

SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 23

Shavuos, Sicha 2

The Context:

Shavuos is the only holiday about which the sages unanimously agree that there is an obligation to enjoy a festive meal, to specifically enjoy physical delights. Regarding other holidays, some sages maintained that no such obligation exists.

Even according to the final law, however, which does mandate material enjoyment on all festivals, Shavuos is still unique in that it is forbidden to observe a “fast on behalf of a bad dream.” On all other holidays and on Shabbos, if a person desires to observe a fast to annul the portents of a bad dream, they may do so. Even though there is an obligation to physically enjoy the holiday, the pain and distress this person would have by not fasting overrides that obligation. For the person oppressed by a bad dream, the fast brings physical comfort, and is therefore allowed. On Shavuos, however, even this form of fasting is not permitted.

The Question:

The other two festivals commemorate physical salvations of the Jewish people — the Exodus from Egypt, and the Divine protection of the people in the desert. Shavuos, on the other hand, commemorates a spiritual event, the Giving of the Torah. Why is it that on the holiday marking a spiritual gift, there is a greater stress placed on material enjoyment than on the holidays celebrating material salvation?

The Explanation:

The objective of the Torah is to infiltrate the material reality and reveal the inherent Divinity of all of creation. Torah houses the Essence of G-d, and from the perspective of the Essence, everything is united with G-d, even the material.

On other holidays, the focus turns to more specific manifestations of G-d, His protection, His kindness. The ideal is for these spiritual themes to be realized within the material, and therefore there is an obligation to find joy in the festive meal. However, a person may not feel able to find the Divinity within food and drink, and may

be confined to a perspective that actually finds more relief in fasting. The Torah accommodates this limitation in the other festivals, since we are dealing with particular Divine manifestations that do not necessarily resonate on every level of reality.

On Shavuos, however, when the Essence of G-d is revealed through the Torah, there is no place for reservations about the material world. Every Jew is empowered to find the Divinity within physical food and drink, and therefore, it is unanimously agreed that on Shavuos, the body takes center stage.
