

SICHA SUMMARY

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 27

Shabbos Hagadol

The Context:

On the Shabbos of the 10th of Nissan, days before the exodus from Egypt, the Jewish people set aside their lambs for the Pesach sacrifice as commanded by G-d. In response to the curious and apprehensive Egyptian neighbors, the Jews explained that G-d was going to strike the Egyptian firstborn and commanded them to offer a sacrifice to be spared themselves. The firstborn of Egypt confronted their elders and demanded to release the Jewish slaves. When they refused, a civil war broke out resulting in catastrophic loss to the Egyptian people.

Every year this is commemorated on the Shabbos prior to Pesach, known as “Shabbos Hagadol,” the Great Shabbos.

The Question:

But the date of commemoration is strange: Every other holiday is commemorated on the day of the month the miracle occurred, but this miracle is commemorated on the day of the week it occurred, Shabbos, and

not on the 10th of Nissan. What is the significance of this anomaly?

The Explanation:

The cycle of the week and the month allude to two different systems of Divine direction. The week is the cycle of nature — the original template of creation, identical in its rhythm, timed by the sun’s orbit which does not fluctuate. The month is a different order of time, given by G-d to the Jewish people on the eve of the exodus, measured by the moon which is always renewed, representing a higher order of G-dliness that disrupts and intervenes in nature.

Thus the miracles of all other holidays are commemorated on the day of the month, because they are expressions of G-d’s light which transcends the natural, “weekly” rhythm of creation.

Yet the miracle of Shabbos Hagadol is not a rupture of the natural realm. A disgruntled cohort of firstborns rose up against a complacent elite when they felt their lives were believably in danger, and a civil war ensued, weakening the empire.

Thus, this miracle is commemorated on the day of the week, alluding to the miracles that unfold within the confines of nature,

reworking nature itself to be aligned with G-d's purpose.

The miracle of the "Great Shabbos" is not great in the sense of it overwhelming the

natural reality, it is "great" because it transforms nature itself to express the Divine truth that all of creation is one with G-d.
