

SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 16

Bo, Sicha 4

The Contrast:

On the eve of the Exodus from Egypt, the Jews were commanded to eat the Paschal lamb with matzah and maror. The matzah in question was allowed to be “wealthy matzah,” that is, the flour was mixed with wine, oil, honey, or fruit juice, with the caveat that the dough had to be capable of leavening (meaning, water was mixed in as well). But in the commandment to eat matzah throughout the generations, only a “poor man’s bread” can be used to fulfill the mitzvah, that is matzah made from flour and water. If a person eats “wealthy matzah” on the night of the Seder, they have not fulfilled their obligation.

What is the significance of this distinction?

Two Spiritual Profiles:

In spiritual terms, the rich taste of “wealthy matzah” alludes to the satisfying taste of comprehending G-dliness and having an authentic emotional response to G-d. When

the mind and heart are occupied with G-dliness, then the person is “incapable of leavening,” meaning, just like “wealthy matzah” made without water cannot rise, so, too, negativity does not have a foothold in a person who is suffused with light.

The tasteless “poor man’s bread,” on the other hand, alludes to the simple submission to G-d’s will, in spite of the foreign desires of the heart and mind. A person at this stage is “capable of leavening,” meaning, because his heart and mind are unoccupied with spirituality, he is vulnerable to negativity.

The Preface to the Explanation:

At the time of the Exodus, the forces of negativity still reigned within the Jewish souls, their hearts and minds were spiritually undeveloped. Therefore, they had to “flee” Egypt to avoid any further contamination. Their service was the service of submission to the Divine will. Therefore, when we commemorate and reenact that Exodus, we eat “poor man’s bread,” matzah that is tasteless and capable of leavening, for it alludes to the spiritual work of “escaping” from negativity and submitting

ourselves to G-d, even while our conscious selves remain distant.

Regarding the future redemption, however, the prophet says “we will not go in haste,” because at that time, we will have refined our inner selves, transforming our minds and hearts with Divine knowledge. There will be no negativity to run from, thus resembling the service of the “wealthy matzah.”

But we do not only use the poor man’s bread on Pesach because it reflects the spiritual standing of our ancestors on that night. There is a spiritual advantage to the simple submission of the poor man’s bread, in contrast to the “wealthy matzah.” The one who transforms their inner selves cleaves to G-d, they draw their conscious selves near to Him. But surrendering to G-d entails exertion and commitment to do what is unnatural. That dedication is lacking in the one who seamlessly cleaves to G-d.

That is why we will still recall the Exodus from Egypt in the era of the future redemption. Because the ultimate objective is to achieve both advantages — the exertion of submission, and the ecstasy of cleaving to G-d.

The Explanation:

The Alter Rebbe writes that the future redemption began in inchoate form with the Exodus from Egypt. In the spiritual terms laid out above, this means that the potential for a Divine service that transforms and vitalizes the inner self (the future redemption) is present even at the outset of the first steps of Divine service, the work of submission (leaving Egypt). What does this fusion of both redemptions look like? Even though internal transformation cannot yet occur, it is possible to perform the work of submission with joy and vitality. That is, the mind and heart themselves enthusiastically agree to surrender themselves to the Divine.

Thus, the Jews in Egypt eating “wealthy matzah” on the eve of the Exodus represents the “rich taste” of the mind and heart surrendering to G-d. This was possible only prior to the actual Exodus. Once the Jews physically left Egypt, however, they, and we, can only fulfill the obligation with “poor man’s bread.” At this early point of spiritual work, all their attention and spiritual energy must be devoted to the critical service of giving themselves completely to G-d, without any hints of personal satisfaction or contentment.
