

THE CHABAD WEEKLY

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❖ SEVENTH DAY OF PESACH: Splitting of the Sea

The Seventh Day of Pesach commemorates the Splitting of the Sea of Reeds (Yam Suf), the climax of the Exodus from Egypt. Until "Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore," they remained in dread of Egypt's military might; some were even prepared to submit to slavery again rather than risk death. After the Splitting of the Sea, however, all fear of danger ended and they experienced true freedom. Our Sages consider these two events, the Exodus from Egypt and the Splitting of the Sea, to be of such fundamental importance that they require us to recall them every day. This obligation indicates that they are not simply incidents in history. Instead, the Exodus from Egypt and the Splitting of the Sea reflect two continually relevant stages in our service of G-d. Leaving Egypt means transcending our limitations and ceasing to be slaves by identifying ourselves as servants of G-d. The Exodus from Egypt was not complete, however, until the Splitting of the Sea. By the same token, on a personal level, each individual's experience of leaving Egypt is incomplete without the spiritual parallel to the Splitting of the Sea.

...We find the miracle of the Splitting of the Sea described as follows: "He turned the sea into dry land." In chassidic thought, the sea serves as a metaphor for the material world which hides the G-dliness within it. Like the waters of the sea which cover over whatever is within them, our material existence conceals the G-dly life-force which maintains its existence. The transformation of the sea into dry land symbolizes the revelation of this hidden truth, demonstrating that the world is not separate from G-d, but rather unified with Him entirely. Perceiving G-d's integrated involvement in our physical world enables us to overcome the challenge posed by our material environment. As long as our faith in G-d is abstract, removed from experience, it is disconnected from our day-to-day existence. However, when we recognize G-d's constant presence and influence in our lives, we are able to see His Torah as a means of establishing a connection with Him as we continue our day-to-day lives.

...The narrative of the Splitting of the Sea teaches another important lesson about the extent of our commitment to the service of G-d. The miracle at the Sea was a direct response to the actions of the Jewish people. The Torah relates that when the Jews found themselves trapped between the pursuing Egyptian army and the Sea of Reeds, they "became greatly frightened" and "cried out to G-d." G-d responded by telling Moshe: "Why do you cry out to Me? Tell the Children of Israel to go forward!" Our Sages explain that after Moshe relayed this message, Nachshon ben Aminadav, the Nasi (leader) of the Tribe of Yehudah, plunged into the Sea, followed by his tribe and then by the entire Jewish people. They pressed onward until the water reached their nostrils. Only then did the sea split.

Nachshon's action exemplified *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice). He knew that the goal of the Exodus was the Giving of the Torah, for G-d had promised Moshe, "When you bring the people out of Egypt, you will serve G-d on this mountain." Accordingly, Nachshon's only desire was to reach Mt. Sinai. No matter what the obstacles, his resolve would not be shaken. Not even the sea would stand between himself and receiving the Torah.

...In our own lives, recalling the Splitting of the Sea teaches us to strive for selfless determination. The exile in Egypt prepared our people for the revelation of the Torah at Mt. Sinai; the present exile is also a

preparation, readying us for the revelation of new dimensions within the Torah by Mashiach. We, like Nachshon and Avraham, have been given a mission - to prepare the world for the coming of Mashiach by disseminating the knowledge of the Torah and its mitzvos. Nachshon's steadfast commitment brought about a miraculous salvation for the Jewish people. Emulating his commitment will likewise prepare us for the miracles of the Era of the Redemption, which will include a parallel to the miracle of the Splitting of the Sea. As the Haftorah recited on the Eighth Day of Pesach relates, "G-d... will raise His hand over the river (Euphrates) with His mighty wind and smite it into seven streams." May this prophecy be fulfilled speedily, in our days. (Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. I, pp. 135-137; Vol. III, Parshas Beshallah, pp. 876-880. Chabad in Cyberspace)

❖ ACHARON SHEL PESACH: Seudas Mashiach

"Acharon Shel Pesach" means the last day of Pesach. A principle in Torah is that "one ascends in sanctity." Thus, despite the lofty nature of the first days of Pesach, Acharon shel Pesach is loftier yet...Indeed, Acharon shel Pesach is uniquely associated with Moshiach - as stressed in the Haftorah, and evidenced by "Moshiach's banquet" being held then.

...Moshiach will concern himself with every Jew. Our Sages tell us that Moshe Rabeinu, the "redeemer of Israel," when he saw that one lamb had strayed from his flock, left the flock and chased after the lamb to bring it back. Every Jew was precious to Moshe, even a Jew who had "strayed" away. So too with Moshiach: Every Jew, whoever he may be, is most precious to him.

...Because Moshiach will redeem every Jew, each Jew must make the proper preparations to this event - beginning with his participation in "Moshiach's banquet." And because "one mitzvah causes another mitzvah," this participation will bring other efforts to hasten the true and complete redemption.

...The Meor Einayim writes, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov, that "every Jew must rectify and prepare that part of Moshiach's 'body' that is relevant to his [personal] soul." That is, each Jew has within his soul part of Moshiach's soul. He continues: "as it is known, the letters of the word adam (man) are the beginning letters of Adam, David, Moshiach." Every person called "adam" (and all Jews are called adam) has in himself the levels of Adam, David and Moshiach. Adam - because all men are his offspring. David - because he is "King of Israel," and the king is the life and existence of the country and its citizens. Likewise. Every Jew has part of Moshiach's soul within him.

...The Meor Einayim continues to say, "every Jew must prepare that part of the level of Moshiach applicable to his soul, until all the 'body' will be rectified and prepared, and there will be a general unity speedily in our days." In other words, the service of every Jew is to awaken and reveal the level of "Moshiach" in his soul, and to ensure that this "Moshiach" will redeem him and everything related to him. This is his personal redemption, similar to the general redemption through Moshiach. (From: Sichos in English, Vol. 17)

The presence of *Mashiach* is revealed on Acharon Shel Pesach, and this revelation has relevance to all Israel: Pesach is *medaleg*. "skipping over" (rather than orderly progress), and *leil shimurim*, the "protected night." In general the mood of Pesach is one of liberty. Then Pesach ends, and we find ourselves tumbling headlong into the outside world. This is where *Mashiach's* revealed presence comes into play - imbuing us with a powerful resolution that enables us to maintain ourselves in the world. (Rebbe's Hayom Yom, Nissan - 23)

May it be G-d's will that through waiting and celebrating "Moshiach's banquet, " we speedily merit ongoing for Moshiach, expressed through our the true and complete redemption. -The Rebbe