



INSIGHTS ON SEDER, HAGADDAH & ELIJAHU

1) The *Shelah HaKadosh* says that the *Seder* should be conducted with seriousness and with no idle chatter, and that if a person is careful with this, he merits many high levels, atonement for all sins, etc. How can a person fulfill this *Shelah HaKadosh* in a family setting where he needs to make a relaxed and light atmosphere by talking and laughing with them? Is this *avodah* of the *Shelah HaKadosh* only for rare individuals to practice?

ANSWER Any words spoken to the family which create a pleasant atmosphere of enjoying Yom Tov are not in the category of idle chatter. Rather, such chatting is a *mitzvah*. It is just that “Where there is celebration, there should also be seriousness.”

QUESTION 2) What is the *Hagaddah*? Is it all a form of *tefillah*, or is it a way to tap into the holiness of the festival, or is it for the purpose of bringing out certain points in our soul? Or is it simply to tell over the miracles and to sing praises of Hashem, which is what it simply sounds like?

ANSWER Each person connects to the *Hagaddah* on his own level. The *Hagaddah* speaks to anyone on any level, and each person can connect to it from where he is and on his current level.

QUESTION 3) Since the “Baal Tzefon idol” represents the 50th level of *tumah* (spiritual defilement), and Internet is the 50th level of *tumah*, can we say that the Internet was hidden inside the “Baal Tzefon” idol? Was the technology for Internet contained in potential form inside the Baal Tzefon idol, and it is just that it wasn’t actually released onto the world until later?

ANSWER Yes! It was there *b’koach*, in potential form,

but not yet in the *poel* (active form).

QUESTION 4) Why does Eliyahu come between the third and fourth cups? Since Eliyahu heralds the Redemption and he represents the bridging point between this world and the next, shouldn’t he come after the fourth cup? Is it because the first 3 cups represent the world before the Geulah whereas the 4th cup represents the Geulah, thus Eliyahu comes between the 3rd and 4th cups because that represents the bridging point to the time of Geulah?

ANSWER Eliyahu comes between the third and fourth cups because the first cup represents the letters *hey* and *yud* of Hashem’s Name of *havayah*, which did not become separated by the Creation, whereas the third and fourth cups represent the letters *vov* and *heh* in Hashem’s Name of *havayah*, which become separated in our Creation – and therefore Eliyahu, whose role is to bring peace, comes to make peace between the letter *vov* (which corresponds to *Zeir Anpin*, which contains the six *Sefiros* of *Chesed* until *Yesod*) and the letter *heh*, which corresponds to *Nukva* (the *sefirah* of *Malchus*).

QUESTION 5) When we pour the cup for Eliyahu, does Eliyahu actually visit the house by the Seder? Or are we pouring the cup [and standing up for him] only in his honor, but he doesn’t actually come?

ANSWER It depends how meritorious (worthy) the leader of the house and family members are.

QUESTION 6) Does Eliyahu come to a house where there is Internet?

ANSWER No.

QUESTION 7) The *Sefas Emes* says that unlike in the first *Geulah* (from Egypt) where four-fifths of the Jewish people died out in the plague of darkness and didn’t go out from Egypt, the final *Geulah* will be a

complete redemption, where every single Jew will go out. Why then did the Rav say that those who are connected to the 50th level of *tumah* won't be *zocheh* to *Geulah*, *chas v'shalom*.

ANSWER The *Sefas Emes* wrote those words because that was the level of his generation [where the entire generation was worthy]. *Halevay* (certainly it is our hope that everyone will be *zocheh* to *Geulah*) that this should happen, and *Amen*, may that become Hashem's will.

CHOL HAMOED TRIPS

On Chol HaMoed, many people go to parks and supermarkets, amusement parks, zoos, trips, hikes, etc. Is there anything wrong with having a little of this? Should we send our children to go to these places so that they shouldn't feel bored and thereby enjoy the Yom Tov? Or should we withhold children from all of this, because it can cause them to go to places that are inappropriate?

ANSWER One should find the most refined kind of place possible in this generation to go to, relatively speaking, in order to calm their [children's] souls. At the same time, one also needs to gradually educate their children to live a life of an inner world: to get the child accustomed to searching for an inner kind of life. A child should be trained to always examine each thing he/she encounters, by breaking up a matter into details and seeing the different factors involved in everything.

WHAT TO SAY AT THE SEDER

Regarding the Pesach seder, in a family that includes boys and girls of all different ages, is it better to focus on conveying the simple meaning of the Hagaddah, relaying parables and stories, which would disappoint the older children [because the older children won't enjoy this]? Or, is it better to focus on more

intellectual-type insights of the Hagaddah, which the younger children won't understand?

ANSWER One needs to run the Seder with wisdom, and to be attentive at all times to the level of concentration [of the family]. Accordingly, one can then decide what kinds of insights can be relayed.] (Editor's Note: The Rav once delivered shiurim in Argentina, where he gave about 20 shiurim in different communities, of all different types. Some communities requested of the Rav to give in-depth shiurim, whereas other communities wanted the Rav to say a story and then deliver lessons from it. One Friday morning there, the Rav was invited to give a shiur on that week's parsha. The Rav prepared the shiur, but when he began to deliver the shiur, he saw that the crowd wanted a more interactive, give-and-take kind of experience, rather than listening to a lecture, and that it wouldn't be possible to give a derasha which required concentration and listening. Immediately the Rav changed the derasha to a give-and-take discussion on the parshah. In the course of delivering the derasha, the Rav pointed out several in-depth insights that sparked interest in the crowd, and the crowd became very involved, animatedly responding to the Rav's words. The crowd did not realize that the Rav had quickly 'changed gears' for them.)

AFIKOMAN

Is the custom of "stealing the afikoman" a contradiction to the spiritual lessons of the night of the Seder? Is it possible to forego this custom somewhat? Or, to the contrary, is this a custom that only creates a positive experience at the Seder which can bring the family closer to fulfilling the mitzvos [of the Pesach Seder] with greater joy?

ANSWER The custom should not be foregone. However, one should find a positive point in this custom which he can focus on [for the family] and emphasize at the Seder. For example, one can explain

to the family that taking the afikoman is a parable of how we need to search in our own “hidden places” [to do soul-searching]. This is actually the deeper intent of the ceremony of “Tzafon” at the Sefer, which, on a deep level, is about the “light which is hidden for the tzaddikim in the future” [the ohr hatzafun, the “hidden light.”]

COMING TO THE SEDER RELAXED

Many parents are exhausted by the time they come to the seder on Pesach night, after having worked so hard to prepare the seder. Many people have a hard time physically with the night of the seder and sometimes people feel emotionally drained about the whole thing. What is the advice for how to come to the Pesach seder relaxed and happy?

ANSWER 1) One needs to go through the days preceding Pesach amidst an inner awareness [Ed: that these are days of preparation for Pesach, as opposed to just taking care of chores]. [1] 2) One needs to get chores done, then take a break, and then return to the chore at hand, repeating the cycle. One needs to take breaks so that he can get back his yishuv hadaas (settled mind). 3) One needs to infuse inner meaning into the external, physical actions. [1] Editor's Note: Refer to Pesach Talks

ABUNDANCE OF KOSHER L'PESACH PRODUCTS

Today there are hundreds and thousands of products that fill the kosher supermarkets which are labeled as “Kosher for Pesach”, listed as mehadrin (the strictest standards of kashrus). What should be the inner attitude towards this? Are we supposed to be bringing all of these products into our homes so that the family can have more simchah (for, as the Rambam says, that one gladdens his children on Yom Tov by giving them candies, nuts, and sweets)? Or, are we supposed to cling to the custom of the previous generations, by not bringing in anything

from the outside into our homes [as in the dictum, “Chadash (in this context, ‘new items’) is prohibited by the Torah?”]

ANSWER It is proper to live as close as possible to the way that the previous generations lived. At the same time, one also needs to act according to his current madreigah (spiritual level), and he must also take into account the madreigah that his family is on, and to cater to their personalities.

BILVAVI-STYLE EMUNAH

I don't understand the Rav's style in sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh teaches that we need to develop our emunah in a question-and-answer format by asking ourselves questions how the world got created and then clarifying that Hashem created it, etc. This sounds like an intellectual and philosophical approach towards emunah, which is very different from the emunah I was taught as a child, which is that we need to simply believe that Hashem is here, there, everywhere and without clarifying how this is true and without getting into questions.

ANSWER It is like when we say the questions of the Mah Nishtanah by the Pesach seder, which is in question- and -answer format. We are not asking the questions because we are honestly questioning it and looking for an answer] rather, we already know the answer and we are just clarifying it to ourselves so that our knowledge can internalize. [

RETURNING TO A HIGHER EXPERIENCE

I one time had an experience during hisbodedus when I was davening, where I felt the ohr Ein Sof, the infinite light. I didn't consciously try to get there, it happened unexpectedly. Only later when I learned some sefarim did I realize what I experienced. How can I return to such an experience?

ANSWER It is similar to the night of Pesach, which is

a high level that we experience and the day after it is gone ,and we need 49 days afterwards of purifying our middos in order to return to it ,so that we will be able to live with it correctly.

SIMPLE SON'S NOT-SO-SIMPLE QUESTION

In Bilvavi Part 2 (Chapter 28) the Rav talks about the concept of *temimus* (simplicity), that a person who is a *tamim* (wholehearted believer in Hashem) doesn't ask questions on Hashem, and instead accepts how everything is from Hashem.

The Rav also explains there that even a *tamim* (or *tam*) asks questions, because otherwise he would just be like the child who doesn't know how to ask (like we say in the *Hagaddah*), and it is just that the person who is a *tamim* doesn't ask questions, even though he knows how to ask, and this is because he is a *tamim* towards Hashem.

I don't really understand this. In the *Hagaddah* it says that a *tam* does have a question, and the *tam's* question is: "*Mah Zeh*", "What is this?" So the *tam* certainly does ask questions. Can the Rav please explain to me more about this?

ANSWER The *tam* doesn't ask "Why" or "What's the reason?" Rather, the *tam* asks "What's going on over here, so I can know what I'm doing?" That is the *tam's* question of *Mah Zeh*, "What is this?" He is only asking "What", he wants to know the entire process from A-Z so that he can know how to act properly and in the best way possible [For example, when a child becomes *Bar Mitzvah* and he is learning how to put on Tefillin, he asks what to do and how to put it on. He is asking these questions only because he wants to know how to fulfill the *mitzvah*].

There is also a deeper understanding: There is a *tam* who is one of the four children in the *Hagaddah*, who asks "What is this?", and he is the third son listed [which shows that he is on a lower level than the wise son and even lower than the wicked son]. But there is also a kind of *tam* who is on a higher level than all of these, and he is the kind of *tam* which means

shaleim, whole. This is a higher level of a *tam* and he doesn't have any questions at all. Instead, he is simply drawn towards his root.

So there are two levels of a *tam*. There is a *tam* that we mention in the *Hagaddah* on the night of Pesach, where we discuss questions and answers, and there is also a higher-level *tam*, who is on the level of *Toras Hashem Temimah*, "the Torah of Hashem is wholesome" (and a hint to this is that the letters of the word *tam* are also an acronym for "*Matan Torah*", the giving of the Torah). However, this higher level of *tam* disappeared after the breaking of the first set of *Luchos*. After the *Luchos* were broken, we are now on the level of asking questions for the sake of getting answers, and this is the level that is reflected when we learn *Shas*, where we involve ourselves with questions and answers.

SKIPPING LEVELS BY THE PESACH SEDER

As the Rav explains, on the night of Pesach we serve Hashem by way of *dilug* (skipping), by skipping over the normal steps of *avodas Hashem* and "jumping" straight to the highest level of closeness to Hashem, without traversing the normal lower levels that are needed to ascend higher to Hashem. The Rav has also explained that even this *dilug* has some kind of *seder* (order) to it. Can the Rav please explain about this more and what exactly the *seder* of this *dilug* is, on the night of Pesach?

ANSWER The way to "skip" on the night of Pesach is either through *mesirus nefesh*, being prepared to give up our lives for Hashem, which reflects the teaching of the Sages that "There are those who acquire their World To Come in one hour", or, by connecting our souls to the "awakening that comes from Above" (*isarusa d'leila*) which immediately connects our souls to the higher dimension. That is the spiritual illumination on Pesach.