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מכתב התחזקות (ג)

Many people are wondering to themselves and worrying what type of Pesach will we be having this year, how will our Yom Tov be, whilst we are all confined to our houses without any visitors, and it is almost impossible to go out at all, and we are asking ourselves why is this Pesach different from all other years of Pesach.

However, when we examine the essence of Pesach we will see that all the mitzvos which we perform during Pesach are mitzvos that we perform specifically at home, unlike the other Yomim Tovim where we perform the mitzvos of the Yom Tov out of the home. The special mitzvah of Rosh Hashona is Tekiyas Shofar which we hear in shul, Yom Kippur we spend the entire day in shul, returning home just to catch a bit of sleep, Succos we shake the Arba Minim in shul, and to fulfil mitzvas Succah we have to leave our houses in fulfilment of "leave your permanent abode and go into a temporary abode".

The exception to this is Pesach. When it comes to Pesach, there are no special mitzvos that are to be performed in shul, rather all the mitzvos of the Yom Tov are performed at home. Even the chiyuv min HaTorah to destroy chometz refers in principal to chometz in one's home as it is written (חיי אדם כלל קיט ס' יח) תשביתו שאור מבתים and someone who does not have a house cannot make a brocha on bedikas chometz (although he is still required to destroy any chometz in his possession). Similarly the mitzvah of eating matza and drinking the 4 cups and all the other mitzvos of the Seder are all performed at home and not in shul.

We know that the name "Pesach" is derived from the possuk על בתי בני ישראל that Hashem passed over all the Yiddishe Houses, and so it is written "ואת בתי בני ישראל הציל" "והיה הדם לאות על הבתים" and the Yidden had to place some blood from the Korban Pesach on the doorpost of their houses to show that this is a Yiddishe house and they were also commanded "אל יצא איש מפתח ביתו עד בוקר" not to leave their houses and they also had to



eat the korban in one specific location "בבית אחד יאכל לא תוציא מן הבית חוצה" and they may not wander out of the house. Rav S.R. Hirsh zt"l explains that from here we learn how the Torah establishes the centrality and the importance of the Jewish home as a vital part and foundation in Yiddishkeit. The Korban Pesach had to be eaten at home and this was the avodah of Pesach, to establish the fact that Klall Yisroel is comprised of "homes" not merely people of various groups, and it is the home that makes Klall Yisroel.

The Meshech Chochmah points out a very important lesson which is very pertinent to all of us and is a chizuk in our present situation. Many people are very upset about the prospect of being unable to go to shul on Yom Tov and to miss out davening together the Yom Tov tefillos and the singing of Hallel etc. and the atmosphere of being in shul over Yom Tov.

We have to bear in mind the following insight of the Meshech Chochmah. In order for an offering to be considered a korban, it had to be offered on the מזבח in the בית המקדש but in Mitzrayim there was no בית המקדש or משכן and no מזבח, so how could their offering possibly be considered and have the status and kedusha of a Korban?

The gemara tells us that in Mitzrayim, their homes were the replacement of the mikdash and the mizbaich. Explains the Meshech Chochma that the gemara does not mean to say that they sprinkled the blood on the doorpost instead of the מזבח, rather the gemara is telling us that their very homes had the status and the kedusha of the מקדש and the מזבח and by sprinkling the blood on the door post it was the equivalent of sprinkling the blood on the מזבח.

This year we are all confined to our houses, and we are being taught that our avodah is to elevate our houses that they rise up to the level of a מקדש מעט so that when we daven at home it will be have the same kedusha of davening in a shul. Chazal tell us that in the time of the Beis Hamikdosh the מזבח atones for a person, in golus a person's table atones for him. This year we have to elevate our homes and our tables that they should be worthy of being regarded as a מקדש and a מזבח.

If in previous years we might have thought that such lofty madreigos are beyond us, this year is indeed different. I once read a book from one of the Holocaust survivors. In it he describes how in the concentration camp they were marched out for forced labour on Shabbos, they had



no siddurim, no sefer Torah, no kiddush and no challah, not even a kappel on their heads. Despite this, the Yidden would secretly whisper to each other “Remember it is Shabbos today” Don’t forget it is Shabbos today” and quietly they would hum to themselves a niggun from Lecho Dodi or Koh Ribboin or one of the other zemiros.

This Yid finished off with the following observation. Although I was then unable to be a shomer Shabbos, it wasn’t possible to keep Shabbos, but I was a מקדש השבת, I and all the other Yidden had and felt great pain we were forced to desecrate the holy Shabbos against our will. Today after the war, although I am able to keep Shabbos properly, I still wonder greatly if I am zoche to be a מקדש השבת like I was then!

This year we will all אם ירצה ה' be able to keep the halachos of Pesach, and we will all have disposed of our chometz and we will sit down to a seder with matza and the 4 cups etc, but this year our seder will have a new and special dimension which we might never have experienced until now. When we rejoice with the Yom Tov and its mitzvos despite all the worries and the difficult and tragic situation we are all in, this is a true level of keeping the Torah Lishmoh. This year we will all be zoche to come to the level of מקדש ישראל והזמנים we will have sanctified ourselves, our homes and families!

In the days before Pesach, Yidden are busy cleaning and preparing their houses and when all is finally ready to greet the Yom Tov, we sit down at the seder and we make the following declaration “השתא הכא לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל”. Explains the Chasam Sofer that Chazal have told us that when Moshiach comes, all the shuls are going to fly off to Eretz Yisroel, but what is going to happen to our houses, are we going to have to leave them behind?

A Yid who has got rid of all his chometz and has prepared himself and his household “his house becomes sanctified with the kedusha of Eretz Yisroel and this is what we declare in the Hagaddoh השתא הכא although I am still here now in Golus, לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל, the following year **this house** will be in Eretz Yisroel” because all our houses will be worthy of greeting Moshiach. May we all be zoche still this year to all be in Yerushalayim Ir HaKodesh. יראו עינינו וישמח לבנו ותגל נפשנו בישועתך באמת בב"א

בברכת חג כשר ושמח
ידידכם ישראל פרידמן