

Re'eh

THE WEISS EDITION

# *Light points*

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF  
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE  
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints  
לזיכרון ולעילוי נשמת  
הרה"ח הרה"ת  
הר"ר ישעי' זושא  
ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם  
גלב"ע ביום ד' שבט ה'תשפ"ב  
תנצב"ה



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# ראה *Re'eh*

12:20-23 | יב:כג-כ

כִּי יִרְחִיב ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת גְּבֻלְךָ בְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לְךָ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲכָלָה בָּשָׂר  
כִּי תֵאָוֶה נַפְשְׁךָ לֶאֱכֹל בָּשָׂר בָּשָׂר... רַק חֲזֹק לְבָלִיתִי אֲכֹל הַדָּם

*When Hashem, your G-d, expands your borders, as  
He has spoken to you, and you say, "I will eat meat,"  
because your soul desires to eat meat... However, be  
strong in not eating the blood.*

## *Let Them Eat Meat*

According to one opinion in the Talmud,<sup>1</sup> during their years in the desert the only meat Bnei Yisrael were permitted to consume was that of the sacrifices. It was therefore necessary for Moshe to tell them that when G-d "expands your borders," i.e., when they will arrive in the Land of Israel, they will be allowed to eat meat whenever "your soul desires to eat meat," even from an animal that was not brought as a sacrifice.

The permission to consume non-sacrificial meat upon

<sup>1</sup>. Chullin 16b.

entering the Land of Israel reflects the shift of spiritual focus that accompanied Bnei Yisrael's transition from the desert to the Land.

Upon entering Israel, Bnei Yisrael would begin engaging with the world on a natural level, working the land and settling it. Their Divine mission would be to elevate the material world by imbuing it with G-dly purpose.

In the desert, however, G-d had provided all their material needs, allowing them to devote themselves entirely to spiritual development and the study of Torah. There was therefore no justification for eating “mundane” meat in the desert, for the job of elevating the mundane had not yet begun. Animals were to be offered to G-d as sacrifices, and only in that holy context was the consumption of meat permissible.

Non-sacrificial meat became permissible for consumption only when Bnei Yisrael entered the Land of Israel. Now they were permitted to partake of the physical world—even beyond that which is obviously sacred (as the sacrifices were), for they now had the ability (and responsibility!) to infuse even their mundane desires with G-dly purpose.

The Torah warns, however, “Be strong in not eating the blood.” Blood is a metaphor for energy, enthusiasm and passion. The Torah's admonition to eat meat only if it has been drained of its blood means that when we utilize what the world has to offer for a G-dly purpose, we must do so without “blood”—i.e., without excitement or lust for physical pleasure.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 4, pp. 1108–1110*

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 16:1 | ט:א
 

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שְׁמֹר אֶת חֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב וְעָשִׂיתָ פֶּסַח לַה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי  
בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב הוֹצִיאָךְ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם לַיְלָה

*Safeguard the month of spring and offer a Pesach to Hashem, your G-d; for in the month of spring, Hashem, your G-d, brought you out of Egypt at night.*

## What Spring Teaches Us about Winter

The Torah commands us to structure the calendar in a manner that ensures that the 15th of Nissan—the day Pesach begins—falls in the spring. The emphasis placed on the timing of this holiday highlights the uplifting message conveyed by springtime.

During the months of winter, there are almost no visible signs of thriving plant life. When winter concludes, however, the processes of growth that lay dormant in the earth suddenly spring to life, and it becomes evident that the lack of growth we witnessed throughout the winter was only a temporary pause, to allow for nature's rejuvenation. Now a fresh crop of vegetation can blossom and thrive.

The exodus from Egypt contains a very similar message. Bnei Yisrael suffered bitterly in Egypt, oppressed in both body and spirit. It was revealed only later that the exile had in fact refined them,<sup>2</sup> enabling them to receive the Torah—the very word of G-d—a short 50 days after leaving Egypt.

The same is true for us, as individuals. If ever we experi-

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2. See Devarim 4:20 and Rashi ad loc.

ence a period in life that seems to be barren, with no signs of productivity or growth, we must realize that this barrenness is almost certainly not our permanent reality. It is merely a temporary break so we can rejuvenate, and ultimately blossom and flourish again.

—*Igros Kodesh, vol. 4, pp. 267–268*

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 16:14 | טז:יד
 

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וְשִׂמְחַת בְּחֻגֶיךָ

*You shall rejoice in your Festival.*

## *Appreciating the Joy of Yom Tov*

The obligation of *simchas Yom Tov*, rejoicing on the holidays, is described by the Alter Rebbe:

For all seven days of Pesach, eight days of Sukkos, and the holiday of Shavuos, a person is obligated to be happy and in good spirits—he, his children, his wife, the members of his household and all who depend on him. This rejoicing is a positive commandment in the Torah, as it is written, “You shall rejoice in your festival.” How are they caused to rejoice? To children, one gives roasted kernels and nuts; for women, one buys clothes and jewelry according to his means; men, in the times of the Beis Hamikdash, they would eat the meat of the *shelamim* offering. Nowadays, in absence of the Beis Hamikdash, they fulfill their obligation to rejoice only by drinking wine.<sup>3</sup>

The Alter Rebbe’s wording indicates that by enjoying physical treats one genuinely fulfills the mitzvah to be joyous on Yom Tov. Granted, he notes that the ideal joy for men was achieved in Temple times by eating sacrificial meat, but in its absence, drinking wine fulfills this mitzvah as well.

In contrast, the Rambam suggests that the joy we are obligated to feel on the holidays is primarily spiritual—the joy of offering and eating the *shelamim* sacrifice—and the physical

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3. Shulchan Aruch Admor Hazaken, Orach Chaim 529:6–7.

aspects of rejoicing are merely secondary. Thus, the Rambam writes:

Even though the rejoicing mentioned here refers to the *shelamim* offering... included in this joy is to make himself, his children and the members of his household joyous, each one accordingly. How so? To children, one gives...<sup>4</sup>

This debate between the Rambam and the Alter Rebbe mirrors the discussion surrounding the delight in Divine revelation that we will experience in the future, in the era of reward, known as Olam Haba, the World to Come. The Rambam writes that in Olam Haba “there is no body or physical form, only the souls of the righteous alone, without a body.”<sup>5</sup> The Alter Rebbe, however, follows the opinion that since the observance of the mitzvos is intended to refine and elevate even our physical bodies, the reward in Olam Haba will likewise be experienced only after the soul is restored to a physical body at the time of *techiyas hameisim*, the resurrection.<sup>6</sup>

Accordingly, the Alter Rebbe rules that both body and soul must equally partake in the Mitzvah and experience the joy of Yom Tov.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 33, pp. 62–70

4. Mishneh Torah, Hil. Shevisas Yom Tov 6:17–18.

5. Ibid., Hil. Teshuvah 8:2.

6. See Likkutei Torah, Tzav 15c.



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 16:15 | טז:טו
 

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שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תִּחַג לַה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ ... וְהָיִיתָ אֶךְ שִׂמְחָה

*Seven days you shall celebrate the Festival to Hashem,  
your G-d... and you will be only happy.*

## *The Holiday that was Left Out*

The Torah commands us to be exceedingly joyous during the seven-day festival of Sukkos. The obligation to rejoice on Shemini Atzeres, the eighth day of the holiday, however, is not stated explicitly. Rather, the Talmud<sup>7</sup> derives this obligation from the extra words stated at the conclusion of the commandment to rejoice on Sukkos, “וְהָיִיתָ אֶךְ שִׂמְחָה—and you will be only happy.” As Rashi explains, “From here it is derived that the evening of the last day of the festival is included in the obligation of rejoicing.”<sup>8</sup>

The methodology of this Talmudic teaching is unusual. Generally, the Torah’s use of the word אֶךְ, “only,” in the context of any particular mitzvah, denotes an *exception* to the obligation stated there.<sup>9</sup> Yet here the Talmud interprets the words “וְהָיִיתָ אֶךְ שִׂמְחָה—you will be *only* happy” as *extending* the obligation to rejoice on Sukkos to include an additional day—Shemini Atzeres!

In doing so, the Talmud hints that not only should our joy on Shemini Atzeres be equal to our joy on the other holidays, it should truly be exceeded.

How so?

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7. Sukkah 48a.

8. Devarim 16:15.

9. See Talmud Yerushalmi, Berachos 9:7.

The obligation to rejoice on the festivals has limits. In fact, the religious authorities are obligated to appoint patrolmen on the holidays to see that the drinking and festivities do not get out of control.<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly, the phrase “You will be only happy,” which indicates an *exception* to the rule, teaches us that there is a holiday when our joy must be *excluded* from the typical limited joy of the holidays—i.e., our celebration of this holiday must exceed our constrained celebration of the other holidays. Which one? Says the Talmud: Shemini Atzeres.

As such, the custom of *hakkafos*, dancing with the Torah scrolls, which has no parallel in any other holiday, is observed specifically on Shemini Atzeres (and Simchas Torah, in the Diaspora). For the holiday of Shemini Atzeres is to be celebrated not only in a manner equivalent to the other holidays, but with a joy that is truly boundless.

—*Sefer Hasichos 5749, vol. 2, pp. 661–662*

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10. See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 529:4.

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תנצב"ה

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