

LUBAVITCH OF N. C.

Thoughts From The Lubavitcher Rebbe

Passover and the Pascal Lamb

By Rabbi Yossi Groner

Passover is the festival that celebrates our exodus from Egypt; the actual celebration begins a few days before Pesach. That is on the Shabbat before Pesach. This Shabbat is called the great Shabbat (Shabbat Hagadol). The reason is as follows: "On the 10th day of the Hebrew month of Nissan, (which fell on a Saturday Shabbat) the Jews selected and took the lamb for their Pascal sacrifices. A great miracle took place in consequence to the Jewish peoples action; the Egyptians gathered around them and asked: "Why are you doing this?" They answered that it was a Passover sacrifice to G-d, who would slay the Egyptian first-born.

When the first-born heard this, they approached King Pharaoh and the elders and demanded that the Jews be released. Pharaoh refused and in response, they waged war against each other and many Egyptians were killed. This was considered a great miracle and to commemorate the event the Shabbat before Passover is called the great Shabbat, and parts of the Passover Haggadah are read on this day.

This year the days of the month correspond to the same days of the week as the first year when the miracle actually took place.

Our sages have called the exodus "one of Torah's general principles." The Torah and its commandments are intrinsically related to the exodus from Egypt, therefore a Jew must bring every aspect of life into connection with the Exodus. Awareness of the Exodus must permeate a Jew's entire existence, therefore we are commanded to recall it twice daily, in the morning and evening.

In a personal and practical sense, the exodus from Egypt refers to each individual's personal departure from all the restrictions and constraints on the Divine Soul. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for Egypt — "Mitzrayim" is etymologically

related to the Hebrew word "meitzorim" which means boundaries or limitations, so in essence Egypt represents the boundaries and limitation of Israel.

We are to experience our own Pesach, our own exodus and create a miracle; miracles represent a step beyond the limitations of nature, a miracle is there to lift the person into a high state of spiritualism.

The goal of a Jew is to reach true greatness, i.e. a state which is not confined by any limits. On Pesach, a Jew must "spring forth" and attempt to reach such a level of unlimited freedom.

As a preparation, in order to stimulate his potential, on the Shabbat before, G-d performs a great miracle revealing a state of total limitlessness.

The midrash describes the state of the Jewish people in Egypt as very poor spiritually, for this reason, G-d commanded them to bring the Pascal sacrifice.

The bringing of the Pascal sacrifice demanded a total transition of character from being in a poor state, to progress to the highest levels of self sacrifice and devotion to G-d.

The selection of the lamb for slaughter involved a very real threat to their lives, as Moshe himself told Pharaoh, "If we sacrifice the Egyptian's god (the lamb was one of the idols) before them, surely they will stone us. Nevertheless, after the selection of the Pascal sacrifice, the lamb was tied to the bed posts of the Jewish people, to excite the Egyptian curiosity. Despite the tremendous gap between their present state and the service demanded from them, the Jews were able to summon up their power of self sacrifice and make a public display of selecting the lamb. This total transition, in turn, brought about the great miracle.

These days are to be remembered and celebrated. By reliving the process of bringing the Pascal sacrifice, a Jew caused G-d to bring about a great miracle, and bring us closer to the exodus from our present state of "Egypt."

Purim Kits Were Distributed

More than 1500 Purim kits have been distributed by Lubavitch to Jewish school children around the state. The kits were designed to help the child celebrate the Purim festival.

On Purim we send at least two food gifts to friends, and we give charity to at least two poor people. Each of the kits contained various kinds of snacks including some from Israel; it also had a packet with coins for charity. A colorful brochure, which described the many joyous mitzvot observed on Purim day, was also placed in the Purim kit.

The majority of these kits were distributed during special Purim programs throughout the Carolinas. The number one program was held



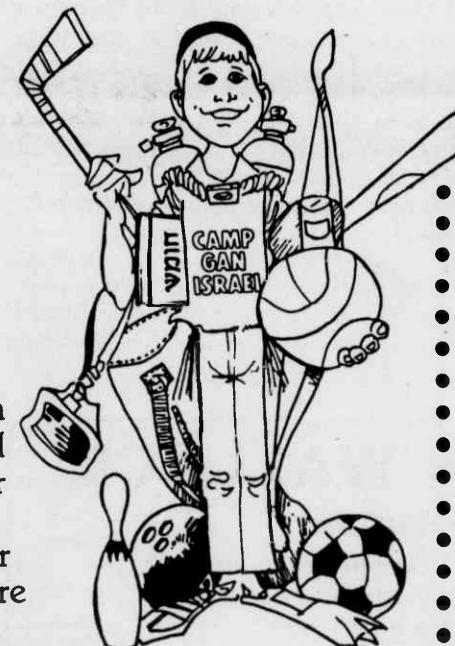
Sue and Louis Doctor preparing kits.

right here in Charlotte. Additional programs were held in Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Fayetteville, Ft. Bragg, Myrtle Beach, Durham and many more. This is all part of the educational project of Lubavitch of North Carolina.

In addition to the above, Lubavitch mailed out Purim

guides to over 7,500 Jewish households in the Carolinas. These brochures are very well received, since they give a comprehensive overview of the holiday with specific details of the observances. They are seen as an excellent educational tool by parents and teachers alike.

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