



POWER POINTS ON PESACH

Rabbi Ephraim Nisenbaum

No chametz shall be found by you... (Shemos 13:7)

Wisotzky Tea was the largest tea company in Russia. It was owned by Kloymous Zev Wisotsky, a student of Rav Yisroel Salanter. When Mr. Wisotzky was approached about producing tea with special Pesach supervision, he surprisingly refused. People told him that since tea was a popular drink in Europe, he would increase sales by receiving special supervision, but he still refused. He explained, "I know, and the year-round kosher supervisor can attest, that there is no chametz in my factory throughout the entire year. If I get special supervision for Pesach the stores will all raise the price of the tea, making the Pesach expenses more difficult than they already are. My conscience does not allow me to do that." That is why Wisotzky tea does not bear a Kosher for Pesach label.

Remember the day that you let Egypt (shemos 13:3)

In 1936, when David Ben Gurion testified before the Peel Commission regarding the founding of the state of Israel, he said, "Three hundred years ago a ship called the *Mayflower* sailed to the New World. It was a great event in the history of England and America. Yet, who remembers when it left port in England? What was the date? How many people were on board? Who were their leaders? What did they eat?"

"Over 3300 years, our people left Egypt. Jews, even children, around the world know what day they left, who our leader was and what food they ate. We still eat that food every year on the anniversary, and we tell the story to our children and grandchildren to make sure it is not forgotten. We also sing the slogan 'Next year in Jerusalem!' That is the nature of the Jewish people."

Rabbi Berel Wein commented on this that Ben Gurion may have been a secular Jew, but he sure understood what the Seder was all about!

The night before the fourteenth we search for chametz... (Pesachim 2a)

During the search for chametz in the house of Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, one of his grandsons got down on the floor to search under the furniture for chametz. When he stood up he brushed the dust off his clothing. Rav Elyashiv looked at him disapprovingly. "What is the matter-- My clothing became dirty?" asked the grandson.

"What do you mean?" said Rav Elyashiv, "Dust that comes from performing a mitzvah is not dirty! The change in color on your pants is a badge of honor!"

...you shall relate to your son on that day.... (Shemos 13:8)

A student posed the following question to Rav Yerucham Levovitz. He had the opportunity to spend the Seder with the Chafetz Chaim, and he was unsure if he should grab the chance or rather spend the Seder with his parents. Rav Yerucham advised him to go to his parents. As proof he cited a Midrash that relates how Gideon complained to G-d, "Yesterday at the Seder, my father recited in Hallel how the Jews left Egypt. Why have You forsaken us now? If our fathers in Egypt were righteous—save us in their merit. And if they were wicked—save us like You saved them!" Rav Yerucham suggested that Gideon was a judge at the time and was already forty years old. He certainly knew about the Exodus without his father reciting it at the Seder. We see that there is something special about sitting at a father's Seder. In the same way that the milk of a cow does not compare to a mother's milk, a father's words have a greater impact than those of any other person.

..."He sojourned there" this teaches us that Jacob did not descend to Egypt to settle there but rather to stay there temporarily. (Haggadah)

A student who was leaving the yeshiva to enter the outside world for employment asked Rav Chatzkel Levenstein for his blessing. Rav Chatzkel told him that we are fortunate that when Jacob descended to Egypt he had no intention to settle there permanently. Had his intention been to settle there the Jewish nation would have been permanently lost in Egypt with no hope for redemption. Similarly, when a student enters the world outside the yeshiva, he must make sure not to settle himself too comfortably. That way he will be able to save his children in the future from total assimilation.

Motzi Matzah...

Rav Chaim Kanievsky wonders why in the order of the Seder it mentions the berachos of *Hamotzi* and *Al Achilas Matzah* rather than the mitzvah of eating the matzah itself. Rav Chaim recalled that in his father, the Steipler Rav's, house, when they would offer a guest something to eat, they would not say, "Please take a piece of cake." They would say instead, "Please make a beracha on something." One should always emphasize the spiritual dimension, the reciting of the beracha on the food, more than the eating, the physical dimension.