

# PASSOVER NEVER PASSES OVER

*by Rabbi Dovid Green*

Passover never really passes over. The truth is that we are really meant to pack it up and take it with us. Passover is the Holiday of Faith. It is the time that we made our first national connection with G-d. He let us know that He didn't just create the world and leave it up to random events of history. He is involved. He even took the time out of His busy schedule to make that known to Pharaoh, Egypt, and of course, to us. G-d's intervention into history is the exception which proves the rule. That is that He is always involved behind the scenes, and He is very interested in us.

Those who participated in a Pesach seder may remember that the Hagada (the Passover night liturgy), states in it that even if we were seasoned veteran Torah scholars, we would still have a commandment to relate the events of leaving Egypt. Rabbi Sholom Noach Bresovsky, of blessed memory, explains the reason for this. Recounting the events of the Exodus from Egypt is the basis of our faith in G-d. Just as G-d is unlimited, faith in G-d too has no limits - it can always rise to new levels. The knowledge of the events one may have, but the growth in our faith that we draw from this knowledge continues indefinitely. So even a well versed Torah scholar has much faith to gain from participating in a seder (a reading of the Passover liturgy) and all of its observances.

Passover teaches us that there is a G-d who is interested in us and involved in our lives. The natural conclusion then, is that we should show interest in Him.

The classical work "Chovos HaLevavos" dedicates a chapter of his work to the topic of serving G-d. His basic premise is that since we can discern so many favors which G-d constantly bestows to us in so many ways, it is only natural that we try to show our appreciation in some measure. Even though we would never be able to repay a minute fraction of the favors we receive, one would certainly be ingratious not to try. Consequently, any little bit we can do is a pleasure, as it is an opportunity for us to show our gratitude. If G-d would give me something specific to do, here's my opportunity - let me jump at the chance. That is the basis of all Torah and Mitzvah (commandment) performance. It is also notable that the Hebrew word "mitzvah" meaning "commandment" is related to the Aramaic derivation "tzavsa," meaning "togetherness." Performing commandments brings us close to G-d.

This brings us to this week's parsha. When the Tabernacle was completed, the only thing left was for G-d to bring His presence to dwell in it. On the first day of the Hebrew month of Nissan, G-d did just that. With the entire Hebrew nation witnessing, G-d's heavenly fire consumed the offerings which had been placed on the altar.

Upon witnessing this, two very great sons of Aharon the High Priest, Nadav, and Avihu, longed for closeness with G-d. As the event is recounted by the Torah, they took some of the sacrificial spices and burned them in the Holy of Holies, the most restricted and sanctified area in the Tabernacle. There G-d took their souls, and they died. Their actions are criticized by the Torah, and they died doing a sinful deed. However, the commentaries note that it was their unbridled desire to come close to G-d that got them in trouble. Their souls were drawn like magnets to G-d's presence, and they were not protected, since their deed was not the performance of any commandment given to them. As a result, they perished. Still, their desire to be close to G-d was correct and worthy of emulation.

Now we are living in times when it is hard to take one's mind off of Jews and Jewishness. Bombs are exploding almost daily in Israel killing innocents, and making widows, widowers, orphans, and bereft parents. Synagogues are being torched in European communities. The whole world is preoccupied with Jews! We really need to take stock of where we come in to this seemingly chaotic situation. Let us start by internalizing the message of Passover. G-d runs the world. No one can hurt another person without His permission. That means that He is giving permission. Why? He's trying to tell us something. My feeling is that He wants us to develop our awareness of Him. Some One Who does so much for us should not go on being ignored. He's calling us, and the time to answer is now. Let us strengthen our awareness and desire to get close to G-d. All good things can only come from that. My personal feeling is that alot depends on us now. Let's rise to the challenge. Prayer, performance of mitzvos, and keeping G-d in our thoughts has the potential to go a long way now. Let's do our best.

Good Shabbos!

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