

The True Taste of Pesach

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The grinding poverty suffered by ordinary people in Ukraine over a hundred years ago is hard for us to imagine. Pesach was especially difficult for the poor. So many expenses ... where was the money supposed to come from?

Reb Noson was no stranger to poverty. One year his family lacked the most basic requirements, such as matzah. As they drew water for Pesach, Reb Noson began to dance. He joyously proclaimed, "Thank God we have water for the coming holiday!"

On a different occasion, Reb Noson overheard a chassid saying to his friend, "Pesach is coming and I still don't have what I need. How can I possibly get everything in time?"

The poor man's pain was obvious. Reb Noson spoke quickly to

allay the man's fears: "Don't worry. You will certainly have your physical requirements for the holiday." Then he wondered aloud, "But how can one merit to bring in the Pesach itself?!"

Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender explained that Reb Noson meant this should be our main concern. The matzos, clothing and wine will all work out in the end. But how can we be sure to absorb the inner light and purpose of this precious holiday?

We find a similar Yom Tov story that took place during Sukkot. Reb Nachman of Tulchin labored tirelessly to erect Reb Noson's sukkah. That evening, while sitting in the sukkah, Reb Nachman remarked, "There is a different feeling of joy and satisfaction when sitting in a sukkah that one has worked very hard to build." Reb Noson replied, "You have not yet tried this. Spend an entire day crying out to God: 'Master of the Universe! Let me taste the true taste of sukkah!' Then see what feelings a person can experience in the sukkah."

Rebbe Nachman once said, "Why do you work so hard when nothing will remain? Labor less so that something will remain!"

As one labors for the material things of this world, his time is taken up. But he must eventually leave it all behind. By working less for the physical, a person can have time for that which does remain with him – his spiritual accomplishments.

Based on Siach Sarfey Kodesh, III, 172; V, 88; I, 649; I, 263;

Aveneha Barzel, p. 52, #12.