

Wait a Little More

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“After the sun sets, he will be ritually pure” (Leviticus 22:7).

Whatever degree of impurity a Jew has – whether he has to wait one day or seven days – when night falls at the end of this period, he will attain purity. No matter how long it takes, one must be patient and wait. Eventually the time for purity will come, for each day is a new creation (*Likutey Halakhot* I, p. 254).

Rebbe Nachman tells the following parable:

Two hoboes, a Jew and a German, decided to go around together. As the festival of Pesach approached, the Jew told his friend that a very good meal was in store for them. He encouraged the German to pretend he was a Jew, so the Jewish townsfolk would have pity on him and invite him in for the Seder.

The Jew also taught the German how to act at the Seder and explained the customs of that ritual meal: the recital of Kiddush over wine, then the washing of the hands, then the eating of a small piece of vegetable, then the recital of the Haggadah, then the second cup of wine, the second washing of the hands, and the eating of matzah. Afterwards, he promised, a sumptuous meal would be served. However, he forgot to tell his friend about the *marror* (the bitter herbs).

The German was indeed invited to a house and, being very hungry, eagerly anticipated the fine foods his Jewish friend had described to him. After Kiddush, his host gave

him a piece of celery dipped in salt water. While the family recited the Haggadah, the German sat there longing for the meal. Finally, when the matzah was served, he was very happy.

Then his host gave him a piece of horseradish, which was extremely bitter-tasting. Thinking this was the entire meal, the German jumped up and ran from the house, bitter and hungry. "Cursed Jews!" he cried. "After all that ceremony, that's all they serve to eat?!" He made his way to the synagogue and fell asleep there.

After a while the Jew arrived at the synagogue, happy and full from a good meal. "How was your Seder?" he asked. The other told him what had happened. "You foolish German!" replied the Jew. "Had you waited just a little longer, you would have had a fine meal, as I had" (*Rabbi Nachman's Stories, Parable #23*).

This is what happens to us, Rebbe Nachman says, when we want to come close to God. After all the effort we make to get started, we experience a little bitterness and lose our resolve. In fact, this bitterness is sent to purify the body so that it will be able to receive even more holiness. But a person might think that this bitterness is all there is to serving God, and he runs away from it.

Instead, one should exercise patience and wait a short while, allowing himself to be purified. Then he will be the happy recipient of every joy and delight in the world as he comes close to God.