

Good Shabbos Everyone. Saturday night begins one of the most special periods of the Jewish calendar. We are referring of course to the Yom Tov of Pesach. It would be a shame therefore to "Passover" the opportunity at this time to discuss some of the inspiring messages of this wonderful Yom Tov.

Every year we recite the words in the Hagada "all who are hungry, come and eat..." One of the central themes of Pesach is therefore the importance of reaching out to our fellow Jews who are hungry, not only those who are hungry for matzah but also those who are hungry to hear the word of Hashem." (Amos 8:11) Let us therefore tell the following true story which illustrates the propitious nature of Pesach in regards to reaching out to others.

Binyamin was blessed with the ability to connect with people, and the field of kiruv (Jewish outreach) was perfect for him. He dazzled his audiences, who found his talks both interesting and inspiring. The families he worked with privately were amazed at his level of caring for each individual, the time he put into helping despite having a large family of his own, and his unfailing determination to succeed.

One year, close to Pesach, Binyamin was approached by one of the leading kiruv organizations in Eretz Yisrael, Lechol Kor'av, and asked to conduct a large communal Seder. There would be over 100 people in attendance, as well as his own family. He was very excited at the opportunity, but his family felt differently. They were truly disappointed, since they had been looking forward to a family Seder where they would be able to sing their own songs and tell over their own stories and divrei Torah. With such a large gathering, however, they were bound to get lost in the crowd.

After much discussion, it was decided that Binyamin and his family would have their own private Seder at home, and after the Maggid portion, he would go to the communal Seder for a while. Then he would run home to complete the Seder with his family.

All the plans were made. The boxes and boxes of matzah; the tens of bottles of wine; and the plates, goblets, and food galore were all brought to one of the largest shuls in Bnei Brak. The night of the Seder finally arrived. Binyamin's children were dressed in their Yom Tov finest. The boys had new suits and hats, and were armed with notebooks full of Torah insights they were eager to share. The girls were dressed beautifully in a pretty Yom Tov dresses with shiny new shoes. Best of all, the table was set to perfection. His wife, Miriam, had worked for hours so that everything should be just right. Binyamin went to shul with his sons and was very excited about handling both Seders that night: the family Seder and the communal one.

However, the moment he came home, all the plans changed. His wife, who was not due to give birth for another few weeks, had gone into labor and needed to go to the hospital! Binyamin immediately rethought the evening's plans and prepared to go to the hospital with his wife.

To his utter amazement, Miriam protested! "But, Binyamin, you made a commitment to conduct the Seder for those baalei teshuvah. You can't back out on them!"

He explained to his wife that his first obligation was to escort her to the hospital and remain with her, and that the group of baalei teshuvah would be very understanding of this unusual situation. Hastily, arrangements were made for the children — a relative would be coming by to conduct the Seder — and off they went to the hospital. In the hospital, it became apparent that they were operating with only a skeleton crew. After all, many of the staff members were at home at their own Sedarim.

Soon after they arrived, Miriam's blood pressure began to rise and she needed extra attention. Binyamin stood by reciting Tehillim and watching closely as the doctors and nurses took care of her. Suddenly, his wife called him over to her side. Her request shocked him. She insisted that he return and conduct the Seder for the baalei teshuvah. She assured him that there was absolutely nothing he could do for her in the hospital. Not only that, but in the merit that she was displaying self-sacrifice, everything would turn out well. He knew that her life was not in danger, yet he was still very reluctant to leave. Miriam, however, was insistent.

And so, if for no other reason than to make his wife happy, he agreed to leave for about an hour and then rush back. He ran to the shul and found the room packed with people waiting for him and eager to hear what he had to say.

He was sweating and out of breath, as he had run for 20 minutes, all the way from the hospital. When they heard what had happened, they begged him to go back, but he repeated the discussion he had had with his wife, with her insisting that he leave.

Still, he promised to return to the hospital in a short while.... *(to be continued...)*

Let us all endeavor to reach out to our Jewish brothers and sisters and feed them both spiritually and physically, especially during the Yom Tov of Pesach. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**