



Seudas Moshiach

A New Revelation

Seudas Moshiach is a fairly recent addition to the *chassidische* lexicon. Its background is somewhat unusual, and it evolved in stages to the point where it's now accepted as part of the natural routine of Chassidim. In recent years in fact, it has spread beyond Chassidei Chabad, and is a fairly well known *minhag*.

The Frierdiker Rebbe offered some insight into how this *minhag* began, and it was later expanded upon by the Rebbe in Hayom Yom.

The Basics: The Frierdiker Rebbe brings that the Baal Shem Tov would eat *seudah shlishis* on the final day of Pesach (when, unlike Shabbos, there is no halachic reason to do so). The Baal

Shem Tov would refer to this meal as *seudas Moshiach*¹.

This *minhag* of the Baal Shem Tov, however, was for many years practiced exclusively by the Rabbeim. It was only in the year 5666, when eating together with the *talmidim* of Tomchei Temimim, the Rebbe Rashab revealed this practice to the wider public and he instituted this new custom.²

The Rebbe Rashab instructed the yeshiva faculty to provide four cups of wine for each student to drink at the *seudah*. At the time, the yeshiva was financially strapped, and providing four extra cups of wine for each of the three hundred and ten *talmidim* was no simple expense.

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Now, despite that the Rebbe Rashab established it as a *minhag*, it wasn't commonly practiced in the years thereafter.

It wasn't until recent times that the Rebbe reinstated this practice and expanded it. Each year on the final day of Pesach, the Rebbe would *farbreng*, and he would request that this custom not be limited to the Rabbeim and the yeshiva students, but that everyone should participate. The Rebbe maintained that it is applicable to each and every Yid, irrespective of whether he feels any special Moshiach'dike feeling at this time.³

The Rebbe often emphasized that this practice has a special connection to us today. Being a custom that was only revealed in our generation, it carries a special significance for each of us. Expressing a unique affinity for the *minhag*, the Rebbe asked that we ensure that it reaches others in other circles as well⁴.

The Rebbe would also ask that Chassidim perpetuate the *minhag* of drinking the four cups of wine.

MOSHIACH AND ACHARON SHEL PESACH

The Rebbe offered numerous different explanations for the *seudah*, its connection to Acharon Shel Pesach and Moshiach. Here we will explore some of them.

As is well known, Acharon Shel Pesach benefits from a special connection to the concept of *geulah* and Moshiach.

Indeed, Pesach in general is tightly connected to the *geulah*, as evidenced in the many references to *geulas Mitzrayim* in relation to the ultimate redemption. In fact, as explained in many different places in Chassidus, *geulas Mitzrayim* opened the channel (פתח הצינור) for all following redemptions, including the ultimate *geulah*. Incidentally, this theme of redemption during Pesach

is also emphasized during the second half of the *seder*, in passages such as *Shefoch Chamascha*, *Leshana Haba'ah B'Yerushalayim*, and others.

Additionally, explains the Rebbe, it is through the *geulah* from *Mitzrayim* that Hashem introduced and began the very idea of taking us out of *golus* in order to serve Him. And conversely, when Hashem does finally redeem us once and for all, it will be the true realization of every prior *geulah*.

So while Pesach in general displays a strong connection to *geulah*, more specifically, the first days correspond to the redemption from *Mitzrayim* and the last of days to the ultimate *geulah*.

Within the last days themselves, Acharon Shel Pesach is tied to the *geulah* on an even more profound level. This is evidenced by the *haftarah* that is read on Acharon Shel Pesach, which speaks about Moshiach and the times he will usher in.⁵

One would expect that when dealing with such a deep concept, the emphasis would be expressed through a more spiritual ritual or *avodah*. Why is it that this idea is commemorated with a meal, as opposed to some other practice?

Says the Rebbe, it is specifically through eating a *seudah* that it penetrates down to *gashmiyus* as well. Ideas and philosophy are an integral part of our *avodas Hashem*, but it is how these ideas manifest themselves in *gashmiyus* that really makes a difference. That then, is the novelty of the Moshiach *seudah*. Indeed, even when reading about it in the *haftarah*, it is still relegated to the world of ideas and philosophy, but it is the *seudah* that actually grounds this lofty concept in the *gashmiyus* of this world.⁶ This, as we know, is the very purpose and meaning of Moshiach. The *geulah* and *dirah betachtonim* are all about bringing *Elokus* down to this *olam hatachton*, and fusing the spiritual with the mundane.⁷

Another advantage in connecting it to a *seudah*, is that food becomes an actual part of the person's flesh and blood. When one takes a lofty concept and combines it with his physical self, it trickles down to all his actions throughout the entire year that follows. That is the whole point of this *seudah*; not for it to remain relegated to being a one-time annual event, but for it to effect the whole year thereafter⁸.

WINE AND MOSHIACH

The Rebbe pointed out that an interesting lesson could be learned in connection to the wine that we drink at the Moshiach *seudah*. Usually, it is meat and fish that are the main parts of a *seudah*. But *seudas Moshiach* is unique—setting aside the *seder*—in that the focus of the *seudah* is not the food that we eat, but the wine that we drink.

Wine has a special connection to Moshiach, more so than food. The Gemara relates⁹ that when Moshiach comes and we are *zoche* to *seudas livyasan*, all the *tzaddikim* will partake in the fish and meat; only Moshiach though will make a *bracha* on the wine.

The deeper explanation to this phenomenon is that wine represents *p'nimiyus haTorah*, while meat corresponds to the revealed parts. Moshiach himself is also tied to the *p'nimiyus haTorah* in that he will reveal the secrets of the *Torah*—*Torah chadashah*.¹⁰

SHAYACH TO EVERY YID

The Rebbe explained that *seudas Moshiach* not be kept only as a *minhag* for Lubavitch.

Seudas Moshiach is a very lofty idea, yet it is something that everyone should partake in. The Rebbe would stress that Moshiach is not something that can be confined to groups. Every Yid davens each day for his coming, and every Yid is capable of tapping

into the special energy of this time, whether he feels it right now or not.¹¹

As an interesting note, the Rebbe once mentioned that he was concerned how some people would react to the *minhag* and expressed his pleasure in how widespread the *minhag* has now become¹².

WHY NOW?

The Torah was set up in a way in which new ideas are revealed throughout the generations. Each idea is revealed in its right time, when *klal Yisroel* is ready to fulfil the *avodah* that it entails. The fact that this *minhag* is one that was only revealed as recently as the Baal Shem Tov, gives evidence to the special connection that it has to him. Additionally, despite being initiated by the Baal Shem tov, it remained mostly dormant until the *talmidim* of Tomchei Temimim were encouraged to practice it by the Rebbe Rashab. From then, it generally remained as a *minhag* of Lubavitcher Chassidim only, until our time, when the Rebbe made it accessible to all Yidden.

Interestingly, the various stages in the revelation of this special *minhag* correspond to the style of the specific Rebbe who advanced it.

Moshiach told the Baal Shem Tov that he will arrive when “*Yafutzu maayanosecha chutza*.”

This directly ties the Baal Shem Tov to anything that has to do with the coming of Moshiach, and it explains why this *minhag* was revealed specifically through him, since it is with the revelation of Chassidus that Moshiach will arrive.

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The Rebbe Rashab is distinguished among the Rabbeim for the clarity in which he made the innermost parts of the Torah accessible to all. He was the one that instituted the custom of the four cups of wine. As mentioned above, wine is on many levels connected to the revelation of *p'nimiyus HaTorah*.¹³

Still, even then it was limited to students of Tomchei Temimim, whose job it is to be *neiros leha'ir* and to be involved in *hafatza*. But it was specifically in our generation, when this *minhag* reached the world at large. For in our time, as the Rebbe put it, the [Friediker] Rebbe brought Chassidus to the furthest points of *chutza*, even translating words of Chassidus into various languages. It is therefore the appropriate time for Moshiach's *seuda* to reach the entire world.¹⁴ **T**

1. Hayom Yom, Acharon Shel Pesach. See also Otzar Minhagei Chabad - Nissan-Sivan p. 229
2. Hisvaaduyos 5746, vol. 3, p. 132
3. Likutei Sichos, Volume 7, p. 273
4. Hisvaaduyos 5746, vol. 3, p. 137, 144; Hisvaaduyos 5750, vol. 3 p. 70
5. For more on the connection between Acharon Shel Pesach and Moshiach, see Derher issue 3 page 28
6. Likutei Sichos, vol. 7, p. 273
7. Sichos Kodesh, 5740, vol. 2, p. 690
8. Sichos Kodesh, 5740, vol. 2, p. 693
9. Pesachim, 119b
10. Hisvaaduyos, 5746, vol. 3, p. 133, 138
11. Hisvaaduyos, 5746 vol. 3, p. 144
12. Hisvaaduyos, 5746, vol. 3, p. 148
13. Hisvaaduyos 5746 vol. 3, p. 137, Likutei Sichos, vol. 7, p. 277
14. Hisvaaduyos 5747 vol. 3, p. 130