

7th day of Pesach 5762

1. Rashi end of פרשת שלח: 8 threads of ציצית correspond to 8 days from י"ד ניסן, when the exodus began, until the last day of Pesach, when the Jews sang שירה at יום סוף. What is the connection?

Furthermore, the exodus really began on the 15th of ניסן, not on the 14th. So why is there a thread for the 14th of ניסן?

2. Sifrei שלח: פרשת שלח: Why is it called תכלת בים? תכלת בים על שם שכלו המצרים בים. Apparently, the blue color of the תכלת, which - as the Gemara elsewhere tells us - resembles the color of the sea, is supposed - according to the Sifrei - to remind us of the blue waters of יום סוף. And this, clearly, connects back with the Rashi we saw before; for if the 8 threads correspond to these 8 days of גאולה, then the last thread - the blue thread of תכלת - corresponds to the last day, the day of יום סוף קריעת ים סוף itself.

3. Perhaps we can understand this more deeply. בבא בתרא ת"ל tell us - in the Gemara in בבא בתרא ת"ל and in many other places - that the Jewish people have two relationships with הקב"ה: One the one hand, they are called עבדים, His servants; and, at the same time, they are called בניו, His children. As we say in davening on Rosh Hashanah: אם כבנים אם כעבדים.

These are two different relationships. The relationship of עבדים demands of us the high standard of service that is incumbent on a servant of the King. The relationship of בניו allows us the special intimacy that is shown to a son.

The relationship of עבדים is always apparent. We are never free of the duties of an עבד. But the relationship of בניו is often hidden. Indeed, the Gemara in Baba Basra cites the wicked Roman Turnusrufus who said that when the Jews flout G-d's will they are not His children at all. This is a lie. We are always His children. But not always is it obvious to the outside world, or even to ourselves.

4. When did we first become עבדים? The Torah emphasizes: עבדי הם אשר הוצאתי אותם: יציאת מצרים, מארץ מצרים, at the time יציאת מצרים.

And, in fact, on י"ד ניסן, with the offering of the קרבן פסח, which the Torah stresses was our first עבודה - ועבדתם את העבודה הזאת בחדש הזה - עבודה.

5. When did we first become בניו? At קריעת ים סוף. I mentioned several weeks ago that there was a fundamental difference between יציאת מצרים and קיי"ס: יציאת מצרים was required by the ברית בין הבתים, but קיי"ס was a pure חסד. And since it was a pure חסד - it manifested that special relationship of בניו. As we say each day in davening: המעביר בנו בין גזרי ים סוף!

6. These two relationships are symbolized by the two stypes of ציצית. The Gemara in מ"ג מ"ג calls these two strings: a seal of clay, and a seal of gold. Tosafos explain that slaves were identified with a white clay seal, and that is represented by the white ציצית.

Gold, on the other hand, is an adornment of princes, and that is represented by the strings of תכלת - the royal blue.

7. Now we understand - the seven white strings represent the relationship of עבדים which we entered into on י"ד ניסן with the עבודה of the פסח, and which was confirmed by the exodus - עבדי הם אשר הוצאתי אותם מארץ מצרים. But the last string, the string of royal blue, whose color mirrors that of the sea, represents the special relationship of בנים that began at קריעת ים סוף.

8. Perhaps we can understand in the light the statement of the Midrash that the תכלת has been נגנז - the secret of making תכלת has become lost in the course of the גלות. And likewise the statement of the קאזניצער מגיד that before the arrival of משיח the secret of making תכלת will be recovered. Because in the course of our bitter גלות that relationship of בנים which the תכלת epitomizes has gone underground, so to speak; it is present, but not apparent to the world. And so the תכלת - its visible sign - was hidden.

But with the advent of משיח the recovery of our stature as בנים will be accompanied - perhaps is already to be accompanied - by the recovery of the תכלת, its visible sign.

Pray let it be so, בב"א.