



A Farewell with Dignity

By Rav Paysach Krohn shlita (Shiur E19)

What comes to mind when you think of Melave Malka? Songs? Food?

Setting the tone for a holy Seuda

The Holy Rizhiner Rebbe suggested that the סעודת מלוה מלכה is hinted at in the פסוק where Yaakov Avinu has a vision when he sleeps:

וַיְחַלֵּם וַיְהַגֵּה סֵלֶם מִצָּב אַרְצָה וְרָאָשׁוֹ מְגִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה... (בראשית כח: יב)

The word סֵלֶם is an acronym for סעודת לוויית מלכה – referring to מלוה מלכה. That meal is often regarded as מִצָּב אַרְצָה, that it is not especially elevated in its holiness. Little does the person know that the סעודת מלוה מלכה, the סֵלֶם, is רָאָשׁוֹ מְגִיעַ, it is particularly important and has lofty heavenly implications.

The סעיף סימנים with only one סעיף

The Chozeh of Lublin remarked about two סימנים in שלחן ערוך which only have one סעיף each. סימן ש', the Halacha of מלוה מלכה and סימן ח"ט, the Halacha regarding ראש חודש each only have one סעיף. Clearly, the מחבר was interested in highlighting the importance of these two meals which might otherwise be glossed over.

He added, homiletically, that the admonishment to take these two סעודות seriously can be inferred from the Pasuk¹ in which Eliyahu HaNavi

rebukes the People for straddling the fence between their belief in Hashem and להבריל their belief in the בעל. His words, עַד מָתַי אַתֶּם פֹּסְחִים עַל שְׁתֵּי הַסַּעֲפִים can be interpreted as 'for how long will you gloss over the two סעיפים' which the מחבר highlights by making a separate סימן for but one Halacha each.

The Halacha

The מחבר (סימן ש) cites the Gemara² which says:

לעולם יסדר אדם שלחנו במוצאי שבת כדי ללוות את השבת, אפילו אינו צריך אלא לכזית:

A person should be careful to set his table on מוצאי שבת to escort שבת as it leaves, even if one only needs to eat a כזית.

The משנה ברורה understands that 'setting the table' means to place a tablecloth on the table. To the extent that one is able, one should eat meat and make the סעודה special.

The ילקוט הגרשוני draws this Halacha out of the number of the Siman – Shin. In every Hebrew letter there are the hidden letters. The letter ש is spelled with the letters ש-י-ן, where the Yud and Nun are hidden, unseen and unheard. Together, they stand for שולחנו יעשה נאה.

¹ מלכים א יח: כא

² שבת ק"ט:



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Even after YomTov

While it is not the common practice, the חזון אי"ש would eat מלכה even after YomTov.

Two meanings for Malka

The standard translation for Melave Malka is 'Accompanying the Queen.' Rav Dovid Cohen א"ת pointed out that the Gemara³ speaks about שבת as the King. (The discussion there relates to Havdala when YomTov begins on Motzei Shabbos – the King is leaving, and the governor is entering, thus referring to שבת as the King.)

Clearly, though, Shabbos is also referred to as the Queen (שבֹת מלכה) as we say in בשלום. He opined that the two definitions of King and Queen depend on how one writes the word מלך. It can be written in Aramaic – מלכא meaning King or it can be written in Hebrew – מלכה meaning Queen.

Dovid HaMelech

The סעודת מלוה מלכה is also referred to as סעודת מלכא. This derives from the Gemara⁴ that teaches how Dovid HaMelech ע"ה wanted ה' to tell him when he would pass away. ה' refused each of his requests until דוד המלך ע"ה asked which day it will be and ה' agreed to tell him that it would be on שבת קודש. Once he knew that, דוד המלך would make a סעודה together with כלל ישראל in the knowledge that their king would be with them for another week.

Perhaps the reason we sing songs at the מלוה מלכה is owing to Dovid HaMelech's designation as the נעים זמירות ישראל – the sweet singer of כלל ישראל.

The Avos and the four meals

The four סעודות, while not equal (the 3 meals of שבת are drawn from an אסמכתא in the Torah), each echo one of the אברהם, יצחק, יעקב. אבות הק'. ודוד. The כף החיים points out that the words ארבע סעודות=819, the same as דוד מלך ישראל חי וקים.

The Melave Malka as a סעודת הבראה

There is good reason to need comfort on Motzei Shabbos. For one, three great leaders passed away on Shabbos, Moshe Rabeinu, Yosef HaTzadik and Dovid HaMelech. That is why פסוקים recited after Mincha has three פסוקים. On Motzei Shabbos we also strengthen ourselves after recalling those losses.

In addition, the Gemara⁵ reports that the נשמה יהירה which was given to us with the arrival of Shabbos is taken from us with its departure. This is alluded to in the words שבת וינפש where the word וינפש is broken into the words נפש וינפש.

The רמב"ן points out⁶ that the נשמה יהירה is not just an extra dose of קדושה, though it certainly is that. It is also an upgrade in one's ability to comprehend that which one learns. The preciousness of learning on Shabbos cannot be overstated.

³ פסחים קג.

⁴ שבת ל.

⁵ תענית כז.

⁶ רמב"ן על שמות כ:יא



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Thus, the מלוח מלכה is a form of הבראה (which means recuperation) to enliven us and give us strength to carry forward into the new week.

The לוח

חז"ל teach us that the לוח gets its sustenance from מלוח מלכה.⁷ The name לוח is used in חז"ל to refer to that which is immune to deterioration and death.⁸ (The מלאך המוות has no role in the city of לוח, for example.⁹) This לוח is part of our bodies and it never disintegrates. It can never be burned or crushed, and it remains in waiting for תחיית המתים when it will be the seed for our תחייה.

When death was decreed on mankind when אדה"ר ate from the הדעה, we are taught¹⁰ that the forbidden food entered all parts of his body except for the לוח. The לוח stands for eternal life as it was never cursed with death. As part of our firm belief in תחיית המתים we are careful to provide for the לוח through eating מלוח מלכה.¹¹

The menu

On the surface, there is a dispute between the מהרש"א and the חידושי הרי"מ as to whether one may eat leftovers for מלוח מלכה. The מהרש"א teaches¹² that one should eat something new for מלוח מלכה. Leftovers are a downgrade of the special nature of מלוח מלכה.

The חידושי הרי"מ was of the view that the Shabbos food is akin to a קרבן and partaking of the Shabbos food after Shabbos is akin to eating

the שיירי המנחה, which is a great Mitzvah and is spiritually elevating. Are they arguing?

Rav Dovid Cohen שליט"א explained that they are not arguing. They are both referring to ways to elevate the significance of מלוח מלכה. If you highly regard and enjoy the food from Shabbos, then eating from that food on Motzei Shabbos is a sign of השיבות for the meal. That is what the מהרש"א חידושי הרי"מ is pointing out. However, the מהרש"א would add, do not *only* eat leftovers. Since something new adds yet further distinction to the meal, then one should see that there is that element of distinction at the meal.

Special סגולה of Melave Malka

The גר"א was especially careful about eating מלוח מלכה. He asserted that this meal is a סגולה for פרנסה and ברכות including health and ישועות.

Shpeisi Nacht

My first language growing up was Yiddish. And I heard my mother ע"ה refer to Friday night as Freitag zu Nacht and Motzei Shabbos she called Shpeisi Nacht. Until I researched מלוח מלכה I did not understand these terms. The mystery is unraveled in the (תכז) ספר טעמי המנהגים.

The reference to Friday night as Freitag zu Nacht draws from the fact that we sanctify Friday even before nightfall with the Kedusha of Shabbos. On Motzei Shabbos we do the opposite and we wait for Havdalah even after three medium stars appear. To mark that addition of time the expression for Motzei Shabbos was Shpeit zu

⁷ עיין משנה ברורה סימן ש' ס"ק ב'

⁸ יש לו גם שם נסכוי ואכמ"ל

⁹ סוטה מו:

¹⁰ אליה רבה מובא בשער הציון שם ס"ק ד'

¹¹ וע' תוספות ב"ק טז:

¹² מהרש"א שבת קיט:



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Nacht, or late at night. The term Shpeit zu Nacht became, over time Shpeisi Nacht which, itself, has no meaning but echoes its origins in honoring the Shabbos by extending it.

[That words morph that way is known. The term Kvater, for example, draws from the words Kovod Tir, or an honor given at the doorway or entrance. If you say it enough times, you will get from Kovod Tir to Kfater.]

Tea at Melave Malka

There are Chasidische Rabbeim who drink tea at Melave Malka. In Yiddish (as in Hebrew) tea is תה, pronounced 'teh' which reminds us of the תהא in אבינו מלכנו where we plead:

תהא השפעה הזאת שעת רחמים ועת רצון מלפניך

Takeaway: I will try to upgrade my מלוה מלכה and pray that the סעודה be an רצון עת רצון.

They are drinking the tea as part of their Tefila (ראש השנה on the night of סימנים) that this time, as we are eating מלוה מלכה, should be a time of compassion and רצון.

May every מלוה מלכה be a time of רצון. אמן.

A thank you

I have learned a great deal while preparing to speak about important aspects of שבת קודש. It is fitting to thank the Agudah and, especially, the בדיבור אחד initiative, for facilitating bringing these aspects of Shabbos to our attention. We might not have paid them the attention that they deserve and with the help of this program we are filling in important gaps in our understanding of this central pillar of our lives.