

What Is A Melaveh Malkah

Have you ever heard the term Melaveh Malkah and wondered what or who is this? Learn about a beautiful tradition that helps escort the Shabbat Queen out and enrich your soul...

Sometime on Saturday night it is customary to partake of a meal, called a Melaveh Malkah, "Accompanying the [Shabbat] Queen," meal. It is customary for one to partake of challah and do the ritual handwashing, as well as eat an enjoyable meal.

According to tradition, there is a microscopic bone in the body called the luz bone. This bone, has the power to withstand all forces - it cannot be destroyed. It is said from this bone, like a seed, that G d will reconstruct the entire body when the time arrives for the Resurrection of the Dead. Therefore, tradition has it that the luz bone is nourished from the meal at the Melaveh Malkah.

This meal is also devoted to Elijah the Prophet, King David, and Mashiach. Many of the zemirot (songs) sung during the meal are in honor of them. Many reasons are given for paying homage to these three on Saturday night. Elijah for the diligent observance of the Shabbat, King David for his never ending praise to Hashem as in the spirit of Shabbat, and Mashiach for being the lord of the Shabbat.

These three meals of the Shabbat relate to the three Patriarchs and the kabbalistic notion of the "wheels" of the merkavah, the Divine "Chariot". This fourth meal on Shabbat, a factor the special number 8, is likened unto King David. Thus, this post-Shabbat repast is devoted to David -- and his royal dynasty --which will once again blossom with the return of our Mashiach, Yeshua.

Furthermore, Shabbat is considered to be a "taste" of the Messianic Era. When the day slips away from us, we hope and yearn for the Olam HaBa -- when Elijah will announce the arrival of Mashiach, the righteous scion of the House of David.

While it is customary amongst chassidim to retell stories of tazaddikim (righteous people) at the Melaveh Malkah meal, at our women's Melavah Malkahs will focus on righteous women as well.