

The Weekly Farbrenge



MERKAZ
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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELINGER

PESACH

JOYOUS PRAISE

The *Zohar* writes that whoever retells the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* and celebrates it joyfully will be privileged to rejoice with the *Shechina* in *Olam HaBa*. The *AriZal* taught that the *Haggada* should be recited aloud, with great *simcha* and focused *kavana*.

(רעיא מהימנא פ' בא מ ע"ב, סידור האריז"ל קודם מה נשתנה)

The *meshamesh* Reb Nachman Maryashin related that when he was once at the *Seder* of the Rebbe Maharash, and all the *chassidim* at the table were sitting with awe and *derech erez* as they read the *Haggada* quietly, the Rebbe instructed that the *Haggada* should be recited aloud.

The Frierdiker Rebbe also read the *Haggada* aloud, and when he became physically unable to do so, he asked others to do it instead. The Rebbe likewise would motion to the person reading the *Haggada* to read it aloud. During *Hallel*, the Rebbe would read aloud with a sweet tune and a noticeable *dveikus*, tears flowing from his eyes.

(אוצר מנהגי חב"ד ע' קנר, קצח)

One year during the first *Seder*, *Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka*, the wife of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, came running in to the home of her father, the *Mittlerer Rebbe*. While they were performing the *Seder* at home, her husband had drifted off into a trance of ecstasy, had fallen off his chair, and was lying under the table in a state of *klos hanefesh*. The *Mittlerer Rebbe* was unfazed and assured her, "Never mind; he will crawl out."

Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka returned home, only to find her husband in the same position. She ran back to father, who this time instructed some *chassidim* who had entered to tell the *Tzemach Tzedek* in his name that he should regain consciousness. They went along with *Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka*, but as they entered the house, the *Tzemach Tzedek* stood up and resumed his position at the table.

(למען ידעו ע' 315)

While reciting the *Haggada*, Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev was filled with tremendous *hislahavus*. When he reached the words *Matzah zu* he would become so carried away in *dveikus* that he would fall from his chair to the floor, overturning the *kaira*, the *matzos* and the wine. By the time he came to, the table would be set afresh, and another long white *kittel* was handed to him to replace the one stained with wine. Putting it on, he would say with visible delight, "Ah! *Matzah zu...*"

(סיפורי חסידים ז'וין, מועדים, ע' 367)

CONSIDER

Over what do we rejoice at the seder?

How does one merit feeling the kedusha of the seder?

AN EXACT SEDER

The *Maharil* writes that one should be filled with awe as he fulfills every particular instruction that the *Chachomim* ordained for the *Seder*. Even if a certain observance may seem to be unimportant, one should realize that every detail has significance. As the *Shaloh* writes, "All the *mitzvos* of the *Seder* have lofty reasons, both revealed and hidden. It is a *mitzva* to discuss them and to try to understand them."

(הגש"פ עם לקוטי טעמים ומנהגים ע' ה)

The *Shaloh* writes further, "The *Seder* night and all its *halachos* are filled with *kedusha*, for at this time *HaShem* chose us from the nations and gave us His *mitzvos*. On this night one should refrain from engaging in mundane chatter so as not to be separated from *HaShem* even for a moment. And by telling the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, we arouse the power of *geulah*."

(של"ה)

In the original *Tomchei Temimim yeshivah* in *Lubavitch*, the whole of *Pesach*, including of course the *Sedarim*, was celebrated joyously, with almost all of the *bochurim* staying in *Lubavitch* to hear *Chassidus* from the Rebbe *Rashab*, instead of traveling home.

Many tables were set up for all the *seudos* in a large room, and a director and an assistant were chosen to take care of all the necessary *Yom-Tov* preparations for the hundred-and-fifty *bochurim*. At the *Sedorim*, one person at each table was appointed as *mashgiach*, to be responsible for the needs of that table. One *talmid* was chosen to be the announcer, and he would auction the *zechus* of asking the *Mah Nishtana*, filling the *Kos shel Eliyahu*, opening the door for *Eliyahu*, and leading the *bentching*. Following the announcer's instructions, one table would start *Kadesh*, and when they concluded the next table was instructed to begin, each table taking its turn. *Urchatz* was done in the same organized fashion.

In the middle of the room was a table, on which stood a handcrafted *menorah* of the Rebbe Maharash, and around it the *talmidim* danced during the *seuda*. The *Seder* continued into the early morning hours.

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' של"א)

AUSPICIOUS TIME

When introducing *Mah Nishtana*, the *Haggada* says: *Kan haben shoel*. Simply translated, this means: "At this point, the son asks [the Four Questions]." However, *shoel* means not only "asks" but also "requests." So once at the *Seder*, when the *tzaddik* Reb Osher of *Stolin* came to those words, he told those present, "Now is the time for every *Yid* to ask *HaShem* for whatever he needs."

(בית אהרן)

The Rebbe *Rashab* once told the Frierdiker Rebbe, "Yosef Yitzchok, during the *Seder*, and especially when opening the door for *Eliyahu HaNavi*, one should think about being a *mentch*, and *HaShem* will give His help. Don't ask for *gashmiyus*, only for *ruchniyus*."

(שיחות ח"פ תש"ב)

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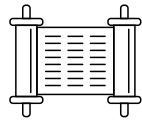


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PREPARING THE SEDER

I forgot to prepare the components of the seder plate before yom tov. What should I do?

Ideally, the seder plate components should be prepared before yom tov. In the event that they were not, one should follow these rules.

Marror, charoses: Chazal prohibited grinding foods which are usually ground in advance (e.g. flour), since they present an unnecessary disturbance to *simchas yom tov*.¹ Furthermore, using a professional grinding device constitutes *uvdin d'chol* (mundane activity).²

Therefore, horseradish and nuts which are often grated days in advance, must be prepared with a simple grater along with a *shinui* (irregular manner).³ Apples and pears which are grated close to eating so that they don't become mushy, can be grated with any grater with a *shinui*.

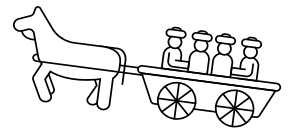
What constitutes a *shinui*? Holding the grater in an irregular fashion or grating into an irregular container or onto the table (when one usually grates into a container) are valid forms of *shinui*.⁴

Regular romaine lettuce may not be rinsed since one may be killing the bugs. Lettuce that is generally clean of live bugs (greenhouse grown or pre-washed) may be rinsed but not soaked, out of concern of *borer* (separating dirt or dead bugs from the lettuce).

Zeroa, beitz: One may only cook food to be eaten on yom tov.⁵ Since the *zeroa* (roasted meat on the seder plate) is not eaten at the seder – since it may be mistaken for a *korbon Pesach*⁶ – one may only roast the meat if he intends to eat it during the day following the seder (he may use the bones for the second seder).⁷ To observe the Chabad custom of not eating the *zeroa* at all,⁸ one should endeavor to borrow a piece of *zeroa* from a neighbor. One who does not have such an option should cook it (instead of roasting) and eat it on that day.

According to our practice to eat the egg of the seder plate, there is no problem whatsoever with cooking the egg on yom tov, since they are tastier when freshly boiled.

1. שו"ע"ר סי' תצ"ה ס"ט.
2. מג"א ס"ק ז', שו"ע"ר סי' תק"ד ס"ד.
3. שו"ע"ר שם. הגרמ"ש אשכנזי ע"ה (הכפר של הרבי' גליון 20 הע' 196).
דראה שלחן יו"ט פ"ו הערה ל"ד.
4. יו"ט כהלכתו פ"ט ס"ט.
5. שו"ע"ר סי' תק"ג ס"א.
6. שו"ע"ר סי' תע"ג סכ"א.
7. שם.
8. ספר המנהגים ע' 39.



REB MICHEL OPOTZKER

Reb Yechiel Michel Opotzker (Opotzk is the name of an inn) was a great chossid of the Alter Rebbe. He had a tremendously deep mind and was a very great *masmid*. He was a great *gaon* with thorough knowledge of *Talmud Bavli* and *Yerushalmi*, the *Poskim* and their sources in the *Rambam* and *Rashba* and *Sifrei Kabbala*. Reb Michel was known to be a great *ba'al madreiga* who had *ruach hakodesh* and *gilui Eliyahu*. He was the teacher of the Rashbatz.

Reb Michel never became a *Rov* and despised any kind of position of honor and authority. In general, he distanced himself from people and wanted to be alone. Nevertheless, when a chossid passed by his town on his way to Lubavitch, Reb Michel would carry his bags and escort him two or three kilometers. When the Rashbatz was seventeen, he was told by Reb Michel that he was ready to go to the Rebbe. Reb Michel was an old man but insisted on escorting the Rashbatz and carrying his suitcase. The *eltere chassidim* were wary of the bizarre scene and protested, "Is it correct for an older man to serve a *bochur*!?" Reb Michel replied, "He (the Rashbatz) will be a greater chossid than you..."

When Rashbatz traveled to the Tzemach Tzeddek, Reb Michel gave him a sealed PaN and warned him not to read it. On the way,

Rashbatz could not resist and he opened the envelope: the PaN inside was blank on both sides...

He arrived in Lubavitch early Friday morning after having walked about 20 kilometers from the nearby town of Rudnia. Entering the Beis Medrash he found chassidim of all ages learning, as they would do all Thursday night, and he quickly fell asleep. Soon, Reb Chaim Ber the *meshares* entered the Beis Medrash and asked, "Who arrived from Reb Michel Opotzker?" Rashbatz was sound asleep and no one else knew from where he had come. Reb Chaim Ber left, but returned a short while later. On the fourth attempt, Rashbatz woke up and came forward. Reb Chaim Ber told him that he was immediately to go with him to the Tzemach Tzeddek. Rashbatz was hesitant to go before going to the *mikvah*, but he did not have a choice.

Upon entering the Tzemach Tzeddek's room he froze in shock and could not move a limb. The Tzemach Tzeddek rebuked him (for opening the PaN), "A young man must follow orders!" The Tzemach Tzeddek stuck his hand in Rashbatz's jacket pocket, took out the PaN, and began reading it... Stunned, Rashbatz remained frozen in his place, until Reb Chaim Ber carried him out of the room.

(רשימת הייזון ע' שע"ה)

A Moment with The Rebbe



TELEVISION

Reb Berl Gurevitch was standing in *yechidus*, delivering tidings from *Anash* of Paris. He also reported the following anecdote:

A Moroccan *baal teshuvah*, who was an alumnus of the *yeshiva*, had invited Reb Nissan to serve as a *sandak*. Reb Nissan accepted the *kibud*, but refused to enter the man's home since it contained a television set, despite his justification that it was only for his elderly mother. Finally, the man agreed to have it removed so Reb Nissan would participate.

"The *yungelait* volunteered to remove it," Reb Berl continued as an aside, "and they dumped it in the janitor's room at the Beis Rivka of Yer."

The Rebbe was unhappy. He instructed Reb Berl to call France, and have the television removed from the building immediately. "I don't want that device in my *mosad*, even for a moment!"

(Reb Nissan, page 331)