

PREPARING FOR PESACH

FAR-REACHING WORK

Chometz symbolizes *kelipa*. That is why we keep our distance from even the tiniest amount of *chometz*, just as a person takes every possible precaution to protect himself from robbers who wish to take his life.

While getting rid of all the *chometz*, we should have in mind our desire that just as we are scrubbing and scouring away even the minutest amount of *chometz*, *HaShem* should destroy every last bit of the *yetzer hara* from the world. We are certain that *HaShem*, Who sees all the work the Yidden invest in cleaning for Pesach, will do away with the *kelipa* and the *qolus* we are in.

All the work we do for Pesach must be carried out with love and joy, with no room for anger and arguments. And the money which we buy the *Yom-Tov* necessities should be honestly earned. Otherwise, one would be feeding the *kelipa* with *kedusha*.

(ספר קב הישר פרק פ"ט)

The Rebbe Rashab writes in a *maamar*: The main focus of Pesach is each individual's personal exodus from bondage to freedom. The preparation for this is *biur chometz* – investing every effort in checking all holes or cracks, and taking every precaution when baking *matza*. All this is done out of vigilant concern for one's *neshama*, so that even the minutest amount of *chometz* should not be seen or found, and so that the *matza* will be properly prepared.

(סה"מ אעת"ר ע' סח)

One year, before *bedikas chometz*, the Frierdiker Rebbe said, “One must check for *chometz* in *ruchniyus*, too, although the physical checking is much easier.”

He added, “In the year תקנ”ה (1765) the Alter Rebbe came home from Mezritch before Pesach. On the day of *bedikas chometz* he did not eat, as he was completely occupied with his preparations for the checking, making sure to implement all the *kavanos* he had learned in Mezritch. That year, *bedikas chometz* took him the entire night, and he only owned one room!”

(ספר השיחות תרח"צ ע' 265)

TOILING FOR A MITZVA

After saying the *Yehi ratzon* following *tekias shofar*, Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev once cried out to *HaShem*, “Sweet and compassionate Father! If the *malochim* that were created from my קשר”ק (the *תקיעה* (תקיעה, *תרועה*, *שברים*, *תקיעה*) are weak, then let them be replaced by the holy and healthy *malochim* created by the hard work of Yidden before Pesach – by their קשר”ק (קשר”ק, *שאבע*, *קראצן* – their scratching, scraping, scrubbing and kashering.”

(לקוטי דיבורים ע' 260)

CONSIDER

Is the elimination of *chometz* primarily a physical activity, or a spiritual one?

How can the physical exertion for a *mitzvah* change the person spiritually?

In the home of Reb Osher of Stolin, so much effort was expended on properly cleaning out the *chometz* from the cracks in the tabletops that the *chassidim* suggested to their Rebbe that it would be easier to get new tables.

The *tzaddik* responded, “If I buy new tables, with what will Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev defend the Yidden?”

(דברי אהרן ע' לו)

The effort and energy one expends while preparing for Pesach can destroy evil *malochim* and provide a person with *tikkun*. One should therefore make that effort, and HaShem, in His great mercy, will accept the good intentions of the Yidden and bring the *geula*. This is part of the purification one must undertake before *Yom-Tov* in order to be able to receive its *kedusha*.

(ספר קב הישר פרק צ')

At the beginning of each year, the Frierdiker Rebbe,

then the *menahel* of Tomchei Temimim, would present a list – with comments – of all the new *talmidim* to his father, the Rebbe Rashab. One year, upon receiving the list, the Rebbe took note of the name of a *bochur* about whom it was written that although he was learned, a veritable *lamdan*, he had coarse *middos* and his features lacked a certain refinement. After some thought, the Rebbe agreed to accept him, and added that he would have to be worked on.

As soon as the list was approved, the Frieddiker Rebbe set up a particularly demanding *seder* for this *bochur*. Soon after Rosh Chodesh Adar he received a letter from the Rebbe Rashab, who was then abroad, instructing him to entrust this *bochur* with all the hard work needed for preparing the *shemura matza*, and asking for a report as to how he performed his tasks.

For two weeks, the *talmid* was kept busy with the physically taxing work of sorting the wheat, setting up the hand-mill, and grinding the wheat into flour. When the time came for baking, he was again assigned the heaviest work. On *erev* Pesach, he was awake most of the night, having been entrusted with doing *bedikas chometz* in the *shul* and the *yeshiva* building. The next morning he was up early to *kasher* the oven for the last batch of *matzos*.

When the preparations for Pesach were finally completed, and the hardworking *bochurim* went to *toivel* in the *mikve* and dress for *Yom-Tov*, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed this *bochur* to learn a certain *maamar* of the Alter Rebbe. The *bochur* was to come to the Frierdiker Rebbe the next morning at seven o'clock, to review the *maamar*. On Pesach night he still had no rest, for he had to help serve the *talmidim* who conducted their *Seder* together in the large *beis medrash*.

Nevertheless, the following morning he came to the Frieddiker Rebbe, having mastered the *maamar* thoroughly. It was now perfectly clear just how much the study of *Chassidus* mattered to him. The Frieddiker Rebbe reported all that had happened to the Rebbe Rashab, and on *Acharon shel Pesach*, when the Rebbe Rashab joined the *bochurim* at their *seuda*, he commented to his son, “Just look how powerful is the sweat of a *mitzva*! Look how he has acquired different features; instead of coarseness (*grobkeit*), he now has the face of a *mensch*.”

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' 244)



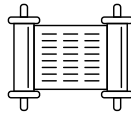
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KITNIYOS FORMULA

My baby drinks soy formula. What should I do on Pesach?

Min haTorah, only the five types of grain—wheat, barley, spelt, oats and rye—become *chametz* when leavened. The Ashkenazic custom, dating back at least to the 13th century, is to avoid eating also other types of legumes and seeds, otherwise known as *kitniyos*. The practice is to avoid them from Erev Pesach after *chatzos* just like *chometz*.¹

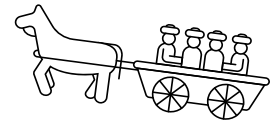
The main reason for this is that many types of *kitniyos* (e.g. rice, corn, beans, sesame, millet, buckwheat) can be used to make cooked dishes that are like those made from the five grains, and people may think that the wheat dish is likewise permitted.² Furthermore, some seeds (e.g. mustard, types of cumin) grow in stalks which are similar to the five grains, leaving room for confusion. Another issue is that kernels of the five grains would often get mixed into kernels of other species.³

Cotton seeds are not edible, and thus many *achronim* permit oil made from them, since there isn't room for confusion with edible kernels, and they also cannot form a dough. Yet, others prohibit regardless so as not to make a distinction.⁴ In 5709 (1949), the Rebbe records the practice to use it.⁵

Kitniyos are only forbidden to be consumed, but one may own or use them (e.g. as a cosmetic).⁶ Paper towels and napkins are generally coated with starch. While wheat starch isn't common in the US, corn-based starch is, and one should avoid using unverified napkins with food.

Our custom is to avoid feeding *kitniyos* even to small children. Babies that need *kitniyos* formula, may eat them on Pesach with a reliable *kosher l'pesach hechsher*. Special utensils should be designated for this purpose.⁷ If a regular pot was used for hot *kitniyos*, the custom is to wait 24 hours before using it for Pesach food.

Soy beans did not exist in Europe at the time of the decree, and thus some hold they aren't included. In practice we avoid it, yet whenever *kitniyos* are needed for a child, they are preferable over other types of *kitniyos* (e.g. soy milk over rice milk).



R. ZALMAN SCHNEERSON

R. Zalman Schneerson of Lodz was a great-grandson of the Mittlerer Rebbe who was a great *talmid chochom* and *chossid*. As a boy, the Rebbe Maharash had blessed him to be a *lamdan* and a *gevir*, both of which materialized. He was a profound *oved* who served Hashem with great fervor. He passed away in the Lodz ghetto on Yud Beis Tammuz ה'ש"נ (1940).

R. Zalman's Chassuna took place in 5659 (1899) in Liozna. The Rebbe Rashab attended the Chassuna, was *mesader kidushin*, and recited several *maamrim* during the Chassuna and Sheva Brachos.

When R. Zalman would be the *chazan* in a *minyan* it was a sight to see. He would read the words with a sweet melody, and with a voice full of pleading emotion. His davening so affected his listeners that they were aroused as if it were the *Aseres Yemei Teshuva*.

The high esteem in which the Rebbeim held R. Zalman is evidenced

in the fact that the Frierdiker Rebbe once sent to him the Baal Shem Tov's *siddur*, for him to show to those who would give a significant donation to Tomchei Temimim of Lodz, where R. Zalman lived. Only R. Zalman was allowed to touch the *siddur*, while the donors, who were required to go to the *mikvah* beforehand, could only look.

When R. Zalman came to visit the Frierdiker Rebbe for Yud Tes Kislev 5699 (1939), R. Chatche Feigin (the Frierdiker Rebbe's secretary) admonished the *Bochurim* for not taking advantage of his presence. He told them, "When R. Zalman would come to Lubavitch, we would surround him to 'squeeze' something out of him, but you just go about your regular day..."

When R. Zalman heard this he responded dismissively: "Ah, there is nothing to hear."

During that visit the Frierdiker Rebbe showed R. Zalman special closeness, seating him right at his side during the *farbrengen*.

(חסידים הראשונים עמ' 140 ואילך)

A Moment with The Rebbe



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Rebbe maintained that public education was not enough of a priority of the American government. An expression of this was the fact that there was no independent office of education, thereby granting it limited influence as just one branch of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

If only education would be given its appropriate status, the Rebbe argued, there would be real changes on the ground in term of funds, leverage and awareness.

In 5720 (1960) and 5730 (1970)

the Rebbe sent Reb Avremel Shemtov to partake in the White House conferences on education. When he was appointed to the intergovernmental advisory committee, he lobbied tirelessly for a cabinet-level separate education department.

When President Carter supported the idea, the Rebbe wrote to him that he hopes other countries will follow the U.S. lead. In 5740 (1980) the Department of Education was finally created.

(As heard from Reb Avremel Shemtov)

1. הר"ח זוננפלד ע"ה בספרו ער"פ שחל בשבת, וראה שו"ת שבה"ל ח"ג סי' ל"א, וראה פסק"ת סי' תנ"ג סק"ד שהכריע שבשעת הצורך יש מקום להקל בזה.
2. שו"ע"ר סי' תנ"ג סק"ג.
3. שו"ע"ר סי' תנ"ג סק"ד.
4. ראה פסק"ת סי' תנ"ג סק"ה בארוכה והמסומן שם.
5. אג"ק חכ"א ע' צ"ו. ויש שהעירו שאולי
6. שו"ע"ר סי' תנ"ג סק"ה.
7. ראה משנ"ב או"ח סי' תנ"ג סק"ז ופסק"ת סי' תנ"ג סק"ט.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה