

## PREPARING FOR PESACH

### Removing the Chometz

After saying the *Yehi ratzon* following *tekias shofar*, the *tzaddik* 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 תרועה, שברים, תקיעה, and 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 קראצן, שאבען, רייבען, and קשר"ן – their scratching, scraping, scrubbing and kashering."

(לקוטי דיבורים ע' 260)

In the home of the *tzaddik* 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)

*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 hora* 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 *golus* we are in.

All the work we do for Pesach must be carried out with love and *simcha*, with no room for anger and arguments. And the money which 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)

"When cleaning the home for Pesach," the Rebbe once said at a *farbrengen*, "one has to begin in advance, and not wait for the last moment of *bedikas chometz*, for otherwise, how will all the

cracks and holes be properly cleaned? To do it all in one moment is impossible. One cannot wait for the last moment and then claim that it is too late.

"The same applies when *Yidden* need to rid themselves of their *ruchniyus'dike chometz*, which is pride. This must be done in advance, because closer to Pesach they may be busy with other aspects of *avoda*."

(תורת מנחם תשמ"ג ח"ב ע' 1711)

### Preparing the Matza

In Lubavitch, reaping the wheat for *matza* was a special event. Reb Zalman of Shzerbina was the *chossid* who supplied the wheat for the Rebbe's *shemura matza*, and all the local *yiddische* farmers, several *yoshevim* – men who studied full time in the Rebbe's *beis medrash* – and some guests in Lubavitch at the time, would join Reb Zalman and his family for the reaping. The Rebbe himself would also participate, first the Rebbe Maharash, and later, the Rebbe Rashab.

The harvest day had to be clear, with a hot sun, and had to be preceded by three dry days. Reb Zalman would travel to Lubavitch with a number of wagons to transport the *chassidim*, and since they could not forecast the weather, they often stayed in Shzerbina for a week or longer. The Rebbe was brought by special transport on the chosen day.

For Reb Zalman, this was a tremendous *simcha*. Blessed with the *zechus* of reaping the wheat for the Rebbe's *shemura matza*, being able to fulfill the *mitzva* of *hachnosas orchim*, which he truly enjoyed, and especially having the opportunity to host the Rebbe, gave him *chayus* for the whole year.

From the day he set out with his wagonloads of helpers, the townsfolk in Lubavitch began their speculations about the next day's weather. Day by day, they eagerly awaited the messenger from Shzerbina who would let them know that the harvest day had arrived. When that finally happened, the Rebbe would set out on the two-hour ride to Shzerbina.

When the sun blazed its strongest, between the hours of twelve noon and two, the *chassidim* reaped the wheat, happily and earnestly. Wearing their hats and *gartlach*, they worked energetically

in the sweltering heat, as if they were accustomed to such intense physical labor.

Even when he was already advanced in years, Reb Zalman himself, with his flowing beard and joyful, shining face, would rush around the fields with his scythe in hand, as if he were a young man. His *simcha* carried him! His feet lifted lightly off the ground to fulfill a *shlichus* of *HaShem*, as can happen only to one of His true servants who feels an inner delight in performing His *mitzvos*.

While some men reaped, others sang, their pleasant voices reaching far and wide. The local women and their children, dressed in their *Shabbos* best in honor of the occasion, stood at a distance. Their faces clearly showed that something extraordinary was taking place.

When the work was over, some of the *chassidim* went to wash themselves. Reb Zalman would put on his silk *Shabbos kapote* and lead *Mincha* to the joyous *niggun* of *Simchas Torah*. As he concluded the final *Kaddish*, he would wait for the *minyana* to help him turn over in somersaults, as they were accustomed to do on *Simchas Torah*. He did that three times back and forth, and broke into a lively dance.

Next came a festive *seuda* of *milchig* delicacies, at which the Rebbe delivered a *maamar* and *farbrenged* for hours. After *Maariv*, he would retire to rest in a room that had been prepared for him, while the *chassidim* continued *farbrenging* through the night.

At ten o'clock the next morning, after *Shacharis*, the Rebbe would leave for Lubavitch. Later that day, Reb Zalman would bring the *chassidim* back to Lubavitch, taking along the sack of wheat they had reaped, ready to hang in a designated room.

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' קא)

### CONSIDER THIS!

- Is the elimination of *chometz* primarily a physical activity, or a spiritual one?
- Is cutting the wheat for the *matza* a *mitzvah*? Why were the *chassidim* and their families so joyous?

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# A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin  
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Horaa Rechovot

## Kosher L'Pesach Shampoo

Does my shampoo on Pesach need to be *kosher l'Pesach*?

- During every moment of Pesach we are obligated by two *mitzvos lo saaseh* and one *mitzvas ase* to get rid of our *chometz*.<sup>1</sup>
- *Min haTorah*, *chometz* that was inedible before the prohibition of *chometz* begins may be used on Pesach.<sup>2</sup> *Midrabanan*, inedible *chometz* may not even be owned unless it is unfit for a dog. Even then it may not be eaten, since by our eating it we deem it "edible" (*achshevei*).<sup>3</sup>
- In certain areas of *halacha* we find that anointing is like drinking.<sup>4</sup> Some *rishonim* hold that one therefore may not anoint oneself with non-kosher products since is like he has drunk it.<sup>5</sup> While the long-held practice was to be lenient and use soap made of non-kosher animal fat, one who is stringent is worthy of a blessing.<sup>6</sup>
- Some *acharonim* distinguish between oil which is intended for the body to absorb, and soap or shampoo which is only to wash away dirt.<sup>7</sup>
- For the above reasons, some are stringent not to use *chometz* shampoos, since by using them we are considering them worthy (*achshevei*), and therefore they are prohibited.<sup>8</sup> However, many contemporary *acharonim* say that applying the principle of *achshevei* (which is itself a dispute) to anointing is an extra *chumra* and one can be lenient.<sup>9</sup>
- Some *poskim* write that even one who is not particular about using kosher ingredients in soap and shampoo year round, should be *machmir* with regards to *chometz* on Pesach which is more stringent.<sup>10</sup> Especially in light of the Arizal's statement that one abstains from even the slightest form of *chometz* on Pesach is assured not to sin all year round.<sup>11</sup>

1. ראה הקדמה להלכות פסח שו"ע"י.  
2. שו"ע"ר סימן תמ"ב ס"כ ו"א.  
3. שו"ע"ר סימן תמ"ב ס"כ ו"ב.  
4. יומא ע"ב.  
5. ראה ב"י י"ד ס"י ק"ז ד"ה כתב.  
6. בה"ל ס"י ש"כ"ו ד"ה בשאר.  
7. שו"ת קנין תורה ח"א ס"י ע"ז.  
8. ספר בדיקת חמץ וביעורו פ"ב אות מ"ג וראה שם הע"ק"י.  
9. ראה חוקת הפסח עמ' ל"ח בשם הגרש"א והגר"ב צ"א בא שאל.  
10. קונטרס מצות הפסח ס"י ב.  
11. באר היטב ס"י תמ"ז סק"א.

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# OUR HEROES

## Reb Elchonon Shagalov



Reb Yitzchok Elchonon *Halevi* Shagalov was born in the year 5658 (1898) to Reb Yehuda Leib Shagalov. He learned in Lubavitch for a full eight years. He married Maryasha, the daughter of Reb Bentzion Garelik from Zhlobin, and together they settled in Homil. At first he collected money for both Tomchei Tmimim in Homil and *maamad* (support for the Rebbe and his activities). Then the Friediker Rebbe instructed him to become a *shochet* and *mohel*. He was arrested on the 4<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei 5698 (1937) and was later shot in prison on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Teves 5698 (1937), HY"D.

A young man once entered the *shul* in Homil and murmured, "I want to make a *bris*. Where is Reb Elchonon?" His wife Maryasha took down his address, and later when Reb Elchonon came home she told him what had happened. "It could be a trap", she cautioned. "Maybe it's one of the NKVD." Reb Elchonon replied, "This could be a genuine *bris*. As long as I live I will put my life in danger to place the stamp of Avraham Avinu on Jewish children, as this will serve them as a constant reminder of their Jewish identity." Reb Elchonon left the house and only returned home the following morning. "I was taken to the NKVD headquarters. They wanted to know who runs the underground *yeshivos*, who is still observing *Yiddishkeit* in Homil, and so forth. They tried to trap me with different sorts of questions—they tortured me, broke bottles over my head, jammed my fingers into the wall...but *baruch Hashem* I kept a clear head and denied it all, and they couldn't prove that I was involved in anything illegal."

(A Life of Sacrifice, p. 57)

Maryasha once sent her daughter Shula to a certain address with a mission to bring her father home. Shula knocked on the door and a *chossid* invited her inside. He bolted the door securely and began moving a large table standing in middle of the room. The man bent down and removed three planks of wood from the floor where the table had stood. Shula could hardly believe the scene that met her eyes; there, under the floor, sat her father Reb Elchonon with a candle, teaching Torah to six children. The space where they sat was so small that it was impossible to rise from a sitting position without banging their heads against the wooden planks of the floor!

(A Life of Sacrifice, p. 65)

# A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

## You Came To Shul To Daven? Think About Hashem!



During the *farbrengen* of 13 Tishrei 5743 (1982), the Rebbe publicly lamented the state of the *davening*: "People come to *shul*, and instead of looking in the *siddur*, they watch me *daven*! There may be a concept of looking at a *rav*, but *davening* is not the time for it.

"You came to *shul* to *daven*? Think about *davening*! Think of Hashem! We're not talking of deep *kavonos*, rather merely about standing as a servant before his master. Think about the Master!"

As the *sicha* continued, the Rebbe expressed such anguish with the laxity in *davening* that he threatened not to join the public *minyan* if matters didn't improve.

It happened once, during the 5730's (1970's), that as the *aron kodesh* was opened, the *niggun* "Ano Avdo Dekusho Brich Hu" was started, and the Rebbe began dancing vigorously.

Naturally, many in the crowd turned to get a better look at the Rebbe during these special moments of ecstasy. The Rebbe however pointed to the *aron kodesh*, signaling where to look...

(Heichel Negina, p. 312)

לע"נ יהודית בת משה לייב שפיגל נפטרה י"ב ניסן תש"ע