

The Weekly *Farbrenge*


MERKAZ ANASH
 מרכז אנאש
 664 • תוריע תשפ"ב • לחען ישמעו
 EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

PREPARING FOR PESACH (I)

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 *golus* 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 with 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"ד 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 תקכ"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, תרועה, and 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 קראצן, שאבען, רייבען, and קשר"ן - 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 Frierdiker Rebbe set up a particularly demanding *sefer* 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 Frierdiker Rebbe, having mastered the *maamar* thoroughly. It was now perfectly clear just how much the study of *Chassidus* mattered to him. The Frierdiker 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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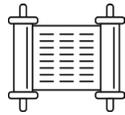


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BIRKAS HA'ILANOS

This year, Rosh Chodesh Nissan is Shabbos. May we recite Birkas Ha'ilanos on Shabbos?

The Gemara teaches that if you walk outside during the days of Nissan and see trees that are blossoming, you recite a bracha, known as Birkas Ha'ilanos. You are not technically obligated to search for such trees, but there is special significance and reward for endeavoring to say this bracha.

The bracha is made specifically when the tree has actual blossoms, and not just leaves. Although some poskim hold that it must be a tree that produces edible fruit, the Rebbe notes that there isn't a clear implication from the Alter Rebbe either way.

Once the fruits are grown, it is too late to recite the bracha. It is understood from the Alter Rebbe that the bracha must be recited before the fruit even begins growing.

According to halacha, the bracha may be recited on a single tree. Based on the Gemara's wording of "trees" plural, poskim write that it is preferable to have multiple trees. But one shouldn't forgo the mitzva if there is only a single tree available.

The time period when this bracha is to be made is during the "days of Nissan." Many hold the bracha may be recited throughout the spring season even after the month of Nissan, but from the Alter Rebbe it seems clear that the bracha with Hashem's name may only be said during Chodesh Nissan. It is proper to recite the bracha at the first possible day, since zerizin makdimin lmitzvos and to avoid the possibility of forgetting.

May the bracha be recited on Shabbos?

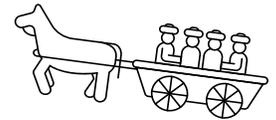
Many poskim permit, and even encourage doing so, since it will help supplement the daily goal of one hundred brachos on Shabbos when many of the weekday ones aren't applicable. Others argue that is forbidden on Shabbos, due to a concern that a person may pick fruit or branches from the tree. In addition, the elevation of the divine sparks from the tree accomplished by saying the bracha is a spiritual act of "Borer," which is not appropriate for Shabbos.

The bracha is recited specifically at the first time looking at a blossoming tree. If you looked at such a tree and did not recite the bracha, you may not recite it with Hashem's name at a later point. If you noticed the tree but do not gaze at it, you may still recite the bracha.

This year, Rosh Chodesh Nissan falls on Shabbos. Since there is debate whether the bracha may be recited on Shabbos, one should not look at blossoming trees on Shabbos so that you can recite the bracha after Shabbos.

1. גמ' ברכות מג, ב. ש"ע או"ח סי' רכ"ו ס"א. ודאה 2. משנה ברורה שם. 3. דאה כה"ח שם סק"ב, ודאה לקר"ש חכ"ג ע' 116. 4. ראה סדבה"נ פ"ג הי"ד להרב גרין ע"ה, ודאה 5. מורה באצבע אות קצ"ח, כה"ח שם, בדה"ש סי' ס"ו סוסק"י"ח, ודאה הנסמך בפסק"ת שם הע' 9.

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



R. DOVID SHIFRIN

R. Dovid Shifrin (d. 5703) was born in Zhebin and lived in Pleshnitz after his marriage until he moved to the U.S. in approximately 5660. An early chossid of the Rebbe Rashab, and later of the Frierdiker Rebbe, R. Dovid Shifrin was one of the first active Chabad Chassidim in the U.S. and served as the secretary of Agudas Chasidei Chabad in America. He devoted himself to fundraising on behalf of Chabad mosdos and assisting fellow Chassidim in need.

even an official title; simply heartfelt, genuine, chassidishe Ahavas Yisroel.

Before leaving to America where his sons lived, R. Dovid came to the Rebbe Rashab and said, "Rebbe! I'm going to America. I didn't come to ask whether to travel or not; I have a ticket already. But I don't want to be like a child who runs away from cheder and doesn't tell his teacher where he went. I therefore came to tell the Rebbe where I'm going."

(זכרון לבני ישראל ע' 141)

Arriving in Lubavitch by foot with just two kopecks, R. Dovid went to rest in the inn of Shmuel Ber "the Kohan Gadol." In walked the two Dokshitzer chassidim, R. Yekusiel and R. Aharon, to collect funds for poor orchim. R. Dovid walked right over to them and said, "I have just two kopecks. Should I give them to you or keep them?"

At a farbrengen with the Frierdiker Rebbe in America, R. Dovid reminisced about his chassidishe hometown of Zhebin. He had arrived back in town late at night of 13 Nissan, and as he walked down the street, he could hear the chassidim singing at a farbrengen in honor of the Tzemach Tzedek's yahrzeit. "Ah!" R. Dovid concluded his sweet memory.

"You have two kopecks?" the chassidim said. "Give them to us and we will then provide for you..."

The Frierdiker Rebbe appreciated the memory, but not the nostalgia. "The 'Ah!' was redundant. That specialness must exist today too."

(קובץ ליובאוויטש ע' 585)

(ספר השיחות תש"ב ע' 93)

This is how R. Yisroel Jacobson described him:

Our dear friend R. Dovid Shifrin was the focal point of Anash in America. He was a heartfelt, pnimiyusdiker, clever, chassidisher Yid. He kept contact with Anash across America without publicity, an office, an assistant or

When our Rebbe, then the Frierdiker Rebbe's son-in-law, arrived in America, R. Dovid watched him in davening and other activities. Though not easily impressed, R. Dovid remarked, "This seems to be something good..."

(ימי מלך ח"ב ע' 10)

A Moment with The Rebbe



A CHOSSID ISN'T PERFECT

Reb Mendel Futerfas, the late mashpia of the central Tomchei Temimim yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, would relate the following story:

"Rebbe, ich bin a gantzer chossid - I am a complete chossid!"

There was a certain rabbi who had a deep connection with Chabad. He personally studied Chassidus, and in many ways considered himself a chossid.

The guest explained that he has earned the title well, since he studied a chapter of Tanya on a daily basis.

The Rebbe replied, "A chossid iz nit kein gantzer, un a gantzer iz nit kein chossid - A chossid isn't complete, and a complete one is no chossid."

This rov once came to the Rebbe. At his personal yechidus, he said to the Rebbe,

(Reb Mendel, page 436)