

The Weekly *Farbrenge*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

716 • לחמן ישמעו • צו תשפ"ג
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

PREPARING FOR PESACH (II)

FOOD OF FAITH

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 *yiddishe* 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 *minyan* 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.

diary: "Erev Pesach, after teaching me the *Seder Korban Pesach*, my father said, "Tonight, Eliyahu HaNavi is coming to all the Yiddishe homes, and the great *tzaddikim* will be privileged to see him. Although in *Shamayim* all *neshamos* are able to see everything, once they are vested in a body they only *feel* things. In the Holy Tongue, the word *mishna* (משנה) has the same letters as *neshama* (נשמה). Start to review the *mishnayos* of *Mesechta Pesachim* eight times, and when you come with me to open the door for Eliyahu HaNavi, review the *mesechta* a ninth time....'"

(ספר הזמרים תשי"א ע' 296)

Recalling his *erev Pesach* experiences in the home of his father, the Rebbe Rashab, the Friediker Rebbe wrote: "On *erev Pesach*, my father would wake up no later than three in the morning and *daven* no later than five-thirty. Afterwards, until the time of *biur chometz*, he was occupied with removing the *chometz* and the *chometz'dike* utensils from the house. At *chatzos*, midday, preparations for *matzos mitzva* began and my father would study the *Seder Korban Pesach*. From that time onward, a *ruchniyus'dike* light shone in our home, filling everyone with joy. During the remaining hours, until *Yom-Tov* began, my father would discuss the meaning of the *Korban Pesach* in *Kabbala* and *Chassidus*, and its practical application in our *avoda*.

"The time between reading the *Seder Korban Pesach* and the beginning of *Yom-Tov* was not considered a mere preparation for *Yom-Tov*. That time was itself considered to be a *Yom-Tov*. It was permeated with an inner joy, a certainty and an expectation that at any moment we would have *Moshiach*, the *Beis HaMikdash* and the *Korban Pesach*! In this elevated mood we would go off to *daven Maariv*. The *shul* was always packed with *Yidden* with shining faces, dressed in clean, fresh clothing despite the hard work they had been doing to prepare for Pesach. No one spoke. Everyone waited eagerly for the joyous *Shir HaMaalos* that would signify the beginning of *Maariv*. An especially delightful *simcha'dike* melody filled the *shul* as the *mispalelim* sang *Hallel*, their voices gradually intensifying. And that holy *tefilla* climaxed in an *ahavas-Yisroel'dike* "Gut-Yom-Tov!"

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' 270)

CONSIDER

Why were the chassidim and their families so happy to prepare the *matzos*?

Is *erev Pesach* a preparation for Pesach or is it a *Yom Tov* itself?

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

GETTING READY FOR THE SEDER

When he was eight years old, the Friediker Rebbe recorded the events of the previous Pesach in his



spritzy
FRESHLY SQUEEZED
FRUIT INFUSED SELTZER

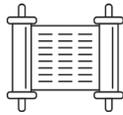


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GLUTEN-FREE MATZOS

What is the best grain to use for matzos if one can't tolerate wheat?

In recording the mitzvah to eat *matza*, the Torah connects it to the prohibition to eat *chametz*. Chazal derive from this that matza must be made from a grain that can potentially become *chametz*. The proper leavening process only happens to the five grains – wheat, barley, rye, oats, or spelt.¹ Although legumes such as rice and beans also undergo a form of fermentation, it is not called *chametz*, but rather *sirchon*, a “decomposition” accompanied by an offensive odor.

Halacha states that the optimal way to perform the *mitzva* is with matzos made of wheat. Various reasons are offered, including that (1) the Mishna consistently mentions “wheat” in connection to matza,² (2) wheat is mentioned first in the *posuk* listing the *shivas haminin*,³ (3) wheat is most tasty and therefore enhances the cherishing of the *mitzva*.⁴ *Poskim* write that one who does not have wheat can use whichever one of the other four types one likes the most, and in this way fulfill the *mitzva* with an appetite.⁵

However, some later *poskim* discourage using flours other than wheat, since other grains have a greater likelihood of becoming *chametz* and require extra precautions that are detailed in Shulchan Aruch, beyond what is necessary for wheat flour.⁶ Yet, in place of illness, such as one who can't tolerate wheat, *poskim* allow making matza from the other grains.⁷

Is there any preference among the other four grains?

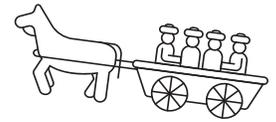
Halacha notes that barley is quicker to become *chametz*. When choosing between the alternative grains, spelt is considered an offshoot of wheat, while rye and oats are considered offshoots of barley. While the Alter Rebbe extends the concern of rapid *chametz* to barley's offshoots – rye and oats – he doesn't apply it to spelt.⁸ For this reason, some write that if not using wheat, it is best to make matza from spelt.⁹

Due to the various concerns, when making barley or oat matzos, one should make a smaller amount at a time to enable working with all the dough throughout the entire process and avoid *chametz*.¹⁰

1. שו"ע ד"ר א"ח ס' תנ"ג ס"א.
2. מהר"י ל"ל הלכות אפיית מצה ע' ס'.
3. לבוש ס' תנ"ג ס"א.
4. משנ"ב ס' תנ"ג סק"ב.
5. חק יעקב ס' ק"ב.
6. מהרש"ם, וראה מנח"י ח"ט ס' מ"ט.
7. שו"ת שרגא המאיר ח"ה ס' ח'.
8. ראה שו"ע ד"ר ס' תנ"ג סעיף כ'.
9. ראה ס' מצה שמורה ס' ה' ענף ב'.
10. ס' מצה שמורה ס' ה' ענף ג'.

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

Our Heroes



R. YECHZKEL (CHATCHE) HIMELSSTEIN

R. Yechezkel (Chatche) Himelshtein was born in Schedrin (5639) and was an early *talmid* of Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch. In 5668, he was appointed to serve as the *mashgiach* for the younger bochurim in the Chadorim and Shiurim in Lubavitch, and was responsible for supervising their learning and caring for their material needs.

R. Chatche had no children of his own, and devoted himself completely to caring for his *talmidim*. He was known as a stern *mashgiach*, but was also kind and caring. Under Communist rule, he taught Nigleh and Chassidus with *mesiras nefesh* in the underground *yeshivos*. In 5693, R. Chatche left Russia and moved to Latvia, where he served as a *mashpia* in the branch of Tomchei Temimim in Dankara. He was killed by the Nazis in Riga in 5702.

R. Chatche was a no-nonsense *mashgiach* and the bochurim feared him.

Three boys in Lubavitch once fell upon a prank: they found a local goat, gave it *mashke* to drink and led it into the *yeshiva's* main Zal. The goat jumped around the chairs and tables and created an uproar. The *mashgiach* R. Chatche immediately expelled the three from *yeshiva*, writing about young Avremel Zaltzman, “The boy still needs his mother...”

The threesome went before the *mashgiach* and pleaded to be allowed to stay, but R. Chatche remained silent. They decided to try their luck with R. Chatche's wife, who was more mellow, but she could not sway her husband. When they found out that their expulsion was approved by the *yeshiva's menahel*, the young

Friender Rebbe, they gave up on reversing it.

After leaving for the train station, Avremel returned to try once more with Rebbetzin Rivkah who let him in to speak to the Rebbe Rashab. Crying, he begged to learn in Lubavitch, and was allowed to return.

(התמים חדש גליון מג ע' 64)

According to the *sefer* established in Tomchei Temimim, the younger boys attending the *chadorim* and the *shiurim* followed a strict schedule of learning. Aside from during *Yomim Tovim*, they had very limited participation in the happenings of the Rebbe's *shotzer*.

At the onset of Shabbos each week, the Rebbe Rashab would deliver a *maamar* in the older Tomchei Temimim *yeshiva*, while the young bochurim had regular *sefer*. R. Chatche longed to be by the *maamar*, and he would always be looking for a replacement so that he could hear the *maamar* from the Rebbe.

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 334)

As a *mechanech*, R. Chatche imbued his students with *yiras Shomayim* and taught them to identify genuine *rabbonim*.

“You're all familiar with ‘*mashinover* (machine made) *matzos*,’ which aren't labored and worked. Instead, you just pour flour into one side of the machine, and out comes a *matzo* from the other side.

“In a similar manner, there are ‘*mashinover rabbonim*,’ who instead of toiling in the study of Shas and Shulchan Aruch, they enter *kollel* ignorant, and come out after a little while with certification of a *rov*...”

(התמים חדש גליון מג ע' 63)

A Moment with The Rebbe



TIME IS PRECIOUS

“I don't want to say that our time is short, rather that our time is precious” – with these words the Rebbe opened the Simchas Torah *farbrengen* of 5712 (1951).

11 Nissan 5742 (1982). Thousands of chassidim and admirers gathered around the world to celebrate the Rebbe's eightieth birthday and to appreciate how much the Rebbe has accomplished. But the Rebbe himself shared no such satisfaction. At the Rebbe's *farbrengen*,

the focus was on the value of time:

“People worry for their monetary losses, but care not for their precious time,” the Rebbe said with a note of urgency. “Money comes and goes, but time never returns!

“Every moment that a person is granted carries a unique purpose, a mission from Hashem. If time passes without it being utilized, that moment in time is lost forever!”

(Toras Menachem 5715; 5742)