

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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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 *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, 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"ן, קראצן, קראבען, ורייבען, 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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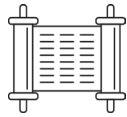
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HYDROPONIC MAROR

What bracha is hydroponic lettuce and can it be used for maror at the seder?

Hydroponics is a method of growing crops without soil, by using water-based mineral nutrient solutions in an artificial environment. Potentially, with certain protocols in place in the controlled growing environment, such lettuce can be certified as insect-free by a reliable hechsher.

The Yerushalmi questions the bracha for bread made from wheat grown in a flowerpot that is not perforated to the ground, as it may not qualify for the bracha "hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz." As the matter is left unresolved, some poskim ruled that the bracha over such bread would be mezonos, and the bracha for vegetables grown this way would be shehakol. However, the halachic consensus is that since such produce was grown in the normal fashion out of soil, and it isn't recognizably different, the regular brachos of hamotzi and ha'adama should be recited.

Hydroponic vegetables aren't even grown in soil and aren't "fruit of the ground" (pri ha'adama). Thus, some contemporary poskim hold their correct bracha would be shehakol. Others posit that we follow the species and since this vegetable is generally grown in soil and people view the hydroponic variety in the same manner, the bracha remains ha'adama. Due to the varying views, some write one should recite shehakol out of doubt. Though, if one recited ha'adama, he has fulfilled his obligation.

With regards to using such lettuce for maror at the seder, contemporary poskim write that its taste and sharpness qualify to fulfill the obligation. One would not make a bracha of shehakol on the maror since the ha'adama recited previously on karpas covers it at least b'dieved, and according to some, even l'chatchila.

Ideally, for maror, one should use lettuce grown in the normal manner. However, if one cannot obtain bug-free lettuce grown in soil, one may certainly use hydroponic lettuce.

- 1. יסוד השיטה כאן זה החיי אדם נ"א
2. ראה הליכות שלמה פ"ז ס"כ. שו"ת שבה"ל ח"א סי' ר"ה בהערות לס"י זה. שו"ת צ"א ח"א ח"ט סי' י"ב.
3. שו"ת יחוד ח"ו סי' י"ב. ס' וזאת הברכה בירורים סי' כ"ד בשם הגרשז"א. שו"ת מחזה אליהו ח"א סי' כ"ח.
4. ראה שו"ת שבה"ל ח"א ר"ה לס"י ר"ד, מבית הלוי ח"י"ד ע' נ"ב. תשובות והנהגות ח"ב סי' קמ"ט.

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



REB BEREL KURNITZER

Reb Berel Garfinkel, born to Chabad chassidim from the city of Kurenitz, studied in Lubavitch during the years 5676-7 (1916-7). Later he served as mashgiach in several underground branches of Tomchei Tmimim in Russia. After leaving Russia in the year 5696 (1936), he was appointed as mashgiach and general menahel of the yeshiva in Otvotzk, Poland. He brought a new chayus into the yeshiva, and he would often walk among the tables encouraging the bochurim in their learning, calling out, "Lebediker! Lebediker!" He married shortly before World War II. In the beginning of the war he was mashgiach of the yeshiva in the Radom Ghetto. He and his wife were killed al kidush Hashem in Auschwitz in the year 5703 (1943).

In his youth, Reb Berel once told his friends, "Come with me, I will ask the Rogatchover Gaon a question that he won't be able to answer!" They went to the Rogatchover and Reb Berel asked, "The Torah writes 'Vayehi erev vayehi boker,'—night and then day. The Mishnah as well begins with the din of Shema at night. If so, why does the

Shulchan Aruch start with the halachos pertaining to the morning?"

The Rogatchover was quiet for a very long time, and finally told the astonished bochurim that he does not have an answer. After taking leave of the gaon, Reb Berel said to his friends, "This question the Rebbe Rashab asks in a maamar and does not give an answer. I was therefore certain that the Rogatchover would not be able to answer this question either."

Reb Mendel Futera related:

Reb Berel was five years older than me had incredible capabilities. When he was seventeen years old he was fluent in the three "Bavos" and additional masechtos with Rashi, Tosfos, and other rishonim.

When we met next, he was twenty one. I asked him where he was up to, and he replied sincerely that he knew all of Shas with Rashi, Tosfos, and other rishonim, as well as all the printed maamorim – all by heart! He said it without any air of pride or "humility." He wasn't proud at all.

(ר' מענדל ע' 253)

A Moment with The Rebbe

זכות שניאור זלמן בן חוה לאה וכל משפחתו שיחיו לכל המצטרך בנשמיות ורוחניות



IF YOU WANT TO LEARN FROM ME

The Tiferes Yisrael commentary on Mishnayos was viewed with suspicion in some chassidishe circles, due to his approach to reconciling questions of Torah and science.

Reb Osher Sasonkin, who had just recently arrived from Eretz Yisroel, entered Yechidus in the winter of 5726 holding a Mishnayos with the Tiferes Yisrael commentary, with a question in pshat.

"If you don't look at it, I'll read it aloud," he

said to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe took the sefer from him, and said, "There were chassidim who didn't use this pirush. Do you use it? I use it."

"So I will learn from the Rebbe!" Reb Osher exclaimed.

"If you want to learn from me, there are other things to learn," the Rebbe responded. "I learn Likkutei Torah..."

(Hiskashrus Issue 455)

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