

HATMIMIM

THE BEIS MOSHIACH SUPPLEMENT FOR TALMIDEI HATMIMIM



SPECIAL EDITION:
A DAY-BY-DAY DESCRIPTION
OF PESACH WITH THE REBBE
MELECH HAMOSHIACH

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PESACH IN LUBAVITCH – 7TH GENERATION

In contrast to the Tishrei holidays when 770 would fill up with thousands of Chassidim from all around the world, or Shavuot when rabbis and *morei tzedek* (those who issue halachic rulings) would come from all across the globe – Pesach by the Rebbe was different than all the rest.

Pesach in the royal court was very quiet, if one may say so. This is a family-centered holiday. Even many of the bachurim who learned in 770 would leave for many diverse destinations to be home with their parents and celebrate Pesach with them.

That is how it came to be that on Pesach the only ones remaining in proximity to the Rebbe were the local residents, and the bachurim who learned all year in 770. In the beginning, these were a small group of bachurim who lived in Crown Heights, as well as those from Eretz Yisrael and Europe who learned in 770.

Either way, in contrast to Rosh Hashana which had the "giluyim" of Tekias Shofar, or Napoleon's March on Yom Kippur, and of course the soul-soaring "hakafos" on Simchas Torah, Pesach was characterized by a sort of inner uplifting feeling that was absorbed quietly, and not with "lights" and "revelations."

In truth, during the first twenty years of the nesius, Anash and the tmimim did merit to see the king in his grandeur reclining on Seder night at the table of his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, on the second floor of the building of 770. This Seder was conducted with a small

number of dignitaries who were invited in advance to be with the Rebbe for the Seder. At a later point, the door would be opened and the bachurim were allowed in to see the Rebbe in his holy avoda on this lofty night.

And yet even then, most of the Seder was conducted without any “displays,” with a restrained and sublime inward silence. Only during the final portion of the night could the Rebbe’s voice be heard, reading the chapters of praise and extolment with an outpouring of the soul.

On the second night, after the conclusion of the Seder, Anash would come to 770 to participate in a special and rare farbrengen, during which the Rebbe would explain sections of the Haggada until the wee hours of the morning. The Rebbe sat at his place at the farbrengen table, but did not taste anything or say l’chaim as it was after the eating of the afikoman.

[Farbrengens that were exceptions to the rule took place in the Rebbe’s 70th year (*Shnas ha’Shivim* -1972) – when the Rebbe farbrenged the first and second days of Pesach at 3:30 in the afternoon, as well as on Shevii shel Pesach. The year 5748 was also an unusual year in that starting from the first night, the Rebbe said a sicha every night after Maariv, and also encouraged the singing of the crowd when he came in to davening (something never done before on Pesach in previous years).]

Aside from the above, the days of Chol Ha’moed and the last days of Yom Tov were also characterized by a more quiet celebratory avoda; that is until the Seudas Moshiach-farbrengen followed by *kos shel bracha*.

Despite the more tranquil nature of the holiday, Pesach in Lubavitch of the Seventh Generation had many uplifting moments, which the Chassidim looked forward to with great anticipation, such as the time of the burning of the chometz, the matza distribution on Erev Yom Tov, the Rebbe’s tour of the various educational institutions on the Seder night, and when the Rebbe would explain sections of the Haggada when the Seder was over.

In this small compilation, we collected a whole host of stories and diaries which describe moments of grandeur of Pesach in Lubavitch of the Seventh Generation, some which provide a glimpse into the holy avoda of the Rebbe which was not visible to the broader public.

Our prayer and belief is that already on this Pesach, we will merit “to go up, to appear and to bow before You, and to discharge our obligations in your chosen House, the great and holy House upon which Your name is proclaimed,” with the revelation of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach in all his glory. ■

BEIS MOSHIACH

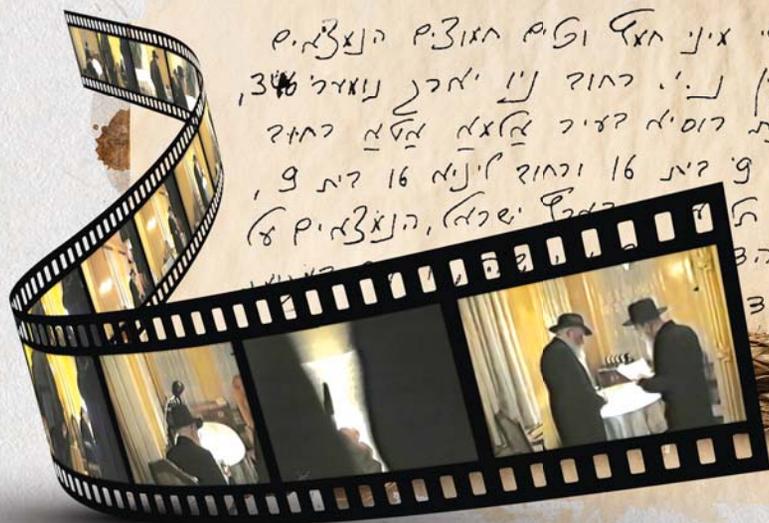
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The Rebbe Sells His Chometz

Why Did the Rebbe Not Sell His Chometz Through the Crown Heights Beis Din?



פ' פרדי אין מאץ ופ'ס מאצ'ים הנאצ'ים.
 קדוץ'ין נ'י. כחוד נ'ו יאכ'ך נואצ'ל 34
 דאצ'ינת רוס'יה קציב אַאַאַ אַאַאַ כחוד
 א'ניא פ' ק'ת 16 וכחוד א'ניא 16 ק'ת 9,
 קציב ת' 16 ק'ת 16, הנאצ'ים 8
 א'פ' ה'ב' 3815

Which rav was chosen? How much was the tip the Rebbe gave the rav?
 Which line of the *shtar* was almost never the same? Find the answers
 amongst these 20 facts about the Rebbe's Mechiras Chometz

Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan •

1 In Beis Rabbeinu it is customary not to make the rav a *mursheh* (a legal designation akin to power of attorney) but to sell him the chometz with an *areiv-kablan* (a guarantor that accepts full liability).

2 In the early years of the nesius, the Rebbe sold his chometz to Rabbi Shmuel Levitin to whom the Rebbe Rayatz also sold his chometz. Upon his passing in 5734, the zechus went to Rabbi Eliyahu Simpson and a year later to Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, the rav of Crown Heights. When the latter passed away, the Rebbe sold his chometz to Rabbi Yisrael Yitzchok Piekarski. Upon R' Piekarski's passing, the Rebbe sold his chometz in 5753-4 to Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson.

3 R' Levitin received \$50 from the Rebbe for the sale. Those after him received more money.

4 Most years, Rabbi Binyamin Eliyahu Gorodetzky served as the *areiv-kablan* in the sale. In later years, this role went to Rabbi Mordechai Rivkin. The Rebbe attributed this to his also being the kohen who received *mishloach manos* from him, which was why he should also serve as *areiv-kablan* on erev Pesach.

5 During the sale of chometz, the Rebbe's personal secretary, Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Isaac Chodakov was present.

6 In 5723, Rabbi Yisroel Labkowsky was given the job of writing the document of sale, a role he maintained

until 5729. In 5730, the job of writing it went to Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchok Boruch Gerlitzky.

7 The wording of the Rebbe's bill of sale was the same traditional nusach used by the earlier Rebbeim.

8 The Rebbe signed his name on the bottom of the document along with his father's name and last name. From a certain year, apparently 5730, the Rebbe began writing the date of signing himself.

9 In 5711, the Rebbe added the word "Avenue" next to "New York," the street that he lived on at the time.

10 That year, the document was signed with the more florid language used in halachic legal documents [*v'al zeh banu al ha'chasum, yom...*] but in the years that followed it was just written as *Ha'yom yom...* Also that year, unlike other years in which it said "North America," these words did not appear.

11 The Rebbe wrote the date 13 Nissan even when the sale was executed after *maariv* the night of the 14th.

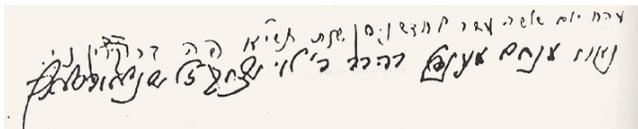
12 Each time, before the sale, the Rebbe would read the entire document from beginning to end to check that it was all written properly and only afterward did he fill in the date and sign it.

13 Rabbi Gerlitzky relates: In 5734, the last year of R' Levitin's life, R' Levitin asked through the secretary, R' Leibel Groner, that the sale be done through a different rabbi since he was

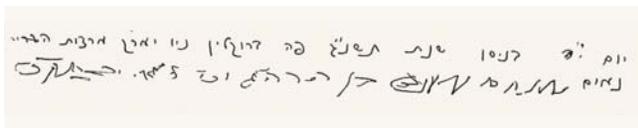
weak and his memory wasn't what it used to be. But the Rebbe insisted that R' Levitin come and buy his chometz.

When the sale was completed, R' Levitin went back to his room and suddenly heard knocking at the door. He was shocked to find the Rebbe standing there. The Rebbe said, "I forgot the main thing" and gave him \$50 as money for the sale.

14 To the surprise of R' Piekarski, the Rebbe said that the amount written in the document as an assessment of the value of the sale was the same as that written by the Rebbe Rayatz (a relatively paltry amount).



THE REBBE'S SIGNATURE ON THE BILL OF SALE FOR CHOMETZ IN 5711.



THE REBBE'S SIGNATURE ON THE BILL OF SALE FOR CHOMETZ IN 5753

15 When the document concluded in the middle of a line, like in 5736, the Rebbe drew a line through until the end of that line and signed on the next line.

16 After the sale, the Rebbe would bless the rov who bought the chometz from him.

THE REBBE SELLING HIS CHOMETZ IN 5748 TO RABBI YISROEL YITZCHOK PIEKARSKI. ON THE LEFT: THE AREIV-KABLAN, RABBI BINYAMIN GORODETZKY.



17 After the passing of R' Dworkin, the role of buying went to Rabbi Piekarski. The following year, when the rabbanim of Crown Heights were elected, the Rebbe asked R' Groner to relay to the rabbanim in his name that the reason he continued to sell chometz to R' Piekarski was because the Badatz had three rabbanim and it was not possible to sell it to all of them, and if it would be sold to just one, the others would probably feel put out. However, the intention was not, G-d forbid, meant to slight their standing and honor.

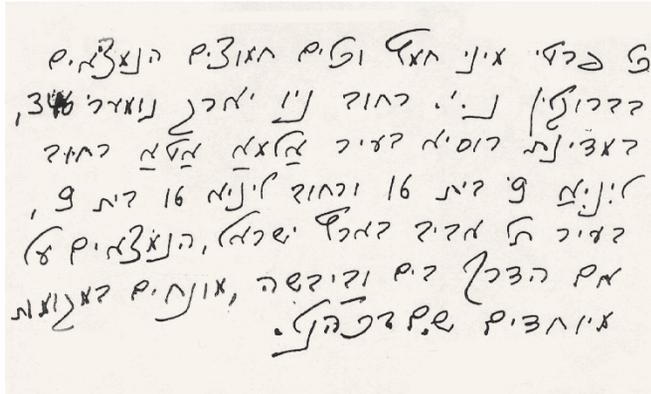
After the sale that year, the Rebbe called R' Chodakov and R' Groner to his office and gave them money to give to the rabbanim of Crown Heights in exchange for the chometz that should have been sold to them, so they wouldn't lose out. This was done every year.

18 There were years that the Rebbe added the day of the week, for example, *yom gimmel* (Tuesday).

19 Nearly every year was different in how the Rebbe signed his name and his father's name and the wording used for the date.

20 In 5753, after the passing of R' Piekarski, R' Groner suggested several rabbanim to the Rebbe for the sale of chometz and the Rebbe chose R' Simpson and even signed (with his left hand) his name and father's name on the bill of sale. ■

A BILL OF SALE OF CHOMETZ IN THE REBBE'S HANDWRITING FROM BEFORE 5710 WHERE HE ALSO LISTS THE ADDRESS OF HIS PARENTS IN ALMA ATA!



SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR PESACH

Eve of 14 Nissan, erev Pesach 5749:

Fortunate are we that we merited that the Rebbe said a maamar with a niggun on this night after more than three years (the last maamar with a niggun was said on Shabbos, parshas Bereishis 5746)

The Rebbe shlita returned from the Ohel at about 8:30, went down for mincha and then went up to his room and went out to *gan eden ha'tachtan* to sell his chometz. Then he went down for maariv. When saying Aleinu, he placed the handkerchief on his hands and after maariv told R' Groner, "Say the niggun."

After the niggun, the Rebbe began a maamar, "*Matza zu sh'anu ochlim al shum mah ...*" and ended with the verse, "And the earth will be filled with knowledge of G-d like waters cover the seabed."



Bedikas Chometz At the Rebbe's Home

**When I
Accidentally
Took One of The
Rebbe's Ten
Pieces...**

First hand testimonies of the meshamshim bakodesh R' Sholom Gansbourg of the Rebbe's Bedikas Chometz, at his home on President Street and later at his holy room in 770





Bedikas

Chometz, as done by the Rebbeim, was always a special avoda which took hours, sometimes even the entire night. It was manifestly clear that this was a lofty matter beyond the ken of mere mortals.

This is what they tell about the Alter Rebbe, that when he returned the first time from Mezritch to his home it was 13 Nissan 5525, erev Pesach. That day he did not eat for he was preoccupied in anticipation of Bedikas Chometz. The bedika lasted all night even though their house consisted of one room. The Rebbe MH”M said that this did not entail just the kavanos of the Arizal; the Alter Rebbe actually searched holes and cracks and this took all night.

The Rebbe writes, “Our custom is to spend a very long time on checking for chometz ... I never heard a specific amount of time.”

The Rebbe did the Bedikas Chometz in his house on President Street. Beforehand, he himself put out ten pieces of chometz.

We have no testimony as to how the Rebbe did the bedika. We just know that he spent several hours on it as he checked all the closets and drawers. We get a glimpse of his Bedikas

Chometz from a story told by R’ Mendel Notik about how, one year (between 5735 and 5738), on the night of Bedikas Chometz, the Rebbe’s household needed a certain vegetable (maybe onion).

“I went to Raskin’s fruit store to get the vegetable and returned via the back door and saw that the Rebbe was doing Bedikas Chometz. The Rebbe was in the basement and I estimated that it would take some time before he reached the first floor to continue the bedika there. But only a few minutes later, the Rebbe appeared in the kitchen and came over to me. I retreated to a corner but noticed that the Rebbe wanted something. I was sure the Rebbe wanted me to leave and then the Rebbe asked, ‘Did you take something?’

“I was very frightened and said no. The Rebbe asked again and I said no again. When he asked a third time I said, ‘A piece of dirt; it was nothing.’ The Rebbe said, ‘That’s what I’m looking for!’ It was one of the ten pieces that the Rebbe had put out for Bedikas Chometz and it was near the garbage pail in a corner of the kitchen and I innocently thought it was a piece of garbage.”

(“The reason I did not understand was because the Rebbetzin would put a brown paper bag near the garbage pail with garbage in it. When one of the people in the house would go out, he would take it out with him. That’s the way it was all year and this is why I thought it was garbage that had fallen out of the bag. I took it to throw it out and that is what the Rebbe was looking for.”)

R’ Gansbourg recounted, “Before the Rebbetzin passed away, and the first year after her passing, the Rebbe checked for

chometz himself in his house and I would follow him. He would also put out the ten pieces.

“The Rebbe would even check the room where I slept (He sometimes moved certain closets in order to check; other times he didn’t). When he finished checking each room he would shut the light and then close the door.”

THE REBBE SEPARATED THE FEATHER INTO TWO PARTS

About a year after the passing of the Rebbetzin, the Rebbe went to live in his office in 770. As per his instruction, R’ Sholom Ber Gansbourg would check for chometz throughout the three floors of the house on President Street. R’ Gansbourg:

“After a little more than a year passed since the Rebbetzin’s passing, when the Rebbe was living in his office in 770, he told me before he began the bedika in his office that his bracha would serve for me too, and after he would finish checking I should go and look for chometz in his house. When he finished the bedika in his room, he separated the feather into two parts and gave me one part and sent me to his house. The Rebbe said I should try not to interrupt the bedika for things not having to do with the bedika.

“In those years the Rebbe only put out ten pieces in his room in 770 and did not tell me to put out another ten pieces in his house. The bedika took me a long time and exhausted me. Although I never

PESACH CLEANING

R’ Chesed Halberstam spoke about his work before Pesach in the Rebbe and Rebbetzin’s home:

A week before Pesach 5730, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka met me at her mother’s house and asked me whether I could come to her house and help her with the cleaning for Pesach. I happily agreed and spent hours during the following days in the house, helping clean for Pesach.

The night before the night of Bedikas Chometz, we finished the work around 9:30. The Rebbetzin said that I had done enough and I could go to sleep. She escorted me to the door.

We stood near the door when the Rebbe suddenly arrived. The Rebbetzin said to the Rebbe, “This boychik saved me today. He did all the work.”

The Rebbe said, “A *Tzanzer einikel* (grandchild) and you call him a boychik?! Rabbi Halberstam!”

Although the Rebbe said this humorously, the Rebbetzin took it seriously and after that she always called me, “Rabbi Halberstam.”

told the Rebbe about this, he asked me several times to take someone with me to help during the bedika. Although I tried to do this, unfortunately, I was unable to because I looked for those who would be suitable and those who were suitable did not accept the job.

“One of the times that the Rebbe asked me to look for help, I told him about my efforts and how my requests were rebuffed. The Rebbe told me to tell those

people who were unwilling that if they helped me, they would get matza from him.

“On my way afterward from 770 to the Rebbe’s home, R’ Shlomo Eidelman a’h met me and asked for my help with something. I thought that since R’ Shlomo was speaking to me, I would ask for his help in checking for chometz on the first floor and the basement and thus I would be fulfilling the Rebbe’s request. He happily agreed and for some reason I did not tell him what the Rebbe said about matza for whoever would help me. Nor did I report to the Rebbe that I had done what he had asked.

“When the Rebbe gave out matza, I was standing near him just as R’ Shlomo came by. The Rebbe suddenly turned to me, as R’ Shlomo watched, and asked whether anyone had helped me check the house.

I said yes and pointed at R’ Shlomo. The Rebbe said, ‘He is a kohen. You ought to ask him for forgiveness,’ [for making use of a kohen] and gave him matza.

“After that, I did not ask R’ Shlomo for help again but on many occasions he offered his help in checking for chometz as well as any other matter having to do with the Rebbe’s house, but I did not accept.”



After the bedika, the chometz should be collected in one protected place and one should be very careful not to eat chometz all over the house but only in one room or corner. Each time one eats chometz, he should shake out his clothes thoroughly right there. ■

A RARE PICTURE OF THE REBBE IN THE KITCHEN IN HIS HOME





Moments With The Rebbe

What Else
Did The Rebbe
Burn Aside From
Chometz?

Facts and Photos
of the Rebbe at
Biur Chometz



The morning of 14 Nissan, erev Pesach, the Rebbe would go from his home to 770 and when it was time to burn the chometz, he would be escorted from his office by the secretaries to the boiler room in the basement of 770. The secretaries would throw in bags (with *pidyonei nefesh* that were given to the Rebbe before Rosh Hashana, etc.) and the Rebbe tossed in a small bag or two of chometz that he brought from home. Then he took an iron rod and stoked the fire.

He would say the “Seder Biur Chometz” from the siddur.

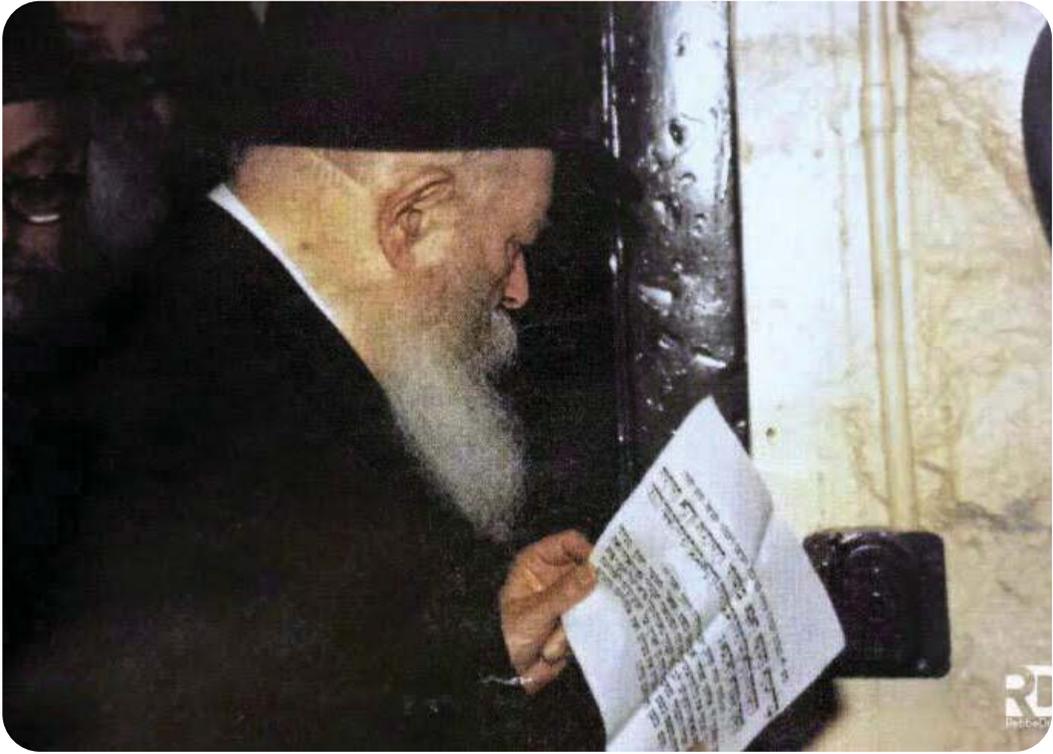
Sometimes he would stir the fire again after saying the “yehi ratzon.”

In 5748, in the year of mourning for the Rebbetzin a’h, the burning of the chometz took place at the side of the Rebbe’s house. The following year, the Rebbe was already living at his room in 770 and he went back to burning the chometz as he did all the years.

R’ Sholom Dovber Gansbourg said, “He motioned to me to throw into the fire those things designated to be burned that I had brought from his house. Only after I threw it in did the Rebbe throw in things that he brought from his room in 770. The Rebbe stoked the chometz in the fire and then read the ‘Seder Biur Chometz.’

“The Rebbe would also burn his lulav and esrog, though I once noticed some old esrogim in the Rebbe’s house that for whatever reason had not been burned.” ■





»» Biur Chometz in the boiler room in 770 in 5750.



»» A series of pictures of Biur Chometz on the backyard porch of the Rebbe's house on President Street.



**Erev Pesach
matza miracles
alongside a
short overview
of the history
this special
momentous
event**

**The
Rebbe
Hands
Out
Matzos
& Miracles**





A hush of silence was in *Gan Eden Hatachton* when the Rebbe gave out packages of matzos mitzva (baked on Erev Pesach) to be further distributed. The distribution was not only of matzos, but also of open miracles and *ruach hakodesh*, but the Erev Pesach rush did not allow for enough time to collect them...

Erev Pesach. Chassidim in Crown Heights were busy at home preparing for Yom Tov. Some bachurim were baking matzos, busy making matzos for the Rebbe, and some were busy with their mitzvaim routes, giving out shmura matza. This is why 770 was relatively empty compared to the rest of the year.

The Rebbe was busy in his office. After mincha, the Rebbe began giving out shmura matza to Chassidim. He stood in the doorway to his office and wore his silk Shabbos sirtuk and gartel. Around him were boxes of matzos.

An almost magical silence prevailed in *gan eden ha'tachton* as, one by one, Chassidim approached and received a

piece of matza from the Rebbe for the night of the seder.

Rabbi Sossover described the scene in his diary of 5737/1977:

“After chatzos, a line to receive matza formed from the last doorway of the *ezras nashim* and extending until 750 Eastern parkway. There were dozens of people on line.

“The distribution of matza began after mincha. First the ziknei Anash or Anash traveling to direct a seder in distant locations received matza. (The Vaad HaMesader did not allow children under bar mitzva to ask for matza, or to take for others, since time was short.)”

As each one passed, the Rebbe looked at them and gave them a *k'zayis* of matzos

THOSE WHO RAN PUBLIC SEDARIM RECEIVED PACKAGES OF MATZOS FROM THE REBBE TO GIVE OUT TO PARTICIPANTS.



mitzva and wished them “*ah kosher’n un ah freilichen Pesach* (a kosher and happy Pesach).” Sometimes, he added individual brachos for certain things.

In 5737, the last year that the Rebbe gave each one individually, the Rebbe also gave a dollar for tzedaka.

The matza distribution was not only conducted with a certain festivity, but also in an otherworldly manner. Nobody knew what the Rebbe was thinking as he gave out the matza but one could see that after the Rebbe gazed at the person before him, he would take out some matza from the box and give it. Sometimes, he “fished around” in the box as though searching for a particular piece. Sometimes, he took out a whole matza and broke it into pieces. A few were given whole matzos. It was obvious that there was a certain avoda here.

Erev Pesach 5727/1967, when R’ Zalman Duchman approached the Rebbe for matza, the Rebbe said to him, “If you continue writing your stories and printing another volume, I’ll give you a whole matza; otherwise, I’ll give you broken pieces.”

AFTER 5738

The situation changed in 5738. Because of his health, the Rebbe did not stand for many hours and give out matza. He gave a package of matzos to each member of the kollel that was under the auspices of the secretariat, and they gave out the matzos to the Chassidim on the Rebbe’s behalf, aside from special individuals, members of the secretariat, and the personal aides who received matza directly from the Rebbe, as well as those who ran public sedarim who received entire packages from the Rebbe.

OPEN RUACH HA’KODESH

The entire affair of the distribution of matzos for public sedarim was a sublime matter. There were nearly always miracles and open ruach ha’kodesh. The following story happened on erev Pesach 5750. Among the people passing by to get matzos from the Rebbe was Rabbi Moshe Tamarin. R’ Tamarin lives in Moscow and came to 770 for Pesach. He was about to head out to run a seder for Russian Jews living in New Haven. R’ Tamarin was asked to get matzos for the participants of the seder and for Anash in that city.

Usually, the shliach of the city, Rabbi Moshe Yitzchok Hecht, went to Crown Heights himself to get matza from the Rebbe but this year, the engine of his car had burned out in the middle of the trip and he wasn’t able to get to Crown Heights. Rabbi Berel Levitin, the one arranging the seder, asked R’ Tamarin, who was going to Crown Heights that day, to get matza for all of them.

Also waiting was Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Stock, a shliach in Bridgeport near New Haven. Rabbi Stock was also holding a seder in his town and had invited ten Russian families to his home. Rabbi Stock was going to drive R’ Tamarin until the highway between Bridgeport and New Haven, where a driver would pick him up and take him to New Haven.

Rabbi Moshe Tamarin and Rabbi Yossi Stock were among the first in line so that they could get back home in time for Yom Tov. When it was Rabbi Tamarin’s turn, he told the Rebbe in Russian, “. . .for the seder for Russian immigrants in New Haven.” After the Rebbe gave him a package of matzos he asked for matzos for Rabbi Moshe Hecht.

The Rebbe leaned forward and asked, “Ah?” Rabbi Tamarin repeated his request. The Rebbe, as though not hearing him, asked, “You’re going to make a seder with Russian immigrants in Bridgeport?”

For a moment Rabbi Tamarin thought that the Rebbe hadn’t understood him, and he repeated, “No, it’s for New Haven.” An uncomfortable silence prevailed. The Rebbe turned to Rabbi Stock and asked, “He’s going with you?”

“Yes,” said Rabbi Stock, marveling at how the Rebbe knew.

“Do you understand what he’s saying?” asked the Rebbe.

R’ Stock shrugged as though to say, I don’t understand Russian. The Rebbe’s secretary, R’ Groner, finally told the Rebbe that Rabbi Tamarin was going to New Haven and was asking for matzos for Rabbi Hecht.

The Rebbe raised his hands and said, “Nu!” as if to say, “If that’s the case...”

The Rebbe gave Rabbi Tamarin and Rabbi Stock each a package and wished them “*ah kosher’n un ah freilichen Pesach.*” The two silently left.

Rabbi Stock and Rabbi Tamarin drove the two-hour drive from Crown Heights. When they got to the highway between Bridgeport and New Haven, there was nobody waiting there for Rabbi Tamarin.

Finally, Rabbi Stock said, “Come and have the seder with me. I am also making a seder for Russians, and I don’t have anybody who speaks Russian to run it properly.”

Rabbi Tamarin agreed — did he have a choice? Now they both realized that the Rebbe had known where Rabbi Tamarin was headed. That was why he had asked,

“Are you going to make a seder for Russians in Bridgeport?”

MATZA FOR THE FIRST SEDER

A similar thing happened in 5724 as told by Rabbi Leibel Groner:

A certain Chassid and his family spent every Pesach outside of New York and a relative of his would ask the Rebbe for matza on his behalf. One year, when it was this relative’s turn, the Rebbe gave him matza for himself and for that person and then the Rebbe said, “Surely, he will make the effort so that he receive the matza by tonight, for the first seder.”

I was standing there and heard and saw the person wonder about this. The Rebbe repeated, “Surely, he will make the effort to bring the matza ...” The person wanted to ask something but there was no time. He packed the matza and rushed to the post office but the guard said the branch was closed. He asked the guard to let him in anyway since the matter was urgent. The guard said, “Even if I open for you there’s nobody here to take care of it. It will remain on the table until tomorrow morning.” Having no choice, the man took the matza home.

As he prepared the seder table, he heard knocking at the door. In walked the person for whom he had asked for the matza. Due to family reasons he had to remain in New York for Pesach.

“Now I understand what the Rebbe said.”

THE MISSING MATZA

Every year, the Rebbe sent a whole matza to three people in Yerushalayim.



R' SHIMSHON AHARON JUNIK (MASHBAK) AND HIS CHILDREN RECEIVING MATZA FROM THE REBBE.

This delivery was made by Rabbi Ezriel Zelig Slonim a'h, who would go to the Rebbe every year before Purim and stay until before Pesach.

In 5729, before his return to Eretz Yisrael, the Rebbe gave him only two matzos. R' Slonim wondered about this and said he always got three. At first, the Rebbe did not respond but when R' Slonim repeated it, the Rebbe gave him a third matza.

When he got to Yerushalayim and wanted to deliver the matzos, he suddenly realized why the Rebbe did what he did. On the ninth of Nissan, Rabbi Aryeh Levin (A Tzaddik in Our Time) had passed away and he was one of the three.

MATZA OF HEALING

One of the people who received an entire matza regularly was Dr. Avrohom

Abba Seligson. When Dr. Seligson would go to the Rebbe erev Pesach to receive matza, the Rebbe would give him a whole one and some pieces and would tell him to grind the matza and give it as medicine.

Throughout the year, there were times that he would give the matza as medicine and this wonder drug brought healing to many.

One sees how the Rebbe used all means possible to help and there were things that were seemingly not in the style of Chabad but the Rebbe did them, in order to help people. Mr. Aharon Greenberg told Rabbi Yisroel Yosef Schneerson of Kfar Chabad, when he met him at mivtzaim at the airport:

One year, when I was a boy, a tumor was discovered in my head. This meant despair in those days. After guidance on the part of friends and those in the know,



TMIMIM WHO RECEIVED PACKAGES OF MATZOS ON THEIR WAY TO RUNNING COMMUNAL SEDARIM.

I was sent to a hospital for an operation. Lubavitcher friends asked the Rebbe for a bracha for me although I wasn't a Lubavitcher Chassid and the Rebbe said to operate.

The night before the surgery, it was late at night when I became overcome with fear and couldn't bear it. I disconnected myself from all the machines that I was attached to and sneaked out of the hospital and went straight home. I knew it was foolish but I breathed a sigh of relief.

The doctors were furious and wanted to deny me any other further treatment but in the end, friends of the family managed to convince them to treat me and a date for the surgery was made right after Pesach. My brother in Montreal, understanding my fear, asked his friends to look into the possibility of getting in to see the Rebbe.

It was during the days before Pesach and this was impossible but they told him that about the Rebbe giving out matza on erev Pesach and advised me to go.

Hours before Yom Tov, my brother and I stood on line near the Rebbe's room, waiting for matza. As we stood facing

the Rebbe, the Rebbe stopped the line and asked R' Groner to look for a whole matza. After a few seconds of emotionally charged waiting, the Rebbe handed me a whole matza and said,

"This is *michla d'asvasa* (food of healing). Put it (in the ke'ara) for 'Levi' and just as the matza is complete, may you have a complete recovery!"

I didn't need any more than that promise.

This time, as I got into bed in the hospital, I was confident and calm. The doctors described the results of the surgery as a medical miracle. They said they hadn't considered the possibility of a full recovery like this.

Many years later, I went to the Rebbe for dollars. When it was my turn, I wanted to say something but was unable to. I felt that the Rebbe knew who I was. He took four dollars, in addition to the dollar he had given me earlier, and said, "So that you won't need to come on to miracles and wonders that were accomplished here for you."

An extraordinary thing happened during the Moshiach's seuda in 5733. In the middle of the farbrengen, when one of the niggunim was sung, the Rebbe suddenly took a piece of matza, wrapped

it in a paper napkin and threw it at the crowd. When someone caught it, the Rebbe called out to him, “*michla d’asvasa*.” The Rebbe did so again and when the matza was caught, the Rebbe called out, “*michla d’meheimenusa*” (food of faith).

This happened another five or six times and each time, he wished something else. Afterward, it turned out that whoever caught it and was wished “food of healing,” they or someone in their family needed a big refuah. Those who were told “food of faith,” needed strengthening in their faith.

LIMITLESS DEVOTION

After hours on his feet while giving out matza to all who came, it is hardly surprising to note that the endeavor demanded great exertion. They say that erev Pesach 5713, the Rebbe told R’ Berel Junik, “What do they want from me; I didn’t eat anything yet today,” and this was after four in the afternoon, after the Rebbe had already returned from his home. [Apparently the Rebbe fasted as a firstborn despite participating in a siyum].

If that was what it was like two years after accepting the nesius, you can just imagine what went on years later. Take erev Pesach 5730, for example, which was described by a tamim in 770 in a letter he wrote to his friend in Eretz Yisrael:

“Candles will be lit in another half an hour. The Rebbe just stopped giving out matzos.”

Rabbi Sossover wrote about the conclusion of the distribution erev Pesach 5737, which as mentioned was the last year that Rebbe personally gave each person:

“It was at 5:40 that the Rebbe finished giving out matzos, half an hour before Shabbos. Hundreds more did not receive

.....
Whoever was wished “food of healing,” needed a big refuah. Those who were told “food of faith,” needed strengthening in their faith.
.....

any before Yom Tov and had to receive that night. Still, thousands did receive erev Yom Tov.

“When the Rebbe went home, some people (Russian artists who gave the Rebbe a picture of him) said they hadn’t received matzos. The Rebbe asked them why not and they said they hadn’t made it in time. Hearing this, the Rebbe went back to his room and gave them pieces of matza and then went home.

“He walked back to 770 after candle-lighting at 6:45.”

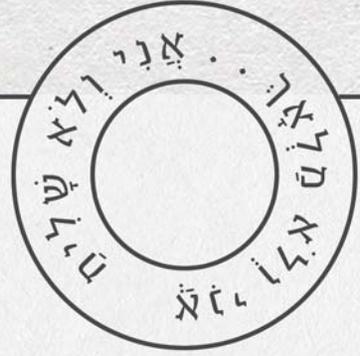
The dedication of the leader of the Jewish people to his flock knew no bounds. Even after Yom Tov came in, after maariv, instead of going to his own seder, the Rebbe received dozens of Chassidim who hadn’t gotten matza earlier in the day and wished them “*ah kosher’n un ah freilichen Pesach*.”

In 5737, when erev Pesach was on Shabbos, the Rebbe held a second distribution on motzoei Shabbos:

“After maariv, the Rebbe began giving out matza to those who had not received on erev Shabbos. The line was very long (estimated at a few hours!). People stood the length of the zal downstairs, went up the stairs of *gan eden ha’tachtan* and left via *gan eden ha’tachtan*,” concluded R’ Sossover. ■



An overview of the Rebbe's Pesach Night royal "tour" through the Crown Heights streets, visiting the Sedarim of his precious sons and daughters at: Hadar HaTorah, "1414," FREE, and Machon Chana



**The Rebbe
Brings a
“Seder” to the
Streets of
Crown
Heights**

The Royal Visits to the Public Sedarim

Every year, after maariv on the first night of Pesach, the Rebbe went up to his room where he gave out matzos to those hadn't received any in the afternoon. When he was finished, he visited the mosdos.

On this most exalted of nights, the Seder night, the Rebbe went to the mosdos chinuch in Crown Heights in order to see how the students were conducting their sederim and how everything had been prepared.

This had been the custom of the Rebbe Rashab. As the Rebbe Rashab walked home from shul, he would look in on the Pesach dining room of the yeshiva to see how things were arranged. He examined everything and inquired about every detail.

Before making his own seder, the Rebbe, Nasi of the seventh generation, would go to the dining room of Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim. Over the years, he also went to other mosdos.

This was the time that the yeshiva bachurim closed their sefarim. Even the most diligent among them, those who usually grabbed another look into a sicha or maamar, made their way to the dining room.

With fatherly love, the Rebbe did not rush to conduct his own seder before seeing how his beloved children were ready for this holy night. In fact, the only time the Rebbe visited his children, the tmimim, in yeshiva, was on Seder night. It was at this time that the Rebbe wanted to see the Chayolei Beis Dovid in their environment, in the dining room at the table, not just in the zal near the sefarim.

Many tmimim nostalgically recall those sederim for which they prepared for many days. The bachurim, knowing that

the Rebbe would be coming, knew that the dining room could not look as it did all year. They prepared the area, cleaning and scrubbing every corner (because of possible chometz but not only for that), and made it look as nice as possible as is fitting when hosting the king.

One tamim described the scene as follows, "In anticipation of the Rebbe's visit to the dining room of the bachurim, everything was already prepared and looked very nice. The tamim Shmuel Rivkin set up lights at the entrance and two rows of lights at the steps."

At the appointed time, the Rebbe left 770 accompanied by the secretaries. The legendary cook, Mrs. Mussia Nimotin a'h was waiting for him. (Any of Anash who learned in 770 in those decades, knew her – see sidebar.) The Rebbe saw what was going on and wished her, "*Ah kosher'n un ah freilichen Pesach.*"

When the Rebbe entered the dining room and kitchen he would sometimes also check the rooms near the Pesach kitchen such as the room in which they cooked, the storage room, etc. In 5740, the Rebbe also went into the year-round meat kitchen.

In 5738, when the dining room moved to the new building 1414, the Rebbe expressed his pleasure over the spaciousness of the new building. When he saw that in certain places the kitchen construction was unfinished, he said to Rabbi Tzvi Yosef Kotlartsky, who was the menahel gashmi of the yeshiva and in charge of construction: "I hope that the kitchen is, apparently, not yet finished."

When they went to the dining room, he took in, in a quick glance, the set tables for between 100 and 200 bachurim and in later years, even more than 300 bachurim.



MAP OF SEDER NIGHT

- (1) 770 Eastern Parkway. This is where the Rebbe had the seder in the home of the Rebbe Rayatz until 5730. In 5742, he began having the seder in the nearby library and from 5748 he had the seder in his office.
- (2) 723 Eastern Parkway. The dining room of the tmimim from 5712.
- (3) 676 Eastern Parkway. The dining room of the tmimim from the mid-60s.
- (4) 749 Eastern Parkway. The dining room of the tmimim from 5727.
- (5) The "Farband" or Uforatza building, corner of Union and Kingston. This is where the tmimim had the seder in the 70s, as did the Iranian youth.
- (6) 824 Eastern Parkway. Hadar Hatorah
- (7) 1414 President Street. The dining room of the tmimim from 5738.
- (8) 1383 President Street. FREE
- (9) 1367 President Street. Machon Chana
- (10) 1304 President Street. The Rebbe's home, where he had the seder from 5731 until 5741.

Although it was a quick glance, nothing escaped him. He once pointed out that under one of the covers there was no ke'ara and another time he commented about the strainer attached to the faucets (see sidebar).

Here is one description written by a bachur: "The Rebbe shlita entered the room and looked at everything, at every single ke'ara, every sign. He entered the kitchen and looked at the sacks etc. Then he came back into the room and looked

at everything. In the middle he turned back and said ‘Gut Yom Tov’ to Rashag.”

This visit, which was one of a kind, was an opportunity for the Rebbe to point out what needed fixing or improvement in yeshiva life as well as regarding the halachos and customs of Pesach:

“In 5713, when the Rebbe came in, the bottles of wine were not yet on the tables. The Rebbe asked, ‘Where’s the wine?’ and then said, ‘You probably won’t be celebrating the seder with milk ...”

In 5734, the Rebbe said each table should have two candles, one of them for havdala.

Some of the halachic comments were in unusual years such as when Pesach night fell out on Shabbos. In 5714, the Rebbe asked whether challa had been taken and whether the maror had been prepared with a *shinui*. The Rebbe said to ask Rabbi Shmuel Levitin what the din is and R’ Levitin permitted it after the fact.

In 5741, the last year that the Rebbe visited the yeshiva’s kitchen, he asked whether the candles had been lit by a woman who said the *shehechyanu* blessing (it was a Pesach night that fell out on Shabbos), and when he was told no, he entered the kitchen and asked Mrs. Mussia to bring the candles out so the tmimim could see the candles during kiddush. The Rebbe explained that just as we gaze at the wine during kiddush, we should also gaze at the candles.

The comments were not always to be more careful; sometimes it was the opposite. In 5713, when the Rebbe entered, he noticed that certain bachurim had placed maror in paper cups. When he asked them why they did this, they said it was out of concern for shruya. The Rebbe

said, “I did not see this with my father-in-law; why start new things? And anyway, it’s not respectful of the mitzva. And if it’s because of shruya, the Rebbe would shake off all the liquid.” He said they could put it on two or three paper napkins.

When he arrived at the dining room Seder night 5728, he went over to the rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Mordechai Mentlick, and asked him whether all the bachurim were present. R’ Mentlick nodded yes but the Rebbe continued asking, “Including the bachurim from Eretz Yisrael?” He said yes.

The Rebbe asked again, “Even those who arrived in recent days?” R’ Mentlick said yes.

The Rebbe asked, “They didn’t go to relatives or balabatim?” R’ Mentlick said no.

With a little smile the Rebbe said, “They shouldn’t go to relatives or balabatim.”

After a quick check it was discovered that one bachur was missing. He had gone to spend the seder with his uncle who lived in East Flatbush. One of the bachurim volunteered to run and get him.

For forty-five minutes all the bachurim of the Kevutza waited.

The Rebbe’s concern down to the smallest details in the lives of the bachurim was noticed on these visits. In 5712, for example, when the Rebbe visited the kitchen, after inquiring about everything and expressing his satisfaction, he said that pillows were missing for the seder to be conducted in an expansive manner and they would probably correct that. Likewise, the Rebbe said they should ensure that the wine was not near the oven where it would go sour. He also pointed

out that the mezuzah on the outer door was not diagonal as it should be.

On his way out, the Rebbe stood somewhere in the center of the dining room and said a brief blessing to the talmidim. The exact place where the Rebbe would stand was not known in advance, which is why it wasn't possible to prepare and grab a place. It was customary for all the bachurim to remain standing and not to make a commotion in order to stand near the Rebbe and hear the bracha, aside from a few bachurim who approached the Rebbe. Only a few bachurim heard the bracha and afterward "chazara" of the bracha was held for all the tmimim.

Some of the times, the Rebbe noted the day of the week. Several times he referred to a verse in his new chapter of Tehillim. In the early years, the bracha was very brief and in later years it turned into a sort of short sicha.

Over the years, the Rebbe visited all the places where there was a dining room for bachurim starting with Beis Rivka in the early years, 676 Eastern Parkway (between Brooklyn and New York), then the building at 749 Eastern Parkway or the "Uforatzta" building (at Kingston and Union) in years that followed, and then the permanent location of the seder of the tmimim until today, the building at 1414 President Street.

Before he left, the Rebbe wished the bachurim "*ah freilichen seder*," for surely they would sing niggunim and farbreng. "*Ah gut Yom Tov*."

ALL THE DAYS OF HER LIFE

As mentioned in the article, when the Rebbe visited the dining room, he also went to the kitchen where the food was cooked. He blessed the cook, Mrs. Mussia Nimotin with a holiday blessing. It was probably the case that Mrs. Nimotin "lived all year" for the month when she worked in the yeshiva's Pesach kitchen. She looked forward for the moments when she would see the Rebbe visiting her kitchen. The Rebbe always examined the big pots and wished her a kosher and happy Pesach. He sometimes would point out different matters regarding Pesach hiddurim in the kitchen.

"The holy tzaddik, he should be well, will be coming in here soon," she would say when mentioning in awe the need to prepare and clean the kitchen for the great moment, days and even weeks in advance.

IN HADAR HATORAH AND "FREE"

In later years, the Rebbe also began visiting the seder at Yeshivas Hadar Hatorah which is on Eastern Parkway [until 5738, when the tmimim ate in the Uforatzta building, he first went to them and then to Hadar Hatorah; in 5738, when the tmimim's dining room moved to President Street, he first went to Hadar Hatorah and then to 1414 President St].

The Rebbe went up to the second floor to see the rooms there and then went down to the dining room and looked at all the ke'aros. Then he went to the kitchen and wished the cook "*ah kosher'n un ah freilichen Pesach*." At the end, he wished the cook again "*ah gut Yom Tov*."

RUACH HA'KODESH AND CAREFUL LANGUAGE

When Rabbi Tuvia Zilberstrom, rav of the Chabad shul in the Shikun Chabad neighborhood in Yerushalyim, was a bachur in 770, he was one of those in charge of arranging everything for Pesach in yeshiva.

One year, he noticed that the faucets for *netilas yodayim* for the bachurim were also meant for drinking water, without there being a covering or strainer. He went to the hardware store and bought two strainers, one for the faucet at the entrance level of 770 and one for one of the three faucets that the bachurim used outside the large dining room.

Pesach night, after maariv in 770, the Rebbe went to visit the yeshiva. He walked around and entered the kitchen and blessed the cook, then entered the dining room where he spoke to the tmimim.

When he left the dining room, he noticed the strainer on one of the three faucets. The Rebbe went over and felt it and turned it and then said, "The strainer should be checked occasionally because undesirable things could be found in it."

A strainer collects whatever is not water and prevents it from going into the cup. Little pebbles or even insects could be caught in it.

After the Rebbe pointed this out, Tuvia removed the strainer and found a worm in it. It was discarded, the strainer was cleaned and then replaced.

"The lesson that I learned from this story," he later said, "was not just the Rebbe's ruach ha'kodesh but primarily his refined way of speaking. He did not say he knows there's a bug inside. Rather, he said the strainer should be cleaned occasionally because there might be undesirable things inside."

From there, the Rebbe went to the seder made for Russian immigrants which was organized by the FREE organization. When he walked in, he wished everyone "*ah gut Yom Tov*." From there, he went to the third floor by the side stairs, wanting to see the library. In the library, he took out some pamphlets from the bookcase. Then he went to the dining room where they held the seder.

During the tour, the Rebbe visited all the main rooms of the building and when he came downstairs one year, he said, "*Chag Pesach kosher v'somayach*." Then he continued (in Russian), "May all of you together with Moshiach soon be in Eretz Yisrael, in a good way and with good health, along with children and grandchildren (looking at the children and smiling) and good parnassa."

One year, the people present wished the Rebbe, "until 120." To many of them, the Rebbe said, "you too," and to one of them he said, "together with you."

MACHON CHANA

From FREE, the Rebbe went to Machon Chana, a school for baalos teshuva. The reason the Rebbe went there, he said, was in gratitude for the school being named for his mother. These visits began in 5734.

Mrs. Gita Gansburg, the house mother, stood waiting in the doorway and the Rebbe wished her “*Gut Yom Tov*.”

Actually, the attention given the students at the Machon began before Pesach when the principal, Mrs. Sara Labkowski, would receive a package of matzos for the girls, with the Rebbe giving this special attention. One time, when Mrs. Labkowski did not come for the matzos, the Rebbe expressed his surprise. When the menahel, Rabbi JJ Hecht arrived to replace her, the Rebbe asked, “Where is Yissochor?” (i.e. Mrs. Labkowski who was in charge of the ruchniyus of the school).

This required a special arrangement since she was the only woman who received matzos from the Rebbe. She would enter via a separate door (the front door) and the distribution to the men was halted so she could be given matzos for Machon Chana.

As mentioned, starting in 5734, the Rebbe went to visit and bless the students of Machon Chana the night of the seder. The girls prepared for a long time, cleaning the dormitory and the entire place. The years that snow fell, they cleared a path themselves from the Rebbe’s house until the Machon.

The Rebbe was accompanied by the secretaries, Rabbi JJ Hecht, Mrs. Labkowski and other Chassidim.

In comparison to the other mosdos that the Rebbe visited, Machon Chana received especially warm attention, as is apparent from the following two anecdotes:

One year, when the Rebbe left a mosad for Machon Chana he said to R’ Hecht, “Now, I’m going home.” Another year, R’ Hecht asked the Rebbe: Since it is named

for your mother, when is she there? The Rebbe said, “Since the girls who live there go in her ways, she is constantly there.”

When the Rebbe went to Machon Chana on President Street, he visited every room in the building, going up even to the upper floors where he walked around the dormitory. R’ Itzke Gansburg who lived there with his wife said that when the Rebbe left the rooms he walked out while facing the room.

One year, one of the students brought a fresh bouquet of flowers and set them in different arrangements in an empty bookcase in the living room. When the Rebbe walked in and perused all of the details, he spent a few minutes near the flowers examining them from up close. His holy countenance showed clear signs of pleasure.

After the tour of the first and upper floors, the Rebbe went down to the basement where the dining room was and the girls were gathered for the seder. This is where the “official ceremony” began. The gashmi and ruchni staff were all present. First, the Rebbe wished each of the staff “*Gut Yom Tov*” and then he went to the kitchen to wish “*Gut Yom Tov*” to the cook, Mrs. Galperin.

In the kitchen, the Rebbe would look at the utensils and food. One time, he asked the cook if she also prepared homemade food in the kitchen of the Machon the way she did at home or were there things she made at home and not here. After that, every year she was particular about cooking every type of food so it would really be like home.

One year, when the Rebbe saw the plastic cups for the four cups of the seder, he said in surprise to R’ Hecht, “For girls?!”



THE DINING ROOM AT 1414 IN THE 90S. EVEN THE WALLS WERE COVERED...

This is not suitable!” The following year, there were silver cups.

The Rebbe would then say a bracha to the students. During the sicha, the Rebbe blessed the girls that the following year each should merit to be in her own home with her family. The visit was over and the Rebbe left.

Every year, there were different reactions from the Rebbe during the visit. One year, after the sicha, the Rebbe asked Mrs. Gansburg where the candles were. She motioned to where they were and the Rebbe said he was surprised that they didn't know that on Shabbos and Yom Tov the candles belonged on the table.

Another time, the Rebbe said to her, “Thank you for raising my daughters.”

One year, the Rebbe stopped near the staircase and said to the young son of R' Moshe Feller (shliach in Minnesota, who ran the seder for the girls) who was standing there whether he knew the “Ma

Nishtana” by heart. The boy said yes and the Rebbe asked, as he pointed at his father, whether he knew how to answer them. The boy said yes. Then the Rebbe asked, since you were given answers last year, why are you asking again this year?

The Rebbe answered this question based on an explanation of the saying, “In every single generation, a person must see himself as going out of Egypt,” that each time requires a loftier going out of Egypt than the previous time and the father's answer, “We were slaves,” is also on a higher level. (Pesach is also the birthday of the young protagonist of this anecdote and when he mentioned this, the Rebbe told him that this idea also pertains to a birthday.)

IRANIAN MAROR

An unusual visit took place in 5739. It was after a thousand Jewish Iranian boys and girls had been taken out of Iran and brought to New York. It was

.....
In this brave and daring operation, executed by some Lubavitcher Chassidim, about 1000 boys and girls were brought in the months of Shevat and Adar 5739. They were placed in Chabad mosdos until their parents arrived.
.....

an unprecedented operation that took place after Moslem extremists ousted the Shah and took over the government, installing Khomeini as the new leader, and instituting a series of extreme Islamic laws. Diplomatic relations between Iran and many western countries including Eretz Yisrael and the United States were severed.

Iranian Jews, who had lived in peace and relative security for years, were in danger. They feared that the Islamic government would persecute Jews. The Rebbe had the young generation extricated from Iran for the purpose of saving them both physically and spiritually. The idea was that they would be followed by their parents, who couldn't leave so fast and leave behind their wealth and their deep roots in an ancient and glorious Jewish history.

In this brave and daring operation, executed by some Lubavitcher Chassidim, about 1000 boys and girls were brought in the months of Shevat and Adar 5739. They were placed in Chabad mosdos until their parents arrived. Rabbi JJ Hecht oversaw the project.

The Rebbe gave special attention to these children, inquiring about their needs and constantly looking out for them.

The Rebbe also wanted to visit the sederim arranged for these children (boys and girls separately). Each group received his bracha for a kosher and happy Pesach.

It began after chatzos when the Rebbe gave out matzos that were baked that day. When R' Hecht passed by, the Rebbe told him to enter his office where he gave him a package of matzos for the bachurim from Iran and another package for the girls.

"Where are the girls having their seder?" asked the Rebbe.

"In Beis Rivka," said R' Hecht.

The Rebbe asked for four portions, that is eight *k'zeisim* of the maror that the Iranian children ate. R' Hecht was taken aback by this request and the Rebbe explained, "I don't mean for the gefilte fish but for the maror."

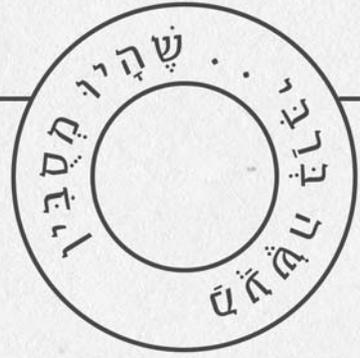
This was a rare display on the part of the Rebbe in light of the difficult and bitter state Iranian refugees were in at that time so that he wanted to eat their maror.



Only after visiting his sons and daughters, talmidim and talmidos, did the Rebbe return to 770 to have his own seder whether in the home of the Rebbe Rayatz or on President Street (starting in 5731).

For thirty years, 5711-5741, the Rebbe visited the mosdos chinuch on Seder night. The practice then stopped, but the memories are still cherished by the thousands of bachurim and students who are dispersed around the globe. ■





Around the Rebbe's Seder Table

**“The
Bachurim
Must Stay
A Full Year So They Can
Observe A Jewish Seder”**

— These words were used by the Rebbe when he discussed with President Shazar the importance of the bachurim of the “kevtza” from Eretz Yisrael being able to stay for Pesach in 770. In this panel discussion, five of those bachurim who now serve in various position of rabbanus and shlichus, share what they saw and heard at that “Jewish Seder” in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s apartment upstairs in 770

PARTICIPANTS:

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Offen – Mashpia, 5727-5728

Rabbi Gershon Burkis – Anash Lud, 5727-5728

Rabbi Dovid Meir Drukman – Rav of Kiryat Motzkin, 5727-5728

Rabbi Yeshaya Hertzl – Rav of Natzrat Illit, 5726, 5728

Rabbi Shneur Zalman Labkowsky – Rosh Yeshiva 770, 5726-5728

The Seder night. The holy and lofty night when lofty lights descend from above. The night when we relive anew the night of our freedom and redemption. The night that the Jewish Nation was born.

After Maariv on the first night of Yom Tov, the Rebbe would return to his room, and after distributing matzos (in continuation of the distribution on Erev Pesach) would go out to visit a number of public sedarim (see separate article).

Afterward, he would return to 770, go up to the apartment of the Rebbe Rayatz on the second floor and begin to set up for the seder. Then his brother-in-law Rashag and another few distinguished Chassidim would arrive and take their places at the seder table when it was ready to begin.

In the first years, the bachurim were allowed to come in already at the beginning of the seder. However, in the last few years (of the seder being held upstairs) certain limits were imposed and the doors were opened only towards the end of “Maggid,” and they would allow the bachurim and a few other Chassidim to enter. These visitors obviously did not

sit at the table, but would quietly observe the Rebbe’s conduct from the side. The late arrivals would come to the Rebbe’s seder only after quickly completing their own at home or in the dining room of the yeshiva.

When the Rebbe entered, one of the aides would come with the ready ke’ara from the Rebbe’s room with the matzos that the Rebbe had already arranged in his room. On the ke’ara was the Rebbe’s becher and plate. After the mashbak would place the ke’ara on the table, the Rebbe began to arrange the various components of the seder on top of the ke’ara.

Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik recounted: “I had the privilege of being at the seder of the Rebbe not only from the beginning but even before that, when the ke’ara was set up! The Rebbe began arranging his ke’ara about ten minutes before the seder began and I watched from a spot in the kitchen – facing directly opposite the ke’ara. The feeling I had as the ke’ara was being arranged is indescribable. An event saturated with outstanding holiness and gravity, as the Rebbe stood and arranged the ke’ara.

“This was a unique event and obviously it was an absolute secret all the years. That’s all I needed, that they should know I was there...”

THE REBBE CONDUCTS THE “SEDER”

“To see the seder of a Jew,” that is how the Rebbe himself referred to the rare privilege that bachurim in 770 merited in the first twenty years of the nesius.

Five rabbis and mashpiim, who saw the Rebbe’s seder as bachurim, describe those unforgettable moments.



THE REBBE SITTING AT A FARBRENGEN IN THE REBBE'S RAYATZ'S APARTMENT WHERE THEY WOULD CONDUCT THE SEDER.

R' Hertzl: We bachurim made a seder at 676 Eastern Parkway, opposite where Oholei Torah is today. The bachurim's seder was attended by talmidim of the yeshiva, not just the Israelis. Each person prepared his own ke'ara, wine and kosos.

R' Offen: The bachurim would prepare the ke'ara and wait for the Rebbe to come. When the Rebbe would come, he would walk around and look at all the tables and would go into Mussia's kitchen and look everything over. The Rebbe once noted that candles were missing, for a lit candle should be present at Kiddush in honor of Yom Tov. Then the Rebbe would stand and give a bracha.

R' Hertzl: When the Rebbe came in, he first went inside to see what was going on there. I remember that he pointed something out to Mussia about the food, about the placement of the mezuzah, and about the place where they had put the boxes of matzos. Then the Rebbe came

out and said a sicha and began to sing "Hup Cossack" and we bachurim danced in place. It was in indescribable feeling. As soon as the Rebbe left, we did an "express seder," because we obviously wanted to go and see the Rebbe's seder.

R' Offen: We knew that the Rebbe would soon be making a seder and we wanted to see everything, so we did our seder in twenty minutes as we quickly read through the Haggada and skipped the food. After *korech* and the egg we immediately ate the *afikoman*.

R' Burkis: We ate the five *k'zeisim* as we were obligated to and then ran off to the Rebbe's seder. As R' Offen said, it took about twenty minutes to do our seder and run to 770. We wanted to grab a place.

R' Offen: Many times we came early and waited for the Rebbe to come.

R' Drukman: To deliver an experiential description of what we merited to see in



R' DOVID MEIR DRUKMAN



R' YOSEF YITZCHOK OFFEN

the course of the sederim is extremely difficult. That is because the majestic and awe-inspiring scene, as well as the atmosphere which entirely radiated royalty, was literally not of this world. Everything around, including the floor, gleamed and shone. There was a feeling of actually being inside a palace.

At the head of the table was the seat of the Rebbe Rayatz, exactly as it was during his life in this world. To the left sat the Rebbe, whose countenance glowed with a supernal light, and to the right sat the Rebbe Rayatz's other son-in-law, Rashag. On the table, there was the small Pesach soup bowl of our "first father," the Alter Rebbe, and around the table sat about a minyan of elders of Anash. The "reader" of the Haggada and the one to lead the bentching was the Chassid, R' Yaakov Katz of Chicago, along with his son who asked the Four Questions.

R' Burkis: The best spot was behind Rashag since he would ask the Rebbe questions and the Rebbe would answer him, so whoever stood behind him could hear the Rebbe's answers.

R' Offen: Next to the Rebbe Rayatz's chair in the center was a ke'ara prepared for him which was on a rectangular silver platter and there were also a cup, spoon and fork. Aside from Rashag there were regularly invited guests including the artist R' Hendel Lieberman - the brother of R' Mendel Futerfas, R' Yitzchok Churgin, R' Zalman Teibel, and R' Yaakov Katz of Chicago who would read the Haggada. Yankel Katz's son, who was a bachur at the time, would ask the Four Questions.

R' Labkowsky: The Rebbe was intensely joyful. You did not see such simcha even on Simchas Torah. Although on Simchas Torah the Rebbe would dance, this inner joy, *tzufriidenkeit*, wasn't there. It was astounding. The Rebbe would do everything on his own; nobody helped him. The Rebbe himself brought the matzos and wine from his room.

PREPARING THE KE'ARA

R' Burkis: The Rebbe covered the ke'ara with a white napkin, but we could see there was something hard under the napkin - the ke'ara was made of some

hard material. The Rebbe would fold the napkin into four and in the three folds that were formed he would insert three matzos.

The Rebbe would start preparing the ke'ara. On the table were bowls, each of which contained one of the simanim. There were bowls of small onions, of lettuce, eggs, pieces of neck that were used as the *zeroa*, *maror*, and *charoses*.

R' Drukman: The Rebbe himself would arrange the ke'ara according to the Arizal. It was really amazing to see the speed of the Rebbe's hand to point of actual skilled craftsmanship. Beyond the amazing exactitude, you never saw the smallest crumb of any of the items fall off or to the side, almost like a pharmacist in a pharmacy, with trained and skilled hands.

R' Offen: The Rebbe would read the minhag or halacha from the Haggada and then do it. That was how the Seder began with the Rebbe reading, "he should arrange on his table, etc." and then doing it, putting the three matzos on the table, one on top of the other, Yisrael with the Levi on it and then the Kohen, and so on with everything throughout the night.

The Rebbe would take the zeroa, peel off almost

all the meat so only very little remained and would put it on the right of the ke'ara. Then he would take the egg and put it on the left.

R' Labkowsky: The Rebbe would break a little of the egg's shell so it wouldn't roll away when it was placed on the ke'ara.

THE REBBE DOES BATTLE WITH MITZRAYIM

On the Seder night in the year 5729, a unique event took place: When they were reciting the "Hallel" portion of the Haggada, the Rebbe repeated the words, "To the one who does great wonders on His own, His kindness is everlasting," three times with tremendous *dveikus* and great emotion. Each time, his voice got louder and became more emotional. As he was saying this, he struck forcefully with the closed fist of his right hand on the seat next to him.

At the time, everyone present saw on the Rebbe's face signs of *dveikus* and passion. There are those that say that on that night, after the recitation of "Lshana Ha'ba'a B'Yerushalayim," the Rebbe instructed that they sing "Prazos Teisheiv Yerushalayim."

After Yom Tov, it became known that literally during those moments when the Rebbe was repeating the verse, a shell landed in the dining room of one of the army outposts in the Sinai and could have caused the deaths of many soldiers who were present. It was only through an open miracle that the shell did not explode. Obviously, Chassidim drew a connection between the two events.

(As mentioned in the article, others recall this taking place two years earlier, and connected it to the miracles of the Six Day War that took place a little more than a month later.)

R' Offen: The Rebbe would take a soup spoon full of *chazeres* - ground horseradish and put it in his palm. If it was too watery, the Rebbe would squeeze it on the floor. The Rebbe would take four teaspoons full and make the shape of an egg and cover it with lettuce above and

below. He would also take a small piece of *chazeres* that was not ground up. That is how the Rebbe prepared the first maror.

[One of the *tmimim*, who had the privilege of being at the Rebbe's sederim for many years, points out that one year the Rebbe did not add any of the root to

WHEN THE BACHURIM WANTED TO COME IN TO THE SEDER

Rabbi Dovid Drukman recounted: The year 5727 (1967) was the first year that it was unusually crowded around the Rebbe's seder table. This was due to large number of students in that year's "Kevutza." As a result, an unpleasant occurrence took place.

It turns out that after the conclusion of the seder, due to the extreme crowding, the table collapsed. That itself was sort of a "mofes" in that it occurred only after the Rebbe left the room. We heard that Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka had a lot of aggravation over this. As a result, they announced that the next night, entrance to the Rebbe's seder would only be after the bentching.

The next night, the bachurim conducted the seder in the dining room of the yeshiva and did so relatively less rushed, since they knew that there was no reason to rush. However, I and another few bachurim decided to try, despite everything, to get in to the Rebbe's seder. That is how we found ourselves standing in the foyer opposite the door of the apartment of the Rebbe Rayatz, where the sederim were held.

Suddenly, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka walked through the foyer and noticed a group of bachurim waiting to come in. She turned to us and said, "It was agreed that there would be no coming in tonight."

I don't know if I behaved correctly, but I got up the nerve and said to the Rebbetzin, "But they announced that it would be possible to enter at 'Shefoch Chamoscha'..."

In response, the Rebbetzin said, "I will ask my husband."

The Rebbetzin walked back down the hall, went down the stairs to the bottom floor, and entered the Rebbe's room to ask him. The Rebbe was still in his room.

The Rebbetzin returned after some time, walked past us and did not say a word. When she entered the apartment of the Rebbe Rayatz, she left the door opened a drop. The hint was clear. Very quickly, we were inside.

This time there was a relatively small crowd at the seder, since they did not know that it would be permitted to enter, and only later did the room begin to fill up.



R' YESHAYA HERTZL

the maror of the korech. Additionally, R' Gershon Mendel Garelik shared about the Rebbe's custom regarding the maror:

As is already well known, the Rebbe would also eat a piece of horseradish that was not grated. While preparing the ke'ara, I noticed that the Rebbe took the vegetable itself, a large horseradish and cut it with a knife in a sharp, swift move, a sort of broad sweeping motion. This was a large piece of the root.

Then the Rebbe tried to cover it well so nobody would notice it. He covered it with the grated horseradish that was on the table and then he squeezed all this maror into an egg-shape. It took a long time with the Rebbe patting down the horseradish again and again. (It was only later, when the maror was eaten, that some noticed how much effort the Rebbe exerted while eating that piece of root.)]

R' Labkowsky: It is interesting that the Rebbe took the greenest leaves from the lettuce and not the inner leaves, and mainly from the upper part. The main part of the maror was the chazeres but the Rebbe wrapped it in a lettuce leaf.



R' SHNEUR ZALMAN LABKOWSKY

R' Burkis: The charoses was very dry. When the Rebbe put it in its place on the ke'ara, you could see it was like dry cardboard.

R' Offen: The Rebbe would take the onion and place it beneath the egg. After he finished, he would say the simanim, i.e. Kadeish, Urchatz, and pour himself wine.

R' Drukman: Throughout the seder, the Rebbe had a copy of the Haggada shel Pesach with his commentary; this was a Haggada with a unique print and a soft cover. To the best of my recollection, there were some lines missing from the frontispiece of this Haggada. I remember that the Rebbe's name was not printed there. The Rebbe also had next to him a Siddur HaArizal from Reb Shabsi of Rashkov. I noticed that it was a Siddur that someone had given the Rebbe as a gift, because I saw there was a dedication inside.

Before every action he would look both in the Haggada and in the Arizal Siddur, and he would say the instructions from the Alter Rebbe's Siddur that were appended to the nusach of the Haggada.



R' GERSHON BURKIS

It was a living lesson in what the Rebbe cites in his Haggada in the name of the Maharil, "Every person should tremble in awe to fulfill..." every matter and detail of the Seder night.

The Rebbe kept the bottle of wine that was covered inside a paper bag on the floor next to him and not on the table.

[It should be noted that in the first years, the bottle of wine was some distance from the Rebbe. Every time that he had to pour the wine, the bachur that was serving would bring the bottle to the Rebbe. One year when it came time to pour the next cup, the mashbak was not in the vicinity so the Rebbe got up from his place to bring the wine himself. The bachurim who were present didn't immediately grasp why the Rebbe got up. After the Rebbe poured the cup, he instructed the mashbak to place the bottle on the floor near him, and every time that he needed the wine the mashbak would hand it to the Rebbe and afterward place it back on the floor. Ever since that time, this was how it remained in the years that followed.]

KADEISH

R' Labkowsky: The Rebbe always poured his own wine. The special wine he used was made by the Rebbe's shochet, R' Yisroel Shimon Kalmanson. It was very strong wine. There were bachurim who made it a point to buy wine from him and after the seder they were out cold.

R' Offen: The Rebbe would pour until his cup overflowed. He made Kiddush standing and quietly. You did not hear his Kiddush. You could just see that the Rebbe held the cup as it says in the minhagim.

R' Drukman: The Rebbe would say the Kiddush quietly, but interestingly when he would say it they would open the door to the room where the women sat. (Those present could only see that the door was open, but it was in a corner on an angle that made it impossible to see what was going on in that room.) Apparently, this was done as a gesture of respect as it would be impossible to say that the Rebbe was *motzi* the women with this Kiddush, since his voice could not be heard. Most likely, the women made Kiddush for themselves.

[One individual who was present at the meals in the upstairs apartment for many years recounted that he noticed that before Kiddush the Rebbe looked towards the room where the ladies were to make sure that the Rebbetzin was there. When the Rebbetzin was delayed, the Rebbe would wait while he occupied himself with other things so that people would not notice that he was waiting for her. Only after the Rebbetzin appeared did the Rebbe begin Kiddush.]

I remember that one time the Rebbetzin Nechama Dina (wife of the Rebbe Rayatz) once came out at the end of the seder on

THE SEDER VESSELS OF THE REBBEIM



in the year 1846, during the leadership of the Tzemach Tzedek. It is therefore possible that this ke'ara was also used by the Rebbeim who preceded the Rebbe Rayatz.

A) A broken dish (by intention) for pouring the wine into during the recitation of the “plagues.”

B) The Rebbe’s Seder Plate (ke’ara).

On the bottom of the tray is a stamp indicating that it was made in the USA in the year 1950. Before Pesach 5711, the Rebbe sent R’ Yaakov (JJ) Hecht to purchase a tray for him with eight corners. From that point and on, the Rebbe used it as the ke’ara for the Pesach Seder.

In the Rebbe’s Haggada it is written: “In the Beis HaRav they arrange the matzos on a cloth and not on a ke’ara, except for the Admor who arranges the matzos on a silver tray.” It would seem clear from the above that until 5711, when the Rebbe sat at the seder of his father-in-law, the Previous Rebbe, he set up his matzos on a cloth and not on a tray.

C) The Rebbe Rayatz’s Seder Plate (ke’ara).

On the bottom of the tray is a stamp indicating that it was made in Russia

D) The silver serving bowl of the Alter Rebbe.

In this bowl of the Alter Rebbe, they would serve soup at the seder table, and each one of those present would take three spoons of soup.

E) A gold Kos Kiddush, which the Rebbe used for Kiddush on the later days of Pesach.

The cup was gifted to the Rebbe by the Chassid, R’ Aharon Klein, on Yud-Aleph Nissan 5722. Engraved on the cup is the verse, “Add days to the days of the king,” from chapter 61 which the Rebbe began to say on that day when he turned sixty years old.

On the bottom of the cup is engraved “U’foratzta,” which was the Rebbe’s call at that time, to spread Judaism and Chassidus in the entire world in a way of “And you shall burst forth westward and eastward and northward and southward,” and on the edge of the bottom is engraved the name of the one who gave the goblet to the Rebbe.

the second night (before the Rebbe left to his room). Since she was extremely hard of hearing, she spoke in a very loud voice. She addressed the Rebbe and asked him, being that the next evening was the yahrtzeit of her grandfather, the Rebbe Maharin (Reb Yisroel Noach) of Niezhin (the son of the Tzemach Tzedek), or as she referred to him, “*der zeide, der Niezhiner Rebbe*,” when to light the yahrtzeit candle, before or after Havdala.

Since she was so hard of hearing, the Rebbe answered her in sign language. He showed with his hands like somebody holding a kos, and made a motion with his hand to indicate that the answer was “after the kos,” meaning after Havdala

R’ Offen: On the Rebbe’s left was a chair whose back was turned to face the left, on which they placed two pillows which the Rebbe leaned on. Rashag was also given a pillow, but since he was a loyal Chassid of the Rebbe, he did not lean.

R’ Labkowsky: The Rebbe would recline with his hand on the chair next to him which had the pillows for reclining. For Urchatz he would stand up and go to the sink opposite the table and wash his hands.

R’ Drukman: The Rebbe did not just lean himself to one direction, but was practically lying down. Interestingly while on the topic; they only prepared pillows for the Rebbe and Rashag, while for the other participants they did not prepare any space for reclining. However, the Rashag also did not recline in keeping with the law of a talmid seated before his Rebbe. So in actual practice, the Rebbe was the only one to recline.

KARPAS - YACHATZ

R’ Offen: The Rebbe would shake the salt-shaker three times into the cup of water in front of him, and remove the inner part of the onion with a knife and put it in the saltwater. Then he would take the middle matza and break it inside the napkin. He broke the afikoman into five pieces and put it into its own napkin, which he placed between the pillows on the other chair.

MAGGID

The Rebbe would come to the Seder with the Haggada he authored in pamphlet form and with the Siddur of the Arizal. R’ Yaakov Katz would begin reading the Haggada out loud, slowly, and the Rebbe would read the page quickly and silently and then look at the reasons and minhagim that he wrote, and then in the Siddur of the Arizal. When R’ Yankel began the next page, the Rebbe began with him too, and again finished the page quickly and read in the two Haggados.

That is what happened until they reached a part where you need to cover or uncover the matza. Then the Rebbe waited for everyone. When the Rebbe uncovered the matza, he would uncover all three matzos. Also by “V’Hee She’amda,” the Rebbe waited for everyone, raised his cup, and said it along with the reader.

R’ Labkowsky: The Rebbe poured the drops into a broken dish that was placed on the floor. Immediately after the pouring they would remove the dish.

R’ Offen: The Rebbe poured very little. After pouring all sixteen times, hardly anything was missing from his cup. The

Rebbe would refill the cup after all the pouring.

RACHTZA - MOTZI MATZA

R' Hertzl: When the Rebbe finished the Haggada, he would read the instructions about Rachtza and Motzi Matza since you cannot speak after washing your hands for matza. Then the Rebbe read the instructions for the maror and took maror.

R' Offen: The Rebbe went to the kitchen to wash his hands, said the bracha over all the matza, said the bracha on the mitzva of matza and broke off a *k'zayis* from each of the two matzos.

R' Labkowsky: The Rebbe ate the matza with both hands. He would recline as he grasped the broken matzos with both hands and chewed them quickly. Amazingly, not one piece fell from his hands. The matzos were hard to digest, especially when the Rebbe was missing most of his teeth at that time, and so the time for eating was relatively lengthy. We did not look at how much time it took.

[One of the tmimim who merited to attend a number of years pointed out that one year eating the matzos on the first night took five minutes, and the same for the *k'zayis* maror. The eating of the Korech took 11 minutes (9 minutes the second night.)]

After finishing eating the matzos, the Rebbe would wipe his teeth with a napkin so no matza crumbs remained between his teeth.

R' Drukman: At the seder, the Rebbe broke the matza into a number of pieces and “wrapped” them in his hands and that is how he ate a very large amount at great speed.

Throughout the seder, the Rebbe used many paper napkins and constantly wiped his lips as “advance insurance” that there not be any concern of *gebrokts*. He placed the napkins after use on a piece of furniture that was next him and was covered with a white tablecloth (the Rebbe did not throw the napkins on the floor – contrary to what was publicized).

There was a bachur who stood next to the Rebbe who thought he would be smart and take the napkins for himself, apparently as some sort of “segula.” When the Rebbe noticed, he said to him, “That is *gebrokts*.” (He did not say “chometz” as some claim; he said “*gebrokts*”).

MAROR - KORECH

R' Labkowsky: The Rebbe would take some charoses on a spoon and put it on the plate beneath the wine cup. He would dip the chazeres (horseradish) into the charoses but not the lettuce. He would take the chazeres, cover it with some lettuce again, and eat it. As he ate the korech, he would dip the chazeres into the dry charoses and not into the charoses in his plate. The Rebbe ate the korech and afikomen with both hands.

The Rebbe would add even more chazeres to what was on the plate. It was an awesome sight to see the Rebbe eating that. There was the sense that the Rebbe was taking on the bitterness of all the Jewish people. He would cough and eat, cough and eat.

R' Offen: Eating the maror took time. Sometimes the Rebbe’s eyes streamed tears.

R' Drukman: While eating the maror, the Rebbe coughed a lot. As is known, he would eat part of the root of the

horseradish which is especially sharp, as he said that he does this because that was the custom of the Minchas Elozor of Munkatch.

Again when eating the korech, the Rebbe broke the matza into a number of pieces and put the maror in the middle, so that there were a few layers of matza on top of the maror and a few layers underneath the maror. He wrapped the entire sandwich in the two palms of his hands and fingers, and that is how he ate. Reclining, obviously.

SHULCHAN ORECH

R' Labkowsky: For Shulchan Orech, the Rebbe would take the egg, roll it on the table and peel it without leaving any shell.

R' Hertzl: The Rebbe did not open the egg to check for blood but ate it as is. He did not begin eating until the assistant, in our days that was Shlomo Reinitz, sat down and began eating too.

R' Offen: After the Rebbe took the egg from the ke'ara, only the zeroa and charoses remained on it. They remained there until the end of the meal.

R' Burkis: When they served fish to the Rebbe, he would pour a lot of salt on it. There was actually a layer of salt on the fish. The Rebbe would eat it as though it was ordinary fish. You could not see any indication on his face that he was eating something inordinately salty.

R' Offen: It's completely beyond human capacity, impossible, for someone to eat something like that. The Rebbe ate fish that way all year, not only on Pesach.

[One of the tmimim who was at the Rebbe's seder for a number of years wrote in his diary: At the day meals, the Rebbe

dipped the matza in salt three times. However, since the salt didn't stick to the matza, the Rebbe took another piece of matza and sprinkled some salt on it and would eat it before eating the fish.

One year, they brought the Rebbe a cup of water during the meal of "Shulchan Orech." The Rebbe said, "*Ah dank*, but I only drink wine.]

R' Drukman: The Rebbe would cover the portion of fish (a piece of gefilte fish) with a "mountain" of salt, which an ordinary person would not be able to eat.

R' Offen: During the meal, the Rebbe would dip the matza into salt now and then even though with the bracha of *hamotzi* at the seder we do not dip the matza into salt. The Rebbe would put the salt under the napkin of the matzos so that the crumbs wouldn't scatter.

R' Burkis: They brought the soup in a tureen belonging to the Alter Rebbe. It was a wide and deep bowl, made of silver. The Rebbe would take first and then the rest of the people.

R' Offen: The Rebbe would take three spoons of soup which is what everybody else did too.

R' Labkowsky: One year, they made kneidlach out of potato starch for the soup. One of the helpers thought it was made out of matza meal and told the Rebbe. They immediately corrected him and he hurried to tell the Rebbe of his mistake, but the Rebbe did not eat the soup after that.

He never ate the potatoes in the soup, just the liquid. That year, the Rebbe did not eat anything.

R' Offen: After the soup they served meat.

R' Labkowsky: The Rebbe would eat matza and drink wine at the meal. I thought that this is what is meant when it says [in the Haggada, that at the meal] one “eats and drinks his full need.” The “drinking” was definitely “his full need.” The Rebbe would add wine and drink.

R' Drukman: I noticed that the Rebbe never put his left hand on the table. During the seder meal, when eating the soup and in order to get the liquid from the bottom of the bowl, he would push up the bowl from under the table (with his thumb, I think) so that the bowl would tilt for that purpose. This was all in order to avoid placing his left hand on the table.

(Only one time a year did the Rebbe also use his left hand on the table to assist in eating, which was the Erev Yom Kippur meal, as that is the custom according to the Arizal and that was also the practice of the Rebbe's father Reb Levi Yitzchok).

If my memory does not deceive me, they served compote at the end of the meal. Since nobody would take from the serving plate before the Rebbe, the Rebbe took first so that everybody else would feel comfortable taking. In practice though, he left it next to him and did not eat it.

R' Burkis: During the meal, Rashag would ask the Rebbe questions and the Rebbe would answer him. The Rebbe answered quietly and only those nearby could hear him. After the seder there was a review of what was said with Rashag and the bachurim who heard repeating it. Excerpts were published in *Ha'Melech B'Mesibo*.

R' Drukman: The Rebbe never said a word on his own initiative at the seder table, but he did respond and answer questions relating to the nusach of the Haggada that his brother-in-law Rashag

would ask. There were times, depending on the topic, when a slight regal smile would spread across his face.

In general, except for the questions and answers and the voice of R' Yaakov Katz reading the Haggada, a majestic silence reigned in the room, like in the royal chamber.

R' Offen: They usually did not sing, but one time Rashag asked something, and following that they sang “Al Achas Kama V'Kama.”

TZAFUN

R' Drukman: When the time came close to *chatzos* – the end-time for eating the afikoman – the Rebbe inquired as to the time.

During the eating of the afikoman, the room would continue to fill up with residents of the shechuna, bachurim and married men, who had already completed the seder at home. I remember the Rebbe's personal secretary, Rabbi Chodakov, was somewhat “high” after the drinking of the four cups of wine.

R' Labkowsky: During the meal, on both nights, the Rebbe would ask what time it was a few times. Close to halachic midnight, which in those days before they changed the clock early, was around 12:00, he would stop the meal and move on to the afikoman. At about ten to twelve the Rebbe moved on to the afikoman.

I saw how the Rebbe was particular about leaving over a piece of the afikoman and would put it aside under the plate of matzos.

R' Offen: After the afikoman, the Rebbe gave his cup and the plate dirty with charoses to be washed and dried.

WHAT DID THE REBBE DO WITH THE AFIKOMAN?

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner, the Rebbe's secretary, recounted:

The Rebbe always left over from the afikoman of the Seder night for after Pesach as well. One summer day when I entered the office, the Rebbe said to me, "In the bottom of the bookcase there is some afikoman from Pesach. Take a piece from it and pack it up."

The Rebbe gave me an address in Bombay, India, in order to send it there by express mail and added, "After you send it, call the family and tell them that they wrote to me that their mother is very sick and the doctors don't know how to help her, and that is why I sent the afikoman. When the matza arrives, they should make an effort that she taste from the afikoman. Since matza is a matter of *michla d'meheimenusa* and *michla d'asvasa* (food of faith and food of healing), thereby Hashem will send her a refuah sheleima."

I called the family in India and spoke to the daughter, as the Rebbe instructed, and I explained to her what to do with the matza. Two weeks later, the daughter called and said that as soon as the package arrived they put some crumbs of the matza into the mother's mouth and immediately saw marked improvement. I encouraged her to continue, and in fact, a day or two later she regained consciousness and a brief while later she returned to complete health.

After birkas ha'mazon, they drank the third cup. Then the helpers would go to open the door. When it was a weekday, they took candles.

BEIRACH - HALLEL

R' Burkis: The Rebbe said the birkas ha'mazon out loud; we heard every word. The Rebbe said Hallel sweetly, out loud and clear.

R' Drukman: When R' Yaakov Katz would say the words "Ana Hashem – hoshia – hatzlicha..." those who were sitting at the table answered as is the custom in shul, where the shliach tzibbur says and the congregation repeat out loud. However, the crowd of the residents and bachurim (who had already completed the seder) did not respond. At that point, the Rebbe turned his head around to the crowd and with the palm of his hand expressed his surprise as to why all present did not join in answering "Ana Hashem, hoshia na."

R' Offen: From "Shefoch Chamascha" until the end of "Yishtabach," the Rebbe said the words a bit louder than the rest of the Haggada so that those standing nearby could hear him. This was the only opportunity during the Seder to hear the Rebbe's voice.

R' Labkowsky: The Rebbe said "Shefoch Chamascha" while sitting. From then on, it was completely different. The Rebbe would say the Haggada out loud and with dveikus. It looked as though the Rebbe was in a completely different world. Pesach night was special. You never saw the Rebbe in such a state at any other time.

R' Drukman: I noticed that the Rebbe said some bits of the Haggada with his eyes closed. It seems to me that it was during the recitation of "Nishmas," and this part was said with amazing *dveikus* and open outpouring of the soul. As is well known, the Rebbe's way was to keep things inside and restrain his feelings. Despite the fact that his eyes were closed, when he reached the end of the page I noticed that he turned the page, as though the pages of the Haggada were photographed in his mind.

R' Hertzl: The Rebbe said "Nishmas" in a unique way. You could hear the great pleasure the Rebbe had in every word.

R' Labkowsky: The Rebbe said Hallel in a special way, just for Seder night. In 5727, the Rebbe repeated the words, "To the one who does great wonders on His own, His kindness is everlasting" three times. A month and a half later is when the miraculous Six Day War took place.

CONCLUSION OF THE SEDER

R' Offen: Pouring back the wine from Eliyahu's cup was an avoda. The Rebbe would pour from the cup of Eliyahu to his own cup, and from there to the bottle and then back to his own cup and from there to Eliyahu's cup and more back and forth an unknown number of times. Those present sang "Keili Ata" while this was going on.

[From the diary of R' Yehuda Leib Raskin (5715): The Rebbe shlita poured the cup of Eliyahu into his own cup and then back again, then into the bottle and back again, and from one to the other. He did this a number of times, which in general was impossible to grasp. On the two nights it was done in a different manner. During the pouring, those sitting

and standing sang the niggun of the Alter Rebbe "Keili Ata."]

R' Drukman: When the Rebbe poured the wine from the Kos shel Eliyahu back into the bottle, it was a whole avoda. From the cup of Eliyahu to the Rebbe's cup, to the bottle, back and forth from here to there. All this took an extended amount of time, and it seems to me that nobody was able to grasp what the exact order was here.

During the pouring of the cup, they sang "Keili Ata" as is the custom in Chabad, and afterward they continued to sing this niggun in a rousing dance that continued in the "zal" downstairs.

R' Hertzl: At the end of the seder the Rebbe would go downstairs with everyone else following. Downstairs they continued to sing and dance to "Keili Ata" for a long time. Obviously, a seder like that left an imprint of kedusha and hiskashrus to the Rebbe forever!



It our hope and prayer that our Merciful Father will have mercy on the remnants of His people, and we are fortified by our certainty that very soon we will merit, together with the entire Jewish Nation, the renewal of our days as before, with joy and gladness of heart, with the revelation of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach immediately now. And then we will see the king in his glory in the Holy City of Yerushalayim, in the Third Beis HaMikdash, and this very year we will eat from the offerings and from the Korban Pesach. ■



The Seder at the Rebbe's Home

After Rebbetzin Nechama Dina's passing on 10 Teves 5731, the Rebbe began conducting his Seder privately at home. Reb Sholom Gansbourg who had the *zechus* to aid the Rebbe and Rebbetzin at their home, shares recollections of these special Sedarim





After the passing of Rebbetzin Nechama Dina in 5731, the sederim in the Rebbe Rayatz's apartment, with the participation of Chassidim, ceased. This was after their taking place thirty years in a row. The Rebbe began having the seder with Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka in their home on President Street.

The table was set by the assistants (mashbakim) who took care of everything and the Rebbe and Rebbetzin had the seder alone.

The situation changed at the beginning of the 80s after the Rebbetzin began to suffer a problem with her foot. Then, the mashbak, R' Sholom Ber Gansburg joined them and he would sit with the Rebbe and Rebbetzin at the seder.

"One year, the Rebbetzin had a problem with her foot and my brother Mendel drove her to the hospital and brought her back that evening. At a certain point, they told me that the Rebbetzin was in the hospital and wanted to see me. I immediately went to the hospital but when I arrived, she had already returned home, so I headed for the Rebbe's house.

"Upon arriving, I went to their bedroom where they were, the Rebbe standing between the beds and the Rebbetzin sitting in a wheelchair. The Rebbetzin said to me, 'I'd like you come stay over tonight.' I said I would do so; I just wanted to get some things that I needed from my house.

"The Rebbe smiled, looking pleased. I got my things from my house and lived at the Rebbe's house after that.

"The first night of Pesach, I assumed the Rebbe and Rebbetzin wanted to have the seder on their own. I thought that since I had already set up everything they needed for the seder, I would quickly have my own seder at my parents' home and would return to the Rebbe and Rebbetzin for Shulchan Orech in order to serve, which is what I did.

"Upon arriving at the Rebbe's home I was surprised. The Rebbe and Rebbetzin had waited for me and had not started their own seder. As soon as she saw me, the Rebbetzin said, 'Sholom, where did you disappear to? My husband has been waiting for you...'

"As my teeth chattered and my whole body trembled the Rebbe asked me, 'What are you up to?' I told the Rebbe where in the Haggada I was up to. The Rebbe pointed at the matzos and said, 'Nu, take matza and make a ke'ara.' I was discombobulated in a way that I had never been before in my life, so that I had to look in the siddur in order to remember how the ke'ara is set up."

R' Sholom Ber Gansbourg related some things he saw the Rebbe do at the seder:

In the Rebbe's home they did not put the maror, after grinding it, into a closed container so that it wouldn't be too sharp. They would put the head of the horseradish on the plate together with the other items. When the Rebbe arranged the ke'ara, after arranging the Maror and Korech, he would take a very small piece of the head with the tip of his knife and put it inside the Maror and the Korech.

For Karpas, the Rebbe took a whole onion and upon reaching Karpas, he cut a piece with a knife and dipped it in salt water.

At sederim that the Rebbe had in his apartment in the library building, he would break the afikoman into five pieces on top of the pillowcase (not inside it).

In the apartment in the library building, the Rebbe read from the Haggada more slowly than when he read it at the sederim that were held in the apartment of the Rebbe Rayatz and in a different way, especially when he got up to Nishmas, but it is hard to describe this.

The Rebbe would pour the Kos shel Eliyahu himself. Sometimes he poured it before birkas ha'mazon and sometimes afterward but I don't remember exactly the order of the different years.

At the sederim in the Rebbe Rayatz's home, the Rebbe used a glass cup for the Kos shel Eliyahu. When the Rebbe poured the wine from the Kos shel Eliyahu back into the bottle, after finishing the seder in his apartment, he would tell me to sing

ADDITIONAL CUSTOMS

Rabbi Shimshon Junik who served as a mashbak from 5742 and on and helped with the preparations for the seder table, provides additional details about the seder:

- At sederim in his home and the library building as well as his office, the Rebbe used a cup with a stem for the Kos shel Eliyahu.
- In preparing charoses, they used only apples and nuts and no pears.
- In the kitchen in the Rebbe's home, they would tie material on the faucet to filter the water.
- I would grind the horseradish with a hand grater, leaving some pieces not grated as was customary. It was very difficult, especially on the eyes. One year, before I began preparing the maror, I opened the back door so fresh air would come in and I also used a face mask hoping this would help with the tears. It didn't work and the Rebbetzin stood on the side and smiled.

After a few years, I began preparing the maror in a food processor. At first, the Rebbetzin was concerned that the sharpness would dissipate but it was so strong that the Rebbetzin still left the jar open so the sharpness would recede a bit.

“Keili Ata” and then he would join and sing along.

From the following story we see how the Rebbe was concerned to bring joy to another Jew and even when, unfortunately, a mistake was made, the Rebbe emphasized the positive aspect:

One year, the wine that was brought to Beis Rebbi for Pesach was spoiled. (It wasn't the fault of the one who prepared

it; it was due to a side reason.) When the Rebbetzin tasted the wine at the seder that year, she noted that it was spoiled. When the seder was over, the Rebbe smiled and said to R' Gansbourg, "You need to tell the one who prepared the wine that all the blessings were made on it and all the *hamshachos* were drawn down through that."

THE KING IN HIS CHAMBER

In 5748, two months after the passing of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, the Rebbe went to 770 to spend Yom Tov. As was customary every year, before the seder, the *mashbakim* went to *gan eden ha'tachton* to receive matza for the seder.

The first night of Pesach after the Rebbetzin's passing, Mrs. Halberstam asked her son Ari, Hy'd, to tell the Rebbe that she invited him to have the seder with them. When Ari went to get matza, he invited the Rebbe on behalf of his mother. The Rebbe smiled broadly and then stressed several times to convey his thanks to her. He said there was a problem with the *bracha* [i.e. over the candles; the *seuda* needs to be where the candles are].

The following year, well before Pesach, Mrs. Halberstam wrote to the Rebbe that she was inviting him in advance so no questions would arise and anyway, she concluded, why should the Rebbe sit alone at the seder?

When Ari went to the Rebbe for matza and invited the Rebbe, the Rebbe smiled and said to tell his mother that he wasn't alone at the seder. "I am here," he said, pointing at the door of his office, "with the *shver* [Rebbe Rayatz] on the night of the seder."

This continued in the years that followed, with the Rebbe having the seder alone in his room. The following are some points from those *sedarim* that the Rebbe had on his own, as reported by R' Sholom Ber Gansbourg:

"One day, the Rebbe received two golden cups as a gift. He used them to make kiddush at home and in his apartment in the library. One cup was used for kiddush on Shabbos and Yom Tov and one cup was used on Pesach. When he ate in his room in 770 (after the passing of the Rebbetzin), he used a silver cup. When I asked him whether I should bring the gold cup, he did not want it.

"At *sedarim* that took place in the Rebbe's room in the library building and those he had in his office in 770, the Rebbe would go to the door himself for *Shefoch Chamoscha*, while holding a candlestick with a lit candle."

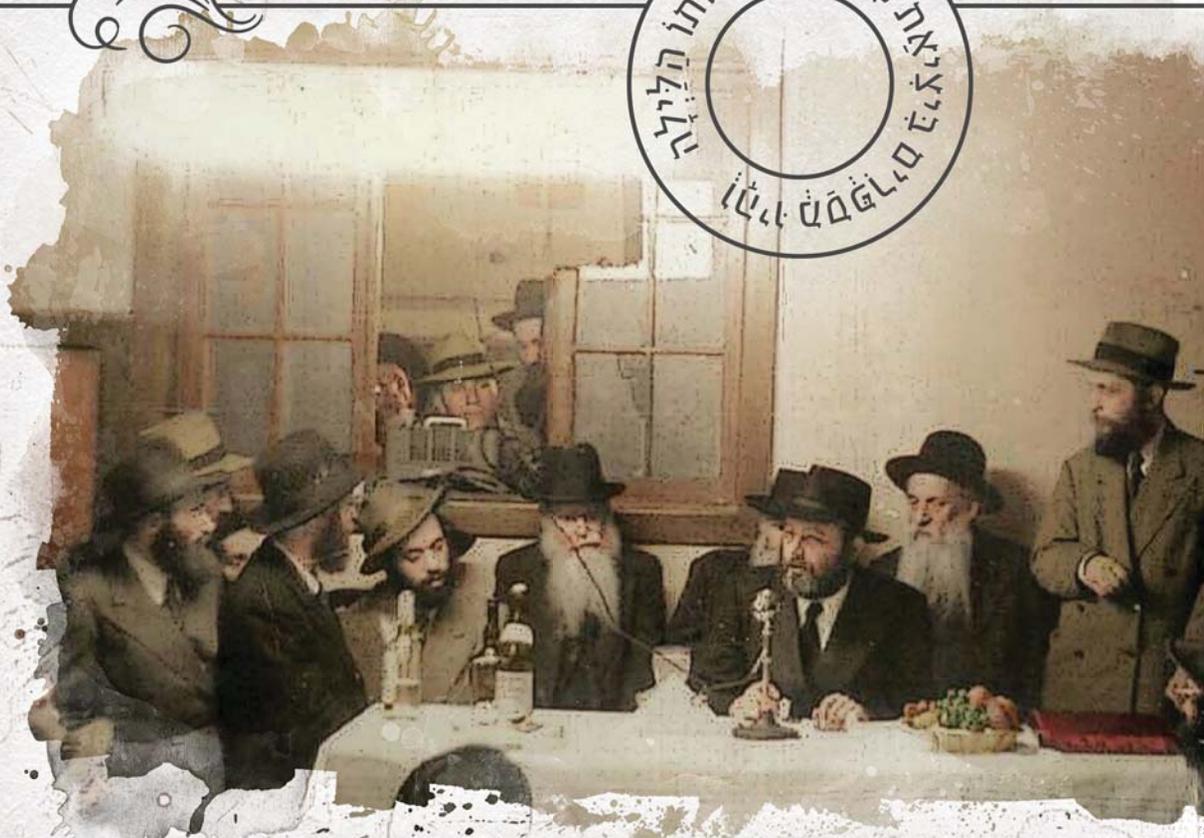
CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES

The following is a list of customs and practices of the Rebbe as reported by R' Sholom Dovber Gansbourg, from *Ba'Kodesh Penima* by Rabbi Yosef Ashkenazi:

Based on the Rebbetzin's instructions, food for all of Pesach was prepared before Yom Tov but not the water.

In the Rebbe Rayatz's apartment, the Rebbe would recite kiddush over a silver cup. At a certain point, when he began to conduct the seder at home, the Rebbe began using a gold cup and he did so when he made kiddush in the library building and in his office in 770. Wine was on the table in a brown paper bag.

cont. on p. 57



The Rebbe Explains the Haggada at a “Dry” Farbrengen



This grand and holy night did not end with the conclusion of the seder but went on for many hours, as described by the secretary, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner:

As is known, on the first night of Pesach, our Rebbeim said few explanations of the Haggada so as to be able to eat the afikoman before chatzos. On the second night, they spent time on explanations.

There was a chiddush in this as far as the Rebbe was concerned. Starting in 5711, we saw that the Rebbe was particular to also eat the afikoman before chatzos on the second night. Sometimes, due to lack of time, the Rebbe shortened the meal and ate just a small piece of fish, a few spoonfuls of soup and a small piece of chicken and was particular to eat the afikoman before chatzos.

In 5711, on the second night of Pesach, the Rebbe came downstairs after the seder that took place in the Rebbe Rayatz's home, and went to his office. I stood there with some other bachurim who waited outside until the Rebbe left for home.

To our surprise, the Rebbe came out of his room while holding a Haggada and entered the small zal. He went to the spot where he farbrenged (near the wall between the zal and the *cheder sheini*), sat down and said, "Since the custom of the Rebbeim is that on the second night they explain the Haggada, I will try to do the same." Then he said, "What to say? I don't know, but I'll jump into the sea and what will come out, will come out."

I remember that special occasion until today. The small zal wasn't set up as it was

for a farbrengen. In the few moments it took for the Rebbe to sit alone at the table, we managed to arrange a few benches facing him. There were no more than fifty people there and none of them went out to announce this to others since they didn't want to miss hearing anything the Rebbe said.

And the Rebbe began explaining the Haggada.

Among those present were Rabbi Tzvi Hirsh Gansbourg who was known as a "baal menagen." I remember the first niggun he began to sing. Since then, every time this niggun is sung, I'm reminded of that scene. The Rebbe suddenly began to encourage the singing with energetic movements of his holy hands like on Simchas Torah. Due to the great simcha the people danced with tremendous energy and the benches nearly broke.



The first night of Pesach 5714 there was no farbrengen as there had been in earlier years but at the end of the seder they sang "Keili Ata" as is customary when pouring the Kos shel Eliyahu back into the bottle. The Rebbe then said, in his father-in-law's name, that this niggun is a segula for the revelation of Eliyahu and a preparation for the Geula. As he said this, he motioned that they continue singing.

At the end, the Rebbe left and went to his room while the crowd accompanied him in song.

Near his room the Rebbe stopped in the corridor and began speaking about the Haggada and the essence of Pesach.

Now and then he stopped between sichos and said to sing and dance. Those present noted that the Rebbe was unusually emotional.

One of those present was Rabbi Yehuda Leib Raskin who related:

“I remember that when the Rebbe came down at the end of the seder and stood in *gan eden ha'tachton* he said, ‘R' Mordechai [Mentlick, rosh yeshiva of Tomchei Tmimim] and all his students should dance.’ We were about ten bachurim and we all danced. Then the Rebbe went out into the foyer opposite the elevator and began to dance himself.

“The Rebbe spoke with R' Zalman Duchman and finished the conversation with him by saying, ‘May Hashem help that on Leil Shimurim 5714 the *is'chalta d'geula* should begin.’”

Rabbi Yoel Kahan also told about that Seder night:

After conducting the seder, the Rebbe stood in the entrance hall of 770 near the entrance to *gan eden ha'tachton* and said wondrous things. He said that within every Jew there is literally a part of G-d above and the Rebbe pointed at himself and at some people standing around him and said, “In my body, in your body and your body – here is where the ‘*chelek Eloka mimaal mamosh*’ is.” There were wondrous giluyim then.

In another diary written at that time it said:

“There still echoes in my ears the things said by the Rebbe about the neshama which is literally part of G-d above. It is impossible to describe just how mind-blowing was the manner of speaking and the emotion. We literally felt that

the Rebbe sees the neshama within each one of us.”

R' Sholom Feldman related:

I remember that when the Rebbe came downstairs, he was in a very joyous state. He stood near the door to his office and moved his hand to encourage the singing and simcha. The Rebbe himself danced in place and near him stood dozens of bachurim and some yungeleit who had come from Paris. The entire *gan eden ha'tachton* was full with bachurim who crowded in. Some stood on the steps and others stood near the elevator. All the bachurim danced with great joy and there was a tremendous “koch” there in the simcha. One of the yungeleit standing on the side watched the scene in amazement and the Rebbe pointed out that he was standing on the side and not joining the dancing.

The Rebbe was in very good spirits. Everyone felt that this was a heavenly matter. It was an entirely unique auspicious time, not ordinarily seen by the Rebbe. These were moments of “revelations” that were seen generally only on Purim and the like.

Rabbi Dovid Meir Drukman described what followed the second seder in 5727:

After the seder in the Rebbe Rayatz's apartment, the Rebbe came down around 1:00 to the zal downstairs, his holy face shining and glowing like white snow. He sat down at his place at the farbrengen table (of course without eating or saying l'chaim because it was after eating the afikoman) and began saying explanations on the Haggada with his eyes closed. The Rebbe explained sections of the Haggada until the wee hours of the morning.

Fortunate is the eye that saw all this. ■

Under the Rebbe's napkin was a silver ke'ara. The napkin was folded in the length and width (like table napkins but larger) and each of the matzos was separate (but when he ate matza during the year they were in a regular cloth matza holder [see also Hanhagos of Shabbos]).

However, since it was one napkin, the middle section of the napkin, where the Rebbe placed the "Levi" matza, was open on three sides. Therefore, after the seder, in the Rebbe Rayatz's apartment, the Rebbe would collect the remains of matza from the middle of the napkin and pour them into the two other closed sections where he had put the "Kohen" and "Yisroel" matzos during the seder.

After he finished pouring (the wine from the Kos shel Eliyahu back into the bottle), he would put the napkin on the silver ke'ara and would instruct me to take them and the wine and go ahead of him (so I wouldn't be pushed as I walked). It was only after I took them and began walking that the Rebbe walked with me to his room where I put them down [when the sedarim took place in the Rebbe's apartment in the library building, the napkin remained in the apartment].

There was no additional napkin under each of the other items (in the ke'ara).

At the sedarim that he held in the library building, the Rebbe would break the afikoman into five pieces on top of the pillowcase (not inside it).

Before reading Maggid, the Rebbe uncovered [the matzos by folding back] only a little of the upper part of the napkin.

When he read the Ten Makkos, the Rebbe would pour wine into a broken bowl that was placed on the floor. It was taken away right after the pouring.

Both at the seder and the rest of Yom Tov, they did not clear away the matzos from the Rebbe's table before serving the meal. The Rebbe moved the matzos off to the side a bit.

Before reading *Shefoch Chamoscha*, they would open all the doors that they would have to walk through until the exit from the building. When they finished reading, the doors were restored to the way they were before: those that were only closed before *Shefoch Chamoscha* were closed and those that had been locked, were locked.

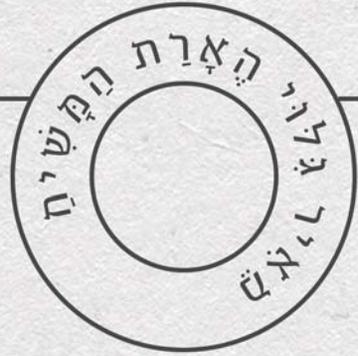
At the sedarim in the Rebbe's apartment in the library building as well as those in his office in 770, the Rebbe would go to the door himself, while holding one candlestick with a lit candle.

When the Rebbe poured the wine from the Kos shel Eliyahu back into the bottle, after finishing the seder in his apartment in the library, he would tell me to sing "Keili Ata" and then he would join and sing along.

On Pesach, the Rebbe only ate food prepared in his home except for two things: cottage cheese and sour cream. In the morning, he would drink milk mixed into hot water (the rumor that the Rebbe ate chocolate on Pesach is not true).

In the Rebbe's home they did not drink tea and did not use sugar, not even boiled sugar. ■





From the
Baal Shem Tov
to the Present:

A Moshiach's Seuda Timeline

For generations, Moshiach's Seuda on the last day of Pesach was a privately observed tradition. In the year 5666, the Rebbe Rashab expanded the ranks and it has even more quickly progressed over the years of *Dor Hashvi'i* as the following historical timeline depicts.

“One *need not wonder about the manner of and order of how things were revealed such as the fact that in earlier generations, before the Baal Shem Tov, they did not know about the Seudas Moshiach, and only in later generations; and within these later generations in an increasing manner from time to time, whether about the four cups or about the way of publicizing the matter in our generation specifically, since this is the order of the revelations of Torah.”* (Sicha at the Seudas Moshiach 5746)

Origins: The basis of this custom goes back to the holy Baal Shem Tov, who would eat three meals on Acharon shel Pesach. The last meal was called Moshiach’s Seuda by the Baal Shem Tov, since on Acharon shel Pesach the radiance of the light of Moshiach shines openly.

Over the years, this custom was not necessarily the exclusive province of the Chabad leaders, as the Rebbe Rayatz related in 5700 that, “Regarding the daytime seuda of Acharon shel Pesach there was a special order by all the Chassidic leaders, those of Chassidus in general and Chabad Chassidus. This order was passed down as an inheritance, and its foundation is from the customs of our master the Baal Shem Tov.”

5666 – The Tmimim join: In 5666/1906, something momentous transpired in Lubavitch. That year, for the first time, the tmimim ate the Pesach meal in the large zal and for Acharon shel Pesach they suggested to the Rebbe Rashab that he have the Seudas Moshiach with the tmimim. The Rebbe accepted this suggestion and at that meal added a chiddush when he said to give each of the tmimim four cups of wine, saying that the cups of wine on the first nights pertain to

Moshe Rabbeinu and the cups on the last day were the cups of Moshiach.

After that, tmimim in yeshivos would have a Seudas Moshiach on Acharon shel Pesach but the practice of four cups of wine did not continue in the years that followed. The meal itself too was held only among the tmimim and not in communities of Anash.

5701-5703 – Going Public: In 5701, the Rebbe Rayatz referred to 5666 and noted that then “began, in Lubavitch, the order of conducting the meal of Acharon shel Pesach with a public farbrengen in general, and the celebration of the tmimim in particular.”

In 5702, the Rebbe Rayatz again mentioned about the custom of Seudas Moshiach that the Chabad leaders had and in connection with this spoke about the need to collect the customs of Chabad in an orderly calendar. Shortly thereafter, the Rebbe MH”M edited a calendar, HaYom Yom, in which he wrote the custom of the Baal Shem Tov and about the drinking four cups in 5666. Still, this custom did not become widespread.

5711-5712 – The Moshiach Dance: In 5711, on the Shabbos after Pesach, the Rebbe said that the Rebbe Rayatz would dance a “Moshiach dance” on Acharon shel Pesach. He said that for various reasons he did not want do so on Acharon shel Pesach, but it could be made up for on the Shabbos after Pesach.

A year later, on Acharon shel Pesach 5712, the Rebbe mentioned this “Moshiach dance” again and added that this phrase can be explained in two ways, as a dance preceding Moshiach or a dance that Moshiach participates in. The Rebbe concluded by saying: It is worthwhile for us to explain it the second way, i.e. that

Moshiach is already with us and he joins us in his dance.

At the conclusion of these words, the Rebbe indicated to those present that they should dance in place and the Rebbe also danced in place with tremendous joy.

5713 – Four cups, but only for the tmimim: In 5713, ten years after publicizing the practice in the HaYom Yom, the Rebbe once again recounted the events of Acharon shel Pesach 5766 and concluded by saying that apparently this wasn't just a one-time thing for that year, and therefore four cups would be given to each of the talmidim.

[That farbrengen is remembered by many because the *menahel poel* of the yeshiva at the time was the Rebbe's brother-in-law, Rashag who, after drinking a few rounds of four cups, began to speak amazing words about the Moshiach and the Baal Shem Tov of the generation. In Rabbi Yoel Kahan's diary it says: On Acharon shel Pesach during the farbrengen Rashag took a lot of wine ... and began saying various things to the Rebbe shlita: "To me it's clear that you will lead us toward Moshiach ... The only heir of the Baal Shem Tov is my brother-in-law ... I hereby give you my kochos as the older son-in-law. I said this at the Ohel and I say it now in public but on condition that you 'hold on to me' like the shver held on to me."

5716 – Four cups to every Jew who wants Moshiach: Four years later, the Rebbe announced that since it was fifty years since the first time they drank four cups at the Seudas Moshiach in 5666, it was time for everyone to drink, not just the current talmidim of the yeshiva but also those who learned in Tomchei Tmimim previously, as being former talmidim they

remain talmidim forever until the coming of Moshiach and including that time.

Later on in the farbrengen, the Rebbe said that the custom of four cups really applies to every Jew but it was revealed only to the talmidei ha'tmimim: 1) because the tmimim are sons and sons are given everything; 2) since this custom is by way of preparation for the coming of Moshiach, this pertains particularly to the talmidei ha'tmimim who are actively involved in learning Chassidus and in combining Nigleh and Chassidus.

After concluding the sicha, the Rebbe said to sing a niggun and then he said: All that was said before about how this custom pertains specifically to the talmidei ha'tmimim was true for the past. But now, as we get closer to the coming of Moshiach, all the Jewish people have a connection to the teachings of Chassidus and therefore, it would be most proper that even those who did not merit to learn in Tomchei Tmimim but they want Moshiach to come soon, should also drink four cups.

5725 – Publicize To All: Another leap to a new stage took place in 5725, which was 100 years since the last Seudas Moshiach of the Tzemach Tzedek as related by the Rebbe Rayatz. The Rebbe told the story again at length as well as the lesson to be learned: Now the time has come to publicize to all about the Seudas Moshiach, and not to claim that not every mind can absorb this.

5728 – The Rebbe suggests announcing "ad kan kos aleph": In 5728, the Rebbe clarified that since drinking four cups had been done more than three times, it obviously should continue! At that farbrengen, he suggested having a 'seder' of drinking four cups and after



THE REBBE RETURNING TO HIS ROOM AFTER THE SEUDAS MOSHIACH AND GIVING OUT "KOS SHEL BRACHA" IN 5746.

each cup to announce "*ad kan kos alef*," as it's announced on Simchas Torah regarding hakafos. He said, "As long as the announcement hasn't been made, all the cups that are drunk belong to the first cup."

5729 – The Rebbe: "In general I'm afraid of innovations but I won't abolish this custom": At the meal on Acharon shel Pesach 5729 in the the Rebbe Rayatz's apartment when the four cups were spoken of, Rashag pointed out that the custom of drinking four cups was not done by their father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, and it wasn't done regularly by the Rebbe Rashab. One of those present said, then it's the innovation of the Rebbe shlita and the Rebbe said: In general I'm afraid of innovations but I will not abolish this custom.

5730 – The connection between the four cups and the keitz of 5666: In 5730, the Rebbe explained the connection between the enactment of drinking four

cups and the year 5666 which was a "keitz" and when the "Hemshech 5666" was revealed, which was a *shleimus nifla'ah* in Chabad Chassidus through which Moshiach becomes blood and flesh of his flesh.

5731 – Women should drinking four cups too: On Acharon shel Pesach 5731, the Rebbe said that 30 years had passed since the sicha of Acharon shel Pesach 5701 in which the Rebbe Rayatz spoke at length about the special Seudas Moshiach in 5666. From this the Rebbe concluded that the time had come for women to also drink four cups at the Seudas Moshiach!

That year, the Rebbe explained the depth of the concept of the Seudas Moshiach and mainly the obligation to explain it to every single Jew and without fearing that "not every mind can absorb this," and the Rebbe brought proofs from Nigleh too for the drinking of four cups at this meal.

5738 – One who eats the Seudas Moshiach instantly connects with the Baal Shem Tov, the Nasi HaDor and Moshiach Tzidkeinu: The farbrengen of Acharon shel Pesach 5738 was shorter than usual with all the sichos focused on one point, that the Seudas Moshiach

is the “day of the Bris” of the Jewish people [being the eighth day] who were born with the Exodus from Egypt. He said that the *k’zayis* of matza that is eaten at the Seudas Moshaich is more lofty than the *k’zayis* matza that is eaten the night of the seder!

.....

At the wondrous farbrengen of 5746, new depths were explained about the connection between the wine of the Seudas Moshiach and the “preserved wine” of the future, which is why the seuda is not over fish and meat.

.....

The farbrengen of 5743, which was after the shturem about demanding Moshiach was exclusively focused on inyanei Moshiach. At the wondrous farbrengen of 5746, new depths were explained about the connection between the wine of the Seudas Moshiach and the “preserved wine” of the future, which is why the seuda is not over fish and meat.

In 5748, the Rebbe explained in amazing depth the difference between the Melava Malka which is the weekly Seudas Moshiach on a small scale and the Seudas Moshiach of Acharon shel Pesach. He explained at length how the Seudas Moshiach is the aspect of “Caesar” while the Melave Malka is only “half a Caesar.”

is connected with three people: the Baal Shem Tov, the Nasi HaDor and Moshiach. These three individuals are interconnected in such a way that they cannot be separated. The Rebbe said that the Seudas Moshiach is not by learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula but by eating a physical meal, which pertains to everyone. There is no difference between a tzaddik and a plain Jew and therefore, by eating the Seudas Moshiach every *k’zayis* that is eaten is eaten together with them!

5749 – Drink four cups with the intention that it pertains to the Geula: During the Seudas Moshiach in 5749, the Rebbe mentioned again and again about drinking four cups and said that whoever was uncertain as to whether he drank, should drink again. The Rebbe drank five full cups of wine and time and again instructed to finish all the cups with the surprising instruction: to drink the cups with the intention that it pertains to the Geula and whoever did not drink while having this intention and even if he is unsure whether he had this intention, should drink again!

5740-5743-5746-5748 – Greater Gepts: On Acharon shel Pesach 5740 the Rebbe said that Acharon shel Pesach

After Yom Tov, the Rebbe edited the maamar including this instruction that became accepted practice from then on. ■

In Memory of

Harav HaChosid Rabbi **Tzvi Hersh**
Ben Harav HaChasid Rabbi **Ben Tzion**
27 Elul

Moras Mrs **Rivka**
Bas HaRav HaChasid Rabbi **Tzvi**
29 Tammuz

By her children
HaTomim Rabbi **Shmuel** and
HaTomim Rabbi **Yaakov Mordchai**

Spritzer

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