



Chicago Rabbinical Council

מועצת הרבנים דשיקגו

Divrei Torah

PESACH 5785



Rabbi Yona
Reiss



Rabbi Yechiel
Bresler



Rabbi Daniel
Fox



Rabbi Akiva
Males



Rabbi Yosef
Posner



Rabbi Aron
Wolf

2701 W. Howard Street | Chicago, Illinois 60645

773.465.3900 | office@crcweb.org | www.crcweb.org

The *Minhag* of 'Not Mishing' - Not Eating Out on Pesach

Rav Yona Reiss¹
Av Beth Din



Pesach is a time of great exultation and exuberance. It is both a festival of freedom commemorating the exodus from Egypt, and a springtime celebration that brings together families and communities for a renewal of bonds and revitalization of relationships. It is also, however, a time of heightened “*chumrah*” - of exceptional stringency – based on the severe Torah prohibition against eating or owning *chametz* (leavened foods from wheat, rye, barley, oats or spelt), and the principle that even the slightest bit of *chametz* does not become nullified in any mixture of food.

The halakhic imperative to eradicate all *chametz* ushers in a season of intense cleaning and searching for any traces of *chametz*, culminating with the night of *bedikat chametz* on the eve of the 14th of *Nissan* (or this year when *Erev Pesach* falls out on *Shabbos*, on the eve of the 13th day of *Nissan*). The *Rabbonim* of each community balance their responsibility to instruct congregants about the detailed *kashering* and food preparation requirements for *Pesach*, with the need to warn the most punctilious practitioners of faith not to lapse into obsessive compulsive disorder in the process. It is often necessary to emphasize that the religious responsibilities of the holiday are not intended to supersede the Biblical mandate of *simchat ha'chag* – rejoicing on the festival.

The tension between being joyous and

being scrupulous about avoiding *chametz* is perhaps best captured in the standard holiday wish for *Pesach*. Unlike the other *shalosh regalim* festivals of *Sukkot* and *Shavuot*, in which community members typically greet each other by saying “*chag sameach*” (“have a joyous holiday”), on *Pesach* the greeting is “*chag kasher ve'sameach*” (“have a kosher and joyous holiday”). The clear implication is that the *simcha* is secondary and subordinate to the scrupulous and amplified observances of *kashrus* during this time period.

In fact, many practices have emerged over the years to reflect the special stringency of *chametz*, including the Ashkenazic practice of not eating *kitniyot* (legumes) and the practice of refraining from *gebrochts* (matzah soaked in water). The Chayei Adam (*klal* 127) devotes an entire chapter of his work to special *Pesach* stringencies and the nature of their binding force according to halakha.

But perhaps one of the most intriguing of *Pesach* stringencies is the widespread *minhag* not to “*mish*” – not to eat anyone else's food during the *Pesach* holiday, even if the other person keeps their *chumros*. At first glance, this custom appears not merely strict, but downright unfriendly.

By contrast, the *Yerushalmi* (*Chagigah* 3:6; see also TB *Chagigah* 26a) derives from the verse כעיר שהבריה לה יהודי (*Tehillim* 122:3) that Jerusalem became the central and

1. An earlier version of this article appeared in YU's *Pesach to Go*, 2016.

unifying place of gathering for the entirety of the Jewish people during the holidays because even an “*am ha'aretz*” (someone not generally presumed to be careful about ritual matters) was treated like a “*chaver*” (reliable person and literally “friend”) in terms of being trusted to prepare his food with the requisite purity during the holiday period. The Maharitz Chiyus (*Nida* 34a, s.v. “*hakatuv*”), commenting on this passage, quotes from the Rambam in the *Moreh Nevuchim* (3:43) that the purpose of this spirit of trust was to increase social gatherings and brotherly love among all Jews during the holidays, and notes that the ultimate sharing of common bonds is through eating together, based on the principle of גדולה לגימה שמקרבת את הרחוקים (Sanhedrin 103b) – ‘breaking bread’ draws disparate people closer. By contrast, he notes that the opposite is also true – גדול הפירוד במה שאדם מונע עצמו לאכול אצל ישראל – that the refusal of one Jew to eat from another Jew’s food creates a terrible schism between them. He cites a parallel passage in the *Yerushalmi* (*Bava Kamma* 7:7) which similarly derives from the same verse in *Tehillim* that Jerusalem unites the hearts of the Jewish people (מהברת את ישראל זה לזה), a statement which he understands to allude as well to the heightened spirit of trust and togetherness during the holiday season. Based on this increased trust, all Jews will be able to eat together in friendship - ויתחברו – resulting in a unity of heart and spirit among all Jews. Accordingly, it

seems that on *Pesach*, as well as the other holidays, there should ideally be a greater degree of trust for the *kashrus* standards of others.

Where then does this seemingly unfriendly practice come from? Interestingly, it is mentioned in a variety of places, mostly of Chassidic origin, based upon both rabbinic and Biblical sources. One source is a talmudic passage in *Pesachim* and the second source is based on scriptural verses in *Devorim*.

The *Gemora* in *Pesachim* (30a) quotes Rava as recounting that when he and his colleagues visited with Rav Nachman, after the seventh day of *Pesach* Rav Nachman instructed them to go out and purchase *chametz* from the local non-Jewish soldiers. The Rashash (*ad locum*) points out that this passage is difficult. Even after seven days, there is an eighth day of *Pesach* that is observed outside of Israel where Rava and Rav Nachman lived, and surely Rav Nachman would not have authorized the purchase of *chametz* on the eighth day of *Pesach*. Therefore, the Rashash suggests that the reference to the timing of the ruling of Rav Nachman is inexact, since it more likely took place after the eighth day when both *chametz* and commerce would have been permitted.

However, Rav Yisocher Dov Babad, the *Av Beth Din* of Buska (see *Nitei Gavriel*, *Pesach* 3:117-118) suggests that perhaps the reference to Rava’s visit following the seventh day is quite deliberate. According

Daf Yomi Shiur by
RAV YONA REISS

לע"נ חיים בן סעדיה והב

WWW.DAYANSDAF.ORG



to his interpretation of the *Gemora* (according to which the comma in the first sentence of the preceding paragraph would belong after the word “*Pesach*” rather than after the word “*Nachman*”), Rava did not visit Rav Nachman altogether until after the first seven days of *Pesach* were over. Thus, the *Gemora* is emphasizing that Rava did not want to eat in Rav Nachman’s home until the eighth day, which is only a rabbinic holiday. Until that time, Rava observed the practice of not eating in anyone’s home, including Rav Nachman, who was his Rebbe. However, according to this explanation, the extra level of leniency for the eighth day requires further elucidation.

Rav Naftoli Zvi Horowitz (*Zera Kodesh*, volume 2, *Le’acharon Shel Pesach*, s.v. “*Yom Tov Ha’acharon*”) explains that the stringent practice not to eat in the home of others does not include the eighth day of *Pesach*, because the final day of *Pesach* epitomizes the unity of the Jewish people, and therefore is a day in which all stringencies are set aside. This would also help explain the common practice for people who do not eat gebrochts to relax that stringency on the last day of *Pesach* (see *Pri Hasadeh* 3:31). While some have questioned this practice as internally inconsistent, or disrespectful to the holiness of the second day of Yom Tov (see, e.g., *Pri Chadash* O”C *siman* 447:5, s.v. “*u’mah shekatav aval b’yom tov*”), there does appear to be a basis in terms of enabling all Jews to eat at each other’s homes on the final day of *Pesach* in fulfillment of the notion of עשאו כולן הברים (*Chagigah* 26a) – of all Jews uniting together at least at some point during the festival, in accordance with the words of the Maharitz Chiyus.

The late Belzer Rebbe (Rav Aharon Rokeach zt”l) brings a different source for the custom of not eating in others’ homes on *Pesach*, noting that only with respect

to Shavuot and Sukkot does the Torah mention the notion of rejoicing together with others (*Devorim* 16:11, 16:14), but not with respect to *Pesach*. Accordingly, the scriptural implication is that on *Pesach* there may be a basis for parties to refrain from joining each other for their meals.

However, while these sources have merit, there is a strong argument for a contrary approach. The Seder feast, which is the most prominent *Pesach* meal, is predicated upon different individuals joining together to form a הבורה – an organic group – for purposes of partaking in the *Pesach* sacrifice. In fact, while the original *Pesach* was focused upon familial units joining in the bringing of the *Pesach* sacrifice as reflected in the verse איש ש לבית אבות שה לבית (*Shmot* 12:3), Rashi notes (*Shmot* 12:47) that for all subsequent *Pesach* observances, the group unit was expanded beyond the family to enable different families to join with each other for the Seder night. It is difficult to account for a *minhag* to eat with others only on the Seder night, the most important meal of the *Pesach* holiday, but not for any other meals.

Secondly, while the eighth day may stand for the notion of unity, surely as the Maharitz Chiyus noted, the first seven days of *Pesach* exemplify the exact same notion. If a desire to bring together the hearts of the people is emphasized on the eighth day which is only rabbinic in nature, surely it should be manifested during the other seven days of the holiday, which is the main time of כולן הברים – of togetherness and unity.

Nevertheless, it is possible that one objection answers the other. The ideal aspiration of being in Jerusalem for *Pesach* as one unified nation presupposes that the *Beit Hamikdash* is in existence and that everyone fulfills the obligation of חיב

אדם לטהר את עצמו ברגל (Rosh Hashanah 16b) – of purifying themselves for the holidays in order to partake in the *kodshim* – the holy offerings brought in the *Beit Hamikdash*. This would also be true with respect to bringing together disparate individuals to partake in a communal *Pesach* offering. However, nowadays when we are not privileged to have a *Beit Hamikdash*, the custom of abstaining from the food of others makes more sense as an additional *Pesach* stringency, particularly given that many families observe different stringencies, whether in terms of *gebrochts* or other special restrictions for *Pesach*.

Of course, the question still lingers regarding the anti-social nature of such a *minhag*, especially in consideration of the spirit of togetherness that is supposed to reign supreme in the fulfillment of the *Pesach* holiday during the time of the *Beit Hamikdash*. Perhaps, however, this is precisely why Rava was careful to observe this *minhag* (according to Rav Babad's interpretation of the *Gemora*) even with respect to his own Rebbe who surely could be trusted, in order to ensure that nobody else be insulted that he did not visit their homes during *Pesach*. At the same time, he was also careful not to visit his Rebbe's home at a time during *Pesach* when he would have been inclined to refuse his Rebbe's food, thus avoiding any direct disrespect to his Rebbe (see *Halikhot Shlomo – Minhagei Pesach*, p. 90, that the *minhag* of not eating in others' homes on *Pesach* does not supersede a person's obligation to act with *derekh erez* – proper manners – towards his Rebbe or others).

In a similar vein, the second Lubavitcher Rebbe (the “*Mitteler Rebbe*”), Rav Dovber Schneuri, stated that on *Pesach* it is a proper *minhag* not to hand guests food or drink but to simply make a repast available for them

(*Sefer Haminhagim – Chabad*, page 42, s.v. “*pa-am*” and *Hayom Yom*, page 47). In this fashion, a host is spared embarrassment if a guest wishes to observe the stringency of not eating from others, while at the same time the guest is properly honored through the host's furnishing of food. Others are lenient with respect to providing guests with clearly unproblematic products, such as fresh fruits. Along these lines, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt”l once chastised a student who observed the *minhag* of not eating in others' homes for refusing Rav Auerbach's offer of wine during *Pesach* from a wine bottle that the student would have surely consumed in his own home (*Halikhot Shlomo* id).

Nowadays, this *minhag* does not appear to be ubiquitously observed. For example, it is the practice of many families to join other families for the Seder and other Yom Tov meals. It would seem that at least in many quarters, the *minhag* attributed to Rava is not consistently followed. In particular, the phenomenon of many families taking advantage of *Pesach* hotels is a further indication of the non-observance of this practice. For those who would otherwise observe the stringency of not eating in other's homes, it would not seem that the *hashgacha* of a *kashrus* agency should be given any greater reliability than was accorded by Rava to Rav Nachman. The Nitei Gavriel (*Hilkhos Pesach* 2:218) even questions the practice of those who purport to keep the custom of not eating out and yet buy items with kosher certification from stores, since in his opinion the *minhag* should logically extend to refraining from even buying items with kosher certification during *Pesach*.

Whichever practice is adopted, it is important to respect and appreciate

(Continued on page 14)

Karpas as the Conduit for Connection

Rabbi Yechiel Bresler, LCPC

Private Practitioner, Bresler Counseling



“והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר” “*And you shall tell your son on that day, saying*”—these are some of the most well-known, frequently discussed, and defining words, describing one of the most significant Jewish events of the year. These words provide instruction on how to relay the historic and profound depth of the events culminating in the Exodus from Egypt and the formation of the Jewish people. And yet, immediately after *Kiddush*, before we begin the telling of the story, we inaugurate the evening with a mere dipping of a small vegetable into saltwater. Why would we start such a grand evening with the modest act of *karpas*? This question has intrigued countless commentators, with dozens, if not hundreds, offering explanations to resolve the apparent anticlimactic beginning. While each explanation has merit, I would like to return to the basics.

The *Gemora* (*Pesachim* 114b) in describing the order of the Seder wonders why we dip twice. It teaches that this is done “in order that it be recognizable to the children”—a way to engage them and

ultimately lead to the *Mah Nishtanah*, sparking the questions and answers. In fact, the *Pesach* Seder requires a question and answer format with one’s children. Why is this so crucial to the dialogue?

Furthermore, upon close examination of the order of the *pesukim*, we see that the Torah does not immediately mandate telling the story. First, the *pesukim* emphasize the context and experience through which the story should be shared. The Torah first instructs us to eat matzah, celebrate the Yom Tov, and remove all *chametz* from our homes. Only after these preparations does the Torah command us to teach our children. But why? What is the Torah trying to teach us by requiring us to set the stage before sharing the story?

Perhaps the Torah is conveying one essential theme, particularly in regard to our relationships with our children. Yes, the focal point of the night is to relive the experience and impart the incredible miracles and the freedom of the Exodus to the next generation, but it’s not enough

(Continued on page 13)



The Symbolism of the Egg

Rabbi Daniel Fox

Rabbi, Darchei Noam of Glenbrook



There are many foods that we eat on *Pesach*, and each is rich with significance and meaning. There is one custom, however, whose symbolism may seem surprising. The Rema (Rav Moshe Isserles) (in אר"ח תע"ב) writes, "נוהגים בקצת מקומות לאכול בסעודה ביצים," זכר לאבילות, *there is a custom in some places to eat eggs as part of the meal, as a symbol of mourning.*" An egg (as well as other round foods) is often served to mourners at the *seudas habra'ah*, the first meal after the burial of a relative, as it is a symbol of mourning. But why is there mourning at the *Pesach Seder*? True, at the Seder we recall the suffering during our time in Egypt, but it seems out of place to eat food of mourners during *zman cheiruseinu*, the time when we celebrate our freedom and redemption!

Parenthetically, the Vilna Gaon (in אר"ח תע"ג) suggests that an egg is eaten as a remembrance of the *korban chagigah* the special offering that was brought in the *Bais Hamikdash* on each of the *shalosh regalim*. This is the reason for putting an egg on the Seder plate (see *Pesachim* 114b), and according to the Vilna Gaon, it seems that we are meant to eat that very egg from the Seder plate. One can question why this is a custom specifically for *Pesach*, and not for *Sukkos* or *Shavuos*, on which we would also bring a *korban chagigah*. But either way, the Rema seems to learn that the egg on the Seder plate and the egg eaten during the meal are different.

The Rema himself proposes two possible meanings for the egg. His second is that it is a *zecher lchurban*, a remembrance of the destruction of the *Bais Hamikdash*.

It's important that as we celebrate the *geulah* from *Mitzrayim*, we also remember that we are still longing for the complete redemption. While we are privileged to fulfill the mitzvos of eating matzah and *maror*, and drinking four cups of wine, we are missing the featured *mitzvah* of the evening: the *korban pesach*. At the very same meal at which we celebrate our redemption, we also mourn the exile in which we currently live.

This is a common and crucial motif in many of our celebrations and simchas. Just as we eat an egg at the Seder, we break a glass under the *chuppah*. At our moments of greatest joy, we must always reflect on that for which we still yearn so deeply.

But the Rema has another suggestion, which may contain a profound message. He writes, "ונראה לי הטעם משום שליל תשעה," באב נקבע בליל פסח, it appears to me that the reason (for the egg) is that *Tisha B'Av* night is established to be on the same night as *Pesach*." Check the calendar and you'll see that the first night of *Pesach* and *Tisha B'Av* are always the same. But the question remains: What is the connection between *Pesach* and *Tisha B'Av*? Aren't these days seemingly opposites? *Tisha B'Av* commemorates destruction and exile, while *Pesach* celebrates redemption and freedom! Why are the two symbolically linked?

One idea is that when trying to understand or experience something, connection and exposure to its opposite can often be clarifying. The Maharal of Prague writes that in order to understand

(Continued on page 14)

The Hardest Words to Say: 'I Was Wrong'

Rabbi Akiva Males

Rabbi, Young Israel of Memphis



The tenth and final plague presents one of the most dramatic moments in Jewish history — *Makkas Bechoros*, the death of all the Egyptian firstborns.

Moshe relays Hashem's message to Pharaoh (*Shemos* 11:4): “*Kachatzos haLayla* — around midnight — I will go out among Egypt.” Rashi, quoting the *Gemora*, explains why Moshe used the phrase “around midnight” instead of stating that it would occur precisely at midnight. The reason? Pharaoh's astrologers might miscalculate that exact moment. If the plague did not strike at the precise second they expected, they would seize upon that discrepancy to declare Moshe a fraud.

At first glance, this reaction seems absurd. After nine previous plagues, each predicted and fulfilled with exactitude, could anyone seriously doubt Moshe's credibility if the final plague occurred a minute earlier or later than expected? However, as the *Gemora* suggests, that's exactly what could have happened. Pharaoh and his advisors were so determined to reject Moshe's message that they were ready to grasp at any excuse — no matter how irrational — to dismiss him.

This human tendency is not limited to the Egyptians. The desire to be right is one of the strongest impulses within us. When confronted with evidence that contradicts our beliefs, we often double down rather than admit error.

In his sefer *Meged Yosef*, Rav Yosef Sorotzkin notes that acknowledging a mistake is one of the hardest tasks for a person to do. It's not simply a matter of

intellectual humility — it's an emotional challenge to our very sense of self.

I recall a personal experience that illustrates this point. One *Shabbos* soon after our wedding, my wife Layala and I were attending a family *simcha* in Teaneck, New Jersey. It must have been just after a change from daylight saving time in the fall, and I had forgotten to adjust my watch. That *Shabbos* morning, I rushed to get dressed, hurried my wife along, and prepared to leave for davening, convinced we were running late.

Yet, as we entered the kitchen at our host's home, we were shocked to see family members sitting leisurely around the table, still in pajamas, and sipping coffee. Each of the clocks in the kitchen showed that we still had an hour to spare. Instead of immediately recognizing my mistake, my gut reaction was, “What's wrong with these people? Why are they just lounging around? Why is every one of their clocks an hour behind?”

Only after several moments of cognitive dissonance did it finally hit me — I was the one who was wrong. My *Shabbos* watch had never been changed and it was an hour ahead of the correct time. On that *Shabbos* morning, I had made my wife rush unnecessarily, and instead of considering the possibility of my own error, I had assumed every clock in our host family's kitchen was off by an hour!

We laughed about it later, but the moment stuck with me. How quickly we assign mistakes to others instead of ourselves — even when all the evidence

suggests otherwise!

This is the precise reaction which Moshe knew Pharaoh's advisors would fall prey to. If *Makkas Bechoros* began at 12:01 am according to their calculations, their logical conclusion should have been: "Moshe has been right nine times already. If this final plague didn't begin precisely at midnight, the error is on our end."

However, that was an admission they simply couldn't make. Acknowledging that Moshe was correct would mean admitting that everything that they had done to Bnei Yisrael — centuries of slavery, oppression, and murder — was fundamentally unjust. That realization was too painful to bear, so they would have found another explanation — despite the fact of its absurdity: "Moshe is a liar."

Rav Sorotzkin goes on to suggest that Pharaoh's final punishment was not just the plagues — it was having to face and admit the truth itself. The final and ultimate blow to Pharaoh's ego was not just the loss of his firstborn son, but being forced to admit the truth. According to the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, as he finally expelled *Klal Yisrael* from

Egypt, Pharaoh declared, "You are now servants of Hashem." This, suggests Rav Sorotzkin, was Pharaoh's "eleventh plague." After everything, after all his refusals and rationalizations, he had no choice but to concede: Hashem is real, Moshe is right, and Egypt was wrong.

This lesson is timeless. We all have moments when we resist acknowledging our mistakes. Whether in our personal relationships, professional decisions, or spiritual lives, the challenge remains: Can we humble ourselves and say, "I was wrong"? If Pharaoh — at the height of his arrogance — was finally able to admit the truth, then surely we can strive to be more open to recognizing when we need to reconsider our assumptions.

The Torah teaches not just laws and stories but deep insights into human nature. The story of the *Makkos* challenges us to ask: When faced with the undeniable truth, will we acknowledge it, or will we — like Pharaoh's astrologers — insist our own perception must be correct at all costs? The answer may determine the way we navigate all the relationships and circumstances in our lives. ■



'Thank You, Hashem, for Sticking to Your Plan'

Rabbi Yosef Posner

Rabbi, Lubavitch Chabad of Skokie



One of the well-known lines of the *Haggadah* before *V'hi She'amda* reads:

“ברוך שומר הבטחתו לישראל, ברוך הוא, שהקדוש ברוך הוא חישב את הקץ (.) לעשות כמה שאמר לאברהם אבינו...”

“Blessed is He Who keeps His promise to Israel, Blessed is He, for the Holy One Blessed is He, calculated the end to do as He said to Avraham Avinu....”

Many versions of the *Haggadah* have a comma between the words הקץ (“the end”) and לעשות (“to do”). Accordingly the line is stating that G-d calculated the “end” of enslavement so that He would fulfill His promise to Avraham.

Many other *Haggadahs*, including the Arizal, the Maharal and the Chabad *Haggadahs*, omit the comma. Without it, the sentence reads that Hashem “calculated the end to do, as He promised to Avraham....” What does “end to do” mean?

In my copy of R. Yaakov Emden’s Siddur, the text contains the comma, but the commentary, written by R. Shlomo Kluger (5545-5629/1785-1869), contains the following explanation: Hashem calculated the end of the enslavement in a way to make it shorter, by counting the 400 years from the time of Avraham’s prophecy or Yitzchak’s birth, rather than from when the Jews entered Egypt. Here לעשות (“to do”) means “to make it good.” Hashem did some creative accounting of the years to make it better for us.

The Previous Rebbe, in a 1948 *Pesach Maamar*, expands on this idea. He questions why the Sages in the *Mishna* and the

Haggadah respond to Ben Zoma (earlier in the *Haggadah*) with the obligation to recall *Yetzias Mitzrayim* “in this world and in the days of Moshiach.” If Moshiach’s redemption surpasses the Exodus, why would we still need to remember it?

He explains that there are two benefits to remembering the going out of Egypt during present times:

One benefit is that the memory of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* helps us maintain our hope and trust in Hashem that He will take us out of this *galus*. Knowing that it has happened in the past makes hope for the coming redemption a much more realistic expectation.

More profoundly, Hashem created the world to be a “dwelling place for Him in the lowest realms” (*Tanya* Ch. 36). This is accomplished through our service to Him despite the hardships of *galus*. Since Hashem derives immense pleasure from our devotion under difficult circumstances, He could theoretically prolong *galus* indefinitely.

I recently heard a story of the second and third Belzer Rebbes, R. Yehoshua and R. Yissachar Dov, who were father and son. On one occasion they were in Vienna. On Friday night after the *Shabbos* meal, R. Yissachar Dov went to visit his father. As he was walking to his father’s hotel room, he heard the familiar sound of Torah learning, which seemed very out of place in a Viennese hotel. He saw that it was coming from a hotel room which had the door slightly ajar. Curious, he pushed the door a little more open and saw what appeared to

be an Austrian soldier standing with a large *Gemora* in his hands, deep in study.

R. Yissachar Dov remained rooted to the spot looking at this unusual sight. Eventually the soldier noticed him. R. Yissachar Dov apologized for intruding and explained his bewilderment at this strange sight. The man told him that he was in fact a soldier in the Austrian army. He had worked out an arrangement with his superior that he would take on additional tasks during the week and in exchange he would be free from duty on *Shabbos*. He was so thankful to be able to keep *Shabbos* that he resolved to spend every *Shabbos* standing and learning Torah. He said, “Each week I work much harder than the other soldiers, and on *Shabbos* I stand and learn Torah until I drop from exhaustion.” R. Yissachar Dov apologized again and continued on his way. When he came to his father’s room, he shared this unusual encounter. R. Yehoshua thought a bit and said, “Maybe it is because of Jews such as this that *Moshiach’s* coming is delayed.” Seeing R. Yissachar Dov’s surprise at this statement he explained, “Hashem has tremendous pleasure from the devotion shown by people such as this soldier. So much pleasure, that He might even delay *Moshiach’s* coming, because once *Moshiach* comes this kind expression of selfless devotion despite enormous hardships will simply no longer exist.”

For this reason we remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* in *galus*. We thank and praise

Hashem for calculating and setting a fixed time to end the *galus*, and then sticking to that schedule. Hashem forwent that immense pleasure from the service of *Yidden* in *galus* and took us out of enslavement from Egypt right on schedule. He “calculated the end” and then He actually “did it!” Knowing and remembering what happened in the past enables us to understand our present *galus*. Although if *galus chas v’shalom* continued it could give Hashem immense pleasure for eternity, Hashem has calculated and determined a fixed end to *galus*. This knowledge enables us to maintain strong confidence and trust in Hashem that *galus* will end and *Moshiach* will come.

All this is stated in the comma that isn’t there. Without the comma, “*calculated the end*” and “*to do*” go together as if to be read “*to do the end at the time He had calculated.*”

These are two reasons for remembering *Yetzias Mitzrayim* now while in *galus*. So, why will we continue to remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* even after *Moshiach* comes? The redemption from Egypt was the beginning of an ongoing process. The journey from *Yetzias Mitzrayim* has been a continuous movement toward the ultimate redemption, culminating in the final *geulah*, when exile will be eradicated forever. *Moshiach’s* arrival will not render the Exodus irrelevant but will instead fulfill its purpose. May it happen speedily, with *Moshiach* NOW. ■



To access the digital version as well as updated Pesach information

[VISIT CRCPEACH.ORG](http://VISITCRCPEACH.ORG)



Stringencies on Pesach

Rabbi Aron Wolf

President, Director and Founder of the Chicago Mitzvah Campaign



Hiddur mitzvah, which refers to the concept of enhancing and beautifying mitzvos, holds great significance in Jewish history and religious practice.

Hiddur mitzvah encourages us to find ways to elevate and beautify our observance of commandments, not just in terms of aesthetics but also with intentionality and thoughtfulness. *Hiddur mitzvah* pushes us to go beyond our basic duties as Jews and to extend ourselves by performing mitzvos with a level of devotion and self-sacrifice that is above the letter of the law.

While the concept of *hiddur mitzvah* applies all year round, on *Pesach* this concept takes on even greater significance. For with regard to the laws of *Pesach*, the universal custom is to increase in precautionary measures and additional stringencies. Thus, even those who throughout the rest of the year may not be as meticulous about the *hiddur mitzvah* of keeping extra stringencies and following stricter opinions, will nevertheless increase in this regard for the laws of *Pesach*.

Indeed, in a responsum from the Baal HaTanya, he quotes the Arizal's teaching that it is proper to observe all the *chumros* (extra-precautionary stringencies) of the laws of *Pesach*. The Arizal emphasizes the importance and impact of this meticulous approach to *hiddur mitzvah* for the laws of *Pesach*, by declaring that, "One who

is scrupulously careful to avoid even the minutest quantity (or suspicion) of *chametz* on *Pesach* is guaranteed not to sin throughout the entire year."¹

In this article we will focus on just two of many *Pesach* stringencies that are accepted and implemented as "*hiddurim*" in many communities, and especially in Chassidic circles.

PROMOTING THE USE OF HANDMADE SHMURAH MATZAH

Most *poskim* of the previous generation sided with eating only handmade matzah while avoiding machine-made matzah on *Pesach*, due to a number of *halachic* concerns, including the following:

- The machine's lack of *kavanah lishmah* - the **required intention** in baking for the sake of a *mitzvah* matzah
- The difficulty in cleaning the machine properly
- The inability to replace the surface that comes into contact with the dough every 18 minutes
- The leftover dough that is cut from the matzah square and may become *chametz*
- Heat speeds up the leavening process, and in machine matzah, the matzah is placed on a hot conveyor belt before it reaches the heat of the oven itself, and the matzah may become *chametz*.²

1. It is explained that this statement of the Arizal possibly refers to immunity from sinning inadvertently. With regard to sinning deliberately, however, there is no question that every individual always retains his freedom of choice for good or bad.

- The use of iron in the process³

Among Sanz Chassidim and the Chassidic sects that branched out from it, it is customary to declare every year on *Shabbat HaGadol* the importance of using only handmade matzah on *Pesach*.

Among Chabad Chassidim, based on the words of our Rebbes who spoke strongly about this, there is a special requirement to be stringent and eat only hand-made matzah and to completely abstain from machine-made matzah, since matzah on *Pesach* is considered a *segulah* (treasured practice) for *emunah* (faith). The Rebbe even taught that it is better to let small children eat *kitniyos* rather than machine-made matzah, and he instructed that one should not be lenient about this matter.



GEBROKTS: WATER-MOISTENED MATZAH

Many communities, Chassidic ones in particular, have the custom to refrain from eating *gebrokts* on the first seven days of *Pesach*. *Gebrokts* is a Yiddish word that refers to matzah that has come into contact with water. Literally translated as “broken,” the word *gebrokts* has come to mean “wet

matzah” because matzah is usually ground or broken up into crumbs before it is mixed with water.

Those who refrain from eating *gebrokts* on *Pesach* do so for fear that during the baking process there may have been a minute amount of flour that did not get kneaded properly into the dough. Upon contact with water, that flour would become *chametz*.⁴

The custom of not eating *gebrokts* gained prominence around the end of the eighteenth century. At that time, people began to bake matzahs much faster than *halachically* mandated, in order to be absolutely sure that the dough had no chance to rise before being baked. The flip side of this stringency is that the matzah we eat today may not be as well kneaded as matzah used to be, in which case it would be very possible that it would contain pockets of flour.

According to some opinions, the stringency of not eating *gebrokts* applies not only to matzah and water, but even to matzah and fruit juices or other liquids.⁵

Those who take upon themselves this stringency don't eat matzah balls, matzah brei, or matzah anything; in short, they do not cook with matzah at all. Also, when there is matzah on the table, they are very careful to keep it covered and away from any food that may have water in it. Drinks, soups, and vegetables that have been washed and not thoroughly dried, are all kept far away from the matzah.

A situation in which this stringency comes into play is during the *korech* step

-
2. These are unlike handmade matzos, which do not pass through a hot conveyor belt, but are placed on a stick, and subsequently receive all of their baking heat all at once upon being placed inside the oven.
 3. The Rebbe Rashab (5th Lubavitch Rebbe) explains that the iron may trigger a chemical reaction that accelerates the oxidation (and leavening) process.
 4. כ"כ ברכ"י סי' תס"ג סק"ב בשם הראב"ן ו'ן המצות השקל סי' תנ"ח סק"א, וכ"כ בתשובה בסוף שו"ע הרב סי' ר' שאינו חומרא בלא טעם, כי טעמא רבא איכא במילתא ליוהר מחשש איסור דאורייתא שמא לא נילושה העיסה יפה עיי"ש

of the Seder. This step requires that we take *maror*—lettuce and horseradish—and put it between two pieces of matzah to make a sandwich. Because the lettuce will actually be touching the matzah, it must be absolutely dry. Many families spend time carefully washing the lettuce and then very meticulously drying it in preparation for the Seder.

Among those who are stringent with *gebrochts*, there are some who will even refrain from using a utensil on *Pesach* that came into contact with *gebrochts*.⁶

With regard to children, there are many who hold that for the sake of *chinuch* (education) it is proper for children to

observe the stringency of *gebrochts* as well.

Many other stringencies exist on *Pesach*, especially amongst Chassidim. Not to eat outside of your own home and not to purchase any processed food (besides wine & matzah) are only two of a much longer list.

Let us continue our *tefillos* that

לשנה הבאה בירושלים ונאכל שם מן הזבחים
- *Next year in Jerusalem, and we shall eat there from the sacrificial offerings and the Korban Pesach, in the most meticulous manner of observance.* ■

Karpas as the Conduit for Connection

(Continued from page 5)

for the Torah to simply tell us *what* to do, it also teaches us *how* to do it effectively. The lesson is clear: before we can teach or relay anything, we must ensure that we are connected, aligned with our children, and have gained their “buy-in” before offering our guidance. This might be why we begin this pivotal moment not with a lofty spiritual experience but with a simple gesture designed to foster connection, creating intrigue and dialogue.

Perhaps this is also why the question and answer format is so vital. It is a matter of connection. If we lose the connection with our children, if they feel we are preaching at them, rather than sharing with them, then the message we wish to convey will fall on deaf ears. This idea is reinforced by examining the four sons. On the surface,

the communication of the *Tzaddik*, *Rasha*, and even of the *She'eino Yodea Lishol*, are not all that different. In order to truly appreciate the nuanced differences between the children it requires an attentive parent—one who is connected and attuned to the child—to interpret body language, nuanced speech, and emotional cues in order to truly understand the question being asked. The night of the *Pesach* Seder, and the dipping of the *karpas*, serve as reminders that before we share our story and beliefs, we must first check in with our children to ensure they feel connected, “bought in,” “seen,” and understood. Only then are they ready to receive our guidance of “והגדת לבנך”. ■

6. סמא דחיי סיי י"ג סק"י ומעדני שמואל סיי ק"י סקכ"ט, דיש מקום להחמיר שנתעורר כח המים שבמצה ועם מי פירות ממחר להחמין

6. כפר חב"ד עמוד ל"ז, שכן המנהג שאם נפלה חתיכת מצה לכלי לח אין משתמשים בכלי זה לפסח

The *Minhag* of 'Not Mishing'

(Continued from page 4)

the legitimacy and authenticity of מנהגי ישראל – of long-established practices and stringencies accompanying the *Pesach* holiday. Families should not be insulted if friends follow the practice of not eating out for *Pesach*, nor should they feel inhibited from maintaining such a practice themselves, although they should be careful to apply their practice consistently to all individuals in order not to slight anyone. At the same time, hotel caterers and other hosts who are being relied upon by guests to follow *Pesach* laws and stringencies must recognize the awesome responsibility

that rests upon them to ensure the highest *kashrus* standards of the food that they serve.

Ultimately, the goal for all Jews on *Pesach*, whether eating in their own homes or eating out, should be to strive for the impeccable observance of all of the *kashrus* laws of *Pesach* as well as a sense of joyousness on both a familial and communal level that will pave the path for all Jews to join together in the future in collective offerings of the *Pesach* sacrifice and the friendly sharing of kosher *Pesach* meals in the rebuilt Jerusalem, may it happen speedily during our lifetime. *Chag Kasher v'Sameach*. ■

The Symbolism of the Egg

(Continued from page 6)

the essence of big, one must know what it means to be small. And in order to appreciate satiation, one must feel the sensation of hunger. And yes, in order to relive and celebrate the redemption from Egypt, one must taste the bitterness of destruction. So we eat an egg specifically to momentarily experience the exact opposite of the freedom of *Pesach*, which in turn can help us experience that feeling of *cheirus*, freedom, much more deeply.

But there may be an additional message, and one that is essential for us to remember every generation, and truly every day. *Tisha B'Av* may not, in fact, be the opposite of *Pesach*. Because inasmuch as *Tisha B'Av* is a sad day of mourning, there is also a kernel of light and hope. The *Midrash* recounts that when *Bnei Yisroel* saw the *Bais Hamikdash* in flames, they were devastated, of course, but also hopeful. In their pain and grief, they felt *Hashem's* closeness. They sensed that *Hashem* was showing them that although He may allow the destruction of stones and

wood, although the great and holy building of our Temple may be destroyed, He will always spare and protect His people. No matter how far we fall, He will always give us another chance, and there will always be a brighter future.

This message of *Tisha B'Av* is also a central piece of the *Pesach Seder*. *Chazal* teach that although we had fallen to the lowest level of *tumah*, impurity, *Hashem* never forsakes us. He sent us the leaders we needed, gave us mitzvos as merits, and lifted us back up. We know that in every generation our enemies seek our destruction, and in every generation, no matter what, הקב"ה מצילנו מידם, *Hashem saves us from their hands!*

Within the mourning of the egg lies this crucial message. The message of *Tisha B'Av* and of *Pesach* is one and the same. No matter how far we may fall, both individually and as a people, *Hashem* is always there to help us get back up, and will always ensure an even greater future! ■



IN THIS ISSUE

The *Minhag* of “Not *Mishing*” -

Not Eating Out on Pesach

Rav Yona Reiss

Karpas as the Conduit for Connection

Rabbi Yechiel Bresler

The Symbolism of the Egg

Rabbi Daniel Fox

The Hardest Words to Say: “I Was Wrong”

Rabbi Akiva Males

“Thank You, Hashem, for Sticking to Your Plan”

Rabbi Yosef Posner

Stringencies on *Pesach*

Rabbi Aron Wolf



Chicago Rabbinical Council

מועצת הרבנים דשיקגו