

Bringing the Farbrengen Home

HOLY MOP

by Tzipah Wertheimer

"She probably has a cleaning lady at home," they said in Hebrew thinking that I wouldn't understand.

"Carpeting," I replied in Hebrew with indignation. "We don't do *sponga* in America," I continued.

Have you ever cleaned your windows at the gas station? If so, picture using that squeegee with a dirty rag wrapped around it. Then picture cleaning every surface of your life with that squeegee & rag combination. This process is what Israelis do three times a day, referring to it as "*sponga*."

Picture giving an American girl a squeegee and a rag and expecting her to clean a floor with them. You will find yourself lol-ing as this absurdity begins to take shape in your mind's eye.

I hadn't signed up for it – but my time in seminary included mandatory cleaning. When it came time for Passover, the Israeli dorm counselors really pushed the girls. I remember scrubbing the sides of the old stone walls with a broom that had been soaked in soap and water.

Rolling up your sleeves and scrubbing – it truly makes you a better person. I am the last person to sign up for that type of thing....

There are times that the mess simply comes your way and you have no option other than to deal with it head on. It's hard, it's annoying, but it makes you a better person.

You learn to put things where they belong, discard the trash, give away that which others could use and move forward with less baggage.



On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur we are like angels beginning again – our cleaning is spiritual.

By the time Passover rolls around on the calendar, we've already been through some. We've endured slavery, built the golden calf, and begged for water in the desert. Our practical day-to-day has not always been so much fun – our cleaning is practical.

I would definitely choose meditating on a mountain top and refining my inner character over washing dishes...but life does not always afford us such choices. Also, I would probably get distracted on the mountain top and forgo the whole inner character thing anyway.

So here's where it gets amazing...Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev tells us that if the shofar blasts during the High Holy days did not pierce the heavens as we had wished they would – we can make up for the spiritual loss in four simple, yet difficult ways:

Kashering; Rubbing; Shining; & Scratching

Meant to be understood in Yiddish, it works in English as well. The TeKiyah can be uplifted through Kashering. TeRuah, via Rubbing; SHEvarim via SHining and TeKiyah Gedolah via Krystin (Yiddish for scratching).

It's not surfing waves of spirituality, but the fact that we can connect to the upcoming holiday of Passover in such a simple and practical way does not cease to amaze me. I can tap into spirituality with nothing more than a mop in hand. ☺

Hayom Yom Nissan 10

On the subject of the campaign to popularize the observance of taharat hamishpacha in your community, ponder this deeply: Let us imagine that G-d were to give you the opportunity to save a Jewish community from extinction (G-d forbid), you would certainly be willing to risk your life for this and you would thank and praise Him for His great kindness in offering you an opportunity of such enormous merit. The same then holds true to an even greater degree with regard to the campaign for taharat hamishpacha; it is an endeavor which literally saves lives.

YUD-ALEF NISSAN FARBRENGEN

with the Rebbe's Shliach to Tulsa, OK
Rabbi Yehudah Weg
Sunday 3/29 at 8pm
Chabad House

Just שׁו"ת Me A Question

Q: Can quinoa be eaten by Sefardic Jews who eat Kitniyot on Pesach?

A: There is a debate amongst the poskim if quinoa is kitniyot. That being said, it grows and is processed around chametz, and requires a kosher l'Pesach hechsher.

Q: Can we use any type of bottled water on Pesach? What about seltzer?

A: Any unflavored bottled water, even with minerals added, is acceptable for Pesach. Any type of seltzer, even unflavored, requires a kosher l'Pesach hechsher, because the carbonation process could involve chametz.

Q: If I had my shirts dry cleaned with starch, may I wear them on Pesach?

A: Yes.

Q: I'm having a guest for the Seder who says that he cannot stay the entire time. What are the most important things I should make sure they do before leaving early?

A: At the Seder there are certain mitzvos that are Biblical, and some that are Rabbinic. Eating a kezayis of matzah and saying certain parts of the Haggadah like Avadim Hayinu, Pesach, Matzah & Marror are Biblical in nature and are of the most importance. Additionally, if they can drink four cups of wine, that should be encouraged (however, they cannot be drunk in a row).



Q: If I go to a hotel on Chol HaMoed, do I have to do bedikas chametz?

A: According to halacha you do not need to because any chametz that might be there is not yours. You should be careful about chametz that may be in the room (such as beer in the fridge); do not touch it or deal with it.

Q: Do I have to get a new toothbrush for Pesach?

A: No. It suffices to clean it beforehand (using hot tap water). That being said, it is customary to purchase a new toothbrush for Pesach. (Nittei Gavriel, Pesach 78:3).

Q: Why does Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah say that he is "like" a 70-year-old? How old was he?

A: Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said this because he was not really an old man; for his hair turned white overnight when he was appointed *Nassi* (leader) at the age of 18; or according to Yerushalmi, at 16; in the version of Avudraham, 13.

Q: Who wrote the Haggadah?

A: The earliest Haggadahs we have are from Rav Amram Gaon, Rav Saadia Gaon, as well as Rambam & Machzor Vitri. Some suggest that the Haggadah was written by Eliyahu HaNavi or Rebbi Akiva.

Q: Does a convert need to observe Pesach?

A: The ancestors of converts to Judaism obviously were not enslaved in Egypt. Thus it would seem reasonable to assume that converts need not observe Pesach, just as the Mishna states that a convert does not recite the prayer for bringing the first fruits (Bikkurim; Devarim 26:5) because he cannot say "which Hashem swore to our ancestors."

The Torah thus states "When a convert will dwell with you, he shall observe Pesach": "with you" implies like one of us. For our exodus from Egypt was an eternal redemption for the souls of the converts also. To be sure, this was not so on a visible level, but on a concealed level.

For all holiness has but one root; thus when our ancestors were in Egypt, the general principle of holiness was immersed in the impurity of Egypt. When the general principle of holiness is thus embedded, there is no remedy for any of its branches either. The salvation of the root, therefore, affects the branches also. (see Ohr HaChaim on Bamidbar 9:14).

Q: What do the three matzahs represent?

A: The community of Kairuwan enquired of Rav Sherira Gaon why we take three matzahs on the evening of Pesach. He replied that there is an allusion in the Torah: the three measures of flour which Avraham asked Sarah to use for baking cakes (Bereishis 18:6); for according to our tradition this happened on Pesach. Others say that they are a reminder of the three "mountains of the world," i.e., Avraham, Yitzchak & Yaakov.

חג כשר ושמה

**Shabbos HaGadol Drasha
Shabbos at 5:00pm**

with Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer
at Chabad (corner Main & 69th Ave.)

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