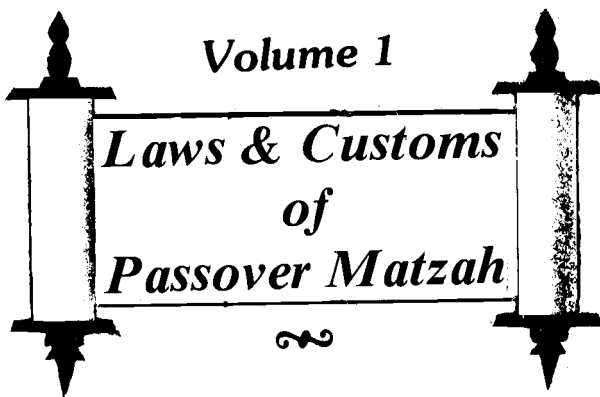


Mitzvah Encyclopedia

Volume 1



***Laws & Customs
of
Passover Matzah***

By

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Rabbi of Congregation Magen Shaul of Holmin, Rosh Yeshivah of
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Mitzvah Encyclopedia

Volume 1

Laws & Customs of Passover Matzah

An extensive anthology from the works of the *Poskim*, from the books of the *Baal Shem Tov* and his disciples, and other holy books encompassing the basic and fundamental rules related to the baking and eating of matzoth on Passover, as well as other matters related to that festival.

No doubt, the reader will be greatly inspired by the words of these saints and sages to make every effort to fulfill the mitzvah of baking and eating matzoth according to all their details with all the stringencies mentioned in this context from the day the Torah was given, until this very day. Only by doing so, can one be assured that he will emerge innocent from the judgment of the Divine Tribunal when G-d will judge the whole world, as is related in the Holy Zohar, that the main part of the judgment on the Day of Judgment will be concerning the bread of healing (the kabbalistic name for matzah). Moreover, we learn many important lessons from the mitzvah of matzah, which will guide us throughout the entire year.

By

Rabbi Sholom Y. Gross,

Rabbi of Cong. Magen Shaul of Halmin, dean of Yeshiva and

Kolel "Beis Yeshay

Institute for Instruction in Shechitah and Bedikah."

Author of the following works:

Giddulei Yehudah (laws of Tzitzith), *Responsa Zivchu Zivche Tzedek* (on *Shehcitah* and *Bedika*), *Chinuch Yisroel Sava* (Guide for education of boys and girls), *Madrich Litznius*, *Minchas Yehuda* (concerning *cholov akum* and "Similac"), *Menuchas Sholom* (Kashruth guide), *Nefesh Yeshayah* (on forbidden foods) 5 vol.), *Kedushath Yisroel* (on *yichud*), *Mezuzas Sholom* (laws of *Mezuzah*), and other important works.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to take this opportunity to mention my dear mother, the personification of “A G-d fearing woman — she is to be praised.” Esther ,י”ח the daughter of Rabbi Zev Wolf Mutzen ל”ז, the *shochet* of Arad, (who passed away on the eighth day of Tammuz, 5715). I beseech the Almighty to grant her long life in health and happiness, and may she have *nachas* from her children and grandchildren engaged in learning Torah and fulfilling mitzvos, until the coming of the Messiah speedily and in our days, Amen.

May my beloved wife, ,י”ח Taube, the daughter of Rabbi Chaim Eliyahu Bittman, שליט”א be blessed with the threefold priestly blessing, for exerting every effort to stand by my side and help me fulfill my aims; she enjoys immensely seeing me free to engage in the Torah, to write novelae, and to author *seforim*. May her reward from the L-rd, G-d of Israel, be complete, and may we both merit to raise our lovely children to learn Torah, to enter the *Chupah*, and to engage in good deeds. May our children: Yaakov Yeshayah Zev, Miriam Berochoh, Avrohom Chaim Elimelech, Chayah Soroh Feige, Pearl Málkah, Nissan Moishe, Dovid, Avigdor, Freide Bale, and Yoseph Yoel all merit long lives in happiness. I pray: Please, Almighty G-d, guard them from misfortunes and illnesses, and may we have much *nachas* from them. May they raise generations of upright Jews, blessed by G-d to be a glory to our holy forebearers.

I also wish to take this opportunity to express gratitude to the members of my congregation, Congregation Mogen Shaul of Halmin, and especially to the scholars of the kolel “Beis Yeshayah” of Brooklyn, who are dedicated to the study of the laws of *shechitah* and *bedikah*. They are all Torah observers and magnanimous people, who assisted me greatly in the publication of this book and other books. May G-d bless them, as well as all others who have assisted me in my holy task and grant them all the desires of their hearts for good.

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Endorsments

בע"ה

הנה ראיתי כמה מהספרים שנתחברו ע"י ידידי הרב הגאון מהר"ר שלום יודא גראס שליט"א הרב דק"ק האלמין מברוקלין, ביניהם הספרים אכילת מצות בישראל ו' חלקים, אפיית המצות השלם ג"ח, שו"ת זבחו זבחי צדק, אהלי ישראל, רבר משה, מזבח שלום, מנחת יהודה, קרושת ישראל, נפש ישעי' ועוד, וכולם נכתבו באופן וצורה שראויה לבני תורה לעיין בהם, שהגאון המחבר שליט"א אסף וביאר בחריפות ובקיאות נפלאה, ההלכות והשקפות ששייכים לכמה ענינים שהעולם, ר"ל, נכשלים בהם, ואף שלא שייך לי מחמת טרדת הזמן, אלא לעיין קצת בספרים, וממילא לא שייך לכתוב הסכמה לגבי החלטת הדינים, מ"מ כבר אתחוק גברא, שיש לסמוך על הגאון המחבר שליט"א, שחיבר ספריו לכבוד השם ותורתו, וממילא אני מקוה, שכל שומרי התורה יעזרו להגאון המחבר שליט"א, שבאמת מצוה גדולה לחזקו ולתומכו בכל האפשרות.

וע"ז באתי על החתום לכבוד התורה ולומדיה,

ביום י"ח לחדש סיון תש"מ

נאום משה פיינשטיין

I have seen many of the Seforim authored by Rabbi Sholom Yehudah Gross שליט"א, Rabbi of Holmin, from Brooklyn, with whom I am well acquainted. Among them are the works entitled: *Achilath Matzoth B'Yisroel*, 7 vol.; *Afiath HaMatzoth Hashalem*, 3 vol.; *Responsa Zivchu Zivchei Tzedek*; *Oholei Yisroel*; *D'var Mosheh*; *Mezuzath Sholom*; *Minchath Yehudah*; and many others. They are all written in a manner and form worthy of the attention of Torah scholars. The author, a Gaon, has organized and explained each topic with extensive erudition and profound understanding. These Seforim document the laws and ideas concerning many areas of Halacha in which observance has, unfortunately, become lax. Shortage of time has denied me the possibility to properly review his works. I, therefore, am not in a position to endorse his legal decisions. However, this Gaon, the author, may be relied upon since he has already displayed his ability in this field, and has authored his works without any ulterior motives, only for the honor of G-d and His Torah. I, therefore, hope that all observant Jews will assist the learned author of these books, for it is a great Mitzvah to encourage him and support him as much as possible.

I, therefore, affix my signature in honor of the Torah and those who study it, on the eighteenth day of Sivan, 5740.

Moshe Feinstein

Moshe Stern
Rabbi of Debrecena and Neuheusel
Author of Responsa Beer Moshe, 5 vol.
Brooklyn, NY

To my dear friend, the outstanding rabbi who wages G-d's battles, Rabbi Sholom Yehudah Gross, Rabbi of Halmin:

I was happy to learn that you are preparing to publish several important booklets concerning matters whose importance reaches the high heavens. The first book is entitled, "*Afiar Hamatzos Hashalem*", the complete book on baking matzos, in which are collected excerpts from the works of the sages of Israel, from the early *rishonim* to the latest of the *acharonim*, dealing with reaping, selecting, grinding, sifting, drawing water, kneading, baking, and separating challah.

An extensive anthology of this sort has never before been published.

Thousands of halachos are collected in this anthology, halachos that light the way for everyone who comes to approach the inner sanctum, to ponder on the matter of baking matzos and to engage in the work of baking matzos.

I saw too the booklet entitled "The Mitzvah of Matzah with Perfection", a booklet containing many interesting excerpts from the works of the *poskim*, and the works of the holy *Baal Shem Tov* and his disciples, basic rules relevant to baking and eating matzos on Pesach.

Additionally, you did a great service by composing "Customs of Tzaddikim of Israel", in which are collected the customs of the greatest *tzaddikim*, to enable everyone to follow their customs and adopt their holy practices.

The fourth is entitled "Wondrous Tales about the Tzaddikim of Israel", stories concerning these angelic men, whose example inspires people's hearts to cleave to the Creator.

This set includes too, *Achilas Matzos B'Yisroel*, devoted to directing the public to the correct way to fulfill G-d's commandment with all its details and ramifications.

Let us quote the testimony of the renowned saint and sage, the author of *Sefer Harokeach* o.b.m., whose words are known to stem from ancient tradition. He writes in *Hilchos Pesach* that whoever eats matzah during the seven days of Passover, becomes a partner with the Holy One, Blessed be He, in the Creation. See also *Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez*, where midrashic sources are quoted to the effect that eating matzos all the days of Pesach is tantamount to fulfilling all 613 mitzvos.

See how far-reaching the fulfillment of this mitzvah can be! Everyone must, therefore, strive to perform this mitzvah properly according to the halachic authorities of all generations.

Combined with this work is *Segulas Mitvas Achilas Matzah*, delineating the effects of eating matzos, both spiritual as well as physical, in this world as well as in the next, for everyone who fulfills the mitzvah of matzah as it was handed down from Mt. Sinai.

Included in this work are many topics related to the mitzvah of eating matzos, viz. the question of whether it is a mitzvah to eat matzos all seven days of Passover, and the laws governing the eating of wet matzos, according to those who rule strictly and according to those who rule leniently. These studies are fit for the rabbis and their students, as well as all those who study the Torah and its laws. It is superfluous to dwell on the importance this wonderful work bears for all Jews, after hearing the fiery words of my forebear, the luminary of Israel, the holy *Chasam Sofer* in the addenda to *Choshen Mishpat*, ch. 196:

The positive mitzvah of eating matzah on the night of Passover is the only mitzvah fulfilled by eating that we still have. We have neither the Passover sacrifice nor any other sacrifice, neither *terumah* nor the second tithe, only one matzah from year to year, and if even this is not fulfilled properly, not only do we not

fulfill the mitvah, but it is possible that one who eats matzos all seven days of Passover is actually eating *chometz*, which bears the penalty of *kares*. Not only this, but they cause others to sin by selling improper matzos, for which people spend thousands of dollars. Can this please G-d?

Nothing can be said after his words, for Moshe our master has given out his decision, and Moshe is true and his Torah is true.

(Rabbi) Moshe Stern
Rabbi of Debrecen

The evening following the Sabbath, *Parshas Pekudei* 5738 Brooklyn, N.Y.



In the author's previous works, among them Responsa Zivchei Zedek, Afiath Matzot, Achilas Matza B'Yisroel, Nefesh Yeshaya and Minchath Yehudah, letters of appreciation and support were printed from Geonim and Tzadikim of our generation, the authorities upon whom the House of Israel depends.

Rabbi Eliyahu Zlotnick - Zecher Tzaddik'bracho
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INTRODUCTION

G-d's acts of loving kindness surely have not ended, neither are his mercies exhausted. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness (Eichah/Lamentations 3:22, 23). Who is like the Lord our G-d whenever we call Him (Deut. 4:7)?

From time immemorial He has performed innumerable miracles and wonders for us, commencing with the redemption from Egyptian bondage and its accompanying miracles. Had the Most Holy, Blessed be He, not taken our forefathers out of Egypt, we would still be enslaved and swallowed up within the Egyptian people.

Moreover, we would not have received the Torah with its mitzvos. The Most Holy, Blessed be He, bestowed His infinite kindness upon us and chose us for His favorite people, and gave us His Torah. Even if our mouths were full of song as the sea, and our tongues full of song like the multitude of its waves, and our lips full of praise like the expanses of the sky, and our eyes were as illuminating as the moon and the sun, and our hands were spread out like the eagles of the air, and our feet as light as antelopes, we would not be able to thank and bless our Creator for one-thousandth or even for one ten-thousandth of the favors, the miracles, and the wonders that He wrought with our forefathers and with us. And now, Israel, what does the Lord your G-d demand of you, but to fear His honored, blessed, and exalted Name? It will be a merit for us if we observe to perform all that is written in this book of the Torah. Indeed, Jews are holy. Who is like Your people Israel, one nation upon the earth, possessing glory of greatness and a crown of salvation? They spare no exertion to enhance their observance, to take precautions upon precautions, to augment stringencies upon stringencies, yet always fearing that they have perhaps infringed

a mitzvah or forgotten to fulfill the observance of a safeguard or a stringent ruling, whatever it may be. Even though they are impoverished and downtrodden in their exile, the object of ridicule among the nations, they have not forgotten the writing of the powerful Torah, and they anticipate G-d's salvation, for His mercies have not been consumed.

Especially before the Passover, this holy and awesome festival, the first festival given to the chosen people, a time when all assemble to pay homage to the Almighty, one with his pitcher and one with his barrel, all toiling and working, fatigued exhausted, all seeking to fear Your name. Since they are preoccupied, they search in the abridged codes for a laudable practice or a stringency, which, they perhaps forgot, especially as regards baking matzos. It is, therefore, a great service for them to find a book in which are gathered together words of inspiration, laws, and practices of *tzaddikim* during the baking of the matzos, all arranged in a manner easy for anyone to read.

O Merciful Master! Accept our prayers, fulfill our requests. We place our trust in You. Let Your mercies come quickly before us. O Mighty One, we have not forgotten Your name. Please do not forget us to all eternity. May Your heart and Your eyes return to Your holy Temple. May You rejuvenate Your people, rebuild Your altar, and return us all to Zion in joy. Then we will sanctify Your name, for You are the Holy One of Israel and its Savior.

The benefit from publishing such sefarim as this is twofold—both for the author and for the reader. I will explain by quoting from several sefarim, first *Sefer Chassidim* (153): *...Anyone whose friend is punished and he does not admonish him by saying, "Don't do that," is accounted guilty for all the punishment his friend receives. If his friend dies, it is accounted as though he killed him, because he failed to admonish him.*

Next I quote *Pele Yoetz (Asifos)*: And so shall they do in every generation: Every scholar whom G-d has favored with knowledge and many books should strive to assist the public with matters that are very necessary, as the Rabbis said: Everyone needs the owner of the wheat, comparing knowledge of the Torah to wheat, a food necessary for life. The scholars should compile anthologies according to their G-d-given abilities. There is no greater kindness than that, since this is kindness to the soul, and those who do this are leading the public to righteousness, hence the merit of the public is attributed to them. Let them not be fazed by the ridicule and jeers of those who say, "What have these wise men done for us, by repeating what has already been written in sefarim. They mean only to accumulate money and to gain for themselves a reputation that they are authors." May the Lord forgive those who talk that way... Indeed, anthologies are very useful. Therefore, every scholar should pursue them... and everyone uses them constantly, for in our times brevity is popular with everyone...

He states further (*Kesivah*): Inevitably, at one time or other, his words will bring results, even if only to one in a thousand. Fortunate is he, for if he had come to this world only for him it would suffice.

Likutei Etzos (Talmud Torah 46, 47): There are many books now, and there are destined to be many more. All these books are necessary for the world, and we may not ridicule any of them, since they are based on our holy Torah, both the written Torah and the Oral Torah... *and whoever ridicules any of them will be punished with boiling excrement*, and will not be able to derive any good behavior from the Torah and will not be able to give good advice. His advice will always be faulty.

The *Chofetz Chaim*, too, stresses this point (*Mishnah Berurah 256:2, and in Shaar Hatziun*): Fortunate is their lot, for

they lead Israel to their Father in Heaven, and those who strive constantly to perform this mitzvah, will merit children who are great Torah scholars... Our Rabbis said regarding Elkanah, that when he would make his pilgrimages every year, he would see to inspire the Jews to follow suit so that all Israel would merit to fulfill this mitzvah to make a pilgrimage to Shiloh. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, "You intended to lead the Jews to righteousness. I will, therefore, give you a son who will lead Israel to righteousness before Me." He was rewarded with a son, Samuel. May their holy words be fulfilled in us. Amen.



APOLOGY

Understandably, it is very difficult to compose an anthology. It is very time consuming, and I did not wish to detain further the publication of the book, especially since all the matters mentioned by the *acharonim* were before my eyes, and almost everything is already mentioned here. It is understood that it is unnecessary to mention that an identical or similar quotation is found elsewhere, especially since all these quotations are customs and accepted halachos with which no one disagrees. I, therefore, selected only the matters that are arranged well like a *Shulchan Aruch*, so that when the time arrives before Pesach, it will be prepared for everyone, and one will not have to search in the nooks and crannies for hours, only to fail to find what he is looking for. See further along an important introduction at the beginning of the chapters of the halachos.



LAWS & CUSTOMS OF PASSOVER MATZAH

Chapter 1

To follow many stringent rulings on Passover

1) *The Gaon R'Shmuel Aboab o.b.m.* wrote in his will:

To be careful concerning stringent rulings concerning matzos on Passover lest they become *chometz* by lying around, since there is a punishment of *kares* for eating *chometz* and there are two negative commandments, *bal yeroeh* and *bal yimatay* for keeping it in ones possession. Therefore, one who fears the word of *Hashem* and desires His mitzvos greatly, will be extremely careful not to delegate this mitzvah to any of his servants or to any members of his household, but he himself must be diligent in performing it. He should be careful to make a small dough, just the amount that requires *challah*, and to hurry, for the time allotted by the Rabbis is short, and it passes like a shadow.

The author of *Shimushah shel Torah* comments: The author wrote to be careful concerning "stringent rulings" concerning matzos for Passover. He did not say, "concerning watching" like the wording of the verse: And you shall watch the matzos. Perhaps he alluded to what is found in *Shulchan Aruch Harav Baal Hatanya in the responsa ch. 6, in the name of Arizal, to adopt all stringencies on Passover.*

2) *Zichron Tou* by the holy gaon *Mahri from Neschiz o.b.m.* (Letter *Zayin Avdus Hatzaddikim*): The Rabbi told that his father o.b.m. was very strict concerning laws of Passover. His son, the *Kovler o.b.m.*, once wanted to promulgate a lenient decision on a question concerning Passover.

He said, "Why should we be so strict to add one stringency to another?" Their father answered, "My son, are you smarter than our *acharonim*, who were very strict concerning the laws of Passover?" From the on, the *Kovler* was very strict concerning the laws of Passover. Our Rabbi told us that the *Berditchover*

was extremely strict in the laws of Shabbos even more than the case mentioned here.

3) In the introduction of *Minchas Shabbos* (3), the author states that he found a similar practice mentioned in *Tur Orach Chaim* 447, that R' Meir of Rothenburg was wont to reply to those who asked him on Passover concerning food with which chometz which gave a bad taste had become mixed, that there are differences of opinion about this, but that many people refrain from such food of their own accord. See also *Chok Yaakov* (462:1) where he quotes the *Knesses Hagedolah* concerning fruit juices without water, even though the *Shulchan Aruch* and all the *acharonim* permit using it from the start.

4) The *Pele Yoetz* dwells on this topic at length. For the benefit of the public, we will quote the entire article:—

Passover is a very holy festival, for had the Holy One, Blessed Be He, not taken our ancestors out of Egypt, we and our children would still be enslaved there; i.e., we would be a nation within a nation, and we would never have received the Torah and its *mitzvos*. Consequently, the name of Israel would never be remembered. The Holy One, Blessed be He, dealt wondrously with Israel and showed them His deep love for them, so much so that it is impossible to fathom one thousandth, or even one millionth thereof. We can only understand that He performed great kindness with us, so great that it cannot be fathomed, and that He showed us His glory and His greatness, His love, His ability to override the heavenly bodies, and His individual Providence. He commanded us concerning this in His Holy Torah, to mention the Exodus and to mention “a remembrance of the departure from Egypt” on every mitzvah. He commanded us to have this remembrance between our eyes and for a sign upon our hand. He gave us Sabbaths and festivals, during which we recite the kiddush, in which we say “a remembrance of the departure from Egypt.” The main reason for mentioning the departure from Egypt every day and for the mitzvah of tefillin is

so that the person will concentrate on these matters both intensively and extensively, and so that Israel should rejoice with their Maker and come to fear and love G-d Who is honored and feared, also to cleave to Him and to serve him wholeheartedly. It is proper to do so since G-d displayed His great love for us, the greatness of His ability, and the efficacy of His providence. For this reason, our Creator commanded us to narrate at length the account of the Exodus, and whoever narrates the account of the Exodus at length, is deemed praiseworthy. This reason is in addition to the secret, kabbalistic reasons involved in these mitzvos. When one relates the story of the Exodus, he builds up the power of G-d in the heavenly worlds, as is described in the holy *Zohar, Parshas Bo*, in a quotation that fills the heart with enthusiasm, and which should be read on the night of the Seder. There is still another reason according to the *peshat*, to imbue the heart with love, for that is the main reason for Man's existence. This is the basis of the mitzvah of narrating the account of the Exodus, to tell the members of the household how the Almighty showed us His glory, His greatness, His love, His mercy, His ability, and His Providence. Because of this we are obligated to serve him wholeheartedly and to observe all His commandments.

On this holy festival, G-d hallowed us with His commandments and commanded us to eat matzah. In this context, the Torah commands us to guard the matzos from becoming leavened. Some authorities rule that the wheat must be watched from the harvesting so that no water reaches it. According to this school, one cannot fulfill his obligation to eat matzah except with matzos that have been guarded from water from the time of harvest.

Since the mitzvah of eating matzah is so wonderful, and its secret is so exalted, to the extent that the holy *Zohar* calls it food of healing, everyone should make every effort to fulfill the commandment according to these authorities, and should by all means, make, at least, the matzos used at the sedarim to fulfill

the mitzvah, from wheat that was watched from the time of harvest. Otherwise, what does a person gain from all the work and toil he does in preparation for Passover if he does not fulfill his obligation to eat matzah? Although some authorities rule that we can fulfill the mitzvah with the matzah that has not been watched from the harvest, one must be wary of the opinion of the great authorities who rule that one cannot. This is analogous to a sick person for whom ninety-nine doctors have prescribed a certain medication. They agree, however, that a second medication is superior, but they insist that the first one is sufficiently potent. A specialist then came and stated emphatically that the medication prescribed by the other doctors is worthless, and that it may even harm the patient, and that the only effective medication is the second one mentioned. Now, who would be so foolish as to disregard the opinion of the specialist and not take the medicine prescribed by him, which medicine all the doctors agree is effective? This case is comparable to that.

Accordingly, *some pious people take care all the days of Passover, not to eat any matzos except those made from wheat that was watched from the harvest, in order to comply with all opinions. For, if we try to comply with all opinions throughout the year, how much more must we do so regarding chometz and matzah, for which one is liable to kares, and for which the reward is so great! we read in the name of R' Yitzchak Luria o.b.m., known universally as HaAri Zal, that whosoever is wary of the prohibition of chometz on Passover, and is careful to fulfill all opinions, and is extremely careful, is assured that he will not sin throughout the year. Everyone should, therefore, be very careful, for there is no greater reward than this. For this reason, matzah is called the food of healing, for it imbues the heart with faith, fear and love for the Creator. How fortunate are the Jews! Their wives are even more fortunate than they, for they are careful to rid themselves of all chometz, and they are much stricter than is necessary. May they be blessed with plenty.*

However, the most important thing that requires caution on Passover is what we put into our mouths, that it should not have the minutest possibility of being *chometz* or containing a mixture of *chometz*, and to comply with all halachic opinions.

It is proper to appoint supervisors in the matzah bakeries to make sure that the utensils are cleaned thoroughly between one kneading and the next, and to see that they do not follow the practice of making thin matzahs that lie around without being worked upon, and then pile them up on the shovel to carry them to the oven, for if one does this, if the matzah was kneaded with water, he is eating real *chometz*. The responsibility lies mainly on the leaders, to keep their eyes open, to close any breaches in the observance of these laws, to prevent the public from sinning, and to be on guard that the people follow the dictates of the Torah.

On the night of the holy festival, one must exert every effort to view himself as though he had come out of Egypt, as our Rabbis prescribed. Through constantly thinking pure thoughts, he will become so enthusiastic that he will soon discover that it is impossible to refrain from rejoicing. As much as he arouses himself and as much as he rejoices, so will the Almighty assist him, for whoever attempts to purify himself, will receive divine aid, and one who rejoices will be aided to rejoice even more with the mitzvah, as is proper on this joyous occasion. The kabbalists write that not only is the prohibition of *chometz* exceedingly serious during Passover, but any transgression is exceedingly serious, and is more destructive, and its mark is more indelible, than during the rest of the year. On Passover, therefore, one must be more alert than during the rest of the year. The Rabbis arranged the mitzvos of the evening with a mnemonic beginning with *kaddesh urchatz*. There are many ignorant people who are unfamiliar with this mnemonic and do not know how to follow it. They should consult a rabbi, who will teach them, and they should jot down his instructions in a language they understand, in order to remember how to fulfill every part of the seder according to the law. This is the rule: *One who goes to the wise will himself become wise*, and this is man's entire aim.

5) The *Kav Hayashar* explains the gravity of the matter in a remarkable manner (ch. 29): The Torah commands us, "And you shall watch the matzos." It is noteworthy that the Torah uses an expression usually used in reference to watching property from thieves and robbers. The truth of the matter is that when G-d took His people Israel out of Egypt with great and wondrous miracles, He first cast down the Prince of Egypt with all other accusers, to prevent them from accusing us. They are, nevertheless, still standing and accusing. When Passover arrives, however, they sparkle and awaken to accuse us, and they seek to harm Israel. The Holy One, Blessed be He, therefore, commanded us to eat matzos. This mitzvah outweighs the forces of evil and the accusers, so that they will not be able to accuse. This is analogous to the mezuzah on the doorpost of the house, upon the outside of which the name *Shad-dai* is written. Since this is the purpose of the matzah, the dough used for it requires extra watching against the forces of evil, so that the forces of evil will not have any adherence to it, G-d forbid. Wherever the Torah mentions *chometz*, it alludes to the forces of evil, and wherever the Torah mentions *machmetzes*, it alludes to the feminine counterpart of the forces of evil, viz, the wicked Lilith and Sammael. We must, therefore, guard the matzos from leavening. The Torah, therefore, uses the expression of watching or guarding. You shall watch the matzos like a person who must watch himself from thieves and robbers who come upon him to kill him and to take all his belongings, for this is the strong *kelipah*, and this is the secret meaning of *chometz* and *machmetzes*. Concerning this *kelipah*, we say, "And all the wickedness shall be consumed like smoke..." G-d forbid that they should have any adherence to the holiness above, even as much as a hairbreadth, as the Torah states: "And nothing of the *cherem* shall adhere to your hand." Therefore, even the minutest amount of *chometz* renders the entire food non-kosher. It is proper to teach our people that when they *kasher* utensils because of *chometz*, they should have in mind

that, similarly, the Holy One, Blessed be He, should purge the evil inclination and the wickedness, synonymous with Lilith, from the earth, and we are confident that the Almighty will do so. A Jewish custom is binding like the Torah itself. It is customary to scrape the tables, benches, and the walls because of fear of *chometz*. The Creator's eyes are open to see all that His children, the children of Israel, his favorite nation, do during the month of Nissan, to rid themselves of all types of leaven. Similarly, He will scrape away all plagues emanating from the evil forces and the accusers. Since all the work in preparation for Pesach is done with love and joy, all Jews must beware of anger, and all the more so of quarrels and arguments.

6) He writes elsewhere (ch. 90): We have a tradition that if one works very hard in honor of the festival of Pesach and becomes exhausted from the work, he destroys thereby all destructive demons, known as *nig'ei b'nei adam*, plagues of people, and everyone who engages in toiling for the mitzvah of the days of Passover, rectifies the sin of the vain emission of semen. Everyone knows that practically no one is innocent of that sin. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every Jew to rectify what he can, and may *Hashem*, with His bountiful mercy and kindness, accept the good thoughts of His people Israel and hasten our redemption.

7) Next we quote from **Responsa Divrei Chaim** (*Orach Chaim* 24): It is well known that many people are strict in making matzohs, that each matzah is placed on a new shovel, and other new utensils are used. Some pious wealthy men spend much money to make matzos on linen or blank paper, for every matzah a new piece of linen. In addition to this, I have seen many various customs, since everyone tries to be strict according to his opinion of what is most proper. I am not referring to people who pretend to be pious, but to G-d-fearing householders, who practice various stringencies.

8) *Bnei Yissachar* (Tishrei 10:7) depicts the greatness of the sanctity brought about by the caution and the strictness and the pious deeds we practice in the making of the matzos.

9) *Daas Kedoshim* (Laws of *Sefer Torah* 276:6) writes: Pious deeds are more desirable to G-d than the mitzvah itself. [He is referring to erasing a letter from a holy *sefar* in order to make a correction which is not halachically obligatory but is merely a pious deed.]

Inspiration to Caution and Zealousness

10) *This matzah that we eat, for what reason do we do it?* I.e., how is it possible to eat a matzah that is watched properly? It is very difficult to ascertain that there is no minuscule doubt of a minimal amount of *chometz*. But we rely on G-d to help us that there will be no chance of any *chometz*, even a minuscule amount, just as he aided our ancestors when they went out of Egypt, even though it was really impossible for them to watch the dough from leavening, according to halacha, so do we trust the Lord to aid us in fulfilling the mitzvah of matzah according to its halachah (*Maor Vashemesh* on the subject of *Pesach*).

11) *R'Yissachar Dov of Belz o.b.m.* was accustomed to say in the name of the *tzaddik* of *Strelisk o.b.m.*, that as soon as water comes in contact with flour, it is very difficult to prevent it from becoming slightly leavened, but since the Holy One, Blessed be He, sees that the Jews are preparing themselves with zeal and with holiness to bake matzos to fulfill the mitzvah of matzah, he sends angels from heaven to watch that the dough does not leaven. (*Haggadah Imrei Kodesh*)

12) But the common people are accustomed to doing the *mitzvos* that come easily and do not involve any expense; the *mitzvos* that require expense or much bother, however they neglect. Now what will become of these *mitzvos*? (*Maor Vashemesh Ekeu*)

13) *He should learn Torah for its sake and judge fairly, not being strict with others and lenient with himself, but he himself must keep the same rules he preaches for others (ibid.).*

14) The aim of the common folk is to achieve temporal success, included in three categories, viz. longevity, children, and worldly possessions. By fulfilling mitzvos, you will achieve all of them. (Seforno, Ekev, also *Or Hachaim*)

15) *If even one person performs one mitzvah, how fortunate he is! He has outweighed his own sins and those of the whole world .. and likewise, if one person repents, his sins are forgiven... The observance of a mitzvah by an individual is regarded as though the public has observed the mitzvah, and they all will benefit by it. The Torah uses the word mitzvah in the singular, to denote that even the observance of one mitvah in the proper manner, results in long life for the community. (K'li Ykar ibid.)*

16) We find in the book entitled *Shaar Hamelech (Hachodesh Hazeh Lachem)* after all his admonitions: All the aforementioned statements to admonish the people are found mostly in *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim*. But since people are not careful in their observance, and each one persists in following his old practice and that of his fathers, everyone should, therefore, abandon his previous practice and adopt customs the earlier generations left for him to gain honor by observing. Even if one knows that he is a scholar and that everything he does is according to halachah, he must still look to observe the laws of *chometz* in a stricter fashion than he did the previous year, for every year the evil forces seek to strengthen themselves and to raise their heads. Corresponding to this, when one adds stringency to his observance and strengthens the powers of holiness, he breaks the power of the evil forces. The main objective must be to break the *chometz* and to make matzah.

17) *Sh'nei Luchos Habris*, known popularly as *the holy Shaloh*, writes (*Maseches Pesachim*): The sanctity of this night and all the laws practiced then amount to an extremely great sanctity, for

then the Lord selected us from all the nations and hallowed us with His commandments. It is, therefore, proper for one to be careful *not to engage on this night in any mundane conversation*, and he should admonish the members of his household to do likewise, so that they should not cease to cleave to the Almighty even for one second, but they should occupy themselves completely with the mitzvos of that night, to narrate the miracles performed on that night and to publicize them to the members of his household. If the Almighty endowed him with understanding, and he knows the secrets of these matters, he should engage in them. Moreover, he should not speak until after eating the *afikoman*, because the blessing, *Boray P'ri Ha'adamah*, recited for the *karpas*, belongs, as well, to the eating of the *maror*, according to *Rashbam* and *Rosh*. Accordingly, how can he converse and make an interruption between them with matters not related to the *seder*? Additionally, when he recites the blessing for the matzah and the *maror*, he should have in mind the *korech* as well, and it is proper to have in mind the eating of the *afikoman*, when one recites the blessings over the matzah. How, then, can he interrupt?

Additionally, a person should think that he has *a mitzvah that comes but once a year*. Afterwards, these mitzvos will no longer present themselves. Consequently, when he has the opportunity to observe them, *he should honor them, love them, and cleave to them*. His thoughts should not leave them. I have seen people of a high level of piety, show love for the mitzvos. They would kiss the matzos and the *maror* and all the mitzvos at the time of their performance. This practice can be derived from the words of *Ramo*, ch. 24: Some are accustomed to kiss the *tzitzis* whenever they see them. This is all because of love for the mitzvah. Fortunate is the one who serves Hashem with joy and with a happy heart, with cleaving, longing, and desire. Thus it is proper for us to do, to thank the One who wrought for our ancestors and for us, all the miracles and wonders in Egypt, and extricated us from bondage to freedom. We must, therefore, display our

greatfulness and rejoice with our G-d's salvation, to recognize and to know the great lovingkindness the G-d of our forefathers wrought for us, to take us out of the iron crucible. He drew us out of the quicksand in which we were sinking among the heathens. We had almost forgotten the covenant of our forefathers, yet He selected us as His treasured people, and crowned us with His Torah and His mitzvos. *Fortunate is the people who has it so; fortunate is the people whose G-d is Hashem.*

Who can comprehend this, and yet refrain from thanking and lauding the Master of All according to his ability and his comprehension, from the depths of his heart and soul, for all the good that He did for His people Israel? He should perform the mitzvah for its sake, with complete knowledge and with the proper intention, not incidentally as a commandment of men learned by rote. All matters of freedom that we practice on this night denote freedom of the soul, since we were redeemed from the forces of evil into which we had sunk, even into forty-nine levels of contamination, from which He took us out into freedom. For this reason, we make these signs of freedom and rejoice with the joy of performing a mitzvah. Before the inauguration of the festival, we rid ourselves of the *chometz*, the representation of the forces of evil, and it may not be seen or found in our houses. When the sanctity of Passover arrives, we enter an exalted sanctity, which takes us out of darkness into light. (*Shaloh Maseches Pesachim*)

18) In the holy sefer, **Yesod Yosef**, ch. 84:20, we read: *And you shall watch the matzos.* We must give thought to the matter, why the Torah uses the expression of watching the matzos, for watching applies mainly to articles requiring watching from robbers and bandits. But you should know that when the Holy One, Blessed be He, took His people Israel out of Egypt with great miracles and wonders, he first of all cast down many heavenly princes of nations to the extent that they had not power to accuse. For this reason, they are still gritting their teeth. Upon the arrival of the holy festival of matzos, may it come toward us in

peace, these princes arouse themselves to accuse and harm. To counteract this, we were commanded to eat matzos, which causes the accusers and the evil forces to flee, so that they will be unable to accuse us. This is analogous to the mezuzah affixed to the doorpost, upon the outside of which the name *Shad-dai* is written. Consequently, matzah dough requires very strict watching because of the accursed powers of evil, lest they adhere to it, G-d forbid. Accordingly, everywhere in the Torah where *chometz* is mentioned, it alludes to the forces of evil, and every mention of *machmetzes* alludes to the feminine counterpart, Lilith the wicked. We must, therefore, watch the dough from leavening. Hence, the expression of *watching* is apropos, *And you shall watch the matzos*, just as one must watch himself from robbers and bandits who are liable to attack him and murder him, G-d forbid. Since this powerful evil force of *chometz* and *machmetzes* are the source of the evil forces, concerning whom we pray, "*And all the wickedness shall be consumed like smoke...*" G-d forbid that they should have any connection with a high level of sanctity, even so much as a hairbreadth, as Scripture states: *And nothing of the cherem shall cling to your hand*. The Rabbis, therefore, prohibited even a minute quantity of *chometz*....

When the time arrives to go to draw water for the matzos used for the mitzvah, even if one is a prominent member of the community, he should not stand on ceremony and refrain from going personally to draw water for the mitzvah. Rather, every Jew should hasten and rejoice, (and pray) that *Hashem* should allow him to live until the next year to draw water from the springs of salvation, when we will merit to see with our own eyes the spring water from the well of Miriam the prophetess. He should select attractive utensils without any dirt on them, to draw the water for the mitzvah. He should take two vessels for the two nights, a separate vessel for each night, just as the pious *Maharil* o.b.m. did. When he reaches the water, as soon as he sees it ... he should take a small vessel with which to draw the water, and when he starts, he should say, "For the sake of

unifying the Holy One, blessed be He, and his Shechinah with awe and love in the name of all Israel." Every time he pours with this vessel, he should count it, i.e., the first time he should count *Alef*, and so on, *Beis, Gimel, Daleth...* in order to draw into the water the sanctity of the letters of the Torah. It is, therefore, advisable to take a small vessel with which he can complete the entire *alefbeth*. He should do the same with the second vessel, for the matzos to be used on the second night. If he is old and feeble, and cannot go personally to draw water, he should wait by his door, and when he sees the people carrying the water for the matzos, he should run toward them and take it to his house. This procedure was practiced by Hagaon R' Isaac, Rosh Yeshivah and Rav of Brest Litovsk. They saw him run toward the holy water and carry it into his house.

It is a laudable custom that when he brings the water into his house, he should announce, "Gentlemen, I am now coming with commandments, laws, statutes, and judgments into our house." The members of his household should respond, "For life and for peace, for length of good days and years. Amen and amen." They should place the water in a clean, pure place, where there is no soil or stench, G-d forbid. It is advisable that a menstruous woman should not touch it, and that it should be covered with clean cloths without any soil. Also when they carry it home, it should be covered, not exposed, because exposure stems from the Serpent and the evil forces. Both going and returning, if he meets a non-Jew, he should not talk to him. Also, if the non-Jew started to talk with him, he should not enter into a long conversation with him, should but shorten the conversation as much as possible, because the holy work is in his charge.

He should then hasten to fulfill the mitzvah of searching for leaven, and it is proper to fulfill what the *geonim, Maharil* and *Maharshal*, write, viz., and to take care of his bodily needs so that he will be obliged to wash his hands well in order to purify his hands before he fulfills this beloved mitzvah which comes from year to year. It is the custom of those who are exact in their

observance, to fulfill what the early *chasidim* wrote, to order the members of the household to place crumbs of *chometz in ten places*. So that *Hashem* will have mercy on us and will shake out, abolish, crumble, cut off, confuse, tear down, uproot, break, defeat, and uproot the evil forces completely, so that they will not spread out to the upper levels of sanctity, and their accusation will not ascend at all, and that the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael, sanctified with ten degrees of sanctity, be purified from the contamination of the evil forces. Then he should search thoroughly, not superficially, and when he searches, he should scrape the *chometz* from every nook and cranny by looking with the candle in his hand. So shall the contamination of the evil forces not be able to hide in the face of the light of the Shechinah, when *Hashem* will appear to search in Jerusalem with candles. He should have in mind too, that all evil forces that have spread in the house and have adhered themselves there through evil thoughts and deeds perpetrated in the house, be abolished and destroyed completely.

The next morning he should rise early in order that he should not, G-d forbid, stumble upon the prohibition of eating *chometz* after the first four hours of the day, figuring from the *amud hashachar*. The *amud hashachar* is not as many say, the morning star, but it means that in the eastern sky, when the day commences to light up, a white line, wide as a pillar, stretches across the sky from north to south. This is the *pillar of dawn*, as explained by *Tosephos Yom Tov* and *Rambam*, and is the correct definition.

Many people are lenient and eat *chometz* after four hours of the day. Woe to them, for it is a grave sin to intentionally transgress an enactment of the rabbis. They are regarded breachers of the fence, and it says in Proverbs, *One who breaches a fence—may a snake bite him*. These people are subjecting themselves to a severe punishment. It has been tested that anyone who eats *chometz* after the first four hours of the day will not avoid a

serious misfortune during the following year, and if no misfortune befalls him, he should worry even more, because surely other punishments *are* being accumulated to destroy him from the world at one stroke with some sort of accident, G-d forbid. Therefore, be extremely careful not to deal leniently with any limits promulgated by our Sages, for all their words are like burning coals.

Likewise, many people cannot resist filling their stomachs with food in the morning before Pesach and drink alcoholic liquors until they become so drunk that, when the time to bake mitzvah matzos arrives, they come to the baking half drunk, without knowledge of the sanctity of the matzos, in addition to other pitfalls; viz., that they sell their *chometz* to a gentile when they are drunk, hence the sale is invalid. All this is caused by their lust for food and drink, and doing whatever they desire. This is not the way the Jewish people should behave, since they are a nation sanctified to the Name of the Lord, for all their matters and all their deeds must be carried on with intelligence, understanding, and knowledge, with sanctity, and with fear. Fortunate is the one who accustoms himself to ponder over all his ways for the benefit of the soul, rather than for the benefit of the body, especially in matters pertaining to this holy festival, whose mitzvos are extremely important and whose prohibitions extremely grave.

We have a tradition from the early *gedolim*, that when a person toils for the mitzvos that are practiced on this holy festival, and he becomes fatigued and exhausted, he slays and cuts off all the destructive forces, the *plagues of men* that were created by the vain emission of semen. Everyone knows his own troubles, and that practically no one is innocent of this sin in his youth or even afterwards. It is therefore incumbent upon every Jew to rectify whatever he can, as above, and *Hashem*, with His abundant mercies, will accept the good intentions of His people Israel with love and favor before the Throne of His glory with mercy, amen and amen.

19) The following are words of admonition from the *most holy Grand Rabbi of Satmar o.b.m.*:

Is it possible to explain homilectically the verse in the section dealing with Passover (Deut. 16:3), “*You shall not eat leaven with it; seven days shall you eat with it matzos, lechem oni, for in haste you went out of the land of Egypt, in order that you mention the day of your departure from the land of Egypt all the days of your life.*”

In *Pesachim*, Shmuel explains *lechem oni*, as bread upon which many words are recited. The simple interpretation is that this refers to the narrative of the Exodus, which we are required to recite when matzah and *maror* are lying before us. However, according to this reasoning, we cannot account for this appellation being given only to the matzah and not to the *maror* and other mitzvos of the evening, for in their presence, as well, the hagaddah is recited, I shall, therefore, venture to explain Shmuel’s statements homilectically, as follows: All scrupulously observant Jews quake with fear of the minutest particle of *chometz* remaining in their possession during Pesach. They, therefore, labor incessantly, cleaning and scouring, searching in all nooks and crannies to remove all *chometz* from their houses and their domains. But, as regards the food they bring into their houses to eat during the Passover festival, to be certain that it is not tainted with a minute particle of *chometz*, is extremely difficult. In fact, the holy books tell us that, short of a miracle, it is impossible to be completely innocent of infracting the prohibition of a minute amount of *chometz* on Pesach. We must depend on G-d’s mercy and constantly pray to Him to take pity on us and enable us to beware of any *chometz* on Pesach. According to this explanation, it is possible to account for the sequence of the verse in conjunction with its Rabbinic exposition, as follows: You shall not eat *chometz* with it; Seven days shall you eat with it matzos, *recitation bread*. I.e., how can you be sure, when you wish to fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzah, that you will not stumble upon the prohibition of eating

chometz, something not within human reach! On this, they expounded that *lechem oni* means *recitation bread*, bread upon which many words are recited. The only way to be assured that the matzah has no taint of *chometz*, is to pour out prayer and supplication before our Father in Heaven to safeguard us from this pitfall. Otherwise, there is no possibility of this.

Even after Passover, we are not free of grave problems. We must beware of using *chometz* over which Pesach passed, i.e. *chometz* that was owned by Jews during Pesach, from which no benefit may be derived. We must investigate the stores from which we purchase our food, to ascertain whether the proprietor sold his *chometz* as prescribed by halacha, from whom he bought his merchandise after Pesach, and other similar questions. For this too, we required divine aid to prevent stumbling upon the prohibition of *chometz* over which Pesach passed, G-d forbid.

Let us think over the matter, from which merchants need we fear for *chometz* after Pesach? Every observant Jew surely sells his *chometz* according to the laws of our holy Torah. Accordingly, if the *chometz* was owned by a non-Jew during Passover, there is no chance of prohibition. All the fear and worry are only from those Jews, who, unfortunately, have cast our holy Torah over their shoulders. They belong to the groups of the *erev rav*, the mixed multitude that mingled with our people. They bring misfortune upon us at all times, in such a way that it is very difficult to beware of them. The holy books teach us that the purification of our people was not completely effected with the Exodus from Egypt. Since they could not tarry, and were forced to leave in haste, there was still a mixture of evil together with the good, and thereby, the mixed multitude was able to mingle with the Jews. It was this mixed multitude that was a thorn in our side throughout all generations. In the final redemption, however, the prophet states: For you will not go out in haste. Then the purification will be completely effected,

without any intermingling of evil. With this idea, we may explain the end of the verse, as follows: As we explained above, matzah is called *lechem oni*, recitation bread, upon which many words are recited, i.e., many prayers and supplications for divine aid to beware of the danger of *chometz* during Passover, and from the *chometz* over which Pesach passed, after Passover. The Torah, therefore, concludes, for in haste you left the land of Egypt, and the complete purification was not yet effected. Therefore, you must remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt all the days of your life, i.e. even after Pesach you must continue to pour our prayers and supplications to the Almighty to save you from the danger of *chometz* over which Pesach passed (*Haggadah shel Pesach Maharitav*, and quoted in *Nefesh Yeshaye*).

20) *Maharcha* at the end of *Responsa Ashdos Happisgah* writes: I heard quoted from a scholar renowned for his erudition in Kabbalah, that not only does one create defects on Pesach by eating *chometz*, but any sin a Jew commits on this holy festival creates grave defects in his soul, much more than during the rest of the year.

21) The Grand Rabbi Zevi Elimelech of Dinov o.b.m. write in *Agra D'pirka*: All the stringencies that the scrupulous adopt are not pious acts, but are required by law, and those who ridicule and scoff at them, by saying that this was never done in the days of our forebears, will be held accountable. On the other hand, one who is strict in his observance will be safeguarded from all distress.

22) He states further: Anything a person does as a stringency over and above the observance required by the law, he should not do on the last day of Passover, for if one observes this stringency on the last day of Passover also, it will appear as though he considers it real *chometz*.

23) The Grand Rabbi Isaac of Kamarna, o.b.m. writes in *Heichal Habberachah* in *Parashas R'eh*: And so during Passover, no one

should say, "How I long to eat and drink *chometz*! But what can I do? My Father in Heaven has forbidden it." One should not say this because *chometz* is linked with paganism, which may not be mentioned. Before Pesach, however, one should say, "How I would like to eat *chometz* on Pesach! It is so delicious! But what can I do? My Father in heaven has forbidden me to eat it."

24) The *Binah L'ittim* writes: In order to bring Israel under the yoke of mitzvos, which the Israelites lacked, *Hashem* commanded them to observe the mitzvos of matzah in order that they subordinate themselves to him with the observance of His mitzvos.

25) *B'nei Yissachar* writes: *Matzah* serves to abolish the temptation for illicit sex relations, comparable to the leavening of the dough, for wind (*ruach*) enters the dough, similar to the temptation for illicit sex relations, which enters a person through the spirit (*ruach*), as our Rabbi stated: No one sins unless a spirit of insanity enters his body. The Almighty, therefore, enjoined us to eat matzah, which contains no *ruach*, to abolish the temptation for illicit sex relations.

26) The Koznitzer Maggid o.b.m. writes in *Daas Moshe*: ... Therefore, it is the first of the months of the year, for the renewal and the bounty of the year are renewed in Nissan, and the preparation of accumulating mitzvos and good deeds is this month.

27) *Sifsei Kedoshim* (*Tissa*) writes in the name of the renowned *tzaddik*, *Maharam* of Lisk o.b.m. an explanation of the juxtaposition of the verse, (Exodus 34:17) *You shall make no molten gods for yourself*, to the verse (ibid. 18) *You shall observe the festival of matzos*. It is common practice for the populace to be very wroth with those who help in the baking of the matzos if they are not fast enough in their work. They think that this is permissible. The truth of the matter is that one who becomes angry is regarded as committing idolatry. The Torah, therefore,

juxtaposes these two mitzvos, implying that you shall not become angry, thereby making a molten god, but you must, nevertheless, observe the festival of matzos.

28) *Hagahos Mahartza* (from the author of *B'nei Yissachar*) notes that the tradition attributed to *ARI zal*, that if one is wary of even a minute amount of *chometz* on Pesach, he is assured that he will not sin all through the year, actually originates in the holy *Zohar* (Tetze 282b): And whosever is wary of leaven and leavening, is guarded from temptation in this world.

29) *B'nei Yisachar* writes (Tishri—Par. 10): The common Talmudic expression, *mitzvos and good deeds*, means as follows: *Mitzvos* applies to those observances observed with a limit. *Good deeds* applies to the stringencies and the deeds of the pious, performed without a limit.

30) *Responsa Radbaz* (576): He was asked to express his opinion concerning the reason people are so extremely stringent as regards *chometz*, and why *chometz* differs from other prohibitions in that Torah required searching for it, burning it, destroying it, and nullifying it. In addition to this, the Rabbis required searching in the nooks and crannies, and removing it from all our boundaries. Also the Torah prohibited having *chometz* seen or found in our possession. The Rabbis prohibited it completely, even the smallest amount intermingled in a large quantity. Such stringencies are not found in any Torah prohibitions.

The conclusion of his reply is as follows: I, rely on what our Sages o.b.m. state in the midrashim, that *chometz* on Passover is symbolic of the evil inclination, the leavening in the dough. The person, must, therefore, rid himself of it completely and search for it in the inner recesses of his mind, for even the minutest particle is not to be overlooked. This is true and correct.

31) *Azulai* in *Simchas Haregel* (Lesson 1) comments on *Radbaz*: You see clearly that the Rabbi searched futilely for the simple halachic reason for the stringencies of *chometz*, concerning

which the Torah, as well as the Rabbis, dealt much more strictly than with any other prohibited substance. He was forced to rely on symbolism, that the *chometz* alludes to the evil inclination, as is explained clearly in his words. Accordingly, the symbolism of *chometz* is its simple meaning, for all these stringencies serve to arouse the person to stay as far as possible from the evil inclination and to search the inner recesses of his heart for any trace of it, to hasten to remove it and to burn it with the fire of the Torah, and to be very wary of it. Perhaps, then he will be saved from it.

32) *The Grand Rabbi of Munkatch, in Nimmukei Orach Chaim (443), writes: Because of the Radbaz' reason, our Rabbis, o.b.m. were strict in their halachic decisions and in their customs, as we have a tradition which we follow in matters of Passover in the practical application of the halachah, which is extremely stringent, much more than any other prohibitions of the Torah, some of which are judged with median stringency and some of which, with leniency.*

33) *Or Lashamaim* by the holy Rabbi Meir of Apta o.b.m. (*Parshas Tzav*) states that the Holy One, Blessed be He, sends angels from above to guard the matzos lest they leaven.

34) *Arugas Habosem (Tzav)* explains that the angel created from the mitzvah of watching the matzos is the Almighty's messenger who guards him from any *chometz*.

35) *Divrei Torah (Munkatch)* vol. 2, ch. 30: ... This is possibly the symbolism of Passover matzos. They symbolize the three parts of the soul, known as *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah*, which correspond to Torah, *avodah* (divine service), and *gemilus chasadim* (acts of kindness). For this reason, the Torah states: And they baked the dough... *ugos matzos*, cakes of unleavened dough. *ugos* is written with three letters, *ayin*, *gimel*, *tav*. This stands for *avodah*, *gemilus chasadim*, and *Torah*.

36) In *Tehillah LeMoshe* (a biographical sketch of the author of *Yismach Moshe* published as a foreword to *Yismach Moshe* on

Nach) is stated: Because of his fear that they would make the matzos too large to be kneaded properly with adequate speed, he would have them make small matzos, so small that three matzos would not suffice for the *sedarim*. He would, therefore, necessarily take six matzos for each Seder.

37) *Metzudos David* (*Radbaz*) writes: Be aware! No other prohibition of the Torah bears the stringencies mentioned in regard to *chometz* on Pesach; viz., it is prohibited to derive benefit from it as well as to eat it, eating it is punishable by *kares*, any minute quantity is prohibited, we must search for it to avoid transgressing the mitzvos of *Bal Yeraeh* (It shall not be seen) and *Bal Yimatze* (It shall not be found), and the Rabbis advanced the time of the prohibition before the Torah forbids it. [I.e. the Torah prohibits *chometz* from noon on the day preceding the festival, whereas the Rabbis enacted a safeguard, prohibiting eating *chometz* for two hours before, and deriving benefit from *chometz* one hour before the Torah's limit].

The reason for all this is that *chometz* is symbolic of the evil inclination, concerning which the Rabbis said, "He is the evil inclination; he is the Accuser; he is the Angel of Death..." Consequently, when the Israelites departed from Egypt, Scripture commanded them to remove it from the houses, lest he accuse us in heaven and detract from our joy, for when *chometz* is removed from our houses below, all the evil forces will be removed from our houses above, which will remain immaculately pure of any contamination. The Torah was, therefore, very strict in all the manners mentioned above, to hint to a person to expel the *chometz*, symbolizing the evil inclination, from his midst and to search for it in all the recesses of his mind, and to rid himself of it completely. Immediately, the heavenly house will be pure, with neither adversary nor evil occurrence.

38) We will now present the wonderful introduction written by the author of *Tohoras Yisrael*, which he wrote as an introduction to the laws of baking matzos:

Anyone of any intelligence knows that the Rabbis dealt more strictly with *chometz* than with any other prohibition in the Torah, that even if a minute quantity becomes intermingled with other foods, it is prohibited. They were stricter because one infracts a Torah law if leaven is even seen or found in his property, he is punished by *kares* for eating it, and people do not avoid it throughout the year. It is also known what the kabbalists wrote, that whoever eats *chometz* on Pesach, will die from pestilence, מגיפה, in Hebrew, for חמץ and מגיפה have the same numerical value. Moreover, the *Zohar* (*Tetzaveh*) writes that it is tantamount to worshipping idols. The *Zohar* states as follows: It is written (Ex. 34:17) *You shall make no molten gods for yourself*. Immediately following this, Scripture writes (Ex 34:18): *You shall observe the festival of matzos*. What is the connection? Here it has been established that whoever eats *chometz* on Passover is regarded as though he worships pagan deities themselves, for the secret is thus: *Chometz* on Pesach is tantamount to worshipping idols, for it is idolatry.

It is known that when baking matzos, one must be more careful than in anything else, for the main source of leaven is flour made from the five species of grain. Moreover, it requires many helpers, most of whom are usually youngsters, or even older people who have no fear of G-d in their hearts and are not careful with the matzos at all. Furthermore, this work must be done by others, for one cannot do everything by himself as he can do other things. As a rule, the baker and the helpers are primarily interested in earning money for their holiday expenses. They are unaware of the prohibition and the severe penalty involved. Were they to know it, they would surely not behave as they do. One must, therefore, inform them and admonish them concerning this, that it is better to spend a little more money for baking the matzos, in order to have matzos baked according to the halachah and 100% kosher. What if a bandit held him up on the road with drawn sword and threatened to kill him unless he

gave him his money? Wouldn't he give it to him to save his life? How much more so is it worthwhile to spend a little more money for baking matzos in order that no defect should come upon his soul and so that he should not be punished with **kares**, G-d forbid! In this case, we must be more careful about a minute amount of **chometz** than in any other case, and in this case much more care must be taken than in any other things. There are many laws involved in baking matzos, which are not arranged in order in the **Shulchan Aruch** and the **Acharonim**, and therefore require a search through the **sefarim**, which not everyone is capable of doing. Consequently, the matzos are baked with blind carelessness.

In many places, a supervisor is appointed in the bakeries. Unfortunately, however, the supervisor himself is unfamiliar with the laws. Additionally, the helpers do not heed his instructions. He, himself, is afraid of the owner, and he is busy scraping the rolling pins. Everyone relies on this supervisor, who is, in reality, not trustworthy. Furthermore, when money is involved, you can rely on no one. Now this involves a prohibition for which there is a penalty of **kares**, and there is a prohibition of **chometz** being seen or found in your possession, in addition to failing to fulfill many positive mitzvos, yet with this you rely on the supervisor. This is only because the matter is unimportant to you.

The pious gaon, Rabbi Mordechai Bennet, o.b.m., who secluded himself from the world for most of his life, not appearing outside at all, but sitting all year in his **beis midrash** and place of prayer, except for going to the synagogue on the Sabbath before the reading of the Torah, and on Yom Kippur, nevertheless, personally went to the matzah bakery even if it belonged to members of his household. He would go with his disciples to supervise the baking of the matzos. He, himself, baked too.

We read in **Sefer Mishpat Tzedek**: I was favorably impressed by the custom instituted in Nicholsburg, where I saw that they are very careful with baking matzos, that they should be kosher without any doubt. In every bakery, even if the owner

is a scholar, he is not believed concerning himself, but he must hire a G-d-fearing scholar, known as the head mashgiach. This mashgiach has another mashgiach under him. They must supervise everything in detail to preclude the possibility of any small particle of **chometz** in the matzos. The mashgiach must be well-versed in the laws of the **Shulchan Aruch** related to this matter. If one wished to become a mashgiach, he would have to see the Rabbi first, who would, in turn, send him to one of the rabbinic judges, who would examine him in these laws and give him the proper sanction. All cities should follow their example. Anyone able to implement this practice, will save many from one of the most serious sins and will lead the public to righteousness. Consequently, no sin will come through him.

I am very surprised at those G-d-fearing Jews who supervise and implement in their cities everything that needs improvement or implementation for the service of the Creator. They enact safeguards, many mitzvah societies, and the like. Why then, do they not supervise this matter to see that the poor do not eat **chometz** on Pesach? This is a public service that warrants top priority, for when the poor eat **chometz**, the blame is not on their heads, because everyone knows that even if the poor man wishes to pay the helpers, they do not want to help properly. Therefore, everybody should donate to the hiring of capable helpers. Thus the poor man will be saved from eating **chometz**, and this will actually be saving his soul. In order for the supervisor and the helpers to know the laws thoroughly, I wrote all the laws of baking matzos according to the order of the baking, in brief, from all **rishoñim** and **acharonim** ... May the righteous redeemer come in haste.

39) Last but by no means least, we present the golden language of the **Chasam Sofer** o.b.m. (Omissions ch. 196):

We are careful not to allow more than two or three minutes from the beginning of pouring the water until the matzos are

taken out of the oven, even though it takes eighteen minutes for the dough to become **chometz**, for in our country everyone is quick in the performance of this mitzvah, even the most unlearned. In spite of this speed, let no one dare to knead a dough large enough to take challah, as is explained in the Talmud and in the **Shulchan Aruch**, that no more than a **kav** may be kneaded for the Passover. If we were to knead more than the amount that requires challah, the hands would not be able to work on the whole dough at once, to prevent it from leavening. Also, we must make certain that there is no heat in the room where the matzos are being rolled, not even for a second until he puts it on the pole just before putting it into the oven.

I heard, however, from Rabbi Benjamin Polner, and I saw in his letter the way you bake your matzos. They knead an extremely large dough, upon which ignorant boys work. It is left in a bowl for even a half hour. Moreover, many matzos are set up one next to the other near the heated oven. They remain there in this great heat before they are put into the oven. Without a doubt, each one of these things causes leavening, the size of the dough, the long time the dough lies, and heat near the oven.

The scrupulously observant, who bake matzos on Erev Pesach, take a small piece of dough from the large piece, according to how much he needs, and he distributes the dough to those who roll it and to the helpers, and the remaining dough he returns to those holding the large dough, i.e. to the youths who watch it. I have no idea how such a procedure could ever have been sanctioned in an orthodox community!

Therefore, be strong and courageous, you nobles of Israel, and do as we do here. In every bakery, there is a mashgiach, a learned man in Torah, a man who supervises the baking day and night. He supervises to see that the workers beware of every pitfall. Nevertheless, the learned of our city make the rounds twice daily, appearing suddenly in every bakery, to see who is doing what, and every difficult problem is submitted to them for their decision.

Section 2

- 1) *Eshel Avraham* (Betschach, **hil. Pesach**) writes: Everyone must adopt all stringencies on Passover.
- 2) **Tehillah LeMosheh** (biography of author of **Yismach Mosheh** states: The holy rabbi, author of **Yismach Mosheh**, practiced all strict opinions on Pesach; i.e., without exception, he followed every strict ruling he came across in any **sefer**; even if he believed that there was no reason for it, and even if he laughed at it, he still practiced it for himself.
- 3) Also Reb Nachum of Tchernobil o.b.m. practiced all stringent rulings on Passover (**Practices of Maharan**—end of Meor Einaim).
- 4) See what the holy saint and sage, Rabbi Chaim of Sanz, author of **Divrei Chaim** o.b.m. (**Divrei Chaim** vol. 2, **yoreh Deah** 39), writes concerning a person who ridiculed a stringent ruling: let no one say, G-d forbid, that I am insulting someone I do not know, for I can tell you this, anyone who believes in Judaism and fears the Lord, will not come to ridicule anyone who follows any stringent ruling. Probably even the common folk would not ridicule you because you practice a stringent ruling, only some apostate. Concerning such people we pray every day, "And for the slanderers..." even if we don't know who they are.
- 5) *In the admonitions of R' Asher Stoliner* (printed at the beginning of **Beis Aharon**) writes that one who ridicules an admirable trait or good deed stems from the root of Gehazi.
- 6) *The saint and sage, the author of B'nei Yissachar* o.b.m. writes (Tishrei, article 4), that one who practices a pious practice is protected more carefully than the average person.
- 7) *He writes further* (article 10) that through this he merits the **or makkif**, the surrounding light (See **Magen Avraham Orach Chaim** 2, words of **ARI zal** in brief, wherein he states that it assures one of a good memory. See also **Kaf Hachaim**.)

- 8) *Reishis Chochmah* writes that those who ridicule the people who practice strict rulings are tantamount to cutting off the feet of those who bring gifts to the King.
- 9) *Orchos Chaim* by *Rosh*: (76) states: Do not abandon the way of piety even though people ridicule you.
- 10) *Mesilas Yesharim*, ch. 20, writes that something one is required by law to do, he must not take heed of the scoffers.
- 11) *Responsa Maharshdam (Yoreh Deah 192)* writes that it is fitting for a person to risk his life to fulfill a pious practice. The story of Rabbi Tarfon in the first chapter of **Berachos** (R'Tarfon lay down to recite the evening **Shema** according to the ruling of Beis Shammai. By doing so, he endangered his life by exposing himself to bandits. R'Tarfon was criticized by his colleagues for following the ruling of Beis Shammai, whose opinion was rejected.) is different, since there was fear that the halachah would be set down in accordance with Beis Shammai.
- 12) *Yerushalmi*, quoted by **Ran, Yoma**, ch. **Yom Hakipurim**, that the prophet Elijah rebuked R' Yehoshua ben Levi for not practicing a pious deed.
- 13) *Tos. Yom Tov (Shabbos 1:9)* states that in matters of refraining from any act, one may even practice the stringent opinion of **Beis Shammai**.
- 14) Same in *Sefer Chasidim* 888.
- 15) *Turei Zahav Orach Chaim* 551:10, writes that one may practice a stringent opinion of a rabbi whose opinion is rejected by the **Gemarah**. We may not say explicitly that we are practicing according to his opinion, but one may go beyond the law without saying why.
- 16 17) See Hebrew edition for many additional sources.
- 18) *Machazik Berachah* 467:5, writes: Everyone knows that on Passover everyone adopts his own strict practices and makes safeguards, for the gravity of the prohibition of **chometz** is very great. It is more stringent than all prohibitions in the Torah as has

been clarified by **Radbaz** in his responsa, Furth, ch. 546, and it does not appear as though one is haughty or that he is doing something to cause wonder, because everyone knows that there are many strict practices on Pesach, of which everybody does what he sees fit, and in such a case there is no objection because of ridicule. However, people should try to conceal their strict practices and confine them to their own homes.

They should try as much as possible to avoid revealing their secrets. If he has attained the rabbinate, he should instruct others only to do according to the law (as quoted in **Kaf Hachaim** 467b).

19) In *Moed Lechol Chai* (R' Chaim Palagi) we read: There is no prohibition of splitting up into groups as regards the stringencies of Passover. Similarly, we need not fear that we appear haughty, for each family adopts the custom of their forebears, and even if one does not follow stringent rulings all year like the extremely pious, how good it would be for him to do so during Pesach!

20) I, too, will attempt to suggest another reason for adopting strict practices on Pesach, according to **ARI zal** in **Shaar Hamitzvos** on the verse (Deut. 28:47) **Because you did not serve Hashem your G-d with joy...** for a person is rewarded for doing a mitzvah with joy more than he is rewarded for the mitzvah itself. **Or Tzaddikim**, too, (24:5) writes the same. How can a person's thoughts be determined, his inner yearning and his joy to perform the will of his Maker? Only if he goes further than the basic mandate, then it is a sign that he is performing the mitzvos with joy, and thereby he enters the category of those who serve G-d with love, whose reward is more than those who serve from fear (See **Rashi** end of **Va'eschanan, Or Hachaim** *ibid.*).

21) May it also be stated that by practicing strict practices, one will be favored by **Hashem** (which is a golden chain upon which all plenty hangs) as mentioned in the **Gemarah (Berachos 20b)**

that the Holy One, blessed be He, replied to the angels that Israel is worthy of favor because of their exactitude and their stringencies.

Chapter 2

-1-

The Performance of the Mitzvah to Perfection

In **Agra D'pirka**, 54, in the name of **Sefer Assarah Maamaros** vol. 1., ch. 13, on the verse (Koheles 7:20): *For there is no righteous man on the earth, who does good and does not sin.* The words, **who does good**, are superfluous. Rather, Scripture means that even in the performance of mitzvos, there are many defects. Thus we explain, **There** is no righteous man on the earth, who performs a mitzvah in which there are no faults or defects.

He writes further: We have a tradition from the disciples of my great uncle, the sainted Rebbe Elimelech o.b.m., who said that any deed of a creature must have an imperfection since only the Creator is perfect. When a person examines his divine service and his Torah studies and mitzvah performance and does not find any imperfection, he may be certain that the entire deed is not good.

-2-

One Must Buy His Festival Needs Only with Kosher Money, Otherwise He Gives Power to the Evil Forces

The **Kav Hayashar** states: (ch. 89) (4) Concerning everything one buys for his house, he should say that he is buying it for the holiday, and he must be careful that the money he uses to buy the necessities for the holiday is not tainted with theft or any

other prohibited acts because then he would strengthen the evil forces by giving them a share in holiness, and the halachah is that **chometz** renders the entire mixture prohibited even if there is a minute quantity of **chometz**. The identical idea is repeated by his disciple in the holy book entitled **Yesode Yosef**. It is interesting what the **Kav Hayashar** writes (46:4): There is something else that blocks the prayers even though the garments of the worshipper are completely clean of any soil, and they are not **shaatnes**, but they are *not clean of theft...*, and every time he wears them to pray, he reawakens his sins and his transgressions, and his prayer is cast to the evil forces. Woe to him and woe to his soul!

See also **Mesilas Yesharim** (ch. 11), where it is stated: Indeed, the general rule is that just as the lust for theft is great, so are its pitfalls many. And in order for a person to be completely clean of it, he requires close scrutiny and great exactitude, and if he is clean of it, he should know that he has attained a high degree, for many practice piety in many branches of piety, but in the matter of hating monetary gain, they could not attain perfection.

See also **Or Hachaim Tavo (Yiftach Hashem)**: Scripture comes to inform us that there is no promise for the observance of the positive mitzvos except after the observance of the negative mitzvos. Otherwise, the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination, and every mitzvah that a sinner performs, the evil forces rest upon, and it does not produce fruit....

-3-

Watchfulness and Care in All Food for Passover

The grand Rabbi Moharam of Kretchnif o.b.m. explained in the Haggadah, in the question of **mah nishtannah**, "This night we eat only matzah," whereas in reality, we eat many other foods on the night of Passover. He explained that all the other foods

that we eat on Passover must be watched as carefully as matzah: just as matzah has no danger of leaven, since it was made and baked with strict watchfulness, so must other foods be prepared with the same degree of watchfulness. Thus, the Haggadah says that on this night all foods are matzah, i.e. they are like matzah (**Raza D'uvda, Shaar Ha'osios** p. 95).

-4-

Manifesting the Obligation of the Mitzvah

In **Sefer Maaseh Rav** concerning the Gaon of Vilna o.b.m. 185: On the night following the festival he would try to taste **chometz**, and he would not eat after Pesach any matzah with which one could fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzah on Pesach. The purpose of all this was to manifest the performance of the mitzvah, that we do not eat matzos for our own pleasure but because of the decree of the Creator. It is apparent from this practice that it is a mitzvah to show that we are no longer required to eat matzah. Similarly, it is known that the sainted Rabbi of Sanz o.b.m. was wont to make **havdalah** on beer on the night following the festival.

Maharil, Laws of Passover, p. 19, writes: On the night following Passover, there was no **chometz** in the home of **Maharash**. They did not care, and ate matzah.

Chapter 3

-5-

Toil in the Mitzvah of Matzah

See how many great men attest to the magnitude of the rectification of the soul accomplished by the toil and sweat put into the baking of the matzos, through which one destroys all the destructive forces and the "plagues of men" created through the

defects in his soul. As mentioned above, these great men are: **Kav Hayashar** ch. 4 (above pr. 6), and **Yesode Yosef**, his disciple (quoted above par. 18. See the end of quotation.)

When working at the matzos, one must be careful that sweat does not drip onto the dough, because some authorities rule that human sweat is like fruit juice and causes leavening quickly when combined with water, as in **Orach Chaim** 462 (**Kaf Hachaim** 460:19).

-6-

Love of the Mitzvah

1) See *Shaloh hakodosh*, quoted above (8), that he saw very pious men who would kiss the matzos and the **maror** and all the mitzvos at the time of their performance ... and everything was because of love of the mitzvos. Quoted in **Eliyahu Rabbah** 486:4

2) Similarly, **Agra D'kallah (Vayera)** Those who love the mitzvos of their Creator are wont to kiss the matzah, the **maror**, and the four cups of wine, to manifest their desire and their longing with devotion to perform the will of their Maker with one spirit cleaving to another.

3) *Beeros Hamaim* (first day Passover): The sainted Rabbi of Rimenov said that if he did not care what people would say, he would take the matzah to the synagogue like the lulav and the ethrog and shake it.

4) *Shaarei Rachamim*, customs of HaGaon R' Eliyahu of Vilna o.b.m.: The Gaon showed his love for the mitzvah of eating matzos all seven days. On the last day, he would eat a third meal, although he did not eat three meals on other holidays, because of the love for the mitzvah of eating matzos which was leaving.

5) *It is related by chassidim* that the sainted Rabbi of Rimenov o.b.m. would eat twenty-eight matzos at the daytime meal on the last day of Passover because of his great love for the mitzvah that was leaving. **Darchei Chaim V'shalom** (Munkatch): The

Rabbi used to relate in the name of R'zvi Hirsh, the great Cohen of Rimenov, that because of his love for the sanctity of the matzah, once he ate twenty-two matzos in one sitting even though he usually did not eat very much.

6) It is proper to heat the oven with the lulav, since one mitzvah was performed with it, let another mitzvah be performed with it. Mahari would make a fire with the lulav at the opening of the oven during the baking of the matzos, in order that the matzos be directly baked by the fire from the lulav, because the Rabbis rule that the bread contains the benefit derived from the wood (**Mahariv**, 193, **Knesses Hagedolah, Kaf Hachaim** 461:8). Some write that we are accustomed to heat the oven with the willow branches of the **lulavim** we had on Sukkos (**Sermons of Maharil**). **Chok Yosef** (6) writes that some heat the oven with the **sechach** of the sukkah.

Rashal (87) writes that his mentors would burn **chometz** with the **hoshanos**, and that some throw them into the oven when baking matzos. Both practices are admirable.

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The Responsibility to Supervise Others

Responsa Devar Moshe (2nd. ed. ch. 98): When baking matzos, I appoint reliable people and mashgichim in the bakeries to supervise everything, that it should be kosher in the best possible manner, and I admonish them and teach them the details of the laws of kneading and baking the matzos, and what is important to pay special attention to, such as burning out and kashering the oven from **chometz** to matzah according to the law, and to check the benches upon which the dough is kneaded, the tables upon which the dough is rolled, and the rolling pins and shovels that they are smooth without a crack or a hole. The main thing is that there should be mashgichim standing over the helpers to be sure that everything is done with care and speed.... But, even so, it is proper for everyone who has fear of G-d in his heart, to supervise his own matzos personally. This was the practice of the **rishonim**.

-8-

Self-sacrifice for a Mitzvah

Taamei Haminhagim, Addenda p. 227: Recently I received a letter from R' Pinchas HaLevi Horowitz (o.b.m.) chief rabbi of Kossov (author of **Pischa Zuta**) that he heard from many **chasidim** who were in Sanz during the last year of the Rabbi's life, that he said before eating **maror**, "*It is apparent that I cannot eat this olive-sized amount of maror even if I would be given all the wealth in the world. Nevertheless, since it is a mitzvah, albeit a Rabbinical mitzvah, I am ready to sacrifice my life, and I will eat it.*" He pronounced the blessing for eating **maror** and ate it. Immediately afterward, he vomited.

Chapter 4

Sources from Talmud and Poskim that Everyone Is Obligated to Be Present at the Baking of His Matzos and to Engage in the Baking, Not to Have It Done by Others. This Was the Custom of the Tzaddikim and Gedolim of All Generations.

1) The *Gemara* (Shabbos 119a) tells us that the *Amoraim* would chop wood and light the fire in honor of the Sabbath. This proves that *in honor of a mitzvah, even a talmid chochom may engaged in work*. In *Yerushalmi Pesachim* 3:1), we learn that R' Chanina went to the mill.

Responsa Chavvos Yair (205) writes: The rabbis engage in drawing water for the *matzos mitzvah*, even though this is degrading work, as evidenced by the fact that Joshua made the Gibeonites wood choppers and water drawers. They do this because everyone knows that they do not receive pay for this work, but are toiling for the sake of Heaven. See *Tur*(*Choshen*

Mishpat 272) where he quotes *Rambam* saying that if he is a pious man who goes within the law, even if he is the great *nassi* and he sees his friend's animal ... he unloads or loads with him. See *Gemara (Pesachim 65b)*, that they would load the Passover sacrifice over their shoulder. Said *Rav Ilish*, "It is the custom of the Arab merchants to do this." *Hagahos Yabetz* explains that the *Gemara* tells us that it is proper to do this out of love for the mitzvah, to treat one's own honor lightly.

2) See *Gem. (Chulin 7a)*: A man was carrying wheat for Passover, and the river parted for him because he was engaged in a mitzvah. And in *Pesachim 116a: bread of poverty*, just as the poor man heats the oven and his wife bakes... From this passage, *Rosh* notes (*Pesachim 5:22*) that it is the custom of the pious to observe this strictly and to knead and bake by themselves. *Beer Heitev (460:4)* quotes *ARI zal* that through the toil one puts into the matzah baking until he perspires, he atones for vain emission of semen, G-d forbid. In *Responsa Avnei Nezer (372)* he laments the sad situation that the householders do not bake their own matzos as they did years before, and the baker who sells the matzos does not usually supervise very thoroughly, because his aim is to cut expenses. The *Zohar (Tetzaveh)* writes: The main judgment on *Rosh Hashanah* is for those who do not take the food of healing..., [the *Zohar's* term for matzah.]

3) *Chok Yaakov (460)* writes that even Jewish women are not believed regarding baking and kneading matzos, because the women think that many things are permissible. Therefore, most *rabbonim* and *talmidei chachomim* supervise the sifting, the kneading and the baking. See *Ramo Yoreh Deah 127:3* and *Shach (ibid. 30)* that regarding any prohibition that has possibilities of leniency or involves bother, women are not believed because they are lazy and lenient.

Divrei Malkiel (4:21) writes that also those who are in the business of baking matzos are not believed, since they are no more reliable than a *shochet* who is paid only for slaughtering

the kosher animals (*Yoreh Deah* 18:18), for if he is paid only for slaughtering the animals that turn out to be kosher, he is not believed, because we are afraid he will be lenient in order to get his pay. Here too, the baker will be lenient with things that require watchfulness, in order not to lose money.

4) *Rosh* would occupy himself with the matzos mitzvah, and he would be present when it was baked and would urge the workers on. He would also assist in the rolling. Likewise, it is proper for everyone to engage personally in the performance of the mitzvah (*Shulchan Aruch* *ibid*:2). *Magen Avraham* 1, writes that the reason is that it is more meritorious for one to perform a mitzvah himself than to do so through an agent. All the *acharonim* follow this reasoning. However, if one studies the *Rosh's* wording (*Pesachim* 2:26) he will see that there is an additional reason. The *Rosh* states: Those who engage in admirable deeds, the pious, and the innocent are strict with themselves ... and knead and bake by themselves, as we say in the *Gemara*, "Just like the custom of the poor man, he heats the oven and his wife bakes." The same expression is found in the *Tur*. It is, therefore, obvious that the main reason is that in this manner it is more in keeping with the term, *lechem oni*, bread of poverty. Later I saw *Beur Hagra*, who quotes this very same wording. See also *Tosfot Shabbos*, who writes that this does not render the matzah invalid, because it is called *lechem oni* even if one has many servants who by themselves made the matzos. As *Rosh* states clearly, they were strict with themselves, indicating that this is not essential. It is also obvious that the reason given by *Magen Avraham* applies just as well. See also *Taz* 2, who quotes *ARfzal* that one should work hard at the matzos mitzvah until he becomes hot and perspires, thereby destroying the unclean forces created by vain emission of semen. *Maharil* decided that, ideally, one should be careful to stand by the baking of all the matzos for there are many pitfalls. *Chok Yaakov* writes in name of *Shibolei Haleket*, that we may not believe women concerning kneading and baking, because

many things could come up which they believe to be permissible. Additionally, *forgetfulness can cause them to do something improper. Therefore, most rabbonim and talmidei chachomim stand personally by the sifting, the kneading, and the baking (Mishna Berurah ibid. 6).*

5) *Responsa Devar Moshe (2:98)* writes: For baking matzos, I appoint responsible people and *mashgichim* to supervise that everything should be done in the most kosher manner, and I admonish them and teach them the details of the laws of kneading, baking the matzos, and what is important for them to keep an eye on in the glowing and kashering of the oven from *chometz* to matzah according to the halacha, and to watch the bench upon which the kneading is done, the tables upon which the dough is rolled, the rolling pins and the shovels that they should be smooth, without any crack or hole. The main thing is that they should stand near the helpers to see that everything is done with watchfulness and speed. The Rabbis did not give the amount of time it takes to walk a mile (eighteen minutes) as the minimum time for dough to become leavened except when the dough has not yet become warmed by the hands. Similarly, everytime it feels warm, it leavens quickly, and attention must be paid to this, not to let the dough rest, without being worked, even a moment, *and that the helpers should cool their hands when they feel that their hands have become hot from working*, and to change the shovels every time. *But it is, nevertheless, proper for everyone whose heart is touched by the fear of G-d, to supervise personally the baking of his own matzos.* The greatest of the *rishonim* did so. I heard someone expounding on that theme from the *Gemara*. We find that the Rabbis said that everything that our father Abraham did by himself, the Holy One, Blessed be He, paid him Himself, whereas everything he did through a messenger, the Holy One, blessed be He, paid him through a messenger. It can be deduced by a fortiori that since the Holy One, blessed be He, did for us by Himself, as the Rabbis teach us in the Haggadah, "I" and not an angel, "I" and not a

seraph, we must in all matters of Passover, which holiday is dedicated to G-d's saving us in His glory and by Himself, *we too must do everything by ourselves*, not through a messenger. It is, therefore, proper for every man to prepare for himself *maim shelonu*, *water that stayed overnight*, to bake his matzos, since the bakers mix and add other water to the *maim shelonu*. The majority must be *maim shelonu*, and there should ideally be 2/3 *maim shelonu*. The bakers are not careful to be so exact. We must also be careful that from the time the water is drawn, shortly before dusk, twelve hours must elapse. Otherwise, such as during leap years, when sometimes the night is short and there are not twelve hours from dusk to dawn, we must wait until twelve full hours elapse. Also, the water must stand all night after having been drawn. Even if the night is longer than twelve hours, we may not knead with it until morning. The people do not know to watch for all this.

6) *Tur Orach Chaim* 460 writes: And Rav Hai Gain wrote... *and people who engage in meritorious deeds and pious people are strict with themselves like the Geonim who rule strictly, and knead by themselves and bake, just as the poor man, as we learned, who heats the oven while his wife bakes. Therefore, it is meritorious for everyone to strive personally in the preparation of the matzos and in baking them. Such was the custom of my father, Rabbenu Asher o.b.m. He would occupy himself with them and would stand over their preparation and hurry those who were occupied with them, and he would help to roll them out. We find the same in Rôkeach (ch. 273), Mordechai (Pesachim ch. 1), Hagahos Maimoni ch. 3, see Bach, Turei Zahav (ibid. 2) that in Sefer Kavvanos HaARI zal it is stated that one should work very hard with the matzos for the mitzvah until he becomes hot and perspired. Thereby, he will destroy the evil forces created from vain emission of semen. See Kav Hayashar (90:3).*

7) *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* (460:2) writes: The Rosh o.b.m. would occupy himself with the matzos for the mitzvah

and stand by their preparation and hurry the ones occupied with them and help them with the rolling. Thus it is proper for every person to do, to occupy himself with the mitzvah. *Magen Avraham* (ibid. 1) cites the *Gemara* at the beginning of *Kiddushin*, ch. 2, that it is more meritorious to perform a mitzvah personally than to send an agent. *Chok Yaakov* (ibid.) cites *Shibolei Haleket* as stating that *even Jewish women* who did not learn the matters related to Passover are not believed concerning baking and kneading on Passover. Therefore, most *talmidei chachomim* stand by the sifting, the kneading, and the baking, since something may come up which women think is permissible, or, perhaps they may forget and do something improper, for they do not know the reward for a mitzvah and the loss for a transgression. If someone stands over them, however, they are more careful.

8) *Responša Avnei Nezer* (372) writes: I received your letter concerning machine matzos. Although I have never seen the machine, I, nevertheless, declare that the Gaon of Kutna o.b.m. is right. Since the *Gedolim* before us prohibited it and created such a furor against those who permitted it, no matter what their reason was, they certainly had adequate reasons. Who can remove the landmark set down by our predecessors who were like angels, and not fear to be burnt by their coals:

I wish to remind you of a timely topic, for I have heard that it has become *widespread* in some towns that each householder does not bake *matzos mitzvah* for himself but one bakes to sell to others. *I am very displeased with this development*, for several reasons. First of all, *if the householder himself bakes the matzos, he watches carefully*, and each one takes the mitzvah very seriously and *makes certain that it should be performed in the best possible fashion* in conformance with the numerous laws involved in the baking of the matzos. *This is not so if one person bakes in order to earn money. Then his entire aim is to cut costs, and he will not supervise as well.* Second of all, is it

unimportant what the Rabbis taught us in the Midrash concerning the reward for grinding and kneading for the baking of the matzos? True, it is difficult to participate in the grinding, but the main mitzvah of watching is to do so during the kneading. Now, why should we eliminate such a beloved mitzvah that comes but once a year, and buy commercially produced matzos. This is like grabbing a mitzvah in the market!

Therefore, how good it would be *if you could abolish this practice completely!* If it is impossible, you should, at least, preach from the pulpit that *anyone who has the fear of G-d in his heart*, should follow in the paths of his forebears, and *each one should bake matzos for himself, and rejoice with the mitzvah that came to his hand.* This merit will surely stand him in good stead on Rosh Hashanah, as is explained in the holy *Zohar*, that the main judgment on Rosh Hashanah is for one who does not take the food of healing.

9) *Shaar Hamelech* (ch. 4) writes; Every intelligent Jew should see to engage in the rolling, the kneading, and the baking of his matzos, and he should have in mind that they should be for matzos mitzvah, which allude to the tetragrammaton, as I mentioned in the previous chapter. How different are the recent generations from the earlier generations in which roasted ears of grain and nuts were distributed to the children so that they would ask about Passover! Since they knew nothing about it, he would teach them of G-d's mighty needs. Now, however, the children participate in baking the matzos. All may roll out the dough. Women and children participate in rolling and kneading, while the householder is absent from his house, because he is busy with his mundane affairs. *Then he asks them.* We must warn the adults concerning the children that they should not give the children dough to work on, since they have no intelligence and are not versed in the laws of watching the matzos. For this reason, matzah is called *lechem oni*, bread of poverty. Just as the poor man bakes his own bread and does everything himself, so

must everyone engage in his mitzvah and not consider the mitzvah degrading, since this is the mitzvah itself. Let him free himself of all his pursuits and engage in the mitzvah. He should have nothing in mind but the bread he is obligated to eat, and it will be acceptable for this obligation, and he will not transgress this mitzvah, as the Rabbis said, "A mitzvah that comes into your hand—do not let it become sour;" so is the practice of every cautious and zealous man. Let him bake it with zealous people, who will hurry in their work, and thereby, he will be assured that there will be no time that the dough is lying without work, for we combine the minutes the dough lies without work. Just as stopping in the middle of *shechitah* renders the *shechitah* invalid, so does stopping during rolling or kneading the matzos. Let everyone, therefore, be quick, and he will be rewarded. *Let him pour out his wrath on the wood and stone* and not spare the oven from becoming cracked, or the wood which is required in large quantities to keep the oven hot. One must use large quantities of wood even though it is expensive. For this reason, the rabbis praise the one who uses much wood and does not spare wood or stone. *When he notices that the oven does not retain the heat necessary to bake properly, he must stop baking and heat the oven to a high temperature.*

10) *Kav Hayashar* writes: We have a tradition that if a person toils in honor of the festival of Passover, and he becomes very tired and exhausted from his work, this work kills all the destructive forces called "the plagues of men". *Responsa Chavvos Yair* writes: The reason for this is that it is more meritorious for one to perform a mitzvah personally than to do so through an agent, and the Rabbis state in *Shabbos* (ch. 16) that the greatest of Israel would do some work themselves in honor of the Sabbath. You should not think that they did this in the privacy of their own homes only, but they did this *even in public for it is a mitzvah to engage oneself in the performance of a mitzvah in honor of its maker.* This applies to mitzvos between man and the Omnipresent.

Chida in *Tziporen Shamir* (132) writes the same. See also *Derashos Maharil, Laws of Preparation of the Matzos*, where he gives three reasons for which one must occupy himself personally with matzos.

11) In *Sefer Ivvah L'moshav*, the biography of my forebear, *Chacham Tzvi*, is related among other facts (p. 20): He implemented a daily learning schedule; in the morning after the *Shacharis* prayers, they would learn a chapter of the Scriptures in public, and between *Minchah* and *Maariv* a chapter of *Mishnayos* with all commentaries to understand it clearly, as they do until this day. The Table upon which he studied is still in existence and it is being used for learning in the "klaus". He was the first one to provide the congregation with wine for *kiddush* and *havdalah*, since no kosher wine was available in that area. He sent agents to Italy and France to make kosher wine. Also, in his time, they were very careless about making matzos. He implemented, therefore, that a pious, G-d-fearing man should supervize the making of the matzos. He also instructed the people not to eat horseradish for *maror*, because with a small amount you cannot fulfill your obligation, and to eat a large amount is dangerous. He, therefore, instituted that they take lettuce as is practiced in Hamburg and Amsterdam (*Responsa Chacham Tzvi* 119) Additionally, there were doubts about the *hadassim* found in Hamburg, they were feared to be hybrid (*Chacham Tzvi* 161)...and he was a remarkable *mohel*.

Sefer Mazkeres Lig'dolai Yisrael (p. 204) *Margenisa Tava d'R' Meir* (The gaon and *tzaddik* R' Meir Margolios o.b.m. chief rabbi of Ostroha, author of *Responsa Meir Nesivim*): I heard a true report from an old reliable Torah scholar, who heard this from reliable elders, that once on the thirteenth of Nissan toward evening, the gaon and chasid R' Meir went with his pitcher in his hand to draw water for *matzos mitzvah*. There was melting snow, and in all the streets there was mud, and the road was very deteriorated. On the way, he met the *Tzaddik* Reb Yeive o.b.m. He asked R' Meir, "Rabbi, why are you going by foot in such a

muddy road?" He replied, "This is such a great mitzvah, which I have but once a year. I cannot give it to the horse." When Reb Yeivi heard these words emanating from R' Meir's mouth, he jumped off the wagon and accompanied him on foot.

13) *Responsa Teerosh V'yitzhar* (192:28) writes: ...And concerning the matter of personally supervising the baking of one's matzos, I usually repeat in my *Shabbos Hagadol* sermon the words of *Beer Maim Chaim* (*Parshas Chaye Sarah*). And Abraham said to his servant, the elder of his house, who rules over all of his belongings. Now why does Scripture have to be so explicit? The truth of the matter is that the Torah tells us Abraham's righteousness, that when it came to do a mitzvah of Hashem, he went to all ends to perform it in the best possible manner, and he quaked with fear lest there be one chance in a thousand that there may be a mishap. Even though Eliezer was his faithful servant with whom he entrusted all his belongings, he still would not allow him to undertake this errand until he adjured him. *Certainly, concerning chometz, of which any minute quantity is prohibited, and the punishment of kares is involved, and it is something given over into the hands of irresponsible people, non-Jews, and minors, how can anyone who has fear of G-d in his heart believe others and refrain from supervising his own matzos?* See also *Beer Maim Chaim B'reishis* on the verse: *Vayitzer Hashem Elokim*. You will surely be impressed. Then there is the well-known story in *Devarim Arevim*, about the sainted R' Levi Yitzchok Berdichever o.b.m, author of *Kedushas Levi* when he was traveling through Hungary. He stopped at an inn for a night's lodging. He saw that the innkeeper was reluctant to believe someone who requested a small loan. Shortly afterwards, when he needed someone to slaughter a calf for his guests, he believed a total stranger who said he was a shochet.

If the reason one does not supervise his own matzos is that he is ashamed, or that he is busy, let him refer to the *Gemara Pesachim* 57 concerning Issachar of Kefar Barkai who wore gloves when performing the temple service. See also *Yerushalmi*

concerning the question of the *rosho*, the wicked son, "What is this work to you?" What is all this bother that you trouble yourselves to do? I discussed this at length at the end of the the *Sefer Tzvi Latzaddik*. In business, no more is paid for an item if the seller had trouble on the road when he was bringing the merchandise. If the wagon broke down in the middle of the road, and he had much trouble repairing it, the price, nevertheless, remains whatever is being paid in the market, but in the service of Hashem, everything is judged according to the bother involved. See *Toras Yitzchak (Parshas Yisro)*.

Responsa Divrei Malkiel writes: *Everyone who fears for his soul must watch by himself during the baking of the matzos to make sure that everything is done according to the halachah, for if, G-d forbid, he stumbles on the prohibition of chometz, all his toil and expense for the festival of Passover will be in vain. Is the mitzvah of watching the matzos a minor matter? See Shulchan Aruch 460:2 concerning Rosh, Chok Yaakov ibid: 4. Thank G-d, all my life I have personally supervised the baking of my matzos to the extent possible, and I would ask others to help me with my supervision even if I had to pay them, because it requires several persons.*

Shaarei Tohar by the author of *Birkas Habayis o.b.m.* writes: *In baking matzos, one must be extremely careful lest people come to eating chometz on Pesach, G-d forbid. Even if there already is a mashgiach, it is still impossible for one person to supervise everything, as I have witnessed with my own eyes. It is, therefore, necessary to have two mashgichim and two people to knead.*

14) See also all the *seforim* quoted in this work, and you will see that each one proclaims that it is meritorious to stand and supervise one's own matzos. I am weary of repeating all their words. For particulars, see the original sources.

(See also in my anthology in the section dealing with baking matzos, a quotation in the name of *Heshiv v'richem*, the paragraph beginning with *השתדלות עפ"י עצמו*.)

- 15) I occupy myself also with the other matzos that I make for my household, since most matzos made today are not made in accordance with the laws of the Talmud and the commentaries (*Pree Chadash* 460)
- 16) A woman who grinds the wheat and kneads the flour for matzas mitzvah may be assured that she will not suffer a miscarriage, as is written in *Sefer Refua V'chaim* (p. 44b from *Likutie Maharan* (*Yafeh Lalev* 5:b, *Kaf Hachaim* 460:12)
- 17) It is customary in most places to appoint an overseer for the making of the matzos to stand over the preparation and to hurry those engaged in this work. It is obvious that an intelligent, G-d fearing man must be appointed, and for such things we do not make groups consisting of women and children (*Sefer Hazichronos* 24b, *Kenesses Hagedolah* and *Kaf Hachaim* 457).
- 18) How good it is if every layman who bakes matzos, takes along a *talmid chochom* with whom he is acquainted, to stand over the making of the matzos from beginning to end, and he should pay him adequately (*Moed lechol chai* 3:16 *Kaf Hachaim* 460:12).
- 19) Even Jewish women who have not learned the laws of Passover are not believed concerning baking and kneading on Passover, since the Omnipresent has commanded us in several places to take care concerning Passover, as in the the verse, *And you shall watch the matzos*. It is also written, *And you shall observe the festival of matzos*. And you will find many verses on this matter. It is a common occurrence that *talmidei chachomim* and most rabbis clean the wheat with their own hands and personally transport it to the mill, and supervise the sifting, the baking, and the kneading, because women may think that many things are permissible, or perhaps they forget and do things that are improper, not knowing the reward for a mitzvah and the loss for a sin. If someone stands over them, however, they will be

more careful (*Matteh Mosheh* 583, *Kenesses Hagedolah*, *Kaf Hachaim* 460). *Mishnah Berurah* 460:6, concludes: Therefore, most *talmidei chachomim* and rabbis stand by the sifting, the kneading, and the baking.

Particulars of baking matzos will appear, G-d willing, in our next volume.

Chapter 5

Da'as Torah concerning Machine Matzos

It is not in place to discuss at length the matter of machine matzos, since it has already been discussed by the sages of the past few generations. (See *Responsa Divrei Chaim Orach Chaim*, vol 1:23, 24; *Responsa Shem Aryeh* vol. 2 *Yoreh Deah* 53; *Maharsham* vol. 2:16; *Minchas Moshe*, booklet of *Chukas Hapesach*; booklet attached to *Sefer Avodas Avodah: Responsa Beer Moshe* 27; *Responsa Shaarei Deah* 30; *R'Yehuda Ossad Orach Chaim* 157; *Kesav Sofer* omissions; *Divrei Malkiel* 4:20; *Sedey Chemed*, *Chometz and Matzah* 12, 13 *Beis Yechezkel* 41; *Teerosh V'yitzhar* 188; *Responsa Imrei Yehudah*; *Responsa Levushei Mordechai*; *Maadanei Sh'muel* 210, 24.) To omit this matter completely, is, nevertheless, impossible. I have therefore presented two responsa from the gaon, the author of *Avnei Nezer*, and a third responsum from *Responsa Meor Yehoshua* by the gaon and *tzaddik Maharai Freund*, chief rabbi of Nossad, From these responsa, the gravity of this matter will be made clear.

Responsum

-1-

It is well known that all the *gedolim* and the *tzaddikim* of our country [Poland] viz., the Gerrer Rebbe Rabbi Yitzchak Meir

Alter o.b.m, the gaon and tzaddik Rabbi Abraham of Chechenov, and R'Yehoshuah of Kutna prohibited machine matzos completely, [Also, the geonim and tzaddikim of Galicia, e.g. the Gaon and Tzaddik of Sanz ... prohibited them.] It is well-known that the Gerrer Rebbe o.b.m. created a furor against the rabbis who permitted them. [I do not wish to elaborate because of the honor of the rabbis who permitted machine matzos.] Now, who is great enough to permit what they prohibited, even if the ones who permitted it were the majority? We learn in the beginning of the chapter entitled, Rabbi Eliezer d'Milah," that in R' Eliezer's place they would chop wood to make charcoal for manufacturing iron for a circumcision knife, on the Sabbath. Even though the Sages were the majority and the halachah is in accordance with them, they were, nevertheless, allowed to follow R' Eliezer. The Talmud even states that they were rewarded for it. Rabbenu Nissim, known as *Ran*, deduces in Chapter "*Makom Shenahagu*" that certainly those who followed the stricter view are regarded as though they took upon themselves and upon all those who join them to observe this prohibition.

Therefore, the prohibition of machine matzos that spread throughout our country according to all our *gedolim*, is binding on us as a full and serious prohibition, just as R' Eliezer's congregants were completely permitted to chop wood even though the halachah was decided to the contrary. Likewise, it is forbidden to us even if the halachah is in accordance with those who permit machine matzos. Certainly we must adopt the halachah in accordance with the rabbis who prohibited it, since they were the majority, and they were greater in wisdom and fear of G-d.

Consequently, if anyone says that it is necessary to permit machine matzos in a certain city to prevent the populace from more serious transgressions than this, his words are of no substance, even if there is reason to fear this. Since this is an absolute and serious prohibition, do we tell one person to sin in order to save his friend from sin?

Those who maintain that today's machines are better than those of that time, are talking nonsense, and their words are of no substance because of numerous reasons. If they

inadvertently permitted it, let them retract their statement, and the Almighty will forgive them (*Responsa Avnei Nezer Orach Chaim* 536).

Responsum

-2-

I was greatly alarmed to learn that the manufacture of matzos by machine has been resumed. Let it be known that the great *geonim* and *tzaddikim*, the Gerrer Rebbe o.b.m., the Rabbi of Sanz o.b.m., and the *gaon* of Tchechenov o.b.m. were aroused to prohibit it completely because it is inherently forbidden, since it is *chometz*. Moreover, many other *Gedolim* and *tzaddikim* prohibited it. Several years ago, they commenced to bake machine matzos in your city, but it was discontinued shortly afterward. Now it has been resumed. Chasidim went to the rabbi of your community, who refused to become involved either way. He showed them a letter from the Rav of Berzan, however, that he permits these matzos. What did he accomplish by his ruling? Is he greater than the Rav of Lemberg, R'Yosef Shaul o.b.m. who permitted them? In spite of his lenient ruling, since these *gedolim*, whose little finger was thicker than his loins in Torah and in fear of Heaven, prohibited them completely, his view was rejected. It is known also that the Gerrer Rebbe o.b.m. created a furor concerning these matzos. He said that those who permitted them were trying to chop a piece off every mitzvah, and eventually to uproot everything. Now, what can the Berzanan Rav add with his lenient ruling? Whom can the fly scare with his whistling among the lions? Since the view of these who prohibited them has been accepted in our country, here it is an absolute prohibition.

We are, therefore, obliged to mend the breach. Especially in this generation, if we will allow them to be lenient concerning prohibitions, even concerning the prohibition of *chometz*, they will raise their hand against the fundamentals of our holy Torah. This is analogous to the case of changing a shoelace to the one worn by non-Jews, since this is a decree that applies to everyone. What is the difference between a decree enacted by gentiles and one enacted by wicked Jews who raise their hand against the mitzvos? (*Ibid.* 537).

Responsum

-3-

Responsum from the *Gaon* and *Tzaddik*, R'Yeshoshua Freund o.b.m., Chief Rabbi of Nassaud (Ch. 10):

I was astounded that you requested a sanction for machine matzos, prohibited by the greatest of the *geonim*, the holiest of the holy, the leader of the entire Diaspora, the author of *Divrei Chaim* (Sanz), for who would have the audacity, G-d forbid, to rule leniently against him, especially since many *geonim* prohibited it? I heard, too, from the *gaon*, and *tzaddik* of Shinova o.b.m., that he protested strongly in Lemberg in 5642, and that the *Gaon*, the author of *Shoel Umeshiv* o.b.m. admonished his disciple and confidant, the Rav of Seret, not to bake matzos by machine, for he regretted his lenient ruling, and the one who persists will surely promulgate his decision as Rabbenu Tam expresses himself (*Tos. Avodah Zarah* 34a s.v. *durdaya*) and may the Creator pour out His spirit upon us. Many people have become cripples because of the matzah machines. Last year in Klausenburg, a young man lost his hand through the machine. Since messengers sent to do mitzvos are never harmed, [this proves that this was no mitzvah]. It is known that in this generation no one is great enough to dispute the decision of the Sanzer Rav, since we are all his disciples or disciples of his company.

It is reported that several days before R' Yosef Shaul o.b.m. passed away, he became ill. He told his disciples that he did not regret any of his decisions except the decision to permit machine matzos. He prayed to the Almighty to allow him to live until he could publicize his retraction of that decision. A poster was composed and spread throughout the city. That R'Yosef Shaul, the leading rabbi of those who permitted the machine matzos, retracted his ruling.

Chapter 6

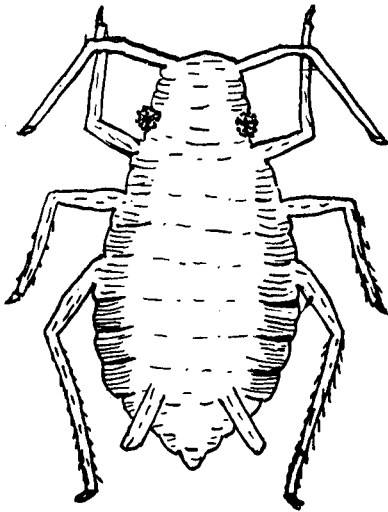
Romaine Lettuce as Maror: Necessity of Careful Inspection for Insects

Vegetarian Hotels

One must be careful even in the most kosher hotels, surely in those not so strict in all kashruth matters, or in so-called “vegetarian hotels”, which, in addition to all this, must be investigated to ascertain whether they use non-kosher margarine. Even though they would not want to jeopardize their reputation, since no one inspects the premises for animal matter, they have no fear of being discovered. Especially if they run out of kosher margarine, they will not skip a meal because of this shortage. Although they are very strict not to bring in any animal fat for cooking or baking, they are not strict concerning baked goods brought in from outside, and they serve such pastries as entrees or with tea. Surely, in case of emergency, they will permit themselves to use non-kosher fat, which is not regarded as poison to them as non-kosher food is to an observant Jew.

We may certainly not rely on them for examining vegetables, even though they are meticulous about cleanliness, they are not particular about an insect here and there. I know of an incident that took place in a well-known hospital, where people go for natural cures. In this hospital, only fruit and vegetables, either raw or cooked, are served. The staff is very meticulous about cleanliness. Once they served a patient a plate of lettuce after it had been washed and cleaned thoroughly. The patient, who was accustomed to examine every leaf before eating it, did so in the hospital as well. Upon finding green insects the color of the lettuce, he called the waiter, showed him the insects, and asked him, “What’s this? Why didn’t you examine it better? The waiter replied, “That’s only a little green bug. So what?”

BEFORE PREPARING VEGETABLES,
EXAMINE FOR PLANT LICE.
KEEP THIS PICTURE IN FRONT OF YOU,
THIS IS MY SOUND ADVICE.
THEN I AM SURE, WITHOUT A DOUBT,
THAT NO MISHAP WILL COME ABOUT.



להזהר בבדיקה הגונה
עצתי לך אמונה
שים לנגדך התמונה
בטוח אני כל אפונה
און אליך לא יאונה

התבוננו נא היטב בבריה הקטנה
הזאת מבריותיו של הקב"ה.

Look closely at this aphid, or plant louse, one of the Almighty's creatures.

The black speck at the right of the illustration, is the true size and shape, and the limbs are not recognizable. After I took this tiny creature, that appeared like a green speck, and placed it under a microscope that magnified it to fifty times its size, all its limbs are visible, even the hairs on its legs, and its nails. How great are Your works, O Lord! This creature is found on all species of vegetables. It is very small, and its color is like that of the vegetable. It is, therefore, difficult to recognize except with

close scrutiny and deliberation. For that reason, I reproduced it.

Now, let us protest the practice of many healthy people, who go to the seashore or to other resorts, not for cures but to enjoy themselves. They stay in unreliable Jewish hotels or even in non-Jewish hotels, and they eat indiscriminately from anything that comes into their hands. They think that in vegetarian hotels, where only fruits and vegetables, raw or cooked, are served, there is no fear of non-kosher foods. In fact, it is much more serious than eating pork, since for the latter there is but one negative commandment, while for the former there are six. May the Lord forgive them!

We will proceed to the matter of examining lettuce. In the mishnah (*Pesachim* 39a) are enumerated the various species of herbs that may be used for *maror*. The first of these is *chazeres*. The *Gemara* defines this as *chassa*. Lettuce is called *chassa* until this day in Eretz Israel. In Arabic too, lettuce is known as *chassah*.



FRENCH LETTUCE חזרת



ENGLISH LETTUCE חזרת

It is meritorious to use this for *maror* on Passover, as in *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 473:5, and in *Responsa Chacham Tzvi* 119. *Chasham Sofer (Orach Chaim* 132), states as follows: Indeed, lettuce is the choice species to use for *maror*, and my mentors o.b.m. used it. We, likewise, follow in their path. But I am accustomed to preach on *Shabbos Hagadol* that one who has no reliable, G-d-fearing people to examine it and cleanse it of the small insects that are prevalent during the Pesach season and are not visible to people with weak eyesight, should not take lettuce, even though it is the first choice, lest he stumble upon a negative commandment or many such commandments. Even when there is just a possibility of transgressing these commandments, one may not take this risk in order to fulfill a Rabbinic enactment, for such is the nature of the mitzvah of eating *maror* after the destruction of the Temple. Let him, instead, use horseradish.

Darchei Teshuvah (84:94) quotes *Knesses Hagedolah*, who writes that in his area insects are prevalent in the lettuce, and it, therefore, requires a thorough examination, because the insects are tiny, and they are the same color as the lettuce itself. At first, he used to eat it after examination. Afterwards, he abstained from eating it even with examination. *Kereisi Ufleisi* (*Yoreh Deah* 84:19) writes that from the time he had understanding, he did not rely on women's examination of lettuce. This is proper for every learned Jew, for the pitfalls are many. *Aruch Hashulchan* (*ibid.* 82), however, writes: We never heard of even the greatest *geonim* and *tzaddikim* not relying on their pious wives to examine vegetables for insects, or even on Jewish maids; if the householder knows them to be G-d fearing and scrupulously observant, he may rely on them.

According to my knowledge, however, this does not depend solely on trustworthiness, but also on erudition and skill, for if one does not know how to examine, of what avail is his trustworthiness? I personally saw men and women who were trustworthy for examining vegetables and knew the gravity of this prohibition. I nevertheless, found some tiny insects after their examination, because they did not know the correct method of examining until I taught them.

There is another species of lettuce called cabbage lettuce. I did not picture it here, since it resembles the cabbage pictured below. All these three species pictured here, are commonly infested with insects, the worst being the French lettuce, and the best being the last, the cabbage lettuce, which is not infested as often as the others. Moreover the aphids are more easily discernible because the leaves are not as green as, and are shinier than, the insects.

הבדיקה הנכונה

***The Correct Method of Examining***

First, separate the leaves and pull them off the stem. Put them into a bowl of water and wash off the dirt. Change the water and rinse them until you find no insects floating on the water. Then take each leaf and hold it up to the sunlight by the window, as in the illustration, or hold it up to candlelight; i.e., hold the leaf between yourself and the light, so that the light will penetrate the leaf, and your eyes will see the light shining through the leaf. If you see a dull spot even as small as the point of a needle, you may be sure that it is an insect or a worm, and since it is usually the same color as the leaf, it is virtually impossible to discover it except opposite a shining light. Then, hold the leaf on a slant under a stream of water from the faucet, and the stream of water will wash it off. Then do it on the other side. Then, examine it again in the light, to see whether the dull appearance has gone away, and when you examine, you must flatten out the wrinkles

in every leaf, for you will often find small insects that do not fall off by rinsing unless the wrinkles are spread out under a strong stream of water. That is the correct method of examining lettuce.

MORROR

1. The best morror to use is Romaine lettuce. It should be inspected at least 2 or 3 times for worms. If possible, it is best to eat only the white stalks in the middle, rather than the leaves.

2. People who are inexperienced in the inspection of lettuce should use horseradishes to fulfill their requirements. Endives may also be used.



CABBAGE (white or red) KOHL

(Note: NOT for Passover Seder)

CABBAGE (weis, rot) KOHL כרוב, קרויט, קאפוסטא.



In some places, many insects are found in cabbages. Its examination is not as difficult as that of lettuce, however. Nevertheless, it requires close scrutiny, and it is advisable to examine it opposite the light, as described above for the examination of lettuce. When I was in Marmorish (previously Hungary, now in Carpathian Russia) where the villagers are accustomed to pickle considerable amounts of cabbage in barrels for the whole winter, and the women gather to help each other, I saw that when they assembled to examine the cabbages it was announced that for each insect found, a sum of money would be given to charity in the name of the finder. This encouraged them to examine thoroughly. This practice pleased me.