



## PASSOVER

### A SLICE OF PERFECTION

*The First Feather in Your Cap Is Already Reason to Celebrate*

# HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

## *Passover*

### **What Is Passover?**

The eight-day festival of Passover is celebrated in the early spring, from the 15th through the 22nd of the Hebrew month of Nisan. It commemorates the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt. And, by following the rituals of Passover, we have the ability to relive and experience the true freedom that our ancestors gained.

### **The Story in a Nutshell**

After many decades of slavery to the Egyptian pharaohs, during which time the Israelites were subjected to

backbreaking labor and unbearable horrors, G-d saw the people's distress and sent Moses to Pharaoh with a message: "Send forth My people, so that they may serve Me." But despite numerous warnings, Pharaoh refused to heed G-d's command. G-d then sent upon Egypt ten devastating plagues, afflicting them and destroying everything from their livestock to their crops.

At the stroke of midnight of 15 Nisan in the year 2448 from Creation (1313 BCE), G-d visited the last of the ten plagues on the Egyptians, killing all their firstborns.

While doing so, G-d spared the Children of Israel, "passing over" their homes—hence the name of the holiday. Pharaoh's resistance was broken, and he virtually chased his former slaves out of the land. The Israelites left in such a hurry, in fact, that the bread they baked as provisions for the way did not have time to rise. Six hundred thousand adult males, plus many more women and children, left Egypt on that night and began the trek to Mount Sinai and their birth as G-d's chosen people.

# HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

## *Passover*

### Passover Observances

Passover is divided into two parts:

The first two days and last two days (the latter commemorating the Splitting of the Red Sea) are full-fledged holidays. Holiday candles are lit at night, and Kiddush and sumptuous holiday meals are enjoyed on both sets of nights and days. We don't go to work, drive, write, or switch on or off electric devices. We are permitted to cook and to carry outdoors (except on Shabbat).

The middle four days are

called Chol Hamo'ed, semi-festive "intermediate days," when most forms of work are permitted.

To commemorate the unleavened bread that the Israelites ate when they left Egypt, we don't eat—or even retain in our possession—any *chametz* from midday of the day before Passover until the conclusion of the holiday. *Chametz* means leavened grain—any food or drink that contains even a trace of wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt, or their derivatives, and which wasn't guarded from leavening or fermentation. This includes bread, cake, cookies, cereal, pasta, and

most alcoholic beverages. Moreover, almost any processed food or drink can be assumed to be *chametz* unless certified otherwise.

Ridding our homes of *chametz* is an intensive process. It involves a full-out, spring-cleaning, search-and-destroy mission during the weeks before Passover, and it culminates with a ceremonial search for *chametz* on the night before Passover and then a *chametz*-burning ceremony on the morning before the holiday. *Chametz* that cannot be disposed of can be sold to a non-Jew for the duration of the holiday.

# HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

## *Passover*

Instead of *chametz*, we eat matzah—flat unleavened bread. It is a mitzvah to partake of matzah on the two *seder* nights, and during the rest of the holiday (except Shabbat) it is optional.

The highlight of Passover is the *seder*, observed on each of the first two nights of the holiday. The *seder* is a fifteen-step, family-oriented tradition, and a ritual-packed feast.



Why put yourself through the grueling process of climbing the mountain of personal growth when you'll never reach the summit anyway?

# TEXT 1

*Rabbi Shneur Zalman  
of Liadi, Responsum 6*

גלילי ידיו הטהורות ואת כל אשר בה  
ראיתי וקריתי, ובאתי בקצרה לאמר עם  
הספר, אודות איסור בישול מצה  
שנתפררה.

באמת כי גם שאינו איסור גמור וברור  
מדינא מכל מקום המחמיר תבוא עליו  
ברכה ואינו מן המתמיהין לאמר כי היא  
חומרא בלא טעם, אלא טעמא רבא איכא  
במלתא, לזהר מחשש איסור דאורייתא  
...

והנה עינינו רואות בהרבה מצות שיש  
עליהם מעט קמח אחר אפייה וזה בא  
מחמת שהיתה עיסה קשה ולא נילושה  
יפה יפה . . . והנה משהו קמח בעין שעל  
פני המצה למעלה שמתחמץ במרק,  
כשמפררים את המצה לתוך המרק כנהוג  
בשבת יש בזה חשש איסור דאורייתא.

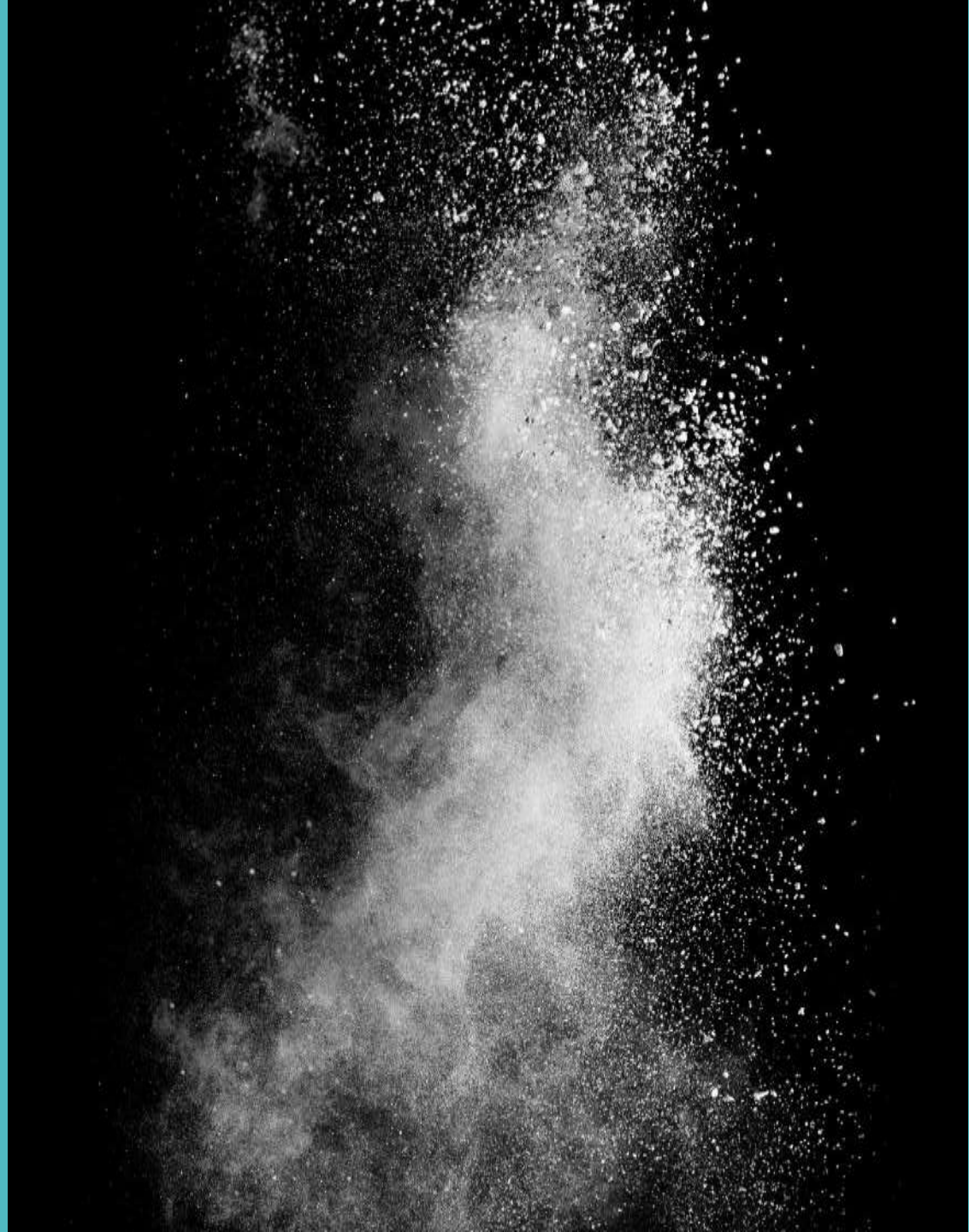
I have read all that you have written in your letter,  
and I enclose herewith a brief response regarding the  
issue of cooking crumbled matzah:

The truth is, there is no outright prohibition against  
doing so. Nevertheless, one who acts stringently shall  
receive blessings; this is not a ridiculous stringency  
without any basis. Rather, there is a strong basis for  
observing this stringency, namely, avoiding the  
possibility of transgressing the biblical prohibition  
against eating *chametz*. . . .

We can plainly observe that many times, flour remains  
on the surface of some matzot even after they have  
been baked. This happens because the dough was  
tough and was not kneaded thoroughly . . . , and this  
minute amount of flour that is on the matzah can  
become *chametz*. If the pieces of such a matzah are  
placed into soup, as many are accustomed to doing,  
one can inadvertently transgress a biblical prohibition.

## *Matzah Sheruyah*

Because of the concern of loose flour from the matzah coming into contact with water and becoming *chametz*, many communities avoid getting matzah wet on Passover.



## TEXT 2

*The Rebbe, Rabbi  
Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, Likutei  
Taamim Uminhagim  
LeHaggadah Shel  
Pesach, Shulchan Orech*

נזהרין ביותר ממצה שרויה. ולכן המצות שעל השולחן  
מכוסות, שמא יפלו עליהם מים. קודם ששופכין מים, או  
משקין שמים מעורבים בהם, לכוס או קערה בודקין שלא  
יהיו בכלי פירורי מצה. למים אמצעים ואחרונים אין להעביר  
ידיו על שפתיו.

We are extremely careful to avoid consuming *matzah sheruyah*. Therefore, the matzot on the table are covered at all times, so that water does not spill onto them. Before we pour water, or any other liquid that is mixed with water, into a cup or a bowl, we inspect the cup or bowl to ensure that there are no crumbs of matzah in it. When we wash our hands during and after the meal, we do not pass our wet hands over our lips.



## TEXT 3

*Rabbi Shneur Zalman  
of Liadi, Responsum 6*

מכל מקום, ביום טוב האחרון - המיקל  
משום שמחת יום טוב לא הפסיד.

Nevertheless, one who is lenient on the  
final day of the holiday for the sake of  
rejoicing on the holiday has nothing to lose.

# TEXT 4

*Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak  
Schneersohn, Sefer  
Hasichot 5602, p. 105*

כבוד קדושת אדוני אבי מורי ורבי הרב הקדוש פלעגט מהדר זיין אחרון של  
פסח עסן דוקא מצה שרויה. א גאנץ פסח פלעגט ער זיין נזהר ניט עסן קיין  
מצה צוזאמען מיט קיין שום אנדער מאכל . . . אבער אחרון של פסח . . .  
פלעגט ער דאס טאן בכדי להראות. ער פלעגט דאן עסן מצה מיט די פיש יוך  
און מיט די פלייש.

My saintly father, the Rebbe [Rashab, Rabbi Shalom Dovber Schneersohn], was particular to specifically eat *matzah sheruyah* on *acharon shel Pesach*. The entire Passover, he was particular to not eat matzah together with any other type of food, . . . but on *acharon shel Pesach*, he would do so deliberately, exhibiting this custom in public. He would eat matzah with the fish, with the soup, and with the meat.

## QUESTION

Why do chassidim specifically eat the matzah with every food on the last day of Passover, taking the Alter Rebbe's leniency to an extreme?

# TEXT 5

*Talmud, Sukkah 32b*

תָּנָא: עֵץ עֲבוֹת כָּשֶׁר, וְשָׁאִינוּ עֲבוֹת פָּסוּל.

הֵיכִי דָמִי עֲבוֹת? אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה: וְהוּא דְקִיָּמִי תִלְתָּא תִלְתָּא טְרַפֵּי בְקִינָא. רַב כְּהֵנָּא אָמַר:  
אֶפִּילוּ תְרֵי וְחֵד.

רַב אַחָא בְרִיה דְרַבָּא מְהֵנָּה אֶתְרֵי וְחֵד, הוּאִיל וְנִפְיָק מִפּוּמִיָּה דְרַב כְּהֵנָּא.

A dense-leaved branch is valid for the mitzvah, and one that is not dense-leaved is invalid.

What is the definition of “dense-leaved”? Rav Yehudah says, “It is a branch that has three leaves emerging from the same stem.”

Rav Kahana says, “Even if only two leaves emerge from one stem, and a third leaf emerges from another stem just below those two, it is valid.”

Rav Acha son of Rava would deliberately seek a myrtle branch with the two-one leaf configuration, since Rabbi Kahana ruled that it was valid.



There is something special about deliberately observing your teacher's ruling, even if it is only a leniency.

But how can we make *matzah sheruyah* such a big deal on the first seven days and utterly dismiss it on the last?

# TEXT 6

*The Rebbe, Rabbi  
Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, Likutei  
Sichot 22, pp. 34–35*

די ערשטע נאכט פסח איז אונזער יום טוב וואס הקדוש ברוך הוא האט אונז אויסגעלייזט פון מצרים, די גאולה ראשונה דורך משה רבינו וואס ער איז געווען דער גואל ראשון — דאס איז געווען דער אנהייב.

אחרון של פסח איז אונזער יום טוב אויף דער גאולה אחרונה, וואס הקדוש ברוך הוא וועט אונז אויסלייזען פון דעם גלות אחרון דורך משיח צדקנו, וואס ער — משיח צדקנו — איז דער גואל אחרון.

דער ערשטער טאג פסח איז משה רבינו'ס שמחה טאג, און אחרון של פסח איז משיח'ס שמחה טאג.

The first day of Passover is our holiday commemorating how G-d liberated us from Egypt. That was the first redemption, and it was carried out by Moses, the first redeemer—that was the beginning.

The final day of Passover is our holiday celebrating the future Redemption, when G-d will send Mashiach to liberate us from our current and final Exile. Mashiach will be the final redeemer.

The first day of Passover is Moses's day of celebration; the final day of Passover is Mashiach's day of celebration.

# TEXT 7

*Isaiah 11:1*

א. וַיֵּצֵא חֹטֶר מִגִּזְע יִשָּׁי, וַיִּנָּצֵר  
מִשְׁרָשָׁיו יִפְרֶה.

ב. וְנָחָה עָלָיו רוּחַ ה', רוּחַ חֵכְמָה  
וּבִינָה, רוּחַ עֲצָה וְגִבּוּרָה, רוּחַ דַּעַת  
וַיִּרְאֵת ה'.

ג. וְהָרִיחוּ בִּירְאֵת ה', וְלֹא לְמַרְאֵה עֵינָיו  
יִשְׁפּוּט, וְלֹא לְמִשְׁמַע אָזְנוֹ יוֹכִיחַ.

ד. וְשָׁפֵט בְּצֶדֶק דְּלִים, וְהוֹכִיחַ בְּמִישׁוֹר  
לְעִנְי אֶרֶץ, וְהִכָּה אֶרֶץ בְּשֶׁבֶט

ה. וְהָיָה צֶדֶק אֲזוֹר מִתְּנָיו, וְהָאֱמוּנָה  
אֲזוֹר חֲלָצָיו.

1. And a shoot shall spring forth from the stem of Jesse, and a twig shall sprout from his roots.

2. And the spirit of G-d shall rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and heroism, a spirit of knowledge and fear of G-d.

3. And he shall be animated by the fear of G-d, and neither with the sight of his eyes shall he judge, nor with the hearing of his ears shall he chastise.

4. And he shall judge the poor justly, and he shall chastise with equity the humble of the earth, and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall put the wicked to death.

5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faith the girdle of his loins.



The final day of  
Passover is a  
celebration of the  
future Redemption.





## TEXT 8

*The Rebbe, Rabbi  
Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, Hayom  
Yom, 22 Nisan*

הַבֵּעַל שֵׁם טוֹב הָיָה אוֹכֵל ג' סְעוּדוֹת בְּאַחֲרוֹן שָׁל פֶּסַח.  
סְעוּדַת אַחֲרוֹן שָׁל פֶּסַח הִיְתָה נִקְרָאת — אֶצֶל הַבֵּעַל  
שֵׁם טוֹב — מְשִׁיחַ'ס סְעוּדָה. אַחֲרוֹן שָׁל פֶּסַח אִיז  
מְשִׁיחַ'ס סְעוּדָה, וַיִּיל אַחֲרוֹן שָׁל פֶּסַח אִיז מֵאִיר גִּילּוֹי  
הָאֶרֶת הַמְּשִׁיחַ.

It was the custom of the Baal Shem Tov to partake of three meals on the last day of Passover. The last of these he called Mashiach's *se'udah*—"the festive meal of Mashiach"—for on the last day of Passover, the radiance of Mashiach is openly revealed.

## TEXT 9

*Isaiah 52:12*

כִּי לֹא בְּחֶפְזוֹן תֵּצְאוּ וּבְמְנוּסָה לֹא תֵלְכוּן, כִּי  
הֵלֵךְ לִפְנֵיכֶם ה' וּמַאַסְפְּכֶם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

For not with haste shall you go forth and  
not in a flurry of flight shall you go; G-d  
goes before you, and your rear guard is  
the G-d of Israel.

# TEXT 10

*Zechariah 13:2*

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, נְאֻם ה' צְבָאוֹת, אֶכְרִית אֶת  
שְׁמוֹת הָעֲצָבִים מִן הָאָרֶץ וְלֹא יִזְכְּרוּ עוֹד, וְגַם אֶת  
הַנְּבִיאִים וְאֶת רוּחַ הַטְּמְאָה אֶעֱבִיר מִן הָאָרֶץ.

And it shall come to pass on that day, says the L-rd of Hosts, “I will cut off the names of the idols from the earth, and they shall no longer be mentioned; also the false prophets, and the spirit of impurity, I will remove from the earth.”

## Exodus from Egypt



We ran from the evil of Egypt enmeshed in our identities.

## Future Redemption



We won't run – the world will already be transformed into a holy place.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Days of Passover



We eradicate chametz completely.

## Last Day of Passover



Chametz is transformed to holiness.

# TEXT 11

*Isaiah 11:6–8*

ו. וְגַר זֵאֵב עִם כֶּבֶשׂ וְנֹמֵר עִם גְּדִי יִרְבֹּץ, וְעֹגֶל וְכֹפִיר וּמָרִיא יִחְדּוּ, וְנֶעֱר קָטָן  
נֹהֵג בָּם.

ז. וּפָרָה וְלֵב תִּרְעִינָה יִחְדּוּ יִרְבְּצוּ יִלְדֵיהֶן, וְאַרְיֵה כִּבְקָר יֹאכֹל חֶבֶן.

ח. וְשִׁעֲשַׁע יוֹנֵק עַל חֵר פֶּתֶן, וְעַל מְאוֹרֶת צִפְעוֹנִי גְמוּל יָדוֹ הָדָה.

6. And a wolf shall live with a lamb, and a leopard shall lie with a kid;  
and a calf and a lion cub and a fatling shall lie together, and a small  
child shall lead them.

7. And a cow and a bear shall graze together, their children shall lie;  
and a lion, like cattle, shall eat straw.

8. And an infant shall play over the hole of an old snake and over the  
eyeball of an adder; a weaned child shall stretch forth his hand.

## TEXT 12

Zohar Chadash,  
Parshat *Yitro*

יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּד הָּוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם, אֶסְתָּאבוּ וְאֶתְטַנְפוּ  
גְּרִמִּיהוֹן בְּכָל זֵינֵי מְסֻאָבוּ, עַד דֵּהוּ וְשָׂרְאוֹן  
תַּחֲוֹת אַרְבָּעִים וְתִשְׁעַ חֵילֵי דְמְסֻאָבוּתָא.

When the Jews were in Egypt, they became sullied and corrupted by all forms of impurity, to the point that they were under the influence of forty-nine powers of impurity.

## TEXT 13

Zohar Chadash, *ibid.*

וְהָא אִיהוּ דְאֵנוּ מִן לְהוּ, מִיּוֹמָא טָבָא דְפִסְחָא. וְאֵנוּ  
מִן יוֹמֵי וְשַׁבּוּעֵי, וְהָא אֵיתְעֵרוּ חֲבֵרֵיִיא, מִצָּנָה לְמִמְנֵי  
יוֹמֵי, וּמִצָּנָה לְמִימְנֵי שַׁבּוּעֵי. כִּי בְּכָל יוֹמָא אֲפִיק לָן  
מִחֵילָא דְמִסְאָבוּ, וְאָעִיל לָן בְּחֵילָא דְדַכְיוּ.

This is what we begin counting on the first day of Passover. We count the days as well as the weeks, for it is a mitzvah to count both days and weeks. For each day, we exit one power of impurity, and replace it with a power of purity.



## *Sefirat Ha'Omer*

The process of spiritual refinement.

Each day, from Passover to Shavuot, we refine one part of one of our soul's seven attributes.



## TEXT 14

Leviticus 23:17

מִמּוֹשְׁבֵיכֶם תָּבִיאוּ לֶחֶם תְּנוּפָה שְׁתֵּי  
שָׁנִי עֲשֻׁרִים, סֵלֶת תִּהְיֶינָה חֲמֵץ תֹּאֲפִינָה,  
בְּכֹרִים לָהּ.

From your dwelling places, you shall bring bread for waving, two loaves made from two *esronim*; they shall be of fine flour, and they shall be baked leavened, the first offering to G-d.

## TEXT 15

*Maimonides*, Mishneh  
Torah, Hilchot  
Temidim Umusafin 8:9

וְהָרִי מִפָּרֶשׁ בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁהֵם חֲמֵץ. וְכִיצַד עוֹשֶׂה?  
מֵבִיא שָׂאֹר מִמָּקוֹם אֲחֵר וְנוֹתְנוֹ לְתוֹךְ הָעֶשְׂרוֹן,  
וּמִמֶּלֶא הָעֶשְׂרוֹן סֵלֶת וּמְחַמְצוֹ בָּאוֹתוֹ הַשָּׂאֹר.

It is explicitly stated in the Torah that they should be leavened bread. How were they prepared? One would bring yeast from another place and place it into the *isaron* measure. He would then fill that measure with fine flour and let it leaven with that yeast.



Through the process  
of self-refinement,  
our inflated, bad ego  
is transformed to  
good ego – pride.

## TEXT 16

*II Chronicles 17:6*

וַיִּגְבֶּה לִבּוֹ בְּדַרְכֵי ה'.

His heart was proud in  
the ways of the L-rd.

## TEXT 17

*Rabbi Shneur Zalman  
of Liadi, Likutei Torah,  
Bamidbar 15c*

כי באמת עם היות שצריך כל האדם להיות שפל במאד, מכל  
מקום צריך התחזקות וקצת הגבהה . . . כי אם לא יהיה בבחינת  
הגבהה כלל - לא יערב ליבו לגשת אל העבודה, באמרו: מי  
אנכי ומה עבודתי? לכן צריך לו הגבהת הלב.

The truth is that although one must be exceedingly humble, nevertheless, a person should have some resolve, if even a bit of pride. . . . For if one would not have any pride, they would never engage in service of G-d, for they would always belittle themselves, thinking, “Who am I? What is my service worth?” Therefore, one needs to have some pride.

## ANSWER

On the last day of Passover, when we have already refined one attribute, we are able and required to use *matzah sheruyah* for the sake of holiness.



By giving the improvement of a single aspect of your personality full dedication, you have the ability to create a small slice of perfection.



## KEY POINTS

1. The Chabad custom is to eat as much *matzah sheruyah* as possible on the last day of Passover.
2. *Acharon shel Pesach* is a celebration of the future messianic Redemption.
3. When Mashiach comes, all evil and impurity will be eradicated. Therefore, on *acharon shel Pesach*, we are less concerned with remote possibilities of *chametz*, which represents ego and evil.
4. *Sefirat Ha'Omer* is a process of spiritual refinement. Each day, we refine one part of one *midah*.
5. On *acharon shel Pesach*, we have already refined one entire *midah*. Therefore, we are less concerned about the remote possibility of *matzah sheruyah* turning into *chametz*.

