



Chazal describe Matza as “מיכלא דאסוותא” and “מיכלא דמהימנותא”. While Matza has a Torah-based uniqueness, Matza from the Rebbe holds incomparable significance. Each year thousands of Chassidim would do their utmost to get their hands on even a bit of Matza that the Rebbe had distributed. Let us take a glimpse at this precious gift the Rebbe presented us every Pesach.



THE BAKERY

Beginning from the Frierdiker Rebbes arrival in the United States, Chassidim used four different Bakeries from which the Rebbeim would partake.

1. In the time of the Frierdiker Rebbe the Bochorim of 770 would rent time in a Matza Bakery on the east-side of Manhattan belonging to the Sadaner Rav. Reb Elya Yaichel Simpson would take charge of the work done in the Matza Bakery.
2. When the Rebbe took accepted the mantle of Nesius, Matza baking continued at that bakery, until the year 5713. Rabbi Yehoshua Korf whom had just arrived in New York acquired a vacant Matza Bakery that was also in the east-side of Manhattan, and from then on Chassidim began baking the Matzos there.
3. Later on Rabbi Korf sold the bakery in Manhattan, bought a space in Crown Heights and converted into a

Bakery.

4. In the year 5739 the Matza Bakery was taken over by Rabbi Yitzchok Tenenbaum and Rabbi Dovber Dubravsky.

Regardless of the bakery, there was a standard practice regarding the one who took charge of the baking. He would organize groups of Bochorim whom would accomplish every detail of the Matza baking, and then he would be the one to bring the Matzos to the Rebbe. He would carry it in, the Rebbe would separate Challa from the Matzos, and then the Rebbe would present the presiding individual with a complete Matzo for his own use.

Initially Reb Elya Simpson took charge of the proceedings. Later on that responsibility was passed on to Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik.

Rabbi Meir Harlig was witness to the moment when Rabbi Mentlik received the responsibility. He relates:

"I was still a Bochor in one of the later

'yuds' when on 13 Nissan the Rebbe arrived from the Ohel for Mincha in 770. Following Mincho the Rebbe instructed Reb Shmuel Levitin to hold a Farbrengen, as he was accustomed to each year on that day. Then the Rebbe turned to the Bochorim and asked:

מיט וואס האט מען צוגעגרייט דעם באקעריי,
פאר דעם באקען מארגען א"ה?

In which way has the bakery been prepared for the baking tomorrow?

As I was standing in close proximity to the Rebbe, I responded that we had prepared the oven, applied new block-paper and procured new rollers. The Rebbe then asked who was in charge. To which I responded, Reb Elya Simpson. Then the Rebbe exclaimed:

ער איז דאך א רב אין בארא פראק, און ער איז פארנומען מיט אנדערע זאכען: מכירת חמץ וכו'. א פאפירעל מער א פאפירעל ווייניקער, א קאטשעלקע מער אדער א קאטשעלקע יווייניקער, אבער די עיקר איז זיין ביי דעם אויבען, ווער נעמט אויף זיך זיין דער אחראי דארטען?

He is a Rov in Boro Park and busy with other thing; Mechiras Chometz etc. One

THE REBBE TURNED TO THE CHASSIDIM AND EXCLAIMED: “UNTIL YOU WILL SING, I WON’T BE ABLE TO GIVE OUT THE MATZOS!”



THE TALMIDIM HASHLUCHIM WITH THE MATZA THEY HAD JUST RECEIVED

paper more or one paper less, one roller more or one roller less, it is essential to take caution with the oven. Who is taking responsibility there?

To this I did not respond, and suddenly Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik came forward and stated that he would take the achrayus upon himself. “

From that time forward, one could always spot Rabbi Mentlick hovering near the oven, presiding with great caution. He was extremely particular that the Matzos should not sit unbaked, even while they were on the rod waiting to be inserted in the oven.

In 5748 when Rabbi Mentlick passed on, this responsibility was passed on to Rabbis Yisroel and Shneur Zalman Labkowsky.

MAYIM SHELANU

Every step in the preparation of Shmura Matza is done with intense scrupulousness. Typically the water for the Matza would be drawn the night before and then remain under watch until the time came for them to be used.

Each year a spring would be set up outside 770, from which they would draw the water to bake the Rebbe’s matzos with. The Rebbe wished to take part in the preparation and on majority of

occasions would join Chassidim for it.

We are going to discuss further on in the article, often the Rebbe’s Matzos were baked twice. The first time would be on Beis Nissan and the second would be Erev Pesach. The Rebbe would always participate unless it was a day which he was going to the Ohel. When that would occur the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky to relate a message that the organizers should not wait for him, because Mayim Shelanu needs to be done before Tzeis Hakochavim.

The atmosphere that encompassed the Mayim Shelanu with the Rebbe was one of a kind. The intense seriousness with which the Rebbe regarded the moment, was palpably felt by Chassidim.

As Chassidim crowded around the steps of 770 the Rebbe would emerge and approach the fountain. The Rebbe would pick up a jug specifically set aside for this, and began to rinse it well with the water of the fountain. The Rebbe then proceeded to fill it up three times and pour it consecutively into a glass tank nearby.

Often as the Rebbe would return to 770, the Rebbe would strongly encourage the singing of the Chassidim.

CHALUKOS HAMTAZOS

Just months after the Rebbe accepted

the Nesius the Rebbe instituted a practice which would take place each year prior to Pesach. Beginning from Erev Pesach 5711 the Rebbe distributed Matza to all, giving first to those who lived further from Crown Heights to ensure they reach their homes before Pesach began.

This diary of Reb Elya Gross from Pesach 5712 gives an incredible depiction of what took place.

“At 4:00 the Rebbe began to distribute Matzos. The Rebbe turned to the Chassidim and exclaimed; ‘Until you will sing, I won’t be able to give out the Matzos!’ Thus we began singing the Keli Ato.

Last year the Rebbe gave out a full Matzo to every person, yet this year the Rebbe only gave that to big financial supporters, while most others received a Kezayis or two of Matzo.

The Rebbe waited until the Matzos had arrived from the Bakery, and only then did he daven Mincho. Following, the Rebbe divided Challa from each carton of Matza and put it in an envelope.

It was extraordinary to see how the Rebbe was particular with the amount he gave each individual. If someone asked that he be given more for someone who wasn’t there, the Rebbe would ask if the Matza could reach them before Pesach. If

the answer was no, the Rebbe would take back the extra Matza and switch it for a smaller one.

When the Matzo ran out, someone brought Matza that had been made earlier in the month, yet the Rebbe said that he only wanted to distribute from the Matza which was made Erev Pesach. Thus they quickly brought from the bakery whatever had been baked in the meantime..."

Each year the Rebbe would allocate the Matzos in this way on Erev Pesach. After

Torah and the young men [members of the kolel] learn Torah for its own sake, they should come tomorrow to receive Matzos and then they should distribute it to the masses wherever possible..."

The Rebbe's instructions were clear in that, the members of the Kolel would all receive packages of Matzo, following which they should distribute one fifth of a Matzo to everyone who requested. Were that not to be enough they would bring Matza which had been baked in the meantime to the Rebbe, the Rebbe would distribute them again to the Kollel whom

would then allocate to all remaining.

The Rebbe then proceeded to compose a list of individuals who would receive Matzo directly from him. They included: Rabbi Binyomin Gorodetzky and Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin for involvement in selling the Rebbe's chometz; Rabbi Yehoshua Korf for his managing the Matza bakery; The Mazkirus and a few others.

When the above had all received the Rebbe instructed that all the doctors that had been at the Rebbe's side since Shemini Atzeres, be called in to receive

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THE REBBE DRAWS MAYIM SHELANU

Maariv on the first night of Pesach, the Rebbe would again give out Matzos for anyone who had not previously received before beginning the Seder.

This changed greatly in the year 5738.

In the year 5738 the Rebbe held a Farbrengen on two consecutive nights, Yud Alef and Yud Beis Nissan. On the eve of Bedikas Chometz the Rebbe called in Rabbi Hodakov and told him as follows:

היות אז מארגען איז ערב פסח און מען דארף טיילען שמורה, איז אזוי ווי יעדער ענין גייט דורך תורה, און די יונגערלייט לערנען תורה לשמה, זאלן זיי קומען נעמען מצות און זיי זאלן דאס טיילען צו דעם עולם וואו ס'איז גרינגער...

As tomorrow is Erev Pesach and we must distribute Shmura [matzo], just as everything in the world goes through



RABBI GERSHOM MENDEL GARELIK RECEIVING MATZA

FASCINATING STORIES THAT TOOK PLACE THROUGHOUT CHALUKOS HAMATZOS

1. Pesach 5735 was just months after the Rebbe established Mivtza Neshek. When the Rebbe gave out Matzos that Erev Pesach the Rebbe handed out matches for the men to give to their wives and daughters.

2. In the year 5737 Pesach fell out on Erev Shabbos, so the Rebbe distributed the Matza on Erev Shabbos the twelfth of Nissan. That year while the Rebbe handed out the Matzos he added a dollar along with each Matzo and instructed that it – or another dollar instead of it – be given to Tzedoka before Shabbos.

3. One year, Shluchim and Anash of Florida wanted to receive the Matzos of Erev Pesach before the Yom Tov began so they organized a special courier service to transport the Matzos before Shkiya. Originally the Mazkirus had set aside

two pounds of Matzo thinking that they would need Matzos for both Sedorim. When the messenger came by the Rebbe, he told the Rebbe that the Matzos are also for the first Seder. When the Rebbe heard that, he replaced the two pounds with one single pound.

Those who stood around were quite surprised at what had transpired. Later that week they found out that the Matzos had not reached Florida on time for the first Seder, and thus the Rebbe had only sent one pound for the second Seder.

4. In the year 5749, following Ma'ariv, the Rebbe turned to the Mazkirim and asked whether they had all received Matzah, to which Reb Leib Groner responded that they had received on Erev Pesach. The Rebbe exclaimed: "היינט פראוועט איר נישט קיין" "סדר מער? איר פראוועט דאך א סדר..."

Matzos. When Rabbi Yisroel Shimon Kalmenson brought wine for the Rebbe, the Rebbe apportioned a Matza for him. After Maariv that night the Rebbe distributed to a few others.

In the years following the Rebbe would distribute to the above individuals, and to the to others who had been close to the Rebbe's family after Ma'ariv on the first night of Yom-Tov. To the exception of times when Pesach began on Shabbos, upon which the Rebbe would hand it out earlier so they would be able to bring it to their residence before shkiya.

Some others who often would receive Matzo along with the others mentioned earlier: Rabbi Mordechai Mentlick, the Halbershtam family, Rabbi Berel Junik, Rabbi Dovid Malka, and Rabbi Gershon Ber Jacobson.

Although this would continue to be the prevailing custom for all the years to come, in the year 5739 the Rebbe announced a special addition. The Rebbe would distribute a package of Matza to any Shliach who was leading a public seder. Because the Rebbe would distribute it on Erev Pesach, only Shluchim who were able to travel back to

there cities on time would be able to receive.

Many other Shluchim who lived to far, to receive and return on the same day, would receive special packages in the mail from Matzos which had been baked on Beis Nissan.

Each Shliach would have his way of transporting the Matzos to his Makom Hashlichus. Due to the shipping constraints prevalent in many countries, numerous Shluchim would not receive the Matzos till Shvii shel Pesach or after Pesach.

Rabbi Gershon Mendel Gorelick who lives in Milan, Italy wouldn't receive his Matzos till Pesach was long over. Each year on Lag Baomer Rabbi Gorelick would distribute the Matza at a special event held on Lag Baomer, as Jews of the Milan learned quickly that Lag Baomer is the Yom Tov of Matza from the Rebbe...

In 5748 the Rebbe began to distribute Matzos from Beis Nissan, so that all Shluchim should be able to receive Matza from the Rebbe directly before their seder. Often Bochorim or Yungerlait who were traveling to help a Shliach in remote areas would merit to receive the

Matzos in the stead of the Shliach. They would then travel with them to the Shliach and distribute it at the seder.

MATZOS FOR ERETZ HAKODESH

Year after year the Rebbe would send a special shipment of Matzos to the Shluchim and Anash of Eretz Yisroel. Initially through Rabbi Zelig Slonim, later through Rabbi Mendel Gorelick, and in the last few years before 5752 through Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Ahronov.

The Rebbe requested that the Matzos be packaged well and transported on the main level of the plane, and not together with the Luggage.

In the earlier years the boxes of Matzo would be organized in the library, where the Rebbe would himself come and observe the happenings. The Rebbe would take Challa, and often gave a Michtov K'loli to be given together with the Matzos. Once the Matzos would arrive in Eretz Yisroel, the Vaad Ruchni of Kfar Chabad saw to it that everyone should receive Matza from the shipment.

May we be Zoche that this Pesach we be reunited with the Rebbe, whom will once more give out these treasured Matzos. ■