

Stories, Biographies & Wonders

The Glass that Did Not Break

Special thanks to Revach L'Neshama for the story

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik made a *Seudas Mitzva* in his house. The table was set with his finest glass and china in honor of the occasion. One of the participants got up from the table and accidentally took the tablecloth with him as he got caught on it. The tablecloth crashed to the floor with all its expensive and delicate contents falling to the ground.



Everyone was horrified and turned to look at Rav Chaim, waiting for his reaction. Rav Chaim told everyone not to worry and assured them that nothing broke. They slowly approached the wreckage and unraveled the tablecloth. Sure enough, every single piece was intact and nothing was damaged.

All eyes turned to Rav Chaim for an explanation. Rav Chaim explained that he is not a *Navi* or a miracle worker. He only knows the tradition that he had from Rav Chaim Volozhin. Rav Chaim Volozhin said that no harm will ever come to something bought from money earned honestly and fairly. Rav Chaim said that since all his money was earned fairly he was sure that nothing could have broken. And so it was.

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◆ Please, don't read me during tefilla, kadish, etc. ◆

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

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Halacha Challenge

Singing *Eishes Chayil* at the Seder



The Seder at the Rubins was one of a kind. Abba's amazing *chidushim* during *Maggid*, as well as the *mitzvos* of the *Seder*, lifted everyone's mood. Hence, during *Shulchan Orech*, everyone wanted to sing. After singing *V'samachta B'Chagecha*, the family was waiting for someone to propose a new song. "How about *Eishes Chayil*?" asked the youngest son, Benny. "After all, today also happens to be Shabbos!" His sister, Shoshanna said: "I am not sure if it's a good idea. We did not sing *Shalom Aleichem* and *Eishes Chayil* tonight before *Kiddush*. Maybe we are not supposed to sing those songs that we sing on Shabbos."

Q. Did Benny make a good proposal?

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DEDICATIONS

- ◆ By *Yaacov & Pam Russ*, for their 40th wedding anniversary
- ◆ By *Chaim and Shoshana Faibisoff*, for *refuah* for *Zelda Bat Sarah*
- ◆ By *the Glickman family*, *l'iluy nishmas Esther bas Shlomo Aryeh and Shmuel ben Dov*
- ◆ By *Ari Stern*, in honor of the *Menucha* staff

Special thanks to *kehillas Beis Tefillah Yonah Avraham*



◆ requires geniza ◆

Help: It's told that Rav Pam was once asked if a person should sing *Shalom Aleichem* and *Eishes Chayil* before *Kiddush* when Yom Tov falls on Shabbos. He answered that there are different *minhagim* regarding this and one should follow his family's *minhag*.* However, some (or perhaps all) families who do have a *minhag* to sing those songs before Kiddush on a Yom Tov that coincides with Shabbos do not sing them before Kiddush of the *Seder*. (Rav Malinowitz, *shlit"a* told Menucha that his family actually has this particular custom.) A possible reason for this is due to the halachos which appear in *Siman 472* (OC) of the *Shulchan Aruch* that express the need to start the *Seder* as soon as possible. The reason for this is so that little children will not fall asleep before they get a chance to ask *Ma Nishtana* and get the answer from their father, who will thereby fulfill the Torah commandment of "*V'higadta L'Vincha*" (i.e. telling the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* to one's child).

Having said that, singing *Eishes Chayil* could be an exception to this, because this song has relevance to the holiday of Pesach. How so? In *Shir HaShirim, Klal Yisroel* is depicted as *Hashem's* beloved¹. Furthermore, *Shir HaShirim* describes how *Hashem* took His Beloved out of the bondage of Egypt and brought her under the *chuppah* – i.e., to Har Sinai². Since we are the *Eishes Chayil* of *Hashem*, perhaps singing the *Eishes Chayil* song during the *Seder* is, in fact, appropriate.

Menucha's answer*: Yes – singing *Eishes Chayil* during the *Seder* meal is a good idea.

Explanation: The *sefer Minhag Yisroel*³ writes that singing *Eishes Chayil* during the *Shulchan Orech* part of the *Seder* is a valid *minhag*, which some families have a custom to practice at their *Seder* (even when the first day of Pesach is not on Shabbos). See the "Help" section (above) for the possible connection between this song and the *Seder*.

1. *Shir HaShirim* [1:2]
2. *ibid.*, [2:8-14, 3:11, see *Mishnayos Ta'anis* 4]
3. *Minhag Yisroel*, Laws of the Seder Night § 26.

*Note: This answer is based on our understanding of the sources cited in this article. (The opinions of these sources may not necessary reflect *halachic* rulings of other *halachic* authorities.) The reader is encouraged to study this topic in depth in order to truly know *halacha lema'aseh* for the case presented in this halacha challenge.

Riddles



Mr. Feinberg is a good father. He teaches his children well how to perform mitzvos so that they'll be ready to do them when they reach Bar / Bat Mitzva. Today – on a beautiful day in the month of Nissan, Mr. Feinberg's people overheard him saying to his son Moishy: "Moishy - I am doing this *mitzva* today, and you should not. But, when you'll be Bar Mitzva, you will do it on this day, and I will not."

Which *mitzva* was Mr. Feinberg talking about?

Answer to the last riddle RIDDLE: Chaim loves Pesach. He especially loves the *chiddushe* Torah that he discovers during this spiritually uplifting time. When he has those *chiddushim*, he writes them down during Chol HaMoed. This Pesach, Chaim's younger brother Akiva noticed that on Chaim's table there are two jars of ink. Akiva also noticed that Chaim never used one of those jars to write his *chiddushim*. When he inquired about it, Chaim answered: "I am not allowed to use that jar of ink on Pesach." Akiva asked back: "Is it because the ink is *chometzduk*?" Chaim answered: "Of course not! No sane dog would ever eat this ink. And by the way, the ink jar that I am using on Pesach has absolutely the same type of ink as this one." So then why is Chaim not allowed to use that first jar of ink on Pesach?

ANSWER: That ink was cooked with *chometzduk* ingredients on Pesach itself (e.g., Chaim's non-Jewish neighbor presented this jar of ink to Chaim on Pesach.) Therefore, it became in-edible to dogs only on Pesach. In such a case, one may not derive benefit from it.



Kids Ask, Zeidy Answers



Zeidy – today is Rosh Chodesh Nissan. You taught us that Nissan is a month when Moshiach is ready to come more than ever. But –Zeidy - many people now in Klal Yisroel are very far from Torah and Mitzvos. Why would we deserve the final *geulah*?



You should know, kids – this is the same type of question Bnei Yisroel asked Moshe Rabbeinu in Mitzrayim. The Midrash* relates that when Moshe Rabbeinu said to Bnei Yisroel "In this month you will be redeemed," they said back to him: "Moshe Rabbeinu – how [is it possible] that we will be redeemed this month?! We don't have good deeds in our hands." To that, Moshe Rabbeinu replied with this important answer—which will also answer your question, kids: "Because Hashem desires your redemption, He does not look at your bad deeds. And at whom does He look? At the *tzadikim* among you and at their deeds, such as Amram and his *beis din*."

*[Midrash Rabba on Shir HaShirim, verse - 2:8]