

bs"D From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

Story # 1269 (5782-31) 3 Nissan 5782 (April 4, 2022) FREE [email subscription](#)

Discover! the "TillesTells Saturday Night Stories" [WhatsApp group](#)

The Last Clean Cup

Every year, in honor of Passover, members of the ***Baal Shem Tov***'s household purchased a large quantity of new cups to be used for the duration of the holiday. Of course, the glasses that were to be used would first be immersed in a *mikvah*, following Jewish law.

The glasses came in a variety of shapes and sizes. And in classic Jewish legal sources, there is a system for measuring liquids, with specific names for the various amounts. In the Baal Shem Tov's home, the glasses were referred to by the Jewish name for the amount of liquid they were able to contain. Thus, a glass that contained 3-4 ounces was called a *revi'tit* glass, etc.

Before Passover, the Baal Shem Tov would look through the glasses and instruct which cups could be set upon the table and which should be set aside. He provided no reasons for his directives, but everyone understood that his reasoning was a product of his exalted spiritual level.

Thus passed the first seven days of Passover.

Then, the final meal on Passover,¹ known as "Moshiach's meal," was special. It was open to the public; everyone who passed through the sage's door was free to enter and partake of the festivities.

One year, before Moshiach's meal began, the Baal Shem Tov instructed that a certain cup be removed from the table because it had not been immersed. After, during the meal, a newcomer entered and asked for some wine. "Sorry," he was told, "but there are no more clean cups."

"What do you mean?" he asked with surprise, pointing to the cup that had been set aside. "I see a clean cup right over here that no one is using!"

¹ At the end of the 7th day in Israel; at the end of the appended 8th day outside of Israel.

“Oh,” he was told, “that cup has not been immersed in the mikvah and must not be used.”

“It doesn’t matter,” he replied dismissively, reaching for the cup.

At that point, the Baal Shem Tov, who had been silent until this point, interrupted. “He just testified about himself,” he declared in a sad tone.

The words were mysterious to everyone aside from the man himself. Hearing the rebbe’s caring words of rebuke, he admitted his shortcoming. It was true. He and his wife were not particular about the laws of family purity, which require a previously menstruant woman to immerse in a mikvah before being intimate with her husband.

Inspired by this revelation of the Baal Shem Tov’s extraordinary holiness, the couple resolved to mend their ways.

~~~~~

*Source:* Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the translation on *Chabad.org*, based on the writings & talks of **Rabbi Yosef-Yitzchak Schneersohn**, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, as printed in *Sefer Hasichot*, 5702.

*Biographical note:*

**Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer** [of blessed memory: 18 Elul 5458 - 6 Sivan 5520 (Aug. 1698 - May 1760 C.E.)], **the Baal Shem Tov** [“Master of the Good Name”—often referred to as “the *Besht*” for short], a unique and seminal figure in Jewish history, revealed his identity as an exceptionally holy person, on his 36th birthday, 18 Elul 5494 (1734 C.E.), and made the until-then underground Chasidic movement public. He wrote no books, although many works claim to contain his teachings. One available in English is the excellent annotated translation of *Tzava'at Harivash*, published by Kehos.

*Connection* – seasonal: Preparations for Passover.