

Getting Down From Scrubbing? – Nissan #1

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Now that Nissan has arrived, it's time to talk about Pesach cleaning. Although the halachic sources applaud the great care that the Jewish people take in preparing for Pesach—going above and beyond the strict letter of the law—many do feel overwhelmed (or just plain worried) about how they will manage the job. Most are even busier than usual without factoring in the cleaning. How can we do a truly thorough Pesach clearing with a clear head that is filled with joyous thoughts? Do we have to feel burdened by the task? How can we free ourselves of such a negative attitude, which is the antithesis of joy?

For me the answer lies in a teaching of Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, z"l, that Reb Levi Yitzchak Bender would recount.

"It was time to blow the *shofar* on Rosh Hashanah and Rav Levi Yitzchak gave the congregation an inspiring talk to inspire them to *teshuvah*. 'How can we find merit to propel our *tekiyot* (shofar blasts) on High? The only thing I can think of, here and now, on Rosh Hashanah is the intense cleaning done by Jewish women in preparation for Pesach. They scrubbed and cleaned, removed and koshered any *chametz* in their domain. The initials of the words in Yiddish for these labors form *tashrak*, which is also the acronym of all four sounds of the *shofar*—*tekiyah*, *shevarim*, *teruah*, *tekiyah*. It is only in their merit that our *tekiyot* will ascend on High, sweetening the judgments for the coming year!' With that, the Berditchever initiated the *shofar* blowing."

This story never fails to fill me with gratitude for the opportunity offered by this special time. The challenge lies in remembering just how precious every bit of effort is as I bring in Pesach.

*Dear G-d, as we begin the month of Nissan
help me to remember that even my most mundane acts
preparing for the festival
are filled with spiritual value and light.
(Siach Sarfei Kodesh VI:561)*

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