

Reb Noson's Pesach Cleaning

written by Chaim Kramer
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In 1834, a ruthless and unrelenting campaign was begun against Reb Noson to prevent him from spreading Rebbe Nachman's teachings. His opponents slandered him to the government and he had to flee Breslov.

When he was allowed to return, his opponents tried a different tactic. An army unit was stationed in Breslov and the authorities sought a large room in which to make and repair soldiers' boots. His opponents let the authorities know that Reb Noson had several large rooms, and with the aid of a "small gift," the boot factory was installed in Reb Noson's house – complete with piles of hides and a team of non-Jewish workers who worked and ate their meals there every day, including Shabbos.

The night before Pesach, when the time came to search for

chametz, the non-Jews were still at work. Reb Noson recited the blessing with his usual intensity, having in mind this time that just as the *chametz* must be removed, so should the boot factory. Then he went around with his candle searching for *chametz*.

The workers were so awed by Reb Noson's blessing that they told him to search wherever he wanted and not think of them at all. By then, the few Breslovers with influence in the town had been able to convince the authorities to relocate the boot factory. The following day, Erev Pesach, at noon, the factory was removed. Immediately a few people were hired to help Reb Noson clean the house and get it ready for Pesach.

That night during the Seder, Reb Noson recited the Haggadah with great fervor. During the meal, his family started talking about their sufferings and how happy they were to be rid of the boot factory. Then they spoke against their opponents.

This upset Reb Noson. He said, "This is such a great and awesome time. After all the effort every Jew has put into his Pesach preparations, after all the money we have spent to honor Pesach, after all our longing to perform the mitzvot of Pesach, it is absolutely forbidden to talk against them. They are our brothers. Eventually they will be rectified. We ourselves will have to seek remedies for them!"

After the meal, Reb Noson completed the Seder with a deeply inspiring melody.

From "Through Fire and Water"