

# Wiping the Slate Clean

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To an outside observer, the ferocity of the opponents of Breslover Chasidim ? and especially of Reb Noson ? is hard to fathom. As one person put it, ?So they decided not to take a new rebbe after Rebbe Nachman passed away. Why did that warrant being attacked and treated like the worst criminals??

Reb Noson was actually forced to flee his home and wander around for most of the winter of 1865. He returned home just before Rosh Chodesh Nisan. His opponents worked overtime to ensure that Reb Noson had no peace of mind even after his return, bribing the authorities to set up a military boot factory in Reb Noson?s own home. Non-Jewish workers filled the main room with foul-smelling hides and also ate their meals there, making it impossible to clean for Pesach.

The night before Pesach, Reb Noson made the blessing over the

search for *chametz*, having in mind this time that just as the *chametz* must be removed, so should the boot factory. The next day, his supporters finally convinced the authorities to remove the factory, and the workers packed up and left. People were hired to get the house ready for the holiday.

That night, Reb Noson conducted the *Seder* with his usual enthusiasm, serenity and joy. During the meal, his family began to talk about the hardships they had endured that winter, with the head of their family absent from their lives.

Then they began speaking about the wickedness of his opponents. Reb Noson stopped them, saying: "It is now *Seder* night. The Jewish people worked so hard to prepare for this special night." He enumerated every aspect of preparation one must make for the holiday and added, "All this they do solely for the honor of Pesach. Clearly, it is forbidden to speak ill of any Jew.

"Let us instead consider how much pleasure God takes in every effort that each of His children make in honor of this precious holiday. Think how important every Jew is, that our every effort is so special; our work and every extra penny that we spend affects all the worlds."

In this manner, Reb Noson helped his family let go of their resentments and open their hearts to the illumination that descends on this special night.

*Based on Shaarey Tzaddik III, 158-159*