



# QUOTH THE MAVEN

BY BEVERLY KING POLLOCK

## Balebosteh Maven

Yesterday my neighbor came over to borrow a cup of sugar. She opened the door, tripped over some shoes, stumbled into a suitcase, bumped into a roller skate and dropped into a kitchen chair.

It was then she spied (next to the mound of dirty dishes) my freshly polished copper-clad stainless steel double boiler on the stove. "Gosh," she said, "Everything sparkles so here. You're a real balebosteh."

Heaven knows I try to feign certain talents. But balebosteh -- I never dreamed! And simply because I like shiny copper!

Thus quoth the Maven: Just as there are varying degrees of perfection and idealism, so there are differing conceptions or judgments of balebostehs.

Now you may ask: what constitutes a balebosteh?

A balebosteh is a vision of uncompromising genius -- in the eyes of the beholder. (Note: beholder -- a neighbor or in-law who makes unannounced spot checks on your household.) Therefore know the pre-requisites (or meshugala) of your beholder and presto! You're a balebosteh!

Tante Bloomeh insists a balebosteh is one who always keeps her electric can opener clean. And I keep a new cutting blade handy in her honor. But to her, spots on the silverware don't count.

The kind of balebosteh you specialize in depends primarily on your "conditioning". In the early days of my marriage, my father-in-law was a closet-and-drawers inspector. And to this day I won't hide stuff in closets. (Instead I pile junk on dressers and desks for the whole world to see and say "Tsk".)

My neighbor thinks I'm compulsive because I wring out dresser drawers twice a year. Never does she dream she's a sweeper balebosteh. There's nary a thread on her carpets, day or night.

Environment also plays a vital role in the category of balebosteh you select. In a small community with no large Jewish bakery nearby, you are forced to become a decent cook.

My husband never complains, "Some Balebosteh!" when it comes to meals. Only when it comes to snacks.

Whenever he opens the refrigerator he yells "Hello" to see if there is an echo. And if the teenagers got there first, he proclaims to the fates that he could get pneumonia just from looking. Or blinded from "the little silver foil things that keep winking at me".

He opens each carefully wrapped parcel and calls out for all the neighbors to hear: "two French fries, one string bean, 1/2 sardine, dog food I think..."

A word of warning: one time my husband said, "I don't know how it is in running a house. But in MY business, if I don't have a good selection, the customer goes elsewhere. (Note: an A plus balebosteh rating in "snacks" is vital for survival.)

Which brings us to the moral of the story: Choose and adopt the proper facade, and you can convince anybody you're a balebosteh.

Except your mother. (P.S. Momma, I made a little joke. Honest, Momma. I defrosted the refrigerator, the stove has absolutely no burned crust inside and out, and we eat three big meals a day at least. Your bubbelahs are fine kain ein horeh, and I'm teaching the girls to be a good balebosteh like me. I mean like you.)

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## RABBINATE ELECTIONS DELAYED

JERUSALEM (WNS) --The election of Israel's chief rabbinate may be delayed because of the objections of Defense Minister Moshe Dayan to the provisions of a rabbinical election bill prepared by the Ministry for Religious Affairs and the Ministry

of Justice.

Israel's chief rabbis, Ashkenazic (East European) and Sephardic (Oriental) are elected by delegates selected by the religious councils in each township.

Gen. Dayan has stated he believes there is no longer any need for two chief rabbis in Israel. Sephardic circles insist on the dual rabbinate because they fear that otherwise the Ashkenazic rabbis would take over all rabbinical institutions.



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