

WAY
BACK
WHEN

The Greatest Aspirin Of All: A Glesele Tay

BY VERA MILLER



If you had a sore throat . . . Ma gave you a *glesele tay*.

If you were too tired to finish your homework . . . Ma gave you a *glesele tay*.

If you had an emotional problem . . . a *glesele tay*.

In a restaurant the other day, I asked for tea. I was served a cold cup and saucer partnered with a white paper krepl filled with tea bits to which was attached a parachute rip cord.

I picked up the square by the little rip cord, opened the hatch of the pewter bathysphere and immersed the shocked-white paper krepl in its tepid bath.

Then I poured out the pale liquid into the cup and added the contents of another little imprinted white tissue krepl which imprisoned granules of sugar.

Remember way back when—tea drinking was a ceremony—a solver of problems—tradition?

THE RITUAL

First, glasses were put to the table. Saucers were thick and usually crazed from years of use. The box of tea was put on the back of the stove. The kettle was filled with cold water and put on. The rococo spoons from the cut glass container were passed around.

On the table was mondel bread and some kichels. Also, the cut glass dish filled with sugar cubes and the bowl from the china cabinet into which was scooped thick home-made strawberry or cherry preserves.

When the kettle started to emit a stream of steam, the boiling water was swished around in the *tchainik*, tea spooned into its steaming innards and the kettle returned to the stove to steam up the wall behind it.

The tea was let steep; a piece of turkish towel put over the entire tea pot and brought to the table. How many times have you tried pouring water in a glass container, only to hear . . . c-r-r-ack!

Remember when Ma did it? Day after day. She'd put the silver spoon or knife into the glass and poured into it the boiling water from the *tchainik*. Occasional breakage had a scientific explanation: "Moishe shuckled the table and it didn't pour even."

You could have tea with lemon, tea with jelly; and for the children—always tea with "a drop milk," but you always had tea with a sugar cube. No manual ever pictured tea drinking instructions as they varied from one household to another.

First you let the brewed tea roll over the teaspoon to inspect the color. Hold glass firmly in curved palm using little finger for balance. Brace index finger to project glass

to tip forward. As downward motion increases glass is tilted to 90 degree angle.

Hold bottom of glass slightly above saucer rim and pour small amount of tea into saucer. Roll saucer in a counter-clockwise motion; place hands around saucer with thumb and index finger exerting force of balance with little finger directly on bottom of saucer. The fourth finger will serve as intake guide.

WON'T YOU WRITE?

As this column is a new addition in The Sentinel, we would appreciate hearing from readers whether they like it or not. What would you like to see included? We'd be happy to hear.

Place cube of sugar between front teeth. When all liquid has been absorbed, return glass to saucer. Then select thick quarter slice of lemon to be squeezed and scraped against side of glass. Note: do not remove seeds before squeezing lemon into glass.

Adding preserves—With quick motion dip spoon into bowl of preserves. Bring quickly to glass and tip spoon so that preserves float slowly down. (Remember: it's not fair to *mish* with the spoon until entire contents of spoon are drained into glass and all the seeds settle on bottom of glass.

NOW IT'S READY

Now—now immerse spoon and stir. As you "steer" the tea, all the strawberry seeds will cavort about gaily. Now—tea is ready to drink. However . . . you must place a sugar cube between the front teeth over which and through the amber liquid must filter.

Remember how the kids' arguments were amicably settled while Ma stood up against the stove; listening and finishing her tea? . . . or the *glesele tay* shared by the family in the glow of the Shabbos candles when the *bucher* made his momentous announcement concerning his *finanee* and the forthcoming marriage plans?

Shabbos dinner over? Make a *chinek tay*. With a drop milk for the *kinder*.