

Halachos of the Month of Nissan

1. Chodesh Nissan

- 1.1) Thirty days before *Pesach* one should start to learn the *halachos* of *Pesach*.
- 1.2) Funds are raised in each community to provide *Pesach* needs for the poor (this collection is called "*Ma'aos Chitin*" or "*Kimcha D'Pischah*"). Everyone should contribute to the community that they live in throughout the year. *Maser* money may be used.
- 1.3) Fasting is prohibited throughout *Chodesh Nissan*, even on the *Yahrtzeit* of a parent (except *Ta'nis Bechoros* on *Erev Pesach*). It is permitted to visit a cemetery.
- 1.4) *Tachnun*, *Av Harachamim*, *Tzidkascha* and יהי רצון on Monday and Thursday after *Krias Hatorah* are not recited throughout *Nissan*.
- 1.5) There is a *minhag* to read the *Parsha* of the *Nesi'im* after *davening* from a *Sefer Torah*. This is done without calling anyone up for the *Aliya* and *brachos* are not recited on the *leigning*. Some have the *minhag* to just read this from a *chumash*.
- 1.6) Many people refrain from eating *matzah* from *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* until *Pesach* (some even stop eating *matzah* from *Purim*).
- 1.7) Starting from *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*, when one sees the blossoming of a fruit tree, he recites the *bracha* "שלא חסר בעולמו דבר וברא בו בריות טובות ואילנות טובים להנות בהם בני אדם". This *bracha* is only said once a year.
- 1.8) The *Shabbos* before *Pesach* is called "*Shabbos Hagadol*". Some have the *minhag* to say part of the *Haggadah* after *Mincha* on *Shabbos* afternoon¹. There is usually a *shuir* given on this *Shabbos* on the *Halachos* of *Pesach*.

2. Bedikas Chametz

- 2.1) The night before *Erev Pesach* is the night of *Bedikas Chametz*². The search for *chametz* should take place in the very beginning of the night, at צאת הכוכבים.
- 2.2) From a half hour before the time of the *bedikah* arrives, one may not engage in any work. Beginning a meal during this time is also prohibited. However eating fruit, vegetables, meat, cheese, cereal, etc. is permissible, as long as a meal is not made of it. Drinking is permissible.
- 2.3) Learning *Torah* is permitted in the half hour before the *bedikah*, however once the time of the *bedika* arrives it is prohibited (even if he started learning earlier in the day).
- 2.4) Some have the custom to *daven Mariv* before doing the *bedikah*.
- 2.5) Before the actual *bedikah*, all rooms which require *bedikah* must be cleaned, and all *chometz* must be put away in a secure place.
- 2.6) Many have the *minhag* to place ten pieces of bread around the house. Each piece should be less than a *k'zais*, and caution should be taken not to lose or misplace them.
- 2.7) When searching for the *chometz* one should use whatever light helps him search best, whether that is a flashlight, turning on the lights in the room, or a candle.
- 2.8) Before beginning the *bedikah*, wash hands and recite the *bracha* "אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על ביעור חמץ".
- 2.9) One should not speak words that do not pertain to the *bedikah* the entire time that *chametz* is being searched for. If one did speak throughout the *bedikah* he is not

¹ רמ"א סי' ת"ל ועי"ש בביה"ל משי"כ בשם הגר"א.

² אבל כשערב פסח חל בשבת אז בדיקת חמץ היא בליל חמישי.

required to do anything again. However if he spoke between the *bracha* and the beginning of the *bedikah* he is required to repeat the *bracha*³.

2.10) Any room that *chometz* may have been brought into it throughout the year requires *bedikah*.

2.11) The purpose of the *bedikah* is to make sure that the cleaning was done properly and that all *chometz* was put away.

2.12) After the *bedikah* one should be very careful to safely put away the *chometz* that has been found (in order not to have to do another *bedikah*).

2.13) Right after the *bedikah* one should be *Me'vatel* the *chometz*. The *bittul* should be said in a language that he understands.

3. *Erev Pesach*

3.1) On *Erev Pesach*, firstborns are supposed fast to remember that they were saved while the Egyptian firstborns were killed. The current *minhag* is for the *bechorim* to partake in a *siyum* which permits them to eat on this day.

3.2) When the firstborn son is still a child, it is incumbent upon the father to fast (or partake in a *siyum*) in his stead.

3.3) At *shachris* לתודה מזמור and למנצח are not said.

3.4) *Chometz* can only be eaten until the end of forth *halachik* hour of the day. By the end of the fifth *halachik* hour of the day all *chometz* must be burned or out of one's possession, for from the beginning of the sixth *halachik* hour it is prohibited to have any benefit from *chometz* (check a calendar to find the exact times).

3.5) The burning of the *chometz* is done on *Erev Pesach*. One should ensure that his *chometz* was burned thoroughly.

3.6) Right after the *chometz* is burned; another *bittul* of *chometz* is done.

3.7) There is a *minhag* to bake *matzah* (to be used at the *Seder*) on *Erev Pesach* after *chatzos*, to remember that this was the time that the *Korban Pesach* was brought.

3.8) From midday of *Erev Pesach* it is prohibited in doing any work that is not allowed on *Chol Hamoed* (a non-Jew, however, may do the work for you).

3.9) Haircuts, shaving, and cutting nails should be finished before noon. If one forgot to do so, he still may cut nails after *chatzos*, but haircuts and shaving are not permitted (unless he finds a non-Jew to do it for him).

3.10) From after the *zman* for *mincha* it is proper to recite "סדר קרבן פסח" found in the *machzor*.

3.11) It is forbidden to eat *matzah* on *Erev Pesach*, this includes serving it to children. Egg *matzah* may be eaten until the end of the fourth *halachik* hour of the day⁴. Those who eat *gebrukts* may eat food that is cooked with kosher for *Pesach matzah* meal⁵ (i.e. *kneidlach*). However, foods baked with *matzah* meal may not be eaten.

3.12) From the tenth *halachik* hour of the day only fruit, meat, fish, eggs, and vegetables are permitted to be eaten. These foods should only be eaten in small amounts in order to preserve one's appetite for the *matzah*.

³ סימן תל"ב סעי' א' "ויזוהר שלא ידבר בין הברכה לתלחת הבדיקה, וטוב שלא ידבר בדברים אחרים עד שיגמור כל הבדיקה וכו." וע' במשנ"ב ס"ק ה' "ויזוהר שלא ידבר, ובדיעבד אם שח בדברים שאין צרך הבדיקה יחזר ויברך דהפסיק בין ברכה לבדיקה." משמע שאם בהפסיק בדברים שיש בהם צרך הבדיקה שאינו מחויב לחזור וליברך. אבל מ"מ לכת' לא ידבר כלום בין הברכה לבדיקה. אבל אחר שכבר התחיל הבדיקה לכת' יוכל לדבר בדברים השייכים להבדיקה כמבואר במשנ"ב שם ס"ק ו'.

⁴ דאסור לאכול מצה עשירה משעה שהתחיל איסור אכילת חמץ, ע' אגר"מ או"ח א' ס' קנ"ה.

⁵ ורק מותר לאכול אותם עד שעה עשירית כמבואר בהמשך.