



פסח

קיצור קובץ הלכות
חודש ניסן ופסח
וספירת העומר

A Short Compilation of
the Halachos and Minhagim of
Chodesh Nissan and Pesach

ניסן תשע"ט / Nissan 5779-2019

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The purpose of this booklet is to act as a refresher for the many halachos and minhagim that come up throughout the month of Nissan.

This booklet was put together and organized from the Halacha sheets that the Rav hands out in Shul on Shabbos. Please clarify anything that seems unclear and point out any mistakes so that they can be fixed for the next year.

בברכת חג כשר ושמח

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SECTION ONE

Halachos of the Month of Nissan

1. *Chodesh Nissan*

1.1) Thirty days before *Pesach*, one should start learning 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 most of the year. *Maaser* money may be used.

1.3) Fasting is prohibited throughout *Chodesh Nissan*, even on the *Yahrtzeit* of a parent (except *Ta’anis Bechoros* on *Erev Pesach*). It is permitted to visit a cemetery.

1.4) *Tachanun*, *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 *Shacharis* from a *Sefer Torah* starting from *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* until *Pesach*. This is done without calling anyone up for the *Aliya*, and *brachos* are not recited on the *leining*. Some have the *minhag* to just read this section from a *chumash*.

1.6) Many people refrain from eating *matzah* from *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* until *Pesach*. (Some stop eating *matzah* even 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*.” During this Shabbos, a Rav usually gives a *shiur* on the *Halachos of Pesach*. Some have the *minhag* to say part of the *Haggadah* after *mincha* on Shabbos afternoon.¹

2. *Bedikas Chametz*

2.1) The night before *Erev Pesach* is the night of *Bedikas Chametz*². The purpose of the *bedika* is to make sure that the *Pesach* cleaning was done properly and that all *chometz* was put away.

2.2) The search for *chametz* should take place in the very beginning of the night, at *צאת הכוכבים*.

2.3) From a half hour before *צאת הכוכבים*, one may not engage in any work. Starting 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.

2.4) Learning *Torah* is permitted in the half hour before the *bedika*; however, once the time of the *bedika* arrives, it is prohibited (even if one started learning earlier in the day).

2.5) Some have the custom to *daven Maariv* before performing the *bedika*.

¹ רמ"א ס' ת"ל ועיי"ש בביה"ל מש"כ בשם הגר"א.

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

2.6) Before the actual *bedika*, all rooms which require *bedika* must be cleaned, and all *chametz* must be put away in a secure place.

2.7) 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.

2.8) When searching for the *chometz*, one should use whatever light helps him search best— whether it is a flashlight, the lights in the room, or a candle, one is not better than the other.

2.9) Before beginning the *bedika*, one should wash his hands and recite the *bracha* "אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על ביעור חמץ".

2.10) Any room into which *chometz* may have been brought throughout the year requires *bedika*.

2.11) One should not speak words that do not pertain to the *bedika* the entire time he is searching for the *chametz*. If one did speak throughout the *bedika*, he is not required to repeat anything. However, if he spoke between the *bracha* and the beginning of the *bedika*, he is required to repeat the *bracha*.³

2.12) Right after the *bedika*, one should be *Me'vatel* the *chometz*. The *bittul* should be said in a language that one understands (refer to a *siddur* for exact text of the *bittul*).

³ סימן תל"ב סע' א' "ויזהר שלא ידבר בין הברכה לתלחת הבדיקה, וטוב שלא ידבר בדברים אחרים עד שיגמור כל הבדיקה וכו'. "וע' במשנ"ב ס"ק ה' "ויזהר שלא ידבר, ובדיעבד אם שח בדברים שאין צורך הבדיקה יחזור ויברך דהפסיק בין ברכה לבדיקה." משמע שאם הפסיק בדברים שיש בהם צורך הבדיקה אז אינו מחויב לחזור וליברך. אבל מ"מ לכת' לא ידבר כלום בין הברכה לבדיקה. אבל אחר שכבר התחיל הבדיקה לכת' יכול לדבר בדברים השייכים להבדיקה כמבאר במשנ"ב שם ס"ק ו'.

2.13) After the *bedika*, one should be very careful to safely put away the *chometz* that has been found (in order to prevent one requiring another *bedikah*).

2.14) One who is by parents or in-laws should be *yotzei* in their parent's or in-law's *bracha* and then they should check their room suitcase and car. (There is no need to rent a room from parents or in-laws).

3. Erev Pesach

3.1) On *Erev Pesach*, firstborns must fast in order 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 *shacharis*, *מזמור לתורה* and *למנוחה* are not said.

3.4) *Chometz* can only be eaten until the end of the fourth *halachic* hour of the day. By the end of the fifth *halachic* hour of the day, all *chometz* must be burned or out of one's possession. From the beginning of the sixth *halachic* 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 thoroughly burned.

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 the *Korban Pesach* was brought.

3.8) From midday of *Erev Pesach*, it is prohibited to do 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 his nails after *chatzos*, but haircuts are not permitted (unless one finds a non-Jew to do it for him). If one did not shave before *chatzos* one can be lenient and shave.

3.10) From after the *zman* for *minchah*, it is appropriate 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 *halachic* hour of the day⁴. Those who eat *gebrukts* may eat food **cooked** with kosher *l'Pesach matzah* meal⁵ (i.e. *kneidlach*). However, foods **baked** with *matzah* meal may not be eaten.

3.12) From the tenth *halachic* 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 save one's appetite for the *matzah*.

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.

SECTION TWO

Guidelines for Preparing and Cleaning for Pesach

1. The Mindset When Cleaning for Pesach

The goal of preparing for *Pesach* is to be able to go into *Pesach* feeling happy and excited that this amazing *Yom Tov* is here. Obviously, this can be hard and stressful, but a little planning can turn it into a smooth experience. *Rav Shimshon Pincus zt"l* asks, why is the *Seder* the first night of *Yom Tov*, it should rather be in the morning, after a good night's sleep? He explains that there is no better feeling than sitting down at the *Seder* and saying to oneself, I worked so hard to please *Hashem* look how worn out I am! This is the thought that we need to keep in our minds throughout our preparations, we are doing this to please *Hashem*.

When people used to live in one room apartments it was feasible to scrub the walls in order to remove every speck of *chametz*, so that not even a *משקו* was left. However, nowadays, we have larger apartments or even houses and many appliances. To start scrubbing everything down is just going to tire ourselves out, causing us not to enjoy the *Seder* and ultimately it will impact our entire *Pesach*.

2. *The Focus of the Cleaning*

Besides the prohibition of eating or benefiting from the *chametz* on *Pesach*, it is also *assur* to own *chametz*. This *issur* only applies to pieces of *chametz* the size of a *k'zayis* (approximately the size of a small match box) and this must be disposed of. Although *chametz* smaller than a *k'zayis*, is not included in the *issur* of owning *chametz* on *Pesach*, there is a *חשש* that one may come to eat this *chometz* by mistake (the *issur* of eating *chometz* includes even eating a *משהו*) therefore this too needs to be gotten rid of. For example, even one cheerio, a small piece of a cookie or pretzel needs to be thrown out before *Yom Tov*. However, since the *issur* on less than a *k'zayis* is only a suspicion of mistakenly coming to eat the *chametz*, this only applies to *chametz* that will be eaten. **Any *chametz* that will not be eaten because it is dirty should not be a focus in the cleaning for *Pesach*. Crumbs are not *חשוב* and therefore they are automatically *battel*, and there is no need to search for them or to focus on them while cleaning.**

The focus of the cleaning should be Getting rid of the *chometz* that is prohibited to have around over *Pesach* . Therefore, only places that *chometz* might have been brought into and will be used on *Pesach* must be cleaned. (As a suggestion, if a woman decides to do spring cleaning and wants to involve her husband, do not call this *Pesach* cleaning, rather refer to it as spring cleaning.)

During and after cleaning, check, using light that there is no *chometz* in that area. The *bedikah* the night before *Pesach* should be only after all the cleaning was finished. The purpose of this *bedikah* is to ensure that all areas were cleaned and any *chometz* that mistakenly left out be put away.

3. Guidelines for General Areas of the House

the following is a concise guideline of how to clean every area in the house:

1. Any place where *chometz* may be stuck to it, like **chairs, tables, or a couch**; take a wet cloth with any cleaning agent (**any soap is fine, there is no need for bleach**) and wipe them down. This will make whatever may be stuck to them not edible/inedible, and then we are not worried about someone coming to eat it by mistake. It is unnecessary to take these things apart.

2. There is no need to clean *seforim* and **books**, since no one is eating the crumbs that are left in them. However, it is suggested to check any *sefer* or book that one plans to bring to the table. Additionally, one can put a cover on the table and place the *seforim* on it, so that no crumbs end up in the food. **Bentchers** used throughout the year should be put away for *Pesach*.

3. As long as **clothing** was washed with detergent, no checking of the clothing is required. A **coat pocket** or

children's coat that has **not** been washed (assuming that it is likely that *chametz* has been put there throughout the year) should be checked for *chametz* before *Pesach*.

4. The kitchen and dining room **table** should be washed well with **soap (not bleach)**. The table should then be covered with any type of cover (even a plastic table cloth). Put the tablecloth directly on top of this cover (there is no need to *kasher* tables).

5. Lower **shelves of clothing closets that can be reached by children** holding food should be emptied and washed down once. The higher shelves do not need cleaning.

4. The Kitchen

The kitchen is the most important room to clean in the house. We are extra concerned that there should not be any *chometz* around, since it is the place where the *Pesach* food will be prepared and if even a slight amount of *chametz* is mistakenly eaten, we have transgressed the *issur* of eating *chometz* on *Pesach*.

1. Towels, oven mitts and tablecloths that were used with *chametz* should be washed with detergent and then may be used for *Pesach*. It is unnecessary to use separate ones for *Pesach*.

2. Empty the **pantry shelves** and clean them well (there is no need to cover them).

3. There are different types of Kitchen Counter tops. Some can be *kashered* by cleaning them well with soap and water, then when dry pouring boiling water on it (and then they can be used uncovered). However, the best option for **all** counter tops is to clean them well with **soap and water** (not to *kasher*) and cover them.

4. Clean the **backsplash** well. If after one cleaned it well there still is a chance of food or condensed liquids falling then cover it.

5. The **refrigerator** and **freezer** usually have spills and crumbs. They should be cleaned **very well** with soap and water (**not bleach**), especially if the shelves are made of glass. It is not necessary to cover the shelves (unless it was hard to clean well).

6. One who has a **sink** that is porcelain or enamel sink One should use a **sink insert**. However, a stainless-steel sink may be *kashered*. The way to *kasher* a sink is as follows: The sink should not be used with hot water and hot food should not be placed in the sink for 24 hours before *kashering* (cold is not a problem). After this 24-hour period, boil water. While it is bubbling, pour onto the sink. Most likely it will take 2 or 3 times to get all parts of the sink. Make sure to **dry the sink completely** in between each time that you pour the boiling water (so that the cold water will not cool off the boiling water and **invalidate** the *kashering*).

7. There is no need to cover the **faucet**, just turn on the hot water from the faucet and pour hot water on it while it is running.

8. Clean the floor/surface of the **stovetop** well and cover with thick aluminum foil (a metal stovetop may be *kashered* and then there would be no need to cover with aluminum foil). The **burners** and **grates** may be *kashered* with a *blech*, for the fire will probably burn off anything stuck to them. This is done as follows: Clean them beforehand, then turn on 3 flames and cover with the *blech*. Leave on for 10 minutes. The *blech* will probably get black and become very hot so be careful turning off the fire. Many people like to buy new grates for *Pesach*.

9. If the **oven** has self-clean use the self-clean mode to *kasher* the oven (the grates and burners from the stove top can be put in there as well in order to *kasher* them). In regards to non-self-cleaning ovens, there is discussion among the *Poskim* if they may be *kashered*. Many *poskim* suggest that one buy a convection oven (or the likes) instead of *kashering* the regular oven⁶. However, some *poskim* hold that there is a way to *kasher* this type of oven: clean the oven well (whatever is burnt to the oven is burnt, and there is no need to worry about it) then turn the oven on to the highest temperature for half an hour. The **racks** in the oven must be *kashered* by ליבון with a torch or using the *blech* like above. It may be more practical to just buy new ones.

10. Clean **hotplates** well with soap and water and cover with thick foil.

11. We do not *kasher* **microwaves** for *Pesach*.

⁶ כן החמיר הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל.

5. Objects around the house

1. There is no need to *kasher* **rings**, however if possible don't wear them a day before *Pesach* (or at least avoid contact with hot *chametz*).
2. Clean the **computer** well using spray.
3. Being that children put **toys** in their mouths they should be washed with soap and water (**no need for bleach**). Or just buy new ones for *Pesach*.
4. A **highchair, car seat, stroller and their trays** should be washed well, making sure to clean every spot. Nothing needs to be covered
5. If possible, it is better to get new **bottles** and **sippy cups** since it goes into the baby's mouth (however, if they were used with cold liquids only it is not necessary to get new ones).
6. It is also best to buy a new **pacifier** if possible, though *kashering* is also an option.

6. Ha'galas Keilim

During the year, it is not so common to *kasher* utensils. However, it is more widespread to *kasher keilim* for *Pesach*. It is better to buy new utensils, but each person should only do what they can afford.

1. The way to do *Ha'galas Keilim* is as follows: It is best to not use the *keilim* for hot drinks or hot food 24 hours

before *kashering*. Clean the utensils well (this can be done before or after the 24-hour period). Then, fill a pot of water and place it on the fire. When the water is bubbling (boiling) put the utensil into the water. The *minhag* is to then rinse the *keilim* with cold water. When *kashering* several *keilim* (one after another) make sure that the water is still boiling/bubbling between each *keili*. It is permissible to dip half of the utensil in the boiling water, and then the other half (only by טבילת כלים must the whole piece be submerged at once).

2. *Ha'galas Keilim* is the way to *kasher* metal utensils. **Keilim made from glass or plastic cannot be kashered for Pesach**⁷. Neither can china dishes. *Askenazim* generally do not *kasher* glass dishes.⁸

3. Anything that was used on the *Shabbos* table (like a **silver kiddush cup** or **wine decanter** made of metal) even though it was only used with cold things the *minhag* nonetheless is to *kasher* it through *Ha'galas Keilim*.

4. Things that were on the *Shabbos table* but are not eaten from (i.e. **candlestick trays, vases, etc.**) do not require any *kashering*. However, they should be cleaned before using on *Pesach*.

5. Some utensils require a more stringent way of *kashering* called ליבון which is *kashering* with an actual fire. The general rule is that utensils that were used with fire must be *kashered*

⁷ כן היא שיטת הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל.

⁸ במקום שיש צורך, יש לשאול שאילת רב.

with fire (i.e. a **grill**). If one wants to *kasher* a **non-coated frying pan**, it is good to find someplace that has a blowtorch available.

7. Medicines & Cosmetics

1. Medicines in the form of pills and capsules do not present any issue of *chometz* on *Pesach* (even though there are many lists compiled on the matter).

2. Syrups, especially those for children with a sweet taste, should preferably have a good *hechsher* for *Pesach*. Please note, that sometimes it is just an issue of *kitniyos* and one can be lenient, a *Rav* should be consulted.

3. Ointments and creams are bitter tasting and therefore not an issue.

4. Body soaps and shampoos do not require a special *hechsher* for *Pesach*.

5. It is preferable to buy **toothpaste, mouthwash**, and other such items that go into the mouth that have a good *hechsher* for *Pesach*.

6. There is no need for **makeup or perfume, body spray, cologne, and aftershave** to have a *hechsher* for *Pesach*. A new **lipstick/chapstick** should be used for *Pesach*.

8. Conclusion

Remember, everything only needs to be cleaned once. Cleaning tends to be somewhat of a *טייקהא* and can cost a lot of

money. However, great reward comes along with it, even in this world.

SECTION THREE

Introduction to the Halachos of the Seder

The Jewish People are made up of so many different stripes and colors. *Sefardim*, *Ashkanizim*, *Chasidic*, and *Litvish* are just general categories that our nation is divided into. The subcategories are endless. Each sect carries with it countless sacred *minhagim*.

The night of the *Seder* is the crowning moment of the whole year, a night that we bask in the knowledge that we are the chosen people. And on this night, more so than any other, the *halachos* are complex and the amount of *minhagim* are staggering.

The purpose of these sheets is not to tell people what to do; rather it is here to act as a guide and an aid. To show what is *Halacha*, and where one must clarify his own personal *minhag*.

Minhagim are precious, they are our link to the previous generations, and they should never be placed aside. May this year we be *zoche* to fulfill even more *halachos*; those of the *Korban Pesach*.

Halachos of the Seder

Part 1

1. *General Minhagim of the Seder*

1.1) One should begin the *Seder* as soon as he comes home from *Shul* so that the children will stay up as long as possible. All preparations, including setting the table and seating arrangements, should be done before *Yom Tov* begins. Similarly, one should not waste time after *Maariv*; rather he should head home immediately.

1.2) Treats should be given to the children during the *Seder* to help them stay awake.

1.3) The *Seder* table should be set with nice utensils.

1.4) There are different *minhagim* how to set the *Seder* plate. The general *minhag* is in accordance with the opinion of the *Arizal* (refer to a *Haggadah* to see the various setups).

1.5) When there are numerous people at the *Seder*, it is enough to set out just one *Seder* plate. The *Seder* plate should be placed in front of the one leading the *Seder* (i.e. the one who will give out the *matzah* and *maror* to the other people at the *Seder*).

1.6) The *minhag* is that married men wear a white *kittel* at the *Seder*. There is a difference of opinion whether one within his first year of marriage, or one who is an *avel*, wears a *kittel*. Some hold that a *chasan* does where a *kittel* while an *avel* does not.⁹

⁹ כן סבר הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל.

1.7) The *minhag* is to not wear the *kittel* in the bathroom.

1.8) Many have the *minhag* to say or sing the *simanei haseder* before beginning the *Seder*. Others say each *siman* before performing that specific *siman* (one who has this *minhag* should say the *simanim* of "רְחִצָּה, מוֹצִיא מִצָּה, מְרֹר, כּוֹרֵךְ" before washing for *hamotzi*, in order not to be מפסיק).

2. *Arbah Kosos*

2.1) One must drink the four cups of wine "*al haseder*" each in its specific place. On the first cup *Kiddush* is recited; on the second, the *Haggadah*. The third cup is said on *birchas hamazon*, and the fourth on *Hallel*.

2.2) The minimum size each cup must hold is a רביעית. Practically speaking, each cup must hold at least 2.9 fluid ounces (however, if the *Seder* falls out on *Shabbos*, then the first cup must hold a minimum of 4.4 fluid ounces).

2.3) It is best to drink most of the *revi'is* quickly like in 2 or 3 sips. However, as long as one drinks it within 3.4 minutes, he is *yotzei*.

2.4) If one's cup holds exactly a *revi'is* then one must drink most of the cup, and it is best to drink the whole cup¹⁰. Even when using a cup that holds more than a *revi'is*, it is best to drink the whole cup, or at least most of it. However as long as one drinks most of a *revi'is* of wine from the cup he is *yotzei*.

¹⁰ ובכוס רביעי יש להקפיד לשתות רביעית כדי שיוכל לברך ברכה אחרונה לכ"ע.

- 2.5)** Red wine that is not *mevushal* and that has nothing added to it is the most preferable wine to be used for the *Arba Kosos*. However, if white wine or wine that is *mevushal* is better or more desired/preffered than the other wine it should be used.
- 2.6)** There is question in the *poskim* if pouring red wine into white wine is enough to consider it red wine for this *halacha*.
- 2.7)** If one is able, he should drink wine over grape juice. However, if there is **any need**, or if it will be much easier to drink all the four *kosos*, or if grape juice is preferred then grape juice may be used for the *Arba Kosos*.¹¹
- 2.8)** Women may drink grape juice and do not need to push themselves to drink wine.
- 2.9)** Someone else should pour the wine for the leader of the *Seder*. The commonplace practice is that all people attending the *Seder* have someone else pour for them.

3. *Hesaibah, Leaning*

- 3.1)** A comfortable seat should be used at the *Seder*, in which one can recline with as much feeling of freedom as possible.
- 3.2)** *Hesaibah* must be done while drinking all of the *Arba Kosos*, and while eating the *matzah* and *Koreich* sandwich. *Hesaibah* is not done while making the *brachos*, reciting the *Haggadah*, or while eating the *maror*. Some have the custom to lean by the entire *seuda*.

¹¹ידוע שיטת הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל שיש לדחוק את עצמו לשתות יין בשביל הארבע כוסות (כל עוד שאם שתה הוא יוכל להמשיך ולגמור הסדר). אבל הרבה פוסקים חולקים וסוברים שאם רוצה במיץ ענבים יוכל לשתות. ואפי' לדעת הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל מותר למוזג היין אם מיץ ענבים או אפי' מים כל עוד שעדיין ניכר טעם יין וטעם המשתכר שבו.

3.3) *Heisaibah* is to lean both the head and body to the left side. A lefty leans to the left as well. **One must lean on something**, such as the side of a chair or pillow, and not in the air.

3.4) Most women do not lean. However, they should make sure to sit comfortably.

Halachos of the Seder

Part 2

1. *Kaddesh*

1.1) *Kiddush* must be said after dark.

1.2) One should have the following in mind before reciting *Kiddush*:

1. To fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush*.
2. That this is the first of the *Arba Kosos*.
3. This is the *bracha* on the *mitzvah* of יציאת מצרים¹².
4. To fulfill the *mitzvah* of *simchas Yom Tov*.
5. That this *bracha* should allow him to drink between this cup and the second cup.

1.2) When reciting the *bracha* of *Shechianu*, one should have in mind that the *bracha* is going on the other *mitzvos* of the *Seder* as well.

1.3) One who forgot to lean while drinking the first cup and finished all the wine in the cup, does not drink another cup of

¹²כן יש שיטות בראשונים. ונכלל בזה היא המצוה של 'והגדת לבנך'.

wine, unless he had in mind at *Kiddush* to drink between the first two cups (as noted above).

1.4) A *bracha acharona* is not said after drinking the first cup of wine.

2. *Urchatz, Karpas, & Yachatz*

2.1) After *Kaddesh* we wash our hands without making a *bracha*. Many people are careful not to speak between washing and eating the *karpas*.

2.2) Next, a piece of *Karpas* is taken and dipped in saltwater, a *bracha* is recited upon it and then eaten.

2.3) If one accidentally recited the *bracha* of “*al netilas yodayim*” after washing, he should eat a *k'zayis* of *karpas*; however, he still should not make a *bracha acharona*.

2.4) When making the *bracha* on the *karpas*. One should have in mind the *maror* that will be eaten later.

2.5) When the *Seder* falls out on *Shabbos* it is preferable to prepare the saltwater before *Yom Tov*, however if it was not prepared beforehand, the amount needed for that *Seder* may be prepared.

2.6) There are different *minhagim* as to what vegetable is used for *karpas*. Generally, it is best to use a vegetable that is served raw. However, many have the custom to eat boiled potatoes. Make sure not to use a vegetable that would be acceptable for *maror*.

2.7) The general *minhag* is to eat less than a *k'zayis* of *karpas*. There is no *bracha acharonah* after eating *karpas*.

2.8) The middle *matzah* is then broken into two pieces; the larger piece is hidden for the *Afikoman*, and the smaller piece is left on the table to be eaten later. One must ensure that the smaller piece is at least the size of a *k'zayis*.

3. *Maggid*

3.1) The *Haggadah* is recited to fulfill the mitzvah of סיפור יציאת מצרים. The *minhag* is to either remove the *Seder* plate or place it at the end of the table, in order to prompt the children to ask questions.

3.2) One should prepare the *Haggadah* and *Medrashim* before *Pesach* in a way that will make it interesting and exciting for the children.

3.3) One should try not to speak about things which are not related to the story of יציאת מצרים while reciting the *Haggadah*.

3.4) The *Haggadah* begins with the *Mah Nishtanah*, which a child present should ask. If there are no children present, one's wife should ask it, or the people at the *Seder* should ask each other. After the *Mah Nishtanah* has been said it does not need to be repeated by whoever is reading the *Haggadah* (some have the *minhag* to repeat it nonetheless).

3.5) When saying "דם ואש ותמרות עשן", the עשר מכות, and "דצ"ך "עד"ש באח"ב" the *minhag* is to pour out a little wine from one's cup. Some do this by dipping their finger into the cup and taking out some wine. There are different *minhagim* about which finger to use. Others do this by tapping the outside of the cup, causing it to spill.

3.6) It is **very** important for everyone including women to say "רבן גמליאל אומר וכו' פסה מצה מרור" and know what it means (suggestion; someone at the table should explain each one)

3.7) The second cup of wine is had at the end of *Maggid*. Drink it while leaning.

3.8) **One who forgot to lean should drink another *kos* in its stead.**

4. Rachtzah & Motzi Matzah

4.1) We wash our hands again and make the *bracha* of "*al netilas yodayim*".

4.2) If one was certain that from *Urchatz* until now he did not touch any places that are *מטמא* the hands, he should touch his shoes before washing his hands again.

4.3) A guest should try to acquire the *matzos* that he will eat from the *Ba'al Habayis* so that they will be his own.¹³ This is permitted to do on Yom Tov.

4.4) Some have the *minhag* (at the beginning of the *Seder*) to put on the table all the *matzah* that will be used so that the *Haggadah* will be said on all the *matztah* that will be eaten.¹⁴

4.5) The one reciting the *bracha* should lift all three *matzos* with his ten fingers, and say the *bracha* of *המוציא*. Then drop the bottom whole *matzah* and say the *bracha* of *על אכילת מצה*.

4.6) There are various *minhagim* on how to distribute the *matzah*. At many people's *Seder*, the leader of the *Seder* makes

¹³ כדי שיהא המצות נחשב "לכם" (ומותר לעשות כן ביו"ט עצמה כיון שהיא מצוה וגם דבר מאכל).
¹⁴ כמו שאמרינן דמצה היא לחם שעונין עליו דברים הרבה.

both *brachos* and then hands out *matzah* to everyone else after he eats¹⁵. Some have the *minhag* to give out the *matzah* to everyone before the second *bracha*, and everyone says the *bracha* of על אכילת מצה on their own. While others, put *matzos* in front of every male attendee at the *Seder*.

4.7) When saying the *bracha* of "על אכילת מצה" one should have in mind the sandwich that will be eaten shortly by *Koreich*. Therefore, one should refrain from speaking until after *Koreich*, unless it is necessary for the *mitzvah*.

4.8) The one who said the *brachos* should eat a *kzayis* from the top whole *matzah* and a *kzayis* from the broken *matzah*. The others at the table should be given a small piece of the leader's *matzah* and complete their own two *kezaysim* from other *matzahs*. There is no difference as to which one of the leader's *matzah* is given out.

4.9) In case of need one may eat only one small *k'zayis*.

4.10) Practically speaking, a small *kzayis* equals 15 grams, thus two *kezaysim* equals 30 grams which is the same amount as a large *kzayis*. 30 grams is approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ hand *matzah*, $\frac{2}{3}$ machine *matzah* 15 grams is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ hand *matzah*, $\frac{1}{3}$ machine *matzah*.

4.11) There are different opinions if one should dip the *matzah* in salt.

¹⁵ באופן שאין לכל אחד מצות בפניו בהסדר, וצריך לחלק משאר המצות (שאינן של מצוה) נכון לסדר השיעורים קודם נטילת ידים שלא יהא הפסק רב בין הנטילה וברכת בעה"ב להאכילה (רק עדיין צריך הבעה"ב לחלק התיכות ממצה שלו כדי לצאת ידי חובת לחם משנה, אבל זה לא יקח זמן רב).

4.12) Many גדולי ישראל would put a piece of *matzah* in their mouth and chew it, but didn't swallow it, until they chewed the whole *k'zayis*.

4.13) The *matzah* needs to be eaten while leaning; if one forgot to lean, he should eat another *k'zayis* of *matzah b'hesaibah*. However, if he already said *birchas hamazon*, he should not eat *matzah* again.

4.14) The *matzah* needs to be eaten "בכדי אכילת פרס" which practically means in about 3 minutes (but no longer than 9 minutes).

5. Maror, Koreich, Shulchan Orech, & Tsafun

5.1) A *k'zayis* (15 grams) of *maror* is taken, dipped into *charoses*, and then shaken off. The *bracha* of על אכילת מרור is said and eaten without leaning.

5.2) Some use the *maror* that was on the *Seder* plate. Others follow the opinion of the *Arizal* to leave it on the *Seder* plate until the end of the *Seder* and use other *maror* instead.

5.3) The *Koreich* sandwich is made by taking a *kzayis* (15 grams) from the bottom unbroken *matzah* and adding *maror*. Some have the *minhag* to also dip this sandwich into *charoses*.

5.4) *Koreich* should be eaten while leaning. If one did not lean, there is no need to eat *koreich* again.

5.5) There are different opinions when to say "זכר למקדש כהלל" "וכר" before or after eating the *koreich* sandwich.

5.6) Some have the *minhag* to eat an egg at the *seuda*.

5.7) After the meal, a *k'zayis* (15 grams) of *matzah* is eaten as the *Afikomen*. The *Afikomen* piece is taken from the middle *matzah* that was hidden in the beginning of the night. To accommodate a large amount of people a small piece should be taken from the hidden middle *matzah* and supplemented with other *matzah* to complete a *k'zayis*

5.8) The *Afikoman* is eaten while leaning. If one did not lean and remembered before *birchas hamozon* he should eat another *kzayis* of *matzah*.

5.9) It is best if the *Afikomen* is eaten before *chatzos*.

5.10) After eating the *Afikoman*, one should not eat or drink anything else (besides water) until the morning.

6. *Barech, Hallel, & Nirtzah*

6.1) The third cup of wine is poured before *bentching*. It should be drunk while leaning.

6.2) One who forgot to drink the third and fourth *kosos* while leaning should **not** drink another *kos*.

6.3) A fifth cup of wine is poured, but it is not for drinking. This *kos* is called the *Kos Shel Eliyahu*. There are different *minhagim* when this cup is poured, some do so at the beginning of the *Seder*, others pour it right before *birchas hamazon*, and there are those who pour this *kos* before שפוך חמתך. There is a *minhag* to leave the *Kos Shel Eliyah* out on the table until the morning and say *kiddush* on it.

6.4) The fourth cup is poured before *Hallel*. Women are required to say *Hallel* on Pesach night.

6.5) There is a mitzvah to say *Hallel* on the night of *Pesach* with a *zimun* of three people. This may include women and children who have reached the age of *chinuch*.

6.6) After drinking the fourth cup of wine it is not permitted to drink anything else (besides water). In case of great need, one may drink nonalcoholic drinks.

6.7) On the second night of *Yom Tov*, nonalcoholic beverages may be consumed (after the fourth cup of wine) even if there is no great need to do so.

6.8) After the *Seder* it is appropriate to discuss the story of *Yitzias Mitzrayim* for as long as one has the strength to do so. Many recite *Shir Hashirim* after the *Seder*.

6.9) When going to sleep, only the *parsha* of *Sh'ma* and the *bracha* of *Ha'mapil* is said.

SECTION FOUR

Halachos of Sefiras Ha'omer

1. The Mitzvah of Sefiras Ha'omer

1.1) There is a discussion in the *Rishonim* regarding the current status of the *mitzvah* of *sefiras ha'omer*. Some hold that even today it is a mitzvah from the Torah. However, many hold that nowadays *Sefiras Ha'omer* is a *rabbinic* decree. Most *poskim* concur with the latter opinion.

1.2) There are two basic reasons given for why *Chazal* instituted this *mitzvah*; to remind ourselves of the counting that was done in the times of the *Beis Hamikdash* in between

the *korban ha'omer* and the *korban* of the *shtei halechem*. Or the purpose is to count from when we left *Mitzrayim* until *Kabolas Hatorah*.

1.3) Being that the mitzvah of *Sefiras Ha'omer* is constrained to a time (i.e. nighttime) women are exempt from this mitzvah. If a woman sets up a system ensuring that she will not forget to count, then she may count with a *bracha*.

1.4) From a half an hour before the time to count *Omer* it is prohibited to eat a meal. One who wishes to eat at this time must set a reminder for *Sefiras Ha'omer*.

1.5) One who has a set *minyan* for *mariv* at which he *davens* every night may sit down to eat a meal before his *minyan*.

1.6) Some have the *minhag* not to do מלאכה from שקיעה until after they count the *Omer*.

1.7) Care should be taken to count the *Omer* with a *minyan*. One who came late to *mariv*, and joined the *minyan* for שמונה עשרה and is planning to say *krias sh'ma* afterwards, should first say *krias sh'ma*, unless there is a chance that he will forget to count the *Omer*.

1.8) The mitzvah of *Sefiras Ha'omer* is to count both the days and the weeks of the *Omer*.

1.9) One who counted only the days should repeat both the days and weeks without a *bracha*. If he did not count again, he may still continue the next night with a *bracha*.

1.10) One who counted only the weeks but not the days did not fulfill the mitzvah of *Sefiras Ha'omer*. The *Omer* must be counted again properly, and if it was not done one may not continue counting with a *bracha*. However, if until now one

has been counting with the number of days, then he may continue counting with a *bracha* (for example, on the ninth night all he said was “one week and two days” and he did not say “nine days” as long as the night before he said “eight days” he is *yotzei*).

1.11) Between days one and six, if someone was asked what tonight’s Omer is, and he answered with the number, he may no longer count that night with a *bracha*. From the seventh night and onward, as long as he only answered the number of days without saying the week, he may count that night with a *bracha* (therefore, if on the night of *Lag b’Omer* one said “tonight is *Lag b’Omer*” he may still count with a *bracha*).

2. When to Count

2.1) It is permitted to count the *Omer* from *shkiah*, however one should wait until צאת הכוכבים (in certain circumstances one may count from *plag hamincha*, which is approximately one and a quarter hour before *shkiah*).

2.2) *Sefirah Ha’omer* may be done throughout the entire night.

2.3) It is preferable to *daven mariv* as early as possible during the days of *sefira* in order to count the *Omer* as soon as possible.

2.4) The *minhag* is to count *Omer* at the end of *mariv*, after *kaddish*, right before עלינו (even on *Motzei Shabbos*). However, some count after עלינו.

2.5) When *daveninig mariv* early on Friday night, *Sefiras Ha'omer* needs to be counted after dark. If the time arrives in middle of the meal, pause from eating and count the *Omer*. If it only became dark when the meal is finishing, *bench* first and then count *Omer*.

2.6) When travelling overseas count according to the current location, even though there may have been a full day that past that was less than 24 hours.

3. How to Count

3.1) There are different *minhagim* whether to say לשם יהוד before saying the *bracha*. Being that it says in it that *Sefiras Ha'omer* nowadays is an obligation from the *Torah* many avoid saying this *teffilah*. Some say the לשם יהוד and skip those words.¹⁶

3.2) There are different *minhagim* whether to say לעומר or בעומר.

3.3) The *bracha* and counting should be said while standing. If one is weak or old, he may say the *bracha* sitting.

3.4) The *bracha* of *Shehchyanu* is not recited on the *mitzvah* of *Sefiras Ha'omer*.

3.5) Make sure to know the number of days to count before saying the *bracha*. Do not rely on hearing the *Omer* from a friend after already having said the *bracha*.

¹⁶ וגם יש הרבה שבכלל לא אומרים שום "לשם יהוד" קודם מצוות משום טעמים שיש בקבלה ועוד.

3.6) Many have the *minhag* to say the הרהמן and יהי רצון after the *bracha*. The reason for this is, at the time of fulfilling a *mitzvah* which was instituted to remember what happened in the *Beis Hamikdash*, it is proper to *daven* for the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

4. One who forgot to count the Omer

4.1) Someone who forgot to count one night and did not remember until the following night should count without a *bracha*. However, if he remembered during the next day, he should count right then without a *bracha* and continues that night with a *bracha*.

4.2) If he remembered that he forgot to count *Omer* up to 13½ minutes after *shkiah*, he may count right then without a *bracha*, and then continue counting that night with a *bracha*.

4.3) One who *davened mariv* early Friday night and then remembered that he forgot to count Thursday night's *Omer*, may still count that *Omer* until *shkiah* (and after *Tzeis Hacoachavim* he may count Friday night's *Omer* with a *bracha*).

4.4) If one is not sure whether or not he counted one night, he may continue the next night counting with a *bracha*.

SECTION FIVE
MINHAGIM OF THE DAYS OF SEFIRAH

1. Minhagei Aveilus: Why and When

1.1) The students of *R' Akiva* died during the 33 days between *Pesach* and *Shavous*. Due to this great tragedy, we adopt certain *minhagim* of mourning during these days.

1.2) There are different opinions as to when to start counting these 33 days. Some count from the first day of the *Omer* until the 33rd day of the *Omer*. Others only begin to count the 33 days from *Rosh Chodesh Iyar*.¹⁷

1.3) On *Lag Ba'omer*, we don't keep any of the *minhagei aveilus*, no matter which days of *sefirah* are being kept.¹⁸

2. Minhagim of the Days of Sefirah

2.1) Cutting hair

- a) It is prohibited for a man to cut or shave any hair on his body.
- b) If one's mustache disrupts his eating, it may be trimmed.
- c) One does not need to incur a loss of money in order to keep this *minhag*.

¹⁷ ויש חילוקי דעות אם היום של ראש חודש אייר עצמה נכלל בהמנהגי אבילות או לא, ע' משנ"ב תצ"ג ס"ק טו וקיצור ש"ע ס' ק"כ אות ו-ז. ומנהג האר"י ז"ל היה להחמיר ולנהוג מנהגי ספירה כל משך הזמן בין פסח לשבועות, ע' משנ"ב שם ס"ק יז.

¹⁸ מלבד אם נוהג כדעת האר"י ז"ל, דאז אפ' בל"ג בעומר עצמה אסורה בתספורת.

- d) It is permissible to cut any hair on the body for health reasons.
- e) A *mohel*, *sandek*, and a father of a baby may cut their hair in honor of the *Bris*. (This may be done even from the evening before.)
- f) One may not cut his hair in honor of a *Pidyon Haben*.
- g) A *chosson* may cut his hair during his *sheva brachos*.
- h) A boy becoming *Bar Mitzva* should cut his hair while he is a *katan*. If he was not able to cut it then, he may cut his hair on the day of his *Bar Mitzvah*.
- i) Women *are* allowed to cut any hair on their body during the days of *sefirah*.

2.2) One may cut nails, wash clothes and bathe during *sefirah*. Some have the *minhag* to avoid going to the ocean during these days.

2.3) It is permitted to say the *bracha* of *Shehechyanu* during the days of *sefirah*; therefore, one may wear new clothing and eat new fruit during this time. However, there are those who try to wait until *Shabbos* to say the *bracha* of *Shehechyanu* (unless the fruit will spoil).

2.4) Music: The *minhag* is to refrain from listening to live or recorded music during the days of *sefirah*. However, one who does not have the intention to enjoy the music may listen. For example, one does not need to leave the waiting room of an office if there is music playing in the background. Similarly,

one may listen to music while driving in order to help keep him awake; or, if one needs music in order to exercise, he may listen as long as they cannot exercise without it.

2.6) The *minhag* is not to make weddings during the days of *sefirah* (whichever half of *sefirah* one is keeping). There are those that will make a wedding until *Rosh Chodesh Iyar* (even if they are keeping the first half of *sefirah*). One who is invited to a wedding when it is prohibited for him to attend (since he is keeping those days of *sefirah*) may go in to say *mazal tov*. Some are lenient and allow attending the whole wedding.

2.7) It is permitted to make an engagement party, without dancing, during *sefirah*. At a *sheva brachos* or *siyum* on a *masechta*, is permitted to have dancing and music.