

זמן חרותינו

קיצור קובץ הלכות
חודש ניסן ופסח
וספירת העומר

A Short Compilation of the Halachos
and Minhagim of Chodesh Nissan,
Pesach, and Sefiras Haomer

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The purpose of this booklet is to act as a refresher for the many halachos and minhagim of this Yom Tov 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 take the time to clarify anything that seems unclear and please 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 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. *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) *Tachnun, Av Harachamim, Tzidkascha* and *Yehi Ratzon* 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 read this from a *chumash*.

1.6) Many people refrain from eating matzah from *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* until Pesach (some even stop 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 *shiur* 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 purpose of this *bedikah* is to ensure that all areas were cleaned and any *chametz* that was mistakenly left out be 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 the time of the *bedikah* arrives, one may not engage in any work. Beginning a meal during this time is also prohibited. However, eating fruits, 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 *bedikah*, however once the time of the *bedikah* arrives, it is prohibited (even if he started learning earlier in the day).

2.5) Some have the custom to *daven Maariv* before doing the *bedikah*.

2.6) Before the actual *bedikah*, all rooms which require *bedikah* 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'zayis*, and caution should be taken not to lose or misplace them.

2.8) When searching for the *chametz* one should use whatever light helps him search best, whether that is; a flashlight, turning on the lights in the room, or a candle.

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

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

2.11) 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 during the *bedikah* he is not 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.

2.12) Right after the *bedikah* one should be *me'vatel* the *chametz*. The *bittul* should be said in a language that he understands.

2.13) After the *bedikah* one should be very careful to safely put away the *chametz* that has been found (in order not to have to do 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 the parents or in-laws).

³ סימן תל"ב סעי' א' "ויוזהר שלא ידבר בין הברכה לתלחת הבדיקה, וטוב שלא ידבר בדברים אחרים עד שיגמור כל הבדיקה וכו." ועי' במשנ"ב ס"ק ה' "ויוזהר שלא ידבר, ובדיעבד אם שח בדברים שאין צורך הבדיקה יחזור ויברך דהפסיק בין ברכה לבדיקה." משמע שאם בהפסיק בדברים שיש בהם צורך 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 כמבאר במשנ"ב שם ס"ק ו'.

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

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

3. *Erev Pesach*

3.1) On *Erev Pesach*, firstborns are supposed to fast to remind them 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 לתודה* and *למנצח* are not said.

3.4) *Chametz* 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 *chametz* must be burned or out of one's possessions, because from the beginning of the sixth *halachik* hour it is prohibited to have any benefit from *chametz* (check a calendar to find the exact times).

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

3.6) Right after the *chametz* is burned; another *bittul* of *chametz* is done (see 2.13 for the procedure of *bittul*).

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 on *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 *chatzos*. If one forgot to do so, he may still cut nails after *chatzos*, but haircuts are not permitted (unless he 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 *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 l'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.

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## ~ 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 does the Seder take place on 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!"

<sup>4</sup> דאסור לאכול מצה עשירה משעה שהתחיל איסור אכילת חמץ, ע' אגרי"מ או"ח א' ס' קנ"ה.

<sup>5</sup> ורק מותר לאכול אותם עד שעה עשירית כמבואר בהמשך.

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 *משהו* was left. However, nowadays, we have larger apartments or even houses and many appliances. To start scrubbing everything down is just going to tire us 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 matchbox) 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 *ששח* that one may come to eat this *chametz* by mistake (the *issur* of eating *chametz* includes even eating a *משהו*) therefore this too needs to be gotten rid of. For example, even one Cheerio or 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 prevention 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.**

Getting rid of the *chametz* that is prohibited to have around over Pesach should be the focus of the cleaning. Therefore, only places that *chametz* 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.)

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

## 3. Guidelines for Cleaning General Areas of the House

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

1. Any place where *chametz* 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 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** 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. 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 *chametz* 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 *chametz* 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.

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.

When dry, pour boiling water on it (and they then 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.

4. Clean the **backsplash** well. If food tends to drip down from it, it should be covered.

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

6. One should use a **sink** insert with a Porcelain or enamel sink. 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*. 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 in between each time that you pour the boiling water so that the cold water will not cool off the boiling water (which would **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 surface of the **stovetop** well, and cover with thick aluminum foil (a metal stovetop may be *koshered*, 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 them on for 10

minutes. The *blech* will probably get black and become very hot so be careful when 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 should buy a convection oven (or the likes) instead of *kashering* the regular oven<sup>6</sup>. 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. It may be most practical to just buy new ones.

**10.** Clean **hotplates** well, and cover with thick foil.

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

## 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 buy new ones just for Pesach.

**4.** A **highchair tray** should be washed well, making sure to clean every spot. It does not need 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, as long as 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 24 hours before *koshering*. Clean the utensils well. Then, fill a pot of water and place it on the fire. When the water is bubbling 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 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**

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<sup>6</sup> כן החמיר הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל.

**Pesach**<sup>7</sup>. Neither can China dishes. *Askenazim* generally do not *kasher* glass dishes<sup>8</sup>.

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*. This *Ha'galas Keilim* can be done at home.

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* with fire (i.e. a **grill**). If one wants to *kasher* a **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 *chametz* 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.

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<sup>7</sup> כן היא שיטת הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל.  
<sup>8</sup> במקום שיש צורך, יש לשאול שאילת רב.

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, perfume, body spray, cologne and aftershave** to have a *hechsher* for Pesach. A new **lipstick** should be used for Pesach.

### 8. Conclusion

Remember, everything only needs to be cleaned once. Cleaning tends to be somewhat of a *טירחא* and can cost a lot of money. However, great reward comes along with it, even in this world.

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~ SECTION THREE ~

HALACHOS OF THE NIGHT OF THE SEDER

Introduction

The Jewish People are made up of so many different stripes and colors. *Sefardim*, *Ashkanizim*, *Chassidish*, and *Litvish* are just general categories that our nation is divided into. Each sect carries with it countless sacred *minhagim*, guarding them faithfully for generations. This is one of the many things that make us as a people so unique. It is a *Yom*

Tov filled with precious *minhagim*, each one minutely different than the other.

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 amount of *minhagim* are staggering and the *halachos*, complex.

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*. It goes without saying that it is upon every person to find out exactly how things are done in his own home, how his father and grandfather acted at their *Seder*. *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 Night 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 *marror* 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 *chassan* does where a *kittel* while an *avel* does not⁹.

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 "כורך, מרור, מוציא מצה, רחצה" 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*.

⁹ כן סבר הגר"מ פיינשטיין זצ"ל.

2.2) The minimum amount each cup must hold is a *revi'is*. 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 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 most of the cup needs to be drunk, and it is best if the whole cup is drunk¹⁰. 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*.

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 than the other wine, it should be used.

2.6) There is a question amongst 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 to, 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.

¹⁰ ובכוס רביעי יש להקפיד לשתות רביעית כדי שיוכל לברך ברכה אחרונה לכ"ע.
¹¹ ידוע 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 למזוג היין אם מיץ ענבים או אפי' מים כל עוד שעדיין ניכר טעם יין וטעם המשתכר שבו.

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 *marror*. Some have the custom to lean by the entire *seuda*.

3.3) *Hesaibah* is to lean both the head and the 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 Night of the Seder

Part 2

1. *Kadesh*

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 *סיפור יציאת מצרים*.¹²
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 *Shechiyanu*, 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 wine, unless he had in mind at *Kiddush* to drink between the first two cups (as noted above).

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

2. *Urchatz, Karpas, & Yachatz*

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

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

2.3) A piece of *Karpas* is taken and dipped in saltwater; a *bracha* is recited upon it and then eaten.

2.4) One should have in mind when making the *bracha* on the *Karpas* to include the *marror* that will be eaten later as well.

2.5) There are different *minhagim* as to what vegetable should be 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 *marror*.

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

2.7) The middle matzah is then broken into two pieces; the larger piece is hidden for the *Afikomen*, 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*. A child present should ask the *Mah Nishtanah*. If there are no children at hand, one's wife should ask it, or the people at the Seder should ask each other. After the child asks the *Mah Nishtanah* 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 "ידם ואש ותמרות עשן", the עשר מכות, and "דצ"ך" עדי"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

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

taking out some wine. 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 היה אומר...פסח 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. *Rachitzah & 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 (or one who is at their parents or in-laws) should try to acquire the *matzos* that he will eat from the *Ba'al Habayis* so that they will be his own¹³. This is permitted to do on יום טוב.

4.4) Some have the *minhag* (at the beginning of the Seder) to put all the *matzah* that will be used on the table so that the *Haggadah* will be said on all the *matztah* that will be eaten¹⁴.

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 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 *Koreich* sandwich that will be eaten shortly; 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 *k'zayis* from the top whole *matzah* and a *k'zayis* from the broken *matzah*. The others at the table should be given a small piece of the leader's *matzah* and complete their two *k'zaysim* from other *matzos*.

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

4.10) Practically speaking, a small *k'zayis* equals 15 grams, thus two *k'zaysim* equals 30 grams which is the same amount as a large *k'zayis*. 30 grams is approximately ½ hand *matzah*, or ⅔ machine *matzah*. 15 grams is approximately ¼ hand *matzah* or ½ machine *matzah*.

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

4.12) A גדולי ישראל amongst the מנהג was to put a piece of *matzah* in their mouth and chew it, but not to swallow it until they chewed the whole *k'zayis*.

¹³ כדי שיהא המצות נחשב "לכם" (ומותר לעשות כן ביו"ט עצמה כיון שהיא מצוה וגם דבר מאכל). עיין אגרות משה או"ח חלק ה' סימן ט"ז אות ד'.
¹⁴ כמו שאמרינן דמצה היא לחם שעונין עליו דברים הרבה.

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 חתיכות ממצה שלו כדי לצאת ידי חובת לחם משנה, אבל זה לא יקח זמן רב).

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*, 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. *Marror, Koreich, Shulchan Orech, & Tsafun*

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

5.2) Some use the *marror* 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 *marror* instead.

5.3) Take a *k'zayis* (15 grams) from the bottom unbroken matzah and add *marror* to make a sandwich. Some have the *minhag* to 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 "זכור למקדש" 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*. This matzah is taken from the piece of the middle matzah that was hidden in the beginning of the night.

5.8) The *Afikomen* is eaten while leaning. If one did not lean and remembered before *birchas hamazon* he should eat another *k'zayis* of matzah.

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

5.10) After eating the *Afikomen*, one should not eat anything else 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.

6.4) The forth 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 non-alcoholic drinks.

6.7) On the second night of *Yom Tov*, non-alcoholic beverages may be consumed 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 *Shema* and the *bracha* of *Ha'mapil* is said.

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~ 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 *d'rabbanan*. 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 time 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 decides to count each night, she should set up a system ensuring that she will not forget to count.

**1.4)** From a half 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 *maariv* 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 *shkiah* until after they count the *Omer*.

**1.7)** Care should be taken to count the *Omer* with a *minyan*. One who came late to *maariv*, and joined the *minyan* for שמונה עשרה, and is planning to say *Krias Shema* afterwards, should

first say *Krias Shema*, unless there is a chance 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 is that night's *Omer*, 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 Ba'Omer* one said "tonight is *Lag Ba'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 hours before *shkiah*).

**2.2)** *Sefirah Ha'omer* may be recited throughout the entire night.

**2.3)** It is preferable to *daven maariv* 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 *maariv*, after *kaddish*, right before עלינו (even on *Motzei Shabbos*). However, some count after עלינו.

**2.5)** When *davening maariv* 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, *bentch* first and then count *Omer*.

**2.6)** When travelling overseas, one should count according to the current location, even though it may have been a day that consisted of less than 24 hours.

### 3. How to Count

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

**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 *Shehechiyanu* is not recited on the *mitzvah* of *Sefiras Ha'omer*.

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

**3.6)** Many have the *minhag* to say the יהי רצון and הרחמן after the *bracha*. The reason for this is that 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 away 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 maariv* early Friday night and then remembered that he forgot to count Thursday night's *Omer*, may still count that *Omer* until *shkiah* (and after צאת הכוכבים 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*.

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

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 kept¹⁸.

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.

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

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

- c) One does not need to incur a loss of money in order to keep this *minhag*.
- 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 Mitzvah* 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 *Shehechiyanu* 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 *Shehechiyanu* (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.

3. *Lag Ba'omer*

3.1) On the eve of *Lag Ba'omer*, before counting *sefirah*, one should be careful not to say "tonight is *Lag Ba'omer*". One who did accidentally say this may still count with a *brachah*.

3.2) *Tachanun* is not recited from *minchah* of the previous day through *Lag Ba'omer*.

3.3) The custom is not to fast on *Lag Ba'omer*, even for a *yahrtzeit*.

3.4) From sunrise on *Lag Ba'omer*, haircuts are permitted. Some are of the opinion that haircuts are permitted even from the night of *Lag Ba'omer*¹⁹.

3.5) When *Lag Ba'omer* falls out on Sunday, it is permissible to take a haircut and shave already from the Friday morning before.

3.6) It is permitted to listen to music on *Lag Ba'omer*. Many wait until the daytime to listen to music. Even one who waits until the daytime to listen to music may listen at the actual bon fires that take place on the night of *Lag Ba'omer*.

3.7) Weddings are allowed on the day of *Lag Ba'omer*. *Ashkenazi minhag* is to allow the wedding only during the day of *Lag Ba'omer*, while the *seuda* and dancing with music may continue into the night after. In case of need, it is permissible to make a wedding on the night of *Lag Ba'omer*.

3.8) For many *Sefardim*, the *minhagei aveilus* conclude only after *Lag Ba'omer* ends. Therefore, haircuts, shaving, and weddings are only allowed from the 34th day of the *Omer*.

¹⁹ אבל לפי מנהג האר"י ז"ל אינו מותר בתספורת בל"ג בעומר.