

# The Jewish Weekly

# Weekly

# Pesach

## Guide, Halachot, Minhagim and stories for the year 2021 / 5781

According to Nittei Gavriel, Mishna Berurah and Shulchan Aruch Harav

All times listed are for Jerusalem only as per [www.myzmanim.com](http://www.myzmanim.com)

Based on Rabbi Shmuel Lesches's Halachah Sheets

Compiled by Yossi Fraenkel  
in memory of his grandparents

ר' ראובן בן הרב משה אליעזר הלוי ע"ה  
וחיה ברכה בת ר' נפתלי משה ע"ה רבינוביץ  
ר' יוסף בן ר' אורי ע"ה  
ומלכה בת ר' יצחק צבי הלוי ע"ה פרנקל

And in memory of his close friend and mentor,  
Mr. Mendy Klein, ר' מנחם משה בן ר' נפתלי הירצקא ז"ל

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## FOREWORD

In honor of Pesach, The Jewish Weekly is pleased to present our very own Pesach Guide, replete with Halachot and Stories.

“The Jewish Weekly” is a weekly publication, which before Covid 19, was distributed throughout Jerusalem, the Kotel, Nevei Yaakov, Efrat, Beit Shemesh, Beitar and Bnei Braq areas. “The Jewish Weekly” can also be found on our website, [www.thejweekly.org](http://www.thejweekly.org) as well as being a popular download on [ladaat.info](http://ladaat.info), [dirshu.co.il](http://dirshu.co.il), and [parshasheets.com](http://parshasheets.com)’s websites as well as through our ever growing email list.

“The Jewish Weekly” is a compilation of stories and Divrei Torah and before every Chag or fast “The Jewish Weekly” releases a Halacha Guide which has grown “bli ayin harah” to becoming the most popular Halacha companion in English, due to it’s diversity, compiled extensively from Nittei Gavriel, Mishna Berurah and the Shulchan Aruch Harav.

On behalf of “The Jewish Weekly” I would like to thank my dear beloved parents, Gershon and Rivka Fraenkel, for all their hours of research, proofreading, distribution, sponsorships and emotional support. It’s thanks to you both, that what started as a dream with only 100 printed copies, has grown to now being one of the most popular publications in the central Jerusalem area and worldwide.

This year, due to the situation with Covid 19, the “Pesach Guide” is only available online, to be viewed or downloaded from either our website [www.thejweekly.org](http://www.thejweekly.org) or the aforementioned websites.

To subscribe to “The Jewish Weekly” please email; [editor@thejweekly.org](mailto:editor@thejweekly.org) or visit our website; [www.thejweekly.org](http://www.thejweekly.org)

May we be blessed with an amazing summer,  
Chag Pesach Kasher Ve'Sameach,  
Yossi Fraenkel,  
Editor

🕊 MONTH OF NISSAN

Some have the custom to visit a cemetery on *Erev Rosh Chodesh Nissan*.

*Tachnun* is not recited the entire month.

Some say *Lamnatzeach* and *13 middot*, besides for *Erev Pesach* and some don't say the whole month, the *Yehi Ratzon* after *Kriat Hatorah* during the week is omitted too as it is a kind of *Tachnun*.

Some hold that an *Avel* (within 12 months of a parent's passing or within 30 days of a spouse, child or sibling's passing) should not serve as the *Chazzan* in Shul the whole of *Nissan*, besides for a *Yahrzeit*.

Others, including Chabad, hold that they do serve as *Chazzan*, besides for *Pesach*.

There is a custom to read the portion of the *Nassi* from a *Sefer Torah* or from a *Chumash* or *Siddur*, each of the first twelve days of *Nissan*, each day representing one of the tribes, followed by the *Yehi Ratzon* printed in the *Siddur*. It is even recited by a *Kohen* and *Levi*.

Some have the custom to start the first day from *Birchat Kohanim* and some (including Chabad) start from *vayehi byom kalot Moshe*.

On the twelfth day, some continue with reciting from "*Zot Chanukat Hamizbeach*" until "*Ken Assah et Hamenorah*", some (including Chabad), recite the above on the thirteenth day, but without reciting the *Yehi Ratzon*.

Some have the custom not to eat *Matzah* from *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* and some refrain thirty days prior to *Pesach*, and some eat up until *Erev Pesach*. However, *Matzah* that is *Chametz* may be eaten until *Erev Pesach*.

One may not fast during *Nissan*, even those who fast on a *Yahrzeit*, with the exception of a *Chattan* and *Kallah*, who some say fast even on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*.

During the month of *Nissan*, we do not *eulogize* over someone who has died.

Some have the custom not to go to cemeteries in the month of *Nissan* as these are days one does not say *Tachnun*. That being said, for the *Yahrzeit* of a *Tzaddik*, one may go to *daven*.

One should not lay a headstone during the month of *Nissan*, although there are some who allow it.

It is a general custom to give money (known as *מעות חטים* – money for wheat), to make sure that less fortunate people have all the necessities for *Pesach*.

During the month of *Nissan*, one recites the applicable *Brachah* when seeing blossoming fruit-trees for the first time.

*Av Harachamim* and *Tzidkatecha* are omitted each *Shabbat* in *Nissan*.

Haircuts may be taken only until *Erev Shabbat*, 13<sup>th</sup> of *Nissan* (see further).

🕊 SHABBAT (7<sup>TH</sup> NISSAN, PARSHAT VAYIKRA)

Some have the custom to say *Piyutim* during the *Amidah* repetition of *Shacharit*.

One attends a *Shabbat Hagadol* *Drashah* about the practical *Halachot* of *Pesach* as many *Halachot* are already applicable prior to *Shabbat Hagadol*. The usual *Kaddish D'raban* is recited at the conclusion of the *Drashah*.

Some also attend a *Shabbat Hagadol* *Drashah* next week for *Shabbat Hagadol* and *Erev Pesach*.

On *Motzei Shabbat* *Vihi Noam* and *V'Atah Kadosh* **are** recited followed by *Kaddish Titkabel* like usual as there is a full week before *Pesach*.

After *Maariv*, one says *Kiddush Levana*.

One should empty their pockets from *Chametz* before putting away their *Shabbat* clothes.



## Itche, the Hero of Ger

By Rabbi Yechiel Spero

Throughout his life, the Imrei Emet, Rav Avraham Mordechai Alter of Ger, was particular that no one should touch his clothing. He was so concerned that his clothes not be affected by impurity, that he even chose his tailor very carefully. There was one person, however, who was allowed to touch his clothing. He was neither a Rebbe nor a learned individual, nor did he come from a prestigious background. Itche Greinemos was a rather simple fellow. However, because of one amazing day in his life, he had the privilege of helping the Rebbe don his Kittel on Pesach night.

At the time of the story, the Sfat Emet, Rav Yehudah Aryeh Leib, stood at the helm of Ger Chassidut. One day, word began to spread that a plague had broken out in the city. Immediately, everyone ran to their homes and tried to protect themselves against the deadly plague. But it was too late; the plague spread quickly and mercilessly, claiming the lives of many, especially children. By the time daybreak had arrived, the streets were littered with the bodies of lifeless children. The authorities, desperate to get the situation under control, decreed that these bodies should be cremated to prevent the plague from spreading any further. The heartbroken families, who wanted so badly to give their children a proper final farewell, watched helplessly from inside their homes, since they knew that they were risking their lives by going outside.

The Sfat Emet was beside himself. There was really nothing anyone could do, as no one was prepared to risk his own life. After much thought, the Sfat Emet issued a declaration: Anyone who was prepared to bury one of the dead children would be guaranteed a portion in the World to Come. Families heard about the Rebbe's promise, but the streets remained eerily empty, until suddenly, one towering figure emerged. It was Itche Greinemos. With a shovel in his hand, he bent down next to a small child in the middle of the street and wrapped him in a tallit. Then he went to the cemetery and buried the boy. At the end of the day, he showed up at the doorstep of the Sfat Emet.

The Rebbe had heard about his act of selfless dedication and promised him that he would receive a special portion in the World to Come, for his Mesirat Nefesh. But Itche just stood there at the doorstep, exhausted and filthy. "Rebbe, what you promised was based on someone burying one child. I just came from the cemetery. Rebbe, I buried 16 children!"

The Sfat Emet looked incredulously at the broad-shouldered fellow. He could hardly believe what he had just heard. "Sixteen children?" The Rebbe contemplated the immeasurable comfort that Itche had provided to those 16 families. Instead of their children being reduced to ash, they now had a final resting place of dignity, where the parents could come visit them and pray.

"So what can I possibly give you as a reward?" the Rebbe asked.

Itche did not hesitate for a moment. He knew exactly what he wanted. It was neither riches nor monetary rewards he was seeking. Nor was he interested in honor or glory. Instead, he asked the Rebbe if he could have the privilege of helping him put on his Kittel every year at the Seder. Immediately, the Rebbe agreed, and so it was. Every year, after they came back from davening, the Sfat Emet allowed Itche to help him with his Kittel, a privilege that was allowed to no one else.

The obvious connection was never spoken about. While Itche had risked his life to prepare the 16 children he had buried and to dress them in their **תכריכים** (burial shrouds), the Rebbe had given him the privilege of dressing him in his Kittel, a special garment reserved for the Seder, and used later for burial.

In the last year of the Sfat Emet's life, as Itche helped him with his Kittel, he let out a krechtz (a sigh of pain), "Oy! There are thousands of Jewish soldiers who have written to me asking that I daven on their behalf. All they want is that they should be Zocheh (Merit) to receive a **קבר ישראל** (a proper Jewish burial). How can I begin my Seder with this enormous burden on my shoulders? Who can carry such a burden? I can't do it anymore. I just can't do it."

Anyone who was in the room at that time was greatly moved by the Rebbe's cry, but perhaps no one was more moved than Itche, who had risked his life to bring so many children to Jewish burial.

After the Rebbe's passing that year, Itche continued to perform his yearly practice with the Imrei Emet, the son of the Sfat Emet. Although the Imrei Emet was particular

about who touched his clothing, Itche was more angel than man.

Years later, on the first day of Succot, as he stood in the Gerrer Beit Midrash holding his Lulav and Etrog, Itche breathed his last breath. With thousands of people in the surrounding area, Itche was taken out of the Beit Midrash. The following day, he was brought to his final resting place, in one of the largest funeral processions the city of Ger had ever seen. Of course, the Imrei Emet was in attendance, as well.

Itche was buried right near the children he had buried years before.

*Reprinted from Haggadah Touched by Our Story  
– Artscroll.com.*

*Editor's Note: My fellow dear medical personnel, my fellow dear Chevra Kadisha members, we are going through a very bad plague, people are dying all over the world from it. Some countries want to make it a law to cremate because they can not handle the burial of the numbers of dead they have. The Chevra Kadisha all over the world are working tirelessly, following in Reb Itche's footsteps to make sure that every Jew gets brought to **קבר ישראל** (a proper Jewish burial). I am so proud to be involved in this big Mitzvah. You are the ones who put on Klal Yisrael's kittel Seder night. You are on the forefront of saving Klal Yisrael, you are the ones who have put yourselves and your entire being into making sure that Klal Yisrael gets a Refuah and for those who can not be saved, a Kever Yisrael. Your zechutim (merits) are great, your Brachot are great, **הקב"ה ישלם שכרם** (may Hashem protect you, may Hashem strengthen you, may Hashem save you, and your families. Klal Yisrael owes you a tremendous debt of gratitude..... Thank you.*



# A Combat Officer's Passover In the Sands of Kuwait

By **Nicole Bauke**

Capt. Sanford Cohen counts down the end of his deployment in Kuwait by the number of Shabbats, rather than days.

"It's a lot more manageable," said Capt. Cohen, 38, from Staten Island, N.Y. "I'm going to quote one of my ... soldiers on this: The Friday-night service is what he looks forward to in his week. It completes his week. It pains him when he can't make it. It pains him."

There is not a single Jewish chaplain at Camp Buehring Army Base - let alone in all of Kuwait - but despite this, Capt.

Cohen's religious observance has remained at the forefront of his priorities, so much so that he has become a volunteer lay leader endorsed by the Jewish Welfare Board.

"When you don't know if the bullet that's being fired has your name on it, the ability to do more mitzvot takes precedence over other projects," said Capt. Cohen. Counting down by Shabbats is easier for his three sons - ages 3, 6 and 9 - to grasp, too. While they only have a chance to speak to him on Sundays due to the time change and differing schedules, they always tell him what they did over Shabbat.

"It's something they get," said Capt. Cohen. "I'll take an article from Chabad.org or Aish on the week's parsha, and send it to my oldest son with, 'hey, I thought you'd like this' He reads it, and they discuss it on Friday night."

And for Capt. Cohen, a Brigade Ammunition Officer of the 35th Combat Aviation Brigade, the end of Passover marks his 40th (and last) Shabbat of his nine-month deployment. But for now, he is

busy preparing for and organizing Passover on base, expecting about 20 people to attend the Seders.

"I'm not going to be with my family, but I'm going to be with my Army family," said Capt. Cohen, whose family back in the States will be spending the holiday with his in-laws at a Chabad-run resort hotel in South California.

As a lay leader, Capt. Cohen orders kosher MREs (shelf-stable Meals Ready to Eat), leads Friday-night services and organizes holiday celebrations

for his fellow troops. Their Passover supplies would not be the same without the support of Jewish organizations such as the Aleph Institute, which provide items that cannot be ordered through the military.



*Capt. Sanford Cohen in Kuwait with the menorah he obtained with the help of the Aleph Institute.*

"The only way to have a connection is through organizations like Aleph Institute and Kosher Troops. They are what keeps us connected when there is no synagogue, or kosher restaurant," said Capt. Cohen.

The Aleph Institute sends religious materials throughout the year - Torah scrolls, menorahs, hamantashen, military camouflage siddurim (prayer books) and other Jewish books. For Passover, they send whatever is needed to complete a seder meal, such as Haggadot, seder plates, charoset and shmurah matzah, benefiting approximately 1,000 soldiers on about 60 bases worldwide.

"This campaign was started by the Lubavitcher Rebbe [Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory] in 1941 or '42, and he oversaw

it personally,” said Rabbi Menachem Katz, director of military and prison outreach at the Aleph Institute. “It’s something that goes back hundreds of years - back to every Lubavitcher Rebbe in Russia, where they took care of the Russian Jewish soldiers in the Russian Army and made sure they had matzah for Pesach and so on.”

The Aleph Institute also helps connect Jewish troops with the visiting Jewish chaplain so that more Jews are able to participate in holiday celebrations and religious observations, according to Capt. Mendy Stern, chaplain for the 312th Military Intelligence Battalion.

Capt. Stern, stationed at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, is preparing for deployment to serve as the rabbi for troops in Afghanistan during Passover. This will be his second Passover deployment and his sixth deployment overall.

“This opportunity to serve those who serve our great country is an absolute honor and privilege,” wrote Capt. Stern over email. “Since joining the Army, I’ve encountered many Jewish troops whose lives were touched by the mere presence of a Jewish chaplain or the opportunity to observe a mitzvah in an otherwise Jewish religious desert.”

His Passover preparations are complicated, to say the least. Usually, chaplains on the ground, who are usually not Jewish, request kosher-for-Passover MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) and “Seder Kits,” which provide the basic items, according to Capt. Stern. Everything must be arranged and shipped far in advance, and, traditionally, more people than expected tend to show up. During his previous Passover deployment, more than 60 Jews attended the Seders.

“As there are so few Jewish chaplains, we must rely heavily on the chaplains on the ground to advertise and help spread the word of the

upcoming services,” wrote Capt. Stern. “We rotate for holiday coverage to locations where there is no Jewish chaplain. We arrive a few days before Pesach, and we set up the Seder, while still visiting the troops, providing counsel and [offering] support to the mission.”

The lack of Jewish chaplains is a real issue for Capt. Cohen, who wishes that more rabbis would bring their religious outreach to the U.S. military. He became a lay leader after traveling two and a half hours to Camp Arifjan last Fall for Rosh Hashanah - the closest location for prayer services - forcing him to miss several days of work at his own base. There are “dozens” of chaplains at Camp Buehring, but no rabbis.

“There aren’t enough rabbis as chaplains in the military, so guys like me have to step up,” said Cohen. “This is the place—the Army, the military—to do the most good, the most Kiddush Hashem, not just for the Jews but for the non-Jews.”

Even though there are about 5,000 Jewish-affiliating soldiers in the military, Rabbi Katz estimates, there are only 12 active-duty Jewish chaplains in the Army, and less than 50 in the entire military. Where there isn’t a rabbi, lay leaders like Capt. Cohen fill the role as best they can. But both Capt. Stern and Capt. Cohen agree: It may be more complicated than a holiday at home, but it’s a shlichut that is well worth it.



*Capt. Mendy Stern, chaplain for the 312th Military Intelligence Battalion, sets up for a Passover seder.*

“On one hand, there’s a bittersweet feeling of being away from family during the holiday, having to imagine the children asking the ‘Mah Nishtanah’ [‘Four Questions’] and celebrating thousands of miles away from home. On the other hand, the feeling that I’m embarking on a shlichus [emissary] mission, to celebrate Passover with servicemen and women who are far from home ... it’s an adventure which I wouldn’t pass up.”



# How We Baked Matzah In a Nazi Labor Camp

By Asharon Baltazar

Three men, all prisoners, could think of nothing but the imminent festival of Passover. As thousands of Jews - including their own relatives - were being sent to their



deaths on a daily basis, Yaakov Friedman, Moshe Goldstein, and Rabbi Yekusiel Halberstam (the Klausenburger Rebbe) had the bravery and presence of mind to secure matzah for Passover 1945.

Here is Moshe Goldstein's account of the amazing turn of events that afforded them the ability to observe the Festival of Freedom amidst abysmal suffering and death.

In the days preceding Passover, the war was nearing its end. The relentless droning of American aircraft filled the German skies, followed by the whistling hail of bombs that pounded the Mühldorf railway complex into rubble.

Spared of destruction were the nearby forced labor camps where we toiled under the harshest conditions. We prisoners celebrated this mighty display of Allied destruction, but the anxiety of our German overseers ran high. The railway was vital to the war efforts, and orders were issued to immediately repair the damage. The Germans decided to send a group of 12 Jewish slaves to begin the cleanup.

I volunteered to go. I knew the work would be excruciating but I hoped that perhaps I would find some food amidst the rubble.

We arrived at a scene of utter devastation. Freight cars lay on their sides, smoke rising from gaping holes. Stretches of railing were ripped off the ground and tossed aside in twisted heaps. Nearly

every building suffered extensive damage. It was clear some of the cars were unrepairable.

I managed to disappear between the rows of trains that were still upright. It took a while, but I eventually found a boxcar from Hungary loaded with wheat in burlap sacks. Wheat! And so close to Pesach! G-d had granted us a good start, but how could I possibly smuggle the wheat into the camp?

A faint groan from amid the wheat sacks caught my attention. There, in a dark corner of the boxcar, lay a man, crushed by the enormous weight of the grain. The man mumbled something more, which I recognized as Hungarian, my native tongue. I saw he wore the gray uniform of an SS officer.

“What happened?” I asked.

The SS officer moaned weakly about being pinned under the sacks. “I understand. Let me help you.”

As I approached, I noticed the officer's boots, deep black in color and luxurious in appearance. On my own were bits of tattered leather, barely held together.

“I'm going to take off your shoes,” I said. “That way, you'll feel less restrained, and then we'll see what we can do.”

Once I had undone the laces, I slipped the heavy boots off. Then, wielding whatever strength and hate I could muster, I swung at the man's head. I took the boots and continued my search.

I knew I did not have much time and I needed to think of a way to bring in as much wheat as possible without the guards knowing. Lugging the sacks through the main gates didn't even occur to me; the wheat would be confiscated and I would be shot without a second thought.

I rummaged around some more, and discovered two pairs of pants. I put them on and cinched the bottoms around my ankles with some rope. I was then able to pour a quantity of wheat into the space between the two pairs of pants. Once my legs were filled with as much wheat as I dared carry, I began the long walk back to the camp.

The bombings left the Germans rattled and fearful, and for the initial days following the air raid, the inspection of prisoners at camp gates was enforced almost half-heartedly. I was thus able to smuggle in a fairly large amount of wheat. We had wheat, but now what?

Reb Sender Dierenfeld, a fellow inmate and a Belzer Chassid, offered to hide the wheat, and amazingly, he managed to keep it away from prying German eyes.

Later, an old mill was procured from somewhere. We ground the wheat in the dead of night, and using a clean piece of cloth, sifted the flour from grit.

Next we needed fuel for a fire.

During one stint in the field, I asked everyone to find a stick and carry it back to the camp.

The branches were conspicuous and caught the attention of a German guard. He motioned me over.

"Why is everyone with a stick?"

"What difference does it make? People want to walk around with a stick," I answered.

We had flour and we had fuel. We were ready to bake matzah.

One night just before Passover, we set about baking matzah. Near the barrack door stood a prisoner, standing guard with fearful eyes.

We lit a fire under a metal can which functioned as our oven, and the Matzah baking - under Nazi noses - began. The Rebbe, Reb Yaakov, and I mixed the flour and kneaded the dough. We worked quickly, not only because of the strict 18-minute limit, but also because of the ever-present danger of being caught. We ended up with 20 small matzahs.

On Pesach eve, after returning from work, our small group sat down for the Seder. On wooden slats around us lay sleeping bodies, exhausted from the relentless work. For those celebrating, the hardships of the Holocaust and daily camp life melted away, as we experienced the Biblical redemption from Egypt. Unable to sit for long, we each ate an olive-sized piece of matzah, the taste of tears mingling with the matzah crumbs in our mouths.

We could not sit leisurely and recite the Haggadah, but in those moments we each prayed - more fervently than ever before or ever since - the words that still ring in my ears: "Next year in Jerusalem."

*Reprinted from email of Chabad.org.*

# Dealing with the Unexpected On the Pesach Seder Night

**By Rabbi David Ashear**

If something is important to a person and he is passionate about it, when things don't go smoothly in that area he could become easily angered. He needs extra chizuk to remind himself that whatever happens is from Hashem. No matter how careful he is to do things right, Hashem is still in charge. The Seder night is a very special time.

Hours upon hours of preparation go into a Seder, and we're all passionate about it; so we want things to run smoothly. If something unexpected comes up and we're not prepared to handle it properly, it could ruin the night.

The Chida writes, because this night is so special, the yetzer hara works harder, to get us to become angry or upset, and ruin it. We must remember, as important as it is to have a proper Seder, it's just as important for us to be calm and composed when issues come up.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman told a few stories about how tzaddikim responded when faced with various, unexpected circumstances which arose on the night of their Sedarim. He quoted from the Bet Aharon of Karlin who said that his father had a righteous student, Rabbi Barsity.

This Rabbi Barsity was very strict in all areas of Pesach, especially when it came to baking matzot and preparing the wine for the four cups. He personally supervised the entire production of both the matzah and the wine which he used for the Seder.

One time, he came home on Erev Pesach, after putting in days of toil, with just enough wine and matzah for his family. While he was in shul that night, his wife was walking by the table and the tablecloth got caught in her belt. As she

continued walking, everything came tumbling down.

The dishes broke, the matzot broke and the wine was all over the floor. She was so angry. Here she had spent hours preparing a beautiful table, and now it was all ruined. When her husband came home, she started yelling at him, blaming him for leaving the matzah and the wine at the edge of the table, blaming him for the tablecloth sticking out.

Rabbi Barsity calmly said to himself, "This is from Hashem." He didn't get upset that his hard work was ruined; he didn't get upset that his wife yelled at him. He said to himself, it's a test. He picked up the broken matzot; he salvaged whatever wine he could; he set the table back to the best of his abilities, and then he sat down at the Seder table with joy and went on as if nothing happened.

The next day, the Rav HaKadosh of Karlin, who had Divine Inspiration, entered the shul and started telling his students about what each one of them accomplished in the spiritual worlds with their Sedarim. And then he said, "Rabbi Barsity's Seder was greater than all. His behavior and his attitude accomplished more in Shamayim than anybody else's Seder.

While we might think that getting angry over spiritual matters is warranted.

Actually, we could accomplish more by not getting angry.

One of the grandchildren of Rabbi Zalman Brizel told that one Seder night, a different grandchild accidentally broke all of the Rabbi's matzah shemurah that he worked so hard to



prepare. The moment Rabbi Brizel saw what happened, he looked up to Shamayim and said, “Hashem, thank You so much for giving me these sweet little grandchildren. Even though sometimes they are careless, they are the greatest gift.”

At the Seder of the Admor Rabbi Yochanan Twersky from Tolna, a child once walked in holding real chametz that he found in the street. The people around the table were mortified. The Rebbe, on the other hand, calmly got up, went over to the child and told him to put the chametz down on a plate. He then took the plate and covered it with a white cloth lichvod Chag. He then turned to the child and said, “Thank you for

letting me fulfill the words of our Chazal who tell us to cover any chametz we find on Chag.” And then he went back to the Seder and continued.

The common denominator in all these stories is that even though Pesach was so important to these Rabbis, they knew that it is just as important not to get angry. They accepted whatever Hashem sent their way, and they kept a happy atmosphere. B’ezrat Hashem, we’ll all be able to elevate ourselves in our middot to be happy and calm throughout the Seder and do this mitzvah the best way possible.

*Reprinted from email of Living Emunah.*

## The Rebbe Does Not Make a Mistake

**By Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon**

Every chassid has his special day or Chag which he spends with his Rebbe. With some it is Rosh Hashanah, when he can hear the Rebbe’s Tekiat Shofar (blowing of the shofar), and with others it is Simchat Torah, when he can participate in the Rebbe’s Hakafot.

In Lubavitch, Shavuot was known as Chag Hama”tzot, as that was the Chag for which Rabbanim (who are called moreh tzedek, the acronym of which is ma”tzot) would be able to come to Lubavitch.

The chassid of our story, whom we will call Shimon, would come to his Rebbe every year for Pesach. (Perhaps this was because as an innkeeper who ran a tavern, this was the only time of the year when he closed his doors, as all of his whiskey was chametz.)

In addition to participating generously in his community’s maot chittim (fund for the poor), he would take a sizeable amount of money to give to the Rebbe to distribute as he saw fit. He would begin cleaning his house early enough so that it would be ready for Pesach when he left.

His married children would lead the seder for his family, and he would be in seventh heaven, spending Pesach with the Rebbe.

Every year, shortly after Maariv on the first night of Pesach, the gabbai would enter the shul and read a list of twenty visitors who were invited to participate as the Rebbe’s guests at his seder. There were a number of people who were always among the honored individuals, and Shimon was one of them. Everyone knew that Shimon was one of the Rebbe’s devoted chassidim who gave extremely generously to the Rebbe’s causes.

On the second night of Pesach, another group of twenty people would be invited. Shimon would join the seder that had been arranged for all of the chassidim who had not been invited to the Rebbe’s seder. Shimon would review for them the thoughts, insights, and stories that the Rebbe had related at the seder on the first night. In addition to being quite wealthy, Shimon was also a talmid chacham and he had a wonderful way of explaining the Rebbe’s teachings and insights.

After Pesach, he would take leave of his Rebbe, and at that time the Rebbe would bless him with longevity and continued success. He would come home invigorated and enriched in his appreciation of his Rebbe's greatness, and he would conduct his life accordingly.

One year, as soon as he arrived at the Rebbe's court as usual, he gave the gabbai an envelope containing his yearly generous participation in the Rebbe's tzedakot (charitable causes). He then went to his friend's house where he was given a room to use for the duration of his stay. He proceeded to help his hosts for Pesach as well, by giving them financial assistance as well as personally participating in preparing for Chag.

The first night of Pesach arrived, and Shimon took a place next to the bimah, waiting for when he would hear the gabbai call out his name.

After Maariv, as soon as the gabbai re-entered the beit hamidrash everyone became silent and waited with bated breath to hear who the Rebbe had invited this year. The gabbai ascended the bimah and began announcing the names, reading from the paper in his hand.

Each time a name was announced, the chassid's face shone with happiness. He had merited to be invited to the Rebbe's seder! Shimon was smiling from the beginning, expecting to hear his name as usual. However, as the gabbai reached the last few names on the list, he began feeling uneasy. Something was wrong here. There must have been a mistake. The Rebbe always invited him!

The gabbai concluded reading the names of the Rebbe's guests at his seder, and began to leave the shul. Shimon stopped him and asked if he had missed mentioning his name by mistake. "After all," Shimon added, "for the last fourteen years the Rebbe has always included me on his list!"

The gabbai opened the paper and looked at the names again. "No, the Rebbe did not include you on the list this year," he stated. Seeing the look of disbelief written all over Shimon's face, he allowed Shimon himself to look at the paper, which the Rebbe had personally written. To his surprise, he saw that his name indeed did not appear on the list.

Shimon couldn't believe it. "It must be a mistake!" he blurted out.

Before he could continue, the gabbai replied: "The Rebbe doesn't make a mistake. If your name is not on the list, it is because the Rebbe wants you to eat today's seder with all of the other guests who also were not invited."

"Perhaps the Rebbe doesn't know that I am here," Shimon said. "Did you give the Rebbe my envelope and letter?"

"Yes, Reb Shimon," replied the gabbai. "The Rebbe knows you are here. I gave him your envelope and letter and I saw him read it. He certainly knows you arrived. But as I said before, the Rebbe doesn't make a mistake. If he didn't put you on the list, he has a reason for it. The Rebbe knows what he is doing!"

Hearing those words, Shimon was confused. What the gabbai had said was indeed true. He himself would often say those very words to others. The Rebbe is a Malach Elokim, a G-dly man, and doesn't make mistakes; all of his actions are correct and precise. But it just didn't feel right. Why had the Rebbe excluded him from his seder this year?!

He joined the numerous other chassidim at their seder, but he did not join them in their joy. They were rejoicing that they had merited to spend this special Chag with the Rebbe, but Shimon was perturbed, lost in thought: "Why wasn't I invited this year? Did I perhaps do something wrong? How can I rectify it?"

After some time, he concluded: “Perhaps the Rebbe plans to invite me to the second seder tomorrow night. Perhaps the Rebbe does certain things on the second night differently than on the first night, and he wants to give me a chance to experience those unique moments.”

Convincing himself that this indeed was the reason and confident that he would be invited for the second seder, Shimon forced himself to smile and participate in the singing and joy. Yes, it would be good.

The next day he made sure to stand where the Rebbe would notice him when the Rebbe entered the shul to daven. That way, just in case he wasn't on the written list, maybe the Rebbe would verbally instruct the gabbai to invite him as well.

Once again, after Maariv Shimon stood next to the bimah, except that this time he was apprehensive. Would his name be called out or not? He tried to make eye contact with the gabbai to receive some assurance, but to no avail. The gabbai began reading the list, and once again he was not included.

Shimon was dumbfounded and aghast. Something was definitely wrong. Once again, he went to the gabbai and asked, this time in a subdued tone: “Are you sure I am not on the list?”

The gabbai showed the second list to Shimon, and his world turned dark. Indeed, his name was not on the list! Unable to control his anguish, he once again blurted out: “This must be a mistake!”

The gabbai saw Shimon's disappointment and grief. Trying to console him, he replied: “Reb Shimon, you know how great our Rebbe is. The Rebbe doesn't make a mistake. There must be a good reason why you weren't invited this year. But who are we to understand the Rebbe? The

Rebbe sees things that we don't. Reb Shimon, have a Chag Sameach.”

To Shimon, it was more like Tisha B'av and the deep reflections of Yom Kippur, than Pesach. He concluded that the Rebbe must have seen a gezeirah (heavenly decree) against him, and therefore he didn't invite him. “It must be,” he thought, “that the gezeirah is so severe that the Rebbe can't nullify it with his tremendous tefillot. I am doomed. I must do teshuvah (repent)! Maybe Hashem will accept my teshuvah.”

The other chassidim saved his regular place for him at one of the main tables, where this year he would be able to hear from the lucky individuals what had transpired last night at the Rebbe's seder. They were hoping that Reb Shimon would elucidate the Rebbe's teachings, as he has done in the previous years.

However, Shimon wasn't in the mood of doing so. He sat at a table in the corner of the room, immersed in his painful thoughts. He tried to recall any incident that may have caused this gezeirah to befall him. What terrible thing had he done? Gone was any façade of happiness and joy of Chag. Instead, it was replaced with noticeable apprehension and despair of some impending tragedy.

While the chassidim were in the midst of reading and discussing the haggadah, the gabbai suddenly entered. “Where is Shimon?” he asked frantically. “The Rebbe is calling for him!”

Shimon was so depressed and lost in thought that he didn't hear the gabbai's words, until many of the chassidim began saying loudly: “Reb Shimon, the Rebbe is waiting for you!”

Hearing this, Shimon began to smile. “This must mean that the Rebbe noticed I am not at his seder,” he thought, “and he realizes that I should be there. That is why the Rebbe sent his gabbai to call me!” He got up from his place, and, with



happiness in his heart, he swiftly followed the gabbai.

As soon as Shimon entered the room, the Rebbe motioned that he should come over to him. When he came close to the Rebbe, the Rebbe handed Shimon an empty bottle and asked him to hold it. Then, to his shock and horror, the Rebbe began to pour the wine of the eser makkot (ten plagues) into it. When he concluded, the Rebbe took the cap and secured the bottle tightly, saying: “Shimon, keep this with you and safeguard it. You may now return to your seder. Chag Sameach!”

If Shimon was sad and depressed before this, now he was heartbroken and devastated. He thought: “The Rebbe is giving me all of the curses associated with the wine that is poured out from the becher (cup) while mentioning each of the ten plagues. This must mean that there is a real and terrible gezeirah against me!” Returning to his place, he mustered all of his strength to control himself from breaking out in tears on Chag.

After Chag, the Rebbe blessed him with a safe trip and wished him that all should be well. But Shimon was far from relaxed. He felt as if his world was collapsing and that he needed to do teshuvah. However, he resolved to conceal his anxiety from his family as much as possible.

When he returned home, he repeated to his family and fellow chassidim a few insights and teachings he had overheard or that he remembered from previous years, but he didn't inform anyone that he hadn't been invited to participate in the Rebbe's seder. They all assumed that he had joined in the Rebbe's seder as usual.

When he informed the older members of his family that he was planning to remain in shul every morning for one hour after Shacharit, they thought this was an instruction he had received

from the Rebbe. No one realized that it was part of his self-imposed teshuvah regimen.

Shimon then proceeded to focus on the Rebbe's directive to keep the bottle with him and safeguard it. He realized that in order to fulfill this instruction properly, he would need to put the bottle in a place where he alone could access it, but was still considered “with him.” It was an unsealed bottle, so if it would be left out in the open, one of his family workers might think that it was useable, and he didn't want to tell anyone that this wine was from the Rebbe's eser makkot.

After giving the matter some thought, he decided to put the bottle on the top shelf in his tavern, where the more expensive bottles were kept behind doors. Moreover, he decided to place it in a small compartment on that shelf which had its own door, and to place a small lock on the door so that no one would take it by mistake.

The next few weeks and months passed by uneventfully. Nevertheless, Shimon intensified his teshuvah, fearing that something harmful would happen to him or to a member of his family.

One very hot summer day, Shimon sat in his tavern, waiting for a customer to come in. Seeing that no one was coming, Shimon began saying Tehillim. He had almost concluded the entire sefer when three men entered the room.

Shimon took out his regular bottle to serve them, but one of the men said, “We would appreciate wine or whiskey of higher quality.” Pulling out a ten-ruble note (which was five times the price of a regular drink), he said, “Please bring us something better.”

Shimon was happy to hear this. These three customers might be his only visitors this hot day, but if they would take just a few more drinks, he might earn more from them than what

he would usually earn from his regular customers! After sipping from their cups, they called him back and said: “That was good, but we want to enjoy something even better. Here is a twenty-ruble note.”

Shimon proceeded to take out a bottle from a higher shelf. After tasting it and paying him for it, they said: “Now please give us your best wine. Don’t worry about the cost; we have plenty of money.” To prove their point, one of them took a thick wad of bills out of his pocket.

Now Shimon was thrilled. This would indeed be a profitable day! He took a step stool and chose a bottle from among those on the top shelf. As he was pouring from it into their cups, two of the men suddenly stood up and grabbed him. Holding him tightly, they warned him not to scream or he would regret it. They then instructed him to sit down, took out a rope from their bag, and tied him up. Next, they stuffed his mouth with a napkin so he wouldn’t be able to scream.

The bandits went behind the counter, and, after emptying the cash register, they began eyeing the bottles on the higher shelves. They then noticed that one of the shelves had a lock on it. Thinking that a very expensive bottle must be behind that door, they broke the lock and removed the bottle.

They sat down next to him and began taunting him. “Aahh, this must be good stuff. Look, only one third of the bottle is left. You must have been saving it for a special occasion. Haha! Are we going to enjoy it!”

One of them brought three clean cups and divided the wine equally among them. Glancing at Shimon, they saw a look of horror on his face. However, they took that as a sign of his anguish over his tremendous loss, proving to them that they had indeed discovered a truly special bottle of wine.

Adding insult to injury, one of them placed his cup next to Shimon’s nostrils and said: “We are good guys. We will share the wine with you. Here, take a whiff!” Shimon recoiled in fear and tried to speak, but his voice was muffled by the napkin in his mouth. After clicking their glasses together, they began to sip the wine, hoping to prolong their savoring of every drop.

As soon as they took their first sip, drowsiness overtook them and they fell into a deep slumber, dropping to the floor. Seeing that they were out cold, Shimon began wiggling around, trying to loosen the rope tied around his body. After a few minutes he succeeded in pushing out the napkin from his mouth and began shouting for help. A few moments passed, and a passerby heard his screams and entered the tavern. He immediately untied Shimon, and together they took the rope along with additional rope and tied up the three men securely. Then, the passerby rushed out to call the local police.

As soon as the officers saw the bandits, they declared: “These men have been terrorizing the area for some time. There is a large reward being offered for any information that leads to their capture, and you will receive it. But please tell us: How did you manage to catch them by yourself, and why are they in such a deep sleep?”

By then his entire family was informed of the close call and converged upon the inn, asking him how he was feeling.

Shimon related to them the entire story of what had transpired the past Pesach, and then added: “Yes, the Rebbe never makes a mistake. The Rebbe saw that I would be in danger and gave me this wine to save me. Perhaps he also saw that I needed to do teshuvah in order to merit to be saved, and therefore he didn’t invite me this year to his seder. How great is the Rebbe’s vision!”

## 🕊️ CLEANING AWAY THE CHAMETZ

It is improper to complain about the work and effort required in preparing for *Pesach*.

One should remember to clean or discard any *Chametz* found in the “less obvious” locations such as vacuum cleaners, brooms, mops, floor ducts, kitchen walls, car interiors (including rented cars), car-seats, baby carriages, highchairs (the tray should also be lined), briefcases, pocketbooks, phones, mobile devices, computer keyboards and other devices commonly handled when eating.

Items regularly used around *Chametz* (e.g. cookbooks, *Birkonim*, *Siddurim* and *washing cups*) must be stored with the *Chametz* that is sold for *Pesach*. *Sefarim* and toys should be cleaned well or included in *Mechirat Chametz*. Some play items such as plasticine may contain *Chametz* and must be included in *Mechirat Chametz*.

Tablecloths or napkins should not be used if they were starched with a substance that may contain *Chametz*. One should also ensure that starched clothing does not come into contact with food.

*Shabbat* candlesticks should be cleaned thoroughly. If the usual tray will be used on *Pesach*, it should be cleaned well and covered in foil. No food should be placed on the candlestick tray on *Pesach*.

Garbage cans should be thoroughly cleaned. Before the end time of *Biur Chametz*, City bins should be placed in the public domain for the entire *Pesach*, with the bin and its contents deemed ownerless.

New toothbrushes should be prepared for *Pesach*.

A *Rav* should be consulted regarding the use of vitamins and medicines (taken orally) which may contain *Chametz*.

Pet food must be *Chametz*-free. Some say, it may contain *Kitniyot*. Cages, enclosures and feeding bowls must be thoroughly cleaned.

One does not need to clean behind or under heavy furniture rarely moved, as long as there are no plans to move it on *Pesach* itself. [Even if one knows for certain that there is *Chametz* there, one may include it in the *Mechirat Chametz*.]

## 🕊️ KASHERING

It is customary to avoid *Kashering* utensils where possible, and to instead use utensils designated exclusively for *Pesach*. [If *Kashering* is performed, it should be done under the guidance of one who is well versed in the relevant *Halachot*.]

Dishwashers, regular ovens, continuous-cleaning ovens, toaster ovens, microwave ovens, grills and BBQs are not *Kashered* and used for *Pesach*. Self-cleaning ovens which reach approximately 480°C/900°F may be *Kashered* by running it through a full clean cycle; the oven door and seals should be cleaned well beforehand.

For gas cooktops, the grates are *Kashered* through *Libbun Gammur* (heating the grates until they glow red-hot in the dark). The burners, drip-trays and cooktop surface beneath the grates are *Kashered* by cleaning them thoroughly, after which *Libbun Kal* (heating the metal until the other side is hot enough to scorch paper) is performed. One way to achieve all of this is by turning all the burners on the highest, and covering the entire cooktop with a



*Blech* until the grates glow red-hot, by which time the other components of the cooktop will have reached the heat of *Libbun Kal*. [Do not leave the stove unattended when *Kashering* with this method, and ensure adequate ventilation.]

For standard electric cooktops (where the burner coils are exposed), the coils are *Kashered* through *Libbun Gommur* (turning them onto the highest setting until they glow red-hot), while the burners, drip-trays and cooktop surface are *Kashered* by cleaning them thoroughly, after which *Libbun Kal* is performed.

If the cooktop surface cannot be *Kashered* through *Libbun Kal* (e.g. if made of glass or enamel), it may instead be covered with a durable and heat-proof covering or lining.

Cooktop knobs and backsplashes should be cleaned and lined with foil.

Induction cooktops and electric smoothtops (where the burner coils lie beneath a flat ceramic glass surface) are not *Kashered* nor used for *Pesach*.

Wooden or laminate tabletops and countertops are *Kashered* by cleaning them thoroughly (including crevices) and waiting 24 hours. Then, after ensuring that the surface is thoroughly dry, one pours boiling water from a kettle that has just been removed from the source of heat, ensuring that the flow of water from the kettle to the entire surface is direct and uninterrupted.

Stone countertops are *Kashered* similarly, but the boiling water is poured over an *Even Meluban* (red-hot stone) which is moved around (or right above) the entire surface as the water is poured over it. The *Even Meluban* remains effective as long as it causes the boiling water to bubble.

Metal countertops and sinks are *Kashered* with boiling water and an *Even Meluban*, in

the manner described above. The water should be poured over the lowest surfaces first, before moving upward. Alternatively, they may be *Kashered* through *Libbun Kal* (blowtorching until the other side of the metal is hot enough to scorch paper).

Metal faucets and faucet handles are *Kashered* by pouring boiling water (in the manner described above for tabletops and counters). The hot water tap should be turned on and running through the interior of the faucet at the time that it's exterior is being *Kashered*. Bleach should be poured down the sink drain and onto any crevices between the sink and the sink drain. Any tap filters, aerators, strainers and sponges should be replaced.

The kettle used to boil the water for *Kashering* is customarily reserved for this purpose alone, and is used neither with the *Chametz* nor with the *Pesach* cooking.

If a tabletop or countertop will be damaged by *Kashering*, or is made of a material that cannot be *Kashered*, one should cover it well instead, ensuring that no liquid is trapped beneath.

After *Kashering*, all countertops, backsplashes, tables and cooktop surfaces should be lined or covered. Sinks should also be lined or fitted with sink inserts.

A separate *Blech* and urn is used for *Pesach*. Pantries, cupboards, shelves, fridges and freezers (defrosted first) should be thoroughly cleaned with a cleaning agent, and lined. The fridge/freezer rubber door seals should be cleaned as well, and the interior circulation vents should not be blocked, so as not to cause damage.

Fans, hoods and other areas above stoves and ovens should be cleaned and ideally covered due to the steam that circulates when cooking.

## ☞ MECHIRAT CHAMETZ

*Mechirat Chametz* is effective only if one truly commits to sell his *Chametz* in an unconditional and absolute sale. It is therefore customary to perform a *Kinyan* (act of acquisition) when authorizing the *Rav* to sell the *Chametz*. [However, this *Kinyan* is not an absolute requirement.]

*Mechirat Chametz* must occur before the fifth seasonal hour (according to the Magen Avraham 11:28am and according to the Gra and the Baal Hatanya 11:43am) on *Erev Shabbat*, in keeping with the usual time schedule every other year. However, it is preferable to visit the *Rav* before the night of *Bedikat Chametz* (i.e. Thursday night). Practically, one should not wait until then, and instead go at the earliest opportunity.

When the householder sells the *Chametz*, his dependents (who dwell with him permanently) do not need to, unless they own *Chametz* independently.

*Chametz* belonging to a *Shul* or public organization should be sold by the office-bearer responsible for finances.

In the sale, one includes all *Chametz* and *Chametz* utensils. Since the actual location of the *Chametz* is also leased to the non-Jew, one should list the full address of each of his personal and business properties, including common-owned properties, preferably concluding with the words “and wherever my *Chametz* may be found”.

If one owns *Chametz* in a different time-zone, or is travelling to a different time-zone for *Pesach*, he should inform the *Rav* of his situation for further guidance.

If one is away from home for the entire *Pesach*: If he arrives at his destination before the night of *Bedikat Chametz*, he includes his entire home in the *Mechirat Chametz*. If he will still be at home the night

of *Bedikat Chametz*, he includes most of his home in *Mechirat Chametz*, but excludes a small area so that he can conduct *Bedikat Chametz* (see “*Bedikat Chametz*” section).

## ☞ FAST OF THE FIRSTBORN (THU MORNING)

Those who would regularly fast the fast of the firstborns on *Erev Pesach*, fasts a day earlier, Thursday, the 12<sup>th</sup> of Nissan.

Every male *Bechor* (firstborn), as well as the father of a *Bechor* under the age of *Bar Mitzvah*, should attend and eat from a *Seudat Mitzvah* such as a *Siyum*, *Brit* or *Pidyan Haben*. They should not eat before partaking of the *Seudat Mitzvah*.

A *Siyum* may be made on a *Masechta* of *Gemarah* or an entire *Seder* of *Mishnah*. [The *Siyum* may be made even by a child.] Some, including *Chabad*, say the usual *Kaddish D’rabanan* at the *Siyum*, and some say the “*Kaddish Hagadol*” printed in the back of the *Gemarah*.

A *Bechor* (or the father of a *Bechor* under the age of *Bar Mitzvah*) who did not hear a *Siyum* must fast

Some have the custom to make a *Siyum* also on Friday, *Erev Shabbat*.

## ☞ BEDIKAT CHAMETZ PREPARATIONS (THU NIGHT)

This year, when *Erev Pesach* coincides with *Shabbat*, one may eat *Chametz* until *Shabbat* morning. In fact, eating *Chometz* is a requirement for the purposes of making *Hamotzie* on Friday night and *Shabbat* morning, given that *Matzah* cannot be used at these times. [See further for details.]

Nevertheless, since *Bedikat Chametz* and *Biur Chametz* cannot be performed in the usual manner on *Shabbat*, both of these are conducted one day earlier, and their times are equivalent to every other year. Thus, *Bedikat Chametz* is conducted on

Thursday night at Tzeit (6:30pm), and the Chametz is burned on Friday morning (according to the Magen Avraham 11:28am and according to the Gra and the Baal Hatanya 11:43am).

From after the time of Bedikat Chametz, it is advisable that all Chametz be eaten only in one designated area, and it be a place where crumbs are easily cleaned even on Shabbat (as opposed to carpet, or dining furniture with crevices). Young children should not be left unsupervised with Chametz.

The house should be completely cleaned, the floors swept (including under the beds), and all Chametz removed prior to *Bedikat Chametz*.

Anything included in *Mechirat Chametz* should be securely stored away before *Bedikat Chametz*, either by placing it in a closed area such as a closet (which should be locked or marked), or by completely barricading it with a sturdy *Mechitzah* at least ten *Tefachim* tall. A curtain that is easily slung aside does not suffice. [When extremely necessary, one may access these areas during *Pesach*, but must avoid remaining there for any length of time, and must not touch the Chametz nor open any boxes containing them.]

*Chametz* that will be eaten later in the evening or the next morning should be placed in a secure location before *Bedikat Chametz*, out of the reach of children and of rodents.

A paper bag, single-wick preferably beeswax candle, feather and wooden spoon are prepared for *Bedikat Chametz*.

Ten pieces of bread are put out in various location in the property. A record should be kept of the pieces' locations, in case they are not found during the search. Each piece

should be less than a *Kezayit*, but all pieces should total at least a *Kezayit*. Each piece should be wrapped well in paper in order to prevent crumbs. The wrapping material must be flammable (as opposed to foil) so that the pieces of bread burn well.

#### 🕯️ TIME OF BEDIKAT CHAMETZ (THU NIGHT)

*Bedikat Chametz* is performed as soon as possible after *Tzeit Hakochavim* (6:30pm), and after *davening Maariv*.

From half an hour prior to *Tzeit Hakochavim* until after *Bedikat Chametz* (even if running late), one may not eat more than a *K'beitzah* (Chaim Naeh is 55cc, Chazon Ish is 100cc) of bread or *Mezonot*, drink alcoholic beverages, nap, learn *Torah*, bathe, haircut, work or perform other absorbing activities unrelated to *Bedikat Chametz*.

If one began these activities prior to this time, he may continue during the half hour before *Tzeit Hakochavim*, but must stop as soon as it is *Tzeit Hakochavim*.

One may begin learning during the half hour before *Tzeit Hakochavim*, only if he appoints a *Shomer* (guardian) who is not learning to remind him to perform *Bedikat Chametz*, as soon as it is *Tzeit Hakochavim*. Even so, a *Shomer* does not allow one to engage in the other prohibited activities.

#### 🕯️ BEDIKAT CHAMETZ (THU NIGHT)

Although not a requirement, some have the custom of washing their hands prior to *Bedikat Chametz*.

One lights the candle before reciting the *Brachah*, and holds it in his right hand during the *Brachah*, in order to begin searching as soon as the *Brachah* is finished.

After the *Brachah*, one should not speak at all prior to beginning the search, even matters related to the search. If one did



Speak, he must repeat the *Brachah* if his words were unrelated to the search.

After one already began the search, until the conclusion of *Kol Chamirah*, one should not speak matters unrelated to *Bedikat Chametz*, nevertheless, if one did speak unnecessarily, he does not repeat the *Brachah*.

The search begins in a location right next to where the *Brachah* was recited, and is conducted carefully and thoroughly.

The obligation of *Bedikat Chametz* rests with the householder. Nevertheless, he may delegate part (but preferably not all) of the search to male family members over *Bar Mitzvah*. Ideally, before spreading out, they should hear his *Brachah* and immediately begin searching in a location right next to where he recited the *Brachah*. Otherwise, they search without a *Brachah*.

One searches by the light of the candle and with a feather. Any *Chametz* found is placed in the paper bag.

One must carefully and meticulously search every location into which *Chametz* may have potentially been brought, even if only on occasion, and even if it has already been cleaned for *Pesach*. Even after all ten pieces are found, one must properly search the remainder of the house. However, one does not need to check the locations that are being leased in the *Mechirat Chametz*.

One should remember to search his porch, garage and vehicle during or after *Bedikat Chametz*.

After *Bedikat Chametz* is concluded, the bag of ten pieces along with the feather and any remnant of the candle is placed inside the hollow of the spoon. It is then all wrapped in paper and tied with string, ensuring that the spoon handle remains

visible, and stored in a secure location inaccessible to children or rodents.

Afterwards, one recites "*Kol Chamirah*", ensuring that he understands the meaning. [Otherwise, he should recite it in a language that he understands.]

One must also perform *Bedikat Chametz* (or appoint a *Shliach* to do so) at any other property he is fully or partly responsible for (e.g. workplace, dormitory room, common-owned entryways and facilities rooms), if it is not being sold for *Pesach*. Ideally, this is done right after *Bedikat Chametz* at home. [The *Brachah* is not recited again; one should therefore have these locations in mind when reciting the *Brachah* at home.] A person must also be delegated to perform *Bedikat Chametz* at the *Shul* and the *Beit Midrash*.

If one is vacating his home for the **entire Pesach**: If he arrives at his destination before the night of *Bedikat Chametz*, he includes his entire home in the *Mechirat Chametz*, and performs *Bedikat Chametz* at his destination. [When one is guesting with a host, he may rely on the host's *Bedikat Chametz* and need not perform it himself. Alternatively, he may rent a room from the host with a valid *Kinyan* and perform *Bedikat Chametz* himself.]

If he will still be at home for the night of *Bedikat Chametz*, he should include most of his home in the *Mechirat Chametz*, but exclude a small area in which to conduct *Bedikat Chametz*. He must also perform *Bedikat Chametz* (without a *Brachah*) when he arrives at his destination, unless someone else already performed it there.

If one is away from home for the night of *Bedikat Chametz*, but will be returning on *Erev Pesach* or during *Pesach*, he must conduct *Bedikat Chametz* (including *Kol*

*Chamirah*) the night before he leaves home, without a *Brachah*. [This is in addition to searching at the place he is staying on the night of *Bedikat Chametz*.] Alternatively, he may appoint a *Shliach* to search his home on the night of *Bedikat Chametz* with a *Brachah*; however, the homeowner must still recite *Kol Chamirah*.

If one forgot on Thursday night to make *Bedikat Chametz*, he needs to do it on Friday during the day.

If he forgot and only remembered after *Shabbat* came in, he should not search for the *Chametz*.

If one forgot to make the *Brachot* of *Bedikat Chametz*, they should not say the *Brachah* at the time of burning the *Chametz*, but should rather say the *Brachah* without Hashem's name.

#### ☞ PESACH AND SEDER PREPARATIONS

One should familiarize himself with all the *Halachot* associated with the *Seder*.

A clean and undamaged *Becher* (or cup) that holds at least a *Revi'it* (Chaim Naeh is 86ml, Chazon Ish is 150ml) is prepared for every participant, both male and female. When choosing the size of the *Becher*, one should bear in mind that each of the four cups of wine are ideally consumed in one swallow.

Preferably, the *Becher* or cup should be of significant quality, such as silver or glass, as opposed to disposables.

One should prepare enough red wine to supply four cups for every participant. (White wine is not used at the *Seder*, unless it is superior to all available red wines.) Since a great variety of wines are readily available in present times, including dry wines and low-alcohol wines, one should avoid grape-juice if possible.

If a non *Shomer-Shabbat* Jew or non-Jew will be present in the room during the *Seder*, the wine should be *Mevushal*.

One should prepare a sufficient supply of unbroken (concave-shaped) *Matzot* for the *Seder*.

The romaine lettuce should be washed and checked for bugs before *Shabbat*. They should also be dried so that they may be eaten together with the *Matzah* at *Korach*.

The horseradish should be ground before *Shabbat* and placed in an air-tight container to retain its potency. [If, prior to purchase, the horseradish was cut with a knife whose status is unknown, the area of the cut should be removed and discarded.]

The *Charoset* should be prepared (with apples, pears and nuts) before *Shabbat*.

Hard boiled eggs should be prepared before *Shabbat* (but remain unpeeled) for the *Kaarah*.

Onions or potatoes are prepared for *Karpas*.

There are various customs regarding the *Zeroah*. The most popular are roasted Chicken-necks which should be roasted before *Shabbat*. Some remove most (but not all) of its meat.

Salt water should be prepared before *Shabbat*. If one forgot and remembered after *Shabbat* came in, they should wait till after *shabbat* and pour the water first then add the salt after, and it should be minimal just enough for *Karpas*.

Roasted meat or poultry may not be eaten at the *Seder*, even if it was cooked **prior** to roasting. However, it may be eaten if it was cooked **after** roasting. [Liver is often just roasted, and it should therefore not be eaten at the *Seder*.] Pot-roast is treated as

regular roast, unless water or juice is added before cooking.

With regards to meat and other foods, one should not say, "This is for *Pesach*," for he appears to be designating it for the *Korban Pesach*. [This prohibition does not apply to the wheat used for *Matzot*.]

Children are encouraged to be given their own illustrated *Haggadah* to increase their excitement.

*Chag* in general, and the *Seder* in particular, is an especially appropriate time to host guests.

The *Mitzvah* of *V'Samechta B'Chagecha* entails eating meat, wine and delicacies; providing new clothing or jewelry for one's wife according to his means; and giving sweets to the children. These should be arranged in advance.

### IN ISRAEL WE MOVE THE CLOCK FORWARD THURSDAY NIGHT TO SUMMER TIME

#### 🕊️ EREV SHABBAT HAGADOL MORNING (FRI MORNING)

When in *Shul*, one should clean and remove any *Chametz* in his locker.

As it is not Erev Chag but rather Erev Shabbat, *Mizmor L'Todah* is recited but from Shabbat until after *Pesach* some do not recite it, however, some hold that it is recited. If someone started saying it, he should continue.

A child who would start to put on *Tefillin* (before his 13<sup>th</sup> birthday) during *Pesach*, some say he should start on *Erev pesach*, some say on the 13<sup>th</sup> of *Nissan* and some say to wait till after *Pesach*.

The activities regularly prohibited on Erev *Pesach* may be performed today even after midday. This includes tailoring or sewing new garments, laundering, meticulous forms of writing, giving haircuts. [as per any Erev Shabbat, any manual labor which is not

for the sake of Shabbat and Chag should not be performed after *Mincha Ketanah* (4:23pm) in a focused and permanent manner.]

Since one may not launder on *Chol Hamoed* either, the laundry should be tended to before Shabbat.

One should have a haircut in honor of *Pesach*. (furthermore, for some, including Chabad, haircuts are not taken again until Erev Shavuot 5<sup>th</sup> Sivan)

Nails are trimmed in honor of *Pesach*. [because they cannot be trimmed on *Chol Hamoed*.]

On *Erev Shabbat*, one should not donate blood or undergo any procedures or tests involving blood loss. [This does not apply in cases of great need, and certainly not when it is *Pikuach Nefesh*.]

#### 🕊️ BIUR CHAMETZ (FRI MORNING)

This year, *Biur Chametz* occurs on Erev Shabbat, before the fifth seasonal hour (according to the *Magen Avraham* 11:28am and according to the *Gra* and the *Baal Hatanya* 11:43am), in keeping with the usual time every other year. Even so, one may continue to consume *Chametz* until Shabbat morning (see further).

Prior to the end-time for *Biur Chametz*, one should:

- store any *Chametz* for Friday and Shabbat in a secure location.
- remove from his property all garbage that may contain *Chametz*.
- check the pockets and cuffs of any unlaundered clothing and coats.
- seal and mark all locations included in *Mechirat Chametz*.

If one is running late, these may be done anytime prior to Shabbat.



When Erev Pesach coincides with Shabbat, one may Kasher utensils the entire Friday until evening. One should remember to clean jewelry rings, then kasher them by pouring boiling water over them. Nevertheless, some advise that all Kashering should be done before midday (12:45pm) so as not to distinguish from other years.

One should ensure that the actual pieces of *Chametz* are thoroughly burned before the end-time of *Biur Chametz*. [nevertheless, if one is running late, the *Chametz* may – and should - be burned the rest of the day, prior to Shabbat. One may also burn the *Chametz* earlier in the morning.]

Flammable liquids are not recommended when burning the *Chametz*, due to the concern that they may render the *Chametz* inedible, as well as safety concerns.

If still extant, the *Daled Minim* and/or *Hoshanot* are burned at *Biur Chametz*.

The fire is used solely for burning the *Chametz*. One should not derive any benefit from the fire.

One does NOT say the second *Kol Chamirah* on Friday after burning the *Chametz*, as he would leave some *Chametz* for Shabbat.

Some recite the accompanying *Yehi Ratzon* when they burn the *Chametz*.

#### **EATING MATZAH & CHAMETZ ON EREV SHABBAT**

One may eat Matzah all day on Erev Shabbat, and some hold to be stringent and not to eat Matzah as on Erev Pesach.

One may give Matzah to minors even those who regularly would not eat Matzah on Erev Pesach.

Some hold that one may eat *Chametz*, the whole of Erev Shabbat, and others hold not to eat *Chametz* from the time of *Biur Chametz*.

It's best not to eat the *Chametz* at the same table that one would be eating on Pesach.

#### **COOKING FOR SHABBAT**

One does not cook for Shabbat using *Chametz*.

One may not dip the Challah in sauce as well as lokshen or Kneidelach which was cooked before Shabbat, soup croutons can also not be poured into the pot.

One should try to cook for Shabbat on Thursday.

All cooking should be done using Kosher for Pesach products and utensils.

One who takes Lettuce for Marror should check them for bugs before Shabbat.

Salt water should be prepared before Shabbat. If one forgot and remembered after Shabbat came in, they should wait till after shabbat and pour the water first then add the salt after, and it should be minimal just enough for Karpas.

One should prepare the Charoset before Shabbat so that the seder should not be delayed, however, if one did not prepare before Shabbat, it can be prepared on Chag.

The Zeroah should be roasted before Shabbat, if it was not roasted before, then it should be roasted after Chag starts but it would have to be eaten on Chag by day.

The hardboiled egg should be boiled before Shabbat.

#### **BAKING MATZAH ON EREV SHABBAT**

Those particular to bake Matzot on Erev *Pesach*, should bake them after Chatzot on Erev Shabbat.

Some have the custom not to say Hallel during the Matzah baking as on a regular year as it is not the day of Erev Pesach, while some do say Hallel.

Some have the custom to go to Mikva and be dressed in Shabbat clothes while baking the Matzah.

One should remember to take Challah from the dough on Erev Shabbat.

#### PREPARATION FOR THE SHABBAT TABLE

One should prepare the table so it would be easy to collect the crumbs, some would put a plastic tablecloth over the regular one.

One should try to prepare on Erev Shabbat a nice table specifically for the Seder, with comfortable chairs, the Seder plate and Haggadot so that the Seder should start as soon as possible after Shabbat.

The candles should be placed at the end of the table and not on the same tablecloth as the one which will be used for the Shabbat meals.

The candles for Pesach should be prepared before Shabbat. The candles should also be long so they can last longer, some even hold till after the Seder.

Some have the custom to prepare candles for Shvi'i shel Pesach as some do not prepare the candles or wicks on Chol Hamoed.

One should put an object on the candlestick tray like a siddur or another sefer as one can not use a Challah as in the rest of the year in order to be able to move the candles.

It is advisable to use plastic dinnerware and cutlery so it can all be disposed of together with the Chametz, however the Kiddush cup and Wash station cup which in general should not be from plastic.

One should have just enough Challah for Hamotzie.

It is a Mitzvah to have hot food for Shabbat and not cold.

One should remember to set the Shabbat timers to be able to cover the Seder night which would usually be longer than the regular Friday night Seudah.

One gives Tzedakah on Erev Shabbat for both Shabbat and Chag.

One should arrange a pre-existing flame so as to be able to light the candles for Pesach and to cook on Pesach..

Candle-lighting is at 6:19pm, as per a regular Erev Shabbat.

#### FRIDAY NIGHT MEAL

Hamotzie of the night and morning meals should be brought out only when it is time to eat it. The Challah should be consumed in a manner that will not leave crumbs in one's property, such as by eating it over napkins. [Hand jewellery should be removed before eating the Challah.]

One who wears braces should make sure not to eat any Chametz once they have been cleaned for Pesach.

After eating the Challah, any used napkins should be flushed down the toilet. Tablecloths and / or tableware should be shaken out over the toilet to remove all crumbs, and then discarded. [If non-disposables were used, they should not be rinsed. Rather, they should be cleaned in the above fashion and then stored with the items included in the Mechirat Chametz.]

One should also wash his hands and mouth at a sink which is not being used for Pesach foods, and inspect his clothes and the eating area for any remaining crumbs, which should all be flushed down the toilet.

As an added precaution, many people choose to eat the Challah in another location, such as the porch or backyard, and then return to the main dining area for the

remainder of the meal. In this case, one will (generally) be required to make Kiddush at the place where the Challah will be eaten, and also have in mind the transfer of location when making the Brachah of Hamotzi. Similarly, one should ensure that the Shabbat candles can be seen from the place where the Challah will be eaten.

One should use a proper Becher for Kiddush, ensuring it doesn't mingle with the Challah.

If someone has a baby boy, the Shalom Zachor should contain only Kosher for Pesach food, unless the event is in a property that is sold to a Non-Jew.

#### ☞ SHACHARIT FOR SHABBAT EREV PESACH

One who goes to Mikva regularly on Shabbat should have in mind for Chag as well.

One should rise early to daven and should try to daven faster than usual so that they should be able to eat the meal before the end time to eat (*according to the Magen Avraham* 10:17am and according to the Gra and the Baal Hatanya 10:41am).

The Haftorah of V'arva is recited, since Shabbat coincides with Erev Pesach.

If one has a Brit on Shabbat morning, they should try to have it right after Shacharit and should be done at a fast pace.

One who delayed the davening and doesn't have time to daven and eat before the time, they should just say, Baruch Sheamar, Ashrei, Nishmat through Yishtabach and continue the davening after the meal.

Apples, pears, nuts and Maror are not eaten from Shabbat morning until Shulchan Orech of the Seder.

#### ☞ SOF ZMAN ACHILAT CHAMETZ (SHABBAT MORNING)

One must stop eating Chametz, according to the Magen Avraham 10:17am and according to the Gra and the Baal Hatanya 10:41am, and wash his hands and mouth at a sink which is not being used for Pesach foods. One may floss or use a toothpick on Shabbat if he does so regularly (for then it is not inevitable that his gums will bleed), but the floss itself needs to have been cut before Shabbat.

#### ☞ DESTROYING THE CHAMETZ (SHABBAT MORNING)

One may still benefit from Chometz until the end-time of Destroying the Chametz (according to the Magen Avraham 11:30am and according to the Gra and the Baal Hatanya 11:42am).

One should inspect and clean any Chametz eating areas (including floors), ensuring that any remaining pieces or crumbs of Chametz are flushed down the toilet before the end-time of destroying the Chametz (according to the Magen Avraham 11:30am and according to the Gra and the Baal Hatanya 11:42am).

One should also clean his clothes, including pockets and cuffs, of any Chametz traces.

All the crumbs and leftover Chametz should be destroyed by flushing it down the toilet, however, if it is too big to be disposed of in the toilet, it should be given as a gift to a Non-Jew.

If there is no Non-Jew available, it should be placed outside and have chemicals poured over it to destroy it.

If one can not do any of the above, one should be mevatel the Chametz in his possession and cover it until after Pesach after which it should be disposed of in the garbage.



Before the end-time of destroying the Chametz, one recites the second Kol Chamira, ensuring that he understands its meaning. [Otherwise, he should recite it in a language that he understands.] He should do so now even if he accidentally recited it on Friday when the Chametz was burned.

The accompanying Yehi Ratzon, which was already recited yesterday, is not repeated at this time.

One should recite Kol Chamira even if he did not destroy any of the Chametz (e.g. a child or guest).

### 🌀 CHAMETZ AFTER THIS TIME

On *Pesach*, one cannot benefit from any *Chametz* – even belonging to a non-Jew. [Examples include sitting on a sack of flour, enjoying the smell of *Chametz*, selling or giving *Chametz* to a non-Jew, feeding *Chametz* to an animal – even one that is ownerless, renting/lending any item to a non-Jew when it is known or he clearly states that he will use it for *Chametz*, or placing an order for *Chametz* to be delivered right after *Pesach*.]

One may not assume responsibility for any *Chametz* on *Pesach*, even if it belongs to a non-Jew. [Examples include providing a delivery service, storing it in one's property or warehouse, or relying on it as collateral for a loan.] If one did assume responsibility for such *Chametz* before *Pesach*, he must include it in *Mechirat Chametz*.

One may not touch *Chametz* throughout *Pesach*, unless while destroying it. [On *Shabbat* and *Chag*, there is the additional concern of *Muktzah*.] One may also not eat at the same table as a non-Jew eating *Chametz*, even if they are not acquainted, and even if there is a *Heker* (item serving as a reminder) in between.

One must prevent a gentile employee from bringing *Chametz* onto his premises. A gentile who is not an employee may enter with *Chametz* and eat it on site, provided that one doesn't thereby assume any responsibility for the *Chametz*. One must also ensure that the gentile removes the *Chametz* from the premises as soon as he leaves, and the area must be cleaned.

### 🌀 FINDING CHAMETZ AFTER THIS TIME

If one finds *Chametz* on *Erev Pesach* after the end-time for *Biur Chametz* – or on *Chag*, he should cover it immediately without moving it, as it is *Muktzah*. He should burn it immediately after *Chag*. [If, for whatever reason, the *Chametz* is already in someone's hand, he should be directed to immediately flush it down the toilet.]

If one finds *Chametz* on *Chol Hamoed*, or after *Pesach*, he should burn it immediately.

When burning such *Chametz*, the *Brachah* of *Al Biur Chametz* is recited only when **all** the following conditions are met:

- It is definite *Chametz*.
- It belongs to him.
- It is a *Kezayit* or bigger.
- It is still *Pesach* (not before or after).
- It was not in his possession at the time when the *Rav* sold the *Chametz*.

If a guest mistakenly brings *Chametz* as a gift, one should intend to not acquire it. One should also remember not to handle it directly on *Chag*, and should follow the instructions above for destroying it.

### 🌀 EREV PESACH AFTERNOON

Parents should ensure that their children nap during the day, so that they are awake and alert for the *Seder*.

It is forbidden to eat a proper meal once the tenth Halachic hour of the day begins

(3:51pm), in order to eat the Matzah at night with a healthy appetite. However, one may snack in small quantities that won't ruin his appetite for the Seder.

### 🌀 MINCHA EREV PESACH (SHABBAT)

Mincha is *davened* a bit earlier than usual, in order to recite “*Seder Korban Pesach*” before sunset. [If one is late, he should still recite it after sunset.]

Some have the custom to say “*Seder Korban Pesach*” at the kotel.

One does not say Tzidkatecha during Mincha.

Some have the custom to have a second Shabbat Hagadol Drashah.

Mincha time is a special and auspicious time to ask for anything needed.

After Mincha, some have the custom to read the Haggadah from “*Avadim Hayinu*” until “*L'chaper Al Kol Avonoteinu*”. Some follow this with the “*Seder Korban Pesach*”. [If one is late, he should still recite it after sunset.]

### 🌀 PREPARATION FROM SHABBAT TO CHAG

One may not perform any preparations on Shabbat for Chag. [However, during Bein Hashmashot, one may instruct a non-Jew to prepare that which would be permissible for a Jew to perform on Chag.]

Some have the custom to change clothing from Shabbat to Chag. It should be done towards evening, some hold even earlier in order to make sure there are no Chametz crumbs in the cuffs of the Shabbat clothing.

One can sleep to prepare for the Seder on Shabbat.

If one is doing the seder at another location, they may not prepare anything to be ready to leave right after Shabbat.

Besides the above, one can not prepare anything for Chag while it is still Shabbat which ends at 7:32pm.

### 🌀 MATZAH

One should use *Matzah* produced from wheat, and not from other grains (such as spelt), unless there are health concerns.

Many, including Chabad, have the custom to use only round hand-made *Shmurah-Matzah* during *Pesach*.

Some do not use Egg-*Matzot* on *Pesach*.

If a *Matzah* folded over during baking, or it has a large bubble, one should not eat of that area or its perimeter (at least 2cm).

Many, including Chabad, have the custom not to eat “*Gebrochts*”. One is extremely meticulous to ensure that the *Matzah* does not become moistened.

For those particular regarding “*Gebrochts*,” the *Matzot* on the table should be covered to prevent liquid spilling on them, as well as to prevent *Matzah* crumbs from falling into liquids. Before pouring liquid into a vessel, one ensures that there are no *Matzah* crumbs in it, and any vessel that came into contact with *Gebrochts* is set aside and not used until *after Pesach*.

During *Pesach*, one does not pass his wet hand over his lips at *Mayim Achronim*, out of the concern that there might be *Matzah* crumbs remaining on his lips.

### 🌀 KITNIYOT

*Kitniyot* (legumes) are not eaten by Ashkenazim and some Sephardim on *Pesach*. Common examples include rice, millet, buckwheat, corn, peas, beans, lentils, sesame seeds, mustard, chickpeas, peanuts, soy and soybeans, tofu, sunflower and poppy seeds. It is best to avoid quinoa, as their status is unclear.

Commonly, you will find on Israeli products the term ליפתית. ליפתית – lupine is also *Kitniyot*.

*Kitniyot* derived oils are not used, such as canola, corn, peanut, safflower, sesame, sunflower, soybean (often labelled as vegetable oil) or rapeseed (flaxseed) oils. The status of cottonseed oil is debated, but it is generally regarded as non-*Kitniyot*.

*Kitniyot* may be used when necessary for the sick, infirm or babies (e.g. infant formulas and nutritional supplements). However, designated utensils should be used, and they should be kept separate from the rest of the *Pesach* utensils.

One may own and derive benefit from *Kitniyot* on *Pesach* (such as feeding pets).

If *Kitniyot* **inadvertently** fell into another food item on *Pesach*, it is nullified if the mixture contains more non-*Kitniyot* than *Kitniyot*. Such a mixture can be consumed even if it has a pronounced taste of *Kitniyot*, as long as no piece of *Kitniyot* is visually discernible. Nevertheless, it is common practice not to eat any item containing even a trace of *Kitniyot*.

### 🌀 PREVALENT CHUMROT

The *Arizal* stressed the importance of observing *Chumrot* on *Pesach*. The following practices are prevalent mainly in *Chabad* circles, the specifics of which may vary from family to family:

- Some peel or shell all fruits, vegetable and nuts before use.
- Some do not eat leafy vegetables which can't be peeled (besides romaine lettuce).
- To have a special pot exclusively for boiling eggs.
- To boil and strain sugar before *Pesach*.
- Some do not eat commercially prepared foods (besides *Matzah*, wine, meat and/or oil).
- Some do not use spices.
- Some use coarse salt and not fine salt.

- Some do not eat garlic and radishes.
- Not to use food that fell on the floor. (If peelable, one may peel it).
- To thoroughly wash any utensil that fell on the floor, or to set it aside and not use it until the following *Pesach*.
- Some do not drink any alcoholic beverages other than wine.
- Not to eat food prepared outside one's own home.
- Some do not eat dairy foods.
- Some do not drink tea or coffee.
- Some do not use potato starch.

To cook as much as possible prior to *Pesach*, since a speck of *Chametz* that is inadvertently mixed in becomes nullified then, unlike on *Pesach* itself.

### 🌀 FIRST NIGHT OF PESACH

Shabbat ends at 7:32pm. Maariv (and Kiddush) should not begin before this time, nor should tasks and preparations required for Chag be conducted before this time.

Vatodienu is recited during the Amidah of Maariv. [If one forgot to do so, he does not correct his mistake, but should say Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'Kodesh before doing anything forbidden on Shabbat but permitted on Chag. The same applies to a woman who will not be davening Maariv.]

The candles should be kindled with a pre-existing flame, and only after Shabbat ends (7:32pm). The Brachot are L'Hadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov followed by Shehecheyanu.

Candles must not be waxed into place, nor may the wicks be twisted. When necessary, one may remove the wax from the previous night in a way that it falls directly into the garbage.

On Chag, one may not relight a candle that extinguished for the first time on Shabbat.



When a man is required to light candles, he does not recite *Shehecheyanu*, as he will be doing so in *Kiddush*. [Therefore, it is best that he lights candles right before *Kiddush*, so that his *Shehecheyanu* is linked to both.]

If conducting the *Seder* elsewhere, one must derive some practical benefit from the candles after nightfall.

### 🌀 HALLEL

Many communities say the entire *Hallel* on the first night and day of *Pesach* during *Davening* (and the second night and day for those keeping two days). Some only say *Hallel* by the *Seder* and by day. Half *Hallel* is recited on the rest of the days of *Pesach*.

*Hallel* is recited standing (unless one is feeble or infirm).

When reciting the entire *Hallel*, one may not interrupt it – other than for those things that one may respond to during the *Brachot* of *Kriat Shema*. [I.e. If the *Chazzan* recites *Kedushah*, one responds *Kadosh*, *Baruch* and *Yimloch*. When the *Chazzan* says *Ha'E-l Hakadosh*, one answers *Amen*. When the *Chazzan* says *Modim*, one answers the three words *Modim Anachnu Lach*. When the *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish*, one answers *Amen Yehei Shmei* etc, and *Amen* to *d'amiran b'almah*. One also answers *Barchu* and *Amen* when the *Brachot* are recited before and after an *Aliyah* or *Haftorah*.]

When reciting half *Hallel*, one may respond *Amen* to any *Brachah*, but not *Baruch Hu u'Varuch Shmo*. One may also respond to *Barchu*, *Kaddish* and *Kedushah*.

It is preferable to recite *Hallel* with the *Minyan*. If one is not up to the *Minyan*, this creates a dilemma; on the one hand it is appropriate to recite *Hallel* with the congregation (if he hasn't yet begun *Baruch*

*She'omar*), and on the other hand, it is appropriate that one *davens* in the correct order. For this reason, many *Rabbanim* are punctilious about being up to *Hallel* when the *Minyan* recite it on *Chag*.

If one forgot to recite *Hallel*, he should recite it with a *Brachah* as soon as he remembers; the night *Hallel* may be recited until dawn, and the day *Hallel* may be recited until sunset.

If one mistakenly recited half-*Hallel* on the first night or day of *Pesach*, he must repeat the entire *Hallel* (without a *Brachah*).

### 🌀 FORGOT TO PREPARE THE SEDER ITEMS

If one forgot to prepare any of the items for the *Seder*, one can prepare only what is necessary for that night.

If one forgot to prepare the *Zeroah*, one may use a cooked chicken-neck instead. One may also roast a chicken-neck provided that he consumes its meat the following day (i.e. while it is still the same day of *Chag*). [This, in spite of the fact that the *Zeroah* is generally not eaten, as explained further.]

One may not grind horseradish on *Chag*. If it was not done on *Erev Chag*, one may chop it coarsely. Alternatively, one can suffice with romaine lettuce.

If one forgot to wash and check the romaine lettuce for bugs, it can be done on *Chag*.

If one forgot to prepare the *Charoset* on *Erev Chag*, one may grate it on *Chag* with a *Shinui*, such as by holding the grater backwards or grating directly onto the tabletop.

If one forgot to prepare the salt-water on *Erev Chag*, it may be prepared as usual on *Chag*.



## The Three Visits of Elijah the Prophet

By Yaakov Brawer

Twenty eight years ago, I attended a farbrengen (Chassidic gathering) in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn and set eyes on the Rebbe for the first time. The year that followed was truly a year of miracles, not the least of which was a visit by Elijah the Prophet.

On the first night of Passover my family and I, suffused with the wonder of our newly discovered Chassidism and aflame with inspiration, were seated around the seder table. I had never before experienced a seder with such spiritual delight and longing for redemption.

At the conclusion of the meal, the cup of Elijah was filled and my six year old son, candle in hand, was sent to open the front door, an old fashioned, ponderous wooden structure that was secured with a heavy iron latch. The door could be seen clearly from where I sat.

However, before my son could take a step, the door unlatched and swung wide open. No one, or at least no one visible, was there. My son dropped the candle and ran to his mother. I hesitantly got up and went to the open doorway. The night was clear and there was not so much as a breeze.

With us that Passover was my parents' housekeeper, a simple, devout, G d fearing

Catholic woman. She had come to us a few days before and stayed on to help with the children. During the seder, she stayed in her room, which was at the top of the stairs on the second floor. When she came down the next morning, she told us that during the night, she had heard the front door open and that she was suddenly and inexplicably overcome by an intense, awesome feeling of fear.

My second encounter with Elijah occurred on the following Passover. In the interim, we had moved from Boston to Montreal. As Passover approached and we immersed ourselves in the seemingly endless scrubbing, kashering, buying, and cooking, the exertion was sweetened by anticipations of the seder. Moreover, in light of the experience of the past year, it was not unreasonable to hope that Elijah would visit us, once again, in person.

The night of Passover arrived and the seder was conducted with joy and expectation. In due course, the cup of Elijah was filled and I sent my (now) seven year old and his four year old brother to open the front door. Our home in Montreal occupied the second story of a duplex, so that the front door was downstairs. I heard the children open the door, and then I heard screams of terror and

the sound of their feet scrambling up the steps.

They burst into the dining room, faces white with fear, and they babbled and clung to me as if their very lives were threatened.

Although their agitated jabbering was totally unintelligible, I wondered whether Elijah had not appeared this time in visible form. After all, it all made a great deal of sense.

When Elijah had arrived last year, I was not yet worthy to behold his presence. Now, however, after a whole year of studying Tanya, and donning the additional "Rabeinu Tam" tefillin as per Chassidic custom, and after having been to the Rebbe a half a dozen times - perhaps I had reached the state of personal perfection necessary for a full revelation of Elijah.

I disengaged myself from my hysterical offspring and went downstairs to greet the prophet. What I encountered, however, was something else. There, at the entrance, was not the angelic figure of Elijah, but two massive dogs sitting on the front porch. I now understood the children's delirium. My kids would cross the street if they saw a miniature poodle leashed to its owner two blocks away.

At a distance of one block they would begin to tremble and whimper. These two dogs were truly grotesque. They looked like those prehistoric carnivores whose fossilized remains populate the LaBrea tar pits. They placidly sat on my porch contemplating me with mild curiosity. I could not imagine what they were doing there.

I closed the door and dejectedly climbed the stairs. How was I to explain to my family that after six trips to the Rebbe, a year of

learning Tanya, and putting on Rabeinu Tam's tefillin in addition to the regular, requisite Rashi tefillin, I was worthy to be visited on Passover night by a couple of dogs? As it turned out, however, they weren't ordinary dogs.

On the following morning in shul, I was approached by one of the Yeshivah administrators who asked if I could take a guest for the midday meal. One of the supporters of the Yeshivah had a son who was studying law at an American school, and while there, he had become attracted to Torah learning and Jewish observance. He was now home, visiting his parents for Passover, and this administrator thought it would be a good idea if I spoke with him. I readily agreed.

We were introduced, and following the morning prayers, my children, my guest and I set out for home. As we reached my house, my guest became excited and exclaimed "I don't believe it! This can't be real".

I asked him what the excitement was about. My guest told me that he had come to Montreal the day before Passover. With him, were his two pet dogs. Just before the seder at his parents' home, the dogs escaped and ran out into the street. By the time their absence was noticed, they were nowhere to be seen, and my guest took to the streets to search for them. Hours later, he found them, very far from home, in a strange neighborhood, sitting on someone's front porch. That someone was me.

Providence had guided those monsters, his "pets", to my house. The experience left a deep impression on all of us and I felt

particularly uplifted. If Elijah did not exactly come in person, at least he sent his dogs.

My guest and I became friends and in time, he embraced Torah completely, married, and raised a wonderful Chassidic family.

The third visit, which occurred the following year and has been repeated ever since, is somewhat less dramatic. Following grace after the meal, the cup of Elijah is filled, and my grandchildren go to the door, candles in hand. The door is opened, the appropriate verses are recited and that's it. Although it would be improper and incorrect to refer to it as a "no show", it is a very low key visit.

In truth, intuition notwithstanding, this third visit is the most momentous of all, but one must know how to appreciate it. Last year, while spending Passover with my eldest son (the six- and seven-year old in the above accounts) he related a story about the Rebbe of Kotsk that puts this third visit in proper focus.

One year the Kotsker Rebbe promised his Chassidim that Elijah the Prophet would be revealed at his seder. On the first night of Passover, the Rebbe's dining room was crammed with Chassidim. The air was electric with anticipation and excitement. The seder progressed, the cup of Elijah was filled and the door opened. What happened next, left the Chassidim speechless. Nothing. Nothing happened. There was no one there.

The Chassidim were crushed. After all, the Rebbe had promised them a revelation of Elijah. The Kotsker, his face radiating holy joy, perceived their bitter disappointment and inquired as to what was the problem. They told him. "Fools!" he thundered. "Do you

think that Elijah the Prophet comes in through the door? Elijah comes in through the heart."

The true light of redemption comes from within. Miracles provide inspiration and cause us to direct our attention and efforts to spiritual truths. The ultimate miracle, however, is not the abrogation of nature, but the transformation of the natural into the G-dly.

Although the redemption from Egypt came from "without" - it was orchestrated and produced entirely by the Almighty, our Sages tell us the future and ultimate redemption will be the product of our own effort. Indeed, the whole point of liberating us from Egypt was to provide us with the opportunity to refine ourselves and the world around us to the extent that Divine Will which is the hidden source and root of all of existence becomes openly manifest.

This is what we achieve when we struggle to overcome the ego-centric inertia of worldly life. Every small, private, inner step on the path to spirituality and goodness is a step toward the Redemption. The Torah-study, good deeds, and character refinement with which we occupy themselves all year open the door of the heart to Elijah the Prophet and all that he represents.

When the cup of Elijah is filled this Passover and the front door is opened, don't concentrate on the doorway. If you peek into your heart, there's a very good chance that you will behold the holy prophet smiling back at you.



# How Much is a Matzah Worth?

**By Rabbi Pinchos Lipschutz**

How many advertisements have you seen that claim to “make your Pesach easier this year”? How often have you heard people complaining about the price of matzah?

Every time I hear or see such kvetching, I’d like to remind the person, who likely doesn’t know any better, that it wasn’t too long ago that Jews paid for matzah with their lives or blood, and how thankful we should be that we live in a time when Jews are free to hold a Seder, drink wine, and eat as much matzah as they want.

Rather than complaining, we should be thankful. Instead of seeing Chag as a difficult period, we should be thankful for the opportunity to have a break from the mundane and live on a higher plane, becoming closer to Hashem, raising our levels of kedusha, and living – at least for a few days – on a more sanctified level.

Not wanting to sound sanctimonious, I usually don’t respond when such comments are offered. I know that whatever I say will sound trite and I will be accused of being uncompassionate.

The next time someone complains about the expenses and “difficulties” of Chag, think of this story related by Rav Yaakov Galinsky as told to him by Rav Yitzchok Shlomo Ungar, who served as rav of K’hal Chug Chatam Sofer in Bnei Brak.

Hungarian Jewry was virtually the last to fall into the evil grip of the Nazis. During the last year of World War II, as the German army faced multiple defeats on the battlegrounds of Europe, they tightened their vice on Hungary. One million Hungarian Jews were herded into ghettos. Two months later, they were shipped off to death camps to be annihilated.

The protagonist of this story was one of those Jews. He arrived at the camp with his wife and children. They were sent straight to the gas chambers, while he was declared fit for work, tattooed with a number, and granted life. His bunkmate was a Rebbishe Ainikel (descendant of a Rebbe) who used every

available moment to learn Torah. He would constantly offer chizuk to our friend and others in the block.

One day, the bunkmate whispered to him that Pesach was coming. There was no shortage of marror, he said, but he wondered how they would be able to observe the mitzvah of eating a kezayit of matzah.

Our friend discovered where wheat was stored for the camp. Anybody caught taking anything faced being shot dead on the spot, but the Rebbishe Ainikel told our friend that he should be prepared to risk his life for the mitzvah. He began gathering a few wheat kernels at a time and hiding them until he had enough to make flour for two kezaitim of matzah. One day, he found two stones and used them to grind the kernels into flour. He heated a piece of metal, added water to the flour, and baked the mixture on the white-hot piece of metal.

He produced a fist-sized matzah, thick enough for two kezaitim, one for him and one for his friend. He hid the prize under his shirt and held his arm close to his body to keep the matzah from falling. If he’d get caught, he’d be dead in an instant. He got past one check, but at the entrance to his block stood a Nazi, who saw that one arm was held stiffly. He pulled the arm of the hapless man and the treasure fell to the floor.

The accursed Nazi beat the man until he fainted and fell to the floor atop his matzah. The Nazi continued stomping on him until he found another Jew to torture. The man came to, gathered as many of the crumbs and pieces of the matzah as he could, and dragged himself to his cot, where he fainted again.

His friend found him there and waited for him to awaken. When he did, with a wide smile upon his beaten face, he told his friend what had happened. He then opened his hand to reveal his treasure, a kezayit of matzah.

And that was when the dispute broke out.

His friend begged, “Please, let me have the matzah. I never missed having matzah at the Seder.”

He answered, “No way. It’s my matzah. I almost gave my life for it. I was beaten to a pulp and fainted a couple of times. I’m not giving it up.”

And so it went, back and forth, in that awful bunk of the death camp.

“Please. I will recite for you the whole Haggadah from memory, and also the entire Shir Hashirim. You can repeat after me word by word. Just let me have the matzah.”

“No.”

“I’ll give you my whole Olam Haba for that kezayit. I lost my wife. I lost my children. I lost everything. Please, let me have the matzah.”

“I also lost everything. But the matzah is mine and I am not giving it up.”

Finally, our friend, the one who is retelling the story, could take it no more and gave up. He allowed his bunkmate to eat the matzah and say the Haggadah, but the reward for the mitzvah was to accrue to him. They cried and laughed together, doing their best to relive the deliverance from Mitzrayim, and they prayed, “Leshanah haba’ah b’Yerushalayim,” with all their hearts.

The next day, they both went out on their work detail. The Rebbishe Ainikel began davening to himself. He got as far as Hallel and then collapsed and fell to the ground. He stood up and tried to walk, calling out the brachah, “Asher kideshanu bemitzvotav.” A Nazi bullet hit him just then. Hashem yikom damo.

The other man lived. After the war, he moved to Israel, established a new family, and became a member of the Chug Chatam Sofer kehillah.

All this he tells to Rav Ungar by way of introduction to his question.

Then he tells the rest of the story.

“Last night, that man came to me in a dream. He was dressed in white and his face was as bright as the morning sky. He said to me, ‘Do you remember when you let me eat the matzah on the condition that you get the s’char? I came to ask you to please let me have the reward for that mitzvah. I received

s’char (reward) for all the mitzvot I performed, except that one. It is the only mitzvah for which I received no reward. Please. I beg you to let me have the reward for that mitzvah.’

“In the dream, I responded to him. I reminded him that it was my matzah. ‘I had risked my life for it. I gathered the kernels. I ground them. I baked them. I snuck it into the camp. Each step could have gotten me killed. I was beaten for it. I could have died on the spot. You begged. You cried. I gave you the act of performing the mitzvah. At least I should get the s’char.’

“He knew I was right. He agreed. But he reminded me that he was the one who kept track of the calendar. It was he who knew that Chag was days away. He was the one who had prompted me to bake the matzah. He recited the Haggadah with me. And now he came down to this world from on high to ask for the reward for that mitzvah. It was that important to him.

“I turned him down. His face became extremely sad. He was very upset. And then he disappeared.

“With that, I woke up. My heart and mind were racing. What was I supposed to tell him? It was my mitzvah. I should get the reward. But how can I say no to a holy neshamah? How can I turn down the wish of a dead man?”

He asked Rav Ungar what he should do. Should he let the martyred man have the reward for the mitzvah of matzah or should he keep it for himself?

Rav Ungar told the man that this wasn’t a question for a Rav. It was a question for a Rebbe. He sent him to the Machnovke Rebbe and asked him to please return and share the response he receives.

He returned the next day and told Rav Ungar what happened by the Rebbe. He found out that the Rebbe saw people in the evenings and waited with bated breath at the Rebbe’s door until he was able to enter. Then he told his story.

The Rebbe told him that by right, he should give the reward to the other man.

“By right?” he exclaimed. “By right it belongs to me! My question is whether I should go beyond what is right and give it to him anyway.”

“No,” the Rebbe responded. “You need to understand. Every day, you put on tallis and tefillin. You daven three times a day and make 100 brachot daily. There’s Shabbat and Chag and so many other mitzvot that you perform. You have children who you were mechaneich (educated) to perform mitzvot, and thus you share in the reward for what they do. It is only fair that you be mevater (relinquish) and let the man have the reward for that mitzvah.”

The man conceded.

“Okay,” he muttered, “if the Rebbe feels that I have to give him the reward, I will.”

“No, not like that,” the Rebbe said. “You have to mean it. You have to do it b’lev shaleim (with a full heart).”

The Rebbe took a ring of keys from his pocket and gave them to the survivor.

“Here, this key opens the door to the Beit Midrash. There is nobody there. Go inside. With this key, open the Aron Kodesh (the Holy ark, where the Sefer Torah is kept). Stick your head in there. Pour out your heart to Hashem. Tell Him how you got to know the other man. Tell Him of your friendly relationship. Tell Him of the chizuk (encouragement) he gave you in that awful place. Tell Hashem that he gave you the idea to obtain matzah there.

“Tell Hashem what it was like that Seder night, the last night of that man’s life. And when you are done, tell Hashem that b’lev shalem you are mevater on the s’char for the mitzvah performed that night, and you surrender it to the other man, in order to give his neshamah (soul) a nachas ruach (peace of mind) in the olam ha’elyon (Upper World). When you are done, lock up and return to me.”

The man did as the Rebbe had told him. He recounted the whole experience in the camp. It took everything out of him. He could barely drag his legs away from the Aron Kodesh. He locked the Beit Midrash, but didn’t have the strength to return to the

Rebbe. He was drained. He gave the keys to the gabbai (warden) and asked him to tell the Rebbe that he would return the next day.

He went home, collapsed into bed, and fell asleep. His friend came to him in a dream once again. With a shining face and bright countenance, he said, “Thank you,” and was gone.

The next morning, the man went to daven in the minyan of the Rebbe. After davening, he went over to the Rebbe and told him what happened. The Rebbe was not surprised. He shared with the man a message that he remembered for the rest of his life and that we should take to heart, particularly in this period leading up to Chag. This is what he said: “Think about it. Your friend was a Rebbishe Ainikel. He grew up in a home of Torah and yirat Shamayim (fear of heaven). There is no doubt that he performed many mitzvot. To top it off, he merited to die al kiddush Hashem (sanctifying Hashem’s name). Even if Heaven would have had any complaints against him, they would have been erased. So he was a person who had only mitzvot and no aveirot (transgressions), which is why Chazal (our sages) say that in Gan Eden nobody can come close to people who were killed al kiddush Hashem. They are in the most exalted place.

“Yet, it was worth it for him to leave the bliss of basking in the glow of the Shechinah (Divine Presence of Hashem) to come down here, to come like a beggar, and plead with you to give him the reward of just one more mitzvah. Think about what that tells you regarding the value of a single mitzvah.

“And here we are, with the opportunity everywhere to pick up mitzvot, and we don’t run after them. Every parsha of the Torah, every Mishnah and every page of Gemara contains so many mitzvot, yet we lackadaisically waste time.

“Every time we help someone, when we just say a nice word to someone, we get another mitzvah, yet we ignore other people. Think about it.”

The man returned to Rav Ungar and told him all that happened and what the Rebbe said.

There are so many teachings of Chazal about the value of a mitzvah. There are so many lessons we have come across in our lifetimes about the reward that awaits those who fulfill Hashem's commandments, but rather than engage in a discussion of them as we usually do in this space, I thought to try something else and instead, transcribed this story.

How can we not be moved by it? Who can complain about the price of a kezayit of matzah after reading this? Who cannot feel proud to be a Jew? Who cannot be excited that Pesach – the Chag of cheirut (freedom), daled kosot (4 cups of wine), Mah Nishtanah and matzah – is almost here?

Let us get our priorities straight and enjoy and appreciate all we have been blessed with.

*Reprinted from an email of the Yated Ne'eman.*

## A Large Communal Pesach Seder

**By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles**

The year 5608 (1848) saw many wild outbreaks of violence in Eastern Europe. Not surprisingly, the Jews were the first victims.

Word spread in Szerdahely, Hungary, that a gang of robbers was preparing to overrun the town on the first night of Pesach, while all the Jews were sitting at their Seder tables. When the news was brought to the chief rabbi of the town, Rabbi Yehuda Assad, he decreed that all the Jews in town should join together to conduct one large communal Seder.

Immediately after the Evening Prayer for the first night of the Passover festival, the Jewish families of Szerdahely arranged themselves around large tables in a central hall. Rabbi Assad at the head of the main table, and spoke words of encouragement to the frightened citizens.

When the scout came running in with the news that the robbers were approaching the town gates, Rabbi Assad went out alone to meet them. Clad in his long white kittel, he walked confidently toward the violent men. On coming within sight of them, he lifted a shofar to his mouth and began to blow.

Confusion overwhelmed the robber gang. They began running wildly in all directions. A number of them were trampled to death by their companions' fleeing horses. A statue was later erected on that spot, to commemorate the events of that night.

The town's gentiles were driven to fury by the Rabbi's feat. They decided to attack him and waited in ambush in the town square. When the rabbi approached, the bakery owner - a violent man - ran out brandishing a sword. R' Yehuda Assad continued to walk toward him, unafraid.

Furious, the baker raised his sword with all his might, intending to bring it forcefully down on the rabbi. But a miracle occurred, and instead of piercing the rabbi's body, the sword swerved and cut off the baker's own hand.

The gentiles' respect for R' Yehuda rose sharply after this incident, and because of him they were careful to treat the entire Jewish community respectfully as well. As for the crippled baker, he wandered through the town for years, no longer able to work, warning his fellow gentiles and reminding them of what awaited those who dared harm a Jew.

*Reprinted from The Carlebach Haggadah.*



**PLEASE NOTE: THE FOLLOWING IS ONLY A PARTIAL LIST OF PRACTICES RELATING TO THE SEDER; THE BASIC DETAILS ARE READILY FOUND IN MOST HAGGADOT.**

## 🕊️ PREPARATION FOR THE SEDER

There are five *Mitzvot* specifically for the *Seder*, two are from the *Torah* and three from the *Rabbanan*, eating *Matzah* and to tell over the story of *Yetziat Mitzraim* (the exodus from Egypt) are from the *Torah*, eating *Maror*, drinking the four cups and eating the *Charoset* are from the *Rabbanan*.

Some have the custom to go to *mikvah* prior to the *Seder*.

One should dress in comfortable clothing for the *Seder*.

Some have the custom to give to the young children nuts, fruits and mini snacks so they should see a change and should ask, as well as to keep them awake, some give before the *Seder* and some give before they say *הא לחמא עניא*.

One should make sure that his household should fulfill all the *Mitzvot* of the night, four cups, telling of the story of leaving Egypt, rating *Matzah*, *Maror* and the *Afikoman*.

One should be particular to drink at least most of a *reviit* at least once and the fourth cup they should drink a *reviit* in one gulp.

There are some who say the *Simanei Haseder* (the order of the *Seder*) including *Nirtzah*, in it's correct place and there are some who say them first at the beginning of the *Seder*, and then once again at it's correct place, and there are some who just say at the beginning of the *Seder*.

If the younger children want to eat before the *Seder*, it's ok to give them moderately, so they do not fall asleep before it's time to ask the *Mah Nishtanah*.

The table should be set with the best utensils and finery – even if not actually needed for the *Seder* – as an expression of freedom. All the *Seder* items should be ready for the men to begin arranging the *Kaarah* (*Seder Plate*), as soon as they arrive home.

The *Seder* should begin as soon as possible, but only after the emergence of three stars (7:40pm). This is so that the children should try to stay awake to ask the four questions.

All men and boys (at least over *Bar Mitzvah*) should try to have their own *Kaarah* (*Seder Plate*). Each person arranges his own *Kaarah* immediately after returning from *Shul*.

A cloth, plate or tray is placed under the *Kaarah*. The *Matzot* should be unbroken and concave-shaped, and positioned so that they resemble a receptacle. They are inserted from bottom to top, with a cloth between each of them. Another cloth is placed on top upon which the *Kaarah* items are placed as per the arrangement described in the *Haggadah*.

A woman when she recites her own *Kiddush* should not say *Shehecheyanu*, as she already did so at candle-lighting.

Males lean to the left when drinking the four cups of wine, as well as when eating the *Matzah* at *Motzi-Matzah*, *Korach* and *Tzafon*. [If one forgot to lean for the second cup of wine or at *Motzi-Matzah*, he consumes them again whilst leaning, without repeating the *Brachah*. One may also drink the first cup if he forgot to lean, as long as he had in mind at the time of *Kiddush* that he might drink more wine before the second cup. For this reason,

it is proper to have such an intention during *Kiddush*. If one forgot to lean for anything else, he does not repeat it.]

One should drink red wine for each of the four cups. (White wine is not used at the *Seder* unless it is superior to all available red wines. Even then, one should add a little red wine to color it). If one cannot drink a full cup of wine, he or she may mix it with grape-juice. If even this is impossible, one may use only grape-juice. [One should avoid diluting the wine or grape-juice with water if possible.]

Each of the four cups should be entirely consumed without any pause. If this is not possible, one should keep any pause to an absolute minimum. At the very least, one should drink the majority of the cup, preferably in one swallow. [If even this is not possible, the barest minimum is *Rov Revi'it* (Chaim Naeh is at least 44ml, Chazon Ish is at least 76ml), preferably in one swallow. This applies only to the first three cups, but not the fourth – see further.]

One may drink water or other liquids (other than wine) between the first and second cups of wine. If he intended to do so when he recited *Kiddush*, then he does not make a *Brachah*; otherwise he recites *Shehakol*.

Children who are hungry may snack. However, if they are old enough to understand the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, they should not eat any *Matzah* until after *Maggid*.

Although a *Brachah* is not recited at *Urchatz*, one must still observe all the other *Halachot* of *Netilat Yadayim*. If one by accident makes the *Brachah*, he must jump to *Motzi Matzah* and then return to *Karpas*.

One dips the *Karpas* before making the *Brachah*, and should have in mind the *Maror* and *Korach* when making the *Brachah*. One should eat less than a *Kezayit* of *Karpas*. After

eating the *Karpas*, any remainder is not returned to the *Kaarah*.

At *Yachatz*, the *Matzah* is broken into two whilst covered in the *Kaarah*. [Ideally, the smaller piece should still be a *Kezayit*.] The larger piece is then broken into five, wrapped in a cloth, and put aside. [If the larger piece broke into more than five pieces, any extra pieces are not included in the *Afikoman*.]

Many have the custom for the children to “snatch” the *Afikoman*, to keep the children awake. (The Chabad custom is that the children do not snatch the *Afikoman*).

During *Maggid*, the *Haggadah* should be recited at a reasonable pace, joyously and in a loud voice, whilst sitting respectfully (and certainly not whilst leaning).

When it says in the *Haggadah* to raise the *Kaarah*, many have the custom to uncover the middle *Matzah* instead. Likewise, when it says to remove the *Kaarah*, many have the custom to cover the middle *Matzah* instead.

During *Ha Lachmah Anya*, the stress is placed on the syllable *Ba* in the first instance of *Haba'ah* and on the syllable *Ah* in the second instance of *Haba'ah*.

After the children ask *Mah Nishtanah*, everyone else – including the one leading the *Seder* – recites it quietly as well.

At *V'hi She'Amdah*, the middle *Matzah* is covered before picking up the wine. At its conclusion, the cup of wine is put down before the middle *Matzah* is uncovered.

After the ten plagues, a little wine is also poured out at each of the acronyms *Detzach Adash Be'Achav*.

One does not pause during the recitation of the fourteen *Dayenu's*.

When reciting *Matzah Zu*, one holds the *Levi* and *Yisroel Matzah* by means of the cloth surrounding them. When reciting *Maror Zu*,

one places his hands on the *Maror* and *Chazeret* on the *Kaarah*.

At *Lefichach* (near the end of *Maggid*), the middle *Matzah* is covered before picking up the second cup of wine. The cup isn't raised continuously from *Lefichach* until the *Brachah* concluding *Ga'al Yisrael*. Rather, it is set down for the two intervening paragraphs of *Hallelu-kah* and *BTzeit*.

In the *Brachah* after the first two paragraphs of *Hallel*, as it is *Motzei Shabbat*, some (including *Chabad*), change the order and say, "Min *Hapesachim* umin *Hazevachim*" instead of "Min *Hazevachim* umin *Hapesachim*".

One should endeavor not to speak unrelated matters from the beginning of *Motzi-Matzah* until the end of *Korach*.

For *Motzi-Matzah*, every person with a *Kaarah* eats two *Kezaytim* of *Matzah*; one *Kezayit* of the *Kohen Matzah* and one *Kezayit* of the *Levi Matzah*. If this is too hard, one may suffice with one *Kezayit* comprised from both of those *Matzot*. The pieces of the *Kohen* and *Levi Matzah* are eaten together, and not one after the other. One without a *Kaarah* is given a bit of the *Kohen* and *Levi Matzah* supplemented by other *Matzah*; they need eat only one *Kezayit* in total. [For *Motzi-Matzah*, one follows the stricter opinion that measures a *Kezayit* as *Chaim Naeh* 29 grams, *Chazon Ish* is at least 50 grams.]

The *Matzah* is not dipped into salt.

When eating *Motzi-Matzah*, as well as *Maror*, *Korach* and *Afikoman*, one should try consume them in the shortest time frame possible, ideally within four minutes.

*Maror* requires one *Kezayit* (combined from both the horseradish and romaine lettuce). [For *Maror*, one may follow the lenient opinion that measures a *Kezayit* at *Chaim Naeh* 19 grams, *Chazon Ish* is 33 grams.]

Wine from the bowl under the *Becher* is added to the *Charoset*.

Before making the *Brachah*, one dips the *Maror* slightly and rapidly into the *Charoset* and then shakes it off. One should have in mind the *Korach* when making the *Brachah* on the *Maror*.

*Korach* is comprised of one *Kezayit* of the *Yisroel Matzah*, and one *Kezayit* of *Maror* (combined from both the horseradish and romaine lettuce). [For both the *Matzah* and *Maror* of *Korach*, one may follow the lenient opinion that measures a *Kezayit* as *Chaim Naeh* 19 grams, *Chazon Ish* is 33 grams.]

In order that the *Matzah* does not get wet, the *Maror* (*Chazeret*) should not be dipped into the *Charoset*. Instead, dry *Charoset* should be sprinkled directly onto the *Maror* and then shaken off.

Some have the custom that *Shulchan Aruch* begins with the egg dipped in salt-water or chopped up egg in salt water as an egg soup. At this point, the remainder of the *Kaarah* may be removed from the table. One should not eat the *Zeroah*.

One does not lean when eating the meal. One should eat his fill, but pace himself so that he can eat the *Afikoman* without feeling bloated.

One does not recite a *Brachah* when drinking wine during the meal, as it is included with the *Brachah* over the second cup of wine. One should not say *L'Chaim*, and should pace his wine intake so as not to disturb the rest of the *Seder*.

For the *Afikoman*, one eats two *Kezaytim* of *Matzah*; one to commemorate the *Korban Pesach* and the other to commemorate the *Matzah* that was eaten with it. As the *Matzah* hidden at the time of *Yachats* is likely less than two *Kezaytim*, it should be supplemented with other *Matzah*.

At this point children who have “snatched” the *Afikoman* will barter it for a toy, a book or something else they want.

Those who do not have a *Kaarah* are given a little bit of the *Afikoman Matzah* supplemented by other *Matzah*.

If one finds it too hard to consume two *Kezaytim*, one may suffice with one *Kezayit*, but should stipulate that he thereby fulfills whichever commemoration is the primary one. [For *Afikoman*, one may follow the lenient opinion that measures a *Kezayit* as Chaim Naeh 19 grams, Chazon Ish is 33 grams.]

The *Afikoman* must be eaten in one place. Thus, one should not move from table to table, and certainly not from room to room.

Most are particular about eating the *Afikoman* before midnight (12:44am).

One does not eat or drink anything after the *Afikoman*, aside from the last two cups of wine. [Even with the last two cups, if one decided not to finish them because it was too hard, he cannot later change his mind and drink what remains.]

Some have the custom to fill the *Kos Shel Eliyahu* before *Birchat Hamazon*, and some have the custom to fill it after *Birchat Hamazon*.

The householder leads the *Mezuman*. Everyone holds the third cup of wine during the first three *Brachot* of *Birchat Hamazon*.

All the doors between the *Seder* and the public domain (or courtyard) are opened for *Shefoch Chamatchah El Hagoyim*.

Those who open the door take a candle with them and say *Shefoch Chamatchah El Hagoyim* whilst standing at the door, whereas those who stay at the table remain seated. The next paragraph (*Lo Lanu*) is begun only after those at the door return.

Many Chassidic Rebbes said, “During the *Seder*, and especially when the door is opened at *Shefoch Chamatchah El Hagoyim*, the gates to heaven are open and you can ask for your personal requests, and then *Hashem* will help ... One shouldn’t request only physical matters; but also spiritual matters!”

When reciting *Hallel*, the householder leads all the participants in the four stanzas of *Hodu* and *Ana Hashem* in the same responsive manner as the *Chazzan* in *Shul*.

During *Hallel Hagadol*, one thinks of the four letters of *Hashem’s* name: The letter *Yud* during the first ten stanzas, the letter *Hey* during the next five stanzas, the letter *Vov* during the next six stanzas, and the letter *Hey* during the final five stanzas.

One must drink at least an entire *Revi’it* at the fourth cup of wine, in order to recite the *Brachah Acharonah*. [It is in any case ideal to consume the whole cup without pause.]

At the conclusion of the *Seder*, the wine from the *Kos Shel Eliyahu* is returned to the bottle. [Wine should first be added to the *Kos Shel Eliyahu* before returning it to the bottle, so that the wine in the bottle does not become *Pagum*.]

### 🌀 YA’ALEH VEYAVO IN BIRCHAT HAMAZON

If one forgets *Ya’aleh Veyavo* in *Birchat Hamazon*, but remembers before saying *Hashem’s* name at *Bonei Yerushalayim*, he goes back. If one remembered after that, but before beginning the next *Brachah*, he recites the extra *Brachah* as printed in some *Birkonim*. If one began even the first word of the next *Brachah*, one must begin *Birchat Hamazon* again if it is one of the two required meals of *Chag*, but not if it is a third optional meal, or *Chol Hamoed*.

The *Harachamon* for *Chag* is recited.

### 🌀 FIRST NIGHT

As *Hashem* watched over us *Seder* night, it is therefore called *Leil Shimurim*. On *Leil*



*Shimurim*, some only say the first paragraph of *Kriat Shema* and *Hamapil* before going to sleep.

### 🌀 PESACH DAY: DAVENING & TEFILLAT TAL

Full *Hallel* is recited, as mentioned above.

After the *Kaddish* right before *Mussaf*, the *Gabbai* announces “*Morid Hatal*”. From that point on, one recites “*Morid Hatal*” in the *Amidah*.

If one heard this announcement before *davening Shacharit*, he recites “*Morid Hatal*” in the *Amidah* of *Shacharit* as well. [One should try to avoid such a situation.] This does not apply when one is *davening Shacharit* together with another *Minyan*.

Someone *davening* at home without a *Minyan* should recite *Mussaf* only after he estimates that the *Gabbai* has already made the announcement.

The *Chazzan* recites the special *Tefillah* of *Tal* during the *Chazzan's* repetition. The congregation recites each paragraph that begins with *Tal* before the *Chazzan*.

If one mistakenly said “*Morid HaGeshem*”:

- If one realized before saying *Hashem's* name at the end of the *Brachah*, he returns to the beginning of the *Brachah*.
- If one already concluded the *Brachah*, he must return to the beginning of *Amidah*.
- If one did not realize his error until the time for that *Tefillah* passed, he must *daven* the next *Tefillah* twice. [E.g. If he said “*Morid HaGeshem*” at *Shacharit*, he must recite the *Mincha Amidah* twice.] Between the two *Tefillot*, he should wait the span of time to walk four *Amot*, and preferably, he should recite words of supplication between them.

If one is in doubt whether he said *Morid Hatal*, for the first thirty days, he should assume that he did not, and after thirty days he should assume that he did.

In many communities, the *Chazzan* adds a prayer *ותערב* before *ותחזינה*. This is not the *Chabad* custom.

### 🌀 MOTZEI FIRST DAY

*Sefirat Haomer* is recited; see page 47.

Some have the custom to learn one *daf* of *Masechet Sotah* each day of *Sefirat Haomer*.

On the first day of *Sefirat Haomer*, one learns the “*Sha'ar Blatt*”, as *Masechet Sotah* has 49 pages, starting with page 2.

### 🌀 V'TEIN BRACHAH

Beginning on the first night of *Chol Hamoed*, we start reciting *V'tein Brachah* in *Barech Alenu*.

If one said *V'tein Tal Umatar*, but realized before saying *Hashem's* name at the end of the *Brachah*, he returns to the beginning of the *Brachah*.

If one already concluded the *Brachah* and has continued with the *Amidah*, he must go back to the *Brachah* of *Barech Alenu*, and continue from there to the end of the *Amidah*. If he already began reciting (the second) *Yih'yu L'ratzon*, he must repeat the entire *Amidah*.

- If one did not realize his omission until the time for that *Tefillah* has passed, he must *daven* the next *Tefillah* twice. [E.g. If one said *V'tein Tal Umatar Livrachah* during *Shacharit*, he must recite the *Amidah* of *Mincha* twice.] Between the two *Tefillot*, he should wait the span of time to walk four *Amot* (approximately two metres), and preferably, he should recite words of supplication between them.
- If one said *V'tein Tal Umatar Livrachah* in *Mincha* of *Erev Shabbat*, he does not repeat the *Amidah* of Friday night.
- If one is in doubt whether he said *V'tein Brachah*, for the first thirty days he should assume that he did not.

### ☞ YA'ALEH VEYAVO IN DAVENING

If one forgets *Ya'aleh Veyavo* in *davening*, but remembers before saying *Hashem's* name at the end of *Hamachazir Shechinato L'tziyon*, he goes back to *Retzei*. If he remembered between the conclusion of that *Brachah* and *Modim*, he recites it at that point, without going back. If he remembers after that point, but before taking three steps back, he returns to the beginning of *Retzei*. If he remembers after taking three steps back, *Amidah* is repeated.

If one is unsure whether he recited *Ya'aleh Veyavo*, *Amidah* is repeated.

If one forgot *Ya'aleh Veyavo* during *Shacharit*, and only realised after *Mussaf*, he does not repeat *Shacharit*.

If one forgot *Ya'aleh Veyavo* during *Mincha* or *Maariv*, and only realized after the *Zman* of *Tefillah* has passed, he must recite an additional *Amidah* in the next *Tefillah*, as compensation. Between the two *Tefillot*, he should wait the span of time to walk four *Amot* (approx. two metres), and preferably, he should recite words of supplication between them.

### ☞ CHOL HAMOED

On the first night of *Chol Hamoed*, *Havdalah* is recited without *Besamim* and candles. Some hold *V'Yiten Lecha* is not recited and some do say it.

One does not fill the cup to overflow as one does regularly for Shabbat.

*Mizmor L'Todah* is not recited on *Pesach*.

Half-*Hallel* is recited during *Chol Hamoed* as well as on the last day of *Pesach*.

Two Sifrei Torah are used each day of *Chol Hamoed*, 3 Aliyot from the first and a fourth from the second Torah.

On *Chol Hamoed*:

- One should try to wear Shabbat or elegant clothing .

- One washes for *Matzah*, eats meat and drinks a cup of wine every day.
- One allocates more time for learning.

Many activities are prohibited during *Chol Hamoed*, including (but not limited to) business activity, trade, moving homes, gardening, sewing, laundering (unless for children who soil their clothing frequently, but only as required), preparing food for after *Chag*, cutting nails (unless it was done on *Erev Pesach* as well) and taking haircuts. One may not instruct a non-Jew to perform these activities for him either.

For the sake of *Chol Hamoed* or the last days of *Chag*, one may professionally repair any item which is directly involved in food preparation (e.g. oven or fridge), or which provides direct benefit to the body (e.g. the plumbing, electricity or air-conditioning), provided that it wasn't practical to fix prior to *Chag* (e.g. it broke on *Chag*).

One should avoid writing. If it cannot be deferred until after *Chol Hamoed*, one should write with a *Shinui*. However, calligraphy and artistic drawing or painting is prohibited.

Unless needed for *Chag*, one should not shop for utensils, appliances or clothing. [One may be lenient if the item is significantly discounted and it cannot be purchased later for a similar price.]

If an employee's job involves activities that are not performed on *Chol Hamoed*, he should arrange to take leave, unless his absence will jeopardize his employment.

Routine medical exams that can easily wait should not be scheduled for *Chol Hamoed*.

One who goes fruit-picking or fishing on *Chol Hamoed* may only collect that which will be used during the remainder of *Chol Hamoed* or on the last day of *Chag*.

One who goes to a farm or zoo may not feed the animals *Chametz*, even if neither the animal nor the *Chametz* belongs to him. [One

should also remember the *Brachah* of *Meshane Habriyot* at the zoo when applicable.]

### ☞ EREV SHVI' I SHEL PESACH

Just like on *Erev Shabbat*, it is preferable to refrain from eating a proper meal once the tenth *Halachic* hour of the day begins (3:52pm), in order to properly enjoy the *Chag* meal at night. However, one may snack in small quantities.

Those who go to Mikva regularly should go after Chatzot (12:42pm)

One gives *Tzedakah* for *Chag*.

Since Shvi'i Shel Pesach is Shabbat, the candles should be kindled at the usual forty minutes (in Jerusalem) before sunset (6:23pm), and certainly not after sunset (7:03pm).

The Brachah is Shel Shabbat v'Shel Yom Tov, but Shehecheyanu is not recited. [If one mistakenly omitted either Shabbat or Yom Tov entirely – if she realized within the time frame it takes to say three words, she corrects her mistake. Otherwise, there is a debate whether to repeat the Brachah, and how. One should take great care to avoid this dilemma in the first place.]

If eating out, one should ensure that practical benefit is derived from the candles after Chag begins.

### ☞ SHVI' I SHEL PESACH NIGHT

As it is Erev Shabbat, those who regularly say Pasach Eliyahu should recite it before Mincha, but not Hodu.

*Kabbalat Shabbat* begins with *Mizmor L'David*, and not with *L'chu Neranenah*. Some begin with *Mizmor Shir L'Yom Hashabbat*. In *Lecha Dodi*, some say all the verses and some say only the first and last two.

Some don't say פגונה and some, including Chabad, do say it. Those who usually say במה מדליקין, do not say it.

The *Amidah* is for Pesach, however, as it is also Shabbat, all the Shabbat selections are added. If one did not make any mention of Shabbat in the middle Brachah, or he mistakenly davened the regular *Amidah* of Shabbat: If he did not yet finish reciting the second Yih'yu L'ratzon (at the end of the passage of Elokai N'tzor), he should return to the beginning of the middle Brachah (i.e. Atah Vechartanu). Otherwise, he must repeat the whole *Amidah*.

After the *Amidah*, the Shabbat selections are recited – Vayechulu, the Brachah of Me'ein Sheva and Mizmor L'David.

Those who have the custom of avoiding Kiddush between 6:40pm and 7:40pm on Friday night applies even when it falls on Shvi'i Shel Pesach.

*Shalom Alechem* and *Eishet Chayil* (as well as all the other selections prior to *Kiddush*) are recited in an undertone.

Yom Hashishi is then recited aloud, followed by Hagafen and the Pesach Kiddush (including the Shabbat additions) Shehecheyanu is **not** recited.

One drinks a cup of wine every day of Pesach. This should be paid special attention by those who did not make their own Kiddush.

### ☞ BENTCHING ON SHVI' I SHEL PESACH

If one forgets Retzei and/or Ya'aleh Veyavo on Shvi'i Shel Pesach: If he remembers before saying Hashem's name at the end of Bonei Yerushalayim, he goes back. If he remembered after that, but before beginning the next Brachah, he recites the relevant Brachah printed in the Birkon.

[There are three separate Brachot – one if only Retzei was forgotten, another if only Ya'aleh Veyavo was forgotten, and a third when both were forgotten.] If one already began the first word of the next Brachah, one must begin bentching again.



The Harachamon of Shabbat and Chag are recited, in that order.

### ☞ SEUDAT CHAG

The joy of *Shvi'i Shel Pesach* is greater than the rest of *Pesach*.

Some have the custom to stay awake and learn the entire night of *Shvi'i Shel Pesach*.

### ☞ SHVI'I SHEL PESACH – DAY

All the Shabbat selections are added in the Amidah of Shacharit and Mussaf. [See the section “Shvi’I Shel Pesach Night” for details regarding one who forgot.]

There are some who read Megillat Shir Hashirim at Shacharit before reading from the Torah.

As it is Shabbat, the special selections normally added for Chag when opening the Aron Hakodesh are omitted.

The congregation stands and faces the Sefer Torah while the Shirah is read.

*Yizkor* is recited before *Mussaf*.

Before *Musaf*, *Yekum Parkan* is recited as per a regular Shabbat.

For the daytime Kiddush, all the selections associated with the Shabbat daytime Kiddush – from *Mizmor L'David* until *Al Kein* (inclusive) are recited in an undertone, followed by *Eileh Moadei* in a loud voice.

After *Mincha* and before sunset, some have the custom to wash for *Matzah* and participate in a *Seudah* (the Chabad custom is to include four full cups of wine). This is called by some the *Seudat Ba'Al Shem Tov* and by some *Seudat Moshiach*.

### ☞ ISRU CHAG

One should wait a short time after *Pesach* before eating *Chametz*, in order to allow time for the *Rav* to buy back the *Chametz*.

*Pirkei Avot* is studied between *Mincha* and *Maariv* each *Shabbat* afternoon, starting the *Shabbat* after *Pesach* and ending the *Shabbat* before *Rosh Hashanah*, some only say until *Shavuot*.





# The Jewish Weekly

## Lag b'Omer in Meron...Again and Again

By Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

The students in the school in Ramat Gan were astonished. The man wearing the uniform of Hevrat Hashmal - the Israel Electric Company - who had come to explain to them the dangers and safety precautions involved in electricity use, was wearing a black eye patch over one eye. Perhaps they thought he was a wounded war veteran?

But when he gave the same talk a week later in the elementary school of Kfar Chabad, he no longer wore the eye patch. After he finished, one of the teachers, Rabbi Chayim Ben-Natan, invited him to wrap tefillin. The man accepted with alacrity. When he finished saying the Shma Yisrael prayer and removing the boxes and straps with the rabbi's help, Meir (not his real name) offered to tell Ben-Natan his story.

For many years he has suffered from diabetes. Recently, he developed a painful eye problem and a loss of vision in one of his eyes. As this was diabetes-related, the doctors all insisted that no cure is possible. His most recent doctor gave him some salve to put on the bad eye to ease the pain, and a black patch to cover it so as not to compromise the vision of his remaining good eye.

His incomplete vision made it impossible for him to continue working as a technician. Instead, the IEC trained him to give presentations to school children about electricity.

One time he was driving in the Galilee to an appointment at a school in Carmiel. On the way, he called his office to check in and confirm the directions. His supervisor, a religious Jewess, upon hearing his location, recommended that he detour to one of the holy burial sites in the North of Israel and pray there for an improvement in his condition.

"Why not?" he thought to himself. "It can't hurt." And off he went to Meron, to the burial site of the great sage of the Mishna and Zohar, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai.

As he stood there praying with one hand on the tomb marker (clearly this was not on Lag b'Omer!), he heard a man at a nearby table groaning and repeatedly crying out, "Hashem, G-d, help me, please! In the merit of Rabbi Shimon, help me now!"

When Meir finished his own prayer, he turned away from the tomb marker. The man who had been crying out stared at him in wide-eyed amazement, and suddenly grabbed his arm! "Praise G-d! Give thanks to the Al-mighty. My prayers are answered. Rabbi Shimon sent you to me!"

"What are you talking about?" Meir said calmly. "Nobody sent me here."

"It's true. It's true!" proclaimed Uri (not his real name) loudly, refusing to release Meir's arm. "I have a wife and five children at home and no electricity. I've been praying for hours to get my electricity back, and here you are from the Electric Company." He pointed to the IEC insignia on Meir's uniform. "Clearly you were sent here to help me. Now give me back my electricity!"

Uri explained that his electricity had been cut off because he owed thousands of shekels in unpaid bills, which he could not afford to pay. He then resumed demanding that Meir give him back his electricity, speaking louder and louder. Meir tried to explain that the nature of his job was in no way related to Uri's problem, not technically, not financially. None of his disclaimers helped. Uri would not relent in his belief that "obviously" Meir had been sent by Heaven and Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai to help him get his electricity restored.

Despairing of ever being able to make Uri be sensible, and in danger of being late to his assignment, Meir finally asked Uri for the number of his account. Uri showed him his most recent bill. Meir said, "Look, let me step outside, and I'll call someone very important in management, check what the situation is, and try to arrange something for you."

Uri grinned in anticipation and stepped back. Meir went out, used his IEC internal communication device to check Uri's account, verified that he owed 2500 shekels...and paid the entire bill with his own credit card number!

Returning inside, he told Uri, "Okay, it is all arranged with the company. You can go home. In two hours you will have electricity." Uri pumped Meir's hand enthusiastically. He couldn't thank him enough. "You see," he said, "I was right that Rabbi Shimon sent you to me."

Meir went to his car, shaking his head in amazement at his own spontaneous kind deed. About ten minutes, later, half way to his destination, he had to pull over to the side of the road. His bad eye was itching so badly he couldn't wait any longer to remove his patch in order to rub his eye. Taking off the patch with his right hand, he moved his left hand towards his eye to massage it, when all of a sudden he realized that he was seeing through the windshield with the eye that had been under the patch. Seeing normally! His vision was fully restored!

The various doctors that Meir had been seeing could not believe their own eyes. "This can only be a miracle," each one proclaimed, even if it was not clear that before this episode they believed in miracles. Meir smiled, understanding the simple formula: If you provide light for another Jew, G-d will provide light for you. And also, as the Talmud states, "Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai can be relied on in desperate situations."

🌀 WHEN

*Sefirat Haomer* is performed right after *Tzeit Hakochavim*, and at the conclusion of *Ma'ariv* (right before *Aleinu*).

From half an hour prior to sunset until after one (*davens Maariv* and) counts the *Omer*, one may not eat more than a *K'beitzah* (Chaim Naeh is 55cc, Chazon Ish is 100cc) of bread or *Mezonot*. If, for whatever reason, one began a meal prior to sunset, he is not required to interrupt it when the time of *Sefirah* arrives. However, if one began after sunset, he must interrupt it to count *Sefirat Haomer* as soon as the time arrives.

If one appoints a *Shomer* (guardian) to remind him to count the *Omer*, or he will be attending a later *Minyan* where he regularly *davens*, he may eat prior.

One may not perform manual labour from sunset until after he counts the *Omer*.

If one realized that he forgot to count the *Omer*, he may still count with a *Brachah* the entire night until dawn, but should hurry to do so as soon as possible.

If, for any reason, one counted the *Omer* any time between *Plag Hamincha* and *Tzeit Hakochavim*, he should count again after *Tzeit Hakochavim* without a *Brachah*.

The same applies when one heard someone else counting the *Omer* any time between *Plag Hamincha* and *Tzeit Hakochavim*, even if he had no intention to be *Yotzeh* (fulfil the requirements of a *Mitzvah*) from him, unless he had explicit intention to **not** be *Yotzeh*.

If one must *daven* with a *Minyan* that is *davening Maariv* between sunset and *Tzeit Hakochavim*, he should count along with

them without a *Brachah*, stipulating as follows: "If I forget to count later tonight, then I fulfil my obligation with this count; if I do not forget to count later tonight, then I do not fulfil my obligation with this count". After *Tzeit Hakochavim*, he counts again with a *Brachah*.

🌀 HOW

One should stand for *Sefirat Haomer*. In extenuating circumstances (such as infirmity), or after the fact, one is *Yotzeh* even if he was sitting or reclining.

Before reciting the *Brachah*, some have the custom to say *Leshem Yichud*. One should ensure that he knows which night of the *Omer* it is. [Therefore, the congregation recites *Sefirah* only after the *Chazzan* recites it.] Nevertheless, if he recited the *Brachah* without knowing which night of the *Omer* it is, or even if he intended to count the wrong night, he does not need to repeat the *Brachah*.

After reciting the *Brachah*, one should not pause or speak before counting the *Omer*, even to answer *Omen* to someone else's *Brachah*. If one did speak, he needs to repeat the *Brachah* only if his words were unrelated to the counting.

When reciting the actual *Sefirah*, one must know its meaning; otherwise, he does not fulfil his obligation. If necessary, one may recite *Sefirah* in any language that he understands.

The chapter of *Tehillim* that follows *Sefirat Haomer* contains 49 words (excluding the first *Passuk*). The *Passuk* of *Yismechu* in that chapter contains 49 letters. The next paragraph *Anah B'Koach* contains 49 words. When counting the *Omer*, one should have in mind the words and letters corresponding to

that night. [These are printed in the *Siddur* alongside each night's *Sefirah*.]

If one recited the wrong *Sefirah*, he should correct himself as soon as possible. He does not need to repeat the *Brachah*, unless he already diverted his attention from the *Mitzvah* of *Sefirah*.

#### 🌀 WHO

Women are exempt from *Sefirat Haomer*. Even so, they may count with a *Brachah*, and it is customary for them to do so.

Boys from the age of *Chinuch* must recite *Sefirat Haomer*. [If necessary, they may count the *Omer* before *Tzeit Hakochavim*, as long as it after *Plag Hamincha*, and preferably after sunset.]

A child who became *Bar Mitzvah* during the period of *Sefirat Haomer* continues counting the *Omer* with a *Brachah*.

#### 🌀 IF ONE FORGOT

If one forgot to count the *Omer* at night, or is unsure, he should recite *Sefirah* during the day, without a *Brachah*. [For this reason, it is appropriate for a *Shacharit Minyan* to count the *Omer* without a *Brachah* if some of its participants either don't *daven Maariv* with a *Minyan*, or they *daven Maariv* before sunset.]

If one forgot to count the *Omer* over the course of an entire night and day, and didn't remember until the following night, he continues counting all subsequent nights of the *Omer*, but without a *Brachah*.

If one is unsure whether he counted the *Omer* throughout an entire night and day, he continues counting the subsequent nights of the *Omer* with a *Brachah*.

#### 🌀 OTHER LAWS

When one listens to someone else counting the *Omer* before reciting it himself, he should have explicit intention to **not** be *Yotzeh*. If he had no such intention, he may

no longer recite a *Brachah* when reciting it himself. However, when listening to the *Chazzan* (or someone else) recite the *Sefirah* purely in order to verify which *Omer* to count, it is regarded as if he had explicit intention to **not** be *Yotzeh*, and he may therefore recite a *Brachah* when reciting it himself.

If one did not yet perform *Sefirah*, and is asked what night of the *Omer* it is:

- If it is before *Plag Hamincha*, he may answer the question directly.
- If it is after *Plag Hamincha*, he should not answer directly, but should instead state what last night's *Sefirah* was.

If, after *Plag Hamincha*, one answered the question directly:

- If it is before sunset, one may still count the *Omer* with a *Brachah* (after *Tzeit Hakochavim*).
- If it is after sunset, then it depends: If he prefaced his response by saying "tonight is..." or "today is...", then one should count the *Omer* without a *Brachah* (after *Tzeit Hakochavim*).
- If he did not preface his response by saying "tonight is..." or "today is...", then one may still count the *Omer* with a *Brachah* (after *Tzeit Hakochavim*).

One who is reciting *Sefirah* without a *Brachah* (for whatever reason) should try to hear the *Brachah* from another male over *Bar Mitzvah*. The one reciting the *Brachah* should have in mind to be *Moitzie* (include) the listener. The listener should have in mind to be *Yotzeh* the *Brachah*, answer *Amen* (but not *Baruch Hu U'Varuch Shmo*), and count the *Omer* immediately afterwards, without interruption. For this reason, it is appropriate that the *Chazzan* has in mind anyone who cannot make the *Brachah*. Nevertheless, one who needs to



hear the *Brachah* should not take this for granted, but should explicitly ask the *Chazzan* (or someone else) to be *Moitzie* him.

One should not cross the International Dateline during *Sefirat Haomer*, unless it is absolutely unavoidable. If one did, he counts the *Omer* – with a *Brachah* – in line with his personal count. He will therefore be either a day ahead of the people at his destination (if he travelled east), or a day behind the people at his destination (if he travelled west).

Polar flight routes can be more problematic. If it is absolutely necessary to fly such a route, or after the fact, one should seek guidance from a *Rav* familiar with these matters.

#### 🌀 CHADASH

The *Torah* forbids the consumption of new grains (*Chadash*) until after the *Minchat HaOmer* was offered up in the *Beit Hamikdash* on the second day of *Pesach*, or in our times, the third day of *Pesach* in *Israel*, and the fourth day in *Chutz Lo'oretz*. The grains become permissible after this time, and are known as *Yashan*.

One opinion maintains that *Chadash* applies only to grain grown in *Israel*. Another opinion asserts that *Chadash* applies only to grain belonging to a Jew at the time of its harvest. The majority of *Poskim* disagree and hold that *Chadash* applies even to grains grown outside of *Israel*, and even to those belonging to a non-Jew. Nevertheless, the centuries-old custom is to rely on the lenient view.

#### 🌀 DAYS OF THE OMER

*Tachnun* is not recited until the 2<sup>nd</sup> of *Iyar*.

Some have the custom to learn one *daf* of *Masechta Sotah* each day of the *Omer*. On the first day, one learns the “*Sha'ar Blatt*”.

The period of the *Omer* is a time of mourning, commemorating the 12,000 pairs of Rabbi

Akiva's students who died due to insufficient respect for each other. Obviously, it is an opportune time to emphasise the *Mitzvah* of *Ahavat Yisrael*.

During the period of the *Omer*, one should not recite the *Brachah* of *Shehecheyanu* (other than for a *Pidyan Haben*), unless on *Shabbat* and *Lag Ba'Omer*. Therefore, one should not eat new fruits during the week. [It would appear that someone celebrating a birthday during the period of the *Omer* should eat the customary new fruit on the *Shabbat* prior (or after).]

The following activities are prohibited from right after *Pesach*:

- Regarding weddings, there are various customs. Chabad don't make Weddings until the second and third nights of the *Shloshet Ymei Hagboloh* except for *Lag Ba'Omer* (see below).
- Haircuts (until *Erev Shabbat 4<sup>th</sup> Sivan*). Even a *Chattan* or the *Baalei Habrit* should refrain from haircuts. [A woman may groom or wax her eyebrows etc. Similarly, one may remove nasal hair or ear hair.]
- An *Opsheren* (3<sup>rd</sup> birthday party) should be deferred to the earliest opportunity (i.e. *Lag Ba'Omer* or until *Erev Shabbat 4<sup>th</sup> Sivan*). However, the other associated areas of *Chinuch* (such as training the child to wear *Tzitzit* and to recite *Brachot*, *Shma* and *birchat hamazon*) should not be deferred.
- Listening to music.
- Celebratory gatherings.
- The following activities are permitted: Engagements (even with a feast). Bar Mitzvah Feasts.

#### 🌀 PESACH SHENI

*Tachnun* is not recited on *Pesach Sheni*, but is recited the afternoon before.

One should eat *Matzah* during the day, to commemorate the sacrifice of the *Pesach*



*Sheni*. [Some maintain that the *Matzah* should be eaten specifically after midday.] Some also eat *Matzah* the night after, to commemorate the eating of the *Pesach Sheni*.

**🕯 LAG BA'OMER**

*Lag Ba'Omer* is a two-fold celebration. First, the students of Rabbi Akivah stopped (or paused) dying. Second, it marks the passing of *Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai*, who instructed that the day be celebrated.

The day's celebratory nature begins at night, and not just at day. The *Shul* is lit up brightly.

*Tachnun* is not recited on *Lag Ba'Omer*, nor the afternoon beforehand.

The *Arizal* was particular not to take haircuts even on *Lag Ba'Omer*, and some hold that custom too. Others do take haircuts on *Lag Ba'Omer*. Nevertheless, the *Opsheren* (3<sup>rd</sup> birthday party) of any boy who turned three between *Pesach* and *Lag Ba'Omer* is conducted on *Lag Ba'Omer*.

It is customary to light bonfires.

It is customary to eat carobs in order to commemorate how *Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai* and his son were sustained when hiding in the cave.

One should give extra *Tzedakah*.

It is customary to go out to the fields.

It is customary for children to engage in archery to commemorate the fact that no rainbow was seen in the days of *Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai*.

A wedding may be conducted during the day of *Lag Ba'Omer* and continue on into the night. If necessary, a wedding may also be conducted the night prior, but it must not begin before *Tzeit Hakochavim*.

**🕯 SHABBAT MEVARCHIM**

Unlike every other *Shabbat Mevarchim*, *Av Harachamim* is recited on *Shabbat Mevarchim Sivan*, in memory of the tragedies that occurred during this month.







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# Sefirat HaOmer תשפ"א 2021

## The Jewish Weekly

On the second night of Pesach, we begin counting the Omer, and we continue to count every evening until Shavuot. here's your personal Omer calendar!

In the Jewish calendar, the 24 hour day begins at sunset (just like Shabbat and Chag). Therefore, we count the new day of the Omer at night.

Sun March 28 ניסן 28  
**First day of Pesach**  
 tonight we will count the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the Omer.

Mon March 29 ניסן 29 <b>Pesach</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 2 <sup>nd</sup> day of the Omer.	Tue March 30 ניסן 30 <b>Pesach</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 3 <sup>rd</sup> day of the Omer.	Wed March 31 ניסן 31 <b>Pesach</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 4 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Thu April 1 ניסן 1 <b>Pesach</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 5 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Fri April 2 ניסן 2 <b>Pesach</b> <b>5<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 6 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Shabbat April 3 ניסן 3 <b>Pesach</b> <b>6<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 7 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Sun April 4 ניסן 4 <b>Isru Chag</b> <b>7<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 8 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.
Mon April 5 ניסן 5 <b>8<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 9 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Tue April 6 ניסן 6 <b>9<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 10 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Wed April 7 ניסן 7 <b>10<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 11 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Thu April 8 ניסן 8 <b>11<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 12 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Fri April 9 ניסן 9 <b>12<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 13 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Shabbat April 10 ניסן 10 <b>13<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 14 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Sun April 11 ניסן 11 <b>14<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 15 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.
Mon April 12 ניסן 12 <b>15<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 16 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Tue April 13 אייר 1 <b>16<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 17 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Wed April 14 אייר 2 <b>17<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 18 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Thu April 15 אייר 3 <b>18<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 19 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Fri April 16 אייר 4 <b>19<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 20 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Shabbat April 17 אייר 5 <b>20<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 21 <sup>st</sup> day of the Omer.	Sun April 18 אייר 6 <b>21<sup>st</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 22 <sup>nd</sup> day of the Omer.
Mon April 19 אייר 7 <b>22<sup>nd</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 23 <sup>rd</sup> day of the Omer.	Tue April 20 אייר 8 <b>23<sup>rd</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 24 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Wed April 21 אייר 9 <b>24<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 25 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Thu April 22 אייר 10 <b>25<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 26 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Fri April 23 אייר 11 <b>26<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 27 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Shabbat April 24 אייר 12 <b>27<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 28 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Sun April 25 אייר 13 <b>28<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 29 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.
Mon April 26 אייר 14 <b>29<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Pesach Sheni</b> tonight we will count the 30 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Tue April 27 אייר 15 <b>30<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 31 <sup>st</sup> day of the Omer.	Wed April 28 אייר 16 <b>31<sup>st</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 32 <sup>nd</sup> day of the Omer.	Thu April 29 אייר 17 <b>32<sup>nd</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 33 <sup>rd</sup> day of the Omer.	Fri April 30 אייר 18 <b>33<sup>rd</sup></b> <b>Lag BaOmer</b> tonight we will count the 34 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Shabbat May 1 אייר 19 <b>34<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 35 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Sun May 2 אייר 20 <b>35<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 36 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.
Mon May 3 אייר 21 <b>36<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 37 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Tue May 4 אייר 22 <b>37<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 38 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Wed May 5 אייר 23 <b>38<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 39 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Thu May 6 אייר 24 <b>39<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 40 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Fri May 7 אייר 25 <b>40<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 41 <sup>st</sup> day of the Omer.	Shabbat May 8 אייר 26 <b>41<sup>st</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 42 <sup>nd</sup> day of the Omer.	Sun May 9 אייר 27 <b>42<sup>nd</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 43 <sup>rd</sup> day of the Omer.
Mon May 10 אייר 28 <b>43<sup>rd</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 44 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Tue May 11 אייר 29 <b>44<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 45 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Wed May 12 אייר 30 <b>45<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 46 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Thu May 13 אייר 31 <b>46<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 47 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Fri May 14 אייר 32 <b>47<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 48 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Shabbat May 15 אייר 33 <b>48<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight we will count the 49 <sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.	Sun May 16 אייר 34 <b>49<sup>th</sup></b> day of the Omer tonight will be <b>Shavuot</b>

After counting 49 days, the following night is **the Chag of Shavuot** commemorating the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

