

Halacha Newsletter בס"ד

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No Tachnun is said throughout the entire month of Nissan.

Bedikas Chometz

Tuesday Evening,
Nissan 13, March 31

Immediately after nightfall we search for the Chometz. The Minyan in Shul (or one that ordinarily davens Maariv with a Minyan) should daven Maariv before doing the Bedika. However, one that normally davens Maariv at home should first do the Bedika, and then daven Maariv.

It is forbidden to work or eat before the Bedika.

The house must be thoroughly cleaned before doing the Bedika. We take a single wicked candle (preferably beeswax candle) along with a feather and search throughout the entire house. This includes homes, garages, cars, and businesses. Purses, pockets, children's furniture, etc., must also be cleaned out and checked to make sure that there is no Chometz.

Any Chometz that will be eaten the next morning should be put away before the Bedika.

Before the Bedika it is customary to place 10 pieces of bread wrapped in paper in different parts of the house.

Before beginning the Bedika we recite the Brocho "Asher Kidshonu B'mitzvosav V'tzivonu Al Biur Chometz." No talking is permitted between

the Brocho and the start of the Bedika. It is preferable that there be no talking throughout the entire Bedika, unless it is something pertaining to the Bedika. The Brocho should be said in the room in which the Bedika is begun.

Following the Bedika it is customary to wrap paper around the bag containing the Chometz, the feather, the remains of the candle, and a wooden spoon, the handle of which should protrude from the paper. The package is then tied securely with string.

The Chometz found during the Bedika (including the 10 pieces of bread) is put away in a secure place until the next morning, at which time it is burnt.

Following the Bedika we recite Kol Chamira. It is of utmost importance to understand the meaning of Kol Chamira. If one does not understand the Aramaic, he should say the declaration of Kol Chamira in any language that he does understand.

Taanis Bechorim

Wednesday Morning,
Nissan 14, April 1

All firstborn males (of either or both parents) must fast to commemorate the miracle of G-d saving the firstborn Jews in Egypt. However, by partaking in a Seudas Mitzvah (Bris, Pidyon Haben or Siyum), one becomes exempt from fasting. Even if he himself is not a firstborn, a father must also fast

(or take part in a Siyum) for a firstborn son who is too young to fast.

Erev Pesach

Wednesday Morning,
Nissan 14, April 1

Mizmor L'Sodah is omitted from the davening from now until Pesach is over.

Did You Know?

There is a famous teaching of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev which explains the meaning of the Passover holiday (Pesach). "Pesach" literally means *peh-sach*, "the mouth (*peh*) talks (*sach*)."
On Pesach, the mouth talks about the wonders and miracles of G-d. Pesach represents the antithesis of Pharaoh, who, as the *Megaleh Amukos* explains, signifies *peh-ra*, a "bad mouth." Pharaoh was someone who denied G-d's providence in every act of nature. Our mouths were not given to us to slander or denigrate others, but to speak of G-d's greatness and wonders.

Chometz may be eaten until 10:52 a.m. Care must be taken to confine one's eating area. The Chometz must be burned no later than 11:57 a.m. followed immediately by Bittul Chometz. (Those who are away from home must also do Bittul Chometz in the morning).

Matzo is forbidden to be eaten the entire day. It is also customary not to

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eat any of the ingredients of the Maror and Charoses until after Korech of the second Seder.

Nail and hair cutting should be performed before midday. If one was unable to do so, he may cut his nails after midday. Likewise a haircut may be taken, but only from a non-Jew. Men should go to the mikvah to purify themselves before the Yom Tov.

In order to begin the Seder as soon as possible after nightfall (so that the children will remain awake) one should set the table during the day. The Seder plate is arranged at night before Kiddush.

Eruv Tavshillin One should take at least a "kibeah" (1 large hand-Shmura matzo or 2 machine matzos) and a highly regarded food (at least a "K'zayis" - 1 oz.) such as fish or meat, and recite the Brocho "Al Mitzvas Eruv" followed by the short verse "B'dein..." This permits cooking and other preparations for Shabbos to take place on Friday, which is Yom Tov.

The Eruv must exist until all Shabbos preparation is completed on Friday. We combine the Eruv along with another matzo to serve as Lechem Mishneh at the first two Shabbos meals, and again at Shalosh Seudas, when it is eaten.

Pesach Night

Wednesday Evening,
Nissan 15, April 1

Candlelighting is at 6:55 p.m. Two Brochos are recited: 1) L'Hadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov; and 2) Shehechionu...

Maariv Shmoneh Esrei L'Sholosh Regolim. After the Shmoneh Esrei, we recite the complete Hallel, along with its Brochos.

The Seder

Chabad custom is that the items of the Seder plate are put directly on the matzos (understandably with a separation). A cloth separation is also placed between each matzo.

Chabad custom is not to wear a kittel at the Seder.

Kadesh The minimum size of each of the four cups of wine is 3.5 oz. All the minimum amounts of food and drink pertaining to the Mitzvos of the Seder apply equally for men and women.

The Kiddush should be performed in the following order:

1. Borei P'ri Hagofen
2. Birkas Kiddush
3. Shehechionu

The wine is drunk while reclining on the left side. Women do not recline.

It is preferable to drink the entire cup of wine. This refers to all the four cups. If this is difficult, it is incumbent to drink at least more than half the cup. However, the fourth cup must be drunk entirely in order to recite the Al Hagefen.

Most preferably, one should use wine for all four cups. If this is difficult, one may dilute the wine with grape juice. If this is also difficult, one may use grape juice.

Urchatz We wash our hands (as for bread); however we do not recite the Brocho.

Karpas The custom in Chabad is to use onion or potato. It should be less than a K'zayis (1 oz.). We say the Brocho "Borei P'ri Ho-Adomo," having in mind also the Maror and the Maror of the Korech. We dip the Karpas in salt water prior to the Brocho. Chabad custom is not to recline while eating the Karpas.

Yachatz We break the middle matzo. The larger piece is broken into 5 pieces and put away to be used as the Affikoman.

Maggid The Hagada is recited, followed by the second cup of wine. While reciting the 10 plagues we pour off 10 drops of wine from the cup. Chabad practice is not to dip one's finger into the wine. Once the pouring-off is completed, the cup should then be refilled for the remainder of Maggid.

Women are also obligated to recite at least the basic parts of the Hagada, especially from "Rabban Gamliel..." until after the second cup. The Hagada

must also be understood; hence, the important parts must be translated for those who do not understand Hebrew.

Maggid is concluded with the drinking of the second cup while reclining.

Rachtza The hands are washed in preparation for eating the matzo. The Brocho "Al N'tilas Y'doyim" is recited.

Motzi-Matzo We pick up the 2 and 1/2 matzos, recite Hamotzi, put down the bottom matzo, and say the Brocho "Al Achilas Matzo." We then take a K'zayis from the top matzo and a K'zayis from the second matzo, eating them together within a 4-9 minute period (preferably 4 minutes, but not more than 9).

The amount of the K'zayis of matzo is 1 oz. (approximately half of a hand-made Shmura matzo or three-quarters of a machine-made matzo).

Both men and women are obligated to eat at least one K'zayis of matzo. Being that the matzos that are on the Seder plate will not suffice for more than one person, additional matzos from the package should be distributed to each participant.

Although salt is present on the table, we do not dip matzo into salt.

Men are required to eat the matzo while reclining.

Maror Either horseradish or Romaine lettuce (Chabad custom is to use both) should be used. One must eat a K'zayis of Maror (approximately three-quarters of an ounce). We dip the Maror into the Charoses and recite the Brocho "Al Achilas Maror" (having also in mind the Maror of Korech). We do not recline while eating the Maror.

Korech Taking a K'zayis from the bottom matzo and a K'zayis of Maror, we dip it into Charoses, recite Kein Osoh Hillel..., and eat while reclining. Many who are extremely careful of Gebruks do not dip the Maror of Korech into Charoses; rather, they put dry Charoses on the Maror and shake it off.

Shulchan Orech It is customary to begin the meal by eating the hard-boiled egg dipped into salt water. It is

permitted to drink wine during the meal.

The Chabad custom is to be very careful about not getting matzo wet. Even when we wash Mayim Acharonim we do not wet our lips with water.

Chabad custom is not to recline during the meal.

Tzafun We eat the Affikoman. At least one K'zayis of matzo (preferably two K'zeisim - 2 oz.) is eaten while we recline.

After the Affikoman we are careful not to eat or drink anything except for the last two cups of wine. The Affikoman should be eaten before 12:57 a.m. (especially the first night).

Beirach We fill the third cup of wine before Bentching. The Rebbe זצ"ל always filled the Kos Shel Eliyohu (Elijah's cup) before Bentching. During Bentching we insert Ya'aleh V'yavo. Upon completion of the Bentching we drink the third cup, while reclining.

Hallel-Nirtza After Bentching, we fill the fourth. Carrying a lit candle, one of the participants opens all doors leading from the Seder room to and including the front door. We recite Sh'foch Chamoscho. We then conclude the Hagada followed by the fourth cup of wine. The whole cup must be drunk in order to say Al Hagefen. The contents of the Kos Shel Eliyohu should be poured back into the bottle. It is customary to sing the Niggun "Keili Atoh" at this time.

The Torah refers to the first night of Pesach as "Leil Shimurim" (a night endowed with G-d's protection). Because of this special protection, before retiring to bed we recite only the first paragraph of Kriyas Sh'ma (Sh'ma and V'ohavto) followed by the Brocho of Hamapil.

Pesach Day

**Thursday Morning
Nissan 15, April 2**

Yom Tov davening with the Shmoneh Esrei of Shalosh Regolim. Following the Shmoneh Esrei we recite the complete Hallel. After Hallel we take out two Sifrei Torah.

On the first day of Yom Tov during Musaf we stop saying Mashiv Haruach and begin reciting Moreed HaTol. Before Musaf the Shammes announces the beginning of reciting Moreed HaTol. During the repetition of the Shmoneh Esrei the Chazzan recites the special prayer "Tal."

The accompanying table summarizes what one to do if one fails to insert Moreed HaTol properly.

If one has not davened Shacharis yet, but hears the Shammes announce Moreed HaTol, if he is not davening with another Minyan he should say Moreed HaTol during Shacharis.

The Second Night

**Thursday Evening
Nissan 16, April 2**

One may not prepare anything for the Seder before 7:55 p.m.

Candlelighting is after 7:55 p.m., only from a pre-existing flame. Shehechionu is recited.

Maariv Shmoneh Esrei L'Sholosh Regolim. After the Shmoneh Esrei, we recite the complete Hallel, along with its Brochos.

Sefiras Ha-Omer At the end of Maariv on the second night, we begin counting the Omer. One should know which night he is counting before he

begins to recite the Brocho.

One who forgot to count Sefira at night should count during the next day without a Brocho. He may then continue counting every subsequent night with a Brocho.

If one forgets to count for the whole day, he must continue counting the rest of the nights, but without a Brocho.

If one is in doubt whether he missed a day or not, he continues counting with a Brocho.

The Second Seder is the same as the First Seder.

The Kriyas Shema before going to sleep is the same as every Shabbos and Yom Tov.

Shabbos

**Friday Evening
Nissan 17, April 3**

Candlelighting is at 6:57 p.m. from a pre-existing flame, and with the regular Shabbos Brocho (L'Hadlik Ner Shel Shabbos Kodesh).

At Mincha we omit Hodu, but we do say Posach Eliyohu.

Kabbalas Shabbos We begin with Mizmor L'Dovid and continue with the usual Friday night Maariv. In the last verse of L'cho Dodi we say the word "B'simcha" instead of "B'rina. We recite the regular Shabbos Shmoneh Esrei, adding Ya'aleh V'yavoh. Shalom Aleichem and Eishes Chayil are said quietly, followed by the regular Shabbos Kiddush.

We say **Ya'aleh V'yavoh** in the Shmoneh Esreh throughout Chol Ha-moed. If one forgets to say it, if he remembers before Modim, he says it there. If he remembers after Modim, but still during Shmoneh Esreh, he returns to R'tzeh. If he remembers after completing the Shmoneh Esrei, the Shmoneh Esrei must be repeated.

On Saturday night of Chol Ha-moed we begin saying "**V'sain Brocho**" in "Boraich Oleinu." If one mistakenly said "V'sain Tal Umatar," whether he realized it immediately or had completed subsequent Brochos, he

Errors in Saying Moreed HaTol

Where one realizes error:	What to do:
Before "Hashem" of the Brocho	Return to Atoh Gibbor
After words "Boruch Atoh Hashem"	Say "Lamdaynee Chukecho," & repeat from Atoh Gibbor
After Brocho M'chaye Hameisim	Repeat Shmoneh Esrei
Said Mashiv Haruach Umored HaTol	No need to repeat

must return to the beginning of Boraich Oleinu, and recite Boraich Oleinu and all subsequent Brochos of the Shmoneh Esrei. If he realized his error after having completed the Shmoneh Esrei, the entire Shmoneh Esrei must be repeated. Moreover, for the first 30 days, if one is in doubt as to whether he said V'sain Brocho correctly, the above instructions apply.

Shvi'i Shel Pesach

Tuesday Evening & Wednesday Nissan 21, April 7-8

Candlelighting is at 7:00 p.m. The Brocho is L'Hadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov. Shehechionu is **not** recited when lighting the candles nor at Kiddush during the last days of Pesach.

Many observe the custom of staying awake and studying Torah throughout the whole night of Shvi'i Shel Pesach. This is in order to commemorate the crossing of the Sea that occurred at this time.

Acharon Shel Pesach

Wednesday Evening & Thursday Nissan 22, April 8-9

Candlelighting time is 8:00 p.m. from a pre-existing flame. The Brocho is L'Hadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov. Shehechionu is **not** recited when lighting the candles nor at Kiddush during the last days of Pesach.

The Geula of Pesach in general and Acharon Shel Pesach in particular, are closely associated with the Geula of Moshiach. Therefore it was the custom of the Baal Shem Tov to eat a third Yom Tov meal, known as Seudas Moshiach, during the afternoon of Acharon Shel Pesach. The Rebbe Rashab introduced the custom of drinking four cups of wine at this Seuda. On numerous occasions, the Rebbe ז"ל, has emphasized that participating in this Seuda is an important element in preparing for the imminent Geula of Moshiach. Ya'aleh V'yavoh is inserted in the Bentching, provided that the Seuda was begun before sunset.

Yom Tov ends Thursday night, April 9 at 8:00 p.m. Before using any Chometz which was sold before Pesach, allow at least one half hour after the conclusion of Yom Tov for the Rabbi to re-purchase the Chometz.

**Best Wishes
for a
Kosheren and
Freilechen
Pesach**