



## PESACH GUIDE

### A. PESACH PREPARATIONS

1. Shop early so that you will have ample time to examine every item for proper Pesach certification.
2. Anticipate the needs for your infants.
3. Anticipate medication needs if necessary, and ask the Rabbi for guidance.
4. Pet foods may be Chometz. Consult a knowledgeable and sympathetic professional for advice.
5. Inquire of the Rabbi as to which utensils may be koshered. In general, koshering should be minimized.
6. Give special attention to what is required for the seder; wine, matzah, maror, charoses, karpas. Check the minimum shiurim- amounts in Section M, that should be eaten and multiply by the number of participants.
7. It is important at this time of year to distinguish between the proverbial spring-cleaning and the necessary Pesach preparation. In addition it is important that all members of the household also be able to share in the Seder experience in a relaxed manner. By the way, why not make the kitchen Pesachdik one or two days in advance. Just leave a small amount of bread until Erev Pesach when it becomes officially Pesach. In this way, cooking for Yom Tov can begin a few days in advance.

### B. TEFILLOHS DURING NISSAN AND PESACH

1. Tachanun, p.103,(132) Tzidkosicha, p.459(524), and Kol Moleh Rachamin, p.605(144) are omitted during the month of Nissan.
2. Fasting and eulogies are not permitted.
3. Portions of the Haggadah (until Rabban Gamliel) are reviewed on Shabbat Hagadol.
4. On Erev Pesach, Mizmore L'Todah p.55(68) and Lamnatzaich, p.131(152) are omitted.
5. Many congregations recite the complete Hallel after Maariv on the first two nights of Pesach.
6. Complete Hallel is recited on the first two mornings of Pesach and “half” of Hallel on the remaining six mornings.
7. Yaaleh V'Yavoh is inserted in the Shemoneh Esrai during Chol Hamoed. If inadvertently omitted, the Shemoneh Esrai must be repeated.
8. Bircat Tal is recited during the Mussaf on the first day of Pesach and from that time on till Shmini Atzeres including Shacharis. Mashiv Haruach is omitted in the Shemoneh Esrai. Also, the wording Vsein Brocho replaces Vsein Tal U'Matar, p.87. (124)
9. The count of Sfirah begins on the second night of Pesach.

Please Note: Siddur references are in the Birnbaum Daily Prayer Book, parenthesis for Artscroll.

### C. DEFINITION OF CHOMETZ

1. Five types of grain (wheat, barley, spelt, rye and oats) can become Chometz if they are in contact with water for a period of time.
2. Three kinds of prohibitions are associated with Chometz, namely:
  - a) Prohibition against eating;
  - b) Prohibition of deriving any benefit;
  - c) Prohibition of processing it.
3. Since flour can be ground from legumes- kitnios e.g. peas, rice, etc., more than eight hundred years ago, the Ashkenazic authorities issued a prohibition against these products. The ban was never applied to the Sephardic Community.
4. Infants, the elderly, and the ill may in certain circumstances be permitted to eat kitnios. One should consult a Rav for guidance.
5. Alcoholic fermentation or extracts from Chometz are not permitted.

6. Egg matzah or matzah mixed with liquid other than water should not be eaten. In case of the elderly or the sick, a Rav should be consulted.
7. Chometz or its derivatives suitable for even animal consumption are not Halachically Chometz. In light of this, cosmetics, lotions, creams, ointments, toothpaste, shoe polish, or their like do not require special Pesach supervision. Some authorities suggest, however, that products for oral usage should have special Pesach supervision.

#### D. BEDIKAS CHOMETZ

1. The Torah prohibits having chometz in one's possession during Pesach. There are two means by which one may fulfill the mitzvah:
  - a) Biur Chometz- -physical destruction or removal from possession.
  - b) Bitul Chometz- -renunciation of title to Chometz in one's possession.
 Halacha requires that both methods are used.
2. Before Bedikas Chometz one should thoroughly search for chometz in one's house the night before Pesach (If the first day of Pesach is on Sunday then the search takes place on the previous Thursday night). Any chometz found should be kept in a safe place until the morning, at which time the burning takes place.
3. Anyone leaving his home within thirty days before Pesach, is required to search for chometz and destroy any remains. However, no bracha is required.
4. Every room or any place where chometz has been placed during the year, requires bedika.
5. Bedikas Chometz should take place immediately after nightfall.
6. The search is done by the light of a candle. Due to matters of danger, it is recommended that when the blessing is recited a candle is used to inspect one room. Thereafter, a flashlight should be used to insure that you are not afraid to inspect the corners of the room because of potential fire.
7. There is a custom to place ten pieces of bread throughout the household prior to the bedika. This custom is optional and if it is observed, then one should be extremely diligent in retrieving all the pieces.
8. Before commencing the Bedika, a bracha is recited. No conversation or any other form of interruption should take place between the recitation of the bracha and the beginning of the search. And it is preferable that no interruption is permitted during the entire search. This ritual possesses significant value and one should concentrate fully on the matter at hand.
9. Following the search the Kol Chamirah- Bitul Chometz is recited. This is the moment of absolute renunciation of any title to chometz aside of the limited amount required for breakfast. If one does not understand the Aramaic Version, then the Kol Chamirah- Bitul Chometz formula should be read in English. Otherwise one has not yet fulfilled the mitzvah. The English translation is as follows: "All Chometz and sour dough (leavening) in my possession which I have not seen and have not destroyed shall be considered nullified and ownerless to me, even as the dust of the earth."
10. The following morning, after Biur Chometz i.e. the burning or destroying of chometz, a more inclusive Bitul Chometz is recited including all Chometz. That is, "whether I have seen it or have not seen it; whether I have destroyed it or have not destroyed it."
11. Any Chometz found during Chol Hamoed should be destroyed immediately. If found on Shabbos or Yom Tov, it should not be moved because it is muktzah, but cover it with another object until the conclusion of the Shabbos or Yom Tov, when it must be destroyed.  
Please note: The bracha for Bedikas Chometz and the Kol Chamira are generally recorded in the Haggadah.

#### E. MECHIRAS CHOMETZ – SALE OF CHOMETZ

1. Mechiras Chometz is required only when some chometz will remain in the residence or any site that one owns or rents.
2. The following are several guidelines pertaining to the procedure of Mechiras Chometz:
  - a) The Rabbi serves as the agent of the seller to the non-Jew.

- b) In addition to the selling of the chometz, the property on which the chometz is found is subleased to the non-Jew.
  - c) The sale must conform to the halacha and to the law of the state.
  - d) The chometz must be sold even if one will not remain at home for Pesach.
  - e) Mechiras Chometz must be effected before a certain hour on the morning of Erev Pesach. If one is traveling to Israel or to any other area where the time zone is different from local time, a special contract may have to be drawn up by the Rabbi.
  - f) Since there are several Halachic complexities associated with Mechiras Chometz, only those who possess a knowledge in Talmudic law are qualified to officiate at a Mechiras Chometz.
  - g) There are questions with regards to the status of a Mechiras Chometz in general therefore there are Poskim who advise that pure Chometz such as bread, bleached flour, cakes, cereals, and the like should not be included in the Mechiras Chometz but rather destroyed or given as a gift to a non-Jew.
3. Chometz possessed by a Jew during Pesach may not be used even after Pesach. Therefore, chometz should be bought from a non-Jewish establishment or purchased from the Jewish establishment when one can be certain that a new stock of Chometz products have been acquired.

#### F. EATING ON EREV PESACH

- 1. One must not eat matzah.
- 2. After three fourths of a day, one should not have any food prepared from grain. Foods such as fruit, cheese, fish, vegetables, etc. may be eaten. However, only moderate amounts may be eaten so that one's appetite for the matzah, wine and the Seder Seuda should not be adversely affected.

#### G. THE FIVE MAJOR MITZVOS OF THE SEDER NIGHT

- 1. *Achilas Matzah*– the eating of matzah.
- 2. *Achilas Maror* – the eating of bitter herbs.
- 3. *Sippur Yitzias Mitzrayim*– relating the story of redemption.
- 4. *Daled Kosos*– drinking four cups of wine.
- 5. *Hallel*– reciting of Hallel.

#### H. THE MITZVAH OF EATING MATZAH

- 1. Every man and woman is required to eat a kazayis- the minimum shiur or measurement of matzah.
- 2. In keeping with tradition, Matzah Shmurah is used for the fulfillment of the precept of eating the first kazayis of matzah on the two Seder nights.

The word Shmurah means watching or guarding. The source for this requirement is derived from the Torah. In Exodus it says, *Ushimartem es Hamatzos* “And you shall guard the matzah.”

The word Shmurah has two implications. The first one instructs us to guard the grain and flour from the possibility of fermentation. The general Kosher L'Pesach matzah are baked from wheat and flour which were guarded from the time of milling. Matzah Shmurah, on the other hand, is produced from grain set aside and guarded from the time of harvest.

The second implication of the Torah verse suggests that the grains from the matzah used for the mitzvah, should be set aside *hwxm \cl*, specifically for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzvah. This means that a special Kavanah or designation is required similar to the Kavanah necessary for the writing of a Sefer Torah, Mezuzah, Tefillin, or Tzitzis.

In lieu of the significance of Matzah Shmurah, it is desirable that an adequate supply of Matzah Shmurah be obtained for Sedorim. The observance of the mitzvah is, thus, further enhanced.

- 5. There are two types of Matzah Shmurah, namely, machine baked and hand baked. Though machine matzah is less expensive, many prefer to use the hand baked for the following reasons:
  - a) Some Poskim, deciders, are of the opinion that the requirement of *hwxm \cl*, that is, the Kavanah specifically required for the production of matzah for the purpose of a mitzvah can be better effected if there is a human involvement in every phase of preparation and baking process. This is not the case in the machine production.

However, many other Poskim declare that as long as the machine process has been initiated by an individual with the proper Kavanah, hwxm \cl -i.e. the proper intention- then this satisfies the requirements of the Halacha.

b) Many prefer hand baked Matzah Shmurah because it lends a special quality to the mitzvah, since this is the form and type of matzah eaten by our people for millennia prior to the machine age. It adds a special touch of tradition with a capital T.

The option, however, is open. One may fulfill the mitzvah with either type- most important is what will enhance the meaning- fullness of the mitzvah for the individual.

#### I. THE MITZVAH OF EATING MAROR

1. The mitzvah of eating maror is incumbent upon men and women.
2. One may use either Romaine lettuce or horseradish.
3. If Romaine lettuce is preferred, one should rinse them carefully. Since the use of insecticide has been curtailed, the possibility of the small bugs or insects blending into the color of the leaves or camouflaged by the fold has increased. Of course, one need not examine the lettuce by means of a magnifying glass. Only that which is visible to the naked eye is prohibited by the Torah.
4. Horseradish may be grated, grounded or cut into small pieces. To preserve at least a minimum amount of bitterness, they should be stored in plastic bags until the Seder night.
5. Horseradish must be pure. They may not be blended with any preservatives, liquids, etc.

#### J. THE HAGGADAH- RELATING THE STORY OF REDEMPTION

1. The mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzraim- reciting the Haggadah- is incumbent upon every man and woman.
2. The mitzvah encompasses three aspects:
  - a) Reading the Haggadah.
  - b) Understanding the contents.
  - c) Discussing and reflecting on the lessons and implications of the Haggadah and relating them to contemporary life.
3. In order to enhance the Haggadah recitation and to make it meaningful, the following suggestions should be borne in mind.
  - a) To purchase attractive Haggadahs with intelligible translations which are easy to read and follow.
  - b) To provide Haggadah that contains meaningful explanations and interpretations.
  - c) To assign selections, both in Hebrew and in English, to different participants, thus insuring the participation of everyone present.
  - d) For assistance in these matters, please consult the rabbi in advance.

#### K. THE MITZVAH OF DRINKING THE FOUR CUPS OF WINE

1. Both men and women are required to drink the four cups at the designated junctures of the Seder.
2. It is preferable to drink grape wine. However, grape juice may be substituted for wine if one cannot tolerate the latter. If it is possible, some wine should be mixed with the grape juice so that the alcoholic taste can be sensed.
3. Although red wine is suggested, one may use white wine if its taste is superior or preferred.

#### L. RECITATION OF HALLEL

1. The recitation of Hallel is the high point of the Seder observance. Hallel is the expression of gratitude and acknowledgement of Hashem as the Creator of the world and ultimate Redeemer of Israel.

Two chapters of Hallel are recited at the conclusion of the Haggadah narrative- just prior to the drinking of the second cup. These chapters refer explicitly to Yetzias Mitzraim- the redemption from Egypt.

Between the third and fourth cups the bulk of the Hallel with additional readings called Hallel HaGodol- The Great Halle- are recited. This is the moment of profound joy with a touch of ecstasy and expressive of hope in the future of Israel's destiny.

2. Both men and women are obligated to participate in these recitations. Careful reading blended with fervor and Kavanah are in order at this time.

## M. SHIURIM- MEASURES

In order to fulfill the mitzvos at the Seder, one is required to consume a minimum quantity- shiur of each of the Four Cups of Wine, Matzah, and Maror in a minimum amount of time- K'day Achilas Pras. The following list of minimum quantities- shiurim and their modern equivalents have been published by the Otzar HaPoskim of Jerusalem, a major center of universally renowned Torah scholars.

1. Minimum Volume for Wine: The minimum size of a wine cup should be a R'viis- 3.0 fluid ounces.
2. Each Seder participant must drink more than half of this volume for each of the four cups of wine.
3. Minimum Volume of Matzah: The minimum amount of matzah to be consumed is a kazayis- one ounce.
4. This shiur- amount approximates at least one third of an average machine made matzah. Of course, matzah may vary in size, therefore, a little more than a third should be consumed.
5. The minimum amount should be eaten at the following times:
  - a) The eating of kazayis mitzvah i.e. the eating of the first kazayis matzah.
  - b) The eating of Korech- the sandwich consisting of matzah and maror.
  - c) The eating of the Afikomen.
6. Minimum Volume of Maror: 19 grams- 0.7 fluid ounces.
7. This shiur- amount can be determined in the following ways:
  - a) In the case of ground horseradish, this shiur can be estimated by placing it in a small cup or glass.
  - b) In the case of Romaine lettuce, the shiur can be estimated as follows:
    - Leaves: enough to cover an area of 80 square inches (8" by 10")
    - Stalks: enough to cover an area of 15 square inches (3" by 5")
8. The minimum shiur of maror should be eaten at the following times:
  - a) The eating of the first kazayis maror i.e. after eating the first kazayis of matzah.
  - b) The eating of Korech- the sandwich containing matzah and maror.
9. Time limits- K'day Achilas Pras: The drinking of each cup of wine and the eating of the matzah and maror should be completed within four minutes.

## N. SUPPLEMENTARY PRACTICES ON THE SEDER NIGHT

### A. Reclining

1. Reclining is required at the following times:
  - a) The eating of the kazayis mitzvah i.e. the eating of the first kazayis mitzvah.
  - b) The eating of the Korech- the sandwich consisting of matzah and maror.
  - c) The eating of the Afikomen.
  - d) The drinking of the four cups of wine.
2. Men are required to recline. For women, the practice is optional.
3. Reclining takes place on the left side. The reasons for the left side and not on the right side are two:
  - a) Because the right hand is used for eating.
  - b) Because food may enter the windpipe instead of the esophagus.
4. Because of the second reason, a left-handed person should also lean on the left side. However, if he leans on the right side, Poskim are of the opinion that he has fulfilled the requirement.
5. The preferred manner for reclining is to use an armchair, which allows for comfortable reclining. However, if such a chair is not available, then one should place a pillow or a cushion on the chair at his or her side and lean on it.

### B. Times Relating to the Seder

1. The Kiddush should not be recited before nightfall.
2. The Afikomen should be eaten before halachic midnight.

## O. ROLE OF THE CHILDREN

1. It is important to include the children in the Seder observance. The Torah declares, "And you shall relate to your child in that day." (Exodus 13:8)

2. Children of school age should be encouraged to partake of the matzah and maror and four cups of wine to the best of their ability.
3. It is advisable to provide both the boys and the girls each with his or her own Seder plate.
4. The children should be encouraged to share their knowledge and display their musical talents in rendering the Pesach songs.
5. The involvement of the children should not be, however, a substitute for the participants of the adults.

P. THE SEDER PLATE

The following are two options for the arrangement of the ingredients on the Seder plate.

The Seder Plate:

- |                            |                                      |                               |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Beitzah</i><br>(egg) | <i>Maror</i><br>( horseradish)       | <i>Ziroa</i><br>(shankbone)   |
| <i>Karpas</i><br>(greens)  |                                      | <i>Charoses</i><br>(Charoset) |
|                            | <i>Chazeres</i><br>(romaine lettuce) |                               |

- |                                  |                               |                             |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2. <i>Charoses</i><br>(CHAROSET) | <i>Maror</i><br>(horseradish) |                             |
| <i>Beitzah</i><br>(egg)          |                               | <i>Ziroa</i><br>(shankbone) |

Note: Chazeret and Karpas are placed alongside the Seder plate, but not on it, because the above items are considered to be the primary symbols.

Q. THE ORDER OF THE SEDER

KADESH – KIDDUSH - Each participant including minors has a cup of wine (or grape juice) and the Kiddush is recited. Red wine is generally used but one may drink white wine if so preferred.

URCHATZ – Wash the hands but remember no bracha – blessing is recited. A cup of water is held in the left hand which then pours water twice over the right hand. Then the cup is transferred to the right hand and then water is poured twice over the left hand.

KARPAS – Some parsley or any other green vegetable is distributed to all the participants and dipped in salt water. A bracha is recited before eating.

YACHATZ – The middle matzah is broken in half and saved for the end of the meal, and used for the Afikomen. In homes where there are minors, it is customary to hide the matzah and a reward is given to the one who finds it first. This is done in order to encourage the children to participate in the Seder. The middle matzah is broken to indicate that the matzah represents the bread of affliction.

MAGID – RELATING –The Haggadah is now related. It is advisable to read passages in English alongside the Hebrew. Participants should be encouraged to take turns in reading aloud selected passages. It is, therefore, important to select Haggadahs with intelligible English translations

and commentaries. In order to enhance the meaningfulness of the Seder one should spend an hour or so before Pesach to survey the Haggadah and mark the striking commentaries and the passages to be read in English. Of course, the more singing at the Seder, the more enjoyable the evening becomes. There are many Pesach records which can be helpful in learning the songs before Pesach. See Section A for Haggadah suggestions.

**RACHTZA - WASHING** – After concluding the recitation of the Haggadah and the second cup of wine is drunk everyone washes their hands in the same manner as URCHATZ, but this time with a bracha.

**MOTZI – MATZAH – EATING THE MATZAH** – At this time, one takes the matzahs and recites the two bracha. One bracha is the customary Hamotzi and the second is the special bracha for the mitzvah of matzah. The first bracha is recited while holding all three matzahs, and the second, while holding the top and middle matzahs. Then one eats a kazais of it while reclining on the left side.

**MAROR – BITTER HERBS** – At this time, one dips the maror in the Charoset, recites a special bracha, and eats the maror, but without reclining.

**KORECH – SANDWICH** –: A sandwich of maror and matzah is made, a special passage is read, and then it is eaten in a reclining position. Please Note: Conversation should be avoided from the washing of the hands until the conclusion of KORECH. Since the brachas for matzah and the maror must apply for the KORECH, no interruptive conversation should take place.

**SHULCHAN ORECH – FESTIVE MEAL** – The Seudah is a celebration meal of free people. It's a time of joy and festivity and of the sharing the blessings of being a member of Klal Yisroel.

**TZAFON – AFIKOMEN** - At this time, a kazais of Matzah Shmurah is eaten. Of course, if one part of the middle matzah was hidden, the children are given the opportunity to find it and to reap their reward. The afikomen is the last item eaten. Similar to the Karban Pesach (Pascal Offering), which was the last item on the Seder menu. By the way, no food should be eaten for the remainder of the evening.

**BIRCAT HAMAZON** – The four themes of Bircat Hamazon are as follows:

1. Thanking G-d for the food
2. Prayer for the rebirth of Eretz Yisroel
3. Prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem and the Bais Hamikdash
4. A general expression of gratitude for all of Hashem's blessings.

The third cup of wine is drunk at the conclusion of Bircat Hamazon.

**CUP OF ELIJAH**: Prepare a special cup for Elijah who is the forerunner of the Messianic Age. Jews have never surrendered their faith in their eventual rendezvous with their glorious destiny. This hope reigned in their hearts even in the most desperate situations. The door is opened. As we rise to greet him, we say *Baruch Haba*, "Blessed is the one who enters." This ritual is not fanciful. It symbolizes the stuff that Jews are made of, namely faith, courage, and vision.

**HALLEL – SONGS OF THANKSGIVING** – The highlight of the evening. Singing praises of Hashem, yearning for His presence and envisioning the future glory. The fourth cup is filled before Hallel.

**NIRTZAH – ALL IS WELL** – We drink the fourth cup and proclaim with the fullness of faith and strength of hope. *Lishana Habaa Beyerushalayim* "Next year in Jerusalem." There are a number of delightful songs which are printed after NIRTZAH. Such songs as Chad Gadya, Adir Hu, and others

are touching and stirring. Now is an opportunity for everyone together to conclude the evening with a final burst of joy.

SHIR HASHIRIM – SONG OF SONGS - Some people read Shir Hashirim (if they have not become overcome by the wine). The theme is the love of Hashem and Israel and it is an appropriate reading at this hour of Israel's redemption.

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Edited from Pesach Guide  
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