

Halacha Newsletter

בס"ד

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No Tachnun is said throughout the entire month of Nissan.

Taanis Bechorim

Thursday Morning,
Nissan 12, April 17

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.

Bedikas Chometz

Thursday Evening,
Nissan 12, April 17

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 to 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 up until Shabbos 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 the custom is 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.

Friday, Nissan 13, April 18

In order not to differentiate between this year and all the other years, the Chometz should be burned at the time it is burned every Erev Pesach; hence, the Chometz should be burned preferably no later than 11:47 a.m. We do **not** recite Kol Chamira at this time, because it will be said Shabbos morning. The same also applies to the selling of the Chometz; preferably, it should be sold no later than 11:47 a.m. Again, pockets should be checked to be certain that there is no Chometz.

Care should be taken not to carry Chometz through the house on Friday.

Grating the Maror, roasting the Z'roah, preparing the salt water and Charoses, and checking the romaine lettuce for bugs should be done on Friday, before Shabbos.

If one did not prepare these things on Friday, then, on Saturday night, the first night of Yom Tov, **only** the amount needed for that night may be made. A Z'roah that was cooked or roasted on Saturday night must be eaten on the first day of Yom Tov. This is because we are not allowed to prepare food on the first day of Yom Tov for the second day. In any event, a roasted Z'roah may not be eaten the

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night of the seder, since we do not eat roasted meat on the Seder nights.

Erev Pesach

Shabbos, Nissan 14,
April 18-19

Candle lighting time is 7:08 p.m.

Even though there are a number of possible ways to work out the meals of this Shabbos, the most practical way is the following:

Except for two small Challas, all food for the entire Shabbos is prepared Kosher L'Pesach using Pesachdik pots, plates, ingredients, etc. One eats his or her portion of the Challah at the beginning of the meal, while sitting away from the table using a paper napkin to catch any crumbs. The paper napkins and any remaining crumbs should then be flushed down the toilet. Following this, one should rinse his or her mouth and then eat the rest of the meal. The same procedure should be followed on Shabbos morning.

Shabbos morning davening should be completed early enough in order to be able to finish eating Chometz no later than 10:41 a.m.

After eating the Chometz on Shabbos morning, we have until 11:47 a.m. to dispose of any remaining Chometz, and to perform Bitul Chometz by reciting the Kol Chamira.

Matzo is forbidden to be eaten the entire day. It is also customary not to eat any of the ingredients of the Maror and Charoses until after Korech of the second seder.

One must be careful not to make any preparations on Shabbos for the seder. This includes setting the table, folding napkins, etc.

Pesach Night

Saturday Evening
Nissan 15, April 19

Candle lighting time is not before 8:08 p.m.

The candles must be lit from a pre-existing flame. Before lighting the candles recite "Boruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'kodesh," thus permitting one to do work. The following two Brochos are recited: 1) L'Hadlik Ner shel Yom Tov; and 2) Shehechiyonu...

In Maariv, "Vatodiyeinu" is added in the Shmoneh Esrei to serve as Havdala. If it was omitted the Shmoneh Esrei is not repeated, but no work (forbidden on Shabbos but permitted on Yom Tov) is allowed until one says "Boruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'kodesh."

After the Shmoneh Esrei we recite the complete Hallel, along with its Brochos, followed by Kaddish-Tiskabel and Oleinu.

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 should be 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. Borei M'orei Ha'eish (at which time we only look at the candles)
4. Birkas Havdala
5. Shehechiyonu

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

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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 Magid.

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, the matzo is not dipped 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 the 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 12:52 a.m. (especially the first night).

Beirach We fill the third cup of wine before Bentching. The Rebbe would also fill the Kos shel Eliyohu at this time. During Bentching we insert Ya’aleh V’Yavo. Upon completion of the Bentching we drink the third cup,

while reclining.

Hallel–Nirtza 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

**Sunday Morning
Nissan 15, April 20**

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 must do if he fails to insert Moreed HaTol properly.

If one did not daven Shacharis yet, but heard the Shammes announce Moreed HaTol, if he is not davening with another Minyan, he should begin saying Moreed HaTol during Shacharis.

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 Umoreed HaTol	No need to repeat

The Second Night

Sunday Evening
Nissan 16, April 20

One may not prepare anything for the seder before 8:09 p.m.

Candlelighting is after 8:09 p.m., only from a pre-existing flame, Shehechiyonu is recited. Again Hallel is said after Maariv.

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, except that the Kiddush should be performed in the following order:

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

Kriyas Sh'ma before going to sleep is the same as every Shabbos and Yom Tov.

Ya'aleh V'Yavo is inserted in the Shmoneh Esrei throughout Chol Hamoed. If one forgets to say it, if he remembers before Modim, he says it there. If he remembers after Modim, but still during Shmoneh Esrei, he returns to R'tzei. If he remembers after completing the Shmoneh Esrei, the Shmoneh Esrei must be repeated.

Shvi'i shel Pesach

Friday Evening,
Nissan 21, April 25

Candle lighting at 7:14 p.m. The Brocho is "L'Hadlik Ner shel Shabbos v'shel Yom Tov." Shehechiyonu is **not** recited when lighting the candles nor at Kiddush during the last days of Pesach.

Maariv begins at "Mizmor l'Dovid." In the last stanza of "L'cho Dodi" we substitute the word "B'simcha" in place of "B'rina." We include the Shabbos insertions in the Yom Tov Shmoneh Esrei.

Before Kiddush, we recite "Shalom Aleichem" and "Eishes Chayil" quietly. The Kiddush consists of Yom Hashishi, followed by the two Brochos: 1)Borei P'ri Hagofen and 2)Birkas Kiddush for Yom Tov.

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

Saturday Evening,
Nissan 21, April 26

Candle lighting time is not before 8:14 p.m.

The candles must be lit from a pre-existing flame. Before lighting the candles recite "Boruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'kodesh," thus permitting one to do work. The Brocho "L'Hadlik Ner shel Yom Tov" is recited. Shehechiyonu is **not** recited at this time.

In Maariv, "Vatodiyeinu" is added to serve as Havdala in the Shmoneh Esrei. If it was omitted the

Shmoneh Esrei is not repeated, but no work (forbidden on Shabbos but permitted on Yom Tov) is allowed until one says

"Boruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh L'kodesh."

The Kiddush is performed in the following order:

1. Borei P'ri Hagofen
2. Birkas Kiddush
3. Borei M'orei Ha'eish (at which time we only look at the candles)
4. Birkas Havdala

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 u'yz, 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 Bentsching, provided that the Seuda was begun before sunset.

Yom Tov ends Sunday night, April 27 at 8:14 p.m., Pacific Daylight Savings Time. Before using any Chometz that was sold before Pesach, allow at least one half hour after the conclusion of Yom Tov for the Rabbi to re-purchase the Chometz.

A Kosher and Freilechen Pesach