

# מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ

## MIKRA'EI KODESH

A Compilation of Pesach  
Divrei Torah, Halakhot, and Guidelines



*Dedicated by*

**Chloe & Jason LeVian**

לעילוי נשמת

**בן ציון בן משה ז"ל  
יהודה בן אפרים ז"ל**

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## Halakhot of Pesach

Sections I – X are adapted from **Rabbi Yosef Bitton's** "*Pesach Made Simple: A Guide for the Laws of Pesach*"

Sections XI – XXI are adapted from "*A Guide To Pesach – based on the teachings of HaRav Eliyahu Ben-Haim Shlit"a*" by **Rabbi Mosheh Aziz & Rabbi Eliyahu Ebrani**

### I. The Eight Mitzvot of Pesach

In his introduction to Mishne Torah Hilkhot Pesach, Maimonides lists and describes a total of **eight biblical Mitzvot** related to Pesach. This list does not include the Mitzvot that have to do with the Pesach sacrifice (Korban Pesach).

There are **three** positive commandments and **five** prohibitions related to Pesach.

#### Three Positive Commandments:

##### 1 - אכילת מצה

The first biblical positive commandment is to eat Matza on the first night of Pesach. In the Diaspora, this obligation automatically extends to include the second night of the holiday. For the rest of Pesach, it is forbidden to eat Chametz, but there is no formal obligation to eat Matza.

##### 2 - והגדת לבנך

The second positive commandment is to tell our children the story of our slavery in Egypt and our miraculous redemption during the first night of Pesach. We do this during the Seder (once in Israel and twice in the diaspora).

This story is narrated and explained in the Haggada of Pesach. This Mitzva includes many other Mitzvot and traditions, such as drinking the four cups of wine, eating the maror, etc.

##### 3 - השבתת חמץ

The third positive Mitzva is renouncing the possession of our Chametz on the eve of Pesach that is the 14th of Nisan before noon.

#### Five Negative Commandments:

##### 4 - איסור אכילת חמץ

The first prohibition is that of eating Chametz during Pesach (the next section defines Chametz). This prohibition also includes se-or, or natural yeast.

##### 5 - איסור אכילת תערובת חמץ

The second prohibition is against eating any food containing Chametz or a combination of Chametz during Pesach. The Gemara mentions as examples of food containing Chametz the *Kutah haBabli*, a type of cottage cheese (cottage= כְּוֹתָה) which contained bits of bread, and *shekhar haMadi*, an alcoholic beverage made from grain, like beer.

##### 6 - בל יראה

The third prohibition is that of owning Chametz during Pesach. This prohibition takes effect regardless of where the Chametz is found.

##### 7 - בל ימצא

The fourth prohibition is of owning Chametz during Pesach. This and the previous prohibition are in fact identical, there is no difference between them and they apply in exactly the same way. This is an exceptional case in the 613 mitzvot.

##### 8 - איסור אכילת חמץ ערב פסח אחר חצות היום

The fifth prohibition is that of eating Chametz from noon on Pesach eve. The rabbis extended this prohibition to two hours before noon, meaning that Chametz can only be consumed until the end of the fourth hour of the day. It is important to mention that these "hours" are not fixed "60 minutes" hours. They are *shaot zmaniyot*, "daylight hours", which are obtained by dividing the daylight period of the day, from dawn to dusk, by twelve.



## II. What is Chametz?

Out of the eight Mitzvot of Pesach we mentioned, six relate to Chametz. During Pesach we are not allowed to eat, benefit from or own Chametz.

### What is Chametz?

Chametz is any fermented substance, solid or liquid, which comes from one of the following five grains: wheat, rye, spelt, barley and oats. These are also the five grains which are generally used to make bread, pastries, cakes, cookies, pizza, pasta, baked products, many candies, and other edibles.

### Liquid Chametz

The fermentation process does not only affect products with “flour” that come from these grains. It also affects liquid types of Chametz. Beer for example, is made from barley grains, which are soaked in water to ferment. Beer (like whiskey and many other alcoholic beverages made out of one of these grains) is considered Chametz, although the grain was never converted into flour.

### Other Fermented Foods

A fermented food which does not come from or contain any of these five grains does not become Chametz, even if it undergoes a fermentation process. For example, wine goes through a fermentation process, but it is not Chametz since it is made from grapes. The same applies to other alcoholic beverages. For example, sake (known in Japan as “rice wine”), is made from fermented rice and is not Chametz.

### Non-fermented Bread: Matza

Finally, not everything that comes from these five grains is Chametz. In fact, Kosher Matza, which is considered a type of bread, should only be made from one of these five grains. Matza is called the “bread of poverty” or לחם עוני. In English it is called “unleavened bread”.

## III. How Do Chametz & Matza Differ?

### 1. Time

The fundamental difference between bread and Matza is time. Bread and Matza are made with the same basic ingredients: flour and water. The difference is that when preparing Matza, once the flour is mixed with water, the dough cannot be left to rest. The dough must be kneaded and baked in less than 18 minutes. If from the time the flour comes into contact with water it is left idle for 18 minutes or more, the dough undergoes a fermentation process. This fermentation is called in Hebrew “Chimutz”, and the product of this fermentation is called “Chametz”.

### 2. Water

If the flour made from one of the five grains is mixed exclusively with fruit juice, honey or eggs (without any water) fermentation/ Chimutz will not take place. Technically, if I make a dough by mixing wheat flour with pure fruit juice, and I bake the dough, this will be called Matza Ashira, “enriched Matza”, and it is not considered Chametz.

### 3. Se-or

Yeast (Heb: se-or/ שאור) is part of the biblical prohibition of Chametz, even though yeast is not an edible food by itself but an additive. Today we mostly use commercial yeast which is bought in a supermarket and which many of us use mainly to bake Halot for Shabbat. Until a century ago, however, yeast was usually produced at home. How is yeast prepared at home? A mixture of flour and water is mixed and then kept for a period of four days. This mixture becomes sourdough, which smells like alcohol and is known as “natural yeast”. Sourdough is used as the catalyst for the process of fermentation in making home-made bread. In other words, when preparing bread, if we introduce some yeast into a simple dough, the fermentation process accelerates, and the dough grows bigger and spongier, resulting in a soft and tasty bread. All of the restrictions around Chametz regarding its use, possession and benefit, also apply to se-or, natural or commercial yeast.

## IV. Rice & Kitniyot

Based on the definition of Chametz, it is clear that rice is not included in its prohibition.

The Talmud records a minority opinion from Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri (First Century CE), a sage from Eretz Israel, who argued against consuming rice during Pesach. The Gemara also records the case of Rabbah, a famous Amora from Babel, who used to eat rice in the Pesach Seder in front of Rab Huna, perhaps to show that rice is completely allowed in Pesach. The Gemara concludes that rice is not Chametz and that it can be eaten in Pesach (Pesachim 114b).

The Ashkenazi custom, however, is to refrain from consuming rice on Pesach. This is not because Ashkenazi authorities consider rice Chametz but because it is fairly easy to visually confuse rice with wheat, in terms of ears, grains and flour.

Additionally, the fields where rice was harvested used to be near the same fields where wheat or barley was harvested. Because of this, some grains of wheat could be mixed in with rice. As will be discussed below, the prohibition of Chametz during Pesach is so strict that a single grain of wheat would turn a whole plate of rice into Chametz. All these elements contributed to the custom of abstaining from rice on Pesach.

Moreover, until a few decades ago, a century ago, food products were not sold packaged in the shelves of supermarkets or grocery stores. Food was sold in street markets by weight, and the seller would usually use the same pallets, bags, scales and areas to store and sell wheat or barley and rice and all other grains. Under these conditions, it was not uncommon to find grains of wheat which were accidentally mixed with grains of rice.

It is worth noting that prohibiting rice on Pesach is not an exclusive tradition of Ashkenazi Jews. Sephardic Jews are divided on the question of rice. Moroccan Jews and Jews from other North African communities (except Egypt) also avoid consuming rice during Pesach. Generally, Jews from Israel, Iran, Iraq, Syria and other Middle Eastern countries consume rice during Pesach.

To avoid the possibility of the accidental presence of a grain of wheat in rice, the custom of Middle Eastern Jewish communities that allow rice on Pesach is to check it carefully three times before using it.

Ashkenazi tradition prohibits the consumption of many other things which are not Chametz such as legumes, beans, corn, etc. These foods are known as **Kitniyot**.

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed, a known Ashkenazi rabbinic authority in Israel and author of the book *Penine Halakha*, points out that although the Ashkenazi custom is to avoid the consumption of Kitniyot products during Pesach, this rule applies when the legumes are or constitute the majority of that food item (see Mishna Berura idem, 9). But if the kitniyot are present in a small proportion, and/or if the kitniyot are used as a food additive (like: corn fructose, corn starch, etc.) that food is not forbidden for consumption during Pesach, even for those who refrain from kitniyot during Pesach.

Now, even those who follow the tradition of refraining from consuming rice, corn and other legumes (kitniyot) during Pesach, can keep these products in their possession during Pesach. There is no need to discard or sell these foods before Pesach (Shulhan Arukh, Rama, 453:1).

## V. Medicine & Non-Edible Chametz

Non-edible Chametz is permitted to own and use during Pesach. This includes any product that is not suitable for human or animal consumption, even if these products may contain Chametz. Examples of non-edible Chametz are: Cosmetics, glue, shampoos, deodorants, soaps, detergents or other cleaning products, etc. In all these cases it is not necessary to ensure an absence of Chametz in these products, nor do they need to have a special rabbinical seal or certification for Pesach (Rabbi Obadia Yosef, *Yalqut Yosef*, 360: 31, 361: 68).

For Sephardim, it is also allowed to use drugs and medications that come in the form of non-chewable capsules or hard pills, that is, pills that are swallowed with water. The reason for this is that when a medicine

comes in the form of a hard capsule or a non-chewable tablet, it is considered “inedible”. Therefore, even if that medication contains a Chametz element (like wheat starch, which is nowadays highly unlikely - see below), it can be consumed during Pesach (Yalqut Yosef Mo’adim, 362: 40).

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed explains that today many Ashkenazi rabbis follow an Halakhic criterion similar to that of Rabbi Obadia Yosef’s in this area (see Penine Halakha Pesach p. 102, 103). Additionally, on the subject of non-chewable pills Rabbi Melamed makes an important practical observation: nowadays, virtually all medical hard pills are made with potato or corn starch –whose consumption in Pesach would still be allowed even for the Ashkenazi criteria – instead of wheat starch. This is, among other reasons, because wheat protein, gluten, is harmful for those with celiac disease.

It is still advisable, when possible, to ask your doctor to prescribe medication in the form of non-chewable pills for consumption on Pesach. Needless to say, in the case of a serious medical condition, one should take any medication that is necessary.

**Stricter Opinions:**

Many prominent Ashkenazi halakhic authorities also say that any non-chewable medication should be allowed for Pesach. But in their opinion, vitamins should not be part of this category. According to these opinions, vitamins, even if they come in the form of non-chewable capsules or pills, cannot be used in Pesach unless one verifies that they do not contain Chametz. Some Sephardic Rabbis also agree with this criterion. Many Ashkenazi rabbis also adopt a stricter stance on the use of non-edible Chametz for Pesach (cleaning products or perfumes made from wheat alcohol, for example).

**Liquid/Chewable Medicine**

Powdered vitamins, food supplements or syrups should have Kosher for Pesach certification to be consumed on Pesach, or one must be absolutely sure that they do not contain any Chametz ingredient in their composition. Bear in mind that many dietary

supplements and vitamins are made with elements that are 100% Chametz (eg, grain fibers, wheat germ, etc.).

Rabbis, Ashkenazi and Sephardic, are also divided on the question of personal hygiene oral products that have a pleasant taste: If they have to be certified Kosher for Pesach. See the UMJCA Pesach List for a more lenient opinion.

**VI. Chametz Mixed in Your Food**

What is the difference between the prohibition of consuming Chametz and consuming any other non - kosher food? (For example, bread during Pesach vs. a non-kosher meat during the rest of the year).

One of the main differences relates to the percentage of Chametz that when mixed in a food render that food forbidden.

Normally, if a food contains a non-Kosher product in a proportion that is **less than 1/60** of that food, the food is still Kosher. For example: what is the status of a meat stew into which you accidentally drop a few drops of milk? If you assess that the milk that fell into the stew constitutes less than 1/60 of the total stew (less than 1.6%), then the stew is Kosher.

During Pesach, however, **any quantity of Chametz renders the food forbidden**. Even if one small grain of wheat or a little bit of flour falls into a large stew it renders the stew not kosher for Pesach. In other words, even if the Chametz elements are less than 1.6% of the food it renders it all forbidden.

As such, since even a minimal amount of Chametz can cause a large meal to become non-kosher for Pesach, the possibility of “accidental” Chametz contamination during Pesach is very real. Therefore, any meal that is made during Pesach must adhere to strict standards. Hotel and restaurants kosher for Pesach, for instance, make sure not only that all the food’s constitutive elements are Chametz-free but also, that none of the workers involved in food prep are bringing any Chametz to the premises where the food is being processed, etc. Even a small bread crumb that accidentally falls from a worker’s meal can render an entire kosher meal as non-kosher for Pesach.

## Exceptions

For Sephardi Jews, the rule that we just mentioned applies in a situation where the Chametz element was mixed into the non-Chametz food **during Pesach**. However, when a food was made **before Pesach**, we go back to the normal Kashrut rule: the non-Kosher for Pesach element must be present in a quantity above 1.6% to render the food as not Kosher for Pesach.

Before Pesach begins, therefore, we can purchase normal non-Chametz food, even without a specific Kosher or Pesach supervision certificate, and use it for Pesach. Obviously, fresh fruits and vegetables; fresh fish; fresh meat and poultry do not need any special supervision for Pesach. And we can also use during Pesach some simple processed foods like regular tea, pure sugar, regular salt, and many other foods that do not contain any Chametz ingredient in their composition.

In many Sephardic communities Rabbis write a list of common food products, like jams, coffees, potato chips, ketchup, mayonnaise, that were not made under a specific Pesach supervision. Through this list, which is a result of careful research, the community rabbis verify that no Chametz element in a proportion higher than 1.6% was used in the basic composition. Usually, the list would clarify that these products should be bought before Pesach.

All what we just said, it is according to the Sephardic tradition. According to the Ashkenazi custom, however, any food that is to be consumed during Pesach has to be prepared or manufactured under special rabbinical supervision for Pesach, because **even before Pesach**, any amount of Chametz renders that food as non-Kosher for Pesach (chozer ve'neor).

## Chametz Machinery

Another major difference between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Halakhic approaches to Pesach concerns food that does not contain a Chametz ingredient in its composition and might have been processed in Chametz machinery. For Ashkenazim such foods are forbidden for Pesach and for Sephardim allowed.

Why? The Sephardic tradition follows the rule “*Noten Taam bar Noten taam DeHetera Mutar Lekhatechila*”. This means that when the (intangible) particles of a prohibited substance are absorbed in the machinery and then these particles get reabsorbed in the non-Chametz food, it results in a kind of a “Chametz cross contamination”. And if that substance was considered Kosher at the time that the absorption took place, since Chametz before Pesach is allowed, the final product is Mutar (permitted).

Because of the strict Biblical prohibition of Chametz, many Jews impose upon themselves extra restrictions or Humrot. It is important to know that these restrictions should be taken as an individual matter (*Iachmir leAtzmo*) and it is **forbidden to teach or instruct people to follow Humrot as if they were the actual Halakha**.

This includes, for example, instructing Sephardic Jews to follow restrictions of the Ashkenazi Minhag or vice versa. Rabbi Obadia Yosef (Yechave Daat, Alef, 11) has written extensively about the severity of teaching extra restrictions, especially regarding the Laws of Pesach.

## VII. Keeping & Owning Chametz

One of the elements that makes the Biblical prohibition of Chametz so unique is that, unlike any other forbidden foods, we are not allowed to **own** Chametz.

There are three Mitzvot in the Tora related to this prohibition:

1. **בל יראה** “Your Chametz shall not be seen in your property” (Exodus 13:7);
2. **בל ימצא** “Your Chametz shall not be found in your premises” (Exodus 12:19).
3. **השבתת המץ** “You shall end [ownership of] your Chametz on Pesach eve” (Exodus 12:15).

The Tora sheBe'al pe, the authoritative (halakhic) Jewish tradition, explains that the first two verses, the two prohibitions, are considered one single restriction, that is: “having” or “owning” Chametz during Pesach.

It is forbidden to own Chametz, even when that Chametz is not physically in your house or premises.

Maimonides explains this concept in his Mishne Torah: In Chametz u'Matza (4:2) he writes "Chametz [food] belonging to a Jew...even though it is buried, or located in another city, or is entrusted to a gentile, causes him to violate [the commandments]: "[Chametz] shall not be seen" and "[hametz] shall not be found."

We also have a third Mitzva called "tashbitu" which our oral tradition interprets as actively disowning our Chametz before Pesach begins.

In sum, there are two identical prohibitions (a unique case in the Tora) and one affirmative commandment, virtually for the same matter: **the prohibition of owning Chametz** during Pesach.

Strictly speaking, (and following Maimonides' opinion) these three Mitzvot would be fulfilled at once by performing one single act: the **'bitul Chametz'**: verbally and wholeheartedly renouncing the ownership of any Chametz that belongs to us, regardless of where that Chametz is located.

By declaring the Chametz ownerless, one fulfills the Mitzva of not owning Chametz and avoids transgressing two prohibitions. This is even if - accidentally - we have kept Chametz in our premises.

Why, then, can't we just declare all our Chametz ownerless through the 'bitul', and keep Chametz at our homes? Why do we still have to search and remove it from our homes? Our Rabbis in the Mishna instructed us to physically get rid of all our Chametz before Pesach begins, and to renounce the ownership of any Chametz we might still have and have not found ("bitul Chametz"). This is because there are some practical complications with just "declaring" our Chametz ownerless while keeping it at home.

First, if we possess valuable Chametz, such as expensive whiskey, we might not mean wholeheartedly that we renounce its possession. Secondly, Chametz is the most common food. So even if we declare our Chametz ownerless, while keeping it at home, we might end up consuming Chametz accidentally.

Following the Rabbis' instructions this is what we actually do:

(1) We should clean our home, cars, offices and any other properties before Pesach to **identify and remove** all Chametz from them.

(2) We run a **final and formal search** of all our properties to make sure that we have removed everything Chametz from them (Bediqat Chametz, the night before Pesach).

(3) We **physically dispose** of or get rid of any Chametz found in our properties before and during the search (Bi-ur Chametz). There are many ways to dispose of our Chametz: We can give our Chametz as a gift or charity to a non-Jew; or if we have bread leftovers, for example, we can throw it to the birds or to fish, or burn it or dispose of it in a garbage outside our premises.

(4) Then, after we get rid of our Chametz, we **recite the kal hamira** — that is the formal Bitul Chametz- saying: "whatever Chametz we may still own anywhere, which was not detected during the bediqa and/or was not removed by us, does not belong to us anymore, and from now on it should be considered ownerless (hefqer) as the dust of the earth."

## VIII. Selling Chametz

In general, you only have to get rid of Chametz which is suitable for human or animal consumption. In terms of food items, one can keep anything so long as one makes sure that it does not contain any of these five grains: wheat, barley, oats, rye, spelt (note that anything which contains gluten, is Chametz).

You do not need to sell your pots and pans, or anything that might contain "invisible" Chametz (Chametz balua). Just put those utensils away during Pesach. Medical pills, perfumes, cosmetics or any non-edible items could be kept, regardless of their composition. Nowadays, most communities, Ashkenazi and Sephardic, arrange a Chametz-selling system in which community members give their rabbi a power of attorney to sell their Chametz. This procedure is a Halakhic leniency done in order to avoid the loss of expensive Chametz items like expensive whiskeys, etc.

Historically, Sephardic Jews did not practice a mekhirat Chametz (=selling of Chametz) procedure. They simply got rid of their Chametz before Pesach. The only exceptional case in which Sephardic rabbis authorized selling the Chametz was the case of a food-store owner, to avoid a very significant loss. In this case, a non-Jew would make a down payment for the total of the merchandise and from the moment the non-Jew made that payment, the Chametz merchandise would belong completely to the buyer.

## IX. A Simple Guide to Making Your Kitchen Kosher for Pesach

During Pesach we do not use the same utensils or the same dishes we use throughout the year for Chametz. Although the utensils in which we cook might be completely clean of Chametz, without any visible remaining food, the surface's pores of these utensils absorb the flavor of the foods cooked in them. For example: if I cook meat and then in the same pot (even after I clean it) I boil eggs, the eggs would absorb some of the taste of the meat. Likewise, when we cook something in utensils used for cooking Chametz, some Chametz flavor will be reabsorbed in the food we prepare for or during Pesach.

It is customary and recommended, therefore, to have a set of dishes, plates and utensils to be used exclusively for Pesach.

When this is not possible, we might use for Pesach the same utensils we utilize throughout the year for Chametz, after they go through a process known as hag'ala, (a kind of sterilization) to remove non visible residual Chametz that may be absorbed within the walls and pores of these utensils.

Before making the Hag'ala we need to make sure that those utensils are thoroughly cleaned of any visible of Chametz (חמץ בעין). The Hag'ala then ejects the Chametz absorbed (בלוע) in the walls of the utensil. Eliminating these adsorbed particles takes place under the same conditions the absorption of these substances occurred (כבולעו כך פולטו). The pores of a metallic surface open up when exposed to heat, and that is when absorption occurs. Consequently, the expulsion of

these particles would also occur by exposing these utensils to heat.

Now, when a utensil is used throughout the year to serve or prepare cold Chametz food, it can be used during Pesach after cleaning it thoroughly from any visible rests of Chametz. These utensils don't need to undergo the Hag'ala process since absorption of Hamatez only takes place at high temperatures. Examples of these types of utensils are: plastic cups and containers, and trays that are used mainly (רוב שימוש) to serve cold food. One should not do Hagala for meat and dairy utensils together. They should be done at separate times.

### Examples of hag'ala:

**Metal:** For metal cutlery such as spoons, forks, or knives, it is preferable to purchase a separate set of utensils for Pesach. If that isn't an option, then:

*Spoons & Ladles:* must be first cleaned of all visible residue of Chametz. Then, they must be immersed in a pot of boiling water. Then we wash them with cold water, and they may be used for Pesach. Hot water opens the metal pores, allowing the ejection of any absorbed Chametz. The cold water closes the pores again.

*Forks:* Forks are difficult to kasher, and therefore it is best to purchase separate forks for Pesach. If one would like to kasher forks with Hagala, one must be careful to clean very well between the tines to make sure there is no residue before kashering with Hagala.

*Knives:* Only knives with metal handles that are the same material as the knife can be kashered. If the knife has a handle of different material such as a hard plastic handle or a wooden handle, the knife cannot be kashered.

**Glass:** According to the Sephardic tradition, glassware, cups, plates, etc, used throughout the year for Chametz, should be washed thoroughly and can be used for Pesach without having to undergo the Hag'ala process. Glass is sterile, and it does not absorb any food substance through its pores, and therefore there is no Chametz to remove from its walls. This applies even for

those glass utensils that are used at high temperatures for cooking or serving hot Chametz food.

Notice that this Halakha is very different in the Ashkenazi tradition. Some Ashkenazi rabbis like the Rama say that since glass is made from sand, glass utensils should be regarded as clay utensils, which are not susceptible to Hag'ala, and therefore cannot be used on Pesach because Hag'ala is useless for them. Other Ashkenazi Rabbis allow a Hag'ala process for glassware. Consult your community Rabbi.

**Clay utensils, pottery and porcelain (Kele Heres):**

If these items were used for Chametz, they cannot be used for Pesach, because they are not susceptible to Hag'ala. The Rabbis explained that unlike metal or other utensils, clay utensils eliminate the substances absorbed in their walls in an erratic and inconsistent way. That is, sometimes they would expel an absorbed flavor and sometimes they will not. Because we cannot rely on the Hag'ala process to sterilize these types of utensils completely, they cannot be used for Pesach.

Most contemporary rabbis believe that regular porcelain utensils should be considered of the same category as clay utensils. However, there are many other considerations to take into account which can allow for exceptions to this. Some factors which might indicate a more lenient opinion in time of need are: whether these utensils were used for cooking or for serving food; the temperature of the food served; whether the china was not used for a long time; whether it is common porcelain or glass coated, etc.

If you have further questions about this and other types of utensils that are mentioned in this brief section, please consult your community rabbi.

**Sink and countertops:** The sink, metal or porcelain, should be cleaned of any food residue and then pouring on it boiling water. Countertops and tables, if possible, should be cleaned and have boiling water poured on them. If pouring hot water is not possible because of the material they are made of (a wood table or countertop, for example) they should be cleaned and covered for Pesach. If you are using a regular table,

clean it carefully and then place on it a Pesach or a new tablecloth.

**Dishwasher:** Preferably, the dishwasher machine should be cleaned well (including the grease trap) and the racks should be replaced for Pesach. If it is difficult to replace the racks, one may clean and wipe down the dishwasher as much as possible (including the grease trap). Then wait 24 hours and run two empty cycles with soap.

**Oven:** The oven should be cleaned thoroughly and then not be used for 24 hours. If it is a self-cleaning oven, it should go through one self-clean cycle, and then it becomes Kosher for Pesach. If the oven does not have a self-cleaning feature, after it is thoroughly cleaned it should run on its highest temperature setting for one hour (including the oven racks). Following this the oven is Kosher for Pesach.

**Microwave:** Fill a microwave-safe bowl with water and some detergent. Insert it in the microwave and turn it on until the microwave walls are filled with its steam. The vapor penetrates the walls rendering the microwave Kosher for Pesach. A microwave that is also used as a convection oven to bake foods should be kashered in the same manner as a regular oven.

**X. When Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbat (as it does this year)**

**A Singular Year**

This year an unusual halakhic situation arises regarding Erev Pesach. Pesach will begin **Saturday night, April 12<sup>th</sup>**. Therefore, Erev Pesach, will fall out on Shabbat. The last time this happened was in 2021, and the next time it will happen is in 2045.

In this situation, we make some adjustments. On the one hand, we want to keep the sanctity of Shabbat intact and, on the other hand, we also want to fulfill all the Halakhic principles of Pesach in the best possible way.

## XI. Ta'anit Bekhorot (Fast of the Firstborn) - Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup>

Every year, on Erev Pesach, in the morning, we observe the fast of the firstborn. This year, the fast will take place on **Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup>** (12<sup>th</sup> of Nissan). The Fast begins at 5:10 am.

Firstborn men who are in good health fast as a recognition of the protection of HaShem, who guarded the Jewish firstborn when all the firstborn of Egypt died. Since this is not a mandatory fast (it was not promulgated by the Tora or by the Rabbis of the Gemara), many avoid it by participating in a festive religious ceremony (for example a Berit Mila or a Pidion).

Since these occasions cannot be anticipated, it is customary for communities to organize a Siyum Masekhet, a conclusion of a Talmudic treatise, Mishna or Gemara. This *siyum* is considered a festive event and meritorious enough to avoid this fast. After participating in this *siyum* the first-born may eat on the eve of Pesach.

Although on most years there is a Mashadi custom for the firstborns not to have Chametz after breaking their fast, this year that the fast is earlier, it is permitted for the firstborns to have Chametz after breaking the fast. The Mashadi custom is that the firstborn instead refrains from Chametz on Shabbat morning, even during the early morning hours when Chametz is technically permitted to others.

Since the fast is pushed earlier this year, fathers who normally fast on behalf of their first-born children who are under bar-mitzvah are exempt from the fast.

## XII. Bedikat Chametz (Searching for Chametz) – Thursday Night, April 10<sup>th</sup>

As we've explained, one of the biblical prohibitions of Pesach is to own Chametz. To prevent this, we clean our houses and other properties before Pesach and remove any Chametz found. Then, the night before Pesach, when the first stars come out, we do the Bedikat Chametz. Bedikat Chametz is a formal search of our

properties to look for any Chametz food that might have been left inadvertently.

This year, since, Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbat, the final inspection of the Chamets should be done “two nights” before the Seder - on **Thursday night, April 10<sup>th</sup>**. The search for Chametz may begin **after 7:50 pm**.

How do we do the Bedikat Chametz? Customarily, we hold a candle or a flashlight and we search every place where we could have brought, eaten or stored food. We should pay special notice in our search to the kitchen and all food storage spaces, such as the pantry, refrigerator, freezer, etc.

Before beginning the search, we say this berakha:

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל בֵּיעוּר חֻמֵץ**

*“Barukh Ata A- donay, E-lohenu Melekh ha'Olam Asher Quiddeshanu beMitSvotav veTsvivanu Al Bi'ur Hamets.”*

Then we say the first Kal Hamira, the formula to formally and legally renounce the possession of any Chametz that belongs to us and we have not found in the Bedika. The text (for Sephardic Jews) is as follows:

**כָּל חֻמִּירָא דְאִיפָא בְרִשְׁוֹתֵי, דְלֹא חֻמְתִּיהָ, וְדִלָּא  
בְעִרְתִּיהָ, וְדִלָּא יְדַעְנָא לִיהָ, לְבָטֵל וְלֹהֵי פְעֻפְרָא  
דְאַרְעָא.**

*“Kal Hamira Deika Birshuti, Dela Haziteh Vedela Biarteh, Libtil Veleheve Hafquer Ke'afra Dear'a.”*

**“All Chametz or leavening substance that belongs to me, that I have not seen or eliminated, should be considered ownerless as the dust of the earth”**

At the end of the bedika we keep in a safe place the Chametz that we are going to consume or discard the next morning.

**What happens if you spend Pesach out of town?**

When one spends Pesach away, the searching for *Chametz* at home should be done the night before leaving home. This early Bedikat Chametz should be done without reciting any blessing. Upon arriving at



your new Pesach residence (usually, your hotel room), you should search for Chametz once again.

For this second search you should recite the blessing "...asher qiddeshanu bemisvotav vesivanu 'al bi'ur hames." You should search for Chametz in your room (even if it is clean), your suitcases, your bags, making sure to go carefully through any snacks in your room, or those you might have brought, etc. In a hotel room, we recommend using only a flashlight for the search.

### XIII. Biur Chametz (Getting Rid of Chametz) – Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>

On a normal year, on the morning of Erev Pesach, we are permitted to eat Chametz until the fourth hour of the day (**in the Mashadi community in Great Neck we set this time every year at 10:00 a.m.**). Once we finish eating our Chametz, we collect any leftovers and combine it with any Chametz found during the previous night's Bedika. Next, we proceed to "eliminate" it. The traditional way of disposing of the Chametz is by burning it. But this can also be done by throwing the Chametz to the birds or to the fish, or disposing it in a garbage bin **outside** our home.

This year, it is preferable to burn Chametz by **11:00 am on Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>** (13<sup>th</sup> of Nissan), the day before Erev Pesach - at the same time of day as all other years. If one cannot burn their Chametz by this time, they can burn their Chametz until later that day, slightly before candle lighting time before Shabbat.

If one is keeping bread for Hamotzi on Shabbat, one may set aside designated bread for Hamotzi and not burn it (**see below, "Section XIV. Erev Pesach: Shabbat HaGadol" for Hamotzi options for Shabbat**).

Bittul Chametz (nullification of Chametz) should be recited before **10:00am** on Shabbat morning - **Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup>** which is the latest time to eat Chametz. If one is finished getting rid of all his Chametz before Shabbat, it may be recited before Shabbat.

After we disposed of the Chametz we proceed to verbalize its last annulment, a more detailed declaration:

**כָּל חֲמִירָא דְאִיכָא בְרִשּׁוּתִי, דְחִזִּיתִיה וְדָלָא חִזִּיתִיה, דְבַעֲרִיתִיה וְדָלָא בַעֲרִיתִיה, לְבָטִיל וְלֹהֲוֵי כְּעֶפְרָא דְאַרְעָא**

*"Kal Hamira Deika Birshuti, Deba'aziteh Vedela Haziteh, Debiarte'eh Vedela Biarte'eh, Libtil Velebeve Hafqer Keafra Dear'a"*

**"Any Chametz or leavening substance that belongs to me, that I have seen or have not seen, that I have eliminated or that I did not remove, should be considered without owner as the dust of the earth".**

### Lighting an Extra 24 Hour Candle Before Shabbat

One should remember to light an extra 24-hour candle before Shabbat, in order to have a pre-existing flame to use for Havdala at the Seder on Saturday night.

### XIV. Erev Pesach: Shabbat HaGadol – Friday Night, April 11<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup>

#### What to do for the Shabbat Meals?

Hamotzi is required for the Friday night and Saturday lunch meals on every Shabbat.

To satisfy this requirement, this year, one has several options.

#### Option # 1 – Using Regular Kosher for Passover Matzah

One can use regular Kosher for Passover Matzah for Hamotzi **only for the Friday night meal**, and not Shabbat lunch, as we do not consume regular matza on erev Pesach (Shabbat day). One person must have  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a machine-made (square) matzah, or half of a shemura (round) matzah at this meal.

For **the Shabbat day meal**, one must use one of the 3 following options:

#### Option # 1 – Using Egg Matzah

One can use Kosher for Passover egg matzah for Hamotzi for both meals. To make Hamotzi on Egg

Matzah, one person should eat 2 full (square) matzahs at each meal.

**Option # 2 – Fried or Cooked Matzah**

One can use fried matzah for Hamotzi for the first two meals. One must fry or cook the matzah before Shabbat (remember to use kosher for Passover pans and utensils). One person must have 2/3 of a machine-made (square) fried matzah, or half of a fried shemura (round) matzah at each meal.

**Option # 3 – Keeping Bread**

One can save a few loaves of bread for Hamotzi on Friday night and early Shabbat morning. One must be especially careful to clean and dispose of all pieces of bread when finished. If keeping bread for Shabbat, it is recommended to use pita bread or similar type of bread that will not leave many crumbs.

When keeping bread for Hamotzi, one must be sure to stop eating by **10:00 am**, and dispose of all leftover bread by **11:00am**, followed by reciting the nullification/bittul.

**NOTE:** It is preferable to discard all Chametz and use one of the Kosher for Passover options for Shabbat where possible, to prevent halachic difficulties of having Chametz around on Shabbat.

**Seuda Shelishit**

For seuda shelishit, it is recommended to have a light meal made of fruits, fish, or other foods that are not bread-based. If one wants to make Hamotzi, one can use egg or fried matzah as detailed above. One should avoid starting a Hamotzi meal at **4:00pm** or later (in Great Neck). One should have seuda shelishit as early as possible in order to have an appetite at the Seder. The earliest time for seuda shelishit this year is **1:33pm** in Great Neck.

**Preparing for the Seder**

As a rule, Jewish law prohibits preparing anything for after-Shabbat on Shabbat itself. This prohibition includes preparing for the Seder (such as setting the table or preparing the food) before Shabbat is over. One can begin Seder preparations that do not involve Shabbat violations, such as setting the table for the Seder, beginning from 20 minutes after sunset (**7:52pm** in Great Neck). Women should only light their candles after the time Shabbat ends, which is 50 minutes after sunset (**8:22pm** in Great Neck). The seder may begin after this time as well.

**XV. Halakhot of the Seder Night**

**Kadesh - קדש**

*Reciting Kiddush*

1. It is important to start the Seder as early as possible, so that the participants- especially the children- should be alert and able to participate.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, one who has young children should try to have them nap on Erev Pesach (Passover Eve)<sup>2</sup>.
2. One should try to have the table set and ready for the Seder before nightfall on Erev Pesach in order to start the Seder as soon as possible on Pesach night. Likewise, when inviting guests for the Seder, one should request that they arrive early on Pesach night.<sup>3</sup>
3. One should use their finest dishes and silverware for the Seder, to show our appreciation for the freedom we gained on Pesach.<sup>4</sup>
4. The earliest time to say Kiddush and begin the Seder is at Tzet HaKochavim, which is 20 minutes after sunset.<sup>5</sup>
5. There is a Mitzvah to drink 4 cups of wine at the Seder. This Mitzvah applies equally to men and women.

<sup>1</sup> כדי לקיים מצוות "והגדת לבנך" כהוגן  
<sup>2</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - קדש ב  
<sup>3</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - קדש א

<sup>4</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - קדש ג  
<sup>5</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - קדש א

6. To fulfill the Mitzvah of the 4 cups one can either use wine or grape juice, but wine is preferable.<sup>6</sup>
7. The best way to fulfill the Mitzvah of the 4 cups is to use red wine, and red wine which is not Mevushal is preferable to red wine which is Mevushal.
8. Each cup of wine must hold a minimum of 81 mL, or 2.75 fluid ounces.<sup>7</sup> The typical shot glass would be too small to use.
9. One should try to drink the entire cup of wine, but at minimum one must drink only the majority.<sup>8</sup>
10. One may dilute the grape juice or wine with water as long as the mixture is more wine/grape juice than water.
11. Children who are old enough to understand the Pesach story should also be given 4 cups of grape juice, and these cups should hold 81mL, like an adult.<sup>9</sup>
12. As we drink each of the 4 cups of wine we lean to our left side, regardless of whether one is right-handed or left-handed. This practice applies to women as well.
13. Someone spending the Seder with his Rabbi not need lean in their presence, unless the Rabbi gives them permission<sup>10</sup>.
14. Even one who doesn't like wine or grape juice is still obligated in the Mitzvah of drinking the 4 cups. Someone who has a medical condition or dietary restriction should consult with a Rabbi before the Seder to asses if they are obligated to drink.<sup>11</sup>
15. Even someone who isn't able to read the Haggadah at all is still obligated to drink the 4 cups, even if they aren't drinking within the framework of the Seder.<sup>12</sup>
16. There is a custom that each person at the Seder has someone else pour the wine for them, as a symbol of our freedom.<sup>13</sup>
17. One should drink each of the 4 cups in one shot. However, if one did not do so they fulfill the Mitzvah as long as they finish drinking the majority of the wine within 2 minutes.<sup>14</sup>
18. Even though every member of the Passover Seder has their own cup of wine only one person recites Kiddush for all. The other members of the Seder simply answer Amen at the end of his Brachot and have fulfilled their Mitzvah. The other members of the Seder should not say הוּא וְכָרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ when listening to Kiddush at the Seder.<sup>15</sup>
19. Sefaradim should try to read the Kiddush out of a Sefaradi Siddur or Haggadah, since there are differences in the text between the Sefaradi Kiddush and Ashkenazi Kiddush.
20. A man should say the Kiddush for all. In a household where there are only women present women are allowed to say Kiddush and conduct the Seder by themselves.<sup>16</sup> In a situation where there are adult women present and all the boys present are under Bar Mitzvah, an adult woman should say Kiddush.
21. Once Kiddush was said, one who is very hungry may eat something light but should leave an appetite for eating Matzah and Marror. If one wants to eat something Mezonot, like cakes made from Matzah meal or Egg Matzah, they are only permitted to eat under 50 mL of the Mezonot until the meal at Shulchan Orech.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>6</sup> אור לציון ח"ג פ"טו ד  
<sup>7</sup> או"ח תעב. ו, חזון עובדיה פסח – קדש כג  
<sup>8</sup> או"ח תעב. ו, חזון עובדיה פסח – קדש כג  
<sup>9</sup> שהרי מצוות החינוך היא לתנך את הילד לקיים את המצוות שיהיה גדול. לכן יש לחנכו לקיימם כהוגן.  
<sup>10</sup> או"ח תעב. ה, כף החיים או"ח רד ס"ק לב, אור לציון ח"ב כ

<sup>11</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח – קדש יח  
<sup>12</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח – קדש יט  
<sup>13</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח – קדש כב  
<sup>14</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח – קדש כד  
<sup>15</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח – קדש כח  
<sup>16</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח – קדש לב, לג  
<sup>17</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח – קדש לו

22. Someone thirsty may drink only water, tea, or coffee after Kiddush until Shulchan Orech.<sup>18</sup>

### Urchatz – ורחץ

#### *Washing hands*

1. We wash our hands Netillat Yadaim just like we would when eating bread, except that we do **not** make the Bracha of "על נטילת ידים".<sup>19</sup>
2. One should preferably not speak between the time they washed their hands and eating the Karpas.<sup>20</sup>

### Karpas – כרפס

#### *Eating celery dipped in saltwater*

1. We dip celery in saltwater or balsamic vinegar at Karpas.<sup>21</sup>
2. One should eat less than a Kezayit (a measurement equal to about 28mL or 1 oz.) of Karpas.<sup>22</sup>
3. It is important that the celery is thoroughly washed prior to the Seder, to ensure that there are no bugs clinging to the celery.<sup>23</sup>
4. One is allowed to use other vegetables in place of Karpas if celery is not available.
5. We make the Bracha "בִּזְרָא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה" before eating the Karpas. One should have in mind to include the Marror we will eat later at the Seder in the Bracha.<sup>24</sup>
6. The more proper custom is for one person to say the Bracha on behalf of everyone at the Seder. All the participants must answer Amen to the Bracha and then may eat the Karpas. If one of the participants doesn't clearly hear the Bracha, they may make their own Bracha.<sup>25</sup>

7. In some families the custom is for each participant at the Seder to make their own Bracha on the Karpas.<sup>26</sup>
8. One should not lean to the left-side when eating Karpas.<sup>27</sup>

### Yachatz – יחץ

#### *Breaking the Middle Matzah*

1. At the Seder table there should be a stack of 3 Matzot. The person leading the Seder takes the middle Matzah and breaks it into 2 pieces. The smaller piece is put back in the middle of the other 2 Matzot, while the larger piece is set aside to be eaten as the Afikoman.<sup>28</sup>
2. If the top or bottom Matzah had already broken, one should switch it for the middle Matzah.<sup>29</sup>
3. There is a custom to give the children the broken piece of Matzah to hide until the Afikoman will be eaten.
4. If someone has only 2 Matzot at the table they should break the bottom one.<sup>30</sup>

### Maggid – מגיד

#### *Reciting the Passover story*

1. There is a Mitzvah to teach the Pesach story to one's children. The more one speaks, discusses, and teaches the story the better.<sup>31</sup>
2. We lift the plate of Matzot while reciting "הָאֵל לְחֵמָּה" "עֲנֵנָּה".<sup>32</sup>
3. The custom of the Mashadi community is for every person at the Seder to recite "הָאֵל לְחֵמָּה עֲנֵנָּה".

<sup>18</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - קדש לו  
<sup>19</sup> חזון עובדיה ורחץ א  
<sup>20</sup> חזון עובדיה ורחץ ב  
<sup>21</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - כרפס א  
<sup>22</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - כרפס א  
<sup>23</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - כרפס ג  
<sup>24</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - כרפס ד  
<sup>25</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - כרפס ב

<sup>26</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - כרפס ב  
<sup>27</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - כרפס ג  
<sup>28</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - יחץ א  
<sup>29</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - יחץ ג  
<sup>30</sup> וכך הוא דעת הגר"א לכתחילה. חזון עובדיה פסח - יחץ ב  
<sup>31</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד ז  
<sup>32</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד א

4. Men and women are both required to recite the Maggid section of the Haggadah. One person can recite the Maggid on behalf of everyone at the table, provided that they listen to his recitation.<sup>33</sup>
5. The Maggid section can be read in English.
6. After reciting **הָא לְחֵמָא עֲנִיָא** we pour the second cup of wine.<sup>34</sup>
7. The Maggid section isn't strictly for reading the text of the Haggadah. One who is capable should elaborate and embellish with Divrei Torah relating to the Passover story.<sup>35</sup>
8. During the Maggid section one should not talk about matters unrelated to the Haggadah.<sup>36</sup>
9. The Matzah should be left uncovered during the Maggid section.<sup>37</sup> When **וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֶדָה** is recited (until the words **מִצִּילֵנוּ מִיָּדַיִם**) we raise our glasses of wine, and cover the Matzah until the end of the section. Likewise, when reciting **לְפִיכָהּ** through the end of the Maggid section we cover the Matzah and again raise our glasses.<sup>38</sup>
10. When saying **וְאֵשׁ וְתַמְרוֹת עֵשֶׂן** the one reciting the Haggadah pours out a drop of wine from his cup into a bowl, pouring once for each word. Then, when reciting **דְּצ"ךְ עַד"ש בַּאֲח"ב** and name the plagues (**דָּם, צְפַרְדֵּי** ...) the leader of the Seder again spills a drop from the cup of wine at each word. Once done, they refill the cup.<sup>39</sup>
11. At the words **זוּ מִצָּה** (which translates to "This Matzah") we raise up the Matzah for everyone to see. When saying **מְרוֹר זֶה** (Which means "These bitter herbs") we lift the Marror.<sup>40</sup>
12. The Sefaradi custom is not to make a Bracha of **בּוֹרָא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן** when drinking the second cup of wine.

The Ashkenazi custom is to make **בּוֹרָא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן** on the second cup, so one using an Ashkenazi Haggadah should be aware to skip the Bracha.<sup>41</sup>

13. When drinking each of the cups of wine we lean to our left-hand side, and if someone drank the cup without leaning to the left they must drink another cup leaning.<sup>42</sup>
14. Ideally one should make the Bracha of **אֶשֶׁר גָּאֵלְנוּ** at the end of the Maggid section before Chatzot (which is about 1:00am in New York, 12 hours after Chatzot of the day).<sup>43</sup>

### רוּחַסָּה – רַחֲצָה

*Washing hands- with a Bracha*

1. We wash our hands Netillat Yadayim, this time with a Bracha, just as one does for eating bread.<sup>44</sup>

### מוֹצִיא מַצָּה – מוֹצִיא מַצָּה

*Eating Matzah*

1. The leader of the Seder holds the 3 Matzot, with the broken one in the middle, and make the two brachot- **מִן הָאֶרֶץ לֶחֶם מוֹצִיא** and **עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה**. Some have the custom to put down the bottom Matzah after saying **הַמוֹצִיא** before making the Bracha of **עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה**.<sup>45</sup>
2. The person who makes the Bracha should taste the Matzah (and may do so without leaning to the left) before handing the Matzah out to the guests at the table. Afterwards they must eat a Kezayit of Matzah while leaning to the left.<sup>46</sup>
3. Ideally one should try to have 2 Kezayits at this time but someone who has a hard time eating 2 Kezayits of Matzah can eat only 1 Kezayit.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>33</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד ג  
<sup>34</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד ו  
<sup>35</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד י  
<sup>36</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד יא  
<sup>37</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד יג  
<sup>38</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד יג  
<sup>39</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד יד  
<sup>40</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד טו

<sup>41</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד כ  
<sup>42</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד יט  
<sup>43</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מגיד כד  
<sup>44</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - רחצה 1  
<sup>45</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה א  
<sup>46</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה ג  
<sup>47</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה א

4. Ideally one should eat handmade Shmura Matzah, but machine-made Shmura Matzah is acceptable too.<sup>48</sup>
5. If there is not enough Matzah, extra Matzah can also be brought to the table, as long as the Matzah is Shmura.<sup>49</sup>
6. A Kezayit is approximately 1/4 of a handmade Matzah and 1/3 of a machine Matzah.
7. We eat the Matzah while leaning to the left, and if someone forgot they must eat another Kezayit of Matzah while leaning.<sup>50</sup>
8. One should have in mind when eating the Matzah that we do so to fulfill the Torah commandment of eating Matzah.<sup>51</sup>
9. As we eat these first Matzot to fulfill our Mitzvah, one should eat the Matzot plain, without any toppings or dips.<sup>52</sup>
10. One may eat wet Matzah to fulfill their Mitzvah.<sup>53</sup>
11. One cannot fulfill their Mitzvah with cooked Matzah, such as a Matzah ball or Matzah dipped in hot soup.<sup>54</sup>
12. One should not talk or interrupt until they have completely eaten the Kezayit of Matzah.<sup>55</sup> One should try to finish eating the Matzah within 3 minutes of starting.<sup>56</sup>
13. Someone who cannot tolerate gluten in large quantities may eat a 1/5 of a handmade Matzah or a quarter of a machine Matzah.<sup>57</sup> Someone who cannot tolerate gluten at all should eat Matzah made from oats.<sup>58</sup>

14. One must eat the Matzot before Chatzot. After Chatzot one eating the Matzah does not make the Bracha על אכילת מצה.<sup>59</sup>

## מרור – Marror

### *Eating Bitter Herbs*

1. We take a Kezayit of Marror, dip it into the Charoset (Haligh in Farsi), and eat it after making the Bracha of על אכילת מרור, with the intention of fulfill the Mitzvah of eating Marror.<sup>60</sup>
2. When eating the Marror for the Mitzvah one simply dips into the Charoset and shakes off the excess in order to be able to taste the bitterness of the Marror.<sup>61</sup>
3. After eating a Kezayit of Marror one has fulfilled the Mitzvah and is now allowed to eat more with as much Charoset as they prefer.
4. A Kezayit is a measure of volume that equals 28mL.<sup>62</sup>
5. There are several types of leafy vegetables that are acceptable as Marror. The best type of Marror is romaine lettuce.<sup>63</sup> The second-best type of Marror are endives. One buying romaine lettuce to use at the seder must make sure to thoroughly wash and check them to make sure there are no insects clinging to the leaves. It is best to buy romaine lettuce grown in a greenhouse, since it is typically cleaner than conventional lettuce. Endives do not pose a serious concern for bugs so one simply needs to rinse them under a strong stream of water.<sup>64</sup>
6. Sefaradim should **not** use horseradish as Marror.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>48</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה כ  
<sup>49</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה ד  
<sup>50</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה א, ז  
<sup>51</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה ו  
<sup>52</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה י  
<sup>53</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה יא  
<sup>54</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה יב  
<sup>55</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה ב  
<sup>56</sup> והאור לציון ח"ג פרק טו יג כתב 4 דקות אך דעת מו"ר ששיעור כדי אכילת פרס לכתחילה בערך 3 דקות

<sup>57</sup> דהיינו כזית לפי שיטת הרמב"ם שכזית היא שליש ביצה, ולא חצי ביצה. וזה עדיף מלאכול מצת שיבולת שועל, שהרי ישנם מפקקים בזהווי השיבולת שועל  
<sup>58</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה יח  
<sup>59</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מוציא מצה כב  
<sup>60</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מרור א, ב  
<sup>61</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מרור א  
<sup>62</sup> אור לציון ח"ג פי"טו יא  
<sup>63</sup> אור לציון ח"ג פי"טו יח  
<sup>64</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - מרור ד  
<sup>65</sup> חכם צבי קיט, חזון עובדיה פסח - מרור ה

**כּוֹרֵךְ – Korech***Eating a Matzah-Marror Sandwich*

1. We eat a sandwich or wrap made with a Kezayit of Matzah, a Kezayit of Marror, and a little bit of Charoset.<sup>66</sup>
2. One may use wet Matzah for the sandwich.
3. One must lean to the left-hand side while eating the sandwich.<sup>67</sup>

**שׁוֹלְחַן עֹרֵךְ – Shulchan Orech***Eating a Meal*

1. We eat a large festive meal to celebrate the holiday.
2. Some have the custom not to have roasted meats at the Seder, while others do not have such a custom, and each family should follow their tradition.<sup>68</sup>
3. On every holiday the meal should contain meat. If one can, it is best to have beef or lamb and not just chicken.<sup>69</sup>
4. There is a custom to eat a boiled egg at the meal.<sup>70</sup>

**צָפּוֹן – Tzafun***Eating the Afikoman*

1. We take the Matzah put aside earlier for Afikoman and every person eats a Kezayit.<sup>71</sup> If there is not enough Matzah, one can take a small piece of the Afikoman Matzah and eat other Shmura Matzah with it to complete the Kezayit.<sup>72</sup>
2. We eat the Afikoman while leaning to the left.<sup>73</sup>
3. The Afikoman should be eaten by *Chatzot*.<sup>74</sup> (12 hours after the midpoint of the day)

4. The Afikoman is the last thing one should eat the night of the Seder. One is not allowed to eat anything after the Afikoman but may drink water and tea.<sup>75</sup>

**בִּרְכַּת הַמַּזֶּן – Barech***Reciting Birkat Hamazon*

1. We pour the 3<sup>rd</sup> cup of wine, to drink after finishing Birkat Hamazon.
2. We pour one more cup of wine, called Eliyahu's cup, but we do not drink it. At the end of the seder the wine from Eliyahu's cup can be poured into the bottle.

**הַלֵּל – Hallel***Reciting Hallel*

1. It is best to finish the Hallel and drinking the last of the 4 cups before Chatzot.<sup>76</sup>

**נִרְצָה – Nirtzah***Reciting Songs of Praise*

1. There is a nice custom to recite songs like קִדְּוֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ and אֶתְּקֵד מִי יוֹדֵעַ.<sup>77</sup>

**XVI. Sefirat HaOmer**

1. From the second night of Pesach we start counting Sefirat Haomer with a bracha.<sup>78</sup>
2. The time for counting is all night long, and one who forgot to count at night may count the following day without the bracha.<sup>79</sup>
3. The ideal time to count Sefirat Haomer is at nightfall (Tzet Hachochavim) but one praying with

<sup>66</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - כורך א  
<sup>67</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - כורך ב  
<sup>68</sup> חזון עובדיה שולחן עורך ב  
<sup>69</sup> שהרי ישנם הפוסקים שאינו יוצא מצות שמחת יו"ט אלא  
בבשר בהמה דווקא מגן אברהם תקנא. כח, חוות יאיר קעח  
<sup>70</sup> רמ"א תעו. ב, גר"א שם  
<sup>71</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - צפון א  
<sup>72</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - צפון ג

<sup>73</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - צפון ג  
<sup>74</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - צפון ו  
<sup>75</sup> חזון עובדיה פסח - צפון י  
<sup>76</sup> חזון עובדיה הלל ז  
<sup>77</sup> חזון עובדיה נרצה א  
<sup>78</sup> אורח חיים תפט. א  
<sup>79</sup> אורח חיים תפט. א, ז

a minyan may count as early as from sunset (Shekiah).<sup>80</sup>

4. Some communities have the minhag to count Sefirat Haomer after Kaddish Titkabal of Arvit while others wait until after Aleinu, and both have what to rely on.<sup>81</sup>
5. When counting Sefirat Haomer one should stand.<sup>82</sup>
6. If someone asks you what day to count, and you haven't yet counted tonight, you should not answer them the day but instead say "Last night was...". The reasoning being that if you say "Tonight is such and such days" you've essentially fulfilled your Mitzvah of counting for the night, and once one has fulfilled their Mitzvah they may no longer count that night with a Bracha.<sup>83</sup>
7. If in the above case you did tell your friend how many days to count (saying "tonight is...") then you should not count with a bracha that night.<sup>84</sup>
8. Once one has counted Sefirat Haomer they may tell their friend what night it is to count, since they have already fulfilled their Mitzvah for the night. Additionally, if it is not yet nighttime one may tell their friend what night to count, since it is too early to fulfill the Mitzvah of Sefirat Haomer.
9. If someone missed counting a night, and did not make it up the following day, they may no longer make a bracha counting the Omer. However, they should still continue to count every night without a bracha.<sup>85</sup>
10. If someone isn't sure whether or not they counted a day, they continue to count with a bracha.<sup>86</sup>

11. If during Ben Hashmashot (between sunset and nightfall) one realized that they may not have counted yesterday, one should count last night's Sefirat Haomer without a bracha and then may continue counting Sefirat Haomer with a bracha after nightfall.<sup>87</sup>
12. Someone who counted the wrong day is considered as if they did not count at all.<sup>88</sup>
13. Women are not obligated to count Sefirat Haomer and may not count with a bracha, however they may count Sefirat Haomer without a bracha.<sup>89</sup>
14. Boys under Bar Mitzvah may count with a bracha.<sup>90</sup>
15. If a boy under Bar Mitzvah was counting Omer, and then becomes Bar Mitzvah during the days of Sefirat Haomer, he should continue counting with a bracha.<sup>91</sup>

## XVII. Customs During the Days of Omer - מנהגי ספירת העומר

### Parties

16. We do not arrange weddings and other parties from Pesach until Lag BaOmer, which is the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of the Omer.<sup>92</sup>
17. One may get engaged during Omer and have a party but may not play music. Ideally one should arrange for the party to fall on Rosh Chodesh, which is a happy day. However, singing without music is allowed.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>80</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר יב

<sup>81</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר יד

<sup>82</sup> אורח חיים תפט. א, חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר ח

<sup>83</sup> אורח חיים תפט. ד

<sup>84</sup> אורח חיים תפט. ד, חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר כד

<sup>85</sup> אורח חיים תפט. ח, חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר טז

<sup>86</sup> אורח חיים תפט. ח, חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר יז

<sup>87</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר יח, יביע אומר חלק י או"ח לח, אור לציון ח"ג פרק טז ו

<sup>88</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר כו

<sup>89</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר ה

<sup>90</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר ו

<sup>91</sup> דעת מו"ר הרב בן חיים כשיטת האור לציון בדן זה- אור לציון ח"א או"ח לו ולא כמו הרב עובדיה יוסף ביביע אומר

<sup>92</sup> ח"ג או"ח. כז-כת, חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר ז

<sup>93</sup> אורח חיים תצג א, חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר ל

<sup>93</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר לב



## Shaving and Haircuts

18. Men may not shave or get a haircut from Pesach until the 34<sup>th</sup> day of the Omer.<sup>94</sup> The custom in some communities is to shave on the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of the Omer.
19. Someone who must look professional and cannot wait until the 34<sup>th</sup> day of the Omer to shave or get a haircut may do so during the Omer on a Friday, in honor of Shabbat or on Rosh Chodesh.<sup>95</sup>
20. When Lag BaOmer falls on Friday one is allowed to shave or get a haircut on Lag BaOmer.<sup>96</sup>
21. Similarly when Lag Baomer falls on Sunday one may shave or get a haircut on Friday.<sup>97</sup>
22. If there is a Brit Milah during the Omer the father of the boy, the Sandak and Mohel are all allowed to shave or get a haircut on the day of the Brit, or the day before if they won't have time to get a haircut before the Brit in the morning.<sup>98</sup>

## Shehechyanu

23. The custom is not to wear a new piece of clothing that would warrant making the Bracha of Shehechyanu until Lag Baomer.<sup>99</sup>
24. One is allowed to make a Shehechyanu on a new fruit during the days of Omer.<sup>100</sup>

## XVIII. Yashan - יָשָׁן

1. Torah law is that every year one must wait to eat from the new grain crop until the second day of Pesach in Israel and the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of Pesach outside of Israel.<sup>101</sup> Flour that was made from grain which was grown before Passover is called Yashan which

means "Old" or Kemach Yashan, which means "Old Flour".

2. The laws of Yashan only apply to the five grains, which are wheat, barley, spelt, rye, and oats.<sup>102</sup>
3. All opinions agree that the laws of Yashan apply to grain in Israel. Almost all opinions consider Yashan a Torah requirement even outside of Israel, so even outside of Israel one should try to keep Yashan.
4. For grain to be considered Yashan the grain must take root before Pesach, which means it needs to be planted about 3 days before Pesach.<sup>103</sup>
5. In America most of our grain will be Yashan from Passover until sometime between September and December. One buying grain products before September can generally assume they are Kemach Yashan.
6. Someone who is invited to another's house on Shabbat during the year, and they suspect that the only Challah is not Yashan, may be lenient to eat the Challah for the bracha of Hamotzi.<sup>104</sup>
7. One is allowed to eat a Yashan food that was cooked in a pot that had cooked foods that were possibly not Yashan.<sup>105</sup>

## XIX. Laws of Yom Tov- הלכות יום טוב

### Cooking

1. Yom Tov is just like Shabbat, except for a few small differences. The biggest difference is that one is allowed to cook on Yom Tov.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>94</sup> אורח חיים תצג ב ונשים מותרות אור לציון ח"ג פ"ט ז ג  
<sup>95</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר לו  
<sup>96</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר לט  
<sup>97</sup> כך פסק מו"ר בשנת תשע"ז בהתחשבות שיטת הרדב"ז שמתיר להתגלח לכבוד שבת, והלכה כדברי המיקל באבל  
<sup>98</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר לו  
<sup>99</sup> יביע אומר ח"ג או"ח. כו אור לציון ח"ג פ"ז ב

<sup>100</sup> יביע אומר ח"ג או"ח. כו, חזון עובדיה יו"ט- הלכות ספירת העומר לד  
<sup>101</sup> אורח חיים תפט. י  
<sup>102</sup> משנה ברורה תפט ס"ק מד  
<sup>103</sup> משנה ברורה תפט ס"ק מד  
<sup>104</sup> אור לציון ח"א יו"ד טו  
<sup>105</sup> משנה ברורה תפט ס"ק מח  
<sup>106</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - מהלכות יו"ט ב

2. In order to cook on Yom Tov one must light the stove's fire from an existing flame, such as a candle that was lit before Yom Tov.<sup>107</sup>
3. One may not turn on an electric oven on Yom Tov, but one may use an electric oven that was already turned on from before Yom Tov or set on a timer.<sup>108</sup>
4. One is only allowed to cook food on Yom Tov to be consumed on that day. One is not allowed to cook food on Yom Tov to be eaten after Yom Tov, and even cooking food on the first day of Yom Tov for the second day is prohibited.<sup>109</sup>
5. One is allowed to cook a large pot of food on the first day of Yom Tov even if they will not consume all the food on that day and the rest will be left over, since cooking in large batches often results in a better tasting dish.<sup>110</sup>
6. One is not allowed to cook on Yom Tov for a non-Jew. However, one is allowed to cook a pot of food for a Jew to eat and feed some of it to a non-Jew.<sup>111</sup>

### Grinding

7. One is allowed to grind spices on Yom Tov, but not salt.<sup>112</sup>

### Bathing

8. Unlike on Shabbat, on Yom Tov one is allowed to warm up and use hot water to wash one's hands, face, and feet.<sup>113</sup>
9. One is only allowed to take a hot shower with water that was heated before Yom Tov. Otherwise one is only allowed to take a cold shower on Yom Tov.

### Driving and Electricity

10. One is not allowed to drive on Yom Tov, since turning on the car ignites a fire within the engine.<sup>114</sup>
11. One is not allowed to turn on or off electric switches or appliances on Yom Tov, just like on Shabbat.<sup>115</sup> Similarly, driving an electric car on Yom Tov is prohibited.

### Non-Jews

12. One is not allowed to ask a non-Jew to do something prohibited on Yom Tov, such as to ask a housekeeper to do laundry. However, one may ask a non-Jewish housekeeper to perform an activity that is allowed on Yom Tov like washing dishes.

### Carrying

13. One is allowed to carry outside even in places without an Eruv on Yom Tov.<sup>116</sup>

### Meals

14. On Yom Tov there is a Mitzvah of *Simchat Yom Tov* to be happy and enjoy the holiday. Therefore, one should have a festive meal with bread<sup>117</sup> ideally involving wine and meat on Yom Tov.<sup>118</sup>
15. For Yom Tov meals one should ideally try to have beef or lamb but eating chicken would also qualify as having meat on Yom Tov.<sup>119</sup>
16. One should use 2 challot or loaves of bread when making Hamotzi on Yom Tov, just like on Shabbat.<sup>120</sup>
17. One should have at least 2 meals every day of Yom Tov, unlike Shabbat where there is a Mitzvah to eat 3 meals.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>107</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - מהלכות יו"ט טו  
<sup>108</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - מהלכות יו"ט לא  
<sup>109</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - מהלכות יו"ט י  
<sup>110</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - מהלכות יו"ט י  
<sup>111</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - מהלכות יו"ט יא  
<sup>112</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - מהלכות יו"ט ל  
<sup>113</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - מהלכות יו"ט יב  
<sup>114</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - מהלכות יו"ט טו

<sup>115</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - מהלכות יו"ט טז  
<sup>116</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - מהלכות יו"ט לו  
<sup>117</sup> יחיה דעת ח"ה לו מביא שדעת מרן שחייב לאכול פת ביו"ט  
<sup>118</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - שמחת יו"ט ח  
<sup>119</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - שמחת יו"ט ח  
<sup>120</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - שמחת יו"ט ה  
<sup>121</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - שמחת יו"ט ו

**Simcha - Joy**

- 18. A husband has an obligation to buy his wife a nice gift, such as clothing or jewelry as the Mitzvah of Simchat Yom Tov includes making one's wife happy.<sup>122</sup>
- 19. One should give charity to the poor before Yom Tov to enable them to enjoy the holiday as well, as part of the Mitzvah of *Simchat Yom Tov*.<sup>123</sup>

**Pets**

- 20. One may feed fish in an aquarium and other pets on Shabbat and Yom Tov.<sup>124</sup>

**Two Days**

- 21. Outside of Israel we keep two days of Yom Tov, and the second day of Yom Tov must be kept exactly the same as the first day.<sup>125</sup>
- 22. One who lives in Israel and travels outside of Israel for Yom Tov still keeps only one day of Yom Tov. However, on the second day of Yom Tov they may not do anything in public that is prohibited to do on Yom Tov, out of respect for the local Jewish community observing the second day of Yom Tov.<sup>126</sup>
- 23. One who lives outside of Israel who is in Israel for Yom Tov should keep one day of Yom Tov but on the second day of Yom Tov should refrain from doing activities prohibited on Yom Tov.<sup>127 128</sup> They should only perform one seder on the first night. On the second day of the holiday they should pray the Chol Hamoed prayers, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> day they should put on Tefillin with a bracha, but they

should not eat Chametz until the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the holiday.

- 24. One who owns an apartment or house in Israel and is spending their Yom Tov in their apartment should keep one day of Yom Tov.<sup>129</sup>
- 25. Someone from outside of Israel who is spending Yom Tov in Israel may ask a local Israeli on the second day of Yom Tov to do something prohibited to do on Yom Tov, since for the Israeli it is not Yom Tov.<sup>130</sup>
- 26. Yeshiva students from outside of Israel who are in Israel for Yom Tov should keep one day of Yom Tov.<sup>131</sup>

**XX. Laws of Chol Hamoed - חול המועד**

**Work**

- 1. On Chol Hamoed one who can should preferably not work, unless they need to in order to pay for their holiday expenses or is at risk of incurring a financial loss if they don't work.<sup>132</sup> An employee should try to take their days off during Chol Hamoed, however in a case where that is not possible an employee is allowed to go to work on Chol Hamoed, so that they don't suffer a loss. One who is allowed to work on Chol Hamoed should try to spend some of their earnings on something extra in honor of the Chag, such as by spending on a special meal for the family.<sup>133</sup>
- 2. Even the possibility of incurring a minor financial loss is enough to allow one to work on Chol

כשיטת החכם צבי אבל לא לעשות מלאכה ביו"ט שני לחשוש לדעת מרן. וחכם עובדיה יוסף פסק לבחורים הלומדים בישיבה בארץ לשמור יו"ט אחד כשיטת החכם צבי. ודעת רבנו בן חיים הוא שכשיש עוד צד לדון מישהו כבן א"י כגון מי שיש לו דירה בארץ או מי שתמיד נוסע לארץ ברגלים שיש לדון אותו כבן א"י וישמור יום אחד.<sup>128</sup>  
 חזון עובדיה יום טוב - יו"ט שני של גלויות יב  
 עיין חזון עובדיה יום טוב - יו"ט שני של גלויות יב  
<sup>129</sup> יביע אומר חלק ט או"ח מט  
<sup>130</sup> יביע אומר חלק ו או"ח מ אור לציון ח"ג פ"כג ח  
<sup>131</sup> משנה ברורה תקל ס"ק א  
<sup>132</sup> כמו שכתב הרמ"א באו"ח תקלט. א  
<sup>133</sup>

<sup>122</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - שמחת יו"ט ח  
<sup>123</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - שמחת יו"ט ח  
<sup>124</sup> דרכי משה או"ח תצו. א. וטעמו הואיל ואין להם מזונות ממקום אחר. שמירת שבת כהלכתא כז, כז. וכן פסק בילקוט יוסף  
<sup>125</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - יו"ט שני של גלויות א  
<sup>126</sup> חזון עובדיה יום טוב - יו"ט שני של גלויות ב, אור לציון ח"ג פ"כג א  
<sup>127</sup> ישנו מחלוקת בין מרן באבקות רוכל (כו) ובין החכם צבי (קסז) בדיון בן חו"ל שנוסע לא"י האם ישמור יו"ט שני. דעת רבינו בן חיים נוטה לסברת החכם צבי אבל אין לנו אלא דברי מרן, ולכן יש לעשות פשרה בין הדעות. לשמור יו"ט אחד

Hamoed. If one can sell merchandise on Chol Hamoed for a higher price than after Yom Tov, one is allowed to sell it on Chol Hamoed.<sup>134</sup>

3. If there is a trade show on Chol Hamoed one is allowed to attend and sell their merchandise.<sup>135</sup>

### Shaving and Haircuts

4. Men may not shave during Chol Hamoed.<sup>136</sup>
5. Men and women are not allowed to get a haircut on Chol Hamoed.<sup>137</sup>
6. Women are allowed to remove body hair on Chol Hamoed.<sup>138</sup>
7. Children under Bar Mitzvah may get a haircut during Chol Hamoed.<sup>139</sup>
8. Someone mourning the loss of a relative whose 30<sup>th</sup> day falls during Chol Hamoed may shave on Chol Hamoed.<sup>140</sup>
9. One is allowed to cut their nails on Chol Hamoed.<sup>141</sup>

### Laundry

10. One may not do laundry on Chol Hamoed.<sup>142</sup> One may not even ask a non-Jew to do laundry for them on Chol Hamoed.<sup>143</sup>
11. However, one is allowed to iron wrinkled clothing on Chol Hamoed.<sup>144</sup>
12. One is allowed to wash children's clothing on Chol Hamoed.<sup>145</sup>

13. One is allowed to wash towels and bed sheets on Chol Hamoed.<sup>146</sup>

14. Someone who washed their undergarments before Yom Tov, and on Chol Hamoed runs out of clean undergarments may launder them.<sup>147</sup>

15. If someone's clothing gets stained on Chol Hamoed one may use cleaning products to try to remove the stain.<sup>148</sup>

### Weddings

16. We don't arrange weddings on Chol Hamoed.<sup>149</sup>
17. One is allowed to have a party for a Bar Mitzvah, Brit Milah, Pidyon Haben, or for some other personal reason on Chol Hamoed.<sup>150</sup>

### Buying Chametz After Pesach

1. One who sold their Chametz over Pesach may not eat their Chametz immediately after Pesach. One should wait until the community Rabbis have had enough time to buy back the Chametz from the non-Jew it was sold to, which usually takes up to 2 hours after Pesach has ended.
2. One may not buy Chametz after Pesach from a store that is owned by a Jew who did not sell his Chametz over Pesach. Instead, one should wait until there has been enough time for the store's inventory to turn over, which could take several weeks, depending on the business.
3. One may buy Chametz immediately after Pesach from large supermarket chains that are publicly owned, even if some of the shareholders are Jewish.

<sup>134</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט ד  
<sup>135</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט יב  
<sup>136</sup> אורח חיים תקלא. ב, חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט כד  
<sup>137</sup> אורח חיים תקלא. ב, חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט מד  
<sup>138</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט מד  
<sup>139</sup> אורח חיים תקלא. ו  
<sup>140</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט כו  
<sup>141</sup> אורח חיים תקלב. א, חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט כז  
<sup>142</sup> אורח חיים תקלג. א  
<sup>143</sup> אורח חיים תקמג. א

<sup>144</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט כח, אור לציון ח"ג פ"כד  
 ד  
<sup>145</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט לב, וע"ע יביע אומר חלק  
 ז או"ח מט  
<sup>146</sup> אורח חיים תקלג. א, חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט לב  
<sup>147</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט לב  
<sup>148</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט לב  
<sup>149</sup> אורח חיים תקמו. א  
<sup>150</sup> חזון עובדיה יו"ט- מהלכות יו"ט מב

**XXI. The Seder – How Much Do I Eat?**

<u>Brand</u>		<u>Kezayit Matsah</u>
<b>Average</b>		
Handmade		1/4
Machine		1/3
Elite Shmura		1/4
Haredim		2/5
Papau Tseleim		1/5
Yehuda Machine		1/3
Geula Machine		1/3
Jerusalem Machine		2/5
Soft Yemenite		1/8
<u>Seder</u>	<u># of Kezayits of Matsah</u>	
Motsi/Matsah	2 (If 2 is too hard, 1 would suffice)	
Korech	1	
Tsafun/Afikoman	1	
<u>Maror</u>	<u>Kezayit</u>	
Romaine Lettuce	1-2 Large Leaves	3-4 Medium Leaves
Endives	½ Endive or 4 Leaves	

## Chametz, Matzah, and the Beauty of Mitzvot

*Adapted from the lectures of Rabbi Eliyahu Ben Haim*

One of the most important lessons of **Pesach** can be found in the difference between **chametz** (leavened bread) and **matzah** (unleavened bread). At first glance, they seem very different—one is soft and fluffy, the other is flat and dry. But when we look closely, we see that the difference between them is just a tiny detail.

The Hebrew words **chametz** (חמץ) and **matzah** (מצה) are almost identical. They share two of the same letters: mem (מ) and tzadi (צ). The only difference is the third letter—chet (ח) in chametz and heh (ה) in matzah.

The only difference between the chet and heh is that the **heh** has a small opening at the top, while the **chet** is fully closed.

The difference between chametz and matzah comes down to just a tiny line—the small opening that turns a chet into a heh! This simple detail teaches a powerful lesson: **sometimes, the smallest things make the biggest difference!**

For example, when baking matzah, if the dough is placed in the oven within 18 minutes, it remains kosher for Pesach. However, if it rises for even one second beyond 18 minutes, it becomes chametz and is completely forbidden on Pesach.

This idea doesn't just apply to Pesach—it applies to all Torah and mitzvot. It teaches us that **even small differences in how we perform mitzvot matter**. This is why we don't just aim to fulfill the basic requirements of a mitzvah—we strive to **always** perform it in the most beautiful and elevated way possible.

This concept is called **hiddur mitzvah**—beautifying a mitzvah to show our love for Hashem.

A person might think:

"Why should I spend so much effort cleaning for Pesach? Can't I just say, 'I nullify my chametz,' and be done with it?" "Why do I need a beautiful lulav and etrog on Sukkot? A simple one is good enough."

Imagine giving a gift to someone you love. Would you give them the cheapest, lowest-quality gift just to "get it over with"? Or would you try to give them something beautiful to show how much you care?

The same is true with mitzvot. We don't just fulfill them to check a box—we strive to enhance them, putting in extra effort to demonstrate our love for Hashem.

The Beit HaMikdash was built with gold and silver, and the Ark that held the Luchot was covered in gold, inside and out. But why use such precious materials? Hashem doesn't need gold. Rather, the idea is for us to show their love for Hashem by making it as beautiful as possible! What's the most valuable material we can offer? Gold! By using the finest and most beautiful materials, we demonstrate how much we value the Torah and our relationship with Hashem, and so we did everything in the highest and best way possible.

At the end of the day, Hashem doesn't need our gold, our money, or our hard work. **He gives us mitzvot so that we can grow closer to Him.** When we do mitzvot with **hiddur**, with **joy**, and with **love**, we show that they aren't just obligations—we **cherish** them.

**This is the lesson of Pesach** - The difference between chametz and matzah is small, but it makes all the difference in the world. The same is true in our mitzvot—sometimes, it's the little extra effort, the hiddur mitzvah, that shows how much we truly care.

May we all have a Pesach filled with **joy, hiddur mitzvah, and love for Hashem!**

## Why do we call this month “Nisan”?

Rabbi Yosef Bitton

חזרנו לקרוא החודשים בשם שנקראים בארץ בבל  
להזכיר כי שם עמדנו ומשם העלנו ה

(Ramban on Shemot 12:2)

A few weeks ago, on Shabbat HaChodesh, we took out a second Sefer Tora and read *ba Chodesh baze lakhem*, that is, the text from the book of Shemot (Exodus) chapter 12 announcing the coming of the month of Nisan:

“This month will be for you the first month ... of the months of the year “.

In the Hebrew calendar, there are 12 months (or 13 when there is a leap year). In the Tora, the names of the months are designed with ordinal numbers: first month, second month, third month, and so on. The month of Nisan is the first of the 12 months of the year.

For those familiar with the Gregorian calendar, there is something unusual here: January is the first month, and it is also the first month of the year; that is, January, the new year begins. In the Hebrew calendar, however, the year starts in the seventh month of the year, the month of Tishri, and the first month of the month is Nisan.

The month we call today “Nisan” was designated by the Tora as the first month of the year because it is the month of Pesach. When we count the months, we remember the great miracle of our redemption. So, when we say: “the third month,” we are saying “the third month, counting from Nisan, the month of our redemption.” Something similar, although in the opposite sense, happens with the days of the week. We count the days of the week in Hebrew, as in Portuguese, with ordinal numbers: the first day (יום ראשון), Sunday, the second day (יום שני), Monday, etc. And every time we count the days, we do it in reference to Shabbat. When we say in Hebrew “Monday,” we are saying, “Today is the second day, counting toward Shabbat” (שני בשבת). So every time we mention a day of the week, we remember Shabbat.

Today, although we continue counting the days of the week with ordinal numbers, we no longer count the months with their ordinal names, but we say Nisan, Iyar, Tishri, etc. Why? These names are not Hebrew names! In fact, these were the names of the months in ancient Babylon (and then in Persia, as they appear in Megillat Esther).

The big question is: why did we Jews abandon the Biblical names of the months and adopt the non-Jewish names of the months of Babylon?

Ramban (Shemot 12:2) explains that this has to do with a prophecy of Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah). Yirmiyahu had the difficult task of announcing that if the people of Israel persisted in their abandonment of the Tora, the Bet haMiqdash and Yerushalayim would be destroyed, and the survivors would be taken prisoners to Babylon. But Yirmiyahu also comforted the people, announcing that HaShem would miraculously bring them again from Babylon to the land of Israel. This great miracle occurred in 538 BCE, when, as the last Pesuquim of the Tanakh says, the Persian emperor Cyrus Koresh announced that HaShem revealed to him and ordered him to rebuild the Bet haMiqdash in Yerushalayim. Miraculously, Koresh also invited all the Yehudim who wanted to return to Israel under his protection.

Yirmiyahu prophesied the destruction and exile of Israel (chapter 16: 9-13) and also the return of the Jewish people to their land. And he said (16: 14-15) that when this happens, when HaShem would bring the Jewish people back from Babel to the land of Israel:

*“... it will no longer be remembered [only] that HaShem took us out of the land of Egypt, but it will be said that HaShem brought back the children of Israel [to their land] from the land of the north (= Babel) and from all the countries where I [HaShem] exiled them.”*

Our sages understood that the memory of the redemption of Babel would completely replace the memory of the redemption of Egypt. In fact, no event

in Jewish history is mentioned and remembered as many times as our deliverance from Egypt. There are dozens of Mitzvot, not only Pesah but also Shabbat, Tefillin, Shema, etc., that remind us of Egypt's departure. But surviving the Babylonian exile was a miracle of Biblical proportions. So, what do we do then with the Prophet Yirmiyahu's indication: to remember

the great miracle of the redemption of Babel? Ramban explains that to follow Yirmiyahu's words, we count the months of the year with the Babylonian non-Jewish names. Thus, whenever we mention the Babylonian name of one of our calendar months, we automatically remember our exile in Babel and "YETSIYAT BABEL," our miraculous redemption from that captivity.



## When Archeology “Disproves” *Yessiat Missrayim*

Yaakob Bitton

Imagine that a reporter publishes a long, very well written, article alleging that you didn't graduate from school. You never met this reporter. You have no idea what he even wants from you. The school you have gone to no longer exists. But this reporter claims to have found a few pages of a yearbook and, guess what, your name is not in it. He then goes on to question whether the rest of your life also is one big fraudulent lie.

*Excuse me?! Did you care to ask me if I went to the school I remember having gone to? What if that yearbook is not even genuine? Why trust a partial yearbook more than me? And what if the pages missing from the yearbook contain the evidence? Moreover, what if I wasn't part of the yearbook but still graduated? And what if the yearbook you claim to have found is not even for the same class as the one I graduated from? And while we are at it, why this obsession with me and my life? Do you have nothing better to do in life? Is attacking me really worth your time, effort and expertise? And why am I even bothering with all this? I know what school I went to, and I know I graduated! The nerve of this guy!*

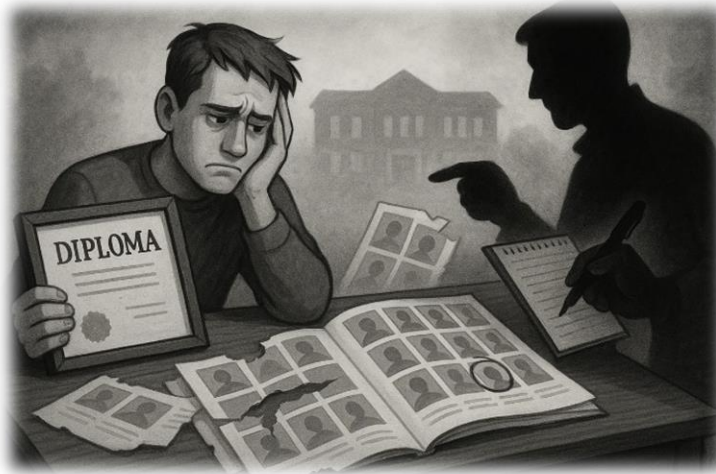
### **Academic Anti-Semitism: our right to feel insulted**

In real life, this would be quite absurd, and therefore not something that one would expect to happen often. Nobody would put up with this, and any reporter of this kind would soon be shunned and chastised. However, this is how I feel when some obscure professor writes a fancy paper in a fancy academic journal claiming that the *Tora, has veshalom*, wasn't written by *Moshe Rabbenu*, or when historians or archaeologists say the *Yessiat*

*Missrayim* did not take place, because they didn't find evidence for it.

As an example (one of many), two of the most famous archeologists in the world, Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, dedicated most of their careers to “disproving” the Jewish version of history as preserved in the *Tanakh*. In their bestselling book, *The Bible Unearthed*, they claim that *Yessiat Missrayim* didn't happen as *'Am Israel* claims.

As a member of *'Am Israel*, I am offended. We have our memory. You don't see many Americans worrying over Benjamin Franklyn *really* looked like the illustration on the \$100 bill, and you don't see many little boys asking for DNA tests before relating to their mother as such. We don't need Finkelstein's validation when we have the *Seder*. And we should know that.



### **Why is so much energy spent on trying to deny *Yessiat Missrayim* happened?**

For starters, the West has always seemed fascinated with Egypt, and maybe with seeing themselves as heirs of a civilization that started with Ancient Egypt. Because of this, there is a lot of academic material about ancient Egypt. There are practical reasons for this, but also deeper ones. True, it is a civilization that may have spanned more than 3,000 years, and the arid climate of Egypt means artifacts tend to be very well preserved. But non-Jewish civilizations always saw Egypt with a certain mythical fascination. From the ancient Romans (remember how Mark Antony and Julius Caesar

courted Cleopatra), to Napoleon who funded hundreds of scientists and archologists to dig Egypt, to the Nazis who looted and collected thousands of Egyptian archeological findings, the civilization of the Pharaohs and Pyramids always held a certain sway in the imagination of Western Society.

As a fascinating side point, we find nothing in the thousands of pages written by Jewish luminaries who lived in Egypt, like *Sa'adya Gaon*, *Haramba"m* or R' *David Ibn Zimra*, suggesting they ever bothered hiking a few miles to the sites of the pyramids to behold with their own eyes some of the remnants of Egyptian civilization—it seemed uninteresting to them. This also explains why the version of the story that we remember and pass on includes so few details from the Egyptian point of view. The name of the Pharaoh, his dynasty, and other details may be fascinating to Egyptologists but are irrelevant to the story of *Yesiat Misrayim* as experienced by *'Am Yisrael* or to its significance to us.

I suspect that the primary drive of people like Finkelstein is animus against the *Tora* and against Jewish memory. It is no accident that the most ardently anti-Jewish academics are either non-observant Jews, or members of a religion whose very definition is replacing Judaism. Others are zealously atheistic (one could say religiously so), but are missing something in life and probably struggle with unresolved guilt deep in their unconscious. I wonder if for those who want to see themselves as descending from the mythical majesty of Ancient Egypt and who also harbor some deep anti-Jewish sentiment, it may feel necessary to erase Israelites from this particular period. Especially if the Israelites' adventure would call into question the grandeur of Egypt.



In any event, it is crucial to point out the bias and agenda at play. A random journalist would not write an article attacking me, and attacking only me, unless motivated by personal animus.

**Historians exaggerate what “facts” can be deduced from archeological findings**

The disciplines of “history” and “archeology,” both of which are fairly recent, have important limitations that must be noted. First, even if Finkelstein, Silberman and others may claim to be conducting “science,” that’s far from accurate. By definition, anything one may want to say about the past is, at best, speculation. Unless Marty McFly and “Doc” Brown allow us to go with them back

in time and see for ourselves real-time what happened, all that any archeologist can do is take whatever artifacts that are found, and build around them a story that is *plausible*.

An honest archeologist would admit that their interpretation of the artifact they found and

what it means about what actually happened is but one of thousands of possible interpretations. An honest archeologist would also point out that:

- (i) all of the artifacts found from a given civilization are an infinitesimally small sample of all the things that existed in that civilization,
- (ii) for artifacts that are found with some message in them (for example, the inscription in a given monument), even if we were able to verify with scientific precision that the artifact genuinely reflects what a specific person said in a certain place at a certain time, all we have is the subjective statement by that person,

- (iii) the dating of any artifacts relies on techniques that are very inexact and that depend on very grand assumptions (for example, carbon dating assumes that the ratio of “Carbon 14” to “Carbon 12” has been consistent through history and all over the world—and we now know for a fact that this is not true), and
- (iv) a conclusion derived from any artifact is a combination of the artifact as well as the interpretation of the archeologist and a myriad of assumptions on which this interpretation relies.

As an example, to illustrate the limits of what archeologists know, in 2003 an inscription was found in a tomb (Sobeknakht the Governor, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century BCE), suggesting that Egypt had been almost totally destroyed by an invasion by the Kushites (Ethiopians) during that time. Until this discovery, historians had no clue that this had happened, because Egyptian texts (and all monuments that we know of) did not mention this event at all. It’s as if ancient Egyptians had edited this humiliating defeat out of history, even though the success of that invasion would have extinguished Egyptian civilization altogether.

**The Tora can be interpreted**

Just like we shouldn’t feel forced to fit “history” (or our memory) uncritically to whatever any historian or archeologist tells us they believe happened, we should also feel free to interpret events told by the *Tora* to the extent necessary. So, for example, when the *Tora* tells us that the entire land was covered by the *Mabbul*, it would be perfectly acceptable (like many *Mefarshim* do) to say “the entire land” refers to the entire land of which

*Noah* would have been aware. Similarly, if the *Tora* describes a serpent that speaks with a human, it would be perfectly acceptable (like the *Midrash* and *Gemara* do) to say that this serpent wasn’t the biological creature we call serpent but rather symbolizes human fantasy/ imagination.

In the story of *Yessiat Misrayim* too, if we went aboard Doc Brown’s time machine and saw that the *Makkot* happened at a smaller scale than what we imagine when we read the *Tora*, I would have no problem reading the *Makkot* as if told from the point of view of ‘*Am Israel*’ (for example, should it ever be proven without a doubt that the plague of *Sefardea*’ was a smaller-scale event of which only *Par’o* and his court, and ‘*Am Israel*, became aware, we could read the *Tora* as if it describes what ‘*Am*

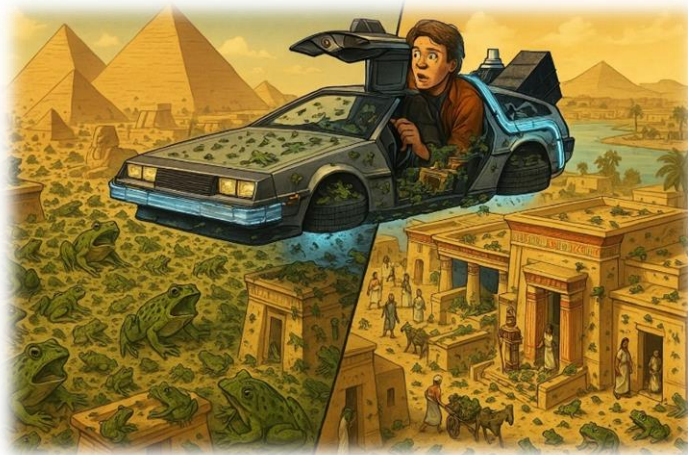
*Israel* felt at the time: that from our point of view the entire land of *Misrayim* had been affected). In other words, if we ever encounter incontrovertible evidence that calls into question the way we read a certain section of the *Tora*, it would be fair to re-read that section a little more creatively (within bounds, of course) in order to

prevent the contradiction with the incontrovertible evidence.

**But what about the year when *Yessiat Misrayim* happened?**

Even in terms of dating, I think we should have some flexibility with the traditionally accepted year of 1313 BCE for *Yessiat Misrayim*.

Historians and archeologists seem to consider one of their highest goals in life to be able to pinpoint the exact dates for certain events, and to do so by giving it a year within some chronology that should be applied universally to all events in history. Most commonly,



historians use the Christian (Gregorian) chronology of years, with year 1 being the year *Yeshua' HaNosri* was born in (which, by the way, is *not* the case), then the year “of the Common Era” being however many years passed since then (for example, today we’d be in the year 2025, since 2024 years have passed since that “year one”), and “before the common era” meaning that one counts backwards from year one. Before the Gregorian system, the preferred system had been the Alexandrian Count (*Minyan HaShetarot*), which considered the beginning of the Macedonian Era (when Alexander conquered Persia) the beginning of history. Both systems could rightly be accused of being self-aggrandizing and narcissistic—of wanting to perceive all of history as happening relative to whatever event each of these systems considered most important.

With a couple of exceptions, years in the *Tanakh* are always relative to a particular king. Contrary to what many believe, it was very rare for Jews to have any universal counting system until relatively recently. The counting of years since the creation of *Adam HaRishon* (this year being 5785) was included for the first time in a *Midrash (Seder 'Olam)*, probably as nothing more than an exercise in adding up the years of all named personalities in *Tanakh* where we have additional information about the age at which they had other named persons, but this system wasn’t used in any popular manner until the time of the *Geonim*. Jews were never obsessed with placing events in our history within a given universal dating system, let alone placing events in the memory of other nations within our own dating system.

*Seder 'Olam* suggests *Yessiat Missrayim* occurred in the year 1313 BCE. The only reference we have in the *Tanakh* to the year of *Yessiat Missrayim* is in the book of *Melakhim*, where *Shelomo HaMelekh* is said to have built

*Bet HaMiqdash* 480 years after *Yessiat Missrayim*. (as an aside, there is strong evidence for the dating of the reign of *Ahab*, and tracing back to *Shelomo HaMelekh* supports the year 967 or 968 BCE for the building of the first *Bet HaMiqdash*).

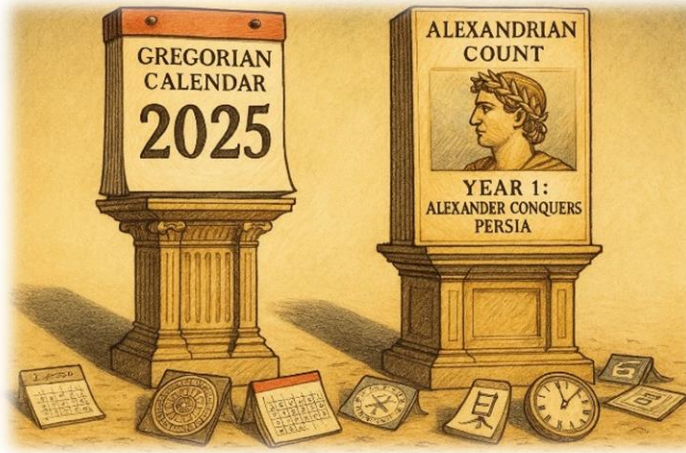
I don’t believe *Seder 'Olam* was meant as a work of literal chronology, since – as mentioned – this wasn’t even a Jewish attitude. Given that it is a *Midrash*, I would feel very comfortable placing *Yessiat Missrayim* at other periods.

**Should we ignore archeology altogether?**

At first blush, there are valid reasons why we should not concern ourselves with archeology. Although our first instinct is (and should) to be offended by what Finkelstein and others may say, this emotion can quickly give way to indifference. We should feel comfortable with the collective memory of *'Am Israel*, and what we remember happened. With the limitations of archeology and history, there is very little that any historian or archaeologist

can claim as irrefutable evidence, and so we could be entitled to dismiss their entire case like a person would dismiss an article by a stranger alleging not having found evidence in a partial yearbook that this person finished school.

Time machines do not exist, and so archeologists with an agenda heavily biased to negating the Jewish People its right to remember pose no serious evidence-based challenges to our recollection of events, even when they suggest that absence of evidence is evidence of absence. Besides, Egyptian history was never too interesting to Jews, and the entire enterprise of finding universal dates to events feels a bit narcissistic.



Having said all this, if the hypothetical article about the partial yearbook was out there, one would feel compelled to respond. Even if a person needs no proof of his own memory, and is comfortable with the recollection that he in fact graduated from school, an accusation has been made, and it is appropriate to refute it. Refuting an accusation, however, is different than “trying to discover what truly happened.” We know what we remember. Wrestling with archeology is an exercise in defending against anti-Jewish attacks. Therefore, the approach should be a bit different.

**A proposed approach**

If I were planning an article responding to that impudent journalist who questioned whether I graduated from school and did not even bother asking me what I remember, my objective would be to show that any evidence presented can be interpreted differently. If I successfully offer an interpretation that plausibly fits the journalist’s evidence, I would destroy his case. I do not need to believe that my interpretation represents what actually happened. Personally, I wouldn’t even write this article, but I must defend myself against an attack on my reputation.

Similarly, in defending the *Tora*, if I propose a narrative consistent both with the *Tora* and archeological findings, it should suffice to dismiss claims of contradiction. To achieve this, I must clearly distinguish what archeology itself states (separate from interpretations added by archeologists or historians) and clarify what our tradition genuinely remembers,



recognizing where flexibility in interpreting certain passages of the *Tora* exists.

When archeologists and historians challenge our memories, one effective defense is to show how their established facts can still align with the narrative we remember. Doing this demonstrates there is no genuine contradiction between evidence and the collective Jewish memory upheld by the *Tora*. This requires accurately identifying what historical facts are convincingly established and simultaneously clarifying what the *Tora* or our memory obligates us to accept (and what is open to interpretation).

We can undertake this despite recognizing the limitations of archeological and historical theories, despite the selective and obsessive attempts to disprove Jewish history—rightfully perceived as academic anti-Judaism—and despite remembering our history through national tradition rather than museum artifacts.

God willing, next year I hope to share one plausible account of *Yessiat Misrayim* that aligns with archeological findings. My purpose is not to claim exact knowledge of historical events but rather to refute those who argue that the established history of Egypt contradicts the events our memory preserves as *Yessiat Misrayim*.

(...to be continued!)

# Solomon's Rings & Passover: A Guide to Overcoming Life's Struggles

Lior Kashimallak

## The Struggle Is Real

Life is full of ups and downs. One moment, everything feels perfect; the next, we're faced with challenges that seem impossible to overcome. **Whether it's struggles with health, financial difficulties (parnasah), or issues within the home (shalom bayit), everyone goes through hardships.** But what if I told you that the key to getting through these challenges has been around for thousands of years?

There's a famous story about King Solomon and a ring with a powerful message: **Gam Zeh Ya'avor** — **"This too shall pass."** This phrase is more than just ancient wisdom; it's a mindset that aligns with the deeper meaning of Passover and its message of redemption, resilience, and hope.

## This Too Shall Pass: Lessons from King Solomon

Imagine being King Solomon—the wisest, wealthiest man ever to rule ancient Israel. **He had it all: gold, power, and the intellect to solve problems like no**



**one else.** But there came a day when he sought something beyond his wisdom—a ring with the power to lift his spirits when he was sad, and humble him when he was too happy. Sounds unusual, right? But this was no simple whim. It was a

quest for something deeper, a key to mastering life's ups and downs. King Solomon sent his trusted general, Benaiah ben Yehoyada, on what seemed like an **impossible mission: to find a ring that could make a happy person sad and a sad person happy.**

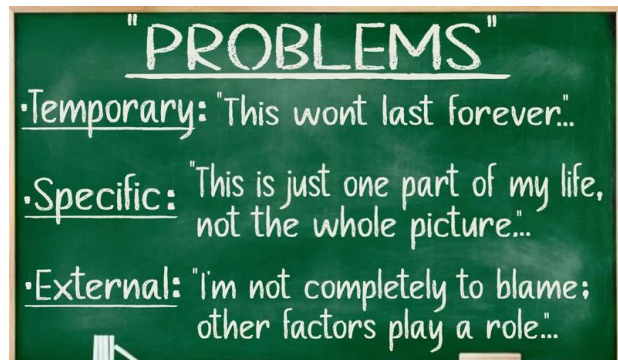
Benaiah searched high and low but couldn't find such a ring. Finally, the day before the festival, he wandered into the poorest part of Jerusalem and met an old jeweler. The man took a simple gold band and engraved the words **Gam Zeh Ya'avor (This too**

**shall pass).** The next day, Benaiah presented the ring to King Solomon during his celebrations. The king smiled, knowing his minister had accomplished the impossible. But when he read the inscription, his face fell. **In that moment, he realized that no matter how much wealth, power, or wisdom he had, everything was temporary.** Good times don't last forever, but neither do bad times. Everything in life is fleeting—his wealth, his victories, and even his worries.

## The Power of "Temporary" in Learned Optimism

Dr. Martin Seligman, a leading figure in the field of positive psychology, explains in his book *'Learned Optimism'* that **how we view setbacks can greatly influence our ability to bounce back.** He argues that seeing challenges as temporary, rather than permanent parts of our lives, helps us deal with tough situations more effectively. His studies show that thinking this way **reduces stress and speeds up recovery,** whether you're facing health issues, financial problems, or personal struggles.

Seligman's research focuses on how the way we explain events to ourselves shapes our emotions and mental well-being. When bad things happen, **some people get stuck thinking, "This is how it will always be."** This negative way of thinking, called a pessimistic explanatory style, is linked to depression and slower recovery. On the other hand, Seligman's theory is summed up in the following optimistic style, which sees setbacks as follows:



For example, if you're facing a financial issue, telling yourself, "This is hard, but it won't last forever" can help you focus on finding solutions instead of feeling hopeless. Seligman's research shows that people who view setbacks as temporary experience lower levels of stress and recover more quickly. **Just like the "Get Out of Jail Free" card in Monopoly, this mindset—whether applied to a financial problem or a personal crisis—can help you break free from a negative spiral and move forward.**

**What Does Pesach Really Mean?**

The claim that **"Passover, or Pesach, means 'to pass over'"** is commonly understood in English due to the translation of the Hebrew word Pesach (פסח) and its connection to the biblical story in Exodus 12:23-27. In this passage, **God "passes over" the homes** of the Israelites during the tenth plague. However, the idea that it "literally means to jump over" requires a closer look at the Hebrew root and its traditional Jewish sources..

The Hebrew word Pesach comes from the root pasach (פסח), which appears in Exodus 12:23: "For the Lord will **pass through (u'fasach)** to strike Egypt, and when He sees the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over (u'fasach) the door and not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you". The verb pasach is usually translated as "to pass over," but many Jewish scholars and suggest a deeper meaning tied to protection or skipping over, rather than just a literal "jump."

**Rashi, a famous medieval commentator,** explains that pasach in Exodus 12:23 means **"to skip over"**, emphasizing that God spared the Israelites' homes. This interpretation highlights the act of protection, rather than a literal jump.

Similarly, the Mechilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, a classic Midrashic commentary on Exodus, states that "The Holy One, blessed be He, **skipped over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt.**" This suggests that the act of "skipping" was a deliberate and protective act, shielding the righteous.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, zt"l, once wrote, **"The Jewish people did not see themselves as prisoners of fate but as active participants in their own destiny."**

**Get Out of Jail Free  
True Freedom Comes**



This idea connects deeply with Gam Zeh Ya'avov. The Jews suffered for years in Egypt, but their suffering was not permanent. **Through passing over their challenges and faith in God,** they overcame the hardship. Just like King Solomon's ring reminded him of life's ever-changing nature, Passover reminds us that no matter what we're going through, it won't last forever.

**Meaning in Suffering: A Bridge Between Faith and Psychology**

Enduring hardship becomes bearable when we find purpose within it. **Viktor Frankl, a Jewish Holocaust survivor,** wrote in *Man's Search for Meaning* that those who **discovered meaning in suffering—whether through love, faith, or a future goal—were more likely to survive the camps.** Similarly, we find a profound Talmudic insight from Berakhot 5a, where **Rabbi Elazar declares, "Suffering is precious, for it purifies. Judaism doesn't glorify pain but views it as a refining fire, a pathway to growth."**



Another example is the **breaking of the middle matzah during the Seder, known as Yachatz.** While this practice is not explicitly detailed in our traditional texts, the focus on matzah as a symbol of affliction ties it to despair. Breaking the matzah and setting aside the larger piece for the Afikoman—eaten later—**suggests a shift from**

**suffering to hope**, as the Seder progresses toward redemption acknowledging and confronting our challenges, finding meaning in them, and transforming them **through rituals like the Seder can lead to spiritual renewal and hope**. In my own life, challenges once felt like dead ends—until I found meaning in them, often through acts of chesed (kindness).

### **The Power of The Mashadi Community: Our Jewish Family**

**We're not meant to face these battles alone**—a truth etched in Jewish life and validated by science. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 King Solomon states, **“Two are better than one... for if they fall, one will lift up his fellow.”** When we wrestle with our own issues, it is often elders, rabbis, and friends who provide steadiness. Their guidance, prayers, and presence turn **Gam Zeh Ya'avov** from mere words inscribed on a ring into reality. Pirkei Avot 1:6 urges, **“Aseh lecha rav u'kneh lecha chaver”**—**“Make yourself a teacher and acquire a friend.”** Whether navigating through a spiritual crises, or a physical challenge, **our community offers wisdom and support to help** move through hardships to brighter days.

### **A Passover Call: Rise, Seek, Overcome**

This Pesach, let's embrace the intertwined lessons of King Solomon's ring and the Exodus. Gam Zeh Ya'avov assures us that when faced with difficulties, thinking of them as temporary—meaning they won't last forever—can provide hope. **Passover shows us that our setbacks, both physical and emotional, is possible to achieve through faith and action.** Together, they remind us that our personal “Egypt” are not endpoints but stepping stones to growth.

Don't face these challenges in silence. **Reach out—to a rabbi, a mentor, a loved one.** In the Mashadi community, **I've seen firsthand how seeking help can transform burdens into breakthroughs.** There are countless individuals out there **who may be struggling silently**, thinking they have to suffer alone. But they don't. As we gather for the seder, recounting our ancestors' journey from slavery to freedom, **let's commit to our own journeys: to find meaning in our struggles, lean on each other for support, and trust that with Hashem's help, this too shall pass.** May this Passover bring you strength, renewal, and the courage to seek help when you need it, knowing that you're never alone.



## Unending Gratitude

Yonatan Aziz

בְּכֹל דּוֹר וְדוֹר חַיֵּב אֲדָם לְרֵאוֹת אֶת עֲצֻמוֹ כְּאֵלוֹ הוּא  
יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: "וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבְנֶךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא  
"לֵאמֹר: בְּעֶבְרַת זֶה עָשָׂה יי' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם"

The gratitude that we have to Hashem for our redemption from Egypt must be recognized in every generation and we must be eternally grateful to Him for it. Even though it happened many generations ago and thousands of years ago, we must feel this gratitude now. We cannot stop thanking Hashem for the good things after one or two or three generations and it is enough- rather we must always recognize and be grateful for what He did.

Likewise, the Torah teaches us:

לֹא תִתְעַב מִצְרַיִם כִּי גֵר הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ

We must even be grateful to the Egyptians for the time we spent in their land. This seems counterintuitive- after all, we were slaves there and subject to their genocidal persecution! What are we grateful for? Yet, as Rashi and the other mefarshim explain, we must be grateful that they hosted us in their country- even though it was for all the wrong reasons.

Let this serve as a reminder to us, in our day-to-day lives, to never forget or take for granted what other

people do for us. Every favor should be recognized and remembered. We must be especially grateful to Hashem who provides us with every little thing we need in life to survive and thrive. We must also be grateful to one another for even the smallest of favors, even if it was not performed with all the right intentions.

This year we can be grateful for an extra miracle- the evil Iranian regime tried not once but twice to annihilate the Jews living in Israel and were unsuccessful- first on Erev Pesach of last year and then again, a few days before Rosh Hashana. They launched hundreds of ballistic missiles and drones at us but Hashem performed a miracle and not a single Jewish man, woman or child was harmed. We should take the opportunity to be grateful firstly and foremostly to Hashem for this open miracle, and also have gratitude to the other countries who intervened to help us, even though they do not always have our best interests in mind.

The Gemara in masechet Rosh Hashana (11b) teaches us:

בְּנִיסָן נִגְאָלוּ בְּנִיסָן עֲתִידִין לִיגָאֵל

May we all merit to see the final redemption of Am Yisrael in the coming days, Amen.

# The Pesach Seder as a Paradigm for Jewish Education

Talia Cohen

*L'iluy Nishmat Esther bat Simcha ז"ל, mother, grandmother, and educator*

Judaism has always placed education at its center. More than just a transfer of knowledge, Jewish education is the foundation of Jewish identity, continuity, and collective memory. Nowhere is this emphasis on teaching more evident than on the night of the Pesach Seder, a carefully structured educational experience designed to engage every participant—especially children—in the transmission of Jewish history and values.

Through educational techniques such as inquiry-based learning, experiential education, differentiated instruction, and intergenerational transmission, the Seder serves as a model for Jewish education. It is not merely a commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt; it is an annual reaffirmation of the Jewish commitment to learning and passing on our heritage.

## The Biblical Command to Educate

The Torah explicitly commands the mitzvah to transmit the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim from one generation to the next:

וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי  
בְצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם

*"And you shall tell your child on that day, saying: It is because of what Hashem did for me when I came out of Egypt." (שמות י"ג:א)*

כִּי-יִשְׁאַלְךָ בֶּןְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר: מָה הָעֲדוֹת וְהַחֻקִּים  
וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צָוָה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲתָם. וְאָמַרְתָּ לְבִנְךָ:  
עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרָיִם, וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרָיִם בְּיַד  
חֲזָקָה

*"When your child asks you in the future, saying: What are these testimonies, statutes, and judgments that Hashem our God has commanded you? You shall say to your child: We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem took us out with a mighty hand." (דברים ו':כ-כ"א)*

These pesukim make it clear that education of our children is at the core of the Pesach experience. Furthermore, teaching Yetziat Mitzrayim is not an abstract command; it is meant to be interactive, personal, and engaging. The Rambam expands on this idea:

מצות עשה של תורה לספר בנסים ונפלאות שנעשו  
לאבותינו במצרים בליל חמישה עשר בניסן, שנאמר  
'זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים'. וכל  
המוסיף ומאריך בדברים שארעו ושהיו—הרי זה  
משובח.

*"It is a positive commandment from the Torah to recount the miracles and wonders that were performed for our ancestors in Egypt on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, as it is said: 'Remember this day when you went out of Egypt.' The more one elaborates on the story, the more praiseworthy it is." (הלכות חמץ ז: א: ומצה ז: א:)*

This principle—that Jewish education should be engaging, dynamic, and continuous—is embodied in every aspect of the Seder.

## The Seder's Educational Methodology

### 1. Inquiry-Based Learning – Encouraging Questions

A fundamental element of effective education is curiosity-driven learning. Mah Nishtanah (Four Questions) establishes this principle by making the child an active participant. Instead of simply lecturing about the Exodus, the Seder provokes questions first, encouraging engagement.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks זת"ל highlights this in his Haggadah commentary:

*"More than any other festival, Pesach is the time when Jews became educators. The duty of fathers and mothers is to hand on their memories to their children, and nowhere is this clearer than on Seder night. For Judaism, education is not just what we know; it is who we are. We are the people who tell the story, who ask the questions, and pass on our ideals to the next generation."*

## 2. Personalized Education: The Four Sons and Multiple Learning Modalities

The Four Sons section of the Haggadah exemplifies the Jewish approach to differentiated education. Each of the sons has a different attitude to learning, and therefore requires a different educational approach. Similarly, the seder allows for different types of learning to benefit the varying students present at the table:

- **Visual learners** – The Seder plate and symbolic foods provide strong imagery to reinforce key lessons.
- **Auditory learners** – The Haggadah readings, songs, and discussion make it an oral learning experience.
- **Kinesthetic learners** – The physical actions of eating matzah, maror, dipping, and breaking the afikoman help learners internalize the story through movement.

This aligns with the Jewish philosophy of education, as stated in משלי כ"ב:ו:

”חֲנֹךְ לְנֶעֶר עַל פִּי דַרְכּוֹ”

*“Educate the child according to his way.”*

By integrating multiple learning styles, the Seder ensures that every participant - regardless of how they learn best - connects with the experience.

## 3. Experiential Learning – Learning by Doing

Jewish education is not just about studying—it is about living and experiencing. The Seder incorporates experiential learning:

- **Eating Matzah** → Feeling the urgency of redemption.
- **Tasting Maror** → Internalizing the bitterness of slavery.
- **Leaning and Drinking Wine** → Embodying freedom.

This hands-on approach ensures that the lessons are not just understood, but felt and remembered. Acting out the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim is encouraged, as we say in the Haggadah:

בכל דור ודור חייב לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא  
ממצרים”

*In every generation, a person is required to see (or show) himself as though he left Egypt*

## The Seder and the Power of Mesorah

At its core, Judaism is based on mesorah—an unbroken chain of tradition. Unlike other religions, Judaism is built upon the collective memory of an entire people.

Rabbi Sacks explains this beautifully in *A Letter in the Scroll*:

*“To be a Jew is to know that the history of our people lives on in us. We are its guardians. In each generation we hand it on to those who come after us, as our parents did for us. The Jewish people did not create history; they were created by it. They did not write a story; they became a story. And the story was passed on.”*

This is why the Seder is more than just a retelling—it is a reenactment of our national story, ensuring that the past remains alive in the present.

The Pesach Seder is the ultimate model of Jewish education. Through questioning, storytelling, multisensory learning, and the power of mesorah, it ensures that Jewish identity is not just studied—it is truly and deeply lived and transmitted.

Each year, as families gather around the Seder table, we are not just recalling history; we are fulfilling the eternal Jewish mission: to educate, to remember, and to pass on our story to the next generation.

# Pesach: True Freedom Through Emunah and Bitachon

Yosef Liviem

Pesach is known as **Zman Cherutenu**, the time of our freedom. But what does true freedom really mean? Many think it just means escaping slavery, but the Torah teaches us that real freedom is something much deeper.

## **Leaving Mitzrayim: More Than Just Physical Redemption**

When Hashem took us out of Egypt, it wasn't just about breaking our physical chains. The deeper goal was to free our **hearts and minds** from the spiritual darkness of Mitzrayim. The word *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) comes from the root *meitzarim*—limitations and constraints. The Jews were not just stuck in Egypt; they were trapped in a mindset of fear, doubt, and dependence on their oppressors.

Today, we face our own *Mitzrayim*. Many people feel trapped by financial worries, job instability, or fear about the future. Especially now, with global uncertainty—wars in Israel and Ukraine, rising anti-semitism, and economic instability—it's easy to feel anxious, just like Bnei Yisrael did in Egypt.

## **Bilvavi: Building an Internal Mishkan**

In *Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*, the author emphasizes that our avodah is to build a place for Hashem inside our hearts. True freedom comes from recognizing that Hashem is always with us, guiding and supporting us. When we rely on external things—money, status, or human approval—we remain enslaved. Redemption happens when we internalize that Hashem alone provides true security and meaning in our lives.

## **Shaar HaBitachon: The Key to Freedom**

*Shaar HaBitachon* (Chovos HaLevavos) teaches that real security comes from putting our full trust in Hashem.

The more we rely on Him, the less we are anxious about the future.

We see this today with the uncertainty in the economy—people are worried about inflation, layoffs, and financial instability. Many feel that their **parnassah** is in the hands of their employers or the government. But Pesach teaches us that **just as Hashem provided for Bnei Yisrael in the desert with the manna, He still provides for us today.**

## **Our Personal Exodus**

Each of us has our own *Mitzrayim*—our personal struggles, fears, and limiting beliefs. The story of Pesach reminds us that we can break free **not by relying on ourselves, but by trusting in Hashem completely.**

## **A Practical Takeaway**

This Pesach, as we eat the matzah, let's remind ourselves:

- **Mitzrayim represents limitations**—What's holding me back in my avodat Hashem?
- **Bilvavi teaches that real freedom** comes from building a deep, internal connection with Hashem, no matter what is happening in the world.
- **Shaar HaBitachon reminds us** that when we fully trust in Hashem, we no longer feel trapped by worry or fear.

The world may feel unstable, but our **emunah and bitachon** give us the ultimate security. Just as Hashem took us out of Egypt, He will bring the final geulah.

## **Chag Kasher V'Sameach!**

## Pesach Trivia

### Questions

1. What was the last plague that made Pharaoh let the Jewish people go?
2. What special food did Hashem give Bnei Yisrael in the desert after they left Egypt?
3. What miracle happened at the Yam Suf (Red Sea)?
4. What is the name of the bread that Bnei Yisrael baked when they left Egypt?
5. What do we do the night before Pesach to make sure there's no chametz in the house?
6. Why do we sing "Dayenu" at the Seder?
7. How many pieces of matzah do we put on the Seder plate, and what do they symbolize?
8. Why do we dip a vegetable in salt water at the beginning of the Seder?
9. What does "Mah Nishtanah" mean, and why do we say it?
10. Why do we eat maror at the Seder?
11. Why do we recline when eating matzah but not maror?
12. Why do we remove a small amount of wine from our cups while reciting the Ten Plagues?
13. What does the word "Pesach" mean, and how does it relate to the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim?
14. Name 4 different places the number four is represented in the Haggadah.
15. Why do we eat matzah on Pesach, and what are the two reasons given in the Haggadah?
16. What is the significance of leaning while drinking the four cups of wine?
17. What is the first mitzvah that Hashem gave to Bnei Yisrael as a nation?
18. What are the four expressions of redemption mentioned in the Torah, and how are they represented at the Seder?
19. What is the difference between chametz and se'or?
20. Why do we start counting the Omer the night after the first Seder?
21. Why is Kitniyot not eaten by many communities on Pesach?
22. What is the punishment for eating chametz on Pesach?
23. What is the minimum amount of matzah one must eat for Motzi Matzah and Afikoman?
24. What is the meaning of the word "Haggadah"?
25. Why is the Seder structured around asking questions?
26. Is one required to tell the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim during the Seder even if they already know it?
27. What is the reason for pouring an extra cup of wine for Eliyahu HaNavi?
28. What is the Hebrew calendar date that Pesach begins each year?
29. What is considered to be the central goal of the Seder night, especially when it comes to the role of children?

30. What is the Torah source for the mitzvah of telling the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim on the Seder night?

### Answers

1. Makkat Bechorot (Death of the Firstborn).
2. The manna.
3. The sea split, allowing Bnei Yisrael to walk through on dry land.
4. Matzah.
5. We do Bedikat Chametz, searching with a candle for chametz.
6. It thanks Hashem for all the good He did for us.
7. Three – one for Kohen, one for Levi, one for Yisrael.
8. To remember the tears and suffering of Bnei Yisrael in Egypt.
9. "Why is this night different?" – It introduces the Seder's special mitzvot.
10. Maror reminds us of the bitterness of slavery.
11. We recline for matzah to show freedom, but maror represents bitterness and suffering.
12. We remove wine to show that our joy is diminished because of the suffering of the Egyptians.
13. "Pesach" means "passed over", or "protected" referring to Hashem sparing the Jewish homes during Makkat Bechorot.
14. Four expressions of redemption, four cups of wine, four questions in the Mah Nishtanah, and the four sons in the Haggadah.
15. We eat matzah because Bnei Yisrael left Egypt in haste, and also because it represents the bread of affliction that we ate in Egypt as slaves.
16. Leaning symbolizes freedom and royalty.
17. The mitzvah of Kiddush HaChodesh – sanctifying the new moon.
18. "והוצאתי, והצלתי, וגאלתי, ולקחתי" – Represented by the four cups of wine.
19. Chametz is a leavened mixture of flour and water, while se'or is a leavening agent such as yeast or fermented sourdough starter.
20. The Torah commands us to count from the second night until Shavuot.
21. Kitniyot is not chametz, but Ashkenazic and some Sephardic custom avoids it due to concerns of confusion with grains.
22. Karet – spiritual excision.
23. About a kezayit (see above) for Motzi Matzah, and another kezayit for Afikoman.
24. "Haggadah" means "telling," as in telling the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim.
25. To encourage engagement and active participation in the Seder.
26. Yes! The Haggadah teaches that the more one tells and expands upon the story, the more praiseworthy it is. Even great Torah scholars, like the rabbis in Bnei Brak, spent the entire night discussing it until the morning.

27. Eliyahu HaNavi is the harbinger of redemption, and we express our hope for Mashiach.
28. Pesach begins on the 15th of Nissan, according to the Jewish calendar.
29. The central focus of the Seder is to pass down the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim to the next generation. The goal should be to engage children, encouraging them to ask questions

and learn about the foundational events of our faith, ensuring that they internalize the significance of the Exodus for future generations.

30. והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי" – (Shemot 13:8).

## A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR WRITERS:



Rabbi Eliyahu Ben Haim



Rabbi Yosef Bitton



Yaakob Bitton



Lior Kashimallak



Talia Cohen



Yonatan Aziz



Yosef Liviem

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### EDITORS IN CHIEF:

DANIEL DILAMANI AND SHAWN AZIZ

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For any questions, comments, suggestions or concerns please contact us at  
[MikraeiKodeshSBM@gmail.com](mailto:MikraeiKodeshSBM@gmail.com)

