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# **DAY-TO-DAY HALACHIC GUIDE**

**Laws & Customs for  
Pesach 5784  
Part I**

**ROSH CHODESH NISSAN - 12 NISSAN**

**ALSO:**

**SALE OF CHOMETZ INSTRUCTIONS**

**KASHERING & TOIVELING**

**CHUMROS & HIDDURIM OF PESACH**

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**B"H**

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Rosh Chodesh Nissan - 12 Nissan

Also:

**Sale of Chometz Instructions  
Kashering & Toiveling  
Chumros & Hiddurim of Pesach**

By

**Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita**  
member of the Badatz of Crown Heights

## Happy Occasions!

The editors of the Day-to-Day Halachah Guide wish a hearty

**Mazal Tov to our dear Rav,**

esteemed member of the Badatz of Crown Heights

Rabbi Y.Y. Braun

on the occasions of **his birthday**

on 4 Nissan

&

the marriage of his son, **Yaakov Yehuda**, *sheyichye*,

to **Chaya Mushka**, *sheyichye*, (Cohen)

on the 21st Adar II, 5784.

May he merit many more energetic, healthy years  
leading the Anash community with continued *nachas* and  
success from all his many efforts in uplifting *Klal Yisrael* with  
the beauty of Torah and halachah.

And most essentially, may we all merit  
the *Geulah Shleimah* now.

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## FOREWORD

Presented here is comprehensive guidance for selling *chametz*, *kashering* and *toiveling* dishes, *chumros* and *hiddurim* of Pesach, and laws and customs associated with the days from Rosh Chodesh Nissan through Shabbos Hagadol, 12 Nissan.

The details are derived from multiple sources, revised by **Rabbi M.M. Rotenberg**.

Due to a dearth of space, only some references and halachic notes have been added. Primary sources include: *Shulchan Aruch* and commentaries, *Haggadah shel Pesach im Likkutei Taamim U'minragim*, *Sefer Haminhagim Chabad*, *Luach Colel Chabad*, *Sichos*, and *Igros Kodesh*. Please see the footnotes in the Hebrew section for more halachic discussion of the topics mentioned.

The intention of this summary is to inform you of some of the relevant laws, not to replace each person's obligation to review the *Halachos* comprehensively.

**Please note:** Specific laws are usually mentioned only the first time that they become relevant, though they may apply to subsequent dates as well.

\* \* \*

### TIME TO PREPARE

In a *sichah* on the second day of Rosh Hashanah in 5752, the Rebbe states:

"We need to focus on studying the laws that apply to this time of year, during which many changes are made to the standard prayers and there are numerous customs that apply. We should make certain to study these laws in the Code of Jewish Law.

"Recently, yearly calendars have begun to include many of the laws that apply to the relevant time of the year and that are necessary to know. This is particularly useful for those who, for whatever reason, do not have *sefarim* or do not know how to find what they are looking for in the *sefarim* that they own. Now, however, they can simply examine such calendars and easily find the relevant laws.

**"It is therefore extremely appropriate for every single person to peruse the contents of these calendars, such as the Kollel Chabad calendar (available both in wall size and pocket size formats) in such a manner that the laws that apply to this time of year will become fixed in his memory. After all, it sometimes happens that a halachic question arises precisely at a point during which it is forbidden to interrupt and ask for someone's guidance - or when there is nobody around to ask. Furthermore, [not having familiarized himself with the relevant laws beforehand] it can happen that one does not even realize that there is a problem to begin with."**

\* \* \*

This guide incorporates several reminders about laws that will only be applicable

during the Era of Redemption, with the hope that Moshiach will come speedily, allowing us to implement these laws in practice.

## LAWS OF REDEMPTION

The concept of studying these halachos is based on several *sichos*, some of which are quoted below.

### To Realize Redemption

“Hashem **begs** the Jewish people,” the Rebbe passionately states,<sup>1</sup> “to occupy themselves with the study of the laws of the sacrificial orders ... which [as our Sages state] is considered as if we had actually offered the sacrifices. This study will bring about the actual offerings because it brings [to quote Rambam], ‘King Moshiach [who] will build the *Beis Hamikdash* ... and restore the laws of the Torah ... so that the Jewish people will again offer the sacrifices ... in accordance with all the mitzvos that are stated in the Torah,’ speedily, in our time—literally! [Then, to quote the festival liturgy], ‘We will offer before You there the offerings of our obligations ... in accordance with the commandments of Your will.’”

“We must experience greater longing and yearning for the Redemption,” the Rebbe demanded.<sup>2</sup> “One of the ways this is accomplished is through studying more Torah on the subjects of the Redemption and the *Beis Hamikdash*. Studying these topics greatly hastens their actual realization, to the extent that we will go directly from studying these subjects to greet our righteous Moshiach. We will inform him, ‘We have just completed studying the laws associated with your coming!’ An additional motivation to study these laws is that we must expect Moshiach’s arrival each and every day. In that case, these laws [concerning the Redemption and the *Beis Hamikdash*] are matters that every Jew—men and women alike—must know, in order to put them into practical use on a daily basis, such as many of the laws of the offerings.”

\* \* \*

**General Note:** The times listed below are for Crown Heights only. Since one can never achieve complete precision, and many factors may influence the accuracy of these times, it is recommended to begin earlier than the time listed and not wait until the last minute (e.g., for the start of Shabbos), or to wait extra time, when that is the appropriate precaution (e.g., at the close of Shabbos).

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1) *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 341—*Emphasis in the original*

2) *From a sichah addressed to N'shei uB'nos Chabad—Sefer Hasichos 5750*, vol. 2, p. 485.

## THIRTY DAYS

### LEARNING THE LAWS

Starting from Purim, we begin to discuss the halachos of Pesach.

#### LAW OF REDEMPTION: 30 DAYS

The Alter Rebbe states<sup>3</sup> in his *Shulchan Aruch*: “During the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the early Sages instituted that the laws of each festival should be explained to the public starting thirty days prior to each festival. Therefore, they would begin teaching the laws of Pesach from Purim onwards ... Each person living in Eretz Yisrael was obligated to bring three offerings (*olas re’iyah*, *shalmei chagigah*, and *shalmei simchah*) on each festival. Each sacrifice has to be free of any blemish or other disqualification. The Sages therefore instituted the practice of publicly explaining the laws of the festivals thirty days in advance, to remind the people of the festival so that they do not forget to prepare animals that are fit for offering. They then had a full thirty days to prepare.”

#### MAOS CHITTIM

Now is also the time to begin donating, preparing, and organizing to provide *ma’os chittim*<sup>4</sup>—supplies for those who cannot afford the Pesach expenses, providing them with *shmurah matzos* for the Seders and for the rest of Pesach, as well as providing their other Pesach needs.<sup>5</sup>

Women are also accustomed to personally be *mehader* in this important mitzvah.

#### DONATIONS BY WOMEN

In *Sichos Kodesh*, the Rebbe explains, “Women have a special connection with the mitzvah of *tzedakah*. In our society, husbands are accustomed to entrust considerable sums to their wives’ discretion and therefore even significant funds are considered within the halachic definition of a minor sum, which a *tzedakah* collector was permitted to accept from a woman in former times [when society placed the majority of a family’s funds under the husband’s sole jurisdiction]. In America, it is prevalent for the distribution of funds for *tzedakah* and for many other matters to be the woman’s prerogative to a far greater extent than that of their husband.”

#### NO MATZAH

We refrain from eating matzah during the thirty days prior to Pesach (from Purim onwards) until the Seder on the first night of Pesach. It is customary to avoid even *chametzdik* matzah not fit for consumption on Pesach, however, egg matzah, matzah balls and other matzah-based products are permitted.

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3) *beg. Hilchos Pesach*

4) Regarding the use of *ma’aser* for purposes of providing Pesach needs, see [www.asktherav.com](http://www.asktherav.com) #3217.

5) See *Sefer Hasichos* 5750, vol. 1, p. 351, fn. 134; *Sichas Purim* 5726; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Parah* 5740

### CHAMETZ PRECAUTIONS

Within the thirty days prior to Yom Tov, care should be taken to prevent *chametz* substances from becoming firmly attached or entrenched in our possessions, which would frustrate our subsequent efforts to clean for Pesach. *Poskim* refer to various scenarios to avoid doing so—such as not using a *chametz* utensil to collect wine from a barrel that has been set aside for Pesach use; preventing *chametz* from entering a location that will be exempt from *bedikas chametz*; not laundering clothes with a *chametz* agent; not gluing paper with a *chametz* substance; performing a *bedikah* on a property that will be vacated within the thirty days and not returned to until after Pesach; checking an area for *chametz* before storing things away in a place that will not be cleared until after Pesach, and so on. (See more details in the entry below called “Cleaning and Bedikah”.)

### MIVTZA MATZAH

The entry for the year 5714 in *Shalshelas Hayachas* (in the introduction to *Hayom Yom*) reads: “[The Rebbe] encouraged [that the *Chassidim*] bring merit to the public by providing *shmurah matzah* for Pesach.”

The Rebbe established<sup>6</sup> the practice whereby everyone, but especially those in positions of authority such as a Rav or a communal leader or activist, should send round hand-baked *matzos* (they must be *shmurah matzah*) for Pesach—or at a minimum, enough for the Seders—to their acquaintances who would not otherwise obtain such on their own initiative. Organizers of large public Seders in hotels and the like should make similar arrangements.

In 5751, the Rebbe announced,<sup>7</sup> “Public Seders will be held in many places. Out of these, many locations will be holding just one Seder due to lack of funds and other concerns. It is urgent and extremely appropriate to put every effort into holding two Seders. At least, the existing budget should be spread over both nights. No doubt, that solution will prove unnecessary because Hashem will certainly bless and supply the organizers with all that is necessary and even more than that.”

## THE MONTH OF NISSAN

Our Sages say, “In the month of Nissan, our forefathers were redeemed from Egypt, and in the month of Nissan, we are destined to be redeemed.”

### HIGHEST OF ALL

Nissan is considered first and foremost of all months—also spiritually—even in

6) *Sefer Haminhagim Chabad*

7) *Sefer Hasichos 5751*, vol. 1, p. 411

contrast to Tishrei, which is a month of great and plentiful Divine revelations. This is because the G-dly Light that is accessed in this month defies all levels of spiritual revelation, and is sourced in the infinite, unfiltered essence of Hashem, *Atzmus*.<sup>8</sup>

Nissan is therefore a main channel for Divine energy being drawn into the world, since the manner that the name of Hashem manifests in this month is in the orderly permutation of letters (first *yud*, then the higher *hey*, then *vav*, then the lower *hey*), and it appears (not merely as an expression of G-dliness) but an actual name and title for His Essence which is accessible immediately at the start of the month.<sup>9</sup>

### YOM TOV EVERY DAY

The entire month, we conduct ourselves in a holy manner similarly to a Yom Tov. The Shaloh writes: “The *possuk* ‘This month is *rosh chodashim* for you’ (though literally meaning ‘the head of all months’) alludes to the practice of treating each day as a Yom Tov—a month where every day is like Rosh Chodesh.”<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the Rebbe encourages,<sup>11</sup> it is good and proper to hold *chassidische* farbrengens, like on Yom Tov, every day of the month of Nissan.

### NO TACHANUN

For the duration of the month of Nissan, we do not say *Tachanun*. On Shabbos, we likewise do not recite *Av Harachamim* before Musaf nor *Tzidkascha* in Minchah.

On these days when *Tachanun* is not said, we omit *Lamnatzeach* (Chapter 20 of Tehillim) from davening. Instead, we precede the daily Tehillim with its recitation.

### FASTING & CEMETERY VISITS

We avoid fasting for the entire month—even as an individual *tikkun*, and inclusive of *erev Rosh Chodesh Iyar* for whom it is their usual custom, and even for a *yahrzeit*. The exceptions to this rule are the Fast of the Firstborn on *erev Pesach* and a *chosson* and *kallah* on their wedding day.<sup>12</sup>

It is also customary to avoid visiting a cemetery during the month of Nissan for the purpose of *davening* at loved ones’ gravesites. If a parent’s *yahrzeit* falls during this month, it is appropriate to go on *erev Rosh Chodesh Nissan* (the 29th of Adar) instead. If you failed to go then, you may attend on the day of the *yahrzeit*, but avoid the *techinot* (supplication prayers) usually recited for the occasion at other

8) From the *maamar* entitled *Hachodesh 5747*. See the more lengthy, edifying explanation there.

9) *Maamar Hachodesh Hazeh 5671*, pp. 64 ff. Also found in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 22, p. 243 in the footnote under the title “Chodesh Nissan”.

10) Since the entire month is under the rubric of *zman cheiruseinu* (the time of our redemption from Egypt), and it is called “a month of geulah”. See Hebrew footnote for some of the many sources in *Chassidus* that mention this.

11) *sichas Shabbos Parshas Tzav*, 5724

12) The latter is observed even on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. However, on *Isru Chag*, they do not fast. (However as per our custom, during *sefirah*, there are no weddings.)

times of the year. The injunction against visiting gravesites does not extend to *kivrei tzaddikim* (the graves of holy people), for frequenting these sites is not for the purpose of bringing succor to the souls of the departed, but to pray and ask that the righteous intercede on behalf of ourselves and other living people.<sup>13</sup>

### THE NASI

Starting on Rosh Chodesh Nissan (the date the Mishkan was inaugurated), and every day until the 12th of Nissan, the *Nasi* is recited after *Shacharis*, followed by the *yehi ratzon* prayer. This prayer is recited also by a *Kohen* or a *Levi* (despite the fact that they have a known lineage and the *yehi ratzon* mentions the possibility of descending from the other tribes) and by women and converts, without any changes to the wording.<sup>14</sup>

On the 13th of the month, the concluding passage of *Zos Chanukas Hamizbe'ach* is recited to represent the tribe of Levi.

If you forgot to say the day's *Nasi*, you may make it up until break of dawn of the following day, reciting the *yehi ratzon* as well. If you did not remember until the following day, say the verses in addition to current day's, but without repeating the *yehi ratzon*.<sup>15</sup>

### AS IF

The Rebbe urges us to strengthen ourselves and those around us in the recitation of the *Nasi* and the accompanying *yehi ratzon* daily,<sup>16</sup> thereby demonstrating how we uphold our *minhagim* in a manner that “we are more punctilious and indulgent of the words of *Chazal*,” and Jewish custom in general, “than the commandments of the Torah itself.”<sup>17</sup>

In fact, regarding this particular custom, we can apply the saying of our Sages, “One who occupies themselves with the study of the holy sacrifices, it is as if they have offered them themselves.” So it can be considered that each and every Jew (who recites the *Nasi*) has brought the *korban* (that is a specialty) of our nation's leaders.<sup>18</sup>

13) See [www.asktherav.com](http://www.asktherav.com) #1683 (in the footnotes), #3846

14) See [www.asktherav.com](http://www.asktherav.com) #20224; also #1694 (regarding a general rule about changing the conventional format in davening.)

15) See [www.asktherav.com](http://www.asktherav.com) #20331

16) Regarding the special significance of the *yehi ratzon* prayer, which is unlike any of the other *tefillos* that commemorate specific historical happenings year-round, see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 32, p. 20 ff, also published in *Sefer Hasichos* 5747, p. 371 ff. (From the *sichah* of *Parshas Vayikra*, 5747, see the *Roshei Devarim* of that occasion.)

17) Oft-quoted with regard to the *hakafos* of *Simchas Torah*, which are sourced in a *minhag Yisrael*. See *Sefer Hasichos* 5749, vol. 1, p. 380, fn. 85.

18) *Sefer Hasichos* 5751, vol. 1, p. 387, fn. 65

## BLESSING ON THE TREES

Someone who goes outdoors during the month of Nissan<sup>19</sup> and observes trees in bloom should recite the blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁלֹּא חָסַר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ כְּלוּם וּבָרָא בּוֹ בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְיִהְיֹוֹת בָּהֶם בְּגִי אָדָם.

“Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has made nothing lacking in His world, and created in it goodly creatures and goodly trees to give mankind pleasure.”

This blessing is recited only once a year, the first time a person observes blossoming trees during Nissan. Someone who observed such trees but failed to recite the blessing should recite it the next time they see such trees, but should omit the words, *atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam* (“L-rd our G-d, King of the universe”) from the brachah. Rather, simply state, “*Baruch shelo* etc.” (“Blessed is the One Who has made....”)

This blessing is only recited on a tree that produces fruit—though the fruit does not have to be edible.<sup>20</sup>

The tree should be in the blossoming stage, prior to the production of fruit. Some are extra scrupulous to recite the blessing over two such trees simultaneously. Both men and women alike make the brachah. Some authorities maintain that the blessing should not be recited for a tree that is *orlah* (within the first three years of its planting) or a tree that has been grafted. The majority of authorities permit reciting this blessing during Shabbos and Yom Tov.

If the brachah was delayed until the blossoms have fallen and given way to fruit, it should be recited without mentioning Hashem’s name, in the method described above.

## PREPARING FOR 11 NISSAN

### THE GIFT THE REBBE WANTS

“There is still time remaining until Yud-Alef Nissan,” the Rebbe says<sup>21</sup> that can be used to fulfill all of the good resolutions made in connection with this day, and to accept even more good resolutions.”

The Rebbe, on another occasion<sup>22</sup>: Those who are preparing for the birthday are thinking about what to do—perhaps in *tzedakah*... or Torah.

First of all, these efforts should be connected with Torah. And not merely that pledges for *tzedakah* should go **toward** Torah study. Although, it is true, there

19) This law is applicable only during the month of Nissan.

20) See [www.asktherav.com](http://www.asktherav.com) #8068

21) From the *sichah* of Yud Shvat 5733

22) From the *sichah* of Purim 5732. In *Sichos Kodesh*, vol 1, p. 539.

is much to be said for those who “support for Torah,” and even more so, to quote, “those who support it are **מאושר**—fortunate,” about which the Zohar states: “Do not read it **מאושר**, but (by rearranging the letters we get:) **מראשו**—from his head”. This means that a “supporter of Torah” draws from the “head” and source of all blessings.

Still, this does not approach the value of Torah study itself (even though the *passuk* first states, “Zevulun on your journeys”, referring to those who do business and support Torah study, and only after, “and Yissachar in your tents”, referring to those who sit and learn Torah). And therefore, simply stated, whatever *hachlatah* you mean to focus on as a gift for my birthday it must include the realm of Torah. Obviously, this refers to whoever desires to do so—as it is not possible to offer conditions for a gift—but since a gift is meant to be pleasing (in line with what the recipient desires).

So whatever the gift will be: *tzedakah* as so, positive activities or good deeds in a different milieu, it would be “proper, desired, good...”(and the remaining accolades of the fifteen positive expressions mentioned in the prayer, *Emes V'yatziv*), that each should include an addition in Torah study. And as mentioned—the addition should be both in *Niglah* and the inner, deeper part of Torah, *Chassidus*.

## PREPARATIONS FOR PESACH

It is a mitzvah for each individual to learn the halachos of Yom Tov prior to Yom Tov, so that they will become proficient in the halachos and know what to do.

### SPECIAL PURCHASES

If you have not yet purchased *shmurah matzah*<sup>23</sup> for Pesach, do so now.<sup>24</sup>

If you have not yet purchased wine for Pesach, do so now too. It is a mitzvah to specifically utilize red wine for the Seder, unless a white wine is of superior quality than the available red wine.<sup>25</sup>

Other items that may need to be purchased anew are sufficient *haggados*, chametz-free *siddurim* (to substitute for those used at mealtimes year-round, as well as as a gift for children—see the next paragraph), matzah covers<sup>26</sup> and appropriately-sized, stemless<sup>27</sup> *bechers* for all Seder participants.

23) Choosing between **white** and **whole wheat flour**? See [#13635](http://www.asktherav.com). **Spelt matzah** may be used if absolutely necessary, see *ibid.* #7062; regarding **oat matzah**, see *ibid.* #20014.

24) It is permitted to use last year's matzah. However, if it was not properly stored to keep it from coming in contact with *chametz*, it must be burned.

25) See the sources and footnotes in [#372](http://www.halachacha2go.com). See also the Day-to-Day Guide for Purim 5783, where it speaks about what qualifies as superior wine (as required for making the brachah of *hatov vehameitiv*).

26) See [#19345](http://www.asktherav.com) about covers bearing the brachos on matzah, with Hashem's name.

27) See [#18985](http://www.asktherav.com) regarding the Chabad custom of using stemless cups for *kiddush*.

For the minimum size required, in the entry for the Seder night (in Part II of this guide) it states: [in] modern

In 5747,<sup>28</sup> the Rebbe issued the following directive: “It is extremely worthwhile and highly appropriate for each Jewish child to receive their own *Haggadah shel Pesach* before the start of the festival. It would be best to give them an illustrated text that depicts the various mitzvos and events that are discussed in the Haggadah, making the Haggadah’s contents far more accessible to them. On the inside cover, inscribe the words *Lashem ha’aretz u’melo’ah* (“*To Hashem is the Earth and its contents*,” often abbreviated as “לה”, acknowledging that everything belongs to Hashem), followed by the child’s name.”

In 5748,<sup>29</sup> the Rebbe added: “It would be best to purchase a new Siddur or the like for a child before Yom Tov. The importance of such gifts can be derived from the law that one should purchase edible treats for a child in honor of Yom Tov, and those are merely non-obligatory items.”

### “IT’S FOR PESACH”

It is forbidden to say in reference to the meat of any kosher animal (domestic or otherwise) or fowl, “This meat is for Pesach.” This would appear as though he is designating it for the *korban Pesach*. Be careful to say instead, “This meat is for Yom Tov,” or something similar. Nor should one person tell another, “Please take this money and buy meat for Pesach.” Instead, they should take care to say, “Please buy me meat for Yom Tov.”

Regarding fish or other foods that are not considered meat, it is permissible to say, “This is for Pesach.” Some, however, are stringent to avoid saying, “This is for Pesach,” regarding any item except for the wheat that will be used for the *matzos* that require guarding from contact with water from the moment of its harvest. In this particular case, someone who overhears someone declaring that this wheat is “for Pesach” will correctly assume that he intends to guard it from becoming leavened, so as to use it for the Pesach matzos. It is best to be cautious and to try following this stringent opinion.

It should be noted that it is only forbidden to declare specific meat *l’Pesach*—“for Pesach,” but there is nothing wrong with employing a different phrase with the same meaning, such as “*al Pesach*”—“over Pesach,” as per the literal translation of the common Yiddish phrase, “*oif Pesach*.” (Many explain that the common custom to be lenient is on account of the English translation that doesn’t represent the same connotation as the Hebrew.)

### SELLING CHAMETZ

*Mechiras chametz* will take place at the Badatz office by Rabbi Braun (see dates

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measurements, the required quantity of a *revi*’s of wine equals approximately 3 ounces. (Divergent views on its precise quantity range from 2.6 oz. to 3.4 oz.) See there for more details.

28) *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5747*

29) *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5748*

and times on pg. 4). It is advisable to arrive as early as possible and not push off until the last day. The laws of selling the *chametz* are detailed at the end of this booklet.

### **PESACH PREP FOR EVERYONE**

In the public Pesach letter dated 11 Nissan 5747, the Rebbe says: “All Jews, especially balabustas, and including children and even the very young, throw themselves into the preparations for Pesach days and days in advance. Even those very special people (though I have never observed or even heard that our Rebbeim did this) who have the custom to move out of the homes for Pesach (or have Pesach kitchens) still find that there are many ways to get ready and organized for Pesach and hustle through with alacrity.”

### **JOY OF YOM TOV**

Gladness and a joyful frame of mind are mandated for the entire eight days of the festival. A man must see to it that his wife, children, and all who are dependent upon or accompany him are similarly joyful. This joy is a Biblical obligation. How is this accomplished? A husband purchases clothing and jewelry for his wife, according to his means. (For how this applies to men and children, see the laws of the First Day of Pesach).

## **PESACH FOOD: CHUMROS AND HIDDURIM**

### **THE ARIZAL'S PROMISE**

The Arizal states, “One who is scrupulous regarding even the minutest quantity<sup>30</sup> of *chametz* on Pesach is guaranteed not to sin the entire year.”<sup>31</sup>

### **WHEN TO RESTRICT**

All the stringencies for Pesach are commonly observed starting from the cut-off time for eating *chametz on erev Pesach*, and including Acharon shel Pesach,<sup>32</sup> and should also be adhered to when preparing any foodstuffs that will be consumed within that time frame. There are some leniencies that may apply on *erev Pesach*, or when cooking for Pesach in advance, which will be discussed below.<sup>33</sup>

Someone who avoids *chametz* completely as stated in Halachah, safeguarding this prohibition by acting in line with the greatest stringencies, will greatly benefit

30) Anything invisible to the eye is excluded. See [#7957](http://www.asktherav.com)

31) He possibly refers to immunity from inadvertent sins; there is no question that every person retains freedom of choice for good or bad regardless, as is explained in the *sichos* of Acharon shel Pesach & Pesach Sheini, 5740

32) The only *chumra* that is suspended on the last day is for soaking matzah in liquid—this will be explored in the entry for the laws of Acharon shel Pesach in Part II of this guide.

33) See [#13490](http://www.asktherav.com). These specific customs are outlined later on in the entry for *erev Pesach* in Part II of this guide.

their soul throughout the year (as promised in the above statement of the Arizal).

The mitzvos of eating matzah and avoiding *chametz* were first given to the Jewish people in Egypt, and they accepted them with love and affection, and applied them stringently in both their generalities and particular details. As stated in Halachah *sefarim*, those who “lengthen their measure of careful observance of these *mitzvos* lengthen their days and years.”

The Alter Rebbe quotes in a responsum that the Arizal stated that we should observe all of the *chumros* (extra-precautionary stringencies)<sup>34</sup> during Pesach.

An individual may be stringent on Pesach to avoid *chametz*, utilizing all possible limits and preventative measures, without any concern that this would somehow constitute a breach of the directive to avoid pretentious or confounding behavior. Similarly, these practices do not fall under the rubric of isolating yourself from the community, for in this, we each have familial traditions upon which to rely. The Rema writes that no custom should be abolished or made fun of, for they were not established gratuitously.<sup>35</sup> Regarding those customs that only some people observe, *poskim* warn not to mock them; everyone should be given the freedom to follow the path best for them.

The truly golden path, however, does not entail a constant search for ever stricter practices,<sup>36</sup> for often stringencies (in a particular area) lead to leniencies (in other areas). Another aspect to avoid is a scenario in which the pursuit of perfection in something of lesser importance takes supreme focus and ends up overriding what is essential. We are taught that our Divine service needs to be on a level, a gradual succession, so as to avoid acting willy-nilly and suffering inevitable regression, and not everyone who wishes to assume the reputation of a G-d-fearing person may actually assume it. In addition, be sure to consider the outcomes of your actions and how they affect those around you—decisions regarding which *chumros* to accept upon yourself will vary depending on your specific circumstances of timing, type of stringency, community and surrounding locale. With the best intentions, a narrow-minded individual can inadvertently display pretentious behavior, or take on too much and need to backpedal, ultimately making themselves vulnerable to transgression and mistakes.<sup>37</sup>

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34) “Generally speaking, on Pesach we should be following all the precautions and details of the mitzvah, staying far away from any *chametz* that could be found, and attuned to the opinions of those who are stringent. However, if a question arises in a unique situation, we don’t automatically assume that we need to be stringent, but should see what the halachic decisors have written in regard to the matter, whether to permit or forbid. These [stringencies] also apply to a situation on Pesach itself and not on what is done before Pesach.” From the responsa *Chavalim B’Neimim*, S18, explaining the intention of the Alter Rebbe.

35) The sefer *Yosef Ometz* states: although these stringencies on Pesach are extreme, even seemingly unreasonable, it is good practice to thus “burn *chametz*” (undergo a spiritual cleansing) to the greatest extent possible.

36) See [#19328](http://www.asktherav.com)

37) See appendix for a transcript of a Q & A session with Rabbi Braun for extensive direction on this topic.

### STRICT, BUT NOT EXPRESSLY

In the year 5692, the Frierdiker Rebbe stated that his father, the Rebbe Rashab, had said not to make a custom of observing *hiddurim* during Pesach. The reason for this is to avoid being considered having formally accepted these stringencies with the force of a vow. Presumably, this means that we should keep the *chumros* without establishing them as a custom.<sup>38</sup>

We should not say, “Pesach is such a bother!” or express similar sentiments. In the *Haggadah*, we read that the wicked son says: *What is this service to you?* meaning, “Why bother with all this hassle?” People are no longer careful about this nowadays, as can be readily observed. In order to judge them favorably, we can assume that the title “*rasha*” applies only when decrying the efforts involved in the actual *Korban Pesach*—the service referred to in the verse in its most limited sense. The *Korban Pesach* is a biblical obligation, and the wicked son is claiming that the Torah’s commandments are nothing but a burden. By contrast, the frequently voiced exclamations of weariness and overwhelmedness that we hear nowadays refer to the extra stringencies and precautions that have accumulated over the generations.

### MATZAH ASHIRAH

*Matzah ashirah*, made of dough kneaded with other liquids like fruit juice that were never mixed with any water, is not essentially *chametz*. However, we are stringent not to utilize it on Pesach,<sup>39</sup> even those that use unquestionably pure fruit juice.<sup>40</sup> This *minhag* should be adhered to even for children—unless such matzah is needed for an ill or elderly person.

### MACHINE MATZAH

“The great G-d-fearing Rabbis of the previous generation<sup>41</sup> forbade machine-made matzos,” the Rebbe Rashab writes to an individual regarding their usability. “Some of them refused to reveal their reasons for their ban, so that no one would counteract them with justifications. Nevertheless, the ruling is resolute that machine *matzos* are forbidden. There were those who wrote they are complete *chametz*. How could we conceive to contravene their words, G-d forbid... You ask for my opinion (and it is this): I do not permit using machine matzos in any manner. There is no need to introduce any innovations, rather we should just follow the proper path that our holy Rabbis laid out for us.”

In a letter of the Frierdiker Rebbe: In response to the topic of machine matzos,

38) Elsewhere, the Rebbe Rashab expressed himself thus: “I am very scared of *chumros*.”

39) Perhaps a minute amount of water was mixed in, which would cause it to become true *chametz*, a transgression that renders the consumer liable for *kares* (spiritual excision). (Water with fruit juice is actually a more potent leavening agent than water alone.)

40) For there are those that say that not only do fruit juices essentially cause leavening, they even cause the leavening process to be faster than with just water.

41) From a list of those who prohibit this: the Tzemach Tzedek; his renowned student, R' Shneur Zalman of Lublin, the Toras Chesed testified, that he himself saw a responsa of the Tzemach Tzedek forbidding machine matzos.

I will address only what is relevant to (the correspondent), for I do not wish to speak about the general issues relating to this type of matzah, which are already well known. So, in response to his question about what he should do: Undoubtedly, there are *shmurah matzos* of superior quality in his location... baked in a traditional oven as is customary, and hand-prepared...is it really possible that there will not be any legitimate *shmurah matzos*?

“Why would you do that?” the Rebbe queries<sup>42</sup> in response to the question of whether machine *matzah* can be given to children. “Consuming matzah is a matter of faith, which is something we need to work on from childhood onward. It is written that a child knows how to say ‘father’ (which also connotes a level of Divine awareness) only once they have tasted grain, and this is not achieved via machines. We don’t need to make a big deal about liquid-soaked *matzah* (*gebrochts*) or other *hiddurim* for children<sup>43</sup>, but do not feed them machine-made matzah.”

Even in regard to *mitvzoim*—Mivtza Matzah, the Rebbe emphasized that matzah that is round, hand-made, and specifically *shmurah* [“guarded” against contact with liquid from the moment of harvest] should be used.<sup>44</sup>

### KITNIYOS

Rice and other non-*chametz* grains, and many types of seeds and legumes are called *kitniyos*. They can never become *chametz*. Nonetheless, many authorities forbade cooking them on Pesach. The Ashkenazi custom is to be stringent about this, and we are not permitted to deviate from the custom. Consuming them on Pesach without an express *heter* for health reasons would transgress the commandment of “do not stray (from the Torah sages’ decree).”<sup>45</sup> Even if we reconvened the court of *Shmuel Hanavi* and the court of *Eliyahu Hanavi*, and all the greatest sages of Israel were with them, they would not be able to permit *kitniyos* on Pesach. Even in a time of pressing need, when a person does not have what to eat, it is forbidden to cook *kitniyos*.

Included in the category of *kitniyos* are: Rice, peas, peanuts, millet, chickpeas, sunflower seeds, mustard, buckwheat, poppy seeds, beans, lentils, soy, quinoa, sesame, corn and many other grains, seeds and legumes not listed here.<sup>46</sup>

Any oil derived from *kitniyos* (peanut, sunflower, rapeseed/canola, sesame, soybean, and the like) is also forbidden. Non-*kitniyos* oils are permissible when

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42) recorded notes of the *sichah* of Yud-Gimmel Nissan 5711

43) See further on, about how for the sake of educating children, one should be careful about these as well.

44) Although in places and times where providing Jewish communities with *shmurah matzah* was impractical (and therefore machine matzos were sent at the behest of the Rebbeim), the Rebbe emphasized that at least 6 round matzos be provided for the seders; in a private handwritten note, the Rebbe instructed to provide, in addition to the Seder matzah, enough that a small piece of *shmurah* could be consumed each subsequent day of Pesach.

45) And, in principle, potentially liable for “death at the hands of Heaven”.

46) For a comprehensive overview regarding quinoa, see [www.asktherav.com](http://www.asktherav.com) #7463

they are made specially for Pesach. Cottonseed oil is permitted halachically, though there are those who nevertheless refrain. Some are stringent not to use any oil, and only animal fats (*shmaltz*).<sup>47</sup>

Some authorities also ruled against coffee, though most are lenient. Some also do not drink tea. Potatoes are not *kitniyos*, though some *poskim* say not to use potato starch—though most do not *pasken* this way. Some *sefarim* mention a custom to refrain from watermelon and pumpkin seeds. There are even those that are stringent not to eat any fruits or vegetables with edible seeds that resemble *kitniyos*, like cucumbers and eggplant.

There is a popular idea that the reason the tradition exists to refrain from eating certain foods is that they were simply not available in a particular locality in the past. However, it should be noted that great *tzaddikim* would nonetheless avoid eating “new” foods (i.e., those that they do not have precedent to consume). It is humanly impossible to absolutely ensure that even the tiniest morsel of *chametz* does not come in contact with our food on Pesach, they argue, so we must rely on our predecessors’ prayers for Divine assistance regarding the suitability of our Pesach fare. Any foods that were not part of our ancestors’ repertoire do not have the same degree of *siyata dishmaya* attached as those that did, and should therefore be avoided. In this practice, they applied the premise: “do not abandon the Torah of your mother (your forebears’ custom)”.

*Kitniyos* were only forbidden for consumption, so it is permitted to derive benefit from them and also to store them in the house over Pesach. .

It is permitted to cook and feed *kitniyos* to a child or sick person if required. The grains must be carefully examined to remove any granules that are not of type (this is a common occurrence) since they may be *chametz*. Special utensils are required for *kitniyos*, separate from those used to cook regular Pesach fare. It’s best to mix the *kitniyos* with fruit juice rather than water, if possible. If using water, the *kitniyos* should be mixed in when the water is already boiling. It is also preferable, if cooking *kitniyos*, to choose grain other than rice, millet or buckwheat.

### GEBROKTS

We are extremely careful about matzah coming into contact with liquid, called *gebrokts* (except for on the last day of Pesach when we **go above and beyond** to eat *gebrokts*, see the entry for Acharon shel Pesach in Part II of this guide).

We therefore cover matzos on the table in case water might fall on them and so matzah crumbs don’t fall into drinks or soup. The *minhag* is to set aside dishes and utensils that you suspect may have been involved in such a mixture, not reusing them until the next year. .

Before pouring water, or any liquid that contains water, into a cup or bowl, we examine the utensil for matzah crumbs.

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<sup>47</sup>) See the response of *Shevet Halevi*, Section 8, 163:7, regarding one who wants to interfere with this custom.

Throughout the first seven days of Pesach, we do not pass our hands over our lips when rinsing them with *mayim emtzayim* (between fish and meat) or *mayim acharonim* (before *Birchas Hamazon*) to avoid the possibility of consuming wet matzah crumbs.

We are careful to teach children to avoid *gebrokts* as well, as a matter of proper *chinuch*.<sup>48</sup>

Pure fruit juice mixed with matzah crumbs are not strictly *gebrokts*, though many avoid it as well. Those who are lenient, however, must take every precaution that not even a drop of water came to be mixed into the juice.

The Rebbe Rashab would not eat matzah together with fish or meat because of his concern that it may become *gebrokts*, but he would eat matzah with (pure) wine<sup>49</sup>.

### OTHER FOOD AVOIDANCES

Halachic works mention a custom to avoid dried fruits, and similarly, sugar,<sup>50</sup> and other foodstuffs, including pre-salted foods, cloves, saffron, and honey,<sup>51</sup> as different locales had production and post-production storage practices for these items that may have caused them to come in contact with *chametz*. If it is definitively known that there is currently no cause for doubt in the purity of these food items, there is no need to be stringent. However, there are those who refrain from using these foods even if they bear a *hechsher* for Pesach based on the principle of strictly following the traditions of their forebears on Pesach.

It is cited in *sefarim* to boil sugar prior to Pesach, as when cooked into a liquid any *chametz* therein is nullified (whereas on Pesach, it can no longer be nullified when dissolved no matter how great the quantity). However, as stated, the need for preserving this practice is dubious based on the current availability of purely kosher for Pesach sugar. It should be noted that the Rebbeim did not use sugar on Pesach at all.<sup>52</sup>

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48) As stated previously, the Rebbe emphasized that we be **most** stringent regarding machine matzah; there, *gebrokts* is grouped with other *hiddurim* that we are not as strict to enforce with children.

49) In another source: only with 'shmurah-milk' or wine, liquids with no cause for concern about any presence of *chametz*. He ate the matzah with wine at the same exact time, together. See *Sefer Hasichos* 5692, p. 41.

Regarding a custom not to eat fish and **then** matzah, or vice versa (regarding which it is related via hearsay that our Rebbeim were also careful about this, the Rebbe was not observed as being careful about this.

50) There is a custom to sell sugar to a non-Jew, even if there is no reason to suspect *chametz* contamination.

Nowadays, however, there is almost no cause whatsoever for cross-contamination, and sugar only requires supervision due to the stringency of *chametz* on Pesach being prohibited even in the minutest quantity. With a superior *hechsher* for Pesach, it is permitted (and those who avoid it, do so only in keeping with tradition, as mentioned).

51) There are those who also refrain from using milk. This is written about at length in halachic works. In any case, many people refrain from milk since it is a manufactured product, as will be discussed.

52) It has been told that the Rebbe Rashab said in connection to those who practice this: "I do not like that I am being copied."

The Rebbe said at the meal of Acharon Shel Pesach 5729: In response to the question why the *hiddur* not to use sugar on Pesach isn't printed in *Sefer Haminhagim* (as opposed to the custom not to drink even water outside of

**Herring:** On Pesach we do not eat salted fish (herring) nor pickled fish.

**Spices:** It has long been our custom not to use ginger and cinnamon (as some add to their *charoses*) because of the concern that it may have been mixed with *chametz*.<sup>53</sup>

**Alcohol:** The custom is to not drink any spirits other than wine on Pesach.

**Radishes:** The Tzemach Tzedek forbade eating radishes on Pesach, without explanation.

### FOOD-RELATED HIDDURIM

**Peeling Fruits & Vegetables:** It is our custom not to eat any fruits and vegetables that are not peeled.<sup>54</sup> This is especially pertinent in our times when fruits and vegetables are sprayed with various coatings that may contain starch or outright *chametz*.

**Eggs:** Women have a tradition of using a special pot to cook eggs on Pesach, to avoid cooking other (peeled) foods in a utensil in which the eggs in their shell were previously boiled. We do not have the custom to wash all eggs before Pesach.<sup>55</sup> In any case, in a situation where there is a concern about *chametz*, eggs should be rinsed in cold water prior to cooking.<sup>56</sup>

**Buying/Cooking in Advance:** The tradition of our ancestors is to avoid buying oil, honey or milk on Pesach itself from non-Jewish shops, on account of the possibility of *chametz* crumbs falling as gentiles ate their bread and getting mixed with the aforementioned liquids. It is rumored that the Rebbe Rashab needed to eat sweetened almonds on Pesach for health reasons, and was insistent that they be bought before Pesach in a store that sold no *chametz* items. Many people have the practice of buying all products needed for the duration of Yom Tov before Pesach. There also exists a custom to cook everything before Pesach (thus increasing the odds of avoiding *chametz* due to the rule of nullifying small quantities pre-Pesach).

### "MISHEN": EATING OUT

Pesach is an outlier as a time when we *misht zich nisht*—we avoid mingling over

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the Sukkah, which is printed: 1) My father-in-law the Rebbe instructed to print the latter. 2) Not all *minhagim* have been recorded in the current edition of *Sefer Haminhagim*. 3) I don't know if this is an instruction for the masses. If a Jew makes his own sugar, or knows with certainty that there is no cause for concern, why forbid him from using it?

53) The same goes for all commercially produced spices. See later, with regard to manufactured foods.

54) There are grounds for being lenient about peeling when cooking before Pesach. It depends on a person's *minhag*.

55) We should still check before Pesach that there is no dirt on the eggs, and it is proper to check the egg cartons that they are unsoiled as well.

56) Washing the eggs may cause bacteria to penetrate inside the eggs, and for this reason they should only be washed right before use; in Halachah, a danger to health is treated more severely than a prohibition.

food. The Alter Rebbe said, “On Pesach we should not offer another person food and drink, but guests can take on their own.” Elsewhere, he said: “We must give guests the choice to partake (or not)”. Also mentioned in this regard is that, “to offer food to another or to take issue that they aren’t tasting what is served is not appropriate for Pesach; we must not bother others observing their Pesach stringencies, but they could still take food on their own.”

As practiced in many communities, the reason we abstain from eating meals at others’ houses is that not everyone observes the same stringencies, and following a blanket rule gives room to each person to follow their own *hiddurim* without possibly causing offense. Even a person who has no unique *chumros* vis-a-vis the community, should follow the message gleaned from the possuk, “*Ashrei yoshei veisecha*” (praised are those who sit in your house...) and stick closer to home on Pesach than the rest of the year. The tradition of the Seder, and by extension the rest of this Yom Tov, is to celebrate in the presence of the nuclear family, at home; parents spend time with their children to whatever extent possible. This is, of course, in addition to the fact that it would be difficult to maintain your particular *chumros* and *hiddurim* to the full extent possible if you spend Pesach away from home.

As as an extension of the rule to eat home-based on Pesach, we have a custom to refrain from using commercially-made products as much as possible. This especially applies to spices.<sup>57</sup>

### FOOD-ADJACENT HIDDURIM

We refrain from placing items that are not specifically *Pesachdik* on the table, since we are concerned that they may have hardened *chametz* stuck to them from use throughout the year and might fall into the Pesach food.

**Covering Shelves:** It is proper to line shelves used throughout the year with paper or cloth, so as not to place Pesach foods or dishes directly on the shelf.

**Sink Filter:** In water-drawing days, someone who wanted to use water for Pesach drawn from the wells of non-Jews, or Jews who weren’t careful about distancing *chametz* from the area throughout the year, would customarily filter all the water through a clean cloth. The custom nowadays is to place a fabric filter on the faucet.<sup>58</sup>

**Wine Seals:** In *Likkutei Dibburim*, the Friediker Rebbe mentions that among the preparations for Pesach was removing the seals from the wine bottles—especially those with lettering—and to remove some of the cork, taking care that the opener

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<sup>57</sup>) The area for leniency is only for essential items that one cannot do without, and those products that are a single ingredient without mix-ins. This only applies in cases where it would be difficult to reproduce the particular food in the home kitchen and only when they were made before Pesach, and of course, endorsed by excellent *hashgachah*.

<sup>58</sup>) It has been reported that when the Rebbe visited educational institutions before the Seder, he commented that they should occasionally check the filters if any unwanted substances were caught there.

on the outside not touch the wine inside.

**Floor Contact:** If food or a food utensil fell in a place commonly used for *chametz*, it is forbidden to use, even if the area was *kashered* before Pesach. This is all an extra stringency, since *kashering* such an area (before Pesach) would in itself be a *chumra*. Practically, we refrain from using food, and put aside utensils that fell on the floor until the next year.

**Bread Talk:** It is written in a few places not to mention the word “bread” on Pesach. It is rumored that the Rebbe said that it is also not fitting to mention the word “*chametz*”.<sup>59</sup>

### MEDICATIONS KFP

Someone who must take medication regularly should not simply decide on their own to be stringent and avoid taking it throughout Pesach. Rather, consult a Rav regarding the status of these particular medicines.

An individual who has personal questions regarding Pesach (such as the above, concerning medicines) that require the deliberation of a Rav at the Badatz should not delay approaching the Badatz until the last minute. It is essential to contact a Rav as early as possible.

### CLEANING & BEDIKAH

It is permissible to begin—although not complete—the mitzvah of *bedikas chametz* earlier than the night of the fourteenth of Nissan. Regardless of the date of the search, it must be conducted during night hours and a candle must be used. In such a case, a blessing is not recited, and care must be taken to avoid introducing any *chametz* into the searched area following the conclusion of the search until after Pesach. One room must be left unsearched, so that a search can be conducted in that room on the night of the fourteenth, with a blessing.

Here is a practical example of such a scenario: A businessman intends to enter his office during Pesach. In that case, the office cannot be included in the sale of *chametz*. It must be cleaned and searched instead, but he does not need to wait until the night of the fourteenth; he may search it earlier, as explained above. He must be extremely careful not to introduce *chametz* to the office following his search.

If a room is cleaned from *chametz* with the intention of storing Pesach items there, it is wise to wait to introduce the Pesach items until the night after it has been cleaned and conduct a search for *chametz* by either candlelight or the use of an electric flashlight, and not rely on the search that will be conducted later on the night of the fourteenth.

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<sup>59</sup> See *Heichal Habrachah, Parshas Re'eh* 12:21, that *chametz* on Pesach is a fatal poison, and similar to the prohibition of mentioning the names of false gods, the word *chametz* should pass the lips these eight days.

**Reminder:** Make sure that even the less obvious places are *chametz*-free—e.g. the computer keyboard must be cleaned thoroughly from *chametz*.

### PESACH MESSAGES

This year has a special significance, as the day on which Pesach falls mirrors the original setting of the redemption from Egypt on a Thursday. The Rebbe speaks about the significance of this in many *sichos* and public Pesach letters.<sup>60</sup>

### KASHERING FOR PESACH

The laws of *hagalas keilim* are complex and not everyone is fluent in them. It is therefore appropriate and correct—despite common practice to the contrary—for an expert in the laws of *hagalah* to perform the procedure.

For the details on which kitchen utensils and appliances may be kashered and the method of kashering, see the appendix at the end of the booklet.

### HAIRCUTS

We are obligated to take haircuts before Pesach to avoid entering the festival disheveled.

## TUESDAY, 1 NISSAN, ROSH CHODESH

### MOSHIACH TODAY

The Rebbe says<sup>61</sup>: “Every Rosh Chodesh the spark of Moshiach, also known as the *yechidah*, the essential, individual aspect of every Jew’s soul (which is a spark of the general *Yechidah*—the soul of Moshiach) is revealed. The revelation of this spark resonates and causes a rejuvenation in the entire being of every Jew, so that everything they do is permeated with the level of *yechidah*.”

“But the most important result of this revelation is that it is related to the manifestation and advent of Moshiach, even in the most literal sense—a soul embodied as the ‘king from the house of David etc.’ (as the Rambam describes).”

### CORONATION

The first day of Nissan is called “Rosh Hashanah for kings and festivals”, as well as a day that “obtained ten crowns”.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>) See Hebrew for list of sources.

<sup>61</sup>) *Sefer Hasichos* 5752, p. 123. See fn 20: This is emphasized even more when we are approaching...the day of Shabbos (which, unlike the rest of the Six Days of Creation) is unpartnered, individual (the aspect of *yechidah* temporarily), which relates as well to the Jewish people who are called “singular”.

<sup>62</sup>) Shabbos 87b, see Rashi. These are the “firsts” that occurred on this day: 1. Beginning of the week; 2. Offerings of the *Nesi'im* 3. Service of the *Kohanim* 4. the Temple sacrifices; 5. holy fire descending on the *mizbei'ach*; 6. *kodshim* eaten in the *Mishkan*; 7. the *Shechinah* resting among the people; 8. *Kohanim* recited the priestly blessing; 9. *Bamos* (temporary altars) being outlawed; 10. the first month of the new year beginning. See also *Sefer Hasichos* 5748, p. 335ff.

More about the specialty of this month, and its particular laws and customs, are found earlier in this guide, under the title “The Month of Nissan”.

### DAVENING & BENTCHING

*Ya’aleh veyavo* is added during the *Amidah* and in *Birchas Hamazon*. If you made a mistake, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

In *Birchas Hamazon*, the *Harachaman* for Rosh Chodesh is also recited.

When saying the brachah *Me’ein Shalosh* (for *mezonos* foods requiring *al hamichya* or the seven fruits and wine), the proper wording for today is: *vezochrainu letovah b’yom rosh hachodesh hazeh*. If you forget, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

During *Shacharis*, half-*Hallel*<sup>63</sup> is followed by *V’Avraham zaken*, *Kaddish tiskabel*, *Shir shel Yom*, *Hoshi’einu*, *Barchi nafshi*, and *Kaddish Yasom*. (We do not recite *Kel erech apayim* today or any day throughout Nissan.) Then *Krias Hatorah* begins.

### KRIAS HATORAH & MUSAF

Four *aliyos* are read in the Rosh Chodesh reading (**Kohen**—until *olah tamid*, **Levi**—reread the verse of *vamarta lahem* until *revi’is hahin*, **Shlishi**—until *veniska*, and **Revi’i**—*Uv’roshei chadsheichem* until *venisko*.)

The Torah reading is followed by *chatzi-Kaddish*; *hagbah* and *gelilah*; *Ashrei* and *Uva letziyon*—the *chazzan* does not conclude *Uva letziyon* aloud. That is followed by *Yehalelu* and the return of the Torah to the *aron*. The *tefillin* are then removed, *Rabbeinu Tam tefillin* are donned and then removed before continuing with *Musaf*.

The *chazzan* should recite a chapter of *Tehillim* before beginning *chatzi-Kaddish* for *Musaf*.<sup>64</sup> If you made a mistake in *Musaf*, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

### LAW OF REDEMPTION: IN THE BEIS HAMIKDASH TODAY

The cycle of the yearly half-shekel tax begins today, Rosh Chodesh Nissan. All communal *korbonos* henceforth are purchased with the funds from the new donations.

We offer the following *Korban Musaf* in the *Beis Hamikdash* in honor of Rosh Chodesh: two bulls, one ram, seven lambs as burnt-offerings, and one goat for a sin-offering. These are in addition to the regularly scheduled *Korban Tamid*.

We will all ascend to the *Beis Hamikdash* in *Yerushalayim*—not just three times a year, for *Pesach*, *Shavuos* and *Sukkos*, but also for each *Shabbos* and for each *Rosh Chodesh* (as it says in *Navi*<sup>65</sup>).

63) Does one make a *brachah* on half-*Hallel* if *davening* without a *minyan*? See [#2750](http://www.asktherav.com)

64) Regarding the custom (based on rumor) regarding saying *Kavei* and *Ein k’elokein* today from the section of the *siddur* for *Shabbos*, see [#19196](http://www.asktherav.com)

65) *Yeshayah* 10:23

### START THE NASI

The *Nasi* is recited after Musaf and Tehillim. Today's *Nasi* is for the tribe of Yehudah and marks the first day of inaugural offerings. After the *Nasi*, the *yehi ratzon* prayer is recited.

### ROSH CHODESH CUSTOMS

“It is an ancient custom, on each Rosh Chodesh, to study one verse of the chapter of Tehillim that corresponds with the current years of a person's life. The verse should be studied with the commentary of Rashi, and additional commentaries may be added as well. If the current chapter contains less than twelve verses, or in a leap year, when there are more than twelve months, verses that have been studied on a previous Rosh Chodesh should be studied a second time. Similarly, if the current chapter contains many verses, then two or three verses should be studied at once on each Rosh Chodesh of the year.”

### DOUBLE DOWN

The Rebbe explains<sup>66</sup> that although the halachic imperative is to learn the laws of Pesach starting thirty days in advance of *Yom Tov*, there is a minority opinion that this must be done just from two weeks prior—which would begin today, Rosh Chodesh Nissan. We can easily and practically account for both the popular timeframe and this alternate one (for, as it states, “these and these are the words of the Living G-d”) by starting to increase the intensity and duration of our learning starting now. The same would apply to expanding our efforts in supplying Pesach support to the needy from now on.

## WEDNESDAY, 2 NISSAN

Today is the *yom hillula* (anniversary of the passing) of the Rebbe Rashab, the fifth Chabad Rebbe. He passed away on the *motzoei Shabbos*, 2 Nissan, 5680 (1920), in Rostov.

### TODAY'S NASI

Recite the *Nasi* after Shacharis and *Tehillim*. Today's *Nasi* is for the tribe of Yissachar and marks the second day of inaugural offerings. After the *Nasi*, the *yehi ratzon* prayer is recited.

## THURSDAY, 3 NISSAN

*Kel erech apayim* is not recited in davening today, and also for the remainder of the month.

Recite the *Nasi* after Shacharis, then *Tehillim*. Today's *Nasi* is for the tribe of

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<sup>66</sup> *Shabbos Parshas Vayikra*, 5751

Zevulun and marks the third day of inaugural offerings. After the *Nasi*, the *yehi ratzon* prayer is recited.

## FRIDAY, 4 NISSAN

Recite the *Nasi* after Shacharis, then Tehillim. Today's *Nasi* is for the tribe of Reuven and marks the fourth day of inaugural offerings. After the *Nasi*, the *yehi ratzon* prayer is recited.

*Shulchan Aruch* states that although a person hears the entire Torah read in shul on Shabbos morning, he also needs to read it himself every week in the manner of *shnayim mikra ve'echad targum* (we recite twice each verse and once the commentary of Onkelos). It is customary to do this Friday after *chatzos* (midday). It is best to ensure that the reading has been completed before starting the Shabbos morning meal, and preferably even before the start of Shacharis.

The custom of the Chabad Rebbeim is to say all *Haftoros* relevant to this Shabbos in this recitation. The *Haftorah* of *Tazria* is read at the conclusion of *shnayim mikra* on *erev Shabbos*, while the Torah portion from *shevi'i* until the conclusion is read once again (also in the manner of *shnayim mikra v'echad targum*) on Shabbos morning.

Check your pockets on *erev Shabbos* before the onset of Shabbos.

Candle lighting is at **7:14 pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

## SHABBOS PARSHAS TAZRIA, 5 NISSAN

**Waiting for Kiddush:** There are those who refrain from making *Kiddush* “in the first hour of the night” (this is a full sixty minutes that begin seven hours from midday). During Daylight Savings Time, this is from **6:56 to 7:56 pm** in New York City.<sup>67</sup>

*Av harachamim* is not recited before Musaf (as is during the entire month of Nissan).

Recite the *Nasi* after Shacharis, then Tehillim. Today's *Nasi* is for the tribe of Shimon and marks the fifth day of inaugural offerings. After the *Nasi*, the *yehi ratzon* prayer is recited.

*Tzidkas'cha* is not recited today, (nor on any Shabbos during the month of Nissan).

Shabbos ends at **8:16 pm**.

### MELAVEH MALKA

“One should always set his table,” writes the Alter Rebbe in *Shulchan Aruch*, “and arrange it fully on *motzoei Shabbos* (for *melaveh malka*), as if he were setting it

<sup>67</sup>) See more on this topic on [www.asktherev.com](http://www.asktherev.com) #1824 and #3350

for a complete *seudah*. Even if he will only eat a *kezayis*, either because that is all he has [or for other reasons]... he should nevertheless prepare and set his table as if he were sitting down to a full meal, in order to escort the departing Shabbos with honor, similar to the honor with which he welcomes it.”

## MONDAY, 7 NISSAN

### TODAY'S NASI

The *Nasi* is recited after Shacharis, then Tehillim. Today's *Nasi* is for the tribe of Ephraim and marks the seventh day of inaugural offerings. After the *Nasi*, the *yehi ratzon* prayer is recited.

### LAW OF REDEMPTION: INAUGURATION & PURITY

Describing the inauguration of the third *Beis Hamikdash*, the prophet Yechezkel states,<sup>68</sup> “And so shall you do on seven [days] in the month, because of mistaken and simple-minded men, and expiate the House.” According to Rashi's commentary, this verse informs us that in the Era of Redemption, the Jewish people will begin their seven-day inauguration of the *Beis Hamikdash* on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, completing the process on the **seventh** of Nissan.<sup>69</sup>

The seven days of ritual cleanliness for the sake of the *korban Pesach* begins on this day.

Rambam states that “all Jews are warned by the Torah to maintain a state of ritual purity during each festival (Pesach, Shavuos, and Sukkos), so that they are ready to enter the *Beis Hamikdash* and partake of the sacred offerings.”<sup>70</sup> This is especially critical before Pesach, because each Jew is required to offer and partake of the *Korban Pesach* in the required state of ritual purity.<sup>71</sup>

In order to accomplish this, all those who are ritually impure from a form of impurity that involves a bodily discharge (a *zav*, *zavah*, and possibly a *niddah* according to the stringency of Rabbi Zeira) and who must count seven days of cleanliness from the source of impurity, immerse, and bring a *korban* on the eighth day, must begin counting seven clean days from the seventh of Nissan (after determining that they are fit on the previous day prior to sunset) in order to be ritually clean in time for the *Korban Pesach*.<sup>72</sup>

## TUESDAY, 8 NISSAN

68) 45:20; *Haftorah* for *Parshas Hachodesh*

69) See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 22, p. 198. Radak's commentary on the verse notes that repeating the inauguration process for the altar and the *Beis Hamikdash* on the seventh of Nissan is exclusive to the Era of Redemption. According to the *Gemara Menachos*, the prophet Eliyahu will clarify the details found in Yechezkel's description of the future inauguration. For additional discussion, see further in that *Gemara*.

70) See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 32, *Parshas Shemini*, at length.

71) See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 36, p. 208

72) Regarding people who are ritually impure due to having had contact with a corpse, see tomorrow's entry. This year (5784), they too should ideally begin the purification process today (see explanation in the Hebrew section).

## TODAY'S NASI

The *Nasi* is recited after Shacharis, then Tehillim. Today's *Nasi* is for the tribe of Menasheh and marks the eighth day of inaugural offerings. After the *Nasi*, the *yehi ratzon* prayer is recited.

### LAW OF REDEMPTION: ATTAIN PURITY

Nowadays, all people are considered ritually impure from having had contact with a corpse. Anyone who contracted this form of impurity must begin the purification process today<sup>73</sup> in order to count seven days free of impurity and to enable offering the *korban Pesach* in the required state of purity.<sup>74</sup>

Some authorities permit the nation to offer their sacrifices in a state of impurity when all or the majority of the nation is impure. In the case of the *Korban Pesach*, however, even these authorities concur that ideally, every possible effort must be made to ensure that the offering is brought in a state of ritual purity.

## THURSDAY, 10 NISSAN

Miriam the Prophetess, sister of *Moshe Rabbeinu*, passed away on the tenth of Nissan. This date was therefore established as a fast day when it occurs during the week.<sup>75</sup> Common custom, however, is not to fast on this day.<sup>76</sup>

The *Nasi* is recited after Musaf, then Tehillim. Today's *Nasi* is for the tribe of Dan and marks the tenth day of inaugural offerings. After the *Nasi*, the *yehi ratzon* prayer is recited.

### LAW OF REDEMPTION: THE PURIFICATION PROCESS

As mentioned earlier, someone who is ritually impure with the degree of impurity that is associated with contact with a corpse (this status applies to everyone, everywhere, nowadays) must undergo a seven-day purification process to regain ritual purity. Ritual purity is required to offer the *Korban Pesach* on *erev Pesach*.

Part of this process involves being sprinkled with the ashes of the *Parah Adumah* (red heifer) on the third and seventh day. Since ritual purity is required to offer the *Korban Pesach* on *erev Pesach*, the last opportunity to begin the seven-day count was this past Thursday. Those who began the count on Thursday would be sprinkled with the ashes for the first time today—the third day of their count.<sup>77</sup>

“In the Future Era, Yom Kippur will be observed on the tenth of *Nissan* [instead of the tenth of *Tishrei*].”<sup>78</sup>

73) See previous footnote.

74) See Rambam and Ra'avad, *Hilchos Korban Pesach*, 6:2, as to the date for beginning the seven day count for those who contracted impurity from contact with a corpse.

75) as stated in the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 580.

76) see, however, *Magen Avraham* 492:106

77) However, see entry for the eighth of Nissan about this year specifically.

78) *Ahavas Yonason (Parshas Hachodesh)*; see the reasoning in the original source.

## EVE OF 11 NISSAN - THE REBBE'S BIRTHDAY

The central *farbrengen* in honor of Yud-Alef Nissan will be held in 770 at 9:00 pm.

### MEGA FARBRENGEN

“We should utilize this day to increase in all matters of Torah and mitzvos,” the Rebbe instructs,<sup>79</sup> “and with joy! This should be accomplished by means of a joyful *farbrengen* that is attended by many Jews—men, women, and children (separated by a *mechitzah* that meets the requirements of the *Shulchan Aruch*). The *farbrengen* should be conducted in a spirit of the joy of a mitzvah, the joy of Torah, and even joy associated with the physical body, through food and drink: ‘Bread that satiates the heart of man’, especially the kinds of food and drink that bring gladness. Needless to say, this must be done within the well-known limitations—not exceeding four cups of spirit using small shot glasses, and even then, only if one’s nature permits him to drink this quantity without undesirable effects. There is no need to elaborate on something that is understood and obvious even to the small-minded, meaning those who, when left to their own devices, would assume that conducting themselves contrary to the above restrictions would emphasize their association with *simchah shel mitzvah*... (They would assume that by imbibing greater quantities of alcohol) they are achieving far more than what they were instructed to by the elder *mashpi'im* and by the leader of this generation who issued the above restrictions in plain and clear words.

“It is also an appropriate occasion,” the Rebbe continues, “to mention the birthday of the Rambam. He was a guide to the confused of his own generation and remains a guide to those in all subsequent generations until the end of time. His birthday coincides with *erev Pesach*. We should arrange a joyful *farbrengen* that addresses matters of Torah and mitzvos on that date. It should be attended by many Jews—men, women, and children; to quote the Rambam’s introduction to *Mishneh Torah*: “It is for the small and the great alike.” However, since *erev Pesach* is not an appropriate time to hold widely attended gatherings, the event should be held in proximity to *erev Pesach*. Since it will not be held on the actual anniversary of his birth, it is necessary to put even greater effort into publicizing the event.”

## FRIDAY, EREV SHABBOS HAGADOL, 11 NISSAN

### The Rebbe’s Birthday

The Rebbe was born on Nissan 11, 5662 (1902), during the day of *erev Shabbos Hagadol*. The publication *Hatomim* records that the Rebbe Rashab delivered a *maamar* on that day, *erev Shabbos* after Minchah.

### TEHILLIM

In honor of the Rebbe’s 122st birthday, we begin reciting Chapter 123 of *Tehillim* daily after *Shacharis*, together with the daily portion of *Tehillim*.

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<sup>79</sup>) *Sichas Yud Alef Nissan* 5748

The Rebbe encourages the study of the year's chapter of Tehillim, not only with its classic commentaries, but also with the explanations of Chassidus. For example, the Rebbe pointedly states,<sup>80</sup> "No doubt, many have already studied the explanations of this chapter's verses as they are expounded in *penimius hatorah*. These teachings have even been published, creating publicity for generations to come." The teachings for this year's chapter have been published in a *sefer* entitled *Kovetz Yud-Alef Nissan—Shnas Hakuf-Chaf-Gimmel*.<sup>81</sup>

### TODAY'S NASI

The *Nasi* is recited after Shacharis. Today's *Nasi* is for the tribe of Asher and marks the eleventh day of inaugural offerings. After the *Nasi*, the *yehi ratzon* prayer is recited.

### KASHERING

With regard the timeframe for *hagalas keilim* (koshering kitchen utensils for Pesach by immersion in scalding water): Some are extra scrupulous to perform the procedure at least three days prior to Pesach. That would be today.

### LAW OF REDEMPTION: EXAMINATION

It is a mitzvah to examine the animal designated for the *Korban Pesach* today, as must be done at least four days prior to its slaughter, to ensure that it contains no disqualifying blemishes or wounds. (If someone neglected to examine the animal today, the *korban* is still valid.)

**Erev Shabbos:** For more halachos that apply to each *erev Shabbos*, see the entry above for the previous Friday.

Candle lighting is at **7:21 pm** (eighteen minutes before sunset).

## SHABBOS KODESH PARASHAS METZORA, 12 NISSAN

### Shabbos Hagadol

This Shabbos is known as *Hagadol* ("Great") to commemorate the great miracle that occurred on this Shabbos immediately prior to the Exodus from Egypt.<sup>82</sup>

### KRIAS HATORAH

Generally, *Parshas Metzora* is read prior to Pesach in a leap year.<sup>83</sup> The hint for this

<sup>80</sup>) *Sichas Yud-Gimmel Nissan* 5751

<sup>81</sup>) See the footnotes in the Hebrew section for sources about the significance of the number and content of Chapter 123.

<sup>82</sup>) The details of the miracle are recorded in *Tur* and in the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, beginning of #430, and are explained in many places in *Likkutei Sichos*.

<sup>83</sup>) See Hebrew section notes for some exceptions.

order of events is *sagru u'paschu* (the first word hints at the *metzora*-leper who is *musgar*—isolated from the camp, the telling of which is followed by celebrating Pesach).

The *Haftorah* for *Parshas Metzora* is read. The *Haftorah* for *Shabbos Hagadol* is **not** read. It is read only when *erev Pesach* coincides with Shabbos, which is not the case this year.<sup>84</sup>

*Av harachamim* is not recited today, nor on any Shabbos during the month of Nissan.

The *Nasi* is recited after *Shacharis*. Today's *Nasi* is for the tribe of Naftali and marks the twelfth day of inaugural offerings. After the *Nasi*, the *yehi ratzon* prayer is recited. There are special lessons associated with the 12th of Nissan as the culmination of the sacrifices of the *Nesi'im*. See the footnotes in the Hebrew section for sources.

### MINCHAH

In 770, Minchah is held earlier than usual today. The Torah reading for Minchah is from *Parshas Acharei Mos*.

*Tzidkas'cha* is not recited today, nor on any Shabbos during the month of Nissan.

Minchah is followed by the individual reading of the *Haggadah*, from *Avadim hayinu* until *lechapeir al kol avonoseinu* (the end of the paragraph that follows *Dayeinu*). This reflects the fact that it was on the Shabbos prior to the Exodus that the redemption and the miracles began.

### FOCUS ON KIDS

“Our practices on Pesach place great emphasis on children,” the Rebbe said on *Shabbos Hagadol* 5748, “we use all kinds of tricks to keep them awake at the Seder. This means that we must engage them on the Shabbos preceding Pesach, *Shabbos Hagadol* (as brought in different sources in *Rishonim* and *Acharonim*) in retelling the story, so that on Pesach they should ask (at the Seder). I haven't seen this custom practiced, but that's no proof (that it shouldn't be).”

### THE DRASHAH

In recent generations, it has become customary for the Rav of a community to lecture on the laws of Pesach on *Shabbos Hagadol*. The main goal of this address is “to teach the people the ways of Hashem and to advise them in the practical laws of Pesach.”<sup>85</sup>

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84) The Rebbe notes in *Hanhagos for Nissan 2, 5698 (Paris)* that when *erev Pesach* coincides with **erev Shabbos**, that “individually, one reads both haftoros.” This refers to the readings associated with *shnayim mikra*.

85) as explained in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 3, p. 953 ff.

In 770, the Shabbos Hagadol address will be delivered by the Rabbanim of the Badatz at **7:45 pm**.

## **MOTZOEI SHABBOS, EVE OF 13 NISSAN**

Shabbos ends at **8:25 pm**.

*Vihi no'am* and *Ve'atah kadosh* are not recited at the conclusion of Ma'ariv.

**Reminder:** *Kiddush Levanah* is recited after Maariv (for those who haven't recited it yet).

*Havdalah* is recited. Then, *Veyiten lecha*.

Since we do not use cloves during Pesach, it is important to remember to place the cloves, after using them for *Havdalah*, in an area designated to be sold to a non-Jew during Pesach.

### **MELAVEH MALKA**

“One should always set his table,” writes the Alter Rebbe in Shulchan Aruch, “and arrange it fully on *motzoei Shabbos* (for *melaveh malka*), as if he were setting it for a complete *seudah*. Even if he will only eat a *kezayis*, either because that is all he has [or for other reasons]... he should nevertheless prepare and set his table as if he were sitting down to a full meal, in order to escort the departing Shabbos with honor, similar to the honor with which he welcomes it.”

## THE HOWS AND WHYS OF SELLING CHAMETZ

### Q: What is the basis for selling *chametz*?

A: The Torah forbids the possession of *chametz* during the festival of Pesach and instructs us to destroy our *chametz* on *erev Pesach*. *Chametz* that remains in a Jew's property over Pesach becomes *assur b'hana'ah* (prohibited for any benefit) even once Pesach has passed, whether the *chametz* remained in their possession on purpose or through oversight. Hiding the *chametz* from sight does not help in this respect.

Anyone who owns a large amount of *chametz* and wishes to avoid incurring the financial loss that its destruction would invite is permitted to sell it to a non-Jew.

It is insufficient to merely sell the *chametz* to a non-Jew; you must also rent the location of the *chametz* to the non-Jew. Only once you have taken both steps are you permitted to leave the *chametz* in your home without violating the prohibitions of *bal yeira'eh* and *bal yimatze'h*—because the *chametz* now belongs to a non-Jew and is located in the area he is renting.

### Q: How long has the custom of selling *chametz* existed?

A: The concept of selling *chametz* to a non-Jew as a means of avoiding ownership of *chametz* during Pesach appears in a Mishnah at the beginning of the second chapter of Tractate Pesachim. The Tosefta mentions the theoretical option of buying the *chametz* back from the non-Jew after Pesach. During the era of the early *poskim*, a recommendation was made regarding such a sale. In subsequent times, selling the *chametz* was presented as a practical course of action, and was included as such in the Shulchan Aruch. Eventually, the custom became dominant throughout Jewry.

### Q: Why is it necessary to have a Rav arrange the sale?

A: There are multiple laws involved in making such a sale. It is therefore customary to sign an authorization form designating a Rav familiar with these laws as our emissary to execute the transaction on our behalf in full accordance with halachah.

According to the view of the Alter Rebbe (in his *Seder Mechiras Chametz*), if the transaction does not comply with all of the halachic requirements, the owner of the *chametz* will have transgressed *bal yeira'eh* and *bal yimatze'h mid'Oraisa* (as prohibited by the Torah). The Alter Rebbe adds specific requirements to the standard methods of transaction. Some of these details are significant enough that otherwise the entire sale might be rendered invalid. The most obvious example is the requirement of an *areiv kablán*, a third-party guarantor to the sale. Accordingly, it is crucial for the sale to be conducted by a Rav.

### Q: What exactly should I do?

A: Fill in the authorization form that is supplied by the Rabbonim, specifying the addresses in which *chametz* is to be found. Then, a *kinyan sudar* is performed with the

Rav (by lifting an item belonging to the Rav). It is important to inform the Rav if you are planning to travel elsewhere for Pesach, so accommodation can be made according to any time difference between your destination and the Rav. It is a custom to pay the Rav for his efforts in this sale.

**Q: What does the authorization note include?**

**A:** The authorization note is a form that authorizes the Rav to sell your *chametz* and to rent out the location in which the *chametz* is found, in the manner he deems appropriate. On the form, specify all the addresses in which your *chametz* will be found. In addition to the form, it is best to make a *kinyan sudar* with the Rav.

**Q: What is a *kinyan sudar*?**

**A:** According to halachah, it is insufficient to conduct any transaction in which an item is transferred from one person's ownership to another's based on a verbal agreement alone. An act of acquisition is essential. This is because the present owner must have sincerely resolved to transfer ownership of the item to the other person. The person acquiring the item can then rely on the sincerity of the decision. In order to be certain that the owner truly resolved to make the transaction, an act of acquisition such as a *kinyan sudar* is performed as follows:

The person acquiring the item hands something of his own to the original owner. Common practice calls for the witnesses to a transaction to offer such an object for this purpose. The owner then raises the object he was handed, thereby making the transaction effective.

When we authorize a Rav to sell our *chametz*, we do not technically require a *kinyan sudar*. That is because the Rav is not purchasing our *chametz*; he is merely acting as our agent to sell it to a non-Jew. We are nevertheless accustomed to performing such an act through raising a garment, or another object belonging to the Rav, in order to confirm that our request that he act on our behalf is made in earnest.

**Q: Is it necessary to read the entire form?**

**A:** It is preferable, although not essential. It is certainly not desirable to make the authorization unthinkingly, out of habit. Rather, it is important to realize that you are truly and completely selling your *chametz* in a binding sale. For that reason, if you failed to read the document, but are nevertheless familiar with its purpose and truly intend to make the sale, the sale is valid.

**Q: Until when can *chametz* be sold?**

**A:** Once the time of *biur chametz* has passed, any *chametz* that we still own becomes *assur b'hana'ah*. At that point, it is no longer possible to sell any *chametz*. It is therefore highly inadvisable to wait until the last moments before the *biur chametz* deadline to authorize your sale. It is advised to come to the office of the Badatz **at the earliest opportunity** to sell your *chametz*.

Although the office of the Badatz is open for selling the *chametz* until **Shunday**

night, Nisan 14, at 1:00 am, it is strongly advisable to take care of your *chametz* in the preceding days.

**Q: Which comes first, filling in the form or making the *kinyan sudar*?**

A: There is no preference—either sequence is fine.

**Q: Should I hand my keys to the Rav?**

A: No. In *Igros Kodesh*, the Rebbe writes that in recent times and in many locations, even individuals most scrupulous in their observance of mitzvos do not follow the custom of handing a key to the Rav when selling their *chametz*.

**Q: Do I need to specify every place in my home where *chametz* will be locked away?**

A: It is necessary to specify each address that is included in your sale such as homes, offices, cars, vacation homes, off-site storage rooms, and lockers in shul. Likewise, include any change in residence for Pesach, if you intend to travel and bring *chametz* there before the *zeman* and want it included in the sale. In the form, also add “...and wherever the *chametz* may be found.” Be sure to record the exact address of each location, including apartment number, where applicable. However, you do not need to specify each closet within your home, office, and the like. This is because the authorization form states clearly that the sale will include all the *chametz* that is placed in “designated places” within the addresses listed.

Remember not to move the *chametz* to an address not recorded on the form once it has been itemized.

**Q: In addition to recording the name of the person selling the *chametz* as well as the appropriate addresses, what else must I do?**

A: You need to securely close off or lock away all *chametz* that remains on your properties and will be sold to a non-Jew, and clearly mark those locations (e.g., tie or tape the doors closed). There are a number of reasons for this— among them, the need to clarify what exactly is included in the sale, and to prevent us from accidentally accessing these locations during Pesach.

All areas which are certain to contain real *chametz* must be sectioned-off with a secure *mechitza* that is 10 *tefachim* (around three feet) high. If the *chametz* is stored in a normal kitchen unit with doors, it is sufficient to close the doors and mark it clearly.

**Q: Is there any form of *ha'aramah* (evasion) involved in this sale?**

A: No. According to the Alter Rebbe the sale is absolute in every sense, to the extent that it is a valid remedy to avoid the stringent biblical prohibitions of *bal yeira'eh* and *bal yimatze*. The Tzemach Tzedek adds that the Alter Rebbe's requirement for an *areiv kablan*, third-party guarantor, dispels any concern of *ha'aramah*.

**Q: Can we include real *chametz* in the sale?**

A: According to the Alter Rebbe the sale is a totally valid sale (not simply *ha'aramah*)

and there is therefore no reason not to include actual *chametz* in the sale. The Chabad Rebbeim personally followed this practice.

**Q: If I verbally nullify any *chametz* that remains in my possession on *erev Pesach*, must I also sell it to a non-Jew?**

**A:** *Chazal* insisted that verbally declaring all *chametz* nullified is insufficient. We must actively search for any *chametz*, remove it from our property and destroy it. If there is particular *chametz* that we wish to retain, we can sell that *chametz* to a non-Jew. However, this *chametz* is **not** included in our verbal declaration of nullification because we intend to buy it back from the non-Jew after Pesach.

**Q: What is the source of the custom to pay the Rav for arranging the sale?**

**A:** The practice is ancient and is reported in *Sdei Chemed* and similar sources. In addition to the obvious reasons such as the actual efforts expended and the need to cover the costs involved in the sale, it is also a means of paying the Rav for serving the community throughout the year. Halachic sources also discuss halachic reasons for this practice that strengthen the validity of the sale.

**Q: Can I sell *chametz* through any Rav I like?**

**A:** Rabbinic responsa discuss at great length the concept of encroaching on the rabbinic jurisdiction of a community rabbi. This is upheld by many contemporary authorities such as *Sha'alos u'Teshuvos Sha'arei Ezra*, who specifically forbids selling *chametz* through someone who has not been designated for this purpose by the Badatz.

**Q: If I sign an authorization form at the offices of the Badatz a few days before Pesach, and then purchase additional *chametz*, is the new *chametz* included in the sale?**

**A:** According to the Tzemach Tzedek, yes, it is included in the sale. The authorization form includes an additional clause, in accordance with the suggestion of the Tzemach Tzedek (as an “extra measure”) that the Rav is authorized to perform a *zechus* for us and include in the sale any *chametz* that may enter our possession up until *erev Pesach*, and this year - the day before.

**Q: Can I still access an area that was designated as sold to a non-Jew after the time of *biur chametz* has passed?**

**A:** While processing the transaction with the non-Jew, the Rabbonim come to an agreement with him whereby he good-naturedly allows the sellers to temporarily access those places that are being sold to him **in cases of necessity**. If you do access these locations during Pesach, be careful to avoid touching any *chametz* and avoid remaining there for any length of time.

If you intend to spend Pesach in the home in which your *chametz* is sold, or if you are travelling elsewhere but are leaving guests in your home during Pesach, do not include the rooms that will be used over Pesach in the sale of *chametz* --because no one may live in the rooms that have been sold as *chametz* to a non-Jew.

**Q: If I sell my *chametz* utensils to a non-Jew, must I immerse them in a *mikveh* after Pesach like I would when purchasing utensils from a non-Jew?**

A: In *Likkutei Sichos*, the Rebbe explains at length that this is unnecessary; although the non-Jew is technically authorized to make use of the utensils during Pesach, this is highly unlikely to ever occur.

**Q: Is there anything else I must do in addition to selling personal *chametz*?**

A: Yes. In *Igros Kodesh*, the Rebbe writes that it is a mitzvah to encourage neighbors and business owners to sell their *chametz* as well, in order to avoid the strict prohibitions of owning *chametz* on Pesach. There is an added benefit in doing so, since it acts as a much-needed reminder to many Jews about the general prohibition of *chametz* and of the customs and traditions of their ancestors.

**Q: Do I need to search for *chametz* in those areas that will be sold to a non-Jew?**

A: No, common practice is not to search these areas. (The Tzemach Tzedek explains this at length in his halachic correspondence with the *Divrei Nechemiah*.)

**Q: Can I simply sell my entire house to a non-Jew and thereby free myself from the obligation to search for *chametz*?**

A: No. Each *chametz*-owning individual has an obligation to conduct a search. The best practice is that even a guest in another's home should place some personal *chametz* in their room at the time of *bedikas chametz*, providing an opportunity to conduct their own search. (According to the strict letter of the law, however, it is acceptable if the host searches for *chametz* on a guest's behalf). Some suggest that a guest should purchase the room in which he is staying from his host (using a purchase method that is halachically valid). However, it is still advisable to listen to the host recite the blessing over the search that he conducts prior to the guest conducting the search in their rooms. It is also advisable that even if you plan to travel for Pesach, (and you are leaving home less than thirty days before Pesach), to clean at least one area in your home and conduct a search there, without a blessing, before departing.

Only someone who does not possess any *chametz* at all is exempt from the search.

**Q: Is there any type of *chametz* that I can't sell?**

A: 1. You may sell *chametz* located in the trunk of your car, even though it does not have an address, provided that you simultaneously sell *chametz* located within your home. In such a case, specify the details regarding the vehicle, such as its parking spot and license plate number in the Sale of *Chametz* authorization form. If possible, it is preferable that the entire car be leased to the non-Jew, and hence the car cannot be driven around on Chol Hamoed (even if was properly searched and found to be clean from *chametz*). Nonetheless, according to the strict letter of the law, you need not be concerned about this. Still, ensure that the trunk is locked, and the key is securely stored away.

Needless to say, if you find it difficult to entirely rid your car of *chametz*, you cannot simply include the entire car in the sale and then ride in it during Pesach.

2. As mentioned above, if you are certain there is absolute *chametz* in a particular location, it is not sufficient to sell the *chametz* there and mark the location with tape; the area needs to be sectioned off with a proper *mechitza* of 10 *tefachim*. In an area where a proper *mechitza* cannot be arranged, you cannot sell the *chametz* located there; rather, dispose of the *chametz* properly.

3. Halachic authorities debate whether we can sell crumbs of *chametz* that are worth less than a *perutah*. True, the text of the sale includes a clause stating that the sale includes *chametz* that “is not subject to sale and will never be bought by anyone.” Nevertheless, this clause does not indicate that the sale extends to *only* this form of *chametz*. Therefore, if you have no *chametzdig* utensils or other forms of *chametz* that are worth at least a *perutah*, and merely wish to evade cleaning the house of crumbs, you cannot rely on the sale. You must conduct an adequate search to rid your homes of all *chametz*, in accordance with *halachah*, on the eve of the fourteenth of Nissan.

4. If you are aware that you own *chametz* that is currently in transit—it has been deposited with movers, on a boat or airplane, at a port, or in the mail—this must be specified in your authorization form. Even if you report this in the form, the sale will be valid only if you simultaneously sell additional *chametz* that is in your home. If the moving or mail company happens to belong to a Jew, consult your Rav for specific instructions.

5. If you own animals that require to be fed *chametz* on Pesach, you cannot rely on the standard authorization form, and you need to consult your Rav.

6. If members of your household own *chametz* that is their personal property, they should sell it separately and not rely on the sale conducted by the head of the household.

7. As Chabad Chassidim, we are accustomed not to sell food or beverages that were received from the Rebbe, but to eat or drink them in their entirety before Pesach. This practice is explained at length in *Likkutei Sichos*.

8. Some contemporary poskim argue that challah dough which was separated for the mitzvah of *hafrashas challah* cannot be sold and should be destroyed.

9. Due to time-zone limitations, if you intend to travel for Pesach to a location where Pesach begins earlier than it does in your present location—for example, if you travel from the USA to Eretz Yisrael or Europe—you must inform the Rav before selling your *chametz*. This is because at the time that the prohibition will affect you on *erev Pesach*, the sale of *chametz* will not yet have been conducted here, in the offices of the Badatz. This year, due to popular request, the Badatz has prepared a special authorization form for those who are traveling overseas and will be in an earlier time zone for Pesach. By completing this form, the Badatz can ensure that your *chametz* will be sold earlier than usual to correspond with the time difference in your location on *erev Pesach*.

**Q: When on *motzaei Pesach* can I begin using the *chametz* I sold?**

**A:** You can make use of the *chametz* that was sold immediately after Pesach has ended.

It has always been the custom of the Rabbonim of the Badatz to leave during the Rebbe's *farbrengen* towards the end of Pesach to buy back the *chametz* from the non-Jew as soon as Pesach has ended.

**Q: Where can we study more about the laws and customs of selling *chametz*?**

**A:** *Shulchan Aruch Admor Ha-Zaken*, 448; *Seder Mechiras Chametz* that appears in *Siddur Admor HaZaken* and in the commentary *Sha'ar HaKolel* (authored by HaRav Lavut, the Rebbe's grandfather); *Piskei Dinim of the Tzemach Tzedek*, 448; *HaMo'adim B'Halachah*, authored by Rabbi Zevin; and in numerous contemporary halachic compilations.

# KASHERING MADE SIMPLE

## Overview<sup>1</sup>

*All items listed in the table that follows can be kashered (or not) by one of the six methods detailed below.*

**#1: הגעלה<sup>2</sup> (Boiling)** Immersing an item in a pot of bubbling hot water while it is on a source of heat. The item cannot have been used for 24 hours in advance for hot food. And must be clean from substantial dirt and rust<sup>3</sup>. For more detail, see below: Additional Details on הגעלה.

**#2 ליבון קל (Light Burning)** Heat the item to the point that straw on the other side of the heat contact would burn. In some cases, it's sufficient if the other side is hot to the extent that one's hand would naturally recoil.

**#3: ליבון גמור (Burning)** Heat the item to the point that it is red hot, most commonly done with a blow torch.

**#4: עירוי ואבן מלובן (Pouring and Heated Stone)** Pour hot water from a kli rishon (water still within the original source of heat)<sup>4</sup> over the surface of the<sup>5</sup> item<sup>6</sup> whilst passing a white-hot stone<sup>7</sup> or a hot iron<sup>8</sup> over the surface.<sup>9</sup>

**#5: עירוי (Pouring)** Pour boiling water from a pot or kettle over the surface of the item.

## #6: Cannot be Kashered

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For more information, see [www.asktherav.com](http://www.asktherav.com)

The following only applies to kashering for pesach, not when kashering from other issurim.

It is best for a halachically versed person to kasher items because of the nuances.

1. All items should be clean from visible dirt before kashering. With ליבון גמור pre cleaning is not necessary but basic cleaning is advisable.

2. Where הגעלה is sufficient, one can also substitute with ליבון קל and heat the item to the point that both sides of the item are hot to the extent that one's hand would naturally recoil.

This doesn't apply where there is rust or dirt or any concern for actual chometz substance. In this case, ליבון קל must be performed specifically as described in #2.

3. Any non cleanable parts require ליבון קל.

4. Practically, it's most convenient to do this with an electric cordless kettle.

5. Make sure it pours in a direct flow without interruption before touching the surface of the item being kashered.

6. The surface must be dry.

7. Use tongs, long sleeves, non-loose clothing and closed shoes.

8. Be mindful of the dangers of using a plugged in iron for such a thing.

9. It is customary not to use the pot that was used for the kashering on Pesach without kashering it itself afterwards.

<b>ITEM</b>		<b>KASHERING METHOD</b>
		<i>Refer to the table above for the indication of the kashering method each number represents.</i>
<b>KITCHEN UTENSILS</b>	Alcohol Vessels - long term containers	1 only if washed and scoured to remove taste and smell
	Cooking pots, frying pans, lids and cooking utensils (for moist/oily/greasy foods)	<b>1</b>
	Cutlery	<b>1</b>
	Earthenware such as ceramic, porcelain, china and glass	<b>6</b>
	Enamelware	<b>6</b>
	Hard to clean items and items with crevices	<b>6</b>
	Items damaged easily by heat (glued handles, boneware, etc)	<b>6</b>
	Knives from one solid piece	<b>1</b> <sup>10</sup>
	Knives with screws or glue	<b>6</b>
	Metal ware	<b>1</b>
	Plasticware, rubberware, and other synthetic materials	<b>6</b> <sup>11</sup>
	Roasting pans and lids (for foods with little moisture)	<b>3</b>
	Stoneware	<b>6</b>
	Stone Slabs (such as marble and granite countertops)	<b>2</b>
	Teflon	<b>6</b>
Wood - Undyed/uncolored	<b>1</b>	
Wood - Dyed/colored	<b>6</b> <sup>12</sup>	

10. It's preferable to buy new knives.

Many poskim mention this about all dishes, that it's preferable to buy new ones, instead of kashering.

11. In cases of need, there are grounds for leniency.

12. Wooden dishes with cracks or holes should be smoothed first with sandpaper.

<b>SINK</b>	Enamel sink	4 three times and must put in a sink insert afterwards.
	Faucet	1 if removable, if not possible 5
	Faucet handles	5
	Porcelain and clay sinks	6 <sup>13</sup>
	Metal Sink	2 or 4
	Spout strainer	6
<b>GAS AND ELECTRIC STOVE<sup>14</sup></b>	Burner plates	2
	Burners	2 <sup>15</sup>
	Electric stove	3 <sup>16</sup>
	Enamel stove top	6 <sup>17</sup>
	Glass stove top	6
	Grates	3 Turn on fire and place blech on top when kashering
	Knobs	6 <sup>18</sup>
	Metal stove top	2 or 4

13. Requires sink insert

14. If doing **ליבון גמור** on grates, can turn on fire for a while and cover entire top with blech, and then everything is kashered in one step

15. Clean them well, especially the holes the fire comes out from. Replace and leave burning for an hour.

16. Leave on the highest heat level until the element becomes red.

17. Clean well and cover with special cover for Pesach.

18. Remove them and clean them well, and then cover with silver foil or such.

<b>OVEN</b>	Oven (including continuous cleaning ovens)	6 see footnote 19 for options
	Self-Cleaning oven	See footnote 20
<b>APPLIANCES</b>	Dishwasher	6
	Keurig	6
	Microwave	6
	Shabbos hotplate	See footnote 21
	Shabbos blech	3 <sup>22</sup>
	Urn	See footnote 23

19. Best not to use a Chametz oven on Pesach. If that isn't an option, clean it well with an oven cleaner to disqualify the Chametz that can be seen by the naked eye, leave it on the highest heat level for two hours, and insert a tin crate that is closed from all sides to place the food within or double wrap all the food.

20. If the temperature of the self cleaning cycle reaches 900 fahrenheit, run the oven on self clean on the highest heat for as long as the cycle runs. The door should be covered with thick silver foil. (A continuous cleaning oven is treated Halachically as a normal oven. Some new self cleaning ovens use Aqualift technology that cleans at low heat; they should be considered like non-self-cleaning ovens.)<sup>21</sup> If possible, one is to purchase a new electric hot plate for Pesach. If needed, clean the entire hot plate, cord, sides, and bottom with bleach etc. After 24 hours, turn the hot plate onto its hottest setting for an hour, and then pour boiling water over it. One is to then cover the hot plate with a thick piece of tinfoil. For extra care, one can place a second sheet of tin foil or aluminum pan on the hot plate.

22. This can be done but putting it over the fire for about 20 minutes.

23. An urn used all year round may not be used for Pesach without kashering, in each of the following cases:

- if it is small enough to be brought to the table,
- if it is used to heat other beverages, if one ever warmed challah or other food on top of it for Shabbos,
- if one cleaned it with vinegar (to remove calcium buildup),
- if it's washed with chametz dishes,
- if it was placed down while hot onto chametz,
- if one has poured hot water from the urn onto chametz (e.g. instant noodles or a Chametz soup mix),  
or
- if one has poured the leftover hot water into a chametzdik sink.

If one is certain that none of the above took place with the urn, it is not required to be kashered. Practically, however, it is difficult to ascertain this.

If the urn is plastic, it should not be used, as plastic is customarily not kashered. If it's stainless steel, or even if it's plastic but this a case of need, do as follows:

- Remove the hardened calcium from the urn before Kashering.
- The lid should be kashered with הגיעלה.
- Fill the urn itself with water and turn it on. When the water reaches the highest temperature, the cover should be removed. Then throw

HOW TO PREPARE COMMON KITCHEN ITEMS FOR PESACH		
Bread bin that contains hot Chametz	4. If you aren't sure all the crumbs are removed, sell it.	
Cabinets that contain dishes or food at room temperature	Clean well from all visible Chametz, reaching all corners, and line it.	
Chairs and Benches	Scrub and clean the chairs.	
Fridge and Freezer	Clean well, including the shelves, drawers, and the rubber that lines the door. Wipe them with a wet cloth. Remove the ice from the freezer before cleaning. It is customary to line the shelves and drawers.	
High Chair	Clean and wipe down well. Line the tray with plastic wrap/saran wrap/cling film to stay for the entire Pesach.	
Table and countertops <sup>24</sup>	Formica that's used for hot dishes	Must be covered. As an added stringency, 5.
	Wood, stainless steel, stone (granite, quartz)	4 <sup>25</sup> Some are stringent not to rely on kashering for quartz, especially for Pesach. Therefore, it's <b>necessary</b> to cover it.
	A table with no pots placed on it and always covered with a tablecloth when eaten upon	Clean well and cover.

into the boiling water an אבן מליבן [red hot stone or slab of metal] such that the water overflows the top. Run a blowtorch over the edge on top.

24. Since pouring water might ruin the cabinets beneath the counters, it is recommended to place a towel over the cabinet doors to protect them.

25. It's sufficient to pass a blow torch over the counter to the extent that the other side gets hot enough that one's hand would naturally recoil. The common custom is to also cover the counters and tables after kashering. One should also cover the wall above the counter to the height where the pots reach when placed on the counter.

## ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON הגעלה

### Preparing an item for הגעלה

Clean all cracks and crevices well from dirt or rust<sup>26</sup> and dry well. Discoloration or burn stains are okay.

Any non-cleanable parts require קל ליבון as well. If one didn't do so in advance, it can be done post הגעלה.

Screws, company imprints and the area around handles need extra attention. Clean well or do קל ליבון קל.

Do not use items to be kashered or the kashering pot with hot food for 24 hours in advance.

### Preparing a Chametzdik pot to be used for kashering

Bring a full pot of water to boil. Submerge a white-hot stone so that the pot overflows and becomes kashered.

Empty and rinse with cold water.

Fill with boiling water again and use this water to kasher the items.

### Process

When submerging an item in the boiling water, it must be bubbling. Wait in between each item so that the bubbles return.

Item should be submerged entirely but doesn't need to reach the depth of the pot.

Leave it in for a moment so the water can draw out the Chametz but not for too long. Remove when water is still bubbling.

Wash with cold water immediately.

Items too large to be kashered in one immersion

One can do it in two parts and try as much as possible that the same section

shouldn't be submerged twice.

If any parts don't manage to enter the hot water, one can do קל ליבון קל on those parts.

### Pointers:

- It is best not to kasher items that absorb chametz on different levels together, such as an item used only for cold chametz and an item used on the fire for chametz.
- The entire item needs to be in contact with the hot water. If using tongs, make sure to release them and grasp the item at a different part at some point during the immersion. Best to place the item in a basket or such rather than kashering the item part by part with tongs.
- Don't pack the basket with many items. They shouldn't be touching so that they all come in full contact with the water.
- If the item holds liquid, submerge it on its side so that no air pockets are formed.
- The water must be pure water.
- If the water has been reused many times, replace.
- If one wants to use the items used for kashering for Pesach and the water it held wasn't sixty times more than the item it kashered, it needs הלעגה. There is no need to empty the water it is already holding. Add more water and when it reaches boiling point, submerge a white-hot stone or iron within it so that the water overflows the brim. Rinse with cold water.
- If doing הגעלה on erev Pesach, be sure to finish before זמן אכילת חמץ. Some have the custom to kasher three days before Pesach.<sup>27</sup>

26. One can use the following to remove rust: lemon juice, vinegar, baking soda, steel wool or rust remover.

27. קל ליבון גמור may be done on Chol hamoed if it wasn't done before, but it's not recommended to leave it till then, as one may forget and use it without ליבון.

# TEVILAS KEILIM UTENSILS IMMERSION

## DISH DIPPING IN A MINI-MIKVEH

### PRIOR TO INITIAL USE

#### What is the original source for *tevilas keilim*?

In *Parshas Matos* (*Bamidbar* 31:21) the Torah relates that following the war against Midyan, the Jewish nation was commanded to immerse all eating and cooking utensils that they had captured as spoils of war before using them. This requirement came in addition to the obligation to *kasher* these utensils with scalding water or fire to remove the penetration of non-kosher foods. Most halachic opinions concur that immersion of utensils is a Biblical obligation—*de'Oraisa*.

#### What is the basic definition of this *mitzvah*?

All utensils made of metal, glass, or similar material that had belonged to a non-Jew and now belong to a Jew and are used to prepare, serve, or store food and beverages must be ritually immersed before they can be used.

A utensil rented or borrowed from a non-Jew does not require *tevila*.

#### What is the reason for this *mitzvah*?

This commandment is a *chok* (supra-rational decree of Hashem). However, the following rationale was provided: Ritual immersion serves to purify the utensils from the spiritual impurity of non-Jewish ownership and to induct them into the sanctity of the Jewish nation. It is comparable to a convert's immersion in a *mikveh*.

In *Likkutei Sichos* the Rebbe explains at length that according to *peshat* (the literal meaning) there is another reason (that also fits well with the halachic rationale) for immersing utensils prior to initial use: to purge the utensils of the potential for non-kosher contamination.

To clarify: A utensil, that was owned by a non-Jew but not used by him, nevertheless was subject to potential contamination via non-kosher food during that time. Ritual immersion purifies the utensil of the negative influence caused by potential contamination.

#### Do utensils that have never been used require immersion?

Absolutely. As explained above, the obligation to immerse applies whether or not the utensil had been used.

#### Is it permissible to use a utensil temporarily—just once—before immersion?

No. It is forbidden to use such a utensil even once before immersion. However, disposable utensils that are designed for one-time use may be used without immersion one time.

If one then decides to continue using the disposable utensil it is preferable that he

immerse it, but without reciting a blessing.

### **Do disposable aluminum pans require immersion?**

A disposable aluminum pan that will be used just once does not require immersion. However, if one purchases such pans with the intention of reusing them, then according to many halachic opinions, they must be immersed without reciting a blessing before their first use. This applies regardless of whether one plans to line them with parchment paper and the like while baking, in which case the food will not come in direct contact with the pan. (There are many who are accustomed not to immerse disposable aluminum pans that they intend to use more than once. There are many *poskim* who defend the lenient practice, especially if the pans will be lined with parchment paper and the like.)

Bottles and cans that are sold with food inside them, such as coffee jars, do not require immersion for their initial use until they have been emptied of their original contents. If one then decides to continue using them for food-related purposes it is preferable that it be immersed, but without reciting a blessing.

### **Which type of utensils requires immersion?**

All utensils used in the preparation, serving, and consumption of foods and beverages. This includes utensils used directly for eating such as cups, plates, bowls, cutlery, and the like, as well as utensils used for serving food or bringing food to the table, such as serving platters.

It also includes utensils used to cook, bake, fry, and the like—such as pots, pans, kettles, as well as their covers that come in contact with food or steam from the food.

Utensils that are used in food preparation and come in direct contact with food, such as peelers, grinders, and food processors require immersion.

Utensils that only partially prepare food, after which further major processing is required—such as a flour sieve, a raw-meat grinder, or a *shechitah* knife—should be immersed without reciting the blessing.

Utensils that do not come in contact with foods or beverages, such as bottle and can openers do not require immersion at all.

Utensils used for storage such as jars, cans, bottles, and containers that are used to store flour, sugar, and the like should be immersed without reciting a blessing. A container used to store food that is constantly wrapped while in storage, such as one that holds individually wrapped tea bags, need not be immersed. There are those who wish to be stringent and immerse them without reciting a blessing.

If one uses a storage container to serve food at the table, it requires immersion **with** a blessing like all serving utensils.

A nutcracker should be immersed without reciting a blessing.

If a utensil is made of many parts, only those parts that come in contact with food require immersion.

**Does it matter what material the utensil is made of?**

Introducing the laws of immersing utensils the Torah specifies six kinds of metal utensils that require immersion *mi'de'Oraisa* (on a Biblically binding basis). These are: gold, silver, copper, iron, tin and lead. In practice, every type of metal requires immersion, including stainless steel and aluminum.

Glass utensils (including Crystal, Pyrex, Duralex, and Coral) must be immersed *mi'de'Rabanan* (as per an enactment of our Sages). The law of metal was extended to glass since they resemble each other in that they can both be melted down and recycled.

Wooden, earthenware, stone, and paper utensils do not require immersion unless they are coated with metal or glass. Generally, a utensil that has a coating made from a material that requires immersion should be immersed without reciting a blessing. By contrast, if the entire surface (interior and exterior) is coated with metal (in contrast to glass), not merely for aesthetic appeal, it should be immersed with a blessing.

Utensils made from a combination of materials, some of which require immersion while others do not, should be immersed without reciting a blessing. However, if a utensil's chief function is accomplished via a material that requires immersion, and the utensil would be useless without this material, and this material also comes in direct contact with food—then it should be immersed with a blessing.

For example, an electric kettle may be made entirely of plastic, but the element that directly heats the water is made of metal. The kettle requires immersion with a blessing.

Metal utensils with handles fashioned from a material that does not require immersion must be fully immersed with a blessing—the entire utensil with its handles, all at once.

Plastic, nylon, and silicone tools do not require immersion according to the majority of halachic opinions. Some people are stringent and immerse them nevertheless, but without reciting a blessing. Metal utensils with a Teflon coating should be immersed without a blessing.

According to custom, porcelain utensils are immersed without reciting a blessing.

**Is there an issue with immersing an item that does not require immersion?**

Yes. An item that does not require immersion at all—according to all opinions—must not be immersed because doing so might lead one to inadvertently recite a blessing in vain.

**Do electrical appliances require immersion?**

Yes—even if there is a risk of damage to the appliance by immersing it. However, one may be lenient and immerse only the part of the appliance that directly receives the food or liquids without immersing the electrical cord. Nevertheless, the section of cord in immediate proximity to the appliance requires immersion along with the actual appliance. It is advisable to wait a considerable length of time (forty-eight hours or longer, if necessary) before using the appliance, so that it has time to fully dry before using it.

If there is concern over damage to the appliance it can be taken to a Jewish technician who can disassemble the appliance—so that it is no longer considered an appliance—and then reassemble it. The appliance will then be considered the product of Jewish manufacture and will not require immersion. For this method to be halachically valid, only a professional technician may dismantle and reconstruct the appliance. It is insufficient for the expert to simply remove and reattach the electrical cord.

Some suggest making an arrangement with a non-Jew, whereby the appliance is given to the non-Jew as a gift and then borrowed in return from him. In that case, the appliance technically remains the property of a non-Jew and does not require immersion. However, this method should not be employed because in actuality the appliance will constantly remain exclusively with the Jew.

A bread toaster is an example of an appliance that will most likely be damaged by immersion. There is room for leniency in such a case—it can be used without immersion as long as its electrical cord remains constantly plugged into an electrical outlet. Even in such a case, it is worthwhile taking a stringent approach and having the appliance dissembled and reconstructed by a Jewish technician, so that it will be considered manufactured by a Jew.

### **How do intervening substances impact the immersion?**

Every part of a utensil requiring immersion must come in direct contact with the water. Any substance that will act as a barrier to prevent complete contact with the water must be removed from the utensil prior to immersion. Examples of such substances are rust, residual glue, labels and adhesives.

If the substance is found on a minor portion of the utensil, to the extent that most people (including the actual owner) would simply ignore it, the immersion will be valid even if it was not removed.

Valuable labels that the owner specifically desires to leave attached to the utensil, such as quality brand names that raise the utensil's value, may be left attached even during immersion, provided they cover only a minor area of the utensil.

One should not hold the utensil during its immersion, because his hands will prevent the waters from fully contacting every area of the utensil. If he must keep a hold of the utensil, he should hold it very loosely.

Another option is to change the position of one's hands from one part of the utensil to another while the utensil is underwater. This way, at least for the brief moment it takes to switch position, the water will be in contact with the entire utensil.

Another suggestion is to put one hand into the water and then, with the first hand still underwater, lower the second hand that is holding the utensil into the water, so that it comes to rest on the first hand.

### **What is the halachic status of food placed in a utensil that was not immersed?**

The food is permissible to be eaten. However, it should not be eaten while it remains in

that utensil. It should be transferred and eaten from a non-problematic utensil.

One who eats at the home of someone who does not yet observe the *mitzvos* must assume that his host has not immersed any utensils that require immersion. As a result, even if for whatever reason *kashrus* is not a concern, he should nevertheless avoid eating directly from—or with—his host's utensils.

### **What if there is a doubt regarding the necessity of immersion?**

If there is a doubt as to whether a particular utensil requires immersion, one should immerse it without reciting a blessing.

### **The manufacturers of many products in the USA are Jewish. Do American products require immersion?**

Utensils purchased directly from a factory that is jointly owned by a Jew and a non-Jew require immersion but without reciting a blessing. (Some *poskim* do require a blessing in such a case.)

If the factory is Jewishly owned but the workers are non-Jewish, its products require immersion but without reciting a blessing.

If there is doubt as to whether the factory owners are Jewish, the utensils require immersion. Furthermore, if it is not possible to clarify the nature of the factory's ownership a blessing must be recited over the immersion, because the majority of factories are owned by non-Jews. (According to some opinions a blessing is not recited in this case.)

It is important to note that even if a product was manufactured by a Jew, if it has since been sold to a non-Jewish outlet, store, or the like, it acquired the influence of non-Jewish ownership. Regardless of the product's origins, one who now purchases the product from a non-Jewish source must immerse it with a blessing.

### **What type of *mikveh* is good for immersing utensils?**

Not every men's *mikveh* is kosher for immersing utensils. As described earlier, the obligation to immerse utensils acquired from a non-Jewish source is of Biblical origin - *de'Oraisa*. In that case, the *mikveh* must likewise meet the Biblical definitions of a kosher *mikveh*.

The construction of such a *mikveh* requires the oversight of experts in the laws of *mikveh*, with continual oversight for the duration of its operation to ensure that it does not become invalid in some way. One who wishes to immerse utensils in a *mikveh* located within a store should first ascertain that the *mikveh* was recently examined by expert *rabbanim*.

It should be noted that the *mikveh* located in the store adjacent to the offices of the Badatz was constructed under the guidance of expert *rabbanim*, through the efforts of the *rabbanim* of the Badatz. It is kosher to the highest standards.

The outdoor *keilim* mikvah on Kingston Avenue between Crown and Carroll was also renovated under the guidance of the *rabbanim* of the Badatz.

Please note that these locations have been updated for Pesach 5783. The status of any mikvah should be confirmed periodically to ensure that it is still in good repair halachically.

### **Can anyone perform the immersion?**

Any male or female over the age of *bar* or *bas mitzvah* may perform the immersion, provided they are *shomer* Shabbos.

Some are stringent and only allow individuals who are halachically considered having entered adulthood to immerse utensils that require immersion *mi'de'Oraisa*.

A child may perform the immersion as long as an adult stands next to him and can vouch for the child having conducted a valid immersion. Theoretically, even if a utensil is immersed properly of its own accord, without human intervention, the immersion is valid.

Therefore, if one sends a minor to immerse utensils he must receive an adult's report that the immersion was valid. For example, he may send a cell phone with the child so that an adult present at the *keilim mikveh* may call the parent and report on the validity of the immersion.

One may rely on a child's immersion of utensils that require immersion *mi'deRabanan* (although some opinions are stringent even in this case).

### **What exactly does the immersion process involve?**

The first step is to fully pay for the purchase of the utensil. If the purchase has not been fully completed, the immersion is invalid because the utensil has not yet passed from the vendor's ownership to the buyer's ownership.

If a utensil requires *hagalah* for purposes of *kashrus*, that step must be conducted prior to immersion.

The utensil must then be prepared for immersion by removing any substance that could intervene between the utensil's surface and the waters of the *mikveh*.

The utensil is then held in the right hand (a left-handed person holds it in his left hand) and a blessing is recited—provided that the utensil requires immersion with a blessing according to the rules explained above.

The blessing for immersing a single item is: *Baruch Atta ... asher kideshanu b'mitzvosav ve-tzivanu al tevilas keili* (“...who sanctified us with His commandments and instructed us regarding the immersion of a utensil”). For multiple items the final word is replaced by the plural—*keilim* (“...of utensils”).

It is best to immerse an item that does not require a blessing together with one that does require a blessing. This way the blessing recited on the latter can include the former. The item that requires immersion with a blessing should be immersed first, immediately after the blessing.

The entire utensil must be immersed at once, not first one part of the utensil and then the

rest of it. Some are accustomed to immersing each item three times.

One should not speak from the moment he recites the blessing until after immersing the last of his items that require immersion.

An item that is comprised of distinct parts, such as a meat grinder, should be immersed fully assembled, as if it were to be used for its intended function, even if some of its parts do not require immersion altogether. It should not be immersed in parts. Nevertheless, if it was immersed in separated parts, the immersion remains valid. Under pressing circumstances, it may be immersed in parts to begin with. In such a case, care should be taken to ensure that it is *entirely* separated into parts. Needless to say, if the each part of a utensil or appliance is intended to be used separately, then each part should be immersed separately.

Utensils may be immersed while resting inside a basket, net, or the like that has many holes. The basket or net should be shaken back and forth while underwater so that the water reaches every part of the utensil. More than one utensil may be placed alongside each other in such a basket, as long as they are not stacked on top of each other.

Pots and containers must be immersed with their openings facing upwards or to one side, but not facing downwards, so that the water can fill them entirely. To be certain that the water has reached every part of the utensil, it should be lowered into the water slowly while held at an angle so that the water can flow and fill the entire utensil. A narrow vessel should be left in the water for some time to ensure that the water reached all parts of the vessel.

### **Is there an issue with immersing items that were purchased in order to give as gifts?**

Yes, this is problematic. Items may not be immersed until they have entered the ownership of the end user. Therefore, the recipient of such gifts may not rely on the fact that they were immersed by the giver beforehand. One who nevertheless wishes to immerse an item on behalf of the intended recipient must first have the intention to acquire the item on behalf of the recipient and only then may he immerse it on that recipient's behalf. The recipient should obviously be informed about this *tevila*.

There is room to suggest that one who sends a utensil filled with food, as is often done with *mishlo'ach manos* that is distributed on Purim, should indeed immerse the utensil before giving it to the recipient. Since there is some doubt about this obligation, he should seek to avoid the obligation altogether by not allowing the food to directly contact the utensil. Instead, the foods should be placed in a bag before being placed in the utensil. Simply lining the utensil with baking parchment and the like is not considered a sufficient barrier between the food and the utensil in this case. The recipient will then later immerse the utensil with a blessing upon receiving the gift.

Store owners must not sell items labeled as having been immersed because immersion

performed by a vendor prior to selling the item does not absolve the buyer from the obligation to immerse that item once it falls under his ownership.

**Is it necessary to immerse *chametz* utensils after Pesach because they were sold and then repurchased from a non-Jew?**

In *Likkutei Sichos*, the Rebbe explains at length that this is unnecessary because although the non-Jew could technically make use of the *chametz* utensils during Pesach, it is a scenario of extreme improbability.

**Where are the detailed laws of *tevilas keilim* recorded?**

There are copious sources, but here are some basics:

*Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah*, 120; *Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZaken*, 323:8, 451:70, 452:25, 159:21 (also see 161:1-7 [laws of intervening substances that apply to hand washing and bodily immersion]); *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, 37; *Tevilas Keilim* (authored by HaRav Tzvi Kohen); *Kashrus Keilim* (authored by HaRav Yisachar Chazan).

MATERIAL	NEEDS TEVILA	NEEDS BRACHA
All Metals (gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, lead, stainless steel, aluminum)	YES	YES
All Glass (crystal, pyrex, duralex, and corelle)	YES	YES
Wooden	NO	NO
Wooden coated with metal or glass	YES	NO*
Earthenware	NO	NO
Earthenware coated with metal or glass	YES	NO*
Enamel	YES	NO
Stoneware coated with metal or glass	YES	NO*
Paper, Styrofoam	NO	NO
Paper coated with metal or glass	YES	NO*
Metal with teflon or enamel coating	YES	NO
Porcelain	YES (as per custom)	NO
Disposable Aluminum Pans	NO	NO
Disposable Aluminum Pans intend to re-use	YES (Some are lenient)	NO
Jars bought with food inside	NO	NO
Jars bought with food inside once emptied and intend to re-use	YES	YES
Plastic, Nylon, Silicon, Rubber	NO (Some are stringent)	NO
Utensils made of mixture of required + not required	YES	NO

\* ) If both interior and exterior are coated with metal (in contrast to glass) and not merely for aesthetic appeal, it should be immersed with a bracha.

UTENSILS	NEEDS TEVILA	NEEDS BRACHA
Used for food preparation	YES	YES
Used for serving	YES	YES
Used for eating & drinking (cups, plates, bowls, cutlery etc)	YES	YES
Used to cook, bake, fry, etc (pots & pans, covers)	YES	YES
Peelers, food processors, grinders	YES	YES
Partially prepare food (flour sieve, raw meat grinder, schechita knife)	YES	NO
Bottle or can opener	NO	NO
Used for storage	YES	NO
Used for storage, doesn't come in contact with food because wrapped (tea bags)	NO (some are stringent)	NO
Barbeque grill	YES (only the grill)	YES
Nut Cracker	YES	NO

TYPE OF UTENSIL	NEEDS TEVILA	NEEDS BRACHA
Bought in factory jointly owned by Jew	YES	NO
Owned by Jew, non-Jewish workers	YES	NO
Doubt if factory owned by Jew	YES	YES*
Manufactured by Jew, sold by non-Jew	YES	YES
Electric Appliance	YES	YES
Plastic Electric Appliance with metal heating element	YES	NO
Even for first time use	YES	YES

\*) if cannot confirm if most factories are non-Jewish. Some omit Bracha

## CHUMROS ON PESACH

# Q&A's

Mara D'Asra and Chaver HaBadatz of Crown Heights

Horav Yosef Y. Braun shlita

Interview by Mrs. Chana Shloush of the *N'shei Chabad Newsletter*

### WHAT IS CHABAD'S GENERAL APPROACH TO PESACH CHUMROS AND HIDDURIM?

Let's distinguish between the two words themselves: *chumra* and *hiddur*. While the terms are used interchangeably, nonetheless for the purpose of our discussion it would be worthwhile to establish a distinction.

*Chumra* means stringency, with connotations that it is challenging, difficult, strict, and narrow. *Hiddur*, in contrast, means the beautification of a mitzvah.

There is an old *vort* about the three different approaches to mitzvos. One can view them as 613 different segulos, i.e. "what's in it for me," or, worse, as 613 problems to contend with. The third – and ideal – way is to think of the mitzvos as 613 opportunities to connect with Hashem. Of course, this is the authentic Torah approach and is particularly highlighted in Chassidus. The added stringency or beautification then enhances our connection. Still, when taking on a *chumra* or *hiddur*, it is important to understand the historical background and *halachic* discussions involved. A sefer entitled *Sh'ailos Uteshuvos Min Hashamayim*, written in the early 13th century, by Rabbi Jacob of Marvège (which incorporates responses he received from Shamayim to various *halachic* questions), discusses this subject. The author (actually, the Author with a capital A) writes that since avoiding *chometz* on Pesach was one of the very first mitzvos the Jews accepted from Hashem, therefore, our ancestors embraced it with *ahavah*, *chibah* *v're'us*: love, affection, and warmth. Because of

that tremendous initial enthusiasm, they were quite *machmir*, and the special care and attention paid to Pesach has only grown over the generations. In fact, some *tzadikim* have said that when the mitzvah of Pesach was given, there was uncertainty as to the parameters, since it was before *mattan* Torah, but due to their love for the mitzvah, the Yidden formulated their own *chumros*. There are several practical reasons for stringency as well. Chazal have taken a different attitude toward *chometz* on Pesach than toward any other mitzvah, since the Torah itself is extremely stringent regarding *chometz*. The Torah tells us that not only may we not eat *chometz*; we must go so far as to declare it ownerless or, alternatively, search for it and destroy it. Chazal went a step further and added that we must always perform the mitzvah of *bedikah*. Strictly speaking, from the Torah perspective, one may declare the *chometz* ownerless in a process called *bittul* – and that would have been sufficient. Chazal have insisted that we search for the physical *chometz* on the night before Erev Pesach in order to burn it on Erev Pesach. After the *bedikah*, we destroy it in our thought (*bittul*), and we verbalize that it has been destroyed and declared ownerless. Furthermore, Chazal say we are not permitted even a *mashehu* of *chometz* in a mixture, unlike other mitzvos where a tiny amount of the forbidden might be allowed in a mixture, in some cases, as determined by a Rav. One of the reasons for all these extra safeguards regarding *chometz* is due to the fact that *chometz* is permitted year-round, unlike *traife*, which is always forbidden. The extra care we

take regarding Pesach serves as a margin of safety as we separate ourselves from what is otherwise allowed. In later times, more Rabbinic prohibitions were added. *Kitniyos* (beans, legumes, rice, etc.) is an example of food which is not *chometz* but which Ashkenazi *poskim* have forbidden on Pesach. Of course, all of Ashkenaz Jewry has accepted the prohibition of *kitniyos* on Pesach, and even some Sefardim have taken upon themselves this *issur*. Even in times of severe famine, the Tzemach Tzedek (among other *Poskim*) treated *kitniyos* almost as serious a prohibition as actual *chometz* (except for the infirm or for children). It's important to always keep our focus on the fact that the Jewish people's becoming increasingly *machmir* through the ages stemmed from our love for this mitzvah. In addition to all the above, we have the spiritual dimension. It is quoted in the name of the Arizal that one who is careful about a speck of *chometz* on Pesach is protected from sin year-round. Because *chometz* represents the yetzer hara and the ego, we need to work full force against it (as per Responsa from the Radbaz). There are only three other things which the Torah forbids *b'mashehu*, even a minute amount: anger, arrogance and *avodah zarah*. *Chometz* is symbolic of all of the above. However, here is a crucial caveat: If being *machmir* on Pesach enhances our ego (engendering a "holier than thou" attitude toward others who are less *machmir*) or leads to anger in the household, we are defeating the purpose and allowing our *chumros* to become a stumbling block. In being *machmir* on Pesach, people sometimes violate an explicit *din* in Shulchan Aruch (Alter Rebbe 469:5) because they say, "How difficult this Pesach is for me!" Such an expression sounds like the words of the *rasha* in the Haggadah, "What is this work to you?" The reality, however, is that people do feel this way and therefore they express it. The Alter Rebbe was *melamed zechus* on such people by pointing out that the *rasha* in the Haggadah was referring to the *avodah* of the *korban* Pesach exclusively, whereas today's Jews are

complaining about all the extra *chumros*. Nevertheless, if we fall into the trap of complaining, we are defeating the purpose.

#### DOES THAT MEAN WE SHOULD BE LESS EXACTING ON OURSELVES?

Not necessarily. Another perspective on Pesach *chumros*, from the Shulchan Aruch (Alter Rebbe 442:30), is that *Yisroel kedoshim heim* – the Jews are holy: they scrape their chairs and walls. Even though the tasks are not necessary according to the letter of the law, the Rishonim tell us – and Shulchan Aruch quotes this – that the Jews are considered a holy nation for performing them. The Shulchan Aruch adds (O.C. 442:6): *Yesh lahem al mah she'yismochu* – they have a basis to rely upon. This turn of phrase is generally reserved for discussing a leniency, since normally we would not be *halachically* lenient, unless there was a real *halachic* basis. Why is this expression used here when discussing a *chumra*? The Maadanei Shmuel brings the following explanation from Reb Yaakov Yosef of Ostra (and a similar thought is also found in Mishna Berurah on this *halachah*): Here we learn an important perspective that our *chumros* must also have a basis, a real source backing it up. The *chumros* should not be a *chassidus shel shtus* – a foolish piety... An individual cannot simply add his own made-up stringencies to the list. All *chumros* must stem from an actual *halachic* source, or at least from a specific community *minhag* or family *mesorah*.

#### HOW IMPORTANT IS THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN HALACHAH AND CHUMRA?

It is important to distinguish, because there are clear differences. This is one of the many reasons offered (see Derech Pikudecha Mitzvah 12) as to why we all eat matzah *shruyah* on Acharon Shel Pesach: if other Torah-true Jews are eating it throughout the Yom Tov, it surely is *halachically* permissible after all. In order that we don't create any notion that others

are eating something which might be *chometz*, *chas v'sholom*, we go out of our way on the last day of Pesach to drop this particular *chumra*. (Of course, other reasons are offered why we eat *shruyah* specifically on Acharon Shel Pesach and why we don't take this approach with other *chumros*.) Reb Michel Zlotchover's son, Reb Binyomin Zev, was exceedingly *machmir* on Pesach and of course always ate matzah *shmurah*. At one occasion, he noticed his followers humiliating a Yid for eating matzah that was only guarded from the time of grinding. He stood up and said: "You think that so many Yidden who aren't *machmir* on *shmurah* are eating *chometz* on Pesach? *Chas v'sholom*. Certainly, these matzos are very kosher." He then asked for some only-from-time-of-grinding matzah and ate it in the presence of all the *chassidim*. Relying on Hashem and maintaining proper humility and respect for others on Pesach are the themes of this eye-opening story which the Rebbe told at a *farbrengen* on Shabbos Parshas Ha'azinu 5722. (While the story is not printed in the transcript of the sichos, and some have doubted the veracity of the story as it appears in other sources differently, my father-in-law, Rabbi Berel Lipskier, *zol gezunt zein*, testifies that he heard it personally from the Rebbe): A certain chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek was extremely careful in his Pesach preparations, doing everything himself including baking his own matzos. He wouldn't use the regular water in his house obtained by the water carrier, preferring to draw water from a covered well behind his home. He didn't want to eat in the Tzemach Tzedek's house, so he only visited the Tzemach Tzedek on the last day of Pesach. At that time the Tzemach Tzedek told the chossid, "I want you to know that you had *chometz* the entire Yom Tov. Check the well behind your house." The man ran to the well and discovered a loaf of bread floating on the surface. Distraught, he ran back to the Tzemach Tzedek and said, "I have three questions: Why did I receive such a serious punishment when I was so careful to avoid

*chometz*? Why did the Rebbe not warn me? What is my *tikkun*?" The Rebbe replied, "I didn't see you all Pesach so I couldn't warn you. What occurred is not a punishment, but a direct result of your own actions - you relied only upon yourself and forgot about *siyata d'Shmaya*." The Rebbe then gave the man a *tikkun*.

SO, IF ONE WISHES TO OBSERVE EXTRA CHUMROS FOR PESACH, WHAT IS THE PROPER APPROACH?

Simchas Yom Tov, celebrating Pesach with joy, is a mitzvah from the Torah for men, women and children. *Hiddurim*, on the other hand, are just that - *hiddurim*, not obligations. If Pesach puts someone in a Tishah B'Av mood, *hiddurim* are out of place (see *Chassidim Mesaprim* I:637). People need to approach a Rav or *mashpia* with any questions. They may learn that some of their so-called "*hiddurim*" have no basis whatsoever in *halachah* or *minhag*. The Rebbe quotes (in his account of Pesach 5692 with the Frierdiker Rebbe) in the name of the Rebbe Rashab that one should not take on extra *chumros* on Pesach, so that one will not be making a *neder*. On a different occasion, the Rebbe Rashab said after selling his *chometz*, "I'm very scared of *chumros*." This is difficult to understand; the Alter Rebbe brings from the Arizal that one should "follow all *chumros* regarding *chometz*." Indeed, the Rebbe Rashab himself observed many extra *chumros* beyond the norm on Pesach. One lesson we can learn from the Rebbe Rashab's strong language is the importance of taking on our Pesach *hiddurim* "bli *neder*." Not all *hiddurim* are suitable for all people. A person has to be *makir es mekomo*: to know whether a practice is suitable to take on or whether it is beyond their level. Discuss this with a *mashpia* or Rav. And when one decides to keep a particular *hiddur*, one should do so with both simchah and humility, recalling that many people of the highest spiritual caliber did not keep such *hiddurim*. The great chossid Reb Noteh of Malastirchina

never ate *shmurah* matzah in his life. (Keep in mind, in earlier times all matzah was hand-made, but most was guarded from contact with water only from the wheat-grinding stage, not from the time of harvest. Today all hand-made matzah is *shmurah* matzah, guarded from harvest.) Reb Noteh would say, "I don't know when I should begin [observing this *hiddur*]." Of course, nowadays we all insist on eating only *shmurah*. (This stringency became the norm in the time of the Rebbe Maharash.) Whether or not we keep a particular *minhag* or *hiddur*, it's vital to emphasize the importance of not undermining, *chas v'sholom*, any *minhag* Yisroel practiced by others.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IF A PERSON REALIZES THEIR PESACH *HIDDUR* IS BEYOND WHAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF DOING?

There is always the option of doing *hataras nedarim* when one realizes a certain practice cannot be kept any longer. Consult a Rav who is a *moreh hora'ah b'poel* (an experienced Rav) if necessary.

CAN THE RAV DISCUSS *HALACHAH* AND *HIDDUR* IN CLEANING FOR PESACH?

When cleaning, some people overdo Pesach *hiddurim* in an inappropriate way. People often confuse Pesach cleaning with spring cleaning, saying, "I might as well..." However, if one runs into a time management problem, one can develop a negative attitude toward Pesach altogether. It is important to separate Pesach cleaning from spring cleaning, as was famously said, "Dirt is not *chometz*, and children are not the *korban Pesach*." If one wants to do spring cleaning, one may do so as long as one realizes it is extra work and has nothing to do with Pesach. As mentioned, if one wants to perform extra *hiddurim*, one should appreciate that this is a *hiddur*, done out of a love for the mitzvah and not

complain about the difficulty. And really, why not wash curtains and windows before Shavuot? Or in honor of Rosh Hashanah? Pesach cleaning today is often much harder than it was centuries ago. We have larger houses and far more possessions. In addition, we do not have many maids and servants – plus a grandmother and extended family living with us – as did our ancestors with small homes. It is critical to keep in mind the *halachah*, "A place into which one doesn't bring *chometz* does not require *bedikah*." We have a *halachic* definition of such a spot: In the middle of a meal, you would not get up from the table and take things from that place. Of course, in a house with young children, many additional areas must be checked because children don't necessarily follow such rules. But one need only check places where children can reach, not the high shelves they cannot access or places like the boiler room or meter room, where they will not go. In addition, according to the Tzemach Tzedek, a place that is being sold does not require *bedikah* or cleaning beforehand. Remember: One need not dispose of a piece of *chometz* smaller than a *k'zayis* which is slightly soiled. If the *chometz* is larger than a *k'zayis*, then only in a case where it's entirely soiled, e.g., it is soaked in bleach, is it okay to leave it. Of course, as mentioned, *Yisroel kedoshim heim* – the Jews are holy and go beyond the letter of the law, if they can.

AFTER ALL MY CLEANING, *BEDIKAS CHOMETZ* FEELS LIKE A WASTE OF TIME. ANY SUGGESTIONS?

The purpose of all our cleaning is in order to make a proper *bedikah*. Traditionally, people swept their earthen floors on the 13th of Nissan in order to prepare properly for the *bedikah* at night. People certainly didn't start cleaning for Pesach in Adar Rishon. My grandfather z"l used to say, "In Rozhvodov [Galicia] they took a broom, and it became Pesach." We do the *bedikah* after sweeping because the broom might not reach into all the nooks and crannies

where *chometz* could be lodged. Today, however, many people have confused the priorities: “sweeping” (cleaning) has become the overriding issue, while the *bedikah*, over which we make an actual *brachah*, is sometimes not treated so seriously and may be given minimal time and attention. As we know, the Alter Rebbe had only one room, but he spent all night doing *bedikas chometz* there. Our Rebbe has said that we always do *bedikas chometz* after Maariv because our custom is to do a very long *bedikah* and thus one might come to forget to daven Maariv. On the emotional level, we can understand people’s feelings about *bedikas chometz*. The kitchen is particularly difficult: it is usually already Pesachdik on the night of *bedikas chometz* and people don’t even want to walk into it with *chometz*, or with the *bedikas chometz* paper bag. Also, there are very few actual cracks and crevices in the home today. A proposal which the Rebbe Rashab suggested to Rabbi Yaakov Landau of B’nei Brak is worthwhile for us to adopt. Before we make a room Pesachdik, the husband can do *bedikas chometz* in that room with a candle (or flashlight), any night before Pesach, so long that it is within 30 days of Pesach. This *bedikah* should be done without a blessing. In this way, the mitzvah, broken into smaller segments, is done carefully and properly. It also becomes extrameaningful for the woman, who usually cleans the home in preparation for the *bedikah*: it accentuates all her hard work in preparing each room, and not only the husband’s carrying out the final *bedikah*, thus fostering *sholom bayis*. Of course, some areas must be left for the night of Erev Pesach *bedikah*, to be done with the blessing.

WHAT ARE THE BASIC CHABAD MINHAGIM FOR PESACH, IN CONTRADISTINCTION TO CHUMROS/HIDDURIM?

We do not eat matzah *shruyah* – wet matzah, or *gebrochts*. *Chassidim* in general keep this custom, dating back to the time

of the Maggid of Mezeritch, and some non-*chassidim* do, as well. The Alter Rebbe wrote a lengthy *teshuvah* explaining the *halachic* rationale for this *chumra*. In the Haggadah, our Rebbe says that we not only avoid wet matzah, but we keep the matzah covered at the table while eating. This is the source for the matzah *tash* (holder) of cloth, paper or plastic (ziplock bag). Another option not mentioned by the Rebbe: Some people move their chairs away from the table while eating matzah, rather than covering it. Before we pour water into a container, we check to make sure that no matzah crumbs are in that vessel. We do not pass our wet fingers over our lips during *mayim acharonim* in order to avoid wetting any remaining matzah crumbs. There is a *halachic* dispute as to whether machine-made matzah is permissible, and many *poskim* maintain that it is not. The Chabad position is to follow those *poskim* and eat only handmade matzah, not machine-made matzah. Chabad *chassidim* follow those *poskim* who have forbidden the use of Pesachdike *mashkeh*. In the Haggadah, the Rebbe notes that according to our custom, two ingredients of the original *charoses* – cinnamon and ginger – were dropped due to a concern over *chometz*. If an individual harvests his own and personally ascertains that it is *chometz*-free, these ingredients would probably be permissible on Pesach.

WHAT, EXACTLY, IS CONSIDERED WET MATZAH?

In a *teshuvah* of the Alter Rebbe – who was one of the very first *poskim* to discuss matzah *shruyah* – he specifies that matzah *shruyah* is defined as matzah that came in contact with water. In the case of *mei peiros*, fruit juice, the Alter Rebbe writes, “Peshitah,” it is obvious that we don’t have to be *machmir* at all. The Rebbe in his commentary on the Haggadah also writes that *shruyah* applies only to matzah that came in contact with water, or with liquids that contain water. The Rebbe Rashab was so strict regarding matzah *shruyah* that

he would only use a spoon and not use a fork at all on Pesach (in case the matzah that was in his mouth came in contact with the fork!), and he wiped his mouth after every bite. A possible explanation for this is because it is relatively easy to know that a spoon is 100 percent clean, but a fork is much harder to clean perfectly. Even so, he hardly ate soup on Pesach out of concern over matzah *shrudah*. Yet we know the Rebbe Rashab ate matzah with milk. The expression used in the Frierdiker Rebbe's sichos is "*shmurah* milk", i.e. milk which has been watched from the time of milking to ascertain that it contains no water. Today, many people will not eat matzah with milk or other liquids because they can't be sure no water was mixed into the liquid. Some won't even eat matzah with food that they know with certainty is water-free, not to confuse their children and families, or they don't want matzah on the table altogether. Likewise, some might have a family *minhag* to follow the view of those *poskim* who are equally stringent regarding *shrudah* with *mei peiros*, fruit juice, as with water. Thus, there is room for the *chumra* of not wetting matzah with other, water-free liquids. Regarding the chinuch of children, the Rebbe distinguishes between machine-made matzah and wet matzah. He says never to give machine-made matzah to children, whereas he permits wet matzah for them. Nonetheless, as mentioned elsewhere in sichos, children who have already reached the age of chinuch should also be educated not to eat wet matzah.

#### SO, AVOCADO AND FRESH LEMON JUICE MAY BE EATEN WITH MATZAH?

One may do so if one is careful that the knife has no water on it. One would want the plate and knife to be of disposable plastic in order to avoid issues with washing them afterwards. Remember that not everyone is capable of being cautious in this area.

#### IF ONE USED REAL (NOT DISPOSABLE) PLATES AT THE TABLE, MUST THEY BE

TAKEN TO THE SINK ONE BY ONE IN ORDER TO AVOID *GEBROKTS*, OR MAY THEY BE STACKED ONE ON TOP OF ANOTHER?

There is no official Chabad custom regarding stacking plates. Some people who are exceedingly *machmir* about matzah *shrudah* – and have a particular family *minhag* about this – might avoid stacking.

#### WHAT IS THE CHABAD *MINHAG* REGARDING BOILING SUGAR?

Not eating sugar on Pesach is a custom of the Rebbeim, and not all their *chassidim* took it upon themselves. In fact, the Rebbe Rashab was unhappy when others imitated him in this matter. The original source for this *chumra* is a din in Shulchan Aruch that one shouldn't eat sugar on Pesach due to a concern – which was relevant in those days – of a mix-up with flour. However, there are many *poskim* who state clearly that sugar which was made in a manner which is kosher for Pesach is permissible. Nonetheless, our Rebbeim have decided to adopt this *chumra* (not eating any sugar on Pesach) even nowadays. While we can never know their true reason, it should be noted that some respected *Halachic* sources also mention such a *chumra* even nowadays. There are also other circles where sugar wouldn't be used on Pesach even with a Pesach *hechsher*. When our Rebbe was asked directly why this custom wasn't incorporated in Sefer *Haminhagim*, he replied (among other explanations) that he was unsure whether this custom of the Rebbeim is a custom for everyone. The Rebbe explained that if one makes sure that the sugar is permissible to use for Pesach, one should be allowed to use it. Others boil the sugar with water before Pesach, which is a custom in some families and not mentioned in sources as an official Chabad custom. Still others avoid sugar altogether, as per the custom of the Rebbeim. The reasoning behind boiling sugar is as follows: *Chometz* may be nullified before Pesach in certain specific circumstances (beyond

the scope of this interview), whereas during Pesach it can never be nullified. If a cracker or *chometzdik* matzah has been inadvertently mixed with many pieces of matzah before Pesach (referred to as a mixture of *yavesh b'yavesh*), it would never be completely nullified because when Pesach arrives the bread will always, as it were, stand on its own and announce, "I'm here." This concept is called in *halachah chozer v'neur* (it has reawakened). There is a second type of mixture addressed in *halachah* called *lach b'lach*, referring to ingredients mixed together wherein the *chometz* and Pesach-permissible ingredient are totally indistinguishable from one another forever. In this case, the *chometz* ingredient has become totally nullified (*b'shishim*, i.e. the *chometz* ingredient comprises 1.6% or less in the mixture) before Pesach, as it will never stand alone as a *chometz* item. It is for this reason that matzos are baked always before Pesach; just in case there is some wheat which has sprouted (rendering some of the flour *chometz*) it will become nullified when all the flour is mixed together as one unit in the baked matzah. Back to our case of sugar, once sugar (prechecked for *chometz*) is combined and boiled with water, even if there were a miniscule grain of *chometz* in the sugar, it would never again be distinct from the permissible ingredients. Any possible minute amount of *chometz* in such a mixture may be nullified *l'chatchilah* before Pesach. In his *Shulchan Aruch*, the Alter Rebbe says regarding real *chometz* in a mixture that has been fused into a single entity and totally nullified (*lach b'lach*), that if one wishes, they may be *machmir* not to rely on the nullification of *chometz*, even though it is *lach b'lach*, but not to be *machmir* with others on this. Bottom line, there is no formal Lubavitch custom regarding sugar on Pesach.

#### IS PEELING ALL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES A CHABAD MINHAG?

There is no known *halachic* source for

peeling fruits. Nonetheless, this is an accepted custom among *chassidim* and many others. It is no different than not using food that touched the floor (explained below). The *minhag* could be seen as more relevant nowadays when many fruit are sprayed. Whatever fruits and vegetables we cannot peel, we do not use. Indeed, contemporary *poskim* state that even in the year of *shmittah* where one may not waste any part of the *shmittah* fruit, one may dispose of edible peels on Pesach.

#### CAN THE RAV EXPLAIN THE CUSTOM OF SOME TO USE SEPARATE KNIVES FOR PEELING AND CUTTING AND TO KEEP THESE AWAY FROM OTHER KITCHEN UTENSILS?

This is similar to the *minhag* of having a separate pot for eggs (mentioned in *Eshel Avrohom*), since they are cooked in their peels. However, I don't know if this can be fully explained, as the peeling knife usually ends up touching the actual fruit anyway. Nonetheless, if one has a *mesorah* of this *minhag*, it shouldn't be disregarded, as there were Gedolei Yisroel who practiced it. It could be that the idea was to aid in establishing a clear distinction between the peels and the fruit.

#### LETTUCE CANNOT BE PEELED, BUT SINCE WE DO EAT ROMAINE LETTUCE AT THE SEDER (WASHED, CHECKED AND DRIED), CAN WE ALSO EAT IT AT THE MEALS (ALSO WASHED AND CHECKED) IN SALADS? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

Technically, it is permissible to have a salad made from the checked Romaine lettuce as long as the outer leaves have been removed. This is a question of family *minhag*. (Parenthetically, it should be noted that a bigger issue than the fact that it can't be peeled is the real concern of bugs in the lettuce. If the lettuce is not checked properly it can be the cause of many serious Torah prohibitions both on Pesach and at other times.) The fact that we eat lettuce

at the *seder* is not a contradiction to those following the *minhag* of not eating lettuce on Pesach; at the *seder*, it's a mitzvah of *seder*. Similarly, there were great *tzadikim* who avoided matzah as much as possible on Pesach (after all, the biggest concern for *chometz* exists with matzah!), though many *poskim* advised against this *chumra*. However, no one would consider avoiding eating matzah at the *seder*. It is worthwhile to note that people sometimes contradict themselves in a different way regarding the peeling custom. They peel all fruits and vegetables in their homes, even for cooking, before Pesach, yet they drink wine and grape juice or other juices made of unpeeled fruit. (Yes, juices made of peeled fruit do exist.) The point is not to stop peeling fruit on Pesach: the point is to avoid being critical of others, because there is nothing wrong according to the strict *halachah* with peels on Pesach.

#### WHAT IS THE REASON SOME PEOPLE ONLY EAT PEELABLE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES THAT WERE AVAILABLE IN RUSSIA IN THE 1930'S?

To label the custom this way is an old joke; the practice has nothing to do with life in Russia. The reason some limit themselves to potatoes, yams, beets, carrots, onions, lemons, apples, bananas, oranges and pears (did I leave anything out?) on Pesach is because certain people hold a very broad definition of, and fervent wish to avoid, *kitniyos*. Some definitions are quite extreme. There is a *machlokes* as to whether coffee and cocoa are *kitniyos*. The Pri Megadim mentions those who had a *minhag* not to eat potatoes and the Chayei Adam actually forbade potatoes, categorizing them as *kitniyos*. However, Klal Yisroel has long settled this issue in favor of potatoes. A modern-day *machlokes* over cottonseed exists, but most authorities rule that there is no question of *kitniyos* in cottonseed oil. Some people became so extreme that if a vegetable or fruit contains many seeds, they removed it from their Pesach shopping list.

However, the *halachic* definition of *kitniyos* (in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch) does not rule out any of the above foods. Nonetheless, there happens to be some truth to the joke. The Belzer Rebbe, Reb Aron, wouldn't eat cucumbers on Pesach because his ancestors didn't eat them. He explained that since even a minute amount of *chometz* is forbidden, we need extra *siyata d'Shmaya*. "Whereas for the potatoes my ancestors already davened, this needs new tefillos; thus, I'd rather go on the paved road." However, the Belzer Rebbe also didn't fly on airplanes for the same reason...

The Tzemach Tzedek said not to eat radishes on Pesach, without giving a reason. There is an ancient *minhag* not to eat garlic on Pesach; the Pri Megadim writes that he does not know the reason for it. In his Shulchan Aruch, the Alter Rebbe brings a case where garlic is used on Pesach, and from the context we can perhaps infer that the Alter Rebbe had no problem with its use. Some have testified that in the city of Lubavitch garlic was used on Pesach. Nevertheless, there are many Lubavitchers who do not use garlic on Pesach.

#### IF FOOD IS DROPPED ON THE FLOOR, MAY IT BE WASHED AND USED? WHEN MY BEST FOUR PEELERS FALL ON THE FLOOR, DO I REALLY NEED TO WAIT UNTIL NEXT YEAR TO USE THEM AGAIN?

A common but not official Chabad *minhag* (practiced by many others as well) is not to use any food that touches the floor. The same applies to utensils as well. If necessary, one may wash and immediately use a utensil that fell on the floor. This does not present a *halachic* problem. However, common custom is to put away the utensils until the following year. While this custom is not mentioned outright in *halachah*, some narrow support can be found in respected *Halachic* sources, and it's very similar to the *minhag* of peeling vegetables and fruits.

#### WHAT IS THE HALACHAH IF I MARRY A MAN WITH FEWER CHUMROS THAN

I WAS RAISED WITH? DO I HAVE TO KEEP MY *CHUMROS* FROM MY PARENTS' HOUSE, OR CAN I DROP THEM? WHAT IF I MARRY SOMEONE WITH MORE *CHUMROS*, AND HE DOESN'T WANT TO MOVE IN TO MY PARENTS' HOUSE FOR YOM TOV BECAUSE THAT WOULD MEAN DROPPING HIS *CHUMROS*?

Virtually all *poskim* agree that the woman follows her husband's *chumros* after the wedding, whether they are more lenient or more strict than the way she was raised. If the husband is less strict than the wife's family, the wife is permitted to keep the *chumros* from her parents' home if her husband does not mind. If there is any conflict, one should get advice from an experienced Rav or *mashpia*. Regarding *chumros*, the effect on *sholom bayis* must be taken into consideration. A family can fall apart *chas v'sholom* because of a couple's lack of respect and appreciation for each other, not because of religious differences. However, it should be pointed out that this is being written for a women's magazine. Any man reading this should think carefully and consult with a *mashpia* or Rav before insisting that his wife add *chumros* that he was raised with. 1) Is it a real *minhag* with a sound basis? 2) Is it going to make his wife "call out to Hashem because of the work"? 3) Is he presenting it to her as a suggestion with room for her input, i.e. not "I insist," but rather, "This is really important for me, I hope it won't be too difficult for you"? 4) Is he sure that he is as strict and demanding on himself as he is on his wife? Some people have a family *hiddur* not to use dish soap on Pesach, only salt water mixed with lemon juice. A husband who wishes to incorporate this *hiddur* might consider offering to wash the dishes and pots himself.

DO I NEED TO BUY BRAND NEW SIDDURIM EVERY YEAR FOR PESACH?

There is no need to buy new siddurim each year for Pesach, so long as last year's Pesach siddurim were stored away from the *chometz*. You may also use siddurim that

were not stored away if they were never used by the table throughout the year and have been checked to ensure that they are totally clean from *chometz*. It should be noted however that the Rebbe once spoke (*Sefer Hasichos* 5748 1:343) about buying the children new siddurim for Yom Tov, to make them happy.

REGARDING BUYING FRUITS, VEGETABLES, OR MEAT ON CHOL HAMOED: IF THE ITEM IS PURCHASED FROM A LOCAL FRUM STORE WHOSE OWNER SOLD HIS *CHOMETZ* PROPERLY BEFORE PESACH, IS THERE ANY POTENTIAL PROBLEM IN BUYING THERE?

There is certainly no *halachic* problem in buying things that are needed for Yom Tov - for example, a bag of potatoes, or clothing an adult needs to wear on Yom Tov - if there is no *chometz* in the store. The Rebbe Rashab once needed to buy certain materials for medical purposes to use on Pesach, and he requested that they be purchased before Pesach from a store which contained no *chometz*. This was his personal conduct. Some people will not buy these items in a store in which there is actual *chometz*, even if it has been sold properly. Nevertheless, according to *halachah*, it is permissible to buy items needed for Yom Tov on Chol Hamoed from a store owner who has sold his *chometz* properly. (According to the laws of Chol Hamoed, shopping for items not needed for Yom Tov is highly questionable altogether.)

AM I ALLOWED TO SMELL *CHOMETZ* ON PESACH?

It is forbidden to smell *chometz* on Pesach even if it belongs to a gentile (unless one has no choice and it's unintentional). The Alter Rebbe brings this *halachah* clearly in his Shulchan Aruch. In the case of smelling perfume, there are other considerations and factors permitting one to be lenient.

DO COUNTERS NEED TO BE BOTH KASHERED AND COVERED?

According to basic *halachah*, if one covers, one does not need to *kasher*, and if one *kashers*, one does not need to cover. Why do people both *kasher* and cover, despite the fact that both are not required? This is all part of the spirit of undertaking extra *chumros*. One reason is due to a concern (which was common in the wooden counters that were prevalent in days of old) that the area wasn't sufficiently cleaned and a minute amount of real *chometz* might have remained somewhere on the counter. Also, some counters are made of materials which not all agree can be *kashered*. The *halachah* is that areas that became *chometzdik* through fire cannot become Pesachdik by *kashering* with water alone. These areas might need a higher level of *kashering*, such as blowtorching, but then, blowtorching might destroy the surface. In such a case (which isn't very common with kitchen surfaces), after *kashering* with water, people would cover the area. In addition, *kashering* with water is supposed to be done in a pot, a *kli rishon*. Pouring the water over a stone onto the surface is a second-choice solution. Since this is not the preferred practice, people cover the surface. Finally, it is a *hiddur* not to rely on *kashering chometzdik* items altogether and to purchase new utensils especially for Pesach. The Shulchan Aruch says to buy new knives, and some apply this ruling to all vessels and to covering their counters as well. Why would people not simply cover their surfaces without *kashering*? First, the *halachah* is that *chometzdik* utensils are supposed to be locked away. Accordingly, we are not satisfied with merely covering the *chometzdik* counters, rather we *kasher* them first. Second, in case the covering tears or moves, there could be a *chometz* problem. Third, heat might pass through the covering into the surface below and then back above. Especially problematic is a case where liquid penetrates the covering. Therefore, in order to be extra careful, many people both *kasher* and cover surfaces.

AFTER THE WALLS NEAR THE STOVE ARE WASHED, DO THEY HAVE TO BE

COVERED AS WELL?

There is no real reason to cover walls, since we don't eat from our walls. People may cover their walls if they wish. In case one is concerned that a hot *chometz* pot has touched the backsplash or a wall near the stove, and then a Pesachdik pot would touch the same spot, there is room in *halachah* to say to cover the area.

AFTER THE REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER SHELVES, DOOR, ETC., ARE THOROUGHLY WASHED, MUST THEY BE COVERED IN ADDITION? IF SO, WHAT COVERING MATERIAL IS BEST?

Covering the inside of the refrigerator has a real, practical reason, since *chometzdik* food is actually put there. Because we are not allowed even a *mashehu* of *chometz* on Pesach, and because it is very hard to clean every crevice of the refrigerator, people cover it to be safe. In days of old, when they stored food in wooden closets, the Maharil cautioned to cover those closets used during the year for *chometz*, even though they were cleaned for Pesach. Covering with foil may lead to transgressing the important *halachic* prohibition of *bal tashchis* since foil is known to cause refrigerators to break. If a refrigerator breaks down during Yom Tov and all the food spoils, this greatly compounds the issue. Therefore, plastic refrigerator lining is a good choice for covering.

IF CLOTHING HAS BEEN WASHED IN DETERGENT OR DRY CLEANED, DO POCKETS NEED TO BE CHECKED BEFORE PESACH?

There is no need to check the pockets of clothing which has been washed in soap or dry cleaned before Pesach (rendering all possible *chometz* inedible). This only applies to clothing which was not worn afterwards, so that there wasn't a chance to put fresh *chometz* into the pockets after cleaning.

IN WHAT CASES MAY I DO LAUNDRY DURING CHOL HAMOED? SOME DON'T AT ALL, BUT I CAN'T AFFORD

TO BUY 8-9 YOM TOV OUTFITS FOR MY CHILDREN. THE CLOTHING THEY WEAR TO THE SEDORIM, AND ON CHOL HAMOED, GETS DIRTY?

The Torah mandates that we wash ourselves and our clothing before Yom Tov so that we should be clean and fresh for the holiday, and not in a state of “*menuval*,” i.e. filthy and contemptible. Shulchan Aruch forbids doing laundry on Chol Hamoed, even if done by a non-Jew, in order that we should be extra particular to enter Yom Tov with fresh, clean clothing. The exceptions include clothing for small children who soil themselves very often: one may do any amount of laundry for them, as there is no limit to how many changes of clothing they will need in a day. For older children who soil themselves but not as frequently, one may only wash what they need to wear right now, not what might be needed in a few days. One must wash only what is immediately needed at the time it is needed. There is no reason to buy 8-9 outfits for each child in order to avoid doing laundry for them. For an adult, however, it is preferable to buy new clothing on Chol Hamoed rather than to resort to washing dirty clothing.

IS IT IMPORTANT FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN TO WEAR YOM TOV CLOTHING, RATHER THAN ROBES, AT THE SEDORIM? DURING THE WEEK I ALWAYS WEAR AN APRON, AND ON SHABBOS A DARK ROBE, BECAUSE EVERY TIME I AM AROUND FOOD, MY CLOTHES GET DIRTY. AM I GIVING SUFFICIENT KAVOD TO YOM TOV?

As long as the robes are appropriate for Yom Tov and are totally *tzniusdik*, there is no problem for women and girls to wear robes to the *sedarim* and in the house. *Tznius* and Yom Tov suitability are high priorities for women’s clothing at home. There is no *halachah* that one must wear outdoor clothing in the house on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

SHAMPOOS, MAKEUP, VITAMINS: IS

IT REALLY PERMISSIBLE TO USE ONLY THOSE IN THE “LIST”? WHY WOULD THEY BE *CHOMETZDIK*, SINCE THEY’RE NOT EDIBLE AT ALL?

According to *halachah*, if *chometz* is *nifsal mei’achilas kelev* (unfit for canine consumption) it is not considered *chometz*. Such *chometz* is considered, in the words of the Gemara, “*mere dust*.” If it is fit for canine consumption, even though it is inedible for a human, it is no different than yeast which is specifically forbidden by the Torah on Pesach, since it has the ability to ferment bread. The definition, however, of *nifsal* is not that straightforward. The fact that contemporary norms render something inedible doesn’t mean that *halachah* would treat it the same. Some things are considered in *halachah* fit for human consumption, though nowadays people would be repulsed by the thought of eating them. Many products, such as perfume, contain pure denatured alcohol. Some opinions consider denatured alcohol suitable for consumption, since some alcoholics would drink this with slight additions. *Poskim* also address the fact that in today’s day and age it can be restored to regular drinkable alcohol through the addition of certain chemicals. However, it should be noted that some products cannot be reconstituted as drinkable alcohol, especially products using completely denatured alcohol (CDA). Examples include nail polish, hand lotion, shoe polish and paint. Another consideration is the minority view that the exemption of *nifsal* applies only to items that are normally consumed, not an item that has initially been produced as a non-food item. Alternatively, since dogs would not consume even conventional drinkable alcohol, we should not apply the regular exemption of *nifsal* to alcohol, according to this view. All of this applies primarily to medications, cosmetics or toiletries that are in liquid form such as perfume, hair spray and deodorants. Another issue with perfume specifically: Some *poskim* are of the view that although the product itself

is *nifsal*, it can't be classified as such, since the fragrance added to the base product is fit for consumption and the primary purpose of perfume is to exude a fragrance. While the consensus of Acharonim seems to be lenient about some of these issues, the common custom has been to follow the more stringent views regarding Pesach. It should be pointed out, however, that at times the alcohol contained in many products is from corn or synthetic (not from grain, therefore not a problem for Pesach).

#### WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE MACHMIR EVEN WITH CREAMS AND SOAP CONTAINING CHOMETZ?

The fact that anointing can be considered a form of drinking is the basis for being *machmir*. For a variety of reasons which are beyond the scope of this interview, mainstream *halachah* doesn't recognize this issue as a legitimate concern. (Even if the hand-cream might touch Pesachdike food, it would also not be a serious issue, since the intention isn't to eat the inedible cream. The *halachah*, mentioned in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch as well, is that one may use on Pesach ink which contains *chometz* *dik* beer since the ink was rendered inedible before the z'man on Erev Pesach. One need not be concerned with the fact that one might accidentally place the quill of ink in the mouth, as even so nothing would be wrong with that, since there is no actual intention to eat the *chometz*.) Nonetheless, *Yisroel kedoshim heim*, and a common *minhag* exists to be extra scrupulous in these issues. All agree that it is recommended to use a fresh stick of lipstick for Pesach, since it is often inadvertently ingested when eating [*chometz*] food during the year and can come in contact with real edible *chometz*. Indeed, this applies to any items that are normally placed in the mouth such as a toothbrush used throughout the year. It is common practice to be *machmir* with all items that are taken orally, such as vitamins, natural remedies, mouthwash and toothpaste.

#### DOES THIS MEAN THAT MEDICINE SHOULDN'T BE TAKEN UNLESS IT HAS BEEN VERIFIED TO BE CHOMETZ-FREE?

It depends. If an ingested medicine contains *chometz* but doesn't have a good taste, whenever possible, one should rather use an alternative medication which is *chometz*-free. If a *chometz*-free medication is not available, a sick person may take the medication, provided it has no good taste. However, flavored medications, chewable pills, or pleasant-tasting cough syrups are generally considered edible food and should not be taken on Pesach, unless one's life is in danger or may be in danger, or it has been determined that the medicine is *chometz* free. (Examples of potential *sakanah* include: abnormal blood pressure, heart condition, depression, a woman in active labor or within seven days after birth, or even regular infections.) Any medication taken on a regular basis for chronic conditions should not be discontinued on Pesach without first consulting with the doctor. It should be noted that individuals who are in a state of potential *sakanah* should not switch medications without express approval from one's Rav and from one's doctor. As a general rule, one should not refrain from taking any required medication even if it does contain *chometz*, without first consulting one's physician and Rav.

#### REGARDING A PESACH PRODUCT I USE, SUCH AS DISH SOAP OR TOOTHPASTE, MUST I BUY THE JEWISH BRAND IF IT DOESN'T DO A GOOD CLEANING JOB OR IS DISTASTEFUL, WHEREAS THE NON-JEWISH, BUT CERTIFIED FOR PESACH, BRAND WORKS WELL?

This issue is relevant year-round. It is a mitzvah to support a fellow Jew unless his product is extremely expensive or not practical. When it comes to Pesach, is the Jewish brand better to buy on Pesach – is it more kosher? Being that both brands are certified for Pesach, unless you know specific differences, it is difficult to say one

is more kosher than the other and you are permitted to use the non-Jewish brand, if it's more convenient and more practical.

#### HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO USE ONLY SCHMALTZ AND DO WITHOUT OIL?

According to the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, on Pesach one is permitted to use oil. The issues here are *chumra* and *minhag*. First, many people don't want to use any processed food. Regarding processed food, some only use the bare minimum, and some consider oil to be in the category of bare minimum. Also, take into account that some foods are more processed than others (more about this later). The Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch states that oil made of *kitniyos* is forbidden. There is a debate whether, since *kitniyos* oil was forbidden, all *nonkitniyos* oil should be forbidden as well so that people will avoid confusing the two. The Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch states clearly, in parentheses, that this is not the case. In America before the *nesius*, our Rebbe was asked which oil Anash use for Pesach. The Rebbe wrote in a telegram in English (reprinted and translated in Hebrew in *Igros Kodesh XXI:96*), "Anash use Nutola [name of a company] fat." Some have a tradition not to use oil, but we cannot say it is forbidden.

#### IS IT IMPORTANT TO AVOID MILK AND DAIRY PRODUCTS ON PESACH?

Some avoid dairy on Pesach because of the processed foods issue. Additionally, there is a *halachic* discussion regarding milk from cows that ate *chometz* on Pesach, especially if they were milked within 24 hours of the time they ate *chometz*. Today this issue is usually not relevant because the milk we receive is from cows milked before Pesach. Furthermore, at many *cholov* Yisroel dairies, workers stop feeding the cows with *chometz* for a period of time before Pesach. Nevertheless, some people continue to keep the old *minhagim* despite technological changes today. As we said earlier, it is written in *sichos* that the Rebbe Rashab drank milk on Pesach.

#### WHY DO SOME PEOPLE AVOID EATING PROCESSED FOOD ON PESACH? IS THIS CONNECTED WITH NOT EATING OUTSIDE ONE'S OWN HOME?

The custom not to eat in others' homes on Pesach is a *minhag* mentioned in many sources, including the writings of the Sefardi ga'on, Rabbi Chaim Palaggi (who passed away over 150 years ago). Some link this with the *korban* Pesach where only "members" who were "subscribed" in advance were permitted to eat from the *korban* of each group. In fact, the Gemara mentions that everyone brought their own knife! The prevailing Chabad custom dating from the Alter Rebbe (described in *Hayom Yom*) is not to offer visitors food on Pesach, but to allow them to help themselves. The Frierdiker Rebbe explains that we do not put any pressure on the visitor because he might have *hiddurim*. He may be willing to eat at one home but not at another, and we don't want to offend anyone, host or guest. The Rebbe once wrote to someone that it is not recommended to travel away from home for Pesach because it is difficult to be *mehader* in someone else's home. Our Rebbe's bris took place on Chol Hamoed Pesach at the home of his grandfather, Rabbi Meir Shlomo Yanovsky, Rav of Nikolayev. A chossid, Reb Asher Grossman, didn't want to eat at the bris. The Rav told him, "You really deserve a serious telling off for refusing to eat at the home of the Rav, but I can't give it to you because you saved my life." When Rav Meir Shlomo was deathly ill with typhus, Reb Asher stood outside the door and read aloud one particularly inspiring chapter of Tanya (*Iggeres Hakodesh Ch. II*) day after day, giving the Rav the spiritual strength to continue fighting for his life. Clearly, the Rebbe's grandfather felt this chossid was being unduly *machmir* under the circumstances. We can learn from it the importance of striking the proper personal balance in our conduct on Pesach. Pesach is a family holiday when people are home. Moreover, the mitzvah from the Torah for a father to teach his son about Pesach is

achieved more successfully at home than away. The question of eating outside one's own home is compounded in the case of processed food (depending on the product and *hechsher*). Processed food has not only been made outside of our home; it has been processed in a commercial setting. When a *sh'ailah* arises on processed food, a serious financial loss can sometimes occur for the company, and thus a *Rav* might have to be lenient according to *halachah* due to the monetary loss. Of course, this issue is equally relevant, or even more relevant, to those who participate in the Pesach getaways at hotels. *kashering* a hotel is a complicated process and a very high level of vigilance and supervision is required if everything produced in the premises is to be totally acceptable. Some processed foods are so clean that one almost can't go wrong in buying them. In fact, sometimes the processed food has less chance of being *chometzdik* than the home-made version. Other foods, if processed, theoretically could involve serious potential *sh'ailos* of *chometz* mixtures, especially in a non-dedicated Pesach factory. One example is the use of unprocessed *schmaltz* on Pesach versus the commercially produced oils available on the market. *Schmaltz* can come from chickens that were surrounded by grain at the chicken farm. Those who use *schmaltz* should always ensure that it's grain-free. In fact, many families make sure to cook or fry the *schmaltz* before Pesach – and some do this with all their chicken bought for Pesach – so that any potential *chometz* would be nullified before Yom Tov (as we discussed earlier in relation to boiling sugar).

#### IS GIVING PROCESSED FOODS TO CHILDREN PERMISSIBLE, OR A GOOD IDEA?

There is a difference in *halachah* between adults and children, and we do not necessarily inconvenience children with adult *chumros*. Of course, we do not give them *gebrochts l'chatchilah*. Still, it is good for their *chinuch*, and a practical lesson in *iskafya* and *bittul*, when they do not eat

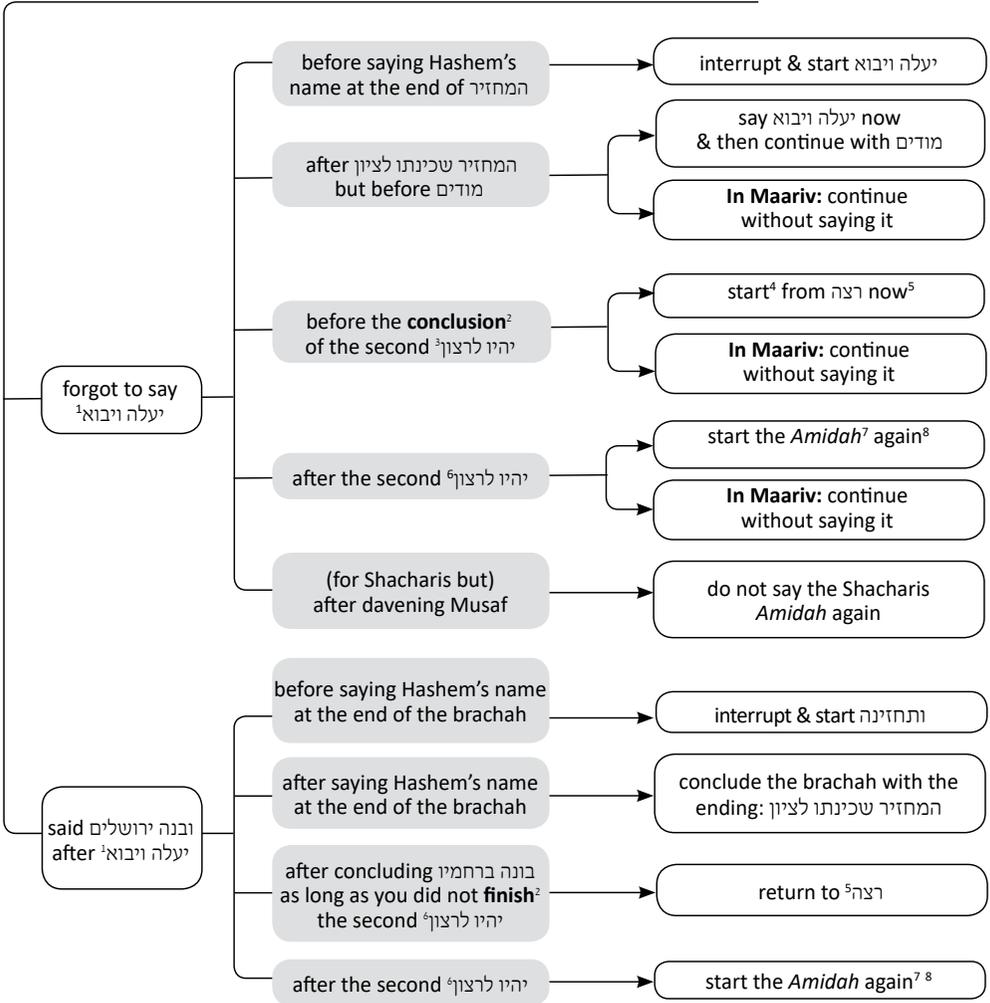
every type of treat they receive throughout the year. Then what do we give them? The answer to this varies according to the individual family and its culture. While we don't want to overindulge the children, we also don't want to deprive them to the point that they rebel in an opposite, undesirable direction. When coming to a decision about nosh for children, we adults might ask ourselves a question: Why do we need to eat all that garbage, anyhow?

#### WOULD THE RAV LIKE TO SHARE ANY CLOSING THOUGHTS?

The Shulchan Aruch discusses the mitzvah *mid'Oraisa* of *simchas* Yom Tov, whereby a husband needs to make his wife and children happy on Yom Tov. He accomplishes this by buying clothing and jewelry for his wife, and treats for the children. The Rebbe suggested (on Purim 5747) that we buy new Haggados containing beautiful pictures for the children. This is a *chassidische, ruchniusdik* version of treats for children. We wish each other a *kosheren, freilichen* Pesach; we need to realize that it's important that our Pesach contains both aspects. It should be 100% kosher and it should bring us true *simchah*. If we work overly hard on one, it might come at the expense of the other. A proper balance between kosher and *freilich* is the key. B'gashmius, it's almost impossible to be protected from a *mashehu chometz*. The reason we are successful is because Hashem provides us with an extra measure of protection provided by the malachim (See Ohr LaShamayim Parashas Tzav). All the *chumros* we do are our *keli* to merit that special *siyata d'Shmaya*. May Hashem give us a true kosher and *freilich* Pesach, with the ability to wrap our lettuce and matzah with real lamb from the *korban* Pesach, with the coming of Moshiach, now *mamash!* THANK YOU VERY MUCH, RABBI BRAUN!

# “Oops! I made a mistake...”

## Rosh Chodesh Amidah • Maariv, Shacharis & Minchah



### Notes

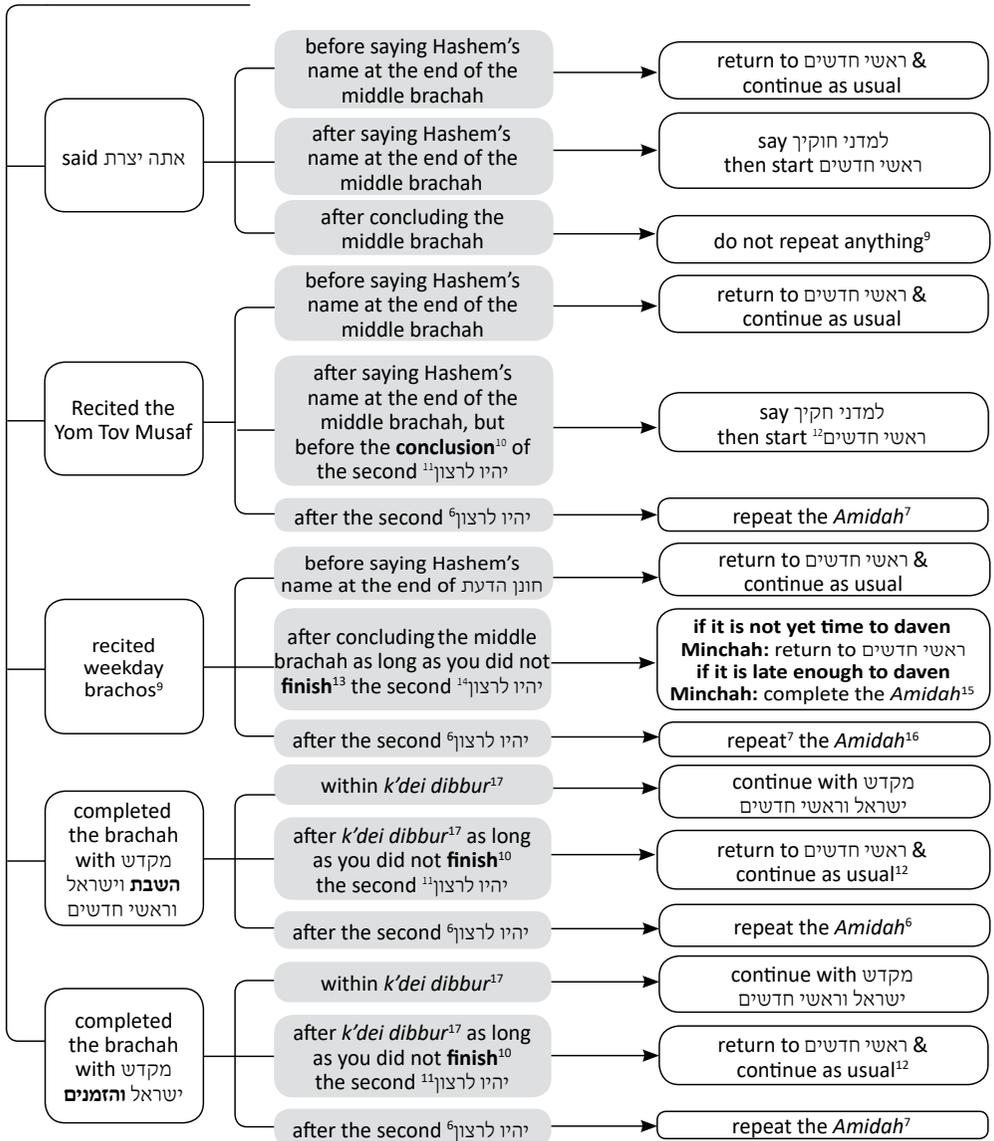
1. or if you are unsure what you said.
2. Even if he already said Hashem's Name you should Stop and go back to רצה.
3. If you started בצדוק and the Chazzan Reached *Kedusha* you should answer and you can then go back to רצה.
4. If you mistakenly said *ya'aleh veyavo* and then concluded the brachah of *Vesechazenah*, you are *yotzeh*.
5. If you remembered after reciting Hashem's name at the end of the brachah of the *brachah* of הטוב שמך or ישראל בשלום את עמו המברך say למדני and go back to רצה.
6. and you have also made the decision not to lengthen the *tefillah* with extra requests and supplications.
7. You must first wait *k'dei hiluch daled amos* (the time it takes to walk six feet) after you say *וכי שיבנה* before restarting the *Amidah*.
8. Before davening again you may make an intrusion. If it's for Shacharis, and you already removed your *tefillin*, it's proper to don them again before repeating the *Amidah*. If you remembered after the time has arrived for the next *tefillah*, say the *Amidah*, and then repeat it to make up for the earlier one. The earlier *tefillah* can only be compensated as long as you are occupied with the following one; once you have finished davening, you are no longer able to make it up. See details (in Hebrew) on [www.asktherav.com #25750](http://www.asktherav.com #25750). However, if you erred in Shacharis, and you already recited Musaf, do not repeat the *amida*.

What did I do?

When did I remember?

Now I should...

**Musaf Amidah**



**Notes**

If, on *motzoei Rosh Chodesh*, you realize that you made a mistake in Minchah that day, you may repeat the *Amidah* after Maariv, but only as a *tefillas nedavah* (a "bonus", i.e., non-obligatory).

9. if you concluded in the correct way with מקדש ישראל וראשי חדשים. It is still best to listen to the *chazzan's* repetition with the intent to be *yotzeh* through him.

If you concluded with מקדש ישראל וראשי חדשים: within *k'dei dibbur*, say the correct version immediately. If *k'dei*

*dibbur* has passed, go back to ראשי חדשים.

10. Even if he already said Hashem's Name you should Stop and go back to ראשי חדשים.

11. If you started וצור אלקי נצור and the Chazzan Reached *Kedusha* you should answer and you can then go back to ראשי חדשים.

12. If you remembered after reciting Hashem's name at the end of the brachah of הטוב שמך or הטוב שמו and the *chazzan* said, למדני חוקין, המברך את עמי ישראל בשלום or הטוב שמך and go back to ראשי חדשים.

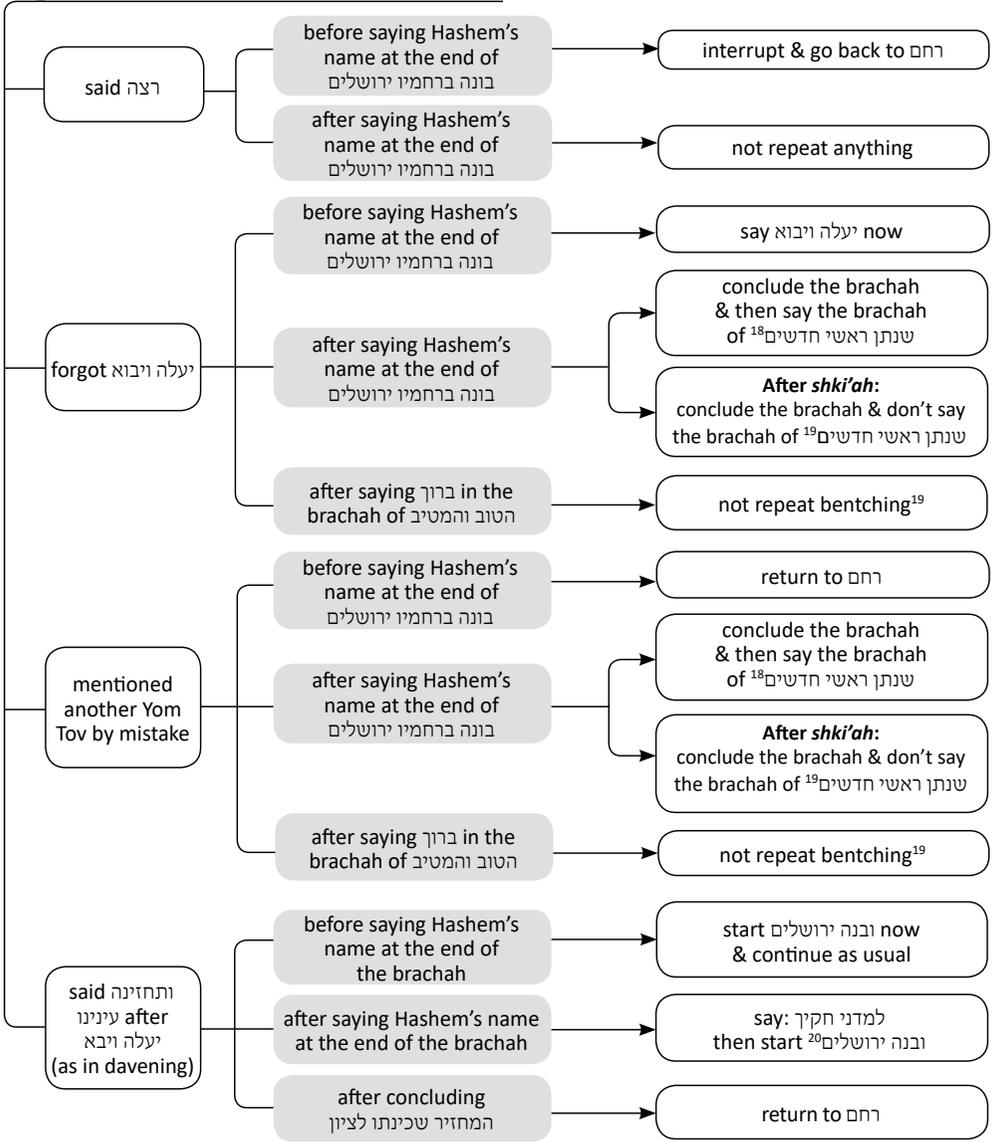
13. Even if you already said Hashem's name. *Hashem Tzuri*

What did I do?

When did I remember?

Now I should...

**Birchas Hamazon • Rosh Chodesh**



**Notes**

14. If you started נצור אלקי נצור and the Chazzan Reached *Kedusha* you should answer and you can then go back to ראשי חדשים (If it's not already possible to daven Minchah).

15. This *tefillah* will then be considered Minchah; go back and daven *Musaf*. (You may daven *Musaf* at any time throughout the day.)

16. If it is already possible to daven Minchah, it will be

considered as such.

17. a short span of uninterrupted time it would take to say the words, "Shalom alecha, Mori v'Rabbi".

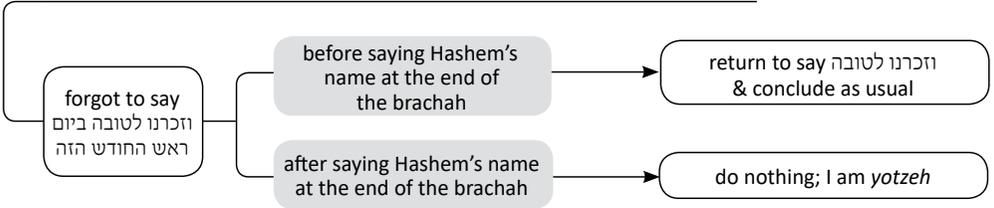
18. as stated in the siddur (for Rosh Chodesh): ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם שנתן ראשי חדשים לעמו ישראל לזכרון **without** the conclusion.

What did I do?

When did I remember?

Now I should...

**Me'ein Shalosh • Rosh Chodesh**



**Notes**

19. If you did not realize that you are not meant to repeat benching and you started saying it again, stop wherever you are currently holding—even in middle of a brachah.

20. If you concluded the brachah with בונה ברחמי ירושלים, you are *yotzeh*.

# THE 4 QUESTIONS NO CHILD SHOULD HAVE TO ASK THIS PESACH.

1 Are the chocolate lebens too expensive?

2 Will I get a new Yom Tov outfit?

3 Is there enough for me to get my own Ka'ara?

4 Why does mommy look so worried?

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