



נפלאות הבריא

84 Pesach Halachos

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84 Pesach Halachos to Know

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THIRTY DAYS BEFORE

1. Rav Chaim Kanievsky writes (Shoneh Halachos 695:12) that before we start the Purim Seudah, we should learn the halachos of both Purim, and believe it or not – Pesach! Rav Menachem Mendel of Vishiva brings an allusion to this from Parshas Nitzavim – The verse states, *m'chotev aitzecha ad sho'ev maimecha* – that the laws of drawing water (*mayim shelanu* for Matzah baking) must be studied from Purim – where the tree that was eventually used hang Haman haRasha was prepared.
2. Moshe Rabbeinu enacted that we must study the *halachos* of Pesach 30 days before it begins as well as on Pesach itself.
3. A minority view (Ran and Rashba) has understood this to mean that if two students pose questions, one on Pesach laws and the other on another law, we answer the one on Pesach first — but there is no obligation to actually study the halachos 30 days before Pesach. This view has been rejected by the majority of *poskim* who rule that indeed we must actually study the *halachos* of Pesach – both 30 days before it begins as well as on Pesach itself (SA 429:1 and MB #2). There is even a view (Pnei Yehoshua Psachim 6a “V’amar Rabbi Yehudah) that the obligation of studying thirty days before the Yom Tov is actually a biblical requirement!
4. The Mishna Brurah also writes (436:32) that within the thirty day period before Pesach one must be careful in anything that

one does not to leave Chometz there in a manner that it will not be cleaned easily.

5. When one cleans out Chometz within the thirty day period before Pesach one fulfills the Mitzvah of "Tashbisu" removing Chometz (MB 445:8). It, therefore, makes sense to do the cleaning within this time period as opposed to starting earlier because one gets a Mitzvah. According to the Pnei Yehoshua one would be fulfilling a Torah Mitzvah. If, however, it will not be possible to fully clean within the thirty days then one should start earlier.

WHY WE OBSERVE MITZVOS

6. The main reason that we observe *mitzvos* is because it is the *Retzon Hashem*. Nonetheless, it is important to understand and appreciate some of the reasons that are brought down that explain the *mitzvos*. The Rambam writes that this is, in fact, an obligation.
7. Pesach is known as the "Rosh Hashanah of *emunah*" — the New Year for faith and belief in Hashem. *Chazal* tell us that it was solely on account of our *emunah* in Hashem that we were redeemed from Egypt, and that it will be solely on account of *emunah* in Hashem that we will be redeemed in the times of Mashiach.
8. Since this is the essence of the Yom Tov of Pesach, one of the three main positive *mitzvos* of Pesach is to plant and entrench *emunah* — belief in Hashem. The *emunah* is planted within ourselves and within others through the *mitzvah* called "*sipur yetzias Mitzrayim* — the retelling of the Exodus from Egypt," as it states, "*V'higadeta l'vincha* — And you shall relate it to your son."

9. Our Sages further tell us that *kol ha'marbeh l'saper...harei zeh meshubach* — the more we discuss the Exodus or the *mitzvah*, the more praiseworthy we are. Why is this so? In regard to all other *mitzvos*, once the *mitzvah* has been fulfilled, that is it — it ends. Here, however, the *mitzvah* Reb Shalom Noach Berzovsky, *zt"l*, the Slonimer Rebbe, explains that the *mitzvah* is a continuous one precisely because it is the means of imbuing the heart of each and every Jew with *emunah* throughout the year.
10. No matter who the person is, the *mitzvah* never ends: *Afilu kulanu chachamim, kulanu nevonim...*the greatest of Sages are also obligated in this ever-continuous *mitzvah* because they, too, need the boost in *emunah* that is obtained from Pesach.
11. There are infinite depths to *emunah* — thus the means of instilling this *emunah* is also infinite.
12. What is *emunah*? The *Nesivos Shalom* describes three separate areas:
 - Belief in Hashem as Creator of the world, which the righteous gentiles of the world also believe.
 - Belief in Hashem's *hashgachah pratis* (Divine Providence) — that Hashem takes the time and “effort” to involve Himself in the details of our lives here on earth.
 - The fact that we, *Klal Yisrael*, have been chosen for a unique and Divine role and mission.
13. All three aspects of *emunah* are part of the Pesach experience.
 - All the *nissim* we experienced point to Hashem as the Creator of the world.

- The 10 *makkos* show that there is *hashgachah pratis*.
 - *Yetzias Mitzrayim* itself, and the subsequent revelation of the Torah to the Children of Israel, indicate Israel's unique role and mission.
14. We should utilize this special Yom Tov to increase our *emunah* in all three areas. We must also remember that the Gemara tells us (*Sotah* 11a) that it was in the merit of the righteous women that the Jewish people were redeemed. What did they do? They demonstrated remarkable *emunah* and continued having children.
 15. The other two positive *mitzvos* are to get rid of all *chametz* on the 14th of Nissan and to eat matzah on the night of Pesach, the 15th of Nissan.
 16. *Chametz* figuratively represents the *yetzer hara*. The *yetzer hara* tries to take us away from *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* and undermine our *emunah*. We should therefore get rid of anything within us that undermines *emunah*. This is one of the reasons suggested as to why *chametz* is prohibited *b'mashehu* — in any tiny amount. Rashi tells us that *Chazal* forbade *chametz* in any amount because the prohibition of eating it involves an *issur kareis*.
 17. Matzah is described by the *Zohar* (Vol. II, 183b) as a *michlah d'mehemnusah* — a food of *emunah*.
 18. We therefore see that all three positive *mitzvos* of Pesach deal directly with *emunah*.

MONTH OF NISSAN

19. During the month of Nissan, we do not fast — not even for the *yahrtzeit* of a parent. We do not recite the prayer of *Tachanun* nor do we deliver eulogies at funerals. Also, the special funeral *Kaddish* is not said — only the regular *Kaddish*. All this is because most of the month is filled with days of *kedushah* — holiness. It may also be because the month of Nissan is when Mashiach will come.
20. There is an obligation that begins in the month of Nissan to ensure that all other members of our community have funds so that they can purchase matzah or flour for matzah. This obligation goes back to the time of the Gemara. Whoever does not give to this is considered as if he has spilled blood. According to the *Mishnah Berurah*, the Rema adds that there is a *minhag* to give them the flour itself. This *minhag* is to make obtaining matzah for them even easier. If one knows that his or her relative is poor, the relative is given funds before anyone else. This is called Maos Chittim or Kimcha d'Pischa.
21. Figuratively, since matzah increases *emunah*, we should look to ensure that all other members of the community have what they need to increase their *emunah*.
22. During the month of Nissan, the blessing on fruit trees is recited. The blessing is: "*BAH EMH shelo chaser beOlamu klum u'varah vo brios tovos v'ilanos tovos lehanos bahem bnei adam.*" It may be recited on Shabbos or Yom Tov. Women recite this *berachah*, too. Ideally, it should be said in the company of two other people because of *b'rov am hadras Melech* and ideally it should be said before two trees. However, neither of these requirements is absolutely necessary.

23. There is a *minhag* not to eat matzah from Rosh Chodesh Nissan until Pesach itself. This refers only to *kosher l'Pesach matzos*. *Chametz matzos* are permitted. Some have the *minhag* not to eat matzah from 30 days before Pesach until the Yom Tov. All people, however, are forbidden to eat matzah on the day of Erev Pesach itself.
24. Shabbos HaGadol is the Shabbos that comes before Pesach. It is a *minhag* in *Klal Yisrael* to attend a *shiur* on this Shabbos that reviews the *halachos* of Pesach so that the holiday will be observed properly. The main reason that it is called Shabbos HaGadol is because of the great miracle that occurred then. We had the sheep which the *Mitzrim* We were going to offer the sheep as a *korban*, and that Shabbos the Egyptians said nothing. This was a tremendous *neis*.
25. The Gemara in *Bava Metzia* 32a discusses the *passuk* that if one sees a friend with a heavy load, one should surely help him. Certainly then, morally and philosophically, if you see your parents cleaning for Pesach, you should certainly help them.

WHERE TO SEARCH

26. Chazal ordained that on the 14th of Nissan a search be conducted in all the *chorim usedakim* – all the holes and cracks. Figuratively, since Chometz represents the Yetzer HaRah, we should also look to eliminate any presence of the Yetzer HaRah within the holes and cracks of ourselves. This means, not just the obvious places, but even deep within our *neshamos*.
27. The Gemorah discusses the concept of *Mapoles* (Psachim 8b) – a dangerous wreckage, where there is no obligation to search for Chometz. It is said in the name of Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l, that there is no obligation to move a heavy

item in order to search for Chometz, just like the case of Mapoles.

28. From the strict halachic point of view there is no obligation to search for perurim – crumbs of chometz. However, *Yisroel Kedoshim Haim* – Jews are holy – and they clean their homes of all Chometz (MB 442:28).
29. There is no obligation to clean the back or front yard of your house because there is an assumption that the birds will eat the Chometz (MB 433:27). Even though this is a debate in the Poskim, we are lenient. However, if it is already the 14th if Nissan and the Chometz is still there, it should be cleaned.
30. The laundry room and stairwell of an apartment house or shared dwelling must be searched for Chometz. The obligation is incumbent upon all the tenants. Arrangements should be made that it be done in a thorough and fair manner.
31. Cars must be thoroughly cleaned and searched for Chometz as well. If one has cleaned the car completely before the night of the 14th, then some are of the opinion that one can skip the inspection on the night of the 14th. Others hold that there is still a requirement to inspect the car, however, a blessing is not recited on it. Rabbi Yaakov Breish zt"l (Chok Yaakov 436:17) explains that the essential enactment was only made on the dwelling. It is possible, however, that it was included in the enactment, it is therefore best to have the car in mind or, if one is not at home, to have someone who is reciting the blessing have you in mind.
32. If he is planning not to be in the office the entire Pesach, then one should include the office in the sale of Chometz to the gentile. If he is going in the office during Chl HaMoed, then it

should also be searched on the night of the 14th. If, however, this is impractical because of distance he should search his office on the night of the 13th.

33. Rav Sheinberg zt"l ruled that if it is very difficult to clean and search an area, it is possible to pour or spray ammonia on the area rendering any food that might be there as unfit for the consumption of a dog.
34. Dormitory students who live in in a dorm (*pnimiah*) are obligated in searching their dorm room on the night of the 14th. They can do so by appointing a shliach – a messenger. Alternatively, they can do the search on the night before they leave the dormitory room.
35. The search should be done at nightfall on the night of the 14th. It should be done immediately after Maariv. If one is still at work at this time then one should begin as soon as possible, but if at all possible, one should leave work early.
36. It is the minhag in Klal Yisroel for someone other than the person performing the search to hide ten pieces of Chometz in the house. The pieces should be less than a kezayis in size, and should be covered in plastic so that the ten pieces will not create crumbs. There are many incidences where the ten pieces were actually lost. Ideally, one should therefore write down the location of the ten pieces.
37. There is a prohibition in involving oneself in any activity within 30 minutes before the time for the Bedikah begins. If one had begun that activity before the 30 minute period, one may continue until nightfall itself. Although one can drink within the 30 minute period before nightfall, one may not eat more than a K'baiya of Mezonos.

38. Ideally, the search should be conducted by the homeowner. If there are assistants helping him, they should hear the bracha from the homeowner.
39. The person should have in mind that he is fulfilling his Torah obligation to destroy his Chometz and that the Mitzvah will continue until the next day. One may not speak between the bracha and the beginning of the search. If one did speak the bracha must be repeated. Indeed, even during the search one should avoid saying anything that does not have to do with the actual search.
40. The Kol Chamira, annulling all the Chometz that one owns, should be recited immediately after the search is over, and then again in the morning before the zman. Although the Kol Chamira is written in Aramaic, it is imperative that the person reciting it understand what is said in his or her native language. If a person forgot to recite the blessing at night he may recite it in the morning before the Chometz is burned.

THE PROHIBITIONS OF *CHAMETZ*

41. There are five separate negative prohibitions regarding *chametz* on Pesach. Each of these prohibitions has its own unique *passuk*. They are:
- Not to eat *chametz* from the designated time on the 14th of Nissan
 - Not to eat *chametz* throughout the holiday of Pesach
 - Not to eat even a mixture of *chametz* throughout the holiday of Pesach
 - Not to see any of your own *chametz* on Pesach (*bal yira'eh*).
 - Not to find any of your *chametz* on Pesach (*bal yematzeh*).

42. One should likewise treat all issues that undermine our *emunah* in the same manner as we treat *chametz*: namely,
- 1) we should rid ourselves of all issues that undermine *emunah* before Pesach,
 - 2) throughout Pesach,
 - 3) even mixtures of it,
 - 4) not see anything that undermines *emunah*,
 - 5) nor find anything that undermines it.
43. By Torah law we may rid ourselves of *chametz* either by nullifying it (*bitul chametz*) or by destroying it (*biur chametz*). The Rabbis, however, enacted that both methods be employed.
- *Bitul chametz* is the declaration that all *chametz* that we own is declared to be ownerless.
 - *Biur chametz* is where we search out and set aside to burn any *chametz* that we find.
44. In the past few centuries, we have arranged for gentiles to purchase *chametz* that we have. The sale is conducted with six different types of *kinyanim*, because there is debate among the *Rishonim* as to what types of transactions are effective under these circumstances. Some people question this procedure since the gentile does not actually remove the *chametz* from the Jew's home; he just rents space there. Many have the *minhag* not to sell real *chametz*, but only items that do not really have a *hechsher* for Pesach — unless it would entail a huge loss.

KASHERING

45. There is no need for special Pesach table-cloths, although some are machmir. The same is true with hand towels. Washing them well in a washing machine is sufficient. Some have the custom to have special Pesach bibs for children.
46. High chairs should be cleaned well, bleached or rinsed with ammonia. They should then be covered in a manner that will last all of Yom Tov.
47. In regard to koshering an oven that has not been used for 24 hours, Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l held that the inside and outside of the oven should be cleaned with an oven cleaner (such as Shunamit or Easy-Off) and then put on the highest temperature for two hours. This works for everything (the oven and the oven racks) but a broiler tray according to Rav Aharon zt"l. Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l was of the opinion that our ovens require a Libun Gamur, a red hot flame, which can only be achieved with a blow torch or with coals. When using Libun gamur, there is no need to wait 24 hours.
48. The knobs of the oven should ideally be covered with foil or replaced with knobs used exclusively for Pesach. Alternatively, but less ideal, they should be cleaned and soaked or sprayed with ammonia or bleach.
49. Most Poskim permit koshering through a self cleaning oven. One should clean it beforehand so there will not be excessive smoke. Some say the racks of the electric oven could be left in for 15 minutes.

BAKING MATZOS

50. Baking matzos is a complex procedure. It requires removing everything that was used in making the dough, that sat for

more than 18 minutes, and thoroughly cleansing it. The water that is used in the dough must be drawn earlier and left overnight. This is called *mayim she'lanu* — water that slept.

EREV PESACH

51. Erev Pesach has numerous *halachos* associated with it. On the night before Pesach we perform the *bedikas chametz*. We do so immediately upon nightfall — generally 50 minutes after *Shekiyah*, although some wait 42 and some wait 72 minutes.
52. One may eat *chametz* until the end of the 4th halachic hour of the day. A halachic hour is 1/12th of the daylight hours (total minutes from sunrise to sunset divided by 12). It is the custom of *Klal Yisrael* to stop eating *chametz* at the earliest calculation of the 4th hour of the day—according to the Magen Avraham's time (the Magen Avraham calculates it from dawn until three stars come out, not from sunrise to sunset). Generally speaking, for *Krias Shema* during the day most people observe the later calculation of the Vilna Gaon (sunrise to sunset).
53. One must dispose of *chametz* either by selling it or by burning it by the end of the 5th hour of the day. The head of the household then recites the *Kol Chamira*. After the *Kol Chamira* is recited, even if done so earlier, no one in the house may eat *chametz*. This is a little-known fact.
54. It is the custom for firstborn men to fast on Erev Pesach or attend a *siyum*. The reason for the fast is to publicize the fact that the Jewish firstborn were saved during the plague of the firstborn. If the firstborn of a family is still under the age of bar mitzvah, it is the custom for his father to fast for him. If a

person cannot get to a *siyum*, he may eat before dawn on that day.

55. Matzah may not be eaten on Erev Pesach nor may products containing baked matzah meal be eaten. Cooked matzah meal products may be eaten until 3 halachic hours before sunset, however.

56. We do our *Seder* preparations on Erev Pesach, too, in order to minimize any *melachah* to be performed on Yom Tov. This includes:

- 1) roasting the *z'roa* meat,
- 2) cooking, then roasting, the egg
- 3) mixing the salt water
- 4) preparing the *charoses*,
- 5) grating the horseradish, and
- 6) checking lettuce for bugs.

57. There is a special *mitzvah* of "*simchah*" on Pesach. This is on account of the *passuk* that states, "*V'hayisa ach samei'ach.*" Fathers should therefore get their children and wife something special for Yom Tov. For wives and teen-age daughters, an article of clothing (the *Mishnah Berurah* writes: at least new shoes); and for younger children, nosh.

58. There is a relatively little-known and little-observed *mitzvah* to give the children nosh on the first night of Pesach. The Gemara (*Pesachim* 109a) states that the reason is

“so that they will not fall asleep and will ask.” The *Shulchan Aruch*, however, adds the words (472:16), “so that they will see a difference and ask.” There is a *machlokes* whether this should be done immediately before the *Seder* (Rav Shulchan Aruch 472:31; *Kaf HaChaim* 472:96) or immediately after *Kiddush* (*Minhagei Chasam Sofer* 10:16). There is no need for the nosh to be eaten while leaning.

BENTCHING THE CHILDREN

59. When the father comes home from shul, there is a special *inyan* to bless the children since Yaakov was blessed on this night by Yitzchak. This *minhag* is important.

THE MITZVOS OF THE SEDER NIGHT

60. The Five Mitzvos of the seder are as follows:

- Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim – Biblical nowadays
- Eating Matzah – Biblical nowadays
- Drinking the Four Cups in Order – Rabbinic always
- Eating Marror – Rabbinic nowadays (because there is no Korban Pesach anymore)
- Hallel – Rabbinic always

MAGGID – SIPPUR YETZIAS MITZRAYIM

61. Just as there is a *mitzvah* of *v'higadeta l'vincha* for a son, there is an obligation to do so for a daughter, as well. There is also a *mitzvah* to say it to one's grandchildren: *b'oznei bincha u'ven bincha*.

62. The *Haggadah* was instituted by the *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah*. The Mishnah tells us: One must

mention *pesach*, *matzah u'maror* at a minimum to fulfill the *mitzvah*.

63. "Mention" in this context means it has to be explained. "The *mitzvah*" refers to the *Haggadah* according to most *meforshim*. Some say it refers to each of the individual three. It may be heard, and not necessarily said, because of the concept of *shomei'a k'oneh* — hearing is like saying.
64. Chazal established the Hagaddah in question and answer form because this is the best manner in which to teach and carry on the mesorah.

EATING MATZAH

65. As explained earlier, Matzah is described by the *Zohar* (Vol. II, 183b) as a *michlah d'mehemnusah* — a food of *emunah*.
66. We eat Matzah three times during the seder. We eat it at Motzi Matzah, Korech, and at achilas Afikoman. The first time we eat it, at Motzi Matzah, is when we fulfill the Torah obligation. It is important to eat the Matzah within the proper period of time, this is called, "*b'chdei achilas pras.*"

FOUR CUPS OF WINE

67. The Mitzvah of drinking four cups of wine in the order of the Haggada is a Rabbinic obligation during the night of the seder. Chazal enacted this obligation to correspond to the four expressions of redemption in regard to the exodus from Egypt. The four expressions are found in Sefer Shmos (6:6-7.) They are: *v'hotzeisi*, *v'hitzalti*, *v'ga'alti*, and *v'lakachti*.

68. The Vilna Gaon, however, holds that *v'lakachti* is actually an error that has crept into our editions of the Talmud Yerushalmi and that the true fourth expression is *v'ga'alti* once again.
69. Although it is a time-bound mitzvah to drink wine at the seder, women are obligated in it. The reason is because they too were redeemed. Not only that, but it was in the merit of the Jewish women that the Jewish nation was redeemed. It was the women who encouraged their husbands to continue having children notwithstanding the extraordinary difficulties of slavery.

EATING MARROR

70. Nowadays, when we no longer have the Korban Pesach, the eating of Marror is only Rabbinic. The purpose is to remind us of the bitter life that we had in Mitzrayim which Hashem redeemed us from.
71. The Mishna lists five different vegetables which may be used for Marror. Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l used to use a type of lettuce, as some people question whether horseradish root, although it is valid to use, was one of the original types considered in the Mishna. Whatever is used may not be cooked or marinated (Kavush). It is important to make sure that the marror is insect-free.
72. One must eat a k'zayis of marror. The marror should be dipped in the charoses and shaken off before consuming it.

HALLEL

73. We recite Hallel at the seder and it is broken up into two parts, before the meal and after the meal. This is not an actual

hefsek because on Pesach, the eating of the meal itself is considered praise of Hashem and is part of Hallel.

74.

75. The Mishna Brurah rules that ideally, even the Hallel should be recited before Chatzos – midnight. When there are three or more people present, the Hallel should be said responsively in the sections where it is done thus in shul.

HESEIBA (LEANING)

75. During the time of the Gemara, it was the way of free men to lean. The Rambam (*Laws of Chametz U'Matzah 7:6-7*) implies that in leaning we fulfill the Biblical *mitzvah* in the Torah of “*Vzacharta ki eved hayisa* — And you shall remember that you were a slave.” It is a question as to whether the *mitzvah* of *heseiba* is a condition in the fulfillment of the other *mitzvos* of the night or perhaps its very own *mitzvah*. Women are exempt from this *mitzvah*, but many Sephardic women do perform it, nonetheless.

76.

77. For men, however, there is an obligation to lean during matzah, drinking of the wine, *korech*, *afikomen*, and — if it is not too difficult — during the meal itself. There is no leaning for *karpas* and *maror*.

YaKNHaZ

77. This acronym stands for **Y**ayin **K**iddush **N**er **H**avdalah **Z**man. This is the order that we do things when Pesach falls on Motzaei Shabbos. [When it falls during the week, leave out the N & H]. If, by accident, one ended off with *Bein Kodesh l'Chol* and not *Bein Kodesh L'Kodesh*, he has to recite *Kiddush* again since he changed the manner in which *Chazal* enacted it.

78. *Besamim* are not used on Yom Tov because we also have a *neshamah yeseirah* on Yom Tov and there is no need to reinvigorate ourselves (Rashbam *Pesachim* 102b).

KARPAS

79. Since there is a *machlokes* whether to recite *Borei Nefashos* on *karpas*, we do not eat more than a *k'zayis*. Some, however, do have a *k'zayis*. Nonetheless, a separate *Berachah Acharonah* is not said. The prevailing *minhag* is to dip it in salt water, not to dip it in other things. One should have in mind to be *motzi* the *maror* also with the *HaAdamah*. One should also have in mind that one will be going back and forth in the house (to and from the kitchen, upstairs and downstairs, etc.) whenever they want in between the *karpas* and *maror*.

THE HALACHOS OF THE SECOND NIGHT

80. On the second night of Pesach, we light candles with a *berachah* including the *Shehecheyanu*. We do not make any preparations for the *Seder* until nightfall. If one forgot to say *Shehecheyanu* in *Kiddush*, one goes back and says it whenever it is remembered until Yom Tov is over.

SEFIRAS HAOMER

81. The *mitzvah* of *Sefiras HaOmer* starts on the second night of Pesach. Let us not forget that this was when we were redeemed on Purim.
82. Each night of the *sefirah*, according to *Kabbalah*, is when the seven *sefiros* correspond to the seven subdivisions of *sefirah*. The first night is *chessed sheb'chessed*. This is especially appropriate for the redemption of *Klal Yisrael* on Purim — it was a *chessed of chessed*. The *Mishnah Berurah* (490:2) quotes

the *Acharonim* (see *MA* citing the *Shelah*) that a special *zecher* to the *seudah* of Esther should be made in the day meal of the second day. It seems this can be a song, a tune, a *siman*, or a food. Do not have a *chametzdike* hamantash!

EREV PESACH THAT FALLS ON SHABBOS

83. In case you were curious, Erev Pesach falls on Shabbos approximately once every 9 years.
84. It also occurs as frequently as every 3 years and as infrequently as every 20 years. It did not occur between 1954 and 1974.