

# ANSWERS TO FAQ

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**These Halachos are answers to the usual FAQs about Pesach.  
Specific answers to this year's unique questions will be published separately.**

## חודש ניסן (Month of Nisan)

- One should donate money for *ma'os chittim*. While there is no specific amount one must give, one should keep in mind the tremendous expense of Pesach for needy families.
- One should do their best to make a *brachah* on a blossoming fruit tree during the springtime. One may make this *brachah* on any day of the week (even Shabbos), and at any time (night or day).
- Many have a custom to recite the Hagadah (from "עבדים היינו" until "ליכפר על כל עונותינו") on *Shabbos Hagadol*.

## MECHIRAS CHAMETZ (Sale of Chametz)

- One can never be sure they got rid of all of the *chametz* in their possession, therefore it is proper for everyone to sell their *chametz* before Pesach.
- One should not attempt to do this sale on their own as the details of the sale of *chametz* are very complex.
- One should make their Rav their agent to sell their *chametz*.
- One may sell food that is REAL *chametz* to a non-Jew. Many have a *minhag* not to sell *חמץ גמור* (real *chametz*) with the exception of expensive alcoholic beverages. (See list of "real *chametz*".)
- It is best to specify the exact location of the *chametz*.
- One should preferably arrange for the sale of their *chametz* in person. If that is impossible the sale can be arranged via phone, email etc.
- One should lock/seal off and label the location of the *chametz* being sold to the non-Jew. If one needs something from the area designated for the non-Jew's *chametz*, one may enter and get what they need over Pesach.
- One who will be away for Pesach should provide a key or any other means of access for the non-Jew.
- One who is selling *chametz* that is in a different time zone should discuss this with the Rav. This may require an earlier sale before Pesach or a later buy back after Pesach.

## בדיקת חמץ (Searching for Chametz)

- One is required to search their home for *chametz* on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan (Tuesday night). There are different customs as to the intensity of the search. Some will spend many hours searching their home and possessions for *chametz*. Others, whose home has been thoroughly cleaned already will do a "walk through" to make sure no new *chametz* was introduced to those areas, and to confirm that the various rooms, closets, dressers etc. had been properly cleaned. This is not a perfunctory ceremony! Both methods are acceptable.
- *Bedikas chametz* should begin immediately at nightfall (9:18 PM).
- It is customary to set out 10 small pieces of bread (each one less than a *kezayis*; altogether more than a *kezayis*) around one's house before the *bedikah*. Be sure to "find" all 10 and not leave crumbs around.
- One should use a candle or a flashlight to do *bedikas chametz*. The lights in the house need not be turned off unless that will make one's search more effective.
- One should make the *brachah* and immediately begin the *bedikah*. During *bedikas chametz*, one should not speak about anything unrelated to the *bedikah*.
- After completing the *bedikah* one says *ביטול חמץ*, nullifying all *chametz* that they were not able to find. One who is not fluent in Aramaic should say the English translation of the *bitul*.
- One should do a *bedikah* on their car, office etc. (no *brachah*). If there's no time on Thursday, one may do it earlier.
- One who is going away for Pesach and will be leaving before Thursday night should do a *bedikah* the night before they leave. One does not put out 10 pieces of bread, nor do they make a *brachah*. One does say *ביטול חמץ*.

## תענית בכורים (Fast of the Firstborn)

- All first born males must fast on *erev Pesach*, whether he is first born to his father or first born to his mother.
- The father of a boy under Bar Mitzvah must fast for him. A mother need not fast for her *bechor* if her husband is a *bechor* himself, provided her husband or son attends a *siyum*.
- The *minhag* is to end the fast early by attending a *siyum*. The *bechor* (or father of a *bechor* under Bar Mitzvah) should be at the actual *siyum* and eat something at the *siyum*.

## Eating on Erev Pesach

- One may eat *chametz* up until the end of the fourth hour of the day (11:12 AM). One should brush their teeth after eating their last *chametzdik* food.
- One may not eat Kosher for Pesach *matzah* the entire *erev Pesach*. Many have a custom not to eat *matzah* from Purim or *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*.
- This prohibition on *erev Pesach* includes all baked goods containing *matzah* meal (Pesach cake, etc.)
- *Matzah* made with eggs, juice etc. may be eaten up until the time one may still eat *chametz* (11:12 AM). *Kitniyos* should also not be eaten after 11:12 AM.
- *Matzah* meal products that are cooked (i.e. *kneidlach*) may be eaten until the 10<sup>th</sup> hour of the day (5:02 PM).
- Children under age six may eat *matzah* and baked *matzah* products.
- Meat, fish, cheese, eggs, potato starch cakes, fruits and vegetables may be eaten up until candle lighting. However, one should not affect their appetite for the *Seder*.

## ביעור חמץ (Burning of Chametz)

- Ideally, one should get rid of their *chametz* by burning it.
- One should be careful not to pour lighter fluid into the fire before their *chametz* has fully burned.
- One should burn a *kezayis* of *chametz*, and include the 10 pieces of bread they used for *bedikas chametz*. One's *chametz* should burn completely by 12:29 PM. One shouldn't burn foil-wrapped *chametz* as it won't fully burn.
- Many have a *minhag* to burn their used *mitzvah* items along with the *chametz* (*lulav*, Chanukah wicks, etc.).
- AFTER one's *chametz* has fully burned, one should say "כל חמירא" (*bitul*) in a language one understands.
- Once "כל חמירא" is recited, no *chametz* may be eaten by anyone in the household.

## Erev Pesach Afternoon

- After *chatzos* (1:47 PM) one should not take a haircut, shave, do laundry or cut fingernails/toenails. In the event that one neglected to take care of these needs before *chatzos* one should ask their Rabbi. One may drop off dry-cleaning first thing in the morning to pick up later in the afternoon.

## Seder Preparations

- REST!!!! The *Seder* is the focal point of all of our Pesach preparations, therefore everyone - women, men and children - should try to be as well rested as possible for this tremendously important night.
- We do not eat roasted meat/poultry at the *Seder*. Meat cooked with some water (at least 1/4 of an inch) on the bottom of the pan is not considered roasted.
- The *זרוע* (forearm of animal or the part of a bird wing attached to the body) should have some meat on it and be roasted/cooked then singed over a flame. One should not eat it at the *Seder*, but it is best to eat it on the second day of *Yom Tov*.
- Boil and roast *ביצה* (egg). Many eat the *ביצה* during *עורך שולחן* of the second *Seder*.
- Open boxes of *matzah*.
- Arrange the *קערה* (*sefer plate*) according to one's *minhag*.

## ארבע כוסות (Four Cups of Wine)

- Men and women must drink four *kosos* of wine at the appropriate points during the *Seder*. Children age five and up should participate in this *mitzvah* (assuming they are awake) with grape juice.
- It is best to use a red wine that has no added sugar and is not *mevushal* (i.e. Kedem Matuk Soft Rouge).
- The wine one uses for the four cups should have alcoholic content.
- One who cannot drink wine may drink grape juice.
- One who would become incapacitated or bedridden from drinking wine or grape juice should discuss their situation with their *Rav*.
- There are many opinions as to how much wine the *kos* should hold. The *Chazon Ish* holds that one should use a *kos* that holds 5.1 oz. *Rav Moshe* holds that the *kos* should hold 4.42 oz. One who is unable to use these *shiurim* may use a *kos* that holds 3.3 oz. It is best to drink the entire *kos* of wine. If not possible, drink most of the *kos*.
- One should drink the *kos* in one shot (without pausing) or as fast as possible. If one finished within 4 minutes one has fulfilled their obligation (in cases of extreme need one can have up to 9 minutes).
- Many have a custom not to pour one's own *kos*.

## מצה

- Men and women (and children five and up) must eat *matzah* at the *Seder*.
- One must eat *Shmurah Matzah* at the *Seder*. One has not fulfilled their obligation with regular Kosher for Pesach *matzah*.
- It is best to pre-measure the *matzah* needed for everyone for the *Seder*, but it may be done at the *Seder*.

- While there are many charts available to figure out the amount of *matzah* for the various *matzah*-based *mitzvos* at the *Seder*, they are not exact because they do not factor in the thickness or density of the various types and brands of *matzah*. The most accurate measurement can be attained by weighing the *matzah* (preferably before Yom Tov).
- It is best to use 30g for מוציא מצה; 20g for כורך; 30g for אפיקומן. If not possible, then 25g for מוציא מצה; 20g for כורך; 25g for אפיקומן. The *matzah* that lands on one's *kittel*/the floor doesn't count. If one cannot consume that amount of *matzah*, one should ask a *shailah*.
- One should eat the *matzah* without pausing and finish within 2 minutes. If not possible, finish within 4 minutes (in extreme need, up to 9 minutes).

## מרור

- One must wash and check their lettuce before Yom Tov.
- One who uses horseradish root for *maror* must grate it. It should be grated before Yom Tov. If one forgot, one may do so on Yom Tov with a *shinui* such as grating it over the table as apposed to a plate.
- One should use the volume of one ounce for מרור and כורך. One may use a chart or imagine filling up a one ounce shot glass with horseradish/lettuce.

## הסיבה (Reclining)

- Men and boys should have a pillow on their left side to be able to recline comfortably.
- Leaning leftward in midair is not reclining.
- One should recline while drinking the 4 *kosos*, eating מצה, כורך, and אפיקומן.
- Some lean during the meal, but it is not necessary.
- We do not recline for מגיד.

## Seder

- The table should be set and everything should be ready so the *Seder* can start when the proper *zman* arrives.
- One should focus on the children and try to hold their attention.

## קדש

- Many have a *minhag* that everyone at the *Seder* makes their own *Kiddush*.
- One should have in mind all of the *mitzvos* of the *Seder* when making their "שהחיינו".
- Women may answer "אמן" to their husband's "שהחיינו" even though they already made that *brachah* when lighting candles.

## ורחץ & כרפס

- One should not talk between washing one's hands and eating כרפס.
- One should eat less than a *kezayis* of כרפס.
- When making the *brachah* on כרפס, one should have in mind the מרור that they will eat later.
- One who mistakenly made a *brachah* "על נטילת ידיים" should eat a *kezayis* of כרפס.

## יחץ

- One should use the largest of the three *matzos* as the "middle *matzah*" to be used for יחץ.
- The larger half is used for אפיקומן.

## מגיד

- Many have a *minhag* that everyone says the "מה נשתנה".
- Everyone should participate in the entire מגיד. It is important to understand what one is saying (or hearing).
- The 10 *makos* and "רבן גמליאל..." until the second *kos*, is mandatory for everyone.
- If a man forgot to recline while drinking the *kos* he should drink another *kos*.

## רחצה

- From the time one washes until after כורך there should be no talking.

## מוציא מצה

- The one making "המוציא" holds the 2 ½ *Matzos*, makes "המוציא"; drops the bottom *matzah* and makes the *brachah* "על אכילת מצה" over the 1 ½ *matzos* in his hands.
- It is best to have all of the *matzah* that will be distributed at the table while making the *brachos*.
- The *matzah* needs to be eaten immediately and quickly, therefore it is best to have all of the *matzah* measured and handed out before making the *brachos*. After making the *brachos* a small piece from the *matzah* can be quickly added to everyone's

portion.

- If one forgot to recline one should eat another portion of *matzah*.

## מרור

- One may combine lettuce and horseradish to attain the proper *shiur*.

## כורך

- One should recline when eating כורך, but one need not repeat כורך if they forgot to recline.

## שולחן עורך

- Many have a *minhag* to eat hard boiled eggs in salt water.
- One should not *shlep* out the meal. It is important for everyone (especially children) to excitedly experience as much of the Seder as possible.
- One should make sure to leave enough appetite for the *afikoman*. If a person is truly stuffing themselves they may not fulfill the *mitzvah*!

## צפון

- One should make sure to eat the *afikoman* by *chatzos* (1:47 AM). If the *zman* was missed, still eat the *afikoman*.
- One should recline for eating the *afikoman*. If one forgot, he should eat it again unless he began *bentching*.
- One should not eat after the *afikoman*. If one did, one should eat the *afikoman* again.
- One should not drink anything with a strong taste after the *afikoman*. Water is best.

## ברך

- One should recline when drinking the *kos* after *bentching*. If one forgot, do not drink again.
- Many use the *כוס של אליהו* for *Kiddush* in the morning.

## הלל

- Women are required to say *Hallel* at the Seder.
- If there are three or more people at the Seder, “הודו” and “אנא ה” should be said responsively.
- One should recline for drinking this *kos*. If one forgot, do not drink again.
- One should try to drink the entire *kos* or at least a full *revi'is* (4.42 oz.) so they can say the *Brachah Acharonah*.

## נרצה

- If someone has fallen asleep by נרצה they do not need to be awoken.
- Many have a *minhag* to say “שיר השירים” after נרצה.
- Although it is brought down that one should immerse oneself in מצרים until one is overtaken by sleep, if one fears they won't be able to daven *Shacharis* properly the next morning they should go to bed after the Seder normally.

## קריאת שמע

- The *minhag* is to only say the first paragraph of “שמע” and “המפיל”.

# לשנה הבאה בירושלים!