

הַלְכוֹת פֶּסַח, חוֹל הַמוֹעֵד, סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר, וכו'

SOME DINNIM CONCERNING THE FESTIVAL OF PESSACH, CHOL HaMO'ED (THE INTERMEDIATE DAYS OF THE FESTIVAL) AND THE COUNTING OF THE OMER, ETC.



INTRODUCTION

1. *One of the first commandments we received as a People was to celebrate the Festival of Pessach (Passover) so called because הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא "passed over" (in Hebrew, "פָּסַח") our houses when we were in Egypt and spared us whilst in every other house throughout the whole of the land of Egypt there was at least one person killed. This happened on the dot of midnight of the 14th / 15th of Nissan in the year 2448 after Creation, in the dreaded tenth plague, the Smiting of the Firstborn (מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת) which הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא brought upon the Egyptians for defying His command to them to let us go free. Since then and through the ages, this night has been for us the symbol of HaShem's protection of us — throughout the generations many miracles were wrought for us on this night in the month of Nissan, which the Torah itself calls "לַיְלַל שִׁמּוּרִים" — "the night of protective watchfulness."*
2. *But besides being a punishment for the Egyptians, this plague was also a lesson to us to trust in הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא for we had been commanded to stay indoors and eat the קֶרֶבֶן פֶּסַח (the Pascal Lamb) despite the horrible death shrieks of the Egyptians which terrified all.*
3. *The next day, in the brightness and openness of midday, we left Egypt. The Egyptians and their king had urged us to go already the night before when they experienced the terrible Plague of the Firstborn, but, as Mosheh our Teacher asked Par'o, "Are we then thieves, to steal out at night?" — in broad daylight and in the sight of all did we leave Egypt.*
4. *Urged on by the Egyptians so that we could not even wait till our dough for the journey was risen, all our belongings with us, we left Egypt, a free people. It was on Pessach that we became an independent people. "And it came to pass, at midday of that very day, that הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא brought out the Children of Israel from the land of Egypt in their ordered groups."*
5. *The Festival of Pessach is the first of the three Pilgrimage Festivals (the שְׁלֹשׁ רִגְלִים) and its laws and customs are many and intricate. Each law and precept, every symbolism, has its own great and inspiring message; they all add up to the meaning and lesson of the Festival of Pessach, clear to us through all time, namely, that we were delivered by הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא from slavery and misery and taken to Him in lovingkindness and for all time to be to Him as "a treasure more than all Peoples, a kingdom of princes and a holy Nation." Our deliverance from Egypt signifies that*

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point in our history when we were dedicated to be the bearers of the Message of אֱלֹהֵינוּ to the world, when we became the People of G-d, the 'עַם ה'. And because it was through this deliverance from Egypt that the Jewish Nation was born, therefore at the start of every Shabbos and Yom Tov which represents our steps forward in our national spiritual life-story, therefore do we make special mention of our great and wonderful beginnings with the words, "זִכָּרוֹ לְיֵצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם", that this Shabbos or Yom Tov is a "remembrance of our going out of Egypt."

THE MONTH OF NISSAN

6. Tach'nun is not said the entire month of Nissan, nor is צְדָקָתְךָ said on Shabbos at Minchah during this month. Some people follow the custom that every day from ראש חודש ניסן until the thirteenth of Nissan they read after Shacharis that day's chapter of the Service of the Consecration of the Mishkan, for it was in the month of Nissan, in the year following יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם that the Mishkan was erected. (Some congregations have the custom to have this reading from a Sefer Torah, although nobody is called up to this reading.) The custom generally prevails that at Minchah of שַׁבַּת הַגְּדוֹל, "the Great Shabbos," so called because it marked the beginning of our actual deliverance from Egypt, instead of "בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשֵׁי" we say part of the Haggadah, namely, from "עֲבָדִים" "לְכַפֵּר עַל כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ" until "עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ".

EREV PESSACH

7. On Erev Pessach in the morning, מְזֻמֹּר לְתוֹדָה is not said, nor is לְמַנְצַח, and it is forbidden from midday to do any work other than that which is for the Yom Tov, as if it was Chol HaMo'ed.

One should have one's hair cut before midday, if possible. In the morning, eating any Chometz is forbidden from the time of the *Hafsokkoh* (that is, the time of *stopping* to eat Chometz, about ten o'clock — the exact time is given in the better kind of Lu'ach) and it is forbidden, too, to eat any Matzoh on Erev Pessach. (In our countries, we have the custom not to eat Matzoh from Purim; others abstain from eating Matzoh from the beginning of the month of Nissan.) It is not correct to give even children Matzoh to eat on Erev Pessach either, unless they are so young that they do not know anything about Pessach. However, dishes made with Matzoh-meal may be eaten by everyone until about three hours before nightfall, after which time even that is not allowed, and only fruit and vegetables, etc., are permitted, only so that one should not be starving hungry.

8. On Erev Pessach is the תַּעֲנִית בְּכוֹרִים when all male firstborns fast. In our countries the custom prevails that they are allowed to break their fast after Shacharis at a סְעוּדַת מִצְוָה, usually a מִסְכָּתָא סִיּוּם.
9. On Erev Pessach, as in fact on every Erev Yom Tov, we go to the Mikveh to purify ourselves in preparation for the holiness of the coming Yom Tov.
10. Regarding the kashering of vessels (where this is necessary) it is important to consult a Rav well in advance of Pessach as in some cases the kashering process has to be started some days before Pessach. (In this context, "kashering" is the process by which vessels and utensils are made suitable for use on Pessach.)

11. Since it is forbidden to have any benefit whatsoever from Chometz during Pessach, it is not permitted even to give one's pet to a non-Jew to look after if one knows that it will be fed Chometz. Usually, a pet shop will be able to advise an alternative for one's pets' food, e.g. ants' eggs for goldfish; sprats, tinned sardines or tinned pilchards for cats; birdseed for budgerigars, etc., but care must be taken not to use any kind of pet food which contains Chometz.

THE SEARCH FOR CHOMETZ

12. The night before Erev Pessach, the night between the days of the 13th and 14th of Nissan, we make the search for Chometz. (The whole house will already be thoroughly cleaned so that this search can be made easier.) This search has to be made immediately as night sets in: it is forbidden to do anything else (even to eat supper) until the search has been made, and even to only start any job of work is not allowed within the half-hour before nightfall lest one becomes pre-occupied and forgets to make the search when night falls. The search is made by the light of a single candle, and since the aim of the search is to ensure that there is no Chometz anywhere (and to destroy later any that might be found) one is therefore obliged to look anywhere and everywhere, in all nooks and crannies, where there could, even by the remotest chance, be some Chometz.
13. If one does find any Chometz, it should be kept carefully until the next morning, to be burned. Some people have the custom that the lady of the house hides some pieces of bread for the master of the house to find in his search — but care must be taken to keep account of all the pieces. These pieces, too, when found, should be carefully put away until the next morning, when they are burned. Likewise, that Chometz which one intends to eat for breakfast on Erev Pessach morning should be carefully covered and kept to one corner.
14. Before the search is started, the following בְּרָכָה is said:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל בִּיעוּר חֵמֶץ .

There should be no interruption between the בְּרָכָה and the conclusion of the search. The בְּרָכָה can be for any number of houses, courtyards, offices or other places of work (which all have to be searched if they belong to a Jew) so long as the intention was to include these places at the time of making the בְּרָכָה. After the search for Chometz so as to be rid of it, there is the additional Mitzvah of annulling and disowning any Chometz one might have in one's possession at all and after the search one should speak out this intention, thus:

“All kinds of Chometz in my possession which I have not seen or of which I have no knowledge, should be as nothing, and considered ownerless as the dust of the earth.”

15. Even though the intention and wish to disown any Chometz in one's possession was spoken the night before, nevertheless, the next morning after the actual burning of the

remaining Chometz, this intention has to be repeated aloud to include each and every particle of Chometz, thus:

“All types of Chometz in my possession, which I have seen and which I have not seen, of which I have knowledge and of which I have no knowledge; which I have destroyed and which I have not destroyed: I hereby disown and wish it all to be as nothing, and considered ownerless as the dust of the earth.”

16. If, G-d forbid, one found Chometz in one's possession on Chol HaMo'ed Pessach, one should take it out and burn it immediately. If one found it on Yom Tov, on Shabbos Chol HaMo'ed or late on Erev Pessach which was a Shabbos (in which three cases it is מוקצה and one may not move it at all, even indirectly) one must cover it over with a plate or suchlike until the end of Yom Tov or Shabbos and then burn it (or flush it away) as soon as possible. If the Chometz found in one's house was in fact sold to a non-Jew, then it should be moved quickly (indirectly, that is, using a dustpan and brush, for example) to the room or location where the rest of the sold Chometz is kept.
17. A person leaving home within thirty days of Pessach with the intention to spend the Yom Tov elsewhere and not to return until after the Yom Tov, may obviously nevertheless not own any Chometz over Pessach, just like everyone else. Also like everyone else, he has the obligation, the evening before he leaves, to make the search for Chometz, with a candle, just as Chazal instituted, so that his house will be clear of any Chometz during Pessach. However, because his search is before the time instituted by our Chachommim, no Brochah is said and after the search, he makes the declaration disowning any Chometz he might have missed in his search, as said above (*in paragraph 14*).
18. Someone who intends to be away from home for the whole duration of Pessach (for which reason he did not clean the house of Chometz at all) and who does not make the search for Chometz before he leaves for his Yom Tov location, can rent out his house — lock, stock and barrel — to a non-Jew for the duration of Pessach through the Rabbi who is going to arrange the sale of his Chometz to a non-Jew. (*See further.*) (Although it is true that there are some Halachic authorities that do allow the sale of one's house for the duration of Pessach even though such a sale is manifestly for the purpose of avoiding the prohibition of owning any Chometz over Pessach (there is no annotation of this sale in the title deeds, for instance) there are others who seriously doubt the validity of such a sale simply because in all other regards it is not recognized as a proper sale. Rather than a sale, therefore, it is better that the house should be leased to the non-Jew for the duration of Pessach with any Chometz there passing into non-Jewish ownership.) In such a case, the vacationer should nevertheless make the search, as mandated by Chazal, but without the Brochah (as mentioned above) and in any case, he must make the search for Chometz, with the Brochah, at the place where he is on the night of the 14th Nissan.
19. If he leaves home more than thirty days before Pessach, he has no obligation to make the search before he leaves but, as said, he must make the search (with the Brochah) wherever he is on the night of the 14th of Nissan. In all cases, wherever he might be, he makes the declaration renouncing his ownership of any Chometz anywhere in his

possession (including back home) after he has made the search. Someone who will be abroad over Pessach and appoints his Rabbi to sell his Chometz to a non-Jew over Pessach must tell this to the Rabbi because in certain cases (if he is going from England to Eretz Yisroel or to America, for instance) the Rabbi needs to keep in mind not to acquire the Chometz back for the owner who is in Eretz Yisroel or America before the end of Pessach there.

THE SELLING OF THE CHOMETZ

20. From what has been said thus far it will be clear that it is forbidden for any Jew to have Chometz in his possession during Pessach. This prohibition is **מְדֻאָרְיֵיתָא** (that is, from the Torah). No benefit may be derived from Chometz which was in the possession of a Jew during Pessach — ever. It follows therefore that after Pessach we may not buy any Chometz or anything containing Chometz from a Jewish grocer or merchant about whom there is any suspicion that he had it in his possession during Pessach. In such cases one must allow enough time to pass that this stock be exhausted before buying such products from such a person. The same applies to supermarkets or chain-stores which are even only partly owned by Jews (or in which Jewish shareholders have a controlling interest).
21. Where one does not find it possible, or one does not want, to consume all one's Chometz before Pessach, or it is not feasible to destroy it (if one owned a bakery, shop, distillery, etc.) our Rabbis, of blessed memory, authorized the disposal of such Chometz by way of a correct and valid contract of sale or hire of the room or location where the Chometz is kept, to a non-Jew (as mentioned above). Since the conditions of contract of such a sale are various and complicated in their legality, it is best that a qualified Rabbi be properly empowered to complete the sale on one's behalf. The exact location and nature and value of the Chometz to be sold must be made known. (The scrupulous person will also see to it that the carefully cleaned vessels and utensils which are used during the year, too, should be deposited in the room with the Chometz to be sold so that any Chometz in them should be included in the sale.) It is imperative that the sale be concluded before eleven o'clock on the morning of Erev Pessach after which time it is forbidden to have any Chometz in one's possession. It must be remembered to turn out the pockets of clothes worn during the year and to brush them clean. The same applies to turn-ups of trousers, etc., and cases, bags, school satchels, etc..
22. Inks, paints, glues, etc., may be used on Chol HaMo'ed Pessach (where the **הַלְבוֹת** of **חוֹל הַמוֹעֵד** allow this) even when in their manufacture or preparation (before Pessach) Chometz was used so long as they are not at all edible, even to a dog. Care must be taken with tablecloths that the starch used is not Chometz and likewise wherever something comes in contact with food on Pessach extra caution must be exercised that there is no danger of contamination with Chometz. Shelves in food-cupboards should be re-lined. Microwave ovens, electric hobs and modern cooking ranges require special treatment and guidance about modern appliances in the kitchen is given in the better kind of Kashrus manual. General practice is that ovens and stoves are thoroughly cleaned and, depending on the surface material, scoured and ideally an insert oven is used for the duration of Pessach. There are Halachic authorities who permit the direct

use of the oven (that is, without an insert oven) on Pessach if, after being scrupulously cleaned, the oven is “kashered” as follows: Firstly, the oven must be left unused for at least twenty-four hours and then (together with the oven shelves) it is heated to its maximum heat for about twenty minutes. After this, nothing more needs to be done. (However, if during the year Chometz food came into direct contact with the oven shelves, then on Pessach food must not come into direct contact with those shelves — this, even with the oven being “kashered.”) Tables and work-surfaces in the kitchen and dining-room must be permanently covered for the duration of Pessach.

23. During Pessach it is forbidden to use artificially-dried fruit of any kind nor any spices, ground or whole, unless they have a *Hechsher*, that is, rabbinical certification that they are *correct* for Pessach use. (In the past, the lack of properly supervised foods restricted the foods that one could use on Pessach but nowadays, thankfully, there is a very wide range of various foods available, all with a *Hechsher*.) While there is a tradition amongst most Ashkenazzim that neither rice, beans, pulse, nor peanuts are allowed on Pessach, the custom of most Sefaraddim is that these *are* allowed. Generally, the wise and conscientious person has a golden rule for Pessach: “When in doubt — do without!”

THE PREPARATION OF THE SEDER AND THE PASSOVER MEAL

24. The Seder Dish is arranged as shown. (It should be noted, however, that there are other customs, too, and as in all such matters, each family should follow its own faithful tradition.) The Seder Dish consists of the following:

זְרוּעַ — usually a roasted shank-bone with some meat on it: In remembrance of the קָרְבַּן פֶּסַח (the Pascal Lamb) which also was roasted. It is called “זְרוּעַ” in reference to our redemption from Egypt by הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא which was “בְּזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה” (“with an outstretched arm” meaning, in full public sight of the world). To be eaten on Yom Tov, but only during daytime.



THE SEDER DISH

בֵּיצָה — a hard-boiled egg (some have the custom to roast it in its shell, too): In remembrance of the קָרְבַּן חֲגִיגָה אֲרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר (the special חֲגִיגָה of the 14th of Nissan) brought by the people together with the קָרְבַּן פֶּסַח in the time of the Beis HaMikdash. A hard-boiled egg is used rather than a piece of meat or some other foodstuff because an egg is usually a main component part of the mourner’s meal on his return from the cemetery and in this context it symbolises our mourning for the still-not-rebuilt Beis HaMikdash. An egg on our Seder Plate also recalls, בְּרַמְזוֹ, that the night of the coming

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Tisha b'Av will be the same night of the week as is this first night of Pessach, that is, לַיִל תִּשְׁעָה בְּאָב חַל בְּאֵ שֶׁל פֶּסַח. Taken all together, then, this item on our Seder Dish reminds us that even at our happiest moments we are to remember that our Beis HaMikdash was destroyed and to better our ways so that it should be rebuilt.

מָרוֹר — bitter herbs (grated horseradish): bitter or sharp in taste and, by similarity of words and association of ideas (in Hebrew and, incidentally, also in English) recalling the bitter experience of our life in Egypt where the Egyptians enslaved us and afflicted us and embittered our lives.

חֲרוֹסֶת — a mixture of finely ground-up nuts and almonds, grated apple, broken cinnamon sticks and a little red wine: to resemble the mortar we used in Egypt.

כֶּרֶפֶס — radish, celery, parsley, boiled potato, or other vegetable. At the prescribed place in the Seder, the כֶּרֶפֶס is eaten after being dipped into the salt-water, as an appetizer: symbol of riches and free men. (On Pessach every man in Israel is like a king.) The salt-water (reminiscent of our tears under our suffering in Egypt) if made on Yom Tov itself (or Shabbos) should be made with a slight variation to the usual way of making it on weekdays.

חֲזֵרֶת — lettuce. Used as מָרוֹר when making the Matzoh-and-Morror sandwich as Hillel the Elder did. When chewed a long time, the green leaves of lettuce gradually taste more and more bitter. So, too, our slavery in Egypt started-off with our working for a wage, then the wage was diminished and the work was increased, and at the end we were forced to work even harder still for no payment at all. (Utmost care must be taken to wash, rinse and then search the lettuce leaves to ensure that there are no insects or flies hidden in the folds of the lettuce leaves and the same applies to the parsley that some use for כֶּרֶפֶס, too.)

25. In addition to the Seder Dish, the Yom Tov table should be laid with the best and most valuable tableware possible.
26. Three perfect Matzos are arranged one on top of the other in the place of the master of the house (traditionally under the Seder Dish) and each person present has his own cup from which to drink the Four Cups of wine during the Seder (symbolizing the four expressions of deliverance as promised to us by הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא). The Fifth Cup, the בּוֹס שֶׁל אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּבִיא, is placed in the centre of the table and is filled at the prescribed time. Red wine should be used as it is considered more fitting for the Mitzvah, but he who cannot drink four cups of wine may fulfil the Mitzvah with grape-juice or a mixture of wine and grape-juice.
27. The custom prevails that everyone has his cup filled for him by someone else (and he, in turn, fills the cup of another man, too) for, as mentioned previously, at the Pessach Seder every man is like a king, and a king is served upon by others.

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28. To fulfil the Mitzvah of Matzoh one has to eat Matzoh equivalent to the size of an olive within four minutes, and likewise Morror — made up of lettuce and grated horseradish — the equivalent of the volume of an olive within four minutes. Otherwise one has not discharged one's obligation of these Mitzvos. The whole meal (with the exception of the Morror) is eaten while comfortably leaning to the left, which is the way free men lean (in a manner that is perhaps best described as "relaxed in a respectful slouch"). Even a son at his father's table is allowed to do so even without asking his permission but a pupil in his Torah-teacher's presence may not lean until he has the permission of his teacher.
29. The four Mitzvos of the Seder Night, namely: **(1)** eating Matzoh; **(2)** eating Morror; **(3)** drinking the Four Cups of wine and **(4)** recounting and talking about our redemption from Egypt, are as much incumbent upon women as upon men. One should make sure before Yom Tov that there is enough wine and Matzos for all the participants in the Seder and each participant should have his or her own Haggadah. If some of the participants at the Seder do not understand Hebrew, then those parts of the Haggadah which describe our slavery in Egypt and our redemption should be read aloud in English as well as in Hebrew. (The various Brochos of the Mitzvos of the Seder, however, must be said in **לְשׁוֹן הַקּוֹדֶשׁ**.) It is earnestly recommended that the Haggaddos used at the Seder should have a reliable and faithful translation and also that the directions and explanations provided concerning the various activities and procedures at the Seder should be correct and clearly explained.

EREV PESSACH WHICH FALLS TO BE ON A SHABBOS

30. When Erev Pessach falls to be on a Shabbos, the **תְּעִנִית בְּכוֹרִים** (*see paragraph 8, above*) is on the preceding Thursday. The search for Chometz is carried out as above (*see paragraphs 12 — 15, above*) but is brought forward to the preceding Thursday night and all the Chometz (except that which will be needed for Shabbos) is burned in the usual way on the Friday morning. The second declaration renouncing one's ownership of the Chometz, however, is not made until Shabbos morning after the morning Se'udos.
31. On Shabbos morning we davven Shacharis very early in the morning, so that the two meals of the Shabbos Day (which together with the Friday Night meal make up the three Shabbos Se'udos which should contain bread) can be eaten before the Hafsokkoh at about 10 o'clock in the morning. It is proper to eat the Shabbos Morning meal in two parts, that is, a short break is made in the meal, Birchas HaMazzon is recited and then, perhaps after a short walk in the garden, the meal is resumed after **נְטִילַת יָדַיִם** and **הַמוֹצֵיא**. (At the end of this meal, which is then counted as the Se'udoh Shlishis, Birchas HaMazzon is said again.) After these two meals, any Chometz that remains must be flushed away and then the declaration renouncing one's ownership of all and any Chometz in one's possession is spoken, as above (*see paragraph 15*). It makes good sense to use disposable paper plates, plastic cutlery and cups (which can then be put in the dustbin to be collected later) so that there will be fewer dirty plates, etc.,

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which might contain Chometz. (But these disposables, of course, may not be carried out into the street on Shabbos.) Any other plates, pots or pans, etc., may be rinsed with water in the bathroom or over an outdoor drain (not in the kitchen sink which will have been kashered and which one will want to use during Pessach) to remove any Chometz which might be in them, and they are then placed together with the tablecloth used, in the room which is sold and where all the other Chometz things are being kept during Pessach. Because the tablecloth will have to be removed on Shabbos, the candlesticks, which are מוקצה, must be kindled on a sideboard or sidetable, etc., on the Friday night. The room is then locked shut, as on any other Erev Pessach.

32. During the Shabbos meals, great care must be taken that the Pessach and Chometz vessels are not mixed and do not come into contact with each other. The meals, which besides the *Challos*, must consist only of food which is permitted on Pessach, should be cooked (on the Friday) in Pessach vessels and transferred to other Pessach vessels before it is served on the Chometz dishes on the Shabbos table.
33. Those things which will be needed for the Seder and which need not be made immediately before the Seder must be prepared on the Friday and not on Shabbos. This includes: grating the horseradish for the Morrор, the mixing of the Charosses, the roasting of the זרוע (shank-bone) and the egg. It must be remembered (and the ladies, too, must be reminded) that nothing may be done on Shabbos for the Yom Tov until Shabbos has ended and one has said the abbreviated form of Havdolloh: "בְּרוּךְ הַמְּבָדִיל בֵּין קוֹדֵשׁ לְחוֹל". This includes even arranging the table, preparing the "Kittel" (the white robe worn by the leader of the Seder, according to custom) the Matzos or the wine.

CHOL HaMO'ED

34. During the Intermediate Days of the Yom Tov, ("חול המועד" — "Chol HaMo'ed") most kinds of hard, manual work are forbidden, and likewise it is forbidden to do that work, even if it is not particularly hard work, by means of which one ordinarily earns one's livelihood, unless it be a case where (1) one stands to lose a considerable amount of money if the work is not done, or (2) one otherwise will not have enough to buy for oneself and one's family food for the remaining days of the Yom Tov. For clarification as to whether these conditions apply to one, it is recommended that a Rav who is acquainted with one and who knows one's particular circumstances, should be consulted.
35. Besides hard work, other things are not allowed on Chol HaMo'ed. They include: having one's hair cut; shaving; washing clothes (except nappies); and most buying and selling (except where conditions (1) or (2) of the preceding paragraph 34, applies); moving house, etc.. Marriages do not take place on Chol HaMo'ed (this is because אין מערבין שמהה בשמה) but the סעודת תנאים or small engagement party is allowed, as is a סעודת ברית מילה or a סעודת פדיון הבן. Travelling and outings are allowed on Chol HaMo'ed, as is ordinary writing (but not scribe-work, calligraphy or specialist writing).

36. Chol HaMo'ed is really a kind of extension of Yom Tov proper, and even if, as we have seen above, certain kinds of work are allowed in particular circumstances and which are not allowed on Yom Tov itself, we should not be misled into thinking, as unfortunately so many people do, that it has not the sanctity or holiness of Yom Tov. On the contrary, our Chachommim, of blessed memory, expressed themselves very forcefully about this point and even went so far as to liken the person who desecrates Chol HaMo'ed to one who is **עוֹבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה**. (This might be because a person who treats the Yommim Tovim given by HaShem as if they were merely for his own convenience, even if he treats them as a holiday, but without the sanctity and restraints of a Yom Tov, thereby shows how he considers the Mitzvos of HaShem with scant regard, to accept or discard them as his own fancy takes him.) They stated further that even if a man has to his credit much Torah-learning and many Mitzvos and good deeds but if he desecrates Chol HaMo'ed — **אֵין לוֹ חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא**. Therefore, every G-d-fearing person will honour these Intermediate Days of the Festivals by wearing his best clothes, by enjoying food and drink and taking the air, and by engaging in Torah-learning and Mitzvos. In this way he will utilize these blessed days for bodily relaxation and spiritual uplift.

“YA’ALEH V’YOVOH” — “יַעֲלֶה וַיָּבֵא”

37. During Chol HaMo'ed, **יַעֲלֶה וַיָּבֵא** is inserted in the **שְׁמוֹנֵה עֶשְׂרֵה** (but not in Mussaf) in the **בְּרַכַּת “רִצָּה”**. If one forgot to say it there —
- [a] but reminded oneself before the **שֵׁם** of **“בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'”** at the end of that Brochah, one goes back to say **יַעֲלֶה וַיָּבֵא** and then continues as usual to the end of the Shemoneh Esre.
 - [b] If one had said **“בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'”**, and at that point reminded oneself, one adds the words **“לְמַדְיִנִי חוֹקֵיךָ”** there, and continues as usual to the end of Shemoneh Esre.
 - [c] If one reminded oneself anywhere after that but before the Possuk **יְהִי לְרִצּוֹן** **“אֲמַרִי פִי”** (which signifies the end of Shemoneh Esre proper) one finishes that phrase (without saying any **שֵׁם**) goes back to the beginning of the **בְּרַכַּת “רִצָּה”** and corrects the omission, finishing the Shemoneh Esre in the usual way.
 - [d] If one remembered only after having said **“יְהִי לְרִצּוֹן”** one must recite the whole Shemoneh Esre again (this, even if one reminded oneself later on in the day).
38. In Birchas HaMazzon, where **יַעֲלֶה וַיָּבֵא** is inserted in the **בְּרַכַּת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם** (which starts with the word **“רַחֵם”**) if one forgot it on Yom Tov the Din is:
- [e] If one reminded oneself before the **שֵׁם** of **“בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'”** at the end of that Brochah, one says **יַעֲלֶה וַיָּבֵא** there and then continues as usual.

הַלְכוֹת פֶּסַח, חוֹל הַמוֹעֵד, סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר, וכו'

SOME DINNIM CONCERNING THE FESTIVAL OF PESSACH, CHOL HaMO'ED
(THE INTERMEDIATE DAYS OF THE FESTIVAL) AND THE COUNTING OF THE OMER, ETC.

- [f] If one reminded oneself only after having finished that Brochah but before starting the next Brochah, one says the following (if it is also Shabbos and one forgot "רְצָה" too, one includes what is in the brackets):

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן [שְׁבֻתוֹת לְמִנוּחָה] לְעַמּוֹ
יִשְׂרָאֵל [וּבְאַהֲבָה לְאוֹת וְלִבְרִית וְ] יָמִים טוֹבִים לְשִׁשּׁוֹן וְלִשְׂמֻחָה אֶת יוֹם
חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, מְקַדֵּשׁ [הַשְּׁבֻת וְ] יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְמַנִּים

and then one continues the Birchas HaMazzon with the **בְּרַכַּת הַטוֹב וְהַמְטִיב** and proceeds as usual.

- [g] If one reminded oneself only after having started the **בְּרַכַּת הַטוֹב וְהַמְטִיב**, even if one had said only the first word (but as long as one has not gone further than "בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'" one can add the words "לְמַדְיִנִי חוֹקֵיךָ" and can continue, as in [b]) one has to start the Birchas HaMazzon again from the beginning.

39. On Chol HaMo'ed, however, in case [g] and one has started the **בְּרַכַּת הַטוֹב וְהַמְטִיב**, one continues the Birchas HaMazzon and one is not allowed to correct oneself.

"MA'SHIV HoRU'ACH uMORID HaGESHEM" — **"מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם"**

40. "מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם" ("Who causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall") the phrase which is inserted in the second Brochah of the Shemoneh Esre during the winter time, is not said from after the Mussaf Amidah of the first day of Pessach. If one did say this phrase, and reminded oneself of one's mistake before the **שֵׁם** of "בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי מְחַיֶּה הַמֵּתִים", one goes back to "אַתָּה גְבוּר" and continues as usual after that. If one reminded oneself only after the **שֵׁם** one has to start the Shemoneh Esre again. (If one did not yet say the words "וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם" the mistake is ignored and one continues as usual.)

"V'SAYN BROCHOH" — **"וְתַן בְּרַכָּה"**

41. From the end of Yom Tov Rishon of Pessach onwards, that is, from the first weekday Shemoneh Esre after the initial Yom Tov of Pessach, we cease to say in the **בְּרַכַּת הַשָּׁנִים** the phrase "וְתַן טַל וּמָטָר לְבְרַכָּה" and instead say "וְתַן בְּרַכָּה". If one forgot, then as long as one has not yet said the Possuk **יְהִי לְרַצוֹן אֲמַרִי פִי וכו'** (which signifies the end of the Shemoneh Esre proper) one goes back to the beginning of the **בְּרַכַּת הַשָּׁנִים**, that is, **בְּרַךְ עָלֵינוּ**. However, once one has said the Possuk "יְהִי לְרַצוֹן" one cannot correct oneself in this way and one has to say the Shemoneh Esre again.
42. In case of doubt, that is, that one does not remember whether one said the correct version or not, the assumption is that after 90 times (about one month) the new version will have become the habit and therefore one does not correct oneself. Before that, however, the assumption is that one said the old version out of habit.

THE COUNTING OF THE OMER

43. On the second night of Pessach commences the Mitzvah of the Counting of the Omer, as it is written in the Torah: “You shall count for yourselves from the morrow after the Festival ... seven weeks shall there be, complete ... until after the seventh week shall you count, [up to] fifty days.” This “Sefiras Ha'Omer,” when each night we count aloud the number of days leading up to the Yom Tov of Shovuos, brings us to remember the objective and purpose of our redemption from Egypt, namely, our acceptance of the Torah and Mitzvos, for it was on Shovuos, on the sixth day of Sivvan in the year 2448 after Creation that we received the Torah at Mount Sinai. Through this Counting of the Omer therefore, our going out of Egypt is connected to the ultimate purpose and aim for which we were called into being as a People, for it is only through the Torah that we can be that which הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא in His goodness intends us to be — “a kingdom of princes and a holy Nation.” Interestingly, there is no command to count the days between two Yommim Tovim nor to count the days leading up to any other Yom Tov except Shovuos and the Mitzvah of Counting the Omer makes it clear that the event of Shovuos is the climax and the realization of the event of Pessach.
44. Before the Counting of the Omer every night, the בְּרָכָה is said, thus:
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר.
 The Mitzvah of Counting the Omer, which is done while standing, comes immediately with nightfall. In Jewish Law, it is the day that follows the night, rather than the other way round and therefore, if one forgot to count the night before, the omission can be rectified during the following day until sunset, and one counts the number of days (and weeks) but without saying the בְּרָכָה. Provided that one did not miss out a complete day, the בְּרָכָה is again recited on the following night (or indeed on any subsequent night). However, if one forgot to count and a complete day passed before one reminded oneself, then for the remaining period of Sefiras Ha'Omer one counts each night but one may not recite the בְּרָכָה oneself. Instead, if possible, each night one should hear the Brochoh spoken by someone else who does count with a בְּרָכָה and then count the Omer oneself.
45. If one is in a doubt as to whether or not one counted the night before, even if one knows that one did not count during the day, one may nevertheless continue to count on the following nights with the בְּרָכָה.
46. Before reciting the Brochoh, it is necessary to know how many days one is about to count, for before making any Brochoh one must know to what the Brochoh is to refer. However, if one did not know beforehand, but one listened to one's friend counting and then repeated what he counted, though not ideal, it suffices. If one was mistaken and counted wrongly, one must correct oneself immediately. If one did not do so immediately, then the Brochoh must be recited again before counting again correctly.
47. One must avoid counting (in any language) before reciting the Brochoh, for it is a general rule that the Brochoh is recited before doing the Mitzvah to which it refers and

that one cannot make the Brochah after one has performed the Mitzvah. Consequently, if one is asked in the late afternoon and onwards, "How many days do we count tonight?" one should answer, "*Yesterday* was so-and-so many."

YEMEI HaSEFIRAH — A PERIOD OF RELIGIOUS MOURNING

48. Although in reality the period after Pessach leading up to Shovuos should be a time of joy when we relive the happy anticipation for the Receiving of the Torah, nevertheless this joy is for us somewhat dimmed and indeed this period has been transformed, to a degree, into a sad time for it was between Pessach and Shovuos that many thousands of Rabbi Akiva's pupils died in an epidemic. Because the death of a Tzaddik is considered by us to be a catastrophe and all the more so is the death of many, many Tzaddikim, therefore during the time of the Sefiras Ha'Omer we observe certain forms of mourning. Exactly on which days they died is not known: what *is* known is that the epidemic lasted thirty-three days and also that on Lag b'Omer (that is, the thirty-third day of the Omer) the terrible plague was suspended. For this reason, the period of public mourning that we observe varies with the custom of the community to which one belongs. In addition, events in our history have unfortunately reinforced this time of year as a time of calamity and mourning. For instance, many of the massacres of the Middle Ages, when hundreds of Jewish communities were cruelly wiped out by the Christians in their Crusades, happened in the time between Pessach and Shovuos. Some observe as this period of religious mourning the first thirty-three days of the Omer. Others observe the period from Rosh Chodesh Iyyar until three days before Shovuos. And yet others observe from after Rosh Chodesh Iyyar until Erev Shovuos. In any case, in those places where there is a recognized tradition and the people are particular about keeping those traditions faithfully, it is important that everyone complies with the custom of the community and avoids any kind of strife.
49. Marriages do not take place during this sad time and hair-cutting and shaving are not allowed, as for a mourner. (Only in certain special circumstances might it be allowed to shave, but a Rav must be consulted to ascertain whether or not one falls into the category of people who are permitted to shave. Contrary to common belief and practice, shaving during Sefirah time is not allowed ordinarily.) Various other manifestations of joy are also suspended during this time, but a *סְעוּדַת בְּרִית מִילָה* and a *סְעוּדַת הַתְּנָאִים* etc., are allowed. In any case we do not generally allow the original happiness of this time of year to be completely eclipsed by the sad events of a later time.
50. And then, with the approach of the Festival of Shovuos we prepare ourselves to meet this Yom Tov with serene happiness, and we make ready to rejoice on this wonderful Yom Tov, when at once with quiet, inner joy and awe we received, and do receive every year anew, from *הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרִיךְ הוּא* that most precious and beautiful gift, the Holy Torah, through which by His grace and lovingkindness He sanctifies us, His People Yisroel.