

תורת השיבנו



TORAS HASHEVAYNU

הרב חיים אברהם זקוטיןסקי
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**ASSORTED HALACHOS &
HASHKAFAT FOR THE SEDER
5783**



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Thoughts for the Seder	3
Making A Siyum	11
Burning The Chametz	12
Hallel In Shul On The Seder Night	12
Preparations For The Seder	13
The Kittel	14
Blessing One's Children	15
The Ka-arah - Seder Plate	16
Charoses At The Seder	16
The Shankbone At The Seder	17
The Wine At The Seder	19
The Simanim At The Seder	21
Laws of the Seder- Assorted Halachos	22
Gebrochts On Pesach	24
Reference Section	25

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Preparing For The Seder

The Shulchan Aruch (472) writes that one should distribute candies and nuts to the children before the Seder in order to keep them awake. The Baal Hatania (472:31) adds that, “distributing nuts and candies will hopefully lead the children to ask why is this night different from other nights that we are receiving these gifts. Although we have no answer for this specific question, however, that question will hopefully lead them to notice other differences that this great night has and they in turn will ask why we eat matzah, marror etc.” Harav Wolfson shlit”a explains that the Baal Hatania is teaching us a great lesson in chinuch. The night of the seder is a great opportunity to teach children lessons of faith in Hashem. To that end, we begin by having them ask a question that we do not have the answer to. This will allow the child to realize that there are times in life when it is ok for the response to a question to be “I do not know.” A Jew’s faith is unbreakable. Even if one does not have the answer to some of life’s questions, their faith will not crumble. The child needs to learn to always ask and we need not fear giving them an answer, even if that answer is “we do not yet know.”

Kaddesh

1) The Seder begins with Kaddesh, meaning “sanctify”, followed by Urchatz, meaning “cleanse”. Kaddesh represents a Jew’s ability to gain great spiritual heights through the proper performance of mitzvos, while Urchatz represents the Jew’s ability to repent and remove himself from the grip of sin. The Avnei Nezer questions the order of Kaddesh and then Urchatz. Normally one must cleanse oneself from all sins and spiritual blemishes and only then can one sanctify oneself with mitzvos. As David Hemelech said in Tehillim (34) “Turn away from evil and do good”, first one must turn away from evil and only then can one properly perform mitzvos. Why then is the order Kaddesh and then Urchatz when it should seemingly be Urchatz and then Kaddesh?

To properly understand the order of the Seder one must first understand the difference between the month of Tishrei and the month of Nissan. Both Tishrei and Nissan are awesome times, times that a Jew can gain immense spiritual heights and become very close to Hashem. However, there are two very fundamentally different ways this happens. During Tishrei the method is “from below to Above”. Hashem wants to become very close to every Jew, but the

Jew must start the process through repenting and performing mitzvos. After a Jew extends himself, Hashem will then become close to him and raise him to a higher spiritual plain.

During the month of Tishrei we must earn the spiritual levels through repentance and adherence to the Torah. This is why Tishrei is preceded by Elul, a month that Chazal say is hinted to in the verse "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine." indicating that Hashem wants to intensify His relationship with the Jewish people. However, we must begin the process (I am my Beloved's) and then Hashem will reciprocate (my Beloved is mine). Even the month Tishrei is spelled from the end of the alphabet forward (Tav, Shin then Reish and finally Yud) further indicating that this month must begin from below to Above.

However, the month of Nissan is completely different, it is "from Above to below". The Ari z"l explained that the Jewish people in Egypt were at the forty ninth level of impurity and had they remained in Egypt any longer they might have fallen r"l to the fiftieth level. They were not deserving of the great spiritual heights that they experienced. Why then were they redeemed? During the month of Nissan Hashem's love for every Jew is so great that Hashem breaks the natural order and he raises the Jew up, even though he has not done anything to deserve it. Unlike Tishrei, it is rather the Jew's job to reciprocate and continue to excel and grow after Pesach. On Pesach we are gifted spiritual heights and it is then our job to earn those levels through Torah study and performing mitzvos. Even the name Pesach means to "jump". Meaning to go out of order and to skip steps. Because Pesach is a time where Hashem chooses to go out of order and a Jew can gain spiritual heights in a moment that would take months to attain in the natural order. A Jew can skip the steps normally necessary to grow spiritually.

Therefore, explains the Avnei Nezer, the Seder begins with kaddesh before urchatz, even though the natural order of events is that one must cleanse himself before sanctifying himself through Torah and mitzvos. The Seder is a time where one can break the natural order. At the Sefer, one can sanctify himself even if he is still struggling with sin and has not yet properly cleansed himself. As long as a Jew comes to the Seder and is interested in growing, Hashem will raise him up and make him holy (Kaddesh). It is then our job to continue to grow (Urchatz) and earn the levels that we were just given as a gift.

2) During Kiddush on Shabbos and Yom Tov we are required to remember the redemption from Egypt. Why does Judaism stress so much emphasis on remembering the redemption from Egypt? Every day we are required to remember it morning and night, during Kiddush and even when Hashem begins the Ten Commandments He says, "I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage". Hashem did not say that He is the Lord who created the world rather He is the Lord that took us out of Egypt. Why is there such an emphasis on the Jewish people's Exodus?

The Nesivos Shalom (Parshas Bo) explains that there is a well-known phenomenon that in times of great stress a person can summon physical strength that he or she did not know that they even had, (i.e. the mother that lifts a car off of her child). This exists with spiritual strength as well. At times of spiritual danger, the Jewish soul has an inner strength that the person is not aware of. It is our job to awaken this dormant potential. What is the key to arousing this inner strength? The Nesivos Shalom explains that the key to tapping into the full strength of the Jewish soul is by believing that no matter what one has done in the past, Hashem still cares, loves, and is waiting for your repentance. If one doesn't believe that Hashem still cares there is no way to summon the strength necessary to fight against the Yetzer Hara. The key to success is the belief that Hashem will never give up on a Jew.

The Nesivos Shalom explains that this belief comes from our redemption from Egypt. As noted above, the Jews in Egypt were at the forty ninth level of impurity and it would be very easy to assume that Hashem would have forsaken them. This redemption teaches that there is nothing a Jew can do to make Hashem give up on any Jew. Even if one is on the forty ninth level of impurity there is still hope. All one needs to do is to return to Hashem and repent. This is why there is such an emphasis on remembering the Exodus and why Hashem introduces Himself to the Jewish people by stating that he is "The Lord that took us out of Egypt". Hashem understands that the Yetzer Hara's tactic is to convince the Jew that Hashem gave up on him or her due to past sins. Therefore, the Jewish people constantly remember the redemption from Egypt as a reminder that just as Hashem did not forsake the Jewish people in the past, he has not and will not forsake the Jewish people today.

Urchatz

The word Urchatz means to wash, as it is the point in the Seder to wash hands for the eating of the karpas. However, Rav Avraham Schorr shlit"א, citing the Sefer Divrei Shalom, explains allegorically that the word Urchatz in Aramaic is rooted in the word faith, or bitachon, as it is stated in the prayer Brich Shmei בְּה אֱנָה רַחֵיץ meaning "In Him I do trust." Rav Schorr explains that Kaddesh means sanctifying oneself through the performance of mitzvos and through learning Torah and is then followed by Urchatz, meaning faith. This is because oftentimes one performs mitzvos and does not feel that he has changed in any way. He does not feel more exalted or more close to Hashem. In such a situation, one has to have faith in the power of Torah and mitzvos. Even if he feels no change in himself, he is more exalted and on a higher level because of his actions. Rav Meilich Biderman shlit"א compares it to someone who takes the elevator to the top floor of a large building. When he is told that he is at his floor, he remarks, "I don't feel like I have arrived, I don't feel like I am any higher than I was before." This is obviously ridiculous because regardless of how he feels he has arrived. When one performs mitzvos he is higher and changed because of it, whether he feels it or not.

Maggid

1) At the beginning of Maggid, matzah is described as the "bread of affliction" because Jews were served matzah when they were slaves in Egypt. Yet, at the end of Maggid, we say that we eat matzah because when the Jewish people left Egypt they left so quickly that their dough did not have time to rise. This seems to offer contradictory notions regarding the nature of matzah: does it symbolize exile (bread of affliction) or redemption (leaving exile quickly)? The same question can be asked regarding the charoses. The charoses is thick to remind us of the mortar and bricks of Egypt (symbolic of exile) and yet is made of sweet apples to commemorate the miracles that took place under the apple orchards. Rashi and Rashbam explain that the Jewish women in Egypt would painlessly and quietly give birth beneath the apple trees so that the Egyptians would not discover that a Jewish male was born (symbolic of redemption). So is it exile or redemption?

Rav Yisroel Belsky zt"l was once asked what the most important message for the children at the Seder is. He said that the children should understand that we thank Hashem not just for taking us out of Egypt but also for placing us in Egypt. He explained that the Jewish people have a mind and a heart. The mind of Klal Yisroel was developed in the desert where the Torah was given. However, the heart of the Jewish people was developed in the slave pits of Egypt.

In those difficult times, the Jewish people gained a sensitivity that they would not have had had they never gone through the difficult times. As the Torah (Exodus 22:20) tells us, "And you shall not mistreat a stranger (convert), nor shall you oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." The Jewish people understood what it was like to be a stranger in Egypt and should learn from that experience not to oppress others.

Rav Belsky zt"l taught us that true redemption is not ignoring the difficult times in life, but rather the ability to find purpose in those difficulties. If a person can look back at those "down" times and see that he grew from it, and that it helped him become the person that he is, then even those times of exile can become redemptive. The objective is to look at those periods in life with a different perspective, with "eyes of geulah." The objective of the Seder is not to just reference leaving Egypt, but to discuss the slave pits as well and to find the sweetness and purpose of those times. Therefore, matzah represents both exile and redemption, because true redemption is not ignoring the affliction but finding the goodness and purpose in those times of life. This is evidenced in Korach where we wrap matzah and marror together. We eat the marror (exile) with the matzah (redemption).

Rav Avraham Tzvi Kluger shlit"a also explains that the objective of the Seder is to be able to look back at the exile with purpose and to find the good within the bad. He adds that the time that one will be able to do this fully is when Moshiach will come. After Moshiach comes each person will be able to look back at all of exile and all the trials and tribulations and be able to fully grasp the reason behind them. Rav Kluger adds that during the Seder each Jew experiences a taste of the Next World, of the World that will be. Jews get a grasp of the clarity of the times of Moshiach. Each individual is able to close their eyes and enter a time where all the suffering will be behind us, where all the pain will be explained and are all able to truly understand the sweetness of exile.

2) The section of Maggid at the Seder begins with the paragraph of "Ha Lachma Anya". where the nature of matzah is described as the bread of affliction. The next phrase is, "Whoever is hungry let him come and eat." We invite all those that need food to join the Seder. At first glance this is a beautiful act of kindness to invite those that need a meal. It would make a lot more sense to invite them in shul before the Seder when it would be more practical for others to join? This seems to not be a real invitation at all?

Rav Avraham Hakohen Kook zt"l explains that the Gemara tells us that the nature of every Jew is to be bashful, merciful and inclined to do chessed. It is the nature of a Jewish person to think and care for others. However, one of the sad side effects of galus is that people become somewhat selfish. It is not even their fault. Part of exile causes people to go into "survival mode" and doesn't allow them to be their true merciful selves. Therefore, when we begin the seder, a night of true redemption from the shackles of galus, each Jew reminds himself of the true nature of a Jew. And that is someone who would invite others. Someone who thinks about helping other Jews. It is a night where the Jewish people are no longer selfish. The Seder begins by reminding the Jewish people of the true nature and desires of a Jew.

3) During Maggid we recount how during one year Rav Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Eliezer Ben Azaryah, Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiva shared a Seder together in Bnei Brak and how they recounted the miracles of leaving Egypt the entire night. The Tanna who lived in Bnei Brak and hosted the Seder was Rabbi Akiva. Why were these great sages visiting Rabbi Akiva? The question is even stronger knowing that Rabbi Yehoshua was a teacher of Rabbi Akiva. Why is the teacher traveling to the student? The Aruch Hashulchan answers this question by citing a Gemara in Makkos (24b). The Gemara relates that these same sages, Rav Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Eliezer Ben Azaryah and Rabbi Akiva were traveling to Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple. When they arrived at the Temple Mount, they saw a fox that emerged from the site of the Holy of Holies. They began weeping, while Rabbi Akiva was laughing. They asked him, "For what reason are you laughing?" Rabbi Akiva responded, "For what reason are you weeping?" They replied, "This is the place concerning which it is written: "And the non-priest who approaches shall die" (Numbers 1:51), and now foxes walk in it; and shall we not weep?"

Rabbi Akiva replied, "That is why I am laughing. Since we now see the prophecies regarding the destruction of Jerusalem has been fulfilled, so too we can be confident that the prophecy regarding it's rebuilding shall take place as well." The Sages replied, employing this formulation "Akiva, you have comforted us; Akiva, you have comforted us."

The Aruch Hashulchan (Haggadah Leil Shimorim) explains that these great sages had experienced first hand the great optimism of Rabbi Akiva. When others saw foxes leaving the Holy of Holies, Rabbi Akiva saw the seeds of redemption. The year that they had Seder together was a particularly difficult year and there was much oppression against the Jewish people. Therefore, they went to Bnei Brak to dine with Rabbi Akiva in hopes that his visions of redemption will sweeten their difficulties. They were hoping for the comfort of Rabbi Akiva.

Each participant at the Seder hopes to experience a morsel of the hope and optimism of Rabbi Akiva, to be able to see the redemption within the exile. As Rav Kook (Shir Hashirim) writes, "For this spiritual giant, the distant future was as real and palpable as the present reality. His unshakable faith and vision was rooted in a profound love of God. This love so filled his pure heart that the future was a certain reality, leaving no room to mourn over the disasters of the present. For Rabbi Akiva, the tragedies of the day were but a thin cloud, casting fleeting shadows under the brilliant daytime sun."

4) It states in Maggid that, "Hashem took us out of Egypt, not by means of an angel, and not by means of a seraph, and not by means of a messenger. Rather, it was the Holy One, Blessed is He, in His Glory by Himself." The commentaries offer many reasons as to why Hashem Himself took us out of Egypt without the use of angels. One beautiful teaching can be found in the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh. The verse (Shemos 2:23) tells us, "the children of Israel sighed from the labor, and they cried out, and their cry ascended to God from the labor." The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh writes, "It was not that they cried out to Hashem to save them, but they cried out in distress, as a man cries out from physical pain, and the verse tells us that their cry rose up to Hashem."

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh is revealing that the Jewish people did not pray in a formulaic way as they were too overwhelmed by the suffering to do so. Rather, they cried out and bickered and showed their frustration with their situation. It was Hashem who converted those cries into prayers. Hashem knew that deep down they truly wanted to pray to Hashem, and the very reason that they aren't doing so is due to their tremendous suffering. It is specifically Hashem Himself who took us out of Egypt because only Hashem can see stress and convert it to prayers. An angel would not recognize these as prayers at all. An angel would only hear complaints and strife. Hashem sees past what Jews say and see why they are acting this way.

Rav Avraham Tzvi Kluger shlit"א, in his Haggadah Bni Bechori Yisroel, cites the Ohr Hachaim and writes that this exile will end in a similar way to the way the Jews left Egypt. And the same way Hashem converted all pain into prayer, so too Hashem does this now as well. Oftentimes, a Jew is suffering and he feels overwhelmed to the point that he can't formulate a proper prayer, which can be frustrating as prayer has the power to help one merit a salvation from his personal suffering. Yet one should remember that Hashem cares so much for each and every Jew that He will even take our pain, cries, suffering and stress and convert it to the most worthy prayers in order to each Jew. Merely the knowledge that Hashem cares that much can help one pray. May Hashem answer all of our prayers and bring a redemption speedily in our days, Amen.



Making a Siyum



1. It is customary for all firstborn males to fast on Erev Pesach in order to recall the tenth and final plague which God inflicted upon Egypt – the death of the firstborn. Nevertheless, the Fast of the Firstborn is actually a fast which rarely takes place. This is because it has become a universal custom to exempt oneself from the fast by attending a seudas mitzva, a meal celebrating the performance of a mitzva, most commonly, a meal accompanying a siyum meseches.
2. There is a great discussion amongst the poskim as to which areas of Torah study qualify for a siyum upon their completion. The most widespread practice is to reserve the siyum celebration for the completion of a tractate of Gemara.
3. The Pnei Yehoshua¹ deduces that Rav Yochanan would make a seudas siyum when he would finish Sefer Iyov. Similarly, Harav Meir Arik zt"l² writes that the meal accompanying a siyum on one of the 24 seforim of Tanach is considered a seudas mitzvah. Harav Moshe Feinstein zt"l³ also rules that one may make a siyum on a sefer on Tanach, however, only if one learns it in depth with a commentary of the Rishonim (such as Radak etc.) and not with modern day commentaries. Harav Shlomo Kluger zt"l is of the opinion that a siyum on a sefer of Tanach is only considered a halachic siyum if one learned it and happened to be finished by Erev Pesach. However, to learn in order to finish and make a siyum on Erev Pesach would only suffice if one is doing so with a mesechta of Gemara and not with a Sefer of Tanach.
4. As stated earlier, all agree that one may make a siyum on a tractate of Gemara. There is an interesting teaching of Rav Yosef Mashash zt"l in the Sefer Mayim Chaim⁴ who writes that one can actually make a siyum on a chapter of Gemara. However, there is room to question this opinion. As the Pirush Anaf Yosef⁵ writes, one can only make a siyum upon completing an entire section of Torah and that as long as the section is incomplete it is not considered a seudas mitzvah to permit bechorim to eat. According to the Anaf Yosef it is hard to believe that upon completing merely a chapter of a mesechta one can make a siyum and permit bechorim to eat. Indeed, the majority of poskim, including Harav Ovadia Yosef zt"l⁶, Harav Gedalya Felder zt"l⁷, Harav Yitzchak Weiss zt"l⁸, and Harav Betzalel Stern zt"l⁹, maintain that a siyum on one perek would not suffice to allow bechorim to eat on Erev Pesach.
5. The Maharsham¹⁰ cites a view that one may make a siyum on one mesechta of Mishnayos. A similar view is attributed to Rav Yizrael of Rozin zt"l¹¹. Harav Yitzchak Eisik Liebes zt"l¹² writes that theoretically one should be able to make a siyum on one mesechta of Mishnayos, however, he has never seen such a thing done practically. Harav Betzalel Stern zt"l¹³ writes that while learning a mesechta of Mishnayos is a big mitzvah, one cannot make a siyum on it and permit bechorim to eat on Erev Pesach. Harav Azriel Hildsheimer zt"l¹⁴ and Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l¹⁵ also feel that one cannot make a siyum on one Mesechta Mishnayos.

6. The Shu"t Pnei Meivin¹⁶ writes that while one mesechta of Mishnayos would not suffice for a siyum, one seder of Mishnayos (such as Zeraim or Moed etc.) is considered a siyum. This is also the view of Harav Betzalel Stern zt"l. Harav Yaakov Kamanetzsky zt"l¹⁷ also rules that one can make a siyum on a seder of Mishnayos.

Burning the Chametz

1. There are two views in the Mishnah Pesachim 21a concerning the proper procedure for fulfilling the mitzvah of tashbisu, the Torah's command to destroy all chametz on erev Pesach. The basic halachah is that tashbisu is accomplished by getting rid of chametz in any of the following ways: burning it; crumbling it and throwing it to the winds; crumbling it and throwing it into an ocean or river. L'chatchilah, though, it has become customary to follow the view of R' Yehudah who holds that burning in fire is the only legitimate method of getting rid of chametz (biur chametz).¹⁸
2. Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l¹⁹ mentions that it is not advisable to pour lighter fluid, gasoline or other combustible materials over the chametz before burning it, because then the chametz becomes inedible - "destroyed" - by the gasoline, rather than by the fire and as mentioned before, this should be avoided. One should therefore be careful to leave at least a kezayis of chametz (the minimum amount required to burn) untouched by lighter fluid or other chemicals. Once a kezayis of chametz is sufficiently burned one may pour lighter fluid on the remaining bread to speed up the burning process.

Hallel in Shul on the Seder Night

1. In some communities the custom is to recite the complete Hallel with a bracha on the first night of Pesach in Israel, and the first two nights outside of Israel. This is the custom of those that pray Nusach Eidut Mizrach, Nusach Sefard, and Nusach Hagra.²⁰
2. Harav Shmuel Kamanetzky shlit"a explains that even those that recite Hallel in shul on the Seder nights only do so with a minyan. Therefore, if one davens Nusach Sefard (which recite Hallel) and did not go to Shul on the Seder night, he should not recite Hallel when he is davening alone at home.²¹ However, Harav Ovadia Yosef zt"l²² proves that many achronim (including the Chida) maintain that one can recite the Hallel without a minyan.
3. There would be a similar question regarding whether women should recite Hallel at home before beginning the Seder. According to Harav Ovadia Yosef zt"l, they must recite the full Hallel since they are included in the miracle of leaving Egypt. However, according to Harav Shmuel Kamanetzky shlit"a, they would not say it since one only recites it in Shul and women generally do not go to shul on the night of the Seder.

4. If one is in a shul where they do not recite Hallel and his personal custom is to recite Hallel, he may recite Hallel quietly in the shul.²³ However, according to Harav Shmuel Kamanetzky shlit" a it would seem that one should not recite Hallel since one is not reciting it together with the minyan.
5. What is the halacha if someone's personal minhag is not to recite the Hallel, but he happens to be in a place where Hallel is recited? What should he do then? Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l²⁴ writes that if someone finds himself in a shul that recites Hallel it is preferable to recite the Hallel and not act differently in order to avoid Machlokes. He adds that ideally he should do so without a blessing. However, if it will be readily apparent that he is not reciting a blessing, then he should even recite a blessing rather than appear to act differently. Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky shlit" a, however, is of the opinion that it is preferable to leave the shul earlier rather than recite the Hallel. Rav Kamenetsky advises that it is preferable to sneak out of shul undetected. If this is not possible, he advises to recite Tehillim instead – also in a manner that is not detected.

Preparations for the Seder

1. The poskim stress the importance of starting the Seder as soon as possible upon returning home from Shul after nightfall. (It should not begin before nightfall.) The reason why we begin the Seder promptly is in order that the children should still be awake and also in order to eat the Afikomen in the proper time. It is a mitzvah to run home from Shul in order to quickly begin the Seder, even though normally one may not run on Shabbos and Yom Tov.²⁵
2. It is for this reason that the Seder table (including the wine, Kiddush cups, Matzah, Marror, Charoses etc.) should be prepared before Yom Tov in order to facilitate commencing the Seder immediately upon returning home from Shul after nightfall.²⁶ When feasible, all the preparations should be done by adult Jews and not by non-Jews or Jewish minors.²⁷ It should be noted that the Chasam Sofer would set the table himself before leaving to Shul.²⁸ Indeed, many tzadikim would perform the preparations themselves and not rely on others to perform the mitzvah.²⁹
3. The Mishnah Berurah³⁰ writes, "Although during the entire year it is best to minimize use at the table of elegant vessels (i.e. exquisite silver) in order to recall the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, on the Seder nights it is a mitzvah to set the table with the finest vessels, in the manner of free men and royalty."
4. As a sign of our freedom, when a person dines on many of the items on this night he is required to eat and drink in a reclining position (heseiba), in the manner of free men and royalty. The preferred position for reclining is that while seated near the table, he leans to the left, with a pillow or cushion to support his head.³¹ Therefore, pillows and cushions should be prepared by each seat before Yom Tov.³² It is preferred that the pillow be prepared by someone other than the master of the house.³³

5. The cups used for Kiddush should be rinsed prior to use.³⁴ The Chaya Adam³⁵ writes that that the rinsing of the cups, like the other preparations, should be done before Yom Tov. However, others write that the cups should be washed immediately prior to Kiddush.³⁶
6. The Shulchan Aruch³⁷ writes that one should distribute candies and nuts to the children before the Seder in order to keep them awake. In the Rav Chaim Kanievsky Haggadah it states that Rav Chaim would distribute the candies and nuts in adherence to the view of the Shulchan Aruch. However, many do not adhere to this Halacha.

The Kittel at the Seder

1. There is a custom for men to wear a kittel (white robe) at the Seder. There are two primary reasons for this custom: A) The kittel resembles the ministering angels, who are clothed in pure white. According to this reason, the kittel symbolizes angel-like freedom from sin and it would generate feelings of happiness.³⁸ B) The kittel resembles shrouds. Since at the Seder we conduct ourselves like free men and royalty, we are afraid that a person may become haughty. Therefore, to diminish any haughtiness he wears the kittel which reminds him of the day of his death.³⁹
2. The custom of Sefardim and Chabad Chassidim is not to wear a kittel at the Seder.⁴⁰
3. The custom is not to enter the bathroom while wearing a kittel, since it is considered a garment set aside for prayer (on Yom Kippur). Entering the bathroom with the kittel is not an honorable act. Therefore, if one needs the bathroom during the Seder, he should remove the kittel before entering the bathroom.⁴¹
4. Many, including Square Chassidim, do not wear a kittel during the first year of marriage.⁴² This is also the view of Harav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l.⁴³
5. Others maintain that it is preferred to wear the kittel during the first year of marriage. Vizhnitz, Nadvorna, Sanzer, and Munkatch Chassidim wear the kittel during the shana rishonah. This is also the view of Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l and Harav Chaim Pinchas Sheinberg zt"l.⁴⁴
6. Above we cited two reasons to wear the Kittel (1. To symbolize angel-like freedom from sin. 2. To remind us of death so that one will not become haughty) There is a debate amongst the authorities as to whether a mourner wears a kittel. The Taz⁴⁵ favors the second rationale for wearing a kittel (so that one will not become haughty) and therefore writes that a mourner should wear a kittel. This is also the view of the Baal Hatania,⁴⁶ Harav Yaakov Emden zt"l, Harav Yekutiel Halbestam zt"l⁴⁷ and Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l.
7. However, the Magen Avraham maintains that according to both explanations of a kittel's significance, a mourner at the Seder should not wear one. Certainly, if wearing the kittel symbolizes angel-like freedom from sin, it would generate simcha and is inappropriate for a mourner. But even if the kittel is meant to induce humility, it is unnecessary for a mourner to wear it since he is already saddened. This is also the view of the Bach. Harav David Feinstein zt"l⁴⁸ writes, "Magen Avraham's reasoning is sound, and his ruling is therefore definitive; especially since the Gra, according to the Haggadah of Rabbi Yechiel Heller, holds that the rationale for wearing a kittel is that we resemble the ministering angels." The Mishnah Berurah writes that the custom is not to wear the kittel, however, those that choose to wear one should not be rebuked. For normative Halacha, a rav should be consulted.

Blessing One's Children

1. There are times throughout the year where it is customary to bless one's children, such as Friday night and the Seder night.
2. The father and mother say, "May G-d make you like Efraim and Menashe" (Genesis 48:20) ["יישימך אלקים כאפרים וכמנשה"]. This is the traditional blessing given to sons. They then recites the priestly blessing: "ברכך ה' וישמרך וכו'". Some also add the verse, "May G-d's spirit rest on him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and might, a spirit of knowledge and the fear of G-d" (Isaiah 11:2). Beyond this, the parents may add any blessing or prayer that they desire.⁴⁹
3. The poskim discuss how to bless the children. The Maaver Yabok seems to indicate that one should bless the child by resting one hand on the head of the child. The reason is that there are fifteen limbs in one hand corresponding to the fifteen words found in the birchas kohanim. An additional reason given to use only one hand when blessing children can be found in the Torah Temimah.⁵⁰ The Gemara⁵¹ says that it is prohibited for a non-kohen to perform the birchas kohanim (priestly blessings). Therefore, the Torah Temimah explains, blessing with two hands may be too similar to the kohanic blessings, which are performed using both hands. He adds that he heard from trustworthy sources that the Vilna Gaon would only use one hand when blessing children. When asked why, the Vilna Gaon explained that, "The only time we find a blessing given with both hands is by the kohanim."
4. However, Harav Yaakov Emden zt"l⁵² rules that one should lean two hands on the child's head when giving the blessing. The Sefer Yosef Ometz⁵³ writes, "Although I do not like to focus on Kabbalistic concepts, nevertheless, I believe that it is preferable to bless the children using both hands. This way the blessing will be performed using all ten fingers which is beneficial, for kabbalistic reasons. In addition, blessing with only one hand appears as if one is being 'stingy' with his blessing." Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l⁵⁴ would use both hands when blessing others. A similar ruling is expressed by the Rav of Debreczin.⁵⁵

The Ka'arah-Seder Plate

1. The Ka'arah is a plate, specifically made for the Seder, which has spaces for the items that must be displayed on the Seder table: the shankbone, the roasted egg, the maror (bitter herbs), the charoses and, according to most opinions, the karpas as well.⁵⁶
2. The Ka'arah is placed in front of the person leading the Seder.⁵⁷ Other members of the household do not require individual Ka'aros, but will obtain their Seder foods from the master of the house.⁵⁸ The custom of Square and Biyana Chassidim is that all men from the age of thirteen and upward obtain their own Ka'aros.⁵⁹ Similarly, the custom of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l⁶⁰ and the Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l⁶¹ was that all the men receive their own Ka'arah. [Many have the custom that all the men have their own matzos before them, but not their own ka'aros, for reasons beyond the scope of this halacha.]
3. The custom of Chabad, Tchernobal and Leluv Chassidim is to place the Ka'arah to the left of the head of the household, with his Kiddush cup to the right.⁶²
4. There are different customs as to when the Ka'arah should be assembled (when should the food be placed on the Ka'arah) and brought to the table. A) Some have the custom to assemble it and bring it to the table before Yom Tov. This is the view of the Chayei Adam,⁶³ Kitzur Shulchan Aruch,⁶⁴ Mateh Moshe,⁶⁵ Shelah Hakadosh, Rav Yaakov Koppel zt"l,⁶⁶ the Chasam Sofer and Rav Y. Dushinsky zt"l.⁶⁷ B) Others have the custom to assemble and bring it to the table after donning the kittel, before Kiddush. This is the view of the Pri Megadim,⁶⁸ Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l,⁶⁹ Chabad Chassidim⁷⁰ and is the custom of those in Yerushalayim. C) Others have the custom to assemble and bring it after Kiddush. This seems to be the view of the Shulchan Aruch.⁷¹ D) The Gra⁷² holds that one should bring the Ka'arah to the table after eating the Karpas (vegetable dipped in salt water). One should conduct himself according to his custom.⁷³
5. It is preferable to obtain the nicest Ka'arah possible. Many use a silver Ka'arah.⁷⁴

Charoses at the Seder

1. The view of Rav Elazar Ben Tzadok⁷⁵ is that eating Charoses is a mitzvah. The Gemara presents two explanations of Rav Elazar ben Tzadok's opinion. One explanation is that the thick texture and cloudy color of the Charoses serve to recall the mortar that the Jewish slaves used for making bricks in Egypt. A second explanation is that the Charoses serves to remind us of the "Tapuchim" in Egypt. Rashi and Rashbam explain that the Jewish women in Egypt would painlessly and quietly give birth beneath the apple trees so that the Egyptians would not discover that a Jewish male was born. We follow the view of Rav Elazar Ben Tzadok.
2. The Rishonim write that Charoses is made from fruits mentioned in Tanach symbolizing the Jewish people (apples, figs, dates, walnuts, almonds and pomegranates, with some adding grapes and pears). The Ari z"l would eat Charoses comprised of grapes, figs, dates, nuts, apples, pomegranates and pears. The Ari z"l did mention that the common custom amongst Ashkenazim was to make Charoses comprised of nuts, apples and pears.⁷⁶

3. It should be noted that Tosafos⁷⁷ explains that the Biblical word “Tapuach” refers to a citrus fruit, like an esrog or an orange. This view of Tosafos was also cited by Harav Yosef Dov Soloveichick zt”l.⁷⁸ It is for this reason that Rav Hershel Schachter shlit”a (in a shiur) maintains that if one wants to be accurate, he should use oranges (or other citrus fruits) for the charoses. Harav Avraham Blumenkrantz zt”l adds that in many Sefardic homes apples are not used at all for the Charoses. He adds that those who do use apples for the Charoses should also include some citrus fruit or juice. However, this does not seem to be the common custom.
4. The Gemara in Pesachim continues and teaches that we should add spices to the Charoses to remind us of the straw in Egypt. The Rama⁷⁹ writes that the custom is to add cinnamon and ginger. The Baal Hatania explains that these spices resemble straw because even after they are grated and ground, they are in strand like form, similar to straw.
5. Although the common custom is to use powdered cinnamon and ground ginger, it would seem that using powdered cinnamon and ground ginger would not be a proper fulfillment of this custom, as they are no longer strand like. Harav David Feinstein zt”l⁸⁰ writes, “Semi-ground, long-shaped spices such as cinnamon and ginger should also be added, since they symbolize the straw that the Israelites had to work with. As of this writing, unground cinnamon or ginger is not widely available in America, so people season the Charoses with ground cinnamon. But this is needless because ground spices do not symbolize straw. I am surprised that we neglect to enhance our mitzvah performance by obtaining this ingredient. In Mishnaic times the peddlers of Jerusalem would call out, ‘Come and get your spices for the mitzvah!’ (Pesachim 116a). As of this writing, however, these spices in their unground form have become available and can be used for Charoses.”
6. As cited in the previous halachos, the fruit is chopped up and ground in a thick mixture, in order to resemble the mortar that the Jewish slaves made in Egypt. However, if it were to remain thick one would not be able to dip the Marror in the Charoses. It is for that reason that we add red wine to the Charoses in order to thin it out. The red wine in the charoses also serves to recall the first of the ten plagues – the plague of blood.⁸¹
7. The Chayei Adam and Chok Yaakov write that one should bring the Charoses to the table while it is thick and right before one is ready to dip in it the Marror one adds the wine.
8. When Pesach falls on Shabbos the wine should be added before Shabbos. If one forgot to add the wine before Shabbos, the wine may be added on Shabbos in an abnormal way. Therefore, the wine should first be placed into the vessel and then the Charoses is added. He should not mix it with a spoon or other utensil, but should mix it by using his finger or by shaking the vessel.⁸²

The Shankbone at the Seder

1. On the eve of Pesach in the Beis Hamikdash in Jerusalem, two sacrifices (Korban Pesach and Korban Chagigah) were offered and their meat roasted and eaten at the Seder meal. After the destruction of the Temple, the Sages instituted the practice of placing two kinds of cooked foods on the Seder plate, one to commemorate the meat of the Pesach offering and one to commemorate the meat of the Chagigah offering.⁸³

2. The custom has developed to use a shankbone to symbolize the Korban Pesach and an egg to symbolize the Korban Chagigah.⁸⁴
3. The reason that the shankbone is used is that, aside from recalling the Korban Pesach, it also corresponds to the human arm, symbolizing the “outstretched arm” of Hashem.⁸⁵
4. Above we mentioned that the custom is to place a shankbone on the Seder plate to commemorate the Korban Pesach. Although the Shulchan Aruch and its commentaries write that the custom is to use a shankbone, many Chassidim actually use parts of a chicken in stead. The custom of Belz Chassidim is to use the drumstick of a chicken. The custom of Ropshitz, Sanz, Amshinav, Spinka, Satmar and Sigat Chassidim it to use a chicken wing. The custom of Chabad, Karlin and Ziditchov Chassidim is to use a chicken neck.⁸⁶ I believe that the reason that these chassidim chose to use a chicken and not the standard shankbone is in order to avoid any similarity to the korban pesach, which may not be sacrificed outside of the Beis Hamikdosh.⁸⁷
5. If one does not have a shankbone he should take any other meat, even not on the bone.⁸⁸
6. A bone without meat does not constitute a dish. Therefore, one must make sure that there is meat on the bone.⁸⁹ The custom of Chabad Chassidim is to remove most of the meat and only leave over a small amount of meat. This is in order to avoid any similarity to the Korban Pesach.
7. The Chayei Adam⁹⁰ writes that it is not proper to throw away the shankbone, and that it should be eaten on the second day of Yom Tov, during the day. Indeed, in the Haggadah of Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt”l,⁹¹ it states “Rav Chaim makes sure that the zeroa, the roasted bone that was placed on the Seder plate, is eaten on Yom Tov, to ensure that it will not go to waste, as that would be a disgrace for this item, which was used for a mitzvah.”
8. Many people roast the shankbone before Yom Tov and use the same shankbone for both sederim. In many cases the shankbone, after sitting out for two days has become repulsive and inedible. Care should be taken to avoid this (by the use of refrigeration between the two sederim). Harav David Feinstein zt”l⁹² writes, “Indeed, to my mind, one does not even fulfill the mitzvah to remember the Pesach sacrifice the second night if the shankbone is not fit to eat.”
9. As noted above, the custom is to place an egg on the Seder plate in order to commemorate the Korban Chagigah. There are two reasons that we use an egg as the second cooked dish. A) The Aramaic word for egg (בִּיצָא) is related to the Aramaic word for desire (בְּצִיאָ) - God desired to take us out of Egypt with an outstretched arm. B) In addition, the egg is a mourner’s food. Therefore, an egg is used to symbolize our mourning for the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh and our inability to offer the Korban Pesach and the Korban Chagigah.⁹³

10. The Tanaim⁹⁴ disagree as to how the Korban Chagigah was prepared. According to the Sages the Korban can be either boiled or roasted, while Ben Teima believed it must be roasted similar to the Korban Pesach. The Shulchan Aruch⁹⁵ writes that the egg, symbolizing the Korban Chagigah, can be either boiled or roasted, in accordance with the view of the Sages that both preparations were permitted for the Chagigah. This is also the view of the Ben Ish Chai⁹⁶ and is the custom of Chabad, Karlin, Lelov, Belz and Vishnitz Chassidim.⁹⁷ The Rama however, notes that the common custom is to roast the egg, in order to also accommodate the view of Ben Teima. This is the common custom amongst Ashkenazim.

The Wine at the Seder

1. Preferably, one should not use cooked wine for the Four Cups unless this wine is superior to the other wines which are available.⁹⁸
2. Many poskim prohibit any uncooked wine that is touched by a Jew who publicly desecrates Shabbos. Therefore, if there are those at the Seder who publicly desecrate Shabbos, one should use cooked wine.⁹⁹ The poskim debate whether pasteurized wine has the status of cooked wine in Halacha. According to Harav Moshe Feinstein zt"l,¹⁰⁰ pasteurized wine is considered cooked and therefore is permitted even if it was touched by a non-Jew or a Jew who publicly desecrates Shabbos. However, according to Harav Elyashiv zt"l¹⁰¹ and Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l,¹⁰² pasteurized wine is not considered cooked in halacha in regards to being touched by a non-Jew. Harav Ovadia Yosef zt"l¹⁰³ writes that b'dieved one can rely on the opinion of Rav Moshe zt"l.
3. It is preferred to use red wine for the Four Cups. There are numerous reasons cited by the poskim: A) It says,¹⁰⁴ "Look not after a wine which is red", indicating that a red wine is a desirable quality of wine. B) Red wine reminds us of the shedding of innocent blood which flowed when Pharaoh slaughtered the Jews.¹⁰⁵ C) It serves as a reminder of the blood of the Korban Pesach and the blood of circumcision.¹⁰⁶ D) It serves as a reminder of the first plague of Blood.¹⁰⁷ Tokay wine is also considered as red for this preference.¹⁰⁸
4. The Tur,¹⁰⁹ Rama, Levush and Baal Hatania rule that if a specific white wine is of higher quality one should drink white wine. Harav Ovadia Yosef zt"l,¹¹⁰ however, writes that the custom amongst the Sefardim today is to use red wine even if the white wine is of higher quality.
5. Can one pour a little red wine into the white wine in order to color the white wine red? Yes. One may do so, since the red wine is adding flavor to the red wine. Adding the red wine is considered "Tziviva B'Ochlen" ("coloring of foods"), which is permitted on Shabbos and Yom Tov.¹¹¹ However, when doing so it is preferable to pour the red wine into the empty cup first, and then add the white wine afterward. As opposed to pouring the red wine into the white wine.¹¹²

6. The poskim discuss whether one may use grape juice for the Four Cups. Those that oppose the use of grape juice do so for the following three reasons: A) The Gemara states¹¹³, “Rav Yehuda says that [the wine used for the Four Cups] should have the taste and appearance of wine.” The Rashbam explains that when Rav Yehuda required that it have “the taste of wine”, he was referring to the alcoholic taste of wine. Accordingly, grape juice, which does not cause intoxication would not qualify as most preferable. B) According to some authorities, including the Mordechai and Harav Chaim Shabsai, one must drink “יין המשמח”, wine that brings joy. The poskim explain that the property of wine that causes it to “bring joy” is the alcohol. Therefore, argues Harav Tzvi Pesach Frank zt”l,¹¹⁴ one should not use grape juice for the Four Cups since it does not “bring joy”. C) The Gemara states that one who drinks wine [of the time of the Gemara] without diluting it fulfills the mitzvah of drinking wine, but does not fulfill the requirement of “היררות”, the drink of free men. The opinion of Harav Moshe Feinstein zt”l¹¹⁵ is that one who drinks grape juice fulfills the requirement for the Four Cups, but does not fulfill the preferred requirement of היררות. According to Rav Moshe one should drink wine and not grape juice even if drinking wine will cause discomfort and drinking grape juice will not.
7. Harav Shlomo Zalman Braun zt”l,¹¹⁶ however, disagrees with the assertion of Harav Moshe Feinstein zt”l. He writes that the common custom is to drink grape juice for the Four Cups. He adds that one demonstrates freedom by drinking the wine drink that is the most pleasant to the individual. If one prefers grape juice over wine, then he should drink grape juice as that is what a free man would do. On the contrary, drinking wine when it is unpleasant is, in his opinion, is not a fulfillment of the preferred requirement of היררות.
8. Similarly, Harav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik zt”l¹¹⁷ believes that one who does not enjoy wine should use grape juice for the Four Cups. Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt”l¹¹⁸ was also of the opinion that one may use grape juice for the Four Cups. Similarly, Rav Moshe Sternbuch shlit”a¹¹⁹ relates that Rav Dov Berish Weidenfeld zt”l, the Brisker Rav and the Chazon Ish, all used grape juice for the Four Cups. Harav Gavriel Zinner shlit”a¹²⁰ writes that according to the Tzelemer Rav, grape juice is acceptable even l’chatchilah [as a first option]. For practical Halacha, a rav should be consulted.
9. Harav Noach Isaac Oelbaum shlit”a¹²¹ writes that if one is unable to drink wine without discomfort, he should mix the wine with grape juice, as long as the alcoholic taste of the wine can still be detected. This way one will be able to avoid any discomfort while still drinking the alcoholic drink of wine. However, as noted above, there were poskim who maintained that one may initially drink grape juice.
10. However, one who may become bedridden and ill from drinking wine should not drink wine. He is, however, required to drink grape juice or Chamar Medinah, if it would not cause him to become bedridden.¹²²
11. One should use an elegant vessel (within his means) for the cup used for the Four Cups.¹²³
12. Most people use a silver cup for the Four Cups since silver is a very elegant material. The Kaf Hachaim¹²⁴ adds that silver is also beneficial kabbalistically.

13. Harav Nossan Gestetner ז"ל¹²⁵ was asked whether there is any potential issue with using a gold cup for the Four Cups. The person who sent him the letter mentioned that the Zohar seems to indicate that for kabbalistic reasons one should not use a gold cup. However, Harav Gestetner ז"ל explains that for halachic purposes there is no issue with using a gold cup. On the contrary, it is commendable to use gold as it is very elegant and valuable. Harav Gavriel Zinner shlit"א¹²⁶ reports that the Rebbes' of Square and Satmar had the custom of using gold cups.
14. The Avnei Nezer had the custom to use a glass (or crystal) cup so that the red wine is visible. This is also the custom of Sanz and Komarna Chassidim. Interestingly, the Haggadah of Rav Chaim Kanievsky ז"ל says, "At the Seder, Rav Chaim does not pour the wine into a silver Kiddush cup as he does the whole year. Rather, following his father's custom, he pours the wine into a glass, which he places in a silver cup. As a result, the wine is visible, as dictated by Shulchan." However, as noted above the common custom is to use a silver cup.

The Simanim at the Seder

1. The Seder ritual contains fifteen observances, or stages, which have been summarized with the following fifteen simanim (symbols):
 - 1 - Kaddesh קדש: Sanctify the day with the recitation of Kiddush.
 - 2 - Urchatz ורחץ: Wash the hands before eating Karpas.
 - 3 - Karpas כרפס: Eat a vegetable dipped in salt water or vinegar.
 - 4 - Yachatz יחץ: Break the middle Matzah. Put away the larger half for Afikomen.
 - 5 - Maggid מגיד: Narrate the story of the Exodus from Egypt.
 - 6 - Rachtzah רחצה: Wash the hands prior to the meal.
 - 7 - Motzi מוציא: Say the bracha of Hamotzi Lechem Min Haaretz over Matzah (as a food).
 - 8 - Matzah מצה: Recite the blessing over Matzah (as a mitzvah) and eat the Matzah.
 - 9 - Marror מרור: Recite the blessing and eat the bitter herbs.
 - 10 - Korech כורך: Eat the sandwich of Matzah and bitter herbs.
 - 11 - Shulchan Orech שלחן עורך: The table is prepared with the festive meal.
 - 12 - Tzafun צפון: Eat the Afikomen which has been hidden all during the Seder.
 - 13 - Berach בריך: Recite Birkas Hamazon, the blessing after the meal.
 - 14 - Hallel הלל: Recite the Hallel.
 - 15 - Nirtzah נרצה: Pray that Hashem accept our observance and speedily send Moshiach.
2. These simanim are not a new invention. Rather, they can be found in the works of the Rishonim, including the Machzor Vitri,¹²⁷ citing the view of Rashi.
3. There are numerous reasons given for these simanim. A) These summaries were created to help remind us of the order of the Seder and to ensure that no step is skipped. B) It is always important to prepare oneself before performing any mitzvah. For example, the Mishnah in Masechet Berachot¹²⁸ states that three who have eaten a bread meal together must perform a "Zimun" before reciting Birkas Hamazon. The Meiri writes that the reason why three individuals who ate together must perform the Zimun is in order for them to arouse themselves to recite Birkas Hamazon with the proper concentration. It is for this very reason that the fifteen simanim were created. By reciting these words and meditating on their meaning one can properly prepare oneself for each important step of the Seder process.¹²⁹

4. The Sefer Yesod V'Shoresh Ha'avodah¹³⁰ writes that there are many mystical concepts included in these simanim. Therefore, one should recite each siman aloud before performing the corresponding step in the Seder with much concentration. Before reciting kiddush one says the word "Kaddesh" and before washing his hands he recites "Urchatz" etc. The custom of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l¹³¹ was to recite each siman before performing the corresponding act in accordance with the view of the Yesod V'Shoresh Ha'avodah.
5. Some have the custom to recite all fifteen simanim before beginning the Seder and then to recite each siman before performing each stage of the Seder. This was the practice of the Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l. All the simanim however were recited quietly.
6. Previously we mentioned that some have the custom to recite all fifteen simanim before beginning the Seder and then to recite each siman before performing each stage of the Seder. One cannot recite the simanim of "Motzi" and "Matzah" prior to their performance since one may not speak after washing his hands during Rachtzah. The proper time to recite them is prior to washing his hands. Therefore, prior to washing his hands he should recite "Rachtzah Motzi Matzah."¹³²
7. After Urchatz we do not recite the blessing of Al Netilas Yadayim. Yet, one should still not talk from the time that one washes their hands until after eating the Karpas.¹³³ For this reason many recite the simanim "Urchatz Karpas" before washing his hands, since he should not speak after washing his hands.¹³⁴

Laws of the Seder (Assorted Halachos)

1. **Lettuce at the Seder** - If one is using romaine lettuce as Marror he must thoroughly check the lettuce before Yom Tov to remove any potential insects or buy lettuce that was already checked by a competent Kashrus organization. If one did not check it before Yom Tov, he may do so on Yom Tov, even if it is Shabbos as well.
2. Harav Yehoshua Neuwirth zt"l, in his Sefer Shemiras Shabbos K'Hilchasa, writes regarding checking lettuce for bugs on Shabbos, "Lettuce leaves may be examined on Shabbos to make sure there are no insects on them. Any large insect which is found, such as a caterpillar, may be removed, since it is a distinctly separate object and can in no way be said to be intermingled with the lettuce, so that its extraction does not fall within the prohibition against selecting (on Shabbos). It is, however, preferable not to move the insect by itself, but to take it off together with a piece of the lettuce leaf. Small insects which cling to the leaves may not be removed on their own. They should be taken out together with part of the lettuce leaf."¹³⁵
3. With regards to removing bugs on Yom Tov, (when it is not Shabbos), Harav Neuwirth zt"l writes, "When preparing lettuce for a meal to be eaten on Yom Tov, one may remove insects, whether large or small, although it is preferable to take them out together with a piece of lettuce leaf, rather than move them by themselves."¹³⁶
4. One may not rinse lettuce leaves in water containing salt or vinegar on Shabbos or Yom Tov in order to remove insects, since such water will kill the insects (and killing is not permitted on Yom Tov or Shabbos).¹³⁷

5. **Saltwater at the Seder** - The Karpas is dipped in salt water or vinegar. The Mishnah Berurah¹³⁸ explains that the dipping is done so that the children will notice the peculiarity in our eating dipped vegetables before the meal and question us about this. Indeed, we do many things at the Seder to draw the children's notice.
6. The Chayei Adam¹³⁹ and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch¹⁴⁰ write that one should prepare the salt water before Yom Tov. If one forgot to prepare it before Yom Tov, one should prepare it in an abnormal way, by first pouring the water and then adding salt. However, many poskim disagree and maintain that one may make the saltwater on Yom Tov in the normal fashion.
7. When Pesach falls on Shabbos the salt water should be prepared before Shabbos.¹⁴¹ If one forgot to prepare it and no vinegar is available, one may make a small amount of water, a minimal amount sufficient for the Seder.¹⁴² In addition, the mixture should contain less than two thirds salt to water ratio.
8. **Al Netilas Yadayim** - The poskim discuss what to do if one forgot and recited the bracha of Al Netilas Yadayim during Urchatz. (A) The view of Rav Shmuel Kamanetzky shlit" a is that one continues the seder as usual and one washes his hands before the Matzah (called Rachtzah) without a bracha and should ensure that his hands remain clean from Urchatz to Rachtzah.¹⁴³ (B) The view of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l is that one continues the seder as usual and one should repeat the blessing of Al Netilas Yadayim again before Hamotzei. One should touch one's hair or other parts of the body that is dirty before Rachtzah to ensure the need for washing one's hands.¹⁴⁴ (C) The Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l states that the following is done: One should perform Yachatz and Motzi Matzah immediately, (skipping Karpas and Maggid), saying Hamotzi on the three Matzah in order to save oneself from a potentially unnecessary bracha. One then eats the Karpas (without a bracha of Haadama, as one is in middle of the meal). One then continues with Maggid and Maror. Therefore, in summary, the order according to the Rebbe is: Yachatz, Eat Matzah, Karpas without a bracha, Maggid and Maror.
9. There is a debate as to whether one should recite Shalom Aleichem if the Seder is on Friday night, as one does on every Friday night, or is this night different. The opinion of some, including Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l,¹⁴⁵ is to recite Shalom Aleichem as any other Friday night. However, many do not recite Shalom Aleichem on the night of the Seder. Two reasons are given for this: A) In order to start the Seder as soon as possible and not cause any delay. B) The seforim Hakedoshim tell us that at the night of the Seder the presence of Hashem is so pronounced that one doesn't need the aid of angels.¹⁴⁶ One should follow his or her personal custom.



Gebrokts on Pesach



1. Some communities have a custom not to eat matzah in any form that came in contact with water or other liquids during Pesach.¹⁴⁷ This custom is known as avoiding eating "Gebrokts". [This word literally means "broken" and it has come to mean wet matzah, which is usually ground or broken up into crumbs before it is mixed in with water]
2. The reason for this custom is out of concern that some of the matzah flour was not kneaded well and when it will come in contact with the liquid it will become chametz.¹⁴⁸
3. Since the last day of Pesach is only rabbinic in the Diaspora, many of those who are strict in avoiding eating Gebrokts, did not accept the custom for the last day of Pesach.¹⁴⁹
4. A woman, upon marriage, assumes the custom of her husband.¹⁵⁰
5. Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l¹⁵¹ rules that if one avoids eating Gebrokts, he should avoid even the utensils that were used to prepare gebrokts dishes.
6. Even if one is strict not to eat Gebrokts, it is not muktzah throughout Pesach.¹⁵²

Reference Section

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- 2 Minchas Pitim Y.D. 246:26.
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- 4 Mayim Chayim 179.
- 5 Medrash Shir Hashirim 1:9.
- 6 Yabia Omer 1:27:10.
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- 8 Minchas Yitzchak 2:93.
- 9 Btzeil Hachachma 2:28.
- 10 Daas Torah 551:10.
- 11 See Orchos Chai, 551:35.
- 12 Shu"t Beis Avi 2:52.
- 13 Shu"t Btzeil Hachachma 4:99:2.
- 14 Shu"t Rav Azriel Y.D. 246.
- 15 Halichos Shlomo Pesach page 181.
- 16 103.
- 17 Sefer Emes L'Yaakov page 225.
- 18 Rama 445:1.
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- 20 Refer to Shulchan Aruch 487:4 and Mishnah Berurah 9.
- 21 Sefer Koveitz Halachos Pesach page 196.
- 22 Shu"t Yechava Daas 5:34.
- 23 Chida in Birkei Yosef 487:8.
- 24 Igros Moshe O.C. 2:94.
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- 28 Minhagei Chasam Sofer 10:11.
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- 34 Mishnah Berurah 271:44.
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- 41 Beer Heitiv 21:3/
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- 46 Shulchan Aruch Harav 472:4.
- 47 Shu"t Divrei Yetziv 208.
- 48 Haggadah Kol Dodi.
- 49 See Siddur Rav Yaakov Emden Friday night and Sefer Maavor Yabok Sifsei Rinanos 43.

- 50 Naso 131.
- 51 Kesubos 24b.
- 52 Siddur Rav Yaakov Emden Friday Night.
- 53 70.
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- 56 Tosafos Pesachim 115b.
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- 63 130:1.
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- 79 473:5.
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- 97 Netai Gavriel Pesach vol. 2 page 340.
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- 99 See Shemiras Shabbos K'Hilchoso 47:19:91 and Sefer Umekareiv Biyamin vol. 1 Siman 10 for a full discussion.
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- 132 Seder Haaruch 75:7.
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- 149 See Halichos Shlomo Pesach page 91 Dvar Halacha for a full explanation. Refer to Shulchan Menachem of the Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l vol. 2 page 354 where he discusses whether one should actively be lenient on this day and eat Gebrochts.
- 150 Refer to Shu"t Igros Moshe O.C. 1:158 and Halichos Shlomo Pesach page 91.
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