

Halachos of the Month of Nisan

Α

* The Greatness of Chodesh Nisan

- The month of *Nisan* is the first month of the Jewish calendar. Although the counting of the years is counted from the beginning of *Tishrei*, nevertheless the counting of the Jewish months begins from the month of *Nisan*.
- 2. The specialty of the month of Nisan is because it is the month the Yidden were redeemed from mitzrayim, and through the redemption, Hashem displayed his supervision over his creations and specifically over the Yidden. As well as through the miracles performed on the Egyptians, Hashem showed his force and that there is reward and punishment for one's actions.
- 3. The *mazal* (zodiac) of the month of *Nisan* is *tleh* (ram a.k.a. Aries), it's superior to the other *mazalos*. Pharaoh relied upon the *mazal* to save himself and *Hashem* showed the world that only He alone controls the happenings of the world.
- 4. Besides the month being the month the *Yidden* were redeemed, it was also the month that the *Mishkan* was erected for the first time. Each day from the beginning of the month, the נשיאים (leaders of the *shvatim*) sacrificed their offerings on the *mizbeach* to inaugurate the *Mishkan*. The final redemption will also take place in the month of *Nisan* as is says "עתידין ליגאל".
- 5. There is an additional advantage to the beginning of the month as it is considered a time of preparation for redemption. As stated above, there is also an advantage to the month even after *Pesach*, as it is the month of redemption and the month the *Mishkan* was erected, (and most of the month went by "קדוש").
- 6. The seforim expand on the powers of the holiness of the month. The month of Nisan is enveloped by salvation, a month that is given the power of renewal. Each day of the month has the power of Rosh Chodesh, it's a month that demonstrates how all abundance depends on our work and effort, a month that instills faith and other important matters.
- 7. The Poskim bring a custom to refrain from consuming kosher matza from the beginning of the month so that the consumption while performing the mitzvah will be performed with an extra appreciation for the mitzvah. Rav Moshe Feinstein Zt"l brings a custom to refrain from consuming matza already from a month before Pesach, however, some are more lenient

- with this custom. Though, it is definitely forbidden to consume kosher (for Passover) matza on erev Pesach.
- 8. *Matza,* which is not kosher for Passover, or not baked for the sake of the *mitzvah* and *kneidels,* is excluded from this custom entirely.
- 9. There is no need to be stringent on minors for this custom.

Е

♣ Learning The Halachos of Pesach ⋠

- 10. Chazal instituted in the times of the Beis Hamikdash (that we were instructed to bring and sacrifice karbanos when ascending to the Beis Hamikdash on Yom-Tov) to teach publicly the halachos pertaining to the upcoming Yom-Tov and its relevant karbanos for thirty days preceding the Yom-Tov.
- 11. This practice still applies today after the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, to the laws that apply to the *Yom-Tov*, to learn and remember the relevant *halachos* (particularly as lots of *halachos* are unknown to many people).
- Besides for this directive from chazal (regarding the karbanos), Moshe Rabeinu also mandated that every community leader, Rav, should teach the relevant halachos for the upcoming Yom-Tov.
- 13. It emerges, that the community leader is obligated to teach publicly the relevant *halachos* for the upcoming *Yom-Tov* as well as an obligation to learn the *halachos* pertaining to the *Yom-tov* thirty days preceding it. (And perhaps what we find that one who leaves his home less than thirty days before *Pesach* is obligated to search his home for *chometz*, teaches us that the need to prepare for the *Yom-Tov* is not merely in learning the *halachos*, just to act according to them as well. As such, the *halacha* that one fulfills their obligation of burning the *chometz* if one gets rid of the *chometz* within thirty days of Pesach indicates as mentioned above).
- It is for this reason that our rabbis teach the relevant halachos pertaining to Pesach on the Shabbos preceding Pesach (Shabbos Hagadol).

C

* Maos Chitim (Money for the Poor)

15. Since the cost of the Yom-Tov expenses is extremely expensive, there is an obligation to distribute money to the poor. Some have the custom to distribute actual foods and necessities while some distribute money for the poor to purchase on their own.

- 16. Any person residing in a city for twelve months must contribute to the needs of the poor of that city. Some *Poskim* rule that one who resides in a city for even thirty days must contribute to the needs of the poor of that city.
- 17. Even a *Torah* scholar who is exempt from regular duties, is obligated to contribute to this cause.
- 18. There is no set amount to fulfill this obligation, just that one should strengthen to the best of their ability to contribute to the poor. One can also use money set aside for *maaser* for this obligation.
- 19. The distribution should be for the needs of the poor residing in that city for twelve months, yet some are of the opinion that even a poor person residing in the city for thirty days should receive from the distribution. However, the custom is to distribute to anyone who willingly stays in the city for Pesach, to at least contribute his needs for the meals of Pesach.

* Tefilos and Readings of the Month *

- 20. We do not recite *tachnun* for the duration of the month of *Nisan*. We also do not recite the יהי רצון that we usually recite after the reading of the *Torah* on Monday and Thursday.
- 21. We do not recite אב הרחמים and צדקתך on *Shabbos* in the month of *Nisan* (there are of the opinion to recite אב הרחמים on *Shabbos* after *Pesach*).
- 22. Some have the custom for the first thirteen days of the month to read the parsha of the נשיאים after shacharis, each day to read the נשיא that sacrificed his karbanos on that day in the Mishkan. And on the thirteenth day to finish up with the reading of parshas בן עשה את המנורה until בהעלותן. However, some argued on this custom since we do not recite birchas Hatorah on the reading, it is not considered a reading from the Torah (for this reason one should rather read it from a chumash).
- 23. On *erev Pesach* we rise early to *daven* since one must finish eating *chometz* before four hours into the day. We do not recite אשרי in *shacharis* and אשרי after אשרי, as well as ארך ארך אפים before *krias Hatorah*.
- 24. One should not fast during the month of *Nisan*, even on a day of a *Yartzeit*. However, a fast on a bad dream and the fast on *erev Pesach* for firstborns are permitted.
- 25. There is a custom to recite birkas hailanos (blessing on the trees) when one sees a fruit-bearing tree that has blossomed. The bracha to recite is ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם שלא חיסר בני בעולמו כלום וברא בו בריות טובות ואילנות טובות ליהנות בהם בני .The bracha is recited only once a year.
- 26. In a place where the blossoming of the trees only takes place after the month of *Nisan*, one can recite the *bracha* during its blossoming season.
- 27. Women and children are also obligated to recite this bracha.
- 28. One can recite the bracha on Shabbos and Yom-Tov as well.
- 29. One should try to recite the *bracha* at the earliest opportunity

- since the time to recite the *bracha* is at the beginning of blossoming, as well as not to forget to recite the *bracha*.
- 30. One who saw a fruit-bearing tree and forgot to recite the *bracha*, can recite the *bracha* when he remembers.

Ε

♣ Mourning ♣

- 31. The deceased are not eulogized the entire month of *Nisan*. However, one may eulogize a *Torah* scholar before him (even on erev Pesach).
- 32. We do not recite the א-ל מלא רחמים that we usually say at a funeral during the month of *Nisan*.
- 33. We do not recite צידוק הדין at a funeral. We also do not recite the *kaddish* at the funeral for the duration of the month.
- 34. All customs of *shiva* apply during the month of *Nisan*. However, if the *shiva* period coincides with the onset of *Yom-Tov*, the happiness of *Yom-Tov* supersedes the mourning and interrupts the *shiva* (the *shiva* does not resume after *Yom-Tov*).

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Shabbos Hagadol

- 35. The Shabbos preceding Pesach is called Shabbos Hagadol, for the miracle that occurred on that day (the Yidden were instructed to prepare a lamb which was the god of the Egyptians for the korban Pesach, and since the Egyptians stayed quiet, we commemorate the miracle on this day). Another reason for Shabbos Hagadol is that it is a day that we converge to hear the halachos of the Yom-Tov. And more so, all occurrences during the week originate from the influence of Shabbos.
- 36. As in during the ר" כרשיות, some have the custom to recite חוצרות on this *Shabbos*. The יוצרות include many important halachos of *Pesach*, therefore it is proper for one to focus when reading the יוצרות, to learn and understand the applicable halachos of *Pesach*. (Therefore, when *Erev Pessach* is *Shabbos*, we say it the week preceeding).
- 37. We have the custom that the Rav gives a *drasha* on *Shabbos*Hagadol for the matters of the *Yom-Tov*.
- 38. Some have the custom to recite the *Haggadah* from עבדים until לכפר על כל עוונותינו on *Shabbos* after *mincha*. The custom is for children also to recite it, and some say it along with their families.
- 39. On *Motzai Shabbos* we do not recite ויהי נועם and ויהי and ויהי as usual.
- **40.** One should specifically be careful to clean their *Shabbos* clothing and *Shabbos tallis* bag of *chometz*, as not to forget to clean it later during the week.

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