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אורח חיים

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by Rabbi Yechiel Michel HaLevi Epstein

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from the Mishnah Berurah, Shulchan Aruch HaRav, and today's poskim.
Includes a practical summary of every siman

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A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

The Nature of this Work
This volume presents an original English elucidation and commentary, prepared through a combination of advanced language and translation technology and human editorial oversight. The methods employed were carefully configured to adhere to Orthodox Jewish *hashkafa* and to preserve fidelity to the original Hebrew text. Even so, this edition does not carry the authority of a translation prepared and certified by a full team of rabbinic scholars.

Usage and Limitations
This translation is intended as a tool to help advanced learners access the depth of the original work. It is **not** intended to replace the original Hebrew source, nor to serve as a substitute for study under a qualified teacher.

Because the nuance of Torah study often transcends any single method of preparation, we ask the reader to keep two things in mind:

1. **Verification:** Any novel insight, ruling, or conclusion drawn from this translation should be checked against the original Hebrew.
2. **Consultation:** All practical questions or derived lessons should be discussed with and verified by a qualified rabbinic authority before being relied upon.

The goal of this edition is to make these teachings accessible to a wider audience, but the responsibility for accurate understanding and practical application remains with the reader.

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עַל פִּי חָכְמַת הַקַּבָּלָה, כַּמְבוֹאָר בְּ"פְּרִי עֵץ חַיִּים". — **And so it is according to the wisdom of Kabbalah, as explained in the Pri Etz Chaim.** The kabbalistic arrangement places the six items in two triangular groupings in the form of the vowel segol, reflecting the position of the Sefiros in the mystic realms.

Halachic Divergences & Insights

Kabbalistic Arrangement of the Seder Plate

Shulchan Aruch HaRav (Seif 26): The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* describes the kabbalistic arrangement that the *Aruch HaShulchan* mentions only briefly. The three matzos are designated kohen on top, levi in the middle, and Yisrael on the bottom. The six items are placed on the kohen matzah in two segol-shaped (ֶ) triangles.

In the upper triangle, the zeroa is on the right, the egg is on the left, and the maror is between them. In the lower triangle, the charoses is on the right, the karpas is on the left, and the maror for korekh is between them.

Lubavitch custom follows this arrangement. The items are placed directly on the matzos, which are wrapped in a cloth, rather than on a separate plate above them.

Pearls from the Rebbe's Haggadah

Why Items Are Placed on the Matzos

Likutei Taamim (P44): The Rebbe explains the kabbalistic rationale for placing the six Seder-plate items on top of the matzos rather than on a separate plate. According to the Rebbe Rashab, the three matzos represent keilim (vessels) and the six items represent the Divine lights (oros) that fill them. The Rebbe addresses the apparent difficulty that matzos are elsewhere identified as Mochin d'Abba (supernal intellect), which would seem to be the 'lights' rather than the 'vessels.' He resolves this by noting that in Torah, one object can simultaneously represent multiple concepts — the matzos are indeed Mochin d'Abba, but they also correspond to the Patriarchs (Chesed-Gevurah-Tiferet), and to Malchut as 'bread of affliction.' Within any level of the Sefiros, there are both lights and vessels.

§12 שָׁנוּ חֲכָמִים בַּמִּשְׁנָה (לט א): (וְאֵלּוּ יְרָקוֹת שֶׁאָדָם יוֹצֵא בָּהֶן יְדֵי חוֹבָתוֹ בְּפֶסַח: בַּחֲזֶרֶת, בְּתַמְכָא, וּבַחַרְחֲבִינָא, וּבָעוּלְשִׁין, וּבַמָּרוֹר.) — **Our Sages taught in the Mishnah (Pesachim 39a): 'These are the vegetables with which a person fulfills his obligation on Pesach: with chazeres, tamcha, charchavina, ulshin, and maror.'** The *Aruch HaShulchan* now proceeds to identify each of these species, noting the considerable uncertainty that exists regarding their precise identification: **"חֲזֶרֶת" רְגִילִין לְפָרֵשׁ שֶׁהוּא סאלאט"א, וְכֵן פֵּירֵשׁ הַמַּעְתִּיק בָּעָרוּךְ עֵרֶךְ "חָזָר".** — **'Chazeres' — it is commonly explained as salata [lettuce], and so the translator explained in the Aruch, entry 'chazar.'** This identification as lettuce is widely accepted. Furthermore, **וּבַגְּמָרָא אָמְרוּ: מַאי חֲזֶרֶת? חָסָא. וּבְעֵרֶךְ "חָס" פֵּירֵשׁ הַמַּעְתִּיק לאטי"ך, עַיֵּין שָׁם.** — **In the Gemara they said: What is chazeres? Chasa [lettuce]. And in the entry 'chas,' the translator explained it as latich; see there.** Both terms — salata and latich — appear to refer to the

same plant, i.e., lettuce, known today as romaine lettuce. **וְ"תַמְכָא" רְגִילִין לְפָרֵשׁ שֶׁהוּא קריין אוֹ חריי"ן. — And 'tamcha' — it is commonly explained as kriyan or chrein [horseradish].** This is the species most commonly used in Eastern European communities, as will be discussed below. **וּבָעָרוּךְ הֶעְתִּיק איי"ן פפלאנצ"א, וְלֹא יָדַעְתִּי מַה הוּא זֶה הַשֵּׁם. — In the Aruch, he translated it as ein pflantz'a, and I do not know what this name refers to.** The *Aruch* frequently used foreign-language terms from his era, many of which are no longer recognizable. The next species presents even greater difficulty: **וְ"חרחבינא" לֹא יָדַעְתִּי, וּבָעָרוּךְ פֵּירֵשׁ: מִין עֵשֶׂב מַר. — And 'charchavina' — I do not know [its identity], and in the Aruch he explained it as a type of bitter herb.** The Gemara offers an additional description of this species: **וּבַגְּמָרָא אָמְרוּ: אַצְוָותָא דְּדִיקְלָא, וּפֵירֵשׁ רש"י: סִיב הַגָּדֵל וְנִכְרָךְ סָבִיב לַדֶּקֶל. — In the Gemara they said: atzvasah d'diklah, and Rashi explained: fiber that grows and wraps around the palm tree.** **וְגַם הֶעָרוּךְ פֵּירֵשׁ כֵּן, וְצָרִיךְ לוֹמַר דְּהוּא עֵשֶׂב מַר וְנִכְרָךְ סָבִיב לַדֶּקֶל (עַיֵּין תּוֹסָפוֹת שָׁם). — The Aruch also explained it this way, and we must say that it is a bitter herb that wraps around the palm tree (see Tosafos there).** That is, to reconcile the *Aruch*'s description of a bitter herb with the Gemara's description of palm fiber, we must say it is both bitter and grows around a palm tree. There is yet another view: **וּבְשֵׁם רַב הַאי גָּאוֹן פירש: צֶמַח עָבֶה מאוד, וְיֵשׁ בּוֹ כְּמוֹ רָאשֵׁי הַמַּחַטִּין, עַיֵּין שָׁם. — In the name of Rav Hai Gaon he explained: a very thick plant that has something like the tips of needles; see there.** This description suggests a thorny or spiny plant, quite different from the fiber described above. **וְ"עוּלְשִׁין" פֵּירְשׁוּ בַּגְּמָרָא: הִינְדִּיבָא. וְהֶעָרוּךְ פֵּירְשָׁם בִּלְשׁוֹן לַע"ז וְלֹא יָדַעְנוּם. — And 'ulshin' — the Gemara explained it as hindiva [endive]. The Aruch explained it in a foreign language, and we do not know [the meaning of his translation].** **אַךְ לֹא כְּלַע"ז דְּרש"י, וְאוּלַי שֶׁשְּׁנֵי לְשׁוֹנוֹת הֵם. — However, it is not the same as the foreign-language term used by Rashi, and perhaps they are two different languages.** i.e., Rashi used Old French while the *Aruch* may have used Italian or another language, leading to different terms for the same plant. **וְ"מָרוֹר" פֵּירְשׁוּ בַּגְּמָרָא: מְרִירָתָא. וְרש"י פֵּירֵשׁ בְּלַע"ז, וְלֹא יָדַעְנוּ פִּתְרוֹנוֹ, וּבָעָרוּךְ לֹא מְצָאתִיו. — And 'maror' — the Gemara explained it as merirasah. Rashi explained it in a foreign language, and we do not know its meaning, and in the Aruch I did not find it.** The Bartenura, however, offers his own identification: **וְהָרַע"ב פֵּירֵשׁ: מִין כּוּסְבָּרְתָּא, וְהוּא מַר בְּיוֹתֵר. וְלֹא יָדַעְנוּ מַה זֶּה, וְגַם בָּעָרוּךְ לֹא מָצָאתִי כּוּסְבָּרְתָּא. — The Ra'av [Bartenura] explained: a type of kusbarata, and it is extremely bitter. We do not know what this is, and also in the Aruch I did not find 'kusbarata.'** The uncertainty surrounding the precise identification of several of these species underscores how many details of ancient botanical knowledge have been lost over the centuries of exile.

Halachic Divergences & Insights

Maror grown hydroponically or in a detached medium

Cheshev HaEfod 3:9; Shevet HaLevi 1:205; Kinyan Torah 4:54; Teshuvos veHanhagos 2:149; Shraga HaMeir 5:2; Machazeh Eliyahu 25-30; Taz 690:7; Birkas HaPesach 12:8: Lettuce is now often grown in water or in an unperforated container detached from the ground, as is common with the lettuce grown in a detached medium during shemittah. The poskim divide over the blessing on such produce: *Machazeh Eliyahu* 25-30 and the *Siddur Minchas Yerushalayim* p. 334 conclude that its blessing is shehakol, while most contemporary poskim rule that it takes its proper blessing, since the seed or the

roots come from the earth (*Shevet HaLevi* 1:205 in the notes to Orach Chaim 204; *Kinyan Torah* 4:54; *Teshuvos veHanhagos* 2:149; *Shraga HaMeir* 5:2).
For maror one may in any case fulfill the obligation with such produce (*Cheshev HaEfod* 3:9): even if its blessing were shehakol, its taste is unchanged and the taste of maror has not left it, and the hamotzi of the meal covers its blessing in any event. *Cheshev HaEfod* nonetheless closes by invoking the *Taz* 690:7 that one should not abandon the path of our forebears, and *Kinyan Torah* writes that it is certainly better to take produce fully grown in the ground; *Birkas HaPesach* 12:8 leaves the question of such lettuce for maror in doubt.

§13 **כָּל הַשָּׁנוּי קוֹדֵם בַּמִּשְׁנָה – קוֹדֶמֶת לְשֶׁאַחֲרֶיהָ.** — **Whatever is listed earlier in the Mishnah takes precedence over what follows it.** This is a general principle: the Mishnah lists items in order of preference. **וְלָכֵן חֲזֶרֶת קוֹדֶם לַכֹּל.** — **Therefore, chazeres [lettuce] takes precedence over all the others.** Since it is the first species listed in the Mishnah. The Gemara provides an additional reason for this preference: **וְכָךְ אָמְרוּ בַּגְּמָרָא שָׁם: מִצְוָה בַּחֲזֶרֶת. מַאי "חֲזֶרֶת"? חַסָּא.** **מַאי "חַסָּא"? דְּחָס רַחֲמָנָא עָלַן.** — **And so they said in the Gemara there: The mitzvah is [preferably fulfilled] with chazeres. What is 'chazeres'? Chasa. What is 'chasa'? [It alludes to the fact] that the Merciful One had compassion (chas) upon us.** The name itself contains a reminder of Hashem's compassion for Israel in redeeming them from Egypt. **וְלָכֵן אַף עַל גַּב שֶׁאֵין לָהּ מְרִירוּת, מִכָּל מָקוֹם הִיא יוֹתֵר מִצְוָה.** — **Therefore, even though it has no bitterness, it is nevertheless the preferred [species for the] mitzvah.** Because of its symbolic significance and its position in the Mishnah. After chazeres, **וְאַחֲרֶיהָ תַּמְכָא, וְכֵן כְּסִדְרָהּ.** — **After it is tamcha [horseradish], and so on in order.** i.e., the remaining species follow in the order listed in the Mishnah: charchavina, ulshin, and maror. In practice, however, **וּבִמְדִינָתֵינוּ לוֹקְחִין תַּמְכָא, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁחֲזֶרֶת אֵינוֹ מָצוּי עֲדַיִין קוֹדֶם הַפֶּסַח, אֶלָּא בַּחֲצֵרוֹת הַשָּׂרִים.** — **In our country, they take tamcha [horseradish], because chazeres [lettuce] is not yet available before Pesach, except in the courtyards of the nobles.** In the cold climate of Russia and Eastern Europe, lettuce did not grow early enough to be available for the Seder. Only the wealthy, who had greenhouses or special gardens, could obtain it. **וְכָתַב רַבֵּינוּ הָרמ"א בְּסָעִיף ה דְּאִם אֵין לוֹ אֶחָד מֵאֵלּוּ הַיְרָקוֹת – יִקַּח לַעֲנָה אוֹ שְׁאָר יֶרֶק מַר. עַד כָּאן לְשׁוֹנוֹ.** — **The Rema wrote in Seif 5 that if one does not have any of these vegetables, he should take wormwood or another bitter vegetable. End quote.** The Rema thus permits using any bitter vegetable when none of the five Mishnaic species are available. The *Aruch HaShulchan* now analyzes the basis for this ruling: **וְנִרְאֶה דְּסָבִירָא לֵיהּ דְּזֶה שֶׁשָּׁנִינוּ בַּמִּשְׁנָה "וּבְמָרוֹר", וּמְפָרֵשׁ בַּגְּמָרָא "מְרִירָתָא", הָכִי פֵּירוּשׁוֹ: כָּל מִין יֶרֶק מַר.** — **It appears that he holds that what the Mishnah teaches 'and with maror,' which the Gemara explains as 'merirasah,' means: any type of bitter vegetable.** According to this understanding, the fifth species in the Mishnah is not a specific plant, but rather a general category encompassing all bitter herbs. However, others disagree: **וְיֵשׁ מִי שֶׁסּוֹבֵר דְּמְרִירָתָא הוּא לַעֲנָה, וְלֹא שְׁאָר יֶרֶק מַר.** — **There are those who hold that merirasah refers specifically to wormwood, and not to other bitter vegetables.** According to this view, only the five specific species — including wormwood as the fifth — may be used for the mitzvah. **וְלָכֵן שְׁאָר יֶרֶק מַר – יֹאכַל בְּלֹא בְּרָכָה.** — **Therefore, other bitter vegetables should be eaten without a blessing.** Since there is a dispute whether they qualify as true maror, one should not recite the blessing al achilas maror over them, out of con-

cern for a blessing recited in vain. **וְכֵן יֵשׁ לַעֲשׂוֹת (עַיֵּין מָגֵן אַבְרָהָם סָעִיף קָטָן ט"ו, וְח"י סָעִיף קָטָן כ"ד).** — **And so one should do (see Magen Avraham, se'if katan 15, and Chok Yaakov, se'if katan 24).** This is the accepted practical ruling. The identification of wormwood itself is as follows: **וְ"לַעֲנָה" – כָּתְבוּ שֶׁזֶּהוּ שֶׁקּוֹרִין וֶורמי"ט.** — **'Wormwood' (la'anah) — they wrote that this is what is called wermut.** i.e., the herb known in German as Wermut, an extremely bitter plant. There is also a separate concern regarding the procurement of maror: **וְלֹא יַעֲקוֹר הַיִּשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַצְמוֹ אֶת הַמָּרוֹר מִן הַקַּרְקַע, דְּאוּלַי הִיא קַרְקַע גְּזוּלָה.** — **A Jew should not uproot the maror from the ground himself, for perhaps it is stolen land.** Since land in the Diaspora may have been acquired through conquest or confiscation, the produce growing on it may have the status of stolen property, and one may not use a stolen item for a mitzvah. Instead, **אֶלָּא יַעֲקוֹר הָאֵינוֹ יְהוּדִי וְהוּא יִקָּחֵם מִמֶּנּוּ, דְּהָוֶה לֵיהּ יֵאוּשׁ וְשִׁינּוּי רְשׁוּת.** — **Rather, the non-Jew should uproot it and the Jew should take it from him, for this constitutes despair [by the original owner] and a change of possession.** Through the combination of ye'ush — the original owner's abandonment of hope of recovering the property — and shinui reshus — the transfer of the produce into the possession of the non-Jew and then to the Jew — the item is no longer considered stolen and may be used for the mitzvah. **וְעַיֵּין לְקַמָּן סִימָן תרמ"ט (עַיֵּין מָגֵן אַבְרָהָם סָעִיף קָטָן י"ד).** — **See below, Siman 649 (see Magen Avraham, se'if katan 14).** Siman 649 discusses similar concerns regarding the use of stolen items for the mitzvah of lulav and esrog on Sukkos.

Halachic Divergences & Insights

Order of Preference for Maror

Shulchan Aruch HaRav (Seif 27, 30-31): The *Aruch HaShulchan* reports that romaine lettuce was unavailable before Pesach in his region, so people used horseradish. The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* says that one should seek romaine lettuce even at great expense. Lettuce begins sweet and becomes bitter as it grows, just as the Egyptians first enticed the Jews with kind words and payment and later embittered their lives with hard labor.

If romaine lettuce is unavailable, the order of preference follows the Mishnah: endive, horseradish, charchavina, and then wormwood. If none of these is available, one may eat any bitter vegetable, but without reciting al achilas maror.

Lubavitch custom is to combine romaine lettuce and horseradish for both maror and korekh.

Pearls from the Rebbe's Haggadah

Using Both Lettuce and Horseradish for Maror

Likutei Taamim (P51a): The Rebbe discusses the Lubavitch practice of using both chazeres (lettuce) and tamcha (horseradish) together for maror and korekh. He notes that in the Alter Rebbe's Siddur, the term 'maror' is used for the main eating while 'chazeres' is used for the korekh — a change in terminology that has puzzled many commentators. Some explained this was to prevent people from thinking only the species specifically named 'maror' should be used for korekh. The Rebbe, however, citing his father's kabbalistic writings (Likkutei Levi Yitzchak), suggests the terms carry distinct mystical allusions:

'maror' corresponds to the Sefirah of Tiferet (the central column), while 'chazeres' corresponds to Yesod — both of which occupy the middle line in the arrangement of the Sefiros, mirroring the position of these items on the Seder plate.

Halachic Divergences & Insights

Returning to lettuce now that insect-free lettuce is available

Piskei Teshuvos 473:18; Vayaged Moshe 25:3: The *Aruch HaShulchan* reports that in his region romaine lettuce is unobtainable before Pesach, so horseradish is used, even though lettuce heads the mishnah's list. In earlier generations horseradish was used either because lettuce was unavailable or because of the difficulty of checking it for insects. Now that lettuce is grown and marketed in a form free of the tiny insects that are hard to detect, and each leaf need only be rinsed thoroughly under running water, one should seek it out, and even those whose family practice was always horseradish should change and take lettuce, which is first in the order of the five species (*Piskei Teshuvos* 473:18, in the name of leading poskim).

It is good to take both lettuce and horseradish together, since all the species combine to make up the kezayis. This preserves the reason behind the fathers' practice, both out of respect for it and because of the view that sweet lettuce does not discharge maror, since the horseradish gives the bitter taste. *Vayaged Moshe* 25:3 records that **R' Aharon of Belz** in Eretz Yisrael took lettuce for maror with a little horseradish, and that the author's own grandfather of Biala did so for both maror and korech.

Halachic Divergences & Insights

Whether today's sweet lettuce discharges the obligation of maror

Shulchan Aruch HaRav 30; Levush seif 5; Chok Yaakov sk 18; Chayei Adam 130:3; Ridbaz on Yerushalmi Berachos ch. 6; Mishmeres Shalom 35:2; Chazon Ish 124; Mishneh Halachos 6:92, 7:68: The *Aruch HaShulchan* (seif 16) holds with the many authorities who rule that lettuce discharges maror even though it is sweet (*Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 30; *Levush* seif 5; *Chok Yaakov* sk 18; *Chayei Adam* 130:3). Their reasoning is that the Torah's command is not that a bitter taste be felt but that one eat the vegetable called maror, and lettuce is called maror because, if left in the ground, its stalk hardens and turns very bitter, just as the Egyptians began with soft words and ended by embittering our lives.

Others hold that the essence of the mitzvah is to feel the bitter taste, citing *Pesachim* 39b that one fulfills the obligation only with something that has the taste of maror, and on their view the lettuce sold in the market while still sweet does not discharge the obligation (*Ridbaz* on Yerushalmi Berachos ch. 6; *Mishmeres Shalom* 35:2; *Chazon Ish* 124). Even

on their view one must not leave the lettuce in the ground until it is as bitter as wormwood, but take it out when the bitterness begins. *Mishneh Halachos* 6:92 and 7:68, after an exchange with **R' Chaim Kanievsky**, concludes that this is a dispute among the rishonim and that one who eats even sweet lettuce as the world does is not to be censured. Such a question should be brought to a rav.

§14 חֲמִישָׁה מִינִים אֵלּוּ מִצְטָרְפִין לִכְזַיִת. — **These five species combine to form a kazayit (olive-sized portion).** Therefore, one need not eat the entire required measure from a single species. וְלָכֵן יֵשׁ אֶצְלֵינוּ שֶׁלּוֹקְחִין מְעַט חֲזֶרֶת עִם מְעַט תַּמְכָא, שֶׁטּוֹב לְאָכְלָן יַחַד. — **Therefore, there are among us those who take a little chazeret (lettuce) with a little tamcha (horseradish), for it is good to eat them together.** Combining both species makes it easier to consume the required measure. וּכְשֶׁיֵּשׁ מִשְּׁנֵיהֶם כַּזַּיִת – יָצָא יְדֵי חוֹבָתוֹ. — **And when from both of them together there is a kazayit, one has fulfilled his obligation.** The *Aruch HaShulchan* now discusses which parts of the plant are valid. וְיוֹצְאִין בְּכָל אֵלּוּ: בֵּין בְּהֶעָלִין שֶׁלָּהֶם, וּבֵין בְּהַקְלָחִים. אֲבָל לֹא בַּשָּׁרָשִׁים, — **And one may fulfill the obligation with all of these, whether with their leaves or with their stems. But not with the roots,** The term "roots" here requires clarification, as not all underground parts are disqualified. דְּהַיְינוּ שָׁרָשִׁים הַקְּטַנִּים הַמִּתְפַּצְלִים לְכָאן וּלְכָאן. — **that is, the small roots that branch off to one side and the other.** These thin rootlets that split off from the main body of the root are not valid. However, the main body itself has a different status. אֲבָל הַשֹּׁרֶשׁ הַגָּדוֹל שֶׁבּוֹ גְּדִילִים הֶעָלִים, אַף שֶׁהוּא טָמוּן בַּקַּרְקַע – חֲרֵי זֶה בִּכְלַל קֶלַח. — **But the main root from which the leaves grow, even though it is buried in the ground, is in the category of a stem.** Since it is the primary body of the plant from which the leaves emerge, it is functionally a stem, not a root. וּמִכָּל מָקוֹם טוֹב יוֹתֵר לִיטּוֹל הֶעָלִים וְהַקֶּלַח הַיּוֹצֵא חוּץ לַקַּרְקַע, לְפִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ אוֹמְרִים שֶׁמָּה שֶׁטָּמוּן בַּקַּרְקַע מִקְרֵי "שׁוֹרֶשׁ". — **Nevertheless, it is better to take the leaves and the stem that emerges above the ground, because there are those who say that whatever is buried in the ground is called a "root."** As a preferred practice, one should avoid this dispute and use only the above-ground portions. אֲבָל הָעִיקָּר כַּסְּבָרָא רִאשׁוֹנָה (הגר"ז סָעִיף כ"ח). — **But the primary ruling follows the first opinion (Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Seif 28).** i.e., the main root is considered a stem even though it is underground. The *Aruch HaShulchan* now turns to discuss grated horseradish. וְדַע שֶׁיֵּשׁ מִי שֶׁרָצָה לוֹמַר דְּתַמְכָא שֶׁקּוֹרִין קריי"ן – אֵין יוֹצְאִין בּוֹ אֶלָּא אִם כֵּן אוֹכְלָהּ בִּשְׁלֵימוּת כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא, — **And know that there is one who wished to say regarding tamcha, which is called krei'n (horseradish), that one does not fulfill the obligation with it unless one eats it in its whole state as it is,** meaning without any processing, and specifically: וְלֹא הַנִּגָּרָר בְּמוֹרָג שֶׁקּוֹרִין רי"ב אייז"ן, כְּדֶרֶךְ שֶׁאוֹכְלִין עִם בָּשָׂר שֶׁהוּא מְפוֹרָר דַּק דַּק. — **and not when it is grated with a grater called ri'b eize'n, in the manner that people eat it with meat, when it is crumbled very finely.** The *Aruch HaShulchan* strongly rejects this view. וְדָבָר תָּמוּהַּ לוֹמַר כֵּן, דַּאֲדַרְבָּא זֶהוּ עִיקַּר אֲכִילָתוֹ כְּשֶׁהוּא מְפוֹרָר, וּלְאָכְלוֹ כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא הוּא סַכָּנָה כַּיָּדוּעַ. — **This is an astonishing thing to say, for on the contrary, its primary manner of eating is when it is grated, and to eat it in its whole state is a danger, as is well known.** Eating raw, whole horseradish can cause choking or severe digestive distress. וְכֵן נָהֲגוּ כָּל גְּדוֹלֵי עוֹלָם. — **And so was the practice of all the great Torah authorities.** i.e., to use grated horseradish for the mitzvah. Nevertheless,

some people have difficulty eating horseradish even when grated. **וּלְמִי שֶׁקָּשֶׁה עָלָיו לֶאֱכוֹל תַּמְכָא מִפְּנֵי חֻלְשׁוּת הַלֵּב – בְּהֶכְרֵחַ לְהַדֵּר אַחַר חֲזֶרֶת, אַף שֶׁיַּעֲלֶה לוֹ בְּדָמִים יְקָרִים. — And for one for whom it is difficult to eat tamcha due to a weakness of the heart, he must seek out chazeret (lettuce), even if it will cost him a great expense.** Since lettuce is the primary species for the mitzvah. However, there is another option. **אַךְ יוֹכַל לִיקַּח הֶעָלִים מִן הַתַּמְכָא, שֶׁאֵין בּוֹ מְרִירוּת אֶלָּא מְעַט, דְּהָא יוֹצְאִין בֶּעָלִין כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְבָּאֵר. — However, he may take the leaves of the tamcha, which have only a little bitterness, for one fulfills the obligation with the leaves, as has been explained.** The horseradish leaves are far milder than the root and can be used to fulfill the mitzvah. **וּמִי שֶׁהוּא חוֹלֶה וְאֵינוֹ יָכוֹל לֶאֱכוֹל מָרוֹר – לֹא יֹאכַל. — And one who is ill and cannot eat maror — should not eat it.** Since, as will be explained, in our times the obligation of maror is only Rabbinic. **וְקַיְימָא לַן דְּמַצָּה בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה דְּאוֹרַיְיתָא, וּמָרוֹר דְּרַבָּנָן (קכ א). — And we hold that matzah in our time is a Torah obligation, and maror is Rabbinic (Pesachim 120a).** The reason for this distinction is derived from Scripture. **דְּהָא כְּתִיב: "עַל מַצּוֹת וּמְרוֹרִים יֹאכְלֻהוּ" – בְּזְמַן דְּאִיכָּא פֶּסַח אִיכָּא מָרוֹר, וּבְזְמַן דְּלֵיכָּא פֶּסַח לֵיכָּא מָרוֹר. — For it is written: "They shall eat it with matzos and bitter herbs" (Bamidbar 9:11) — when there is a Pesach offering, there is maror, and when there is no Pesach offering, there is no [Torah obligation of] maror.** Since the Torah linked the maror obligation to the Pesach sacrifice. But one might ask about matzah as well. **וְאִי קַשְׁיָא: דְּאִם כֵּן מַצָּה נַמִּי אֵינוֹ כֵן? דְּמַצָּה הָדַר וְתָנֵי בֵּיהּ קְרָא "בָּעֶרֶב תֹּאכְלוּ מַצּוֹת" – אַף בִּדְלֵיכָּא פֶּסַח (שָׁם). — And if you ask: if so, matzah too should be the same? Regarding matzah, Scripture repeats and teaches: "In the evening you shall eat matzos" (Shemos 12:18) — even when there is no Pesach offering (ibid.).** Thus matzah has an independent obligation from a separate verse, unlike maror which depends entirely on the Pesach sacrifice.

Halachic Divergences & Insights

A Sick Person, Grated Horseradish, and Lubavitch Practice

Shulchan Aruch HaRav (Seif 31) / Likutei Taamim (P51a): The *Aruch HaShulchan* says that a sick person who cannot eat maror should not eat it. The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* adds that a sick or delicate person who cannot eat the required amount should chew a little maror to taste its bitterness as a remembrance, without reciting a blessing. A person who can eat a full kezayis despite the discomfort is obligated to do so. Only one who truly cannot eat it is exempt.

The *Aruch HaShulchan* and the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* agree that grated horseradish is valid for maror. The *Aruch HaShulchan* calls the contrary position 'astonishing.'

Lubavitch custom is to use both romaine lettuce and horseradish for maror and korekh. The Rebbe added a small piece of whole horseradish to the grated horseradish. This also satisfies the view of the Chavot Da'at, who holds that grating invalidates horseradish, although most authorities disagree.

HALACHIC DIVERGENCES & INSIGHTS

When to grate the horseradish

Mishnah Berurah sk 36 and 504:19; Moadim uZmanim 7:182; Orchos Rabbeinu vol. 2 pp. 73, 77; Magen Avraham 504:7; Shulchan Aruch HaRav 504:4; Nitei Gavriel, Erev Pesach shechal beShabbos ch. 16 n. 12; Piskei Teshuvos 473:16: The *Mishnah Berurah* sk 36 rules that horseradish must be grated and left exposed so that its sharpness dissipates, and records that the Vilna Gaon directed that it not be grated before returning from shul, so that the taste not be lost.

Moadim uZmanim 7:182 argues that the horseradish of earlier generations may have been less sharp than ours, and that if ours is grated just before the seder it will be so sharp at the time of eating that this is not the normal way of eating it and one does not fulfill the obligation; better to grate it during the day, so that at night it is fit to eat while the bitter taste is still felt. That was the practice in the house of the Brisker Rav, where the horseradish was grated and left uncovered for several hours before yom tov. *Orchos Rabbeinu* vol. 2 p. 73 records the opposite practice of the *Chazon Ish* and **R' Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky**, who grated it on yom tov night after shul; there, p. 77, it is also noted that they took the root uncut, out of concern for a chametz knife.

Grating beforehand also avoids the melacha question: the *Magen Avraham* 504:7 and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 504:4 forbid grating horseradish on yom tov even with a change, whereas the *Mishnah Berurah* 504:19 permits it with a change, grating onto the table rather than into a vessel or holding the grater upside down, and some permit it even without a change. For both reasons it is proper to grate before yom tov (*Piskei Teshuvos* 473:16). Today's sealed glass jars with a rubber ring keep the horseradish sharp for many hours, so that even those who are stringent about loss of taste can rely on this, and it can be prepared on erev yom tov for the second night as well (*Nitei Gavriel*, Erev Pesach shechal beShabbos ch. 16 n. 12, in the name of *Be'er Moshe*). When yom tov falls on Shabbos all agree it must be grated beforehand and kept covered.

HALACHIC DIVERGENCES & INSIGHTS

Measures of maror for a sick person, and the tradition of less than a kezayis

Shearim Metzuyanim BeHalachah 119:13; Siddur Pesach KeHilchaso vol. 2 p. 141; Aishel Avraham (Butchatch) mahadura tinyana; Imrei Noam responsa 3; Maharsham Engel 4:3; Taamei HaMinhagim 519; Eretz Tzvi 1:85; Avnei Nezer 383; Atzei Chaim 3: For a sick person one may rely on the shortest reckoning of kdei achilas pras, nine minutes, for consuming the kezayis (*Shearim Metzuyanim BeHalachah* 119:13), and measure the maror by the smallest shiur, seventeen grams (*Siddur Pesach KeHilchaso* vol. 2 p. 141, as the *Chazon Ish* directed). The *Aishel Avraham*, mahadura tinyana, holds that the maror of maror and of korech combine to a kezayis and he may then recite al achilas maror, which presumes that both are eaten within one kdei achilas pras.

A tradition among the chassidic masters of Galicia permitted a sick person who cannot

manage horseradish to eat even less than a kezayis and still recite al achilas maror (*Imrei Noam*, responsa at the end of the sefer 3, in the name of the Ropshitzer; *Maharsham Engel* 4:3; *Taamei HaMinhagim* 519 in the name of the Strelisker; *Eretz Tzvi* 1:85 in the name of the Shinover, noting that it was well known in Galicia). *Eretz Tzvi* stresses that this leniency was extended only to horseradish, which is not ordinarily eaten as food and in which the sharpness and bitterness are concentrated. Today there is no need to reach this, since lettuce leaves are available everywhere and one need not force himself with horseradish.

Where he cannot eat even lettuce in the required measure he does not recite the blessing. *Atzei Chaim* 3 advises that another recite the blessing for him and that he eat what he can, and the *Avnei Nezer* 383 advises that at the time of eating maror he learn the Rambam, Hilchos Chametz uMatzah 8:6, where the text of the blessing appears, read it there, and eat at once.

Halachic Divergences & Insights

How ill one must be to be exempt from maror

***Mishnah Berurah* sk 43; *Tzitz Eliezer* 14:27 citing *Binyan Shlomo* 47; *Mikraei Kodesh Pesach* 2:32; *Maharam Schick* 260; *Mahari Assad* 160; *Tzitz Eliezer* 15:32:** The *Aruch HaShulchan* rules that a sick person who cannot eat maror does not eat it at all, and the *Mishnah Berurah* sk 43 rules that where even a small amount is impossible for him because of his health he eats a little or chews it to recall the bitter taste, without a blessing.

The scope of that exemption is disputed. *Tzitz Eliezer* 14:27, citing *Binyan Shlomo* 47, and *Mikraei Kodesh* Pesach 2:32, hold that it applies even where there is no danger at all, so long as the patient feels that eating maror will lay him up, or a competent physician says so. *Maharam Schick* 260 disagrees and exempts only where there is a concern of danger to life.

Where physicians say that eating maror endangers his life he is forbidden to be stringent with himself and eat, and if he is stringent he should not recite al achilas maror, for such a blessing is not praise but provocation (*Mahari Assad* 160). Where the physician says it will not harm him and the patient says it will, the heart knows its own bitterness and he may not be stringent and eat (*Tzitz Eliezer* 15:32). Such a question should be brought to a rav.

§15 הֶעָלִים אֵין יוֹצְאִין בָּהֶן אֶלָּא אִם כֵּן הֵן לַחִין, אֲבָל לֹא כְּמוּשִׁין שֶׁקּוֹרִין צווייאלע"ט, וְאֵין צָרִיךְ לוֹמַר יְבֵשִׁים. — **The leaves — one does not fulfill the obligation with them unless they are fresh, but not when they are wilted, which is called tsveyale't, and needless to say, not when they are dried out.** Since the bitterness of thin leaves dissipates when they lose their moisture. The law regarding stems, however, is different. **אֲבָל הַקְּלָחִים יוֹצְאִין בָּהֶן, בֵּין לַחִין בֵּין יְבֵשִׁין, וְאֵין צָרִיךְ לוֹמַר כְּמוּשִׁים,** — **But the stems — one fulfills the obligation with them, whether**

fresh or dried, and needless to say when merely wilted, because of the following reason: **דְּכֵיוָן שֶׁהַקֶּלַח הוּא עָב – אֵין טַעַם מְרִירָתוֹ נִפְסָד עַל יְדֵי שֶׁמִּתְיַבֵּשׁ. — since the stem is thick, its bitter taste is not spoiled through drying out.** The thickness of the stem retains the bitterness even when moisture is lost. However, there are processes that do destroy the bitter flavor. **אֲבָל אֵין יוֹצְאִין בְּקֶלַח מְבֻשָּׁל, לְפִי שֶׁעַל יְדֵי הַבִּישׁוּל נִפְסָד טַעַם הַמְּרִירוּת לְגַמְרֵי. — But one does not fulfill the obligation with a cooked stem, because through cooking, the taste of bitterness is completely spoiled.** One might ask: if chazeret (lettuce) has no bitterness even when fresh, why is the loss of bitterness a disqualification for other species? **וְאַף עַל גַּב דְּחֲזֶרֶת אֵין בּוֹ מְרִירוּת כְּלָל – זֶהוּ מִפְּנֵי שֶׁטִּבְעוֹ כָּךְ. — And even though chazeret (lettuce) has no bitterness at all — this is because its nature is such from the outset.** Chazeret is inherently mild; this is its natural state, which the Torah counts as maror for other reasons. But regarding other species: **אֲבָל זֶה שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ מְרִירוּת, כְּשֶׁנִּפְסָד הַמְּרִירוּת שֶׁבּוֹ – אֵין זֶה מָרוֹר, שֶׁהֲרֵי נִשְׁתַּנָּה מִגִּידּוּלוֹ. — But this species that naturally has bitterness, when its bitterness is spoiled — it is not maror, for it has changed from its natural growth.** When a naturally bitter species loses its bitterness through processing, it has been fundamentally altered. The same principle applies to soaking. **וְכָבוּשׁ כמבושל, וְאֵין יוֹצְאִין בּוֹ. וְיֵשׁ שְׁנֵי מִינֵי כָּבוּשׁ: — And kavush (soaked/pickled) is equivalent to cooked, and one does not fulfill the obligation with it. And there are two types of kavush:** i.e., soaking in strong brine or vinegar, where kavush takes effect in the time it would take the liquid to boil; and soaking in any liquid for twenty-four hours. **הָאֶחָד: הַכָּבוּשׁ בחומץ וְצִיר. וּזְמַן כְּבִישָׁה זוֹ הוּא מְעַט, רַק כְּשִׁיעוּר שֶׁיִּתְּנוּ עַל הָאֵשׁ וְיַתְחִיל לְהַרְתִּיחַ. — The first: that which is soaked in vinegar or brine. And the time for this type of soaking is short — only the amount of time it would take to place it on the fire and for it to begin to boil.** Vinegar and brine are potent enough that they penetrate and alter the food quickly, equivalent to the brief time needed to bring a pot to a boil. This is the halachic standard for kavush in strong liquids. **וְהַשֵּׁנִי: הַכָּבוּשׁ בְּמַיִם. וּכְבִישָׁה זוֹ צְרִיכָה "מֵעֵת לְעֵת". — And the second: that which is soaked in water. And this type of soaking requires "me'et le'et" (a full twenty-four-hour period).** Water is a weaker medium than vinegar or brine, so it takes a full twenty-four hours of continuous soaking for the halachic status of kavush (equivalent to cooked) to take effect. **וְלָכֵן יִזָּהֲרוּ שֶׁלֹּא לְהַנִּיחַ הַתַּמְכָא בְּמַיִם מֵעֵת לְעֵת. — Therefore, one should be careful not to leave the tamcha (horseradish) in water for a full twenty-four hours.** Since horseradish is commonly soaked in water to reduce its sharpness, one must ensure it is removed before twenty-four hours elapse, lest it acquire the status of kavush and become invalid for maror. **וְיֵשׁ שֶׁנִּדְחָקִין לוֹמַר דְּתַמְכָא, אַף שֶׁנִּשְׁרָה מֵעֵת לְעֵת – לֹא יִשְׁתַּנֶּה. וְאֵינוֹ עִיקָּר. — And there are those who are hard-pressed to say that tamcha (horseradish), even if soaked for twenty-four hours, does not change. But this is not the primary ruling.** The *Aruch HaShulchan* dismisses this lenient view. **וְכֵן וְכָל שֶׁשָּׁרוּי מֵעֵת לְעֵת – אֵין יוֹצְאִין בּוֹ, הִסְכִּימוּ הַגְּדוֹלִים. — And anything that has soaked for twenty-four hours — one does not fulfill the obligation with it, and so the great authorities agreed.** The *Aruch HaShulchan* appends a parenthetical note citing specific authorities. **(מָגֵן אַבְרָהָם סָעִיף קָטָן י"ד, וְח"י סָעִיף קָטָן כ, עַיֵּין שָׁם שֶׁנִּדְחַק לְיַישֵׁב הַמִּנְהָג. וּדְבָרָיו דְּחוּקִים, וְיָכוֹל לְהוֹצִיאָם קוֹדֶם הַ"מֵּעֵת לְעֵת". וְעַיֵּין מַה שֶּׁכָּתַב הַגר"ז סָעִיף כ"ט. וְדַיֵּיק וְתִמְצָא קַל.) — (Magen Avraham, se'if katan 14, and Chok Yaakov, se'if katan 20; see there that he [the Chok Yaakov] was hard-pressed to justify the custom. And his words are forced, for one can simply remove them [the maror from the water] before the twenty-four hours. And see what the Graz [Shulchan Aruch HaRav] wrote in Seif 29. And examine carefully and you will find it straightforward.)** The practical solution — removing the maror from the water before twenty-four hours elapse — obviates the need for any strained justification.