

# **Guide to Minhag Ashkenaz**

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## I. Introduction\*

### 1. The Migration of Torah Tradition from the Land of Israel to Ashkenazic Lands

I hold of our tradition and that of our ancestors, the sages of Ashkenaz, whose Torah teachings were passed down to them from their ancestors since the time of the Churban (destruction of the Holy Temple). — *The Rosh, R' Asher b. Yechiel*.

Ashkenazic Jewry had yeshivos continuously, generation after generation, since the time of the Churban. They put their souls into the knowledge of the Torah and its observance, following its laws of justice and other halachos. Therefore, it is certain that their correct knowledge of its details goes back farther [than other traditions]. — *R' Yakov Emden*.

During the Second Temple Period, Jerusalem was the center of Jewish life. The kernel of Torah tradition was ensconced in the *Lishkas Hagazit* (Chamber of Cut Stone), the basilica set into the north wall of the Holy Temple. The Sanhedrin was situated there.<sup>1</sup> The Sanhedrin was the superior court and the final word in all matters of Torah law. All eyes turned to the sages of the Sanhedrin for guidance in every area of Jewish life. From there Torah went forth to world Jewry. As such, it was the place to which the oral tradition of the Torah legacy was entrusted.

After the destruction of the Second Temple, about ninety thousand Jews were exiled from the Land of Israel by the evil emperor Titus (39-81 CE).<sup>2</sup> The Torah sages continued to safeguard the oral tradition passed down to

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\* As a general rule, the style of translation of the introduction is more formal than that of the rest of the book to make it more accessible to the general reader.

<sup>1</sup> Yoma 25a.

<sup>2</sup> See R' Yosef (Yousep) Shamash, *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim 1988), introduction by R' Binyamin Shlomo Hamburger, p. 78, note 61.

them from earlier sages.<sup>3</sup> This legacy was kept in its entirety by core yeshivos and by rabbinic supervision over its precise practice in the community.

The Jews settled in Italy under the dominion of Titus toward the end of the first century and brought their Torah heritage with them. When they migrated north to Ashkenazic lands, the authorities entrusted with transmitting Torah remained with them, all the while retaining steady contact with the seats of Torah in the Land of Israel and Babylon. The Jewish heritage of Ashkenaz continued uninterrupted for almost two millennia, and in every generation, yeshivos and Torah sages have guarded, cultivated, and glorified this ancient tradition.

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The nation of Ashkenaz is mentioned several times in the scriptures. Sources indicate that Ashkenaz was located in Asia Minor (present day Turkey, Armenia, and Iraq) and that during the great world migration that had begun during the Second Temple Period, these light-skinned<sup>4</sup> Germanic tribes eventually migrated westward toward Europe from the Mountains of Ararat<sup>5</sup> (which were outside the boundaries of the Roman Empire) to the Alps. These tribes had been forced out of Asia Minor by marauding barbarians who decimated everything in their path. The Germanic tribes continued wandering until they found land suitable for agriculture. They divided those lands among themselves and established individual kingdoms therein. When they settled the area, each head of tribe became king of his province. As time progressed they pushed the Romans out of central Europe.<sup>6</sup>

Interestingly, the Talmud and Midrash identify some of the biblical names mentioned in the family of Ashkenaz, grandson of Japheth, with Germany. The names Togarma<sup>7</sup> and Gomer,<sup>8</sup> Ashkenaz's brother and father, even sound like Germany. Gomer's brother, Magog,<sup>9</sup> is also associated with Germany. Moreover, we know of places in Asia Minor that were called

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<sup>3</sup> See *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), pp. 78, 79.

<sup>4</sup> Mishnah Nega'im 2:1.

<sup>5</sup> Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) 51:27.

<sup>6</sup> See *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), pp. 70, 71.

<sup>7</sup> Midrash Bereishis Rabbah 37:1.

<sup>8</sup> Yoma 10a.

<sup>9</sup> See Yerushalmi Megillah 1:9, where Magog is identified with Gothia.

Garmania or Caramania. This all indicates that the source of Germany is in fact the biblical nation of Ashkenaz.<sup>10</sup>

Although sources also point to a Jewish presence in these lands during biblical times and during the Second Temple Period, no records exist of an organic, continuous Jewish community during the tribal migrations, nor do we have details about their Torah traditions. Thus, although biblical Ashkenaz does seem to have a historical association with modern Germanic lands, from a Jewish perspective it has no bearing upon the line of the Ashkenazic Torah heritage.

Some ancient Jewish communities in the diaspora claim that their traditions come directly from the pre-Temple period. This also has no bearing upon the line of Torah tradition. An authentic Jewish community had to be intimately associated with the sages of the Mishnah and Talmud. A community claiming to have bypassed the Temple Period is indeed ancient, but invalid as a conduit of Torah tradition.

Similarly, the present Jewish community of Babylonian heritage cannot claim to be the heir to the seat of Torah legacy in classical Babylon, as its tradition has obviously been infiltrated by Sephardic customs such as those of the Ari, a fact which indicates that its legacy is not a consistent, direct line to ancient Babylon. Indeed, only Ashkenaz has had a continuous line of Torah sages and yeshivos since the time of the Churban of Jerusalem until the Churban of Europe in our day.

Although the oral tradition came with Hillel the Elder from Babylon<sup>11</sup> and continued there and in the Land of Israel after the Churban, the seat of oral tradition did not remain in Babylon or in the Land of Israel until modern times. When the communities of the Ge'onim began to dwindle, the oral tradition passed to Ashkenazic Jewry. Ashkenaz had been in close contact with the great yeshivos in Jerusalem and Babylon throughout the centuries, and its traditions reflect those legacies without any changes based on logic, popular pressure, or peripheral influences.

As R' Amram Gaon of Babylon (c.810-c.875) writes:<sup>12</sup>

In all the communities of Ashkenazic lands, they are all noted for a thousand-fold of goodness and blessings, for they are all filled with Torah and mitzvos as the seeds of a pomegranate, and their deeds

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<sup>10</sup> See *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), p. 71, notes 19, 28.

<sup>11</sup> Sukkah 20a.

<sup>12</sup> R' Amram Gaon (Goldschmidt edition) (Jerusalem 1972), p. 16. See also *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), p. 78.

are fine. They are strict in the laws of kosher animal slaughter, the immersion of a *niddah*, and in all that it is proper to be strict about.

The Ashkenazic communities gradually spread to other parts of Europe. Torah students from the core communities of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz went on to become Torah leaders in neighboring lands. Some examples are France (Rashi and others), Bohemia and Austria (the *Or Zarua* and others), Poland (Maharam Mintz, R' Yakov Falk, and others), and Italy (the *Shibolei Haleket*, Mahari Mintz, and others).

In general, these communities continued to practice Ashkenazic customs in the lands they spread to. As a result, we refer to all European Jews — except the Spanish, Portuguese, and those Jews who came under their influence — as “Ashkenazim.” An indication of their Ashkenazic origin is the obvious linguistic link between Yiddish and German. However, due to oppression, migration, and a lack of insistence on rejection of any change, the heritage of those new communities eventually lost its Ashkenazic authenticity.

It must be noted that there were cases of debate between our medieval sages and differing customs in various Ashkenazic communities, as mentioned below. Such debate within the tradition is not an indication of inauthenticity. In fact, the constant challenge to tradition inherent in the debates of the Babylonian Talmud is what gives life to its tradition and has always been the main topic of Torah study. When we speak of precision and authenticity we mean that any opinion, custom, or law voiced by our sages is based upon teachings that had always been accepted as part of their heritage, as opposed to being based upon those influences mentioned above.

Thus the concept of the authentic Ashkenazic tradition is not based on the geographical region, political district, or genealogical lineage of Germany or the German people; rather, the focus is on an unbroken chain of precise, supervised oral tradition from the time of the Churban until today. No other tradition can make that claim.

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Detailed information about the actual period of migration to Ashkenaz is lacking. Various traditions go very far back in history, and although there are specific indications of a Jewish presence in Germany at the time of the Churban and maybe even much earlier, not all details are confirmed. Besides, even if there were such a presence, it remains unclear whether the

community was an organic, continuous one.<sup>13</sup> What is certain is that the heritage of Torah and halachah (Torah law) in Ashkenaz originally came from the Land of Israel and from there was preserved for a long time in Roman Italy, where our ancestors arrived after the Churban.

Italy and the Land of Israel remained in close contact, as they were both under the dominion of the Roman Empire. Sources indicate that this contact persisted for a very long time — until the end of the Ge'onic Period (about 1000 CE). The sages of Italy were also in close contact with the Talmudic sages and the Ge'onim in Babylon throughout the centuries.<sup>14</sup>

From Italy, the tradition was brought north to Ashkenaz with the Torah sages who migrated there toward the end of the Ge'onic Period. The first records of specifically Ashkenazic customs appear during this period of migration from Italy to Germany.

R' Elazar of Worms (1160-1237), the *Rokei'ach*, records in his introduction to the siddur (prayer book) the following intriguing chain of oral tradition:<sup>15</sup>

They had received the inner meanings of the prayer text and other traditions from teacher to student back to Abu Aharon son of R' Shmuel Hanasi who had left Babylon because of a certain incident, and had been forced to wander across the continent. He reached a city named Luka in the land of Lombardy [northern Italy], where he encountered Rabbeinu Moshe, the poet of “Eimas Nore'osecha,” son of Klonimus, son of Meshulam, son of Klonimus, son of Yehuda and passed down the entire tradition to him.

R' Moshe was the first to leave Lombardy. His sons R' Klonimus and R' Yekusiel, his relative R' Isiel, and other distinguished people came with him. King Carlo<sup>16</sup> brought them to settle in

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<sup>13</sup> See *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), pp. 73-78, with notes.

<sup>14</sup> See *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), p. 80.

<sup>15</sup> R' Elazar of Worms, *Peirushei Siddur Hatefillah LaRokei'ach* (Jerusalem 1992), vol. 1, p. 229. See also R' Binyamin Shlomo Hamburger, *Gedolei Hadoros al Mishmar Minhag Ashkenaz*, note 4; and *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), p. 79, note 68.

<sup>16</sup> King Carlo was one of the many Carolingian emperors of similar name, descendants of Charlemagne (747-814), who ruled Germany and Italy during the mid-ninth century.

Mainz, where they were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly until the wrath of G-d struck the community in the bloody year of 1096 [when the Crusaders slaughtered most of the Jewish community. R' Moshe survived and] passed his teachings on to R' Elazar, the Chazzan of Speyer, who passed the tradition to R' Shmuel Hachassid, who passed it to R' Yehuda Hachassid. I, the meek one, in turn received the tradition from him.

Another source indicates that the *Rokei'ach's* tradition was passed down generation after generation from Yosef Ma'on, one of those exiled from Jerusalem to Rome by Titus toward the end of the first century.<sup>17</sup>

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At the decline of the Ge'onic Period, a monumental turning point occurred — the confluence of the Babylonian and Jerusalem legacies in Ashkenaz. Ashkenaz became the sole guardian of the composite legacy which it had been following for centuries.

Since the details of the two branches did not always concur, there existed differing customs in various Ashkenazic communities, depending upon which legacy they favored. This phenomenon is discussed by the Tosafists<sup>18</sup> (early medieval commentaries on the Talmud) and is evident in the practices of earlier Rishonim, such as R' Yitzchak b. Yehuda of Mainz, R' Yitzchak Halevi of Worms, and R' Yakov b. Yakar of Mainz-Worms,<sup>19</sup> teachers of Rashi (R' Shlomo Yitzchaki of Troyes 1040-1105). An examination of those traditions indicates that the Babylonian influence was somewhat greater.<sup>20</sup>

The rise of the Rishonim at the beginning of the Middle Ages ushered in a time of growth for the Ashkenazic legacy. The communities of Ashkenaz had become known as Torah centers of worldwide influence. This cultural development reached its apex with the appearance of the great early-medieval Ashkenazic sages such as Rabbeinu Gershom Me'or Hagolah of Mainz (960-c.1028), Rashi, and the Tosafists. By anchoring the practice of true customs, weeding out popular alterations, and creating ordinances

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<sup>17</sup> See *Gedolei Hadoros al Mishmar Minhag Ashkenaz*, note 5.

<sup>18</sup> See *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), p. 85.

<sup>19</sup> See *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), pp. 86, 87.

<sup>20</sup> See *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), pp. 79-89, and especially note 76.



(such as those of Rabbeinu Gershom) for the welfare of society, these leaders became known as the “founders” of Minhag Ashkenaz in Germany.

As R' Moshe Sofer of Pressburg (1763-1840), the *Chasam Sofer*, writes:

Know that all these Ashkenazic customs were founded under the supervision of our sages the Tosafists and Rashi and his students, residents of that land.

During the late eleventh century, renewed persecution of Ashkenazic Jewry created another turning point which threatened to endanger the continuity of the precious guarded heritage. This dark period in Jewish history occurred between the times of the Crusades and the Black Plague, notoriously known as the “decrees” of 1096 and 1249. Those two years made an especially bloody imprint on medieval Jewish history, when Christian mobs wiped out entire Jewish communities.

Our great sages realized the peril threatening the unbroken chain of Torah tradition. They risked their lives to ensure the continuity of our heritage and the transfer of Torah to their children and students. By valiantly dedicating themselves to passing the Torah down to following generations, orally and in writing, they prevented the loss of Torah. They taught the halachos and minhagim (customs) to their students in yeshivos and made their writings accessible to the rest of the people. These writings are a repository of customs for prayer, mitzvah performance, and an overall way of life.

During its period of prosperity, the Ashkenazic community served as a wellspring for the spiritual lifestyle which had emanated from its deep source with vigor and intensity for many generations. Famous Jewish communities known by the names of the cities hosting them rose and flourished. Those vibrant communities nurtured the world with Torah, purity, mitzvos, and tradition.

When the barbarous Crusaders gave the Jews a choice of apostasy or death, the Jews remained faithful to their heritage and preferred a death of “Kiddush Hashem” (in sanctification of G-d’s name) to a life without Torah practice. In famous towns such as Speyer, Worms, Mainz, and many other cities and settlements, the survivors continued guarding our authentic Jewish heritage, keeping its flame burning strong.

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The period of upheaval in Ashkenaz was followed by a period of stability. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, several factors led to a further solidification of Minhag Ashkenaz: reduced oppression, the influence of R' Yakov Molin of Mainz-Worms (1360-1427) — the Maharil — and the invention of the printing press. Subsequently, when the cataclysmic sixteenth century wreaked havoc on the German community of Worms with the expulsion of 1615, the effects of the Thirty Years War, and the pogrom of 1689, the traditions remained uncannily accurate.

The Maharil has often been called the “Founder of Minhag Ashkenaz.” The term “founder” in the sense of “inventor” is a misrepresentation; nothing can be farther from the truth. The role of the Maharil was consolidator of Minhag Ashkenaz —rendering the ancient customs firm and secure. A study of his influence on Minhag Ashkenaz would fill volumes.<sup>21</sup>

At the end of the sixteenth century, another shining light rose in Worms — R' Yair Chaim Bachrach of Worms (1628-1701), the *Chavos Yair*. In one rare case, the people requested the alteration of a custom because of the situation of turmoil. The *Chavos Yair* refused. He had faith that the persecution would end and that peace would return to the land.<sup>22</sup> Thus, he stands out as one of the valiant leaders and protectors of the Ashkenazic tradition.

## 2. Types of Customs

Some people erroneously define “custom” as trivial, peripheral matters and popular folklore. The Hebrew word for custom, “minhag,” does imply these things, but when minhag is used in the context of custom, it means something specific and much more significant. The literal meaning of minhag is any phenomenon that is repeated habitually or at certain regularities. Even natural and technological phenomena are referred to as minhag. For example, when Chazal (classical sages) tell us about the mechanism of King Solomon’s royal throne, which Pharaoh Nechoh, king of Egypt, wished to operate, they describe that “this wicked Pharaoh Nechoh wished to sit on Solomon’s throne, but he did not know its minhag (the way it worked).”<sup>23</sup> Similarly, when Chazal describe the way animals

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<sup>21</sup> See *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), pp. 95-105.

<sup>22</sup> In one case a popular custom was adopted instead of the old custom. See *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), p. 95, note 57.

<sup>23</sup> Midrash Vayikra Rabbah §20.

behave, they say, “The minhag (way, habit, or instinct) of nature is that wolves prey on goats.”<sup>24</sup>

In human context, the word minhag has always been used to describe laws and legally binding accepted practice that do not necessarily have a source in the Torah or Jewish tradition. For example, the first mishnah in tractate Bava Basra teaches that when building a wall between two properties, one must use the accepted materials. The mishnah’s phraseology is, “It all has to be done in accordance with the minhag (accepted practice) of the country.” Similarly, the Talmud says, “A great minhag was practiced in Jerusalem. One who supplies food for a banquet (what we call a caterer) and spoils the food, must pay restitution for the value of the embarrassment experienced by both the host and the guests.”<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, when dealing with the topic of Torah tradition, the concept of minhag is generally used only for matters relating to the performance of mitzvos. There is a hierarchy, though, of various types of customs associated with mitzvos according to their level of importance in the eyes of halachah. Some customs are related to biblical mitzvos and others to rabbinic mitzvos. Some have arisen in association with post-Talmudic rabbinic ordinances, while others were started by the people and became popular practice. Some customs must be kept always, and others have a weak connection to halachah or even run in opposition to it and therefore may be abolished. Some customs are practiced by all and others only by individuals.

We will try to cite examples for all these categories from our treasury of Ashkenazic customs.

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Firstly, an example of a biblical custom is the mitzvah to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah: “A day of horn blowing (*teru’ah*) shall it be for you.”<sup>26</sup> Even during the days of Chazal, it was unclear whether the *teru’ah* mentioned in the Torah was a staccato cry, a long sigh, or both together. Therefore, Chazal decided to cover all bases by blowing *shevarim*, *teru’ah*, and *shevarim-teru’ah* together. We do this to ensure that we are fulfilling the biblical mitzvah of *teru’ah* in the correct and precise way.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Bava Basra 15b.

<sup>25</sup> Bava Basra 93b.

<sup>26</sup> Bemidbar (Numbers) 29:1.

<sup>27</sup> See Rosh Hashanah 34a.

Over the years the issue has become more complicated because new uncertainties have arisen, such as the actual sound of the *shevarim* and *teru'ah* themselves.

R' Yakov Emden of Altona (1698-1776) presented the problem in the following words:<sup>28</sup>

We find that nowadays — even this very day — different lands have different ways of producing the actual sound of the *teru'ah* itself. There is a distinct difference between the Ashkenazic *teru'ah* on the one hand and the Sephardic and Polish *teru'ah* on the other. The former blow a trembling sound (*terumitin*) and the latter blow a toot toot sound...Each fulfills the mitzvah according to its custom because in both situations the sound is what a *teru'ah* implies. Still, I think it is preferable to make a trembling sound, as the halachic codifiers have mentioned and as the verse says, *Vaharei'osem*.

This *teru'ah* (*terumitin*) which R' Yakov Emden preferred has been kept throughout the years as part of the authentic Ashkenazic tradition in Germany. When R' Emden mentions “the halachic codifiers,” he is referring to all the Rishonim (medieval rabbinic sages). Although not all the Rishonim agree on the sound of the *shevarim*, every one of them agrees on this authentic sound of the *teru'ah*.<sup>29</sup>

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We have thus examined a custom instituted to ensure the precise fulfillment of a biblical mitzvah. Now we shall look at a custom associated with a rabbinic mitzvah. A difference of opinion exists between the Rambam (1135-1205) and the Ramban (1194-1270) whether prayer is a biblical obligation or a rabbinic enactment. Even the Rambam, however, who holds that it is a biblical obligation, agrees that the nusach (prayer text) of the *Shemonah Esreh* prayer is rabbinic.<sup>30</sup> The topic of nusach is

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<sup>28</sup> R' Yakov Emden, *Mor Uktzi'ah* §590.

<sup>29</sup> See Hamburger, R' Binyamin Shlomo, *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (Bnei Brak: Machon Moreshe Ashkenaz 1995), vol. 1, chap. “Kol Hashevarim Vehateru'ah.” See also vol. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Rambam, *Laws of Tefilla*, chap. 1. See also R' Yechiel Michel Epstein, *Aruch Hashulchan*, Orach Chaim §89.

very crucial. It stands out in the field of minhag as the prime example of the evolution of customs in different Jewish communities. Indeed, the prayer text one uses identifies one's social circle, community, family origins, and even the type of *hashkafah* (philosophy of life) one associates with.

Among the Ashkenazic Jews, two prayer texts are in common use: Nusach Ashkenaz and Nusach Sepharad. Historically, Nusach Ashkenaz is the authentic text of European (non-Sephardic) Jewry. Relatively recently, a new prayer text named Nusach Sepharad, due to its heavy reliance on Sephardic nusach, became prevalent. This divergence has raised the question whether one may change an essential custom instituted by Chazal.

Rabbinic leaders all over Europe wrote against this deviation. For example, R' Yechezkel Landau of Prague (1714-1793), the *Noda Bihudah*, claims adamantly:<sup>31</sup>

Our Ashkenazic text is as authentic as the Torah, but the Sephardic Jews should still keep their minhag, as they have what to rely on, and one should not deviate from his ancestors' minhag. Recently, however, Ashkenazim have gone and changed the holy customs of their fathers. In my opinion they are at fault and are degrading the respect of the Tosafists and the Rosh, and will be judged accordingly. There is no love or unity here; rather, there is just a source of scorn, as it says, "He who keeps himself apart seeks to satisfy his own vanity."<sup>32</sup> About them I say, "Those who despise me adore death,"<sup>33</sup> and "He who goes back on a commitment has the lower hand."<sup>34</sup>

Still on the topic of prayer, let us look at the issue of *piyyutim* and *selichos* (poetic and penitential prayers). These additional prayers are post-Talmudic, and therefore their level of importance is lower than that of the established prayers of Chazal. The customs relating to *piyyutim* have much more variation than those associated with the main prayer text because their arrangement as part of the text took place at the end of the Middle

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<sup>31</sup> R' Yechezkel Landau, *Tziyun Lenefesh Chaya (Tzlach)*, Berachos 11b, s.v. Tanya nami hachi.

<sup>32</sup> Mishlei (Proverbs) 18:1.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Mishlei 8:36.

<sup>34</sup> Bava Metzi'a 76a.

Ages, and it was usually left up to the individual communities to choose what to say. Many combinations of *piyyutim* and *selichos* have emerged, but they remained in the possession of the individual, isolated communities and provinces where they were recited.

Among the *piyyutim* that were fortunate enough to get printed are, for example, “Minhag Swabia and Switzerland” and “The Altnoi Shul Minhag in Prague.” Since *piyyutim* are post-Talmudic, and more importantly, since some Sephardic Rishonim had been opposed to saying them at places in the prayers where interruptions are generally not allowed, a degree of contempt for their recital has appeared. This opposition influenced other halachic sages to encourage and emphasize the importance of their continued practice. This friction is evident in the words of the *Mishnah Berurah*, who summarizes the opinions of the main proponents of the topic.<sup>35</sup>

R' Chaim Vital [1543-1620] writes that [his teacher] the Ari did not recite *piyyutim* and *pizmonim* [poems chanted alternately by the leader and congregation], aside from those arranged by Rishonim, such as the Kaliri [R' Elazar Kalir], which are based on Kabbalah. The Ari also did not recite the *Yigdal* poem. Nevertheless, R' Chaim Vital's son testifies that when his father led the congregation on the High Holidays, he would in fact recite all the *vidduyim* (confessional prayers) and *piyyutim*. A wise person will take note of this and use his wisdom and good sense and not change customs. The Shlah wrote a long piece citing several Ge'onim who believed that it is a mitzvah to say the *piyyutim*. When R' Elazer Kalir wrote the poem *Vechayos Asher Heinah Meruba'os* (in the Kedushah prayer of Mussaf [additional services] on Rosh Hashanah), a fire blazed around him.

Even more intimidating is the warning of R' Yehuda Hachassid of Mainz (c.1150-1217) in his *Sefer Chassidim*: “One who changes a minhag of Rishonim, such as *piyyutim*, has been known to die as a result. In a place where the *krovetz* (poetic prayer inserted into the Amidah prayer) of R' Meshulam is usually recited, someone said a different *krovetz* and died within thirty days.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> R' Yisrael Meir Kagan, *Mishnah Berurah* §68:4.

<sup>36</sup> R' Yehuda Hachassid, *Sefer Chassidim* §607.

R' Yoel Sirkish of Cracow (1561-1640), author of the *Bayis Chadash* or the “*Bach*”, confirmed the severity of the issue, testifying that “someone, in our times, began to abolish the recitation of *krovetz* in his community. He did not live out the year.”<sup>37</sup>

Besides the importance of reciting *piyyutim* per se, some sages found a basis for strictly following the order in which they were said. They justified their opinion with reasons based on Kabbalah. R' Yedidia Tiah Weil (1722-1806), son of the *Korban Nesanel* and heir to his rabbinate in Karlsruhe, writes the following in his approbation to *The Order of Selichos for All Year According to Minhag Alsace*, which was printed in Karlsruhe in 1798:

Each river takes its course and follows its own channel when it comes to prayer and *selichos*, especially in the province of Alsace, where the customs are organized and unique, in distinction with such issues in other provinces of Ashkenaz. G-d forbid that we should abolish their customs, which have been passed down from the time of the Rishonim, for each minhag has a gate above in heaven.”

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An additional type of minhag is considered fully obligatory by all rabbinic authorities, but its nature — halachic versus popular — is disputed. For example, on the evening before a *bris milah* (circumcision), all of Jewry observe what we call a “Wachnacht,” the recital of *Krias Shema* (Deut. 6:4-9) and a night of study in the presence of the baby. According to Minhag Ashkenaz, a dinner including meat and wine is also arranged on this evening. The question came up as to whether this is considered a *se'udas mitzvah* (a meal that is a mitzvah to partake of) or a *se'udas reshus* (voluntary).

The ramification is that had one vowed not to eat from a voluntary meal, he may or may not be permitted to partake of this Wachnacht dinner. The *Nachalas Shiv'ah*<sup>38</sup> holds that it is a *se'udas mitzvah*, while the *Magen Avraham*<sup>39</sup> and the *Chavos Yair*<sup>40</sup> claim that it is a *se'udas reshus*. If it is

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<sup>37</sup> R' Yoel Sirkish, *Bayis Chadash (Bach)*, Orach Chaim §68.

<sup>38</sup> R' Shmuel Segal Mezeritch, *Nachalas Shiv'ah* §12, subclause 1.

<sup>39</sup> R' Avraham Avli Gombiner, *Magen Avraham* §640:13. In his commentary he mentions the opposing view of the *Nachalas Shiv'ah*.

considered a *se'udas reshut*, the halachah does not obligate its function; rather, it is a *minhag be'alma* (simply a custom) instituted to lend greater honor to the mitzvah.<sup>41</sup>

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Another type of minhag is neither biblical nor rabbinic in origin, but nevertheless is considered very important — this is the *minhag issur*. A *minhag issur* is adopted either by an individual or by a community as a safety fence around a biblical prohibition. For example, the community of Worms adopted the minhag not to eat dried fruit at all, to avoid, G-d forbid, inadvertently eating the bugs, which tended to infest the fruit.<sup>42</sup> The rabbinic sages have debated about whether these customs may be abolished and under which circumstances.<sup>43</sup>

### 3. The Boundaries of Minhag Ashkenaz

We have treated several types of customs and their respective levels of importance. This hierarchy of customs applies to all locations. “Minhag Ashkenaz” is more specific and refers to the totality of religious Ashkenazic way of life. Ashkenaz has specific historic boundaries within which Minhag Ashkenaz was practiced.

It would seem that these boundaries should follow at least the geographic, if not the political, borders of Germany, but that is not the case. Minhag Ashkenaz, as opposed to Minhag Poland, has its roots in Minhag Rheinus, named after the communities along the Rhine River in Germany. This tract of land was the cradle of Ashkenazic Jewry and the nucleus of its cell. The ancient towns on the banks of the Rhine — Speyer, Worms, and Mainz — sprouted Torah centers a thousand years ago. These communities had a vast influence on European Jewry for many generations. This core of Rhine communities carefully tended to its heritage of customs with great precision. On the other hand, although ancient French Jewry had absorbed its heritage and some of its traditions from Ashkenaz, it was open to influences from the south, from Provence and Spain, and therefore its

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<sup>40</sup> R' Yair Chaim Bachrach, *Chavos Yair* §70.

<sup>41</sup> R' Simcha b. Shmuel, *Machzor Vitri* §506.

<sup>42</sup> *Chavos Yair*, addendum to §126.

<sup>43</sup> See R' Yitzchak Lampronti, *Pachad Yitzchak*, vol. 5, pp. 137-139, and many other sources.



customs do not carry the uniform stamp and stability of its Ashkenazic sister community.

During the fourteenth century, the Jewish expulsion from France led to the fortification of another Torah center, mainly in Austria, but also in certain areas of southeastern Germany. Here developed a set of customs bearing the mixed influence of the Rhine and France. This tradition is called Minhag Austreich. In the Maharil's times these two traditions, Minhag Rhine and Minhag Austreich, stood opposite each other as two sets of well-organized customs. The details of certain customs were further differentiated in local communities.

The advent of the printing press and the codification of halachah in the *Shulchan Aruch* of R' Yosef Karo of Safed (1488-1575) were the next turning points in the history of Minhag Ashkenaz. The concepts of Minhag Rheinus and Minhag Austreich fell out of use, except in individual cases in which customs fortunate enough to remain under those titles spread beyond their geographic borders. As the fifteenth century progressed, expulsions and migrations brought Minhag Rheinus to large sections of Germany. Concurrently, Minhag Austreich reached Poland and many other parts of eastern Europe. From that time on, Minhag Rheinus became known as Minhag Ashkenaz, while Minhag Austreich became known as Minhag Poland.

During this period, Minhag Poland branched out to many surrounding countries. It was adopted in Moravia, Bohemia, Hungary, and Lithuania. The new Jewish communities of the semi-Slavic areas in eastern Germany accepted Minhag Poland as well, including cities such as Hamburg and Berlin. These cities are usually identified with German minhag; however, their true history is different. Hamburg and Berlin were settled relatively recently by Austrian and Polish Jews who brought along Minhag Poland which they had been used to in their countries of origin. Certainly, Minhag Ashkenaz did have a degree of influence on these communities as a result of certain periods of migration of Jews to these cities from southern and western Germany. Two examples of this Ashkenazic influence are the musical notes for the Torah reading and the Hebrew pronunciation.

Meanwhile, what were the main routes of Minhag Ashkenaz, which, as we have said, had become the successor of Minhag Rheinus? The main route traveled south to Bavaria and took over from Minhag Austreich-Poland. Another course followed the new Jewish settlement in northern France. Minhag Ashkenaz also penetrated northern Italy and remained there for a long time. It reigned in Alsace, Holland, and Switzerland, and primarily in all of southern and western Germany. The border between Minhag

Ashkenaz and Minhag Poland cut through Germany itself, roughly following course of the Elbe River, which traverses eastern Germany from north to south.

#### 4. The Significance of Minhag Ashkenaz

Similarly to the *Chasam Sofer*, many other great Torah sages recognized the significance of Minhag Ashkenaz. Its spokesmen enthusiastically praised it for many centuries and saw in the traditions of other lands a veering from the authentic tradition. The Rambam, who was in a position to judge Minhag Ashkenaz objectively, as he did not live in Ashkenazic lands, wrote that the western Europeans were “unaffected by tainted practices and by the trends and paths that the current sages take. All their ways agree with the Talmudic text.”<sup>44</sup>

The sages of Europe who intimately understood the differences between Minhag Rheinus and other European customs held Minhag Rheinus in high esteem. R’ Yitzchak b. Moshe of Vienna (1180-1250), the *Or Zarua*, a native of Bohemia who had studied in Germany, was once asked on what basis the “fools” (as the questioner calls them) make Kiddush in synagogue even when no guests in need of Kiddush are present. Although the custom of reciting Kiddush in synagogue was practiced by Jews all over Europe with or without guests, the *Or Zarua* felt that since this had in fact also been in practice in Germany, where only authentic customs were kept, the question posed an attack against Minhag Ashkenaz. He was angered and answered thus:<sup>45</sup>

About that which you wrote, asking me to supply a justification for those “fools” who make Kiddush in synagogue, considering that they do not fulfill any obligation with that Kiddush [since they are going to make Kiddush at home anyway] and there being no guests there to fulfill the mitzvah, you should be ashamed of yourself, and I have good reason to be upset at you, for you have allowed yourself to commit a sin. I wonder how a wise and understanding person like you could permit such words to leave his mouth. Do you not know how many great sages and holy men were in Mainz, Worms, and Speyer, and that from there Torah emanates to all of Jewry? Have not our fathers and ancestors, righteous and holy, the

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<sup>44</sup> Rambam, *Commentary to the Mishnah*, Gittin, chap. 5, mishnah 8.

<sup>45</sup> R’ Yitzchak b. Moshe, *Or Zarua*, vol. 1, §752.

wisest of the wise, practiced this minhag from the day all the communities of the Rhine and elsewhere in the land of Ashkenaz and its dominions were established? And now you come and call them “fools”! The halachah states<sup>46</sup> not to change the customs practiced by our ancestors, whose souls are at rest, because they are not empty things, and if they seem empty, it is because of shallow understanding and vacant minds, for our ancestors acted in accordance with the laws of the Torah.

The *Or Zarua* goes on to explain that the original custom of making Kiddush in synagogue was not instituted for the sake of guests; rather, it was introduced as a general public sanctification of the day. Based on several sources in the Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Talmud), he shed new light [a play on the words of the name *Or Zarua*] on the halachah as it appears in tractate Pesachim of the Babylonian Talmud. At the end of his letter he rebukes the questioner again, saying, “As for you, a man of wisdom and understanding, let your mind remain humble when considering the views of your rabbinic sages, whose souls are at rest, so that you may merit length of days and years of Torah study and mitzvah observance.”

We encounter truly zealous defense of the Ashkenazic heritage in the struggle of Chassidei (the pious of) Ashkenaz against changes introduced in the prayer text in France and England. When compared with the Ashkenazic text, one can find additions in several places in the early French-English text.

It seems that some Jews in Ashkenazic lands found the French-English text richer or generally better than theirs, and they adopted it as their prayer text. This aroused the active interest of the Chassidei Ashkenaz, and they issued a stern warning against changing the text. The *Siddur Chassidei Ashkenaz* includes the following admonition regarding French changes to the Rosh Hashanah prayers:<sup>47</sup>

One who adds or subtracts even one letter from the prayer text, his prayers are not heard, for the whole text was formulated precisely and put in proper balance with respect to both the letters and the words, which have a deep underlying meaning. Every G-d-fearing person must take care not to subtract or add and not to listen to the

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<sup>46</sup> See Yerushalmi Eiruvim, chap. 3, end of halachah 9; *Magen Avraham* §68.

<sup>47</sup> Siddur (prayer book) of R' Shlomo of Germeiza (Worms) (Jerusalem 1972), p. 221.

French and the islanders [the English] who have added several words, for the sages are uncomfortable with what they have done, because the reasons behind the text and its underlying meanings were not passed down to them. The Chassidim Harishonim (the early pious ones) were known to keep the deeper meanings and the reasons behind the text hidden until our holy rabbi, R' Yehuda Hachassid, came and passed them down to pious members of his family both in writing and orally....And that pious rabbi wrote, "One who adds even one letter to the prayer text, about him the verse says,<sup>48</sup> "[My heritage has become to me as a lion in the forest;] it cries out against me: therefore I have hated it."

The writings of Chassidei Ashkenaz generally do not criticize the common nusach in Ashkenaz. They verify that it fits well with the reasons behind the text and the underlying meanings that were passed down to them. The sages of Ashkenaz had a clear preference for their ancestors' tradition as opposed to other traditions, especially the Spanish (Sephardic) one, to which they preferred even the French tradition.

Also in halachic decisions the ancient Ashkenazic tradition had been accepted as unreservedly accurate. R' Yosef Cologne of Italy (c.1420-1480), the Maharik, establishes that:<sup>49</sup>

If in ancient times the custom in Ashkenaz had been to force a *chalitzah*, whether it was customary everywhere or just in some places, such as Speyer, Worms, and Mainz,...woe unto the *yavam* who relates lightly to this practice of our ancestors, which has the imprimatur of Torah. With a headstrong spirit and a rigid heart, he has gone against our sages in Ashkenaz.

R' Asher b. Yechiel (1250-1328), the *Rosh*, wrote in a similar vein when he was forced to flee Germany and settle in Spain. While living in Spain, the *Rosh* was asked about the kashruth of fowl which had a local tradition to be kosher.<sup>50</sup>

His response was the following:<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Yirmiyahu 12:8.

<sup>49</sup> R' Yosef Cologne, *Maharik*, shoresh 102.

<sup>50</sup> Fowl have no biblical kashruth indications; rather, the Oral Law requires a specific tradition to testify to the kashruth of each species.

<sup>51</sup> R' Asher b. Yechiel, *Teshuvos HaRosh*, category 20, paragraph 20.

You should know that I would not eat something on the basis of their tradition, because I hold of our tradition and that of our ancestors, the sages of Ashkenaz, whose Torah teachings were passed down to them from their ancestors since the time of the Churban (destruction), and the same is true of the tradition of our French rabbis, as opposed to that of the land in which I am living now.

The Rosh's brief but weighty words made an impression for future generations and have been frequently quoted in the writings of the halachic sages. Among those stands out the Sephardic codifier, R' Yosef Karo, who cites these words of the Rosh in their entirety without reservation in his *Beis Yosef*.<sup>52</sup> The historical background of the Rosh's approach is provided by R' Yakov Emden.<sup>53</sup>

The Ashkenazic Jews have a sturdy tradition, as the Rosh writes in his letter, more reliable than that of the Sephardim, even considering their known roots from the time of the exile from Jerusalem. They had their great sages in Babylonia, leaders and teachers such as R' Moshe and his son R' Chanoch, and from then on they produced more great Torah sages, but before that period they had been very empty. The Talmud had not reached them at all. However, Ashkenazic Jewry had yeshivos continuously, generation after generation, from the time of the Churban. They put their souls into the knowledge of the Torah and its observance, following its laws of justice and other halachos. Therefore, it is certain that their correct knowledge of its details goes back farther.

The Rosh made his statement in the context of personal experience, but the Maharil endorsed it as a general ruling and used it in deciding the halachah and teaching it to the public. In one of his letters, the Maharil writes, "Our tradition is superior, as the Rosh writes in his letter....Therefore, let us reject other traditions in deference to ours."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> R' Yosef Karo, *Beis Yosef*, Yoreh Dei'ah §82.

<sup>53</sup> *Siddur Amudei Shamayim* (prayer book) (Altona 1745), pp. 411, 412. This piece is quoted in its entirety in R' Shimon Sofer, *Michtav Sopher* §2, s.v. Ukvar. Also see *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), note 41.

<sup>54</sup> R' Yakov Molin, *Teshuvos Maharil* §95.

## 5. Polish Customs in the Rama's Writings

Toward the end of the Middle Ages, when a new Torah center had developed in Poland, Minhag Ashkenaz found itself faced with new competition that threatened its very existence. Sixteenth-century Poland had suddenly become a powerful Torah center and supplanted the older Torah center in Ashkenaz. As the Jewish population of Ashkenaz dwindled, Poland became the new Torah metropolis, and its sages began making an impact throughout the world. The shining light among those sages was R' Moshe Isserles of Cracow (1520-1572), the Rama, whose halachic writings rapidly became the final word in halachah for all of European Jewry.

This development is expressed clearly in the writings of one of the greatest German rabbis of the period, R' Yitzchak Mizei of Hechingen.<sup>55</sup>

I was asked if one should decide the halachah according to the code of R' Moshe Isserles (the Rama), considering that he has compiled all the stringent opinions of the later rabbis and all the customs of our lands and countries, as he writes in his preface. My answer is that he definitely has the proper level of authority, he is unequalled...and his code is set up in a very reasonable way, in accordance with our rabbis whom we in Germany rely upon for deciding the halachah.”

While R' Yitzchak Mizei goes on to mention more advantages of the *Shulchan Aruch* with the Rama's decisions, he does not hide his reservations about its use by one who is not a competent halachic authority. Since the Rama's style is brief and lacks deliberation of the halachic opinions, there is a chance one may misinterpret the halachah.

By cautioning against relying upon the Rama's decisions without researching the sources, R' Mizei avoided a different problem which now challenged Ashkenaz. In addition to presenting decisions which concur with the original Ashkenazic customs, the Rama also presents many current customs which generally reflect Minhag Austreich-Poland. As the authority of the *Shulchan Aruch* grew in Ashkenaz, so did the concern that the Rama's addenda would eventually cause the old Minhag Ashkenaz to phase out. A competent halachic authority would have the insight to check the provenance of each of the Rama's decisions.

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<sup>55</sup> R' Yitzchak Mizei, *Yefeh Nof*, miscellaneous §4, p. 236.

Interestingly, the most prominent combatant against the infiltration of Polish customs in Ashkenaz was actually one of the Polish sages. R' Chaim b. Betzalel of Friedeburg (c.1550), brother of the Maharal of Prague (1520-1609), had studied with the Rama in R' Shalom Shachna's yeshivah in Lublin. R' Chaim was confident that he had the authority to deal with the relationship between Minhag Ashkenaz and Minhag Poland, because he had lived and served as a rabbi in both lands and thus knew the customs of both intimately. He wrote a critique on *Toras Chattas* of the Rama, called *Vikuach Mayim Chaim*. In his extensive introduction he argues his main objections to the Rama's methodology in deciding halachah. In this introduction, R' Chaim endeavors to invalidate the prevalent understanding that the Rama's writings also represent Minhag Ashkenaz.

R' Chaim begins by saying that he wishes to give warning against adopting Polish customs. He writes that as opposed to the Jews of Poland, German Jewry did not migrate from land to land, and that as a result, their tradition is continuous and faithful to its origins.

Then he expresses the following logic: Just like the Rama felt a necessity to differentiate his local customs from those of the Sephardim in eastern lands, so too it is imperative to distinguish between the true Ashkenazic heritage and the local Polish customs. Furthermore, considering that the Rama did not opt to reject his customs in deference to those practiced in the Land of Israel, it goes without saying that the German Jews should not reject their customs in deference to those practiced in Poland.

R' Chaim did not think that the Rama himself had presumed to impose Polish customs on Germany. It was the printer who had presented the Rama's writings as if they reflected upon German customs also. He did this to increase his sales throughout Europe. As R' Chaim writes, "The Rama himself only mentioned his country's customs in his introduction; he did not mention Minhag Ashkenaz at all....On his own accord, the printer added explicit mention of Minhag Ashkenaz on the first page, since potential buyers always look at the beginning of the work, and thus sales in all countries would be increased."

## **6. Guardians of Minhag Ashkenaz**

Were the efforts of R' Chaim of Friedeburg successful? Did Minhag Ashkenaz hold its own in face of the powerful influence of the *Shulchan Aruch* with the Rama's addenda (figuratively called the "tablecloth" upon the table that is the *Shulchan Aruch*)? It is hard to answer this question

conclusively. Regarding halachic decisions which do not relate to established customs, the Rama's superior authority is virtually uncontested. When it comes to established customs, however, the German Jews cleaved to their ancient customs, generally using as a guide the writings of the Maharil, whom they considered the father of Minhag Ashkenaz in the Middle Ages. They had stood up to the tremendous, constant pressure to surrender to Sephardic, kabbalistic, and other influences of the time.

The Maharil's influence on the preservation of Minhag Ashkenaz was great both during his lifetime and after his death. During his lifetime he was personally active in the spiritual restoration of the Ashkenazic communities destroyed during the "decrees" of 1349, and he preached for the rejuvenation of the ancient customs. The Maharil's student, R' Zalman of Shutigvera (St. Goar), published the Maharil's customs. That work also includes a description of the customs of the Rhineland communities.

The Maharil's customs had been printed about a hundred years before the *Shulchan Aruch*. Distributed as tens, if not hundreds, of handwritten manuscripts, it served German Jewry as a buttress against the influence of the Polish customs included in the Rama's addenda — customs which even knowledgeable people today erroneously think of as ancient practice. The mainstay of Minhag Ashkenaz, though, were the very people who practiced it. These people fell into three groups: the simple villagers, members of prominent urban communities, and most importantly, the Torah sages.

Each group espoused Minhag Ashkenaz according to its own inclination. The simple villagers cleaved to the traditions of their ancestors with a deep feeling of conservatism. The great R' Chaggai Chanoch Frankel (-1691), rabbi of Hanau (a suburb of Frankfurt) at the end of the seventeenth century, defined their character with a truly fitting description:<sup>56</sup>

I know and recognize the best of the elder leaders in rural Germany. They would give up their lives not to alter a custom, even one that has no logic or foundation at all, more than they would for the actual mitzvos of the Torah, almost resulting, because of our sins, in the Torah being wrapped up and put away in the corner with no one to get up and teach it to his son, to increase its study and expand it. For the sake of perpetuating a custom, they will uproot mountains in order not to alter it at all. My opinion

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<sup>56</sup> *Nachalas Shiv'a* §77.



about this is...that one should not dissuade them from performing any custom, even one that has no basis....Who knows? Maybe their customs do have a solid foundation, based on their holy ancestors of this land, from whom teachings have emanated to all Jewry.

The second group was that of members of prominent urban communities. The most renowned community at this point in history was Frankfurt-on-Main. Here there developed what is called in German *lokal Patriotismus*, or local patriotism. On an *aron kodesh* (holy ark) in Worms, the verse<sup>57</sup> “I am not better than my fathers” was inscribed as a warning against altering the customs of Worms in any way.

The third group — the great German Torah sages — was different. They assessed each custom in light of the Talmud and the halachic commentaries. Some of those sages had written complete orders of customs for the purpose of perpetuating every last nuance practiced in their communities. These Torah sages had high regard for the Ashkenazic legacy. Many said outright that they preferred it over other traditions, arguing, like the *Chavos Yair*,<sup>58</sup> that German Jewry is “healthy and strong, unplagued by mistaken and corrupted customs.”

R’ Nesanel Weil (1687-1764),<sup>59</sup> author of the *Korban Nesanel*, repeated the view of his predecessors that “German customs are firmly based and superior to Polish customs.” He clarified that even in his day this superiority persisted, because “the great sages who had disseminated Torah to Jewry, such as the Maharil and his student R’ Yakov Weil, the Mahariv, set down for all generations all the stringencies and customs that we, the Ashkenazim, follow diligently.”

R’ Yonasan Eibschitz (1690-1764)<sup>60</sup> also expressed this view, adding that “the Torah has been entrusted to the German sages,...and what could we know that they had not known?”

“Be aware,” exhorted R’ Moshe Sofer,<sup>61</sup> author of the *Chasam Sofer*, “that all German customs were founded under the supervision of our rabbis the Tosafists and Rashi and his students, who dwelled in that land.”

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<sup>57</sup> Melachim 1 (I Kings) 19:4.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in R’ Yair Chaim Bachrach, *Mekor Chaim* §66, paragraph 9.

<sup>59</sup> R’ Nesanel Weil, *Toras Nesanel* §5.

<sup>60</sup> R’ Yonasan Eibschitz, *Kreisi Upleisi* §35.

<sup>61</sup> R’ Moshe Sofer, *Teshuvos Chasam Sopher*, Even Ha’ezer, vol. 1, §98.

## 7. The Community of Frankfurt — Stronghold of Minhag Ashkenaz

While some German communities had begun abandoning the historical Minhag Ashkenaz in later generations, whether as a result of the influence of Polish Jews who had migrated to Germany, or because of the impact of halachic works written in other lands, Frankfurt-on-Main stood as a valiant stronghold of the authentic Minhag Ashkenaz. This spiritual birthright, which had once been entrusted to the communities of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz (“Kehilos Shu’m”), was passed over to the Jewish community of Frankfurt. The Jews had been expelled from Mainz and Speyer hundreds of years earlier, and the population of Worms had diminished in body and spirit.

The Jewish community of Frankfurt had gradually become the “Jerusalem of Germany” over the past four hundred years at least. Its credentials were its antiquity, its famous and eminent yeshivos, its great Torah sages who served in its rabbinate, and its remarkable ability to preserve the Ashkenaz legacy without compromise. Among the ancient German communities, Frankfurt had inherited the birthright. It served as a compass and signpost for the other communities, big and small, in southern and western Germany.

R’ Klugman, in his recent monumental work on R’ Samson Raphael Hirsch, writes:<sup>62</sup>

The Jews of Frankfurt were fiercely proud and zealously protective of their traditions, and changes in the services were not undertaken lightly. Entire books detail the intricate customs known as Minhag Frankfurt, which were practiced for hundreds of years.

This distinctive status is recorded in the words of R’ Shabtai Sheftel Horowitz (1592-1660), author of the *Vavei Ha’amudim*.<sup>63</sup>

The “mountain summit,” Frankfurt, the great city of G-d, in all Germany is the peak that all others turn to.

Throughout all the years of turmoil and evil decrees in Germany, the Ashkenazic communities had continued to keep almost all the customs

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<sup>62</sup> R’ Eliyahu Meir Klugman, *Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch* (Brooklyn, New York: Mesorah Publications, 1996), p. 109.

<sup>63</sup> R’ Shabtai Sheftel Horowitz, *Vavei Ha’amudim*, introduction.

handed down to them from the Rishonim. The Rama's brother-in-law, R' Pinchas ben Yisrael Horowitz of Cracow (1540-1618), singles out Frankfurt as:<sup>64</sup>

A "matriarchal" city in Germany, in Torah and all matters of holiness, from Sinai they have received their legacy.

In some cases this idea is evident in prayer books. On the title page of a machzor (holiday prayer book) printed in 1625 without note of place of publication, it reads:<sup>65</sup>

See, this is new, has not been around for ages, a small machzor arranged according to the order of customs of Frankfurt and other communities and Ashkenazic provinces, may G-d protect them, and also according to Polish custom.

Note that Frankfurt is singled out as the leading community in Germany. Similarly, on the title page of a machzor printed in 1712 in a Polish city under Prussian jurisdiction, the subtitle reads:<sup>66</sup> "According to the customs of Frankfurt and the Ashkenazic countries."

R' Yakov HaKohen Papris (1670-1740), author of the *Shav Yakov*, writes in one of his letters:<sup>67</sup>

It is unnecessary to talk about issues of custom, because I have truly seen that he has investigated the matter in Frankfurt, and all Ashkenazic countries are dependant on the custom there.

When writing about his first rabbinate in Koblenz (on the west bank of the Rhine, at its confluence with the tributary river Moselle), the *Shav Yakov* says that the members of his community practiced the customs of Frankfurt in all matters.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> R' Pinchas b. Yisrael Horowitz, *Derushim Lechol Cheftzeihem* (Cracow 1609), introduction.

<sup>65</sup> R' Naphtali Wieder, *Hitgabshut Nusach Hatefillah Bemizrach Ubema'arav* (Jerusalem 1998), vol. 1, p. 414.

<sup>66</sup> Jerusalem Judaica, Sales Catalogue for 4 I Adar 5757 (11 February 1997), number 30.

<sup>67</sup> R' Yakov HaKohen Papris, *Shav Yakov*, vol. 2, Choshen Mishpat, end of §13.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, §14, s.v. Hinei.

R' Yakov Emden similarly asserted that:<sup>69</sup>

The community of Frankfurt...serves as a leading community in Germany, which all other communities diligently follow.

R' Tzvi Hirsch Horowitz (-1817),<sup>70</sup> author of the *Machaneh Levi* and son and heir to the rabbinate of R' Pinchas Horowitz (c.1731-1805), the *Haphla'ah*, in Frankfurt, repeated and confirmed this claim to Frankfurt's superiority in 1815, saying that "most of the German communities follow our customs."

R' Shlomo Zalman Geiger (1792-1878)<sup>71</sup> published his *Divrei Kehillos* in 1862 to make known "the superior customs of prayer in Frankfurt on the Main and the rest of the German communities that follow them."

Even the ancient communities of Worms and Friedeburg recognized the distinction of Frankfurt, so much so that R' Chaim of Friedeburg, the Maharal's brother, who had served in the rabbinate in both those communities, claimed that through his exposure to Frankfurt he had been fortunate enough to identify the true German customs. He writes:<sup>72</sup>

During my twenty-six years in Worms and Friedeburg, I would continually travel to the "King's city," Frankfurt, and I would constantly and thoroughly investigate the customs of the country.

Likewise, R' Yair Chaim Bachrach (1628-1701), author of the *Chavos Yair*, a third generation rabbi in ancient Worms, deliberated with other German rabbis of his generation about a certain wedding custom. He relates that to avoid an uncertainty:<sup>73</sup>

After all that was said, I wrote to a special member of the Frankfurt community, requesting that he let me know the custom there.

The communities which stood under the influence of Frankfurt or had similar lifestyles and customs were mainly those situated nearby. Earlier in

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<sup>69</sup> R' Yakov Emden, *Toras Hakna'os*, Amsterdam 1752, p. 36a.

<sup>70</sup> R' Tzvi Hirsch Halevi Horowitz, *Chomer Bakodesh* (letters) §6.

<sup>71</sup> R' Shlomo Zalman Geiger, *Divrei Kehillos* (Frankfurt on the Main 1862), title page.

<sup>72</sup> R' Chaim of Friedburg, *Vikuach Mayim Chaim*, introduction.

<sup>73</sup> *Chavos Yair* §52.

this work we presented the fact that the ancient customs of Germany fall under two categories: Minhag Rheinus and Minhag Ashkenaz. Both terms essentially define geographical boundaries. An additional, less known geographical region is Franconia, which refers to the territories on both sides of the Main River. From there came the name Frankfurt, which means “Gate of the Franks” in Old German. The river became familiar to anyone studying Jewish history, because of the eminent city that rests upon its banks.

The *Chasam Sofer* (1763-1840), writes of his native city Frankfurt,<sup>74</sup> “She is unique to her people, in the whole world there exists not her equal.” He delineates the geographical boundaries of the uniform heritage of Franconia in his letter defending its heritage from attack. A Hungarian rabbi had written to the *Chasam Sofer* in scathing terms against the German custom to permit a mourner to take a haircut if he was to take part in a circumcision during his thirty-day mourning period. The *Chasam Sofer* replied:<sup>75</sup>

What he wrote in reference to the cities of Franconia, that their practice is not in accordance with Torah law, Heaven forbid one should say such things against G-d’s people, for this insults the honor of my teachers, rabbis, colleagues, and holy ancestors, both living and dead....They have the upper hand in these matters, and they are great and virtuous, of lofty holiness....Let it be known that the cities of Franconia are comprised of all the German communities south of the villages of Fürth [a suburb of Nuremberg], for the communities [in the vicinity of Fürth] still practice the Polish customs [that had infiltrated Germany] in most matters....From there on, however — from the Würzburg region on — along the Main and Rhine rivers all the way to the sea, those we count among the cities of Franconia, among them Frankfurt, Mainz, Worms, Metz, Mannheim, etc.

Most of their customs follow R’ Amram Gaon, whose grave I stood at in Mainz, and R’ Yoel, R’ Ephraim of Bonn, the Tosafists, Rashi, the Maharam of Rothenburg, the Rosh, and the *Tur*. What can I add to that? You can see, for example, *Noheig Katzon Yosef* and *Yosef Ometz*,...where you will find customs that differ greatly from the decisions of [the Rama], because he spoke for Minhag

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<sup>74</sup> *Teshuvos Chasam Sopher* §7:9.

<sup>75</sup> *Teshuvos Chasam Sopher* (new letters) §10.

Poland, whereas they [the people of Franconia] did not alter their ancient customs because of this [the Rama's decisions].

The *Chasam Sofer* points out that in Fürth “they still practice the Polish customs in all matters.” Indeed, in Fürth the machzor of Minhag Ashkenaz was used and many authentic Ashkenazic customs were practiced. An examination of the customs of Fürth shows that they were more faithful to the Ashkenazic heritage than most German Jewish communities of today. They were not, however, as insistent and precise as Frankfurt, the *Chasam Sofer's* birthplace, and therefore he branded them as being followers of Minhag Poland in most matters. Notice that he had hopes that the situation would be temporary, as he writes, “They *still* practice,” implying that they may go back to the authentic customs.

Some cases in which the practice in Fürth was true to Minhag Ashkenaz are the prayer book text (with the short version of Veyiten Lecha, etc.) and the order of *piyyutim*. Alternatively, some signs of influence from the east, indicating a deviation to the Austrian customs, are the following: Birkas Kohanim (priestly blessings) is said in Mussaf (late morning services), but not in Shacharis (morning services); when a holiday falls on Sabbath there is no Birkas Kohanim at all, and neither are *ma'aravos* (evening service *piyyutim*) recited; when holidays or intermediate days of holidays fall on Sabbath, Bameh Madlikin (chapter of mishnah on the topic of Sabbath candle lighting) is not recited; Barechi Nafshi (Psalm 104) is recited on Sabbath afternoon in the winter; and Kiddush is recited on Sabbath night after Amar Rabbi Elazar — and not before.

## **8. Siddurim (Prayer Book Texts)**

The conservatism in Frankfurt and its suburbs applied not only to all customs related to the four sections of the *Shulchan Aruch*, but also to the prayer text. The community of Frankfurt had tenaciously guarded the ancient prayer texts over the centuries, and had scarcely been influenced by new siddurim, notwithstanding the pressure to adopt changes such as those suggested by grammarians or those from Sephardic sources.

The customs under discussion are based primarily on Minhag Frankfurt, for there the Jews had kept most details of the Ashkenazic heritage, which earlier had been widespread all over Germany. When certain elements were changed because of various influences, Minhag Frankfurt still represented the most authentic, robust, and ancient Minhag Ashkenaz, but not in every detail. Some customs going back to the time of the Rishonim

had actually been more faithfully kept in other communities, while in Frankfurt a newer form was adopted. Some examples of ancient customs that were altered in Frankfurt are the recital of *Yizkor* (the memorial service for the departed) only on Yom Kippur, the removal of seven Torah scrolls for the Hoshana Rabbah circuits, and the true pronunciation of the *cholam* vowel. In such cases, we would certainly opt for the authentic customs when establishing a new Ashkenazic community today.

It should be noted that the general characteristics of the synagogue were kept almost identical in all Ashkenazic communities. These characteristics were also preserved in central European communities, who prayed with machzorim which followed pre-Chassidic Minhag Poland. (During Chassidic times, Sephardic elements were intentionally added.) The most conspicuous differences between authentic Minhag Ashkenaz and Minhag Poland appear in the order of the *piyyutim* and *selichos*. Additional differences between Frankfurt and other communities arose as a result of the fact that other communities had not kept the ancient legacy as tenaciously.

During the period of the Rishonim, Ashkenazic Jews had prayed with siddurim (daily prayer books) and machzorim handwritten on parchment. In the writings of the Rishonim and in the vernacular of Ashkenazic Jewry until later generations, the term *tefillah* (prayer) referred to the *siddur tefillah* (prayer book), just as the term “Torah” refers to the Torah scroll. Even during the past several hundred years, when printed siddurim and machzorim became available and prevalent, the custom in ancient communities was for the leader of the services to use a special siddur written by a scribe on parchment. One of several reasons given for this is that when a scribe copies a manuscript there is more control over the precise transcription of the community’s earlier text, as opposed to a printing press, which just runs off the most commonly used texts in the country. This custom of providing a handwritten siddur for the leader was important especially in ancient Ashkenazic communities, which took great pains to protect the ancient legacy.

Another reason for this custom is that it is fitting for the leader to pray from a siddur that is the property of the entire congregation. Moreover, in a handwritten siddur the names of G-d are manually written with their holiness in mind; regarding print, however, the halachic codifiers disagree as to whether it has the same status as handwriting.<sup>76</sup> Alternatively, for this

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<sup>76</sup> See *Minhagim Dekehillas Kodesh Vermeisa* (ibid.), central text, p. 18, §13; and see also R’ Moshe Isserles, *Rama*, Orach Chaim §53:26.

reason some protested the use of handwritten siddurim, as the Talmud teaches that siddurim should not be written.<sup>77</sup>

In any case, writing these siddurim for the prayer leader was generally considered to be a great mitzvah. Many people would “spend great sums of money to write the prayers and thereby deplete their savings.”<sup>78</sup> The high cost of such a project led some communities to institute the practice of using charity money for this purpose.

In practice most communities were forced to make due with printed machzorim, which came off the presses of printers in various cities in Europe, such as Venice, Sulzbach, Amsterdam, Metz, and others. In 1800 a new siddur began to appear — the *Saffah Berurah* and the *Seffas Emes* of R’ Binyamin Wolf Heidenheim of Rödelheim (1757-1832), the Ravah. His significant contributions to the legacy of prayer texts was the correction of printing mistakes in the *piyyutim* and the addition of precise, consistent vowelation. The problem is that the Ravah often changed the prayer texts from the old Minhag Ashkenaz on the basis of recommendations from the *maskil*, Yitzchak Satanov (1732-1804). He also casually interspersed Sephardic and Polish versions, which had been rejected by the Rishonim of Ashkenaz.

Nowadays people do not realize that the Ravah’s Rödelheim prayer texts had not been accepted in Frankfurt because he had changed the ancient versions. He had allowed himself to be influenced in some matters by Yitzchak Satanov (who feigned to be a believing Jew by wearing Polish dress). The Ravah writes in his introduction to the Pesach machzor, “And one should know that in establishing the order of prayer I have followed the sage who authored *Vaye’tar Yitzchak*, and I have printed most of the text on the basis of his view and decisions.”

Furthermore, at times the Ravah mixes Sephardic and Polish versions into the authentic Ashkenazic texts. He was definitely a great grammarian, weeding out bad vowelization from the text, but his interest in sales in Minhag Poland communities led him to blend Ashkenaz and Poland, with additional changes in vogue in his day.

The traditionalist community of Frankfurt refused to accept the new Rödelheim prayer texts. An examination of the most important Frankfurt book of customs, *Divrei Kehillos*, by R’ Shlomo Zalman Geiger (1792-1878), shows that he criticizes the Rödelheim siddur and machzor in dozens of places!

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<sup>77</sup> Shabbos 115b. See *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz*, vol. 3.

<sup>78</sup> R’ Yakov Yukev Weil, *Toras Shabbos* §284:1.



In later generations, Frankfurters began using the Rödelheim siddur for want of a better printed siddur, but they would write the correct versions in the margins throughout the siddur. Only a few of those notes made it to the printing press in later editions of the Rödelheim siddur, and even those were not always precise. Frequently they were contributed by secular members of the community who had some affiliation with the Reform movement. Those notes seem to bear the Reform imprint and consciousness.

Our great sage the *Chasam Sofer* praises the Ravah for his corrections of the *piyyutim* and for their translation. He writes that if not for the Ravah, people would have ceased to recite them in his generation. He does omit, though, praise of the actual version of the prayer text. Notice his emphasis on *piyyutim*.<sup>79</sup>

The accomplished sage, our teacher R' Wolf Heidenheimer...spent much time correcting the *piyyutim* and translating them into German, and if not for him the *piyyutim* would have already been forgotten and omitted in these generations, something that is clear to all.

He went to the trouble of amassing hundreds of texts necessary for such a task and invested a great sum of money....Our eminent sages, the Chassidei Ashkenaz, had set in such a case the due privilege of his selling this work exclusively for twenty-five years, and no one may encroach upon his right.

Approbations for the Ravah's project from other contemporary sages are also directed toward his revival of the *piyyutim* in his machzorim, his translation of them, and his wonderful explanations. Not one word, though, is written about his siddur text and the version of prayers presented in his machzorim.

Had the Ravah seen all the siddurim of the Rishonim — the precise versions of which have become available to us only recently — he surely would not have printed versions which followed the myopic logic of his own generation.

*Siddur Rödelheim* served as a prototype for many siddurim in both western and eastern Europe. Some siddurim, such as the common German *Siddur Tefillas Yisrael*, by R' Yechiel Michel Zaksh (19th century, Berlin), were transcribed entirely from the Rödelheim text. The widespread distribution

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<sup>79</sup> *Teshuvos Chasam Sopher*, Choshen Mishpat, end of §79.

of these siddurim brought about a change in practice in the small and medium sized communities which relied upon those texts. Large, precision-oriented communities such as Frankfurt, on the other hand, rejected Heidenheim's additions and changes and continued to pray according to the ancient versions preserved in old siddurim. In Frankfurt, the leader's siddur was written according to the accepted version there, and community members who appreciated the significance of a precise text would write corrections in their personal Rödelheim siddurim according to the customs of Frankfurt.

A very small number of these corrections were eventually printed in later editions of the *Siddur Sefas Emes* as alternate versions. Most of the distinctive characteristics of old Minhag Ashkenaz siddurim, though, were not recorded. For example, a note indicates that in the Sabbath evening prayers, the custom in Frankfurt was to say *poreis sukkas shalom*, and not *haporeis...* (the Sephardic version). There is no note, however, saying that in Baruch She'amar they said *Av Harachaman*, instead of *Ha'av...* (this too the Sephardic version).

Other examples of authentic Ashkenazic prayer customs are as follows: *Le'olam yehei adam yerei shamayim* is not recited at all, since it is only an introduction explaining the significance of what comes next. Birkos HaTorah are said before Parshas Tamid and not before Birkos Hashachar (and certainly not after Asher Yatzar, which would interfere with Elokoy Neshamah). Birkas Kohanim and Eilu Devarim, which come from eastern Europe, are not recited at all; rather, Korbanos (the sacrifice section) serves as the customary Torah study. Mizmor Shir Chanukas Habayis, a Sephardic custom, is omitted, as in Ashkenaz no Tehillim (Psalms) are recited before the blessing Baruch She'amar. The recital of Aleinu ends at *timloch bechavod*. The additions of the Ari are omitted, as they cause the sum of letters to deviate from the tradition of Chassidei Ashkenaz.

The fact that these deviations from Minhag Ashkenaz are printed in the siddur without any mention of their being inauthentic — and in some cases directly opposed to authentic custom — gave rise to the misconception that they are, in fact, part of the original nusach.

Therefore, the Nusach Ashkenaz siddurim of today are not authentic Minhag Ashkenaz texts at all. They are based on an Ashkenazic version with additions and changes adopted in later years in eastern Europe, just as Nusach Sepharad is based on a Sephardic version with many changes. A Sephardic Jew would not pray from an eastern European Nusach Sepharad siddur; similarly, an Ashkenazic Jew who wishes to follow the tradition of

his ancestors will not find what he is looking for in the standard Nusach Ashkenaz siddur.

The time has come to print a siddur suitable for those who wish to pray according to the authentic text of ancient Minhag Ashkenaz.

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Just as the sages did not allow their heritage to be lost in face of persecution and migration, so too today, those who thirst to discover the invincible spirit of the Torah heritage of our fathers have the opportunity to plow through the wreckage of World War II and bring our ancient culture back to life.

Those interested in learning more about the Ashkenazic heritage, are encouraged to see *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz*, a series by the same author.



## II. Daily customs

### 1. Prayer Dress

Respectable clothing is worn during prayers. Men wear a jacket and a hat. Boys also wear a small traditional hat and not just a *kippah*.

### 2. Proper Pronunciation

The *cholam* is pronounced like the long American *O* sound, as in “Moses.” It is a combination of a *kamatz* and a *shuruk*, ending with a *W*. See *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 1).

The *reish* is pronounced by creating full contact between the tongue and palate as in the American, German, and Russian *R*, as opposed to the Israeli *reish* and the dialectic Anglo-Saxon *R* (as in the British “car”), which do not involve such contact and are not truly pronounced. There is no reason to assume that the *reish* must be “rolled.”

In earlier times, Ashkenazim differentiated between the letters *ches* and *chaf* and between *ayin* and *alef*. To this day Dutch Jews differentiate between the *ayin* and *alef*.

### 3. Birkos Hashachar (Morning Blessings)

The prayer services follow a relaxed, unhurried pace. See *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 4).

Tefillas HaTzibbur (public prayer) commences with Adon Olam.

The leader recites Adon Olam aloud. Certain days have special melodies. If a funeral is to take place later that day, Adon Olam is recited in an undertone.

The leader recites all the morning blessings aloud, from Al Netilas Yadayim to Gomeil Chassadim Tovim. The congregation answers *Baruch Hu uvaruch Shemo* and *amen* and then repeats the blessings. The custom in some communities is to stand during the recital of the morning blessings.

When reciting Asher Yatzar, the leader recites from *uvara vo* to *echad meihem* in an undertone.

After *umafli la'asos*, Elokoy Neshamah (with a *kamatz* under the letter *hei*) is immediately recited. The first words, *Elokoy neshamah shenasata be*, and the concluding words, *Ribon kol hama'asim* until the end of the blessing, are recited aloud by the leader.

The fourteen blessings which follow Elokoy Neshamah are recited to a special melody, alternately rising and falling. Roka Ha'aretz and Oteir Yisrael rise to a higher pitch. Hanosein Laya'eif has a concluding melody.

Some other details about the authentic nusach:

*Shello asani goy* (not *nochri* or the like).

Malbish Arumim is recited before Pokei'ach Ivrim.

Asher Heichin precedes She'asah Li.

*Gomeil chassadim* (not *Hagomeil chassadim*).

Ribon Kol Ha'olamim is recited without the preface *Le'olam yehei adam*.

The *nusach* before Shema is:

עָרַב וּבִקֵּר בְּכֹל יוֹם תָּמִיד פְּעָמִים בְּאַהֲבָה וְאוֹמְרִים  
(ולא : ערב ובקר ואומרים פעמים בכל יום)

#### **4. Birkos HaTorah (Torah Blessings)**

Birkos HaTorah are recited before Parshas HaTamid.

The nusach in Birkos HaTorah is *befinu uvfifyos* (or *befiyos*, but not *befi*).

The word *lishmah* is omitted.

After Birkos HaTorah the following sections from Korbanos are recited: the Tamid (from the Torah), Eizehu Mekoman (from the Mishnah), and Rabbi Yishmael (from the Talmud).

Yevarechecha and Eilu Devarim are omitted.

Kaddish is not recited after Korbanos.

#### **5. Tallis and Tefillin**

Tallis and tefillin are donned after completing the recital of Korbanos.

The rabbi and the prayer leader recite the blessing on the tallis and both blessings on the tefillin aloud.

When the tallis is wrapped around the head for several moments after the blessings, the top is not pulled down to cover the face; rather, the right side is thrown across the face below the nose with the eyes uncovered, *ka'atifa Yishme'eilim* (in Arabic custom). The verses beginning *Mah yakar chasdecha* are omitted.

In ancient times the tallis was worn covering the hat. Recently, two customs emerged: to cover the head either with a hat or a tallis.

Boys also wear a tallis. Some wait until bar mitzvah.

It is preferable to don small tefillin which measure no more than two centimeters in height and width to ensure that they lie in the proper place (especially for bar mitzvah boys).

The knot of the *shel rosh* is shaped like a square.

The script is “Beis Yosef” style, but the *yud* of the *tzaddi* is written backward.

The *shel yad* is wound around the forearm (except the first revolution) after donning the *shel rosh*.

The jacket is worn in the proper way and not hanging off the shoulder.

“Rabbeinu Tam” tefillin are worn only by great Torah sages and usually in private.

On Chol HaMo’ed tefillin are donned. (In Eretz Yisrael, where there is a question of *Lo sigodedu* (i.e., incongruity with the custom in the general community), they should be worn in private.)

## 6. Pesukei Dezimrah (Morning Psalms)

Mizmor Shir Chanukas is omitted.

The *gabbai* or the prayer leader announces, *Shesikah yaffa bish’as hatefillah* before Baruch She’amar.

The leader recites Baruch She’amar to the melody of the day. (Some days have special melodies.)

In Baruch She’amar, the nusach is *Av Harachaman* (not *Ha’av*) and *b’fi ammo* (not *b’feh*).

One need not stand for Mizmor LeSodah.

In all recitals of Ashrei the leader raises his voice when reciting the verse Posei’ach to arouse *kavvanah* (attention).

The leader recites from *Hallelukah hallelu Keil* until *kol ha’aretz amen ve’amen* aloud.

It is an ancient custom to stand for Vayvarech David until *umhallelim lesheim tif’artecha*. The Maharil would rise a little at *Attah Hu Hashem levadecha*.

There is no pause before *vecharos imo haberis* except on the day of a bris, when the mohel and sandak recite the following verses to a special melody.

After the Shiras Hayam, *Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed* is repeated. *Hashem malchusei* and *ki va sus Par'oh* are omitted. One continues *Ki laHashem* and concludes *Uvsorasecha kasuv leimor shema...*

## 7. Kaddish and Barechu

In Kaddish the reflexive verbs *yisgaddal*, *yiskaddash*, *yishaddar*, *yishallal*, and *tiskabbal* all have two *patachs* (not *tzeirehs*).

It is customary to bow five times during Kaddish: at *yisgaddal*, *amen yehei shemei*, *yisbarrach*, *berich hu*, and *ve'imru amen*.

The congregation answers *Amen yehei shemei rabba mevarach le'alam ul'almei almayya*, takes a pause, and says the word *yisbarrach*. Some say *yisbarrach* even at junctures in the service where interruptions are not usually allowed.

At *shemei dekuddesha*, the congregation says *berich hu* together with the leader. The leader then continues *le'eila* until the end.

It is not necessary to stand when Kaddish is recited, unless one is already standing. Some adhere to a more stringent view and rise when Kaddish is recited. Some rise partially when the words *yehei shemei rabba* are recited.

The leader must extend the melody of Barechu long enough for the congregation to finish reciting the Yisbarrach prayer (printed next to Barechu in most siddurim).

The entire congregation bows when the leader says Barechu, even when it is said too quickly for the congregation to recite the Yisbarrach.

The leader repeats *Baruch Hashem hamvorach le'olam va'ed* along with the congregation, as in Kedushah. The same practice is followed for the Barechu of an aliyah.

## 8. Shema and Its Blessings

In Ahavah Rabbah, the nusach is just *Av Harachaman* (not *Ha'av*).

The congregation answers *amen* after Ahavah Rabbah (after the blessing ending *be'ahavah*).

*Keil melech ne'eman* is always recited (both in public and private prayers) as a preface to and an integral component of Shema to complete the sum of 248 words. Some consider this component fulfilled (in public) by answering *amen* to the leader's blessing ending *be'ahavah*. This custom is treated extensively in *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 2).



Preferably, Shema should be recited with the authentic Ashkenazic Torah reading melody. See *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 3).

The rabbi recites from *Lema'an yirbu* to the end of Parshas Tzitzis aloud. See *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 4).

At the end of Shema, the leader says the last word, *emes*, aloud. Since no portion of the Shema text is repeated by the leader, he should recite Parshas Tzitzis along with the rabbi in an undertone in order to say *emes* immediately following *Elokeichem*.

In Al Harishonim, the nusach is *mei'olam shemecha* (not *mei'olam Hu shemecha*).

The verse *Go'aleinu* is omitted from Ga'al Yisrael. See *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 1).

## 9. Shemoneh Esreh

Some details about the nusach of Shemoneh Esreh:

*Morid hageshem* is pronounced with a *seggol* (not a *kamatz*).

In Attah Chonein the order is: *binah dei'ah vehaskeil* (not *dei'ah binah*).

In Re'ei Ve'onyeinu: the word *na* is omitted.

In Bareich Aleinu: *mituvecha* (not *mituvah*)

The non-censored version of Lamalshinim is:

לְמִשׁוּמְדִים אֵל תְּהִי תְקוּנָה וְכָל הַמַּיִנִּים כָּרְגַע יֵאבְדוּ וְכָל אוֹיְבֵי עַמְךָ מֵהֲרָה יִכָּרְתוּ  
וּמַלְכוּת זָדוֹן מֵהֲרָה תִּעֲקַר וּתְשָׁבֵר וּתְמַגֵּר וּתְכַנְיַע בְּמֵהֲרָה בְּגִמְיִנוּ.

In Al Hatzaddikim: *ul'olam lo neivosh* (not *le'olam ve'lo neivosh*).

In Elokoy Netzor: *vekalkeil machshevosam* (not *machshavtam*).

## 10. Kaddish Hapesach — Perisah al Shema

When latecomers who did not hear Chatzi Kaddish (Half Kaddish) and Barechu are present in synagogue, slight changes are introduced into the service:

When the rabbi finishes reciting the Shemoneh Esreh and takes three steps back, a mourner or one who has yahrtzeit stands at the synagogue door and recites Chatzi Kaddish and Barechu. The leader then immediately begins his Shemoneh Esreh.

At Minchah the same procedure is followed, but only Chatzi Kaddish is recited.

This procedure is not followed on Shabbos or Yom Tov.

## **11. Leader's Shemoneh Esreh**

Some people stand during the repetition of Shemoneh Esreh, while others remain seated.

In Kedushah, only the leader recites the lines which begin with the words *nekadeish*, *le'umasam*, and *uv'divre*. The congregation remains quiet.

On public fast days, *selichos* are incorporated into the sixth blessing, Selach Lanu.

The leader raises his voice upon reaching the conclusion of the blessings Shomei'a Tefillah and Hamachazir Shechinaso and recites them to a special melody. When Tachanun is omitted, the same is done for the conclusion of Sim Shalom.

## **12. Birkas Kohanim (Priestly Blessings)**

One Levi is honored with washing the Kohanim's hands and another with bearing the towel. On the high holidays only married Leviim receive this honor.

The leader begins Retzei only after the Levi honored with washing the hands of the Kohanim calls out "Retzei" to indicate that the Kohanim are ready.

While the Kohanim ascend the *duchan* the leader recites *Elokeinu v'Eilokei avoseinu* in an undertone and then calls out "Kohanim" to a special melody. Leader and congregation say the words *am kedoshecha ka'amur* to a special melody.

At the call of "Kohanim," the Kohanim turn to face the congregation and then begin reciting the blessing of *asher kideshanu....*

Some cover their faces and the faces of their children with the tallis to avoid gazing at the Kohanim's hands. The leader likewise uses his tallis to cover his face.

The Kohanim descend the *duchan* after the leader finishes reciting Sim Shalom.

## **13. Nefillas Appayim (Leaning on the Face)**

The verse *Vayomer David el Gad* is omitted.

Shomeir Yisrael is recited only on public fast days. On regular days one continues *Va'anachnu lo neida*.

On Mondays and Thursdays, *Rachum Vechanun* is preceded by *Vehu Rachum*, which is recited standing.

On the following days *Tachanun* is omitted from *Shacharis*:

Rosh Chodesh, Purim Katan (both days), Purim Gadol (both days), Chanukah, Tish'ah Be'Av, Tu Be'Av, Tu Be'Shevat, the month of Nissan, Lag Ba'Omer, Rosh Chodesh Sivvan through Isru Chag Shavuot, the day preceding Rosh Hashanah, the day preceding Yom Kippur through Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan, and all major holidays.

*Tachanun* is omitted in a house of mourning and in synagogue on the day of a bris or when a groom is present (during the seven days of feasting). A groom should leave the synagogue before *Tachanun* and return before *Kaddish*, so that *Tachanun* may be recited. However, the mohel and sandek who presided over a bris in synagogue (which is customary) do not leave before *Tachanun*, since in this case the entire service takes on the aspect of a bris.

*Nefillas Appayim* may be practiced only if a Torah scroll is present.

#### 14. Torah Reading

Great respect is shown to the Torah when removed and replaced in the *aron kodesh* (holy ark).

*Berich Shemei* is omitted.

All congregants involved in the Torah Reading wear a tallis. These include congregants honored with *hotza'ah* (removing the Torah), *hachnasah* (returning), *hagbahah* (raising), *gelilah* (binding), *ba'al segan* (giving out the honors), bearers of the second and third Torahs, as well as those honored with opening the *aron kodesh* at any point during the service and anyone who recites *Kaddish*.

For further details about all the customs mentioned above in this section, see *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 1).

When no Kohen is present, a Levi is called up (unless a Yisrael on a higher level of distinction is present). The *gabbai* calls out:

כהן קרב - אם אין כאן כהן, לוי במקום כהן קרב  
יעמוד פלוני בן פלוני הלוי במקום כהן.

Alternately, if a Yisrael of greater distinction is present, or if there is no Levi in synagogue, the *gabbai* calls out:

אם אין כאן כהן, ישראל במקום כהן קרב יעמוד פלוני בן פלוני במקום כהן.

The Torah is read according to the authentic Ashkenazic melody.  
All congregants called up to the Torah receive a Mi Shebeirach, including on weekdays.  
Chatzi Kaddish is always recited by the reader. See *Yerushaseinu* (vol. 1).  
The Torah is bound with a *Wimpel*, which is a piece of cloth that had been used at a bris. It is decorated with the name of the boy and with blessings and relevant drawings. See below, end of section “Bris Milah” and *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 2).  
Five men are honored with “dressing” the Torah: *hagbahah*, *gelilah*, *kippul hamappah* (folding the *Wimpel*), *hoshatah* (passing), and *hachzakah* (holding). The latter three mitzvos are sold on the night of Simchas Torah.  
After the *Wimpel* has been removed from the Torah, it is handed to the “folder,” who prepares it for binding after the reading.  
The “folder” passes it to the “passer,” who gives the *Wimpel*, mantle, and silver adornments to the congregant honored with *gelilah*.  
The “holder” aids the one honored with *hagbahah* by holding the top handles of the Torah while it is being raised.  
It is not customary to recite *Yehi ratzon milifnei avinu* after the Torah reading.

## 15. Conclusion of Shacharis and Recital of Kaddish

Some recite the verses printed between the lines of Kaddish Tiskabbal. However, some refrain from doing so since, although these verses are printed in fifteenth-century siddurim, they are not mentioned by any of the Rishonim.  
Aleinu ends with the words *timloch bechavod*. The Ari’s nusach of *kakasuv* until *unshmo echad* is omitted.

Kaddish Yasom (Mourners’ Kaddish) is not recited after Aleinu. Some recite Shir Hayichud. Kaddish Yasom is not recited after Shir Hayichud.  
Kaddish Yasom is recited after the Shir shel Yom.  
On weekdays Ein Keilokeinu and Pitum Haketores are omitted.  
Shir Mizmor LeAsaf (Tehillim 83) is recited every day of the week after the Shir shel Yom, and is followed by Kaddish Yasom. The leader does not recite Kaddish Yasom if there are other mourners present. If the leader is the only mourner in synagogue, he recites the Kaddish after Shir

Mizmor LeAsaf only. It is not customary to recite Kaddish Yasom more than once during each service.

Kaddish Yasom is recited by only one congregant. If there is no *yahrtzeit* that day, a mourner or an orphan recites Kaddish. One whose parents are living does not recite Kaddish Yasom.

Immediately after Shacharis a short *shiur* (Torah study session) in Mishnah or halachah is taught. After any *shiur* or sermon Kaddish Derabbanan is recited. After a *shiur* in halachah or halachic parts of the Talmud, some preface the Kaddish with *Rabbi Chanania ben Akashia*. After aggadah this is not necessary.

Barechu was instituted to be recited only when followed by a blessing. Thus it is never recited at the conclusion of any service.

Rules to be followed when reciting Kaddish: Each Kaddish is recited by only one person, similarly to the repetition of Shemoneh Esreh. The congregant reciting Kaddish must stand on either side of the leader by the *amud* (leader's stand). Before reciting Kaddish one must receive permission from the *gabbai* and don a tallis. See *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 1).

## **16. Minchah (Afternoon Prayers)**

It is preferable to hold the service after *minchah ketannah*, which is nine-and-a-half halachic hours into the day. A halachic hour is calculated by dividing the time period between morning and evening into twelve hours.

The leader wears a tallis.

On the following occasions Tachanun is omitted. Tachanun is also omitted on the day preceding each of these occasions:

Rosh Chodesh, Purim Katan (both days), Purim Gadol (both days), Chanukah, Tish'ah Be'Av, the month of Nissan, Rosh Chodesh Sivvan through Isru Chag Shavuot, the day preceding Rosh Hashanah, the day preceding Yom Kippur through Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan, and all major holidays and the day preceding each one.

Tachanun is omitted in a house of mourning or when a groom is present (from the Minchah on the day preceding the wedding, when the practice is to have a *se'udas sivlonos*, and all through the seven days of feasting). The groom should leave the synagogue before Tachanun and return before Kaddish, so that Tachanun is not forfeited by the congregation.

Tachanun is recited at Minchah on Tu Be'Av, Tu Be'Shevat, and Lag Ba'Omer and on the day preceding each of these occasions.

When Ma'ariv immediately follows Minchah (before sunset, as is customary in many communities), Aleinu is omitted between the two services.

### **17. Ma'ariv (Evening Prayers)**

When Ma'ariv is held after *tzeis hakochavim* (nightfall), it is prefaced by Shir Hama'alos Hinei (Tehillim 134) and by the accompanying verses, and is followed by Chatzi Kaddish.

Baruch Hashem Le'olam until the end of Yir'u Eineinu is also recited in Eretz Yisrael. (Those who do not follow the opinion of the Vilna Gaon and recite Veshameru on Friday night — as is Minhag Ashkenaz — have no reason to omit Baruch Hashem Le'olam on weekday nights.)

For details about announcing Ya'aleh Veyavo, see below, section “Rosh Chodesh.”

For details about announcing She'eilah in Bareich Aleinu, see *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 2).

### **III. Shabbos (Sabbath)**

#### **1. Paroches (Torah Curtain) for Shabbos**

The weekday *paroches* is replaced with the Shabbos *paroches*.

#### **2. Kabbalas Shabbos**

An integral part of Minhag Ashkenaz is the institution of societies to provide for a community need. One society, for example, provided tzitzis for poor people, while another provided firewood. These societies were small groups of people whose hearts motivated them to provide these community services.

Similarly, new spiritual needs arose throughout the centuries. In response, new societies were formed, such as one that would recite additional supplications before Shacharis every day, and another that would do so on the day preceding Rosh Chodesh. These societies would study together and collect charity among themselves to be distributed to the poor.

Kabbalas Shabbos was originally practiced by such a society as an addition to the traditional Friday night prayers. Although its source is in kabbalah, it was welcomed into the tradition because the idea of Kabbalas Shabbos was by no means a new concept and because the content does not contain overt kabbalistic features. In later generations the popularity of this society grew due to the captivating beauty of this prayer.

Kabbalas Shabbos is begun right after Kaddish Tiskabbal of Minchah.

The verses of Kabbalas Shabbos are recited alternately by the leader and the congregation in the customary manner: The leader recites one verse, and the congregation recites the next verse. The alternate party recites that verse in an undertone.

There is no need to stand for Mizmor LeDavid. Anna Becho'ach is omitted because of its overt kabbalistic nature.

The leader approaches the *bimah* for Lecha Dodi and remains there until after Hashem Malach.

The congregation recites Lecha Dodi together with the leader.

After Hashem Malach, Kaddish Yasom is recited by a congregant who has yahrtzeit on that Shabbos. If there is no yahrtzeit on Shabbos, the

following order of precedence is followed: a congregant who has yahrtzeit on Friday, a mourner, or an orphan. One whose parents are living does not recite Kaddish Yasom. As in the recital of every Kaddish, the rules in section 16 of “Daily Customs” are followed.

### 3. Ma’ariv

The nusach in Hashkiveinu is *poreis sukkas* (not *haporeis*).

The leader chants Veshameru after the congregation.

The nusach in all Shabbos Amidos is *veyismechu vecha Yisrael ohavei shemecha* (not *veyanuchu*). See *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 1).

All chant Vaychulu together.

The leader bows at the beginning of “Mei’ein Sheva,” similarly to the beginning of Shemoneh Esreh.

The congregation chants Magen Avos and is followed by the leader.

Bameh Madlikin is recited after Kaddish Tiskabbal and is followed by Kaddish Yasom (not by Kaddish Derabbanan).

The leader recites Kiddush over a cup of wine in synagogue, and boys under bar mitzvah age drink the wine. When the rabbi and/or Kohanim are present, the leader recites the following words before Kiddush:

ברשות כהנים, מורה מורנו הרב, מרנן ורבנן ורבבותי

Amar Rabbi Elazar is recited after Kiddush. Starting from *Shalom rav* it is recited to the customary melody and is followed by Kaddish Yasom. After Aleinu the congregation chants Yigdal while seated.

After Ma’ariv the boys under bar mitzvah age stand in queue to receive the rabbi’s blessing. He places both hands on each boy’s head and says only the words *Yesimecha Elokim keEphraim vechiMnasheh* (pronounced as here transcribed). Fathers bless their married sons (if they are not to be present later at the father’s Shabbos table) and grandfathers bless their grandchildren, but fathers and grandfathers add the verses of Birkas Kohanim. These verses are also added to the blessing given by fathers to sons and daughters upon coming home after Ma’ariv.

### 4. Shacharis

The public prayers commence with Adon Olam, which is recited to the Shabbos melody.

For Birkos Hashachar and tallis customs see “Daily Customs.”



The leader recites Baruch She'amar to any non-weekday melody.  
 The leader recites the beginning and end of each chapter of Pesukei Dezimrah to the Shabbos melody.  
 In Hodu the verse *Vehu rachum* is not omitted.  
 It is not necessary to stand while reciting Hallel Hagadol (the verses beginning with *Hodu*) in Pesukei Dezimrah.  
 The leader recites from *Hallelukah hallelu Keil* until *kol ha'aretz amen ve'amen* aloud to the Shabbos melody.  
*Nishmas kol chai* through *ein lanu melech ella attah* is recited to a specific melody, which should not be substituted with any other. It is unclear whether the congregation joins the leader in chanting Nishmas.  
 Hakol Yoducha is recited alternately with the leader from Shabbos Hagadol until the Shabbos preceding Rosh Hashanah, the time of year when the days are long.  
 On special Shabbosim *yotzros* are recited during Birkos Kri'as Shema, and *krovos* are recited during the repetition of the Amidah.

## 5. Shabbos Torah Reading

The procedure by which the Torah is removed from the *aron kodesh* and prepared for reading on Shabbos and Yom Tov demonstrates, at every step, great respect and honor for the holy scrolls. All the accompanying verses are recited to a melody. See *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 1). Many communities omit Ein Kamocha, Shema, and Echad Elokeinu.  
 No candy is thrown upon a groom or bar mitzvah boy when they are called to the Torah. Indeed, barring wine for Kiddush, Havdallah, and a bris, food is never brought into the synagogue.  
 The *gabbai* calls out each aliyah without announcing its number (*shelishi, revi'i*). The seventh aliyah, however, is called out by number (*Ya'amod shevi'i*) and not by name. The *shevi'i* is privately informed that he is to be called up.  
 Aliyos are added only in extenuating circumstances. In such a case, the extra aliyah is called by name.  
 It is not customary to recite a Mi Shebeirach for recovery from illness on Shabbos or Yom Tov, unless the person is deathly ill and may die that day. The congregant honored with *maftir* is not called to the Torah aloud, but is privately informed that he is to be called up.  
 At the conclusion of each Chumash, the congregation calls out the words "*Chazak venischazak*" alone, as in II Samuel 10:12, and is followed by the

reader (unless the reader has been given that aliyah, in which case he may not interrupt before his concluding blessing).

Chatzi Kaddish is always recited by the reader. On special Shabbosim the Chatzi Kaddish is recited to special melodies.

During *hagbahah* there are those who chant the verses from *Ve'zos haTorah* until *Veya'dir*.

## 6. Multiple Torah Scrolls

When more than one Torah is read from, the second is placed on the *bimah* to the left of the first before *hagbahah* of the first. The second is not uncovered until the first is bound with its *Wimpel*.

The Mi Shebeirach for the last aliyah of the first Torah is recited during the uncovering of the second, and the same for the aliyah of the second Torah.

After reading from the second Torah, only the third is placed on the *bimah* (to the left of the first), but the first is not replaced on the *bimah*.

The one who raises the first Torah hands it (after *gelilah*) to the one who was holding the second, and the one who raises the second scroll passes it to the leader before the latter recites Yehallelu.

## 7. Haftarah

The congregant honored with *maftir* reads the *haftarah* himself from the *sefer aftarta*, a traditional scroll which includes the portions from the Prophets read as *haftaros*. The scroll is written with the same *kavvanah likdushas hasheimos* (intention of sanctity) as a Torah scroll, but includes vowels and cantillation notes. The *sefer aftarta* is held by two rods and is bound with a *Wimpel*. It is not stored in the *aron kodesh*, but in a special, separate cabinet.

For further details, see *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 3).

Boys aged eleven and twelve are honored with removing and returning the *sefer aftarta*.

The congregation does not recite the *haftarah* along with the reader.

In the blessings which follow the *haftarah* the nusach is:

ולעלות נפש תושיע ותנקום נקם במהרה בימינו

The reader stands at the center of the *bimah* even though his back is turned to the Torah scroll.

## 8. Prayers after the Haftarah

The nusach is Yekum Purkan (not Parkan or Porkan), here and in Al Hanisim.

The leader reads from the *Memorbuch* in an undertone, so as not to arouse grief, in the following order: First the names of the three most recently deceased members of the congregation are read out. The same names will hopefully be repeated on the following Shabbosim as well. Immediately following the first three names, the names of another three deceased members are read out, and on the following Shabbos the next three names are read out. Some insert a paperclip to note where the reading is to start the following week.

A fee is paid to the synagogue or community for the privilege of having a name included in the *Memorbuch*. In Frankfurt the price was twenty-one gold coins.

When *yotzros* and *zulasos* are added to the service, the reading from the *Memorbuch* is omitted, with the exception of Shabbos Shuvah, the intervening Shabbosim of Arba Parshios, and during *sefirah* and *bein hametzarim*. Other Shabbosim when the *Memorbuch* reading is omitted are Shabbos Mevarechim and at times when Tachanun would be omitted were it a weekday.

The Mi Shebeirach for the congregation is recited to a melody by the reader alone.

Av Harachamim was instituted at the time of the Crusades in 1096. This passage is recited only on a "Shabbos Shechorah," i.e., the Shabbos before Shavuos and Tish'ah Be'Av.

The first two and last two verses of Ashrei are chanted.

## 9. Birkas Hachodesh

In Birkas Hachodesh the Yehi Ratzon is omitted (since supplications are not made on Shabbos) and the *molad* is not announced.

The leader takes the Torah in his hands and announces:

ראש חודש פלוני יהיה ביום פלוני.

When Rosh Chodesh falls on Shabbos, he adds:

הבא עלינו לטובה.

When Rosh Chodesh falls on Shabbos and Sunday, he announces:

ראש חודש פלוני יהיה ביום השבת הבא עלינו לטובה ולמחרתו ביום הראשון.

When it falls on Friday and Shabbos:

ראש חודש פלוני יהיה ביום הששי ולמחרתו ביום השבת הבא עלינו לטובה.

When it falls on Sunday only:

ראש חודש פלוני יהיה למחר ביום הראשון.

When it falls on two weekdays:

ראש חודש פלוני יהיה ביום ה... וביום ה...

The congregation does not repeat the announcement, but immediately begins reciting the short Yechadesheihu:

יחדשהו הקדוש ברוך הוא עלינו ועל כל עמו בית ישראל, לחיים ולשלום, לששון ולשמחה, לישועה ולנחמה, ונאמר אמן.

The leader repeats the passage with either a Yom Tov melody or a melody associated with a special day that occurs during the coming month. The melody is also applied to the first verse of Ashrei.

## 10. Mussaf

In Kedushah, only the leader recites the introductory stanza beginning *Na'aritzecha*. The nusach is *Echad Hu Elokeinu* (which follows the pattern according to which each stanza begins with the last word of the previous stanza). At *lEilokim*, the congregation waits and says *Ani Hashem Elokeichem* along with the leader. See *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 1). On special occasions the leader chants Kedushah and/or Kaddish Tiskabbal to a melody of his choosing.

The congregation chants Ein kEilokeinu together.

After Aleinu, Shir Hayichud and Shir Hakavod are recited. The verses that appear after Shir Hakavod are omitted.

Mussaf is concluded with Shir shel Yom and Shir Mizmor LeAsaf.

## 11. Minchah

All congregants involved in the Torah reading wear a tallis until the conclusion of Kedushah.

All congregants called up to the Torah receive a Mi Shebeirach.

Sim Shalom is recited (not Shalom Rav).

From Shabbos Bereishis until the Shabbos before Shabbos Hagadol, many communities accepted the Sephardic custom to recite Barechi Nafshi and the chapters of Shir Hama'alos before Aleinu, followed by Kaddish Yasom. This custom was not accepted in Frankfurt.

On each of the Shabbosim between Pesach and Shavuos, one chapter of Pirkei Avos is recited. On each of the Shabbosim between Shavuos and the Seventeenth of Tamuz, two chapters of Pirkei Avos are recited. After the Seventeenth of Tamuz, recital of Pirkei Avos is discontinued.

Kaddish Yasom (not Kaddish Derabbanan) is recited following Pirkei Avos.

## 12. Ma'ariv for Motza'ei Shabbos (Saturday Night)

Before Ma'ariv on *motza'ei Shabbos*, LeDavid Baruch (Tehillim 144) and Lamnatzei'ach Binginos (Tehillim 67) are chanted to the traditional melody by the entire congregation.

The leader recites Vehu Rachum and Barechu to an extended melody.

After Kaddish Tiskabbal, Veyiten Lecha is recited. The followings sections of this prayer were added in Poland and are therefore omitted: Hamal'ach, Machisi, Beis Yakov, and Amar Rabbi Yochanan. The following verse is inserted before Ki Vesimchah:

יְפֹדֵיֵי הַשֵּׁם יִשְׁבּוּן וּבָאוּ צִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם עַל רֵאשִׁים שְׂשׂוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה יְשִׁיגוּ וְנָסוּ  
יְגִוּ וְאֶנְחָה.

The leader makes Havdallah before Shir Hama'alos Ashrei, and gives the wine to the young boys.

After the congregation chants Shir Hama'alos Ashrei to the traditional melody, Kaddish Yasom is recited.

After Ma'ariv all fold their talleisim, and the paroches and other coverings in the synagogue are changed.

For further details, see *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 1).

## IV. Rosh Chodesh

### 1. Ma'ariv

The leader recites Barechu with the extended *motza'ei Shabbos* melody, as on all days when Tachanun is omitted. Vehu Rachum is recited to the regular melody.

Before Shemoneh Esreh on the first night of Rosh Chodesh, a member of the congregation announces, "Ya'aleh Veyavo." On the second night of Rosh Chodesh he says, "Rosh Chodesh." If Rosh Chodesh is only one day, he says, "Rosh Chodesh."

### 2. Shacharis

The leader recites Barechu to the extended *motza'ei Shabbos* melody.

In Hallel, Hodu and Ana are recited to a melody traditionally associated with the coming month.

When the leader recites Yomeru Na, he should intend to be *motzi* the congregation (to have this fulfill their obligation). Despite this, some people are careful to repeat these phrases themselves. Congregants who do so must take care to respond with Hodu along with the congregation.

The service is not halted before Mussaf for the purpose of removing the tefillin. Instead, they are removed either before Kaddish or after Mussaf.

The additional words *ulchapas pasha* are added to the Mussaf service only on Rosh Chodesh Adar Beis.

### 3. Shabbos Rosh Chodesh

In Ma'ariv, the leader recites Barechu, Malchusecha, Vene'emar, and Hashkiveinu to the melody of a Shabbos in which two sifrei Torah are read from.

The Rosh Chodesh announcement before the Amidah is identical to that made on a weekday Rosh Chodesh.

The *yotzeir* for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh, Elokeinu Elokim Emes, is recited along with the *ofen* of Lecha Eilim. The short Emes V'yatziv is recited, and Al Harishonim is chanted. The *zulas* of Emunasecha Amiti is recited.

After the Torah reading, Kaddish is recited to the Shabbos Rosh Chodesh melody.

In Mussaf, Attah Yatzarta replaces the regular text. The words *Zeh korban Shabbos V'korban Rosh Chodesh ka'amur* are inserted between the verses relating to Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh sacrifices.

In Kedushah, the Elokeichem Yazriach passage for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh is recited. Kaddish Tiskabbal is recited to a melody of the leader's choosing.

#### **4. Birkas Halevanah**

One raises himself on his toes only once for each recital of the words *K'sheim she'ani rokeid*.

At the end of Birkas Halevanah, neither Aleinu nor Kaddish Yasom is recited. There is no dancing and Tovim Me'oros is not chanted, since it is a Shabbos poem.

## V. The Seder Night

### 1. Bedikas Chametz (Searching for Leaven)

*Bedikas chametz* (searching for leaven) is performed by candlelight on the night of the fourteenth of Nissan. When the fourteenth falls on Shabbos, the *bedikah* is done on the night of the thirteenth.

The *bedikah* (searching) is performed right after Ma'ariv. One may not do the *bedikah* before Ma'ariv and one may not eat before the *bedikah*.

Some wash their hands with a cup before the blessing on the *bedikah* to make sure that the blessing is said in a state of purity.

Some wear a *sarbel*, the jacket that is worn during services, when performing the *bedikah* and do the same for any uncommon mitzvah. Some remove the jacket after the blessing so as to search more comfortably.

Some scatter ten pieces of bread around the house before the *bedikah*, while others refrain from this practice. It is forbidden to speak between the recital of the blessing and the commencement of the *bedikah*. It is customary to refrain from conversation also until the conclusion of the *bedikah*.

The following blessing is recited:

ברוך אתה השם אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על ביעור חמץ.

The chametz that was found is placed in a box or a bag. Possession of any remaining chametz is nullified by reciting the following words:

כל חמירא וחמיעא דאיכא ברשותי, דלא חמתיה, ודלא בערתיה, לבטיל ולהוי כעפרא דארעא.

One who does not understand the Aramaic text must recite the *bittul* (nullification) in one's own tongue. One who understands Hebrew but not Aramaic recites the following words:

כל שאור וחמץ שישנו ברשותי, שלא ראיתיו ושלא בערתיו, יתבטל ויהיה כעפר הארץ.



One who understands neither Aramaic nor Hebrew recites the following English translation:

All leaven and leavened products in my possession, which I have neither seen nor removed, shall be deemed of no value and ownerless like the dust of the earth.

## 2. Sereifas Chametz (Burning the Chametz)

In earlier generations, the *shamash* (*gabbai*) would go out into the street on the morning of the fourteenth of Nissan and gather the townspeople for *sereifas chametz*. In many communities the custom was to burn the chametz communally in an organized fashion, either in the synagogue courtyard or in another designated place.

The chametz is kept until *sha'as habiyyur* (the time limit designated to the burn the chametz) and is burnt at the beginning of the sixth halachic hour. Nowadays the custom has become to burn the chametz at the end of the fifth hour. In any case, the chametz must be nullified before the sixth hour, when halachically the chametz is still in one's possession, by saying:

כָּל חֲמִיצָה וְחֲמִיצָה דְאִיכָּא בְרִשׁוּתִי, דְחֲמִצָּה וּדְלֵא חֲמִצָּה, דְבִעֲרִיתִיהּ וּדְלֵא בִעֲרִיתִיהּ,  
לְבַטֵּל וְלִהְיוּ כְעֶפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

One who understands Hebrew but not Aramaic recites the following words:

כָּל שְׂאֹר וְחֵמֶץ שֶׁיִּשְׁנֶנּוּ בְרִשׁוּתִי, שֶׁרְאִיתִיו וְשֶׁלֹּא רְאִיתִיו, שֶׁבִעַרְתִּיו וְשֶׁלֹּא בִעַרְתִּיו,  
יִתְבַטֵּל וְיִהְיֶה כְעֶפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

One who understands neither Aramaic nor Hebrew recites the English translation:

All leaven and leavened products in my possession, whether I have seen them or not, whether I removed them or not, shall be deemed of no value like the dust of the earth.

When the day preceding Pesach falls on Shabbos, the *sereifah* is performed on Friday before halachic midday, and the *bittul* is performed on Shabbos before the sixth hour.

### 3. Fast of the Firstborn

It is customary for the firstborn to fast the entire day preceding the Seder night. Some authorities are lenient and permit the firstborn to eat sparingly after the ninth halachic hour so as not to begin the holiday in an uncomfortable physical state.

Fathers fast on behalf of their young firstborn sons. If the father is weak he may redeem the fast with money.

In recent generations it has become popular custom for the firstborn to exempt himself from fasting by making his own *siyyum* (conclusion of a volume of Talmud study).

Some authorities are yet more lenient and permit the firstborn to exempt himself from fasting by being present at another's *siyyum*, but other authorities doubt the legitimacy of this last custom.

Barring wine for Kiddush, Havdallah, and a bris, food is never brought into the synagogue, not even for a *siyyum*.

When the day preceding Pesach falls on Shabbos, the fast is moved up from Friday to Thursday.

### 4. Eiruv Chatzeiros (Inclusion of the Courtyards)

Since *eiruv chatzeiros* customarily involves the use of matzah, which lasts a long time, it is carried out on the day preceding Pesach, traditionally the time for baking matzah.

Originally, all members of the community would contribute a small amount of dough to make a large matzah for *eiruv chatzeiros*. Later, when the communities grew and this became impractical, a baker would bake one large matzah and transfer it to the possession of the whole community, in a manner which will be explained below.

This matzah should be the size of six eggs (some say eight eggs), assuming there are at least eighteen residents in the area. If there are fewer than eighteen residents, it is enough to bake a matzah which contains the size of a *grogeres* for each resident. A *grogeres* is either a third of an egg or four-ninths of an egg.

The blessing is recited only if it is clear that the area does indeed require an *eiruv*.

In communities where Ma'ariv is recited before sunset on the night of Pesach, the *eiruv* is made before Barechu. Otherwise it is made before Minchah or before Kabbalas Shabbos.

The rabbi or another distinguished member of the congregation ascends to the *almemor* (*bimah*, reader's table), takes the matzah, passes it to the *shamash*, and says to him in Hebrew (or in any spoken language):

זָכָה בְּעָרוֹב זֶה לְאַחֲנוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַדְּרִים פֶּה עָמְנוּ וְשִׁיבֹאוּ לְדוֹר בְּמִשְׁךְ הַשָּׁנָה בְּעִיר  
הַזֵּאת [בְּחֶצֶר הַזֵּה, בְּבֵית הַזֵּה] שְׂיִסְמְכוּ עָלֵינוּ לְטַלְטֵל עַל יָדוֹ מְרִשׁוֹת לְרִשׁוֹת בְּשִׁבְתוֹת  
וּבְיָמִים טוֹבִים הַבָּאִים.

The *shamash* raises the matzah a *teffach* (three to four inches) and with intention to acquire the matzah on behalf of the entire community, he says, *Hareini zocheh*.

The rabbi takes the matzah from the *shamash* and recites the following blessing aloud: (When a central rabbinate makes an *eiruv* for the city, the blessing is recited without *sheim umalchus* — i.e., *attah to ha'olam* is omitted from the blessing — in each individual synagogue.)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ  
עַל מִצְוֹת עָרוֹב.  
בְּדֵן עָרוֹבָא יְהִי שְׂרָא לָנָא, לְאַפּוֹקִי וּלְעִיּוּלֵי וּלְטַלְטוּלֵי, בְּרַחוּבוֹת וְהַחֲצָרוֹת וְהַבָּתִּים,  
וּמְהַבְּתִים לְחֲצָרוֹת וְהַרְחֹבוֹת, וּמְהַרְחֹבוֹת וְהַחֲצָרוֹת לְבָתִּים, וּמִבֵּית לְבֵית, וּמִחֶצֶר  
לְחֶצֶר, וּמִגֶּג לְגֶג, וּמְהַבְּתִים וְהַחֲצָרוֹת לְגִגוֹת, וְלִכְל אֶתֶר דְּצָרִיךְ לָן, בְּכָל שְׁבִתוֹת הַשָּׁנָה  
וּבְיָמִים טוֹבִים, לָנוּ וּלְכָל הַדְּרִים וְהַעֲתִידִים לְדוֹר בְּעִיר הַזֵּאת.

Some read this blessing from the Memorbuch on the *bimah*, but there is no set nusach.

The *eiruv* is kept in a safe place in the synagogue. It is customary to hang it near the ceiling on the west side of the synagogue in a visible location in a decorative wooden box with a door cut out in the shape of a Magen David, through which the matzah can be seen. If the matzah becomes moldy during the year, it is replaced.

Originally, when the *eiruv* was made from pieces of dough donated by all members of the community, it would be distributed on the day preceding Shabbos Haggadol, and on that Shabbos only, the *eiruv* was made of chametz. When the practice of collecting dough was no longer possible, the distribution of the *eiruv* on the day preceding Shabbos Haggadol was discontinued. Instead the *eiruv* was burnt along with the chametz on the day before Pesach in accordance with another ancient custom.

*Eiruv chatzeiros* is not carried out in a city in which there is no conventional *eiruv* and in which it is therefore forbidden to carry on Shabbos. Nevertheless, some perform *eiruv chatzeiros* without a blessing so that the concept will not be forgotten.

## 5. Eiruv Tavshilin (Mingling of Cooked Foods)

When the day preceding Pesach falls on Wednesday, *eiruv tavshilin* must be performed. (In Eretz Yisrael, where Yom Tov Sheini does not fall on Friday, *eiruv tavshilin* is unnecessary, and the first day of Pesach cannot fall on Friday anyway.)

In communities that follow the ancient custom to recite Ma'ariv before sunset even on Pesach eve, it is customary to remind the congregation between Mincha and Ma'ariv about the obligation to perform *eiruv tavshilin*. The congregation then delays Mincha to await the return of members who have hurried home to fulfill the mitzvah. Some communities wait for a set time of five or ten minutes.

In later generations this announcement was made at Shacharis and again before Minchah.

Some don a jacket when fulfilling the mitzvah of *eiruv tavshilin*, as they do when performing any uncommon mitzvah.

*Eiruv tavshilin* is performed in the following fashion: One takes a piece of matzah, places some cooked or roasted meat on it, raises it, and recites the following blessing:

ברוך אתה השם אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצנינו  
על מצות ערוב.

Then the following declaration is recited:

בהדיו ערובא והא שרא לנא למיפא ולבשלא ולאטמנא ולאדלקא שרגא ולמעבד כל  
צרכנא מיומא טבא לשבתא לנו ולכל הדרים בעיר הזאת.

One who understands Hebrew but not Aramaic recites the following words instead:

בזה הערוב יהיה מתיר לנו לאפות ולבשל ולהטמין ולהדליק נר ולעשות כל צרכינו  
מיום טוב לשבת, לנו ולכל הדרים בעיר הזאת.

One who understands neither Aramaic nor Hebrew recites the English translation:

By means of this Eruv may we be permitted to bake, cook, keep food warm, kindle lights and prepare on the festival all that we require for the Sabbath, we and all the inhabitants of this city.

The *eiruv* is preserved until Shabbos, when the portion of matzah is used as *lechem mishneh* for the first two meals and eaten at the third meal. Some eat it at the second meal.

Hallel is not recited in synagogue on the Seder night. See *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 1).

## **6. Preparations for the Seder**

Silver or gold vessels, whether for use or display, are placed on the Seder table as symbols of freedom.

In ancient times sheets were hung on the walls of the room as an adornment, similarly to the sukkah decorations of our times. Recently the custom has become to adorn the walls with a decorative cloth called a *Zvehl*, which measures some four-and-a-half feet in height and one-and-a-half feet in width. The cloth is embroidered with designs, images associated with Pesach, inspiring sayings, and the names of the embroiderers. A special pillow with a decorative cover is set out for the leader of the Seder. The pillow is placed on a special seat, preferably a couch.

If possible, one should use a silver Seder plate with silver cups engraved with designs relating to Pesach.

In many families the leader of the Seder wears a *Sargenes* (*kittel*) and a white head covering. The *Sargenes* comes to remind the participants of the eventuality of death at a time when we are emulating the proud behavior of royalty. In some families the *Sargenes* is donned even if the leader is in mourning.

In other families the leader wears Yom Tov clothing.

## **7. Blessing the Children**

It is customary to bless the children, regardless of age, on Shabbos and Yom Tov after the evening, morning, and *motza'ei Shabbos* services, either in synagogue or at home.

One should make an effort not to forget this blessing during the pre-Seder rush and preoccupation with the preparations, since it was on this night — when the “treasures of heavenly dew” open — that Yitzchak blessed Yakov.

## 8. Candle Lighting

The women light candles after Ma'ariv before the commencement of the Seder, especially today when houses are lit regardless of the candles.

As on Shabbos, it is preferable to light with olive oil, using a traditional *Shabbos lampa*, which has six or eight arms and hangs from the ceiling above the dinner table. Candles are not added for each child.

Since lighting fire on Yom Tov is permissible, the women recite the blessings (Lehadlik and Shehechianu) before lighting the candles and do not lift their hands.

When reciting Shehechianu, women should have in mind the other mitzvos of the Seder.

On Shabbos, the blessings are recited in the same manner as on any Shabbos.

## 9. Preparation of the Seder Plate

Three matzos baked with signs distinguishing Kohen, Levi, and Yisrael (one hole or line for Kohen, two for Levi, and three for Yisrael) are placed on the Seder plate with Kohen on top. A fourth matzah, *matzas safek*, is baked along with them in case a problem arises with one of the three matzos.

The concept of “machine matzos” arose following the mechanization of the baking process and the resulting decline in manual baking skills. For instance, the *Chasam Sofer* writes that he was able to put the dough into the stove less than two or three minutes after water touched the flour — a feat that cannot be replicated today.

Ashkenazic sages sanctioned the use of machines in the baking of matzos and Torah authorities in other lands soon followed suit.

Led by the example of our sages, many families have adopted the practice of using machine matzos to fulfill the biblical commandment of eating matzah on Seder night. As a result, the practice of baking distinguishing marks on the Seder night matzos has been largely forgotten.

In ancient times, the matzos were placed upon the Seder plate and a cloth laid between each. The *karpas*, vinegar, *maror* (bitter herbs), *charoses*, bone, and egg were all placed on the top cloth.

In later times, elaborate four-tiered plates came into use. The three matzos are placed on three of the tiers and the other Seder items are placed on the fourth. Those who could afford such an apparatus made of engraved silver

would purchase it to fulfill *Ze Keili ve'anveihu* (glorifying G-d) to its utmost.

Similarly, some use specially designed vessels for the various Seder items, such as a miniature silver wheelbarrow for the *charoses*.

In order to follow the halachah of *Ein ma'avirin al hamitzvos*, according to which the closest mitzvah must be performed first, the Seder items are placed according to the order in which they are used. The *karpas* is placed closest on the right with the cup of vinegar to its left. The *maror* is placed behind the *karpas* with the *charoses* to its left. The roasted egg is placed behind the *maror* with the bone to its left, behind the *charoses*. The bone should have a *kezayis* of meat attached to it. Unfortunately, many haggados specify only the Seder plates of the Vilna Gaon and the Ari, and as a result, the Rama's authentic Ashkenazic Seder plate has been all but forgotten.

The *charoses* is made with small pieces of bitter apples, dates, or figs and almonds and other nuts, mashed together with a little vinegar or wine. Ginger and cinnamon are added. Some lay thin strips of cinnamon on top, reminiscent of straw on the mortar. Some add pomegranate or pear.

## 10. Kiddush

The first cup of wine is poured and Kiddush is recited over it. Kiddush must be recited after *tzeis hakochavim* (nightfall).

It is not customary to sing Shalom Aleichem when Pesach falls on Shabbos.

For the Four Cups it is preferable to use red wine rather than white wine, which was used in places where there was a threat of blood libels.

In ancient times all Jewry used small measurements for the mitzvah requirements. However, since the *Tzlach* determined that the measurements have changed over the years, a more stringent approach has been adopted and larger measurements have been employed. The *Chasam Sofer* determined that a *revi'is* is half an Austrian *Zeidel*. The *Zeidel* itself varied from place to place, ranging from 4.38 to 7.00 ounces. (According to R' Chaim Na'eh the *revi'is* is 86 square centimeters, while according to the Chazon Ish it is 150 square centimeters.)

The leader does not fill his own cup of wine; rather, another participant fills it for him in the custom of a free man who is served but does not serve.

The Four Cups are poured for every member of the household, including newborn infants.

The Cup of Eliahu should be taller than the others to emphasize its prominence. It is poured before Kiddush. Some fill it gradually, pouring a quarter each time the Four Cups are filled.

The matzos should be covered during Kiddush. Care should be taken not to have extra uncovered matzah on the table.

All participants, including the women, recite this Kiddush aloud together.

On Shabbos the Kiddush begins with Vaychulu. On *motza'ei Shabbos* the order of "Yaknehaz" is followed (the blessings Hagafen, Mekadesh HaShabbos, Ha'eish, Hamavdil, and Shehechianu).

When reciting Shehechianu, one should have the other mitzvos of the Seder in mind. Since the women recite Shehechianu at candle lighting, they omit this blessing in Kiddush.

### **11. Leaning**

One reclines toward the left and drinks the first cup.

In Ashkenaz the women are considered distinguished, and thus are required to recline along with the men, in the custom of free people.

### **12. Giving Out Nuts to the Children**

After the first cup of wine some have the custom of distributing nuts to the children, starting from the youngest.

### **13. Urchatz (First Washing)**

The leader washes his hands for the first dipping in the custom of a free man of authority, even though during the rest of the year it is not customary to wash before eating a food dipped in liquid. The rest of the participants do not wash at this point. One of the other participants brings a basin and washes the leader's hands at his seat. The leader does not recite the blessing Al Netilas Yadayim at this point.

### **14. Karpas (Dipping the Vegetable)**

The Maharil maintained that the *karpas* of Chazal is *ipuch* (*Apium graveolens*), which is known as celery. While the *Chasam Sofer's* opinion was that the *karpas* should be eaten raw, the *Korban Nesanel* and the *Nachal Eshkol* maintained that it is preferable to eat it cooked.

Some use other vegetables such as dill, radish, or cress.



The common Ashkenazic custom is to dip the *karpas* in vinegar rather than in salt water.

The leader takes a piece of *karpas* (smaller than a *kezayis*), dips it in vinegar, and recites Ha'adamah. Some sages maintain that one should have the *maror* in mind (which would seem to prohibit irrelevant speech until after the *maror* is eaten), while others maintain that this is unnecessary because the *maror* is included in the blessing on the matzah, which covers everything eaten as part of the meal.

After the leader partakes of the *karpas*, he passes it to the other participants.

### **15. Yachatz (Breaking the Middle Matzah)**

The leader halves the middle matzah unevenly and sets the larger half aside for the *afikoman*, placing it in an embroidered case.

It is customary for the leader to hold the case over his shoulder, walk back and forth, and say:

ככה יצאו אבותינו ממצרים : "משאַרְתֶּם צָרַת בְּשִׁמְלֹתֵם עַל שְׂכָמֵם."

Some walk with a cane, to demonstrate the words, *umakelchem beyedchem*. Some step over a container of water to recall the Splitting of the Sea.

The leader then hides the case behind the pillow at his head.

In order to keep the children awake, some allow them to "steal" the *afikoman* and then give them a present in return for it. During the times of the Rishonim this was not the practice. Instead, they held the children's attention by playfully removing items from the table and then returning them.

The objection of many Ashkenazic authorities to "stealing" the *afikoman* persisted into later generations. Some even gave the children presents for refraining from grabbing the *afikoman*, and others would hide it themselves and give presents to those who found it.

### **16. Maggid (Recounting the Story of the Exodus)**

When reciting the Haggadah, all should have in mind to fulfill the biblical mitzvah of relating the story of the Exodus. It is proper to explain the Haggadah to the children and to translate it for the benefit of those who do not understand the literary Hebrew.

Some open the door before Ha Lachma so that anyone standing outside can enter and join the meal.

The matzos are uncovered and the egg and bone are removed from the table. (The egg and bone are reminiscent of the Korban Pesach and Korban Chaggigah. They are removed in order to emphasize that they do not have the holiness of actual sacrifices.) All the participants raise the matzah together and recite Ha Lachma. Afterward, the egg and bone are replaced on the Seder plate.

The second cup is poured (as is the second fourth of the Cup of Eliahu).

The leader requests that the Seder plate be removed in order to provoke the children to ask, "But we did not eat yet?" to which he answers that we may not eat until we praise Hashem and relate the story of the Exodus. It is a specific mitzvah for the children to ask, as the verse says, *Ki yish'alecha vincha*.

The children sing Ma Nishtanah. If no children are present, Ma Nishtana is recited by one's wife. When there is no one to ask the Ma Nishtana questions, one recites them oneself.

Before reciting Vehi She'ameda, the leader covers the matzos and all raise their cups. Then the cups are put down, the matzah is uncovered, and the Seder resumes with Tzei Ulmad.

When saying *Dam va'eish vesimeros-ashan*, three drops of wine are removed from the cup with the little or ring finger at mention of each of these three words. Some do not remove wine at these three words.

A drop is removed in the same manner at mention of each of the ten plagues and at each word of the abbreviation, *Detzach adash be'achav*.

At Lefichach, the matzos are covered as in Kiddush and all raise their cups to recite this paragraph aloud together. Some place the cups on the table and uncover the matzos until the following blessings, while others hold their cups until after the blessings.

All recite the blessings aloud together as in Kiddush and then, while reclining on the left, drink most of the second cup.

The matzos are uncovered.

### **17. Rochtzah (Second Washing)**

At this point all participants wash their hands and recite the blessing Al Netilas Yadayim. According to the *Chasam Sofer*, although the participants wash their own hands, someone still brings a basin and washes the leader's hands at his seat in the custom of a free man of authority.

## 18. Motzi Matzah (Blessings over the Matzah)

The mitzvah of eating *shmurah matzah* at the Seder is the only biblical mitzvah associated with eating still applicable today.

The leader takes up the three matzos and recites two blessings. When he recites Hamotzi he has in mind the upper matzah and when he recites Al Achilas Matzah he has in mind the broken matzah. He takes a *kezayis* of the upper matzah and of the broken matzah and eats them at once while reclining on the left. It is not necessary to dip the matzah in salt, but some do.

Some follow the opinion of the *Nachal Eshkol*, which requires that the leader first finish eating before distributing portions of matzah to the rest of the participants, who recite their own blessings.

At a Seder with many participants, some follow the opinion of the *Yad HaLevi*. According to this opinion, only the leader and his wife partake of the matzah from the Seder plate, and the rest are given whole matzos which they eat along with the leader after reciting their own blessings.

Others follow the opinion of the *Chasam Sofer*, who says that the leader recites the blessings for all the participants, as on any Shabbos or Yom Tov, and gives them pieces of the matzos on the Seder plate. In such a case, the procedure is as follows: The leader takes up the three matzos and recites Hamotzi on behalf of all the participants, who answer *amen*. Thus the requirement of *lechem mishneh* is fulfilled. The leader then gives a piece of the top and middle matzos to each participant, and when everyone is ready, all recite Al Achilas Matzah together and eat two *kezeisim*.

There are varying opinions about the size of a *kezayis*. The *Chasam Sofer* maintained that a *kezayis* is the size of half an egg of our day, which ranges from 0.53 to 1.12 ounces. He also maintained that *k'dei achilas p'ras* (the time limit) is between two and nine minutes. The matzah should be eaten as quickly as possible.

One who cannot eat both *kezeisim* inside the time limit of *k'dei achilas p'ras* should first eat the Hamotzi portion and then the Al Achilas Matzah portion.

## 19. Maror (Bitter Herbs)

It is customary to use lettuce for *maror*. The sages referred to lettuce as *lettuga*, *lattich*, or *sallat*.

Since lettuce was scarce and expensive in Europe at this time of year and frequently infested with worms, other vegetables were substituted. When a

small amount of lettuce was available, it was used for *maror* and other species were used for *koreich*.

A common substitute is *chrein* (horseradish). The sages referred to horseradish as *tamcha*, *merretich*, or *krein*.

Because of its extremely sharp flavor, some used the leaves of the horseradish but not its root. Some used the root although it is unhealthy, and some soaked it for a day to render its flavor bland, a practice which is against the halachah. Others ate it raw but did not eat the minimum portion, which is also against the halachah.

A well-known alternative, where lettuce is unavailable, is to grind the horseradish before midday on the day of the Seder and to leave it out in a bowl to allow its sharpness to weaken. Some say the bowl should be uncovered and others say it should be covered. Some maintain that ground *chrein* may not be used while others maintain that *chrein* should not be used at all because it is unhealthy. Also, *chrein* is sharp rather than bitter, and *maror* is supposed to be bitter.

One takes a *kezayis* of *maror* (between 0.63 and 0.88 ounces), dips it into the *charoses*, shakes off the *charoses*, and recites the blessing Al Achilas Maror. The *maror* is eaten without reclining.

## **20. Koreich (Wrapping the Matzah with Maror)**

A *kezayis* of the bottom matzah is wrapped with a *kezayis* of *maror* and eaten while reclining to the left. The *koreich* is not dipped and no blessing is recited on it. The paragraph of Zeicher LeMikdash KeHillel is recited before eating the *koreich*.

## **21. Shulchan Oreich (Festive Meal)**

Many people have the custom of eating hardboiled or roasted eggs at the beginning of the Seder meal as a reminder of the Churban. Some eat the egg from the Seder plate. Some add eggs to the soup.

The halachic authorities of Ashkenaz decided that roasted chicken or meat should not be eaten at the Seder meal; however, roasted fish is permissible since it does not require *shechitah* (halachic slaughter) and thus cannot be taken for a *korban*.

For the same reason, when preparing the meat for the Seder meal, one should not mention that it is for Pesach but rather that it is for "Yom Tov." In all Ashkenazic lands the custom was to eat *kneidelach* made from matzah meal. *Gebrockt* was never a concern in Ashkenaz and is even less

so with present day thin matzos that do not have a trace of flour on them. Moreover, halachic sources posit that refraining from eating a tasty, traditional food is an infringement on the biblical mitzvah of *simchas Yom Tov* (rejoicing on the festival).

## **22. Tzafun (Afikoman)**

After Shulchan Oreich, the leader removes the broken matzah (the *afikoman*) from the case in which it was hidden and gives a *kezayis* to each participant. Some are careful to eat two *kezeisim*.

The *afikoman* should be eaten before halachic midnight. However, some Ashkenazic sages did not insist on this practice because the *afikoman* is a rabbinic mitzvah marking the *korban chaggigah*, which was eaten before midnight during the times of the Beis Hamikdash (Holy Temple). Moreover, rushing to eat the *afikoman* before midnight may cut short the biblical mitzvah of recounting the Exodus, as the fulfillment of that mitzvah may depend on having matzah and *maror* remaining to eat.

It is customary to hang a small piece of the *afikoman* from both Seder nights on a wall or to keep them in a drawer in recollection of the Exodus and as a symbol for warding off evil on the roads. For this reason some keep this piece of matzah in their pocket when going on a journey. Therefore, it is advisable to make an effort to preserve this piece of matzah before it is cleared away.

Some add this piece of matzah to the cholent of the following Shabbos Hagadol (if it is still edible) and others burn it with the chametz the following Pesach.

## **23. Bareich (Birkas Hamazon)**

After eating the *afikoman* the third cup of wine is poured (and wine is added to the Cup of Eliahu), upon which Birkas Hamazon is recited.

Whole loaves of bread or pieces of matzah are removed from the table for Birkas Hamazon for two reasons: so that Birkas Hamazon should not resemble the worship of Jupiter in which food is placed on the table as part of the service and because blessing (in this case Birkas Hamazon) does not attach itself to items that are normally counted, such as whole loaves of bread. Generally, unbroken loaves do not remain on the table at the end of a meal; however, on Pesach it is common for whole pieces of matzah to be left. Therefore this halachah is especially relevant on Pesach.

Although it is not customary to wash *mayim acharonim* (after the meal) during the year, some Rishonim did wash after the Seder meal as a sign of freedom, similarly to the washing for *karpas* which is not performed throughout the rest of the year.

Throughout Pesach, Shir Hama'alos is chanted to the famous melody of Adir Hu.

After Birkas Hamazon all recite the blessing over the wine aloud together as in Kiddush and then, while reclining to the left, drink most of the third cup of wine.

## 24. Shefoch Chamasecha

Before Shefoch Chamasecha the door is opened to show that it is Leil Shimurim (a special night of Divine protection). It is an ancient custom to say at this point:

אליהו ומשיח יבואו!

Some have a participant wait outside the door dressed up as Eliahu. When the door opens he walks in or pretends to fall in and announces the *ge'ulah* (final redemption) to illustrate our full belief in its speedy arrival. Some use a doll. This practice is not meant to be playful; rather, it is a serious, tangible expression of our faith in the coming of Mashiach.

## 25. Hallel

The fourth cup of wine is poured (and the final fourth of the Cup of Eliahu), and the rest of Hallel is chanted to pleasing melodies.

It is proper to hold the cup in the right hand until after the blessing over the wine.

Some have a child call out the "Hodu's" and the "Ana's" in a pleasant singing voice. The Rishonim explain that the reason for this is to keep the children awake and to train them in mitzvos, and therefore this is not what the Talmud refers to as a distasteful practice. Still, an adult should sing the verses with the child so that when the participants repeat the verses, it is clear that they are primarily responding to the adult.

These verses are chanted to the famous melody of Adir Hu.

Yehallelucha is not concluded with the blessing of *Melech mehullal batishbachos*; rather, it is immediately followed by Hallel Hagadol (the twenty-six verses of *Ki le'olam chasdo*) and concluded with Yishtabach.

## 26. Piyyutim Recited after the Haggadah

At the end of the Seder it is customary to chant the *piyyutim* in their Judeo-German translation.

The *piyyut* “Allmechtiger G-tt” is a free translation of Adir Hu and is chanted to the same melody. Of all the translated *piyyutim* in the Haggadah, this *piyyut* made its mark on sages and laymen alike. Even in recent years when the other translations began slipping out of later editions of the German Haggadah, “Allmechtiger G-tt” remained. To this day, even families that are unfamiliar with the old German dialect continue to sing this song with deep feelings of nostalgia. Indeed, it is with this song in mind that we customarily greet each other after services on the Seder night with the salutation “Bau gut” (Build well), as the theme of this *piyyut* is the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash.

The *piyyutim* Echad Mi Yodei’a and Chad Gadya also have poetic translations, which are inserted after each stanza of the original *piyyut*. To this day there are families who are keeping this tradition alive. Some have the children sing the translation (the *Chasam Sofer* had his young daughters sing it) to keep them awake until the end of the Seder.

Some families have the custom of singing Ein Keilokeinu in translation — *Es gibt kein G-tt wie unser G-tt* — after Chad Gadya.

Some recite Shir Hashirim after the Haggadah.

## 27. After the Seder

Upon going to bed only the first paragraph of Shema, the blessing Hamapil, and the verse *Beyadecha afkid ruchi* are recited. Anshei ma’aseh (men of stature) do not lock their doors to show their full faith in Hashem’s special protection on this night.

Some families have the custom of leaving the Seder plate on the table overnight with the Cup of Eliahu covered. The Cup of Eliahu is then used for Kiddush the following day.

## VI. Bris Milah

### 1. “Zachar” (Friday Night before the Bris)

This widely practiced Ashkenazic custom became known as “Shalom Zachar” in eastern Europe.

After the Friday night meal on the Shabbos preceding the bris, the community visits the house where the baby is staying and enjoys a repast of light food, fruit, and drinks.

This event is announced in synagogue after Ma’ariv in the name of the baby’s father.

### 2. Wachtacht (The Night before the Bris)

On the night preceding the bris, a meal of meat and wine is prepared in the home of the mother. The sandak and mohel attend, and some maintain that this is a *se’udas mitzvah* (a meal that is a mitzvah to partake of). During the Nine Days, dairy food is served.

Many have the practice of studying sources relevant to the bris at this meal, such as Bereishis 17 and 21 (verses 1 to 8), Shemos 4 (verses 18 to 26 — some use R’ Hirsch’s and other commentaries), Yehoshua 5, Mishnah Shabbos 19 with Gemara, and Gemara Nedarim 31b.

A *minyán* of ten men recites Shema in the presence of the mother. This custom is also practiced on Yom Kippur and on the Seder night, when the meal is omitted.

Some call children into the house to recite Shema near the baby.

Unshelled nuts are given out to the children to symbolize Hashem’s intention for people to participate in the completion of Creation, as is taught in Midrash Tanchuma (Tazria 5).

### 3. Preparations before Shacharis

The bris is performed as early in the morning as possible, preferably at the end of Shacharis.

The father, dressed in Shabbos finery, brings a wax candle to synagogue, large enough to burn for three days. This candle is called a *Yudish Kertz*.



He lights it at the prayer leader's *amud*. He brings an additional twelve small wax candles, symbolic of the twelve tribes, which will remain lit until after the bris. These candles are called *Shevatimshe*. Six candles are placed on the north side of the *aron kodesh* and six to its south. Some place four on either side and the remaining four at the four corners of the *almemor (bimah)*. Others place a twelve-stemmed candelabra behind the Chair of Eliahu.

A special bris *paroches* is fastened to the *aron kodesh*.

Two chairs (or a "double chair") are prepared for the sandak and for Eliahu. The Chair of Eliahu is prepared first, and upon it is placed a fine pillow.

Both chairs face the *aron kodesh*.

A special piece of white cloth measuring about three square feet is prepared for use as a diaper during the bris. This cloth is called a *Yudish Windel*. It is the material used to make the *Wimpel* for the Torah scroll.

The sandak immerses in a *mikveh* before Shacharis.

#### **4. Order of Prayers**

Adon Olam is chanted to a melody of the leader's choosing.

The leader chants from Romemos Keil Bigronam (in the fourth Hallelukah) until Vayevarech David to the special bris melody.

Vecharos Imo Haberis is recited alternately by the mohel and the sandak. (If the *peri'ah* is performed by someone else, he has precedence over the sandak.) If they are incapable of reciting Vecharos, they may be replaced by another congregant. Each recites the alternate verse in an undertone. The congregation recites all the verses along with them in an undertone.

The leader chants Shirah Chadashah and Tzur Yisrael to a special melody.

Tachanun is omitted, but Lamnatzei'ach is recited.

On Mondays and Thursdays the leader recites Keil Erech Apayim to a fine melody. The sandak must be called to the Torah. If possible, the mohel and *porei'ah* should also be given *aliyos*.

If he is capable, the mohel leads Ashrei and Lamnatzei'ach. He takes precedence over a mourner or one who has yahrtzeit.

After Kaddish Tiskabbal, the congregation skips Aleinu and immediately recites the Shir shel Yom, Shir Hayichud (where it is customary to recite it daily), Shir Mizmor LeAsaf, and Kaddish Yasom. Those involved in the bris hurry to prepare for the bris. Some do not remove their tefillin until after the bris.

On a public fast day, the “Chatanu” of Zechor Bris Avraham is incorporated into Selichos. Tachanun is omitted, but Lamnatzei’ach and Eil Erech Apayim are recited.

## 5. When the Bris Is Not Held in Synagogue

If due to extenuating circumstances the bris cannot be performed in synagogue, and the sandak, mohel, or father are present in synagogue for the service, the following parts of the special Shacharis are observed:

The bris paroches is fastened and the candles are lit.

Vecharos is recited alternately. If either the mohel or sandak is not present, the leader takes his place. If necessary, the father or any other congregant may recite Vecharos along with the leader.

The leader chants Shirah Chadashah and Tzur Yisrael to a special melody.

Tachanun is omitted.

The sandak must be called to the Torah. If possible, the mohel and *porei’ah* should also be given *aliyos*.

On Shabbos, if the mohel, sandak, or father is present, the Yotzeir, Ofan, and Zulas for a bris are recited, as well as Elokeichem in Mussaf. This is contingent upon whether any of them was present for Vayevarech David. If they were not, all the *piyyutim* are omitted.

Immediately after the conclusion of Shacharis, those involved hurry to perform the bris.

Aleinu is recited after the bris. During the month of Elul it is followed by *shofar* blowing.

## 6. Sandak

According to Minhag Ashkenaz, *Gefater* (*k’fater*), sandak, and *amidah leberachos* are one and the same. (*Gefater* is indeed the German translation of sandak.) The Sandak brings the baby to the bris arena and holds him during the bris and the following blessings. Giving out *cheikes* and the like is not customary.

The sandak’s wife — called *sandeikes* or *Gefaterin* — brings the baby to her husband at the entrance to the women’s section.

The father may not honor the same sandak at a following bris. However, if for some reason the sandak was only honored with a part of the procedure (bringing the baby, holding him on his knees, or *amidah leberachos*), he may serve as full sandak at a subsequent bris. Some are more lenient and allow the father to serve as sandak for more than one of his sons.

The sandak provides certain items for the simchah: the special diaper, beverages for the bris meal, and cakes and other food for the Wachnacht and for after the bris ceremony. If the father is not a man of means, the sandak pays for the entire meal. Some sandaks give the baby a silver goblet.

The *sandeikes* presents a gift (called *Gefatershaft*) to the mother when she takes the baby from her to bring him to the bris.

Sandak funds are established to aid sandaks who are unable to cover the above costs.

## 7. Preparations for the Bris

A chain of silver and gold coins, or antique coins, is placed upon the baby's neck. Some actually drill holes in the coins to string them on a chain, and others place them in a fine bag.

Two goblets are prepared — one for the blessing and one for *metzitzah*. They are usually designed as a matching set — *keta'omei tzeviyah* — which interlock with each other. They are engraved with the words *Kos shel Berachah* and *Kos shel Metzitzah*.

The *Yudish Windel* is prepared for the bris.

## 8. The Bris Ceremony

At the conclusion of Shacharis, the *sandeikes* brings the baby from the mother's residence to the women's section of the synagogue. (The mother traditionally does not leave her home during the first month after childbirth.) She passes the baby to her husband, the sandak, and waits to receive the baby after the conclusion of the bris. If the *sandeikes* is not in a state of purity, a child passes the baby from her to her husband.

When the baby is brought into the sanctuary, all rise and call out:

בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא!

The sandak brings the baby to the Chair of Eliahu. The mohel takes the baby from his hands, places him on the chair, and says the following words only:

זֶה הַפֶּסֶא שֶׁל אֱלִיהוּ זְכוּר לְטוֹב.  
אֲשֶׁרִי תִבְחַר וּתְקַרֵב וְשָׁכֵן חֲצֵרֶיךָ.

The congregation responds:

נִשְׁבָּעָה בְּטוֹב בֵּיתְךָ, קְדוֹשׁ הַיְכָלְךָ.

The mohel takes the baby from the Chair of Eliahu as the sandak seats himself in the chair prepared for him. The mohel places the baby upon the sandak's knees.

Some have an additional mohel perform the *peri'ah* and the *metzitzah*. In such a case the primary mohel recites Al Hamilah and the mohel of the *peri'ah* recites Hagafen and Asher Kidash. This practice is prohibited on Shabbos.

Some are careful not to touch the foreskin before reciting the blessing, but others hold it between their fingers during the blessing.

The mohel recites the following blessing aloud:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִנְנוּ עַל הַמִּילָה.

The mohel quickly cuts the foreskin, and immediately afterward the father recites the following blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִנְנוּ  
לְהַכְנִיסוֹ בְּבְרִיתוֹ שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ.

Shehechianu is omitted, but some fathers recite this blessing when performing the *milah* of their firstborn son themselves. See *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 1).

The congregation immediately responds:

כָּשֶׁם שֶׁנִּכְנַס לְבְרִית בְּךָ יְיָ לְתוֹרָה וּלְחֻפָּה וּלְמַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים.

The mohel throws the foreskin upon the Chair of Eliahu and then quickly performs the *peri'ah*. He takes some wine into his mouth from the *metzitzah* cup and then discharges it with the *metzitzah* blood into the same cup. Then he bandages the wound and binds the baby in the special diaper, which will be used to make the *Wimpel*.

At this point the mohel takes the baby from the sandak, the sandak rises, and the mohel returns the baby to the sandak's hands. The mohel washes his hands and mouth and then recites the concluding blessings. In cases where someone may take serious offence at being omitted from the ceremony, this honor may be given to a different participant.

The mohel recites the blessings from a special chart. Some make this chart from silver. He takes the goblet in his hands and faces east while reciting the blessings. He has in mind to be *motzi* the sandak with the Hagafen blessing.

It is customary, even among great Torah scholars, to name the child after a deceased ancestor rather than an unrelated rabbi, no matter how great. The first child is named after an ancestor on the father's side, the second on the mother's side, and so on. Sometimes a compromise is reached and the name is taken from both sides, but the father's side always takes precedence.

The mohel recites the following concluding blessings:

**סברי כהנים [מורה מורינו הרב] מרנן ורבנן ורבותי!**  
ברוך אתה השם אלקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן.  
ברוך אתה השם אלקינו מלך העולם, אשר קדש ידיד מבטון, וחוק בשארו שם,  
ונאצאיו חתם באות ברית קודש, על בן בשכר זאת אל חי חלקנו צורנו צוה להציל  
ידידות שארנו משחת למען בריתו אשר שם בבשרנו.  
ברוך אתה השם כורת הברית.

אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, קים את הילד הזה לאביו ולאמו  
(כשהאב מוהל יאמר: קים את בני הילד הזה לי ולאמו)  
ויקרא שמו בישראל פלוני בר פלוני.  
ישמח האב ביוצא חלציו. ותגל אמו בפרי בטנה  
(כשהאב מוהל יאמר: אשמח ביוצא חלציו.  
כשנפטרה האם יאמר: ותגל אמו בגן עדן בפרי בטנה)  
כפתיב, ישמח אביו ואמו ותגל יולדתו.  
ונאמר, ואעבור עליך ואראך מתבוססת בדמיך.  
ואמר לך בדמיך חיי. ואמר לך בדמיך חיי.

The mohel touches some wine to the baby's lips. Some use the wine mixed with blood from the *metzitzah* cup.

ונאמר, זכר לעולם בריתו דבר צנה לאלף דור. אשר כרת את אברהם ושבועתו לישחק.  
ויעמידה ליעקב לחוק לישראל ברית עולם. ונאמר, וימל אברהם את ישחק בנו בן  
שמונת ימים באשר צנה אותו אלקים. הודו להשם כי טוב, כי לעולם חסדו. הודו  
להשם כי טוב, כי לעולם חסדו. פלוני זה הקטן גדול יהיה. כשם שנכנס לברית בן  
יכנס לתורה ולחפה ולמעשים טובים. אמן.

If the baby has no father, the mohel recites the following nusach:

אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו קים את הילד הזה לאמו ולקרוביו ולכל משפחתו ויקרא שמו  
פלוני כשם אביו. אתה השם אלקינו אלקי כל בשר אבי ותומים תהיה לו לאב והוא  
היה לך לבן, ותהי כניסתו לברית כפירה לאמו ולכל קרוביו. ותענג נפש האב בגן עדן

בְּיוֹצֵא חֲלָצִיו וְהָאֵם בְּעוֹלָם הִזָּה תִּגַּל בְּפָרִי בְטָנָהּ, וַיִּתְקַים בּוֹ מִקְרָא שְׁכָתוֹב, וְנֶאֱעָבֹר עָלֶיךָ וְנֶאֱרָאךְ מִתְּבוּסָסֶת בְּדַמִּיךָ. וְאִמֵּר לְךָ בְּדַמִּיךָ חַיִּי. וְנֶאֱמַר, זָכַר לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ דְּבָר צְנָה לְאֶלְפֵי דוֹר. אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת אֶת אַבְרָהָם וּשְׁבוּעָתוֹ לְיִשְׁחָק. וַיַּעֲמִידָהּ לְיַעֲקֹב לְחוּק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית עוֹלָם. וְנֶאֱמַר, וַיִּמַּל אַבְרָהָם אֶת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ בֶן שְׁמוֹנֵת יָמִים כַּאֲשֶׁר צְנָה אֹתוֹ אֱלֹקִים. הוֹדוּ לַהֲשֵׁם כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ. הוֹדוּ לַהֲשֵׁם כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ. פְּלוּנִי זֶה הִקְטַן גְּדוֹל יְהִיָּה. כְּשֵׁם שְׁנַכְנַס לְבָרִית כֹּן יַכְנִס לְתוֹרָה וּלְחֻפָּה וּלְמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים. אָמֵן.

If the baby has no father or mother, the mohel recites the following nusach in the place of Elokeinu:

תְּשַׁלַּח אֶסוּתָא דְחַיִּי וְרַחֲמֵי מִן קַדְשׁ מְרָא שְׁמִיָּא לְאַסְאָה יֵת רַבִּינָא הָדוֹן וַיִּתְקַרֵּי שְׁמָה פְּלוּנִי וַיִּתְסָא כְּמָה דִּי אֲתִסְרִי מִיָּא דִּי מְרָה עַל יְדֵי מַלְשָׁה בְּמַדְבְּרָא וּכְמִיָּא דִּירִיחוֹ עַל יְדֵי אֱלִישֶׁע, כֹּן יִתְסָא בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, כַּאֲמֹר, וְנֶאֱעָבֹר עָלֶיךָ וְנֶאֱרָאךְ מִתְּבוּסָסֶת בְּדַמִּיךָ. וְנֶאֱמַר לְךָ בְּדַמִּיךָ חַיִּי. וְנֶאֱמַר, זָכַר לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ דְּבָר צְנָה לְאֶלְפֵי דוֹר. אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת אֶת אַבְרָהָם וּשְׁבוּעָתוֹ לְיִשְׁחָק. וַיַּעֲמִידָהּ לְיַעֲקֹב לְחוּק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית עוֹלָם. וְנֶאֱמַר, וַיִּמַּל אַבְרָהָם אֶת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ בֶן שְׁמוֹנֵת יָמִים כַּאֲשֶׁר צְנָה אֹתוֹ אֱלֹקִים. הוֹדוּ לַהֲשֵׁם כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ. הוֹדוּ לַהֲשֵׁם כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ. פְּלוּנִי זֶה הִקְטַן גְּדוֹל יְהִיָּה. כְּשֵׁם שְׁנַכְנַס לְבָרִית כֹּן יַכְנִס לְתוֹרָה וּלְחֻפָּה וּלְמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים. אָמֵן.

The mohel gives the sandak to drink of the wine. Some wine is given to the baby and the children who are present. The cup of wine is also sent to the mother.

At this point the leader calls out *Aleinu leshabei'ach!* In the meantime the sandak returns the baby to his wife at the entrance to the women's section.

The foreskin is burned. Some practice the custom of burying it.

The Chair of Eliahu remains in its place with its decorative coverings until the third day after the bris, until which time the *Yudish Kertz* remains lit.

### 9. The Festive Meal

Some serve the meal immediately after the bris, and others serve it in the afternoon. A *derashah* (homily) on the topic of bris is given. There is singing and chanting of *piyyutim*.

*Shir Hama'alos* is chanted to a melody. *Nodeh Leshimcha*, which was not instituted for a bris, is not recited.

The mohel leads *Birkas Hamazon* if he is capable of doing so.

The acrostic *Elokim Tzivisa Lididecha bechirecha*, composed by the Tosafist R' Ephraim of Bonn (1132-1197), is incorporated into the second blessing before *kakasuv ve'achalta vesava'ta*. The leader recites it aloud and the participants respond after each stanza, "*Beris olam.*"

Toward the end of Birkas Hamazon, **before** *Bamarom yelamedu*, the authentic “Harachamans,” composed in acrostic form by R’ Ephraim of Bonn, are recited. These are not identical to the “Harachamans” printed in the eastern European *siddurim*.

## 10. When Two Brisim Take Place Together

When two brisim take place together, the number of candles is doubled. The baby who was born first takes precedence, and his sandak takes precedence for an aliyah. If the older baby’s bris has been delayed (i.e., it is not the eighth day), the practice is unclear. The two mohelim recite Vecharos alternately in the place of the sandak. Both babies are brought to synagogue concurrently. The first *sandeikes* walks in front of the second and the first sandak takes his baby first. The congregation calls out, “Baruch Haba!” Some have the custom of calling out “Beruchim Habaim!” The first mohel recites Al Hamilah for both and the second mohel responds *amen* to be *yotzei* (so that he need not recite his own blessing). The second mohel recites Hagafen and Asher Kidash for the first. If the babies are twins, the father says *lehachnisam* instead of *lehachniso*. In all cases of **double brisim**, the congregation responds:

בָּשֵׁם שְׁנֵיכִנְסוּ לְבְרִית כֵּן יִכְנְסוּ לְתוֹרָה וּלְחֻפָּה וּלְמַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים.

The following “Elokeinu” supplications are recited in plural form. Three goblets are prepared — one for the blessing and two for *metzitzah*. Wine is taken from the single blessing goblet and given to both babies at *bedamayich chayi*. If both babies will not be circumcised concurrently, then a separate procedure should be practiced for each one. In Birkas Hamazon, the Harachamans are recited in plural form.

## 11. Bris on Shabbos

All the traditional candles are lit before the onset of Shabbos. The candles must be long enough to remain lit for the required amount of time. The prayer melodies are identical to those used on weekdays. The bris is performed after Mussaf, before Aleinu. The sandak partakes of the wine even though he has not yet made Kiddush.

In Shacharis the customary *yotzeir*, *ofan*, and *zulas* are recited. The short Emes Veyatziv is recited. The *ge'ulah piyyut* of Yom Layabashah is omitted.

In Mussaf, the "Elokeichem" is recited.

On Yom Tov — even if it falls on Shabbos — all bris *piyyutim* are omitted.

## 12. Changes in the Prayers on Special Days

If the bris falls on a Shabbos when special *piyyutim* are recited, some bris *piyyutim* take precedence over the special Shabbos *piyyutim*. This custom is not uniform in all Ashkenazic communities.

In Frankfurt the following procedure was followed:

**שבת חול המועד פסח** – "אלקיכם" דמילה.  
**שבת חול המועד סוכות** – "אופן" ו"אלקיכם" דמילה.  
**שבת ראש חודש** – יוצר ו"אופן" דראש חודש, "זולת" דמילה, "אלקיכם" דראש חודש.  
**שבת בראשית, ארבע פרשיות, שבת הגדול, שבת נחמו, שבת שובה** – "אופן" ו"אלקיכם" דמילה.  
**שבת ראש חודש שחל בחנוכה או בפרשת שקלים או בפרשת החודש** – "יוצר" של השבת, "אופן" ו"אלקיכם" דראש חודש, "זולת" דמילה.  
**שבת הפסקה ושבת פנויה בחודש אדר או ניסן** – "יוצר" של השבת, "אופן", "זולת" ו"אלקיכם" דמילה.  
**שבתות שבין ר"ח אייר לשבועות, שבתות בין המצרים** – "יוצר", "אופן" ו"אלקיכם" דמילה, "זולת" דשבת.  
**ראש חודש אב שחל בשבת** – "יוצר", "אופן" ו"אלקיכם" דראש חודש, "זולת" דשבת, "אלקיכם" דמילה.  
**הושענא רבה** – בפיוט "אנא אזון חין" לפני החרוז "אנא הבט" אומרים את החרוז הראשון מהפזמון "זכור ברית אברהם".  
**בתענית ציבור ובכל יום שאומרים בו סליחות** – לפני "זכור לנו ברית ראשונים" אומרים את החרוז הראשון מהפזמון "זכור ברית אברהם".

## 13. Bris during the Nine Days

From Rosh Chodesh Av until Tish'ah B'Av, dairy food is served at the Wacht. However, all participants at the bris meal (even if they comprise more than a *minyan* of ten men) eat meat and drink wine until halachic midday on the day preceding Tish'ah B'Av.

The main bris participants — father, sandak, and mohel — have their hair cut and wash their clothing. In some communities this was not the practice



during the week of Tish'ah B'Av. Others were more stringent and forbade this practice from Rosh Chodesh.

The main bris participants wear Shabbos finery at the morning services whether the bris falls on a weekday or on Shabbos Chazon, when it is otherwise customary to wear weekday clothing. The only difference is that when the bris falls on Shabbos Chazon, the main bris participants also wear Shabbos finery on the previous evening when participating in the Wachnacht (but not at Ma'ariv). They also may take a hot bath before Shabbos.

The entire prayer service and all the bris additions are recited to the weekday "Bein Hametzarim" melody.

On Mondays and Thursdays Keil Erech Apayim is recited to the Sha'ah Ne'esar melody. The reader lowers his voice at the end of the Chatzi Kaddish following the Torah reading.

#### **14. The Third Day after the Bris**

A small meal is served after halachic midday on the third day after the bris. A modest number of people are invited.

Some have the practice of washing the baby at this time in the presence of distinguished women of the community.

The Chair of Eliahu is restored to its place and the *Yudish Kertz* is extinguished.

#### **15. Customs Relating to the Mother Going to Synagogue**

A mother after childbirth leaves her home for the first time on the fourth or fifth Shabbos morning after the birth, when the baby is approximately one month old and approaching the time when he is considered viable, and not a *safeik neifel*. Her first steps outdoors are directed toward the house of G-d. Dressed in Yom Tov finery, she is accompanied to Shacharis by an entourage of friends. Some take the baby along.

In the *piyyut* Keil Adon, the leader chants *semeichim betzeisam* (rejoicing as they go forth) to a special melody.

The father is given an aliyah. He has in mind to be *motzi* his wife for her obligation of thanksgiving, and she has this in mind when answering *amen*. Birkas Hagomeil is not recited after childbirth at all, neither by the mother nor by the father. The connection between the father's Barechu and thanksgiving is based upon the verse *Hodu lo barechu shemo* (Give **thanks** to Him and **ble**ss His name).

The father makes a Mi Shebeirach for his wife and baby and pledges money in their merit for the synagogue lighting. This is the alternative to the Korban Yoledes and Korban Todah.

The Mi Shebeirach nusach varied from one community to another. The following is R' Yitzchak Zeligman Ber's nusach:

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב הוא יברך את האשה היולדת [פלונית בת פלוני] עם בנה הנולד [לבת: בתה הנולדה] במזל טוב, בעבור שבעלה נדר בעדם... בשכר זה הקדוש ברוך הוא יהי בעזרם וישמרם ויזכה את האם לגדל את בנה [לבת: בתה] בטוב ובנעימים ולהדריכו [לבת: ולהדריכה] באורח מישור למצות ולמעשים טובים, ונאמר אמן.

Note that there is no mention of the bris or any blessings for the mother's recovery since the Mi Shebeirach is recited several weeks after the birth.

As mentioned above, it is not customary to recite a Mi Shebeirach for recovery from illness on Shabbos or Yom Tov unless the person is deathly ill and may die that day. The following is the *Terumas Hadeshen's* Mi Shebeirach for a woman who is having serious complications during or following childbirth:

מי שברך אמותינו שרה רבקה ולאה וחנה, הוא יברך פלוניתא בת פלוני בעבור שפלוני ברי פלוני יתן צדקה בעדה, וכמו שריפא חזקיהו מלך יהודה ובנימין הצדיק ומרים הנביאה, כן ישלח לה רפואה שלמה מהרה [ולפעמים אמר: ויתיר לה חבליה מצרייה לטב] בתוך כל חולי עמו ישראל, ונאמר אמן.

A girl is named on this Shabbos. she is not named beforehand. Some give the name during the Torah reading, and others give it at the Chol Kreish.

Kaddish Tiskabbal is chanted to a fine melody.

After services the entourage of women escorts the mother home where they partake of cakes and beverages.

The Chol Kreish is held that afternoon.

## 16. Chol Kreish

The *Chasam Sofer* writes,<sup>80</sup> "One should not mock Jewish customs for which the reasons are unclear, for they flow from a deep source, and as I have said, 'Anyone who doubts the validity of our courtesies and customs should have his ancestry examined.'" Earlier the Rama wrote,<sup>81</sup> "One may

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<sup>80</sup> *Teshuvos Chasam Sopher*, Orach Chaim §51.

<sup>81</sup> *Rama*, Orach Chaim §690:17.

not desist from the practice of any custom or mock it since not for nought were they established.”

A minhag which requires such an admonition is the Chol Kreish. Although this ancient custom began falling out of practice in most eastern European communities during the seventeenth century, it was practiced universally in Germany until the war. Some of our early sages who mention this custom explicitly are the *Machzor Vitri* (Rashi's student), R' Yehuda Hachassid, and the Maharam Mintz. Some sources attribute it to the *mishteh gadol* of Avraham Avinu (Bereishis 21:8).

The underlying rationale of the custom is that something so integral to the child's life — the name he will be called on a daily basis — should not evolve haphazardly but should be established in a set, holy fashion at the beginning of his life.

The Chol Kreish is held on the afternoon of the first Shabbos the mother goes to synagogue — about a month after the birth — for a boy or a girl.

A boy's biblical name is traditionally given at the bris, while the name that will be actually used is given at the Chol Kreish. For example, a boy named Shlomo Zalman would be named only Shlomo at the bris and only Zalman at the Chol Kreish. Such a boy would be called up to the Torah only by the name of Shlomo. This tradition is recorded in the *Chasam Sofer* and in the *Bach*.

Similarly, a child named Yechezkel may be given the name Chezky at the Chol Kreish. If the boy is going to be called by his biblical name, that name is repeated at the Chol Kreish.

This ancient minhag has no relevance to the secular names that Jews were forced to accept since the Emancipation at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It applies only to traditional Jewish names.

The Chol Kreish procedure goes as follows:

After the Shabbos morning meal, boys or girls (depending upon the baby) under bar or bas mitzvah age gather at the residence of the new mother.

The baby is dressed up as at a bris and the crib is decorated.

A baby boy is covered with a kosher tallis and a book of Vayikra is placed at his head. The children either sit at the table or stand around the crib and recite the following verses:

בראשית ברא אלקים, את השמים ואת הארץ. ויכולו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם.  
המלאך הגואל אותי מכל רע יברך את הנערים וייקרא בהם שמי ושם אבותי אברהם  
ויצחק, וידגו לרוב בקרב הארץ. ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה, את יעקב  
איש וביתו באו. ויקרא אל משה, וידבר השם אליו מאוהל מועד לאמר. וידבר השם  
אל משה במדבר סיני באוהל מועד, באחד לחודש השני בשנה השנית לצאתם מארץ

מצרים לאמר. אלה הדברים אשר דיבר משה אל כל ישראל בעבר הירדן, במדבר בערבה מול סוף בין פארן ובין תופל ולבן וחצרות ודי זהב. וזאת הברכה אשר בירך משה איש האלקים את בני ישראל, לפני מותו. ולכל היד החזקה ולכל המורא הגדול, אשר עשה משה לעיני כל ישראל.

Thus a bond to Torah and mitzvos is forged at the onset of the baby's life. Afterward, for both baby boys and girls, the children raise the crib and call out three times: "*Chol Kreish! Eich yikre'u latinok?* (What will the baby be called?) So-and-so! So-and-so! So-and-so!"

The children are given bags of fruit, nuts, and sweets.

For further details about this custom, see *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 1).

## 17. Wimpel

The mother or anyone else with artistic talent fashions the *Yudish Windel* into a *Wimpel* (also called *Mappe*). The square cloth is cut into four strips ten inches wide which are sewn together to form one long strip.

The *Wimpel* is painted or embroidered with the name of the boy, his date of birth, and the standard blessing to raise him *leTorah lechuppah ulma'asim tovim*. It is decorated with images associated with the boy's name, such as a lion for Yehuda, and with an image of his *mazal* (zodiac). By "Torah" would appear an image of a Torah scroll, by "chuppah" would appear a canopy with a bride and groom, by "ma'asim tovim" would appear a charity box, and so on.

As an example, the following is the nusach of R' Akiva Eiger's *Wimpel*:

הילד עקיבא בן הר"ר משה גינז שנולד למז"ט יום ר"ח מרחשון תקכ"ב לפ"ק  
ה' יזכה לגדל אותו לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים, אמן.

Some add verses and decorations in the margins of the *Wimpel*.

Some bring the *Wimpel* to synagogue when the boy is one year old, and others wait until he walks to synagogue for the first time at the age of three.

One who wishes to dedicate the *Wimpel* to the synagogue must do so before the onset of Shabbos.

Although it is clear that the *Wimpel* may be used not only to bind the Torah but also to bind other scrolls such as the *sefer aftarta*, some are careful to explicitly enunciate such a condition.

On the Shabbos after the boy's third birthday, his mother brings him with his *Wimpel* to synagogue for Shacharis. At the Torah reading the boy goes from the women's section to his father with his *Wimpel*. The father is given an aliyah and then makes a Mi Shebeirach for the boy. Relatives are honored with *hagbahah* and *gelilah* and the boy is honored with *hoshatah* (see Daily Customs). The father then lifts the boy so that he can also perform *hachzakah* of the *atzei chaim* (Torah rods). Finally, the boy places the *rimonim* on the *atzei chaim*.

The father takes his son to the rabbi, who blesses him while placing his hands on the boy's head.

After services, some have the custom to give out delicacies in the boy's home to all those who come to bless him.

In many communities the boy is now allowed to continue attending services regularly.

On the Shabbos of his bar mitzvah, the boy performs *gelilah* with his *Wimpel*.

For further details about this custom, see *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 2).

It is not customary to give a boy his first haircut at age three. Some adamantly oppose this practice because of its resemblance to pagan practices. Instead, the child's hair is first cut in honor of Yom Tov or when it is too long.

For further details, see *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz* (vol. 3).



## VII. Pidyon Haben (Redemption of the Firstborn)

### 1. Who Is Obligated

A firstborn baby boy must be redeemed by his father. This obligation applies when the baby is the firstborn to his mother. It is not necessary that he be the firstborn to his father. The baby need not be redeemed if the father is a Kohen or a Levi, or if the mother is a bas Kohen or a bas Levi. A baby born after a miscarriage need not be redeemed. The baby is, however, considered the firstborn for inheritance purposes.

### 2. When the Pidyon is Performed

The firstborn is fit to be redeemed after thirty days of life. The pidyon is performed on the thirty-first day and should not be delayed.

The pidyon is compared to kodashim, and since kodashim are not redeemed at night, the pidyon is not performed at night. Night is also the time when *mazikin* are active. It is customary to perform the pidyon during the afternoon meal, in which meat is usually, but not necessarily, eaten. Performing the pidyon in the afternoon and not in the morning serves to more fully publicize the mitzvah. Nevertheless, the pidyon should be done as early as possible in the afternoon so as not to delay it more than necessary and also to ensure that the meal begins before *minchah ketanah*, which according to opinion of the Ashkenazic sages is the optimal time for Minchah.

Tachanun is recited in both Shacharis and Minchah, even if Minchah takes place during the pidyon.

If the thirty-first day falls on Shabbos or Yom Tov, the pidyon is postponed to the next day. It is not customary to perform a pidyon on *motza'ei Shabbos*.

If the thirty-first day falls on Chol HaMo'ed, some postpone the pidyon until Isru Chag (the day after Yom Tov), because the simchah of Yom Tov and the simcha of a pidyon should not be mingled. Some, however, do perform the pidyon on Chol HaMo'ed, but omit the festive meal.

If the thirty-first day falls on a public fast day, the pidyon is performed on the previous evening, provided that at least twenty-nine days, twelve hours, and 793 *chalakim* have passed since the birth of the baby.

If the thirty-first day falls on the day before Rosh Hashanah, which by custom is a fast day, all participants partake in the meal. Similarly, on the week of Tish'ah B'Av, the participants may eat meat and drink wine. Some permit only dairy food and wine.

If the day of the pidyon falls on the fast of "Bahab," Yom Kippur Kattan, or other voluntary fast days (in which the Kohen and the father are fasting), Minchah is held after *minchah gedolah*, and then the Kohen and father eat the pidyon meal. As for the rest of the participants, if they stipulated before the fast that they would eat, they may partake of the meal. Otherwise, they must complete the fast.

### **3. Five Sella Coins**

It is a biblical obligation to redeem all firstborn sons with five biblical "shekalim," called "*sela'im*." Throughout the generations, the sages have appraised the *sela'im* according to the monetary system of their day. It is difficult to determine the exact worth of five *sela'im* according to modern-day monetary systems. Contemporary halachic authorities give values that vary between 0.54 and 0.61 ounces of pure silver. Thus, a minimum of 3.5 ounces ensures that the obligation is fulfilled according to all opinions.

After the Kohen receives the five *sela'im* or its value in goods from the father, he may, if he so desires, return them, provided that the father had given them without intending to get them back.

### **4. The Ceremony**

A festive meal is arranged. This meal may not be held inside a synagogue. The baby is dressed in a fine outfit of clothing. The father and the Kohen wear festive clothing at both the ceremony and the festive meal. It is not necessary to lay the baby on a silver tray or to place candy around him.

The Kohen washes his hands for the meal, followed by the participants. The Kohen is seated in a prominent place at the table.

The Kohen recites Hamotzi on the bread and distributes portions to the participants. The pidyon is performed immediately after Hamotzi. The father puts the five coins inside a fine silver case and places it before the Kohen.

A cup of wine is poured and placed before the Kohen.



## 5. The Manner of the Pidyon

The father stands facing the Kohen, who is seated in a respectable place to receive the priestly gift. The father puts the baby in the Kohen's arms while the Kohen is sitting and says:

אֲשֵׁתִי (פלוגית) לְדָה לִי בֶן זָכָר (פלוגי), בְּכוֹר, פֶּטֶר רַחֵם, וְהָרִי הוּא שְׁלֶךְ.

The Kohen asks the father:

אִי-זֶה תְּרַצָּה יוֹתֵר, אֶת בְּנֶךְ בְּכוֹרְךָ זֶה, אוֹ חֲמִשָּׁה סֶלָעִים דְּמֵי פְדִיּוֹנוֹ?

The father picks up the silver case with the coins and answers:

אֶת בְּנֵי בְּכוֹרֵי אֲנִי רוֹצֶה יוֹתֵר, וְהָא לֶךְ חֲמִשָּׁה סֶלָעִים בְּפְדִיּוֹנוֹ.

Then the father recites the following two blessings out loud. He has intention to be *motzi* the Kohen with Shehechianu for the benefit he derives from the coins that he receives.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל פְּדִיּוֹן הַבֵּן.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעְנוּ לְזִמְנוֹ הַזֶּה.

While the father recites the blessings (some wait until after the completion of the blessings), he gives the Kohen the case with the money, and the Kohen removes the coins from the case. After the father completes the blessings, the Kohen and the participants say together:

בְּנֶךְ פְּדוּי. בְּנֶךְ פְּדוּי. בְּנֶךְ פְּדוּי.

The Kohen returns the baby to the father's arms, raises the cup of wine in his hand, and recites the following blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן.

The Kohen drinks from the wine, and passes the cup to the father to drink. Some Kohanim have the practice of taking the coins, holding them on top of the baby's head, and saying:

זֶה תַּחַת זֶה, זֶה חֲלוּף זֶה, זֶה מְחוּל עַל זֶה. יֵצֵא זֶה לְכַהֵן. וְנִכְנַס זֶה הַבֵּן לְחַיִּים לְתוֹרָה וְלִירֵאת שְׁמַיִם. יְהִי רָצוֹן שְׁכֵשֵׁם שְׁנִכְנַס לְפְדִיּוֹן בֶּן יִכְנַס לְתוֹרָה וְלַחֲפָה וְלִמְעֻשֵׁים טוֹבִים.

The Kohen rests his hands upon the baby's head and says:

יְשִׁימְךָ אֱלֹקִים בְּאִפְרַיִם וּכְמִנְשָׁה.  
בְּרַכְךָ הַשֵּׁם וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ. יְאֹר הַשֵּׁם פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ וַיַּחַנְדְּ.  
יִשָּׂא הַשֵּׁם פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.  
הַשֵּׁם שְׁמֶרְךָ הַשֵּׁם צְלָךְ עַל יַד מִיָּנֶה.  
כִּי אֲוָרְךָ יָמִים וְשָׁנוֹת חַיִּים וְשְׁלוֹם יוֹסִיפוּ לְךָ.  
הַשֵּׁם יִשְׁמְרֶךָ מִכָּל רָע יִשְׁמַר אֶת נַפְשְׁךָ. אָמֵן.

## 6. The Festive Meal

After the pidyon, meat and wine are served at the meal in honor of the mitzvah. At least ten men should be present. This meal is considered a se'udas mitzvah and a time of rejoicing.

In Birkas Hamazon, *shehasimchah bim'ono* is omitted, although some Rishonim did say it.

It is not customary to give out garlic or sugar cubes to the participants to bring home in order to include one's household in the pidyon, in the custom of "shirayim" in the Chassidic courts. The belief that participating in a pidyon is equivalent to fasting eighty-four fasts is a Chassidic belief, and some Acharonim claim there is no source for this custom in Chazal and *poskim*. Other Acharonim are generally against giving out garlic.

If the Kohen has yahrtzeit on the day of the pidyon and is fasting, he may not partake of the pidyon meal.

## 7. If the Firstborn is Absent

If for some reason the baby is not with the father, the pidyon is not performed by proxy at the location of the baby. Rather, the entire pidyon ceremony is performed by the father without the baby.

Some have a custom that the father takes a sheet folded in the shape of a baby and holds it during the pidyon. At the words *harei hu shelcha*, he adds, *bechol makom she'hu*.

## 8. Delays in the Pidyon

The baby is redeemed on schedule even if the bris has not been performed, since bris and pidyon are two separate mitzvos. Some, however, wait until after the bris.

If, G-d forbid, the baby dies within thirty days of life, it is not necessary to redeem him. If the baby dies after the thirtieth day of life, the father does redeem him. He recites the blessing “al pidyon haben,” but not “shehechianu.”

A firstborn who was not redeemed (for example, if the father died within the thirty days of the birth), has an obligation to redeem himself upon becoming bar mitzvah. In such a case he recites the blessing ending in the words *al pidyon habechor* and recites Shehechianu. It is customary for such a child to wear a necklace inscribed with the words “ben bechor” to remind him to perform the pidyon when he becomes bar mitzvah.



## VIII. Bar Mitzvah

### 1. Pre-Bar Mitzvah Period

The bar mitzvah boy completes the three public fast days preceding the bar mitzvah date.

If he has no tallis yet, he receives one before the bar mitzvah.

The bar mitzvah boy begins donning tefillin two months before the bar mitzvah. Some begin three months before, and some one.

The custom is not to say Shehechianu on the tefillin. Since some maintain that Shehechianu should be said, the boy should be instructed to have the tefillin in mind when reciting Shehechianu on his tallis.

### 2. Calling the Bar Mitzvah Boy to the Torah

The bar mitzvah Shabbos and accompanying celebrations take place on the Shabbos after the bar mitzvah date.

A bar mitzvah boy who reads from the Torah is given an aliyah on Shabbos at Shacharis or Minchah.

The bar mitzvah is not given an aliyah on a weekday before that Shabbos.

A boy whose thirteenth birthday is on Shabbos reads on that Shabbos. Some say he does not read until the following Shabbos.

The bar mitzvah boy does not read on Yom Tov; rather, he waits until the following Shabbos.

Some bar mitzvah boys read the whole portion. If only part of the portion is read, it should be the part for which he is given an aliyah.

The bar mitzvah is given the sixth aliyah and is called up to the Torah to the “high melody” of *Ya’amod habar mitzvah*. If he does not read from the Torah, he is given *maftir*. Like all those called to *maftir*, his name is not announced, but he is told personally to approach the *bimah*.

He may not read Zachor. He may read Shekalim, Parah, and Hachodesh.

### 3. Baruch Shepitarani

After the bar mitzvah boy’s concluding blessing and before the Mi Shebeirach, his father approaches the *bimah*, places his hands on the bar mitzvah’s head, and recites the following blessing aloud:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר פָּטַרְנִי מֵעַנְשׁוֹ שֶׁל זָה.

The congregation answers *amen*.

In later generations, some recited the blessing in an undertone and not in full, saying only the words:

בְּרוּךְ שְׂפָטַרְנִי מֵעַנְשׁוֹ שֶׁל זָה.

#### **4. Customs of Joy during the Prayers and Torah Reading**

Before the Torah reading the bar mitzvah boy chants *veya'azor veyagein* in the bar mitzvah melody.

Candy is neither thrown upon the head of the bar mitzvah boy nor given out in bags.

Relatives are honored with aliyahs. Only seven aliyahs are given out, but if necessary, one aliyah may be added. The third aliyah is given to the rabbi or the bar mitzvah boy's father.

Chatzi Kaddish is recited to a melody of the reader's choice.

A bar mitzvah boy who has a good singing voice and knows how to pray pleasantly leads Mussaf or another prayer.

After the *haftarah* and before Yekum Purkan, the rabbi preaches *chizuk* and *mussar* (encouragement and morals) to the bar mitzvah boy, who stands facing him.

At Minchah the bar mitzvah boy is honored with performing *gelilah* with the *Wimpel* that he brought to synagogue when he was a young child.

#### **5. The Festive Meal**

After Mussaf a reception is held for the congregation outside the sanctuary. Later the family partakes of a festive meal. In earlier times some held the meal on Friday night or on Shabbos afternoon.

The bar mitzvah boy delivers a *derashah* at the meal. The *derashah* is the focal point of his simchas mitzvah celebration. Some bar mitzvah boys make a *siyyum* (conclusion of a volume of Talmud study).

The bar mitzvah boy leads the blessings after the meal.

In the past it was customary to make a "noch bar mitzvah mol" on the following day (Sunday) in case the joy of the bar mitzvah celebration paled in comparison to the joy of Shabbos. Today the practice is to hold a reception or festive meal on the night of the actual bar mitzvah.

## IX. Marriage

### 1. Eirusin (Engagement)

The Acharonim refer to engagement as *eirusin* despite the difference in meaning between this term and the *eirusin* in the Talmud.

Upon conclusion of the financial negotiations and before the writing of *tenaim* (conditions), the two sides affirm their agreement with a handshake.

A *tenaim* document or *kesav kishur* is written. Thus some refer to the first stage of the *tenaim* as *tenaim schreiben*.

The *tenaim* set a fine for retracting from the engagement or for not properly fulfilling any of its conditions. For this reason the entire engagement ceremony is referred to as *kenas legen*.

In the past the *tenaim* were handwritten in one or two copies by the rabbi or by a scribe on parchment according to the Ashkenazic nusach printed in *Nachalas Shivah* (section 8). In later years printed *tenaim* with a nusach suitable to the financial lifestyle of the day came into use.

Some honor the rabbi with reading the *tenaim*.

The witnesses do not make a *kinyan* (act which shows awareness and consent to the agreement) with the fathers of the bride and groom; rather, each side brings its own guarantour, and both guaranteurs make the *kinyan* between themselves. It is not customary to make a *kinyan sudar* (with a handkerchief) at this point; rather, both guaranteurs pick up a *sefer* (book) and exchange them between themselves three times. This formally establishes the obligations written in the *tenaim*. The two fathers and the two guaranteurs sign the *tenaim*.

After the *tenaim* are concluded, a china pot, cup, or dish is taken — some collect charity in it from the participants — and broken to shards (with the money inside). The participants call out “Mazal tov!” Some keep pieces of the china as a souvenir.

Some have the custom of drawing a large circle or Star of David on the floor with chalk. The bride and groom face each other in the circle, and the two mothers drop the pieces of china on the floor between them.

If possible, a meal is prepared for close family members on the day of the *tenaim*, preferably within the hour of concluding the *tenaim*. This meal is

called *kenas mahl*. The meal is accompanied by words of Torah and singing. In the past the *chazzan* (cantor) and his assistants were honored with singing *piyyutim* (but not verses).

On this occasion the two fathers pay the *shadchan* (matchmaker) in privacy. The bride and groom present each other with gifts.

## 2. The Full Ancient Ashkenazic Tenaim Text

המגיד מראשית אחרית, הוא יתן שם ושארית, לאלה דברי התנאים והברית, שנדברו והותנו בין שני הצדדים בשעת הקנין סודר, דהיינו בין כמר פלוני בן פלוני, הבא בכח בנו הבחור פלוני מצד אחד, ובין כמר פלוני בן פלוני הבא בכח והרשאה מספקת מבתו פלונית (ועל פי שאלת פיה) צד שני. ראשית דבר הבחור כמר פלוני הנ"ל ישא במז"ט ויקדש את הבתולה מרת פלונית הנ"ל ויסבלנה ויכניסנה לחופה כדת משה וישראל והיא תקבל הקידושין ממנו. וכמר פלוני יכניס לנדן בנו החתן כמר פ' סך פ' קודם החופה. גם ילביש את בנו במלבושי כבוד שבת וחול כראוי ולפי כבודו. גם יתן לבנו סבלונות וטבעת קידושין לפי כבודו. גם ישתדל שטר חליצה מכל בניו קודם החופה בחנם. וכמר פלוני בן פלוני הנ"ל יכניס לנדן בתו הכלה פלונית סך פלוני מזומנים קודם החופה. וילביש את בתו הכלה במלבושי כבוד שבת ויום טוב וחול ובגדים וצעפים ורדידים לפי כבודו. גם יתן לבתו סבלונות לפי כבודו. [וכמר פ' הנ"ל יתן להזוג מזונות על שלחנו כאחד משאר אוכלי שלחנו שנה תמימה אחר החתונה, ולאחר כלות המזונות עוד ב' שנים דירה בביתו]. וכמר פלוני הנ"ל יתן לבתו קודם החופה שטר חצי חלק זכר בן פשוט, וכן מזוגתו מרת פלונית. (ואם יש עוד תנאים ביניהם - הכל לפי תנאים). ומחמת עידור וקטט ח"ו, יתוקן קודם החופה כתקנות קהלות שו"ם. והמעשר יחלוקו כמנהג המדינה. והחתונה תהיה למז"ט ולשעת ברכה והצלחה לזמן פלוני, על הוצאת שניהם ובמקום הממוצע לשניהם, או בתוך זה הזמן מתי שיתרצו שניהם. ואם ח"ו יעבור אחד מן הצדדים על התנאים האלו, הן על כולה או על מקצתה, יתן צד העובר לצד המקיים כך וכך. ועל זה נעשה ערב קבלן בעד החתן כמר פלוני בן פלוני, וערב קבלן בעד הכלה ר' פלוני בן פלוני. והצדדים קבלו עליהם בחרם חמור ובשבועה דאורייתא לפצות את הערבות שלא יגיע להם שום היוזק ח"ו. וליתר שאת וליתר עוז באו הערבים הקבלנים עצמם על החתום. והערבים הקבלנים עשו קנין חליפין ספר במקום קנין סודר לאשר ולקיים כל הנ"ל. נעשה היום יום פלוני שנה פלונית פה בעיר פלונית.

## 3. Condensed Tenaim Text

המגיד מראשית אחרית, הוא יתן שם ושארית, לאלה דברי התנאים והברית, שנדברו והותנו בין שני הצדדים בשעת הקנין סודר, דהיינו בין הר'... הבא בכח בנו הבחור ר'... מצד אחד, ובין הר'... הבא בכח והרשאה מספקת מבתו מרת... ועל פי שאלת פיה, צד שני. ראשית דבר הבחור ר'... הנ"ל ישא במז"ט ויקדש את הבתולה מרת... הנ"ל ויסבלנה ויכניסנה לחופה כדת משה וישראל, והיא תקבל הקידושין ממנו. והר'... יכניס לנדן בנו החתן ר'... סך המדובר לצורך רכישת דירה ורהיטים. גם ילביש את בנו במלבושי כבוד שבת וחול כראוי ולפי כבודו. גם יתן לבנו סבלונות וטבעת קידושין לפי כבודו. והר'... הנ"ל יכניס לנדן בתו הכלה מרת... סך המדובר לצורך רכישת דירה ורהיטים. וילביש את בתו הכלה במלבושי כבוד שבת ויום טוב וחול



ובגדים וצעופים ורדידים לפי כבודו. גם יתן לבתו סבלונות לפי כבודו. ושאר תנאים שביניהם - הכל לפי תנאים. ומחמת עידור וקטט ח"ו, יעמוד כתקנות קהלות שו"ם. והחתונה תהיה למז"ט ולשעת ברכה והצלחה לזמן... על הוצאת שניהם ובמקום הממוצע לשניהם, או בתוך זה הזמן מתי שיתרצו שניהם. ואם ח"ו יעבור אחד מן הצדדים על התנאים האלו, הן על כולה או על מקצתה, יתן צד העובר לצד המקיים סך... ועל זה נעשה ערב קבלן בעד החתן ר'... וערב קבלן בעד הכלה ר'... והצדדים קבלו עליהם בחרם חמור ובשבועה דאורייתא לפצות את הערבות שלא יגיע להם שום היזק ח"ו. וליתר שאת וליתר עוז באו הערבים הקבלנים עצמם על החתום. והערבים הקבלנים עשו קנין חליפין ספר במקום קנין סודר לאשר ולקיים כל הנ"ל. נעשה היום... שנה... פה...

עד	נאום
ערב קבלן	נאום
עד	נאום
ערב קבלן	נאום

#### 4. Engagement Period

Even a poor man sends gifts to his fiancé immediately after the *tenaim*. During Shacharis on the Shabbos following the engagement, the leader chants the words *semeichim betzeisam* (rejoicing as they go forth) in Keil Adon to a special melody, provided the groom is present. The groom is called to the Torah to the "high melody" of *Ya'amod hechasan*.

Before his Mi Shebeirach, the congregation chants Echad Yachid in his honor.

The groom of a second marriage need not be given an aliyah and there is no special singing.

#### 5. Accompanying the Bride and Groom

The bride and groom are provided with constant accompaniment. In the past the bride would not leave her home for seven days before the wedding until the following Shabbos.

If possible, the groom should not leave his home during the entire *sheva berachos* week. He prays there with a *minyan* of ten men. He does this not only to ensure his safety, but also to permit the recital of Tachanun in synagogue.

On the wedding day, the groom does not leave his home unaccompanied. Some practice this precaution beginning from the Shabbos preceding the wedding day.

Some maintain that the bride and groom should not visit a cemetery thirty days before and after the wedding. Others maintain that they should not visit the cemetery in which their parents are buried for an entire year following the wedding.

## **6. The Time of the Wedding**

Weddings are set for the first half of the month since the waxing of the moon is considered an auspicious symbol for marriage.

The wedding of a first-time bride is set for Wednesday. The wedding of a woman who has already been married is held on Thursday.

Weddings are not held throughout *sefiras ha'omer* until the day preceding Shavuot, with the exception of Rosh Chodesh Iyar and Lag Ba'omer.

Weddings may be held during Elul, the Ten Days of Repentance, and the month of Cheshvan.

Weddings should preferably be held during the day, as this is considered an auspicious symbol for marriage.

## **7. The Shabbos before the Wedding (Schpinholtz)**

The Shabbos before the wedding is called *Schpinholz Shabbos*. If the groom is present in synagogue on Friday night, the leader chants Malchusecha and Hashkiveinu to a special melody in his honor.

The groom is given one of the seven aliyos (not *maftir*).

The groom is called to the Torah to the “high melody” of *Ya'amod hechasan*.

Before his Mi Shebeirach, the congregation chants Echad Yachid in his honor.

The groom of a second marriage need not be given an aliyah and there is no special singing.

No candy is thrown upon a groom or bar mitzvah boy when they are called to the Torah. Indeed, barring wine for Kiddush on Friday night and for a bris, food is never brought into the synagogue.

Chatzi Kaddish after the Torah reading is recited to a special melody in honor of the groom.

In earlier generations, friends and relatives would visit the bride's home and the groom's home for a repast of light food, fruit, and drinks, similar to a “zachar” before a bris. Nowadays a modest reception is held for the congregation after Mussaf.

The bride is not abandoned on this special Shabbos and milestone in her life. Her family and friends stay with her on this special Shabbos, joining her for meals and rejoicing with her as is done for the groom.

### **8. Sivlonos (Presenting Gifts)**

This treasured custom gradually fell out of practice only during the past hundred years and was discontinued even in Germany. The Acharonim write that the *se'udas hasivlonos* is held the night before the wedding in order to ensure that the groom sees his bride before the wedding since it is forbidden to marry a woman without seeing her first. Customarily, the bride and groom are allowed to meet until the day of the wedding.

At Minchah the groom exits the synagogue before Tachanun and returns before Kaddish.

The *Mishnah Berurah* writes that the *se'udas hasivlonos* is a *se'udas mitzvah*. It is held at either the bride's or the groom's home. The participants are seated at tables for the meal, and some maintain that the groom should be seated where he can see the bride.

After one or two courses have been served, the groom's father gives the bride's *sivlonos* to the rabbi of the community or to the most distinguished participant, accompanied by music, this participant places the gifts on the table before her. In order to avoid all suspicion that this act effects the marriage, he tells her, "The groom has sent you these gifts to be yours after the *kiddushin* (the first stage of the wedding) and not beforehand."

The bride does not accept the gifts herself; those seated beside her receive them for her and adorn her with the jewelry. Afterward the bride's father passes his gifts to the rabbi, who brings them to the groom's table, accompanied by music. Some have the custom of saying to the groom, "The bride has sent you these gifts to be yours after the *kiddushin* and not beforehand," as valuables given to the groom can also effect marriage in certain cases.

The bride and groom commence dining only after the gift-giving ceremony.

It is customary for the groom to give the bride jewelry, a fine siddur (called *sivlonos tefillah*), and machzorim. The bride gives the groom a *Sargenes (kittel)*, a new tallis with a case, or a genuine Scroll of Esther. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was customary for the groom to give the bride a gold or silver belt, a scarf, and other fine clothing. The bride gave the groom shoes and a silver belt.

Before Birkas Hamazon the *piyyut* Nodeh Leshimcha is recited. Afterward there is dancing and the groom meets with his bride.

If either the bride or the groom were previously married, they do not receive gifts. However, a *sivlonos* meal is held even if there are to be no gifts at all. In such a case, the bride's and groom's families participate in the meal but no other guests are invited.

## 9. Chuppas Main

According to an ancient tradition attributed to Maseches Soferim and explicated in the works of the Ge'onim, Rishonim, and Acharonim, the wedding is divided into two chuppah (marriage canopy) ceremonies. The first chuppah is referred to as Chuppas Main and the second, in which *kiddushin* is performed and *sheva berachos* (seven *nisuin* blessings) recited, is called Chuppas Tallis.

In earlier times the Chuppas Main was held before Shacharis and the Chuppas Tallis was held after Shacharis or after Minchah. According to the *Rokei'ach*, the reason for holding the wedding so early in the morning is because of the conceptual similarity to the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, which took place in the morning. Since the Chuppas Main was held very early in the morning, the assembly would bear torches and candles to light the way. It is also reminiscent of the lightning flashes that were seen on Mount Sinai.

As it became more and more difficult to gather participants so early in the morning, the two chuppah ceremonies were held before and after Minchah or before and after Ma'ariv. Some performed the two chuppah ceremonies one immediately after the other with no intervening services. The Chuppas Main ceremony proceeds as follows:

The assembly accompanies the groom to the entrance to the synagogue courtyard (in Mainz and its hamlets) or to the door of the wedding house (in Worms and its hamlets). If the rabbi is to officiate at the ceremony, he escorts the groom to the chuppah with the groom leading, the rabbi following, and the rest of the assembly behind or ahead of them.

The assembly escorting the bride and groom to the chuppah carries lit torches at the Chuppas Main only, and not at the Chuppas Tallis. The children are usually given the task to bear the candles and torches simply because they enjoy such activities.

Musicians play the ancient Chuppas Main melody (the same triumphant melody is used on Purim when reading the verse *Vayislu es Haman* in the Scroll of Esther).

When the groom arrives at the chuppah area, the officiating rabbi takes him by the hand (not the arm) to the Chuppas Main bench, where he waits for the bride. The groom sits down and his escorts flank him on both sides. The torch bearers, musicians, and the bride's friends accompany the bride from her home to the chuppah area, accompanied by a separate retinue of women. The bride's face remains covered with a cloth veil while walking to and from the chuppah. Two women or the two mothers walk beside her. Since the bride's face is covered, her attendants support her by holding her arms. Since the groom's face is not covered, his arms are not held.

When the bride reaches the entrance to the synagogue courtyard, the rabbi takes the groom by the hand and leads him to his bride, accompanied by distinguished members of the community.

The groom takes the bride's hand and thereby effects the *nisuin* stage of the marriage (Kesuvos 48b), while the rabbi continues holding his other hand. All three walk in this fashion to the Mein bench, which is considered the official chuppah. During this procession the participants throw wheat kernels upon the couple and call out "Peru urvu!"

If the participants are likely to take offense at the bride and groom holding hands, he may hold on to part of her bouquet instead.

The bride and groom sit together for a short time on a bench or platform.

The bride's attendants escort her home and then young boys lead the groom to prayer services in synagogue. The rabbi and the rest of the assembly follow them.

Chuppas Main is held only for a woman's first marriage.

## **10. The Day of the Wedding**

The groom is seated in a distinguished location in synagogue during Shacharis, and candles are lit in his honor. He leaves the synagogue before Tachanun and returns before Kaddish. On Mondays and Thursdays he is given an aliyah.

The bride and groom fast until the chuppah. Since the chuppah is traditionally held during the day, this is usually not a full day fast. Therefore, the bride and groom are permitted to engage in this fast during the month of Nissan.

In the past the boys would entertain the groom and the girls would entertain the bride on the wedding day. They would sing and sometimes dance. Aside from a short address before the chuppah blessings on the gravity of the event, no saddening poems or words of rebuke are addressed to the couple on the day of the wedding.

The chuppah is held after the time of *minchah gedolah*. The bride and groom pray before the chuppah and add Aneinu in Shema Koleinu and Vidui before Elokoy Netzor. On Rosh Chodesh some recite only the Ashamnu. Those who join the groom for Minchah omit Tachanun.

## 11. Kesuvah

In earlier times the kesuvah was written on parchment so that it would last. In such a case care must be taken to completely correct any mistakes. If mistakes were corrected, the following words are added at the bottom of the kesuvah:

מילה פלונית היא על המחק, והכל שריר וקיים.

The problem of correcting errors may be avoided by computer-printing the kesuvah. The paper used should be of good quality and may be laminated. Some write the kesuvah in block letters, and others write in regular script. The last line must reach the margin; for this reason the last three words, *hakol sharer vekayam*, are drawn out on some kesuvos.

The rabbi checks that the names on the kesuvah match the names of the bride and groom. It is a good idea to bring an extra kesuvah in case of a problem.

In some communities the kesuvah witnesses are chosen from among those whose professions make them known to the public.

Two witnesses are appointed for the kesuvah and *tenaim acharonim*, and another two witnesses are appointed for the *kiddushin*, to honor the bride and groom and to publicize the marriage. In recent generations the same two witnesses served in both capacities.

After the reading of the kesuvah or at the conclusion of the chuppah ceremony, the witnesses and the groom sign the kesuvah. The witnesses sign one above the other on the bottom right, "First name son of first name *eid* (witness)," and the groom signs on the bottom left, "First name son of first name *hechasan* (the groom)."

The following is the nusach of the kesuvah:

ברביעי בשבת [בכך וכך] ימים לחדש פלוני שנת חמשת אלפים ושבע מאות [וכך וכך] לבריאת עולם למנין שאנו מונין כאן עיר [פלונית] איך ר' פלוני [המכונה פלוני] בן ר' פלוני [הכהן / הלוי] אמר לה להדא בתולתא פלונית [המכונה פלונית] בת ר' פלוני [הכהן / הלוי] הוי לי לאנתו כדת משה וישראל, ואנא אפלח ואוקיר ואזון ואפרנס יתיכי כהלכות גוברין יהודאין דפלחין ומוקרין וזנין ומפרנסין לנשיהון בקושטא, ויהיבנא ליכי מהר בתוליכי כסף זוזי מאתן דחזי ליכי מדאוריתא. ומזוניכי וכסותיכי

וספוקיכי ומיעל לוותיכי כאורח כל ארעא, וצביאת מרת פלונית [המכונה פלונית] בתולתא דא והות ליה לאנתו ודין נדוניא דהנעלת ליה מבי אבוה [ביתומה: מבי נשא] בין בכסף בין בדהב בין בתכשיטין במאני דלבושא ובשמושי דערסא חמשיין ליטריין, וצבי ר' פלוני [המכונה פלוני] [הכהן / הלוי] חתן דנן והוסיף לה מדיליה חמשיין ליטריין, סך הכל מאה ליטריין דכסף. וכך אמר ר' פלוני [המכונה פלוני] [הכהן / הלוי] חתן דנן אחריות שטר כתובתא דא קבלית עלי ועל ירתי בתראי להתפרע מכל שפר ארג נכסין וקנינין דאית לי תחות כל שמיא דקנאי ודעתיד אנא למקני, נכסין דאית להון אחריות ודלית להון אחריות כלהון יהון אחראין וערבאין לפרוע מנהון שטר כתובתא דא ותוספתא דא ואפילו מן גלימא דעל כתפאי בחיי ובמותא, מן יומא דנן ולעלם. ואחריות שטר כתובתא דא ותוספתא דא קבל עליו ר' פלוני [המכונה פלוני] [הכהן / הלוי] חתן דנן כחומר כל שטרי כתובות העשויין בישראל כתיקון חכמים דלא כאסמכתא ודלא כטופסי דשטרי, וקנינא מן ר' פלוני בן פלוני [הכהן / הלוי] חתן דנן למרת פלונית בת ר' פלוני [הכהן / הלוי] בתולתא דא ככל מה דכתוב ומפורש לעיל במנא דכשר למקניא ביה, הכל שריר וקיים.

The following is the kesuvah nusach for a woman's second marriage:

בחמישי בשבת בכך וכך ימים לחדש פלוני שנת חמשת אלפים ושבע מאות וכך וכך לבריאת עולם למנין שאנו מונין כאן עיר פלונית איך ר' פלוני [המכונה פלוני] בן פלוני [הכהן / הלוי] אמר לה להדא [מתרכתא / ארמלתא / חלוצתא] מרת פלונית [המכונה פלונית] בת ר' פלוני [הכהן / הלוי] הוי לי לאנתו כדת משה וישראל, ואנא אפלח ואוקיר ואזון ואפרנס יתיכי כהלכות גוברין יהודאין דפלחין ומוקריין וזנין ומפרנסין לנשיהון בקושטא, ויהיבנא ליכי כסף [מתרכותיכי / ארמלותיכי / חלוצתיכי] זוזי מאה דחזו ליכי מדרבנן. ומזוניכי וכסותיכי וספוקיכי ומיעל לוותיכי כאורח כל ארעא, וצביאת מרת פלונית [המכונה פלונית] [מתרכתא / ארמלתא / חלוצתא] דא והות ליה לאנתו ודין נדוניא דהנעלת ליה בין בכסף בין בדהב בין בתכשיטין במאני דלבושא ובשמושי דערסא עשרין וחמשה ליטריין, וצבי ר' פלוני [המכונה פלוני] [הכהן / הלוי] חתן דנן והוסיף לה מדיליה עשרין וחמשה ליטריין, סך הכל חמשיין ליטריין דכסף. וכך אמר ר' פלוני [המכונה פלוני] [הכהן / הלוי] חתן דנן אחריות שטר כתובתא דא קבלית עלי ועל ירתי בתראי להתפרע מכל שפר ארג נכסין וקנינין דאית לי תחות כל שמיא דקנאי ודעתיד אנא למקני, נכסין דאית להון אחריות ודלית להון אחריות כלהון יהון אחראין וערבאין לפרוע מנהון שטר כתובתא דא ותוספתא דא ואפילו מן גלימא דעל כתפאי בחיי ובמותא, מן יומא דנן ולעלם. ואחריות שטר כתובתא דא ותוספתא דא קבל עליו ר' פלוני [המכונה פלוני] [הכהן / הלוי] חתן דנן כחומר כל שטרי כתובות העשויין בישראל כתיקון חכמים דלא כאסמכתא ודלא כטופסי דשטרי, וקנינא מן ר' פלוני בן פלוני [הכהן / הלוי] חתן דנן למרת פלונית בת ר' פלוני [הכהן / הלוי] [מתרכתא / ארמלתא / חלוצתא] דא ככל מה דכתוב ומפורש לעיל במנא דכשר למקניא ביה, הכל שריר וקיים.

## 12. Tenaim Acharonim (Second Tenaim)

Before the chuppah the *tenaim acharonim* document, which delineates the details of “Takanos Shu'm” (the stipulations instituted in Speyer, Worms, and Mainz), is prepared in two copies, one for each family. The documents

are signed by the kesuvah witnesses at the chuppah following the *kiddushin*. Some sign them before the chuppah.

The nusach reads as follows:

מזל טוב יצמיח ויעלה, כגן רטוב עד למעלה. דברי הברית והתנאים האלה, שנדברו והותנו בין שני הצדדים בשעת החופה, דהיינו הר'... ובנו החתן ר'... צד אחד, והר'... ובתו הכלה הבתולה מרת... צד שני. ראשית דבר כמר פלוני הנ"ל נשא וקידש את הבתולה מרת פלונית הנ"ל בטבעת קידושין של זהב והכניסה לחופה כדת משה וישראל והיא קבלה הקידושין ממנו. וכמר פלוני הכניס לנדן בנו סך שהתחייב... ומלבושי שבת ויום טוב וחול, וסבלונות וטבעת קידושין לפי כבודו. [גם השתדל כמר פלוני שטר חליצה מכל אחיו קודם החופה, וכמר פלוני אבי הכלה נתן לבתו שטר חצי חלק זכר בן פשוט]. וכמר פלוני הכניס לנדן בתו הכלה סך שהתחייב... קודם החופה, והלביש את בתו במלבושי כבוד שבת ויום טוב וחול, ובגדים וצעופים וסבלונות כולן לפי כבודו. ומעתה הזוג הנ"ל ינהגו יחד באהבה ובחיבה, ולא יבריחו ולא יעלימו ולא ינעלו לא זה מזו ולא זו מזה שום הברחה בעולם רק ישלטו שניהם שוה בנכסיהם. ואם ח"ו שיעשה כמר פלוני הנ"ל לזוגתו מרת פלונית איזו דברים שאינה יכולה לסבול וצריכה לבית דין אז תיכף ומיד יתן לה סך... לפיזור מזונות. וכן יתן לה כל חודש וחודש משך ימי הקטט, וכל בגדיה ותכשיטיה השייכים לגופה, וירד עמה לבית דין שלהם תוך ב' שבועות אחר בקשתה ממנו, ועל פי דברו יעמוד כל ריב וכל נגע, ואחר שנתפשרו תחזור מרת פלונית לבית בעלה וכל הנותר בידיה מן המעות וכל בגדיה ותכשיטיה תחזירן למקומם הראשון. ומחמת העידור, כך נתקן. שאם יעדר ח"ו ר'... הנ"ל בשנה ראשונה אחר החופה בלי זרע קיימא מאשתו הנ"ל אז תחזיר מרת... הנ"ל ליורשי בעלה הנ"ל כל מה שהכניס. ואם ח"ו יעדר בשנה שנייה אחר החופה בלי זרע קיימא מזוגתו הנ"ל אז תחזיר מרת... הנ"ל החצי ממה שהכניס. ואם ח"ו שתעדר היא מרת... הנ"ל בשנה ראשונה אחר החופה בלי זרע קיימא, יחזיר כמר פלוני הנ"ל ליורשיה כל מה שהכניסה. ואם ח"ו שתעדר בשנה שנייה אחר החופה בלי זרע קיימא ממנו יחזיר כמר פלוני הנ"ל ליורשיה החצי ממה שהכניסה לו. ובשנה השלישית אחר החופה ומשלישית ואילך, איזה מהן שיעדר, הדין חוזר לסיני שהבעל יורש את אשתו והיא נוטלת כתובה ותוספת. ובכל הזמנים הנ"ל היא נוטלת טבעת קידושין בראש בלי ניכוי ומגרעת כתובתה. וכל הנ"ל קבלו הזוג עליהם בחרם חמור ובשבועה דאורייתא ובקנין סודר לאשר ולקיים כל הנ"ל והנעשה. נעשה היום יום וכו' הכל שריר וקים.

### 13. Chatzi Zachar Document

As an additional dowry, the bride's father grants his daughter a *chatzi zachar* document before the chuppah.

The *Chasam Sofer* explains that the purpose of this document is to endear the bride to the groom. By allowing the bride to inherit half of a male's portion, her new husband takes on the status of a son to her father. Only half of a male's portion is allotted in order to preserve the biblical law which stipulates that only a male inherits, but by granting her no less than half a portion, her status is matched to that of the younger sons of the



family. In order to further clarify that there is no intention, G-d forbid, to negate the biblically mandated inheritance, a stipulation is made that the bride does not inherit land or books.

The *Chasam Sofer* continues that this document fell into disuse in eastern Europe as the Jewish courts began to lose their supremacy in the Jewish community, and Jews began appealing to the secular courts instead. Nevertheless, contemporary halachic authorities point out that employing this document helps avoid the problem of theft in the case of a secular court granting the daughters of the family a part of the inheritance.

The *chatzi zachar* document translates as a financial obligation on the part of the bride's family, parallel in nature to the groom's commitment as specified in the *chalitzah* document mentioned below. Generally speaking, if either document is not employed, the other is omitted as well.

This document has no bearing on the effect of the marriage.

The following is the *chatzi zachar* nusach:

זכרון עדות שהיתה בפנינו עדים חתומים מטה בכך וכך יום לחדש פלוני שנת חמשת אלפים ושבע מאות וכך וכך לבריאת העולם לזמן שאנו מנין כאן עיר פלונית, איך שבא לפנינו ר' פלוני בן פלוני ואמר לנו הווי עלי עדים כשרים ונאמנים וקנו ממני בקנין גמור אגב סודר מעכשיו ואף חתמו ותנו ליד בתי היקרה מרת פלונית תחי' שהיא אשת ר' פלוני להיות בידה וליוצאי חלציה שיהא לה מבעלה הנ"ל לעדות לזכות ולראיה, איך שרציתי ברצון נפשי הטוב שלא באונס והכרח כלל כי אם בלב שלם ונפש חפצה ודעה שלמה מיושבת, והנני מודה בפניכם היום כמודה בבית דין חשוב וראוי בהודאה גמורה שרירא וקימא דלא בהשטאה ודלא בהשבעה ודלא בהשנאה ודלא למהדר ביה מיומא דנן ולעלם, איך שיש בידי ממון בתי הנ"ל כך וכך אלפים... שהלוותה אותם לי מידה לידי במזומנים, והרי הם עלי ועל יורשי אחרי בחוב גמור ואמתי ברשות ובהלוואה גמורה, ומחוייב אני לשלם סך הנ"ל לבתי הנ"ל או ליוצאי חלציה שיהיו לה מבעלה הנ"ל על פי תנאים המבוארים בשטר זה. וכך התניתי עמה, שזמן פרעון חוב הנ"ל לא יחול עלי ולא יגיע אלא שעה אחת קודם מותי, וכשיגיע זמן ההוא אין אני שואל ומבקש זמן אחר כלל, רק שמחוייב אני ובאי כחי אז לשלם כל סך הנ"ל לבתי הנ"ל או ליוצאי חלציה שיהיו לה מבעלה הנ"ל או לבאי כחה במעות מזומנים דוקא ובמטבע טובה דוקא העוברת לסוחר וכל שום סחורה בעולם (ואף כשיהיה לי שום סחורה אפילו טובה מאד מחוייב אני או יורשי אחרי וכל באי כחי לטפל בה ולמכרה אפילו בפחות מחצי שויה כדי לשלם החוב הנ"ל במזומנים דוקא). גם מחוייב אני לשלם כל הוצאות והיזקות שיגיעו מחמת עיכוב פרעון חוב הנ"ל ככל אופן גוף החוב. ואין אני ולא שום אדם בעולם נאמנים אפילו בשבועה חמורה למעט שום טענה בעולם הגורעת כח שטר חצי זכר רק אדרבה בתי הנ"ל או יוצאי חלציה שיהיו לה מבעלה הנ"ל וכל באי כחה יהיו נאמנים נגדי ונגד יורשי אחרי ונגד כל באי כחי בדיבור הקל בלי שום אלה ושבועה ובלי שום קבלת חרם לומר שטר חצי זכר זה אינו פרוע, ולא נמחל שעבודו לא כולו ולא מקצתו. וגם על ההוצאות ועל ההיזקות הנ"ל ועל כל שאר ענייני החוב הנ"ל על הכל יהיו נאמנים לעולם הן לפני זמן הפרעון הן בזמן הפרעון הן לאחר זמן הפרעון עד דנכתב עליו תברא בשני עדים כשרים או עד דנקרע קרע בית דין. וכל נכסין וקניינין דאית לי תחות כל שמיא דקנאי ודעתיד אנא

למקני נכסין דאית להון אחריות ודלית להון אחריות כלהון יהון אחראין וערבאין לפרוע מנהון חוב הנ"ל מנאי ואפילו מן גלימא דעל כתפאי בחיים ובמות מן יומא דנן ולעלם. אכן תנאי זה התניתי עם בתי הנ"ל שכשיגיע זמן פירעון הנ"ל ויאותרו בני הזכרים לירד לנחלה ולחלק עזבוני יהיה הברירה ביד בני הזכרים לשלם לה חוב הנ"ל או ליתן לבתי הנ"ל או ליוצאי חלציה שיהיו לה מבעלה הנ"ל וכנ"ל או לבאי כוחם חצי חלק זכר בן פשוט מכל נכסי שימצאו לי בעת ההיא בראוי ומוחזק מאשראי ומטלטלין ומתכשיטין שיהיו לי אז חוץ מספרים וקרקעות, אזי כשיתנו לה החצי חלק הנ"ל הם פטורים מלשלם לה סך הנ"ל אף על פי שלא יגיע אותו חצי חלק לכדי ערך סך הנ"ל, מכל מקום יהא המותר מתנה ביד יורשי אחרי שלא לתבעם לעולם, כי על מנת כן נמסרו המעות לידי מעיקרא. אבל אם יעברו יורשי שלא יתנו לבת הנ"ל או ליוצאי חלציה כנ"ל החצי חלק כנ"ל כשירדו לנחלה לחלוק אז יעמוד כל השטר חצי זכר בתקפו שמחוייבים לשלם לה כל סך הנ"ל עד גמירא. גם הותנה שלא יגיע לו שום פטורין ומחילה על שטר חצי זכר זה מבתי הנ"ל או מבאי כחה אם לא כשיהיה מרצון בעל הנ"ל. גם קבלתי עלי בחרם חמור ובשבועה דאורייתא ובתקיעת כף בפועל על דעת רבים, ובפרט על דעת פלוני חתני הנ"ל, שלא אתן שום שטר לשום אדם בעולם כדי להבריח או להפקיע כח שטר זה בשום תחבולה וערמה בעולם. וכל התנאים הנ"ל הותנו בתנאי כפול בהן קודם ללאו ובתנאי קודם למעשה ובדבר שאפשר לקיימו ממש כתנאי בני גד ובני ראובן לכל הלכותיו. וכל הא דלעיל קבלתי עלי ועל יורשי אחרי בחוב גמור לאשר ולקיים כל הנ"ל בחרם חמור ובשבועה דאורייתא ובתקיעת כף בפועל ובקנין סודר כנ"ל. וכל מודעי דמודעי ומודעי דנפקי מגו מודעא וכל עדי מודעי שמסרתי כבר או שעתיד אני למסור על שטר חצי זכר כולם אני פוסל ומבטל לפניכם היום בביטול גמור בכל לישנא דאמרי רבנן דמבטלין בהון מודעות. ושטר חצי זכר לא יופסל ולא יוגרע מחמת שום ריעותא וגריעותא בעולם מכל מה שהפה יוכל לדבר והלב לחשוב ולהרהר, רק הכל יהא נדון ונדרש לטובת ולזכות וליפוי כח ותועלת של בעל השטר. ולעולם תהא יד בעל השטר על העליונה ויד המערער על התחתונה. ודברי המערער בטלין ומבוטלין חשובין כחרס הנשבר שאין בו ממש וכטוען אחר מעשה בית דין חשוב דלא יתעביד ליה דינא כלל לא בדיני ישראל ולא בדיני אומות העולם. ותמיד יהא שטר חצי זכר בתקפו ובחזקתו כל זמן שלא נקרע קרע בית דין או לא נכתב עליו תברא כתוקף כל שטרי חוב והודאות דנהיגי בישראל העשויין כתקנת חז"ל דלא כאסמכתא ודלא כטופסי דשטרי. וקנינא מן ר' פלוני בן פלוני לבתו היקרה מרת פלונית תיי שהיא אשת ר' פלוני הנ"ל בכל מה דכתוב ומפורש לעיל במנא דכשר למקני ביה.

#### 14. Prenuptial Chalitzah Document

If a man should G-d forbid die without offspring, his wife must receive *chalitzah* from his brothers before remarrying another man (Devarim 25:5-10). The prenuptial *chalitzah* document obligates the groom's brothers to perform *chalitzah* without delay in the event of the husband dying without offspring.

The brothers make a *kinyan sudar* and then the kesuvah witnesses sign the *chalitzah* document.

Nowadays some have the groom's brothers commit verbally to performing *chalitzah* in the event of "chas veshalom" ("G-d forbid") as an alternative to the *chalitzah* document.

The *chalitzah* document fell into disuse even among German Jews at the beginning of the twentieth century, a phenomenon about which one of the great German Torah authorities expressed displeasure. However, since this is strictly a money matter, it has no bearing on the effect of the marriage.

The following is the prenuptial *chalitzah* nusach:

זכרון עדות שהיתה בפנינו עדים חתומים מטה בכך וכך בשבת בכך וכך ימים לחדש פלוני שנת חמשת אלפים ושבע מאות וכך וכך לבריאת עולם למנין שאנו מונין כאן עיר פלונית איך שבאו לפנינו האחים ר' פלוני ור' פלוני בני פלוני ואמרו לנו הווי עלינו עדים כשרים ונאמנים איך שאנו מקבלים עלינו בחרם חמור ובשבועה דאורייתא בפועל ממש על דעת רבים שלא יהיה לנו התרה והפרה כלל כי אם על דעת אשת אחינו מרת פלונית בת פלוני בעלת השטר וכתבו בכל לשון של זכות ייפוי כח בכל אופן המועיל ואף חתמו ותנו ליד האשה מרת פלונית בת פלוני אשת אחינו פלוני בן פלוני להיות בידה לעדות ולזכות ולראיה מחמת שרצינו ברצון נפשנו הטוב שלא באונס והכרח כלל כי אם בלבבות שלמות ובנפשות חפצות ובדעה שלמה ומיושבת והננו מודים בפניכם היום כמודה בפני בית דין חשוב וראוי בהודאה גמירה שרירא וקיימא דלא בהשטאה ודלא בהשבעה ודלא בהשנאה ודלא למיהדר ביה מיומא דנן ולעלם שאם ח"ו יעדר וימות אחינו פלוני בן פלוני בעלה של מרת פלונית בת פלוני הנ"ל בלי זרע קיים ותהיה אשתו מרת פלונית בת פלוני זקוקה לחלוץ אזי איזה אח מאתנו אחים שתתבע אותו לחלוץ לה מחוייב הוא לפוטרה בחליצה כשרה בחנם שלא יקח ממנה או מכל באי כחה אפילו שוה פרוטה בעולם תכף ומיד אחר כלות ג' חדשים להעדרו של אחינו בעלה של הנ"ל ח"ו כשתהיה ראויה לחלוץ ובלבד שהיבמה תלך אחר היבם וכל זמן שלא יפטרנה בחליצה כשרה כנ"ל תהא היבמה ניזונית מנכסי מיתנא ומוחזקות בהן כל הא דלעיל קבלו עליהם האחים הנ"ל בחרם חמור ובשבועה דאורייתא ובביטול כל מודעות ובפיסול כל עדי מודעות בעולם בכל לישנא דאמרי רבנן דמבטלי בהן מודעות ושטר חליצה זה לא יפסל ולא יגרע כחו בשום ריעותא וגריעותא בעולם מכל מה שהפה יוכל לדבר והלב לחשוב ולהרהר ויהא הכל נידון ונדרש לטובת לזכות וליפוי כח בעלת השטר וידה על העליונה ויד המערער על התחתונה ויהא כח לשטר זה כאלו נעשה בבית דין חשוב דלא כאסמכתא ודלא כטופסי דשטרי וקנינא מן האחים ר' פלוני ור' פלוני בני פלוני על כל מה דכתוב ומפורש לעיל במנא דכשר למקניא ביה הכל שריר וקים.

## 15. Covering the Bride's Face

The bride covers her face on the day of the chuppah for modesty purposes and in order to avoid the evil eye. Since there is no *badeken* (veil covering ceremony) as a substitute for the Chuppah Main, neither the groom nor the rabbi covers the bride's face, just as they take no part in any other stage of her dressing.

It is customary for the bride to cover her face before going to the Chuppas Main. The ancient custom in Alsace was for the bride to cover her face only after *kiddushin*.

The veil should be transparent enough for the witnesses to identify the bride from a short distance.

## **16. The Procession to the Chuppah**

There is no set location for the chuppah. Originally it was held in the home, but as the communities grew it was held outdoors in the synagogue courtyard. After the Emancipation, there were those who held the wedding in synagogue to emulate the gentile custom. The *Chasam Sofer* was adamantly against this innovation, but R' Hirsch allowed it as an unavoidable concession in his day.

The groom is escorted to the chuppah at the time the wedding is called for. Before the chuppah, the father, grandfather, and sometimes the mother of the groom bless him as is customary on Shabbos. The same is done for the bride.

The bride wears her jewelery to the chuppah. Only if she is a widow does she remove her jewelry.

In Germany up until the war, the bride wore shrouds (*Sargenes, kittel*) to the chuppah, to temper her intense joy, unlike the Christians who wore radiant white gowns. In earlier generations she would wear a fur *Kürzen* (overcoat) over the *kittel*. Either the *Sargenes* or the *Kürzen* was drawn over the head as an additional sign of mourning. The *Kürzen* was traditionally worn also at the onset on Shabbos and on Rosh Chodesh.

The groom did not wear a *kittel*; rather, he covered his head in the custom of a mourner and put ashes on his head at the place where the tefillin rests. All this is done as a means to temper the intense joy of the occasion to remind us that we still live in exile without the Beis Hamikdash.

The groom is accompanied to the chuppah by the assembly, and the bride, whose face is covered, is held by the hands by both mothers.

For a first marriage, violinists walk before the couple while playing their instruments.

The bride is escorted to the chuppah under a canopy supported by four boys.

It is not customary for the bride to make circuits around the groom. This practice draws unnecessary attention to the bride and forces the mothers to squeeze in between the men.

As the groom approaches the chuppah, a choir sings the verses beginning with the words *Baruch haba*. The name of G-d is enunciated as in prayer. Some also sing the short *piyyut* of Mi Adir. Some repeat the singing of *Baruch haba* at the approach of the bride.

Several communities sing Ma Tovv at the approach of the groom. Some sing Hallelukah Odeh (Tehillim 111) and the like.

This singing is omitted if the marriage is a second one for both the bride and groom.

## **17. Chuppas Tallis**

It is proper for the bride and groom to face south, the direction of wisdom, with the rabbi facing north.

In some communities the bride and groom did not face the assembly for the sake of modesty.

In some communities it was customary to place a table under the chuppah to hold the wedding accoutrements. If the Chuppas Main was not held, two candlesticks would be placed on the table.

Before the spreading of the tallis over the bride and groom, some rabbis would deliver a short address.

The groom creates the chuppah by draping his tallis over himself and his bride. The canopy used to escort the bride to the chuppah is either kept above her or removed to ensure that nothing separates the couple from the sky. (The tallis rests on their persons and therefore does not resemble a separation.)

The groom recites the blessing on the tallis, and if it is new, adds Shehechianu. He veils himself with the tallis as is customary every morning (see section "Tallis and tefillin") and then drapes it over the bride. Some use a borrowed tallis and omit the blessings. In such a case the groom need not veil himself as usual, and therefore the tallis is draped over the couple's heads by the *shamash* or one of the witnesses. When the chuppah is held after sunset, the groom recites only Shehechianu, provided the tallis is new.

The tallis remains draped upon the bride and groom until the conclusion of the marriage ceremony.

If the bride is not in a state of purity, the tallis is lifted slightly off her head after she receives the ring, and the groom should be careful not to touch her when placing the ring on her finger. Some permit the tallis to be left in place all throughout the ceremony.

## 18. Kiddushin Blessings

The rabbi wears a tallis for the recital of the blessings.

A narrow glass is used for a first marriage. A wide china cup is used for a second marriage. This is the cup that is broken at the end of the ceremony. The microphone should preferably be switched off for the blessings to ensure that the bride, groom, and ten other men hear the natural sound of the blessings.

The preface to the blessing over the wine is:

סברי מרנן ורבנן ורבתי

When Kohanim and the rabbi of the community are present:

סברי כהנים מורה מורינו הרב מרנן ורבנן ורבתי

After the blessing over the wine the *shamash* passes the cup to the groom. The ancient custom is that he drinks most of the cup, but in later years a small amount was considered sufficient. The *shamash* then hands the cup to the bride's mother who gives to the bride to drink of it. The rabbi need not drink of the wine.

The groom passes the ring to the rabbi, who calls out "Eidim!" and shows the witnesses that it does in fact have the value of at least a penny or two.

It is a universal custom for the rabbi to prompt the groom with the Harei At declaration (except for the word *li*) even when the groom is a scholar.

It is proper to slip the ring on the bride's index finger. Some wait until the conclusion of the Harei At, while others do not feel that this is necessary and put the ring on after the word *li*.

The assembly calls out "Mazal tov" immediately and does not wait until after the breaking of the cup.

## 19. Reading the Kesuvah

After the recital of the *kiddushin* blessings, the kesuvah witnesses are called up.

The rabbi reads the kesuvah aloud. Before he begins, or before the words *vekanina min* are read out, the groom affirms his obligation with a *kinyan* (any type).

The witnesses and the groom sign the kesuvah after its reading or after the ceremony.

The *tenaim acharonim* are not read aloud. Both the bride and groom make a *kinyan* and the witnesses sign the document.

## 20. Nisuin Blessings

The *nisuin* blessings are recited over a narrow glass of wine for a first marriage. A wide china cup is used for a second marriage. This cup is not broken at the end of the ceremony, as the words *vehisken lo mimenu binyan adei ad* — “and prepared for him from Himself a building for eternity” — were recited over it.

The first six blessings of the *sheva berachos* (called *rishonah*) are given as an undivided unit to a relative of the groom to recite, and the seventh blessing is recited by a relative of the bride. Both wear a tallis for the recital of the blessings.

Similarly to the *sheva berachos* recited after Birkas Hamazon, the names of the people called up to the chuppah are not announced aloud.

The assembly does not sing during or between the recital of the blessings.

After the *nisuin* blessings the *shamash* passes the cup to the groom. The ancient custom is that he drinks most of the cup, but in later years a small amount was considered sufficient. The *shamash* then hands the cup to the bride’s mother who gives to the bride to drink. The rabbi need not drink of the wine.

The groom takes the first cup and breaks it — with the remaining drops of wine, as a symbol of blessing, as at havdalah — on a special chuppah stone on the synagogue wall. Only when it is a second marriage for the bride does the groom throw the cup on the ground.

The tallis is removed from the bride and groom’s heads, and the assembly (or the choir) sings Shir Hama’alos Ashrei (Tehillin 128), to the customary melody.

If the groom drank most of the cup of wine, he recites Al Hagefen during the singing.

## 21. Yichud (Seclusion)

The bride and groom proceed to the *yichud* room. Some have the groom enter first, as head of the household.

The *yichud* has no minimum time, does not require witnesses, and certainly does not require the groom to rent the room. It is simply a time to slow down and share an intimate meal together as at a restaurant. In fact, it

is customary for a waitress to serve them the traditional meal of chicken and egg, as a symbol of blessing.

Until some two hundred years ago, ten men would join the meal at some point to make it possible to recite *sheva berachos* there.

According to the *Haphla'ah*, those who wish to adhere to the Rambam's opinion that the *yichud* effects the marriage may have witnesses watch them enter their home after the wedding.

## **22. The Wedding Meal**

In earlier years, distinguished communities set limits to the number of people who could be invited to a wedding.

Several communities insisted that a curtain separate the men from the women and maintained that this should be the practice in small villages as well.

In some communities charity was collected during the wedding meal.

Two or three short addresses are delivered, and a jester performs in honor of the bride and groom. The groom also delivers an address. In some cases he was "sung down" during the address, but generally he was allowed to finish his speech.

The bride is seated facing the groom during *sheva berachos*.

The *sheva berachos* are divided exactly as at the chuppah. Afterward, the leader of Birkas Hamazon recites Hagafen.

After the leader drinks of the wine, he pours some into the groom's *sheva berachos* cup, which the groom drinks from and then sends to the bride to drink from. Some mix the two cups of wine first, and then pour from the first into a third cup. Only then does the leader drink from the first, and then the groom and bride drink from the second and third cups, respectively.

The assembled guests rejoice with the couple by dancing after the meal. After the dancing the bride and groom are seated on a bench, and participants chant *piyyutim* and engage in merriment in the couple's honor.

## **23. The Sheva Berachos Week**

The full *sheva berachos* are recited only on the day of the wedding. During the rest of the week only the last blessing is recited since there are usually no genuine *panim chadashos* (the "new faces" of people who did not attend the wedding and whose appearance thus adds to the occasion in



a recognizable way) and since today the meal is not held at the location of the wedding, as the Talmud requires.

During the *sheva berachos* week, if a *minyan* of three is present, Devai Haseir, Shehasimchah Bim'ono, and Asher Bara are recited.

The meal on the first night after the wedding is called *se'udas kerovim*. As the name implies, only relatives are invited.

Some have a fish meal, called *fish mahl*, on one of the days of *sheva berachos* as a symbol of blessing.

After the first three days it is unnecessary to hold large meals with invited guests.

#### **24. The Shabbos after the Wedding**

The Shabbos after the wedding is called *shenk wein* because wine is sent to the new couple. The bride is escorted by women to the morning services which the groom is attending.

Some communities would sing the *piyyut* Lecha Dodi to a special melody in honor of the new couple. If on the Friday night preceding the wedding the groom attended services in a different synagogue, the leader now chants Malchusecha and Hashkiveinu to a special melody in his honor.

Devai Haseir is recited also on Shabbos.

Because the "Shabbos queen" herself is considered *panim chadashos*, some do recite all seven blessings at the two main meals, but not at *se'udah shelishis*. Others recite only the last blessing even on Shabbos when the meal is not held at the location of the wedding.

In the *piyyut* Keil Adon, the leader chants *semeichim betzeisam* (rejoicing as they go forth) to a special melody in honor of the bride and groom.

The groom is given the third aliyah. He is called to the Torah to the "high melody" of *Ya'amod hechasan*.

Before the groom's Mi Shebeirach, the congregation chants Echad Yachid in his honor.

The groom of a second marriage is given an aliyah, but there is no special singing.

Chatzi Kaddish is recited to a melody of the reader's choice.



## X. Mourning

### 1. Bikur Cholim (Visiting the Sick)

Ashkenazic communities established *bikur cholim* societies whose members visited the sick and took care of their needs, such as providing medicine, watching over them, giving support to the family, etc. Some communities had separate societies for men and women.

Some communities had an ancient regulation saying that when someone has been very sick for three days, two members of the chevrah kaddishah (burial society) visit him and pray with him. Five days later ten members come and pray with him. This practice was not frightening when it was common practice in the community.

Friends or members of the chevrah kaddishah, when visiting a very sick person, quietly pray for him from prayer books such as *Kitzur Ma'avar Yabok*, *Totze'os Chaim*, and *Sefer Hachaim*.

If the sick person is deathly ill, he is encouraged to recite *vidui* (confession), to be found in the sources mentioned above.

On Shabbos and Yom Tov, prayers for the sick are not recited. Instead, several chapters of Tehillim are recited.

On weekdays one says to the sick person:

השם ישלח לך רפואה שלמה.

On Shabbos friends and acquaintances visit the sick after morning services. They say:

שבת היא מלועזק ורפואה קרובה לבא [עם שאר חולי ישראל].

### 2. Prayers for the Sick

When a person is deathly ill, a *minyan* of ten men recite Tehillim, followed by Kaddish, on his behalf.

When it becomes clear that medicine can no longer help him, it is customary to accede to his request or the request of his family to change his name.

The name changing is performed after the services before the congregation leaves. To announce the name changing to the congregation, a candle is lit at the charity box and the *shamash* carries a candle with him when he walks around collecting charity. If necessary this custom may be performed at a different time.

The *gabbai* passes a Tanach to a boy below bar mitzvah age, who opens it to a random page. The first name on the page (male for a man, female for a woman) is the new name.

The rabbi opens the *aron kodesh* (some hold the Torah scroll) and recites the following nusach with the old name:

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב שרה רבקה רחל ולאה, משה אהרן דוד ושלמה, מי שהמתיק מי מרה על ידי משה רבנו ומי ירדן על ידי אלישע ומי שרפא מרים מצרעתה ונעמן מצרעתו וחוזקיהו מחליו ובנימין הצדיק הוא ברכת את פלוני בר פלוני בעבור שנתן [שיתן ר' פלוני בר פלוני] עבורו לצדקה, בשכר זה הקדוש ברוך הוא ישלח לו רפואה שלמה על כל גופו ועל כל אבריו ויחן אותו ויעמידהו על בוריו אותו וכל שאר חולי עמו ישראל השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב. ונאמר אמן.

The Mi Shebeirach is recited a fourth time with the addition of the new name, which is said loudly.

Some communities precede the Mi Shebeirach with three chapters of Tehillim: 20, 38, and 91. The last verse of each is recited three times. Then the Metzalin prayer is recited, followed by the Mi Shebeirach. After the *aron kodesh* is closed, two more chapters are recited: 30 and 41. Newer versions of this custom can be found in prayer books such as *Totze'os Chaim*.

As the congregation exits the synagogue they give money to charity. Some say *Tzedakah tatzil mimaves* when they drop money in the charity box.

Friends of the sick person go to his home to tell him his new name and to encourage him by saying that his mazal will surely change for the better. If telling him about the name change will cause him distress, he is told only after he gets well.

If his health does not improve, some give an additional name. At this point such a person would have a total of three names. Each additional name is added before the existing name. He is called to the Torah with the whole new name and his sons are called “son of” the whole new name. Some retain the new name for memorial prayers even if the sick person died from his illness.

In later years many communities, such as Frankfurt, began performing *pidyon nefesh*. In this ceremony the chevrah kaddishah gets together and

recites three chapters of Tehillim: 38, 41, and 20, followed by 119 according to the sick person's name. Then they study from the *Shlah* (Pesachim, Neir Mitzvah §53ff.) Each member donates three times *chai* (54) coins of the local currency. Some of the money is used to buy some type of food for the sick person, usually sugar, and the rest is given to the poor or Torah students.

According to the *Chasam Sofer*, the chapters beginning *Al tashcheis* (57, 58, 59, and 75) are recited, followed by the same *Yehi Ratzon* and the *Ribono shel Olam* recited for a difficult childbirth. Each member donates 160 coins for the sake of R' Meir Ba'al Haneis, and says, *Elaka deMeir aneina*, while doing so.

*Pidyon nefesh* is performed on Shabbos only at the sick person's request, in which case nuts or the like are used instead of money. Without his request it is preferable just to pray and commit oneself to giving charity, and the *pidyon* is delayed until after Shabbos.

### 3. Blessing the Children before Death

If the sick person is clear minded, he should bless his children before his death. He washes his hands, places them on each child's head, and recites the following blessing:

שְׁמֹךְ אֱלֹקִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה.  
בְּרַכְךָ הַשֵּׁם וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ. יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי וַיְחַנְּךָ.  
יִשָּׂא הַשֵּׁם פְּנֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וַיִּשָּׂא לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.  
וְנַחְתָּ עָלֵינוּ רוּחַ הַשֵּׁם רוּחַ חֲכָמָה וְבִינָה רוּחַ עֲצָה וְגִבּוּרָה  
רוּחַ דַּעַת וַיִּרְאֵת הַשֵּׁם.

Then he recites once for all his children:

הַמַּלְאָךְ הַגָּאֵל אֶתִּי מִכָּל רָע וְבֵרַךְ אֶת הַנְּעָרִים  
וַיִּקְרָא בְהֵם שְׁמִי וְשֵׁם אֲבוֹתַי אֲבֹתֵיהֶם וַיִּצְחַק וַיְדַגּוּ לְרֵב בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ.

If the sick person has a living parent, the parent should bless him at this point.

### 4. Gesisah (State of Dying)

It is a mitzvah to be present with a person at the moment of death. The chevrah kaddishah assigns two or three members to watch over the dying person in two to four hour shifts. As long as the person is conscious,

the members should stay in an adjacent room, in order not to disturb him. Also, family members who are overcome with grief should be removed from the room. If the person is not moving, the chevrah kaddishah members should sit near him and observe the motions of his face.

Ten men should be present at the moment of death. Until that comes, Tehillim should be recited, following the order stated in the sources mentioned above. If the person is a great sage, the members study Torah there until the death or the burial. The *Sefer Chassidim* advises studying with him, if possible, so that his soul will leave in the midst of Torah study.

*Vidui* is recited, and if possible, it is recited together with the person. This is called *forzagen*.

On weekdays the members hold candles, or at least light one at the sick person's head. (Nowadays one would use an extra electric light.) Some open one or all windows from the time of *gesisah*. If the person is a Kohen, some cover his hands with a clean cloth. He is not touched or moved except for the purpose of a medical procedure. Something should be placed around the bed to keep his limbs from falling off the bed. If they do fall off, they are covered but not moved.

At the moment of death, whether on a weekday or on Shabbos, the elder member begins the *sheimos* and all join in as follows:

In the Frankfurt area:

השם הוא האלקים. ז' פעמים  
שמע ישראל השם אלקינו השם אחד. פעם אחת  
ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד. פעם אחת בלחש

In other communities (in Halberstadt the verse of Shema was repeated afterward, at the time of death):

שמע ישראל השם אלקינו השם אחד. פעם אחת  
ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד. ג' פעמים  
השם הוא האלקים. ז' פעמים

In Adas Yisrael in Berlin (the verse of Shema is repeated until the time of death):

ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד. ג' פעמים  
השם הוא האלקים. ז' פעמים  
שמע ישראל השם אלקינו השם אחד.

In some communities the following is added:

השם מְלֵךְ. השם מְלֵךְ. השם יְמֵלֵךְ לְעֵלָם וְעַד.

Some communities add after the verse of Shema:

וְאַהֲבַת אֵת הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֵדְךָ.

If possible, the sick person should recite the verse of Shema aloud. The whole process should be repeated until the time of death.

Some recite the thirteen attributes of faith at the time of death, and some add Yigdal and Adon Olam to the mourning or Yom Kippur melody. Others chant these *piyyutim* later, just before the burial.

## 5. Death and Rending the Clothing

After death comes the members wait five, ten, or fifteen minutes, and then check for life with a feather or cotton held at the nose after making certain there is no circulation of air in the room at all. This empirical test is performed also today, despite the concurrent use of modern machinery.

When death is ascertained, the candles are extinguished and every person present in the room rends his clothing. It is customary to tear a *teffach* of the lining, but all close relatives are obligated to tear a *teffach* of the actual clothing. No one under twelve years old tears. The tearing begins at the right collar, and is done while leaning over the body. For a parent the tearing is done on the left and goes through all the clothing except the *kutones* (undershirt).

Close relatives are father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, wife, and husband.

The tearing must be done standing. The most distinguished among those present opens with the following blessing and the others recite it together with him:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֵךְ הָעוֹלָם דְּיִן הָאֵמֶת.

Some communities add before the blessing:

הַשֵּׁם נָתַן וְהַשֵּׁם לָקַח יְהִי שֵׁם הַשֵּׁם מְבֹרָךְ.

And after the blessing (followed by Vihi No'am and Yosheiv Beseiser):

הצור תמים פָּעָלוּ כִּי כָּל דְּרָכָיו מִשְׁפָּט קָל אֲמוּנָה וְאִין עוֹל צְדִיק וְיִשָּׁר הוּא.  
וְהַלֵּךְ לְפָנָיו צְדָקָה כְּבוֹד הַשֵּׁם יֵאֱסָפֵךְ.  
תִּשְׁכַּב בְּשָׁלוֹם וְתִישָׁן בְּשָׁלוֹם עַד כִּי יבֹא מְנַחֵם מִשְׁמִיעַ שְׁלוֹם.

Non-mourners who were present at the time of death may sew the tear immediately, but a mourner must wait seven days to baste and thirty days to sew. For a parent one may baste after thirty days but never sew. Tearing is not done for the death of a child who has not begun studying Chumash (Bible).

If the death takes place on Shabbos or Yom Tov, the entire rending procedure is not performed. On Chol HaMo'ed some perform this procedure, but others do not.

## 6. Aligning the Limbs

The chevrah kaddishah (or chevras nashim, in the case of a woman) usually takes care of the body. They close the mouth and eyes and align the limbs. Some have the son close the eyes of his father as he recites the verse: וְיוֹסֵף יִשִּׁית יָדוֹ עַל עֵינָיו. He has precedence over the daughter to close the eyes of his mother. If the mouth is open, the head is tied with a handkerchief around the chin. Some communities do not tie the head of a woman. On Shabbos the ends are tucked in instead of being tied in a knot. All bedding is removed from under the body and he is placed in a flat position. Rings are removed. The head and most of the body is covered with a thin sheet, excluding the feet.

At this point the windows are opened.

On Shabbos alignment of the limbs is performed, but only after placing bread (or matzah) on the body to remove the status of *muktzah*.

## 7. Setting Down the Body (*Abheben*)

Setting down of the body is done twenty minutes after death. Some wait an hour.

The body is checked, and if necessary, cleaned, while covered with a sheet for modesty.

On Shabbos the bread remains on the body while setting it down and until after Shabbos. If the death occurs close to the conclusion of Shabbos, the setting down is delayed until then. Some always delay it until then.



For setting down the body, a half-rolled sheet is pushed under the body to the spine and then unfurled on the other side and wrapped around the entire body.

On the floor is placed straw or stones, but not a mattress or anything else that becomes *tamei* (impure). Two or three people assist in placing him there, near a window that does not face the sun, with his feet pointing toward the door.

In Worms the following words were recited while setting down the body:

יִרְכַּבְהוּ עַל בְּמִתֵּי אֲרָץ וַיֵּאָכֵל תְּנוּבוֹת שְׂדֵי וַיִּנְקְהוּ דְּבַשׁ מִסָּלַע וְשָׁמֶן מִחֲלָמִישׁ צוּר.  
אִם תִּשְׁכַּב לֹא תִפָּחַד וְשִׁכְבָתוֹ וְעַרְבָה שְׁנֵינֶיךָ.

Other communities would say:

בֵּית יַעֲקֹב לָכוּ וְנִלְכָה בְּאוֹר הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ.  
קַל אֱלֹקִים הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ דִּבֶּר וַיִּקְרָא אֲרָץ מִמְזֹרַח שָׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאוֹ.  
יָבוֹא שְׁלוֹם יְנוּחוּ עַל מְשַׁכְּבוֹתֵם הַלַּיְלָה נִכְחוּ.  
כִּי עָפַר אֶתְהָ וְאֵל עָפַר תֵּשׁוּב.

The head is raised a bit by condensing some of the material he is lying on. All the limbs are straightened and the feet are tied pointing upward. (Some tie the big toes together with straw.) On weekdays, the head and feet are secured between pieces of wood.

The body is then covered with a black sheet, with the feet showing.

On weekdays and Yom Tov a candle is lit by his head, but not on Shabbos, even by a gentile.

All water in vessels within a three house radius is spilled as a method of announcing the death.

## 8. Shemirah (Watching the Body)

Two people stay in the vicinity of the body at all times, even when it is in refrigeration.

Some have women guard a female body. Women never guard a male body.

Guards are exempt from reciting Shema and performing all positive mitzvos. If two are present, they alternate.

No Torah study or prayer whatsoever is done by the body. If it is impossible to go to an adjacent room or to put up a curtain of ten *teffachim*, chairs may be set up as a divider.

The guards are replaced every few hours. Small communities set up a community rotation. Large communities had a Shomeir Mitzvah society. In any case, the family is responsible to ensure the *shemirah*.

### **9. Aninus (Pre-Burial Period)**

The *onein* (a close relative in *aninus*, from death until after burial) is forbidden from eating meat, drinking wine, having relations, bathing, anointing, rejoicing, greeting, taking a haircut and nailcutting, working, sitting on a standard height chair, and studying Torah (except sad parts).

He is exempt from all positive mitzvos, all blessings, and may not answer amen. He may not even do so voluntarily. He also may not recite Kaddish until after the burial.

He washes before eating bread, but does not recite any blessings and does not join a *zimun* (quorum) for Birkas Hamazon.

He may wear shoes, go anywhere he wishes, and participate in the preparations for the burial.

On Shabbos and Yom Tov the laws of *aninus* do not apply, except those governing private activities, such as having relations and studying Torah. When the burial is delayed until the following day, the *onein* recites Havdallah without spices or a candle. From Tuesday night on he does not recite Havdallah at all.

He does not attend synagogue or join a *minyán* of ten men, except on Shabbos (or on a weekday when he is not needed to arrange to burial) when he is needed as the tenth man. He attends both Seder nights and Yom Kippur services. However, he is not given an aliyah or a Mi Shebeirach.

After the burial, he recites any prayers still within their time limit. However, he may not don tefillin the entire burial day.

A child who is old enough to understand the circumstances follows some laws of *aninus* — those which are not too hard for him.

A bride or groom (after the chuppah) finishes the wedding week and then begins shivah.

There is no *aninus* for a baby who died before the end of his thirtieth day.

Where the government authorities delay burials for three days, *aninus* does not begin until the day of the burial, but some hold that if the body was prepared for burial and put in a coffin, *aninus* ends and the general laws of *aveilus* (mourning) begin. In any case, shivah is counted only after the burial.

## 10. The Coffin

In Ashkenazic lands a complete coffin with nails was always used. It is unclear whether wood or metal nails were used.

In some communities slight spaces were left between the boards, and in Frankfurt holes in the floor allowed the body to come in contact with the earth. When the government opposed this, a *teffach*-wide hole was cut into the foot, and sometimes head, wall of the coffin.

In large communities a special branch of the chevrah kaddishah would build coffins, which should be done in the cemetery or on the synagogue property. Each member performed his specific task (cutting the wood, banging in the nails) each time. Frankfurt had a carpentry shop on the bottom floor of one of the old synagogues for this purpose. In smaller communities a carpenter would make the boards, and the chevrah kaddishah (with the prayer leader in charge) would put them together. Sometimes the only option was to have a local carpenter do all the work. Eating is not permitted on the production site of a coffin.

On Yom Tov the coffin is built by a gentile.

The body is measured (by a man for a male, woman for a female) and the coffin is built accordingly. In later years small communities would have three standard sizes.

Everyone uses the same type of coffin made of unfinished wood. The floor is made of two pieces held together by two wide braces and attached to each of the two long walls by five nails. End pieces are cut to fit into the floor and sides, and are attached to the sides by three nails and the floor by two nails to each board. The two pieces that make up the lid are braced with a piece of wood on top (with five nails) and bottom (with four nails). Some make the floor out of one piece of wood.

The wood is covered to ensure that nothing pointy sticks out. Plaster is spread over breaks in the inside walls. No designs or thick padding is allowed.

The rectangular shape usually tapers from the head to the toe. If not, the letter *reish* is inscribed at the head. The first and last name of the deceased is written in ink on a piece of wood about seventy-five centimeters long.

Extra pieces of wood from the coffin-making process may not be used for other purposes, but may be used to heat water for washing the body.

For a Torah teacher, part of his study table is used for the coffin. Some asked that it be made from the walls of their sukkah.

In Frankfurt, a small, fully assembled coffin was used for a less than one-year-old baby. Some communities had the custom to place the pieces together in the grave without attaching them with nails, and to place the lid on a slant. For a less than one-month-old baby a simple box is used. When the coffin is finished it is brought to the house of the deceased. In Eretz Yisrael the burial is done without a coffin.

## 11. The Shrouds

In earlier generations the women would engage in the great mitzvah of sewing the shrouds on day of death, whether in the room of the deceased or in the women's section of the synagogue.

The shrouds were made from white flax, but now cotton is also used. They must have no dirt or tears in them. All symbols and buttons are removed and no gold or silver decorations are added. The sewing must be performed with dexterity, since no knots may be made.

For bar mitzvah age and above, the following articles of clothing are included among the shrouds: hat, pants, socks, *kutones* (undershirt), lower and upper *Sargenes* (*kittel*), belt, *fulder* (mantle), and tallis made *passul* (unfit for use) and having no gold or silver head piece.

In earlier times a neckpiece and scarf would be made for one who wore them during one's lifetime.

A Kohen is dressed with two hats.

A bag of earth from the Eretz Yisrael is prepared, preferably taken from the vicinity of the graves of prophets and great early sages, and especially from Jerusalem, the Tomb of the Patriarchs, and other holy places. From age thirteen to twenty-one, about half an ounce is prepared; from age twenty-one and above, about an ounce.

From age twelve to thirteen, all the above is done except the addition of the bag of earth, which is only done for adults, probably because children do not need the extra merit. If the deceased did not yet begin wearing a tallis, then a *tallis katan* (*passul*) is prepared for him.

From age four to twelve, only the hat, socks, shirt, upper kittel, belt, mantle, and earth are prepared. If the deceased did not yet begin to wear a tallis, then a *tallis katan* (*passul*) is prepared for him.

In some places neither a tallis nor a *tallis katan* was prepared for a boy under the age of bar mitzvah.

From age one to four, only the hat, shirt, upper kittel, belt, and mantle are prepared.

A baby less than one year old is wrapped only with four flax diapers. A baby less than thirty days old is wrapped with three diapers. For women, instead of the pants and tallis, a skirt (*rekla* or *shirtze*) is prepared, with a decorated apron in middle. A coif takes the place of the hat.

## 12. Taharah (Washing the Body)

A special branch of the chevrah kaddishah would take care of the taharah. Relatives close enough to be unfit for giving testimony stay out of the room for the taharah, but may take part in the dressing.

The taharah is usually performed in the house of the deceased, unless he is to be buried in a different city, in which case it is done in the taharah room there.

The taharah is commenced only after everything is prepared and the coffin is in the room sitting on two chairs.

At least two or three people must engage in the taharah. If they have a bruise they may not touch the body. Some begin by saying *Ana Hashem Elokei hachessed veharachamim*, and some light two candles.

A solemn atmosphere is kept and the body is treated with respect as if it were alive.

Using the same sheet as was used to set down the body from the table, the body is then placed on the taharah board (*metaher bret* or *metaher tish*) with the feet pointing toward the door. If the sheet became dirty, it is replaced.

An egg is broken with a nail where the body's head had been placed. Some drive the nail into the floor. Some also break a ceramic vessel.

The clothing of the deceased is removed without uncovering the private parts. If the shirt will not come off, it is torn through the sleeve and front starting from the top. All contact with the body is done in the gentlest way. Some recite the following verses while removing the clothing:

וּפָשַׁט אֶת בְּגָדָיו וְלָבַשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים  
וְהוֹצִיא אֶת הַדָּשָׁן אֶל מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל מְקוֹם טְהוֹר.  
וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל הָעַמֻּדִים לִפְנֵי לֵאמֹר הִסִּירוּ הַבְּגָדִים הַצְּאִים  
מֵעַלְיוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי רָאֵה הָעֵבֶרְתִּי מֵעַלֶיךָ עֹנֵךְ וְהִלְבַּשׁ אֶתְךָ מַחֲלָצוֹת.  
וַיִּפְשַׁט מִשָּׂה אֶת אֶהְרֹן אֶת בְּגָדָיו וַיִּלְבַּשׁ אֹתָם אֶת אֶלְעָזָר בְּנוֹ וַיִּמַּת אֶהְרֹן  
שָׁם בְּרֹאשׁ הַהָר וַיִּרְדַּ מִשָּׂה וְאֶלְעָזָר מִן הָהָר. וַיִּרְאוּ כָּל הָעֵדָה כִּי גִוַע  
אֶהְרֹן וַיִּבְכוּ אֶת אֶהְרֹן שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם כָּל בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל.  
וַאֲחֵיכֶם כָּל בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל יִבְכוּ אֶת הַשְּׂרָפָה  
אֲשֶׁר שָׂרַף הַשָּׁמַיִם.

The body is checked to see that it is clean and all bandages and the like are removed, unless that would cause damage to the skin or hair. Nails are cleaned. Some have the practice of trimming them.

The sheet is replaced to cover the body (except the hands) and warm water is poured on the body through the sheet. Some use a ceramic vessel. After pouring water through the sheet, the body is washed using that sheet, while it remains in place. care is exercised not to let water into the mouth.

After washing the front from head to toe, the body is turned on its left side and the right side is washed, and vice versa. The body is never turned over.

After the completion of the entire taharah process, some communities would insert cotton in back.

No internal taharah is ever performed.

### 13. Taharah (Pouring Water on the Body)

Nine *kabin* of water are then poured onto the body. Some change the wet sheet first, taking care not to uncover the body in the process. (The body is not immersed in a mikveh.)

The process of taharah is as follows: A barrel (*metaher kessel*) is filled with warm water to the nine *kabin* mark (between 19 and 27.5 quarts). The water may be divided into no more than three barrels, and there must be no interruption between the pouring of one barrel to another. The water is poured continuously, directly onto the body, while two to four people hold a sheet in the air above the body, averting their faces.

Some lay the body down and pour continuously onto its right side and then its left side. Some raise the head end of the platform as much as possible. Some have the body in a sitting position, with one holding the arms from the back and another holding the head. Others have three people stand the body with three belts on either side, thus allowing for a single flow of water from head to toe.

One member keeps the mouth closed.

All participants recite the following verse during the pouring process. In some places the *shamash* holds a chart for the participants to read from. Some recite the verse three times, finishing the recital before the end of the pouring.

וְזָרְקֵתִי עֲלֵיכֶם מֵיִם טְהוֹרִים וְטָהַרְתֶּם מִכָּל טְמְאוֹתֵיכֶם  
וּמִכָּל גְּלוּלֵיכֶם אֲטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם.

Some add the following verses. No other Torah teachings at all are read in the presence of the body.

וַיִּצַק מִשֶּׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה עַל רֹאשׁ אַהֲרֹן וַיִּמָּשַׁח אֹתוֹ לְקִדְשׁוֹ.  
וְהִתְקַדְּשְׁתֶּם וְהִיִּיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.

Afterward the body is placed on a different, dry platform, upon a clean, dry sheet, where the body is carefully dried without uncovering it. The body is leaned to the right and then to the left to dry the back, just as during the washing. Open wounds are carefully bandaged. On Yom Tov several sheets are used to avoid the prohibition of *sechitah* (squeezing out water).

The hair of the head and beard are then combed in the same custom as during his lifetime. The comb is checked. All fallen hair is put in the coffin or the prepared hat. Anything that falls off the body after the taharah, such as bandages, is put into the coffin. Dentures that he died wearing are left in the mouth. If they fall out during the taharah, some do not replace them and even do not put them into the coffin.

Some pour a mixture of beaten egg and wine on the head of the body after the taharah.

The platform and floor are dried. The platform is not turned over because this draws dangerous spirits. For the same reason the body is removed from the taharah room and placed at the inner side of the door to the house.

Only women participate in the taharah of a woman, but a man may remain in an adjacent room to give directions. A woman in an active state of *niddah* may not participate.

When taharah cannot be performed, the body is wrapped in a sheet and placed in the coffin with the shrouds lying beside it.

#### **14. Halbashah (Dressing the Body)**

The participants then dress the body while it rests on the taharah table fully covered. Care is taken not to let any part of the shrouds enter the mouth.

The elder stands at the head of the body, giving instructions.

Hat: The elder himself puts the hat on the body, covering the eyes, with the stiches toward the back. A Kohen is dressed with two hats. Some recite the following verses:

וְאָמַר יְשִׁימוּ צְנִיף טְהוֹר עַל רֹאשׁוֹ וְיִשְׁימוּ הַצְּנִיף הַטְּהוֹר עַל רֹאשׁוֹ  
וְיִלְבָּשֶׁהוּ בְּגָדִים וּמְלַאֲךְ הַשֵּׁם עִמּוֹ.  
וְיִלְבֹּשׁ צְדָקָה בְּשֵׂרָיו וְכוֹבֵעַ יְשׁוּעָה בְּרֹאשׁוֹ.  
וְיִשֵּׁם אֶת הַמְצַנְנֹת עַל רֹאשׁוֹ וְיִשֵּׁם עַל הַמְצַנְנֹת אֶל מוֹל פְּנָיו אֶת  
צִיץ הַזָּהָב נֶזֶר הַקֹּדֶשׁ כְּאִשֶּׁר צִוָּה הַשֵּׁם אֶת מֹשֶׁה.  
רֹאשׁוֹ עַלֶיךָ כְּפָרְמֶל וְדִלֵת רֹאשׁוֹ כְּאִשֶּׁר מְלַךְ אֲסוּר בְּרֵהוּטִים.

The rest of the dressing is done in pairs, according to seniority in the chevrah kaddishah. (Clothing is always put on the right side first.)

Pants: While putting on the pants, some recite:

כְּתִנֵּת בְּד קֹדֶשׁ יִלְבֹּשׁ וּמְכַנְסֵי בְד יִהְיוּ עַל בְּשָׂרוֹ וּבְאַבְנֵי בְד  
יִחְגַּר וּבְמַצְנֵנֹת בְּד יִצְנֵף בְּגָדֵי קֹדֶשׁ הֵם וְרוּחָץ בְּמִים אֶת בְּשָׂרוֹ וְלִבְשָׁם.  
וְהֵייתָ עֹטָרַת תְּפִאֲרַת בֵּיד הַשֵּׁם וְצִנִּיף מְלוּכָה בְּכַף אֶלְקֵיךָ.  
שׁוֹשׁ אֲשֵׁישׁ בְּהֵשֶׁם תִּגַּל נִפְשֵׁי בְּאֵלְקֵי כִי הִלְבִּישְׁנִי בְּגָדֵי יִשְׁעַ מְעִיל  
צְדָקָה יַעֲטֵנִי כְּחֹתֶן יִכְהֶן פָּאֵר וְכַפְלָה תַעֲדָה כְּלִיָּהּ.

Socks: Sons and relatives put socks on the body, at which time they ask for forgiveness (*mechilah freiyin*) from the deceased. If there are no relatives, or if they prefer not to, then the socks are put on by the chevrah kaddishah.

Shirt: first the sleeves and then the head.

New *Sargenes* (*kittel*): The laces are not tied, but wound.

*Sargenes* worn during his lifetime: It is put on over the new one, and the part that was traditionally left unsewn during his lifetime is now sewn while on his body.

A neckpiece is put on married men and a neck handkerchief is put on bachelors.

Tallis and belt are put on the body when the body is put into the coffin.

Some communities had different orders of dressing.

If a woman died during pregnancy, a sheet is placed upon her legs, probably as a sign indicating that there is another (unseen) soul resting in the coffin.

For a less than one-year-old baby, the first diaper is wound around the torso. The second is folded into a triangle and covers the head and neck. The third is folded the same way and wound around the nape of the neck and covers the shoulders and arms in front. After placing the baby in the coffin, the fourth diaper is placed as a mantle.

For a less than one-month-old baby the fourth diaper is omitted.



## 15. Placing the Body in the Coffin (*Einlegen*)

The coffin is set on the gurney with the foot end facing the door.

The tallis, mantle (with stitches exposed), and belt are placed in the coffin. Then the body is gently placed in the coffin, face up. The belt is folded around itself three times in a temporary fashion, so that it can be untied easily. The two ends are laid on the *Sargenes* in the form of the letter *shin*. The folds of the sleeves and one fold of the *Sargenes* reach between the thumb and index finger.

Some set the hands of a Kohen in the position of Birkas Kohanim.

The mantle is placed on the shoulders like a coat and the corners are laid in front. Then the mantle and the tallis are folded over the head without covering the face, provided he wore his tallis over his head during his lifetime. No headpiece is added to the tallis and any gold or silver is removed.

The lower righthand *tzitzis* are removed, and new *tzitzis* are placed in the lower righthand corner of the coffin. The unfit corner of the tallis is left hanging out the coffin, between the coffin wall and the coffin cover. In the Eretz Yisrael, the tallis is omitted, since the land itself surrounds the body with holiness.

The folds of the *Sargenes* on the hand are made in the shape of shin-dalet-yud, and are tied with the *tzitzis*. All the while care is taken not to let any part of the clothing get stuck in the mouth.

Some recite the following verses while placing the body in the coffin:

וַיִּקַּח וַיִּתֵּן אֶת הָעֵדוּת אֶל הָאָרֶץ וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת הַבְּדִים עַל הָאָרֶץ וַיִּתֵּן אֶת הַכַּפֹּת  
עַל הָאָרֶץ מִלְמַעְלָה. וַיָּבֵא אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֶל הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת פְּרֻכַת הַמִּסְכָּד וַיִּסְדֵּךְ עַל אֲרוֹן  
הָעֵדוּת כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה הַשֵּׁם אֶת מֹשֶׁה. וַיִּכַּס הָעֵנָן אֶת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּכְבֹּד הַשֵּׁם מְלֵא אֶת  
הַמִּשְׁכָּן.

The legs are then straightened and the fingers are bent around the thumb. The *tzitzis* or *Sargenes* may be used to achieve this. The *Sargenes* is then pulled down to the feet.

Blood-soaked articles are placed in the coffin before the body is placed in it. If death occurred during the amputation of a limb, the limb is placed by the body where it had been attached.

Before closing the coffin, the participants in the dressing ask for forgiveness from the deceased with a nusach such as the following:

פלוני ב"ר פלוני, הנני מבקש ממך מחילה, תחלה מהקדוש ברוך הוא ואחר כך ממך.  
אם גרמנו לך כל רע בחיך או בעת עשיית הטהרה, מחל לנו.

The coffin is then covered with a black sheet and the coffin cover is placed upon it partially, leaving the head exposed. That opening is covered with a bag of earth or a clean piece of cloth. If there is a nameplate, it is affixed at this point.

Some are careful not to set the coffin in a place where the body had been lying.

## 16. Burial of One Who Died Bleeding

One who died bleeding is bound with a sheet and placed in the coffin as he is, with the shrouds beside him, according to their order of dressing. If possible, the hat and socks are put on. Even where the custom is to use an incomplete coffin, in this case a complete coffin is used, and it is plastered well on the inside.

Any bloodstains on soft articles are cut away and placed in the coffin before the body is placed in it. Any bloodstains on hard articles are wrapped in paper and put on top of the coffin.

A murder victim is buried precisely as found, without shrouds. A new, black-handled knife is placed in both hands, the blade in the hands and the handle pointing upward. He is covered with a sheet like any other body.

A woman who died bleeding during childbirth also does not have a taharah, but is dressed in shrouds, and the coffin is sealed with pitch to prevent blood from dripping into the ground. Anything that absorbed blood is buried with her as described above. If the baby also died, it is placed in her coffin at the right foot.

## 17. Requesting Forgiveness (*Mechilah Freyin*)

Forgiveness is requested from the deceased between the taharah and the funeral. Relatives and friends pass by the foot of the coffin, which is left slightly open, and in turn take hold of the large toe and request forgiveness with a nusach such as the following:

פלוני ב"ר פלוני היקר, הריני מבקש ממך מחילה, אם גרמתי לך צער כלשהו, אנא  
מחל לי אתה תחלה, ואז אוכל לזכות למחילת הקדוש ברוך הוא.

If the deceased was a member of the chevrah kaddishah, the living members request forgiveness even before the taharah, right when they set him on the taharah board, while he is still dressed. The elder stands by the feet while the others stand around the platform, and takes hold of the large toe and recites the nusach mentioned above. Then they all take three steps back to show that his membership has ceased.

The sons of the deceased may take the opportunity to request forgiveness when putting the socks on his feet.

### **18. Interval before the Burial**

The burial is not done early in the morning; rather, it is delayed until after morning services are concluded. In general, a hasty funeral is considered shameful, especially if done while the body is still warm. When, for example, the death occurs Friday afternoon, the sages would delay the funeral until after Shabbos.

The ancient regulation in Frankfurt was not to remove the body from the house for the funeral until three hours after the death. In Worms the regulation was not to commence the taharah until two hours after the death.

There were those who requested that their funeral be delayed two days, but that was not customary except where the government authorities had made such a law. In such a situation, the preparations for the burial were usually made close to the day of death, and the body was left in the coffin until it was possible to begin the funeral.

### **19. The Funeral**

Some communities would announce after Shacharis that a funeral was to take place that day. For the funeral of a great person, the announcement would include instructions to close all stores during the funeral.

When a burial takes place on Friday or the day preceding Yom Tov, Minchah is delayed five to ten minutes.

Shim'u Zos (Tehillim 49) is recited at the funeral. No stops are made for Kaddish, since an *onein* may not recite prayers or answer amen until after the burial, and certainly not within four *amos* (cubits) of the body.

The chevrah kaddishah have the privilege to carry the body and walk before it to the cemetery.

It is customary for sons to follow the coffin of both parents with the other relatives and to aid a little in the carrying of the coffin. The custom, based

on the Ari, not to follow one's father's coffin was generally not accepted in Ashkenazic lands. To disperse the evil spirits, some would recite the relevant prayer in *Kitzur Ma'avar Yabok* and the like. Others would ask that their sons not walk after the coffin, but before it.

The close relatives cover their heads in the custom of mourners. If the covering is done with a tallis, it is worn at the cemetery before *tzidduk hadin* (accepting the judgment) and removed before proceeding to the grave. The covering was traditionally done with a mourners' hat, a black turban wound around the head and around the chin and nose, with the eyes uncovered, similar to Arabic custom. This was kept on until arriving home from the cemetery.

At the funeral of a great man, his students walk after the mourner. They hold his writings.

The gurney is raised and carried on the shoulders. At this point some recite the following verses:

וַיָּבֵאוּ כָּל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׂאוּ הַלְוִיִּם אֶת הָאָרוֹן.  
וַיָּבֵאוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת אָרוֹן בְּרִית הַשֵּׁם אֶל מְקוֹמוֹ אֶל  
דְּבִיר הַבַּיִת אֶל קִדְשׁ הַקִּדְשִׁים אֶל תַּחַת כְּנָפֵי הַכְּרוּבִים.  
וַיְהִיו הַכְּרוּבִים פְּרָשִׁים כְּנָפִים עַל מְקוֹם הָאָרוֹן וַיִּכְסּוּ  
הַכְּרוּבִים עַל הָאָרוֹן וְעַל בְּדֵי מַלְמַעְלָה.  
שָׂרְפִים עֹמְדִים מִמַּעַל לוֹ שֵׁשׁ כְּנָפִים שֵׁשׁ כְּנָפִים לְאַחַד בְּשֵׂתִים  
יְכַסֶּה פָּנָיו וּבְשֵׂתִים יְכַסֶּה רַגְלָיו וּבְשֵׂתִים יַעֲוֹפֶה.

The women follow the men and leave the cemetery before the men. In some places the women did not enter the cemetery. In Worms, the men would look away, toward the wall, when the women would exit the cemetery. In later years, in some places it became customary for women not to join the funeral altogether.

In later years, the sages accepted the use of a hearse in large cities where the distance to the cemetery was great. Some would cover the horses with black fabric and some would print verses, such as the following, on the sides of the hearse:

בִּינְךָ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי פְּדִית אוֹתִי הַשֵּׁם קַל אֲמַת.  
בְּלַע הַמָּוֶת לְנִצָּח וּמַחַה הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹקִים דְּמַנְעָה מֵעַל כָּל פְּנִים.  
וְהַלֵּךְ לְפָנֶיךָ צְדָקָתְךָ כְּבוֹד הַשֵּׁם יֵאֱסָפֶךָ.

Others refrained from the use of a hearse and a ceremonial procession with funeral dress, since these can be considered gentile customs.

The *gabbai* of the chevrah kaddishah collects charity at the funeral and then places it in the house of mourning.

It is laudable to follow the funeral to the cemetery. If a hearse is used, the coffin is taken off, put on a special gurney, and covered with black fabric. The mourner leads the procession at the foot of the coffin.

One who has not visited a cemetery in thirty days recites the blessing *Asher yatzar eschem*. See below, section “Prostration at the Grave.”

## **20. Rending the Clothing before the Burial**

The coffin is placed on the taharah table in the cemetery assembly house. If the mourner is a Kohen, the coffin is placed outside. In later years some cemeteries had a four inch space along the ceiling to permit the Kohanim to stand in the room.

If the mourner did not rend at the time of death, he does so now. (The chevrah kaddishah advise him to wear clothing that is fitting to tear.) The coffin is opened for several minutes. Someone approaches the mourner holding the blade of a knife pointing backward and begins the tear, which the mourner continues tearing downward manually a *teffach* length. The undershirt is not torn. A woman helps a female mourner tear, and then the tear is covered with a scarf or handkerchief. If she has none, then she closes the tear with a pin.

For a parent the rending is done on the left side of the chest. Otherwise, it is done on the right side. Rending is not done for a baby who died less than thirty days old.

Both boys and girls do not rend unless they are twelve years old.

In most communities no blessing is recited at this point.

After rending for a parent the mourner removes his shoes. For other relatives, the mourner removes his shoes when he arrives home. Some remove their shoes before *shurah* and put them on again to walk home.

On Yom Tov there is no rending. On Chol HaMo'ed rending is done, but only for a parent. Otherwise, the rending is delayed until after Yom Tov.

The body is checked and the coffin is closed.

## **21. Tzidduk Hadin (Accepting the Judgment)**

After rending, the mourner, accompanied by the assembly, recites the following aloud:

הצור תמים פָּעלוּ כִּי כָל דְּרָכָיו מְשֻׁפָּט קל אֲמוּנָה וְאִין עוֹל צְדִיק וְיִשָּׁר הוּא: הַצּוֹר תָּמִים בְּכָל פֶּעַל. מִי יֹאמֶר לוֹ מָה תִּפְעַל. הַשְּׁלִיט בְּמִטָּה וּבְמַעַל. מִמִּית וּמַחֲיָה מוֹרִיד שָׂאוֹל וְעַל: הַצּוֹר תָּמִים בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה. מִי יֹאמֶר לוֹ מָה תַעֲשֶׂה. הָאוֹמֵר וְעָשָׂה. חֶסֶד חֲנֻם לָנוּ תַעֲשֶׂה. וּבְזָכוֹת הַנֶּעֱקָד כְּשָׂה. הַקְּשִׁיבָה וְעָשָׂה: צְדִיק בְּכָל דְּרָכָיו הַצּוֹר תָּמִים. אֶרֶךְ אַפְּסִים וּמְלֵא רַחֲמִים. חֲמַל נָא וְחוּס נָא עַל אֲבוֹת וּבָנִים. כִּי לָךְ אֲדוֹן הַסְּלִיחוֹת וְהַרְחַמִּים: צְדִיק אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם לְהַמִּית וְלְהַחְיֹת. אֲשֶׁר בִּינְךָ פְּקוּדוֹן כָּל רוּחוֹת. חֲלִילָה לָךְ זְכוּרֵנוּ לְמַחֹת. וַיְהִי נָא עֵינֶיךָ בְּרַחֲמִים עָלֵינוּ פְּקוּחוֹת. כִּי לָךְ אֲדוֹן הַרַחֲמִים וְהַסְּלִיחוֹת: אֲדָם אִם בּוֹ שָׁנָה יִהְיֶה. אוֹ אֶלֶף שָׁנִים יַחֲיֶה מָה יִתְרוֹן לוֹ, כְּלֵא הִזְהִי יִהְיֶה: בְּרוּךְ דָּין הָאֱמֶת מִמִּית וּמַחֲיָה: בְּרוּךְ הוּא. כִּי אֱמֶת דִּינוֹ. וּמְשׁוּטט הַכֹּל בְּעֵינָיו. וּמְשַׁלֵּם לְאָדָם חֲשׁוֹנוֹ וְדִינוֹ. וְהַכֹּל לְשִׁמוֹ הוֹדִיָּה יִתְנוּ: יִדְעֵנוּ הַשֵּׁם כִּי צְדִק מְשֻׁפָּט. תִּצְדַּק בְּדַבְּרֶךָ וְתִזְכֶּה בְּשִׁפְטֶךָ. וְאִין לְהַרְהֵר אַחַר מִדַּת שִׁפְטֶךָ. צְדִיק אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם וְיִשָּׁר מְשֻׁפָּטֶיךָ: דָּין אֱמֶת. שׁוֹפֵט צְדִק וְאֱמֶת. בְּרוּךְ דָּין הָאֱמֶת. שְׁכַל מְשֻׁפָּטֵי צְדִק וְאֱמֶת: נֶפֶשׁ כָּל חַי בִּינְךָ. צְדִק מְלֵאָה יְמִינְךָ וְיָדְךָ. רַחֵם עַל פְּלִטַת צֶאֱן יָדְךָ. וְתֹאמֶר לְמַלְאֲךָ הָרֶף יָדְךָ: גְּדַל הַעֲצָה וְרַב הַעֲלִילָה. אֲשֶׁר עֵינֶיךָ פְּקוּחוֹת עַל כָּל דְּרָכֵי בְּנֵי אָדָם. לְתַת לְאִישׁ כְּדָרְכָיו וּכְפָרֵי מַעֲלָלָיו: לְהַגִּיד כִּי יִשָּׁר הַשֵּׁם צוּרֵי וְלֹא עוֹלְתָה בּוֹ: הַשֵּׁם נִתָּן וְהַשֵּׁם לְקַח. יְהִי שֵׁם הַשֵּׁם מְבֹרָךְ: וְהוּא רַחוּם יְכַפֵּר עוֹן וְלֹא יִשְׁחִית וְהַרְבֵּה לְהַשִּׁיב אִפּוֹ וְלֹא יַעִיר כָּל חַמְתּוֹ.

*Tzidduk hadin* is never recited aloud on days when Tachanun is omitted or on the day preceding Shabbos and Yom Tov. Instead, the coffin is placed upon the table for a moment, and the *tzidduk hadin* is recited in an undertone while walking to the grave.

*Tzidduk hadin* is not recited at night.

On Yom Tov the coffin is taken directly to the grave without any prayers, Kaddish, or *shurah* (see below).

Some omit *tzidduk hadin* for a baby who died less than one year old.

The coffin of an uncircumcised baby is placed on the table and uncovered. The bris is performed with a piece of glass or a sharp stone. The foreskin is placed at the foot of the grave, outside the coffin.

Some have eulogies immediately after *tzidduk hadin*.

The coffin is then taken to the gravesite. Kohanim remain at the assembly house.

## 22. Putting Earth in the Coffin

On the way to the gravesite, some put the coffin onto the ground and let go of it. Some do this twice, and others do so three or seven times, but never on days when *tzidduk hadin* is omitted.

The coffin is placed beside the grave and the black sheet is removed. The coffin is disengaged from the gurney, laid on the ground, and uncovered. Some perform the rending at this point.

The elder of the burial department of the chevrah kaddishah fills a bag with three shovelfuls of dirt from the grave. Some allow the relatives to participate. The elder ties the bag and places it beneath the head of the body. In Worms, women would fill the bag and men would place it in the coffin. If the deceased is a woman, then women place the bag and engage also in the placement of earth mentioned below.

If the eyes opened, they are closed gently.

The elder of the *chessed* (kindness) department of the chevrah kaddishah pours earth from the Eretz Yisrael upon the body's face and chest. If the mouth opened, it is held closed with two fingers so that the earth does not fall in. Some pour earth also on the location of the bris.

Care is taken to ensure that the unfit corner of the tallis remains hanging out the coffin.

The lid is nailed shut with wooden nails. The elder of the burial department and the elder of the *chessed* department each bang in four nails three quarters of the way in, with a rock, and not a hammer, starting from top right. Relatives do not bang in nails. On Yom Tov a gentile bangs in the nails, also with a rock, as a deviation from his normal practice.

### **23. The Burial Location**

When possible, relatives are buried in proximity to each other. A woman is buried either next to her (first) husband or next to her ancestors. In several cemeteries in southern Germany the women were buried in separate rows. Kohanim are buried near the outer wall, where relatives can see the grave, either through a window or with the aid of a platform outside the wall.

A woman who died during childbirth is buried away from the other graves, near the cemetery wall. One of several reasons given for this custom is to simulate the death of Rachel, who died during childbirth and was buried on the road, not in the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

It was common to have separate individual sections for rabbis, murder victims, and children.

No trees, flowers, or topiaries are planted in a cemetery. It is permissible to sell cemetery flora and to use the proceeds for cemetery expenses.

### **24. The Burial**

In ancient communities the burial department of the chevrah kaddishah would promptly dig the grave and take care of the burial. Only one person would dig at a time, unless the time is late.

In some places there was a custom to toss a lock into the grave and to dispose of the key.

After the coffin is sealed, it is lowered into the grave by four men using two ropes or belts.

The feet face east. Some have the feet facing south.

As mentioned above, the black sheet is removed before interment.

During the interment some recite the following verse (some repeat it three times):

וְלִבְנֵי הַפִּילֵגְשִׁים אֲשֶׁר לְאַבְרָהָם נָתַן אַבְרָהָם מִתְּנַת וַיִּשְׁלַחם מֵעַל יַצְחָק בְּנוֹ  
בְּעוֹדָנוּ חַי קַדְמָה אֵל אֶרֶץ קַדְמָה.

The gurney is turned over once. Some turn it over three times. Some make sure to turn it over away from the city.

Each member of the assembly shovels earth into the grave three times. In some communities this is done seven times. The sons shovel first (according to age), then the relatives, and then the rest of the assembly.

The shovel is not passed from hand to hand, nor is it prepared with earth for the next in line.

When the grave is about half filled, a name sign with date of death (or other identifying details, such as the grave number in the chevrah kaddishah's records) is thrust in at the head of the grave. The chevrah kaddishah takes over the rest of the burial. The mound left over is called *tzuras kever*. It is tapered to a point on top and is wider at the head of the grave. No one leaves before the shaping of the *tzuras kever*.

On Yom Tov the chevrah kaddishah lowers the coffin into the grave, but the rest of the work is done by gentiles under their supervision.

Unfit Torah scrolls and tefillin are buried in the grave of a rabbi or head of yeshivah. They are placed in a new container and inserted into a special hole left in the grave.

In some communities the chevrah kaddishah would recite the following prayer for the deceased at the conclusion of the burial:

יְהִי רָצוֹן לְפָנֶיךָ הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹקֵי הַנְּשָׁמוֹת שֶׁתִּקְבַּל נִשְׁמַת (פְּלוֹנִי בֶן פְּלוֹנִי) לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאַהֲבָה  
וּבְחֶבֶד, וְתִשְׁלַח לוֹ (לָהּ) מַלְאָכֶיךָ הַטּוֹבִים לְהוֹלִיךְ נִשְׁמַתוֹ (נִשְׁמַתָּהּ) לְגַן עֵדֶן, כְּאֲשֶׁר  
שָׁלַחְתָּ מַלְאָכִים לְיַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב, וַיַּעֲקֹב הָלַךְ לְדָרְכוֹ וַיִּפְגְּעוּ בוֹ מַלְאָכֵי  
אֱלֹקִים, וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב כְּאֲשֶׁר רָאָם מַחֲנֵה אֱלֹקִים זֶה וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא מַחֲנֵי.  
וַיִּתְקַים בוֹ (בָּהּ) מִקְרָא זֶה, וְקוֹל הַשֵּׁם יִחַלִּיפוּ כַח יַעֲלֵו אַבְרָ כְּנִשְׁרִים יְרוּצוּ וְלֹא יִיגְעוּ  
יִלְכוּ וְלֹא יִיעֲפוּ. וְתִנְהַג עִמּוֹ (עִמָּהּ) בְּחֶסֶדֶיךָ הַמְרַבִּים, וְתִתְעַנֵּג מִדְּשׁוֹן נַפְשׁוֹ (נַפְשָׁהּ) וּמְרַב  
טוֹב הַצִּפּוֹן לְצַדִּיקִים. וְתִהִי נִשְׁמַתוֹ (נִשְׁמַתָּהּ) צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים עִם כָּל שׂוֹכְנֵי עֵפְרָיִם  
הַשׂוֹכְבִים פֹּה עִם כָּל צַדִּיקִים וְצַדִּיקָנוֹת שְׁבִיגוֹן עֵדֶן, אָמֵן.



Public recital of Keil Malei, on any occasion, is not customary.

One should not tarry at the cemetery. On the way out each member of the assembly places a small stone on the mound.

A mourner for a parent had already removed his shoes after the rending. For other relatives, the mourner removes his shoes when he arrives home. Some remove their shoes before *shurah* and put them on again to walk home.

On Yom Tov and Chol HaMo'ed the shoes are not removed.

## 25. Kaddish after Burial

Kaddish is recited no less than four *amos* away from the site of a grave. Therefore, it is usually recited in the assembly house, unless there is none or there is another body present, in which case it is recited outside the cemetery entrance. Some wash their hands before entering the assembly house. In some communities the Kaddish is prefaced with Michtam LeDavid (Tehillim 16). The assembly recites the following special Kaddish together with the mourner until *vikarei*:

וְתִגְדֹּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעַלְמָא דְהוּא עֲתִיד לְאַתְחַדְתָּא וְלֹא חֲזָא מִתְּיָא וְלֹא חֲסָא  
וְתִהוּן לְחַיֵּי עַלְמָא וְלִמְבִינָא קִרְתָּא דִירוּשָׁלַם וְלִשְׂכַלְלָא הִיכְלָה בְּגוּה וְלִמְעַקֵּר פְּלַחְנָא  
וְנִכְרָאָה מְאַרְעָא וְלֹא תִבָּא פְּלַחְנָא דְשְׂמִיָּא לְאַתְרָהּ וְיִמְלִיךְ קִדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא בְּמַלְכוּתָהּ  
וְיִקְרָה בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזֶמַן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.  
יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמָא וְלְעַלְמֵי עַלְמֵיָא.  
וְתִבְרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרַמֵּם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקִדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ  
הוּא לְעַלְמָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא דְאָמִירוּ בְּעַלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.  
יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׂמִיָּא וְחַיִּים עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.  
עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

Some hold that the mourner does not take three steps forward after taking three steps back.

The order of precedence for this Kaddish is the son, a different mourner, a *yahrtzeit*, and then a member of the *chevrah kaddishah*.

This special Kaddish is not recited on days when *Tachanun* is omitted. On such days some recite Kaddish *Yasom* instead, and others recite Kaddish *DeRabbanan* prefaced with the study of a *mishnah*, such as *Berachos 9:5* (*Chayav adam levareich al hara'ah...*) followed by *Rabbi Chanania ben Akashia*.

On Yom Tov no Kaddish is recited.

## 26. Shurah (Consolations at the Cemetery)

After Kaddish the assembly forms a *shurah* (queue) in two lines at the entrance to the cemetery, and then consoles the mourner as he walks (sons walk according to age) between the two lines, saying the following words:

הַמָּקוֹם יִנְחַם אוֹתְךָ (אֶתְּכֶם) בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר אֲבְלֵי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

The following is an additional ancient nusach:

הַשָּׁם [בְּרוּךְ הוּא] יִנְחֶמְךָ (יִנְחַמְכֶם) עִם שְׂאֵר אֲבְלֵי צִיּוֹן.

(ולא תוסיפו לדאבה עוד) is a late Turkish addition. Using the plural אתכם or ינחמכם for only one mourner is a late eastern European custom.)

*Shurah* is not done on Yom Tov, but is done on Chol HaMo'ed. Some communities do not have *shurah* on Chol HaMo'ed either.

*Shurah* is not done unless ten non-mourning men are present.

In communities where women would enter the cemetery, as is customary, *shurah* would be done for women also. In communities where such a practice is perceived as awkward, the two rows may be formed by women.

## 27. Casting of Grass and Earth

After *shurah* each member of the assembly tears out a handful of grass and throws it over his head onto the ground in back of him while reciting the following verse:

וַיִּצְיָצוּ מֵעִיר כְּעֵשֶׂב הָאָרֶץ.

If there is no grass, some earth is thrown while reciting this alternate verse:

זְכוּר כִּי עָפָר אֲנִי.

This casting is done on all days except Yom Tov. Some do it three times.

## 28. Handwashing

After visiting a cemetery, even when there is no funeral, hands must be washed on the way out before entering a building. Women should wash their hands twice.

Some recite the following verse while washing their hands after participating in a funeral:

בִּלְעַם הַמָּוֹת לְנִצָּחַ וּמְחַהּ הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹקִים דְּמַעְהָ מַעַל כָּל פְּנִים וְחֶרֶפֶת עֲמוֹ יִסִּיר מֵעַל כָּל  
הָאָרֶץ כִּי הַשֵּׁם דָּבָר.

The washing cup is not passed from hand to hand.

One washes one's face also, and after doing so does not dry one's hands.

Some hold that on Tish'ah BeAv one should not wash one's hands, since this handwashing is not a strict obligation.

Upon exiting the cemetery one sits three times, taking a few steps in between. The ancient custom is to repeat this in the synagogue courtyard and then once in the house of mourning, for a total of seven sittings. Some do all seven in the cemetery, some recite Vihi No'am and Yosheiv Beseiser each time, and others only recite *vidui*.

## 29. Eulogies

The coffin is brought into a synagogue or study hall for eulogies only if the deceased was a great Torah teacher who taught in that place.

Eulogies are generally given in the cemetery after *tzidduk hadin*, but some have them given in the assembly house.

No eulogies are given on days when Tachanun is omitted and after halachic midday before Shabbos and Yom Tov.

Great sages are given long eulogies in synagogue, with full attendance, later that day or on the following days, between Minchah and Ma'ariv. More eulogies are given at other times, according to the greatness of the deceased.

Some eulogists make sure to begin with a halachic topic, which is more important, but most of the eulogy should be about an aggadic (homiletic) topic, which all can understand.

After the eulogy of a great sage, the assembly sits on the floor (except after halachic midday on the day preceding Rosh Chodesh, when the eulogy itself is permitted) and some individuals would recite the following Keil Malei:

קַל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמִים הַמְצֵא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה תַּחַת כַּנְּפֵי הַשְּׂכִינָה בְּמַעְלוֹת  
קְדוּשִׁים וּטְהוּרִים מְזֻהָרִים כְּזֶה־הָרַקִּיעַ אֶת נַשְׁמַת (פְּלוֹנִי בֶן פְּלוֹנִי) בְּעֶבֶר שְׂבָלִי נֶדְרָר  
אֶתְּוֹ אֶדְקָה בְּעֵדוֹ בְּשִׁכְרֵי זֶה הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִסְתַּיְרְהוּ בְּסִתְרֵי כַּנְּפֵי לְעוֹלָמִים וְיִצְרָר  
בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת נַשְׁמַתוֹ הִי הוּא נִחְלָתוֹ וְיִנְיַח עַל מְשֻׁכְּבוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

Some continue with short eulogies while all are sitting on the floor. After the assembly rises, some eulogists end with *divrei nechamah* (consolations). Kaddish DeRabbanan is not recited after eulogies; it is recited only after regular discourses.

It is customary to eulogize great sages during the year after their death on the evening of fast days, such as the special chevrah kaddishah fast day or a public fast day such as the Tenth of Teves. These eulogies are given late in the afternoon on the day of the fast.

### 30. Se'udas Havra'ah (Mourners' Meal)

The mourner's first meal after returning home from the cemetery is provided by his neighbors. It consists of hardboiled eggs, bread, and wine. Some also eat lentils. Relatives and friends serve the mourner by putting the food into his hand.

Food is sent to the mourner throughout the shivah, whether rich or poor, in order not to embarrass one who are unable to feed one's family because of the prohibition to go out to work.

In Birkas Hamazon, in place of Uvnei Yerushalayim and the fourth blessing, the mourner recites the following blessings:

נחם השם אלקינו את אבלי ירושלים ואת האבלים המתאבלים באבל הזה, נחם מאבלם ושפחם מגונם, כאמור פאיש אשר אמו תנחמו בן אנכי אנחמכם ובירושלם תנחמו. ברוך אתה השם, מנחם ציון בבנין ירושלים. אמן. ברוך אתה השם, אלקינו מלך העולם, האל אבינו מלכנו, בוראנו, גאלנו, קדושנו, קדוש יעקב, המלך החי, הטוב והמטיב, אל אמת, דין אמת, שופט צדק, לקח נפשות במשפט, שליט בעולמו לעשות בו כרצונו, כי כל דרכיו משפט, ואנחנו עמו ועבדיו. ועל הכל אנחנו חייבים להודות לו ולברכו. גדר פרצות ישראל הוא יגדר את הפרצה הזאת מעלינו (אם אחר מברך יוסיף: ומעל האבל הזה) לחיים ולשלום, הוא יגמלנו לעד חן וחסד ורחמים וכל טוב ומכל טוב אל יחסרנו.

In several communities two locked boxes were sent to the house of mourning. The first box came with a key, and the second box was meant to remain locked. The first box had a note saying that the mourner should take out as much money as needed to cover the week's expenses, and he should put the rest (or all of it, if he has enough money already) into the second, locked box. Since the second box was not opened until it passed several houses of mourning, no one would know how much money any one mourner withdrew.

### 31. Shivah (Seven Day Mourning Period)

During shivah the following activities are prohibited: engaging in work (except in private when there would otherwise be a loss — not a lack of profit), bathing (even in cold water, but washing individual parts of the body is permissible), having relations, studying Torah (except sad parts), greeting other people, laundering and ironing (and certainly wearing new or newly laundered clothing), taking a haircut and nailcutting, rejoicing in general, sitting on a standard height chair, wearing a new article of clothing, leaving the house (one who must go out requires accompaniment, whether young or old), and reciting Birkas Halevanah (unless the time will pass by the end of the shivah).

*Kefiyas hamitah* (turning over the beds) is not customary. It was taken out of practice in ancient times because of a specific problem that it had caused.

Except when alone, the mourner would wear the traditional mourning turban (see above, section “The Funeral”). This is not done nowadays, because of the change in clothing style.

The mourner wears a black headpiece on his tallis. On Shabbos, Yom Tov, Purim, and Chol HaMo’ed he folds it under.

When mentioning something in the name of the deceased parent, the mourner adds *Hareini kaparas mishkavo* (or *mishkava*, for his mother).

On Shabbos and Yom Tov shivah is counted, but only applies to private activities, such as having relations and studying Torah.

On the seventh day of shivah, it is customary to sit for one hour after the conclusion of synagogue services. Some sit only for several minutes. At this point shivah ends and the mourner may put on shoes and leave the house.

### 32. Nichum Aveilim (Consolations at the House of Mourning)

The mourner’s friends (and in some places also the chevrah kaddishah) escort him home and engage in consolations immediately.

It is not customary to desist from consolations during the first three days.

The mourner remains silent.

For the nusach of consolation see above, section “Shurah.”

On Shabbos the nusach is the following:

שְׁבֵת הִיא מְלַנְחֵם וְנִחְמָה קְרוּבָה לְבוֹא וְשִׁבְתוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם.

### 33. Prayers in the House of Mourning

During the entire shivah a *minyan* of ten men gathers in the house of mourning for all prayer services, even if the mourning is not for a parent, or if the deceased was as young as one year old, or if there are no male mourners present.

Organizing the *minyan* is the responsibility of the chevrah kaddishah or the *chevras minyan*. Members of this special *chevrah* (society) are primarily Kohanim and weak people who are prohibited or unable to perform the taharah and burial. (There is no pay for any of these tasks; they are done for the sake of Heaven.)

The *chevrah* brings to the house a Torah scroll, *aron kodesh*, siddurim, benches, and a portable table suitable for Torah reading. In very small communities, the entire congregation prays there instead of in synagogue. If possible, the services should be held in the room where the death occurred. Women should not be present in the room where the services are held unless there is a partition.

If he is capable, the mourner leads the services. Some mourners begin only on the third or fourth day. The mourner neither reads from the Torah nor is given an aliyah.

Tachanun, Keil Erech Apayim, and the verse *Va'ani zos berisi* are omitted, but Lamnatzei'ach is recited.

Birkas Kohanim is recited as usual, but the Kohanim do not ascend the *duchan*.

In Kaddish Tiskabbal, "Tiskabbal" is not omitted.

Shir Mizmor LeAsaf (Tehillim 83) is recited as usual. Michtam LeDavid (Tehillim 16) is added to every prayer service. It is not customary to recite Shim'u Zos (Tehillim 49). At this point the mourner recites Kaddish Yasom.

At Ma'ariv, Shir Hama'alos before Barechu is omitted.

On *motza'ei Shabbos*, LeDavid Baruch, Vihi No'am, VeAtah Kaddosh, and the verses preceding Havdallah are omitted, but Veyiten Lecha is recited.

On Rosh Chodesh and Chanukah the mourner leaves the room during the recital of Hallel.

The mourner recites Selichos, but not as the leader, and he omits *vidui*.

If there is no *minyan* in the house of mourning, the mourner still does not attend synagogue, except on Tish'ah BeAv, when the whole congregation is mourning.

The mourner may attend synagogue for Selichos on the day preceding Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, as the Selichos on those days are recited before daybreak.

On Purim, he may attend synagogue at night to hear the megillah, and in the morning also for services.

### **34. Shabbos during the Shivah**

Before the onset of Shabbos, two distinguished members of the community escort the mourner to synagogue from the house of mourning. He remains silent on the way.

The mourner wears Shabbos clothing, but in the synagogue vestibule or in a side room, he covers his head and mouth with his tallis in Arabic custom. If he has not yet recited Minchah, he does so there with the tallis wrapped around his head.

Before Bo'i Veshalom (or before Barechu — if Ma'ariv will be before sunset) the *shamash* announces, *Likras avel* (approaching the mourner). The rabbi and a distinguished member approach him. The rabbi tells him, *Hikaneis* (enter), and escorts him to a different place from where he usually sits. The alternate seat is in a less distinguished place (more distant from the *aron kodesh*) or at the mourners' bench at the entrance to the synagogue by the southern or western wall. (A woman also changes her seat or sits at the mourners' bench in the women's section.)

As the mourner walks to his alternate seat, the congregation says to him the "Hamakom" phrase.

The congregation commences Shabbos with Bo'i Veshalom or Barechu, and the mourner continues wearing his tallis, but in the usual fashion (not wrapped around his head), until the conclusion of Ma'ariv.

After Hashem Malach, the mourner stands beside the leader's *amud* and recites Kaddish Yasom.

The unusual parts of this procedure are omitted when Yom Tov or Purim fall on Friday, and are also omitted at the onset of Yom Tov. On those days the mourner goes to synagogue just as everyone else.

In most communities the procedure is done even when the death was on Chol HaMo'ed, and the Shabbos during the shivah is more than seven days since the burial.

On the way out of synagogue, the congregants say to the mourner the Shabbos nusach (see above, section "Nichum Aveilim").

At the Shabbos meal, the mourner does not chant Shalom Aleichem, but does chant all his customary Shabbos *piyyutim*.

The mourner is not given an aliyah during shivah. The ancient custom was that after morning services the mourner would leave synagogue first and sit outside. The congregation would join him, and then they would get up, escort him home, and console him. The mourner omits Tzidkasecha and Pirkei Avos at Minchah. On *motza'ei Shabbos* the minyan returns to the house of mourning for Ma'ariv. The mourner removes his shoes after Barechu, but if he is the leader, he removes them beforehand, in order not to get confused. (It is not customary to end Shabbos by saying "Baruch Hamavdil.") A mother whose fourth Shabbos after giving birth falls during shivah does go to synagogue, but wears Shabbos — not Yom Tov — clothing and does not invite her friends home for the Chol Kreish. In a community where this practice is not widespread and may be misunderstood, the mother should wait until the Shabbos after the shivah to go to synagogue.

### **35. Relatives of the Mourner**

Close relatives of the mourner display minimized mourning until after the Shabbos during the shivah, even if they are located in a different city. They may not bathe, take a haircut, or do laundry. On Shabbos they wear a weekday outer article of clothing. On Rosh Hashanah, this is only done on the first day.

### **36. Torah Study in the House of Mourning**

It is customary to hold a Torah study session in merit of the deceased during shivah, morning and evening, preferably where the death occurred. Some make certain to go straight from the cemetery to the house of mourning to hold the first study session. The study includes *mussar* (ethical) and aggadic teachings on the topic of illness, visiting the sick, prayer for the sick, repentance, *vidui*, death, taharah, funeral, burial, *nichum aveilim* — similar to that which is mentioned in *Sefer Hachaim* and *Totze'os Chaim*. Some study the chapter of Eilu Megalechin (third chapter of Mo'ed Katan) or the like. The Torah writings of the deceased are included in the study. In some communities the preacher of the chevrah kaddishah would give the discourse. Charity is collected before the discourse.





### **39. Furnishings in the House of Mourning**

In some places it was customary to leave a water basin and hanging towel in the room with the candle. Some changed the water every day. Others were opposed to this entirely.

In some small communities this was done only until the burial. Anyone who left the room would wash his hands with the water in the basin.

Some have the custom to make the bed of the deceased, although one may not sleep there during the shivah.

As a partial fulfillment of *kefiyas hamitah*, the mirrors and pictures with reflective glass are turned around for the duration of the shivah, but especially while the body is in the house.

### **40. Sheloshim (Thirty Day Mourning Period)**

During the period after the shivah until the thirtieth day after the burial, the following activities are prohibited: taking a haircut, nailcutting, marrying, bathing in warm water, and wearing new or laundered clothing (unless someone else wore it first or it lay on the ground for several hours).

Some sages permitted the main bris participants — father, sandak, and mohel — to have their hair cut where people were sensitive to unkempt appearance. Some did not permit this for one who is in mourning for a parent. In any case they may not participate in the festive meal.

The mourner continues wearing a black headpiece on his tallis. On Shabbos, Yom Tov, Purim, and Chol HaMo'ed he folds it under. If he must be the leader on the High Holidays he wears a regular tallis. On Chanukah and Purim he does not hide the black strip.

Before women began wearing wigs, the mourner would cover her hair with a black coif, called a *Storz*.

It is forbidden to greet a mourner with *Shalom aleichem*, since he is obviously not at peace, but instead one may say *Baruch haba*. Some refrain even from a handshake.

The mourner (even a child) continues covering himself with his tallis during all the prayer services, but not on the evening and morning of Tish'ah BeAv.

He may be given an aliyah at Shabbos Minchah and on any weekday, but not at Shacharis of Shabbos, Yom Tov, or the High Holidays, unless he has a specific reason, such as when he is a main bris participant, on the

fourth Shabbos after the birth of a child, or if there is no other Kohen. If he is called up by mistake, he takes the aliyah.

A child mourner, who may not lead the services or be given an aliyah, is given *maftir* on Shabbos to recite the blessings in the merit of the deceased.

A mourner may not recite the Chatzi Kaddish after the Torah reading unless he is the reader.

If he is capable, a mourner should lead the services — especially on *motza'ei Shabbos* — but he should not lead any of the services on days when Tachanun is omitted.

When a mourner is the leader, he may not recite Kaddish Yasom if another mourner is present. If he is the only mourner, he recites only the Kaddish Yasom after Shir Mizmor LeAsaf (Tehillim 83).

Some make sure to have the mourner lead Birkas Hamazon during the entire twelve month period.

A mourner does not wear a *Sargenes (kittel)* on the High Holidays. Some wear it under a jacket. There are differing family customs about whether he wears one at the Seder. He does not join the circuits on Hoshana Rabbah or Simchas Torah, and certainly not during the rest of Sukkos.

On Purim, one may not send him Mishlo'ach Manos, except where there are only two Jews, in which case the non-mourner need not forfeit his mitzvah.

A mourner may not partake of any *se'udas mitzvah* (a meal that is a mitzvah to partake of) — such as a bar mitzvah, engagement, wedding, “zachar,” bris, or pidyon — unless he is actually serving as a waiter, and only with permission from a halachic authority. Whenever music is playing, he must leave the room.

A mourner — even siblings or other close relatives of the bride or groom — may not partake of a wedding meal, even if he is sitting in a different room, unless he is needed to complete a *zimun* (quorum) for *sheva berachos*.

A mother whose fourth Shabbos after giving birth falls during *sheloshim* does go to synagogue, and does invite her friends home for the Chol Kreish, but wears Shabbos — not Yom Tov — clothing. Other mourners, however, may not attend her Chol Kreish during their *sheloshim*.

The *sheloshim* ends one hour after the conclusion of morning services on the thirtieth day from the burial. One who is mourning for a parent continues with the halachos of the twelve months.

During a plague of pestilence, G-d forbid, all halachos of mourning are suspended for all mourners. Contemporary halachic authorities decide when a plague has reached the magnitude of a plague of pestilence.

#### **41. Twelve Month Mourning Period**

Most halachos of *sheloshim* (see previous section) continue until the end of the twelve month mourning period for a parent. Some differences are as follows:

A mourner may not take a haircut until people chide him about his appearance. Many are lenient and take a haircut after thirty full days. Others wait thirteen weeks or the full year. In Worms, a new chiding was required before each haircut.

A mourner may not wear new clothing and may not wear Shabbos clothing on weekdays, such as for a fancy affair or business meeting. The same applies during *sheloshim*.

A mourner continues leading the services and reciting Kaddish until the day before the end of the eleventh month from the date of death. On that day he takes precedence for the recital of Kaddish.

A mourner may attend a chuppah, but some are stringent and refrain from doing so. At the wedding of an orphan or destitute people, where he attends not because he was invited, but because otherwise the wedding would lack an assembly, he may even partake of the wedding meal.

Siblings of a bride or groom may partake of the wedding meal, but may not join the dancing.

The main bris participants may partake of the bris meal.

A mother whose fourth Shabbos after giving birth falls during the twelve months follows all the customs of Chol Kreish. Other mourners, however, may not attend her Chol Kreish during their twelve month period.

On the first Shabbos after the twelve month period (or after the thirteenth month in a leap year), he must be given an aliyah at Shacharis.

#### **42. Leap Year**

Although the twelve and eleven month periods are not extended on a leap year, some mourning practices still apply, such as sitting in a different seat, the halachos of when one may be given an aliyah, and the black headpiece and coif.

Some continue adding *Hareini kaparas mishkavo* (or *mishkava*, for a mother) when mentioning something in the name of the deceased parent.

### **43. Visiting the Cemetery**

The custom in ancient communities was that a mourner does not visit any cemetery during *sheloshim* in order not to arouse Divine judgment.

The general custom is that a mourner does not visit his parents' cemetery during the twelve months, unless he is performing a function as a member of the chevrah kaddishah. When attending a funeral, he stops at the cemetery gate.

Anyone else may visit the grave during the twelve months, but may pray only for the deceased, and not for himself in the merit of the deceased.

Some hold that parents who lost their first child should never visit his grave.

### **44. Yahrtzeit (Anniversary of the Death of a Parent)**

Several communities had a society that would send a message to one who has yahrtzeit, reminding him to fast, recite Kaddish, and light candles.

On the Shabbos before the yahrtzeit there are no yahrtzeit customs whatsoever.

The widespread custom is that when the death occurs in the month of Adar during a regular year, the yahrtzeit is in the first Adar in a leap year. When the death occurs in the second Adar during a leap year, the yahrtzeit is in the second Adar in the following leap year.

However, some sages held that in the first case the yahrtzeit is in the second Adar in a leap year, unless the death occurred in the first Adar in a leap year. Some are stringent and hold both days, but on the second day recite Kaddish only if no other congregant has an obligation to recite Kaddish.

The fast is on the date of death. (In Worms, one who was present for the burial, but not the death, would fast on the date of burial.) Some accept the fast upon themselves at the previous Minchah. The fast is obligatory and lasts until *tzeis hakochavim* (nightfall).

When the yahrtzeit falls on days when fasting is prohibited, some fast on the following or previous day, but most are lenient and do not fast at all. It is not customary to fast during the entire month of Nissan through Rosh Chodesh Iyar.

When the yahrtzeit falls on Friday, once one begins fasting the entire day, one continues doing so the rest of his life, even where the congregation holds early Shabbos services.

One who is not sure when the yahrtzeit falls must fast on both days, unless they are consecutive, in which case he fasts only on the first.

One may not eat outside his home during the entire yahrtzeit. Ashkenazic sages were adamantly against making parties or *siyyumim* on the yahrtzeit of tzaddikim or anyone else.

Some hold that one who has yahrtzeit may not attend a bris meal — even a main participant — until after praying at *minchah gedolah* with Aneinu.

One who has yahrtzeit recites Kaddish Yasom according to the regulations mentioned above in section “Conclusion of Shacharis and Recital of Kaddish.” In some places he takes over for the leader at the second Ashrei. If he is capable, he should lead all the services.

One who has yahrtzeit wears a tallis for all the services, even if he is not the leader, except on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Some wear the tallis also on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

It is proper to give the one who has yahrtzeit an aliyah. Some communities consider this an obligation. One who is unable to attend synagogue on the yahrtzeit recites Kaddish up to several days later.

A candle, gas light, or electric bulb is lit also in synagogue.

Women attend synagogue on their yahrtzeit. In earlier generations women wore a black coif, except during the first year of marriage.

After services the congregants console the one who has yahrtzeit by saying, *Ad bi'as hago'eil*. The one who has yahrtzeit responds, *Bimheirah veyameinu*. The congregants answer *amen*.

One who has yahrtzeit then goes to pray at the grave of the deceased. If that cemetery is too distant, he visits any other cemetery. It is not customary to bring ten men to the grave for Kaddish.

The day should be spent studying Torah, making *chidushim* (coming up with new Torah ideas), preaching in public, and studying the Torah writings of the deceased. In later years the study of Mishnah became popular on the yahrtzeit as a means to elevate the soul of the deceased, but as mentioned above, it should not be done during mourning. Some give a special amount of charity.

On the first yahrtzeit halachos of the twelve month period apply.

Ashkenazic sages were against making mass pilgrimages to the graves of Jewish leaders on their yahrtzeit.

#### **45. Tombstone**

The tombstone is erected as the first yahrtzeit approaches. It is inscribed according to a nusach composed by the family or a Torah scholar,

including the name of the deceased, date of death and date of burial, and his praises. It is erected vertically, between half and full height of man. Usually the same simple quality of stone is used for everyone, rich or poor.

Usually the stone is inscribed and not done in bas-relief.

Sometimes a relevant image is inscribed on the stone, such as the mazal (zodiac symbol) of birth, the animal corresponding to the name of the deceased, or relevant images for a Kohen, Levi, and mohel.

Most sages were displeased with foreign language inscriptions, but allowed the name inscribed on the back of the tombstone.

The practice of having a single stone for husband and wife is a late custom which only few people espoused.

Neither fences nor tents are erected at the grave of great leaders.

There is no ceremony for erecting the tombstone. Family members visit the grave on the first yahrtzeit, not necessarily in a group, and each prays either a private prayer or the nusach mentioned below.

Some sages prohibited leaning upon a tombstone, but others were lenient.

#### **46. Prostration at the Grave**

A cemetery is a place where the righteous rest, and therefore it is a holy place where prayers are accepted more readily. According to the Ashkenazic tradition, it is also considered a location where one can figuratively purify oneself with prayer and exaltation. Since it is customary to pray there, it is similar to a synagogue.

It is customary to pray at the grave of deceased relatives and friends, as they derive benefit from the fact that people come and pray for them and for the living. In general, the merit of the righteous buried there is a benefit to those who pray by their grave, and in addition, the heart of man is humbled when in the presence of the departed.

In times of trouble it is customary to vow to visit the graves of ancestors and other righteous people, and in earlier years one vowed to go into exile barefoot on the way to the cemetery. However, one should not go to a cemetery in a different city until visiting the cemetery in one's own city. There is no need for concern about evil spirits, since the mitzvah has protective power.

One may visit a cemetery on Rosh Chodesh.

It is customary to visit a cemetery on fast days and yahrtzeit. Some go to a closer cemetery when they are not in proximity of the cemetery of their ancestors.

On Tish'ah BeAv one walks around the cemetery. On the day preceding each of the High Holidays one prays at the cemetery. Some go also during the month of Elul and the Ten Days of Repentance.

One does not visit the cemetery during the month of Nissan.

One who has not been in a specific cemetery for thirty days recites the following blessing when coming within four *amos* of the graves.

The nusach of Frankfurt:

ברוך אתה השם אלקינו מלך העולם אשר יצר אתכם בדיו וכלכל אתכם בדיו והחיה אתכם בדיו והמית אתכם בדיו ועתיד להחיותכם בדיו ויודע מספר כלכם ועתיד לגלות עפר מבין עיניכם ולהחיותכם. ברוך אתה השם מחיה המתים.

The nusach of Siddur Rödelheim:

ברוך אתה השם אלקינו מלך העולם אשר יצר אתכם בדיו וזן וכלכל אתכם בדיו והמית אתכם בדיו ויודע מספר כלכם (בדיו) ועתיד להחיותכם בדיו. ברוך אתה השם מחיה המתים.

Then the following is added (at a funeral, some recite this only after the burial):

אתה גבור לעולם השם מחיה מתים אתה רב להושיע. מכלכל חיים בחדק מחיה מתים ברחמים רבים סומך נופלים ורופא חולים ומתיר אסורים ומקים אמונתו לישגי עפר. מי כמוך בעל גבורות ומי דומה לך מלך ממית ומחיה ומצמיח ישועה. ונאמן אתה להחיות מתים.

Kaddish is not recited at the gravesite, and neither is Mishnah nor Tehillim recited. One who wishes to recite Tehillim must step away from any grave. Only *techinot* (supplications) are recited at the gravesite, and it should be understood that the prayers are not directed to the deceased; rather, they are directed to G-d in the merit of the deceased. The supplications addressing the deceased are done with the intention that the deceased shall join his pain and want, thereby making the prayers to G-d more compelling.

It is preferable to use texts such as those mentioned below, which have no supplications addressing the deceased.

Although the gravesites of Ashkenazic sages have always served as a place of prayer from near and far, and some sent messengers to pray there on their behalf, these places were never the destination of mass pilgrimages.



Neither notes nor candles are placed at the grave, as these practices are gentile customs. The Ashkenazic sages advised giving the money to charity instead.

According to what we know from the writings of Ashkenazic sages, it is possible that those who practice these customs at the graves of sages such as the Maharam of Rothenburg, the Maharil, and other sages in cemeteries such as those in Worms and Frankfurt, are acting improperly, especially when the wax and ashes deface the tombstones.

After praying at a grave, one lays a piece of grass or a rock on the tombstone and gives money to charity on the way out.

One may not return to the same grave on the same day.

Some families have the custom that children do not visit any cemetery during the lifetime of their parents, but wait outside the gate.

#### 47. Prayers at the Cemetery

The prayer of R' Yehuda ben Asher (son of the Rosh) at the gravesite of the righteous and faultless:

רבון העולמים, מלך יושב על כסא רחמים. גלוי וידוע לפניך, שכל חפצי בבנים לא בשביל אהבתי בהם ולא בשביל להתכבד בהם, רק לקים מצוה שצויתנו בפרהי ורביה. יהי רצון מלפניך, שתתקננו בעצה טובה מלפניך בכל עניננו, ותהיה יראתך על פנינו לבלתי נחטא, ונחיה לפניך ביראתך, ויהיה לי זרע של קיימא, זרע אנשים שימלא מקום אבותי, ויעמיד לנו השם ברחמי זכות הצדיק הקבור בקבר הזה, ותשמע תפילתי במקום הזה. גם הוא יתפלל בעדנו תמיד, כל היום וברכנו.

The supplication of the Terumas Hadeshen:

צדיקים יסודי עולם! יהי רצון שתהא מנוחתכם כבוד, וזכות תלמוד תורתכם ומעשיכם הטובים יעמד לי ולביתי ולכל הנלוים אלי ולכל בית ישראל. יהי רצון מלפני אלקי הרחמים והסליחות, מלך על כל הארץ, שיתגוללו רחמי וחסדי המרבים על מדותיו [ערב ראש השנה: שנגזר ונקתב בזה ראש השנה. ימי התשובה: שנגזר ונקתב באלה ימי התשובה. ערב יום כפור: שנקתב ונחתם בזה יום הכפורים]. לקליחה למחילה ולכפרה על כל חטאתינו עונותינו ופשעינו, ולשנה טובה ומתקנת, לחיים טובים ולשלום, ולפרנסה וכלכלה, ולשנת גאולה וישועה וישנת ברכה והצלחה בכל מעשי דינו, וישנת רוח והצלחה, וישנת השקט ומנוחה מכל דאגה ובהלה, מכל שמד ותקלה וגזרה רעה, וישנזכה לזרע חיים וקיימים העוסקים בתורה ובמעשים טובים, וישנזכה לעשר ולקבוד, ואל ישלט בנו שטן ויצר הרע, ונמצא חן ושכל טוב בעיניך הקדוש ברוך הוא ובעיני כל ראינו. על כל זאת שבקשתי לפניך אלקי ישראל אדון כל העולמים, העתר לי למען רחמיך וחסדיך המרבים, ולמען זכות הצדיקים האלה, וזכות כל צדיקי עולם, ואל תשיבנו ריקם מלפניך.

The prayer of R' Yakov Chazan of Lunderz:

עֲתָה עֲנִיתִי נַפְשִׁי בְּדָרְךָ לְהַשְׁתַּטֵּחַ עַל קְבוּרַת הַצַּדִּיק הַזֶּה, יְהִי רַצוֹן לְפָנֶיךָ הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹקֵי שְׂתַעֲמִיד לִי זְכוֹת תִּלְמוּד תּוֹרָתוֹ וּמַעֲשָׂיו הַטּוֹבִים לְהִגֹּן עָלַי מִכָּל רָע, וְתַעֲשֶׂה לִּי (כַּךְ) וְזַפְנִי לְרֵאוֹת בְּעִמְדַת הַצַּדִּיק הַזֶּה בַּהֲדָרוֹ וּגְדֻלוֹ עִם שְׂאֵר מְתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, כְּפָתוּב: יִרְנוּ יֹשְׁבֵי סֵלַע מִרֹאשׁ הַרִים יִצְחוּ. עִם אָב הַמּוֹן, וְעָקוּד בְּהַר מֹר, וּפְצַל לַח וְלוֹז וְעֶרְמוֹן, וּמִפְעֻנַח נְאֻמָּן, וּמִשְׁרֵת, וְדוּד, וּמַלְכִים וּנְבִיאִים, וְחֲכָמִים וּמְלָאִים מִצְוֹת פְּרָמוֹן. וְעֲתָה אֲדוֹן הָעוֹלָם הַחִישָׁה קֶץ עֲמִידַתְּךָ, כְּפָתוּב: יַחֲיוּ מֵתֶיךָ נִבְלָתִי יְקוּמוּן הַקִּיצוֹ וְרַנְנוּ שְׂכָנֵי עֶפְרָיִם כִּי טַל אֹרֶת טַלְךָ וְאַרְצְךָ רְפָאִים תִּפִּיל. וְכָתוּב: יִשְׁשׂוּם מִדְּבַר וְצִיָּה וְתִגַּל עֲרֵבָה וְתִפְרַח כְּחַבְצֵלֶת, פֶּרֶחַ תִּפְרַח וְתִגַּל.

The customary prayer printed by R' Binyamin HaLevi of Nuremberg in the *Machzor Ma'gelei Tzedek* (1549):

אֲנָא הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹקֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹקֵי יַעֲקֹב, עֲמוּד מִפְסָא דִּין וְשֵׁב עַל פְּסָא רַחֲמִים, וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ, לְמַעַן, וְלִמְעַן זְכוֹת אַבּוֹתֵינוּ, וְלִמְעַן הַחֲסִידִים וְהַיִּשְׁרִים בְּלְבוֹתֵם, וְלִמְעַן כָּל הַהַרְוֹגִים עַל יְחֻדְךָ, וְלִמְעַן כָּל הַשְּׂרוּפִים עַל קְדוּשַׁתְּךָ, וְלִמְעַן כָּל אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁפָּךְ דָּמוֹ עַל יְחֻדְךָ, דָּם נַפְשׁוֹת אַבְיוֹנִים וְגֵרִים, אֲשֶׁר לְמוֹת הָעִירוֹ נַפְשָׁם, וְתַחַת הַחֶרֶב נָתַנוּ רֹאשָׁם, אַחֲרֶיךָ יִשְׂאֲגוּ, וְעֲלִיךָ כָּל הַיּוֹם הוֹרְגוּ, יִקְרִיבוּ לְפָנֶיךָ עוֹלָה וְזִבְחִים, וְיַעֲשׂוּ לְרִיחַ נִיחּוּחַ אֶת הָרֹאשׁ וְאֶת הַנִּתְחִים, וְהֵם בְּמִיתַתְּם שְׂשִׁים וּשְׁמֵחִים, זֶה יֹאמֶר לַהֲשֵׁם אֲנִי, וְלִצְוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁבָרָאֲנִי אֶקְרִיב אֶת עֲצְמֵי חֲלָבִי וְדָמֵי נִתְחֵי וְרֹאשֵׁי, וְאֶתְּנוּ בְּפוּרֵי פִשְׁעֵי פְרִי בְטִנֵּי חֲטָאֵת נַפְשִׁי, וְנַפְשָׁם מִתְעַלְפָּת, בְּדָמִים מִתְבוֹסְסָת, וּמֵאֲבוֹת לְבָנִים מוֹרְשָׁה מְסִינִי, לְעֵלוֹת לְהֵם לְשִׁלְמֵי נְדָבָה לְרַצוֹן לְהֵם לְפָנֵי הַשֵּׁם, לֹא לָנוּ הַשֵּׁם לֹא לָנוּ, כִּי לְשִׁמְךָ תָּנוּ כְּבוֹד, עַל חֲסִדְךָ עַל אֲמִתְךָ, לְמָה יֹאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם, אֵיךְ נָא אֱלֹקֵיהֶם, וְאַתָּה תּוֹחַלְתָּנוּ וְסִבְרָנוּ וְתִקְוִיתָנוּ. חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם, יְהִיוּ נֹגֵד עֵינֶיךָ צְרוּתֵינוּ, וְרֵאָה בְּעֵינֵינוּ, וְיַעֲלֶה עֲלֵבוֹנֵנוּ וְעֲלֵבוֹן אַחֲיוֹ שְׁבָכָל עִיר וְעִיר לְפָנֶיךָ בְּכָל יוֹם, עִם עֲלֵבוֹן שְׁמֶךָ הַגָּדוֹל הַמְּחַלְלֵל בֵּין אֲשֶׁר חֲרַפְוֹת וְיִתְנוּ אֶת כְּבוֹדְךָ לְאַחַר וְתַהֲלִתְךָ לְפָסִילִים. שְׁמַע אֱלֹקֵינוּ חֲרַפְתָּ אֲשֶׁר חֲרַפְוֹת, אֱלֹקִים חֵי, וְאֵל תִּכַּס עַל עוֹנֵם, וְחֲטָאֵתְּךָ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ אֵל תִּמְחָה, וְיִדְעוּ כִּי אַתָּה הַשֵּׁם קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְהַקְדִּישׁוּ אֶת קְדוּשַׁתְּךָ יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעֲרִיצוּ. זָכַר נָא בְּנֵיךָ, עֲנִיִּים וְאַבְיוֹנִים, מִצַּפִּים לִישׁוּעָתְךָ כָּל הַיָּמִים. אַבְיוֹנוּ שְׁבִשְׂמִים, צַדִּיק אַתָּה, וְחֲסִיד אַתָּה, וְכָל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ בְּאַמוּנָה, יִגְלוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ עַל בְּנֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר הֵם בְּאַרְצְךָ שׁוֹבֵיהֶם, וְתוֹצִיא מִבֵּית כְּלָא יוֹשְׁבֵי חֲשֶׁךְ, וְלֹאֲסוּרִים פֶּקַח קוֹחַ, וְזָכַר לָנוּ אֱלֹקֵינוּ שְׁהַקְדַּשְׁתָּ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹךְ שְׁבָעִים אֲמוֹת, וּמִתּוֹכֶם הִפְרַשְׁתָּ אֶת שְׁבֵט לֵוִי, וְהִפְרַשְׁתָּ כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל לְעַמְּךָ לְשֵׁרֵת וְלַהֲתוֹדוֹת עַל עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם, וְעֲתָה בְּעוֹנֵינוּ שְׁרָבוּ, נִגְדַע בֵּית מֵאֲוִינוּ, וְהַשְׁלַכָּה תִפְאַרְתָּנוּ, וְנִשְׂאָרְנוּ רִיקִים מִכָּל טוֹב, וְאִין לָנוּ כִּי אִם תִּפְלוּתֵינוּ, הַיּוֹצֵאוֹת מִקִּירוֹת לְבָנוּ, כִּי צָמְאִים אָנוּ לְרַחֲמֶיךָ בְּאַרְצְךָ עֵינֵיךָ לְמִים, וְצוּעֵקִים לְפָנֶיךָ מִכָּאֵב לֵב, וְשׁוֹפְכִים שִׁיחֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּדַמְעַ לֵב. וְזָכַר לָנוּ מַה שְּׁצִיּוּתָנוּ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ, וְכִי מוֹךְ אַחֲרֶיךָ וּמִטָּה יְדוּ עַמְּךָ וְהַחֲזַקְתָּ בּוֹ, וְאַנְחָנוּ בְּנֵיךָ יְלִידֵי שְׁעִשׁוּעֶיךָ, רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ כְּרַב רַחֲמֶיךָ, וְקִים לָנוּ מַה שְּׁנִאָּמַר עַל יְדֵי נְבִיאֶיךָ, לְמַעַן לְמַעַן אֶעֱשֶׂה כִּי אֵיךְ יִחַל וּכְבוֹדֵי לְאַחַר לֹא אֶתֶן. שְׁמַחְנוּ כִּימוֹת עֲנִיתָנוּ, שְׁנוֹת רֵאֵינוּ רָעָה. שְׁלַח הַגּוֹאֵל לְגֵאֲלָנוּ, וְהַעֲלֵנוּ שְׁמַחִים עַל אֲדַמְתְּךָ, וְשְׁכִינְתְּךָ שְׁפֹן בֵּינוֹתֵינוּ, וְכַדְבָּרְךָ יַחֲיוּ מֵתֵינוּ, יִקְיָצוּ וִירַנְנוּ שׁוֹכְנֵי עֶפְרָתֵינוּ, וְשְׁמַחַת עוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה עָלֵינוּ, כְּאֲשֶׁר נִאָּמַר, וּפְדוּנוּ הַשֵּׁם יִשְׁבּוֹן, וּבָאוּ צִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה, וְשְׁמַחַת עוֹלָם עַל רֹאשָׁם, שְׁשׁוֹן וְשְׁמַחָה יִשְׁיִגוּ, וְנִסּוּ יִגּוֹן וְאַנְחָה. וְעוֹד נִאָּמַר, כִּי הַהֲרִים יְמוּשׁוּ, וְהַגְּבְעוֹת תִּמוּטְיֵנָה, וְחֲסִדֵי מֵאֲתָךְ לֹא יְמוּשׁוּ, וּבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי לֹא תִמוּט,

אמר מרחמך השם. ועוד נאמר, עתה אשיב את שבות יעקב, ורחמתי כל בית ישראל, וקנאתי לשם קדשי.

יהי רצון מלפניך, השם אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, לנחם אותנו על כל הצרות שעברו עלינו, לילות וימים, וכלה שנותינו בטוב וימינו בניעימים, תושיע מעוטי עמים, וסוככינו בשלומך, ולמדנו להועיל, וספק על דינו לשמר ולעשות, ושימנו מבני אדם אשר בצל כנפיך יחסיו ומדשו ביתך ירונו, ותכין ותזמן לכל אחד די מחסורו, ברוח ולא בדחק, בהתר ובקשרות. ותשבר ותאבד ותכניע ותשפיל ותכלה כל הקמים נגדך, והאלהים יכניעם ויפילם ויניא ויבטל מחשבות הרעות, מעלינו ומעל כל עמך ישראל, ותכלה ממנו בזה ושביה, ותכלה ממנו גלות וטלטול, ותכלה ממנו דבר ומשחית, ותכלה ממנו הנה על הנה, ותכלה ממנו זעם ועברה, ותכלה ממנו חרון וקצף, ותכלה ממנו יצר הרע, ותכלה ממנו כליון עינים, ותכלה ממנו מלאך המות, ותכלה ממנו גוף וחרון, ותכלה ממנו עין הרע ושנאת חנם, ותכלה ממנו כל צרה וצוקה וכל קלון וחרפה, ותננו לראש ולא לזנב, ותננו לרחמים בעיני השלטונים, וזכרנו השם ברצון עמך, ופקדנו בישועתך, לראות בטוב בחיריך, ולשמח בשמחת גוים, ולהתהלל עם נחלתך. כי אתה שומע תפלה ומאזין צעקה, ואנחנו לא נדע מה נעשה, כי עליך עינינו. ושמע תפלתנו, ושועתנו האזינה, שנאמר, כי שמע אל אביונים השם, ואת אסיריו לא בזה, כי לא בזה ולא שקץ ענות עני, ולא הסתיר פניו ממנו, ובשועו אליו שמע, טרם נקרא אתה תענה, כדבר שנאמר, והיה טרם יקראו ואני אענה, עוד הם מדברים ואני אשמע. וחדש בקרבנו רוח נכון לחזר לפניך בתשובה שלמה, ולעבדך בלב נאמן. וראה דמעוטינו פנסוד המים, ושברון רוחנו ככל הקרבנות, ואנחותינו כקמץ מנחת הדל, ושיח שפתותינו כשיחי הלויים למשפחתם וכשירי המלאכים, השתחויתנו לפניך ככל השתחויות משרתיך במרום, ורוח פינו כעולה תמימה וכקטרת הסמים. אלקים השיבנו, והאר פניך ונשעה, ולא נצא ריקם מלפניך. יהיו לרצון אמרי פי והגיון לבי לפניך, השם צורי וגואלי.

ברוך אתה אדון השלום, על כל אשר עשית ואשר אתה עתיד לעשות, עמי ועם כל בריותיך, וברוכים מלאכיך שעושים רצונך בלבב שלם, אדון השלום, תברכני ותפקדני לחיים טובים ולשלום, תזכני ואת זרעי ואת זרע זרעי, למצא חן וחסד ושכל טוב בעיניך ובעיני כל רואי, ותעביר עוני פשעי וחסאתי. תזכני לקבל שבתות, מתוך רב שמחה, ומתוך עשר וכבוד, ומתוך מעוט עונות. ותעביר ממני, ומכל בני ביתי, ומכל עמך ישראל, כל מיני חלאים רעים, וכל מיני מדונה, וכל מיני דלות ועניות. ותנחילנו יצר טוב, וחי העולם הבא, ורב עשר וכבוד, לעבדו ביראה ובאהבה. ברוך אתה המלך הכבוד. שלום לכם מלאכי השלום, שלום לכם מלאכי רחמים, בואכם לשלום, מלאכי השלום, מלאכי הרחמים, מלאכי השרת, ברוך בואכם לשלום.

The Shlah's supplication for the entire year, but especially for those fasting on Rosh Chodesh Sivvan:

אתה הוא השם אלקינו עד שלא בראת העולם, ואתה הוא אלקינו משבראת העולם, ומעולם ועד עולם אתה קל, ובראת עולמך בגין להשתמודעא אלקותך באמצעות תורתך הקדושה כמו שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה, 'בראשית', בשביל תורה ובשביל ישראל, כי הם עמך ונחלתך אשר בחרת בהם מכל האמות, ונתת להם תורתך הקדושה, וקרבתם לשמך הגדול: ועל קיום העולם ועל קיום התורה בא לנו ממך השם אלקינו שני צוויים, כתבת בתורתך פרו ורבו, וכתבת בתורתך 'ולמדתם אתם את בניכם', והפונה בשתייהן אחת, כי לא לתהו בראת כי אם לשבת, ולכבודך בראת

יצרתי אף עשיתי, כדי שנהיה אנחנו וצאצאינו וצאצאי כל עמך בית ישראל יודעי שמך ולומדי תורתך:

ובכן אבוא אליך השם מלך מלכי המלכים, ואפיל תחנתי, ועיני לך תלויות עד שתחנני ותשמע תפילתי להזמין לי בנים ובנות, וגם הם יפרו וירבו הם ובניהם ובני בניהם עד סוף כל הדורות לתכלית שהם ואני כלנו יעסקו בתורתך הקדושה ללמד וללמד לשמר ולעשות ולקיים את כל דברי תלמוד תורתך באהבה, והאר עינינו בתורתך ודבק לבנו במצותיך לאהבה וליראה את שמך:

אבינו אב הרחמן, תן לכלנו חיים ארזים וברוכים, מי כמוך אב הרחמים זוכר יצוריו לחיים ברחמים, וזכרנו לחיים נצחיים כמו שהתפלל אברהם אבינו 'לו יחיה לפניך', ופרשו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה, 'ביראתך': כי על כן, באתי לבקש ולחנן מלפניך שיהא זרעי וזרע זרעי עד עולם זרע כשר, ואל ימצא בי ובזרעי ובזרע זרעי עד עולם שום פסול ושמצ, אך שלום ואמת וטוב וישר בעיני אלהים ובעיני אדם, ויהיו בעלי תורה, מארי מקרא, מארי משנה, מארי תלמוד, מארי רזא, מארי מצוה, מארי גומלי חסדים, מארי מדות תרומיות, ויעבדוך באהבה וביראה פנימית, לא יראה חזונית, ותן לכל גויה וגויה מהם די מחסורה בכבוד, ותן להם בריאות וכבוד וכל, ותן להם קומה ויפי וחו וחסד, ויהיה אהבה ואחנה ושלוש ביניהם, ותזמין להם זיוגים הגונים מזרע תלמידי חכמים מזרע צדיקים, וגם זיוגים יהיו כמוותם ככל אשר התפללתי עליהם, כי זכרון אחד עולה לכאן ולכאן:

אתה השם יודע כל תעלומות, ולפניך נגלו מצפוני לבי, כי כוננתי בכל אלה למען שמך הגדול והקדוש ולמען תורתך הקדושה, על כן ענני יה זה ענני בעבור האבות הקדושים אברהם יצחק ויעקב, ובגללם תושיע בנים להיות הענפים הנה כי כן יברך גבר ירא השם: יברךך השם מציון ויראה בטיב ירושלים כל ימי חייך: ויראה בנים לבניך שלום על ישראל:

אנא השם שומע תפלה יקיים בנו הפסוק ואני זאת בריתי אותם אמר השם רוחי אשר עליך ודברי אשר שמתו בפיך לא ימוש מפיו ומפי זרעך ומפי זרעך אמר השם מעתה ועד עולם: יהיו לרצון אמרי פי והגיון לבי לפניך השם צורי וגואלי:

An extract from the Ramchal's prayer at the cemetery on the day preceding Yom Kippur:

רבון כל העולמים מודים אנחנו לפניך השם אלקים אלקי ישראל, אבינו מלכנו, שאתה הוא השם אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו לעולם ועד. הקל מלך צור ישראל, המקדשנו בקדושת שמו ומנחנו בדרכיו ללכת בכל מצותיו, ובטהרתו מטהרנו. המוחה כעב פשעינו ומעביר אשמותינו בכל שנה ושנה. הגוער בכל מסטינו וסותם פיות כל מזכירי עונות עמו בית ישראל. כי מלך מלא רחמים הוא, גואלנו ומושיענו לדור ודור ולנצח נצחים.

מלך רוצה בתשובה, ועל התשובה מראש הבטחתינו. נושא עון ועובר על פשע לשארית נחלתו. המזכה עבדיו ומושיע כל החוסים בו. עדיך באנו ולפניך נשפוך שיחנו, כי אתה אלוה תהילתנו וצור ישענו. את פינך השם נבקש להעתר לנו ולתת לנו את שאלתנו ברחמים גדולים. להמציא לנו מחילה סליחה וכפרה ולמחול לנו את כל עונותינו. חננו השם חננו. עננו השם עננו. גאוננו ומבטחנו לדור ודור נשמחה בך.

אבינו מלכנו זכרנו לטובה והעבר ממנו כל חטא ועון, וראה בצרות נפשנו, ועל דלותנו תמחול. כי אנחנו חטאנו ועזבנו דרכיך, ואתה השם מלך חנון ורחום אינך חפץ בהשחתת עולם, כי לא תחפוץ במות המת כי אם בשונו מדרכיו וחייה. העתר נא

לתפלתנו ועננו למען זכות שלשת עבדיך אברהם יצחק וישראל אבותינו, זכותם יחון עלינו למען רחמיך.

ואתה השם קל אלקי הרוחות לכל בשר. אתה יודע יצרנו, זכור כי עפר אנחנו. זכרנו לטובה לפניך, לחיים טובים, ויקראו לפניך זכיותינו, ותפרנסנו ותכלכלנו בידך הרחבה ואל תצריכנו לידי מתנת בשר ודם ולא לידי הלואתם, ולא נבוש ולא נכלם לעולם לעד. ותדריך רגלינו בתורתך, ותמהר לגאלינו, ותחיש ישועתנו ברחמים רבים, ותמחול לנו על כל חטאתינו ותהיה השנה הזאת שנה טובה ומתוקה, מעוטרת בברכותיך ומליאה כל טוב. ותרחיק ממנה כל יגון ואנחה כל עצב ועצבון לעולם.

מלך קל זן ומפרנס לכל. הסר עני מעמך והעבר ממנו כל דלות וחסרון, והרבה לנו טובך וברכותיך, ותמציאנו כל צרכנו ותטריפנו לחם חוקנו. ותתן חלקנו בתורתך ובמצותיך תמיד לעולם ועד. ואת יצר הרע תעבירה ותתן לנו לב בשר. כי אתה השם חפץ לזכות עמך ברחמים רבים וגדולים. ובימנו תושע יהודא וישראל ישכון לבטח. רחם על פליטת עמך בית ישראל השם אלקים אלקי ישראל, ותהא השנה הזאת שנת גאולה שלימה. השם הושיעה המלך יעננו ביום קראנו.

השם אלקים אלקי ישראל. כשמך כן תהלתך וכבודך על כל הארץ, ומוראך על כל יושבי תבל. לפניך ירגזו ארץ ומלואה וכל אשר בה לפניך יחרדון, נכון כסאך מאז מעולם אתה. ישמחו איים במלכך ויקריבו לך כתר מלוכה, וכל אשר עשית ישתחוו לך וירננו לשמך ויזמרו תהלתך. כי מלך אתה ואין כמלכותך. מלך עלינו לבדך ואין עוד. מלך אחד, יחיד במלוכה ומושל על כל הארץ. זכרך לדור ודור ישראל. בדבריך יזלו השמים והארץ האירה מכבודך. כי כל שנה תחת רגליך, ועיניך בכל תראינה, ובעפעפיך תבחן צדיקים. ואוהביך ישמחו בך וישרים יעלו לפניך. אתה אהבת את עמך ותבחר בם, ותודיעם אמונתך ויכירו גדולתך. ותלבישם אימה ויראה מפני שם קדשך אשר נקרא עליהם.

אנא השם אלקים אלקי ישראל. ראה בדוחק השעה ותחלץ עני בעניו. ראה כי אזלת יד ואפס עצור ועזוב. ורשעים עתקו חיל ואנשים זדים בזרועם על הארץ משלו, וגאים גבוהה דברו, ולצים לצון חמדו להם.

רבון כל העולמים. הבט לברית ואל תשחית ארץ. יבושו מפניך כל רשעים ואת נטע שעשועיך תביט. והוציאנו מצרה לרוחה, מחשכה לאורה, מיגון לשמחה ומאבל ליום טוב. וזכור את העקדות אשר עקדו לפניך עמך בית ישראל ואת כל דמיהם אשר הקריבו לך. וזכור לנו אהבתך ושבועתך, ובריתך תקים אתנו, ותשמחנו בבית תפלתך ותושיע תפארתך ומשיחך תצמיח בקרוב, לגאול כל ענוי ארץ ולהרים שפלים למרום, וזדים בגבורתך תכניע.

אדון כל העולמים. על התשובה מראש הבטחתנו ועל התשובה עינינו מיחלות לך. שוכן בחדרי גאווה ומעוטף בהדר תפארה. המעוטר בגאון גבהו, לשבחך אין קצה ולגבורתך אין תכלית וחסדך הגדול על כלי. כי אתה אחד יחיד ומיוחד. גלה לנו רצון וגאולה, והשב לנו בית קדשך להיות נכון בראש ההרים. עושה פלא לחיים לבל יהיו כמתים. כי אתה מכלכל חיים בחסד מחיה מתים ברחמים רבים. הקל מעלינו חבלי המשיח ותן לנו גאולת עולם בקרוב. ומלכות בית דוד משיחך תחזינה עינינו, וירושלים עיר קדשך לכבוד תהיה בתוכה, ותרים קרננו ותושיענו בקרוב.

#### 48. Inauguration of a Cemetery

When designating a plot of land for a cemetery, it is purchased as a full sale. Some prefer to make a conditional purchase until it becomes necessary to bury someone there.

At the time of purchase, some chevrah kaddishah societies decree that all members must fast on Monday or Thursday and recite Selichos and other prayers. Other places would announce a public fast day on the morrow of the first funeral. In Frankfurt it was not customary to fast.

If the previous cemetery will no longer be in use, a short prayer of conclusion is recited there.

At the inauguration of a cemetery, Shim'u Zos (Tehillim 49) is recited as at a funeral. Some add Yosheiv Beseiser (Tehillim 91) and Barechi Nafshi (Tehillim 104).

Kohanim dig the first grave. Sometimes a large crowd of Kohanim gathers for this occasion.

It is not customary to bury a chicken first.

The boundaries of the cemetery are marked.

Sometimes words such as the following are put up at the entrance to the cemetery:

הַיְלוּדִים לְמוֹת, וְהַמֵּתִים לְהַחְיֹת (אבוֹת).  
וְנִתְּתִי לָהּ אֶת כְּרַמְיָהּ מִשָּׁם וְאֶת עֲמֻק עֶבֶר לְפֶתַח תְּקוּנָה (הושע).

The cost of the first tombstone is covered by the chevrah kaddishah of taharah and burial.

## **XI. Hachnasas Sefer Torah (Inauguration of Torah Scrolls)**

### **1. The Preferable Time**

The inauguration of Torah scrolls is done on Shabbos for the following reasons:

- a) A new Torah scroll is comparable to the giving of the Torah at Sinai, which occurred on Shabbos.
- b) On Shabbos the entire community — men, women, and children — can participate in the ceremony.
- c) The Torah scroll contains the Written Law and the Talmud contains the Oral Law. It is customary to give a Talmudic discourse on this occasion to complement the Written Law with the Oral Law, and it is most fitting for this to be done during the sanctity of the day of Shabbos.
- d) According to kabbalistic sources, Shabbos is the time of the Divine inauguration of the Torah.
- e) The Torah is afforded the honor of having its inauguration at a time when it will be read from immediately and not merely installed in the synagogue.
- f) Sources indicate that this was the ancient custom.

Shavuos and Simchas Torah are also appropriate times to hold the inauguration.

It is not customary to honor participants with filling in the last letters of the scroll before the inauguration. Some halachic authorities were opposed to the practice of having participants not trained as scribes writing letters in the Torah.

### **2. Shabbos Evening**

If the benefactor is fully donating the Torah to the community, he should dedicate the scroll before the onset of Shabbos in order to avoid a question of acquisition of Shabbos.

Before the onset of Shabbos the Torah is placed in a decorated, well-lit room. After the Shabbos evening meal an assembly gathers in the room in

which the Torah is being kept. They sit around a table arranged with food and sing and deliver Torah discourses. Some arrange for a *minyan* of ten men to study Torah there all night.

### **3. Shacharis**

The inauguration is performed at Shacharis before the Torah reading. In generations when the entire congregation used to be present in synagogue for Adon Olam, the inauguration was frequently held before Baruch She'amar.

On an inauguration Shabbos the services begin earlier than usual.

During Shacharis the leader recites various parts of the service, such as Kedushah and Kaddish Tiskabbal, to special melodies.

### **4. The Procession**

After Kaddish Tiskabbal the rabbi is escorted by the congregation from the synagogue to the location of the Torah scroll. Only the rabbi and community dignitaries enter the house.

The rabbi carries the Torah under a canopy supported by poles for the distance of several houses, after which the dignitaries are afforded the same honor. In this way the Torah scroll is carried to the synagogue. Since the canopy serves an aesthetic purpose only, it is not considered a prohibited structure on Shabbos.

During the procession the *chazzan* (cantor) and others chant *piyyutim* in honor of the Torah. In earlier years a new *piyyut* was composed for each inauguration. Several of these *piyyutim* were brought to print.

### **5. Installing the Scroll in Synagogue**

The canopy is removed at the entrance to the synagogue. The others Torahs are brought out to greet the new Torah scroll.

The Torah is carried into the synagogue to the chanting of *Baruch haba besheim Hashem* (from Hallel) to the end. Due to the prohibition against dancing on Shabbos, there is no dancing at this event.

### **6. Alternate 1: Passing from One to Another**

If the synagogue is in a location where there is no *eiruv* to permit carrying on Shabbos, some communities allowed the Torah to be passed from one



person to another on the way to the synagogue, provided that each person carries the scroll less than four *amos* (cubits) and provided that the street is a *carmelis* (not a biblically mandated thoroughfare). A gentile removes the scroll from the house in which it was lodged and later carries it over the threshold of the synagogue. Other authorities, however, protest this leniency.

In later years the scroll would be lodged in the synagogue or in close proximity to the synagogue, from where it could be carried to the synagogue without an *eiruv*.

Some large synagogues replaced the outdoor procession with an indoor one held after Shacharis. The Kohanim and Levi'im stand in a row on either side of the aisle, and the Torah is passed from one to another until it reaches the Kohen standing by the stairs leading to the *aron kodesh*. The *chazzan* and his assistants accompany the procession with song. A community leader escorts the Torah to ensure that the procession remains orderly.

Nowadays some communities sing Se'u She'arim (Tehillim 24) instead of composing new *piyyutim*.

The benefactor waits at the *aron kodesh*.

## **7. Alternate 2: Circuits around the Bimah**

Other communities practiced a different custom as an alternative to the outdoor procession.

Seven circuits (as on Hosha'na Rabba) are made around the *bimah*. Each circuit is made by a different honoree. In Holland the practice was to sing seven chapters of Tehillim instead of composing a new *piyyut*. The order of the chapters differed from one community to another. Some examples are chapters 19, 29, 45, 67, 84, 100, and 132 / 100, 136, 67, 97, 99, 19, and 29 / 19, 24, 29, 67, 99, 111, and 118 / 8, 15, 19, 24, 84, 94, and 111 / 19, 68, 91, 1, 95, 24, and 132 / 19, 84, 95, 1, 91, 40, and 132.

The verses are recited alternately by the leader and the congregants, similar to any recital of Tehillim. Some have two of the chapter chanted by the singers.

## **8. Installation and Initial Reading**

After the older Torah scrolls are returned to their place, the benefactor installs the new scroll, which will be read from momentarily, in the *aron kodesh*.

In some communities the rabbi delivers a discourse after the *aron kodesh* is closed. In other communities this discourse is delivered immediately after the rabbi's aliyah.

The removal of the Torah for reading is as usual.

### **9. Calling Up to the Torah**

The benefactor is given an aliyah. If he retains partial ownership of the Torah, he dons a new tallis or other piece of clothing and recites Shehechianu before his aliyah.

The rabbi must be given an aliyah.

The benefactor, as in any simchah, is honored with giving out the aliyos.

### **10. Se'udas Sefer (Festive Meal)**

Following services, or alternately at *se'udah shelishis*, a celebration is held in honor of the Torah. This meal is referred to as the *sefer mahl*.

There is usually an address praising the Torah and the importance of writing one.

### **11. Reading from a New Torah Scroll**

It is customary to read from the new Torah for a period of thirty days following its inauguration and then on every Shabbos until the end of the first year.

## **XII. Synagogue Structure**

### **1. Traditional Structure**

The *Noda Bihudah* writes, “Nowhere in the two Talmudim or in the works of the Rishonim are we given any depiction of the synagogue structure.” Thus, the synagogue design has undergone changes over the years, similarly to Jewish attire. He continues, however, that “it is a good thing not to institute changes that differ from ancient custom.”

The *Chasam Sofer* also warns not to change the established layout of the synagogue in his famous will: “The leader’s *amud* and the arrangement of the synagogue as it has been until this day shall remain that way forever, and G-d forbid, one should not change either the structure of the building or that of the service and leaders of the service from the way it was, and anyone who institutes such a change, may he lose the countenance of his face, and to the righteous may no evil happen.”

### **2. Location and Height**

The synagogue should be the tallest building in the city. This Talmudic teaching was preserved in Ashkenaz, when possible, until the end of the Middle Ages, when the government authorities began regulating synagogue construction. As a result of these regulations, several synagogues in Germany were built in a deliberately inconspicuous fashion. Since in many places the height of the synagogue was severely restricted, a steeple (sometimes adorned with an aesthetic iron flag), a wooden pole, or a stone tower was added to the roof to symbolically raise the synagogue above the surrounding buildings, in fulfillment of the *Shulchan Aruch*’s ruling that it suffices to raise one corner of the synagogue. Although an iron pole is hardly a perfect alternative, many ancient communities relied on this when there was no other option.

### **3. Doors**

In most ancient synagogues, the entrance is from the south. In some synagogues the entrance is from the west, opposite the *aron kodesh*.

Between the women's section and the main sanctuary is a small door, called the *yudish Tir*, where the *sandeikes* passes the baby to the sandak.

#### **4. Floor**

In most ancient synagogues, the floor is lower than street level in fulfillment of the verse *Mima'amakim kerasicha Hashem* (From the depths have I called to you Hashem).

The leader's *amud* is a step or more lower (as in the Agudath Israel synagogue in Baltimore).

The floor is made of wood and covered with mats to keep it warm in the winter.

#### **5. Windows**

The windows usually face Jerusalem. The practice of having twelve windows in a synagogue is based on kabbalistic sources and was therefore not customary during the period of the Rishonim.

In ancient times the windows were left open from Rosh Chodesh Iyar until the commencement of Selichos in the month of Elul for air circulation.

They were closed throughout the winter to keep the synagogue warm.

#### **6. Aron Kodesh (Holy Ark)**

The *aron kodesh* is situated on a platform several steps above the synagogue floor. The Kohanim stand on this platform during Birkas Kohanim.

It was common practice to have an aesthetic pillar situated on both sides of the *aron kodesh*.

A smaller ark is constructed inside the *aron kodesh* for the storage of Torah scrolls that have become unfit for use.

The Talmudic dictum of *Da lifnei mi atta omeid* is generally inscribed above the *aron kodesh*. Alternately the area above the ark is adorned with two tablets inscribed with the beginning of each of the Ten Commandments or with the image of a crown with the words "keser Torah."

Above the *paroches* is a small screen reminiscent of the *kapores* in the *mishkan* (tabernacle).

In large communities there is a separate *paroches* for weekdays, Shabbos, each Yom Tov, special Shabbosim, Rosh Chodesh, and a bris.

The lectern is not placed in a position which would force the rabbi to turn his back to the *aron kodesh* when addressing the congregation.

### **7. Amud (Leader's Stand)**

The leader's *amud* is situated opposite the center of the *aron kodesh*. The *amud* is flanked on both sides by a set of stairs leading to the *aron kodesh*. In some synagogues the *amud* is to the right (south) of a single set of stairs.

### **8. Bimah (Reader's Table)**

The *bimah* is traditionally called the *migdal* or *almemor*. It is raised and is accessed by a set of stairs. Although kabbalistic sources require that six stairs lead up to the *bimah*, only three or four are necessary. Ancient *bimos* included a guard rail and were adorned with twelve spaced pillars that sometimes rose to the ceiling. A tablecloth is firmly affixed to the *bimah*. In later years it became customary to place another cloth under the Torah during reading.

A bench long enough to seat several people engaged in the relevant mitzvos is placed opposite the western side of the *bimah*.

The entrances to the *bimah* are not situated precisely to the south and north. Rather, the entrance is at the southeast corner and the exit is farther from the *aron kodesh*, on the northwest corner of the *bimah*.

### **9. Seating**

In ancient synagogues the benches were arranged along the four walls of the synagogue and around the four walls of the *bimah*. Thus most seats faced the *bimah*, and some faced the synagogue walls.

Before each divided seat on the benches is a *stender* (stand) that can be shifted toward the east for the Amidah prayer. The stands have cubby holes for books and prayer accoutrements. Some congregants would cover their stand with a cloth, which they would change for Shabbos.

In later years the benches were arranged in rows facing east. The front benches were preferred because of their proximity to the leader. Some had the children seated in the front of the synagogue so that they could be more easily supervised; others, however, reserved these seats for distinguished congregants and had the children seated with their fathers instead.

In ancient synagogues the rabbi was seated in front of the *aron kodesh* with his back to the *bimah*. Any congregant could sit along the four walls of the synagogue. In later years the rabbi was seated to the south of the *aron kodesh*, facing the wall.

Originally the seating locations were sold and then inherited to the next generation. In later years they were rented on a yearly basis.

Some communities set aside a certain bench for guests. Some set aside certain seats for mourners, usually along the western wall, near the entrance and away from the *bimah* and *aron kodesh*.

## **10. Women's Section**

In ancient synagogues the women's section was on the same floor as the main sanctuary, separated from it with latticed windows. In later synagogues the women's section was built on a balcony and curtained with semi-transparent drapes.

## **11. Lighting**

The synagogue was traditionally illuminated by wax candles placed in three places: at the *amud*, near the *aron kodesh*, and around the *bimah*.

A candle is lit at the *amud* even when its light is not needed, in fulfillment of the verse in Yeshayahu 24:15, *Ba'urim kabedu Hashem* (Glorify G-d with light). It is lit even when services are not held in synagogue.

In some synagogues the verse *Shivisi Hashem lenegdi samid* (I have always set G-d before me — Tehillim 16:8) is inscribed above this candle, and hence the name *menoras shivisi*. This candle is extinguished after services. It is lit well before Shabbos and remains lit until after Shabbos.

The *neir tamid* (eternal light) was traditionally lit with oil. It hangs in front of the *aron kodesh* or above the *bimah*. Over the years the candles were replaced with gas lights and then with electric lights.

There is special lighting on Yom Kippur and on the occasion of a bris.

Additional lights are lit on special Shabbosim and on other special days. Many synagogues had a silver or copper *Shabbos lamp* lit with oil in front of the *aron kodesh*.

## **12. Accessories**

A charity box is placed inside the synagogue door. Some place another on the southeast side of the *bimah*.

A basin for washing hands is situated just outside the main sanctuary and the women's section.

In later years a heating stove was introduced into the synagogue, a practice which some felt to be a luxury, and therefore an improper addition to the synagogue.

In Hungary the introduction of a clock in the holy sanctuary of the synagogue was protested, whereas in Germany it was accepted.

### **13. Plaques and Decorations**

Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries many communities invited artisans from eastern Europe to decorate their synagogues with verses, sayings, or their abbreviations. Here are examples of abbreviated maxims:

”סור מרע ועשה טוב” – סמו”ט  
”אך טוב לך יהיה סלה” – אטלי”ס  
”דע מי שהוא קונך” – דמש”ק  
”מתן בסתר יכפה אף” – מבי”א  
”שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד” – שיל”ת  
”שתיקה יפה בשעת התפילה” – שיב”ה

Some decorated the walls with illustrated inscriptions of prayers, such as Al Hakol, Modim Derabbanan, and Mah Tovu.

In later years plaques with the names of benefactors and yahrtzeit dates were affixed to the walls. (Traditionally, such records were kept in the community's Memorbuch.) Similarly, plaques announcing the Torah portion and seasonal prayer insertions were affixed.

### **14. The Vestibule and Additional Rooms**

Vestibules were added to the synagogue entrance only in later years.

Even in ancient times, the halachic authorities insisted on the importance of constructing an outhouse near the synagogue.

In modern times additional rooms were added for related functions, including study halls, offices, meeting rooms, and simchah halls.

### **15. Proper Honor and Respect**

Our ancestors were very careful about the synagogue's dignity, cleanliness, and the prohibition of eating inside its walls.





### **XIII. Chanukas Habayis (Inauguration of a Home)**

#### **1. The Preferable Time**

One who buys a new house or apartment celebrates the Chanukas Habayis on the day the family moves in. Before the first night of sleep in one's new home, it is consecrated with Torah, prayer, and mitzvos.

#### **2. Installing Mezuzos**

Upon moving into a new home, the first activity is the installation of mezuzos. The following blessing is recited:

ברוך אתה השם אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לקבוע מזוזה.

#### **3. Timely Blessings**

After installing mezuzos, the family gathers and the head of the family recites the following blessing, having in mind to be *motzi* (fulfill the obligation of) his family:

ברוך אתה השם אלקינו מלך העולם הטוב והמטיב.

If one lives alone, and no one else will benefit from the new home, the alternate blessing is recited:

ברוך אתה השם אלקינו מלך העולם שהחיינו וקיימנו והגייענו לזמן הזה.

#### **4. Torah Study**

Immediately after installing the mezuzos, one engages in Torah study. The topic of study is flexible and can consist of halachah, aggadah, or both. Some study Mishnah Berachos (skipping the third chapter, dealing with death). Some study halachos of real estate, contractors, or dwelling, such as Bava Metziah 107. Some study Rambam, Dei'os, chapter 5; or Rambam, Beis Habechirah, chapter 1.

If the assembly is composed of ten men, one of them recites Kaddish Derabbanan with the preface of *Rabbi Chanania ben Akashia* upon conclusion of the Torah study.

### **5. Recital of Tehillim (Psalms)**

After Torah study, Tehillim are recited in the belief that they ward off evil. The Tehillim are recited alternately, in the customary manner: The leader recites one verse, and the rest recite the next verse. The alternate party recites that verse in an undertone.

Some say the following chapters: 30, 91, 112, and 120-134. Then chapter 119 is recited according to the names of the man and woman of the house and their mothers. Chapter 90 concludes the service.

If the assembly is composed of ten men, one of them recites Kaddish Yasom (Mourners' Kaddish) upon conclusion of the service.

It is unclear whether one may celebrate the Chanukas Habayis upon moving into a new home during the Three Weeks. If one must move into a new home during that period, the main ceremony of study and prayer is held without the festive meal.

### **6. Festive Meal**

After Torah study and the recital of Tehillim, it is customary to serve a festive meal of praise and thanksgiving.

### **7. Obligation To Be Called to the Torah**

The custom in some communities is that one who performs a Chanukas Habayis is given an aliyah on the following Shabbos.

#### XIV. Index of Rabbinic Sages

**The following are sages mentioned in *Guide to Minhag Ashkenaz*,  
*Gedolei Hadoros al Mishmar Minhag Ashkenaz*, and other books by  
the same author.**

**Compiled by the translator**

- Abarbanel, Don Yitzchak b. Sar Don Yehuda (1437-1509) [Portugal-Spain-Italy]  
Abudraham, R' David b. Yosef b. David, author of *Abudraham*, published 1340 [Seville] (student of the *Tur*)  
Abulafia (see Ramah)  
Abysroi (see Meir b. Yosef)  
Adler, R' Nasan (1742-1800) [Frankfurt-Boskowitz, Moravia-Fürth] (teacher of the *Chasam Sofer*)  
Agudah, R' Alexander Zuslin HaKohen (-1348) [Ehrfurt]  
Aharon Berachia b. Moshe, R', author of *Ma'avar Yabok* (-1639) [Modena, Italy]  
Aharon, ibn, son of R' Shmuel Hanasi (middle ninth cent.) [Babylon-Italy]  
Ahavas Yisrael (see Hager, R' Yisrael)  
Albutini, R' Yehuda b. Moshe, author of *Sulam Ha'aliyah* (-1520) [Lisbon-Jerusalem] (kabbalist)  
Alfasi, Yitzchak b. Yakov, the "Rif" (1013-1103) [Tunis-Morocco-Spain]  
Alter, R' Avraham Mordechai b. Yehuda Aryeh Leib, the *Imrei Emes* (1866-1948) [third Rebbe of Gur]  
Alter, R', the Shamash [Zulkevah]  
Amnon, R', alleged author of *Unesaneh Tokef* (11th cent.) [Mainz]  
Amram Gaon, Rav, b. Sheshna (c.810-c.875) [Babylon]  
Ari (see Luria Ashkenazi, R' Yitzchak)  
Aruch (see Nasan b. Yechiel)  
Ashkenazi Eisenstadt, R' Meir b. Yitzchak, the "Maharam Eish," author of *Panim Me'iros* (1670-1744) [Eisenstadt]  
Ashkenazi, R' Betzalel, author of *Shitah Mekubetzes* (1520-c.1594) [Egypt]  
Auerbach, R' Tzvi Binyamin b. Avraham, author of the *Nachal Eshkol* (1804-1871) [Darmstadt-Frankfurt-Halberstadt]

Auerbach-Zalkover, R' Yehuda Leib b. Yisrael, author of *Nefesh Yehuda* and *Minchas Yehuda* (-1792) [Zalkova]  
 Avraham ibn Ezra, R' (1092-1164) [Spain-France] (a *parshan*)  
 Ba'al Hama'or (see Zerachia)  
 Ba'al Sheim of Michelstadt (see Wormser)  
 Ba'al Sheim of Michelstadt (see Wormser, R' Yitzchak)  
 Besht (see Yisrael b. Eliezer)  
 Ba'al Sheim Tov (see Yisrael b. Eliezer)  
 Bach (see Sirkish)  
 Bachrach, R' Moshe Shimshon b. Shmuel, author of *Chut Hashani* (1607-1670) [Prague-Worms] (father of the *Chavos Yair*)  
 Bachrach, R' Naphtali Hertz b. Yakov Elchanan, author of *Eimek Hamelech* (17th cent.) [Frankfurt] (kabbalist)  
 Bachrach, R' Yair Chaim b. Moshe Shimshon, author of *Mekor Chaim* (1628-1701) [Worms]  
 Bachye b. Asher ibn Chalawa, Rabbeinu (1255-1340) [Saragossa, Spain] (a *parshan*, student of the Rashba)  
 Bachye b. Yosef ibn Pekuda, Rabbeinu, author of *Chovos Halevavos* (1050-1120) [Saragossa, Spain] (an ethicist)  
 Baer, R' Hertz (-1819) [Parnas of Worms]  
 Baer, R' Yitzchak Seligman b. Aryeh Yosef Dov, author of *Totze'os Chaim* (1825-1897) [Frankfurt]  
 Bamberger, R' Nasan, author of *Likutei Halevi* (1842-1919) [Würzburg]  
 Bamberger, R' Yitzchak Dov Seligman b. Simcha halevi, author of *Sha'arei Simcha* and *Yad Halevi* (1808-1878) [Würzburg]  
 Bayis Chadash (see Sirkish)  
 Beis Yosef (see Karo)  
 Beriel, R' Yehuda, author of *Tzir Hatzirim* and *Teshuvos Vechidushim* (1643-1722) [Mantua (Mantova), Italy]  
 Berlin, R' Noach Chaim Tzvi b. Meir, author of *Atzei Almogim* (1734-1802) [Fürth-Hamburg]  
 Binyamin Halevi, R', author of *Machzor Ma'gelei Tzedek*, published 1549 in Sabbioneta [Nuremberg]  
 Brach, R' Shaul (1865-1940) [Kashoa, Czechoslovakia]  
 Brandes ברנדס, R' Baruch Yehuda halevi, author of *Leshon Chachamim* (c.1815) [Prague]  
 Braude, R' Simcha Zissel b. Yisrael, the "Alter of Kelm" (1824-1898) [Kelm]  
 Breslau, R' Yosef Moshe, author of *Chok Yosef* and *Kesones Yosef* (-1752) [Bamberg] (son-in-law of R' Avraham Brody of Frankfurt)

Butchatcher, R' Binyamin Wolf (-1691) [Butczacz, Ukraine]  
 Chacham Tzvi, R' Tzvi Ashkenazi b. Yakov Zack (1660-1718)  
 [Amsterdam-Lemberg] (father of R' Yakov Emden)  
 Chananel b. Chushiel, Rabbeinu (965-1055) [Kairouan, Tunis] He was  
 student of his father and Rav Hai Gaon, and teacher of R' Gershom, the  
 Rif, and the Aruch.)  
 Chasam Sofer (see Sofer, R' Moshe)  
 Chavos Yair (see Bachrach)  
 Chizkiyahu b. David da Silva, R', author of the *P'ri Chadash* (1659-1698)  
 [Jerusalem]  
 Chochmei Narvonah - Narbonne, south France  
 Chomer Bakodesh (see Horowitz, R' Tzvi)  
 Chozeh of Lublin (see Horowitz, R' Yakov)  
 Cohen, R' Meshulam Zalman, author of *Bigdei Kehunah* (1739-1820)  
 [Fürth]  
 Cohen, R' Yitzchak Chaim [Padua] (chazzan)  
 Da'as Kedoshim (see Wahrman)  
 David b. Shlomo ibn Yichye Don Negro, R', author of *Leshon Limudim*  
 (1440-1504) [Portugal-Constantinople]  
 David b. Yakar, R'  
 Dessler, R' Eliahu Eliezer b. Reuven Dov, the *Michtav M'Eliyahu* (1891-  
 1954) [London-Bnei Brak]  
 Di Lunzano, R' Refael b. Avraham [Firenze, Italy]  
 Dianah דאיינה, R' Ezriel b. Shlomo (-1536) [Italy] (student of R' Chananel  
 b. Chushiel and R' Nissim b. Yakov Gaon)  
 Dil Re'os דיל ריאוז, R' Gavriel (-1728) [Levorno, Italy] (kabbalist)  
 Divrei Kehillos (see Geiger)  
 Eibschitz, R' Yonasan b. Nasan Netta, author of *Kreisi Upleisi* and *Urim  
 Vetumim* (1690-1764) [Prague-Metz-Hamburg]  
 Eidelitz, R' Zerach, author *Or Layesharim* and *Melech Machasheves* (-  
 1786) [Prague]  
 Eiger, R' Akiva b. Moshe Gins, author of *Gilyon Hashas* (1762-1838)  
 [Posen]  
 Eiger, R' Shlomo b. Akiva (1785-1852) [Posen]  
 Eishel Avraham (see Wahrman and Oppenheim)  
 Eizelle Charif, R' (see Shapiro, R' Yehoshua)  
 Elazar, R', the Chazzan of Speyer (early 12th cent.) [Speyer]  
 Eliah Rabbah (see Shapiro, R' Eliahu)  
 Eliezer MiMetz, R', author of *Sefer Yirei'im* (c.1220) [Metz] (Tosafist)  
 Eliezer of Bohemia ביהם, R' (c.1195) [Bohemia-Prague] (Tosafist)

Elyakim b. Meshulam Halevi, R' (1030-c.1100) [Speyer] (student of students of Rabbeinu Gershom)

Emden, R' Yakov Yisrael b. Tzvi Ashkenazi, author of *Mor Uktzi'ah* and *She'eilas Ya'avetz* (1698-1776) [Altona] (son of the *Chacham Tzvi*)

Ephraim b. Yakov of Bonn, author of *Sefer Hazechirah* (1132-1197) [Bonn] (a Tosafist, student of R' Yoel)

Ephraim b. Yakov haKohen, R', author of *Sha'ar Ephraim* (1616-1678) [Vilna-Hungary]

Ephraim b. Yitzchak, R' (-1175) [Regensburg]

Epstein, R' Baruch b. Yechiel Michel halevi, author of the *Torah Temimah*, *Mekor Baruch*, and *Baruch She'amar* (1860-1941) [Pinsk]

Epstein, R' Yechiel Michel b. Avraham, author of *Kitzur Shlah* (-1709) (son-in-law of the *Levush*)

Epstein, R' Yechiel Michel, author of the *Aruch Hashulchan* (1830-1908) [Navhordok] (father of R' Baruch and father-in-law of the *Netziv*)

Ettias, R' Yosef (c.1687) [Amsterdam]

Ettlinger, R' Yakov Yukev b. Aharon, author of *Aruch La'ner* and *Binyan Tzion* (1798-1871) [Manheim-Altona]

Falk, R' Yakov b. Yitzchak halevi, author of *Vayakom Eidus Beyakov*, published 1594 in Prague [Prague-Cracow] (student of R' Yakov Margolios)

Falk, R' Yakov Yehoshua, author of *Pnei Yehoshua* (1680-1754) [Frankfurt]

Feinstein, R' Moshe b. David, author of *Igros Moshe* (1895-1986) [Liuban-New York]

Fiammetta, R' Yosef, author of *Or Boker* (-1730) [Ancona, Italy] (father-in-law of R' Shimshon Morpurgo)

Fleckles, R' Elazar, author of *Teshuvah Mei'ahavah* (1754-1826) [Göttingen-Prague] (student of the *Noda Bihudah*)

Frankel, R' Chaggai Chanoch (-1691) [Fürth-Bamberg-Hanau]

Frankel-Segal, R' Yissachar Berman, author of *Mateh Yissachar* (c.1660-1709) [Fürth]

Frankfurter, R' Avraham Abish Lisa b. Tzvi Hirsch (1700-1769) [Frankfurt]

Ganzfried, R' Shlomo b. Yosef, author of *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* and *Kesses Hasofer* (1804-1846) [Ungvár, Hungary (now Uzhhorod, on the border of the Ukraine and Slovakia)]

Geiger, R' Shlomo Zalman b. Aharon Yechiel Michel (1792-1878) [Frankfurt]

Gershom Me'or Hagolah, Rabbeinu, b. Yehuda (960-1028 or 1040) [Mainz]

Gershon b. Yitzchak, R' (see Ulif)

Gershon Kolomeia, R', author of *Avodas HaGershuni* (late 19th cent.) [Kolomeia, Galicia]

Ghiron, R' Yochanan b. Yosef Chaim (early 18th cent.) [Firenze, Italy]

Ginsburg, R' Shimon, author of *HaMinhagim* (Yiddish, printed in Venice 1590) [northern Italy]

Ginsburger, R' Refael Zev, author of *Dinei Uminhagei Beis Hak'neses* (c.1810) [Breslau]

Goldstein, R' Yissachar Dov, author of *Ohel Yissachar* (1915-1988)

Gombiner, R' Avraham Avli b. Chaim, author of *Magen Avraham* (1637-1683) [Kalish]

Gordon, R' Yehuda Leib b. Meir Avraham Abba, author of *Divrei Yehuda*, printed in Warsaw in 1904 [Ostroh]

Gottlieb, R' Menachem, author of *Darchei No'am* (c.1896) [Hanover]

Haas, R' Shlomo, author of *Kerem Shlomo* (1800-1843) [Dresnitz]

Hager, R' Chaim b. Menachem Mendel, author of *Toras Chaim* (1795-1854) [Kosov]

Hager, Yisrael b. Baruch, the *Ahavas Yisrael* (1860-1936) [third Rebbe of Vizhnitz]

Hai Gaon, Rav, b. Shrira (969-1037) [Pumbedisa] (appointed 997, son of Rav Shrira Gaon)

HaKohen, R' Eliezer [Levorno, Italy]

Halberstam, R' Chaim b. Aryeh Leib, author of *Divrei Chaim* (1796-1876) [Rebbe of Sanz]

Halberstam, R' Yechezkel Shraga (1814-1898) [Rebbe of Shinova, Sieniawa, south-eastern Poland] (son of the *Divrei Chaim*)

Halevi, R' Nesanel b. Meshulam (-1771) [Padua-Modena-Pesaro]

Halpren, R' Yakov, author of *Nachalas Yakov* (c.1580) [Cremona קרימונה, Italy]

Hamachiri, R' Nasan b. Rabbeinu Machir, author of *Maasei Hage'onim* and commentary on the *siddur* (late 11th cent.) [Germany-France] (student of Rashi)

Hamburger, R' Avraham Binyamin Wolf, author of *Sha'ar Hazekeinim* and *Nachalas Binyamin* (1770-1850) [Fürth]

Hamburger, R' Refael b. Yikusiel Ziskind haKohen, author of *Toras Yekusiel* (1723-1803) [Hamburg-Ansbach (א"ה"ו)]

HaMinhagim (see Ginsburg and Tyrnau)

Hanover, R' Nasan Notte b. Moshe of Ostroh, author of *Yevein Metzulah* (-1683) [Zaslev, Russia-Germany-Italy-Romania]  
 Haphla'ah (see Horowitz, R' Pinchas b. Tzvi)  
 Hecksher, R' Ephraim b. Shmuel Zenville, author of *Adnei Phaz* (-1759) [Altona-Hamburg]  
 Heidenheim, R' Binyamin Wolf b. Shimshon, publisher of a siddur and author of *Kitzur Ma'avar Yabok* (1757-1832) [Rödelheim]  
 Heller (see Yom Tov)  
 Henna, R' Shlomo Zalman, author of *Binyan Shlomo* (1687-1746) [Frankfurt] (grammarian)  
 Hibner, R' Yechiel Michel b. Yisrael Moshe, author of *Zeicher Rav*, *Mishkenos Haro'im*, and *Nachalah Leyisrael* (19th cent.) [Niznov (Nizniów, eastern Galitzia)]  
 Hildesheimer, R' Ezriel b. Yehuda Leib Galya (after the town Gleidingen) (1820-1899) [Eisenstadt-Berlin]  
 Hillel the Elder, the fifth of the *Zugos* (pairs) (c.32 BCE) [Babylon-Jerusalem]  
 Hillman, R' Shmuel b. Yisrael Halpren (-1766) [Prague-Yeruslev-Metz] (kabbalist)  
 Hirsch, R' Shamshon b. Rephael (1808-1889) [Frankfurt]  
 Horowitz, R' David b. Elazar halevi, author of *Imrei David* (1862-1935) [Stanislaw]  
 Horowitz, R' Pinchas b. Tzvi Hirsch, author of the *Haphla'ah*, *Hamiknah*, and *Panim Yaffos* (c.1731-1805) [Frankfurt]  
 Horowitz, R' Pinchas b. Yisrael (1540-1618) [Cracow] (brother-in-law of the Rama)  
 Horowitz, R' Shabtai Sheftel, author of *Vavei Ha'amudim* (1592-1660) [Frankfurt-Fürth-Posen-Vienna] (son of the *Shlah*)  
 Horowitz, R' Tzvi Hirsch b. Pinchas, author of *Machaneh Levi* and *Lachmei Sodah* (-1817) [Frankfurt] (son of the *Haphla'ah*)  
 Horowitz, R' Yakov Yitzchak b. Avraham Eliezer, the Chozeh of Lublin (-1815) [Lublin]  
 Horowitz, R' Yeshaya b. Avraham, the *Shlah* (1558-1630) [Frankfurt-Prague-Jerusalem]  
 Abu Aharon (see Aharon)  
 Ibn Ezra (see Avraham and Moshe)  
 Ibn Gabirol (see Shlomo)  
 Ibn Yichye (see David b. Shlomo)  
 Igra-Tismanitz, R' Meshulam b. Shimshon of Butchatch (1746-1803) [Stanislaw-Tismanitz-Pressburg]



Imrei Emes (see Alter)  
 Isserlen, R' Yisrael, the Maharia, author of the *Terumas Hadeshen* (1390-1460) [Marburg-Neustadt]  
 Kagan, R' Yisrael Meir b. Arye Zev, the *Chafetz Chaim*, author of the *Mishnah Berurah* (1838-1933) [Radin]  
 Kahana, R' Moshe haKohen, author of *Derech Moshe* (-1718) [Gibtch, Moravia-Lisa, Poland]  
 Kahanov, R' Elazar b. Uri Meir, author of *Mishmeres Elazar*, printed in NY in 1959  
 Kaliri, R' Elazer Kalir (c. sixth cent.) (poet)  
 Kalman of Worms, R' (-1560) [Worms-Lemberg]  
 Kaplan, R' Avraham Eliahu b. Avraham Eliahu, author of *BeIkvos Hayir'ah* (1890-1924) [Berlin]  
 Kapsali, R' Moshe (1420-1495) [Constantinople]  
 Kara, R' Yehuda Leib (c.1642-1722) [Glogów גלוגא, Poland] (father-in-law of the *Adnei Phaz*, R' Ephraim Hecksher)  
 Karelitz, R' Avraham Yeshayahu b. Shmaria Yosef, the *Chazon Ish* (1879-1954) [Bnei Brak]  
 Kargoi קארגוי, R' Menachem Mendel, author of *Giddulei Taharah* (1772-1842) [Paris-Fürth]  
 Karlebach, R' Shlomo, author of *Beis Yosef* (1845-1919) [Libeck]  
 Karo, R' Yosef b. Ephraim, author of the *Shulchan Aruch* and *Beis Yosef* (1488-1575) [Safed]  
 Katz Kaufman, R' Moshe Yekusiel b. Avigdor haKohen, author of *Lechem Hapanim* (c.1710) [Poland] (son-in-law of the Magen Avraham)  
 Katz, R' Naphtali b. Yitzchak, author of *Semichas Chachamim* (1660-1719) [Frankfurt-Prague]  
 Kickinesh, R' Levi b. Yakov (-1503) [Lemberg] (a Sephardic sage)  
 Kitzur Ma'avar Yabok (see Heidenheim)  
 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (see Ganzfried)  
 Klausner, R' Avraham, the Mahara'ak מהרא"ק (-1410) [Vienna]  
 Klein, R' Avraham Yitzchak (1875-1961) [Nuremberg-Haifa]  
 Koblenz-Mizei, R' Gershon, author of *Kiryas Chana* (-c.1742) [Metz-Koblenz]  
 Koidenover, R' Aharon Shmuel, author of *Birkas Shmuel* (1614-1676) [Frankfurt-Cracow]  
 Korban Nesanel (see Weil Ashkenazi, R' Nesanel)  
 Kornitzer, R' Yosef Nechemia b. Akiva (1879-1933) [Sellish-Cracow] (grandson of the *Michtav Sofer*)

Kosmann Segal Essa, R' Yosef Yousep b. Moshe, author of *Noheig Katzon Yosef* (-1759) [Amsterdam-Dietz-Frankfurt]  
 Kosover, R' Nachman (18th cent.) [Kosov] (student of the Ba'al Sheim Tov)  
 Kramer, R' Eliahu b. Shlomo Zalman, the Vilna Gaon (1720-1797) [Vilna]  
 Kreisi Upleisi (see Eibschitz)  
 Lampronti, R' Yitzchak, author of *Pachad Yitzchak* (1679-1756) [Ferrara]  
 Landau, R' Menachem Mendel Chaim b. Yakov, author of *Ateres Zekeinim*, *Meikitz Nirdamim*, and *Tzelusa DeAvraham* (1862-1935) [Rebbe of Tchechnov, and was also in Zaviertzia and other towns in Poland]  
 Landau, R' Yakov Baruch b. Yehuda, author of *Sefer HaAgur* (-1493) [Germany-Italy]  
 Landau, R' Yechezkel b. Yehuda, author of *Noda Bihudah* and *Tzlach* (1714-1793) [Prague]  
 Lange, R' Gershon b. Yitzchak, author of commentary on *Koheles* (1868-1924) [Frankfurt]  
 Lehmann, R' Meir (1831-1891) [Mainz] (son-in-law of R' Shmuel Bondi)  
 Lehrmann, R' Tzvi Hirsch (1784-1854) [Amsterdam]  
 Lemans לימאנס, R' Yosef Asher Lemel (1766-1842) [Hague]  
 Leowy, R' Chaim b. Betzalel, author of *Vikuach Mayim Chaim* and *Sefer Hachaim* (1515-1588) [Friedberg] (older brother of the Maharal)  
 Leowy, R' Yehuda (see Maharal)  
 Levi Yitzchak b. Meir, R', author of *Kedushas Levi* (1740-1815) [Berditchev]  
 Levi, R' Refael Shlomo [Finnel פינל, Italy]  
 Lipkin Salanter, R' Yisrael b. Zev Wolf (1810-1883) [Salant] (founder of the Mussar Movement)  
 Litch-Rosenbaum, R' Moshe Leib Litch, author of *Mata Dirushalayim* (1800-1877) (student of the *Chasam Sofer*)  
 Lorbeerbaum, R' Yakov b. Moshe Ashkenazi, author of the *Nesivos* and *Chavas Da'as* (1770-1832) [Lissa (Leszno), Poland]  
 Lowenstam, R' Avraham b. Aryeh Leib, author of *Tzeror Hachaim*, printed in Amsterdam (-1839)  
 Luentz לויאנץ, R' Sinai (-1754) [Worms]  
 Luria Ashkenazi, R' Yitzchak, the "Ari" (1534-1572) [Safed]  
 Luria, R' Avraham b. Yechiel of Alsace (-1522) (grandfather of the Maharshal)

Luria, R' Moshe Betzalel b. Shraga Feivush, author of *Toras Hakna'os* (1835-1914) [Suwalk]  
 Luria, R' Yecheiel, of Alsace (-1470) [Alsace-Brisk]  
 Luria, R' Yochanan b. Aharon, author of *Meshivas Mefesh* (-1512) [Alsace-Worms]  
 Ma'avar Yabok (see Aharon Berachia)  
 Mabit, R' Moshe b. Yosef di Trani the elder, author of *Beis Elokim* (1505-1585) [Safed]  
 Machaneh Levi (see Horowitz, R' Tzvi)  
 Machzor Vitri, R' Simcha b. Shmuel (-1105) [Vitri, France] (student of Rashi)  
 Magen Avraham (see Gombiner)  
 Maggid Meisharim (see Karo)  
 Mahara'ak (see Klausner)  
 Maharal, R' Yehuda Leowy b. Betzalel (1520-1609) [Prague]  
 Maharam Barbie, R' Meir (1725-1789) [Barbie, near Halberstadt]  
 Maharam Chagiz, R' Moshe b. Yisrael Yakov, author of *Mishnas Chachamim* and *Sefas Emes* (1672-c.1762) [Amsterdam-Altona]  
 Maharam Mintz, R' Moshe Mintz Segal b. Yitzchak halevi (1415-1480) [Mintz-Mainz-Posen]  
 Maharam of Rothenburg, R' Meir b. Baruch (c.1215-1293) [Rothenburg]  
 Maharam Shick, R' Moshe b. Yosef Shik (1805-1879) [Jergen-Chust]  
 Maharam Shif, R' Meir b. Yakov haKohen (1608-1641) [Fulda-Prague]  
 Maharam Ziskind (see Rothenburg, R' Mordechai)  
 Maharash Neustadt, R' Shalom, the "Sar of Neustadt" (late 14th cent.) [Neustadt] (*Minhagei Maharash*)  
 Maharashdam, R' Shmuel di Medinah (1506-1590) [Turkey]  
 Maharatz Chayyas, R' Tzvi Hirsch Chayyas, author of *Toras Haneviim* (1805-1855) [Galitzia]  
 Maharaz Binga, R' Zelikman (15th cent.) [Bingen, on the Rhine] (student and *mechutan* (in-law) of Maharil)  
 Mahari Brona, R' Yisrael b. Chaim [Brunn, Moravia]  
 Mahari Mintz, R' Yehuda b. Eliezer halevi (-1509) [Padova]  
 Maharik, R' Yosef Cologne b. Shlomo Trabotto (c.1420-1480) [Italy]  
 Maharil, R' Yakov b. Moshe Molin (1360-1427) [Mainz-Worms]  
 Mahariv (see Weil, R' Yakov, student of the Maharil)  
 Maharsha, R' Shmuel Eliezer b. Yehuda halevi Eidel's (1555-1636) [Cracow-Lublin-Ostrow] (His mother-in-law was Eidel.)  
 Maharshak, R' Shlomo b. Yehuda Aharon Kluger, author of *Ha'elef Lecha Shlomo* (1783-1863) [Poland]

Maharshal, R' Shlomo b. Yecheiel Luria, author of *Yam Shel Shlomo* and *Chochmas Shlomo* (c.1510-1574) [Ostroh-Lublin] (student of R' Shalom Shachne)  
 Maharshashach (see Katz, R' Shmuel)  
 Maharzach, R' Zalman Cohen, author of *Seder Gittin* (c.1421) [Nuremberg]  
 Marcus, R' Aharon, author of *Sefer Hachassidus* and *Kesess Hasofer* (1843-1916) [Germany-Cracow]  
 Margolios, R' Meir b. Tzvi Hirsch, author of *Meir Nesivim* (-1790) (student-colleague of the Ba'al Sheim Tov) [Horodenka-Lemberg-Ostroh]  
 Margolios, R' Yakov the First (-1492) [Nuremberg]  
 Margolios, R' Yakov the Second (-1519) [Regensburg]  
 Margolios, R' Yakov, author of *Seder Gittin Vachalitzah* (c.1430) [Luka-Worms]  
 Meginei Eretz is an edition of the *Shulchan Aruch*  
 Meir b. Yosef b. Abysroi, R' (13th cent.) (student of Rabbeinu Yonah)  
 Meir Ba'al Haneis, R' (4th generation Tanna) [Gallilee]  
 Meisel-Mirkish, R' Shlomo Zalman b. Yehuda Leib, author of *Shulchan Shlomo* (-1774) [Mir-Koenigsburg-Frankfurt]  
 Mekor Chaim (see Bachrach)  
 Meltzer, R' Isser Zalman b. Baruch Peretz, author of *Even Ha'azel* (1870-1954) [Kletzk-Jerusalem]  
 Menachem b. Aharon b. Zerach, R', author of *Tzeidah Laderech* (14th cent.) [Spain]  
 Mertzebach, R' Yonah b. Moshe (1900-1980) [Darmstadt]  
 Meshulam b. Klonimus, Rabbeinu (end of Ge'onic period) [Luka-Mainz]  
 Michtav Sofer (see Sofer, R' Shimon)  
 MiKoidenov, R' Shalom (1851-1926) [Koidenov]  
 MiKozhnitz, R' Yisrael (1736-1815) [Kozhnitz] (a maggid)  
 MiLukio (see Shlomo David)  
 Mishmeres Elazar (see Kahanov)  
 Mishnah Berurah (see Kagan)  
 Mizei, R' Yitzchak, author of *Yefeh Nof* (16th cent.) [Hechingen]  
 Molcho, R' Yosef, author of *Shulchan Gavo'a* (1688-1760) [Salonica-Safed]  
 Mor Uktzia (see Emden)  
 Mordechai b. Hillel haKohen Ashkenazi, R', author of the *Mordechai* (-1298) [Austria] (student of the Maharam of Rothenburg and son-in-law of R' Yecheiel of Paris (-c.1267) teacher of the Maharam)

Moshe Aharon Schneur, R' [Levorno, Italy]  
 Moshe b. Klonimus, R' (son of R' Meshulam b. Klonimus) [Lombardy-Mainz]  
 Moshe b. Yakov ibn Ezra, R' (1085-c.1135) [Granada, Spain]  
 Moshe Halevi (see Maharam Mintz)  
 Moshe, R' [Dayan of Cordoba]  
 Munk, R' Shmuel David HaKohen, author of *Pe'as Sadecha* (1924-1982) [Haifa]  
 Nachal Eshkol (see Auerbach, R' Tzvi)  
 Nachalas Shiv'a (see Segal Mezeritch)  
 Naeh, R' Avraham Chaim b. Menachem Mendel, author of *Shiurei Torah* (1890-1954) [Jerusalem]  
 Nasan b. Yechiel, Rabbeinu (1035-1110) [Rome]  
 Nathanson, R' Yosef Shaul b. Aryeh halevi, author of *Sho'el Umeishiv* and *Beis Shaul* (on Mishnah) (1808-1875) [Lemberg]  
 Natronoi Nasi b. Chachinoi, Rav (Ge'onic Period) [Babylon-Spain]  
 Nesivos (see Lorbeerbaum)  
 Netziv, R' Naphtali Tzvi Yehuda b. Yakov, author of *Ha'ameik She'alah* and others (1817-1893) [Rosh Yeshivah Volozhin]  
 Nissim b. Reuven, R', the Ran (c.1290-1376) [Barcelona]  
 Nissim b. Yakov Gaon, R' (c.990-1057) [Tunis]  
 No'am Elimelech (see Weisblum)  
 Noda Bihudah (see Landau)  
 Noheig K'tzon Yosef (see Kosmann)  
 Nördlingen, R' Yosef Yousep Han b. Pinchas Seligman, author of *Yosef Ometz* (-1637) [Frankfurt]  
 Novomesta, R' Moshe (early 19th cent.) [Jerusalem] (student of the *Chasam Sofer*)  
 Oppenheim, R' Avraham, author of *Eishel Avraham* (-1789) [Hanover]  
 Oppenheim, R' David b. Avraham, author of *Nish'al Ledavid* (1664-1737) [Worms-Moravia-Bohemia-Prague]  
 Or Zarua, R' Yitzchak b. Moshe (1180-1250) [Würtzburg-Regensburg-Vienna] (student of R' Yehuda Hachassid)  
 P'ri Chadash (see Chizhiyahu)  
 Papris, R' Yakov HaKohen Katz (1670-1740) [Koblenz-Frankfurt]  
 Peretz b. Eliahu, Rabbeinu (-1300) [Corbeil]  
 Pesachia b. Yosef (see Sofer, R' Pesachia)  
 Pinkarli, R' Ezriel Yoel [Italy] (kabbalist)  
 Raavad I, R' Avraham b. David halevi, author of *Sefer Hakabbalah* (1110-c.1180) [Spain] (also called Ibn Daud)

Raavad II, R' Avraham b. Yitzchak, author of *Sefer HaEshkol* (1110-1179) [Narbonne]  
 Raavad III, R' Avraham b. David, Ba'al Hahasagos (1125-1198) [Posquières] (son-in-law of Raavad II)  
 Raavan, R' Eliezer b. Nasan (1155-1215) [Mainz-Lunel-Toledo]  
 Raavia, R' Eliezer b. Yoel (1140-1220) [Mainz]  
 Rabinowitz-Teomim, R' Eliahu David b. Binyamin, the "Aderes" (1843-1905) [Ponovezh-Mir-Jerusalem]  
 Radbaz, R' David b. Shlomo ibn Zimra (c.1479-1573) [Spain-Safed-Fes-Cairo]  
 Rama, R' Moshe b. Yisrael Isserles, author of *Darchei Moshe* and comments on the *Shulchan Aruch* (1520-1572) [Cracow]  
 Ramah, R' Meir b. Todros halevi Abulafia (1170-1244) [Burgos, Spain]  
 Rambam (Maimonidies), R' Moshe b. Maimon (1135-1205) [Cairo]  
 Ramban (Nachmanidies), R' Moshe b. Nachman (1194-1270) [Girona]  
 Ramchal, R' Moshe Chaim b. Yakov Luzzatto (1707-1746) [Padua-Amsterdam-Akko]  
 Ran (see Nissim b. Reuven)  
 Rashba, R' Shimshon b. Avraham MiShantz (1150-c.1216) [Senz, France] (a Tosafist)  
 Rashba, R' Shlomo b. Avraham b. Aderes (1235-1310) [Barcelona]  
 Rashi, R' Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105) [Troyes]  
 Ravina ראוּינָה, R' Yosef [Alexandria]  
 Reisher, R' Nechemia (c.1737)  
 Reisher, R' Yakov, author of *Shevus Yakov* (1670-1733) [Metz]  
 Ri Hazaken (see Yitzchak b. Shmuel)  
 Ri Migash, R' Yosef b. Meir ibn Migash (1077-1141) [Alisena (Lucena, southern Spain)] (teacher of the Rambam)  
 Rif (see Alfasi)  
 Rishonim (medieval rabbinic sages)  
 Ritz Ghiyyas, R' Yitzchak b. Yehuda ibn Ghiyyas (1038-1089) [Lucena, Spain] (student of R' Shmuel Hanaggid)  
 Rivash, R' Yitzchak b. Sheishes (1326-1408) [Barcelona] (student of the Ran and R' Peretz HaKohen)  
 Rivkas, R' Moshe b. Naphtali Hirsch Sofer, author of *Be'er Hagolah* (c.1590-1671) [Vilna]  
 Rokei'ach, R' Elazar b. Yehuda b. Klonimus (1160-1237) [Worms]  
 Rokei'ach, R' Yehoshua b. Shalom (1825-1894) [second Rebbe of Belz]  
 Rokei'ach, R' Yissachar Dov Ber b. Yehoshua (1854-1926) [third Rebbe of Belz]

Rosenboim (see Litch-Rosenbaum)  
 Rosenheim, Moreinu Yakov (1871-1965) [Frankfurt]  
 Rosh, R' Asher b. Yechiel (1250-1328) [Germany-Toledo] (son of the *Tur*  
 and student of the Maharam of Rothenburg)  
 Rothenburg-Ziskind, R' Mordechai b. Moshe, the "Maharam Ziskind"  
 (c.1670) [Wietzenhausen-Horodna-Lublin]  
 Rothenburg-Ziskind, R' Moshe b. Mordechai, the "Maharam Ziskind-  
 Rothenburg" (-1712) [Brist-Tiktin-Hamburg]  
 Safrin, R' Yitzchak Eizik Yehuda Yechiel b. Alexander Sender (1806-  
 1874) [Komarna]  
 Sagari, R' Avraham [Kasli קאַסלי, Italy]  
 Sagari, R' Nesanel b. Aharon, author of *Afar Yakov* (-1691) [Italy]  
 Salanter (see Lipkin-Salanter)  
 Schneur Zalman b. Baruch, R', the Ba'al HaTanya (1745-1812) [Liadi]  
 Schneurson, R' Shalom Ber, the "Rashab" (1861-1920) [Rebbe of  
 Lubavitch]  
 Schotten-Katz, R' Shmuel b. Yosef Yousep, the "Maharshashach" (1644-  
 1719) [Frankfurt]  
 Sefer Chassidim (see Yehuda Hachassid)  
 Sefer Hachaim (see Leowy, R' Chaim)  
 Segal Mezeritch, R' Shmuel b. David, author of *Nachalas Shiv'a* (1625-  
 1681) [Halberstadt-Bamburg]  
 Segal, R' David b. Shmuel halevi, author of the *Taz (Turei Zahav)* (1586-  
 1667) [Posen-Lemberg] (son-in-law of the Bach)  
 Segal-Landau, R' Yehuda Yudel (-1839) [Ostroh] (grandson of the *Noda  
 Bihudah*)  
 Semag, R' Moshe b. Yakov MiKutzi, author of *Sefer Mitzvos Gadol*  
 (1198-1274) [Coucy, France]  
 Sha'agas Aryeh, R' Aryeh Leib b. Asher Ginsburg (1695-1785) [Minsk-  
 Metz]  
 Sha'ar Ephraim (see Ephraim b. Yakov)  
 Sha'arei Dura, R' Yitzchak b. Meir halevi [Düren, on the Rur] (student of  
 the Maharam of Rothenburg)  
 Shalom Shachna, R' (c.1495-1559) [Lublin] (father-in-law of the Rama  
 and great-grandson of the Maharash Neustadt)  
 Shamash, R' Yosef Yousep b. Naphtali Hertz halevi Mantzepach, author  
 of *Minhagim of Worms* (1604-1678) [Fulda-Worms]  
 Shapiro, R' Chaim Elazar b. Tzvi Hirsch, author of *Minchas Elazar* (1872-  
 1937) [Rebbe of Munkatch]  
 Shapiro, R' Dov Berish (19th cent.) (son of R' Eizelle Charif)

Shapiro, R' Eliahu b. Binyamin Wolf, author of *Elijah Rabbah* (1660-1712) [Prague]

Shapiro, R' Yehoshua Eizik b. Yechiel, R' Eizelle Charif (1801-1872) [Slonim] He was born in Glubki, near Vilna.

Shapiro, R' Yehuda Meir, author of *Or Hameir* (1887-1933) [Galina-Sunik-Pietrikov-Lublin] (founder of Yeshivah Chochmei Lublin)

Shav Yakov (see Papris)

Shemesh Tzedakah, R' Shimshom b. Yehoshua Moshe Morpurgo (1682-1740) [Morpurgo-Ancona] (son-in-law of R' Yosef Fiammetta)

Shibolei Haleket (see Tzidyiah Harophei)

Shimon bar Yochai, R' (second cent.) [Land of Israel] He was a third generation post-Churban Tanna, a student of R' Akiva, and alleged author of the *Zohar*, *Mechilta*, and *Sifre*.

Shimon Hagadol b. Yitzchak Hachassid, Rabbeinu (born 950) [Mainz-Frankfurt] (poet)

Shimshon b. Tzaddok, R' (c.1280) [Germany] (student of the Maharam of Rothenburg)

Shinova (see Halberstam, R' Yechezkel)

Shlah (see Horowitz, R' Yeshaya)

Shlomo b. Shimshon, R', of Germeisa (-1096) [Worms]

Shlomo b. Yehuda ibn Gabirol (1021-1058) [Spain]

Shlomo bar Matzliach, R' (contemporary of Rashi)

Shlomo David Min-Hazekeinim MiLukio, R' (c.1690) [Lugo, Italy]

Shmaryahu b. Moshe, R', author of *Takanta DeMoshe* (c.1760) [Halazomitz הלזומיץ, Poland]

Shmuel b. Yosef halevi Hanaggid, R' (993-1056) [Spain]

Shmuel Hachassid, R' (12th cent.) [Speyer] (father of R' Yehuda Hachassid)

Shmuel Hanasi, R' (early ninth cent.) [Babylon] (father of Abu Aharon)

Shor, R' Ephraim Zalman b. Naphtali Hirsch, author of *Tevuos Shor* (-1633) [Lublin] (son-in-law of R' Shaul Wahl)

Shor, R' Yakov b. Elisha Yitzchak, author of *Divrei Yakov* (1853-1924) [Kitov]

Shrira Gaon b. Chanina Gaon, Rav (906-1006) [Pumbedisa] (appointed 967, father of Rav Hai Gaon)

Shulchan Aruch (see Karo)

Siddur Da'as Kedoshim (see Wahrman)

Siddur Da'as Kedoshim (see Wahrman)

Sirkish, R' Yoel b. Shmuel Yaffa, author of the *Bayis Chadash (Bach)* (1561-1640) [Cracow] (His mother was Sirka.)



Sonnenfeld, R' Yosef Chaim b. Avraham Shlomo (1849-1932) [Jerusalem] (rabbi of Jerusalem, student of the *Ksav Sofer*)

Sofer, R' Akiva b. Simcha Bunim, author of *Da'as Sofer* (1878-1960) [Pressburg-Jerusalem] (son of the *Sheivet Sofer* and father of the *Cheishev Sofer*)

Sofer, R' Avraham Shmuel Binyamin b. Moshe, the *Ksav Sofer* (1815-1871) [Pressburg] (son of the *Chasam Sofer* and father of the *Sheivet Sofer*)

Sofer, R' Avraham Shmuel Binyamin, author of the *Cheishev Sofer* (-1962) [Pressburg-Jerusalem] (son of the *Da'as Sofer*)

Sofer, R' Moshe b. Shmuel, the *Chasam Sofer* (1763-1840) [Pressburg]

Sofer, R' Pesachia b. Yosef (-1637) [Prague-Frankfurt-Worms] (grandfather of the *Be'er Hagolah*)

Sofer, R' Shimon b. Moshe, the *Michtav Sofer* (1821-1883) [Cracow] (son of the *Chasam Sofer*)

Sofer, R' Shimon MeErloi b. Avraham Shmuel Binyamin, author of *His'orerus Teshuvah* and *Shir Ma'on* (1850-1944) [Erloi] (son of the *Ksav Sofer*)

Sofer, R' Simcha Bunim, author of *Sheivet Sofer* (1843-1906) [Pressburg] (son of the *Ksav Sofer* and father of the *Da'as Sofer*)

Sofer-Zusman, R' Mordechai Ephraim Fishel (-1843) [Budapest] (student of the *Chasam Sofer*)

Spector, R' Yakov David (brother of R' Yitzchak Elchanan)

Spector, R' Yitzchak Elchanan b. Yisrael Isser (1817-1896) [Kovno]

Stadthagen, R' Yosef, author of *Divrei Zikaron* (1640-c.1705)

Steinhart, R' Yosef, author of *Zichron Yosef* (1720-1776) [Alsace-Fürth]

Tam, R' Yakov b. David ibn Yichye, author of *Ohalei Tam* (in *Tumas Yesharim*) (1470-1542) [Salonica-Constantinople]

Tam, Rabbeinu (see Yakov b. Meir)

Tanya Rabbasi (13th cent.) [Italy] (contemporary of the *Shibolei Haleket* and the Maharam of Rothenburg)

Tashbatz Katan (see Shimshom b. Tzaddok)

Taz (see Segal, R' David)

Tefillas Yisrael (see Zaksh)

Teomim, R' Aharon b. Moshe, author of *Mateh Aharon* and *Bigdei Aharon* (-1690) [Prague-Worms-Cracow]

Teomim, R' Yosef b. Meir, author of *Pri Megadim* and *Rosh Yosef* (1727-1792) [Lemberg-Frankfurt]

Terumas Hadeshen (see Isserlen)

Tilki, R' Moshe [Levorno, Italy]

Todros b. Yitzchak, R' [Spain]  
 Toras Hakna'os (see Luria, R' Moshe)  
 Toras Nesanel (see Korban Nesanel)  
 Tosefos Yom Tov (see Yom Tov)  
 Totze'os Chaim (see Baer, R' Yitzchak Seligman)  
 Treves טרױײס, R' Naphtali Hertz (1460-1542) [Frankfurt] (kabbalist and chazzan)  
 Troyes, R' Eliezer Leizer (1493-1567) [Frankfurt]  
 Tur, R' Yakov b. Asher, "Ba'al Haturim" (1270-1343) [Toledo]  
 Tyrnau (טירנא), R' Yitzchak Eizik, author of *Sefer Haminhagim* (c.1420) [Austria-Hungary] (student of the Mahara'ak and the Maharash)  
 Tzaddok b. Yakov HaKohen, R', author of *Tzidkas Hatzadik* and *Kuntras Divrei Chalomos* (1823-1900) [Lublin]  
 Tzelusa DeAvraham (see Landau, R' Menachem)  
 Tzidyah Harophei (the doctor) b. Avraham, R', author of *Shibolei Haleket* (1210-c.1275) [Rome]  
 Tzioni, R' Menachem b. Meir, author of *Tzioni* (1340-1410) [Speyer-northern Italy] (kabbalist)  
 Tzlach (see Landau)  
 Ulif Ashkenazi, R' Gershon b. Yitzchak, author of *Avodas HaGershuni* and *Tiferes HaGershuni* (1618-1693) [Metz]  
 Ulma אולמא, R' Chaim (c.1600) [Fürth] (student of the Maharal, wrote comments on *Yosef Ometz*)  
 Vavei Ha'amudim (see Horowitz, R' Shabtai)  
 Veldler, R' Shlomo Lipman (c.1880) [Shönlanke, Prussia (Trzcianka in Polish)] (student of the *Ksav Sofer*)  
 Vidal of Toulouse, R', author of *Maggid Mishneh* (c.1390) [Toulouse, France]  
 Vikuach Mayim Chaim (see Leowy, R' Chaim)  
 Vilna Gaon (see Kramer)  
 Vital, R' Chaim b. Yosef (1543-1620) [Safed] (student of the Ari)  
 Wahrman, R' Avraham David b. Asher, author of *Siddur Da'as Kedoshim* and *Eishel Avraham* (1771-1840) [Rebbe of Butchatch]  
 Weil Ashkenazi, R' Nesanel, author of *Korban Nesanel* (1687-1764) [Karlsruhe] (father of R' Yedidia)  
 Weil, R' Yakov b. Yehuda, the "Mahariv" (-<1456) [Nuremberg-Erfurt-Augsburg] (student of the Maharil)  
 Weil, R' Yakov Yukev, author of *Toras Shabbos* (middle 19th cent.) [Karlsruhe] (great-grandson of the *Korban Nesanel*)

Weil, R' Yedidia Tiah (Tiah is short for Yedidia) (1722-1806) [Karlsruhe] (son of the *Korban Nesanel*)

Weinberg, R' Yechiel Yakov b. Moshe, author of *Seridei Eish* (1884-1966) [Slabodka-Berlin-Montreux]

Weisblum, R' Elimelech b. Elazar Lipman, author of *No'am Elimelech* (1717-1786) [Lizhensk]

Wieder, R' Naphtali, author of *Hitgabshut Nusach Hatefillah Bemizrach Ubema'arav*

Wohlgemut R' Yosef (1867-1942)

Wolbe, R' Shlomo, author of *Alei Shur* (1914-2005 [16 Nissan]) [Berlin-Jerusalem]

Wormser, R' Aharon, author of *Me'orei Or* (1754-1836) [Metz] (student of the *Sha'agas Aryeh*)

Wormser, R' Yitzchak Aryeh Zeckle Leib, the "Ba'al Sheim of Michelstadt" (1768-1847) [Manheim-Michelstadt-Ehrfelden]

Ya'avetz (see Emden)

Yad Halevi (see Bamberger, R' Yitzchak)

Yadler, R' Ben Tzion b. Yitzchak Zev (1872-1962) [Jerusalem] (a maggid)

Yadler, R' Yitzchak Zev, author of *Tipheres Tzion* (19th cent.) [Lithuania-Jerusalem] (father of R' Ben Tzion)

Yaffa, R' Mordechai b. Avraham, the *Levush* (1530-1612) [Prague-Posen]

Yakar (see David, Yakov, and Yehuda)

Yakov b. Meir, Rabbeinu Tam (1100-1171) [Ramerupt רומיר, France] (a Tosafist)

Yakov b. Yakar, R' (-1064) [Mainz-Worms] (Rashi's teacher)

Yakov Chazan, R', author of *Eitz Chaim*, published 1287 [Londerz (London)]

Yakov MiLisa (see Lorbeerbaum)

Yakov Yosef b. Tzvi Hirsch HaKohen, R', the *Toldos Yakov Yosef* (-1782) [Polnoye] (student of the Ba'al Sheim Tov)

Yakovson, R' Binyamin Zev, author of *Divrei Ben Shlomo* (1894-1973) [Copenhagen-Jerusalem]

Yechiel b. Asher, R' (1267-1314) (son of the Rosh)

Yefeh Nof (see Mizei)

Yehuda b. Asher, R' (1270-1349) [Toledo] (son of the Rosh)

Yehuda b. Moshe, R' (see Albutini)

Yehuda b. Yakar, R' (c.1410) [Provence-Spain] (the Ramban's teacher)

Yehuda Hachassid, R', b. Shmuel, author of *Sefer Chassidim* (c.1150-1217) [Mainz]

Yehuda Halevi, R', author of the *Khuzari* (1075-1141) [Granada] (student of the Rif)  
 Yent, R' Zalman, author of Italian minhagim (15th cent.) [Tervies, Italy]  
 Yisrael b. Eliezer, R', the Ba'al Sheim Tov (c.1698-1760) [Mezhebuzh] (married Chana, daughter of R' Ephraim of Brody)  
 Yisrael b. Shmuel MiShklov, R', author of *Pe'as Hashulchan* (c.1770-1839) [Safed] (student of the Vilna Gaon)  
 Yisrael di Koriel, R' (16th cent.) [Safed]  
 Yitzchak b. Shimon, R' (early) [Spain]  
 Yitzchak b. Shmuel, the Ri Hazaken, (-1241) [Dampierre] (a Tosafist)  
 Yitzchak b. Yehuda, R', of Mainz (c.1060) [Luther-Mainz] (Rashi's teacher)  
 Yitzchak b. Yosef HaYisraeli, R', author of *Yesod Olam* (early 14th cent.) [Toledo] (student of the Rosh)  
 Yitzchak Halevi, R' (late 11th cent.) [Worms] (Rashi's teacher)  
 Yoel, R' (late 12th cent.) [Mainz] (son-in-law of Raavan (1090-1170) and father of Raavia (1140-1220))  
 Yom Tov Lipman b. Nasan halevi Heller, R', author of *Tosefos Yom Tov* (1579-1654) [Bavaria-Prague-Cracow] (student of the Maharal)  
 Yonah b. Avraham, Rabbeinu (1210-1263) [Gerona]  
 Yosef ibn Phallath פלאח (c.1170) (mentioned in Rashi's *Sefer Hapardeis*)  
 Yosef ibn Tzaddik, R', author of *Zeicher Tzaddik* (c.1075-1149) [Arevalo-Cordoba] (student of the Ritz Ghiyyas)  
 Yosef Ma'on (late first century) [Jerusalem-Rome]  
 Yosef Ometz (see Nördlingen)  
 Zacklikover, R' Yehuda Leib, author of *Likutei Maharil* (-1826) [Zacklikov]  
 Zaksh, R' Yechiel Michel, author of *Tefillas Yisrael* (19th cent.) [Berlin]  
 Zalichover, R' Yehuda Leib b. Moshe, author of *Shirei Yehuda*, published 1697 in Amsterdam [Altona-Hamburg-Zalichov] He was a *chazzan* and a *sofer*.  
 Zalkover (see Auerbach-Zalkover)  
 Zalman, R', of Shotigvera [St. Goar, Rhineland] (student of the Maharil)  
 Zerachia b. Yitzchak halevi Gerondi, Rabbeinu, the *Ba'al Hama'or* (c.1125->1186) [Girona-Provence-Lunel]