***Halakhot* of the *Seder*: *Korekh***

**By Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon**

Translated by Rabbi Dr. Shmuel Himelstein

**The reason for the “sandwich”**

The Gemara in *Pesachim* (115a) brings a dispute of *tanna’im* about the question of how the observance of eating *matza* and *maror* took place when the Temple still stood. According to the Sages, one must eat the *matza* by itself and the *maror* by itself, whereas Hillel would wrap the *matza* and the *maror* and eat them together, as the verse states, “They shall eat it with *matzot* and bitter herbs” (*Bemidbar* 9:11).[[1]](#footnote-1) According to the Rambam (*Hilkhot Chametz u-Matza* 8:6-7), Hillel would wrap only the *matza* and the *maror*, whereas according to Rashi and the Rashbam (ibid.) Hillel would wrap the *matza* and the *maror* with the Pesach sacrifice and eat them together.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**According to Hillel, would failure to eat the items together mean that one has not fulfilled the commandment?**

The *Rishonim* differ as to whether failure to eat the different components together means that one has not performed the commandment according to Hillel.

The Rashbam (ibid.), Ramban (*Milchemet Hashem*, 25, in the Rif’s pagination) and Rav Yehonatan of Lunil (ibid.) are of the opinion that according to Hillel, a failure to eat the components together means that one has not fulfilled his obligation, and thus one who eats *matza*, *maror*, and the Pesach sacrifice separately has not fulfilled his obligation.

On the other hand, according to *Tosafot* (s.v. *ella amar*), “Ideally one should wrap them together, but if he did not do so, he has still fulfilled his obligation.” That is also the view of the *Ba’al ha-Ma’or* (25a, in the Rif’s pagination), that even according to Hillel, a person who eats the components separately has fulfilled his obligation.

**According to the Sages, if one eats the components together, has he nevertheless fulfilled his obligation?**

The *Rishonim* also differ as to what the Sages’ position is if a person ate *matza* and *maror* together.

Rashbam (ibid., s.v. *ve-hashta*) understood that Rabbi Yochanan’s opinion in the Gemara there is that if the *matza* and *maror* are eaten together, according to the Sages one has not fulfilled his obligation, and that is also the view of the Me’iri and *Ba’al ha-Ma’or* (ibid.).

*On the other hand,* the Rashbam understood that Rav Ashi’s view there is that according to the Sages it does not make a difference, and one can fulfill the obligations of *matza* and *maror* whether eating them together or separately. That is the view of the Ramban (*Milchemet Hashem*, there), even regarding Rabbi Yochanan’s understanding.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Explanation of our custom today**

The Gemara rules that:

Now that the law was not determined as either according to Hillel or the Sages, one recites [the] “*al akhilat matza*” [blessing] and eats it [the *matza*], then recites [the] “*al akhilat maror”* [blessing] and eats it [the *maror*], and then eats *matza* together with Romaine lettuce without a blessing - a remembrance of the Temple practice according to Hillel.

In other words, as there was no decision made regarding this dispute, one eats *matza* by itself, *maror* by itself, and then *matza* together with *maror*. Why do we act that way?

First, we should note, that in our times even Hillel would agree that in order to fulfill the commandment of eating *matza*, one must eat it by itself. The reason for this is explained in the Gemara (ibid.) that in our times eating *matza* is a Torah commandment, whereas eating *maror* is by rabbinic decree, and one is not to mix a Torah commandment with a rabbinic decree, for the taste of the rabbinic decree would nullify the taste of the Torah commandment.

Thus, according to all views, one must eat a *ke-zayit* (olive’s bulk) of *matza* by itself. The dispute between Hillel and the Sages only affects what is done thereafter:

According to the Sages, after eating the *matza* one must eat a *ke-zayit* of *maror* by itself, and the *maror* is not to be eaten with the *matza*. It is true that we saw *Rishonim* who are of the opinion that according to the Sages one may eat the *maror* along with the *matza*, but even according to this view that would only be true when the Temple stood, when a person could fulfill the two commandments together. Nowadays, when one must eat the *ke-zayit* of *matza* by itself, one may not eat the *matza* along with the *maror*. This is because once one has eaten *matza*, eating more *matza* is optional but not required, and one cannot mix the eating of *maror*, which is required by rabbinic decree, with the eating of *matza*, which is now an optional act (just as one does not mix an eating requirement by Torah law with one which is only by rabbinic decree). Therefore, had we ruled according to the Sages, we would say that the *matza* and the *maror* must be eaten separately.

On the other hand, according to Hillel, as ideally the commandment is to eat the *matza* together with the *maror*, thus, even though we must eat the *matza* by itself nowadays, we still have the obligation to make a remembrance of the Temple practice and to eat the two together, thereby fulfilling the commandment to eat *maror*. According to Hillel, we do not say that after one has eaten the *matza*, the later eating of *matza* will be optional and will nullify the taste of the *maror* in the “sandwich,” because eating the *maror* is by rabbinic decree as is the eating of *matza* along with the *maror*, since eating the two together serves as a remembrance of the Temple practice. Thus we have here two rabbinic decrees, where one does not nullify the other. Therefore, if we had ruled in accordance with Hillel, we should have said that one is to eat a *ke-zayit* of *matza* and afterwards to eat a *ke-zayit* of *maror* along with a *ke-zayit* of *matza* (all of this is according to *Tosafot* ibid., s.v. *ella*; Rosh, 27; Ran, 25a in the Rif’s pagination; and others).

Now, given that the Gemara did not reach any decision, we follow both views:

a) We start by eating a *ke-zayit* of *matza* (which is required by both the Sages and Hillel, because eating *matza* is required by Torah law, and one cannot mix it with *maror*, which is only is rabbinic ordinance).

b) Afterwards, we eat a *ke-zayit* of *maror* (in accordance with the view of the Sages, that one does not mix the eating of *maror*, which is a rabbinic ordinance, with *matza*, which at that point is only optional).

c) Finally, we eat *matza* together with *maror* (according to Hillel, who ruled that at the outset that is the way to fulfill the eating of *maror*, as was done in the Temple).

As mentioned, according to Hillel it would be appropriate in our times to eat a *ke-zayit* of *matza*, and immediately afterwards eat the *korekh*. However, out of concern for the view of the Sages, we eat the *ke-zayit* of *maror* separately before the *korekh*. In light of our custom, one can ask whether, according to Hillel, one fulfills the commandment of *maror* when eating the *maror* or when eating the *korekh.* This question would seem to depend on the first dispute we mentioned above, whether, after the fact, according to Hillel one can fulfill the requirement to eat *maror* by itself without *matza*. If, after the fact, one has already fulfilled the requirement by eating the *maror* by itself, that would mean that by the time one gets to *korekh*, one has already fulfilled the commandment, and eating the *korekh* at that time is merely a remembrance of the Temple practice, and there is no additional fulfillment of *maror* consumption. However, if according to Hillel one does not fulfill the ordinance of eating *maror* by itself, the eating of the *korekh* fulfills the rabbinic decree of *maror*. This latter approach is suggested by a number of *Acharonim* (Vilna Gaon, *Bei’ur ha-Gra* 475:1; s.v. *u-mi’she’beirekh*; *Peri Chadash*, ibid., s.v. *ve-khorekhah*, and others), namely that the *korekh* is not only a remembrance of the Temple practice, but is the main element of fulfilling the ordinance (by rabbinic decree) according to Hillel.

This question, though, depends on another question. As cited above, there is a dispute among *Rishonim* if Hillel wrapped only the *matza* and *maror* together, or whether he added these to the Pesach sacrifice. If Hillel also included the Pesach sacrifice, then, in our times, where there is no Pesach sacrifice, the entire wrapping of the items together loses its real significance.[[4]](#footnote-4) Thus one can say that even if at the time of the Temple there was an obligation to combine the two, and eating *maror* by itself would have been of no value according to Hillel, nowadays, where there is no Pesach sacrifice, the commandment of eating *maror,* which is only by rabbinic decree, need not require be combined with *matza*, and it is possible to fulfill one’s obligation by eating the *maror* alone even according to Hillel. It follows that as we have the custom of eating *maror* by itself out of concern for the view of the Sages, we are thereby fulfilling our obligation of eating *maror* even according to Hillel, and when we eat the two together it is only a remembrance of the Temple practice, but not a fulfillment of the obligation to eat *maror*. That is what the *Bach* (475, s.v. *u-ma she-katav ve’achar kakh noteil*) wrote, that nowadays where we have no Pesach sacrifice one is unable to fulfill the *korekh* properly, and that is why we fulfill the obligation to eat *maror* by eating it by itself, and the *korekh* is only as a remembrance. That is also the view of the Maharal *(Gevurot Hashem*, 63), and that is the view accepted by the *Acharonim*.

**Reciting “****A Remembrance of the Temple practice according to Hillel”**

The *Shulchan Arukh* (475:1) writes:

Once he recited the blessing on the *matza* he should not be distracted by anything which is not part of the meal until he eats this combination, so that the blessing of *matza* and that of *maror* will apply to this combination as well.

In other words, one should not speak between starting to eat the *matza* until finishing *korekh* (except for those matters which pertain to the eating). The source of this is the *Tur* (475) in the name of the *Sefer ha-Manhig* (Laws of Pesach, 84). They explain that since according to Hillel it is a commandment to eat *matza* and *maror* together, when reciting the blessings of *matza* and of *maror* one must keep in mind to include *korekh* in those blessings.

This question is also dependent on the dispute among *Acharonim* mentioned above. If *korekh* is the main aspect of eating *maror* according to Hillel, it is clear that one may not interrupt with conversation between eating the *maror* and eating the *korekh*, for that would be an interruption between the blessing and the performance of the commandment. That was also what the Vilna Gaon and *Peri Chadash* wrote, as quoted above.[[5]](#footnote-5) However, if *korekh* is only as a remembrance of the Temple practice, it is only a preferred practice that one should not speak between the blessing and *korekh*, just as, in the view of Hillel, at the time of the Temple one was forbidden to speak between the blessing and the *korekh*, but that is not required by law. That indeed emerges from the words of the *Manhig* and of the *Tur*, who write that this is “most preferable,” as the *Bach* (475, s.v. *u-ma she-katav ve-khatav od),* based on his view above, wrote.

The *Shulchan Arukh* (475:1) added:

...Afterwards he takes the third *matza* and breaks it and wraps it with the *maror*... and he says: A remembrance of the Temple practice according to Hillel and eats it while leaning.

The *Bei’ur Halakha* (s.v. *ve’omair)* expressed surprised regarding this: after all, the *Shulchan Arukh* himself writes that one is not to interrupt himself between the blessing of the *matza* and *korekh*, so how can one say, “A remembrance...”? He rejects the solution that this statement is part of the meal and is therefore not considered to be an interruption (evidently because there is no instruction being given here which practically serves the needs of the meal, but is rather providing background for the consumption). The *Bei’ur Halakha* gives two answers:

a) It is possible that the sequence which the *Shulchan Arukh* wrote here was not precise, and he meant that one must eat the *korekh* and then make this declaration. However this answer is difficult given the language of the *Shulchan Arukh*: “He says ‘A remembrance of the Temple practice according to Hillel,’ and then eats it.”

b) One can emend the language in the *Shulchan Arukh* and delete the words “he says.” According to this, what *Shulchan Arukh* means is that one eats the *korekh* as appears in the Gemara and the *poskim*, but without making any statement.

In the end, the *Bei’ur Halakha* leaves the question unanswered.

One might be able to understand the *Shulchan Arukh* based on the view of the *Bach* which we saw above, that the entire eating of *korekh* is only as a remembrance of the Temple practice, even according to Hillel. According to this view, when one recites the blessings on *matza* and *maror*, there is no reason to have *korekh* in mind, but at the outset one tries not to interrupt between them, so that the “remembrance” will be fulfilled in a true way. As this is only an enhancement but not required by law, one can say “A remembrance of the Temple practice according to Hillel,” and explain the significance of the combination, even though this is an interruption.[[6]](#footnote-6)

One can explain this matter slightly differently. On the night of the *seder* we attempt to emulate the way the *seder* was celebrated in Temple times, as if the Temple still stood. As we saw, according to the *Bach* and most *Acharonim*, in our times, Hillel, too, would agree that there is no obligation to eat *matza* together with *maror*, so why do we eat *korekh*?

The answer is that we try to have the entire *seder* as a “remembrance of the Temple,” and we therefore make a point of eating the *korekh,* as if the Temple still stood. It follows that our declaration is not merely symbolic. The declaration is part of the obligation of *korekh*. That declaration imparts all the significance to the *korekh* in our time! It announces: we are now eating *korekh*, because we want to act as if the Temple still stands! (It is obvious that even without this declaration we have fulfilled the obligation of *korekh*, but the declaration is an integral part of the fulfillment of the obligation, and is not merely a symbolic and external statement.) This also emerges from the words of the *Bach* (475, s.v. *u-ma she-katav ve-khatav od*), who wrote that one should not speak until after the *korekh* even though it is only a remembrance, for we are acting “as if the Temple still stood”:

If so, as a matter of course, we act in regard to the blessing as if the Temple still stood, and one is not to divert his attention until he performs the *korekh* as Hillel ruled, so that the blessing of *matza* and *maror* will apply to the *korekh*.

*Bei’ur Halakha* wrote that reciting “A remembrance of the Temple practice according to Hillel” is not mentioned by any rabbinic decisor except for *Shulchan Arukh*, but in reality it is mentioned by a number of *poskim*: *Hilkhot Pesach de-Rabbi Shmuel mi-Palaiza* (one of the Tosafists, p. 138), the *Darkei Moshe* (475:3) in the name of the Maharil, and others. And indeed the custom today is to say, “A remembrance of the Temple practice according to Hillel,” before eating the *korekh* (*Kitzur Shulchan Arukh*, 119:7; *Shulchan Arukh ha-Rav* , 475:18), and others).[[7]](#footnote-7)

**The way to combine the two**

According to Rabbeinu Chananel (*Pesachim* 115a), “one wraps the *maror* on the *matza*,” or, in other words, the *matza* is wrapped by *maror*. And that is what *Sefer ha-Chinukh* (Commandment 21) wrote.[[8]](#footnote-8)

However, the custom is to place the *maror* between pieces of *matza*, and that is what *Arukh ha-Shulchan* (475:7) and *Kitzur Shulchan Arukh* (119:7) wrote. In any event, both are equally valid (*Haggadat Mo’adim u-Zemanim*, p. 107).

*Mishnat Ya’akov* (475) explained that the *Rishonim* would use Romaine lettuce for *maror*, and they were therefore able to wrap the *matza* with *maror*, but in Europe they would use horseradish, and it is impossible to wrap *matza* with it, and that is why they placed the *maror* between the *matza*.

In reality, even though it might be appropriate to revert to the practices of the *Rishonim* and to wrap the *matza* with *maror*, in any event, since it is not essential for the fulfillment, it is the accepted practice to place the *maror* between the *matza*. In this way, it is possible to say that one *matza* is meant to commemorate the *matza* eaten with the Pesach sacrifice, and the second *matza* to commemorate the Pesach sacrifice itself (*Vayaged Moshe*, 26:7).

**Dipping in *charoset***

According to the Ra’avya (quoted in *Tur*, 475) and Rabbeinu Yona (*Seder Leil Pesach*), it is not customary to dip the *maror* of *korekh* in *charoset,* as one has already fulfilled the requirement of dipping, and as the *charoset* is only optional, it will annul the requirement of eating *matza* with *maror* according to Hillel. Similarly, there is no need to offset the pungent taste of the *maror* (one of the reasons given for dipping the *maror* in *charoset)*, as the *matza* annuls this taste.

However, according to Rashi, the Rosh (brought by the *Tur* ibid.), the *Or Zaru’a* (II:256) and others, the custom is to dip the *korekh* in *charoset* as well, because that was what Hillel did (because he would fulfill the obligation of *maror* with *korekh*)*,* and we act as Hillel did in fulfilling *korekh* (*Hagahot Maimoniyot*, 8:7).

In practice, the *Shulchan Arukh* (475:1) wrote that one dips the *korekh* in *charoset*. The Rema (ibid.) noted that there are those who do not dip, while the *Mishna Berura* (subsection 19) wrote that the custom is to dip.

**Shaking off the *charoset***

Regarding *maror*, the *Shulchan Arukh* (ibid.) wrote that one shakes off the *charoset*, whereas in regard to *korekh*, he did not write that one shakes it off, implying that there is no need to do so for *korekh*. This is indeed what the *Beit Yosef* (ibid., s.v. *ve-khen katav*) cited in the name of the *Agur* from the Maharil. However, the *Mishna Berura* (subsection 17) wrote in the name of the *Ma’amar Mordekhai* that one must shake off the *charoset* for *korekh* as well. In any event, whoever wants to eat the *korekh* without shaking off the *charoset* first may do so (see *Pesach Me’ubban,* 308*; Kaf ha-Chaim*, 475:32).

**The *maror* in the *korekh***

**The quantity of *maror***

The *Sha’agat Arye* (100) wrote that according to the Rosh, who states that the need for a *ke-zayit* of *maror* is only because of the blessing, there is no need for a *ke-zayit* for *korekh*, and the *Yeshu’ot Ya’akov* wrote the same.

In the final analysis, the *Sha’agat Arye* disagreed with the Rosh, and wrote that one is to eat a *ke-zayit* for *korekh* as well, and that is the ruling of the *Mishna Berura* (475:16).

The amount of a *ke-zayit* for rabbinic decrees is 27 cubic centimeters (1.65 cubic inches). However, according to the letter of the law one may use a smaller quantity for the *ke-zayit* of *korekh*, namely 19 or even 17 cubic centimeters (just over a cubic inch) - namely, a medium or small leaf of lettuce, because this is only a remembrance of the Temple practice, and many *poskim* were lenient in the size of *maror* (including the *Chazon Ish* and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach).

One should eat the *korekh* continuously (within four minutes, but there is no need to time it with a watch).

**The type of *maror***

There are those who wrote that, according to the Ari z”l, it is preferable to use Romaine lettuce for *maror* and horseradish for *korekh*. The *Magen Avraham* (473:12) wrote that the custom is to use the leaves of Romaine lettuce for *maror* and the stalks of Romaine lettuce for *korekh*.

The *Taz* (ibid., subsection 5), though, wrote that “there is no rhyme nor reason” for this differentiation, and those who do so “do not know their right from their left.” There are those who wrote that the “origin of this is that the *seder* plate of the Ari z”l had one place for “*maror*” and another for “*chazeret,*” but he did not mean that there are different things.

In practice, there is no need to differentiate between the vegetable to be used for *maror* and that to be used for *korekh*, however every person may do as he wishes, as any of these is acceptable (and according to *Chazon Ish* there is even an advantage in eating horseradish, and if that is so, it is possibly better, according to him, for the *maror*. And there are those whose custom is to eat Romaine lettuce for *korekh*, but to add a little horseradish).

**Leaning**

It is better to lean when eating the *korekh*, for Hillel certainly ate it while leaning, given that, according to him, this is the obligatory eating of *matza*. If one did not lean, he has nevertheless fulfilled his obligation (*Peri Chadash*, 475:1; *Shulchan Arukh ha-Rav*, 475:20).

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1. According to the Sages, it would have been enough if the Torah had simply said for “they shall eat it” - *yokhelu*. The fact that the Torah states *yokheluhu* teaches us that each item can be eaten alone (Gemara and Rashbam ibid.). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Because of this dispute, there are various opinions as to what should be recited in the haggada: according to the *Taz* (475:9), one should say: “so did Hillel at the time that the Temple stood: he would wrap the Pesach sacrifice, *matza* and *maror* ...” However, the accepted version of the text is, “he would wrap *matza* and *maror*...” (*Mishna Berura* ibid., subsection 21). The *Chok Yaakov* (ibid., 13) explains that this latter version is based on two reasons: a) According to the Rambam, Hillel would only wrap the *matza* and *maror* together. b) As we do not eat the Pesach sacrifice nowadays, the text recited should be in keeping with what we are doing, and there is a concern that if the alternate version is recited, some might eat roasted meat along with *matza* and *maror*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Tosafot* (ibid. s.v. *ella*) understood that Rabbi Yochanan’s view is that at the outset one must wrap the *matza* and *maror* together, even according to the Sages, but if one does not do so he has nevertheless fulfilled his obligation. This view requires study. See the Maharshathere. The *Peri Megadim* (*Mishbetzot Zahav*, 475:7) writes that even according to *Tosafot* the Sages would prefer that one eat the two separately, while if one nevertheless ate them together he still fulfilled his obligations. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik claimed (*Harerei Kedem*, II:93) that even if Hillel combined only *matza* and *maror*, that is the way one is to eat the Pesach sacrifice (“unleavened cakes, with bitter herbs they shall eat it”), and therefore, where there is no Pesach sacrifice there is no meaning to the *korekh* as such, and it is only meant as a remembrance of the Temple practice. One can also add that that in any event, since the person has eaten an *ke-zayit* of *matza* by itself, the combining has lost its significance for another reason, because the commandment might be specifically to combine the *matza* and the *maror*, and as the person has already fulfilled the commandment of *matza*, there is no reason to combine the *maror* specifically with “the taste of *matza*” unrelated to the fulfillment of the commandment. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. It is true that the main prohibition against talking is between the blessing over *maror* and the *korekh*, whereas there is technically no prohibition to speak between the *matza* and *maror* blessings. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik (brought in *Harerei Kedem*, II:93) added that as the *korekh* is not the fulfillment of the commandment of *maror* but is only a remembrance of the Temple practice, one can say that it has nothing to do with the blessings of *matza* and *maror,* but is an independent display of “there is none to seek Zion,” i.e., the remembrance of the Temple, and thus there is no problem whatsoever in interrupting oneself by speaking before *korekh*. He adds, however, that in practice Rav Chaim of Brisk made a point of not interrupting by speaking until after eating the *afikoman* (in accordance with the view of the *Shela*), because the *afikoman* is part of the commandment of *matza*, “so that one should remain with the taste of *matza* in his mouth.” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See also *Chazon Ovadya*, I:41, that this is the view of the *Acharonim*, and that is the custom. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. There are those who are of the opinion that the *maror* is to be placed on the *matza*, for the Gemara states that “he wraps *matza* and *maror*,” and not “he wraps the *matza* with *maror*,” or “he wraps the *maror* with *matza*” (*Haggadat Teiman im Peirush Eitz Chaim; Haggadat Mo’adim u-Zemanim*, p. 107). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)