

KITZUR HILCHOS PESACH

PREPARATIONS FOR PESACH



**Summary of contemporary Halachos of preparing for Pesach
based on Shulchan Aruch, Mishna Brurah, Chayei Adam,
and the Psak Halacha of Rabbi Bezalel Rudinsky.**

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Shloshim Yom Kodem HaChag

- The main purpose of *Shloshim Yom Kodem HaChag* is to become acquainted with the *Halachos* of *Yom Tov*. It is therefore proper to have a *Seder Limud* of the *Halachos* during this time.
- It is a great *Mitzva* to provide poor people with *Ma'os Chittim* to enable them to purchase *Yom Tov* provisions. Today this is best accomplished by providing them with money so they can buy their *Yom Tov* needs.
- When buying or referring to meat, there is a problem calling it “Meat for Pesach,” since we don’t have a *Korban Pesach* today, and want to avoid the possibility of meat sounding like it is for a *Korban*. One should rather call it “meat for *Yom Tov*.”

General Kashering Concepts

- Anything that is being *Kashered* must be thoroughly cleaned prior to *Kashering*.
- An item which will be *Kashered* cannot be used with heat within 24 hours of *Kashering*.
- *Hagala* only suffices for cooking utensils used for cooking; items used on the fire require *Libun*.
- We are generally *Machmir* to have designated pots, cutlery, and the like for Pesach use only, due to their widespread availability as well as the complicated nature in *Kashering* them.
- If one does need to *Kasher* utensils, it is preferable use a *Kashering* service, due to the many technicalities involved.

Ovens and Cooking Appliances

- Self-cleaning ovens can be *Kashered* by running the oven through the self-clean cycle.
- Non self-cleaning ovens can be *Kashered* by fully cleaning the insides, preferably with Easy-Off, and then running the oven on the highest cycle for an hour. Those who are *Machmir* not to *Kasher* such ovens as per R’ Moshe Feinstein should line the surfaces with foil.
- Stove grates can be *Kashered* by placing them inside a self-cleaning oven, or by cleaning them and putting the fire on the highest setting until they are red hot. The latter process should not take more than 20 minutes.
- Enamel stovetops cannot be *Kashered*, and should therefore be covered with foil.
- Oven knobs should be perfectly cleaned or covered. Oven hoods and exhaust fans do not require *Kashering*, though they should be thoroughly cleaned.
- Microwaves are generally used with open food throughout the year, and therefore should not be *Kashered* for Pesach due to possible splatter on the walls.
- If a microwave was only used with covered food during the year, it can be *Kashered* by heating up water until it produces steam that fills the entire microwave. Trays need to be removed or covered.
- Warming drawers cannot be *Kashered*, and should only be used when designated for Pesach.

Hagalah

- Metal sinks can be *Kashered* through *Hagalah* by pouring boiling water over the entire surface.
- Porcelain sinks cannot be *Kashered*; inserts are recommended.
- Faucets do not need to be *Kashered*, they just need to be cleaned.
- Granite, marble, and stainless steel countertops can be *Kashered* through *Hagalah* by pouring boiling water over the entire surface.
- When doing *Hagalah*, the water needs to be boiling, and the pouring cannot have any interruption in the stream.
- *Hagalah* on sinks and countertops requires that every area have direct contact with the poured water; contact through water that spreads afterwards does not suffice.
- *Hagalah* on sinks and countertops requires that they not be used with hot within 24 hours. Additionally, the pot or kettle being used for pouring needs to be Kosher for Pesach, or not used within 24 hours prior to *Kashering*.
- There is a debate among *Poskim* whether Formica or quartz composite (i.e. Silestone) can be *Kashered*. Rabbi Rudinsky and many *Kashrus* organizations feel they cannot be *Kashered*, and should therefore be covered.
- Teflon pots and pans, and utensils with any plastic, are generally considered non-*Kasherable*.
- A steamer for *Hagalah* may only be used when the specifics are discussed with a *Rav*.
- Glassware may not be *Kashered* according to *Ashkenazic* custom.
- Items generally used for cold such as silver *Bechers* may be used with a thorough cleaning. However, the prevalent custom is to do *Hagala* on *Bechers*.
- Tablecloths washed in a washing machine can be used on Pesach.

General Kitchen Guidelines

- Refrigerator and freezer shelves can be scrubbed clean and need not be lined, though the prevalent custom is to line the shelves.
- Refrigerator handles, oven handles, and the like do not need to be covered, but should be thoroughly cleaned.
- Refrigerator gaskets do not need to be cleaned.
- Non-*Kasherable* surfaces that have contact with food during the year need to be covered.
- Appliances that generally don't have direct contact with food and are not used for anything hot, such as can openers and corkscrews can be used on Pesach if they are thoroughly cleaned.
- Cabinets that are going to be used to store food or items used with food on Pesach should be cleaned and lined.
- Cold water coolers need to be thoroughly cleaned, after which they may be used on Pesach.
- Hot water coolers and urns may be used if they are thoroughly cleaned and were not used for *Chametz* during the year.
- Hot water coolers used for *Chametz* (i.e. oatmeal) during the year should be avoided on Pesach.
- Paper goods and styrofoam cups should preferably be purchased prior to Pesach, since they may have minute starch residue.

Medications, Cosmetics, and Other Products

- Medications in tablet form without any flavor do not present any problem regarding *Chametz*. However, it is best to try to get a brand that is approved for Pesach when possible.
- Liquid and chewable medications that are not on an approved list may contain *Chametz*, and should only be used under the direction of a doctor and *Rav*. (Do not discontinue use of any medication without professional consultation.)
- *Kitniyos* ingredients do not present a problem regarding medication.
- Vitamins and supplements require a valid Pesach certification.
- In general, cosmetics do not present any problem regarding Pesach. An exception is lipstick, which should be on an approved Pesach list. An approved lipstick that was used during the year should have the top layer removed for Pesach use.
- Shampoos, soaps, moisturizers, and deodorants are not a problem to own or use on Pesach.
- Perfumes, spray deodorants, shoe polish, and similar products are not fit for human or animal consumption, and therefore not a problem to keep and use on Pesach. However, they should be purchased prior to Pesach should they contain *Chametz* ingredients.
- Any item that goes in the mouth, such as mouthwash and toothpaste, needs to be on an approved Pesach list.

Selling the Chametz

- One only needs to sell items containing tangible *Chametz*. *Chametz* utensils and *kitniyos* can be stored away and do not have to be sold.
- If selling areas in the house, one should not sell partial cabinets or partial spaces in the refrigerator/freezer.
- If one is selling *Chometz* in a car, this should be specified in the sale contract.
- One should follow their family *Minhag* regarding the sale of *Chametz Gamur*.
- For those who do not to sell *Chametz Gamur*, this is only on actual bread-related products such as cookies, bread, cereal, noodles, etc. Products that are *Taaruvos Chametz*, including all alcoholic beverages, may be sold even if one does not sell *Chametz Gamur*.
- For those who do not to sell *Chametz Gamur*, to give such *Chametz* over to a friend prior to the sale with the intention of getting it back after Pesach can be a serious problem, since the friend is likely not to fully acquire the product.
- The best approach to *Mechiras Chametz* is for the sale to take place prior to the *Bedika*. Some *Rabbonim*, including Rabbi Rudinsky, are *Makpid* on this. Therefore one should have all the areas designated to be sold marked as *Chametz* no later than 50 minutes after *Shkiya*.
- The timing of the *Mechiras Chametz* goes by one's location, not by the location of the *Chametz*. For example, if you are in California, you have 3 additional hours to sell your *Chametz* that is in New York, and if you are in *Eretz Yisrael*, your *Chametz* in New York must be sold 7 hours prior.
- If selling the entire house, it is preferable to be out of the house by the time the sale goes into effect; however if need be one can remain in the house overnight.

Zman Bedikas Chametz

- The proper *Zman* of *Bedikas Chametz* according to most opinions is at *Tzais Hakochavim*. One should follow their general *Shiur* for *Tzais Hakochavim* as they normally follow for ending Shabbos.
- It is important to start the *Bedika* at the proper *Zman*.
- A *Shliach* in the home may be appointed for someone who is running late or not available to start the *Bedika* at the proper *Zman*.
- It is preferable to *Daven Maariv* early prior to the *Zman* of *Bedika*.
- One may not sit down to eat or start to occupy oneself with a busy task within half an hour of the *Zman Bedika*.
- It is preferable not even to snack on *Shehakol* foods once the *Zman* of *Bedika* arrives.
- One should start the *Bedika* at the proper *Zman* even if he did not finish cleaning yet. The remainder cleaning will be part of the process of *Bedika*.

Bedikas Chametz – Areas

- The proper way to do a *Bedika* is by thoroughly going through the house, and feeling confident at the end of the search that all rooms were properly checked.
- One only needs to check places where there is a possibility for *Chametz* to have been in that area. Areas that one does not generally enter with *Chametz*, such as attics or crawl spaces, need not be checked unless there is a reason for suspicion.
- When young children are present in a home, any area where a child can place *Chametz* should be checked. A personal recommendation is to also check inside toys with compartments.
- One should check pockets of their clothing as part of the *Bedika* process. However, clothing washed in a washing machine need not be checked if they have not been worn since washing.
- Liquids such as detergents or bleach may be poured over an area that contains visible *Chametz* that is out of reach.
- *Seforim* do not need to be checked unless they will be brought to the table on Pesach, and have been used in the vicinity of food during the year.
- Cars should be checked after checking one's home. One should not make a *Brocha* if they are doing a *Bedika* on just their car.
- If one has several locations to check, the *Brocha* for *Bedika* is made only upon the checking of the first location, even if travel will be required between the different locations.
- If one works locally and is not selling his work office, the office should be checked after the *Bedika* of their home is complete.
- If one travels out of the local vicinity to work, the work office should be checked prior to leaving work the day of *Bedikas Chametz* (or earlier if they are going away.)

Bedikas Chametz Specifics

- The *Minhag* is not to make a *Shehecheyanu* on *Bedikas Chametz*, though it is preferable to make a *Shehecheyanu* on a new garment or new fruit and have in mind the *Bedika* and *Biur Chametz*.
- Only a single-wick candle may be used for the *Bedika*.
- One may partly substitute the candle with an incandescent bulb flashlight. This is especially recommended for corners, closets, and cars. However the *Bracha* and initial *Bedika* should be with a candle (fluorescent and LED flashlights should be avoided.)
- One may not talk at all from the *Bracha* until the beginning of the *Bedika*. Once the *Bedika* has started, one should only talk about items related to the *Bedika*.
- It is advisable to assign different people to inspect different areas, to ensure all areas are properly covered. Unless supervised, those checking should be over *Bar/Bas Mitzva* (though *Bodieved* a child over ten also suffices.)
- One is not required to use a wooden spoon or feather for the *Bedika*.
- One can and should keep the lights on in the room in addition to using a candle or flashlight.
- One should keep in mind that they are not checking for crumbs, but rather pieces of *Chametz* larger than a *Kazayis*.
- Small pieces less than a *Kazayis* are only a problem if they are doughy, or in the vicinity of a place where one normally eats.
- The prevalent *Minhag* is to place 10 pieces of *Chametz* around the house. However, one should be careful to keep track of where the pieces were placed so they don't get lost, and they should only place them in locations that are required to do *Bedika*. Additionally, it is best if all together the pieces total less than a *Kazayis*.

Bedikas Chametz for those Travelling

- One who will leave his home prior to the 14th of *Nissan* does a regular *Bedika* but does not make a *Bracha*.
- If one rents a room in a hotel and is there on night of the 14th of *Nissan*, *Bedika* on the room is done with a *Bracha*.
- One who only arrives to a hotel on *Erev Pesach* needs to do a *Bedika* when he arrives, but without a *Bracha*.
- One who will leave his home after to the 14th of *Nissan* and will be selling his home over *Pesach* should leave an area of the home unsold in order to have a place to do a *Bedika*.

Bitul Chametz

- One should remember to do the *Bitul* both by night and by day.
- The night *Bitul* should be made after the *Bedika* is completed, and all the remaining *Chametz* has been set aside in a designated area.
- The day *Bitul* should be said only after the last of one's *Chometz* has been completely burnt or otherwise removed.
- One may not eat *Chametz* after the day *Bitul* is declared.
- One should not rely on a *Shliach* for *Bitul*, but rather every person should make their own individual *Bitul*.
- One needs to understand what they are saying in the *Bitul*, and it is therefore recommended for women and children to declare the *Bitul* in English.
- When one does the *Bitul*, they should have in mind that they are disowning the *Chametz*, and that it no longer has any value.

Burning the Chametz

- One is not allowed to be busy with other things or sit down to eat once the time of *Biur Chametz* arrives.
- Taking garbage with *Chametz* down to the curbside suffices in removing it from one's domain.
- One should ensure the *Chametz* that is being burnt is the last of the unsold *Chametz* in his domain.
- It is preferable not to burn *Chametz* in a public burning area, since the *Chametz* will become *Hefker* prior to it having been burnt.
- One needs to be very careful that *Chametz* being burned is completely burnt. This is especially true regarding large *Chametz* items which may not fully burn unless the fire is very large.
- *Chametz* should not be wrapped in foil.

Erev Pesach

- *Matza* may not be eaten on *Erev Pesach* from the morning onwards. Many have a *Minhag* not to eat *Matza* from Rosh Chodesh Nissan.
- Children under the age of *Chinuch* may eat *Matza* all day, even prior to *Kiddush*.
- Egg *Matza* on *Erev Pesach* should also be avoided after the 4th hour, and it is even recommended for *Sefardim* to be *Machmir* today on this.
- Eating *Gebroktz* cake made from *Matza* meal should be avoided on *Erev Pesach*. *Matza* Balls can be eaten until *Chatzos*.
- In order to maintain an appetite for the *Matza* at night, one may not sit down to a meal after 10 hours into the day (4 hours after *Chatzos*.) Snacking, however, is permitted in small quantities, even on meat or fish.
- *Melacha* is prohibited on *Erev Pesach* from *Chatzos* onwards. This includes any involving *Melacha* that is not related to Pesach preparation.
- One can have a non-Jew do *Melacha* for him on *Erev Pesach*.
- *Bechorim* that go to a *Siyum* need to eat at least a *Kazyis* or drink a *Reviis*. The food does not need to be *Mezonos*.
- A *Bechor* has to be present at the *Siyum*; sending the food home does not suffice.
- There is a big advantage to having *Erev Pesach Matzos* for the first *Seder* if one can get a hold of them; a *Kazyis* per person suffices for this.

Please note: This guide is meant only as a practical reference guide. It is recommended one properly learn the *Halachos* in greater detail.

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