

HALACHOS OF PESACH

Bedikas Chometz

It is incumbent to conduct a search for *chometz* throughout the house; this should be done immediately after dark (8:15 PM) on **Thursday evening, April 14th**. This *bedikah* should not be postponed and must be done in a most thorough manner. After the *brocha* of "Al B'iur Chametz" one should not be *mafsik* unless it pertains to the actual search. It is not necessary for the head of the household to do the entire search on his own. He may also designate other males 13 years of age or older to assist in the *bedikah*. If the *sheliach* will only assist the owner, then the owner should recite the *brocha*; and the *sheliach* should listen and answer "Amen". If the representative is performing the entire *bedikah* on behalf of the owner, the *sheliach* recites the *brocha*. Use a single wicked candle which can also be supplemented with a flashlight to aid in the *bedikah*.

This search should not merely be a cursory ceremony in which the pieces of bread are collected, but rather a thorough search into every area where *chometz* may have been brought even if only on occasion (e.g. closet or drawer). Following the search *Kol Chamira* which constitutes *Bitul Chometz*, is recited. It is a statement renouncing title to any *chometz* other than that set aside for breakfast, sale, or destruction the following morning. It is important to understand the formula of *Bitul Chometz*; therefore if one does not understand Aramaic he should recite it in English as well.

In order to make it easier to perform the extensive *bedikah* for Pesach, the following procedure may be followed. During the days or weeks before Pesach, as you clean each room, it is permissible to do a *bedikah* at night at any time without a *brocha*. One can use this procedure for every room of the house as he or she finishes cleaning. However, you are obligated to leave over one room for the night of *Bedikas Chometz* at which time a *bedikah* on that final room with a *brocha* and recite the *bitul* thereafter. If one is leaving town before Thursday night, April 14th, then the *bedikah* should be made the night before departure without a *brocha* and the *bitul* is to be recited at that time as well. **If you will not be home Thursday evening and have not appointed a *sheliach* to do *Bedikas Chometz* for you, you should check your house properly the evening prior to your departure but without reciting a *brocha*. Nonetheless, the *Kol Chamirah* is said after the search.**

Siyum Bechorim

Whether a man is the first born son, or the father of a minor first born son he must fast on Erev Pesach; however, if one participates in the *Siyum* of a *Mesechta* he is absolved from this *Taanis*. It is important not only to join in the actual *Siyum* but also to participate in the *Seudas Mitzvah* following the *Siyum*. It is proper to be present when the final section of learning takes place. Nonetheless, if you missed the learning he may still partake in the *siyum*.

A *Siyum Bechorim* will be conducted in our Shul on Erev Pesach, Friday, April 15th, following each of the following Shacharis minyanim: 6:00, 7:00 & 7:45 AM respectively.

Burning the Chometz

In the New York area *chometz* may be eaten on the morning of Friday, April 15th until 10:13 AM (Mag' Av); 10:42 AM (Gr'A). The *chometz* that was gathered the night before, as well as *chometz* that remains that morning, should be burned no later than 11:34 AM (Mag'Av); 11:48 AM (Gr'A), at which time the *Kol Chamira* formula, a renouncement of one's ownership of ALL *chometz*, is recited. One should be sure to make this statement in a language that they understand. If one has a lulav or *hoshanos* remaining from Succos it should be used as fuel to burn the *chometz*.

Erev Pesach Diet

On Erev Pesach, Friday April 15th, aside from the chometz prohibition it is not permissible to eat *mezonos products* after 4:15 PM. One may not eat *matzoh* all day *Erev Pesach*. This prohibition begins at dawn (72 minutes before sunrise). Products containing *matzoh meal* that are baked (e.g. *matzoh* meal cake) may not be eaten all day *Erev Pesach*. Kosher for Passover *matzoh* meal products that are boiled/cooked (e.g. kneidlach) may be eaten until 4:15 PM – three halachic hours before sunset. Meat, fish, salad, cheese, eggs, fruits and potato starch cakes and wine/grape juice may be consumed until sunset, as long as one's appetite is not ruined for the Seder.

Shiurim (measures and amounts)

On the *Seder* night there are many *mitzvos* which we fulfil only if we partake of a proper *Shiur*.

WINE: This year, as the first night of Pesach is Friday night, the first kos must be 4.42 ounces (to fulfil Kiddush of Friday night). It is preferable that the entire cup be completed, If a person is unable to finish the entire cup but has finished most of it, the person has fulfilled the *mitzvah*. (Therefore, it is advisable to use a smaller cup containing just a *reviis* so that it is possible to complete the entire cup of wine). For Motzei Shabbos, one is only obligated to drink 3.3 ounces. Red wine should be used but grape juice is to be used only if one is not permitted to drink wine for health reasons. It is better to dilute wine with water (2/5 wine to 3/5 water) than to use grape juice, so long as the diluted amount has at least 4% alcohol. This cannot be done with low alcohol wines. Both men and women are obligated to drink wine with the proper measure as they are obligated in all the *mitzvos* of the *Seder*.

MAROR: For *Morror* it is preferable to use Romaine lettuce, however unless the leaves are inspected carefully to be sure that they are free of insects (eating an insect is a Torah prohibition), it is better to use horseradish. The following are the *shiurim* of a *kezayis* of *morror*: if using leaves it is an area of 8 x 10 inches, if using ground horseradish it is approximately one compacted ounce.

MATZAH: Every adult is obligated to eat at least a *kezayis* of *matzah* the first two nights of Pesach. There are three observances of *matzah* during the *Seder*: 1) *Motzi Matzah* 2) *Korech* and 3) *Afikoman*. It is vital that *shmurah matzah* be used for these three obligations. For **Motzi Matzah** and **Afikoman** one should eat approximately 1/2 of a hand *matzah* each time or 2/3 of a machine *matzah* and for **Korech** it is sufficient to eat 1/4 of a hand *matzah* or 1/3 of a machine *matzah*. It is preferable to complete the *kezayis* of *Motzi Matzah* within two minutes. It is also important not to overeat at the meal so that you will be able to partake of the *Afikoman* properly. The Afikomen must be eaten before Chatzos. Chatzos is at 12:54 AM

Chometz Found on Pesach

If one finds *chometz* in his house during *Chol Hamoed* he should burn it at that time; if he finds it during Yom Tov it is considered *muktza*. It should be covered with a vessel until the conclusion of Yom Tov and then burned.

Pesach Products and Kashering

It is important to note that a number of products which come from Israel and Europe, as well as some that are produced in America, use emulsifiers and sweeteners which are derived from *kitniyous* (legume). Sephardim are permitted to use these items. Ashkenazim have refrained from using legumes and this is a custom which we follow. One is therefore cautioned to read ingredient labels very carefully, if the words glucose, lecithin, or emulsifier appears it is best to refrain from using these items. Products that are supervised by the OU, OK, Star K, *Chof* K, and Streit's do not usually permit the use of *kitniyos* derivatives in their *Pesach* products.

For more halachic information on preparing for Pesach, please check out these links:

www.oukosher.org/passover; <http://www.star-k.org/cons-pesach.htm>