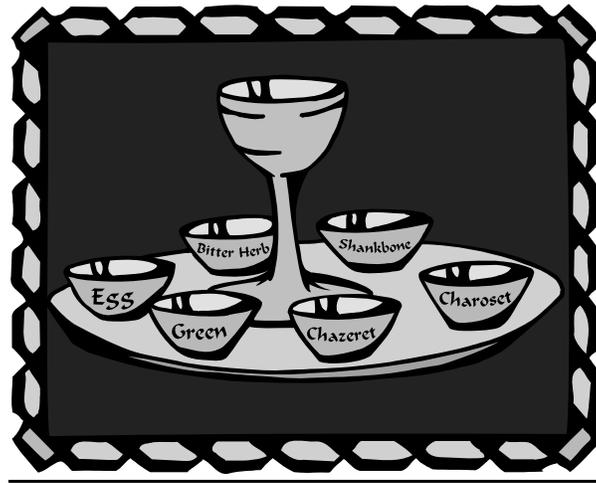


JTS GUIDE TO PESAH

2011 * 5771



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NISAN 5771

BEDIKAT HAMETZ

Bedikat Hametz takes place at the onset of the night the 14th of Nisan. This year that means the evening of Sunday, April 17. The symbolic search serves as the last chance for unearthing any undiscovered pockets of *Hametz* in your household. It is customary, but not mandatory, to place ten pieces of bread or hard-core *Hametz* around the house. A *berakhah*, found in front of most *Haggadot*, is recited before the search commences. With a feather and a spoon, the residents search the house. The search is conducted by candlelight. Anyone who is concerned with being unable to search properly with a candle or who feels that the use of a candle might be a fire hazard may use a flashlight. Beginning with the recitation of the *berakhah*, all participants must remain silent until the act for which the *berakhah* was said (i.e. the search) is completed. The *Hametz* is collected, piece by piece, with the feather and the spoon, and then disposed of, usually by burning the next morning, together with the *Hametz* collected by others (this must be done by 11:47 AM in the New York area). After the conclusion of the *bedikah* a declaration in Aramaic is recited, averring that *Hametz* in one's possession is null and void. Another declaration is made on the morning of *Erev Pesah*, at the time of the disposal of the *Hametz*.

It is permissible to eat *Hametz* after the search until the time that it becomes forbidden to do so – April 18 at 10:40 AM. Since the house will be cleaned for Passover, great care should be taken not to get *Hametz* scattered around. It is desirable to use disposable plates, cups, and plastic ware, if eating actual *Hametz*.

REMOVAL OF HAMETZ

1. All leavened grains (*hametz b'ayin*) such as bread and pasta, and any foods which are mixtures of *hametz* and other foodstuffs (*ta'arovet hametz*) should preferably be given away (although they may be thrown away); otherwise they must be sold.
2. Foods which do not clearly contain *hametz*, but may still contain traces of it (such as tuna, canned vegetables, and processed foods) should be placed in a closed cabinet and sold.
3. Legumes and rice are not *hametz* and need only be placed in a cabinet which will not be opened during *Pesah* to ensure that they are not eaten during *Pesah*.

OVENS

The easiest way to clean an oven is to use Easy Off or some other oven cleaner. The sides of the oven, racks and broiling pans should be carefully cleaned. Afterwards, the oven, together with the racks and broiling pans, can be *kashered* by turning the oven to the highest temperature for a minimum of one half hour. Self-cleaning ovens (in Goldsmith and MSRH) can be *kashered* by running the cleaning cycle. Read the directions carefully before starting. Microwave ovens should be thoroughly cleaned and a glass of water should be heated in it until it boils and a mist fills the inside of the microwave. A microwave with a browning element cannot be koshered.

STOVE

The grates of the stove should be cleaned thoroughly (using oven cleaner if they are very grimy and cannot be adequately cleaned without it), and then replaced on the burner which should then be turned on to full heat for a minimum of one half hour. The stove top should be opened and cleaned underneath. The outside of the oven (door, sides) and the hood need only be cleaned thoroughly. In a self-cleaning oven, the self-cleaning also *kashers* the top of the stove. If an oven is not self-cleaning, some *kasher* the top of the stove with boiling water (carefully), and others cover the top with foil.

REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER

The refrigerator need only be thoroughly cleaned with warm water and soap. Freezers need to be defrosted and cleaned. Self-defrosting freezers need not be defrosted, but they must be cleaned thoroughly. The racks don't need to be covered, but if you wish to use foil or wax paper, pierce it so as to allow air to circulate in the refrigerator.

SINKS, COUNTERS, AND DISHWASHERS

Metal sinks should be cleaned well and then *kashered* by pouring boiling water down the sides of the sink. The water for this and all other *kashering* should be boiled in a pot that has not been used in the last 24 hours. Remember to clean the drain carefully. If you have porcelain sinks, clean it, and put in a liner or a new basin. The counters should be cleaned and then covered with either foil or contact paper. Wood-top tables can be *kashered* with boiling water. Most also suggest that they be covered with a table cloth throughout *Pesah*. All Goldsmith and Mathilde Schechter dishwashers can be *kashered* by running a cycle after not using the dishwasher for 24 hours.

CABINETS

Hametz which is to be sold should be placed in a cabinet that is labeled and taped shut. This cabinet may not be opened during *Pesah*. For the cabinets that will be used during *Pesah*, it is sufficient to simply wipe them down with a damp cloth. Also, please remember to sweep the kitchen floor and remove any stuck-on food "that may be growing there."

POTS, PANS, DISHES, SILVERWARE

Kashering of utensils should be completed before the 14th of Nisan (Monday, April 18). Metal can be *kashered* by cleaning it, waiting 24 hours, and then immersing it completely in a pot of boiling water. Therefore, silverware and small pots can be *kashered* by placing them in a pot of boiling water. Large pots (that will not fit into another pot) can be *kashered* by cleaning them, waiting 24 hours, boiling water in them and then while they are still boiling, adding a heated rock so that a little water runs over the sides of the pot. Plastic can be *kashered* by cleaning it and immersing it in boiling water, though there are *posekim* who do not permit *kashering* of plastic at all. Frying pans cannot be *kashered* reasonably; invest in separate ones for *Pesah*. Plastic handles that are attached to pots pose a potential problem. The plastic can be *kashered* but the handle must be removed in order to properly clean the spot where it is attached to the pot. This is very important as food tends to accumulate there. If the handle is welded to the pot, so that foods cannot accumulate, the pot can be *kashered* together with the handle. Porcelain dishes cannot be *kashered*, nor can stoneware or ceramic mugs. Some authorities feel that very fine china can be *kashered*.

GLASS AND PYREX

Glass may be *kashered* by simple washing, according to Sephardic *minhag*. Ashkenazim, however, maintain that glass should be *kashered* by a different process. This process entails soaking glass in water for 72 hours, changing the water every 24 hours. At least one prominent authority allows *kashering* glass by placing it in boiling water. Some authorities maintain that Pyrex is to be treated as glass and some maintain it should be treated as metal. The wisest policy is to *kasher* it as glass if it has not been used in the oven, and not to *kasher* it at all if it has been. Glass *kashering* should also be completed before the 14th of Nissan (Monday, April 18).

If you cannot clean it, you cannot kasher it!

FOOD

1. The following foods may be purchased before and during Pesah without special *hekhsher*: fresh meat and fish, eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables.
2. The following foods may be purchased before the 14th of Nissan without a special *hekhsher*, but require one if purchased later: milk, pure fruit juices (that is, with no additives whatsoever), pure coffee (regular, not decaffeinated), unflavored pure tea, salt (not iodized) and sugar. The Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly has also permitted the inclusion of frozen vegetables (containing no sauce) and canned fruit in its own juice or water (not fruit in syrup), in this category. Given the complexity of food manufacturing and processing, it is probably desirable not to rely on this permission at this time.
3. All other foods (baked products, all *matzah* products, dairy products, oils, vinegar, wine, liquor, tuna, candy, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables, etc.) require a special *hekhsher* whether bought before or during *Pesah*. In other words, all processed foods require a *hekhsher*. Rice, corn, and legumes are not *hametz*. There is however, a long standing custom among Ashkenazim not to eat them (*kitniyot*) on *Pesah*. In regard to derivatives of legumes (such as oils like soybean oil), some permit consumption. In connection with peanuts, the Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly, with significant classical support, has ruled that peanuts do not fall in the category of forbidden *kitniyot*; still, most Ashkenazim do not eat them during *Pesah*.

It is not necessary to throw away or sell non-food items such as cologne or shampoo and they may be used on *Pesah*. One should use a new toothbrush and tube of toothpaste. Medicines may contain a binder which uses *hametz*. Pressed (uncoated) tablets, e.g. aspirin and Tylenol are permitted. While it may be advisable to avoid unnecessary medicines, one should continue using medicines which a physician considers essential.

PEOPLE WHO WILL BE AWAY DURING PESAH

If you will be away during the entirety of *Pesah* (and are leaving fewer than thirty days before the beginning of the holiday), you must still clean your apartment, perform *bedikat hametz*, and sell any remaining *hametz*. However, you need not *kasher* your utensils.

MEKHIRAT HAMETZ (SALE OF HAMETZ)

All *hametz* (food and dishes) which are not being disposed of must be sold. The *Gabbaim* are available after the *minyanim* to arrange for your *hametz* to be sold. The Jewish Life Directors will also be available in the residence halls. The *gabbaim* can help with the sale of the *hametz* until **Thursday, April 14**. Please note that this is several days before Pesah, but it is necessary for you to have completed your transaction with the *gabbaim* by that time. The *gabbaim* have directions, and will be able to assist you in completing your transaction correctly. Note that you may list others on the *shtar* and be their agent for the sale of their *hametz*. There are two requirements, though: 1) that the people know and agree that you should serve as their agents, and 2) that they are in the Continental United States or Canada.

MA'OT HITTIN

It is customary to contribute to a communal fund before *Pesah* in order that everyone can afford a kosher *Pesah*. Contributions should be made to the *gabbai* when you appoint him/her your agent for the sale of your *hametz*.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHABBAT AND YOM TOV

Certain activities prohibited on Shabbat are permitted on Yom Tov. Cooking for Yom Tov itself is permitted; however, one may not cook on one day of Yom Tov for the next.

Although one may cook on Yom Tov, one may not ignite a fire on Yom Tov. This is prohibited under the category of *molid*, creating something new. Therefore, if one has a gas stove that is ignited electrically (this is the "click, click, click" sound) one should leave a low flame throughout Yom Tov if one is intending to cook.

In the case of gas stoves with pilots one may certainly turn on a burner on Yom Tov. There is debate as to whether one may extinguish such a burner on Yom Tov; consult your *halakhic* authority for a ruling on this question.

Electric ranges raise the question of the use of electricity on Yom Tov in general. Obviously, those *halakhists* who permit the use of electricity on Shabbat permit it on Yom Tov as well. There are some *halakhists* who permit the use of electricity on Yom Tov though they forbid it on Shabbat. Still others are equally stringent about the use of electricity on Yom Tov. Again, consult your *halakhic* authority.

Besides cooking, the other activity prohibited on Shabbat and permitted on Yom Tov is carrying in, from and to the public domain. One may only carry what is needed for Yom Tov itself (e.g. a tallit bag, siddur, or stroller) and one may not handle, much less carry, *muktzeh*, i.e. objects not fit for Yom Tov use (e.g. a radio) or for general use (e.g. a stone).