

## **Pesach Guide, Slifka Center for Jewish Life 5775**

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### **I. Laws of preparing for Pesach**

#### **Chametz Prohibitions**

The Torah prohibits the owning or eating of Chametz, or leavened products, on Pesach. Preparing for Pesach entails both ensuring that all Chametz is out of one's domain, and that one have proper food and utensils to be able to eat on Pesach.

#### **Ridding One's Home of Chametz**

During the eight days of Pesach, our homes must be cleared of all Chametz products and all products that have any Chametz content. This is ideally accomplished by searching for all Chametz in one's home, collecting it, and destroying it. For any Chametz one does not find, one says a Bittul formula, nullifying any unknown leavened products that they own. Everyone, and especially students in dormitories, is encouraged to follow this method, if doing so does not incur significant difficulties. An alternative, the selling one's Chametz, will be discussed below.

#### **Chametz of Roommates**

Jews living with non-Jewish roommates often have shared Chametz, and it is sometimes ambiguous which Chametz belongs to the Jew. To remove doubt, one should physically hand all of the Chametz to the non-Jew prior to Pesach as a gift, stating, "I give this to you as an unconditional gift, and accept no responsibility for storing or guarding it." The non-Jew may then continue to own and use the Chametz over Pesach. Once this is done, there is no further need to sell the Chametz. If the Jew will be in the room over Pesach, the Chametz should be stored in some specifically designated area outside of the Jew's private area, to prevent confusion.

#### **Bedikat Chametz**

The Torah forbids us not only to eat, but also to own Chametz on Pesach. We remove any Chametz unknown to us by "nullifying" it through Bittul Chametz, thus making the Chametz

ownerless. Our Chachamim, however, further mandated a thorough check of the house on the night before Pesach a) in case we have not truly nullified our Chametz in our hearts and b) lest one find and eat Chametz on Pesach. This is not just a perfunctory check of our homes! While the custom of putting out 10 pieces of bread has some basis, finding only those pieces does not fulfill one's obligation. Places to check include drawers, coat pockets, garages and cars. One should try to do the Bedikah as soon as possible after nightfall on Thursday April 2<sup>nd</sup>; it is improper to push it off until late at night. The Bedika is done in the dark, using a candle or flashlight to explore everywhere.

*One leaving home before the night of Bedikat Chametz* (Thursday April 2<sup>nd</sup>) should do the Bedika the night before they leave, without a Beracha, but with the "Kol Chamira" declaration: "All Chametz and leavening in my possession which I have not seen and have not destroyed shall be considered nullified and ownerless, as the dust of the earth." They should check dorm rooms, closets, desks, lockers and vehicles that belong to them for Chametz. Lockers where one never stores Chametz during the year do not need to be checked. Students should also participate in Bedikat and Biur Chametz in their parents' homes, if applicable.

### ***Mechirat Chametz (Sale of Chametz)***

Some Rabbinic authorities allow for a loophole through which one sells their Chametz to a non-Jew for the duration of Pesach while keeping the Chametz in their home, if it is placed in designated areas in the home. During the entire Pesach, the designated cabinets should not be opened, and no items in the designated areas should be used during this period. Many authorities maintain that this method be used only for mixtures containing some Chametz ingredients. In their view, pure Chametz such as bread and cookies should be physically destroyed or given permanently to a non-Jew. For those selling their Chametz, there is an attachment to this email with the relevant document.

**Note:** Those who sold their Chametz with me, should wait until 10:00 PM on April 4<sup>th</sup> before using it after Pesach has concluded.

### **Maot Chitim**

Pesach is a very expensive holiday, between the Matza, the wine, and all of the other peripheral expenses. There is an ancient tradition of donating money to charity to provide for the needs of the poor on this occasion. The Rambam writes that we are obligated to bring joy on the holidays not only to ourselves and our own families, but also to those who are less fortunate this year.

## II. Mitzvot of Pesach

### Thursday Night April 2nd 2015 – 13 Nisan, 5775

Bedikat Chametz: After dark, i.e., 7:59 PM in New Haven, CT, we check our homes for Chametz. Before the search, the Beracha “*al biur chametz*,” is recited, and afterwards *Kol Chamira* are said, the latter to render all unfound Chametz null and void. Hopefully, by now, our homes are for the most part free from Chametz. Nonetheless, this is supposed to be a bona fide search and not just an educational game. One should utilize this opportunity to search through coat pockets, medicine cabinets, pocket books, desk drawers, utility closets, etc... During this search one might find various forms of Chametz: little candies in pockets, cheerios under the radiator etc.

### Erev Pesach, Friday Morning, April 13th, 2015 – 14 Nisan, 5775

*Ta’anit Bechorot*– Fast of the First Born:

The fast starts at 5:07 AM, and applies to first born children. Participating in a Siyyum exempts one from fasting. Any significant amount of learning suffices for making a *siyyum* for such purposes.

*Sof Zeman Achilat Chametz* – Last Time to Eat Chametz

By now, our homes should be virtually Chametz free and all set for Pesach.

The latest time to eat Chametz on Friday morning is at 10:47 AM (GR”A).

*Sof Zeman Biur Chametz* -- Last Time to Dispossess/Burn Chametz

Chametz must be disposed of by 11:51 AM (GR”A). Despite the fact that we will nullify our possession of any remaining Chametz with our recitation of *Kol Chamira*, our custom is to burn a tiny bit of our Chametz to fulfill Rabbi Yehuda’s opinion that one must burn Chametz to destroy it. *Kol Chamira* is recited once again at the time of burning. We will host a Chametz burning fest at Slifka right after breakfast, around 9:15.

Eating on Erev Pesach

We are prohibited from eating Matza or anything with Matza ingredients on *Erev Pesach* (and some have the practice to refrain from eating Matza as early as two weeks or a month before Pesach). This is in order to differentiate between Mitzvat Matza and discretionary eating of Matza. This prohibition includes cakes and cookies made from Matza meal. Other foods should only be eaten in moderation from mid-afternoon and on in order to have an appetite for the Seder.

### Candle Lighting Times:

For the first night, the Berakhot to be recited are "*lehadlik ner shel Shabbat ve-shel Yom Tov*" and "*Shehechyanu*." It is a proper custom to give Tzedaka before candle lighting on Yom Tov.

For the second night, candles should not be lit and preparations for the 2nd day should not begin until after Shabbat ends, at 8:02 PM, and after one says Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh Lechol. Before lighting, the Berachot to be recited are "*lehadlik ner shel Yom Tov*" and "*Shehechyanu*." The flame for lighting the candles must be taken from a pre-existing flame.

### **III. Cleaning and Kashering a Kitchen for Pesach**

\*Please note that many of the matters discussed below are subject to debate, and your family may follow a different opinion than what appears in this guide.\*

The CRC has made a helpful you tube clip that demonstrates the koshering process:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OA3P1shmhME>

#### **Basic Cleaning**

If you will not be cooking during Pesach, you do not need to Kasher your cooking appliances in the manner described below. Rather, you simply need to eliminate all physical Chametz in your possession, including bits of bread in toasters, spills on surfaces, etc. Pieces that are both smaller than an olive and inedible do not count, so the easiest thing to do is to dispose of all the large pieces, then clean your surfaces with a strong, inedible chemical cleaner. If anything remains after this, it is not edible Chametz and you need not destroy it. This is the simplest method for counters, cooking appliances, refrigerators, and floors. It is prohibited to own any Chametz that

is edible *by a dog*, which is a relatively low standard, but still rules out many things. Remember: Dirt is *not* Chametz.

It is good to launder clothes or check their pockets for Chametz if you ever put food in their pockets.

Don't forget to clean the Chametz out of lockers, desks, vehicles, and other locations around campus where you store personal property.

Although it is nice to neaten up one's coin collection, wash windows, etc, these are not really related to Pesach. One should focus primarily on Chametz elimination.

## Ovens

In a conventional oven, gas or electric, the oven must be completely cleaned before Kashering can begin. Oven cleaner may be necessary to remove baked on grease. If a caustic type of oven cleaner (such as Easy-Off) was used to clean the oven and some stubborn spots remain after the caustic cleaner has been applied a second time with similar results, the remaining spots may be disregarded.

Once the oven and racks have been cleaned, they may be Kashered by *Libbun Kal*. Turning the oven to the broil setting for 2 hours satisfies the requirement of Libbun Kal. In a gas oven the broil setting will allow the flame to burn continuously. In a conventional electric oven the highest setting, broil or 550°F, Kashers the oven.

In a **continuous cleaning** oven, one cannot assume that such an oven is clean because the manufacturer claims it to be continuously clean. **A visual inspection is required.** Since caustic or abrasive oven cleaners, e.g. Easy-Off, cannot be used without destroying the continuous clean properties of the oven, a non-abrasive, and non-caustic, cleaner must be used to clean the oven. Grease spots will usually disappear if the top layer of grease is cleaned with Fantastic and a nylon brush. Then the oven should be turned on to 550°F for 2 hours so that the continuous clean mechanism can work. If the spots don't disappear the oven should be left on for a few hours to allow the continuous clean mechanism to deep clean. If the spots do not disappear, the spots should be removed with oven cleaner or steel wool. If the spots are dark spots that crumble, they can be disregarded. In all of the above cases the oven should then be Kashered by turning the oven to the broil setting for 2 hours.

In a **self-cleaning** oven, the self-cleaning cycle will clean and Kasher the oven simultaneously. This is true for **convection** ovens with a self-cleaning feature as well. The oven need not be cleaned well before the process begins because everything inside of the oven is reduced to ash. The oven door and rubber around the door should, however, be completely cleaned before beginning the self-clean cycle.

**Oven Racks** are very difficult to thoroughly clean. It is therefore recommended that they either be placed into a self-cleaning oven or covered with foil (punching holes though to allow the air to circulate.)

**Oven Broiler:** The broiler pan and grill cannot be Kasherred by just turning on the gas or electricity. Since food is cooked directly on the pan or grill, they must be heated to a glow in order to be used on Pesach. An alternate method is to replace the pan with a new pan and Kasher the empty broiler cavity by cleaning and setting it to broil for 2 hours. If one does not intend to use the broiler on Pesach, one may still use the oven, *even without koshering the broiler*, provided that the broiler has been thoroughly cleaned. Similarly, other cooktop inserts such as a griddle or a barbecue broiler would require "*Libbun Gamur*," i.e., heating the surface to a red glow before usage. If not, the insert should be cleaned and covered and not used for Pesach

**Cooktop:** On a **gas range** the cast iron or metal grates upon which the pots on the range sit may be inserted into the oven after they have been thoroughly cleaned. (If one has a self-cleaning oven one need not clean the grates first.) The grates can be Kasherred simultaneously with the oven. Another method of Kashering the burners is to place a Blech (all year round belch may be used) or heavy foil over each burner and turn on highest temperature for 15 minutes. (*For safety concerns it is recommended to do one burner at a time.*) The rest of the range should be cleaned and covered with a double layer of heavy-duty aluminum foil. (Stainless steel stove tops may be purged with boiling water and need not be covered.) The burners themselves do not need Kashering or covering but should be thoroughly cleaned. The drip pans should be thoroughly cleaned and need not be Kasherred.

Kashering a **Glass, Corning, Halogen or Ceran** electric range top for Pesach is a very difficult task. The elements of the stove can be turned on until they come to a glow. The **burner areas** are now considered Kosher for Pesach. However, the rest of the cook top presents a serious Kashering problem. The unheated area of glass top ranges cannot be covered with foil like conventional or porcelain tops. Since glass tops are made of tempered glass, and are not meant to be covered, there is a risk that the glass cooktop will shatter if it is covered. Therefore, one should check with the company before attempting to Kasher a Corning stovetop. In an **electric cooktop**, one only needs to turn the burners on the high heat setting for 5 minutes in

order to Kasher them, since the burners come to a glow in a few minutes. The remaining cooktop areas should be covered. The **knobs** with which the gas or electricity is turned on should be cleaned. No other process is necessary to Kasher the knobs.

### **Microwave Ovens**

Clean the microwave thoroughly and do not use for 24 hours. Then boil a cup of water on the highest setting for 20 minutes, or until all the water has boiled off. The glass plate (if you have one) should be replaced or covered for the duration of Pesach. If your microwave walls have holes or grates through which food has fallen and cannot be removed, it's best to cover all foods that you heat in the microwave on Pesach.

### **Refrigerator and Freezers**

Each shelf should be removed and cleaned thoroughly. If hot Chametz was spilled on a shelf then that shelf should be covered (make sure to perforate any covers to allow for air circulation). Otherwise, covering shelves is not necessary.

### **High Chairs**

Should be cleaned thoroughly and the tray should be covered with contact paper.

### **Metal Utensils**

Metal Utensils that have been used for **cooking, serving** or **eating hot Chametz** may be koshered by cleaning them thoroughly, waiting twenty-four (24) hours and then immersing them, one by one, into a Kosher for Pesach pot of water which has been heated ***and is maintaining a rolling boil when the vessel is immersed.*** **Note that Teflon coated pots cannot be Kashed.**

The utensils undergoing the Kashering process may not touch each other on the way in to the pot. In other words, if a set of flatware is being Kashed for Pesach, one cannot take all the knives, forks, and spoons and put them in the boiling water together. They should be placed into the boiling water one by one. The process is finalized by rinsing the Kashed items in cold water. If tongs are used to grip the utensil, they should be loosened for a moment while the utensil is underwater. Otherwise, the utensil will have to be immersed a second time with the

tongs in a different position so that the boiling water will touch the initially gripped area. The entire utensil does not have to be Kasherred at once; it may be done in parts.

Please watch out for utensils that are rusty or difficult to clean properly. Silverware made of two parts (a handle and a blade, for instance) should most often not be Kasherred.

Technically, a non-Kosher for Pesach **pot** may also be used for the purpose of Kashering, provided that it is thoroughly clean and has not been used for twenty-four (24) hours. However, it is the custom to make the pot Kosher for Pesach before using it for Kashering. This can be accomplished by cleaning the pot, leaving it for 24 hours, filling the pot completely with water, waiting until the water comes to a rolling boil, and throwing in a hot stone or brick which has been heated on another burner. The hot rock will cause the water to bubble more furiously and run over the top ridge of the pot on all sides at one time. The pot is now Kasherred.

There are different opinions about whether plastic utensils can be Kasherred in the same manner as metal.

Ashkenazim today do not Kasher **glass utensils** used with hot Chametz for Pesach. **Arcolac, Pyrex, Duralux & Corelle** should be treated as glass for Kashering purposes. Glassware used with cold Chametz may be Kasherred. Each utensil should be soaked in room temperature water for 72 hours. The water should be changed every 24 hours.

## **Sinks**

**China sinks** cannot be Kasherred at all. **Porcelain or Corian sinks** should also be considered like a china sink, as there is a controversy whether these materials can be Kasherred. These sinks should be cleaned and completely lined with contact paper or foil. The dishes that are to be washed should not be placed directly into the sink. They must be washed in a Pesach dishpan that is placed on a Pesach rack. Alternatively, a sink insert can be purchased, allowing for the placement of either dairy or meat dishes directly into the sink. Dishes can also simply be washed holding them in the air, not placing them on the surface of the sink at all.

**Stainless steel** sinks can be Kasherred by the following method. Clean the sink thoroughly. Hot water should not be used or poured in the sink for twenty-four (24) hours prior to Kashering. (It is recommended that the sink be covered or the hot water knob covered or removed, etc. to insure that it is not used.) Kashering is accomplished by pouring boiling hot water from

a Pesach kettle/pot over **every part** of the stainless steel sink. The poured water must touch every part of the sink including the drain and the spout of the water faucet. It is likely that the Kashering kettle(s) will need to be refilled a few times before the Kashering can be completed.

**Granite sinks** can be Kashered like a stainless steel sink.

### **Countertops**

Countertops made of granite may also be Kashered. Formica countertops should be cleaned and covered with a waterproof material. The same goes for tables with synthetic tops. Wood tables could theoretically be Kashered with boiling water, but the custom is to clean and cover them.

### **Dishwashers**

Porcelain and enamel dishwashers cannot be Kashered for Pesach. Stainless steel dishwashers may be Kashered but the racks should be replaced. These dishwashers must be thoroughly cleaned. Please contact a rabbi before doing so.

## **IV. Halachic Requirements of the Seder**

### **The Seder**

While it would be impossible to list all of the Halachot of the Seder in this Guide, certain Halachot deserve special attention.

### **Starting Time**

The Sedarim should start as early as possible, but after it has become fully dark (especially the second night). After 8:01 PM in New Haven this year.

Note: All Minimum sizes follow particular Halachic rulings. Some are more stringent or lenient regarding these matters.

### **Minimum Size of Wine Cup (Kosot)**

For the four cups of wine (including Kiddush) the cup must be filled and hold at least 2.9 fluid ounces in size. This is **the size of a Dixie cup** (the little disposable ones for mouthwash).

One must drink at least “*rov kos*,” more than half of the cup of wine, and ideally the entire cup. The same Halacha applies to each of the 4 cups. If you don’t want to drink a lot of wine, get a cup that is only a little bigger than the minimum size.

### **Minimum Strength of Wine:**

1. If health reasons preclude the use of wine or a person’s appreciation of the Seder is significantly diminished by using wine, grape juice may be drunk.
2. One may also dilute the wine with a small amount of grape juice or water. The resulting mixture should still be majority wine.

Remember to include the additions for Kiddush of Shabbat into the first seder, and the additions for Havdala into the second seder. The latter will be a rare occasion of YaKNaHa”Z!

### **Minimum Amount of Matzah Shmurah**

Men and women must eat Matzah Shmurah the following three times during the Seder: 1) After the Bracha of Al Achilat Matza (for the Biblical Mitzva of eating Matza) 2) for Korech (commemorating Hillel’s Matza-Maror sandwich) 3) for the Afikoman (in place of the Mitzva of eating the Korban Pesach, and to leave the night with Matza flavor in our mouths).

**For 1 & 3:** After reciting the Bracha, Al Achilat Matzah and for Afikoman - a piece equivalent in size to **4/5 of a machine made Matza or 2/5 of a hand-made Matza** (45 cc). One who has difficulty eating Matza may halve this amount.

**For 2** - a piece equivalent in size to **2/5 of a machine made Matza or 1/5 of a hand-made Matza** (22.5 cc).

If for health reasons, one cannot eat Matza, then Matza Shmura Meal (upon which one is permitted to recite the Hamotzi) may be substituted as follows: For **1&3**: An amount of meal that can be compacted into a vessel measuring 1.5 ounces. **For 2** - an amount of meal that can be compacted into a vessel holding 1.1 fluid ounces.

Matza and Maror **should both be eaten at a steady clip**, without taking major breaks. However, they **should not be gobbled down** in an abnormally fast manner.

### **Minimum Amount of Maror**

Each person must eat a minimum amount of Maror twice during the Seder. Once after the Bracha, Al Achilat Maror, and once for Korech.

The **use of Romaine Lettuce is preferable for Maror** (even though it doesn't hurt going down), and grated horseradish is acceptable, as well. However, one absolutely must check for bugs on this lettuce, before Yom Tov. The lettuce should be soaked rinsed thoroughly and then checked leaf by leaf for bugs. One can also clean one's lettuce by rubbing each side forcefully with a sponge and soap. The leaves can then be rinsed off and do not need to be checked. Some lettuce is sold pre-checked.

The minimal amount for the Mitzva of Marror is 1.1 fluid ounces. This is how it translates into various food items for the Mitzva of Marror:

*Romaine lettuce, whole leaves:* **A large leaf of Romaine lettuce**, or two smaller ones.

*Romaine lettuce, stalks only:* **Two large stalks of Romaine lettuce.**

*Pure grated horseradish:*

After reciting the Bracha, Al Achilat Maror, an amount that can be compacted into a vessel measuring 1.1 fluid ounces. This is the size of **a disposable shot glass, slightly overfilled.**

The requirement for the practice of Korech is slightly less than that for the Mitzva of Marror.

Remember that Shulchan Orech (the meal) is part of the Seder and part of our praise to Hashem. This should be reflected in the tone of the meal and conversation at the meal. One should be sure to leave a little room for the Afikoman so that it not be eaten after one is already stuffed. We do not eat after the Afikoman, so that the taste of the Matza to remain in our mouths.

## **V. Laws of the Omer**

### **The Omer**

The period from Pesach until Shavuot is known as the Omer. Each night, beginning with the second night of Pesach, we count the day of the Omer, starting with 1 and going up to 49. The text is found in siddurim. One must say only the blessing and the “Hayom \_\_\_\_ LaOmer” part, although some have the custom to add on additional psalms and declarations.

If you forgot to count one night, you can count the following day without saying the blessing. That makes you still eligible to count the Omer with a blessing the following nights.

If you totally missed a 24 hour period, you can't count the Omer with a blessing anymore. However, you are still obligated to count the Omer without a Beracha. Ideally, one in this situation should hear the Beracha recited by someone else, say Amen, and then count the Omer. For this reason, in synagogues, the Rabbi or Chazzan recites the Beracha out loud every night at Maariv.

Rabbi Akiva's students died during the Omer, because they were not respectful to one another. We should use the Omer as a time to try to inculcate character traits of mutual respect for one another.

In memory of Rabbi Akiva's students, there are several mourning customs that apply during the Omer

- 1) Not getting haircuts (even on Fridays)
  - 2) Men – not shaving (some shave on Fridays in honor of Shabbat, or for professional reasons)
  - 3) Not listening to live music
  - 4) Not going to parties, even without live music
- Some translate these practices into a restriction against seeing movies, as well.

There are various customs about when these restrictions apply, including:

- 1) The entire period of Sefirat Haomer
- 2) From after Pesach until Lag Ba'omer
- 3) From Rosh Chodesh Iyar until Shavuot

One should follow their familial practice, or consult with a Rabbi.

The restrictions of the Omer (except getting a haircut) are suspended on Yom Ha'atzmaut.

## **VI. List of foods and medications that require Kosher for Pesach Certification**

See the OU website: <http://oukosher.org/passover/>