
EREV PESACH 5768: WHY IS THIS SHABBOS DIFFERENT THAN EVERY OTHER SHABBOS?

By Rabbi Reuven Spolter

This year Pesach begins on a Saturday night, creating a slew of questions: When do we prepare the Seder? When do we burn the Chametz? Here is a primer on Pesach 2008, handling some of the issues which arise. Of course, please feel free to call me (248-967-3652 in shul or 248-967-8692 at home) or email me (rabbispolter@yiop.org) if you have any questions. *Note that all times mentioned are appropriate only for Oak Park, MI*

When do we search for Chametz?

While we usually search for Chametz on the night before Pesach, this year we can't because of Shabbos. So, we search on Thursday night, April 17th, after the stars emerge, at 9:02pm. Before searching we recite the blessing of "Al Biur Chametz," and after the search we recite the "Kol Chamira;" (found in the standard Artscroll Siddur on pg. 655.) The "Kol Chamira" paragraph (the first one printed in the Siddur) annuls our ownership of any Chametz which has escaped our notice, so have that in mind when you say it.

When do we burn Chametz?

Ordinarily we burn our Chametz on the day before Pesach, before the 6th hour of the day. ("Hours" are determined by dividing the time between sunrise and sunset into twelve equal parts; each part is an "hour.") This year, obviously, we can't burn Chametz on Shabbos. Even though we could technically destroy Chametz by other means even on Shabbos (as we'll soon see), the sages felt the need to preserve the practice of burning Chametz. So, to preserve the practice of burning Chametz, we burn our Chametz on Friday, April 18th, at the normal time – before 12:25pm. This year, in order to prevent unnecessary dangers in our backyards, we are again working to arrange a communal fire to fulfill this minhag, and we will let you know the place and time for the communal chametz burning when that information becomes available. We do not recite any blessing at the time of the burning this year.

When do we say "Kol Chamira," annulling our ownership of Chametz?

In an ordinary year, we recite one version of the "Kol Chamira" paragraph when searching for Chametz at night and a second version when burning the Chametz on the next morning. (Both versions may be found in the standard

Artscroll Siddur, page 655.) The language we use at night allows us to save some Chametz to use at breakfast. The language we use when we burn the Chametz states that we annul our ownership of **all** Chametz. This year we cannot recite the second version of "Kol Chamira" when burning our Chametz, because we are keeping some Chametz for use on Shabbos. So, we recite the first version when we search for Chametz, on Thursday night, and the second version of "Kol Chamira" on Shabbos morning, before 12:25pm, after having disposed of Chametz as described below.

When do the first-born sons fast?

The first-born sons usually fast on the day before Pesach, commemorating the fact that they were saved from the plague of the first-born in Egypt. We do not fast on Shabbos, nor on Friday, since fasting would cause people to enter Shabbos in discomfort. So the first-borns must fast on Thursday, unless they attending a celebration honoring a Mitzvah in order to exempt them from fasting. One popular option is to attend a "siyum" celebrating completion of a course of Torah study. This year's siyum will be given by Shmuel Kresch.

What should we eat on Shabbos April 23rd?

All cooked food should be kosher for Pesach. I don't recommend serving any cooked Chametz food, as it's quite challenging to get rid of the dishes, utensils and residue from that food. This is because utensils which are used with Chametz **may not** be washed on Shabbos, as the rinsing of the utensils of Chametz would be an act of preparation for Pesach, and you can't prepare for Pesach on Shabbos. Moreover, I recommend serving on paper utensils over Shabbos in order to avoid any problems with your dishes. Also, even if you did use Pesach dishes, you can't wash dishes on Shabbos for use after Shabbos, and who wants to start washing dishes before the Seder? If you have a pressing need to serve cooked chametz food on Shabbos, please contact me to discuss the issue.

But what about the bread? What do we wash on?

Good question. Eating the Shabbos meals present a unique challenge. On a normal Erev Pesach, we would eat Chametz until the end of the fourth hour (this year that 11:16am), and get rid of the Chametz by the end of the fifth hour (12:22pm). After that point, it's matzoh balls, potatoes and canned fruit until Pesach time. We do this because while you can't eat bread, the rabbis also prohibited the eating of matzah on Erev Pesach because they wanted us to be really hungry when we come to eat the matzoh during the Seder. On Shabbos, not eating bread presents a problem, as we have to make not one, but two separate meals to fill out the normal three-meal Shabbos requirement. So you have two options:

- The first option, suggested as optimal by Rav Moshe Feinstein, is to eat Egg Matzah for the Shabbos meals. While you normally wouldn't make a blessing of Hamotzi on Egg Matzah, if you're using it for a

Shabbos meal, that's certainly alright. At the same time, because of the unique properties of Egg Matzah, we Ashkenazim normally do not eat Egg Matzah over Pesach unless there's some pressing need. I could explain why, but that's a pretty involved issue. Just trust me on this. While Egg Matzah is not Chametz by any means, it does have "Chametz cooties," so we don't mix it with the regular Pesach dishes. This way, if your kids decide to have a food fight during the Friday night meal, you can rest easy knowing that they're not throwing chametz across your living room. If you have any Egg Matzah left over, you can leave it out with the Pesach foods. Just don't eat it unless you really have to.

- If you don't want to eat Egg Matzah (or Grape Matzah), you can eat regular bread up until the times listed above. Make sure to keep the bread completely separate from the rest of the food, the kitchen, your cat, and everything else. Just eat it. And be really, really careful about where you keep the chametz. It's a good idea to only keep as much chametz as you need for the Shabbos meals. If you have extra chametz left over that you need to get rid of, you can either allow a non-Jew to take the chametz off your property or flush whatever's left down the toilet. As a cautionary note, if you have children, I do not recommend this option.

Whichever option you choose, all bread and/or Egg Matzah eating must be finished before 11:15am. For this reason, we will daven at 7:00AM on Shabbos morning to allow people time to return home and enjoy their Shabbos meal. When you're finished eating, wash out your mouths and dental apparatus to rid them of any chametz residue, and then recite the second "Kol Chamira" paragraph, as explained above.

Does Chametz become Muktzeh on Shabbos afternoon?

Why, yes it does. Actual Chametz becomes Muktzeh at 1:32pm, when one is no longer allowed to benefit from Chametz. If you find Chametz after that time, either find a Gentile who can dispose of it or cover it with a vessel until Chol haMoed when you must burn it.

When do we eat Seudah Shlishit (the 3rd Shabbos meal – you know -- Shaleshudes)?

Ah, shaleshudes. On the one hand, many authorities rule that the third meal of Shabbos must be bread-based, like the first two meals. On the other hand, the third meal is ideally eaten on Shabbos afternoon, at which time Chametz is forbidden! We already noted that you can't eat Matzah on Erev Pesach, so what's a shaleshudes Jew to do?

Many poskim say that you can fulfill the requirement of shaleshudes without bread anyway, and on Erev Pesach, we can certainly rely on their position. So, during the afternoon eat a third meal of matzah balls, meat, fish or fruit. It is important to be careful not to eat this third meal so close to Pesach that it diminishes one's Seder appetite. (The first solution does not satisfy the view that the 3rd meal must be bread-based. Those who wish to satisfy this view should split their "lunch" into two parts, bentching, and then taking a twenty minute break before starting to eat again, completing both meals before 11:15am.)

May we make any preparations on Shabbos for the Seder?

No. One may not prepare on Shabbos for events occurring after Shabbos. One may nap with the intent that this will help him at the Seder, though, because that is a normal part of Shabbos activity. Just don't state that the purpose of his nap is to prepare for that night. After Shabbos is over (9:05pm), one may prepare for the Seder. Before beginning the preparations, either recite Maariv, or recite the abbreviated version of Havdalah, in Hebrew or English: *Baruch haMavdil Bein Kodesh leKodesh* (Blessed is the One who distinguishes between one type of sanctity and another). The full Havdalah is recited during Kiddush at the Seder.

How does one light candles for Pesach night?

When Yom Tov begins on a Saturday night, we wait to light candles until Shabbos is over, and we light from an existing flame: We light a 24-hour candle before Shabbos, which we then use as the fuel for the Yom Tov candles. We also light a second 24-hour candle on the first day of Yom Tov, and use that candle as the fuel to light candles on the second night of Yom Tov, after the first day has ended.

How does one make Havdalah on Pesach night?

Havdalah is recited as part of Kiddush at the Seder, before the "Shehechiyanu" blessing. The Yom Tov candles are used for the Havdalah candle. Some people remove two Yom Tov candles from the candlesticks and place them side-by-side, to simulate a multi-wicked Havdalah candle. Others simply leave the candles in the candlesticks. Follow your normal custom.