

Practical Pesach Pointers – 5778/2018

Part 1 – Preparing for Pesach

Although we clean our homes thoroughly before *Pesach*, we are still required to perform a proper *bedikas chameitz* (search for *chameitz*) in every place in which *chameitz* might have been brought.^[1] This includes all rooms regarding which there is reason to suspect that one might have brought in *chameitz* or into which one walked during a meal or during the course of a snack. Closets, shelves and drawers regarding which there is no reason to imagine that *chameitz* was brought in their vicinity do not require *bedikah*. If small children walk around the house carrying *chameitz*, one must check any area (even drawers) accessible to them. After rooms have been cleaned for *Pesach*, children should not be permitted to walk around with *chameitz*. Until *Erev Pesach*, one may give children *Pesach* macaroons or the like from a *hechsher* (*Kashruss* supervision) on which one relies during the year even if would not rely on it that *hechsher* on *Pesach* (due to one's personal *Pesach* stringencies). One may also give them *egg-matzos* or rice cakes, even though – according to Ashkenazic custom – these foods are not eaten on *Pesach*.

⁴Since our homes are large and difficult to check properly in one night, one may begin *bedikas chameitz* several nights earlier, checking one or more rooms each night – without *ab'rachah*. One may certainly use an electric

flashlight to check at such time (see note 4). At least one room must be left to be checked on the night of *bedikas chameitz*,^[2] at which time the *b'rachah* is recited.

4On the night of *bedikas chameitz*, other members of the family (who are responsible adults), may assist in the *bedikah*, each checking one room or more. The *ba'al habayis*^[3] recites the *b'rachah* and all those who are assisting must listen to his *b'rachah*. They should (preferably) answer *Amen*, but not *Baruch Hu U'varuch Shemo*. (See note regarding the usage of a flashlight on the night of *bedikas chameitz*.)^[4]

4The custom is to place ten pieces of *chameitz* around the house on the night of *bedikas chameitz* (see note).^[5] It is preferable that they be placed by someone other than the one who will be performing the *bedikas chameitz* (see note).^[6] However, they should not be placed by young children, who are liable to forget where they placed the pieces, unless an adult (or at least a responsible child) keeps track of where the pieces are placed. Each piece should be less than *ak'zayis* (olive size),^[7] and preferably wrapped in a tissue wrap, and sealed with tape. Collectively, the pieces should add up to at least the size of a *k'zayis*.^[8] One should not place the pieces in unusual places that do not require *bedikah*.

4When cleaning for *Pesach*, one is not required to move heavy appliances such as a refrigerator or washing machine (unless it is easy to do so, such as if they are on

wheels).^[9](See note for exception.)^[10] One should merely clean and vacuum under and around such appliances as best as possible. If it is possible to remove the bottom drawer of the oven or the bottom panel of the refrigerator and clean underneath, one should do so.

4One who will be away from home for *Pesach* must nevertheless perform *bedikas chameitz* and must, therefore, rid one's home of *chameitz*. If doing such is difficult, one may sell the entire house to the non-Jew to whom one is selling one's *chameitz*. Note: Even if the house no longer requires *bedikah*, one is required to somehow fulfill one's personal obligation of performing a *bedikah*. One should discuss with one's *Rav* whether to exclude one room of the house from the sale to the non-Jew, and to perform *bedikah* on that room or/and perform *bedikah* where one is staying for *Pesach* on the night of *bedikas chameitz*. **To access an article relevant to one who is going away for *Pesach*, click [here](#).**

4Burning the *chameitz*: One should dispose of most of one's *chameitz* before *Erev Pesach*. Only a small amount of *chameitz* should be kept for burning, but one should make sure that it is at least the size of a *k'zayis* (see note).^[11] One should not attempt to burn flour, vacuum cleaner bags, bagels, macaroni, or anything wrapped in a plastic bag, since these are difficult to burn and are likely to not be consumed completely by the fire. Such items, if remaining, should be thrown into a public garbage bin before the *sof z'man bi'ur*.^[12]

4One may not eat *matzah* on *Erev Pesach*, but one may eat *Pesach kneidlech* (*matzah* balls) until the end of the ninth proportional hour of the day.^[13] There is a dispute amongst the *Poskim* (halachic authorities) whether one may eat *matzah-meal* cakes on *Erev Pesach* even before the end of the ninth hour of the day.^[14]

4There are different standards regarding the *matzos* one eats on *Pesach*. *L'chatchilah* (preferably/initially), one should eat only hand-baked *shmurah matzos* for the *Pesach Seder*. However, some have the custom to use machine *matzos* even for the *Seder*; the *matzos* must still be *machine-shmurah matzos*.^[15] There is a worthwhile *chumrah* (stringency) to eat only *shmurah matzah* (hand or machine) the entire *Pesach*. Those who use *non-shmurah matzos* for the remainder of *Pesach* should try to use only “18-minute” *matzos* with a reliable *hechsher*. One should note that all products containing *matzah-meal* or cake-meal should be of the same standard as the *matzos* that one eats. Most *Pesach* cakes, snacks and cereals that contain *matzah-meal* are not made from “18-minute” *matzos*.

4It is preferable to use red wine for the four *kosos*.^[16] However, one who dislikes red wine may drink white wine (see also note).^[17] Before *Yom Tov*, one may mix white wine with red wine to give it a red color. If one did not mix the wines before *Yom Tov*, the custom is to allow mixing them on *Yom Tov* if one first pours the red wine into the receptacle and then adds the white wine,

thereby avoiding a concern of the *melachah*^[18] of *tzove'a* (“coloring”) on *Yom Tov* (see note).^[19]

IY”H,^[20] next week, we will discuss the *halachos* of the *Pesach Seder*.

[1] See *Rema, Orach Chaim* 433:11 with *Mishnah Berurah* #46. Cf. *Sha'arei Teshuvah* on *Rema* (ibid.).

[2] That is, the night before *Pesach* (unless *Pesach* begins on *Motz'ei Shabbos*, in which case the night of *bedikas chameitz* is Thursday night, not Friday night).

[3] Literally: the head of household.

[4] In our houses, using a candle often poses a fire hazard. However, the *minhag* (custom), based on the *Gemara (Pesachim 7b-8a)* is to use a candle. It is possible to preserve the *minhag* yet remain safe by reciting the *b'rachah* and beginning the *bedikah* with a candle – in a non-flammable area, and then switching to a flashlight shortly thereafter.

[5] The reason is as follows: The purpose of performing a *bedikah* is to search for *chameitz*. If one does not find any *chameitz*, there is concern that the *b'rachah* on the *bedikah* is a *b'rachah l'vatalah* (blessing in vain). To prevent such a scenario, we put out bread before beginning the *bedikah* so that we are assured of finding at least those pieces (*Rema O.C.* 432:2). (Putting out specifically ten pieces of bread is based on the Kabbalistic writings of the *Arizal*; see *Kaf Hachayim* 432:13.) The *Poskim* (halachic authorities) write, however, that putting out *chameitz* before the *bedikah* is actually not required according to *halacha*, since the *mitzvah* is not to locate *chameitz*, but merely to search for *chameitz* (*Rema* ibid.; see also *Taz*, cited in *Mishnah Berurah* ad loc.). Nevertheless, the *Poskim* write that one should act in accordance with the custom (*M.B.* ibid.). [In fact, nowadays that we follow the ruling of the *Rema (O.C.* 433:11) that prior to the *bedikah* one should clean one's house well, it would seem that we should be required according to *halacha* to put out the pieces of bread even when doing *bedikah* at home (see *Sha'arei Teshuvah* ad loc.). Indeed, *Sha'ar Hatziyun* (432:12) writes such in the name of the *Eimek Halacha*. Cf. *Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* note to *Sha'ar Hatziyun* (ibid.) and *Koveitz Halachos* chapter 5 note 8.]

[6] See *Dirshu Mishnah Berurah* n.e. 432:12 note 17. Nevertheless, it would seem that one who will be performing the *bedikas chameitz* and has no one else to place the pieces may place the pieces oneself.

[7] *Sha'arei Teshuvah* 432:7.

[8] See *M.B.* 445:10.

[9] See *Koveitz Halachos, Pesach* 6:25, based on *Shulchan Aruch O.C.* but see note that follows). Likewise, any piece of furniture that might become damaged or cause damage (to the floor or carpet) by moving need not be moved for *bedikas chameitz*.

[10] If, however, one places a large appliance within 30 days before the night of *bedikah* in a location, the leniency does not apply (see *S.A.* ibid.). Thus, if within 30 days before the night of *bedikah* one wishes to place a large appliance, one should perform a proper *bedikas chameitz* on that location before placing the large appliance (*Koveitz Halachos, Pesach* 6:26).

[11] Due to the doubt as to the precise measurement of a halachic *k'zayis*, one should burn *chameitz* at least the size of an egg. See *M.B.* 486:1.

[12] The time before which all *chameitz* must be destroyed, sold or disposed of. (**This year, in the Five Towns/Far Rockaway vicinity, *sof z'man bi'ur* according to the opinion of the GR”A (see note that follows) is at approximately 11:56 AM, and according to the opinion of the Magen Avraham is at approximately 11:43 AM.**) The *Mishnah Berurah* (443:8) writes that with regard to *achilas chameitz* one should *l'chatchilah* (initially/preferably) follow the more stringent opinion of

the *Magen Avraham*. Perhaps the same ruling applies to *bi'ur chameitz*.

[13] *M.B.* 471:20. One proportional hour is calculated by dividing the hours of daytime into twelve equal portions. There is a dispute among the *Poskim* (halachic authorities) whether daytime for this purpose is defined as beginning at *alos hashachar* (daybreak) and ending at *tzeis hakochavim* (nightfall – when three stars medium are visible) (*Magen Avraham*), or as beginning at *haneitz hachamah* (sunrise) and ending at *sh'kiah* (sunset) (*GR" A*). See *M.B.* 233:4. Nine proportional hours into the day translates into three proportional hours before the end of the day (as defined above.) **(According to the opinion of the *GR" A*, nine “proportional hours” into the day on *Erev Pesach* this year is at approximately 4:09 PM in the Five Towns/Far Rockaway vicinity. According to the opinion of the *Magen Avraham* it is at approximately 4:45 PM – if calculating presuming *alos hashachar* to be 72 minutes before *haneitz hachamah* and *tzeis hakochavim* to be 72 minutes after *sh'kiah*; and approximately at 4:18 PM – if calculating presuming dawn to be when the sun is 16.1 degrees below the horizon and nightfall to be when the sun is 36 degrees below the horizon.)**

[14] See *Rema O.C.* end of 471:2 with *M.B.* #20; see also *Koveitz Halachos, Pesach* 16:7 note 9 at length.

[15] See *S.A. O.C.* 460:1 with *Bi'ur Halacha* s.v. *matzas mitzvah*.

[16] Cups of wine at the *Pesach Seder*. *S.A. O.C.* 472:11.

[17] If one has both red wine and white wine and the white wine is superior to the red wine, one may use the white wine (*S.A. ibid.*).

[18] Labor forbidden on *Shabbos/Yom Tov*.

[19] *Sh"ut Sheivet HaLevi* 10:56. However, *Rav Elyashiv* (cited in *Hilchos Shabbos B'Shabbos*, vol.1 page 749, with note 61) rules that pouring red wine into white wine on *Yom Tov* solely for the purpose of creating red wine for the *Seder* is forbidden Biblically. Accordingly, he would likely hold that even pouring white wine into red wine for such purpose would be forbidden. (See also *Mishnah Berurah* 320:56 and 318:65.)

[20] *Im Yirtzeh Hashem* (G-d Willing).