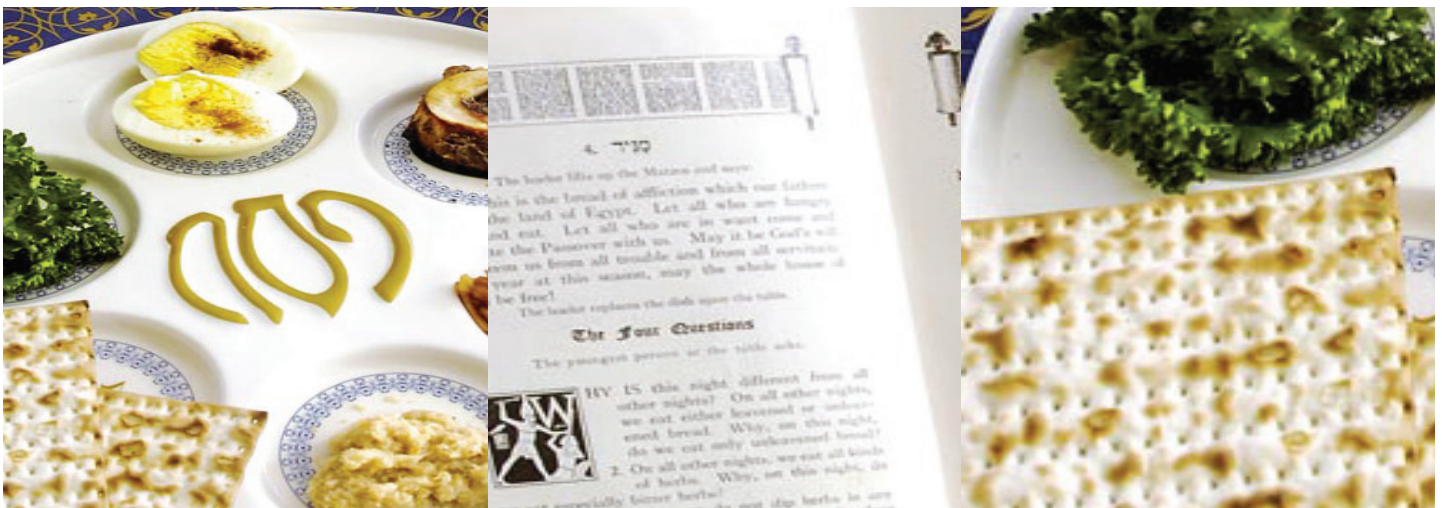




Once We Were Slaves Avadim Hayinu עבדים הינו



Guide to Kashering for Passover

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PESACH MADE EASY... AVOID “BURN OUT”

This article is to differentiate between obligatory observance and superfluous overburden. Throughout the years, many erroneous customs have crept their way into our Pesach observance that have a negative effect on this holiday of joy and hope. We should rejoice in this festival as it commemorates our going from slavery to freedom.

Why do we have to remove chametz? It is written in the Torah: “Chametz shall neither be seen nor found.” The reason we clean before Pesach is to find all the chametz that we do not want to get rid of, and if we find this chametz on Pesach, we would not want to destroy it. Examples are boxes of cookies, bottles of liquor, or bottles of perfume. For simplification, let us call this type – “important chametz.” Checking for this is easy to do. We are not concerned with small pieces of chametz that we do not want, but should you find small pieces while cleaning and looking for important chametz, then dispose of it.

People tend to overburden themselves with drudgery that is unnecessary for Pesach and then blame it on the holiday. It is “asur” - improper to look at Pesach with a sense of fear and dread with the wish that you could go to a hotel instead of staying home and cleaning.

Pesach cleaning is not “spring cleaning” and therefore it should not take more than a few hours to do it properly. Do not make the mistake of working so hard at spring cleaning (not Pesach cleaning), that you come to the Seder exhausted, barely able to stay awake. Spring cleaning should be done after Pesach since it is not relevant to the holiday.

Let us start with the kitchen. One must keep in mind that there is no obligation to destroy chametz crumbs, the prohibition is eating them on Pesach. So, we must be careful to clean away all chametz that can possibly come in contact with our food. Crumbs that cannot get into the food do not have to be cleaned away. For example, there is no need to clean out the cracks in the kitchen chairs since the chametz is stuck in there and will not fall out into our food. Since you usually do not go behind your refrigerator or your stove, there is no obligation to remove chametz that may have fallen behind and will not be seen on Pesach.

Tables and countertops, as well as the floor, should be swept clean. Curtains that are hanging in the kitchen should be shaken out; they do not have to be washed.

Items that you are putting away for Pesach and will not be using, such as toaster ovens, breadbaskets, mixers, etc. do not have to be cleaned. Even if there are crumbs in these items, you do not have to clean them – the declaration of bitul is sufficient to resolve this halachic issue. Brooms that will be used to clean the kitchen or the dining room on Pesach need only be shaken out before Pesach.

In the dining room, if you store your chametz dishes in a china cabinet, you do not have to remove them. Displaying beautiful things like crystal or fancy dishes adds to enjoyment of the festival. They do not have to be hidden.

Benchers are full of chametz and should not be used on Pesach; use the Haggadah for Birkat Hamazon.

In the bedrooms, the only thing that you have to look for is important chametz. Pockets on clothing that may have chametz in them, must be checked, if you plan on wearing them on Pesach. Certainly, you do not have to check the cuffs of your pants unless you are accustomed to sitting with your feet on the table!!

Children's toys should generally be cleaned. If however, the chametz is caked on or embedded in the toy so there is no fear that the children will eat it, it doesn't concern us and does not have to be cleaned.

Finally, attics, crawl spaces, garage, and cars have to be checked for important chametz but crumbs that may be present, will not end up in your food and will probably become decayed and moldy and hence not edible, they do not have to be cleaned out.

Garbage pails do not have to be cleaned and vacuum bags do not have to be emptied since there is no fear that you will want to eat that kind of chametz. You do not have to remove your garbage pails from your property even if you threw away chametz and it is still in there. Once chametz is dumped in the garbage pail, your bitul before Pesach works 100%.

Bedikat Chametz – the search for chametz is not to look for the 10 pieces of bread, but to look for important chametz. Since it may be dangerous to search the house with a candle, the bedikah can also be done with a flashlight. We light a candle before we make the bracha; then blow out the candle and use the flashlight.

If you are leaving your house before Pesach, the bedikah should be done on the last night you are in the house.



KASHERING DISHES AND UTENSILS

It is preferable to have special dishes, cutlery, glassware set aside for Pesach. If you have fancy silverware that can be koshered for Pesach, then do so. Crystal as well can be kashered.

METHODS OF KASHERING: For cutlery, the method is called Hagala. Clean out a large pot very thoroughly and let it sit idle for 24 hours. Clean the items that you want kashered and let them sit idle for 24 hours. Fill the pot with enough water to totally immerse the utensils. When the water is bubbling, place the items into the pot, completely immersed for a few moments, then remove and rinse in cold water.

Items such as roasting pans, frying pans, and the burners on your stove, that were exposed to direct heat need to be kashered using the “leebun” process – dry heat. The heat produced in a self-cleaning oven is sufficient for kashering utensils and the oven. This does not apply to convection ovens. Other ovens should have a liner for Pesach or follow the following steps: the oven must be thoroughly cleaned; 24 hours must pass after the last use; the oven should be burned at the highest temperature for at least two hours; and the racks should be either changed or covered with heavy aluminum foil.

The range is like a countertop, so if it is not enamel or enamel coated, then it can be koshered the same way you do your counters – boiling water poured on it. If the stovetop is enamel, you will have to cover it with aluminum foil if you want to use it on Pesach. Stove trivets, also known as burners, need to be koshered. Once cleaned, they should be turned on full for ten minutes.

SINKS: If the sinks are aluminum, then they can be koshered by pouring hot water in them. If the sinks are enamel, then one should use a liner made of plastic self-adhesive paper which will completely cover the sink. You do not have to kasher the faucets on your kitchen sinks, most do it anyway by pouring boiling water over them, the strainer in the sink as well.

DISHWASHERS: Generally, you cannot kasher enamel dishwashers, however, dishwashers, including the racks, made of hard plastic or metal can be koshered. For further information, please contact me for details.

REFRIGERATOR: Unless you cook in your refrigerator, you do not have to kasher it, cleaning it is enough. However, if you do not want to clean your refrigerator, you have to cover or line the shelves.

MICROWAVE OVENS: Kashering is not really difficult. Once you are satisfied that you have removed all food particles from inside the oven, particularly by the internal vent, then you can start. First, remove the glass tray and pour boiling water on it. For the oven itself, after 24 hours of non-use, place a saucer of water inside and turn the unit on and let the steam fill the oven. Then splash boiling water on the five walls and the inside of the door. This does not apply to convection ovens.

COUNTERTOPS AND TABLES: To kasher a counter or a table made of wood, formica, granite, or marble, just pour boiling water over them after they have been cleaned very well. Many people cover their countertops and tables instead or as well. If you cover the counter, one layer of paper or aluminum is enough.

Cupboards and cabinets do not need to be koshered; they need to be cleaned and lined.

The article is predicated on Rav Moshe Feinstein's approach to observing the Pesach holiday. All of the concepts that are listed have a halachic source. Rav Mordecai Tendler has given this shiur and it has been transcribed by Moishe Siegel.

REMEMBER- ONCE WE WERE SLAVES!

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

To find "important chametz" only!
Preparation for bedikah. Do not fear Pesach.
Do not wish you were going to a hotel.
It is not difficult! It is not spring-cleaning!
Spring-cleaning should wait till after Pesach.
You should be well rested for the Seder.

Kitchen:

Clean away only chametz that can get into your food.
Leave chametz stuck in cracks.
Leave chametz hidden behind heavy appliances.
Do not clean items being put away for Pesach.
Tables, countertops, and floor just need to be swept.
Curtains just need to be shaken out. Brooms have to be shaken out.