

KITCHEN PREP FOR PESACH

BY RABBI MOSHE HAUER

I. KITCHEN FURNISHINGS:

a. Cabinets: Anywhere that Chametz or Chametz dishes are to be stored should be sealed for Pesach. Cabinets to be used for Pesach should be carefully wiped down.

b. Counters and Tabletop: These should be cleaned very carefully, including corners and cracks or between leaves. Hard to clean areas should be sprayed with a harsh cleanser. The surfaces should then be covered for Pesach use. If it is a 'hot' surface, a suitable heat-resistant cover should be used.

c. Sink: All areas of the sink, including the knobs, faucets, spout cover and drain, should be thoroughly cleaned. Porcelain or enamel sinks that cannot be kashered should be used with a sink liner or basin only. Stainless steel sinks may be kashered as follows: Hot water should not be used in sink for twenty-four hours prior to kashering. To kasher, boil water until it reaches a bubbling boil and pour the boiling water over all the surface areas (floor, walls, spout and fixtures) of the sink. The water must be poured directly from the pot or kettle onto the entire area; it is not sufficient to pour it on one end and allow it to flow from there. This process may take one or two refills of the kettle to complete. Dish and sink racks and sink strainers should be changed for Pesach.

d. Pots, Dishes and Flatware: Ideally one should have separate kitchen utensils for Pesach. However, kashering is an option for certain types of utensils. Generally, we only kasher items made of metals. One can kasher non-coated metal pots and pans that are used for cooking, but (usually) not those used for roasting or baking. Frying pans may be kashered if they are usually used with generous amounts of oil or other liquids. Flatware can be kashered, with the exception of certain kinds of knives. Glassware should not be kashered in most cases. Please feel free to ask about your specific items.

It is traditional that kashering be done in the presence of a Rabbi. **To facilitate this, our shul will do kashering Sunday, April 14, from 8:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., in the shul's kitchen.** Remember: all dishes should be *thoroughly* cleaned and not used with hot food or water for twenty-four hours before kashering.

II. APPLIANCES:

a. Refrigerator/Freezer: All of the surfaces and shelves should be thoroughly cleaned. It is not necessary to line the shelves, other than hard-to-clean ridged shelves or vegetable drawers on/in which unwrapped food - such as produce - is placed. Any refrigerated food that you could not use on Pesach should ideally be disposed of before Pesach. If there is something that needs refrigeration that you could not dispose of and will be included in your sale of Chametz, you should keep it in a defined area of the fridge, such as the door or a specific shelf or drawer, and cover it in a way that would require effort to undo.

b. Dishwasher: Unfortunately, a dishwasher that doesn't have a stainless steel interior cannot be kashered for Pesach use. As such, it should be cleaned, especially at the 'trap' (drain), and closed up. If your dishwasher is stainless, call me to discuss the possible kashering options.

c. Stove top: The entire stove top area, including the grates and burners, should be thoroughly cleaned. Pay special attention to the knobs, as well as the area under the cover (if it is not a sealed burner model). The burners should then be lit for kashering. Electric burners should be lit until they glow red, gas burners for a few minutes, and Corning top stoves at "Maximum" setting for ten minutes. The grates of a gas stove should be kashered by placing them inside the oven at high heat for forty minutes. You may do this while you are kashering the oven. Burner pans should also be kashered. If you think that they could not stand the high heat in the oven, you may cover them with foil, or you may kasher them as you kasher the sink (above). All stoves must be covered properly between the burners or lightly blow-torched. Glass-top stoves may be Kashered by turning up the burners and pouring hot water over the other areas. With such stovetops, pots or food should **not** be placed on the areas between the burners during Pesach. The 'blech' must be replaced for Pesach.

d. Oven: Self-cleaning ovens can be kashered by running the self-cleaning cycle. Please note that the self-cleaning doesn't always clean the door, so make sure that the door and door seal are cleaned of any dirt or visible grime. If your oven does not self-clean, clean the oven and racks manually of any dirt or grime using an oven cleaner. After you are satisfied with the cleaning, run the oven at maximum heat (broil) for forty minutes. If you do not want to leave your racks in your self-cleaning oven for the self-clean cycle, you may also kasher them by cleaning them and then leaving them in the oven at high heat for forty minutes. Please note that although broiler pans cannot be kashered for Pesach, you may kasher the broiler like the oven and then use a new broiler pan.

e. Microwave Oven: I generally discourage Kashering the microwave. For those who wish or need to, all surfaces - especially the ceiling - should be thoroughly cleaned. After not using for twenty four hours, place a number of cups of water in the oven and run the oven until the steam of the water fills the oven. The floor of the oven and turntable should be covered or replaced for Pesach. Even after such Kashering, I would recommend using double covers for cooking in the microwave for Pesach.

f. Small appliances: Mixers cannot easily be rendered fit for Pesach use. Food processors may be usable with new plastic bowls after the blades are kashered. Hot water urns are usually difficult to properly kasher.

Some Pesach Cleaning Pointers

Pesach cleaning can be a big job (wow - how insightful!). While it is meant to be rigorous and thorough, the rigor does not need to be way beyond Halachic necessity. As such, please note the following few points that could be kept in mind to make the job equally effective but a bit less challenging.

1. “Dust is not Chametz”. Cleaning for Pesach requires making sure that no actual Chametz is present. In many cases this can be done by a visual inspection without actual cleaning. For example, one can check a sleeping area by looking under the bed, without moving it or vacuuming. Of course if the area is cluttered one cannot properly inspect it visually without moving the clutter.
2. “A place where *Chametz* is not introduced during the year does not require *Bedikah*.” Non-food storage closets, attics or filing cabinets that are not used for *Chametz* and that are never entered while eating do not require cleaning for Pesach. Likewise while one needs to check pockets of clothes such as coats or jackets that may have once contained a food item, one does not need to check pockets of clothing such as shirts where this either would not have happened to begin with or it would have come out in the wash.
3. A place where the *Chametz* is essentially buried away in a place and manner that it will not come out over Pesach does not need to be cleaned out. Thus one is not obligated to clean behind and beneath heavy appliances like refrigerators and ovens that are never moved - other than for Pesach cleaning!
4. An area of the house – a room or cabinet – that will not be used at all on Pesach may be included in the sale of *Chametz* such that the entire room or cabinet and its contents are sold, thus saving the individual the task of checking, cleaning and scouring closets full of *Chametz* dishes.

Medicines, Cosmetics & Toiletries

The Jewish people treat Pesach with the utmost care, making sure not to use or to keep anything that may contain Chametz. Many are careful as well with items such as medicines, cosmetics and toiletries, to use only those products that are known not to contain any kind of Chametz. This is a virtuous practice, and may be maintained as long as there is no inappropriate compromise on medical care, and no imposition of significant additional expense. For lists of Chametz-free medicines, cosmetics and toiletries one may consult the Star-K Passover Directory or Rabbi Blumenkrantz’s Pesach Digest, amongst others.

For Halachic clarification, please note the following guidelines that should be followed where one is unable or does not choose to maintain the higher standard.

- All pill medications (with or without Chametz) that are swallowed whole are permitted without Passover certification, even for one who is not significantly ill. Vitamins and food supplements may not fall into this category. Please consult your Rabbi regarding your specific situation.
- All liquid and chewable medications that have *kitniyos* may be consumed by one who is ill. However, a healthy person who only has a slight discomfort should consult with a reliable list for *kitniyos*-free liquid and chewable medications.
- All liquid and chewable medications that may contain Chametz or possible Chametz should only be used under the direction of a doctor and a rabbi. Important: Before discontinuing liquid or chewable medicine, you must consult with your doctor and rabbi.
- All varieties of body soaps, shampoos and stick deodorants are permitted for use on Pesach, other than those that are known to be grain-based.
- All types of ointments, creams, nail polish, hand lotions, eye shadow, eyeliner, mascara, blush, foot and face powders, ink or paint may be used, other than those that are known to be grain-based.
- Colognes, perfumes, hairspray, shaving lotions and deodorants that have denatured alcohol (listed as a form of SD, such as SDA, SD29C], SD Alcohol, Alcohol, Denatured Alcohol or Ethyl Alcohol) cannot be used on Pesach unless they appear on a reliable list. This only applies to products in a liquid state.
- Lipstick, toothpaste and mouthwash and other items that are used by mouth should not be used if they contain *Chametz*. Many standard brands of these items are Kosher for Pesach, however a new stick, tube or bottle should be purchased for Pesach use.

Finish eating Chametz on Erev Pesach, 4/19 by 10:18 am. **Burn Chametz** before 11:34 am.

Note: The Star-K notes that it may be problematic (**חמץ שעבר עליו הפסח**) to purchase real Chametz for four weeks following Pesach from Baltimore-area Giant, Target & Safeway stores, other than from their Kosher aisles.

Rabbi Hauer can be reached at 410-764-7356; Rabbi Rose at 410-499-8066. Please leave a message for a return call. Questions about the Kashrus of specific brands or products would best be directed to the Vaad HaKashrus, 410-484-4110.