

## ❖ Laws Pertaining to The Day Before Pesach

By Rabbi Yochanan Schnall

### Food Restrictions

- Starting from dawn, it is forbidden to eat matzah the entire day.<sup>1</sup>
  - Baked foods containing matzah meal are also forbidden but cooked foods made from matzah meal may be eaten.<sup>2</sup>
- Once a third of the day has passed, it is forbidden to eat chometz.<sup>3</sup> The website [www.myzmanim.com](http://www.myzmanim.com) provides these times for communities around the world.
- In order to have appetite for the seder, a satisfying volume of any food may not be eaten during the late afternoon.<sup>4</sup>

### Destroying and Nullifying the Chometz

It is forbidden to own or benefit from chometz after five-twelfths of the day has passed and all owned chometz must be destroyed before this time. In addition, every Jewish person over bar/bas mitzvah<sup>5</sup> must declare his or her chometz as ownerless<sup>6</sup>. The time for five twelfths of the day in any given community can be accessed at [www.myzmanim.com](http://www.myzmanim.com).

More details on this subject can be found in the “**Chometz 101**” publication.

### Fast of the Firstborn

All firstborn males over bar mitzvah are required to fast the day prior to Pesach.<sup>7</sup> This fast is customarily curtailed by participating in a *siyum*.<sup>8</sup>

A *siyum* is a celebration that marks the completion of a tractate of Gemara, a seder of Mishna, or a book of Tanach that was studied in depth with the Rishonim (primary commentaries)<sup>9</sup>.

- Even an oldest son who was born after a miscarriage is included in this fast.<sup>10</sup>
- If a firstborn son is under bar mitzvah, his father is required to fast on his behalf (or avoid it by attending a *siyum*).<sup>11</sup>
  - If the firstborn son is less than thirty days old there is no requirement for the father to fast.

### Work Restrictions

Performing skilled activity becomes restricted after mid-day.<sup>12</sup> Consult [www.myzmanim.com](http://www.myzmanim.com) to see what time this is in your area.

- Receiving a haircut from a Jewish barber, shaving and cutting nails are to be completed before this time<sup>13</sup>.
- A Jewish person may not do laundry after this time.<sup>14</sup>
  - Receiving a haircut from a non-Jew and giving laundry to a non-Jew remain permitted throughout the day.<sup>15</sup>
  - One who forgot to take care of these before the proper time should see endnote 16.
- Other than the above instances, all work that is necessary for the holiday is permitted as long as it is done without charge.<sup>17</sup>
- One who must remain at the place of his or her employment after mid-day, should consult a rabbi<sup>18</sup>.

## General Laws

- There is a particular mitzvah to shower or bathe in honor of the holiday.<sup>19</sup> Men and boys go to the mikvah as well.<sup>20</sup>
- When buying and preparing food for Pesach, one must be careful not to refer to a piece of meat as “for Pesach” since this statement resembles the consecration of a Pesach sacrifice.<sup>21</sup> (Violating this does not affect a food’s permitted status.)
- It is praiseworthy to study the laws of the Pesach sacrifice on Erev Pesach since this has the significance of bringing it.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rema 471:2

<sup>2</sup> Mishna Berura 471:20; see Sha’ar Hatziyun 444:1

<sup>3</sup> Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 603:1

<sup>4</sup> Shulchan Aruch 471:1, Mishna Berura ad loc.

<sup>5</sup> Halachos of Pesach IX C 5

<sup>6</sup> Shulchan Aruch 434:2

<sup>7</sup> Shulchan Aruch 470:1

<sup>8</sup> Mishna Berura 470:10

<sup>9</sup> Igros Moshe Orach Chayim volume 1 #157

<sup>10</sup> Mishna Berura 470:2

<sup>11</sup> Rema 470:2

<sup>12</sup> Shulchan Aruch 468

<sup>13</sup> Mishna Berura 468:5

<sup>14</sup> Mishna Berura 468:7

<sup>15</sup> Mishna Berura 468:5,7

<sup>16</sup> Shaving and cutting nails are permitted after the fact. See Mishna Berura 468:5 and Shiurei Halacha by Rabbi Shmuel Felder

<sup>17</sup> Mishna Berura 468:6

<sup>18</sup> See Mishna Berura 468:6,7

<sup>19</sup> Rema 471:3

<sup>20</sup> Mishna Berura 471:22

<sup>21</sup> Shulchan Aruch 669:1, Mishna Berura 669:2

<sup>22</sup> Mishna Berura 471:22