

Best wishes for a Chag Kasher ve-Sameach.
Rabbi Elliot Kaplowitz

Please note: All times listed are for Baltimore. For times in other locations visit www.myzmanim.com

1. **Maot Chitim** – The Rema (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 429) records the ancient custom of *ma'ot chitim* – providing money for poor people to buy matzah and other supplies for Pesach. A number of tzedka organizations have special Maot Chitim drives.
2. **Ta'anit Bechorim, Fast of the Firstborns** – Erev Pesach is the fast of the firstborns, to commemorate the fact that the Jewish firstborns were spared during *makat bechorot* (the slaying of the firstborns). **This year the fast is observed on Friday March 30 (14 Nissan) beginning at 5:33am.** The *minhag* is that any firstborn who attends a *siyum* and thereby become obligated to participate in the *seudat mitzvah* associated with the *siyum* is exempt from fasting the rest of the day. **Shacharit will be at 6:00am followed by a siyum at approximately 6:35am.**
3. **Chametz** On Pesach, in addition to the prohibition against eating Chametz (any leavened product), there is also a prohibition against owning Chametz and deriving benefit from it. The Torah therefore mandates that one get rid of all their Chametz before Pesach. The prohibition against owning Chametz is so severe that there is a Rabbinic penalty that any Chametz that was in a Jew's possession during Pesach cannot be used after the holiday has passed (*chametz she-avar alav ha-Pesach*; see below). All restrictions of eating and owning Chametz begin the morning before Pesach begins Monday morning, April 10; 14 Nissan. Whatever one is not able to consume or give away before Pesach must be destroyed on Erev Pesach by burning it. We take the prohibition so seriously that we also make a statement declaring all Chametz in our possession about which we don't know to be ownerless and akin to the dust of the earth.
The last time to eat chametz is 10:33am The prohibition against owning chametz comes into effect at 11:43am All chametz must be burned by this time. The sale of chametz takes effect as of 11:43am for those in Baltimore. Please note that there are communal chametz burning at Pimlico Race Course Clubhouse Parking Lot and in the Beth Tfiloh Synagogue Parking Lot.
Extreme caution should be used to ensure proper safety while burning chametz.
4. **Mechirat Chametz – selling chametz**
Recognizing the significant financial loss that the requirement to get rid of and destroy all of one's Chametz may impose, the Rabbis came up with a way that the Chametz need not be destroyed – selling it to a non-Jew for the duration of the holiday. For a full explanation of how the sale of Chametz works, see the attached document titled “mechirat chametz explanation.”

In order to be included in the sale, you must fill out the attached form appointing me as your agent (*shaliach*) to sell your chametz. **One may submit the form electronically. Electronic submissions can be completed at** <https://goo.gl/forms/qBtIY6Ot5qbwTFkz2>

The final deadline to submit forms online is 11:55 PM, Wednesday March 28.

Please keep the following points in mind:

- Even if you will not be home for the entire holiday, if you have Chametz that you own, you must either dispose of it or sell it. **Any Chametz not appropriately accounted for is considered *chametz she-avar alav ha-Pesach* (see below) and it is forbidden to derive any benefit from it after Pesach.**
- **Children who live away from home should not rely on their parents' *mechira* (sale).** Parents can act as an agent for their children but **Chametz owned by children living independently is not automatically included with their parents' sale.**

5. Mitzvah of *Biur Chametz* (Getting Rid of Chametz)

In anticipation of Pesach we are commanded to get rid of the Chametz in our possession. We can do this by eating the Chametz, giving it away to non-Jews or disposing of it. No matter how thorough a job we do in the weeks leading up to Pesach, there are additional mitzvot to ensure we have gotten rid of every piece of Chametz in our possession.

a. **Bedikat Chametz – Searching for Chametz**

The night of the day before Pesach (14th of Nisan) we conduct a search (*bedika*) of the house to make sure all Chametz is gone. The *bedikah* is done on the night of the 14th of Nissan, which this year is Thursday March 29 after 8:08pm.

If one will not be home Thursday night, they should do a *bedika* on the final night that they will be there, without a *bracha*. The chametz found during this *bedikah* should be burned on Friday morning March 30. In such a situation, an additional *bedikah* (search) should be performed on Thursday night if one is in the location that will be their primary residence for Pesach.

According to some views, those who will be away from their primary residency from before the night of bedikat chametz through the entire Pesach are exempt from bedikat chametz provided they have sold their chametz. In this situation, it is still advisable to perform bedikat chametz the night before leaving without a *bracha*, if possible.

The Bedika should be performed at or after *tzeit ha-Kochavim* (when the stars appear), 8:09pm. In order to ensure that Chametz will be found and the *bracha* will not be a *bracha le-vatala* (blessing in vein), we put out 10 pieces of Chametz. The search should be a real, thorough search. This includes looking in drawers, coat pockets, closets etc. Cars, offices and any other space that Chametz might have been brought should also be searched. Rooms

where Chametz is never brought during the year do not have to be checked. Finding only the 10 pieces of bread that you put out, is not sufficient. To perform the Bedika, the lights in the home/apartment/dorm room should be turned off. A candle or flashlight should be used to ensure we check in every crack and crevice. Traditionally a feather is used to sweep away any crumbs. Before beginning the search, we make the following *bracha*

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על בעור חמץ
Baruch Ata Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha-Olam Asher kidshanu be-
mitzvotav ve-tzivanu al biur Chametz.

Blessed are You Lord our God, Sovereign of the World, Who has sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us concerning the removal of chametz.

Note: A bracha is only said if performing the search on Thursday evening.

At the conclusion of the search the following declaration is made:
 כל חמירא וחמיעא דאכא ברשותי. לדא חמיתה ולדא בערתה ודלא ידענא ליה לבטל ולהוי הפקר כעפרא
 דרארעא

Kol Chamira ve-chmi'ah de-ika bi-reshuti de-la chamiteh ude-la bi'arteh ude-la yadana leih. Li-batel ve-le-hevei hefker ke-afra de-ara.

All leaven and leavened products in my possession, which I have neither seen nor removed nor know about shall be deemed of no value and ownerless like the dust of the earth.

The declaration should be said in a language that you understand.

b. Biur Chametz – Burning Chametz

All Chametz must be removed from our possession by the beginning of the 6th hour. As a final act of getting rid of chametz, we burn the chametz that we found during our *bedikah* the previous evening (as well as any other chametz still in our possession). Chametz must be burned by 11:56am – the time at which owning chametz becomes forbidden.

All utensils one intends to kasher for Pesach should be koshered by 11:56 am on Friday. *Be-di'eved*, however, one may kasher them all day on Friday.

c. Bitul Chametz – Nullifying Chametz

In addition to selling, searching for and the burning of Chametz, we also make a declaration to nullify any Chametz we might have missed. We recite this nullification during the burning of the chametz.

The declaration of *bitul* is:

כל חמירא וחמיעא דאכא ברשותי דהזתה ודלא חזתה חזמתה ודלא חמתה דבערתה ודלא בערתה לבטל ולוי
 הפקר כעפרא בעלמא

Kol chamira ve-chami'a de-ika bi-reshuti de-chaziteh ude-la chaziteh, de-
chamiteh ude-la chamiteh de-bi'arteh ude-la bi'arteh li-batel ve-leheveh hefker
ke-afra de-ara.

All leaven and leavened products in my possession, whether I have seen them or not, whether I removed them or not, shall be deemed of no value and ownerless like the dust of the earth.

This declaration should be said in a language that you understand.

6. Eating on Erev Pesach

We do not eat Matzah or anything baked with matzah (including matzah meal products) on *erev Pesach*, Monday April 10, in anticipation of the mitzvah to eat Matzah at the seder. Cooked matzah products (i.e., matzah balls) are permitted. One should eat in moderation on *erev Pesach* in order to have an appetite at the seder.

Many have the minhag to refrain from eating Matzah products beginning on Rosh Chodesh Nissan or from the the 15th of Adar.

7. Candle Lighting

We light candles at sunset Friday March 30 which is 7:10pm. Two blessings are said:

1) ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של שבת ושל יום טוב
baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha-Olam Asher kidshanu be-mitzvotav ve-tzivanu lehadlik ner shel Shabbat ve-shel Yom Tov

Blessed are You Lord our God, Sovereign of the world, Who has sanctified with His commandments and has commanded us to kindle the light of the festival.

2) ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם שהחיינו וקיימנו והגעיננו לזמן הזה
Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha-olam she-hechyanu ve-kiyimanu ve-higiyanu la-zman ha-zeh.

Blessed are You Lord our God, sovereign of the world, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

8. Mitzvot of the Seder

The seder should not begin until after tzeit ha-kochavim (appearance of the stars) which is 8:09 pm in Baltimore, Friday March 30..

On the second night (Saturday March 31), candle lighting is no earlier than 8:11pm. One should not begin any preparations for the seder until that time.

Candles should be lit from an already-existing flame – it is prohibited to light a new flame on Shabbat or Yom Tov, but transferring a flame is permitted.

The *brachot over candles are*

1) ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של יום טוב
baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha-Olam Asher kidshanu be-mitzvotav ve-tzivanu lehadlik ner shel yom tov

Blessed are You Lord our God, Sovereign of the world, Who has sanctified with His commandments and has commanded us to kindle the light of the festival.

2) ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם שהחיינו וקיימנו והגעיננו לזמן הזה
Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha-olam she-hechyanu ve-kiyimanu ve-higiyanu la-zman ha-zeh.

Blessed are You Lord our God, sovereign of the world, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

Note that Havdallah is included in Kidush of the second night.

- a. 4 cups of wine** --the minimum size of the wine cups is 3.0 fluid ounces. Everyone must drink more than half of this volume. The cups should be filled fully for each of the four cups, and should be poured by someone else to demonstrate that we act as free people. The Shulchan Aruch rules that it is preferable to drink red wine, but one may drink whatever wine he/she prefers. One may use grape juice if he/she is unable to drink wine.
- b. Matzah** – there are three times during the seder when matzah must be eaten:
- i. When we say the Brachot of *hamotzi* and *al achilat matzah*
 - ii. When we make the *korech* sandwich with Matzah, and Maror
 - iii. Afikomen

At each of these times one must eat a *kezayit* (volume of a large olive) worth. This translates to approximately one-half of an average machine made matzah or one-third of a hand made matzah.

Many people have the minhag at the Seder to eat only Shmurah matzah.

- c. Maror (bitter herb)** one should use horseradish or romaine lettuce. A *kezayit* worth of maror must be eaten. When using horseradish this translates to 19 grams or .7 fluid ounces. When using lettuce leaves it should be enough to cover an 8” x 10” area. When using stalks of romaine it should be enough to cover a 3”X 5” area.

All of these should be eaten in a time period of *k'day achilat Pras* (approx. 4 minutes.)

The Matzah and the Wine should be consumed while leaning to the left.

- d. Sipur Yetziat Mitravim – Telling the story of the exodus**
The goal of telling the story is not simply to relate the details of the story, but to create an experience where everyone feels that they have experienced a personal redemption. The Haggadah tells us “anyone who increases the telling of the story, it is praiseworthy.”
- e. Hallel**
Our telling of the story of the Exodus should lead to singing the praise of God. This is why Hallel is instituted at the end of the Seder. Note that many have the tradition to recite Hallel with a *bracha* as part of Ma'ariv (the evening prayer).

9. Seudah Shlishit

The mitzvot of Shabbat, including eating three meals remain in place. The seder and Yom Tov lunch account for the first two meals. Seudah shlishit should be eaten on Shabbat afternoon, early enough so it will not ruin one's appetite for the second seder. Ideally one should wash and eat Matzah for Seudah Shlishit.

Please note that Seudah shlishit will NOT be served at shul.

10. Second Seder

No preparations for the second seder should begin before 8:11pm. This is the earliest time to light candles and to recite kidush as well. **Please note that we will daven Ma'ariv at shul prior to 8:11. Davening ma'ariv early does not allow preparations for the second night any earlier.**

Please note that a special version of Havdallah is included in kidush for the second night to mark the end of Shabbat. The Yom Tov candles can be used as the flame for Havdallah.

11. Havdallah

We recite Havdallah at the conclusion of the second day of Yom Tov (Sunday April 1). We only say it over wine (no candle or spices) and we omit the introductory paragraph said on Shabbat. **Havdallah should be said after 8:11pm.**

12. Medicine and Cosmetics

- a. **Medicine** – Any medicines that one swallows may be taken on Pesach, without checking whether or not they have Chametz and/or kitniyot. The reason for this is that these pills are not eaten in the normal way, and any chametz present is simply a binding agent. The medical need to take the pills overrides whatever restrictions we would normally impose on this type of chametz.

Liquid and chewable medicines may contain Chametz or kitniyot. Since they are ingested in the normal way that we eat, these may be problematic. **If you have a serious medical condition it is important to consult with your doctor before discontinuing any medication. The halachic imperative to take care of oneself obligates those with serious conditions or illnesses to take their medicine without regard for ingredients.**

A list of common over the counter liquid and chewable medicines approved for Pesach may be found at
<http://www.crcweb.org/Passover/5778/Medicine%20and%20Cosmetics%20Letter.pdf>
<http://www.crcweb.org/Passover/5778/Medicines%20and%20Cosmetics%20List.pdf>

- b. **Vitamins and food supplements**

Vitamins and food supplements do not necessarily fall under the category of medicine. If they are taken based on a doctor's order for an already existing medical condition (and not as a preventative measure), they should be treated like medicine. If not, they may be problematic to ingest on Pesach if not properly certified for Pesach.

- c. **Lactose Intolerant**

There is a unique concern that comes up for those who are lactose intolerant. Lactaid contains trace amounts of Chametz in it. However, those who are lactose intolerant may follow these guidelines in order to drink milk on Pesach. There is a concept in Halachah of *bitul* (nullifying) minority ingredients. Generally if a mixture contains less than 1/60 of the minority ingredients, it is

assumed to be null and void. This halacha does not hold true for chametz on Pesach. Even trace amounts of chametz cannot be nullified. HOWEVER, this stringency begins only from the time that owning chametz is prohibited. Thus, if one buys Lactaid milk BEFORE Friday morning the trace amounts of chametz become nullified and remain insignificant when Pesach begins.

One may also buy other dairy products and place lactaid drops in them BEFORE Pesach in order to eat them on Pesach.

There is more of a debate over whether one may employ these procedures for Lactaid chewable pills. Some *posekim* feel that the need to eat dairy is a health need which would make the chewing of Lactaid pills allowable under the guidelines of other medicines described above. Others feel that chewing Lactaid pills is not enough of a medically urgent need.

For more see <http://oukosh.org/passover/guidelines/medicine-guidelines/lactose-intolerant/>

d. Cosmetics and Toiletries

(see

<http://www.crcweb.org/Passover/5778/Medicines%20and%20Cosmetics%20List.pdf>)

All varieties of blush, soap, creams, eye shadow, eyeliner, face powder, foot powder, ink, lotions, mascara, nail polish, ointments, paint, shampoo and stick deodorant are permitted for use on Pesach – regardless of the ingredients they contain.

Many liquid deodorants, hairsprays, perfumes, colognes and shaving lotions contain denatured alcohol and should not be used on Pesach unless they are confirmed to be free of Chametz.

Lipstick, mouthwash and toothpastes which contain chametz should not be used on Pesach.

- 13. Pets** – Many pet foods contain Chametz. The prohibition against chametz includes a prohibition against owning and benefiting from it – this includes feeding it to one's pets. If you have a pet please see the following on how to properly care for them on Pesach.

<https://www.star-k.org/articles/articles/seasonal/375/feeding-your-pet-barking-up-the-right-tree/>

https://www.star-k.org/articles/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/PetFoodList_2018.pdf

<http://www.crcweb.org/Passover/5778/Pet%20Foods.pdf>

It is important to note, that just as we are forbidden to feed our pets Chametz on Pesach, we are forbidden to feed them *basar be-chalav* (meat with milk) the entire year. Many popular brands of pet food (especially for dogs and cats) contain meat and milk and should not be used throughout the year.

14. Quinoa

In recent years quinoa has become a popular option for Pesach. The fact that it was only grown in the Andes mountains in areas where Chametz grains were not grown, led many leading posekim to rule that quinoa is not *kitniyot* and therefore permitted on Pesach even for Ashkenazim. However, the popularity of quinoa among the general public has led to a proliferation of farms growing quinoa – many of which also grow chametz grains. It has also been discovered that some farmers use barley and/or oats to cover their quinoa while it is drying to protect it from birds. A final concern was raised that some of the sacks used to transfer quinoa were previously used to transport chametz. Thus, while quinoa remains permitted for consumption on Pesach, stronger diligence and supervision is required to ensure that it has not come into contact with chametz.

Kashrut agencies have, therefore, determined that the only way to allow quinoa for use on Pesach is to track the quinoa from certain farms that are free from the above concerns. The Star-K spearheaded this endeavor and sent a mashgiach to find such a farm. While they were successful in their search, it proved to be challenging from a practical point of view, as the company visited generally sells their products in large quantities. The Star-K has now worked with other companies to pack the usable quinoa into smaller packages, the following option is available for the home consumer:

Any quinoa used on Pesach should therefore be under proper supervision. It is further recommended that one visually inspect the quinoa to ensure there are no trace amounts of chametz.

15. Chametz she-Avar alav ha-Pesach –

In addition to the prohibition against chametz on Pesach, there is also a Rabbinic penalty against chametz that was in a Jew's possession during Pesach. The most common area where this is a concern is in Jewish-owned stores that did not make the proper arrangements to sell their Chametz.

One may confidently shop at major supermarkets in the Baltimore area after Pesach.

16. Kashering

Those who need advice on kashering appliances and utensils for Pesach should contact Rabbi Kaplowitz.

17. Chol ha-Moed (Intermediate Days)

No unnecessary work should be done on chol ha-moed that does not directly contribute to our enjoyment of the holiday or our preparations for Shabbat and Yom Tov. We are allowed to do work which saves us from significant financial/professional loss. Professionals are allowed to go to work on Chol ha-Moed.

We are allowed to drive, use electricity, shop, write, etc. but should maintain the festive nature of the holiday. The prohibition against Chametz remains in effect for the duration of the holiday.

Customs vary regarding wearing Tefilin on Chol ha-Moed and shaving on Chol ha-Moed. Please consult with Rabbi Kaplowitz if you have any questions.

18. Liturgical changes

- A full Hallel is said on the first two days of Pesach. On the subsequent days we say a "Half Hallel."
- Many have the *minhag* of saying a full Hallel (with a *bracha*) as part of Ma'ariv on the first two nights of Pesach.
- *Tal* (dew) – During the *Chazan's* repetition of the first day of Pesach we recite a special prayer for dew. From this point on we no longer recite *mashiv ha-ru'ach u-morid ha-geshem* in the *Amidah*.
- *Ve-ten brachah* – Beginning *ma'ariv* at the end of the first days of Yom Tov, we say *ve-ten brachah* in the *amidah*. We no longer recite *ve-ten tal umatar li-vrachah*.
- *Yizkor* – is recited on the 8th day of Pesach (Saturday April 30, 2012).
- *Shir ha-Shirim* (Song of Songs) is read in synagogue on the second Shabbat of the holiday (Saturday April 30)

19. Sefirat ha-Omer

We begin counting the *omer* on the second night of Pesach. There are many practices of mourning that affect this period to commemorate the students of Rabbi Akiva who died during the *omer*.

20. Eruv Tavshilin

On Yom Tov we are allowed to perform certain activities that we can't do on Shabbat if they fall under the category of *ochel nefesh* (things that are beneficial to the soul) such as preparing food (this is true only if the fire is lit before Yom Tov begins). However, we may not prepare on one day for the following day. The only exception to this rule is when Yom Tov is immediately followed by Shabbat, we are allowed to cook for Shabbat on Yom Tov as long as the preparation begins before Yom Tov starts (on Thurs. night). To meet this criteria, on *erev Yom Tov*, (Thursday), one should take two cooked food items – a matzah and something else (usually a hard boiled egg, fish or meat) and set them aside to be eaten on Shabbat. Since one has begun their food preparations for Shabbat, they can now continue those preparations by cooking on Friday. The setting aside of two food items is accompanied by a blessing and declaration specifying them as an *eruv tavshilin*. These two items must be eaten on Shabbat. **The *bracha* for *eruv tavshilin* is found on page 654 of the Artscroll Sidur.**

21. The Last days of Yom Tov

Pesach concludes with two days of Yom Tov, beginning Thursday April 5. Candle lighting is at 7:16pm We recite the following:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של יום טוב
baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha-Olam Asher kidshanu be-mitzvotav ve-tzivanu lehadlik ner shel yom tov

Blessed are You Lord our God, Sovereign of the world, Who has sanctified with His commandments and has commanded us to kindle the light of the festival.

Friday April 6, candle lighting is 7:17pm. We recite:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של שבת יום טוב
baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha-Olam Asher kidshanu be-mitzvotav ve-tzivanu lehadlik ner shel Shabbat ve-shel yom tov

Blessed are You Lord our God, Sovereign of the world, Who has sanctified with His commandments and has commanded us to kindle the light of Sabbath and of the festival.

Candles for the second night should be lit from an existing flame.

Yizkor is recited on the eighth day of Pesach (Shabbat April 7, 2017).

We recite Shir haShirim on the last day of Pesach.

22. *Cooking on Yom Tov*

Note the following applies ONLY for Yom Tov and NOT for Shabbat

On Yom Tov we are permitted to perform certain activities that we can't do on Shabbat if they fall under the category of *ochel nefesh* (things that are beneficial to the soul). This broad category includes cooking and preparing food for the Chag, carrying, and other activities. One may cook on Yom Tov with the following restrictions:

- One cannot create a new flame, but must use a fire that was lit before Yom Tov. Similarly, one cannot extinguish a flame on Yom Tov.
- One CAN adjust the temperature on an oven or stove as long as there is not digital temperature display or other lights that will be turned on or be adjusted when changing the temperature. Electric stoves in which the heating element turns red when active are also problematic – please consult with a rabbi before using such stoves. Provided one's oven and/or stovetop meet these criteria, it is recommended to leave it on at a low temperature before the start of Yom Tov, and to increase the temperature when cooking. Once you finish cooking, you should return the oven/stove to the low temperature. **Extreme care should be taken to prevent fires and accidental burns.**
- One can only prepare food for that day of Yom Tov. It is not permitted to cook on the afternoon of the first day for the next day's meals. If there happen to be leftovers, they can be eaten on the following day.

23. *Showering on Yom Tov*

Many posekim feel that showering on Yom Tov is permitted by the principle of *ochel nefesh* (things that are beneficial to the soul) if a person feels particularly dirty from not having showered. If one decides that he/she needs to shower on Yom Tov, the following guidelines must be followed:

- One should shower in order to clean themselves and not take an overly long or luxurious shower.
- One may not use bar soap as this presents a separate problem of *memareach* (smoothing out the soap)
- One should not use a wash cloth in order to avoid problems of *sechitah* (squeezing out the water from the washcloth)

- One must also be very careful not to squeeze out their hair for the same concern.
- Ideally, one should drip dry after the shower in order to avoid squeezing out the towel. If one exercises extreme caution they can pat themselves dry with a towel.

24. Havdallah

At the conclusion of Yom Tov (Saturday April 7, 23 Nissan) we recite Havdallah no earlier than 8:18pm. Because the end of Yom Tov coincides with the end of Shabbat, we say full Havdallah with wine, candle and *besamim*.

25. Chametz after Pesach

Please allow an hour after the conclusion of Pesach to allow Rabbi Kaplowitz to buy back any Chametz that was sold through him before eating it.

26. Inclusion of Children

The late start of the *sedarim* is especially challenging for family with small children when so many of the Pesach rituals occur at night. Parents are encouraged to prepare with their children for the late night – encourage them to take a nap or to rest during the days before the Seder.

Parents are also encouraged to be flexible with their kids. Due to the biblical nature of the mitzvot of the night, we wait until *tzeit ha-kochavim* (emergence of three stars) before beginning the seder. If one's children cannot wait up that long, consider having a kids' seder at a more reasonable time.

Similarly, we wait until nightfall to do *bedikat chametz*. However, children can certainly do their own search for chametz prior to nightfall (without a bracha) and parents can then do a perfunctory search once the kids have gone to sleep.

I am happy to discuss specific situations with you and try to come up with creative solutions that might work for your family.