

# HALAKHIC GUIDELINES

By Rabbi Elazar Muskin  
**Erev Pesach on Shabbat:  
The Laws and Customs  
March 25-27, 2021**

The last time we celebrated Purim on a Friday and Erev Pesach on a Shabbat was in 2008. Due to these infrequent occurrences (the next time will be in the year 2025 and then 2045), special attention must be placed upon the correct observance of Erev Pesach and its unique demands. This Practical Halakhic Guide is dedicated to presenting a clear and concise outline of how to properly celebrate Erev Pesach this year. No attempt has been made to document every possible issue; rather, I hope these guidelines will offer the reader an easy understanding of the basic problems and their solutions. Considering this fact, I have not documented my sources, eliminating from this guide the copious notes that deserve to be attached only to a scholarly paper. If one wishes to personally study all the laws in detail, I strongly recommend the authoritative Hebrew work, "Erev Pesach Shechal B'Shabbat" by Rabbi Zev Cohen.

If you should have any questions concerning Pesach, please feel free to contact me at any time.

## **Erev Pesach on Shabbat**

### **Fast of the First Born:**

This year the Fast of the first-born occurs on Thursday (March 25). The Siyum for the first-born is held after Shacharit services on Thursday morning. If you are not able to attend the Siyum in person because of Covid-19 you can participate via Zoom, which will be arranged by the Shul.

### **Bedikat Chametz (Search for Chametz)**

The search for Chametz takes place on Thursday evening (March 25). The blessing, "Al Biur Chametz" is pronounced before commencing with the search. The "Kol Chamira" declaration is recited immediately following the search, annulling any Chametz one might have missed in the search.

### **Bi'ur Chametz (Burning the Chametz)**

The burning of the Chametz takes place on Friday (March 26) before the end of the fifth hour of the day (Los Angeles time – 11:45 a.m.) The "Kol Chamira" declaration, which is usually said at this time, is not said until Shabbat morning since one may eat Chametz all Friday and early on Shabbat morning.

If one did not burn the Chametz on Friday by 11:45 a.m., it may be burned at any time prior to the onset of Shabbat.

### **Sale of Chametz**

The sale of Chametz should take place on Friday morning (March 26) by 11:45 a.m. Many authorities maintain that the bill of sale used for the transfer of ownership of the Chametz to a

non-Jew should be dated the 13th of Nisan rather than the 14th of Nisan. Chametz, which is to be eaten on Friday, and Shabbat morning should be excluded from the sale.

If one did not perform the sale of Chametz by the correct time on Friday morning, he may sell the Chametz any time prior to Shabbat.

### **Preparations for the Seder**

On any Shabbat or Festival, one is not permitted to prepare on Shabbat for Saturday night. Therefore, one should not set the table for the Seder, nor make any other preparations until the conclusion of Shabbat. Due to this law, many preparations for the Seder must be completed on Friday, including:

a) Roasting of egg and shank bone for the Seder plate. If one forgot to roast these items on Friday, they should be roasted on Saturday night and eaten during the day on Sunday. This should be repeated for the second Seder on Sunday night and eaten on Monday.

b) Charoset should be prepared before Shabbat. If one forgot to make the Charoset on Friday, it may be prepared on Saturday night, albeit with a "Shinui" (a modification of technique).

c) Salt water should be prepared before Shabbat. If one forgot, he can prepare it on Saturday night.

Maror, however, presents its own special problem because we don't want it to lose its bitter taste. To avoid this problem, neither horseradish nor romaine lettuce should be soaked in water for a full twenty-four-hour period. The lettuce should be checked for insects on Friday. If one did not inspect the lettuce on Friday, then he should do so on Saturday night. If he finds any insects he should, however, remove a little lettuce together with the insect.

Ground horseradish may be prepared before Shabbat and stored in a covered airtight container until the Seder. Alternatively, the horseradish may be grated after Shabbat, prior to the Seder, but with a "Shinui" e.g., on a table or counter surface rather than in a bowl.

### **Working on Friday**

The Halakha states that after midday on Erev Pesach, one should stop work and prepare for the holiday. Because this year Erev Pesach is on a Shabbat, it's permitted to work on Friday afternoon, similar to any other Friday during the year.

### **The Shabbat Meals**

The most complicated issue for this Erev Pesach is how to have "Lechem Mishneh" - two loaves of bread, for the three meals on Shabbat. The problem is aggravated by the fact that on Erev Pesach one is not permitted to eat Matzah. To resolve this problem, the following options may be used:

a) Your entire house, including the kitchen, should be ready for Pesach before Shabbat. The only Chametz one should have is bread for "Lechem Mishneh" to be used on Friday evening and Shabbat morning. All other food should be "Pesachdik." In order to avoid any problems, disposable paper plates and plastic cutlery should be used. Preferably, a high quality, festive-looking paper plate and serving dishes should be used in honor of Shabbat. The

regular tablecloth should be covered with disposable plastic tablecloth (do not use paper in case of a spill) and removed after the meal. One should place the Shabbat candlesticks either at the very end of the table, which is not covered by the plastic covering, or on another surface in the dining room. This will permit one to be able to remove the plastic covering and dispose of it in the garbage. Since all the cooked food is "Pesachdik," only Pesach serving forks, etc., should be used to remove food from the pots.

When serving the bread, no food should be on the table, and one should be careful not to cause any crumbs to scatter. One must finish eating Chametz on Shabbat morning by 10:31 a.m. Collect all crumbs into one area and dispose of them in the bathroom. The leftover Chametz must be disposed of by 11:45 a.m. When all the Chametz has been cleared away, one recites the "Kol Chamira" passage.

b) Follow the same instructions as described above, but instead of using bread, Egg Matzot may be substituted for "Lechem Mishneh."

Even if one is using egg Matzot, many Halakhic authorities advise that its consumption on Shabbat morning must be completed before 10:31 a.m., at which time Chametz becomes forbidden as well. Rabbi Hershel Schachter, however, is of the opinion that one can eat egg Matzot on Erev Pesach beyond the time when Chametz becomes forbidden, permitting one to eat egg Matzot even at Seudah Shlishit.

### **Matzah**

If a person decides to use regular "Challah" for the Friday night and Shabbat morning meals, but he is afraid that he will not be able to consume nor dispose the leftover bread, he may carefully wrap a matzah and use it as the second loaf for "Lechem Mishneh." The matzah used for this purpose should be a regular Matzah and not Matzah Shmura. Since Matzah Shmura is eaten at the Seder, and forbidden on Erev Pesach, such Matzah is considered Muktzah on this Shabbat.

### **Seudah Shlishit**

This meal, which is usually eaten on Shabbat afternoon, considerably after the hour when Chametz no longer may be eaten, raises its own unique problems because of the problem pertaining to "Lechem Mishneh" on Erev Pesach. The following are the options one can use to fulfill this mitzvah while avoiding any Halakhic problems:

a) Eat two meals on Shabbat morning, both with bread for "Lechem Mishneh," before the time during which Chametz may be eaten has elapsed. In this way, Seudah Shlishit may be fulfilled during the morning hours. One may not, however, simply wash, eat bread, recite "Birkat HaMazon," and quickly wash a second time. Rather, there must be an "interruption" between the two meals, during which one studies Torah or takes a Shabbat walk, to avoid the prohibition "Berakha She'ana Tzericha" - reciting a blessing for no reason.

Considering that we are very pressed for time so early in the morning of Erev Pesach, leaving a sufficient interval between these two early meals is highly problematic and most unlikely.

b) If one cannot complete Seudah Shlishit within the prescribed time, then it should be eaten in the afternoon in the form of fruit, meat, or fish. Most authorities permit eating "knaidlach" (Matzah balls) or cake made from Matzah meal on Erev Pesach, and therefore they can be served at Seudah Shlishit as well. No foods containing Matzah meal should be eaten after the beginning of the Tenth hour (4:05 p.m.) on Erev Pesach.

In order that one will have an appetite for the Seder, Seudah Shlishit should be completed by the beginning of the Tenth hour of the day (4:05 p.m.). After this hour foods may be eaten, but in moderation.

### **Lighting Yom Tov Candles**

When Yom Tov begins on a Saturday night, we wait to light candles until Shabbat is over (not before 7:56 p.m.). On Saturday night the candles must be lit from an existing flame: We light a 24-hour candle before Shabbat (if you are able to obtain a longer burning candle that would even be better to use), which we use as the source of fire for the Yom Tov candles. We also light a second 24-hour candle on the first day of Yom Tov and use that candle as the source of fire to light candles on the second night of Yom Tov, after the first day has ended.

### **Havdalah**

Havdalah is recited as part of Kiddush at the Seder, before the "Shehecheyanu" blessing. The Yom Tov candles are used for the Havdalah candle. Some people remove the two Yom Tov candles from the candlesticks and place them side-by-side, to simulate a multi-wicked Havdalah candle. Others simply leave the candles in the candlesticks. People should follow their family custom.

**Best wishes for a Chag Kasher V'Same'ach**