

Preparing for Pesach – 5778/2018

While the holiday of *Pesach* is unmatched in beauty and depth, and is a wonderful opportunity to spend meaningful time with family and friends, preparing for *Pesach* can be overwhelming and anxiety-ridden. Use this handy guide to help ease any angst. Also, please download and consult the OU Passover guide at <https://oukosher.org/passover/download-passover-guide-signup/>. if you have any questions regarding the status of specific products for Pesach use. Please contact Rabbi Block with any specific questions: via phone or text at 516-849-5776, or via email at rabbiblock@keshernj.com.

A few Preliminary Notes:

Shabbat Hagadol. It is a long-standing tradition in all Jewish communities for the Rabbi to present a special Drasha to the community on the Shabbat prior to Pesach, this year **March 24**, Shabbat Hagadol. This year, our Shabbat Hagadol Derasha will take place before Mincha, and will be entitled "**Eliyahu Hanavi at our Seder and Beyond - History and Theology.**" Why do we take the unusual step of inviting Eliyahu to our seder? How old is this practice? Why is it associated with a 5th cup of wine, which, unlike the other 4, is not drunk? I look forward to seeing everyone for this community learning opportunity sure to enhance your Pesach. (Note: I hope to disseminate the source material in the days leading up to Shabbat, to allow people to prepare and peruse.)

Maot Chittim: To help Jews in need celebrate the holiday, the strong custom exists to collect and distribute funds for Maot Chittim. Feel free to drop off a donation with Barbara at the shul office, or, as has been the custom of many, leave it with Rabbi Block when coming to sell chametz.

STEP #1: Preparing Your *Pesach* Kitchen

Appliances:

*****Please be careful to avoid cleaning or *Kashering* in a manner which may damage your appliances.**

- **Gas Cooktop:** On a gas range, the metal grates upon which the pots on the range sit may be *kashered* by turning the flame on high for 15 minutes. In order to spread the flame over the entire grate, it is advisable to cover the grates with a *blech*, a piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil, or a pot full of water during the *kashering*. The rest of the range (the area between the burners) should be cleaned and covered with a double layer of heavy-duty aluminum foil. The burners themselves do not need *kashering* or covering, just cleaning. The drip pans should be thoroughly cleaned and need not be *kashered*.
- **Electric cooktop:** One need only turn the burners to the high-heat setting for a few minutes in order to *kasher* them, since the burners come to a glow in a few minutes. The remaining cooktop areas should be covered.
- **Conventional oven:** Whether gas or electric, the oven must be completely cleaned before *kashering*. Oven cleaner may be necessary to remove baked-on grease.¹ Once the oven and racks have been cleaned, they may be *kashered* by "*Libun Kal*," *i.e.*, turning the oven to the highest setting (broil setting) for forty minutes. In a gas oven, the broil setting will allow the flame to burn continuously. In a conventional electric oven, the highest setting (broil or 550°F) *kashers* the oven.
- **"Continuous-cleaning" oven:** One cannot assume that the oven is clean simply because the manufacturer claims it to be continuously clean. A visual inspection is required.² The oven should then be *kashered* by turning it to the broil setting for forty minutes.

¹ If a caustic type of oven cleaner (such as Easy-Off) was used to clean the oven and some stubborn spots remain after the caustic cleaner has been applied a second time with similar results, the remaining spots may be disregarded.

² Since caustic or abrasive oven cleaners (*e.g.*, Easy-Off) cannot be used without destroying the continuous-clean properties of the oven, a non-abrasive, non-caustic, cleaner must be used. Grease spots will usually disappear if the top layer of grease is cleaned with Fantastic and a nylon brush. The oven should then be turned to 450°F for an hour so that the continuous-clean mechanism can work.

- **Self-cleaning oven:** The self-cleaning cycle cleans and *kashers* the oven simultaneously. This is true for convection ovens with a self-cleaning feature as well. The oven need not be carefully cleaned beforehand, because everything inside the oven is reduced to ash. The oven door and rubber around the door should, however, be completely clean before the self-clean cycle. Note: Many ovens instruct taking the grates out before running the self-cleaning cycle. If one prefers to self-clean the oven without the grates, one can *kasher* the grates separately by using the method described above - cleaning the oven and the grates first and turning the oven to its highest setting for about 40 minutes as indicated above, and then running the self-clean cycle separately to properly *kasher* the oven.
- **Broilers and Grills:** The broiler pan and grill cannot be *kashered* by just turning on the gas or electricity. The same can be said for grates on a barbecue. Since food is cooked directly on the pan or grill, they must be heated to a glow ("*Libbun Gamur*") in order to be used on *Pesach*. This can be done by using a blow torch or, in the case of an outdoor grill, by sandwiching the grates between the charcoal briquets and setting them on fire. Since this can be dangerous and/or very time consuming, an alternate method is to replace the broiler pan or grill grates with new ones and *kasher* the empty broiler cavity or grill by cleaning and setting it to broil/highest setting for forty minutes. If one does not intend to use the broiler on *Pesach*, one may still use the oven, even without *kashering* the broiler, provided that the broiler has been thoroughly cleaned or covered with heavy-duty aluminum foil. Similarly, other cooktop inserts, such as a griddle or a barbecue broiler, would require heating the surface to a red glow before usage ("*Libbun Gamur*"). If not, the insert should be cleaned and not used for *Pesach*. If the grill has side burners, they should be treated like cooktop grates, assuming no food has been placed directly on it.
- **Warming Drawers:** Warming drawers can be *kashered* (after cleaning and allowing to sit idle for 24 hours) by heating at the highest setting for one hour. The floor of the drawer must be covered with heavy duty foil, and items being warmed should be totally wrapped before warming in the oven.
- **Microwave Ovens:** Microwaves whose inside is made of metal may be *kashered* by first cleaning them out thoroughly, then placing a container filled with water in the oven and boiling it until the oven fills with steam. Microwave ovens whose inside is made of plastic present a *kashering* problem. Fortunately, many do not heat up the oven walls enough to cause a real *kashrut* concern. Clean the microwave well, then boil a cup of water on the highest setting for 10 minutes. Quickly insert your hand and touch the oven ceiling: if it is too hot to touch, the microwave should not be used for *Pesach*.³ If it is relatively cool (or even warm), the oven may be used and has just been *kashered*. It is preferable that the glass plate in your microwave not be used, if need be, it should be covered with saran wrap.
- **Sinks:** Sinks are generally made from china, corian, porcelain, stainless steel, or granite. **China sinks** cannot be *kashered* at all. **Porcelain or corian sinks** are treated like china sinks, since there is a controversy whether these materials can be *kashered*, and are likewise not used for *Pesach*. These sinks should be cleaned, not used for twenty-four hours, and completely lined with contact paper or foil. The dishes that are to be washed should not be placed directly into these sinks. They must be washed in a *Pesach* dish pan that is placed on a *Pesach* rack. Alternatively, a sink insert can be purchased, allowing for the placement of either milk or meat dishes directly into the sink. **Stainless steel sinks** can be *kashered* by the following method: clean the sink thoroughly. Hot water should not be used or poured in the sink for twenty-four hours prior to *kashering*. *Kashering* is accomplished by pouring boiling water from a kettle/pot over every part of the stainless steel sink. The poured water must touch every part of the sink, including the drain and the spout of the water faucet. It is likely that the *kashering* kettle will need to be refilled a few times before the *kashering* can be completed. **Granite sinks** can be *kashered* like stainless steel.
- **Countertops** made of granite, marble or stainless steel may also be *kashered* in the same way, by pouring boiling water over their surface. **Formica, corian, and plastic countertops** cannot be *kashered*, and should be cleaned and covered with a waterproof, thick material. The same goes for tables with synthetic tops. Wood tables and counters can theoretically be *kashered* with boiling water, but the custom is to clean and cover them.
- **Refrigerators** should be washed (shelves, walls and compartments).

³ If it is absolutely necessary to use the microwave during *Pesach*, one may line the inner walls with cardboard and then use it.

- **Dishwashers-** it is recommended to not use one's dishwasher on Pesach. However, should one wish to use their dishwasher if the need is great, please speak to Rabbi Block about Kashering.

Utensils:

- It is preferred to have utensils reserved for *Pesach* use.
- If one is unable to use special utensils for *Pesach*, many utensils used throughout the year may be *kashered* for *Pesach*. These include metal utensils which are not difficult to clean (a sieve, for example, or a utensil which has parts that are glued together, would not be *kasherable*) and glass utensils that were used strictly for cold food.
- According to Ashkenazic custom, **glassware** used for cooking, as well as earthenware, pottery, porcelain, pyrex, and chinaware may not be *kashered*. Arcolac, Duralex & Corelle should be treated as glass for *kashering* purposes. **Plastic** utensils are not *kashered*. Glass utensils which came into contact with only cold *chametz* should be cleaned with a cleaning solution and then immersed in water for three days, changing the water every 24 hours.
- There are two different procedures for *kashering*:
 1. Metal utensils which came into contact with heated *chametz* in a medium of water (*i.e.*, utensils in which *chametz* was cooked; pots are a good example) may be *kashered* via the procedure known as *hag'alah*, which involves immersion in boiling water, as explained below.
 2. Metal utensils which came into direct contact with heated *chametz* without the medium of water (*e.g.*, a broiler) may be *kashered* by heating them until they are literally "red-hot," or by placing them in a self-cleaning oven during the self-clean cycle.
- The procedure for *hag'alah* is as follows:
 1. **Metal Utensils** that have been used for cooking, serving or eating hot *chametz* may be *kashered* by cleaning them thoroughly, waiting twenty-four hours, and then immersing them one by one in a large pot (which has not been used for *chametz* within the last 24 hours) full of water which maintains a rolling boil when the vessel is immersed. Note that we do not *kasher* pans coated with Teflon.
 2. The utensils undergoing *kashering* may not touch each other on the way in to the pot. In other words, if a set of flatware is being *kashered*, one cannot take all the knives, forks and spoons and put them in the boiling water together. They should be placed into the boiling water one by one. The process is finalized by rinsing the *kashered* items in cold water. If tongs are used to grip the utensil, the utensil will have to be immersed a second time with the tong in a different position so that the boiling water will touch the initially gripped area. The entire utensil does not have to be *kashered* at once.
 3. Please watch out for utensils that are rusty or difficult to clean properly. Silverware made of two parts (a handle and a blade, for instance) should not be *kashered*.
 4. A non-Kosher-for-*Pesach* pot may also be used for the purpose of *kashering*, provided that it is thoroughly clean and has not been used for 24 hours. However, many have the custom to make the pot Kosher-for-*Pesach* before using it for *kashering*. This can be accomplished by cleaning the pot, leaving it dormant for 24 hours, filling the pot completely with water, waiting until the water comes to a rolling boil, and putting in a hot stone or brick which has been heated on another burner. The hot rock will cause the water to bubble more furiously and run over the top ridge of the pot on all sides at one time. The pot is now *kashered*.
- A **Keurig** machine which was used only for plain coffee (but not flavored coffee) may be *kashered* by way of *Hagal* (see above), or *Irui* (pouring hot water on it). Remove the K-cup holder, clean well, leave unused for 24 hours, perform *hagal* or *irui* by pouring boiling hot water on the K-cup holder, and then brew a Kosher for Passover K-cup in the machine (which *kashers* the top pin.)
- Instant hot devices and individual hot/cold water filters that are connected to the sink with a separate spigot should be *kashered* along with the sink; boiling water should be poured over the spigot.
- **Soda Stream soda makers** used during the year may be rinsed and used for *Pesach*. Bottles which have not been used for flavors and which have not been washed together with *Chametz* items or come in contact with heat may be washed thoroughly and used for *Pesach*. Otherwise, or if uncertain,

new bottles should be purchased for Pesach.

- The non-electronic versions of Soda makers (no LED's) may be used to carbonate water on Shabbos or Yom Tov. The electronic versions are of course "mukzta."
- **Water Coolers** – Cold water coolers should be cleaned thoroughly. The hot spigot on a water cooler should not be used if it came into contact with chametz during the year.
- **Other Kitchen Items that cannot be kashered:** Bread Machine, Crockpot, China, Colanders, Corning Ware, George Foreman Grill, Knives w/ Plastic Handles, Melmac, Mixer, Pasta Maker, Plastic Utensils, Porcelain (Enamel) Utensils, Pyrex, Rolling Pin, Sandwich Maker, Silverstone, Stoneware, Synthetic Rubber, Teflon, Toaster/Toaster Oven, Waffle Iron.
- Note: Ashkenazim also do not *kasher* drinking glasses which were used for hot beverages, or washed in hot water, such as in a dishwasher

*****PLEASE NOTE While in general, we do not kasher utensils from Dairy to Meat or vice versa, after the Pesach kashering process has taken place, the status of these newly kashered utensils is pareve, and thus may now be may be changed from Dairy to Meat, or vice versa.**

STEP #2: Cleaning for Pesach

- Although the official search for *chametz* is performed on **Thursday night, March 29th** this year (see Step #3 below), we of course all begin cleaning well before then.
- Where to clean: Cleaning should extend to every place into which *chametz* is brought (including all rooms into which *chametz* is brought even periodically), pockets in clothing, book bags and briefcases, pocketbooks, *tallit* bags, under and behind furniture, and under and between furniture cushions. Heavy appliances which are not moved during the year, such as stoves and refrigerators, need not be moved in order to clean away *chametz* under them. Special care should be taken if little children live on the premises, since they tend to bring food everywhere. Any *chametz* one owns which is located at one's workplace or in one's car must be either destroyed or sold.
- Note that the goal is to clean away pieces of *chametz* of significant size (larger than an olive's worth); while any *chametz*, including crumbs, that you find should be destroyed, there is no need to actually search for small crumbs.
- Non-"*Pesachdik*" dishes: Dishes and utensils should be cleaned and stored away in such a manner that they cannot be accidentally used during Pesach. It is preferable to tape or tie shut cabinets that contain things you cannot use.

STEP #3: The Search for Chametz

- Time: The usual time for *bedikat chametz* (searching for *chametz*) is the night before the *Seder* night, or this year **Thursday night, March 29th, after nightfall - approximately 7:58 PM.**
- Ground rules: When the time for the *bedikah* arrives, one should begin immediately, deferring eating and other activities until after the search. The search itself is begun with the *berakhah* (p. 654 in the Artscroll *siddur*, or at the beginning of most *Haggadot*) recited by an adult on behalf of all of those participating in the search. Although the blessing mentions *destroying* the *chametz* rather than searching for it, it is appropriate at this point because searching for the *chametz* is the first step in its destruction. Those who will be leaving the area before Sunday night and returning at some point on Pesach should conduct the search on their last evening home, but without the *berakhah*. One who will not be home at all for *Pesach* and is selling all of his or her *chametz* should speak to Rabbi Block about conducting the search for *chametz*. The search is conducted silently, other than conversation relevant to the search.
- Lighting: Although *bedikat chametz* is traditionally done by the light of a candle in a dark room, one may use a flashlight to assist in the search.
- Ten Pieces of *Chametz*: There is a custom of long standing to distribute ten pieces of *chametz* to be found during the search.
- "But I've been cleaning for weeks!": One must perform a serious search for *chametz* even if one has previously cleaned one's house and believes that there is no further *chametz*. This search should cover all of the places into which *chametz* may have been introduced.
- *Bittul*: At the conclusion of the search, all of the *chametz* is placed in a known location, and a declaration ("*Bittul*") is made annulling all *chametz* which remains hidden. By this declaration, we relinquish ownership over the *chametz* overlooked in the search and state that we consider it worthless, like the dust of the earth. Because this declaration is a legal declaration, it is valid only

if one understands what one is saying. If one does not understand the Aramaic version (“*Kol Chamira*”), one should recite the English version, which goes as follows: “Any *chametz* or leaven which is in my possession which I have not seen, have not removed or destroyed, and of which I am unaware, should hereby become null and ownerless as the dust of the Earth”.

STEP #4: *Erev Pesach*- Fast of the First-Born

- All male *bekhorim* (first born) fast on *Erev Pesach*, **Friday, March 30**, to commemorate their having been saved from the last and most terrible of the ten plagues.
- Jewish Law provides that if a *bekhor* attends a celebration such as a *siyyum*, he is exempted from this fast. As such, a *siyyum* will take place at davening on Monday morning, March 30th, following *Shacharit* at Keshet. (it is customary for a parent to attend the *siyyum* in the place of a first born son who is not yet of age to attend on their own) **This year's siyyum will be made by Jared Caplan.**

STEP #5: The Sale of *Chametz*

- If you own *chametz* which you prefer not to destroy, you may authorize Rabbi Block to sell these items to a non-Jew for you (forms have been sent out, attached to the email together with this guide). Please note that the *chametz* is not sold to Rabbi Block; one is merely authorizing the Rabbi to sell it for him/her.
- *Chametz* which you will be selling should be placed in specific locations and sealed off with string, tape, or a lock and a sign indicating that *chametz* is present there.

In addition to after shacharit every morning at Keshet, Rabbi Block will be available to accept authorization forms for the sale of *Chametz* at the following times: **Monday, March 19** 9:00-10:00 pm, **Thursday March 22** 9-10 pm, **Motzaei Shabbat, March 24** one hour after Shabbat for one hour, **Sunday, March 25**, after Shacharit at Keshet. **Tuesday April 4 and Wednesday April 5** 9:30-10:30pm. It is highly recommended for reasons pertaining to the sale itself that you deliver the form in person at one of the allotted times. Should any of these times not work, please arrange a private appointment with Rabbi Block. Do not merely send the form in via email or drop it off at the office.

STEP #6: Burning the *Chametz* and last time to eat *Chametz*

- *Chametz* is burned on *Erev Pesach* during the mid-morning. This year, we burn the *chametz* on **Monday morning before 11:45 AM. *Chametz* should not be eaten after 10:30 AM. Please note that once again this year, to alleviate the need to supervision, we will be having a communal *biur chametz* supervised by the Englewood Fire Department, taking place at Ahavath Torah. Stay tuned for more details.**

STEP #7: Preparations for the *Seder*

- The shankbone, or “*zero'a*,” is a small piece of roasted meat, placed on the *Seder* plate to commemorate the Paschal sacrifice.
- The roasted egg, also placed on the *Seder* plate, commemorates the *Chagigah* sacrifice which was offered on *Pesach*.
- The *charoset*, usually composed of ground apples, pears, cinnamon, and red wine, is placed on the *Seder* plate in commemoration of the mortar with which our ancestors were forced to construct buildings in Egypt.
- Also on the *Seder* plate should be the *maror*, the bitter vegetable. The most common choices are romaine lettuce and horseradish (unsweetened). Romaine lettuce must be washed and examined carefully for insects. (Take care not to soak the vegetable used for *maror* for 24 hours, since this would compromise its sharpness.)

STEP #8: After *Pesach*: Using *Chametz* you have sold

- Those who sold *Chametz* for *Pesach* should wait approx. an hour and fifteen minutes after the *chag* before partaking of it to allow time for the *Chametz* to be repurchased. Rabbi Block will announce in shul the exact time after which one may open their sold *Chametz*.

STEP #9: After *Pesach*: Shopping

- *Chametz* owned by a Jew during *Pesach* may not be eaten by a Jew even after *Pesach*. Care must therefore be taken when shopping even after *Pesach*. Stores owned by non-Jews present

no problem; products in stores owned by Jews may be purchased if the proprietor sells the *chametz* for *Pesach*, or once enough time has passed that the items owned over *Pesach* have been purchased by other customers and have been replaced by new products from the store's suppliers.

STEP #10: Next *Pesach* Falls Out... Friday Night, April 19th, 2019 – **Next year in Jerusalem!**