

## **Preparing our Homes for Pesach**

### **Step #1: Removal of Chametz – Cleaning the House**

### **Step #2: Kashering Appliances**

Gas ovens, both the stove-top and inside (racks as well), should be cleaned with an oven cleaner, and then not used for 24 hours. After 24 hours, invert the metal spiders and turn the burners on to the highest setting for 15 minutes. (If using an electric oven, turn the burners on the highest setting for 15 minutes as well.) After this is done, cover the stovetop with aluminum foil for the duration of Pesach. The inside oven should be turned on to broil for one hour.

If the oven is self-cleaning, go through one cycle.

Microwave ovens should be cleaned, and not used for 24 hours, after which a bowl or cup containing a few ounces of water should be put in and ‘cooked’ until the water is vaporized into steam.

Stainless steel sinks should be cleaned with a cleaning solution, and not used for 24 hours, after which boiling water should be poured on every area of the sink and its parts. Porcelain sinks cannot be kashered. They must be cleaned and covered.

Dishwashers may be kashered for Pesach after standing unused for 24 hours. They should be put through 3 complete cycles, using soap in the first one.

### **Kashering Utensils**

While it is preferable to have as many utensils as possible specially reserved for use only on Pesach, many utensils used throughout the year may be kashered for use on Pesach. Items that are ‘kasherable’ include: metal utensils used for hot and cold, providing they are not difficult to clean (i.e., a sieve, parts that are glued together), and glass utensils that were used strictly for cold food.

Items that may not be kashered are: glassware that is used for cooking, earthenware, pottery, porcelain, pyrex, and chinaware.

*The easiest way to kasher utensils is to bring them to the KJ (125 East 85th St.) “Kasher-In” - Sunday, April 14 from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm and Monday, April 15 from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Bring your pots, silverware and other cooking/serving/eating accouterments to the second floor KJ kitchen.*

It is also possible to kasher in the privacy of your own home. The procedure for kashering is as follows: Metal utensils should be thoroughly cleaned with a cleaning solution and then not used for 24 hours. Small utensils such as silverware or other cutlery should be immersed briefly in a large pot containing rapidly boiling water. If the pot is very large, more than one piece may be immersed at a time. Each piece should then be rinsed with cold water.

Pots are kashered by bringing water in them to a boil and then immersing a hot stone or iron such that the water will overflow onto the sides of the pot. Then rinse the pot in cold water. Items which came into direct contact with chametz, without the medium of water (e.g. a broiler, frying pan) may be kashered by heating them until they are literally ‘redhot’ or by placing them in a self-cleaning oven during the self-clean cycle.

Glass utensils should be cleaned with a cleaning solution and then immersed in water (a bathtub works) for three days, changing the water every 24 hours.

### **Step #3: The Search For Chametz**

One of the most beautiful and meaningful ceremonies associated with Passover is *b'dikat chametz*—the search for *chametz*. The ceremony is composed of five parts.

1. Reciting a special blessing over the mitzvah of the removal of *chametz*.
2. The search of the house by the light of a candle to find vestiges of *chametz*.
3. The reciting of the formula of nullification of chametz.
4. The burning or disposal of any *chametz* found during the search.
5. The reciting of a final, more inclusive formula of nullification.

The first three parts of this ceremony will be observed this year on Sunday evening, April 13, after nightfall, 8:10 p.m. The disposal should be on Monday morning, April 14. Children especially will be impressed by the ceremony. It should, therefore, be performed with enthusiasm and dedication.

The children should be asked to place pieces of *chametz* in the various rooms — a practice which ensures that the search will not be in vain. They can hold the candle and the feather and they should examine their own possessions, dressers and desks, for long forgotten relics of *chametz*.

Passover is a beautiful festival. It is a serious one, too. Both these aspects can be captured in advance of the festival by a careful observance of *b'dikat chametz*.

### ***Disposal of Chametz***

No chametz may be eaten on Friday morning, April 3 after 10:52 a.m.

#### **Step #4: The Sale of Chametz**

The ritual sale of chametz must be completed by early Friday morning, April 3. There are those who prefer to perform the ritual in person.

Individuals who will be in Israel for Passover should consult the rabbis in advance to make special arrangements.

#### **Step #5: The Burning of Chametz**

On Friday morning, April 3<sup>rd</sup> it is customary to burn the chametz. The synagogue provides a large, contained fire for this purpose. No bracha should be said, since the one said before the search applies to the burning as well.

#### **Step #6: After Pesach**

According to Jewish Law, chametz that was owned by a Jew during Pesach may never be eaten by a Jew. Therefore, it is preferable that after Pesach one buys food from establishments owned by non-Jews, establishments owned by Jews who properly sold their chametz before Pesach, or after a month (time that a store's stock has been used up) from any establishment.

## MATZAH: SEEING GOD IN HISTORY

Of all of the reasons given for various *mitzvoth*, probably the best known reason is the reason for eating *matzah* on Passover. Unusually enough, the Torah states the reason explicitly: “*Lo tokhal alav chametz; shivat yamim tokahl tochal alav matzah...ki be-chipazon yatzata me-Eretz Mitzrayim...*” – “You shall not eat leavened bread...For seven days, you shall eat *matzot*...for you departed from the land of Egypt in haste...”

The Torah makes it quite clear: we eat *matzah* to remind ourselves that we left Egypt in haste, that we were so rushed that there was not even enough time to let our bread rise. We had no provisions prepared in advance, so we simply took what we had in hand and ran. But why does it matter that we left in a rush? What difference would it have made whether we left Egypt in haste or took our sweet time?

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, the great German Jewish Bible commentator, wrote that the fact that we left Egypt in such haste teaches us something fundamental about the nature of the redemption from Egypt: that the Jews did not plan their escape – for if they had, they certainly would have prepared essentials for the road. There are no 7-11’s in the wilderness, after all, so the fact that the Jewish people left in a hurry, without any preparation, proves that the redemption was accomplished not by the people, but by God Himself. We should not imagine that the enslaved Jews decided at some point to unite and revolt against their oppressor. Rather, God alone orchestrated this historical event that would follow. All of this, explains Rav Hirsch, is symbolized by the *matzah* and the haste in which it was created.

If *matzah* symbolizes the belief that God can be found behind history, *chametz* represents the notion that man alone controls history. Indeed, some Jewish sources speak of *chametz* as symbolizing shaking off God’s sovereignty, representing a human hubris that denies divine intervention in history. In some Chasidic *siddurim*, the *tefilah* recited before the *bedikat chametz* (the search for *chametz*) refers to the *chametz* as the aspect of our evil inclination that breeds arrogance and haughtiness.

The command to remove all remnants of *chametz* from our midst is, symbolically, a command to work on ourselves, to be less enamored with the impact of our own accomplishments – to be more humble. It is a way to train ourselves to see God as the great force behind human events and to internalize the great message of the Passover holiday: that God did not simply create the world and then withdraw; He remains involved in history and in our lives today. *Chag Sameach*.