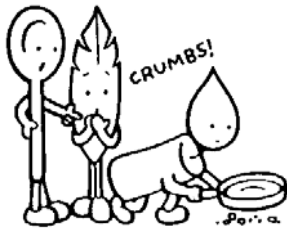


# BEDIKAT CHAMETZ – THE SEARCH FOR LEAVEN

*Chametz* is leavened bread, bread that has been allowed to rise and become fermented. *Chamezt* is different from all other forbidden foods in that it must be removed from the house before Passover. “Leaven shall not be found in your houses for seven days” (Exodus 12:19). One of the reasons *Chametz* is treated so much more strictly is that one is used to eating it during the rest of the year. If one were allowed to keep *Chametz* in the house during Passover one could easily forget that it is Passover and eat the *Chametz* as one does during the rest of the year.



**Bedikat Chametz** is a wonderful ritual that your family can participate in on the day before Passover. It is a wonderful way to symbolically prepare yourself for the start of the holiday. In preparation for Passover, our homes are cleaned and all of the *chametz*, leavened bread, has been removed or stored away. A parent hides small pieces of bread throughout the house and a child (or children) are required to “search and destroy.” The traditional tools include a feather, wooden spoon and candle. Your family can create their

own tools - a “Dustbuster” would definitely be a modern twist!

Here’s how **Bedikat Chametz** is done:

- On the night before the first Seder (this year, on Thursday, April 21, because it is not done on Shabbat) at some point after sundown, someone hides ten (or so) pieces of *Chametz* (pieces of bread, crackers, etc.) around the house. The “searchers” should not see where the pieces are hidden.
- Each searcher is armed with a wooden spoon, candle and feather (customary, but not necessary). The candle is lit (a flashlight works well with younger children).
- Conduct the search, using a candle (or flashlight) to illuminate areas. When a piece is found, sweep it onto the wooden spoon using the feather, and then deposit it into a container (paper bag). Be sure to collect all pieces that are hidden.
- After the search is concluded, the *bi’ur chametz* prayer is recited. The bag of bread is either burned (traditionally) or disposed of.



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל בְּעוֹר חֵמֶץ.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam  
asher kid’shanu b’mitzvotav v’tzivanu al bi’ur chametz.*

Praised are You, *Adonai* our God, Ruler of the universe,  
Who hallows us with *mitzvot* and commands us to burn *chametz*.