

## **Pesach 5781: When Erev Pesach Occurs on Shabbat**

By Rabbi Kalman Topp

With the first night of Pesach this year on Saturday night, March 27, 2021, many questions arise as to how to fulfill the mitzvot and customs leading up to Yom Tov, while adhering to the laws of Shabbat. This document offers halachic guidance by presenting the rules, challenges and solutions. The conclusions are based on the Shulchan Aruch and commentaries, the pamphlet *When Erev Pesach Occurs on Shabbos* by Rabbi Shimon Eider, as well as rulings from contemporary poskim. Halachic conundrums such as navigating these conflicting concerns presented by Shabbat and Pesach, serve as an opportunity to remind us of concepts and laws that we may tend to otherwise overlook (e.g., eating seudah shlishit on Shabbat).

### **General Halachic Rules:**

1. Like every year, chametz may not be eaten after the conclusion of the fourth hour on Erev Pesach (the day prior to Pesach), which means that the last time for eating chametz is Shabbat morning, March 27 at 10:31am.
2. Like every year, chametz may no longer be in your possession after the conclusion of the fifth hour on Erev Pesach, which corresponds to Shabbat morning at 11:45am. Prior to that time, your chametz must be disposed of/sold/nullified (with details explained below) so that you no longer halachically own any chametz after that time.
3. Matzoh may not be eaten on Shabbat Erev Pesach, starting from dawn that morning, to promote excitement for the special mitzvah of eating matzah at the Seder. Some have the custom to refrain from eating matzoh from Rosh Chodesh Nissan or even from thirty days in advance, but the main prohibition is Erev Pesach. The law of not eating matzoh on Erev Pesach only applies to matzoh with which you can fulfill the mitzvah at the Seder.
4. On Shabbat Erev Pesach, one must be mindful, as always, of the laws of Shabbat as well as the requirement to have “Shalosh Seudot”- three meals.
5. With Erev Pesach occurring on Shabbat, all kashering of appliances and utensils must be completed before Shabbat. (Shulchan Aruch 509:5)

### **1) When do we perform bedikat chametz?**

**Problem:** Customarily, the bedikah is achieved by searching one’s home by candlelight the night of the 14th of Nissan, the evening prior to Pesach. The problem is that one may not light or carry candles on Friday night. Friday during the daytime is also not advisable since the Rabbis established the evening as the best time for searching because it is then when people tend to be home and that is when candlelight can be effective.

**Solution:** We perform the bedikah on Thursday night, the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, with all the regular customs associated with it (Shulchan Aruch 444:1). Like every year, the bracha of “al biyur chametz” is recited before you commence the search. A candle is

used, and it is permitted and even encouraged to use a flashlight for additional light. At the conclusion of the search, you recite the bittul, nullification of chametz, using the formula of “kol chamira.” The bedikah should be done after nightfall at 7:50pm.

## **2) When do we perform biyur chametz?**

Problem: Customarily, the biyur, or destruction of the chametz, is done prior to the conclusion of the fifth hour on the morning prior to Pesach. The problem is that the preferable way to fulfill the mitzvah of biyur is through burning, which is not permitted on Shabbat.

Solution: Like the bedikah which is done a day earlier than usual, so too the biyur. This year, we burn the chametz on Friday morning prior to the conclusion of the fifth hour (before 11:45am). Even though chametz may still be owned and eaten on Friday afternoon (and Shabbat morning, until 10:31am), we burn the chametz on Friday morning before the 5<sup>th</sup> hour, like other years, to prevent confusion in the future (ibid 444:2).

After the burning, any remaining chametz that will be eaten the rest of Friday and until Shabbat morning, should be placed in a secure location or box reserved for this purpose. Since chametz remains in your possession, the second bittul (nullification) is not recited after the burning. On Shabbat morning, prior to 11:45am, you recite the second and final bittul of “kol chamira.”

## **3) What is the best approach for serving food on Shabbat Erev Pesach?**

With Erev Pesach occurring on Shabbat, the kashering of all appliances and utensils must be completed prior to Shabbat. Kashering is not allowed on Shabbat since it is considered “k’metaken”- repairing the utensil.

Due to the halachic and logistical challenge of cleaning chametz off utensils on Shabbat, it is recommended that all foods that will be served hot, be made with kosher for Pesach ingredients and be prepared/cooked only with kosher for Pesach utensils.

To make life even easier, all foods served at the meals (aside from the hamotzi which will be addressed below), whether hot or cold, can be kosher for Pesach, even for the Friday night and Shabbat morning meal (this suggestion is optional until 10:31am. After that time, as we explained above, one is absolutely prohibited from eating chametz).

If one is eating challah or any chametz foods for the Friday night and Shabbat morning meal: Because of the challenge of transferring from the Pesach pot to year-round chametz dishes, combined with the difficulty of cleaning the plates after the meals, a practical suggestion is to use disposable plates and silverware.

Regarding the table to be used for your shabbat meals, it is recommended to eat on a table that will not be used for eating on Pesach or, even better, to eat on an outdoor table, if one

is available. Use a disposable plastic tablecloth to cover the table which can then be carefully wrapped and discarded after the meal. If eating indoors, one should be careful to eat over a floor that can be cleaned easily from crumbs. If outdoors, crumbs can be swept away, this being tantamount to “throwing into the wind” which is considered a form of destruction of chametz, and then these crumbs will be nullified in your bittul.

On Shabbat, for the Friday night and Shabbat morning meal, one is required to make kiddush and begin the meal with hamotzi. A challah or challah rolls can be eaten for this purpose of hamotzi.

If one would like their home to be completely kosher for Pesach on Shabbat and not serve any chametz, the following is a solution for Hamotzi: Instead of challah, use egg matzoh (Igros Moshe O”C 1:155). Two egg matzot should be used to fulfill “lechem mishnah” and the egg matzoh can be eaten as long as chometz can be eaten (until Shabbat morning 10:31am)

Note about egg matzoh: Our custom is to not eat egg matzoh on Pesach unless one is elderly or ill and requires it for their diet. While the custom for those who are healthy is to not eat egg matzoh on Pesach (and many poskim write that the custom to prohibit begins at the time one refrains from chametz, i.e. 10:31am), it is not considered chametz and one is permitted to own it on Pesach.

Moreover, according to the majority opinion, you cannot fulfill the mitzvah of matzoh at the Seder with egg matzoh since it is not “lechem oni”- poor man’s bread- and therefore there is no prohibition to eat egg matzoh on the day prior to Pesach (Friday night or Shabbat morning). The bracha on egg matzoh, certainly when eaten to begin the meal, is Hamotzi.

Based on these considerations- a) it is not chametz, b) it is not viable for the mitzvah at the Seder, and c) it is hamotzi- egg matzoh is a good practical suggestion as a substitute for bread, for those who want to have their home “kosher l’pesach” and avoid eating chometz on Shabbat.

#### **4) How does one fulfill the mitzvah of eating three meals?**

On every Shabbat of the year, there is a requirement for men and women to eat three meals, the first two of which begin with hamotzi made on bread or matzoh. The third meal preferably takes place on Shabbat afternoon and, according to many authorities, should also ideally begin with hamotzi.

Problem: The complication for this year is that you may not eat bread after the fourth hour (10:31am) and you may not eat matzoh the entire day of Erev Pesach (starting from Shabbat morning). Even egg matzoh- which is another option for hamotzi- cannot be eaten, according to most opinions, after the fourth hour. It should be noted that while kosher for Pesach snacks can be eaten throughout the afternoon, the halacha for every erev Shabbat/Yom Tov is that a meal should not be eaten after the conclusion of the ninth

hour, which corresponds to 4pm on March 27<sup>th</sup>, to ensure a healthy appetite for the Yom tov meal.

Solution: The Friday night meal is eaten as usual and begins with challah or egg matzoh. On Shabbat morning, we will daven earlier than every Shabbat so that there is sufficient time to eat your meal that begins with Challah (or egg matzoh) and for the challah and any chametz to be completed prior to 10:31am. While chametz may not be eaten after 10:31am, the meal itself with kosher for Pesach foods may continue beyond that time.

Regarding Seudah Shlishit- the third meal- you have two options:

1. Eat the meal in the afternoon, and have fruit, meat or fish (Rama 444:1). The benefit of this approach is that the meal is being eaten in the afternoon, and it is relying on those opinions that the third meal can be fulfilled without bread or matzoh. It is preferable that this small meal be completed prior to 4pm.  
or
2. Divide the morning meal into two: Recite Kiddush, wash, make hamotzi, eat at least the volume of an egg of challah or egg matzoh (with one small course of food, if you'd like) and say birchat hamazon. Take a break of 15 minutes, in which you can learn or go for a walk outside.  
At that point, wash and make hamotzi again, eat at least the volume of an egg of challah or egg matzoh and make sure to complete the eating of chametz prior to 10:31am. Clear the table and house of any remaining chametz and recite the "kol chamira" bittul prior to 11:45am. The benefit of this approach is that the "third meal" is done with hamotzi and it is relying on those opinions that the third meal can be fulfilled even in the morning. While chametz may not be eaten after 10:31am, once the chametz is cleared off, as explained above, the meal may continue with kosher for Pesach foods.

Certainly, if you want to fulfill all opinions, you can do both options above, #2 and then #1. Divide the meal in two as outlined and then in the afternoon, have a small portion of fruit, meat or fish.

### **5) What does one do with the remaining chametz on Shabbat morning?**

Any disposable dishes and tablecloths used for the meal (if chametz was served) should be discarded and placed in the garbage bin at the edge of your property.

Regarding chametz served at the meals, an effort should be made in advance to serve an amount that will be consumed so that little or nothing is left over. Remaining chametz should be disposed of in one of the following ways:

- a) Give it to a non-Jew, if he/she will take it off your property.
- b) If it's a small amount, you can crumble it and flush down the toilet, this being considered a legitimate destruction of chametz.

- c) You may discard it and place in the garbage bin at the edge of your property. As it says on the container, the bin is the property of Los Angeles and moreover when you place items in the garbage bin, it is implicit that you are renouncing ownership and declaring it null and void (and you should include these crumbs in your bittul as well).

As explained above, after the chametz is cleared away, and prior to 11:45am, you do the final bittul by reciting the formula of “kol chamira.”

### **6) How does one prepare for the Seder?**

With Erev Pesach being Shabbat, one needs to be careful to not violate any laws of Shabbat or Yom Tov when preparing for the Seder. Even when there is no “melacha” (prohibited labor) involved, the general rule is that we do not prepare on Shabbat for the following night of Yom Tov. For these reasons, the general rule is that Seder preparations should be completed prior to Shabbat. Doing these preparations on Shabbat is usually problematic and leaving these to be taken care of on Saturday night will delay the start of the Seder.

Therefore, the zroah and egg for the Seder plate should be roasted prior to Shabbat. The maror, crushed nuts for charoset and salt water should also be prepared prior to Shabbat. If one is unable to prepare these items prior to Shabbat, one may prepare them on Saturday night with the following caveats: The zroa can be roasted if he intends to eat it the next day and the egg can be roasted if it will be eaten at the Seder. When grating the maror/horseradish or grinding the ingredients of the charoset, a slight shinui (deviation) should be employed.

### **7) When is Taanit Bechorim - Fast of the Firstborn?**

With Erev Pesach occurring on Shabbat, the custom this year is for the firstborn to fast on Thursday, March 25, the 12<sup>th</sup> of Nissan. The fast is not observed on Friday to avoid the situation of entering Shabbat while fasting. Like we do in other years and in accordance with the widespread custom, we will make a Siyum after shacharit to enable participants to partake of the seudat mitzvah (mitzvah meal) that follows, serving as the break of the fast. If one can do so safely, it is encouraged to hear the siyum in person. This year, due to the extenuating circumstances, if you are unable to attend due to Covid concerns, you can participate in the Siyum via Zoom.

### **8) How will Mechirat Chametz be done this year?**

In typical years, the rabbi is authorized to serve as your agent to sell your chametz, by going in-person, filling out a “shtar harshaah,” (document empowering the rabbi to perform the sale and listing the locations/values of the chametz) and making a “kinyan chalipin” (with handkerchief/pen) to strengthen the appointment. Due to Covid considerations, we will be encouraging members to complete and submit the “shtar harshaah” online. Even though no “kinyan chalipin” is made, the submission of the form with your online signature is considered sufficient to appoint the rabbi as your agent.

With Erev Pesach occurring on Shabbat, the rabbi will sell your chametz to the non-Jew on Friday morning, March 26. While the transaction will be done at that time, the kinyan and transference of the chametz will halachically take effect on Shabbat morning, prior to the conclusion of the fifth hour.

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Any questions can be sent to [rabbittopp@bethjacob.org](mailto:rabbittopp@bethjacob.org).