

Pesach 5781

Frequently Asked Questions

This year, 2021/5781, Pesach begins on a Saturday night. This creates a whole slew of questions, some more obvious than others. Here is a primer, handling some of the issues which arise. The conclusions reached here are based on Shulchan Aruch and standard commentaries, as well as Rabbi Shimon Eider, *Halachos of Pesach* pp. 359-396; Rabbi J. David Bleich, *Halachos of Erev Pesach Which Occurs on Shabbos* (2001); Rabbi Nochum Gold, *Erev Pesach that Falls on Shabbos* (2001); and Rabbi Hershel Schachter's video shiur to the RCA on March 1, 2021. Of course, please email me (torczyner@torontotorah.com) with corrections; please contact your shul rabbi for practical guidance.

Note: All "hours" in this document are determined by dividing the time between sunrise and sunset into twelve equal parts; each part is an "hour."

Section 1: *When is our Chametz sold?*

Ordinarily:

Chametz is sold with a sale which takes effect on the morning before Pesach.

This year's problem:

We cannot sell our Chametz in the normal manner, since we don't arrange sales on Shabbat.

If we were to sell our Chametz on Friday, we would run into a different problem – if we were to then eat Chametz on Shabbat, we could not add Chametz and utensils to the area containing the pre-sold Chametz.

Two solutions:

1. The sale will be transacted before Shabbat, stipulating that the sale will include Chametz that is in the designated locations as of Shabbat morning, at a time right before ownership of Chametz becomes prohibited.
2. Some authorities do not accept the idea of a sale which becomes binding on Shabbat. Therefore, they create sales that are effective before Shabbat, and they do not permit Chametz to be added to the sold areas during Shabbat. We should declare that we exclude from the sale the Chametz we plan to eat on Shabbat.

Section 2: *When do we search for Chametz?*

Ordinarily:

We search for Chametz on the night before Pesach.

This year's problem:

We cannot conduct the search on Friday night, since the search involves moving a light from room to room in conducting the search.

We cannot conduct the search on Friday; the sages interpreted biblical verses to indicate that the search should be via candlelight, which is most effective at night.

The solution:

We search on Thursday night, March 25th, when the stars emerge. Before searching we recite the blessing of "Al Biur Chametz," and the "Kol Chamira;" these may be found in the Artscroll Ahavat Shalom Siddur on pg. 655. The blessing marks the beginning of our destruction of Chametz; the "Kol Chamira" paragraph (the first one found in the Siddur) renounces ownership of Chametz which has escaped our notice.

Section 3: *When do we burn Chametz?*

Ordinarily:

We burn our Chametz on the day before Pesach, before the sixth daylight hour.

This year's problem:

We cannot burn Chametz on Shabbat.

Technically, one may destroy Chametz by other means, even on Shabbat, but there is a need to preserve the practice of burning Chametz.

The solution:

To preserve the practice of burning Chametz, we burn our Chametz on Friday, March 26th, before the sixth daylight hour. We do not recite any blessing at that time. On Shabbat, after we finish eating Chametz, we dispose of the remaining Chametz in the manner recorded in Section 7 below.

Section 4: *When do we say "Kol Chamira," renouncing our ownership of Chametz?*

Ordinarily:

In an ordinary year, we recite one version of the "Kol Chamira" paragraph when searching for Chametz at night, and a second version when burning the Chametz on the next morning. (Both versions may be found in the Artscroll Ahavat Shalom Siddur, page 655.) The language we use at night allows us to save some Chametz to use at breakfast. The language we use when we burn the Chametz states that we renounce our ownership of **all** Chametz.

This year's problem:

We cannot recite the second version of "Kol Chamira" when burning our Chametz, because we are keeping some Chametz for use on Shabbat.

The solution:

We do not recite "Kol Chamira" when burning our Chametz. We recite the first version when we search for Chametz, on Thursday night. We recite the second version of "Kol Chamira" on Shabbat morning, before the sixth daylight hour, after having disposed of Chametz as described in Section 7 below.

Section 5: *When do the first-born fast?*

Ordinarily:

The first-born fast on the day before Pesach, commemorating the fact that they were saved from the plague of the first-born in Egypt.

This year's problem:

We do not fast on Shabbat. We do not move this fast to Friday, either, since fasting would cause people to enter Shabbat in discomfort.

The solution:

The fast is conducted on Thursday. Attending a celebration honoring a Mitzvah exempts one from fasting. One popular option is to attend a "siyum" celebrating completion of a course of Torah study. I have posted a recording of an entire volume of Talmud (Tamid) at <https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/949758/>; one may learn this recording and perform a siyum.

Section 6: *How do we serve Chametz food on Shabbat, March 27th?*

Utensils:

Utensils which are used with Chametz **may not** be washed on Shabbat, unless there is no other way to remove Chametz. This is because rinsing the utensils of Chametz would be an act of preparation for Pesach, and one may not prepare for Pesach during this Shabbat.

Therefore, one should use disposable utensils, and dispose of them in the manner described in Section 7 below.

The table:

One who is eating Chametz should eat at a table which will not be used for food on Pesach. The standards for cleaning a surface which **will not** come into contact with food on Pesach are relatively lax; one need only clean off all visible Chametz, and the job is done.

Alternatively, prepare the table for Pesach before Shabbat and cover it with a disposable plastic cover. After the meal, dispose of the tablecloth in the manner described in Section 7 below. (Remember to place the candlesticks somewhere other than the table before lighting the Shabbat candles.)

Hot foods:

All hot foods should be prepared as Pesach foods, with Pesach utensils, which should be kept apart from Chametz and from Chametz utensils.

Section 7: *What do we do with Chametz which remains after the Shabbat meals?*

The Chametz which remains may be disposed of in one of four ways, before the sixth daylight hour:

1. Allow someone who is not Jewish to remove it for herself.
2. Flush very small quantities down the toilet. (Some avoid this, because it is degrading to food.)
3. Dispose of Chametz in a trash can or bag, declaring the can or bag “ownerless,” **and** leaving it outside the property, **and** avoiding it during Pesach.
4. Put large amounts into the area in which we store the Chametz we are selling, if one used “Solution 1” in Section 1 above.

Please note that the options for disposal also apply to utensils used with Chametz.

We wash out our mouths and dental apparatus in the same way we do every year, but we use only liquid toothpaste because of Shabbat. One whose gums bleed when flossed should not use dental floss.

We then recite the “Kol Chamira” paragraph, as explained above in Section 4.

Section 8: *Does Chametz become Muktzeh on Shabbat afternoon?*

Actual Chametz becomes Muktzeh after the time to destroy it, when one is no longer allowed to benefit from Chametz. If you find Chametz afterward:

1. Find a non-Jew who will dispose of it, or
2. Cover it with a vessel until Chol haMoed; dispose of the Chametz on Chol haMoed.

Section 9: *When do we eat Seudah Shlishit (the third Shabbat meal)?*

The problem:

We face competing mandates governing our Shabbat meals:

- A. On one hand, many authorities rule that the third meal of Shabbat must be bread-based, like the first two meals.
- B. On the other hand, the third meal is ideally eaten on Shabbat afternoon, at which time Chametz is forbidden!

Why not simply eat Matzah for the third meal? Because we do not eat Matzah on the day before Pesach, to increase excitement for Matzah at the Seder.

Two solutions:

Arrange an early Shacharit service, and then eat lunch as breakfast. Then:

1. Finish the Chametz “lunch” before the fifth daylight hour. After the midpoint of the daylight hours, and ideally after davening minchah, eat a third meal of matzah balls, meat, fish or fruit. Some even permit eating Ashkenazim to use egg matzah.

It is important to be careful not to eat this third meal so close to Pesach that it diminishes one’s Seder appetite. Therefore, egg matzah or mezonot should be completed before the tenth daylight hour; other foods are subject to your judgment.

2. The first solution does not satisfy the view that the third meal must be bread-based, unless one relies on the view permitting egg matzah. Those who wish to eat chametz bread should split their “lunch” into two parts, reciting the “blessing after meals” and then taking a twenty minute break before starting to eat again, and completing both meals before the fifth daylight hour. Of course, this solution will not satisfy the view that the third meal should be after minchah, or at least after midday.

Section 10: *May we make any preparations on Shabbat for the Seder?*

One may not prepare on Shabbat for events occurring after Shabbat. One may nap with the intent that this will help him at the Seder, though, because that is a normal part of Shabbat activity. One should not declare that the purpose of the nap is to prepare for that night.

After Shabbat is over, one may prepare for the Seder. Before beginning the preparations, one should recite the Maariv prayer, or recite this abbreviated version of Havdalah, in Hebrew or English: *Baruch haMavdil Bein Kodesh leKodesh* (Blessed is the One who distinguishes between one type of sanctity and another).

The full Havdalah is recited during the Seder, as described in Section 12 below.

Section 11: *How does one light candles for Pesach night?*

When Yom Tov begins on a Saturday night, we wait to light candles until Shabbat is over. Even then, we light from an existing flame: We light a 24-hour candle before Shabbat, which we then use as the fuel for the Yom Tov candles. We also light a second 24-hour candle from an existing flame on the first day of Yom Tov, and use that candle as the fuel to light candles on the second night of Yom Tov, after the first day has ended. Some prefer to light a 48-hour candle from before Shabbat, and light candles from that for the second night.

Section 12: *How does one make Havdalah on Pesach night?*

Havdalah is recited as part of Kiddush at the Seder, before the “Shehechyanu” blessing. The Yom Tov candles are used for the Havdalah candle. Some people remove two Yom Tov candles from the candlesticks and place them side-by-side, to simulate a multi-wicked Havdalah candle. Others leave the candles in the candlesticks. Follow your normal custom.