

# Weekly Halacha Discussion

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A weekly discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

## Shabbos erev Pesach: Frequently Asked Questions

This year, *Erev Pesach* falls on Shabbos, a fairly infrequent occurrence. While our lack of familiarity with observing *Erev Pesach* on Shabbos may catch us off-guard and cause some confusion, with the proper planning and know-how it need not be a difficult Shabbos to keep. Indeed, it actually gives us an opportunity to be well-rested for the *Seder* and to be able to fulfil the *mitzvos* of Pesach in a more alert and dignified manner.

The following are some of the frequently asked questions that deal with the special *halachos* of this Shabbos:

**QUESTION:** Why do we burn and sell the *chometz* on Friday morning when it is actually permitted to eat *chometz* until Shabbos morning?

**Discussion:** Although Friday is not really “*Erev Pesach*,” in certain respects we act as if it really is “*Erev Pesach*.” This is done in order to avoid confusion in subsequent years when *Erev Pesach* does not fall on Shabbos. Thus any *chometz* which will not be consumed before Pesach is burned or sold<sup>1</sup> no later than 11:47,<sup>2</sup> the time that would have been the deadline had this day truly been *Erev Pesach*.<sup>3</sup>

But concerning other *halachos* we do not treat Friday as *Erev Pesach*. Thus:

- The paragraphs usually omitted from Shacharis on *Erev Pesach* are recited on Friday.
- *Kol Chamira*, which is a statement that nullifies all of our *chometz* and is normally recited when the *chometz* is burned, is not recited this year on Friday. Instead, it is recited on Shabbos morning after the last remnants of *chometz* are gone.
- The special *Erev Pesach* restrictions that apply to taking a haircut and doing laundry after midday, do not apply on this particular Friday.<sup>4</sup>
- Dishes may be kashered until the onset of Shabbos.

1 There are different customs concerning when exactly the *chometz* is sold this year, since many people eat *chometz* and use *chometz* dishes until Shabbos morning.

2 All times are based on the GR”A for Golders Green London – 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

3 This custom is only *l’chatchilah*. If the *chometz* was not burned by this time, it may be burned anytime prior to the onset of Shabbos.

4 See *Beur Halachah* 468:1.

**QUESTION:** When should the *marror* and the other *Seder* items be prepared?

**Discussion:** All *Seder* preparations should be done on Friday, since it is prohibited to prepare anything<sup>5</sup> for the *Seder* on Shabbos. While technically the preparations may be done after Shabbos ends and before the *Seder* begins, this is not a good idea since it unnecessarily delays an already late start for the *Seder*.<sup>6</sup> Thus the horseradish,<sup>7</sup> *charoses*, shank bone, roasted egg and salt water should all be prepared on Friday.<sup>8</sup>

The romaine lettuce should also be washed and checked on Friday. Care must be taken, however, not to leave the lettuce soaking in water, as lettuce that was soaked in water for twenty-four hours may no longer be used for *marror*.

**QUESTION:** How do we discard the *chometz* crumbs on Shabbos?

**Discussion:** Leftover crumbs on the table, dishes or floor should be swept, gathered together and then flushed down the toilet. Larger pieces of bread may be crumbled<sup>9</sup> and then flushed down.

- If the collection of rubbish will not take place before approximately 11:45 do not place *chometz* in your bin.
- If the floor needs to be swept,<sup>10</sup> one must make sure that no *chometz* crumbs remain on the broom. Since it is extremely difficult to adequately clean a broom on Shabbos, it is advisable to put away the broom with the *chometz* utensils which have been sold to a non-Jew.

5 Even a “verbal preparation” such as stating that the Shabbos nap is for the purpose of being well-rested for the *Seder*, should be avoided; see Mishnah Berurah 290:4.

6 For the sake of the children, who are a primary focus of the *Seder*, the *Seder* should begin as promptly as possible once Shabbos is over.

7 The horseradish should be ground and stored in an airtight container until the *seder*.

8 When feasible, even the *Seder* table should be set on Friday.

9 Mishnah Berurah 321:30.

10 A soft-bristled broom should be used. A carpet sweeper should not be used on Shabbos.

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**QUESTION:** Some people use *chometz* rolls for *lechem mishneh* on this Shabbos and then serve the rest of the meal with kosher for Passover foods. Which dishes should be used during those meals?

**Discussion:** The recommended method is to use disposable (paper or plastic) dishes only as long as any *chometz* is being eaten. After the *chometz* is gone, the rest of the meal may be served on Pesach dishes.

**QUESTION:** In order to rid one's teeth of *chometz* is it permitted to brush them on Shabbos, with or without toothpaste?

**Discussion:** The consensus of contemporary *poskim* is that it is forbidden to use toothpaste on Shabbos.<sup>11</sup> Their main concern is that applying toothpaste to the teeth or the brush could result in a transgression of the prohibited Shabbos Labour of *Memareiach* – Smoothing.

Brushing without toothpaste is permitted,<sup>12</sup> provided that the following conditions are met:

- Use a toothbrush that is designated for Shabbos use only.<sup>13</sup> Some *poskim* require that the Shabbos toothbrush also look different from the weekday one, e.g. be of a different colour or style.<sup>14</sup>
- Use a soft brush so as not to irritate the gums and cause bleeding. (People with extremely sensitive gums who bleed whenever they brush their teeth may not use a toothbrush at all.)
- To avoid the prohibition of *Sechitah* – Squeezing, a dry toothbrush should be used. It is, however, permitted to rinse the mouth with cold water first and then use the toothbrush.<sup>15</sup>
- The toothbrush should not be rinsed off after it is used unless it is going to be used again this Shabbos.<sup>16</sup>

11 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:112; Seridei Eish 2:28; Minchas Yitzchak 3:48; Shevet ha-Levi 5:45; Tzitz Eliezer 7:30. (Although a minority opinion permits using toothpaste — see Ketzos ha-Shulchan (Badei ha-Shulchan 138:31), Yabia Omer 4:28 and Nefesh ha-Rav, pg. 168 — it is generally accepted not to do so.)

12 See Minchas Shlomo 2:35:3.

13 Based on Mishnah Berurah 327:10.

14 Minchas Yitzchak 3:50.

15 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:112; Shevet ha-Levi 5:45.

16 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:112.

**QUESTION:** Many people do not want to have any *chometz* in their home on Shabbos. Instead, they use egg matzah<sup>17</sup> for *lechem mishneh* at both the Friday night and Shabbos morning meals and recite *ha-motzi* over the egg matzah. Is this permitted?

**Discussion:** Yes, it is.<sup>18</sup> In fact, this is the preferred method for homes with little children who may scatter *chometz* crumbs around the house. This is also recommended for hotels or large gatherings where Shabbos meals are being served, or for anyone who feels more secure with having no *chometz* in the house on Shabbos.

Although usually the proper blessing over egg matzah is *mezonos*, when egg matzah is eaten during a full-course meal and substitutes for bread, *ha-motzi* is recited.<sup>19</sup> One should eat at least a *k'zayis*<sup>20</sup> (about 1 US fl. oz. or 30 ml) of egg matzah for each meal in addition to the other foods served at the meal.

Even when egg matzah is eaten for *lechem mishneh* one should finish eating it no later than 10:36.<sup>21</sup> The other foods served at the meal may be eaten later.

**QUESTION:** When is *Shalosh Seudos* – the third Shabbos meal, eaten on this Shabbos?

**Discussion:** Scheduling the third meal on this Shabbos is difficult, since the third meal is supposed to be eaten after midday – 13:00. At that time, we may no longer eat *chometz*, matzah or egg matzah. Thus, there is no perfect system for the third meal on

17 Although egg matzos contain some eggs, they are mainly kneaded with either apple cider or grape juice.

18 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:155. There is, however, a minority view that objects to eating egg matzah on Erev Pesach; see Nezer ha-Kodesh 52 and Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 2:211-23 for an explanation of this view. (To satisfy this view, it is preferable to use egg matzah which is kneaded with grape juice.)

19 Mishnah Berurah 168:24; Igros Moshe O.C. 1:56; 3:32; 4:41. See explanation in Pirkei Moed on Pesach (Horav M. Gifter), pg. 17-19.

20 According to some *poskim*, it is preferable to eat a *k'beitzah* (about 2 fl. oz.) of egg matzah, since *Al netilas yadayim* is only recited over a *k'beitzah* or more; see Mishnah Berurah 158:10 and Igros Moshe O.C. 4:41.

21 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:155, based on Rama 444:1.

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this Shabbos.<sup>22</sup> Instead, the *poskim* offer two alternatives, neither of which is ideal:

1. Divide the morning meal into two parts – i.e., wash, recite *ha-motzi*, eat a meal,<sup>23</sup> recite *Birkas Hamazon*, take a break (15 to 30 minutes),<sup>24</sup> wash again, recite *ha-motzi*, eat a meal and recite *Birkas Hamazon*. The *chometz* or egg matzah<sup>25</sup> which is used for *lechem mishneh* at the second meal, *Shalosh Seudos*, must be consumed before 10:36.
2. Eat a meal consisting of “other foods,” such as cooked matzah-meal<sup>26</sup> balls (*knaidelech*<sup>27</sup>), meat, fish<sup>28</sup>, fruit<sup>29</sup> or a kosher-for-Passover chulent<sup>30</sup> any time after one-half-hour after *chatzos* (approx. 13:36) until the beginning of the tenth hour of the day (approx. 16:36). After that time, one is required to minimize his intake of food so as not to ruin his appetite for the *Seder*.

22 Indeed, some *poskim* hold that there is no mitzvah to eat *Shalosh Seudos* at all on this Shabbos, and that none of the following options should be employed; Aruch ha-Shulchan 444:6.

23 The more important Shabbos foods should be served during the first morning meal, as the second Shabbos meal is considered more significant than *Shalosh Seudos*.

24 If time allows, taking a short walk outside between the meals is recommended.

25 When using egg matzah at this meal, other foods must also be served; otherwise *ha-motzi* and *Birkas Hamazon* cannot be recited.

26 Although it is prohibited to eat matzah on Erev Pesach, cooked or boiled matzah-meal products are permitted according to all of the *poskim*. Fried matzah-meal products, however, should be avoided (see Sha’ar Ha-Tziyun 444:1). Baked matzah-meal products, such as cakes or cookies, are prohibited; Horav S. Z. Auerbach (Erev Pesach Shechal b’Shabbos, pg. 207); Shevet ha-Levi 8:117.

27 For those who eat *gebrokts* but some people eat *gebrokts* on Erev Pesach even if they do not do so on Pesach; She’arim Metzuyanim B’halachah 115:7.

28 Even if they were prepared with matzah-meal. A *shehakol* is recited over them.

29 When possible, eating matzah balls – whose blessing is *mezonos* – is preferable to eating meat or fish. Eating meat or fish is preferable to eating fruit; O.C. 291:5.

30 Mishnah Berurah 444:14.

Since both of these options are halachically problematic, some people have the custom of following both procedures, i.e., they split the morning meal and then eat a meal of “other foods” after 13:36.

#### Points to remember...

- Although we do not eat matzah on this Shabbos, the matzos are not considered *muktzeh*, since it is permitted to feed small children matzah on Erev Pesach. It is permitted, therefore, to use a matzah for *lechem mishneh* on this Shabbos. Care should be taken that no *chometz* crumbs attach themselves to the *matzah*.<sup>31</sup>
- On Shabbos, it is advisable not to cast *chometz* crumbs to the winds even within an *eiruv*, as some *poskim* hold that this may be a violation of the Shabbos Labour of *Zoreh* – Winnowing.<sup>32</sup>
- The *challos* which are designated for *lechem mishneh* should be left in a safe place where children cannot reach them.<sup>33</sup>
- A small child who will not participate in the *Seder* may eat regular matzah this Shabbos.<sup>34</sup>
- Before the women begin to prepare for the *Seder* after Shabbos is over, they should recite *Boruch hamavdil bein kodesh l’kodesh*.<sup>35</sup>

23 <sup>rd</sup> of April	London	Manchester	Gateshead
סוף זמן אכילת חמץ (ב"א)	10:12 AM	10:19 AM	10:15 AM
סוף זמן אכילת חמץ (הגר"א)	10:36 AM	10:43 AM	10:39 AM
סוף זמן הנאה (ב"א)	11:36 AM	11:43 AM	11:40 AM
סוף זמן הנאה (הגר"א)	11:48 AM	11:55 AM	11:52 AM

Please use the times published by your shul or local Orthodox Jewish Rabbi if available.

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31 Igros Chazon Ish 1:188, quoted by Shemiras Shabbos K’hilchasah 55:14.

32 Magen Avrohom 446:2; Shulchan Aruch Horav 446:5-6; Maharsham (Drashah to Shabbos ha-Gadol, 76). Mishnah Berurah, however, is not concerned with this; see Beir Halachah 319:17 (s.v. efazer).

33 Mishnah Berurah 444:3

34 Rama 471:2.

35 Mishnah Berurah 299:36.

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### Miscellaneous FAQs for every Pesach

**QUESTION:** Is it halachically acceptable to celebrate *Pesach* away from home after selling one's home with all of its *chometz* contents to a non-Jew?

**Discussion:** Anyone who owns *chometz* is obligated to dispose of it before *Pesach* begins. This can be accomplished in one of two ways: By destroying it<sup>36</sup> or by selling it (or giving it away) to a non-Jew.<sup>37</sup> Either way, one fulfils his basic obligation and does not transgress the Biblical injunction against owning any *chometz*.

But there is something else to consider: The Rabbis obligated each person to search for *chometz* on the night before *Pesach*. (If one leaves town before that time, he is still obligated to search for *chometz* the night before he leaves, although no *berachah* is recited for that search.) In the opinion of many *poskim*, the search for *chometz* is obligatory whether or not one owns his *chometz* by the time *Pesach* arrives, since once the rabbinical ordinance was enacted, it cannot be abrogated regardless of the circumstances.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, selling the house to a non-Jew does not free one from his personal obligation to search for *chometz*.

A solution<sup>39</sup> to this problem is to set aside one room in the house, even a small one, and not sell it to a non-Jew along with the rest of the house. That room should be cleaned for *Pesach* and thoroughly searched for *chometz* on the night before *Pesach*, with the proper blessing recited for the *bedikah*.<sup>40</sup> One who will have already gone out of town by the night before *Pesach* should follow the same procedure on the night before he leaves – but he may not recite a *berachah* on the *bedikah*.

**QUESTION:** What should be done if a package containing *chometz* arrives at one's home or business during *Pesach*?

**Discussion:** One, who knows or suspects that the package may contain actual *chometz*, may not assume ownership of the package. If he can refuse to accept the package, he should do so. If he cannot, he should not bring it into his house or yard and should have specific halachic intent not

to “acquire” the *chometz*. The package is considered “ownerless” – anyone who wants it is free to take it.

If the package was mistakenly brought into the home or business, one must have specific intent not to “acquire” it. One may not touch the actual *chometz*.<sup>41</sup> If the package comes on *Chol ha-Moed*, the *chometz* should be immediately discarded, either by burning it or by flushing it down the toilet. If it comes on Shabbos or *Yom Tov*, it should be put aside<sup>42</sup> and covered until it can be discarded.

While most people do not expect to receive packages containing *chometz* during *Pesach*, one should be aware of a recent problem that applies to almost everybody. Many packaged items are insulated by packing pellets that protect the contents during transport. In the past, this cushioning was made from polystyrene, but recently, some companies have begun using biodegradable “peanuts” which are made from edible corn starch or wheat starch. Those that are made from wheat starch may be halachically considered “actual *chometz*” since they are fit for human consumption. If a package insulated with these “peanuts” arrives on *Pesach*,<sup>43</sup> the *halachos* stated above may apply. A *Rav* should be consulted.<sup>44</sup>

While it may not always be easy to differentiate between the different types of packing pellets, there is a definite difference in appearance between the polystyrene and the starch ones. The polystyrene ones come in random shapes while the starch ones look as though they have been extruded through the holes of a machine. Each piece is perfectly cylindrical and is water-soluble.<sup>45</sup>

36 Either by eating it, burning it, flushing it down the toilet or throwing it in a river.

37 This is a difficult halachic procedure that can only be administered by a *Rav*.

38 See O. C. 436:3 and Mishnah Berurah 27 and 32.

39 Another possible solution (for people who are away for *Pesach* and are staying at another person's home) is for the guest to “rent” from his host – with a valid *kinyan* – the room in which he is staying, and search for *chometz* in that room; M'harsham 3:291. But other *poskim* prefer not to rely on this solution; see Shevet ha-Levi 4:44.

40 Siddur Pesach K'hilchaso 12:1.

41 O. C. 446:10.

42 The *chometz* is severe *muktzeh* and may not be moved for any reason; O. C. 446:1. Some *poskim* add that it may not even be moved with one's body or foot, even though other types of severe *muktzeh* may be; L'ehoros Nossan 5:30.

43 The same applies to packages that arrived before *Pesach* but were not opened. Although one nullifies (*mevatel*) his *chometz* before *Pesach*, it is still forbidden to knowingly keep *chometz* in the house unless it is put away and sold to a non-Jew with the rest of the *chometz*.

44 A more lenient ruling might be based on the argument that these pellets have been designated as packing material – not food. They have been processed to remove their nutrients and thus lost their “*chometz* form” and may be stored on *Pesach*; refer to O. C. 442:3 and 9, Mishnah Berurah 15, 41 and 42 and Chazon Ish O. C. 116:8. This is a questionable argument and a *Rav* must be consulted.

45 The technical information quoted here is based on information from *Kashrus Magazine*, April 2000.