



# PASSOVER

The information below is only applicable for Passover  
2020

## COVID-19 and Pesach Related Issues

OU Kosher Staff

As the world struggles to contain and address the Corona virus pandemic – with only a short time left until Pesach – the following is intended to address some common and unique circumstances:

**CLEANING THE HOME FOR PESACH**

**PREPARING THE KITCHEN FOR PESACH**

**TEVILAS KEILIM IF MIKVA IS INACCESSIBLE**

**WHAT IF I CAN'T MAINTAIN CERTAIN FAMILY CUSTOMS OR STRINGENCIES THIS YEAR?**

**PRODUCTS WITHOUT SPECIAL PESACH SUPERVISION?**

**KITNIYOS AND NON-KITNIYOS LIST**

**WHICH COUGH MEDICINE'S MAY BE USED ON PESACH**

**IF UNABLE TO PERSONALLY VISIT A RABBI TO AUTHORIZE THE SALE OF CHAMETZ**

**IF ONE CANNOT GET TO CERTAIN LOCATIONS TO PERFORM BEDIKAS CHAMETZ**

**IF UNABLE TO BURN CHAMETZ IN THE NORMAL FASHION**

**IF A FIRST BORN IS UNABLE TO PERSONALLY ATTEND THE EREV PESACH SIYUM**

**IF ONE FORGOT TO MAKE THE ERUV TAVSHILIN BEFORE PESACH**

Some who have never before prepared their homes and kitchens for Pesach, will be doing so this year for the first time. The following are basics for cleaning one's home and koshering one's kitchen:

## **CLEANING THE HOME FOR PESACH**

One need only clean for Pesach areas where one might have brought chametz. If one never eats or brings chametz into their attic, basement or garage, these areas need not be cleaned. Likewise, drawers or closets that never have chametz, need not be cleaned.

Any furniture or appliance that cannot be moved out of place (such as a breakfront, refrigerator or built-in appliance) need not be moved to clean underneath it. Inaccessible chametz is automatically batel (nullified).

According to the letter of the law, one is only required to check for pieces of chametz that are the size of an olive. Anything smaller than an olive is viewed as crumbs and is inherently insignificant. One is not required to clean or check for such small pieces of chametz, since they are automatically batel (nullified). However, Igros Moshe writes that small pieces of chametz that are not crumbs (e.g, Cheerios, pretzels) require cleaning for Pesach. The main objective when cleaning for Pesach is to make sure that one's home is cleaned of these items. Tiny crumbs that might be stuck on toys, carpeting, floors, walls are insignificant and do not require cleaning. However, Rishonim already wrote, that the Jewish people are a holy nation and they go beyond the letter of the law and try to remove even crumbs of chametz. If one has the ability to do so – this is praiseworthy.

Seforim (books) need not be checked for chametz. However, one should not bring to the table any sefarim (especially year-round bentchers) that might have crumbs in them, out of concern that a crumbs may get into your Pesach food.

One should check pockets (especially coats), knapsacks, and briefcases.

One should remember to clean their car, office or any other place outside of the home where they might keep chametz. If these areas are inaccessible, one should sell the chametz.

Areas of the house that will be sold for Pesach need not be cleaned. However, these areas should be clearly marked and either closed off with a door, or a mechitza (temporary wall) should be put up to segregate these areas. One may not store actual chametz in a closet, fridge or freezer that you will be using on Pesach even if you put the chametz in a bag. Rather, one must place a partition between themselves and the chametz.

## **PREPARING THE KITCHEN FOR PESACH**

## COUNTERTOPS

*Ceramic Tile Countertops* Cover the countertop with a water-resistant covering such as plastic. (The countertop itself cannot be kashered; therefore, it must be covered.)

*Formica or Plastic Countertops* There are different opinions as to whether formica or plastic countertops can be kashered for Pesach. Consult your rabbi for guidance.

*Granite, Composite Stone (e.g. Quartz) or Stainless Steel* It is preferable to kasher a countertop by pouring boiling water in conjunction with an even melubenet (a heated stone).

To kasher with an even melubenet: Attach a stone to a clamp, and heat the stone on the stove for a minute. While pouring the boiling water on the counter, move the stone along on the counter with the boiling water so that the water is reheated on the surface of the counter. The stone may need to be reheated on the stovetop several times, since it can cool down quickly.

## DISHWASHER

Consult with a halachic authority, since kashering dishwashers is a complicated process.

## ELECTRIC MIXER

Because of the difficulty in cleaning out the housing of the mixer from fine particles of flour, one should not use their year-round mixer on Passover.

The mixer blades, however, can be cleaned and kashered through boiling (see “**Small Utensils**” below).

## FABRIC ITEMS: APRONS, GLOVES, TOWELS, TABLECLOTHS

Remove any pieces of food that are attached. Wash items with detergent in the washing machine set on “hot.”

Items should be checked afterwards to make sure that no pieces of food remain attached.

## FREEZER, REFRIGERATOR, PANTRY, FOOD SHELVES, HIGHCHAIR

Clean thoroughly, paying special attention to the edges where crumbs may get trapped.

Line all surfaces with paper or plastic. (Note: Refrigerators and freezers will operate more efficiently if holes are poked in the lining to allow for air flow.)

## BABY HIGHCHAIR

Wipe down the seat, legs and bars with a soapy rag. Cover the tray with contact paper

## HOT WATER URN

*Urn only used for heating water:* Run hot water through the water tap for 10 seconds, while pouring boiling water from a kettle over the water tap.

*Urn also used to warm food (e.g. to warm challah):* Must be put away and not used for the Pesach.

## KEURIG COFFEE MAKER

*For those who kasher plastic. (Those who do not kasher plastic should put away their coffee maker for Pesach.)* Clean the coffee maker and do not use for 24 hours.

Remove the K-cup holder and perform hagalah (boiling in water) or iruy (pouring boiling water over it) on the K-cup holder. Run a Kosher for Passover K-cup in the machine. (This will kasher the top pin.)

## MICROWAVE

*For those who kasher plastic. (Those who do not kasher plastic should put away their microwave for Pesach.)*

Clean thoroughly and do not use for 24 hours. Remove the glass turntable and replace it with a new, kosher-for-Passover surface.

After 24 hours, fill a styrofoam cup with water and boil it in the microwave for 10 minutes. Refill the cup and move it to another spot. Boil it in the microwave for 10 more minutes.

Tape cardboard or contact paper over the interior glass window pane for the duration of Passover.

## OVEN

*Self-cleaning ovens* Remove any visible food. Complete the self-cleaning cycle with the oven racks in place. (This accomplishes libun gamur – burning.)

*Non-self-cleaning oven* Clean all surfaces (walls, floor, doors and racks) thoroughly with a caustic cleanser (e.g. Easy Off). Pay special attention to the thermostat, oven window, and edges of the oven chamber. Black discoloration that is flush with the metal need not be removed.

Oven should not be used for 24 hours.

Place racks in the oven and turn on the oven to broil (highest heat) for 60 minutes. (This accomplishes libun kal – light burning.)

Note 1: A broiler pan that comes in direct contact with food should not be used.

Note 2: The method of kashering described above is based on the ruling of Rav Aharon Kotler zt”l. However, Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l ruled that the oven must either be kashered with a blow torch, or an insert should be placed in the oven. Consult your rabbi for guidance.

## POTS, SILVERWARE, SMALL UTENSILS

Utensils must be first cleaned and left unused for 24 hours. After 24 hours, immerse utensils into a pot of boiling water that is on the fire.

- The pot can be non-Passover, provided it is clean, has not been used for 24 hours, and water is first boiled in the pot and discarded.
- Small utensils should be immersed one at a time.
- Larger items can be submerged in the water one part at a time.

Allow the water to return to a boil before the next item is placed in the pot.

Rinse utensils in cold water after the immersion.

Note 1: Rolled lips, seams or cracks, which cannot be cleaned, will require torching of those areas before boiling.

Note 2: Metal tea kettles must be kashered just as any other pot must be kashered. Although it is uncommon for anything but water to be put into a tea kettle, nevertheless, it must be kashered. Tea kettles often sit on the stove, and it is common for them to get spritzed with hot food.

## SINK

*Stainless steel sink* Remove the drain.

It is recommended that the drain be replaced with a new drain for Passover. If this is difficult, it may be used if the drain has large holes that can be completely scrubbed clean.

Kasher the sink:

First, clean the sink and do not use it for 24 hours.

It is preferable to kasher the sink by pouring boiling water (iruy) in conjunction with an even melubenet (a heated stone). To kasher with an even melubenet: Attach a stone to a clamp, and heat the stone on the stove for a minute. While pouring boiling water over all surfaces of the

sink, move the stone along the sink with the boiling water so that the water is reheated on the surface of the sink. The stone may need to be reheated on the stovetop several times, since the stone may cool down quickly.

In lieu of kashering with a heated stone, some will just kasher their sinks by pouring boiling water and then using a tub or sink insert.

### *Ceramic sink*

A ceramic sink cannot be kashered, and therefore must be cleaned and covered as follows:

The sink should not be used with hot water for 24 hours. Remove the sink drain.

It is recommended that the drain be replaced. If this is difficult, and the drain has large holes and can be completely scrubbed clean, then it can be kashered. The drain should not be used for 24 hours and should have boiling water poured over it from a Passover kettle.

Clean the sink thoroughly and make sure it is completely dry.

Cover the sink with 2 or 3 layers of contact paper or foil. (It is best to purchase a sink insert instead of covering with paper or foil.)

### SINK FAUCET – INCLUDING INSTANT HOT DISPENSER

Detach any filters or nozzles. Pour boiling water over the faucet.

### STOVETOP

*Electric Stovetop* Clean the stovetop surface well and cover with foil. Turn on the burners until they glow red. (This accomplishes libun – burning.)

*Gas Stovetop* Clean the stovetop surface and grates well and do not use for 24 hours. Cover the stovetop surface with foil.

Either replace the stovetop grates with new ones for Passover, or burn them out in the oven at 550° F for one hour. (This accomplishes libun kal – light burning.)

*Glass Stovetop* A glass stovetop cannot be kashered, and therefore must be dealt with as follows: Clean the stovetop surface well and do not use for 24 hours. During Pesach, pots should not be placed directly on the stove surface, but rather an aluminum (or other metal) disk should be placed directly under the pots. One should not cover the entire glass top surface, as this might cause it to overheat and crack.

## TABLE

Clean the table well. Cover the table with two layers. One of those layers should be water-resistant (such as plastic).

## WARMING DRAWERS

Typically, warming drawers do not get to the 550°F temperature required for libun kal (light burning). Therefore, unless one is experienced in kashering with a torch, warming drawers are not recommended for use on Pesach.

## WATER COOLER

Pour boiling water over the tap for 10 seconds. Replace the water bottle with a fresh bottle.

## **TEVILAS KEILIM IF MIKVA IS INACCESSIBLE**

In many communities the keilim mikvaos are closed. What should be done if one bought new utensils that require tevila?

If one has the ability to toivel their utensils in the ocean, this is also a valid mikvah.

Regarding rivers or lakes, Rav Belsky zt”l ruled that for tervilas keilim these are also adequate provided that it has not rained in several days. Rivers and lakes are flowing bodies of water. If the majority of the water in the river or lake is spring water then it is acceptable as a mikvah even if it is moving. If the majority is rainwater then it must be contained and cannot flow. Rav Belsky said that if it has not rained in two or three days, one may assume that the majority of the water is spring water and is suitable for tevilas keilim.

If tevila is not an option, Shulchan Aruch writes that one may gift the utensils to a non-Jew and then borrow them back. The non-Jew should pick up the utensil with intent to acquire them and then loan them back to you for as long as you want. One is not required to return the utensil to the non-Jew, since the loan is for as long as you want, still as soon as a mikvah becomes available, one must toivel these utensils.

If gifting to a non-Jew is also not an option, Rav Schachter has said that given the shas ha’dchak (extenuating circumstances) one may rely on the poskim who permit being mafkir (declaring ownerless) the utensils in front of three Jews. They should be Jews who are eligible to testify in court. If one cannot assemble three people for this purpose, one may conference them on the

phone and announce to them that these utensils are ownerless. One may then use the utensils with intent to not reacquire them.

### **WHAT IF I CAN'T MAINTAIN CERTAIN FAMILY CUSTOMS OR STRINGENCIES THIS YEAR?**

This year due to the coronavirus, some people might find themselves in a situation where they are unable to keep all of their personal chumros or family minhagim. For example, some have the custom only to eat shemurah matzah on Pesach. Some do not sell chametz gamur (actual chametz such as bread). Some families will not eat processed foods that were prepared outside of their home and some will not eat gebrochts (matzah that became wet). What should be done if one find themselves in a situation where they will be unable to keep these chumros? Do these customs and chumros have the status of a neder (vow)? Is one required to make hataras nedarim (annul the vow in front of three)?

Rav Schachter said that although these chumros have the status of a Rabbinic neder, still in this type of situation hataras nedarim is not required. This is based on the Magen Avrohom (581:12) and Dagul Mirevava (YD 214) who writes that if one finds themselves temporarily in a shas ha'dchak (extenuating circumstance), where it is not possible to keep a certain chumra, but as soon as the situation improves, the chumra will be continued, then hataras nedarim is not necessary. Rav Schachter explains that when the neder was initially accepted, it was understood that it was being accepted under normal circumstances when the neder can be followed. The chumra was never accepted in situations of shas ha'dchak. Therefore, there is no need for hataras nedarim. Moreover, regarding community or family minhagim, it would not help for us to make hataras nedarim, since we were not the ones who made the neder, but it was imposed on us by others. This type of neder cannot be undone. Still, in a temporary situation of shas ha'dchak even these community chumros need not be followed, since this too was the intent of those who originated the neder.

### **PRODUCTS WITHOUT SPECIAL PESACH SUPERVISION?**

There are a whole variety of OU certified products that OU recommends for Pesach even without the OUP symbol. Please consult the OU Passover Guide at: <https://oukosher.org/passover/passover-guide/>

### **KITNIYOS AND NON-KITNIYOS LISTS**



The following are considered Kitniyot:

Beans

Buckwheat

Caraway

Cardamom

Corn

Edamame

Fennel Seeds

Fenugreek

Flaxseed (Linseed)

Green Beans

Hemp Seeds

Lentils

Millet

Mustard

Peas

Poppy Seeds

Rapeseed

Rice

Sesame Seeds

Soybeans

Sunflower Seeds

Teff

The following are not considered Kitniyot, but may require special checking:

Anise

Carob

Chia Seeds

Coriander

Cottonseed

Cumin

Guar Gum

Locust Bean Gum

Safflower

Saffron

The following may be Kitniyot and are therefore not used:

Amaranth

Peanuts

### **WHICH COUGH MEDICINE'S MAY BE USED ON PESACH**

Many cough medicines are formulated as a liquid syrup, which is one of the most effective ways of delivering the active ingredient, dextromethorphan or guaifenesin, into one's throat. These liquids often contain glycerin.

The consumer hotline at the manufacturers of the following products have declared (in writing) that the following products contain no animal derivatives. Although the OU has not independently verified these claims and does not certify these products, the OU poskim have ruled that in this context such a claim is reliable:

Robitussin DM and Maximum Strength Liquid Cough Medicine

Mucinex Liquid Cough Medicine

Quality Choice Liquid Cough Suppressant (99413 appears under bar code)

The following products do not contain glycerin and can be assumed to be kosher:

Dayquil and Nyquil Cold and Flu Liquid Medicine (these do not contain glycerin); Vapocool Severe, according to the P&G consumer hotline, contains non-kosher glycerin

Delsym Liquid Cough Medicine (these do not contain glycerin)

None of the medicines above present a problem of chametz.

Liquid cough medicines that are prescribed by a doctor should be viewed as a safek (doubt). Ideally these should be diluted in a ratio of two teaspoons of liquid medicine to five ounces of water, juice or other liquid. This should be done if it is practical and doing so does not compromise the effectiveness of the medicine.

### **IF UNABLE TO PERSONALLY VISIT A RABBI TO AUTHORIZE THE SALE OF CHAMETZ**

If unable to personally sign the authorization contract and perform a Kinyan to grant the Rabbi power of attorney to sell Chametz it is sufficient to make this authorization via a verbal telephone declaration or in the form of an electronic communication.

### **IF ONE CANNOT GET TO CERTAIN LOCATIONS TO PERFORM BEDIKAS CHAMETZ**

If one cannot access spaces where one would normally do Bedikas Chametz before Pesach, any Chametz in those spaces should be included in the sale of Chametz that one makes to a non-Jew.

### **IF A FIRST BORN IS UNABLE TO PERSONALLY ATTEND THE EREV PESACH SIYUM**

It has become customary for bechorim to exempt themselves of fasting on Erev Pesach by participating in a siyum and partaking in what is served.

One should either 1) listen to (preferably understand) the content of the Siyum or 2) partake from the food served at the Siyum. Others suggest that it is sufficient to rejoice in the Siyum even if unable to personally participate.

The Madani Shlomo (R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach) writes that in extenuating circumstances one can fulfill his obligation by listening to the siyum on the phone.

## IF UNABLE TO BURN CHAMETZ IN THE NORMAL FASHION

The halacha states that one accomplishes the Mitzva of Biur Chametz by getting rid of the chametz in any of the following ways; crumbling it and throwing it to the winds, crumbling it and throwing it into the ocean or river, flushing it down the toilet(M.B. O.C.445.5). Nonetheless, it has become customary (when possible) to specifically burn the Chametz in a fire. Where this is not possible any of the methods prescribed above can be used.

The proper time to burn the chametz is during the fifth hour( M.B. 445.10) each person can check the exact time of his city at <https://oukosher.org/passover/> and type in your city.

## IF ONE FORGOT TO MAKE THE ERUV TAVSHILIN BEFORE PESACH

If one forgot to make an eruv before Yom Tov it is possible to make an eruv on the first day of Yom Tov (Thursday). To do so, one should say the following: "If today (Thursday) is Yom Tov (and as such tomorrow {Friday} is a weekday), the eruv is unnecessary (because one may cook for Shabbos on a Friday which is a weekday). However, if today (Thursday) is a weekday and tomorrow is Yom Tov, this will be my eruv, which will allow preparation on Friday/Yom Tov for Shabbos. (Shulchan Oruch 527:22).

If one forgot to do the above process on Thursday, or if Yom Tov began on Friday, one may rely on the Eruv Tavshilin performed by the rabbi of the city, as it is customary for him to include his entire community in his eruv. One may rely on this only if the Eruv Tavshilin was not forgotten due to negligence (Shulchan Oruch ibid). In addition, one cannot rely on the rabbi's eruv for two consecutive Yomim Tovim (MB 527:22). Kaf Hachaim 527:48 suggests that this limitation applies only if the two Yomim Tovim were consecutive. After forgetting to make an eruv two consecutive times, the Chayei Adam (Klal 102:7) questions whether one may rely again on the rabbi's eruv in the future.

Another option is to have someone who made an Eruv Tavshilin cook for the one who forgot. In this case, ownership of the ingredients must be transferred to the one who is allowed to cook. This person may then proceed to cook even in the home of the person who did not make an Eruv Tavshilin (Shulchan Aruch OC 527:20).

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