

Important Reminders and Instructions for Pesah

By Rabbi Frank Varon

Bedikat Hametz – Noche de Kal Hamira / Searching for Hametz:

The Torah prohibits possession of any Hametz during Pesah. As such, it is proper and appropriate for one to check their home and rid themselves of all such Hametz products, and to do so well before the traditional Bedikat Hametz (which we refer to as “Noche de Kal Hamira”). Even though the home may already be pristine clean from the seasonal cleaning and free of any Hametz, one still needs to do Bedikat Hametz in their home (and, places of business, vehicles, and any other homes one may own) where Hametz might be found. This year, the first night of Pesah occurs on Wednesday night, so we perform the Bedika on Tuesday night, March 31st after dark (8:08 pm).

Prior to starting the search, the one conducting the Bedika recites the following blessing:

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֱ-דֹנֵי אֱלֹהֵי-יְנוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
עַל בִּיעוּר חֵמֶץ.**

Baruch Ata Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha'Olam, Asher Kideshanu BeMitzvotav VeTzivau 'al Be'ur Hametz.

The search is conducted at night to more easily discover unaddressed Hametz with a light that is contrasted against a background of darkness. Although traditionally a candle has been used, it is recommended for safety reasons, as well as efficiencies for highlighting any remaining Hametz in the premises to use a flashlight.

Upon completing the search the one performing the search should then recite a “renunciation and annulment” of any Hametz of which they are unaware. It is very important for one to understand this proclamation that they’re reciting. Please note that the following recitation only covers Hametz unbeknownst to the individual; it does not apply to Hametz that one is intentionally setting aside for later consumption prior to Pesah. (see further details below).

The one completing the Bedika recites the following:

כָּל חֲמִירָא דְאִפְא בְּרִשּׁוּתִי, דְּלֹא חֲזִיתִיהּ, וְדִלָּא בְּעֵרְתִּיהּ, לֶהְיוּ בְּטֹל
וְחֲשִׁיב כְּעֶפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

Kal Hamira de Eeka Birshuti, de La Haziteh, Ud-la Bi-'arteh,
LeHeveh Batel VeHasheev Ke'Afra deAr'ah.

Translation: Any Hametz that is in my possession, that I have not seen, and that I have not destroyed shall be nullified and ownerless and shall be considered like the dust of the earth.

Hametz that was collected as a result of the search, and any Hametz thereafter found, except for the Hametz intentionally designated for later consumption shall be gathered and set aside for burning/destroying the next morning, Wednesday, April 1st, by 11:54 am. IMPORTANT: Note that no further consuming of Hametz shall occur on Wednesday, after 10:33 am, even though one has until 11:54 am to burn/destroy any remaining Hametz.

Following the burning/destroying the remaining Hametz, a final nullification of any remaining Hametz shall be recited as follows:

כָּל חֲמִירָא דְאִפְא בְּרִשּׁוּתִי, דִּי חֲזִיתִיהּ וְדִלָּא חֲזִיתִיהּ, דְּבְעֵרְתִּיהּ וְדִלָּא
בְּעֵרְתִּיהּ, לֶהְיוּ בְּטֹל וְחֲשִׁיב כְּעֶפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

Kal Hamira de Eeka Birshuti, di Haziteh, Ud-la Haziteh, DeBi-
'arteh, Ud-la Bi-'arteh, LeHeveh Batel VeHasheev Ke'Afra
deAr'ah.

Translation: Any Hametz that is in my possession, that I have seen and that I have not seen, and that I have destroyed and that I have not destroyed shall be nullified and ownerless and shall be considered like the dust of the earth.

For the remainder of the day one may continue to eat non Hametz food, such as eggs, fruits, vegetables, nuts, etc., being careful not to over-eat in order to enter the holiday with a hearty appetite, eager to engage in the many Haggada rituals and the delectable cuisine that was prepared for the holiday. Also, NO Matza should be consumed prior to the start of Pesah, so that one enters the holiday with an appetite to partake of the biblical commandment of eating Matza on the first night of Pesah during the Seder. (Of course, there is also a

Mitzvah for those of us outside of Israel to eat Matza on the second night of Pesah during the Seder.)

Noche de Pesah and The Seder:

For the first night of Pesah, Minha on Wednesday evening is scheduled for 7:15 pm, with the Arvit service to follow and will include the Pesah liturgy with the beautiful community singing of the “Hodu” and the “Hallel” to the same chant of the Haggada – among our time honored traditions. This same timing for services will occur on the second night of Pesah, as well, Thursday, April 2nd.

Since the Hebrew ‘day’ begins at nightfall, Pesah commences in the evening, as does each and every day of the year and all holidays of the year, i.e., Pesah, Shavuot, Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, Succot, etc. And, since Passover ushers in the night on which we are obligated to fulfill specific Mitzvot (commandments), such as telling of the Exodus story (Haggada), eating Matza, eating the bitter herbs (Marror), and so forth, we wait for nightfall to occur in order to properly and timely fulfill these Mitzvot. As such, the Haggada service should commence no earlier than 8:10 pm on the first night, and no earlier than 8:11 pm on the second night.

Additional Reminders:

1. Tue, March 31st, Tefila, Fast of the First Born, 7:00 am, followed by a Siyum (presentation and brief ceremony upon concluding a Tractate from the Talmud)
2. Tue, March 31st, Bedikat Hametz, Search for Hametz, 8:08 pm

Pesah Allegre!

Mo’adim leSimha, Hagim Uzmanim LeSasson

Wishing all a happy and enjoyable Passover Holiday!