

SHABBOS EREV PESACH: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

This year, Erev Pesach falls on Shabbos, a fairly infrequent occurrence. While our lack of familiarity with observing Erev Pesach on Shabbos causes some confusion and concern, still, 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 fulfill 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 chametz on Friday morning when it is actually permitted to eat chametz 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 chametz which will not be consumed before Pesach is burned or sold⁽¹⁾ no later than 12:12 p.m.⁽²⁾, (All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Consult your local Rav for the appropriate time in your city), the time that would have been the deadline had this day truly been Erev Pesach.⁽³⁾

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 chametz and is normally recited when the chametz is burned, is not recited this year on Friday. Instead, it is recited on Shabbos morning after the last remnants of chametz are gone.

The special Erev Pesach restrictions that apply to taking a haircut and doing laundry after midday, do not apply on Friday⁽⁴⁾. Dishes may be kashered until the onset of Shabbos.

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⁽⁵⁾ 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.(6) Thus the horseradish,(7) charoses, shank bone, roasted egg and salt water should all be prepared on Friday.(8)

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 can no longer be used for marror.

QUESTION: How do we discard the chametz crumbs on Shabbos?

DISCUSSION: Leftover crumbs on the table, dishes or floor should be swept,(9) gathered together and then flushed down the toilet. Larger pieces of bread may be crumbled(10) and then flushed down.

If the Sanitation Department will not pick up the garbage before 12:00, (All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Consult your local Rav for the appropriate time in your city) do not place chametz in your trash can.

The broom which is used to sweep the floor must be cleaned well. If it cannot be cleaned adequately, then it must be put away with the chametz utensils which have been sold to a non-Jew.

QUESTION: Many people use chametz 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 chametz is being eaten. After the chametz is gone, the rest of the meal can be served on Pesach dishes.

QUESTION: In order to rid one's teeth of chametz, 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.(11) Their main concern is that applying toothpaste to the teeth or the brush could result in a transgression of the prohibited Shabbos Labor of Memareiach, Smoothing.

Brushing without toothpaste is permitted,(12) provided that the following conditions are met: Use a toothbrush that is designated for Shabbos use only.(13) Some poskim require that the Shabbos toothbrush also look different from the weekday one, e.g., be of a different color or style.(14) 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.(15)

The toothbrush should not be rinsed off after it is used unless it is going to be used again on that same Shabbos.(16)

QUESTION: Many people do not want to have any chametz in their home on Shabbos. Instead, they use egg matzah(17) 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.(18) In fact, this is the preferred method for homes with little children who may scatter chametz crumbs around the house. This is also recommended for hotels, for large gatherings where Shabbos meals are being served, or for anyone who feels more secure with having no chametz 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.(19) One should eat at least a k'zayis(20) (about 1 fl. oz.) of egg matzah for each meal in addition to the other foods served at the meal.

Even those who use egg matzah for lechem mishneh, should take care to finish eating the egg matzah no later than 10:55 a.m.(21) (All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Consult your local Rav for the appropriate time in your city). The other foods served at the meal can be eaten later.

QUESTION: When is seudah shelishis, the third Shabbos meal, eaten on this Shabbos?

DISCUSSION: Eating the third meal on this Shabbos is difficult to do, since the third meal is supposed to be eaten after midday. At that time, we may no longer eat chametz, matzah or egg matzah. Thus, there is no perfect system for the third meal on this Shabbos.(22) 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(23), recite Birkas ha-Mazon, take a break (15-30 minutes)(24), wash again, recite ha-motzi, eat a meal and recite Birkas ha-Mazon. The chametz or egg matzah(25) which is used for lechem mishneh at the second meal, the seudah shelishis, must be consumed before 10:55 a.m. (All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Consult your local Rav for the appropriate time in your city).

2.Eat a meal consisting of "other foods," such as cooked matzah-meal(26) balls (knaidelech(27)), meat, fish(28), fruit(29) or a kosher-for-passover cholent(30) any time after 2:00 p.m. until 4:45 p.m. (All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Consult your local Rav for the appropriate time in your city). After that time, one is required to minimize his intake of food so as not to ruin his appetite for the seder.

Since both of these options are halachically problematic, many people have the custom of following both procedures, i.e., they split the morning meal, and then eat a meal of "other foods" after 2:00 p.m. (All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Consult your local Rav for the appropriate time in your city).

FIVE POINTS TO REMEMBER ...

1. The matzos which are designated for use at the seder should not be moved on Shabbos, as they are considered muktzeh in the opinion of several poskim(31).
2. On Shabbos, it is advisable not to cast chametz crumbs to the winds even within an eiruv, as some poskim hold that this may be a violation of the Shabbos Labor of Zoreh, Winnowing(32).
3. The challos which are designated for lechem mishneh should be left in a safe place where children cannot reach them(33).
4. A small child who will not participate in the seder may eat regular matzah this Shabbos.(34)
5. Before the women begin to prepare for the seder after Shabbos is over, they should recite Boruch hamavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh(35).

FOTNOTES:

- 1** There are different customs concerning when exactly the chametz is sold this year, since many people eat chametz and use chametz dishes until Shabbos morning.
- 2** All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio.
- 3** This custom is only l'chatchillah. If the chametz was not burned by this time, it may be burned anytime prior to the onset of Shabbos.
- 4** See Beirur Halachah 468:1.
- 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** A soft-bristled broom should be used. A carpet sweeper should not be used on Shabbos.
- 10** Mishnah Berurah 321:30.
- 11** Igros Moshe O.C. 1:112; Seridei Eish 2:28; Minchas Yitzchak 3:48; Shevet ha-Levi 5:45; Tzitz Eliezer 7:30. [While 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 universally accepted not to do so.]
- 12** See Minchas Shelomo 2:35:3.
- 13** Based on Mishnah Berurah 327:10.
- 14** Minchas Yitzchak 3:50.

15 Igros Moshe, *ibid.*; Shevet ha-Levi, *ibid.*

16 Igros Moshe, *ibid.*

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 who objects to eating egg matzah on Erev Pesach; see Nezer ha-Kodesh 52 and Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 2:21 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 (Harav 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.

22 Indeed, some poskim hold that there is no mitzvah to eat seudah shelishis 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 seudah shelishis.

24 If time allows, 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 ha-Mazon 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; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Erev Pesach Shechal b'Shabbos, pg. 207); Shevet ha-Levi 8:117.

27 For those who eat gebrochts. Some people eat gebrochts 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.

31 See Pri Megadim 308:10; 471:8; 444:1.

32 Magen Avraham 446:2; Shulchan Aruch Harav 446:5-6; Maharsham (Derashah to Shabbos ha-Gadol, 76). Mishnah Berurah, however, is not concerned with this; see Beirur Halachah 319:17 (s.v. mefazer).

33 Mishnah Berurah 444:3

34 Rama 471:2.

35 Mishnah Berurah 299:36.

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