

Halachic questions, a competent Rav should be consulted.

Note: Lactaid drops may contain Chometz. Therefore, they should be added to milk before Pesach to have the Chometz annulled in sixty times the amount of milk, applesauce etc.

CONSUMPTION OF CHOMETZ

Since the prohibition of eating Chometz on Pesach applies not only to Chometz itself, but to any derivatives of Chometz or to any product that may contain Chometz, one should make certain that all food products that are bought for Pesach should have a certification by a reliable Kashrus organization or Orthodox Rabbi.

HANA'AH (BENEFIT) FROM CHOMETZ

During Pesach, we may not derive any sort of benefit from Chometz. Therefore, Chometz may not be sold or used, even in business transactions or as pet food. Even some cosmetics must be Chometz-free. Generally, there is no problem with the following products if they are not organic in nature, and do not contain any grain by - products: Acne Aid, Mineral Oil, Baby Cream, Baby Oil, Eye Liner, Mascara, Rouge (Powder), Nail Polish, Talcum Powder, Stick Powder Deodorant, and Vaseline.

MECHIRAS (SELLING OF) CHOMETZ

"Mechiras Chometz" is the sale of Jewish- owned Chometz to a non- Jew before Pesach. One must sell Chometz which is in their regular home, vacation home, office etc. If one cannot sell their Chometz through their local Rabbi, numerous sites on-line will facilitate this transaction. This transfer of Chometz to a non-Jew is a legal and binding sale, complete with contract. This sale is transacted through a Rabbi, who acts as a legal agent to sell the Jew's Chometz to a non-Jew. The Rabbi enters into an agreement with the non-Jew for the sale of this Chometz. The Chometz that has been sold must be placed in an area which is completely sealed off and must remain there throughout the holiday of Pesach. One must be careful to inform the Rabbi if they intend to be in a different time zone for Pesach. They do not want to have their Chometz bought back if it is still Pesach where they are (i.e. overseas, etc.) If one leaves home within 30 days of Pesach and will not return before Pesach, they should either check for Chometz the night before they leave or appoint someone to check for them on the regular night of B'dikas Chometz. If the checking is done before the b'dikah night one does not say a Bracha. A person can sell all the Chometz in their home before leaving and check only one room for Chometz. Regardless, a person needs to say the Bittul (annulment) of Chometz at its regular time of Erev Pesach.

The Following Are Considered Chometz Gamur:

Beer, Bread, Cake & Cookies, Cereal with primary ingredient of wheat, oats or barley, Cream of Wheat, Couscous, Farfel, Licorice (when wheat is in the ingredients), Oatmeal (Instant, Regular Baby Cereal), Pasta, Pretzels, Rolled Oats, Wheat Gluten/Wheat Protein, Yeast (Brewer's).

EIRUV TAVSHILIN

This year, the last two days of Pesach are Yom Tov followed by Shabbos. This presents a problem of when we may cook for Shabbos. Normally, we are prohibited from cooking on one day of Yom Tov for a different day. The same holds true for cooking on Yom Tov for Shabbos meals. Recognizing the difficulty of cooking for Shabbos days in advance, Chazal (the early generation of Rabbis) came up with an alternative. This consists of beginning the cooking process for Shabbos before Yom Tov and concluding the preparations on Yom Tov Erev Shabbos. Therefore, this year, the official start of Shabbos cooking (the last days of Pesach) is done Friday, by cooking an egg or other small part of a meal and setting it aside together with a Matzo for Shabbos. One then recites the Brocho (blessing) and declaration as stated in the Siddur under Eiruv Tavshilin. If a person forgot to do this on Erev Yom Tov, they should ask their local Rabbi what to do.

CHOMETZ SHE'AVAR ALAV HAPESACH

(BUYING CHOMETZ AFTER PESACH)

Due to the severity of the "Issur" (prohibition) of Chometz, Chazal reinforced the sale of Chometz with a fine. This fine was levied on any Jews who kept Chometz in their possession or ownership during Pesach. This is called "Chometz She'avar Alav HaPesach." Jewish law requires that if a Jew owns Chometz on Pesach, no Jew is allowed to eat that food, even after Pesach. Therefore, we are also prohibited from buying in stores which are Jewish owned if they have not sold their Chometz. It is important to note that although we may not buy Chometz from such Jewish - owned stores that did not sell their Chometz, we may purchase non-Chometz food products from these stores. Only Chometz Gamur has this restriction.

Some common products that one may assume are Chometz, (but are actually not), and therefore may be purchased in a store that did not sell their Chometz are the following... baker's yeast, cosmetics, dry cake mixes, kitniyos, glue containing Chometz, ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, pickles, medicine containing Chometz, maltodextrin, maltose, malt flavoring, food coloring, flour, extracts, raw pearled barley, vanilla and vitamins/medicine containing Chometz.

Rav Moshe Feinstein ZT"l, in his sefer "Igros Moshe", states that if a Jew sold his Chometz for Pesach, and then kept his store open during Pesach and continued to sell items of Chometz, one is nevertheless allowed to buy from that store after Pesach.

A Jew may buy from the following stores immediately after Pesach: 7-Eleven, 99 Cent Store, Albertsons, Aldi, B's, Bev/Mo, Big Lots, Bristol Farms, Coffee Bean, Costco, CVS, Dollar Tree, Erewhon, Food4Less, Food Lion, Fresh & Easy, Gelson's, Jetro/Restaurant Depot, Jon's, K-Mart, Nuts & More, Petco, Petsmart, Ralphs/Kroger, Rite Aid, Royal Farms, Sadaf, Safeway, Sam's Club, Smart & Final, Smith's, Target (California), Trader Joe's, Vons/Pavillions, Walgreens, Walmart, Wegmans, Whole Foods, Wine & Liquor Depot

In addition, all reliably certified Kosher stores are fine to shop in for Chometz after Pesach. Reliably certified Kosher stores all sell their Chometz before Pesach.

Note: Rabbi Elmaliach, the Rabbi in charge of Kashrus at Ben Gurion airport, reports that the stores at area D7 in the airport are clear of Chometz She'avar Olav Hapesach. There is a restaurant in the Ben Gurion airport called "Aroma Espresso Bar", under Chug Chosom Sofer Hashgacha and it is fine to eat there after Pesach. The other stores in other areas of the airport had their Chometz sold but were open on Pesach and continued to sell Chometz during Pesach. Some poskim allow purchases from such establishments after Pesach, while some do not.

(See AKO whiskey alert in the "alerts" section)

SHMITTA

Eretz Yisroel is blessed with many Mitzvos that the rest of the world lacks. This year, 5782, is the Shmitta year, the year in which the land is not worked, the farms lay quiet, and the farmers are able to take a Sabbatical. It allows them to reconnect with their families and learn Torah, uninterrupted, without the pressure of daily farming. One year at the commencement of Shmitta, the Ponnevez Rav, Harav Yosef Kahannaman ZTL, walked over to a tree, kissed it and wished it a "Good Yom Tov". Although the Mitzvah is centered in Eretz Yisroel, it has many ramifications for Jews living in other countries as well. As the Posuk says: "for six years we may tend to our fields but in the seventh year, we must cease". שש שנים תזרע Although there are many laws associated with this great Mitzvah, which might confuse anyone not familiar with those laws, fortunately, one can mostly rely on their usual Hechsherim to take care of the Shmitta Halachic issues. However, we are certainly still confronted with situations that require guidance for the

seventh - year produce. If one were, for instance, to buy Jaffa Oranges or wine from Israel produced this year, or lemon juice etc., the laws of Shmitta would be very relevant. If a product bears a reliable Hashgacha, it means that it was Halachically dealt with in a manner that it was allowed to be sold to a frum Jew. Produce grown this year normally is not allowed to be exported. However, produce grown in Israel this year on land fully owned by a non-Jew is fully permissible according to the Minhag of Yerushalayim, while the Bnei Brak Minhag dictates not to use it. Certain areas of Israel are not within the boundaries of Eretz Hakodesh and therefore, are not subject to the laws of Shviis. Although at one time, out of great necessity, the entire country was "sold" to a non-Jew in the manner of selling Chometz, most Poskim and Kashrus agencies agree that this "Heter Mechira" is not normally effective or even allowed. The majority of Poskim say that one is not allowed to sell Eretz Yisroel to a non-Jew, as it would lower its Kedusha. Fruit of Shviis must be treated with special regard as well, even out of the country. It normally cannot be thrown away or treated in a disrespectful manner. This necessitates throwing away left over fruit from Eretz Yisroel in a bag, leaving it to rot and only then, discarding it in the trash. Certain fruits from the seventh year have restrictions next year, after Rosh Hashanna as well, due to having been grown in the seventh year of Shmitta. This Halacha is relevant to next year's crop of Esrogim as well. Most will sell a Lulav with Hadasim and Aravos and give a "free" Esrog with the set. In addition, for the next couple of years, we will need to check Israeli wines that were produced during the Shmitta year. Some will state "Heter Mechira" on them. The major Kashrus agencies of the world do not use this Heter. Otzar Beis Din, on the other hand, is a Heter that is widely used. This means that a Bais Din supervised the sale, and the transport of produce took place with minimal payment to the orchard owner to cover expenses. These products, however, still need to be treated with proper handling of Kedushas Shviis produce (as mentioned above). Due to the complexity of the laws of Shmitta, one should always check with their Rav when in doubt.

Anyone fortunate to spend Pesach this year in Israel should become well versed in these Halachos. As always one should only rely on certain Hashgachos that are known to be careful in Shmita as well as Kashrus.

KASHERING

(MAKING UTENSILS KOSHER)

Utensils that are used during the year for Chometz may not be used to prepare food for Pesach unless they are properly Kashered.

Cloth tablecloths (not plastic) and towels used year-