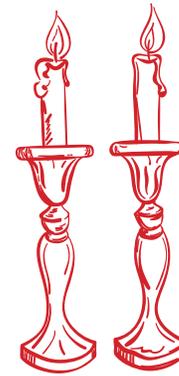




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EREV PESACH WHICH OCCURS ON SHABBOS:

A Practical Guide



When Erev Pesach coincides with Shabbos, we benefit from having a restful and spiritually uplifting day leading into the *Seder* night. However, this infrequent calendrical occurrence also raises practical questions relating to the *halachos* of Erev Pesach¹ as well as to the proper fulfillment of the *mitzvos* of Shabbos. This article will address these concerns.

TAANIS BECHOROS

While on a regular Erev Pesach, firstborn males customarily fast, fasting is prohibited on Shabbos either because it detracts from the *mitzvah* of *oneg Shabbos* or because an obligation to eat three meals exists (OC 288:1 and *Beur Halacha*). Therefore, the *Beis Yosef* (OC 470) cites opposing positions whether to observe the *taanis* on Thursday or not at all this year. Although the *Shulchan Aruch* (OC 470:2) favors omitting the fast this year, Rav Ovadia Yosef (*Yechaveh Daas* 1:91) suggests that even firstborns who follow the *Shulchan Aruch* participate in a *seudas siyum* to exempt themselves from any obligation to fast. Ashkenazim follow the *Rama* (OC 470:2) who rules that firstborns should fast on Thursday (or participate in a *siyum* to exempt themselves from any obligation).

BEDIKAS CHAMETZ AND BIUR CHAMETZ

The *Shulchan Aruch* (OC 444:1) instructs us to perform *bedikas chametz* on Thursday night (13th of *Nisan*; this year, March 25, 2021), preceded by the regular *bracha*² and followed by the recitation of *kol chamirah* (see *Mishna Berura* 444:1). For the text of the *bracha* and *kol chamirah*, see “The Days Before Pesach”, pages 42-45.

The Talmud (*Pesachim* 49a) records a dispute about the proper time to destroy *chametz* when Erev Pesach falls on Shabbos -

Friday (13th of *Nisan*; this year, March 26, 2021) or Shabbos (Erev Pesach; this year, March 27, 2021)? The *Shulchan Aruch* (*ibid.*) says to burn most of the *chametz* on Friday, leaving some for the Shabbos meals (see next section). Whatever *chametz* remains after the meals should be broken into small crumbs and disposed of in a manner that destroys it completely but does not violate the laws of Shabbos. Preferred methods include flushing the crumbs down the toilet, feeding them to a pet, or throwing them into a garbage outside of the house. Larger quantities may also be given to a non-Jew (but you should not directly ask the non-Jew to remove more than a meal’s worth of *chametz* from your house – see *Shulchan Aruch* 444:4 and *Mishna Berura* 444:18-20).

According to the *Shulchan Aruch* (OC 444:2), the burning that takes place on Friday should preferably take place before the end of the fifth *halachic hour*³ of the day, 11:41 AM in the Chicago area, like it would on a regular year (to avoid confusion). If you plan on eating *chametz* on Shabbos, postpone your recitation of the *kol chamirah* to Shabbos by the end of the fifth *halachic hour* (*Rama* *ibid.* and *Mishna Berura* 444:22) (11:41 AM in the Chicago area). If, however, you destroyed all your *chametz* on Friday and do not plan to eat any *chametz* on Shabbos Erev Pesach, the *Mishna Berura* (OC 444:10) implies that you do recite the *kol chamirah* on Friday at the time of *biur*.

SEUDOS SHABBOS

The most challenging issue to navigate on Shabbos Erev Pesach is how to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *seudos Shabbos* in their ideal form. The Talmud (*Shabbos* 117b) rules, based on the appearance of “*hayom*” three times in the *pasuk* (*Shmos* 16:25), that we must consume three meals on Shabbos. Generally, *halacha* requires us to wash and consume at least

a *kizayis* of bread at each meal. How can this be accomplished on Shabbos Erev Pesach when the prohibition to eat *chametz* begins at the end of the fourth *halachic* hour of the day (see OC 443:1), 10:27 AM in the Chicago area?

To avoid any last minute *chametz* complications and fulfill the *mitzvah* of eating bread during the Shabbos meals, the simplest solution would be to use matzah for all of the meals. However, the *Shulchan Aruch* and *Rama* (OC 471:2) forbid matzah consumption on Erev Pesach as a way of distinguishing the matzah eaten later that night at the *Seder* as *matzas mitzvah*. This renders using regular matzah for *hamotzi* at your Shabbos meals an impossibility.⁴

MATZAH ASHIRA

One potential solution is to use *matzah ashira* (made from dough containing fruit juice instead of water). The *Shulchan Aruch* (462:1) follows the opinion of the *Rambam*, *Rosh* and *Rabbeinu Tam* that *matzah ashira* is not considered *chametz* and can be consumed on Pesach but does not fulfill the *mitzvah* of *matzah* at the *seider*. This would permit its consumption on Erev Pesach. The *Rama* (462:4), however, rules stringently out of concern for the position of *Rashi* that *matzah ashira* might be considered *chametz* if some water was mixed in during the baking process and should not be eaten on Pesach unless there is a great need (like to treat an ill or elderly individual). This is the position adopted by Ashkenazim.

Later authorities debate whether the *Rama's* prohibition of *matzah ashira* extends to Erev Pesach or if it is limited to Pesach itself. While the *Aruch Hashulchan* (444:5) maintains that the *Rama's* stringency does not apply to Erev Pesach, Rav Moshe Feinstein (OC 1:155) and others take a strict approach to this question. Therefore, Ashkenazim should only view *matzah ashira* as a potential solution for the Shabbos night and Shabbos day meals (before the time that *chametz* consumption becomes forbidden).

We must consider an additional factor regarding *matzah ashira*, namely the proper *bracha* to recite. As *pas haba'ah b'kisnin*,⁵ the *Acharonim* argue whether to recite the *bracha* of *mezonos* or the *bracha* of *hamotzi* on *matzah ashira*. According to most authorities, when consuming a significant amount (exact quantity subject to debate) or in the context of a meal, you recite *hamotzi*. Rav Moshe Feinstein (*ibid.*) rules that one should say *hamotzi* when consumed in the context of a meal such as *seudas Shabbos*. Many Ashkenazim rely on this to use *matzah ashira* for Shabbos night and Shabbos day (prior to the time that *chametz* becomes forbidden after the fourth *halachic* hour of the day). Rav Ovadia Yosef (*Yechaveh Daas*, 1:91) expresses hesitation with regard to the proper *bracha*

on *matzah ashira* and therefore advocates using *matzah mevusheles* (boiled *matzah* that has not lost the form of *matzah* but is not suitable for the *seider*).

BREAD

Due to the complications noted above, many prefer using actual bread for the Shabbos *seudos* as much as possible. In this instance, you must exercise caution to ensure that the *chametz* consumption takes place only in one designated area, (in proximity to your Shabbos table, to fulfill the requirement of *kiddush bimakom seudah*, but not too close as to risk getting *chametz* on your kosher-for-Pesach dishes), preferably eating the *chametz* with disposable dishes and/or utensils.⁶ Like *matzah ashira* for Ashkenazim, this option works for the Shabbos night and Shabbos day *seudos* (although will necessarily entail rising and *davening* early on Shabbos morning to ensure finishing the *chametz* before the latest time for *chametz* consumption), but *seudah shlishis* raises additional complications.

Both the timing of *seudah shlishis* and the requirement for eating bread during this meal are debated by the *Rishonim*, but the *Shulchan Aruch* (291:2,5) rules that *seudah shlishis* cannot be eaten until after the time for *Mincha* (6.5 *halachic* hours into the day) and that it should ideally include eating bread. Fulfilling both of these conditions is obviously an impossibility on Shabbos Erev Pesach, as bread is forbidden after the fourth *halachic* hour. Several solutions appear in the writings of the *poskim*:

According to the opinions that we are not concerned about *matzah ashira's* being *chametz* on Erev Pesach and that its *bracha* is *hamotzi*, you can use *matzah ashira* (*Shulchan Aruch* OC 444:1) and eat the meal during its regular time (after *Mincha*).

According to the view that the *Rama* prohibits *matzah ashira* on Erev Pesach as well, one should fulfill the *mitzvah* of *seudah shlishis* with fruits and/or fish and meat (relying on the positions quoted by the *Shulchan Aruch* [OC 291:5] that even fruits suffice).

The *Mishna Berura* (OC 444:8) suggests getting an early start to the day and splitting the morning meal into two separate meals. In this way, you fulfill the obligation to consume bread during both the Shabbos day and *seudah shlishis* meals before *chametz* becomes forbidden. To do this effectively, you should make *kiddush*, wash, make *hamotzi* and have one course of your Shabbos meal. Then recite *birkas hamazon*, take a short break (learn, play a board game, or go on a short walk) and then return to the table, wash and make *hamotzi* again, and finish your Shabbos meal. The only concession here is that

your third meal is not eaten in the ideal timeframe. If you would like to be extra meticulous in fulfilling the obligation of *seudah shlishis*, you can have fish/meat and/or fruits in the afternoon after the time for *Mincha* (*Sefer Tashbetz Katan*, 23 in the name of the *Maharam*). This allows you to cover your bases by also fulfilling the third meal of Shabbos at the ideal time (albeit without bread). If you chose to have this additional “meal” in the afternoon, make sure not to eat too much, so that you enter the *seder* with an appetite (*Mishna Berura* *ibid.*).

DIVREI TORAH

The *Magen Avraham* (444:2) records the practice of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who learned in lieu of eating *seudah shlishis* on Shabbos Erev Pesach. Based on this practice, some authorities (see *Gra* *ibid.* and *Aruch Hashulchan* 444:6) posit that if bread cannot be consumed, there is no obligation for *seudah shlishis* on Shabbos Erev Pesach. Others (*Kaf Hachaim* 444:18) maintain that there is an obligation and, in some way, *Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's* learning either fulfilled the obligation or had the same spiritual impact that a meal with bread would have on a normal Shabbos. Whereas Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's learning may have had this effect, we assume that as important as our learning is, it does not serve as an adequate replacement for *seudah shlishis*.

Whichever method we employ to best navigate the complicated issues of fulfilling this important *mitzvah* on Shabbos Erev Pesach, we should definitely make an effort to include extra learning and *divrei Torah* at our *seudah shlishis* (especially considering that in any event it promises to be a smaller meal in anticipation of the *Seder* night).

Although the *halachos* associated with Shabbos Erev Pesach are complex, we appreciate that the very commitment to punctilious *halachic* observance is part and parcel of the Pesach celebration, which commemorates Hashem taking us out of Egypt, transforming us into His nation and privileging us to enter His covenant.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 In fact, feeling confused on Erev Pesach that falls on Shabbos is not a new phenomenon; the Talmud (*Pesachim* 66a) records that in the times of the Temple, Erev Pesach fell out on Shabbos and the sages forgot whether the paschal offering should be offered or if the laws of Shabbos prevented its sacrifice.
- 2 Normally you do not recite a *bracha* on a *bedikah* performed earlier than the 14th of Nisan, such as when leaving your house for the duration of Pesach prior to the 14th of Nisan. The *Beur Halacha* (OC 436:1) explains that only when the *bedikah* is the first step in the burning that will take place the next morning, is it considered part of the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* (requirement to destroy *chametz*) and therefore requires a blessing. When carried out well in advance of the burning for *tashbisu*, it is not being done as a part of the positive commandment, but rather to prevent you from owning *chametz* on Pesach. However, this year because the *biur* will take place the next morning, you do recite a *bracha* because the *bedikah* constitutes the first step in the *mitzvah* of *tashbisu* (despite its performance on the 13th of Nisan).
- 3 *Halachic* hours, known as *shaos z'manos*, are essentially calculated by determining total daylight hours and dividing by twelve. The exact method of calculating *halachic* hours is beyond the scope of this article.
- 4 Rav Ovadia Yosef (*Yechaveh Daas*, 1:91) permits regular *matzah* consumption on Shabbos night, but forbids it on Shabbos day. For Ashkenazim, on the other hand, Rav Moshe Feinstein (OC 1:155) rules that *matzah* should not be used at all on Shabbos Erev Pesach.
- 5 A term used in the Talmud to describe food made from dough, but differing from bread in that it is hard, filled or sweetened. The exact definition of *pas haba'ah b'kisnin* and the *halachos* thereof are beyond the scope of this article.
- 6 Rav Ovadia Yosef's preference for *matzah mevushales* is due to his concern that using *chametz* constitutes an unnecessary risk, as you may make a mistake in cleaning it up and/or disposing of it.

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