

International  
Rabbinic  
Fellowship

Pesach Guide 5780

Dear Community,

Passover 5780/2020 is unlike any other Passover in recent Jewish memory, and many Jews are finding themselves in uncharted territory. Some are “making Pesach” for the first time in their lives because they cannot visit family, and some are “making Pesach” with limited resources.

The purpose of this guide is to provide a foundation for what you need to know to make Pesach. We have included information for making Pesach under normal circumstances, with additional instructions for how one can be lenient this year under special circumstances if necessary. Please note that the majority of halakha in this guide conforms to standard Ashkenazi practice.

Please read this guide carefully. There are many unique circumstances this year, and it is beyond the scope of our guide to address all of these new and pressing questions. If you have any specific questions please contact your local halachic advisor.

The final document we have included is a piece on “COVID-19 and the Challenge of Spending Pesach Alone” by Dr. Michelle Friedman. While some of the anxiety about Pesach this year is related to logistical preparation, much of it is about spending seder and yom tov alone. Our hope is that Dr. Friedman’s piece provides some comfort and useful information. **If you plan to spend Pesach alone and have any mental health concerns, please reach out to your local halachic advisor for guidance.**

As we approach the holiday celebrating our salvation from Egypt, we recall the words of Hashem just after the kriyat yam suf: “*ani Hashem rofecha*, I am the Lord your healer.” May we celebrate this Pesach and the next in Jerusalem, in health and in happiness.

We wish you a happy and healthy Pesach.

With prayers for healing and strength,

The International Rabbinic Fellowship

## Table of Contents

- I. How to Clean and Kasher
- II. Shopping Guide
- III. Guide to Leading a Seder
- IV. Loneliness and Mental Health

# I. How to Clean and Kasher

*We know that this year presents serious challenges for a variety of reasons, and some people may not be able to conduct a comprehensive cleaning of their kitchens. If you will not be able to clean according to the manner prescribed, or if you have any other questions, please contact your local clergy for guidance.*

The intent of this guide is to free you from unnecessary work before Pesach so that you (1) can spend more time preparing the Torah for your Seder, and (2) do not have to experience slavery until the Seder actually begins!

The main reason we clean for Pesach is to get rid of chametz that, if found on Pesach, we would want to keep. Things like boxes of cookies and bottles of liquor fall into this category. These items can be referred to as “Chametz Gamur” (Important Chametz.)

Checking for “Important Chametz” is easy to do. We are not concerned with small pieces of chametz that we do not want. One must remember that there is no obligation to destroy chametz crumbs. The prohibition is eating them on Pesach. Therefore, we must be careful to clean away any chametz that may come into contact with food. Since the kitchen is the location where most of our food is prepared, we must be very careful when preparing this room for Pesach. Crumbs that cannot get into food do not have to be cleaned away, however, obvious crumbs should be removed.

We have to keep this in mind when cleaning for Pesach and make sure not to confuse Pesach cleaning with spring cleaning. Although it is a mitzvah to clean one’s house before every *chag*, it would be a shame to approach Pesach with a sense of fear and dread, wishing that you could go to a hotel instead of staying home and cleaning.

This guide has been prepared so that one can do a 100% halachic job of cleaning for Pesach without going overboard and destroying the joy that Pesach should bring.

## KASHERING YOUR KITCHEN

The **stove** must be *kashered* if it is to be used for *Pesach*. This includes the **oven**, the **cooktop**, and the **broiler**. No part of the stove can be considered *kashered* for *Pesach* unless it is completely clean, and free from any baked-on food or grease.

### > OVEN

In a **conventional** oven, gas or electric, an oven cleaner may be necessary to remove baked-on grease. If a caustic type of oven cleaner (such as Easy-Off) was used to clean the oven and some stubborn spots remain after the caustic cleaner has been applied a second time with similar results, the remaining spots may be disregarded. Once the oven and racks have been cleaned, they may be *kashered* by turning the oven to the broil or highest setting. Once it has achieved this temperature, it must be left on for 40 minutes. In a gas oven, the broil setting will allow the flame to burn continuously. In a conventional electric oven the highest setting, broil or 550°F, *kashers* the oven. This method is also acceptable for the oven racks, since it is usual to cook food in a pan, not directly on the racks themselves.

In a **continuous cleaning** oven, one cannot assume that such an oven is clean because the manufacturer claims it to be continuously clean. A visual inspection is required. Since caustic or abrasive oven cleaners (Easy- Off) cannot be used without destroying the continuous clean properties of the oven, a non-abrasive, and non-caustic, cleaner must be used to clean the oven. Grease spots will usually disappear if the top layer of grease is cleaned with Fantastic and a nylon brush. Then the oven should be turned on to 450°F for an hour so that the continuous cleaning mechanism can work. If the spots don't disappear, the oven should be left on for a few hours to allow the continuous cleaning mechanism to deep clean, or the spots should be removed with oven cleaner or steel wool. If the spots are dark spots that crumble when scratched, they can be disregarded. In all of the above cases, the oven should then be *kashered* by turning it to the broil setting. Once it has achieved this temperature, it must be left on for 40 minutes.

In a **self- cleaning** oven, the self-cleaning cycle will clean and *kasher* the oven simultaneously. However, the self-cleaning cycle causes the oven to get dangerously hot and has been known to cause fires. **It is not necessary to *kasher* the oven by utilizing this feature.** Instead, one may *kasher* the oven by turning it on to the highest setting, and, once it has achieved this temperature, leaving it on for 40 minutes.

Some ovens come with a **convection** feature. This feature allows for more uniform heat distribution by using a fan to circulate the heat. If the convection oven has the self -cleaning feature, it will be sufficient to *kasher* the fan as well. If there is no self- cleaning feature, the entire oven, including the fan, must be sprayed with a caustic cleaner e.g. Easy- Off and cleaned well. The oven should then be *kashered* by turning it on to its highest setting, and once it has achieved this temperature, it must be left on for 40 minutes.

## > COOKTOP

On a **gas range** the cast iron or metal grates upon which the pots on the range sit, may be inserted into the oven after they have been thoroughly cleaned. The grates can then be *kashered* simultaneously with the oven. Another method to *kasher* the grates is to turn the grates over and turn the burner on the highest setting for 10 minutes.

As long as the range top is not enamel, it can be kashered by cleaning it very thoroughly and then pouring boiling water over it. If it is enamel then it should be covered with a double layer of heavy duty aluminum foil which remains there during *Pesach*.

In an **electric cooktop**, one only needs to turn the burners on the high heat setting for a few (about 15) minutes to *kasher* them, since the burners come to a glow in a few minutes. The drip pans should be thoroughly cleaned and need not be *kashered*. The remaining cooktop areas should be covered. The knobs with which the gas or electricity is turned on should be cleaned. No other process is necessary to *kasher* the knobs.

**Glass, Corning, Halogen or Ceran:** To *kasher* the burner area, turn on the elements until they glow. The burner area is now considered kosher for *Pesach*. The remaining area needs to be cleaned thoroughly. It is advisable not to put anything down directly on the glass.

## > BROILER & GRILLS

Since food is broiled or roasted directly on the pan or grill, they must be heated to a very high temperature to be used on *Pesach*. This can be done either by leaving it on for longer than usual or by using a blowtorch. An alternate method is to replace the broiler pan or grates of the grill. The empty broiler or grill cavity must then be *kashered* by cleaning and setting it to broil. Once it has achieved this temperature, it must be left on for 40 minutes. If one does not intend to use the broiler on *Pesach*, one may still use the oven, even without *kashering* the broiler, provided that the broiler has been thoroughly cleaned.

## > MICROWAVES

To kasher a microwave oven clean thoroughly until absolutely no food residue is left. Special attention must be given to the internal vent of the microwave. After you are satisfied that there is no food residue, the following steps need to be taken.

1. The glass turntable tray should be removed and replaced. Alternatively, use the microwave without the turntable for *Pesach*.
2. For the oven itself, after 24 hours of non-use with hot chametz, place a saucer of water inside and turn the microwave on and allow the microwave to be filled with steam (5-7 min. should be sufficient). Repeat the same procedure with the saucer in a different spot.

## > METAL UTENSILS

Metal utensils may be *kashered* by cleaning them thoroughly, and then immersing them, one by one, into a kosher for *Pesach* pot of water which has been heated and is maintaining a rolling boil when the vessel is immersed. Furthermore, utensils can only be koshered once 24 hours has elapsed since they have been last used with hot chametz.

The effect of this process is immediate – a split second. Make sure that the item is completely immersed before coming into contact with any other items that have been immersed beforehand. You must be careful that the water is always boiling; if the water cools down and stops bubbling, you must wait for the water to bubble again before putting in the next item. The process is finalized by immediately rinsing the *kashered* items in cold water. If tongs are used to grip the utensil, the utensil will have to be immersed a second time with the tongs in a different position so that the boiling water will touch the initially gripped area. The entire utensil does not have to be *kashered* at once; it may be done in parts.

A non-kosher-for-*Pesach* pot may also be used for the purpose of *kashering*, provided that it is thoroughly clean and has not been used with hot chametz for 24 hours. However, it is the custom to make the pot kosher for *Pesach* before using it for *kashering*. This can be accomplished by (1) cleaning a pot that has not been used for at least 24 hours, (2) filling the pot completely with water, and (3) bringing the water to a rolling boil so that the water overflows. The pot is now *kashered*.

**Extra Bonus:** After the *Pesach kashering* process has taken place, the status of these newly *kashered* utensils may be changed from *milchig* to *fleishig*, or vice versa.

## > SINKS

**China or Porcelain sinks:** These items are not kasherable. To use them on *Pesach* you must keep a rack on the bottom of the sink. **If** your usual method of cleaning dishes is to fill the sink with water and letting the dishes soak, then a rack IS NOT ADEQUATE. In such a case a sink insert is required.

**Stainless Steel, Corian and Granite sinks** can be *kashered* by pouring boiling hot water over every part of the sink from a kettle/pot that has not been used in 24 hours, provided that the sink is thoroughly clean and has not been used with hot chametz for 24 hours.

## > COUNTERTOPS

**Wood, Formica, Plastic, Corian, Granite, Marble, or Stainless Steel** can be *koshered* through pouring boiling water over them after they have been cleaned thoroughly, and have not been used with hot chametz for 24 hours. Certain kinds of steamers can also be used to Kasher these types of counter tops.

## > DISHWASHERS

**Enamel Dishwashers cannot be koshered.**

**Plastic dishwashers – Make sure there are no cracks in the plastic lining of the racks.**

1. Clean the inside of the dishwasher and the racks to remove any crumbs or food that is adhering to any surface. Also, if your dishwasher has a removable filter it must be cleaned out.
2. Before koshering the dishwasher it must not be used for 24 hours.
3. Run the dishwasher on the hottest setting using soap. Keep the racks in to kasher them along with the dishwasher.

## > BBQ GRILL

1. Clean the inside of the BBQ, including the racks, as well as the inside of the hood making sure that there are no food particles adhering to the surface.
2. Turn on the BBQ to high and let it run for 1 hour. **MAKE SURE THE HOOD IS CLOSED.**
3. Kasher the racks by placing them in the self cleaning cycle of your oven, or by covering the grates with fresh coals and letting the coals burn out.
4. The briquettes must also be checked and cleaned of any pieces of food
5. New BBQ “tools” would be required.

## > WARMING DRAWERS

### **Removable Warming Drawers**

1. Do not use for 24 hours
2. Clean well
3. Remove drawer and pour boiling water over entire inside surface of the drawer.
4. Replace the drawer, and it may now be used for Pesach.
5. Cover food (no need to wrap) with tin foil while warming.

### **Non Removable Drawers**

1. Do not use for 24 hours.
2. Clean well.
3. Line the entire drawer with tin foil. Replace foil if it rips.
4. Cover food (no need to wrap) with tin foil while warming

### **Alternatively, you could do the following for both types of warming drawers:**

1. Do not use for 24 hours
2. Clean well
3. Light a canned fuel source used to heat chaffing dishes in the warming drawer.  
(One 7-8 ounce size can is sufficient to get the warming drawer hot enough)
4. Make sure to leave the door of the drawer slightly ajar so that there will be enough air to allow for combustion.

## KASHERING HOUSEHOLD ITEMS FOR PESACH

**Bedrooms:** The only chametz that you have to look for in a bedroom is “Important Chametz.”

**Cars:** A car is a place where food decays quickly. It is very unlikely that food found in your car

will find its way back to your kitchen. The car should be checked for IMPORTANT chametz.

Other chametz only has to be removed if you fear it will stick to your clothing and end up in your food.

**Cabinets:** Cabinets, closets etc. do not need to be kashered, lined or covered.

**Clothing:** Pockets should be checked if you plan on wearing them on Pesach.

**Dining Room:** Chametz dishes DO NOT have to be removed from a display.

**Garbage Pails:** Garbage pails do not have to be cleaned since there is no fear that you will want to eat that kind of chametz. Also, once chametz is put into your outdoor garbage pail, your bittul before works 100%.

**Toys:** The only chametz we are concerned about on toys is chametz that children may eat on Pesach. Caked on or embedded chametz need not be cleaned before Pesach. Play-dough, glue and shellacked pasta do not have to be removed, since they are designated as non-food items.

**Vacuum Bags:** Vacuum bags do not have to be emptied since there is no fear that you will want to eat that kind of chametz.

**The following is a checklist reviewing items commonly found in the kitchen and how to prepare them for *Pesach*.**

**Baby Bottle** - Ideally, new ones should be purchased, but some opinions permit plastic baby bottles to be *kashered* by immersing them in boiling water.

**Baby High Chair** - Thoroughly clean. Preferable to cover the tray with contact paper.

**Blender/Food Processor/Smoothie Machine** - New receptacle (plus anything that food makes direct contact with) is recommended, although the blade can be treated like any knife *kashered* through dipping in boiling water. Some opinions do permit the receptacles to be *kashered* by immersing them in boiling water after non-use with hot chametz for 24 hours and a thorough cleaning.

**Can Opener** - Manual or Electric - Clean thoroughly.

**Coffeemakers** - Coffeemakers that have brewed only unflavored pure coffee: Clean thoroughly. Replace with new glass carafe and new filters.

**Dentures, Bite Plates, Braces** - Clean thoroughly after finishing eating *chometz*.

**Electric Burner Drip Pans** - Clean thoroughly.

**Metal Wine Goblets** – Pour boiling water over the inside and outside.

**Pump Pot/water urn** - If only used for water and not brought to table, clean thoroughly. Otherwise, kasher or purchase a new one.

**Refrigerator, Freezer** - Thoroughly clean OR line shelves.

**Rings, Napkin** – Clean.

**Shabbat Blech** – Cover or use one that is especially set aside for Passover use.

**Tables** – Clean by wiping them down or using your regular polish. They need not be covered with anything special for Pesach use.

**Towels, Tablecloths, etc.** - Those used during the year with *chometz* may be used on *Pesach* if they have been laundered.

**Water Filters** - Water filters that are connected to the faucet need not be removed. They should be thoroughly cleaned and may be used on *Pesach* without changing the filters.

**The following is a list of items commonly found in the kitchen that generally cannot be *kasher*:**

Bread Machine

Crockpot

China

Pasta Maker

Porcelain (Enamel) Utensils

Sandwich Maker

Silverstone

Stoneware

Teflon

Toaster oven

Waffle Iron

NOTE: Items that you are putting away for Pesach such as toaster ovens, breadbaskets, mixers, etc. **DO NOT HAVE TO BE CLEANED.** Even if they are full of crumbs, the mental declaration (*bittul*) is sufficient to resolve any concern.

## **MEDICINES, VITAMINS, COSMETICS and TOILETRIES FOR PESACH**

### **> MEDICINES & VITAMINS**

1. All pill medication (with or without *chametz*) that one swallows is permitted without special *hashgacha* (including Lactaid pills). Vitamins and food supplements do not necessarily fall into this category.
2. Liquid and chewable medications that may contain *chametz* should only be used under the direction of a doctor and rabbi, who will judge the severity of the illness, the likelihood that the medicine contains *chametz*, and the possibility of substituting a swallowable pill. Liquid and chewable medications that contain *kitniyot* may be consumed by someone who is ill. Important: Do not discontinue use of liquid, chewable or any other medicine without consulting with your Doctor and Rabbi.
3. Liquid and chewable medications that contain *kitniyot* may be consumed by someone who is ill. An otherwise healthy person, who would like to consume a liquid or chewable medicine to relieve a minor discomfort, should only do so if the product is known to be free of *kitniyot*.
4. Many vitamin and food supplement products are devoid of actual *chametz* due to gluten allergen concerns. Therefore, one should carefully check product ingredients, and vitamin/supplements that do not contain *chametz*, or only contain *kitniyot*, may be consumed if they are taken for a specific health need and/or nutritional deficiency.

### **> COSMETICS AND TOILETRIES**

1. All varieties of blush, body soaps, conditioners, creams, eye shadow, eyeliner, lipstick, chapstick, face powder, foot powder, foundations, ink, lotions, mascara, nail polish, ointments, paint, shampoo, and stick deodorants are permitted for use on Pesach regardless of its ingredients.  
So too all colognes, perfumes, hairspray, shaving lotions, toothpastes, and deodorants are not edible and therefore can be used on Pesach.

## **POST-PESACH PURCHASING**

The Shulchan Aruch rules that chametz that is owned by a Jew over Pesach may not be eaten after Pesach (Orach Chaim, 448:3). This is a rabbinic prohibition intended to encourage Jews not to violate Pesach. However, it is permitted for a Jew to eat chametz that was owned on Pesach by someone who is not Jewish (448:1). This rabbinic decree does not apply to kitniot (e.g. corn based products, legumes, corn flour, and corn syrup).

Some are concerned that the suppliers of the supermarket are Jewish and therefore the chametz in the supermarket may have been owned by a supplier on Pesach. Hence, they argue that one should not shop in these stores following Pesach.

We argue that we can be lenient in this case because:

- 1) Many of the suppliers do indeed sell their chametz and so the chametz may have been sold to a non-Jew before Pesach.
- 2) The chametz may have been purchased by the supplier after Pesach. This is not a problem since only chametz owned by a Jew on Pesach is problematic.
- 3) When one purchases something in a store after Pesach we do not know who owned it over Pesach. It is not something that is easily ascertained.
- 4) Furthermore, this is a rabbinic decree with many ambiguities (sefeikot). There is a principle in Jewish law that when there is a doubt about a rabbinic law we may be lenient.
- 5) Indeed, as a communal policy, there are problems that arise from being stringent in this area;
  - a) Cost: if people on a tight budget are being forced to shop in a store that is not the most cost effective, then this is an unfair burden to place upon them.
  - b) Many of the local supermarkets go out of their way to stock kosher items. If we discourage our community from shopping there, then we are not only hurting the stores who act with us in good faith, but we also hurt their suppliers who sell them kosher products and who do sell their chametz over pesach.

Thus, we believe it is appropriate to shop in the major supermarkets after Pesach.

## II. Shopping Guide

## A. Food

- The [Orthodox Union](#) and the [Chicago Rabbinical Council](#) have comprehensive lists of what products are available, and which require special Passover supervision.
- **If you have difficulty getting to a kosher store this year, please note that there are a number of products that can be purchased at most general grocery stores and do not require specific Passover certification.** These include:
  - Salt
  - Sugar
  - Extra virgin olive oil,
  - Unflavored coffee
  - Milk
  - Kosher kinds of fish (though you should wash it carefully before cooking.)
- Many stores also carry standard dairy brands such as Dannon and Breakstones that do special kosher runs in their factories for Passover products (and will be labeled accordingly.) Additionally, all raw kosher chicken and meat can be considered kosher for Pesach so if you have any in your freezer you can use it (the only exception is ground beef). You can also purchase fresh produce and eggs at any store before or during Pesach.
- While normally one should purchase a fresh bottle of olive oil or package of sugar for Passover, if purchasing groceries is difficult this year you may use the products you already have in your home that are acceptable for Passover use. We recommend checking them first for any obvious traces of chametz (e.g. wipe down the bottle of olive oil to eliminate traces of chametz, make sure there isn't contamination of flour in the sugar, etc.)
- If you live in a community in which the supply lines have been severely limited and you are finding it difficult to locate basic items, please reach out to our halachic team for some more individual guidance. There have been conversations about making certain leniencies with regard to kitniyot, under specific circumstances. We do not believe that given the present reality that there should be a blanket permission. However, for those who are in a particularly challenging situation, please contact your local halachic advisor for further guidance.

## B. Other products

- Please remember that only **edible** products require certification. You may use any standard cleaning products, including toothpaste, on Passover.

## C. Pets

- Because we are not allowed to benefit from chametz on Passover, pet food should not contain chametz (but it may contain kitniyot). If you are unable to procure chametz-free pet food you can sell your pet as part of your mechirat chametz and continue to feed them their chametz food. Be sure to list the pets and their food on the list of items that you are selling, and include this statement as well:  
After the point of sale, and until GENTILE shall take the TYPE OF PET into his physical possession, he designates YOUR NAME, and anyone they may subsequently designate, to feed them from the food he has acquired from them and do anything necessary to care for the TYPE OF PET. No financial responsibility is assumed.

## D. Immersing New Dishes in a Mikvah

- Ordinarily, certain types of new kitchen utensils require immersion in the mikvah before you can use them. A utensil must be immersed if it is a. made of metal or glass, **and** b. comes in direct contact with food, **and** c. if water won't damage the vessel. Vessels made of plastic, rubber, or wood do not require immersion.
- If you purchased new utensils this year and are unable to safely use a mikvah to immerse them and have no other way to cook food (such as using single use aluminum foil pans or the like) then you may still use them, relying on the following leniencies for extreme circumstances:
  - a) Formally selling them to a non-Jewish friend and borrowing them from that person until you are able to buy them back and dip them in a mikvah
  - b) If that is not an option relying on the view of the Rogochover Gaon, R. Yosef Rozen (Tzofnat Paneah-Hilkhot Maakhalot Assurot Ch. 17) who maintained that mass produced utensils were not included in the obligation of tevilat keilim and immerse them when the mikvah is safe to use again.

# III. Guide to Leading a Seder

**Read this first and then see the Step by Step Guide To Running a seder:**

## **Condensed Ritual Guide to Passover Seder - The Orthodox Union**

### **1. Seder Plate**

A special Seder Plate is displayed during the Seder, containing the key elements of Passover. The plate is carefully prepared and placed before the head of the household, or the one conducting the Seder, who dispenses the Seder foods to each of the participants.

**The following items appear on the Seder Plate:**

1. Three whole Matzahs or unleavened "bread" (either on the plate or next to it)
2. Maror or bitter herbs, usually horseradish or romaine lettuce
3. Charoset or special mixture of apples, nuts, wine and cinnamon symbolizing mortar
4. Karpas or a vegetable, preferably parsley or celery
5. Zeroah or a piece of roasted or boiled meat or poultry, preferably a shankbone, recalling the Paschal sacrifice of the original Exodus. Before the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple the Paschal sacrifice was the central feature of the Seder.
6. Baytzah or a roasted or boiled egg, commemorating the festival sacrifice that was brought at the Jerusalem Temple. An egg is used because it is a traditional food for mourners, reminding us of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.
7. There are other items that can be placed on Seder plates depending on the customs followed by the family.

### **2. Basic Obligations**

There are five basic obligations (mitzvos) performed by each Jew, in the course of the Seder conducted according to the traditional Haggadah:

1. Eating Matzahs - **There are three times during the course of the Seder when Matzah must be eaten** at the beginning of the Seder meal, when the special blessing over Matzah is made, for the Korech (Hillel Sandwich) together with the Maror, and at the end of the meal for the Afikomon.

Three unbroken Matzahs are required for the Seder plate for each Seder. Each individual must consume the minimum specified quantity of Matzah during the course of the Seder.

2. Drinking four cups of wine (Arba Kosot) - **Red wine is the preferred beverage for use during the Seder. If a person has difficulty drinking wine, grape juice is permitted.**
3. Eating bitter herbs (Maror). When lettuce is used, it must be cleaned and inspected very carefully to remove the small insects which often are present in its leaves.
4. Relating the story of the Exodus (Haggadah or Magid)
5. Reciting Psalms of Praise (Hallel)

**Step by step guide to running a seder:**  
**Adopted from dummies.com with additional notes based on the writings of Rav Yosef Tzvi Rimon.**

The Passover seder (a Jewish ritual dinner) is based on the *Haggadah*, a book of instructions, prayers, blessings, and stories that lays out the proper order for the ritual. *Haggadah* means “the telling,” referring to one of the most important aspects of the seder: the recitation of the Exodus story.

**Printable versions of the Haggadah are available [here](#), and [here](#)**

Each seder needs a leader, someone who will orchestrate the proceedings and read key parts of the *haggadah*. In traditional homes, the leader may wear a white *kittel* (robe), which is worn only during the seder, Yom Kippur, one’s wedding, and one’s burial, which helps create the sense that this is a sacred time. The seder then proceeds through its 15 steps:

**In order to fulfill the Mitzvot of drinking 4 cups of wine, eating Matzah and Marror, certain amounts must be consumed. Additionally, the cups used for the 4 cups of wine must be a certain size. See below for a guide of amounts and measurements.**

**1. Kadesh (sanctification of the day)**

Fill your cup with the first glass of wine or grape juice, lift the cup, say the Kiddush (sanctification over the fruit of the vine and over the special energies of the holiday), and drink, leaning to the left. **Please refer to the Amounts and Measurements Guide for detail on the proper size of the cup as well as time frame for drinking.**

• **2. Urchatz (handwashing with no blessing)**

The second step is a ritual washing — a spiritual cleansing by pouring water over the hands. Traditionally, a pitcher of water is used to pour water over the right hand twice and then over the left hand twice. You can then dry your hands on a towel. Ideally, everyone should wash their own hands, however, in some homes, and in a large congregation, the leader often acts as proxy, performing the urchatz for everyone in attendance.

- This ritual is enacted as a *zecher lemikdash*, a remembrance of the practice in Temple times of washing hands before partaking of wet fruits and vegetables, which were susceptible to contracting ritual impurity. Since this is not our routine practice, **we do not recite the usual blessing over washing the hands.**

• **3. Karpas (eating the green vegetable)**

One takes a vegetable (see below for options) and dips it into salt water (some use vinegar or charoset) followed by the blessing of “Borei P’ree Ha’Adamah.”

- Some explain the custom of Karpas as a way to induce questions from the kids as this is an unusual practice, while others see it as a symbol of freedom, i.e. to stimulate the appetite before the actual meal.
- Some have a custom to eat only a symbolic amount, but others do not follow this practice and use it as a time to fill up a little in preparation for the seder ahead. Some put out platters of vegetables with salt water and other dips.
- **Common foods used for this part of the seder are: celery, parsley, potatoes or radishes. Some even use bananas! As strange as it may seem, as long as the blessing on that particular food is “Ha’adamah” it may be used for this part of the seder. Bonus - you just learned the proper blessing for bananas.**
- **4. Yachatz (breaking the matzah)**  
Now the seder leader picks up the middle of the three matzahs from the matzah plate and breaks it in half. Matzah is referred to as “Lechem Oni”, “bread of poverty”. Normally a poor person does not have a full loaf. Others suggest that “splitting” splitting the Matzah is a reminder of the splitting of the sea.
- The leader puts the smaller half of matzah back in between the other two pieces of matzah, but the larger half is reserved as the afikoman (“dessert”), which is eaten at the end of the meal. Thus, the Hagaddah can be recited over bread appropriate for a poor person, who is used to having a broken matzah, rather than a whole one.
- In some families, the afikoman is taken away and hidden somewhere in the house, and near the end of the seder, the kids are allowed to go looking for it (see Step 12). Another common practice is to place the afikomen near the leader, from whom the kids must steal it during the seder without the leader noticing and then bargain for Afikoman presents before agreeing to give it back. The kids have the upper hand, because the seder cannot continue without the Afikoman Matzah. In some Sephardic families, each person places a broken afikomen matzah on their shoulder, symbolizing the quick exodus from Egypt.
- **5. Maggid (telling the story)**  
Maggid is the telling of the Exodus narrative. Most importantly, we are supposed to remember our dire straits and how God saved us. “We were slaves to Pharaoh...and the Lord...took us out from there, and “In the beginning, our ancestors were idol worshippers, but now God has brought us close to him. **Additionally, we must mention Pesach (Paschal offering), Matzah and Marror, and the reason for each. We conclude with words of praise and thanks.**
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- Four questions (every *haggadah* lists them). Often read by the youngest, but any person can read the questions, or everyone can read them together. The four questions all revolve around the basic question, “Why is this night different from all other nights?” (*Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleilot?*)

- **Who reads the Haggadah?** In some households the leader, in others everyone and in others it is split up (those listening should read in an undertone)
- We start Maggid by picking up the seder plate and Matzah to recite Ha Lachma Anya - This is the Bread of Affliction...
- **The second cup of wine is filled before Ma Nishtana.**
- **6. Rachtzah (handwashing with a blessing)**  
It's time to wash your hands again, but this time you *do* say the blessing. We wash again in case our hands have wandered and touched something dirty. In many places, it is customary to have someone else pour the water on each other's hands, so as to show freedom.
- It's customary not to speak at all between washing your hands and saying the blessings over the matzah. You can use this time to reflect on the sanctification and purification that you're undergoing.
- **7 & 8. Motzi / Matzah (blessing before eating matzah / eating Matzah)**  
Next, raise the three matzot and recite two blessings over the Matzah: the regular motzi blessing and one specifically mentioning the *mitzvah* (Jewish commandment) of eating matzah at Passover.
- Eating Matzah at the seder is a biblical commandment! It is the only Torah commandment related to eating in our times (as opposed to when the Beit Hamikdash stood)
- Once the blessings have been said, everyone breaks off a piece of matzah and eats it. **Please refer to the Amounts and Measurements Guide for detail on how much Matzah to eat at this time. Don't forget to lean to the left while eating the Matzah!** If the Matzahs from the Seder plate are insufficient, they should be supplemented by additional Matzahs.
- **9. Maror (eating the bitter herb)**
- To remember the bitter times in Egypt.
- What to use: Romaine Lettuce. Some use ground horseradish. Iceberg Lettuce is also Ok as it starts of sweet, but turns bitter, as was the slavery in Egypt. Still others use belhain endives. Traditionally, you should dip the maror in the charoset (the apple-nut-wine-cinnamon salad) to taste a small amount of sweetness along with the pain. **(for those with nut allergies, or with family members with food allergies, Charoset can be made without nuts).**
- **Please refer to the Amounts and Measurements Guide for detail on how much maror one must eat.** Do not lean when eating Maror. Cooked or preserved vegetables are not suitable for Maror; therefore commercially prepared grated horseradish, which is packed in vinegar, may not be used for the mitzvah.
- **10. Korech (Hillel's sandwich)**  
There is a debate as to how the Matzah and Marror were eaten in the times of the

Beit Hamikdash. According to the Sages, they were each eaten separately. Hillel, on the other hand, would wrap the Matzah and Marror (and according to some the meat of the Paschal Sacrifice). We do this step in order to fulfill Hillel's approach. Of course, since we do not have a Paschal Sacrifice, our sandwich does not include meat. **Remember to sprinkle a bit of Charoset on the Marror and to lean to the left while eating.**

- **11. Shulchan Orech (eating the meal)**

Once the korech is finished, it's time for a festive meal of thanksgiving. This meal is eaten in the middle of Hallel, rendering the eating itself as an act of praise of God. The meal is a good time to discuss more elements of the Haggadah and the Exodus story that one did not get to during the Maggid section.

- **12. Tzafun (eating the afikomen)**

Whether or not dessert is served after dinner, the last food that is officially eaten at the seder is a piece of the afikomen matzah (see Step 4), which symbolizes the Pesach sacrifice. If the afikomen is hidden or stolen by the children, it must be returned to the leader by the end of the seder. The seder can't be concluded without the afikomen (and tradition says that the seder *must* end before midnight). Eating from the actual afikomen should be augmented with enough Matzah to fulfill the required amount- **Remember to lean to the left and please refer to the Amounts and Measurements Guide for details on how much Matzah to eat at this point.**

- **13. Barch (Birkat Hamazon / Blessing After Eating)**

This Birkat Hamazon is the same and different from all of the others that we say during the year. We always end a meal with a blessing, but this time we feel extra joy for having been taken out of the land of Egypt. Birkat Hamazon also includes thanking God for the Land of Israel, which is the next state of the Exodus from Egypt.

- The third cup of wine celebrating the meal is poured and, after a blessing is recited. **Don't forget to lean when drinking. Please refer to the Amounts and Measurements Guide for details on how much wine to drink at this point.**

- **Now, a curious tradition occurs:** A cup of wine is poured in honor of the prophet Eliyahu, (some have a custom to open the door to let Eliyahu in). Many folks think the cup is for Eliyahu. Actually, the extra cup stems from a rabbinic debate over whether we should drink four or five cups of wine during the seder; the compromise was to drink four (the fourth is drunk in Step 14), pour a fifth, and wait until Eliyahu comes to tell the Jews which is correct.

- **14. Hallel (songs of praise)**

After closing the door, the final seder ritual includes singing special songs of praise to God, (this is the primary obligation of the Seder and then filling, blessing, and drinking the fourth cup of wine. The practice of saying Hallel now stems from the custom (back in the days of the Beit Hamikdash) to say Hallel while the Paschal Sacrifice was being eaten.

- **15. Nirtzah (conclusion)**

The prescribed rituals and actions end at the 14th step; *Nirtzah* celebrates a conclusion. Some say that the word *Nirtzah* - related to the word *Merutzeh* (accepted by God), means: "if one carried out the seder, it should be *Merutzeh*, accepted by God.

- Many people end the Seder by singing *L'shana haba-a bi-Y'rushalayim*, meaning "Next year in Jerusalem!"
- Many Haggadot print songs customarily sang at this point. These songs offer additional opportunities to thank God and engage the kids.

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### **Amounts and Measurement Guide**

#### **Matzah:**

##### **Motzi Matzah**

Ideally, for motzi matzah one should eat two kezaytim (olive's bulk) - one for motzi, which is for the actual bracha of hamotzi on the bread, and one for the matzah, which is for the mitzvah of matzah. One kezayit should be from the top matzah and one should be from the middle matzah because it is unclear which we are to use for the mitzvah - the middle, broken piece, or the top piece, on which we made the bracha of hamotzi.

For motzi matzah one should eat a sum total of the following amount of matzah:

- Hand matzah (at least 10.25" diameter) - 1/3 of a matzah
- Machine matzah (6 1/8" x 7") - 1/2 of a matzah

If necessary, one may fulfill the requirement with only half this amount. **When one eats the matzah for motzi matzah, one must recline to the left side.** If one forgets to recline, one must eat another kezayit of matzah.

##### **Korech - Hillel Sandwich**

Ideally, one should eat one kezayit of matzah for korech:

- A kezayit of hand matzah (10.25" diameter) = 1/6 of a matzah
- A kezayit of machine matzah (6 1/8" x 7")=1/4 of a matzah

##### **Afikoman**

Ideally, for motzi matzah one should eat two kezaytim.

- Hand matzah (at least 10.25" diameter) - 1/3 of a matzah
- Machine matzah (6 1/8" x 7") - 1/2 of a matzah

If necessary, one may fulfill the requirement with only half this amount. **When one eats the matzah afikoman, one must recline to the left side.** If one forgets to recline, one should (if not too difficult) eat another Kezayit. If one has recited **Birkhat Hamazon**, one **should not** eat another kezayit of matzah.

### **The Rabbis Speak**

The Chazon Ish would give out handmade shmura Matzah the size of the palm of one hand without the thumb to the participants of his seder.

**(Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, Kinor David Haggadah pg. 139)**

[According to this] most people who suffer from celiac disease must eat a *kezayit* of matza on the Seder night, because a *kezayit* of matza will not cause them to become sick. Even if it will cause one to suffer somewhat, this is not considered sickness. **However, people who suffer from severe celiac disease, and who know that they are liable to have a strong reaction to matza, are exempt from the mitzva of eating matza.** Nowadays one can find *matzot* made from oatmeal and spelt flour, which are better than wheat matza for people with celiac disease.

**(Rabbi Eliezer Melamed)**

**From an Interview with Rabbi Hershel Schachter...**

**Not long after Purim comes Pesach. Many people obsess over how much matzah they are supposed to eat at the Seder. Your definition of a kezayis, though, is rather smaller than what's currently popular.**

*"I don't know what's popular. My father-in-law spent about two years by Rav Shimon Shkop rewriting the Shaarei Yosher. Rav Shkop asked the mashgiach from the Mir Yeshiva, Rav Yeruchom Levovitz, for a bachur who had a nice style of Hebrew, so he sent my father-in-law. He was there about two years, so he ate the Seder by Rav Shimon Shkop. He said five boys ate a kezayis from one matza. That's a pretty small kezayis."*

**Didn't you once say a kezayis is the size of the palm of one's hand?**

*Rav Chaim Volozhiner says that.*

**Wine:**

Each cup of wine is a separate mitzvah.

- For the first cup of wine it is best to have a cup that holds 4 ounces of wine and to drink at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the cup. (This is because according to some authorities kiddush for Yom Tov is a biblical commandment)
- For the other three, a cup that holds 3 ounces is sufficient. Again, one should drink at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the cup.
- One should drink each of the four cups of wine within half a minute, with just taking normal, short breaks between sips. For those for whom this is difficult, you can take up to 7 minutes to drink the half cup.

**Marror:**

- 1 fluid ounce of horseradish should be eaten to properly fulfill the *mitzvah* of *maror*.
- If using romaine leaves, the measurement for marror is the equivalent size to a  $\frac{1}{4}$  piece of machine matzah



# IV. Loneliness and Mental Health

*If you have any mental health concerns please contact your mental health provider and a halachic advisor for guidance.*

## Part I

### COVID-19 and the Challenge of Spending Pesach Alone

by Dr. Michelle Friedman, Director of Pastoral Counseling at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended many of our lives and required us to distance ourselves from family and friends. This comes right upon Pesach, a time when typically we gather with friends and family to celebrate freedom, eat, discuss and give thanks right in our own homes. Maybe you were planning to travel or to get together locally with folks dear to you. Almost all of these plans are cabashed this year. And for people who will be on their own, this is an especially daunting situation, as we are in a year when Pesach is a 3 day yom tov.

Please know that you are not alone experiencing significant stress, feeling waves of anxiety about the general uncertainty of this time and specifically the potential loneliness in the upcoming chag.

You may also feel other painful feelings, such as anger and frustration that you have been a good person and a good Jew and it is so unfair that you are alone and not in a serious relationship now when you really need a partner. You might feel so angry that you are thinking about chucking the whole holiday and binge watching TV or just staying in bed.

I'd like to make a few suggestions:

1. Most importantly, do not try to avoid or judge whatever you are feeling. The more we avoid anxiety, fear, shame or whatever the emotion, the scarier it becomes. The more we feel shame that we aren't in a place we hope we would be at this point in life (with a committed life partner, with kids), the more we suffer.. This is the time when we need to take a PAUSE and reflect about what just happened that led to this anxious feeling.

2. Now that you've taken a pause, IDENTIFY what you are feeling. Ask yourself, "What makes me the most upset?" Be curious about what made you uncomfortable. Think of this wave of anxiety as an opportunity to learn more about yourself and whether there was another feeling behind that first feeling. I'll use anxiety as an example. Some common emotions that can make us anxious are:

a. Disappointment. These last few weeks have been filled with many, many disappointments and loss. For example, you may automatically think, “Why is this happening to me?” Try not to personalize this loss as punishment for something you did wrong, but rather allow yourself to feel the sadness that comes with this loss. Reach out to a friend who will empathize and not judge your sadness. Talk about your plan for your Yom Tov

b. Anticipation anxiety. Anticipation anxiety is the anxiety that we feel prior to whatever it is that we fear. You might be really anxious about what it will be like being with yourself for the seder. The more you plan for your seder – choosing a Haggadah that you like, making a simple meal, setting a nice table -the more in control you are likely to feel. However small the routine, it is important. You are an adult who can pull this together.

3. CHECK your thinking. Ask yourself, “What am I worried will happen?” When we are stressed it’s sometimes hard to think clearly and our brains can jump to assumptions. Check to see if you are thinking in all-or-nothing terms such as “everyone,” “no one,” “always,” “never.” Are you thinking of the extremes, like the worst case scenario? ( I will always be alone ,this is my fate, etc) If so, see if you can find a more helpful and middle ground using facts that you know. Pay attention to “always” and “never” words and challenge them. Do you know the future? No! You only know what’s going on right now. Make an active choice to use words that are nuanced and allow for future opportunity. Words like “sometimes,” “possibly,” “some people” are usually more accurate at describing situations. Try and describe what you are feeling using these less extreme words.

4. LEARN from what you are feeling now and as you go through Yom Tov. Take note of who and/or what in your life you are worrying about. Often we worry about those who are important and meaningful to us. Notice that you have them in your life and how much you care about them. We also worry a lot about ourselves – we tend to ruminate and regret. Notice when you slip into regret and rumination and think of those states as a kind of bondage, a servitude to old habits of mind that you want to release yourself from. Think of where else you feel your freedom is limited – what does Yitziat Mitzrayim mean to you this year? Perhaps you might journal a bit before the holiday and then after. Keep a written journal as we approach the chag and hold on to your mental notes so you can jot them down Saturday night or Sunday

5. Set up a schedule- assign yourself a “seder” for davening/meditation/ reading/Haggadah reading. Allow yourself to be creative, even playful. Plan to meet up with friends using social distance guidelines to discuss your seder experience.

7. CREATE a phrase or a mantra that you can repeat to yourself to provide comfort. This phrase should resonate with you and soothe you. Some phrases that others have used include, “I am not alone”, “This too shall pass”, “I have overcome worse” or “This will only make me stronger”. Phrases might resonate with the holiday “ this is my Yitziat Mitzrayim”

or “this is the birth of a new freedom for me.” Some find it helpful to write the phrase on a piece of paper and to carry it with them.

8. REMIND yourself that emotions come and go. This wave of anxiety, disappointment, uncertainty of faith, anger or whatever else you are feeling is like a wave in the ocean- it may be stronger than others, but like every other wave, this feeling will pass. Finally, we respect that you know yourself best. We understand that some people have mental health conditions that make a solo 3 day yom tov dangerous to their health. If this is you, please speak to your halachic advisor and to your psychiatrist/psychologist/therapist and get their advice in making decisions that keep you safe and well.

Wishing you a joyous Pesach!

Michelle Friedman MD

YCT Rabbinical School, Pastoral Counseling