



When Erev Pesach Falls on Shabbat

Before Pesach

This year, the Shabbat HaGadol *drasha* is said the week before Pesach. *Taanit Bechorot* is on Thursday.

Bedikat chametz is on Thursday evening. *Chametz* is burned on Friday morning, up until the fifth hour, but we do not annul it yet. One can continue to eat *chametz* after burning it.

The Shabbat Meal

The best way to eat the Shabbat meal is to eat kosher for Pesach food which was cooked in kosher for Pesach utensils. If one cooks the food in Pesach utensils and then transfers the food to disposables, one can eat *chametz* for the entirety of the meal without worrying that *chametz* will touch the Pesach utensils.

There are two solutions for eating bread at the Shabbat meal:

1. Eat *matzah ashira*. According to Ashkenazim, *matzah ashira* can only be eaten until the end of the fourth hour (*sof zman achilat chametz*). It is advisable that to begin with, the *matzah ashira* does not touch the Pesach utensils.

2. Eat *chametz*. It is advisable to leave only a little bread – preferably one that doesn't crumble, like pita, to be concentrated and eaten carefully. One should be careful that the crumbs do not touch the Pesach utensils, and it is advisable to place a disposable tablecloth on the table and remove it after eating the bread. One should shake off one's clothing before bringing the Pesach utensils and food to the table. For *birkat hamazon*, a small amount of bread in a bag or a piece of *matzah* should be brought to the table.

One should finish eating *chametz* before the end of the fourth hour. One should *daven Shacharit* early enough to finish the meal before this time. The general *minhag* is to finish the entire meal by this time, but one who wants to finish his *chametz* and continue his meal can do so. Before the end of the fifth hour one should clean his clothing and his mouth well and sweep the house thoroughly. The leftover *chametz* should be thrown in the toilet or damaged with soap. If there is a large quantity, it can be left in the public trash outside the house. One should annul the *chametz* before the end of the fifth hour.

Seudah Shlishit

On a regular Shabbat, it is preferable to eat *seudah shlishit* containing bread after *mincha*. This year, we cannot do so. There are three solutions:

1. Those who eat *matzah ashira* after the fourth hour can eat *matzah ashira* for *seudah shlishit*.
2. One can have *seudah shlishit* by eating meat, fish or fruit.
3. Others divide the morning meal: they say *birkat hamazon*, take a quick break, wash hands and say *hamotzi* once again.

Preparations for Seder Night

All preparations for Seder should be performed before Shabbat, as on Shabbat it is forbidden to prepare. Anything which was not prepared should be prepared on Yom Tov, not on Shabbat. One should check the lettuce for bugs and prepare the foods for the Seder before Shabbat, as well as ensure the Shabbat timer will turn off after the end of the Seder. One should also light a *ner neshama* from which the Yom Tov candles can be lit. It is forbidden to set the table and to warm food for the Seder until *motzei* Shabbat, after

reciting *baruch hamavdil bein kodesh lekodesh*. Candles should also only be lit after this.

Leil HaSeder

In Kiddush at the beginning of the Seder, we also say *Havdala*. (The order of the *brachot* is *YaKNeHaZ*: *yayin, kiddush, ner, havdala, and zeman*.)

Asher ga'alanu: The accepted Ashkenazi custom is that when *erev* Pesach falls on Shabbat, *min hapesachim umin hazevachim* (opposite of the regular order) is said in the *bracha* concluding *maggid*, since the *chagigah* (*zevachim*) is not sacrificed on Shabbat, so the *korban* Pesach is eaten first.



Leil HaSeder on *motzei* Shabbat can seem stressful and complicated, but it is actually a wonderful occasion. In all other years we arrive at the Seder exhausted from work, but this time – we arrive at the Seder through calm and rest. On all other years we arrive at the Seder from weekdays, this time we arrive at the Seder from the holiness of Shabbat! We have a unique opportunity to reach an especially uplifting Seder through holiness and spiritual preparation.

A more detailed explanation of these laws can be found in my book, Erev Pesach Shechal BeShabbat, published earlier this year.

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Who's in Charge?

Pharaoh is the archetype of the many dictators throughout history, who ruled over and enslaved entire nations. The desire to rule over others stems first and foremost from lack of self-confidence. Pharaoh was afraid that the Jews would multiply; he was afraid of their talents, their physical strength, their unity. In order to prevent them from overcoming him, he rules over them.

Besides fear, the desire to rule stems from the attempt to fill the ruler's needs through using the strength and abilities of others. Thus, Pharaoh takes advantage of the Jews' workforce for the needs of his kingdom, and with their help builds treasure storage cities.

Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch reminds us that "there is nothing new under the sun, and general historical phenomena are as old as history itself..." Indeed, the decree to harm the Jews has repeated itself throughout Jewish history in the Diaspora, the conquest and enslavement of a nation over another repeats itself throughout human history, and even one person rising up to rule over his fellow on a personal level are everyday acts.

How can we free ourselves from such rule? It seems that the first step is to cry out: "*Bnei Yisrael* cried out" (Shemot 2:23). There is no need to inform G-d of the occurrence of an injustice, yet only when the Jews reach the stage of moaning and crying out is there the possibility of beginning the process of redemption. Only when the slave feels himself that something is not right, and he cries out, can revolution and change take place.

The next step is to prove to Pharaoh that there is a G-d. At the beginning

of the story, Pharaoh says: "Who is G-d?" (Shemot 5:2). Pharaoh does not believe in the existence of G-d, and actively opposes His will. Like other powerful rulers, Pharaoh sees himself as all-powerful and does not recognize there is a G-d above him Who rules the world. He mistakenly thinks others are meant to satisfy his needs, instead of recognizing that all people are created in G-d's image and are meant to serve G-d alone, and thus all men are equal. He tends to exaggerate his power and value instead of feeling humility before the Creator.

6699 **Like other powerful rulers, Pharaoh sees himself as all-powerful and does not recognize there is a G-d above him who rules the world**

Therefore, there is a need for 10 plagues to prove to Pharaoh again and again that he does not control a thing – as opposed to G-d, who controls every single detail of existence, from the forces of nature to historical processes.

But the most important point is the proof to Pharaoh that G-d rules even over him – his feelings, thoughts and behaviors. Pharaoh did not want to send the Jews free, but in the end he was the man to decide to free them. It would have been possible to free the Jews from Egypt against Pharaoh's will, or even to kill Pharaoh, thus allowing the Jews to go free. But the way G-d chose was different: G-d waits for Pharaoh's approval, asking him again and again to

set the Jews free, and Pharaoh repeatedly refuses. Seemingly, the power is in Pharaoh's hands. He continues to feel that he is in control of the situation and that things will progress only according to his will. But the opposite is true. G-d is "playing" with Pharaoh, causing him repeatedly to oppose the logical process of freeing the Jews. While Pharaoh thinks he is "playing" with G-d and the Jews, the truth is that G-d is "playing" with Pharaoh's heart and hardening it, causing him to behave illogically and suffer repeated plagues (see Rambam *Shemoneh Perakim*, 8, ואם תאמר). Parashat Beshalach begins with the declaration – "When Pharaoh sent out the nation" (Shemot 13:17). Despite him having opposed it, despite him wanting the story to end differently, despite him not believing in G-d's power, in the end Pharaoh himself is the one who let the Jews go and was forced to acknowledge G-d's power and his own weakness.

Pharaoh's attempt to rule over the Jews is strongly tied to his lack of belief in G-d, and thus, the freedom of the Jews is strongly tied to belief in G-d. In the end, the Torah commands us to avoid enslaving others:

"For it is to Me that the Israelites are servants: they are My servants, whom I freed from the land of Egypt, I the L-rd your G-d" (Vayikra 25:55).

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