

BS"D

## Stress Relief Through Understanding Hilchos Pesach

Understanding the Torah and halachic prohibition of owning chometz can greatly diminish stress before Pesach.

The directives of various Torah scholars are offered in the following paragraphs.

(Notes in parenthesis are usually added comments. Also, italics and underlines are added for emphasis.)

Rav Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg Zatzal, who was the Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Ohr in Yerushalayim, gave his directives in response to questions posed by women who came to his regular chizuk talks. They were compiled into a kuntres by his students and edited by Rabbi Moshe Finkelstein of Kiryat Mattersdorf, Yerushalayim.

The Rosh Yeshiva explained that all property and possessions must be cleaned and checked to make sure that they are free of chometz, except in the following cases:

a. If, during the year, chometz is not brought into a place, that place does not have to be cleaned out or checked for chometz.

b. Any article which is not used on Pesach does not need to be checked for chometz, provided it is put away properly and the chometz is sold.

c. Crumbs which have been rendered completely inedible to the extent that they are not fit to be eaten by a dog are not considered chometz.

d. The general obligation to check for and get rid of crumbs does not apply if the crumbs are less than the size of an olive (k'zayis) and are dirty or spoiled enough to deter a person from eating them.

e. A cleaning product (regular household cleanser) must spoil the crumbs slightly, to the extent that people would refrain from eating them.

The Rosh Yeshiva spoke out strongly against people cleaning for Pesach the way people cleaned in Europe. In Europe, he said, people had small homes with few belongings, while here we have larger homes with many belongings.

Information about this kuntres, "Clean for Pesach and Enjoy the Seder," can be obtained from Yeshiva Torah Ohr in Yerushalayim or from [www.anshe.org/parsha/palm-pesach.htm](http://www.anshe.org/parsha/palm-pesach.htm), or [www.orchos.org/torah/chagim/pesach/pesachcleaning.html](http://www.orchos.org/torah/chagim/pesach/pesachcleaning.html)

Rabbi Barclay (011-972-(0)2-5830914) and Rabbi Jaeger (011-972-(0)2-5834889), are authors of the Guideline Halacha Series including Guidelines – Over

Five Hundred of the Most Commonly asked Questions about Pesach (Targum Press).

Rabbi Barclay and Rabbi Jaeger write (chapter 2) that there are two mitzvos connected to the possession of chometz. One - not to see it or find it in one's possessions. Two - to dispose of it.

According to Torah law, it is enough to either get rid of the chometz, or to declare it null and void. Our sages required both for three reasons: so that our declaration should be sincere, so that we shouldn't accidentally eat the chometz (since the laws forbidding eating chometz are most stringent), and so that our declaration should cover chometz that we didn't notice.

"If the chometz is edible, then even a smaller piece that one may be tempted to eat must be removed."

"Therefore, when cleaning for Pesach one must remove small pieces of edible chometz and large pieces of inedible chometz."

Rabbi Barclay and Rabbi Jaeger also write that there is no need to check books, except for books that will be brought to the table. Books that are brought to the table should be either new or well cleaned.

Bentchers in use the whole year should not be used on Pesach; they should be put away with the chometz because they often contain crumbs and are difficult to clean. (Nowhere is it mentioned that the chometz crumbs have to be removed or that the bentchers and zemiros books have to be sold, even though chometz crumbs remain in them. The only rule is that should be put away so that they are not accidentally brought to the table on Pesach.)

Toys that will be used on Pesach should be cleaned with soapy water and checked. Other toys should be put away. Special toys for Pesach are recommended.

Clothing that won't be worn on Pesach needs only a quick check. "Since they are not going to be worn, there is no concern that one may eat any crumbs that are there. Small crumbs do not have to be removed since there is no prohibition to own them during Pesach. If this (a quick check to see that there isn't a larger piece of chometz there) is also difficult, one may put away some of the clothes and include them in the sale of chometz."

Light switches and door handles should be cleaned when necessary. Vacuuming cleans a carpet sufficiently, since any remaining crumbs are not fit for eating.

Pesach food and pots should not be placed directly on the floor, and silverware that falls on the floor should be rinsed.

Food that falls on the floor should be rinsed, though some have a custom not to eat such food until after Pesach.

The rubber seal on a refrigerator should be cleaned. If it is torn and there are crumbs inside, one should try to remove them. If this is difficult, the tear should either be covered, or bleach should be poured into it.

Since a toaster will not be used on Pesach, it is sufficient to remove loose crumbs by shaking the toaster well and to put it away with the chometz utensils. The chometz pots do not have to be scrubbed. Some have the custom to check the pots for chometz.

Aish HaTorah has information on preparing for Pesach, titled "Passover Cleaning Made Easy". It is written by Rabbi Yitzchak Berkovits, Rosh Yeshiva of the Jerusalem Kollel.

Rabbi Berkovitz writes: "What about bread crumbs on your kitchen floor?"

"The only kind of crumb that's a problem is one you would pick up with your finger and put on your tongue. So leftover crumbs from the table are in fact "chometz." [But] leftover crumbs on the floor, which you wouldn't eat, are garbage. Therefore, any crumb that you would consider dirt does not have to be gotten rid of" (Aish.com). (Still, the floors are swept, and if necessary, washed - to prevent crumbs from getting into our food and to prevent babies from eating these crumbs.)

Rabbi Yaakov Zev Smith, a maggid shiur for Irgun Shiurei Torah, gives shiurim on Halachah, including Hilchos Pesach (Irgun Shiurei Torah Tape #SN20, 3/24/96; #SN658, 04/03/11).

Hamodia printed a transcript of Rav Smith's Hilchos Pesach Shiurim in its Halachah Yomis of Adar 5766.

Rabbi Smith explains: "The Gemara says that after bedikas chometz (checking for chometz,) one still needs to annul the chometz. This requirement is not because of crumbs which may be scattered in the house; rather, it is a protection against a big piece of chometz. The reason we do not worry about crumbs is that since they are on the floor they have no importance to us and are "self-annulled" (Pesachim 6b).

He explains further that the Chayei Adam (119:6) is of the opinion that one must clean crevices of crumbs within hand's reach. This is not because of the prohibition of bal yeira'eh – the prohibition to see or have chometz in one's possession – (since the crumbs are not significant enough to be considered food, as mentioned above), but because we are concerned that

one might inadvertently eat them" (cf. Radvaz 1:135; Machaneh Yisrael10:).

The Pri Chadash (444-4) and the Igros Moshe (1-145) disagree with this stringency.

However, the commonly held custom is to follow the Chayei Adam's ruling and clean out all easily accessible places where crumbs might be found (Irgun Shiurei Torah tape #SN20 3/24/96).

The Chazon Ish (122:8) cites the Gra in stating that crumbs caught between the floorboards do not have to be removed. Even if there are many crumbs that add up collectively to a k'zayis, they are not a problem halachically, because they are dried out and unappetizing.

"The requirement for chometz to actually be unfit for canine consumption only applies to a k'zayis" (Magen Avraham; Mishnah Berurah).

Rabbi Smith continues:

What about chometz that is bigger than a crumb yet smaller than a k'zayis? An example might be a pretzel, or half a cookie. "While small crumbs are insignificant and are automatically nullified, these bits of food (which are identifiable things) are in a category of their own."

Loose pieces of chometz (larger than a crumb yet smaller than a k'zayis – identifiable things such as a pretzel or half a cookie) do need to be removed (Shulchan Aruch Harav; Mishnah Berurah).

Rabbi Smith's tapes may be ordered at 718-851-8651.

(All the above should not be used by husbands and children as an excuse for not helping make the house shining and fresh, as well as kosher for Pesach. It is indeed part of the signature of Pesach to have a home that is extra clean. The wholehearted participation and help--without criticism--of husband and children makes a big difference and brings much joy to the Yom Tov.)

May we all be zocheh to clean and prepare for the Yom Tov of Pesach without excessive strain or fear, but with anticipation and happiness; and may our cleaning and preparation find chein Above and help bring the Geulah Shleimah closer. A truly kosher and freilichen Pesach to all.

The information above was reviewed and approved by Rabbi Elozor Barclay and Rabbi Yitzchok Jaeger, the authors of Guidelines – Over Five Hundred of the Most Commonly Asked Questions About Pesach (Targum Press) and by Rabbi Zev Smith of Irgun Shiurei Torah.

L'ilui nishmas Zeel bas R' Tzvi, a"h