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BEDIKAS CHOMETZ

WHEN TO PERFORM THE BEDIKA

1) On the eve of the fourteenth of Nissan one is required to search one's home or domain for all chometz (SA 433-1). If one can only perform the bedika either on the thirteenth by day or on the fourteenth by day, one should perform the bedika on the fourteenth by day with a bracha (Emek Tshuva Siman 63).

2) Although the issur of chometz does not begin before the seventh halachic hour on the fourteenth day. Nevertheless, Chazal held that the search must be done in the evening for two reasons.

A. Most people are at home in the evening. Therefore, it is much easier for one to perform the bedika and by day one may forget (MB 431-3).

B. Chazal held that the bedika should be done by candlelight for it offers a better illumination and one is able to search into all the cracks and crevices (Gemorah Pesuchim 4a, MB 433-1).

3) One should perform the bedika at the beginning of the evening of the fourteenth (when three stars appear) about 45 minutes after sunset (MA 431-1, MB-1).

4) When the time to perform the bedika arrives, one is prohibited to engage in any work (SA 431-2), or learn torah (however, one may learn the halachos of the bedika (SA 431-2, Aruch Hashulchan-27), eat a meal (however, a light snack is permitted). One may not engage in one of the above within a half an hour before the time of bedikas chometz. The reason for this is that Chazal were afraid that one would become engrossed in the subject matter and become negligent and not perform the bedika in its proper time. If the person engaged in the above before this time, one is not required to stop until three stars appear whereupon one must stop and perform the bedika (Rama 431-2, MB-12). If one started within the half an hour, one must stop what they are doing and perform the bedika.

5) One should not sell their chometz to the rabbi at this time (Shiurim Mitzuyani B'halacha 111-3, Divar Yehoshua Vol. 2-81 note 2).

IF ONE GOES AWAY WITHIN THIRTY DAYS BEFORE PESACH

6) If a person will not be at home on the eve of the fourteenth, one should appoint a representative to perform the bedika for him (MB 436-1).

If no representative is available than one should perform the bedika the evening before one leaves without a bracha, even if one will not return home the entire pesach (SA 436-1, MB-3). Some are of the opinion that the bedika should be performed as one would on the eve of the fourteenth (e.g. Bread, Candle, feather, etc.) (Kinyan Torah B'halacha Vol 2-82), others are of the opinion that they are not required (Minchas Yitzchock Vol. 8-35).

7) Following the bedika one must nullify the chometz which has not been seen (MA-1).

8) If one forgets to perform the bedika at night, one must perform it by day (MB-3).

9) If one goes on a short trip within thirty days of pesach with intention to return before pesach, one need not perform a bedika prior to the trip (SA-1, MB-3).

IF ONE GOES AWAY MORE THAN THIRTY DAYS BEFORE PESACH

10) If a person goes away from home more than thirty day before pesach but intends to return before pesach, one must perform the bedika before they leave without a bracha. The reason being that many times one may be delayed and arrive on erev pesach after the permitted time (MB 436-9).

11) If one leaves before thirty days with no intention to return before pesach, although no bedika is required one is required to nullify one's chometz before pesach (SA 436-1, MB-6). Some Poskim are of the opinion that if one knows that they have chometz in their domain one should dispose of it before they leave, others disagree (MB-5).

BEDIKA AT ONE'S PARENTS

12) One who goes to one's parents for pesach does not perform a bedika in the room that they are sleeping in for they are considered as a guest and not as an owner of the room (Shevet Halevi Vol. 4-44). However, one should make a bedika in one's home before they go away.

DAVENING MAARIV BEFORE THE BEDIKA

13) Most Poskim are of the opinion that one should daven in shul Maariv at its proper time (at nightfall)(MA, MB 431-8, Chai Adam 119-7, Shulchan Aruch Harav-8) even though the bedika will be performed later. Their reasoning is that it may be difficult to find a minyan later.

14) If one has a set minyan at a later time than one should perform the bedika at its proper time and daven maariv later.

Some Poskim are of the opinion that if one will not go to shul one should daven maariv at home prior to the bedika (MB-8, Chock Joseph, Sharai Tzion-11). Their reasoning is that we have a principle in halacha that when two mitzvos come at the same time, the one that is most frequent takes precedent (MB), and one may forget to davin later.

WHO PERFORMS THE BEDIKA?

15) One performs the bedika himself or may appoint a representative to assist or perform the bedika for him (MA 432-5, MB-8&11, MA 436-14 & 437-8). Preferably, the person should be over bar mitzvah (MB-8).

WHAT REQUIRES A BEDIKA

16) Any place where one took chometz or ones children possibly took chometz into, requires a bedika even if one took chometz there on an occasion (SA 433-3, MB 433-13, Kaf Hachaim-30). Some examples are the basement, office, car, attic, pantry, furniture, clothing, etc.

17) Many Poskim are of the opinion that those rooms that one sells to a non-jew do not require a bedika (MB 436-32).

HOTEL

18) one who goes to a hotel for Yom Tov is required to check his room, however, a bracha is recited only if one is there on the eve of the fourteenth (SA 437-1).

IF ONE FORGOT TO PERFORM THE BEDIKA AT NIGHT

19) One who forgot or was unable to perform the bedika on the eve of the fourteenth is required to perform the bedika with a bracha during the day when one remembers (SA 435-1, Shulchan Aruch Harav-1, MB-2). One may not engage in any work etc. as stated above prior to the bedika (MB 431-5,433-5).

20) The bedika is performed in the same manner as on the eve of the fourteenth (e.g.. Bread, candles, etc.) (MB-4). The Kol Chamirah should be recited after the bedika is finished (Shulchan Aruch Harav-1).

21) If one is in doubt if they did a bedika on a certain room the room must be bodek again (Aruch Hashulchan437-2).

22) If one realized after the sixth halachic hour that a bedika was not performed, one must make the bedika but the Kol Chamirah is not said (MB 435-1).

23) If one recited the Kol Chamirah on erev pesach but remembered on Yom Tov that the bedika was not performed, on Chol Hamoad the bidika must be done even by day with a bracha. However, if the Kol Chamirah was not recited, one must perform the bedika on Yom Tov with a candle (MB-3). The chometz should be covered for it is muktzah (Shulchan Aruch Harav-2).

PROCEDURE FOR THE BEDIKA

BEDIKAS CHOMETZ IS NOT MERELY A CEREMONY IN WHICH PIECES OF CHOMETZ ARE PLACED AROUND THE HOUSE AND COLLECTED. A THOROUGH CHECK AND SEARCH ARE REQUIRED SO THAT THE BRACHA SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SAID IN VAIN.

WASHING ONE'S HAND

24) One should wash one's hands before making the bedika however, no bracha should be recited (MB 432-2).

PLACING TEN PIECES OF BREAD

25) The minhag is to place ten pieces of bread around the house (Rama 432). Each piece should be no larger than the size of an olive (ST 432). However, one should have at least the size of an olive when one combines all the bread together (Archus Hachaim -8, Chukas Pesach Hakatzar-8).

26) Hard chometz should not be used for they leave many crumbs (MB-12).

27) Many wrap the bread in paper or place a paper under them. One must use extreme caution not lose or misplace the bread (MB-13).

28) There are various reasons for the minhag:

A. In order that the bracha should not be a bracha in vain if one finds no chometz (Rama). Most Poskim deems it not as a bracha in vain for the mitzvah is to search and destroy even if there is no chometz found (Rama).

B. Some Poskim feel that by putting out bread it will ensure that one will not forget and nullify the chometz because one will have chometz to burn the next day (Chok Yakov-12).

C. Others state that by putting out chometz one will not stop until all the chometz is found (Chok Yakov-14).

29) One must realize that the collection of the ten pieces is not to be considered as doing a proper bedika, one must search one's domain thoroughly (MB-12, KSA 111-8, Aruch Hashulchan 432-5,433-13).

30) Since today we clean our homes thoroughly some Poskim are of the opinion that one must place the ten pieces of bread out (Machzik Bracha 432, Sedai Chemed Chometz U'matzah Siman 5-49).

Using a candle

31) Chazal state that one must search one's domain through candlelight and not by the light of the moon (Mishna Pesachim Perek 1-2, SA 433-1). The reason for this is that if one would search one's domain during the day, the daylight would be insufficient for one would not be able to search into all the cracks and crevices. It is for this reason that Chazal ordained that the bedika is performed in the evening when candlelight offers a better illumination (MB 431-3,433-1).

32) As we have stated before, if one must perform the bedika by day one must search for chometz with a candle (SA 433-1).

33) One should use a wax candle that is made out of one wick for one would be afraid to go into the cracks and crevice with a torch (Rama 433-2, MB-8&12).

34) Any candle made of more than one wick is to be considered as a torch, therefore one cannot use a havdalah candle for the bedika.

35) A bedika that was performed with a torch is not a valid bedika and one must perform another bedika without a bracha (MB-10, Aruch Hashulchan-2).

36) One is permitted to use a flashlight to perform the search (Rabbi Aaron Kotler Zt"l, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein Zt"l). Some Poskim feel that it is even better than a candle for one is not afraid to search into the cracks and crevices (Shiurim Mitzuyanim B'halacha 111-4). Many Poskim are of the opinion that one should start the bedika with a candle and change over to a flashlight (Rabbi Moshe Stern Shlita).

37) The electric light in the room is insufficient for the bedika, one still needs another light (Yesodai Yishurin Vol 6 Daf 340).

FEATHER AND SPOON

38) The minhag is to search for chometz with the use a feather to assist in removal of the chometz (MA 433-1, MB-46).

39) The minhag to use a spoon is to remove any crumbs of chometz. Some give the reason for the spoon is so that the person will not forget to nullify the chometz. Therefore, since one burns the chometz in the morning it will remind one to nullify the chometz (MB 445-7). Others state that when one burns the

chometz one should use wood (Rashash Shabbos Daf 66, Minchas Yitzchock Vol. 2-53, Hagaddah Moadim Uzimanim, Chok L'yisroel Daf 38).

Bracha

40) Some Poskim are of the opinion that the bracha should be recited in the room that the bedika will take place (Emek Tshuva Siman 63).

41) Before beginning the bedika a bracha is recited. One recites "Boruch Ata Adon-ai Aloha-nu Malech Haloam Asher Kidishanu B'mitsvosav V'tsivanu Al Biur Chometz" (SA 432-1). Although at this time one does not destroy the chometz, it is considered as if it is destroyed, since after the bedika one nullifies it. The bracha is not recited on the actual searching of the chometz, but rather on the destroying of the chometz and searching is only a means to get to the chometz.

42) If a person did a bedika but did not get rid of the chometz they are considered as if they did nothing. Similarly, if one did not nullify the chometz after the bedika it is as if they still have not destroyed the chometz.

43) If a person made a mistake and said "L'vair Chometz" or "Al Bidkas Chometz" one is not required to repeat the bracha (Bach, Pri Migadim-1, MB-3).

44) If one forgot to recite a bracha before beginning the bedika, one should recite it as long as the bedika has not been completed (Rama 432-1). If one completed the bedika, no bracha is recited at this time, however, in the morning before one burns the chometz one should recite the bracha (Taz-2, MA-2, MB-4). If one forgot to recite the bracha before burning the chometz, no bracha is recited afterwards (Mahram Shick Siman 208, Sedai Chemed Siman 5-7).

45) One is not allowed to speak between the bracha and the beginning of the bedika, even if it is relevant to the bedika (SA 432-1). However, if one spoke in regard to the bedika, no new bracha need be recited. If one spoke even one word about something not relevant to the bedika, the bracha needs to be repeated (MB 5).

46) Preferably, one should not talk throughout the entire bedika regarding matters not relevantly to the bedika (SA). If one did, no new bracha is needed (MB).

47) If one will perform the bedika in many places (e.g.. home, car, office) one need only recite one bracha (SA 432, MA-4, MB-7). If one will have a big break from one place to the other, some Poskim are of the opinion that when you recite the first bracha one should have in mind that the bracha is only going on this bedika and does not include the bedika of the office etc. (Mikraha Kodesh Vol Siman 46, Keren L'dovid Siman 59).

48) No bracha of shehecheyanu is recited, for the purpose of the bedika is to prepare the house for pesach, therefore, it is included in the bracha of shehecheyanu which is said on the first night of pesach during kiddish (Tur 432, Machzik Bracha-1, Shulchan Aruch Harav 432-3).

49) If one goes to the bathroom in the middle of the bedika, one may recite the bracha of asher yotzar (MA-4).

AFTER ONE FINISHES THE BEDIKA

50) After one completes the bedika the chometz should be put in a secured place and not moved around (SA 434, MB-2). Furthermore, the chometz that is left to be eaten the next morning must be set aside in a proper place (Taz 436-1).

51) Immediately after the bedika one should say the Kol Chamirah which is to nullify the chometz that one does not see (SA 434-2). One should say the following: "All chometz and leaven that may be in my domain which I have not seen and which I have not destroyed or whose existence I have no knowledge of, shall be nullified and be deemed null and disowned and deemed valueless like the dust of the earth."

52) One must understand the language that they are saying, if one is unaware of what they are saying or doing the nullification is ineffective (Rama 434-2, MB-9).

53) If one appointed a representative to perform the bedika for them, then one must wait until the representative finishes the bedika before one recites the Kol Chamirah

IF ONE PERFORMED A BEDIKA BEFORE THE FOURTEENTH

54) One may not perform a thorough bedika on the thirteenth by day to be used as his bedika. If one did, one is required to repeat the bedika on the eve of the fourteenth, however, no bracha is recited (MB 433-1). Some state that one should think the bracha or hear the bracha from a neighbor.

55) if one will not have sufficient time to complete the bedika on the eve of the fourteenth, one may perform the bedika on the eve of the thirteenth, however, one must leave over at least a room that requires a bedika in order to recite a bracha (Sedai Chemed Siman 5).

ROOMMATES

56) If a person shares their room with a roommate and one departed before the fourteenth, the other person should perform the bedika (MA 436-16).

BURNING THE CHOMETZ IN THE MORNING

57) We burn the chometz on the morning of the fourteenth before the end of the fifth halachic hour (MB 445-1). Some have the minhag to burn the chometz at the beginning of the fifth hour (Bach).

58) The chometz should be burned until it becomes charcoal (MB-1).

59) Immediately after the burning of the chometz we again recite Kol Chamirah with a minor change (Rama 434-2, MB-12), "All chometz and leaven that may still be in my domain which I have or have not seen and which I have or have not destroyed or whose existence I have or have no knowledge of, shall be nullified and be deemed null and disowned and deemed valueless like the dust of the earth."

60) Preferably, one should burn one's own chometz. If for some reason one cannot one may make representative to burn it for him.

61) If one will not be at home at the time of the burning of the chometz, they nevertheless should say the nullification where they are.

62) Some have the custom to burn the Lulovim and Hoshanos from Sukkos as fuel for the fire because since they were used for a mitzvah it is proper to use them for another mitzvah (MB-7).

63) One should not pour lighting fluid or it's like over the chometz until some of the chometz is already burning (Seder Pesach K'hilchaso Daf 175). See par 14.

64) One may dispose of the chometz by other means, one does not need to just burn it. One may flush it down the toilet (MA-2, MB-3, Chazon Ish Oruch Chaim 118-3), break the bread into crumbs and throw it into the wind or sea (SA 445-1).

Garbage can

65) One should not place the leftover chometz in one's own garbage can or on one's property to be removed by the garbage collectors, but they should be placed in plastic bags and put outside one's property (Rabbi Moshe Feinstein Zt"l Egros Moshe OC Vol. 3-57, Shevet Halevi-137, Minchas Yitzchock Vol 4-53).

DIFFERENT TIME ZONE

66) If there is a time zone difference the nullification and selling of the chometz must take place before the earlier of the two time zones (Rabbi Moshe Feinstein Zt"l). One must make sure when they are selling the chometz that the rav does not buy back the chometz before the latter time zone (Rabbi Moshe Feinstein Zt"l).