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Cleaning and Kashrut Guide

The intent of this guide is to make your life easier, as HaShem intended for it to be. It will hopefully allow you to focus more on the spiritual experience of the Seder night, and spend less time, money, and energy, on unnecessary cleaning and on purchasing expensive certified Kosher products.

Even if you are not planning to spend Pesah at home this year, you might benefit from some general laws of Kashrut offered here.

Cleaning the house:

Spring cleaning is fun, for some people, but it should not be confused with Pesah cleaning. When cleaning the house for Pesah, attention should be given only to places where edible Hametz is used or stored: kitchen, pantry, garage, etc. The purpose of cleaning and searching for Hametz is to:

- Avoid contact of Hametz with the food we prepare and
- Prevent a case of eating Hametz found on Pesah.

To the cleaning and searching we add another protective measure: nullifying the Hametz. For that reason, even if we missed a well-hidden Hametz, no prohibition was transgressed. Before going through toys, removing books from shelves, and checking clothes' pockets, ask yourself these questions:

- What are the chances that I will find here a piece of Hametz, clean and edible, which I will be tempted to eat upon seeing?
- What are the chances that an edible piece of Hametz, whose flavor has not been spoiled, will be mixed into a hot dish made for Pesah?

If you can answer those two questions with “negligible or infinitesimal”, abort mission and turn to more important things.

Kitchen:

You only need to clean cabinets and storage areas where food is stored and which you are going to use on Pesah. If only dishes, utensils, paper goods, or non-hametz foods are stored there, there is no need to clean. If food is stored there but you are not going to use it on Pesah, seal the cabinet and rely on the Sale of Hametz.

Cooking before Pesah:

If the flavor of Hametz was mixed with Pesah food before Pesah, the flavor is nullified. You can therefore clean your kitchen the way you normally do, and then, before Pesah, use your everyday dishes and utensils to make freezable food from kosher for Pesah ingredients. Freeze and enjoy on Pesah.

Kashering the Kitchen

Dishes and utensils:

The reason for kashering dishes is the concern that flavor absorbed from Hametz will be released into the KFP food. That concern was valid in the past, when dishes were made from porous, low-quality materials. In today's modern kitchen, this is almost non-existent. Therefore, unless you know for sure that even after thoroughly cleaned a utensil transfers flavors from one dish to another, you can use it for Pesah after washing it regularly.

You can wash by hand or in the dishwasher and then use utensils made from the following materials, even if used for Hametz immediately before cleaning:

Glass, plastic, metal, chinaware, Corelle, Bakelite, silicone, stoneware, Teflon.

The only dishes which should be put aside are earthenware dishes (which are not widely used in the common kitchen.) Wood utensils can be cleaned thoroughly, and if you are concerned about flavor absorbed in them, soaked in water with detergent for a couple of hours.

When in doubt whether dishes or utensils absorb flavor, conduct this fun experiment: cook a batch of hot peppers (ghost, habanero, jalapeno) with the strongest spices you have. Rinse the dish and cook in it bland rice or pasta. Taste the rice or pasta.

Appliances:

Oven: Clean regularly. Wash racks. Turn the oven to 450° Fahrenheit and leave on for 20 minutes. Avoid the self-cleaning feature as it operates on extremely high temperatures and would ruin the oven.

A note on using oven for meat and dairy: The smallest standard ovens today are big enough, by halakhic standards, to be used simultaneously for meat and dairy, as long as the dishes do no

splatter. If you feel uncomfortable doing so, you can use the oven for those dishes consecutively, with no need for cleaning, waiting for it to cool down, or kashering between the two dishes.

Stove top (Gas, electric, glass, Corning, Halogen, or Ceran) and broilers, grills, BBQ's: clean regularly. Turn on high for 10 minutes.

(**Non-Kosher BBQ**: if you are traveling and would like to use a public BBQ, on Pesah or year-round, it is preferable to cover it with thick aluminum foil after it is well heated.)

Microwave oven: Clean the turntable and the oven regularly. Put in the oven half a cup of water with a drop of dish soap and a wooden stick (to avoid explosions), for 90 seconds.

During the year, there is no need for separate microwave ovens. In case a meat or dairy dish splattered on the oven walls, clean it regularly. There is no need to wait between uses.

Shabbat Plata (hot plate/blech): Clean regularly and heat for 10 minutes.

Dishwasher: Can be used for Pesah after the last round of Hametz dishes was washed, with no waiting period or cleaning necessary. For good feeling, you could run it empty for the shortest cycle and clean the filter.

During the year: There is no need to have separate dishwashers for meat and dairy. Meat and dairy dishes can be washed together, even without removing chunks of food from them, because the detergent is very powerful and any flavor "absorbed" in the dishes is utterly destroyed.

Refrigerator, freezer, warming drawers, coffee machines: clean regularly.

Toaster oven, toaster: clean like an oven and leave on high heat for ten minutes.

Upright smoker: Run one cycle of burn-through.

Sandwich maker, waffle maker: If you need to use those on Pesah, clean them as you normally do and then turn on high for ten minutes. (Make sure that the Teflon is not scratched, and flavor is not transferred from one food to the next. If there is a need, test it by making a strongly flavored waffle mix, baking it, and then, after cleaning, baking another mix, this time bland.)

Electric knife, KitchenAid, food processors, including blades and receptacles: Clean regularly.

Serving dishes: all modern serving dishes today do not absorb flavor and could therefore be used for Pesah after a regular wash. This includes Corelle brand and chinaware. Glazed dishes, even if chipped can be used in the same manner, though caution must be taken.

A note on flavor absorption: Color is not taste. Plastic utensils and Tupperware sometimes retain color from spices such as paprika and turmeric, but that does not mean that flavor is also absorbed. When in doubt, put hot flavorless rice in the colored utensil and then taste it (before Pesah, of course!)

Baby bottles and paraphernalia, baby high chair and tray: clean regularly.

Table and benchtops: clean regularly.

Dentures, bite plates, braces, water filters: No special action required.¹

There is no need to clean inside or behind vents in ovens, microwave ovens, and refrigerators, or remove, as some Kashrut guides recommend electric panels and tubes.

Remember that the cleaning is performed to prevent the possibility of an edible piece of Hametz mixing into the food. Ask yourself before approaching any nook or cranny if there is a chance that the Hametz monster will crawl out of there and latch itself to your food.

Sinks and countertops: As previously explain the concern when kashering is that flavor absorbed from a Hametz dish will be released into a Pesah dish. The only way Hametz flavor can be transferred from sinks and countertops to your food, is if boiling pasta water spilled or a hot loaf of bread was placed on them, and then hot pesah food was put directly on that surface (a piece of meat, for example). No one eats foods which were placed in that manner on countertops or in sinks, and in any case, they do not absorb flavor. Therefore, there is no need to have separate sinks for meat and dairy, and there is no need to kasher them. Clean regularly, and if it makes you feel good, pour hot water.

There is no need to seal off cabinets with all-year dishes, even if you are not going to use those dishes on Pesah.

¹ Many of the details in this article are obvious, yet I had to write them because years of Kashrut industry and extremist Halakhic rulings have created misconceptions regarding Kashrut.

Decorative, non-edible Hametz, such as pasta projects, colored and glued, or colorful pasta in sealed glass jars, does not need to be removed before Pesah.

Cleaning Supplies:

Kosher for Pesah certification is needed only for edible products. Since no one serves Windex shakes with Ajax sandwiches, no cleaning supplies need supervision, and stamping them with any Kashrut symbol borders with deception. For good feeling, you might want to use new dish-washing sponges for Pesah.

It seems obvious that all paper, aluminum foil, and plastic products do not need Kashrut supervision. However, I have to mention it here because some Kashrut organization claim that paper goods coated with wax and paper bags are not KFP. To clarify: all paper goods, foil, Styrofoam, and plastic disposables are KFP.

Medicine: all medicine is KFP.

Vitamins: If the pills are swallowed with water, they can be used on Pesah. Chewable vitamins: if the ingredients do not include one of the four grains (wheat, barley, spelt, rye), they can be used on Pesah.

Cosmetics and hygienic products, including oral hygiene: all are kosher for Pesah since none is edible, including Listerine strips.

Pet food: The only pet food which can present a problem is dog food, and within the variety of dog foods, the only category which should be preferably avoided on Pesah is baked goods. All other foods, even if grains are mixed in them, are non-edible for humans, and therefore can be used by pet owners for their pets²

² Though dog food and cat food look appetizing, and some of them can be and were consumed by humans, continuous consumption of these foods is a health hazard. The confusion around pet food stems from the fact that it is a relatively new phenomenon, and before pet food was commercially made, pets ate their owners' leftovers. The halakha says that Hametz retains its status as forbidden until it becomes unfit for a dog. That refers to Hametz which was once fit for humans, but dog food was destined from its inception for dogs and not humans. The idea that food retains its status until it becomes unfit for a dog is based on the Halakha regarding purity of foods at the time of the Temple (B. Kerithoth, 21:1): כלל אמרו בטומאה: כל המיוחד לאכול אדם - טמא עד שיפסל מאכילת כלב!

Edible Items:

Open packages, bottles, spices, and spreads: if containers or bottles are used to pour from, and no utensils are inserted into them, or if you know that only clean utensils were inserted, they can be used on Pesah. Though some claim that spices, salt, olive, and wine which were used over boiling hametz have become Hametz because of the vapor absorbed in them, this is not true, and they can be used on Pesah.

Rabbi Abadi's list: A comprehensive list of products which do not bear a KFP stamp but are kosher for Pesah, is available at www.kashrut.org. Here is sample of the list.

- Alcoholic beverages: all alcoholic beverages which are not made of grains or grapes are kosher for Pesah with no need for supervision, including potato, cane, or corn vodka, and agave tequila.
- Baby food: most of Beech Nut mixes of fruits, vegetables, and corn or rice cereal are kosher for Pesah, check the list for details.
- Cereals: Chex – Apple Cinnamon; Chocolate; Cinnamon; Corn; Honey Nut; Rice; Kellogg's Gluten Free Rice Krispies; Cocoa Pebbles; Fruity Pebbles.
- Yogurt: Many of Dannon and Yoplait flavored yogurts are kosher for Pesah – details in the list.
- Ice Cream: Many flavors of Breyer's, Edy's, and Haagen Dazs are kosher for Pesah – details in the list.
- Ingredients: refer to Rabbi Abadi's list for kosher ingredients (hundreds of them!). In that manner, you will be able to determine whether a product is kosher based on the ingredients listed on the package.
- Snacks and candies: Baby Ruth; Butterfinger bar; Bit-O-Honey; Nips; Oh Henry!; Raisinets; Bamba;

There is much more on the list. Check it out.

The rule is: that which is destined for human consumption [and became impure] remains impure until it becomes unfit for a dog.

R. Shimshon Raphael Hirsch explains (Deut. 14:21): אין הטומאה חלה, ("הסריחה מעיקרא"), אם לא היתה ראויה לאכילה מעולם – if it was never fit for humans, it cannot become impure to begin with.

Flour: all flour is KFP, even if the grains were processed with water, but it can only be used for baking Matzah. The Shulhan Arukh recommends buying KFP flour, but comments that if it is not available one can use any flour. The exorbitant prices of KFP flour today put it under the category of “not available”. You could use this flour to bake Matzah at home, as long as you observe the dough to make sure it does not rise.

Fresh and frozen fish: Kosher all year round when purchased from a major chain (Costco, Stop and Shop, Whole Foods etc.) or from a reputable fishmonger. The fish can be bought on Pesah.

Spices: all 100% pure spices can be used on Pesah.

Oil, milk, plain yogurt, hard and soft cheeses, soft drinks, jams and jellies do not need Pesah supervision.

Vinegar: When buying vinegar, check the label to see if it is grain vinegar. If so, contact the manufacturer to find out which grain because in many cases it is corn.

Vinegar as an ingredient: When vinegar is listed as an ingredient and it is bought before Pesah, one can rely on the fact that the single word “vinegar” on the label implies fruit vinegar.

Tea: all tea bags and tea leaves are kosher for Pesah.

All pickles (unless you know with certainty grain vinegar was used), olives, frozen vegetables, canned vegetables, dried fruits and of course fresh fruits and vegetables are KFP.

Coffee: All coffee, including instant and granulated is Kosher for Pesah. You can also buy whole bean coffee and grind it at the store.

Starbucks: you can buy unflavored coffee from Starbucks or similar establishments on Pesah. For flavored coffee, and K-cups, check ingredients.

Pure peanut butter, almond butter etc. are kosher for Pesah, including the DIY mixes available at Whole Foods.

Oats, grains, and legumes

Oats: The Mishnah mentions five grains which can become Hametz. Four of them are identified without doubt: שיפון, כוסמת, שעורה, חטה – are, respectively, wheat, barley, spelt, and rye. Regarding

the fifth grain there is confusion, and the identification of its Hebrew name – שבולת שועל, with oats, has been contested. I am presenting here the information, not as a ruling in the matter.

Rabbi Yitzhak Abadi does not consider oats to be one of the five grains but does not officially allow their use on Pesah. Prof. Yehudah Felix, the leading authority on Biblical and Talmudic fauna and flora, argues that the Mishnaic species is not oats but a sub-specie of barley which contains gluten and ferments with water.³ R. Yosef Efrati claims that in an experiment conducted for him by Prof. Moshe Zacks, oats became Hametz.

The arguments against the identification of Shibbolet Shu'al with oats are:

- a) Oats were unknown in Israel at the time of the Mishnah, so the rabbis could not have referred to them.
- b) Oats do not contain gluten and do not behave like the other four grains (oatmeal does not rise). They do contain avenin, to which about 15% of celiac patients are sensitive.

In addition, there is the visual/etymological aspect. Oats stalks resemble wheat and barley, but so does rice. The name Shibbolet Shu'al means Fox's stalk, which probably referred to a grain with long haors resembling the fox's tail. That description does not fit oats but rather wild barley, which supports Prof. Felix's argument.

Legumes and beans: Ashkenazi Jews have a custom of not eating legumes on Pesah. Today, globalization has turned Jewish population worldwide into one big community, and people are aware of each other's customs. For that reason, Sepharadim and Ashkenazim can adopt the customs of each other, but great caution must be practiced not to infringe upon norms of the community or the family, and either do the transition privately or gradually. This includes using legumes on Pesah.

Those who decide to adhere to the custom should know that the original custom, starting in 14thC Europe, applied only to flour of certain legumes which could have been mistaken for flour made of Hametz grains. Peanuts, soy beans, corn, and quinoa, which were not known in Europe at the time, cannot therefore be part of the custom. Similarly, fresh beans and legumes, or liquids distilled

³ כלאי זרעים והרכבה: מסכת כלאים : משנה, תוספתא וירושלמי לפרקים א-ב : בירור הסוגיות ורקען הבוטני-חקלאי, הוצאת דביר 1967, עמ' 24-29

from legumes, such as corn oil, corn syrup, or Saki, as well as legumes by-products mixed with other foods, were never a part of the original Ashkenazi custom of avoiding legumes on Pesah.

It is customary among some Moroccan Jews not to eat rice. Some believe that they decided to follow the Ashkenazi custom, but Rabbi Yosef Messas explains that the custom had practical roots. At the time, only whole grain rice was used. It was shipped, stored, and sold with wheat and the two could easily mix. This concern does not apply to white rice, and today there is no concern even with whole grain because there is great caution not to mix grains for concern of allergies. An additional reason that Moroccan Jews avoided rice on Pesah is that it never was a major staple of the Moroccan cuisine.

In general, all rice is Kosher for Pesah. There is no need to check rice before Pesah since storage and shipping conditions have changed, but it should be checked briefly before cooking on Pesah. In the rare case that a grain of wheat is found in rice on Pesah it should be thrown away.

Shopping for the Seder:

Seder ingredients:

Matzah: there is no need to buy matzah marked as Shmurah, since all commercial matzahs are Shmurah. The term Shmurah means supervised, and the difference between the Shmurah and “regular” matzah, is that Shmurah is supervised from the moment of harvesting and the “regular” from the moment of grinding. One is not more kosher than the other, only more expensive, and it is preferable to buy the less expensive Matzah and give the difference to charity.

Alternatively, you can make matzah at home. Any flour is kosher for Pesah, and since it takes a mixture and flour a couple of hours to rise, you should not be worried that it will become hametz under your hands. Even if you want to keep the 18 minutes rule, it is easy since the 18 minutes start from the moment you let go of the dough. As long as you are kneading, the Talmud says, the dough cannot become Hametz, and it would take much less to make the dough into Matzah.

In this manner, you can have soft Matzah, which will be easy to cut and wrap.

Maror: any bitter herb will do, but there is no need to suffer. Even though today’s lettuce is much sweeter than it was forty years ago, it still counts as bitter herbs. When cleaning lettuce or any

other leafy vegetables, there is no need to go on a crazy bug-hunt. Wash the leaves well and look for tiny flies or mosquitos, but not for tiny bugs which require a magnifying glass or intense light.

Salt water: I suggest you give a try to my tradition. Babylonian Jews use a mixture of lemon and orange juice to dip the celery and the egg in. It is delicious.

Haroset: Moroccan tradition – crushed dates with wine, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg; Iraqi tradition: date honey (silan) with ground nuts or peanuts.

Karpas: the best vegetable to use for Karpas is celery, which is called Karpas in Hebrew. Celery stalks, dipped in lemon-orange juice are delicious and nutritious.

Travel Advice

When traveling: if you arrive at a hotel or Airbnb on Pesah or shortly before Pesah, all the rules mentioned earlier could help you settle in easily. If you are expected to pay for food, you do not need to seal off Hametz products, because they do not belong to you. If the host left for you a welcome package which includes cookies, for example, either keep it in a sealed place, mark it with a clear signage, or give it back to the host with an explanation if possible.

You do not need to clean anything again, since these places are kept rigorously clean. Just heat the oven and stove for ten minutes and place a cup of water with some soap in the microwave for 1.5-2 minutes.

Hametz: Search, Sell

Hametz sale: You can include in the sale any Hametz you have at your home or business, even half used packages, since the main point of the sale today is to dissociate ourselves from the Hametz, and not to follow all the technicalities of an official transaction. You can appoint me to be your representative by sending an email requesting that to hovadia@gmail.com. No need to submit information, addresses, or any payment. If you have Hametz in a freezer and you need to use the rest of the space in the freezer, it is fine, as long as the Hametz is clearly marked in a way that ensures that no one will use it by mistake on Pesah.

Searching Hametz: We only look for sizable, edible Hametz. Only children's rooms and backpacks should be checked. Pockets do not need to be checked, unless you know that your child

regularly puts bread in his pockets and then eats it, and you are not going to wash these pants or jackets before Pesah.

Garbage cans: whatever you put in the garbage is not Hametz and not yours anymore. That includes hametz disposed of on the eve of Pesah.

Waiting between Hametz use and koshering: there is no need to wait between the two, including when koshering an oven, though it is recommended not to apply detergents to hot surfaces for safety and health concerns. The reason people used to wait 24 hours between uses was to let the absorbed flavor “go bad”. Since today’s utensils and appliances do not absorb flavor, there is no need to wait.

Stress-Free and Joyous Seder

Karpas: You can eat as much Karpas as you wish. Our tradition is to use celery and serve alongside it other fresh vegetables, such as cucumbers, some cooked food for the children, as well as water and soft drinks. Hard-boiled eggs are also eaten at this point. After eating eggs and vegetables, the Seder is conducted with energy and joy.

Wine: you can use any type of wine, red or white, sweet or semi-dry, or grape juice. If you cannot drink wine or grape juice, you can rely on the person conducting the Seder, or if you are conducting, on any other person who does drink.

The minimal amount of wine for each of the four cups, is the majority of the biblical measure called Revi’it HaHin. There are various opinions as to the volume of Revi’it, so you can use the smallest one which is 75cc, or 2.5 fl. oz., and drink its majority which would be 38cc or 1.3 fl. oz., if you can drink.

Starting early: the one element of the Seder which is time sensitive is the eating of the first Matzah. You can start the Seder earlier, and time it so you arrive at HaMotzi after sunset. It will make it easier for the children, and it can solve many problems for the second Seder.

My Model Seder

A model Seder, ideally, should occur once a year (twice, outside the Holy Land). It is a little different every year, because we keep changing and evolving. We can choose to learn from our mistakes, ignore them or fix them. We hopefully grow more intelligent, sensitive and understanding with each passing year, although it is becoming ever so difficult to do so in a society which gives little respect to age and to the wisdom acquired with it. We might have been learning, or reading, or asking ourselves tough questions during the year, questions not there last Pesah. Our Seders will also vary because of the participants. Do we get along with all of them, or do some give us anxiety attacks? Are we celebrating the Seder at home with close family and friends, at a shul with hundreds of somewhat familiar people, or at a resort with close family and friends and hundreds of total strangers? The ingredients of the Seder night are so varied and volatile that as a result, not all of our Seders can be created equal. (For me, two Seders stand poles apart, on one hand the first Seder, as a teenager, without my beloved grandfather, and on the other, 31 years later, the first Seder with my youngest daughter who was born just a day earlier).

In light of the infinite possibilities for a real Seder to evolve, the whole notion of a Model Seder, whether for kids at school or as a community event, seems to be counterintuitive. The power and energy of the Seder stem from the people, their experience, knowledge, curiosity, place in life, history, past and future. It hinges on how excited are the participants to be Jewish and to observe the Seder or, conversely, how detached they feel from the rituals and the lore of this wonderful night. How can one anticipate and prepare for all these unknown factors which will unfold only at the moment of truth? I really want to know who thought that this is a good idea. Who came up with the idea of a Model Seder? My google search for the “first Model Seder” retrieved many interesting matches which made me rethink the concepts “model” and “Seder”, but it did not provide the name of that man or woman who are responsible for this now ubiquitous practice.

It seems, unfortunately, that the Model Seder, alongside the fire, the wheel and the first written alphabet, would join the great inventions which forever changed the course of human civilization, without giving us the opportunity to thank the anonymous inventor. According to most researchers in the yet not fully explored field of Model Seder sciences (especially the renowned scholar Dr. Manish Evitz) the practice was either the intellectual brain-child of a frustrated, authoritarian teacher who wanted to make sure that even when away from school, the students would march to

the tune of his military style, or the frustration was for lack of educational materials to feed the students, a problem beautifully solved by preparing them, for one whole month, for a one night event which was supposed! to be! a SURPRISE! (sorry for yelling, got carried away). Model Seder as Dress Rehearsal? Dress rehearsals are indispensable before a show or a presentation, and they could be tolerated and maybe even understood before a wedding, but would you have one before a surprise birthday party, with the birthday boy or girl in attendance? I think not! I have a feeling that such a move would somewhat diminish the element of surprise.

But let me approach the problem from a more levelheaded perspective. I think that there are three problems here: one is that we focus all of our attention on the children, the second is that our attention is dedicated to what WE think they need to know or ask, and the third is the taming of the Haggadah. (If I would follow the pattern of the Haggadah I would add a fourth problem, but I leave that to you).

First problem: focusing on the children

The ancient Exodus marked the beginning of a covenant between God and the Israelites. God delivered the Israelites from Egypt and gave them their freedom and independence. In return, all He asked of them was to fulfill their part of the covenant, to walk in His ways. It was, as a matter of fact, a unilateral covenant, because the only beneficiary were the Israelites, but it was still a commitment, and for thousands of years there were those who chose to remain in the fold and do great things in the name of Judaism, others who opted out, and yet others who despite defining themselves as non-observant went on to accomplish great deeds for humanity in the spirit of Judaism. The Seder is a reenactment of the covenant between us and God, into which we bring each year the new generation, each year a little more mature and ready than the previous. Obviously, we cannot recruit new members and enjoin them in the covenant if we are not fully committed, so what the Seder requires from us first and foremost is to ask questions and find out if we have answers:

- What does it mean to be Jewish?
- What is my slavery? What is my freedom?
- How am I different than my father or grandmother?
- How am I different than the younger me, the “me” of last year or ten years ago?

- Does the Exodus still have an impact on me, 3,500 years later?
- What do I expect from my sons, my daughters, my family, and friends to do as Jews?

The list can go on and on, and every question is important because it engages us in a dialog with God and with ourselves. By asking, we are willing to recognize challenges and doubts and when we do we might be able to face and overcome them.

The Four Sons of the Haggadah? They are us, or in us, all of them, at different junctures in life. We are at times inquisitive and curious, seeking spiritual awareness and personal improvement, and at times brash and cynical, seeing only suffering and futile religious ritual which we want to avoid. At times we would feel that something is wrong but we would not be able to put our finger on it, not knowing what to ask and how to address the situation, or we might just turn our sensitivities off and sail through events apathetic and indifferent.

This whole process of asking why (why the Exodus? now what? what does God want from me? God, why don't you leave me alone? God, why do you leave me alone?) cannot be rehearsed in a model Seder. It must coalesce with the smell of the food and the taste of the wine and the sight of the people and the thoughts rushing through your mind and the things you want to forget and the moments you want to remember forever and... get you ready to impart all these in a real personal way to those you bring into the covenant, your children.

Second problem: Letting them be!

A couple of things we tend to forget when we think of children, especially when they are with adults: Children are smart. They love to learn. We do know, however, even if only subconsciously, that they can tell if we are genuine or not, and we are therefore careful not to let them have an advantage by pointing out our faults.

We understand that because they read us, we must be really connected to what we do and not be superficial or hypocritical, and that is probably why many adults, when "teaching" children, are actually training them. Treading the terrain of content, message, emotions or thoughts is deemed dangerous because when these are applied to the intricate and unique soul and persona of each human being, their versatility is manifested and they become very difficult to manage and control.

It is much easier to stick to mechanical motions. Do this, don't do that, measure this and write that. This is true in a regular school setting, and much more so when we are dealing with religious rituals. God forbid I should try to explain to a kid the ethical implication of being a slave or owning one. This might lead him to question suffering, social justice and even Divine justice. No, the drill sergeant approach is much safer: Say HaGefen; Wash hands; No blessing; do not talk; eat celery; No more than 2 ounces and so on and so on. The model Seder, then, becomes a dress rehearsal for preparing the airplane for takeoff. You could check lights, fuel, visibility, weather, but the plane will never take off if the pilot is not there. Teaching your kid to fly, to spread her wings and take off on her own does not happen in one model Seder, going through the motions. It happens throughout the year by grooming curiosity and being a role model for spiritual, wholesome and purpose driven life.

Children are the most awesome learning machines. They learn to crawl, fall, talk and rationalize without being instructed. They are always on the look for new and exciting adventures, whether in mom's kitchen or the great outdoors. Children learn by observation. They watch, absorb and emulate, and when they encounter something they don't understand they touch it, turn it and roll it over, the toddler will put it in his mouth and the teenager will put his mind to it. In short, kids do not stop learning, at least not until we step in and suffocate their curiosity by over-instruction. The best way to kill a kid's curiosity, says Peter Gray in *Free to Learn*, is to hover around him and offer ways to enhance knowledge. For example, on a field trip a kid sees an interesting rock and comments on it. The teacher gets all excited: so you like rocks? Great, let me recommend this book, and this kit, and why don't you write a paper on rocks or start a rock collection and, hey, you can do a presentation. The kid learns one important lesson: next time, if he is interested in something, he'd better not tell anyone about it.

Imagine, just imagine, what would have happened if you never told your kids anything about the Seder and its weird practices until it was actually here. What a surprise would that have been! Hearing the word Pesah or Seder before the holidays the brain will get active and retrieve memories from an earlier age, and they will be the kid's own memories, the moments that stood out for her last year and not the ones we choose to highlight. At the actual Seder table these memories will merge with the current experience and will add another dimension to the personal and unique

perception of the Holiday, helping the young participant to own the moment and join the covenant on her own volition.

Third Problem: Taming the Haggadah

I would like to go back to the adults now. Generations of legal discussions by scholars and religious anxiety of those who observe the Torah, have taken away from the Haggadah its flexible and unexpected nature. The Haggadah, as I previously explained, was meant to be a natural and organic process. It was supposed to interact with us in a slightly different way each year and to provide us with new insights and incentives to immerse ourselves in the redemptive power of the Torah which will eventually bring us to the end of the journey started with the Exodus. The elements surrounding the narration of the Haggadah were put there in order to connect the intellectual experience with a palpable one, touching and igniting all our senses. And what have we done with it? Just as we drill the kids, so we drill ourselves. We dwell so much on the technical and quantitative aspects of the Seder while letting the redeeming and personal aspects of it be hidden away, perhaps with the Afikoman. Our Seder has become compartmentalized, a collection of self-contained units, each with its set of rules, with no intrinsic progression and connection. The obsession with the proper quantities, the duration of time allotted for consumption, the recitation of every word and the forced participation of all in a D'var Torah ritual distract us from the main goal of the Seder night:

בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאלו הוא יצא ממצרים

Am I a slave now? To what? How do I break free? How do I help others break free?

I'd like to conclude by sailing back on the waves of nostalgia to my grandfather's Seder table. Around his table there was never tension. He would not remind anyone how much wine or matza they must consume. When we washed for Karpas, there would be mountains of celery to dip in a mix of lemon and orange juice, fresh boiled fava beans in their shells, fluffy Persian rice, sliced cucumbers and hard boiled eggs (which we dipped, of course, in the sour-sweet juice). We were never hungry during the Haggadah, which we sang through, taking turns, translating the fun parts to Arabic and just basking in the beauty of the moment, the unforgettable experience of being with someone who embodied the covenant and waiting for him to bring us in.

You see, my grandfather was the model of my true Model Seder. He was a passionate Zionist, a living Bible, a poet and philosopher who, despite having a rabbinic ordination and being a descendant of eight consecutive generations of rabbis, dedicated his life to social service to the physically and mentally ill and to education through books he published. I still look up to him, 31 years after he left this world, knowing that he was the center of my Seder, and as such, also the focal point of my religious life and my own perspective of our ancient, living covenant. At the end of the Seder he would put his head between his hands, and sing with us, the grandchildren who were still awake, a traditional Babylonian Piyyut:

נכון לבו, איש הוא ירא, כל נתיבו מצות בורא

נאמר בו, כתוב אשרי, כל חוסי בו אשרי שומרי

The pure of heart is the one who reveres God, whose life leads to his Creator

It is regarding him that it is written: all those who trust in HaShem are joyous

As he sang it, I knew, deep in my little kid's heart, that the poem was written about him.

Let us be the Model of our Seder, for our children and others to emulate.

פסח שמח

Koshering Dishes in Modern Times

The requirement to make dishes Kosher was originally mentioned in the Torah regarding dishes looted from non-Jews at war⁴. It is based on the notion that the flavor of the non-Kosher food was absorbed in the dishes. If they will be used without Koshering, the flavor will be exuded into the food and will make it non-Kosher. There is a simple rule which governs the process of Koshering dishes: כבולעו כך פולטו – It exudes the same way it absorbs.

The meaning of this rule is that if a certain dish is used with boiling liquids, the flavor should be extracted from it by using boiling water. If it is used directly on the fire, it has to be heated, empty, to a higher temperature. There is an extensive discussion in the Halakhic literature regarding the fine details of this requirement, but they all depend on the assumption that the dish absorbed flavor from the non-Kosher food. This factor must be examined in order to determine how to make dishes kosher.

There could be several circumstances when koshering would be necessary, for example: for Pesah, in case of a mixture of dairy and meat, when staying at a hotel room or at an Airbnb.

When discussing material quality of dishes in the modern kitchen, we have to take into consideration the tremendous progress achieved in the field since the industrial revolution. Some materials, such as clay, were used in antiquity but are not used today, while others, such as Stainless Steel, Teflon, Bakelite (poly-oxy-benzyl-methyl-englycol-anhydride), plastic, and Pyrex, are new inventions.

The Halakhic literature recognizes two systems for determining koshering method. One is the absorbent/non-absorbent divide, and the other is by material: wood/metal/clay and so on. Since modern materials differ from their namesakes in antiquity, it is understood that when we want to define the status of a certain dish, we should use the general halakhic yardstick of absorption and not the material label for the dish.

Here are a few documented examples of physical changes in the absorption of dishes:

⁴ במדבר לא: כג: כִּלְדָבָר אֲשֶׁר-יָבֵא בָאֵשׁ תַּעֲבִירוּ בָאֵשׁ וְטָהַר אֵלָיו בְּמֵי גִדְהָ: וְתִסְמָנָא וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָבֵא בָאֵשׁ תַּעֲבִירוּ בְּמַיִם

- The Talmud speaks of “sweating dishes”⁵ in reference to dishes in which the food travels through the dish and can be seen from the outside – this never happens with modern dishes.
- The Mishna says that liquids are absorbed in the utensils containing them, at a level between 1.5% and 15% of the original volume of the liquid⁶. In today’s utensils the absorption is less than 1:175,000 or 0.0000006%.
- Rabenu Nissim writes⁷ that when koshering many dishes one has to change the water frequently because the residue exuded from the dishes could turn the water into thick sauce. This also does not happen today.

There are opinions that measuring the level of absorption in utensils should be conducted with scientific methods, and that even then the results might not be reliable⁸. We know, however, that the Talmud says⁹ that in order to check whether flavor was absorbed in a utensil or a dish, one could taste it, in case it is not a forbidden flavor. For example, if Terumah (sacred food which only the kohanim could eat) was cooked with regular food, a kohen would taste the food. If it tasted like the Terumah, it would be given to the kohanim, and if not, regular people could eat it. In case the flavor is forbidden, such as in a mixture of dairy and meat, we ask a non-Jewish chef to taste it.

The famous rule of 1:60 ratio between the ingredients of the mixture is used only if there is no non-Jew available to taste it, or if the two ingredients have the same flavor, for example, kosher and non-kosher fat. The statement of the Talmud that we rely on one’s taste buds is supported by

⁵ תלמוד בבלי פסחים, ל:ב: כלי קוניא... חזינא להו דמידיית אלמא בלעי ואסירי

⁶ משנה בבא מציעא, ג:ז-ח: המפקיד פירות אצל חברו... יוציא לו שתות לין רבי יהודה אומר חומש

⁷ הר"ן על הרי"ף, חולין מד:א: ולפיכך צריך ליזהר שלא להגעיל כלים יותר מדאי ביורה אחת עד שנשתנה צורת המים מחמת פליטת הכלים דהוה ליה מגעיל ברוטב

⁸ For further reading, in Hebrew, on the scientific methods used to determine absorption and the opinions of some modern Halakhic authorities on the issue, see the excellent articles by rabbi Dror Fixler, PhD, and by rabbi Yitzhak Devir. <https://faculty.biu.ac.il/~fixeled/FixlerFrankBliea.pdf> and <http://www.yeshiva.org.il/midrash/22720>

⁹ בבלי חולין, פט:ב: אמור רבנן: בטעמא, ואמור רבנן: בקפילא, ואמור רבנן: בששים; הלכך: מין בשאינו מינו דהיתרא - בטעמא, דאיסורא - בקפילא, ומין במינו דליכא למיקם אטעמא, אי נמי מין בשאינו מינו דאיסורא דליכא קפילא - בששים.

the rulings of great scholars, who say that laws which depend on human senses are defined by these very senses and not by scientific tools. Here are a couple of examples:

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef says¹⁰ that the sharpness of a slaughtering knife is determined by touch, and that the question of whether a Matzah is well baked is determined by our eyesight.

Similarly, Rabbi Yosef Messas writes¹¹ that looking for bugs in fruits and vegetables should be done with the naked eye and not by magnifying glass or other tools.

Following the guidelines of the Talmud and these great scholars, we can now say that in order to check whether a certain dish or utensil absorbs flavors, we are allowed, or even obligated, to rely on our taste buds. Here is how it is done: Have a person with a healthy sense of flavor conduct the following experiment:

1. In a pot, cook a pound of habanero peppers with oil and garlic;
2. Empty the pot and rinse it thoroughly with detergent the way you usually wash it;
3. In the clean pot, cook a pound or bland rice, with no salt or spices;
4. Taste the rice.

If you feel the spicy flavor, it means that the pot absorbed it from the peppers and exuded it into the rice. If not, it means that there is no absorption.

If you do not want to conduct this experiment, it is fine. It has already been done. With the exception of wood and earthenware, the dishes in the modern kitchen do not absorb flavor. This is true regarding all types of metal, plastic, glass, and Pyrex.

As explained above, the modern kitchen uses dishes, utensils, and tableware, which are non-absorbent. To that we have to add that even if some flavor has been absorbed, if the utensil has not been used for 24 hours, that flavor which is considered spoiled and unwanted (נותן טעם לפגם). We

¹⁰ ילקוט יוסף, סימן לב בהערות: ...התורה סמכה בזה על ראיית האדם כפי מה שהוא, דאם לא כן אין שום אפשרות לקיים שום מצוה, דהיאך¹⁰ אנו סומכים על שחיטה, ניחוש שמא הסכין היה פגום ולא הרגישו בפגימתו, ואיך אנו סומכים לאכול מצה, ניחוש שמא החמיצה, וכו' ולא נמסרה התורה למלאכי השרת, אלא נתנה תורה לבני אדם לפי מה שהם, ולא יתכן שהתורה תצוה על האדם לעשות יותר מכפי כוחו.

¹¹ הרב יוסף משאש, אוצר המכתבים ג:אלף תל: הראית לדעת שאחרי הבדיקה מותר, וגם מה שכתב הרב על ידי כלי זכוכית חומרה גסה היא¹¹ (זו, רק בעיניים יפות די (הרב כותב שאין צורך לחפש תולעים בזכוכית מגדלת אלא רק בעיניים בלתי מזויינות, ודון מינה ואוקי באתרין

also use very powerful detergents and scrubbers, so even if there was an absorbed flavor, it would have been overcome, if not completely removed, by the detergent.

The implication of these facts and rules is that once we know a certain dish is non-absorbent we could use it after it was cleaned in the regular method, without boiling or burning. This is true regarding koshering a dish for Pesah, converting it from meat to dairy and vice versa, and using dishes at a hotel.

The idea of converting dishes from dairy to meat might seem strange to some of the readers for two reasons. One is that while the Shulhan Arukh allows koshering dishes from meat to dairy¹², the Magen Avraham, who is followed by most Ashkenazi Jews, established a practice to avoid doing so¹³. The second is that today kitchenware is mass produced and most people can afford to have two sets of everything, so the question of such conversion is highly uncommon.

However, the fact that one is not aware of a certain law does not invalidate that law. As a matter of fact, Sepharadim have been following this ruling for quite a long time now. We have been using glass dishes for both dairy and meat, with only washing in between. The same is true when koshering glass dishes for Pesah. Only washing is necessary, which means that the clean glass dishes in your cabinets are ready for Pesah.

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef stated this law very forcefully and applied it to switching even cookware from meat to dairy¹⁴:

We [Sepharadim] do not follow the ruling of the Magen Avraham, and we convert meat dishes to dairy and vice versa by koshering them. We are therefore allowed to use glass

¹² שולחן ערוך, אורח חיים, תקט:ה: מותר ללבן ביום טוב כלי ברזל שאפו בו פלאדון [עוגה] של גבינה, ואחר הליבון יאפו בו פשטידה של בשר

שו"ת ציץ אליעזר, ט:לח: המגן אברהם בסימן תק"ט סעיף קטן י"א שמביא מנהג העולם שלא להגעיל כלי חלב לאכול בשר או איפכא, דנעלם ¹³ ממנו כאילו דברי שו"ת הרא"ש כלל כ' אות כ"ה, שכתב דכפות וקערות של עץ שאכלו בהן בשר רותח מגעילין במים רותחין ומותר לאכול בהם חלב

הרב עובדיה יוסף, יביע אומר ד, יורה דעה ה: בדין שלא נהגנו בחומרת המגן אברהם, ונוהגים להגעיל לכתחילה כלי בשר לחלב, וכן להיפך, ¹⁴ הכא נמי רשאים להשתמש בכלי זכוכית בין לבשר בין לחלב על ידי רחיצה והדחה היטב, לפי מנהגינו שנוהגים כדברי מרן שקבלנו הוראותיו שלא להצריך הגעלה או עירוי לכלי זכוכית להכשירם לפסח, אלא די להם בשטיפה בעלמא. ... ואם כן פשוט הדבר דעל כל פנים להספרדים אין מקום להחמיר בשאר איסורים, אף לאלה שירצו להחמיר בפסח מחמת איזה מנהג שנהגו מקדמת דנא. ואם כן שפיר אורווי מורינן להתיר להרתח חלב בכלי הפיירקס אחר רחיצה והדחה היטב משומן הבשר שבעין שעל פני הכלי מחמת הבישול הקודם, וכן להיפך, ולא חיישינן לטעות ושכחה

dishes for both meat and dairy as long as we wash them in between. This follows the ruling of Shulhan Arukh that everyday glass utensils need only be washed in order to be Kosher for Pesah. I accordingly ruled that one can use a Pyrex dish to cook meat, and then clean it thoroughly and use it to boil milk and vice versa. There is no concern [as some have suggested] that there will be confusion or forgetfulness [and that people will cook meat and dairy together or will forget to clean the dishes.]

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef goes on to say that if an Ashkenazi Jew would like to follow this ruling, which is supported by many great scholars, no one can prevent him or her from doing so.¹⁵

As discussed above, and as I heard personally from Hakham Yaakov Peretz, the head of the Semikha program at the Shehebar Sephardic Center¹⁶, the same rule applies to pots, silverware, plastic ware and all utensils. Only thorough rinsing is necessary to make them Kosher for Pesah or to use them at a host's house with your kosher ingredients.

There is of course the element of disgust that many would feel when thinking that a dish was used for non-kosher food, as well as the inertia of centuries-old traditions. This is perfectly understood and respected, as the Halakha stated here does not force people to follow it, but rather to offer options to those who need them. One possibility to respect one's tradition and gut feeling would be to pour hot water from an electric kettle on the utensils which needs to be koshered.

¹⁵ ואפילו לאשכנזים מאן דבעי למעבד ככל הני רבוותא דלעיל מאן מרמי ליה מניה

¹⁶ <http://sscusa.org/>

How does the Sale of Hametz work?

There is a wide range of opinions regarding the appropriate way of selling Hametz. On one end there are those who say that the Sale of Hametz is an emergency measure, reserved only for commercial quantities of Hametz which cannot be consumed before Passover, According to this approach, individual household should not sell their Hametz but rather consume whatever is possible before Passover and throw the rest away. On the other end there are those who want to emphasize the validity of the Sale of Hametz. They deliberately leave large quantities of Hametz in separate refrigerators and freezers, to demonstrate that the sale is not just an emergency measure.

In order to understand these differences and answer the question we will have to travel back in time. The first mention of the sale was indeed regarding an emergency situation, where the owner of the Hametz cannot eat or get rid of the Hametz on time:

“A Jew and a non-Jew who are traveling in a ship and the Jew owns Hametz, he should sell it to the non-Jew and repurchase it after Passover.”¹⁷

By the time of the Shulhan Arukh, the sale has become more commonplace, and so writes Rabbi Yosef Karo:

“If the Jew sold or gave the Hametz to a non-Jew, even though the Jew knows that the non-Jew will not touch the Hametz at all, and will give it back to him after Passover, it is allowed.”¹⁸

R Yoel Sirkis, who lived a century later in Europe, already addresses the problem of commercial quantities of Hametz. He says that since many Jews own breweries and distilleries, where large quantities of Hametz are processed and stored, they cannot get rid of their Hametz before Passover.¹⁹ He insists that the sale will be an officially documented one, and R Betzalel HaCohen

¹⁷ תוספתא פסחים פרק א', הלכה י"ב-י"ג: ישראל וגוי שהיו באים בספינה וחמץ ביד ישראל, הרי זה מוכרו לנכרי, ונתנו במתנה, וחזור ולוקח ממנו לאחר הפסח.

¹⁸ רבי יוסף קארו, שולחן ערוך אורח חיים תמח, א: ואם מכרו או נתנו לנכרי... אף על פי שהישראל מכירו לנכרי ויודע שלא יגע בו כלל, אלא ישמרנו לו עד לאחר הפסח ויחזור ויתננו לו מותר.

¹⁹ רבי יואל סירקיש, בית חדש, אורח חיים תמח: ובמדינה זו שרוב משא ומתן הוא בין שרף, ואי אפשר להם למכרו לנכרי מחוץ לבית, בפרט למחזיקים באורגנדא [חכירה], יש להתיר בענין זה שימכור לנכרי כל החמץ שבחדר וגם החדר עצמו ימכור לנכרי... ומיהו צריך למסור המפתח לנכרי

of Vilnius adds that the buyer must have access to the Hametz, including having the key, if necessary.²⁰

This is obviously not the case today. Even with detailed documents and official acquisition ceremonies conducted by the rabbis, the sale is clearly legal fiction. In many cases one person buys the Hametz of hundreds of thousands of sellers. The buyer has neither the financial means to pay for the purchase or access to the Hametz, which is usually behind locked doors and alarm systems.

How can we then continue selling the Hametz in the way we do today? The argument in favor of this “legal fiction” sale was first made by R Alexander Sender Schorr in the 18th century. He explains that the nullification of Hametz is enough to remove the Hametz from one’s possession. The sages also said that one should physically get rid of the Hametz, just to be on the safe side, but they left open the possibility to get rid of the Hametz through the sale.

The argument of R Schorr has been contested, but he relies on an earlier discussion of the nullification itself. R Moshe ben Nachman (Nachmanides) explains that the reason one can nullify the Hametz is that the Hametz is already forbidden by the law. By saying the formula of the nullification, the owner acknowledges the prohibition, and agrees to follow the law, so it is the power of the biblical law which renders the Hametz nullified.²¹ In the same manner the sale, as it is done today, is basically an acknowledgement that the seller does not want to own Hametz in a forbidden manner.

The sale of Hametz is not another step which follows the nullification of Hametz, but rather an independent process. The similarity is that in both cases the legality of the process is questionable. When we nullify Hametz we declare that we disown any Hametz which is in our possession. To make such a declaration regarding any other property, the law requires a Beth Din of three people, and there are indeed lengthy discussions in the Halakhic literature dedicated to the mechanism of

²⁰ רבי בצלאל הכהן מוילנא, ראשית בכורים, תרכ"ט, ב: וקודם מסירת השטר יראנו הכל, וגם יפרש לו כל מה שיש שם, והכל במידה בסכום דמים... והעיקר דלא ליהוי כחוכא ואיטלולא אלא כמכירה גמורה.

²¹ רמב"ן, חדושים, ריש מסכת פסחים: אסורי הנאה אינן ממון ולא קרינן ביה לך, בדין הוא שלא יעבור עליו בכלום, אלא שתורה עשאתו כאילו הוא ברשותו לעבור עליו בשני לאוין, מפני שדעתו עליו והוא רוצה בקיומו, לפיכך זה שהסכימה דעתו לדעת תורה ויצא לבטלו... שוב אינו עובר עליו.

nullification of Hametz, which are most eloquently presented by R Moshe ben Nachman (Nachmanides)²².

The arguments raised by Nachmanides are:

1. The Talmud uses the term ביטול – nullification, and not the more appropriate הפקר – disowning.
2. Nullification seems to work instantly while the rules of disowning require someone else to take possession of the disowned object. According to this rule, one who declares that he disowns his Hametz is still considered the owner and will be held accountable.
3. Disowning has to be explicitly stated, while the nullification can be done by thought alone and does not need to be verbalized.
4. Disowning needs to be done in front of three people while this is not a requirement for the nullification.
5. Disowning cannot be performed on Shabbat since it is considered a transaction.

These are the problems which engulf the process known as ביטול or nullification of Hametz, now let us examine the sale:

When we sell the Hametz we conduct a sale which does not follow the basic rules of a transaction. In Israel, for example the rabbinate is authorized by hundreds of thousands of people to sell their

²² חידושי הרמב"ן, מסכת פסחים, דף ד עמוד ב: לפיכך פירשו בשם ר"ת ז"ל דמה שאמרו בביטול בעלמא סגי משום דביטול היינו הפקר, ונפקא להו היתירא משום שנאמר "לך" - שלך אי אתה רואה אבל אתה רואה כו', וזה אינו שלו, זהו דעת רבותינו הצרפתים ז"ל בביטול. **וקשה** א"כ למה הזכירו כמה פעמים בכל מסכתא זו לשון ביטול? מי סני הפקר ששנו חכמים בכל מקום? ולא מישתמיט תנא למימר בחמץ הפקר ולא למימר ביטול במקום הפקר בשום מקום בעולם, וכן לענין עבודה זרה ששנינו (ע"ז נ"ב ב') נכרי מבטל כו' עבודה זרה שלו ושל חבירו - אינו הפקר, שאינו מפקיר דבר שאינו שלו! ועוד דפחס או שקטע ראש חוטמה בטלה, ואין כאן הפקר כלל. וכן נמי ביטול רשות שהזכירו לענין עירוב (עירובין ס"א ב') אינו מפקיר ביתו שישבו בו אחרים, אלא שהוא עוקר דעתו מלדור עם השותפין ביומו כדי שיהו הם כמי שדרים לבדם. **ועוד קשה לי** שהביטול דבר פשוט הוא בגמרא בלא מחלוקת דמדאורייתא בביטול בעלמא סגי ליה, ואלו בהפקר איתמר בנדרים בפרק אין בין המודר (מ"ג א') דלר' יוסי הפקר כמתנה מה מתנה עד דאתיא לרשות מקבל לא נפקא מרשות נותן, אף הפקר עד דאתי לרשות זוכה לא נפיק מרשות מפקיר, ולהך סברא הפקיר חמצו כל זמן שלא זכו בו גוים עובר, ואיכא דאמרי התם (מ"ה א') הפקר בפני שלשה הוי הפקר בפני שנים לא הוי הפקר והכא מבטלו בלבו, ועוד קשה לי שהתירו ביטול בשבת כדתניא (ז' א') מבטלו בלבו אחד שבת ואחד י"ט, והלא הפקר נראה שאסור לאדם להפקיר נכסיו בשבת כענין ששנינו (ביצה ל"ו ב') אין מקדישין ואין מעריכין ואין מחרימין גזירה משום מקח וממכר, ועוד קשה לי ששנו חכמים ז"ל בכל מקום מבטלו בלבו והפקר בפה הוא ולמה הזכירו בלבו בכאן

Hametz to a non-Jew. I believe that in our daily life, no one would accept the validity a contract in which the buyer does not have the means to pay for the merchandise, does not know where the merchandise is, and does not have access to the merchandise. We would also question the validity of a deal where the buyer is given seven or eight days to come up with the money and if he fails to do so, the deal is not cancelled but rather we buy it back from him for the same amount he initially invested. Furthermore, even in the age of eBay, no one would be willing to buy hundreds of thousands of open packages and bottles. The absurdity of the sale is most evident in the practice of some rabbis to sell the flavor of Hametz which is absorbed in the dishes. Who, in his right mind, would sell or buy impalpable, undetectable flavor, and how much would one pay for it?

Because of all of the above, and because of the fact that these sales of Hametz are still conducted each year all over the world, I explained that the underlying principle of the sale is similar to that of the nullification.

The Torah does not want us to eat Hametz and the Hametz therefore does not belong to us. One is still held accountable if he left usable Hametz in his house. The nullification takes care of the unknown Hametz and the sale takes care of the known Hametz. Both processes are consummated not by regular legal definitions but by an exceptional power which stems from the Torah prohibition to own Hametz. Since the actions of the person who nullifies or sells the Hametz are aligned with the intention of the Torah, the nullification and the sale are effectuated and valid.

One therefore can rely on the sale for all Hametz products which he or she owns, including open packages and half bottles of scotch. There is no need to physically sign a document or to pay any fee for the transaction, only to submit your name electronically to your rabbi or synagogue, or to me at rabbiovadia613@gmail.com

Your Matzah Might Not Be Kosher

Food for thought

Jewish Europe of the mid 1850's is considered by many as the cradle of the current Yeshivah world, and the names of the leading schools of that period, Volozhin, Brisk, Mir, Slavodka, are still mentioned with reverence. Not many know, though, that a bitter dispute was threatening to tear these schools apart and maybe cause their students to scatter to the four corners of the earth. I am not referring to the enlightenment movement and the great dangers it posed to the religious world which wanted to remain protected and secluded from foreign cultural influences. No, the dispute was an inner one and it was initiated by one of the great masters of the time, Rabbi Yisrael Salanter (1810-1873). Rabbi Salanter, who is known as the founder and father to the Mussar Movement, felt that too much emphasis is put on the technical elements of torah study and the intellectual brilliance of the top learners. Just as academic research can deteriorate into an abstract exchange of theories with no applied knowledge and practical change in the world and the way people live in it and perceive it, so also the Torah learning of Rabbi Salanter's period became a totally abstract and intellectual engagement, completely removed from everyday life and from people's problems, emotions and needs. Rabbi Salanter understood the Torah as a comprehensive guide to life, one which is definitely enhanced by the intellectual pursuit and the willingness to dedicate time and effort to studying Torah, but also one which could be null and void if its messages are not applied regularly to life. He started preaching for people to balance their Torah study, which focused on Maimonides' legal codex and the Talmud, with the philosophical and educational writings of the great thinkers such as R. Bahaya ibn Pakuda, R. Yonah of Gerona, and his own writings and teachings which were collected by his disciple Rabbi Yitzchak Blazzer in the book *Or Yisrael*.

The opposition to Rabbi Salanter's "new way" was immense. The schools which accepted his method and implemented a mandatory schedule with time allocated for Mussar – reflective and contemplative study, faced rebellions by the students, who in some cases staged physical and verbal attacks against the rabbis who were supposed to be the Mussar teachers, or Mashgiach, in the Yeshivas. Rabbi Salanter himself almost became a victim of an attempt to publicly humiliate him. As was customary at the time, he would send a word to the cities in which he was going to speak, along with a list of sources he was going to discuss in his class. The sources sometimes

numbered in the hundreds, and they were not given verbatim, only as reference to their locations in rabbinic literature. The elite scholars in the city would delve into these sources and then gather to witness the greatness of the rabbi as he connects all the sources, poses questions and answers them with mastery using the texts cited, and of course, delivering a final conclusion or message, which in Rabbi Salanter's case was always tied to the improvement of human behavior and refinement of character traits. The list he posted in one city became the target of his opponents, who replaced his original list with a different one they made up, where there was no connection between the sources mentioned. The list was sent by the rabbi, who would not repeat the same lesson twice, a week in advance to give the learners enough time to properly review all the source material (this is before Xerox, PDF, Dropbox etc.) When the rabbi arrived at the central Beit HaMidrash, hundreds of listeners were eagerly awaiting his lecture, many of them did not know about the terrible conspiracy but the perpetrators, all respected and knowledgeable scholars, were there to gloat over Rabbi Salanter's public disgrace and to emerge victorious, telling the world that his shame has been revealed and that he is no match to their superior knowledge. They hoped that this event will bury, once and for all, the nascent Mussar Movement and the efforts of its leader to remind people that Divine Torah was written for human beings and therefore must take into consideration the human condition. It is not hard to imagine the utter shock of those "Tzadikim" when Rabbi Salanter, after being handed the posted list and realizing that he has been tricked, remained speechless only for a few minutes. Then, holding the fake list which his opponents prepared in order to bring about his intellectual demise and facing an audience which has prepared this fake list of sources and was expecting him to discuss them, he delivered, on the spur of the moment, a lecture which brilliantly tied in all the sources, without looking them up in a book, and managed not only to stun his listeners and foil his opponents' plot, but to deliver his moral and educational message. In the aftermath of this display of genius and calmness, those who knew him well said that he was able to deliver the lecture without waiting even a second, but he took a moment to contemplate whether doing so will be perceived as arrogance. He then decided to do it in order to show people that studying morals and ethics does not diminish one's intellectual prowess, and that he was on the same level of the other great rabbis who opposed the new method.

In light of this introduction you will be able to appreciate the following short story, which inspired the title of this article. One year, as Rabbi Salanter was lecturing throughout Europe, it became obvious that he would not be able to be home in time for his personal Matzah baking, which he

usually tended to very meticulously, so he delegated the task to his disciples. Feeling excited to have gained his trust but also intimidated with fear that they might not be able to follow his strict standards, they asked the rabbi what are his special requirements and which details of the process they should handle with extreme caution. “When you draw water from the well”, said the rabbi, “be very careful”. The students wanted to know whether they should be careful that the water doesn’t spill and touch the flour, or that it remains covered and cool. “No”, said the rabbi, “that is not the problem, but the woman who draws and carries the water is a widow. Make sure you treat her with respect and that in your rush to bake Kosher Matzah you don’t treat her harshly or criticize her.”

What a beautiful and demanding message. If my mitzvah was performed at the expense of someone else’s convenience or sensitivity, and especially if that other person belongs to the weaker, oppresses strata of society, then my Mitzvah and my Matzah are not Kosher and neither God nor rabbi Salanter will be fond of them.

I am reminded of this story every Pesah because even though today, a 130 years after rabbi Sakanter passed away, most Yeshivas have a regular Seder (learning time) dedicated to the writings and ideas Rabbi Salanter promoted, as well as the writings of his disciples and successors, the Elder of Kelm, Rabbi Yeruham of Mir, Rabbi Yehudah Leib Hassman, Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe and others, it sometimes seems like nothing has changed. In the name of religious stringency and the rush to prepare for the Pesah we allow ourselves to sidestep and even step over rights and privileges of our fellow citizens, Jews and non-Jews alike. In the crowded parking lot of a Kosher supermarket, on Pesah’s eve, an elderly religious woman was fighting with someone who stole her parking spot. There were plenty of spots available in the underground parking lot but nonetheless the woman left her car parked diagonally, blocking shoppers on their way out, and stepped out to settle issues with the “thieves”, which turned out to be non-observant Jew who told her that what she is doing is Hillul HaShem (desecration of God’s name). I was one of the frustrated motorists who were waiting for the lady to get back into her car and drive fifty feet to the next available stop. I admit that was a little nervous, thinking of Klein’s dairy free, Chametz free ice-cream which was probably starting to practice in my trunk the reenactment of the Splitting of the Sea, so when I was finally able to squeeze through, I called out, despite my wife’s protests, telling the lady that she should consider the strife of the stuck drivers. With an air of nonchalant arrogance she uttered no

more than two words: “Yeah, yeah!” which were venomously steeped in contempt. The two words told her whole story: “You don’t come here and preach to me. I am in charge of a household and I have to prepare for Pesah, and no one, no one will stand in my way.”

I wish that have been an isolated incident, but it plays itself over and over again. Double parking, honking, cutting lines in stores, over pricing, putting Kashrut stamps on toilet paper and leaving burnt Hametz rolling in the streets, a disgrace to Judaism and to God’s blessing to us, are examples of the pre-Pesah carelessness for ethical behavior. There is plenty of it on Pesah itself, as people criticize each other for being too observant, non-observant and anything in between.

Let us remember the teachings of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter and understand that the most Kosher Pesah we can have is one in which we have not, in our rush to do the mitzvah, have infringed upon someone’s rights or emotions. Oh, and review today’s Torah portion (2nd day of Hol HaMoed – Ex. 22:24-23:19) in which the commandment to observe the Pilgrimage Holidays is preceded by very strong admonitions against Social Injustice.

And in that spirit, for Hebrew speakers, here is Vidduy for Pesah:

וידוי של פסח

א אכלנו כזית וכביצה מצה ומרור (לחומר אדום ולחומר אדום) ועכבנו את כל המסובין עד שגמרנו, אכלנו ביצה קשה וכמעט נחנקנו, אמרנו דברי תורה עד בלי די והרדמנו אורחינו.

ב בדקנו חמצנו לאור נרות ולפידים (בסיועם האדיב של מכבי האש), בדקנו בכיסי מעילים ובתוך הכדורגל של הילדים, בערנו חמצנו עם איזה שבע חלות שנשארו משבת ועכשיו הן מתגוללות בחוצות רחוב.

ג גלינו רבע עוגיה מעופשת מתחת למסילת הוילון ושמנו תמונתה בגאווה בפייסבוק.

ד דאגנו בלי הרף שמא גוש חמץ אורב בחדרינו.

ה הזמנו לסדר רק את חברינו ולא את אלה שמעמידים פנים שהם חברינו או שמדברים עלינו מאחרי גבנו.

ו ותרנו על קטניות, על מצה שרויה ובעצם על אוכל טעים בכלל, מרצוננו החפשי

ז זרקנו לפח בלי למחזר, טונה של דברים שקנינו מאז הפסח שעבר ולא היינו צריכים בכלל.

הנקנו גרונונו במצה שמורה עבודת יד בטעם, צבע ומרקם של נייר עתון, חכינו שכולם ירדמו ושתינו את כוסו של אליהו הנביא (באמת סליחה, אליהו).

טאטאנו רצפות, טבלנו כלים, טמטמנו עצמנו וילדינו בפולחן נקיון האביב.

ירדנו על הברכיים לשפשף פנלים ולחפש חמץ מתחת לצ'אסיס של האוטו.

כעסנו פחד על כל המפריעים באמצע הסדר.

לא דפקנו חשבון לכרטיס האשראי.

מתחנו בקורת על אלה שמקלים יותר מדי לא עומדים בסטנדרטים שלנו, ועל אלה שמחמירים יותר מדי וחושבים שהם יותר צדיקים מאתנו (שיתביישו להם).

נסינו לשנות ארבע כוסות בהסיבה והתעוררנו בטשטוש חושים (בסמטה חשוכה) למחרת הסדר.

סרפנו חמץ, סמנו מפות על שולחננו, סחקנו באגוזים (נכון שזה בשין, אז מה, בסידור כל הזמן מחליפים ש' בס).

ערכנו שולחננו בכלים חדשים ושמנו תמונה באינסטגרם שימותו הקנאים (החזרנו לחנות אחרי החג בטענה שזה לא הגודל הנכון).

פתחנו בקבוק יין משובח כאילו לכבוד אורחינו ולא נתכוונו אלא להנאת עצמנו.

צעקנו על כל מי שהסיח דעתו במהלך סדרנו.

קנינו טונה של זבל חדש שנזרוק בפסח הבא ולא נמחזר.

רכשנו הגדות חדשות עד בלי חקר.

שלמנו לגוי טבין ותקילין כדי שירכוש חמצנו.

תכל'ס, אחרי כל זה, לא הרגשנו כייף ולא התעלות רוחנית בהגיגת פסחנו.

אז רבונו של עולם, תגיד לנו, איפה טעינו?

Exemptions from Drinking Wine

Q: What are the options for someone who cannot or does not want to drink four cups of wine or grape juice?

A: First, I would like to list the reasons for not drinking wine or grape juice. Wine is a problem for people who are not used to consume alcohol in high quantities, recovering alcoholics, people who suffer from allergies, and those who avoid wine for health or moral reasons. Grape juice is a problem because of the high levels of sugar in the juice.

While there are those who hold that drinking four full cups is an unavoidable obligation, there are some options for those who might suffer as a result of drinking. As I have shown in previous posts, it makes no difference whether the suffering is physical or emotional, and whether it is temporary or permanent.

1. You could drink of each cup only the minimal amount required. The minimal volume of a cup is Revi'it, which has been calculated to be at least 75cc or 2.5 fluid ounces. The minimal amount for drinking is the majority of a cup, which is 38cc or 1.3 fluid ounces.²³
2. Those who cannot drink even that amount can either sip a little from their cup, as a symbolic act, or rely on the blessings and actions of the person who conducts the Seder.

This second option is based on the words of the Mishnah and the interpretation of the Mishnah by the Tosafot. I have also witnessed it in the Seder of my grandfather, Hakham Shaul Fetaya, who would drink the majority of the cup himself, but would let the participants drink whatever they felt comfortable with, or not at all.

The Mishnah I am referring to is found in the tenth chapter of tractate Pesahim and it says the following: “one should not be served less than four cups of wine”²⁴

In the commentary of Tosafot on the Talmud we find the following interpretation: It seems that one is served by his children or wife. Those who serve him do not have to drink, and he represents

²³ הרב אליעזר מלמד, פניני הלכה פסח, ט"ז, ליל הסדר ח-ט, שיעור היין והכוס-שיעור השתייה: לפי חישובים מדויקים התברר שהוא 75 מיליליטר... צריך לשתות לכל הפחות שיעור רוב רביעית

²⁴ משנה פסחים י, א: ולא יפחתו לו מארבע כוסות

them with his cup. It is a logical argument, since on every Shabbat one person does Kiddush for all others.²⁵

R Nathan Gestetner comments that although the conclusion of Tosafot is that each one has to drink four cups, it is presented as stringency, rather than as an essential halakha. He explains that the Tosafot's opinion is that the person who conducts the Seder can cover for the participants.²⁶

R Hayyim David HaLevi further explains that while eating Matzah is a biblical commandment, having four cups of wine is only a component of setting a table with a luxurious meal. According to the Tosafot, he says, the four cups are analogous to the Kiddush. Just as one can fulfill the obligation Kiddush by hearing someone else, so also he can fulfill the obligation of the four cups.²⁷

Conclusion:

If one cannot drink four cups of wine or grape juice, he or she can either drink the minimum amount, which is 1.3 fluid ounces, or rely on the blessing of the person who conducts the Seder.

²⁵ תוספות פסחים, צט:ב, ד"ה ולא יפחתו: מתוך הלשון משמע קצת שאין נותנין לבניו ולבני ביתו כי אם לעצמו, והוא מוציא את כולם בשלו. ²⁵ וסברא היא, דמאי שנא ארבע כוסות מקידוש דכל השנה שאחד מוציא את כולם.

הרב נתן גשטטנר, שו"ת להורות נתן, חלק ב סימן כח: דמסברא סבירא להו להתוספות דאחד מוציא את הרבים ידי חובתם במצות ארבע כוסות, ורק משום חומרא הצריכו כוס לכל אחד ואחד. ומשמע דלא ברירא להו מעיקר הדין שלא יוכל לצאת ידי מצוה זו על ידי חברו

הרב חיים דוד הלוי, כתב העת הליכות, 102-103, עמ' 5-6: והמהר"ל הביא דברי תוספות הנ"ל וכתב: ולא הבנתי דבר זה דלא שייך שיהיה ²⁷ מוציא את אחרים בד' כוסות, דמאי שנא ממצה ומרור... ותמיהת המהר"ל על התוספות צריכה עיון קצת, שכן חיוב "אכילת" מצה ומרור מפורש בתורה כידוע, ואילו ארבע כוסות עיקר החיוב בהם לשיטת תוספות עריכת הסדר ולא השתייה דווקא. ולכן השוו ארבע כוסות לפי שיטתם לקידוש, שהעיקר בו הקידוש וכל השומע יוצא ידי חובתו ואין שתייה מעכבת בו

Starting Seder Early and Preparing on Shabbat and Yom Tov

Q: As much as I have tried, I cannot keep my kids from falling asleep halfway through the Seder. Is there an opinion which allows starting the Seder early?

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A: This is a common problem, and since the whole idea of the Seder is to convey the message of the Exodus to the children, it is a shame that they would be the ones to miss that experience.

There is indeed a tendency to start the Seder late and stretch it almost indefinitely. If not for the requirement to eat the Afikoman before midnight (to be discussed in a future post), I believe people would have carried on with the Haggada until dawn. Some people enjoy this kind of Seder and they are entitled to it, but when the participants at a Seder, whether they are children or adults, are at risk of losing the whole experience because of fatigue, a solution should be presented.

That solution exists, and it appears in none other than the Tur Orah Hayyim (472), the Halakhic compilation by Rabenu Yaakov ben Rabenu Asher:

ידיה שולחנו ערוך מבעוד יום, כדי לאכול מיד כשתחשך... משום שמצוה למהר ולאכול בשביל התינוקות שלא ישנו. אבל לא יאכל קודם שתחשך... דזמן אכילת מצה אינו אלא בלילה

One should have the table set in advance in order to eat at nightfall... since it is a Mitzvah to eat as soon as possible so the children will not fall asleep... one cannot eat before darkness because the time for eating Matzah is at night.

It is true that some commentators did not feel comfortable with the Tur's ruling that the Seder could start that early. They have interpreted his statement as referring to the first eating of the night, which is the dipping of the celery, or karpas. However, it is clear from the phrasing of the Tur that he refers to the eating of the matzah itself. First, he says that the reason for starting early is that the children will not fall asleep, and if we wait for darkness to start the Kiddush, we have gained nothing. Secondly, and more importantly, he says: "one cannot eat Matzah before darkness", meaning that other things, such as Kiddush and karpas, could be consumed before darkness.

The definition of darkness is contested in Halakah and it varies between 50 and 72 minutes after sunset. However, the simplest tool to measure darkness is our eyesight.

Conclusion: The earliest you could eat Matzah is after darkness. Calculate the time of darkness in your area, either by adding 50-72 minutes to sunset, or by going outside the night before Pesah to see when it gets dark. Then figure out how much time you need to get from the Kiddush to מוציא מצה – the point in the Haggada where we eat the Matzah, and start your Seder so you will be able to eat Matzah after it gets dark.

Q: Can I start the Seder early on Saturday night, before the official time for Havdala?

A: Several readers asked if the ruling that one could start the Seder earlier applies also on the second night, which falls this year on Saturday night.

They had two concerns, which I will present here and address one at a time:

A) One is not allowed to prepare from Shabbat to Yom Tov, so how can we set the table and get ready for the second Seder?

This concern is not unique to our situation. It also exists when the second Yom Tov falls on a weekday, since one is not allowed to prepare from one Yom Tov to another.

Interestingly enough, When we refer to the Halakhic literature we find that until the 15th century the concept of preparation from Shabbat to a weekday or to Yom Tov was much more limited than it is today. It was understood as a prohibition of benefiting on Yom Tov from something which was created on Shabbat. The creation of a new thing could have occurred through human action (such as chopping vegetables) or natural processes (eggs laid on Shabbat). Today the practice is to avoid any action on Shabbat which can save time on Motzai Shabbat. This practice was first presented and promoted by rabbis of 16th century Germany.

This analysis, of course, does not come to diminish the status of the practice today, but it could be used to make concessions when we encounter a special situation.

That special situation, the preparation for second Yom Tov, was discussed by R Hayyim Benveniste, who lived in 17th century Constantinople:

רבי חיים בנבנישתי, כנסת הגדולה, אורח חיים, תמד: אין לסדר השולחן לצורך הלילה אלא יסדרהו מערב שבת (מהר"י וייל ז"ל), וכן כתבתי אחרי רואי דברי הרב ז"ל. ונראה לי דהוא הדין דאין מסדרין השולחן ביום ראשון של פסח לצורך הלילה דאין יום טוב מכין לחבירו ולא ראיתי נוהרים בזה

[If Pesah falls on Saturday night] one should not set the table on Shabbat but rather on Friday afternoon... I also think that one should not prepare the table for the second day on the first Yom Tov, but people do not keep this practice.

A century later, the great R Hayyim Palachi of Smyrna explained why people prepare the table on Yom Tov:

רבי חיים פאלאצ'י, חיים לראש, עמוד יז: ובוודאי יש לדון לכף זכות כי אין להם בתים ועליות מרווחים ומה יעשו כיוון דצר לו המקום ללון, והטוב הוא דאחר שעה י"ב יסדרו הכל

We must say that they are righteous [and not sinners] because they do not have ample houses. If they set the tables on Friday for Saturday night, they will have no room to sleep. They should therefore start setting the table after midday on Shabbat.

Note that R Palachi did not suggest that people will start setting the table after Shabbat is over, because then the Seder will start too late. As explained earlier, the concern for the ability of the children to stay alert, and of the guest to enjoy the Seder, is a serious Halakhic consideration. By extension, any activity which is allowed on Shabbat for the sake of Shabbat or on Yom Tov for the sake of Yom Tov, could be performed for the upcoming Yom Tov.

The consideration, as appears in the writing of R Hayyim Palachi, and as intuitively understood by many generations of observant Jews, is that one cannot fully enjoy the current Shabbat or Yom Tov if he is stressed and worried about celebrating the second Yom Tov.

Similarly, R Shimon Grinfeld of Hungary (1860-1930) rules that if the activity is done on Shabbat in order to alleviate stress and feel better, and not in order to save time, it is not considered preparation:

ר' שמעון גרינפעלד, ש"ת מהרש"ג, חלק א, סימן סא: משום הכנה משבת קודש על ימי החול אין לאסור... דהיינו אם בכוונת העושה להרוויח הזמן שלא יצטרך לעשות בימי החול... ורק יען שבשבת הוא פנוי הוא רוצה לעשות הדבר הזה בשבת כדי להרוויח הטירחא או הזמן במוצאי שבת... אם רוצה להציע מטות או להדיח כלים בשביל שהבית יהיה נאה יותר... מותר

In our case also, people are not preparing in order to save time, but rather because waiting until after Havdalah will cause irreparable damage to the Yom Tov celebration, which in turn is now ruining their Shabbat experience as well.

The example which R Grinfeld uses is washing dishes, even if they are not going to be used on Shabbat, because the sight of dirty dishes is bothersome. This was also the practice of my grandfather Hakham Shaul Fetaya, and it was also confirmed to me personally by R Yitzhak Abadi of Lakewood, who allows even scrubbing of pots and pans for that reason.

The second concern regarding early Seder is:

B) The Havdalah is included in the Kiddush, and the Kiddush is the first part of the Haggada, so if we start the Seder early we will be saying the Havdalah before Shabbat is over.

This concern does not apply on a weekday Yom Tov because there is no Havdala between the first and second Yom Tov. However, the question whether one is allowed to recite Havdala early was raised in different circumstances. For example, if one needs to travel on Motzai Shabbat, or in places where Shabbat ends very late. The answer to that question was that one can say Havdalah before Shabbat is over, but he should postpone the blessing on the candle for later.²⁸

Conclusion:

One can prepare for the second night as early as needed to start the Seder on time, but not earlier than midday of Shabbat or first Yom Tov. On the Shabbat preceding Yom Tov, only activities which are permitted on Shabbat should be performed. On the first Yom Tov, only activities which are permitted on Yom Tov should be performed.

When starting the Seder before nightfall, one can recite the Kiddush with the Havdalah, but skip the blessing on the candles and say it later when Shabbat is over. When that time comes, one can

²⁸ רבי חיים דוד הלוי, שו"ת מים חיים, א, כד: ולכאורה פשוט שיוכל להבדיל להוציא הצבור ידי חובתם, וכדגרסינן בברכות (כז ב) ר' יאשיה ²⁸ מצלי של מוצאי שבת בשבת, ואמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל מתפלל אדם של מוצאי שבת בשבת ואומר הבדלה על הכוס. וכתב הטור (או"ח בסימן רצ"ג) וזו לשונו: ופירש רב האי גאון שהיה להם שום אונס שלא היה להם יין להבדיל במוצאי שבת או שהיו צריכין להחשיך על התחום לצורך מצוה... כי דבר פשוט הוא שלא היו ממהרים להתפלל של מוצ"ש בשבת אם לא בשביל אונס עכ"ל. וכך פסק מרן בשו"ע (או"ח סימן רצ"ג סעיף ג') מי שהוא אנוס כגון שצריך להחשיך על התחום לדבר מצוה יכול להתפלל של מוצאי שבת מפלג המנחה ולמעלה ולהבדיל מיד, אבל לא יברך על הנר, וכן אסור בעשיית מלאכה עד צאת הכוכבים עכ"ל

stop reciting the Haggada in order to say the blessing of בורא מאורי האש - and then light Yom Tov candles. After this, he can resume the reciting of the Haggada.

