

Guidance for the Week Before Pesach

Birkat Ha'ilanot

What: During the month of Nissan there's a special blessing to make upon seeing blossoming fruit trees. The blessing thanks Hashem for creating a world with no lacking, including beautiful trees that we enjoy. The text of the bracha is (also on artscroll pg 228):

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁלֹא חָסַר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ כְּלוּם, וּבָרָא בּוֹ בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבוֹת לִיהֲנוֹת בָּהֶם בְּנֵי אָדָם

Where: Local fruit tree listings: (1) The Meshel's front yard 4656 Thornhurst Drive (2) Crabapple trees along the walking path

Bonus riddle: What are 3 *other* blessings we only make once a year outside of Israel?

Thursday April 10

Taanit Bechorot/Fast of the Firstborn

What: On *Erev Pesach*, firstborn males fast in recognition of Hashem saving them from the plague of the firstborns in Egypt.

When: This year since *Erev Pesach* is on Shabbat, the fast is moved up to Thursday April 10.

But do I have to?: It's customary for firstborns to attend a *siyum* in the morning where they can eat and be exempt from fasting the rest of the day. There will be a siyum at OSTT Thursday morning following 6:20 AM shacharis (approximately 7:10 AM)

Bedikat Chometz

Bedikat Chometz/the search for chometz is moved up to Thursday night this year. Begin after nightfall (8:22pm in Olney), put out 10 pieces of chometz, recite the blessing, search by candlelight or flashlight, and say the *kol chamira* declaration afterwards like on a regular year (Artscroll page 654).

Friday April 11

Biyur Chometz/Burning Chometz

Since we cannot burn chometz on Shabbat, we burn it on Friday. Chometz should be burnt by 12:04pm (in Olney) as if it were actually Erev Pesach. Do not recite the second *kol chamira* paragraph at this time since you still intend to eat chometz through Shabbat morning. The declaration is recited on Shabbat morning. There will be a fire for biyur chometz at OSTT from 10:30am-12pm.

Pesach Prep

Make sure your chometz is sold.

Since you cannot prepare for Pesach on Shabbat, be sure to do the necessary seder prep on Friday. This includes preparing the bone, egg, charoset, salt water, and maror. Remember to light a 48hr candle so you can transfer fire for lighting on Motzei Shabbat and Sunday night.

Going into Shabbat, chometz should be locked up and covered except for what you intend to eat at the Friday night and Shabbat morning meals.

Guidance for Erev Pesach that's on Shabbat

Friday Night Meal

The best practice is to eat only kosher-for-Pesach food, except for the bread.

There are two options to fulfill your bread/*lechem mishna* obligation at the meals:

(1) Bread - Use small rolls or pitas and make sure to contain crumbs. Flush leftovers.

(2) Egg Matzah (that is labeled kosher for Passover). If you'd rather not deal with chometz at all, you may make *hamotzi* on KFP egg matzah. Although we avoid eating it on Pesach, it is not chometz and you don't have to worry about crumbs and leftovers.

Shabbat Morning Meal

Shachris at OSTT will begin at 7:20am. We'll have a small kiddush with egg matzah for those who would like to wash.

The latest time to eat chometz (and egg matzah) is 10:57am in Olney, (the more stringent opinion is 10:30am). You must finish eating chometz by this time, but can continue eating the meal and bentch afterwards. Be sure to clean out your mouth from chometz.

Some try to have a second meal with bread/egg matzah in the morning before 10:57am to fulfill the 3rd meal with bread.

Bitul and Biyur Chometz

Before 12:03 pm, you must get rid of any leftover chometz. Small crumbs can be disposed of in the trash; bigger pieces of chometz should either be put in a public trash bin, flushed down the toilet, or destroyed with bleach/chemicals to make them unfit for canine consumption.

After you get rid of your chometz, say the *kol chamira* declaration in a language you understand. This must be said *before* 12:03pm. Here is the text (also in Artscroll pg 654)

כָּל חֲמִירָא וְחֲמִיעָא דְאִיכָא בְּרִשְׁוֹתַי דְחֻמְתִּיה וְדִלָא חֻמְתִּיה וְדִלָא חֲמִירָא דְבַעֲרִיתִיה וְדִלָא בַעֲרִיתִיה לְבָטֹל וְלִהְיוֹי הַפָּקָר
בְּעַפְרָא דְאַרְעָא

“Any chometz or leaven that is in my possession, whether I have recognized it or not, whether I have seen it or not, whether I have removed it or not, should be annulled and become ownerless, like the dust of the earth”

Shabbat Afternoon

Enjoy a relaxed Erev Pesach! This is a great time to review the hagadah and prepare thoughts for the seder. Physical preparations for the seder like setting the table etc. may not be done on Shabbat.

Third Meal - Although it's not possible to eat Third Meal with bread or matzah, you should fulfill it with other kosher for Pesach foods (e.g. meat, fish, salad, fruit...). Make sure you will still have an appetite for the seder. You may not eat matzah until the seder.

Motzei Shabbat/Pesach Night

Shabbat ends at 8:25pm, at which time you should say *baruch hamavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh* and begin preparations for the seder. Yom Tov candles should be lit from an existing flame at this point.

The seder runs as usual. We include havdala in the kiddush (follow instructions in your hagadah). You can bring your Yom Tov candle to the table to use for the blessing on fire.