

The Night Before the Seder

The Search for Chametz

בְּדִיקַת חֲמֵץ

1. *The Search for Chametz* (products containing leavened grain) is the ceremonial culmination of several weeks of transforming the house into a sanctified setting for Pesach. The physical efforts help create a psychological readiness for the seder.

2. *Prior to this evening's ceremony, we clean all the rooms where food might have been eaten or stored, so that no chametz is left. We collect all the chametz products (like spaghetti or whiskey) and put them in a cabinet. We seal it, mark it as chametz, and sell its contents to a non-Jew for the duration of the holiday. Generally a local rabbi will serve as your agent for the ritual "sale."*

3. *After dark, on the night before the seder (or two nights before the seder when it falls on Saturday night), conduct a candlelight search for chametz into all the corners of the house. (In Eastern Europe Jews used a candle, a feather to sweep the crumbs and a wooden spoon to collect them. For greater safety you may prefer a flashlight to a candle). We recommend that ten pieces of chametz be hidden before the search begins, to enhance the fun of the search for the children.*

4. *Before the search recite the blessing. After the search recite the Aramaic formula for disowning any chametz still undiscovered in the home.*

The Blessing before the Search in the Evening:

BLESSED ARE YOU, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who sanctified us by commanding us to remove all the chametz.

The Formula for Disowning Unseen Chametz After the Search:

ALL CHAMETZ in my possession which I have not seen and have not removed shall be nullified and be ownerless as the dust of the earth.

*Bu-nach uva Ahamal
Elo-hel-uu me-lech lu-alam,
ashter kee-d'Shu-uu b'chametz-vo-lav
v'tzer-uu-uu al bee-ur dia-metz.*

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך
העולם, אשר קדשנו
במצותיו, וצונו על בעור
חמץ.



Sipur Haillohu, Amman, 1900

כל חמץא וחמיעה דאכא
ברשותי דלא חמתה ודלא
בערתה ודלא ידענא ביה
לבטל ולהוי הפסד פעפרא
דארעא.