PESAH: What to do today and tomorrow?

THURSDAY APRIL 2nd
One of the biblical prohibitions of Pesah is owning Hamets: to keep Hamets in our possession during Pesah. To avoid this, before Pesah we clean our houses and other premisses (car, office, etc.) and remove all Hamets food that can be found there. Then tonight, when the first stars come out (in NY, 7.45pm), we make the Bediqat Hamets, i.e., the last inspection for any Hamets food that could have remained in our property after cleaning. How do we do the Bediqat Hamets? With the help of a candle or a flashlight, we look everywhere in our house where we could have brought, eaten or stored foods. We must check especially in the kitchen, in all areas of food storage, like the pantry, refrigerator, freezer and all other places where food is usually kept. In the bediqat Hamets we are looking particularly for Hamets food: cookies, crackers, bread, pasta, frozen foods, protein drinks, cereals, and alcoholic beverages made from grain (beer, whiskey, most vodkas, etc).

After the bediqa we keep in a safe place the Hamets that we will be eliminating in the morning, and in a different place, the Hamets that we will consume tomorrow morning.
Then we say the first kal Jamira, the formula by which we renounce to our possession of any Hamets that belongs to us and we have not found
KAL HAMIRA DEIKA BIRSHUTI, DELA HAZITEH VEDELA BI'ARTEH, LIBTIL VELEHEVE HAFQER KE'AFRA DEAR'A.
"All Hamets or yeast that belongs to me, that I have not seen or removed, should be considered owner-less as the dust of the earth"

FRIDAY APRIL 3
Ta'anit Bejorot
On the eve of Pesah, it was established as a custom (minhag) that all the firstborn men should fast, as a recognition of

the protection of HaShem, when during the last plague, all the firstborn of Egypt died and the Jewish firstborn were saved. However, since this is not a mandatory fasting (it was not enacted by the Torah or the rabbis of the Gemara) we usually avoid this fast by participating of a festive religious ceremony. For example, Berit Mila or Pidyon. But because these events cannot be anticipated, it is customary in most communities to organize a Siyum Masekhet, the conclusion of a tractate of the Talmud, which is considered a festive event with sufficient merit to avoid this fast. By participating in this fast the firstborn may eat during Pesah eve normally.

Bi'ur Hamets (Disposing of Hamets)

In the morning, we can only eat Hamets until the fourth hour of the day (in NY about until 10 am). Once we finished eating Hamets, we collect the remains of Hamets from this morning, together with the rest of Hamets we left yesterday, and proceed to eliminate it (remove it). This can be done by feeding the Hamets to the birds, to fish, or throwing it in a public garbage, or selling it to a non-Jew. Many have the custom to burn the left overs because Hamets symbolizes arrogance and by burning it we demonstrate that our souls are clean and purified from pride.

After the removal of Hamets, we proceed to their final nullification (= declaring the Hamets ownerless). And once again we recite the statement of "Bitul Hamets" but more detailed:

KAL HAMIRA DEIKA BIRSHUTI, DEHAZITEH VEDELA HAZITEH, DEBIARTEH VEDELA BIARTEH, LIBTIL VELEHEVE HAFQER KE'AFRA DEAR'A.

"All Hamets or yeast that belongs to me, which I saw or which I did not see, which I have removed or which I have not yet removed, should be considered ownerless as the dust of the earth"

The elimination/removal of the Hamets, in any of its forms, and the renunciation to the Hamets, must be done before the fifth hour of the day. In New York this is about 11 in the morning.

From that time on, one cannot consume, sell or make any nullification of Hamets.

Akhilat Matsa

On the eve of Pesah we should not eat Matsa. We reserve the taste of Matsa for the ideal time: the Seder night. We can eat

Matsa ‘ashira, also known as egg Matsa. Tomorrow, in general, we should eat only until noon, to save our appetite for the Matsa and food we will eat at the Seder.