# When Pesach eve falls on Shabbat (Part 1 of 2)

**A SINGULAR YEAR**

As Pesach approaches we will begin by exploring an unusual Halakhic situation that we have this year 5781 / 2021. Pesach will begin Saturday, March 27th at night. And the eve of Pesach, therefore, will fall on Shabbat, Friday night, March 26th and Saturday, March 27th. The last time this happened was in 2008. And the next time this will happen is in 2025, and then again in 2045. In this situation, we make some adjustments. On the one hand, we want to keep the sanctity of Shabbat intact and, on the other hand, we also want to fulfill all the Halakhic principles of Pesach in the best possible way.

**FAST OF THE FIRSTBORN**

According to some rabbinic opinions, when the eve of Pesach occurs on a Shabbat like this year, the firstborns are exempt from fasting. However, it is worthwhile to partake on commemorating the finishing of a Talmudic treatise on the morning of Thursday, March 25th, as we do every year, and then participate in a Se'udat Siyum (a celebratory meal in honor of this event. You can participate in person or by Zoom).

**LAST INSPECTION OF CHAMETS**

Typically, we search for Chamets (Bediqat Chamets) the night preceding the Seder night However, when Pesach Eve falls on Shabbat, the final inspection of the Chamets should be done "two nights" before the Seder: this year on Thursday night, March 25th.

What we do the next day, Friday, March 26th, depends on which of the following two options we will follow: to eat or not to eat "bread" during Friday night and Shabbat?

**1. KOSHER LE-PESACH FOOD & BREAD**

Technically, one could have bread and Chamets during Friday night meal and on Saturday morning until mid-morning (around 10.00 am, NYT), because the prohibition against eating Chamets only starts from that hour (Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 444:1).
Most Ashkenazi Jews and many Sephardic Jews would follow this option: All food to be consumed during Shabbat shll be Kosher for Pesach, except for actual bread that will be used with extreme caution for HaMotsi Friday night, and Shabbat morning before 10.00am. You will have to pray earlier than usual and dispose of the Chamets, before 11.00, in a way that is permitted to do so on Shabbat. For more details regarding this option see for example here or here.

**2. THE NO-BREAD OPTION**
However, as a practical advice, many contemporary rabbis (particularly Sephardic rabbis like rabbi Obadya Yosef z"l) recommend to completely avoid the consumption of Chamets during this Shabbat. Why? Among other things for fear that because it is Shabbat, either one will be unable to properly dispose of any leftover Chamets, or could inadvertently come to transgress Shabbat or any of its restrictions in the process of actually trying to eliminate or get rid of the Chamets.

For those who want to follow this second option, these are some practical takeaways:

**FRIDAY MORNING**
Stop eating Chamets at the end of the fourth hour of the Friday, March 26th in the morning (around 10.00am, see the exact times here ) as we do every year). All Chamets that was found Thursday night in Bediqat Chamets should be disposed off by burning it or by throwing it away, etc. by the end of the fifth hour (Friday around 11.00am). The selling of Chamets and Bitul Chamets (*kal chamira*, the declaration that we do not own Chamets anymore) should also be done by the end of the fifth hour (although technically all this may be done even later, as

a practical matter, it is advisable to do all this at the same time that we do it every year). All food that we will consume from now on should be Kasher LePesach.

**FRIDAY NIGHT AND SHABBAT LUNCH**

For Shabbat meals we still must say the beracha "HaMotsi". Now, is there a way to have a meal with HaMotsi without having actual bread? One way would be to substitute bread with regular Matsa, but this is not allowed, as it is not permitted to have regular Matsa on Pesach eve (technically, from the morning), as our rabbis indicated that the taste of the Matsa should be reserved for the Seder night. So the best and easiest alternative would be to use a "modified Matsa" that is, a Matsa that would not be fit for the Mitsva of eating Matsa at the Seder, but would still be good for reciting the HaMotsi, as if it was bread. One such kind of Matsa is a "cooked' or "fried" Matsa. So, before Shabbat begins we should prepare some of these Matsot to be used as "bread" for all Shabbat meals (see below).

**SEUDA SHELISHIT**

For Se'uda Shelishit, the third meal of Shabbat –which this year should take place earlier than usual– we could also use Matsa 'ashira (also known as egg Matsa) and recite the blessing "mezonot". If that is not possible, this Se'uda can be made alternatively on the basis of meat, fish, fruits and/or vegetables, without reciting Mezonot or Hamotsi.

*To be continued…*

The next email on this topic will clarify, among other things, the following questions:
*How do you cook or fry Matsa?*
*What is the minimum size of this modified Matsa that should be used for Hamotsi?*
*Can preparations for the Seder begin on Shabbat?*
*When and how do we light Yom Tov candles on Saturday night?*