



בדיקת חמץ The Search for Hameitz

The formal search for leaven (בדיקת חמץ) is conducted on the night before *Pesah*. This symbolizes the final removal of leaven from the home. Before the search, it is customary to deposit small pieces of bread (ten pieces, according to kabbalistic lore) in strategic places so that the inspection should have a purpose. It is traditionally carried out by the light of a candle, with a feather and a wooden spoon to collect the *hameitz*; all this is set aside until morning. If *erev Pesah* occurs on Shabbat, we search for *hameitz* on Thursday evening.

Before the search, recite:

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר קדשנו במצותיו,
וצונו על בעור חמץ. Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh haolam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav,
v'tzivanu al biur hameitz.

Praised are You Adonai our God, who rules the universe, instilling in us the holiness of mitzvot by commanding us to remove all hameitz.

After the search, recite:

כל חמירא וחמיעא דאפא ברשותי,
דלא חמיתה ודלא בערתה ודלא ידענא לה,
לבטל ולהוי הפקר כעפרא דארעא. Kol hamira v'hamia d'ika virshuti,
d'la hamiteih udla viarteih udla y'dana leih,
libateil v'lehevei hefkeir k'afra d'ara.

All hameitz in my possession which I have not seen or removed, or of which I am unaware, is hereby nullified and ownerless as the dust of the earth.

Recitation of this declaration, and a similar one the following day, prevents us from violating the prohibition against *hameitz* (Exodus 13:7). In the morning, after the last meal of *hameitz*, leftovers are added to the crumbs gathered the previous night. These are burned or thrown out. This concludes the ritual of banishing *hameitz* from our dwellings.

In the morning, recite:

כל חמירא וחמיעא דאפא ברשותי,
דחזיתה ודלא חזיתה,
דחמיתה ודלא חמיתה,
דבערתה ודלא בערתה,
לבטל ולהוי הפקר כעפרא דארעא. Kol hamira vahamia d'ika virshuti
dahaziteih udla haziteih,
dahamiteih udla hamiteih,
d'viarteih udla viarteih
libateil v'lehevei hefkeir k'afra d'ara.

All hameitz in my possession, whether I have seen it or not, whether I have removed it or not, is hereby nullified and ownerless as the dust of the earth.