

Pesach in India

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Source:

“Pesah work,” as it was called in Cochin, would begin immediately after Chanukah. In the Cochin community, it was believed that if a Jewish woman were to make even the slightest mistake in Passover preparation during the 100 days before the actual seder, then the lives of her husband and her children would be endangered.

The pursuit of chametz was a serious business. To ensure purity, the Jews of Cochin kept special rooms in which all Passover utensils, thoroughly scrubbed, were stored. Houses would be scraped and repainted immediately after Purim. Wells would be drained and scrubbed, lest they be polluted. Each grain of rice – an essential staple even during Passover – would be examined to ensure that it was free from cracks into which polluting chametz might find its way.