

HUNTINGTON JEWISH CENTER

*Passover Guide*

Prepared by Rabbi Neil Kurshan

5776 - 2016



March 2016

Dear Congregants,

In this insert, you will find a number of items which I hope will facilitate your Passover preparations and enhance your Sedarim.

The following materials have been included as preparation aids:

1. An authorization form for the selling of Chametz, to be returned to the synagogue office by Thursday morning, April 21.

2. An outline of ceremonies of preparation which precede Passover.

3. A schedule of Passover services.

4. A section of "Top Ten Passover Practices."

The following materials have been included to be used as supplemental to your Sedarim:

1. Seder Ritual of Remembrance.

This ceremony commemorates the victims of the Holocaust and can be used immediately following the third cup of wine.

2. Matzah of Unity. This prayer for Jewish unity reflects our hope for peace among all Jews.

Baked goods remain a particular problem. To the best of my knowledge, only a handful of bakeries on Long Island provide Kosher for Passover items. Signs indicating "Passover Products" or "Passover Style" are not acceptable certification of kashruth. Local bakeries acceptable during the remainder of the year are not acceptable on Passover.

**We have not reprinted in this booklet the sections on "Kashering" and "Permitted and Forbidden Foods." New and updated details can be found at: [rabbinicalassembly.org/pesah-guide](http://rabbinicalassembly.org/pesah-guide)**

If you have any questions not answered in this Bulletin, please do not hesitate to call me. My family and I wish you and your families a Chag Kasher V'Sameach-A Happy Passover.

Sincerely yours,  
*Neil Kurshan*  
Rabbi

## PASSOVER PREPARATIONS

5776 - 2016

**Definition of CHAMETZ:** In Exodus 12:15 the Bible tells us, "Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the very first day you shall remove leaven from your houses..." The Rabbis specified five grains which can become chametz: wheat, barley, spelt, rye, and oats. Ashkenazic authorities added to this list rice and kitniot, or legumes (including beans, peas, lentils, corn and maize, millet, and mustard). Sephardic authorities prohibit only the five specified grains, thus Sephardic Jews are allowed to eat legumes and rice during Passover.

**MECHIRAT CHAMETZ - The Selling of Leaven:** According to the Biblical injunction that "no leaven shall be seen or found in your possession," during Passover, one must dispose of all non-Pesach foods for the full week of Passover. See page titled Mechirat Chamez, the Selling of Chametz, toward the back of this booklet for detailed explanation.

**BEDIKAT CHAMETZ - The Search for Leaven:** Taking place the evening before the first Seder, (except when Passover begins on a Saturday night), this ceremony is the climax of the Passover preparation. Ten pieces of chametz are hidden around the house. The family gathers together with a candle for lighting the way, a feather for brushing-up the chametz, and a wooden spoon onto which the chametz is brushed. If you prefer, a flashlight and small hand broom work equally well. Everything can be burned the next day with the rest of the leaven. The ceremony should involve the children and be performed immediately after supper. The prayers to be recited are found at the front of any Haggadah. The search should be conducted on **Thursday evening, April 21.**

**BIUR CHAMETZ - The Burning of Leaven:** The crumbs of bread that have been gathered the night before are put together in a bundle and burned the morning before Passover. The appropriate prayers can be found in any Haggadah. **The burning of Chametz should be done Friday morning, April 22.**

# TOP TEN PASSOVER PRACTICES

1. ***Set up an hourglass timer at one end of your Seder table.*** Don't let more than five minutes pass without someone asking a question.

2. ***Have participants sign their Haggadah.*** Each year you can look back and see who has been with you in the past; remember funny stories, and be touched by people who can no longer be at your table. If you are not comfortable writing during the Seder, try to have people sign before the holiday begins!

3. ***Make a Haggadah with your family.*** Assign everyone a page or section one month before. Collect and collate each section and photocopy enough for all your participants. Adults and teenagers can be responsible for the text and children for the drawings.

4. ***Bring in props.*** This can happen in a number of ways.. Buy them at your local Judaica store (you can literally buy a "Bag of Plagues") or make them with your family. And props don't necessarily have to just be the plagues: be creative and turn your whole house into a Jewish/Egyptian home!

5. ***Personalize your Seder experience.*** Assign everyone a section of the Haggadah to study before they arrive. During the Seder people can bring readings or questions to the group, depending on what they were assigned.

6. ***Think about incorporating new traditions into your Seder.*** Learn about "The orange on the Seder plate" or Miriam's Cup rituals. Regardless of whether or not you decide to add them to your Seder, then you can at least open the door for more questions.

7. ***Order blank papyrus pages from Egypt*** (via eBay) or use construction paper and in advance of the Seder ask participants to draw a scene that they "remember" from either their slavery or exodus from Egypt. Hang the pictures on the dining room wall. Similarly ask everyone to bring one or two items they took with them out of Egypt. Before the Seder put them in a pillowcase. At various points in the Seder, participants remove an item and guess who put it in and why, and then the person who brought the item explains his/her thinking.

8. ***Ask each person to bring a poem or reading that relates to the Seder.*** Ask your guests to retell the story of the Exodus in their own words or to present a skit. You can also ask them in advance of the Seder to research customs of different communities for a specific part of the Seder.

9. ***Try to have more than one version of the Haggadah at your Seder.*** While many Haggadot have essentially the same pieces, some include extra questions or phrase sections differently. Looking at the differences can help bring out more questions. Encourage people to explain what strikes them about the differences.

10. ***Create a Seder Supplement.*** Create a Passover supplement for each of the Haggadot at your Seder that includes readings/explanations/stories from other Haggadot or other sources as well as questions for discussion. This is an effective way to personalize and enrich your Seder.

## Seder Ritual of Remembrance

This service, in memory of the six million Jews who perished in the worst oppression in the modern world, may be read after the THIRD of the four cups of wine, just before the door is opened for the symbolic entrance of the Prophet Elijah.

The Jews in Bergen-Belsen had no matzot for Pesach 1944. It was decided that it was permissible to eat Chametz, and that the following prayer should be recited before eating:

*Prayer recited in Bergen-Belsen before eating Chametz:*

“Our Father in Heaven, behold, it is evident and known to You that it is our desire to do Your will and to celebrate the festival of Pesach by eating matzah and by observing the prohibition against Chametz. But our hearts are pained that the enslavement prevents us from doing so, and our lives are in danger. Behold, we are ready to fulfill Your commandment, ‘And you shall live by them and not die by them.’ Therefore, our prayer to You is that You may keep us alive and save us and rescue us speedily so that we may observe Your commandments and do Your will and serve You with a perfect heart. Amen.”

On this Seder night, we recall with anguish and with love our martyred brothers and sisters, the six million Jews of Europe, who were destroyed at the hands of a tyrant more fiendish than Pharaoh. Their memory will never be forgotten. Their murderers will never be forgotten.

Trapped in ghettos, caged in death camps, abandoned by an unseeing or uncaring world, Jews gave their lives in acts that sanctified God’s name and the name of His people, Israel. Some rebelled against their tormentors, fighting with makeshift weapons, gathering the last remnants of their failing strength in peerless gestures of courage and defiance. Others went to their death with their faith in God miraculously unimpaired.

Unchecked, unchallenged, evil ran rampant and devoured the holy innocents. But the light of the Six Million will never be extinguished. Their glow illumines our path. And we will teach our children and our children’s children to remember them with reverence and with pride.

All sing ANI MA’AMIN (“I Believe”), the song of the martyrs in the ghettos and liquidation camps:

“I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah:  
And though he may tarry, none the less do I believe!”

אָנִי מֵאֲמִין      בְּאֵמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה, בְּבִיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ וְאֵף עַל פִּי  
שִׁיתְמַהְמֶהָ, עִם כָּל זֶה אַחַכָּה לוֹ בְּכֹל יוֹם  
שִׁיבוֹא.

Ani ma-amin be-emunah sh'leima b'viat ha-mashiach v'af al pi  
she-yitzmahmei-a im kol zeh achakeh lo b'chol yom sheyavo.

## Schedule of Passover Services 5776 – 2016

**Friday, April 22..... *Fast of the First Born and Siyyum* .....7:00 a.m.**  
 An early morning service in the Lief Chapel will be followed by a study session and a light meal sponsored by the Men’s Club to break the fast. All first born and others are welcome.

**Also see “SIYYUM - THE FAST OF THE FIRST BORN” below.**

**Friday, April 22..... *Mincha, Maariv, First Seder*..... 6:00 p.m.**  
*First Seder*      Candle Lighting 7:19 p.m.

**Shabbat, April 23..... *Shacharit, First Day*..... 9:30 a.m.**  
*Second Seder*      Candle Lighting 8:00 p.m.

**Sunday, April 24..... *Shacharit, Second Day*.....9:30 a.m.**

**Thursday, April 28..... *Mincha, Maariv, Seventh Day*.....7:15 p.m.**  
 Candle Lighting 7:25 p.m.

**Friday, April 29..... *Shacharit, Seventh Day*.....9:30 a.m.**  
*We will honor our Shabbat and Weekly Torah Readers during services*

**Friday, April 29..... *Mincha, Maariv, Eighth Day*.....7:15 p.m.**  
 Candle Lighting 7:26 p.m.

**Shabbat, April 30..... *Shacharit, Yizkor, Eighth Day*..... 9:30 a.m.**  
 Yizkor will be recited during services on the Eighth Day  
 Members of the Congregation will chant Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs)  
 on Shabbat morning, April 30<sup>th</sup>.  
*(All times reflect Daylight Savings Time)*

### SIYYUM - THE FAST OF THE FIRST BORN

The Torah relates that the first born of the Israelites were spared from the last plague which was visited upon the Egyptians. As an act of gratitude and as a means of reenacting a great event of ancient history, the custom has arisen to have all the Bechorim (first born) fast on Erev Pesach. As a substitution for this fast, Bechorim may participate in some sacred study in the synagogue on the morning before Pesach. Thus, the fast is obviated while the purpose is enhanced. There will be a service and study session **Friday morning, April 22<sup>nd</sup> beginning at 7:00 AM**. The Men’s Club will sponsor a light breakfast following services.

# THE MATZAH OF UNITY

*(To be recited during the Seder at Yachatz—when breaking the middle Matzah)*

Pesach is a wonderful time to be together as one Jewish family, connecting our symbols with our actions, our rituals with our ethics.

We recall springtime as we eat the green vegetable Karpas.

May we remember that it symbolizes a renewal of nature and the human spirit.

We recall our people's tears and suffering as we dip into the saltwater.

May we remember our people's past oppressions and care for those who still have tears and pain.

We recall the bitterness of slavery as we eat the Maror.

May we remember the plight of the poor and the downtrodden and alleviate their distress.

We recall our servitude to Pharaoh as we eat the Matzah, the bread of affliction.

May we remember God's redemption of our people and how Matzah became the first food eaten in freedom.

Pesach is a beloved holiday, not only because we recall our freedom, but also because we share our concerns for all in need. We cannot only taste the foods. We have to remember our responsibilities as Jews to reach out and assist others with our tzedakah, our charitable obligations, and through our gemilut hasadim, our acts of loving kindness.

Let us now take the middle Matzah and divide it in half. As we break this Matzah and set it aside, we link ourselves symbolically with all Jews throughout the world, especially those who were broken from the community of Israel for so long and have only recently rejoined Klal Yisrael, in their native lands and in the land of Israel.

Our Seder meal will not conclude until the missing piece of Matzah is found and returned to the table. The Matzah, when restored shows the desire of our people to be together as one at peace. As Jews we are a people with a sacred connection. May this Passover be a time of recommitment to our people and our faith.

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**HAGGADAH SUGGESTIONS**—Don't waste time having everyone find the same page in ten different Haggadot. The Conservative Movement Haggadah, [The Feast of Freedom](#), is available from the HJC Judaica Shop. The pictures in this Haggadah are fantastic sources for discussion and the commentary helps in understanding the Seder.

A wonderful Haggadah with enough material to sustain different Seders for ten years is A Different Night. If you buy this Haggadah also purchase the Leaders' Guide which includes sections titled The "Jazz Haggadah," "Young Children at the Seder," "Short Cuts Through the Haggadah," and "Recalling Great Seders" and much more. This is the best Haggadah available if you are planning a family Seder. It can also be obtained through our Judaica Shop or by contacting the American Friends of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Englewood, N.J.

Don't be scared off by the expense of buying 20 Haggadot. We bought ours 20 years ago for \$200. That works out to an approximate cost of \$10/year—far less than we spend each year for Passover food.

## THE DETAILS OF PASSOVER ARE OVERWHELMING — HOW DO I BEGIN?

*(edited from a Passover Guide by Rabbi Raphael Rank)*

Pesach doesn't just happen. Like every other celebration in life, it requires planning and preparation. If you don't come from an observant family, all the rules and regulations may seem overwhelming. If you find yourself doubting whether you could ever successfully prepare for Pesach, read on. This section of the Guide will help you understand what needs to be done in order to create Pesach.

### SPRING CLEANING

Your observant friends may have told you about all the cleaning that they do prior to Pesach. Pretty impressive, isn't it? Nevertheless, at the risk of disillusioning you, it must be said that much of what they do, you do too, but you may call it "spring cleaning."

A simple way to affirm your identity as a Jew is to continue your ritual spring cleaning, but this year, use Pesach as your deadline for completion. House cleaning is what an observant Jew does before Pesach. You can do that, too. But this year, add a special dimension to the cleaning: ridding your house of hametz.

### GET RID OF THE OBVIOUS HAMETZ

Without delving into the technicalities of hametz, consider the bottom line: During Pesach, Jewish homes should have no breads, bagels, doughnuts, muffins, pizza, or pasta products. That means cleaning out the freezer as well. We do not eat these products within the home or outside the home for the entire eight days of the festival.

### WHY SHOULD I BOTHER?

Good question. Of course, we don't ask why we should engage in spring cleaning. The answer there is somewhat clear. The house has been locked up for the winter. Bedding needs laundering, windows need washing, rooms need airing, etc. We engage in spring cleaning to freshen up our physical space. But like our homes, our neshamot or souls also require a cleaning. We get rid of hametz to freshen up our spiritual space. Some rabbis have likened hametz to "sin," noting that the term itself even sounds like "het," the Hebrew term for sin. Because leavening causes fermentation that makes a product swell, hametz is likened to pride or arrogance. We get rid of all the bread and pastas for eight days, all the hametz around us, and remember that a humble life

is a refreshing life—the most successful life to lead.

### BUT I CAN'T EAT MATZAH FOR EIGHT DAYS!

Surprise —you don't have to. According to the rabbis we are obligated to eat matzah on the first two nights only. The rest of the week we may eat matzah, but are under no obligation to do so.

### SO IS THAT WHAT A SEDER IS - A MEAL WITH MATZAH?

A seder without matzah would certainly be pointless. But it is good to remember that a seder is more than just a meal. It's a discussion about who we are as a people. And who we are, in large part, has to do with a story regarding our enslavement in and redemption from the land of Egypt. Somewhere in Jerusalem, there's a Jew who sits on the ground wearing a colorful skullcap, speaks Arabic, sells teapots, prays three times a day and has never been to New York City. He is our brother. He is our brother by virtue of the fact that together with him, we are equally grateful for the miracle that God rendered in redeeming our ancestors, and thus us, from the land of Egypt. That's the message that ought to be discussed at our seder tables.

### WHO IS GOING TO LEAD ALL THIS DISCUSSION?

Another good question. Who is your family's natural discussion leader? There usually is one who enjoys a good debate or discussion. It's time to tap into his/her talents. Hold a family meeting and appoint someone the leader.

### IN SUMMARY

- 1) Clean the house;
- 2) Get rid of the hametz;
- 3) Eat matzah on the first two nights;
- 4) Make sure the seder is more than just a meal;
- 5) Make a commitment to do a little more each year.

*Remember - this is only the beginner's list, but make sure that you and your Pesach seder grow each year.*

# *Mechirat Chametz*

## *The Selling of Chametz*

Jewish law prohibits the use or legal possession of any Chametz, leaven of any kind, on Passover. In order to be certain that all Chametz has been removed from our possession, Jewish tradition requires us to sell our remaining Chametz to a non-Jew. This Chametz, then, becomes the property of the non-Jew for the duration of Passover and should be set aside in a place in one's home that will be unused during Passover.

The authorization of the right to sell Chametz can be granted to another. If you would like Cantor Gordan to sell your Chametz on your behalf, please fill out the form below. In order to symbolize that one is transferring the authority to sell, it is customary to make a token monetary transfer. The money contributed will be used to provide needy families with Passover necessities. If you send a check, please make it out to Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, c/o Huntington Jewish Center.

### **AUTHORIZATION OF PROXY**

**W**hereas according to Jewish Law one is not permitted to maintain or possess Chametz during the Passover holiday, I, the undersigned, hereby authorize Cantor Gordan to sell the Chametz whether it be found in my residence or elsewhere. This Chametz that I wish sold includes every kind of leavened food or liquid whether in separate entities, mixed forms, dishes or utensils. I understand that Cantor Gordan will sell the Chametz for me to a non-Jew for the entire week of Passover and that I shall derive no use or pleasure from it during that time.

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

(City and State) \_\_\_\_\_

Please return the Proxy to the Synagogue office by  
**Thursday morning, April 21, 2016.**



## SEDER TIPS

The following tips will help to create a more meaningful Seder.

**GIVE HOMEWORK** - Have all of your participants prepare something in advance of the Seder which they will contribute at the Seder. Children might prepare a few songs; teenagers their own creative skit about the Exodus such as a take-off on a television show. Adults can be given a topic to prepare in advance such as the role of women in the Exodus or theories about the plagues or the parting of the Red Sea.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING** - A great Seder does not happen spontaneously. Map out in advance what parts of the Seder you will include or leave out. (There is no requirement to recite every word from the Haggadah.) Where will you follow the Haggadah and where will you allow for creativity? How will you allow for the participation of those at your table? Coordinate your timing with the person in charge of the kitchen so that you are not blamed for burned zimmes or cold chicken soup. Give attention to how you will conclude the Seder after the meal so that everyone is not asleep right after dessert or ready to go home.

**HORS D'OEUVRES** - In addition to the traditional dipping of the Karpas (green vegetable) in salt water at the beginning of the Seder, I recommend that you provide a plentiful array of additional vegetables and dips. This will take the edge off of everyone's hunger and is also in keeping with the earliest haggadot which indicate the variety of vegetables that were dipped at the beginning of the Seder.

**TELL THE STORY** - The main requirement of the Seder is to tell the story of leaving Egypt. Don't limit your imagination. If you are creative, use drama, voices, costumes, or puppets to retell the story. Let the children do a skit or have the adults imagine the night of leaving Egypt and act out their preparations. Don't try to read every word of the Haggadah.

**ASK QUESTIONS** - Don't limit yourself to the four questions in the Haggadah. One of the best ways to elicit the telling of the story of the Exodus is by asking questions. We have learned a lot and had a lot of good laughs by asking questions such as: What was a typical day during the plague of frogs? If you could only pack three things when you left Egypt, what would you take? What would be the first thing you would say after emerging from the far side of the Red Sea? In a different vein, go round the table and ask people to share one way they feel enslaved or one aspect of their lives in which they would like to feel freer this year. The level of self disclosure is up to each person, but it is a great way to equalize participation around the table.

**EAT THE MATZAH IN SILENCE** - There is much noise at the Seder table as there should be. Traditionally a Jewish meal is begun by silence between the washing of the hands and the motzi. Invite everyone at the table not to speak from the time the first person washes until the motzi is made. You will focus more intently on the eating of the matzoh and the meal itself might feel more like a religious celebration.

**SING** - Even if you do not know many songs, the children will know songs from Nursery School or Religious School. Invite a grandparent to share a family melody. Be creative! Have your guests try to sing all the verses of Chad Gadya in one breath or do it with the sound effects of each animal or object which is mentioned. Be prepared that finding the right sounds for God and the Angel of Death is a real challenge.



**Huntington Jewish Center**

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