

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, March 29.**
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 material 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. 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 the sections on "Kashering" and "Permitted and Forbidden Foods." New and updated details can be found at rabbinicalassembly.org/pesach-guide.

If you have any questions not answered in this booklet, 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,

Rabbi Ari Saks

PASSOVER PREPARATIONS

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 kitniyot, 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. A recent teshuvah (Jewish legal responsum) adopted by the Committee on Jewish Law & Standards of the Conservative Movement allows Ashkenazi Jews to eat kitniyot on Passover. To read the teshuvah, google "kitniyot CJLS" and click the top result.

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 Chametz, the Selling of Chametz, toward the back of this booklet for detailed explanation.

BEDIKAT & BIUR CHAMETZ, The Search for & Burning of Leaven: This is a two part ceremony. **Part 1, the search for chametz,** occurs the evening before the first seder as the climax of the Passover preparation. Ten pieces of chametz are hidden around the house & the family searches for the chametz with a candle for lighting the way, a feather for brushing-up the chametz, and a wooden spoon onto which the chametz is brushed

(a flashlight & hand broom may also work). Everything can be burned the next day with the rest of the leaven. The prayers to be recited are found at the front of any Haggadah. The search should be conducted on **Thursday evening, March 29.**

Part 2, the burning of the chametz, occurs the next morning on **Friday, March 30.** The crumbs of bread that have been gathered the night before are put together in a bundle & burned. The appropriate prayers can be found in any Haggadah. If burning is not feasible, you may toss the leaven away in the garbage, provided that the garbage is not in your possession prior to Passover.

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 (you can buy a "Bag of Plagues") or make them with your family. And props don't necessarily have to be just 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, you can open the door for more questions.
7. Order and distribute blank papyrus pages from Egypt (via Amazon or use construction paper) before the Seder and ask participants to draw a scene that they "remember from either their slavery or exodus from Egypt." Ask everyone to bring one or two items they took with them out of Egypt. Put them in a pillowcase before the Seder. At various points in the Seder, participants remove an item and guess who put it in and ask why. The person who brought the item then explains their 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 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 cup 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 in 1944. It was decided that it was permissible to eat chametz and that the following prayer would be recited before eating:

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

אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאַמּוּנַת שְׁלֵמָה בְּבִיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ וְאֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁיִּתְמַחֲמֵהוּ אִם כָּל זֶה אֲחֻזָּה לוֹ בְּכָל יוֹם שְׂבִיבוֹ

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.

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 spring time 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.

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 & preparation. If you don't come from an observant family, all the rules & 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. It may be said that much of what they do, you would call "spring cleaning." A simple way to affirm your identity as a Jew is to continue your ritual spring cleaning but use Pesach as your deadline for completion. Add a special dimension to the cleaning this year by ridding your house of chametz.

GET RID OF THE OBVIOUS CHAMETZ: Bottom line: During Pesach, Jewish homes should have no bread, bagels, doughnuts, muffins, pizza or pasta products. 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? We engage in spring cleaning to freshen up our physical space. Like our homes, our neshamot or souls also require a cleaning. We get rid of chametz to freshen up our spiritual space. Some rabbis have likened chametz to sin, noting that the term itself even sounds like "het," the Hebrew term for sin. Because leavening cause fermentation that makes a product swell, chametz is likened to pride or arrogance. We get rid of all the bread & pasta for eight days, all the chametz 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!

You don't have to! 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 be pointless but a seder is more than just a meal. It's a discussion about who we are as a people and the story regarding our enslavement in and redemption from the land of Egypt. Somewhere in Jerusalem, a Jew sits on the ground wearing a colorful skullcap, speaks Arabic, prays three times a day and has never been to NYC. 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 is the message that should be discussed at the seder table.

WHO IS GOING TO LEAD THIS DISCUSSION?

There is usually one person in each family who enjoys a good debate or discussion. Hold a family meeting and appoint someone to lead.

IN SUMMARY:

1. Clean the house.
2. Get rid of chametz.
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. Make sure that you & your Pesach seder grow each year.

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. Children might prepare a few songs; teenagers can create a skit about the Exodus. 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. Map out in advance the parts of the Seder that you will include or leave out. There is no requirement to recite every word from the Haggadah. How will you allow for the participation of those at your table? Give attention to how you will conclude the Seder after the meal so that everyone does not leave right after dessert.

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 & dips. This takes the edge off of everyone's hunger & is 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. You can 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. For example: 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? Or, ask your guests to share one way they feel enslaved or one aspect of their lives in which they would like to feel freer this year.

EAT THE MATZAH IN SILENCE. 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 matzah 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 the ECC, Religious School or Schechter. Invite a grandparent to share a family melody. 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 that is mentioned.

HAGGADAH SUGGESTIONS: The Conservative Movement Haggadah, *The Feast of Freedom*, has fantastic pictures & sources for discussion & 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*. This is the best Haggadah available if you are planning a family seder.

Schedule of Passover Services

5778-2018

Friday, March 30	Fast of the First Born and Siyyum*	7:00 am
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.		
Friday, March 30	First Seder (Traditionally begun after nightfall)	Candle Lighting 6:58 pm
Shabbat, March 31	Shacharit, First Day	9:30 am
	Second Seder (Traditionally begun after nightfall)	Candle Lighting 7:59 pm
Sunday, April 1	Shacharit, Second Day	9:30 am
Thursday, April 5	Maariv, Seventh Day	6:00 pm
		Candle Lighting 7:05 pm
Friday, April 6	Shacharit, Seventh Day	9:30 am
We will honor our Shabbat and Weekly Torah Readers during services		
Friday, April 6	Maariv, Eighth Day	6:00 pm
		Candle Lighting 7:06 pm
Shabbat, April 7	Shacharit, Yizkor, Eighth Day	9:30 am
Yizkor will be recited during services.		
Members of the Congregation will chant Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs)		
Festival ends at 8:15 pm		

*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 substitute 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, March 30th beginning at 7:00 am**. The Men's Club will sponsor a light breakfast following services.

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 Rabbi Saks 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

Whereas according to Jewish Law one is not permitted to maintain or possess chametz during the Passover holiday, I, the undersigned, hereby authorize **Rabbi Saks** 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 **Rabbi Saks** 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, MARCH 29, 2018

Question for Discussion:

How does the story of Passover help us be good moral people?

**Cut and pasted pp. 185-186 on these two pages.
See actual booklet for content**

Source: The Passover Anthology by Philip Goodman,
pp. 185-186