

Pesah

April 18th - April 26th, 2010

פֶּסַח

שנת תשע"א



Biblical Commandment to Observe Pesah:

“In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, there shall be a Passover sacrifice to the Lord, and on the fifteenth day of that month, a festival. Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days. The first day shall be sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations...You shall offer...daily for seven days...And the seventh day shall be a sacred occupation for you: you shall not work at your occupations.” (Num. 28:16-25)

Appropriate Greeting for the Festival:

חג כָּשֶׁר וְשָׂמֵחַ!

Hag Kasher v'Samei'ah!

Happy and Kosher Festival!

THE PESAH STORY

The story of Pesah is the story of our people's formation and our search for freedom. It is the story of God's intervention in our history to free the Israelites from slavery. The saga begins in the book of Bereishit (Genesis), with Joseph's odyssey, his being sold as a slave, and his rapid rise to power. His work saved Egypt from seven years of famine. With the entire Middle East suffering from the famine, Joseph's brothers make their way to Egypt in hopes of purchasing some food to take back home to the Land of Israel. After Joseph sees that his brothers are changed men, he reveals his identity to them and invites them all to settle with him in Egypt. Jacob's sons live comfortable lives as welcome strangers in the land of Egypt. However, life for their descendants quickly takes a turn for the worse.

In the book of *Sh'mot* (Exodus), the story resumes with the Israelites being enslaved by a Pharaoh who did not know of the work of Joseph. He is threatened by the presence of the multitudes of Israelites in the land and decrees that all newborn baby boys must die. It is at this point that we meet a Levite baby, the son of Yokheved and Amram, who is saved by his mother's plan to send him off down the Nile in a basket, where he is later discovered by Pharaoh's daughter, adopted, and named Moses. As an adult, Moses becomes God's intermediary, leading the Israelites out of Egypt



and into freedom. However, it is critical to remember that Moses' role is secondary to God's. It is God who caused the plagues of Egypt that eventually caused Pharaoh to free the slaves. It is God who split the Sea of Reeds and defeated Egypt's army of chariots. Moses served as God's messenger and mouthpiece. In fact, the document which retells the Pesah story, the *Haggadah*, omits the name of Moses virtually completely, limiting his name to one direct Biblical quote in order to emphasize this message. For more information about the *Haggadah*, see further below.

Festival Schedule:

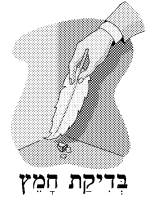
Sunday, April 17th, 2011

B'dikat Hameitz - The Search for leavened products (at night)

Monday, April 18th, 2011

Bi'ur Hameitz - Burning of leavened products (in the morning)

Ta'anit B'khorim - Fast of the Firstborn (from sunrise to sundown)



Monday, April 18th, 2011

Pesah begins at candle lighting at 7:51pm

FIRST SEDER NIGHT

Tuesday, April 19th, 2011

First day of *Yom Tov shel Pesah* - Morning Festival services held at your local synagogue, including joyous *Hallel* and special Torah and Haftarah readings

SECOND SEDER NIGHT (must begin after the end of first day of *yom tov* when three stars can be seen in the sky) **candle lighting after 8:51pm** (see guidelines for below for the method by which candles are to be lit)

Wednesday, April 20th, 2011

Second day of *Yom Tov shel Pesah* - Morning Festival services held at your local synagogue, including joyous *Hallel* and special Torah and Haftarah readings
Festival Havdalah: 8:53pm.

Wednesday night, April 20th, 2010 - Sunday, April 24th, 2010 - *Hol HaMo'ed Pesah*

The intermediate days of *Pesah* are celebrated with *Hallel* and special Torah readings, but are days on which we are permitted to go to work.

Sunday night, April 24th, 2011 *Erev Yom Tov shel Pesah*

Yom Tov Candle lighting: 8:00pm

Sunday night, April 24th - Tuesday, April 26th - *Yom Tov shel Pesah*

Morning Festival services held at your local synagogue, including joyous *Hallel* and special Torah and Haftarah readings

Yizkor services held in the morning on Thursday at your local synagogue

Candle Lighting for the second day of *Yom Tov* on Monday night: 9:01pm

***Yom Tov* Havdallah ceremony on Thursday night: 9:03pm**

PREPARATIONS FOR PESAH

Preparing the House

Pesah is known as Hag Hamatzot because we are commanded to eat matza (unleavened bread). There are two reasons for this commandment. First, the eating of matza is in commemoration of the speed with which the Israelites left Egypt in their quest for freedom. The bread was not able to rise because of their haste. Furthermore, matza is referred to as lechem oni (bread of poverty/affliction). During Pesah, we are reminded of the plight of the Israelite slaves. Matza is the symbol for both slavery and liberation.

Not only are we commanded to eat matza, but we are also commanded not to eat any *hameitz* (leaven product). *Hameitz* is any food that includes barley, oats, wheat, spelt, or rye mixed with water and has been permitted to ferment for 18 minutes. *Hameitz* also includes any other food product that contains grain, such as alcoholic beverages like beer and whiskey. Any product in which hameitz is even an ingredient, no matter the amount, is prohibited for use on Pesah. The rabbinic expression reflecting this prohibition is:

חֶמֶץ הוּא אָסוּר, אֶפִּילוּ בְּמִשְׁהוּ

Hameitz is forbidden, even in the most miniscule of amounts.

It is for this reason that special supervision is needed for manufactured goods and Rabbinical certification is necessary to verify that no *hameitz* ingredients have been included.

In medieval times, grains other than the five specified ones were ground and used as flour to bake bread-like substances or stored along with the five grains, perhaps leading to mixing. These products, known as *kitniyot*, include legumes (dried beans and peas, except for string beans), rice, corn, buckwheat, millet, and mustard seed. Although they do not ferment in the same way, they resemble *hameitz* and it is the tradition in Ashkanazi communities to prohibit their use on Pesah. Sephardi communities never made this association and permit their use on Pesah.

The prohibition against *hameitz* in any amount causes the need for homes to be thoroughly cleaned before Pesah. Furthermore, completely separate and Kosher for Pesah sets of dishes, silverware, and cookware are often brought out in the days before the festival in order to ensure that absolutely no *hameitz* makes it way into cooking and eating during Pesah. Other families go through the laborate process of *kashering* their existing dishes for the festival. Refrigerators, ovens, countertops, and sinks are scrubbed and made “Kosher L’Pesah.” All “non-Pesah” kitchenware are to be separted and stored away during the festival to prevent their accidental use.

M'khirat hameitz - The Sale of *Hameitz*

מכירת חמץ

The Torah prohibits not only the eating of, but also the ownership of *hameitz* during Pesah. In order to fulfill this requirement without having it cause financial hardship to an individual or family or great waste (which are also prohibited by the law), we arrange for the sale of the *hameitz* to a non-Jew. Since this transfer, known as *m'khirat hameitz*, must be valid according to the *halakhab* (Jewish Law) and involves numerous details, it is generally accomplished by appointing an agent,



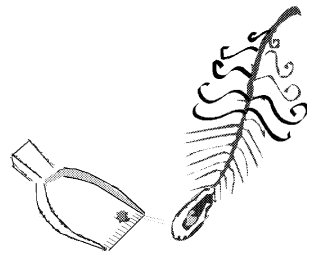
usually a rabbi, to handle the sale. It is a valid and legal transfer of ownership. From the time that Pesah begins, the non-Jewish purchaser of the hameitz owns it and has full legal rights to it. It is merely being stored in the prior owner's home. The *halakha* is very clear in its explanation that use of or tampering with your stored hameitz during Pesah is considered theft. At the end of the festival, the sale agent arranges for the reversion of ownership of the now-permitted hameitz back to the prior owner, at which time s/he can freely consume or use it. If ownership of the hameitz was not transferred before the festival, the use of this hameitz becomes prohibited after it as well. As a result, care must often be taken when grocery shopping after the festival of Pesah. If a Jewish grocery owner did not sell his or her hameitz before Pesah, the leavened grocery products in the store are prohibited for all Jews.

One important custom associated with *m'khirat hameitz* is the giving of tzedakah, called “*Ma'ot hittim*” (“money for wheat”) that is used to provide the poor with funds which would enable them to have a Seder on Pesah.

B'dikat Hameitz - The Search for Hameitz

בדיקת חמץ

In most years, as is the case this year, *b'dikat hameitz* is done on the night before (erev) Pesah immediately after sunset. The search is customarily made with a candle, feather, and wooden spoon.



בדיקת חמץ

The candle is lit and the family searches for hameitz. Because this search takes place after all of the cleaning has been done and the likelihood of finding any leaven products is negligible, it is customary to place ten pieces of bread in various places, so that when the search is made, leaven is actually found. Otherwise, the *b'rakha* (blessing) that is recited before the search would have been in vain. The hameitz which is found (except that which is set aside for use the following morning for breakfast) is gathered by “sweeping” the pieces up with the feather and depositing them on a wooden spoon. The hameitz is then put into a paper bag and put aside until the morning for *bi'ur*, burning. The following *b'rakha* for *b'dikat hameitz* is recited before the search:

ברוך אתה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל בְּעוֹר חֹמֶץ.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh Ha'Olam asheir kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al bi'ur hameitz.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with God's commandments, and commanded us to remove all hameitz.

Immediately following the search, the leaven is wrapped and the nullification formula for hameitz is recited (this is Aramaic - the spoken language of the Jews in antiquity - not Hebrew):

כָּל חֲמִירָא וְחֲמִיעָה דְּאַכָּא בְּרִשּׁוּתֵי דְלָא חֲמִתָּהּ וְדְלָא בְּעִרְתָּהּ וְדְלָא יִדְעָנָא לָהּ לְבִטֵּל וְלִהְיוּ הֶפְקֵר כְּעִפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

Kol hameerah va'hamee'ah, d'ika veershooti, d'la hamitei, u'd'la vi'artei, u'd'la yadana lei, libateil v'le'he'vei hefker k'afra d'ar'a.

Any leaven that may still be in my possession, which I have not seen, or have not removed, or did not know about shall be nullified and shall be ownerless, as the dust of the earth.

Bi'ur hameitz should be completed by the fifth hour after sunrise (approximately 10:30AM). At the burning the following is recited:

כָּל חֲמִירָא וְחֲמִיעָה דְּאִפְּא בְּרִשּׁוּתִי דְּחֻזְתָּהּ וְדִלָּא חֻזְתָּהּ, דְּחֲמִיתָהּ וְדִלָּא חֲמִיתָהּ, דְּבִעְרָתָהּ וְדִלָּא
בְּעִרְתָּהּ, לְבָטֵל וְלֹהֵי הַפֶּקֶר כְּעַפְרָא דְּאַרְעָא.

*Kol hameerah va'hamee'ah, d'ika veershooti, d'la hamitei, u'd'la vi'artei, u'd'la yadana lei,
libateil v'le'he'vei hefker k'afra d'ar'a.*

Any leaven that may still be in my possession, which I have not seen, or have not removed, or did not know about shall be nullified and shall be ownerless, as the dust of the earth.

The fast applies to the firstborn male of either a mother or father, though firstborn daughters may choose to take on the responsibility of this fast if they so wish. The fast is an expression of gratitude for being spared during the 10th plague - the killing of the firstborn in Egypt. For children who are below Bar/Bat Mitzvah age, they should be taught about their obligation when they are younger and given "practice" with the fast as they grow to the age of *mitzvot*. The fast usually occurs during the day immediately preceding the first Seder. It is the custom for synagogues to host a *siyyum* (a public completion of the study of a tractate/section of rabbinic literature, Mishnah or Talmud) after *Shaharit* services on the morning of the fast day. Since the siyyum is followed by a *s'udat mitzvah* (a festive meal accompanying the performance of a mitzvah, here the completion of study), a first born who is present may eat, and, having eaten, need not fast that day. After the completion of study and before the meal, Kaddish d'rabbanan is recited.

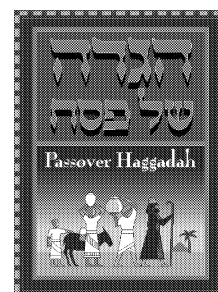
THE PESAH SEDER & THE HAGGADAH

The Exodus from Egypt is the great epic of the Jewish people. Like all epics, it is passed on from generation to generation and retold in the hope of sparking the imaginations of Jews across the ages. The *Haggadah* is the text for the retelling of this epic story and the Pesah seder is the dramatization of the experience for each individual. Indeed, the Rabbis teach that:

בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים

B'khol dor va'dor hayav adam lir'ot et atzmo k'ilu hu yatza mimitzra'yim

In every generation, each individual is obligated to see himself or herself as if s/he went out from Egypt.



The Pesah seder is our reenactment of the Exodus from Egypt and the means by which we are able to fulfill this directive of the Rabbis to us. We must find our own ways to experience redemption from personal slavery and the feeling of freedom. The *Haggadah* serves as our script and walks us through fourteen steps on the way to our redemption:



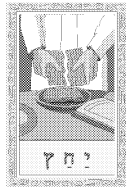
1. **KADESH** (קדש) - RECITATION OF THE KIDDUSH



2. **U'R^HATZ** (ורחץ) - WASHING THE HANDS (WITHOUT A B'RAKHLA).



3. **KARPAS** (כרפס) - EATING A GREEN VEGETABLE DIPPED IN SALT WATER



4. **YAHATZ** (יחץ) - BREAK THE MIDDLE MATZA AND HIDE THE LARGER FOR THE AFIKOMAN



5. **MAGGID** (מגיד) - THE TELLING OF THE PESAH STORY

There are several parts to this section of the Seder. They include the following:

A. *Ha Lahma Anya* - The Bread of Affliction: This paragraph invites all those who are in need to join us for the meal. It is written in Aramaic, the language that was spoken during the time of the Talmud.

B. *Ma Nishtana* - The Four Questions

C. *Avadim Hayinu* - Our Ancestors Were Slaves.

D. The Tale of the Four Children.

E. The Ten Plagues.

J. *Da'yeinu* - It Would Have Been Enough For us.

K. Explaining the Pesah, Matza, and Maror - our Seder obligations.

L. Hallel - Psalms of Praise: only the first two psalms are before the meal.

M. The Second Cup of Wine



6. **ROHTZAH** (רחצה) - HAND WASHING BEFORE THE MOTZI



7. **MOTZI MATZAH** (מוציא מצה) - THE BLESSING AND EATING OF MATZA



8. **MAROR** (מרור) - EATING MAROR MIXED WITH HAROSET



9. **KOREKH** (כורך) - THE MATZA AND MAROR SANDWICH



10. **SHULHAN OREKH** (שלחן עורך) - THE FESTIVAL MEAL



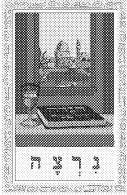
11. **TZAFOON** (צפון) - THE SEARCH FOR AND EATING OF THE AFIKOMAN



12. **BAREKH** (ברך) - *Birkat HaMazon* - THE BLESSINGS AFTER THE MEAL



13. **HALLEL** (הלל) - SONGS OF PRAISE



This section of the seder also includes the counting of the omer for the first time in the year, beginning on the night of the second seder.

14. **NIRTZAH** (נִרְצָה) - CONCLUSION OF THE SEDER

It is customary to sing the Pesach songs at the back of the haggadah

The *Haggadah* also instructs us in the following way:

וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משובח

V'khol ha'marbeh l'sapeir bi'tzi'at mitzrayim, harei zeh m'shubah.

Whoever enhances the telling of the story of Pesah is to be praised.

To make each year's *S'darim* (plural of Seder) more meaningful, it is helpful to do some act, recite some words at the Seder, make some change that enables us to focus anew on the meanings of the Exodus, slavery, and freedom for us in our day. The *seder* has been and is fluid. Many changes and additions are permissible within the 14 steps that are outlined. Ritual observances are a means to an end. They enable us to give meaning and power to the things we value so that we, our children and others can see the meaning. In order to accomplish this task, you can and should feel free and within the *halakhab* (Jewish Law) to make additions, supplement, and be creative at your *seder*.

General Information:

<http://www.judaism.about.com/od/passover/>

<http://www.jewfaq.org/holidaya.htm> (see also the links on the side bar for additional detailed info)

<http://www.jewfaq.org/seder.htm>

http://www.everythingjewish.com/Pesach/Pesach_Origins.htm

Information and Activities for the Whole Family:

http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/kids/pesah_together/

If any questions remain unanswered, please feel free to call the school 604-736-7307 and be in touch with Rabbi Matthew Bellas, who prepared this material, at ext. 3403.

A MUSICAL ADDITION FOR YOUR SEDER AT HOME WHICH THE STUDENTS HAVE
LEARNED:

THE BALLAD OF THE FOUR SONS
(TO THE TUNE OF “MY DARLING CLEMENTINE”)

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | Said the father to his children
”At the Seder you will dine
You will eat your fill of matza
You will drink four cups of wine” | 7. | Then did sneer the son so wicked
What does all this mean to you?
And the father’s voice was bitter
As his grief and anger grew. |
| 2. | Now this father had no daughters
But his sons they numbered four
One was wise and one was wicked
One was simple and a bore. | 8. | “If yourself you don’t consider
As a son of Israel,
Then for you this has no meaning
You could be a slave as well.” |
| 3. | And the fourth was sweet and winsome
He was young and he was small,
While his brothers asked the questions
He could hardly speak at all. | 9. | Then the simple son said simply,
“What is this?” and quietly,
The good father told his offspring
“We were freed from slavery.” |
| 4. | Said the wise one to his father,
”Would you please explain the law
And the customs of the Seder
Will you please explain the cause?” | 10. | But the youngest son was silent
For he could not ask at all
His bright eyes were bright with
wonder
As his father told him all. |
| 5. | And the father proudly answered
”As our fathers ate in speed,
Ate the Paschal Lamb ere midnight
And from slavery were freed.” | 11. | Now dear children, heed the lesson
And remember ever more
What the father told his children,
Told his sons that numbered four. |
| 6. | “So we follow their example
And ere midnight must complete
All the Seder and we should not
After 12 remain to eat. | | |