

GUIDE TO PASSOVER OBSERVANCE

INTRODUCTION ...

Pesach (Passover) is the festival of freedom, commemorating the redemption of Israelite slaves from Egypt. This first episode of freedom points ahead to the final redemption in the age of the Messiah. It is also the time of the barley harvest and the end of the rainy season.

For Jews, Passover marks their birth as a free people. G-d reminds us frequently of the deliverance from slavery in Egypt. It is associated with many laws, observances, and ethical instructions.

When our ancestors began their journey to Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah, little did they realize how important that journey was. By keeping Pesach, every Jew identifies with his faith and people, and a long and distinguished history. This was the first step in the formation of the Jewish people. The eating of matzah on Passover and the ban on chametz have historic origins enriched with religious significance.

The highlights of this festival include the elaborate ritual of the Seder on the first two nights (one night in Israel). The Haggadah read at this time seeks not only to educate the child, but to remind the adult of the bitterness of slavery and the sweetness of freedom, and hence to arouse gratitude to G-d for this deliverance.

WHAT CONSTITUTES CHAMETZ?

Chametz designates all leavened foods, drinks and ingredients which are made from or contain a mixture of wheat, rye, barley, oats or spelt. Therefore, all grain alcohol, grain vinegar, yeast and malts are forbidden for the duration of the festival.

Legumes (Kitniot): beans, corn, peas, rice, alfalfa sprouts, green beans, mustard and the derivatives of these foods are also cognate to chametz and are not eaten by Ashkenazic Jews (Jews of Eastern European descent). Peanuts are also not customarily eaten by Ashkenazic Jews, although peanut oil may be used. Sephardic, Yemenite or Oriental Jews, however, do eat certain legumes (Kitniot) on Passover.

Foods such as: matzah, cakes, macaroons, egg noodles, etc... require reliable rabbinic endorsement, either a nationally recognized supervisory agency (i.e. O-U, O-K, Chaf-K, CRC) or an individual supervision that is recommended. The Rabbi can advise which personal supervisions are recommended.

BAKERY PRODUCTS:

The purchase of macaroons, sponge cakes and the like in any bakery, even those Rabbinically endorsed through the year, before or during Passover with the mistaken impression that they are permissible is a serious error. Without special Passover supervision these are, in all likelihood, forbidden. Endorsement is also required for candy, soft drinks, wines, liquors, milk and milk products, horseradish, vinegar and canned goods.

Jewish grocers, bakers and other food merchants who deal in chametz the entire year, must sell their chametz before Passover. If they fail to do so, their products are forbidden even after Passover. In such an event, purchases should not be made for a period of time permitting a complete replenishment of stock. It is, therefore, preferable to deal with a proprietor who is known to have sold his chametz before Passover and sells no chametz during Pesach.

The prohibition against chametz applies to all products prepared or baked before nightfall on the 8th day of Passover. This means that **YOU MAY NOT PURCHASE BREAD UNTIL THE EVENING FOLLOWING THE LAST DAY OF PASSOVER.** All kosher bakeries cease their operations prior to Passover and do not begin baking until after the conclusion of the entire holiday.

MEDICINE:

Since *chametz* binders are used in many pills, the following guide-lines should be followed? If the medicine is required for life-sustaining therapy, it may be used during Pesach. If it is not for life-sustaining therapy, some authorities permit, while others prohibit. Consult your rabbi. In all cases, capsules are preferable.

PERMITTED FOODS:

The following foods require no *kosher lePesach* label if purchased prior to Pesach: Unopened packages or containers of natural coffee (without cereal additives or processed i.e. decaf or flavored), sugar, pure tea (not

processed i.e. de-caf or flavored), salt (although iodized salt may have may have a sweetener derived from corn, and would be prohibited according to some Ashkenazic authorities) , pepper, natural spices, fruit juices with no additives, frozen (uncooked) vegetables (for legumes see previous page), milk, butter, frozen (uncooked) fruit (with no additives), baking soda.

The following foods require no *kosher lePesach* label if purchased before or during Pesach: fresh fruits and vegetables (refer to previous page for legumes), eggs, fresh fish and fresh meat.

CAUTION:

Labels bearing the inscription KOSHER FOR PASSOVER can be produced by any printer. The presence of such a label does not by any means guarantee that the product to which it is affixed is therefore really Kosher for Passover. Only if the product in question bears the signature of an authoritative Orthodox Rabbi or Rabbinic body is the certification reliable. This also applies to companies producing meat products especially for Passover use and so noted. When in doubt consult the Rabbi. He will be happy to answer all your questions.

DISHES AND UTENSILS:

Sets of dishes, pots and pans, flatware and other necessary utensils should be set aside specifically for Passover use. Certain utensils such as flatware, metal pots and pans, etc. may be made Kosher for Passover use. This process is termed "Kashering". Since the laws which this process entails are many and varied, you should consult the Rabbi if you wish to "Kasher" for Passover. All new metal, aluminum and glass require Tivilat Kelim (ritual immersion).

THE FOLLOWING MAY NOT BE KASHERED:

China, pottery, earthenware, Teflon and similarly coated ware, plastic dishes, enameled pots, pans, ladles, utensils with wooden or plastic handles. Oven glassware (Pyrex, Melmac and Corningware).

However, fine translucent chinaware which has not been used for over a year may be used if scoured and cleaned in hot water.

Utensils or vessels which cannot be thoroughly cleaned because they have crevices in which chametz can accumulate. Dishwashers (ceramic type).

KASHERING OF UTENSILS:

The process of kashering utensils depends on how they will be used. According to *halacha*, leaven can be purged from a utensil by the same process in which it was absorbed in the utensil. Therefore, utensils used in cooking are kashered by boiling, those used in broiling are kashered by fire and heat, and those only used for cold food are kashered by rinsing.

Metal (wholly made of metal) used in fire (spit, broiler) must first be thoroughly scrubbed and cleansed and then made as hot as possible. Those used for cooking or eating (silverware, pots) must be thoroughly scrubbed and cleaned and completely immersed in boiling water. Pots should have water boiled in them that will overflow the rim.

The utensils should not be used for a period of 24 hours before kashering them. Metal baking utensils cannot be kashered.

Ovens and Ranges—Every part that comes in contact with food must be thoroughly scrubbed and cleaned. Then, oven and range should be heated as hot as possible for a half hour. If there is a broil setting, use it. Self-cleaning ovens should be scrubbed and cleaned and then put through the self-clean cycle. Continuous cleaning ovens must be kashered in the same manner as regular ovens. Glass or ceramic stovetops should be left untouched for 24 hours, then have boiling water poured over them.

Microwave ovens, which do not cook the food by means of heat, should be cleaned, and then a cup of water should be placed in them. The oven should be turned on until the water evaporates. A microwave that has a browning element cannot be kashered for Pesach.

Glassware—Authorities disagree as to the method for kashering drinking utensils. One opinion requires soaking in water for three days, changing the water every 24 hours. The other opinion requires a thorough scrubbing before Pesach, or putting it through a *KLP* dishwasher.

Dishwasher—After not using the machine for a period of 24 hours, a full cycle with detergent should be run.

Electrical Appliances—If the parts that come into contact with *chametz* are removable, they can be kashered in the appropriate way (if metal, follow rules for metal utensils). If the parts are not removable, the appliance cannot be kashered. (All exposed parts should be thoroughly cleaned.)

Tables, Closets and Counters—If used with *chametz*, they should be thoroughly scrubbed and covered and then they may be used. However, one should not use them 24 hours before kashering.

Kitchen Sink—A metal sink can be kashered by a thorough cleaning and pouring boiling water over it. A porcelain sink should be cleaned and a sink rack used. If, however, dishes are to be soaked in a porcelain sink, a dish basin must be used.

Chametz and Non-Passover utensils— Non-Passover dishes, pots and *chametz* whose ownership has been transferred should be separated, locked up or covered and marked so as to prevent accidental use.

THE SEARCH FOR CHAMETZ

The first Seder falls on Friday, April 3

On the Thursday night before the first Seder, perform a candle-lit search for any remaining or forgotten *chametz*. You'll need a candle (to illuminate the hard-to-reach nooks and crannies), a feather (to sweep up the small crumbs), wooden spoon (to hold the *chametz* and facilitate its burning), and a paper bag to hold all of the above.

By this time, the house should be completely cleaned for Passover; hopefully there's no *chametz* to be found. It is therefore, customary to prepare ten carefully wrapped pieces of bread to be hidden throughout the house for the searcher to find (kids love this part!) in order that we can fulfill the mitzvah of searching out and destroying our *chametz* before Passover.

Gather the family, light the candle and recite the blessing”

Blessed are You,

L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to remove the leaven before Passover.

Baruch atah A-onai, Elokeinu melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvitova v'tzian al bi'ur chametz.

After the search is completed, and the leaven and receptacle are wrapped together the following declaration is made:

May all leaven in my possession which I have not seen or removed, be regarded as non-existent and considered as mere dust of the earth.

Kol chamirah v'chamiah d'ika birshuti d'lo chamitei u'd'lo v'artei u'd'lo yidana la libatel v'lehevei hefker k'afrah d'arah.

The following morning after breakfast, the leaven is burned, and the follow final declaration is made:

May all leaven in my possession, whether I have seen it or not, or whether I have removed it or not, be regarded as non-existent and considered as mere dust of the earth.

Kol chamirah v'chamiah d'ika birshuti da'chamitei u'd'lo chamitei, d'v'artei u'd'lo v'artei libatel v'lehevei k'afrah d'arah.

SETTING THE SEDER TABLE

Three matzah, specially baked for Seder use, are set before the head of the house and covered with a cloth featuring 3 compartments.

On a tray or Seder plate, (known in Hebrew as a Ke'arah) set all these things as shown:

2 O'clock—Z'roa: Roasted shank bone of lamb, symbol for the roasted paschal lamb of Temple days.

4 O'clock—Haroset: Chopped apples, nuts and cinnamon and wine to denote the mortar with which the Israelites made bricks in Egypt.

6 O'clock—*Hazaret: Ground horseradish or romaine lettuce, eaten later in a sandwich with matzah.

*According to the custom of Rabbi Isaac Luria

8 O'clock—Karpas: Parsley or celery sticks. Prepare salt water to dip Karpas into. This symbolizes the tears shed by the children of Israel while slaves in Egypt.

10 O'clock—Betzah: A hardboiled, roasted egg to symbolize the 2nd Temple sacrifice of Passover time.

Center: Maror: Bitter herbs—horseradish

Or romaine lettuce, to denote the Israelites' bitter suffering in Egypt.

Everyone is to drink 4 cups of wine at the Seder, for the four promises of freedom promised the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 6:6). A special cup is filled for Elijah the Prophet, who, we believe, comes to visit and will one day herald the Messiah.

The Seder does not consist of "customs and ceremonies" to be performed perfunctorily, but presents an opportunity for all participants—all men, women and children, old and young alike—to understand and experience the full meaning of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, the Exodus, each to his own capacity

Order of Service

Recite the Kiddush, after which all drink the first of the four prescribed cups of wine.	KADESH
Wash the hands, omitting the customary prayer.	URCHATZ
Eat the Karpas (celery/parsley) dipping in salt water and saying the customary blessing.	KARPAS
Break the middle matzah, putting half away for afikoman.	YACHATZ
Recite the service in the Haggadah.	MAGGID
Wash the hands, with the customary prayer.	RACHATZ
Recite the blessing over a piece of the upper matzah.	MOTZI
Eat the bitter herb, dipped in charoset.	KORECH
Serve the Pesach meal.	SHULCHAN ORECH
Eat a piece of the afikoman, after which no other food may be taken.	TZAFUN
Birkat Hamazon	BARECH
Chant the Hallel (Psalms of praise)	HALLEL
The Pesach service has been proven acceptable to G-d.	NIRTZAH

The Ritual and Customs of Passover Eve

THE FOUR CUPS—These are instituted as a symbol of the four expressions for redemption used in the Bible: “And I shall draw out”, “And I shall save”, “And I shall redeem”, “And I will take”.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS—In the accepted version, their order is as follows: matza, bitter herbs, dipping the vegetable and reclining.

AFIKOMEN—Should be eaten before midnight, while reclining, without delay and uninterruptedly. Nothing may be eaten or drunk after the *afikoman* (with the exception of water and the like) except for the last two Seder cups of wine.

THE WHITE GARMENT—It is customary for the head of the house to don a white dressing-gown in honor of Passover. This garment is known as a “Kittle”. It is holiday garb, the white color symbolizing freedom. It is also a commemoration of the white robes of the Temple priests who were clothed in white, for the wearing of this robe on Passover eve connotes worship in the Temple.

D’TZACH, ADASH, B’AHAB—A mnemonic device composed of the first letters of the ten plagues.

HAGGADAH—This name has been given the book from which we read on Passover Eve, because of the biblical verse, “And thou shall tell (*vehigadeta*) it to their son on that day, saying: It is because of that which the Eternal did for me when I came out of Egypt.” Also, because of the verse:

“I have told the Eternal this day that I am come into the land.” And there are those who derive the name Haggadah from thanksgiving and praise to the Eternal for redeeming us from Egypt.” This derivation is found in version by the Palestinian Talmud of the phrase, “I have told the Eternal this day.” They translate, “I have this day praised the L-rd.”

SPILLING DROPS OF WINE—During the recitation of the ten plagues also occurs when we mention the phrase “blood and fire and pillars of smoke,” and “D’Tzach, Adash, B’Ahab.” One spills wine therefore sixteen times.

There are those accustomed to perform the spilling by dipping a finger into the wine as a remembrance of the verse, “This is the finger of G-d,” while others spill by merely tipping the glass.

RECLINING—It is necessary that the place upon which one reclines during Passover be a pleasant couch where one must eat matzah and the afikoman, and drink the cups by reclining on one’s left side. This last custom is symbolic of freedom, for in olden times only royalty would dine in this fashion.

SHANKBONE AND EGG—The plate contains two types of cooked food, the shank bone with a bit of roast meat clinging to it—a remembrance of the paschal sacrifice, and the egg—a remembrance of the holiday offering customarily eaten on Passover eve. The egg was chosen as symbolic of this latter sacrifice for in Aramaic the word for egg is *Be-Ah*, which also means desire alluding to the thought “The Eternal be Willing and Redeem Us”.

HAROSET—A dish is prepared of pounded fruits, such as apples and nuts, almonds and pomegranates, further mixed with cinnamon, wine or vinegar. These fruits are especially symbolic of the community of Israel, and the haroset serves as a reminder of the clay with which our forefathers were forced to work in Egypt.

ELIJAH’S CUP—It is customary to pour a brimming and beautiful cup of wine in honor of Elijah the Prophet, before one begins recitation of “Pour out Thy wrath.” Opinions as to the reasons for opening the front door of the house while reciting this prayer vary. Some say it is symbolic of our invitation to Elijah to enter the house. The basis of this custom is found in the world of our sages, who said that Israel was to be redeemed in Nisan. In that month, both Elijah and the Messiah will come. By opening the door, we express our belief in, and expectation of, the coming of the Redeemer. There are others who say that this custom proclaims this as “the night of watching”. Still others opine that the custom refers to the question of whether we should drink a “fifth cup” of wine. Only Elijah can solve this problem, and the door remains open for his solution.

KARPAS—A type of vegetable, either parsley or celery. One can fulfill the commandment, however, with any vegetable. In the word *karpas* there lies a special clue—for if the numerical value of the letters is read in reverse order, we discover the “sixty myriads” of Israelites who were oppressed with heavy and arduous work.

MATZAH—Three matzoth are used on Passover eve, because each Sabbath and holiday is marked by a blessing over two breads, while on Passover, a third matzah is added because of the afikoman. There are some who give names to the three matzoth—the top one is called Kohen; the middle one, the Levite and the bottom matzah, the Israelite.

MATZAH SHMURAH—matzah baked of dough whose wheat has been carefully guarded from moisture from the time of the harvest.

BITTER HERBS—In order to ease the burden of recalling all the details of the Seder, the earlier commentators to the Haggadah compiled various rhymes and mnemonic devices. The most popular of these is the “Kadesh Urhatz”, which has been attributed to Rabbi Solomon Itzhaki.

THE KA’ARAH—It is customary to place the three matzoth, the vegetables, the two cooked foods, the haroset upon one large plate or tray. There are different customs as to proper arrangement of the foods on the dish.

After the Fourth Cup...

IN GRATITUDE FOR THE CREATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Fill an additional cup of wine

It has been explained that at the Seder we drink four cups of wine, symbolic of the four verses of redemption mentioned in the Bible. These are followed by a fifth verse, most appropriate in commemorating the dramatic events preceding the return of our people to Zion: V'HE-VE-TI, "And I will bring you in unto the land that I solemnly vowed to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for a heritage; I am the L-rd." (Exodus 6:8)

Seven nations conspired to destroy the newly created State of Israel and push its inhabitants into the sea. But they were repulsed as was foretold: "The L-rd will cause your enemies that rise up against you, to be routed before you; they shall come out against you one way, but they shall flee before you seven ways." (Deuteronomy 28:7) What transpired in Eretz Yisrael is additional evidence to the believer, of the "Hand of G-d" in history, a modern miracle as impressive as any recorded in our Bible.

In gratitude for the creation of the State of Israel which we hope shall forever be established upon Justice and Truth, let us rise and drink another cup of wine.

Baruch atta Axonai, Elokeinu melech ha-olam, boray p'ri hagafen.

Praised be Thou, O L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Creator of the Fruit of the Vine.

The Matzah of Unity

(to be recited during the Seder at Yachatz - when breaking the middle Matzah)

Passover is the great Jewish family holiday - but there is also a message about our ethics.

We eat the Karpas, the green vegetable - and recall our concern for the environment

We dip into the salt water of tears - and remind ourselves to care for the oppressed.

We endure bitter herbs - and sharpen our concern for the stranger.

We taste the matzah, the bread of affliction - and feel the memories of our servitude to Pharaoh.

Passover is so real and tangible, because we not only have our freedom but we also resolve to work for the liberation of all people, it is a time when we ask ourselves: what are we doing to care for those in need? Can we reach out and assist with our Tzedakah, our charitable contributions, or through 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 have lived under the yoke of the oppressor.

Our Seder menu will not conclude until the missing piece of Matzah is found and returned to the table.

Today the Star of David rises proudly in the former Soviet Union. Yet hundreds of thousands of elderly Jews struggle to survive.

Jews who left Ethiopia and other countries experienced a modern exodus to live in freedom. They brought their children and grandchildren to Israel, a land sworn to us by our ancestors and G-d. Now we are committed to helping them to become full participants in all aspects of Israeli society.

But our work is not done. We need boundless love for the Jewish people in order to continue our efforts at caring for the most vulnerable, supporting exiles and rebuilding Israel.

May this Passover be a time of recommitment to our people and our faith.