



## Guide to *Pesah* Observance – 5771-2011

by Rabbi Gerald Zelermyer

### **General Information**

*Pesah* is celebrated this year from the night of Monday, April 18, through Tuesday, April 26. The two *sedarim* are observed on Monday and Tuesday, April 18 and 19.

What follows is a general guideline; however, Rabbi Zelermyer should be consulted when any doubt arises. *Kosher l'Pesah* labels for observance of *Pesah* that do not bear the name of a rabbi or one of the recognized symbols of rabbinic supervision, or which are not integral to the package, should not be used without consultation.

### **Preparing the Home for *Pesah***

Year after year, at each festival, we relive the miracle of our existence with creative experiences. At *Sukkot*, we move out of the house to re-experience our journey in the wilderness. At *Pesah* we turn our house inside out to relive our journey from slavery to freedom. Each year we relive the journey by thoroughly cleansing the home, office, and car of *hametz* and leftover food. We clean out desk drawers which might store a snack, pockets in clothing which might still contain a piece of gum or candy, and we scour countertops and sinks thoroughly. It is preferable to put contact paper or another liner on countertops and shelves to avoid contact with *hametz* during *Pesah*. The stove is prepared by thoroughly scrubbing and cleansing all parts and turning on full flame until all the grates or burners are red hot. The oven is turned to its highest setting and left on for 20 minutes. An electric dishwasher may be used for *Pesah* after thoroughly scouring it with boiling water, then running it for one cycle on empty.

### **Kashering Utensils and Dishes**

We are not permitted to have even traces of *hametz* in our food on *Pesah*, so it is best to have a special set of dishes and utensils for *Pesah* use only. Under the following circumstances, however, it is possible to render utensils fit for *Pesah* use:

- a. Silverware, pots, non-baking pans, and other metal utensils are to be thoroughly scoured and completely immersed in boiling water. A few minutes are sufficient. If a pot or frying pan is too large to immerse in boiling water, fill the pot or pan with water; boil it; then place a hot object, such as a heated stone, in it to make it overflow while it is still boiling. If the utensil has wooden or plastic handles, it is not fit for *kashering* unless the handle may be removed and cleaned separately.
- b. All table glassware is permitted after soaking in water for three days, changing the water daily.
- c. Fine chinaware, if not used for a year, is permitted after a thorough scouring and soaking in room temperature water.
- d. Utensils used for baking, or those whose eating surfaces are made of wood or plastic, may not be *kashered*. The same applies to earthenware, enamelware, and porcelain.

### ***Bedikat Hametz—The Search for Hametz (Leaven)—Sunday, April 17, After Dark***

The entire home should be clean of any possible food particles by the evening of the day before *Pesah*. A formal search for *hametz* is conducted on the night before *Pesah*. This symbolizes the final removal of leaven (*hametz*) from the home. Before the search, it is customary to hide small pieces of bread in places where *hametz* is eaten. The search is done by candlelight with a feather, a wooden spoon, and a bag (paper is best) to collect the *hametz*. Before the search begins, a blessing for *bedikat hametz* is recited (found in most *haggadot*). When all pieces of bread are collected, set the bag, feather, and spoon aside for burning the next morning, and recite, “Any unfound *hametz* that may still be in our possession that I am not planning to eat before *Pesah*, or that I did not discard, shall be as if it does not exist, as dust of the earth.” That text is usually found in the introductory section of a *haggadah*.

## **The Morning Before Pesah—Monday, April 18, 6:45 AM**

**Service for the First Born:** As a gesture of gratitude at not having been struck by the Tenth Plague, first-borns are obliged to fast the day before *Pesah*; however, one may break that fast in order to participate in a feast celebrating the completion of a major portion of Jewish literature, so it has become traditional to celebrate such a completion that morning. Following the 6:45 am service, everyone who attends is invited to a feast celebrating the completion of a Tractate of *Mishnah* by the Thursday morning *Mishnah* class. Even non-first-borns may attend! This is the last chance to eat *hametz* you do not wish to discard.

**Burning the Hametz.** The bread found in the “Search for *Hametz*” and any left over from breakfast should be burned outside one’s home before noon on Monday, April 18. At that time recite the last line from the search: “Any *hametz*, etc.” (The entire ritual can be found in your *haggadah*.)

**Foods During Pesah.** Forbidden foods: The following are forbidden for use during *Pesah*: bread, cakes, biscuits, crackers, cereals, and pasta made from wheat, barley, oats, rye, or spelt. All liquids which contain ingredients or flavors made from grain alcohol are forbidden. Ashkenazim traditionally refrain from rice, corn, legumes (called “*kitniyot*”), as well.

### **Permitted Foods:**

- a.. Requiring no "*kosher l'Pesah*" label: The following foods are permitted in unopened packages or containers. They require no "*kosher l'Pesah*" label if purchased before *Pesah*: natural coffee, sugar, tea, salt, pepper, milk, vegetables (except peas and beans; string beans, however, are permitted, as they are not really beans at all).
- b. Frozen fruits and vegetables: Fruits and those vegetables normally permitted for *Pesah* are permitted in their frozen state.
- c. If certified for *Pesah* use by rabbinical authority: *Matzot*, *matzah* flour, *Pesah* noodles, candies, cakes, beverages, canned and processed foods, butter, cheese, jams, jellies, vinegar, wines and liquors, vegetable gelatin, relishes, salad oils, dried fruits, and shortening are permitted if rabbinical authority indicates that these items of food have been manufactured and wrapped free from contact with *hametz*.

Labels and tags marked "*kosher l'Pesah*" are of no value unless they bear rabbinical signature. For milk purchased during the holidays, "*kosher l'Pesah*" certification is preferred.

## **The Sale of Hametz**

Not only do we not eat *hametz* on *Pesah*, but it is prohibited to own it or even have it in our possession. Today, however, with canned goods, liquors, and well-sealed packages, it has become impractical to discard all unused *hametz*. So as to avoid *hametz* being "found" in our possession, we collect it and set it in a place we do not intend to use during the holiday. The *hametz*, stored in a basement or closet, is covered or locked. We then make arrangements for it to "leave" our possession.

The rabbi is designated to act as our agent to sell the remaining *hametz*. To observe this important tradition, you may designate Rabbi Zelermyer as your agent for "*Mekhirat Hametz*" (The Selling of *Hametz*) by giving to him or by faxing the form on page 3 of this insert no later than April 17, or April 18 at the “*Siyum* for the First-Born” at 6:45 am. Any donations made in conjunction with this tradition will be deposited in the Senior Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund for distribution to needy causes for *Pesah*. No donation is required for the sale to be valid.

***Let all who are hungry, come and eat. – Haggadah***

Do you have an extra place at your table?                      Do you need a place at a *seder* table?

*Pesah* hospitality is an important *mitzvah*. If you can host a guest or a family for a *seder*, or if you would like to attend a *seder* in someone’s home, call Paula Weisman at 301-299-7087, ext. 1.

***Mekhirat Hametz Agreement—Pesah 5771/2011***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Additional addresses where hametz might be found:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I hereby designate Rabbi Gerald Zelermyer to act on my behalf in selling the hametz in my possession.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Attached please find my donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund for \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Mail to: Rabbi Gerald Zelermyer; Congregation Har Shalom; 11510 Falls Road;  
Potomac, MD 20854; or fax to: 301-299-2247.

**THE FIFTH QUESTION**

*Why on this night are millions  
of people going hungry?*

מדוע בלילה זה מליוני אנשים רעבים?

Ma-dooah beh-laila zeh mill-yonay ana-sheem re-evim

Because on this night, like every other night, millions of people living in poverty have no other choice.

**Please donate to MAZON and help us rewrite the stories of those less fortunate who struggle with hunger.**



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# PASSOVER 5771 – 2011

## Opening Days – April 18-20

Monday, *Siyum B'hor*..... 6:45 AM

Minyan and study sessions for first-born with breakfast following

Monday and Tuesday evenings.....6:30 PM

Brief Pre-seder *Ma'ariv*

Monday and Tuesday mornings ..... 9:15 AM

Yom Tov services

## Shabbat *Hol HaMoed* – April 22-23

Friday evening .....6:30 PM

Saturday morning ..... 9:15 AM

## Concluding Days – April 24-26

Sunday and Monday evenings .....6:30 PM

Monday – Seventh Day ..... 9:15 AM

Yizkor service .....12:30 PM

Tuesday – Last Morning ..... 9:15 AM

Yizkor memorial prayers are recited as part of the service

## PASSOVER CANDLE LIGHTING

Monday, April 18..... 7:30 PM

Tuesday, April 19 ..... 8:30 PM

Friday, April 22..... 7:35 PM

Sunday, April 24..... 7:35 PM

Monday, April 25..... 8:40 PM

## MINYAN SERVICES AT PASSOVER

Thursday and Friday mornings, April 21 and 22..... 6:45 AM

Sunday morning, April 24 ..... 9:00 AM

## *Hag Kasher V'sameah*

A meaningful Passover holiday to one and all!