



Pesach

מתוך "ליקוטי שמואל"

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When Is Passover?

- Passover 2024 will be celebrated from April 22 - April 30.
- The first Seder will be on April 22 after nightfall, and the second Seder will be on April 23 after nightfall.
- Passover is celebrated by eating matzah (unleaven bread) and maror (bitter herbs).
- For the duration of the 8 (or 7 days in Israel) of Passover, which celebrates the emancipation of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery, chametz (leaven) is strictly avoided.

What Is Passover?

The eight-day Jewish holiday of Passover is celebrated in the early spring, from the 15th through the 22nd of the Hebrew month of Nissan, April 22 - 30, 2024. Passover (Pesach) commemorates the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt. Pesach is observed by avoiding leaven, and highlighted by the Seder meals that include four cups of wine, eating matzah and bitter herbs, and retelling the story of the Exodus.

In Hebrew it is known as Pesach (which means “to pass over”), because G-d passed over the Jewish homes when killing the Egyptian firstborn on the very first Passover eve.

Passover History in a Nutshell

As told in the Bible, after many decades of slavery to the Egyptian pharaohs, during which time the Israelites were subjected to backbreaking labor and unbearable horrors, G-d saw the people's

distress and sent Moses to Pharaoh with a message: “Send forth My people, so that they may serve Me.” But despite numerous warnings, Pharaoh refused to heed G-d’s command. G-d then sent upon Egypt ten devastating plagues, afflicting them and destroying everything from their livestock to their crops.

At the stroke of midnight of 15 Nissan in the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE), G-d visited the last of the ten plagues on the Egyptians, killing all their firstborn. While doing so, G-d spared the children of Israel, “passing over” their homes—hence the name of the holiday. Pharaoh’s resistance was broken, and he virtually chased his former slaves out of the land. The Israelites left in such a hurry, in fact, that the bread they baked as provisions for the way did not have time to rise. Six hundred thousand adult males, plus many more women and children, left Egypt on that day and began the trek to Mount Sinai and their birth as G-d’s chosen people.

In ancient times the Passover observance included the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, which was roasted and eaten at the Seder on the first night of the holiday. This was the case until the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in the 1st century.

How Is Passover Celebrated?

Passover is divided into two parts:

The first two days and last two days (the latter commemorating the splitting of the Red Sea) are full-fledged holidays. Holiday candles are lit at night, and *kiddush* and sumptuous holiday meals are enjoyed on both nights and days. We don’t go to work, drive, write, or switch

on or off electric devices. We are permitted to cook and to carry outdoors

The middle four days are called Chol Hamoed, semi-festive “intermediate days,” when most forms of work are permitted.

No Chametz

To commemorate the unleavened bread that the Israelites ate when they left Egypt, we don’t eat—or even retain in our possession—any chametz from midday of the day before Passover until the conclusion of the holiday. *Chametz* means leavened grain—any food or drink that contains even a trace of wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt or their derivatives, and which wasn’t guarded from leavening or fermentation. This includes bread, cake, cookies, cereal, pasta, and most alcoholic beverages. Moreover, almost any processed food or drink can be assumed to be *chametz* unless certified otherwise.

Ridding our homes of *chametz* is an intensive process. It involves a full-out spring-cleaning search-and-destroy mission during the weeks before Passover, and culminates with a ceremonial search for chametz on the night before Passover, and then a burning of the chametz ceremony on the morning before the holiday. *Chametz* that cannot be disposed of can be sold to a non-Jew (and bought back after the holiday).

Matzah

Instead of *chametz*, we eat matzah—flat unleavened bread. It is a mitzvah to partake of matzah on the two Seder nights (see below for more on this), and during the rest of the holiday it is optional.

Matzo

Matzo (also spelled matzah) is the central food eaten at the Seder, the ritual-rich meal held on the first two nights of Passover (only the first night in Israel).

Matzo is made of just two ingredients—flour and water—which are quickly mixed together and baked before the dough can rise and become chametz (“leaven”), which is strictly forbidden on Passover.

The matzo recalls how when our ancestors left Egyptian slavery they were in such a hurry that there was no time to allow their dough to rise.

Only matzo that is marked as “kosher for Passover” may be consumed on Passover. It is especially recommended to use handmade, round shmurah matzo during the Seder nights.

Three matzos are placed on the Seder Plate, and matzo is eaten at three points during the Seder meal: Once on its own, once together with maror (bitter herbs), and once again as the afikoman (dessert).

Shmurah Matzah

Shmurah means “watched,” and it is an apt description of this matzah, the ingredients of which (the flour and water) are watched from the moment of harvesting and drawing.

“Gebrokts”: Wetted Matzah

Many communities, chassidic ones in particular, have the custom to refrain from eating “gebrokts”—matzah that came in contact with water after it was fully baked—on the first seven days of Passover . . .

Matzo or Matzah?

On the modern spelling of an ancient food

By Menachem Posner

The original Hebrew word is pronounced as “matzoh” among Ashkenazi Jews and “matzah” by Sephardic Jews (as well as speakers of Modern Hebrew).

Can We Bake Our Own Matzah?

Is homemade matzah kosher for Passover?

By Yehuda Shurpin

With just two simple ingredients of flour and water, what could go wrong? Turns out, quite a lot.

It is ideal to use handmade *shmurah* matzah, which has been zealously guarded against moisture from the moment of the harvest..

The Seders

The highlight of Passover is the Seder, observed on each of the first two nights of the holiday. The Seder is a fifteen-step family-oriented tradition and ritual-packed feast.

The focal points of the Seder are:

- Eating matzah.
- Eating bitter herbs—to commemorate the bitter slavery endured by the Israelites.
- Drinking four cups of wine or grape juice—a royal drink to celebrate our newfound freedom.
- The recitation of the Haggadah, a liturgy that describes in detail the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The Haggadah is the fulfillment of the biblical obligation to recount to our children the story of the Exodus on the night of Passover. It begins with a child asking the traditional “Four Questions.”

Why Passover Is Important

Passover, celebrating the greatest series of miracles ever experienced in history, is a time to reach above nature to the miraculous. But how are miracles achieved? Let's take our cue from the matzah. Flat and unflavored, it embodies humility. Through ridding ourselves of inflated egos, we are able to tap into the miraculous well of divine energy we all have within our souls.

Passover, also known as Pesach, is the 8-day Jewish holiday celebrated in the early spring that commemorates the Israelites' emancipation from slavery in ancient Egypt.

What is the history of Passover?

After decades of slavery to the Egyptian pharaohs, G-d saw the Israelites' distress and sent Moses to Pharaoh to demand their release. Despite numerous warnings, Pharaoh refused to heed G-d's command. G-d then wrought upon Egypt 10 devastating plagues. By

the last, Pharaoh's resistance was broken and he virtually chased his former slaves out of the land.

Why is it called Passover?

During the last of the 10 plagues, death of the Egyptian firstborns, G-d spared the children of Israel, "passing over" their homes—hence the name of the holiday.

How is Passover celebrated?

During Passover, chametz (leavened bread) is strictly avoided, and matzah is consumed instead. The highlight is the Seder, a ritual-packed feast conducted on the first two nights, during which we eat matzah, drink four cups of wine, recline, and recount the story of our freedom. .

What is *chametz*?

Chametz refers to any food or drink that contains leavened grain, such as wheat, barley, rye, oats, or spelt. It includes bread, cake, cookies, cereal, pasta, and most alcoholic beverages. *Chametz* must be completely removed from possession or sold to a non-Jew before Passover.

How can I sell my *chametz*?

Ideally one should sell their *chametz* by contacting their local orthodox Rabbi. If that isn't an option, you can [sell your *chametz* online](#).

What is matzah?

Eating matzah—flat, unleavened bread—is a central component of Passover. Handmade shemurah matzah is considered ideal. It is eaten during the Seder and can be consumed throughout the holiday.

What is the Seder?

The Seder is a 15-step ritual-packed feast held on the first two nights of Passover. It involves eating matzah and bitter herbs, drinking four cups of wine or grape juice, and having the children ask the Four Questions. The Haggadah, a liturgy detailing the story of the Exodus, is the guidebook.

Why is Passover important?

Passover commemorates the miraculous liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. It is a time to reflect on humility, Divine energy, and the potential for miracles.

Dayeinu – Mount Sinai but no Torah?!

Written by d fine

In Dayeinu we say ‘if You [HaShem] would have brought us to Mount Sinai but would not have given us the Torah that would have been enough.’ But is that really true – what would we have gained from standing at Mt Sinai but not getting the Torah? The answer is that before one can accept Torah fully, one must have yiras HaShem – fear of HaShem. And this is what we got on Mt Sinai even before the Torah was given. We saw the lightning, etc and gained real yiras HaShem. So too do we see that the psukim after shacharis that detail the remembering of Mattan Torah do not say anything about receiving the Torah – they just talk about the spectacle of standing at Mt Sinai. Why?

For the same reason – because the way to remember everything that went on and really live by the Torah is by utilizing and developing the yiras HaShem that we achieved at Mt Sinai. And it is this receiving of yiras HaShem that would have been enough of a gift even without receiving of the Torah.

Four Cups...of milk??!! : Pesachim 99b

Written by Anonymous

Even the poorest man in Israel may not eat until he reclines and they must not give him less than four cups of wine, eve, even if he is supported by the charity soup kitchen. (Gemara Pesachim 99b) A famous story is related concerning Rav Chaim of Brisk who, hours before Pesach, received a knock at the door. Outside stood a poor man who said: “Rabbi, I need to ask you a question about Seder night. Is it permissible to drink milk for the four cups at the Seder?” Rav Chaim asked his wife to bring five rubles, which he gave to the man and wished him a happy Pesach. When the man had departed, Rav Chaim’s wife inquired: “Why did you give so much money to that man? One ruble would have been sufficient to buy wine for the whole of Pesach.” Rav Chaim replied: “Since he was asking whether he could drink milk at the Seder, I deduced that he obviously could not afford meat either! The extra money was to purchase meat for the festival.” This story reminds us of two important lessons. Firstly, there is a Mitzvah called Lifnim MiShurat HaDin, going beyond the call of duty. Sure, we can offer basic help where required; but a higher level is to provide additional assistance where possible. Secondly, this story teaches us about Chesed, kindness. We should always be considering and assessing the needs of others, and responding accordingly.

Freedom: Matzah or bagels?

Written by Jonathan Caller

Q: It’s true that when we were taken out of Egypt we only had time to bake Matzah, and therefore on seder night the eating of the matzah symbolizes

freedom. However, surely matzah also symbolizes slavery as well, since matzah (which took very little time to bake) is what the Egyptians fed us in order to maximise our working hours, so how does it symbolize freedom? Shouldn't we have bagels and bread, which would surely really symbolize freedom! A: I heard the following in the name of Rav Grunfeld . Freedom is being able to serve Hashem. Freedom is not where we are released from all obligations and free to serve ourselves. Freedom is being able to serve Hashem, rather than being forced to serve finite beings in Egypt. This is exactly the Exodus. Hashem took us out from serving Egypt and allowed us to dedicate our lives to serving Hashem. Therefore, bagels do not remind us of freedom, they do not help us internalize that Hashem freed us; if anything they would let us think that we are free from all obligations. But we are not. It's only matzah, where the baker is bound by something, time, that reminds us of our freedom, since the matzah reminds us to serve Hashem rather than anything else.

Humor

A Rabbi took his Passover lunch to eat outside in the park. He sat down on a bench and began eating. Since Jews do not eat leavened bread during the eight-day holiday, he was eating Matzo, flat crunchy unleavened bread that has dozens of perforations. A little later, a blind man came by and sat down next to him. Feeling neighborly, the Rabbi passed a sheet of matzo to the blind man. The blind man handled the matzo for a few minutes, looked puzzled, the blind man gives the matzah back to the rabbi and says "no thanks, I can't read Hebrew"

What do you call someone who derives pleasure from the bread of affliction?

A matzochist

An aerospace company is building a new super fighter jet, but the wings break during every trial. They've tried everything - different materials, strengthening structures - nothing works. The chief engineer is bemoaning the stresses of the job to his rabbi. He tells the rabbi at length about his frustrations, and how he is all out of ideas. The rabbi looks thoughtful and asks 'do the wings always break in the same place?' 'Yes rabbi, every time'. The rabbi takes a deep breath and says 'could I come and visit you at work?' 'of course rabbi, you're always welcome'. The man gives the rabbi directions and agrees a time for the next day.

The next day the rabbi arrives at the aerospace company and is brought in to look at this amazing new fighter jet. The man shows him round and the rabbi walks all the way around it, and looks thoughtful. 'Is this where it breaks?' he asks, 'yes rabbi, right along this line'. The rabbi says 'I think I know what you can do, can we get onto the wing?' 'sure rabbi, I'll get a ladder'. They climb onto the wing and the rabbi points to the joint of the wing 'if you drill a line of very small holes along there, from edge to edge, maybe a quarter of an inch apart'. The man frowns and says 'but why rabbi?' The rabbi shrugs and says 'well the matzo never breaks along the line of the holes!'

A lady calls the Rabbi at 10 pm Erev Pesach.

Wife: "Rabbi!, we scattered ten pieces of bread around the house, and my husband only found nine of them. What should we do?"

Rabbi: Is the bread the size of kezayis?

Wife: Yes.

Rabbi: So he has to find it!!

At midnight, she calls again.

Wife: Rabbi!, my husband has already dismantled all the closets, taken out the rugs, turned over the furniture, and nothing. He can not find the tenth piece of chometz!

Rabbi: There's nothing to do. He must search until he finds it.

2:00 am she calls again.

Wife: Dear Rabbi, we are all tired. My husband has searched 702 times as a gematria of Shabbos, searched on the roof, opened the plumbing, everything, and still has not found it. What can we do?

Rabbi: If it's a kazayis, there is no choice. He has to find it!

Wife: Can I at least give him a hint?