

LAWS AND CUSTOMS FOR PASSOVER

Oheb Shalom Congregation

GETTING RID OF CHAMETZ (LEAVEN)

- **Bedikat Chametz** (the search for the leaven) is done on the night before Passover after it's dark out. This year it is done on Sunday night, April 9. The appropriate passage that is recited upon searching for chametz can be found in the Haggadah.
- **Mechirat Chametz** (selling chametz, or leaven) - Since we are not allowed to have any chametz in our legal possession during Passover, it is customary to sell to a non-Jew any chametz that we cannot give away, eat, or throw away. It is the usual practice to appoint the rabbi as an agent to sell our chametz. The sale of chametz should be accomplished by Friday morning, April 19. A form appointing Rabbi Cooper as agent in the sale of *chametz* is available online or from our office. Those who wish to arrange the sale of *chametz* directly with the rabbi should call to set up a time. It is appropriate to donate to the Rabbi's Charitable Fund when arranging for the sale of chametz. All such donations are used to aid the needy in our community.
- No chametz may be eaten after Friday, April 19, beginning at approximately 10:00 am., until the conclusion of Passover.
- **Please do not bring any food into the synagogue building during the holiday of Passover.**

SIYYUM BEKHORIM- According to the Torah, the tenth plague caused the death of all first-born in Egypt. As an expression of regret that others, especially the innocent of Egypt, had to die so that we might be free, it is customary for Jewish first-born to fast on the day of Erev Passover. However, since it is undesirable to fast, first-born children are called upon to complete a unit of study (the word "Siyum" means conclusion). The traditional celebration for celebrating the completion of study calls for eating, and doing so is a greater mitzvah than fasting on Erev Passover. Thus, it is customary for the rabbi to arrange for a study session so that first-born may fulfill this obligation and thus be exempt from fasting. The Siyum Bechorim (celebration of the first-born) will be held this year on Friday, April 19 at 7:45 am. Both male and female firstborns should attend this ceremony.

GENERAL DEFINITION OF CHAMETZ (LEAVEN)

Chametz is any one of five grains (wheat, barley, oats, spelt, or rye) that has come into contact with water and been allowed to rise. Ashkenazic rabbis also prohibit legumes (known in Hebrew as kitniyot) such as beans (not string beans) and peas, corn, and rice. Products derived from legumes, such as peanut oil, are permitted if they do not otherwise contain chametz.

PERMITTED AND PROHIBITED FOODS

1. These foods require no Kosher l'Pesach label bearing rabbinic certification (otherwise known as a "*Pesach Hechsher*") **if purchased before Pesach**: unopened packages or containers of natural coffee without cereal additives; sugar; pure tea; salt (not iodized); pepper; natural spices; frozen fruit juices with no additives; frozen (uncooked) vegetables; milk; butter; cottage cheese; cream cheese; ripened cheeses; frozen (uncooked) fruit with no additives; baking soda. A *Pesach Hechsher* is required if they are bought after the start of the holiday.
2. These foods require **no *Pesach Hechsher* at all**: fresh fruits and vegetables; eggs; fresh fish, and meat.
3. These foods require a *Pesach Hechsher* **if purchased before or during Pesach**: all baked products (including matzah, cakes, matzah flour, matzah meal, and any products containing matzah); canned or bottled fruit juices; canned tuna; wine; vinegar; liquor; oils; dried fruits; candy; chocolate flavored milk; ice cream; yogurt; soda.
4. These **processed foods** (canned, bottled, or frozen) require a *Pesach Hechsher* if purchased during Pesach: milk and milk products; butter; juices; vegetables; fruit; spices; coffee; tea; fish; plus everything listed in #3 above.
5. Miscellaneous items: Detergents, if permitted during the year, do not require a kosher l'Pesach label. Medicines prescribed by a doctor in connection with life-sustaining therapy are permitted. Other medical substances (aspirin, vitamins, etc.) may contain hametz and should be avoided. If necessary, capsules are preferable. Baby food and baby formula are usually hametz. Toothpastes, lotions, ointments, and creams are permissible. Cosmetics made from grain alcohol are prohibited (the ban on Chametz extends to possession, not only consumption).

MAKING UTENSILS KOSHER FOR PASSOVER

1. When possible, dishes, flatware, and utensils reserved for Passover should be used during the holiday. If items used for chametz must be used during the holiday, the following guidelines apply to making them kosher for Passover.
2. Silverware, knives, forks, and spoons made wholly of metal may be kashered if thoroughly cleaned and immersed in boiling water. Glass may be used if thoroughly cleaned. Fine china that has been used for chametz may be used for Passover if it has not been used for a year, if thoroughly cleaned in hot water.
3. Metal pots and pans for cooking (but not for baking) if wholly of metal (but also coated with Teflon) may be used if cleaned and immersed in boiling water.
4. Baking utensils used during the rest of the year, even if they are made of glass, cannot be kashered.
5. Earthenware, enamelware, and porcelain used during the year cannot be kashered.
6. Ovenproof ceramics such as Pyrex and Corningware may be kashered.
7. Tables, closets, counters, and cupboards should be cleaned and covered with paper.
8. Toasters and toaster ovens cannot be koshered. Appliances with removable parts such as mixers and food processors can be kashered if the parts that come in contact with chametz can be removed and kashered.
9. Dishwashers may be kashered by cleaning by hand and running them empty through a full cycle with detergent.
10. Ovens should be kashered by thorough scrubbing and then turned on to full heat for one hour (or run through a cleaning cycle if self-cleaning). Stove burners should be scrubbed and then put on full heat for one half-hour.
11. Microwave ovens should be wiped clean with a damp cloth, a bowl of water put in, and then turned on to have the water boil and steam inside.

12. Kitchen sinks, if metal, should be thoroughly cleaned and then boiling water should be poured over them. Porcelain sinks should be cleaned and a sink rack should be used. If dishes are to be soaked in a porcelain sink, a dish basin must be used.
13. Refrigerators and freezers should be thoroughly washed.