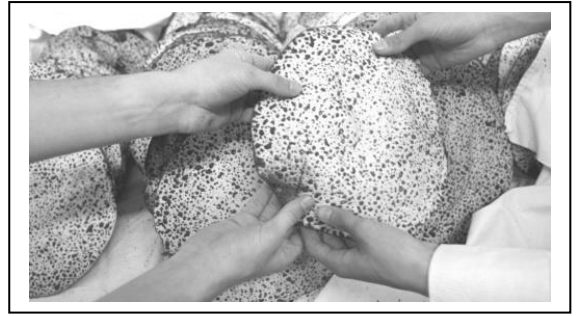


Passover 2017

The Passover Guide and information is available on our Temple website- templewb.org. You'll get the Passover Guide, my somewhat rebellious thoughts about celebrating Passover, and a link to the official United Synagogue/Rabbinical Assembly Passover Guide (<http://tinyurl.com/TIPassover>)



The holiday begins with an ancient tradition: The Fast of the Firstborn. Since it was the firstborn of the Israelites that Pharaoh commanded be cast into the Nile, the 10th plague was the death of the firstborn of Egypt. And soon after came the Torah command to sanctify the first born of the animals and even of humans as belonging to God. We still do a Pidyon haBen ceremony to “redeem” the firstborn male child from God in exchange for silver coins. Sometimes, when that baby is screaming for hours in the middle of the night, we think about getting those coins back and letting God listen to the screaming infant for a few hours! But as the child grows older we bring him to the Temple on the morning of the First Seder (Monday, April 10 at 7:15 a.m.). The firstborn son is supposed to fast on this day in commemoration of all that happened to firstborns in antiquity. But we have a brief study session following the service which calls for eating afterwards, even for the firstborn. So bring everyone- firstborn sons and daughters, second born, third born, and beyond and have your last bagel before all the Matzah. **Monday morning, April 10, 7:15 a.m.**

The rest of the holiday is a celebration of freedom from slavery. It's a pretty big deal, even thousands of years later. The Seder meal helps us re-enact some of what our ancestors experienced. The Matzah and getting rid of the Chametz has become a huge part of the observance of Passover. And in Temple we celebrate that freedom on **Tuesday morning, April 11 (First Day)** and the following **Monday morning April 17 (Last Day)**. We'll read the story of the Exodus, and the song at the crossing of the Red Sea and **Yizkor will also be recited** (we will also have Yizkor following evening services Sunday, April 16 after 5:15 Minyan).

That Chametz and the Matzah have come to symbolize the holiday of Passover. Matzah takes over for a week. People who eat very little bread normally consume a ton of flour over the Passover holiday. It's in the form of Matzah, or Matzah meal. Or Matzah cake flour. Or Matzah farfel. Various different sizes of particles of Matzah, which is essentially compressed flour and water. The ancient Egyptians developed sourdough. They were among the first to use yeast to let their bread rise while everyone else ate flatbread or one kind or another. Leaving Egypt meant leaving that risen dough behind and living on flat pita. It was the first major sign to the Israelites that freedom requires some sacrifices. For seven days, the Torah commands us, give up that fancy bread, those cakes and cookies, and have flour and water in a cracker to remind you of how valuable a life with liberty is. Matzah is called Lachmah Anyah- the bread of poverty. Give up the fancy stuff for a week and live on the basics.

In our tradition-based Jewish lives we have ignored the message of Passover and adopted instead an obsessive detail based concern over Chametz. If some rabbi in Queens hasn't stamped the package with a P for Passover we might as well be eating pork. Somehow Manischewitz muffin mix made from pulverized Matzah is good for Passover, but green beans and peas aren't. That's beyond absurd, it's a shame. We miss the opportunity to get rid of the REAL CHAMETZ in our lives and homes. The growing fungus of anger and resentment. The rising fermenting anguish that grudges cause. How can we imagine true freedom when we hold ourselves and others hostage in the form of grudges and resentment?

There's a tradition of “selling” our Chametz before Passover. We appoint someone (like the rabbi) to be our agent to “sell” our Chametz- our dishes, our utensils, our pots and pans, our food pantry, even our businesses to someone who is not Jewish. This non-Jewish person then “owns” our Chametz for the week of Passover and

we don't have to worry about being in trouble with God for violating the commandment in the Torah: No Chametz shall be found in your habitations throughout the seven days of Passover." Hey, it's not MY habitation, this week it "belongs" to our custodian!

I'm not downplaying the importance of such rituals. I'd like to see it continue, but ONLY if that means that all the emotional Chametz gets cleaned out as well. If we're going to get rid of the half empty box of Cheerios, fine. But we must also get rid of the grudges which eat us up too. We must use Passover as a half-way point to Rosh Hashanah and ask forgiveness for the hurts we've caused others. We've come out of Egypt- which in Hebrew is Mitzrayim. It comes from the word for narrow. We must come out of our NARROW MINDEDNESS into the freedom of letting bygones be bygones. And selling our nasty thoughts about others to a Gentile won't do any good at all.

So by all means clean your house and discard your old Chametz. Refer to the online Passover guide and follow the parameters of the holiday according to your level of comfort. Remember- meat, fish, poultry, and vegetables and fruits are Kosher for Passover!! You don't need to eat more than a handful of Matzah if you don't want to! And sell your Chametz by sending back the form below, and check off the part that says you're getting rid of your internal Chametz.

We collect Ma'ot Chittin now- Money to help the poor buy flour to make Matzah on Passover. Sometimes Jewish families need the money not just for Matzah, but to pay their rent. I'm appealing to everyone who might want to get rid of some of that built up Chametz inside to do a Mitzvah and help local Jewish families experience a bit more freedom. Please consider making a donation to the Discretionary Fund as you "sell" your Chametz. Thank you- and have a Happy and MEANINGFUL Pesach!

Rabbi Kaplan

JUST FILL IN this form and send or bring it to Minyan or the Temple Office as soon as you can, and definitely by Monday, April 10, 2017 with a check made payable to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

I hereby authorize Rabbi Larry G. Kaplan to serve as my agent for the sale of all Chametz (Leaven) in my possession.

I _____ appoint Rabbi Larry Kaplan as my agent to sell my Chametz for the week of Passover and absolve me of any infraction for any Chametz which may remain in my home or business, the addresses of which are indicated below.

I am enclosing a check to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund to help the family mentioned above. _____