

Pesach Customs and Practices

When: Pesach begins on Saturday, April 19th at night, and lasts through the day of Sunday, April 27th.

Prohibition of Chametz: It is not only forbidden to eat *chametz* on Pesach, it is also forbidden to have *chametz* in our possession or in our sight. Therefore, a thorough cleaning of all places where *chametz* may be found is required by the night of Thursday, April 17. What is required is to clean all places where *chametz* may be found, used or stored in our homes, basement, pantries, offices, cars, purses and book bags. Don't forget your *talit* bag! Spring cleaning of rooms and areas that never have *chametz* there is not necessary. *Chametz* products that we are not consuming or throwing away before Pesach should be stored in a closed or covered cabinet. Dishes and utensils used for *chametz* should also be stored separately in order to avoid the mistaken use of these during Pesach.

Kitchen Preparation: We only use Pesach dishes, utensils and cookware on Pesach. The kitchen counters and appliances must be made Kosher for Pesach before any food for Passover is prepared in or on them. The kashering process differs for each appliance or utensil, and some may not be koshered at all. Please consult a reliable source for the laws and method of kashering, and do not hesitate to ask the rabbi for assistance. Many of the major supervising agencies have kashering guides on their web sites. Kashering must be completed before you burn the *chametz*.

Shopping: Buy only products with a Kosher for Passover label from a reliable supervisory organization. The primary reliable agencies are the OU, the Star-K, the Chof-K, the OK, and KAJ. Many other supervisory agencies are also acceptable, but consult the rabbi before purchasing a product with a kashrut symbol that you are unsure is acceptable. Many products can be used on Pesach without a special marking, and most of the kashrut agencies have lists of these on their web sites. When in doubt, please ask the rabbi for assistance.

Mechirat Chametz — Selling of the Chametz: The *chametz* that we have not consumed or disposed of before Pesach may not remain in our possession during the holiday. In order to avoid undue hardship or a large economic loss, arrangements can be made to sell the *chametz* to a non-Jew for the duration of the holiday. As indicated above, all *chametz* remaining in your home must be stored in a closed or covered cabinet. Non-Passover utensils can be stored separately since we do not need to sell these. In order to execute a legally and halachically binding sale, you must complete the authorization form found in this *ChaiLine* and submit it by 10:00 am on Friday, April 18. It is preferable to do this in person, but forms submitted to the office or by mail are also acceptable.

Bedikat Chametz – Search for Chametz: We check the house and search for any *chametz* that we may not have found during our cleaning after nightfall on Thursday, April 17. It is customary to place 10 pieces of *chametz* around the house prior to the search to make sure that our search is complete. Any *chametz* that we find during our search should be stored or disposed of, except for that which we plan to eat on Friday and Shabbat or burn the next morning. Before beginning the search we recite a blessing, and following the search we recite a statement of nullification for any *chametz* that we may not have found. The blessing and nullification can be found in a siddur or Haggadah.

Ta'anit Bechorim — Fast of the First Born: The fast of First Born is usually held on Erev Pesach. Since Erev Pesach this year is on Shabbat, the fast is observed on Thursday, April 17. The first born are required to fast in order to commemorate their deliverance from death during the tenth plague in Egypt. It is customary for the first-born to participate in a meal served in celebration of a *mitzvah*, such as a *Brit Mila* (circumcision) or *siyum* (the completion of a tractate of the Talmud). Those who attend one of these events celebrate with the partaking of refreshments and are then

exempt from this fast. A *siyum* will be held at Beth David following *Shacharit* services.

Bi'ur Chametz – Burning the Chametz: The burning of the *chametz* is usually done on Erev Pesach. However, since Erev Pesach occurs on Shabbat this year, this is done on Friday, April 18. It is customary to burn the *chametz* that we have not sold or have set aside to eat the rest of the day and for the Shabbat meals on Friday night and early Shabbat morning at the time that it is usually burned on Erev Pesach if it occurs during the week. This year we should burn the *chametz* before 11:54 am. If you are unable to burn it at that time, it may be burned later that day, but before the beginning of Shabbat. **The statement of nullification usually recited at that time is not recited this year at the time of burning. Rather, it will be recited on Shabbat morning, as detailed below.**

Matzah and food on Erev Pesach: It is forbidden to eat matzah during the entire day of Erev Pesach in order that we may hunger for the taste of matzah at the Seder. Under some conditions, foods containing matzah meal may be eaten, as well as egg matzah, which we generally do not eat on Pesach. Please consult the rabbi for specifics. After 4:15 pm we may only eat small quantities of fruits, vegetables, meat, eggs or fish.

Since Erev Pesach occurs on Shabbat, and we have an obligation to eat *shalosh seudot* – three meals that include bread, special care and planning must be made in advance to enable the proper observance of Shabbat laws and Pesach laws. **I urge you to attend the Shabbat luncheon on April 12 when I will discuss these laws and procedures in greater detail.**

Some will avoid all *chametz* this Shabbat and make the required *hamotzie* on egg matzah. Others will have small *chametz* rolls for that requirement. Care and special laws must be followed in disposing of any left over food and *chametz*.

It is prohibited to eat *chametz* on Erev Pesach, Shabbat, April 19, after 10:45 am. All *chametz* must then be removed from our possession and the statement of nullification, found in a siddur or Haggadah, is recited before 11:52 am. What foods are permitted to be eaten for the rest of the day, including for the “third meal” (*seudah shelishit*) will be discussed on April 12. **Please note that no preparation for the Seder, including setting the table, may be done on Shabbat until after the conclusion of Shabbat at 8:31 pm and a *havdalah* statement (*baruch hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol*) is recited.**

Seder Preparation: The special foods for the Seder plate for both *Sedarim* should be prepared during the day of Friday, April 18. Yom Tov candles may not be lit and the *Kiddush* at the Seder may not be recited until after nightfall on either night. The *afikoman* should be eaten before 1:00 AM. Some people have the custom of beginning *sefirat ha'omer* – the counting of the omer – at the second Seder instead of counting during the evening service.

After Pesach: *Chametz* that was owned by a Jew during Pesach may not be consumed, even after Pesach. The *chametz* that you arranged to sell before Pesach will be returned to your possession at approximately 9:45 pm on Sunday, April 27. Wagner's bakery is not Jewish owned, and even though their products are not kosher for Passover, any product may be used immediately following Passover. Most of the local supermarkets are not owned by Jews and kosher *chametz* products may be purchased immediately following Pesach. Price Chopper is Jewish owned and arranged for its *chametz* to be sold to a non-Jew through the Albany Vaad Hakashrut. Friendly's Ice Cream outlets are Jewish owned and arranged for its *chametz* ice cream products to be sold to a non-Jew through the Rabbi Shaya Kilimnick of Beth Sholom Congregation in Rochester, NY.