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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April 2020

Nisan 5780

SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting
🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)
*For service times (as we pray for their
resumption soon after lockdown)
see page 2*

10 & 11 April – 17 Nisan
Chol Hamoed Pesach
🕒 5:38 – 🕒 6:27

17 & 18 April – 24 Nisan
🕒 Shemini
🕒 5:31 – 🕒 6:20

24 & 25 April – 1 Iyar
🕒 Tazria & Metzora
🕒 5:25 – 🕒 6:14

1 & 2 May – 8 Iyar
🕒 Acharei Mot & Kedoshim
🕒 5:19 – 🕒 6:09

RABBI'S MESSAGE

As for you, you shall not leave the entrance of the house (Exodus 14, 22)

Hashem will pass over the entrance and He will not allow the destroyer to enter your homes to smite (Exodus 14, 23)

Ever since that first Passover, back in Egypt, we have gathered in our homes to commemorate that fateful night, on the eve of the Exodus and to celebrate our concomitant freedom. As tradition has it, we start the Seder with the famous Ma Nishtana, "How different is this night from all other nights?"

But this year, as we prepare for this special night, the

foremost question on our mind is, "How different will this Pesach be from all other Passovers of our life?"

Our Seder will not be preceded by a Shul service, to set the tone for the evening. That will be missed, but the focus of the Pesach celebrations is actually on our homes. We like to compartmentalise our Judaism: when we want to practice our religion and connect to Hashem, we enter the Synagogue; once we come home and close the door, we want to be just us, free to live our life, as we wish, out of the public eye.

Just like the first Seder, back in Egypt, had to happen in each respective home, the locale of all subsequent Pesach observances is in the Jewish home, where families gather to observe the rituals.

With lockdown now in effect, our focus this year is going to be on our immediate family only. No extended family, no guests. Not the large social events that we are accustomed to. For a community that measures the quality of a Seder by the quantity of people we managed to seat around our tables, this is truly painful. It is a pain we are all going to experience. I feel deeply for the

many who will be totally alone on that night.

The silver lining is that, this year, Pesach cannot slip into a mere social event. We will have a golden opportunity that we should not miss: to truly explore the theme of freedom, what spiritual slavery means in contemporary terms and the ultimate redemption of the future.

On the theme of future redemption, the Prophet speaks of the painful lead up to this era, known as the "birth pangs of Messiah."

Go my people, enter your rooms and close your door behind you, hide for a brief moment, until the wrath has passed. (Isaiah 26,20)

As we look in Rashi's commentary for some deeper insight into this poignantly and prophetically topical prophecy, we find several interpretations.

The first explanation is that G-d is telling us to take refuge into our Batei Knesiot and Batei Midrashot, synagogues and houses of study. How so, you may ask? Our current circumstances have forced us to move the shul into our homes, to turn our abodes into a mini-sanctuary. Our residences have become places where we now pray and learn—there is an abundance

of lectures, shiurim and virtual minyanim via Zoom just in our own communities, not to mention beyond our borders, and for those off work, available time for this.

Rashi then quotes Rabbi Tanchuma, who suggests entering your rooms as a journey into the depths of your heart to ponder your actions. Isolation from the hustle and bustle of the world affords us the unique opportunity of true introspection.

Targum Yonatan explains closing the doors as the performance of good deeds that will protect us from harm. Now more than ever, we can commit to upgrading our observance of Yiddishkeit. Even without freedom of movement, there are so many ways we can show kindness to others. According to Rabbi Tanchuma, it is a reference to the closing of the aperture of our mouth, to refrain from questioning G-d's decisions at this time.

How different this Pesach will be from all other Passovers of our lives! May Hashem indeed Pass Over our homes and not allow the destroyer to strike.

May this very different Pesach be one of true redemption. Not just from the 21 days of restrictions but also from some 21 centuries of Exile.

In the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy and stay home.

Chag Sameach

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

This article was first published in the SA Jewish Report on 2 April 2020

FROM THE REBBETZIN

I can tell what time it is by the sounds outside. As I open my eyes I listen. If the birds are chirping, it is almost 5:00. If the hadedas are at it then it is even later. And if it is just the peacocks then it is still the middle of the night.

This week, when my eyes would no longer stay shut and my head was filled with millions of worries about the world we have been thrust into, I was fascinated to hear the birds begin to chirp and see the sun begin to rise, oblivious to the chaos.

Often, erev Pesach is a stressful time, with so much to do. This year, how we pray for the stress we complained about last year. This Pesach will be different.

But there are some constants. We will all sing the exact same Ma Nishtana, as always, but we may have a different intention as we do so. There is a Chassidic custom that before reciting Ma Nishtana we add the words "Father, I want to ask you four questions." This year, we will be addressing our father in heaven. One of the questions will be, "Father, when will this harsh decree end?" Then we will continue our Seder, singing Vehi Sh'eamda. He who has saved us time and time again will save us once again.

May it be in this month of redemption that once again our stresses are only about the cooking, cleaning and shopping. And that when we wake up in the night, we will smile as we listen out for the chirping of the birds.

I wish you a kosher and happy Pesach. May Hashem watch over all of us, protect us and keep us safe and healthy.

Rivky

THE SEDER PLATE

Before you start the Seder, set up a Seder plate as follows:

1. Zeroah - upper right

A piece of roasted meat (the neck of a chicken or shankbone). It commemorates the Pesach sacrifice in Temple days. It is **not** eaten during the Seder.

2. Beitzah - upper left

A hard-boiled egg which commemorates the Chagigah offering in Temple days. It is customary to eat the egg with salt-water at the beginning of the meal.

3. Maror - middle

Bitter herbs: pure ground horseradish (not mixed with sugar or beetroot) or romaine lettuce. Cos or Chinese lettuce is also acceptable. Commemorates the 'bitter lives' of our ancestors in Egypt.

4. Charoset - bottom right

A paste made from apples, nuts and wine (you may also add pears, dates, figs, pomegranates, ginger and cinnamon) - commemorates the cement used in the Jews' forced labour in Egypt.

5. Karpas - bottom left

Any vegetable can be used. It is customary to use parsley, onions, potatoes or celery. The Karpas is dipped in salt water, which is reminiscent of the tears of the Jewish slaves.

6. Chazeret - bottom middle

The same herb used for Maror (no. 3) - the Chazeret is used for the Matzah Maror sandwich eaten during step 9 (Korech) of the Seder.

SERVICE TIMES



SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday & Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday	7:15
<i>24/04 (Rosh Chodesh) 7:00</i>	
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	5:30
Friday	5:45
From 24/04	5:30
Shabbat	5:15

PESACH 5780 TIMETABLE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT
		7 April 13 Nissan	8 April 14 Nissan	9 April 15 Nissan	10 April 16 Nissan	11 April 17 Nissan
		<i>Sale of Chametz by the end of today!</i> <i>Checking for Chametz in the evening</i>	EREV PESACH <i>Siyum in the morning</i> <i>Eat Chametz until 9:45 a.m. -</i> <i>Burn & Annul Chametz before 10:45 a.m.</i> <i>Eruv Tavshilin in the afternoon</i> <i>First Seder in the evening</i> ז"ל 5:40 p.m.	1st DAY PESACH <i>Second Seder in the evening</i> ז"ל 6:28 p.m.*	2nd DAY PESACH ז"ל 5:38 p.m.*	SHABBAT CHOL HAMOED ז"ל 6:27 p.m.
12 April 18 Nissan	13 April 19 Nissan	14 April 20 Nissan	15 April 21 Nissan	16 April 22 Nissan		
Second Day Chol Hamoed	Third Day Chol Hamoed	Fourth Day Chol Hamoed ז"ל 5:34 p.m.	7th DAY PESACH ז"ל 6:23 p.m.*	8th DAY PESACH <i>Yizkor in the morning</i> ז"ל 6:22 p.m.		
ז"ל Candle Lighting -- * Light from pre-existing flame – ז"ל Shabbat or Chag ends (Havdalah)						

WHAT TO DO, AND HOW TO DO IT

★ Sale of Chametz (Must be completed before Friday 8 April at 8:30 a.m.)

During the eight days of Pesach one may neither eat nor own any Chametz (leavened food). It is not practical to consume or to physically get rid of all Chametz before the onset of Pesach. One may however sell all Chametz to a non-Jewish person - if the sale is valid according to Jewish law then the Chametz is not 'owned' during Pesach. The technical details of this sale are involved because the goods do not physically change hands. It is highly recommended that you appoint a rabbi as your proxy to sell your Chametz before Pesach. The rabbi will also re-purchase your Chametz from the Gentile at the completion of Pesach.

Please complete attached form and send back to the office via fax or email. If unable please complete form at <https://tinyurl.com/OxfordChametz>

★ Bedikat Chametz (Tuesday 7 April in the evening)

This is the traditional search for Chametz (leaven and leavened products), using a candle, wooden spoon and feather. It is customary to hide ten pieces of bread around the house. These are then "found" when the search is performed.

Before starting recite the following Bracha

BARUCH ATA ADO-NAI ELO-HEINU MELECH HA-OLAM ASHER KIDESHANU BEMITZVOTAV VETZIVANU AL BI-UR CHAMETZ.

When the search is complete, recite the following formula to annul any Chametz that you have not found (original Aramaic text can be found in the first pages of most Haggadot):

ANY FORM OF LEAVEN THAT IS IN MY POSSESSION WHICH I HAVE NOT SEEN OR HAVE NOT REMOVED, OR HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF, SHALL BE NULL AND DISOWNED AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH.

★ Siyum (Wednesday 8 April in the morning)

All male first-born are obligated to fast on the day before Pesach to commemorate the miracle of their salvation from the plague of Death of the First Born. There is one way that this obligation is waived: if the first-born takes part in a festive Mitzvah-meal, such as the meal after a Bris, or after a Siyum (the completion of a tractate of the Talmud). This year, please avail yourself of one of the Siyum ceremonies online at <http://tinyurl.com/SiyumJhb>

★ Burning of Chametz (Wednesday 8 April before 10:45 a.m.)

Any Chametz found in the course of the previous evening's search and any other leftover Chametz is burnt at this stage. If you are unable to light a fire on your property, you may dispose of the Chametz by flushing it down the toilet. If this is not an option, render the Chametz inedible by pouring Jik or Handy Andy over it.

★ Annulment of Chametz (Friday 19 April before 10:45 a.m.)

The second formula for annulling the Chametz is recited after the Chametz has been burnt (Here again the original Aramaic text can be found in the first pages of most Haggadot.)

ANY FORM OF LEAVEN THAT IS IN MY POSSESSION WHICH I HAVE SEEN OR HAVE NOT SEEN, WHICH I HAVE REMOVED OR HAVE NOT REMOVED, SHALL BE NULL AND DISOWNED AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH.

★ Eruv Tavshilin (Tuesday 7 April before 5:30 p.m.)

It is forbidden to cook on a Festival for the next day. When a Festival occurs on a Friday we are allowed to prepare food for Shabbat provided the preparations begin before the Festival. For this purpose we make an Eruv Tavshilin (literally "mingling of the foods") on the day preceding the Festival. An Eruv Tavshilin consists of a matzah, along with any other cooked food (e.g. meat, fish or egg), that we set aside before the Festival begins and then eat on Shabbat.

The Eruv foods are taken in the hand and the Bracha is made, followed by this declaration:

BA-RUCH A-TA ADO-NAI E-LO-HEI-NU ME-LECH HA-OLAM A-SHER KI-DE-SHA-NU BE-MITZ-VO-TAV VE-TZI-VA-NU AL MITZVAT ERUV.

THROUGH THIS IT SHALL BE PERMISSIBLE FOR US TO BAKE, TO COOK, TO PUT AWAY [A DISH TO PRESERVE ITS HEAT], TO KINDLE A LIGHT, AND TO PREPARE AND DO ON THE FESTIVAL ALL THAT IS NECESSARY FOR THE SHABBAT.

The Eruv is eaten at one of the Shabbat meals.

★ Yizkor (Thursday 16 April in the morning)

Yizkor may be recited at home, without a Minyan. Artsroll Siddur page 810, Singer page 436

SEDER SHEL PESACH

A Step-by-step Guide to the Seder

Seder means order. The simple instructions below will help you to lead (or participate in) a Seder with a minimum of anxiety.

Before starting your Seder, prepare your Seder plate.

1. KADESH

Fill the first cup of wine. Each of the Four Cups must contain at least a *Reviit* (90 ml). Recite Kiddush from your Haggadah. After Kiddush, drink a minimum of just over half of the cup of wine, while reclining to the left.

2. URCHATZ

Wash your hands as you would normally for bread (fill a large cup with water, and pour twice over entire right hand, then twice over entire left hand; dry hands thoroughly) but do not say a blessing.

3. KARPAS

Dip a small piece (less than 25 g) of vegetable (parsley, onion, boiled potato) in salt water. Say the Bracha and eat while leaning to the left. While saying the Bracha have in mind the Maror that will be eaten later on.

Baruch Ata Ado-nai Elo-heinu Melech Haolam Bore Pri Ha-adamah.

4. YACHATZ

The middle Matzah is broken into two parts. The smaller part is replaced between the other two Matzot. The larger part is wrapped in a serviette and set aside as the Afikomen.

5. MAGGID

The story of the Exodus is read. Although it should be read in Hebrew, the emphasis is on

understanding the story, and parts of the Haggadah should therefore be translated if those present do not understand Hebrew. Before the Four Questions (MA NISHTANA) fill the Second Cup of wine. When the reading is completed drink a minimum of just over half of the cup of wine, while reclining to the left.

6. RACHTZA

Hands are washed for Matzah (same as for bread - see no. 2 above), and recite the Bracha.

Baruch Ata Ado-nai Elo-heinu Melech Haolam Asher Kideshanu Be-Mitzvotav Ve-Tzivanu Al Netilat Yadayim.

7. MOTZI - MATZA

All three Matzot are held and the first Bracha is said. Then the second Bracha is said while holding only the top two Matzot. Eat at least a *Kezayit* from the top Matzah and middle (broken) Matzah combined, while leaning to the left. A *Kezayit* is equivalent to 29 grams ($\frac{3}{4}$ of a square Matzah or $\frac{1}{2}$ of a hand-made round Matzah.) Ideally though you should eat a *Kezayit* **each** of the top and of the middle Matzah. No salt, margarine etc. should be eaten with the Matzah.

Baruch Ata Ado-nai Elo-heinu Melech Haolam Hamotzi Lechem Min Ha-aretz.

Baruch Ata Ado-nai Elo-heinu Melech Haolam Asher Kideshanu Be-Mitzvotav Ve-Tzivanu Al Achilat Matzah.

8. MAROR

One *Kezayit* of bitter herbs (pure ground horseradish, romaine lettuce, or Chinese or Coz lettuce) is dipped in Charoset. Recite Bracha and eat without reclining. Horseradish in a jar (which is pickled and/or mixed with other ingredients) is not acceptable. Various types of Maror can be combined to form a *Kezayit*. Make sure that Charoset

is shaken off before eating the Maror.

Baruch Ata Ado-nai Elo-heinu Melech Haolam Asher Kideshanu Be-Mitzvotav Ve-Tzivanu Al Achilat Maror.

9. KORECH

Take one *Kezayit* Maror and one *Kezayit* Matzah (from the bottom Matzah) and eat as a sandwich while reclining to the left. The Maror should first be dipped in Charoset as above.

10. SHULCHAN ORECH

The Seder meal is now eaten. First course is usually hard-boiled egg (from Seder Plate) and salt water. No roast may be eaten.

11. TZAFUN

At the end of the meal (after dessert) eat the Afikomen. Minimum requirement one *Kezayit*, ideally it should be two. No food or drink may be consumed after the Afikomen.

12. BARECH

Fill the Third Cup of Wine and recite Birkat Hamazon (or Bentsching - the Grace after meals). After Birkat Hamazon drink a minimum of just over half of the cup of wine, while reclining to the left.

13. HALEL

The Fourth Cup is filled now as well as a special cup for Elijah the Prophet. The front door is opened. After it is closed complete the reading of Hallel and other songs of praise to Hashem. When finished drink a full *Reviit* of wine, while leaning to the left.

14. NIRTZAH

Having observed the Seder correctly we are assured that it is accepted.