



Beth Israel
MALDEN

Annual Halacha Guide

Your Basic Reference

for the Jewish Holidays of

5785 - 2024/25

Written by: Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Rabinowitz

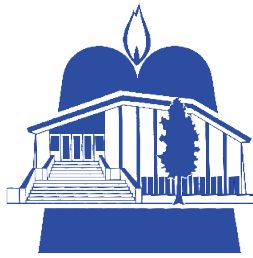
Edited by: Matthew Garland

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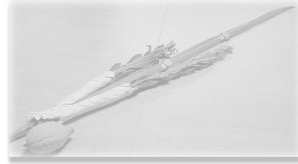
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BETH ISRAEL MALDEN



Halacha Guidebook 5785

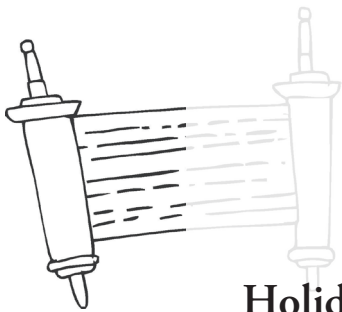


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Calendar of Holidays 5785 (2024/25)

	<i>Start (at night)</i>	<i>End</i>
Rosh Hashana*	Wednesday, October 2, 2024	Friday, October 4, 2024
Tzom Gedalia**	Sunday, October 6, 2024 (observed)	Sunday, October 6, 2024
Yom Kippur	Friday, October 11, 2024	Saturday, October 12, 2024
Sukkot*	Wednesday, October 16, 2024	Friday, October 18, 2024
Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah*	Wednesday, October 23, 2024	Friday, October 25, 2024
Chanukah	Wednesday, December 25, 2024	Thursday, January 2, 2025
Asara B'Tevet**	Friday, January 10, 2025	Friday, January 10, 2025
Ta'anit Esther**	Thursday, March 13, 2025	Thursday, March 13, 2025
Purim	Thursday, March 13, 2025	Friday, March 14, 2025
Pesach	Saturday, April 12, 2025	Sunday, April 20, 2025
Lag B'Omer	Thursday, May 15, 2025	Friday, May 16, 2025
Shavuot	Sunday, June 1, 2025	Tuesday, June 3, 2025
17 Tammuz**	Sunday, July 13, 2025	Sunday, July 13, 2025
Tisha B'Av	Saturday, August 2, 2025	Sunday, August 3, 2025

* - Rosh Hashana, Sukkot, and Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah are a "three day yom tov", running into Shabbat

** - these four fast days start at dawn on the same day



The High Holidays

Prepare for your Day in Court

The forty days from *Rosh Chodesh* (the beginning of the Hebrew month of) *Elul*, which began this year on Tuesday night August 22, is a period designated for *Teshuva* (Repentance). This corresponds with the time Moses received the second tablets of the Ten Commandments from G-d. He ascended Mount Sinai on the first of *Elul* and came down with them on the tenth of *Tishrei* (*Yom Kippur*). On that day G-d proclaimed his forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf.

Elul

Elul is the time to prepare for the holy days that start with *Rosh Hashana* (Day of Judgment) and extend through *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement). We set aside time for introspection and examination of our behavior, and we need to take greater diligence and care in *mitzvah* performance.

Beginning with *Ma'ariv* of the second day of *Rosh Chodesh* (Tuesday night, August 22), we began to recite Psalm 27, *L'David Hashem Ori*, at the end of *Shacharit* and *Ma'ariv*.

On the second day of *Rosh Chodesh Elul* we began to blow the *Shofar* at the end of *Shacharit* (before we recite *L'David Hashem Ori*). The crying sound of the *Shofar* reminds us to repent from our sins before the new year day of *Rosh Hashana* arrives.

During the month of *Elul* we include in our correspondences wishes of *Ketiva VaChatima Tova* (May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year).

On the Sunday before *Rosh Hashana* we begin to say *Selichot*, the prayers of forgiveness. If *Rosh Hashana* falls out on a Monday or Tuesday, we begin on the Sunday of the previous week. The custom is to recite the first *Selichot* early Sunday morning, and then continue saying them during morning services through *Erev Yom Kippur* (the day before *Yom Kippur*). One of the primary prayers of the *Selichot* is the recitation of the "13 Attributes of G-d's Mercy", which begin with the words, "*Hashem, Hashem...*" This prayer is only recited in the presence of a *minyán* (a quorum of ten men). The Aramaic passages at the end of the *Selichot* are also only said with a *minyán*.

Rosh Hashana

Erev Rosh Hashana

We do not blow the *shofar* on *Erev Rosh Hashana* as we do throughout the month of *Elul* in order to differentiate between customary *Shofar* blowing that we do during *Elul* and obligatory *Shofar* blowing that we do on *Rosh Hashana*.

Although the Day of Judgment is a very serious day, we celebrate *Rosh Hashana* as we do on *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov* (holiday), to show that we put our trust in G-d, that He will bless us with a good year. Therefore, we make our preparations for this special day on the day before, such as food preparation, bathing and hair-cutting.

In order to free ourselves from the sin of violating a vow/promise, we recite "*Hatarat Nedarim*", the annulment of vows, after *Shacharit* in front of three people who act as a court. We also declare that any promise we make in the future should not have the force of a vow. The text for this can be found in a *machzor* (High Holiday prayer book) or in the Artscroll *siddur* (prayer book) on page 762, and should be said in the language that you understand.

When doing "*Hatarat Nedarim*", you should notify the court that you are doing so for your spouse as well.

Eruv Tavshilin

We are not permitted to prepare on one day of *Yom Tov* for the next or on *Yom Tov* for after *Yom Tov*. We have a problem when the day after *Yom Tov* is *Shabbat* (when cooking is forbidden).

So how can we cook for *Shabbat*? In order to permit cooking and preparation for *Shabbat* on Friday, we perform "*Eruv Tavshilin*" on Wednesday, the day before *Yom Tov*.

Eruv Tavshilin Instructions

Set aside a cooked food, such as a boiled egg or a cooked piece of fish or meat and a challah, roll, or a piece of matzah.

While holding the cooked food and the challah, recite the blessing, "...al mitzvat eruv" and the eruv "declaration" found in any *siddur* or *machzor*.

Store them in a place where they will remain for *Shabbat*. It is important to remember to eat these items during *Shabbat*.

New Year's Day(s)

Rosh Hashana commemorates the creation of the world and begins the Jewish calendar year. It is a day of intensive prayer that acknowledges G-d's sovereignty over the world. All things pass before Him for judgment on this holy day.

When we greet one another on the first night of *Rosh Hashana*, we greet a man with the new year wishes of "*Lshana tova tikatev v'techatem*" and a woman with "*Lshana tova tika'vee v'techat'mee*" - "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year".

During the evening meals, we eat foods that serve as "*simanim*" (signs) for a good year, such as *challah* and apple dipped in honey, and the head of a fish.

Many *machzorim* include the procedure, blessings and prayers for the different foods that we eat as "*simanim*". We do not eat foods that are bitter or have a vinegar taste.

Shofar

On *Rosh Hashana*, we have the *mitzvah* of sounding the *shofar* (ram's horn). It is symbolic of the blowing of the trumpet at the coronation of a King, which on this day means that we reaffirm our belief in G-d's sovereignty over the world and our commitment to serving Him. (*We should have these thoughts in mind while hearing the shofar blow.*)

The three basic sounds of the *shofar* are:

1. Tekiah: a long drawn-out sound.
2. Shevarim: three broken, plaintive sounds; and
3. Teruah: nine short, staccato sounds.

We blow 30 sounds before *Mussaf*, 30 during the repetition of the *Amidah*, and 40 after the *Amidah* on each day of the holiday.

We do not blow the *shofar* on *Shabbat*.

You must intend to fulfill your obligation through the blessings and blows of the *Baal Tokeah* (*shofar* blower).

You must remain silent from the time the blessings are made before the blowing of the *shofar* until all the blows are completed at the end of the *Mussaf* service.

Tashlich

On *Rosh Hashana*, we recite *Tashlich*, the prayer expressing our hope that *Hashem* will forgive our transgressions on the Day of Judgment. We do not recite *Tashlich* on *Shabbat*, so on those years it is recited on the afternoon of the second day of *Rosh Hashana*. At the conclusion of *Tashlich*, it is customary to shake out our pockets as a symbol of casting away our sins.

We are forbidden to feed any animals or throw stones into the water at *Tashlich*.

If you are unable to recite *Tashlich* on *Rosh Hashana*, you may do so up until *Hoshana Raba* (the seventh day of the holiday of *Sukkot*).

The Second Night

On the second night of *Rosh Hashana*, we place a fruit that we haven't eaten for a year on the table while *Kiddush* is recited, so that the "*Shehechyanu*" blessing in the *Kiddush* should also be recited over the fruit. After drinking the *Kiddush* wine, we make the blessing "*boreh p'ri ha'etz*" on the fruit and eat some of it. We then wash our hands, say "*Hamotzi*" and continue with the meal.

The Ten Days of Repentance

The Ten Days of Repentance

The period from *Rosh Hashana* through *Yom Kippur* is called *Aseret Yemai Teshuva* - The Ten Days of Repentance. During this period there are changes made in our prayers.

a) In *Kaddish*, we say "...*l'ayla u'l'ayla mikol birchata...*" in place of "...*l'ayla min kol birchata...*"

b) In the first *bracha* (blessing) of the *Amidah*, we add "*zochrenu l'chaim*". In the second *bracha*, we add "*mi khamocha...*". If you forget these, you need not repeat the *Amidah*.

c) In the third *bracha* of the *Amidah*, we conclude with "...*haMelech haKadosh*" instead of "...*ha'Kel haKadosh*". If you forget and conclude the *bracha* without this change and don't immediately correct yourself, or if you are in doubt about whether you made the change when you recited the third blessing of the *Amidah*, you must repeat the *Amidah*.

d) In the *bracha* of "*ha'shiva shoftenu*", we conclude with "...*haMelech hamishpat*" instead of "*Melech ohev...*". At the end of the *bracha* of "*Modim*", we add "*u'chtov l'chaim...*". And at the end of the *bracha* of "*Sim shalom*", we add "*B'sefer chaim...*". If you forget any of these, you do not repeat the *Amidah*.

e) We recite *Avinu Malkenu* after the repetition of the *Amidah* by *shacharit* and *mincha*.

f) This year (2778) we recite *Avinu Malkenu* during *shacharit* on *Erev Yom Kippur*, since on *Yom Kippur* we only recite it during *Ne'ilah* because it's *Shabbat*.

Tzom Gedalya/ The Fast of Gedalya

After the destruction of the first *Bet Hamikdash* (the Holy Temple) at the hands of the ancient Babylonians, the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, appointed Gedalya son of Achikom as governor over the remaining Jews in Israel. On this day Gedalya was assassinated. Nebuchadnezzar retaliated by killing thousands and exiling the last remaining Jews in Israel.

This day was therefore proclaimed as a fast day.





Yom Kippur

Erev Yom Kippur - 11th hour Repentance

We perform the custom of “*kaparot*”, in which we take a live chicken or money and rotate it around our heads, reciting the “*kaparot*” prayer, which can be found in the *machzor*. Many people perform this during *Aseret Yimeh Teshuva*, the days between *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*.

At *Mincha* of *Erev Yom Kippur*, we recite “*Viduy*”, the confession of our sins, at the conclusion of the *Amidah*. “*Viduy*” is recited throughout *Yom Kippur*. We recite it as we stand slightly bent over without leaning on anything, and at each sin we confess, we strike our hearts.

Before *Yom Kippur* begins, we eat the *Se'udah Hamafseket*, the final meal before the fast begins. You should not eat foods that will be difficult to digest or cause you to be thirsty later on. If you want to eat or drink anything after this meal (before *Yom Kippur* begins) you should think or say aloud before reciting *Bircat HaMazon* (Grace After Meals) that you do not want to begin the fast with the conclusion of the meal.

Before *Yom Kippur* begins, there is a custom for parents to bless their children. The text for this blessing can be found in the *machzor*.

You must accept the sanctity of *Yom Kippur* upon yourself before *Yom Kippur* actually begins, which is at sunset. With this acceptance, all the laws of *Yom Kippur* go into effect. You must also extend *Yom Kippur* to some degree after the actual day has passed.

The shul will provide candles at the synagogue for all women who desire to light candles on *Erev Yom Kippur*. This will give people the opportunity to drive to shul and light candles there.

Yom Kippur - Day of Judgment and Atonement

Yom Kippur is the day we petition *Hashem* for forgiveness through prayer and *teshuva* (repentance).

Yom Kippur begins with the *Kol Nidrei* service. The custom is for men to wear a *tallit* and *kittel*. To be allowed to make the *bracha* over the *tallit*, you must put it on before sunset. Otherwise, you wear it without reciting a *bracha*. *Kol Nidrei* concludes with the *bracha* of “*Shehechyanu*”. The custom is to begin reciting the *bracha* together with the *chazzan* (leader of the services), but to finish it before he does in order to answer “*amen*” to his *bracha*.

Throughout *Yom Kippur*, the second verse of the *Shema* - “*Baruch shem kavod malchuto...*”, etc. is said out loud (unlike the rest of the year, when it is said silently).

The *Yom Kippur* day services consist of *Shacharit*, *Mussaf*, *Mincha* and a fourth service called *Ne'ilah*. At the conclusion of *Yom Kippur*, we daven *Ma'ariv*, followed by *Kiddush Levana*, the sanctification of the new moon.

Yom Kippur has all the restrictions of *Shabbat*. Therefore, we make *Havdallah* at its conclusion. *Havdallah* consists of the *brachot* of “*boreh p'ri hagafen*”, “*boreh m'orei ha-aish*”, and “*hamavdil ben kodesh l'chol*”. Unlike the *Havdallah* candle after *Shabbat*, this *Havdallah* candle must have been lit before *Yom Kippur* and left burning throughout the holiday. The preferable way is to light another candle from this candle and recite the *bracha* of “*boreh m'orei ha'aish*” over both of them.

The 4 R's of Repentance Written by Matthew

Garland

Recognize - We realize we have made mistakes and **R**ecognize our sins, intentional and unintentional. We do this with the “*Viduy*”, the confession prayers, as we look inside ourselves to recognize our faults.

Regret - As we recite the *Viduy* and recognize our faults and mistakes, we must feel true regret over what we've done. If you have difficulty with this, try to think about the negative effects your mistakes have had on you and your relationship with G-d.

RESOLVE - Once you feel badly for your mistakes and sins, you can work on yourself to not do it again, by resolving to improve your ways. Only you know what you did wrong and why, so it's up to you to determine how to prevent it from happening again.

REJECT - Now that you've resolved to improve yourself, you must take active steps to abandon your sinful behaviors. This is the practical aspect; whereas with resolution you committed to active steps, now you actively take those steps to refrain from your past sinful behavior.

For sins against another person, you must sincerely request forgiveness, make appropriate reparations, and receive forgiveness from that person. Only then can you receive forgiveness from *Hashem* for that sin.

The 5 Afflictions

Yom Kippur carries restrictions known as “the five afflictions” of the day. They are:

1. **No eating or drinking.** If a doctor assesses that fasting can pose a danger to your life, you are forbidden to fast. If you are ill and must eat or drink, you should eat or drink small amounts at intervals. Contact the Rabbi as to how this should be done.
2. **No washing or bathing.** When washing hands in the morning or after using the bathroom, wash only up to the knuckles.
3. **No anointing** (i.e. applying a substance to the body).
4. **No wearing of leather shoes**, even if they are only partially covered with leather.
5. **No marital relations.**

Sukkot

Sukkah Basics

The *sukkah* is our temporary dwelling place for the week of *Sukkot*. We eat meals in it (weather permitting), and many people - particularly in warmer climates - sleep in it, as well!

To keep you on track while building your own *sukkah*, here are a few *halachic* guidelines to keep in mind: a *Sukkah* consists of walls and *S'chach* (the *Sukkah* roof).

1. *Your sukkah needs at least 3 walls.* The walls have to be at least 10 *tefachim* (handbreadths) high—approximately 38 inches. Four walls is preferable.
2. *You may use any material for the walls as long as your sukkah can withstand normal winds.* If you use canvas walls, tie your walls securely to the framework.
3. *Decorate your sukkah.* If the decorations fall down, you may re-hang them only on *Chol HaMoed* (the intermediary days of *Sukkot*), and you may not use them for anything else until after *Simchat Torah*. Hanging decorations should be within four *tefachim*—approximately 14 inches—of the *s'chach*.
4. *Your s'chach must be "all natural".* The *s'chach* must be made from material that grew from the ground, but is detached and is not subject to the laws of *tumah* (ritual impurity). This means that the pieces of the *s'chach* cannot be considered a *k'li* (utensil).
5. *Use appropriately sized s'chach.* You can't use something that is more than four *tefachim* wide (approximately 14 inches) for *s'chach*.
6. *Don't waterproof your sukkah's roof.* The *s'chach* should not be thick enough to provide protection from a heavy rain. You should be able to see the stars through the *s'chach*, but if not, it is still *kosher*.
7. *Location: under the open sky!* Your *sukkah* should not be built under any tree branches or under a ledge or overhang. If it is, contact the Rabbi.

4 Important Rules About The Sukkah

1. Men are obligated to eat in the *sukkah*. Women, very small children and those who are ill are exempt.
2. On the first and second nights of *Sukkot*, we are obligated to eat bread in the *sukkah*. When you perform the *mitzvah* of *sukkah*, have in mind that the *mitzvah* is a commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt and that the *sukkah* commemorates the heavenly clouds with which G-d surrounded the Jews to protect them at the time. Eat slightly more than a *kebetza* (literally the volume of an egg – volume of

200 ml). During the rest of *Sukkot*, if you eat more than a *kebetza* of bread or cake, you are obligated to eat it in the *sukkah*.

3. Recite the blessing of "*leshev ba'sukkah*" whenever you are obligated to eat in the *sukkah*. A woman who eats in a *sukkah* has fulfilled the *mitzvah* (even though she is exempt) and may make the blessing (*Ashkenazim only*).
4. Light the *Yom Tov* candles in the *sukkah*. You may bring candles into the house to make space, but should leave some in the *sukkah*.

CAUTION: Please be careful when placing open flames within your *sukkah* and keep flammable materials away from the candles.

What to do if it rains on Sukkot:

Rain On the First Night of Sukkot

If it rains on the first night of *Sukkot*, wait an hour or two for the rain to stop in order to perform the *mitzvah* of eating in the *sukkah*. If after this time the rain has not stopped, or the family or guests can't wait any longer, then do the following even as it is raining:

Make *Kiddush* in the *sukkah*. Wash your hands and make *hamotzi* in the *sukkah*, and eat a *kazayit* (literally the volume of a large olive – volume of 50 ml) of bread. Do not say the blessing for eating in the *sukkah* (*leshev basukkah*). Then you may eat the rest of the meal and recite *bircat hamazon* in the house.

If the rain stops during the meal, enter the *sukkah*, make the blessing of *leshev basukkah*, and eat a piece of bread larger than a *kebetza* and recite the *bircat hamazon* in the *sukkah*. If the rain stops after reciting *bircat hamazon* in the house, you should wash again and in the *sukkah* eat a piece of bread larger than a *kebetza* with the blessing, and recite *bircat hamazon*.

If the rain continues, wait as long as you are able. If you feel very tired you may go to sleep for the night.

Rain On All Other Nights of Sukkot

If it rains on the second night, wait for a short time. If the rain continues, you may make *Kiddush* and begin the meal in the house. If at the end of the meal it is still raining, eat a *kazayit* of bread in the *sukkah* without a blessing over the *sukkah* and recite *bircat hamazon*. If the rain stops, follow the laws for the first night.

Other nights, if rain enters through the *s'chach* to the extent that you would leave the room if the same amount of rain were to come in your house, you are not obligated to eat in the *sukkah*.

Even if the sky is overcast and it is sure to rain you are obligated to eat in the *sukkah*, until the rain actually falls.

If the rains stops you are not obligated to return to the *sukkah* to eat if you have already begun eating in the house. If you have made *hamotzi* in the *sukkah* but have





not already begun eating in house, return to the *sukkah* and eat the meal there. Upon returning to the *sukkah* you do not repeat the blessing over the *sukkah* until the next time you eat bread or cake.

If the rain has stopped but it is still dripping throughout the entire *sukkah*, if it is difficult to go to another *sukkah* you may eat in the house.

The 4 Species (Arba Minim)

What Are The 4 Species?

On *Sukkot*, we are obligated to perform the *mitzvah* of taking the “*arba minim* (four species)”—the *lulav*, *etrog*, *hadassim* and *aravot*.

The *lulav* consists of the *lulav* branch with three *hadassim* (myrtle branches) and two *aravot* (willow branches) attached to it. Place the *hadassim* on side of the *lulav* corresponding to your dominant side (the right, for most of us) with the spine of the *lulav* facing towards you, and slightly higher than the *aravot*, which you place on your weaker side. There should be at least a *tefach* (approximately three to four inches) between the tip of the *lulav* and the tips of the *hadassim* and *aravot*.

Typically a *lulav* comes with a holder made from woven *lulav* leaves into which you place the *hadassim* and *aravot*. This holder is positioned near the bottom of the *lulav* so that when you grasp the *lulav* you are grasping the *hadassim* and *aravot* as well.

Take care that the tops of the *lulav*, *hadassim* and *aravot* aren't broken off and that they don't become dry and white.

On the etrog, take care that the pitum - the protrusion at the opposite end from the point where it is detached from the tree - does not fall off.

How To Use The 4 Species

Take the *lulav* in your dominant hand (the right, for most of us) with the spine towards you and the *etrog* upside down in your other hand (the left, for most of us). The first time we perform the *mitzvah*, we say two *brachot*:

- 1) “...*al netilat lulav*”, and
- 2) *Shehechyanu*.

For the rest of *Sukkot*, we say only the first one.

After reciting the *brachot*, turn the *etrog* right side up, and wave it along with the *lulav* in each of the four directions, as well as up and down. The procedure for waving is to hold the *lulav* and *etrog* away from your body and shake them, then bring them back close to your chest and shake them again. Do this three times for each direction, in the following order: in front of you, to your right, to your back, to your left, upwards towards the front, and downwards towards the front. Some people hold the *lulav* and *etrog* straight up and down during the shaking, others point them horizontally to the direction

in which they are shaking.

We do not take the four *minim* on *Shabbat*.

On the first day of *Sukkot*, the four *minim* must belong to you to fulfill the *mitzvah*. For the rest of *Sukkot*, you are able to fulfill the *mitzvah* by borrowing them.

What do you do if you don't own your lulav and etrog on the first day? You can have a friend give you his *lulav* and *etrog*, making it yours. Make sure that if you give your *lulav* and *etrog* to a friend that you use a legal condition called “*al m'nat l'hachzir*” - “on condition of return”. That means that if you give it to your friend, he only acquires ownership if he intends to give it back to you as a gift afterwards (and then does give it back). The same is done with the synagogues' *lulav* and *etrog*.

Women are exempt from this *mitzvah*, but if they perform it, they have fulfilled the *mitzvah* and may recite the *brachot*.

Throughout the recital of *Hallel* at *Shacharit*, we hold the *lulav* and *etrog* and wave them in the manner mentioned above when we say “*Hodu la'Shem*” and “*Ana Hashem ho'shia na*”

After *Mussaf* of each day of *Sukkot*, a *Torah* is removed from the Ark and brought to the *bimah* in the middle of the synagogue. Each person takes his *lulav* and *etrog* in hand and begins the prayers of “*Hoshanot*”, and continues to say the *Hoshanot* as they walk around the *bimah* one time.

On *Shabbat* we recite the *Hoshanot* prayer with the Ark open but do not remove a *Torah*. Everyone recites the prayer by their seat.

The Last Days

The seventh day of *Sukkot* is *Hoshana Rabba*. On this day we beseech G-d to bless us with a year of ample rain. The *Pesukei D'Zimra* (first section of *shacharit*) are the same as we say on *Shabbat* or *Yom Tov* (with the exception of “*Mizmor L'Todah*”, which we say, and “*Nishmat*”, which we don't). At the *Hoshanot* prayer we circle the *bimah* seven times. We continue reciting more *Hoshana* prayers after we finish circling the *bimah*. At one point, we put down the *lulav* and *etrog* and take in hand a bundle of *aravot*. After concluding these prayers we beat the bundle on the ground three times.

The eighth day of the holiday is called *Shemini Atzeret*. Women recite the *bracha* “*shehechyanu*” at candle lighting and men recite it at *Kiddush*. We recite the *Yizkor* prayer after the *Torah* reading in the morning. In *Mussaf* of *Shemini Atzeret*, we begin saying “*mashiv ha'ruach umorid ha'geshem*” in the second *bracha* of the *Amidah*.

The ninth day is *Simchat Torah*. At night and by day we celebrate the completion of the yearly reading of the *Torah*. The *Torah* scrolls are removed from the Ark and we dance “*hakafoi*” (circuits) around the shul.

Chanukah

Chanukah in Brief

During the period of the Second *Bet HaMikdash* (the Second Temple), when the Syrian-Greeks ruled over the Land of Israel, the ruling government issued decrees that forbade the practice of the Jewish religion.

The Almighty delivered our ancestors from their hands, granting victory to the Maccabees. On the 25th day of the Hebrew month of *Kislev*, the Jews were victorious and entered the *Bet HaMikdash*, which had been defiled by their oppressors. They searched for ritually pure olive oil to light the *menorah* and found only one flask of undefiled oil. Although there was only enough oil in the flask to burn for one day, a miracle occurred and the oil burned for eight days. The Sages instituted the holiday of *Chanukah* to rejoice and give thanks to *Hashem* (through the recital of *Hallel* - the prayer of thanksgiving to the Almighty) and to light candles for eight nights.

Chanukah FAQs

Who lights Chanukah candles?

Men and women alike are obligated to perform the *mitzvah* of lighting the *Chanukah* candles. A married woman may fulfill her obligation through her husband's lighting if he is home. If he isn't, she is required to light the candles herself.

How many candles should I light each night?

The accepted practice is for everyone in the household to light one candle the first night, then two the second night, increasing the number of candles based on which night of *Chanukah* it is.

If several *menorahs* are being lit together, it's important that they not be positioned too close to each other, so that it will not be difficult to tell how many candles are lit that night.

What should I use to light the Chanukah candles?

The preferred fuel for the *Chanukah* candles is olive oil. Many people use candles. Electric lights cannot be used to fulfill the *mitzvah*.

How do I set up the candles?

We set up the candles from right to left and light them from left to right. The candles should be in a straight row (ie, not curved or in staggered heights).

Where should I place the candles?

Our practice is to light the *menorah* by a window that faces the street so people passing by will see the candles and the miracle of *Chanukah* will be publicized.

What is the proper time for lighting candles?

Candle lighting time begins 10 min after sunset. If you are at services then or for some other reason you

cannot light at that time, you should do so immediately upon arriving home.

The candles must burn for at least half-an-hour after *tzet hakochavim* (when the stars come out; approximately 45 minutes after sunset). Use a sufficient amount of oil or candles large enough to last that amount of time.

If you use the small wax candles that burn only for half an hour, make sure to light candles when the stars come out or later.

When do I light Chanukah candles on Erev Shabbat?

On Friday night, we may not light candles once *Shabbat* begins. Therefore, we light the *menorah* before the *Shabbat* candles.

Since we are lighting earlier than usual, we must use large enough candles or enough oil to burn until half-an-hour after the stars come out. Therefore, if you use candles, you should use the large type used for *Shabbat*, or long candles if they are able to burn long enough.

If you cannot use these larger candles for all of the *Chanukah* candles (you don't have enough, for example), then at least one of them should be a large candle that will burn for the required amount of time. If you use oil, you should place enough in the *menorah* to burn for the required amount of time.

When do I light Chanukah candles on Motzei Shabbat?

On *Motzei Shabbat* (Saturday night), we may light only after *Shabbat* is over. In the synagogue, we light *Chanukah* candles before reciting *havdallah*. At home, we recite *havdallah* first, and then light the *Chanukah* candles (unless you have your own *minbag* (custom) of lighting *Chanukah* candles first).

What if I can't light candles at the proper time?

If you are not able to light at the specific time designated for lighting the *menorah*, you may light with a *bracha* the entire night. The candles must burn for at least half-an-hour.

What Blessings Do I Recite on the candles?

On the first night, we say three *brachot*:

1. "*l'hadlik ner shel Chanukah*"
2. "*she'asa nisim l'avotenu*"
3. "*shehechyanu*".

The full text of the *brachot* can be found in the *siddur*. During the rest of *Chanukah*, we only recite the first two *brachot*. There should be no interruptions between the *brachot* and the lighting.

After lighting the first candle, we sing the song "*Hanerot Halalu*" while lighting the remaining candles. Some have the *minbag* to recite it after all the candles are lit. After the candles are all lit, we sing the song "*Ma'oz Tzur*".





Are there any restrictions on the Chanukah candles?

You may not use the *Chanukah* lights for any other purpose. Therefore, our practice is to place the “*shamash*” - the candle that was used to light the *Chanukah* lights - next to the *menorah*. Place it in a manner clearly showing that it is not one of the *Chanukah* candles.

Are there any other restrictions?

Once candle-lighting time arrives, we are prohibited from eating a meal until we light.

What if I get invited out?

If you are invited out for dinner during *Chanukah* you cannot fulfill your obligation of lighting candles where you will be eating. You must light at home.

If you are staying overnight and you leave home before candle lighting time, light at your destination. If you leave after lighting time, light at home first.

Do we light the candles in the synagogue, too?

We light the *menorah* with the *brachot* in the synagogue in the evening before the *Ma'ariv* service. We also light in the morning during the *Shacharit* service, but no *brachot* are said.

Are there any special Chanukah prayers not related to the candles?

During *Chanukah* we recite the prayer of “*al hanisim*” in the *Amidah* during the *bracha* of “*Modim*”, as well as in the *Bircat Hamazon* in the *bracha* of “*Nodeh l'cha*”.

If you forget to insert *Al haNisim* in the *Amidah* and realize before saying the name of *Hashem* at the conclusion of the blessing of *Modim*, return to *Al haNisim* and continue from there. If you realize afterward, make the insertion at the conclusion of the *Amidah* after the verse of “*...yeh'yu l'ratzon*”.

If you forget during *Bircat haMazon* - and have not yet said the name of *Hashem* at the conclusion of the blessing of *Nodeh* - return to *Al haNisim* and continue from there. If you realize afterward, then after the paragraph of *Bamorom*, add the following phrase: “*harachamon ya'aseh lanu nisim v'nifla'ot k'shem she'asitah la'avotenu ba'yamim ha'hem ba'zman ha'zeh*” and continue with *Al haNisim*, starting from the words “*bimeit Matityahu*”. (The first paragraph, beginning with the words *Al haNisim*, is omitted). Even if you were to totally forget to insert *Al HaNisim*, you need not repeat the *Amidah* or *Bircat haMazon*.

Fast of Asarah B'Tevet (10th Day of Tevet)

On the 10th day of the Hebrew month of *Tevet* the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem which culminated in the Destruction of the first *Bet HaMikdash*. Therefore this day was declared a fast day as part of our mourning over the destruction of the *Bet HaMikdash* and the exile of the Jewish people.

Purim

Shabbat Parshat Zachor

On the *Shabbat* before *Purim*, there is a *mitzvah* to hear the *maftir* (the eighth and final *aliyah* of the *Torah* reading) of *Zachor*. This is read from the end of *Parshat Ki Tetzeh* (Deut. 25:17-19), in which the *Torah* commands us to remember what the ancient nation of *Amalek* did against the Jewish nation when they first left Egypt (as is depicted in this reading). We do this before *Purim* because the wicked Haman was a descendant of *Amalek*. Through this *maftir* reading, we fulfill this *mitzvah*. Women should also come to hear the reading of *Parshat Zachor*.

Fast of Esther

The fast commemorates the Jewish custom of fasting and praying before war, which the Jews did on the 13th of *Adar*, as they prepared to fight against those who wished to annihilate them. Fasting is not the goal; rather it is a component of *teshuva*. We are reminded that when a person repents, G-d hears his cries and rescues him from danger, just as He did in the days of *Purim*.

This fast is observed on the day before *Purim*. When *Purim* falls out on Saturday night, since we do not fast on *Shabbat* (except for *Yom Kippur*) the fast is moved up to the preceding Thursday.

Machatzit Hashekel

At *mincha* services on the fast of Esther, every male adult contributes *machatzit hashekel* (half the unit of the national currency) to charity. It is a remembrance of the Biblical tax of one half-*shekel* toward the daily communal sacrifices offered in the Holy Temple.

If you did not do so at *mincha*, you can give it anytime during *Purim*. The *minhag* is to give three half-*shekels* (i.e. three U.S. half-dollar coins). For \$1.50, you can purchase the three coins from the synagogue. You lift them out of a collection plate as an act of acquisition and then return them to the plate as the donation. The money is distributed to charity.

Those under bar *mitzvah* age are exempt, but a boy's father may contribute for him. This is the preferred *minhag*. Once a father has done so for his son, he must continue until his son assumes this practice himself.

The Prayers of Purim

Beginning *Purim* night by *Ma'ariv* services, we insert the paragraph of *Al haNisim* into the *Amidah* in the blessing of *Modim* and into the *Bircat haMazon* in the blessing of *Nodeh*. If you forget to insert *Al haNisim* in the *Amidah* and realize before saying the name of *Hashem* at the conclusion of the blessing of *Modim*, you should return to *Al haNisim* and continue from there. If you

realize afterward, make the insertion at the conclusion of the *Amidah* after the verse of "...*yeh'yu l'ratzon*".

If you forget during *Bircat haMazon* - and have not yet said the name of *Hashem* at the conclusion of the blessing of *Nodeh* - you should return to *Al haNisim* and continue from there. If you realize afterward, then after the paragraph of *Bamarom*, add the following phrase: "*harachaman ya'aseh lanu nisim v'nifla'ot k'shem she'asitah la'avotenu ba'yamim ha'hem ba'zman ha'zeh*" and continue with *Al haNisim*, starting from the words "*bime'i Mordechai*". (The first paragraph, beginning with the words *Al haNisim*, is omitted). Even if you were to totally forget to insert *Al haNisim*, you need not repeat the *Amidah* or *Bircat haMazon*.

On *Purim* day, during the repetition of the *Amidah*, insertions known as *Krovetz* are said. There is a special *Torah* reading for *Purim*. *Tachanun*, *Kel Erech Apayim* and *Lamnatzayach* are omitted.

Reading of the Megillah

Men and women are obligated to hear the *Megillah* read twice, once by night and once by day. You should wear *Shabbat* clothing in honor of the *Megillah* reading. During the daytime *Megillah* reading, men should wear *Tallit* and *Tefilin*.

The reader of the *Megillah* must have in mind that through his reading those listening will fulfill their obligation, and those listening must have in mind to fulfill their obligation through his reading.

To fulfill this *mitzvah*, you must hear every word in its entirety from the reader. Everyone must remain absolutely silent so they and others can hear every word. (If you think when you whisper to your neighbor no one else hears you, you're wrong! You should even silence sneezing or coughing as much as possible). Parents are responsible to make sure their children do not disturb, and children who are too young to remain quiet should not be brought to the *Megillah* reading.

No one should make noise with the *gragger* other than when *Haman's* name is mentioned (and only until the signal is given to stop).

You should not read the *Megillah* to yourself in a low tone, nor say aloud the words together with the reader (as some people tend to do at the end of a chapter), so as not to disturb others from hearing every word from the reader.

If you were unable to hear a word or a phrase from the reader, you can read it from the *Megillah* in which you are following along (even a printed one), and then continue to listen to the reader after catching up. Some people follow from a *kosher Megillah* scroll and read along silently to be certain they will not miss a single word. If you are following in a printed *Megillah*, you should not read along silently, but only the words that you miss.

Before the *Megillah* is read, the reader recites three





brachot:

1. “*Al mikrah megillah*”,
2. “*She’asah nisim*”,
3. “*She’hechyanu*”.

During the daytime reading, have in mind that the third *bracha* of *She’hechyanu* applies to the *mitzvah* of *Megillah* reading and to the other *mitzvot* of *Purim* day, which are: *mishloach manot* (sending gifts of food); *matanot la’evyonim* (charity to the poor); and the *se’udah* (the festive meal).

After the *Megillah* is read, the reader recites the concluding blessing of “*harav et ri’vainu*”. At night, we recite the paragraphs of “*Asher Hainee*” and “*Shoshanat Yaakov*”. (By day, we omit “*Asher Hainee*”). Upon returning home at night after *Megillah* reading, it is proper to celebrate with food and drink.

Mishloach Manot

On *Purim* day, men and women are obligated in the *mitzvah* of sending gifts of food. With regard to a husband and wife, there should be a *mishloach manot* portion designated for her to send to another woman. Another option is for them to send their *mishloach manot* jointly just that the food portions sent should be of a size that would be respectful for two people to send together.

The minimum requirement is to send two portions of food to one person. The portions should be two different kinds of food (they don’t have to be two foods that need different *brachot*) and should be ready to eat or drink.

Mishloach manot can be sent through a messenger. It is actually preferable to have *mishloach manot* delivered through a third person, even if the third person merely hands the *mishloach manot* to the recipient. This third person can even be a child. Note: There are businesses and organizations that offer *mishloach manot* deliveries anywhere in the country or Israel. If the delivery does not take place on *Purim* day, you do not fulfill the *mitzvah* through this. Also, there are those that give a donation in honor of another person in lieu of actual food gifts. This too cannot be a fulfillment of this *mitzvah*.

Mishloach manot should not be sent to a mourner, but can be sent instead to the mourner’s spouse and family.

Matanot L’Evyonim

On *Purim* day, men and women are obligated in the *mitzvah* of *Matanot L’Evyonim* (charity to the poor).

The minimum requirement here is to give a gift of money to two poor people, each one receiving his own gift.

The poor must receive the money on *Purim* day. If there are no poor where you live, you set aside on *Purim* day two gifts of money to be distributed to the poor when the opportunity arises - or a messenger can be sent to deliver the charity to the poor on *Purim* day. To facilitate

this *mitzvah* for our congregation, Rabbi Rabinowitz will make sure that the funds are distributed on *Purim* day.

(*Matanot la’evyonim* should not be confused with *ma’ot chitin*, the Passover charity fund for the needy.)

Either send in your donation by mail in time to arrive on *Purim*, or donate the money on or before *Purim* at the shul. Check the schedule for the time by which all cash or checks collected by the rabbi or phone pledges must be in.

The Purim Se’udah

On *Purim* day, men and women are obligated to partake in a *se’udah*, a festive meal in celebration of the *Purim* miracle.

The *se’udah* must begin before sunset. The majority of the meal should be eaten before sunset and extend into the night. On *Purim*, we indulge in wine in an amount more than usual.

Note: The *mitzvot* of *mishloach manot*, *matanot la’evyonim*, and the *se’udah* can only be performed on *Purim* day and should be done after the daytime reading of the *Megillah*.

Your spouse and children above *bar* and *bat mitzvah* age are also obligated to fulfill all the *mitzvot* of *Purim*.

Shushan Purim

The day after *Purim* is called *Shushan Purim*. In *Shacharit* we do not say *Tachanun*, *El Erech A’payim* and *Lamnatzayach*.

When *Shushan Purim* is on *Shabbat*, we omit *tzidkatcha tzedek*.

Passover

Chametz In General

The Exodus from Egypt came about so hastily that our ancestors had no time to prepare bread in the usual manner, but were compelled to bake it before it became leavened. Thus, they set out in their march to freedom eating *Matzah*.

We are forbidden to eat, derive benefit from, or possess any *chametz*/leavened item or product that contains *chametz* for the entire eight days of Passover.

Wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt in any form that remains with water for 18 minutes become *chametz*. If the water is hot or salted, *chametz* will result immediately. Therefore, any food that contains grain or grain derivatives must be certified by a reliable *kashrut* authority as acceptable for Passover use.

When baking for Passover, ordinary flour is strictly forbidden, and only *matzah* meal, cake meal or potato starch may be used. All *matzah*, cakes and macaroons require certification.

Drinks containing or made from alcohol and products containing grain vinegar, such as pickles and horseradish, must be certified as *kosher* for Passover.

Although legumes - such as rice, peas, beans, corn, and mustard seeds - cannot become *chametz*, *Ashkenazi* Jews do not eat them during Passover. These legumes are referred to as *kitniyot*. Although you may not eat them if you are *Ashkenazi*, you may possess and derive benefit from them. For example, Pet foods that contain *kitniyot* are permitted to feed to animals while those that contain *chametz* are not. Foods that may contain *kitniyot*, such as soft drinks and candy, require Passover certification.

Passover Shopping

Many stores in the area carry ‘*kosher* for Passover’ products. Additionally, there are useful Passover guides that list the products that need and have Passover certification, as well as which ones don’t need certification. Such guides are available at the Israel Book Shop or on-line from established *kashrut* organizations, like the Star-K (www.star-k.org), the Orthodox Union (www.oupassover.org), the Chicago Rabbinical Council (www.crcweb.org), and the Vaad HaRabanim of Massachusetts (www.kvhkosher.org) as well as www.kashrut.com.

Because we may not derive benefit from *chametz*, non-food products containing *chametz* must also be approved for Passover use. For these, too, there are useful guides available, as mentioned above.

If you need assistance, please contact the Rabbi.

Passover Product Caution

Food and non-food production nowadays is so complex that you never know what food may contain an ingredient rendering it unfit for Passover use, ***even from reading the label***. You must be a careful and educated consumer.

When purchasing Passover food from the Passover aisle in the supermarket, make sure the product you buy is actually *kosher* for Passover. It is common for items that are not *kosher* for Passover to be mistakenly placed in the Passover aisle.

Beware of the shankbones being sold in the kosher section of the supermarket!

Pet Food

Pet food must be approved for Passover use. It may also not contain meat and dairy ingredients together (this applies all year round). For a listing of approved pet foods see our Passover supplement or visit www.star-k.org.

Medications on Passover

All high blood pressure, heart, diabetic, anti-depressant and seizure medication in tablet or capsule form, and all insulin and antibiotics, may be used on Passover.

Medications that you do not need should be put away along with *chametz* items.

Under no circumstances should you make a decision to forgo a prescribed medication without first consulting your doctor and rabbi.

Cleaning for Passover

Overview

The Torah prohibits us from possessing *chametz*. Therefore, before Passover, we clean out all *chametz* from our premises.

We thoroughly clean any place where we may have brought *chametz* into prior to Passover (eg. car, knapsack, closets, etc.) and dispose of any *chametz* that we find.

Our focus should be to primarily clear away *chametz* that is the size of *kazayit* or something less than that but significant (e.g. a small pretzel, a piece of a cookie). When we clean the kitchen we have to be concerned with any amount of *chametz* of which there is a chance that it might fall into our food (e.g., a crumb of bread under the radiator in your kitchen would not be a cause for great concern).

If you have small children, the chances are greater that *chametz* will be found in areas of the house that you would normally not expect *chametz* to be found.

For a thorough discussion about cleaning for Passover go to our website www.bethisraelmalden.org and click on the “Holiday” category to listen to the “Cleaning for





Pesach” audio lecture.

All members of our shul who have lockers are responsible to clean out their lockers from all items that are not kosher for Passover.

Everyone should clean around their seats.

Part 1: Kashering Utensils for Passover

For a more extensive discussion see the Passover directories available from crcweb.org, ou.org, or star-k.org.

Since we are not permitted to have any trace of leaven in our food during Passover, we give special attention to dishes and utensils. It is best to use dishes and utensils specially set aside for Passover use. However, under certain conditions, you may also use on Passover some utensils that you used throughout the year. They must be *kashered* (made *kosher*) in a special manner for Passover use.

You must finish all your *kashering* before the time it is forbidden to possess *chametz*.

Utensils that cannot be kashered:

- Bread machine, dishwasher, George Foreman Grill, Crockpot, Sandwich Maker, Toaster, Toaster Oven.
- Any utensil made from the following materials: china, Corelle, Corningware, Duralex, earthenware, formica, Melmac, nylon, plastic, porcelain (enamel), pottery, Pyrex, Synthetic Rubber, Teflon, and wood that cannot be thoroughly cleaned.
- Utensils that cannot be cleaned properly, such as food grinders and colanders.

Utensil Kashering procedures:

There are three procedures by which you can *kasher* different types of utensils for Passover: purging, glowing, and soaking.

Purging

Through a process of purging, you can *kasher* metal utensils that have been used for cooking, serving, or eating hot *chametz*. Purging is done in the following manner:

a) Refrain from using the articles to be purged for the 24 hours prior to the purging.

b) Fill a large vessel (that is already *kosher* for Passover) with water and bring it to a rolling boil. It must maintain a rolling boil throughout the entire ‘purging’ procedure. If you notice that the boiling has stopped, wait until it begins to boil again.

c) Thoroughly clean the articles to be purged, and scrape them if necessary. Then completely immerse them in the boiling water. *Kasher* vessels one by one, because they should not touch each other while being *kashered*. For example, put flatware into the water one piece at a time. The entire vessel does not have to be done at one

time, but can be done in parts. If the utensil or vessel has any dents or cracks that cannot easily be cleaned, then the area must first be glowed before the immersion. In these cases, glowing is usually impractical.

d) After the immersion, wash the articles with cold water.

Glowing

Metal utensils where the food is cooked directly on them without the addition of liquids (such as baking or broiling) cannot be *kashered* through purging but can only be *kashered* through glowing.

Glowing is done by placing the utensil directly on a fire until it is red hot. For many utensils, such as baking utensils, this is highly impractical since they could be damaged. In that situation, you need to purchase new ones for Passover.

Soaking

You may *kasher* glass vessels that were only used for cold foods or liquids by soaking them in water for three consecutive days, changing the soaking water every 24 hours. However, you may not *kasher* for Passover glass vessels that you ordinarily use for hot foods or liquids.

It is preferable to have special glasses for Passover.

Part 2: Preparing Your Kitchen

Kashering The Stove And Oven

Oven cleaning: Use a caustic oven cleaner, such as ‘Easy-Off’, to clean conventional gas or electric ovens and racks. Make sure to clean hidden areas including corners, the edges of the door, behind the flame burners, and the grooves of the rack shelves. You can disregard spots that remain after a second thorough cleaning. With the racks inside, turn the oven to broil or to the highest setting for 40 minutes.

The self-cleaning cycle in a self-cleaning oven cleans and *kashers* the oven and the racks at the same time. Before you start the self-cleaning cycle, clean the inside face of the oven door, the opposing outer rim of the oven outside the gasket, the gasket, and the groove under the gasket, as these areas do not necessarily get as hot as the oven itself. Keep in mind that the gasket is sensitive to abrasion.

If you intend to use the broiler on Passover, the empty cavity needs to be cleaned and set to broil for 40 minutes to be *kashered*. The broiler pan, where the food is cooked directly on them without liquid, needs to be heated to a glow or replaced with a new one for Passover. If the broiler will not be used, you need only to clean the broiler cavity and the pan and put them away with other *chametz* utensils.

Stovetop cleaning: For a gas range, thoroughly clean the stovetop grates, then insert them into the oven while *kashering* the oven. In a self-cleaning oven they do not need to be cleaned first. The burners need only be cleaned

well. For electric range cooktops clean the burners well, and set them to their highest setting for a few minutes until they glow. Clean the rest of the stovetop and cover with a double layer of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Be careful not to cover over the vent. Drip pans need only be cleaned well and covered. The knobs need only be cleaned.

For ovens with separate broiler pans, griddles, barbecue or rotisserie inserts, these features must be cleaned and then heated to a glow using a blow torch, as food is cooked directly on them without liquid. It is advisable to replace the broiler pan with a new one used only for Passover.

Kashering The Sink

Stainless steel or granite sinks need to be cleaned well. Do not use the sink for 24 hours after cleaning before you *kasher* it. To *kasher* a stainless steel or granite (pure granite, not granite composite) sink, pour boiling water from a Passover kettle or pot onto every part of the sink, including the drain, the spout of the faucet, and the knobs. You may need to refill the kettle a few times before this process is complete.

China, porcelain, corian, or granite composite sinks cannot be *kashered*. Instead, clean and line them with contact paper or foil. Do not place dishes directly into these types of sinks, but wash them in a dishpan designated for Passover use. Use separate dishpans for meat and dairy.

Countertops made from porcelain, enamel, corian or plastic formica cannot be *kashered*. They should be covered with cardboard or a thick pad. Marble, stainless steel, and wood (that has a smooth surface) countertops can be *kashered* through pouring boiling water.

Preparing the Kitchen

A table upon which *chametz* is eaten during the year should be covered with a water-proof covering (eg. plastic covering). It is preferable to place another covering under the plastic, such as a piece of cardboard.

Thoroughly clean the refrigerator and/or freezer. Some have a custom to cover the shelves.

Thoroughly clean high chairs (if applicable). It is preferable to cover the tray with contact paper.

Dishwashers cannot be *kashered* for Passover.

Chametz Leading Up To Passover

Selling Your Chametz

Any *chametz* owned by a Jew during Passover week is forbidden for actual use forever. If there is *chametz* that you do not want to dispose of (eg. bottle of shnapps), you must arrange for a formal sale of *chametz* to a non-Jew that will go into effect before Passover. Rabbi Rabinowitz is available to arrange for this important contract following weekday morning and evening services, or by

appointment.

If you cannot take care of this in person, the Synagogue will make available a contract that you may use. **Whichever way you use, write your name and address legibly and give an approximate total value of the *chametz* items you are selling** (when doing so focus on the value of items that we conventionally refer to as real *chametz*, i.e. breads, pasta, cereals, cakes, cookies, oatmeal etc.).

All *chametz* that you sell should be stored away in one or more designated areas and sealed off.

See the Passover schedule for when you may resume eating *chametz* that you sold after Passover has ended.

The Search for the Chametz

On the night of the 14th of *Nissan* (the day before Passover), we are obligated to perform *bedikat chametz* (the search for *chametz*). Search everywhere that *chametz* may have been brought into as a final check for any *chametz* left behind. See the Passover schedule for when the time for performing the search begins.

Set aside and cover any *chametz* to be left over to eat that evening or the next morning. Before the search begins, the head of the household says the *bracha* “*al bi’ur chametz*”, found at the beginning of any Haggadah. Do not make any interruption between the *bracha* and the beginning of the search, nor say anything unnecessary to the search until after the search is completed.

The head of the household, with his way lit by a single-wick candle, proceeds from room to room with a feather that serves as a brush. CAUTION: Please be careful when using a candle to search confined areas, such as closets, cabinets, under the bed, etc.

Completely wrap any *chametz* that you find to burn it all together with the feather and the candle the next day. There is a *minhag* to place 10 pieces of bread around the house for which to search, and it’s important to make sure that the pieces can be easily found. It is recommended to place the pieces on a napkin or paper towel to avoid the spread of crumbs.

Following the search, *Bitul* (nullification of) *Chametz* is performed. This means to relinquish ownership by firmly deciding that the *chametz* in your domain (other than the *chametz* you still plan to eat) is worthless like the dust of the earth. Thus, you remove any connection you have to the *chametz* and it becomes ownerless. This is done by saying “*Kol Chamira*”. It can be found at the beginning of most *Haggadot*, and you should recite it in a language that you understand.

There are two declarations of “*Kol Chamira*”. One we say by night after the search, and one we say the next day when we burn the *chametz*.

Burning of Chametz

We must stop eating *chametz* before the 4th *halachik*





hour of the day and may not possess or derive benefit from *chametz* at the 5th *halachik* hour of the day. By the 5th hour we must perform *Biyur* (burning of the) *Chametz*. See the Passover schedule for the exact times.

Burn any *chametz* you found during Thursday evening's search along with any other leftover *chametz* that you did not sell or discard. Say the "*Kol Chamira*" for after burning *chametz* at this point. It is at the beginning of any *Haggadah*, and you should recite it in a language that you understand. You can burn your *Chametz* at the synagogue on Dexter St. See the Passover Schedule for the time the burning will take place.

Remove any *chametz* in the trash from your trash cans and premises by the 5th *halachik* hour of the day.

The Fast of the First Born

On the eve of Passover we observe *ta'anit bechorim* - the Fast of the First-born son. All first born Jewish men fast on this day to commemorate that the Jewish first born sons were saved from *makkat bechorot*, the Plague of the First Born. If, however, the *bechor* attends a *siyum* - a feast that accompanies the completion of a significant section of the *Torah* or *Talmud* - he is not obligated to fast.

As is our tradition, Beth Israel will host a *siyum* following *Shacharit* services.

Eating Matzah Products

We may not eat *matzah* or baked products made with *matzah* meal beginning the morning of the eve of Passover. *Matzah* meal products that are cooked, such as *matzah* balls, may be eaten until the 10th *halachik* hour of the day (see the Passover schedule). After this time, be careful not to eat too much of any food so that you come to the *Seder* with an appetite.

Egg Matzah

Egg *matzah* may not be eaten on Passover, except by the sick or elderly who cannot digest regular *matzah*. (Consult with a rabbi first.) The *mitzvah* of eating *matzah* on the *Seder* night cannot be fulfilled with egg *matzah* even for those who are permitted to eat it.

On Passover

At the Seder Table

(For a more extensive discussion of the laws of the *seder* see the directories mentioned above)

Passover is the only holiday celebrated with a home service—the *Seder*. *Seder* meals are symbolic both in the way the table is set and in the service conducted before and after the meal.

The Four Cups

Use a wine cup that can hold at least three fluid ounces.

Wine is the preferred drink for fulfilling the *mitzvah* of the four cups. If this is difficult, you may dilute wine with grape juice and/or water. The mixture should contain at least 4% alcohol. The ratio should not exceed more than one third parts water. If using *any* wine is difficult, you may use grape juice. If you need to dilute the grape juice with water, the ratio must not exceed two parts water to one part grape juice.

Drink each entire cup. If you cannot, drink at least the majority of the cup. If the cup is larger than three ounces, and you cannot drink the majority of the cup, then you should drink the three ounces. If you cannot even do that, then drink the majority of three ounces.

Remember to recline while drinking.

Matzah

We eat *matzah* three times at the *Seder*. For those three times, we use *shmura matzah* (made from grain that is guarded from moisture from the time of harvest until baking by hand or machine). You can purchase it at The Butcherie or at Stop and Shop. If you are using square, machine-made *shmura matzah*, make sure that it says *shmurah matzah* on the box.

The minimum portions to eat: For "*Motzi-Matzah*" and *Afkomen*: a piece equivalent in size to 6 1/4 in. by 7 in.; for *Korech*, a piece equivalent in size to 6 in. by 4 in. Each time, you should eat the *matzah* within two to nine minutes (nine is the maximum).

Remember to recline while eating the required matzah.

Maror

Ground horseradish: If you use horseradish, it must be pure ground horseradish with nothing added. The minimum amount to be eaten for *Maror* is 1.1 fluid ounce; for *Korech* is 0.7 fluid ounces.

Lettuce leaves: Eat an amount that covers an area eight by ten inches. If you use just stalks, eat enough to cover an area three by five inches.

Eating even a single small insect is a serious *Torah* prohibition. Therefore, you must inspect all lettuce leaves, especially Romaine, to make sure there are no bugs on them. See our Passover Supplement for detailed instructions on how to check for insects.

You may use pre-washed lettuce without inspection when a reliable *kosher* certification symbol is printed on the bag. Without a *kosher* symbol on the bag, you cannot use that bag without inspection.

Another option is to use only the stalks of the Romaine lettuce. These just need to be rinsed and rubbed well.

We eat *maror* twice at the *Seder*—at *Maror* and at *Korech*.

The Seder Plate

On the table is a *k'ara* (plate), consisting of:

Zroa: A bone with meat from the forearm of an animal or bird, dry roasted over an open flame. This represents the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb offered at the *Bet Hamikdash* and eaten on the night of Passover.

Betza: An unshelled hard-boiled egg, browned slightly over an open flame. This represents the *Chagiga* sacrifice offered at the *Bet Hamikdash* on the festivals.

Maror: Bitter herbs for which lettuce or grated horseradish may be used. These symbolize the bitter life of the Jews as slaves in Egypt. The *maror* is dipped in *charoset* before it is eaten.

Charoset: A mixture of nuts, apples and wine that symbolizes the mortar used in making bricks for Pharaoh.

Karpas: A vegetable - such as radish, onion, celery or cooked potato - that is dipped in salt water before it is eaten.

Chazeret: The head of a horseradish.

Three *matzot* in a sectional *matzah* cover or on a *Seder* dish covered with a large napkin. These three *matzot* symbolize the *Kohen*, *Levi* and *Yisrael*.

Items also placed on the table:

Salt Water: Symbolic of the tears shed by the Jews in Egypt. The *karpas* is dipped into the salt water.

Wine Cups: One for each individual. Four cups of wine are drunk at four different times during the *Seder*. They symbolize the Almighty's four expressions of redemption.

Cup for Elijah: A special wine cup is set aside as a symbolic hope for the coming of the Messiah.

Afikomen: The half *matzah* set aside at the beginning of the *Seder* and eaten at the end of the meal.

Also Found at the Seder:

Hessebet: Pillows in order to lean during the *Seder*.

Purchasing Chametz After Passover

If a Jew owns *chametz* during Passover, no one may eat or use that *chametz* even after the holiday ends. Therefore, we can only buy *chametz* from a non-Jewish establishment or from a Jew who sold his *chametz*. Our Passover Supplement will contain a list of establishments that you can buy *chametz* from immediately after Passover.

All Jewish-owned *kosher* establishments under rabbinic supervision have sold their *chametz* in accordance with *halacha*. If a Jewish establishment didn't sell its *chametz*, you cannot resume buying *chametz* from there until you are sure that the *chametz* from Passover has been bought out. This time period varies for different stores.

Please see the Passover Supplement mentioned above for more important information about food and non-food products, medications, toiletries, and pet foods for Passover.

Passover Preparations

This year, since the first seder is on Shabbat, all preparations (roasting the shankbone, salt water prep, grinding horseradish) are all done on Friday.



Sefirah

Laws of Sefirat HaOmer

1. On the second night of Passover we begin the *mitzvah* of *Sefirat HaOmer*, the counting of the *Omer*. We have a *mitzvah* to count the forty-nine days from the second night of Passover until the holiday of *Shavu'ot*.
2. The *mitzvah* is to count the days and the weeks. On the first night we say, "Today is the first day of the *Omer*" and in this manner continue counting the subsequent days. When we reach the seventh days we count the days and weeks by saying, "Today is seven days, which is one week of the *Omer*." On the eighth day we say, "Today is eight days, which is one week and one day of the *Omer*." We continue in this manner of counting until the completion of *Sefirat HaOmer*.
3. Before counting we recite the *bracha* of "*al sefirat haomer*". Before the *bracha* you should make sure that you know which number night you are about to count.
4. The time for counting is in the evening as soon as the night begins. If you don't count at that time, you can count throughout the entire night.
5. You should stand while reciting the counting.
6. If you forget to count the entire night, you can count during the day, but without saying the *bracha*. When you continue counting the next night in the count, you do so with a *bracha*. If you missed an entire day in the count, you continue subsequent nights without a *bracha*. If you are counting with a minyan, you can ask someone who is making the *bracha* to have the intention that his *bracha* should be said for you too. You will need to have in mind that his *bracha* is for your counting as well and answer "Amen".
7. If you are not sure whether or not you counted the previous day, you continue counting the next day with a *bracha*.
8. If someone asks you what to count that night and you have not yet counted, do not respond, "Tonight is the Ninth night." That could possibly fulfill your obligation to count, and you will not be able to recite the *bracha* that night. You should instead respond, "Yesterday was the Eighth day."
9. The *Talmud* relates that during this period 24,000 students of the famed Rabbi Akiva died in a plague over the course of thirty-three days. Therefore we observe a thirty-three day period of mourning during which we refrain from cutting our hair, playing or listening to music, dancing, and performing weddings.
10. The thirty-third day of the *Omer* is called "*Lag BaOmer*" and all restrictions are suspended on that day.
11. There are varying customs as to which thirty-three

days are observed as the period of mourning. Some say that the period is counted from the second day of Passover until *Lag BaOmer* (no mourning is observed during the holiday of Passover). Others observe the period from the first day of *Rosh Chodesh Iyar* until the morning of the third day prior to *Shavuot* (these three days are known as "*Shloshet Y'mei Hagbalah*"). Mourning is suspended on *Lag BaOmer*.



Shavu'ot

About Shavu'ot

Shavu'ot is called *Z'man Matan Toratenu*, the season of the giving of the *Torah*. *Shavu'ot* is on the sixth day of *Sivan* and is the anniversary of the Revelation at Mt. Sinai, when G-d gave the *Torah* to the Jewish people.

Shavu'ot is not just about celebrating an event of the past; rather every holiday is a station along the circuit of the Jewish calendar year. Every *Shavu'ot* we return to the season of the Sinai experience. Just as G-d gave the *Torah* then, so too He gives it now, by imbuing us with the inspiration and potential to grow in *Torah* study and observance.

We do not recite *Tachanun* for the first eight days of the month of *Sivan*.

On the first night of *Shavu'ot* women light *Yom Tov* candles and recite the *brachot* of “*lehadlik ner shel Yom Tov*” and “*Shehechyanu*”. *Ma'ariv* does not start until after *tzet hakochavim* so that there should be 49 complete days from Passover until *Shavu'ot*. After *Ma'ariv*, the *Yom Tov Kiddush* is recited along with the blessing of “*Shehechyanu*”.

There is a *minhag* to eat dairy on *Shavu'ot* and there are varying customs as to how this is done. The *minhag* in our shul is to serve a dairy *Yom Tov* meal on the first night of *Shavu'ot*.

Many people have a *minhag* to decorate their synagogue and home with flowers and greenery. The reason given for this is that Sinai, normally a barren and desolate mountain, was in bloom and covered with greenery at the giving of the *Torah*. The decorating is done before the holiday.

As with any *Yom Tov*, on *Shavu'ot* one is obligated to eat two meals in honor of the holiday. (On *Shabbat* we are obligated to eat a third.)

There is a *minhag* to study *Torah* late into the night on the first night of *Shavu'ot*. The Jewish people received the *Torah* on the morning of the sixth day of *Sivan*. Instead of preparing the night before for this colossal event, they went to sleep. We, their descendents, make up for this by studying *Torah* late into the night on the sixth of *Sivan*.

When the Ten Commandments are read from the *Torah* on *Shavu'ot* morning, we are to see ourselves as receiving the *Torah* as our ancestors did at the foot of Mt. Sinai. For this reason, many stand when the Ten Commandments are read, just as our ancestors stood at Mt. Sinai.

Just before the *Torah* reading begins, the Aramaic song of *Akdmut* is recited. The themes of *Akdmut* are the greatness of the Almighty and the privilege the Jewish people have of being His chosen nation—a privilege we never forfeit even when enticed by foreign influences.

On the second night of *Shavu'ot* candle lighting and

preparations for the second day of *Yom Tov* must be done after *tzet hakochavim* and the candles must be lit from an existing flame.

The *brachot* of “*lehadlik ner shel Yom Tov*” and “*Shehechyanu*” are recited at candle lighting. After returning from shul, the *Yom Tov Kiddush* is recited, along with the blessing of “*Shehechyanu*”.

On the second day of *Shavu'ot*, we read *Megilat Rut*, the Book of Ruth. One of the reasons for this is that King David was born on *Shavu'ot*. Upon conclusion of the book, the lineage of King David is recorded, because he was a descendant of Ruth.

During the reading of the *Haftarah*, the song “*Y'tziv Pitgam*” is recited. *Yizkor* is said on the second day.





Three Weeks

Laws of The Three Weeks and the Nine Days

The 17th of *Tammuz* through *Tisha B'Av* (The 9th day of the Hebrew month of *Av*) is the period we refer to as “The Three Weeks”. During this time, we mourn the destruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*. On the 17th of *Tammuz*, the enemy breached the walls of Jerusalem. On *Tisha B'Av*, both the first and second temples were destroyed. Our mourning begins on the 17th of *Tammuz* and intensifies as *Tisha B'Av* approaches.

There are 5 periods of mourning that we go through:

- (1) From the 17th of *Tammuz* until the 1st of *Av*.
- (2) The first nine days of the month of *Av* (“The Nine Days”).
- (3) The week in which *Tisha B'Av* occurs.
- (4) *Erev Tisha B'Av*-the day before *Tisha B'Av*.
- (5) *Tisha B'Av* day.

The Three Weeks (Starting from the 17th of Tammuz)

1. We do not hold weddings.
2. We are not permitted to dance, play musical instruments, or listen to music.
3. We do not shave or get haircuts. An adult may not give a haircut to a child. However, if you will incur financial loss if you do not shave, you are permitted to shave until the week in which *Tisha B'Av* occurs.
4. We refrain from reciting the blessing of *shehechyanu*. Therefore, we do not purchase or wear new garments or eat a new fruit for the first time. Until the first day of *Av*, you may purchase and wear new shoes, undergarments, socks, and shirts, since they do not require the blessing of *shehechyanu*. On *Shabbat*, the above is permitted, and *shehechyanu* may be recited.

The Nine Days (Starting the first day of Av)

1. We do not eat meat or drink wine. However, on *Shabbat* we are permitted to do so. “Meat” includes fowl and food cooked with meat or meat fat or gravy. You may eat food cooked in a meat vessel without meat ingredients.
2. You are permitted to use wine for *havdallah* on Saturday night. Some give the wine to a small child, while others use beer.
3. We refrain from laundering. However, you may launder children’s clothing that constantly soils with dirt and the like. Additionally, you may give clothing to a non-Jewish cleaner before the first of *Av* even if it will be

cleaned afterwards.

4. We refrain from wearing freshly laundered clothing. If you wear your clothing for a short time before the first of *Av*, they can then be worn during The Nine Days. Undergarments, socks, and pajamas, which are worn directly on the body, may be changed. Also, we may not purchase or make any new garments. Knitting and needlecraft are prohibited, but you may repair or patch torn garments. If you do not have any non-leather shoes, and forgot to buy appropriate footwear for *Tisha B'Av*, you may do so.
5. We also refrain from changing bed linen and using fresh tablecloths and towels.
6. On *Shabbat* you may wear freshly cleaned clothing or use fresh towels and tablecloths, but you may not change bed linens.
7. You may not wear any new garments even on *Shabbat*. You may not wear *Shabbat* garments on weekdays during The Nine Days.
8. You may not bathe for pleasure. You may not use hot or warm water for cleaning yourself unless the dirt or perspiration will not come off otherwise. You may add hot water to cold water in order to take out the chill.
9. For *Shabbat*, you may bathe with hot water (if you do so every Friday for *Shabbat*). A woman may go to the *mikvah* during The Nine Days.
10. Construction is suspended unless it is required for living purposes or to prevent damage. Home decorating is not permitted. If a non-Jew was contracted before the 1st of *Av*, he may work during The Nine Days. Gardening is suspended.
11. You may not purchase objects of joy, such as silver for a wedding, if it will be available after *Tisha B'Av* for the same price.
12. You may not cut your nails during the week in which *Tisha B'Av* occurs. However, for *Shabbat* or as preparation for *mikvah* use, you are permitted to do so.

Erev Tisha B'Av

1. We do not say *Tachanun* at *Mincha*. We eat a regular meal before *Mincha*, and afterwards we eat the *Se'udah Hamafseket*, the final meal before the fast. It consists of bread dipped in ashes, an egg, water, and is eaten while sitting on the floor or on a low chair. It is not necessary to remove leather shoes for this. You should not eat this meal with a group, rather you should sit and eat alone.
2. If you plan to continue eating after this meal, you should think or say before reciting *Bircat haMazon* that you are not yet beginning the fast.
3. The fast and restrictions begin at sundown.
4. We remove leather shoes before the fast begins.

When Tisha B'Av falls out on a Saturday Night

1. You may eat meat and drink wine on *Shabbat Erev Tisha B'Av* but you must stop eating and drinking by sunset.
2. Because it's *Shabbat*, we do not eat the traditional *Erev Tisha B'Av se'udah hamafseket* of bread and ashes.
3. We do not say the customary *havdallah* on Saturday night, but rather on Sunday night, at the conclusion of the fast. On Saturday night we only recite the blessing over the candle (*boreh m'oreh ha'esh*), preferably before reading the Book of *Eicha*. However, you can recite the blessing over the candle any time during the night. Only the blessing over the wine (*boreh pri ha'gefen*) and the blessing of *Hamavdil* are included in the *havdallah* that we recite on Sunday night at the end of the fast.
4. Since we do not wear leather shoes on *Tisha B'Av*, we wait until after *Ma'ariv* has begun on Saturday night – after we say *Barechu* – to remove our *Shabbat* shoes and put on leather-free shoes for *Tisha B'Av*. Please remember to bring your *Tisha B'Av* shoes to shul before *Shabbat*. NOTE: We do not change our shoes during the *Ma'ariv* service. Be careful not to touch your shoes as you remove them.
5. We recite *Ma'ariv* sitting on a low stool.
6. If you are not davening *Ma'ariv*, you must say the *bracha*, “*Baruch HaMavdil ben Kodesh l'chol*” (Blessed is He who distinguishes the Holy from the mundane) in order to conclude *Shabbat* properly and resume weekday activity (this is true for every Saturday night). If you are davening *Ma'ariv* you recite the *Ata Chonantanu* in the *Amidah*, as is done every Saturday night. If you forget to include the *Ata Chonantanu*, then you should recite the *Baruch HaMavdil bracha* written above.

Tisha B'Av

1. Everyone is required to fast on *Tisha B'Av*. If you are weak and may become ill from fasting, consult your rabbi. If fasting is dangerous to your health, you are forbidden to fast.
2. Swallowing capsules or bitter medicine in liquid or tablet form is permitted.
3. We may not wash ourselves. If an area of the body becomes dirty, then we may wash that area. You may wash your hands up to the knuckles when you awaken in the morning, after using the bathroom, and before davening.
4. After drying your hands in the morning, you may wipe your eyes and face with them as long as long as your hands are not very damp.
5. Cohabitation and anointing are forbidden. We may

not wear perfume or cologne. For medical purposes, such as a skin condition, anointing is permissible.

6. We may not wear leather shoes, even those partially made of leather or covered with leather. If you must wear leather shoes for medical reasons, you should consult a rabbi.
7. On *Tisha B'Av*, we may only study the subjects of *Torah* that relate to *Tisha B'Av* or mourning.
8. We may not greet one another or send gifts on *Tisha B'Av*. Giving *tzedaka* is permitted.
9. Until *chatzot*, we may not sit on a chair that is 12 inches or higher off the ground.
10. Work that diverts your mind from mourning or business transactions are prohibited until *chatzot*. Housework should also be postponed until then.
11. Preparation for the break-fast meal is done after *chatzot*.
12. Tallit and tefillin are not worn at *Shacharit*, but at *Mincha* instead.
13. In the *Amidah* of *Mincha* we add the paragraph of “*Nachem*” to the *bracha* of “*Et Tzemach David*” and the paragraph of “*Anenu*” to the *bracha* of “*Shema Kolenu*” as is found in the *Siddur*.

