



April 20, 2019
15 Nisan 5779



Pesach

Torah Reading
Day 1 - Page 354
Day 2 - Page 680

Passover



Schedule of Events

Friday, April 19

10:39 a.m. Last time to eat Chametz
11:30 a.m. Burning of Chametz
7:50 p.m. Candle lighting
8:52 p.m. First Seder

Saturday, April 20

9:00 a.m. Shacharit
7:35 p.m. Mincha
8:15 p.m. Congregational Pesach Seder

Sunday, April 21

9:00 a.m. Shacharit
8:00 p.m. Mincha
8:40 p.m. Maariv
8:54 p.m. Havdala

Monday, April 22

6:45 a.m. Shacharit
8:45 p.m. Mincha/Maariv

Tuesday, April 23

6:45 a.m. Shacharit
8:45 p.m. Mincha/Maariv

Wednesday, April 24

6:45 a.m. Shacharit
8:45 p.m. Mincha/Maariv

Thursday, April 25

6:45 a.m. Shacharit
7:57 p.m. Candel Lighting

Friday, April 26

Office Closed

9:00 a.m. Shacharit
7:58 p.m. Mincha/Maariv
7:58 p.m. Candle Lighting

Saturday, April 27

9:00 a.m. Shacharit
6:55 p.m. Insights into the Weekly Torah Portion
7:40 p.m. Mincha/Seudah Shlishit
9:02 p.m. Havdalah

A very special thank you goes out to our Guardian and Patron Members for going above and beyond in supporting our Synagogue.

Guardian Members:

Joel & Conny Alperson
Jeff & Sharon
Kirshenbaum,
Joe & Maxine
Kirshenbaum
David & Janet Kohll
Stacey & Jonathan
Rockman
Phil & Nancy Wolf

Patron Members:

Samuel & Shirley Cemaj
Michael & Karen Cohen
Steve & Tippi Denenberg
Donald Gerber
Bruce & Cindy Goldberg
Don & Nancy Greenberg
Milton & Marsha
Kleinberg
Georgia Plotkin

Bruce & Linda Potash

Carl & Zoe Riekes
Mike & Marina Sadofsky
Jack & Helene Shrago
Paul & Susan Shyken
Jeff Zacharia



Mazel Tov to Those Celebrating Next Week

Birthdays

Samuel Kohll	Apr 21
Yaakov Jeidel	Apr 23
Zoe Riekes	Apr 23
Josephine Lila Epstein	Apr 23
Harold Edelman	Apr 23
Nathan Wolf	Apr 25
Shilo Abramovich	Apr 26



*Celebrating a special simcha in April or May?
Its graduation season don't forget to call Kaitlin in
the office or contact Bette Kozlen to be apart of the
April/May Simcha Kiddush.*



...Faige Jeidel, Yaakov Jeidel, Nancy Mattley, Marge Williams, Ruthe Starlin, Dani Shrago, Rabbi Shlomo Abramovich and Rabbi Ari Dembitzer for working tirelessly to prepare our kitchen and food for Pesach.

...the volunteers of the Chevra Kadisha for taking care of our recently departed

Friedel's Annual Plant Sale!

Thursday, May 2 and Friday, May 3

JCC Main Entrance: 9-5

CDC: 11:30-6:00

Friedel Jewish Academy will be holding their annual plant sale on Thursday, May 2nd and Friday, May 3rd. There will be a large variety of annuals and perennials as well as vegetables and herbs. There will be two locations to shop at this year, at the JCC front desk as well as the CDC. Also, to add to this year's sale is the opportunity for pre-ordering. All preorders will be due by April 17th. Please contact Friedel's PTO head at usbooksandme@yahoo.com for any additional preorder details. Vegetables will be available at the sale but not available to preorder.

If you are available to help, Friedel is also asking for volunteers. Refer to the weekly email for the volunteer sign-up link.

Friedel's plant sale hours are:

Thursday and Friday

JCC Main Entrance: 9-5

CDC: 11:30-6:00



Spring into Life: Blood Drive
Beth Israel Synagogue
Sunday, May 12th
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Donate blood this Mother's Day and receive a flower and admission ticket for Lauritzen Gardens to gift your mother (or keep for yourself)!

For an appointment please visit redcrossblood.org and search sponsor code: BethIsrael or call 1.800.RED.CROSS (1.800.733.2767).

Please call or email Faige Jeidel with any questions.

 A colorful poster for the 2019 Yom Ha'Atzmaut Festival. The title "2019 Yom Ha'Atzmaut Festival" is written in a large, blue, cursive font, with "WEDNESDAY, MAY 8" below it in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. The background is light blue with confetti and stars. There are three circular inset photos: one of two young girls, one of a child sitting on a globe, and one of two children in traditional Jewish attire. The poster lists various activities and their locations:

- 5:30-7:30 p.m. | FREE CHILDREN'S CARNIVAL**: Join us at the shuk for inflatables, games, prizes and more! Food from Star Catering will be available for purchase.
- 6:00-6:15 p.m. | YOM HAZIKARON CEREMONY**: Join us as we remember and honor fallen Israeli soldiers.
- 7:00-8:00 p.m. | B'NAI B'RITH JEWISH TRIVIA CONTEST**: All ages are welcome. Advanced registration requested.

 A note states: "All events are FREE and open to the community." On the right side, it lists school activities:

- 3rd-6th Grade & Beth El 7th Grade**: 4:00-6:00pm | JCC Social Hall (Snacks, religious school activities)
- 6:00-6:15pm | JCC Gymnasium**: Yom HaZikaron Ceremony
- 6:15-7:30pm | JCC Gymnasium**: Yom Ha'Atzmaut Carnival w/ parental supervision
- 8th-12th Grade & Temple 7th Grade**: 6:00-6:15pm | JCC Gymnasium (Yom HaZikaron Ceremony)
- 6:15-7:00pm | JCC Auditorium**: Dinner and activities with Israeli teen delegation
- 7:00-8:00pm | JCC Auditorium**: B'nai B'rith Jewish Trivia Contest

 At the bottom, there are logos for Omaha JCC, The Jewish Federation of Omaha, and The Jewish Restoration Foundation. A "THANK YOU!" message acknowledges support from the Herbert Goldstein Trust, the Glikberg Jewish Federation of Omaha Foundation, Parot and Eleanor Feinstein Family Social Foundation, and the Murray H. and Doreen C. Neuman Supporting Foundation.



Todah Rabbah to NCSY Director for this week's D'var Torah



What's Your Addiction?

This Passover, I'm experiencing seven days of freedom from my taskmaster. I'm putting my smartphone in my drawer for the entire week.



My first meaningful Jewish experience was a Passover Seder when I was 17. At the time I was living with an addict. He would freebase heroin, "chasing the dragon", as it was known, pretty much every day, and I would come home regularly from high school and find him sitting on our couch with eyes wide open, only the whites visible. Sadly, though almost inevitably, he eventually died of an overdose.

Judaism meant less than nothing to me, at that point in my life, but somehow, I had ended up at a rabbi's Seder table. He started talking about the freedom from Egypt as a metaphor for freedom from ourselves; the freedom to make the choices we wish to make, unrestricted by our own habitual desires and beliefs; freedom from addiction.

I was utterly dumbfounded that a book written two thousand years ago could have such insight into my roommate's relationship with heroin. It succinctly and completely accurately defined his way of life and talked about an obvious route to change. It opened my eyes to a Judaism that was not about dogma and ritual, but wisdom and meaning.

Every commandment on Passover has within it a deeper meaning about this personal freedom and is a guide to achieving it.

I want to focus on the commandment to rid ourselves of chametz, leaven, on Passover. It is a small part of a much bigger picture. And yet, as with everything in Judaism, even a little goes a very long way.

People often think that the difference between leaven and matzah is yeast, but that is not strictly true. The technical difference is that matzah is grain and water that has not been allowed to rise and leaven is grain and water that has.

So, leaven and matzah share the same ingredients. Only leaven has had time (18 minutes to be precise) to rise and matzah has not. Leaven, in effect, is matzah that has been puffed up by air. And yet, leaven - in

particular bread – is so much more attractive and enticing than matzah. Bread is simply matzah that looks and tastes better.

We become enslaved to life's luxuries, not its necessities.

Before Passover, we spend time searching our homes for this leaven. The evening before Passover, we get it all out into the open and then the next day we burn it. And for seven days we do not eat or even possess leaven.

In Jewish belief, leaven represents personal slavery and matzah represents personal freedom. We become enslaved to life's luxuries, not its necessities. I have yet to meet someone addicted to eating broccoli or drinking water, addicted to spending time with their children. As the Beatles said, "the best things in life are free, but you can save them for the birds and bees." We become addicted to the leaven, those things which look good, appeal to our desires, urge us to engage in them – but ultimately offer nothing more (and often much less) than the "best things in life." I have met no one addicted to broccoli but plenty of people addicted to chocolate. Chocolate provides less (a lot less) nutrition than broccoli – and yet we desire them in inverse proportion to their value.

A few days before Passover, not only do we search our homes for leaven, we search our hearts for "leaven" as well. We look inside of ourselves to see where we are enslaved.

I wake up in the morning and my beloved is next to my bed; it's my alarm after all.

Let me give a very relevant example – likely for every one of us: Smartphones. I wake up in the morning and my beloved is next to my bed; it's my alarm after all. My first thought is not how can I thank God for the gift of life today, rather let's see the life changing messages on Whatsapp – no, not "let's see", rather "I need to see, I MUST see". The news might be next. What has happened overnight? My world has surely changed in cataclysmic ways. I absolutely, positively HAVE to know...

So, without any possible option otherwise, I check Whatsapp and the news, as well as my emails; one person has Whatsapped me a very unfunny meme and I have emails from Amazon, Google and LinkedIn and, lo and behold, the news tells me that the world is exactly the way I left it the previous evening. Pretty much the same as a decade ago, actually. The addiction offered me something so exciting and glamorous – and delivered only disappointment.

Passover is a time when freedom is in the air. A time not to just think about freedom but to embrace freedom and, indeed, be free.

So, on the eve of Passover, we have searched our homes for leaven and have it all on the table. We have journeyed inside and found our areas of spiritual enslavement. And now we burn it all.

For me, burning my leaven means making a decision that for seven days I am not interested slavery. For seven days I am going to look in a different direction. For seven days, I am going to be free of this way of life that enslaves me. On other days of the year it would be madness to think this possible. To make a decision to change habits of a lifetime and for the decision to last forever. Judaism believes, however, that the spiritual season of Passover is propitious for such overnight changes in direction.

Try suddenly stopping smoking for seven days, with an eye on it lasting forever, at another time of year. Or being completely disinterested in your desire for sugar. Or try to decide you are not going to follow the thoughts of anger when they come. Will it happen? The coming week of Passover, there is a guarantee that it will. Our willpower is magnified and we can be different and then live with those changes as long as we decide to do so. If we genuinely burn our leaven, it will be gone.

This Passover, my smartphone is going in my drawer for seven days. And I can't tell you how exciting that sounds to me! Wow – seven days of freedom from my taskmaster; a daunting thought, but a breath of fresh air.

Let me share a few more of my slaveries (though many others are not for public disclosure!). I won't be watching soccer for seven days. I won't be going to bed later than midnight (other than on the Seder nights). I won't be playing chess on my computer, nor eating sugar. My diet starts this Passover – and really it does. Because there is no time to start a diet like Passover. Forget that we Jews have food all around us for seven days. We have freedom all inside of us for those seven days. Which is a more powerful force? As long as we choose, the freedom of Passover is a gift to wield as we see fit. It is the most glorious time of year for personal change.

So, spend some time during the next few days making a list of your slaveries, your addictions. I suggest you write them all down (password protected!) and then pick two or three to break free from on Passover. I usually print a piece of paper with them on and burn that paper with my leaven. On the eve of Passover, make your decision. You are going to be free for the next seven days. Stick to your guns and watch Passover work its beautiful magic.

Take advantage of what is on offer. Use it and change. As Martin Luther King famously quoted, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"



WELCOME TO BETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE

We are delighted to welcome you to Beth Israel Synagogue. A passage from Deuteronomy 30:11-14 inspired the art work in the sanctuary. "For this commandment that I command you today - it is not hidden from you and it is not distant. It is not in heaven, [for you] to say, 'Who can go to the heaven and take it for us so that we can listen to it and perform it? Nor is it across the seas, [for you] to say, 'Who can cross to the other side of the sea for us and take it for us, so that we can listen to it and perform it?' Rather, the matter is very near to you - in your mouth and your heart - to perform it." Mitzvot are obtainable.

- ◆ The focal point of the sanctuary is the Menorah Window, which frames the Ark and is shaped in the form of the six branched candelabrum. To the right, brilliantly colored windows have forms that reflect the heavens, while the left side depicts the seas.
- ◆ The message is completed in a frieze, the horizontal painting on wood mounted on the wall. The background of the frieze symbolically and abstractly represents the relationship between G-d and the people of Israel through the Covenant. The perochet, or curtain over the Ark, completes the symbolic composition, with an expression that intertwines the Torah and the letter Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, of the Ten Commandments, and of G-d's name in Hebrew.
- ◆ As is traditional, the sanctuary has 12 windows, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. These windows contain the name of each tribe in flowing, organic letters. The windows are located above the continued frieze, which includes two central texts of the revelation at Sinai - "If you will keep my Covenant, you shall be precious to me," and "You shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." This composition expresses the unity of Israel as the people stood together at Sinai and accepted the Torah.

Beth Israel Synagogue strives to perpetuate the legacy of Torah Judaism in the modern world. Beth Israel welcomes all persons of the Jewish faith to join and accepts the diversity of practice and thought among its members.

Rabbi Ari Dembitzer, Senior Rabbi
Toba Cohen-Dunning, President
Nate Shapiro, Executive Director
Rabbi Shlomo Abramovich, Visiting Scholar
Leo Fettman, Cantor Emeritus
12604 Pacific Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68154
(402) 556-6288 / www.orthodoxomaha.org