

**Jewish Home Festivals that Create Jewish Time:  
An Adult and Family Curriculum Guide**

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# CURRICULUM RATIONALE

The intent of this year-long adult education curriculum is to support adults in creating intellectually and religiously meaningful holiday and festival rituals and celebrations. The curriculum will allow adults to explore the textual and/or halachic basis for ritual observances. In addition to text studies from Torah, Midrash, and Talmud, learners will also be exposed to cultural adaptations within different Jewish communities.

The units within this study will focus on the ritual observances as embodied in texts relating to Shabbat, Chanukah, Pesach, and Sukkot. Jewish rituals and celebrations are some of the most enduring memories a person can create and savor. The goal of this curriculum guide is to give learners basic knowledge and empower them to make holiday and festival observances memorable moments of celebration and an integral part of their Jewish identity and connection to the Jewish People.

All too often holidays, with the exception of Passover seder or lighting Chanukah candles, are seen as only occurring at the synagogue and are not a part of the family's home cycle. Perhaps the parents or adults do not feel empowered to be their child's teacher or an authentic leader of ritual. Maybe they lack the knowledge to create meaningful Jewish memories, or to establish holiday rituals at home. When families merely mimic rituals experienced at synagogue or when ritual is seen as the purview of the synagogue or synagogue school, the ritual will not have meaning in the life of the family and they will not practice it in the home. The study of Torah, Midrashic, and Talmudic texts will allow adult students to understand the meaning and symbolism of traditions and rituals. The study of cultural adaptations will add yet another level of potential personalization and meaning.

This guide is based around three enduring (major) understandings:

1. The observance of holiday and festival celebrations connects modern-day Jews to biblical and historical traditions.
2. Holiday and festival celebrations are primary experiences in forming and enacting Jewish identity while creating Jewish memories.
3. Holiday and festival celebrations provide opportunities to create a relationship with God, with Judaism, and with the Jewish People.

### **Beyond the “How-To”:**

The materials and activities in each of the holiday/festival units stress connections between the sociological issues of personal and group Jewish identification and the historical attempts to live out the concepts taught in Torah and other holy texts. Through the study of the *mitzvot* of holiday and festival observances, participants will be encouraged to explore and validate a personal theology and relationship to God, Torah, the Jewish People, and hopefully, the Land of Israel. The Jewish festival observances are the epitome of experiential learning – you learn as you build the *sukkah*, read the from *haggadah*, and recite the Sabbath prayers. This guide will assist the teacher in providing an adult-centered experience of the festivals that answer the questions “why do we do what we do?”

### **Why the Stress on Personal Meaning?:**

Steven M. Cohen’s and Arnold M. Eisen’s research project to determine how or why individuals identify as Jews, found that personal connections to Judaism are crucial for liberal American Jews. “Personal meanings are sought ... for new as well as for inherited observances. If such meanings are not fashioned or found, the practices in question are revised or discarded – or not undertaken in the first place.”<sup>1</sup> The study sessions within this curriculum are designed to stimulate each learner to relate the meaning of the festivals to their own understanding of Judaism. To reach this goal, students will examine the origins of holiday traditions, question the options available for personal ritual observance, and

experience the celebration. When adults understand a concept, performance of the action becomes more personalized. When a concept and action have personal meaning, most adults are more comfortable with and *want* to participate in religious observances.

### **A Focus on Home Celebrations:**

Analyzing text two or three months prior to the actual observance of the holiday/festival will provide the academic background to understand the origins of the rituals. In addition, students will create a personal ritual, ceremony or ritual object to be shared with family and friends at the time of the holiday observance. The final class for each topic should be scheduled as closely as possible to the actual date of the festival or holiday. Each culminating activity to enact the rituals and celebrations studied will be a gathering of small groups of learners and their friends and families at the home of one of the group members.

This curriculum guide is designed to answer the intellectual and spiritual needs of

- adults “returning” to Judaism, whether it be because they are creating their own family or because of a need to heal from a personal tragedy or loss,
- individuals who want to find a Judaism that can speak to their lives,
- or adults who want to have an interactive experience with their religion and religious community.

Holiday and festival celebrations are tangible experiences that can help create lasting memories and connections to God, Torah, and the People Israel.

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<sup>1</sup> Cohen and Eisen. *The Jew Within*, page 3.

## CURRICULAR GOALS

- Help students discover through Jewish texts both the religious-symbolic meanings and the intricacies of observance of Jewish festivals and holidays. Through this text-based study, to discover the evolving manifestations of these observances based on time and space within which the Jewish people have lived.
- To demonstrate that Jewish festival and holiday rituals teach values which reflect a connection with the Divine.
- Help students create a personal connection to God within the study of and observance of Jewish festival and holiday rituals that will extend to form spiritual links with Jews throughout the world.
- Provide resources for students to design festival and holiday rituals or ritual objects that integrate components studied in Jewish texts.
- Encourage students to incorporate personalized festival and holiday rituals into their home life to create personal Jewish memories.
- Empower students to be leaders of festival and holiday celebrations within their home or extended community.

## OUTLINE OF UNITS

### **Unit One: Introduction**

In this unit, students will be introduced to the study of Jewish texts and Jewish values. The learning activities will demonstrate how the Biblical commandments are expanded in various Jewish sources. In addition, students will study Jewish values to add personal meaning to enacting mitzvot.

### **Unit Two: Shabbat**

Learning activities will help students discover the textual basis and cultural adaptations for Shabbat rituals. Students will also explore traditional brachot to find personal meaning and significance in their life. Students will create a Shabbat “schedule” and a personal ceremony for any section of the twenty-fives hours of Shabbat.

### **Unit Three: Chanukah**

After studying the Book of Maccabbes, students will investigate the ideas of how miracle stories and celebrating the struggle for religious freedom can enrich the celebration of Chanukah. Students will create a series of readings for each night of the Festival.

### **Unit Four: Pesach**

Though the study of texts from the Haggadah, ancient texts, and various modern commentaries, students will examine the major story of the Jewish people to discover the multiple levels of meaning of the rituals and mitzvot. Students will create personal interpretations or readings for one or more sections of the Seder that intensify their spiritual and/or intellectual relationship with the Seder.

### **Unit Five: Sukkot**

Wrapping up the year of study, and pre-planning for the beginning of the new year, the last unit will look at the rituals and mitzvot of Sukkot. Students will investigate how this ancient ceremony helps us focus on our sacred history and the ongoing covenant between God and the People Israel. Students will create personal interpretations for one or more of the rituals of Sukkot that intensify their spiritual or intellectual relationship with the Festival.

## NOTES TO THE TEACHER

This curriculum guide is designed as a 27-30 week course for examining the reasons why Jews “do what they do” when observing or celebrating the Jewish holidays at home. Students will examine the texts, biblical, rabbinic, and modern, that form and enrich the observances. The goal of such study is to find a personal sense of holiness in observance through understanding and doing. It is my belief that if one understands the origins of and adaptations to festival observance the joy and commitment to fulfilling the mitzvot related to that *chag* will last for a lifetime. Additionally, encouraging the students to create personal observances will satisfy their instinct to participate in ensuring the continuance of the traditions of our people.

This guide is not intended to be a “how-to” guide. Rather, it assumes the learners have had experience with Jewish holiday observance. Though not designed for a “first-timer,” it should not be too difficult to adapt the learning activities to meet the needs of all learners.

### How this guide helps structure your class:

The guide provides goals and objectives to guide the learning toward the enduring understandings for each holiday. In addition, learning activities are provided for two of the objective for each unit. These learning activities should be scheduled after you have introduced the students to the Biblical text and/or Talmudic texts that mandate the observance of the holiday. These texts serve as the opening point for discussion, and lead into the learning activities.

Please be aware I have not attempted to provide all Talmudic sources for each holiday. Your students may have additional questions. Encourage them to use the skills they will learn during each of the lessons provide the skills to continue their own investigation of texts.

### Scheduling:

This curriculum is divided into 5 units, one introductory and four units focusing on home celebrations. The first unit serves as an introduction to primary Jewish texts and Jewish values that are embodied in the mitzvot of our holiday observances.

The perfect time to kick off this study is when the succah is in place. Begin your class with a social gathering under the succah. Use this time to model the rituals of the Festival of Sukkot. Then allow students to share holiday memories and survey what they hope to learn during the course of study.

Check the holiday schedule and allow adequate time for text study prior to each holiday observance, the suggested order for the home-based holiday units are:

- Shabbat, our weekly celebration (Can be broken into two sections if easier to schedule)
- Chanukah
- Pesach
- Sukkot.

#### Creating a ritual within your classroom

Modeling the act of bringing Jewish ritual into our daily lives, each of your class sessions should begin with the blessing for study: Note, even though the blessing states “words of Torah,” the blessing applies to the study of any of our holy texts.

#### LA'ASOK B'DEEVREI TORAH

#### לְעִסוּק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה

Ba-rukhh a-tah, ADONAI e-lo-hei-nu,  
me-lekh ha-o-lam,  
a-sheer kee-d'sha-nu b'meeetz-vo-tav,  
v'tzee-va-nu la-a-sok b'deev-rei Torah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,  
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסוּק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

We praise You, ADONAI our God, Eternal Soul of the universe, who makes us holy through the mitzvah of studying Torah.

#### Journaling:

Keeping a journal of new or reinterpreted ideas for rituals or celebrations should be an ongoing activity. Unit questions can also serve as prompts for journal entries, or students may want to list topics for future study or consideration. Allow few minutes of each class session – beginning or end –to journaling.

### Celebratory Sessions:

To encourage internalization and ownership of the material learned, each unit culminates with learners creating either a ritual object or “liturgy” for each holiday that will be implemented in their personal observances. The final session of each unit is designed as a group observance of the holiday at which time family members or friends are invited to participate. It is suggested that these gatherings take place in the home of different participants and/or the instructor, and be scheduled as close as possible to the actual festival.

### Textbooks

Each student, or study partners, should have their own copies of the following books:

1. Tanakh (English translation okay, preferably with commentary)
2. Haggadah for Pesach (any edition, hopefully the one they intend to use at this year’s Seder)
3. *My People’s Prayer Book: Shabbat at Home*, Volume 7. Rabbi Lawrence A Hoffman, editor. Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont.

## Unit One: Introduction to Course

**Unit Goal:** To orient students to the study of Jewish texts and the value system that imbues the observance of mitzvot and ritual celebrations with a sense of doing holy work.

### **Enduring Understandings:**

1. The study of Jewish text helps the learner form an understanding of the development of Jewish law, ritual, and festival observance.
2. Being consciously aware of our Jewish value system nurtures our efforts to become holy and walk in God's ways.

### **Session one: Text study**

Session one is structured as an overview of the different types of Jewish texts so that students will be familiar with the different genres of texts. Included in the appendix section for this unit are various resources for presenting the sources and categories of Jewish thought, law, and literature. If your school has a library, take a walk to the library to see where the various sources are shelved. Allow students to see the original sources.

The learning activity to reinforce the introduction to text will trace the expansion of one Biblical idea through various sources. You may want to consider creating a handout describing the major categories of Jewish texts that will be discussed during this seminar (Tanakh, Talmud (Gemara), Midrash, Mishneh Torah, Pirke Avot, Apocrypha, and Commentaries).

### **Session two: Study of Jewish Values**

The goal of this session is not to discuss the entire Jewish values system, but selected values that are embodied within the observance of Jewish holidays. In all likelihood, students are already putting these values into action but are not aware of the "jewishness" of their actions. The study of Jewish values can lead to meaning-making within the community and a continued dedication to value-based action.

### **Objectives:**

SWBAT explain the source of Jewish actions and beliefs as transmitted through Jewish texts.

SWBAT discuss the value of study of each of the genres of Jewish texts.

SWBAT identify the Jewish values that impact their participation in Jewish rituals and holiday celebrations.

**Note to the Teacher:**

**Jewish Texts:** The majority of texts referenced in this guide find their source in the Torah. I believe that the study of text helps us find connections to God and to the traditions and collective consciousness of the Jewish people. The goal of this curriculum is for each learner to find one or more of these connections, and then, with a sense of purpose, to continue the observance of holidays and festivals enriched by the hopes and dreams of our people as we participate as God's partners in creating a better world.

The texts are more than a historical study of the festivals. They illustrate the origins of the mitzvot applicable to each festival, as well as a study of inherent values or ethical behavior. I encourage you to make available a wide variety of texts, both ancient and modern, both written and visual, so that each learner can find that which best speaks to him/her. Our unwritten goal should be to encourage each person to keep learning – for a lifetime!

**“Talmud torah k'neged kulam” – the study of Torah is equal to them all. *Mishnah***

**Talmud Torah** (lit. the study of Torah) As you begin the study of text it is appropriate to imbue the students with a sense of holiness by offering the traditional blessing that precedes the holy act of studying Torah. In the morning service the *Eilu D'varim* prayer lists ethical duties we are commanded to perform and ends with the statement that the study of Torah leads to them all. Begin your text studies with the following blessing:

Ba-rukH a-tah, ADONAI e-lo-hei-nu,	בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
me-lekh ha-o-lam,	מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
a-sHer kee-d'sha-nu b'mee-tz-vo-tav,	אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
v'tzee-va-nu la-a-sok b'deev-rei Torah.	וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

We praise You, ADONAI our God, Eternal Soul of the universe, who makes us holy through the mitzvah of studying Torah.

## **Session One: Looking at Jewish Texts**

### **Learning Activity: Shabbat through the Holy Texts**

**Learning Goal:** To experience the multiple levels of meaning found in the different genres of Jewish texts, by tracing one biblical citation through various text sources.

**Guiding Question:** What does each genre of Jewish text add to my understanding of Shabbat?

**Materials Needed:** Text study sheet

**Format:** Class discussion and private reflection

#### **Steps for text study:**

- Read through the text in small sections.
- Ask someone to summarize the idea(s) in their own words
- Ask if there are any additions to the summary or questions about the text– be sure all key phrases or words are understood
- Study any commentaries referring to the text, and repeat the questions/answers sequence listed above.
- Discuss implications of the text for understanding Judaism, Jews, and oneself.
- Draw connections to other texts or experiences in the life of the student.
- Express the ideas learned in any medium – written, oral, musical, or artistic.

*Note:* Depending on the size of your class, you may want to divide the learners into pairs or trios to read one section and text and then teach it to the others.

This exercise will trace the halakhic (legal) interpretation of the Biblical phrase: “You shall keep the Shabbat...”. The text sheet provided lists three sources, Talmud, Oral Torah, and Mishnah, that expand the idea of the Biblical verse. A second resource, “Laws Concerning Pikuah Nefesh on the Sabbath” from the *Mishneh Torah* (see resource section), offers even more detailed instructions. Students should read all of the texts, following the steps listed above.

Then discuss:

How do the texts tie together?

How do you intellectually relate to the interpretations of the biblical verse?

What issues did these texts bring up that you had never considered?

Have you read or studied alternate interpretations? From what source?

Now that you have read these three sources, how has it changed how you think about Shabbat?

Remember: There is no one right answer!

# The Laws of Shabbat

## Source one: TORAH

You shall keep Shabbat, for it is holy unto you. He that profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his kin. Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Lord; whoever does work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. The Israelite people shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout the ages as a covenant for all time: it shall be a sign for all time between Me and the people of Israel. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He ceased from work and was refreshed.” (Exodus 31:14-17)

## Source two: GEMARA (Talmud)

How do we know that the duty to save a life supersedes [worship of] Shabbat? Rabbi Yochanan ben Joseph said, “It is written in the Torah, ‘You shall keep Shabbat, for it is holy unto you’ (Exodus 31:14). This implies that Shabbat is committed to you, not you to Shabbat.” (Yoma 85b)

## Source three: CODES: Mishneh Torah: The Oral Torah

The laws of Shabbat are set aside where there is danger to life, as is the case with the mitzvot. Therefore, a sick person who is in danger may have all his needs taken care of on Shabbat (even when doing so violates the laws of Shabbat), if it is so ordered by a doctor. If there is some question as to the seriousness of the illness (as in the case where one doctor says there is danger and another says that there is not), the Shabbat is set aside on the principle that when there is any doubt about danger to life, we set aside Shabbat in order to save a life.

(Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shabbat 11:5)

## Source four: Midrash

It is reported about Hillel the Elder that every day he used to work and earn one *tropaic*, half of which he would give to the watchman at the house of study; the other half he used on food for himself and the members of his household. One day he was unable to earn anything, so the watchman at the house of study did not let him in. He then climbed [to the roof] and hung on, sitting over the opening of the skylight, so that he could hear the words of the living God from the mouths of Shemaiah and Avtalion. It is said that the day was a Sabbath eve in the winter solstice, and snow came down on him from heaven. When the dawn rose, Shemaiah said to Avtalion, “Brother Avtalion, every day this house is bright with light, but today it is dark. Is the day cloudy?” When they looked up, they saw the figure of a man in the skylight. They climbed to the roof and found Hillel, covered with three cubits of snow. They removed the snow from him, bathed and anointed him, and, as they seated him in front of an open fire, they said, “This man deserves to have the Sabbath profaned on his behalf.”

Sefer Ha-Aggadah

## **Session Two: Looking at Jewish Values**

### **Learning Activity: The Value of Being Jewish**

**Learning Goal:** To think about the multiple sources of personal significance when we participate in the mitzvot of the holidays and festivals.

**Guiding Question:** How do rituals and mitzvot help us feel a connection to God, Judaism, the People Israel, and our family traditions?

**Materials Included in this Guide:** Talmud Torah: Text Study for Jewish Values  
Jewish Values Chart

**Format:** Text Study and Reflection

Suggested questioning sequence to open class discussion:

- Why should we strive to fulfill the mitzvot of the Festivals and Holidays?  
*Possible answers: Because we accepted the Brit and are commanded*  
*Because they can be a bridge between us and God*  
*Because they are reminders of our connections to other Jewish communities*
  
- What can we learn about Judaism or ourselves as we perform the mitzvot or rituals of the Festival or Holiday?  
*Possible answers: A sense of meaning or self-definition in being Jewish*  
*The intentionality of Jewish rituals*  
*The Sources of practice and tradition within Judaism or our own families*  
*That what we do can make a difference in our world and the world around us*

Background to text study:

Abraham Joshua Heschel describes mitzvot as man's expression or interpretation of what God requires of all humans. "When we fulfill a mitzvah and perform an acceptable deed, we grasp man's attachment to God. If it were possible to say so, God is revealed in our deeds, in the depths of our being we perceive the divine voices." Heschel goes on to teach that we should try to do the mitzvot, and by so trying the "mitzvah will awaken spiritual potentialities within you!"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Petuchowski, Jakob J. "Faith as the Leap of Action: The Theology of Abraham Joshua Heschel." Commentary, May 1958, pages 392 and 395.

## Step Two: Going to the next Level

Using the enclosed text sheet “Talmud Torah: Text Study for Jewish Values,” discuss the nine values that have been selected:

- Anavah*: Humility
- Dibuk Chaverim*: Cleaving to Friends
- Din v’Rachamin*: Justice and Mercy
- Hachnasat Orchim*: Hospitality
- Nedivut*: Generosity
- Ometz Lev*: Courage
- Sh’lom Bayit*: Peace in the Home/Peace in the Family
- Simchah*: Joy and Happiness
- Yirah*: Awe and Reverence

Discuss each value as a whole class discussion, followed by a personalized written exercise for each student. Detailed instructions are included at the top of the *Talmud Torah* sheet.

You will need to remind the students that during this course of study, they will be focusing on the home celebrations for:

- Shabbat, a day of rest and spiritual enrichment
- Chanukah, Festival of Lights, celebrating the fight against assimilation
- Pesach, Festival of Freedom, celebrating religious freedom and the promise of Covenant
- Sukkot, Festival of Booths and the season of our rejoicing, celebrating the gifts from God.

Working with the Values Chart, discuss each value. Encourage students to apply the values to the themes of these four holiday/festival celebration.

### Wrap-up:

How does the study of *middot* help feel a connection to God, Judaism, the People Israel, or family rituals?

How did the study of *middot* help you find the value of performing Jewish rituals and mitzvot?

*Special Note:* Both sheets should be kept in the student’s journal notebook for future reference. At the conclusion of each holiday study, refer back to the “Jewish Values Chart” to see if students have additional information or reflections to add.

## ***Talmud Torah: Text Study for Jewish Values (Middot)***

Adapted from *Teaching Jewish Value: Sacred Sources and Arts Activities*  
by Susan Freeman, A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., Denver, CO

This exercise will show how the meaning and significance of Jewish values is woven throughout the literary heritage of Judaism.

### **There are two goals of this exercise:**

1. To call your attention to actions and attitudes that are part of your daily life and imbue those actions with a greater sense of holiness and purpose
2. To make connections between virtuous behaviors and the mitzvot and rituals of Jewish holidays and festivals in order to enrich the observance of the holiday or festival.

### **Instructions:**

Nine *middot* have been selected for consideration. A brief definition or description of the value precedes the texts that expand the value concept.

1. As a class, read the definition of the value to be sure you have a good idea of the concept.
  - On your Jewish Values chart, restate the meaning in your own words.
2. As a class, read and discuss the texts to determine how they address the behavior described through the value system.
  - On your Jewish Values chart, list ways that you have personally enacted this virtue.
3. As a class brainstorm which rituals or mitzvot demonstrate or incorporate each value.
  - On your Jewish Values chart list rituals or mitzvot that you are already observing, and
  - in the last column rituals or mitzvot that you would like to learn more about.

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**Anavah: Humility** Through humility we make room for God in our lives.

By contracting our ego we can become more compassionate and sensitive to the needs of others.

*Anavah* is being honest with yourself.

From one of Dov Baer's disciples: The essence of serving God and of all the *Mitzvot* is to attain the state of humility, to understand that all your physical and mental powers and your essential being depend on the divine elements within. You are simply a channel for the divine attributes. You attain this humility through the awe of God's vastness, through realizing that "There is no place empty of It." Then you come to the state of *Ayin*, the state of humility. You have no independent self and are contained in the Creator. This is the meaning of the verse [Exodus 3:6], "Moses hid his face, for he was in awe." Through his experience of awe, Moses attained the hiding of his face: He perceived no independent self. Everything was part of divinity. (Issachar Baer of Zlotshov, *Mevasser Tsedeq*, Berditcheve, 1817, 9a-b)

Ever let a man be humble in Torah and good works, humble with his parents, teacher, and wife, with his children, with his household, with his kinsfolk, near and far, even with the heathen in the streets, to that he become beloved on high and desired on earth. (*Tanna de Be Eliyahu*, p. 197)

**Dibuk Chaverim: Cleaving to Friends** Valuing a special relationship.

Learning through friendship partnerships.  
Mutual support, communion, and intimacy.

Cherish your friend's honor as your own. (Pirke Avot, 2:15)

It is an important arrangement to make for your spiritual life, that you find a close religious friend, so that you can always take counsel with [that friend] on how to do the work of God in the right way. (*Derech Hayim*, 2-90, as quoted by Yitzchak Buxbaum in *Jewish Spiritual Practices*, p. 670.)

**Din v'Rachamin: Justice and Mercy** *Din*: justice; *Rachamin*: merciful action

God surrounds you with kindness and mercy ... God executes righteous acts and judgments for all who are wronged. (Psalms 103:4, 6)

A king had some empty goblets. Said the king: "If I pour hot water into the goblets, they will burst, and if I pour cold water in them, they will crack." So what did the king do? He mixed hot and cold water together and poured the water into the goblets, and the goblets did not break. Similarly, said the Holy Blessed One: "If I create the world on the basis of mercy alone, it will be overwhelmed with sin; on the basis of justice alone, the world cannot exist. So I will create the world with both justice and mercy; that way it will endure!" (*Genesis Rabbah* 12:15, adapted)

There is no justice unless mercy is part of it. (Zohar)

**Hachnasat Orchim: Hospitality**

"Bring in" strangers  
Develop a welcoming, gracious demeanor - a hospitable personality.

The two angels arrived in Sodom in the evening, as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to greet them and, bowing low with his face to the ground, he said, "Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant's house to spend the night, and bathe your feet; then you may be on your way early." But they said, "No, we will spend the night in the square." But he urged them strongly, so they turned his way and entered his house. He prepared a feast for them and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. (Genesis 19:1-3)

When [Rabbi Huna] had a meal, he would open the door wide and declare, whosoever is hungry let [that person] come and eat. (Ta'anit 20b)

Let all who are hungry come and eat ... (Passover Haggadah)

## **Nedivut Generosity**

Gifts given freely. Generosity in day-to-day interactions.  
Basic loving deeds that are carried out to alleviate suffering  
in the world.

Giving gifts eases a person's way, and gives that person access to the great. (Proverbs 18:16)

*Ahavah Rabbah* prayer: To understand, to have insight, to hear, to learn, to teach, to observe, and to have the ability to do and to fulfill the teachings of God revealed to us in love.

The Holy Jew [Rabbi Yaakov Yitzhak of Pshischa] said that people should train themselves to be good-hearted and giving. Start with something small. For example, accustom yourself to giving others a little of your snuff tobacco. Then do a little more, like letting them enjoy the use of your pipe, and so on by degrees, until gradually you are in the habit of being generous." (*Niflaot ha-Yehudi*, p. 58, as quoted by Yitzchak Buxbaum, *Jewish Spiritual Practices*, p. 461)

## **Ometz Lev: Courage**

*Ometz*: strength                      *Lev*: heart  
Who we are in our heart.  
Willingness to turn to God in trust and faith.

The Eternal gives courage to the lowly ... (Psalms 147:6)

Those who trust in the Eternal will renew their strength. (Isaiah 40:31)

Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit ... (Zechariah 4:6)

Separate reeds are weak and easily broken; but bound together they are strong and hard to tear apart. (*Tanchuma, Nitzavim 1*)

**Sh'lom Bayit**: Peace in the Home/Peace in the Family  
Trust, respect, affection, honesty, humility, good manners, humor, sensitivity, and the ability to listen are qualities that are needed to attain and maintain *Sh'lom Bayit*.  
Pursuing peace (*Rodef Shalom*) and maintaining peace.

He shall reconcile parents with their children and children with their parents. (Malachi 3:24)

Peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces. (Psalms 122:7)

Rabbi Alexandri said: "Those who study Torah for its own sake make peace in the Upper Family and the Lower Family [humankind]." (*Sanhedrin 99b*)

*Ufros alaynu sukat shlomecha*. "Spread over us a shelter of Your peace."  
("Hashivaynu" prayer)

**Simchah: Joy and Happiness** Exuberant rejoicing

Happiness, contentment, satisfaction, trust and faith  
Righteousness and ethical living add to a sense of well-

being.

Eternal God of hosts, happy is the one who trusts in You! (Psalms 84:13)

Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and in dance. (Exodus 15:20)

A joyful heart makes for good health; Despondency dries up the bones. (Proverbs 17:22)

[The Torah] is a tree of life to those who grasp it, and all who uphold it are happy. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace. (*Siddur*, from Proverbs 32:18 and 17)

Joy in the fulfillment of the commandment, and in love for God who prescribed the commandment, is a supreme act of divine worship. One who refrains from participation in such rejoicing deserves to be punished, as it is said, "Because you did not serve the Eternal your God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart..." (Deuteronomy 28:47). (Maimonides, *Mishnah Torah*, Season/*Hilchot Lulav* 8:15)

**Yirah: Awe and Reverence**

Often translated as "fear" of God – can include wonder, amazement, appreciation, gratitude, standing in mystery.

The sum of the matter, when all is said and done:  
Revere God and observe God's commandments! For this applies to all humankind: that God will call every creature to account for all their conduct, be it good or bad. (*Ecclesiastes* 12:13)

It was taught: Rabbi Meir used to say: "A person should say one hundred blessings daily, as it is written, 'And now, O Israel, one hundred things does the Eternal your God demand of you'" (Deuteronomy 10:12). (*Menachot* 43b)

Awe enables us to perceive in the world intimations of the divine, to sense in small things the beginning of infinite significance, to sense the ultimate in the common and the simple; to feel in the rush of the passing, the stillness of the eternal. (Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Wisdom of Heschel*, selected by Ruth Marcus Goodhill, New York, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1970, p. 135)

### Middot (Jewish virtues/values)

Definitions: "Virtues are values – principles we consider to be of central importance...."

*Middot* challenge us to raise the level of our interactions with each other, with ourselves and with God. Middot are an integral part of our tradition.

Middot are a means by which we can increase our emotional, interpersonal, and spiritual fulfillment.'

*Teaching Jewish Virtues, page 1*

<b>Middah</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Ways I personally enact this virtue</b>	<b>Which mitzvot I am already doing demonstrate this value?</b>	<b>Which mitzvot would I like to learn more about?</b>
<b>Anavah:</b> Humility				
<b>Dibuk Chaverim:</b> Cleaving to Friends				
<b>Din v'Rachamin:</b> Justice and Mercy				
<b>Hachnasat Orchim:</b> Hospitality				
<b>Nedivut:</b> Generosity				
<b>Ometz Lev:</b> Courage				
<b>Sh'iom Bayit:</b> Peace in the Home/ in the Family				
<b>Simchah:</b> Joy and Happiness				
<b>Yirah:</b> Awe and Reverence				

## **UNIT 1: Introduction to Course**

### **General information or handouts for students:**

Chart: "The Development of Jewish Law"

Chart: Listing of the Books of the Tanach

Sample Sheets: "A Page from..."

Information Sheet: "The Classic Texts of Judaism"

### **Activity One: Shabbat through the Holy Texts**

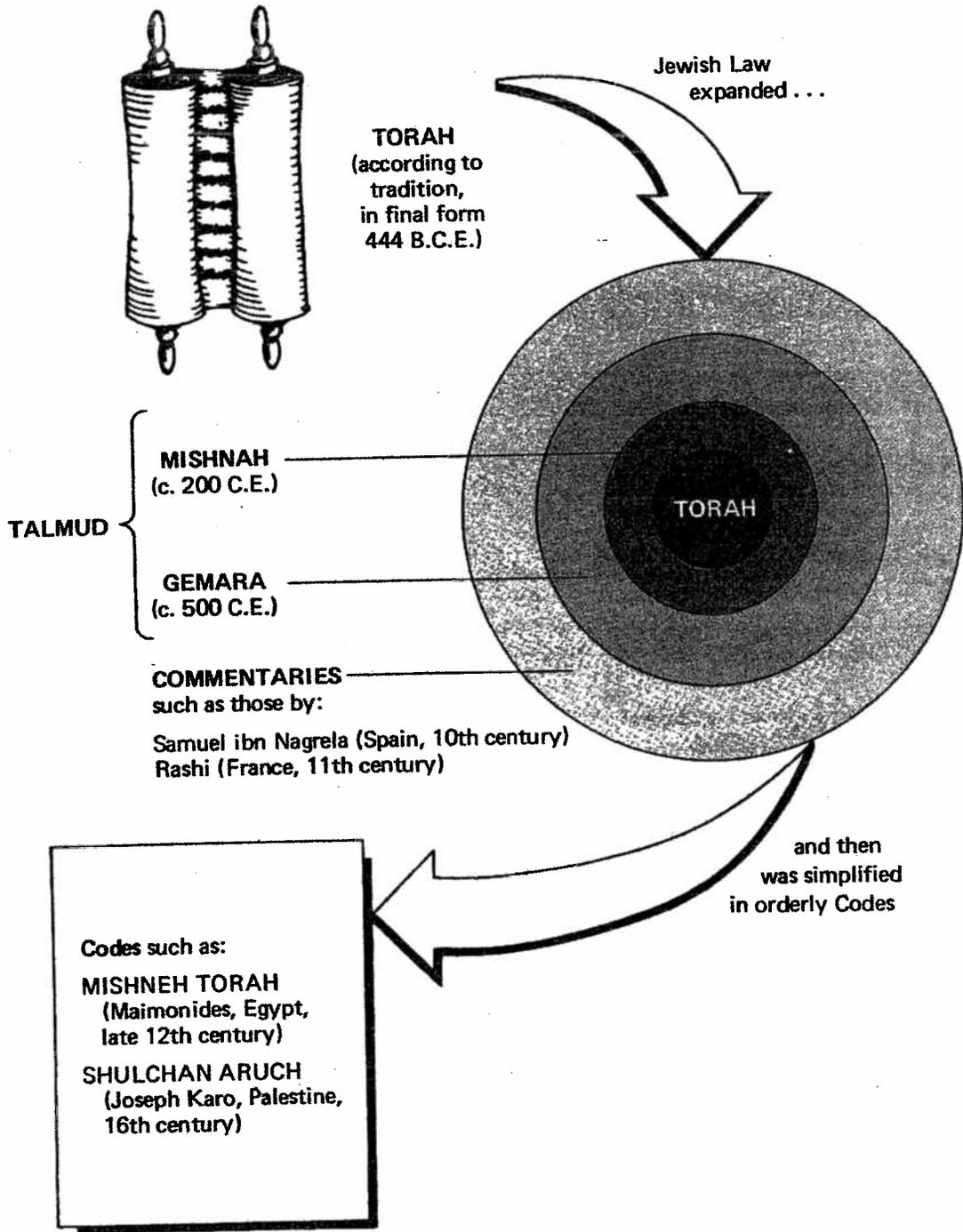
"Laws Concerning Pikuah Nefesh on the Sabbath"

### **Supplementary Learning Activity:**

How to Study a Text ... "Jewishly," that Is

**BACKGROUND AND GENERAL  
INFORMATION**

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH LAW



AND TO GET YOU STARTED, HERE IS A  
LISTING OF THE BOOKS OF THE  
TANACH WITH A ONE-LINE SUMMARY  
OF EACH!

TORAH

GENESIS	Creation, story of Abraham and children till settlement in Egypt
EXODUS	Slavery, freedom and exodus from Egypt, Ten Commandments and laws
LEVITICUS	Mainly laws of ancient priests, including animal sacrifices
NUMBERS	History of movement from Egypt to Canaan
DEUTERONOMY	Second "review" of laws and Moses' ethical will to us

PROPHETS

(Early Prophets)

JOSHUA	Conquest of Canaan till death of Joshua
JUDGES	Wars and struggles in the Promised Land
I SAMUEL	Appointment of Saul as first King
II SAMUEL	Problems with King, David's Kingship
I KINGS	Solomon, the Temple, division of country into Israel and Judah
II KINGS	Later history, fall of Israel and Judah

(Later Prophets)

ISAIAH	Ethics, warnings against sin, promise of peace
JEREMIAH	Telling sins of people; fall of Jerusalem told
EZEKIEL	Prophecies of doom; comfort to exiles in Babylon

(The Twelve)

HOSEA	Israel's unfaithfulness to God and repentance
JOEL	Prophecy of Israel restored
AMOS	Prophecies against nations enemies to Jews; visions
OBADIAH	Prophecy of doom against the country of Edom
JONAH	Message of hope to Nineveh, a non-Jewish City
MICAH	Visions of the universal reign of peace
NAHUM	Prophecy of fall of Nineveh
HABAKKUK	Problem of injustice; prayer for compassion
ZEPHANIAH	Prophecy against idol worship; prophecy of Israel restored
HAGGAI	Encouragement to rebuild Temple
ZECHARIAH	Visions of Jerusalem rebuilt; rule of God
MALACHI	Prophecies against sin

WRITINGS

PSALMS	150 prayers
PROVERBS	Short sayings offering advice on many subjects
JOB	The problem of evil discussed

(5 SCROLLS)

SONG OF SONGS	Love poetry
RUTH	Short story about a woman who chooses Judaism
LAMENTATIONS	Sad poetry concerning destruction of Temple
ECCLESIASTES	Story of person who feels that life has little meaning
ESTHER	The Purim story

DANIEL	Story from time of Babylonian exile
EZRA	Return of exiles; rebuilding of Temple
NEHEMIAH	Rebuilding walls of Jerusalem; laws for new community
I CHRONICLES	Lists of families, other historical info from period of David
II CHRONICLES	History of monarchy from David to end of Babylonian exile

**A PAGE  
FROM ...**

**THE TORAH  
THE TALMUD  
THE MIDRASH  
THE MISHNEH TORAH  
THE SHULCHAN ARUCH**

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TORAH  
PROPHETS  
WRITINGS

תורה  
נביאים  
כתובים

BIBLE

תנ"ך

MIDRASH AGGADAH

MIDRASH HALACHA

Midrash Rabba

MISHNA

Tanhuma

GEMARAH

Pesikta de Rabbi Kahana

(Palestinian Talmud. Babylonian Talmud)

GEONIC RESPONSA

COMMENTARIES

Rashi, Maimonides,  
Ibn Ezra, Rashbam

CODES

Alfasi, Mishna Torah, Rosh, Tur,

Shulchan Aruch

LATER COMMENTARIES

LATER RABBINIC RESPONSA

# THE TORAH

The Five Books of Moses are known by several names:—the **Torah**, the **Pentateuch** (Greek for the "Five Books") and the **Law of Moses**. In Hebrew, they are often referred to as the "CHUMASH". This is simply an abbreviated form of "CHAMISHAH CHUMSHEI TORAH", meaning the "Five Books of the Torah". The names of the Five Books are as follows:—

<b>GENESIS</b>	...	...	...	<b>B'RESHIT</b>
<b>EXODUS</b>	...	...	...	<b>SH'MOT</b>
<b>LEVITICUS</b>	...	...	...	<b>VAYIKRA</b>
<b>NUMBERS</b>	...	...	...	<b>BAMIDBAR</b>
<b>DEUTERONOMY</b>	...	...	...	<b>D'VARIM</b>

**GENESIS** commences with the story of the Creation, Adam and Eve and Noah. It continues with the early history of the Hebrew people from the time of Abraham. After describing the lives of the Patriarchs, (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), it tells the story of the sons of Jacob, of Joseph's life in Egypt and concludes with the death of Joseph in Egypt.

**EXODUS** describes the slavery of the Jews in Egypt and their redemption under Moses. It contains the account of the Revelation at Mt. Sinai. The Ten Commandments and other Laws and the details of the building of the Sanctuary in the Wilderness are to be found here.

**LEVITICUS** enumerates the Priestly laws, the laws concerning sacrifices, laws of purity and certain civil and criminal laws.

**NUMBERS** describes how the Jews continued their journey through the Wilderness. It tells of the Twelve Spies, who were sent out to survey the Land of Canaan, and of the subsequent wanderings of the Jews. The Book concludes, historically, with Israel at the borders of the Promised Land, some forty years after the Exodus.

**DEUTERONOMY**, the concluding book, contains the exhortation of Moses to his people prior to his death. It also enumerates further laws. The final chapter describes the death of Moses.

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On the right can be seen a portion of the text of the Torah as it appears in an actual Sepher Torah, (Scroll of the Law), such as is used in the Synagogue for the traditional Reading of the Law. The text in the Sepher Torah is unpunctuated, has no vowels and does not contain the "Taamei HaMikrah"—the traditional notes to which the Law is chanted.

ועשר שנים ויחננו אותו וישישם בארץ במצרים

ואלה שמות בני ישראל הנאים מצרימה אהרן יעקב אשל ובניו באו ראובן שמעון לוי ויהודה יעשכר זבולן ובנימן דן נפתלי גד ונאשיר ויהויה כל אשע יעקב ויר יעקב שבעים נפש ויוסף היה במצרים וימת יוסף וכל אחיו וכל הדור ההוא וכונו ישראל פרו ויערצו וירבו ויעצמו במצרים מאד ותמכה הארץ אתם

ויקם מלך חדש על מצרים אשר לא ידע את יוסף ויאמר אל עמו הזה עם בני ישראל רב ועצום ממנו הבה לחזקמה לו פן ירבה ויהיה כי תקרא אלה מבלומה ויוסף גם הוא על ענאנו וכלום בנו ועלה מן הארץ ויעשו עבדי עשרים מסים למנוע ענאנו במסכתם ויבן ערו מסכות כפרתה את פתם ואת רעמסס וכוונת יעקב אתו כי ירבה וכן יפריץ ויקנו מופני בני ישראל ויעבדו מצרים את בני ישראל ויפרכו וימררו את זויהם בעבדה קשה במצרים ובכפונם ובכב עבדה בשדה את כל עבדתם אשר עבדו בהם בפרך ויאמר מלך מצרים למיכרת העברית אשר שם החיות שפרה ושם השעית פועל ויאמר מלך את העברית וראיתו על האנשים אם בן הוא והמתן אותו ואם בת היא וזויה ויהיו המיכרת את האנשים ולא עלו כאלו דבר אלה מלך מצרים וזויה את העברים וקרא מלך מצרים למיכרת ויאמר להן מריו לעיון הדבר הזה וזויה את העברים והאמרן המיכרת את פריעה כי לא נעשים המצרות העברית כי לזויה הנה בלום תבוא אלה המיכרת וילכו ויעלבו אבהים למיכרת וירב העם ויעצמו מאד ויהיו כי יראו המולדת את האנשים ויעשו כלם בתים ועלו פריעה ככל עמו לאמר כל הבן היחוד הארדה תעלבו וכל הבת תזוין

ויבך אשל מכות לוי ויקח את בת לוי ויהיה האשה ויחבר בן ותר אהו כי טוב הוא ותצפנו על פועל ויהיו ולא וכלה עוד העפנו ותללו לו תבת גמא וזויה מלך מצרים ויבנה ותעלה את הילל ויהיה מסוף על ענפת הים ותחצב אלוהו מרתק ברעה מה יעשה לו ותדי בת פריעה בריוץ על האר

# תרגום

1. THE FORAM. The passage shown is the main entrance of the book of Exodus.

2. TARGUM. The Targum is a translation into Aramaic. The word "Targum" means translation. It was made, it is approximately the end of the 1st Century. The origin of the Torah is traditionally attributed to Onkelos or Jonathan ben Uzziel. It is a fairly literal translation but occasionally contains interpretations.

3. RASHI. Commentary of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1106) has been taught in Tzefarim (Germany). His commentary contains associations derived from the Talmud and Midrash and often he carries over the Hebrew words into Medieval French.

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# תרגום

6. COMMENTARY ON IBN EZRA. The Commentary of Ibn Ezra himself presents various difficulties. This Commentary on Ibn Ezra's work was written by Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Neftcharesh. It attempts to render Ibn Ezra more understandable.

7. SIFRINO. Obadiah Sforno (1475-1550) lived in Italy. He too was a physician by calling. His commentary was largely devoted to a literal explanation of the text.

8. KASHBAM. Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir (1085-1170) was a grandson of the famous Rashi. He lived in France. In his Commentary, he is concerned with the simple meaning of the text. In addition to his commentary on the Torah, he also wrote a commentary on most of the prophets (Nevi'im).

9. MASSORAH. These are notes and rules concerning the actual text of the Torah. They are concerned with the writing, counting and paring of the text of a Sefer Torah. Observations are also made on the correct vowels of the text. The purpose is to ensure the accuracy and uniformity of text.

The Scholars responsible for the "Massorah" are referred to as "Massorot". They lived from about the 6th to the 10th Centuries and their work was done mainly in Tiberias.

10. TOLDOT AHARON. This is a book of Talmudic references where every biblical phrase or sentence is quoted in the Talmud. (See next page).

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# THE TALMUD

## ZERAIM

Contains eleven books or Tractates. This Order deals with the regulations governing public and private prayer and laws concerning agriculture and the produce of the fields and vineyards. Special attention is paid to the laws of tithes, mixed planting and grafting, the Sabbatical year and the first fruits.

Since the Jewish people were originally an agricultural people it is natural that the first collection of their laws should be devoted to the regulations which concern the land and its produce.

## MOED

Contains twelve Tractates. This Order deals with all the laws concerning the festivals. Detailed attention is paid to the Shabbat, Pesach, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Succot and the fasts. Most of these regulations are still applicable even though many of the laws contained in this section are concerned with the ancient practices in the Temple. Much of our religious ritual as used in the home and synagogue is traceable to this section; for example, the Haggada of Pesach is drawn largely from this section.

## NASHIM

Contains seven Tractates. This Order deals mainly with the laws of marriage and divorce and family life. Since the Jewish home plays so prominent a part in Jewish life such a section is obviously of supreme importance in the formulation of traditional law. Detailed attention is paid here to the laws governing marriages, which are permitted and forbidden; regulations regarding the writing of the Ketuba, the marriage document and the Get, the bill of divorce. One Tractate is devoted to the laws of vows, because the acceptance of a vow can cause serious disturbance in the family group.

## NEZIKIN

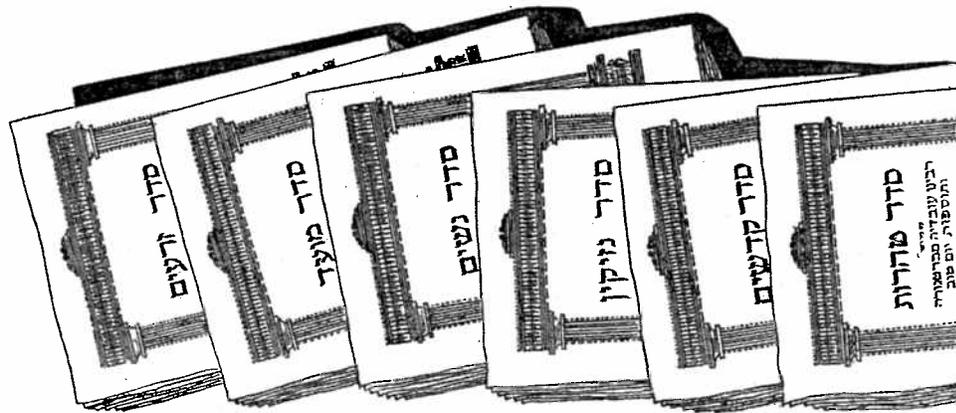
Contains ten Tractates. This Order is mainly devoted to the regulations governing the relations between man and his fellow in society. Special attention is paid to the laws of damages, both to persons and property, and the forms of compensation to be paid. Stress is naturally laid on the regulations governing the procedure of the courts of justice and the behaviour of judges and witnesses. The relations between Jews and non-Jewish courts is also dealt with and the responsibility of religious authorities when issuing their decrees.

## KODASHIM

Contains eleven Tractates. This Order is mainly devoted to the regulations governing the Temple procedure and the sacrifices which were offered. These are carefully enumerated with detailed instructions as to the form to be adopted. Of special interest to us is the Tractate called "Chulin" which is concerned with the dietary laws and matters affecting that which is kosher and trefah; all the regulations governing the types of food which may be eaten, the method of slaughter of animals and the detailed examination to which they must be submitted before the meat is permitted for consumption.

## TOHOROT

Contains twelve Tractates. This Order is devoted to the laws of personal hygiene and the "levitical purity". The Torah demands that "the camp of Israel shall be holy" and this meant that it had to be free from defilement. Contact with corpses was the main source of such defilement in ancient days as well as the main source of contracting contagious diseases. Special ceremonies existed in Temple times for purification. All these regulations are set out in this order and some of them, especially those connected with personal hygiene, are still an integral part of Jewish life.





# THE MIDRASH

# MIDRASH RABBAH

## "THE GREAT MIDRASH"

MIDRASHIM, such as those previously outlined, are to be found dispersed throughout the Talmud. There are, however, specific collections of Midrashim and the largest of these is the MIDRASH RABBAH. This is devoted to the Five Books of Moses and to the Five Megilloth (Songs of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther). The collections were compiled at various times between the 3rd and 12th centuries but the material is basically to be traced to the Talmudic period.

**Breshit Rabbah**, on the Book of Genesis, is the oldest and most comprehensive of the Aggadic Midrashim. Although it contains Tannaic elements (i.e., parts composed by the Rabbis of the Mishna period) the Amoraic parts (written by Rabbis of the Gemara period) predominate. It assumed its final form in the sixth century.

**Echah Rabbah**, on the Book of Lamentations, dates from the same period. The remainder of the Midrashim on the Five Megilloth are of a later date. Whilst they draw on earlier Midrashim and on the Palestinian Talmud, they include other material not otherwise known.

**Vayikra Rabbah**, on the Book of Leviticus, is also an older Midrash. The remainder of the Midrash Rabbah on the other books (Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) are later collections compiled during the 9th and 12th centuries.

Other collections of Midrash Aggadah are:—**Midrash Tanchumah** on the Pentateuch which bears the name of a Palestinian Rabbi of the 4th century; **Pesikta d'Rav Kahana**, a midrash largely devoted to the portions of the Torah and Hapthoroth read on the special sabbaths of the year; **Midrash Tehillim** on the Psalms and the **Yalkut Shimoni**, a comprehensive work based on the earlier collections.

The books of the Halachic Midrash are devoted to the legal aspects of the Pentateuch. They are among the earliest of the Midrashim and are largely the works of the Tanna'im. They comprise the **Mechilta** (on Exodus), the **Sifra** (on Leviticus) and the **Sifre** (on Numbers and Deuteronomy). These Halachic Midrashim formed the foundation on which most of the legal discussions of the Talmud are based.



The word "Midrash" is derived from the root "DaRaSH" meaning to "search" or to "seek". The collections of works called Midrash are therefore those which seek out the underlying truths and meanings of the text of the Bible; hence the expression is used for expounding each word of the Bible.

The four major methods of exposition of texts which are frequently used are:—

- (1) The state of the literal meaning (Peshat)
- (2) Allusions or hints (Remez)
- (3) Simple exposition (Drush)
- (4) Mystical interpretation (Sod)

The vast body of Midrash may be divided into two classifications: MIDRASH HALACHAH, where the emphasis is laid on the legal aspects of the Biblical texts and the lessons to be drawn from them, and MIDRASH AGGADAH, which is concerned with ethical teachings and topical homilies. In both these types of Midrash the expounder uses whichever method of interpretation produces the necessary results. He may compare the text he is explaining with another verse selected from other parts of the Bible, or select a story to illustrate his theme. Often historical events are recorded which have a bearing on the text, or stress is laid on a moral teaching which such an incident illustrates. Whichever style is adopted the author refers to the text of scripture either as his point of commencement or as his final objective.

The initial letters of these four words spell PaRDeS which means 'orchard' or 'fruitful garden', in itself an allusion to the fruit to be derived from the exposition of the Bible.



# THE MISHNEH TORAH

"MISHNEH TORAH" means "The Repetition of the Torah". It is the title of a Code which provides a masterly summary of the Oral Torah, the traditional supplement to, and expansion of, the Written Torah (the Five Books of Moses). Decisions in this Code are clearly stated without quotation of source or indication of opposing views. As he makes plain in his introduction, the author intended to make it possible for an enquirer to find in his work precise rulings on every aspect of the Oral Torah; it would then not be necessary to consult any other book. For that reason, he attempted to make his Code fully comprehensive by including in it even those laws that did not apply after the destruction of the Temple and the fall of the Jewish State, and also principles of beliefs and ethics.

Despite the admiration and respect felt for its achievement, the Mishneh Torah did not immediately become recognised as the standard Jewish code. The Code's failure to fulfil its author's hopes and expectations may be explained by three reasons:

1. The rulings of no rabbi, and expectations may be explained by three reasons: Opposition arose to particular rulings because (i) it was suspected that the author had overlooked, or rejected without reason, statements in the Talmud or contrary decisions by later authorities, or (ii) it was thought that they had been based on faulty reasoning. There was also sometimes difficulty in tracing the sources of the author's decision or disagreement about which source was used.

2. The author was a Sephardi, and his rulings were not always acceptable to Ashkenazi Jews, whose divergent practices and customs he had not taken into account.

3. There was considerable fear among some rabbis that the Code might lead to the abandonment or lessening of the study of the Talmud. Although it is not followed in all respects, the Mishneh Torah has remained to this day a major authority for decisions on Jewish Law, and has attracted many commentaries and stimulated many learned discussions.

The Mishneh Torah is distinguished by its lucid, precise style, which has influenced later literature. It also excels in its systematic structure and in its analysis and orderly presentation of the scattered and complex material of Oral Torah.

The Code is divided into Fourteen Books, hence the other name by which it is known: **HaYad HaChazakah** ("The Strong Hand"), so called because the Hebrew word "Yad" ("Hand") has the numerical value of fourteen. Each Book is divided into sections of **Halachot** (laws on a particular subject, e.g. "Idolatry" or "Prayer" or "Sabbath"); each section of **Halachot** into chapters; and each chapter into statements of a single **Halachah**. The author proceeds from the general to the particular, and from the more to the less important. Laws plainly stated in the Books of Moses are mentioned first, next Laws deduced by the methods of interpretation used in the Talmud, and then Rabbinic laws in their various categories.

## THE AUTHOR

The author of the **Mishneh Torah** is Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, often known as Moses Maimonides or simply Maimonides (meaning the son of Maimon) or as the **RaMBaM**, an abbreviation formed from the initials of his full Hebrew name.

Maimonides was born in Cordova, in Moslem Spain, in 1135. In 1148 a fanatical Moslem dynasty, the Almohades, invaded Spain and gave non-Moslems the alternatives of conversion, expulsion or death. Maimonides' family left Cordova and after years of wanderings, including a lengthy stay at Fez (Morocco) and a short visit to the land of Israel, finally settled in Egypt in 1165. At Fostat (Old Cairo) Maimonides practised as a physician, his skill eventually secured him appointment to the Vizier and later to the Sultan's court. The fame of his learning obtained him recognition as **Nagid** (Prince) of Egyptian Jewry and brought him requests from rabbis in many countries for solutions to problems in Jewish law.

Maimonides died in 1204 and was succeeded as **Nagid** and court physician by his only son, Abraham. It was said of Maimonides in his lifetime:

"From Moses (the prophet) to Moses (ben Maimon) there has arisen none like Moses".

## MAJOR WORKS

1. **The Commentary on the Mishnah**, begun in 1158 when he was 23 and completed ten years later, was written in Arabic but soon translated into Hebrew. In his general introduction he describes the principles of the **Oral Torah** and gives a historical survey of its development. Each tractate of the **Mishnah** is preceded by an introduction in which he analyses in general the subject matter and reveals the underlying principles. Each individual **Mishnah** is explained, with the addition of grammatical and scientific information where necessary. If there are conflicting opinions in the **Mishnah**, he states whose opinion is to be followed. From this work comes the formulation of the **Thirteen Principles of Faith**; most prayer books contain a brief prose version (beginning "Ani ma'amin") as well as the poetic version ("Yigdal").

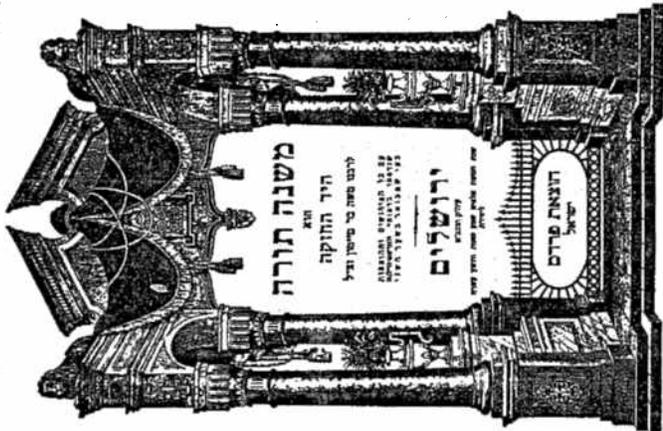
2. **Mishneh Torah** ("Repetition of the Torah"), his great code, was completed in 1180. It was written in a Hebrew style that is largely based on the style of the **Mishnah**.

3. **Moreh Nevuchim** ("Guide for the Perplexed") completed in 1190, was written mainly for his disciple Joseph ibn Aknin. It was written in Arabic but was quickly translated into Hebrew and later into several other languages. It is the greatest work of Jewish philosophy ever produced. The book deals in particular with the conflict between the apparent meaning of the letter of the Bible, and reason as embodied in the accepted philosophy of his time. The book soon provoked a widespread Jewish controversy on the authority of reason and on the advisability of the study of secular subjects, especially philosophy. Some determined opponents, who feared that Jewish belief and practice were being undermined by study of the work, proclaimed sentence of excommunication on all who read it. On the instigation of individual rabbis, there were even public burnings of the work by Christian authorities. Nevertheless, the **Moreh Nevuchim** has continued throughout the centuries to influence Jewish thinkers.

## OTHER WORKS

1. **Responsa**, his answers to problems posed to him by rabbis and communities.
2. **Iggeret Hashmad** ("Letter on Apostasy"), was addressed to those who had been forcibly converted to Islam but secretly maintained Jewish practices. He refused the utter condemnation of them pronounced by another rabbi and encouraged them to remain Jews at heart until they could openly return to Judaism.
3. **Iggeret Teman** ("Letter to Yemen"), was addressed to the Jews of Yemen. He encouraged them to remain steadfast to their faith during a period of Moslem persecution and to refuse to listen to a false Messiah.
4. **Sefer Hamitzvot**, a list of the 613 commandments with a justification of his methods of classification.
5. a number of medical treatises.
6. several works on belief and logic, and one on the calendar.

**Mishneh Torah** is also a title applied to Deuteronomy, the last of the Five Books of Moses, because it is mainly a summary by Moses, of the events and Laws set out in the preceding three Books.





# THE SHULCHAN ARUCH

"Shulchan Aruch" means "Prepared Table" and is a Code of Jewish Law. As the name implies, it is written in a clear and concise style so that its contents are readily understood. The layman can quickly obtain a ruling on any law or practice. The **Shulchan Aruch** is divided into four parts.

**ORACH CHAYIM**—This contains 697 chapters and deals with one's daily duties, from the time of rising in the morning until retiring to bed at night. It also deals with the Shabbat and Yamim Tovim and all the prayers.

**Rabbi Joseph Caro**, the author of the **Shulchan Aruch**, was a Sephardi Jew and, in consequence, wrote his Code with Sephardi customs in mind. For this reason, a gloss was later written by **Rabbi Moses Isserles** (1520-1572), known as the **Rama**, from the initials of his name. The gloss was given the name "**Mappah**", meaning "table-cloth", in keeping with the title of the **Shulchan Aruch**. The **Mappah** records all the Ashkenazi customs and is now embodied in the main text of the **Shulchan Aruch**, unlike other commentaries which are normally relegated to the margin of the page. In this way, the **Orach Chayim** now speaks authoritatively for all sections of the Jewish community.

**YOREH DEAH**—This contains 403 chapters and deals with such subjects as **Shechita**, the dietary laws, circumcision, proselytisation and mourning. These highly technical regulations are very much the concern of the Rabbi in a community, who may be approached for guidance or a ruling on these matters.

**EVEN HAEZER**—Containing 178 chapters, this volume deals with Marriage and Divorce laws.

**CHOSHEN MISHPAT**—The final book has 597 chapters and deals with Civil and Criminal Law.

## The Author

**Rabbi Joseph Caro** was born in 1488 in Toledo, Spain. He subsequently went to Portugal and Turkey and then, in 1535, settled in the holy city of Safed, Palestine. There he became one of the leading Rabbis, at a time when Safed was a great centre of Jewish learning.

After writing a commentary on the "**Mishne Torah**" of **Rambam** (called "**Keseph Mishne**") **Caro** wrote a further commentary, "**Beth Joseph**", on the "**Tur**" of **Rabbi Jacob ben Asher** (14th century). The "**Beth Joseph**" quotes the sources of the laws found in the **Talmud** and the authorities, whilst the "**Tur**", formed a digest of these laws.

## The Shulchan Aruch

The **Shulchan Aruch** was completed in 1555. It was intended as a practical guide and is, in part, a digest of "**Beth Joseph**" which **Caro** regarded as his principal work.

For some time after the appearance of the **Shulchan Aruch**, there were fears in some Rabbinical quarters that the work would supplant the study of the **Talmud** itself. The **Shulchan Aruch** was simple and straightforward to follow. These fears gradually abated and the **Shulchan Aruch** forms today the main "text book" of Jewish Law, certainly for the layman.

Shorter editions of the work have been produced—"Kitzur **Shulchan Aruch**"—i.e. an abridged edition. This obviously gave prominence to the first section—**Orach Chayim**—which contains those laws most frequently required for daily practice.

## Other Codes

The **Shulchan Aruch** was not the first code of Jewish laws, although it is the easiest for the layman and the scholar to consult. Several attempts had been previously made to extract the laws scattered throughout the **Talmud** and to clarify them according to their subjects. The first collection of laws was naturally the **Mishna** (edited by **Rabbi Judah Hanassi** in the 3rd Century), but this was expanded through the discussions contained in the **Talmud**. The first real code which attempted to make an abstract of the laws was the "**Halachot Gedolot**" (end 9th Century) and came from the school of the **Gaonim** of Babylon. This was improved upon by the **Rambam** (12th Century) whose "**Mishneh Torah**" classified the laws under their subject headings and gathered together all the rulings found throughout the Babylonian and Palestinian **Talmud**. In the 14th Century **Rabbi Jacob B. Asher** produced the "**Tur**" which divided all the laws developed during the **Talmudic** and post-**Talmudic** period into four main sections, each item sub-divided into subjects. The **Tur** became the model for **Caro's** "**Shulchan Aruch**".

The unique features of all these codes is that they do not quote the sources of the laws or the authorities responsible for them. They simply state the final ruling and omit all the discussions which are contained in the **Talmud** and later Rabbinic works. Thus, the Codes help those who desire to know the law on any given subject and avoid any confusion which might result from inability to follow a close legal argument.

On the following page the actual text of the **Shulchan Aruch** can be seen. It is written in "square" letters towards the top of the page. Surrounding it are the many commentaries and explanations which have subsequently been written. To quote from the title page of the edition shown (printed Lemberg, Poland 1876):—"The table is prepared by **Joseph Caro**, **Moses Isserles** spreads the tablecloth and, around the table, sit the various commentators".

# A Page from the SHULCHAN ARUCH

1. This indicates the volume of the Shulchan Aruch, i.e. Orach Chayim.
2. The three Hebrew letters are the chapter number.
3. At the top of each page, the subject matter of the section is indicated. In this case, the Laws of Pesach are being dealt with.
4. A brief summary of the contents of each chapter always precedes the chapter. Here we are told that "One does not say Tachanun during the whole of the month of Nissan". This summary is always followed by the number of paragraphs contained in the chapter.
5. The first paragraph informs us that one should commence to study the laws of Pesach 30 days prior to the festival.
6. The "RAMA" (R. Moses Isserles) is inserted in the body of the text. He informs us that it is the custom to purchase wheat for distribution to the poor for the Pesach requirements. A person who has been in the town for 12 months is obliged to contribute to this fund. The "Rama" always commences with the Hebrew word which means "Note".

The image shows a page from the Shulchan Aruch, a Jewish legal code. The page is written in Hebrew and is annotated with numbered circles (1-11) and arrows pointing to specific sections. The annotations correspond to the list provided on the left side of the image. The text on the page is dense and includes various headings and sub-sections. The annotations are as follows:

- 1. Points to the top of the page, indicating the volume (Orach Chayim).
- 2. Points to the top of the page, indicating the chapter number (Pesach).
- 3. Points to the top of the page, indicating the subject matter (Laws of Pesach).
- 4. Points to a summary section at the top of the page.
- 5. Points to a paragraph in the text.
- 6. Points to a paragraph in the text.
- 7. Points to a paragraph in the text.
- 8. Points to a paragraph in the text.
- 9. Points to a paragraph in the text.
- 10. Points to a paragraph in the text.
- 11. Points to a paragraph in the text.

7. "BE'ER HOGOLAH" by Rabbi Moses Rivkes of Vilna gives the various references, both in the Talmud and other Codes.

8. The "MAGEN DAVID" is a commentary by Rabbi David ben Samuel Halevi. He is concerned with an examination of other authorities. Where difficulties or apparent contradictions are found, he endeavours to reconcile them. He also wrote a commentary on the Tur called "Ture Zahav".

9. "MAGEN AVRAHAM" was written by Rabbi Abraham Abele Gombiner. He was only 30 years of age when he wrote it and its clear references to legal practices greatly helped German and Polish Jews. In this passage, he deals with the remarks of the "Rama". He points out that the same rule of 12 months' residence also applies to the poor due to receive the flour.

10. "BAER HEYTEV" by Rabbi Yehudah Ashkenazi of Tiktin incorporates much of the other commentaries and so tries to give a comprehensive picture.

11. The second paragraph informs us of those prayers, such as Tachanun, which are omitted during the whole of the month of Nissan. The commentaries point out the reason why the whole of Nissan is "holy". On the first 12 days the 12 Princes of the Tribes each brought their dedicatory sacrifices. Each of these days was regarded as being a Yom Tov. Subsequently, there is Erev Pesach, Pesach and Isru Chag. Thus, as the major part of the month is holy, the whole of the month is affected by this sanctity.

Gates of the Seasons:  
A Guide to the Jewish  
Year, CCAR, NY, 1983

PP 189-191

THE CLASSIC TEXTS  
OF JUDAISM

APOCRYPHA and PSEUDEPIGRAPHA. Known in Hebrew as "hidden" works, both terms refer to collections of inter-testamental literature, c. 200 B.C.E. to 200 C.E., primarily of Jewish authorship. They are "hidden" by exclusion from the Hebrew canon. Books of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha are included in some Christian Bibles.

ARBA-AH TURIM. A comprehensive compilation of private and public law, by Jacob ben Asher (1270?-1340), chiefly following the legal opinions of Maimonides and universally accepted as authoritative. The code served as the basis for Caro's monumental *Beis Yosef* and later his *Shulchan Aruch*.

GEMARA ("Completion"). A word popularly applied to the Talmud as a whole, or more particularly to the discussions and elaborations by rabbinic authorities of the 3rd to 5th centuries C.E. on the Mishnah. There is a *Gemara* to both the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmudim, although not to all or to the same tracts.

MIDRASH. The method of interpreting scripture to elucidate legal points (*Midrash Halachah*) or bring out lessons through stories or homiletics (*Midrash Aggadah*). "Midrash" is also the designation of a particular genre of rabbinic literature extending from pre-Mishnaic times to the 10th century. Taken together, the body of works known as "Midrash" constitutes an anthology of homilies consisting of both biblical exegesis and sermonic material. Among the more important Midrashic works are *Midrash Rabbah*<sup>1</sup> (separate works on each volume of the Pentateuch, c. 400-1000); *Tanchuma* (a group of homiletical Midrashim edited later than c. 800); and the *Perisha deRav Kahana*<sup>2</sup> (a homiletic Midrash, probably c. 500, on portions of Scriptural readings for festivals and special Sabbaths). Among the *Midreshei Halachah*, dealing primarily

<sup>1</sup> H. Freedman and M. Simon, eds. *The Midrash*. London: Soncino Press, 1951. 10 vols.

<sup>2</sup> W. Braude and I. Kapstein, trans. *Perisha deRav Kahana*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1975.

with law as derived from the Bible, are the *Mekilta* on Exodus<sup>3</sup>, *Sifra* on Leviticus, and *Sifrei* on Numbers and Deuteronomy. All were edited c. 4th–5th century C.E.

**MISHNAH.** The first legal codification of basic Jewish law, arranged and redacted by R. Judah Hanasi about 200 C.E. The Mishnah<sup>4</sup> is the nucleus for all *Halachah*, and contains the basic Oral Law as evolved through generations. The Mishnah is divided into six orders: *Zera'im* (seeds), *Mo'ed* (seasons), *Nashim* (matrimonial law), *Nezikin* (civil law), *Kodoshim* (holy things), and *Tobrot* (ritual purity), each order being divided into separate tractates.

**ISHNEH TORAH.** An encyclopedic legal code in fourteen volumes, also called *Yad Hachazakah*, by Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides; Rambam), 1135–1204. The *Mishneh Torah*<sup>5</sup> covers all halachic subjects discussed in the Talmud and gives clear rulings where there are conflicting opinions.

**ESPONSA** (Heb. *She-elot uteshu'ot*). Replies sent by halachic authorities to questioners who addressed them in writing. These cover every aspect of Jewish belief and practice and are the main source for the development of Jewish law since the close of the Talmud and a primary source for Jewish and general history. The writing of responsa continues to our own day in all branches of the Jewish community.

**HULCHAN ARUCH** ("A Prepared Table"). The basis for Jewish law today, by Joseph Caro (1488–1575), codifying Sephardic custom and to which was added Moses Isserles' *Mappah* ("Tablecloth"), codifying Ashkenazic custom. Usually referred to as the *Code of Jewish Law*, the *Shulchan Aruch* contains four main sub-divisions: *Orach Chayim*, *Yoreh De'ah*, *Even Ha-Ezer*, and *Choshen Mishpat*.

**TALMUD** ("Study" or "learning"). The body of teaching which comprises the commentary and discussions of the early Rabbis on the Mishnah of R. Judah Hanasi. Divided into the same orders and tractates as the

Lauterbach, trs. *Mekilta*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1961. 3 vols.

<sup>3</sup> Danby. *The Mishnah*. London: Oxford University Press, 1933.

<sup>4</sup>ilian Oberman, ed. *The Code of Maimonides*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957, in progress.

Mishnah, the Talmudic discussions are always printed together with their corresponding parts of Mishnah. The *Babylonian Talmud*<sup>6</sup> is the interpretation and elaboration of Mishnah as developed in the great academies of Babylonia between the 3rd and 5th centuries, C.E., and is considered more authoritative than the smaller *Jerusalem Talmud*.<sup>7</sup> The *Babylonian Talmud* developed in the great academies of Palestine before the 5th century. The *Babylonian Talmud* especially, as a storehouse of Jewish history and customs as well as law, has exerted an unparalleled influence on Jewish thought and is the foundation of Judaism as we know it today.

**TANACH.** The traditional Hebrew acronym designating the Hebrew Bible, composed of the initial letters of the words *Torah*<sup>8</sup> (Pentateuch), *Nevi'im* (Prophets),<sup>9</sup> and *Ketuvim* (Writings, Hagiographa).<sup>10</sup>

**TORAH** ("Teaching, doctrine, or instruction"). The scroll consisting of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible for reading in the synagogue. "Torah" is also used to describe the entire body of traditional Jewish teaching and literature.

<sup>6</sup> I. Epstein, ed. *The Babylonian Talmud*. London: Soncino Press, 36 vols.

<sup>7</sup> J. Neusner, ed. *The Talmud of the Land of Israel*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980, in progress.

<sup>8</sup> G. W. Plaut. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. New York: UAHC, 1981.

<sup>9</sup> *The Prophets*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1978.

<sup>10</sup> *The Writings*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1982.

**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL FOR  
ACTIVITY #1**

Epstein, Rabbi Jerome M. *The Sabbath: A Sourcebook on the Sabbath, its History, its Tradition, and its place in our lives*, Central Youth Commission, United Synagogue of America, New York, 1969.

### LAWS CONCERNING PIKUACH NEFESH [THE SAVING OF HUMAN LIFE] ON THE SABBATH

[Selections from Mishnah Torah, Laws of Shabbat, Chapter 2]

1. The commandment of the Sabbath, like all other commandments (with three exceptions), may be set aside when human life is in danger. For a person who is dangerously ill, therefore, whatever a skilled physician of that locality considers necessary may be done for him on the Sabbath. If it is uncertain whether the Sabbath needs to be violated or not, or if one physician says that the violation is necessary and another says it is not, we violate the Sabbath because the mere **possibility** of danger to human life overrides the Sabbath.

2. If it is estimated on the Sabbath day, itself, that a certain treatment is necessary and will have to be continued for eight days, one should not say, "Let us wait until evening so we do not have to violate two Sabbaths." Instead, one should begin the treatment from that very Sabbath day for as long as the treatment is necessary, while danger—or the possibility of danger—exists, even for a hundred Sabbaths. One may light a lamp, extinguish a lamp that is disturbing the patient, slaughter an animal, bake, cook, or heat water for the patient to drink or wash with. The general rule is that insofar as the needs of the person who is dangerously ill are concerned, the Sabbath is the same as a week day.

3. When such things have to be done, they should not be left to heathens, minors, slaves or women, lest these categories of individuals should come to regard Sabbath observance as a trivial matter. They should, instead, be done by elders or scholars. Furthermore, it is forbidden to delay such violation of the Sabbath for the sake of a person who is dangerously ill, for the Bible says, "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My ordinances, which if a man does, he shall live by them" (Leviticus 18:5); that is to say, he shall not die by them. Thus, you learn that the ordinances of the Torah were meant to bring upon the world not vengeance, but mercy, loving-kindness, and peace. . . .

4. If one's eyes hurt because there is pus in both of them or in one of them, or shed tears because of excessive pain, or lose blood or are inflamed, or are affected by a similar illness, he is regarded as a person who is dangerously ill, and the Sabbath may be violated for his sake in order to prepare whatever is needed to cure him.

5. Similarly, if one is suffering from any kind of internal wound—from the lips inward (that is to say, in the mouth), in the bowels, in the liver, in the spleen, or in any internal organ—he is immediately regarded as dangerously ill, and his case requires no prior evaluation that his complaint is serious. Accordingly, the Sabbath may be violated for him immediately, without any assessment.

16. Measures to save a life may be undertaken on the Sabbath immediately, and there is no need to seek authority for it from a court. Indeed, the more speedily one acts to save a life, the more he is to be commended. Thus, if one sees a child fall into the sea, he should cast a net and pull him out, even though

he may ensnare some fish at the same time. (Snaring fish with a net on Shabbat was normally prohibited.) If one hears that a child is drowning and casts a net for him, but catches only fish, he is entirely exempt. If, while intending to catch fish one catches both fish and the child, he is also exempt, even if he was unaware that the child was drowning. So long as he netted the child along with the fish, he is exempt.

17. If a child falls into a pit, one may dislodge a clod of earth from the side in order to pull the child out, even though he actually makes a stairway in the process, (normally prohibited on Shabbat).

If a child is accidentally locked in a room, one may break down the door to rescue him: he otherwise may die of fright. . . .

**ADDITIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITY**  
**(if needed)**



U A H C

UNION OF AMERICAN  
HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
איחוד ליהדות מתקדמת באמריקה

# PROGRAM IDEAS FOR SMALL CONGREGATIONS HOW TO STUDY A TEXT... “JEWISHLY,” THAT IS

by Rabbi Josh Zweiback and Richard Abrams, RJE • edited by Alice Jaffe

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROGRAM

This program was designed by the Department of Adult Jewish Growth to help congregations of small size encourage Torah study and deepen ties among members of the community. Because Torah study is ideally done in pairs, the intimate size of a small congregation provides the perfect setting.

Torah study doesn't need a big budget, a big name teacher, or a big number of people. All it needs is two people open to the opportunity to be transformed. As Rabbi Charanyan ben Teradyon teaches: "When two sit together and exchange words of Torah, then the Divine Presence dwells with them." (*Pirkei Avot 3:2*)

This program should be a sociable and enjoyable event, an interesting way to get to know people, and a good opportunity to percolate plans for ongoing ventures in Torah study. It will give those new to Torah study a taste of the experience and will help members find study partners for future projects.

## BACKGROUND

In its narrowest sense, Torah ("teaching") refers to the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, known as the Five Books of Moses or the *Chumash*. In a more general sense, it refers to the totality of Jewish teaching and learning, including the entire Bible, the Mishnah, the Talmud, the Midrash, and other more contemporary writings. The texts chosen for this program are from the Torah in the broader meaning.

Rabbi Eugene Borowitz, a professor at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, similarly defines Torah broadly as “the substance of our ongoing Jewish religious experience.” Studying it, explaining it, and endeavoring to “live” it have long been central occupations of the Jewish people. The well-known teaching of Simon the Righteous illustrates the centrality of Torah in the life of the Jewish people. “The world stands on three things—the Torah, prayer, and acts of loving kindness.” (*Pirkei Avot* 1:2)

Another teaching from *Pirkei Avot* expands our reasons for *Talmud Torah*. Ben Bag Bag teaches: “Turn the Torah, and turn it again, for everything you want to know is found within it.” (*Pirkei Avot* 3:22)

The literature of the Reform Movement understands *Talmud Torah*, Torah study, to be a mitzvah, a commandment. *Gates of Mitzvah*, published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (the principal organization of Reform Jewish rabbis), states: “The mitzvah of *Talmud Torah* is incumbent upon every Jew throughout life, whether or not one acquired a Jewish education during childhood.”

Torah study connects us to others, to ourselves, and to God. Joel Grishaver, a leading Jewish educator, writes: “It is important to understand that learning is a spiritual process. It is a way of bonding deep friendships with others; it is a method of coming to understand ourselves; and it is a path towards God. For the Jew, learning is also a process of world change, a process of directing humanity toward its potential. For Jews, Jewish learning [Torah learning] is a holy process.”

Thus we are obligated to study Torah because it is “the substance of our ongoing religious experience,” because “everything you want to know is found within it,” because “it is a path towards God,” and because, as Rabbi Harvey Fields writes, “the teachings of Torah are splendid sparks—glowing particles providing light for the seeker of knowledge and illumination for our ethical choices.”

For modern seekers, however, one challenge to effective Torah study is the culture in which we live. From the time young students first visit a library, they are told to be quiet, to choose a book, and to read it in silence, often sitting in carrels or booths, which block them from any other human contact. This is a sensory deprivation mode of learning—no sound of excited voices, no facial expressions to coin an idea. This practice may keep order in the library, but it is not conducive to effective Torah study.

Torah study should be experienced actively, as is reflected in the blessing for *Talmud Torah*:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסֵּק בְּדַבְּרֵי תוֹרָה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haolam, asher kid'shenu b'mitzvotav v'civvanu la-asok b'divrei Torah*

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to engage in Torah study.

The blessing for Torah study commands us to engage with the text. The Hebrew for “to engage” (the verb *la-asok*) can also mean “to engage in” and “to trade” (in the sense of business). These are activities that are better with two.

# INSTRUCTIONS

We realize that some of you may have been studying Torah for years, while others may have never studied Torah before. Even though Torah study can be a do-it-yourself activity, when people have gathered together for a 'program,' someone has to take the lead. Leading Torah study is a spiritually energizing endeavor that can also be a bit daunting. What follows are several suggested approaches. Some of these ideas are gleaned from scholarly literature about adult learning. Others come from personal experiences, and still others are derived from the communal experience of the Jewish people--the tried and true approaches to Torah that our tradition has bequeathed to us through the ages.

1. **Jewish study happens best in pairs (in *chevruta*).** The Mishnah teaches us that "Joshua ben Perachyah used to say, 'Appoint yourself a teacher and acquire for yourself a study partner [a *chever*].'" (*Pirkei Avot* 1:6)

Studying in *chevruta* is very easy to arrange.

Set the room up with pairs of chairs facing each other but not necessarily the front of the room. The leader can either stand in the middle of the paired chairs or at one end of the room.

Explain the purpose of the room's setup (i.e., the methodology behind studying in *chevruta*). Lead the group in reciting the blessing for Torah study (found on page 2). Pass out copies of the text to be studied (see the enclosed handout).

Give the following instructions: Pairs are to read the Text out loud to each other, paying close attention to the words. After they have read the text, have them use the Commentary to help them answer any questions they may have. Then tell them to proceed to the Questions for Discussion. After the pairs have completed talking over the questions, have each pair join with another dyad and compare what they have learned.

As the group facilitator, reconvene the entire group. Ask if any dyad/foursome would like to share their insights.

Although you may not be used to this type of chaotic "classroom," try it. Studying in pairs helps build community and gives everyone a chance to verbalize her or his reactions to the text. Plus, it facilitates deeper understanding because communicating with a partner helps one sharpen one's reading of the text and vice versa. And you can use *chevruta* study for any text you choose, from Torah to a popular novel. Just remind the students to focus on the reading and hearing of the text and to do this in pairs.

2. **Perhaps most important, endeavor to approach the group with warmth, enthusiasm, and great sensitivity, as well as a genuine regard for the participants.** Some participants might feel anxious about studying Torah with respected peers. They might feel insecure about their own Torah knowledge. They might be carrying around emotional "baggage" dating back to their own religious school experiences years before. Acknowledge their concerns. Nurture their willingness to react honestly to the texts. Value their opinions by listening carefully to them.
3. **Don't feel that you have to be the "expert" who knows all the answers.** Each participant brings his or her own wealth of experiences and knowledge to the discussion. Some will be familiar with the many layers of Jewish tradition. Others will bring their knowledge of literature or psychoanalysis to the discussion. Still others will share their business acumen or gift for languages. Rabbi Lawrence Kushner eloquently describes this "democracy" of Torah study: "It is said that just as there were 600,000 Jews who received the Torah at Sinai, there must be 600,000 Torahs, paths leading to God, unique to each individual. But do not be disappointed or frustrated with the apparent direction of your path, for sooner or later, each one leads to every other one and each one requires you to know every other in order to properly understand it. A great Hebrew novelist and a student who has just learned the letter *shif* are the same; a great scholar of Talmud and a student who has just read that 'in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' are the same. . . they are all travelers on the way without end."

## Unit Two: Shabbat

Chemdat hayamin, the most treasured of days  
Erev Shabbat through Motsa'ei Shabbat

**Unit Goal:** To enrich the observance of Shabbat within the home and synagogue.

### **Enduring Understandings:**

- The individual and communal observance of Shabbat functions as a weekly spiritual connection to God and the Jewish people.
- Shabbat is a day of rest when the mundane activities of the week are put aside. One's energy is focused instead on creating a life, home, and world filled with peace and reverence for God.
- God alone cannot keep Shabbat.

### **Essential Question:**

- How do the rituals and prayers of Shabbat help us focus our energies on spiritual connections to God and filling our lives and the world with peace?

### **Unit Questions:**

- What are the biblical and historical origins of the rituals and prayers of Shabbat?
- How do the private and public aspects of Shabbat observance relate to each other?
- What personal meaning can be derived from the *brachot* over the candles, wine, and challah that form the base of a Shabbat home experience?
- What do I need to know or do in my observance of Shabbat that could help deepen my spiritual relationship with God?
- How can the study of the weekly parashah enrich my observance of Shabbat?

### **Objectives:**

- SWBAT to identify the blessings and rituals of Erev Shabbat through Havdalah, and be able to read/recite those which have special meaning to his/her personal observance.
- SWBAT explain the meanings of the traditional *brachot* for Shabbat and interpret the significance of such blessings in their life.
- SWBAT to locate and access resources for Torah or text study for Shabbat enrichment.
- SWBAT create a personally meaningful Shabbat ritual(s).

### **Authentic Assessment:**

- Create an “agenda” of Shabbat activities for the twenty-five hours of Shabbat. Prayers and rituals can either be “traditional” or individually personalized.
- Create a personal ceremony for any section of Shabbat, for those times when you are able to set aside only a few minutes or several hours to the observance of Shabbat.

## OPENING TEXT STUDY: Shabbat

**Learning Goal:** To experience the multiple levels of meaning and understanding found in the different genres of Jewish texts, by tracing biblical citations are expanded or enriched by the *Mishneh Torah*.

Step One: Read through the biblical citations (next page) and follow the first three steps for text study listed on page 12 in Unit One.

Step Two: text study to supplement Biblical commands: *Mishneh Torah* (see resource section: “General Laws Pertaining to Shabbat”)

Divide the class into two groups to read through the sections of The Laws to see how they fill in the details of the Biblical citations.

Conclude by asking:  
How do the texts tie together?

What issues did these texts bring up that you had never considered?

Step Three before continuing with learning activities:

**As with each unit, first assess what the students know.** Answers can be entered into the student journal and/or shared with the class.

1. How are you currently observing Shabbat? Why?
2. What is the most meaningful part of your Shabbat observance?
3. What do you hope to learn or be able to do at the end of this unit of study?

Note: The answer for question three, projected learning goal, should be shared with the teacher!

## The Biblical commands regarding Shabbat:

The people of Israel shall keep Shabbat, observing Shabbat throughout the generations as a covenant for all time. It shall be a sign for all times between Me and the people of Israel. For in six days God made heaven and earth and on the seventh day God ceased from work and was refreshed.

Exodus 31:16-17

Remember the Shabbat and keep it holy ...For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and God rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed Shabbat day and hallowed it.

Exodus 20:8-11

On six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a Sabbath of complete rest, a sacred occasion. You shall do no work; it shall be a Sabbath of the Lord throughout your settlements.

Leviticus 23: 3-4

Observe Shabbat and keep it holy ...Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Shabbat day.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

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From these texts do we know how to keep Shabbat?

No, that is where Talmud and Mishnah fill in the gaps and set the rituals.

### Text study to supplement Biblical commands:

Students should read through the *Mishneh Torah* texts (resource section: “General Laws Pertaining to Shabbat”) and share how the texts fill in the details.

#### A Famous Shabbat Story

Hadrian, the Roman emperor, asked Rabbi Joshua ben Hananyah: “Why does the Shabbat meal smell so good?” Rabbi Joshua replied: “We have a certain seasoning and its name is the Shabbat which we put into our food to produce a wonderful aroma.” Hadrian immediately requested some of the spice. Rabbi Joshua said to him: “Whoever keeps the Shabbat finds how the spice works for him/her, but whoever does not keep the Shabbat finds that the spice does no good.” (*Talmud Shabbat* 199a)

## **Activity # 1: The Mitzvot of Shabbat**

**Learning Objective:** To be able to create personally meaningful Shabbat rituals.

### **Guiding Questions:**

- What do I need to know or do in my observance of Shabbat that could deepen my spiritual relationship with God?
- How do the private and public aspects of Shabbat observance relate to each other?

### **Materials Needed:**

Handouts: “Thinking in Terms of Mitzvah/Commandment for Reform Jews”  
“Welcoming Shabbat”

Text sources explaining each of the mitzvot of Shabbat.

the mitzvah of preparation for Shabbat  
the mitzvah of Shabbat observance  
the mitzvah of joy (Oneg)  
the mitzvot of doing and refraining from doing  
the mitzvah of sanctification (kedushah)  
the mitzvah of rest (menuchah)  
the mitzvah of tzedakah  
the mitzvah of hospitality (Hachnasat Orechim)  
the mitzvah of kindling Shabbat candles (Hadlakat Hanerot)  
the mitzvah of reciting the blessing over wine (Kiddush)  
the mitzvah of reciting the blessing over challah (Hamotsi)  
the mitzvah of reciting grace after meals (Birkat Hamazon)  
the mitzvah of congregational worship  
the mitzvah of study (Talmud Torah)  
the mitzvah of visiting the sick (Bikur Cholim)  
the mitzvah of Havdalah

### **Format:**

Step One: Discuss the concept of being commanded. Each student should have a copy of the two handouts.

Guiding Question: Do you agree with Rabbi Plaut’s comment: “Mitzvah is what a Jew ought to do in response to God and to the tradition of our people.”  
Why or why not?

Step Two: Focus on the Mitzvot of Shabbat:

1. Break students into groups to focus on individual mitzvot. Students will study text relating to that mitzvot, and then teach the class what they learned.
2. The second step is for the whole class to brainstorm how these mitzvot may or may not be applicable to Jewish practice in today’s world.
3. The third step is for each participant to record in their journal which of the mitzvot they would like to begin incorporating into their personal observance. How will do they see this action making the observance of Shabbat more personally meaningful?

Part two listing of mitzvot from pages 21-33, *Gates of the Seasons: A Guide to the Jewish Year*, published by Central Conference of American Rabbis.

## **ACTIVITY #2: The Blessings of Shabbat**

**Learning objectives:** To explore the meanings of the traditional *brachot* for Shabbat and interpret the significance of such blessings in their life.

**Guiding question:** In what ways might the Shabbat blessings model ideal behavior? (showing honor, emulating God's behavior of blessing, reaching for the longings of a perfect society, etc.)

### **Materials Needed:**

1. Text sources on the blessings to be studied:
  - Hadlakat Hanerot
  - (song of welcome) Shalom Aleikhem
  - Kiddush
  - Netilat Yadayim
  - Hamotsi
2. Worksheet with guided questions for each blessing. (Sample included, or use the guiding question listed above, and any other you think appropriate for the individual blessings.)
3. Jewish values chart (from Unit One) to help the students better understand how the act of blessing can stimulate positive action beyond the particulars of Shabbat.

### **Format: Learning Stations**

Each learning station will provide students with several textual sources and commentaries on each of the blessings to help see the multiple levels of the blessings.

Step one: "Do it and then find the meaning." As a class recite or sing each of the blessings. Be sure to read the English translation so that the students know what they are saying.

Step two: Students can work in pairs (*chevrutah*) to study the resource sheets relating to each blessing. Complete as many questions on the worksheets as possible or applicable.

Step three: In their journal, each student will write a reflective piece on those blessings that they already incorporate into their Shabbat observance (why I say this blessing...what this blessing means to me...).

Step four: Each student should select one or more blessings they would like to continue to study. In their journal reflect on how the next Shabbat observance would be enriched by the new blessing(s) and why.

## RITUAL BLESSINGS OF SHABBAT

The following blessings and song of welcome set the spiritual tone for a home observance of Shabbat. Each takes place around the table, the symbolic altar of the home, before the Shabbat meal and can be done as a large group or by individuals.

After reading the textual sources and commentaries on each, record your thoughts to as many of the following questions as possible.

	<b>Hadlakat Hanerot Candle lighting</b>	<b>Shalom Aleikhem Song of welcome</b>	<b>Full Kiddush Wine Blessing and sanctifying the Shabbat</b>	<b>Netilat Yahdayim Washing hands</b>	<b>Hamotsi Blessing before eating</b>
I do it because that's "what Jews do".					
I do it because that's "what Jews do," but in my family we have added....					
I have discovered a deeper meaning connected to this ritual. It is:					

	Hadlakat Hanerot	Shalom Aleikhem	Full Kiddush	Netilat Yahdayim	Hamotzi
I would like to expand on this blessing by adding thoughts about....					
Doing this blessing/ritual helps me remember ....					
Doing this blessing/ritual is a reminder of ideal behaviors that could help build an ideal world. Behaviors such as....					
This seems like a nice ritual, but my family would not want to do it because....					

### **ACTIVITY #3: How Do You “Do” Shabbat?: The Shabbat Home Liturgies**

*Suggestion:* Devote one class period to Erev Shabbat, another to Shabbat Day and Motsa’ei Shabbat, and a third to finding the similarities of the three liturgies.

**Source material:** *My People’s Prayer Book: Shabbat at Home*, Volume 7, edited by Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman, Jewish Lights Publishing.

**Learning Objective:** To find personal meaning in the prayers of Shabbat.

Following Rabbi Hoffman’s structure, this activity will examine the home liturgies for the three (3) times prayers are recited on Shabbat:

- Erev Shabbat: to welcome the Shabbat
- Shabbat Day
- Motsa’ei Shabbat: bidding Shabbat farewell through the ritual of Havdalah

#### **Guiding Questions:**

1. What personal meaning can be derived from the *brachot* of Shabbat?
2. How is Shabbat a time for finding spiritual wholeness, and connecting with one’s personal God and the Jewish people?

#### **Format:**

- Each student will receive a “Shabbat Home Liturgy” worksheet on which to keep notes. (a sample chart is included in this guide.)
- Using the text from *My People’s Prayer Book: Shabbat at Home*, Volume 7, edited by Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman, students should be divided into study partners, with each group exploring texts for one or more sections of the three home liturgies. Study partners will report back to the group on the historical, mystical, and experiential aspects of the prayers or rituals.
- As a group, ask students to share how they have experienced or participated in each prayer or ritual and how it has added to the holiness of their Shabbat observance. This sharing will open up the possibility of participants trying “new” ways to celebrate Shabbat.

## The Shabbat Home Liturgies

### Erev Shabbat: to welcome the Shabbat

	Historical aspect of this ritual or blessing	Mystical aspect of this ritual or blessing	Experiential aspect of this ritual or blessing	What I would like to incorporate into my celebration of Shabbat
Preparation: Giving tzedakah				
Hadlakat Nerot – Candle lighting				
Shalom Aleikhem ” “Peace Be to you”				
Kiddush – Sanctification of the Day				
Netilat Yadayim – Washing the Hands				
Ha-Motzi – Blessing over bread				
Seudat Shabbat – The Shabbat Meal				
Z'mirov – Shabbat Songs				
Birkat Ha-Mazon – Blessing after Food				

## Shabbat Day

	Historical aspect of this ritual or blessing	Mystical aspect of this ritual or blessing	Experiential aspect of this ritual or blessing	What I would like to incorporate into my celebration of Shabbat
Kiddush Rabbah: The GREAT Kiddush				
Seudah Sh'niyah: the second meal				
Z'mirov				
Shabbat study: Torah portion or Ethics of our Fathers				

## Motsa'ei Shabbat: bidding Shabbat farewell through the ritual of Havdalah

HAVDALAH "Separation"	Historical aspect of this ritual or blessing	Mystical aspect of this ritual or blessing	Experiential aspect of this ritual or blessing	What I would like to incorporate into my celebration of Shabbat
<p>Introduction:</p> <p>Eight biblical verses:                      Isaiah 12:2; 12:3; Psalms 3:9; 46:12; 84:13; 20:10; Esther 8:16; Psalm 116:13</p> <p>God as ruler and creator:                      Fruit of vine                      Spices                      Lights of fire</p> <p>God who distinguishes between</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The holy and ordinary</li> <li>▪ light and dark</li> <li>▪ Israel and the nations</li> </ul> <p>The seventh day and the six day of work</p> <p>Shavu'a Tov "A Good Week"</p> <p>Eliyahu Hanavi "Elijah the Prophet"</p>				



## **ACTIVITY #4: Birkat Hamazon: Thanking God for Food**

**Learning Objective:** To find personal meaning in the prayer.

### **Introduction:**

Though the wording of the Birkat Hamazon did not take shape until the time of Ezra the Scribe, the commandment to give thanks after eating is found in the Torah:

“When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land that He has given you.” (Deut. 8:10)

Deut. 8:11-18 continues with an explanation of why the blessing is mandated *after* eating. (Read the verses). Basic human nature is to “forget,” to be less humble when we are satisfied, so the commandment reminds us to express our gratitude.

The Talmudic name for the prayer was *Shalosh Berakhot* (“Three Blessings”). The fourth blessing, expressing the goodness of God (Berakhot 48b) was added by later rabbis.

### **Guiding Questions:**

1. What do I need to know or do in my observance of Shabbat that could help deepen my spiritual relationship with God?
2. How are the four major themes of the Birkat Hamazon relevant in my life?

**Format:** Begin in *hevrotah* (study partners) and then bring the groups together for sharing and processing.

### Part One:

▪ Each student should have a copy of the prayer with English translation. Ask each *hevrotah* to read through the prayer, up until the concluding Harahaman petitions, and divide the opening of the prayer into sections according to themes.

First blessing: God provides food to sustain all life

Second blessing: the covenants between God and Israel (Eretz Israel, Torah, Circumcision)

Third blessing: rebuilding Jerusalem, the Temple, and restoring the David dynasty (all symbols of redemption)

Fourth blessing: God’s eternal goodness

Or: theological motifs of Creation, Revelation and Redemption

- Regroup, and share the findings of each study pair (create a list on a board or flip chart)
- Redivide into small groups (combine two sets of study partners who have not yet worked together) and ask each group to write a one or two sentence synopsis of each of the sections. Have the groups write on index cards that can be collected and photocopied at the end of the lesson, so that each person can have a copy of what the others have written.

### Part Two:

- As a large group read through the concluding petitions and ending blessings. Discuss how these elaborate on the previous section of the prayer. Ask what other petitions or blessings the group would like to add to the blessing (yes, they can be in English!)
- Give each participant time to reflect in his/her journal.

### Part Three:

- Learn the melody of the Birkat Hamazon. Warning, the melody does not stay the same throughout. You may want to listen to a recording of the entire prayer, but concentrate on one section at this time.

### **Additional Learning Activities:**

1. Discuss the spiritual or physical differences between “*Zachor*: Remember” and “*Shamor*: Observe” the Sabbath as found in the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment (Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15) and in the Kiddush for Shabbat) to Included in this guide is an additional resource from the website, [www.us-israel.org/jsource](http://www.us-israel.org/jsource). Brainstorm “new” traditions that can fulfill both commandments.
2. Compiling resources for Torah study and interpretation. Divide learners into study groups (hevrutah) to practice making Torah accessible through study. See guidelines for the program, “How to Study a Text...’Jewishly,’ that Is” by Rabbi Josh Zwieback and Richard Abrams, RJE. (included)
3. Learn the melodies for the Shabbat blessings and “Shalom Aleikhem.”
4. Discuss the concepts of God as described in the traditional Shabbat song “Shalom Aleikhem.” How can these images help or hinder forming a spiritual relationship with God.
5. Shabbat is considered a sign of the covenant between God and Israel (Exodus 31:13-18.) Discuss how each learner sees the symbolic meaning played out in his/her life.

## **CULMINATING ACTIVITIES for SHABBAT UNIT**

Activity one for the last Class Session prior to beginning the next unit

Activity two for the Shabbat immediately following the close of this unit

### **ACTIVITY #1: Personalizing Shabbat through Havdalah: Separation**

Note: The Havdalah ceremony is recited not only on Saturday night at the conclusion of Shabbat, but also at the conclusion of the Major Jewish Festival celebrations and the High Holy Days to mark the distinction between “holy” time and “mundane or profane” time. The study of Havdalah is being used as the culminating activity for the unit on Shabbat study for multiple reasons:

1. Marking the conclusion of the first unit of serious text study – separating before tackling a new topic.
2. Involving the extended family or friends to participate in a learning activity that involves all the senses thus making it relevant to all ages.
3. Involving the extended family or friends in a ritual that can be repeated throughout the year.

**Learning Objective:** To be able to read and explain the meanings of the brachot of Havdalah and interpret or reinterpret to strengthen the significance for personal observance.

### **Guiding Questions:**

- Why do we need a special ceremony to mark the end of Shabbat?
- How does the Havdalah ceremony draw on other elements of Shabbat or act as a reminder of the covenant between God and the Jewish People?
- How can I get my entire family or group involved in the ceremony?

### **Format: Learning Stations**

Set up 5 stations:

Creator of the Fruit of the Vine

Creator of the Different Spices

Creator of the Fire’s Light

Who Separates Between the Holy and the Profane

Elijah

Each station should have resource materials describing the blessing, worksheets (enclosed), examples of the symbols (for 1-3), and midrashim and/or storybooks about Elijah at station #5.

### **Step One: Participants rotate through each of the stations**

Allow adequate time for each group to complete each of the five stations, and then as a group share new insights and practice reciting each blessing. (As the groups are working fill the room with the music of Shabbat – don’t forget the melody for Havdalah!)

### Step Two: Art projects.

Depending on your budget and time, individuals or families should also be given opportunities to create one or more ritual objects (either at the station or at an additional Art station.)

- Stain glass, bejeweled or hand decorated wine cup
- Spice boxes or spice bags
- Braided candles (three soften Hanukah candles work just fine for this project) or a holder for a purchased havdalah candle (trickier because candles come in different shapes and diameters)

### Step Three: Sharing of creative readings (one of the activities on the worksheets)

Step Four: Learning the Blessings. First be sure everyone is comfortable with the Hebrew, then teach the melody. Each participant should have a copy of the blessings – one sheet of paper works best so that they can have one hand free at all times!

### Step Five: “Doing” Havdalah.

(Havdalah can be a very short ceremony – you really only have to recite the 4 blessings and sing Eliyahu Hanavi, or can be a longer more personal ceremony when you add poetry, prose, or well-wishes between the blessings.)

Ask everyone to stand in a circle (outside if the weather is mild). Ask for volunteers to hold each of the symbols and to read one of their creative readings between each of the blessings.

Shavuah Tov! Have a good week!

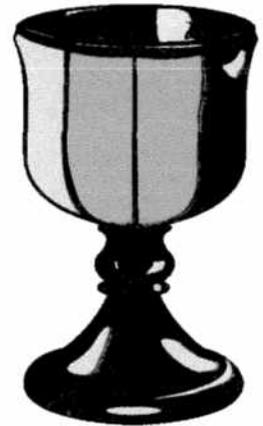
### **Other suggestions for ritual items that can be created in the session for students and family members if you don't want to concentrate on Havdalah**

The mitzvot for Shabbat require that we set aside a special time in our lives to show honor to God for the gifts we have received. We give extra honor to Shabbat when we wear our finest clothes, use our fanciest dishes, and adorn our celebration with beauty. This enhancement of the mitzvot is called “Hiddur Mitzvot.”

Ideas for Shabbat Hiddur Mitzvah crafts are

- Batik Shabbat Tablecloth or Challah cover (from *The Art of Jewish Living – The Shabbat Seder*)
- A Shabbat Queen wine bottle stopper (from *The Art of Jewish Living – The Shabbat Seder*)
- Purchase and decorate hand towels just for *netilat yadayim*
- Using stain glass paints, decorate a platter for challah or a wine cup for kiddush.

## CREATOR OF THE FRUIT OF THE VINE



1. What does the word kiddush mean?

*Kiddush* means "sanctification." It comes from the same Hebrew root as the word *kadosh*, which means "holy." Kiddush has to do with making something holy.

2. Why do we recite the kiddush on Shabbat?

*Exodus 20:8 contains the fourth of the Ten Commandments: "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy (sanctify it)." The rabbis interpreted the word "remember" as a commandment to state how holy Shabbat was at the beginning of Shabbat and at the end of Shabbat.*

3. Why do we recite the kiddush over wine?

*Wine is a symbol of joy and life in Judaism. Therefore saying the kiddush over wine reminds us of the joy of Shabbat.*

4. What things are you reminded of when you see the kiddush cup ?

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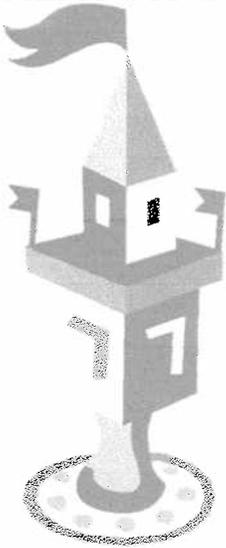
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5. Which of the five senses are related to this symbol?

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## CREATOR OF THE DIFFERENT SPICES



1. What is this symbol?

*A spice box is used as one of the three ritual objects during the celebration of Havdalah. Havdalah marks the end of Shabbat.*

2. Why a blessing over spices?

*According to rabbinic legend, each Jew receives an additional soul on Shabbat. At the end of Shabbat the extra soul departs. The smelling of spices became a way of refreshing the soul that stayed behind.*

3. Does the spice box have to be shaped in a certain way and are there particular spices that need to be used?

*No, the spice box is a just a container for the spices. It can be very simple or elaborate and decorated. Some spices that are often used are cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves, but any good smelling spices can be used.*

4. What things are you reminded of when you see the spice box?

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5. Which of the five senses are related to this symbol?

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created by Beth Young, MAJE

## CREATOR OF THE FIRE'S LIGHT



1. What is this symbol?

*A braided candle is used as one of the three ritual objects during the celebration of Havdalah. Havdalah marks the end of Shabbat.*

2. Why is there a blessing over light as part Havdalah?

*Light was God's first creation, according to the Torah. Therefore, the tradition thought it was appropriate to begin a new week by blessing light. Also, light is a symbol of God's presence and of the Divine potential in every human being.*

3. But why is the *havdalah* candle braided?

*The special braided candle arose out of an interpretation of the blessing over light. Since the literal translation is "Creator of the lights of fire," the rabbis ruled that there must be at least two candles with two wicks. Hence the braided havdalah candle.*

4. What things are you reminded of when you see the braided candle?

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5. Which of the five senses are related to this symbol?

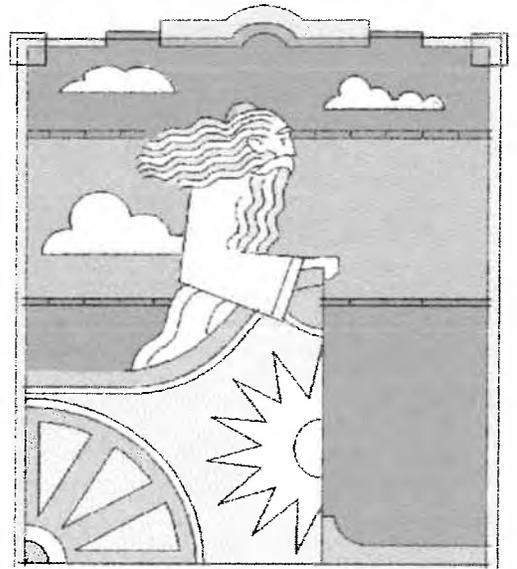
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## Elihahu Hanavi "Elijah the Prophet"

This is the song we sing at the end of each Havdalah service:

May Elijah the prophet, Elijah of Tishbi, Elijah of Gilad quickly in our day come to us with the messiah, descended from David.



1. What is a prophet?  
*In Torah we have many prophets: men and women who hear God's voice and then bring that message to the Jewish people.*

2. Who is Elijah?  
*Jewish folktales about Elijah have depicted him as the champion of the poor and downtrodden, the guardian angel of children, and God's agent WHO brings hope and mercy. He is considered to be the one who will usher in the messiah when the world is finally at peace. That is why we invite him into our home at the Passover Seder and into our lives at the beginning of each new week.*

3. How does singing a song about Elijah help you think about what you will do in the coming week?

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4. How can you help bring peace into your home? Into the world?

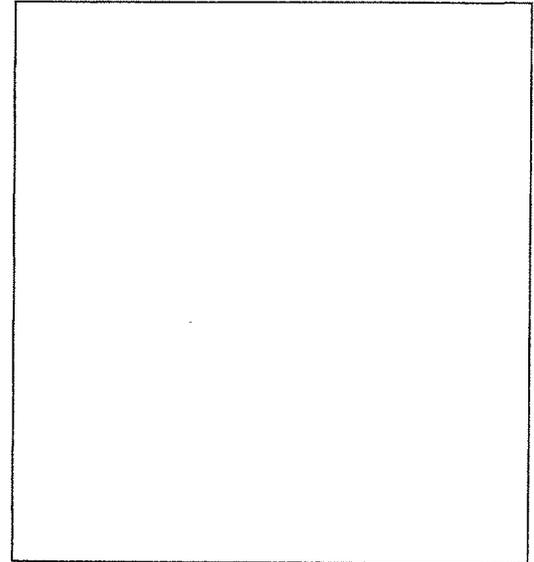
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## God: Who Separates Between the Holy and The Profane

Before extinguishing the candle, we say this final blessing praising God:

*Blessed are You, Adonai our God, ruler of the world,  
Who distinguishes between holy and ordinary,  
Between light and dark,  
Between Israel and the nations,  
Between the seventh day and the six days of work.  
Blessed are You, Adonai, who distinguishes between  
holy and ordinary.*



(you decide what to draw in the box)

Let's look at each of the pairs and make a list of other things these verses make us remember or think about.

1. Between the holy and the ordinary: One of the jobs of the priests, as God's helpers in the time of the Temple in Jerusalem, was to be sure that all sacrifices and gifts made to God were holy or extra special not ordinary. (Leviticus 20:24.)

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2. Between light and dark: In the story of the creation in the Book of Genesis we read that God distinguished between light and darkness, making day separate from night. (Genesis 1:4)

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3. Between Israel and the nations: The People Israel accepted the covenant from God at Mt. Sinai, thus making them different from the other nations who were unable or unwilling to accept God's rules.

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4. Between the seventh day (Shabbat) and the six days of work: God worked for six days to create the world and then rested on the seventh. We too are commanded to rest on the seventh day.

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## **CULMINATING ACTIVITY #2: “Doing” Shabbat on Shabbat**

Ask for volunteers to host a Shabbat dinner in their home. Depending on the size of your group, secure multiple locations so that there is enough room for each student and family members. The students are now ready to practice what they have learned, so you the teacher do not have to attend each dinner!

Each student should have an assignment of what food or drink to bring, as well as which section(s) of “Welcoming Shabbat” he or she will lead.

## **SHABBAT RESOURCES:**

Donin, Rabbi Hayim Halevy. *To Pray as A Jew: A Guide to the Prayer Book and the Synagogue Service*, Basic Books, U.S.A., 1980.

Glatzer, N. N.. *Franz Rosenzweig: Life and Thought*, Schocken Books, New York, 1972. pp. 309-316, 356-57.

Greenberg, Rabbi Irving. *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays*. Touchstone, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1988. pages 121-181.

Hoffman, Rabbi Lawrence A., editor. *My People's Prayer Book: Shabbat at Home*, Volume 7. Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont, 2004.

Millgram, Abraham E. *Sabbath: The Day of Delight*, Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1944.

Shapiro, Mark Dov. *Gates of Shabbat: A Guide for Observing Shabbat*. Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 1991.

Wolfson, Dr. Ron. *The Art of Jewish Living: The Shabbat Seder*, The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, 1985.

## UNIT 2: Shabbat

### Background and general information

#### Supplementary Material for Shabbat Text Study: Biblical Commands regarding Shabbat

“General Laws Pertaining to Shabbat”

#### Activity 1: The Mitzvot of Shabbat

Handouts: “Thinking in Terms of Mitzvah/Commandment for Reform Jews”  
“Welcoming Shabbat”

Text sources for each mitzvot

- the mitzvah of preparation for Shabbat
- the mitzvah of Shabbat observance
- the mitzvah of joy (Oneg)
- the mitzvot of doing and refraining from doing
- the mitzvah of sanctification (kedushah)
- the mitzvah of rest (menuchah)
- the mitzvah of tzedakah
- the mitzvah of hospitality (Hachnasat Orechim)
- the mitzvah of kindling Shabbat candles (Hadlakat Hanerot)
- the mitzvah of reciting the blessing over wine (Kiddush)
- the mitzvah of reciting the blessing over challah (Hamotsi)
- the mitzvah of reciting grace after meals (Birkat Hamazon)
- the mitzvah of congregational worship
- the mitzvah of study (Talmud Torah)
- the mitzvah of visiting the sick (Bikur Cholim)
- the mitzvah of Havdalah

#### Activity 2: The Blessing of Shabbat

Text sources for:

- Candlelight
- Shalom Aleikhem
- Kiddush
- Netilat Yadayim
- Hamotsi

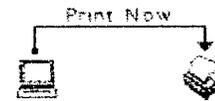
#### Activity 4: Birkat HaMazon

#### Shabbat Culminating Activities: Havdalah

Resource materials on

- Kiddush
- Spices
- Candle: fire
- Hamevulil* holy and profane
- Elijah

**BACKGROUND AND GENERAL  
INFORMATION**



## Biblical Origins of Shabbat

### The Sabbath was a cornerstone of the Temple service and of popular observance in ancient Israel.

By David A. Glatt and Jeffrey H. Tigay

*Reprinted from Harper's Bible Dictionary, by Paul J. Achtemeier, et al., pages 888-889. Copyright (c) 1985 by The Society of Biblical Literature. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.*

### Origins--Creation, and (maybe) Babylonians

Shabbat is the weekly day of rest and abstention from work enjoined upon the Israelites. An etiological origin for the Sabbath is supplied in Genesis 2:1-3, which speaks of God ceasing from the work of creation on the seventh day, blessing the day, and declaring it holy. Scholarly explanations of the Sabbath's origins have focused on certain days in the Babylonian monthly calendar on which normal activities of the king and certain professions were restricted. These days, known as "evil days," were determined by the lunar cycle, corresponding with the quarters of the moon.

While the postulating of a dependence on the Babylonian calendar is tempting, it cannot be objectively sustained. The biblical Sabbath was ordained as a weekly institution with no relation whatsoever to the lunar cycle. Moreover, the somber nature of the Babylonian "evil days" stands in stark contrast to the joyous nature of the Sabbath.

Of uncertain relation to the lunar "evil days" was the day of the full moon on the fifteenth of the month, known as *shapattu*, a term possibly related to *sabbath*. This day was described as a "day of pacifying the heart [of the god]" by certain ceremonies. No significant similarities between this day and the Sabbath are known, however.

The closest analogy between the biblical Sabbath and Babylonian culture is the shared literary motif of the god(s) resting after having created humans (see *Enuma Elish* 7.8, 34). Even here, the parallel is distant: the biblical God rests at the conclusion of his creative efforts, while the Babylonian gods are freed from the labors required to feed themselves since humans were created to relieve them of that task.

### The Sources Are Full of the Sabbath

The Sabbath was a cornerstone of Israelite religious practice from earliest times. This can be seen from the consistent mention of the Sabbath throughout all the strata of Pentateuchal and extra-Pentateuchal sources, with the exception of wisdom literature. In the Pentateuch, Sabbath observance is legislated repeatedly in general terms (Exodus 20:8-11; 23:12; 31:12-17; Leviticus 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:12-15), though the types of work prohibited are relatively limited; those mentioned include gathering food, plowing and reaping, kindling a fire, and chopping wood

(Exodus 16:29-30; 34:21; 35:3; Numbers 15:32-36). The positive specifications of Sabbath observance include giving rest to one's servants and animals (Exodus 20:10; 23:12; Deuteronomy 5:14).

Outside the Pentateuch, evidence relating to the practical observance of the Sabbath is not overabundant, but it is more extensive than that found for most laws. During the monarchical period (ca. 1050-586 BCE), the Sabbath (as well as the New Moon) was marked by visits to prophet and Temple (2 Kings 4:23; Isaiah 1:13). Business activity came to a halt (Amos 8:5). The Sabbath was a joyous day, much like the festivals (Hosea 2:13; Lamentations 2:6).

### **Observance, Non-Observance and Enforcement**

Its desecration was severely attacked by Jeremiah, who lashed out against those who carried burdens from their houses or through the gates of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 17:19-27). During the period of the restoration, Nehemiah enforced observance of the Sabbath by locking the city gates of Jerusalem in order to prevent traders from selling their wares (Nehemiah 13:15-22). Contemporary documents from a Jewish colony in Elephantine, Egypt, likewise mention the Sabbath, attesting to its recognition by Diaspora (i.e., non-Palestinian) Jews in the fifth century BCE.

In addition to these features of popular observance of the Sabbath, one can also piece together a picture of Sabbath observance in the Temple. The Pentateuchal prescriptions of additional sacrifices and changing of the showbread of the Sabbath (Leviticus 24:8; Numbers 28:9-10) apparently reflect accepted practice (cf. Ezekiel 45:17; 46:4-5; 1 Chronicles 9:32; 23:31; 2 Chronicles 2:3; 8:13; 31:3). The sacrificial service may have been accompanied by a special psalm (Psalms 92:1). There is also a somewhat cryptic reference to the changing of the royal guards at the Temple on the Sabbath (2 Kings 11:4-12).

### **Why Sabbath?: The Biblical Take**

Two major rationales for Sabbath observance are presented in the Pentateuch. The concept of the Sabbath as a memorial of God's resting from the work of creation is expressed in Genesis 2:1-3 and repeated in Exodus 20:11 and 31:17. The latter passage broadens the concept in defining the Sabbath as "a sign forever between me and the people of Israel." Although God had already sanctified the seventh day at the time of creation, he did not reveal its special status to humankind at large, but only to his people Israel. Thus, Israel's observance of the Sabbath underscored its special relationship with God. This rationale was emphasized by Priestly writers.

Along with the theological rationale, a distinctly humanistic approach is to be found in Exodus 23:12 and Deuteronomy 5:14-15, both of which ground the observance of the Sabbath on the need to give servants, strangers, and work animals an opportunity to rest. The added reminder in Deuteronomy 5:15 of Israel's experience in Egypt most likely intends to bolster the owner's feeling of compassion for the weak and destitute (cf. Deuteronomy 15:15; 16:12).

### **A Primary Mitzvah for Prophets**

Sabbath observance took on an added significance with the prophets active shortly before and during the period of exile in Babylonia (6th century BCE). Jeremiah attaches the very fate of Jerusalem to the observance of the Sabbath, thereby expressing a radical new conception (Jeremiah 17:19-27; cf. Nehemiah 13:17-18). Ezekiel subscribes to the same line of thought in

equating the Sabbath with all other commandments (Ezekiel 20:11-24).

The prophecies in Isaiah 56:2-7 and 58:3-14 likewise single out the Sabbath as the primary commandment, observance of which will bring personal as well as national salvation. The mention of the Sabbath in the Elephantine papyri and the appearance of the personal name Shabbetai, meaning "born on the Sabbath" (Ezra 10:15) likewise attests to its importance in this period.

## Sabbath in the Outside World

This unique prophetic idea may stem from the ever-growing need for Israel to preserve its own identity in the face of a hostile pagan world. To this end, Ezekiel significantly draws from the Priestly formulation in describing the Sabbath as a "sign" between God and Israel (Ezekiel 20:12), though his stress on the national consequences of Sabbath desecration represents a new application of the Priestly concept.

Another explanation for the prominence of the Sabbath in the exilic literature is the fact that observance of the Sabbath was not dependent on the Temple cult. Although some of the old Sabbath practices, such as the additional sacrifices, became impossible with the destruction of the Temple, the continued observance of the Sabbath on the lay level would ensure Israel's steadfastness to its faith.

## Other "Sabbaths"

In addition to the weekly seventh day of rest, the term "Sabbath" and its related form *Shabbaton* occur elsewhere in the Pentateuch, referring to some of the festival days and to the seventh "Sabbatical" Year, on which the land was to lie fallow (Leviticus 16:31; 23:24, 32, 39; 25:2-6; 26:34, 35, 43). Each of these occasions shares the chief characteristic of the weekly Sabbath, namely, the restricting of work. It has been suggested that the Sabbath day and the Sabbatical Year express the belief that Israel's time and land belong ultimately to God.

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## CHAPTER ONE

## SHABBAT



## VOCABULARY

**Ayshet Chayil:** "A Woman of Valor" is devoted to her husband and family, cares for the poor, and practices acts of loving-kindness . . . she is worth far more than precious jewels. As part of the Friday evening home ritual prior to dinner, the husband and children recite Proverbs 31:10-31 to their wife and mother. It is a sign of great honor and prestige to be called an *Ayshet Chayil*.

**Besamim:** Spices, in particular those used as a part of the Havdalah service. Often put in a beautiful spice box, these cloves and other fragrant spices serve as a last, poignant reminder of the sweetness of the Shabbat now coming to an end. (For blessing, see Appendix, page 251.)

**Birkat HaMazon:** The Grace After Meals. In Yiddish it is called *Benschen*. It is recited only when bread has been eaten. Thanking God for our food is based on the command in Deuteronomy 8:10: "When you eat and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the land God has given to you." The Shabbat Grace after Meals begins with Psalm 126, "*Shir HaMa'alot*."

**Birkat Horim:** "Blessing of Parents." Parent places hands on the head of each child, saying for each boy: "May God make you as Ephraim and Manasseh" (Genesis 48:20), and for each girl: "May God make you as Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah" (after Ruth 4:12). For both boys and

girls, the Priestly Blessing (Numbers 6:24-26) is also recited. (For blessings, see Appendix, page 251.)

**Candles:** At least two candles (*Nayrot*) are lit approximately 20 minutes before sundown prior to Shabbat or a festival. For Shabbat the two candles refer to the two versions of the fourth commandment (Exodus 20:8 and Deuteronomy 5:12).

**Candle Lighting:** In Hebrew *Hadlakat Nayrot*, in Yiddish *Benschen Licht*. The candles are usually lit and blessed by the woman of the house, but other members of the family are permitted to light and bless the candles (*Mishnah Shabbat 2:61*). (For blessings, see Appendix, page 251.)

**Challah/Challot:** Originally, this referred to the portion of each batch of dough that was twisted off and set aside as an offering to the Tabernacle (Numbers 15:18-21) and then to the Temple in Jerusalem. Today, *challah* refers to the special Shabbat loaf which is braided to remind us of the portion twisted off as an offering. Two *challot* are used at each Shabbat meal to remind us of the double portion of manna available to the Israelites in the Wilderness each Friday, enough to last through Shabbat (Exodus 16:13-26).

**Cholent:** "Warm things" in Yiddish. It is a Shabbat dish consisting of meat, potatoes, and beans in a stew prepared on Friday and kept in the oven until Saturday lunch. The term *cholent* is used

among Ashkenazim; the Hebrew word *chamim* is used among Sephardim.

**Eliyahu HaNavi:** "Elijah the Prophet." Seen as the forerunner of the Messiah, Elijah plays an important role in Jewish messianic hopes. The song "*Eliyahu HaNavi*" is sung as part of the Havdalah service in the hope that the Messiah will speedily arrive. (Since Shabbat is deemed to be a foretaste of the messianic era, Messiah need not and would not arrive on that day. Once Shabbat is over, however, Messiah is beckoned.)

**Erev Shabbat:** "Shabbat Eve." *Erev* Shabbat refers to all day Friday and the time preceding the beginning of Shabbat, as well as the Friday evening portion of Shabbat itself.

**Haftarah:** This is the portion from the Prophets (*Nevi'im*) or Writings (*Ketuvim*) which is read in the synagogue after reading from the Torah. A *Haftarah* portion is read on Shabbat, holidays, and on fast days. There is usually a noticeable link between the Torah portion and the *Haftarah* portion in the form of a common theme, word, name, or event.

**HaMotzi:** The blessing over bread. The wording, "... Who brings forth bread from the earth," is taken from Psalm 104:14. (For blessing, see Appendix, page 251.)

**Havdalah:** "Separation." The Havdalah ceremony consists of a series of blessings recited at the termination of Shabbat to emphasize the difference between Shabbat and the ordinary weekdays. A special braided candle, spices, and wine are used as part of the ceremony. (For blessings, see Appendix, page 251.)

**Kabbalat Shabbat:** "Welcoming the Shabbat." Before the Ma'ariv service on Friday evening comes the Kabbalat Shabbat service, consisting of Psalms 95-99 and Psalm 29, "*Lecha Dodi*" (the famous poem made into a hymn), and Psalms 92-93.

**Kiddush:** "Sanctification." The term refers to the blessing over the wine for any holiday or life cycle occasion, but especially when Shabbat (or the Festivals) are consecrated. This blessing can be said over two loaves of bread if wine is not available. On Friday evening, the first paragraph consists of Genesis 2:1-3, followed by "... *Boray Pri HaGafen*." This in turn is followed by the body of the *Kiddush*, which reminds us of the Exodus from Egypt. The festival *Kiddush* differs from the Shabbat *Kiddush*.

**Lecha Dodi:** "Come, my friend." Written by Rabbi Solomon Alkabetz (1505-1584), a Kabbalist of Safed, this poem set to music likens the Shabbat to a bride in the refrain, "Come, my friend, to meet the bride; let us welcome the Shabbat." It has been described as one of the finest pieces of religious poetry ever written.

**Maftir:** "One who concludes." It is the term given to the three or more concluding verses of the weekly Torah portion. It also refers to the person who reads these verses and then blesses (and reads) the *Haftarah*. A child celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah usually reads the *Maftir* and then the *Haftarah*.

**Melaveh Malkah:** "Accompanying the Queen." Shabbat is said to begin/enter like a bride, but conclude/go out like a queen. At the conclusion of the Shabbat, known as *Motza'ay Shabbat*, a festive meal and celebration take place as if in honor of the "queen." The meal is accompanied by songs and hymns.

**Mezuzah:** "Doorpost." *Mezuzah* refers to the parchment scrolls on which are written Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. These scrolls are placed inside a container and affixed to the doorposts of a home occupied by Jews. The *mezuzah* is fastened in a slanting position to the upper part of the doorpost on the right side as one enters the room, home, school, or synagogue.

**Motza'ay Shabbat:** Means "Conclusion of the Shabbat," at which time the Havdalah service takes place.

**Muktzeh:** "Set aside" or "Stored away." The term refers to objects related to work which may not be handled on the Shabbat so that Jews will not forget the holiness of the day. Money, work objects, and other items designated for non-Shabbat use are set apart from those objects which are for Shabbat use. *Muktzeh* also refers to the 39 acts of work prohibited on Shabbat.

**Neshamah Yetayrah:** "Additional soul." Tradition teaches that a Jew possesses an additional soul or oversoul on Shabbat. This enables one to derive an extra measure of satisfaction from the day. Smelling the sweet spices of Havdalah serves to compensate for the departure of the additional soul as Shabbat comes to an end.

**Oneg Shabbat:** "Shabbat delight." The term refers to gatherings held either Friday evening or Shabbat afternoon devoted to community singing, study, cultural discussions, or socializing. In the 1920s, the poet H. N. Bialik introduced the custom of *Oneg Shabbat* through Torah study and the singing of *zemirot*. More commonly, the term refers to the reception held in the synagogue after Shabbat services.

**Pikuach Nefesh Docheh et HaShabbat:** "Saving a life postpones the Shabbat." While many laws have been established to preserve the holiness of the day, Shabbat laws may be suspended if health is endangered or in order to save a life. For example, if a woman goes into labor on Shabbat, her husband is permitted to drive her to the hospital. The basic principle underlying this dictum is that the *mitzvot* are to live by and not to die from. Similarly, Shabbat was made for humankind and not humankind for Shabbat.

**Sedra/Sidrot:** "Order." The term refers to the order of the weekly Torah portions. Torah is divided into 54 *sidrot*. On some weeks, especially in a non-leap year, two *sidrot* are combined several times so that the Torah will be completed in one year. The term *parashah* is used interchangeably with *sedra*;

however, the term *parashah* also refers to the divisions of each weekly *sedra*. There are seven *parashiyot* in each *sedra*, plus *Maftir*.

**Seudah Shelisheet:** "Third Meal" in Hebrew; in Yiddish, *Shallish S(h)eudos*. In years past, two meals a day was the norm especially among the poor. The Hasidim, especially, insisted that a third meal be added to Shabbat so as to further emphasize the joy of the day. Eaten on Saturday at sunset, it developed into a festive communal gathering accompanied by *zemirot* and lasting long into the evening. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with *Melavah Malkah*.

**Shabbat Beresheet:** The first Shabbat after Simchat Torah on which the first *sedra* of the year (Genesis 1:1-6:8) is read.

**Shabbat Chazon:** "Shabbat of the Vision," the Shabbat preceding Tishah B'Av. Its name derives from the *Haftarah* (Isaiah 1:1-27) which begins with the word *Chazon*, vision.

**Shabbat Chol HaMo'ed:** The Shabbat occurring in the middle of Sukkot or Passover is marked by special Torah readings and festival poems. In addition, Song of Songs is read on Passover and Ecclesiastes is read on Sukkot.

**Shabbat HaChodesh:** "Shabbat of the Month." This is the Shabbat that coincides with the first of Nisan, the month of Passover, and the celebration of Jewish freedom. Exodus 12:1-20 is read in addition to the regular weekly *sedra*.

**Shabbat HaGadol:** "The Great Shabbat," the Shabbat preceding Passover, at which time it is customary for the Rabbi to deliver a sermon dealing with the rites and dietary laws pertaining to Passover. Its name derives either from a corruption of "Shabbat *Haggadah*" or from its *Haftarah* portion (Malachi 4:5-6) which ends with the words: "Behold, I will send you Elijah . . . before that great and awesome day of God."

**Shabbat Mevarchin:** “The Shabbat of Blessing” is a Shabbat that precedes a new month. A special blessing is recited for the new moon and the name of the month and the date of Rosh Chodesh are announced.

**Shabbat Nachamu:** “Shabbat of Comfort,” the Shabbat that follows Tishah B’Av. Its name is derived from the *Haftarah* of the day (Isaiah 40: 1-26) which begins with the words “*Nachamu, Nachamu, Ami* — Be comforted, be comforted, My people . . .” This is the first of seven consecutive weeks in which the *Haftarah* portions read are prophecies of comfort. The *sedra* read is the Ten Commandments.

**Shabbat Parah:** “Shabbat of the Red Heifer” — the Shabbat that occurs one week before Shabbat HaChodesh. Numbers 19:1-22 is read in addition to the regular *sedra*.

**Shabbat Queen (Shabbat HaMalkah):** Shabbat has been described in folk literature and in poetry as the crowning glory of the week — as royalty. It is said that Shabbat enters as a bride and departs as a queen.

**Shabbat Rosh Chodesh:** “Shabbat of the New Month” — when a new month coincides with the Shabbat. Isaiah 66:1-24 is read as a special *Haftarah* in place of the regular *Haftarah*.

**Shabbat Shekalim:** “Shabbat of the Shekel,” the Shabbat immediately preceding the month of Adar (Adar II in a leap year). Exodus 30:11-16 is read in addition to the regular *sedra*. This reading makes mention of the ancient coin (*shekel*) which was collected as an offering of the people for the Tabernacle.

**Shabbat Shirah:** “Shabbat of the Song,” the Shabbat on which “*Shirat HaYam*” (The Song of the Sea) is read. This song of victory marked the redemption of the Hebrew slaves from Egyptian slavery. The song is part of the *sedra Beshalach* (Exodus 13:17-17:16).

**Shabbat Shuvah:** “Shabbat of Repentance,” the Shabbat between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. Its name derives from the *Haftarah* for that day (Hosea 14:2-10) which begins with the word *Shuvah*, return or repent.

**Shalom Aleichem:** “Peace be unto you.” This is the traditional Jewish greeting. The usual response is “*Aleichem HaShalom*,” meaning “Unto you be peace.”

**Shomer Shabbat:** “Keeper of Shabbat.” A *Shomer Shabbat* is a Shabbat observer, while a *M’chalayl Shabbat* is one who desecrates the Shabbat. The term *Shomer Shabbat* usually refers to a person who observes Shabbat according to *halachah* — Jewish law. There are, however, according to some Jews, gradations of Shabbat observance, as modern life often raises the issue of religious compromise.

**Shemoneh Esray:** “Eighteen.” The core of the worship service, this group of prayers in the weekday liturgy consists of three introductory blessings of praise to God, 13 intermediary petitions or requests of God, and three final blessings of praise. For Shabbat, the 13 intermediary petitions are replaced by one blessing which hallows the sanctity of Shabbat. The other six blessings remain the same. Also known as the *Amidah* (Standing) or *HaTefilah* (The Prayer).

**Siddur:** The Shabbat and Festival Prayer Book, as differentiated from *Machzor*, the High Holy Day Prayer Book. The *Siddur* contains selections from the Bible and post-biblical literature. It can also be seen as an open-ended anthology of Jewish literature and values.

**T’chum Shabbat:** The “Shabbat limit” beyond which travel on the Shabbat is prohibited. The traditional distance is 2000 cubits in any one direction, but various considerations (*ayruv*) make possible extensions of the distance that one may walk on the Shabbat.

**Zemirot:** "Songs" sung during Shabbat meals and/or melodies sung during Shabbat worship services. The words to some *zemirot* are in the *Siddur*. Others are simply a part of the Jewish folk repertoire developed over time.

## BACKGROUND

Shabbat represents one of the most unique and significant contributions of the Jewish people to world civilization. In looking for antecedents to Shabbat, it can be noted that prior to the Israelite development of Shabbat, there was no fixed rest day in the ancient world. In Mesopotamia where the lunar calendar was used, the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th day of each month were considered to be unlucky. Therefore, certain activities were not scheduled on these days out of fear that they would fail.

Among the Babylonians, the *Sapattu* occurred on the 15th day of the month, the day of the full moon. It was called the "day of the quieting of the gods." It may have been a day when certain special ceremonies were performed. While there appears to be a linguistic connection between the Babylonian *Sapattu* and the Hebrew Shabbat, the two have little else in common.

From the idea of a weekly day of rest, came the idea of a Sabbatical year (*sh'mitah*) during which the soil was allowed to lie fallow in order to replenish itself. After seven times seven years, there is a jubilee year (*yovel*) — a time of returning property to its original tribal ownership and of releasing slaves from their period of indenture.

Whatever its antecedents, the biblical Shabbat (Saturday) represents a radical departure from anything that preceded it. Though a Jewish creation, the idea of the Sabbath has been adopted by both Christian and Moslem traditions. Christianity chose Sunday as its Sabbath and Islam, the youngest of these religions, chose Friday as its Sabbath.

### Shabbat in the Bible

Genesis 2:1-3: "The heaven and the earth were finished, and all their array. And on the seventh day God finished the work which God had been doing,

and God ceased on the seventh day from all the work which God had done. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation which God had done."

Exodus 16:4-5, 29: "And God said to Moses, "I will rain down bread (i.e., manna) for you from the sky. and the people shall go out and gather each day that day's portion . . . . But on the sixth day, when they apportion what they have brought in, it shall prove to be double the amount they gather each day . . . . Mark that God has given you the Sabbath; therefore God gives you food for two days on the sixth day."

Exodus 20:8-11: "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Eternal your God: you shall not do any work — you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. For in six days, God made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore God blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

Exodus 31:13-18: "And God spoke to Moses saying: Speak to the Israelite people and say: 'Nevertheless, you must keep My Sabbaths, for this is a sign between Me and you throughout the generations, that you may know that I the Eternal have consecrated you. You shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy for you. One who profanes it shall be put to death: whoever does work on it, that person shall be cut off from his kin. Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Eternal; whoever does work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. The Israelite people shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout the generations as a covenant for all time: it shall be a sign for all time between Me and the people of Israel. For in six days, God made heaven and earth,

and on the seventh day, God ceased from work and was refreshed.”

Deuteronomy 5:12-15: “Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God: you shall not do any work, you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your ox or your ass, or any of your cattle or the stranger in your settlements, so that your male and female slave may rest as you do. Remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt and the Eternal your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore, the Eternal your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.”

Isaiah 58:13-14: “If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your affairs on My holy day; if you call the Sabbath ‘delight,’ God’s holy day honored; and if you honor it and go not your ways nor look to your affairs nor strike bargains — then you can seek the favor of the Eternal. I will set you astride the heights of the earth, and let you enjoy the heritage of your father Jacob, for the mouth of the Eternal has spoken.”

### Doing Shabbat

For the observant Jew, there is a carefully orchestrated choreography for the Shabbat. What follows is a brief schematic of a typical traditional Shabbat. A more detailed account can be found in *The First Jewish Catalog*, edited by Siegel, Strassfeld, and Strassfeld, pp. 105-114.

#### Friday Preparations

Cleaning the home for Shabbat.  
Preparation of food and baking of *challah*.  
Bathing and visit to the *mikvah*.  
Dressing for Shabbat.  
Putting money in the *tzedakah* box.

#### Friday Night

Lighting the Shabbat candles to mark the formal

beginning of the Shabbat.

*Kabbalat Shabbat*: Beginning of the Shabbat eve worship service in the synagogue.

Ma’ariv Service: The evening service after which one returns home for dinner.

Blessing of the children by parents.

Sing “*Shalom Aleichem*” at the table.

A Woman of Valor: Husband (and children) read(s) selections from Proverbs 31 to the woman of the home.

Singing of *Kiddush*.

Washing of the hands with appropriate blessing.

*HaMotzi*.

The first meal of the Shabbat.

Singing of *zemirot* during and after the meal.

*Birkat HaMazon* (Grace after Meals) is sung.

Family Time and/or study of Torah before going to sleep.

#### Shabbat Morning

Shacharit – Morning Worship Service, includes reading of Torah.

Musaf Service – after the Shacharit Service, this additional service is recited.

Return home for the second Shabbat meal.

A short version of the *Kiddush* is sung.

*HaMotzi*.

The second meal is usually a meat meal and it consists of food kept warm from the previous day (*cholent/chamim*).

Mealtime may also include singing or discussion of a selection from the Torah.

*Birkat HaMazon* is sung.

Afternoon – time for a walk, a nap, reading, fellowship.

Study of *Pirke Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) or a passage from the Bible.

#### Concluding the Sabbath

At the Minchah Service (afternoon), the beginning of the following week’s Torah portion is read.

*Seudah Shlishet*, the third meal, takes place.

Ma’ariv Service (evening) takes place approximately 43 minutes after sunset.

Havdalah marks the conclusion of the Shabbat and the beginning of the week.

*Melaveh Malkah* (Escorting the Queen) celebration.

### Central Themes

- Shabbat is considered the symbol of the perfect life. It is the one day when Jews can forget their troubles and have a foretaste of the world to come. Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15 point out that Shabbat is the common possession, the entitlement of all, rich and poor, human and beast. Therefore, the very idea of Shabbat bespeaks the equality of all people, and the necessity for human rights and individual freedom. Shabbat is not the possession of one segment of society, but is the common possession of everyone. Shabbat is a universal, democratic concept. Shabbat is unlike the *Shappatu* in ancient Babylonia, which limited the day of rest to the wealthy and the powerful. Judaism mandated that Shabbat should be for all of God's creatures. The animals were also to rest on Shabbat. Just as God rested on the seventh day, so, too, should all of God's creatures have a chance to do the same.
- Shabbat serves as a sign and as a tangible symbol of the covenant between God and Israel (Exodus 31:13-18). In the words of Ahad Ha'am: More than Jews have kept the Sabbath, the observance of the Sabbath has kept the Jews alive.
- Shabbat emphasizes differences: Shabbat vs. the other six days, special vs. mundane, faithfulness vs. faithlessness, etc. It teaches that it is important not to take for granted that which is special and different. The brief but beautiful ceremony of Havdalah marks the conclusion of the Shabbat and the beginning of the work week. It sets the other six days apart from Shabbat.
- Shabbat teaches hope. Just as Jews could always look forward to the joy of Shabbat no matter how difficult life might be, so, too, has the Jew always looked forward to a better world. Shabbat and Shabbat joy teach optimism and hope for a better world for all of God's creatures. Part of that hope stems from the idea that we are partners with God in the work of creation. Our task is to fix that which is broken so as to improve the world (*Tikkun Olam*).
- Shabbat teaches the *mitzvah* of *Talmud Torah* (study). Judaism considers prayer and study of equal importance. A large portion of the Shabbat morning worship service is devoted to the reading or chanting of Torah and *Haftarah*. Many synagogues have Hebrew and English texts with accompanying commentaries so that the worshiper can both follow the portions and reflect upon their meaning. At home, at mealtime and during the Sabbath day, it is appropriate to read and then discuss passages of Torah.
- Shabbat teaches the *mitzvah* of *Hachmasat Orchim* (welcoming guests/hospitality). It is a *mitzvah* to welcome the stranger and those who are without family to share a Shabbat meal. This reinforces a sense of community and the belief that every Jew cares about every other Jew.
- While most of the Jewish holidays and festivals have historical roots, Shabbat goes back to the very act of creation itself. Just as God rested on the "day" after creation, we, too, are commanded to make Shabbat a day of rest for ourselves and for all of God's creatures.
- Shabbat is the fourth commandment in both versions of the Ten Commandments — Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15. In Exodus we are commanded to "remember" the Shabbat because God created the world in six days and then rested. In Deuteronomy we are reminded to "observe" the Shabbat because we did not have that luxury when we were slaves in Egypt.
- One of the central activities of Shabbat in addition to prayer and study is eating. Ideally, it is one day of the week when everyone shares leisurely meals accompanied by discussion and singing. Usually the foods eaten have become

family traditions over the years, passed on to each succeeding generation. Eating well and enjoying family sharing time go hand-in-hand with the observance of Shabbat.

- *Tzedakah* is an important Jewish value word. It means “righteousness” or “doing righteous acts,” which would include acts of charity. It is a long-standing custom for Jews to have a *pushke* or charity box in the home, and to put money in it before the lighting of the Shabbat or Festival candles. This is to remind us that, even as we prepare to enjoy the beauty of the day ahead, we must also consider the needs and well-being of others.
- Harold M. Schulweis (*For Those Who Can't Believe: Overcoming the Obstacles to Faith*, p. 207) cites an “imaginative Rabbinic legend” which notes that each day of the week was paired with a partner: Sunday with Monday, Tuesday with Wednesday, Thursday with Friday. But that left Shabbat without a partner. So it asked God to be its partner. Schulweis puts it this way: “The Sabbath is the thanksgiving prayer affirming the life of the universe.”
- Harold Kushner (*To Life! A Celebration of Jewish Being & Thinking*, pp. 105-106) notes that there is nothing inherently holy in the day itself. Only if we take the time to sanctify it does it become holy. Only when we choose to observe Shabbat does it take on meaning. We can become observant one step at a time, gradually adding to our repertoire of Jewish observance. This process has a connection to the idea that humankind is a partner with God in the ongoing act of creation.

### Shabbat and the Contemporary Jew

In a previous section, the choreography of Shabbat observance was outlined . . . from the time of preparation before the Shabbat actually begins until Havdalah, which marks its termination. The observant Jew knows what to do because it is a natural part of his or her life. The non-observant Jew, on the other hand, may not know where to

begin. He or she may be overwhelmed by the fullness of activities and expectations, by the details of ritual, and by the prayers associated with Shabbat observance.

In this contemporary world with its many demands and challenges, Shabbat observance has many permutations. In some homes, while the husband goes to synagogue, the wife stays home to prepare the Friday Shabbat meal. *Erev* Shabbat is celebrated at home around the dinner table. The family will worship in synagogue with the rest of the community on Saturday morning. In other homes, the family ushers in the Shabbat with dinner and then, as a family, goes to synagogue. Saturday morning may or may not see them attending services again in the synagogue. Late Friday evening services for some Jewish families and for single people have been a spiritual blessing.

One of the key elements of Shabbat for the modern Jew is that it offers a change of pace, a respite from the work week — the opportunity to set aside cares and anxieties and to do something different from the every day. This may involve reading a good book, going on a picnic, going to synagogue, studying *Pirke Avot* or the week's Torah portion. It may be the only time of the week that families can spend significant time together. Just as the soil needs time to replenish itself, so, too, do Jews need an opportunity to dedicate one day a week to personal and family “re-jew-venation.”

### SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Grade	Themes/Ideas
Kindergarten	What is Shabbat — the kinds of things we do at home to celebrate Shabbat.
Grade One	Basic Shabbat blessings — candles, <i>motzi</i> , wine, Shabbat stories.
Grade Two	Shabbat in the synagogue — what makes Shabbat different from the rest of the week?



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# Nefesh נפש

The (occasional) Bulletin of the UAHC-CCAR Commission on Religious Living

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## IDEAS FOR CREATING SHABBAT

### Shabbat at Home...

- Listen to Shabbat music while driving home from work on *erev* Shabbat
- Bless your children whether they are at home or away. If they're away, bless them over the phone.
- Wash your hands at the dinner table and recite the traditional blessing, thinking about how you have used your hands in the past week and how you might use them in the week to come.
- Give each person in the family (or around the dinner table) his or her own Shabbat candle. A full table will create the beautiful light of many candles.
- If you're out of town, take traveling candlesticks with you and say the blessings wherever you are.
- During dinner, share a mitzvah that you have done since last Shabbat as well as a good thing that has happened to you since last Shabbat.
- Invite both Jewish and non-Jewish friends and relatives to join you for Shabbat dinner.
- If you are an "aspiring" vegetarian, "eat veggie" on Shabbat, thus helping to increase your awareness of Shabbat as not only different but also as truly holy time.
- At dinner, discuss a family mitzvah project that you could start.
- After Shabbat dinner, do a Shabbat-related activity. For instance, you could read a story with Jewish content, learn some Yiddish words, or discuss ethical issues from a Jewish perspective.
- Leave your watch off on Shabbat so as to be free from the constraints of time.
- Spend Shabbat outdoors—hiking, at the beach, biking, skating, walking, gardening—any activity that puts you back in your physical self and in touch with the wonders of nature and Creation.
- On Shabbat afternoon, take a meal to an older person who relies on Meals on Wheels during the week but does not receive them on weekends. Your recipient will love not only the food but the company as well.
- Turn off the TV on Shabbat. Let go of the noise, the constant "chatter", the intrusion of the mundane into the sacred.
- Save any new clothing for first wearing on Shabbat. Give your new acquisition more meaning and, simultaneously, enhance your Shabbat experience by doing so.
- Don't open mail on Shabbat.
- Don't turn on the computer.



- Don't shop.
- Organize a study group (informal or formal) Shabbat afternoon.
- Make *Havdalah*

## Shabbat...In Between Home and Synagogue

- On the way to services, give *tzedakah* to a homeless person.
- Place a *tzedakah* box in the lobby of your synagogue and make a donation to it before you enter the sanctuary.

## Shabbat at the Synagogue...

- If you don't already have one, consider instituting an informal "*minyán*" - type service on either *erev* Shabbat or Shabbat morning. These services are typically informal with an emphasis on singing, study, creative liturgy, and lay participation and/or leadership.
- Bring instruments to your Shabbat worship. Kids and adults alike can "make a joyful sound" with tambourines, drums, maracas, etc.
- In the summer, how about a "picnic Shabbat" outdoors? Worship outside and then enjoy dinner or brunch together.
- Organize a "Learners' Series" where participants can learn about the structure and meaning of Shabbat liturgy either during or immediately following the service.
- Before the Shabbat service begins, take a moment to study one of the psalms. After "teaching" the text, begin Shabbat worship by reciting the text together as a community.
- Invite a newcomer or a family who has returned from vacation or an extended leave to hold the challah for *motzi*. In order to receive a piece of challah, members of the congregation need to come up to the special newcomers and welcome them, or welcome them back, to the community.
- Have everyone in the congregation either touch the challah or touch someone who is touching someone who is holding the challah before reciting *motzi*.
- Prepare a timely article for some additional study or conversation during the oneg Shabbat.
- Include Torah study in the middle of the morning Shabbat service and serve lox, bagels, and cream cheese!
- Teach a new piece of liturgical music before your service begins. Encourage everyone to sing it when you reach the appropriate point in the service.
- Before *erev* Shabbat services, light candles and make *kiddush* and *motzi* together as a congregation outside the sanctuary before the service. Walk into the sanctuary together singing.
- Recite a prayer for Israel, such as Psalm 122.
- Link one of the "obligations" enumerated in "*Elu D'varim*" on Shabbat morning to a specific mitzvah project; i.e. encourage the participants to attend a *shiva minyan* (*leva'yat ha-met*) or to call home (*kibud av va-em*)
- Following Shabbat morning services have a simple lunch and a study session. In the winter months, this activity could easily extend to *Havdalah*.



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Activities 1

CHAPTER VII

THE LAW OF THE SABBATH

לשבת שבתות קדושות  
לך יתן ה' אלהיך

The observance of the Sabbath outweighs all the commandments of the Torah (Yer. Ned. 39).

NON-JEWS frequently describe the law of the Sabbath as harsh and burdensome. They usually point to the innumerable minutiae which suggest rigidity and pettiness. But the impression given by an enumeration of the many Sabbath prohibitions is altogether misleading. In practice, the observance of the Sabbath was always a joyful experience which led the Jew to regard the Sabbath as the greatest of divine gifts to Israel. The Sabbath was a day of physical relaxation and spiritual stimulation. The devout Jew, although he observed all the minute details of the Sabbath law, was conscious solely of the cheerful aspects of the Sabbath. To him the Sabbath laws were not burdensome. On the contrary, so great and unique was the joy which he reaped from their observance that he found it necessary to explain his delightful experience in terms of possessing an additional soul on the Sabbath. The numerous laws of the Sabbath merely reflected the Jew's high regard for the Sabbath and his earnest desire to protect it by means of a strong legal fence.

The Sabbath law as taught in the Bible is vague. The Bible teaches that "in it thou shalt not do any manner of

work" (Ex. 20.10). But it was impossible to obey this injunction without an explicit definition of what constituted "work." The rabbis of the Talmud, therefore, resorted to their ingenious method of interpreting the text, and defined what constitutes work on the Sabbath. In Exodus 35, immediately after the prohibition of work on the Sabbath, are the directions for the building of the Tabernacle. Since these two biblical sections are introduced by similar phrases, the rabbis concluded that everything that went into the construction of the Tabernacle was considered work and was therefore prohibited on the Sabbath. It was thus that thirty-nine major categories of work were established. Among them are such prohibitions as kindling fire, sowing, reaping, threshing, and carrying a burden from one place to another. These thirty-nine general categories and their many derivatives constitute the negative law of the Sabbath. The Talmud, in addition to defining the Sabbath laws, also liberalized some of them. This the rabbis achieved by means of legal fictions as well as by textual interpretation. The classic example of the rabbinic efforts at liberalizing the Sabbath law is the 'Eruv. The Bible teaches, "Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day" (Ex. 16.29). A literal interpretation of the word "place" would restrict all movement on the Sabbath to one's home. Indeed, the Karaites, members of a Jewish sect that has insisted on the literal interpretation of the Bible, actually refrain from walking out of their homes on the Sabbath except to go to the synagogue. The rabbis of the Talmud, however, by interpreting the word "place" to mean "city," made it possible for one to have freedom of movement not only within his city but also as far as 2,000 cubits (half a mile) beyond the city limits.<sup>1</sup> This Sabbath law was further liberalized by a legal fiction. If a person had to go beyond the 2,000-cubit limit for the performance of an important

religious deed, he could place at the prescribed limit sufficient food for two meals, thus technically converting that spot into his abode. He was then permitted to walk 2,000 cubits beyond this technical abode. This was known as the 'Eruv'. Thus by ingenious interpretation of the laws and by occasionally resorting to legal fictions, the Talmud was able to liberalize some of the biblical restrictions without abrogating any of the laws.

Since the prohibitions of the Sabbath are frequently quoted and generally known, and since "in the last instance, not what the Jew will refrain from doing will determine the spiritual influence of the Sabbath, but the affirmative conduct which the observance of the Sabbath will elicit from him,"<sup>2</sup> it is more advisable to set forth some of the positive aspects of the Sabbath law. The following selections were culled from the sixteenth century code, the *Shulhan 'Aruk*, which was compiled by Joseph Karo and has been the traditional guide for Jewish practice. The selections are set forth in the hope of conveying a more accurate knowledge of the spirit and practice of the Sabbath law.

#### SABBATH LAW:

The holy Sabbath is God's great sign and covenant by which we may know that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. That is the foundation of our Faith. For our rabbis, of blessed memory, said that the Sabbath is equal to all the other commandments. Observance of all the laws of the Sabbath is equivalent to the observance of the entire Torah, and the desecration of the Sabbath is like the denial of the entire Torah (Ex. Rab. 25) . . . .

Hence, the praise of the prophet: "Happy is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that holdeth fast by it: that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it" (Isa. 56.2). He who observes the Sabbath accorded to the law, honoring it to his utmost ability, is rewarded in this world, to say nothing of the great reward in store for him in the world to come. This too is set forth by the prophet: "If thou turn away thy foot because of the sabbath, from pursuing thy business on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, and the holy of the Lord honourable; and shalt honour it, nor doing thy wonted ways, nor pursuing thy business, nor speaking thereof; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will make thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 58.13, 14).

It is mandatory upon all, even upon those who have numerous domestics, to honor the Sabbath by doing something in preparation for it. Such was the habit of the Sages. Rabbi Hilda, for instance, used to cut the vegetables. Rabbah and Rab Joseph used to chop wood. Rabbi Zera was in the habit of lighting the fire. Rab Nahman put the house in order, bringing all the utensils needed for the Sabbath and disposing of the things used during the week (Shab. 119a). All men should emulate their example and not regard such work as an indignity. For it is indeed man's glory to honor the Sabbath.

One should prepare choice meat, fish, dessert, and good wines, in accordance with one's means. It is desirable to eat fish at every Sabbath meal provided it is not harmful to the health of the individual. . . . The table should be

covered with a white cloth which should remain upon the table the entire Sabbath day. One should rejoice at the coming of the Sabbath, and make his house ready as one does for the coming of a distinguished guest....

Even the poorest of Israel should endeavor with all his might to take delight in the Sabbath. He should economize the entire week in order to have sufficient funds wherewith to honor the Sabbath. If one has no money he should borrow it or pawn something in order to provide for the Sabbath. Of such a one did our rabbis, of blessed memory, say, "My children borrow for My sake and I will repay (saith the Lord)" (Bezah 15b).... If, however, a man is very poor, he should be guided by this maxim of our rabbis, of blessed memory, "Make thy Sabbath as a weekday [i. e., spend no more for it than for a weekday] and do not require the aid of the community." However, if at all possible, he should do some little thing to distinguish the Sabbath from all other days (Pes. 112a)....

An effort should be made to wear fine clothes as well as a beautiful *Tallit* (prayer shawl) in honor of the Sabbath. For it is written, "And shalt honour it," which is expounded by our rabbis to mean that the garments for the Sabbath should not be the same as those worn on weekdays (Shab. 113a). Even while journeying among non-Jews, Sabbath attire is desirable, for the festive array is not for the on-lookers but in honor of the Sabbath.

It is forbidden to engage a non-Jew to work on the Sabbath. Even if the non-Jew is not expressly told to do the work on the Sabbath, but it is obvious from the instructions that at least part of the work would have to be done on the

Sabbath, it is forbidden to engage him for such a purpose. For instance, if a written message is being sent through a non-Jew who is instructed to deliver the message on a given day, and it is obvious that the messenger cannot reach his destination except by traveling on the Sabbath, it is forbidden to send such a message. If market is held on the Sabbath day, it is forbidden to give a non-Jew money beforehand in order to buy merchandise which the Jew knows cannot be obtained except on the Sabbath day. Similarly, it is forbidden to give a non-Jew merchandise which it is known he must sell on the Sabbath day....

It is obligatory upon everyone to put work aside and to light the Sabbath candles at least half an hour before the appearance of the stars....

It is mandatory to honor the Sabbath by the lighting of many candles. Some are accustomed to light ten, others seven. One should light no less than two.... It is also desirable that women set aside money for charity before lighting the candles....

The obligation to light candles on the Sabbath devolves upon both men and women, but it is more obligatory for women, since they are at home and attend to household matters.... But the men, too, should share the *Mizvah* by setting the candles and candlesticks on the table....

The candles should be lighted in the dining room, to show that they are lit in honor of the Sabbath, and should not be moved except in case of necessity. For instance, when the woman is sick, she may light the candles near her bed. Afterwards they may be placed in the dining room....

It is a positive biblical law to sanctify the Sabbath in words, for it is said: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20.8). This implies an obligation to remember it at its coming in by *Kiddush* and at its going out by *Habdalah*. Hence the Sages instituted the ceremony of sanctification over the cup of wine, both at the coming in and going out of the Sabbath.

It is mandatory to recite the *Kiddush* over old wine; it is also mandatory to select good wine, and if possible red wine. Where suitable grape wine cannot be obtained, *Kiddush* may be recited over raisin wine . . . .

*Kiddush* is also obligatory upon women. They must listen attentively when the *Kiddush* is recited, and respond "Amen." . . . .

The bread must be covered while the *Kiddush* is being recited. When the *Kiddush* is recited over bread, the *Hallah* should be covered throughout the recitation, since it symbolizes the manna which was covered with dew.

The Sabbath morning *Kiddush*, too, should be recited over wine, though brandy is also acceptable. This *Kiddush* consists of the benediction *Bore Peri ha-Gafen*,<sup>4</sup> and, like the Friday evening *Kiddush*, is also obligatory upon women . . . .

Both the evening and morning *Kiddush* should be recited where the meal is eaten, for it is written: "Thou shalt call the sabbath a delight" (Isa. 58.13). And the rabbis, of blessed memory, said that wherever you recite the *Kiddush* there you shall have the pleasure of eating. Therefore, if

one recites the *Kiddush* in one house and eats in another, he has not fulfilled his obligation concerning *Kiddush*. Further, the meal should immediately follow the *Kiddush*. If not, the obligation concerning *Kiddush* has not been fulfilled . . . .

Every Israelite, man or woman, is in duty bound to partake of three meals on the Sabbath, one on Friday evening and two on the Sabbath day. And at each meal it is obligatory to break bread . . . .

It is obligatory to break bread at every meal upon two whole loaves. Both loaves should be held while saying the *Ha-Mozi*,<sup>5</sup> but only one need be broken . . . .

Grieving on the Sabbath is forbidden, but one may pray for God's mercy.

It is mandatory to take delight on the Sabbath in everything that gives pleasure, as it is written: "And thou shalt call the sabbath a delight" (Isa. 58.13).

Time should be set aside during the Sabbath for the study of the Torah. For relating to the Sabbath it is written: "And Moses assembled all the congregation of the children of Israel" (Ex. 35.1). And our rabbis, of blessed memory, said: "Why does it say 'And he assembled' in this particular portion and not in all the rest of the Torah? God said to Moses: 'Go down and make assemblies on the Sabbath, so that the generations to come may learn to make assemblies to study the Torah in public'" (*Yalkut Shime'oni, Vayakhel*). And again our rabbis, of blessed memory, said: "Sabbaths and festivals were given to Israel solely to devote themselves to the study of the Torah, since there are many who are too

busy during the week and have no time to study the Torah regularly. But on Sabbaths and festivals, being free from work, they can study the Torah properly" (*Pe'ikta Rab-bati, Aseret ha-Dibrot*). Hence all those who do not study the Torah the entire week are all the more obligated to study the Torah on the holy Sabbath, each according to his conception and capacity.

Whatever an Israelite is himself forbidden to do he must not relegate to a non-Jew. But in the wintertime a non-Jew is permitted to light the stove for the purpose of heating the house. The Sabbath food may be warmed, provided the non-Jew places it upon the stove before lighting the fire....

It is written: "That thine ox and thine ass may have rest" (Ex. 23.12). Thus has the Torah admonished us that the cattle in the jurisdiction of an Israelite must also rest. And not only the cattle, but all the animals as well....

The words "from pursuing thy business" (Isa. 58.13) our rabbis, of blessed memory, have expounded to mean "thy business is forbidden thee even if thou doest no work." Thus one is forbidden to examine his property in order to see what must be done on the morrow. It is also forbidden to walk through the town for the purpose of finding a horse, a ship or a wagon in order to hire them after the Sabbath....

Inasmuch as it is written "thy business," our rabbis, of blessed memory, have inferred that only the business of man is forbidden, but not matters of Heaven.... Hence, one may attend to matters of public interest on the Sabbath. For instance, one may visit a governor or an assembly of officers to plead for the people; for the needs of the public

are tantamount to Heavenly matters. Also, it is permissible to inquire of a teacher whether he is willing to teach a child Scripture or even a trade. For teaching a trade is a religious duty, because the lack of a trade wherewith to earn a livelihood often leads to theft (Shab. 150a)....

The precept to observe the Sabbath may be disregarded when there is danger to human life. And that is the case with all the precepts of the Torah. Hence it is mandatory to desecrate the Sabbath for the sake of one who is dangerously ill.... If the sick person will not allow such desecration, he should be compelled to submit. For it is very iniquitous to be over-pious and refuse to be cured because the cure necessitates the violation of a prohibition. Concerning such a person it is said: "And surely your blood of your lives will I require" (Gen. 9.5). Indeed, violating the Sabbath under such circumstances is not only permissible but praiseworthy. Even if a non-Jew is present, the work should be done by an Israelite. And he who disregards the Sabbath for the sake of one dangerously ill, even if his exertions prove fruitless, has earned a reward. Thus if the physician orders a fig, and nine men run and each plucks a fig, they have all earned a reward from the Lord, blessed be His name, though the patient recovers from the very first one. Even when it is doubtful that life is at stake, it is mandatory to disregard the Sabbath and perform all necessary work. There is nothing that supersedes the importance of human life, for the Torah was given only for life, as it is said, "He shall live by them" (Lev. 18.5). This is explained to mean that man is to live by the laws and not die on account of them. The only exceptions to this rule are the laws prohibiting idolatry, adultery, and murder. Not to violate these, man is asked to give his life.

Just as it is mandatory to sanctify the coming of the Sabbath over a cup of wine, the *Kiddush*, so is it mandatory to sanctify its going out over a cup of wine, the *Habdalah*. Benedictions should also be pronounced over spices and over the light. Women are in duty bound to hear the *Habdalah* . . . . When wine cannot be procured, the *Habdalah* may be pronounced over any other beverage except water.

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The conclusion of the Sabbath should be celebrated with appropriate hymns and bright lights so that the Sabbath may depart as befits a queen. The name of Elijah the Prophet should be invoked, and prayers recited for his coming with the glad tidings of redemption . . . .

**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL FOR  
SHABBAT TEXT STUDY  
(session one)**

"Halakah makes the holy days distinctive. It does so by prescribing acts through which the individual himself is to make the days holy, and these acts are of an entirely normal character. (Normal here means: the experience of God which is related to the very essences of the personality and everyday life.) The Mekilta de Rabbi Simon speaks of such acts in commenting on the verse, "Remember the Sabbath Day to make it holy" (Exod. 20:8). "Remember" refers to remembering the Sabbath by reciting the Kiddush over a cup of wine, while "to make it holy" means that the Kiddush is to be recited, in the first instance, on the Sabbath Eve. According to another interpretation, "remember" means to remember the Sabbath every day by designating the successive days of the week as "the first day in the Sabbath, the second day in the Sabbath," and so on until the sixth day, the designation for that day being, "the eve of the Sabbath." The Sabbath Day is to be made holy by being made festive: "To make it holy--with what are you to make it holy? With food and with drink and with clean clothes, so that your meals and clothes may be different on the Sabbath from what they are on week-days; and the same rule is applied to the Festivals. More than in any other way, however, the holy days are distinguished by the individual abstaining from work on those days. "Make it holy by [refraining from] the doing of work." The gradations in the hierarchy of holy days are established, in large measure, by the halakot which prohibit anything classified as "labor." In the main, the holier the day, the more inclusive is the category of prohibited "labors."

### General Laws Pertaining to Sabbath Observance

1. The time between the setting of the sun, and the appearance of three stars, is called twilight and there is doubt as to whether that period is day or night. We consider it as night and therefore lighting the candles is prohibited at that time. They should be kindled before. One who accidentally does work during the twilight period on the eve of the Sabbath or at the conclusion of the Sabbath must bring a sin offering. (This means that he is guilty of violating the Sabbath, and were the Temple in existence and the sacrificial system still operative, this would be his penance.)

Maimonides, Mishneh Torah Shabbat, Ct. 5, p. 11.

2. The holy Sabbath is the great sign and covenant that the Most Holy, blessed be His name, has given to us to know "That in six days God made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them and rested on the seventh day," and that is the foundation of the Faith. Observing all the laws of the Sabbath is like the observance of the entire Torah, and the desecration of the Sabbath is like the denial of the Torah in its entirety. And thus it is said in Ezra: "Also on Mount Sinai . . . Sabbath madest thou known unto them."

3. Hence, the praise of the prophet: "Blessed is the man who doeth this and the son of a man that holdeth fast by it: that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it," etc. (Is. 54, 2). One observing the Sabbath according to the laws, honor [y] it to his utmost ability, is rewarded in this world . . .

4. It is written: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," which means to remember daily the Sabbath day to keep it holy; thus on coming across a delicious viand of a rare kind, and which is not liable to be spoiled through keeping it, it should be purchased in honor of the Sabbath.

5. One should prepare choice meat, fish, dessert, and good wines, in accordance with his means. . . . He should rejoice with the coming of the Sabbath, and reflect how the expectation of receiving a distinguished guest would make him active in setting his house in order, how much more so then in honor of Queen Sabbath.

6. Even the poorest of Israel should endeavor with all his might and main to take delight in the Sabbath. He should economize the entire week in order to have sufficient funds wherewith to honor the Sabbath.

7. All deeds should be reviewed on the day preceding the Sabbath, and repentance aroused, resolving to amend all misdeeds committed during the six days, for Sabbath eve embodies all the week days, just as the eve of the New Moon embodies the entire month.

8. An endeavor should be made to have fine clothes as well as a nice tallith in honor of the Sabbath; for it is written: "And thou shalt honor it" which is expounded by our Rabbis to mean that the garments for the Sabbath should not be the same as those for week days; and even while on a journey, among non-Jews, the attire of Sabbath clothes is desirable, for the array is not in honor of the onlookers but in deference to the Sabbath.

### Laws Concerning the Lighting of the Sabbath Candles

1. It is obligatory upon everyone to put work aside and to light the Sabbath candles at least half an hour before the appearance of the stars; if "A Psalm, a song for the Sabbath" was said in the synagogue, even if it be yet two hours before night, the observance of the Sabbath is nevertheless obligatory upon the minority from that time, and any manner of work is forbidden.

Mishneh Torah.

## Laws Concerning the Holiness of the Sabbath and the Night and Day Feasts

1. It is a biblical positive law to sanctify the Sabbath in words, for it is said: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," implying an obligation to remember it at its coming in by Kiddush and its going out by havdallah. Hence, the sages have instituted the ceremony of sanctification over the cup of wine, both at the coming in and going out of the Sabbath.
2. Kiddush is also obligatory upon women. They should, therefore listen attentively when the kiddush is said and respond "Amen."
3. One is forbidden to be grieved about any distress on the Sabbath, God forbid, but should pray for mercy to the good God.
4. It is forbidden to fast on the Sabbath for the express purpose of fasting, even for a very short time. And to fast until nighttime it is forbidden in any event, even if not done for the express purpose of fasting.

A person should always try to enjoy the Sabbath and festivals; and if he is a poor man, in want all week long, he should take great care to see that there are funds for the Sabbath, and he should try to enjoy the Sabbath to the best of his ability. And even if he could not prepare a great deal for the Sabbath, as long as he tried and his intentions were good, he is considered to have prepared as well as any wealthy man.

Mishneh Torah, Shabbat, 30:7-B.

## Melacha Done by a Non-Jew on the Sabbath

1. A Jew is forbidden to allow a non-Jew to work for him on the Sabbath. This law is based upon the Biblical verse (Exodus 12:16): "No manner of work shall be done," which implies even by a non-Jew. However, if the work is delivered to the non-Jew on Friday, it is permissible even if he does it on the Sabbath, but only on the following conditions:
  - (a) The non-Jew should take the work before the Sabbath, but not on the Sabbath day.
  - (b) The amount of compensation should be stipulated in advance, then the non-Jew does the work for his own sake, in order to get paid. Therefore, one who employs a non-Jewish servant, is forbidden to allow the latter to do any work on the Sabbath, as the work is done solely for the benefit of the Jew. If a non-Jew travels to a certain place (before the Sabbath), and a Jew asks him to deliver a letter, which will have to be carried on the Sabbath, he should be given some reward. Then he does it for compensation and not gratis.
  - (c) The non-Jew should be paid a stipulated amount for the entire work and not hired by the day.

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(d) A Jew is forbidden to engage a non-Jew to complete some work before a certain time if it is clear that the non-Jew cannot complete it unless he worked on the Sabbath. If a Jew sends a written message through a non-Jew and tells him: "See to it that you deliver it on such and such a day," and it is obvious that he cannot reach there on that day unless he travels on the Sabbath, this is likewise forbidden. If a fair is to be held on the Sabbath, a Jew is not allowed to give money to a non-Jew on Friday to buy things for him, if he knows that the non-Jew cannot obtain it on any other day except on the Sabbath. Likewise, he is forbidden to give him anything to sell. However, if he does not explicitly tell the non-Jew to do the work on the Sabbath, it is forbidden only when he delivers the work to him on Friday, but before that day he is permitted to give him some work, or some money to make a purchase. It is best not to live in a community where the fair takes place on a Sabbath, for it is impossible to avoid violations. But if it is held in a non-Jewish quarter, it does not matter.

(e) The work should not be connected with the soil, such as building, or farm work. We are not allowed to have a non-Jew work on a building on the Sabbath, even if we have agreed to pay him a certain amount for the entire work. In case of urgent necessity, we should consult a rabbi. On the Sabbath, it is forbidden even to let a non-Jew quarry stones or prepare lumber for building purposes, if it is known that they belong to a Jew, and if the non-Jew works on it publicly in the street. This rule applies also to farming, such as ploughing or reaping, even if the non-Jew is hired at a stipulated price for the whole task. If, however, the non-Jew has a share in the crops, and it is customary in that region for a farm worker to receive a share in the crops, it is permissible. If the farm is far away, where there is no Jew in the vicinity within two thousand cubits (three thousand feet), it is permissible, if the non-Jew performs the work at a stipulated sum, so long as he is not hired by the day.

(f) If a non-Jew has illegally built a house for a Jew on the Sabbath, it is well to be scrupulous and not move into it. (There are many divergent opinions about this.)

(g) The owner of a farm or a mill may rent it to a non-Jew, although he will work there on the Sabbath. But it is forbidden to rent a bathing establishment to a non-Jew. If the Jew does not own the bathing establishment, but only rented it from a non-Jew, he should consult a rabbi on how to act. The owner of a hotel, a glass factory, a brick factory, and the like, should also consult a rabbi how to act.

(h) A Jew is forbidden, under any circumstances, to allow a non-Jew to do work at his house on the Sabbath. Even if a non-Jewish servant desires to do some work for himself on the Sabbath, he should be forbidden by the Jewish employer.

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## **SHABBAT ACTIVITY #1**

**One of the goals of this curriculum is to expose students to multiple interpretations of our rituals. Enclosed are the beginning of your resource library – keep collecting!**

**HANDOUTS FOR ALL STUDENTS  
SHABBAT ACTIVITY #1**

## Thinking in Terms of Mitzvah/Commandment for Reform Jews

Just as the various aspects of Shabbat have their own background, this guidebook for Shabbat also has a history. It follows the publication of two other volumes by the Reform rabbinat, each of which also stressed the significance of Jewish practice. The first, *Shareti Mitzvah/Gates of Mitzvah*, presented the life cycle; the second, *Shareti Mo-edi/Gates of the Seasons*, took up the subject of observing the Jewish holidays.

All three of these books were preceded in 1972 by the text on which this volume is modeled, *A Shabbat Manual*. That book was edited by Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut and was noteworthy because it was the first publication of the Central Conference of American Rabbis devoted to the observance of Shabbat in terms of mitzvah/commandment.

Such an approach toward Jewish practice was novel and even controversial at the time because Reform Judaism has always allowed individual Jews freedom in shaping their own Jewish lives. The *Shabbat Manual* maintained, however, that in addition to the need for autonomy in Jewish decision-making, there also ought to be some sense of discipline among Reform Jews.

The concern was that without some counterbalance to the autonomy of the individual, Reform Judaism could be fragmented into as many divisions as there were individual Jews. Each Jew could make Shabbat as he or she wished without any sense of commonality or even minimum observance. "Mitzvah" was the word used in the *Shabbat Manual* to signal that Reform Jews needed to reassess their attitudes toward radical freedom in the area of Jewish practice. By using the word "mitzvah," the *Shabbat Manual* asked Reform Jews to begin thinking about their Jewish observances in terms of commandment or obligation.

Rabbi Plaut wrote, "Mitzvah is what a Jew ought to do in response to God and to the tradition of our people." The *Shabbat Manual* listed a full regimen of Shabbat observances, calling them mitzvot, and Rabbi Plaut commented, "It is suggested that you make a permanent decision to apply the principles of this catalogue of mitzvot to your life. You may do this for yourself alone, or together with your family, or as a member of a group of like-minded Jews who seek such a commitment."

Shapiro, Mark Dov. *Gates of Shabbat: A Guide for Observing Shabbat*. Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 1991.

## Shabbat Becomes a Mitzvah

Almost two decades later the invitation to observe Shabbat remains a challenge for Reform Jews. That is why this book was created. It was designed to allow Reform Jews the fullest opportunity to ask questions, explore Shabbat, and find a path through "the gates of Shabbat." The hope was that if Reform Jews had a text which helped them encounter the beauty and joy of Shabbat, they would embrace Shabbat as a necessity in their lives. In other words, *Shabbat would become a mitzvah for Reform Jews.*

When all is said and done, the commitment to Shabbat which raises it to the level of a mitzvah may not yet be what you feel. If you have just begun to discover Shabbat, that is not surprising. You are probably still trying to integrate the many facets of Shabbat into your life, and that process takes time and patience.

On the other hand, even those who are accustomed to Shabbat may not find it easy to use the term mitzvah/commandment when it comes to describing their practice. As moderns, most of us are very hesitant when it comes to accepting any notion of external authority or regimen.

Nevertheless, Jews have used the term mitzvah/commandment for centuries in describing the obligation they felt to live their lives Jewishly. Jews have followed mitzvot not solely out of compulsion but because living Jewishly provided an inner source of fulfillment and joy.

In regard to Shabbat, this guide attempts to communicate these positive feelings of satisfaction and pride. Hopefully, your experience of Shabbat will add a dimension of sanctity to your life that nothing else can replace. When that happens, *you ought to begin to feel commanded to observe Shabbat because you would not want to do anything but that.* At that time what you do will not only strengthen you as a Jew, but also strengthen the Jewish people.

We now turn to two brief discussions of mitzvot followed by a recapitulation of all the possibilities for Shabbat described in this guide. This time around, the possibilities of Shabbat are presented in terms of mitzvah. Our goal is to communicate the belief that being a Jew has to mean at least the attempt to make Shabbat a part of our lives.

## The Meaning of Mitzvah

Mitzvah (plural, *mitzvot*) is what a Jew ought to do in response to God and to the tradition of our people. This response comes from personal commitment rather than from unquestioning obedience to a set of commandments which past tradition thought to be the direct will of God. By making choice and commitment part of our plan of life, we willingly and purposefully strengthen our bonds with the God of Israel and with our people.

Mitzvah is, therefore, more than folkway and ceremony. As we choose to do a mitzvah — be it a positive act or a negative act (an abstention) — we choose the way of duty, of self-discipline, and of loyalty. To do so with eagerness and joy is the true seal of Shabbat observance.

This manual lists Shabbat mitzvot and offers options and opportunities. It is suggested that you make a permanent decision to apply the principles of this catalogue of mitzvot to your life. You may do this for yourself alone, or together with your family, or a member of a group of like-minded Jews who seek such a commitment....

How much ought I observe? To make Shabbat meaningful, observe as much as you can. Begin from where you are now, with what you presently do or do not do. If your Shabbat is like a weekday, begin with any mitzvah, but begin. Make your decision into a habit. From a modest start you may progress to a more significant observance. If you presently observe some mitzvot, search for the opportunity to deepen or enlarge that practice.

You must always remember that you are performing mitzvot. It is not a question of "how you feel about it" at any given time. You may not be "in the mood." But being a Jew is not always convenient or easy. The performance of mitzvot ought to be the pattern of one's life. The more deep-rooted such a pattern, the more intense and regular one's performance of mitzvot, the richer and truer will be one's life as a Jew. Do not become discouraged because the manual contains mitzvot which you cannot now fulfill. The secret of observing a mitzvah is to begin.

W. Gunther Plaut  
From *A Shabbat Manual*

Mitzvah is the key to authentic Jewish existence and to the sanctification of life. No English equivalent can adequately translate the term. Its root meaning is "commandment," but mitzvah has come to have broader meaning. It suggests the joy of doing something for the sake of others and for the sake of God, and it

conveys still more: it also speaks of living Jewishly, of meeting life's challenges and opportunities in particular ways. All this is mitzvah. Doing one mitzvah, says our tradition, will lead us to do another and another.

This book was written by Reform rabbis. Reform Judaism attempts responses to the conditions of each age in order to make it possible for Jews to live their Judaism meaningfully and richly. Such Jewish responses should seek to preserve the continuity of Jewish life and at the same time be sensitive to opportunities for desirable innovation.

In an earlier stage, Reform sought to distinguish between ethical and ritual mitzvot. It was argued that the ethical commandments were valid eternally and thus binding upon Jews of every generation. The ritual commandments, however, were considered optional or even superfluous. But this dichotomy is often arbitrary, for ethical resolve and ritual expression, intention and act, are in fact closely interlinked, as are reason and feeling. Ritual, as the vehicle for confronting God and Jewish history, can shape and stimulate one's ethical impulses. Therefore, the ancient advice is still valid: the very act of doing a mitzvah may lead one to know the heart of the matter.

This book was conceived to help Jews make Jewish responses, to give their lives Jewish depth and character. It recognizes that not all Jews need to do the same thing or make the same responses, that even within the realm of each mitzvah various levels of doing or understanding might exist. Reform Judaism maintains the principle of individual freedom; each Jew must make a personal decision about the Judaism which has come down through the ages.

Nevertheless, all Jews who acknowledge themselves to be members of their people and its tradition thereby limit their freedom to some extent. This book is an expression of Reform Jewish philosophy in that it is built on the twin commitments which each Jew ought to have, the commitments to Jewish continuity and to personal freedom of choice.

Simoneon J. Maslin  
From the Introduction to *Shma'ei Mitzvah/Scales of Mitzvah*

## The Mitzvot of Shabbat An Overview of Shabbat Observance

This summary of Shabbat observance was adapted from *Shma'ei Mo'edi/Scales of the Seasons*, which based its own listing of the Shabbat mitzvot on an original presentation of the mitzvot in *A Shabbat Manual*. Extensive footnotes are available in *Shma'ei Mo'edi* (see "Further Reading," page 103).

### The mitzvah of Shabbat observance

It is a mitzvah for every Jew, single or married, young or old, to observe Shabbat. The unique status of Shabbat is demonstrated by its being the only one of the holy days to be mentioned in the Ten Commandments. Its observance distinguishes the Jewish people as a Covenant People.

The people of Israel shall keep Shabbat, observing Shabbat throughout the generations as a covenant for all time. It shall be a sign for ever between Me and the people of Israel.

(Exodus 31:16-17)

Shabbat observance involves both positive and negative mitzvot, i.e., doing and refraining from doing.

### The mitzvah of oneg/joy

It is a mitzvah to take delight in Shabbat observance, as Isaiah said, "You shall call Shabbat a delight" (58:13). Oneg implies celebration and relaxation, sharing time with loved ones, enjoying the beauty of nature, eating a leisurely meal made special with conviviality and song, visiting with friends and relatives, taking a leisurely stroll, reading, and listening to music. All of these are appropriate expressions of oneg. Because of the special emphasis on oneg, Jewish tradition recommended sexual relations between husband and wife on Shabbat.<sup>21</sup>

### The mitzvah of kedushah/holiness

It is a mitzvah to sanctify Shabbat by setting it apart from the other days of the week. The Torah depicts Shabbat as the culmination of Creation and describes God as blessing it and sanctifying it (making it *Shabbat Kodesh*). Every Jew should partake of this day's special nature and abstain from that which lessens his or her awareness of its distinctive character. Shabbat must be distinguished

from the other days of the week so that those who observe it may be transformed by its kedushah/holiness.

#### The mitzvah of menucha/rest

It is a mitzvah to rest on Shabbat. However, Shabbat menucha/rest implies much more than simply refraining from work. The concept of Shabbat rest includes both physical relaxation (for example, a Shabbat afternoon nap) and tranquility of mind and spirit. On Shabbat one deliberately turns away from weekday pressures and activities. The pace of life on Shabbat should be different from that of the rest of the week.

Conversations should not focus on the problems of everyday existence but rather on the meaning of life and the awareness of beauty in God's creation. One might choose, for example, to walk more slowly on Shabbat in order to absorb one's surroundings and to enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of Shabbat.

If the week is characterized by competition, rush, and turmoil, their absence will contribute to serenity and to the rejuvenation of body and spirit. It is this unique quality of menucha which moves our tradition to call Shabbat "a foretaste of the days of the Messiah."<sup>22</sup>

#### The mitzvah of refraining from work

It is a mitzvah to refrain from work on Shabbat, as it is said: "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of Adonai your God; you shall not do any work" (Exodus 20:9-10). Abstinence from work is a major expression of Shabbat observance,<sup>\*</sup> however, it is no simple matter to define work today. Certain activities which some do to earn a living, others do for relaxation or to express their creativity. Clearly, though, one should avoid one's normal occupation or profession on Shabbat whenever possible and engage only in those types of activities which enhance the oneg/joy, menucha/rest, and kedusha/holiness of the day.

#### Social events during Shabbat worship hours

It is inappropriate to schedule social events at a time that conflicts with the Shabbat worship hours set by the congregation, and thereby to cause friends and relatives to choose between joining the congregation in worship or attending the event. One should not attend social events scheduled for these hours. Jewish organizations should be particularly careful in this matter.

\* Where circumstances require an individual to perform work on the Shabbat, that individual should nevertheless bear in mind that refraining from work is a major goal of Shabbat observance and he/she should perform as many Shabbat mitzvot as possible.

#### Public events on Shabbat

The scheduling of, or participation in, public events on Shabbat violates the sanctity of Shabbat. Therefore, it may become necessary to object to civic functions on Shabbat, especially those conflicting with Shabbat worship hours, and to refuse to participate in them.

#### The mitzvah of preparation

It is a mitzvah to prepare for Shabbat. According to the Rabbis, this mitzvah is implied in the Exodus version of the Ten Commandments, "Remember Shabbat and keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). Preparations may begin well before Shabbat by buying special food or waiting to wear a new garment for Shabbat. Wherever possible, all members of the household should be involved in Shabbat preparations.

#### The mitzvah of hachnasat orchim / hospitality

It is a mitzvah to invite guests to join in the celebration of Shabbat. Ideally, no one should have to observe Shabbat alone. Therefore, one should pay particular attention to newcomers in the community and others who are alone. Although every Jew is obligated to celebrate Shabbat whether at home or away, the joy of Shabbat is increased by joining with others. The mitzvah is called *hachnasat orchim*.

#### The mitzvah of tzedakah

It is always a mitzvah to give tzedakah. Following the example of talmudic sages, the tradition has recognized the final moments before Shabbat as one of the regular opportunities to perform the mitzvah. The placing of money in a tzedakah box just prior to lighting the Shabbat candles is an excellent way to observe this mitzvah and to teach it to children.

#### The mitzvah of Hadlakat Neiroi / Shabbat Candlelighting

It is a mitzvah to begin the observance of Shabbat with the kindling of Shabbat candles followed by the recitation of the appropriate blessing.

The lighting of candles in the synagogue is not a substitute for performance of the mitzvah in the home.

#### The mitzvah of Kiddush

It is a mitzvah to recite Kiddush over wine at the Shabbat table. The recitation of Kiddush in the synagogue is not a substitute for the performance of the mitzvah in the home.

**The mitzvah of blessing children**

It is a mitzvah for a parent or parents to bless child(ren) at the Shabbat table each week.

**The mitzvah of the Motzi**

It is a mitzvah to recite the Motzi at every meal. On Shabbat, it is recited over challah, which is either cut or broken and then eaten by all present.

**The Shabbat table**

The mitzvah of taking delight in Shabbat is appropriately expressed at the Shabbat meal. Special foods and beverages should grace the table. Joy is enhanced by singing Shabbat zemirot/songs.

**The mitzvah of Birkat Hamazon**

At the conclusion of all meals, and of course on Shabbat, it is a mitzvah to recite grace after meals (Birkat Hamazon).

**The mitzvah of congregational worship**

It is a mitzvah to join the congregation in worship on Shabbat.

**The Shabbat noon meal**

The noon meal provides additional opportunities for making Shabbat special. The mitzvot of Kiddush, Motzi, and Birkat Hamazon should be observed, as well as the singing of zemirot, as on Friday evening.

**The mitzvah of Talmud Torah / study**

It is a mitzvah to study Torah every day, even more so on Shabbat. The reading of the *sifra*, the weekly Torah portion, during the synagogue service should lead to further appropriate reading and related study.

**The mitzvah of bikur cholim / visiting the sick**

It is a mitzvah to visit the ill and shut-ins at any time. The Talmud, elaborating on the Mishnah,<sup>33</sup> lists visiting the sick as one of the ten basic mitzvot for which "a person is rewarded in this world and the world to come." By performing this mitzvah on Shabbat, one brings the sick a measure of Shabbat joy.

**Beit mila / the covenant of circumcision**

The Torah is very clear about the importance and the timing of circumcision for a male child: "Throughout the generations, every male among you shall be circumcised at the age of eight days." (Genesis 17:12)

Because of this verse, Jewish tradition has required the performance of *beit mila* specifically on the eighth day even if that day falls on Shabbat.

Circumcision may be postponed for medical reasons. If postponed, it should be held as soon as possible consistent with the health of the child.

**Weddings and wedding preparations**

Weddings should not take place on Shabbat. In making unavoidable final preparations for a Saturday evening wedding, care should be taken to preserve the spirit of Shabbat.

**Mourning on Shabbat**

Although Shabbat is counted as one of the days of *shiv'a* (the first seven days of mourning), mourners do modify their mourning insofar as it is appropriate to observe Shabbat during *shiv'a* and to leave the house in order to attend synagogue services.

Funerals are not conducted on Shabbat, nor on the first day or last day of major festivals, since no work may be performed, and the mood of the funeral is contrary to the spirit of rejoicing (*oneg*) which characterizes Shabbat and the festivals.

**Maintaining the special quality of Shabbat**

One should maintain and enjoy the special quality of Shabbat throughout the entire day from the lighting of Shabbat candles until the recitation of Havdalah. This may be done by choosing activities to complement and enrich one's spiritual life. Special care should be taken to conduct oneself in such a manner and to participate in such activities as will promote the distinctive Shabbat qualities of *kedusha*/holiness, *menucha*/rest, and *oneg*/joy.

**The mitzvah of Havdalah**

At the conclusion of Shabbat, it is a mitzvah to recite Havdalah—separating the holy from the ordinary, Shabbat from the other days of the week.

## Welcoming Shabbat

*Come, my beloved. Let us go out to meet the bride. Let us greet Shabbat.*

*From the sixteenth century song, Lecha Davi!*

Jewish tradition compares the arrival of Shabbat to the arrival of an important guest. In the sixteenth century, the Jewish mystics of Safed in the land of Israel took this imagery so seriously that on Friday afternoons they would dress in white as if they were going to a wedding. As the sun set and Shabbat began, they would go to the outskirts of their town to "welcome the Sabbath bride."

To this day Shabbat is referred to as both a bride and a queen. The understanding is that in order to greet Shabbat properly, special preparations must be made.

### *Preparations*

According to the rabbis,<sup>2</sup> the commandment to prepare for Shabbat is implied in the Ten Commandments as they appear in the Book of Exodus (20:8)—"Remember Shabbat and keep it holy." How does one "remember" Shabbat? The answer is that one remembers Shabbat by keeping it in mind and anticipating it as the days of the week go by.

The Talmud<sup>3</sup> also relates that everyone in the community became involved in preparing for Shabbat. Even the leading rabbis stopped their weekday activities early enough on Friday to participate in preparing meals, gathering wood, and getting out proper dishes for Shabbat.

In our day, too, stopping early and preparing for Shabbat can be the first steps in observing Shabbat. This can involve shopping for appropriate Shabbat food earlier in the week, baking or buying challah, and preparing the special meal often associated with Friday evening. (See page 30 for more details on the Shabbat meal.)

At the same time, preparing for Shabbat need not only mean logging hours in the kitchen. In fact, in this era of dual-career families a complicated dinner menu may prove to be an obstacle to Shabbat rather than an incentive. Because of that, some people may concentrate their efforts on welcoming Shabbat in areas other than cooking. Consider these possibilities for enhancing the beginning of your Shabbat:

**Purchase flowers to beautify your table for Shabbat**

If children are involved, let them accompany you and help choose the flowers.

**Use different dishes for the Friday evening meal**

When it comes to the Kiddush over the wine, try to use cups that are specifically set aside for that purpose. Even though standard wineglasses and weekday dishes will suffice, special tableware is more appropriate, because it draws on the Jewish custom of *hidur mitzvah*—the belief that the spirit of any celebration is enhanced when it is carried out as beautifully as possible. On the same principle, you can make your meal special by using attractive linens or moving the meal to the dining room.

**Dress differently for the Friday evening meal, if not all of Shabbat day**

The Talmud<sup>4</sup> recommends this practice. A clean shirt or blouse (white is a traditional Shabbat color) for everyone at dinner might set the tone.

**If children are present, let them help as much as they can in preparing**

They might set the table or create decorations for Shabbat.

**Open your home to guests**

Ideally, no one should have to observe Shabbat alone. Judaism even understands the act of *hachnasat orchim*/hospitality as a mitzvah/commandment, which means that by sharing Shabbat with someone outside your family, you are giving extra Jewish significance to the seventh day.

**Be there**

For those who are just beginning to approach Shabbat, being home for dinner may constitute *the* major change of pace. Leaving work in time to be present when the rest of the family eats may mean thinking about Friday's schedule one day or possibly several days in advance. It may mean breaking a series of old work habits in order to make space in your life for a new Jewish commitment.



Finally, when you think about Shabbat, it is important to remember that Shabbat extends beyond Friday evening's meal. Preparing for Shabbat can, therefore, involve much more than preparing for Kabbalat Shabbat (the welcoming of Shabbat around the dinner table). It can involve making room in your schedule for the many aspects of Shabbat that extend through Friday night and into Saturday.

## Tzedakah/Charity

It is customary to make charitable donations just before Shabbat arrives. This can be done at your table with everyone in the household putting some change in a suitable collection box (*pushke*). Every few weeks you can then have a discussion as to where the tzedakah money collected ought to go.

In some households family members save the requests for donations that they receive in the mail. When the family discusses how to distribute its tzedakah, these requests are brought to the table so that the entire family can decide which organizations ought to receive support.

## Further Options

You may add to your Shabbat experience by trying some of the following. They can be done at any point in the Shabbat rituals.

### A special prayer or reading

One or more of those present can write their own Shabbat thought or prayer. It can be as simple as a brief wish for those around the table that evening. Others can participate at the table by reading a poem or a relevant article. Suitable readings can be found later in this book (see "Readings and Meditations," page 73) as well as in *Gates of Prayer* and *Gates of the House*.

### Something good

Each person (preschooler as well as grandparents) completes this phrase as you go around the table: "Something good happened to me this week. It was...."

### Proud time

Looking back on the previous week, each person completes this phrase: "I'm proud that I...."

### The past week

Without using either of the above two discussion starters, you might simply invite those at your table to reflect on some of the events of the past week.

**TEXT RELATING TO THE  
SHABBAT MITZVOT OF  
PREPARATION FOR SHABBAT**

## SHABBAT CUSTOMS AROUND THE WORLD

Shabbat is celebrated by Jews all over the world. Even though Jews from different countries celebrate the holiday in unique ways, the fact that Shabbat is observed simultaneously by so many is a thread connecting Jews everywhere.

Did you know that the Falashas, the Black Jews from Ethiopia, celebrate every seventh Shabbat in a special way? On the eve of this Shabbat, the Falashas gather in their synagogue to pray and only stop for the meal. Then they continue to pray and sing throughout the night and the following day.

Did you know that Sephardic Jews have a number of interesting Shabbat customs that differ from the Eastern European Ashkenazic practices? For example:

Among the Jews of Syria, the husband is responsible for doing all the shopping for Shabbat and for setting up the candlesticks for their wives to light. Many of their families still use oil and wick lights for Shabbat candle lighting. And many use twelve small *hallab* rolls for *ba-Motzi*, symbolic of the twelve shewbreads once used in the Temple.

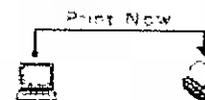
In the Moroccan Jewish community, if a new fruit appears in the marketplace during the week it is purchased for eating on Shabbat, at which time the *Sbebeheyanu* prayer is recited. There used to be a very interesting custom of having a pre-Shabbat snack of cake and radishes, which they called "*Bo'i Kallab*," "Welcome, Queen (Shabbat)". They found that this little social occasion prior to Shabbat calmed the emotions of family members and relieved the pressures everyone felt in rushing to complete Shabbat preparations.

The Jews of Spain bless their children after the *Kiddush* and they then kiss the hand of their parents or grandparents. After the traditional Hebrew blessing, it is customary for the parents to add an additional personal blessing for each child being blessed. They sing *Z'miroi* in their language—Ladino—a mixture of Hebrew and Spanish, and in Hebrew—sometimes using both languages in the same song!

The Spanish-Portuguese Jews who live in Holland do not sing *Shalom Aleikhem* or recite *Eisbet Hayil* because these prayers are Kabbalistic in origin, a trend they generally do not follow.

Many Sephardim recite the entire *Shir ba-Shirim* (*Song of Songs*) just before Shabbat begins.

Most Sephardim recite a version of *Birkat ha-Mazon* that is different in several ways from the Ashkenazic version. For example, the *Zimmun*, the invitation to bless, begins: *Nezarekb she'akhalnu misbelo*—"Let us bless (our God) of whose food we have eaten." The response is: *Barukh she'akhalnu misbelo u'vetuvo bagadol hayinu*—"Blessed is (our God) of whose bounty we have eaten and through whose great goodness we live."



## Gleanings

### Preparing for Shabbat

Two contemporary authors touch on different aspects of Shabbat preparation. One surveys the technical preparations, the other the spiritual side of preparedness for the Sabbath. Each adds a personal note about the way his or her household gets ready for the arrival of "the Sabbath Queen."

#### Shabbat Preparation is a Weeklong Activity



One prepares for the Sabbath all week. In Hebrew the days of the week do not have names; they are all a launch pad for Shabbat. Sunday is the first day, Monday the second, and so on until Friday, which is both the sixth day and "the eve of Shabbat."

In anticipation of the Friday night meal, observant Jews tend to eat lighter meals during the daytime on Friday. There is also much to do. In fact, the more observant you are of the details of Shabbat, the more you have to prepare before it arrives. The late eminent scholar Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik used to say that the true mark of a pious Jew is not that he or she is a *shomer Shabbat* (a Sabbath observer) but is *shomer erev Shabbat* (one who properly prepares on the eve of the Sabbath). By traditional Jewish law, one cannot shop on the Sabbath, so marketing is usually done during the day on Friday. Cooking is prohibited on the Sabbath, so that must be done in advance, too. Foods prepared beforehand can be kept warm on a hot plate or on the stove, a condition that has led to a preference for certain hearty dishes like a meat-bean-and-potato stew called *cholent*.

In our home, we try to give our children special Sabbath eve responsibilities. Of course, there's cleaning up their own rooms, but we also divide up family responsibilities like sweeping, or setting up the Sabbath candles. My daughter, Emma, loves art projects, so she is always willing to write and decorate place cards if we are having company for Shabbat dinner. My son Adam vacuums.  
-- Ari Goldman, a former New York Times reporter, is the author of *The Search for God at Harvard*. Reprinted with permission from *Being Jewish*, published by Simon & Schuster.

#### Friday: Spiritual Preparation as Well



Some Jewish men, Chasidim in particular, go to the *mikvah* (ritual bath) on Friday afternoon. It is a lovely custom, for *mikvah* not only symbolizes a spiritual cleansing, it also offers a few moments of private time to reflect, to relax, to disengage from the past week, to think about the coming experience of Shabbat. However, if their wives are home frenziedly preparing for Shabbat, caring for eight kids, it's not altogether fair, nor is it in the spirit of the day. Similarly, in those families where a woman has the leisure to sit in a beauty parlor for three hours on a Friday afternoon, while her husband is frantically winding up a hard week, there might be a better distribution of responsibility so that a man will have the time to come a bit more restfully into Shabbat.

Before Shabbat begins, it is a custom to put some money into a *pushke*, a charity box. Nowadays, *tzedakah* (charity) being a bigger business, what with appeals, dinners, guests of honor, checks, and IRS deductions, this custom of slipping a few coins into a slotted tin box is of less impact. Yet, it is a sweet thing for children to observe, to do, and to learn from. And it's one more act associated with the special preparations for Shabbat.

Some people also are able to set aside time to meditate, or study quietly before Shabbat. These are wonderful ways to prepare spiritually for the day. My husband often studies his daily quota of Talmud right before Shabbat. Somehow, I never have the time or discipline to distance myself this way until the very last minute. Perhaps this is my conditioning as a woman who, like most women, has been largely responsible for the physical preparations in the home, and who gleans the sense of sacredness and holiness from those endeavors; but for those who can get themselves spiritually as well as physically ready, there is a different foretaste altogether of Shabbat.

Inasmuch as one should review the biblical portion of the week at least once before it is read in *shul* [synagogue] on Shabbat morning, this is an excellent subject for quiet study on a Friday afternoon.

-- *Blu Greenberg*, a writer and lecturer on contemporary Jewish issues, is the author of *On Women and Judaism*. Reprinted with permission from *How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household*, published by Simon & Schuster.

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## THE SABBATH IN PRACTICE

A SABBATH CHANT<sup>10</sup>

S. BENZION (A. GUTMAN)

(Translated from the Hebrew by HARRY H. FEIN)

To the market mother went  
 To buy some food for Sabbath;  
 From the market mother came  
 And brought some food for Sabbath.  
 What?  
 Flour and meat and fish and fruit,  
 To honor Sabbath, to honor Sabbath.

Mother kindled a fire to make  
 Dainty food for Sabbath;  
 Mother worked all day and made  
 Dainty food for Sabbath.  
 How?  
 She baked and cooked and broiled and fried  
 Dainty food for Sabbath, dainty food for Sabbath.

Father went to the synagogue  
 To welcome the Queen Sabbath;  
 Father came back from the synagogue,  
 And we honored the Queen Sabbath.  
 With what?  
 With food and drink and chants and praise,  
 We honored Sabbath, we honored Sabbath.

## SABBATH HOUR FOR CHILDREN

## WELCOME, QUEEN SABBATH

ZALMAN SHNEIUR

(Translated from the Hebrew by HARRY H. FEIN)

Oh, come let us welcome sweet Sabbath  
 The cobbler abandoned his awl and  
 The tailor's brisk needle now sleeps  
 Father has bathed, washed his hair  
 Sweet Sabbath is now  
 Sweet Sabbath is here  
 Oh, come let us welcome sweet Sabbath  
 The storekeeper locked and bolted  
 The teamster unbridled his horse at  
 The sexton runs hither and thither  
 The sun sets in the sky  
 Sweet Sabbath is now  
 Oh, come let us welcome sweet Sabbath  
 The white-bearded cantor has hastened  
 To welcome the Sabbath with blessing  
 Dear mother is lighting the candles  
 Day of holiness, rest,  
 Forever be blessed,  
 Oh, come let us welcome sweet Sabbath

## A DEED OF DARING

A. M. KLEIN

This is a tale of a deed of daring;  
 How Samson got the rabbi a herring  
 The rabbi who ate for his Sabbath  
 A herring's parts, lower, middle, and  
 So Samson the brave, his pennies  
 Into the market went wayfaring,  
 And bought, and got, and brought  
 This is a tale of a deed of daring.

Hence, the praise of the prophet: "Happy is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that holdeth fast by it: that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it" (Isa. 56.2). He who observes the Sabbath according to the law, honoring it to his utmost ability, is rewarded in this world, to say nothing of the great reward in store for him in the world to come. This too is set forth by the prophet: "If thou turn away thy foot because of the sabbath, from pursuing thy business on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, and the holy of the Lord honourable; and shalt honour it, not doing thy wonted ways, nor pursuing thy business, nor speaking thereof; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will make thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 58.13, 14).

It is mandatory upon all, even upon those who have numerous domestics, to honor the Sabbath by doing something in preparation for it. Such was the habit of the Sages. Rabbi Hisda, for instance, used to cut the vegetables. Rabbah and Rab Joseph used to chop wood. Rabbi Zera was in the habit of lighting the fire. Rab Naḥman put the house in order, bringing all the utensils needed for the Sabbath and disposing of the things used during the week (Shab. 119a). All men should emulate their example and not regard such work as an indignity. For it is indeed man's glory to honor the Sabbath.

One should prepare choice meat, fish, dessert, and good wines, in accordance with one's means. It is desirable to eat fish at every Sabbath meal provided it is not harmful to the health of the individual.... The table should be

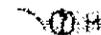
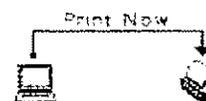
Millgram, Abraham E. *Sabbath: The Day of Delight*,  
Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia,  
1944.

covered with a white cloth which should remain upon the table the entire Sabbath day. One should rejoice at the coming of the Sabbath, and make his house ready as one does for the coming of a distinguished guest....

Even the poorest of Israel should endeavor with all his might to take delight in the Sabbath. He should economize the entire week in order to have sufficient funds wherewith to honor the Sabbath. If one has no money he should borrow it or pawn something in order to provide for the Sabbath. Of such a one did our rabbis, of blessed memory, say, "My children borrow for My sake and I will repay (saith the Lord)" (Bezah 15b).... If, however, a man is very poor, he should be guided by this maxim of our rabbis, of blessed memory, "Make thy Sabbath as a weekday [i. e., spend no more for it than for a weekday] and do not require the aid of the community." However, if at all possible, he should do some little thing to distinguish the Sabbath from all other days (Pes. 112a)....

An effort should be made to wear fine clothes as well as a beautiful *Tallit* (prayer shawl) in honor of the Sabbath. For it is written, "And shalt honour it," which is expounded by our rabbis to mean that the garments for the Sabbath should not be the same as those worn on weekdays (Shab. 113a). Even while journeying among non-Jews, Sabbath attire is desirable, for the festive array is not for the onlookers but in honor of the Sabbath.

**TEXT RELATING TO THE  
SHABBAT MITZVOT OF JOY  
(Oneg)**



## The Rabbis' Shabbat II: Enjoyment and Spiritual Fulfillment

**The Rabbis used requirements and prohibitions to shape a Shabbat experience in which creative activity is set aside to make time for matters of the spirit. Second of two parts.**

By Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

*Rabbi Steinsaltz describes in some detail the rabbinic laws of Shabbat as understood by traditionalist Jews, with an emphasis in this second part of the article on the positive requirements rather than the prohibitions. Reprinted from Teshuvah: A Guide for the Newly Observant Jew (transl. Michael Swirsky), published by Jason Aronson Inc.*

The heart of Shabbat observance is, as I have said, refraining rather than doing: cessation. But there is also the positive dimension of the "culture" of Shabbat, the dimension that makes it, in the words of the liturgy, "a day of joy and rest, quiet and security," a day of holiness, a day when one acquires an "extra soul."

Thus, before Shabbat begins, candles are lit, preferably on or near the dinner table. This practice, which was originally intended to make the Sabbath evening meal more enjoyable, has always had a festive quality to it: the brightness of the light gives added honor to the day. Every Jew is obliged to light candles, but over the centuries the tradition arose that it should be done, wherever possible, by the woman of the house. (There is also a beautiful custom according to which each female member of the family, even little girls, lights her own Shabbat candles). The connection between the night of Shabbat and the woman's role is a deep and ancient one; of which the candlelighting is but one part.

Unlike weekday meals, those eaten on Shabbat are not for physical sustenance alone but serve to fulfill the mitzvah of Sabbath joy. It is also a mitzvah to eat three Shabbat meals: evening, noon, and late afternoon. These are "sacred meals," both in their ceremonial character and in their deeper meaning, meals in which the Jewish family, as a religious (and not merely social) unit, communites with the sanctity of the day. The first two of the three meals begin with *kiddush* ("sanctification"), a special benediction usually said over a cup of wine (or spirits or grape juice in the case of people who do not tolerate alcohol well). After *netilat yadayim* (ritual hand washing), the meal itself begins. In most Jewish communities it is customary to sing *zemirot*, special Sabbath hymns, at the table. This custom is not restricted to people with special musical talents; rather, each person at the table participates as best he can. The effect is to reinforce both the sense of togetherness and the element of *zevah mishpahah*--familial offering--appropriate to the Sabbath table.

The solemnity of the Shabbat meals, and of Shabbat in general, should not be taken to imply heaviness or gloom, nor should the element of restriction be allowed to predominate. On the contrary, festivity is of the essence. Even one who is newly bereaved or has a fresh memory of some other personal catastrophe must stop mourning when Shabbat arrives. The *neshama yeterah* ("extra soul") each Jew is said to acquire on Shabbat is really an augmented ability to rejoice in tranquillity, to cease doing things as if all were already done, to accept life with a feeling

of wholeness and contentment. Not only is Shabbat a time to disengage oneself from workaday affairs--even reading, speaking, and thinking about them is forbidden--but when it comes to spiritual matters, too, vexation and anxious self-analysis should be avoided. The holiness of the day must be sought in a spirit of *oneg shabbat* ("the job of the Sabbath"), of pleasure, relaxation, and ease.

Shabbat should be devoted as much as possible to holy activities, which one may feel he has no free time for during the week, especially prayer and study. Thus, one who finds it inconvenient for one reason or another to attend public prayer during the week should make a special effort to do so on Shabbat. While the mitzvot of Shabbat also apply to isolated individuals, it is desirable to foster collective--familial and communal--observance of them. In addition, certain aspects of public worship, such as the ceremonial reading of the Torah, cannot be done alone. So while it may be a long walk to the nearest synagogue, and one may not find the people there entirely congenial, it is important to make the effort to join them. Of course, synagogue attendance is not nearly as important as Shabbat observance itself. Thus the person who rides to the synagogue, in serious violation of the Sabbath laws, in effect, sacrificed the principle of cessation from labor, which is the very basis of Shabbat, in favor of an observance of secondary significance.

It is appropriate to devote a certain amount of time each Shabbat to Torah study, if possible in communal and family settings. One may not be able to cover much ground in a once-a-week session, but the fulfillment of the mitzvah consists of setting aside a significant block of time for spiritual nourishment rather than any particular intellectual achievement. Other kinds of activities--a political discussion with friends, a game of chess--may be permissible on Shabbat, but they should not be allowed to predominate. Sport per se is not considered *melakhah*, but the Sages forbade certain more active kinds of athletic activity because their strenuousness was not in the spirit of Shabbat. Watching commercial sporting events is forbidden because such events usually entail many kinds of *chillul Shabbat* ("violation of the Shabbat")--traveling, buying tickets, etc.--and in public besides. In general, it is not play or free movement that is ruled out, but activity that involves strain and effort. The issue of play on Shabbat arises most acutely, of course, in the case of children, whose main source of pleasure involves jumping and running. Because for them as well, Shabbat should be a gift and not a burden, the halakhic authorities have long been lenient toward them in such matters.

*Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz is the author of an as-yet-unfinished translation and commentary to the entire Babylonian Talmud in modern Hebrew (parts of which have appeared in English translation) and many other works bringing traditional Torah scholarship and Hasidic thought to a contemporary audience. He lives in Jerusalem.*

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חדרש מקדוש שנו, זכרה וזמרה  
 מוזקד מולשקענע, חזקה למעצמא  
 פשקת יושקת  
 פומיר ושקחה, שבת מעודה.  
 (יום וואו)

*Moderato*

*mf*  
Yom zeh y'-yis-ro - el o - roh v' - sim - choh

*Folk Melody*

o - roh o - roh o - roh v'-sim-choh sha - bas m'nu - choh

sha - bas m'nu - choh Tsi - vi - so pe - ku - dim b' -

ma-mad har si - nay sha - boe ti - mo - a - dim hi - sh -

mor b' - chol sho - nay, 'a - a - roch y' - fo - nay

mas - es va - a - ru - choh sha - bas me - nu - choh

Millgram, Abraham E. *Sabbath: The Day of Delight*,  
 Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia,  
 1944.

3. ZEMIROT

Table-Hymns for the Sabbath Noon Meal

YOM ZEH LYTSROEL — יום זה לילשארעל

ISAAC LURIA

(Translated from the Hebrew by NINA SALAMAN)

This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,  
A Sabbath of rest.

Thou badest us, standing assembled at Sinai,  
That all the years through we should keep Thy behest —  
To set out a table full-laden, to honor  
The Sabbath of rest.

This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,  
A Sabbath of rest.

Treasure of heart for the broken people,  
Gift of new soul for the souls distressed,  
Soother of sighs for the prisoned spirit —  
The Sabbath of rest.

This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,  
A Sabbath of rest.

When the work of the worlds in their wonder was finished,  
Thou madest this day to be holy and blest,  
And those heavy-laden found safety and stillness,  
A Sabbath of rest.

This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,  
A Sabbath of rest.

If I keep Thy command I inherit a kingdom,  
If I treasure the Sabbath I bring Thee the best —  
The noblest of offerings, the sweetest of incense —  
A Sabbath of rest.

This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,  
A Sabbath of rest.

Restore us our shrine — O remember our ruin  
 And save now and comfort the sorely opprest  
 Now sitting at Sabbath, all singing and praising  
 The Sabbath of rest.

This day is for Israel light and rejoicing,  
 A Sabbath of rest.

יום זה מקבד

יום זה מקבד מקל ימים,  
 כי בו שבת צור עולמים.

ששת ימים תעשה מלאכתך  
 ויום השביעי לאלהיך,  
 שבת לא תעשה בו מלאכה,  
 כי כל עשה ששת ימים

יום זה ...

ראשון הוא למקראי קודש,  
 יום שבתוך יום שבת קודש,  
 על-כן כל-איש ב"יתו יקודש,  
 על-שתי לוחם יבצעו תמימים

יום זה ...

אכול משמנים, שמה ממתנים,  
 כי אל יתן לך-בו דבקים  
 פגור לבוש, לחם חקים,  
 בשר נדונים וכל-מטעמים.

יום זה ...

לא תחסר כל בו ואבלק  
 ושבעת וברכת  
 את-ה' אלהיך אשר אהבת,  
 כי ברכתך מקל העמים.

יום זה ...

תשקנים מטפריים פבורו,  
 נגם הארץ קלאה חסדו.  
 ראו כי כל-אלה עשותה ירו,  
 כי הוא האזור פעלו תמים  
 יום זה ...

*Allegretto*

*f* Yom zeh yom zeh mi' chu-bod mi - kol mi - kol yo - mnm

*Flute*

Ki yo sho - vas tsur o - lo - mnm. 1 She - shes  
 2 Ri - shon

yo - mnm, ta - a - seh m'ach - te - cho, V'Yom hash - vi - l  
 hu - lmk - ro - e - ko - desh. Yom sha - bo - son

le - lo he - cho, Sha - bos lo sa - a - seh  
 yom sha - bos ko - desh. Al Shi - ken kol ish b' -

*D. C. refrain*

bo m'lo - choh Ki chol o - soh she - shes yo - mnm,  
 ye - no y - ka - desh. Al sh'le - le - chem yiv - ts' - u t' - m - mnm.

## YOM ZEH MECHUBOD

(Translated by HERBERT LOWMY)

Crown of days, above all blest,  
 The Rock of Ages chose thee for His rest.

Six days are for toil created  
 But the seventh God has consecrated.  
 Do no labour! Thus He bade us;

In six days a world He made us.

Crown of days, above all blest,  
 The Rock of Ages chose thee for His rest.

First of all His feasts renowned,  
 Holy Sabbath day, with glory crowned,  
 With our cup we speak thy blessing,  
 With twin loaves His grace confessing.

Crown of days, above all blest,  
 The Rock of Ages chose thee for His rest.

Eat thy fill, then drink thy pleasure,  
 For he granteth of His richest treasure  
 Gifts to all His word believing,  
 To His faithful promise cleaving.

Crown of days, above all blest,  
 The Rock of Ages chose thee for His rest.

Lacking naught, give thanks abounding,  
 Satisfied, then let thy praise be sounding.  
 Love the Eternal thy God Who loved thee.  
 From all nations He approved thee.

Crown of days, above all blest,  
 The Rock of Ages chose thee for His rest.

Hark, the heavens His praise are singing;  
 With His mercy, hark, the spheres are ringing!  
 Look, He wrought these works enduring,  
 True His word our weal assuring.

Crown of days, above all blest,  
 The Rock of Ages chose thee for His rest.

## SHABBOS HAYOM L'ADONOI

(Translated from the Hebrew by HERBERT LORWE)

Keep ye holy Sabbath rest before your God today.

Come, cry out with joyful shout, exulting in your play:  
Pleasure mine, treasures fine, take with laughter gay.  
Yet be mindful, God's command obey:  
Day of rest, God hath blest Israel's Sabbath day.

Cease thy weary journey, stay and rest beside the road.  
Toil is past, thy burden cast, for I will bear thy load:  
Sweetmeats I bring thee, eat thy fill and say:  
Day of rest, God hath blest Israel's Sabbath day.

Keep me safe and God will ever guard thee in His sight.  
Thou, with all thy tender ones, shalt find in me delight.  
Joyful, in chorus, raise the festive lay,  
Day of rest, God hath blest Israel's Sabbath day.

Bring me finest dainties, bring me sweets and spices rare:  
Crispest nuts and ripest fruit shall be our Sabbath fare.  
Raisins and comfits, see their choice array,  
Day of rest, God hath blest Israel's Sabbath day.

Set twin loaves beside thy cup, so He will bless thy bread.  
Feast our guest and with thy best, thrice let thy board be spread.  
Praise Him who fed thee, turn to Him and pray,  
Day of rest, God hath blest Israel's Sabbath day.

## שְׁבִיחַ

שְׁבִיחוּ בְּמַלְכוּתְךָ שְׁמַרְי שְׁבִיחַת וְקוּרְאֵי עֲנֵנִי. עִם מְקוּרְאֵי  
שְׁבִיחֵי: בְּלֵלִים שְׁבִיחוּ וְיִתְעַנְּנוּ מִסוּבָּה. וְהַשְׁבִּיחַ רְצִיחַת בּוֹ וְקוּרְאֵי  
תְּמִידַת יָמִים אוֹתוֹ קוּרְאֵי וְכִי לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית:

## YISMECHU

They that keep the Sabbath and call it a delight shall rejoice in Thy kingdom; the people that hallow the seventh day, even all of them shall be satiated and delighted with Thy goodness, seeing that Thou didst find pleasure in the seventh day, and didst hallow it; Thou didst call it the desirable of days, in remembrance of the creation.

COME, O SABBATH DAY

GUSTAV GOTTHEIL

Come, O Sabbath day, and bring  
Peace and healing on thy wing;  
And to ev'ry troubled breast  
Speak of the divine behest:  
Thou shalt rest! Thou shalt rest!

Earthly longings bid retire,  
Quench the passions' hurtful fire;  
To the wayward, sin-oppressed,  
Bring thou thy divine behest:  
Thou shalt rest! Thou shalt rest!

Wipe from ev'ry cheek the tear,  
Banish care and silence fear;  
All things working for the best,  
Teach us the divine behest:  
Thou shalt rest! Thou shalt rest!

COME, O SABBATH DAY

*mf* *Larghetto*

A. W. B.

1. Come, O Sab-bath day, and bring Peace and heal-ing  
2. Earth-ly long-ings bid re-tire, Quench the pas-sions'  
3. Wipe from ev-'ry cheek the tear, Ban-ish care and

The first system of musical notation consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The vocal line begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment begins with a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The music is marked *mf* and *Larghetto*. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

on thy wing; And to ev-'ry troub-led breast Speak of the di-  
hurt-ful fire! To the way-ward, sin-oppressed, Bring Thou Thy di-  
si-lence fear! All things working for the best, Teach us the di-

The second system of musical notation continues the vocal and piano lines from the first system. The lyrics continue below the vocal line.

vine be-hest: Thou shalt rest,  
vine be-hest: Thou shalt rest,  
vine be-hest: Thou shalt rest,

The third system of musical notation concludes the vocal and piano lines. The lyrics continue below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final chord.

**TEXT RELATING TO THE  
SHABBAT MITZVOT OF  
SANCTIFICATION / KEDUSHAH**

Activity One

# MEKILTA

## de-RABBI ISHMAEL

A CRITICAL EDITION ON THE BASIS OF THE  
MANUSCRIPTS AND EARLY EDITIONS WITH  
AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION, INTRODUCTION  
AND NOTES

BY

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VOLUME TWO



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# מכילתא

## דברי ישמעאל

הוצאה חדשה על פי כתיב ד' ודפוסים ישנים עם שיעור נסחאות  
ונראה מקומות וחקירות בספר אנליט

פאח

יעקב בצלאל הכהן לוטערבאך  
פרופסור בבית מדרש הרבנים בפנסילבאני

ספר שני



פילאדלפא

החברה היהודית לפרסום ספרים ושם באנגליה

תרצ"ג

*Remember the Day of the Sabbath to Keep It Holy.* "Remember" and "observe" (Deut. 5.12) were both spoken at one utterance. "Everyone that profaneth it shall surely be put to death" (Ex. 31.14) and: "And on the Sabbath day two he-lambs" (Num. 28.9) were both spoken at one utterance. "Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife" (Lev. 18.16) and: "Her husband's brother shall go in unto her" (Deut. 25.5) were both spoken at one utterance. "Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff" (Deut. 22.11) and: "Thou shalt make thee twisted cords" (ibid., v. 12) were both spoken at one utterance.<sup>4</sup> This is a manner of speech impossible for creatures of flesh and blood. For it is said: "God has spoken one utterance which we have heard as two,"<sup>5</sup> etc. (Ps. 62.12). And it also says: "Is not My word like as fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23.29). *Remember and observe.* Remember it before it comes and observe it after it has gone.—Hence they said: We should always increase what is holy by adding to it some of the non-holy.—Thus it can be compared to a wolf moving backward and forward.<sup>6</sup> Eleazar b. Hananiah b. Hezekiah b. Garon says: "Remem-

<sup>4</sup> Each pair in the above group consists of two laws which contradict one another. Hence, it is explained that they were both given in the same utterance, the one being an exception to the general law contained in the other.

<sup>5</sup> This rendering of the word שנים is required by the *Mekilla*.

<sup>6</sup> See Commentaries.

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו זכור ושמור שניהם בדבור אחד נאמרו מחלילה מות יומת ובוים השבת שני כבשים ונ' שניהם בדבור אחד נאמרו ערות אשת אחיך ויבמה יבא עליה שניהם בדבור אחד נאמרו לא תלבש שעמנו ונדילים תעשה לך שניהם בדבור אחד נאמרו מה שאי איפשר לבשר ודם לומר כן שנאמר אחת דבר אלהים שתיים זו שמענו ונ' ואומר הלא כה דברי כאש נאם יי וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע זכור ושמור זכור מלפניו ושמור מלאחריו מכאן אמרו מוסיפין מחול על הקדש משל לואב שהוא מורד מלפניו ומלאחריו. אלעזר בן חנניה בן חזקיה בן גרון אומר זכור את

65-66 ספרי דברים רלג. י. שבעות ב' י. (340). 65-66 מ"ח ונ' / 66 ספרי ל"א. י"ד. 66-67 במדבר כ"ח. מ"ב. 66 ויקרא י"ח. מ"ז. / דברים כ"ה. ה'. 66-67 מ"ב. י"א-י"ב. 67-68 חולין מ"ב. י"ב. / לעיל ד'. 68-69 ירמיה כ"ג. כ"ט. 64-65 יזמא מ"א. כ"י.

65 זכור את יום השבת לקדשו ב' ד'. > 65 כה דברי כאש / נאם יי מ'. כה דברים א'. כה דברי נאם יי כאש. 65 וכפטיש / יפוצץ סלען המספתי: א. מ. נ"י. 65 לואב ב' ד'. לואב ב' ד'. לארי / מורדו ב'. מורד מ"ח. מורה ש. שם עזרד ה'. מורה. 66 חזקיהו / ד'. כן חנניה.



*But the Seventh Day Is a Sabbath unto the Lord Thy God.* Why is this said? Because it says: "Whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death" (Ex. 31.15). We have thus heard the penalty. But we have not heard the warning. Therefore it says here: "But the seventh day is a sabbath unto the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any manner of work." I thus know only the penalty for and the warning against work on Sabbath during the daytime. How do I know that there is also a penalty for and a warning against work during the night time of the Sabbath? It says: "Everyone that profaneth it shall surely be put to death" (Ex. 31.14). From this however we only learn about the penalty. But we have not heard any warning. Scripture says: "But the seventh day is a sabbath unto the Lord thy God." Now, there would be no purpose in saying "a sabbath" except to include the nighttime in the warning. —These are the words of R. Aḥai the son of Josiah.

*Thou nor Thy Son nor Thy Daughter.* That is, the minors. Perhaps it is not so but means the grown ups? You must reason: Have they not already been forewarned themselves? Hence what must be the meaning of: "Thou nor thy son nor thy daughter"? The minors.

\* Instead of "a Sabbath day."

7 יום השביעי שבת ליי אלהיך למה 80  
 נאמר לפי שהוא אומר כל העושה מלאכה ביום  
 השבת מות יומת עונש שמענו אזהרה לא שמענו  
 ת"ל יום השביעי שבת ליי אלהיך לא תעשה כל  
 מלאכה אין לי אלא עתא ואזהרה על מלאכת היום 85  
 עונש ואזהרה על מלאכה הלילה מנין ת"ל מחלילה  
 מות יומת עונש שמענו אזהרה לא שמענו ת"ל ויום  
 השביעי שבת ליי אלהיך שאין ת"ל שבת אלא  
 להביא את הלילה בכלל אזהרה דברי רבי אחאי  
 בר יאשיהו.

90 אתה ובנך ובתך אלו הקטנים או אינו אלא  
 הגדולים אמרת והלא כבר מזהרים הם הא מה  
 ת"ל אחת ובנך ובתך אלו הקטנים.

80-86 לקטן שבתא א'. 81-82 שמות לא, מ'. 85-86 שמות  
 לא, י"ד. 90-99 מ"ח 22-23.

80-86 לא שמענו ד'. מנין. 85 שבת ליי אלהיך ד'. >  
 88-89 דברי ר' אחאי בר יאשיהו=מ. (כי תשא שבא) 3. מ. ד'.  
 מ"ח. ט. ה. ר' אחאי בר יאשיהו אומר. 90 הקטנים מ. ~ אה  
 אומר אלו הקטנים / אינו אלא ד'. אל.

**TEXT RELATING TO THE  
SHABBAT MITZVOT OF  
PREPARATION FOR REST**

### *Rest*

For this is the ultimate significance of the Sabbath: it was instituted primarily to commemorate the work of the beginning and thus forms the solid and lasting basis of the spiritual year. On the other hand, its institution was the first sign of revelation within the act of creation itself; though veiled, the revealed name of God appears in the Scriptures for the first time in the words instituting the Sabbath. So, through being at once the sign of creation and the first revelation, it is also, and even mainly, the anticipation of redemption. For what is redemption if not the concord between revelation and creation? And what is the first ineluctable premise for such concord, save man's rest after he has done the work of this earth! Six days he has worked and attended to all his affairs; now, on the seventh, he rests. Six days he has uttered the many useful and useless things the workday demanded of him, but on the seventh he obeys the command of the prophet: he lets his tongue rest from the talk of everyday, and learns to be silent, to *listen*. And this sanctifying of the day of rest by *listening* to God's voice in silence must be shared by all members of his house. It must not be fretted by the noise of giving orders. The man-servant and the maid-servant must also rest; and it is even said that just for the sake of their rest the day of rest was instituted, for when rest has penetrated to them, then all the house is, indeed, freed from the noise and chatter of the weekday, and redeemed to rest.

### *Perfection*

The rest is intended to signify redemption and not a period of collecting oneself for more work. Work is an ever new beginning. The first day of work is the first day of the week, but the day of rest is the seventh. The feast of creation is the feast of perfection. In celebrating it we go, in the midst of creation, beyond creation and revelation. The great Sabbath prayer of benedictions involves none of those requests that are concerned with the needs of the individual. There are not merely none of the weekday requests for creature comforts, such as a good year, a good harvest, health, intelligence, and good management, but also none of the requests of every child of God for forgiveness of sins, and ultimate redemption. Besides the requests for peace and the coming of the Kingdom—individual as well as community requests—there is only praise and thanks. For on the Sabbath the congregation feels as if it were already redeemed—to the degree such a feeling is at all possible in anticipation. The Sabbath is the feast of creation, but of a creation wrought for the sake of redemption. This feast instituted at the close of creation is creation's meaning and goal. That is why we do not celebrate the festival of the primordial work of creation on the first day of creation, but on its last, on the seventh day.

busy during the week and have no time to study the Torah regularly. But on Sabbaths and festivals, being free from work, they can study the Torah properly" (*Pe'ikha Rabbari, Aseret ha-Dibrot*). Hence all those who do not study the Torah the entire week are all the more obligated to study the Torah on the holy Sabbath, each according to his conception and capacity.

Whatever an Israelite is himself forbidden to do he must not relegate to a non-Jew. But in the wintertime a non-Jew is permitted to light the stove for the purpose of heating the house. The Sabbath food may be warmed, provided the non-Jew places it upon the stove before lighting the fire...

It is written: "That thine ox and thine ass may have rest" (Ex. 23.12). Thus has the Torah admonished us that the cattle in the jurisdiction of an Israelite must also rest. And not only the cattle, but all the animals as well...

The words "from pursuing thy business" (Isa. 58.13) our rabbis, of blessed memory, have expounded to mean "thy business is forbidden thee even if thou doest no work." Thus one is forbidden to examine his property in order to see what must be done on the morrow. It is also forbidden to walk through the town for the purpose of finding a horse, a ship or a wagon in order to hire them after the Sabbath...

Inasmuch as it is written "thy business," our rabbis, of blessed memory, have inferred that only the business of man is forbidden, but not matters of Heaven... Hence, one may attend to matters of public interest on the Sabbath. For instance, one may visit a governor or an assembly of officers to plead for the people; for the needs of the public

are tantamount to Heavenly matters. Also, it is permissible to inquire of a teacher whether he is willing to teach a child Scripture or even a trade. For teaching a trade is a religious duty, because the lack of a trade wherewith to earn a livelihood often leads to theft (Shab. 150a)....

The precept to observe the Sabbath may be disregarded when there is danger to human life. And that is the case with all the precepts of the Torah. Hence it is mandatory to desecrate the Sabbath for the sake of one who is dangerously ill... If the sick person will not allow such desecration, he should be compelled to submit. For it is very injurious to be over-pious and refuse to be cured because the cure necessitates the violation of a prohibition. Concerning such a person it is said: "And surely your blood of your lives will I require" (Gen. 9.5). Indeed, violating the Sabbath under such circumstances is not only permissible but praiseworthy. Even if a non-Jew is present, the work should be done by an Israelite. And he who disregards the Sabbath for the sake of one dangerously ill, even if his exertions prove fruitless, has earned a reward. Thus if the physician orders a fig, and nine men run and each plucks a fig, they have all earned a reward from the Lord, blessed be His name, though the patient recovers from the very first one. Even when it is doubtful that life is at stake, it is mandatory to disregard the Sabbath and perform all necessary work. There is nothing that supersedes the importance of human life, for the Torah was given only for life, as it is said, "The shall live by them" (Lev. 18.5). This is explained to mean that man is to live by the laws and not die on account of them. The only exceptions to this rule are the laws prohibiting idolatry, adultery, and murder. Not to violate these, man is asked to give his life.

**TEXT RELATING TO THE  
SHABBAT MITZVOT OF  
HADLAKAT HANEROT**

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It is obligatory upon everyone to put work aside and to light the Sabbath candles at least half an hour before the appearance of the stars . . . .

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It is mandatory to honor the Sabbath by the lighting of many candles. Some are accustomed to light ten, others seven. One should light no less than two . . . . It is also desirable that women set aside money for charity before lighting the candles . . . .

The obligation to light candles on the Sabbath devolves upon both men and women, but it is more obligatory for women, since they are at home and attend to household matters . . . . But the men, too, should share the *Mizvah* by setting the candles and candlesticks on the table . . . .

---

The candles should be lighted in the dining room, to show that they are lit in honor of the Sabbath, and should not be moved except in case of necessity. For instance, when the woman is sick, she may light the candles near her bed. Afterwards they may be placed in the dining room . . . .

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**TEXT RELATING TO THE  
SHABBAT MITZVOT OF BLESSING  
OVER WINE**

It is a positive biblical law to sanctify the Sabbath in words, for it is said: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20.8). This implies an obligation to remember it at its coming in by *Kiddush* and at its going out by *Hab-dalah*. Hence the Sages instituted the ceremony of sanctification over the cup of wine, both at the coming in and going out of the Sabbath.

It is mandatory to recite the *Kiddush* over old wine; it is also mandatory to select good wine, and if possible red wine. Where suitable grape wine cannot be obtained, *Kiddush* may be recited over raisin wine . . . .

*Kiddush* is also obligatory upon women. They must listen attentively when the *Kiddush* is recited, and respond "Amen." . . . .

The bread must be covered while the *Kiddush* is being recited. When the *Kiddush* is recited over bread, the *Hallah* should be covered throughout the recitation, since it symbolizes the manna which was covered with dew.

The Sabbath morning *Kiddush*, too, should be recited over wine, though brandy is also acceptable. This *Kiddush* consists of the benediction *Bore Peri ha-Gafen*,<sup>4</sup> and, like the Friday evening *Kiddush*, is also obligatory upon women . . . .

Both the evening and morning *Kiddush* should be recited where the meal is eaten, for it is written: "Thou shalt call the sabbath a delight" (Isa. 58.13). And the rabbis, of blessed memory, said that wherever you recite the *Kiddush* there you shall have the pleasure of eating. Therefore, if one recites the *Kiddush* in one house and eats in another, he has not fulfilled his obligation concerning *Kiddush*. Further, the meal should immediately follow the *Kiddush*. If not, the obligation concerning *Kiddush* has not been fulfilled . . . .

**TEXT RELATING TO THE  
SHABBAT MITZVOT OF  
CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP**

In recent times Oneg Shabbat has come to refer to the social hour that follows Shabbat evening services. The idea of using the term Oneg Shabbat as the title for a specific component of Shabbat originated with the Hebrew poet Chaim Nachman Bialik (1873-1934). Bialik used to convene a Shabbat afternoon gathering that consisted of discussion, singing, refreshments, and Havdalah. He called his gathering an "Oneg Shabbat." In due course, the new term came to be applied as it is now.

**When did the custom of a public Torah reading arise?**

The sources available to historians do not permit exact dating for the origin of this practice. However, just as the synagogue began to emerge during the period of the Second Temple, scholars believe that the institution of a public Torah reading also developed during this era.

By the end of the second century C.E., the public reading of the Torah appears to have been well established. Thus the Mishnah mentions Monday, Thursday, and Shabbat as regular times for reading the Torah. The Mishnah also specifies portions of the Torah that are to be read for the Jewish holidays.<sup>18</sup> The first reference to the kind of fixed cycle of consecutive Torah readings that is followed today occurs in a talmudic text.<sup>19</sup>

**A final thought on the significance of the weekly Shabbat Torah readings.**

Franz Rosenzweig was a leading theologian and teacher among German Jews during the 1920's. In his major book on Judaism, *The Star of Redemption*, he presented this understanding of the relationship between Shabbat and the cycle for the reading of the Torah.

*"In the circle of weekly portions which, in the course of one year, cover all of the Torah, the spiritual year is paced out, and the paces of this course are the Sabbaths. By and large, every Sabbath is just like any other, but the difference in the portions from the Scriptures distinguishes each from each, and this difference shows that they are not final in themselves but only parts of a higher order of the year. For only in the year do the differentiating elements of the individual parts again fuse into a whole.... It is only in the sequence of the Sabbaths that the year rounds to a garland."*

Shapiro, Mark Dov. *Gates of Shabbat: A Guide for Observing Shabbat*. Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 1991.

Activity 1  
congregational  
worship

wine as the divine gifts of the earth—the divine nature of what is earthly is attested in the glow of the Sabbath lights and the entire day thus consecrated as a festival commemorating creation. For bread and wine are the most perfect works of man, works that cannot be surpassed. They cannot, however, be compared to his other works in which his inventive mind artfully combines the gifts of nature, and in the act of combining goads itself on to greater and greater artfulness. Bread and wine are nothing but the ennobled gifts of earth; one is the basis of all the strength of life, the other of all its joy. Both were perfected in the youth of the world and of the people thereon, and neither can ever grow old. Every mouthful of bread and every sip of wine tastes just as wonderful as the first we ever savored, and certainly no less wonderful than in time immemorial they tasted to those who for the first time harvested the grain for bread and gathered the fruits of the vine.

#### *Sabbath Morning*

While the eve of the Sabbath is primarily a festival in honor of creation, the morning celebrates Revelation. Here the poetic insert in the great prayer of benedictions proclaims the joy of Moses at God's gift of the Sabbath. And the joy of the great receiver of revelation, to whom God "spoke face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend,"<sup>4</sup> and to whom he gave greater recognition than to any later prophet of Israel, is followed, in the order of the day, with the reading of the weekly portion to the congregation by its representatives. On the eve of the Sabbath, expression is given to the knowledge that the earth is a creation; in the morning, we find utterance of the people's awareness of being elect through the gift of the Torah which signifies that eternal life

<sup>4</sup> Exod. 33:11.

has been planted in their midst. The man called forth to the Torah from the congregation approaches the book of revelation in the knowledge of being elect. When he leaves the book and again merges with the congregation, he does so in the knowledge of eternal life. But within the Sabbath, too, this knowledge of eternal life carries him over the threshold separating both revelation and creation from redemption. The Afternoon Prayer becomes the prayer of Redemption.

#### *Sabbath Afternoon*

In the insert in this prayer, Israel is more than the chosen people, it is the "one and only" people, the people of the One and Only God. Here all the fervor which the praying Jew breathes into the holy word "One," the fervor which compels the coming of the Kingdom, is at its greatest intensity. Twice daily, in the morning and in the evening profession,<sup>5</sup> after the community of Israel has been created through the injunction to "hear," and the immediate presence of God has been acknowledged by the invocation of God as "our God," God's "unity" is proclaimed as his eternal name beyond all name, beyond all presence. And we know that this proclamation is more than a fleeting word; we know that within it the eternal union of God with his people and of his people with mankind occurs through every individual "taking upon himself the yoke of the kingdom of God."<sup>6</sup> All this vibrates in the Afternoon Prayer of the Sabbath, in the hymn on the one people of the One and Only God. And the songs of the "third meal," at which old men and children gather around the long table in the light of the waning day, reel with the transport of certainty that the Messiah will come and will come soon.

<sup>5</sup> "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one."

<sup>6</sup> This is done, according to the Talmud (Mishnah Berakhot II. 2), by reciting this profession.

**TEXT RELATING TO THE  
SHABBAT MITZVOT OF  
PREPARATION FOR STUDY**

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Time should be set aside during the Sabbath for the study of the Torah. For relating to the Sabbath it is written: "And Moses assembled all the congregation of the children of Israel" (Ex. 35.1). And our rabbis, of blessed memory, said: "Why does it say 'And he assembled' in this particular portion and not in all the rest of the Torah? God said to Moses: 'Go down and make assemblies on the Sabbath, so that the generations to come may learn to make assemblies to study the Torah in public'" (*Yalkut Shime'oni, Vayakhel*). And again our rabbis, of blessed memory, said: "Sabbaths and festivals were given to Israel solely to devote themselves to the study of the Torah, since there are many who are too

busy during the week and have no time to study the Torah regularly. But on Sabbaths and festivals, being free from work, they can study the Torah properly" (*Pesikta Rab-bati, 'Aseret ha-Dibrot*). Hence all those who do not study the Torah the entire week are all the more obligated to study the Torah on the holy Sabbath, each according to his conception and capacity.

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Millgram, Abraham E. *Sabbath: The Day of Delight*,  
Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia.  
1944.

**TEXT RELATING TO THE  
SHABBAT MITZVOT OF  
HAVDALAH**

Just as it is mandatory to sanctify the coming of the Sabbath over a cup of wine, the *Kidush*, so is it mandatory to sanctify its going out over a cup of wine, the *Habdalah*. Benedictions should also be pronounced over spices and over the light. Women are in duty bound to hear the *Habdalah* . . . . When wine cannot be procured, the *Habdalah* may be pronounced over any other beverage except water.

The conclusion of the Sabbath should be celebrated with appropriate hymns and bright lights so that the Sabbath may depart as befits a queen. The name of Elijah the Prophet should be invoked, and prayers recited for his coming with the glad tidings of redemption . . . .

#### THE THOUGHT

##### *The Close of the Sabbath*

But this entire course of the day of God is included in the circuit of the individual Sabbath like a preview that can only be realized to the full in other festivals yet to come. The realization does not occur in the Sabbath itself. The Sabbath is and remains a festival of rest, of reflection. It is the static foundation of the year which—aside from the sequence of weekly portions—is informed with motion only by the cycle of other festivals. As ornaments carved on a frame are the hints of the contents of revelation that make the actual pictures to be set within that frame, each at its own given time. The Sabbath itself is not merely a festival, but also just another day in the week, and very much so. It does not stand out in the year like the actual festivals, even though the structure of the year is based upon it; it stands out in the week. And so it also merges with the week again. When the congregation enters the House of God it acclaim the Sabbath with joy, as the bridegroom does the bride, but later the Sabbath vanishes into quotidian life like a dream. The smallest circuit set for man, the workday week, begins again. A child holds the light that an older man lit while, with closed eyes, he drinks a cup of wine, waking from the dream of perfection spun by the festival of the seventh day. A way must be found from the sanctuary back into the workaday world. The year, all of life, is built up on the shift from the holy to the profane, from the seventh to the first day, from perfection to outset, from old age to early youth. The Sabbath is the dream of perfection, but it is only a dream. Only in its being both does it become the cornerstone of life; only as the festival of perfection does it become the constant renewal of creation.

Glatzer, Nahum N., trans. *Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, Schocken Books, New York, 1970.



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## Havdalah: The Ritual



Havdalah is Hebrew for separation. In Jewish liturgy it refers to separating the sacred from the ordinary, the sacred being the Sabbath day and the ordinary being the other days of the week. It is one of the earliest blessings in Jewish tradition.

The Havdalah ceremony formally ends the Sabbath day when much secular activity is prohibited and ushers in the regular week when we are once again engaged in more worldly concerns.

For an in depth study on the meaning of the ceremony and its blessings, see [Learning About Havdalah](#) in the [Text Study](#) section.

### The Biblical verses that begin the Havdalah Service

The service begins with a collection of Biblical verses that praise the heavens for being the source of many salvations. It also offers the hope that just as in the time of Queen Esther, the Book of Esther says, "The Jews were of light, joy, gladness, and preciousness" so, too, will it be with us. We then raise a cup of wine of salvation declaring, "I will lift this cup of salvations" which symbolizes the many salvations of the Jewish people, and I will call out to the Holy One.

*Hinay, El yishu'ati evtach velo efchad, ki azi vezimrat Yah, Adonai, va'yehi li lishu'a.*

Behold, God is my savior, I will trust Him and not be afraid, for my strong faith and song of praise for God will be my salvation.

Isalah 12:2

*U'she'avtem ma'yim besason, mima'a'yenay ha'yeshu'a.*

You will draw water joyously from the wellsprings of salvation.

Isalah 12:3

*La'Adonai ha'yeshu'a, al amcha virchatecha, Selah.*

Salvation is the God's; may Your blessing

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May 9, 2004  
[Lag B'Omer](#)



rest upon Your people, Selah.  
Psalms 3:9

*Adonai Tzeva'ot imanu, misgav lanu,  
Elohay Ya'akov, Selah.*  
God of the heavenly armies is with us;  
the Lord of Ya'akov is a fortress  
protecting us, Selah.  
Psalms 46:12

*Adonai Tzeva'ot, ashray adam botay'ach  
bach*  
God of the heavenly armies, happy is the  
individual who trusts You.  
Psalms 84:13

*Adonai hoshi'ah, hamelech ya'anaynu  
ve'yom kor'aynu.*  
God, redeem us! The King will answer us  
on the day we call Him.  
Psalms 20:10

*La'yehudim ha'yetah orah vesimcha  
vesason vikar,*  
The Jews had light, happiness, joy and  
honor;  
Esther 8:16

*kayn te'hi'yeh lanu.*  
may we have the same.

*Kos yeshu'ot esa u'veshaym Adonai Ekra.*

I will raise the cup of salvation and call  
out in the name of the God:  
Psalms 116:13

### **The blessing over the wine**

Wine was always considered special and it is a way that we signal that this ceremony has great significance. Just as we bring in the Sabbath with wine when we say "Kiddush" so, too, we leave the Sabbath with wine as well. The verse in Proverbs says, "Wine will gladden the hearts of humanity."

Lift the cup of wine, say this blessing, but don't drink from the cup. Put the cup down.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech  
ha'olam, boray pri hagafen.*

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of  
the universe, Creator of the fruit of the  
vine.

### **The Blessing over spices**

There is a Talmudic tradition that every Jew is given an extra soul on the Sabbath, and when the Sabbath is finished that extra soul is removed. The spices, according to some opinions, are savored to revive us from the loss of the extra soul.

Lift the spices, say this blessing and sniff the spices.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech  
ha'olam, boray minay vesamim.*

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of  
the universe, Creator of the different  
spices.

### **The blessing over the torch**

The Talmud stipulates that the Havdalah candle must have at least more than one wick and must be a torch. A bright fire is required which symbolizes the distinction between the upper and lower worlds. The illumination of the upper world is a world of light. Shabbat, which is a gateway to the spiritual world, is also a world of light. The days of the week are considered to be a part of the material world and is fueled by fire, hence the bright fire which brings us back to the mundane days of the week. It is customary to look at the back of one's hand when reciting the blessing over fire to symbolize that now, we are dealing with the material world, the superficial world and not the inside of the hand which symbolizes the inside world that is hidden during the days of the week and only witnessed on the Sabbath.

Look at the candle, say the blessing, raise your hand to the light of the Havdalah candle, then curl your fingers over your palm and look at the light as it is reflected off your fingernails and then at the shadow cast by your fingers across your palm.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech  
ha'olam, boray me'oray ha'aysh.*

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of  
the universe, Creator of the fire's lights.

### **The Havdalah blessing**

This blessing not only distinguishes between the Sabbath and the rest of the week, but uses this distinction to symbolize other important distinctions: The sacred and profane, and light and darkness. We live in a world of opposites. During this ceremony we are acutely aware of the tensions between those worlds and we acknowledge the pain of transition and the opportunity that both worlds offer.

Pick up the cup of wine and recite the following blessings.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech  
ha'olam, hamavdil*

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of  
the universe, who separates  
*bayn kodesh lechol*  
between the holy and the profane;  
*bayn or lechoshech*  
between the light and dark;  
*bayn Yisra'el la'amim*  
between Israel and the other nations;  
*bayn yom ha'shevi'i leshayshet yemay  
hama'aseh.*  
between the seventh day and the six  
days of the week.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, hamavdil bayn  
kodesh lechol.*  
Blessed are You, God, who separates  
between the holy and the profane.

Now drink the cup of wine, leaving enough to use to  
extinguish the flame.

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## **SHABBAT ACTIVITY #2**

**One of the goals of this curriculum is to expose students to multiple interpretations of our rituals. Enclosed are the beginning of your resource library – keep collecting!**

## CHAPTER

## 17

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*Some Prayers for  
Sabbaths and Festivals*


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## KIDDUSH: THE PRAYER OF SANCTIFICATION

**T**HE FOURTH COMMANDMENT bids us to remember the Sabbath day, *lekadsho*, "to keep it holy" (Exod. 20:8). This is done by abstaining from all work. But *lekadsho* can also mean "to sanctify it." Jewish law therefore requires us to sanctify the Sabbath—at its beginning and at its conclusion—with an oral declaration. The prayer that does so at the start of the Sabbath is Kiddush; the prayer that does so at the conclusion of the Sabbath is Havdalah.

When Kiddush and Havdalah were first instituted by Ezra and the Men of the Great Assembly, it was not as independent rituals but as part of the Amidah prayer. These have been retained. In the Friday night Amidah, the middle blessing affirms the sanctity of the day. This is Kiddush. A passage added to the first of the middle blessings said in the weekday Amidah as the Sabbath ends, proclaims the separation of the Sabbath from the other days. This passage is Havdalah.

At a later time, when the impoverished Jewish community became more affluent and wine became plentiful, the sages ruled that Kiddush and Havdalah be said also over a cup of wine. As the symbol

of joy and celebration, wine added significance to an occasion. Therefore it was reserved for special occasions and for honored guests. And what could be more special than the Sabbath and the festivals?

I might also point out that pouring wine on the altar was part of the sacrificial ritual in the Temple. It was at this point in the ceremony that the Levites sang their songs of praise to God. The Temple service may have been influential in the introduction of wine for Kiddush and Havdalah. This is hinted at in the Talmud: Rav links the kind of wine that may be used for Kiddush with the kind suitable for the altar. "Kiddush," he said, "may not be said except over wine that is worthy of being poured on the altar" (Bava Batra 97a).

After much rabbinic debate as to whether Kiddush over wine should be said in the synagogue or at home, the halakhic verdict came down in favor of the home. Actually, the decision was that it be said only *when and where one sits down to eat the Sabbath dinner*. A verse in Isaiah is interpreted as support for this ruling: "And you shall call the Sabbath a delight" (58:13). This implies that "where you call the Sabbath [i.e., recite Kiddush], there shall be your delight [i.e., eat and drink]" (Pesahim 101a, Tos s.v. *af yedei*).

The custom in Babylonia was also to say Kiddush over wine in the synagogue at the end of the Friday night service. This was due to the frequent presence in the synagogue of wayfarers who would remain to eat and sleep. Synagogues in ancient Babylonia had annexes serving as community hostels that provided food and lodging to travelers. It was for the benefit of these people that Kiddush was said (Pesahim 101a, Tos. s.v. *d'akhu*). And though it has remained customary throughout the diaspora for Kiddush to be said in the synagogue, one's personal obligation to recite Kiddush or to hear it recited is only fulfilled at the dinner table. It should be noted that the custom of reciting Kiddush at the end of the Friday night synagogue service never arose in Eretz Yisrael, and so to this day Kiddush is not said in Israeli synagogues on Friday night (OH 269:1).

At dinner, the recitation of Kiddush not only serves to sanctify the day, but also exalts the religious significance and spiritual import of the meal itself. It was the Talmudic sage, Rava, who noted that on Sabbath day, Jews "eat and drink, but begin with the words of Torah and praise [of God]" (Megillah 12b). Kiddush provides such a beginning.

Rabbi Hayim David Halevy sees a Jewish religious ideal expressed in the link between Kiddush and the meal, namely, the fusion of the spiritual and material, the sacred and the secular. The intense spirituality and deep faith of the sages did not make them disown the material comforts of life or affect their appreciation for the good things in life. "Three things expand a man's spirit: a pleasing dwelling, a pleasing wife, pleasing clothing" (Berakhot 57b). The spiritual and material worlds are compatible, even good one for the other. Perfection in this world, to whatever degree this is possible, cannot be attained only through one or the other. The material must be infused with the spiritual; the sacred must be joined to the secular. As the natural wholeness of man consists of both the physical and the spiritual, so does the wholeness of the Sabbath (see Mekor Hayim HaShalem III: 115, pp. 76-77).

This thought underlies the rule that just as one may not sit down to eat on Friday night without first reciting Kiddush, one may not recite Kiddush without immediately afterward sitting down to eat. A person who, for whatever reason, cannot yet eat, may not therefore say Kiddush. Kiddush will have to be delayed until that person is ready to eat (OH 273:3). Although Friday evening is the principal time for Kiddush, it may under extenuating circumstances be said throughout the Sabbath day. In that case, one omits the introductory passage of *Vayekhulu*, for it relates only to the very end of the sixth day.

The general rule which exempts women from observing those mitzvot that depend upon a set time does not apply to Kiddush. Since the Sabbath rule is that everyone who is duty-bound to observe the prohibitions of the Sabbath must also say Kiddush, women are under equal obligation to say it. This being the case, it is halakhically permissible for a woman to recite Kiddush not only on her own behalf, or on behalf of other women when there is no male adult to do so, but also on behalf of males who are present (Mekor Hayim HaShalem III, 114:11; Yesodei Yesurun III, p. 209).

Opinions differ as to whether Kiddush should be said while standing at the dinner table or while seated. The ancient sources are ambiguous on this point. Rabbi Moses Isserles reflects this non-resolution when he writes that "one can stand for Kiddush, but it is better to sit" (OH 271:10, Rema). This clearly implies that both

ways are correct. Both practices are, in fact, widespread among Ashkenazic Jews. One should follow family tradition or the tradition of one's teachers in this matter. Sephardic tradition calls for standing during Kiddush. This was also the practice followed by Rabbi Isaac Luria and the kabbalistic school, whose ways are emulated by many Hasidic groups. The kabbalistic explanation for standing for these Sabbath blessings is that the Sabbath is compared to a bride, and the bridal blessings are said while standing.

On the other hand, some Ashkenazic scholars ruled that one should sit while saying Kiddush. If the person saying Kiddush is to discharge the ritual obligation of the others in the room, the people present must establish themselves as a group (*keviut*), best symbolized by sitting down together. Those whose custom is to stand for Kiddush consider the very act of gathering around the table sufficient in establishing this condition of *keviut*.

While Kiddush is said, it is customary that the two whole hallot on the Sabbath table remain covered. \* Covering the hallah enables us to reverse the order of the blessings and to first say Kiddush over wine before the blessing for bread, since that serves as the equivalent of removing the bread from the table. This is necessary because a blessing for bread halakhically takes precedence over a blessing for wine, since wheat is mentioned ahead of the vine in the Torah (Deut. 8:8). \*\*

If wine suitable for Kiddush is not available or if one may not drink wine, it is permissible to say Kiddush over the two whole loaves of hallah. The blessing for bread is then substituted within the Kiddush for that of wine; all else remain the same. When Kiddush is said over hallah, it is customary to place one's hands on the hallah while

\* The Sabbath table is traditionally set with two whole unsliced Sabbath loaves known as *hallah* (pl. *hallot*). The two hallot, called *lehem mitnahsh*, represent the double portion of manna that the Israelites gathered on the sixth day (Exodus 16:22). Like the two candles, the two hallot are also said to symbolize the two forms of the Fourth Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day . . ." (Exodus 20:8) and "Observe the Sabbath day . . ." (Deut. 5:12).

\*\* Several non-halakhic, symbolic reasons for covering the hallot during Kiddush are suggested by the Tosephtists. If bread does not appear until after the Sabbath has been sanctified in the Kiddush, this clearly demonstrates that the meal is not an ordinary one but in honor of the Sabbath. Another explanation is based on the hallah's symbolic representation of the manna. The cover over the hallah and the cloth beneath it represent the two layers of dew between which the manna is said to have fallen (Yoma 75b), protecting it from the sand below and the heat of the sun above. (Pesachim 100b, Tos. s.v. *she'eni*.)

Home Prayers for Sabbaths and Festivals

saying it. Furthermore, according to this reasoning, the hallot need not then be covered.

Kiddush consists of three parts:

1. an introductory passage from Genesis 2:1-3: Vayekhulu
2. the blessing for wine
3. the blessing of sanctification.

Vayekhulu

From about the third century C.E., it has been customary to say the Biblical passage from Genesis in the Friday night service. It was later also introduced in the home as a preface to Kiddush.

יום הששי: ויבולו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם:  
 ויבולו אלהים פנים השמימי מלאכתו אשר עשה,  
 וישיבת פנים השמימי מקל מלאכתו אשר עשה:  
 ויבנהו אלהים את-יום השביעי ויקדש אותו,  
 כי בו שבת מקל-מלאכתו, אשר פרא אלהים  
 לעשות:

The sixth day. The heavens and the earth were completed and all their host. On the seventh day God finished the work that He had made; On the seventh day He rested from all the work that He had made. Then God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because on it God ceased from all the work that He created to function thenceforth.

This Biblical passage expresses the main reason for the Sabbath, that is, as a memorial to Creation. It is first said in the Amidah at the Maan service. It was added to the home Kiddush to enable members of the household, who were not in attendance at the Friday evening service at the synagogue, to say the passage or to hear it said (Shabbat 119b).

The words *yom hashishi* ("the sixth day"), are actually the last two words of the Biblical sentence that immediately precedes Vayek-

us to inherit His holy Sabbath in love and favor as a memorial to the work of creation. This day is the first of the sacred festivals, a memorial to the exodus from Egypt. For Thou hast chosen us and sanctified us above all nations, and Thy holy Sabbath did Thou bequeath to us as an inheritance in love and favor. Blessed art Thou, Lord, who sanctifies the Sabbath.

The Sabbath owes its primary distinction and sanctity to its status as a memorial to God's creation of the universe. "Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exod. 20:11). By desisting from work on the seventh day, we show our homage to the Lord and bear witness that the world is not ours, but His. By sanctifying the day, we recognize God as the Creator and Lord of the universe.

Although the sanctity of the Sabbath day is implicit in the Creation and thus predates the Jewish faith, the Sabbath is also meant to remind Israel of its exodus from Egypt. "Remember that you were once a slave in the land of Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out from there . . . hence [He] commanded you to observe the Sabbath day" (Deut. 5:15).

By recalling the slavery endured by our ancestors and the freedom that God won for us at the very beginning of our history as a nation, we should be better able to appreciate the freedom of mind and body that the Sabbath weekly affords to those who faithfully keep it. If keeping the Sabbath attests to our servitude to God, it simultaneously establishes our freedom from the servitude that is imposed on us by society and by the responsibilities we each bear. On the Sabbath, we heed no human taskmaster. For twenty-four hours, nothing (unless it be a matter of life or death) is permitted to interfere with rest, with tranquility of mind, with freedom from the pressures of daily affairs and the tensions of work. The Sabbath is intended to prevent us from slipping back into a slave mentality and to free us from worldly concerns.

The exodus is mentioned in the Kiddush to emphasize our faith in Divine Care, namely, that God acts in history. That He does so is inseparable from Jewish belief that He exists and is the Creator.

The Sabbath is called *tehilah* *Imikra-ei kodesh* ("the first of the sacred festivals"). It is listed first in Leviticus, Chapter 23 where all the sacred days on the Jewish calendar are summarized.

hulu, "And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." The words are customarily added as a preface to the passage. Scholars note the symbolism inherent in this custom. The first letters of these two Hebrew words, Y (*yod*) and H (*heh*), plus the first letters of the first two Hebrew words of Vayekhulu, V (*vov*) and H (*heh*), together constitute the four letters that spell out the Tetragrammaton.

#### The Blessing for Wine

The blessing for the wine is introduced with the words *savri maranan verabotai*, meaning either: "With the permission of those present" or "Be attentive, those of you present." It is similar to the formula used by the one who leads the Grace after Meals: *Birshut maranan verabotai*. (See p. 299.) The word *birshut* is used with bread, *savri* is used with wine. This formula is used to call the attention of those present to the fact that a blessing is about to be said and to obtain their silent consent in having Kiddush recited on their behalf. Each person need only listen to the blessing, and to answer "Amen" with the intent to fulfill his or her individual obligation to recite Kiddush.

#### The Blessing of Sanctification for the Sabbath

בְּרַחֵם אֱתָהּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּךְ הַעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
 קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְרָצָה בָּנוּ וְשֵׁבַת קִדְּשׁוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה  
 וּבְרַצוֹן הַנְּחִילֵנוּ לְוַכְרֵךְ לְמַצְאֵה בְּרֵאשִׁית, כִּי הוּא  
 יוֹם הַתְּהִלָּה לְמַקְרָאֵי קִדְּשׁ, וְכָר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם,  
 כִּי בָנוּ בְּתֵרֶת וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, וְשֵׁבַת  
 קִדְּשָׁךְ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן הַנְּחִילֵנוּ, בְּרַחֵם אֱתָהּ  
 יְהוָה, מְקַדְּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who sanctified us with His commandments and has taken pleasure in us. He caused

The Blessing of Sanctification for the Festivals

Kiddush said for a festival differs slightly from that said for the Sabbath. If the festival coincides with a Sabbath, the Sabbath theme is incorporated into the festival Kiddush. The additional words for the Sabbath usually appear in parentheses or brackets.

בָּרַכְנוּךָ אֱתָהּ יְיָהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
 בָּחַר לָנוּ מִכָּל עַם וְהוֹמָמָנוּ מִכָּל לְשׁוֹן וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ  
 מִמְצֻדְתֶּיךָ, וְתָמַךְ לָנוּ יְיָהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִצְדָּתְךָ  
 (כַּסֵּמֶת: שְׁפִירוֹתָהּ לְמִנְחָהּ (ה) מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׁמְחָהּ, תְּגִים  
 חֲמוּמִים לְשִׁשְׁתָּיִךְ, אֵת זֶה (כַּסֵּמֶת: הַשְּׂפִירָה הַזֶּה רְאֵה זֶה)

כַּסֵּמֶת: תְּגֵה הַשְּׂפִירוֹת הַזֶּה וְכֵן הַחֲרִיתָנוּ

כַּסֵּמֶת: תְּגֵה הַשְּׂפִירוֹת הַזֶּה וְכֵן מִכָּל תּוֹרָתְךָ

כַּסֵּמֶת: תְּגֵה הַשְּׂפִירוֹת הַזֶּה וְכֵן שִׁמְחָתְךָ

כַּסֵּמֶת: תְּגֵה הַשְּׂפִירוֹת הַזֶּה וְכֵן שִׁמְחָתְךָ

(כַּסֵּמֶת: בְּאַהֲבָה) מְקַרְבָּא קְדִישׁ וְנִכְר לְיִצְרָאֵל מְצֻרִים,  
 כִּי בָנוּ בְּחַרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים,  
 (כַּסֵּמֶת: שְׂפִירָה) וְמוֹעֲדֵי קִדְּשֶׁיךָ (כַּסֵּמֶת: בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן)  
 מִשְׁמִחָתְךָ וּבְשִׂשְׁתֵּיךְ הַנְּהַלְתָּנוּ. בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ אֱתָהּ יְיָהוָה,  
 מְקַדְּשֵׁנוּ (כַּסֵּמֶת: הַשְּׂפִירָה י) וְשִׂירָאֵל וְהוֹמָמָנוּ.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast chosen us above all people and exalted us above all nations and sanctified us by His commandments: Thou, Lord our God, hast given us in love [Sabbaths for rest] festivals for gladness, holidays and sacred seasons for joy: [this Sabbath day and] this: [appropriate insert] ... Festival of Matzot, the season of our freedom ... Festival of Shavuot, the season of the Giving of our Torah

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... Festival of Sukkot, the season of our rejoicing  
 ... Festival of Shemini Atzeret, the season of our rejoicing  
 [in love] a sacred festival commemorating the exodus from Egypt.  
 For Thou hast chosen us and hallowed us above all nations, and Thy holy [Sabbath and] festivals Thou didst bequeath to us as an inheritance [with love and favor], with gladness and joy. Blessed art Thou Lord, who sanctifies [the Sabbath], Israel, and the festive seasons.

The theme of Israel as the chosen is here also associated with the idea that Israel was given special commandments to keep, whose observance sanctifies Israel.

The reason why the word "love" (bahavah) is always added to the festival Kiddush on the Sabbath is because of the Jewish belief that God demonstrated special love to Israel when He gave it the Sabbath to keep—so precious a possession is the Sabbath. Another reason for adding this particular word on the Sabbath is based on a tradition that the Sabbath was given to the children of Israel while they were still at Marah, before they ever reached Mt. Sinai and heard the Ten Commandments proclaimed (Sanhedrin 56b). It was at Marah, midrash tells us, that they first accepted the Sabbath of their own free will and with great love. This contrasts with the other Torah commandments, including the festivals, that were given to them later at Mt. Sinai, where according to one tradition, their acceptance was accompanied by a measure of Divine coercion (Shabbat 88a).

On the two nights of Rosh Hashanah, the Kiddush is similar to that of the festival Kiddush, except for several small variations that venture on the theme of Rosh Hashanah as a Day of Remembrance, a Day of Blowing the Shofar. (Consult a siddur or mahzor for the exact text.)

When the night of a festival coincides with the end of a Sabbath day, a blessing for light and a blessing of havdalah (see pp. 333-334) are added to the Kiddush. A Havdalah candle, however, is not lit, since the candles that were lit for the festival satisfy the basic requirement for the blessing for light.

בָּרַכְנוּךָ אֱתָהּ יְיָהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְּכַדִּיל בַּיּוֹם  
 קִדְּשֵׁנוּ לְחֹל, בַּיּוֹם אֲוֵר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בַּיּוֹם יִשְׁרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בַּיּוֹם זֶה

הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. בֵּין קִדְשֵׁת שַׁבָּת לְקִדְשֵׁת יוֹם  
 טוֹב הַבְּדִלָּה. וְיָאֵת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִשֵּׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה קִדְשָׁה.  
 הַבְּדִלָּה וְקִדְשָׁה אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשֶׁתְּךָ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה  
 יְהוָה, הַמְּבַדִּיל בֵּין קִדְשֵׁי לְקִדְשֵׁי.

Except for the last day(s) of Pesah, the festival Kiddush is always concluded with the blessing of *she'hechyanu*:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הַעוֹלָם, שְׁהַחַיֵּנוּ  
 וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהַעֲרֵעֵנוּ לְזַמַּן הַיּוֹם.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast kept us in life, and hast preserved us and hast enabled us to reach this season.

## HAVDALAH: THE PRAYER OF SEPARATION

The ending of the Sabbath calls for a special declaration (Havdalah), which identifies the Sabbath as a day distinct from the rest of the week. It is said twice, once during the Saturday night Amidah and once again over a cup of wine (The Havdalah that is said in the Amidah is explained in chapter 5). The sages attached great significance to also saying Havdalah again over a cup of wine. (Berakhot 33a; Shabbat 150b).

In Babylonia where wine was scarce, Havdalah, like Kiddush, was said over wine only in the synagogue, the intent being to discharge the obligation of all those present. Havdalah is still said in the synagogue at the end of the Ma'ariv service. Like Kiddush, Havdalah became a familiar home ceremony. It is said at home to discharge the

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obligation of the entire household. Although wine is the preferred beverage for the ceremony, Havdalah may be said over other "important liquids" (*hamar medinah*). In the view of many authorities, this includes beer, milk, coffee, tea, and fruit juice.

Although it is the view of some authorities that Havdalah, like Kiddush, should be said while seated and for the same reason (see p. 321) the majority opinion prefers standing for Havdalah. Just as courtesy demands that one rise when an honored guest takes leave, so we should stand as we bid farewell to the Sabbath. Both practices are correct and both have their adherents (OH 296:6).

The Havdalah ritual contains the following components: a) introductory verses, b) a blessing for wine, c) a blessing for spices, d) a blessing for light, and e) the Havdalah blessing, which is the basic prayer of the ritual.

### The Introductory Verses

It is now customary to recite several verses from Isaiah, Psalms, and the Scroll of Esther before the Havdalah ritual. These verses are not an obligatory part of Havdalah. As late as the sixteenth century, Rabbi Moses Isserles lists only three of the eight verses that we today recite (OH 296:1, Rema). The verses all express trust in God and hope for the days ahead. Their recitation is regarded as a "good sign" (*siman tov*). The "salvation" referred to in these verses is the deliverance from immediate troubles or dangers. The verses are as follows:

הִנֵּה אֵל יִשְׁעֵנוּ, אֲבֹתָהּ וְלֹא אֲפֹתָהּ, כִּי עֲזַר הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה,  
 יְהוָה, יְהוָה לִי לִישׁוּעָה; וְשִׂבְתֶּם מִיָּם בְּשִׂשׁוֹן, מִפְּעֻנֵי  
 הַיְשׁוּעָה: לַיהוָה הַיְשׁוּעָה, עַל עַמְּךָ בְּרַבְרָתְךָ סֵלָה: יְהוָה  
 אֲבֹתָנוּ עֲשָׂנוּ, מִשְׁבֵּב לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה: יְהוָה אֲבֹתָנוּ  
 אֲשֶׁר־יְאֹדָם בַּטָּח בְּךָ: יְהוָה הַיְשׁוּעָה, הַפְּלִיךְ יַעֲזֵנוּ כַּיּוֹם  
 קָרָאנוּ: לַיהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְשִׂמְחָה וְשִׂשׁוֹן וְיִקְרָ: כֵּן  
 תְּהִיָּה לָנוּ. כּוֹס יִשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא וּבָשֵׂם יְהוָה אֲקַרְא:

Behold, I will trust in the God of my salvation; and will not fear, for God, the Lord is my strength and song; He has been to me a salvation.  
With joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation. (Is. 12:2)

Salvation belongs to the Lord; Thy blessing be upon Thy people, Selah. (Is. 12:3)

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge, Selah. (Psalms 3:9)

Lord of hosts, happy is the person who trusts in Thee. (Psalms 46:12)

Lord, save us; the King will answer us on the day we call. (Psalms 84:13)

The Jews had light and joy, gladness and honor. So be it with us. (Psalms 20:10)

I will lift the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. (Esth. 8:16)

The quotation from the Scroll of Esther is the only place in the entire prayer book where the name *Yehudim* ("Jews") is used as a reference to the Jewish people. Throughout the Bible and *siddur*, only the name *Yisrael* ("Israel") is used. It is customary for everyone present to join in saying this verse from Esther and the parenthetical hope that "so be it with us."

**The Blessing for Wine**

The introductory verses lead into the blessing for wine, which is the obligatory beginning of Havdalah. It is customary to fill the Havdalah wine cup to overflowing. A basis for this custom is an aggadic interpretation of the Biblical verse that God "will bless your bread and your water" (Exod. 23:25). A household where wine flows like water is regarded as within the framework of this Divine blessing (Eruvin 65a). Hence the overflowing cup, symbolizing good fortune and our share in the Divine blessing.

**The Blessings for Spices and Light**

Fragrant spices and light used in connection with the Havdalah ritual began around the second century B.C.E. It was then customary for the sages to extend their third Sabbath meal, usually eaten on

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Sabbath afternoons, well past nightfall. Toward the end of this meal, fire (which could not be made on the Sabbath) and incense (which, since it had to be heated, could not be prepared on the Sabbath) would be brought in. These two items and the blessings associated with their use eventually became an integral part of the Havdalah ritual.

The two blessings are as follows:

**קָרַחַךְ אֲתָהּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלַחַח הַעוֹלָם, בּוֹרְאָה מְרַחֵם.**

**קָרַחַךְ אֲתָהּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלַחַח הַעוֹלָם, בּוֹרְאָה מְרַחֵם.**

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates various kinds of fragrant spices.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the lights of the fire.

The blessing for spices is a blessing of enjoyment (Birkat Hanehenin); it is in the same category as the blessings said for food and drink. Whenever one enjoys the fragrance of spices, one must recite a blessing.

A reason that is given for the use of fragrant spices at the end of the Sabbath day is that a Jew is saddened by the departure of the Sabbath. The lift provided by the fragrance is supposed to compensate somewhat for the resultant gloom. The sages had taught that "three things restore a man's good spirits: [beautiful] sounds, sights, and smells (Berakhot 57b). Fragrant spices serve to refresh and revive the spirit (Maim. Hil. Shabbat 29:29).

A similar reason offered is to compensate for the departure of the additional soul (*neshamah yeterah*) that every Sabbath-observant Jew acquires on the Sabbath. The additional soul is defined as the restful, content feeling that comes to a person on the Sabbath (Rashi, Betzah 16a). The loss of this spiritual serenity is somewhat replaced

While saying the blessing for light, it is customary to spread one or both hands toward the flame and momentarily to examine the palms of the hand or the nails of the fingers. This is done to derive some use from the light over which the blessing is recited. The candle itself is usually held by a member of the household. It is a favorite assignment among the children.

Only the wine blessing and the basic Havdalah blessing are said at the end of any festival that does not fall on Saturday night. Neither the introductory verses, nor the blessings for light and spices are said. The religious symbolism of the latter two blessings applies only to the end of the Sabbath day.

If the end of the Sabbath coincides with the onset of a festival, the blessing for spices is omitted. The festival, or yom tov, has more than enough "fragrance" to compensate for the departure of the Sabbath (Pesahim 102b s.v. *rav*).

#### The Havdalah Blessing

הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחַל, בֵּין אֹרֶךְ הַחַיִּים, בֵּין  
 קָרְוָה אֶתְּהוּ יְהוָה יְאֻלְהֵנוּ מִקְּלַי הָעוֹלָם,  
 הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחַל, בֵּין אֹרֶךְ הַחַיִּים, בֵּין  
 שְׂרָא לְעַמִּים, בֵּין זֶה הַשְּׂבִיעִי לְשִׁשִּׁת יְמֵי  
 הַמְעֻשָׂה. קָרְוָה אֶתְּהוּ יְהוָה, הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ  
 לְחַל.

Blessed are Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who separates between the holy and the everyday, between light and darkness, between Israel and the other nations, between the seventh day and the six days of work. Blessed art Thou, Lord, who separates the holy from the everyday.

The text of the Havdalah blessing found in the Talmud (Pesahim 103b) is based on various separations (*havdalot*) mentioned in Scripture:

"Between the holy and everyday" comes from Leviticus 10:10.

"Between light and darkness" comes from Genesis 1:4.

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by the refreshing fragrance (Beitzah 33b, Tos. s.v. *ki*). To compensate for a "lost soul" by the use of fragrant spices was plausible to the rabbis because they regarded a pleasant odor to be the delight of the soul rather than of the body (Berakhot 43b). The Hebrew word for breathing (*nashom*) stems from the same root as the word for soul (*neshamah*).

The blessing for light or fire is not in the same category as the blessing for spices. It is not classified as a blessing of enjoyment, which is why we do not have to say the blessing when deriving the benefit of fire, either as light to see by, as heat to be warmed by, or as flames to cook with. The Birkhot Hanehenin were prescribed only for benefits or pleasures that are directly absorbed by the body (Pesahim 53b, Tos. s.v. *ein*).

The blessing for light on Saturday night is to commemorate man's discovery of fire. The Talmud tells us that God provided Adam with the knowledge to take two stones and strike them together, bringing forth fire (light) and that this discovery took place on the first Saturday night (Pesahim 54a). Furthermore, since it is forbidden to light a fire on the Sabbath, it is as though fire was renewed for us and so we thank God for it.

The Talmudic aggadah may also be a subtle rejoinder to the ancient Greek legend that fire was given to man by Prometheus, who stole it from heaven. When Zeus, the king of the gods, discovered the theft, he ordered Prometheus chained and tortured. Jewish legend, by contrast, teaches us that God Himself taught man about fire. Ours is a God who wants to help man discover the way to progress. For this heavenly gift, the blessing expresses thanks. The sages deliberately chose the plural "lights of the fire" to emphasize that God gave man the wisdom to fashion many kinds of illumination. We credit God with being the source of all light, even that developed by man.

A braided multiwick candle is used for Havdalah since a "torch" that sheds a greater light is regarded as the choicest way to perform the mitzvah (Pesahim 103b). If one does not have such a candle, one may use two ordinary candles if they are held together so that their flames merge together. This qualifies as a "torch" (OH 298:2, Rema). In the absence of candles, the blessing may be said by the light of two matches or even by the light of an electric bulb.

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"Between Israel and the nations" comes from Leviticus 20:26.

The "separations" imply different levels of holiness established by the Holy One, blessed be He. (See pp. 125-126 for a fuller discussion.)

The Havdalah, said as part of a festival Kiddush, further distinguishes the greater holiness of the Sabbath from that of the incoming festival (Hulin 26b). The festival is of a lesser holiness for it is permissible on these days to cook and bake.

In making use of all the senses: touching the cup, tasting the wine, smelling the fragrance, seeing the light, hearing the blessing, and applying the mind to understand the separations Havdalah speaks of, we may look upon this blessing as a consecration of all our senses to God at the very start of each new week.

## THE BLESSINGS FOR LIGHTING CANDLES

From earliest Talmudic sources we learn that the lighting of lights for the Sabbath was an essential element in preparing for the Sabbath. Midrashic sources give as the reason for the practice the greater delight that this adds to the Sabbath and in keeping with the requirement that "You call the Sabbath a delight." (Tanhuma, Noah). To sit in the dark on the night of Shabbat, a practice followed by sects who rejected the authority of the Oral Torah, would have meant a diminishing of the Sabbath joy. While the sages may have debated about which kinds of oils and wicks were suitable for use as Sabbath lights, there was unanimity about the practice itself. It is customary to light two candles to symbolize the two forms of the fourth commandment: "Remember (*Zakhor*) the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Exod. 20:8) and "Observe (*Shamor*) the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Deut. 5:12).

## Home Prayers for Sabbaths and Festivals

The lighting of Sabbath lights is one of seven ritual mitzvot that the sages legislated (Shabbat 25b).\*

The blessing itself employs the standard formula of all berakhot said before doing a mitzvah:

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר  
קדשנו במצותיו וצונו  
... קדשנו במצותיו וצונו

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kidashanu  
b' mitzvotav, v' tzivvanu ...*

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to ...

The blessing concludes with: *lehaddik ner shel Shabbat* ("to kindle the Sabbath light"). On the festivals, the conclusion is: *lehaddik ner shel Yom Tov* ("to kindle the festival lights"). On Yom Kippur, it is: *lehaddik ner shel Yom Hakippurim*. For lighting the Hanukkah candles, the conclusion is: *lehaddik ner shel Hanukkah*.

The question may well arise how one can say a blessing to God "who commanded us to light the (Hanukkah, Sabbath, festival, etc.) lights," when this mitzvah was prescribed by the rabbis. The Talmudic sages themselves asked that same question: "Where indeed were we commanded to light the Hanukkah lights?" This question also applies to the Sabbath lights. Rabbinic authority for ordaining this mitzvah rests on the commandment of the Torah to act "in accordance with the instructions that they [the religious leaders of each generation] give you and the rulings they hand down to you; deviating ... neither to the right nor to the left" (Deut. 17:11). This Biblical commandment embraces the rabbinically-prescribed mitzvot and justifies the words of the blessing (Shabbat 23a).

\* The other six are: 1) to light candles on Hanukkah, 2) to say Hallel at certain times, 3) to read the Scroll of Esther on Purim, 4) to wash the hands before eating and upon arising, 5) to say an appropriate blessing before deriving various satisfactions and (6) to set up an *eruv* where necessary. A blessing is said in conjunction with these observances.

#### TO PRAY AS A JEW

The duty to light candles for the Sabbath and to have them burning in one's dwelling place falls equally on men and women. In a family setting, the carrying out of this mitzvah is the woman's responsibility. Because she is normally found at home and involved in the work of the house, it is easier for her to meet this obligation (Maim. Hil. Shabbat 5:3). If there is no woman at home to light the candles, it becomes the man's responsibility to do so.

To be on the safe side, Sabbath candles are lit twenty minutes before sundown. Sundown is the actual deadline. The kindling of a fire thereafter, even for Sabbath candles, is forbidden.

Since the recitation of the blessing means the immediate acceptance of the Sabbath for the woman lighting the candles (see pp. 256-257), the usual practice of reciting the berakhah before performing the mitzvah is reversed in this instance. First the candles are lit, then the blessing is said (OH 263:5 Rema).

The moments after the blessing have become sanctified to most Jewish women as a time to add a personal prayer, in the quiet privacy shared by her lips and her heart.

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCE  
MATERIAL FOCUSING ON  
HADLAKAT HANEROT**

## CONCEPTS

## THE SYMBOL OF LIGHT

The lighting of candles is a major Jewish ritual act. We light candles on the festival of *Hanukkah*, on the anniversary of the death of a family member (the *Yahrzeit* candle) and to begin major Jewish holidays. We even keep a light—the *Ner Tamid*—eternally burning in the synagogue.

The lighting of candles is a symbolic act. Kindling is an act of exploration, it involves illuminating the dark or the unknown. Without light, there is no opportunity for study, for knowledge, or for joy. Light also symbolizes the creation. God's first creative act was the creation of light. Shabbat is a celebration of creation, and the lighting of candles conjures up the first act of creation. Just as God began creation by saying, "Let there be light," we begin our Shabbat celebration by lighting and blessing the Shabbat lights.

Candle lighting also had a practical implication. Light was needed for the evening celebration. Since no fire can be kindled after Shabbat begins, it was very important in the days before electricity to light candles that would burn during the evening.

## OBJECTS

## CANDLESTICKS

Although Jewish law only requires the kindling of one Shabbat light (candle), it is traditional to use at least two candlesticks and to light at least two candles.

In the Torah, the Ten Commandments are presented twice: first in the book of Exodus and then in the book of Deuteronomy. While the two sets of commandments are functionally identical, the only major difference falls in the fourth commandment—that for Shabbat. In Exodus (20:8) the commandment reads, "Remember (Zakhor) the Shabbat day to keep it holy," and the commandment is justified by the statement, "for in six days Adonai made heaven and earth... and He rested on the seventh day." In Deuteronomy (5:12) the fourth commandment is stated as "Observe (Shamor) the Shabbat day to keep it holy," and it is explained, "remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Adonai your God freed you from there..." Tradition connects the two candlesticks to the two forms of the Shabbat commandment: "Remember" and "Observe." The two *halvah* breads also evoke this twofold command. These two themes of "creation" and "exodus" form the core of the Shabbat *Kiddush*. Even the first verse of the Shabbat hymn *Lecha Dodai* begins: "Observe" and "Remember" in one breath...

There are no physical requirements for the candlesticks themselves, although generally families have acquired silver or brass ones. Many candlesticks are quite elaborate in design, while others are very simple. Some are short; some are tall. Some families light more than two candles, in many cases using one for each member of the family.

Many families use candlesticks that are family heirlooms. If you are purchasing candlesticks for the first time, or, for that matter, any of the other Shabbat ritual items, try to acquire the most beautiful objects you can afford. Or, you might want to use candlesticks you or your children have made. The point is not the expense, but the beauty and meaningfulness of the ritual objects.

## CANDLES

The *mitzvah* (commandment) to kindle the Shabbat light was originally directed toward oil lamps. The Mishnah goes into great detail about the right kind of wicks to be used in the lamp. Today, the *mitzvah* is commonly performed with candles. Just about any kind of candle can be used. White candles are traditional. The candles simply need to last long enough to burn throughout the meal. Either white utility candles or white tapers are commonly used. Birthday candles or Hanukkah candles will not burn long enough which disqualify them for use as Shabbat candles.

## PRACTICE

The procedure for lighting the Shabbat candles is as follows:

1. Place the candlesticks wherever you wish. The candles should not be moved after they are lit until Shabbat is over; so choose your place carefully. Most families place the candles directly on the Shabbat dinner table or nearby.
2. Put the candles into the candlesticks. If you have difficulty making them stay put, burn the bottom of the candle to allow some hot wax to drip into the receptacles. This should help the candles stick in the holders.
3. It is common practice to cover the head before lighting candles.
4. Strike a match and light the candles. Make sure that all the candles are well-lit before reciting the blessing. This may take some time, especially if children are involved. You may need to strike several matches to get all the candles lit. That's fine, as long as all lighting is done before the blessing is recited. Do *not* use one candle to light another as in the candle lighting for Hanukkah!
5. Circle the flames with your hands once or three times, beginning with your hands parallel to your body and reaching out over the candles in a circular motion back towards your body. When the circling is completed, place your hands over your eyes or in front of the candles to block your view of them.
6. Recite or chant the blessing for the candles.
7. Do not say "Amen" at the end of the blessing. Although many people are used to saying "Amen" at the conclusion of a blessing, technically it is unnecessary. The word "Amen" literally means "so be it," a formal acknowledgment that one agrees with what has just been said. This was done for those who were unfamiliar with prayers, and served to include them in the process of praying. If, however, you are reciting a particular blessing, it is superfluous to say "Amen" to your own prayer.
8. Spend a few seconds in private prayer with your eyes covered.
9. Uncover your eyes, look at the flames in order to complete the act that the blessing you just recited specified, and wish everyone "Shabbat Shalom" with appropriate kisses, hugs, handshakes, etc.

Wolfson, Dr. Ron. *The Art of Jewish Living: The Shabbat Seder*, The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, 1985.

## PRACTICAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Why does the Shabbat day begin on Friday night?**

The Jewish calendar is based, in part, on a lunar system, so the Jewish day begins at dusk, when the moon can first be seen. The first chapter of Genesis makes this clear. At the end of the first day of creation, that day is reviewed with the words: "Vay'bi eruv, vay'bi voker—yom ehad"—"And there was evening, and there was morning—one day" (Genesis 1:5). Always remember: a Jewish day begins the night before.

**When are the candles lit?**

According to Jewish law, candles are to be lit no later than 18 minutes before sundown.

**How can I find the exact candle lighting time?**

Most Jewish calendars include candle lighting times for your city. On some calendars, the time is listed next to the symbol of two candlesticks in the date box. Other calendars have charts listing the candle lighting times week by week.

**What if I don't have a Jewish calendar?**

Candle lighting time can be determined by anyone with a local newspaper. Simply find the Friday weather page, which lists the times for sunrise and sunset. Candle lighting will be 18 minutes before the listed sunset time. For example, if the newspaper lists sunset at 6:18 P.M., candle lighting will be no later than 6:00 P.M.

**Why are there different candle lighting times in different cities?**

Sunset comes at different times, depending on the geographic location of a particular place in relation to the solar cycle. Note also that while some calendars adjust for Daylight Savings Time, others list only Standard Time. In the latter case, one hour must be added

to the listed time when Daylight Savings Time is in effect.

**When does Shabbat end?**

Shabbat is, of course, celebrated for a full day. It does not end with the completion of the Friday night Shabbat Seder. Although a description and discussion of the remainder of the Shabbat observance is beyond the scope of this text, it is important to note that a variety of synagogue and home rituals take place during the Shabbat day. Shabbat officially concludes with the *Havdalah* ("Separation") ceremony that literally separates Shabbat time from the rest of the week. It is recited when three stars are visible in the Saturday evening sky, or at least 42 minutes after the sunset time listed for that day.

**Who should light the Shabbat candles?**

While it may come as a surprise to many, both men and women are equally obligated to light Shabbat candles. According to the *Shulchan Arukh* (*The Code of Jewish Law*):

Men and women are both obligated to have a candle lit in their homes on Shabbat. (*Orach Hayim* 263:2)

The reason women traditionally lit the Shabbat candles is found in the very next line of the *Code*:

Women are more obligated in this *mitzvah* than are men, because they are usually at home and they deal with the household needs.

The *Shulchan Arukh* was written more than 400 years ago, and then this explanation reflected a sociological reality. In those days, women were at home preparing the Shabbat dinner while men were at synagogue welcoming the Shabbat through an early evening service. Today, however, with many women pursuing careers outside the home, and with house-

### HADLAKAT NEROT— CANDLE LIGHTING

1. *Barukh attab Adonai* Praised are You, Adonai,
2. *Eloheinu melekh ba-olam* our God, Ruler of the Universe,
3. *asher kideshanu* who made us holy  
*b' mitzvotav* through His commandments
4. *v'tzivanu l'hadlik* and commanded us to kindle  
*ner shel Shabbat.* the Shabbat lights.



1. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,
2. אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
3. אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
- בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
4. וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
- נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

hold responsibilities being shared, the emphasis given by the *Shulchan Aruch* may no longer apply. Also, it is important to note that the setting for candle lighting has changed. Once, women tended to light candles alone in the corner of a room—it was a kind of private spiritual moment. Today, candle lighting tends to be a public ritual, often taking place at the dinner table or nearby.

While every family will make its own determination concerning the roles different members will occupy, it is clear that, according to Jewish law, if the woman of the house is not at home in time to light Shabbat candles, the man of the house is obligated to do so. This suggests that any (or all) family member(s) may kindle the Shabbat lights and recite the *brachah*.

We also know that in many families, one adult lights the candles and the entire family joins in chanting or reciting the *brachah*.

**Must I cover my head during candle lighting?**

Covering the head is a sign of reverence for God above. Men are expected to wear head coverings called *kippot* (*yarmulkes*) during the entire Shabbat Seder. Women traditionally covered their heads with a lace cloth or scarf (known as a *Tibetel* in Yiddish) while lighting the candles, just as they would wear a similar head covering in the synagogue. While this practice has fallen out of use among many women, others retain it as a sign of respect. In fact, some women are now adopting the *kippah* as part of their religious wardrobe.

**Why are the eyes covered and the hands waved during candle lighting?**

The reason the eyes are covered while reciting the blessing is to block the view of the candles. Normally, in Jewish ritual practice an act is done immediately after a specific blessing is said. For example, we will recite the *Kiddush* and immediately drink the wine; we will recite the *ha-Motzi* and immediately eat the *halalah* bread. With candles it must be different because of the prohibition of lighting fire on Shabbat. Since the blessing itself officially ushers in the Shabbat, we cannot light the fire after the blessing is said. Therefore, the Rabbits came up with a kind of legal fiction. We light the candles first so the fire is prepared for the Shabbat. Then we block the candles from our sight while we recite the blessing. During this moment, it is as if the candles had not been lit. When the blessing is completed, we uncover our eyes and, behold, the candles are lit.

To enhance this action, it became traditional to wave the hands in a circular pattern over the candles just before reciting the blessing. Various reasons are given for this. Some say it is to bring the warmth of the flames into the aura of the person reciting the blessing. Others say it is to ensure that the flames are well lit, avoiding the possibility of the candles extinguishing themselves before catching the wick. Others point to the inherent mystical sensation of the act. Whatever the reasons, it became traditional to circle the flames—some say once, others say three times—just before blocking the view of the candles.

There are three ways to block the view of the candles while reciting the blessing:

1. Place your hands over your eyes with palms toward you.

2. Place your hands over your eyes with palms away from you toward the flames.
3. Place your hands with palms toward the flames directly in front of the candles, blocking them from view.

Everyone seems to have a favorite position. Those who cover the eyes seem to feel the privacy of the moment more. Those whose hands are close to the candles feel their warmth on the palms. Rest assured that little children will peek through their fingers at whatever is going on.

**What happens if not everyone can get home in time for candle lighting?**

With busy schedules and work obligations, some families find it difficult to gather together at the official candle lighting time. This is especially true during the winter months, when candle lighting can be as early as 4:00 P.M.

Jewish law insists that candles not be kindled after the beginning of Shabbat. To do so is to overtly violate the Shabbat by "kindling," which is one of the forbidden categories of labor.

While we know that it takes advance planning and careful adjustment of work and school schedules, it is important to respect this requirement of Jewish law. In case the entire family cannot gather for candle lighting, one of these options can be considered:

1. One adult lights the candles at the official time and recites the blessing. When the family gathers together at the table, the Shabbat Seder begins with *Shalom Aleikhem*.
2. Do not light candles that week and begin the Shabbat Seder with *Shalom Aleikhem*. Are there other rules about candle lighting?

Once lit, candles should not be moved. The reason for this is that the candlesticks are considered an instrument of work and are not to be touched lest one be tempted to employ or adjust them during the Shabbat. Therefore, choose a place for them carefully. Unless you will not completely clear the table during the length of Shabbat, do not place them on the table itself. Put them nearby the table on a buffet server, on a separate table just for candles, or in the kitchen.

Candles are never blown out; to do so would be an act of labor (by rabbinic definition). Allow the candles to burn down. A tray underneath the candlesticks will help catch wax drippings. Special wax catchers that insert into the bottom of candlesticks can also be used. Before lighting the wicks and saying the blessing, it is permissible to hear the bottoms of the candles to help them stick in the candlesticks. A tip on cleaning candlesticks: soak them in hot water to loosen the wax drippings and you won't need to dig out the hardened wax. If a wick burns out after a blessing is said, do not relight it.

Use new candles each week. They should be completely new with fresh wicks. Buy candles in bulk cartons to make sure a supply is always on hand.

**What happens if we leave home before the candles burn out?**

This is a serious question. More than one home has been severely damaged by fire from

falling candlesticks. Plan ahead. It is perfectly legal to cut the candles down to a length that will enable the flames to last through dinner, but not late into the night. The standard utility candles for Shabbat seem to last approximately 3 to 4 hours. By cutting the candles in half before lighting them, you can reduce the burn time proportionately. Place the candles in a safe area before lighting, e.g. on the kitchen tile or in the sink. Put aluminum foil in a tray under the candlesticks. Be certain that if the candles should fall, they will do no harm.

We've been invited out for Shabbat dinner. Should we take our own candlesticks?

It probably depends on your relationship with your hosts. If they invite you to bring along your own candlesticks, by all means do so (although to be strictly observant of Jewish law you will have to pick them up after Shabbat is over). Some families will offer extra candlesticks to guests who come for Shabbat dinner. If you sense that there will be no opportunity for you to light candles at the host's home, light your candles at home first.

What about my children who want to light candles?

There is a custom that families kindle one candle for each family member. Often, children are asked to kindle their own candle. When children reach the age of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, they take on adult Jewish obligations, and this includes the responsibility to have a Shabbat candle lit in their home. Younger (or older) children may wish to light their own candles. There is no reason they cannot do so. We do strongly suggest that children never be allowed to take over the adult's responsibility to light candles. Children should always see their parents lighting candles first. It is important that children realize that the Shabbat ritual is for the parents as well as for the family. Some parents will ask very young children to help light the candles by placing the child's hand on top of their own. Here are a few suggestions for children lighting candles:

1. If the children are lighting their own candles, use long fireplace or kitchen matches to avoid burning fingers. For some kids, this will be the first opportunity to learn to use matches safely.
2. There is a natural tendency among kids, reinforced by the birthday party ritual, to want to blow out candles. Since that is not allowed, let the kids blow out the match used to light the candles.
3. In all cases, encourage the children to imitate the candle lighting ritual motions and blessings. It is the best way for them to learn the Shabbat ritual.

What happens when other Jewish holidays fall on Shabbat? What is the candle lighting procedure then?

When the festivals of Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah and Sukkot coincide with Shabbat, the candles are lit in exactly the same manner as on a regular Shabbat, except the blessing is slightly amended to:

*Barukh attah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvatav v'izivanu l'haddik ner shel Shabbat v'Yom Tov.*

Praised are You, Adonai, Ruler of the universe, who made us holy through the commandments and commanded us to kindle the Shabbat and Festival lights.

On the first night of the festival, the *Shebehyanu* prayer is also recited:

*Barukh attah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, shebehyanu v'kimanu, v'bigianu lazman ha-zeh.*

Praised are You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, who has kept us in life and has preserved us and enabled us to reach this season.

On the eve of Shabbat during Hanukkah, the Hanukkah candles are lit and blessed first, before Shabbat candles in order not to violate the prohibition against lighting fire on Shabbat.

When Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat, the candles are lit with the following blessing:

*Barukh attah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvatav v'izivanu l'haddik ner shel Shabbat v'Yom ha-Kippurim.*

Praised are You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, who made us holy through the commandments and commanded us to kindle the lights of Shabbat and the Day of Atonement.

Then, the *Shebehyanu* is recited. By the way, when Yom Kippur coincides with Shabbat, there is no Shabbat Seder. The pre-fast meal is eaten on Friday afternoon, before candle lighting. At the official candle lighting time, this special candle lighting prayer is recited, along with the Blessing for the Children. However, since Shabbat does not begin until candles are lit, and because of Yom Kippur, there is no *Kiddush* or eating after candle lighting.

### SOME INTERESTING SOURCES

Studying Jewish legal texts often teaches us more than just what we are supposed to do or not do. Legal texts often serve as vistas of Jewish values and concerns in action. These "laws" on the Shabbat candles were taken from the Law Code of Maimonides. Here, as in all his legal work, Maimonides fills his citations with all the nuances and details present in the Talmud, setting them in a way that makes them easily accessible.

In many of the interviews we conducted, we heard a common theme. For people who were raised in "traditional" households, their encounter with Shabbat was often restrictive. As children, Shabbat often consisted of things they couldn't do. Only later did a new sense of celebration emerge. This same conflict between the strict observance of the prohibitions of labor and the desire to create an active celebration can be seen in these texts.

One clue to understanding these texts is a law called *ma'akalah*. Not only was it forbidden to work on Shabbat, but to protect the law against labor, the Talmudic rabbis added a "fence" around that law; they also forbade Jews to touch tools of labor on Shabbat. These things were in a category called *mitzvot*. In these texts, the concern over "tilting" the Shabbat light is a concern about touching something that is *mitzvot*.

1. The lighting of a lamp on Friday night is not a voluntary action. A person cannot choose to light it or leave it unlit. Lighting a lamp on the eve of the Shabbat is a *mitzvah* (an obligation).

Both men and women are obligated to have a lamp burning in their houses on Shabbat. Even if one has no food to eat, she must go begging in order to buy oil to light a lamp, for the lamp is an integral part of the Shabbat celebration.

2. It is permissible to make use of the light of Shabbat candles, provided that the objects to be looked at do not require close scrutiny. If, however, the objects require minute inspection, it may not be examined by the lamp's light. This prevents one from being tempted to tilt the lamp.

14. One does not read by lamp light on the Shabbat. Even if the lamp is situated twice a person's height above the ground. This prevents one from being tempted to tilt the lamp.

However, if two people read the same text together, they may do so by the light of the lamp, because each will remind the other should the other forget that it is Shabbat. But, the two of them may not do so if they are reading different texts. Each one may become too involved in his/her text to notice what the other is doing.

15. School children may read by lamp light on the Shabbat in the presence of their teacher, because the teacher will watch over them. But the teacher may not read. The teacher may, however, glance at the book by lamp light, to mark the beginning of the section which she wishes the children to read. Then the book is to be placed in the children's hands for them to read.

Can you explain the compromise these laws are trying to enact? Why do they make a special case for children? Can the ruling on school children serve as a model for decisions about your family's Shabbat practice?

# A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice

by ISAAC KLEIN

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wants to enter the holiness of the day must first lay down the profanity of clattering commerce, of being yoked to toil. . . . Six days a week we seek to dominate the world, on the seventh we try to dominate the self" (Heschel, *The Sabbath*, p. 13).

Professor Morris Levine, of blessed memory, once compared the traditional Sabbath to the perfect harmony of a work of art. Any erasure would mar the harmony. All parts of the Sabbath must be preserved if it is to retain its unity as a work of art.

### 1. Preparation for the Sabbath

Psychologically, it is necessary to prepare for a moment of heightened experience if it is to be fully appreciated. Hence, the approach of the Sabbath should be anticipated with acts of preparation. We are told in the Talmud how many of the sages personally prepared for the Sabbath.

The sage Shammai began his preparations on the first day of the week. If he saw a choice article of food, he immediately set it aside for the Sabbath. If, subsequently, he found one that was even finer, he set the latter aside for the Sabbath and used the other one beforehand (B. *Bet.* 16a).

Some sages even went so far as to help with the preparation of the food or with the cutting of the wood (B. *Shab.* 119a). Hence the ruling that even persons of affluence, who have many servants to do their bidding, should reserve some act of Sabbath preparation for themselves (O.H. 250:1).

The more obvious preparatory steps, such as washing and dressing in a special way, should certainly be taken before the Sabbath (B. *Shab.* 113a). Even today, when people are normally well groomed and well dressed, special attention should be given to this in honor of the Sabbath (O.H. 260:1).

Before the approach of the Sabbath, one should make sure that his pockets are emptied so that he will not carry things that should not be carried on the Sabbath.

### 2. Lighting the Sabbath Candles

"When all work is brought to a standstill, the candles are lit. Just as creation began with the word, 'Let there be light!' so does the celebration of creation begin with the kindling of lights. It is the woman who ushers in the

## IV. The Sabbath (I)

One of the great tragedies of Jewish life in America is the loss of the Sabbath. Jewish life will not be restored to good health unless the Sabbath regains its sanctity and its central place.

The decline of the Sabbath, at least in America, began through force of circumstance; our parents and grandparents had to work on the Sabbath because of the economic pressures of the Western world. In order to hold a job they had to work on the Sabbath. What was first done *צוּרְכָה* (by necessity) later was done *בְּרָצוֹן* (voluntarily). Today people neglect the Sabbath not because economic conditions force them to do so, but by habit and because of the increasing secularization of life.

The secular world also recognizes the value of a day of rest, but it has changed the Sabbath into a weekend. The Sabbath and a weekend are quite different, however (see Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*). What the High Holy Days are for us today the Sabbath used to be for all Israel, because it was observed as meticulously as we observe Yom Kippur. The records show that secular holidays and weekends are marked by the greatest amount of crime, drunkenness, lewdness, and accidental deaths. When a holiday loses its religious connotation, it can become a source of evil.

At best the purpose of a weekend is rest and change. In the case of the Sabbath, however, the Bible enjoins: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Exod. 20:8); and our liturgy repeats: "a day of rest and holiness hast thou given unto thy people." The day of rest must also become a day of holiness.

Holiness is not a flight from the world into fasting and contemplation. The prophet wrote: "And thou shalt call the Sabbath a delight" (Isa. 58:13). This is not attained simply by the cessation of our weekday routine. The prophet continues: "and shalt honor it, not doing thy wonted ways nor pursuing thy business nor speaking thereof." The rabbis interpret this to mean: "that thy speech on the Sabbath shall not be as thy speech on the weekdays (B. *Shab.* 113a).

To experience the Sabbath properly, there must be a transfiguration. Professor Heschel's words are an elaboration of this thought. "He who





**LEARNING STATION RESOURCE  
MATERIAL FOCUSING ON  
SHALOM ALEIKHEN**

## CONCEPTS

### ANGELS

The hymn *Shalom Aleikhem* is the traditional song welcoming the Shabbat at the family table. It speaks of welcoming the "ministering angels," the messengers of God.

There is a lovely legend recorded in the Talmud (Shabbat 119a) about two angels that is said to have inspired the writing of *Shalom Aleikhem*:

It was taught that Rabbi Jose ben Rabbi Judah said that on every Shabbat eve, two angels visit every Jewish home—the Angel of Good and the Angel of Evil. They approach the home and peer into the windows. If they see that the house is messy, that the parents are unhappy, that the children are fighting, and that the table is not set for Shabbat, then the Angel of Evil rubs his hands with glee and says: "May all of your *Shabbatot* be just like this one." And the Angel of Good must say: "Amen. May it be so."

But if the angels see that the house is sparkling, that the candles are shining, and that the family is seated happily at the table, then the Angel of Good throws his arms into the air and says: "May all of your *Shabbatot* be just like this one." And the Angel of Evil has to say: "Amen. May it be so."

### HOSPITALITY

From the time Abraham welcomed strangers into his tent, the principle of *hakhnasat orchim*—hospitality—has been a major theme in Jewish life. Throughout the centuries, Jews welcomed family, friends, neighbors and strangers into their homes, especially on Jewish holidays.

One expression of this valuing of hospitality is found in the prayer *Ha Lahma Anya* which is recited at the beginning of the Passover Seder. It invites "all who are hungry" into our homes to join in our Seder celebration. *Hakhnasat orchim* has often been translated into action by Jewish families who open their homes to travelers, military personnel, college students away from home, and so on.

A second example of welcoming strangers regularly took place on Shabbat itself. Until very recently, Friday evening services were held before Shabbat dinner. Strangers would come to the *Beit Knesset*—The House of Assembly—to seek fellow Jews. On Friday night, Jews without places to make Shabbat would be taken home from synagogue by members of the community. Some synagogues even had temporary guest quarters for those without a place to stay.

*Shalom Aleikhem* is really a hymn of hospitality. While using the metaphor of welcoming "ministering angels," the prayer also welcomed both the Shabbat and guests into the home.

## PRACTICE

*Shalom Aleikhem* is generally sung according to a traditional melody that is one of the best known Jewish songs. Many families sit at the table when singing, although standing at the table is also appropriate. Some families sing each verse three times.

To enhance the singing, try joining hands or placing your arms around the shoulders of those sitting next to you and swaying to the music.

## PRACTICAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Must we sing *Shalom Aleikhem*?

While *Shalom Aleikhem* has been the traditional hymn welcoming the Shabbat for generations, this does not preclude the addition of other Shabbat songs at this point in the Shabbat Seder. In fact, one family we spoke to told us that their children rapidly tired of the same song week after week, so they alternate a variety of Shabbat songs in its place.

Doesn't the Blessing of Children come before *Shalom Aleikhem*?

In some families, the children are blessed immediately after candles are lit, before the singing of *Shalom Aleikhem*. Traditionally, the father would bless the children immediately upon returning home from synagogue services before sitting down at the table.

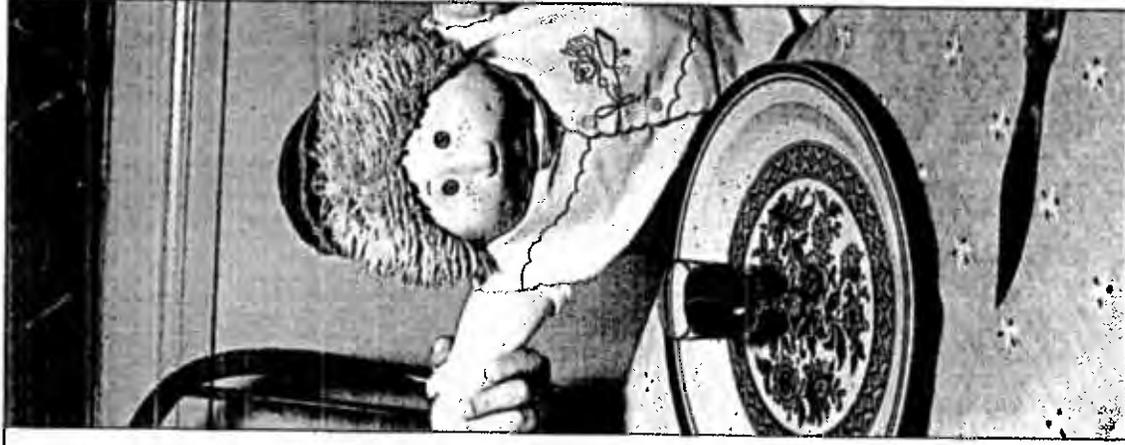
The outline of the Shabbat Seder presented here is based on what we have determined to be normative of Jewish families today. This does not mean that the order of singing *Shalom Aleikhem* or blessing family members cannot be reversed if your family tradition differs from the suggested outline.

If we don't plan to attend Shabbat eve services in the synagogue, can we include those prayers at this point in the Shabbat Seder?

The Goodlick family does just that. Actually, they include several prayers and readings from the *Kabbalat Shabbat* ("Receiving the Shabbat") and the *Malartu* ("Evening") services throughout their Shabbat Seder, beginning just before *Shalom Aleikhem*. This is a wonderful way to broaden the Shabbat Seder experience later on in the development of your celebration.

## SHALOM ALEIKHEM—PEACE BE TO YOU

1. *Sshalom aleikbem*  
Peace to you,  
ministering angels,
2. *malakbei ba-sbareit*  
angels of the Most High,  
from the Ruler, the Ruler  
of Rulers,
4. *ba-Kadosh barukh hu.*  
the Holy One, praised is He.
5. *Bo'akbem l'sshalom*  
Come in peace,  
angels of peace,
6. *malakbei Elyon*  
angels of the Most High,  
from the Ruler, the Ruler  
of Rulers,
7. *mimelekh malkbei*  
*ha-melakbim*  
The Holy One, praised is He.
8. *ba-Kadosh barukh hu.*  
The Holy One, praised is He.
9. *Barkhuni l'sshalom*  
Bless me with peace,  
angels of peace,
10. *malakbei Elyon*  
angels of the Most High,  
from the Ruler, the Ruler  
of Rulers,
11. *mimelekh malkbei*  
*ha-melakbim*  
the Holy One, praised is He.
12. *ba-Kadosh barukh hu.*  
the Holy One, praised is He.
13. *Tzeitkhem l'sshalom*  
Go in peace,  
angels of peace,
14. *malakbei Elyon*  
angels of the Most High,  
from the Ruler, the Ruler  
of Rulers,
15. *mimelekh malkbei*  
*ha-melakbim*  
the Holy One, praised is He.
16. *ba-Kadosh barukh hu.*  
the Holy One, praised is He.



1. שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם  
מַלְאָכֵי הַשָּׁרָת  
מַלְאָכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן,  
מִמְלֶךְ מַלְכֵי  
הַמְּלָכִים
2. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
3. בּוֹאֲכֶם לְשָׁלוֹם  
מַלְאָכֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם  
מַלְאָכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן,  
מִמְלֶךְ מַלְכֵי  
הַמְּלָכִים
4. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
5. בְּרַכּוּנִי לְשָׁלוֹם  
מַלְאָכֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם  
מַלְאָכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן,  
מִמְלֶךְ מַלְכֵי  
הַמְּלָכִים
6. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
7. צֵאתְכֶם לְשָׁלוֹם  
מַלְאָכֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם  
מַלְאָכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן,  
מִמְלֶךְ מַלְכֵי  
הַמְּלָכִים
8. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
9. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
10. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
11. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
12. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
13. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
14. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
15. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
16. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

### SOME INTERESTING SOURCES

Here are some Rabbinic sources on hospitality. As you will see, they understand the mitzvah of "*hachinukh*" as a form of outreach to those in need. Our very translation—hospitality—implies a shift in meaning and application. For us, opening our home on Shabbat tends to mean inviting friends and family. As you read these texts, see if you can find workable ways of implementing these values today.

Let your house be open wide. How? We learn that one's house should have doors on the north, the south, the east and the west, just like Job's house.

Why did Job make his house with four doors? So that the poor would not be troubled to go all around the house. Someone coming from the north could enter directly, someone coming from the south could enter directly, and so on. This is why Job's house had four doors.

Teach the members of your household humility. When a poor person comes and stands in the doorway and asks, "Is your father inside?" she should be answered, "Yes, come in; enter." Even before she has entered, a table is set for her. When she enters and eats and offers a blessing up to heaven, the master of the house has great joy.

But when one is not humble and the members of his/her household are short tempered, the poor man is rebuked and driven off in anger.

*Avot/Rabbi Natan A 7*

These practices may not be practical in our society, but the values they present are still important. What is a good modern equivalent for building a house with four doors? In what ways should members of the household be instructed to show hospitality today?

# Shalom Aleichem

## A Song of Peace

(You may sing the following song.)

‡ See page 110

Shalom a-lei-chem, mal-a-chei ha-sha-reit, mal-a-chei El-yon,	שלום עליכם, מלאכי השבת, מלאכי עליון,
mi-me-lech ma-le-chei ha-me-la-chim, ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch Hu.	ממלך מלכי המלאכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא.
Bo-a-chem le-sha-lom, mal-a-chei ha-sha-lom, mal-a-chei El-yon,	בואכם לשלום, מלאכי השלום, מלאכי עליון,
mi-me-lech ma-le-chei ha-me-la-chim, ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch Hu.	ממלך מלכי המלאכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא.
Ba-re-chu-ni le-sha-lom, mal-a-chei ha-sha-lom, mal-a-chei El-yon,	ברכוני לשלום, מלאכי השלום, מלאכי עליון,
mi-me-lech ma-le-chei ha-me-la-chim, ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch Hu.	ממלך מלכי המלאכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא.
Tsei-te-chem le-sha-lom, mal-a-chei ha-sha-lom, mal-a-chei El-yon,	צאתכם לשלום, מלאכי השלום, מלאכי עליון,
mi-me-lech ma-le-chei ha-me-la-chim, ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch Hu.	ממלך מלכי המלאכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא.

(The service continues on page 20.)

What is the connection between this song and the Friday evening home service?

"Shalom Aleichem," which dates from the seventeenth century, became a customary home song because of its connection with the Talmudic legend that two angels accompany a Jew on the way home from synagogue on Friday evening. If the home has been prepared to honor Shabbat, the good angel says, "So may it be next Shabbat," and the evil angel reluctantly says, "Amen." If the home is not ready for Shabbat, the evil angel can say, "So may it be next Shabbat," and the good angel must respond, "Amen."<sup>6</sup>

Why is music used to welcome Shabbat?

The singing and chanting of songs and blessings have become a customary part of Shabbat because Jewish tradition has always associated Shabbat with oneg/joy. Although music is not necessary around your table (you can recite the blessings as opposed to chanting them), you certainly ought to try singing on Shabbat. With a bit of practice, your chanting of the blessings and singing of Shalom Aleichem or other songs can become an integral part of your observance.



**LEARNING STATION RESOURCE  
MATERIAL FOCUSING ON  
KIDDUSH**

# Kiddush

## Sanctifying Shabbat

Introduction

(You may read one of the following.)

The seventh day is consecrated to God. With wine, our symbol of joy, we celebrate this day and its holiness. We give thanks for all our blessings, for life and health, for work and rest, for home and love and friendship. On Shabbat, eternal sign of creation, we remember that we are created in the divine image. We therefore raise the cup in thanksgiving.



(When children are present, more than one reader might share this passage.)

When God made the world, God made it full of light: the sun to shine by day, the moon and stars by night.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth plants and trees of every kind."

God made the world full of living things, walking and flying, hopping and swimming.

And the Torah tells us God saw that the world was good.

And God made man and woman and gave them minds and hearts and hands.

to think and to feel, to work and to play.

And God saw everything in the world, and, behold, it was very good.

So there was morning and evening, and after six days of creation, heaven and earth, the entire world, was made.

Only one thing more remained to be created.

As a ruler needs a crown, the world needed its own crown.

So God made the seventh day into Shabbat and called it a crown for the world.

Shabbat... A time to look at our world and enjoy its beauty. A day for thanking God for health and love, for family and for friends.

We thank God now for our blessings by singing the Kiddush.

### The Concluding Day of Creation

When we taste the sweetness of the grapes, we say: Thank You, God, for all that is sweet in our lives.

(As a reminder of the origin of Shabbat, you can use the following Torah verses to introduce the Kiddush. The verses can be said in Hebrew or English.)

va-ye-hi e-rev, va-ye-hi e-rer,	וַיְהִי עֶרֶב, וַיְהִי בקר,
yom ha-shi-shi.	יום הששי.
va-ye-chu-lu	וַיִּבְרְאוּ
ha-sha-ma-yim ve-ha-a-ratz	השמים והארץ
ze-chol tse-va-am,	כָּל-צִבְאוֹת,
va-ye-chal E-lo-him	וַיִּבְרַח אֱלֹהִים
ba-yom ha-she-vi-i	בַּיּוֹם השביעי
me-lach-to a-she-r a-sa;	מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂהוּ
va-yish-bot ba-yom ha-she-vi-i	וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם השביעי
mi-kol me-lach-to a-she-r a-sa.	מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂהוּ
va-ye-va-rech E-lo-him	וַיְבָרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים
et yom ha-she-vi-i	אֶת-יוֹם השביעי
va-ye-ka-deish o-to,	וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ,
ki oo sha-va-t mi-kol me-lach-to	כִּי כֹ שִׁבְתָּ מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ
a-she-r ba-ru E-lo-him la-a-sot.	אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לְעֹשֶׂת.

And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. The heaven and the earth were finished and all their array. And on the seventh day God finished the work which God had been doing, and God ceased on the seventh day from all the work which had been done. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation which had been done.

(Genesis 1:31, 2:1-3)

### Blessing over the Wine

† See page 111

Raise the Kiddush cups filled with wine or grape juice. (The Kiddush can be said or sung with those present either standing or sitting.)

Ba-ru-ch a-ta, A-do-nai	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
E-lo-hai-nu, me-lech ha-ol-am,	אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
bo-rei pe-ri ha-ga-jen.	בּוֹרֵא פְרִי הַגֶּזֶן.

We praise You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Shapiro, Mark Dov. *Gates of Shabbat: A Guide for Observing Shabbat*, CCAR, 1991

Sanctifying  
Shabbat

<i>Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai</i>	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
<i>E-lo-hai-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,</i>	אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
<i>a-sher ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-ro-tav</i>	אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
<i>ve-ra-ta va-nu,</i>	וְרָצָה בָּנוּ,
<i>ve-sha-bat kod-sho</i>	וְשִׁבַּת קֹדֶשׁוֹ
<i>be-a-ha-va u-ve-ra-tson</i>	בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן
<i>hin-chi-la-nu, zi-ka-ron</i>	הִנְחִילָנוּ, וּזְכוֹר
<i>le-ma-a-sei ve-rei-shit.</i>	לְמַעַן שֶׁאֵין בְּרֵאשִׁית.
<i>Ki hu yom te-chi-la,</i>	כִּי הוּא יוֹם תְּחִילָה
<i>le-mk-ra-ei ko-desh,</i>	לְמַקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ,
<i>zei-cher li-isi-at Mits-ra-yim.</i>	זֶכֶר לַיְצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם.
<i>Ki na-nu va-char-ta,</i>	כִּי בָנוּ בְּחַרְתָּ,
<i>ve-o-ta-nu ki-dash-ta</i>	וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ
<i>mi-kol ha-q-mim,</i>	מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים,
<i>ve-sha-bat kod-she-cha</i>	וְשִׁבַּת קֹדֶשְׁךָ
<i>be-a-ha-va u-ve-ra-tson</i>	בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן
<i>hin-chal-la-nu.</i>	הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ:
<i>Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai,</i>	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי,
<i>me-ka-desh ha-sha-bat.</i>	מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשִּׁבְּת.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe who hallows us with mitzvot and favors us with the holy Shabbat, lovingly and graciously bestowing upon us, a memorial of the act of creation, first of the holy assemblies, a remembrance of the going forth from Egypt.

You have chosen us and hallowed us from among all peoples, by lovingly and graciously bestowing upon us Your holy Sabbath. We praise You, O God, who sanctifies Shabbat.

*Drink the wine.  
(The service continues on page 27.)*

**What does "Kiddush" mean?**

Kiddush is the Hebrew word for "sanctification." It comes from the same Hebrew root as the word *kadosh*, which means "holy" or "set apart."

**What is the structure of the Kiddush?**

The Friday evening Kiddush consists of:

1. The one line blessing over the wine (... *borai peri hagafen* / Creator of the fruit of the vine).
2. The blessing sanctifying the day of Shabbat. (This is the full Hebrew paragraph on page 24, concluding with the words of blessing: *Ba-ruch ata, Adonai, mekadesh hashabbat* / We praise You, O God, who sanctifies Shabbat.)

**What is the purpose of the Kiddush?**

The Kiddush is the prayer with which we sanctify Shabbat. The rabbis reasoned that there was an obligation to sanctify Shabbat as a result of their reading of the Shabbat commandment in the Book of Exodus (20:8). Where that text says "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," the rabbis determined that making Shabbat holy meant sanctifying it with a blessing.<sup>7</sup> The two-part Kiddush on Friday night is that blessing.

**How does wine become involved in the Kiddush?**

Because Shabbat is associated with joy ("You shall call the Sabbath a joy," Isaiah 58:13) and because wine is also understood in Jewish tradition to be a symbol of joy ("Wine makes glad the human heart," Psalms 104:15), the rabbis declared that Shabbat should be sanctified using wine.<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that the Kiddush is not a prayer in which the wine is sanctified. Rather, it is a prayer in which the wine is used in order to sanctify Shabbat.

If you do not have wine, you may omit the blessing, "... *borai peri hagafen*." Instead, recite the Motzi over bread followed by the Kiddush paragraph which sanctifies Shabbat.

**What kind of wine is appropriate for Kiddush?**

The kosher wine associated through the ages with Jewish ceremonies was kosher, by definition of the Talmud, if it was produced by Jews alone under rabbinic supervision.<sup>9</sup> Special precautions to ensure that Jews were the only ones involved in producing the wine were taken long ago, because, in the ancient world, wine was used in the libations for idol worship. Lest they unwittingly use wine intended for idolatry, Jews chose to use only their own wine. When idol worship ceased, the rabbinic exclusion of non-Jews from the production of wine persisted as a way of minimizing social contact between Jews and non-Jews.

In our time the rationale for the earlier definition of kosher wine no longer obtains. Some Jews will, therefore, use any wine for Kiddush. In the interest of historic

continuity, others choose to use traditional kosher wine. Out of a desire to support Israel, all of whose wines are kosher, some Jews also opt for making Kiddush with Israeli wine.

**Should the full text of the Kiddush be said in Hebrew?**

Ideally, the Kiddush should be recited in Hebrew. However, English is definitely acceptable. If you possess at least some knowledge of Hebrew, you should be able to do the blessing over the wine in Hebrew while leaving the blessing sanctifying Shabbat in English. As time goes by, you could work towards doing the second blessing in Hebrew by adding a Hebrew sentence or phrase each week.

**Why does the Kiddush refer to Shabbat as a reminder of both the Creation of the world *and* the Exodus from Egypt?**

The Kiddush contains these two references to the past because the Torah refers to first one and then the other as the historic underpinnings for Shabbat.

In Exodus 20, where the Ten Commandments are proclaimed from Mount Sinai, Jews are called upon to "remember" Shabbat as the day on which God rested after creating the world. Responding to that biblical phrase, the Kiddush mentions creation as a reminder that on Shabbat we follow God's lead and step back from creating and manipulating the world.

In Deuteronomy 5, where Moses repeats the Ten Commandments, the emphasis of the Shabbat commandment is different. There the fourth Commandment calls on Jews to observe Shabbat as a reminder of the Exodus from Egyptian slavery.

According to this understanding of the seventh day, Shabbat calls to mind the experience of liberation. It returns every seven days to help Jews liberate themselves personally from the burdens of the week.

With its focus on liberation, Shabbat ideally achieves even one more purpose. It has the possibility of sensitizing Jews to societal issues of deprivation and injustice. By raising the themes of slavery and freedom, Shabbat can become the gateway to social action during the rest of the week.

**What is the significance of the greeting "Lechayim?"**

The classic Jewish toast before drinking wine or other beverages is "Lechayim," which means "To life." The toast has talmudic roots insofar as it was the custom during that period to give wine to bereaved persons who were sitting in mourning.<sup>10</sup> When wine was then used in joyous settings, the mood was, of course, very different. To make the distinction clear, the drinking of wine in these settings was accompanied by the hope that it should only be *lechayim* (for life)—for reasons of joy and gladness rather than for grief.

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCE  
MATERIAL FOCUSING ON  
NETILAT YADAYIM**

The ritual washing of hands is a reminder of the Jerusalem Temple and its sacrifices. Cookouts we understand—sacrifices confuse us. People often have difficulty making peace with the sacrificial history of the Jewish people; they try to purge it from their Jewish understandings and practices. It seems primitive, pagan. It doesn't matter that the real process of the Temple cult was communal meals and a public acknowledgment that all we grow, raise, or produce is as a much product of God's help as of our own efforts. One merely says the word "sacrifice" and people envision natives throwing things off the cliff to appease the god of the volcano. The Temple cult in Jerusalem was really much closer to being a tax bureau that offered a good stage show and held regular national barbecues. Most farmers came to the Temple one, two, or three times a year. Each trip involved bringing the tithe of their crops for both the priests and the poor. The Temple sacrifices were not attempts to feed a hungry God or bribe a capricious deity. Rather, they were tangible expressions of thanks for Divine involvement in the natural order, and physical expressions of the desire for quality interpersonal relations. The Jewish practice of sacrifice was not violent or mindless. It was just the opposite—reverent and communal.

While the Pharisaic rabbis who created the Talmud were often alienated from the workings of the Temple cult, they found value in preserving remembrances of its operation in the day-to-day Jewish ritual they evolved. With the destruction of the Temple Judaism lost the presence of a monolithic national focus. The religious hegemony moved from a single national cult to the emerging synagogue and into the home. The rabbinic leaders of this transition acted on the belief that there was significant value in preserving an active memory of the time when all Jews celebrated their relationship with God through a single national worship center. They seeded the daily practice of Judaism with echoes of the Temple. While facilitating the new centrality of the small worship community and the family, they never let the memory of a strong worship-connection common to all Jews slip from the collective memory. Today, the practices that are most directly rooted in the Temple are often those most difficult to understand.

In our society, washing is an act of hygiene. It has a physical outcome. The washing of already clean hands is something we leave to the surgical community. The notion of ritual cleanliness has no immediate context. It seems magical—primitive. Likewise for us, the act of eating is a physical process. Fuel is consumed, a certain amount of pleasure is experienced, and hunger is satisfied. The Jewish tradition has another view of eating, and this view is rooted in the sacrificial experience. In *Pythe Avox*, the Rabbis teach, "When three people sit together and eat, and they don't discuss words of Torah, then it is as if they are eating dead bodies." The Rabbis weren't arguing for vegetarianism. Rather, they suggested that eating itself can be a religious experience. One can go beyond the mere physical acts of consuming fuel and satisfying hunger and reach an understanding that God was at work in the natural order that provided this food. Just eating can help us understand that all people are entitled to food, and that our temporary stewardship over any

wealth comes with responsibility. This was the core message of the "primitive" sacrificial cult in Jerusalem.

To eat with spiritual intent takes focus and concentration. Therefore, every act of eating was framed with ritual. The washing of hands with a blessing is not a Shabbat action. It is an action tied to every formal Jewish meal, every act of eating bread.

In preparing this chapter on *Netilat Yadayim*, our experience with the families taught us that two things were important to share. First, that the ceremony of washing hands was not performed in every home we visited. For most of the families we interviewed, it was the hardest part of the Shabbat Seder in which to find meaning. Many did it anyway because it is a tradition. Second, it became clear that we were obligated to provide a clear vision of some of the values that can be encountered through this act.

#### JANICE REZNIK:

My favorite Shabbat time is right after washing the hands. Yoni (age 3) knows that he can't talk until he eats, so we take about three minutes to get to the bread, so we can have the silence.

#### SANDY GOODGLICK:

I like washing our hands in the kitchen because we don't say anything. Bill washes first. Then me, and then Todd. We say the blessing to ourselves. I usually get a little hug from Todd then. It's nice being surrounded by two men—a nice warm moment, away from everybody, relaxing, uninhibited. It feels free, that's why I like it. If guests come in, then I don't get hugged or tickled. But they are certainly welcome. But usually it's just the three of us.

#### ELAINE ALBERT:

I made a decision at some point... I am now not sure that I still agree with. I'm sorry that I didn't include handwashing in our Shabbat ritual. It's an experience that my children don't have and they are not familiar with. For us, too, it is an experience that we have not had. But I just couldn't really understand it. I mean, I knew what the reason was, and I had studied and I understood what it was, but at that time I did not find that things having to do with the Temple were really relevant to me.



ERIN VINOCOR:

We wash our hands and while we're drying them we say a *brakbab*.

KAREN VINOCOR:

Ari takes a glass or cup, anything that's around. I've shown him how to pour water three times over each hand and then pass the cup onto someone else; to take the towel and say the *brakbab*. Erin hasn't yet poured water over her hands. At that point, I am very hungry and cannot be bothered with taking time, so I pour water over both our hands and we say the *brakbab* together. She's just getting used to saying it. Then we sit down at the table as quietly as we possibly can and we say a very quick *ba-Motzi*.

## CONCEPTS

### THE SHABBAT TABLE AS ALTAR

The Talmudic rabbis viewed the Shabbat table as a substitute for the altar in the Temple. For them, participants in the Shabbat Seder approached the meal as the High Priests approached the altar. Thus, in the washing of hands and the breaking of bread, we see echoes of Temple times.

*Netilat Yadayim*, washing of hands, is not an act of cleanliness. It is a ritual preparation. Just as the priests ritually cleansed their hands before beginning their duties in the Temple (Exodus 30:20), we symbolically wash our hands before breaking bread. By doing so, we become celebrants in the holy act of eating.

## OBJECTS

A large cup or pitcher is required for *Netilat Yadayim*. Special pitchers with dual handles have been developed for this purpose. There are even *Netilat Yadayim* "sets" of a pitcher and basin made in Israel especially for this purpose. But any glass and sink will do just fine. You will also need a towel for drying the hands. It is not appropriate to use the small pitcher and basin designed for "*mayim aharonim*," the "after water" passed around the table in some families before *Birkat ha-Mazon*. The tradition prescribes that each person "cover his/her hands with water," and these "finger" pitchers don't hold enough water.

## PRACTICE

The first step in *Netilat Yadayim* is to remove any jewelry from your fingers. As in other ritual cleansing (e.g., the *mikvah* immersion), nothing should come between your hands and the water. Fill a cup or pitcher with water (or if a thoughtful person precedes you, she will have refilled the cup after finishing). Take the cup in the left hand and pour some of the water over the right hand, letting the water cover the hand from the wrist down. Turn your hand under the water so it gets completely wet. Then switch the cup into the right hand and pour water over the left hand. (Actually, the order of hands is arbitrary.) Some repeat this procedure three times. When you are finished pouring, it is good etiquette to refill the cup for the next person. Then lift up your hands and begin reciting the blessing. Dry your hands after completing the blessing.

If you have left the table to perform this ritual at a sink, return to your place without talking. Since the handwashing is done in order to eat the bread, *Netilat Yadayim* and *ba-Motzi* (the blessing for bread) are considered one act. As we learned earlier, a ritual is not completed until both the blessing is recited and the act is done. Nothing should interrupt this part of the ceremony until the blessing for bread is recited and the bread is actually eaten.

## NETILAT YADAYIM—WASHING THE HANDS

1. *Barukh attah Adonai* Praised are You, Adonai,
2. *Eloheimu melekh ha-Olam* our God, Ruler of the universe,
3. *asher kiashanu* who has made us holy
4. *b'mitzvotav* through His commandments
5. *al netilat yadayim.* and commanded us concerning the washing of hands.

## THE BLESSING

There is an interesting point to make about the use of the word *netilat* in the *brakhab* for washing hands. If you recall the Passover Seder, the leader symbolically washes hands at the beginning of the service. This is called *rabitzab*—the Hebrew word for "washing." We might expect, then, that the blessing for washing hands would read *al rabitzat yadayim*, not *al netilat yadayim*. *Netilat* literally means "take" or "lift up." The use of this term indicates that the hands are in fact "lifted up" to a higher level by this symbolic cleansing, ready to participate in the breaking of bread.

## PRACTICAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Can we wash hands at a sink or must we use a special pitcher and basin?

Either way is fine. Washing at the table can be somewhat cumbersome with the chance of spilling significant amounts of liquid in the process. On the other hand, using a kitchen or bathroom sink requires everyone to get up from the table to perform the ritual. Do what seems comfortable in your situation.

Who washes first?

In some homes there is a weekly race to the sink to see who will wash first. Of course, whoever washes first has the longest time to stay quiet before the *ha-Motzi* is recited. Some families establish a regular order of washing to avoid arguments.

Is there absolutely no talking once the washing is completed?

Since the act of washing the hands is preparation for the breaking of bread, no talking is to interrupt what is considered to be one complete ritual act. There are some interesting dynamics to this process. Because not everyone can wash simultaneously, some will have completed washing while others are waiting on line. Those waiting to wash can, of course, talk, while those who have finished must wait silently. Some families have taken to

1. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,
2. אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
3. אֲשֶׁר קִיְשָׁנוּ
4. בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ,
5. עַל נְטִילַת יָדָיִם.



humming a *mitzgan*, a melody without words, during this waiting time. Try humming the tune for "Shabbat Shalom" or any of your other favorite Shabbat songs. It will help reduce the temptation to talk.

By the way, since there is no talking before the actual tasting of the *hallah*, you will have to establish who is to do the various actions associated with the *ha-Motzi* before you wash hands. Decisions about who will uncover the *hallot*, who will say the blessing, who will break the bread, and who will pass the bread around should be made before *Netilat Yadayim*. Otherwise, you'll find a lot of people trying to give directions with hand motions.

What should we do if guests are at the table who have never seen this ritual?

As with any of the steps of the Shabbat Seder, guests may be invited to participate in your ritual. The chances of them doing so are much greater if you take the time to explain the reasons why you do these actions. It also helps to demonstrate the ritual for them. In the case of *Netilat Yadayim*, some even consider it a sign of friendship to pour the water over another's hands. For young children in the family, you will certainly want to do the pouring. It is also a good idea to warn your guests about the "no talking" rule and the reasons for it before someone is embarrassed by talking at the wrong time.

What if I can't get my rings off?

Go ahead and wash. For those who can get their jewelry off, be careful where you put the valuables. We spoke to one person who nearly lost a wedding ring when it fell into a kitchen sink!

### SOME INTERESTING SOURCES

As we've seen, the practice of *Netilat Yadayim* is rooted in the Temple ritual, in the practice of sacrifice. Here is a Rabbinic text that tries to explain the real purpose of sacrifice by eliminating some misconceptions. Once the false understandings are stripped away, what do you think it sees as the "true" purpose of the sacrifices?

God said: "I do not need sacrifices, for all the world is Mine, and the animals which you offer I created, as it teaches in the Bible: 'If I am hungry, I would not tell you, for the world is mine and its fullness' (Psalm 50:12). I do not eat or drink."

Rabbi Simon said: "Thirteen stages of compassion are ascribed to God. Would a compassionate Being assign that Being's feeding to one who is cruel (as people can be cruel)?"

Rabbi Hiyya ben Abba said: "God says, 'My creatures do not need My creatures. Have you ever heard of a person who says: 'Give this vine wine to drink, that it may give much more wine, or 'drench this olive tree with oil, that it may give much oil?' If My creations do not need My creations, why should I need my creations?'"

*Numbers Rabbah*, Pimbas, 21.16-7

Here is a text about "washing hands." It makes a great deal out of the practice. Why do you think the transmitters of this legend found such value in this ritual action?

When Rabbi Akiba was in prison, (incarcerated by the Romans for teaching Torah), Rabbi Joshua ha-Garsi used to attend him. Every day he would bring him a certain amount of water. Once the prison guard met him and said, "You have too much water today (Do you want to flood the prison?)" He poured out half the water. When Rabbi Joshua came to Rabbi Akiba, Akiba said, "Joshua, do you not know that I am old, my life depends on you, why have you brought me so little water?" Joshua told him what had happened. Then Rabbi Akiba said to him, "Give me the water to wash my hands," Joshua said, "You don't even have enough drinking water, why wash?" Akiba said, "The Rabbis have made washing an important act. How can I go against the words of my colleagues?"

### The Morning Blessings—*Birkhot HaShahar*

prayer book, in order to explain the origin of the prayer more clearly and to place it in its proper perspective.

The Talmud says that "A person is required to recite one hundred *berakhot* ("blessings") every day" (Mena sought from the Geonim by distant Jewish c fulfill this requirement, may well have been th to the appearance of the first siddur. Credited one hundred blessings are all the blessings said services and those said before and after meals. provide a great boost for reaching the daily mark.

Donin, Rabbi Hayim Halevy. *To Pray as A Jew: A Guide to the Prayer Book and the Synagogue Service*, Basic Books, U.S.A., 1980.

### THE BLESSING FOR WASHING HANDS: AL NETILAT YADAYIM

The very first blessing in this section is for washing hands:

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning the washing of hands.

To wash one's hands in the morning (and also before meals) is one of the mitzvot legislated by the sages (Hulin 106a; Sotah 4b; OH 4:1, 158:1). The reasons are both hygienic and spiritual. In addition to insuring physical cleanliness, the washing of hands symbolizes the removal of defilement and impurity, and the restoration of spiritual cleanliness. It also serves as a reminder of the ancient Temple service in which the kohen was required to wash his hands before beginning the daily ritual (Exodus 30:20). His was an act of consecration. We emulate that act.

Although blessings are usually recited before performing a mitzvah, the proper time for saying this blessing, both in the morning and before meals, is after washing, but before drying the hands (OH 4:1; MB:2). The blessing is always delayed until after the washing because hands are sometimes so dirty that it is not proper to say a blessing then. The blessing for the morning washing is properly said after dressing; many people say it, however, at the start of the morning prayers. This blessing is not recited aloud by the Prayer Leader in the synagogue.

One should note the unusual word used for "washing hands." The conventional Hebrew word for washing is *rohetz*, and one would expect to say *al rehitzat yadayim*. Instead, we say *al netilat yadayim*, which literally means "the lifting up of the hands." The use of this expression for washing of the hands implies that it is a ceremony symbolizing that the hands are "lifted" to a higher level and are being consecrated for nobler deeds in fulfillment of God's commandments. We wash them out of respect to our Maker (Shabbat 50b).

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCE  
MATERIAL FOCUSING ON  
HaMOTZI**

# Motzi

## Blessing over the Bread

### Introduction

(You may read one of the following)

When the world was created,  
God made everything a little bit incomplete.  
Rather than making bread grow out of the earth,  
God made wheat grow so that we might bake it into bread.  
Rather than making the earth of bricks,  
God made it of clay  
so that we might bake the clay into bricks. Why?  
So that we might become partners  
in completing the work of creation.

◆  
Before Rabbi Simcha recited the blessing for bread, he would first look at the bare ground. He wanted to be inspired by an appreciation of the contrast between the dust of the earth and the fine bread which it brought forth.

### The Blessing ‡ See page 113

*The leader places hands on the challah as everyone says the blessing.*

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-mi  
E-lo-hi-mu, me-lech ha-o-lam,  
ha-mo-tsi le-chem min ha-a-rets.  
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם.  
הַמּוֹצֵא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

*Slice or tear the challah and distribute it around the table to be eaten.  
Dinner is served.*

(Birkat Hamazon, the blessing after the meal, can be found on page 34.)



**What is the origin of the term "challah"?**

The word "challah" originally referred to the dough offering set aside for the priests during the time of the Jerusalem Temple. After the destruction of the Temple, Jews continued setting aside part of their dough when they baked Shabbat and holiday breads. Eventually, the term "challah" was also applied to these loaves themselves.

**Why is a blessing said over the challah?**

When we pause to recite the Motsi before a meal begins, our goal is to sensitize ourselves to the fundamental blessings that surround us. We thank God for creating the world in such a way that life can sustain itself.

**Why are two loaves used in some homes?**

The two loaves represent the double share of manna which, according to the Torah (Exodus 16:22), fell each Friday in order to feed our ancestors on their journey from Egypt to Canaan. Collecting the double portion of manna on Friday meant that the Israelites did not have to collect food when Shabbat arrived.

If you want to have a double share of bread on your table but feel that the two loaves of bread might be wasted in your household, you can use a regular challah with a small roll beside it or simply use two smaller braided challah rolls.

**Why is the challah covered until the Motsi in some homes?**

Since bread is a basic part of almost every meal, some people keep the challah out of sight in order to highlight the Friday evening ceremonies of candlelighting and Kiddush. Once it is clear that the meal is not an ordinary one but in honor of Shabbat, the challah is uncovered and the Motsi is recited.

Another explanation for this custom is based on the challah's symbolic representation of the manna. The cover over the challah and the plate or platter which is usually placed underneath the challah are said to represent the two layers of dew between which the manna fell, protecting it from the sand of the Sinai desert below and the heat of the sun above.<sup>11</sup>

A popular explanation for children is that the challah is covered in order not to embarrass the bread when the candles and wine are dealt with first. When covering the challah on your table, a napkin can suffice. You can also purchase or even make special challah covers to add to the beauty of your evening.

**What is the significance of the handwashing ceremony that precedes the Motsi in some homes?**

The custom of washing hands before the Motsi was developed by the talmudic rabbis because of their belief that the family table was as holy as the altar in the Jerusalem Temple where the priests conducted ancient Jewish worship. Just as the priests ritually cleansed their hands before beginning their duties, the rabbis maintained

that we ought to wash our hands symbolically before our meals.

Those who wish can participate in this ceremony by going to the sink before the Motsi. Each person grasps a cup or pitcher of water and pours some water from the cup over each hand two or three times. The cup is refilled for the next person until everyone has had a chance. At that point the following blessing is said and the hands are dried.

Ba-ruch a-tu, A-do-nai  
 E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam  
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
 a-sher ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-so-tu,  
 אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,  
 ve-tsi-ta-nu al ne-i-lai ya-da-yim.  
 וְצִוָּנוּ עַל יָדְיֵינוּ וְעַל יָדְיֵיךָ.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has made us holy with commandments and commanded us to cleanse our hands.

The Motsi is said as soon as everyone returns to the table.

**How is salt used after the Motsi?**

After the blessing is said over the challah and the bread has either been cut or broken into pieces, some Jews sprinkle salt on the bread. This is done as a way of comparing the household table to the altar in the historic Jerusalem Temple. As salt was sprinkled on the offerings in Jerusalem, salt can be used on the challah when the meal begins.

**When is the word "amen" said?**

The word "amen" is first found in the Torah as a response of affirmation. After hearing a series of pronouncements by the Levites (Deuteronomy 27), the Israelites indicate their endorsement of the Levites' words by responding "amen."

"Amen" is used in the same way today. It is said when a person hears someone else say a blessing and then expresses agreement with the sentiments of the blessing by responding "amen."

**SHABBAT ACTIVITY #4**

## PRACTICAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

When is *Birkat ha-Mazon* recited?

The *Birkat ha-Mazon* is recited at the conclusion of the Shabbat Seder. Generally, this means that dessert has been eaten and all the *Z'mitot* and table talk are over.

Why do some people remove knives from the table before reciting the *Birkat ha-Mazon*?

As we have learned, the table is compared to an altar. In Deuteronomy 27:5 it is written: "You shall not lift up any iron upon (the altar)." Iron is an instrument of violence that shortens human life, while the table and its offerings sustain life.

How can I include *Birkat ha-Mazon* when my young children are squirming at the table? As the last and by far the longest prayer in the Shabbat Seder, the *Birkat ha-Mazon* is often recited hurriedly. To counteract the problem, families have devised interesting solutions. Some families choose to recite *Birkat ha-Mazon* immediately after dessert and before a long round of *Z'mitot* so the children can be excused. (Note the similarity to the Passover Seder when the hymns such as *Had Gadya* are sung after *Birkat ha-Mazon*.) This allows "the young and the restless" the opportunity to excuse themselves to play. In other families, the children are excused after eating the main part of the meal and are called back to the table for dessert, *Z'mitot*, and *Birkat ha-Mazon*. Other families choose the short version of the *Birkat ha-Mazon*, concentrating on the key phrases of the four major blessings.

Another great help is to learn the tunes for the recitation of the *Birkat ha-Mazon*. They are easy to pick up, and as the children hear them repeated every Shabbat they, too, will soon know the tunes. Again, you can learn the melodies from friends who know them, tapes, or perhaps your children!

Should I let the kids leave the table and then ask them back for the *Birkat ha-Mazon*? Depending on the ages of the children involved, once they leave the table it can be difficult to get them back, particularly if they resent it as interference in their play. Some families are successful with this approach; others maintain that saying the *Birkat ha-Mazon* as soon as possible after eating is the only way to have their involvement.

## SOME INTERESTING SOURCES

Look at these two rabbinic selections about *b'rakhot*. How do they explain the importance of a blessing "after" a meal? What is their moral impact?

A person is forbidden to enjoy anything of this world without saying a *b'rakha*. Whoever does so, commits an act of their against God.

*B'rakhot* 35a

A person should not taste anything without first saying a *b'rakha*, because it teaches in the Psalms (24:1), "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." Someone who gets enjoyment out of this world without a *b'rakha* has defrauded the Lord.

*Tosefta, B'rakhot* 4:1

In saying *Birkat ha-Mazon*, we adopt the focus of two moments in Jewish history. The first comes before the Israelites enter the land of Canaan after 40 years in the wilderness. The second comes during the Babylonian exile and anticipates a return to Israel. Look at these two texts and explore what can be gained from understanding and reliving these two moments in the Jewish experience.

For Adonai your God is bringing you into a good land,

a land with streams and springs,

and lakes coming from plain and hill;

a land of wheat and barley,

of vines, figs, and pomegranates;

a land where you may eat food without worry;

where you will lack for nothing;

a land whose rocks are iron

and from whose hills you can mine copper.

When you have eaten and are full,

give thanks to Adonai your God

for the good land which He has given you.

Take care not to forget Adonai your God

and fail to keep His commandments,

His statutes and His laws

which I command you today.

When you have eaten your fill

and have built fine houses to live in,

and your herds and flocks have multiplied,

and your silver and gold have increased,

Wolson, Dr. Ron. *The Art of Jewish Living: The*

*Shabbat Seder*, The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs,  
1985.

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*Tosefta, B'rakbot* 4.1

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For Adonai your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams and springs, and lakes coming from plain and hill; a land of wheat and barley,

of vines, figs, and pomegranates,

a land of olive oil and of honey;

a land where you may eat food without worry,

where you will lack for nothing;

a land whose rocks are iron

and from whose hills you can mine copper.

When you have eaten and are full,

give thanks to Adonai your God

for the good land which He has given you.

Take care not to forget Adonai your God

and fail to keep His commandments,

His statutes and His laws

which I command you today.

When you have eaten your fill,

and have built fine houses to live in,

and your herds and flocks have multiplied,

and your silver and gold have increased,

and everything you own has prospered,  
beware not to let your heart grow proud  
and you forget Adonai your God  
who freed you from the Land of Egypt,  
the House of Bondage; who led you through the great and terrible wilder-  
ness, with its seraphs, serpents and scorpions,  
a parched land with no water in it,  
who brought forth water for you from the flint rocks;  
who fed you in the wilderness with manna  
which your fathers had never known,  
in order to test you by hardships,  
only to benefit you in the end,  
and you say to yourselves, "My own power and the might of my own hand  
have won this wealth for me."

Deuteronomy 8:7-17

A song of ascents:  
When Adonai restores the fortunes of Zion—  
we will be as in a dream—  
Then our mouths will be filled with laughter;  
our tongues with songs of joy;  
Then shall they say among the nations,  
"Adonai did great things for them!"  
Adonai will do great things for us;  
and we will be happy.  
Adonai will restore our fortune,  
like streams in the Negev;  
Those who sew in tears, with songs they shall reap;  
He who walks and weeps  
carrying his sack of seeds—  
he will come back with song—  
carrying his sheaves.

Psalms 126

Both of these settings are moments of expectation rather than fulfillment. Why do you think that *Birkat ha-Mazon* is set in moments of hope (waiting to go into Israel, waiting to return from Babylon), rather than moments of success (the conquest of the Land, the return from Exile)? What is the lesson?

# The Shab

When Yael was in n  
composed a recipe  
would give their fav  
cooks and how the  
course, being in nur  
no conception. "Yo  
ter and you take a h  
it until it's hard and  
favorite was, to mak  
freezer and put it ir  
were chicken soup

# Activity 4

wonder about learning others. The remedy for your doubts is simple: Just try. Try one or two songs to begin with and you will almost certainly realize that singing together adds a whole new dimension of joy to Shabbat.



Shapiro, Mark Dov. *Gates of Shabbat: A Guide for Observing Shabbat*. Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 1991.

## Birkat Hamazon The Blessing after the Meal

*You shall eat, be satisfied, and bless Adonai your God for the good land given to you.*  
Deuteronomy 8:10

As we give thanks to God before the meal, it is also Jewish custom to give thanks with Birkat Hamazon after eating. The component parts of this prayer of gratitude are:

1. **PSALM 126**—An introductory psalm of hope set at the time when our biblical ancestors returned from exile in Babylonia. Psalm 126 ("A Song of Ascent") is used to introduce Birkat Hamazon only on Shabbat and holidays.
2. **ZIMUN / INVITATION** — The actual Birkat Hamazon is preceded by a responsive section in which one person acts as leader and invites those present to pray.
3. **THE BLESSING FOR FOOD**—The first paragraph of Birkat Hamazon expresses thanks to God for providing food.
4. **THE BLESSING FOR THE LAND**—This paragraph cites the biblical source for Birkat Hamazon (Deuteronomy 8:10). It also thanks God for the Land of Israel.
5. **THE BLESSING FOR JERUSALEM**—A prayer for the well-being of Jerusalem.
6. **ASKING FOR PEACE**—A short petition asking that the peace of this one Shabbat fill the whole world.
7. **MAKER OF PEACE**—The final hope that God bring peace to the world.

If you are not familiar with Hebrew you can begin by doing much of Birkat Hamazon in English. Section 7 of the prayer is probably familiar to many people in Hebrew, so you could end your Birkat Hamazon with this section in Hebrew.

You can find a more extended version of Birkat Hamazon, in which Jewish tradition has elaborated extensively on the themes of sections 4 through 7, in *A Passover Haggadah* (see "Further Reading," page 103).

1. Psalm 126

On Shabbat

Shtir hu-ma-a-lot.  
 Be-shuv A-do-nai  
 et shi-voit Tsi-yon,  
 hu-yi-nu ke-chol-mim.  
 Az yi-ma-lei se-chok pi-nu,  
 u-le-sho-nei-nu ri-na.  
 Az yom-nu va-goi-yim:  
 "Hig-dil A-do-nai la-a-sot im ei-leh."  
 Hig-dil A-do-nai la-a-sot i-ma-nu,  
 hu-yi-nu se-mei-chim!  
 Shu-va A-do-nai et she-oi-tei-nu  
 ka-a-fi-kim ba-ne-gev.  
 Ha-zor-im be-dim-a,  
 be-ri-na yik-tso-ru.  
 Ha-loch yei-leich u-va-cho,  
 no-sei me-shech hu-za-ra,  
 bo ya-vo ve-ri-na,  
 no-sei a-lu-mo-tav.

שיר המעלות.  
 בשוב יי  
 את־שיבת ציון,  
 יהינו כחלמים.  
 אז ימלא שחוק פינו,  
 ולשונונו רנה.  
 אז יאמרו בגוים:  
 "הגדיל יי לעשות עם־אלהו."  
 הגדיל יי לעשות עמנו,  
 יהינו שמחים!  
 שובה יי את־שבתנו  
 כאפיקים בגב.  
 חזרים בדמעה,  
 ברנה יקצרו.  
 הלוך ילך וזכה,  
 נשא משר־הרעה,  
 בארבה ברנה  
 נשא אלמוניו.

When God restores the exiled of Zion, we shall be as those who dream.  
 Our mouths will be full of laughter then, our tongues with song.  
 Then will they say among the nations: "God has done great things for them."  
 God has done great things for us, and so we now rejoice.  
 Restore us once again, O God, like sudden floodstreams in the desert.  
 Then those who sow in tears will reap in joy.  
 Those who go forth weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, will return bearing the sheaves with song and with laughter.

(On weekdays, begin here)

2. Zimun / Invitation

Leader:  
 Friends, let us praise God.

Group:  
 Let the name of God be praised from now to eternity.

Leader:  
 Let us praise God of whose bounty we have partaken.

Group:  
 Let us praise our God of whose bounty we have partaken and by whose goodness we live.

Leader:  
 Chai-vei-rat (Ra-bo-tai)\*; ne-va-reich!  
 חי־וֵי רַבּוֹתַי, נְכַרְדֵּי

† See page 114

Group:  
 Ye-hi sheim A-do-nai me-vo-rach  
 mei-a-ta ve-ad o-lam!  
 יהי שם יי מברך  
 מעתה ועד עולם

Leader:  
 Ye-hi sheim A-do-nai me-vo-rach  
 mei-a-ta ve-ad o-lam!  
 Bi-re-shut chai-vei-rat,  
 (Bi-re-shut ma-ra-nan  
 ve-ra-ba-nan ve-ra-bo-tai)\*  
 ne-va-reich (E-lo-hei-nu)\*\*  
 she-a-chal-nu mi-she-lo.  
 יהי שם יי מברך  
 מעתה ועד עולם  
 ברשות חברי,  
 (ברשות מרנן  
 ורבנן ורבנותי)  
 נכרך (אלהינו)\*\*  
 שאכלנו משלו.

Group:  
 Ba-ruch (E-lo-hei-nu)\*\* she-a-chal-nu  
 mi-she-lo u-ve-tu-vo chu-yi-nu.  
 ברוך (אלהינו)\*\* שאכלנו  
 משלו ובטובו חיינו.

Leader:  
 Ba-ruch (E-lo-hei-nu)\*\* she-a-chal-nu  
 mi-she-lo u-ve-tu-vo chu-yi-nu.  
 Ba-ruch hu, u-va-ruch she-mo!  
 ברוך (אלהינו)\*\* שאכלנו  
 משלו ובטובו חיינו.  
 ברוך הוא, וברוך שמו!

\* Chaveirai, literally "my friends", is a gender-neutral alternative to the masculine terms traditionally used: rabotai, meaning "gentlemen"; maranan, meaning "masters"; and rabanan, meaning "sages."

\*\* Added when ten or more are present at the meal.

3. The Blessing for Food

Together:

*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai*  
*E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,*  
*ha-zan et ha-o-lam*  
*Ku-lo be-Hu-ro.*  
*Be-cheit be-che-sed u-ve-ra-cha-mim*  
*hu no-tein le-chein*  
*le-chai ba-sar,*  
*ki le-o-lam chas-do.*  
*U-ve-Hu-ro ha-ga-dol*  
*ta-mid lo cha-sar la-nu,*  
*ve-al yech-sar la-nu*  
*ma-zon le-o-lam va-ed,*  
*ba-a-vur she-mo ha-ga-dol.*  
*Ki hu Eil zan u-me-far-nets la-kol*  
*u-meit-to la-kol*  
*u-meit-to ma-zon*  
*le-chai be-ri-yo-tav a-sheer ba-ra.*  
*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai, ha-zan*  
*et ha-kol.*

ברוך אתה, יי  
 אלהינו, מלך העולם,  
 הזן את העולם  
 כולו בטובו.  
 בתוך בחרת וברחמי  
 הוא נתן לחם  
 לקל-בשר,  
 כי לעולם חסדו.  
 ובטובו הגדול  
 תמיד לא יחסר לנו,  
 ואל יחסר לנו  
 מזון לעולם ועד,  
 בעבור שמו הגדול.  
 כי הוא אל זן ומפרנס לכל  
 ומטיב לכל  
 ומטיב מזון  
 לקל-בשרתו אשר ברא.  
 ברוך אתה, יי, הזן  
 את הכל.

Through God's kindness, mercy and compassion all existence is eternally sustained. God is forever faithful. God's surpassing goodness fills all time and space. Sustenance there is for all. None need ever lack, no being ever want for food. We praise You, O God, the One sustaining all.

4. The Blessing for the Land

*Ka-ta-tuv: "ve-a-chal-ha,*  
*ve-sa-va-ha, u-vei-trach-ta*  
*et A-do-nai E-lo-he-cha*  
*al ha-a-rets ha-to-va*  
*a-sheer na-tan lach."*  
*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai,*  
*al ha-a-rets ve-al ha-ma-zon.*

פירות: ואכלת  
 ושבעת וברכת  
 את יי אלהיך  
 על הארץ הטובה  
 אשר נתת לנו.  
 ברוך אתה, יי,  
 על הארץ ועל המזון.

5. The Blessing for Jerusalem

*U-ve-nei Ye-ru-sha-la-yim*  
*ir ha-ko-desh*  
*bi-me-hei-ra ve-ga-mei-nu.*  
*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai,*  
*bo-neh ve-ra-cha-mav*  
*Ye-ru-sha-la-yim. A-mein.*

ובנה ירושלים  
 עיר הקודש  
 במקרה בימינו.  
 ברוך אתה, יי,  
 בונה ברחמי  
 וירושלים. אמן.

And build Jerusalem, O God, speedily in our day. We praise You, O God, whose compassion builds Jerusalem.

6. Asking for Peace

*On Shabbat*  
*Ha-ra-cha-man,*  
*hu yan-chi-lei-nu*  
*yom she-ku-lo Shu-bat*  
*u-me-ru-cha le-cha-yei ha-o-la-min.*

ברכהמן,  
 הוא ינחילנו  
 יום שכולו שבת  
 ומנוחה לחיי העולם.

All Merciful, may we inherit a Sabbath of eternal peace.

*O-seh sha-lom bi-me-ro-mav,*  
*hu ya-a-seh sha-lom*  
*a-lei-nu, ve-al kol Yis-ra-ell,*  
*ve-i-me-ru: A-mein.*

עשה שלום במרומו,  
 הוא יעשה שלום  
 עלינו, ועל כל ישראל,  
 ואמר: אמן.

May God who causes peace to reign in the high heavens, bring peace for us and all Israel.

*A-do-nai oz le-a-mo yi-tein,*  
*A-do-nai ye-va-reich*  
*et a-mo va-sha-lom.*

יי עז לעמו יתן,  
 יי יברך  
 את עמו בשלום.

May God give strength to our people. May God bless all peoples with peace.

### Who wrote Birkat Hamazon?

Birkat Hamazon is largely a creation of the rabbis whose lives and work are described in the Mishnah and Talmud. These post-biblical texts came into being during the first five centuries of the Common Era and they represent the attempt of the scholar-leaders of Judaism to clarify Jewish practice.

The Mishnah is the first Jewish text to mention the custom of reciting a blessing after eating. Short examples of the prayer resembling the Zimun/Invitation of today are recorded.<sup>14</sup>

Later texts in the Talmud indicate how the Birkat Hamazon became an increasingly complex repository of material. Giving thanks for food became the occasion for giving thanks for the covenant, the land of Israel, and the hope of future redemption.

### Does the Torah mention Birkat Hamazon?

No, it doesn't. It does, however, contain Deuteronomy 8:10, which reads: "You shall eat, be satisfied, and bless Adonai...." Although we do not know if this verse gave rise to a blessing after meals in biblical times, we do know that by the time of the Rabbis this verse was considered to be the biblical rationale for Birkat Hamazon. Deuteronomy 8:10 is the only Torah verse quoted in full in the Birkat Hamazon (see "The Blessing for the Land," page 36).

### How important is Birkat Hamazon?

Although it can be difficult to refocus those at the table after they have eaten, Birkat Hamazon should definitely be included in your home service. It is, after all, the component of the service with the most direct connection to the Torah.

It is also the only table prayer that explicitly presents a messianic vision (see "Asking for Peace" and "Maker of Peace"). Since Shabbat is often described as a foretaste of the perfected future, Birkat Hamazon is important because it actively expresses that hope for a compassionate and peaceful world.

Despite this, you may still need to make an extra effort in order to integrate Birkat Hamazon into your Shabbat. You can help the process along by reminding everyone at your table that after eating and singing, you *do* want to conclude with Birkat Hamazon. Doing an abbreviated version of the prayer (try sections 3 and 7) can also ease you into the routine.

*The Grace After Meals:  
Birkat Hamazon*

PRAYERS IN THE HOME

**I**N JEWISH TRADITION, prayers and blessings are not confined to the synagogue or limited to the formal religious service. Though sanctuaries are built and set aside as special places for prayer, we do not believe that the Shekhinah, the Divine Presence, is restricted only to such places. God's abode is the entire universe. "Thus said the Lord: The heaven is my throne and the earth is My footstool; is there a house that you can build for Me, is there a place that can be My abode?" (Is. 66:1). If God commanded the Israelites to "make for Me a sanctuary" (Exod. 25:8), it was not for Him to dwell in it, but so that he could dwell "in their midst." The language of the Torah is very precise and revealing. The purpose of the sanctuary was not to house the Divine Presence, but to create an environment that would allow His spirit to penetrate the community and be reflected in the life of the people.

The synagogue is indeed vested with greater holiness than are other places, and the sages made it abundantly clear that they regarded it as the preferred place for prayer. Said Rabin, son of Rabbi

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Adda, in the name of Rabbi Isaac: "How does one know that the Holy One, blessed be He, is to be found in the synagogue? For it is said (Psalms 82:1) 'God stands in the congregation of God' " (Berakhot 6a).

While not discounting the enthusiasm shown for praying in the synagogue, the Talmud is equally clear that a prayer service may be held anywhere. The only places where prayer is forbidden are places identified with idolatry or sexual lewdness, or places that are foul-smelling or in sight of excrement. A hazardous place is also unsuitable for prayer. No one who has ever prayed in the splendid isolation of nature, where hills and valleys, forests and fields, skies and oceans provide inspirational testimony to God's handiwork, can ever again think of the synagogue as the only place suitable for prayer (see OH 90, MB:11).

But of all places outside the synagogue where Jewish prayer may take place, the home is first in importance. Like the synagogue, the Jewish home has also been described as a "small sanctuary." There too does the Divine Presence dwell. Aside from those times when one prays privately at home because one cannot be at the synagogue, there are many prayers and blessings that were from their inception intended to be said at home. The best known religious service that takes place at home is the Passover seder. The dinner meal is an integral part of that service, but without the prayers and the blessings, it is not a seder.

There is also the Kiddush recited at the dinner table every Sabbath and festival eve, and the Havdalah recited at the very end of the Sabbath and festival day. There is the lighting of candles before every Sabbath and festival and throughout the week of Hanukkah. There is the Shema that is said before retiring for the night. The religious ceremonies of *Brit Milah* ("Covenant of the Circumcision") and *Pridyon Ha-Ben* ("Redemption of the First-Born") often take place at home. The Seven Marriage Blessings said at dinner in the week following the wedding is a home observance. Even a regular prayer service may be conducted at home instead of at the synagogue, a practice that is routinely followed in a house of mourning during the week of shiva. But no prayers or blessings are recited at home with greater regularity than those relating to our meals. We bless God before we eat. We thank Him after we eat.

significance will be discussed in the next chapter.) Yet the greater obligation, the Biblical duty, is to recite a blessing *after* eating. Why? Perhaps because when people are sated, they are more likely to forget Him who is the source of their nourishment. It is easier to think of God and be grateful to Him when the food is still before us and we are hungry. It often happens that when people are able comfortably to meet their basic needs, they turn away from God. This is precisely what troubled Moses when he instructed the Israelites. Immediately following the commandment to bless God after eating, Moses expressed his concern:

Take care lest you forget the Lord your God and fail to keep His commandments . . . lest when you will eat and be sated and will build fine houses to live in, and your herds and flocks will multiply, and your silver and gold will increase, and everything you own will prosper. Beware, lest your heart grow haughty and you then forget the Lord your God . . . and you say to yourselves "My own power and the might of my own hand have won this wealth for me." Remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you the power to acquire wealth . . .

(Deut. 8:11-18)

The after-meal grace was meant to help one resist just such tendencies. It was meant to instill, and help a person maintain, a measure of humility.

## THE FOUR BLESSINGS OF BIRKAT HAMAZON

The four blessings that now make up the Grace after Meals are each devoted to a separate major theme. The first blessing speaks of God providing the food to sustain all the life that He created in the world. The second blessing speaks of Eretz Yisrael, the Torah, and the Covenant of Circumcision, all of which God gave to Israel in covenants manifested through Divine revelation. The third blessing, which originally expressed thanksgiving for Jerusalem and the Beit Hamikdash, now expresses a prayer that God rebuild Jerusalem and its Holy Temple and restore the Davidic dynasty—all elements in Israel's

A Jewish home where prayers and blessings are heard is a home where there is an awareness of God and His teachings. There Judaism lives, and there the Divine Presence dwells.

## A TORAH COMMANDMENT

Among the many blessings that we recite in the fulfillment of our religious duties, the only ones that Scripture explicitly required us to say are those that we say *after* we eat. The obligation to say all the other blessings originated with our sages, who wished to heighten our awareness of God and to strengthen our faith in Him. And though the specific wording of the Grace after Meals did not begin to take shape until the time of Ezra, the Scribe, and was not totally crystallized even by the Talmudic period, to say blessings of thanksgiving after eating was prescribed by the Torah: "When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land that He has given you" (Deut. 8:10).

The Biblical commandment is fulfilled by reciting three blessings: 1) for the food, 2) for the land (of Eretz Yisrael), and 3) for Jerusalem with its Holy Sanctuary. The Talmudic name for the Grace after Meals is in fact *Shalosh Berakhot* ("Three Blessings"). The rabbis later ordained a fourth blessing, expressing the goodness of God (Berakhot 48b).

The Talmud tells us that a blessing for food was first articulated by Moses in gratitude for the manna that the Israelites ate in the desert. A blessing for the land was introduced by Joshua when he led the Israelites into Eretz Yisrael. And King David initiated a blessing for Jerusalem when he established it as the capital of the country. His son, King Solomon, who built the first Temple, expanded upon the blessing by adding his gratitude to God for the "great and holy Sanctuary." Shortly after the destruction of the Second Temple, the sages added a fourth blessing to the Grace after Meals, so as to emphasize the everlasting goodness of God.

Saying a blessing *before* eating is widespread among many peoples and religions. Our sages instituted such blessings too. (Their unique

redemption. The fourth blessing speaks of God's eternal goodness in every thing, in every way, and in every time.

Delicately interwoven throughout the three original blessings is reference to such theological motifs as Creation, Revelation, and Redemption. (These themes are also found in the Blessings of the Shema, in the Musaf Amidah of Rosh Hashanah, and in the middle blessing of the various Sabbath Amidah prayers.) But as in a symphony, the major theme emerges in each and every one of the different blessings: God is the ultimate provider; He is the source of our food, of our sustenance, of our livelihood. A second major theme stresses the centrality of Eretz Yisrael in the life of the nation.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hakohen Kook regards the original three blessings of the after-meal grace as a series of spiritually ascending levels. Man's very first concern is and must be with his own physical survival. If it were his only concern, however, he would not differ from the rest of the world's creatures. Still, physical survival is an essential prerequisite for going on to higher spiritual levels. The Ethics of the Fathers phrases it succinctly: "Where there is no meal, there can be no Torah" (Avot. 3:21).

While the first blessing addresses itself to physical sustenance, the first block in building a more altruistic, meaningful, and holier existence, the second blessing moves on to a concern for the physical survival and well-being of the entire nation, of all the Jewish people. Once physical survival is assured, we can turn our attention to the attainment of spiritual aspirations, on both the personal and national levels. This is reflected in the third blessing, which is a prayer for Jerusalem, the spiritual center of the Jewish people, and for the Beit Hamikdash, which embodies the universal spiritual ideal of the nation. It was built, the Bible says: "so that all the nations of the earth may know that the Lord, He is God, there is none else" (Olat Re'iyah I, pp. 363-365).

Now let us turn to examine each of the blessings separately:

The Blessing for Food: Birkat Hazan

פָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מַלְכוּת הַשָּׁמַיִם, הַיּוֹם  
אֵת הַיְּעוֹלָם כְּלֹל פְּסוּבֹה, בְּחַן וּבְחִיבֻת וּבְרַחֲמִים,

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הוּא נוֹמֵן לָהֶם לֶכֶךְ פֶּשֶׁר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִידוֹ.  
וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל תִּמְרִיר לֹא חֲסֵר-לָנוּ וְאֵל יִחְסֵר  
לָנוּ מִזֶּה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, בְּצַבּוּר שְׂמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל, כִּי  
הוּא אֵל זֶן וּמְפָרְנֵם לְכֹל וּמַטִּיב לְכֹל וּמַכְרִיז  
מִזֶּה לֶכֶךְ בְּרִיחוּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּרָא. פָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,  
הַיּוֹם אֵת הַכֹּל.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who in His goodness, grace, loving kindness, and mercy, nourishes the whole world. He gives food to all flesh, for His loving kindness is everlasting. In His great goodness, we have never lacked for food; may we never lack for food, for the sake of His great Name. For He nourishes and sustains all, He does good to all, and prepares food for all His creatures that He created. Blessed art Thou, Lord, who provides food for all.

This is the oldest and the most universal of the blessings. It is the basic theme in the Grace. It acknowledges God as the world's great Provider. We thank Him for the food that we have eaten and for making it possible for every creature in the world to find its own food supply.

The commandment to bless God after eating is preceded in the Torah by a reference to the manna that God provided the Israelites in the desert in order to teach them "that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives on whatever the Lord decrees" (Deut. 8:3).

This Biblical verse is commonly explained to mean that human beings need more than the mere gratification of a physical need. Man also needs "what the Lord decrees." In other words, man also needs spiritual fulfillment.

The explanation may be a truth unto itself, but the simple meaning of the verse, in a context that deals with the basic question of physical survival, actually teaches us an even more basic lesson. People tend to become accustomed to certain staples or basic commodities without which they feel they cannot survive. Bread has

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historically been an example of one such a staple: not for naught did it come to be called the "staff of life," and this is why the word for flour, "meal," became synonymous with an entire dinner. And when people face the prospect of losing such staples, be it bread or meat or fish or whatever, they panic (as did the Israelites in the desert) and they believe that they are doomed. But the Torah teaches us that if God wants us to live, He will provide alternative forms of nourishment that may have been entirely unknown before. This was the case with the manna that neither the Israelites nor their ancestors had ever encountered before. This verse simply says to us that not only bread, but *everything*, is created "by God's decree," and that life can be physically sustained in ways other than those that we have grown accustomed to and upon which we have come to depend. The important thing is to recognize the Source of our sustenance, "to walk in His ways and revere Him."

The experience of the Israelites in the Sinai desert was intended to be a lesson in faith to all of mankind. Therefore, this blessing does not thank God for feeding only us, or only the Jewish people, and only in the present, but for feeding all the world forever.

The Blessing for the Land: Birkat Haaretz

בְּרָכָה לְךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עַל שְׁהַנְחִילְךָ  
 לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ אֶרֶץ הַמְדֵּה סוּכָה וְרַחֲבָה, וְעַל  
 שְׁהוֹצֵאתָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, וּפְדִיתָנוּ  
 מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים, וְעַל בְּרִיתְךָ שֶׁתַּמְתֵּם בְּבָשָׂרנוּ,  
 וְעַל תּוֹרַתְךָ שֶׁלֹּא מִדְּבָר, וְעַל הַקְּיָה שְׁהוֹדִיעָתָנוּ,  
 וְעַל חַיִּים חַן וְחֶסֶד שְׁהוֹנְנָתָנוּ, וְעַל אֲכִילַת  
 מִזֵּה שְׂאֵתָהּ וְזֶמְרָתָהּ אוֹתָנוּ תָמִיד, בְּכָל יוֹם  
 וּבְכָל עֵת וּבְכָל שָׁעָה.

וְעַל הַכֹּל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לְךָ  
 וּמְבַרְכִים אוֹתְךָ, יְיָ בְּרַךְ שְׁמֹךְ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד

לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, כְּפָתוּב : וְאֲכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבְרַכְתָּ  
 אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר לָנוּ  
 לְךָ: בְּרַךְ אוֹתָהּ יְיָ, עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל הַמָּוֶן.

We thank Thee, Lord our God, for the desirable, good and spacious land that Thou gave our forefathers as a heritage; for having brought us out of the land of Egypt and redeemed us from slavery; for Thy covenant that Thou sealed in our flesh; for Thy Torah which Thou taught us and Thy statutes which Thou made known to us; for the life, the grace and loving kindness that Thou has bestowed on us; and for the food [we eat] with which Thou constantly feed and sustain us every day, at all times [of the day] and in every hour.\*

For everything, Lord our God, we thank Thee and bless Thee; may Thy name be blessed in the mouth of every living creature at all times and for all time; as is written [in Thy Torah]: "When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land that He has given you." Blessed art Thou, Lord, for the land and for the food.

The second blessing is the one in which we proceed to comply with the Torah requirement to also bless God "for the good land that He has given you." Although it would have made more sense if the "good land" to which the Torah refers meant any land where our food grew or where we might be living, it is clear from the context that it means Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel.

The wording of the Torah and the subsequent ruling of our sages that "anyone who does not mention the 'desirable, good and spacious land' when giving thanks does not satisfy the requirements of saying the Grace" (Berakhot 48b) suggests another reason for the Grace after Meals, namely to imbue the Jewish people with a love for Eretz Yisrael and to impress upon them the analogy that just as food is essential for the survival and development of the individual, so Eretz Yisrael is essential for the survival and development of the nation. The Land of Israel is capable of providing physical sustenance

\* On Hanukkah and Purim, *Al Hanisim* (see p. 137), a prayer thanking God for the miracles and victories commemorated by these holidays, is inserted at this point.

and, of course, an endless supply of spiritual nourishment for all Jews. And while it is true that both the Jewish people and Judaism survived for centuries without the land, it is equally true that their survival was sustained by the hope of someday returning to Eretz Yisrael. Their observance of Torah kept that hope alive. They never allowed the Jewish claim to the land to lapse. Eretz Yisrael may have been conquered and settled by others, but the Jewish people never yielded title to it. And mysteriously, the land never yielded itself entirely unto its conquerors and trespassers. It remained waste and desolate for over eighteen centuries until Jewish settlers returned to work it. The Biblical prophecy that Jewish exile would be accompanied by "your land remaining desolate" turned out to be so. And if for many centuries most Jews did not live in Eretz Yisrael, it lived within them: in every prayer, in every holiday, in every ceremony, day in and day out. It remained for them "our land," for which they never ceased to offer daily thanksgiving to God.

Interestingly, the sages also required, as a condition of discharging the obligation of saying the blessing for the land, that reference be made to the Brit Milah ("Covenant of the Circumcision") and to the Torah. This only reinforces the point—that in addition to food, Eretz Yisrael is a central theme of the Grace and not just a peripheral motif. If this were not so, there would be no reason to consider Brit Milah and Torah as integral parts of the blessing. Only in the context of Eretz Yisrael can their inclusion be explained, for both are intimately related to Israel's possession of the land. God made a covenant with Abraham, giving to him and to his descendants as an everlasting possession, the land that was then known as Canaan. Incumbent on them, with the acceptance of this gift, was the commandment that "every male among you be circumcised" (Genesis 17:7-10, 13) and the obligation to keep to the Torah. "All the precepts that I command upon you this day you shall keep, so that you may live and multiply and come and inherit the land that the Lord promised on oath to your fathers" (Deut. 8:1).

If loyalty to Torah was a condition for acquiring the land, it is equally a factor in retaining it. Physical possession of Eretz Yisrael and a love for the land are, in themselves, not enough to assure national survival and growth. There must be a spiritual dimension to Jewish life in the holy land. It is in this context that we can turn to

*The Grace After Meals: Birkat Hamazon*

the popular meaning of the verse that "man does not live by bread alone." The Divine Presence must be felt, and nothing more strikingly reflects this dimension than Jerusalem and its central sanctuary, the Beit Hamikdash. This spiritual need is the theme of the third blessing.

The Blessing for Jerusalem: Birkat Yerushalayim

רָחֵם-נָא יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל יְשׁוּעָא דְעַמְךָ,  
 וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ וְעַל צִיּוֹן מְשׁוֹכֵן כְּבוֹדְךָ  
 וְעַל מְלָכוּת גְּרִית דְּרוּךְ מְשִׁירְתָּךָ וְעַל הַפְּרִיחַת הַגְּדוּלָּה  
 וְהַקְּדוּשָׁה שְׁמֹרָתָךְ עָלֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אָבִינוּ,  
 רַעֲמֵנוּ וְחַיְנוּ פְּרוּסְמֵנוּ וְכִפְקֵלְנוּ וְהַרְוִיחֵנוּ, וְהַרְוֵהָ  
 לָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְהֵרָה מִקֵּץ צְרוּתֵנוּ, וְנֵא  
 אֶל מַצְרַיִכֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לֹא לִידֵי מָהֵנָה פְּשִׁיךְ  
 חָדָם וְלֹא לִידֵי הַלְוָאָתָם, כִּי אִם לִידֵי הַמְּלָאָה,  
 הַמְּחַוְתָּהּ, הַקְּדוּשָׁה וְהַרְחֵבְךָ, שְׁלֵא גְבוּלָהּ וְלֹא  
 נִקְלָהּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

וְנִנְיָהּ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר הַקְּדוּשָׁה בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ.  
 כְּפָרְךָ אֲמָתָה יְיָהּ, בּוֹנֵיהַ בְּרַחֲמֵיךָ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. אָמֵן.

Be merciful, Lord our God, to Thy people Israel, to Thy city, Jerusalem, and to Zion, the dwelling place of Thy glory, to the royal House of David, Thine anointed, and to the great and holy Temple that was called by Thy name. Our God, our Father, tend us, feed us, sustain us, maintain us, and comfort us. Grant us speedy relief, Lord our God, from all our troubles. And please, Lord our God, let us not need other people's gifts or loans, but only Thy filled and open hand, holy and bountiful. So that we may not ever be shamed or humiliated. Rebuild Jerusalem, the holy city, soon in our days. Blessed art Thou, Lord, who in His mercy builds Jerusalem. Amen.

reality was too great to bear. The faith of the people was put under great strain. To restore their hope and revive their spirit, the sages deliberately stressed the goodness of God who is bound to bring redemption.

More than a half-century later, Bar Kokhba led an abortive uprising against the Romans to restore Jewish independence. In 135 c.e. the downfall of Betar, his last stronghold, marked the collapse of the rebellion. The Roman emperor, Hadrian, insisted on punishing the Jews by refusing to permit their dead at Betar to be buried. And so they lay unburied until Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius, came to the throne in 138 c.e. and revoked the edict. Miraculously, the bodies of the fallen had not decayed beyond recognition, inspiring the sages at Yavneh to see it as a sign that Israel, though defeated, will be preserved until such time as it will be restored to glory. And so they specifically applied the fourth blessing to this event: "God is good" for preventing the decay of the corpses, and "He does good" in making it possible to bring them to burial (Berakhot 48b; Taanit 31a; Bava Batra 121b; Olat Re'iyah I, p. 366).

This fourth blessing of Grace, *Hatov V'hametiv*, was known and recited before the events at Betar. This is clearly indicated in several other Talmudic sources. It is mentioned by Rabbi Eleazar in his view on when to say Retzei (Berakhot 48b), by Rabbi Akiva on what to say in a house of mourning (Berakhot 46b), and by Rabbi Ishmael who was of the opinion that the fourth blessing should also be regarded as biblically enjoined (Yer. Berakhot 7:1). The point is that all these sages lived before the tragedy of Betar occurred. It may, however, have been lent a new dimension of significance in the aftermath of the events of Betar. By associating the blessing of God's goodness with the events at Betar, the sages wished to stress that even when God is angry with His people, He will still show them kindness. They were not to lose hope.

כְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הָאֵל,  
אֲבִינוּ, מְלֶכֶךְנוּ, אֱדִירֵנוּ, בּוֹרְאֵנוּ, גּוֹאֲלֵנוּ, יוֹצֵרֵנוּ,  
קְדוֹשֵׁנוּ, קְדוֹשׁ יַעֲקֹב, רוֹעֵנוּ, רוֹעֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַמְּלֶכֶךְ

This was originally a blessing of thanksgiving for Jerusalem and the Temple. Only after the Temple was destroyed and the city razed, was it reworded as a prayer for their rebuilding.

With respect to this blessing the sages ruled that "one who does not mention 'the kingdom of the House of David' in the context of this blessing has not fulfilled his obligation" (Berakhot 49a). This phrase reflects the national yearning for political sovereignty as symbolized by the coming of the Messiah. The sages obviously believed that the spiritual aspirations of the Jewish people could not be dissociated from its national aspirations. Judaism blends them together. Jewish prayer reflects this.

Since the passages of Retzei (said on Sabbaths) and of Ya'aleh V'yavo (said on Rosh Hodesh and the festivals) not only mention the special day being celebrated, but are prayers that petition for the restoration of Jerusalem and the Beit Hamikdash, they are added to the Grace on those particular days within the context of this third blessing.

"Amen" is said upon the conclusion of the third blessing to indicate the end of the biblically-enjoined grace. This is the only time that we add "Amen" to a blessing that we recite ourselves. Otherwise, the rule is to say "Amen" only in response to a blessing that someone else recites.\*

The Blessing of Goodness: *Birkat Hatov V'hametiv*

Maimonides notes that the fourth blessing to the Grace after Meals was prescribed by the sages of the Mishnah "soon after the destruction of the Temple" circa 70 c.e. (Maimonides, Commentary to the Mishnah, Berakhot 6:8). The blessing was at first simply: "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who is good and does good," a formula that we still use upon hearing good news.

The post-Temple period was certainly not a happy one. It was a period marked by deep despair. Feelings of depression were only intensified by a Grace that thanked God for the "good land" that now lay waste before people's very eyes, and for a Jerusalem and a Temple that now lay destroyed. The contrast between the prayer and the

\* Some prayers conclude with *V'nomar Amen* ("And let us say Amen") or *V'imru Amen* ("And say Amen"). These are not regarded as responses made to oneself but as a call to those hearing the prayer to respond with an affirmation.

הַטוֹב וְהַמְצִיטֵי לְכָל, שֶׁפָּקֵד יוֹם יוֹזֵם הוּא הַיְיִטִּיב  
 הוּא מְצִיטֵי הוּא יְיִטִּיב לָנוּ הוּא מְקַלֵּנוּ הוּא  
 מוֹמַלְנוּ הוּא יְמַלְנוּ לְעַד לְחַי וְלְחַיֵּי וְלְרַחֲמֵינוּ  
 וְלְרַחֲמוֹ, הַצֵּלָה הַהַצֵּלָה, פְּרֻכָּה וְשׁוּעָה, גְּהֻמָּה,  
 פְּרֻחָה וְכִלְכִּילָה, וְהַחֲמִיץ וְחַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם וְכָל  
 טוֹב, וְהַקְּדֵנוּ לְטוֹב לְטוֹב אֵל יְהוָה.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, God our Father our King; our Mighty One; our Creator; our Redeemer; our Maker; our Holy One, the Holy One of Jacob; our Shepherd, the Shepherd of Israel.

Thou art the King who is good and does good to all. For every day He has done good to us, does good to us, and will do good to us; it is He who has bestowed, does bestow and will always bestow upon us grace, loving kindness, mercy and relief; rescue, success, blessing, salvation; consolation, sustenance, and maintenance; mercy, life, peace and all good; and of everything good, may we never lack.

The end of the fourth blessing returns to the theme of food and sustenance. It concludes with the words *Toldm dl yehasteinu*, "may we never lack." When one hears another person reciting Grace reach this point, one responds with "Amen." This is the end of the required text of the after-meal grace. One who says the Grace over a cup of wine may put down the cup at this point.

### THE CONCLUDING HARAHAMAN PETITIONS

The Grace continues with a series of short petitions, some personal, some national, that were gradually added to it. It became customary to recite them. Each now begins with the word *Harahaman*

### The Grace After Meals: Birkat Hamazon

("May the Merciful One . . ."). They do not form part of the obligatory after-meal blessing (AH 189:7).

On special occasions, this section of petitions is expanded. When a bride and bridegroom are present, or at a meal celebrating a Brit Milah, appropriate Harahaman petitions are added to suit the occasion.

The section of Harahaman petitions concludes with the same verse that concludes the Amidah and the Kaddish: *Oseh shalom bimromay*, ("May He who makes peace in the heavens, may He make peace for us and for all Israel, and say Amen").

Only one of the Harahaman petitions, the Guest's Prayer, has a basis in Talmudic literature; it may even be the one that inspired the development of the others. Or it may simply be that the sages, who were accustomed to adding personal petitions at the end of the Amidah, also did so at the end of the Birkat Hamazon.

### THE GUEST'S PRAYER

The Talmud tells us that if a guest is invited to dine with us, he should be given the privilege of leading the Grace. The reason for this is that he may bless the host. The text of this blessing in the Talmud is:

May it be God's will that our host should never be humiliated in this world nor disgraced in the world-to-come.

(Berakhot 46a)

To this prayer, Rabbi Judah added more words of blessing. All of it is quoted as the Guest's Prayer in the Shulhan Arukh (OH 201:1).

The first part is an indirect way of saying that the host should be blessed with a livelihood, for poverty was seen as a humiliating plight. The second half of the blessing is a prayer that a man's wealth should not cause him to behave in such a way or live in such a manner that will disgrace him in the afterlife. It is a blessing that one use his wealth in this world in such a way as to implement his spiritual greatness in the world-to-come.

It is not known why the Talmudic text of this prayer fell into disuse. But the text of the blessing that is now said is a prayer in general terms:

הַרְחֵמְנוּ הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה וְאֵת בְּעֵלַת הַבַּיִת  
 הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה אוֹתָם וְאֵת בֵּיתָם וְרָעַם וְאֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם.  
 אוֹתָנוּ וְאֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָנוּ כְּמוֹ שְׂנוֹתְכֶם וְכִי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֶבְרָהָם  
 יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב בְּכָל מָקוֹם כָּל כֵּן יְבָרֵךְ אוֹתָנוּ כְּלַנּוּ יַחַד  
 בְּבִרְכָתְךָ שְׁלָמָה וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.

May the Merciful One bless the host and hostess and all who are seated about the table . . . just as our forefathers were blessed in every way with every manner of blessing.\*

One who hears this or any one of the other Haraḥaman petitions should answer "Amen."

## THE SUMMONS TO SAY GRACE: ZIMUN

When three or more males over the age of thirteen dine together at the same table, they do not say the Birkat Hamazon individually. The Talmud requires them to join together as a unit where one recites and the others respond (Berakhot 49b).

The reason for joining together to say Grace is probably based on the same considerations that favor congregational public worship over private worship. But their decision to recite the blessings so that one person elicits a response from at least two others, instead of every-

\* The Hebrew use of the words *ba'kol* ("with everything"), *mikol* ("of every thing"), and *kol* ("everything"), is an allusion to the comprehensiveness of the blessings bestowed upon each of the Patriarchs. These words are found in Genesi 24:1, 27:33, and 33:11. The Talmud calls these blessings "a foretaste of the world-to-come" (Bava Batra 16b-17a).

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one saying it at the same time (as in the Amidah), follows a pattern found in two Biblical verses. In each verse one person is found addressing a plural (minimum of two):

*Gadlu l'd Adonai iti, uneromemah shemo ya'hdav*

Exalt the Lord together with me and let us together extol His name.  
 (Psalms 34:4)

*Ki shem Adonai ekra, havu godel lei'loheinu*

For I proclaim the name of the Lord, give glory to our God.  
 (Deut. 32:3)

The convening of those present for the purpose of saying Grace is called *zimun*. It also connotes an invitation to say Grace. It is done with two summonses by the one who leads the Grace. The first summons is *Rabotai, nevareikh* ("Gentlemen, let us bless"). This is simply a call to attention. With these words, the one who is to lead the Grace calls the attention of those present to the prayers that are about to be recited. One may use the word *haverai* ("friends") in place of *rabotai*. It is often said in Yiddish: *Rabosai, mir velen beshen*. And it may be said in English as well.

The response of others around the table to this initial summons is:

יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה קְבוֹרָךְ מְעַמָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם:

*Yehi shem Adonai mevorakh mei'atah ve'ad olam*

Let the Name of the Lord be blessed from now and for ever more.

Then everyone is invited to say Grace together. The wording for this invitation was inspired by an aggadic tale told about the hospitable Abraham, who would invite passersby to stop and eat with him. When they finished eating and drinking, they would get up to thank and bless him. He would then say to them: "Did you then eat of what is mine? Thank and bless the Creator, for it is of His that you ate!" (Sotah 10b, Bereshit Rabbah 54:8). This thought is the essence of the invitation.

*Birshut maranan verabotai.  
 Nevareikh (Eloheinu) she'akhainu mishelo.*

With the permission of those present.  
Let us bless Him (our God) of whose [food] we have eaten.

The response to the formal invitation is:

פָּרַחַךְ (בַּמִּנְיָן) : אֵלֵינוּ : שְׂאֵלָנוּ מִשְׁלֵךְ וּבְטוֹבוֹ הָיִינוּ.

*Barukh* (Eloheinu) *she' akhadinu mishelo uvetuvo hayinu*

Blessed be He (our God) of whose [food] we have eaten and from whose goodness we live.

The one leading the Grace always repeats the response of the others before continuing.

If a minyan is present, that is, ten or more males over thirteen, *Eloheinu* ("our God"), is specifically mentioned where indicated in the parentheses. Otherwise, it is omitted.

If the one leading the Grace is a guest in someone else's home, or if his father, or rabbi, or a kohen, is present at the table, it is proper to phrase the request for permission so as to include these people. In such cases, one might insert after the word *Birshut*, one or more of the following designations: *bad hadbaryt* ("host"), *avi mori* ("my father, my teacher"), *haRav* ("the rabbi"), *ha-kohen*, before the more general designation of *maranan verabotai*. This procedure is followed in order to show special courtesy to those who should have taken precedence or who merit special recognition. It is no different from the practice followed by speakers before they address an audience. The host has the right to determine whom he wishes to honor with the leading of the Grace. It is proper for him to give precedence to a kohen if one is present; if not, then to a scholar.

When the after-meal grace is thus convened, it is not necessary for everyone to say the Grace separately. The one leading the Grace says it aloud; the others need only respond "Amen" at the end of each of the four blessings. Today, however, it is a widespread practice for those at the table to join in reciting the entire Grace.

Three or more women dining together may and, even should, use the formula of the zimun (Berakhot 45b). The first word *rabotai* (gentlemen) is replaced by *gyivotai* ("ladies") or *haverotai* ("friends").

### The Grace After Meals: Birkat Hamazon

#### THE INTRODUCTORY PSALMS

It is customary to recite a short psalm before Birkat Hamazon. Psalm 137, *Al Naharot Bavel* ("By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept"), is said during the week. Psalm 126, *Shir HaMaddot* ("When the Lord brought back those that returned to Zion, we were like unto them that dream"), is said on Sabbaths and holidays.

In saying this introductory psalm, we achieve a double purpose. First, it serves as an ongoing memorial to the destruction of the Temple. On the Sabbath, the sorrowful Psalm 137, which contains the traditional oath of allegiance to Jerusalem, is replaced by an optimistic and joyous one that looks forward to God's salvation and redemption. Both, however, serve the same purpose of recalling Zion and Jerusalem. Second, the psalm touches upon the saying of Rabbi Simeon who taught that "If three have eaten at a table and spoke there no words of Torah, it is as if they had eaten of a sacrifice to idolatry . . . but if words of Torah were spoken, it is as though they had eaten at the table [of the All-present] that is before the Lord" (Avot 3:4). The recitation of a psalm is considered to be at least one way to have some words of Torah spoken at the table, where one is otherwise unable to engage in such talk.

#### WHEN THE FULL GRACE IS SAID

The Biblical commandment clearly says that Birkat Hamazon must be said only if one eats to the point of being full or sated without regard to what is being eaten. However, the sages decreed that since bread is the accepted basis of a meal, the full grace must be said only if bread is eaten. On the other hand, one does not have to reach satiety before incurring the obligation. Even if one eats an amount of bread equivalent only to the size of an olive (*kazayit*), approximately one ounce by volume, one is obligated to recite the full Birkat Hamazon. Bread as defined in the Torah is only that which is baked from the flour of one of the following five grains: wheat, spelt, barley, rye, and oats.

The Grace After Meals: Birkat Hamazon

If one partakes only of other kinds of food (or drink), shorter forms of grace are prescribed, even if a full meal is eaten. There are two shorter forms. One is the *Berakhah Aharonah* ("Concluding Blessing"), also known in the Talmud as "The One Blessing that Summarizes the Three" (*Berakhah Ahat M'ein Shalosh*). The other is the *Borei Nefashot* blessing.

SHORTER FORMS OF GRACE AFTER MEALS

The *Berakhah Aharonah*: The Concluding Blessing

The Concluding Blessing consists of a single paragraph that mentions all the central themes contained in the four blessings of Birkat Hamazon. Thanks is given for the food that was eaten and for the "desirable, good and spacious land." God's mercy is invoked on the city of Jerusalem and on Zion. We plead for its rebuilding, and He is praised as being good and doing good to all.

This condensed blessing is recited whenever one eats a minimum of one ounce by volume or drinks a minimum of three fluid ounces of any of the foods mentioned in the Torah as indigenous to the Land of Israel. They are as follows: wine, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, dates (the honey mentioned in the Bible); also wheat, barley, spelt, rye, and oats whenever these grains are not in the form of bread.

The beginning of the Concluding Blessing varies depending on what is eaten. For wine, the words "for the vine and the fruit of the vine" are used at the beginning. For any of the five fruits, the words "for the tree and the fruit of the tree" are used. For foods other than bread made from any of the five grains, the words "for the sustenance and nourishment" are used. The end of the blessing reflects the same variations.

The *Borei Nefashot* Blessing

Whenever one eats or drinks food other than bread or those foods that require the recitation of the Concluding Blessing, a very brief form of grace is prescribed:

בָּרַךְ אֱתָהּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, עַל  
 עַל מַנְהֵג  
 הַמְּחִיָּה וְעַל הַפְּלִיָּה | הַגָּן וְעַל פְּרִי הַגָּן  
 עַל יְיָ מַנְהֵג הַמְּחִיָּה וְעַל הַפְּלִיָּה וְעַל הַגָּן וְעַל פְּרִי הַגָּן  
 וְעַל תְּנוּבַת הַשָּׂדֶה וְעַל אֲרֵץ תְּמַדָּה סוּכָה וְרַחֲבָה, שְׂרָצִית  
 וְהַנְּחִלָּה לְאַבְוֹתַי לְאֵל מַפְרֵיחַ וְלִשְׂפַע מַשׁוּבָה, רַחֵם-  
 נָא יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ וְעַל יִרְאֵלִים עִירְךָ וְעַל  
 צִיּוֹן מְשֻׁן בְּבוּדָךָ וְעַל מוֹפְתֶיךָ וְעַל הַיְכָלְךָ, וּבְנֵה יִרְאֵלִים  
 עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּמַהְרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, וְהַעֲלֵנוּ לְחוּכָה וְשִׁמְחָנוּ בְּבִנְיָנָהּ  
 וְנִאֲכַל מִפְרֵיהָ וְנִשְׂפַע מִשׁוּבָה, וּבְרַכְךָ עֲלֵיהָ בְּקִדְשָׁהּ  
 וּבְטָהֳרָה.  
 נְשַׁח: וְרַצָּה וְהַחֲלִיצֵנוּ בְּיָוִם הַשְּׁבִיטָה הַזֶּה,  
 בְּרַאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ: תְּכַרְנֵנוּ לְסוּכָה בְּיָוִם רֵאשׁ הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה,  
 בְּרַאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה: תְּכַרְנֵנוּ לְסוּכָה בְּיָוִם הַזְּכוּר הַזֶּה,  
 בַּשָּׁלֹשׁ רִגְלִים: וְשִׂמְחָנוּ בְּיָוִם  
 בְּפֶסַח: חַג הַמַּצּוֹת הַזֶּה,  
 בַּשְּׁבִעוֹת: חַג הַשְּׂבִיעוֹת הַזֶּה,  
 בַּסּוּכוֹת: חַג הַסּוּכוֹת הַזֶּה,  
 בַּשְּׁמִינֵי עֲצוּת וּבַשְּׂמַחַת תּוֹרָה: הַשְּׂמִינֵי חַג הַעֲצוּרֹת הַזֶּה,  
 כִּי אֱתָהּ יְיָ הוֹדֵה טוֹב וּמְטִיב לְכָל וְנוֹדֶה לְךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ  
 עַל מַנְהֵג  
 וְעַל הַמְּחִיָּה: בְּרוּךְ וְעַל פְּרִי הַגָּן: בְּרוּךְ וְעַל הַפְּרִי: בְּרוּךְ  
 אֱתָהּ יְיָ, עַל הָאָרֶץ אֱתָהּ יְיָ, עַל הָאָרֶץ  
 וְעַל הַמְּחִיָּה: וְעַל פְּרִי הַגָּן: וְעַל הַפְּרִי: וְעַל הַמְּחִיָּה וְעַל  
 עַל מַנְהֵג יְיָ מַנְהֵג  
 וְעַל הַמְּחִיָּה וְעַל פְּרִי הַגָּן: בְּרוּךְ אֱתָהּ יְיָ, עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל הַמְּחִיָּה וְעַל  
 פְּרִי הַגָּן:

TO PRAY AS A JEW

פָּרַחַךְ אֲתָהּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
בוֹרֵא נְפָשׁוֹת רַבּוֹת וְחַסְדֵינוּ, עַל כָּל מַה שְּׁפָרַחְתָּ  
לְהַחְיֵיתָ בָּהֶם נְפָשׁ כָּל חַי. בְּרוּךְ הוּא הַעֹלָמִים.

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates many different living beings and the things they need [to survive]. For all that Thou hast created to sustain the life of every living being, blessed [art Thou], the Life of all worlds.

An Abbreviated Version of Birkat Hamazon

Although it is not now customary to recite an abbreviated version of Grace in lieu of the full four-blessing Grace, such versions were used in Talmudic times for farm laborers (Berakhot 16a), and authorities have occasionally sanctioned their use under pressing circumstances. The abbreviated version now in use contains all four berakhot, but each of the last three blessings is condensed, with only a concise reference to the essential elements in each blessing.\* The abbreviated version can be adopted, not only for emergency situations, but as a children's Grace after Meals.

\* See *To Be a Jew*, pp. 170-172.

TO PRAY AS A JEW

the people's superior power or greater fighting ability, but to Divine Providence. God reveals His saving powers in the great events of Jewish history. Thanksgiving is therefore in place.

ATAH HONANTANU: THE DECLARATION  
OF HAVDALAH

It is a mitzvah to declare the sanctity of the Sabbath day, both when it begins and when it ends. At the start of the Sabbath, we do this in the middle blessing of the Maariv Amidah and again over a cup of wine before eating at the dinner table. This declaration we call *Kiddush* (the "Sanctification"). At the end of the Sabbath, we do this in the fourth blessing of the first weekday Amidah, which is recited at the Maariv service on Saturday night, and once again over a cup of wine. This declaration we call *Havdalah* (the "Separation"), for in it we proclaim the separation of the sacred Sabbath from the other days of the week. The home ritual of Havdalah is explained more fully in chapter 17. Here we will deal only with the havdalah passage recited during the Amidah.

אַתָּה חוֹנְנֵתָנוּ לְמַדַּע תּוֹרָתְךָ, וּתְלַמְּדֵנוּ לְעִשׂוֹת  
חֻקֵי רְצוֹנְךָ וּתְבַדֵּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחֹל,  
בֵּין אֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. אָבִינוּ מְלַכְנוּ הַחַל  
עֲלֵינוּ הַיָּמִים הַבָּאִים לְקִרְאָתְנוּ לְשֵׁלוֹם חַשׁוּכִים  
מִכָּל חַטָּא וּמִנְּקִים מִכָּל עֲוֹן וּמִדְּבָקִים בִּירְאָתְךָ.

Thou hast favored us with knowledge of Thy Torah,  
And taught us to perform the laws of Thy will.

**SHABBAT CULMINATING  
ACTIVITY #1**

**One of the goals of this curriculum is to expose students to multiple interpretations of our rituals. Enclosed are the beginning of your resource library – keep collecting!**

## **Learning About Havdalah**

The Havdalah ceremony, performed at the end of Shabbat on Saturday night, is replete with nuance and meaning.

### **Introduction**

Reciting Havdalah on Saturday night, when Shabbat ends, is one of the 613 commandments (Mitzvot) of the Torah.

"Havdalah" is a Hebrew word meaning "separation."

### **Preparing for Havdalah**

To perform the Havdalah ceremony, you will need:

- A full cup of wine or grape juice
- A plate upon which to place the cup of wine or grape juice
- A bit of sweet smelling spice
- A braided, multi-wick candle
- Something disposable, like an old newspaper, to place on the table to catch the wax as it drips from the candle.

Before reciting the Havdalah, place the cup on the plate, and pour the wine or grape juice into the cup. Continue to pour until the wine spills over a bit onto the plate. Have the spice handy. Light the candle. Someone other than the person reciting the Havdalah can hold the candle. The cup is lifted with the right hand and the recitation begins.

### **The Text of the Havdalah Ceremony**

#### **Verses of Salvation**

The ceremony begins with quotations from the Bible. The common theme of these verses is salvation. The

experience of salvation is one of simple joy coupled with spiritual ascent. This is what we pray for in the beginning of the Havdalah ceremony.

*Hinay, El yishu'ati evtach velo efchad, ki azi vezimrat Yah, Adonai, va'yehi li lishu'a.*  
Behold, God is my savior, I will trust Him and not be afraid, for my strong faith and song of praise for God will be my salvation.  
Isaiah 12:2

*U'she'avtem ma'yim besason, mima'a'yenay ha'yeshu'a.*  
You will draw water joyously from the wellsprings of salvation.  
Isaiah 12:3

*La'Adonai ha'yeshu'a, al amcha virchatecha, Selah.*  
Salvation is the God's; may Your blessing rest upon Your people, Selah.  
Psalms 3:9

*Adonai Tzeva'ot imanu, misgav lanu, Elohay Ya'akov, Selah.*  
God of the heavenly armies is with us; the Lord of Ya'akov is a fortress protecting us, Selah.  
Psalms 46:12

*Adonai Tzeva'ot, ashray adam botay'ach bach*  
God of the heavenly armies, happy is the individual who trusts You.  
Psalms 84:13

*Adonai hoshiah, hamelech ya'anaynu ve'yom kor'aynu.*  
God, redeem us! The King will answer us on the day we call Him.  
Psalms 20:10

*La'yehudim ha'yetah orah vesimcha vesason vikar,*  
The Jews had light, happiness, joy and honor;  
Esther 8:16

*kayn te'hi'yeh lanu.*  
may we have the same.

*Kos yeshu'ot esa u'veshaym Adonai Ekra.*

I will raise the cup of salvation and call out in the name of the God:  
Psalms 116:13

### **The Blessings of Havdalah**

Lift the cup of wine, say this blessing, but don't drink from the cup. Put the cup down.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech ha'olam, boray pri hagafen.*

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Lift the spices, say this blessing and sniff the spices.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech ha'olam, boray minay vesamim.*

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of the universe, Creator of the different spices

Look at the candle, say the blessing, raise your hand to the light of the Havdalah candle, then curl your fingers over your palm and look at the light as it is reflected off your fingernails and then at the shadow cast by your fingers across your palm.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech ha'olam, boray me'oray ha'aysh.*

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of the universe, Creator of the fire's lights .

Pick up the cup of wine and recite the following blessings.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech ha'olam, hamavdil*

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of the universe, who separates

*bayn kodesh lechol*

between the holy and the profane;

*bayn or lechoshech*

between the light and dark;

*bayn Yisra'el la'amim*

between Israel and the other nations

*bayn yom ha'shevi'i leshayshet yemay hama'aseh.*

between the seventh day and the six days of the week

*Baruch atah, Adonai, hamavdil bayn kodesh lechol.*

Blessed are You, God, who separates between the holy and the profane.  
Now drink the cup of wine, leaving enough to use to extinguish the flame.

As we begin another week with the recitation of Havdalah, the differences between Shabbat and the rest of the week are called to mind. The wine reminds us of Kiddush. The sweet smell of the spices calls up the memory of the delicious Shabbat meals. The light of the multi-wicked candle is but a poor, rough re-enactment of lighting the sublime Shabbat candles. The content of the Havdalah ceremony forces us to contemplate the many ways that Shabbat is unique and different from the rest of time. Havdalah prepares us for another week of work, creation, production and study; but it also reminds us that another Shabbat is just six days away.



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## Havdalah: The Ritual



Havdalah is Hebrew for separation. In Jewish liturgy it refers to separating the sacred from the ordinary, the sacred being the Sabbath day and the ordinary being the other days of the week. It is one of the earliest blessings in Jewish tradition.

The Havdalah ceremony formally ends the Sabbath day when much secular activity is prohibited and ushers in the regular week when we are once again engaged in more worldly concerns.

For an in depth study on the meaning of the ceremony and its blessings, see [Learning About Havdalah](#) in the [Text Study](#) section.

### The Biblical verses that begin the Havdalah Service

The service begins with a collection of Biblical verses that praise the heavens for being the source of many salvations. It also offers the hope that just as in the time of Queen Esther, the Book of Esther says, "The Jews were of light, joy, gladness, and preciousness" so, too, will it be with us. We then raise a cup of wine of salvation declaring, "I will lift this cup of salvations" which symbolizes the many salvations of the Jewish people, and I will call out to the Holy One.

*Hinay, El yishu'ati evtach velo efchad, ki  
azi vezimrat Yah, Adonai, va'yehi li  
lishu'a.*

Behold, God is my savior, I will trust Him  
and not be afraid, for my strong faith  
and song of praise for God will be my  
salvation.

Isaiah 12:2

*U'she'avtem ma'yim besason,  
mima'a'yenay ha'yeshu'a.*

You will draw water joyously from the  
wellsprings of salvation.

Isaiah 12:3

*La'Adonai ha'yeshu'a, al amcha  
virchatecha, Selah.*

Salvation is the God's; may Your blessing

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rest upon Your people, Selah.  
Psalms 3:9

*Adonai Tzeva'ot imanu, misgav lanu,  
Elohay Ya'akov, Selah.*  
God of the heavenly armies is with us;  
the Lord of Ya'akov is a fortress  
protecting us, Selah.  
Psalms 46:12

*Adonai Tzeva'ot, ashray adam botay'ach  
bach*  
God of the heavenly armies, happy is the  
individual who trusts You.  
Psalms 84:13

*Adonai hoshi'ah, hamelech ya'anaynu  
ve'yom kor'aynu.*  
God, redeem us! The King will answer us  
on the day we call Him.  
Psalms 20:10

*La'yehudim ha'yetah orah vesimcha  
vesason vikar,*  
The Jews had light, happiness, joy and  
honor;  
Esther 8:16

*kayn te'hi'yeh lanu.*  
may we have the same.

*Kos yeshu'ot esa u'veshaym Adonai Ekra.*

I will raise the cup of salvation and call  
out in the name of the God:  
Psalms 116:13

### **The blessing over the wine**

Wine was always considered special and it is a way that we signal that this ceremony has great significance. Just as we bring in the Sabbath with wine when we say "Kiddush" so, too, we leave the Sabbath with wine as well. The verse in Proverbs says, "Wine will gladden the hearts of humanity."

Lift the cup of wine, say this blessing, but don't drink from the cup. Put the cup down.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech  
ha'olam, boray pri hagafen.*

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of  
the universe, Creator of the fruit of the  
vine.

### **The Blessing over spices**

There is a Talmudic tradition that every Jew is given an extra soul on the Sabbath, and when the Sabbath is finished that extra soul is removed. The spices, according to some opinions, are savored to revive us from the loss of the extra soul.

Lift the spices, say this blessing and sniff the spices.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech  
ha'olam, boray minay vesamim.*

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of  
the universe, Creator of the different  
spices.

### **The blessing over the torch**

The Talmud stipulates that the Havdalah candle must have at least more than one wick and must be a torch. A bright fire is required which symbolizes the distinction between the upper and lower worlds. The illumination of the upper world is a world of light. Shabbat, which is a gateway to the spiritual world, is also a world of light. The days of the week are considered to be a part of the material world and is fueled by fire, hence the bright fire which brings us back to the mundane days of the week. It is customary to look at the back of one's hand when reciting the blessing over fire to symbolize that now, we are dealing with the material world, the superficial world and not the inside of the hand which symbolizes the inside world that is hidden during the days of the week and only witnessed on the Sabbath.

Look at the candle, say the blessing, raise your hand to the light of the Havdalah candle, then curl your fingers over your palm and look at the light as it is reflected off your fingernails and then at the shadow cast by your fingers across your palm.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech  
ha'olam, boray me'oray ha'aysh.*

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of  
the universe, Creator of the fire's lights.

### **The Havdalah blessing**

This blessing not only distinguishes between the Sabbath and the rest of the week, but uses this distinction to symbolize other important distinctions: The sacred and profane, and light and darkness. We live in a world of opposites. During this ceremony we are acutely aware of the tensions between those worlds and we acknowledge the pain of transition and the opportunity that both worlds offer.

Pick up the cup of wine and recite the following blessings.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech  
ha'olam, hamavdil*

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of  
the universe, who separates  
*bayn kodesh lechol*  
between the holy and the profane;  
*bayn or lechoshech*  
between the light and dark;  
*bayn Yisra'el la'amim*  
between Israel and the other nations;  
*bayn yom ha'shevi'i leshayshet yemay  
hama'aseh.*  
between the seventh day and the six  
days of the week.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, hamavdil bayn  
kodesh lechol.*

Blessed are You, God, who separates  
between the holy and the profane.

Now drink the cup of wine, leaving enough to use to  
extinguish the flame.

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## The Blessing Over Wine

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Just as we welcome Shabbat on Friday evening, we usher in the new week by **saying a blessing over a full cup of wine**. The wine represents joy, and the full cup marks our appreciation of the bounty we enjoy. The blessing over wine in the Havdalah ceremony is identical to the first blessing of the Shabbat kiddush, **but we wait until the havdalah ceremony is completed before drinking the wine.**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי.  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם.  
בוֹרֵא פְרִי הַגֶּפֶן:

*Barukh ata Adonai  
Eloheim melekh ha-olam  
bo-re p'ri hagafen.*

Praised are you, Adonai our God  
Sovereign of the universe  
who has created the fruit of the vine.



# Havdalah

Corresponds to the *Kiddush*, which proclaims the holiness of Shabbat and festivals. Both are attributed to the Men of the Great Assembly, who functioned during and after the Persian period of Jewish history, about 500-300 before the common era. The *Havdalah*, recited over wine, consists of four benedictions, over wine, spices, light, and the distinction between the sacred and the profane, between light and darkness, between Yisrael and the nations, between the seventh day and the six workdays.

In Talmudic literature, great importance is attached to the Havdalah, future salvation as well as material blessings are promised to those who recite the Havdalah over the wine cup. "He who resides in Yisrael, he who teaches his children Torah, and he who recites the Havdalah at the conclusion of the Shabbat will enter the Olam Habah (World to Come)" (Berachot 33a).

Each benediction, pronounced with a symbolic act, has specific significance

**Yayin:** Wine is used as a symbol of joy and celebration. The Talmud comments, "A person in whose house wine is not poured like water has not attained the state of blessedness." (Eruv 65a) It is customary to pour the wine into a cup so that it overflows to depict Divine blessing, . . . as symbolic of the overflowing blessing expected in the coming week. The wine is also used to douse the Havdalah candle, to indicate that the candle was lit to comply with the specific precept of Havdalah. The custom of dipping the finger in the wine of the Havdalah and passing it over the eyes alludes to Tehillim 19:9, where G-d's commands are described as "*enlightening the eyes.*" These usages are not applicable whenever the Havdalah is recited as part of the Kiddush for festivals. In addition to the Havdalah over wine, there is another Havdalah inserted in the fourth benediction of the Shemoneh Esrei. In the Sefardic tradition it is customary to put a drop of wine behind the ears, in back of the neck, or over the eyes, and in the pockets as a sign of good fortune for the coming week. (TSLC, pp. 228, 239)

Customarily, Havdalah should be said while sitting, however, the practice is to stand (Otz Hat, vol. 2, p. 868; cf. Baer, Sidd' Avod' Yis, p. 311) as one accompanies the departure of the Shabbat, that is, to be compared to escorting a king when he departs. (MB, 296:27)

Women are obligated in Havdalah as they are obligated in Kiddush. (MB, 296:34) Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz, known as the Sheloh from the initials of his chief work *Shnei Luchot ha-Brit* (The Two Tablets of the Covenant), says that women do not drink of the wine of the Havdalah, in allusion to the guilt incurred by Chavah when she gave some of the forbidden fruit to Adam, which is said to have been the juice of grapes.

When making Kiddush in the synagogue on Friday night, it is customary to do so before Aleinu, whereas on Saturday night Havdalah is made after Aleinu. The reason for this procedure is that we are hasty to usher in the Shabbat with Kiddush, but making Havdalah after Aleinu prolongs the Shabbat. (Sefer Matanaim - Warsaw, 1889, Sabbath, par. 184)

[http://headecoverings-by-devorah.com/OrachChayim\\_Shabbat\\_Havdalah.html](http://headecoverings-by-devorah.com/OrachChayim_Shabbat_Havdalah.html)

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCE  
MATERIAL FOCUSING ON SPICE**

# Havdalah

**Basamim:** According to Maimonides [Rambam], the symbolic use of fragrant spices is to cheer the soul which is saddened at the departure of the Shabbat. We inhale the aroma of the spices because during the Shabbat man is given a *neshamah yeteirah* ("an additional soul"). (Ta'an. 27b; Bez. 16a) At the end of the Shabbat the *neshamah yeteirah*, which is about to leave, grieves, and the smelling of the spices offers comfort to make up for the loss. When a festival follows immediately after the Shabbat the spices are omitted, because the soul then rejoices with the incoming festival. At the conclusion of any festival, spices are not used because the *neshamah yeteirah* comes on the Shabbat only. Ashkenazim use a combination of cloves and bay leaves for besamim, as well as other pickling spices. In the Syrian synagogue they may use rosewater. In Moroccan communities a myrtle-branch (*Hadass*), rosewater, or various spices are used. Spices or lemon, and, during the summer months, myrtle twigs or mint are often used in Judeo-Spanish communities. (TSLC, pp. 228, 238, 245) According to the Zohar one should use a myrtle twig when making the blessing for besamim. (CF. Otz Hat, vol. 2, Seder Havdalah) A sign for this practice is the two adjacent phrases in the verse in Yeshayahu, "Every one that keeps the Shabbat and does not profane it" (Yeshayahu 56:6) and "Instead of the nettle shall the myrtle tree come up" (Yeshayahu 55:13). Thus the blessing for besamim varies in the Sefardic rite: if it comes from a tree, then the formula for the blessing is "Who creates the spice trees"; if it is a type of herb, then one says, "Who creates the herbs of spice"; and if it is neither from trees or herbs, or when in doubt, the formula is "Who creates diverse spices."

## Creator of the Different Spices

Why do we smell sweet spices as part of the Havdalah ceremony?

The Abudraham ("Sefer Abudraham," "The Order of the Prayer After Shabbat and Their Explanation") explains that "the reason we smell spices after Shabbat ends is to comfort the person because the extra soul ("Neshamah Yetayrah") leaves after Shabbat." The source for this idea is the Talmud, Tractate Baytzah (p. 16a):

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: The Holy One, blessed be He, gives the Jew an extra soul ("Neshamah Yetayrah") on Shabbat eve. After Shabbat ends, it is taken away from the person, as it says, "He ceased working and rested - Shavat Va'Yinafash" (Exodus 31:17), since it ceased, oh my, the soul is lost.

Two concepts are contained in Rabbi Shimon's statement. The first is the idea that God gives each Jew an extra soul ("Neshamah Yetayrah"), so to speak, as Shabbat begins. The second concept is that the person reacts to the extra soul's departure as Shabbat ends.

This leads us to ask two questions: Just what is an "extra soul"? And what does this have to do with the Havdalah ceremony? Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish derives his second concept from a pun on the last words of Exodus 31:17. Here is the text of Exodus 31:16-17:

(16) The people of Israel will observe the Shabbat, making the Shabbat throughout all their generations into an eternal covenant. (17) It will be an eternal sign between Me and the people of Israel, that, in six days, God made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day, He ceased working and rested.

If translated literally, the last phrase, "He ceased working and rested," would read, "He (or it) ceased and He rested." In his playing with the words of this phrase, Rabbi Shimon first adopts the literal translation and decides that the antecedent for the pronoun, he, is the extra soul. He then takes the last word and pulls it apart creating two new words meaning, "Oh my! soul!" Thus, his word game yields a Jews reaction to the departure of the extra soul when Shabbat ends: "Shabbat ceased. Oh my, the extra soul is lost!"

The mild spiritual trauma caused when we sense the extra soul's departure requires that we smell some sweet spices to revive us. So, as part of the Havdalah ceremony we recite the blessing and smell the spices.

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCE  
MATERIAL FOCUSING ON  
CANDLE (Ner)**

## Why Do We Bless the Fire as Part of the Havdalah Ceremony?

This question is asked and answered by Shmu'el. In Genesis Rabbah (11:2), we read:

What blessing do you recite? "Creator of the fire's lights." This is according to Shmu'el, for Shmu'el said: Why do we recite a blessing over a candle after Shabbat ends? That is when it (i.e., fire) was created.

Various versions of the story of the creation of fire appear in the different books of Midrash. The version presented here is from "Pirkay De Rabbi Eliezer" (chapter 20). However, to understand this tale you must know what leads up to the events described here.

Genesis, chapter 3, describes the sin of Adam and Eve. The chapter ends with their banishment from the Garden of Eden. According to the Midrash, their sin took place on the sixth day of creation, the very day that they were created. However, God had mercy on them and allowed them to remain in the Garden for the duration of Shabbat. As the sun begins to set, late Shabbat afternoon, our tale begins to unfold. (From "Pirkay De Rabbi Eliezer," chapter 20)

At sunset at the end of Shabbat, Adam was sitting and thinking to himself, "Woe is to me! Maybe the snake, which misled me on Shabbat eve, will come and bite me." A column of fire was sent to him to light his way and to protect him from evil. Adam saw the column of fire and was happy. He said, "Now I know that God is with me."

He stretched out his hands to the light of the fire and recited the blessing, "Creator of the fire's lights."

As he pulled his hands back from the fire, Adam said, "Now I know that this holy day is separated from the weekday, that it is prohibited to light a fire on Shabbat." He said, "Blessed [are You], who separates between the holy and the profane."

A somewhat different version of this story appears in the Genesis Rabbah (11:2). There, God teaches Adam how to strike two rocks together to make fire. In either case, fire makes its first appearance in the world after the first Shabbat ends. Thus, we bless the fire as Shabbat ends in memory of that event.

While telling us this intriguing story, the Rabbis also teach us the meaning of the fire and light which is part of the Havdalah ceremony. Fire, with all of its attendant uses and goodness, is a gift from God meant to light our way during the dark hours, both literally and figuratively. The fire is also a symbol of God's protection.

Where else in the Pentateuch do we read of fire -- actually a column of fire -- as serving these exact same purposes? Hint: Look in the Exodus!

Can you find in the above Midrash a source from the custom performed with the hands while reciting this blessing?

To explore the custom of holding up our hands to the Havdalah candle, follow the path.

Abba observed when he visited the house of his great teacher, Rava, on Shabbat:

When it was time for Havdalah, his (Rava's) servant rosel, went to bring] and lit a torch from the candle [which was already on the table]. He (Rabbi Ya'akov) said to him (Rava), "Why all this? There is already a candle here."

He replied, "The servant acted of his own accord."

He (Rabbi Ya'akov) said, "Certainly, he would not have done so unless he heard it from you!"

He said, "Aren't you of the opinion that the best way to perform the Mitzvah is with a torch?"

It is clear that Rabbi Ya'akov bar Abba was there to learn all he could from the Mitzvah observance of his teacher. However, in keeping with good Talmudic tradition, Rabbi Ya'akov is not going to let anything slip by him without his understand what is going on.

What makes this tale even more intriguing is the apparent misunderstanding between teacher and student. Rava did not catch the implication of the first question, otherwise he would have given Rabbi Ya'akov bar Abba the final answer. Rabbi Avraham Gumbiner (17th century author of a commentary on the "Shulchan Aruch," titled "Magen Avraham.") explains that Rava thought the question was why run to bring a torch when the requirement for a multi-wicked candle could be fulfilled by holding two candles together, and there were numerous candles on the table. Only after the Rabbi Ya'akov's second question does Rava understand that Rabbi Ya'akov is not familiar with the essential requirement: The best way to perform the Mitzvah is with a torch.

The question still remains, why? Why a torch, i.e., a multi-wicked candle?

Most of the commentaries relate the story in Tractate Pesachim (103b) to an argument between Bayt Shamai and Bayt Hillel that is explained in Tractate Berachot (52b):

Rav Yosef says: Everyone agrees that the word, "Creator" ("Boray"), implies both created (past tense) and creates (present tense). About what are they arguing? About the [words] "light" versus "lights."

Bayt Shamai thinks there is only one light in fire, and Bayt Hillel think there are many lights in fire.

While it is easy to understand Bayt Hillel's opinion -- there are many different colors in a fire -- Bayt Shamai's opinion requires explanation. Apparently, Bayt Shamai is referring to the initial spark created when a fire is lit. In any event, our observance is based on Bayt Hillel's opinion. To create the multiple lights and colors, we use a multi-wicked Havdalah candle. And as Rava taught Rabbi Ya'akov, this is the best way to perform the Mitzvah!

## **Why Do We Hold Our Hands Up to the Havdalah Candle?**

In the tale told in the "Pirkay De Rabbi Eliezer," chapter 20, we read that Adam "stretched out his hands to the light of the fire and recited the blessing, 'Creator of the fire's lights.' " In doing so, he was expressing his appreciation for the light and protective warmth of the fire. This action is a practical application of an anonymous statement that appears in the Mishnah, Tractate Berachot (8:6): "No blessing is recited on the candle until benefit is derived from its light."

In the Talmud Yerushalmi, Tractate Berachot, page 54b, Rabbi Ze'irah makes the following comment on this Mishnaic statement:

Rabbi Ze'irah, son of Rabbi Abahu, said a homily: (It is written,) "The Lord saw that the fire was good" (Genesis 1:4) and then [it says,] "the Lord separated between the light and the darkness" (Genesis 1:4).

This somewhat cryptic statement takes our understanding of this custom one step further. We raise our hands to the light of the Havdalah candle because, just like God, we, too, see that the light is good. Then, as is the custom, we curl our fingers over our palms and look at the light as it is reflected off our fingernails and then at the shadow cast by our fingers across our palms. Again, we imitate God. We draw a distinction between light and dark, between the twinkle of the light in our fingernails and the dark shadow covering the palm of our hand.

That is what Havdalah is all about: Seeing the distinction; separating. And activating our divine souls by imitating God.

## **Why Do We Use a Multi-Wicked Candle for the Havdalah Ceremony?**

The Talmud recognizes four distinct sources for the Halacha (Jewish law). They are: (a) The Pentateuch. The Five Books of Moses contain the 613 Mitzvot (commandments) and a great many of the legal details necessary for their observance. (b) The Oral Law. The oral tradition of laws and details, beginning with the giving of the Torah at Sinai, is summarized in the Mishnah. (c) Human logic. human deductive and inductive logical processes take many forms. Aside from straightforward reasoning, the Rabbis of the Talmud included the use of literary tools for the derivation of law from the Pentateuch text as part of these logical processes. (d) The behavior of the great Rabbis and teachers is also recognized as a source of law. The assumption is a simple one. These Rabbis would never do anything contrary to the law. However, like logical statements, even Rabbinic behavior was open to question. All this leads us to a fascinating little tale that appears in Tractate Pesachim (103b). This is what Rabbi Ya'akov bar

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCE  
MATERIAL FOCUSING ON  
SEPARATION**

## **Why Do We Bless God For Separating Between the Supernal Light and the Relative Darkness of Our World?**

The source for Rashi's Midrashic interpretation of Genesis 1:4 is the Genesis Rabbah (11:2):

Rabbi Yehudah, son of Rabbi Simon, said: [With] the light God created on the first day, Adam could look and see from one end of the world to the other. Once God looked at the people of the generation of the Flood and the people of the generation of the Tower of Babel, whose behavior was degenerate, He stood and hid it (i.e., the light). He set it aside for the righteous for the future.

Just as God sees from one end of the world to the other without turning His head, so to speak, the first, supernal light allowed Adam to do the same. After all, it was divine light!

Adam used the first, supernal light? Didn't God hide it on the first day?!! The very next statement in Genesis Rabbah addresses that issue:

Rabbi Levi said quoting Bar Nezirah: That light shined for 36 hours: 12 hours on the eve of Shabbat; 12 hours on Shabbat night; and 12 hours on Shabbat day. Once the sun began to set at the end of Shabbat, and the darkness began, Adam was afraid, as it says, "Surely the darkness will strike at me" (Psalms 139:11), meaning, "The one, about whom it is written (i.e., the snake), "He will strike at your head and you will strike at his heel" (Genesis 3:16), will come and attack me!" What did God do? He showed him two rocks and he struck one against the other and light (of the fire) came from them. He blessed the light, as it is written, "at night the light is with me" (Psalms 139:11). Which blessing did he recite? "Creator of the fire's lights."

So the first, supernal light actually was used! It served as the light for the first Shabbat of creation. Adam and Eve, who were granted a reprieve and allowed to remain in the Garden of Eden until the end of that Shabbat, used that light.

Throughout that first Shabbat they saw divinity reflected in every creature, in every plant, in every rock. As Shabbat ended and the darkness of a world without that light, without the ability to see God everywhere, began to encroach upon them, they were afraid.

"Here strike two rocks together," says God, "and see the light coming from the fire."

"But where is the divinity? How can I see the Godliness in a fire which I have lit?" asks Adam.

"Recite the blessing," answers God.

By reciting the blessing we reveal the Godliness, the divine source of all that surrounds us. Thus, during the Havdalah ceremony which marks the close of Shabbat, the waning of the supernal light which is available to us every Shabbat, we bless God, who separates between the light and the darkness. We bless God for teaching us to see His divinity reflected in all of His creation.

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCE  
MATERIAL FOCUSING ON ELIJAH**



## JEWISH VIRTUAL LIBRARY

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### Elijah

Each Passover, a special cup of wine is filled and put on the seder table. During the Seder, the door of the house is opened and everyone stands to allow Elijah the Prophet (*Eliyahu ha-Navi*) to enter and drink. At every *bris*, a chair is also set aside for Elijah. At the conclusion of Shabbat, Jews sing about Elijah, hoping he will come "speedily, in our days...along with the Messiah, son of David, to redeem us."

Elijah is a heroic figure in Jewish tradition. It is he who stands up to King Ahab, whose Phoenician wife has introduced the worship of the idol Baal into the Jewish Kingdom.

Elijah curses Ahab, "As the Lord lives, the God of Israel who I serve, there will be no dew or rain except at my bidding" (I Kings 17:1). Afterward, God tells the prophet to hide from the King in a brook known as Wadi Cherith. Meanwhile, as Elijah warned, the country suffers a serious drought.

After trying to track Elijah down for three years, Ahab's top aide, Obadiah, finds the prophet. Knowing that Elijah's curse had been fulfilled, Obadiah is hesitant to turn him in, but he is also afraid of what the King would do if he does not. Elijah makes the decision easy by promising to go before Ahab that day. He agrees not out of fear of the King, but because God has commanded him, "Go, appear before Ahab, then will I send rain upon the earth" (18:1).

When Elijah meets Ahab he challenges the 450 priests of Baal imported by Jezebel to a contest at Mt. Carmel to prove whose god is the true God. The priests and Elijah slaughter a bull as a sacrifice and call on god to consume it. The priests try a variety of prayers, dances and even self-mutilation, but nothing happens. Elijah then calls on God to prove his power and a great fire comes from the sky and burns the bull. The Israelites who witness the act declare, "The Lord, He [alone] is God" (*Adonai, hu ha-Elohim*, [I Kings 18:39]), a commitment to monotheism recited today seven times at the end of the Yom Kippur service each year. Elijah then tells the people to kill the priests, and they obey.

Despite his "victory," Elijah sees no change in the kingdom and has to flee to the desert to escape the wrath of Jezebel. God then comes to Elijah again and

reassures him that he is not alone, that others have resisted the temptation to worship idols. Elijah is told to go to the mountain of Horeb where he witnesses a series of examples of God's power -- an earthquake, powerful wind and fire - before being instructed to return to the city (19:12).

Elijah is not too popular with King Ahab. In another incident, Ahab decides he wants to buy a vineyard adjacent to his winter palace in Jezreel, but the owner, Navot, rejects his offer. The King returns home depressed and tells his wife what has happened. She is shocked that a King would allow himself to be treated this way and decides on a scheme whereby she gets two men to testify that Navot has cursed God and the King. Navot is convicted of blasphemy and treason, and stoned to death, allowing the King to seize Navot's land.

Elijah is sent by God to the vineyard to confront Ahab. "Have you murdered and also inherited?" He curses Ahab's descendants and his wife, saying "I will cut off every male in Israel belonging to Ahab" and "The dogs will devour Jezebel in the field of Jezreel" (21:23).

Years later, after Ahab has died and been succeeded by his son Jehoram, a rebel leader named Jehu kills Jehoram and orders Jezebel to be captured and thrown out a palace window. When the soldiers go outside, all they find are her skull, hands and feet. As prophesized by Elijah, the rest of her was eaten by dogs.

Given his career as a prophet, it should not be surprising that it should end in a miraculous way. When Elijah returned from his sojourn in the desert he ran across a young man plowing a field named Elisha. He took Elisha under his wing to be his successor.

One day Elisha becomes aware that Elijah's time on earth is nearly over. They are walking together and, when they reach the Jordan River, Elijah strikes the water with his cloak and the river parts to allow them to cross. Later, the prophet asks Elisha what he can do for him before he goes and Elisha asks for "a double portion of your spirit."

Elijah replies that it is a difficult request, but "If you see me as I am being taken from you, this will be granted to you; if not, it will not" (2:9-10). Then a fiery chariot, drawn by fiery horses, comes out of the sky and takes Elijah away to the heavens. Elisha picks up the cloak Elijah dropped and strikes it against the river, causing the waters again to separate. Seeing this, Elijah's followers proclaim, "Elijah's spirit now rests on Elisha" (2:15).

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Sources: Telushkin, Joseph. *Biblical Literacy: The Most Important People, Events, and Ideas of the Hebrew Bible*. NY: William Morrow and Co., 1997. and *Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People and Its History*. NY: William Morrow and Co., 1991.

## Guess who's coming to dinner

By SUSAN HOGAN/ALBACH / The Dallas Morning News

04-03-01

At every Passover Seder, Elijah's the one with the special wine goblet. At every Jewish circumcision, he's the one with the special chair. And at the end of every Sabbath, he's the one Jews pay tribute to in song. He's a prophet, miracle worker, and champion of the poor. He's an ethical role model and solver of centuries-old disputes over Jewish law. Elijah the Tishbite is the only prophet the Bible never says died.

Scriptures say he turned a river dry, called down fire from heaven and healed a dying boy. He slaughtered enemies, but rewarded a widow who fed him by miraculously multiplying her scant food supply. Ravens brought him bread and meat during a drought.

When his time came to leave earth, Elijah calmly stepped into a fiery chariot sent to fetch him. He "ascended in a whirlwind into heaven," according to II Kings 2:11. He's a prophet who knows how to make an exit - and an entrance.

Passover is Elijah's busiest time because he's expected at every Jewish home for Seder meals, which commemorate the Exodus from Egypt. Tradition calls for families to leave a door open and pour a glass of wine for the popular prophet. "My kids would watch that cup to see when Elijah would take a sip," said Mary Isenstein, who attends Congregation Anshai Torah in Plano. "I'd tell them, 'He's invisible, but you must believe he's here.'" Audree Disraeli, who attends Temple Shalom in North Dallas, places a chair for Elijah at her crowded Seder table. "We have a cushion on it for him," she said.

During the Seder, families eat symbolic foods such as bitter herbs and recount the biblical story of how Moses parted the Red Sea and led the Israelites to freedom more than 3,000 years ago. Elijah played no role in the Exodus - he was born five centuries later.

Still, he's integral to Passover because some Seder prayers focus on future redemption. Jews believe the Book of Malachi indicates that it's Elijah who will one day announce the advent of their long-awaited Messiah. "We literally leave the door open for him to return to herald the redemption," said Rabbi Ari Perl of Congregation Shaare Tefilla in North Dallas. "He is a very powerful symbol as the prophet who is now the figure of hope for the world."

Elijah's story is told in the books of Kings. As a prophet, he was a staunch monotheist who railed against the Baal worshippers supported by King Ahab and Queen Jezebel in the northern kingdom of Israel.

This led to a famous showdown on Mount Carmel, where Elijah challenged the Baal prophets to call down fire from heaven to burn their sacrifice, which had been placed on an altar. When they failed, Elijah's water-soaked sacrifice was consumed by fire the moment he prayed to God.

Afterward, Elijah ordered the hundreds of Baal prophets to be killed. The Bible implies that he single-handedly slew them at a brook (Some interpreters say he slit their throats, but most scholars agree that view embellishes the text.)

Queen Jezebel vowed revenge. Elijah fled at once out of fear, the Bible says. But when the "word of the Lord" came to him and asked why he was on the run, Elijah said it was because the Israelites had forsaken their covenant with God. Because of that statement, post-biblical writings said that God ordered Elijah to witness all Jewish circumcisions, which represent the covenant between God and Israel (Genesis 17:10-13).

Today, at every bris there's a special chair for Elijah, who's sometimes called the "angel of circumcision." "We treat Elijah as an honoree," said Rabbi David Shawel, a Dallas area mohel, the ritual circumciser. At the recent bris of Noah Solomon Hoch in North Dallas, the ceremony began by placing the baby in the empty chair. "Elijah will hold the baby and give testimony to God that Jews are faithful to the covenant," Rabbi Shawel explained to those gathered.

Other stories about Elijah abound by the hundreds in Jewish folklore and rabbinical literature. Over time, the prophet was assigned new roles, from miracle worker to moral guide. "Because he never died, Jewish tradition has always held that he comes back to perform miracles for us," said Rabbi Jordan Parr of Adat Chaverim in Plano.

One folk tale has Elijah visiting the home of a destitute couple at their Seder. Because they welcome him, he rewards them with wealth and comfort for the rest of their lives. In another story, Elijah changes the bandages of the poor. "He becomes the model of proper behavior," Rabbi Parr said.

In many folk tales, Elijah appears to people to point out their transgressions. There's a story about how all the people living in a courtyard chipped in to build a gate. Elijah objected, and stopped studying with a righteous person living there. "He didn't like that the gate didn't allow the people in the courtyard to hear the poor when they came for bread," said Aryeh Cohen, who teaches rabbinic literature at the University of Judaism in Bel Air, Calif.

Elijah is also seen as a bridge figure between heaven and earth, who can easily travel back and forth. In one story, he tells a sage what God was doing the very moment the sage was praying.

Legend has it that Elijah also will settle ancient rabbinic disputes never resolved. These are noted by the word "teyku" in the Talmud, an authoritative body of Jewish law. Some sages linked "teyku" to Tishbe, Elijah's place of origin or family.

Bible scholars generally agree that Elijah was a historical figure, but that biblical writers assigned miracles and superhuman powers to him to prove he was a prophet sent by God. (Some, of course, believe the stories happened literally as described in the Bible.) "Most people feel Elijah was a real figure greatly expanded by legend," said Rabbi S. David Sperling, a Bible professor at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York.

The biblical parallels between Moses and Elijah are striking. Both men parted a body of water and encountered God on Mount Sinai, also known as Mount Horeb, where they spent 40 days.

Elijah is also revered by Christians and Muslims. But his role isn't nearly as prominent in those faith traditions, and he's viewed differently, too. A ninth-century Muslim commentary says Elijah became so distraught at one point that he prayed for death. Instead, a fiery horse – sans chariot – rode off with the prophet. Then God wrapped him in feathers.

"When Elijah comes, there will be no mistaking it," said Rabbi Perl of North Dallas. "He will usher in a redemptive age where things are much simpler and clear."

Jews are reminded of that every week as the Sabbath closes with a ceremony called the Havdalah. Many end the service by singing the "Eliyahu ha-Navi" (Elijah the Prophet). "Tradition says Elijah can't come on the Sabbath because it would be distracting," Dr. Cohen said. "When the Sabbath ends, we celebrate that he can come." And so they sing: May Elijah come quickly in our time Along with the Messiah, the son of David

## CHAPTER VII

*Elijah in Liturgy and Ritual*

The timeless significance of Elijah naturally finds manifold expression in Jewish liturgy and ritual.

As the prayer of the biblical Elijah: 'Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou, Lord, art God' (I Kings 18: 37) brought about the decisive revelation to the multitude on Mount Carmel,<sup>1</sup> so the Aggadic Elijah instructs one of the talmudic scholars on prayer and its efficacy. Certainly, the individual may in case of emergency say his prayers while walking along, but it pleases God especially when his sons praise 'his great name' in the synagogues and houses of study—he then regrets that he banished them 'from his table'—the altar of his temple.<sup>2</sup> A Hasidic interpretation of the details of this talmudic passage emphasises the close connection between prayer and redemption,<sup>3</sup> and the Kabbalists, as has been mentioned, represent Elijah transformed into an angel twinning Israel's prayers into wreaths and crowns for God (see P. 99). It could be said that Elijah connecting heaven and earth, and hastening the coming of the redemption, corresponds to prayer as the relation of dialogue between man and God.<sup>4</sup>

Elijah is daily mentioned when grace is said after meals: 'May God in his mercy send us the prophet Elijah, may his memory be blessed, and may he bring us good tidings, help and comfort.' And in the benedictions after the weekly public Sabbath reading of a chapter from the Books of the Prophets, it says: 'Let us rejoice, O Lord, through your servant, the prophet Elijah, and

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through the kingdom of David, your Messiah, may he come soon and rejoice our heart.'

The passage which is read from the Books of the Prophets on the Sabbath always has a certain connection with the Torah passage which is read before it. Three times a year the passage from the prophets concerns Elijah. The description of the worship by the Israelites of the golden calf, and Moses' endeavours to lead the people back to God (Exod. 30: 11-33) is followed by a reading of the account of the contest with the worshippers of Baal arranged by Elijah on Mount Carmel (I Kings 18: 1-39). The account of Phinehas' zealous deed and his appointment to the office of priest which is his reward (Num. 25: 10 ff.) is followed by the description of Elijah's flight into the desert, his journey to Horeb and the revelation which is granted to him there (I Kings 18: 46; 19: 21). Finally, the reading on the so-called 'Great Sabbath', the Sabbath before the Passover feast commemorating the exodus from Egypt, is Malachi's final chapter (3: 4-24) which prophesies Elijah's return at the time of the redemption.

There are numerous mentions of Elijah in the *piyyutin* (poetic elaborations) of the prayers said on festivals, especially of the prayers for dew and rain. Similarly, the *selihot* (prayers of repentance) on fast days and in the weeks preceding the Day of Atonement include repeated supplications for a favourable hearing with reference to Elijah's prayer being answered on Mount Carmel.<sup>5</sup> And when the Day of Atonement is ending, Jewish communities stay, after twenty-four hours of fasting, dressed in shrouds to say the closing prayers which begin with the words: 'Open the gate unto us at the time when it is closing', and conclude with the exclamation, repeated collectively seven times, of the people at the revelation on Mount Carmel: 'The Lord, he is God.'

In particular, the ending of the Sabbath bears the mark of Elijah. Following the official liturgy, before and after the *havdalah* (the ceremony at the end of the Sabbath), 'Elijah songs' are sung in many Jewish homes. The best known, included in all traditional prayer-books, devotes several verses to Elijah's biblical miracles. It also mentions that his appearance in a dream

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promises good luck, and expresses the hope that he will soon proclaim the redemption. The refrain of this song is: 'The prophet Elijah, the Tishbite from Gilead, may he come to us soon with the son of David, the Messiah.' This is frequently followed by some other traditional songs, based mostly on folk legends about Elijah's good deeds performed for pious men and especially for those who keep the Sabbath strictly.

The particular 'Elijah-mood' at the close of the Sabbath arises from the view expressed in the Talmud that Elijah is to be expected at any time, but not on a Friday or on the Sabbath itself (see p. 64). Therefore his coming is most likely to be at the end of the Sabbath observance. Aggadic literature also relates that at the close of every Sabbath, Elijah records men's good deeds (see p. 51). Moreover, during the week, external pressure and inner distress is more noticeable to men, so that at the close of the day of rest Elijah's coming is particularly ardently desired.<sup>6</sup>

The celebrating of the end of the Sabbath as an evening dedicated largely to Elijah—joining as it were under his auspices the secular to the holy—is in itself in the nature of a ritual. Two further important and impressive rites have been observed by the Jewish people for over 2,000 years: the placing of 'Elijah's chair' at the beginning of the circumcision ceremony (see pp. 58, 100), and the references to Elijah-Phinehas and the 'covenant of life and peace' made with him in the grace after the festive meal which concludes the ceremony. Furthermore, in the Sephardic and Italian ritual, all those present sing an 'Elijah hymn' before the circumcision.

Particularly popular is a custom within the framework of the *Seder* evening, the first evening of the Passover festival celebrated annually by Jewish families on the night of 15 Nisan in memory of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. At a festive table set with *mazzot* (unleavened bread), bitter herbs and wine, through a recitation of the biblical account and its manifold Aggadic interpretations, the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt, the miracles which took place before the liberation and the night of the redemption are relived as in *illo tempore*. This brings to life the expectation repeatedly mentioned in traditional literature that

during this very night, on which the first redemption of the Israelites took place through Moses, there will come the final redemption through Elijah and the Messiah who will follow him. Right at the beginning of the celebration, a special cup of wine, called 'Elijah's cup', is placed on the table. When grace has been said after the meal, the door of the house is opened by a child in expectation of Elijah's appearance, and biblical passages are recited which express the hope of the Jewish people to be delivered from oppression.<sup>7</sup> This custom has in the course of time given rise to many legends. They tell of Elijah's appearance, mostly in the guise of a venerable old man who sits down with the family at table, offers wise counsel or raises hopes for a happy future.

himself and others, and he may reach adhesion to God through love, reverence, humility and truthfulness.

These two works frequently mention Elijah's personal appearance; he is then repeatedly introduced as 'father Elijah'. He tells of men he met on his numerous journeys, relates the conversations he held with them, the questions he answered, how he advised and admonished them. The books moreover contain numerous religious and ethical demands addressed to the general public. They concern especially the study of the Torah, sincerity of prayer, family life, friendship and honesty in human relations.

Talmudic-Aggadic literature frequently emphasises Elijah's role as 'the angel of the covenant'. As has been mentioned, as early as the time of Moses, after the revelation at Horeb, at the beginning of the wanderings in the wilderness, an angel was appointed who was to lead the Israelites on behalf of God and as his representative. Later, in the time of Joshua and the Judges, he is explicitly called 'the angel of the covenant'. He has to supervise the keeping of the covenant made between God and his people. In the prophecy of Malachi, the angel of the covenant and the prophet Elijah will bring about the decision at the Last Judgment (see pp. 33-4). In Aggadic literature, Elijah is identified with the angel of the covenant, his appointment being regarded as God's answer to Elijah's accusation that the Israelites 'have broken your covenant'. The Aggadah relates that at the time of the Israelite kings, after the realm had been divided, the ritual of the covenant, the circumcision of the boys (Gen. 17: 9-13), was not performed, and that Elijah's accusation referred also to this, not only to the people's worship of Baal. That is why Elijah has since to watch personally over the performance of the boys' circumcision on the eighth day of their lives. A special chair, 'the chair of Elijah', should therefore always be provided for him at circumcisions.<sup>125</sup>

The biblical term for circumcision, *brit* (the making of the covenant), and the fact that it is undertaken as early as the eighth day after the boy's birth, show that in the Bible the act no longer appears as paternal castration—in contrast to pubertal initiation rites of primitive tribes. Nor can the biblical command to circumcise be regarded as the intervention of God seen only as

the father who wants to bring the newly-born into his power. On the basis of his research into circumcision rites in New Guinea, the anthropologist and psychoanalyst Géza Róheim reached the conclusion: 'The penis in the foreskin is the child in the mother, and it is separated from her through the circumcision.' Compare the report of Richard Thurnwald that in some East African tribes the father tells his son, after he has circumcised him: 'My son, now you have left the wrapper of your mother.' Thurnwald sees this as the psycho-social transformation of the boy.<sup>126</sup>

The biblical circumcision would then be the child's symbolic release from the exclusive bond with its mother, which enables it to establish personal relationships with its fellow-men and with God. This also limits the father-aspect of the Divine and makes possible the covenant, as the *partnership* between man and God.

The biblical Elijah who, in the Books of Kings and especially as represented in the Aggadah, fights extremely zealously for the covenant with God, now becomes in the Aggadah also the angel of the covenant with the individual, the patron of the individual relationship between man and his fellow-men and between man and God. As such, he is alive in the people and intervenes in events not only in the Aggadists' time: his presence is felt in every family throughout future generations.

Above all, however, the Aggadists are concerned with Elijah's appearance at the time of the redemption and with his part in it. The oldest original talmudic writing, the Mishnah, deals with the prophecy of Malachi. Tractate Eduyot, in which the oral traditions of the earlier scholars are recorded, discusses the purpose, according to Malachi, of Elijah's future appearance: In the name of R. Johanan, who relies on an old tradition, R. Joshua says that Elijah comes to remove those who have arbitrarily approached and to bring close those who are arbitrarily remote. R. Judah says: 'Elijah comes only to bring close and not to remove.' R. Simeon says: '[he comes] so as to reconcile the controversies.' Later sages say: '[he comes] so as to make peace on earth as it says in Malachi: "Behold, I will send you Elijah".'<sup>127</sup>

These different interpretations of the Malachi prophecy must

Metatron and Sandalphon cling to each other like brothers and cannot be separated even by the Jewish people's involvement in sin.<sup>104</sup> Enoch and Elijah correspond to the two heavenly cherubim Metatron and Sandalphon, who were portrayed embracing each other on the cover of the Ark of the Covenant.<sup>105</sup>

The relationship of Metatron to Sandalphon as well as between them and Elijah and Enoch is understandable. Elijah and Enoch had been created as human beings in God's likeness. In their life on earth they realised their inherent potential. They succeeded in bridging the gulf between God and man; they transcended their human limitations and were transformed into angels.

Within the mystic figure of the godhead, Metatron and Sandalphon represent the unity of the differently evolving divine emanation. Together they represent the virtual 'middle line' uniting the opposites, which as it were descends vertically from the highest *sefirah* (Keter) to the lowest: 'The middle line are the *sefirot* Da'at, Tiferet, Yesod; it is the light of love which descends from above to the *shekhinah*.'<sup>106</sup> In Lurianic writings, the middle line is usually equated in its entirety, including Keter, with *adnan kadmon* (see the diagram).

Metatron represents the actual unity reigning in the upper worlds of the emanation and is, according to R. Meir ibn Gabbai (c. 1500), identical with *adnan kadmon*, the human figure on the chariot of the divine throne in Ezekiel's vision.<sup>107</sup> Sandalphon represents the potential unification of the lowest emanation, the *shekhinah* (immanence), with the transcendental godhead. He can appear to people and through his revelation, 'Giluy Eliyahu', show them the way to bring about the potential unification with the divine.

Elijah's activity does not consist exclusively of transmitting mysteries to the chosen. As has been mentioned before (pp. 93, 58-9), he is in the Kabbalah, as in the Aggadah, the angel—the guarantor—of the covenant. The Zohar demands that every father of a new-born boy summon Elijah to the circumcision, and prepare a special chair for him. Elijah will then appear and testify before God to the fulfilment of the covenant.<sup>108</sup>

The identification of Elijah with the Aaronide Phinehas is also

evident to the mystic. A Zoharic passage says that 'Elijah'—according to the historical context he ought here to be called 'Phinehas'—had in his time received the 'covenant of peace' from Moses because of his justified ardour (see pp. 72-4). Since, in his excessive zeal, Elijah was accusing the Israelites of breaking the covenant, he has to give back to Moses his covenant of peace. 'That is why he goes to Horeb, but there Moses says to him: 'Go to the children of Israel as angel of the covenant, and they will give back to you the covenant of peace.'<sup>109</sup> This sentence means that through Elijah's presence at the circumcision, which symbolises man's direct relationship to God and to his fellow-men, Elijah himself will restore his own harmony. Rabbi N. Z. J. Volozhin explains that by giving to Phinehas the 'covenant of peace', God compensated for his excessive zeal and made his soul harmonious.<sup>110</sup>

The Zohar, however, bases its identification of Phinehas with Elijah not only on their zeal for God and the 'covenant of peace.' The expectation often mentioned in the Talmud that, in the time of the Messiah, Elijah shall solve all religious legal problems is substantiated in the Zohar with the promise once made to Moses that Aaron shall be his prophet. Accordingly, 'Aaron's son', i.e. his grandson Phinehas=Elijah will solve these problems at the Messianic redemption.<sup>111</sup>

Here and in other passages,<sup>112</sup> the identity of the two personalities is derived, as in the Talmud, from biblical verses, and explained through the similarity of their characters; the Zohar however also implies Phinehas' incarnation in Elijah, and later Kabbalist writings are explicit about it.

According to the Zohar, the reincarnation of souls in other bodies (metempsychosis) occurs mainly among the childless and those who transgress sexual prohibitions. Amends have to be made in a second life for non-observance of the covenant, or for violating it—'covenant' referring in Jewish mysticism to the relationship of the Jewish people with God, as well as to the erotic-sexual relationship of man and woman (see 3 Zohar 57b). Interestingly enough, Phinehas himself is mentioned as an example of such amends (*tikun*, restitution) being made. He reincarnated the souls of Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu, who died, according to

## Unit Three: Chanukah

Hag ha-Urim Festival of Lights  
Feast of the Maccabees

Festival of Freedom  
Feast of the Hasmoneans

**Unit Goal:** To enrich the observance of Chanukah and personal rededication to the Jewish people.

### **Enduring Understandings:**

- The Festival of Chanukah is a reminder of the historical struggles for personal religious freedoms and the fight to prevent assimilation.
- The Chanukah celebration provides the opportunity to rededicate oneself to ensuring the continuity of the Jewish people in the State of Israel and the Diaspora.

### **Essential Questions:**

- How can the observance of the rituals and mitzvot of Chanukah enrich our lives and strengthen our spiritual connections to God and the Jewish people?

### **Unit Questions:**

- How can the candles symbolize the struggle between the forces of darkness and light; assimilation or religious observance?
- Why is Chanukah an eight-day observance?
- What are the customs of celebration that have evolved over time?
- Why do we need two “miracle” stories for Chanukah? What do we learn from each?
- How can the religious values and actions of the Maccabees guide us in balancing cultural assimilation and religious observance?
- Where is God in the story of Hanukkah?
- In what ways do the mitzvot of Chanukah assist or hinder personal commitments to religious freedom and observance?

### **Objectives:**

- SWBAT explain the meanings of the brachot recited over the candles.
- SWBAT describe the different traditions of the order of lighting the candles.
- SWBAT retell the story of the Maccabean struggle for religious freedom, and relate to issues facing modern day Jewry.
- SWBAT to list religious values that help guide decision making in their life and/or create a spiritual bond with God or the Jewish people.
- SWBAT to identify mitzvot or customs of the festival celebration that have personal meaning in their lives.

### **Authentic Assessment:**

In addition to the traditional brachot, create a series of readings for each night of the Festival of Chanukah.

## OPENING TEXT STUDY: Chanukah

**Learning Goal:** To experience the multiple levels of meaning and understanding found in the different genres of Jewish texts, ancient and modern commentaries.

Step One: Read through the texts (next page) and follow the first three steps for text study listed on page 12 in Unit One.

Step Two: What issues did these texts bring up that you had never considered? What do the texts not teach us? (*how to celebrate, what prayers to use, etc.*)

To answer are questions about how to observe the festival, examine a collection of the *halachot* from *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* and *Mishnah Berurah* as collected for The ArtScroll Mesorah Series: *Chanukah: Its History, Observance, and Significance*. (See resource section)

Step Three:

**As with each unit, first assess what the students know.**

1. How are you currently observing Chanukah?
2. What is the most meaningful part of your Chanukah observance?
3. What do you hope to learn or be able to do at the end of this unit of study?

Note: If your students are keeping a journal, the answers to these questions should be entered into the journal for future reference.

## **Not biblically ordained, but a text-based holiday just the same – Chanukah:**

Now on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the ninth month, which is called the month of Kislev, in the 148<sup>th</sup> year, they rose up in the morning and offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings, which they had made. At the very season and on the very day that the Gentiles had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs, citherns, harps, and cymbals... And so they kept the dedication of the altar eight days... Moreover, Judah and his brethren, with the whole congregation of Israel, ordained that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year for eight days, from the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month Kislev, with mirth and gladness.

-- I Maccabees 4:52-59

What is Chanukah? For the rabbis have taught: Commencing with the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Kislev, there are eight days upon which there shall be neither mourning nor fasting. For when the Hellenists entered the Temple, they defiled all the oil that was there. It was when the might of the Hasmonean dynasty overcame and vanquished them that, upon search, only a single cruse of undefiled oil, sealed by the High Priest, was found. In it was oil enough for the needs of a single day. A miracle was wrought and it burned eight days. The next year they ordained these days a holiday with songs and praises.

-- Talmud B., Shabbat 21b

### **TEXT STUDY:**

From these two texts we learn that we are commanded to celebrate for eight days with “mirth and gladness” with “songs and praises.” The rabbis took those instructions and made them into rituals, as found in the Laws of the Festival. Examine a collection of the *halachot* from *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* and *Mishnah Berurah* as collected for The ArtScroll Mesorah Series: *Chanukah: Its History, Observance, and Significance*. (See resource section)

### **Background information:**

#### The Development of the Holiday of Chanukah:

Originally a commemoration of a historical event (probably a victory in a Jewish civil war), Hanukah took on different meanings in different eras. It attached itself to the time of the winter solstice where, like Christmas, it replaced a pagan festival which brought light to the dark winter. Its original significance was de-emphasized by later tradition which did not glorify human victory in war, and its celebration was commemorated by a special *haftarah* (prophetic reading) from the Book of Zechariah which states, “not by might, nor by power, but by my spirits, says the Lord of Hosts.” In modern times, Hanukah was revived both by Zionists, who wanted to glorify Jewish efforts in military endeavors, and by Jews integrated into Christian society, who needed a counterpart to Christmas.

from page 22, *Exploring Judaism: A Reconstructionist Approach* by Rebecca T. Alpert and Jacob J. Staub

The complete story of the struggles and battles of the Hasmonean Dynasty are to be found in the two volume, *The Book of the Maccabees*. A quick synopsis:

The historical story of the battles of the Hasmoneans are not found in Tanakh, but are a part of the Apocrypha (known in Hebrew as “hidden” works.) Scholars date the authorship of the Books to between 135 to 105 B.C.E. The first observance of Hanukkah is dated as 165 B.C.E. when the soldiers commanded by Judah the Maccabee happened upon the desecrated Temple in Jerusalem as they traveled north to attack the Syrian army. All battles were halted while the Temple was cleansed and reconsecrated. Solomon Grayzel teaches the holiday was observed until 125 B.C.E., but when the Judean state once again gained independence, the observance “became more of a reunion time for the old soldiers.”<sup>3</sup> One hundred years later, when Judea once again lost its independence, the observance was revitalized.

Other references to the revolt of the Maccabees can be found in *Antiquities*, the writings of the 1<sup>st</sup> century historian, Flavius Josephus. A third source, thought to have been written during the period of the Hasmoneans, but considered to be fictitious and not historically accurate, is the story of Judith who cuts off the head of an Assyrian general, Holofernes, thus saving the city of Bethulia. The Book of Judith is also found within the Apocrypha.

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<sup>3</sup> Goodman, Philip. *The Hanukkah Anthology*, page 22.

## **Activity #1: Do Jews Believe in Miracles?**

**Enduring Understanding:** The Festival of Chanukah is more than a commemoration of the miracle legend of oil that burned for 8 days, but also a reminder of the historical struggle for personal religious freedom and the fight to prevent assimilation.

**Learning Objective:** To identify Jewish values and statements of religious faith that helped guide the decisions of the Hasmoneans and similar values/faith statements that help guide decision making in the lives of modern-day Jews.

### **Guiding Questions:**

- Why do we need two “miracle” stories for Chanukah? What do we learn from each?
- How can the religious values and actions of the Maccabees guide us in balancing cultural assimilation and religious observance?
- How can the candles symbolize the struggle between the forces of darkness and light; assimilation or religious observance; assimilation or freedom?

### **Materials Needed:**

- Book of Maccabees I and II: from Book I, Chapters 1, 2, 7:10-30, 8 and 9. From Book II, Chapters 6 and 7.
- Historical timeline (in resource section of this guide)
- Talmudic and Midrashic legends (in resource section of this guide)
- Modern interpretations from the book *A Different Light: the Big Book of Hanukkah*

**Format:** (adapted from Teaching Jewish Holidays, A.R.E. Publishing)

**Step One:** Students should read the Book of Maccabees looking for the following themes:

1. Why would a subjugated people put their lives on the line and battle a much stronger army in pursuit of religious freedom?
2. Why did the Jews decide to fight – what would have happened if they chose not to fight?
3. What values and principles were challenged during the time of Hellenistic oppression?

**Step Two:** After reading the Talmudic and Midrashic legends, answer the following questions:

1. Why did the rabbis decide to stress the miracle of the cruise of oil, rather than the miracle of the military battle?
2. How does our ritual of lighting candles on each night of the festival help or hinder the memory of the two miracles (military and oil)?
3. What values or faith statements are supported in these rabbinic writings?
4. What other Jewish practices are said to have originated during the time of Hellenistic and Roman persecution?

**Step Three: Synthesis**

Students should divide into two groups, the Maccabees and the Rabbis. Each should compose a values statement defending the continuance of the observance of Hanukkah in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Statements will be read aloud, and each “opposing” group will ask questions of the other.

Following the question and answer period, each individual should write a personal value statement for observing Hanukkah. The personal values statements should include Jewish values or reasons being Jewish is important that they would like to highlight during the candle lighting ceremony each night of the festival.

## **Activity #2: Freedom Fighters**

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. To articulate how we can help balance cultural assimilation and religious observance.
2. To retell the story of the Maccabean struggle for religious freedom, and relate to issues facing modern day Jewry.

**Guiding Questions:** On some holidays and festivals, our participation symbolically links us to events in the distant past and creates a continuum to the present. How do we feel about ancestral stories concerning warfare and deceit? Were the Maccabees and Hasmoneans commanded to fight? Were there no alternatives?

### **Resource Materials:**

*Book of the Maccabees*, Book I, Chapters 1, 2, 7:10-30, 8 and 9  
Text sources from “The Hanukkah Anthology” in resource section

**Format:** Role-playing

**Step One:** Divide students into small groups to study section of the resource materials and Apocryphal texts. Their goal is to decide if or how these texts address the issue of military struggle for religious freedom

**Step Two:** Ask students to imagine that they were living when these events took place. Role-play the decision of the Hasmoneans to fight.

- How did they justify going to war?
- What do you think would have happened if they didn't fight? If they had lost?
- What did they accomplish?

Then discuss how the fight for religious freedom needs to be waged in our day. How can we defend Jewish values and traditions in the face of pressures from the Christian Right or other extremist groups.”

(adapted from Teaching Jewish Holidays, A.R.E. Publishing, page 107)

### **Activity # 3: How do the mitzvot tie in to the story? which story?**

**Learning Objective:** To identify mitzvot or customs of the festival celebration that have personal meaning in their lives.

**Guiding Question:** In what ways do the mitzvot of Chanukah assist or hinder your understanding of the last value (religious or cultural) of the observance of Chanukah?

#### **Materials included in Resource Section:**

copies of the blessings for the candlelighting service  
resource materials reflecting on Biblical, Talmudic, and Mishnaic passages concerning mitzvot, ceremony, and celebration of the Festival of Chanukah

**Format:** Group discussions and text study

**Step one:** Discuss the mitzvot of the holiday as summarized in “The Laws”

Questions:

- Do any of these laws set boundaries or requirements that seem “outdated”? Why do you think they were instituted?
- Which of the laws remind you of the political struggles of the Maccabees?
- Which of the laws remind you of the “miracle of the oil” legend?
- How do the “requirements” help or hinder your personal observance or connections to the holiday?

**Step two:** Expanding our understanding of the mitzvot and how they help commemorate the festival

Divide into study groups to look at the text materials.

- Which texts remind you of the political struggles of the Maccabees?
- Which texts remind you of the “miracle of the oil” legend?
- How do the texts increase your understanding of how or why modern-day Jews should observe this holiday?

**Step three:** Discuss the content of the blessings said during the candlelighting ceremony.

Questions:

- How do the blessings tie together with the mitzvot and/or customs you have personally witnessed in observing the holiday?
- How might you expand the blessings to thank God for more modern miracles or to tell the story of the holiday?

## **Activity # 4: Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord**

**(Zechariah 4:6).**

### **Learning Objective:**

To enrich the celebration of the festival through the traditional songs of the holiday.

**Guiding Question:** Where is God in the story of Chanukah?

### **Materials Needed**

- Blessings for the candlelighting ceremonies.
- Copies of song lyrics for “Maoz Tsur,” “Rock of Ages,” “Mi Yimalayl,” and “Al ha-Nissim.”
- Sound recordings for each song.

**Format:** Students will learn the melodies for these songs and analyze the text to uncover the historical “legends” of the festival and the actions attributed to God.

Building on the study of the *Book of Maccabees*, students should examine each song, including the blessings for the candles, and discuss how the lyrics reflect God’s part in the festival.

The discussion could be guided by questions such as:

How is God portrayed in the songs? In the blessings?

Do you agree with how lyricist portrayed God? Why or why not?

Do you agree with how lyricist portrayed the role of the Israelites? Why or why not?

Do the songs/blessings reflect the “true” story? Why or why not?

### **Additional Learning Activities for this unit:**

- Write a modern-day legend about a people’s struggle to maintain religious identity.
- Create a Chanukah trivia game. Categories could include: history of the holiday, famous Jews throughout history who have fought for freedom of religion, the things most worth fighting for, foods of the holiday, music of the holiday, etc.
- Design a chanukiyah that has personal meaning. Bring in pictures of antique and modern chanukiyot. Have each student bring his/her chanukiyah to class and share why this is their favorite.

## **CULMINATING ACTIVITIES FOR THE CHANUKAH UNIT**

Activity 1 for the last Class Session prior to the Festival of Chanukah

Activity 2 is the group celebration scheduled during the Festival.

### **ACTIVITY #1: Personalizing Chanukah**

Invite members of student's extended family or friends to participate in this last formal class prior to the Festival of Chanukah.

**Learning Objective:** Letting Jewish values guide our holiday observance.

**Guiding Question:** Chanukah is not the Jewish Christmas. How can I make this JEWISH festival more Jewish?

**Materials Needed:** 1 sheet of poster board for each student  
Art supplies: markers, scissors, glue, construction paper, etc.  
Jewish values sheet (same as in unit one) as a reference guide

**Format:** Graphic representation of “Plan for the 8 days/nights of Chanukah”

**Step one:** Group sharing.

Ask family/friend groups to share their favorite Chanukah memories. Encourage participants to think in terms of activities or celebratory gatherings and include what made this so special. (Only thing off limits is a discussion of gifts given or received.) List key points on the board.

Examine the responses and group together similar responses focusing on what made the experience so special. From this list you should be able to open the discussion to how the memorable moments of the Festival are times that involve other people, helping other people, doing a mitzvah, etc.

**Step two:** Each family/friend group will now brainstorm how they can become a real Jewish *mensch* or “mitzvah hero” and incorporate Jewish values into their holiday celebration. Their job is to convert the plan into a graphic representation that they will hang in their home as reminder of the plan they have made.

**Suggested formats:**

- A large chanukiyah with each candle being the description of the plan for that day or evening observance.
- Eight “gift” envelopes to be opened each night containing instructions for the next activity.
- A giant “To Do” list

End the evening with the group voting on a theme or project for their group celebration of Chanukah. If materials will be needed, divide the tasks between each class member.

## **ACTIVITY #2: “Doing” Chanukah**

It has been the goal of this curriculum for each of the holiday celebrations to take place in the homes of the participants. If your group is too large for one home, make an exception for the observance of Chanukah. It is only one night out of eight, and a big party is a lot more fun!

### **Materials Needed:**

- Each family/friend group should bring their own *chanukiyah* and candles. Set up on a table covered with foil, and you get twice the light while protecting the table top!.
- Blessings and song sheets.
- A story of Chanukah appropriate for the group.
- Something good to eat and drink! It’s a party!

### **Format:**

- Light the candles, blessing God and each other.
- Read the story.
- Do the group project (the one voted on by the group at the previous class).
- Play dreidl, sing songs, nosh.

## CHANUKAH RESOURCES:

Goodman, Philip. *The Hanukkah Anthology*, Jewish Publications Society, 1976.

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## UNIT 3: Chanukah

### Opening Text Study:

“The Laws of Chanukah”

### Activity 1: Do Jews Believe in Miracles?

Historical timeline

Talmudic Midrashic legends about miracle of oil  
Rituals of lighting  
Hellenistic and Roman times

### Activity 2: Freedom Fighters

Text about fight for religious freedom from  
Book of Maccabees

### Activity 3: How do the mitzvot tie in to the story?

“The Laws of Chanukah”  
Mishneh Torah texts about candlelighting  
Copy of blessings  
Resources about 8 days of celebrating

### Activity 4:

Copy of Songs: Maoz Tsur, Rock of Ages, Mi Yimalayl, and Al ha-Nissim  
Candleblessing

**BACKGROUND AND GENERAL  
INFORMATION**

## CHAPTER SIX

# CHANUKAH



Goodman, Robert. *Teaching Jewish Holidays: History, Values, and Activities*. A.R.E. Publishing, 1997.

### VOCABULARY

**Al HaNissim:** This special Chanukah blessing is included in the Grace after Meals and in the Eighteen Benedictions during Chanukah. Meaning "For the Miracles," this thanksgiving prayer recounts the mighty acts of Mattathias and his sons leading up to the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem.

**Antiochus:** The name of several Seleucid rulers of Syria during the second and third centuries B.C.E. Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, reigned from 175-163 B.C.E. His repressive, brutal policies and his attempt to impose Hellenism upon the Jews of Judea led to the Hasmonean revolt of 168-165 B.C.E.

**Apocrypha:** Known as *Sifre HaChitzonim* in Hebrew, these are books which were not included in the canon of the Hebrew Bible, but which are included in the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox canon. Written in Hebrew or Aramaic, most of the books of the Apocrypha resemble the *Ketuvim* (the third part of the Hebrew Bible, the Writings). Among the books of the Apocrypha are I and II Maccabees, The Wisdom of Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus), and Judith.

**Chanukah:** "Dedication." This holiday commences on the 25th of Kislev and ends on the 1st or 2nd of Tevet — the only Jewish holiday that occurs in two months. It commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem in 165 B.C.E. by the

Hasmoneans/Maccabees three years after it had been desecrated by Antiochus IV, Epiphanes.

**Chanukah Gelt:** A Yiddish term meaning Chanukah money; it is called *D'mai Chanukah* in Hebrew. It is customary to give children foil covered chocolates or some small trinket on each night of Chanukah.

**Chanukiah:** A special *menorah* or candelabra with nine branches, one for each day along with one servant candle. It is used only on Chanukah.

**Daniel, The Book of:** This book of the Bible, which is part of the *Ketuvim* (Writings), ostensibly is about a series of events during the reign of the Persians. However, many Bible scholars feel that it was written just prior to the Maccabean Revolt and served to rally support for the rebellion against Antiochus.

**Haftarah:** A section from *Nevi'im* or *Ketuvim* (the Prophets or Writings) read after the Torah portion on Sabbaths, festivals, and fast days. The practice of reading from the second part of Tanach probably originated during the persecutions of Hadrian, when the Jews of Judea were forbidden to read the Torah. (Some say it originated during the reign of Antiochus.) To get around this prohibition, this non-Torah reading which by theme or vocabulary hinted at the Torah portion, was read in its place. After the ban was lifted, the practice of reading this additional section was retained. *Haftarah* means

“ending,” and is so called because it is read at the end of the Torah service.

**Hallel:** The *Hallel* consists of Psalms 113-118 and sometimes Psalm 136. It is recited on special occasions, including Chanukah and Sukkot. The word means “praise.”

**HaNayrot Halalu:** “These Lights.” This prayer is said or sung each night during Chanukah immediately after the kindling of the first Chanukah candle. The rest of the candles are lit as this praise to God for the miracles of days gone by is recited. (See below, page 96.)

**Hannah:** Hannah and her seven sons were killed by soldiers of Antiochus Epiphanes because she refused to worship pagan idols (II Maccabees 7).

**Hasmoneans:** A priestly family from the town of Modin whose patriarch was Mattathias. The origin of the name (*Hashmonaim*, in Hebrew) is unknown. The Hasmoneans led the revolt against Antiochus IV, defeated him after three years of struggle, and then ruled until 63 B.C.E. when Judea became a Roman province.

**Hasmonean Scroll:** Also known as the Scroll of Antiochus, it was composed around the seventh century C.E. Drawing heavily upon *midrashic* interpretations of the Maccabean struggle, the scroll contains many legends and stories. During the Medieval Period, it served as the chief source of information for Jews about the Maccabean struggle.

**Judah Maccabee:** One of the five sons of Mattathias who, along with his brothers Jonathan, Simon, John, and Eleazar, led the revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes. The third but best known of the brothers, he was the leader of the uprising and remained at the helm until his death in 160 B.C.E., five years after the rededication of the Temple.

**Judith, The Book of:** In the Apocrypha, this book tells the story of a beautiful Jewish widow

who cut off the head of the Assyrian commander, Holofernes, after feeding him cheese to make him thirsty and then wine to get him drunk. She thereby saved the Jewish city of Bethulia. The story was probably written during the period of the Hasmoneans. The composition is considered to be fictitious and not historically accurate. It serves as the origin of the custom of eating cheese dishes on Chanukah.

**Kislev:** The ninth month of the Jewish religious year, it can have 29 or 30 days. Its zodiac sign is Sagittarius. The festival of Chanukah begins on the 25th of Kislev.

**Latkes:** The Yiddish word for potato pancakes. The Hebrew equivalent is *levivot*. Originally cheese dishes were eaten on Chanukah to commemorate the actions of Judith, a daughter of the Hasmoneans (see The Book of Judith, above). From the custom of eating cheese dishes grew the custom of eating pancakes of all kinds. *Latkes* are also eaten because they are fried in oil symbolizing the miracle of the cruse of oil which burned for eight days when the Temple was rededicated.

**Maccabee:** A name given to Judah, first leader of the Hasmoneans, and later applied to the entire Hasmonean dynasty. This Hebrew word is usually translated as “hammer,” but can also be understood as an acronym of the first letters of “*Mi Kamocha BaAyilim Adonai*,” meaning “Who among the mighty is like You, O God?” It may have served as a rallying cry for the Jews in their battle against Antiochus.

**I Maccabees:** In the Apocrypha, I Maccabees traces the history of the Jewish people from 175 B.C.E. when Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, became King of Syria, until 135 B.C.E., when Simon was killed and his son John Hyrcanus became the leader of Judea. It is generally seen as a reliable historical account of the period, most likely written in the second half of the second century B.C.E. by an admirer of the Maccabees. While it was probably

written in Hebrew, only the Greek translation is extant.

**II Maccabees:** In the Apocrypha, II Maccabees deals with the deeds of Judah Maccabee until 164 B.C.E., the year after the rededication of the Temple. It may be an abridgment of a longer work by the second century Jewish historian, Jason of Cyrene. II Maccabees has a religious rather than a historical aim. It portrays the persecutions of Antiochus in greater detail than I Maccabees and, in effect, seeks to justify the establishment of Chanukah as a Jewish festival. It makes references to God's role in Jewish history, while such references are omitted from I Maccabees.

**Ma'oz Tzur:** "Rock of Ages" is a Chanukah hymn sung in the synagogue and at home after the kindling of the Chanukah candles. It originated in Germany in the thirteenth century.

**Mattathias:** (*Matityahu* in Hebrew) A priest from the village of Modin, he initiated the revolt against the Syrian Greeks in 168 B.C.E. and, with his five sons, led the battle. He died in 167-166 before the rededication of the Temple (on 25 Kislev, 165 B.C.E.).

**Mi Yimayl:** "Who Can Retell," a popular Chanukah song, has the following refrain: "Who can retell the things that befell us, who can count them? In every age a hero or sage came to our aid."

**Modin:** A village near Lydda (Lod). In the second century B.C.E., it was the home of the Maccabees and the place where the revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes began. Each year, at the beginning of Chanukah, a torch is lit at the tomb of the Maccabees and carried to Jerusalem by runners.

**Nes Gadol Hayah Po:** "A Great Miracle Happened Here." The word *Po* (here) is substituted for *Sham* (there) on *dreidels* used in Israel, because the miracle of Chanukah occurred in Israel and not in the Diaspora. In Israel, one side of a *dreidel* has a *Pay* instead of a *Shin*.

**Nes Gadol Hayah Sham:** Means "A Great Miracle Happened There." Each letter on the sides of the *dreidel* refers to one of the four words in this statement. The miracle is, of course, the victory of the Maccabees over the Hellenist Syrians, and the rededication of the Temple in 165 B.C.E.

**Seleucids:** When Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C.E., his empire was divided among his generals. Ptolomy ruled Egypt and its environs while Seleucus ruled Greater Syria. From then until the Maccabean Revolt in 168 B.C.E., Palestine was sometimes under the control of the Egyptian Greek Ptolomies and sometimes ruled by the Syrian Greek Seleucids. Antiochus Epiphanes and his immediate predecessors were Seleucids.

**Sevion:** A four-sided top with a different Hebrew letter on each side. The Hebrew word *sevion* is derived from the Hebrew root meaning "to turn." In Yiddish, such a top is called a *dreidel*, which is derived from the German word *drehen*, to turn. In the Middle Ages, there were German tops known as *trendels*. The Jewish *dreidel/sevion* is probably an outgrowth of that top. The letters on the side of the *dreidel* represent Hebrew words meaning "A Great Miracle Happened There" or, in Israel, "A Great Miracle Happened Here." Each of the letters on the side of the *dreidel* also corresponds to a Yiddish word linked to the *dreidel* game: *Nun* for "*nichts*," meaning to take nothing and put nothing; *Gimel* for "*ganz*," meaning to take everything; *Hay* for "*halb*," meaning to take half of the pot; and *Shin* for "*shtellen*," meaning to put into the pot. There are many variations of the *dreidel* game.

**Shamash:** "Servant." This refers to the ninth — or servant — candle used to light all of the other Chanukah candles each night.

**She'ahsah Nissim:** "Who made miracles." The second prayer recited when lighting the Chanukah candles is said on all eight nights and speaks of the miracles wrought for our ancestors in ancient times. (See Appendix, page 250, for blessing.)

**Shehecheyanu:** "The One Who Has Kept Us Alive." This blessing, recited at most new beginnings, is said on the first night of Chanukah. (See Appendix, page 251, for blessing.)

**Sufganiyot:** An Israeli jelly-filled doughnut. It is eaten on Chanukah because, like the *latke*, it is fried in oil, which is symbolic of the miracle of Chanukah.

## BACKGROUND

### History

333 B.C.E. Alexander the Great conquered Judea. Now a part of the Greek Empire, the policy of cultural pluralism was applied to the Jews. They were permitted cultural and religious freedom while remaining under the political and economic control of the Greek Empire.

323 B.C.E. With the death of Alexander, his empire was divided among his generals. One section of the empire was centered in Egypt under the control of Ptolemy; another major section of the empire was centered in Syria under the control of Seleucus. Palestine, which was located between these two kingdoms, became a bone of contention.

198 B.C.E. Until this time, Judea had been in the hands of the Ptolemies (Egypt). Now it came under Seleucid (Syria) control. It remained a part of the Seleucid kingdom until the Maccabean revolt.

175 B.C.E. Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, became the ruler of the Seleucid Kingdom. Rather than continue the policies of previous rulers, Antiochus tried to fashion an empire held together by

the Greek religion and the Greek way of life. In the process of establishing this common denominator, Antiochus attempted to eliminate all national and religious differences among his subject peoples. He made a special effort to integrate the Jews into his kingdom.

175 B.C.E. Jason, son of Simon II, became High Priest of Judea after offering Antiochus large sums of money. The High Priest was considered to be the head of the Jewish nation. Jason was an assimilationist who sought to incorporate as much of Syrian-Greek Hellenism into Judea as possible. Other elements in Judea, among them the "Hasidim," fiercely defended their Jewishness against all incursions.

171 B.C.E. Jason was dismissed, and Menelaus became the High Priest. The repressive policies of Antiochus continued.

168 B.C.E. Active revolt against Antiochus began with the famous rallying cry of Mattathias: "Whoever is for the Lord, follow me!" For two years, Mattathias and his five sons waged guerrilla warfare against the Syrians. Then, as more and more Jews joined Judah (Mattathias died in 167-166), the Jews pursued a more active military policy and won several decisive battles against the Seleucids. The Hasidim also joined forces with the Hasmoneans.

165 B.C.E. On 25 Kislev, Judah and his forces drove the Greeks out of Jerusalem and rededicated the Temple, which had been intentionally defiled by the

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Hellenists. This did not mark a final victory on the part of the Jews, as fighting continued intermittently for more than 20 years.

163 B.C.E. Judah Maccabee obtained internal autonomy for his nation from Antiochus, but continued to fight because he sought full political freedom.

161/160  
B.C.E.

Judah was killed at Elasa near Beth-Horon. Jonathan became the leader of the Jews. An astute diplomat, Jonathan used unsettled political conditions to Jewish advantage. The Syrian authorities recognized him as both the governor of Judea and its High Priest. This merging of previously separate roles angered the Pharisees who saw in Jonathan's actions a grab for power. From this point on, ill will existed between the Pharisees and the Hasmoneans.

143 B.C.E. Jonathan was murdered and Simon, the last of the five brothers, became the High Priest and ruler of Judea. He succeeded in expelling the Syrian Greeks and establishing an independent kingdom. Simon was murdered by his son-in-law Ptolemy who wanted to succeed him as ruler of Judea. However, his son John Hyrcanus took over and ruled until 105 B.C.E.

104 B.C.E. Alexander Yannai took over as the Hasmonean ruler. His opposition to the Pharisees led to a civil war.

76 B.C.E. With the death of Yannai, his widow, Salome Alexandra (76-67 B.C.E.) became the Hasmonean ruler. It was during her reign that the Pharisees

regained a position of religious and political leadership in Jewish life.

63 B.C.E. Judea became a Roman province.

### Observance

The Chanukah lights are first mentioned by the Roman Jewish historian Josephus in his book *Antiquities* (12:7): "From that day to this we observe this festival and call it lights."

The Talmud speaks of the *mitzvah* of lighting the Chanukah lights in a prominent place in order to proclaim the "miracle" of Chanukah to the entire world. "Our sages taught: The Chanukah lights should be placed at the door of the house. A person who lives in an upper story should place it in the nearest window to the public thoroughfare. In time of danger, however, it may be placed on the table and that will be sufficient . . ." Rabbi Joshua said: "Women are bound to fulfill the commandment of kindling the lights, for they, too, were involved in that miracle. The lights may be kindled from sunset till the time when all movement comes to an end in the marketplace" (*Shabbat* 21b, 23b).

The Rabbis of the Talmud stressed the miracle of the cruse of oil, rather than the miraculous military victory of the Hasmoneans, for they wished to emphasize the role of divine intervention and minimize the military prowess of the Hasmonean dynasty. A famous passage in the Talmud asks: "*Mai Chanukah?*" — What is Chanukah? In response, the Talmud states: "Our sages taught: Beginning with the twenty-fifth of Kislev, during the days of Chanukah, we neither fast nor mourn. For the idolaters entered the Sanctuary and defiled all the oils in the Sanctuary; and when the power of the Hasmoneans overcame and defeated them, they searched, but found no more than one flask of oil, sealed with the seal of the High Priest, and there was not enough oil in it to last more than one day. But a miracle took place, and they kindled with it for eight days. For future years, therefore, they established these days as days of feasting, praise, and thanksgiving" (*Shabbat* 21b).

How to light the Chanukah lights: On the first night, the first candle is placed in the *chanukiah* on the far right. Each night, an additional candle is added to the left. On the eighth day, the last candle on the far left is added to the other seven. Although candles are added from right to left, they are lit from the left to the right. Each night, therefore, the newest candle is lit first.

The first and second blessings are said every night. *Shehecheyanu* is said on the first night only. (See Appendix, pages 250 and 251, for blessings.)

*HaNayrot Halalu* is read after the kindling of the newest Chanukah candle. The rest of the lights are kindled as this prayer is being said or sung. The Ashkenazic and Sephardic versions differ somewhat, but the meaning remains essentially the same in both renderings:

“We kindle these lights on account of the miracles, the deliverances, and the wonders which You did work for our ancestors by means of your holy priests. During all of the eight days of Chanukah, these lights are sacred, neither is it permitted us to make any profane use of them; but we are only to look at them, in order that we may give thanks to Your Name for Your miracles, Your deliverance, and Your wonders.”

*Al HaNissim* is read as one of the final blessings of the *Amidah* and is part of the Grace after Meals. It reads:

“We give thanks for the redeeming wonders and the mighty deeds by which, at this season, our people was saved in days of old. In the days of the Hasmonians, a tyrant arose against our ancestors, determined to make them forget Your Torah, and to turn them away from obedience to Your will. But You were at their side in time of trouble. You gave them strength to struggle and to triumph, that they might serve You in freedom. Through the power of Your spirit, the weak defeated the strong, the few prevailed over the many, and the righteous were triumphant. Then Your children returned to Your House, to purify the sanctuary and kindle its

lights. And they dedicated these days to give thanks and praise to Your great name.” (A similar *Al HaNissim* prayer is recited on Purim.)

The *chanukiah* is then placed in a window or in the doorway so that the lighted candles may be viewed from the street. The placement of the *chanukiyah* in the front window can be seen as a statement of Jewish pride and identity.

In addition to these prayers and blessings, there are no other special Chanukah rituals. It is customary to sing various Chanukah songs, but they have no special religious significance. For the enjoyment of all, new melodies and recordings are being produced each year.

#### Central Themes

- Chanukah was a struggle for freedom of religious practice, the first such (Passover not withstanding) in recorded history. That a subjugated people chose to put their lives on the line and battle a much stronger foe in pursuit of religious freedom and triumphed is the real miracle of Chanukah.
- The events leading up to the Maccabean revolt put in jeopardy the continued religious identity of the Jewish people. Not to fight would have meant an end to Jewish peoplehood. That battle was therefore a fight for Jewish survival.
- Chanukah symbolizes the fight against totalitarianism in all forms. The struggle was waged in a particular context, but its implications are universal — a festival of liberty and freedom. Chanukah celebrates more than the independence of one people; it points toward the right to freedom for all peoples.
- The actions of Antiochus IV represent a classic error committed by non-Jews in their dealings with the Jewish people. He, like many others in the centuries that followed, tried to interfere with the internal life of the Jewish people. He did not realize that Jews had learned to live as a minority element in a dominant non-Jewish

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culture and that they were prepared to submit to political and economic control for the sake of religious freedom.

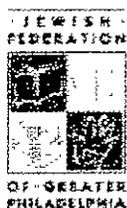
- Chanukah affirms the universal truth that the only effective answer to oppression is to fight for and defend the very values and principles which that oppression threatens and tries to suppress.
- Chanukah as a festival of faith affirms the declaration of the prophet Zachariah (5:6): "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." The Maccabean struggle was even more a fight for Judaism than a fight against Hellenism.
- Both Chanukah and Purim celebrate a victory of Jews over larger, more powerful forces.
- In Israel, there is a natural resonance with the victory of the Maccabees in light of the struggle for peace and security in the modern Jewish state.
- The link between Chanukah and Christmas represents an ongoing challenge for North American Jewry. While Chanukah is but a minor festival in the Jewish calendar, Christmas is one of the two main holidays (with Easter) in the Christian calendar. Although Chanukah and Christmas occur at the same time of year, they have virtually nothing else in common. Ironically, of course, had the Maccabees not sustained their commitment to Judaism, the history of the people might have ended then and there. Christianity could not have emerged as it did.
- The story of the oil lasting for eight days may or may not have occurred. If it were merely a legend created to explain why Chanukah lasts eight days, it would not substantially detract from the meaning and importance of the holiday.

### SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Grade	Themes/Ideas
Kindergarten	Stories about Chanukah; basic Chanukah observances in the home.
Grade One	Stories about Chanukah giving of presents — why at this time of year? How do we feel when we receive gifts? How do we feel when we give gifts?
Grade Two	How Chanukah is celebrated in the synagogue; an introduction to the Chanukah story.
Grade Three	A basic Chanukah vocabulary — key terms; introduction to the three blessings.
Grade Four	<i>Al HaNissim</i> prayer and review of blessings; how Chanukah is celebrated in Israel.
Grade Five	Chanukah as a religious and a national holiday; Chanukah customs — <i>gelt</i> , <i>dreidel</i> , cheese dishes, <i>latkes</i> , doughnuts, etc.
Grade Six	Hannah and her seven sons: the event and its implications; the meaning of Chanukah then and now.
Grade Seven	An overview of I and II Maccabees — comparison and contrast of the two sources; The Book of Daniel and Chanukah.
Grade Eight	A critical overview of the Chanukah story — Chanukah in the light of history and politics.
Grade Nine	The origins of Chanukah traditional and non-traditional viewpoints.



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# HANUKKAH: A FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

*Hanukkah is a time of miracles, miracles of light and religious freedom. We celebrate pride in Jewish identity and commitment to Jewish life in the face of assimilation.*

## Articles:

- [The Hanukkah Story](#)
- [Hanukkah at Home](#)
- [The Hanukkah Blessings](#)

## Activities:

- [How to Play the Dreidel Game](#)

## The Hanukkah Story

In the year 167 BCE (that is, Before the Common Era) Antiochus (an-tay-o-kus), a Syrian king, ruled Israel. During his rule, Jews were forced to hellenize: Jewish ritual was banned and Jews were forced to join the dominant culture and adopt its way of life.

Why did Antiochus care about limiting Jewish observance? Some suggest as an effort to consolidate his rule over the land and its people. Others think the Jewish elite of the time embraced hellenization and wanted to impose its will on fellow Jews. In each story, the goal was to fully assimilate Jews into the dominant culture of the ruling class.

### Back to the story

A small group of Jews who lived outside of Jerusalem in Modi'in, the Macabees, resolutely opposed these changes. They organized a small, guerilla-style, army under the leadership of Judah Macabee. Miraculously, this small group defeated both of their oppressors, Antiochus' army and the Jewish elite, and established themselves as the new ruling class for nearly 100 years.

### What about the oil?

Several hundred years later, the religious leaders of the time (the rabbis) felt uncomfortable with this piece of history which celebrated aggression and civil clashes. They introduced a new feature to the story, which has now become the dominant symbol of the holiday.

### Here's how it goes

When the Macabees celebrated their victory reclaimed the Temple in Jerusalem, they re-lit the flame of the Temple's Menorah with a small cruse of oil they found. The cruse contained enough for only one day. When they used the oil, it miraculously burned for not one but eight days. The "miracle of the oil" was integrated into the history of Hanukkah, and lighting candles for eight days became its central ritual.

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## HANUKKAH AT HOME

Rituals often mean more than we can explain. In lighting the menorah we conjure our memories of the Maccabees, of the first Hanukkah, of the meaning of "dedication." Even without full explanation or firm conclusions, we make rituals part of who we are. The Hebrew phrases lead us to gaze into the flames and reflect. To fully understand Hanukkah, just observe how your children watch the candles.

### Lighting candles

On the first night of Hanukkah, place one candle on the extreme right end of the Menorah. Light the Shammash (the server candle) and with the Shammash light the first candle while saying the three blessings below.



On the second night, place two candles on the right end of the Menorah. Use the Shammash to light the two candles, lighting the one on the left first while saying the first two blessings below. Follow the same procedure on all the rest of the nights; put candles in from the right end of the Menorah and light from the left hand side.

It is traditional to place the Menorah in a window so that it can be seen by passersby.

### What to eat

Traditional Hanukkah foods are traditional (though not the most healthy) because they are fried in oil. The most common food is latkes, fried potato pancakes; in Israel, jelly donuts (*sufganiot*) fried in oil, are also eaten.

What about presents?

While gift-giving has become part of the Hanukkah celebration, no one knows exactly when and where the tradition originated. Jewish tradition does associate gift-giving with other holidays: Pesach (Passover), Rosh HaShanah (New Year) and Purim.

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## How to Play the Dreidel Game

A dreidel is a top with one Hebrew letter on each side. Together they form the initials for "Nes Gadol Haya Sham...A Great Miracle Happened There."

### The Rules

Each player starts with the same number of nuts, m&m's, pennies, (you get the idea).

1. Each player antes one piece.
2. The first player spins the Dreidel.
3. When the Dreidel stops, do what the letter tells you:

		(Nun)	the spinner gets nothing.
		(Gimel)	the spinner gets the whole pot.
		(Hey)	the spinner gets half the pot.
		(Shin)	the spinner adds one to the pot.

(Nun) the spinner gets nothing.  
 (Gimel) the spinner gets the whole pot.  
 (Hey) the spinner gets half the pot.  
 (Shin) the spinner adds one to the pot.

4. Go back to #1 and the second player plays, and so on!

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## The Hanukkah Blessings

*The first is a blessing over the candles themselves:*

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם אשר  
 קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher  
 kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah.

Praised are You, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the universe, who makes us holy  
 through mitzvot and commands us to light the Hanukkah candles.

*The second blessing expresses thanks for the "miracle" of deliverance:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שְׁעָשָׂה  
נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she'asah  
nissim la'avoteinu ba-yamim ha-hem ba-z'man ha-zeh.

Praised are You, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the universe, who did wondrous  
things for our ancestors in former times at this season.

*The third blessing is chanted only on the first night:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

Barukh atah Adonai, Elohenu melekh ha'olam,  
she-heheheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu la-z'man ha-zeh.

Praised are You, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the universe, who keeps us alive,  
sustains us, and brought us to this occasion.

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**OPENING TEXT STUDY  
CHANUKAH**

each banquet (OC 670:1). However some authorities maintain that there is a degree of merit to celebrating Chanukah with feasts (Ramah ad loc.)<sup>111</sup>

7. Women have a custom not to do work as long as the Chanukah lamps burn (OC 670:1), i.e. for the half an hour period that they must burn (MB). Some authorities explain that only *hard* work is avoided (Orchos Chaim ad loc.).

#### \*§ The Chanukah Lights: Who is required to light them.

8. The basic obligation is that each household kindle at least one light every night of Chanukah (Shabbos 21b).<sup>112</sup> However it is a commonly accepted custom that every man should light a *mitzvah* meal (Mishnah Berurah 670:9; Mishnah of Rottenburg; Talmud, ed. Prague 205).

3. This view holds that Chanukah is celebrated on two levels: (a) To mark the dedication of the Temple, the Sages instituted eight days of fasting and rejoicing (mishnah in *Hil. Chanukah* 3:3) states: "Therefore the Sages in that generation instituted that these eight days... be days of rejoicing...." Some (R. Shimon Huldiner and R. A'ayah Leib Yehonin in their glosses on *Kerubim*, ed. Vilna) understand that by "rejoicing" Rabbah refers to feasting. However *Talmud Bavli* understands that he means the joyous recital of Hallel.

4. Women have adopted this custom distinctive to them because of the important role they played in the victory over the Greeks (MB loc. cit. see p. 76). Some (Shev HaGiv 670:3 and *Mor U'Ketzia* ad loc.) feel that this custom was instituted to stress the prohibition against mixing use of the burning lamps. Others (Mishnah cited by *Be'er Heitev* 670:2) advocate abstention from work even for men.

5. There is debate among the commentators whether the provision that all the members of a household may fulfill their obligation with the kindling of one of its members is a case of one's agent is an oneself (omiyag o'eg v'yomiyag), or whether the obligation to kindle was placed on each domicile and not on the individual, i.e. perhaps the Sages did not obligate each individual to kindle lights, but rather stipulated that lights be kindled and exhibited in each household. See *Pnei Yehoshua* and *Sfas Emes*, *Shabbos* 21b s.v. "v'n", and *Hanzeret Kodosh*, notes to R. Z.P. Frank's *Mikvat Kodosh*, p. 33.

6. See MB 672:10. The reason to require their presence during the kindling lies at the core of the mitzvah of kindling — to publicize the miracle. Furthermore in our days the function of kindling is primarily to proclaim the miracle to the household members (see Ramah 671:7A, 672:2; 671:1). Consequently, someone who arrives home after the household members are already asleep may not recite the blessing unless he awakens them; otherwise he may not recite the benedictions (MB 672:11; see *Shev HaGiv*). Additionally, there is specific merit in hearing the recitation of the benedictions, for according to many authorities one who has fulfilled the mitzvah by proxy, must nevertheless recite the benedictions *Shev HaGiv* and *Shitchev* upon seeing the lights (see MB 676:6). By juxtaposing the benedictions it is considered as if one had recited the benedictions himself (mishnah in *Shitchev* and one is spared the dilemma of whether or not to recite *Shev HaGiv* and *Shitchev* (see further 110).

7. The reason for this custom is not clear. Some authorities explain it with the well-known dictum: *Imag turek, one's wife is as oneself*, i.e. they are considered as one person concerning

[113] GEMARAH / Its History, Observance, and Significance

## The Laws

The following halachos are culled in the main, from the authorities having the widest acceptance, the *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* (here abbreviated OC) and *Mishnah Berurah* (MB). We have restricted ourselves to the most important halachos, and have also included some decisions from the Halachah literature of our generation where we feel that this is warranted.

#### \*§ The Eight Days of Chanukah

1. The Chanukah festival starts on the 25th of Kislev and continues for eight consecutive days. Eulogies, accepted in the presence of a Torah scholar's bier, may not be delivered on these days. Fasting is prohibited on them (OC 670:1, 3).

2. These eight days were demarcated *Yamim Tovim* (festivals) by the Sages (Shabbos 21b) and *Hallel* is recited every day (OC 683).

3. A segment starting with the words *דבורי שני*, *Al Hanisim*, is inserted in the benediction of the *Sheronah Erev* beginning with the word *דריח*, *modim*, and in the second benediction of *Bircas Hamazon* (Grace after Meals) (OC 682).

4. If *Al Hanisim* was omitted, the *Sheronah Erev* or *Bircas Hamazon* need not be repeated. However even if one had forgotten to recite *Al Hanisim* in the place indicated in the prayer-book, he must still recite it if he had not yet recited the words, *ו'ן תתקן ה' אלהינו* at the end of the blessing. Moreover, even if he had already said the words *ה' אלהינו*

1. The *Parkim* (Mishnah of Rottenburg cited by *Tur*, *Orach Chaim* 670) point out that the Talmud (Shabbos 21b) states only that the Sages made it a *Yom Tov* with regard to [recital of] *Hallel* and thanksgiving [i.e. the recital of *Al Hanisim* (Rambam)], omitting any mention of *Lemach* (Orach Chaim 670 cited by *Mishnah Berurah* 681) explains that Chanukah differs in this from Purim where feasting is an integral part of the festival because of the nature of the event commemorated. The festival of Purim celebrates the deliverance of the Jewish nation from physical annihilation, therefore the celebration takes a physical form. By contrast, the Syrian-Greeks did not seek the physical destruction of the Jews, but their spiritual obliteration. King Antiochus demanded only that they reject the Torah and their beliefs. Appropriately, therefore, the celebration of their deliverance expresses itself in spiritual ways — the lighting of lamps, recital of *Hallel* and *Al Hanisim* (cf. *Shach* and *Turei Zahav* ad loc.).

2. Although Chanukah is considered a *Yom Tov*, there is no obligation to feast on these days. Therefore the customary Chanukah banquets *per se* are not to be considered *mitzvot*. However, it is customary to recite psalms or songs of thanksgiving to God for His miracles at these meals, and these recitations elevate the meals to the status of *mitzvot*.

**16.** At the conclusion of the Sabbath in the synagogue, the Chanukah lights are kindled after the *Shemoneh Esrei* prayer and before the *Havdalah* is recited (OC 681). There are conflicting opinions and customs as to the sequence to be followed in the home. Some recite the *Havdalah* first and then kindle the lights, while others reverse the procedure. Both views have validity (MB 671:2).

¶§The Place

**17.** In Talmudic times the lights were placed at or near the outer part of the doorway facing the street, i.e., in the space between the door and the outside or on the street near the doorway (Shabbos 21b, OC 671:5). Furthermore, according to the halachically accepted view (Tos. Shabbos 21b, s.v. מוצא; OC 671:5), if the domicile entrance faced a courtyard, the lights may not be placed in that doorway, but rather they are put in the courtyard doorway leading to the street. The reason for this is obvious — to publicize the miracle. The lights are placed on the left side of the doorway, opposite the *mezuzah* (*ibid.*). However, in the Diaspora it has become accepted custom to kindle the lights indoors; (see *Tur* O.C. 671 and 673 with *Bach*; *Shulchan Aruch* OC 671:7). Nonetheless one should kindle the lights near an interior doorway (at its left side). (See next paragraph about kindling by a window.) Nowadays many observant Jews in *Eretz Yisrael* perform the *mitzvah* as it was done in Talmudic times.

**18.** If one lives above the ground floor and has no door leading to the street [his entrance is through the ground floor apartment (MB 671:23)], he kindles at a window facing the street (M.B. 671:5). However if the window is

11. The Talmud (Shabbos 21b) rules: 'In time of danger one places it (the Chanukah lamp) on his table and this is sufficient'. To this *Be'el Hattar* (*Aseres HaDibros, Hil Chamitzah*) remarks, 'Since they have already adopted this usage (to kindle indoors) because of the danger, it has acquired the status of a valid custom, and remains valid even after the danger has passed'. *Aruch HaShulchan* (671:24) reasons that the present custom is due to the modern weather prevailing in Europe at the time of Chanukah which all but renders outdoor kindling impossible (cf. *Chidushei HaRitva HaChadashim, Shabbos 21b* s.v. פתח אל פתח).

(above the age of 13) in the household, the woman of the house must kindle (OC 675:3, MB there).

**10.** A minor male, who is old enough to understand the significance of Chanukah, should kindle the lights, but adults (men or women) may not discharge their obligation through him (*ibid.*).

¶§The Time

**11.** Ideally one should kindle immediately upon nightfall, i.e. *הכנסת נר*, the emergence of stars, or within the half hour following nightfall. However, since in our days kindling is performed within the house (in contrast to Talmudic times when it was performed at the outer doorway), one may kindle and say the benedictions even after this time. In Talmudic times the lights were lit to publicize the miracle to passersby, therefore, they had to be lit while people were still up and about outdoors. Nowadays, they are lit primarily for the family, however (OC 672:1-2).

**12.** One should not kindle before the designated time (OC 672:1; see *Be'ur Halachah*, s.v. מוצא קטן). However if it will be impossible for him to kindle later one may kindle up to approximately one hour before this time (OC 672:1 with MB).<sup>8</sup> If one must kindle earlier than this he should consult a halachic authority.

the *mitzvah* of kindling (see *Shatzkes UTeshuvos Sh'ar Ephraim* 42, *Machatzia HaShekel* 675:4, *Eliyahu Rabbah* 671, and MB 671:9; *Chidushei Chasam Sofer, Shabbos 21b*).

8. There is much controversy as to exactly when this takes place halachically: opinions range from approximately 40-72 minutes after sunset.

9. The above is the view expressed in *Shulchan Aruch*, and the one generally followed in practice. However some (see *Be'ur HaGon* 672:2) advocate that the lamps be lit immediately after sundown. This view is especially followed in Jerusalem's old community (see *Moadim Uzmanim* 1:72, 2:154). See *Rabbi K' S. Eider, Halachos of Chanukah* p. 20 for other views.

10. The period after *plag haminchah* is considered night for some halachic requirements, e.g., the *Maariv* prayer may be recited then (see OC 233:1 for a discussion of *plag haminchah*). Although technically the length of this period is 1¼ hours, this does not mean 75 minutes. These hours are not sixty-minute periods, but are reckoned as 1/11th of the daylight hours of that particular day. During the short 9 hour winter days of Chanukah, 1¼ hours would be approximately 60 minutes. In general there is a question if the Mishnaic hours are counted from dawn to nightfall (i.e., emergence of the stars) or from sunup to sundown. *Mishnah Berurah* (672:3) rules (concerning the above halachah) that *plag haminchah* occurs 1¼ halachic hours before the emergence of the stars.

**13.** The lights should burn for at least half an hour. If one kindles an oil lamp one must be sure that there is sufficient oil to burn until the end of this period before reciting the benedictions. Where one kindled before the indicated time (see 81:2), he must make sure that there is sufficient oil for the light to burn a half hour past nightfall, in addition to the time it burns in the period between kindling and nightfall. Likewise, if one uses candles, they must be of sufficient length to burn the required time (*ibid.*).

¶§Sabbath

**14.** On Sabbath eve one kindles the Chanukah lights prior to the kindling of the Sabbath candles. A woman who forgot and kindled the Sabbath candles first may not kindle the Chanukah lights. She must ask another adult to kindle for her. In this case the person who kindles on her behalf must recite the first benediction, but she may say the next two benedictions (MB 679:1).

**15.** On the Sabbath eve one must make sure that at least one of the lights will burn through the entire half hour period following nightfall (as in 81:3; see MB 679:2). It is not sufficient that they burn for half an hour after kindling (as usual) because the *mitzvah* is performed prior even to sun-down, and at least an hour before nightfall.

the first one, kindles the added light first and then, moving to his right, lights the one at the extreme right. This procedure is repeated every night; first one kindles the added light and then kindles the rest, moving from left to right (OC 673:5). See accompanying illustration.

¶ The Fuel

24. Any fuel may be used for the lights and all materials are suitable to serve as wicks. However in order to perform the mitzvah in a most meritorious manner one should use olive oil. If olive oil is not readily available one should use an oil which gives a steady and clear flame, or wax (or paraffin) candles (OC 673:1). However oil is preferable to candles (MB 673:4) (1).

25. Electric or gas lights may not be used to perform the mitzvah, (1)

¶ Activity Before Performing the Mitzvah

26. One may not eat, perform work, or even study Torah once the time for kindling has arrived (MB 672:2).

27. There are two reasons for this preference: (a) olive oil yields the steadiest and clearest flame (see Shabbos 23a ... דבר דבורה עץ with Tos. s.v. זרובח; cf. Meiri to 21a); (b) because the miracle of Chanukah occurred with olive oil (this is the only oil which may be used for the Menorah in the Temple; see Exodus 27:20). Preferably, the mitzvah of kindling should reflect this historical event (Chayei Adam 154:5; Aruch Hashulchan 673:1).

14. In order to emulate the Menorah lamp of the Temple in which [olive] oil was used (MB, see Meiri Shabbos 21a). *Mafnat Mitzvah* (Ner Mitzvah) maintains that even *post facto* (עקיפתו) one cannot discharge his obligation with any fuel other than oil, but the *Paskim* do not accept his argument (see *Sha'ar HaTziyun* 673:4).

15. The Talmudic sources speak of a *ner*, which refers to a receptacle holding fuel for kindling purposes, i.e., a lamp and not a light. Indeed the benediction recited before kindling uses this word (נרנו בן נרנו) indicating that this aspect of the Temple Menorah must be represented in the mitzvah of kindling. Surely one cannot perform the mitzvah by kindling a long burning wood splint; it is not a *ner*, lamp. Candles, although they seem to resemble splints, actually operate on the same principle as oil lamps. The flame on the wick inside the

¶ The Berachos Performance of the Mitzvah

27. Before kindling the lights the appropriate benedictions must be recited. On the first night three benedictions are said: (א) נרנו ... נרנו ... נרנו ... *who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Chanukah lights;* (b) *Blessed ... who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Chanukah lights;* (c) *who has kept us alive ... and brought us to this season.* On the second night only the first two benedictions are said and *Shehecheyanu* is omitted. However if one had forgotten to recite *Shehecheyanu* the first night, he should recite it prior to kindling on the second night, or on whatever night he recalls his oversight (OC 676:1; see MB 62 with *Sha'ar HaTziyun*).

28. All three benedictions must be recited prior to kindling the first light. If one forgot to recite the benedictions and already kindled some lights he may say them prior to kindling one of

hand while kindling does not discharge his duty (OC 675:1).

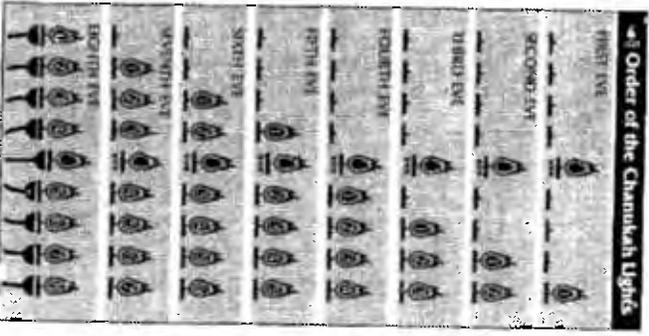
21. Lamps are also kindled in the synagogue before the *Mizmor* prayer and the appropriate benedictions are said. However one does not discharge his obligation by kindling in the synagogue; he must kindle the lights in his home as well. The menorah is placed near the southern wall (as it was in the Holy Temple) and the lamps arranged from east to west (OC 671:7). However some have a custom to arrange the lamps from north to south; this too, is a valid custom (MB 671:42). Both customs are based on conflicting opinions among the *Tannaim* as to how the Menorah in the Temple was arranged (*ibid*). In many communities the lamps are also lit during the *Shacharit* prayer, albeit without the benedictions.

¶ The Number of Lights

22. Basically the mitzvah can be performed by kindling every light for an entire household every night (*Shabbos* 21b). However the Talmud (*ibid*.) notes that it is desirable to 'enhance' (ענין) the mitzvah by lighting more than the minimum of a light per night in each household. There are two possible enhancements to this mitzvah. Those who enhance their performance of mitzvos (ענין) kindle one light for each member of the household (e.g., if the household consists of five members, five lights are kindled every night). Those who enhance their mitzvos even more (ענין) begin with one light on the first night and add one additional light on each succeeding night until eight lights are kindled on the eighth night. The custom in Ashkenazic communities is to incorporate both 'enhancements', that is: each male member of the household kindles one light on the first night, and adds an additional light on each night (OC, Rama

671:2). Most Sephardim, however, conduct themselves according to the custom described in Rambamim (*Hil' Chanukah* 4:3) as 'the prevalent custom in all our cities in Sepharad (Spain) and that given by R' Yosef Caro in the *Shulchan Aruch* (OC 671:2). This custom calls for one menorah to be used for an entire household, and for one lamp to be lit on the first night and an additional light on each of the succeeding nights.

23. According to the custom most widely followed, on the first night one kindles the lamp at the extreme right of the menorah; on the second night one adds a light to the left of



12. Rambam himself is of the opinion that a set of lamps should be kindled for each member of the household. *Turaz Zohar* (OC 671:3) points out the anomaly that the Ashkenazim conduct themselves according to Rambam while the Sephardim adopt the view of *Talmud* (*Shab*).

34. The above holds true for a transient lodger. If one lives with a fellow Jew year-round and eats at his table, he is considered as part of the household and is not required to kindle for himself (MB 377:1; cf. *Be'er Hachocher* there). [He should however kindle his own lights in accordance with the custom that every male member of the household kindles for himself (see above 82).]

35. If the traveler's wife is at home, she must kindle to fulfill her own obligation (her *mitzvah* is not discharged by her husband's kindling away from home, for lights must be kindled in each household; see *Terumas HaDeshen* 101). If she will be lighting at home, the husband may rely on his wife and fulfill the *mitzvah* through her agency. If he wishes to, however, he may also kindle for himself and recite

the benedictions (OC 677:3), but he must have in mind that he does not wish his obligation to be discharged for him by his wife (MB 677:15). However some authorities dispute this ruling and hold that his duty is fulfilled with his wife's kindling in any case. Although one may rely on the first view, it is preferable that he either kindle before his wife does so, or hear the blessings from someone else (MB 377:16; see also *Pri Megadim*, *Mishbetzos Zahav* 377:1).

36. Someone who is merely paying a visit or is invited to a meal by a friend or relative cannot discharge his obligation by kindling at his host's home. The *mitzvah* is fulfilled only with kindling at one's own residence (MB 677:12). If one plans to stay at the friend or relative's house for the entire night or until near midnight he should consult a competent halachic authority.



## § The Ritual

the additional lights. If he had already kindled all of the lights he may not recite the first benediction (... *who has commanded us to kindle* ...); he must recite the next two benedictions (on the first night) or the second (on the other nights) while the lights are still burning (OC 676:2 with MB). However, some authorities point out that one cannot recite these benedictions if the lights have already burned half an hour after kindling (see *Teshuvos Hisorerus Teschuvah* 1:67; *Sadei Chemed Maaarachos Chanukah* cited in *Ner Ish Uveiso* p. 34; *Shoneh Halachos* 676:6).

29. After kindling the first light one recites the formula *נרתי ונרתי* (676:4 with MB).

30. According to many authorities, even someone away from home who discharges his obligation by having someone kindle for him at his own home, must nevertheless recite the last two blessings upon seeing burning Chanukah lights. The *Sha'ulchan Aruch* rules that one should not recite these blessings in such a case because of the doubt as to whether one is obligated to recite the blessings in this instance (OC 676:3 with MB). [Therefore one should make it a point to be present when the lights are being kindled so as to hear the recitation of the benedictions, and thus to discharge his obligation, for it is a cardinal rule that *נרתי ונרתי, one who hears is considered as if he had recited.*]

31. As already mentioned (820) the act of kindling is the essence of the *mitzvah* *נרתי ונרתי* (נרתי ונרתי). Therefore, if after kindling, the lights were inadvertently extinguished (e.g., accidentally extinguished the flame), he is not obligated to rekindle them even if this happened during the first half hour of burning. However it is preferable to rekindle the extinguished lights (OC

fuel which is then sucked up through the wick.) The presence of a wick is also presumed to be a necessity. A gas lamp, by comparison, is merely burning gas, *sama* wick or receptacle. The incandescent light is a glowing piece of metal, hardly comparable to a *ner* lamp (see *Teshuvos Bois Yitzchak*, *Yoreh Deah* 120; *Teshuvos Yad HaLevi* v. 1; R' Z. P. Frank, *Mikraei Kodsh* p. 47).

673:2 with MB 827). If, however, he placed the lights in a place where they were apt to be extinguished by an ordinary wind, or, he did not put enough oil into the lamp, or, he used a candle too short to burn for half an hour, or the like, he must rekindle the lights (to burn for half an hour), but should not recite the blessings again (OC 673:2 and 673:2 with MB).

### § The Shamash

32. One may not derive any benefit from the burning lamps. Therefore an additional lamp or candle is placed alongside the lights in a manner which sets it off from the Chanukah lights (usually it is placed higher than them) so that the number of Chanukah lights can readily be discerned. This light is called the *shamash* (lit. attendant) and serves as a precaution against inadvertent use of the Chanukah lights; in case someone reads or makes some other use of the lights, it can be assumed that he enjoyed the *shamash*. In Ashkenazic communities a candle is used to kindle the lights and it serves as the *shamash*. In some communities the *shamash* is set up with the rest of the lights and all of them — the Chanukah lights and the *shamash* — are kindled with another flame. Nevertheless if someone wishes to do anything needing light, he should refrain from doing it near the menorah, even though the *shamash* is burning (OC 673:1 with MB).

### § One Who is Away From Home

33. If one is lodged away from home (see below) and is staying at the home of a fellow Jew he may buy a partnership in his host's candles or oil (a penny's worth is sufficient) and discharge his obligation through the agency of his host. It is preferable, however, that he kindle his own lights, if possible (677:1 with MB).

**CHANUKAH ACTIVITY #1**

TEACHING JEWISH HOLIDAYS

**Shehecheyanu:** "The One Who Has Kept Us Alive." This blessing, recited at most new beginnings, is said on the first night of Chanukah. (See Appendix, page 251, for blessing.)

**Sufganiyot:** An Israeli jelly-filled doughnut. It is eaten on Chanukah because, like the *latke*, it is fried in oil, which is symbolic of the miracle of Chanukah.

the Greek religion and the Greek way of life. In the process of establishing this common denominator, Antiochus attempted to eliminate all national and religious differences among his subject peoples. He made a special effort to integrate the Jews into his kingdom.

**BACKGROUND**

**History**

333 B.C.E. Alexander the Great conquered Judea. Now a part of the Greek Empire, the policy of cultural pluralism was applied to the Jews. They were permitted cultural and religious freedom while remaining under the political and economic control of the Greek Empire.

323 B.C.E. With the death of Alexander, his empire was divided among his generals. One section of the empire was centered in Egypt under the control of Ptolemy; another major section of the empire was centered in Syria under the control of Seleucus. Palestine, which was located between these two kingdoms, became a bone of contention.

198 B.C.E. Until this time, Judea had been in the hands of the Ptolemies (Egypt). Now it came under Seleucid (Syria) control. It remained a part of the Seleucid kingdom until the Maccabean revolt.

175 B.C.E. Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, became the ruler of the Seleucid Kingdom. Rather than continue the policies of previous rulers, Antiochus tried to fashion an empire held together by

175 B.C.E. Jason, son of Simon II, became High Priest of Judea after offering Antiochus large sums of money. The High Priest was considered to be the head of the Jewish nation. Jason was an assimilationist who sought to incorporate as much of Syrian-Greek Hellenism into Judea as possible. Other elements in Judea, among them the "Hasidim," fiercely defended their Jewishness against all incursions.

171 B.C.E. Jason was dismissed, and Menelaus became the High Priest. The repressive policies of Antiochus continued.

168 B.C.E. Active revolt against Antiochus began with the famous rallying cry of Mattathias: "Whoever is for the Lord, follow me!" For two years, Mattathias and his five sons waged guerrilla warfare against the Syrians. Then, as more and more Jews joined Judah (Mattathias died in 167-166), the Jews pursued a more active military policy and won several decisive battles against the Seleucids. The Hasidim also joined forces with the Hasmoneans.

165 B.C.E. On 25 Kislev, Judah and his forces drove the Greeks out of Jerusalem and rededicated the Temple, which had been intentionally defiled by the

## TEACHING JEWISH HOLIDAYS

Hellenists. This did not mark a final victory on the part of the Jews, as fighting continued intermittently for more than 20 years.

163 B.C.E. Judah Maccabee obtained internal autonomy for his nation from Antiochus, but continued to fight because he sought full political freedom.

161/160 B.C.E. Judah was killed at Elasa near Beth-Horon. Jonathan became the leader of the Jews. An astute diplomat, Jonathan used unsettled political conditions to Jewish advantage. The Syrian authorities recognized him as both the governor of Judea and its High Priest. This merging of previously separate roles angered the Pharisees who saw in Jonathan's actions a grab for power. From this point on, ill will existed between the Pharisees and the Hasmoneans.

143 B.C.E. Jonathan was murdered and Simon, the last of the five brothers, became the High Priest and ruler of Judea. He succeeded in expelling the Syrian Greeks and establishing an independent kingdom. Simon was murdered by his son-in-law Ptolemy who wanted to succeed him as ruler of Judea. However, his son John Hyrcanus took over and ruled until 105 B.C.E.

104 B.C.E. Alexander Yannai took over as the Hasmonean ruler. His opposition to the Pharisees led to a civil war.

76 B.C.E. With the death of Yannai, his widow, Salome Alexandra (76-67 B.C.E.) became the Hasmonean ruler. It was during her reign that the Pharisees

regained a position of religious and political leadership in Jewish life.

63 B.C.E. Judea became a Roman province.

### Observance

The Chanukah lights are first mentioned by the Roman Jewish historian Josephus in his book *Antiquities* (12:7): "From that day to this we observe this festival and call it lights."

The Talmud speaks of the *mitzvah* of lighting the Chanukah lights in a prominent place in order to proclaim the "miracle" of Chanukah to the entire world. "Our sages taught: The Chanukah lights should be placed at the door of the house. A person who lives in an upper story should place it in the nearest window to the public thoroughfare. In time of danger, however, it may be placed on the table and that will be sufficient . . ." Rabbi Joshua said: "Women are bound to fulfill the commandment of kindling the lights, for they, too, were involved in that miracle. The lights may be kindled from sunset till the time when all movement comes to an end in the marketplace" (*Shabbat* 21b, 23b).

The Rabbis of the Talmud stressed the miracle of the cruse of oil, rather than the miraculous military victory of the Hasmoneans, for they wished to emphasize the role of divine intervention and minimize the military prowess of the Hasmonean dynasty. A famous passage in the Talmud asks: "*Mai Chanukah?*" — What is Chanukah? In response, the Talmud states: "Our sages taught: Beginning with the twenty-fifth of Kislev, during the days of Chanukah, we neither fast nor mourn. For the idolaters entered the Sanctuary and defiled all the oils in the Sanctuary; and when the power of the Hasmoneans overcame and defeated them, they searched, but found no more than one flask of oil, sealed with the seal of the High Priest, and there was not enough oil in it to last more than one day. But a miracle took place, and they kindled with it for eight days. For future years, therefore, they established these days as days of feasting, praise, and thanksgiving" (*Shabbat* 21b).

**AL HANISSIM****DO I REALLY BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?**

by Noam Zion

*An ancient ceramic cruse of oil and lamp (3rd-4th century CE)*

**C**andle lighting on Hanukkah is about proclaiming the miracles that occurred. But how do we explain miracles to ourselves, let alone to our children? As modern “believers” in the scientific lawfulness of nature (even if we do not “understand” the theory of relativity and the Heisenberg uncertainty principle or how electro-magnetic fields pass through our houses and our bodies bringing us television images), we are usually embarrassed by traditional “believers” in supernatural interventions into the natural world. Yet we know that since the Middle Ages when the Greek understanding of the lawful structure of nature was accepted by religious people, the belief in God has meant both that God created the world order and the God can at will violate that order. The world as seen by the scientist is not “the whole truth,” and other dimensions exist that sometimes encroach on our orderly world. To believe in miracles is to believe in these other dimensions, yet how do we reconcile religious beliefs with scientific ones?

Interestingly enough, it is easier to reconcile religion and science today than ever before. Both religious and scientific beliefs have changed greatly since the Middle Ages. We have completely rejected the Aristotelian science taken for granted then and replaced it first with Newtonian and then with Einsteinian physics. Today many scientists would qualify the “lawfulness of nature” by saying these are merely useful hypotheses, partial

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Interestingly enough, it is easier to reconcile religion and science today than ever before.

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models that help predict physical events, until we come up with better models. It is thought best to use multiple models simultaneously even if they appear intuitively contradictory (like the particle and the wave theory of light). Today our picture of reality as law abiding is less secure. Miracles are not as inconceivable as they once were when we took

the scientific picture of the world literally.

Still our street-sense as moderns tells us that it is irrational and unhealthy to educate our children that a benevolent God creates anomalies in nature (like splitting the Red Sea) specifically to help the chosen people. It is not only the “belief in miracles” that threatens “our belief in nature” but the kind of person we imagine believes in supernatural occurrences seems weird whether s/he is an ultra-Orthodox Jew, a born-again Christian or a New Age occultist. To open up ourselves and our children to a life-giving faith in God’s surprises means not only holding scientific hypotheses with less self-confidence, as in fact many scientists do today, but to ask what the faith in “other dimensions” will do to our everyday life. What kinds of miracle beliefs do we wish to explore and what kinds of believers are dangerous and crazy?

Let me map out some of the possible

approaches to miracles and on such a map you may be able to locate your own beliefs. I too will express my preferences. Today's science and philosophy cannot totally exclude any of these views of miracles, so it is a matter of choice which one we want to adopt when "proclaiming the miracle of Hanukkah." Rejecting certain options will be as important as adopting others, as we sort out our beliefs.

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## What kinds of miracle beliefs do we wish to explore and what kinds of believers are dangerous and crazy?

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### Option #1

**Public miracles usually violate the laws of nature because that is how God teaches us to look beyond the physical to a higher realm of reality.**

Korah, Datan and Abiram, the desert rebels, accused Moses of making up the whole project of the Promised Land, of pulling off a Wizard-of-Oz hoax on the whole people. Then Moses called upon God to "prove" that he had been chosen, by "making a miraculous creation" like the earth opening its mouth to swallow them up.<sup>100</sup> In fact, earthquakes do occur, but not usually when predicted in advance to prove a point at a particular time. The miracle is not necessarily a violation of natural law, but it is a "sign" felt by the people to be a decisive message from another dimension. Miracles of this sort, like Moses turning his staff into a snake before Pharaoh, come to establish credibility, to prove a point, to end speculation.

One might object to such miracles on several grounds:

- (1) Uncertainty is preferable in the realm of faith since it refers faith to one's personal choice rather than "forcing belief" on us by powerful and threatening "tricks."
- (2) The relative certainty of the natural order is more reliable in most cases. One should not build a worldview on bizarre exceptions.

- (3) To cite supernatural miracles is to open up the field to charlatans who claim authority for their dangerous belief systems based on exotic so-called miracles.

Personally speaking, I do not believe literally in the supernatural variety of miracles as actual occurrences in the present or the past. Even if they occurred, I do not think they would "prove" something to me, that is, convince me of a certain religious worldview. Yet they do make great stories and they do teach lessons in a dramatic, literary way that I appreciate because I deeply believe that what appears invincible (like Pharaoh at the Red Sea or even a powerful cancer) can sometimes be vanquished in unpredictable ways. "God" is my name for that surprising power when the forces of good are victorious. I choose to believe in that God of surprising moments of reversal, but I also choose to be skeptical of particular "tricks," as I see them, which strike me as trivial, even if I cannot explain them away scientifically.

### Option #2

**Private miracles, the hidden coincidences, that sometimes change the direction of our lives because of amazing timing, are guided by Divine destiny.**

The concept of the "hidden miracle" is developed by Nachmanides (13th century Spain) in his explanation of the ups and downs and ups again of Joseph's life in the Bible. Even though God never speaks to Joseph — not even in dreams — and never violates any laws of nature to cast him down into the pit via his brothers' jealousy or to raise him up by his ability to analyze the future and make a plan to preempt a famine, Joseph is convinced, in retrospect, that it is the hand of Divine destiny that has shaped his roller coaster existence and given it meaning.

But one might object on three grounds:

- (1) You cannot "prove" the existence of an invisible hand of God, because it is only a

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100. Numbers 16

matter of interpretation.

- (2) One might become passive awaiting God's miracles whether public or private.
- (3) Living in a world of existential uncertainty offers more moral grandeur and harsh honesty than the childish world of Divine providence.

Personally, I have great respect for an existentialist Camus-like stand that there are no Divine safety nets and that accidents may determine one's fate in the most indifferent way. Yet in a world of uncertainty I do not

want to be dogmatic either in accepting or denying the possibility of personal, private miracles. It is a matter of interpretation and it is not provable one way or the other. When I choose to interpret coincidences as miracles, as a personal sense of destiny, then it gives me a strength to make meaning out of my life. I feel like Queen Esther who decides to reveal her Jewishness to the King in order to appeal to save her people from Haman, because "*who knows if just for this opportunity I became queen.*" We, like Esther, cannot know for sure but we can wager on the possibility that God has

## The God of Surprise!

BY RABBI DAVID HARTMAN

Central to the Exodus story and the Pesach seder is the recounting of the ten plagues. As moderns educated in natural science, the lawful order of the world, the story strikes us as childish, as primitive, as mythological. Yet we may be missing the point of these extraordinary events if we understand it as ancient superstition. Instead the miracle is a symbol of spontaneity in history, a faith in the changeability of oppressive regimes. What appears as fate, the necessity of a small people subject to an invulnerable empire, is revealed as an illusion. The language of the supernatural miracle is the Bible's way of undermining the acquiescence of humans to the "way things have to be," to the political "facts of nature" created by powerful dictators.

There is an unpredictable Power present in the universe. For a people arising from helplessness, utter destruction and complete impoverishment, the movement from Egypt to the desert was a radical leap. It was not a steady process, not a gradual development. The plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea signaled the breaking in of Power that confronted tyrannical hegemonies, which refused to accept ultimate divine Sovereignty.

Belief in miracle is the basis of the "hope model" of Judaism. Exodus becomes a call to revolutionary hope regardless of the conditions of history. The act of protest against their environment can occur, because the Jews possess a memory bank that structures what they think is possible. The Exodus becomes vital, because it tells people that they are able to hope. The

order that people observe in the cosmos is not irreversible. Tomorrow will not necessarily be like today.

Belief in the doctrine of creation reinforces the belief in miracle. Creation means that the world that came about at a certain moment could be recreated in a new constellation if God so wills it. Spontaneity and surprise characterize divinity. Not everything is a recurring pattern. The cosmos is not a Nietzschean wheel of eternal recurrence. Creation and the miracles of Exodus protest against the despair of the book of Ecclesiastes. The Preacher of Ecclesiastes proclaims that the world is *hevel*/vanity. Nothing really changes; all is endless repetition. A generation comes, a generation goes. A child dies, a wife, a father... all is in vain, without significance.

The Exodus provided the memory that made hope a very real possibility. Being is not inalterable. Becoming marks a human being's ontology. Radical surprise becomes an important feature. New possibilities are always present; history can change.

Life is not just the present. A future is real. Without spontaneity and without creativity the future would be just a repetition of what already was. The Exodus introduces the dimension of a radically new tomorrow. That is the idea of Messianism. The belief in a Messiah proclaims a radical futurism; a new separate concept in human consciousness of time. Life is not exhausted by endless cycles. Once our story is told as our beginning through revolution, then history is a wide-open book.

**H**anukkah is the Festival of Lights. It commemorates an ancient Jewish rebellion against oppression, during which the Temple in Jerusalem was miraculously recaptured from pagan hellenizers and rededicated to the worship of God. The candles of Hanukkah celebrate that rededication. They also help brighten the long winter nights.

But I remember a Hanukkah when darkness almost overpowered the light. It was the first week of November 1938. The final years of the Depression lay like a polluting mist across the streets of New York. On afternoons when it did not rain I would play on the sidewalk in front of the plate-glass window of the candy store near our apartment house. The bubble of darkness on the other side of the world bumped only vaguely against my consciousness. I was very young then, interested more in Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers than Adolf Hitler.

One afternoon I was near the candy store, in the cardboard box that was my rocket ship, when an elderly couple walked slowly by; I caught some of their frightened words. Before supper that evening I saw my mother standing over the kitchen sink, her head bowed, and heard her whispering agitatedly to herself. Later, my father came home from work, drenched in weariness, he turned on the radio and became wearier still.

That night I lay awake in my bed and saw the pieces of

the day come together and form a portrait of terror: "A Jewish boy had shot a German [official in Paris]," the old people had said. "We will pay dearly for it, very dearly." "The boy had been sent by his parents to live with his uncle in Paris," my father had murmured. "Then the boy's parents were deported to Poland [by the Nazis in Germany]."

"The boy went out of his mind," my mother had said in a voice full of fear. "He did not know what he was doing."

I lay very still in my bed, thinking of the boy who had shot the German and wondering what the Germans would do to the Jews. Two days later the [German official] died, [then came *Krystal Nacht*, the pogroms called the Night of the Broken Glass, November 9, 1938].

In the weeks that followed I dreamed about the synagogues that were burning all over Germany, about the Jews who were being sent to concentration camps, about the looted stores and smashed shop-windows. One day I stood in front of our apartment house and imagined our street littered with glass, shattered glass everywhere, the plate-glass window of the candy store splattered across the sidewalk, the store itself burned and gutted. I imagined the entire block, the neighborhood, the city heaped with broken glass and thick with the stench of fire. The days of that November and December began to go dark, until it seemed all the world would soon be shades of darkness: dark sun and dark moon, dark sky and dark earth, dark

offered us or called us to take an initiative in a significant "window of opportunity" that may just transform history "miraculously." We can become active partners with Divine destiny by regarding key junctures in our life, so-called "accidents," as pregnant with meaning. That is how we rewrite and reinterpret our lives as a purposeful narrative.

### Option #3

**The laws of nature are themselves a miracle created by God and worthy of wonder.**

As the Jewish philosophers Maimonides (12th century) and Heschel (20th century)

argue, the fact of order can itself be seen as Divine. As the prayerbook phrases it, "we thank you God for miracles of the everyday" such as our success in processing our wastes without diarrhea or constipation. In experiencing the beauty of order in the snowflake and in the glacier, in the human mind's innovative wisdom and in the lawfulness of the everyday, we discover the miracle of what exists, rather than the miracle of the anomaly and of the bizarre. Though the miracle of Hanukkah celebrates the extraordinary, in which we may be reticent to believe, we can still have faith in the miracle of the ordinary, the amazing patterns of order in a world created by God out of chaos.

night and dark day. I was a child then, but I still remember that darkness as a malevolence I could touch and smell, an evil growth draining my world of its light.

My world seemed thick with that darkness when Hanukkah came that year on the twenty-fifth of December. I remember my father chanting the blessings over the first candle on the first night of the festival. He was short and balding, and he chanted in a thin, intense voice. I stood between him and my mother, gazing at the flame of the first night's candle. The flame seemed pitiful against the malignant darkness outside our window. I went to bed and was cold with dread over the horror of the world.

The next night two candles were lighted. Again my father chanted the blessings before the lighting and the prayer that follows when the candles are burning: "We kindle these lights on account of the miracles, the deliverances, and the wonders which You did for our ancestors . . . During all eight days of Hanukkah these lights are sacred . . . We are only to look at them, in order that we may give thanks unto Your Name, for Your miracles, Your deliverances and Your wonders."

I wanted a miracle. But there were no miracles during that Hanukkah. Where was God? I kept dreaming of burning synagogues.

On the eighth and final night of the festival I stood with

my parents in front of the burning candles. The darkness mocked their light. I could see my parents glancing at me. My mother sighed. Then my father murmured my name.

"You want another miracle?" he asked wearily.

I did not respond.

"Yes," he said. "You want another miracle." He was silent a moment. Then he said, in a gentle, urging voice, "I also want another miracle. But if it does not come, we will make a human miracle. We will give the world the special gifts of our Jewishness. We will not let the world burn out our souls."

The candles glowed feebly against the dark window.

"Sometimes I think man is a greater miracle-maker than God," my father said tiredly, looking at the candles. "God does not have to live day after day on this broken planet. Perhaps you will learn to make your own miracles. I will try to teach you how to make human miracles."

I lay awake a long time that night and did not believe my father could ever teach me that. But now, decades later, I think he taught me well. And I am trying hard to teach it to my own children.

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101: Reprinted by the generous permission of Rabbi Chaim Potok from an article originally published in *McCall's Magazine*, 100, No. 3, Dec. 1972, p. 30.

#### Option #4

The Biblical miracles are always associated with historical redemption because they point not to the violation of natural order which is seen as Divinely beautiful, but to the violation of human order which is so often corrupt and oppressive.

This is an insight I owe to my teacher Rabbi David Hartman. Miracles in the Bible are often not merely proofs of religious dogmas (as in the case of Elijah on Mount Carmel), but also contributions to undermining totalitarian oppressors. For example, at the Red Sea the Jews needed not only a

military miracle to be saved from Pharaoh's chariots, but a psychological-political miracle to be liberated from their paralyzing fear of Pharaoh, their self-deified master. When Pharaoh is so amazingly defeated before their very eyes, then they can begin to believe in their own potential as free human beings and to give their allegiance to a God of liberation.

The violation of nature is the *form* the miracle took in the eyes of the people because for them the absoluteness of the rule of Pharaoh, his invincibility, seemed as solid as the laws of nature. Many of the ten plagues are described as events that had never before occurred since the foundation of Egypt.

Thus described, they served to undermine the mental hold on the slaves who believed the ancient kingdom of Egypt could never be shaken. But the message of the miracle is about people's mistaken belief that the power of an empire is absolute and eternal. I believe in this message which liberates me from the totalitarian propaganda of the oppressor, even if I regard the supernatural form of the miracle as a rhetorical device, a kind of educational gimmick, to shake me out of my habitual defeatism about "the way things are and always will be."

### CHOOSING OUR HANUKKAH MIRACLE

With these options in mind, we return to the Hanukkah narratives. The Rabbis speak of two different kinds of miracles that the menorah proclaims. We must decide whether to believe in and propagate either.

#### A. Miracle Oil

The miracle recalled in the Talmud speaks of a cruse of oil that burned for eight days instead of one. That is a supernatural miracle violating the laws of nature. Taken literally it promotes a belief in supernatural intervention. It may even denigrate human effort. Perhaps that kind of belief explains why Lubavitch Hasidim refused to wear gas masks during the Iraqi missile attacks on Israel in 1991 when chemical warheads were feared.

However David Hartman argues that the miracle of oil is only a symbol that arouses human faith. When human beings are willing to believe that more is possible than meets the eye, then they will invest in historical projects like the Maccabean Revolt and the Declaration of the Independence of Israel in 1948 even against all odds. Our presupposition that a cruse of oil cannot burn for eight days, that it is a natural impossibility, is only a symbol of the mistaken belief in the historical impossibility of change.<sup>102</sup>

#### B. The Miracles of the Few Against the Many

Even if we cannot embrace the miracle of the cruse of oil, the Rabbis offered a different kind of miracle to celebrate. The Rabbinic prayer for Hanukkah, *Al HaNissim*, ignores the miracle of the oil and speaks of a general phenomenon possible in every generation whereby God helps human beings to bring about miraculous rescues from historical oppressors. This belief in God's miracles does not undermine human effort but causes it to redouble. The miracle is "natural" within the realm of historical possibility, yet inconceivable and unattainable by oppressed peoples who don't believe in its possibility.

In the Exodus from Egypt, God initiates the miracles for a passive, despairing people of slaves. However on Hanukkah, first the martyrs like Hannah and then the zealots and the warriors initiate the redemptive process. In a world where God seems eclipsed, where there are no supernatural signs and no prophets, where the leading priests accepted Hellenism as a boon, the Maccabees bear witness to another dimension. They evaluate the world differently and they believe in a Divine power whose hidden will becomes manifest. The Rabbis celebrated the political and military manifestation of God's miracle in the Maccabees' victory.

Personally, I prefer the miracle of the few against the many. I need to reject the miraculous long-burning cruse of oil lest I be understood as an anti-rationalist or passive Jew. But perhaps beyond my polemic against the childish legend, I need to mature and to reinterpret both kinds of miracles as opening me up to other dimensions, to possibilities in myself and in my world that I have too quickly foreclosed. Believing in miracles is another way of learning to keep my options open and letting myself be surprised.

102. See David Hartman, "Trusting in a New Beginning," in the companion volume, *The Hanukkah Book of Celebration*, p. 195.

Activity one



### Al Ha-Nissim

BY RABBI AVROHOM GORDINER

The Al Ha-Nissim prayer which is recited during Shmoneh Esrei and Birkas Ha-Mazone on Chanukah is quite lengthy. Unlike the Al Ha-Nissim of Purim, which very briefly relates the basics of the Purim story, the Al Ha-Nissim of Chanukah is very elaborate. **After** narrating the story of the Chanukah victory, the text seems to wax poetic:

"...You gave the mighty (Syrian-Greeks) into the hands of the weak (Jews), and the many into the hands of the few, and the defiled into the hands of the pure, and the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the malicious into the hands of those who engage in Your Torah. And You made a great and holy name for Yourself in Your universe; and to Your nation, Israel, did You grant a great salvation and liberation, as on this day. And subsequently Your children came to Your holy abode, and they cleared out Your Palace, and they purified Your Temple, and they kindled lights in the courtyards of Your holy place. And they established these eight days of Chanukah in order to give thanks and praise to Your great name."

Why does the text contain the above, flowery addendum to the Chanukah narrative, detailing what the Jews did **after** the victory ("...Your children came into Your holy abode...and they established these eight days of Chanukah...")? Why does it make no direct mention of the miracle of the oil which burned for eight days?

Let's begin by contrasting Chanukah and Purim. Purim is a primarily a tale of salvation from physical annihilation. Although the tribulations prior to Haman's downfall and the victories of Purim precipitated teshuvah and a renewed religious commitment on the part of the Jewish community, the central theme of Purim is that of rescue from death at the hands of Amalek (Haman and his cohorts). This event therefore comprises the text of the Al Ha-Nissim prayer of Purim.

Chanukah is starkly different. There was no threat of death to the Jews. Rather, Torah study and observance of mitzvos were at stake, for the Syrian-Greeks forbade them, and the Beis Ha-Mikdash was defiled. Chanukah celebrates the Jews' spiritual victory.

Therefore, the text of Al Ha-Nissim of Chanukah could not stop at the point of detailing the Hasmonean military triumph. The real victory of Chanukah was that of the spirit, and the narrative of Al Ha-Nissim thus continues to the spiritual significance of the Chanukah story, elaborating on the religious qualities of the victors, the Kiddush Hashem of their success, the redemption of the Beis Ha-Mikdash and the eternal religious

significance of the events. The physical triumph was merely a means for spiritual renewal and restoration, and it is this point which is the true focus of Chanukah's Al Ha-Nissim.

Still, why is the miracle of the oil not specifically mentioned?

The answer lies in the thematic motif at the end of Al Ha-Nissim. The conclusion of the text details the physical work involved in reclaiming the Beis Ha-Mikdash and the enactment of Chanukah as a holiday. ("...Your children came to Your holy abode, and they cleared out Your Palace, and they purified Your Temple, and they kindled lights...and they established these eight days...") The narrative does not focus on the spiritual respite attained on Chanukah; instead, the **spiritual work and effort** of the victorious Jews are given attention.

Although the miracle of the oil affirmed that the military triumph of Chanukah reflected a deeper spiritual victory (and was a symbol of the presence of the Shechinah in Israel - see Sefer Noraos Ha-Rav), the true religious conquests for which we give thanks by reciting Al Ha-Nissim in the Hoda'ah ("Thanksgiving") b'rachah of Shmoneh Esrei and Birkas Ha-Mazon are the freedom to engage in Torah and mitzvos and the redemption of the Beis Ha-Mikdash. Please allow me to explain why this is so.

Passive Jewish religiosity was not the enemy of Hellenistic culture. Recognition of Jewish identity and spirituality did not clash with Syrian-Greek ideology, as spiritual virtues and self-image were within the bounds of Hellenistic, man-centered thinking. To claim that humans are endowed with Godliness and that each person has a unique national or spiritual identity was not at odds with Syrian-Greek worship of man, as these qualities accentuate additional aspects of man's greatness.

Chanukah - and Torah as a whole - center on the service and supremacy of God and thereby declare the limitations of man. Hashem endowed man with wondrous physical, mental and spiritual capabilities not for man's own exploitation and self-aggrandizement: on the contrary, man's greatness and creativity exist for his pursuit of God and the establishment of the Divine Presence in man's midst. Thus, pro-active pursuit of holiness is the Jew's mandate, and restricting oneself so as to focus on Hashem is at the crux of the Torah's directives. By the same token, active service of Hashem was the real enemy of Hellenism, as such service displays man's subservience, directing all focus and praise on God. It is precisely the theocentric, God-focused path of Torah life, as embodied in active service of Hashem, which the Syrian-Greek culture could not tolerate. Avodas Hashem as the Master of the Universe negates the Hellenistic concept of man's autonomy and magnificence. The Syrian-Greeks did not attempt to stifle our religious identity; rather, they sought to destroy our theocentric approach as borne out through Torah study, mitzvah performance and the sanctity of the Beis Ha-Mikdash, which is the purest physical manifestation of service to Hashem and is itself a declaration of man's limitations, for entry to its various parts

is restricted to certain classes of persons and specific levels of purity. The Beis Ha-Mikdash is the most forceful display of God-centered religion and man's limitations.

Therefore, the conclusion of Chanukah's Al Ha-Nissim exclusively addresses the religious **actions** of the Jewish victors in reclaiming the Beis Ha-Mikdash and establishing Chanukah for permanent observance, and the passive spiritual message of the miracle of the oil is omitted; for subservience to God, as reflected by active service to Him, and the centrality of Hashem and limitations of man, as manifested by the Beis Ha-Mikdash, clashed with Hellenism and were therefore at stake. The miraculous victory of Chanukah affirmed and restored these values.

It thus follows that "Mi laShem eilay" ("Whoever is committed to God should fight alongside me") and "Mi chamocha ba-eilim, Hashem" ("Who is like you among the spiritual beings, O God") were the rallying calls of the Macabis. Their war was to protect the supremacy and ultimate centrality of Hashem's role in Jewish life.

May we strive to embody the characteristics and drive of Mattisyahu and his sons, and may our approach to Torah be guided by the vision which is encapsulated in Al Ha-Nissim. May Hashem enable us to realize our potential in Torah and understand that the highest form of His Avodah is not defined passively by our culture or identity, but by becoming pro-active Torah personalities, depicted as "those who **engage** in Your Torah".

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## HOW HANUKKAH BECAME A HOME HOLIDAY

### THE RABBIS TRANSFORM THE DAY OF THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE INTO THE EVENING OF THE REDEDICATION OF THE HOME

by Noam Zion

#### THE ANCIENT AND THE MODERN INDEPENDENCE DAY PROCESSION

**T**he original Hanukkah founded by the Hasmonean dynasty was probably not celebrated at home with the lighting of the family menorah. As described in the historical *Books of the Maccabees* (c. 125 BCE), the original festivities involved a victory march. "They celebrated for eight days . . . carrying palm branches."<sup>48</sup> (The palm branch is both a Jewish symbol of Sukkot and perhaps a Greek symbol of the goddess of victory, Nike, who later gave her name to sports shoes in the 20th century.)

Perhaps the festival was not fully formed in 164 BCE when the Temple was first recaptured and rededicated. Maybe only in 152 BCE when Judah's brother Jonathan became the High Priest or in 140 BCE when his other brother Simon became High Priest and dynastic prince of a recognized autonomous state, did this **ancient Israeli Independence Day** gain its ritual form as a public celebration of the founding of a new and renewed political-religious-national order.

The festival, which does not even have its own name in the *First Book of Maccabees*, seems to follow the Greek model of days that commemorate military victories, especially ones that founded a new political dynasty like the Maccabees. Elias Bickerman, the historian, notes that the Bible has no holidays established by political leaders and no commemoration of military events. Therefore Hanukkah itself is a Hellenist-style innovation.

If we search for a modern parallel to Hanukkah as a "State Holiday of Independence," the Zionist entity of the 20th century comes to mind immediately. It is no surprise that in the 1930s and 1940s the rising secular nationalist Zionist movement in Israel

adopted Hanukkah as its central holiday.<sup>49</sup> Theodore Herzl concluded his book, *The Jewish State* (1896), with the visionary prophecy, "The Maccabees shall rise again," in the same spirit in which Greek and Italian 19th century nationalism envisioned a rise of their modern nation-state in the image of the ancient glory of Athens and Rome. (Note that modern Greece hosted the renewed Olympics in the same year, 1896.) In Eretz

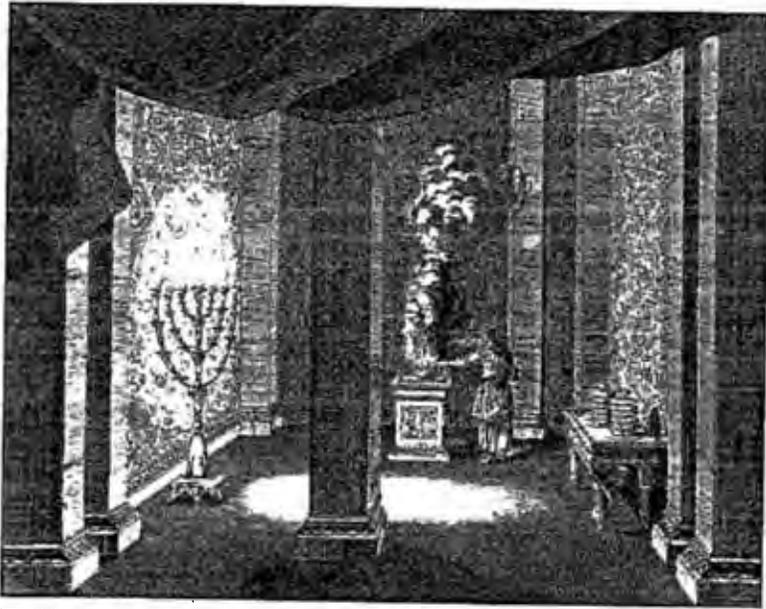
48. *II Maccabees* 10:7

49. see Ehud Luz and Eliezer Don-Yehiya's article on page 10)



Lighting the Oil Menorah.  
(*French Book of Jewish Ceremonies*, Amsterdam, 1713)

Zion, Noam and Barbara Spectre, editors. *A Different Light: the Big Book of Hanukkah*, Devora Publishing, New York. 2000.



*The Menorah in the Ancient Temple.*

*In this engraving, we have a peek into the inner sanctum of the Temple through a raised curtain revealing the twelve showbreads, the altar of the incense, and a giant seven-branched menorah.*

*(Illuminated Manuscript of Josephus, Amsterdam, 1704)*

Yisrael in the 1920s-1930s the form of celebration for the new nationalist Hanukkah was public parades often by torchlight, youth movement pilgrimages to the graves of the Maccabees at Modiin and the creation of the Maccabia international sports competition. After the establishment of the state in 1948, the public Hanukkah candle lighting began at the graves of the Maccabees at Modiin with an Olympic-style runner carrying a lit torch to the Knesset with intermediate stops — including the Israeli President's home.

In the 1930's everyone was asked: what "bricks" have you contributed to rebuilding the "Temple," the Third Commonwealth, meaning metaphorically, the new Jewish political entity. Note that the Hebrew word for Temple is "sacred house," *Beit Hamikdash*, and that the British Mandate's term for the

renewed settlement of Jews in Israel is the "Jewish National Home" (Balfour Declaration, 1917). To celebrate the emergence of Jewish consciousness from the home to the streets, from minority status to a claim to be an autonomous majority, the place of the menorah (later the national emblem of the State of Israel) was atop Jewish public buildings, *not only in private homes on the window sill*. The proper Zionist name for the holiday was "**The Festival of the Maccabees (or of the Hasmoneans),**" not "**Hanukkah**" which means "Rededication of the Temple."

Now let us return from the modern counterpart to the ancient context of the Maccabees and later, the Rabbis.

### A Temple Rededication Ceremony

In addition to the victory parades of the ancient Maccabees that celebrated their political independence, the original holiday also took the form of a **Temple Rededication Ceremony**. In the *Second Book of the Maccabees*, which quotes from a letter sent circa 125 BCE from the Hasmoneans to the leaders of Egyptian Jewry, the holiday is called "**The Festival of Sukkot celebrated in the Month of Kislev (December),**" rather than Tishrei (September). Since the Jews were still in caves fighting as guerrillas on Tishrei, 164 BCE, they could not properly honor the eight day holiday of Sukkot (and Shemini Atzeret) which is a Temple holiday, hence it was postponed until after the recapture of Jerusalem and the purification of the Temple. This — not the Talmudic legend of the cruse of oil — explains the eight day form of Hanukkah. The use of candles may reflect the later reported tradition of *Simchat Beit HaShoeva*, the all-night dancing in the Temple

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To celebrate the emergence of Jewish consciousness from the home to the streets, from minority status to a claim to be an autonomous majority, the place of the menorah in modern Israel was atop Jewish public buildings, *not only in private homes on the window sill*.

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on Sukkot which required tall outdoor lamps to flood light on the dance floor of the Temple courtyard.

“They celebrated it for eight days with gladness like Sukkot and recalled how a little while before, during Sukkot they had been wandering in the mountains and caverns like wild animals. So carrying lulavs . . . they offered hymns of praise [perhaps, Hallel] to God who had brought to pass the purification of his own place.”<sup>50</sup>

The connection between Sukkot and Hanukkah (as the Rabbis later called it) goes beyond the accident of a postponed Sukkot celebration. Sukkot is the holiday commemorating not only the wandering of the Jews in the desert in makeshift huts but the end of that trek with the dedication of the First Temple (i.e. the permanent *Bayit*/ Home of God in Jerusalem by King Solomon circa 1000 BCE).

“King Solomon gathered every person of Israel in the month of Eitanim [Tishrei] on the holiday [Sukkot] in the seventh month . . . for God had said, ‘I have built a House for my eternal residence.’”<sup>51</sup>

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The medium is the message, and the new Rabbinic household ceremony offers us a new interpretation of Hanukkah, transforming it from the “Rededication of the Sacred House,” the Temple, to the “Rededication of the Family Sanctuary.”

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Thus the Maccabean rededication celebration is appropriately set for eight days in the Temple.

### The Rabbis' Home Hanukkah

After the brief review of the two rationales and two forms of celebration taken by the original unnamed Maccabean festivities of the 25th of Kislev, the Rabbis' decision to make Hanukkah a home holiday is all the more

amazing. It would have been so much more appropriate to commemorate a national victory in the streets and a Temple purification in the Temple courtyard. After losing the Temple and political independence, the ceremonial lighting of the menorah would still have found its natural place in the synagogue. (Yet it is only in the Middle Ages that a new custom originates and it becomes customary to light a menorah in the synagogue on Hanukkah, even though the halacha is still that only home candles are an adequate fulfillment of the candle lighting obligation.) While no historical source (neither the *Books of the Maccabees*, Josephus nor Philo) mentions anything about home candle lighting in relationship to the original Hanukkah, the Talmudic Rabbis (2nd-5th century CE) assume that the only obligation is to light a lamp on one's doorstep (or window sill). One lamp must be kindled for each household just at dusk in order to publicize the miracle for the passersby on their way home from the market place.

*Why then did the Rabbis make this Temple holiday into a home holiday?* Was that the oral tradition since the days of the Maccabees or was it an innovation after the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE)? Whatever the historical development of this custom, the home-based form of the holiday expresses a particular spiritual message. “The medium is the message,” and the household ceremony offers us a new interpretation of Hanukkah, transforming it from the “Rededication of the Sacred House,” the Temple, to the “Rededication of the Family Sanctuary.” Let us suggest some possible rationales for this innovation, one we still observe, the family candle lighting at home.

First, the Rabbinic candle lighting is a liminal ceremony, meaning it occurs at the threshold (“*liminos*” in Greek) in two senses. **In space, the doorway is the border and the gate between home/street, private/public, family/national. In time, dusk is**

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50. *II Maccabees* 10:6-7

51. *I Kings* 8:2,12

**the border between day/night and light/darkness with all their metaphoric significance.** The Rabbis required that each household "*publicize the miracles of Hanukkah*" by sending a message from their home to the public sphere, the market place. It seems more than a coincidence that when the Greeks tried to force every Jewish family to renounce its Judaism and to proclaim its loyalty to Hellenist culture, religion and politics, that the doorstep was the location chosen.

"At the doors of their houses and in the squares they burned incense<sup>52</sup> [to the pagan gods]."

In short, the Greek persecution was aimed not only at the Temple and not only at requiring notables like Mattathias to offer sacrifices on public altars, but struck at **family Judaism**. Circumcision, Shabbat and Kashrut (or at least eating ritually pure foods) were the target as well. Many rank and file Jews defended their family's Judaism even to the point of martyrdom. The martyrdom of the scribe Elazar and of Hannah and her seven sons is a personal "bearing witness" (*martyr* in Greek means to bear witness) to the public persecutors that God, not Antiochus, is the final authority.

Therefore the Rabbinic "publicizing of the miracle," house by house is more than a clever advertising campaign to spread information. It is a **family bearing of witness to the public that we are a family loyal to Judaism**. When the Rabbis encouraged individuals to go beyond the minimum requirement of one lamp per house and to light one lamp per individual, they mandated individuals within each household to voluntarily reiterate their personal commitment to the family's public declaration of faith.

In ancient Hellenist and contemporary Western civilization the public realm usually overshadows the private, the street values invade the home in the name of "enlightenment." If you will, in contemporary terms the light of the TV spreads its messages within the home sanctuary. However it is the

family of the Maccabees, one family, a father and five sons (parallel to Hannah and her seven sons), who rejected the external light and declared their loyalty to their ancestral "lights." The inside triumphed over the outside, the ancient over the so-called modern, the family values over the enforced fads of up-to-date society. Thus it makes sense for the Rabbis to sanctify Hanukkah as a home holiday.

Let us add a second note about the Rabbinic form of observance. The candles are lit one at a time in mid-winter at the darkest point of the cycle of the **moon** (the 25th of Kislev when the moon is just disappearing and then beginning as a new moon to reappear on the 1st of Tevet and then to wax slowly). This occurs also at the darkest phase of the **solar** cycle, the winter solstice (of the northern hemisphere). Unlike holidays of redemption like Sukkot, Purim and Pesach, which are celebrated at the full moon and at the fall and spring solstice, Hanukkah reflects the beginning of the redemptive process, not its completion. Historically the 164 BCE rededication of the Temple takes place only at the beginning of the 25 year struggle for political independence, when many "dark days" still lay ahead.

The Rabbis' Hanukkah celebration marks the miracle of a new beginning in the historical and natural cycle, so Hillel's form of adding one light each night reflects that process as it waxes gradually, as each person adds to the light of the previous day.<sup>53</sup> The Rabbinic Hanukkah which is celebrated in the home focuses on the power of family values to stave off the outside influences of the street, in this case Hellenism, and ultimately to transform the public space by the light that shines from within the house. This is a faith that begins, like the winter solstice, in darkness but has the power to generate unexpected illumination for the whole world.

52. *I Maccabees* 1:55

53. See David Hartman's "Courage to Begin," in the companion volume, *The Hanukkah Book of Celebration*, page 195.

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*Laws Relating to Hallel*  
MOSES MAIMONIDES

The day on which the Israelites were victorious over their enemies and destroyed them was the twenty-fifth day of Kislev. When they reentered the Temple, they found within its precincts only one cruse of ritually pure oil, enough to burn for but a single day. Yet they kept alight with it the required number of lamps for eight days, until they could press olives and produce new ritually pure oil.

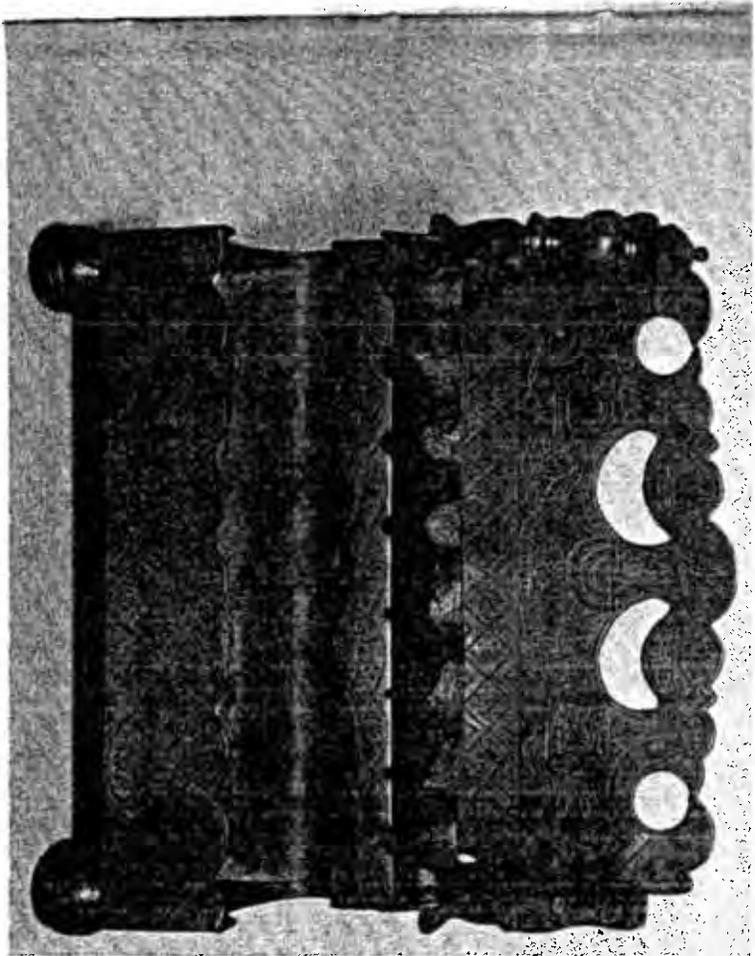
Consequently, the sages of that generation ruled that the eight days beginning with the twenty-fifth of Kislev should be days of rejoicing on which the Hallel is to be recited, and that on each one of the eight nights lamps should be lit at eventide over the doors of the houses, to serve as manifestation and revelation of the miracle. These days are known as Hanukkah. Funeral eulogies and fasting are forbidden on them, just as they are on Purim, and the lighting of lamps on them is a commandment based on the authority of the scribes, analogous to the commandment to read the Megillah.

On each of these days, the whole of the Hallel should be recited, and both individuals and congregations should preface it with the following benediction: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us to recite the Hallel in full." Note that although the recitation of the Hallel is a commandment based only on the authority of the scribes, the phrase "who has sanctified us with His commandments" is included in this benediction, just as it is included in the benediction before reading the Megillah or depositing an *eruv*. For a benediction so phrased should be recited over any act based on the authority of the scribes where the keynote is certainty. It is only where the principal reason for performing an act based on the authority of the scribes is to allow for a doubt—as is the case with the tithing of *demai* produce, for example—that no such benediction is to be recited.

*Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Megillah and Hanukkah 3:2-3, 51*

Goodman, Philip. *The Hanukkah Anthology*, Jewish Publication Society, 1976.

Activity one



11. Hanukkah lamp. Trn. Mangyrend. 1756.

iiiiiii

*Laws Governing the Hanukkah Lamps*  
MOSES MAIMONIDES

How many lamps should be lighted on Hanukkah? According to the commandment each house should light one lamp, whether the household consists of many persons or of only one. A more zealous way of fulfilling this commandment is to light as many lamps as there are members of the household, one lamp for each member, man or woman. A still more zealous way, indeed the best possible one, is to light a lamp for each person on the

first night, and add one more lamp per person each night thereafter.

Thus, if a household consists of ten members, on the first night it should light ten lamps, on the second twenty lamps, on the third thirty lamps, and so on, so that on the eighth night it would light eighty lamps.

However, the prevailing custom in all our cities in Spain is to light one lamp for all the members of a household on the first night, and to add another lamp on each succeeding night, so that on the eighth night eight lamps are lit; this is the case whether a household consists of many persons or of only one.

Hanukkah lamps may not be lit before sunset, but only at sunset—neither later nor earlier. If one forgets or deliberately fails to light the lamp at sunset, he may light it up to the time when people cease to walk about in the streets. How much time does this amount to? About half an hour, or a little more. Once this time has passed, however, one may not light the lamp on that night at all. Enough oil should be placed in the lamp to make it burn until the time when people cease to walk about in the street. If one lights the lamp and it goes out after awhile, he need not relight it. If it is still burning after people have ceased to walk about in the street, and one wishes to extinguish it or remove it, he may do so.

Any kind of oil and wick may be used in the Hanukkah lamp—even oil which does not flow easily through the wick, and a wick to which the flame does not adhere properly. Even on the Sabbath which falls during Hanukkah, it is permissible to burn in the Hanukkah lamp oils and wicks that may not be burnt in the Sabbath lamp. The reason for this is that no use may be made of the light of the Hanukkah lamp, either on a Sabbath or on a weekday.

In times of peril, one may place the Hanukkah lamp inside his house—it is even enough to place it on the table. There must be, however, another lamp in the house to provide illumination. If there is a hearth fire burning, no other lamp is necessary, but if the householder is a person of distinction, who would not normally make use of the light of a hearth fire, another lamp is still required.

A Hanukkah lamp lit by a deaf mute, an imbecile, a minor, or a heathen is invalid; it must be lit by one who is in duty bound to light a Hanukkah lamp. If one lights the lamp indoors, and then takes the lighted lamp out and places it over the door of his house, it too is

invalid; it must be lit at its proper place. If one stands outside the door holding the lamp in his hand, he has not fulfilled his duty, because an observer would think that he is holding it for his own convenience. If a lantern has been burning all day long during the Sabbath, it should be extinguished immediately after the Sabbath, the benediction should be recited, and the lantern should be relit; for it is the lighting of the lamp which constitutes the fulfillment of the commandment, not the act of setting it up outside the house.

If a courtyard has two doors on different sides, two Hanukkah lamps are required, lest the passersby on the side where there is no lamp should think that the courtyard did not put out a Hanukkah lamp at all. If the two doors are on the same side of the courtyard, a lamp burning at one of them is sufficient.

If a wayfarer knows that a lamp will be lit on his behalf at his home, he need not have one lighted for himself at the place where he is staying. If he has no home to light a lamp in his behalf, he should have one lighted for himself at the place where he is staying and should make a contribution toward the cost of the oil. If his present residence is a separate house, he should light a lamp at this house, even if one is lit on his behalf at his own home, because of what passersby might think otherwise.

The commandment to light the Hanukkah lamp is an exceedingly precious one, and one should be particularly careful to fulfill it, in order to make known the miracle, and to offer additional praise and thanksgiving to God for the wonders which He had wrought for us. Even if one has no food to eat except what he receives from charity, he should beg—or sell his garment to buy—oil and lamps, and light them.

If such a poor man needs oil for both a Sabbath lamp and a Hanukkah lamp, or oil for a Sabbath lamp and wine for the Sanctification benediction, the Sabbath lamp should have priority, for the sake of peace in the household [since the household members would be discomfited by sitting in darkness], seeing that even a divine Name might be erased to make peace between husband and wife. Great indeed is peace, forasmuch as the purpose for which the whole of the Law was given is to bring peace upon the world, as it is said, *Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace* (Proverbs 3.17).

*Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Megillah and Hanukkah 4.1-3, 5-6, 8-12, 14<sup>2</sup>*

|||||

*Laws Concerning Hanukkah*  
SOLOMON GANZFRIED

One should recount to his household the miracles that were performed for our forefathers in those days [of the Maccabees]. . . .

One should generously dispense charity during Hanukkah; these days are appropriate for rectifying flaws in one's character through charity, especially when given to maintain the poor engaged in the study of the Torah.

Fasting is not allowed during Hanukkah, but on the day previous to and following Hanukkah a eulogy may be delivered and fasting is permitted.

Work is permitted on Hanukkah; however, women refrain from work during the entire time the lights are burning, and they should not be deterred [from this obligation]. The reason women are more scrupulous is because of the harsh decree affecting the daughters of Israel [during the Maccabean period]; for example, a virgin about to be married was required to have sexual intercourse with the monarch. Furthermore, the miracle was effected by a very beautiful woman, the daughter of Johanan the high priest. When the monarch demanded that she lie with him, she replied that she would acquiesce. Then she fed him cheese dishes until he became thirsty. He then drank wine, became drunk, and fell asleep; whereupon she severed his head and brought it to Jerusalem. When the enemy general saw that their king was dead, he and the army fled. Therefore, it is customary to eat dairy dishes on Hanukkah in remembrance of the miracle achieved by milk.

All oils are proper for the Hanukkah lights; however, olive oil is preferable since the miracle in the Temple was accomplished with olive oil. If it is not available, one may select any other clean and clear oil, or wax candles can be used as their light is clear. . . .

A clay lamp lit on one night becomes old, and should not be used on the second night because it is unsightly. Therefore, one should use a beautiful metal menorah. If it is within one's means, he should purchase a silver candelabrum to show deference for the precept.

It is a common custom among those who are most scrupulous that every member of the household kindles one light on the first night,

two on the second, and adding progressively until eight lights are lit on the eighth night. Each one should be careful to set his lights in a special place in order to recognize how many lamps are lit. They should not be kindled in a place where other lights are lit throughout the year, so that the Hanukkah lamps will be explicitly identifiable.

It is a precept to light the Hanukkah lamp at the entrance [of the house] near the street to commemorate the miracle; thus it was done in the time of the Talmud. However, since we now live among non-Jews we light inside the house. If there is a window facing the street one kindles the lamps there; if not, they are lit near the entrance. . . .

The lights should be in an even row; neither higher nor lower. There should be a separation between the lights so that the flames will not merge and flare up. Wax candles should be separated from each other so that their heat will not cause the wax to drip and spoil the candles. . . .

The time of kindling is when the stars appear and not later. It is forbidden to initiate any action, even to study the Torah, before the lighting. Only if one has not recited the evening service, he should first pray and then light. Before lighting the menorah, one should assemble all the members of the household to make a public event. Sufficient oil should be provided to burn for at least a half hour. If one did not light immediately [when the stars appear], he may kindle and pronounce the benedictions as long as his family is still awake. Once the household is asleep, there is no longer [the possibility of] proclaiming the miracle, therefore he should light without pronouncing the benedictions. . . .

The order of kindling, according to our custom, is as follows: on the first night one lights the lamp on the extreme right; on the second, a lamp is added to its left, and each night thereafter another is added to the left. The last one added is lit first and the lighting continues from left to right.

During the time prescribed for the precept [of kindling the Hanukkah lights], that is, for a half hour, it is forbidden to derive benefit from their illumination. Therefore, it is customary to place near the candles the *shammash* candle with which they were lit; thus if he makes use of the light, it will be that of the *shammash*. The *shammash* should be placed on a slightly higher level than the other lights, so it is clear that it is not counted as one of them.

Lights are lit in the synagogue to commemorate publicly the miracle, and the blessings are recited. They are placed at the south wall and are lit in the interim between the afternoon and evening services. However, the individual's obligation is not fulfilled with the lights in the synagogue; he must light them in his home. . . . A woman may light them on behalf of her entire household. A child that has reached the age of [religious] training is also obligated.

On the eve of the Sabbath the Hanukkah lamp is lit first and then the Sabbath candles as long as it is later than the middle of the afternoon, and the afternoon service has been recited. There must be sufficient oil to burn for a half hour after the appearance of the stars; otherwise, the blessing will have been invalid. If one kindled the lights near the entrance he should be careful to have something to separate them and the door, to prevent their being extinguished by a wind when the door is opened and closed.

At the conclusion of the Sabbath, Havdalah is recited and then the Hanukkah lights are lit.

*Kitzur Shulhan Arukh* 139:1-7, 9-11, 14-18

Name into the noary  
berated through Mir  
the Lord, follow me  
This has become c

# HANUKKAH

## THE FEAST OF LIGHTS

*Compiled and edited by*

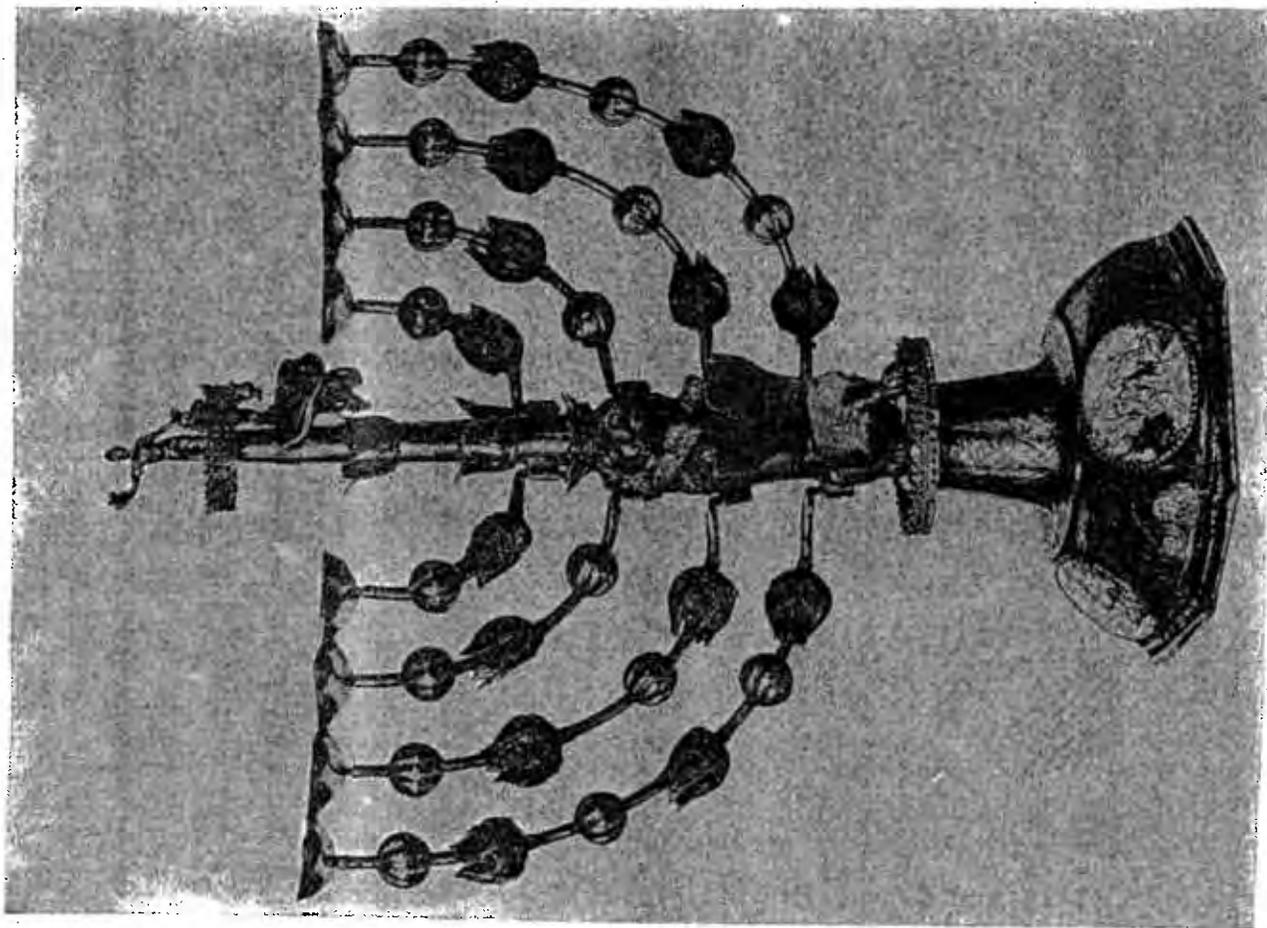
EMILY SOLIS-COHEN Jr.



PHILADELPHIA

THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA

5708-1947



Hanukkah Lamp in form of Menorah, with four enamel medallions representing biblical scenes, silver-gilted, German. Museum, Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

## THE MIRACLE OF OIL

THE Talmud is a compilation of the law and folklore discussed in the rabbinical academies of the East. The Babylonian Talmud was brought to completion, more or less in the state in which we possess it, in the Babylonian academies about the year 500 C. E. It is divided into treatises, each dealing in the main with a separate subject. The treatise from which the following is taken deals with the laws of the Sabbath. It is characteristic of the Talmud to interrupt the subject under discussion by the inclusion of other matters suggested by the subject. And so our sages asked: *What is Hanukkah?*

Commencing with the twenty-fifth day of the month Kislev there are eight days upon which there shall be neither mourning nor fasting. For albeit the Greeks entered the temple and defiled the oil, it was when the might of the Hasmonean overcame and vanquished them that, upon search, a single cruse of undefiled oil sealed by the High Priest was found. In it was oil enough for the needs of a solitary day.

Then it was that a miracle was wrought.

The oil in the cruse burned eight days.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 23 b. 139

### THE OBSERVANCE OF HANUKKAH

FOR centuries the *Shulhan 'Aruk* has been the code of rabbinical Judaism for all ritual and legal questions that arose after the destruction of the Temple. Its author, Joseph ben Ephraim Caro, is the last of the great codifiers. The *Shulhan 'Aruk* was written in Caro's latter years, although its authority was not firmly established until the middle of the seventeenth century.

From this book have been taken the following injunctions for the observance of Hanukkah:

Do not fast during Hanukkah, nor on the day preceding the feast, nor on the day following.

Eat and be merry. Linger over your viands and punctuate your meals with jest and song, and relate miracles.

Buy yourself a lamp of silver to reflect the beauty of the flickering lights. Fill it with sufficient oil to burn at least half an hour. Set it in public view.

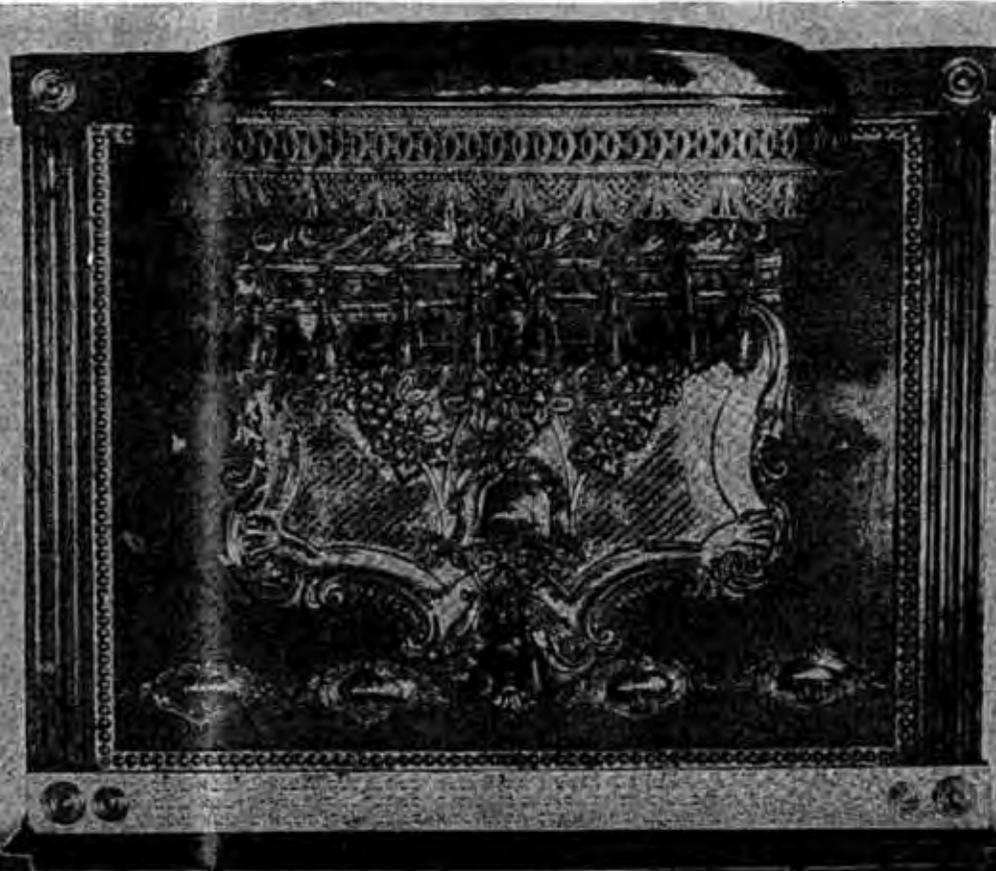
Place the eight tapers in a straight row, since no day of Hanukkah is superior to another. Only the kindler and guardian of the lights, the ninth taper, shall stand above them all.

Kindle the lights before any member of the household, child or adult, seeks sleep.

Light the *Shammash*. With it kindle first the taper on the left. Move toward the right.

Men, women and children may kindle the lamp of dedication. It is well for each member of your household to have a lamp to kindle.

Augment your contribution to the community fund so that all your brethren may celebrate Hanukkah.



Hanukkah Lamp, silver, Italian.  
Museum, Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

**JEW'S REAL HOLIDAY STORY...  
WHAT IS THE DEAL WITH THE OIL?!**

**Text I: 1 Maccabees 4:36-40; 59**

But Judah and his brothers said: "Now that our enemies have been crushed, let us go up to Jerusalem to cleanse the temple and rededicate it." So the whole army was assembled and went up to Mount Zion. There they found the temple laid waste, the altar profaned, the gates burnt down, the courts overgrown like a thicket or wooded hillside, and the priests' room in ruin. They tore their garments, wailed loudly, put ashes on their heads and fell on their faces to the ground. They sounded the ceremonial trumpets. And cried aloud to Heaven... then Judah, his brothers and the whole congregation of Israel decreed that the rededication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness at the same season each year, for eight days, beginning on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev.

**Text II: 2 Maccabees 10:6-8**

The joyful celebration lasted for eight days; it was like the Feast of Booths (sukkot), for they recall how, only a short time before, they had kept that feast while they were living like wild animals in the mountains and caves. And so they carried garlanded wands and branches with their fruits, as well as palm fronds, and they chanted hymns to the One who has so triumphantly achieved the purification of his own temple. A measure was passed by the public assembly to the effect that the entire Jewish people should keep these days every year.

**Text III: Josephus**

And so Judah together with his fellow citizens celebrated the restoration of sacrifice in the temple for eight days, omitting no form of pleasure, but feasting on costly and splendid sacrifices, while honoring God with songs of praise and playing of harps. So much pleasure did they find in the renewal of their customs and in unexpectedly obtaining the right to have their own service after so long a time, that they made a law that their descendants should celebrate the restoration of the temple service for eight days. And from that time to the present we observe this festival, which we call the Festival of Lights. I think, from the fact that the right worship appeared to us at a time when we hardly dared hope for it. Then Judah erected walls around the city, and having built high towers against the incursions of the enemy, he placed guards in them; and he fortified the city of Bethsura in order that he might use it as a fortress in any emergency caused by the enemy.

**Text IV: Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 21b**

What is Hanukah? Our rabbis teach us in a beritah: On the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev [we begin] the eight days of Hanukah, on which lamentations for the dead and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils in it, and when the Hasmonean dynasty [The Maccabees] prevailed over them and defeated them, they searched and found only one bottle of oil with the seal of the High Priest. It contained only enough oil for one day's lighting. Yet a miracle was brought about with it, that they lit [the ner tamid with that oil] for eight days. The following year these days were established as a festival of Hallel (psalms of praise) and Thanksgiving.

**CHANUKAH ACTIVITY #2**

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*The Dedication of the Sanctuary*

Judah and his brothers said: "Now that our enemies are crushed, let us go up to purify and dedicate the sanctuary."

The entire army gathered together and went up to Mount Zion. They saw the sanctuary desolated and the altar profaned, the gates burned up, and weeds growing in the courts as in a forest or as on one of the mountains, and the priests' chambers torn down. They tore their garments and made great lamentation, and put ashes on their heads, and fell on their faces on the ground, blew solemn blasts upon the trumpets, and cried out to heaven. Judah appointed certain men to fight against the garrison in the citadel, until he could cleanse the sanctuary. He selected priests without blemish, whose delight was in the Law, and they purified the sanctuary, carrying out the stones that had defiled it into an unclean place. They took counsel as to what they should do about the altar of burnt offering, which had been defiled. A good plan occurred to them, namely, to tear it down, lest it become a reproach to them, because the heathen had defiled it. So they pulled down the altar, and put away the stones in the Temple mount, in a suitable place, until a prophet should come to decide what to do with them. They took whole stones, according to the Law, and constructed a new altar like the former one. They built the sanctuary and the interior of the Temple, and hallowed the courts, and made new holy vessels, and brought the candlestick, the altar of incense, and the table into the Temple. They burned incense on the altar and lit the lights on the candlesticks so that they would shed light in the Temple. They put loaves of bread upon the table, hung up the curtains, and finished all the work which they had undertaken.

They also adorned the front of the Temple with golden crowns and small shields, and rededicated the gates and the priests' chambers, and fitted them with doors. Thus there was great joy among the people, and the reproach caused by the heathen was removed. Judah and his brothers and the entire congregation of Israel decreed that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept with gladness and joy at their due season, year after year, for eight days from the twenty-fifth of the month of Kislev.

*1 Maccabees 4:36-51, 57-59e*

Goodman, Philip. *The Hanukkah Anthology*, Jewish Publication Society, 1976.

iiiiiii

*Festival of Lights*

FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

Judah assembled the people and said that after the many victories that God had given them, they ought to go up to Jerusalem and purify the Temple and offer the customary sacrifices. . . .

And when he had carefully purified it, he brought in new vessels, such as a lampstand, table, and altar, which were made of gold, and hung curtains from the doors, and replaced the doors themselves; he also pulled down the altar, and built a new one of various stones which had been hewn with iron. And on the twenty-fifth of the month Chaslev [Kislev], which the Macedonians call Apellaios, they kindled the lights on the lampstand and burned incense on the altar and set out the loaves on the table and offered whole burnt offerings upon the new altar. These things, as it chanced, took place on the same day on which, three years before, their holy service had been transformed into an impure and profane form of worship. For the Temple, after being made desolate by Antiochus, had remained so for three years; it was in the hundred and forty-fifth year that these things befell the Temple, on the twenty-fifth of the month Apellaios, in the hundred and fifty-third Olympiad. And the Temple was renovated on the same day, the twenty-fifth of the month of Apellaios, in the hundred and forty-eighth year, in the hundred and fifty-fourth Olympiad [165 B.C.E.]. Now the desolation of the Temple came about in accordance with the prophecy of Daniel, which had been made four hundred and eight years before; for he had revealed that the Macedonians would destroy it.

And so Judah together with his fellow citizens celebrated the restoration of sacrifices in the Temple for eight days, omitting no form of pleasure, but feasting them on costly and splendid sacrifices, and while honoring God with songs of praise and the playing of harps, at the same time delighted them. So much pleasure did they find in the renewal of their customs, and in unexpectedly obtaining the right to have their own service after so long a time, that they made a law that their descendants should celebrate the restoration of the Temple service for eight days. And from that time to the present we observe this festival, which we call the Fes-

tival of Lights, giving this name to it, I think, from the fact that the right to worship appeared to us at a time when we hardly dared hope for it. Then Judah erected walls round the city, and, having built high towers against the incursions of the enemy, he placed guards in them; and he also fortified the city of Beth Sura in order that he might use it as a fortress in any emergency caused by the enemy.

*Jewish Antiquities 12.7.6-77*

They celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing in the manner of the Feast of Tabernacles, mindful of how but a little while before at the festival of Tabernacles they had been wandering about like wild beasts in the mountains and caves. That is why, bearing thyrsi and graceful branches and also palm leaves, they offered up hymns to Him who had given them success in purifying His own place of worship. They decreed by edict and confirmed by vote that the entire nation of the Jews should celebrate these days every year.

*2 Maccabees 10.6-8<sup>s</sup>*

On the twenty-fifth thereof [Kislev] is the day of Hanukkah. For eight days mourning is forbidden.

*Scholiaz:* When the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils that were there. When the House of the Hasmonians prevailed and won a victory over them, they searched and found only one cruse [of oil] with the seal of the high priest that was not defiled. It had only [enough oil] to burn for one day. A miracle happened, and there was light from it for eight days. In the following year they established eight festival days.

*Megillat Taanit 9*

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### *The Martyrdom of Eleazar*

Eleazar, one of the foremost scribes, a man well advanced in years and of most noble countenance, was compelled to open his mouth in an attempt to force him to eat swine's flesh. He welcomed death

with glory rather than life with pollution, and of his own free will went to the rack. Spitting out the food, he became an example of what men should do who are steadfast enough to forfeit life itself rather than eat what is not right for them to taste, in spite of a natural urge to live. Those who were in charge of the forbidden sacrifice, because they had known the man for such a long time before, took him aside and urged him privately to bring meat, prepared by himself, which would be proper for him to use, and to pretend that he was eating the meat of the sacrifice ordered by the king. Thus he might be saved from death and on account of his old friendship for them he might obtain courteous treatment. He, however, high-minded as always, . . . declared himself in no uncertain terms, saying that they should rather quickly send him forth to Hades:

"It is not suitable to my age to pretend, lest many of the youth think that Eleazar in his ninetieth year has changed to heathenism. They, because of my pretense and for the sake of this short span of life, will be led astray through me, and I shall come to a stained and dishonored old age. Even if for the present I were to escape the punishment of men, nevertheless I could not escape, either living or dead, the vengeance of the Almighty. Therefore by departing this life courageously now, I shall show myself worthy of my old age, and to young men I shall have left a noble example of how to die happily and nobly in behalf of our revered and holy laws."

After saying this he immediately went to the rack. . . . As he was dying under the blows, he said with his last sigh: "The Lord in His sacred knowledge is aware that though I could escape death I now endure terrible suffering in my body under these floggings; yet within my soul I suffer this gladly, because of my reverence for Him." In this way he died, leaving in his death an example of nobility and memorial of valor, not only to the young but also to the great majority of his nation.

*2 Maccabees 6.18-31<sup>9</sup>*



### *The Seven Brothers and Their Mother*

It happened also that seven brothers, with their mother, were arrested and tortured with whips and scorpions by the king, to compel them to partake of swine meat forbidden by the Law. One of them made himself their spokesman, and said: "What do you intend to ask and to learn from us? It is certain that we are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our fathers."

The king in his rage ordered that pans and caldrons be heated red hot. They were heated at once, and he ordered that the tongue of the spokesman should be cut out, that they should scalp him in the Scythian manner and cut off his extremities, while the rest of his brothers and his mother were looking on. When he had been reduced to a completely useless hulk, he ordered them to bring him, while he was still breathing, to the fire, and to fry him in the pan. As the vapor from the pan grew more dense, the children with their mother encouraged each other to die nobly, saying:

"The Lord God is watching, and in very truth will have compassion on us, just as Moses declared in his song, which bears testimony against them to their very face, saying: 'And He will have compassion upon His servants.'"

When the first one had died in this way, they brought the second to be mocked. Then they tore off his scalp with the hair and asked him:

"Will you eat, or else have your body dismembered limb from limb?"

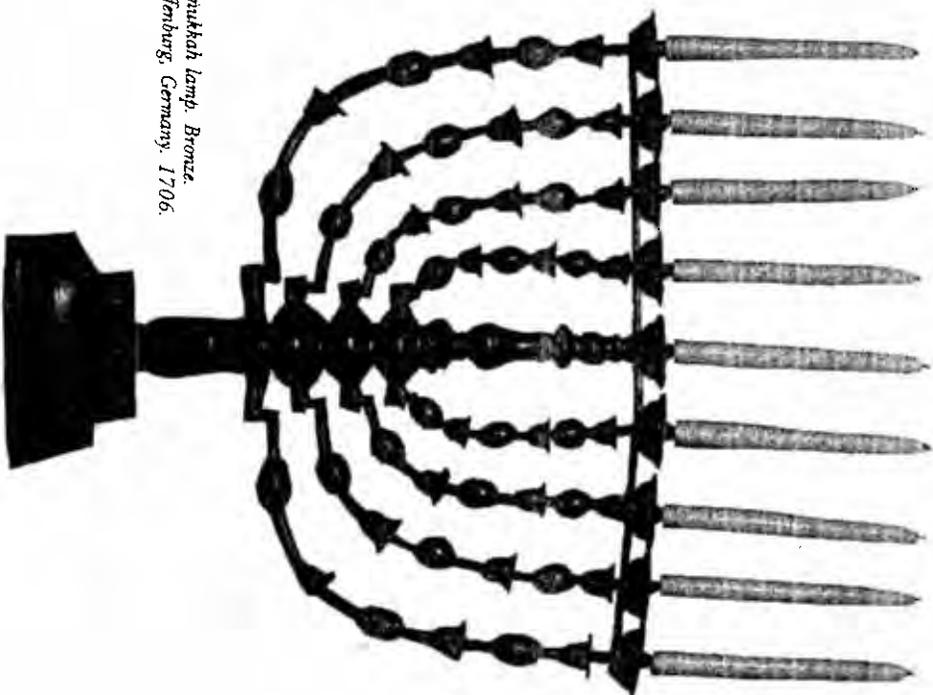
He, however, replied in the mother tongue, and said: "Never."

For this reason he too underwent the same order of torture. But with his last breath, he said:

"You accursed wretch, you may release us from our present existence, but the King of the universe will raise us up to everlasting life because we have died for His laws."

After him the third one was brought to be mocked. When he was ordered to put out his tongue, he did so quickly. He courageously stretched forth his hands, then nobly said:

"From heaven have I had these, yet because of God's laws I count them as nothing, for from Him I hope to have them back again."



5. Hanukkah lamp. Bronze.  
Aschaffenburg, Germany, 1706.

The result of this was that the king himself and his men were struck with admiration by the spirit of the young man because he minimized his sufferings.

When he too had died, they mutilated and tortured the fourth one in the same manner. As he was dying he said:

"Better is it for people to be done to death by men if they have the hopeful expectation that they will again be raised up by God, but as for you, there will be no resurrection to life."

Next they brought up the fifth and treated him shamefully. As he looked at the king he said:

"Because you, a finite mortal, have authority among men, you may work your will; but do not think that God has abandoned our people. You will see how His overwhelming power will torment you and your offspring."

After him they brought on the sixth. As he was about to die, he said:

"Do not vainly deceive yourself. We suffer these things because of ourselves, because we sinned against our own God. That is why these astounding things have come upon us. But do not think that you will go free in thus daring to wage war against God."

Their mother was truly wonderful and is worthy of blessed memory. Though she saw her seven sons die in the space of a single day, she bore it bravely because of her faith in the Lord. She encouraged each one of them in their mother tongue, filled as she was with a noble spirit. She stirred up her womanly nature with manlike courage, and said to them:

"How you ever appeared in my womb, I do not know. It was not I who graced you with breath and life, nor was it I who arranged in order within each of you the combination of elements. It was the Creator of the world, who formed the generation of man and devised the origin of all things, and He will give life back to you in mercy, even as you now take no thought for yourselves on account of His laws."

Antiochus then thought that he was being treated contemptuously and suspected the reproachful tone of her voice. As the youngest son was still alive he appealed to him not only by words but also by oaths, [saying] that he would make him both rich and enviable if he would leave the ways of his fathers; that he would consider him as a friend, and would put him in an office of trust. When the young man paid no attention to him at all, the king summoned the mother and urged her to advise the lad to save himself. After he had exhorted her for quite a while, she undertook to persuade her son. She leaned over him, and jeering at the king, she spoke in the mother tongue as follows:

"My son, have pity on me, who carried you in my womb for nine months. For three years I nursed you, reared you, brought you to this stage of your life, and sustained you. I beg of you, my child, to look up to heaven and earth and see all that is therein, and know

that God did not make them out of things that were already in existence. In the same manner the human race came into being. Do not be afraid of this executioner, but show yourself worthy of your brothers. Accept death, that in God's mercy I may receive you back again along with your brothers."

While she was still speaking, the young man said: "What are you waiting for? I will not obey the king's command, but I will obey the command of the Law that was given to our fathers through Moses. But you, who have shown yourself to be the contriver of every evil against the Hebrews, shall not escape the hands of God. We are really suffering for our own sins. Although our living God, in order to punish and discipline us, is angry at us for a little while, He will again be reconciled with His servants. You profane wretch, vilest of all men, be not vainly buoyed up by your insolent, uncertain hopes, raising your hand against His servants. You have not yet escaped the judgment of the Almighty, all-seeing God. Indeed, our brothers, after enduring brief trouble, are under God's covenant for everlasting life; while you under God's judgment will receive just punishment for your arrogance. I, like my brothers, surrender body and soul for our paternal laws, invoking God speedily to be merciful to our nation, and to make you acknowledge through affliction and torment that He alone is God, while it has devolved upon me and my brothers to stay the wrath of the Almighty, which has justly been brought against the whole of our nation."

With this the king became furious, and dealt with him worse than with the others, bitterly resenting his sarcasm. He then died in purity, believing implicitly in God. Finally, after her sons, the mother also died.

Let this then be enough about eating of idolatrous sacrifices and inhuman tortures.

2 *Maccabees* 7:10

\*The spirit of loyalty to the monotheistic faith as exemplified in this account was reiterated in talmudic and midrashic literature through variations of the narrative. For parallel accounts in the tractate *Gittin* and *Lamentations Rabbah*, see the next chapter, "Hanukkah in Talmud and Midrash."

# Activity Two

## Refrain

Your chattels and your lands  
 Go and pledge, go and sell  
 Put money in your hands,  
 To feast Hanukkah well.

Capons of finest breed  
 From off the well-turned spit  
 The roasts that next succeed  
 Each palate will surely fit.

Joints tender, poultry young,  
 Rich cakes baked brown in pan;  
 "A-greed" is on every tongue,  
 "Set-to" laughs every man.

No water here they carry,  
 Their steps fade fast away;  
 Over wine we all will tarry,  
 Two nights in every day.

Our ears no more shall tingle  
 At sound of the water's fall;  
 But, red wine in cups come mingle,  
 And shout in chorus all.

Our fields and our lands  
 We will pledge, we will sell,  
 To put money in our hands  
 To feast Hanukkah well.

Translated by Israel Abrahamson<sup>1</sup>

Shabbat and Hanukkah Dispute before Me  
 SOLOMON BEN ELIJAH  
 "GOLDEN SCEPTER"

*astronomer, poet, and grammarian who lived in Salonika (c. 1422-1502); this poem, depicting a disputation between the Sabbath and Hanukkah on the day they coincide, was published in an early sixteenth-century Mahzor.*

Goodman, Philip. *The Hanukkah Anthology*, Jewish Publication Society, 1976.

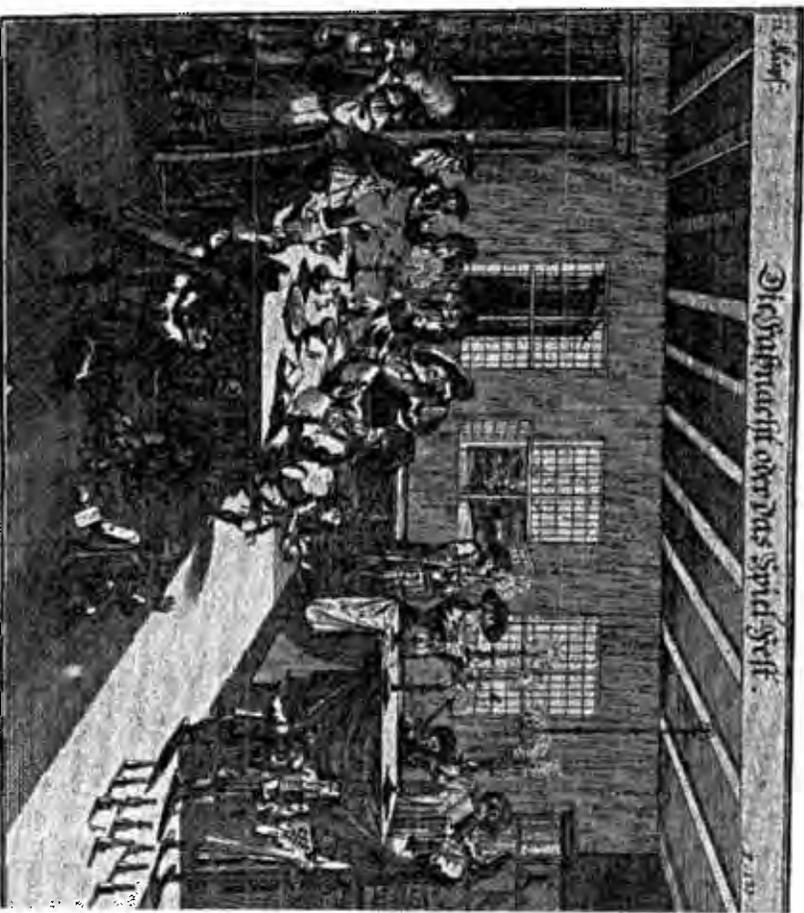
## 207 Hanukkah in Poetry

Quoth Shabbat to Hanukkah:  
 I lay claim to priority!  
 For who are you and your upstart brood?  
 On me the great and awesome God forbore  
 From all creation's work that He had done (Genesis 2.2).

Quoth Hanukkah to Shabbat:  
 Why do you assail and harry me?  
 On my eight days the whole Hallel is said  
 But on your single day not even once.  
 And why do you declaim: "Watchman, what of the night?  
 Watchman, what of the night?" (Isaiah 21.11)

Quoth Shabbat to Hanukkah:  
 My additional prayer for the early rain is superior,

<sup>28</sup> Hanukkah celebration. From *Jüdisches Ceremoniel*, by Paul C. Kirchner, Nuremberg, 1726.



Even better "A burnt offering for every Sabbath in addition to the regular burnt offering" (Numbers 28.10).  
Why do you glorify yourself with Hallelujah,  
You who are bare, denuded of offerings?

Quoth Hanukkah to Shabbat:

My lustrous lights are kindled first and yours come after (on Sabbath eve).

I'm mentioned first in "Blessing the land," and later you in the prayer "Have mercy" (in Grace after Meals).

All your allusions and all your words, are they not

"These shall march *last*, according to their standards"?  
(Numbers 2.31)

Quoth Shabbat to Hanukkah:

I am constant like the virtuous bride of one's youth

Summoned every seven days as a king's honored daughter,

But you, like a mistress affrighted in the night,

Are summoned once annually at the appointed season.

Quoth Hanukkah to Shabbat:

Your light may be eyed and made use of,

But for mine "it is permitted only to look at them."

Your anthem (Psalm 92) may be sung by all, but mine (Psalm 30)

Only by those born into priesthood,

When the Temple rebuilt becomes the holy of holies.

My decision:

Desist from your disputation.

Now you are linked together in love

Beware, lest a sin be committed

Desist and I'll vindicate both of you.

I avouch that no dispute need be between you

Why should you stir up and contest your love?

YOU, SHABBAT, most eminent of festivals, remit your claims,

Most beautiful for mankind, grace is distilled from your lips.

YOU, HANUKKAH, you are a redeemer, none but you can bring redemption.

Translated by A. Alan Steinbach

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## The Banner of the Jew

EMMA LAZARUS

*an American Jewess who received wide recognition for her poetic abilities; her poem "The New Colossus" is on the Statue of Liberty (1849-87)*

Wake, Israel, wake! Recall today

The glorious Maccabean rage,

The sire heroic, hoary-gray,

His fivefold lion-lineage:

The Wise, the Elect, the Help-of-God,

The Burst-of-Spring, the Avenging Rod.

From Mizpeh's mountain ridge they saw

Jerusalem's empty streets, her shrine

Laid waste where Greeks profaned the Law,

With idol and with pagan sign.

Mourners in tattered black were there,

With ashes sprinkled on their hair.

Then from the stony peak there rang

A blast to ope the graves: down poured

The Maccabean clan, who sang

Their battle anthem to the Lord.

Five heroes lead, and following, see,

Ten thousand rush to victory!

Oh, for Jerusalem's trumpet now

To blow a blast of shattering power,

To wake the sleepers high and low,

And rouse them to the urgent hour!

No hand for vengeance—but to save,

A million naked swords should wave.

Oh, deem not dead that martial fire,

Say not the mystic flame is spent!

With Moses' law and David's lyre,

Your ancient strength remains unbent.

Let but an Ezra rise anew,

To lift the *Banner of the Jew!*

A rag, a mock at first—ere long,  
 When men have bled and women wept,  
 To guard its precious folds from wrong,  
 Even they who shrunk, even they who slept,  
 Shall leap to bless it, and to save.  
 Strike! for the brave revere the brave!?

|||||

*The Feast of Lights*

EMMA LAZARUS

Kindle the taper like the steadfast star  
 Ablaze on evening's forehead o'er the earth,  
 And add each night a luster till afar  
 An eightfold splendor shine above thy hearth.  
 Clash, Israel, the cymbals, touch the lyre,  
 Blow the brass trumpet and the harsh-tongued horn;  
 Chant psalms of victory till the heart takes fire,  
 The Maccabean spirit leap newborn. ]  
 Remember how from wintry dawn till night,  
 Such songs were sung in Zion, when again  
 On the high altar flamed the sacred light,  
 And, purified from every Syrian stain,  
 The foam-white walls with golden shields were hung,  
 With crowns and silken spoils, and at the shrine,  
 Stood, midst their conqueror-tribe, five chieftains sprung  
 From one heroic stock, one seed divine.  
 Five branches grown from Matthias's stem,  
 The Blessed Johanan, the Keen-eyed Jonathan,  
 Simon the fair, the Burst-of-Spring, the Gem,  
 Eleazar, Help-of-God: o'er all his clan  
 Judah the Lion-Prince, the Avenging Rod,  
 Towered in warrior-beauty, uncrowned king,  
 Armed with the breastplate and the sword of God,  
 Whose praise is: "He received the perishing."

They who had camped within the mountain pass,  
 Couched on the rock, and tented 'neath the sky,  
 Who saw from Mizpeh's heights the tangled grass  
 Choke the wide Temple courts, the altar lie  
 Disfigured and polluted—who had flung  
 Their faces on the stones, and mourned aloud  
 And rent their garments, wailing with one tongue,  
 Crushed as a windswept bed of reeds is bowed,  
 Even they by one voice fired, one heart of flame,  
 Though broken reeds, had risen, and were men,  
 They rushed upon the spoiler and o'ercame,  
 Each arm for freedom had the strength of ten.  
 Now is their mourning into dancing turned,  
 Their sackcloth doffed for garments of delight,  
 Week-long the festive torches shall be burned,  
 Music and revelry wed day with night.  
 Still ours the dance, the feast, the glorious psalm,  
 The mystic lights of emblem, and the Word.  
 Where is our Judah? Where our five-branched palm?  
 Where are the lion-warriors of the Lord?  
 Clash, Israel, the cymbals, touch the lyre,  
 Sound the brass trumpet and the harsh-tongued horn,  
 Chant hymns of victory till the heart take fire,  
 The Maccabean spirit leap newborn!

|||||

*An Interpretation of Hanukkah*

RUTH F. BRIN

*short-story writer, poet, and interpreter of Jewish liturgy*

The light of freedom burns bright and hot  
 at the crossroads of decision.

In the marketplace at Modin  
 Mattathias stood in the heat and the light  
 for only an instant.

He heard the offer of the tyrant:  
 silver and gold, honor and the king's friendship,  
 but he, in his freedom, chose another way.

Without hesitation, he chose the Law of God  
 for himself and his family,  
 though it meant warfare and death.

When we sing the holiday blessings  
 let us ponder the solemn choices of those men  
 who fathered our freedom,

When we light the Hanukkah candles  
 let us remember the grave choices  
 freedom illuminates for us.<sup>4</sup>

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 —

### *In Darkness Candles*

MICHAEL I. HECHT

*author of The Fire Waits, a collection of prayers and poems; rabbi in  
 Cleveland Heights, Ohio*

Lord, You create day and night,  
 Rolling away light before darkness,  
 Darkness before light.

Thank You for the darkness.  
 Without it we could not appreciate the light.  
 By the darkness we can measure blessing—  
 Health by sickness,  
 Laughter by tears,  
 Riches by poverty,  
 Freedom by oppression.

In the darkness of the night  
 The Maccabees lit a flame  
 Which still illuminates our lives.  
 Thank You for the challenge that they met.

In centuries of night  
 Men rose at midnight and lit flames.  
 And by those slender lights,  
 From torn and tear-soaked prayer books,  
 They pleaded for Your mercy  
 And asked an end to exile's night.

Thank You for the answer to their prayers.  
 Thank You for restoring Israel's light.  
 But still night reigns  
 In all the world.

Thank You for unfinished tasks.  
 In the darkness  
 Teach us to light candles.  
 Teach us to light candles,  
 Even as we did tonight  
 In memory of ancient light after darkness.

A candle is small.  
 Not far from where it brightly flames  
 The darkness closes in.  
 But candles light other candles,  
 And light draws strength from light.  
 Each night of life let us add candles:  
 The candle of hope.  
 The candle of faith.  
 The candle of brave deeds.  
 The candle of freedom . . .

Thank You for the darkness  
 Thank You for the light.<sup>5</sup>

|||||

*The Festival of Hanukkah*  
RUBY FOGEL LEVKOFF

*one of three American poets honored at the 1967 Stroud International Festival of the Arts in England*

The candles burn against the brink of years,  
flashing their shadows through the centuries  
back to an old beginning—the fiery, fierce  
devotion that once stirred the Maccabees.

to triumph over a tyrant. *The Temple stood;*  
*the Temple was destroyed . . . its altar dark—*  
except for one small flame—that somehow would  
burn like the Faith lit from an ageless spark.

Now flashing through the dark of histories  
of people harried by hatred's troubled night,  
stand the tall shadows of the Maccabees—  
as if God willed each year, "Let there be light!"

|||||

*The Eternal Light*

MOSHE DAVIS AND VICTOR RATNER

*Dr. Davis: historian and educator, head of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University; Mr. Ratner: public-relations consultant and freelance writer*

A candle is a small thing.

But one candle can light another.

And see how its own light increases,  
as a candle gives its flame to the other.

You are such a light.

Light is the power to dispel darkness.

You have this power to move back  
the darkness in yourself and in others—  
to do so with the birth of light

created when one mind illuminates another,  
when one heart kindles another,  
when one man strengthens another.

And its flame enlarges within you  
as you pass it on.

Throughout history,  
children of darkness have tried  
to smother this passage of light  
from man to man.

Throughout history, dictators large and small  
have tried to darken, diminish  
and separate men by force.

But always in the end they fail.

For always, somewhere in the world,  
the light remains;  
ready to burn its brightest  
where it is dark;  
a light that began  
when God created the world:

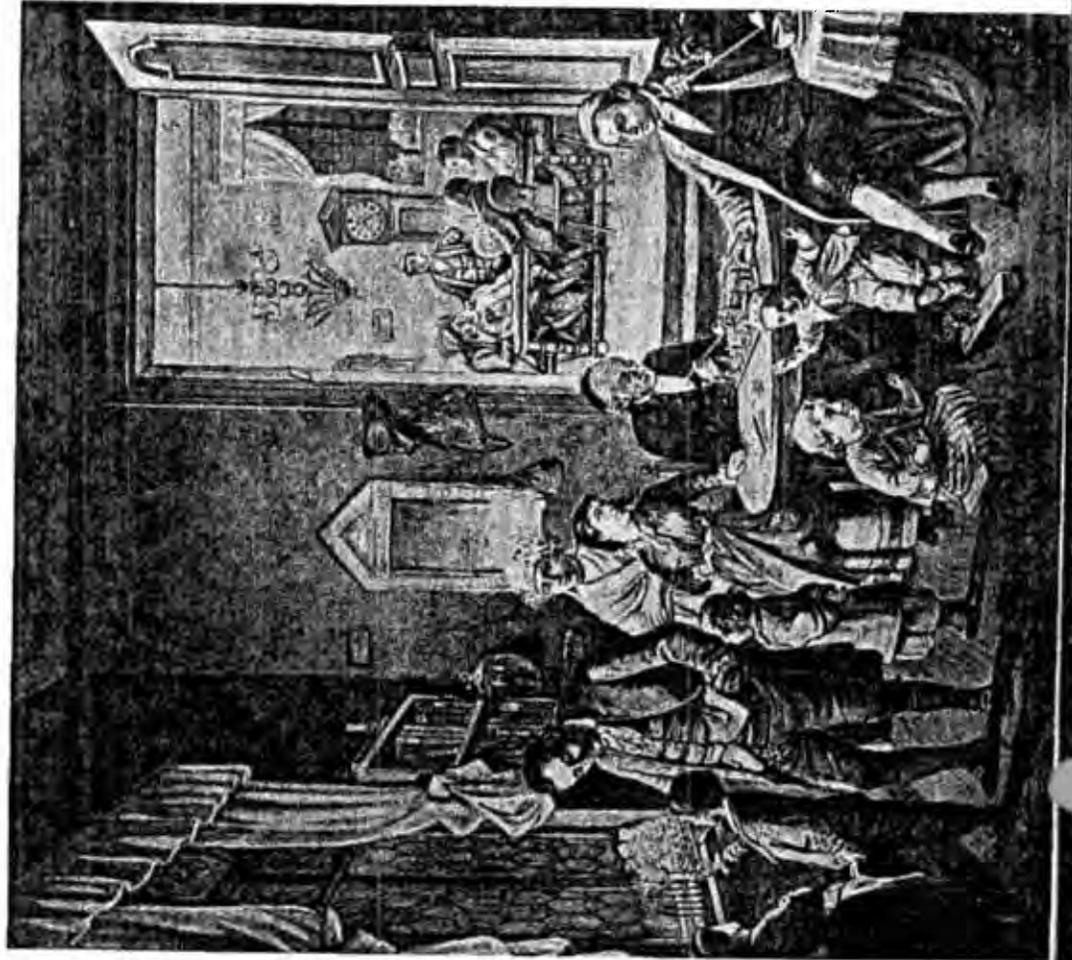
*" . . . Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment."*

And every free people has remained free  
by resisting those who would  
extinguish in men the light  
of freedom,  
of love,  
of truth.

To do our daily part to increase this light,  
we must remember that a candle alone is a small thing,  
a man alone is a small thing,  
a nation alone is a small thing.

Remembering this,  
 we must recognize something much more  
 than our indispensability to others.  
 We must also remember their indispensability to us.  
 We cannot hope—  
 either as individuals or nations—  
 to reach our highest capabilities  
 until we help those around us reach theirs.

29. "A Hanukkah Evening." By Moritz Oppenheim (1800-82).



To be strong  
 the strong must serve.  
 "These lights we now kindle. . . ."  
 These words accompany the lighting  
 of Hanukkah candles in the home,  
 and in the heart,  
 to commemorate the eternal bridge of light  
 which reaches from creation itself  
 to the radiant spirit of freemen.

In this spirit is celebrated  
 the Festival of Hanukkah—  
 the Festival of Light—  
 wherein the candle that gives its light  
 to the others is called  
 "the servant candle."  
 You too are strongest . . .  
 when you serve.<sup>7</sup>



### Meditation on Hanukkah

CHARLES REZNIKOFF

*a native New Yorker who wrote fiction, drama, and verse, and served as editor  
 of the Jewish Frontier and as a contributing editor of The Menorah  
 Journal (1894-1976)*

The swollen dead fish float on the water;  
 the dead birds lie in the dust trampled to feathers;  
 the lights have been out a long time and the quick gentle  
 hands that lit them—  
 rosy in the yellow tapers' glow—  
 have long ago become merely nails and little bones,  
 and of the mouths that said the blessing  
 and the minds that thought it

**CHANUKAH ACTIVITY #3**

### *Kedushah and Other Additions to the Amidah*

a person is to bestow God's blessing upon others, he must have a feeling of love for his fellow Jews. It is for this reason that a kohen who is quarreling with people in the congregation, should not go up to dukhen, but should step out of the synagogue.

The ceremony is short, simple, and dramatic. Properly performed, Birkat Kohanim can be awe inspiring.

### AL HANISIM: FOR THE MIRACLES

On the holidays of Hanukkah and Purim, "Modim" (the Blessing of Thanksgiving) is expanded to include a "synopsis of the event" being celebrated. The additional prayer begins with the words *Al hanisim* ("For the miracles"). It was incorporated into this particular blessing because it is a prayer of thanksgiving and not a prayer of petition (Shabbat 24a, Tos., s.v. *mazkir*).

עַל הַנְּסִיִּים וְעַל הַפְּרָקָן וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת  
וְעַל הַמְּלָחְמוֹת שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם בְּזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

[We thank Thee] for the miracles, for the redemption, for the mighty deeds and victories, and for the battles that Thou didst perform for our fathers in those days, during this season.

Following this introductory sentence are two sections: one briefly describing the basic events of Hanukkah, the other of Purim. The worshiper says the passage appropriate to the holiday. Common to both paragraphs is the theme that although men fought the wars and were involved in the victories described, it was God who made these victories possible. In the case of Hanukkah, He made it possible for the strong to be defeated by the weak, the many by the few, the impure by the pure, the wicked by the righteous, and the arrogant by those who studied Torah. In the case of Purim, He caused the evil counsel of Haman to be overturned, his plans to be upset, and his subsequent punishment. The victories of Israel are not ascribed to

**The Eight-Day**

**Cruse** "The twenty-fifth of Kislev} is the day of Hanukkah. For eight days mourning is forbidden. Why? When the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils that were there. When the House of the Hasmonenas prevailed and won a victory over them, they searched and found only one cruse {of oil} with the seal of the High Priest that was not defiled. It had only {enough oil} to burn for one day. A miracle happened, and there was light from it for eight days. In the following year they established eight festival days.

**Babylonian Talmud, Megillat Taanit 9**

**WHY DO WE CELEBRATE HANUKAH FOR 8 DAYS?**

מתני ואלו אידיהן של עובדי כוכבים : קלנדא ,  
 וסטרנורא, וקרטיסים, ויום גגוסיא של מלכיהם, ויום  
 הלידה, ויום המיתה, דברי רבי מאיר.

גמלי אמר רב חנן בר רבא קלנדא חי ימים אחר  
 תקופה סטרנורא חי ימים לפני תקופה וסימנך  
 אחור וקדם צרתי וגוי יתייר לפי שראה אדם  
 הראשון יום שמתמעט והולך אמר אוי לי שמא  
 בשביל שסרחתי עולם חשוך בעדי וחוזר לתוהו  
 ובוהו וזו היא מיתה שנקנסה עלי מן השמים עמד  
 וישב חי ימים בתענית (ובתפלה) כיון שראה  
 תקופת טבת וראה יום שמאריך והולך אמר  
 מנהגו של עולם הוא הלך ועשה שמונה ימים  
 טובים לשנה האחרת עשאן לאלו ולאלו ימים טובים  
 הוא קבעם לשם שמים והם קבעום לשם עבודת כוכבים

*Babylonian Talmud, Avodah Zarah, Page 8a.*

And what are the festivals of gentiles? (1) Calends, (2) Saturnalia, (3) Cratesis {the commemoration of the empire}, and (4) the emperor's anniversary, (5) his birthday, "and (6) the day of his death," the words of R. Meir.

Said R. Hanina bar Raba, "Calends is for eight days after the winter solstice, and Saturnalia is kept for eight days prior to the same, with the mnemonic, 'you have beset me behind and before' (Ps. 139:5)." Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:

When {evening fell,} the first Man saw the world growing dark as the sun set.

He thought to himself, "Woe is me! Because I turned rotten, the holy One, blessed be he, on my account brings darkness to the entire world. This is that death that has been imposed upon me as sanction by Heaven. So he went and sat in a fast and in prayer for eight days. When he noted the winter solstice and saw that the day was growing longer, he said, "This is the way of the world." So he went and observed eight days of festivities. The next year he treated both these and those as festival days, and he set them up for the sake of heaven, but the {idolators} set them up for the sake of idolatry.

**Sukkot in the Month of Kislev**

"They celebrated for eight days with gladness, like Sukkot, and recalled how, a little while before, during Sukkot they had been carrying wands(lulav) wreathed with leaves and beautiful branches and palm leaves too, they offered hymns of praise to God who had brought pass the purifying of his own place. And they passed a public ordinance and decree that the whole Jewish nation should observe these days every year." **The Second Book of Maccabees**

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## The Hanukkah Blessings

*The first is a blessing over the candles themselves:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר  
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתַיִךְ וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher  
kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah.

Praised are You, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the universe, who makes us holy  
through mitzvot and commands us to light the Hanukkah candles.

*The second blessing expresses thanks for the "miracle" of deliverance:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שְׁעָשָׂה  
נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she'asah  
nissim la'avoteinu ba-yamim ha-hem ba-z'man ha-zeh.

Praised are You, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the universe, who did wondrous  
things for our ancestors in former times at this season.

*The third blessing is chanted only on the first night:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁהַחַיִּי וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha'olam,  
she-heheheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu la-z'man ha-zeh.

Praised are You, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the universe, who keeps us alive,  
sustains us, and brought us to this occasion.

*but cannot speak* (ibid. 115.5); in connection with our God it is written, *By the word of the Lord the heavens were made*" (ibid. 33.6). "Has your God eyes?" He answered: "In connection with your gods it is written, *Eyes [have they], but cannot see* (ibid. 115.5); in connection with our God it is written, *The eyes of the Lord, that run to and fro through the whole earth*" (Zechariah 4.10). "Has your God ears?" He answered: "In connection with your gods it is written, *They have ears, but cannot hear* (Psalms 115.5); in connection with our God it is written, *And the Lord hearkened, and heard*" (Malachi 3.16). "Has your God a nose?" He answered: "In connection with your gods it is written, *Noses [have they], but cannot smell* (Psalms 115.6); in connection with our God it is written, *The Lord smelled the pleasing odor*" (Genesis 8.21). "Has your God hands?" He answered: "In connection with your gods it is written, *They have hands, but cannot touch* (Psalms 115.7); in connection with our God it is written, *My own hand founded the earth*" (Isaiah 48.13). "Has your God feet?" He answered: "In connection with your gods it is written, *Feet [have they], but cannot walk* (Psalms 115.7); in connection with our God it is written, *And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives*" (Zechariah 14.4). "Has your God a throat?" He answered: "In connection with your gods it is written, *They can make no sound in their throat* (Psalms 115.7); in connection with our God it is written, *And sound goeth out of His mouth*" (Job 37.2). The emperor asked: "If there are all these attributes in your God, why does He not deliver you out of my hand in the same manner that He rescued Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah from the hands of Nebuchadnezzar?" He answered: "Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were worthy men, and King Nebuchadnezzar was deserving that a miracle should be performed through him. You, however, are undeserving; and as for ourselves, our lives are forfeit to heaven. If you do not slay us, the Omnipresent has numerous executioners. There are many bears, wolves, serpents, leopards, and scorpions to attack and kill us; but in the end the Holy One, blessed be He, will avenge our blood on you." The emperor immediately ordered him to be put to death. The child's mother said to him: "By the life of your head, O emperor, give me my son that I may embrace and kiss him." They gave him to her, and she bared her breasts and suckled him. She said to the king: "By the life of your head, O emperor, put me to death first and then slay him." He answered her, "I cannot agree to that because it is written in your Torah: *No animal from the herd or from the flock shall be slaughtered on the same day with its young* (Leviticus 22.28).

Goodman, Philip. *The Hanukkah Anthology*, Jewish Publication Society, 1976.

She retorted: "You unutterable fool! Have you already fulfilled all the commandments save only this one!" He immediately ordered him to be slain. The mother threw herself upon the child and embraced and kissed him. She said to him: "My son, go to the patriarch Abraham and tell him, 'Thus said my mother. Do not preen yourself [on your righteousness], saying I built an altar and offered up my son, Isaac. Behold, our mother built seven altars and offered up seven sons in one day. Yours was only a test, but mine was in earnest.'" While she was embracing and kissing him, the emperor gave an order and they killed him in her arms. When he had been slain, the sages calculated the age of that child and found that he was two years, six months, and six and a half hours old. At that time all the peoples of the world cried out: "What does their God do for them that they are all the time slain for His sake!" And concerning them it is written: *It is for Your sake that we are slain all day long* (Psalms 44.23). After a few days the woman became demented and fell from a roof and died, to fulfill what is said, *She that hath borne languisheth* (Jeremiah 15.9). A bat kol issued forth and proclaimed, *A happy mother of children* (Psalms 113.9); and the Holy Spirit cried out: "For these things I weep."

*Lamentations Rabbah* 1.16.50\*

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### *The Reason for Hanukkah*

What is [the reason for] Hanukkah? For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev [commence] the days of Hanukkah, which are eight on which a lamentation for the dead and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils therein, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the high priest, but which contained sufficient for one day's lighting only; yet a miracle was wrought therein and they lit [the lamp] therewith for eight days. The following year these [days] were appointed a festival with [the recital of] Hallel and thanksgiving.

*Shabbat* 21b

*Kindling the Lights*

Our Rabbis taught: The precept of Hanukkah [demands] one light for a man and his household; the zealous [kindle] a light for each member [of the household]; and the extremely zealous—Beth Shammai maintain: On the first day eight lights are lit and thereafter they are gradually reduced [by one each day]; but Beth Hillel say: On the first day one is lit and thereafter they are progressively increased. Ulla said: In the West [Palestine] two *amoraim*, R. Jose b. Abin and R. Jose b. Zebida, differ therein: one maintains, the reason of Beth Shammai is that it shall correspond to the days still to come, and that of Beth Hillel is that it shall correspond to the days that are gone; but another maintains, Beth Shammai's reason is that it shall correspond to the bullocks of the Festival [of Tabernacles], whilst Beth Hillel's reason is that we promote in [matters of] sanctity but do not reduce.

*Shabbat* 21b

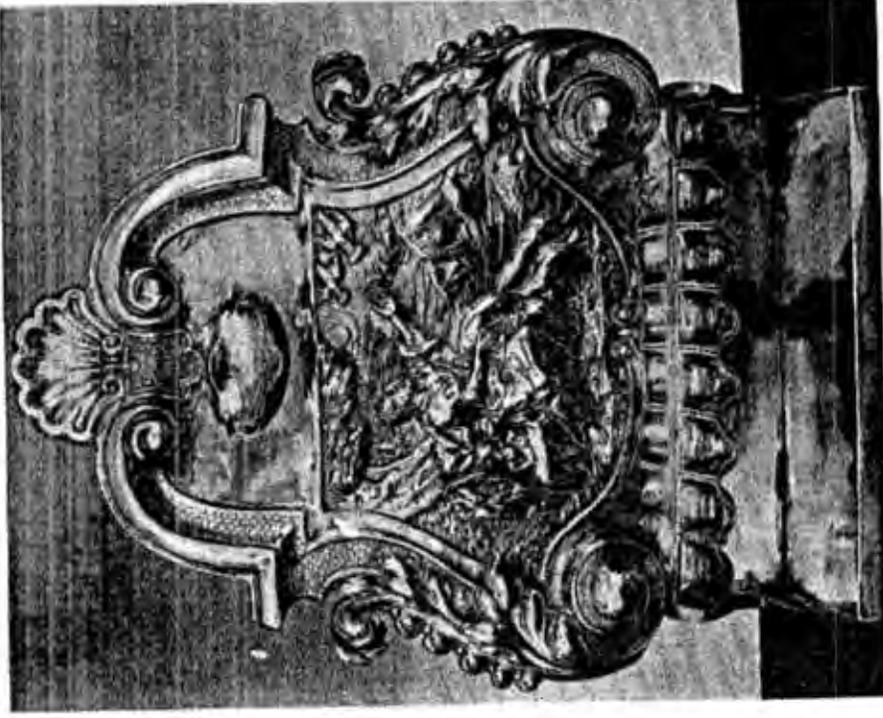
And why are lamps kindled during Hanukkah? At the time that the sons of the Hasmonean, the high priest, triumphed over the kingdom of Greece, upon entering the Temple they found there eight rods of iron which they grooved out and then kindled wicks in the oil which they poured into the grooves.

*Pesikta Rabbati* 2.1<sup>3</sup>

Let our Master instruct us: If a Hanukkah lamp has some oil left over in it, what is to be done with the oil? In keeping with the tradition of the *amoraim*, our Masters taught as follows: If a Hanukkah lamp has oil left over in it after the first day, one adds oil to the lamp and lights it on the second day. If oil is left over after the second day, one adds more oil to the lamp and lights it on the third day; and so on for the successive days. But if on the eighth day some oil is still left, one makes a fire of the oil and burns it by itself. Why so? Because the oil was set aside for a religious purpose, hence it is forbidden to make use of it [for any other purpose].

*Pesikta Rabbati* 3.1<sup>4</sup>

Let our Master teach us: Is a man permitted to kindle from a Hanukkah lamp a lamp which is to be used for a secular purpose?



8. *Hanukkah lamp. Silver chased with biblical scene, Eijah and the ravens. By John Ruskin. London. 1709.*

In keeping with the tradition of the *amoraim*, as R. Aha stated in the name of Rab, our Masters taught as follows: From a Hanukkah lamp it is forbidden to kindle a lamp which will be used for a secular purpose; but to kindle one Hanukkah lamp from another Hanukkah lamp is permitted.

From what usage is the inference drawn that it is permitted to kindle one Hanukkah lamp from another? From a usage—so taught R. Jacob ben Abba in the name of R. Aha—sanctioned in the tending of the lampstand in the Temple where the holy of holies was, for our Masters [of the Mishnah] taught as follows: “Whenever the priest

found that the lampstand's two easternmost lamps had gone out, he would clear away their ash, then rekindle them from the lamps which were still burning" (Tamid 3.9). Now if, when one of the lamps upon the lampstand in the innermost part of the Temple was found extinguished, usage permitted rekindling that lamp from a companion, all the more it follows that it is permitted to kindle one Hanukkah lamp from another Hanukkah lamp.

*Pesikta Rabbati* 8.15

What are the regulations respecting Hanukkah? The Rabbis said: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev the Hanukkah lamp is kindled, and it is forbidden to use an old lamp [if it is an earthen lamp, because the burnt oil renders it unsightly]; but if a person has only an old lamp, he must thoroughly heat it in fire [to burn away the old oil], nor may the Hanukkah lamp be moved from its place before it is extinguished.

The commandment to kindle it extends from sunset until the last person has left the street [as then it no longer serves as a public demonstration]. . . .

It is a religious precept to place the Hanukkah lamp by the door which is near the public domain, in such a manner that the mezuzah should be on the right hand and the Hanukkah lamp on the left, to fulfill what is stated, *How fair you are, how beautiful* (Songs of Songs 7.7)—*how fair* with the mezuzah and *how beautiful* with the Hanukkah lamp. The number of lights [for each night] is in accordance with the ruling of the school of Hillel [i.e., one light on the first night, two on the second, and so on], because in sacred matters one should proceed to a higher grade but not descend to a lower one [and also because the number of lights should] correspond to the days of the festival as they pass.

In what manner are the benedictions said? On the first day, the person who kindles [the lamp] says three benedictions while the onlooker says two. The person who kindles says: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord . . . who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments and hast given us command to kindle the light of Hanukkah." Then [after the three benedictions] he says: "We kindle these lights on account of the deliverances and the miracles and the wonders which Thou didst work for our fathers, by means of Thy holy priests. During all the eight days of Hanukkah these lights are sacred, and it is not permitted to make any profane use of them but we are only to look

at them, in order that we may give thanks unto Thy Name for Thy wonders, Thy miracles, and Thy deliverances." [The third benediction is] "Blessed art Thou, O Lord . . . who hast kept us in life." [Before this] he says: "Who wroughtest miracles for our fathers." *Sotah* 20.3-6

R. Jeremiah ruled, He who sees the Hanukkah light [while he himself did not light one in his own home] must recite the benediction. What benediction does one recite? Rab Judah answered, On the first day he who kindles the light must recite three benedictions and he who sees it must recite two [omitting the first benediction "to kindle the light"]; henceforth he who kindles the lights recites [the first] two benedictions and he who sees them only [the second] one. What is the [first] benediction? "Blessed [art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe] who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments, and commanded us to kindle the light of Hanukkah." But [since it is not mentioned in the Bible] where did He command us? [The commandment is deduced from the verse], *You must not deviate* [Deuteronomy 17.11; even from that which the Rabbis instituted]. R. Nahman b. Isaac replied, [Deduction is made from the verse.] *Ask your father, he will inform you* (ibid. 32.7). Which [benediction] does one omit [after the first day]? The [third] benediction on the season ["Who has kept us alive, etc."]. Might it not be suggested that one omits the [second] benediction concerning the miracle? The miracle occurs every day [and therefore cannot be omitted].

*Sabbah* 46a

R. Joshua b. Levi said: The [precept of the] Hanukkah lamp is obligatory upon women, for they too were concerned in the miracle.

*Shabbat* 23a

R. Joshua b. Levi said: All oils are fit for the Hanukkah lamp, but olive oil is the best. Abaye observed: At first the Master [Rabbi] used to seek poppy-seed oil, saying, The light of this is more lasting; but when he heard this [dictum] of R. Joshua b. Levi he was particular for olive oil, saying, This yields a clearer light.

*Shabbat* 23a

Raba said: It is obvious to me [that if one must choose between] the house light and the Hanukkah light [if one cannot afford both], the former is preferable, on account [of the importance] of the peace of the home; [between] the house light and [wine for] the

Sanctification of the Day, the house light is preferable, on account of the peace of the home. Raba propounded: What [if the choice lies between] the Hanukkah lamp and the Sanctification of the Day: is the latter more important, because it is permanent [as it occurs every week], or perhaps the Hanukkah lamp is preferable, on account of advertising the miracle? After propounding, he himself solved it: The Hanukkah lamp is preferable, on account of advertising the miracle.

*Shabbat 23b*

Rab Judah said in R. Assi's name: One must not count money by the Hanukkah light. . . . It is that precepts may not appear disdainful to him.

*Shabbat 22a*

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### *Thanksgiving and Hallel*

In the thanksgiving benediction we include [on Hanukkah] "and thanks for the wonders and salvation of Thy priests which Thou hast wrought in the days of Mattathias, son of Johanan, high priest, and the Hasmoneans his sons. So also, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, perform for us miracles and wonders, and we will give thanks unto Thy Name forever. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who art all-good." The miracles [of the days] of Mordecai and Esther are also mentioned [on Purim] in the thanksgiving benediction. Both miracles are likewise mentioned in the Grace after Meals.

The whole Hallel is recited during all the eight days of Hanukkah. . . .

On eighteen days and one night the individual reads the whole Hallel and they are: the eight days of Hanukkah, the eight days of Tabernacles; the Festival of Solemn Assembly, the first festival day of Passover and the night preceding it. In the Diaspora [the whole Hallel is read on] twenty-one days and two nights. The most proper way of performing the commandment is to read the Hallel psalms on the two nights [of Passover] in the Diaspora in the synagogue, to say the benediction over them, and to recite them melodiously

to fulfill what is stated, *Let us extol His Name together* (Psalms 34:3). When, however, one reads [the Hallel] at home [during the seder], there is no need to say the benediction because it has already been said in the congregational service.

*Sofetim 20.8-9*

Why is the Hallel read? Because [one of the psalms included in the Hallel] declares *The Lord is God; he has given us light* (Psalms 118:27). Then why is it not read on Purim, when, as Scripture records, [the right was granted to the Jews] *to assemble and fight for their lives; if any people or province attacks them, they may destroy, massacre, and exterminate its armed forces* (Esther 8:11)? If the Hallel is read on Hanukkah, why should it not also be read on Purim? Because the Hallel is not read except on the overthrow of a kingdom, and since the kingdom of Ahasuerus continued, therefore the Hallel is not read. But as for the kingdom of Greece which the Holy One, blessed be He, did destroy, the Jews proceeded to give voice to the Hallel, a hymn of praise, saying: In times past we were servants to Pharaoh, servants to Greece; but now we are servants to the Holy One, blessed be He: *O servants of the Lord, give praise* (Psalms 113:1).

*Pesikta Rabbati 2.16*

Let our Master instruct us [in regard to the following]: Inasmuch as *Musaf* is not said on weekdays in Hanukkah, when a worshiper is saying either the *Musaf* that falls [on the Sabbath in Hanukkah] or the *Musaf* for the New Moon [of Tevet] that falls in Hanukkah, is he required to say the words that mention Hanukkah?

In keeping with tradition of the *amoraim*, as R. Simon cited it in the name of R. Joshua, our Masters taught as follows: Even though *Musaf* is not ordinarily said during Hanukkah except on the Sabbath, nevertheless, when the New Moon falls in Hanukkah, one is required to say the words that mention Hanukkah in the *Musaf* for the New Moon. So, too, on a Sabbath falling in Hanukkah, even though *Musaf* is not said during Hanukkah except on the Sabbath, nevertheless, one is required to say in the Sabbath *Musaf* the words that mention Hanukkah. And in what part of the *Musaf* is one to say the words that mention Hanukkah? In the Thanksgiving for God's mercies.

*Pesikta Rabbati 4.17*

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Fasting Prohibited

On the occasion a fast was decreed in Lydda on Hanukkah and R. Eliezer went down there and bathed and R. Joshua had his hair cut [though bathing and haircutting were prohibited on fast days]. They said to the residents, Go and fast in atonement for having fasted [on Hanukkah]!

Rosh Hashanah 18b

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The Hanukkah Lights Will Shine Forever

Aaron was distinguished not only by being selected to dedicate the sanctuary through the lighting of the candles, God ordered Moses to communicate to his brother the following revelation: "The sanctuary will on another occasion also be dedicated by the lighting of candles, and then it will be done by thy descendants, the Hasmonaans, for whom I will perform miracles and to whom I will grant grace. Hence there is greater glory destined for thee than for all the other princes of the tribes, for their offerings to the sanctuary shall be employed only so long as it endures, but the lights of the Hanukkah festival will shine forever."

Or Zarua 1.139<sup>a</sup>

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The Seven Hanukkahs

Seven events are marked by Hanukkah—by a rite of dedication: The dedication at the creation of the world, in connection with which it is written *The heaven and the earth were finished* (Genesis 2.1), for, like the word "finished" in the verse *Thus was finished all the work of the*

*Tabernacle* (Exodus 39.32), here also the word *finished* can indicate nothing other than an occasion marked by a rite of dedication; the dedication carried out by Moses, as set forth in the passage beginning with the words *On the day Moses finished setting up the Tabernacle* (Numbers 7.1); the dedication of the First Temple, of which it is written *A psalm of David. A song for the dedication of the temple* (Psalms 30.1); the dedication of the Second Temple, as is said *And they offered at the dedication of this house of God* (Ezra 6.17); the dedication of the wall [enclosing the city], of which it is said *At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out . . . to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness* (Nehemiah 12.27); the dedication which we are now considering, the Hanukkah instituted by the Hasmonaean family; and finally the dedication of the world-to-come, which also is to be celebrated with the light of lamps, as is written *And the light of the moon shall become like the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall become sevenfold, etc.* (Isaiah 30.26).

*Pesikta Rabbat* 2.69

# HILCHOT CHANUKAH

## CHAPTER THREE

1. In [the era of] the Second Temple, the Greek kingdom issued decrees against the Jewish people, [attempting to] nullify their faith and refusing to allow them to observe the Torah and its commandments. They extended their hands against their property and their daughters; they entered the Sanctuary, wrought havoc within, and made the sacraments impure.

The Jews suffered great difficulties from them, for they oppressed them greatly until the God of our ancestors had mercy upon them, delivered them from their hand, and saved them. The sons of the Hasmoneans, the High Priests, overcame [them], slew them, and saved the Jews from their hand.

They appointed a king from the priests, and sovereignty returned to Israel for more than 200 years, until the destruction of the Second Temple.

### Commentary, Halachah 1

In [the era of] the Second Temple - The Chanukah miracle took place in the year 396 (165 BCE). The Greek persecutions began several years beforehand. the Greek kingdom - More particularly, the Seleucid kingdom of Syria, whose ruling hierarchy was of Greek origin.

issued decrees against the Jewish people, [attempting to] nullify their faith - *Beresbit Rabbah* 2:4 relates that the Greeks would have the Jews "write on the horn of an ox that they have no portion in the God of Israel."

and refusing to allow them to observe the Torah and its commandments. - See *Megilat Antiochus*, which relates that the Greeks prevented the Jews from observing the Sabbath and performing circumcision.

They extended their hands against their property - In this era, the Greek rulers established gentile cities in *Eretz Yisrael* and deprived the Jewish population of its livelihood.

and their daughters - Rashi, *Shabbar* 23a, states that before a Jewish virgin was married, she was required to have relations with a Greek officer.

they entered the Sanctuary, wrought havoc within - See *Middot* 1:6, 2:3 and *Shedim* 6:3, which speak of the Greeks breaking open portions of the *Soreg*, a divider on the Temple Mount, and destroying portions of the wall around the Temple Courtyard.

and made the sacraments impure. - As we find with regard to the oil for the Menorah, the Greeks did not destroy the oil; they made it impure.

## הלכות חנוכה פרק שלישי

א בניתו שני, קשמלכי נון גזורי גזרות על ישראל, ובטלו דתם, ולא הניחו אותם לצסק בתורה ובמצות,

וקשטו דום בקמזנים ובכנותיהם, ונכנסו להיכל ופרצו בו פרוצות וטמאו הטהרות,

וצר להם לישאל מאד מפניהם, ולתצום לחס גזולו;  
עד שרתם עליהם אלהי אבותינו, והוליעים מיזם והצילים.

ותברו בני חשמונאי, הכהנים הגדולים, והתגומו, והוליעו ישראל מיזם. והצמיחו קלון מן הכהנים, והתורה פלגה לישראל יתר על מאתים שנה, עד התורן השני.

Herein, there is a lesson regarding the nature of the conflict between the Greeks and the Jews. The Greeks were not anxious to stamp out Judaism entirely. They were prepared to accept Judaism as one of the cultures of the Mediterranean area, which they would incorporate into an all-encompassing collection of knowledge and values; i.e., the sacraments of Judaism would remain, but they would become impure, tainted by Greek culture.

The Jews suffered great difficulties from them, for they oppressed them greatly until the God of our ancestors had mercy upon them, delivered them from their hand, and saved them. - By calling attention to the Divine origin of the Jews' victory before mentioning the Hasmoneans, the Rambam emphasizes the miraculous and spiritual nature of the miracle.

The sons of the Hasmoneans, the High Priests, overcame [them], slew them, and saved the Jews from their hand. - The valiant struggle of the Hasmoneans who were able to defeat the most powerful armies of the world with guerilla forces is recounted in many sources.

They appointed a king from the priests, and sovereignty returned to Israel for more than 200 years, until the destruction of the Second Temple. - There is a significance to these statements beyond the laws of Chanukah. There are many Rabbinic authorities who are highly critical of the Hasmoneans for assuming the kingship of the Jewish people. (See the Ramban's commentary on the Torah, *Parashat Vayichi*.) Although in *Hilchot Melachim* 1:7-8, the Rambam writes that King David's descendants have an eternal right to the monarchy in Jerusalem, his description here of the Hasmoneans as kings does not have the slightest intimation of criticism; if anything, the contrary is true.

2. When the Jews overcame their enemies and destroyed them, they entered the Sanctuary; this was on the twenty-fifth of Kislev.<sup>1</sup> They could not find any pure oil in the Sanctuary, with the exception of a single cruse. It contained enough oil to burn for merely one day. They lit the arrangement of candles from it for eight days<sup>2</sup> until they could crush olives and produce pure oil.<sup>3</sup>

3. Accordingly, the Sages of that generation ordained that these eight days, which begin from the twenty-fifth of Kislev, should be commemorated to be days of happiness and praise [of God]. Candles should be lit in the evening at the entrance to the houses on each and every one of these eight nights to publicize and reveal the miracle.

Several laws regarding the nature of kingship are derived from the Hasmonean kings and others, even from the kings of Herod's dynasty, who ruled after them.

1. Significantly, the wording of the Rambam appears to indicate that the victory of the Hasmonians took place on the twenty-fifth of Kislev. Rabbenu Nissim and other authorities explain that the victory took place on the twenty-fourth, and it was on the twenty-fifth that the Jews rested from the war and entered the Sanctuary. Indeed, an allusion to this is found in the very name Chanukah, חנוכה, which is broken up into two words, חט כה, "they camped on the twenty-fifth."

2. The commentaries raise the question: Why was the miracle of the cruse of oil necessary? With regard to communal offerings, in which category falls the kindling of the Menorah, we follow the rule that "the requirement for ritual purity is suspended," if it is impossible to bring the offering in purity (*Hilchot Bi'at HaMikdash* 4:7-17). Thus, if the cruse of pure oil had burned out, the Jews could have used impure oil. Why did God perform a miracle when there was no absolute necessity?

Among the explanations for this is that God saw the dedication of the Jewish people as evidenced by their search for pure oil, and, in a greater sense, by their entire struggle against the Greeks. This commitment which extended beyond the limits of their intellect evoked a miracle from God that transcended the limits of nature.

3. This fact also provokes a question: Why did it take so long to produce pure olive oil? Although there is an obligation to use oil of the finest quality for the Menorah (see *Hilchot Isurei HaMizbe'ach* 6:1, 7-8-10), when there is no other alternative, inferior oil prepared for the Menorah is also acceptable. Seemingly, it would have been possible to produce oil from olives in the Jerusalem vicinity in less than eight days.

### Commentary, Halachah 3

Accordingly, the Sages of that generation - *Shabbat* 21b states that the celebration of the holiday was ordained in the year following the miracle.

ordained that these eight days, which begin from the twenty-fifth of Kislev, should be

ב וּלְשִׁבְעוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל אוֹיְבֵיהֶם וְאֶבְדוּם, בְּתַמְשָׁה וְעִשְׂרִים בְּחֹדֶשׁ כִּסְלֵו הַקֵּה.

וְנִכְנסוּ לְהִקְל, וְלֹא נִצְאוּ שָׁמֶן פְּהוּר בְּמִקְדָּשׁ אֵלָּא פֶּן אָחַד.

וְלֹא הָיָה בּוֹ לְהַדְלִיק אֵלָּא יוֹם אֶחָד בְּלַבָּד,

וְהַדְלִיקוּ מִשְׁנֵי גֵרוֹת הַפְּעֻרְבָּה שְׂמוּנָה יָמִים, עַד שֶׁנִּשְׁתָּפוּ וְזָתִים וְהוֹצִיאוּ שָׁמֶן פְּהוּר.

ג וּמִפְּנֵי זֶה הִתְקַיְנוּ חֲכָמִים שְׁבֹאוֹתוֹ הַקִּדוּ, שִׁיְהִי שְׂמוּנַת יָמִים הָאֵלֶּי, שְׂתַחֲלָטוּ כִּי"ה בְּכִסְלֵו, וְיָמֵי שְׂמִיחָה וְהֵלֵל.

וּמִדְלִיקוֹן בְּיָמֵי הַגֵּרוֹת בְּעֶרְבַּ עַל פְּתָחֵי הַבָּתִּים בְּכָל לַיְלָה וְלַיְלָה מִשְׂמוּנַת הַלַּיְלוֹת, לְהַרְאוֹת וּלְגַלוֹת הַנֶּסֶם.

commemorated - There are many who question why the holiday is celebrated for eight days, since the miracle was only for seven (for there was enough oil for the Menorah to burn for a single day). The Rambam's words seem to allude to a resolution of this difficulty. The miraculous lighting of the Menorah began on the twenty-fifth of Kislev and continued for eight days.

[Note, however, the *Pri Chadash* (*Orach Chayim* 670:1), who explains that, according to the Rambam, the first day of the celebration was instituted in appreciation of the military victories, while the remaining seven came in recognition of the miracle of the Menorah.]

as days of happiness - an acknowledgement of God's miracles in a material context in appreciation of the military victories.

As the Rambam explains in *Hilchot Purim*, Chapter 2, "happiness" is associated with feasting. In this context, the *Yam shel Shlomo*, *Bava Kama* 7:37, explains that according to the Rambam - in contrast to the rulings of the *Tur* and the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 670:2) - the festive meals customarily served on Chanukah can be considered to be feasts associated with a mitzvah.

and praise [of God]. - A spiritual acknowledgement of God in appreciation of the miracle of the Menorah. These two aspects of the celebration of the holiday reflect the different nature of the miracles mentioned in each of the first two halachot (*Likkutei Sichot*, Vol. 10).

Candles should be lit in the evening at the entrance to the houses on each and every one of these eight nights to publicize and reveal the miracle. - Both factors, the kindling of the Chanukah candles at night - when their light could be seen - and their placement at the entrance to the house - where their light will be projected into the street - emphasize the principle of *pirsumei nisa*, publicizing the Chanukah miracle.

These days are called Chanukah. It is forbidden to eulogize and fast on them, as on the days of Purim. Lighting the candles on these days is a Rabbinic mitzvah, like the reading of the Megillah.

4. Whoever is obligated to read the Megillah is also obligated to kindle the Chanukah lamp.<sup>4</sup> On the first night, a person lighting [the lamp] recites three blessings. They are:

Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us<sup>5</sup> to light the Chanukah lamp.

"...who wrought miracles for our ancestors...."<sup>6</sup>  
 "...who has granted us life, sustained us...."<sup>7</sup>

When a person who did not recite a blessing [on his own Chanukah lamp] sees a lamp,<sup>8</sup> he should recite the latter two blessings.<sup>9</sup> On subsequent nights, a person who kindles the lamp should recite two blessings and one who sees a lamp should recite one, for the blessing *Shehechyanu* is recited only on the first night.<sup>10</sup>

5. On each and every one of these eight days, the entire *Hallel* is

These days are called Chanukah. - According to the Rambam, the choice of this name is somewhat problematic: As mentioned above, there are authorities who associated the name with the expression, כה נר, "they camped on the twenty-fifth." This certainly does not express the Rambam's view. *Megillat Tarani* associates Chanukah with *chanukai hamizbe'ach*, the rededication of the altar in the Temple, but there is no mention of this event by the Rambam here.

It is forbidden to eulogize and fast on them, as on the days of Purim. - As mentioned in the commentary on Chapter 2, Halachah 13, the prohibition to eulogize and fast applies only on the days of Chanukah themselves, and not on the preceding or succeeding days.

Significantly, unlike Purim, there is no prohibition against work on Chanukah (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 670:1).

Lighting the candles on these days is a Rabbinic mitzvah, like the reading of the Megillah. - This emphasizes the Rambam's perspective that the allusion to the obligation to read the Megillah in the Megillah itself does not change the status of this mitzvah. (See also the commentary on Chapter 1, Halachah 1.)

4. I.e., all adult men and women; similarly, there is an obligation upon parents to train their children in the observance of this mitzvah.

Although Chanukah is a mitzvah that is dependent on a specific time, women are obligated, because "they were also included in the miracle." As mentioned in Halachah 1, the Greeks' decrees affected them and they also had a share in the military victory, for the Greek commander was slain by a woman, Yehudit.

5. Although the mitzvah of kindling Chanukah lights was ordained by the Sages, it is

וימים אלו הן הנקראין חנוכה.

והן אסורין בהספד ותענית וקרי תפוחים.

והדלקת הנרות בהן מצוה מדיבורי סופרים, פקריאת המנלה.

ד כל שחנך פקריאת המנלה, חנך בהדלקת נר חנוכה.

והמדליק אותה בלילה הראשון, מברך שלש ברכות, ואלו הן:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו ה' העולם אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה.

ו"שעשה נסים לאבותינו" וכו'.

ו"שהחנינו וקיימנו" וכו'.

וכל הרוצה אותה ולא ברה, מברך שתיים:

"שעשה נסים לאבותינו" ו"שהחנינו".

ובשאר הלילות - המדליק מברך שתיים, והרוצה מברך אחת.  
 שאין מברכין "שהחנינו" אלא בלילה הראשון.

ד בכל יום ויום משמנות הנשים האלו גזקורין את ההלל.

proper to praise God "who commanded us," as explained in Chapter 1, Halachot 1 and 3.

6. This blessing is also recited in commemoration of the Purim miracles (Chapter 1, Halachah 3).

7. This blessing is recited whenever one fulfills a mitzvah that is performed only from time to time (*Hilchot Berachot* 11:9).

8. The *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim* 676:3) interprets this as referring to a person who has not lit the Chanukah candles yet, is not intending to light them, and will not have them lit by others in his home. (See Chapter 4, Halachah 11.) Since he will not be fulfilling the mitzvah by himself, he should commemorate the miracle by reciting these blessings on candles lit by others.

Significantly, Rav Kapach's version of the *Mishneh Torah* does not contain the phrase, "who did not recite a blessing." Based on a responsum of the Rambam, he develops a unique interpretation, explaining that one may recite these blessings several times each night if he did not have the intent to light or see additional Chanukah lamps.

9. Since he did not kindle the lamp himself, it is improper for him to praise God for the opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah.

10. After the fulfillment of this mitzvah on the first night, it is no longer appropriate to recite this blessing.

11. *Hallel* is a selection of celebrant psalms (Psalm 113-118). The Rambam mentions

Activity Three

**MAIMONIDES**  
**MISHNEH TORAH**  
**Hilchot Ta'aniot**  
The Laws of Fasts

and

**Hilchot Megillah VaChanukah**  
The Laws of [Reading] the Megillah and of Chanukah

*A new translation with commentaries and notes.*

by

**Rabbi Eliyahu Touger**

**למב"ם**

**משנה תורה**

**הלכות תעניות**

**הלכות מגילה וחנוכה**

תורגם מחדש לאנגלית

עם מקורות והערות

מאת

**הרב אליהו תוגר**



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**בית הוצאת ספרים**  
**מאזנים**  
ירושלים — ניו יארק  
תשע"ב

above represents the custom followed in the early ages and it is fitting to adhere to it. At present, however, I have seen different customs in all places with regard to the reading of [the *Hallel*] and the responses of the people, not one of them resembling another.

## CHAPTER FOUR

1. How many candles should one light on Chanukah? The mitzvah is that a single candle should be lit in each and every house, regardless of whether there are many members of the household, or merely one person [lives] there.

A person who performs the mitzvah in a beautiful and conscientious manner should light candles for every member of the household, whether male or female.

A person who is even more conscientious in his performance of the mitzvah than this and observes the mitzvah in the most desirable manner should light candles for every member of his household, a candle for each individual, whether male or female, on the first night. On each subsequent night, he should add a candle [for each of the members of the household].

their obligation, based on the principle that "one who listens is considered as if he recited [the prayers] himself" (see *Hilchot Berachot* 1:11).

This principle does not apply, however, when the person reciting the prayer is not obligated to do so. Hence, since all the individuals mentioned by the Rambam (quoting *Sukkah* 3:10) are not obligated to say *Hallel*, an adult male cannot fulfill his obligation by listening to their recitation. By repeating the *Hallel* word for word, he does fulfill his obligation, since in this manner he recites the entire *Hallel*.

The Mishnah (*loc. cit.*) states that a person who must have one of the above read for him is worthy of a curse. The intent is that he should learn how to read himself.

### Commentary, Halachah 1

**How many candles should one light on Chanukah? The - minimal requirement to fulfill the**

**mitzvah is that a single candle should be lit - on each night of the holiday in each and every house - Significantly, the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles is connected with an individual's home as well as with his person. Therefore, as mentioned in Halachah 11, a person who is a guest at the home of others need not share in the lighting of the candles if he knows that candles are being lit in his own home.**

זהו המנהג הראשון, ובו ראוי ללך.

אבל בזמנים אלו ראיתי בכל המקומות מנהגות משנות בקריאתו ובזמני העם, ואין אחד מהם דומה לאחד.

## פרק רביעי

א כמה נרות הוא מדליק בתנקה?

מנהגת שיהיה כל בית ובית מדליק נר אחד, בין שהיו אנשי הבית קרובין בין שלא היה בו אלא אדם אחד.

המנהג את המנהג, מדליק נרות כמנהג אנשי הבית, נר לכל אחד ואחד, בין אנשים בין נשים.

המנהג יותר על זה ועושה מנהג מן המנהג, מדליק נר לכל אחד בלילה הראשון ומוסיף והולך בכל לילה ולילה נר אחד.

regardless of whether there are many members of the household, or merely one person [lives] there. - *Shabbat* 21b states: "The mitzvah of Chanukah requires a candle for a man and his household."

A person who performs the mitzvah in a beautiful and conscientious manner should light candles for every member of the household - *Shabbat* 21a.

From the Rambam's statements, it appears that the additional light is kindled by the master of the household and not by each of the members of the household themselves. Even according to this interpretation, however, the custom of each child lighting Chanukah lights is valuable as an expression of *chinuch*, training them in the observance of the mitzvot.

whether male or female. - As stated in Chapter 3, Halachah 4, women are obligated to fulfill the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles. Nevertheless, separate candles should not be lit for one's wife (*Mishnah Berurah* 671:9). Similarly, in some communities, even when candles are lit for every member of the household, they are not lit for girls under the age of Bat Mitzvah.

A person who is even more conscientious in his performance of the mitzvah than this and observes the mitzvah in the most desirable manner - *Shabbat* (*loc. cit.*) describes such a person as *mehadrin min hamehadrin*.

should light candles for every member of his household, a candle for each individual, whether male or female, on the first night. - i.e., these people also fulfill the practice of the *mehadrin*. See *Tosafot* (*Shabbat, ibid.*), who differ. See also the commentary on Halachah 3. In addition,

On each subsequent night, he should add a candle [for each of the members of the

2. What does the above imply? When there are ten members of a household, on the first night one lights ten candles, on the second night - twenty, on the third night - thirty, until on the eighth night, one lights eighty candles.

3. It is common custom in all of our cities in Spain that a single candle is lit for all the members of the household on the first night. We proceed to add a new candle on each and every night, until on the eighth night eight candles are lit. [This practice is followed] regardless of whether there are many members of the household or only one man [is lighting candles].<sup>1</sup>

4. When a candleholder has two openings, it can be counted for two individuals.

[The following rules apply when] one fills a bowl with oil and surrounds it with wicks: If one covers it with a utensil, each of the

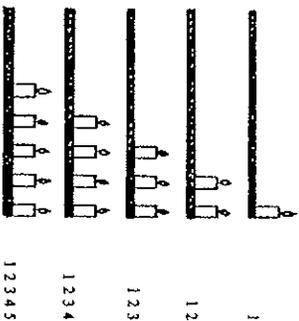
household]. - e.g., on the second night, he lights two candles for each of the members of the household, as explained in the following halachah.

*Shabbat (ibid.)* mentions a difference of opinion between the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai. The School of Shammai maintains that eight candles should be lit on the first night, seven on the second, etc. The School of Hillel, in contrast, maintains that "one should increase in holy matters and not decrease," and one therefore begins with one candle and adds a new candle every night.

1. The *Lechem Mishneh* questions the custom mentioned by the Rambam. Since the Rambam maintains that the *mehadrin min hamehadrin* also observe the practice of the *mehadrin*, this custom seems inappropriate. It is not the custom of the *mehadrin min hamehadrin*, nor is it the minimum requirement of the law.

The *Lechem Mishneh* justifies the custom, explaining that since each night additional light is added, there is a positive intent even though it does not follow the practice of the *mehadrin min hamehadrin*.

The *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 671:2)* quotes the custom cited by the Rambam as halachah. The Rambam adds that in Ashkenazic communities the custom is to fulfill the mitzvah in the manner of *mehadrin min hamehadrin* - i.e., each member of the household lights candles, and each night an additional candle is added. It is significant that with regard to this mitzvah in particular, it is common custom throughout the Ashkenazic community, for everyone - even those who are not fully observant - to fulfill this mitzvah in "the most desirable manner."



ב פיצוד? הרי שהיה אנשי הבית עשורה - פלילה הראשון מדליק עשורה גרות, ופליל שני עשורים, ופליל שלישי שלישי.

עד שנומצא מדליק פליל שמיני שמונים גרות.

ג מנהג פשוט בכל ערינו בספרד, שהיהו כל אנשי הבית מדליקין גר אחד פלילה הראשון ומדליקין גר בכל לילה, עד שנומצא מדליק פליל שמיני שמונה גרות.

בין שהיה אנשי הבית מרבנים בין שהיה אדם אחד.

ד גר עשיר לו שהיה פולח, עולה לשני בני אדם.

מלא קערה שמן והקיפה פתילות: אם פפה עלילה פלי - כל פתילה ופתילה

#### Commentary, Halachah 4

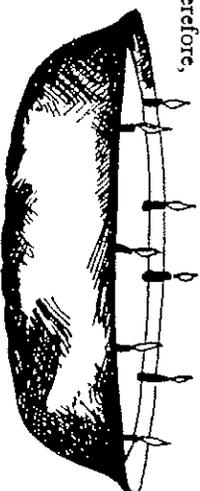
When a candleholder has two openings - and a wick is kindled in both of them it can be counted for two individuals. - Although both wicks use the same oil, since they protrude from separate portions of the candelabrum, they are considered to be separate lights.

This law is applicable to the *mehadrin* (see Halachah 1), who light a candle for each individual (Rashi, *Shabbat* 23b). Alternatively, this law is relevant for two people whose doorways are adjacent to each other or when two people live in the same house, but do not share in their household expenses (*Maggid Mishneh*).

The *Magen Avraham 671:2* states that according to the Ashkenazic custom, in which each person lights his own candles, two people should not light candles using the same candleholder even on the first night. A passerby might see the two lights and instead of thinking they were lit by two different people, he might err and think that one person lit both candles because it is the second night of the holiday.

Since the purpose of lighting candles is *pirsumei nisa*, publicizing the Chanukah miracle, the impression created in an onlooker's mind is significant. Therefore, two people should not light candles in this manner.

[The following rules apply when] one fills a bowl with oil and surrounds it with wicks: If one covers it with a utensil - The flames from each of the lights will not merge together. Therefore,



wicks is considered to be a separate candle. If one does not cover it with a utensil, it is considered to be a large fire, and is not counted even as a single candle.

5. The Chanukah candles should not be kindled before sunset. Instead, [they should be kindled] at sunset. One should not light later or earlier. Should one forget, or even if one purposely did not light at sunset, one may light afterwards until there are no longer any passersby in the marketplace.

How long a duration of time is this? Approximately half an hour or slightly more than that. Should this time pass, one should not kindle the lights.

each of the wicks is considered to be a separate candle - and is thus significant according to our custom of adding candles each night.

If one does not cover it with a utensil - The flames from each of the lights may merge together as a single flame. Therefore,

it is considered to be a large fire, and is not counted even as a single candle. - A large fire may be used for several purposes and hence does not necessarily serve as a sign of the commemoration of the Chanukah miracle.

In light of this halachah, the Ramah (*Orach Chayim* 671:4) discusses the use of a circular candelabrum. The *Mishnah Berurah* 671:18 mentions that in such a candelabrum, each candleholder should be at least one fingerbreadth from the other.

### Commentary, Halachah 5

The Chanukah candles should not be kindled before sunset. - Most commentaries interpret the Rambam's intent as the time when the sun disappears from the horizon. The *Tur* and the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 672:1) interpret "sunset" in this context as referring to the time when there is no sunlight visible - i.e., the appearance of three stars. Many of the later authorities, however, accept the Rambam's ruling of three stars. (*See the Be'ur Halachah* 672.)

The candles should not be lit before sunset, since their purpose is to publicize the Chanukah miracles. During the daytime, no one will notice them and this purpose will not be served.

Instead, [they should be kindled] at sunset. - This is the ideal time to kindle them. Since the sun has already set, the candle's light will be noticed. On the other hand, since there is still some light outside, it is obvious that the candles are being lit for the purpose of publicizing the Chanukah miracle and not for one's individual needs.

One should not light later - At night, it is customary to kindle lights. Therefore, if a person lights the candles at this time, an onlooker may err and think that he is lighting for his own needs and not for the sake of the mitzvah. Nevertheless, on Saturday night, when there is no alternative, we light the candles after the appearance of the stars.

נחשבת כגור אחד; לא כפה עליה כלי - נעשית כמקדוקה, ואפילו כגור אחד אינה נחשבת.

ה אין מדליקין גרות חנפה קדם שהנשקע החמה, אלא עם שקיעתה; לא מאתרוז ולא מקדימין.

שבה או היזד ולא הדליק עם שקיעת החמה, מדליק והולך עד שתתקלה רגלו בן השוק.

וכמה הוא זמן זה? כמו חצי שעה או יותר.

עבר זמן זה, אינו מדליק.

or earlier - The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 672:1) cites an opinion which states that from *plag haminchah* (an hour and a quarter before nightfall) onward, a person who is busy and will not have an opportunity later may kindle the Chanukah lights. He must, however, place enough oil within them for them to continue burning for half an hour after nightfall.

On Friday night, we all rely on this opinion and kindle the Chanukah lights shortly before sunset. (*See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 679.)

Should one forget, or even if one purposely did not light at sunset - although the most appropriate time for fulfilling the mitzvah has passed

one may light afterwards until there are no longer any passersby in the marketplace. - Once the passersby no longer walk in the street, one will not be publicizing the Chanukah miracle by lighting candles.

How long a duration of time is this? Approximately half an hour or slightly more than that. - Thus, according to the Rambam, after half an hour past sunset, kindling the candles no longer fulfills a mitzvah. The Ramah (*Orach Chayim* 672:2) states that in the present age, since it is customary to light inside one's house (see Halachah 8 and commentary), the essential element of publicizing the Chanukah miracle is to involve one's own family in the candle lighting. Therefore, one fulfills the mitzvah as long as the members of one's household are awake.

The Ramah, nevertheless, counsels that at the outset, one should try to adhere to the stricter view. In light of these statements, the common practice of lighting the Chanukah candles well after nightfall should be examined. Is it correct to refrain willfully from fulfilling the mitzvah in the most desirable manner, and perhaps, according to the Rambam, not to fulfill it at all?

Should this time pass, one should not kindle the lights. - This appears to indicate that, according to the Rambam, it is undesirable to light the candles afterwards. The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 672:2), however, quotes the opinion of the *Tur*, which states that if one did not light the candles at the proper time, one should light them throughout the night. (There is, however, a question about the recitation of a blessing.)

One should place enough oil in the lamp so that it will continue burning until there are no longer any passersby in the marketplace. If one lit it and it became extinguished, one need not light it a second time. If it remained burning until there are no longer passersby in the marketplace, one may extinguish it or remove it if one desires.

6. All oils and all wicks are acceptable for use in the Chanukah lamps, even those oils that are not drawn after the wick and even those wicks that do not hold the light well. Even on the Sabbath nights of Chanukah, it is permitted to light with oils and wicks that are forbidden to be used for the Sabbath lights.

[The reason for this leniency is that] it is forbidden to use the

One should place enough oil in the lamp - When one lights the candles, they should have the amount of oil mentioned. It is improper to light with a smaller amount of oil and add more afterwards. (See *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 675:2*)

so that it will continue burning until there are no longer any passersby in the marketplace. - At present, in deference to the opinion that states that the time for candle lighting begins after nightfall, even when a person kindles Chanukah candles at sunset, enough oil should be placed in the candelabrum for the candles to burn until half an hour after nightfall.

If one lit it and it became extinguished, one need not light it a second time. - The *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 673:2)* prefaces this law by stating the principle, "Kindling fulfills the mitzvah." Although the Chanukah candles should burn for half an hour, one fulfills the mitzvah only when lighting them. Thus, one must light them in a manner that - barring any unexpected events - they will be able to burn for that half an hour - e.g., they must have a sufficient amount of oil to burn for that period and they must not be placed where they could be extinguished by the wind. Once a person has taken these precautions, however, he has no further obligation.

Note, however, the *Mishnah Berurah 673:27*, which states that it is proper to relight the candles so that they will burn for the desired time.

If it remained burning until there are no longer passersby in the marketplace - there is no longer any purpose in having the candles burning. Thus the mitzvah is concluded and therefore

one may extinguish it or remove it - While the candles are burning, however, they should not be moved. See also Halachah 9 and commentary.

If one desires - *Knai Elyahu* notes that at the present time, it is customary for people to walk or travel at night after nightfall. For this reason, perhaps the Chanukah candles should be left burning for longer than a half an hour. For as long as they are burning, the intent of *presumei nisa*, publicizing the Chanukah miracle, is fulfilled.

### Commentary, Halachah 6

All oils and all wicks are acceptable for use in the Chanukah lamps - This is a contrast to the Sabbath laws. As explained in Chapter 2 of the tractate of *Shabbat* and

וְצִרְיָה שִׁיתָן שֶׁמֶן בְּכֵר שְׂמֵהָהּ דוֹלֶקֶת וְהוֹלֶכֶת עַד שֶׁתִּכְלָה רִגְלָה מִן הַשּׁוּק.

הַדֹּלֶקֶת וְכִבְיָהּ, אֵינוֹ נִזְקָק לְהַדֹּלֶקֶת פַּעַם אַחֲרָתָה. נִשְׁאַרָה דוֹלֶקֶת אַחֵר שֶׁכִּלְתָּה רִגְלָה מִן הַשּׁוּק - אִם רָצָה לְכַבּוֹתָהּ אוֹ לְסַלְקָהּ, עוֹשֶׂהָ.

וְכָל הַשְּׂמֵנִים וְכָל הַפְּתִילוֹת קְשׂוּתוֹת לָנֶר תִּנְקָה, וְאֵף עַל פִּי שְׂאֵר הַשְּׂמֵנִים וְנִשְׂמֵנִים אַחֵר הַפְּתִילָה, וְאֵין הָאֵר נִתְלִית יָפֵה פְּאוֹתָהּ הַפְּתִילוֹת.

וְאֶפְסָלוּ כָּלֵילִי שֶׁבֶת שְׂבֻתוֹךָ וְלִי תִנְקָה מִתּוֹר לְהַדְלִיק הַשְּׂמֵנִים וְהַפְּתִילוֹת לְפִי שְׂאֵסוֹר לְהַשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ לָנֶר תִּנְקָה בֵּין בְּשֻׁבָתָה בֵּין בְּתוֹר.

Chapter 5 of the Rambam's *Hilchot Shabbat*, there are certain oils and wicks that are unacceptable for use for the Sabbath candles.

even those oils that are not drawn after the wick - This is the primary reason one is not allowed to use these oils on the Sabbath. Since they are not drawn after the wick, their light does not burn brightly. A person might inadvertently tilt the lamp for the light to shine brighter, and thus transgress the Sabbath laws. There is no reason for caution in this regard on Chanukah, as explained below. Hence, there is no difficulty in using such oil.

Although all oils are acceptable for the Chanukah candles, the Rabbis have suggested using olive oil, for this was the oil used to light the Menorah in the Temple (Ramah, *Orach Chayim 673:1, Mishnah Berurah 673:4*). If olive oil is not available, one should use beeswax candles.

and even those wicks that do not hold the light well. - Here also, these wicks were forbidden for use for the Sabbath candles lest one tilt the light.

Although all wicks are acceptable, it is customary to use wicks of flax or of cotton (*Mishnah Berurah 673:2*).

Even on the Sabbath nights of Chanukah, it is permitted to light - the Chanukah lights with oils and wicks that are forbidden to be used for the Sabbath lights. - Needless to say, the prohibition against using these candles for the Sabbath lights still remains in effect.

[The reason for this leniency is that] - In addition to the reason cited by the Rambam in this halachah, *Shabbat 21b* mentions the principle stated in the previous halachah: If a Chanukah candle is extinguished, there is no obligation to light it again.

Thus, the reason these wicks and oils may be used on the Sabbath of Chanukah can be explained as follows: We are not worried about the candles being extinguished,

Chanukah candles [for one's own purposes] whether on the Sabbath or on a weekday. It is even forbidden to use their light to inspect or count coins.

7. It is a mitzvah to place the Chanukah lamp at the outside of the entrance to one's home, within the handbreadth that is closest to the doorway on the left side as one enters the home, so that the mezuzah will be on the right side and the Chanukah lamp on the left side.

When a person lives in a second storey apartment, he should place [the Chanukah lamp] in a window close to the public domain. If [a person] places a Chanukah lamp more than twenty cubits [above the

because even in that eventuality, there is no obligation to relight the candles. Nor are we worried that one will tilt the Chanukah candles so that their light will shine brighter, because:

**it is forbidden to use the Chanukah candles [for one's own purposes]** - During the week, this prohibition applies only during the first half hour that the candles are burning. Afterwards, their mitzvah is completed, as stated in the previous halachah. **whether on the Sabbath or on a weekday.** - The Sabbath candles were instituted to bring about *sh'loim bayit*, "peace in the home," through the use of their light. In contrast, the Chanukah candles were instituted for *pirsumei nisa*, publicizing the Chanukah miracle. To emphasize this purpose, the Sages forbade using them for any other purpose.

Furthermore, the Chanukah candles were instituted to commemorate the miracle of the Menorah in the Temple. Thus, just as it is forbidden to use the Menorah's light for any worldly purpose, so too, the light of the Chanukah candles is prohibited (*Mishnah Berurah* 673-8).

**It is even forbidden to use their light to inspect or count coins.** - *Shabbat* 22a relates that this prohibition was instituted so that the mitzvot would be viewed with respect. If a person were able to use the light of the Chanukah lamp for his own purposes, he would treat the mitzvah with little regard.

In this halachah, the Rambam is describing a situation when the Chanukah candles are lit outside the home (where it is unlikely that the light of the candles will be used for mundane purposes). In Halachah 8, he mentions the lighting of candles within the home (and it is likely that work will be carried out within the home at that time). Therefore, it is in that halachah that he mentions the custom of lighting another candle (the *shamash*) next to the Chanukah candles, so that if a person carries out an activity near the candles, he will be using the light of that additional candle.

See also the *Shulchan Aruch* (*loc. cit.*), which questions whether it is permissible to use the Chanukah candles for a holy purpose - e.g., to study Torah by their light.

#### Commentary, Halachah 7

**It is a mitzvah to place** - As is obvious from Halachah 9, the Chanukah lamp should be placed outside before being lit.

ואפילו לבדוק מעות או למנותן לאורה אסור.

ז גר תנקה מקנה להניחו על פתח ביתו מבהיץ בטפח הסמוך לפתח על שמאל הנקנס לביתו, כדי שתהיה קרובה בקמין וגר תנקה משמאל. ואם היה דר בצליה, מניחו בחלון הסמוך לרשות הרבים. וגר תנקה שהניחו למעלה מעשרים אמה - לא עשה כלום, לפי שאינו נקר.

the Chanukah lamp at the outside of the entrance to one's home - As mentioned previously, the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles was instituted for the purpose of *pirsumei nisa*, publicizing the Chanukah miracle. Therefore, the candles should be placed at the outside of one's dwelling to attract the attention of the passersby in the public domain (Rashi, *Shabbat* 21b).

In a spiritual sense, this points to the potential possessed by the Chanukah candles to spread light beyond the normal limits of holiness. Generally, mitzvot are performed within a home or synagogue. In this instance, the nature of the mitzvah is to spread light to the public domain, to illuminate the darkness of the world at large.

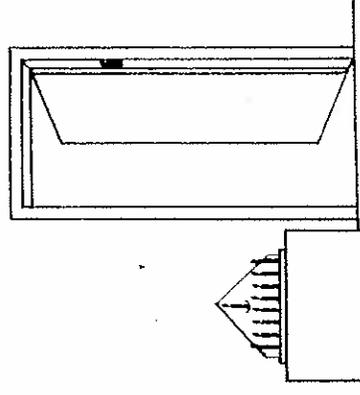
**within the handbreadth that is closest to the doorway** - If the candelabrum were placed any further away, it would not be obvious that the owner of the home placed it there for the purpose of kindling Chanukah lights (*ibid.*).

**on the left side as one enters the home** - Generally, mitzvot are associated with the right side; the left side, by contrast, is identified with the forces of evil. Lighting the Chanukah candle on the left indicates a potential to refine and elevate the forces opposed to holiness (*Likkurei Sichot*, Vol. V). **so that the mezuzah will be on the right side** - as is required (see *Hilchot Mezuzah* 6:12) **and the Chanukah lamp on the left side** - so that the person kindling them will be surrounded by mitzvot.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orah Chayim* 671:7) states that if there is no mezuzah in the doorway, the Chanukah candles should be lit on the right side.

**When a person lives in a second storey apartment** - The *Shulchan Aruch* (*ibid.*:5) qualifies this to mean a second storey apartment that does not have a private entrance to the public domain or a courtyard. If the apartment has such an entrance, the Chanukah lamp should be lit at that entrance. **he should place [the Chanukah lamp] in a window close to the public domain** - For the sake of *pirsumei nisa*.

**If [a person] places a Chanukah lamp more than twenty cubits** - a cubit is between 18 and 24 inches, according to the varying Rabbinic opinions. Thus the Rambam is speaking about a height between thirty and forty feet.



ground], his actions are of no consequence, because [the lamp] does not attract attention [at that height].

8. In a time of danger, a person may place a Chanukah lamp inside his house; even if he lit it on his table, it is sufficient.

[Therefore,] another lamp must be burning in the house to provide light for one's [mundane] activities. If a fire is burning in the house, an additional candle is not necessary. For a prestigious person who does not normally use the light of a fire, an additional candle is required.

9. A Chanukah lamp that was kindled by a deaf-mute, a mentally incapable person, a minor, or a gentile is of no consequence. It must be kindled by a person who is obligated to light it.

[above the ground], his actions are of no consequence - i.e., he is not considered to have fulfilled the mitzvah

because [the lamp] does not attract attention [at that height]. - We see a similar concept with regard to the *s'chach* of a sukkah and the *korah* of an alleyway. If they are placed above twenty cubits, they are not acceptable (*Hilchoi Sukkah* 4:11; *Hilchoi Shabbat* 17:15).

Although the Rambam does not address himself to this issue, the *Maggid Mishneh* and similarly, the *Shulchan Aruch* (*ibid.*:6), state that the Chanukah lights should be placed between three and ten handbreadths high.

#### Commentary, Halachah 8

In a time of danger, a person may place a Chanukah lamp inside his house - *Shabbat* 21b mentions this leniency. According to *Tosafot*, the danger refers to the persecutions of the Jews of Babylon by the ruling Persians for lighting candles mentioned in *Shabbat* 45a. Needless to say, there have been countless other periods of persecution in Jewish history.

It is, however, significant that even in times when there was no obvious danger, the custom has been to light the Chanukah candles inside our homes. Even in the present day, when there is little danger of persecution in most places where Jews are located, it is not customary to light the Chanukah candles at the entrance to the home in most communities.

even if he lit it on his table, it is sufficient - i.e., there is no necessity to light near a doorway. The Ramah (*Orach Chayim* 671:7) states that it is preferable that the Chanukah lights be positioned near a doorway.

[Therefore,] another lamp must be burning in the house to provide light for one's [mundane] activities - As mentioned in *Halachah* 6, it is forbidden to use the light of the Chanukah lamp for a mundane purpose. Since it is very likely that there will be some activity carried out in the house while the candles are burning, an additional

ח פנימי הפקנה מנייה אדם נר הנקפה בחוץ פירו מופנים. ואפילו הניחו על שלחן - ר"י.

תצריך להיות בחוץ מבית נר אהד להשתמש לאורו.  
ואם הוקמה שם מדרגה, אינו צריך נר אהד.  
ואם אדם חשוב הוא, שאין דרכו להשתמש למדרגה - צריך נר אהד.

ט נר הנקפה שהדליקו תרש שזונה וקפץ אז עפ"י - לא עשה כלום, עד שיצילקנו מן שיהא חייב בהדלקה.

light should be kindled. Note the *Mishnah Berurah* 673:14, which explains that the present custom is to kindle an additional light near the Chanukah candles, besides the light that is ordinarily burning in the room.

This light, called the *shamash*, should be placed apart from the Chanukah candles so that it can be distinguished from them (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 673:1). Often, many commercially produced Chanukah lamps fail to make a sufficient distinction between this candle and the Chanukah lights themselves.

If a fire is burning in the house - One can use the light it produces for one's mundane activities; therefore

an additional candle is not necessary. For a prestigious person who does not normally use the light of a fire, an additional candle is required - to serve the purpose of the *shamash*.

#### Commentary, Halachah 9

A Chanukah lamp that was kindled by a deaf-mute, a mentally incapable person, a minor, or a gentile is of no consequence. - i.e., it does not constitute fulfillment of the mitzvah. All these four individuals are not obligated to fulfill mitzvot. Therefore, their kindling of the Chanukah lamp cannot fulfill the obligation instituted by our Sages.

Rabbeinu Nissim mentions that a minor who is of the age when he is obligated to be trained in the fulfillment of the commandments may kindle the Chanukah lamps on behalf of the household. This opinion is not, however, accepted by other authorities, although they do mention that a child should be trained in the observance of the mitzvah of Chanukah candles as part of his process of education (*chinuch*).

Although the Rambam does not mention the latter concept explicitly, nevertheless, it is expected that he would agree. (See *Hilchoi Nachalat* 11:10.)

It must be kindled by a person who is obligated to light it. - This and the laws that follow depend on the principle that "Kindling the lamp fulfills the mitzvah and not placing it down" (*Shabbat* 23a). Since the mitzvah is fulfilled when the Chanukah lamp is being lit, the person lighting the lamp must be obligated in the mitzvah.

Should the [Chanukah lamp] be kindled inside and then taken and placed at the entrance of one's home while it is still burning, it is of no consequence. One must light it in its place.

If one held a candle and stood in one place, it is of no consequence, since an observer will say, "He is standing there for his own purposes."

When a lamp was burning through the entire [Sabbath] day, one may extinguish the light, recite the blessings [for the mitzvah], and relight the lamp. Kindling the lamp fulfills the mitzvah and not placing it down.

It is permissible to light one Chanukah candle from another Chanukah candle.

Should the [Chanukah lamp] be kindled inside and then taken and placed at the entrance of one's home while it is still burning, it is of no consequence. - *Shabbat* 22b explains that even those opinions that do not accept the principle, "Kindling the lamp fulfills the mitzvah and not placing it down," would accept this law, because it would appear that one is carrying the lamp as a torch and using it to light the way.

One must light it in its place. - Furthermore, as an extension of this law, it is proper not to move the Chanukah candles at all for the half an hour that they are required to burn (*Mishnah Berurah* 675:6).

If one held a candle and stood in one place - *The Tur* *Zahav* 675:3 states that this restriction applies only when one holds the Chanukah lamp for the full half an hour that it is required to burn. If, however, one held it while lighting it and placed it down, one is considered to have fulfilled the mitzvah.

The *Mishnah Berurah* 675:7, however, quotes other opinions, which do not accept this principle, and states that one should light the candles when the candelabrum is positioned in its place.

It is of no consequence - i.e., one does not fulfill the mitzvah. This law differs from the others stated in this halachah, which depend on the principle, "Kindling the lamp fulfills the mitzvah and not placing it down." Indeed, *Shabbat* 22b cites this law in an attempt to refute this principle. Nevertheless, although the above-mentioned principle is accepted, this law is still valid. Thus, it can be assumed that the Rambam mentions this law in this halachah only because it is mentioned in this context in the Talmud.

since - another factor is involved

an observer will say, "He is standing there for his own purposes."

When a lamp was burning through the entire [Sabbath] day, one may extinguish the light - To fulfill the mitzvah for the present night, one must extinguish the light. The word "may" is used only because there is no obligation to kindle one's Chanukah lights in this manner.

recite the blessings [for the mitzvah], and relight the lamp. - Although an onlooker would not necessarily appreciate that this lamp was kindled for the purpose of *pirsumei nisa*, one is considered to have fulfilled the mitzvah. The rationale for this decision - and most of the other laws mentioned in this halachah - is the following principle:

הדליקו מקנים והוציאו דלוק והניחו על פתח ביתו - לא עשה קלום, ער שדלוקו במקומו.

אזו הני בידו וצמד - לא עשה קלום, שהרואה אומר: לצדו הוא עומד. עשית שהיתה דולקת כל היום כלו, למוציא שבת מקבה ומברך ומדליקה. שהתדלקה היא המצוה, ולא ההנחה. ומתוך להדליק נר הנכה מגר הנכה.

Kindling the lamp fulfills the mitzvah and not placing it down. - *Shabbat* 23a derives this principle from the blessing we recite before lighting the candles, which mentions the commandment "to kindle the Chanukah lights."

There are two dimensions to every mitzvah: the performance of the deed itself (the *po'el*) - in this instance, the deed of kindling the Chanukah lights - and the effect of that performance (the *nifal*), the fact that these lights are burning. This principle emphasizes that it is the kindling of the lights which is the focus of the mitzvah.

This is significant, for one might think that since the purpose of the mitzvah is *pirsumei nisa*, communicating the Chanukah miracles, what is most important is the fact that the lights are burning; how they are lit is of no consequence. This principle shows, however, that for *pirsumei nisa* to take place, the Chanukah lights must be kindled as prescribed by our Sages (*Kinot Eliyahu*).

It is permissible to light one Chanukah candle - The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 674:2) cites an opinion that states that this also applies to other candles that are lit for the purpose of a mitzvah - e.g., the Sabbath candles.

from another Chanukah candle. - Chanukah candles may not be used for any mundane purpose, for doing so is an act of disrespect for the mitzvah. *Shabbat* 22a states that using them to light another Chanukah candle is acceptable, however, since this is obviously not an act of disrespect.

The Rambam states this law in the present halachah, which deals with the principle, "Kindling the lamp fulfills the mitzvah and not placing it down," because *Shabbat* 22b associates the two. Since "kindling the lamp fulfills the mitzvah," the act of lighting the lamp is the essence of the mitzvah, and, therefore, using another Chanukah candle is not considered an act of disrespect. If, however, placing the Chanukah candles down constituted the mitzvah, the kindling of another candle would not be a direct fulfillment of a mitzvah. Therefore, it would not be proper to use another Chanukah lamp for that purpose (see Rashi, *Shabbat, loc. cit.*).

[Note, however, *Tosafot* (*Shabbat* 23a) and the Ramah (*Orach Chayim* 674:1), which state that it is customary not to light one Chanukah candles from another.]

Among the questions also discussed with regard to this law is whether one must light the second candle from the first, or if it is acceptable if one lights a match from the first candle and uses it to light the second candle. To state the matter in terms of a question relevant to us: If the *shamash* is extinguished and one intends to use it to light other candles, may it be relit from a Chanukah candle which is already burning or not? Both opinions are mentioned in the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach*

10. When a courtyard has two entrances from two different directions, it requires two [Chanukah] lamps. [Were one to light at only one entrance,] the passerby from the other direction might say, "A Chanukah light had not been placed down." If, however, [two entrances to a courtyard] are located on the same side, [it is sufficient] to light at only one of them.

11. A guest [at another person's home, whose family] kindles [the Chanukah lights] for him at his home need not kindle [Chanukah lights] in the home where he is [temporarily] lodging. If, however, he has no home in which [Chanukah lights] are being kindled, he is required to light in the place where he is lodging. He should share in the oil [used by the owner of his lodgings].

*Chayim* 674:1). According to the later authorities, it is definitely desirable to light only a candle to be used for a mizvah itself from the Chanukah lights.

#### Commentary, Halachah 10

When a courtyard has two entrances from two different directions - Rashi, *Shabbat* 23a, clarifies that the entrances need not be on opposite sides, as long as they are different - e.g. north and east

it requires two [Chanukah] lamps. - The Ramah (*Orach Chayim* 671:8 states that only one blessing should be recited, for the second candle is not being lit to fulfill the mizvah *per se*.

[Were one to light at only one entrance,] the passerby from the other direction might say, "A Chanukah light had not been placed down." - At present, however, when it is customary to light inside one's home, it is sufficient even for a person with such a courtyard to kindle a single Chanukah lamp (Ramah, *loc. cit.*).

If, however, [two entrances to a courtyard] - and it is obvious they are from a single home (Ramah, *loc. cit.*).

are located on the same side, [it is sufficient] to light at only one of them. - For there is no possibility of such a mistake being made.

#### Commentary, Halachah 11

A guest - i.e., a person who is not a permanent member of the household, even though he eats at the family table (*Mishnah Berurah* 677:4).

*Shabbat* 23a, the source for this halachah, concerns itself with *yeshiva* students. Rabbi Zeira states, "When we were students at the academy, I contributed pennies to my host's candles. After I took a wife, I said, 'This is not necessary.'" The same laws, however, apply to other guests.

י' חָצֵר שְׂעִישׁ לָהּ שְׁנֵי פְתָחִים בְּשֵׁתַי רוּחוֹת, צִרְיָה שְׁתֵּי נְרוֹת;  
שְׂפָא יֵאמְרוּ הַעוֹבְרִים בְּרוּתָם זֶה: לֹא הִנִּיחַ נֵר חֲנֻכָּה.

אִבְל אִם הָיָה בְּרוּתָם אַחַת, מְדַלֵּיק בְּאַחַד מֵהֵן.

י"א אוֹרָם שְׂמֵדִילֵיקָן עֲלֵיו בְּתוֹךְ בֵּיתוֹ, אֲנֵנו צִרְיָן לְהַדְלִיק עֲלֵיו בְּמִקְוֹם  
שְׂמֵתְאָרְתָּ בּוֹ.

אֵיךְ לֹא בֵית לְהַדְלִיק עֲלֵיו בּוֹ, צִרְיָן לְהַדְלִיק בְּמִקְוֹם שְׂמֵתְאָרְתָּ בּוֹ, וּלְשִׁתְּתוֹרָן  
עִמְהֵן בְּשִׁמְוֹן.

[at another person's home, whose family] kindles [the Chanukah lights] for him at his home need not kindle [Chanukah lights] in the home where he is [temporarily] lodging. - This halachah clarifies the expression used by the Rambam at the beginning of this chapter, "The mizvah is that a... candle should be lit in each and every house."

This implies that the obligation of kindling Chanukah lights is associated with an individual's dwelling, as well as with his person. I.e., although as stated in Chapter 3, Halachah 4, the obligation to kindle Chanukah lamps is incumbent on each person, the mizvah is that every Jewish dwelling should be illuminated. Therefore, if Chanukah lamps are being kindled in one's dwelling, one has no further obligation regarding the mizvah even though one does not see those Chanukah lamps oneself.

The rationale for this decision is that the Chanukah candles were instituted for the purpose of *pirsumei nisa*. Thus, what is important is that the light of the Chanukah lamps is perceived by others.

Note the Ramah's decision (*Orach Chayim* 677:3) that if a person desires, he may light the Chanukah lamps in the place where he is staying. This is common practice in the Ashkenazic community at present.

The Ramah states that such a person may also recite the blessings. This ruling is not accepted by many other authorities, who suggest that he hear the blessings recited by another person (*Mishnah Berurah* 677:16).

If, however, he has no home in which [Chanukah lights] are being kindled - The *Turei Zahav* 677:1 states that a person must be certain that his wife is lighting the candles at home. If the possibility exists that she will not do so, one should kindle Chanukah lights and recite a blessing.

he is required to light in the place where he is lodging. - He need not, however, kindle his own Chanukah lamp.

He should share - He is not required to pay the cost of half the oil. It is sufficient for him to give a few pennies towards its cost (*Shabbat, loc. cit.; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 677:1).

In the oil [used by the owner of his lodgings]. - Similarly, two people sharing the same home who provide for their needs separately may share a single Chanukah lamp in this fashion (*Be'ur Halachah* 677).

If he is staying in a private dwelling, he is required to light in the place where he is staying, even though [Chanukah lights] are being kindled for him at home, because [of the impression created in the minds] of the passersby.

12. The mitzvah of kindling Chanukah lamps is very dear. A person should be very careful in its observance to publicize the miracle and thus increase our praise of God and our expression of thanks for the miracles which He wrought on our behalf. Even if a person has no resources for food except [what he receives] from charity, he should pawn or sell his garments and purchase oil and lamps to kindle them [in fulfillment of the mitzvah].<sup>2</sup>

13. When a person has only a single *prutah* and he [is required to fulfill both the mitzvot of] sanctifying the [Sabbath] day and lighting the Chanukah lamp, he should give precedence to purchasing oil to kindle the Chanukah lamp over [purchasing] wine to recite *kiddush*. Since both [of these mitzvot] are Rabbinic in origin, it is preferable to give precedence to the kindling of the Chanukah lamp, for it commemorates the miracle.

14. If [a person has the opportunity to fulfill only one of two mitzvot,] lighting a lamp for one's home [i.e., Sabbath candles] or lighting a Chanukah lamp - or, alternatively, lighting a lamp for one's home or

If he is staying in a private dwelling - more specifically, if the dwelling where he is staying has a private entrance (*Shulchan Aruch, loc. cit.*) he is required to light in the place where he is staying - This applies even when he eats together with another family and merely sleeps in his private dwelling.

even though [Chanukah lights] are being kindled for him at home - and thus, he would ordinarily have no obligation to kindle these lights

because [of the impression created in the minds] of the passersby. - As mentioned in the previous halachah, were passersby to see a Jewish house without the Chanukah lights having been kindled, the very opposite of *pirsumei nisa* will have been accomplished.

2. Although the Rambam's ruling is accepted by all authorities, the commentaries question the Rambam's source. The *Maggid Mishneh* explains that since in *Hilchot Chameitz UMatzah* 7:7 (based on *Pesachim* 10:1), the Rambam states that even a person who derives his income from charity should not drink less than four cups of wine on Pesach, we can conclude that the same concept applies with regard to Chanukah. Indeed, as explained in the following halachah, kindling Chanukah candles receives priority over the recitation of *Kiddush*.

The concept of selling or pawning one's clothes to perform a mitzvah is mentioned in *Megillah* 27b with regard to the mitzvah of *Kiddush*.

ואם היה לו בית בפני עצמו - אף על פי שפדליוקין עליו בתוך ביתו, צריך להקליל בפניו שיהא בו, מפני העובדיו.

יב מצות גר תנפה מצוה חביבה היא עד מאד, וצריך אדם להזהר בה, כדי להודיע הנס, ולהוסיף בשבח האל והודיה לו על הנסים שעשה לנו. אפילו אין לו מה יאכל אלא מן הצדקה, שואל או מוכר קסותו ולוקח שמן ונרות ומדליוקין.

יג גרי שאין לו אלא פרוטה אחת, ולפניו קדוש היום והלקת גר תנפה - מקדים לקנות שמן להדליוק גר תנפה על היין לקדוש היום;

הואל ושניהם מדברי סופרים, מוטב להקדים גר תנפה שיש בו זכרון הנס.

יד היה לפניו גר ביתו וגר תנפה, או גר ביתו וקדוש היום - גר ביתו קודם,

#### Commentary, Halachah 13

When a person has only a single *prutah* - A *prutah* is worth .05 gram of silver, approximately 5-10 cents in today's currency. It is a significant commentary on the inflation in food costs to note that either a cup of wine or a measure of oil could be purchased for that amount.

and he [is required to fulfill both the mitzvot of] sanctifying the [Sabbath] day - reciting *kiddush* and lighting the Chanukah lamp, he should give precedence to purchasing oil to kindle the Chanukah lamp over [purchasing] wine to recite *kiddush*. - In this instance, he should recite *kiddush* over bread, as stated in *Hilchot Shabbat* 29:9. If a person has the choice between purchasing bread for his Sabbath meal or oil for his Chanukah lamp, the bread is given priority (*Mishnah Berurah* 678:4).

Since both [of these mitzvot] are Rabbinic in origin - There is a Biblical commandment to "Remember the Sabbath to sanctify it" (Exodus 20:8). This commandment, however, involves merely making a statement of the day's holiness; the concept of associating the *kiddush* with wine is Rabbinic in origin (*Hilchot Shabbat* 29:1.6).

it is preferable to give precedence to the kindling of the Chanukah lamp, for it commemorates the miracle - fulfilling the purpose of *pirsumei nisa*.

#### Commentary, Halachah 14

If [a person has the opportunity to fulfill only one of two mitzvot,] lighting a lamp for one's home [i.e., Sabbath candles] - Perhaps the Rambam uses the expression "lighting a lamp for one's home," rather than the expression "the Sabbath lamp" to emphasize that the focus is on how the Sabbath lamp leads to peace in the home. or lighting a Chanukah lamp - or, alternatively, lighting a lamp for one's home

recting *kiddush* - the lamp for one's home receives priority, since it generates peace within the home.

[Peace is of primary importance, as reflected by the mitzvah requiring] God's name to be blotted out to create peace between a husband and his wife. Peace is great, for the entire Torah was given to bring about peace within the world, as [Proverbs 3:17] states: "Its ways are pleasant ways and all its paths are peace."

or recting *kiddush* - It is questionable why the Rambam mentions the latter law in *Hilchot Chanukah* when both the mitzvot concerned relate to the Sabbath. Although *Shabbat* 23b, the source for this halachah, refers to the two items mentioned in this halachah together, there is no necessity for the Rambam to do so. On the contrary, the Rambam structured the *Mishneh Torah* subject by subject. Seemingly, it would have been proper for him to mention this law in *Hilchot Shabbat*. [Indeed, the *Tur* and the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 263:3) mention this law in connection with the laws of the Sabbath as well.]

By structuring his text in this manner, however, the Rambam indicates that the priority of kindling Sabbath candles stems not from a particular law associated with the Sabbath, but rather from a general principle - the importance of peace - which relates to the entire Torah as a whole (*Likkutei Sichot*, Vol. XV).

the lamp for one's home receives priority, since it generates peace within the home. - *Shabbat* 23b associates the Sabbath candles with peace, explaining that they prevent the members of the household from stumbling over obstacles, and also allow them to avoid the discomfort of sitting in darkness.

Significantly, in *Hilchot Shabbat* 5:1, the Rambam mentions that the Sabbath candles contribute to the atmosphere of *oneg Shabbat*, Sabbath pleasure. Similarly, in *Hilchot Shabbat* 30:5, he mentions them as being associated with activities carried out in honor of the Sabbath (*k'vod Shabbat*). In the laws of the Sabbath itself, the Rambam does not mention the connection between the Sabbath candles and peace within the home. This relates to the concept mentioned previously, that the peace generated by the Sabbath candles relates to the Torah as a whole and not to the Sabbath in particular (*Likkutei Sichot*, *loc. cit.*).

[Peace is of primary importance, as reflected by the mitzvah requiring] God's name to be blotted out - As mentioned in *Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah*, Chapter 6, blotting out

מאשים שלום בית;  
 שרתו השם נזקק לעשות שלום בין איש לאשתו.  
 גדול השלום, שכל התורה נתנה לעשות שלום בעולם. שנאמר: דרךיה  
 דרכי נעם, וכל נתיבותיה שלום.

God's name is a severe matter and constitutes a Torah prohibition. Nevertheless, this prohibition is waived

to create peace between a husband and his wife. - The Rambam is referring to the process of testing a *sotah*, a woman suspected of committing adultery. A curse against her containing God's name is written on a scroll. The text is rubbed out in water, and the water is given to the woman to drink. If she indeed committed adultery, she will die. (See Numbers 5:11-31; *Hilchot Sotah* 3:8-10.)

Peace is great, for the entire Torah was given - The Rambam's choice of wording is extremely precise. The Torah does not exist for the world. On the contrary, *Shabbat* 88b relates that the Torah existed even before the world came into being. I.e., the Torah represents spiritual truths that transcend our material existence. Nevertheless, the Torah "was given," drawn down into the context of our material frame of reference for a purpose.

to bring about peace within the world, as [Proverbs 3:17] states: "Its ways are pleasant ways and all its paths are peace" - This concept shares an intrinsic connection to Chanukah (and is therefore chosen as the conclusion for *Hilchot Chanukah*), because the Chanukah candles are intended for the purpose of *pirsumei nisa*. They project the light of Torah into the world at large and make the world conscious of its Godly purpose. The spreading of the awareness of Godliness is associated with peace, as reflected by the Rambam's statements at the conclusion of the *Mishneh Torah*:

In that era (the Era of the Redemption), there will be... neither envy nor competition.... The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know God.... "For the world will be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the ocean bed."

May we merit the coming of that era in the immediate future.

3. The standard printed text of the *Mishneh Torah* also contains the line "And this concludes the first part [of the work]." We have omitted this line, for nowhere else is a division of the *Mishneh Torah* into parts mentioned.

THE ORIGINS OF THE  
FESTIVAL OF HANUKKAH  
THE JEWISH NEW-AGE FESTIVAL

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indeed strange had those aspects of Iranian fire-theology, associated with the rites of religion and more popularly conspicuous, made less impression on Judaism than did the Iranian conception of fire as agent of world-judgment on Jewish eschatological thought.

It may be assumed that in explaining the light-symbol of Hanukkah by the sacred fire which instituted the cultus, the author of 2 M. had actually in view the practice of hanging lamps at the house-doors (Baba Qamma vi. 6; cf. Seholion to Meg. Ta'an. ix.) on Hanukkah, and that the sacred fire is for him commemorated by the lamp. That the festival in his day was celebrated altogether as Booths, and by illumination of the women's court of the temple, we shall have occasion to show later is not admissible. From the point of view that 2 M. interprets the lamp, if we suppose that the lighting of lamps was connected from the beginning with the above-named incident at the Hanukkah of the House, the explanation given is one which may not be without support of analogy. In Ex. xxxv. 3 (P) there is given the command, "You shall not kindle fire in all your dwellings on the Sabbath-day." G. Beer has suggested, with some consent, that this ordinance derives from the Persian custom of allowing no lights or fires in private dwellings on certain festivals, but only in the temple, and that the custom of kindling the Sabbath-lamp on the evening before the Sabbath, while meeting the prohibition of Sabbath-work, exhibits direct or indirect influence from the

Feuer und Metall lediglich ein Gleichnis und es handelt sich um die Ausscheidung des Edelmetalls aus den Schlacken; bei Daniel dagegen ist die Schilderung durchaus nicht symbolisch gemeint, sondern der Feuerstrom—die lodernen Räder—sind eben so real wie der Uralt. "Das Weltgericht vollzieht sich wie bei Zoroaster durch einen gewaltigen Feuerstrom."

Persian practice.<sup>1</sup> A picture of Judaism in Babylonia under the Sassanid dynasty, when Zoroastrianism, after a decline under the Parthians, blossomed again into new life, is commentary on the Persian rite, which Beer conjectures had already left its mark upon Jewish custom at an earlier period. The Magian priests (*Magabads*) "on certain festival-days on which the light was worshipped as the visible image of Ahura, suffered no fire to be on the hearth, no light in the room. On such days the *Maubads* forced their way into the Jewish houses, extinguished the fire, and took in their sacred fire-pans the glowing coals, in order to present them as offerings in the fire-temple" (Kohut, *Über die jüdische Angelologie und Demonologie*, *usw.*, p. 12). The common fire was thus purified by being brought to the general place of fire and "united" with the sacred fire there. In these later days of persecution we have the rite, which forbade fire and light in private dwellings on certain days, practised on the soil from which, if Beer's conjecture be accepted, long before, under the peaceful Persian dominion, some influence of it had spread to Judaism. The Sabbath-lamp is held to be of early Pharisæic origin (*Jewish Ency.*, vol. vii.; Lamp, Sabbath). If it be a custom which can be

<sup>1</sup> G. Beer, *Der Mäschtractat "Sabbat"*, Tübingen, 1908, to Sab. ii. 1 f. pp. 46, 60: "Das Verbot Licht anzuzünden am Sabbat, wird meist nur als eine Konsequenz aus dem Verbot aller Arbeit am Sabbat (Ex. xx. 10; Lev. xxiii. 8) angesehen. Aber kommt man mit dieser Auskunft ganz aus? Kabe, und so auch Sammer, sagt nach Rasethi zu Schab. ii. 5, dass die Perser an gewissen Festen in keinem andern Hause als dem Tempel Licht zu brennen dulden. *Liegt hier eine bloss Parallele vor?* . . . Ist nicht möglich, dass unter dem Einfluss des persischen Brauchs der jüdische entstand, dessen Ausübung dann das Verbot der Sabbatarbeit entgegenkam?" p. 50. "Sollte nicht das Illuminieren am Sabbat, am Versöhnungstag und am Tempelweihfest auf mittelbaren oder unmittelbaren persischen Einfluss weisen?" Cf. Novack *Traktat-Sabbath*, Sab. ii. 6, p. 42. Max Haller, "Das Judentum" (*Sch. d. A.F.*, 1914), p. 198, thinks that the Persian rite "sehr wohl auf die jüdische Feastsitte abgefarbt haben kann."





question, "Why do they light lamps?" Hochfeld (*Z.A.W.*, *ut sup.*, p. 273 f.), who substantially agrees with Krauss in his theory of the customs of Hanukkah being subject to development, believes that the story of the seven spears contains the same trace of later reflection and of motive as is discernible in the oil-miracle of Sab. 21, b. Men of blood and warfare could not touch the lamp-stand with their hands. They lit the lamps with long spears and thus rendered the act clean; or the lamp-stand itself was regarded, as yet, as unclean, and spears were used instead. Though the tradition itself contains nothing miraculous, on any element of historical truth it may have we cannot venture to found. From a religious-historical standpoint it is less valuable than that of Sab. 21, b.

Inquiry into the origin and meaning of the lights of Hanukkah is thus cast back upon the earliest documents which record the festival (1 and 2 M.). It is therefore necessary to deal here with the theory of Krauss that the custom of lighting lamps at Hanukkah is reflected neither in 1 nor 2 M., but was a practice which arose in the time of Herod, and at that period was engrafted on the festival previously celebrated in the manner of Booths (2 M. i. 9). The first evidences for the lamp, he sees in the discussions of the schools of Shammai and Hillel on the question of diminishing or increasing the number of lamps as the days of the festival took their course (Sab. 21, b.; cf. Goldschmidt, *Talm.*, p. 365), the *φῶτα* of Josephus, and the reference in Baba Qamma, vi. 6. These belong to the time after Herod. In the days of this king, the festival of Hanukkah, which, as 2 M. (x. 6) records, was held as compensating for the interruption of Booths in the Maccabean revolution, had long lost, in this aspect, its inner necessity. As a commemoration of the restoration of the temple,

it was further deprived of meaning by the raising of the splendid and magnificent temple of Herod. The *political* significance of Hanukkah as recalling the heroic deeds of the Hasimoneans had to be kept in the background by the king as it might offend the Romans. Herod was a friend of the Romans, and he himself did not like the Hasimoneans to be talked of. At this juncture and in these circumstances, the scribes struck upon a plan of perpetuating in silence the memory of their Maccabean rulers. They instituted the custom of lighting lamps. The wars and the struggle for freedom which the Maccabees had waged, thus passed "à l'arrière-plan," and the *religious* significance of the festival was emphasized. Herod had no objection to this. And thus from the old Hanukkah there was born a new festival, and as this was established in the time of Herod, people could speak of it as the "festival of Herod."<sup>1</sup> The incident of the spears would supply to the new custom of lamps the foundation needed for popular acceptance.

In behalf of these contentions and of the belief that the festival in its new guise received the name "festival of Herod," Krauss seeks to find support in the lines of the Roman satirist, Persius (*Sat.* v. 179-184), who there speaks of the "days of Herod": "But when the days of Herod come round and the lamps wreathed with violets and set at the greasy windows have spat out their heavy vapour, when the

<sup>1</sup> R.E.J., tome xxx. 1896, p. 36 f.: "Probablement que les docteurs d'alors, par opposition contre le roi et pour honorer la glorieuse époque asmonéenne, se virent amenés à établir une fête spéciale qui perpétuât en silence, et par cela même d'une façon plus sûre, le souvenir des Asmonéens. À cet effet, ils proclamèrent Hanukkah fête des lumières, faisant ainsi passer les guerres et les luttes à l'arrière-plan et marquant d'avantage la signification religieuse. Hérodote ne pouvait pas faire d'objection à une pareille fête. De l'ancien Hanouca est sortie une fête nouvelle, et comme cette institution nouvelle s'est établie au temps d'Hérodote, on a pu lui donner le nom de fête d'Hérodote."

tail of the tunny overlapping the red dish floats in its sauce and the white jar brims with wine, you move your lips in silence and grow pale over the circumcised sabbath."<sup>1</sup> This reference to the "Herodis dies" and the lamps, Krauss holds, implies the festival of Hanukkah. In this he is in agreement with Derenbourg who, however, thought the poet wrote under a misconception "days of Herod" instead of "Hasmonean days."<sup>2</sup> The construction which Krauss has built up is not without strength in several of its elements. The scheme of the doctors of the law may have been within the scope of their authority and rendered necessary by changed conditions. That the thought of Hanukkah as a festival of compensation for the interruption of Booths more than a century before, if ever strong, would fade, and that the new temple of Herod might cast a shadow upon the memories of the former temple, must be granted. But that the lights of Hanukkah date only from the days of Herod and under such conditions and owing to such motives as Krauss supposes, is far more than improbable. 2 M., with its zeal for the celebration of the days of "Booths and of the Fire," its painstaking descriptions of the different occasions this sacred fire appeared, the Biblical and traditional examples of the fire emerging, convinces us that the author knew of Hanukkah as a

<sup>1</sup> Persius, *Sat.* 179-184:

"At quum

Herodis venere dies uncta<sup>que</sup> fenestra  
 Dispositae pinguem nebulam vomuere lucernae  
 Porcantes violae, rubrumque amplexa catinum  
 Cauda natat thynni, fumet alba fidelia vino:  
 Labra mores tacitus recitata<sup>que</sup> sabbata palles."

<sup>2</sup> *Essai sur l'Histoire, etc.*, p. 164: "Persius, *Sat.* v. 180 et suiv. parle d'une fête célébrée par les Juifs sous le nom de *Herodis dies* mais toute le contexte montre qu'il s'agit dans ces vers des jours de Hanoucca (voy. p. 62) et que le poète romain a mis à la place des Asmonéens, Hérode, nom répandu et connu à Rome."

festival with two marked characteristics. One was similarity to the festival of Booths; and the other, in which Hanukkah was apparently distinguished from Booths and the illuminations of Booths, required interpretation by reference to the sacred fire. The two aspects of the festival are given each a religious foundation by 2 M. It is not difficult to see which feature of the festival is the more prominent in the view of the Epitomist. Both belong to the *ἐπέμνεα* of Hanukkah as celebrated in his day, as he desires them to be celebrated by the Jews in Egypt, and as he represents them as having had the signature of the senate and Judas (i. 10b f.). The author shows he knows of a light-symbol distinct from that of Booths. The theory of Krauss might gain more substance by resort to a literary criticism of 2 M. which placed that book later than the days in which the doctors of the law met and conceived their scheme. But this he does not undertake.

Further, the design of the scribes in the time of Herod, partly in opposition to the king (*par opposition contre le roi*) and partly meeting his and the Romans' wishes, to cause the political implications of the Hasmonean period to be forgotten, yet to establish its remembrance silently but the more certainly, seems subtle but is strikingly ill-conceived. To light up Jewish cities in Palestine and the Ghettos of the diaspora with lamps on the Hanukkah-days, so that the Gentile satirist, as Krauss believes, had his attention drawn to the fact, and chose it among all the other marks of Judaism as target for his satire, was hardly a method that would deceive Herod or the Romans. This *silent* commemoration of the Hasmonians would be most eloquent. Jewish tradition itself speaks of the Emperor Trajan's wrath being directed against the Jews because of the

this surname is shrouded in uncertainty. The Hebrew original source has been lost; the earliest extant record is the Greek *Makabaios*, which has been transliterated into Hebrew. Maccabee may be derived from the Hebrew word meaning "hammer," equating Judah with its great strength. Dr. Zeitlin maintains that the Hebrew *makkaba*, literally "hammerhead," was applied to Judah because of the shape of his skull, claiming that it was a common practice in the Hellenistic world to name men according to physical characteristics.<sup>4</sup>

It has been claimed that the family name of the Maccabean dynasty is Hasmonean. According to Josephus, Mattathias's great-grandfather was named Hashmon, meaning rich, prince, or noble.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps it derives from a geographical locale (Joshua 15:27).<sup>6</sup> Others maintain that Hasmonean was applied to Mattathias because he was a priest or a "prince," as were his descendants.<sup>7</sup>

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### A Glaring Omission

While the author of I Maccabees reveals a deep devotion to Jewish laws and ideals, the words "God" and "Lord" are conspicuously missing, although the divine Presence pervades the volume. This avoidance appears to have been deliberate on the part of the author.<sup>8</sup>

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### The Eight-Day Miracle

ELIYAHU KITOV

Why do we observe Hanukkah for eight days, since the miracle of the oil occurred only for seven days, there having originally been sufficient oil for one day? Many of the great scholars have offered a variety of answers. The following are some of their explanations:

1. The first day of the festival commemorates the miracle of the military victory. "On the twenty-fifth of Kislev the Jews rested from battle with their enemies." They therefore celebrated the day, just as Purim celebrates the day when the Jews "rested from their enemies." The remaining seven days commemorate the miracle of the oil.

2. The very discovery of the one remaining jar of pure oil that was marked with the high priest's seal was itself a miracle.

3. The discovered oil was divided into eight portions to last the eight days required for the production of new oil. Till then the menorah was to be lit for at least a brief hour every evening. Miraculously, the minute measure of oil poured into the menorah each evening burned the entire day.

4. After the menorah was filled with all the available oil, the jar remained full as before.

5. All the oil was emptied into the menorah, but after the lamps had burned all night, they were found next morning still filled with oil.

6. The Greeks prohibited circumcision; this decree was the harshest of all the decrees they issued, its aim being to annul the covenant between God and Israel. When the Hasmoneans prevailed against their enemies, they rejoiced over the renewal of the covenant of circumcision, which is set for the eighth day in a child's life.

7. The first night they made thin wicks, which could only draw a minute measure of oil; they also apportioned the oil itself, of which they poured only a little into the menorah. Miraculously, the lamps burned in full light all night, and the same occurred every remaining night.

8. The jar itself absorbed some of the oil so that there did not remain even sufficient oil for one day.

9. The Greeks wanted to uproot faith in divine Providence from the Jewish heart. They wanted to implant the belief that the events of nature occur only in accord with mechanical laws. Many Jews inclined to their views. Events, however, convinced them that all existence reflected divine Providence; that even when the world functioned in accord with natural law, it still remained totally depen-

ent on the hand of God and His providence. From the miracle they understood that the natural function of oil is also a miracle.

10. The very fact that they did not despair from lighting the lamps on the first day, despite the knowledge that they would be unable on the morrow to fulfill the Torah's command to light "a perpetual lamp," was in itself a great miracle; a miracle which enables the people of Israel to endure through all generations and every exile. And they always tried to surmise what the future held in store for them, they would long since have lost the capacity to survive. The people of Israel have, however, placed their trust in God, and they have rejoiced whenever they were given the opportunity to abide by His word.

Translated by Nathan Bulman<sup>9</sup>



### *Candlelighting in Daylight*

In Jerusalem it is customary to kindle the Hanukkah lamp in the synagogue not only in the evenings but also in the mornings when the recital of the blessings is omitted. Two rationales are advanced for this practice: first, lighting the lamp in the morning when lights are not needed adds emphasis to the commemoration of the miracle; second, it aids those who were unable to kindle the lamp on the previous evening to know the number of lights required on the following evening.<sup>10</sup>

Among the laws of Hanukkah prepared for soldiers by Israel's Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren when he was chief chaplain of the Israel Defense Force, we find the following. Soldiers in fortified positions and in the front lines, fearing that the enemy will spy on them if they kindle the Hanukkah lights at night, should light them half hour before sunset and extinguish them immediately after sunset. If this is not possible, they should feel as though they are fulfilling the commandment through the candles being lit at their military base.<sup>11</sup>

Goodman, Philip. *The Hanukkah Anthology*, Jewish Publication Society, 1976.



on its site. The anniversary of their death, or, according to some sources, the spiritual "Birthday of the Maccabees," was fixed on the first day of August and was denominated by the early Christians as *Commemoratio Sanctorum Macchabaeorum Martyrum*, Commemoration of the Sainted Maccabean Martyrs. In church usage the "birthday" of a saint meant commemoration. While the August 1 date is listed in the oldest ecclesiastical calendar (702-6), the commemoration is no longer observed.

In the sixth century, when Antioch was destroyed by an earthquake, the marble casket was removed and eventually was taken to Rome and, on orders of the pope, lodged in San Pietro in Vincoli. With the passing of many generations, the Maccabean coffin was forgotten. In 1876, during excavations under the steps of the church's entrance, the casket was uncovered and identified by Cardinal Rampolla and others as that of Hannah's seven sons. The cardinal later wrote a book on this subject, published in 1899 in a French translation, entitled *Martyre et sépulture des Macchabées*.

According to Jewish tradition, Hannah and her sons are buried near Safed at a place called Kerem.<sup>21</sup>



## Zot Hanukkah

The eighth and last day of Hanukkah is called *Zot Hanukkah* (This Is the Dedication). It alludes to this day's scriptural portion dealing with the dedication of the Tabernacle, which states: "This was the dedication offering for the altar" (Numbers 7:84). Great rejoicing was customary on this day, as on Simhat Torah, the last day of Sukkot. Eating elaborate meals, narrating legends of Jewish heroes, and playing games were included in the day's gaiety. In some communities the eighth day was dedicated to Judith; the women would read in Old Yiddish the story of this heroine in *Zos Hanukkah Bikkhel* by Elhanan ben Issachar (Frankfort on the Main, 1712).<sup>22</sup>



## Hanukkah and Sukkot

The author of 2 Maccabees underscores the similarity between Hanukkah and Sukkot. It might even be interpreted as equating Hanukkah with Sukkot. Following the account of the cleansing of the Temple by the Maccabees, we read: "They celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing in the manner of the Feast of Tabernacles, mindful of how but a little while before at the festival of Tabernacles they had been wandering about like wild beasts in the mountains and caves. That is why, bearing thyrsi and graceful branches and also palm leaves, they offered up hymns to Him who had given them success in purifying His own place of worship" (2 Maccabees 10:6-7). These verses seem to intimate that the Maccabees, embattled against their enemies, were unable to observe Sukkot in the traditional manner. When Jerusalem was liberated their first thought was to observe the festival of Sukkot to compensate for their failure to do so at the appointed season. Eager to have other Jews join in the celebration, they dispatched letters to Egypt to advise the Jews of their decision: "Now [we write] urging you to keep the days of the feast like the Feast of Tabernacles in the month of Kislev. . . . We are now about to celebrate the purification of the Temple, on the twenty-fifth day of Kislev. We thought it only right to tell you, so that you too may celebrate [these days] like the Feast of Tabernacles" (2 Maccabees 1:9, 18).<sup>23</sup>

38. Israeli stamps with Hanukkah lamps.



**CHANUKAH ACTIVITY #4**

# 18 HOME SERVICE FOR HANUKKAH

Goodman, Philip. *The Hanukkah Anthology*, Jewish  
Publication Society, 1976.



## *The Blessings on Kindling the Lights\**

The major ritual for Hanukkah is the kindling of the lights. This is performed soon after nightfall. On Friday it precedes the kindling of the Sabbath candles.

The *shammash* candle is lit and used to kindle the other candles. One candle, set in the extreme right candle-holder, is lit on the first night of Hanukkah. On each succeeding night another candle is added to the left until eight candles are lit on the eighth night. The kindling is from left to right. The same procedure is followed if oil and wicks are used.

The following two blessings are chanted each night before kindling the lights:

\*Music for the service will be found in the chapter "Music for Hanukkah."

Activity Four

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה.  
ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, ששפה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

"Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us with Thy commandments and hast commanded us to kindle the Hanukkah light.

"Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who didst perform miracles for our fathers in those days at this season."

The following blessing is chanted only on the first night:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שנתתנו וקדשנו וצונו להדליק נרות.

"Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast granted us life, and sustained us, and brought us to this season."



"Hanerot Hallalu"—These Lights

After kindling the first light, the following passage is read or chanted:

הנרות הללו אמתנו קדוילקים על הנסים ועל התפלאות ועל המשניות ועל תפלתנו ששפית לאבותינו בימים ההם, בזמן הזה, על גוי פגועה תקדושים, וכל שמונת ימי חנוכה, הנרות הללו קדושים ואין להן רשות להשתמש בהם אלא לראותם בלבד, כדי להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול על נסותך ועל ישועתך ועל נפילת אוהבך.

"We kindle these lights to commemorate the miracles and the wonders, and the victorious battles that Thou achieved for our fathers in those days, at this season, through Thy holy priests. During all the eight days of Hanukkah these lights are sacred, and we are not permitted to make use of them; but we are only to look at them, in order to give thanks and to praise Thy Name for Thy miracles, Thy wonders, and Thy salvations."

"Maaz Tzur"—Rock of Ages

"Maaz Tzur" (Rock of Ages) is one of the most popular hymns sung by Ashkenazic Jews. It is generally accepted that it was written in the thirteenth century by someone named Mordecai. We derive his name from an acrostic of the first letters of the first five stanzas. This hymn praises God for Israel's redemption from Egyptian slavery and from the Babylonian exile; for saving the Persian Jews from Haman's plot of extermination, and for the triumph over Antiochus Epiphanes. Finally, it expresses the hope that those nations guilty of persecuting Jews will be avenged and Israel will be redeemed from exile. The last stanza, attributed to another author, was frequently omitted from prayer books "for the sake of peace" with the nations among whom Jews dwell. The origin of the melody is a medieval German folk song; however, the stirring tune underwent changes in the course of time. The singing of this hymn concludes the candlelighting ceremony.

The English version by Solomon Solis-Cohen is a free translation that attempts to adhere to the rhyme scheme and spirit of the original Hebrew while retaining the basic ideas. Another singable English translation will be found in the chapter "Music of Hanukkah."

קדושה צדק ישועתי  
לך נאה לשבת  
חכמת בריה תפלתך  
ושם חזקתה נובח  
לעת תפיד מלכות  
קוצר המלכות  
או אגמור בשיר קומור  
חנכה חנוכה.  
ך עזות שבעה נפשי  
ביטול שתי כלה  
חיי מרדך בקדשי  
פושעבור מלכותה עצלה  
וגדודו הנודל לה  
הוציאה את-זמנולה  
חיל פלענה רכל-ורעו  
יודו כאמן מאולה.  
ך ברי קדושו הגבאי  
נתם שם לא שקדתי  
וגבא נגש והמלי  
כי וימים עבודתי  
חייך ועל קסבתי  
כמעט שבעברתי  
קדו כמבל ורפבל  
לקדו שבעים ושלעתי.  
ך רח קומת ברדח בקדש  
אגתי כן המדבא  
ונתתה לוי קדש דלמנאש  
ונתתה ושלבתה

ראש ימינו נשאנו האויב שמו מוקח  
 רב בנינו ונאננו על-העז תליתי.  
 יגנים נקבצנו עלי איו בימי השמינים  
 ופרצו חומות מגדלי ושאנו כל השבנים  
 ומוותר קנאנים נעשה גם לשושנים.  
 בני ביתה ימי שבנה קבעו שיר ורננים.  
 ת שורף ורוע קדשך הקרב יום השועה  
 נקום נקמת צדדיך מפלבותה קדשעה  
 כי ארבה השעה האין רצ לימי רעה  
 דחה אדמוח בצל צלמון הקום לנו רועים שבנה.

Mighty, praised beyond compare,  
 Rock of my salvation,  
 Build again my house of prayer,  
 For Thy habitation!  
 Offering and libation, shall a ransomed nation  
 Joyful bring  
 There, and sing  
 Psalms of dedication!  
 Woe was mine in Egypt-land,  
 (Tyrant kings enslaved me);  
 Till Thy mighty, outstretched hand  
 From oppression saved me.  
 Pharaoh, rash pursuing, vowed my swift undoing;  
 Soon, his host  
 That proud boast  
 'Neath the waves was ruing!  
 To Thy holy hill, the way  
 Madest Thou clear before me;  
 With false gods I went astray—  
 Foes to exile bore me.  
 Torn from all I cherished, almost had I perished;  
 Babylon fell,  
 Ze-rub-ba-bel  
 Badest Thou restore me!  
 Then the vengeful Haman wrought  
 Subtly, to betray me;

In his snare himself he caught—  
 He that plann'd to slay me.  
 (Haled from Esther's palace; hanged on his own gallows!)  
 Seal and ring  
 Persia's king  
 Gave Thy servant zealous.  
 When the brave Asmonéans broke  
 Javan's chain in sunder,  
 Through the holy oil Thy folk  
 Didst Thou show a wonder.  
 Ever full remainèd the vessel unprofanèd;  
 These eight days.  
 Light and praise,  
 Therefore were ordained.  
 Lord, Thy holy arm make bare,  
 Speed my restoration;  
 Be my martyr's blood Thy care—  
 Judge each guilty nation.  
 Long is my probation; sore my tribulation—  
 Bid, from heaven,  
 Thy shepherds seven  
 Hasten to my salvation!  
 Translated by Solomon Solis-Cohen\*

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### Al ha-Nissim—For the Miracles

In the Grace after Meals as well as in the *Amidah* (the Eighteen Benedictions, recited silently while standing) an additional prayer is recited throughout the eight days of Hanukkah.<sup>5</sup> It is a psalm of thanksgiving for divine intervention and deliverance from the enemy. Epitomizing the Maccabean struggle, it emphasizes the spiritual over the military aspect. While an abbreviated text of *Al*

*ha-Missim* is in the Talmud,<sup>6</sup> the current version is first found in the prayer book of Rav Amram Gaon, head of the academy in Sura, Babylonia, in the ninth century.

על הנסים ועל המצות ועל הגבורות ועל התפלות ועל המלכות שציינת  
לאבותינו בנימי חתם פזמן חנה.

בימי מתקרתה פן יחתן פתח גדול תשמעו בני פשמעדה מלכות הן שצעה  
על עמך ישראל להשיחם מורמם ולהעבירם מחרץ רצונך. ואפה בדתך  
הרבם עמך להם פעת צרתם. רבף את ריבם ורף את ריבם, נקמף את  
נקמתם, מפרת גבורים בנד חלשים ורבים בנד מעטים וטמאים בנד טהורים  
ורשיעים בנד צדיקים ונורים בנד עוסקי תורתך ולי עשית שם גדול וקדוש  
פועלך ואל עמך ואל עשית תשיעה גדולה ופרקן פהיום חנה. ואחר פן פאז  
בנדך לרביר פירמך ופפ את הילכך וטהרר את מקדשך והדליקו נרות פתערת  
קדשך. נקבעו שמונת ימי תנפת אליו להודות ולהלל לשכך הגדול.

We thank Thee for the miracles, the redemptions, the mighty deeds and the victorious battles that Thou achieved for our fathers in those days at this season.

It was in the days of Mattathias, son of Johanan, the Hasmonean high priest, and his sons, when the wicked Greek government rose up against Thy people Israel to force them to forsake Thy Torah and to transgress the laws of Thy will. Thou in Thy abundant mercy didst stand up for them in their time of travail, defended their cause, judged their suit, and avenged their wrong. Thou didst deliver the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked ones into the hands of the righteous, and the insolent ones into the hands of those occupied with Thy Torah. Thou didst make for Thyself a great and holy name in Thy universe. For Thy people Israel Thou didst create a great deliverance and relief as at this day. Then Thy children came to the holy of holies of Thy house, cleansed Thy Temple and purified Thy sanctuary. They kindled lights in the courtyards of Thy sanctuary and established these eight days of Hanukkah to give thanks and praise to Thy great Name.



*Hamerot Hallalu*

We kindle these sacred lights in remembrance of the miracles, the wonders, and salvations wrought by God.

Liturgy

Harry Coopersmith

With martial spirit



*Maot Tzur: Rock of Ages*

This famous anthem celebrates the end of tyranny and the emergence of freedom.

Hebrew verse: Mordecai Ben Isaac  
English verse: Gustav Gottheil and M. Jastrow

Traditional

Marcato

2. Ye-va-nim nik-be-tzu a-lai  
 A-zai bi-me Hash-ma-nim,  
 U-far-tzu ho-mot mig-da-lai  
 Ve-tim-u kal hash-ma-nim.
- U-mi-no-tar kan-ka-nim,  
 Na-a-sah nes le-sho-sha-nim.  
 Bene vi-nah ye-me  
 she-mo-nah  
 Kav-u shir ur-na-nim.
2. Kindling new the holy lamps,  
 Priest approved in suffering,  
 Purified the nation's shrine,  
 Brought to God their  
 offering.  
 And His courts surrounding  
 Hear, in joy abounding,  
 Happy throngs  
 Singing songs,  
 With a mighty sounding.
3. Children of the martyr-race,  
 Whether free or fettered,  
 Wake the echoes of the  
 songs,  
 Where ye may be scattered.  
 Yours the message cheering  
 That the time is nearing  
 Which will see  
 All men free,  
 Tyrants disappearing.



## Al ha-Nissim

A psalm of thanksgiving for divine intervention and deliverance from the enemy.

Liturgy

Arr. by Harry Coopersmith

Al ha-ni-sim ve-al ha-pur-kah, ve-al bag-yu-rot, ve-al hat'-shu-ot  
 she-a-si-ta la-a-vo-te-mi, la-a-vo-te-mi ba-ya-mim ha-be-ma-  
 zo-man-ha-ze. Bi'ys-me Ma-tit-ya-lu, Ma-tit-  
 ya-lu ben Yo-ha-nan ko-lan ga-dol. Hash-mo-  
 ni-sim Yis-ra-el, al am-kha Yis-ra-el. le-hash-ki-lan To-ra-  
 te kha, ul-ha'a-vi-ran me-lu-ke-re-tzo-ne-kha.  
 Ve-a-tah be-ra-ja-me-kha, be-ra-ja-me-kha ha-ra-bitm. a-ma-de-  
 ta la-be-m be-et tsa-ra-tam. be-ra-ja-me-kha ha-ra-bitm.

*Fine*

*D.C.*

*D.C. al Fine*



**Mi Yemalel?\*: Who Can Retell?**

Hebrew verse: Menashe Ravina  
 English verse: Ben M. Edidin  
 Adapted by Menashe Ravina

Folk song

Mi ye-ma-lel gi'vu rot Yis-ra-el? O - tan ml ylm - neh?  
 Who can re-tell the things that be-fell us? Who can count them?

Hen be-khol dor ya - kum ha-gi-bor go - el ha - am.  
 In ev-'ry age, a he - ro or sage came to our aid!

Sh'mal Ba - ya - mim ha - ben ba-z'man ha - zeh, Brevé  
 Hark! In days of yore, in Is-r'ael's an-cient land,

Ma - ka - bi mo - shi - a u - fo - deh,  
 Mac - ca - be - us led the faith - ful Band. But

u - v'ya - me - du kol am Yis - ra - el.  
 Now all Is - rael must as one a - rise. Re -

yt - a - ved ya - kum le - hi - ga - el.  
 deem it - self thru deed and sac - ri - fice.

\* This may be sung as a round. Second voice starts at [1] from the beginning.



**Hanukkah\***

Hanukkah is a beautiful holiday: light is all around, the dreidel spins, and there are lakes in every home—so sing and dance.

Levin Kipnis

Folk song  
 Arr. by Samuel E. Goldfarb

Ha - nu - kah, Ha - nu - kah, Hag ya - fah kol kakh, Or ya - viv

ml - sa - viv, gil le - ye - led rakh, Ha - nu - kah, Ha - nu - kah,

se-vi-yon boy, boy, boy, boy, boy, boy, ma na - lam va - tov.

2. Ha-nu-kah, Ha-nu-kah, en ha-lon be'li esh,  
 Le-vi-vot, mig-da-not, be-khol ba-yit yesh.  
 Ha-nu-kah, Ha-nu-kah, hag ha-viv me-od.  
 Shi-ru na, zam-ru na, u-tze-u hir-kod.

**Hanukah First Blessing**



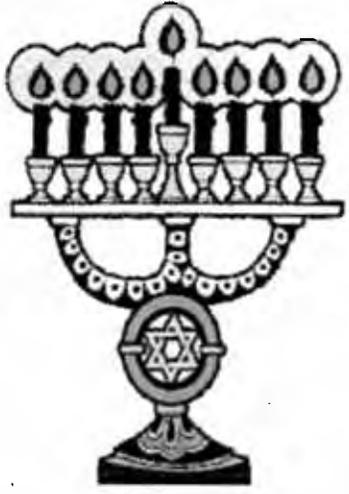
ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,  
אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו להדליק  
נר של חנוכה.

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohenu melech ha-olam  
asher kideshanu be-mitzvotav, ve-tzivanu le-hadlik  
ner shel Hanukah.

Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, King of the Universe,  
Who sanctified us by his commandments, and has  
commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukah.

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**Hanukah Second Blessing**



ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,  
שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם  
בזמן הזה.

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohenu melech ha-olam  
she-asa nisim la-avotenu ba-yamim ha-hem  
ba-zeman ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, King of  
the Universe, Who wrought miracles  
for our fathers in days of old, at this season.

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**Hanukah Third Blessing**



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
שְׁחַתְּנוּנוּ, וְקִיַּמְנוּ, וְהַגִּיעַנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam  
she-hecheyanu, ve-kiyemanu, ve-higiyanu  
la-zeman ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, King of the  
Universe, Who has kept us alive, and has  
preserved us, and enabled us to reach  
this season.

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## **Unit Four: Pesach**

- *Zeman Cherutenu*, the Season of our Liberation
- *Chag Haaviv*, the Spring Festival
- *Chag Hamatzot*, the Festival of Unleavened Bread
- *Chag Hapesach*, the Festival of the Paschal Lamb.

**Unit Goal:** To enrich the observance of the Passover Seder and the mitzvot of the Festival by looking at:

- How the study of texts can help Jews develop a personal understanding of God as an ongoing source of strength and redemption,
- How might the Exodus story illustrate the concept of the Jewish people being “chosen” or set apart to be a holy people, and
- How do the rituals and prayers of Pesach help us live a Jewish life filled with meaning and purpose.

### **Notes to the Teacher:**

1. The Passover story is perhaps the major story of the Jewish people, encompassed in the Book of Exodus and thousands of pages of rabbinic literature, commentaries, and artistic interpretation. Depending on the desires of the learners, this study unit will probably be the longest of the five units, with a minimum of five to six classes of text study followed by participation in a seder. Plan ahead, and let your students help you determine which areas of study they wish to focus on.
2. Each student should bring his/her favorite Haggadah to each class. The books will be used for reference and for creative inspiration.

### **Enduring Understanding:**

- The texts and Haggadah of Pesach, and the re-enactment of the Exodus during the Seder, teach the value of freedom for all people and the mitzvah of creating a better world.

### **Objectives:**

SWBAT explain the symbolic meanings of the Seder symbols and sections of the Seder.  
SWBAT retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt and apply it to modern-day struggles.  
SWBAT identify Jewish values taught in the texts that have personal meaning to them.  
SWBAT share “new” interpretations reflecting the promise of the Exodus and Pesach.  
SWBAT lead or participate in a Seder for Pesach.

### **Unit Questions:**

- How might a modern Jew understand the symbols of the seder plate?
- How can we compare the challenges we face in the modern world with the preparations to leave the bonds of slavery in Egypt? From what must we flee?

- How might one reinterpret the ten plagues as warning signs for modern Jews?
- How can the Passover Haggadah be expanded to include the challenges faced by American Jews in creating a more just society?
- What is the textual evidence for the value of Hachnasat Orchim, welcoming the stranger, and how might this mitzvah be applied in today's social climate?
- Just as the seder plate symbols represent concepts beyond the physical, what items or actions in your life symbolize a dream of a better world, being one of God's creatures, and/or your commitment to Judaism and the Jewish People?
- In what ways do the mitzvot of Pesach assist or hinder personal commitments to religious freedom and observance?

**Authentic Assessment:**

Students will create personal interpretations or compile modern-day readings for one or more sections of the Seder that intensify their spiritual and/or intellectual relationship with the Seder.

(Background Information) **The Biblical commands regarding Pesach:**

You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your ranks out of the land of Egypt; you shall observe this day throughout the generations as an institution for all time. In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.

-- Exodus 12:17-18

You shall observe this as an institution for all time, for you and your descendents....And when you children ask you, "What do you mean by this rite?" You shall say, "It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, because God passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and smote the Egyptians, but saved our houses."

-- Exodus 12:23, 26-27

You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread – eating unleavened bread for seven days as I have commanded you – at the set time of the month of Aviv, for in the month of Aviv you went forth from Egypt.

-- Exodus 34:18

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a Passover offering to the Lord, and on the fifteenth day of that month the Lord's Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall eat unleavened bread for seven days. On the first day you shall celebrate a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. Seven days you shall make offerings by fire to the Lord. The seventh day shall be a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations.

-- Leviticus 23:5-8

**First Class Session:**

**1. As with each unit, first assess what the students know.** Answers can be entered into the student journal and/or shared with the class.

Referencing a copy of their favorite haggadah, or the haggadah they intend to use for this year's seder, ask each student to record their answers to the following questions:

- 1) Why is this edition your favorite?
- 2) How does this haggadah help recall how we were once each a slave, a refugee, and a participant of the revelation at Mt. Sinai?
- 3) Which sections of the seder are the most meaningful to you or contribute to your personal connections with the festival, God, or the Jewish people?
- 4) Which sections of the seder are the most troubling in terms of theology or liturgy?

Then ask what they hope to learn or be able to do at the end of the unit of study.

## Activity One, Session One

Veer from the “normal” pattern to begin the study unit with Biblical and Talmudic texts. The haggadah for Pesach is in itself a repository of textual sources throughout the ages. Begin this unit with reading the haggadah. Be sure you have an annotated haggadah that lists the primary sources for the passages being read. Pick a haggadah that includes commentary or further explanations of traditional readings; these too should list primary text sources. Keep a list of those sources for further reference or study.

To make the reading a little more fun, included in this guide is “The Talk Feast in Four Acts” by Wolfson and Grishaver.

- Assign the parts and then allow a few minutes for each participant to locate their readings in their haggadah. They may read from any script (any haggadah).
- Whenever necessary, stop the reading to allow students to list the primary text sources on their “script” worksheet.

At the conclusion of the reading, discuss the list of primary text sources:

- From which genre of Jewish texts do the majority of readings originate?
- How are each of the primary sources used? (ex: to further explain the biblical text, to further explain the use of matzah, to state the mitzvot, etc.)
- Is there one primary text that carries more emphasis in the haggadah? Why do you think that is the case?

Wrap up with a check-in:

- Are there any sections of the story that you do not understand or need further clarification?
- Discuss implications of the text for understanding Judaism, Jews, and oneself.
- Draw connections to other texts or experiences in the life of the student.

## **Activity # 2 Symbolic meanings: How might a modern Jew understand the symbols of the seder?**

**Learning Objective:** To explain the symbolic meanings of the Seder symbols and share “new” interpretations of the symbols.

**Format:** Learning stations for each symbol.  
Students can work alone or with a partner, moving at their own pace from station to station.

### **Materials:**

- Each student should have his/her own copy of a haggadah (preferably the one they intend to use for this year’s seder)
- Copies of the “Symbols of Pesach” inquiry chart to record their learning
- photocopies of material from multiple resources representing a wide variety of interpretations at each learning station
- packet of sticky notes at each station

### **Instructions to Student:**

Each learning station contains information regarding each of the traditional and modern symbols found at the seder:

- Matzah, maror, charoset, z’roa, chazeret, karpas, salt water, baytzah (egg), orange, Elijah’s cup and Miriam’s cup

At your own pace, move from station to station reading the materials presented. You are being provided with a chart to make notes that will help you in expanding your own interpretations of the symbols of Passover.

If you have experienced or read of another explanation for any of the Passover symbols, please share that information by writing the interpretation on a sticky note at the appropriate learning station.

When all students have completed each station, as students to share how they now understand the symbolic meanings of the symbols and how they can be incorporated into a Seder.

Each student should then rewrite or expand one or more readings for their personal Passover observance. Students should be encouraged to use their own Haggadah as a model or a starting point for the creative reading.

**Note:** The time that students are investigating the materials at the learning stations is a perfect time to experience the music of Pesach. Softly fill the room with the sounds of Pesach with CD or cassette recordings.

## THE SYMBOLS OF PESACH

"Traditional" symbols	As explained in my haggadah	"traditional" interpretations	"modern" interpretations	Ideas I would like to incorporate into my seder
MATZAH				
MAROR				
CHAROSET				
Z'ROA				
CHAZERET				
KARPAS				
BAYTZAH				
SALT WATER				
ELIJAH'S CUP				

"Modern" symbols 4 <sup>th</sup> MATZAH	As explained in my haggadah	"traditional" interpretations	"modern" interpretations	Ideas I would like to incorporate into my seder
ORANGE				
MIRIAM'S CUP				

### **Activity # 3: The Mitzvot of the Festival of Pesach**

**Learning Objectives:** To identify Jewish values taught in the texts, find personal meaning in the texts, and then reflect on how they may be interpreted as the promise of the Exodus and Pesach.

1. Break students into groups to focus on individual mitzvot. Students will study text relating to that mitzvot, and then teach the class what they learned.
2. The second step is for the whole class to brainstorm how these mitzvot may or may not be applicable to Jewish practice in today's world.
3. The third step is for each participant to record in their journal which of the mitzvot they would like to begin incorporating into their personal observance.

the mitzvah of observing Pesach  
the mitzvah of removing leaven  
the mitzvah of abstaining from eating leaven  
the mitzvah of preparing a Seder  
the mitzvah of hospitality (Hachnasat Orechim)  
the mitzvah of tzedakah  
the mitzvah of participating in a Seder and reciting the Haggadah  
the mitzvah of eating unleavened bread  
the mitzvah of eating bitter herbs  
the mitzvah of four cups

See pages 65-74, *Gates of the Seasons, A Guide to the Jewish Year*, published by Central Conference of American Rabbis.

## Activity #4: After We Open The Door....

**Learning Objective:** How can the Passover Haggadah be expanded to include the challenges faced by American Jews in creating a more just society?

**Format:** Leader reads the following “Reading for Passover Seder” followed by discussion session.

### Reading for Passover Seder:

*We have opened the door in the hope that Elijah the Prophet might enter and announce the Messiah, a descendant of King David, is about to arrive and usher in the time of redemption for all humanity. But the line of David has commingled with all other families, and we no longer know who are his heirs. It is therefore possible that anyone—anyone seated around this table—might be his heir. God might choose any one of us to help redeem the world .... If we cannot see Elijah enter, it means that God has asked each of us here tonight to help realize the world for which all people yearn.*

(If Elijah seems not to come, all say)

*We have failed the test of the open door - yet in our failure lies our hope as human beings. We have opened the door and looked only into darkness - but the darkness calls each of one of us to help bring the light.*

*(On Wings of Freedom, Passover Haggadah.  
Ktav Publishing House p.99)*

Ask the students to respond to the text and answer the following questions:

1. Before you looked at this reading, what would you have said was the most important message of Passover? What has the reading added to your initial response?
2. What rituals or ritual objects, liturgy, music or traditions reinforce the message of the holiday as suggested by the above texts?
3. Where else in Jewish life is the message of the Passover reinforced?
4. How does this holiday inspire us to work toward *tikkun olam*?
5. Are there elements you could add to your own holiday celebration that would make the connection between the message and the holiday more apparent?

### Additional Learning Activities:

1. **Role Playing:** Have the class brainstorm questions that might be asked by a non-Jew who is attending a Passover Seder for the first time. Then divide the group into teams, pretending they are a family hosting a seder or the guest at the seder and role play asking and answering the question. Keep a record of any questions that are difficult to answer, and address them as the review session for the next week’s lesson.
2. **Modern Day Plagues:** Using a large sheet of butcher paper (allow a minimum 12” length for each student), divide the sheet into 2 sections (top and bottom). On the top half, have the class create a billboard of 10 modern day plagues (the plagues can be represented graphically or with text). The bottom half will be reserved for the “answer” to the plagues. As a group, list possible solutions to overcoming each of the 10 plagues, and how the solutions can be tied to Jewish values and/or mitzvot.

3. Dayyenu! The text of *Dayyenu* is a continuation of the Exodus story. Use the song to trace the fifteen acts of kindness which God bestowed on the People Israel. Are there other acts of kindness that should be added to this list?
4. Dayyenu, Part Two. When is enough really enough? Compare modern-day challenges that prevent us from fully participating in being God's partner in freeing all people from acts of tyranny and ourselves from obsessions or addictions with the challenges faced by the People Israel on their trek from slavery to freedom. Using the text of the Book of Exodus, look not only at the complaints of the people but also at the leadership styles of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

**Note to Teacher:** To increase the comfort level in leading a seder at home, the next two activities depart from the stated norm of this guide of not being a "how to" course of study.

5. **The foods of the holiday:** Participants should be encouraged to share favorite recipes and cooking tips. This activity can be used to help explain the differences in Ashkenazi and Sephardi food restrictions for the festival. Plan a grocery tour to help design menus for the week of Pesach.
6. **Song and interpretive readings:** Experience with adult learners has pointed out they may be able to read the haggadah, but are less comfortable with enriching the experience with song or drama. The next learning activity would not only help develop those skills, but serve as yet another method of studying the texts.

- **Learn the songs of the Haggadah.**

Music is interspersed throughout the seder and the concluding group activity. Each song plays a part in telling the story. Look at each song or musical blessing to determine its function in the narrative. Commentary in many haggadot will include explanations about the origins of the songs and additional background information can be found in Dr. Ron Wolfson's book, *Passover: The Family Guide to Spiritual Celebration* published by Jewish Lights.

Ask each participant to relate their favorite musical memory. Then ask participants to write new lyrics to be added to one of the existing songs or to create a new "song" for Pesach.

Tape and CD recordings of the music of Pesach are available through multiple sources, or participants can log onto [www.jewfaq.org/holidaya.htm#Seder](http://www.jewfaq.org/holidaya.htm#Seder) to hear the music.

## **CULMINATING ACTIVITIES**

Activity #1, the last class session prior to Pesach

Activity #2, group celebration(s) during the Festival.

### **Activity #1: Personalizing Pesach**

Family members should be invited to attend this last formal class session at which time each student should present the material they have created or compiled that interprets, reinterprets, or enriches a section of the Seder.

Then each “family” group should be given an opportunity to create a ritual item together that will be used at their seder. Ritual items can be decorative pieces for the seder table or new readings for the seder evening. If your budget permits, allow participants to choose between 2 or 3 different craft projects (have samples of each project – samples can be a professionally produced piece or one you have created.)

### **Suggested ritual items that can be created in the session for students and family members:**

- pages to add to their haggadah: new readings of rituals, poetry, new song lyrics
- hand painted table runner (pictures of the symbols, listings of the plagues, illustrations of favorite song lyrics or the mnemonic device to remember the order of the Seder: kadaysh, urchatz, karpas, yachatz, magid, rachatzah, motzi, matsah, maror, koraych, shulchan oreaych, tzafun, baraych, hallel, nirtzah)
- decorated mitzvah bag, afikomen bag, Elijah’s cup or Miriam’s cup

### **Activity #2: “Doing” Pesach** (schedule for one night during the festival)

Ask for volunteers to host a seder in their home, so that there is enough room for each student and family members. Each student should have an assignment of what food or drink to bring, as well as which section(s) of the seder they will lead.

## PESACH RESOURCES:

Black, Philip. *Mishnayoth, Order Moed*, Mishna Press Ltd., London, England, 1952.

Goodman, Philip. *The Passover Anthology*. The Jewish Publication Society of American, Philadelphia, 1962.

Goodman, Robert. *Teaching Jewish Holidays: History, Values, and Activities*. ARE Publishing, Inc., Denver, CO., 1997. Chapter 9, pages 153-162.

Knobel, Peter S., Ed. *Gates of the Season: A Guide to the Jewish Year*. Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 1983. Pages 66-74.

Lieber, David L., editor. *Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary*, The Rabbinical Assembly, The Jewish Publication Society, 2001.

Piercy, Marge. *The Art of Blessing the Day: Poems with a Jewish Theme*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2000. pages 154-167.

Schwartz, Frances Weinman. *Passage to Pesach: Preparing for Passover Through Text and Tradition*. UAHC Press, NY, NY. 2003.

Wolfson, Dr. Ron with Joel Lurie Grishaver. *Passover: The Family Guide to Spiritual Celebration*. Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, VT., 2003.

Wolfson, Dr. Ron with Joel Lurie Grishaver. *The Art of Jewish Living: The Passover Seder*. Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, VT., 1999.

Wolfson, Dr. Ron with Joel Lurie Grishaver. *The Art of Jewish Living: The Passover Seder Workbook*. A Project of The Federation of Jewish Men's Club's and The University of Judaism. New York, NY., 1988.

Zion, Noam. *A Different Night: The Family Participation Haggadah*. Shalom Hartman Institute, Jerusalem, Israel.

## UNIT 4: Pesach

### Activity 1: The Talk Fest Four Acts

Handout of outline of haggadah

### Activity 2: Symbolic meanings

Learning station resources for each symbol:

- matzah
- maror
- charoset
- z'roa,
- chazeret
- karpas
- salt water
- baytzah (egg)
- orange
- Elijah's cup and Miriam's cup

### Activity 3: The Mitzvot of the Festival of Pesach

Text resources for:

- the mitzvah of observing Pesach
- the mitzvah of removing leaven
- the mitzvah of abstaining from eating leaven
- the mitzvah of preparing a Seder
- the mitzvah of hospitality (Hachnasat Orechim)
- the mitzvah of tzedakah
- the mitzvah of participating in a Seder and reciting the Haggadah
- the mitzvah of eating unleavened bread
- the mitzvah of eating bitter herbs
- the mitzvah of four cups

**BACKGROUND AND GENERAL  
INFORMATION**

*Shabbat* prohibitions are included within these *avot*. Each one of them (*av*) has derivative prohibitions, called *toladot*. The Sages themselves promulgated additional prohibitions called *shivut*, which are designed to prevent inadvertent violation of *avot* and *toladot* and to protect the spirit of *Shabbat* rest. The Talmud deduces these basic categories from the activities involved in the construction of the tabernacle, which are delineated in Exod. 35 in close proximity to the commandment to observe *Shabbat*. But even the Talmud does not provide an abstract definition of the concept of *m'lakhah*.

Nonetheless, there is near unanimity among modern scholars that *m'lakhah* is correctly defined as: "A constructive human act, initiated on the Sabbath, demonstrating supremacy over nature." Advocates of this definition include S. R. Hirsch, M. M. Kaplan, and A. J. Heschel. It is a reasonable thesis that makes sense of *Shabbat* prohibitions as they are delineated in the Talmud and the post-talmudic codes and responsa. Even more, it is supported by the biblical account of Gen. 1 and 2, in which God's work of creation is defined as *m'lakhah* (2:2-3). The definition encapsulates the rationale underlying *Shabbat* prohibitions: Humans desist from controlling nature on *Shabbat* to give concrete expression to their recognition that human mastery over nature and human creative abilities are divine gifts. Knowledge of the definition allows the details of *Shabbat* prohibitions to be seen and understood in better perspective.

*Shabbat* observance has been perceived as a source of pleasure and delight since the biblical period. Isaiah especially calls it a day of delight (Isa. 58:13). For the Sages, *Shabbat* is a precious gift (BT Betz. 16a) and its observance is a taste of the world to come (BT Ber. 57b). If all Jews would observe one *Shabbat* as it ought to be observed, the Messiah would come (Exod. R. 25:12). It becomes the focus of the week's attention, and full appreciation of it is truly possible only for those who observe it (BT Shab. 119a).

It was Ahad ha-Am who said that more than the Jews have preserved *Shabbat* obser-

vance, *Shabbat* has preserved the Jews. His words remain true.

## THE HOLIDAYS

### *The Pilgrimage Festivals*

The holidays known best as *Pesah*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot* are the pilgrimage festivals on which, by law of the Torah, one was obligated to present oneself at God's shrine. They are called *shalosh r'galim* in Hebrew.

The Torah lists the cycle of annual holidays in several places: Exod. 23:12-19, 34:18-23; Lev. 23; Num. 28-29; and Deut. 16. Some of them are more complete than others. *Pesah* is also mentioned in Exod. 13:6-8. The details of these various listings constitute the pieces to a puzzle; and it is difficult, probably impossible, to complete the puzzle with certainty.

Some facts, though, are clearer than others. The holidays that are called *hag* in the Torah are pilgrimage festivals. In Exodus, the pilgrimages are as follows:

- *Hag ha-matzot*: festival of the unleavened bread (in Exod. 12:14, Lev. 23:6, and Num. 28:17, only the first day is a pilgrimage day; in Exod. 13:6, it is the last day that is the pilgrimage; and in Ezra 6:22, all seven days are pilgrimage days).
- *Hag ha-katzir*: festival of the reaping of harvest (although in Exod. 34:22 this holiday is called *hag shavu-ot*, the festival of weeks).
- *Hag ha-asif*: festival of the ingathering.

Exodus does not give specific dates for these festivals. Rather, the first is defined as being "at the set time in the month of Abib." Perhaps the phrase should be translated as "at the advent of the new moon of the season of soft-seeded grain ears." That timing is linked to the fact that Israel had been redeemed from Egypt in that season. The second is defined as occurring at the time of the harvest of "the first fruits of your work" (Exod. 23:16) and at the time of the "first fruits of the harvest of the wheat" (34:22). (Do these define each other?

Does the latter define the former? A puzzle!) And the third is defined as occurring "at the end of the year, when you gather all of your work in from the field."

Leviticus 23 distinguishes between *Pesah*, which occurs on the 14th of the first month, and *hag ha-matzot*, which begins on the 15th. The second holiday of Exodus is not named at all in Leviticus. Rather, it mandates a counting period of 50 days, at the conclusion of which an offering of new grain (wheat) is brought. This holiday is not called a *hag* in Leviticus, implying that no pilgrimage to the shrine was necessary. In Leviticus, the third pilgrimage of Exodus is called *hag ha-sukkot* (the festival of the booths), which lasts for 7 days, beginning on the 15th of the seventh month and culminating in a final (8th) day called *atzeret* (concluding assembly).

The Book of Numbers presents the distinction between *Pesah* and the *hag ha-matzot*. The first occurs on the 14th of the seventh month and the second begins on the 15th with that day a pilgrimage. The second holiday is called *yom ha-bikkurim* (day of first fruits), which is defined as "your Feast of Weeks." However, like Leviticus, Numbers does not declare it a pilgrimage and defines the third pilgrimage as a nameless festival that lasts 7 days, beginning on the 15th day of the seventh month and culminating on an 8th day on which an *atzeret* (solemn assembly) is to take place.

Deuteronomy 16 does not distinguish clearly between *Pesah* and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. Instead it seems to combine the two together, stating in verse 1 that the people should "offer a Passover sacrifice," yet calling the pilgrimage by the name *hag ha-matzot* in verse 16. The second pilgrimage is called *hag (ha-)shavu-ot* by Deuteronomy and is defined as occurring after a count of "seven weeks from the time the sickle is first put to the standing grain." The third pilgrimage, called *hag ha-sukkot*, is celebrated for seven days "after the ingathering from your threshing floor and your vat." Regarding each of the three pilgrimages, Deuteronomy emphasizes

that the celebration of the festival must take place "in the place where the LORD will choose to establish His name."

Of the three pilgrimage festivals, *Pesah* is most clearly a historical holiday. Exod. 23:15 specifically links its observance with the Exodus: "You shall observe the Feast of unleavened bread . . . for it was then that you went out of Egypt." None of the listings of the holidays in the Torah calls this pilgrimage by any name that is linked to agricultural matters. Indeed, it would be difficult to do so, because *Pesah* occurs just before the ripening of the grain in the spring. Yet, *Pesah* appears in all of the listings in the Torah, even those that exclude the holidays now called *Rosh ha-Shanah* and *Yom Kippur*, and its inclusion in those lists indicates that it was also an agricultural holiday. One must say, therefore, that it had an agricultural element to serve as a counterpoint to *Sukkot*. *Pesah* was the pilgrimage that preceded the harvest, and *Sukkot* was the pilgrimage that followed the end of the harvest.

Ginsberg hypothesized that the festival of the unleavened bread was originally celebrated at the time of the new moon of *Nisan*, just before the hardening of the barley. (This hypothesis is summarized by Baruch Levine in his commentary to Leviticus.) It was a seven-day festival, with the pilgrimage occurring on the seventh day. A separate sacrifice, the *pesah* offering, was to take place near the home of each person on the eve of the first day of the festival. The second pilgrimage festival, originally known exclusively as *hag ha-katzir*, the pilgrimage of the reaping, was observed as a one-day pilgrimage on the full moon of the month of ingathering, *Tishrei* (September). All of these observances are predicated on the possibility of making the required pilgrimage to a shrine near home. Deuteronomy, with its newly ordained requirement to observe all pilgrimages in one central shrine, made the earlier calendar of festival observances difficult and impractical, if not impossible. Changes had to be made to accommodate the new requirement. The second pilgrimage could no longer take place at the beginning of the har-

vest because no one could afford to be away from the fields for the length of time needed to make a pilgrimage to the central shrine. So the festival was moved by seven weeks, from the beginning of the harvest to its end. The name of the pilgrimage was changed from *hag ha-katzir* (pilgrimage of reaping), which was no longer appropriate, to *hag ha-shavu-ot* (pilgrimage of weeks), marked by a period of counting of those weeks. The third pilgrimage was also moved so that it would not occur too close to the second. It is no longer called *hag ha-asif* (the pilgrimage of ingathering), because it now takes place after the produce has been processed. Its name is changed to *hag ha-sukkot* (the pilgrimage of booths). That name refers to the booths set up to accommodate the pilgrims who now ascend to the central shrine in a pilgrimage that has been extended to seven days, from its original one day.

By far the greatest changes necessitated by the Deuteronomic mandate occur in the celebration of *Pesah* and the pilgrimage of *matzot*. Originally, the *pesah* offering was made near one's home on the eve of the festival, and the actual pilgrimage to a shrine took place on the seventh day of the festival. This had become an impossible arrangement. The *pesah* could now be offered only at the central shrine, and another pilgrimage offering was required seven days later at the same central shrine. People would have to arrive before the *pesah* offering day and remain for the entire seven days, because there might well not be time to travel back and forth to home in that short span of time. So Deuteronomy mandates that the *pesah* offering be made immediately before the onset of the pilgrimage of unleavened bread—serving also as the pilgrimage offering. And the pilgrimage now takes place on the first day of the festival instead of on the last day. After that first day, people can go home, although the requirement to refrain from eating leavened bread continues for an additional six days.

As *Pesah* has no clear agricultural component in the Torah, *Shavu-ot* has no clear historical component in the Torah. Nonetheless, since Second Temple days, it carries a histori-

cal dimension as well, as the festival commemorating the revelation at Sinai—*zman mattan torateinu*, the time of the giving of our Torah. This attribution is based on the dating of that revelation, intimated by Exodus 19, and seems to reflect an ancient tradition with echoes in 2 Chron. 15:10–13 and in some of the sectarian literature. Through this act, *Shavu-ot* acquires a historical dimension to accompany its agricultural dimension. The period of counting the seven weeks between *Pesah* and *Shavu-ot* becomes not merely the counting of the period of the harvest, but the counting of the period between our liberation from Egyptian bondage to the beginning of nationhood through the act of revelation.

Deuteronomy and Leviticus call the third pilgrimage festival *hag ha-sukkot*. Deuteronomy gives no explanation of the name (although Ginsberg's explanation for it was offered above). Leviticus, however, does offer an explanation, stating in 23:42–43 that we are to dwell in booths for these seven days to remember that God "made the Israelite people live in booths when [God] brought them out of the land of Egypt." The explanation of Leviticus is replete with difficulties, not least of which is that the Israelites lived in tents during the wandering in the wilderness. The most likely explanation of the name is that the Torah is here imbuing with historical significance the practice of living in booths during the period of gathering in the grapes and fruits. It thus makes the third pilgrimage parallel to the other two pilgrimages in having both an agricultural and a historical significance.

Whatever the problems of putting together the pieces of the puzzle of the pilgrimage festivals in the Bible, the Rabbinic-halakhic tradition leveled the field. It made the festivals into a coherent system that incorporated the demands and the explanations of all the biblical passages. In addition to the names I have already referred to for the holidays, the Rabbinic tradition also refers to *Pesah* as *zman heruteinu*, the period of our liberation, and to *Sukkot* as *zman simhateinu*, the time of our joy. For the Rabbinic tradition, *Shavu-ot*, which

marks the giving of the Decalogue, becomes the culmination of *Pesah* and is known simply as *atzeret*, the concluding assembly. *Sukkot* is called simply *he-bag*, the holiday.

#### *The High Holy Days*

The Torah knows of no holiday called *Rosh ha-Shanah*, New Year's Day. It does ordain the first day of the seventh month (*Tishrei*) as a day on which the horn is to be sounded (Num. 29:1) or commemorated with blasts (Lev. 23:24). Jacob Milgrom noted that the choice of the new moon of the seventh month preserves the sabbatical cycle in the lunar calendar. Just as the seventh day is unique among days, the seventh new moon is unique among new moons. Neither of the biblical passages that mention this holiday explains the significance of the horn to be sounded. Most probably, it was to indicate the advent of the pilgrimage of *Sukkot*, which began exactly two weeks later. The day is defined as one of cessation from labor and for sacred assembly. But it is not a pilgrimage holiday.

Rabbinic tradition, reflecting the view that the world was created by God in the autumn, recasts this holiday as commemorating the world's creation and, more important, as a day when human beings are judged by God. The sounding of the *shofar* remains central to its observance but takes on a totally different significance. It becomes the impetus to self-reflection and repentance and a reminder to God of the test of Abraham's faith at the binding of Isaac, on the basis of which his descendants seek God's forgiveness. *Rosh ha-Shanah* inaugurates a period of 10 days, culminating in the final judgment of *Yom Kippur*.

*Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, is mentioned in the festival listings of Leviticus and

Numbers (although it is not called by that name in Numbers) and also at the end of Lev. 16. The latter chapter contains the detailed account of the purification ceremonies ordained for cleansing the sanctuary from the defilements of humans during the year (see vv. 16,19). The term *kippurim* refers to this cleansing and purging of the sanctuary. Leviticus 16:29-34 establishes the date of the purification as the 10th day of the seventh month and mandates that the purification ritual is to be accompanied by fasting and total cessation of labor. From Lev. 16 it is clear that the purification rites of *Yom Kippur* were a priestly matter, and that the people were not present at the sanctuary. That fact is sufficient to explain why neither Num. 29 nor Lev. 23 makes any mention of the purification rites of the sanctuary in their descriptions of the holiday that occurs on the 10th of the seventh month. Both include the requirements of fasting and refraining from all labor. Probably, the timing of purification of the sanctuary was intended to ensure that it was pure just before the advent of the masses of pilgrims on the 7-day pilgrimage that would follow in five days.

Rabbinic tradition, of course, personalized the atonement of the biblical holiday and made *Yom Kippur* into the culmination of a 10-day period of judgment by God of all human beings. Intimations of personal atonement can be read fairly easily into parts of Lev. 23. Thus the two nonpilgrimage holidays of the seventh month became in Rabbinic tradition, and in subsequent Jewish practice, the most personal of holidays, focused on individual responsibility for one's actions and for ultimate accountability before God's judgment.

**PESACH ACTIVITY #1**

*Pesah* 101  
 Activity Four: The Seder Outline  
 Purpose: To learn the basic structure of the Seder in your *Haggadah*.

# THE TALK FEAST IN FOUR ACTS

The Seder is a talk-feast in four acts. The *Haggadah* is the script for the evening. Below you will find an outline of the *Haggadah*. Since there are very different editions of the *Haggadah* in use, it is important to locate where each step of the Seder is found in your text.

Take your *Haggadah* in hand and flip through it to find each step. As you do, fill the "page" number in the outline.

(When you are reading to assign parts for the Seder, complete the "Who" column. Hint: Use pencil—the assignments are likely to change from year-to-year.)

Step	Page	Items	Practice	Who
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## ACT ONE: THE BEGINNING

### Prologue

Candle Lighting	_____	Candles Candlesticks Matches	Light Candles	_____
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<i>Kadesh, Urbatz</i>	_____	Text	Say or chant	_____
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### SCENE 1: THE FIRST CUP

<i>Kadesh</i>	_____	First cup	Lift cup of wine, chant and drink while reclining together.	_____
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### SCENE 2: HANDS

<i>Urbatz</i>	_____	Water Pitcher Basin Towel	Wash without blessing	_____
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### SCENE 3: APPETIZER

<i>Karpas</i>	_____	Vegetable (parsley) Salt water	Dip parsley in salt water, recite blessing together.	_____
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### SCENE 4: BREAK THE MIDDLE MATZAH

<i>Yabatz</i>	_____	Middle <i>Matzah</i>	Leader breaks <i>matzah</i> in two; hides <i>afikomen</i> .	_____
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### CURTAIN: INVITATION

<i>Ha Labma Anya</i>	_____	<i>Matzot</i>	Uncover <i>matzot</i> , recite.	_____
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Step	Page	Items	Practice	Who
<b>ACT TWO: MAGGID—THE TELLINGS</b>				
<b>SCENE 1: THE FIRST TELLING</b>				
Question: <i>Mab Nishtanab</i>	_____	Wine cup <i>Matzot</i>	Cover <i>matzot</i> ; fill 2nd cup; recite	_____
Answer: <i>Avadim Hayinu</i>	_____	<i>Matzot</i>	Uncover <i>matzot</i> ; recite	_____
Praise: <i>Barukh Ha-Makom</i>	_____	Text	Recite together	_____
<b>SCENE 2: THE SECOND TELLING</b>				
Question: <i>Arba'ab Banim</i>	_____	Text 4 children	Recite	_____
Answer: <i>Mitebila Oudei</i>	_____	Text	Recite	_____
Praise: <i>Barukh Sbomer/ V'bi She'amdab</i>	_____ _____	Wine cup	Raise cup; sing together	_____
<b>SCENE 3: THE THIRD TELLING</b>				
Question: <i>Tzet u-L'mad</i>	_____	Text	Uncover <i>matzot</i> ; recite	_____
Answer: <i>Arami oved avi Eser Makot</i>	_____ _____	Text Wine cup	Recite Spill one drop for each plague	_____ _____
Praise: <i>Dayyenu</i>	_____	Text	Sing together	_____
<b>SCENE 4: THE FOURTH TELLING</b>				
Question: <i>Rabban Gamliel</i>	_____	Text	Recite; point to symbols	_____
Answer: <i>B'kbol dor va-Dor</i>	_____	Text	Recite	_____
Praise: <i>L'fikbakb</i>	_____	Wine cup	Lift and recite	_____
<i>V'nomar L'fanav Ga'al Yisrael</i>	_____ _____	Text Wine cup	Recite Lift and recite	_____ _____
<b>CURTAIN: THE SECOND CUP OF WINE</b>				
<i>Kos Sheini</i>	_____	Wine cup	Lift and chant; drink while reclining	_____

Step	Page	Items	Practice	Who
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## ACT THREE: THE FEAST

### SCENE 1: PREPARING TO EAT

<i>Robtzab</i>	_____	Water Pitcher, basin, towel	All wash hands; recite	_____
<i>Motzi/Matzab</i>	_____	<i>Matzot</i>	Lift three <i>matzot</i> Recite both blessings; eat piece of top and/or middle <i>matzab</i> while reclining	_____
<i>Maror</i>	_____	<i>Maror</i> , <i>Haroset</i>	Dip <i>maror</i> in <i>Haroset</i> recite blessing; eat without reclining	_____
<i>Korekb</i>	_____	Bottom <i>matzab</i> , <i>maror</i>	Make sandwich of <i>maror</i> between two pieces of <i>matzab</i> , recite and eat without reclining.	_____

### SCENE 2: THE MEAL

<i>Sbulhan Orekh</i>	_____	Food	Enjoy!	_____
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### SCENE 3: THE AFIKOMEN

<i>Tzafun</i>	_____	<i>Afikomen</i>	<i>Afikomen</i> is redeemed; eat a piece while reclining.	_____
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### SCENE 4: BLESSINGS AFTER FOOD

<i>Barekb</i>	_____	Wine	Fill third cup; recite <i>Birkat ba-Mazon</i>	_____
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### CURTAIN: THE THIRD CUP OF WINE

<i>Kos Sh'isbi</i>	_____	Wine	Lift, recite drink while reclining	_____
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Step	Page	Items	Practice	Who
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## ACT FOUR: REDEMPTION

### SCENE 1: ELIJAH THE PROPHET

<i>Shfokh Hamatkba</i>	_____	Text	Fill Elijah's wine Cup and Fourth Cup; open door; recite	_____
<i>Eliyahu ba-Navi</i>	_____	Text; Elijah's cup	Sing together; Elijah's cup is not moved	_____

### SCENE 2: SONGS OF PRAISE

<i>Hallel</i>	_____	Text	Sing, recite	_____
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### SCENE 3: SONGS

<i>Z'mirot</i>	_____	Text	Sing together	_____
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### SCENE 4: COUNTING THE OMER (SECOND SEDER ONLY)

<i>Sefirat ha-Omer</i>	_____	Text	Rise and recite	_____
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### CURTAIN: CONCLUSION

<i>Kos R'vi</i> (Fourth Cup)	_____	Wine	Lift cup; recite; drink while reclining	_____
<i>Nirtzah</i>	_____	Text	Recite together	_____

## **PESACH ACTIVITY #2**

**One of the goals of this curriculum is to expose students to multiple interpretations of our rituals. Enclosed are the beginning of your resource library – keep collecting!**

## CHAPTER NINE

# PESACH



### VOCABULARY

**Adir Hu:** "God Is Mighty" or "God of Might" is a hymn sung at the end of the *Seder* service.

Composed by an unknown poet, it consists of eight stanzas of eight lines each. The hymn speaks of how God's might and power brought freedom to the Israelites and offers the hope of freedom for all people living in servitude.

**Afikoman:** Greek for "Dessert." A portion of the middle of the three *matzot* on the *Seder* plate, it is hidden by the person leading the *Seder*, and redeemed after the meal from the children who have searched for and found it. It is the last morsel eaten on the *Seder* night.

**Arami Oved Anochi:** "My father was a fugitive Aramaean" (Deuteronomy 26:5). The verse continues: "... He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation." The Passover *Haggadah* includes this verse to reinforce the idea that despite humble beginnings, even subjugation, the Jews became a great and free people.

**Arba'ah Banim:** Literally "Four Sons." The *Haggadah* labels four types of Jewish youngsters based on how each approaches the story of the Exodus. The wise one asks about Pesach and wants to learn (Deuteronomy 6:20). The wicked one contends that the observance of Pesach does not pertain to him (Exodus 12:26). The simple person is bewildered by the celebration of Pesach and asks

what it is all about (Exodus 13:14). The ignorant person is unable to ask even the simplest questions related to Pesach and must be taught on the simplest level (Exodus 13:8).

**Arba Kosot:** "Four cups" of wine are served during the *Seder*, two before the meal and two during the concluding portion of the *Seder* service.

**Arba Kushiyot:** "Four Questions." Posed by the youngest child able to read or recite questions, this comes early in the *Seder* immediately after *Ha Lachma*, which opens the *Magid*, the fifth section of the *Seder* service. If there are no children present, an adult may ask the questions. The leader responds with a complex answer that includes: a brief historical account of the liberation of the Jews from Egypt, evidence of God's protection of Israel since the deliverance, and some of the rules of Pesach observance.

**Baraych:** Meaning "Bless," this is the thirteenth part of the *Seder* Service, and consists of the Grace after Meals with special Pesach additions.

**Baytzah:** "Egg." Usually roasted, an egg is one of the symbols on the *Seder* plate. It may be a substitute for the festival sacrifice (*Chagigah*), which was offered on Pesach in the Temple. The egg may also be a symbol of springtime and the rebirth of a people. Eating the egg in salt water may derive from the fact that this was a freeman's dish in ancient times.

**Bedikat Chamaytz:** "Search for Leaven." After having thoroughly cleaned one's home, a search for leaven takes place on the evening before Pesach. So as not to make this a vain search, a few crumbs are conspicuously placed, searched for by candlelight, and when "found," swept onto a wooden spoon with a feather. Once these last crumbs are burned, any other *chamaytz* in the house is considered to be just dust.

**Bi'ur Chamaytz:** "Burning of *Chamaytz*." By 10:00 A.M. on the morning of *erev* Pesach, all *chamaytz* which has not been sold is burned.

**Chad Gadya:** "An Only Kid," is a folk song which concludes the *Seder* service. Intended for the entertainment of the children, it consists of ten stanzas written in the form of a nursery rhyme using Aramaic rather than Hebrew. Some people regard it as an allegorical song that speaks of the eventual destruction of all tyrants and oppressors.

**Chag HaAviv:** "Festival of Spring," is one of the four names of Pesach. This is the end of the rainy season in Israel.

**Chag HaMatzot:** "Festival of the Unleavened Bread," is one of the four names given to Pesach (Leviticus 23:6).

**Chag HaPesach:** "Festival of Passover," is one of the four names given to Pesach. The word "*pesach*" is of uncertain origin. It may mean to "pass over," as the Angel of Death passed over the homes of the Hebrews, or it may refer to the lamb offered in sacrifice on the holiday, or it may refer to an ancient nomadic festival.

**Chamaytz:** "Sour" or "Leavened." No leavening agent may be used or owned during Pesach. *Chamaytz* is symbolically sold to a non-Jew before Pesach and then bought back after the festival is concluded.

**Charoset:** One of the symbols on the *Seder* plate, it is a combination of apples, nuts, cinnamon, and

wine. This sweet mixture symbolizes the mortar used by the Israelites to make bricks for the building projects ordered by Pharaoh. It is used to sweeten the bitter herbs.

**Chazeret:** "Bitter Herb," is one of the symbols on the *Seder* plate. *Chazeret* can be any vegetable with a bitter taste — cucumber, watercress, radish, endive, etc. Numbers 9:11 speaks of eating the Paschal lamb "with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (*m'rorim*)." Since bitter herbs is in the plural, *chazeret* is used in addition to *maror*. While most *Seder* trays have a compartment for *chazeret*, its use is considered optional.

**Chol HaMo'ed Pesach:** "The intermediary days of Pesach." Of the eight days of Pesach, the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth days are considered intermediary. Chol HaMo'ed Pesach and Sukkot are semi-holidays, observed with special prayers. However, one may treat these days as any weekday with only minor restrictions. In Jerusalem, and among liberal Jews, Pesach is celebrated for seven days.

**Echad Mi Yodea:** "Who Knows One?" is a cumulative riddle that is sung at the conclusion of the *Seder* service. Using the format of questions and answers, basic Jewish beliefs and traditions are conveyed in the thirteen stanzas. Each number has a special meaning: 13 attributes of God, 12 tribes of Israel, 11 stars in Joseph's dream, 10 Commandments, 9 months of pregnancy, 8 days for *Brit Milah*, 7 days in a week, 6 sections in Mishnah, 5 books in Torah, 4 Matriarchs, 3 Patriarchs, 2 tablets of the Covenant, and One God.

**Eliyahu HaNavi:** "The Prophet Elijah." This ninth century B.C.E. prophet who took on the evil Ahab and Jezebel as described in I Kings, according to tradition, did not die, but ascended to heaven in a fire chariot. He remains among us testing the hospitality and generosity of people, protecting children, helping the poor, and primed to announce the coming of the Messiah. Opening the door for Elijah during the *Seder* symbolizes hope in that

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time of redemption. A fifth cup of wine is on the *Seder* table for Elijah. Should he arrive, he will answer all difficult questions . . . including, are there to be four or five cups of wine at the *Seder*.

**Eser Makot:** "Ten Plagues" were inflicted upon Egypt (Exodus 7:14 - 12:36) because Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrew leave his country. The plagues were: 1) waters of the Nile turned to blood; 2) infestation of frogs; 3) lice; 4) swarms of insects; 5) a pestilence affecting livestock; 6) boils; 7) hail and fire; 8) locusts; 9) three days of darkness; 10) the death of the firstborn of man and beast. A drop is removed from the wine cup upon mention of each plague.

**Haggadah:** "Telling" or "Narrative." This book contains the rituals for the observance of the *Seder*, including the stories, songs, and prayers. *Magid*, which is the fifth section of the *Seder* service, comes from the same Hebrew root.

**Ha Lachma:** "This Is the Bread," is a prayer in Aramaic which marks the beginning of the *Magid* section of the *Seder* service. Holding half of the middle *matzah* from the stack of three, the leader announces: "This is the bread of affliction, the poor bread, which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt . . ." Dating back some 2000 years, this prayer goes on to invite the needy to join in the *Seder*, and it concludes with an expression of hope for all people: "This year we celebrate here. Next year in the land of Israel. Now we are all still slaves. Next year may we all be free."

**Hallel:** The *Hallel* consists of Psalms in praise of God. Psalms 113-118 are recited on the first two days of Pesach and serve as the fourteenth section in the *Seder* service. During the last six days of Pesach, the first 11 verses of both Psalm 115 and 116 are omitted. The *Chatzi-Hallel* is said on these days because of a tradition which states that God stopped the angels from singing praises when they saw the Egyptians drowning in the sea — a reflec-

tion of Jewish sensitivity toward the suffering of others.

**Isru Chag:** Meaning "Bind a Festival," this term comes from Psalm 118:27 which states: ". . . hold onto the festival even as it departs." Thus, the day following Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot is Isru Chag. It is a minor festival for liturgical purposes.

**Kadaysh:** "Sanctify." This is the first section in the *Seder* service, the recitation of the Passover *Kiddush* and the drinking of the first of four cups of wine.

**K'arah:** The Passover *Seder* plate.

**Karpas:** "Green Vegetable," is one of the symbols on the *Seder* plate. While parsley is the usual *karpas*, lettuce or celery may also be used. *Karpas* symbolizes the green of spring and the spirit of hope for the future. It also recalls the meager food available to the Hebrews living as slaves in Egypt. (See Appendix, page 253, for blessing.)

**Kittel:** A white robe, usually made of linen, that is worn on Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, and Pesach. The *kittel* is worn on Pesach to symbolize the release from bondage and slavery and the beginning of a life of freedom. It is also worn by a groom, and serves as a burial shroud.

**Koraych:** Hillel "Sandwich," is the tenth section of the *Seder* service. So named because of the custom of Hillel to place *maror* on *matzah* and eat as a sandwich. The source of the practice is Numbers 9:11: "They shall eat it (i.e., the paschal lamb) with *matzah* and *maror*."

**Koso Shel Eliyahu:** The "Cup of Elijah" is set aside for the Prophet's arrival at the *Seder*.

**Lechem Mishneh:** "Double Portion of Bread," refers to the double portion of manna collected by the Israelites in the wilderness before the Shabbat

to last for two days (Exodus 16:22). It also is the term used to refer to two of the three pieces of *matzah* on the *Seder* plate.

**Lechem Oni:** "Bread for the Poor," refers to the *matzah* which was the bread eaten by those living in a state of stress and hardship. The third of the three *matzot* on the *Seder* plate is called *Lechem Oni*.

**Magid:** From the same Hebrew root as *Haggadah*, this is the section that tells the Pesach story. It begins with the *Ha Lachma* prayer and the Four Questions.

**Ma Nishtanah:** Meaning "What is different," this is a name for and also the first two words of the Four Questions.

**Ma'ot Chitim:** Literally "Money for Wheat," this is a special fund which provides even the poorest Jew with *matzah*, wine, and the other essentials for a festive celebration of Pesach. Thus all can celebrate Pesach in dignity. This fund is in addition to regular *tzedakah* gifts made throughout the year.

**Maror:** The bitter herb, usually horseradish root, which symbolizes the bitterness of slavery. (See Appendix, page 253, for blessing.)

**Matzah/Matzot:** Unleavened bread made from flour and water, quickly kneaded, and then rapidly baked so that no fermentation takes place during the baking. *Matzah* is also the term for the eighth section of the *Seder* service consisting of reciting the grace for the *matzah*, then the breaking of the upper *matzah* and distributing pieces to the participants at the *Seder*. (See Appendix, page 253, for blessing.)

**Matzah Ashira:** Literally "Rich *Matzah*," it is made with wine, oil, honey, and eggs instead of with just flour and water. The Talmud (*Pesachim* 36a) states that, since this kind of *matzah* does not conform with the idea of *matzah* as "bread of affliction" (*Lechem Oni*), it may not be used for the celebration of Passover.

**Matzah Sh'murah:** Literally "Guarded *Matzah*," it is made from wheat that is watched carefully from harvest to baking so that it is not exposed to moisture or excessive heat. Once mixed with water, the batter must be kneaded, rolled, and baked within an 18 minute time period. It is considered by some the most desirable *matzah* to use during Pesach.

**M'chirat Chamaytz:** "The Selling of *Chamaytz*." Since one must not own *chamaytz* during Pesach, it is sold for the duration of Pesach, and then repurchased. While the transaction is technically a sale, it is really a "legal fiction." The Rabbi draws up a bill of sale for the *chamaytz*, temporarily transferring ownership to a non-Jew.

**Motzi:** "The Blessing over Bread" is the seventh section of the Pesach *Seder*. At the *Seder* it is said over a piece of the upper *matzah* immediately followed by the blessing for eating *matzah*. (See Appendix, page 253, for blessing.)

**Nirtzah:** "May it be Acceptable," is the fifteenth and final section of the *Seder* service. The *Seder* is concluded with the hope that all of the prayers recited will be acceptable to God, and with the final words *l'Shanah HaBa'ah Birushalayim* — Next Year in Jerusalem.

**Nisan:** The first month of the Jewish year, corresponding to March/April, it has 30 days, and its zodiac sign is Aries. In ancient times, Nisan 1 was the New Year for dating the years of a king's reign. The 15th is the first day of Pesach.

**Pesach:** The actual meaning of this word is in doubt. It may mean to pass over (as did the Angel of Death), or to skip (like a young lamb), or it may mean a young lamb (the sacrifice in the Temple), or it may have its origin in an ancient nomadic festival. Pesach is called Passover in English.

**Pesach Shayni:** "Second Pesach." Sometimes called *Pesach Katan* ("Small Pesach"), this was for someone unable to offer the Pesach sacrifice in Nisan

due to travel, illness, or ritual defilement. In accordance with Numbers 9:9-13, such a person may celebrate *Pesach Shayni* on the 14th of Iyar, a month after Pesach.

**Rachatzah:** Washing, is the sixth section of the *Seder* service, consists of washing one's hands accompanied by the customary blessing. (See Appendix, page 253, for blessing.)

**Seder:** Meaning "Order," it refers to the order of the *Seder* service on the first night(s) of Pesach. The *Seder* is traditionally divided into 15 sections, each of which has a name.

**Sefirat HaOmer:** "The counting of the *Omer*." An *Omer* was a measure of barley brought in ancient Israel to the Temple on the first day of Pesach as a thanksgiving offering. Leviticus 23:15-16 commands: "From . . . the day that you bring the sheaf (*omer*) of wave offering, you shall keep count until seven full weeks have elapsed: you shall count 50 days, until the day after the seventh week (*Shavuot*); then you shall bring an offering of new grain to *Adonai*." The Counting of the *Omer* is a part of the daily evening service from the day after Pesach until *Shavuot*. This provides a link between Pesach and *Shavuot*.

**Shabbat HaGadol:** "The Great Sabbath" precedes Pesach and is so called because the *Haftarah* for that day is Malachi 3:24, which ends with the words: "Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome great day of *Adonai*." Traditionally, the Rabbi's sermon is devoted to the rules and dietary laws pertaining to Pesach.

**Shalosh Matzot:** "Three *Matzot*" are placed on the *Seder* plate, two are the *Lechem Mishneh*, and one the *Lechem Oni*.

**Shalosh Regalim:** "The Three Pilgrimage Festivals." On Pesach, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot*, Israelites

journeyed on foot to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices at the Temple in accord with Deuteronomy 16:16-17.

**Shir HaShirim:** "Song of Songs," one of the five *Megillot*, is read on Shabbat Chol HaMo'ed Pesach, the Shabbat in the middle of Pesach. *Shir HaShirim*, described as a love song between God (the bridegroom) and Israel (the bride), is read on Pesach to symbolize the courtship between Israel and God which began with the Exodus and continued with the wedding at Mount Sinai, when Israel accepted the Torah.

**Shulchan Oraych:** Literally, the "Table is Ready." This is the term for the eleventh section of the *Seder* service, eating the Passover meal. Four sections of the *Seder* service remain to be completed after the conclusion of the meal.

**Ta'anit B'chorim:** "The Fast of the Firstborn." On *erev* Pesach in Egypt, the firstborn of the Egyptian were slain, while the Hebrews were spared. In memory of that deliverance from the tenth plague, it is a custom for first born sons to fast all day until the *Seder*. To obviate the fast, it is customary to finish a tractate of Talmud that morning so as to celebrate with a *siyyum* — a celebratory snack.

**Tefilat Tal:** "Prayer for Dew" is recited at the *Musaf* service on the first day of Pesach. It was composed by Eleazar Kalir in the tenth century and takes the form of a reverse acrostic which asks for dew to freshen the soil of Israel.

**Tzafun:** "Hidden." This is the twelfth section of the *Seder* service. It consists of eating the *Afikoman* which had been hidden then found by a child. No other food may eaten after the *Afikoman*.

**Urchatz:** Literally, "And Wash." This second section of the *Seder* service consists of washing one's hands without saying the customary blessing.

**Yachatz:** This fourth section of the *Seder* service consists of breaking the middle *matzah* and putting half away to be hidden for the *Afikoman*.

**Yizkor:** The memorial service that takes place on the last day of Pesach, Sukkot, Shavuot, and on Yom Kippur.

**Z'man Chayrutaynu:** "The Season of Our Freedom." This is one of the names for the festival of Pesach. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt, and then during this season became a free people.

**Z'roa:** The roasted "Shankbone" is one of the symbols on the *Seder* plate. It represents the paschal offering that was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem. It can also be seen as a symbolic representation of God's "outstretched helping hand."

## BACKGROUND

The story of the Exodus from Egypt is found in the first half of the Book of Exodus with chapters 12 and 13 serving as the focal point of the historical narrative.

Leviticus 23:5-8 contains the biblical injunctions to celebrate the Festival of Pesach: "in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a passover offering (Pesach) to the Lord, and on the fifteenth day of that month is the Lord's Feast of Unleavened Bread (Chag HaMatzot). You shall eat unleavened bread for seven days. The first day shall be for you a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. Seven days you shall make offerings by fire to *Adonai*. The seventh day shall be a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations."

Efforts to probe the origins of the Jewish holidays are in no way intended to denigrate the importance or the meaning of the festivals. Rather, they help to demonstrate the genius of the Jewish people who drew from their environment, transforming what might have begun as a pagan idea or practice into something with universal and timeless significance.

According to such scholars as Hayyim Schauss and Theodor Gaster, the modern festival of Pesach

is a combination of a shepherd's festival and an agricultural festival. Leviticus 23 reinforces that idea.

It is possible that a Pesach festival had its earliest stirrings among semi-nomads who thousands of years ago wandered the desert and the semi-arid environs around Palestine. Nisan was the month when sheep most often gave birth. These nomads came to observe a festival at the time of the full moon. Just before nightfall, a sheep or goat was sacrificed. The animal was then roasted, and the family ate a hasty meal so that all of the animal would be eaten by daybreak. No bones of this sacrificial animal could be broken. Tent posts were daubed with the blood of the slain animal as an antidote to plagues, misfortune, and illness. The original meaning of the Hebrew word "*pesach*" is lost. The interpretation signifying "skip over" or "pass over" was later given to the word.

Perhaps the Feast of Unleavened Bread was a six or seven day festival marking the beginning of the spring harvest period that was celebrated by the farmers of Canaan. It was started with the cutting of the barley and the offering of the first sheaf of the newly cut barley to the priest as a sacrifice to God. The elimination of *chamaytz* may have originally been precautionary so as not to infect the new incoming crop. Or, it may have been a way of propitiating the priests and God so as to assure health and bounty.

As Judaism moved away from being agriculturally based, new interpretations and new customs were added to the Pesach ritual so that Jews living all over the world and in all ages could meaningfully celebrate Pesach. The prototype *Haggadah* finds its way into the Mishnah as Tractate *Pesachim*. By the end of the Talmudic period, its form and much of its content were as they are today. It must have been widely accepted, because the *Haggadah* was included in the very first prayer book of Rav Amram in the eighth century, as well as in the prayer book of Saadia Gaon in Babylonia (tenth century). Somewhere around the twelfth century it began to be copied as a separate book. It attracted many commentaries, and became the favorite subject of Jewish artists who found the subject

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liberating. Illuminated *Haggadot* were especially prevalent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Prague, Amsterdam, and Venice, among other important cities. A magnificent Sephardic *Haggadah* made its way from Spain eastward in the fifteenth century and is named after the city which claimed it — *The Sarajevo Haggadah*. Today, the making of *Haggadot* is without end. The artistry and commentaries continue to delight and amaze. Often such works are not only used at the *Seder* table, they become treasured possessions.

### Central Themes

- The four names for Pesach reflect four aspects of this festival:

Chag HaPesach is linked with the account of the tenth plague when God passed over the homes of the Israelites, and with the Pesach offering that was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Chag HaMatzot, The Festival of Unleavened Bread, is an outgrowth of an early agricultural festival and reflects the centrality of *matzah* in the celebration of Pesach.

Chag HaAviv, The Festival of Spring, reflects the seasonal significance of Pesach.

Z'man Chayrutaynu, The Season of Our Freedom, marks the attainment of freedom from bondage by the ancient Israelites.

- Pesach can be viewed as a time of release, accompanied by a positive achievement. This theme is seen on three levels. On a seasonal plane, there is the release of the earth from the grip of winter, and the time of the reaping of the grain. The grain is harvested by people, but could not have been grown without God's help. On a historical plane, there is the release of the Children of Israel from the grip of Egypt, and the birth of the Jewish nation in Covenant with God. On a universal plane, Pesach symbolizes the hoped for release of all people from physical and spiritual bondage, and the ability of all to live in dignity.

- While Pesach was at first an agricultural festival, through the centuries it became a festival of freedom and deliverance. This gradual shift took place in response to the growing numbers of Jews living outside of *Eretz Yisrael* and to the reality of the end of the biblical period and the beginning of the Rabbinic era. Change brought added new symbolism, concepts, and dimensions to the festival.
- Pesach marks the emergence of Israel as a nation and as a people, freely accepting Torah as its constitution, and as the basis for Jewish life. Until Sinai, God made covenants with individual Jews; this time it was with *Am Yisrael*, the entire Jewish People.
- By participating in the *Seder*, one symbolically and vicariously relives the Exodus from Egypt. Around the festive table, past and present merge, and the future is promising. In a certain sense, the *Seder* ritual is a reflection of Deuteronomy 29:13-14, which speaks of just such timelessness: "I make this covenant . . . not with you alone, but with those who are standing here with us this day before *Adonai* our God and with those who are not (yet) with us here this day."
- The *Seder* is abundant in symbolism. Each aspect and item in the service can be interpreted on many levels, leading to ever newer interpretations which further enrich the meaning of the Festival. On such innovation took place in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. The Matzah of Hope was added to remind us of the plight of Soviet Jews who were then virtual prisoners in their country. While many Jews from the FSU have subsequently found a home in Israel, America, and elsewhere, we can still set aside a Matzah of Hope for people everywhere who are victims of political, economic, and religious oppression. It is our hope as Jews that all people everywhere will soon live in freedom.
- The *Haggadah* is a masterpiece of pedagogy. It uses many effective and affective learning techniques, employing the Socratic method of

questions and answers, storytelling, show and tell, song, play, food as stimulus and as reward, suspense (will Elijah appear?), pathos (plagues), and more. It is especially structured to involve children meaningfully and to hold their interest by carefully integrating activities for them. These include: a child reciting the Four Questions, the singing of familiar melodies throughout the service, the search for the *Afikoman*, and the question and answer approach during the *Magid* section of the *Seder* service.

- The origins of Pesach reflect Judaism's ongoing process of development and change. Two ancient pagan festivals, the semi-nomadic one-day Pesach festival and the seven-day Canaanite *Matzah* grain festival are mixed together in the blender of Judaism. It is interesting to trace references to Chag HaPesach and Chag HaMatzot in the Torah. Sometimes they occur together, and at other times, Passover is described as one or the other. Time and again throughout Jewish history, ancient customs have been adapted for inclusion within the framework of Jewish life. In the process the meaning and significance of these practices, ideas, and customs were radically transformed and given a

spiritual dimension. This brief explanation can serve as a backdrop for a discussion about how Judaism changes and develops in our day.

### Order of the Passover Seder

There are 15 parts to the *Seder* service. Some are very short, and one, the *Magid*, is extremely long. For the order of the *Seder*, see below on this page.

### Highlights of the Liturgy

For the first Day of Pesach, there are two Torah readings. First, Exodus 12:21-51 is a description of the last of the ten plagues, the events leading up to the Exodus, and some of the basic laws regarding the Passover offering. The second portion, the *Maftir*, is Numbers 28:19-25, which describes in detail the Pesach offerings to be brought to the sanctuary.

The *Haftarah* is Joshua 5:2-6:1, which describes how Joshua gathers the Israelites at Gilgal; circumcizes all males who had been born after the Exodus; and, while still encamped at Gilgal, offers the Passover sacrifice.

On the Second Day, two Torahs are again taken from the Ark. First, Leviticus 22:26-23:44, con-

Name	Description
1 KADAYSH	Recite the <i>Kiddush</i> over the day. All drink the first of the four cups of wine.
2 URCHATZ	Wash the hands without reciting a blessing.
3 KARPAS	The celery is dipped in salt water, blessed, and eaten.
4 YACHATZ	Break the middle <i>matzah</i> , putting half away for the <i>Afikoman</i> .
5 MAGID	Tell the story of the Exodus and sing praises to God over the second cup of wine.
6 RACHATZAH	Wash the hands with the customary blessing ( <i>Al Netilat Yadayim</i> ).
7 MOTZI	Recite the blessing over bread using a piece of the upper <i>matzah</i> .
8 MATZAH	Recite blessing over the <i>matzah</i> , break and distribute the upper <i>matzah</i> .
9 MAROR	Eat the bitter herbs dipped in <i>charoset</i> .
10 KORAYCH	Eat the <i>maror</i> and <i>matzah</i> in a sandwich.
11 SHULCHAN ORAYCH	Serve the Pesach meal.
12 TZAFUN	Eat a piece of the <i>Afikoman</i> , after which no other food may be eaten.
13 BARAYCH	Say the Grace after Meals.
14 HALLEL	Chant the <i>Hallel</i> (Psalms 113-118).
15 NIRTZAH	End the <i>Seder</i> with a prayer for the acceptance of the service.

tains instructions regarding the celebration of the major festivals of the Jewish year with specific reference to the bringing of the Omer. The *Maftir* is the same as for the first day.

The *Haftarah* is II Kings 23:1-9 and 21-25, which describes the Pesach celebrated by King Josiah around the year 621 B.C.E. when the Book of Deuteronomy was "discovered" in the Temple and read to the people.

The counting of the *Omer* begins on the Second Day of Pesach. Leviticus 23:15-16 is read each evening during the Counting of the *Omer*: "From the day after the Sabbath [i.e., Pesach], the day that you bring the sheaf of wave offering, you shall keep count until seven full weeks have elapsed: You shall count 50 days, until the day after the seventh week; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to *Adonai*." This passage is followed by: Blessed are You, *Adonai* our God, Sovereign of the World, who has hallowed us by Your commandments, and has commanded us concerning the Counting of the *Omer*." Then: "This is the \_\_\_\_\_ day of the *Omer*."

Because this seven week period is full of sad memories for the Jewish people, weddings are permitted only on Lag B'Omer, Rosh Chodesh Iyar, and Sivan, and recently Yom HaAtzma'ut and Yom Yerushalayim. A Yizkor service is held on the last day of Pesach.

The liturgy for the Shabbat that falls on Chol HaMo'ed Pesach essentially follows that of a regular Shabbat with the addition of a passage related to Pesach in the *Amidah*. The Torah portion is Exodus 33:12-34:26, about the Pilgrimage Festivals and ending with the command to eat unleavened bread. The *Maftir* is identical to that for the first two days of Pesach. The *Haftarah* is Ezekiel 37:1-14, the famous vision of the valley of dry bones. At the conclusion of the morning service, Song of Songs is read. It speaks of the love between a young man and young woman and has been likened to the covenantal relationship between God and Israel. The love song, whether it be understood literally or allegorically, is well suited for the spring. It speaks of the winter being past, the rain gone, and flowers upon the earth. Hope, too, springs eternal.

### Passover Foods

Removing all leaven (*chamaytz*) from the home is part of making a home *Kasher l'Pesach* — Kosher for Pesach. In addition to removing any leavened foods, all utensils which came into contact with *chamaytz* may not be used during Pesach or on the day preceding Pesach. Two special sets of utensils, flatware, and dishes are used for Pesach: one for *milchig* (dairy) dishes and one for *fleishig* (meat) dishes.

All cooking, food preparation, and eating surfaces are scoured and usually covered for the duration of Pesach. The refrigerator is likewise cleaned to remove all traces of *chamaytz*. The care and the extent that Pesach preparations are made depends on the fervor with which a person celebrates Pesach. Some people do not prepare the home for Pesach, but refrain from eating anything that is *chamaytz*, while others meticulously follow all of the rules and regulations.

Many foods are labeled *Kasher l'Pesach*. Each year the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America publishes a directory of Passover products that are recognized by them as *Kasher l'Pesach*. In the choice of foods, there is also a wide range of observance.

In addition to bread products containing leaven, there are a few other foods which are not eaten on Pesach. The basic rule is that any product that is fermented or can cause fermentation may not be eaten, including five grains: wheat, rye, barley, oats, and spelt. Any food or drink that is made from one of these grains or which contains one of these grains, even in very small quantity is considered *chamaytz*.

Ashkenazic Jews follow the custom of not eating rice, corn, peanuts, or other vegetables in the pea family, treating them as *chamaytz*, because these products swell when cooked and so resemble a leavening process. Neither the grains nor any of the flours or oils made from them may be used. Sephardic tradition allows these products to be eaten.

*Matzah* is an unleavened bread made from water and flour of any of the five major grains which have been carefully tended from harvest through

## TEACHING JEWISH HOLIDAYS

the baking process to make certain that they have no leaven in them.

### SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Grade	Themes/ideas
Kindergarten	Stories about Pesach. A first look at the <i>Seder</i> service.
Grade One	Stories about Pesach. What children can do to help their families prepare for the family <i>Seder</i> .
Grade Two	A basic <i>Seder</i> service: a look at some of the key sections, such as the "Four Questions" and "The Four Sons."
Grade Three	Preparing and leading a <i>Seder</i> for students in Kindergarten through Grade 3. The main <i>Seder</i> symbols and their significance.
Grade Four	The Pesach vocabulary related to the <i>Seder</i> . How Pesach is celebrated in Israel.
Grade Five	Pesach customs and practices apart from the <i>Seder</i> service.
Grade Six	The Order of the <i>Seder</i> . Review of Pesach vocabulary.
Grade Seven	Pesach as it is described in the Bible. A close look at Leviticus 23:5-9. An overview of the events leading up to the Exodus as portrayed in the book of Exodus.
Grade Eight	The Meaning of Pesach, its significance for contemporary Jewry. Writing and leading a creative <i>Seder</i> entitled "Passover Old and New."

Grade Nine The origin and development of Pesach.

Grade Ten Review of Pesach vocabulary, the origin of Pesach, and its significance for modern Jewry.

Grade Eleven The mechanics of having a *Kasher l'Pesach* home and the rationale for it.

Grade Twelve Exploring new symbolism and new ideas to add to the many varied interpretations of Pesach and its symbols.

### ACTIVITIES

#### Preschool/Kindergarten

1. Before Pesach have a "tasting party." Compare the taste of *matzah* with other kinds of crackers and/or bread. (NSM)
2. Help children make a *Seder* plate. Children decorate a paper plate with pictures of items used on the *Seder* plate. Variation: Cut the likenesses out of colored paper, glue them on the plate and decorate it.
3. Work with sand and water to mold bricks. (You'll need to warn parents that you're going to be playing with wet sand in the sandbox). Let the bricks dry. Compare these bricks with bricks of mud baked slowly in an oven. (NSM)
4. Bring a commercially made brick into the classroom. Make observations and comparisons concerning its size, shape, and weight. Mark the water line in a tub of water. What will happen if you put in a brick? Put the brick in and check the line. Take it out and remeasure. (NSM)
5. Use a balance scale. How much *matzah* does it take to balance out an amount of *charoset*? (NSM)

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCES  
FOR MATZA**

The leader raises the matzah and says:

**THERE ARE THREE MEANINGS TO THE MATZAH.**

At the beginning of our seder, we learned that the matzah is a symbol of the bread of poverty we were made to eat in our affliction, when we were slaves in the land of Egypt; that it should always inspire us to work for freedom, justice, and peace for all peoples.

The matzah reminds us, too, of the haste in which we fled from Egypt. So hard did the Egyptians press the Israelites that, as the Torah tells us, "They could not tarry. So, they baked unleavened cakes of the dough they had brought out of Egypt and did not prepare for themselves any provision." (Exodus 12:39)

The work of redemption cannot wait. The freeing of the oppressed, the hastening of the day when "justice shall well up like water," cannot be delayed. (Amos 5:24) When the moment came, we did not tarry or delay our flight to freedom. We fled with the unleavened dough so that it baked, unrisen, in the sun. The matzah thus reminds us that there is no time to linger when justice waits to be done.

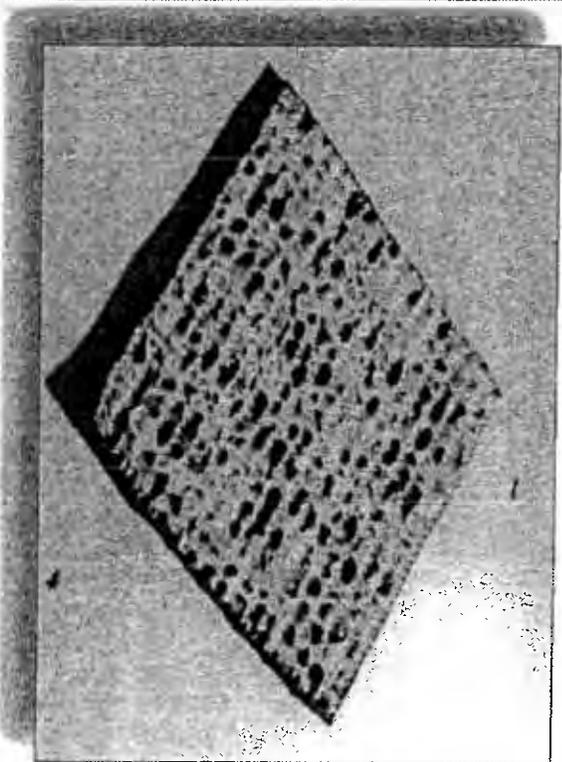
There is a third meaning to the matzah. In ancient times, the Israelites lived with simplicity in the desert. They lived in tents, dressed in plain garments, and ate only the simplest of foods. Even their bread was only an unleavened cake, like the matzah we eat tonight.

When the Israelites settled in Canaan, they became farmers. Soon they prospered; and they began to desire more and more material goods. Yet their desires were not sated; instead, they grew with each new acquisition; and the Israelites became greedy. The prophets cried out, pleading with them to return to the modest ways of the desert.

Now the matzah has come to symbolize moderation and balance. Let it teach us to delight not in acts of unrestrained desire but, instead, in acts of compassion and humanity. Luxuries can be good, adding to our enjoyment of life. But when we live only for our plea, blind to those in need, then the plea of the promises must be heard

The leader raises the matzah and says:

מִצֵּה זֶה שְׂאֵנוּ אוֹכְלִים עַל שׁוּם מַדָּה  
עַל שׁוּם שְׁלֵא תִסְפִּיק בְּצַקִּים שְׁלֵ-  
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ לְהַחְמוּרֵי עַד שְׁנוּגְלָה  
עֲלֵיהֶם מִלֶּךְ מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים הַקְדוּשׁ-  
בְּרוּךְ-הוּא וְגֵאֲלָם שְׁנוּאַמָּר, וְיֵאָפוּ  
אֶת-הַבֶּצֶק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם  
עֲגוּת מִצּוֹת כִּי לֹא חָמֵץ, כִּי-גֵ'שׁוּ  
מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא יִכְלוּ לְהַחְמוּמָה וְגַם-  
צִדָּה לֹא-עָשׂוּ לָהֶם: (שְׁמוֹת י"ב ל"ט)



### What are the Passover Seder Requirements?

- **Passover Seder Requirement #1: Matzah, Matza, or Matzo: "sweet", "unleavened bread" in Hebrew)**

Matzah is used in many rituals in the Passover seder, and has a number of symbolic meanings. Because matzah is sweet as opposed to leavened bread which is sour, matzah primarily symbolizes the sweetness of freedom for the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. Matzah also symbolizes the speed with which the Hebrews became free people, as they had to leave Egypt in haste in order to attain their freedom, only leaving enough time to bake the unleavened bread known as matzah, which symbolized the haste of the Hebrews. On the other hand, matzah also symbolizes the somber fact that the Hebrews baked unleavened bread because they were trying to escape slavery. Therefore, matzah represents the dual meanings of recalling the hardships of slavery while experiencing the sweetness of freedom.

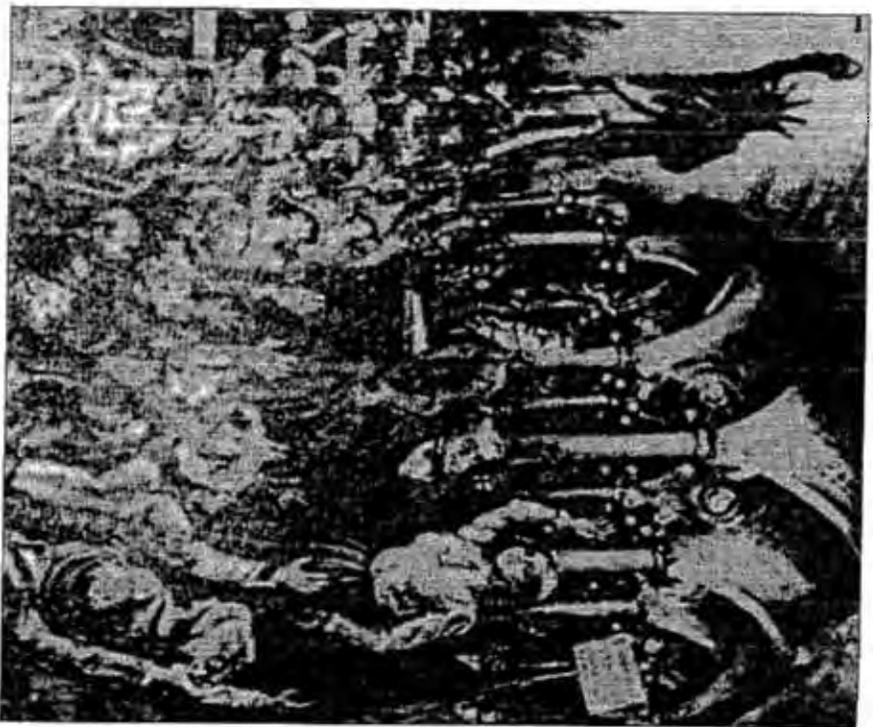
- **Passover Seder Requirement #2: Maror (meaning of Maror: "bitter herbs" in Hebrew) –**

Maror are bitter herbs, usually represented by horseradish or romaine lettuce, that symbolize the hardships experienced by the Hebrews when they were slaves in Egypt. Maror is placed in two areas on the Passover seder plate. Some Jewish communities replace the second maror on the Passover seder plate by using a second bitter vegetable called "Chazeret" (meaning of Chazeret: "bitter vegetable" in Hebrew). This second bitter vegetable must not be the same type of bitter vegetable that is used for the Karpas. Examples of chazeret include watercress, cucumber, romaine lettuce, endive, and radishes. The chazeret is used in some Jewish communities to replace the second maror when making Koreich, meaning Hillel's Sandwich.

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCES  
FOR MAROR**

The leader raises the maror and says:

WE EAT THE MAROR, OR BITTER HERBS, BECAUSE OUR OPPRESSORS EMBITTERED OUR LIVES; as the Torah tells us, the Egyptians "made [the Israelites'] lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and brick, and in all manner of work in the field; all service wherein they made them serve was with crushing labor." (Exodus 1:14)



The leader raises the maror and says:

מָרוֹר שְׂאֵנוֹ אוֹכְלִים עַל שׁוֹם מָדָד  
עַל שׁוֹם שְׁמֹרְרוֹ הַמִּצְרִים אֶת-חַיֵּינוּ  
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ פְּמִצְרִים, שְׁנֹאֲמַר  
וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת-חַיֵּיהֶם בַּעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה  
בְּהַמֶּר וּבַלְכֻנִּים וּבַקֶּל-עֲבֹדָה בַּשָּׂדֶה  
אֶת כָּל-עֲבָדְתָם אֲשֶׁר-עָבְדוּ בָהֶם  
בְּפֶרֶךְ: (שְׁמוֹת א' י"ד)

Clara Lemlich (shown at left, on stage, with hand raised) personifies the qualities of urgent and determined commitment to justice. A teenage garment worker and activist, Lemlich attended the November 22, 1909 meeting in New York of the ladies' shirtwaist industry workers. After hours of open debate, she stood up and, in response to the intolerable working conditions, offered a resolution that a strike be declared. There was wild cheering as thousands raised their hands in agreement. This strike came to be known as the Uprising of the Twenty Thousand.

that follow. Rabban Gamliel, one of the most important early Rabbis, is credited with transforming Judaism after the destruction of the Temple. He thought so highly of the *z'roa/pesach* mitzvah that, in the Haggadah, he named it first among three seder commandments ("Whoever has not explained the following three things on Passover has not fulfilled the purpose of the seder, namely: *pesach* . . ."). And yet, the *z'roa* is neither raised nor lowered from the seder plate. In traditional Haggadah, the leader does not even point to the shank bone when asking, "What is the meaning of this *pesach*?"

The answer to this question is there for all to see, making any further gesture superfluous. The *z'roa* embodies the holiday in seasons past, present, and future. Symbolizing the first, Egyptian Pesach, the shank bone stands for those Israelite slaves who led their households to freedom. The Pesachs that ensued are remembered by the biblical commandment from Exodus, reinforced by the Mishnaic edict of Rabban Gamliel.

In Temple times the *pesach* was an animal specifically chosen for its sacrificial suitability, without blemishes of any kind. After Temple priests slaughtered it, Jews took the offering back to their homes and roasted it whole, making sure that none of its bones were broken in the cooking process. In our time, the Jewish people stand united in basic beliefs that defy bone-crushing divisiveness. Our future redemption is contingent on our unflinching understanding of *z'roa* as symbolic of the strong, outstretched arm of God, *z'roa n'yugah*. We endeavor to renew our Mount Sinai covenant with God, pledged barely three months after God led us out of Egypt. Trying to be godlike in our dealings with others will surely help to bring ultimate deliverance. God's hand extends everywhere to guide our moral strivings.

### *Maror* and *Chazeret*—Horseradish or Lettuce?

Each year, after cleaning my seder plate before Pesach began, I would stare at one of its symbols, confounded by its meaning. I presumed I had at least a passing knowledge of Pesach and its observances. But an understanding of *chazeret* completely escaped me. I had never encountered an explanation of *chazeret*, so I willed it into oblivion, covering its designated place, and my ignorance, with additional *karpas* or

*chazret*. Only a close reading of reference books and traditional Haggadah led me to learn about *chazeret*.

I soon discovered that *chazeret* is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible. The Rabbis meant *chazeret* to be included in the more familiar, generic term *maror*, or bitter herbs. According to both the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, the preferred *chazeret* is called *chassah*, a form of lettuce closely related to the romaine or escarole varieties we know today. The Mishnah describes sharp-tasting green vegetables variously translated as endive, chervil, peppercorn, dittany, snakeroot, or sea holly. I also learned that in antiquity, lettuce was used for medicinal purposes and was quite different from our current salad mainstay, made much milder by two thousand years of cultivation. When it first sprouts, *chazeret* has soft leaves and a sweet taste. If allowed to grow until it begins to flower, the leaves harden and become bitter. It is this bitter *chazeret* that adorns some seder plates. "Rabbi Shmuel ben Nachman said: How is Egypt similar to *chazeret*? Just as when it first grows it is gentle but turns harsh and bitter, exile in Egypt began gently and ended harshly."

By late medieval times, when Jews moved east and north to Poland and Russia, lettuce was a difficult commodity to come by, especially in the early spring. They began to substitute the much more biting horseradish root as *maror*, called *chrein* in Yiddish. Ira Steingrodt, author of *Keeping Passover*, philosophically reasons that *chazeret* is missing from some modern seder plates because it may have become redundant, given our modern upbeat attitudes. Prosperous, assimilated American Jews no longer feel the need for a double dose of suffering.

A clue to the tradition of two seder plate spaces for *maror* may come from the Mishnah. This legal code, known for its brevity, nonetheless mentions two Pesach actions done with *maror* that we continue to practice at our seders today: "They served him—he dips lettuce before he reaches the 'bread condiment,'" and "They served him unleavened bread and lettuce and *chazret*." A second hint can be seen by studying our familiar seder plate configuration. *Maror* is situated in the middle, central position, connected to both *beitzah* (eggs) and *z'roa* (shank bone), the prime Temple sacrifices of Pesach. The contemporary Jewish scholar and psychologist Reuven Bulka defines *maror* as the central feature and theme of the seder plate. Our Sages doubled its role and highlighted its importance through its prominent seder placement.

A third, psychological rationale resonates today, with so many of us seeking a heightened spiritual understanding of Judaism. Perhaps because of the almost unbearable amount of pain and suffering Jews have been forced to endure, bitterness has become endemic in the Jewish psyche. Zalman Schacter-Shalom, a creator of the Jewish Renewal Movement in America, explains that this doesn't have to be viewed as totally bad. *Maror* reawakens the pain and bitterness that define parts of everyone's life. We try to work our way through the pain. Sometimes we learn from it, sometimes we do not. With its harsh, biting taste, *maror* recalls pain's reality.

Even when we are prosperous and happy, we remember bad times. Even when living in freedom and well-being, we must remember that our condition was not always thus. That is why, says Israeli scholar Menachem Kasher, we eat matzah before we eat *maror* in the seder ritual. Only after the Israelites had a tantalizing taste of freedom as represented by the matzah did they begin to understand and feel the full bitterness of their exile in Egypt. Slaves become used to their condition. If they are fortunate enough to escape their ordeal, they appreciate freedom more than the rest of us, who tend to take our liberty for granted. But does this mean that we can appreciate what we have only after we lose it? A large part of the maturation process teaches us the wisdom to distinguish good times from bad, to appreciate the good times as we experience them. Turning to the rhythms of the Pesach seder affords us the opportunity of many "Dayeinu" moments. "Sharing bitersweet memories with family and friends helps us to appreciate our fortunate circumstances together. A short memory of complacency often has bitter consequences. Eating *maror* at seder gives us back our lengthy pasts, reminding us of our substantial, solid history.

We have referred to the first-century Jewish philosopher Philo several times in these pages. His quiet sense of the ideal focuses a search for peaceful order in the mad frenzy of existence. Here is what Philo had to say about *maror*: "[Bitter herbs] are manifestations of a psychic migration, through which one removes from wickedness to virtue. Those who naturally and genuinely repent become bitter toward their former way of life. We who desire repentance eat . . . bitter herbs. We first eat bitterness over our old and unendurable life, and then [we eat] the opposite . . . through meditation on humility, which is called reverence."

*Charoset* may also be related to the Hebrew word *lachzor*, "to return," signifying God's compassionate freeing of Israel from Egyptian slavery, bringing Israel back to serve the Divine after the long sojourn among Egyptian idolaters. As noted earlier, in the Aramaic vernacular of ancient Jewish life, the word for bitter herbs is *chasah*, which, according to the talmudic Sage Rava, also suggests compassion "because *Adonai* had compassion upon the Children of Israel and redeemed them." Our eating of bitter herbs on Pesach transmits divine tenderness in its many marvelous complexities.

### Charoset—Recipes for Judaism

Our last seder plate symbol activates taste buds just thinking about it. There are as many varieties of *charoset*, a mixture of fruit, nuts, and wine, as there are distinct Jewish practices on Pesach. Several ingredients of *charoset* are compared to themes of love in the Song of Songs, the sensual biblical saga we read on this holiday.

The green figs form on the fig tree,  
The vines in blossom give off fragrance.  
Arise, my darling;  
My fair one, come away! . . .

My beloved has gone down into his nut-garden,  
To the beds of spices. . . .

Let me climb the date-palm . . .  
Let your breasts be like clusters of grapes . . .  
Your breath like the fragrance of apples,  
And Your mouth like choicest wine. . . .  
(Song of Songs 2:13; 6:2; 7:9-10)

Two of Judaism's most erudite medieval philosophers could not resist offering their own recipes for *charoset* in their otherwise abstract writings. In his chapters of *Mishneh Torah* devoted to Pesach, *Hilchot Charosetz Umatzah*, Maimonides explains: "Take dates, dried figs, or raisins, and crush them. Add wine vinegar, and mix with shredded cin-

namon and fresh ginger." The most important figure in Kabbalah, Rabbi Isaac Luria, borrows his mother's recipe, which calls for three kinds of spices and seven kinds of mashed fruit. One contemporary rabbi describes the *charoset* savored by our ancestors as more like Chinese duck sauce, made of apricots.

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### From Our Tradition

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## Maror

### Mind vs. Heart

At the height of the bitter exile, Moses cries out to G-d: "My Lord! Why have You done bad to this nation?!"—A cry that reverberates through our tear-soaked history. G-d begins His response by saying: "I have revealed Myself to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob..." Why is G-d evoking the memory of the Patriarchs?



The Patriarchs are the "heart" of Israel, while Moses is the mind of Israel. The mind can come to understand that suffering refines man. That a person's finest abilities are unleashed only under conditions of challenge and trial. That without a free choice between good and evil nothing we do could possibly be of any significance.

But, ultimately, why must it be this way? You, G-d, could have ordered reality so that there is gain without pain, so that the highest peaks of life could be scaled also without the momentum of its lowest descents.

The mind of the believer will never accept the "necessity" for evil and pain. The heart, of course, also perceives the pain, but, unlike the mind, tolerates contradiction. Can you prove to a mother that her child is not deserving of love? Outrage and devotion, judgment and acceptance—a heart that loves has room for them all.

Moses, said G-d, you are the mind of My people. The mind that is the instrument for grasping My Truth and, with it, illuminating the world. But you, too, are a child of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You, too, have inherited from them the Jewish heart—the intrinsic bond with your G-d that the most terrible contradictions cannot shake.

*Excerpted from **The Passover Haggadah** with Insights from the Teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, published and copyright Kehot Publication Society, Brooklyn NY*

## 9. Maror – Bitter herb



### BODY

Grab some of that bitter herb, enough to make the size of a small egg if you would crunch it into a ball. Some have the custom of using both horseradish and romaine lettuce (though either/or is also ok). Dip the bitter herb in the charoset. Shake off any excess.

*It's a careful balance: You want bitter herbs, but you want to sweeten the bitterness a little. But it's still got to be bitter herbs—not a sumptuous charoset hors d'oeuvre. Look, you can try that later at the meal. We'll get there—don't worry.*

Say the blessing: "Blessed be You... and commanded us concerning eating bitter herbs."

Eat it. All of it. No funny faces now.

### SOUL

What's so great about the bitterness? Why do we want to remember *that*? Actually, our bitterness in Egypt was/is the key to our redemption. We never got used to Egypt. We never felt we belonged there. We never said, "They are the masters and we are the slaves and that's the way it is." It always remained something we felt bitter about, something that was unjust and needed to change.

If it hadn't been that way, we probably would never have left. In fact, tradition tells us that 80% of the Jews said, "This is our land. How can we leave it?" And they stayed and died there. But as for the rest of us, when Moses came and told us we were going to leave, we believed him. It was our bitterness that had preserved our faith. Everyone has his Egypt. You've got to know who you are and what are your limitations. But heaven forbid to make peace with them. The soul within you knows no limits.

This is the sweetness we apply to the bitter herb: Bitterness alone, without any direction, is self-destructive. Inject some life and optimism into it, and it becomes the springboard to freedom.

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCES  
FOR CHAROSET**

Mishnah 3

משנה ג

When they had brought<sup>1</sup> before him<sup>2</sup> he dips<sup>3</sup> lettuce<sup>4</sup> before he reaches *the breaking* of the bread.<sup>5</sup> They brought before him<sup>6</sup> unleavened bread, lettuce, fruit-spice sauce,<sup>7</sup> and two cooked dishes,<sup>8</sup> although the fruit-spice is not obligatory;<sup>9</sup> R. Eliezer bar Zadok says, It is obligatory.<sup>10</sup> And when the Temple existed they used to bring before him the bones of the Pass-over offering.<sup>11</sup>

יהביאו ילפניו ימטבל יבחורה עד שמיניע ילפרפרת הפת. הביאו לפניו מצה וחרוסת ושני תבשילין אף על פי שאין חרוסת מצנה; רבי אליעזר בר צדוק אומר, ימצנה. ובמקדש היו מביאים לפניו גופו של פסח.

Charoset

1 Vegetables (according to רש"י and רשב"א), the food (according to ר' חננאל). Some texts add greens and lettuce. 2 The participant at the table. 3 Into vinegar or salt water. 4 Or other vegetable into a condiment and eats it. 5 'bread sauce'—a bread condiment which was bitter. Only the vegetable (referred to as כרפס in the instructions in the הגדת הפסח) may be eaten until the proper time for eating the מצה. סרפרת actually means appetiser, salad, dessert, and some render this phrase until he comes to the bitter herbs. 6 i.e., the celebrant. 7 Finely ground fruit, nut and spices mixed with wine, used as a sauce for neutralising the bitter taste of the מרור. 8 An egg to symbolise the קרבן פסח and meat (roasted bone) in token of the קרבן חגיגה. 9 Literally commandment, i.e., a ritual obligation. No benediction is recited over the חרוסת because it is secondary to the מרור. 10 The חרוסת is symbolic in remembrance of the mortar which the Israelites used for building in Egypt. 11 i.e., the whole roasted carcass of the קרבן פסח was served up.

Mishnah 4

משנה ד

They poured out for him the second cup.<sup>1</sup> And here\* the child<sup>2</sup> asks his father, and if the child has insufficient understanding<sup>3</sup> his father instructs<sup>4</sup> him: *Wherefore<sup>5</sup> is this night different from all other nights, because on all other nights we may eat both leavened and unleavened bread but on this night only unleavened bread? Because<sup>6</sup> on all other nights we may eat any kind of herbs, but on this*

ימנוגו לו כוס שני. וקאן יתבן שואל את אביו, ואם אין דעת בבן אביו מלמדו, מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות, שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה, הלילה הזה כולו מצה? שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות, הלילה הזה מרור? שבכל הלילות אנו

כאן שאלה הן?

night bitter herb? Because<sup>6,7</sup> on all other nights we may eat flesh which is roasted, cooked or boiled, but on this night entirely roasted? Because<sup>8</sup> on all other nights we might dip once<sup>9</sup> but on this night twice?<sup>9</sup> And according to the knowledge of the child his father instructs<sup>10</sup> him. He begins with the shameful tale<sup>11</sup> and ends with the praiseworthy narrative.<sup>12</sup> And he explains from *My ancestor was a wandering Aramean*<sup>13</sup> until he concludes the whole portion.<sup>14</sup>

אֹכְלֵי בֶּשֶׂר צְלִי שְׁלוּק, וּמְבוּשָׁל, הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה כָּלוּ צְלִי? שֶׁבֶכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ מְטְבִילִין פְּעַם אַחַת. הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה יִשְׁתִּי פְּעָמַיִם? וְלִפִּי דַעְתּוֹ שֶׁל בֶּן אָבִיו<sup>10</sup> מְלַמְדוֹ. מִתְחִיל<sup>11</sup> בְּנִגְוֹת וּמְסִיִּים יִבְשָׁבַח. וְדוֹרֵשׁ יִמְאַרְמֵי אוֹבֵד אָבִי, עַד שִׁיִּגְמֹר כָּל-הַפְּרָשָׁה כּוּלָּהּ.<sup>14</sup>

1 *i.e.*, the celebrant's cup of wine was filled up. 2 Or son. 3 *viz.*, who does not know how to put the questions. 4 *prompts him* how to word the questions. 5 This is the text as given in the *תלמוד בבלי*, *Babylonian Talmud*.

The *תלמוד ירושלמי*, *Jerusalem (or Palestinian) Talmud*, gives מה-וְשִׁמְנָה הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת, שֶׁבֶכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ מְטְבִילִין פְּעַם אַחַת וְהַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה יִשְׁתִּי פְּעָמַיִם? שֶׁבֶכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלֵי חֶמֶץ וּמִצָּה, וְהַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה כָּלוּ מִצָּה שֶׁבֶכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלֵי בֶּשֶׂר צְלִי שְׁלוּק וּמְבוּשָׁל וְהַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה כָּלוּ צְלִי

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6 This is preceded mentally by מה-וְשִׁמְנָה הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת. 7 This question naturally could only have been put during the existence of the Temple. But after the destruction of the Temple it is no longer applicable and is therefore omitted from our *סדר* liturgy. 8 *i.e.*, there is no question whatever regarding ritual observance. The *גמרא* points out that the *Mishnah* text should be אֵין אָנוּ מְטְבִילִין אֲפִילוּ פְּעַם אַחַת, *we do not have to dip even once*. It is so given in the *תנדה של פסח*. 9 *i.e.*, we must dip twice, once after the first washing of the hands and before the halving of the middle *מצה* and again when eating the *מרור* (see the preceding *Mishnah*, **Notes 3, 7**). 10 *i.e.*, he explains suitably and according to his intelligence. 11 ..... עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ and וְעַכְשָׁיו קָרְבָנוּ הַמְקוֹם לְעַבֹדָתוֹ. 12 ..... מִתְחִילָה עוֹבְדֵי עַבֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ ..... וְנָאֵל אֶת-אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם. 13 Or *Chaldaean, Chaldee*. 14 *Deuteronomy 26, 5*. \* Popular pronunciation [כין] [כין].

A third, psychological rationale resonates today, with so many of us seeking a heightened spiritual understanding of Judaism. Perhaps because of the almost unbearable amount of pain and suffering Jews have been forced to endure, bitterness has become endemic in the Jewish psyche. Zalman Schacter-Shalom, a creator of the Jewish Renewal Movement in America, explains that this doesn't have to be viewed as totally bad. *Maror* reawakens the pain and bitterness that define parts of everyone's life. We try to work our way through the pain. Sometimes we learn from it, sometimes we do not. With its harsh, biting taste, *maror* recalls pain's reality.

Even when we are prosperous and happy, we remember bad times. Even when living in freedom and well-being, we must remember that our condition was not always thus. That is why, says Israeli scholar Menachem Kasher, we eat matzah before we eat *maror* in the seder ritual. Only after the Israelites had a tantalizing taste of freedom as represented by the matzah did they begin to understand and feel the full bitterness of their exile in Egypt. Slaves become used to their condition. If they are fortunate enough to escape their ordeal, they appreciate freedom more than the rest of us, who tend to take our liberty for granted.

But does this mean that we can appreciate what we have only after we lose it? A large part of the maturation process teaches us the wisdom to distinguish good times from bad, to appreciate the good times as we experience them. Turning to the rhythms of the Pesach seder affords us the opportunity of many "'Dayeinu' moments." Sharing bitersweet memories with family and friends helps us to appreciate our fortunate circumstances together. A short memory of complacency often has bitter consequences. Eating *maror* at seder gives us back our lengthy pass, reminding us of our substantial, solid history.

We have referred to the first-century Jewish philosopher Philo several times in these pages. His quiet sense of the ideal focuses a search for peaceful order in the mad frenzy of existence. Here is what Philo had to say about *maror*: "[Bitter herbs] are manifestations of a psychic migration, through which one removes from wickedness to virtue. Those who naturally and genuinely repent become bitter toward their former way of life. We who desire repentance eat . . . bitter herbs. We first eat bitterness over our old and unendurable life, and then [we eat] the opposite . . . through meditation on humility, which is called reverence."

*Chazeret* may also be related to the Hebrew word *lachzor*, "to return," signifying God's compassionate freeing of Israel from Egyptian slavery, bringing Israel back to serve the Divine after the long sojourn among Egyptian idolaters. As noted earlier, in the Aramaic vernacular of ancient Jewish life, the word for bitter herbs is *chasab*, which, according to the talmudic Sage Rava, also suggests compassion "because *Adonai* had compassion upon the Children of Israel and redeemed them." Our eating of bitter herbs on Pesach transmits divine tenderness in its many marvelous complexities.

### *Charoset*—Recipes for Judaism

Our last seder plate symbol activates taste buds just thinking about it. There are as many varieties of *charoset*, a mixture of fruit, nuts, and wine, as there are distinct Jewish practices on Pesach. Several ingredients of *charoset* are compared to themes of love in the Song of Songs, the sensual biblical saga we read on this holiday.

The green figs form on the fig tree,  
The vines in blossom give off fragrance.  
Arise, my darling;  
My fair one, come away! . . .

My beloved has gone down into his nut-garden,  
To the beds of spices. . . .

Let me climb the date-palm . . .  
Let your breasts be like clusters of grapes . . .  
Your breath like the fragrance of apples,  
And Your mouth like choicest wine. . . .  
(Song of Songs 2:13; 6:2; 7:9-10)

Two of Judaism's most erudite medieval philosophers could not resist offering their own recipes for *charoset* in their otherwise abstract writings. In his chapters of *Mishneh Torah* devoted to Pesach, *Hilchot Chametz Umatzah*, Maimonides explains: "Take dates, dried figs, or raisins, and crush them. Add wine vinegar, and mix with shredded cin-

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**LEARNING STATION RESOURCES  
FOR Z'ROA**

## THE THREE SYMBOLS OF PASSOVER

Shimon ben Gamliel  
is a Palestinian  
who lived  
the end of the  
1 century and  
headed the  
academy of

which  
lived from  
about 80-90 CE.

The Passover seder includes many interesting and important symbols, but three of them are so meaningful that, according to the sage Rabban Gamliel, no seder is complete unless they are fully explained. These symbols are: the *pesach*, the *matzah*, and the *maror*.

The leader raises the shankbone or beet and says:

**THIS BONE OF A LAMB IS THE SYMBOL OF THE PESACH LAMB.** After wandering in the desert for forty years, we came to dwell in our own land where, each year, we would gather together to celebrate the Exodus from Egypt with rejoicing and festivity. Families from across the land would make the pilgrimage, and each family would bring a lamb as its special offering in honor of the festival.

This lamb was known as the *pesach*, or paschal lamb, in remembrance of the time when we were spared the tragic fate of the Egyptians, whose firstborn were slain; as the Torah tells us, "God *passed over* the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when God smote the Egyptians and spared our houses." (Exodus 12:27)

In Hebrew, *pesach* means "pass over." That is why the offering was called the *pesach*, or pass-over, sacrifice; and that is why the festival is called Passover.

*pesach* is derived  
from the Greek  
word *pascha*,  
which means  
"to pass over."

## פֶּסַח מַצֵּה וּמַרֹר

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הֵיזָה אוֹמֵר, כָּל  
שֶׁלֹא אָמַר שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים אֵלּוּ  
כִּפְסַח לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי חוּבְתוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ  
דָּו: פֶּסַח מַצֵּה וּמַרֹר:

The leader raises the shankbone or beet and says:

**פֶּסַח שְׁהָיָה אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ אוֹכְלִים  
בְּזֵמַן שְׂפִיטַת הַמַּקְדָּשׁ קַיִם, עַל שׁוֹם  
מִדֵּוּ? עַל שׁוֹם שְׂפִטַּח הַקֹּדֶשׁ-פְּרוֹךְ-דָּהוּא  
עַל בְּהֵמַי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם,  
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, וְאִמְרַתֶּם בְּחַפְזָה הוּא לִי  
אֲשֶׁר פָּסַח עַל-בְּהֵמַי בְּנִי-יִשְׂרָאֵל  
בְּמִצְרַיִם בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת-מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת-  
בְּתוּלֵי הָעַמ, וְיִסְדֹּד הָעַם וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ:  
(שְׁמוֹת י"ב כ"ז)**



### What are the Passover Seder Requirements?

- **Passover Seder Requirement #4: Z'roah, Zeroah, or Zeroa (meaning of zeroah: "arm" or "wing" in Hebrew, as in the arm or wing of an animal)**

This is either a cooked shank bone, thigh, or neck of a chicken which symbolizes the Pesach, meaning the lamb that was sacrificed during the first Passover, when G-d posach ("passed over" in Hebrew) the homes of the Hebrews and killed the first-born son in each Egyptian household. It also symbolizes the later Passover offering brought to the first and second Temples in Jerusalem. It is not eaten but simply serves as a reminder and symbol. The term "zeroah" also symbolizes the outstretched arm or hand which with G-d delivered the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt.

### What do the Zeroah and Beitzah have in common?

The zeroah (roasted shankbone) and beitzah (hard-boiled roasted egg) both represent Passover lamb sacrifices. In addition to the original Passover lamb sacrifice represented by the zeroah, a second Passover lamb sacrifice called the "chagigah" or "hagigah" came to be represented by the beitzah. Chagigah means "festival offering" in Hebrew. In ancient times, the chagigah now represented by the beitzah was served at the Passover seder meal followed later on by serving the original Passover lamb sacrifice represented by the zeroah. This was done so that the Passover lamb sacrifice would be eaten for the sole purpose of fulfilling the religious commandment to eat a paschal lamb, and not to quell hunger.

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/passoverseder.html>

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCES  
FOR CHAZARET**



Mishnah 3

When they had brought' before him' he dips' lettuce' before he reaches the breaking of the bread. They brought before him' unleavened bread, lettuce, fruit-spice sauce, and two cooked dishes, although the fruit-spice is not obligatory; R. Eliezer bar Zadok says, It is obligatory.<sup>10</sup> And when the Temple existed they used to bring before him the bones of the Passover offering.<sup>11</sup>

1 Vegetables (according to רש"י and רמב"ם), the food (according to רמב"ם). 2 The participant at the table. 3 Into vinegar or salt water. 4 Or other vegetable into a condiment and eat it. 5 'bread sauce'—a bread condiment which was bitter. Only the vegetable (referred to as כְּרִיסִים in the instructions in the Mishnah) may be eaten until the proper time for eating the קָטֹרֶת. קָטֹרֶת actually means appetizer, salad, dessert, and some render this phrase until he comes to the bitter herbs. 6 i.e., the celebrant. 7 Finely ground fruit, nut and spices mixed with wine, used as a sauce for neutralising the bitter taste of the קָטֹרֶת. 8 An egg to symbolise the commandment, i.e., a ritual obligation. 9 Literally the commandment, i.e., a ritual obligation. No benediction is recited over the קָטֹרֶת because it is secondary to the קָטֹרֶת. 10 The קָטֹרֶת is symbolic in remembrance of the mortar which the Israelites used for building in Egypt. 11 i.e., the whole roasted carcass of the קָטֹרֶת was served up.

Mishnah 4

They poured out for him the second cup.<sup>1</sup> And here\* the child asks his father, and if the child has insufficient understanding' his father instructs' him: Wherefore' is this night different from all other nights, because on all other nights we may eat both leavened and unleavened bread but on this night only unleavened bread? Because\* on all other nights we may eat any kind of herbs, but on this

the man brought from outside. 7 Literally hands. 8 To eat of the קָטֹרֶת.

CHAPTER 10

Mishnah 1

When every eye of Passover is close to the Minhah Service, one may not eat until it becomes dark,<sup>2</sup> and even a poor person in Israel may not eat until he reclines,<sup>3</sup> and they give him<sup>4</sup> not less than four cups of wine<sup>5</sup> even though he<sup>6</sup> is supported from the charity-food.<sup>7</sup>

1 Or the Evening Sacrifice, i.e., קָטֹרֶת קֶשֶׁת. About half an hour before, i.e., at the beginning of the tenth hour (3.0 p.m.) (Numbers 28, 8. See 5.) 2 So as to enjoy fully the eating of קָטֹרֶת. 3 On a couch at the table. 4 The guardians of the poor. 5 Or, bet. 6 Corresponding to the four terms (Exodus 6, 6, 7). 7 He must still get wine for four cups. 8 Or Poor-Dish, קַבְדֵי, tray, pot, in which food was collected from the public for the poor.

Mishnah 2

When the first cup had been filled up,<sup>1</sup> the School of Shammai say, He recites the Benediction over the day,<sup>2</sup> and then he recites the Benediction over the wine,<sup>3</sup> but the School of Hillel<sup>4</sup> say, He recites the Benediction over the wine and after that he recites the Benediction over the day.<sup>5</sup>

1 Literally they poured out for him the first cup.\* Here begins a description of the Minhah Service which is essentially as we practise it nowadays. 2 i.e., the קָטֹרֶת is recited first. 3 Blessed art Thou, O Eternal, our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine. 4 Their view is accepted. 5 Compare tractate 8. Concerning the sanctity of the Festival. \* קָטֹרֶת, mix, i.e., mingle with water and spices.

Black, Philip. Mishnayoth, Order Moed, Mishna Press Ltd., London, England, 1952.

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCES  
FOR KARPAS**

### What are the Passover Seder Requirements?

- **Passover Seder Requirement #5: Karpas (meaning of Karpas: "green vegetable" in Hebrew) –**

Karpas primarily symbolizes the tears and sweat of the Hebrews when they toiled as slaves in Egypt.

### Why does one dip vegetables into salt water, vinegar, lemon juice, or lime juice (the liquid depends on one's custom)?

The custom of dipping vegetables into salt water, vinegar, lemon juice, or lime juice may have been derived from the activities at ancient Roman banquets where guests would begin the banquet by dipping vegetables in either vinegar or a fruit sauce. Charoset may have eventually represented the fruit sauce. The ancient rabbis who formulated the Passover seder instructions were writing the Passover seder instructions at a time when the Romans ruled Palestine and so they may have incorporated many of the Roman rituals they saw at ritualized Roman feasts or banquets that were known as "Symposia" into the instructions for conducting the Passover seder as well as both transforming and re-interpreting them to fit the needs of the Passover seder.

- **Passover Seder Requirement #6: Charoset, Charoseth, Haroset, or Haroseth (meaning of charoset: "mixture of fruits and nuts with wine or grape juice" in Hebrew)**

The composition and mixture of Charoset symbolizes the mortar with which the Hebrews used to create bricks which in turn were used to build cities such as Pithom and Ra'amses [not to be confused with the Pharaoh (King) Ramses] for the ancient Egyptians. The sweet taste of charoset is supposed to overtake the bitter taste of maror in both a literal and symbolic sense, symbolically because freedom is represented by the sweet taste of charoset and overtakes slavery, represented by the bitter taste of maror. Moving from slavery to freedom also represents a transition from dependence to independence, from depending on other cultures to survive to depending on one's own self and group to survive and self-govern.

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/passoverseder.html>

# Karpas and Gratitude

*Rabbi Shraga Simmons*

Why is eating a vegetable one of the 15 steps to freedom?

We take a green vegetable and bless God for creating fruits from the ground. Gratitude is liberating. "Who is the rich person?" asks the Talmud. "The one who's satisfied with what he has got."

This appreciation comes through focusing on details. For example, to get this green vegetable to our table, it had to be planted, harvested, packed, shipped, unloaded, unpacked, displayed, and rung up by a cashier -- before we even bring it home!

If we truly appreciate all that we have, we'll be constantly proclaiming: "Life is a wonderful gift!"

On a deeper level, we dip the vegetable in salt water to let us know that even those things which appear bitter -- a lost job or a broken relationship -- are ultimately for the best.

<http://www.aish.com/passinsight>

## Karpas

1. **Karpas is a vegetable. Parsley or a potato is generally used.**

Karpas is dipped in salt water to represent tears. The custom of serving karpas dates back to Jerusalem of the 1st and 2nd centuries when it was common to begin a formal meal by passing around vegetables as hors d'oeuvres.

We dip a vegetable into salt water. Parsley, radishes, celery, or potatoes are traditionally used. After dipping the vegetable, we say:

Blessed are you Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

This practice is meant to arouse the curiosity of the children.

[http://judaism.about.com/library/3\\_holidays/passover/bl\\_passover\\_seder.htm#Karpas](http://judaism.about.com/library/3_holidays/passover/bl_passover_seder.htm#Karpas)

## A Menu of Meanings: Why Karpas?

THE WORD “Karpas” derives from the Greek “Karpos” meaning fruit of the soil. Though the historical origins of dipping Karpas at the seder simply reflect the accepted cuisine of the Greco-Roman symposium, the rabbis added their own symbolic interpretations in order to connect the dipping to the Pesach story.

### 1. Spring Greens: April/Nisan

Metaphorically, Karpas, the spring vegetable, represents both the historic birth of Israel born out of the womb of Egypt in the Exodus and the rebirth of nature renewed each spring. According to Philo and to Rabbi Joshua the original birthday of nature – the Creation – occurred at Pesach-time, not Rosh Hashana. Similarly, the Italian name for spring **prima-vera** and the French **printemps** preserve the sense of the return to the original “first time” of the world.

Spring (old English) is originally applied to the place of origin from which a stream arises. Later it was applied to the season, the “spring of the year.”

### 2. A Time to March

The Latin term for March preserves the memory of spring as a time for war under the auspices of the god of war, Mars. Spring also has military associations in the Torah. God’s spring victory over Egypt is portrayed in martial terms. For example, Israel’s armies left Egypt “armed” (Ex. 13:18) in the month when kings go out to war.

“God took Israel out of Egypt precisely in the best month for an exodus. Not in Tamuz (June-July) when there is the *chamsin* (hot summer winds), not in Tevet (December-January) when it is cold (and rainy), but in Nisan (March-April) when it is neither too hot nor too cold to be on the march.” (*BaMidbar Rabbah* 3)

### 3. A Guilty Memory: Dipping in Blood

The dipping of greens is reminiscent of the historic dipping that led Israel into exile in Egypt and the dipping that facilitated their redemption. The descent to Egyptian slavery began when Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery and dipped his **coat of many colors** into a slaughtered goat’s blood in order to mislead their father Israel about his beloved son’s true fate. The ascent from exile – moral and physical – began when every family gathered together with their neighbors to share a lamb on seder night and to dip in its blood a hyssop plant and to dab it on the **doorposts and the lintel** as a protection against the tenth plague.

<http://www.haggadahsrus.com/PC04urchatz.htm>

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCES  
FOR SALT WATER**

## What are the Passover Seder Requirements?

- **Passover Seder Requirement #7: Mei Melach (meaning of Mei Melach: "salt water" in Hebrew, as in a small quantity of salt water)**

Salt Water is used in the Passover seder to symbolize two things: salt water symbolizes the tears of the Hebrews while in slavery in Egypt, and it also symbolizes the Red Sea which the Hebrews crossed when they were fleeing Egypt and the pursuing Egyptian army. Note that Sephardim may use either vinegar, lemon juice, or lime juice in place of salt water, depending on the custom of the community of their origin.

### Why does one dip vegetables into salt water, vinegar, lemon juice, or lime juice (the liquid depends on one's custom)?

The custom of dipping vegetables into salt water, vinegar, lemon juice, or lime juice may have been derived from the activities at ancient Roman banquets where guests would begin the banquet by dipping vegetables in either vinegar or a fruit sauce. Charoset may have eventually represented the fruit sauce. The ancient rabbis who formulated the Passover seder instructions were writing the Passover seder instructions at a time when the Romans ruled Palestine and so they may have incorporated many of the Roman rituals they saw at ritualized Roman feasts or banquets that were known as "Symposia" into the instructions for conducting the Passover seder as well as both transforming and re-interpreting them to fit the needs of the Passover seder.

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/passoverseder.html>

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCES  
FOR BAYTZAH (egg)**

## What are the Passover Seder Requirements?

- **Passover Seder Requirement #3: Beitzah (meaning of Beitzah: "Roasted or Hard Boiled Egg" in Hebrew)**

The roasted or hard boiled egg primarily symbolizes the first Passover sacrifice of the lamb in biblical times by the Hebrews as commanded by G-d. This sacrifice was eventually performed in the first and second Temples in Jerusalem. The first Temple was built by King Solomon circa 959 or 958 B.C.E. (or B.C.) and lasted until its destruction by the Babylonians in 587 B.C.E. The second Temple was built in 516 B.C.E. under Persian rule, rebuilt by King Herod in 63 B.C.E. and lasted until its destruction in 70 C.E. (or A.D.) by the Romans. The roasted or hard boiled egg also symbolizes - in addition to the zeroah or shank bone (see: Passover Seder Requirement #4) - an offering brought to the Temple in Jerusalem in biblical times. This offering was known as the "festival offering" because it was brought on each of the three pilgrim festivals: Pesach or Passover, Shavuot, and Succot. The roasted or hard boiled egg also symbolizes mourning for the destruction of the second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. by the Romans. Because of the destruction of the second Temple, Rabbinical authorities decreed that the roasted or hard boiled egg would replace the Passover lamb sacrifice. Other symbolic meanings represented by the roasted or hard boiled egg include fertility, the never-ending cycle of life, Springtime - when the first Passover occurred, and rebirth. "Beitzah" also means "want" or "desire" in Aramaic, and implies the "want" or "desire" of G-d to deliver His people from slavery in Egypt.

### What do the Zeroah and Beitzah have in common?

The zeroah (roasted shankbone) and beitzah both represent Passover lamb sacrifices. In addition to the original Passover lamb sacrifice represented by the zeroah, a second Passover lamb sacrifice called the "chagigah" or "hagigah" came to be represented by the beitzah. Chagigah means "festival offering" in Hebrew. In ancient times, the chagigah now represented by the beitzah was served at the Passover seder meal followed later on by serving the original Passover lamb sacrifice represented by the zeroah. This was done so that the Passover lamb sacrifice would be eaten for the sole purpose of fulfilling the religious commandment to eat a paschal lamb, and not to quell hunger.

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/passoverseder.html>

**Baytzah is hard-boiled egg.**

Baytzah is symbolic of the regular festival sacrifice brought in the days of the Temple. Some authorities have interpreted this as a symbol of mourning for the loss of the two Temples (the first was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E., the second by the Romans in 70 C.E.). With the Temples destroyed, sacrifices could no longer be offered. The egg symbolized this loss and traditionally became the food of mourners.

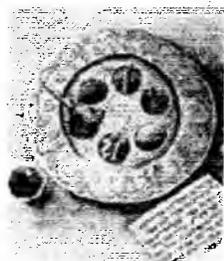
[http://judaism.about.com/library/3\\_howto/ht\\_sederplate.htm](http://judaism.about.com/library/3_howto/ht_sederplate.htm)

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCES  
FOR ORANGE**



## Miriam's Cup: Ritual

- ★ Home
- ★ History
- ★ Ritual
- ★ Biography
- ★ Music
- ★ B'rachot
- ★ Source



### The Origin of the Orange on the Seder Plate

In the early 1980s, the Hillel Foundation invited me to speak on a panel at Oberlin College. While on campus, I came across a Haggada that had been written by some Oberlin students to express feminist concerns. One ritual they devised was placing a crust of bread on the Seder plate, as a sign of solidarity with Jewish lesbians ("there's as much room for a lesbian in Judaism as there is for a crust of break on the Seder plate").

At the next Passover, I placed an orange on our family's Seder plate. During the first part of the Seder, I asked everyone to take a segment of the orange, make the blessing over fruit, and eat it as a gesture of solidarity with Jewish lesbians and gay men, and others who are marginalized within the Jewish community (I mentioned widows in particular).

Bread on the Seder plate brings an end to Pesach - it renders everything chometz. And its symbolism suggests that being lesbian is being transgressive, violating Judaism. I felt that an orange was suggestive of something else: the fruitfulness for all Jews when lesbians and gay men are contributing and active members of Jewish life. In addition, each orange segment had a few seeds that had to be spit out - a gesture of spitting out, repudiating the homophobia that poisons too many Jews.

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When lecturing, I often mentioned my custom as one of many new feminist rituals that had been developed in the last twenty years. Somehow, though, the typical patriarchal maneuver occurred: My idea of an orange and my intention of affirming lesbians and gay men were transformed. Now the story circulates that a MAN stood up after I lecture I delivered and said to me, in anger, that a woman belongs on the bimah as much as an orange on the Seder plate. My idea, a woman's words, are attributed to a man, and the affirmation of lesbians and gay men is simply erased. Isn't that precisely what's happened over the centuries to women's ideas?

Susannah Heschel, April, 2001  
 Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies Dartmouth College

Subj: Re:An orange on the seder plate  
Date: 96-03-24 01:18:41 EST  
From: LSalvay

Last year I attended a women's seder, and on each seder plate there was an orange--along with the following explanation:

'In days long ago when women were just beginning to be rabbis, Susannah Heschel was traveling in Florida, the Land of Oranges. One night she spoke about the merging equality of women in Jewish life--as rabbis, teachers and students of Torah, synagogue presidents, and in all other ways. After she spoke, a man rose in wrath, red with fury. "A woman belongs on the Bimah (pulpit)," he said, "as much as an orange belongs on the Seder plate!" So ever since that day, we place an orange on the Seder plate, for it belongs there as a symbol that women belong wherever Jews carry on a sacred life.

There are those who add: The orange carries within itself the seeds of its rebirth. When we went forth from the Narrow Place, Mitzrayim, the Jewish people passed through a narrow birth canal and broke the waters of the Red Sea, and so was born into the world. The wisdom of women who were midwives made that birth possible. In our generation, the Jewish people are again giving birth to themselves. For the first time, women are sharing equally with men in bringing this new birth to its fruition. So we must for the first time bring to the Seder plate a fruit that carries within the seeds of its rebirth.

Still others add: Every symbol on the Seder plate speaks to us of the Divine Unfoldings, the Sphiroth. The tenth of the Unfoldings, the Sphirah of Malkhut, or Majesty, is the gathering-together of all the Divine energies, and that Sphirah is symbolized in the human body by the Womb, in which each human life is gathered into wholeness on the verge of entering the world. Until now, none of the objects on the Seder plate has symbolized Malkhut: the plate itself has been Malkhut. Malkhut has been the unseen Ground of Being, not the figure on the Ground--as women have been the unseen background upon which all visible history has happened. But tonight we make visible the Gathering-place, Malkhut; tonight we place upon the field of being the ornament that is a visible echo of the Seder plate. Tonight women, rebirth and Malkhut take their place before the eyes of our reborn people. Tonight we place the Orange on the Seder plate.'

This text originated from "ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal," 7318 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19119 and was printed in Torah Aura Bulletin Board, Vol 2, No 24, 4423 Fruitland Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90058.

**LEARNING STATION RESOURCES  
FOR ELIJAH'S CUP and MIRIAM'S  
CUP**

## What are the Passover Seder Requirements?

- **Passover Seder Requirement #8: Kos Eliyahu (meaning of Kos Eliyahu: "Cup of Elijah" in Hebrew)**

A cup or preferably a goblet to represent the Cup of Elijah. This cup symbolizes that on this joyous festival of freedom from slavery, Jews invite all people to join in the festivities and rejoice in the feeling of freedom. Since Elijah the Prophet symbolizes the humble wayfarer and as such represents all people - rich or poor - a cup filled with wine is placed on the Passover seder table for Elijah the Prophet.

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/passoverseder.html>

- **Passover Seder Requirement #9: Yayin (meaning of Yayin: "Wine" in Hebrew)**

Wine or grape juice is also a requirement and must have a Kosher for Passover symbol on it from either a local, regional, or country-specific rabbinical council, and the same applies for all Passover foods sold in either cans or other containers. On the one hand, wine symbolizes celebration and freedom. The Arba Kosos (meaning of Arba Kosos or Arba Kossos: "Four Cups of Wine" in Hebrew) refer to the four promises of redemption as stated in Exodus 6:6-7: "I will free you from the labor of the Egyptians; and I will deliver you from their slavery. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great judgments; and I will take you to be my people". Therefore, wine symbolizes and is the drink of free men. On the other hand, wine represents the blood of Hebrew children, recalling the time when the Pharaoh of Egypt ordered newly-born Hebrew male infants thrown into the Nile River while the Hebrews were slaves in Egypt. The dual symbolisms of joy and sorrow can be interpreted to mean that one must experience suffering before one can realize the joyful meaning of freedom. During the Passover seder, both the matzah we eat and the wine we drink carry with them the dual symbolisms and knowledge that the Jewish people understand what it means to be free by remembering what it was like to be slaves in Egypt.

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/passoverseder.html>

כוס אליהו

Kos Eliyahu

## The Cup of Elijah

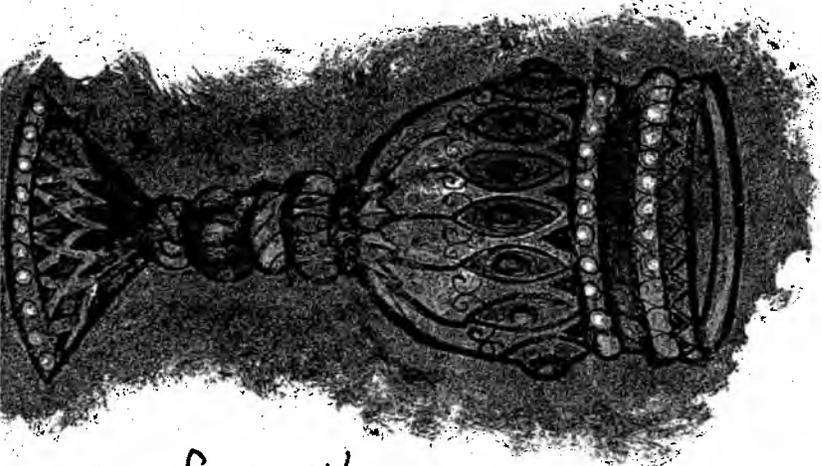
The Cup of Elijah, a special goblet of wine reserved for the prophet Elijah, may either be filled now or before the seder begins. Legends tell us that Elijah visits every seder to provide for the poor and to announce an era of peace.

One such story is of two women, one poor and one rich. The poor woman washed her children's clothes by the river before Passover, but her heart was sad, for she had nothing for the festival. Suddenly an old man appeared. He asked her if she had everything prepared for the holiday. "Oh, yes," she answered, for she did not wish to complain. The next day, the rich woman washed her clothes by the riverbank. The same old man appeared and asked her the same question. "Nothing is prepared!" she grumbled bitterly, for she was never happy with what she had.

On the seder night, the poor woman did not have food on the table, nor even candles to light. But the table was set with a white cloth and the children were dressed in clean, bright clothes. Not so in the rich woman's house. There was much on the table, but her family complained and argued, and there was no happiness in their hearts.

Suddenly the old man appeared in the rich house and said, "On the bank of the river you told me you had prepared nothing for the holiday. That is what you'll have." The rich home became empty and dark.

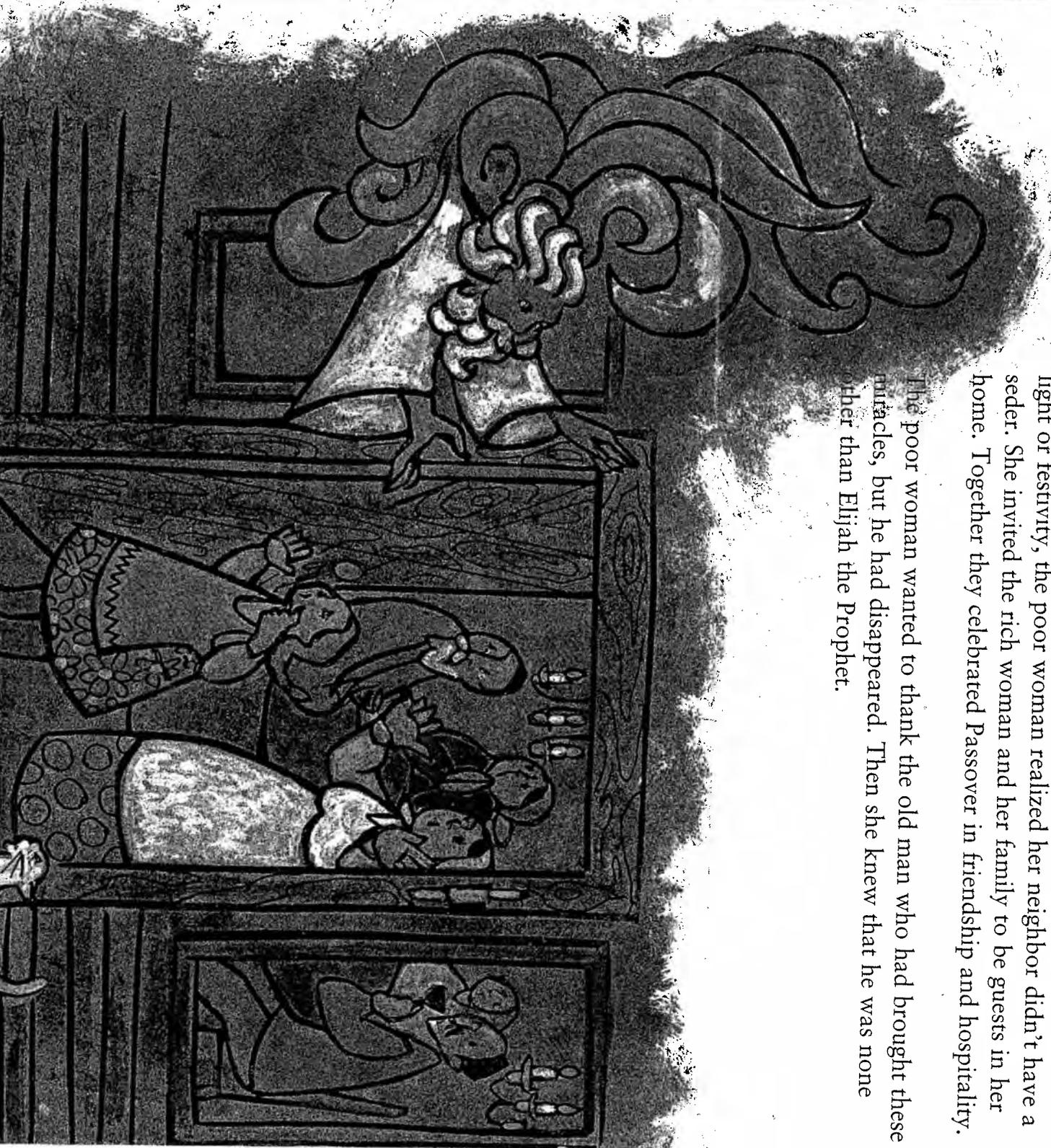
The old man knocked on the door of the poor woman's house and said, "On the bank of the river you told me you had prepared everything for the holiday. That is what you'll have." In an instant the poor woman's home was filled with light and happiness, love and songs, and lots of good food.



Activity Two

When she looked over at the rich woman's house, where there was no light or festivity, the poor woman realized her neighbor didn't have a seder. She invited the rich woman and her family to be guests in her home. Together they celebrated Passover in friendship and hospitality.

The poor woman wanted to thank the old man who had brought these miracles, but he had disappeared. Then she knew that he was none other than Elijah the Prophet.



## DAYENU דַּיְנֵנוּ

Fill Miriam's Cup with water. As these verses are sung, the leader raises the cup and recites each verse. The other participants sing the refrain, *Dayenu*, which is a way of saying: For that alone, we would have been grateful.

The Cup of Miriam reminds us of the legend of Miriam's Well, which teaches that wherever our ancestors wandered in the Sinai wilderness, Miriam's Well would appear and sustain them. The Cup of Miriam symbolizes the many ways we continue to be sustained along freedom's path.

### פְּמֹדָה מַעֲלֹת טוֹבוֹת לְמִקְוֵים עֲלֵינוּ:

*Kamah ma'alot tovot lamakom aleinu:*

How many wonderful deeds did God perform for us!

אֵלֵינוּ הוֹצֵיָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם,  
וְלֹא קָרַע לֵנוּ אֶת-הַיָּם,

Had the Compassionate One brought us out of Egypt  
and not split the sea for us—*Dayeinu!*

אֵלֵינוּ קָרַע לֵנוּ אֶת-הַיָּם,  
וְלֹא הֵעֲבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּחַרְבָּהּ,

Had the Compassionate One split the Sea of Reeds for  
us and not brought us through dry land—*Dayeinu!*

אלו קָרְבָנוּ לַפְּנֵי הַר סִינַי,  
וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה,  
יְיָנוּ:

Had the Compassionate One brought us to Mount Sinai and not given us the Torah—*Dayeinu!*

אלו נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה,  
וְלֹא הִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
יְיָנוּ:

Had the Compassionate One given us the Torah and not brought us into the land of Israel—*Dayeinu!*

עַל אַחַת כַּמְּהַר טוֹבָה כְּפוּלָה  
וּמְכַפְּלֵת לְמָקוֹם עֲלֵינוּ שְׂדוּצוֹיָאֲנוּ  
כַּמְצַרִּים, וְקָרַע לָנוּ אֶת־הַיָּם, וְהַעֲבִירָנוּ  
בְּחוּכּוֹ בְּחוּרָה, וְסַפֵּק צָרְפָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר  
אֶרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה, וְהֵאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת־הַמָּן,  
וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת, וְקָרְבָנוּ לַפְּנֵי הַר  
סִינַי, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, וְהִכְנִיסָנוּ  
לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

How much more, then, are we to be grateful to God for the wonderful deeds that were performed for us! For the Compassionate One brought us out of Egypt, and split the Sea of Reeds for us, and brought us through dry land, and sustained us in the wilderness for forty years, and fed us with manna, and gave us Shabbat, and brought us to Mount Sinai, and gave us the Torah, and brought us into the land of Israel!

אלו הֵעֲבִירָנוּ בְּחוּרָה,  
וְלֹא סַפֵּק צָרְפָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר,  
אֶרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה,  
יְיָנוּ:

Had the Compassionate One brought us through dry land and not sustained us in the wilderness for forty years—*Dayeinu!*

אלו סַפֵּק צָרְפָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר  
אֶרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה, וְלֹא הֵאֱכִילָנוּ  
אֶת־הַמָּן,  
יְיָנוּ:

Had the Compassionate One sustained us in the wilderness for forty years and not fed us with manna—*Dayeinu!*

אלו הֵאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת־הַמָּן,  
וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת,  
יְיָנוּ:

Had the Compassionate One fed us with manna and not given us Shabbat—*Dayeinu!*

אלו נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת,  
וְלֹא קָרְבָנוּ לַפְּנֵי הַר סִינַי,  
יְיָנוּ:

Had the Compassionate One given us Shabbat and not brought us to Mount Sinai—*Dayeinu!*

cient sages that despite plth of our ig, we are gloat over the nes of our ss. And so nud provides frash (biblical ntary) that he Egyptians frowning in 1 of Reeds," 2 ministering celebrated ng, God id them, "How can g while my as are ng."

## **PESACH ACTIVITY #3**

**One of the goals of this curriculum is to expose students to multiple interpretations of our rituals. Enclosed are the beginning of your resource library – keep collecting!**

Knobel, Peter S., Ed.  *Gates of the Season: A Guide to the Jewish Year*. Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 1983.

**PESACH**, which begins on the fifteenth of the Hebrew month of Nisan and lasts for seven days, commemorates the Exodus from Egypt.<sup>137</sup> In the Torah it is designated by several names, *Chag Ha-aniv* (Deuteronomy 16:1), the Spring Festival; *Chag Hamatzot* (Exodus 12:20), the Festival of Unleavened Bread; and *Chag Hapessach* (Exodus 12:17), the Festival of the Paschal Lamb. Current Pesach observance is a unique blend drawn from the agricultural and pastoral origins of the festival as well as from a seminal event in Jewish history.<sup>138</sup>

The liberation of the Jewish people from Egyptian bondage has become a powerful symbol of redemption—not only the redemption of the Jewish people but the redemption of the entire world. The *Haggadah*, reflecting the historic experience of the Jewish people, recognizes that slavery is not limited to physical bondage, but that spiritual slavery and social degradation are no less potent methods of depriving human beings of liberty.<sup>139</sup>

The highlight of Pesach observance is the *Seder* with its many symbolic foods and its elaborate liturgy; the *Haggadah*. The *Seder* is designed to recreate the events of redemption:

In every generation, each of us should feel as though we ourselves had gone forth from Egypt, as it is written: "And you shall explain to your child on that day, it is because of what the Eternal did for me when I, myself, went forth from Egypt."<sup>140</sup>

As "*zeman chevutenu*," the season of our liberation, Pesach is a constant reminder of our responsibility to those who are oppressed or enslaved physically, intellectually, or ideologically. On Pesach we express our solidarity with other members of the Jewish community who are unable to celebrate Passover in freedom. The experience of

redemption in the Passover celebration should inspire all Jews to assist in the future redemption of humanity. As the Midrash teaches, just as the Red Sea did not split until the Israelites stepped into it, so redemption cannot come unless we take the first step.<sup>141</sup>

## B. PESACH

### B-1 The *mitzvah* of observing Pesach

#### הַטָּהַר

It is a *mitzvah* to observe Pesach for seven days, beginning on the eve of the fifteenth of Nisan. As the Torah says, "In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening,<sup>142</sup> you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening" (Exodus 12:18).

### B-2 The *mitzvah* of removing leaven (*Chametz*)

#### חֲמֵץ

It is a *mitzvah* to remove leaven from one's home prior to the beginning of Pesach. Leaven refers to products made from wheat, barley, rye, oats, and spelt, which have been permitted to leaven.<sup>143</sup> Ashkenazi custom adds rice, millet, corn, and legumes (like peas, beans, etc.) The removal of leaven is based on the Biblical injunction found in Exodus 12:15: "On the very first day you shall remove leaven from your house." If one does not actually remove all the leaven from one's home, one should place it in a closet or cabinet appropriately marked so that it will not be used during Pesach.<sup>144</sup>

#### בְּרִיאת חֲמֵץ

Searching for leaven (*Bedikat Chametz*) on the night before the first *Seder* is a Pesach custom that has special appeal for children.<sup>145</sup> After the house has been cleaned for Pesach, a symbolic search for the last remains of leaven is made. At various places in the home, pieces of leaven are hidden. Then children, with flashlights or other illumination, search them out in the dark. The bread is gathered in a bag and burned or disposed of the next morning with the following blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הַעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל פְּעוּר הַמֵּץ.

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-  
lam, a-she-ki-de-sha-nu be-mitz-vo-tav ve-tsi-va-nu  
al bi-ur cha-mets.

*Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who  
hallows us with mitzvot and commands us to burn Chamets.*

מֵיֶזֶה  
Since leaven has been removed, one should not eat bread  
after breakfast on the day before the *Seder*. To heighten  
the appetite for *Matzah* at the *Seder* itself, *Matzah* is not  
eaten at least a full day before the *Seder*.<sup>146</sup>

### B-3 The *mitzvab* of abstaining from eating leaven (*Chamets*)

הַמֵּץ  
It is a *mitzvab* to abstain from eating leaven (*Chamets*)  
during the entire seven days of Pesach. As the Torah states,  
"You shall eat nothing leavened . . ." (Exodus 12:20). Among  
Reform Jews, abstaining from leaven may take many  
forms—from not eating those foods which obviously con-  
tain leaven, such as bread or cake, to the more stringent  
avoidance and examination of all ingredients in a particular  
foodstuff. By consciously making a choice to abstain dur-  
ing the whole week of Pesach, one is constantly aware of  
the Festival and one's identity as a Jew.

### B-4 The *mitzvab* of preparing a *Seder*

סֵדֶר  
It is a *mitzvab* for everyone to participate in the prepa-  
rations for the *Seder*—cooking, cleaning, and setting the  
festive table.<sup>147</sup> The leader of the *Seder* has the special  
obligation to review the *Haggadah* in advance and decide  
which passages will be included. The experience of the  
*Seder* is enhanced when all the participants are provided

הַגָּדָה

with the same *Haggadah*.<sup>\*</sup> In addition, the tradition en-  
courages the use of beautiful ritual items to increase our  
enjoyment of the *mitzvot* (see "*Hidur Mitzvab*: The Aes-  
thetics of *Mitzvot*," pages 162–164).

Although Reform Jews do not celebrate the second day  
of Pesach as a holiday, many people have a second *Seder*.  
Sometimes they join in a communal *Seder* or gather with  
in-laws or relatives and friends who attended other first  
night *Sedarim*. The second *Seder* may follow the same  
pattern as the first or may have another focus, such as the  
liberation of specific oppressed Jewish communities. A  
second *Seder* may provide the opportunity to add passages  
omitted on the first night.

### B-5 The *mitzvab* of hospitality (*Hachnasat Orechim*)

הַכְּנֵסֶת  
אוֹרְחִים

It is a *mitzvab* to invite guests to join in the *Seder*. So  
important is it that the invitation is included in the text  
of the *Haggadah*, "Let all who are hungry come and eat,  
let all who are in want share the hope of Passover."<sup>148</sup>  
Arrangements should be made to see that no one has to  
celebrate Passover alone. Many communities make special  
arrangements for those who are alone, including the el-  
derly, widows, widowers, and college students who are  
away from home.

### B-6 The *mitzvab* of *Tzedakab*

צְדָקָה

It is a *mitzvab* to give *Tzedakab* before the beginning of  
Passover.<sup>149</sup> Tradition encourages the solicitation of special  
funds (*Me-ot Chittin*) to provide a proper *Seder* for the  
poor.<sup>150</sup>

מַעוֹת חֲטִיין

\*The Central Conference of American Rabbis has published *A Passover Haggadah*, edited  
by Rabbi Herbert Bronstein and illustrated by Leonard Baskin, with essays by Lawrence A.  
Hoffman and W. Gunther Plaut.

B-7 The *mizvab* of participating in the *Seder* and reciting the *Haggadah*

הגדה

It is a *mizvab* for every Jew to participate in the recitation of the *Haggadah*, which recalls the Exodus from Egypt.<sup>151</sup> All should look upon themselves as having personally experienced the Exodus. "In every generation, each person should feel as though he/she personally had gone forth from Egypt, as it is written: 'And you shall explain to your child on that day, it is because of what the Lord did for me when I myself went forth from Egypt.'"<sup>152</sup>

B-8 The *Seder* Plate

מצה  
לוחם מצנה

In front of the leader or in front of each participant, a special *Seder* Plate is set.<sup>153</sup> The following are arranged on it: three separate pieces of *Matzah*—two pieces represent the two traditional loaves (*Lechem Mishneh*) set out in the ancient Temple during Sabbaths and Festivals, and the third *Matzah* is symbolic of Passover; a roasted shankbone (*Zerza*) burned or scorched, representing the ancient Passover sacrifice; parsley or green herbs (*Karpas*), symbolizing the growth of springtime, the green of hope and renewal; the top part of horseradish root (*Maror*), symbolic of the bitterness that our ancestors experienced in Egypt and, in a contemporary sense, the lot of all who are enslaved; a contemporary sense, the lot of all who are enslaved; *Charoet*, representing the mortar which our ancestors used for Pharaoh's labor; a roasted egg (*Beitah*), representing the *Chagigah* or festival offering, a symbol of life itself, the triumph of life over death.

B-9 The Cup of Elijah

A special cup filled with wine is placed prominently on the table. In popular legend the Prophet Elijah (herald of redemption) visits every Jewish home at some time during

B-10 The *mizvab* of eating unleavened bread (*Matzah*)

מצה

It is a *mizvab* to eat *Matzah* during the *Seder* and to recite the appropriate blessings.<sup>155</sup>

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, המוציא לחם מן הארץ.

Baruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam, ha-mo-tsi le-chem min ha-a-rets.

*Blessed is the Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth.*

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, אשר קידשנו במצותיו וצונו על אכילת מצה.

Baruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam, a-sher ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav ve-tsi-va-nu al a-chi-lat ma-tsa.

*Blessed is the Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who hallow our lives with commandments, Who has commanded us regarding the eating of Matzah.*

By eating *Matzah* we recall that the dough prepared by our people had no time to rise before the final act of redemption. "And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves."<sup>156</sup>

### B-11 The *mitzvab* of eating bitter herbs (*Maror*)

It is a *mitzvab* to eat *Maror*, the bitter herbs, with the appropriate blessing.<sup>157</sup>

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשֵׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר.

Bar-uch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-  
lam, a-she-ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav ve-tsi-va-nu  
al a-chi-lat ma-ror.

*Blessed is the Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who hallows our lives through commandments, Who has commanded us regarding the eating of Maror.*

*Maror* is eaten because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our people, as it is written: "With hard labor at mortar and brick and in all sorts of work in the field, with all the tasks ruthlessly imposed upon them."<sup>158</sup>

### B-12 The *Matzab* of Hope

Many families in our generation set aside an extra *Matzab*, called the *Matzah* of Hope, for the Jews of the Soviet Union whose lives are bitter as were the lives of our enslaved ancestors. Another way to dramatize the endangered existence of Soviet Jews is to place an empty chair at the *Seder* table to remind us of them.

### B-13 The *mitzvab* of Four Cups

It is a *mitzvab* to drink four cups of wine during the *Seder*.<sup>159</sup> Some follow the custom of adding a fifth cup.<sup>160</sup>

### B-14 The Four Questions

It is customary for the youngest participant or participants to recite the Four Questions.<sup>161</sup> These questions point to

the unusual features of the *Seder* meal and provide an opportunity to teach the lesson of Passover. The text may be found in *A Passover Haggadah*, page 29.

### B-15 Reclining

It is the custom to simulate a reclining position while eating by propping oneself up with cushions.<sup>162</sup> Reclining at the *Seder* is symbolic of being free people who are able to eat with leisure.

### B-16 *Afikoman*

**אֲפִיקוֹמָן** The *Afikoman* is the half *Matzab* that is set aside during the breaking of the *Matzab* early in the *Seder*. An old tradition held that the group could not leave the *Seder* table unless all had tasted of the *Afikoman*.<sup>163</sup> In connection with this, and in order to arouse and maintain the interest of the children and to provide some entertainment for them, a practice developed of *hiding* and searching for the *Afikoman*. Sometime during the meal, the leader hides the *Afikoman* trying to elude the watchful observance of the children, whose endeavor it is to search out its hiding place. Prizes might be awarded to all who participated, with a special gift to the one who actually finds it. In some households it is the custom for children to "steal" the *Afikoman* in order to hide it and hold it for "ransom," since the meal cannot conclude without it.

### B-17 *Chol Hamo-ed*

**חֹל הַמּוֹעֵד** The intermediate days, between the first and the seventh days, are known as *Chol Hamo-ed*. During this period no leaven is eaten.<sup>164</sup> Every effort is made to preserve the holiday mood.

### B-18 The Song of Songs

**שִׁיר הַשְּׁוִירִים** On the Shabbat during Pesach, the Song of Songs (*Shir HaShirim*) is read.<sup>165</sup> The Song of Songs refers to spring-

time, and thus befits the festival. In addition, Jewish tradition has interpreted Song of Songs as an allegory of the love of God for Israel. The experiences of hope and redemption, which characterize Pesach, make the Song of Songs particularly appropriate to this season.

#### B-19 The *mitzvah* of *Yizkor*

**יִזְכֹּר!**

It is a *mitzvah* to recite *Yizkor* on the seventh day of Pesach.<sup>166</sup> It memorializes our relatives and our own friends, as well as the martyrs of our generation and previous generations (see *Gates of Mitzvah*, page 63, D-10, and "Yizkor," pages 153-155).

#### B-20 The study of *Pirkei Avot*

**פִּרְקֵי אָבוֹת**

Beginning with the first Shabbat after Pesach, it is customary to study one of the chapters of *Pirkei Avot* (*Ethics of the Fathers*) each Shabbat afternoon until Shavuot. Selections from *Pirkei Avot* can be found in *Gates of Prayer*, pages 16-28. *Pirkei Avot* is devoted to the ethical-religious maxims of the Rabbis. The study of this material is part of the preparation for Shavuot. As we complete each weekly study session, we are one week closer to Shavuot and the recollection of *Matan Torah*, the giving of commandments at Sinai.

**פְּרָטֵי תּוֹרָה**

# MAIMONIDES

## MISHNEH TORAH

Hilchot Chametz U'Matzah

The Laws of Chametz and Matzah

The Rambam's text of the Haggadah

*A new translation with commentaries and notes*

*by*

Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

**רמב"ם**

**משנת תורה**

**הלכות חמץ ומצה**

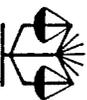
**נוסח הגדה של פסח**

**תרגום מחדש לאנגלית**

**עם מקורות ותערות**

**מאת**

**הרב אליהו טוגר**



MOZNAIM PUBLISHING CORPORATION  
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**בית הוצאת ספרים**  
**מאזנים**  
**ירושלים — ניו יארק**  
**תשמ"ח**

Similarly, it is forbidden to eat on Pesach evening from slightly before the time of *Minchah*, in order that one will approach eating matzah with appetite. However, one may eat some fruit or vegetables, but should not fill up on them.

The Sages of the former generations would starve themselves on Pesach eve so that they would eat matzah with appetite, and thus hold the mitzvot as dear. In contrast, on the eve of Sabbaths or other festivals, one may continue eating until darkness.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

1. It is a positive commandment of the Torah to relate the miracles and wonders wrought for our ancestors in Egypt on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, as [Exodus 13:3] states: "Remember this day,

Similarly, it is forbidden to eat – a meal with matzah (even matzah kneaded with wine, which is not included in the prohibition mentioned above)

on Pesach evening from slightly before the time of *Minchah* -- The Sages defined this time as nine hours after the beginning of the day. (The time of *Minchah* is nine and a half hours after the beginning of the day.)

This time is also calculated according to "seasonal hours." (See Commentary, Halachah 1:8.) Thus, if dawn was at 5:09 AM and three stars appear at 6:45 PM, nine hours would be 3:21 PM.

in order that one will approach eating matzah with appetite. However, one may eat some fruit or vegetables – or other similar foods that do not satiate one's appetite but should not fill up on them – for then, one will not eat the matzah with relish.

The Sages of the former generations would starve themselves on Pesach eve -- *Pesachim* 108a relates that Rav Sheshet would fast the entire day even though he was not a firstborn.

so that they would eat matzah with appetite, and thus hold the mitzvot as dear. In contrast -- greater leniency applies on the eve of Sabbaths or other festivals -- The Rambam's statements require some explanation: In *Hilchot Yom Tov* 6:16, the Rambam states:

It is proper for a person not to dine on the day before a festival from the time of *Minchah* onward, as on the day before the Sabbath.

The latter phrase is a reference to *Hilchot Shabbat* 30:4, which states:

A person may eat and drink [on Friday] until nightfall. Nevertheless, as part of the honor given to the Sabbath, a person should refrain from scheduling a meal from the time of *Minchah* onward.

לִזְכֹּר אֶת הַמִּצְוָה לֶאֱכֹל עֵרֶב הַפֶּסַח מִקְדָּם הַמִּנְחָה כַּמֵּצֵה, כְּדִי שִׂיִּקְנֶס לְאֲכִילַת מִצְוֵה בְּתַאֲרוֹה.

אֲכֹל אוֹכֵל הוּא מַעֲט פְּרוּת אוֹ יִרְקוֹת, וְלֹא יִמְלֵא כֶּרְסוֹ מִהֶן.

וְחֻכְמֵיהֶם הִרְאִישׁוּנוֹם הִיוּ מְרַעֲבִין עֲצָמָן עֵרֶב הַפֶּסַח, כְּדִי לֶאֱכֹל מִצְוֵה בְּתַאֲרוֹה, וְהִיוּ מִצְוֵה חֻכְבוֹת עָלֵיו.

אֲכֹל בִּשְׂאֵר עֲרֵבֵי שִׁבְתוֹת אוֹ עֲרֵבֵי יָמִים טוֹבִים -- אוֹכֵל וְהוֹלֵךְ עַד שִׁתְּקֵשׁוּ.

## פֶּרֶק שִׁבְעִי

א מצוות צישה של תורה לספר בנסים ונפלאות שעשו לאבותינו במצרים  
כלל המשה עשר בנין, שנאמר:

Thus, on the day before the Sabbath and other festivals, a person should not schedule an important meal. However, he may partake of a casual meal and continue eating. On Pesach, even the latter is forbidden.

one may continue eating until darkness. -- at which time one is required to cease eating. However, a person who desires to continue eating may cover his food with a cloth, recite Kiddush, and return to his meal, as explained in *Hilchot Shabbat* 29:12.

### Commentary, Halachah 1

It is a positive commandment of the Torah -- *Sefer HaMitzvot* (positive commandment 157), *Sefer HaChinuch* (mitzvah 21)

to relate -- *Hilchot Kri'at Shema* 1:3 mentions that it is a mitzvah to recall the Exodus from Egypt twice daily. The Rambam makes no further mention of that mitzvah in the *Mishneh Torah*, nor does he mention it in *Sefer HaMitzvot*. There is a basic difference between these two obligations. Throughout the year, a brief recollection is all that is required. On Pesach night, we must elaborate, relating the entire story of the Exodus.

the miracles and wonders wrought for our ancestors in Egypt on the night -- In *Sefer HaMitzvot* (ibid.), the Rambam states "the beginning of the night," implying that we should begin telling the story of the Exodus in the first portion of the night.

of the fifteenth of Nisan -- the night of the plague of the firstborn, when Pharaoh gave the Jews permission to leave Egypt.

as [Exodus 13:3] states: "Remember this day -- the fifteenth of Nisan

on which you left Egypt," just as [Exodus 20:8] states: "Remember the Sabbath day."

From where [is it derived that this mitzvah is to be fulfilled on] the night of the fifteenth? The Torah teaches [Exodus 13:8]: "And you shall tell your son on that day, saying: 'It is because of this...'" [implying that the mitzvah is to be fulfilled] when matzah and maror are placed before you.

[The mitzvah applies] even though one does not have a son. Even great Sages are obligated to tell about the Exodus from Egypt. Whoever elaborates concerning the events which occurred and took place is worthy of praise.

2. It is a mitzvah to inform one's sons even though they do not ask, as [Exodus 13:8] states: "You shall tell your son."

on which you left Egypt" — implying that we are commanded to commemorate the day of the Exodus.

Just as [Exodus 20:8] states: "Remember the Sabbath day." — This addition is a quote from the *Mechiliah* and *Shemot Rabbah*. Nevertheless, the commentators have questioned its necessity. Some explain that the word *וְיָדַע* does not follow the grammatical form usually used for commandments, and hence the comparison with the Sabbath is valuable.

*Likkutei Sichot*, Vol. 21, explains that *Shemot Rabbah* states that the remembrance of the Sabbath is *נִשְׂכַּח בְּרֵאשִׁית לַיּוֹם*, "a commemoration of the work of creation." The remembrance of the exodus, it continues, must also emphasize the wonders and miracles that God performed.

What is the common point between the Sabbath and the exodus? Both emphasize how God is above nature and, hence, can change nature according to His will.

This quality is also reflected in our service. At the very beginning of *Hilchot Shabbat*, the Rambam emphasizes how the observance of the Sabbath is connected with a positive mitzvah: rest. A Jew steps beyond his weekday activities and devotes his energies to spiritual activities bond with God.

Similarly, the recollection of the exodus from Egypt must take us beyond our everyday activities to the extent that as stated in Halachah 7:6 "He presents himself as if he, himself, is leaving the slavery of Egypt."

From where [is it derived that this mitzvah is to be fulfilled on] the night of the fifteenth? The Torah teaches [Exodus 13:8]: "And you shall tell your son on that day — relating the story of the Exodus

saying: 'It is because of this...'" — The *Mechiliah* interprets this as a reference to matzah and maror. Thus, the verse is [implying that the mitzvah] — of relating the story of the exile [is to be fulfilled] when matzah and maror are placed before you — i.e., on the night

"זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים",  
 כמו שצאמר: "זכור את יום השבת".  
 ומנין שבליל המצות-עשירי תלמוד לומר:  
 "והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה" — בפסעה שיש מצה ומרור  
 מנהיגים לקניף.

ואת-על-פי שאין לו בן,  
 אפלו תקמים גדולים —  
 תיבנים לספר בייצאת מצרים.  
 וכל המצאריך פורברים שארעו ושרידי — הרי זה משבח.

ב מצוה להודיע לבנים, ואפלו לא שאלה שצאמר: "והגדת לבנך" —  
 לפי דעתו של בן אביו מלמדו.

of the fifteenth of Nisan, when it is a mitzvah to eat matzah, as explained in Halachah 6:1.

[The mitzvah applies] even though one does not have a son — This clause is necessary because from the expression "and you shall tell your son," one might imply that the mitzvah only applies to a person with children.

Even great Sages are obligated to tell about the Exodus from Egypt. — to quote the Haggadah: "Even if we are all wise, all men of understanding, all Sages, all knowledgeable about the Torah, it is a mitzvah incumbent upon us to relate the Exodus from Egypt." Many commentaries explain that the story the Haggadah quotes concerning Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, and the other Sages is brought to demonstrate and prove this point.

Whoever elaborates concerning the events which occurred and took place is worthy of praise — *Seder Hamitzvot* (ibid.) praises: "Whoever adds further statements and elaborates more on the greatness of what God did for us and the wickedness and violence with which the Egyptians treated us, and how God took His revenge upon them...."

#### Commentary, Halachah 2

It is a mitzvah to inform one's sons even though they do not ask, as [Exodus 13:8] states: "You shall tell your son." — Though Exodus 13:14 states: "And it shall come to pass that your son will ask you:....," the verse quoted demonstrates that the father's explanations need not necessarily come in response to his son's questions (*Mechiliah d'Rashbi*).

A father should teach his son according to the son's knowledge: How is this applied? If the son is young or foolish, he should tell him: "My son, in Egypt, we were all slaves like this maidservant or this slave. On this night, the Holy One, Blessed be He, redeemed us and took us out to freedom."

If the son is older and wise, he should inform him what happened to us in Egypt and the miracles wrought for us by Moses, our teacher; everything according to the son's knowledge.

3. He should make changes on this night so that the children will see and will [be motivated to] ask: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" until he replies to them: "This and this occurred; this and this took place."

What changes should be made? He should give them roasted seeds and nuts; the table should be taken away before they eat; matzot should be snatched from each other and the like.

When a person does not have a son, his wife should ask him. If

A father should teach his son according to the son's knowledge — Commenting on this statement, the Ramah (*Orach Chayim* 473:6) relates that if a person's family is unable to understand the Haggadah in Hebrew, he should translate it into a language they do understand.

How is this applied? If the son is young or foolish, he should tell him: "My son, in Egypt, we were all slaves like this maidservant or this slave. On this night, the Holy One, Blessed be He, redeemed us and took us out to freedom." — To this author's knowledge, this phraseology is the Rambam's original choice of words. He attempts to provide us with an easily applicable example of how to fulfill this mitzvah.

If the son is older and wise, he should inform him what happened to us in Egypt and the miracles wrought for us by Moses, our teacher — The Haggadah (based on the *Mechillat*) also explains that a wise son should be taught the halachot of Pesach.

Everything according to the son's knowledge — The latter phrase, a quote from *Pesachim* 116a, is interpreted differently by some other commentators. They maintain that the father teaches the son how to ask relevant questions, whose nature depends on the son's ability to understand. The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* (473:40,42) combines both these interpretations.

### Commentary, Halachah 3

He — the father or person conducting the seder should make changes on this night so that the children will see — have their curiosity piqued

כיצד? אם היה קטן או טפוש — אומר לו: בני, בלנו היינו עבדים, כמו שפסקה זו או כמו עבד זה, במצרים, ובלילה היה פדה אותנו הקדוש-ברוך-הוא ויציאנו לחרות.

ואם היה הבן גדול והבן — מודיעו מה שארע לנו במצרים, ונסים שפעשו לנו על-ידי משה רבנו — שפצשו לנו על-ידי משה רבנו — הכל לפי דעתו של בן.

ג וְרִירוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת שׁוּנֵי בַּלֵּילָה הַזֶּה, כִּדִּי שִׁירְאוּ הַבָּנִים וַיִּשְׂאָלוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ: "מַה גִּשְׁמָה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?"

עַד שִׁישִׁיב לָהֶם, וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם: כִּדְּ וְכֵן אַרְעֵי, כִּדְּ וְכֵן הִיא. וְכִיצַד מִשְׁנָה? מִחֲלָק לָהֶם קְלוֹיֹת רְאָגוֹתַיִם, וְעוֹקְרִים הַשֵּׁלֶטָן מִלְּפָנֶיהֶם קֹדֶם שִׁיאֲבִלוּ, וְחוֹטְפִין מִצָּה זֶה מִקֵּד זֶה, וְכִיּוֹצֵא בְּדַבְרֵם הָאֵלוּ. אֵין לוֹ בֵּן — אֲשׁוּתוֹ שׁוֹאֲלוֹתוּ.

and will — thus, remain awake and [be motivated to] ask: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" — The question raised by the children are and, similarly, three of the four questions asked by the children are mentioned in the Mishnah, *Pesachim* 116a.

until he replies to them: "This and this occurred; this and this took place." — relating the story of the Exodus by reciting the Haggadah.

What changes should be made? He should give them roasted seeds and nuts — *Pesachim* 109a notes that Rabbi Akiva would follow this practice.

the table should be taken away before they eat — *Pesachim* 115b relates that one Pesach, Abaye was sitting before Rabbah, and the latter suddenly picked up the table as if he had finished eating. Abaye exclaimed: "We have not begun to eat and you have already picked up the table!" (See also *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 473:6. See Halachah 8:2.)

matzot should be snatched from each other — The Rambam's statements are quoted from *Pesachim* 109a. However, Rashi, the Ra'avad, and others interpret *matzot* to mean that the matzot are eaten hurriedly. The Rambam's interpretation is the source for the custom of stealing matzah at the Seder.

and the like — The custom of pouring the second cup of wine directly after reciting *arouse curiosity* is cited by the *Shulchan Aruch* (*ibid.*:7) as another practice instituted to

When a person does not have a son, his wife should ask him. — The Sages stressed that the Haggadah should be recited as a response to questions. We show greater interest in learning about a subject when questions have first been raised in our minds.

he does not have a wife, [he and a colleague] should ask each other: "Why is this night different?" This applies even if they are all wise. A person who is alone should ask himself: "Why is this night different?"

4. One must begin [the narrative describing our ancestors'] base [roots] and conclude with [their] praise. What does this imply? One begins relating how originally, in the age of Terach, our ancestors denied [God's existence] and strayed after vanity, pursuing idol worship. One concludes with the true faith: how the Omnipresent has drawn us close to Him, separated us from the gentiles, and drawn us near to His Oneness.

Similarly, one begins by stating that we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and [describing] all the evil done to us, and concludes with the miracles and wonders that were wrought upon us, and our freedom.

This [implies] that one should extrapolate [the passage beginning] from [Deuteronomy 26:5]: "An Aramean sought to destroy my

If he does not have a wife, [he and a colleague] should ask each other "Why is this night different?" This applies even if they are all wise — as mentioned in the previous halachah.

A person who is alone should ask himself: "Why is this night different?" — Since the question and answer approach is the most desirable way to recite the Haggadah, everyone must follow this pattern, even if he must ask himself the questions.

#### Commentary, Halachah 4

One must begin [the narrative describing our ancestors'] base [roots] and conclude with [their] praise. — This principle is taken from the Mishnah, *Pesachim* 116a. The commentaries offer several rationales in its explanation. Among them:

a) The contrast between our nation's humble roots and the majestic level they reached through the Exodus make us more conscious of God's great kindness (*Tosefot Rif*).

b) Mention of our roots prevents us from becoming overly haughty (*Maharshah*).

What does this imply? One begins relating how originally, in the age of Terach — Abraham's father

our ancestors denied [God's existence] — The Rambam is alluding to the passage "Originally, our ancestors were idol-worshippers."

and strayed after vanity, pursuing idol worship — See *Hilchot Avodat Kochavim* 1:1-3.

One concludes with the true faith — The redemption from Egypt representing the birth of the Jews as a nation and the beginning of their service of God as a people.

how the Omnipresent has drawn us close to Him, separated us from the gentiles, and drawn us near to His Oneness — by giving us the Torah.

אין לו אשה — שואליו זה את זה: "מה נשתנה הלילה הזה," ואפילו היו  
כלן חכמים.

היה לבדו — שואל לעצמו: "מה נשתנה הלילה הזה."

ד וצריך להתחיל בנרות ולסיים בשבח.

פירעו? מתחיל ומספר, שמתחלה היה אבותינו, בימי תרח ומלפניו, נפרים  
וטועין אתר ההכל ורודפין אתר עבודת אלילים;

ומסיים בדת האמת, שקרבנו המקום לו, והקרבנו מהאמות, ומרובנו  
לדודו.

וכן מתחיל ומודיע, שעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים וכל הרעה שנקלנו,  
ומסיים בנסים ונפלאות שפעשו לנו ובהרהטנו.

ורוא — שיודר מ"ארמי אבר אבי" עד שיגמר כל הפרשה.

Similarly, one begins by stating that we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and [describing] all the evil done to us — The Rambam's statements are based on *Pesachim* 116a, which mentions a debate between Rav and Shmuel concerning the interpretation of "One must begin [the narrative describing our ancestors'] base [roots] and conclude with [their] praise."

Rav maintains that it is proper to begin from "Originally, our ancestors were worshipers of idols," placing the emphasis on our degrading spiritual roots. Shmuel (according to the *Maggid Mishneh*, Ravvah) maintains that we should begin from "We were slaves to Pharaoh, stressing the humble material origins from which our people stem. Customarily, we follow both opinions in our recitation of the Haggadah (Rav Yitzhak Alfasi), and hence the Rambam includes both opinions in this halachah.

There is, nonetheless, a certain difficulty with the Rambam's statements: All texts of the Haggadah begin with "We were slaves," and then relate the passage "Originally, our ancestors were idol worshipers." Here, the Rambam reverses that order. Perhaps he made this choice because the Talmud uses this order when mentioning these two opinions. Alternatively, chronologically, our ancestors' worship of idols preceded the Egyptian exile.

and concludes with the miracles and wonders that were wrought upon us, and our freedom — relating the story of the Exodus.

This [implies] that one should extrapolate — bringing other verses to explain and clarify the statements of this passage as found in the Haggadah.

[the passage beginning] from [Deuteronomy 26:5]: "An Aramean sought to destroy my ancestor..." — This passage served as the statement of thanksgiving recited by the farmers bringing *bikkurim* (the first fruits) to the Temple. The Mishnah (*Pesachim* 116a) mentions that it was instituted as the basis of the Haggadah.

וְכָל הַמוֹסֵף וּמֵאֲרוֹן בְּדוֹשׁ פְּרֻשָׁה זֶה — הַרְיָה זֶה מְשַׁבֵּחַ.  
 הַ כֵּל מִי שֶׁלֹּא אָמַר שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים אֵלּוּ בְּלִיל הַמַּשְׁהֵעֶשֶׂר — לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי  
 חוֹבָתוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן: פֶּסַח, מַצָּה וּמְרוֹר.  
 פֶּסַח — עַל שֵׁם שֶׁפֶּסַח הַמַּקּוֹם עַל בְּתֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּמַּצְרִים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר:  
 "וְאֶמְרָתֶם זִכַּח פֶּסַח הוּא לְה' וְגו'".  
 מְרוֹר — עַל שֵׁם שֶׁמְרוֹר הַמַּצְרִיִּים אֶת חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּמַּצְרִים.  
 מַצָּה — עַל שֵׁם שֶׁנִּגְזְרָה.  
 וְדְבָרִים הָאֵלּוּ בְּלִן נִקְרְאוּן הַגְּדָה.

וּ בְּכָל דוֹר וְדוֹר תִּכַּב אֶדָם לְהִרְאוֹת אֶת לְעַמּוֹ כְּאֵלּוּ הוּא כְּעַמּוֹ יֵצֵא עִמָּה  
 מִשְׁעִבּוֹד מַצְרַיִם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: "וְאוֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיא מִמִּשְׁבֵּן וְגו'".

are all referred to as the Haggadah.

Commentary, Halachah 6

In each and every generation, a person must present himself — *Pesachim* 116b explains that the mitzvah of relating the story of the Exodus cannot remain on the intellectual level alone. Rather, it must affect a person to the extent that he personally feels that he is leaving Egypt.

There is a slight difficulty with the Rambam's statements. *Pesachim* (ibid.), the commonly accepted text of the Haggadah, and even the Rambam's own text of the Haggadah, read לְרִיבָה לְרִיבָה (see himself), and not לְרִיבָה לְרִיבָה (present himself) — i.e., show others that he feels this way. Why does the Rambam alter the text here?  
*Likkutei Sichot*, Vol. XII, notes that the following halachot emphasize how the obligation of recalling the Exodus applies, not only to the recitation of the Haggadah but to all the practices performed on Pesach. Since we must recite the Haggadah to others, as implied by the question-and-answer approach required by Halachah 3, the manner in which a person performs all the other Passover practices must also demonstrate to others his personal experience of the Exodus.

as if he, himself, has now — the words, "himself" and "now" are also additions to the Mishnah.

left the slavery of Egypt — Here, also, the Rambam alters the text, adding the words "the slavery." Since the Rambam is addressing people who may never have seen the physical land of Egypt, it is not possible to demand that they feel as if they left that country, but rather, that they left backbreaking slavery as experienced by our people in Egypt.

as [Deuteronomy 6:23] states: "He took — This and the verse quoted below were

ancestor..." until one concludes the entire passage. Whoever adds and extends his extrapolation of this passage is praiseworthy.

5. Whoever does not mention these three matters on the night of the fifteenth has not fulfilled his obligation. They are: the Paschal sacrifice, matzah, and maror.

The Paschal sacrifice: [It is eaten] because the Omnipresent passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt as [Exodus 12:27] states: "And you shall say: 'It is the Paschal sacrifice to God.'"

The bitter herbs: [They are eaten] because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt.

The matzah: [It is eaten] because of the redemption. These statements are all referred to as the Haggadah.

6. In each and every generation, a person must present himself as if he, himself, has now left the slavery of Egypt, as [Deuteronomy

until one concludes the entire passage. — i.e., until Deuteronomy 26:8.

Whoever adds and extends his extrapolation — beyond the accepted text of this passage is praiseworthy.

Commentary, Halachah 5

Whoever does not mention these three matters on the night of the fifteenth has not fulfilled his obligation — to relate the story of the Exodus. The commentators question if a person who does not mention these three concepts is not considered to have fulfilled the mitzvah at all, or rather, is the intent that he has not fulfilled the mitzvah in a desirable manner?

They are: the Paschal sacrifice, matzah, and maror. — From the verse quoted below: "And you shall say: 'It is the Paschal sacrifice to God.'" *Tosefot*, *Pesachim* 116b, derives that the Paschal sacrifice must be among the things spoken about on Pesach. Since the Paschal sacrifice must be eaten "with matzah and bitter herbs," there is also an obligation to mention them.

the Paschal sacrifice: [It is eaten] because the Omnipresent passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt — saving them from the plague of the slaying of the firstborn as [Exodus 12:27] states: "And you shall say: 'It is the Paschal sacrifice to God.'"

The bitter herbs — Here and in Halachah 8:4, the Rambam changes the order found in our text of the Mishnah and in the Haggadah (including even his own text of the Haggadah). Rabbenu Marbach maintains that this was the order found in the Rambam's text of the Mishnah.

[They are eaten] because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt. The matzah: [It is eaten] because of the redemption. These statements — the questions asked in Halachah 3 and the explanations referred to in this and the previous halachah.

6:23] states: "He took us out from there." Regarding this manner, God commanded in the Torah: "Remember that you were a slave [Deuteronomy 5:15]" - i.e., as if you, yourself, were a slave and went out to freedom and were redeemed.

7. Therefore, when a person feasts on this night, he must eat and drink while he is reclining in the manner of free men. Each and every one, both men and women, must drink four cups of wine on this night. [This number] should not be reduced. Even a poor person who is sustained

stated forty years after the redemption from Egypt, to the Jews who were prepared to enter *Eretz Yisrael*. They had not tasted Egyptian slavery.

us out from there." -- This verse is quoted by Ravvah, *Pesachim* 116b. However, the Mishnah (and our text of the Haggadah) derive this concept from Exodus 13:8: "And you shall tell your son...: 'It is because of this, that God acted for me...'" Nevertheless, the Rambam's text of the Mishnah and the Haggadah do not include that verse.

Regarding this manner, God commanded in the Torah: "Remember that you were a slave [Deuteronomy 5:15]" -- It is necessary to quote this verse in addition to the one mentioned previously. The previous verse teaches us that the redemption from Egypt is a continuous activity, affecting us at present as well. This verse emphasizes that we are obligated to recognize and recall that fact.

i.e., as if you, yourself, -- even though physically, you did not experience this slavery. were a slave and went out to freedom and were redeemed.

### Commentary, Halachah 7

Therefore, when a person feasts on this night -- The meal served at the Seder should be festive. The *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 472:2, states that a person should set the table with the most attractive utensils he can afford.

he must eat and drink -- The Talmud mentions two practices as characteristic of freedom: reclining and drinking four cups of wine. The Rambam mentions the general principles applying to these obligations in this halachah, and explains each of the practices in particular in the following halachot.

while he is reclining -- on couches  
in the manner of free men -- In his commentary on the Mishnah (*Pesachim* 10:1), the Rambam relates that this was the practice of "kings and great people."

The commentaries quote the Rambam's expression as a proof that reclining (יָרַח) is not merely a particular law, describing the manner in which the matzah and the four cups of wine must be eaten and drunk, but rather a unique requirement on its own. Therefore, as explained in the following halachah, it is praiseworthy for a person to eat the entire Seder meal while reclining.

each and every one -- Even a person who has difficulty drinking wine must observe this practice. *Needarim* 49b relates that Rabbi Yehudah bar Illai would have to bind his sides from Pesach to Shavuot because of the aftereffects of the four cups of wine he drank at the Seder. Nevertheless, each year he fulfilled the mitzvah.

וְעַל זֶכֶר זֶה צִוְּהָה הַקְדוֹשׁ-בְּרוּךְ-הוּא בְּמִצְוֹתָיו: "זִכְרוּתָם כִּי עֲבָד הָיִיתִי",  
כְּלוּמַר -- כִּי אֵלֶיךָ אָמְרָה בְּעֶמְקֶיךָ הַיֵּיתָ עֲבָד וְנִצַּאתָ לְחֵירוֹת וְנִפְדִּיתָ.

ז' לְפִיכָה כְּשִׁשְׁעֵר אָרַם כְּלִילָה הַיְהִי, צָרִיךְ לְאַלֵּל וּלְשַׁמְחֹת וְהוּא מְטִיב דְּרָוּךְ  
חַרוּת.

וְכָל אִתְרָא וְאִתְרָא -- כִּינְ אֲנָשִׁים, כִּינְ נָשִׁים -- חֵיב לְשַׁמְחֹת כְּלִילָה הַיְהִי  
אֲרַבְעָה כּוֹסוֹת שֶׁל יַיִן,  
אִין פּוֹחֲתִין לוֹ מְהֵרָם.

both men and women -- Generally, woman are not bound to fulfill any mitzvot that have a specific time limitation. However, an exception to this principle is made regarding the mitzvot associated with the Seder night. Since the women had a full share in the miracles of the Exodus - indeed, *Sotah* 11b states that the redemption came about because of their merit - they must participate fully in the commemoration of the Exodus (*Pesachim* 108b).

It is curious that the Rambam does not mention whether wine should be given to children below Bar-Mitzvah age. Many authorities maintain that it is unnecessary for the Rambam to mention this fact, for we can assume that the all-encompassing obligation to educate one's children in Torah practice applies in this regard as well. (See *Shulchan Aruch* 472:15 and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 472:25)

Other commentaries, however, maintain that the omission is significant. They note that in *Hilchot De'ot* 4:12, the Rambam writes that wine is harmful to young children. Hence, they maintain, the Rabbis would not require a father to train his children in Torah practice at the expense of their health.

must drink four -- The Jerusalem Talmud, *Pesachim* 10:1 explains that these four cups of wine are associated with the four promises of redemption given to the Jews in Egypt (Exodus 6:6-7). Alternatively, it is suggested that they refer to:

the four cups mentioned in the narrative of Pharaoh's butler;  
the four exiles in which the Jews will suffer;  
the four cups of retribution God will force the gentiles to drink in the Messianic age; and,  
the four cups of consolation He will offer to the Jews after their redemption.

In Halachah 8:10, the Rambam also mentions a fifth cup of wine. See the commentary on that halachah.

cups of wine -- Most halachic authorities require that this wine have some alcoholic content. Hence, grape juice alone should not be used. However, during certain portions of the Seder, it is possible to drink additional cups of wine.

even a poor person who is sustained by charity should not have fewer than four cups. -- Just as the Jewish community must supply him with his physical needs, they must also provide him with the necessities required to fulfill his halachic obligations.

ואפילו עני המתפרנס מן הצדקה — לא יפתחו לו מארבעה כוסות.  
 שעור כל פוס מהן — רביעית.

ח אכלו עני שבישראל לא יאכל עד שיטב.  
 אשה אינה צריכה הסבה.

ואם אשה חשונה היא — צריכה הסבה.  
 וכן אצל אביו, והשמש בפניו רבו — צריכין הסבה.

אצל תלמיד בפני רבו, אינו מטב, אלא-אסורו נתן לו רבו רשות.  
 והסבת זמין אינה הסבה,

וכן המטב על ערפו או על פניו — אין זו הסבה.  
 ואימתי צריכין הסבה?

בשעת אכלת פנית מצה ובשתיית ארבעה כוסות האלו;

by charity should not have fewer than four cups. The size of each of these cups should be a quarter [of a log].

8. Even one of Israel's poor should not eat until he [can] recline. A woman need not recline. If she is an important woman, she must recline. [Even] a son in the presence of his father or an attendant in the presence of his master must recline. However, a student before his teacher should not recline unless his teacher grants him permission. Reclining on one's right side is not considered reclining. Neither is reclining on one's back or forwards.

When must one recline? when eating the כוית of matzah and when drinking these four cups of wine. While eating and drinking at other

The size of each of these cups — i.e., the amount of liquid they must contain should be a quarter [of a log] — There is some controversy about the conversion of that figure into modern measure. The most commonly accepted figure is 3.35 fluid ounces. Some authorities require even larger cups.

**Commentary, Halachah 8**

Even one of Israel's poor should not eat until he [can] recline. — The word "even" is used to include people who one would presume would not be obligated. *Tosefot, Pesachim* 99b, explains that it obligates even a poor person who cannot afford a couch or pillows to lean on. He also must try to recline to the best of his ability - e.g., leaning on a colleague's side. See *Magen Avraham, Orach Chayim* 472:3.

A woman need not recline. — Rabbeinu Manoach and other commentators explain that this refers only to a woman in the presence of her husband. The *Sh'etot d'Ray Achai* (Tzav 77) states that it applies to all women, since women do not generally recline.

If she is an important woman, she must recline. — The Ramah, *Orach Chayim* 472:4, and other Ashkenazic authorities write: "All our women are considered important. Nevertheless, it is not customary for them to recline."  
 [Even] a son in the presence of his father or an attendant in the presence of his master must recline. — A son is obligated to honor his father, and thus it would not be respectful to recline in his presence. However, we may assume that the father foregoes his honor in this regard. This applies even if the father is also his tutor in Torah studies.

Though an attendant is bound to fulfill the duties required of him by his master, the obligations required of him by God take precedence.  
 However, a student before his teacher — i.e., one who teaches him Torah should not recline — for a person's fear of his teacher must parallel his fear of God (*Pesachim* 22b).

unless his teacher grants him permission. — Should he desire to do so, a teacher may forego the honor due him. In such an instance, a student must recline.

Reclining on one's right side is not considered reclining. — This refers to a right-handed person. Since he must eat with his right hand, it would be uncomfortable for him to recline on that side (*Rashbam, Pesachim* 108a). Alternatively, this refers to all people for reclining in this manner is dangerous, lest the food go down the windpipe rather than the esophagus (*Ramah* 472:3).

Neither is reclining on one's back or forwards. — *Pesachim* 108a explains that מריקין is not considered as a desirable manner of reclining. Most commentaries explain that refers only to leaning on one's back. However, even leaning forward is not acceptable, since this is not a comfortable manner of eating and cannot be regarded as a symbol of freedom and liberation.

When must one recline? when eating the כוית of matzah — At present, this obligation applies also to eating the *korech* (sandwich of matzah and maror) and the *afikoman*, and when drinking these four cups of wine. — for these were ordained particularly to celebrate the redemption from Egypt.

The *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim* 472:7, writes that a person who ate matzah or drank from the four cups of wine without reclining is not considered to have fulfilled his obligation and must repeat the act.

The Ramah qualifies this law, explaining that since, in the Ashkenazic community, certain opinions do not require reclining at present, one need not drink another cup of wine if the third and fourth cups of wine were drunk without reclining. However, he suggests that a person repeat the eating of matzah and the drinking of the first two cups of wine if they were consumed without reclining. The *Magen Avraham* (and the subsequent authorities) declare that the drinking of the first cup should also not be repeated.

While eating and drinking at other times — during the Seder meal

times: if one reclines, it is praiseworthy; if not, there is no requirement.

9. These four cups [of wine] should be mixed with water so that drinking them will be pleasant. [The degree to which they are mixed] all depends on the wine and the preference of the person drinking. [Together,] these four [cups] should contain at least a quarter [of a log] of pure wine.

A person who drank these four cups from wine which was not mixed [with water] has fulfilled the obligation to drink four cups of wine, but has not fulfilled the obligation to do so in a manner expressive of freedom.

A person who drank these four cups of wine mixed [with water] at one time has fulfilled the obligation to drink wine in a manner expressive of freedom, but has not fulfilled the obligation of four cups of wine.

A person who drank the majority [of the cup] from each of these [four] cups has fulfilled his obligation.

If one reclines, it is praiseworthy — for, as mentioned in the previous halachah, reclining is one of the signs of freedom and liberation, and thus, has an importance of its own, independent of its connection to the eating of matzah and the drinking of the four cups of wine.

If not, there is no requirement. — for, in particular, reclining was obligated only for those acts that were specifically instituted as symbols of our liberation. One should not recline while eating the maror, for it was ordained as a remembrance of our people's oppression and not of their liberation (*Pesachim* 108a).

### Commentary, Halachah 9

These four cups [of wine] should be mixed with water so that drinking them will be pleasant. — In Talmudic times, the wines were very strong and had to be mixed with water before being drunk. At present, most commercially produced wines have already been diluted with water. Nevertheless, in many communities, it is customary to mix a small amount of water with the wine when pouring the cup, to fulfill the obligation of mixing the wine with water oneself.

[The degree to which they are mixed] all depends on — the strength of the wine and the preference of the person drinking. — Nevertheless, the Sages placed some limits on the extent to which wine may be diluted.

[Together,] these four [cups] should contain at least a quarter [of a log] of pure wine. — i.e., the sum total of pure wine contained in all four cups must be at least a quarter of a log at least 3.35 fluid ounces, as explained above. A person may thus add three times this quantity of water to the wine to produce four cups, each containing a quarter of a log of mixed wine.

ושאר אכילתו ושתיתו — אם הספ, הרי זה משקה; ואם לאו, אינו צריך.

ב ארבעה כוסות האלה, צריך לקזוז אותן כדי שתהיה שתיה צרבה, הכל לפי היין ולפי דעת השותה.

ולא יפחה בארבעתן מרוביעיה יין חזי.

שמה ארבעה כוסות אלו מיין שאינו מזוג — יצא ירי ארבעה כוסות, וליא יצא ירי חרות.

שמה ארבעה כוסות מזוגין פכה אחת — ירי חרות יצא, ירי ארבעה כוסות לא יצא.

ואם שמה מקל כוס מהן רבוי — יצא.

We may not dilute the wine any further. *Shabbat* 71a states: "Any wine that is less than a third of the quantity of the water [mixed in] is not considered wine."

This factor is significant at present, when the wines commercially produced are substantially diluted with water in the factories. Hence, when adding water to them at the table, one must take care not to exceed the above limits.

A person who drank these four cups from wine which was not mixed [with water] — In *Hilchot Mamrin* 7:4, the Rambam writes that drinking wine in this manner is considered as an accidental occurrence, and no one, not even a glutton, will continue doing this.

has fulfilled the obligation to drink four cups of wine, but has not fulfilled the obligation to do so in a manner expressive of freedom. — i.e., he has not fulfilled the obligation in its proper manner. However, as stated above, at present many commentaries do not require further dilution with water.

A person who drank these four cups of wine mixed [with water] at one time — without waiting to drink them as prescribed in the Haggadah — has fulfilled the obligation to drink wine in a manner expressive of freedom, but has not fulfilled the obligation of four cups of wine. — The Rabbis ordained that the cups be drunk in the prescribed order. (Note the following halachah.) A person who does not drink them in this order does not fulfill his obligation.

A person who drank the majority [of the cup] from each of these [four] cups has fulfilled his obligation. — The *Taz* (472:7) explains that it is desirable for a person to drink the entire cup of wine if possible. Accordingly, the *Magen Avraham* suggests using smaller cups, so that it is easy to drink the entire contents. Some opinions maintain that even if a person is using a very large cup, he is obligated to drink the majority of the cup. However, the prevailing opinion (*Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 472:19) is that for the first three cups, it is sufficient to drink the majority of a quarter of a log (i.e., at

**10.** On each of these four cups, one recites a blessing of its own. In addition:

On the first cup, one recites the *kiddush* pertaining to the day;

On the second cup, one reads the Haggadah;

On the third cup, one recites the grace after meals;

On the fourth cup, one concludes the Hallel and recites the blessing for songs [of praise].

Between these cups, should one desire to drink, one may. Between the third and the fourth cup, one should not drink.

**11.** The *charoset* is a mitzvah ordained by the words of the Sages, to

least 1.68 fluid ounces of wine). For the final cup, one should drink an entire quarter of a *log*.

The source of the latter law is *Pesachim* 108a, which mentions a person who drinks wine from his cup and then gives to his children and the members of his household. The Talmud concludes that he fulfills his obligation if he drinks the majority of the cup. The Rambam quotes only the conclusion of this statement, for he maintains that all adult members of the household, both men and women, should be given their own cups of wine and he does not mention the obligation of giving wine to children. (See Halachah 7.)

### Commentary, Halachah 10

On each of these four cups, one recites a blessing of its own — i.e., one recites the blessing *ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו*, blessing God for creating wine, before partaking of each cup of wine. Generally, when one continues drinking wine in one sitting, only one blessing is recited in the beginning. However, in this instance, since each of the four cups was ordained as a specific mitzvah, it requires a blessing of its own.

The *Ma'aseh Rokeach* quotes Rav Avraham, the Rambam's son, as stating that after each of the four cups, his father also required the recitation of the blessing *ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו* (the blessing recited after drinking wine). Nevertheless, both Sephardic and Ashkenazic custom today is to recite *ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו* only once, at the end of the Seder (Ramah 474:1).

Also, — each of the four cups is associated with another blessing(s).

On the first cup, one recites the *kiddush* pertaining to the day — as on every Sabbath and festival, as stated in Halachah 8:1.

On the second cup, one reads the Haggadah — and concludes with the blessing *אשר יצאנו*, which praises God for redeeming us, as stated in Halachah 8:5.

On the third cup, one recites the grace after meals — which, throughout the year, should be recited over a cup of wine, as the Rambam writes in *Hilchot Berachot* 7:14 and as stated in Halachah 8:10 below.

On the fourth cup, one concludes the Hallel — which is begun before partaking of the meal, as stated in Halachah 8:5.

כל כוס נכנס מארבעה כוסות הללו, מקבץ עליו ברכה בפני עצמה. כוס ראשון, אומר עליו קידוש היום.

כוס שני, קורא עליו את ההגדה.

כוס שלישי, מקבץ עליו ברכת המזון.

כוס רביעי, גומר עליו את ההלל ומקבץ עליו ברכת השני.

בין הכוסות האלו, אם רצה לשמות שותה.

בין שלישי לרביעי, אינו שותה.

לא התקטת מצוה מדברי סופרים, זכר לטיט, שקרו עובדין בו במצרים.

and recites the blessing for songs [of praise]. — i.e., the blessing *יהללוך*, generally recited after the Hallel, as stated in Halachah 8:10.

Between these cups, should one desire to drink, one may. — However, the *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim* 473:3, recommends not drinking between the first and second cups. The *Darchoi Mosheh* states that this is the accepted Ashkenazic custom. See also *Mishnah Berurah* 473:13-15.

No restrictions are placed on drinking between the second and third cups, since this is the time of the Seder meal.

Between the third and the fourth cup, one should not drink — In his commentary on the Mishnah, *Pesachim* 10:7, the Rambam quotes the Jerusalem Talmud, *Pesachim* 10:6, which explains the reason for this prohibition as follows: We fear that the extra wine will cause a person to become drunk and prevent him from concluding the Hallel. Other authorities also add another reason, lest one appear to be adding to the requirement of four cups ordained by our Sages.

### Commentary, Halachah 11

The *charoset* is a mitzvah ordained by the words of the Sages — This statement represents a change of opinion by the Rambam. *Pesachim* 10:3 states: "The *charoset* is not a mitzvah. Rabbi Eliezer ben Tzadok declares: 'It is a mitzvah.'" In his commentary on that Mishnah, the Rambam writes:

According to Rabbi Eliezer ben Tzadok, who maintains that *charoset* is a mitzvah, one is obligated to recite a blessing "...who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us regarding the eating of *charoset*." This is not the halachah.

A change of opinion of this nature is not extremely uncommon. However, the question can be raised: why does the Rambam not require a blessing to be recited over the *charoset*? Among the answers given is that the *charoset* is considered secondary (שני) to the substances which are dipped in it. Hence, we follow the principle of reciting a blessing upon the essential item (the maror or the matzah) and not on the *charoset* (*Lechem Mishneh*).

commemorate the clay with which [our forefathers] worked in Egypt. How is it made?

We take dates, dried figs, or raisins and the like, and crush them, add vinegar to them, and mix them with spices, as clay is mixed into straw. This is placed on the table on [the first two] nights of Pesach.

12. According to the Torah, the eating of bitter herbs is not a mitzvah in its own right, but rather is dependent on the consumption of the Paschal sacrifice. It is one positive commandment to eat the meat of the Paschal sacrifice together with matzah and bitter herbs. According to the words of the Sages, [it is a mitzvah] to eat the bitter herbs alone on this night even if there is no Paschal sacrifice.

13. The bitter herbs referred to by the Torah are Romaine lettuce, to commemorate the clay — i.e., mortar. *Pesachim* 116a offers a second opinion: “to commemorate the apple trees” — i.e., the manner in which the Jewish women made themselves attractive to their husbands and convinced them to continue rearing children. They would then hide in the apple orchards and give birth to their children without difficulty (Rashbam).

with which [our forefathers] worked in Egypt — making bricks. How is it made? We take dates, dried figs, or raisins and the like and crush them — The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* (473:32) suggests using apples, nuts, or pomegranates and fruits used as metaphors for the Jewish people in the Bible. add vinegar to them — The Ramah (473:5) suggests using red wine to recall the Jewish blood spilled by the Egyptians.

and mix them with spices — ginger or cinnamon (However, in certain communities, it is customary not to use these spices on Pesach). *Pesachim* (ibid.) quotes Rabbi Eliezer ben Tzadok as saying “the spice-merchants of Jerusalem would call out: ‘Come and get spices for the mitzvah.’”

as clay is mixed into straw — to commemorate the making of bricks. This is placed on the table — according to our custom, on the Seder plate on Pesach nights.

### Commentary, Halachah 12

According to the Torah, the eating of bitter herbs is not a mitzvah in its own right — In contrast to matzah, concerning which there is a separate commandment (Exodus 12:18): “On that evening, eat matzot,” there is no specific Biblical commandment to eat bitter herbs alone.

Rav Chayim Soloveitchik explains that, accordingly, when eating the maror together with the Paschal sacrifice, there is no obligation to eat a *ת"ב*. That measure is required only according to the Sages, who established a separate mitzvah to eat maror. Therefore, as in all other cases where eating is required, one must consume

וְרֵעֵד עוֹשֵׂין אוֹתָהּ? לֹקְחִין תְּמָרִים אוֹ גְרוֹגְרוֹת אוֹ צְמוֹדִקוֹן וְיִצְאָא בְּהַן וְדוֹרְסִין אוֹתָן, וְנוֹתְנִין לְהוֹלֵךְ חֶמֶץ וּמִתְבַּלֵּין אוֹתָן בְּתַבְלִין, כְּמֹל טֵיט בְּתַבְנִין, וּמְבִיאִין אוֹתָהּ עַל הַשֻּׁלְחָן בְּלִילֵי תַפְסַח.

יב אֲכִילָת מָרוֹר אֵינָה מִצְוָה מִן הַתּוֹרָה כְּפִנֵי עֲצָמָה, אֲלֵא תְּלִיָה הִיא כְּאֲכִילָת תַּפְסַח,

שְׂמֻצּוֹת עֲשֵׂה אִחָה לְאֹכֵל כֶּסֶף הַפֶּסַח עַל מַצָּה וּמְרוֹרִים;  
וּמְדַבְּרֵי סוֹפְרִים — לְאֹכֵל הַמָּרוֹר לְכַדוֹ בְּלִיל יְהִי, אֲפֵלוּ אֵין שֵׁם כְּרוֹבן תַּפְסַח.

יג מְרוֹרִים הָאֲמוּרִים כְּתוּרָה הֵן הַתּוֹרָה וְהַעֲלֵשִׁין וְהַתְּמַקֵּא וְהַתְּרוֹקְבֵינָא וְהַתְּקָרוֹר —

א. However, since there is no Torah mitzvah to eat maror, merely that one should use it to embellish the Paschal sacrifice, that measure is not required by the Torah.

[Perhaps, this thesis may be questioned on the basis of Halachah 8:6, which requires a separate blessing for maror when it is eaten alone. As in Halachah 8:2, a blessing would not be required on a measure less than a *כ"ט*.]

but rather is dependent on the consumption of the Paschal sacrifice — as Exodus 12:8 commands: “eat it together with matzot and bitter herbs.” (See Halachah 8:6.)

It is one positive commandment to eat the meat of the Paschal sacrifice together with matzah and bitter herbs. — Just as the four species taken on Sukkot are one mitzvah, similarly, although the Paschal sacrifice should be eaten with these three elements, it is considered only one mitzvah.

Furthermore, in *Sefer HaMitzvot* (positive commandment 56), the Rambam explains that if it is impossible to obtain bitter herbs, it is still a mitzvah to partake of the Paschal sacrifice. However, there is no mitzvah to partake of bitter herbs alone. (See also *Hilchot Korban Pesach* 8:2.)

According to the words of the Sages, [it is a mitzvah] — and thus, as mentioned in Halachah 8:8, we recite a blessing praising God for commanding us “concerning the eating of maror.”

to eat the bitter herbs alone — in contrast to our practice of eating them together with matzah (see Halachah 8:8), which is only a custom on this night even if there is no Paschal sacrifice.

### Commentary, Halachah 13

The bitter herbs referred to by the Torah are Romaine lettuce — *Pesachim* 39a

endives, horseradish, date ivy, wormwood. All of these five species of vegetable are called maror. If a person ate a כזיא of any one of these [species] or of all five [species] combined, he has fulfilled his obligation.

This applies while they are still moist. One may fulfill one's obligation with their stem even if it is dry. One cannot fulfill one's obligation if they are boiled, pickled, or cooked.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

1. The order of the fulfillment of these mitzvot on the night of the fifteenth [of Nisan] is as follows: In the beginning, a cup [of wine] is mixed for each individual. They recite the blessing, כזיא פזי רזנז, and the *kiddush* of the day on it, and the blessing, *shehecheyanu*. Then, they drink [it].

explains that even though the leaves of this species are sweet, it is preferable to fulfill the mitzvah of bitter herbs with this species than with any other. Just as the Egyptian exile began in a favorable way and ended in bitter oppression, similarly the leaves of this plant are sweet, but its root bitter. Furthermore, its Aramaic name, סזא, also means compassion and alludes to God's mercy for our people. From a halachic perspective, it is easiest to consume the required measure of maror when using this species.

endives, horseradish, date ivy -- the precise English term for the latter species is a matter of question. In his commentary on the Mishnah (*Pesachim* 2:6), the Rambam identifies it with the Arabic "Kretzanah."  
wormwood -- an extremely bitter tasting herb.

All of these five species of vegetable are called maror. If a person ate a כזיא -- As mentioned in the commentary on Halachah 1:1, there is a debate between the commentators if a כזיא is considered as one third the size of a כזיא, or one half. Hence, in regard to questions of Torah law, the more stringent opinion should be followed. However, in questions of Rabbinic law, the more lenient opinion can be relied upon.

Since the consumption of maror is a Rabbinic commandment, the more lenient view - in terms of modern measurements, between 16.6 and 24 grams, depending on different halachic opinions - may be relied upon.  
of any one of these [species] or of all five [species] combined, he has fulfilled his obligation.

This applies while they -- their leaves are still moist. One may fulfill one's obligation with their stem -- The *Shulchan Aruch*,

*Orach Chayim* 473:1 maintains that the most common custom to obtain, was to use even if it is dry. Activities detract from pickled -- in vine the custom of using sharpness. Based on species of bitter herb or cooked.

## Commentary, Ha

The order of the and *charoset*, and on the night of the sixteenth of Nisan is as follows: It is possible after night participate in the S a cup [of wine] is for each individual and they recite the blessing, shehet that is not performed of the mitzvah of including the other of them they drink |

**RESOURCE TEXT FOCUSING ON  
OBSERVING PESACH**

CHAPTER 4

פֶּרֶק ד

Mishnah 1

משנה א

In a place where they are accustomed to work on the eve of Passover up to midday<sup>1</sup> they may do so; in a place where they are accustomed not to work, they may not work.<sup>2</sup> If anyone go from a place where they do work to a place where they do not work, or from a place where they do not work to a place where they do work, the strict regulations of the place whence he came<sup>3</sup> and of the place to which he goes<sup>4</sup> are applied to him. But a man must not vary any custom<sup>5</sup> which might lead to discord.<sup>6</sup>

מקום שנהגו לעשות מלאכה  
בערב פסחים עד יחצות עושין;  
מקום שנהגו שלא לעשות אין  
עושין. ההולך ממקום שעושין  
למקום שאין עושין, או ממקום  
שאין עושין למקום שעושין, בותרין  
עליו חומרי מקום ששיצא משם  
וחומרי מקום שהלך לשם. ואל  
ישנה אדם מפני המחלוקת.

Work prohibited?

1 Literally on the eves of Passovers. 2 In Temple times work was not done after midday at all because of the time needed for the slaughtering of the Passover offerings. 3 If he came from such a place where people do not work on the eve of Passover he must not work in his new place even if they do work. 4 If the people in the place where he came to do not engage in any work on the eve of the Passover he also must desist from work. 5 i.e., behave differently to local practice. 6 If he came from a place where they carry on no work on the eve of Passover to a place where they do, he must do no work for there is no fear of unpleasantness as people will say he has no work to do. But if a person has no intention of returning whence he came then he must act as those among whom he stays.

Mishnah 2

משנה ב

Similarly, if anyone take produce of the *Sabbatical Year*<sup>1</sup> from a place where such had come to an end<sup>2</sup> to a place where such had not come to an end,<sup>3</sup> or from a place where such had not ceased to a place where such had ceased it is obligatory<sup>4</sup> to clear it out.<sup>5</sup> R. Judah<sup>6</sup> says, 'They' say to him, 'Go thou forth and bring thou also.'<sup>8</sup>

כיוצא בו, המוליך פירות שבועית  
ממקום ששקלו למקום שלא כלו,  
או ממקום שלא כלו למקום  
שקלו, חייב לבצר. רבי יהודה  
אומר, אומרים לו, צא והבא לך  
אף אתה.

**RESOURCE TEXT FOCUSING ON  
REMOVING LEAVEN**

מִסְכֵּת

פְּסַחִים

TRACTATE

PESACHIM

CHAPTER 1

פָּרָק א

Mishnah 1

מִשְׁנֵה א

The search for leaven

On the night of the fourteenth<sup>1</sup> they must search<sup>2</sup> for leaven<sup>3</sup> by the light of a candle.\* Any place wherein they do not bring leaven<sup>4</sup> does not require searching. Then why did they say, Two rows<sup>5</sup> in a cellar?<sup>7</sup>—In such a place<sup>8</sup> wherein they bring leaven.<sup>9</sup> The School of Shammai say, Two rows over the whole of the exposed surfaces<sup>9</sup> in the cellar, but the School of Hillel say, Only the two outside rows that are at the top.<sup>10</sup>

אור יִלְאָרְבְּעָה עֶשֶׂר בּוֹדֵקִין אֶת־הַחֶמֶץ לְאֹר הַנֵּר. כָּל־מְקוֹם שֶׁאֵין מְכַנְּסִין בוֹ חֶמֶץ אֵין צְרִיף בְּדִיקָה. \*וְלֵמָּה אָמְרוּ שְׁתֵּי שׁוּרוֹת יַבְמַרְתָּ? מְקוֹם שֶׁמְכַנְּסִין בוֹ חֶמֶץ. בֵּית שְׁמַאי אוֹמְרִים שְׁתֵּי שׁוּרוֹת עַל יַפְּנֵי כָּל־הַמַּרְתָּ. וּבֵית הַלֵּל אוֹמְרִים שְׁתֵּי שׁוּרוֹת הַחִיצוֹנוֹת שֶׁהֵן הָעֲלִיוֹנוֹת.<sup>10</sup>

1 The night preceding the 14th of Nisan. The term אור, *light*, is used here euphemistically for 'night.' 2 So as not to transgress the prohibitions לא תאור לא שאור לא [Exodus 12, 19] and ולא יראה לה שאור [Deuteronomy 16, 4] for any leaven found during Passover being used. 3 חֶמֶץ is the **result** of fermentation, that is, *leavened*; שאור is the **process** of fermentation and comes under the same prohibition as חֶמֶץ. 4 The בְּדִיקַת חֶמֶץ is carried out by night with the household present. If the search is not made at night it must be carried out in the following morning of the 14th *also by candle light*. 5 During the year, for instance, a wine-store, oil-shed or cow-shed. 6 Of the stack; two rows of casks should be searched for leaven. 7 *i.e.*, wine-cellar, or wine-vault, or oil-cellar or vinegar-cellar. 8 *i.e.*, it is one of those places. 9 Casks facing inwards and outwards from floor to ceiling and also those facing the ceiling. 10 *i.e.*, the two rows on the outside surface facing one on entering. \* Or וְלֵמָּה.

Mishnah 2

משנה ב

They need not fear lest a weasel [or mole] may have dragged it<sup>1</sup> from one house to another or from one place to another;<sup>2</sup> because if this were so,<sup>3</sup> it could have occurred from courtyard to courtyard and from town to town; [and] there would be no end to the matter.<sup>4</sup>

אין חוששין שמא יגררה חולדה מבית לבית וממקום למקום; דאם-כן מחצר לחצר ומעיר לעיר, אין לדבר סוף.

1 Some leaven. 2 After it had been searched. 3 If the law had required a research. 4 i.e., there would be no limit.

Mishnah 3

משנה ג

R. Judah says,<sup>1</sup> They must search on the night of the fourteenth,<sup>2</sup> or in the morning of the fourteenth,<sup>3</sup> or at the time<sup>4</sup> when\* it<sup>5</sup> had to be burned.<sup>6</sup> But the Sages say, If one had not searched during the night of the fourteenth let him search on the fourteenth, if he had not made the search on the fourteenth let him search during the Festival period,<sup>7</sup> and if he had not effected the search during the Festival period he may make the search after the Festival period.<sup>8</sup> And what one leaves<sup>9</sup> out<sup>10</sup> he should put away in a hidden place<sup>11</sup> so that it should not be necessary to make another search.

רבי יהודה אומר, בודקין אור ארבעה עשר, ובארבעה עשר שחרית, ובשעת הביעור. וחקמים אומרים, לא כדק אור ארבעה עשר יבדוק בארבעה עשר, לא כדק בארבעה עשר יבדוק בתוך המועד, לא כדק בתוך המועד יבדוק לאחר המועד. ומה שמשייר יניחנו בצינועא, כדי שלא יהא צריך בדיקה אחריו.

1 His view is rejected. 2 The night preceding the 14th day of Nisan. 3 If the search had not been made then. 4 If the search had not been made even then. 5 The חמץ. 6 ביעור, literally removal; see Exodus 12, 15. See 2<sup>1</sup>. 7 Passover. 8 Any חמץ which is left over must be covered up securely and burned on חול המועד or after יום טוב as the case may be; it may not be used after Passover. 9 ומה שהיה משייר in some editions. 10 חמץ left over must be consumed on the morning of the 14th Nisan. 11 In safe keeping, so that there is no risk of any of the חמץ being carried about and thus necessitating another בדיקה, search. \* Or ובשעת.

Mishnah 8

משנה ח

They must not put flour<sup>1</sup> into the fruit-spice pap<sup>1</sup> or into the mustard; but if one put some in<sup>2</sup> he must eat it<sup>3</sup> at once,<sup>4</sup> but R. Meir<sup>5</sup> forbids [this].<sup>6</sup> They must not boil the Paschal lamb<sup>7</sup> in liquids nor in fruit-juices, but they may baste it<sup>8</sup> therein or dip it into them.<sup>9</sup> The water which a baker has used<sup>10</sup> must be poured away because it becomes leaven.<sup>11</sup>

איי נותני קמח לתוך יהחרוסת או לתוך המרדל; ואם ינתן יאכל מיד, ורבי מאיר אוסר. אין מבשלין את הפסח לא במשקין, ולא במי פירות, אבל סכין ומטבילין אותו בהן. מי תשמישו של נחתום ישפכו, מפני שהן מחמיצין.<sup>11</sup>

1 Fruits and spices ground up and mixed with wine or vinegar in which the מרור is dipped at Passover פדר in order to neutralise the bitter taste. It refers also to the mixture of vegetable and vinegar commonly used as a sauce for meat. 2 Into the mustard. Nowadays mustard is not used with food on Passover. 3 Or נאכל (Niphal), it must be eaten.\* 4 Leavening does not occur for a little while. 5 His view is rejected. 6 To be eaten if flour is added to it. 7 Or with. 8 Pour over it after it had been roasted. 9 At the meal. 10 A baker cools his hands with water when he kneads the מצה dough. 11 Or ferments. Literally they cause (other things) to become leaven. \* Pointing favoured by some, but grammatically incorrect because החרוסת is f.

CHAPTER 3

פרק ג

Mishnah 1

משנה א

These must be removed<sup>1</sup> before Passover: Babylonian sauce,<sup>2</sup> Median beer,<sup>3</sup> Edomite vinegar,<sup>4</sup> Egyptian beer,<sup>5</sup> dyers' pulp,<sup>6</sup> paste butcher's loaf,<sup>7</sup> and bookbinders' paste.<sup>8</sup> R. Eliezer<sup>9</sup> says, Also women's face-powder.<sup>10</sup> This is the general principle: anything that is composed of a species of corn must be removed at Passover, and they come under the heading of a 'prohibition, warning'<sup>11</sup> but do not incur the penalty of extirpation.<sup>12</sup>

אלו יעברין בפסח, כותח הבבלי, ושכר המדי, ויחומץ האדומי, ונזיתום המצרי, וזומן של צבעים, ועמילן של טבחים, וקולן של סופרים. רבי אליעזר אומר, אף תכשיטי גשים. זה הכלל, כל-שהוא ממין דגן הרי זה עובר בפסח. הרי אלו באזהרה ואין בהן משום כרת.<sup>11</sup>

foods to be removed

1 Destroyed by burning. 2 A porridge made of sour-milk, bread crusts and salt. 3 Made from wheat or barley with date beer. 4 Or *Roman vinegar* made from wine fermented with barley. 5 Made from equal quantities of barley, field-saffron and salt kneaded with water and used as a laxative or aperient. 6 Or *broth* made from bran and water to render the dye adhesive. 7 (Some render this *baker's dough*). Made from grain not yet one-third ripened in the form of a starchy paste which is placed on a pot to absorb the foam or froth. 8 Or *glue, gum*, made from the fine flour-dust of millstones. 9 His view is rejected. 10 A cosmetic made from fine flour and certain spices, used as a depilatory or as a skin-bleacher. 11 *i.e.*, לא? \* לא תעשה. 12 See *Appendix, Note 2*. The penalty of קרת is not incurred for the transgression of eating less than an olive's bulk of the mixture: the penalty of מכות, *forty stripes*, however, is incurred. \* Or לא?.

Mishnah 2

משנה ב

removing  
leaven

Regarding the dough in the cracks of a trough,<sup>1</sup> if there be as much as an olive's bulk in one place it is obligatory to remove it,<sup>2</sup> but if not, it becomes annulled because of its small bulk.<sup>3</sup> And likewise in the case of uncleanness.<sup>4</sup> If one be concerned<sup>5</sup> about it,<sup>6</sup> it is regarded as an adhesive partition,<sup>7</sup> but if he wish it<sup>8</sup> to remain, then it is as the trough.<sup>9</sup> Dough which is hard,<sup>10</sup> if there be § [other dough] of a like nature<sup>11</sup> that had become leaven<sup>12</sup> then this is also forbidden.<sup>13</sup>

בצק ישבסדקי צריכה אם יש כנית במקום אחד חייב לבער, ואם לא בטל במיעוטו. וכן לענין הטומאה. אם מקפיד עליו חוצץ ואם רוצה בקיומו הרי הוא כצריכה. בצק החרש אם יש כיוצא בו שהחמיץ הרי זה אסור.<sup>13</sup> Or יש.

1 The dough used for stopping the joints in a kneading trough. 2 To be burned. 3 But dough not used for filling in the cracks between the boards requires *ביעור* whatever the quantity. 4 *i.e.*, if on פסח an unclean reptile touched the dough in the chinks it does not render the dough טמא, unclean; but if the dough touched is not more than an olive's bulk, then it is as if the trough itself had been touched and it becomes טמא. But this does not apply except on Passover (see next *Note*). 5 Or *scrupulous, strict*; this applies generally and not specifically to פסח. 6 *i.e.*, he removes the dough touched by an unclean reptile, whether there is an olive's bulk or not. 7 The טומאה, uncleanness, does not affect the trough. 8 The unclean dough—whatever its bulk. 9 And becomes טמא, unclean. 10 Literally *deaf, i.e.*, when struck by the hand it produces no sound; some read it as בצק החרש *dough like a potsherd*,\* dough which has turned hard and one does not know if it has

CHAPTER 2

פָּרָק ב

Mishnah 1

מִשְׁנָה א

So long as<sup>1</sup> it is permissible<sup>2</sup> to eat<sup>3</sup> one<sup>4</sup> may feed<sup>5</sup> [it to] cattle, beast or fowls and sell it to a non-Jew<sup>6</sup> and one is permitted to derive benefit from its ashes. If the time<sup>7</sup> have passed, it is forbidden to make any use of it, and one must not fire with it an oven<sup>8</sup> or a double stove.<sup>9</sup> R. Judah says, *Removal of leaven*<sup>10</sup> means *burning*; but the Sages say,<sup>11</sup> One may also crumble and scatter it to the wind or throw it into the sea.

כָּל-שְׂעָה שְׂמוֹתָר לְאָכֹל  
מֵאֵכִיל לְבִהְמָה לְחִיָּה וְלְעוֹפוֹת  
וּמוֹכְרוֹ לְעוֹבֵד גִּלּוּלִים וּמוֹתָר  
בִּהְנָאתוֹ. עֶבֶר יִזְמְנוּ אָסוּר  
בִּהְנָאתוֹ וְלֹא יִסִּיק בּוֹ תַנּוּר  
יִכְרִים. רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר, אֵין  
בִּיעוּר חֶמֶץ אֵלָּא שְׂרִיפָה.  
וְיַחֲכָמִים אוֹמְרִים, אֵף מְפָרֵר  
חוּרָה לְרוּחַ אוֹ מְטִיל לַיָּם.

how to remove leaven

1 *i.e.*, to 11.0 a.m. 2 For a כֹּהֵן to eat תְּרוּמָה, priest's-due (see *Appendix, Note 1*). 3 חֵלֶץ *i.e.*, to 11.0 a.m. 4 אֵיִשָּׁרְאֵל, non-priest. 5 With חֵלֶץ, completely tithed produce, that is, חֵמֶץ. 6 Literally idolater. לְנִכְרִי in some editions. 7 At the beginning of the 6th hour, *i.e.*, 11.0 a.m. 8 \*תַּנּוּר, an oven broad at the bottom and narrow at the top. 9 בִּירָה, § a stove, like a wide tube, without top or bottom, standing on bricks with room on top for two pots. 10 *Exodus 12, 15*. 11 Their view also holds good, but burning is the customary method. (The vessel used for collecting the חֵמֶץ during the בְּדִיקָה search—even if no חֵמֶץ is found—must be burned.)

\* See שַׁבָּת 3<sup>2</sup>. § Compare שַׁבָּת 3<sup>1</sup>, 38b, 138b.

Mishnah 2

מִשְׁנָה ב

The leaven of a non-Jew<sup>1</sup> when Passover had gone by—he is permitted to derive benefit [therefrom],<sup>2</sup> but that<sup>3</sup> of a Jew is forbidden to be used. As Scripture says,<sup>4</sup> *Neither shall leaven be seen with thee*.

חֶמֶץ שֶׁל עוֹבֵד גִּלּוּלִים שְׂעֵבֵר  
עָלָיו הַפֶּסַח מוֹתָר בִּהְנָאתוֹ, וְשֶׁל  
יִשְׂרָאֵל אָסוּר בִּהְנָאתוֹ. שְׂנֵאָמַר,  
לֹא יֵרָאֶה לְךָ שְׂאוֹר.

1 In some editions, נִכְרִי, instead of עוֹבֵד גִּלּוּלִים (literally idolater). 2 By a Jew. Hence the practice of the conditional sale over Passover of חֶמֶץ to a non-Jew (compare next *Mishnah*). 3 חֶמֶץ left over Passover (but it becomes annulled after בְּטוּל, and thus is allowed to be used, if it became mingled—not purposely—with like permitted produce which is at least sixty times the quantity of the חֶמֶץ). 4 *Exodus 13, 7*.

of Israel [43a] who have attained maturity but have not attained [their] years,<sup>5</sup> the daughters of poor men plaster them [the unwanted hairs] with lime; the daughters of wealthy men plaster them with fine flour; while royal princesses, with oil of myrrh, as it is written, *six months with oil of myrrh*.<sup>6</sup> What is oil of myrrh?—R. Huna b. Jeremiah said: *Safkath*.<sup>7</sup> R. Jeremiah b. Abba said: Oil of olives which were not a third grown. It was taught, R. Judah said: *Anpikanin*<sup>8</sup> is oil of olives which were not a third grown. And why do [women] rub it in [their skin]? Because it removes the hair and rejuvenates the skin.

THIS IS THE GENERAL RULE: WHATEVER IS OF THE SPECIES OF CORN. It was taught, R. Joshua said: Now since we learned, WHATEVER IS OF THE SPECIES OF CORN MUST BE REMOVED ON PASSOVER, why did the Sages enumerate these? So that one should be familiar with them and with their names.<sup>1</sup> As it once happened that a certain Palestinian<sup>2</sup> visited Babylonia. He had meat with him and he said to them [his hosts], Bring me a relish.<sup>3</sup> He [then] heard them saying, 'Take him *kutah*'. As soon as he heard *kutah*, he abstained.<sup>4</sup>

THESE ARE SUBJECT TO A 'WARNING'. Which Tanna [holds] that real leaven of corn in a mixture, and spoiled leaven<sup>5</sup> in its natural condition, is subject to a negative injunction?<sup>6</sup>—Said Rab Judah in Rab's name: It is R. Meir. For it was taught: *Si'ur*<sup>7</sup> must be burnt, and he may give it to his dog, and he who eats it is [punished] by forty [lashes].<sup>8</sup> Now this is self-contradictory. You say, '*si'ur* must be burnt': this proves that it is forbidden for use. Then it is stated, 'and he may give it to his dog', which proves that it is permitted for use! This is its meaning: *Si'ur* [i.e., what is *si'ur*] according to R. Meir [must be burnt] in R. Meir's opinion, and [what is *si'ur*] according to R. Judah [must be burnt] in R. Judah's opinion. And he may give it to his dog, [i.e., what is *si'ur*] according to R. Meir [may be given to a dog] in R. Judah's opinion. And he who eats it is [punished] by forty [lashes]—this agrees with R. Meir.<sup>9</sup> [Thus] we learn that R. Meir holds that spoiled [leaven] in its natural state<sup>10</sup> is subject to a negative injunction, and all the more real leaven of corn in a mixture.<sup>11</sup>

R. Nahman said, It is R. Eliezer. For it was taught: For real leaven of corn there is the penalty of *kareth*; for a mixture of it [one is subject to] a negative injunction: this is the view of R. Eliezer. But the Sages maintain: For real leaven of corn there is

b the penalty of *kareth*; for the mixture of it there is nothing at all.<sup>1</sup> [Thus] we learn that R. Eliezer holds that real leaven of corn in a mixture is subject to a negative injunction, and all the more spoiled [leaven] in its natural state.<sup>2</sup> Now R. Nahman, what is the reason that he does not say as Rab Judah?—He can tell you: perhaps R. Meir rules [thus] only there, [in respect of] spoiled [leaven] in its natural state, but not [in the case of] real leaven of corn in a mixture. And Rab Judah: what is the reason that he does not say as R. Nahman? He can tell you: [Perhaps]<sup>3</sup> R. Eliezer rules [thus] only there, [in respect of] real leaven of corn in a mixture, but not [in the case of] spoiled [leaven] in its natural state.

It was taught in accordance with Rab Judah:<sup>4</sup> *Ye shall eat nothing leavened*:<sup>5</sup> this is to include Babylonian *kutah* and Median beer and Idumean vinegar and Egyptian *zithom*. You might think that the penalty is *kareth*; therefore it is stated, *for whosoever eateth that which is leavened shall be cut off*.<sup>6</sup> For real leaven of corn there is the penalty of *kareth*, but for the mixture of it [you are subject] to a negative injunction. Now, whom do you know to maintain [that] for the mixture of it [you are subject] to a negative injunction? It is R. Eliezer. Yet he does not state<sup>7</sup> spoiled [leaven] in its natural state. This proves that R. Eliezer does not hold [that] spoiled [leaven] is subject to a negative injunction].

Now R. Eliezer, whence does he know that the mixture of it involves a negative injunction: because it is written, '*ye shall eat nothing leavened*'? If so, let him [the offender] be liable to *kareth* too, since it is written, '*for whosoever eateth that which is leavened . . . shall be cut off*'?—He requires that for what was taught: ([*Ye shall eat nothing*] leavened):<sup>1</sup> I only know [that it is forbidden] where it turned leaven of itself; if [it fermented] through the agency of another substance, how do we know it? Because it is stated, *for whosoever eateth that which is leavened shall be cut off*. If so, [the teaching] of the negative injunction too comes for this purpose?<sup>2</sup> Rather, R. Eliezer's reason is [that he] deduces from '*whosoever*'.<sup>3</sup> [But] there too<sup>4</sup> '*whosoever*' is written?—He requires that to include women.<sup>5</sup> But women are deduced from Rab Judah's [dictum] in Rab's name. For Rab Judah said in Rab's name, and the School of R. Ishmael taught likewise: *when a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit*.<sup>6</sup> the Writ assimilated woman to man in respect of all the penalties which are [decreed] in the Torah?—

(5) I.e., they have grown the hair which is the evidence of maturity before the usual age, which is twelve years and a day. They would normally be ashamed and wish to remove it. Tosaf. in Shab. 80b s.v. שנים omits 'years' and seems to translate: 'who have reached their time (for marriage), and yet have not attained it', so that they wish to make themselves more beautiful. (6) Est. II, 12 q.v. (7) Jast.: oil of myrrh or cinnamon. (8) It is stated in Men. 86a that *anpikanin* must not be brought with a meal-offering. R. Judah explains what this is.

a (1) That all may know that their use is forbidden on Passover. (2) Lit., 'son of the West'. (3) To go with the meat. (4) He knew that it contains milk, whilst they did not. (5) '*Nukshah*', a leavened substance unfit for food. (6) Babylonian *kutah* and Median beer both contain real leaven, but mixed with other substances; while women's paste is simply flour, unmixed, but spoiled and unfit for food. (7) This is dough which is beginning to ferment, i.e., semi-leaven. At that stage it is unfit for eating, and therefore the same as spoiled leaven; v. *infra* 48b. (8) This is the punishment for violating a negative injunction. (9) V. *infra* 48b for the controversy between R. Meir and R. Judah as to what constitutes *si'ur*, semi-leaven. Now both R. Meir and R. Judah hold that use of *si'ur*, as each defines it respectively, is forbidden, and hence it must be

burnt. But *si'ur*, as defined by R. Meir, is in R. Judah's opinion *mazzah* (unleavened bread), but as it is not fit for eating, it must be given to a dog. The final clause teaches this: according to R. Meir, he who eats *si'ur*, as defined by himself, is flagellated, though R. Judah holds that at that stage it is *mazzah* and may be eaten. (10) Such as *si'ur*. (11) Rab Judah being of the opinion that real leaven in a mixture is more stringent leaven than spoiled leaven in its natural state.

b (1) No penalty is incurred. (2) Thus R. Nahman holds that spoiled leaven unmixed is more stringent than real leaven in a mixture. (3) [Added with MS.M.] (4) That real leaven mixed is the more stringent. (5) Ex. XII, 20. (6) *Ibid.* 19. (7) I.e., include.

c (1) The bracketed passage is omitted in some edd. as well as *supra* 28b in the quotation of this Baraita. (2) That a negative injunction is involved even in respect of that which is made leaven through a foreign substance. How then do we know that even for a mixture a negative injunction is transgressed? (3) Heb. *kol*. This is an extension, and so teaches even the inclusion of a mixture. (4) In reference to *kareth*. (5) That they too are subject to the penalty of *kareth*. (6) Num. V, 6.



If so, [44a] in the matter of leaven too?<sup>10</sup>—That indeed is so; yet a this<sup>1</sup> is to reject [the ruling] of Abaye, who said, There is burning [on the altar] in respect of less than an olive;<sup>2</sup> therefore he informs us that there is no burning for less than an olive.

R. Dimi sat and reported this discussion. Said Abaye to R. Dimi: And [in] all [other] prohibitions of the Torah, does not a permitted commodity combine with a prohibited [commodity]? Surely we learned: If the *mikpeh*<sup>3</sup> is of *terumah*, while the garlic and the oil are of *hullin*, and a *tebul yom* touched part of it, he disqualifies all of it.<sup>4</sup> If the *mikpeh* is of *hullin*, while the garlic and the oil is of *terumah*, and a *tebul yom* touches part of it, he disqualifies only the place which he touches. Now we pondered thereon: why is the place where he touches unfit? Surely the seasoning<sup>5</sup> is nullified in the greater quantity?<sup>6</sup> And Rabbah b. Bar Hanah answered: What is the reason? Because a lay Israelite is flagellated on its account for [eating] as much as an olive.<sup>7</sup> How is that conceivable?<sup>8</sup> Is it not because the permitted [commodity] combines with the forbidden [commodity]?—No: what does 'as much as an olive' mean: that there is as much as an olive within the time of eating half [a loaf].<sup>9</sup> Is then 'as much as an olive within the time of eating half [a loaf]' a Scriptural [standard]?<sup>10</sup> Yes, he answered him. If so, why do the Rabbis disagree with R. Eliezer in reference to Babylonian *kutah*?<sup>11</sup>—What then: [the reason is] because the permitted [commodity] combines with the prohibited commodity? c Then after all why do the Rabbis differ from R. Eliezer in the b matter of Babylonian *kutah*? But leave Babylonian *kutah* alone,<sup>1</sup> because it does not contain as much as an olive within the eating

of half [a loaf]. [For] if [it is eaten] in its natural state,<sup>2</sup> so that he gulps it down and eats it, we disregard such a fancy as being exceptional.<sup>3</sup> While if he dips [bread] into it<sup>4</sup> and eats it, it does not contain as much as an olive within the time of eating half [a loaf].

He raised an objection against him: If there are two [stew] pots, one of *hullin* and the other of *terumah*, and in front of them are two mortars, one containing [condiments of] *hullin* and the other containing *terumah*, and the latter fell into the former, they are permitted,<sup>5</sup> for I assume: the *terumah* fell into the *terumah*, and the *hullin* fell into the *hullin*. Now if you say that as much as an olive within the [time of] eating half [a loaf] is a Biblical [standard], why do we say, 'for I assume, the *terumah*' etc.?<sup>6</sup>—Leave the *terumah* of condiments alone, he replied, which is [only] Rabbinical.<sup>7</sup>

He raised an objection against him: [If there are] two baskets, one containing *hullin* and the other containing *terumah*, and in front of them are two *se'ah* [of provisions], one of *hullin* and the other of *terumah*, and these fell into those, they are permitted, for I assume: the *hullin* fell into *hullin*, [and] the *terumah* fell into the *terumah*. Now if you say that as much as an olive within the eating of half [a loaf] is a Scriptural [standard], why do we say, 'because I assume' [etc.]?<sup>8</sup>—Leave the *terumah* [set aside] at the present time<sup>1</sup> he answered him, which is only Rabbinical.

Now does this [law of] the infusion [of grapes] come for this purpose?<sup>2</sup> It is required for what was taught: '*An infusion*': [44b]

(10) There too he learns that there is a negative injunction in respect of the mixture of leaven; hence he should likewise assume that it refers to half an olive of each.

a (1) *Sc.* the particular mention of the burning of leaven on the altar. (2) Even if one burns less than an olive of leaven on the altar, he is culpable, since the leaven itself, whatever its quantity, involves punishment. (3) *Jast.*: a stiff mass of grist, oil and onions. (4) A *tebul yom* (v. *Glos.*) disqualifies *terumah*. Since the main part of the dish is *terumah*, even the *hullin* too becomes unfit, because it is subsidiary to the *terumah*. (5) *I.e.*, the garlic and oil. (6) As explained in n. 4, it is merely subsidiary to the main dish. (7) Hence it is not regarded as nullified, in spite of its subsidiary nature. (8) When a lay Israelite eats as much as an olive of that dish, he has not eaten that quantity of *terumah*. Why then is he flagellated? (9) *I.e.*, if he eats as much as half a loaf of eight average eggs in size, this half constituting an average meal, within the time that the normal eater requires for a meal, he will have eaten as much as an olive of *terumah*, and for

that he is culpable. [According to Maim. *Yad 'Erubin*, half a loaf is equivalent to three average eggs]. (10) That flagellation is incurred.—Flagellation is only imposed for the violation of a law of Scripture. (11) Even if flagellation is not incurred on account of the mixture, yet there too in a quantity of four eggs of *kutah* there is as much as an olive of leaven, and for that he should be liable.

b (1) *I.e.*, do not ask a question from it. (2) *I.e.*, by itself, and not as a relish with something else. (3) *Lit.*, 'his mind is nullified by the side of every man'. It is not considered eating, and therefore does not involve punishment.—Punishment is incurred only when forbidden food is eaten in the normal way. (4) *Rashi*; *Jast.*: if he spreads it (on bread). (5) The pot of *hullin* is permitted to a lay Israelite. (6) For of course it might have been the reverse; how then can we make this lenient assumption when there is a doubt of a Scriptural prohibition? (7) By Scriptural law no *terumah* is required for these; hence the entire prohibition in this case is only Rabbinical. (8) *V. n.* b6.

c (1) After the destruction of the Temple. (2) *V. supra* 43b bottom.



It is necessary: [43b] you might argue, since it is written, *Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith*:<sup>7</sup> whoever is subject to 'arise, eat unleavened bread', is subject to 'thou shalt eat no leavened bread'; hence these women, since they are not subject to, 'arise, eat unleavened bread', because it is an affirmative precept limited to time,<sup>8</sup> I would say that they are also not subject to, 'thou shalt eat no leavened bread'. Hence it [the verse] informs us [otherwise].

And now that they have been included in [the injunction of] 'thou shalt eat no leavened bread', they are also included in respect of eating unleavened bread, in accordance with R. Eleazar. For R. Eleazar said: Women are subject to the [precept of] eating unleavened bread by the law of Scripture, for it is said, *Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; [seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith]*: whoever is subject to 'thou shalt eat no leavened bread', is subject to the eating of unleavened bread; and these women, since they are subject to [the injunction of] 'thou shalt eat no leavened bread', are [also] subject to, 'arise, eat unleavened bread'.

a And why do you prefer<sup>1</sup> [to assume] that this 'whosoever' is to include women, while you exclude its mixture; say that it is to include the mixture?<sup>2</sup>—It is logical that when treating of eaters [Scripture] includes eaters; [but] when treating of eaters, shall it include things which are eaten?<sup>3</sup> To this R. Nathan the father of R. Huna demurred: Then wherever [Scripture] treats of eaters does it not include things eaten? Surely it was taught: *For whosoever eateth the fat [heleb] of the beast, of which men present an offering [made by fire unto the Lord, even the soul that eateth it shall be cut off from his people]*:<sup>4</sup> I only know it of the *heleb* of unblemished [animals], which are fit to be offered [as sacrifices]; whence do we know it of the

*heleb* of blemished animals? Therefore it is stated, 'of the beast'.<sup>5</sup> Whence do we know it of the *heleb* of *hullin*? Because it is stated, 'For whosoever'.<sup>6</sup> Thus here, though [Scripture] treats of eaters, yet it includes things eaten?—Since there are no eaters there [to be included],<sup>7</sup> it includes things eaten. Here, however, that there are eaters [to be included],<sup>8</sup> he cannot abandon eaters and include things eaten.

Now as to the Rabbis who do not accept the view [that a negative injunction is violated through] a mixture, they do not interpret 'whosoever' [as an extension]. But then how do they know [that] women [are liable to *kareth*]?<sup>9</sup>—They do not interpret 'whosoever' [as an extension], but they do interpret 'for whosoever' [as such].<sup>10</sup> Then [according to] R. Eliezer, say that 'whosoever' is to include women; 'for whosoever' is to include the mixture [of leaven].<sup>1</sup> And should you answer, R. Eliezer does not interpret 'for whosoever' [as an additional extension], surely it was taught: *For ye shall not burn any leaven . . . [as an offering made by fire unto the Lord]*:<sup>2</sup> I only know it of the whole of it;<sup>3</sup> whence do I know [even] part of it?<sup>4</sup> Because 'any' [kol] is stated. Whence do we know [that] its mixture<sup>5</sup> [is forbidden]? Because it is stated *for any* [ki kol]. Whom do you know to interpret *kol* [as an extension]? R. Eliezer; and he [also] interprets 'for any' [ki kol]. This is [indeed] a difficulty.

R. Abbahu said in R. Johanan's name: In all the prohibitions of the Torah, a permitted [commodity] does not combine with a prohibited [commodity],<sup>6</sup> except in the [case of the] prohibitions of a nazirite, for lo! the Torah said, [any] *infusion [of grapes]*.<sup>7</sup> While Ze'iri said: Also 'ye shall not burn any leaven'.<sup>8</sup> With whom [does this agree]? With R. Eliezer, who interprets *kol*.<sup>9</sup>

(7) Deut. XVI, 3. (8) Lit., 'caused by the time'. I.e., it is performed at certain times or seasons, and it is shown in *Kid.* 29a that women are exempt from such.

a (1) Lit., 'what (reason) do you see?' (2) While the limitation excludes women. (3) Surely not. (4) Lev. VII, 25. (5) Implying whether it is fit for sacrificing or not. (6) Which is an extension. (7) For the inclusion of women in the prohibition and penalty follows from Rab's dictum *supra* 43a bottom. (8) Viz., women, as explained *supra*. (9) For eating leaven. For R. Eliezer interprets 'whosoever' in both cases, one as including a mixture, and the other as including women. But since the Rabbis do not interpret 'whosoever' as an extension, there is nothing to intimate the inclusion of women. (10) Written in connection with *kareth*, Ex. XXI, 15 and 19.

b (1) Teaching that *kareth* is involved, and not merely a negative precept. (2) Lev. II, 11. *For . . . any* (E.V. *For ye shall make no . . .*) is *ki . . . kol*, the same words which are translated 'for whosoever' in the previous verses. (3) I.e., where the whole of that which is burnt on the altar consists of leaven. (4) Leaven must not even be used as part of the offering. (5) I.e., anything containing a

mixture of leaven. (6) The minimum quantity to involve punishment is as much as an olive. Now, if a man eats half that quantity of *heleb* together with half that quantity of permitted meat simultaneously, the latter does not combine with the former, that it should be regarded as though he had eaten the full quantity of prohibited food. (7) Num. VI, 3: *neither shall he drink any infusion of grapes*. By this the Talmud understands that he must not eat bread steeped in wine. Now bread itself is permitted, yet Scripture forbids the combination of bread and wine as though that also were forbidden, and if the *two together* amount to an olive, punishment is involved. For if Scripture refers to a case where the wine itself contains that quantity, why state it at all; obviously the wine is not less prohibited merely because it has been absorbed by the bread? (8) Cf. Lev. I, 11. Rashi: if the priest put half an olive of leaven and half an olive of *mazzah*, not mixed together but each separately distinguishable, upon the altar, he incurs punishment. Tosaf. explains it differently. (9) *Supra*: 'whence do I know (even) part of it' etc. He understands this to mean that there is half an olive of each.



**RESOURCE TEXT FOCUSING ON  
PREPARING A SEDER**

PESACHIM 3<sup>5,6,7</sup>

such dough as has no cracks but has turned on the surface pale-white.  
\* Or locusts perhaps.

Mishnah 6

If the fourteenth<sup>1</sup> fall on a Sabbath\* they must clear all<sup>2</sup> away before the Sabbath. This is the view of R. Meir. But the Sages say, When their time<sup>3</sup> is due. R. Eliezer<sup>4</sup> ben R. Zadok says, *Priest's-due*<sup>5</sup> before the Sabbath and *completely tithed produce* at its appointed time.<sup>6</sup>

משנה ו  
יארבעה עשר שקל להיות בשבת  
מבערים את הכל מלפני השבת.  
דברי רבי מאיר. וחקמים  
אומרים, בזמן. רבי אליעזר  
בר צדוק אומר, תרומה מלפני  
השבת, וחולין בזמן. \* Or בשבת.

when to prepare  
for Pesach

1 The 14th of Nisan, י"ד ניסן. 2 Whether תרומה or חולין (see Appendix, Note 1) leaving only sufficient for two Sabbath morning meals. (In actual practice when שבת פסח is ערב פסח the קמץ is cleared away on the Friday before noon leaving enough food for two meals, and on שבת morning after breakfast the table-cloth is shaken out and any residual קמץ is given away to a non-Jew or covered over securely and got rid of מוצאי יום טוב (at the conclusion of the Festival). 3 i.e., on the Sabbath morning. See 1<sup>4</sup>. His view is accepted. 5 Must be removed. Because either non-priest's nor cattle may eat it and it may not be kept. 6 Because at the last moment it may still be possible to find many to eat and thus avoid waste.

Mishnah 7

If anyone goes<sup>1</sup> to slaughter his Paschal lamb or to circumcise his son or to eat the betrothal meal<sup>2</sup> at the house of his father-in-law, and he reminded himself that he had leaven in his house, if he be able<sup>3</sup> to return and clear away<sup>4</sup> and go back to perform his ritual duty he must return and clear it away, but if not<sup>5</sup> then he annuls it<sup>6</sup> in his mind. If<sup>7</sup> to rescue someone from bandits<sup>8</sup> or from a river or from robbers<sup>9</sup> or from a conflagration or from a ruin, he can annul it<sup>10</sup> in his mind. But if<sup>11</sup> to stay over at a place until dark<sup>12</sup> of his own choice,<sup>13</sup> he must return at once.<sup>14</sup>

משנה ז  
יהולך לשחוט את פסחו ולמול  
את בנו, ולאכול סעודת אירוסין  
בבית חמיו, ונזכר שיש לו קמץ  
בתוך ביתו, אם יוכל לחזור  
ולבער ולחזור למצותו יחזור  
ויבער, ואם לאו, מבטלו בלבו.  
להציל מן הנזיזים, ומן הנזקק,  
ומן הליסטים, ומן הדליקה,  
ומן המפולת, יבטל בלבו.  
יחזור מיד.<sup>11, 12</sup> ולשבות שביתת<sup>13</sup> הרשות.

**RESOURCE TEXT FOCUSING ON  
RECITING THE HAGGADAH**

Mishnah 5

מִשְׁנֵה ה

Obligations  
of  
Seder

*Rabban Gamaliel used to say, anyone who has not said these three things<sup>1</sup> at Passover has not fulfilled his obligation,<sup>2</sup> and they are these: 'Passover,' 'unleavened bread,' and 'bitter herbs.' "Passover,"<sup>3</sup> because the Almighty passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt; "unleavened bread"<sup>4</sup> because<sup>\*</sup> our forefathers were delivered from Egypt; "bitter herbs,"<sup>5</sup> because the Egyptians made the lives of our ancestors bitter in Egypt. In all generations it is the duty of a man to consider himself as if he had come forth from Egypt; as Scripture says,<sup>6</sup> 'And thou shalt relate unto thy son in that day saying, Because of this hath the Eternal wrought for me when I came forth from Egypt.' Therefore we are in duty bound to give thanks, to praise, to laud, to glorify, to exalt, to honour, to bless, to extol and to adore Him Who performed for our forefathers and for us all these miracles; He brought us forth from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to rejoicing, (and) from mourning to festivity, (and) from darkness to light, and from servitude to redemption; and let us say before Him, 'Praise ye the Eternal.'*

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר, כָּל־שֶׁלֹּא  
אָמַר יִשְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים אֵלוֹ בַּפֶּסַח  
יֵלֵא יֵצֵא יְדֵי חוֹבְתוֹ, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן  
פֶּסַח, מִצֵּה, וּמְרוֹר. פֶּסַח, עַל  
שׁוֹם שֶׁפֶּסַח הַמִּקּוּם עַל בְּתֵי  
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם; מִצֵּה, עַל שׁוֹם  
שֶׁנִּגְאָלוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם; מְרוֹר,  
עַל שׁוֹם שֶׁמְרָרוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם אֶת־חַיֵּי  
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם. בְּכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר  
חַיִּיב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ  
כְּאִילוֹ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם,  
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבְנֶךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא  
לֵאמֹר, בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי  
בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לְפִיכֵן אֲנַחְנוּ  
חַיִּיבִין לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבַּח,  
לְפָאֵר, לְרוֹמֵם, לְהַדְרִי, לְבָרֵךְ,  
לְעַלֵּה, וּלְקַלֵּס, לְמִי שֶׁעָשָׂה  
לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וּלְנוּ, אֶת־כָּל־הַנִּסִּים  
הָאֵלֵּיךְ; הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵעֲבָדוֹת לְחֵירוֹת,  
מִיָּגוֹן לְשִׂמְחָה, וּמֵאֲבֵל לְיוֹם טוֹב,  
וּמֵאֲפִילָה לְאוֹר גָּדוֹל, וּמִשְׁעֶבֶד  
לְגִאוּלָּה, וְנֹאמַר לְפָנָיו הַלְלוּיָהּ.

1 Exodus 12, 27, 39; 1, 4. 2 Regarding the narration (הִגָּדָה). 3 i.e., Why is the Passover offering eaten? (or—more in keeping with the post-Temple practice—Why do we observe Passover?) 4 i.e., Why is unleavened bread eaten? 5 i.e., Why do we eat bitter herbs? 6 Exodus, 13, 8. 7 i.e., the Hallel (see 5<sup>7</sup>). The whole of this Mishnah is included in the הִגָּדָה שֶׁל פֶּסַח. \* שֵׁם in some texts.

**RESOURCE TEXT FOCUSING ON  
EATING MATZAH**

tion as the *afikoman*. This doesn't anger well for a welcoming or filling repast to follow, especially to a genuinely hungry person.

The medieval commentator Ibn Ezra may have uncovered a clue to solving this problem. His extended travels once took him to India. There, he observed that prisoners were fed something similar to matzah for a brutally practical reason. Because this matzah-like substance was difficult to digest, it remained in prisoners' digestive systems longer, lessening their hunger and requiring fewer meals for their jailers to prepare. Ibn Ezra presumes Egyptian taskmasters followed a similar practice when feeding their Israelite slaves. Matzah is the dietary staple of those not free to determine the composition and frequency of their meals, or much of anything else in their sad lives. Thus matzah becomes a symbol, not of freedom, but of slavery.

Yet it is important to remember how the Pesach passage ends, with Israel's escape from her Egyptian masters. During the seder, we move back and forth from memories of past servitude to dreams of future redemption, from "now we are slaves" to "next year, may we live in freedom." Rabbi Richard Hirsh refers to this as the "already/not yet" Jewish syndrome, as we simultaneously celebrate our freedom and redemption while reminding ourselves we are neither wholly free nor redeemed, even today. Similarly, matzah can also symbolize a situation we may not feel prepared for, but we have to contend with anyway. When the Jewish people faced the swirling waters of the Red Sea on one side and the advancing troops of Pharaoh on the other, no one knew what to do until Nachshon, one of the leaders of the tribe of Judah, bravely took his first steps into the water. This courageous act rid the people of their paralyzing fear. Matzah thus represents determination, calling forth the need for action in the present as well as recollection of the past.

Interestingly, the first recorded uses of matzah in the Bible occurred not during the Exodus, but long before. Our earliest ancestors served matzah as they opened their homes to strangers in gestures of hospitality. When our patriarch Abraham was resting in his tent, still recuperating from circumcising himself at the not very youthful age of ninety-nine, he entertained three persons unknown to him with cakes of matzah, which had been quickly prepared by his wife Sarah. Next, Abraham's nephew Lot also fed the same men matzah in Sodom, even as they told him and his family to flee the town, just before God destroyed it and its wicked inhabitants.

Today we follow centuries-old Jewish tradition and contribute to community collections during the weeks before Pesach to provide *m'ot chitim*, "wheat money," to those who otherwise would not be able to afford matzah and the many other special Pesach foods needed to celebrate the holiday properly. Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel remembers how *m'ot chitim* was administered in small towns of pre-World War II Hungary. "One by one, [people] would enter a room in the community house. There they would find a dish filled with money. Those who had money left some; those who needed money took some. No one knew how much was given or how much was taken. Thus, the needy were taken care of with dignity."

The Pesach invitation to help the needy can be traced to the Talmud, to a good deed performed by the third-century Sage Rav Huna. He called out to all those who passed his house when he was about to sit down for a meal, opening his door and saying, "Let all who are hungry come in to eat." Today, few of us act this spontaneously. But we recognize how our homage to liberation loses meaning unless we seek to free the downtrodden who suffer injustices: the poor, forced to work long hours for little pay; those subjected to mental or physical abuse; or tragically, even those who labor today in conditions similar to slavery. Helping to relieve deprivation wherever it appears, with Pesach on our minds, adds to the understanding that freedom's struggle is not yet complete. An engaging language game heightens this connection of word to deed. Without vowels, the Hebrew words for "matzah," מצה, and "mitzvah," מצוה, look almost exactly alike. Just as we can transform the food of "matzah" to a sacred commandment, "mitzvah," by changing a few vowels, so should eating the food of liberation be our first step to performing acts dictated by God, doing all we can to free those still enslaved.

### "We Start with Disgrace and End with Praise"

(Mishnah P'sachim 10:4)

Some commentators ascribe the Hebrew word *g'niut*, customarily translated as "disgrace," with a moral overtone. In this understanding, the Israelites brought their problems on themselves by their idolatrous behavior, leading to their exile in Egypt and subsequent enslavement.

Others more matter-of-factly point to slavery as a political and economic state for which our predecessors bear no blame. Whichever comprehension one leans toward, its explanation begins with matzah.

Another Hebrew "word game," matzah as "poor person's bread" versus matzah as "bread of answers," builds on the complexity of this seemingly simple food. Once again, we leave the Hebrew consonants intact and maneuver only the vowels, changing *יֵי*, *lechem oni*, "poor person's bread," to *יָי*, *lechem oneh*, "bread of reciting or answering." Each year we begin the seder with a declaration over matzah, "This is the bread of affliction," making clear that the entire Haggadah is dedicated to reciting our passage to freedom in its name. Matzah becomes the ubiquitous food supplying all of the answers, cataloguing our quite human humiliations, numbering their remedies, and singing our praises to *Adonai*, our Redeemer, past, present, and future.

Matzah didn't always look like the nondescript cracker that now graces our seder tables. In the days of the Talmud, through most of the Middle Ages, some Jewish bakers etched doves and fish, animals and flowers into their matzah dough, creating edible works of art. Instead of relegating its storage to a cupboard, Jews living in Germany in the fourteenth century hung their matzah on a wall of the synagogue for all to see. Only in the sixteenth century were all such designs banned. Perforations were the only markings allowed, and their purpose was not to beautify, but to prevent matzah from rising during baking.

In the mid-nineteenth century, an enterprising Austrian Jew invented the first matzah-making machine. Some Orthodox rabbis strongly praised it because, in their opinion, it guaranteed more scrupulous supervision and cleanliness. Other religious leaders just as vociferously opposed it because it threatened to eliminate the livelihoods of so many Jewish bakers right before Pesach, since other usual baking stops for the duration of the weeklong holiday. Down to contemporary times, rigorously observant Jews still eat only handmade matzah called *sh'murah* because it is "guarded" from the time its grain still grows in the fields, through harvesting, grinding into flour, and making of the dough. Then *sh'murah* matzah dough is carefully placed into closely watched ovens, removed after precisely eighteen minutes, the length of time at which flour mixed with water will begin to ferment or, as our tradition tells us, the length of time it takes to walk a (Roman) mile!

### "Kadeish, Ur'chatz, Karpas, Yachatz" (Order of Seder)

We have determined that matzah is vital to the seder meal, indeed, to the whole commemoration of Pesach. But what is so magical about the number "three" that only this number of especially designated matzot can move us along through the seder observance? (Obviously many more "ordinary" matzot are consumed as we pass through the evening.) One answer from our tradition assumes that, during Pesach, a third "loaf of bread" was added to the standard double portion of manna. This is the breadlike food that fell from the sky for the forty years the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness. Early practice in Palestine mandated only two pieces of matzah, not three. Somewhat later, the Babylonian custom of including one additional matzah on the seder plate became standard throughout the Jewish world. Still, the Jewish philosopher Maimonides used only two pieces in twelfth-century Egypt. And there were holdouts as recently as two hundred years ago. At the end of the eighteenth century in Lithuania, the scholar known as the Vilna Gaon placed only two pieces of matzah on his seder plate.

Today, three whole pieces of matzah are used in our Pesach celebration. The first, uppermost matzah has been called "Kohanim"; the second, "Levite"; and the third, "Israel," for the three classes of Jews in ancient Judea. Others, alluding to the matzah/mitzrah wordplay referred to earlier, say these matzot represent the three mitzvot of the seder: (1) matzah—Torah—learning; (2) pesach—*avodah*—worship; and (3) *maror*—*g'milut chasadim*—human relations of loving-kindness. Rabbi Sherira Gaon, a medieval Babylonian sage, named the matzot after the three biblical Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Whatever the three pieces are called, since all Jews are to be treated equally, especially during Pesach, everyone at seder eats from all the matzot.

There is another question about numbers and matzah. If three pieces of matzah are essential, why is the middle piece, and only the middle piece, "yachatzed," broken in two, just as the seder is getting started, creating in essence a fourth "official" matzah, the *afikoman*? Perhaps because four is the same as the number of seder questions, wine cups, and archetypal children. Most commentators associate breaking this piece of matzah with the slavery of Israel in Egypt or the historical poverty of Jews in general.

Egyptian masters sought to deplete the Jewish population in their land through starvation and overwork, frequently withholding even the meager slave rations. Therefore, to lengthen survival, a slave would not eat a complete matzah at one time. Instead, he would hoard part of it, turning this scrap into a meal when given no food at all. The sixteenth-century Bohemian rabbi known as the Maharal also observed this among the poor of his area, who divided their meager bread into many smaller portions. So afraid that there won't be any more, a person accustomed to poverty doesn't dare eat all the allotted food at once. Much closer to our time, World War II concentration camp survivors have described similar behavior.

**"Sour Dough Must Be Burned, and One Who Eats It Is Subject to Penalty" (Mishnah Psachim 3:5)**

This text from the Mishnah does not use the familiar Hebrew word for fermented bread, *chametz* (leaven), but introduces a new word, *s'or* (sour dough), the precursor to modern-day yeast. Those of us who bake our own bread know that yeast is a critical ingredient. It makes bread rise, "leavens" it. Today, prepackaged yeast is easy to obtain, purchased at any grocery store. But before this convenience was invented, our ancestors used another leavening agent—*s'or*. This sour dough was a portion of the previous week's dough that had been saved, unbaked, and allowed to ferment. It was then used to start the leavening process for a new batch of bread, with the process repeating over and over again. In our Hebrew tradition, *s'or* refers to the old leavening enabler, while *chametz* refers to new dough to which *s'or* had been added. This combination, in turn, is called *lechem chametz*, "leavened bread." As it says in Torah: "This offering, with cakes of leavened bread [*lechem chametz*] added . . ." (Lev. 7:13). For Pesach, though, the rules changed. Both categories, leavening agents and leavened bread, had to be discarded or burned in order to establish the purity of the holiday, as this reading from the Book of Exodus describes:

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread [*matzot*]; on the very first day you shall remove leaven [*s'or*] from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread [*chametz*] from the first day to the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. (Exod. 12:15)

Right after Pesach's conclusion, having rid ourselves of old fermentable substances the week before, we start fresh. Pesach as a period of transition is pivotal to our genuine efforts to separate the old from the new. Hopefully we have gotten rid of everything we let stand around, including the moral and emotional rot that puffs us with pride and self-absorption. Thus leaven stands for all of our selfish tendencies, which left to their own devices, proliferate into humanity's evil inclinations, *yetzer hara*. To counter baseness, the third-century Palestinian Sage Rabbi Alexandri ended his daily silent devotions with the following prayer, naming *s'or* as the obstacle forestalling more God-inspired personal behavior: "Sovereign of the universe, it should be quite evident to You that our will is to do Your will. What impedes us? The yeast, *s'or*, in the dough. . . ."

What other "yeasts" obstruct our finer moments by their prideful pufferies? Uncontrollable feelings of possessiveness, which make us take things we don't even want? Uncontrolled competitiveness, which promotes a winner-takes-all mentality? Raging jealousy, so unrestrained that it threatens to damage our closest relationships? Whatever label we put on it, leaven, the unnecessary yeast making up our emotional DNA, lacks qualities of discipline and consistency. Unstable, subject to radical change, both *s'or* and leaven are missing matzah's defining elements—immortality, stability, quiescence.

**"These Things Fulfill the Pesach Obligation"**  
(Mishnah Psachim 2:5)

But before we cast matzah into the figurative role of the greatest Jewish symbol, let us remember its literal essence, grain and a little cold water. And not just any grain, but one or more of the exact grains that causes dough to swell in the first place: wheat, barley, spelt, rye, and oats. Thus another perplexity surrounds matzah! Only what can become *chametz* may be used to make it. Only something that has both the potential for evil as well as the potential for good, *yetzer hara* as well as *yetzer hatov*, can become a genuine matzah. What determines the tilt one way or the other, for good or for evil, is the mysterious intangible we call faith. A talmudic tale describes this concept. Moses and the angels were involved in a dispute. The angels argued that humanity was

unworthy of receiving Torah. Moses' triumphant rejoinder was that heavenly hosts, lacking the negative emotions of jealousy, temptation, or evil inclination, had no need for Torah. It is plainly meant for mortals, waging their constant battle between good and evil.

This taste of reality we call matzah is the bread of both slavery and liberty, the essence of life for poor and rich alike. It is the basic kernel of hope at the heart of our transitional state, a continual becoming in the soul of Judaism. Because matzah is so primal, it grounds the very centers of our lives.

After the Temple was destroyed more than two thousand years ago, Jewish leaders had to redirect Judaism for a scattered people lacking a pivotal shrine. Gone was the pageantry of dozens of priests in richly designed raiments, assisting ordinary Jews to offer sacrifices to God. Now all Jews had to learn how to become their own priests. Guided by rabbinic teachings, each could access the Divine directly, without needing a human intermediary. The scholar Moshe Greenberg believes that, even when sacrifices still connected mortals to God, they were offered in their least altered state, closest to the manner in which God created them.

Ultimately, this ideal of simplicity was transferred to the absence of leavening, correlating the symbolic purity of the food we eat to the miraculous power of the sacred. Complicated, elaborate bread is not appropriate for Pesach, which celebrates one fundamental action—God's redemption of Israel. Today, many of us search for things "naturally" organic, seeing additives as intrusions to our basic needs and goals. Matzah, the first wholly natural prepared food, perfectly represents our passage from the everyday to the sacred. The Jewish thinker Philo, living in the last days of the Temple and strongly influenced by the flourishing Greek philosophy of his day, described matzah, unleavened food, as a gift of nature, and thus serving as the highest form of praise on the path to perfection.

The bread is unleavened . . . because during springtime, when the feast is held, the fruit of the corn has not reached its perfection. . . . It was the imperfection of this fruit which belonged to the future, though it was to reach its perfection very shortly. Food, when unleavened, is a gift of nature, when leavened, is a work of art. . . . Art for the sake of pleasure has no place, but only nature, providing nothing save what is indispensable for its use. So much for this.

### *From Our Tradition*

You shall observe the [Feast of] Unleavened Bread, for on this very first day I brought your ranks out of the land of Egypt; you shall observe this day throughout the ages as an institution for all time. (Exod. 12:17)

You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, eating unleavened bread for seven days as I have commanded you, at the set time in the month of Aviv, for in it you went forth from Egypt. . . . (Exod. 23:15)

It was only a few days before Passover, when a man entered the home of Yosef Dov Halevi Soleveitchik of Brisk, known as the Bais Halevi. "Rabbi," he pleaded, "I have a very difficult question. Is one allowed to fulfill his obligation of the four cups of wine with another liquid? Would one be able to fulfill his obligation with four cups of milk? "My son," the Bais Halevi said, "that is a very difficult question. I will look into the matter. But until then I have an idea. I would like to give you some money in order for you to purchase four cups of wine for you and your family." The Bais Halevi gave the startled man far more than necessary. The man took it with extreme gratitude and relief. When his disciples questioned this act, saying he had given enough for an entire meal with meat, the rabbi smiled. "That is exactly the point! If he cannot afford wine, he cannot afford meat. So not only did I give him money for wine, but for meat as well." (Mordechai Kamenezky)

PESACHIM 2<sup>5,6</sup>

Mishnah 5

These are the things<sup>1</sup> wherewith a man fulfils his obligation<sup>2</sup> on Passover; wheat, barley, spelt, rye<sup>3</sup> and oats, and they have fulfilled their duty with<sup>4</sup> *doubtfully tithed produce*,<sup>5</sup> and with *first tithe* from which *priest's-due*<sup>6</sup> had been separated, and with *second tithe* and *dedicated produce* that had been redeemed; and priests,<sup>7</sup> with *priest's dough*<sup>8</sup> and with *priest's-due*, but not with *completely untithed produce* nor with *first tithe* from which the *priest's-due* had not been separated, nor with *second tithe*<sup>9</sup> nor with *devoted produce* that had not been redeemed.

The loaves of a *thanksgiving-offering*<sup>10</sup> and the wafers of a *nazarite*<sup>11</sup> if he made them for himself—he can not fulfil his obligation with them;<sup>12</sup> but if he made them to be sold in the market,<sup>13</sup> then he may fulfil his obligation with them.<sup>14</sup>

1 From which flour may be made for מצות. Rice-flour, pea-flour and bean-flour are excluded, because all these are incapable of turning leaven, and though they may be used for preparing dishes on Passover they are not generally used. 2 Of eating מצה. 3 Or oats according to some authorities. 4 .....with flour made from..... 5 See Appendix, Note 1 for these terms. 6 תרומת מעשר or תרומה קטנה. 7 i.e., they may make מצות from..... 8 See Appendix, Note 3; Numbers 15, 18ff. 9 Outside Jerusalem. 10 Leviticus 7, 12. 11 Or nazirite. Numbers 6, 15. 12 Because the מצה must be prepared expressly for the purpose intended and these just mentioned were meant for another object. 13 To anyone who may need them for a קרבן תודה\* or to be used as רקיקי נזיר. § 14 Because he had it in mind that if he could not sell them he would use them for פסח.

\* thank-offering. § Nazirite's wafers.

Mishnah 6

And these are the herbs<sup>1</sup> with which<sup>2</sup> a man fulfils his obligation<sup>3</sup> on Passover, lettuce, endives, chervil,<sup>5</sup> snakeroot,<sup>8</sup> and horse-

מלשנה ה

אלו ידברים שאדם יוצא בהן ידי חובתו בפסח, בחטים, בשעורים, בכוסמין, ובשיפון, ובשבולת שועל, ויוצאין בדמאי, ובמעשר ראשון שנטלה תרומתו, ובמעשר שני והקדש שגפדו; והכהנים בקלה ובתרומה, אבל לא בטבל, ולא במעשר ראשון שלא נטלה תרומתו, ולא במעשר שני והקדש שלא נפדו. חלות תודה ורקיקי נזיר עשאן לעצמו אין יוצאין בהן; עשאן למכור בשוק יוצאין בהן.

making matzah

מלשנה ו

ואלו ירקות שאדם יוצא בהן ידי חובתו בפסח, בחנרת, וכו'.

acceptable herbs

radish,<sup>7</sup>—they fulfil their obligation with them whether they are moist<sup>8</sup> or dry<sup>9</sup> but not if they be pickled<sup>10</sup> or stewed<sup>11</sup> or boiled, and they may be included together<sup>12</sup> to make up an olive's size, and he fulfils his obligation<sup>14</sup> with their stalks on, and with *doubtfully tithed produce*, and with *first tithe* from which its *priest's-due* has been separated, and with *second tithe* and *devoted produce* that had been redeemed.

וּבְעוֹלָשֵׁין, וּבְתַמְכָּא, וּבְחֶרְתְּבִינָא, וּבְמְרוֹר, יוֹצְאִין בְּהֵן בֵּין לַחִין בֵּין יִבְשֵׁין, אֶבֶל לֹא כְבוּשֵׁין וְלֹא שְׁלוּקִין, וְלֹא מְבוּשְׁלִין, וּמְצֻטְרֵפִין לְקוּיָת; וְיוֹצְאִין בְּקֻלַּח שְׁלֵהָן, וּבְדִמְאֵי, וּבְמַעֲשֵׂר רֵאשׁוֹן שְׁנֵטְלָה תְרוּמָתוֹ, וּבְמַעֲשֵׂר שְׁנֵי וְהַקֹּדֶשׁ שְׁנֵפְדוֹ.

1 Or *vegetables, greens*. 2 With their stalks or roots. 3 To eat *מרור*, bitter herbs (Exodus 12, 8). 4 Or *chicory, succory*. \* 5 Or *pepperwort, dittany, dittander*. 6 Or *sea-holly, eryngo*. 7 This is the one most used. The mild-tasting *cress* may be used by anyone to whom the others mentioned may be harmful. 8 Or *fresh*. 9 Or *dried*. 10 Or *preserved* in vinegar or kept in water at frequent intervals. 11 Or *overboiled, overcooked*. 12 *i.e.*, some of each. 13 A little of each of those mentioned may be put together to make up a quantity equal to the bulk of an olive for use as *מרור*. 14 If used for *מרור*. \* See Supplement, Flora.

Mishnah 7

They must not soak<sup>1</sup> coarse-bran<sup>2</sup> for fowls but they must seethe<sup>3</sup> it. A woman must not soak coarse-bran which she brings in her hand to a bath,<sup>4</sup> but she may rub it dry<sup>5</sup> on her flesh. A man may not chew wheat-grains and place<sup>6</sup> them upon his wound on Passover because they become leaven.<sup>7</sup>

מִשְׁנָה ז  
אִין יְשׁוּרִין אֶת-הַמּוֹרֶסֶן לְתַרְנוּגוּלִים אֶבֶל חוֹלְטִין. הָאִשָּׁה לֹא תִשְׂרֶה אֶת-הַמּוֹרֶסֶן שֶׁתּוֹלִיד בְּיָדָהּ לְמַרְחֵץ, אֶבֶל שְׁפָהּ הִיא בְּבִשְׂרָה יִבֵּשׁ. לֹא יִלְעוֹס אָדָם חֵיטִין וְיַגִּיחַ עַל מַכְתּוֹ בַּפֶּסַח, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהֵן מִחְמִיצוֹת.

1 Or *steep*, in cold water or lukewarm water. 2 Or *bruised grain*. 3 Or *scald* it, in boiling water which does not cause it to become leaven. Nowadays this process is not allowed on Passover. 4 To cleanse herself with it. 5 To prevent fermentation. But the ruling forbids it nevertheless as the body's perspiration may cause fermenting. 6 Or *יַגִּיחַ*. 7 They may ferment in his mouth.

**RESOURCE TEXT FOCUSING ON  
EATING BITTER HERBS**

**RESOURCE TEXT FOCUSING ON  
FOUR CUPS**

the man brought from outside. 7 Literally *hands*. 8 To eat of the קרבן פסח.

CHAPTER 10

פרקי

Mishnah 1

משנה א

When every eve of Passover is close to the *Minchah Service*,<sup>1</sup> one may not eat until it becomes dark,<sup>2</sup> and even a poor person in Israel may not eat until he reclines,<sup>3</sup> and they<sup>4</sup> give him<sup>5</sup> not less than four cups of wine<sup>6</sup> even though he<sup>7</sup> is supported from the charity-food.<sup>8</sup>

ערבי פסחים סמוך למנחה, לא יאכל אדם עד שתחשך, ואפילו עני שבישראל לא יאכל עד שישכב, ולא יפקתו לו מארבע כוסות של יין, ואפילו מן התמחוי.

how many cups of wine?

1 Or the *Evening Sacrifice*, i.e., מנחה קטנה. About half an hour before, i.e., at the beginning of the tenth hour (3.0 p.m.) (Numbers.28, 8. See 5<sup>1</sup>.) 2 So as to enjoy fully the eating of מצה. 3 On a couch at the table. 4 The guardians of the poor. 5 Or her. 6 Corresponding to the four terms וְהוֹצֵאתִי וְהוֹצֵאתִי וְהוֹצֵאתִי used in the story of the redemption (Exodus 6, 6, 7). 7 He must still get wine for four cups. 8 Or *Poor-Dish*, פמחוי, tray, pot, in which food was collected from the public for the poor.

Mishnah 2

משנה ב

When the first cup had been filled up,<sup>1</sup> the School of Shammai say, He recites the Benediction over the day<sup>2</sup> and then he recites the Benediction over the wine,<sup>3</sup> but the School of Hillel<sup>4</sup> say, He recites the Benediction over the wine and after that he recites the Benediction over the day.<sup>5</sup>

ימזוגו לו כוס ראשון, בית שמאי אומרים, מברך על היום ואחר כך מברך על היין, ובית הלל אומרים, מברך על היין ואחר כך מברך על היום.

1 Literally *they poured out for him the first cup*.<sup>\*</sup> Here begins a description of the קדר Service which is essentially as we practise it nowadays. 2 i.e., the קדיש is recited first. 3 ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן Blessed art Thou, O Eternal, our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine. 4 Their view is accepted. 5 Compare ברכות 8<sup>1</sup>. Concerning the sanctity of the Festival.

\* מוג, mix, i.e., mingle with water and spices.

## The Four Cups of Wine and the Four Verbs

The rabbis identified each cup of wine with the fourfold promise of redemption:

"God spoke to Moshe [Moses]: Tell the children of Israel:

I will bring you out...

I will rescue you...

I will redeem you...

I will take you for me as a people and I will be for you as a God..."

(Exodus 6:2-7).

## Unit Five: Sukkot

**Ha-Chag: THE Festival (Kings 12:32)**

**Hag ha-sukah: Festival of Booths (Deut. 16:13)**

**Hag ha-asif: Festival of Ingathering (Exo. 23:16)**

**Zeman simchatenu: “The season of our rejoicing”**

- *Three times a year – on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Feast of Weeks and on the Feast of Booths – all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place that He will choose.*  
–Deuteronomy 16:16
- *On the fifteenth day of this seventh month there shall be the Feast of Booths to the Lord seven days.*  
– Leviticus 23:34
- *After the ingathering from your threshing floor and your vat, you shall hold the Feast of Booths for seven days.*  
– Deuteronomy 16:13

**Unit Goal:** To enrich the observance of the Festival through the mitzvot.

### **Enduring Understanding:**

Sukkot, a time of rejoicing, appreciation, and rededication, reminds us that the world is still fragile and in need of our protective and creative energies.

### **Essential Questions:**

- How does this pilgrimage festival help us focus on our sacred history and the covenant between God and the People Israel?
- What do the rituals and traditions of Sukkot symbolize and how can they increase the participant’s rejoicing?

### **Unit Questions:**

1. What “sacrifices” do we offer to God during our modern day “pilgrimage” festival?
2. We are no longer an agricultural community – how can building a *sukkah* or waving a *lulav* and *etrog* have meaning in our celebration?
3. How are we like the *arba minim* (4 species) and the *sukkah*?
4. Why is Sukkot yet another re-enactment of the Exodus? Why do we need another reminder?
5. How do we balance the fragility and temporariness of life, as symbolized by the *sukkah*, with the demands to celebrate?
6. How does the holiday connect North American Jews to the Jews of ancient and modern Israel?
7. How can we use the *brachot* of the festival to both praise God and to rededicate ourselves to being partners in God’s creation?
8. In what ways to the mitzvot of Sukkot assist or hinder personal commitments to religious freedom and observance?

**Objectives:**

SWBAT explain the symbolic meanings of the symbols and rituals of Sukkot.

SWBAT identify Jewish values taught in the texts that have personal meaning to them.

SWBAT share “new” interpretations reflecting how the rituals of the Festival aid in spiritual connections with Jewish history and the Jewish People.

SWBAT lead or participate in the rituals of Sukkot.

**Authentic Assessment:**

Students will create personal interpretations or compile modern-day readings for one or more rituals of Sukkot that intensify their spiritual or intellectual relationship with the Festival.

## OPENING TEXT STUDY: Sukkot

**Learning Goal:** To experience the multiple levels of meaning and understanding found in the different genres of Jewish texts, by tracing how biblical citations are expanded or enriched by Mishnaic texts

**Step One:** Read through the biblical citations (next page) and follow the first three steps for text study listed on page 12 in Unit One.

**Step Two:** text study to supplement Biblical commands: *Mishnayoth -- Moed* (see resource section)

Divide the class into two groups to read through the sections about the taking of the branches and living in booths. What details are added to those in the Biblical citations? Why was it necessary to add more instructions?

Conclude by asking:  
How do the texts tie together?

What issues did these texts bring up that you had never considered?

## **Biblical commands regarding Sukkot:**

On the fifteenth day of this seventh month there shall be the Feast of Booths to the Lord seven days.

--Leviticus 23:34

Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of the Lord [to last] seven days: a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. On the first day you shall take the product of hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. You shall observe it as a festival of the Lord for seven days in the year; you shall observe it in the seventh month as a law for all time, throughout the ages. You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, in order that future generations may know that I made the Israeli people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I the Lord your God.

-- Leviticus 23:39-43

After the ingathering from your threshing floor and your vat, you shall hold the Feast of Booths for seven days. You shall rejoice in your festival, with your son and daughter, you male and female slave, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your communities. You shall hold a festival for the Lord your God seven days....

--Deuteronomy 16:13-15

Three times a year -- on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Feast of Weeks and on the Feast of Booths -- all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place that He will choose. They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed, but each with his own gift, according to the blessing that the Lord your God has bestowed upon you.

--Deuteronomy 16:16-17

From these verses, the Talmud and Mishneh Torah expand to create the guidelines for building sukkah, selecting and using the lulav and etrog, and inviting guests to share meals under the sukkah.

Examine the texts from Mishnayoth -- Moed and share how the texts fill in the details.

## Learning Activities:

### Activity #1: The Mitzvot of the Festival

**Learning Goal:** To share “new” interpretations reflecting how the mitzvot and the rituals of the Festival aid in spiritual connections with Jewish history and the Jewish People.

**Guiding Questions:** How does this pilgrimage festival help us focus on our sacred history and the covenant between God and the People Israel?

**Format:** “The Sukkot View” Tabloid Television

Divide the class into three groups, the historians, the theologians, and the development team or practioners. The three groups will study the texts and then present their point of view in an information-sharing session.

Each group will look at the resource materials on the mitzvot of the Pilgrimage Festival of Sukkot:

- Observing the Festival: “Three times a year you shall hold a festival for Me” (Exodus 23:14)
  - Rejoicing (*simchah*) on the festival. “You shall rejoice in your festival” (Deuteronomy 16:14)
  - Giving tzedakah, sharing with the less fortunate, as we give thanks for the harvest
  - Building a *sukkah*.
  - To take up the *lulav* and etrog and recite the appropriate blessing
  - Celebrating in the *sukkah* for seven days
  - Hospitality (*Hachnasat Orechim*) as we share our meals with guests
  - Resting and avoiding work on the Festival (first and last day)
  - Recite *havdalah* at the conclusion of the festival.
- The historians will offer the facts concerning the laws of the Festival and how they have been adapted throughout the ages.
- The theologians will show how the mitzvot or rituals are reminders of the promises God made to the Jewish People and the promises the People have made to God.
- The development team/practioners will highlight or demonstrate how each of the mitzvot or rituals can be accomplished even if... (you don’t have a place to build a sukkah, you don’t own a lulav or etrog, you have to go to work on the Festival, etc.)

Be sure to allow enough time for each group to ask questions of the other groups.

Wrap-up should be a discussion of “where do we go from here?” Now that everyone has the “facts” how can each person make the mitzvot more meaningful in their personal celebration?

## **Activity #2: The Symbols of the Festival**

**Enduring Understanding:** The symbols of the Festival of Sukkot help us to bless God for the food we eat and God's sheltering presence in our lives as well as acknowledge our dependence upon God.

**Learning Objective:** To understand the "traditional" interpretations of the symbols of the Festival, and to then reinterpret for modern times.

**Guiding Question:** We are no longer an agricultural community – how can building a *sukkah* or waving a *lulav* and *etrog* have meaning in our celebration?

**Materials:** resource materials on each symbol

**Format:** Writing Modern Day Midrash

### **Step one:**

Divide the resource materials between four groups, assigning the following instructions:

- Lulav and Eetrog group 1: biblical and talmudic references to the 4 species
- Lulav and Eetrog group 2: midrashic or interpretive references to the 4 species
- Sukkah group 1: biblical and talmudic references to the building of a sukkah
- Sukkah group 2: midrashic or interpretive references about the sukkah

Each group should read the materials and prepare a 5-10 minute presentation to teach the class the material. Allow time after each presentation for questions and discussion.

### **Step two:**

Divide into study partners or groups no larger than 4, to write a modern-day midrash about the lulav and etrog or the sukkah. After the groups are finished, ask each group to read their midrash.

### ***Background Information for the teacher: What is Midrash?***

Midrash uses allegory and additional narrative to fill in the gaps left by an often terse biblical text. Midrash is creative and imaginative. It can take the form of artwork, dance, music, as well as poetry and prose. Midrash is subversive as it winds its way between and around stern, stark, seemingly stagnant texts. As Judith Plaskow has stated, "Jews have traditionally used midrash to broaden or alter the meaning of texts". Midrash assumes that the black letters of scripture as well as the white spaces between them are holy; that the explicitly stated as well as that which can be inferred from the Bible can be manifestations of God's word. Midrash is

a kind of scriptural archaeology, bidding us not to stop at surface appearances but to dig down deeply into the text to uncover hidden riches.

A midrash can be written in response to glaring omissions in the biblical text. For example: how did Lot's daughters feel when their father offered them to the mob of men that surrounded their house? Where was Sarah while Abraham was taking Isaac to the top of Mount Moriah to sacrifice him? What did Jephthah's daughter do during those two months before she had to return home to be sacrificed at her father's hand? These white spaces provide the canvas on which to paint midrashim. To attempt to answer these kinds of questions is to create a midrash. It is important to remember that within the realm of midrash there is no single truth; the text and life itself are seen as a prism of truths, many different colors converging in those white spaces. Midrashim can also be based on subtleties in the text: a strange use of a word or phrase, a misspelling, a grammatical inconsistency, a pun, a language pattern discerned.

Rabbi Donna Berman, *The Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, edited by Letty Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson (copyright 1996, Westminster John Knox Press)

**Rabbi Scheinerman** expands our understanding of what is involved in the process of midrash. Midrash is:

the art of extending and interpreting Torah by commenting on the text, answering unanswered questions in the text, or deducing laws and traditions from the text. From the time the Torah was closed and canonized, Jews have been interpreting and reinterpreting the sacred writings of the Torah. Many of these interpretations are expressed through Midrash. There are two basic types of midrashim: Halakhic midrashim deal with legal matters; Aggadic midrashim deal with moral and spiritual issues and tend to read like stories. The sages of old wrote midrashim to teach and inspire, explain esoteric legal matters, and interpret the meaning of events of their day. We, today, do the same. The art of midrash is alive and vital today, and you can participate.

### **Additional Learning Activities:**

1. *Ushpizin*: Expand on the Jewish mystical custom of inviting guests into the sukkah. Traditionally these guests were male biblical characters, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David. Contemporary traditions have included significant Jewish women, often the wives of the honored gentlemen. Ask each student to make a list of a special guest for each of the seven nights of the Festival, and why that person should be invited to the celebration.
2. Look at the liturgy for the Festival. The Yom Tov liturgy for each of the Shalosh Regalim (3 Pilgrimage Festivals) include prayers specific for that festival and the reading of the Hallel. Examine those prayers to see how it conveys the historicity and/or the spirituality of the Festival of Sukkot.
3. “Sukkot and the Commandment to Enjoy!” Lesson plan from Rabbi Shelton J. Donnell, published in “Study Guide for S’lichot, the High Holy Days & Sukkot” (2002/5763) by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. (See appendix)
4. “Take Out Your Concordance: A Close Reading of the Word *Sukkah*” by Rabbi Pamela Wax, published in “Study Guide for S’lichot, the High Holy Days & Sukkot” (2002/5763) by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. (See appendix)
5. Options for building a sukkah. Look at the many pre-fab sukkah kits, or work out a design for an easy-to-build sukkah.

## **CULMINATING ACTIVITY**

The last class session prior to the end of the school year. In keeping with the spirit of celebrating the holidays as a group, encourage the participants to start planning now for the nights of Sukkot. Who will build and who will host?

### **ACTIVITY #1: Personalizing Sukkot**

**Learning Objective:** Infuse the observance of Sukkot with reminders of our “duties.”

**Guiding Question:** How can my celebration of Sukkot extend beyond my family and friends to help repair the world (*tikkun olam*) or humanity (*tikkun ha-adam*)?

**Materials Needed:** Copies of the brachot and mitzvot of Sukkot.  
Copies of the Jewish Values chart (from Unit One)  
Assorted fabric scraps and large pieces, fabric markers, fabric glue, etc. to make banners (one per family/friend group)

**Format:** My Holiday Plan.

**Step One:** As a whole group brainstorm how to transform the mitzvot and brachot of the Festival into an action plan that both praises God and rededicates ourselves to being partners with God.

**Step Two:** Allow individual family/friend groups to create their own plan for the Festival. Remind each group there are 7 nights of the Festival!

**Step Three:** Create a welcome banner or a blessing banner for your sukkah.

## **Sukkot Resources:**

Goodman, Philip. *The Sukkot and Simhat Torah Anthology*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia. 1973.

Klein, Isaac. *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York. 1979.

Stern, Chaim, ed. *On the Doorposts of Your House: Prayers and Ceremonies for the Jewish Home*, Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York. 1994.

## UNIT 5: Sukkot

### Activity 1: The Mitzvot of the Festival

Resource materials on

- Observing the Festival
- Rejoicing (*simchah*) on the festival
- Giving tzedakah
- Building a *sukkah*.
- To take up the *lulav* and etrog and recite the appropriate blessing
- Celebrating in the *sukkah* for seven days
- Hospitality (*Hachmasat Orechim*)
- Resting and avoiding work on the Festival (first and last day)
- Recite *havdalah* at the conclusion of the festival.

### Activity 2: The Symbols of the Festival

Resource materials on the succah and the arba minim (4 species)

Midrash about the festival (to be used as a sample)

### Culminating Activity:

The brachot and mitzvot of Sukkot

**BACKGROUND AND GENERAL  
INFORMATION**

## CHAPTER FOUR

# SUKKOT AND HOSHANA RABBAH



### VOCABULARY

**Aravah:** Willow — one of the *Arba'ah Minim*. According to a *midrash*, it is shaped like, and symbolic of, the mouth. Since the willow has neither taste nor aroma, it represents homilectically those Jews who perform no good deeds and who are ignorant of Torah.

**Arba'ah Minim:** The “Four Species” mentioned in the Torah, which grow in *Eretz Yisrael* and are used in the celebration of Sukkot. They are the *etrog* (also called fruit of the *hadar* tree; a citron), *lulav* (palm), *hadas* (myrtle), and *aravah* (willow).

**Chag Adonai:** “Festival of *Adonai*.” This name for Sukkot suggests that, in ancient times, Sukkot was one of the most important festivals in the Jewish calendar. The term is found in Leviticus 23:39: “Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe a Festival of *Adonai* seven days . . . .”

**Chag HaAsif:** “Festival of the Harvest” or “Festival of the Ingathering.” In Israel, Sukkot marks the end of the agricultural year, when the last crops of the season are harvested. It is a time when people would express their joy and gratitude to God for the blessings of a good crop and for health and life. Deuteronomy 16:15 states: “You shall hold a festival for *Adonai* your God seven days, in the place that *Adonai* will choose; for *Adonai* your God will bless all your crops and all

your undertakings, and you shall have nothing but joy” (see also Exodus 23:16).

**Chag HaSukkot:** “Festival of the Booths.” One of the four names for Sukkot, the term is used in Leviticus 23:34: “On the fifteenth day of this seventh month there shall be a Festival of the Booths to God for seven days.”

**Chol HaMo'ed:** “Intermediate Days of the Festival” — these are the third through the sixth days of Sukkot.

**Etrog:** A citron fruit of the *hadar* tree, this is one of the *Arba'ah Minim*. According to a *midrash*, it is shaped like and is symbolic of the heart. Since the *etrog* has both taste and aroma, it represents homilectically those Jews who have a knowledge of Torah and perform good deeds.

**Hadas:** Myrtle — one of the *Arba'ah Minim*. According to a *midrash*, its leaves are shaped like and are symbolic of the eye. Since the myrtle has aroma but no taste, it represents homilectically those Jews who perform good deeds, but who do not know Torah.

**Hakafah/Hakafot:** “Circle(s)” or “Circling.” It is a relatively modern custom to march around (*hakafah*) the sanctuary with the Torah during holidays so that congregants can kiss it and show it honor. *Hakafot* are especially associated with Sukkot,

Hoshana Rabbah, and Simchat Torah (see Hoshana Rabbah below).

**Hakhayl:** "Assemble." Once every seven years, according to Deuteronomy 31:10-13, the Israelites were commanded to assemble on Sukkot (on the steps of the Temple in Jerusalem), to bring their offerings, to listen to the reading of the Torah, and to become acquainted with its laws. In recent years, an effort was made to reinstate this practice in symbolic fashion in Israel.

**Hallel:** Psalms 113-118. During the morning worship services on Sukkot, the *Hallel* Psalms are chanted while the four species are waved as a reminder of God's dominion over all of nature. The *Hallel* is recited only on joyous occasions. Some scholars believe that these Psalms were assembled for use at the rededication of the Temple after the Maccabean victory over Antiochus in 165 B.C.E.

**HeChag:** "The Festival." One of the four names for the festival, it underscores the idea that Sukkot was the most significant of the ancient festivals, surpassing both Pesach and Shavuot in importance. Serving as the culmination of the harvest season, Sukkot occupied a key place in the life of the ancient Israelites.

**Hoshana:** "Save us, please." Hoshana prayers are recited while making *hakafot* around the synagogue during Sukkot. The word comes from Psalm 118:25: "We beseech You, *Adonai*, save now! We beseech You, *Adonai*, make us now to prosper." The word is also associated with a willow branch. Both meanings apply to Hoshana Rabbah. To accommodate the second meaning of the term, some hold willow twigs as they chant Psalm 118.

**Hoshana Rabbah:** "The Great Hoshana." Hoshana Rabbah occurs on the seventh day of Sukkot. On this day, seven *hakafot* are made around the synagogue with the *lulav* and *etrog* in hand while reciting the Hoshana prayer: "Save now, we

beseech you, *Adonai*" (Psalm 118:25). On each of the previous days of Sukkot, there is only one *hakafah* with *lulav* and *etrog*. After the *hakafot* on Hoshana Rabbah, it is a custom to beat willow branches until all of the leaves fall off. This symbolizes the casting off of sins.

**Kohelet:** The Book of Ecclesiastes, which is read on the eighth day of Sukkot. It begins with the somber words, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity . . ." Authorship is ascribed to King Solomon in his later years, reflecting of the passage of time and the changes that age brings, and yet . . . life is always the same — "There is nothing new under the sun." Possessions and pleasures are of no lasting consequence — merely a striving after wind. Sukkot, though a joyous festival, occurs in the autumn when summer's light begins to lessen and intimations of the winter of life are in the air.

**Layl HaChotam:** "The Night of Sealing." While one tradition has it that the fate of human beings decided by God on Yom Kippur, there is also a tradition that the divine decision is not finalized until Hoshana Rabbah, the last night of Sukkot. Accordingly, this name is given to *erev* Hoshana Rabbah. The customary greeting on this evening and the days leading up to it is: "*G'mar Chatimah Tovah*" (May the final sealing decree be good).

**Lulav:** Palm — one of the *Arba'ah Minim*. The *lulav*, according to a *midrash*, is shaped like, and is symbolic of, the spine. Since the date palm has taste but no aroma, it represents homilectically those Jews who know Torah, but do not practice good deeds.

**Masechet Sukkah:** A tractate of the Mishnah which contains a detailed description of the rules and regulations pertaining to Sukkot, with particular emphasis upon the construction and use of a *sukkah*. The tractate begins: "If a *sukkah* is more than 20 cubits high (30'), it is not valid (Rabbi Judah declares it valid), and if it is not ten handbreadths high or has not three sides or if what

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is unshaded is more than what is shaded, it is not valid . . .” (*Sukkah* 1:1).

**S’chach:** Evergreen twigs and leaves that are used to cover the roof of the *sukkah*. The shade created by the roof covering must exceed the areas exposed to sunlight, but one must be able to see stars through the *s’chach*.

**Shalosh Regalim:** Three Pilgrimage Festivals. On Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot, Israelites journeyed on foot (to Jerusalem) to offer sacrifices (at the Temple) in accordance with the injunction in Deuteronomy 16:16-17.

**Simchat Bayt HaSho’ayvah:** “The Joy of the Place of the Water Drawing.” In the days of the Temple in Jerusalem, on each of the six intermediate days of Sukkot, priests filled containers with water drawn from the Pool of Siloam in the valley to the south of the Temple Mount. The water was then brought to the Temple in a joyous ceremony that included singing and dancing (*Sukkot* 5:1-5). The origin of the water drawing celebration is not known, but the festival was believed to have been linked to the people’s prayers for rain. In recent years, some *yeshivot* in Jerusalem have instituted a *Simchat Bayt HaSho’ayvah* ceremony.

**Sukkah:** Booth. The term refers to the special, temporary structure erected for use during the festival of Sukkot. Tradition holds that the Israelites lived in *sukkot* during their 40 years of wandering through the wilderness of Sinai. Such booths were also used as temporary shelters by farmers during the fall harvest period in ancient Israel.

**Sukkot:** This term is the plural of *sukkah*, the name of the festival, and the name of a tractate in the Talmud.

**Tikkun Layl Hoshana Rabbah:** On the eve of Hoshana Rabbah, people gather to study the collection of readings by this name, which includes all of Deuteronomy, the 150 Psalms, and selections

from mystical writings. Deuteronomy is read because on Simchat Torah the annual cycle of reading the Torah is completed. Psalms are read because they like the Torah are divided into five books, and their author, King David (according to tradition), spent his nights in study and prayer.

**Ushpizin:** Each day during Sukkot, a short prayer may be recited whereby one of the seven *Ushpizin* (guests) — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David — is welcomed to join with the family in their *sukkah*. This custom derives from a mystical understanding of the phrase: “*UFros Alaynu Sukkat Sh’lomecha*” — as these leaders saved our people in their times, so may the *Shechinah* (Divine Presence) shelter us today beneath wings of peace. As they are welcomed to join us, so, too, is God’s presence invited.

**Z’man Simchataynu:** “The Season of Our Rejoicing.” Sukkot is a time to rejoice in gratitude for what we might at other times of the year take for granted — for the fall harvest and for all the harvests of one’s life. *Midrash Tehillim* 80:56 states: “In the world to come, all prayers will be eliminated except for prayers of thanksgiving, which will never be abolished.”

### BACKGROUND

#### Sukkot

Sukkot begins at the full moon, on the eve of the 15th of Tishre, four days after Yom Kippur. While it occurs so close to the Day of Atonement, it is remarkably different from it both in mood and in content.

As the third of the *Shalosh Regalim*, Sukkot marks the end of summer, ushers in the fall harvest, and anticipates the beginning of the rainy season in Israel. Between Pesach and Sukkot, little if any rain falls, therefore, between Sukkot and the following Pesach, farmers depend on the rains to get them through the following dry season.

The three Pilgrimage Festivals were originally agricultural celebrations. At one time the festival of

Sukkot, which marked the fall harvest, may not have been linked to a particular day, but rather to the day on which the harvest was completed. Only later (see also Leviticus 23:24), was the period of Sukkot fixed to Tishre 15-22.

Exodus 23:14-16 refers to the three Pilgrimage Festivals in essentially agricultural terms: "Three times a year you shall hold a festival for Me: You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, eating unleavened bread for seven days as I have commanded you, at the set time in the month of Aviv, for in it you went forth from Egypt; and none shall appear before Me empty-handed; and the Feast of the Harvest, of the first fruits of your work, of what you sow in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in the results of your work from the field." Note that only in the case of Pesach is there even a suggestion of more than an agricultural interpretation for one of the Pilgrimage Festivals. In post-biblical literature, more universal interpretations were given to each of these festivals.

Reflecting a later time frame than Exodus 23:14-16 is Leviticus 23:39-43, which clearly links the agricultural and historical aspects of Sukkot: "Mark, on the 15th day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of *Adonai* to last seven days: a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. On the first day you shall take the product of the *hadar* tree, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before *Adonai* your God seven days. You shall observe it as a festival of the Lord for seven days in the year; you shall observe it in the seventh month as a law for all time, throughout the generations. You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am *Adonai* Your God."

In the course of time, Sukkot took on additional significance. Just as Pesach was linked to the Exodus and Shavuot to the giving of the Torah at

Mount Sinai, Sukkot was seen as a tangible reminder of the wilderness experience. According to later thinking, the Israelites used *sukkah*-like structures during their 40 years of wandering in the Sinai. Therefore, the *sukkah* came to be seen as more than a shelter used by farmers during the harvest season. Sukkot, by taking on this historical significance, became relevant to Jews living outside of Israel in non-agricultural settings.

There are a dozen or so references to this festival in the Tanach. Some are quite interesting and raise more questions than they answer. Exodus 23:16 states that the Festival of the Ingathering was celebrated at the end of the year (*b'tzayt hashanah*), not at the beginning. Deuteronomy 31:10-12 states that the Torah was read every seventh year to the assembled people on Sukkot. Nehemiah 8:14-18 implies that that Torah was read before the people (on the first of the seventh month) and studied on Sukkot for seven days. These verses also include olive branches as one of the four species and omit willow. And, there is a reference here that the festival was not celebrated from the days of Joshua until the return from Babylonian exile. The so-called Psalms of enthronement (47, 93, 96-99) have led some to think that Sukkot at first was a time for reaffirming the covenant between God and the people. As if to reaffirm that idea, I Kings 8:2 states: "All the men of Israel gathered before King Solomon at the festival in the month of Etanim — that is, the seventh month . . . to bring up the Ark (of the Covenant) and place it in the Temple."

The Rabbis in the Talmud emphasize Leviticus 23:39-43, which reminds us that we dwelled in booths during the desert experience after the Exodus. Every celebrant is to rejoice with the *Arba'ah Minim* for all seven days of the festival. Reference is also made to the *Simchat Bayt HaSho'ayyah* — when on *Chol HaMo'ed* the people would sing and dance with torches as they carried up water from springs into Jerusalem.

Over the centuries, Sukkot has evolved. Today, the first two days of the holiday are considered Sukkot, the third through the sixth are *Chol*

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*HaMo'ed* Sukkot, the seventh day is called Hoshana Rabbah, the eighth day is Shemini Atzeret, and the ninth day, which is a separate festival, is Simchat Torah.

On the eve of Simchat Torah, all of the Torah scrolls are taken out of the Ark and carried as part of the seven *hakafot* around the synagogue. At the end of each *hakafah*, there is singing and dancing. The *hakafot* are repeated for the morning service on Simchat Torah. The custom of *hakafot* on Simchat Torah originated in the sixteenth century in order to endear the Torah to the children of Israel.

### Central Themes

- Sukkot is a Festival of Thanksgiving for the abundance of the harvest and for the mercies shown to the Israelites as they wandered through the desert after leaving Egypt.
- To today's urban dweller, Sukkot and the building of a *sukkah* are reminders that we were once farmers, and that only now after nearly 2000 years of being kept away from our land do we had the opportunity to work the soil once again.
- Sukkot is the link between the modern Jew and nature. It is also known by the following names: Chag HaAsif ("Feast of the Harvest/Ingathering"), Chag Adonai ("Feast of *Adonai*" – which reflects the connection between God and the People during Sukkot in ancient Israel), HeChag ("The Festival" – which may indicate that Sukkot was the most important of the ancient Pilgrimage Festivals), and Z'man Simchataynu ("The Season of Our Rejoicing" – which reflects the joyous nature of the Festival). The latter name also refers to Simchat Torah.
- The development of the three Pilgrimage Festivals is reflective of the creative genius of the Jewish people. The broader, more universal interpretations given to each festival make it possible for Jews of every age and in every location to celebrate each of these festivals joyfully and meaningfully.
- The *sukkah* unites the past, present, and future. It is the functional booth of wilderness dwellers and of yesterday's farmers, it is the symbolic reminder today of our connectedness to the land and to all of nature, and it points to the continuity of the Jewish people. Despite obstacles and persecutions, still Jews build and harvest, create and survive. Therefore, even when the present is fraught with difficulty the *sukkah* reminds us that one need only look upward to find the source of inspiration and encouragement.
- The *sukkah* lends a sense of needed perspective. We have surrounded ourselves with machines and devices by which and with which we live our lives. The genie of technology is most seductive. It is important therefore to get in touch periodically with nature so as to remind ourselves that "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Psalm 24:1).
- The *sukkah*, according to Maimonides, helps remind Jews to live modestly even in days of prosperity, so as to keep one's values in perspective.
- The Kabbalistic practice of *Ushpizin* reflects the importance of *Hachnasat Orchim*, hospitality, in Jewish life. It is customary for families to invite people to eat with them at any time of year, but especially on Shabbat, at the *Seder*, and in the *sukkah*.
- The Festival of Sukkot reinforces the Jew's sense of community. *Kol Yisrael Arayvin Zeh BaZeh*. That Jews are responsible for one another is the key teaching of Judaism. Eating together on Sukkot reinforces this sense of community.
- Without a doubt, the Pilgrims modeled their Thanksgiving celebration on the biblical Sukkot. One of the lesser known names for Sukkot is *Chag HaHoda'ah* (Festival of Thanksgiving).
- It is also likely that the first celebration of Chanukah was a delayed celebration of Sukkot.

The Maccabees and their followers were so busy fighting the Syrian-Greeks that they were unable to celebrate Sukkot. This may explain why they celebrated the rededication of the Temple for eight days.

- Sukkot is closely connected to nature. In showing gratitude to God for many blessings, one also feels a sense of responsibility to guard and protect God's world. The principle of *Bal Tashchit* (do not destroy) originally referred to trees in a battle zone (Deuteronomy 20:19), but it has come to be Judaism's ecology phrase. Humanity was not given the world to misuse and destroy; rather, the world is to enjoy and to preserve for future generations.

### The Sukkah

The sixth tractate of the second division of the Mishnah is called *Sukkah*. Its very first verses contain a detailed description of the rules and regulations pertaining to the construction and use of a proper *sukkah*:

1. It must be less than 30' high.
2. The walls must be strong enough to withstand ordinary gusts of wind.
3. The shade offered by the roof covering of the *sukkah* must be sufficient to block out most of the sun's rays, while airy enough so that the stars are visible through the roof at night.
4. There must be at least three walls, made of any material.
5. The *sukkah* must be a temporary structure, so a screened in porch or a screened house cannot serve as a *sukkah*.
6. It is considered a *mitzvah* to eat one's meals in the *sukkah*.
7. One is not obliged to sleep in the *sukkah*, particularly in colder climates. One is not required to eat in the *sukkah* when it is raining.
8. The *sukkah* can be adorned or decorated with pictures, hanging gourds, fruit, tapestries, etc.
9. There is no prescribed minimum size; however, the *sukkah* must be large enough to accommodate at least one person.

Upon entering a *sukkah*, one pronounces the blessing over dwelling in a booth. Additionally, *Shehecheyanu* is said upon entering the *sukkah* for the first time. (For blessing in Hebrew and English, see Appendix, page 250.)

### Midrash of the Four Species

The four agricultural species used on Sukkot are mentioned in Leviticus 23:40: "On the first day you shall take the product of the *hadar* tree (*etrog*), branches of palm trees (*lulav*), boughs of leafy trees (*hadass* – myrtle), and willows (*aravah*) of the brook, and you shall rejoice before *Adonai* your God seven days."

A *midrash* equates taste with knowledge of Torah and aroma with being righteous. Using taste and aroma it describes four types of Jews (*Leviticus Rabbah* 30):

The *etrog* is shaped like the human heart; it has both taste and aroma and accordingly represents those Jews who have a knowledge of Torah and do good deeds.

The *lulav* is long and narrow like the human spine. Since the fruit of the palm tree, the date, has taste but no aroma, it represents Jews who know Torah, but do not practice good deeds.

The *hadass* leaf is shaped like the human eye. Since it has aroma but no taste, it symbolizes those who perform good deeds, but who do not know Torah.

The *aravah* leaf has the shape of a mouth. Since it has neither taste nor aroma, it represents those Jews who perform no good deeds and are ignorant of Torah as well.

Before a worship service on Sukkot or immediately before reciting the *Hallel*, a blessing is said over the four species by each worshiper as he/she takes them in hand. They are waved in six directions: East, West, North, South, up and down, to indicate that God is everywhere. (For blessing, see Appendix, page 250.)

The *lulav* is not used on Shabbat, because it was feared that people would carry it through the streets to the synagogue, thereby violating the prohibition against carrying on the Sabbath.

## TEACHING JEWISH HOLIDAYS

### Hoshana Rabbah

Hoshana Rabbah is the seventh day of Sukkot. On the first six days, only one *hakafah* is made around the sanctuary with the *lulav* and *etrog*. On Hoshana Rabbah seven circuits are made.

Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:5 describes the special ceremony in the Temple that took place on Hoshana Rabbah: "How was the rite of the willow branch fulfilled? There was a place below Jerusalem called Motza. There they went and cut themselves young willow branches. They came and set these up at the sides of the Altar so that their tops were bent over the Altar. They then blow on the *shofar* a sustained, a quavering, and another sustained blast. Each day they went in a procession a single time around the Altar saying, 'Save now, we beseech You, *Adonai*, send now prosperity' (Psalm 118:25). But on the seventh day, they went in procession seven times around the Altar . . ."

The ceremony of beating the ground with the willow branches can be explained thusly: just as the tree, after losing its leaves, gets renewed life when God sends rain and warmth, so too, can human-kind gain fresh strength to deal with life's challenges by renewed faith in God and trust in the guidance of God's unseen hand.

Hoshana Rabbah also has a solemn character. It has been suggested in various sources, among them the *Zohar* and Rashi on Talmud *Yoma* 21b, that while God's judgments are sealed on Yom Kippur, the final verdict can be delivered on Hoshana Rabbah. In a sense, the prayers of this day represent one last chance to make impassioned pleas for forgiveness for one's sins.

Linked to this belief is the practice of holding an all night prayer and study session on Hoshana Rabbah during which selections from the anthology *Tikkun Layl Hoshana Rabbah* are read. The book lends its name to the evening. It contains the entire books of Deuteronomy and Psalms, as well as selections from Bible, Mishnah, and other devotional works.

### Torah and Haftarah

The traditional Torah Portion for the first and second day of Sukkot is Leviticus 22:26-23:44. It

begins with the rules for the use of sacrificial animals, and then proceeds to a comprehensive description of the festivals of the Jewish year, concluding with a discussion of Sukkot. *Maftir* for the first two days is Numbers 28:12-16 describing the sacrificial offerings for Sukkot; then, Numbers 29, verses 12-16, 20-28, 23-31, and 26-34, are read on each succeeding day of the festival. Exodus 33:12-34:26 is read on Shabbat of *Chol HaMo'ed*. Numbers 29:26-34 is read on Hoshana Rabbah. Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17 is read on Shemini Atzeret with Numbers 29:35-30:1 as the *Maftir*.

In Reform congregations, Leviticus 23:33-44 and 39-44 are read the first two days; Exodus 23:14-17 on the third; Exodus 34:12-24, Deuteronomy 16:13-17 and 9-13 on the fourth, fifth, and sixth days; and Deuteronomy 11:10-15 on the seventh day. Exodus 33:12-34:26 is read on the Shabbat of Sukkot.

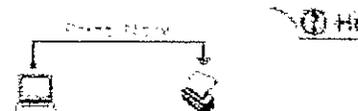
In all synagogues, the *Haftarah* for the first day of Sukkot is Zechariah 14:1-21, a description of life in Israel at the end of days. I Kings 8:2-21 is read on the second day. In it King Solomon speaks to the people, probably on Sukkot, about the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Ezekiel 38:18-39:16 is read on Shabbat *Chol HaMo'ed*, I Kings 8:54-9:1 is read on Shemini Atzeret, and Joshua 1:1-18 is the *Haftarah* for Simchat Torah.

### SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Grade	Themes/Ideas
Kindergarten	The <i>sukkah</i> as a home, a roof over our heads; why the <i>sukkah</i> should be beautiful.
Grade One	The harvest and food: why we should count our blessings and thank God for those blessings; the importance of giving food to the poor.
Grade Two	A look at how we observe Sukkot in the synagogue, including how to build a <i>sukkah</i> .

**SUKKOT ACTIVITY #1**

## Activity one



## Ushpizin: Welcoming Guests

### A ritual inviting symbolic guests into the Sukkah

By Lesli Koppelman Ross

*Excerpted from Celebrate!: The Complete Jewish Holidays Handbook. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. Copyright 1994 by Jason Aronson Inc.*

**Maimonides** admonished that anyone who sits comfortably with his family within his own walls and does not share with the poor is performing a *mitzvah* not for joy but for the stomach. In addition to extending personal invitations to the needy (in former times it was customary to have at least one poor person at a Sukkot meal; today donation of funds often is a substitute), we open our homes symbolically. With a formula established by the kabbalists in the 16th century, based on the earlier *Zohar*, on each night of Sukkot we invite one of seven exalted men of Israel to take up residence in the *sukkah* with us. "When a man sits in the shadow of faith [*sukkah*] the *Shekhinah* [Divine Presence] spreads Her wings on him from above and Abraham and five other righteous ones of God (and David with them) make their abode with him.... A man should rejoice each day of the festival with these guests."

The inspiration for *hakhnasat orekhim* (hospitality to guests) goes back to our first patriarch, and the first guest honored, Abraham. He would sit outside waiting for the opportunity to invite dusty wayfarers into the shade of his tent, and then run to prepare a meal of the choicest ingredients. (A *midrash* based on the apocryphal Book of Jubilees claims that the first booth, on which the holiday Sukkot is based, was built by Abraham when he greeted the three Angels who came to tell him his wife Sarah would at last bear a child [Genesis 18:1-10]. Jubilees [16:21] traces other observances of Sukkot to Abraham's tents in Beer-sheva, where he erected an altar and circled it while praying.)

We perform a short ceremony to welcome the *ushpizin* (Aramaic for "guests"). The full text for the invitation that they join us, including prayers that our fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* will be worthy of Divine favor, is printed in a full daily/festival *siddur* [prayer book]. Then, on the first day we say, "I invite to my meal the exalted guests, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David. May it please you, Abraham, my exalted guest, that all the other exalted guests dwell with me and with you - Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David." On each day, a different one of the seven is singled out, in order.

The *Sephardim* [Jews of Spanish or Mediterranean ancestry], who often set aside a special chair laden with holy books for the *ushpizin*, invite the patriarchs, then the leaders/prophets (Moses and Aaron), then royalty (Joseph and David). They often send provisions to the poor along with a note saying, "This is the share of the *ushpizin*." Recently, it has become popular in some circles to invite matriarchs and other important women of Israel--Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca, Leah, Miriam, Abigail, and Esther--either paired with the men or on their own.

In addition to serving as a reminder of our duty to the poor (it is said that the *ushpizin* would refuse to



**On the wall of this Sukkah, posters display the text of a modern ushpizin text that invites the matriarch Rachel into the Sukkah. Photo credit:** Women's Celebration of Sukkot/Brandeis University

*and Jewish education.*

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enter a *sukkah* where the poor are not welcome), each of these exalted personages represents uprootedness. (Abraham left his father's home for the land God promised to show him [Genesis 12:1], Isaac went to Gerar during a famine [Genesis 26:1], Jacob fled from his brother Esau to the habitat of Laban [Genesis 28:2], Joseph was sold to merchants and taken to Egypt [Genesis 37:23-36], Moses fled to Midian after inadvertently killing an Egyptian [Exodus 2:11-15] and he and Aaron wandered the Sinai for forty years [beginning with Exodus 13], and David hid from Saul in the wilderness [I Samuel 20, 21].)

Each in his wanderings contributed to the world through a respective personal characteristic: lovingkindness, strength, splendor, glory, holiness, eternity, sovereignty. Reflecting the periods of homelessness and wandering in their lives, our temporary dwellings can inspire us to emulate the benefits they brought to the world. Many people put up plaques or pictures of the ushpizin, containing the blessing and scenes from their lives. (Laminated ones are available in Jewish supply stores.)

*Lesli Koppelman Ross is a writer and artist whose works have appeared nationally. She has devoted much of her time to the causes of Ethiopian Jewry*

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A Feminist Perspective

## Inviting Jewish Foremothers to the Sukkah

### A contemporary twist on the traditional ceremony.

By Jack Moline

*The traditional ushpizin ceremony--in which various male biblical figures are symbolically invited into the sukkah--has inspired many contemporary versions, which expand upon the set of guests invited to the sukkah. One of the most popular of these new ushpizin ceremonies involves inviting seven female biblical figures; there are many versions of the liturgy for this ritual and the following is one example;*

*Each evening:*

Enter, holy guests, in the spirit of hospitality. Enter, nurturing ancestors through whose deeds and devotion our lives are inspired. Enter our Sukkah and share our meal. Enter Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, Deborah, Ruth and Esther.

*First night:*

Sarah our mother, whose laughter reached heaven  
Enter our Sukkah this first night of seven.  
The Holy One blessed you with insight profound.  
May we hear your voice; may your wisdom abound.

*Second night:*

Rebecca our mother, renown for your modesty,  
Directed your son on his personal odyssey.  
Enter our Sukkah; provide inspiration.  
Let your sense of vision encourage our nation.

*Third night:*

Rachel our mother, beloved and cherished  
Devotion completed the path where you perished.  
Though exiled children recounted your sorrow  
Returning, we promise a brighter tomorrow.

*Fourth night:*

Leah our mother, whose nurturing care  
Provides an example for Jews everywhere,  
Enter our Sukkah, and share harvest's prize  
As bountiful as the stars in night skies.

*Fifth night:*

Deborah our leader, so valiant and wise,  
Your judgments were fire that burned in your eyes.

Enter our Sukkah as you sat 'neath your tree  
Dispense to us visions of your prophecy.

*Sixth night:*

Ruth our sister, whose choices we laud  
In embracing our people, our land and our God,  
Enter our Sukkah; your praises we sing,  
Grandmother and teacher of David the King.

*Seventh night:*

Esther our heroine, queen of the land,  
You offered your life to thwart Haman's hand.  
Enter our Sukkah, recounting your story  
Of how your adventures restored us to glory.

*Conclude each night:*

Each mother our leader, our teacher, our guide  
With gifts from the One who has blessed her.  
Ushpizin, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah  
Deborah, Ruth and Esther.

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# Sukkot: A Time to Rejoice

By Ozzie Nogg

Hot on the heels of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur comes Sukkot – *Z'Man Simchateynu* – our Festival of Rejoicing! And for hands-on, get-up-out-of-your-pew-and-participate Judaism, it can't be beat.

Sukkot (a.k.a. *Hag ha-Osif*, the Festival of Ingathering) is one of the three Pilgrimage Festivals -- those times when the Israelites traveled to the Temple in Jerusalem bringing harvest gifts in gratitude to God. Of the three Festivals (Pesach and Shavuot being the other two), Sukkot was, by all accounts, the most popular.

Directions for celebrating Sukkot are given in the Torah. "After the fall harvest," says Leviticus, "take the fruits of goodly trees (*etrog*), branches of palm (*lulav*), boughs of thick trees (*myrtle*) and willows from the brook, and rejoice before the Lord seven days." We are also told to "dwell in booths" as did the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt. In other words, the Torah tells us to celebrate Sukkot by observing three *mitzvot*:

1. Rejoice during the holiday
2. gather the "four species" and
3. live in the *sukkah*.

Our early ancestors observed the "rejoice" *mitzvah* to the fullest. They gathered in the Sanctuary at Shiloh on Mt. Ephraim, danced in the vineyards and drank more than a little of their harvested grape. (Now we understand why those provincial sanctuaries were called the "high places". . .)

Eventually, the villagers gave up their unbridled revels and went, en masse, to the Temple in Jerusalem, to celebrate Sukkot in a slightly more sober fashion. They came in camel caravans from Egypt. By boat from distant cities in the Mediterranean. They came on donkeys and in chariots. But those who traveled on foot won the most points, and it is said that Rabbi Hillel, himself, hoofed it all the way from Babylonia.

Once in Jerusalem, the pilgrims were dazzled! There were wooden booths in every courtyard and on every roof. Thousands of men paraded in the streets, each one carrying his very own *lulav*. At dawn, silver trumpets blew and priests with golden pitchers poured water on the altar.

At night, the flames from enormous golden menorahs -- 150 feet tall -- lit up the Temple area. All of Jerusalem glowed! Learned men juggled flaming torches. They somersaulted and sang with harps and cymbals. Nobody could sleep during the entire week of Sukkot! Was it any wonder that the rabbis said, "Whoever has not witnessed this celebration has not seen true rejoicing."

Now, to the *mitzvah* of the four species.

In the early days, our ancestors simply carried around bunches of fruit and tree limbs in thanksgiving to God for his bounty. But that agri-business mentality didn't suit the rabbis, so they invested the *lulav* and *etrog* with great mystical significance. They decided that the four species represent the human body: the *lulav* is the backbone, the *etrog* is the heart, the myrtle leaves are the eyes and the willow is the mouth. Therefore, said the rabbis, one should use all of oneself to study Torah, to speak the truth and do good deeds.

Now, before a *lulav* can be given a five-star rating, it must meet excruciatingly high standards for size, freshness, the way the willow and myrtle are wrapped to the palm, etc., and a *lulav* of dubious character needs rabbinic inspection and approval before it can be used. The *etrog* must be gorgeous, too. Free from any blemish and with a stem that is **just so**. An *etrog* with even the slightest ding in it, is *pasul* -- invalid! -- and condolences to the man whose *etrog's* stem falls off before Sukkot is over.

Now, once you get your hands on the perfect *lulav* and *etrog*, they must be used -- not just admired -- and there are specific ways to hold them and circle the synagogue with them, plus a strict pattern for shaking them and pointing them in all directions. This practice, some say, is left over from a pagan attempt to summon the four winds or bring rain. Pagan or not, the *lulav* and *etrog* are essential to the celebration of Sukkot.

And now the *mitzvah* of the *sukkah*, itself.

According to tradition, we live in booths during Sukkot because the Israelites lived in booths during their Exodus wanderings. *Wrong!* say pragmatic scholars who are quick to point out that desert nomads live in goatskin tents, not in wooden lean-tos with leafy roofs. Therefore, they say, living in booths at Sukkot cannot be connected to our wanderings in the desert. Rather, it's just another echo of our agricultural past, when harvesters lived in temporary huts in the fields.

Well, pooh on scholars with no souls. To paraphrase Theodore Gaster, the myths woven around traditions – even when historically inaccurate – still have validity if people choose to believe them. And most of us **do** choose to believe that the *sukkah* symbolizes God's protection of our people in the wilderness. Furthermore, we also believe the *sukkah* symbolizes the protection God continues to give us.

So how do we turn this metaphor into a real structure? The Torah doesn't tell us, but the rabbis (bless their hearts) give us blueprints.

According to the Talmud, the *sukkah* must be so many handbreadths by X number of cubits with this many planks and beams. It can be no higher than 30 feet (we shouldn't become haughty). It must be portable (we shouldn't become set in our ways and inflexible) and have at least three walls. The *sukkah* must also have a roof of leaves or branches that allows more shade than sun and through which the stars can be seen (since all blessings come from heaven). The Talmud also gives opinions on building a *sukkah* on top of a wagon, on the deck of a ship, on a camel's back and – believe it or not – under an elephant. It gives decorating tips, advice on how to sleep and eat in the *sukkah* plus procedures to follow in rotten weather. A *sukkah*, remember, is to rejoice in – not to suffer in. Hence the rabbinic maxim, "He who eats in the *sukkah* when it is raining is nothing but an ignoramus" – or words to that effect.

So how can we – today – observe the three Sukkot *Mitzvot*?

We can (1) build our own *sukkahs* and enjoy them with family and friends. If that's not an option, then let's go to the *sukkah* at our temple or synagogue and have kiddush **there** with family and friends. We can (2) buy our own *lulav* and *etrog* and learn how to wave and point them appropriately. No? Then let's go to our temples or synagogue and use the *lulav* and *etrog* available there. And (3) we can be joyous for a week,. Let's not argue over this one, okay? There's no need to somersault or juggle flaming torches, but for seven days we can smile and be positive and thankful for what we have. (Any one who wants to act grumpy **after** Sukkot is free to do so.)

May the stem of your *etrog* stay put.

May God spread His sheltering *sukkah* of peace over us and over all Israel.  
And over Jerusalem.

Amen.

#### Related Links:

[Holidays: A Calendar Rich With Tradition](#)

[Sukkot: Be Happy and Rejoice!](#)

[Knowing Vulnerability: A Perspective on Sukkot](#)

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## The Sukkah

**What is a Sukkah?** A sukkah is a booth of sorts, a construction of a one-room abode where holiday-observing Jews dine, entertain, and some even spend the nights, for seven days each year. The origin of this ritual is biblical. God instructed the Jewish people to construct booths. "You shall live in booths seven days. All citizens of Israel shall dwell in booths" (Leviticus 23:42).

Jews who celebrate Sukkot forsake the comforts of a sturdy home equipped with wall-to-wall carpeting and central heating for a temporary dwelling and receive in return a reality check.

What is really important? The creature comforts of home? Or the warmth of community and family that remains even in the flimsy surroundings of the sukkah? It is easier to feel God's presence in the sukkah because it strips away the materialistic cholesterol of all the stuff inside the house. All the trappings of the home create an illusion that protection comes from having the right security system, deadbolt locks, and window bars. In the sukkah, we can feel God's protection, God's watchfulness, like the Jews who left Egypt to follow God into the desert.

According to the *Guide to Jewish Religious Practice* by Isaac Klein, the sukkah reminds the Jew "not to trust in the size or strength or beauty of his home, though it be filled with all precious things; nor must he rely upon the help of any human being, however powerful. But let him put his trust in the great God whose word called the universe into being for He alone is mighty, and His promises alone are sure."

Some Jews begin building the sukkah right after their post-Yom Kippur bagel to demonstrate their eagerness to fulfill their prayerful pledges to be better Jews.

There are a few basic rules and regulations to keep in mind in order to transform an average lean-to into a sukkah. The following details are taken from Jewish legal writings and are at best summaries of the actual laws. A local rabbi should be able to clarify questions about your personal sukkah.

**Sukkah Dimensions** - At minimum, a sukkah can be 27x27 inches. Jewish legal thinkers came up with these dimensions as the smallest space one would occupy while sitting or crouching at a table. A building becomes a building in Jewish law when it is at least nine tefachim or about 38 inches high. Under that height a structure is relegated to an odd halachic category, known as a *karmelet*, which it is considered neither public or private domain. The tallest a sukkah may be is 30 feet tall. A sukkah taller than that would not have its s'chach visible to a passerby. This would give the sukkah the appearance of a permanent building and would not have the important temporary form intrinsic to a proper sukkah. Bear in mind that the 30 foot limit is from the base of the sukkah itself and not measured from the ground up. Sukkot may be built atop skyscrapers as long as the sukkah's walls and roof are less than 30 feet tall.

**The Sukkah Walls** - How many walls?

At minimum a sukkah should have two walls plus an additional third wall that is at least as wide as a hand span. None of the sukkah walls have to be temporary. A sukkah becomes a sukkah because of its s'chach, roof covering. The s'chach alone must be put up for the purpose of being used for the sukkah. To take this halachic stance to an extreme: a pre-existing room without a roof could be used as a sukkah as long as the s'chach material was placed on the top specifically for sukkot.

**Wall material** - These walls may be made of any material from plywood to canvas sheets. Organic material like bamboo, twigs, and cornhusks are used by some who wish to drive home

the agricultural basis of the day. In accord with the letter of the law, pieces of the wall may be spaced up to a foot apart and still be considered one solid way. In practice, sukkah builders strive to build more solid walls.

**Sturdiness** - When is a wall a wall? Jewish law is of the opinion that a wall will not sway more than one tefach (4 inches) in either direction when a normal wind blows. For this reason, walls hung in curtain fashion can be too flimsy to count as a proper sukkah wall.

**S'chach - The Sukkah Roof** - The s'chach is the ingredient that transforms a properly built structure into a sukkah. A sukkah's walls and decorations may be pre-existing and permanent but the s'chach, roofing material, must be put up for no reason other than to be used as a sukkah.

It is important that the s'chach is the roof of the sukkah and not any other sort of overhang. Even though natural material is to be used exclusively for s'chach, any growing thing still attached to the ground – such as a tree – that dangles over the sukkah roof disqualifies that part of the sukkah from use for this mitzvah.

**Suitable S'chach Material** - Only organic matter may be used to top the sukkah. This leaves a wide variety of materials suitable for s'chach with a few reservations. Any natural material that has been fashioned into a utensil or furniture cannot be used. For example, pieces of chairs, wooden spoons, and even pure cotton sheets do not fit the s'chach bill. However, wood pieces that have been milled into lumber may be used if they are less than four tefachim, about 16 inches, wide.

S'chach material should be set atop the sukkah after the walls are put up. It is best for the s'chach to rest atop material that would be kosher as s'chach. For example, a sukkah constructed out of modular aluminum pieces should have wooden boards placed atop the aluminum for the s'chach to rest upon.

**How Much S'chach?** - The s'chach covering should block most of the sun's rays inside the sukkah. Some commentators are of the opinion that this legal detail arises from the sukkah's origin as the hut that the Children of Israel built to shade themselves in the desert where an overly sunny sukkah would be worthless.

There is another tradition, which is not accorded the status of a Jewish law, to limit the amount of s'chach to the amount through which the nighttime stars are visible.

### Decorating the Sukkah

**Hanging Fruit** - Since the sukkah is supposed to be used as a home, it is traditional to decorate the sukkah. Hanging fruit from the s'chach rafters is a way to beautify the sukkah while commemorating the holiday's harvest roots. Because bees also enjoy the fruit, hanging up plastic, ceramic or otherwise fake fruit may be a better option. Furthermore, faux fruit can be used year after year and will not lead to wasting food.

**Stringing New Years Cards** - Decorating a sukkah with New Years cards is so common that it almost seems like a mitzvah. What's the attraction? The graphics of New Years cards are Jewish and often lovely, perfect for those who want their sukkah to look notably Jewish and lovely. If that were not enough, then having the good wishes of friends and loved ones all around is never bad and certainly wonderful at the dawn of a new year. (The cards also provide fodder for table talk, "Oh, you got a card from Jerry Levine. How's his new business/new baby/old Chevrolet doing?" Be careful not to let the decoration discussion slide into snide comments.)

Some Stringing Tips: - Hole punch the two top corners of the card. String it along a piece of twine. Continue on with the next card. This is the intuitive way to string the cards. Improve upon

this method, which often results in the majority of the cards slipping down into one big lump, by stapling each card along the twine once it is slid into place. Better still, amble over to the nearest educational store and laminate the cards in a strip. Once encased in a thin layer of plastic, the cards will outlast many seasons of Sukkot storms.

**God Bless the Coat Hanger** - Keep the kids busy during sukkah construction. Hand them art material, string, and wire hangers, and let the mobile making begin. Just about any little doodad: a bird made of feathers and Styrofoam, a happy face fashioned from beads stuck on a paper plate, a collection of fall leaves and twigs, can be displayed by attaching it to a piece of string and looping the string around a hanger bottom. Hanger heads may then be hooked around the sukkah rafters and niches in the sukkah walls.

**Sukkah Disposal** - Judaism puts emphasis on investing physical matter with spiritual meaning. Wool and cotton are spun into a tallit, prayer shawl. Leather is stretched into Torah parchment. On Sukkot, palm branches and citrons and the common materials used for a sukkah's walls and roof are graced with a holiness that does not fade once the holiday has passed. Mitzvah objects such as these deserve a respectful end. Recycling these items for use in another mitzvah has been considered a proper use for these items long before the first Earth Day was celebrated. One common use for an old lulav is to store it as kindling for burning the leaven on Passover eve. The already fragrant etrog can be studded with cloves and used in the post-Sabbath Havdallah ceremony, when smelling a spice is part of the ritual. It may be less feasible to convert used sukkah walls for use in a new mitzvah. Traditional Jewish sources recommend burning the sukkah, a less disgraceful end than simply tossing out the sukkah with last night's leftovers.

**Holy Hospitality** - God's presence radiates so strongly from the humble sukkahs that the holy souls of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and King David cannot help but be attracted to them. Each day, all seven shepherds of Israel flock to the backyard or balcony huts, acting as silent guests with one lead shepherd influencing the spiritual impact of the day. Together they are known as the Ushpizin, which is Aramaic for "guests."

Since spiritual beings do not eat, there is a custom to offer the poor the meals that would have been served to the Ushpizin. Maimonides emphasizes the importance of feeding the poor. "Anyone who closes the doors of his home, feeding only his family but not the poor and despondent, has not attained the joy of performing a mitzvah but is only stuffing his stomach" (Mishna Torah, Hilchot Yom Tov 6:18).

Each of the Ushpizin was known for a spiritual strength that parallels the seven attributes outlined in kabalistic writings.

Abraham for his love and kindness

Isaac for his restraint

Jacob for his balance of kindness with restraint which resulted in beauty

Moses for his leadership through Torah

Aaron for his empathy

Joseph for making holiness his spiritual foundation

David for developing his kingdom in a way that invited God's presence,

It doesn't take much to notice that all seven of the Ushpizin are men. Altering the tradition to include women is easy, because each of these men had holy wives.

Abraham and Sara

Isaac and Rebecca

Jacob and Rachel, Leah, Bilha, and Zilpa

Moses and Tzipporah

Aaron and Elisheva

Joseph and Osnat  
David and Michal, Abigail, Bathsheba, et al.

There are plenty of other strong Jewish women to assign Ushpizin status to. Abigail, wife of David; Deborah the Judge; Yael the warrior who slew an enemy general; Yehudit the valiant woman who did the same several centuries later; Rachel who sacrificed her personal wealth to marry a poor man who was still illiterate but would become the illustrious Rabbi Akiva; Queen Esther, heroine of Purim. Modern women made their own mark Golda Meir; Sara Schneier creator of the first girls' yeshiva; your great grandmother who encouraged the family to emigrate from Europe just before the war began.

**What do we Do in the Sukkah?** - According to the Torah, there is an obligation to "dwell" in the sukkah. Dwelling includes eating, talking, singing, snoozing, reading, relaxing, entertaining, and more. The sukkah is one of the few Jewish practices that involves the entire body in the mitzvah experience. Other Jewish observances that involved the entire body are immersing in the mikva, a ritual pool, and wrapping oneself in a tallit, prayer shawl. Among these mitzvot, dwelling in the sukkah wins for connecting the entire body with a mitzvah for the greatest duration. Stepping into a sukkah provides a physical framework for understanding the all-encompassing nature of God's presence.

**What do we eat in the Sukkah?** - While there is nothing like opting to sit in the sukkah while sipping a cup of hot coffee in early morning cool, coffee is not a food that Jewish law would require one to eat in the sukkah, at least according to most Jewish legal opinions. Baked grains - cookies, cake, cereal, pasta, toast - are sukkah worthy.

**It's Raining, It's Pouring** - There is a specific mitzvah to eat in the sukkah, especially the first night. Even if the rest of the meal will be eaten inside because of wet weather, it is worthwhile to recite the kiddush blessing over the wine and the hamotzi blessing over the challah in the sukkah.

Rabbi Moses Isserles's (1530-1572) guideline for when to move a sukkot meal inside: Remain in the sukkah if the amount the sukkah is leaking during the rain would not cause a person to leave his or her home. (Aish.com)

Jewish legal writers rely on the axiom that the Torah is a "way of peace" to support their opinion that if eating in the sukkah causes one to be preoccupied with discomfort one should not eat in the sukkah. Yet there are tales told of rabbis and their families who were so desirous of drinking in the holiness of the sukkah that neither rain nor snow forced them into their warmer homes.

Before eating in the sukkah, recite a blessing:

*Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam asher k'dshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu leisheiv ba-sukah*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who makes us holy with mitzvot and commands us to dwell in the sukkah.

**Sleeping in the Sukkah** - Most traditional interpreters of Jewish law include sleeping in the sukkah as a part of the mitzvah to dwell in the sukkah. In the Shulchan Aruch Harav, a major work on Jewish law, author Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi writes against this practice. Rabbi Moses Isserles, who wrote an earlier authoritative work on the Code of Jewish law, argued against over-piety stating that it is foolish to sleep in the sukkah when it rains, or if one is bothered by cold, foul odor or insects.

*www.mazornet.com/jewishcal/Holidays/Sukkot*

rather joy" (B. *Shab.* 30b). In the Jewish tradition, happiness is requisite to entering into a conscious relationship with God (Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, p. 225).

This happiness is best expressed through gratitude to God. The Midrash says: "In the millennium all other sacrifices will be abolished, but not the thanksgiving offering; all other prayers will be abolished, but not the prayer of thanksgiving" (*Mayyira Rabbah* 9:7). Thus gratitude and thankfulness have supreme value as the essence of religion.

## 2. Preliminary Observances

The four days between Yom Kippur and Sukkot have a festive touch of their own. Fasting is prohibited and Tahannun is not recited. If a Sabbath occurs during these four days, neither *Av Haratamim* nor *Tsidqalekha* is said. The Temple of Solomon was dedicated during these days, and today pious Jews are occupied with building a Sukkah and acquiring an Etrog and Lulav, hence the more festive mood (*O.H.* 624, end).

## 3. The Building of a Sukkah

There is an ancient maxim: *האדם צריך ליהנות מהעולם הזה* ("if an opportunity to perform a mitswah presents itself to you, do not be slow in performing it") (based on comment in *Mekhilta, Masekhta d'Pisha, Parasha 9*, ed. Lauterbach, vol. 1, p. 74). Hence, the building of the Sukkah should be started immediately after Yom Kippur (*O.H.* 625:1). Some pious Jews drive in the first nail, so to speak, the night after Yom Kippur so as to proceed directly from one mitswah to another (*O.H.* 624).

The Sukkah is a temporary structure constructed for the festival of Sukkot. It must be erected in the open air, under the sky, not in a room or under a tree (*O.H.* 626:1). It consists of four walls and a removable covering. This covering, called *sekhakh*, must be of material that grows from the soil, has been detached from the ground, and cannot be defiled (*O.H.* 629:1). Hides and the like are excluded because they do not grow from the soil; vines and tendrils are excluded because they are attached to the ground; cloth utensils, or metal objects are excluded because they can become ritually defiled. The *sekhakh* is usually of cut branches or plants.

The *sekhakh* should be loose enough so that one can see the sky, yet

thick enough so that the shadow it casts on the ground exceeds the light thrown by the sun: *השדור שיהיה יותר מן האור* (*O.H.* 631:1, 3). No open space measuring three hand-breadths, or about twelve inches, or longer, may be left (*O.H.* 632:2). There is only one class of objects which, though they conform to the above requirements, may not be used for *sekhakh*: grasses or leaves that dry quickly and start falling, or that have an offensive odor (*O.H.* 629:14).

The walls may be constructed of any material (*O.H.* 630:1), but materials with an offensive odor or that will shrivel within the seven days should not be used (Rama on *O.H.* 680:1). Theoretically two complete walls and part of a third wall satisfy the minimum requirements for a Sukkah, but it is customary to have four walls (*O.H.* 630:5 in Rama), and these should be strong enough to withstand the impact of ordinary winds (*O.H.* 630:10).

The Sukkah should not be constructed in a conic shape—all walls and no *sekhakh*—because the name Sukkah implies that there is *sekhakh* on top (*O.H.* 631:10).

The Sukkah should not be more than twenty cubits high (about thirty feet) (*O.H.* 631:1) because it would then cease to be a temporary dwelling since the walls would have to be exceedingly strong (*O.H.* 631:1 in *M.A.* 1), nor should it be less than ten hand-breadths (approximately three feet) high. It should be at least seven by seven hand-breadths in area (approximately twenty-six inches square)—the minimum space necessary for at least one person (*O.H.* 633:1).

Some people build a permanent Sukkah in their houses by having a removable ceiling in one of the rooms. During the festival the ceiling is removed and *sekhakh* is put in its place. In some cases, the roof is opened by means of pulleys. Both are permissible (*O.H.* 626:1, 3). If it rains the roof may be closed and then reopened when the rain stops (Rama on *O.H.* 631:3).

On the basis of the rabbinic maxim that the commandments should have aesthetic appeal—*האדם צריך ליהנות מהעולם הזה* (B. *Shab.* 133b), it has become customary to decorate the Sukkah. Each country uses its own aesthetic forms in fulfilling this requirement (*Sefer Maharil, Hilkhot Sukkah, O.H.* 627:4).

The building of a Sukkah is an obligation for each individual. However, the custom has become widespread to build a Sukkah in a yard near the synagogue for use by all the worshippers, at least for Qiddush or light refreshment. The synagogue Sukkah may be used by those who are observant but find it difficult to build a Sukkah on their own premises. All the laws pertaining to the Sukkah apply here too. We have reason to believe that such

communal Sukkahs are not a new development but have precedents as far back as the Middle Ages (see *Shibolei Halevai*, ed. Buber, p. 314; *Sefer Hamo'adim, Sukkot*, p. 25; Abraham ben Nathan of Lunel, *Sefer Hamanhig*, p. 64).

#### 4. The Four Species

Before the advent of the festival each family should provide itself with the Four Species: citron (אתרוג), palm branch (תאנה), myrtle (ערבה), and willow (תאנה) (*O.H.* 651:1).

The biblical source for this commandment is the verse in Leviticus 23:40:

"On the first day you shall take the product of *hadar* trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook." The willow and the palm branch are mentioned explicitly. The Talmud explains that "the product of *hadar* trees" refers to the Etrog (*B. Suk.* 35a) and that "boughs of leafy trees" refers to the myrtle (*ibid.* 32b). While the Etrog retained its name, the other three species are together called the Lulav because of the prominence of the palm branch. Hence the blessing for the four species is תאנה תאנה תאנה (B. *Suk.* 37b). These three species are tied together with leaves from a palm branch (*O.H.* 651:1). Today they are also put into a basketlike structure, woven of palm leaves, that serves to hold them together.

The Lulav should have one palm branch, two willow, and three myrtle twigs (*O.H.* 651:1). They should be tied together in the direction in which they grow, the myrtle on the right of the palm branch, the willow on the left, and the spine of the palm branch facing the holder (*O.H.* 651:1 in *M.A.* 4). The minimum length of the palm branch should be four hand-breadths (sixteen inches). The myrtle and the willow should be at least three hand-breadths (twelve inches). The palm branch should be at least one hand-breadth (four inches) longer than the myrtle and willow (*O.H.* 650:1). The Etrog should be at least as large as an average egg (*O.H.* 648:22).

As with the Sikkah, pious people seek to emphasize the aesthetic aspect of the mitzvah so that they can worship God in the beauty of holiness. They go to great lengths to acquire an Etrog and a Lulav that are particularly pleasing to the eye. Especially in the case of the Etrog they try to get a תאנה (extra fine). Here shape and color are important factors. The Etrog should taper upward at the top rather than be spherical. The surface should not be smooth like a lemon but rather rough and ridged (תאנה). The shape should

be symmetrical so that the tip (תאנה) is directly above the stem (תאנה). There should be no blotches, spots, or discolorations on the skin. It should not be green, but yellow, like a ripe lemon (*O.H.* 648).

The Lulav should be fresh, not dried, reaching straight to the top; the leaves should not spread out nor should the tip be broken off (*O.H.* 645). The myrtle and willow should be green, fresh, and with the leaves intact (*O.H.* 646, 647; for a resume, see *Qitsur Shulhan 'Arukh*, ed. Feldmann, 2:64).

The other preparations for Sukkot are the same as those for the other Pilgrimage Festivals.

#### 5. Services

The candles are lit in the Sikkah with two benedictions: תאנה תאנה תאנה and the תאנה. If the first day is a Sabbath, the candles should be lit at the time prescribed for the Sabbath and with the benediction תאנה תאנה תאנה תאנה תאנה (*O.H.* 514:11; Singer, *Ziv Haminhagin*, p. 222). If the Sikkah is so built that a wind can blow out the candles, they should be moved into the house immediately after being lit.

Minhah is the regular weekday service, and Ma'ariv is the same as on the other Pilgrimage Festivals with the variations appropriate to Sukkot. After the services Qiddush is recited in the Sikkah. The regular festival Qiddush is recited, with the appropriate reference to Sukkot. At the end of Qiddush we add two benedictions: תאנה תאנה תאנה תאנה תאנה and the תאנה (*O.H.* 643:1). On Saturday we follow the usual variations appropriate for the day. At home each person recites the Qiddush in his Sikkah as above.

The kabbalists have added a poetic touch to the Sukkot festival. It is written in the *Zohar* that when the children of Israel leave their houses and go into the Sikkah, they are rewarded by receiving the תאנה, divine presence, as a guest along with seven faithful shepherds who descend from heaven and enter the Sikkah (*Zohar, Emor* 103b). The seven faithful shepherds are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David. It has become customary to invite all of these faithful shepherds, each day a different one of them being the special guest, heading the others in chronological order. Isaac Luria rearranged the order according to the importance of the figures, placing Moses and Aaron before Joseph (Wahrman, *Hagei Yisra'el Umotadav*, p. 66; Singer, *Ziv Haminhagin*, p. 224).

The meal, and the prayers accompanying it, follows the pattern of the other festivals with one variation: At the end of the Grace after meals we say *תְּהֵאָהָרָהּ תְּהֵאָהָרָהּ תְּהֵאָהָרָהּ תְּהֵאָהָרָהּ תְּהֵאָהָרָהּ*.

In the morning the Shabharit service is the regular festival service with the same variations in the 'Amidah as on the night before. Before Hallel we recite the benediction over the Eitrog and Lulav.

While one can perform this commandment at any time during the whole day (literally during the day but not at night), it is best to do it in the morning, preferably before Hallel (*O.H.* 652:1). It should be done in the following manner: The Lulav is taken in the right hand and the Eitrog in the left hand, held together in the position in which they grow, i.e., tips upward (*O.H.* 651:2). Since a benediction must precede the performance of a commandment, we begin by holding the Eitrog in the reverse position, i.e., with its tip downward and the stem upward (*O.H.* 651:5), and the benedictions *הֵאָרָהּ לְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* and *וְהֵאָרָהּ לְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* are recited. The *וְהֵאָרָהּ לְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* is recited on the first day only, but if the first day is a Sabbath, it is recited on the second day because the Eitrog and Lulav are not taken on the Sabbath (*O.H.* 658:2). The Eitrog is then reversed so that it is held in the position of its growth, and together the four species are waved in the four directions, upwards and downwards, in this sequence: east, south, west, north, up, down. Each wave is a forward and backward motion and is accompanied by the shaking of the leaves of the Lulav (*O.H.* 651:9-10). All this time the Eitrog and Lulav are held together so that they touch each other (*O.H.* 651).

The waving of the Eitrog and the Lulav is also done each time the verse *וְהֵאָרָהּ לְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* (M. Suk. 3:9). Since *וְהֵאָרָהּ לְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* has six words apart from the divine name, each word is accompanied by a wave, and since *וְהֵאָרָהּ לְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* has three words apart from the divine name, each word is accompanied by two waves (*Hayei Addm* 148:14). The Talmud says: "We wave toward the four points of the world in honor of Him to whom the four corners of the world, upwards and downwards, heaven and earth, belong, proclaiming thereby that the world is God's and that His dominion is everywhere" (B. Suk. 37b).

Also, we wave the four species to and fro to ward off harmful winds, upwards and downwards to keep away harmful waters. The ceremony thus becomes a form of prayer through action, recalling the agricultural theme of the festival.

Two Torah scrolls are taken out of the ark accompanied by the usual festival prayers. In the first Torah scroll we read Leviticus 22:26-23:44, which deals with the festivals. Five people are called, and on the Sabbath,

seven. From the second Torah scroll we read Numbers 29:12-16, which contains the sacrificial offerings for the day. For the Hafarah we read the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah because it speaks of the Messianic days when all mankind will come to Jerusalem, on the Sukkot festival, to worship the Lord of Hosts (*O.H.* 659:1).

The Musaf service is the same as on the other Pilgrimage Festivals, with specific variations for Sukkot.

After *Hazarai Hashas* and before Qaddish, the Hoshanot are recited. These hymns begin with *הוֹשָׁנָה רַבָּה*, and one is recited each day in an order which varies each year according to the day on which the festival begins. The variation is due to the fact that the contents of each hymn are suited to certain days of the week. Thus *הוֹשָׁנָה רַבָּה*, which praises the Sabbath, is always said on the Sabbath; *הוֹשָׁנָה רַבָּה*, which speaks of the glory of God, is always said on the first day (except if the first day is a Sabbath, when it is said on the second day); and *הוֹשָׁנָה רַבָּה* is always on the third day (except if the third day is a Sabbath) because it speaks of atonement, the theme of Yom Kippur, which always occurs on the same day of the week as the third day of Sukkot.

The ark is opened, a scroll of the Torah is removed, and the ark is left open. The reader takes the Eitrog and Lulav and chants the four introductory verses, each beginning with *הוֹשָׁנָה רַבָּה*. The congregation repeats each verse after the reader. A procession of all who have an Eitrog and Lulav is then formed, and it follows the reader around the bimah while the congregation and the reader recite the hymn for the day responsively. After the procession there is a closing hymn, *הוֹשָׁנָה רַבָּה* and *הוֹשָׁנָה רַבָּה*. After these the Torah is returned to the ark, the ark is closed, the people in the procession return to their places, and the service continues with the closing Qaddish.

If the holiday falls on a Sabbath, the Hoshanot for the Sabbath are recited but there is no procession. The ark is opened, but no Torah is removed (*O.H.* 660:1, 2). The procession is patterned after the one held in the Temple of Jerusalem, where it took place around the altar. Today the Torah replaces the altar. Since there is no procession, there is no need for taking out the Torah.

On the second day the service is exactly as on the first day with the following variations. At the preceding Minhah we add *הוֹשָׁנָה רַבָּה* before the 'Amidah and recite the festival 'Amidah. Mar'iv is as the night before, but we recite *הוֹשָׁנָה רַבָּה* at Qiddush after the *וְהֵאָרָהּ לְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* (*O.H.* 661:1). In the morning the Hafarah is I Kings 8:2-21, which tells of Solomon's dedication of the

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It has been taught: R. Eliezer says, [17b] One may not go from one *Sabbath* to another,<sup>9</sup> nor may one<sup>10</sup> make a *Sabbath* during the Intermediate Days of the Festival, while the Sages say, One may go from one *Sabbath* to another, and one may make a *Sabbath* during the Intermediate Days of the Festival; but both of them are in accord that if it fall down, one<sup>11</sup> may erect it during the Intermediate Days.

What is the reason of R. Eliezer?—Scripture says, *Thou shalt keep the Feast of Sabbath for seven days*,<sup>12</sup> [which implies,] make a *Sabbath* which shall be fit for seven days.<sup>13</sup> And the Rabbis?—This is what the Divine Law means: Make a *Sabbath* for the Festival. But both of them are in accord that if it fall down one may re-erect it during the Intermediate Days.<sup>14</sup> But is not this obvious?<sup>15</sup>—I would have said that this<sup>16</sup> is [deemed to be] another [*Sabbath*] and is [thus] not one for seven days, therefore he informs us [that we do not say so].<sup>17</sup>

It has been taught: R. Eliezer said, Just as a man cannot fulfill his obligation on the first day of the Festival<sup>18</sup> with the palm-branch of his fellow, since it is written, *And ye shall take to you on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees*,<sup>19</sup> i.e., from your own, so cannot a man fulfill his obligation with a *Sabbath* of his fellow, since it is written, *The festival of Sabbath thou shalt keep to thee for seven days*.<sup>20</sup> I.e., of thine own. The Sages, however, say, Although they<sup>21</sup> said that a man cannot fulfill his obligation on the first day of the Festival<sup>22</sup> with the palm-branch of his fellow, he may nevertheless fulfill his obligation with the *Sabbath* of his fellow, since it is written, *All that are homeborn in Israel shall dwell in Sabbath*,<sup>23</sup> which teaches that all Israel are able to sit in one *Sabbath*.<sup>24</sup> And how do the Rabbis<sup>25</sup> interpret the words 'to thee'?—It is needed to exclude a stolen [*Sabbath*], but as to a borrowed one, it is written, *All that are homeborn*,<sup>26</sup> etc.<sup>27</sup> And what does R. Eliezer do with, *All that are homeborn*?<sup>28</sup>—It is needed [to include] a convert who had become converted in the meantime<sup>29</sup> or a minor<sup>30</sup> who had attained his majority in the meantime.<sup>31</sup> And the Rabbis?<sup>32</sup>—Since they say that a man may make a *Sabbath* during the Intermediate Days of the Festival no [special] verse is needed [for converts and minors].<sup>33</sup>

Our Rabbis have taught: It once happened that R. Ilai<sup>34</sup> went

(9) So, to eat in one and sleep in the other or to use one on one day and the other on the next. (10) Who did not dwell in a *Sabbath* on the first day. (11) Who fulfilled his duty in it in the earlier-day or days. (12) Deut. XVI, 17.

(13) One made during the Intermediate Days is obviously for less than seven days as is one that is forsaken before the seven days are over. (14) How can they maintain their view against this exposition? (15) Since the *Sabbath* was originally put up for the full seven days. (16) Since it is put up again during the Intermediate Days. (17) Because the repeated *Sabbath* is merely the continuation of the original one which was duly intended for the full seven days.

to pay his respects to R. Eliezer his master in Lydda<sup>35</sup> on a Festival. H<sup>36</sup> said to him, 'Ilai, you are not of those that rest on the Festival'<sup>37</sup> for R. Eliezer used to say, 'I praise the indolent who do not emerge from their houses on the Festival<sup>38</sup> since it is written, *And thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy household*.'<sup>39</sup> But it is not so. For did not R. Isaac say, 'Whence do we know that a man is obliged to pay his respects to his teacher on the Festival? From Scripture which said, *Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? It is neither New Moon nor Sabbath*'<sup>40</sup> from which it follows that on the New Moon<sup>41</sup> and the Sabbath a man is obliged to pay his respects to his master?<sup>42</sup>—There is no difficulty. The latter refers to where he can go and return [to his house] on the one day,<sup>43</sup> the former to where he cannot go and return on the same day.<sup>44</sup>

Our Rabbis have taught: It happened that R. Eliezer passed the Sabbath<sup>45</sup> in Upper Galilee in the Sabbath of R. Johanan son of R. Ilai at Caesarea or, as some say, in Caesarea [Philippi],<sup>46</sup> and when the sun reached the *Sabbath* he said to him, 'How if I spread a cloth over it?'<sup>47</sup> He answered him, 'There was not a tribe in Israel which did not produce a judge'.<sup>48</sup> When the sun reached to the middle of the *Sabbath*, he said to him, 'How if I spread a cloth over it?' He answered him, 'There was not a tribe in Israel from which there did not come prophets, and the tribes of Judah and Benjamin appointed their kings at the behest of the prophets'.<sup>49</sup> When the sun reached the feet of R. Eliezer,<sup>50</sup> Johanan took a cloth and spread it over [the *Sabbath*]. R. Eliezer [thereupon] tied up his cloak, threw it over his back, and went out.<sup>51</sup> It was not in order to evade an answer [that he answered as he did] but because he never said anything which he had not heard from his master.

How did R. Eliezer act thus? Did not R. Eliezer say, One may not go from one *Sabbath* to another?<sup>52</sup>—It was on another Festival.<sup>53</sup> But did not R. Eliezer say, 'I praise the indolent who do not leave their houses on the Festival'?—It was an ordinary Sabbath.

But could he not deduce [the answer]<sup>54</sup> from his own<sup>55</sup> statement, since we have learnt: One may shut a window<sup>56</sup> with a window-shutter if it is fastened or hung [on the window-frame],<sup>57</sup> but if not, one may not shut a window with it, but the Sages

their sole reason for staying at home is their indolence. (10) Deut. XIV, 26. This verse does not, as a matter of fact, refer to a Festival but to the second tribe, *Tosaf*. (Fen. 109a) suggests an analogy between this verse and Deut. XVI, 14, the import of each being the same, but the former is quoted since it mentions the word 'house' (i.e., wife) specifically. (11) II Kings IV, 23. The reference is to the Shunammite woman and Elisha. (12) So, a Festival. (13) V. R. H., (Sone. ed.) 16b n. 212. Now how are the two statements to be reconciled? (14) As his wife would thus have his company for a part of the day he must also pay his respects to his teacher. (15) His duty to his wife over-rides his duty to his teacher. (16) In his own Sabbath. (17) How if I spread a cloth over it? (18) How if I spread a cloth over it? (19) How if I spread a cloth over it? (20) How if I spread a cloth over it? (21) How if I spread a cloth over it? (22) How if I spread a cloth over it? (23) How if I spread a cloth over it? (24) How if I spread a cloth over it? (25) How if I spread a cloth over it? (26) How if I spread a cloth over it? (27) How if I spread a cloth over it? (28) How if I spread a cloth over it? (29) How if I spread a cloth over it? (30) How if I spread a cloth over it? (31) How if I spread a cloth over it? (32) How if I spread a cloth over it? (33) How if I spread a cloth over it? (34) How if I spread a cloth over it? (35) How if I spread a cloth over it? (36) How if I spread a cloth over it? (37) How if I spread a cloth over it? (38) How if I spread a cloth over it? (39) How if I spread a cloth over it? (40) How if I spread a cloth over it? (41) How if I spread a cloth over it? (42) How if I spread a cloth over it? (43) How if I spread a cloth over it? (44) How if I spread a cloth over it? (45) How if I spread a cloth over it? (46) How if I spread a cloth over it? (47) How if I spread a cloth over it? (48) How if I spread a cloth over it? (49) How if I spread a cloth over it? (50) How if I spread a cloth over it? (51) How if I spread a cloth over it? (52) How if I spread a cloth over it? (53) How if I spread a cloth over it? (54) How if I spread a cloth over it? (55) How if I spread a cloth over it? (56) How if I spread a cloth over it? (57) How if I spread a cloth over it?

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למען יבא לא משפחה ליהי' לאלו  
אזי לנס לא מדוע זו אמת; ש  
אלא רבוי דבי בית שמעון ולא

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say. In either case one may shut the window with it? [284]-  
[No.] In the latter case it is [forbidden] since he destroys its  
identity,<sup>4</sup> but in the former where he does not,<sup>5</sup> the law is  
not so.<sup>6</sup>

Our Rabbis have taught: It happened that R. Eliezer passed  
the Sabbath in Upper Galilee, and they asked him for thirty  
decisions in the laws of *Sukkah*. Of twelve of these he said, 'I heard  
them [from my teachers]'; of eighteen he said, 'I have not heard'.  
R. Jose b. Judah said, Reverse the words: Of eighteen he said,  
'I have heard them', of twelve he said, 'I have not heard them'.  
They said to him, 'Are all your words only reproductions of  
what you have heard?' He answered them, 'You wished to force  
me to say something which I have not heard from my teachers.  
During all my life [I may tell you] no man was earlier than myself  
in the college. I never slept or dozed in the college, nor did I ever  
leave a person in the college when I went out, nor did I ever utter  
profane speech, nor have I ever in my life said a thing which I  
did not hear from my teachers'.

They said concerning R. Johanan b. Zakkai that during his  
whole life he never uttered profane talk, nor walked four cubits  
without [studying the] Torah or without *tefillin*, nor was any man  
earlier than he in the college, nor did he sleep or doze in the

(2) Shab. XVII.  
7. Now since the question was whether spreading the cloth over the *Sukkah*  
would be regarded as adding to it on the Sabbath why did not R. Eliezer  
deduce from this analogous case that the answer was in the affirmative? (3) That  
of the window-shutter. (4) I.e., the identity of the shutter is lost to the win-  
dow. The act of closing must, therefore, be regarded as 'building'. (5) Since  
the cloth would not be allowed to remain in the *Sukkah*. (6) The window-  
shutter becomes part of the frame, but the cover does not become part of the  
*Sukkah*. The spread of the latter, therefore, need not necessarily be regarded as  
building. (7) His studies or other sacred subjects.  
a (1) When it was necessary to hurry home to the Passover meal for the sake of  
the children who might otherwise fall asleep (cf. Pes. 109a). (2) When the  
last meal of the day had to be eaten early before the fast began. (3) Cf.  
Joah. X, 12f. (4) Or 'elders', but the following statement suggests 'the  
greatest'. (5) According to Meg. 3a, he wrote a Targum to the Prophets, and

college, nor did he meditate<sup>7</sup> in filthy alleyways, nor did he leave  
anyone in the college when he went out, nor did anyone ever find  
him sitting in silence, but only sitting and learning, and no one  
but himself ever opened the door to his disciples, he never in  
his life said anything which he had not heard from his teacher,  
and, except on the eve of Passover<sup>8</sup> and on the eve of the Day  
of Atonement,<sup>9</sup> he never said, 'It is time to arise from the studies  
at the college'; and so did his disciple R. Eliezer conduct himself  
after him.

Our Rabbis have taught: Hillel the Elder had eighty disciples,  
thirty of whom were worthy of the Divine Spirit resting upon  
them, as [it did upon] Moses our master, thirty of whom were  
worthy that the sun should stand still for them [as it did for]  
Joshua the son of Nun,<sup>10</sup> [and the remaining] twenty were ordinary.  
The greatest<sup>4</sup> of them was Jonathan b. Uzziel,<sup>5</sup> the smallest<sup>6</sup>  
of them was Johanan b. Zakkai. They said of R. Johanan b. Zakkai  
that he did not leave [unstudied] Scripture, Mishnah, Gemara,<sup>7</sup>  
*Halakah*,<sup>8</sup> *Aggadah*,<sup>9</sup> details of the Torah,<sup>10</sup> details of the Scribes,<sup>11</sup>  
inferences *a minori ad majus*, analogies,<sup>12</sup> calendrical computations,<sup>13</sup>  
*gematrias*,<sup>14</sup> the speech of the Munstering Angels, the speech  
of spirits,<sup>15</sup> and the speech of palm-trees,<sup>16</sup> fullers' parables<sup>17</sup> and  
fox fables,<sup>1</sup> great matters or small matters; 'Great matters' mean

wished to translate the Hagiographa, but was prevented. The extant Targum  
to the Prophets is pseudo-Jonathan. (6) Or 'the youngest'. (7) Explanations of  
the Mishnah. (8) Decisions of law. (9) The non-halakhic part of Talmud,  
including homiletics, ethics, folk-lore, legends etc. (10) The minute details  
and subtle points in Biblical exposition. (11) Similarly of Rabbinical en-  
unciums. (12) The second of the thirteen hermeneutical principles of R.  
Ismael. (13) The calculations of the solstice etc. (14) Laws derived from  
the numerical equivalents and other numerical computations of letters.  
(15) Usually evil spirits, demons. (16) Rashi professes ignorance of this. Hai  
Gaon writes in a responsum that on a windless day, if a man stand be-  
tween two palms and observe how they incline to one another, signs can  
be deduced which afford information. The Gaon Abraham Kobasi d. 848,  
was a proficient interpreter of 'the speech of palms'. (17) The fuller is a well-  
known figure in Roman comedy.  
b (1) R. Meir was an adept in fox fables.

For the continuation of the English translation of this page see overleaf.

**SUKKOT ACTIVITY #2**

**LULAV AND ETROG GROUP #1**

one. Goodman, Philip. *The Sukkot and Simhat Torah Anthology*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, of 1973. reci

## LAWS CONCERNING THE PALM BRANCH

MOSES MAIMONIDES

The "branches of palm trees" (Leviticus 23.40) mentioned in Scripture are newly sprouted shoots of a palm tree, before their leaves spread out on both sides. Such a shoot resembles a scepter and is termed *lulav*.

The "product of goodly trees" (*ibid.*) mentioned in Scripture is the citron. The "boughs of leafy trees" (*ibid.*) mentioned in Scripture refer to the myrtle whose leaves cover its twigs—i.e., it has three or more leaves growing from each bud. If, however, there are two leaves opposite each other at one level and a third leaf above them, the myrtle is not regarded as "leafy" but is termed wild myrtle.

The "willows of the brook" (*ibid.*) mentioned in Scripture do not signify every tree growing near a brook, but only a definite species known by this name. Its leaf is elongated like a brook and has a smooth edge, and its twig is red. It is known as *aravah* (willow). Most trees of this species grow beside brooks, and that is why Scripture speaks of "willows of the brook"; but such a tree is valid even if it grows in the desert or in the mountains.

The Four Species enumerated above constitute a single commandment, and the absence of any one of them renders the others invalid. The four together are termed "the commandment concerning the *lulav*." The number of species may be neither diminished nor increased, and if one species is unobtainable, another similar species may not be substituted for it.

The commandment is best performed by binding together the *lulav*, the myrtle, and the willow, so that the three of them form a single bunch.

How many units of each kind should be taken? One *lulav*, one

citron, two twigs of willow, and three twigs of myrtle. If one wishes to increase the number of myrtle twigs in order to make the bunch larger, he may do so, this being regarded as an embellishment of the commandment. The number of units of the other species, however, may be neither increased nor diminished.

What is the minimum length of each of the several species? The *lulav* must be not less than four handbreadths long, and remains valid however much longer it may be. It is measured from the tip of its spine, not from the tip of its leaves. The myrtle and the willow must be not less than three handbreadths long, and remain valid however much longer they may be. Even if each twig has only three fresh leaves on it, it is valid, provided that these are at the tip of the twig. If the *lulav* is bound in a bunch, the spine of the *lulav* must protrude a handbreadth or more above the myrtle and the willow.

The minimum size of a citron is that of an egg, and it remains valid however much larger it may be.

The normative method of fulfilling the commandment is to lift up the bunch of three species in the right hand and the citron in the left, and to move them to and fro and up and down, shaking the *lulav* three times in each direction.

Thus one should move the *lulav* forward and vibrate its tip three times, then move it back and vibrate its tip three times, and then repeat the process during the upward and downward motion.

One who is obligated to hear the ram's horn and to dwell in a booth is also obligated to take up the *lulav*; one who is exempt from hearing the ram's horn and dwelling in a booth is likewise exempt from taking up the *lulav*. A minor who knows how to shake the *lulav* is obligated, on the authority of the Scribes, to take up the *lulav*, as part of his training in the observance of commandments.

A law transmitted by Moses from Sinai states that another willow used to be brought into the Temple, in addition to the willow contained in the *lulav*, and that one did not fulfill his duty by bringing in only the willow in the *lulav*. Even a single leaf on a single twig was sufficient for this purpose. . . . Since this willow is not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, it is not taken up nowadays on each of the seven days—as a memorial of the Temple usage—but only on the seventh day. What is the procedure? One or more twigs of willow, apart from the willow in the *lulav*, are taken up and struck against the ground or against an article of furniture two or three times. No benediction need be recited, because the procedure is merely a custom introduced by the Prophets.

If any part of it is missing, the citron is ineligible for use, however small the missing part may be. If its nipple—that is, the smaller tip where the knob is located—has been removed, the citron is ineligible for use. If the stalk by which the citron was attached to the tree is removed from the base of the citron, leaving a depression, the citron is again ineligible for use.

Although a commandment prescribes rejoicing on all festivals, there was a day of special rejoicing in the Temple during the festival of Tabernacles, in accordance with the verse, "You shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days" (Leviticus 23:40). What was the procedure? On the eve of the first day of the festival, a raised section for women and a lower section for men were set up in the Temple—to insure that the sexes did not mix. Rejoicing began at the termination of the first day of the festival; on each of the intermediate days it began after the regular afternoon sacrifice had been offered, and went on for the rest of the day and the whole of the following night.

What form did this rejoicing take? Fifes sounded, and harps, lyres, and cymbals were played. Whoever could play a musical instrument did so, and whoever could sing, sang. Others stamped their feet, slapped their thighs, clapped their hands, leaped, or danced, each one to the best of his ability, while songs and hymns of praise were being recited. However, this rejoicing did not take place on the Sabbath or on the first day of the festival.

Rejoicing in the fulfillment of a commandment and in love for God who had prescribed the commandment is a supreme act of divine worship. One who refrains from participation in such rejoicing deserves to be punished, as it is said: "Because you would not serve the Lord thy God, in joy and gladness over the abundance of everything" (Deuteronomy 28:47). If one is arrogant and stands on his own dignity, and thinks only of self-aggrandizement on such occasions, he is both a sinner and a fool. It was this that Solomon had in mind when he uttered the warning: "Glorify not thyself in the presence of the King" (Proverbs 25:6). Contrariwise, one who humbles and makes light of himself on such occasions, achieves greatness and honor, for he serves the Lord out of sheer love. . . . True greatness and honor are achieved only by rejoicing before the Lord, as it is said: "King David leaping and dancing before the Lord" (II Samuel 6:16).

*Mishneh Torah, Book of Seasons 6:7-8\**

\* \* \*

## LAWS CONCERNING THE SUKKAH

### SOLOMON GANZFRIED

It is a duty to build the *sukkah* on the day immediately following the Day of Atonement, even if it is the eve of the Sabbath, for when one has an opportunity to fulfill a commandment he should not delay it. He should select a clean site on which to erect it. Every man is obligated to participate in the building of the booth and in the laying of its roof covering, even if he be an eminent personage, since it is an honor for one personally to fulfill a precept. One should be zealous to beautify the booth and to adorn it with attractive vessels and fine dining couches, according to his means.

Since not everyone is well versed in the many diversified laws concerning the walls of the booth, it is obligatory to make complete, strong walls so that the wind will not shake them nor extinguish the candles, if one does not have sufficient [boards or other materials] for the walls, it is preferable that he make three complete rather than four incomplete walls.

If one possesses the means, it is incumbent upon him to have a booth with a roof that can open and close on hinges, so that he may close it when it rains and open it when the rains cease; thus the thatching will remain dry for the proper observance of the precept.

There are also many laws concerning the roof covering. We observe the custom of covering [the booth] with branches of trees or with canes that grow in the soil and are detached from it.

It is necessary to place [sufficient] covering so that there will be more shade than sunlight [entering the booth]; if there is more sunlight than shade, it is unfit for use according to the Torah. Therefore, it is necessary to be careful to place an amount enabling the shade to predominate even after the covering dries up. It is also essential that there be no open space of three handbreadths in any one place. At the beginning, there should be a little open space in the thatching sufficient to render the stars visible; nevertheless, even if it is so opaque that the stars are not seen, it is fit for use. However, if the booth is so densely covered that heavy rains cannot penetrate inside, it is considered like a house and unfit for use.

## Activity Two



## Lulav and Etrog: The Four Species

### What they are and what to do with them

The commandment regarding the four species is found in the Torah. After discussing the week-long Sukkot festival, specific instructions for how to celebrate the holiday are given. Leviticus 23:40 instructs: "On the first day you shall take the product of hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before Adonai your God seven days." These are the four species that form the lulav and etrog. The four species are waved in the synagogue as part of the service during the holiday of Sukkot. Traditionally, they are not waved on Shabbat because bringing these items to the synagogue would violate the prohibition against carrying. Some liberal synagogues do wave the lulav and etrog on Shabbat. While it is customary for each individual to have a lulav and etrog, many synagogues leave some sets in the synagogue sukkah for the use of their members. The lulav and etrog may also be waved at home.

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It is a positive commandment from the Torah [Leviticus 23:40] to gather together the Four Species during Sukkot:

- "The first day" refers to the first day of Sukkot.
- "Fruit of goodly trees" refers to the etrog (citron).
- "Branches of palm trees" refers to the lulav.
- "Boughs of leafy trees" refers to the myrtle.
- "Willows of the brook" refers to the aravot or hoshanot.

The four are lumped together under the inclusive term lulav, since the lulav is the largest and most prominent. Thus, while the mitzvah is to wave the lulav, this actually refers to the four taken together as one.

#### How the Four Fit Together

The lulav is a single palm branch and occupies the central position in the grouping. It comes with a holder-like contraction (made from its own leaves) which has two extensions. With the backbone (the solid spine) of the lulav facing you and this holder in place near the bottom, two willow branches are placed in the left extension and three myrtle branches are placed in the right. The myrtle should extend to a greater height than the willows.

This whole cluster is held in the right hand, the etrog is held in the left, and the two should be touching one another. Some have the custom of picking up the etrog first and then the lulav--reversing the order when putting them down--because the etrog is referred to before the others in the biblical verse.



**A man standing in a sukkah recites the blessing on the lulav and etrog. Credit: Congregation Shir Shalom**

Waving the Lulav

It is a mitzvah to wave the lulav on each of the first seven days of Sukkot. The proper time is in the morning--either before the Morning service or during the service immediately before the Hallel. A meditation (found in the Siddur) is recited prior to the blessing (this has many kabbalistic secrets concealed within it). The blessing is:

"Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us concerning the waving of the lulav."

On the first day of waving add:

"Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has granted us life, sustenance, and permitted us to reach this season."

Before the blessing, the etrog is held with its pittam (stemlike protrusion) pointed downward. After the blessing, it is inverted so that the pittam faces up. At this point you wave/shake the lulav (together with the other three) in

following manner:

1. Stand facing east.
2. Hold the lulav out to the east (in front of you) and shake it three times. Each time the motion of shaking should be a drawing in to you--reach and draw in, reach out and draw in, reach out and draw in.
3. Repeat the same motion three times to your right (south), behind over your shoulder (west), to your left (north), raising it up above you, lowering it down below you.
4. All of these should be done slowly and deliberately--concentrating the symbolisms and intentions of the act. The lulav is also waved during *Hallel* while saying: "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His lovingkindness endures forever."

*Hodu* - shake front [East]

*L'Adonai* - [never shake when saying God's name]

*Kl* - shake right [South]

*Tov* - shake back [West]

*Kl* - shake left [North]

*Le-olam* - shake up

*Chasdo* - shake down

This verse occurs twice during Hallel.

The lulav is again waved while saying: "Let Israel say that His lovingkindness endures forever."

*Yomar* - shake front [East]

*Na* - shake right [South]

*Yisrael* - shake back [West]

*Ki* - shake left [North]

*Le-olam* - shake up

*Chasdo* - shake down

And it is waved again while saying: "We implore *You*, Lord, save us."

*A-na* - [Shake front/East on first syllable, shake right/South on second syllable]

*Adonai* - [never shake when saying God's name]

*Ho-shi-ah* [Shake back/West first syllable, shake left/North second syllable, shake up last syllable]

*Na* - shake down

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Close Window

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## The Lulav and the Etrog

While the Sukkah hut gives the Sukkot holiday its name, this festival has two other main symbols: the lulav and etrog.

A lulav is a slender palm branch that is held together with two willow branches and three willow branches. An etrog is a citron that looks mostly like a misshapen lemon but smells like heaven. The branches and fruit are waved each day Sukkot, except on Shabbat, in a specific manner for a variety of reasons.

### **From the Torah**

The mitzvah to take a lulav and etrog together on Sukkot comes from the Torah. "On the first day you shall take the product of the beautiful (hadar) tree, branches of palm trees, thick branches of leafy trees, and willows of the brook and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days" (Leviticus 23:40).

Other translations name the thick branches of leafy trees as "braided branches." Myrtles are known as braided branches because their branches are thick with leaves that grow in sets of three. Each set overlaps the one above it, creating the appearance of a braid.

When the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the Jewish people used lulav and etrog on the first day. Only the Kohanim who served in the Temple used the lulav and etrog for the rest of the holiday. Once the Temple was destroyed, the rabbis decreed that all Jews should wave the lulav and etrog all seven days as a remembrance of Temple days.

### **A Deeper Look at the Lulav**

Ismar Schorsch, chancellor of the Conservative Movement's Jewish Theological Seminary of America, notes that just as the plants of the lulav cannot grow without water, neither can we survive without God's blessing. Much like the symbolism of dwelling in a sukkah that is open to the elements, this understanding of the lulav reinforces the message of Sukkot that God provides our security and prosperity.

Earlier authorities examine the form of the lulav and etrog for clues about their meaning. A midrash in Vayikrah Rabba 30:12 explains the items as symbols of the importance of unity among different types of Jews. The etrog, a fruit, has both a flavor and a scent, like a Jew who is both learned and observant of the commandments. The lulav is from a date palm, and so it has a taste but no scent. It is likened to a Jew who is learned but does not apply that knowledge in action. A myrtle has a pleasant odor but there is nothing tasty about it, and it parallels the Jew who has little book learning behind his or her observance. Finally the willow lacks both fragrance and food value, just like the Jew who neither studies the Torah nor keeps the commandments. The differences between Jews may be substantial, but, like the lulav and etrog which must be held together for the waving ritual, only when Jews come together do they merit a blessing.

Later in the same Midrash (ibid. 30:14) the rabbis use a quote from Psalms to riff on the lulav and etrog. "All my bones shall proclaim, 'God, who can be likened to You!'" The metaphor is applied in this way: the long straight lulav is likened to the spine. The tiny myrtle leaves become eyes, and the elongated willow leaves morph into lips. Bulbous and firm, the etrog is equated with the heart. As in the first example, holding all parts of the lulav and etrog together for the blessing informs the meaning of the metaphor. The secret ingredient to achieving the true happiness

promised by Sukkot is to feel unity within, to be true to oneself and not say one thing and feel another.

## Lulav and Etrog Rituals

There are many different traditional ways to wave the lulav and etrog. Especially on the first day this ritual is performed Halacha emphasizes that each person should own the lulav and etrog he or she is waving. If actually having one's own set is impossible, "purchase" the lulav and etrog by giving the true owner something of value. After the waving the new owner may sell the lulav and etrog back.

### Custom One:

- Face east.
- Take the lulav in the right hand and the etrog in the left.

Ashkenazic lefties take note, there is a custom for southpaws to hold the lulav in the left hand and etrog in the right. Sephardic Jews do not make this change.

Hold the etrog stem side down. Be sure to have the spine of the lulav facing the person holding it. The myrtle (the one with smallish leaves) should be on the right and the willow should be on the left.

- Say the blessing: "*Baruch ata Adonoy, Elo-heinu Melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu bi'mitzvosav, v'itzivanu al ni-tilat lulav.*"

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who sanctified us with His mitzvot, and instructed us to raise up the Lulav.

- The first time you wave the lulav and etrog follow with the Shehechyanu.

*Baruch ata Adonoy, Elo-heinu Melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu bi'mitzvosav, sheh-heh-khe-ya-nu v'ki-y'manu v'higi-anu la-z'man ha-zeh.*

Blessed are You, Lord our God, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

- Turn the etrog stem side up.
- With lulav and etrog in hand extend your arms out to the east and back toward your heart three times. Then extend your arms to the south and back to your heart three times. Follow the same motions to the west, north, up and down.

### Custom Two:

Some people accompany the waving with the words "*Hodu l'Adonai key tov, key l'olam khahs-doe.*" "Let us give thanks to the Lord for God is good, for God's kindness endures forever."

### Marching with the Lulav and Etrog

As a memorial to a ceremony once held in the Temple, the morning services of Sukkot feature a lulav and etrog procession. While special verses of praise are chanted, worshippers circle around the synagogue or around the reading table and wave the lulav and etrog.

<http://www.mazornet.com/jewishcl/Holidays/Sukkot>

**LULAV AND ETROG GROUP #2**



## Aspects of the Four Species

"Origin of (the Four) Species"

Symbolism of the Four Species

The Stolen(!) Four Species

### "Origin of (the Four) Species"

The Biblical origin is in the Book of Vayikra; specifically, in Parshat Emor, where the Torah commands "And you shall take for yourselves on the First Day the fruit of a beautiful tree, the branches of date palms, branches of the myrtle tree, and branches of the willow tree, and you shall rejoice before Hashem, your G-d, for Seven Days." (Vayikra 23:40)

### Symbolism of the Four Species

The Commandment is to take these four species **together** as a unit, and to shake them together **in all directions**, at various times on Sukkot.

One possible explanation is that we are taking these four elements from nature, and demonstrating that **Hashem rules over nature everywhere** and, by fulfilling this Command throughout the generations of our People, also **at all times**.

Two additional aspects of this "Group of Four" are as follows:

1. The "**Etrog**," the Citron, resembles in its shape, the heart, the driving force behind all our actions. The "**Lulav**," the Palm Branch, resembles the spine, which holds the body together and, without which, we would be unable to move. The "**Hadasim**," the Myrtle Branches, resemble, in their almond-shape, the eyes, with which



*Man Inspecting  
Etrog  
Photo by David Tuttle  
Cohen*

we behold G-d's World. And the "**Aravot**," the Willow Branches, resemble the lips, with which we give expression to our thoughts and feelings.

By holding these four **together**, we show that **a person should devote all of his-or- her strengths and capacities to the Service of Hashem.**

2. The "**Etrog**" has both a pleasant taste and a pleasant aroma, symbolizing one who possesses both the blessings of knowledge of Torah and of good deeds. The "**Lulav**," the branch of a tree (the date palm) the fruit of which has good taste but no aroma, symbolizes the person who has Torah knowledge but not good deeds. The "**Hadas**," the myrtle, which has pleasant aroma only, symbolizes the person who has good deeds but not Torah. And the "**Aravah**," the willow branch, which has neither pleasant taste nor pleasant aroma, symbolizes the person who has neither Torah nor good deeds.

Holding these four in a tight bond represents the **unity** that is Hashem's goal for the Jewish People. The bond represents the conversion of a set of separate individuals into a People, which is **far greater than any individual** in both the **Crown of Torah** and the **Crown of Good Deeds**, and is far more deserving than any individual of the blessings of Hashem.

### The Stolen (!) Four Species

For each of the Four Species, the Mishnah in Masechet Sukkah compares the stolen article to its dried out and lifeless form, which is absolutely invalid. This is derived from a word in the Torah, and is also very understandable. It is derived from the word "**yourselves**" in the expression "And you shall take **for yourselves** the fruit of a beautiful tree, ....," implying that **one's ownership is required.**"

But the explanation is to be found in the Talmud. The reason that the stolen "Lulav," for example, cannot be used as part of the fulfillment of a Divine Command, is that it would then be a "**Command performed By Means of a Sin**," which is self-contradictory! It is obvious that an Act would not be pleasing to Hashem, if it comes at the price of violation of one of His Own Commands.

The Seventy Oxen



Test Your Sukkot IQ

The Maccabees and their followers were so busy fighting the Syrian-Greeks that they were unable to celebrate Sukkot. This may explain why they celebrated the rededication of the Temple for eight days.

- Sukkot is closely connected to nature. In showing gratitude to God for many blessings, one also feels a sense of responsibility to guard and protect God's world. The principle of *Bal Tashchit* (do not destroy) originally referred to trees in a battle zone (Deuteronomy 20:19), but it has come to be Judaism's ecology phrase. Humanity was not given the world to misuse and destroy; rather, the world is to enjoy and to preserve for future generations.

### The Sukkah

The sixth tractate of the second division of the Mishnah is called *Sukkah*. Its very first verses contain a detailed description of the rules and regulations pertaining to the construction and use of a proper *sukkah*:

1. It must be less than 30' high.
2. The walls must be strong enough to withstand ordinary gusts of wind.
3. The shade offered by the roof covering of the *sukkah* must be sufficient to block out most of the sun's rays, while airy enough so that the stars are visible through the roof at night.
4. There must be at least three walls, made of any material.
5. The *sukkah* must be a temporary structure, so a screened in porch or a screened house cannot serve as a *sukkah*.
6. It is considered a *mitzvah* to eat one's meals in the *sukkah*.
7. One is not obliged to sleep in the *sukkah*, particularly in colder climates. One is not required to eat in the *sukkah* when it is raining.
8. The *sukkah* can be adorned or decorated with pictures, hanging gourds, fruit, tapestries, etc.
9. There is no prescribed minimum size; however, the *sukkah* must be large enough to accommodate at least one person.

Upon entering a *sukkah*, one pronounces the blessing over dwelling in a booth. Additionally, *Shehecheyanu* is said upon entering the *sukkah* for the first time. (For blessing in Hebrew and English, see Appendix, page 250.)

### Midrash of the Four Species

The four agricultural species used on Sukkot are mentioned in Leviticus 23:40: "On the first day you shall take the product of the *hadar* tree (*etrog*), branches of palm trees (*lulav*), boughs of leafy trees (*hadass* - myrtle), and willows (*aravah*) of the brook, and you shall rejoice before *Adonai* your God seven days."

A *midrash* equates taste with knowledge of Torah and aroma with being righteous. Using taste and aroma it describes four types of Jews (*Leviticus Rabbah* 30):

The *etrog* is shaped like the human heart; it has both taste and aroma and accordingly represents those Jews who have a knowledge of Torah and do good deeds.

The *lulav* is long and narrow like the human spine. Since the fruit of the palm tree, the date, has taste but no aroma, it represents Jews who know Torah, but do not practice good deeds.

The *hadass* leaf is shaped like the human eye. Since it has aroma but no taste, it symbolizes those who perform good deeds, but who do not know Torah.

The *aravah* leaf has the shape of a mouth. Since it has neither taste nor aroma, it represents those Jews who perform no good deeds and are ignorant of Torah as well.

Before a worship service on Sukkot or immediately before reciting the *Hallel*, a blessing is said over the four species by each worshiper as he/she takes them in hand. They are waved in six directions: East, West, North, South, up and down, to indicate that God is everywhere. (For blessing, see Appendix, page 250.)

The *lulav* is not used on Shabbat, because it was feared that people would carry it through the streets to the synagogue, thereby violating the prohibition against carrying on the Sabbath.

\* \* \*

## JOY IN THE SERVICE OF GOD

AARON HALEVI

Man is governed by the deeds that he does habitually, and all his thoughts and ideas are influenced by the work of his hands whether good or bad. Since God wished to bestow merit on His chosen people Israel, He gave them many *mitzvot* to perform, so that their souls would be occupied with meritorious actions all the day. One of these *mitzvot* that He commanded us which is designed to mold our thoughts is that of *tefillin*. . . .

Similarly, the *lulav* and its three accompanying species are inspired by the same concept. The days of the festival [of Sukkot] mark a time of great joy for Israel, being the season of the ingathering of the corn and the fruits of the tree. . . . God therefore ordained a festival at this time [of natural rejoicing] in order to direct their principal joy to Him. Since such rejoicing has a tendency to lead men after material desires and to divert him from spiritual thoughts at that time, the Almighty commanded us to take in our hands things that would remind us that all joy should be turned towards Him, to pay Him homage. It was His will that the objects reminding us of our spiritual obligations should also evoke joy in keeping with the joyous time. . . . and it is well known that the Four Species by their nature make the hearts of all who gaze on them to rejoice.

Moreover, these Four Species are symbolic of something else. They are likened to the principal human limbs: the *etrog* resembles the heart, the seat of the mind, alluding to the service of the Creator with the mind; the *lulav* to the backbone, intimating that the entire body should be engaged in His service, may He be blessed; the myrtle is like the eyes to warn that one should not let his eyes stray on the day of the rejoicing of his heart; and the willow resembles the lips, signifying that one should control his speech and fear God even in the time of joy.

*Sefer ha-Hinukh* 285<sup>4</sup>

# 12

## THE FOUR SPECIES

Goodman, Philip. *The Sukkot and Simhat Torah Anthology*. Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia. 1973.

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### A GOODLY TREE

ERIC AND RAEL ISAAC

Shortly before World War II, and well before the days of the Egyptian-Israeli conflict, the Egyptian ship *Zamzam* steamed into New York harbor with a worthless cargo which, a few days earlier, would have netted the Jewish booksellers of Canal Street and various other enterprising merchants a profit of thousands of dollars. The ship showed no gaping wounds, the log reported no accidents; the worst that had happened was a delay of a few days. But in this case time was money. The ship's cargo consisted of the "*Citrus Medica* var. *ethrog* Engl., a fragrant golden oval or oblong fruit somewhat larger than a lemon with a small stem at the base and a slight knobby

projection at the head." This fruit is familiar to Jews as the *etrog*, and while it is supremely valuable to them for a single week, commanding prices ranging from six dollars for a scrawny specimen to thirty for an exceptionally handsome one, and averaging eighteen dollars apiece, it is worthless for the rest of the year. Only during the Feast of Booths, Sukkot, is the use of the *etrog* obligatory for ritual celebration. Chances are that a similar shipping delay occurred at least once before in history, for "an *etrog* after Sukkot" is a Yiddish byword for something absolutely without value.

While religious Jews today will go to considerable trouble and expense to obtain an *etrog*, their anxieties and difficulties are minor compared with the anguish suffered by Jews in previous centuries—especially those communities located north of the area where the *etrog* grew—when it came time to acquire the fruit.

The danger of the long trips from Italy, Greece, or Catalonia to Frankfurt or Prague cast an aura of romance on the traders in *etrogim*. We know of one family—the Spaniers of Frankfurt—who for generations were in the business of importing *etrogim* from Spain (hence the name Spanier), and whose house, occupied by the family for one hundred and fifty years, bore the title "The Golden Apple" in honor of the trade. So important economically did trade in *etrogim* become in the Middle Ages that one of the terms of the peace treaty imposed upon the defeated Republic of Pisa in 1329 by the Guelph League of Tuscany (led by Florence) forbade her to continue her commerce in *etrogim*. Presumably Florence and her allies intended to take over the flourishing trade with Jewish merchants from Germany, Austria, and Poland as one of the spoils of victory.

To what can we trace the importance of the *etrog* in the life of the Jewish community? Leviticus 23:40 says concerning the Feast of Booths: "On the first day you shall take to yourselves the fruit of the goodly tree, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days." There is no explicit reference here to the *etrog*, only to "the fruit of a goodly tree."

The Talmud advanced various arguments to prove that the traditional identification of "the fruit of a goodly tree" as the *etrog* was based on Scripture. The biblical phrase, said the rabbis, implied that both fruit and tree had to be goodly, which meant that the taste of wood and fruit must be similar; only the *etrog* lived up to both specifications. Etymological evidence was produced by several rabbis,

one of whom postulated (mistakenly) that the word "goodly" (*hadar*, literally "splendor"), came from *dirah*, meaning "dwelling." The fact that the *etrog* is not a seasonal fruit, and that the citron tree can be said to provide a dwelling for the *etrog* all year round, was cited by the rabbi as proof that the *etrog* was virtually called by name in the commandment. Misguided etymological enthusiasm inspired another rabbi to conclude that *hadar* was really the Greek *hador* ("water"); since the citron tree is often in need of irrigation, the fruit in question must be the *etrog*. The rabbi neglected to mention that many other orchard trees are commonly irrigated. An unsophisticated attempt to cut the Gordian knot was made by yet other rabbis who asserted that the word *hadar* was the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew word *etrog*, despite the fact that *hadar* everywhere else in the Bible means "goodly" or "glory."

Another type of interpretation was advanced by the Aggadists, who claimed that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was the *etrog* tree. This was indicated by the description of the tree in Genesis 3.6, where "the woman saw that the tree was good for eating." Said Rav Abba of Acco: "What other tree is there whose wood and fruit are both edible? It can only be the *etrog*."

In approaching the problem of "the fruit of a goodly tree," one group of rabbis, which included Maimonides, boldly converted what was apparently the chief weakness of the biblical phrase into a source of strength. These rabbis claimed that there was never any doubt that the goodly tree of the Bible was the *etrog* and that the lack of specific reference only proved the absolute necessity of oral tradition, without which we could not know the true significance of the divinely ordained command. Finally, Eleazar of Worms, a rabbi with a mathematical flair, scientifically and conclusively proved that the fruit of the commandment was the *etrog* by showing that the numerical value of the Hebrew letters spelling out "fruit of a goodly tree" was the same as of those in the word *etrogin*.

While discussion of the *etrog*'s relation to the Bible's "goodly tree" died down after the Middle Ages, the matter was never totally abandoned. In fact, only recently S. Tolkowsky, a Palestinian historian of citrus culture, has advanced the thesis that Leviticus referred not to the *etrog* but to the *dar* tree, the *ha* in front of the noun being the definite article. The *dar* tree, or *Cedrus Deodara*, is a giant cedar and a holy tree of India. The fruit of a goodly tree, on this theory, was the cedar cone, which was also used in Assyrian

ritual. Tolkowsky's theory is based upon the assumption that Leviticus could not have intended the *etrog* since that tree did not grow in Palestine in biblical times. The citron, Tolkowsky holds, was introduced into Palestine in the second century B.C.E. and substituted for the cedar cone by Simon Maccabeus, in whose time a coin bearing the imprint of the fruit (the earliest evidence in Jewish records for the *etrog*) is believed to have been struck. Simon Maccabeus, according to Tolkowsky, introduced the *etrog* presumably in order to purify the Feast of Booths from the pagan implications of the cedar cone.

However, it is by no means certain that the citron was brought into the eastern Mediterranean at such a late date. Most recent findings indicate that the citron originated not in India or Southwest Asia, as was formerly thought, but in East Africa or southern Arabia, and there is ample proof of very early connections by land and sea between these areas and Mesopotamia—connections which would have permitted the introduction of the *etrog* in Palestine considerably before the fifth century B.C.E.

Internal evidence from the text of Leviticus also argues against the thesis that *hadar* means the *dar* tree. "The fruit of a goodly tree" is one of a list of items in this verse, and it is unlikely from a stylistic point of view that the definite article would be employed for only one of the objects while the others listed parallel to it are without the article. Finally, the coin bearing the imprint of the *etrog*—which Tolkowsky asserted marked the initial use of the fruit—was not struck in the time of Simon Maccabeus but two hundred years later, in the period of the first Jewish war against Rome, when, according to all available evidence, the *etrog* had already been in use for some time. . . .

By the first century C.E. the *etrog* had become so important in Jewish religious observance that it moved with the Jews outside Palestine wherever the environment permitted. In this way the tree spread through North Africa and Asia Minor, the Aegean, Greece, and Italy. To what extent the *etrog* was responsible for making Jews the expert horticulturists of Mediterranean Europe we do not know. We do know that they were noted for this art and modified the Mediterranean landscape through their practice of it.

The *etrog* played an extremely important role in the development of the entire Mediterranean citrus culture. The Jewish obsession with the *etrog* made the transition from cultivation of the *etrog* to

phrase says: "You shall take to yourselves . . . fruit of a goodly tree"; the Talmud amplified "you shall take to yourselves" to mean "you shall take purely—that is, not steal"; and Kook went further to say that this meant "you shall take from your own"—in other words from Jews and Jewish soil.

The wars of the twentieth century, natural limitations of supply, and the preferences of individual groups have prevented Palestine from being the sole source of *etrogim*. Today the citron is grown on Greek islands such as Crete, Naxos, and Corfu; in southern Italy in the regions of Cosenza, Salerno, and Potenza; and in California, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, and Israel. In the United States today we find the main importers of North African *etrogim* to be *Hasidim*. Some of the North African *etrogim* are far from living up to the early rabbinic ideal according to which both fruit and tree had to be goodly. These *etrogim* are black and shriveled. The *Hasidim* argue that the very unattractiveness of the fruit is proof of its purity: no grafted fruit could look so awful.

Although Jewish devotion to the *etrog* has not diminished over the centuries, the *etrog* itself has perhaps subtly changed in significance. No longer primarily the concrete beautiful fruit described in Leviticus and the Talmud, it has become for many an ideal, almost a schematic object. The *etrog* is often considered as a collection of attributes—i.e., it is not grafted; the fruit is flawless; the stem is intact—rather than as a single essence. It is for this reason that a dark and shriveled fruit may today be preferred over the traditionally firm and golden *etrog*.

An outsider, reading of the multiplicity of rabbinic interpretations, the endless squabbles, and the final seeming *reductio ad absurdum* of using a patently ugly object as "the fruit of the goodly tree," may well ask what the fuss is all about. Is the *etrog* just an excuse for the Jews to exercise their passion for the difficult, for the formal, and, above all, for argument? Such a view has been expressed before—in the fourth century, for example, Methodios Eubulios, a Christian bishop and subsequent martyr, wrote that it was both shameful and foolish for the Jews to make such an issue over a lemon.

But although this definition may seem adequate to other men, to the Jew the *etrog* is not merely the "*Citrus Medica* var. *etrog* Engl." To the Jew the *etrog* is a tree rooted in eternity, its creation antedating man. from whose branches sprang the fruit which, in

history as we know it. According to one midrash the *etrog* is "the heart of man"; according to a Hasidic teacher "the orb of the world." The *etrog* is a national as well as a universal symbol to the Jew. Its fragrance was in Jacob's clothes when Isaac blessed him, bestowing upon the people of Israel, through Jacob, its identity, its rule over nations, and the favor of the Lord. Again, the *etrog* is the beloved in Israel's great poem of love, the Song of Solomon. The *etrog* calls up the glory of the Second Temple when the instrument of prayer became the fierce expression of a people's longing for freedom, hurled literally in the teeth of tyrannical power. Finally, the *etrog* symbolizes the continuity of Jewish history and its common aspiration, binding together the disparate geographic units of the Diaspora over the centuries.

As symbol of world history and Jewish national persistence within it, as the finite object in the natural world revealing God's divine and infinite mystery, the *etrog* is clearly an object of the highest significance. Man must therefore strive to make the *etrog* conform as fully as possible to its divine essence by following the specifications laid down by tradition and law. The trouble is great but the reward is high. If the fruit is the true *etrog*, for seven days each year, when the Jew takes in one hand the palm branch and in the other the *etrog*, he will be united in a chain of intimate association through Jacob with his people, through Adam with the race of man, and, ultimately, through the fulfillment of a cherished commandment, with his God.<sup>1</sup>

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## THE PROCESSION OF THE PALMS

ISRAEL ABRAHAMS

Plants have a language even outside the albums of sentimental girls. Mystical fancy reads into the gift of nature a symbolism of the spirit. The palm tree—closely associated with the Feast of Tabernacles—had an emblematic virtue in ancient Hebrew poetry long before the Midrash likened the palm to the human frame and the citron to the human heart. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree," says

<sup>1</sup> The comparison alludes both to the beauty and the

use his *sukkah*] but are bound to it at night. Night travellers are free from the obligation of *sukkah* at night, but are bound to it by day. Travellers by day and night are free from the obligation both day and night. Those who are on a religious errand [though they travel in the daytime only] are free both by day and by night, as in the case of R. Hisda and Rabbah son of R. Huna who, when visiting on the Sabbath of the festival the house of the Exilarch, slept on the river bank of Sura, saying, "We are engaged on an errand and are [therefore] free [from the obligation]." (Leviticus 23:40)

Women, slaves and but a minor wife of *sukkah* Philadelphia, Pa. The Sukkot and Simhat Torah Anthology, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1913.  
 Goodman, Philip. *The Sukkot and Simhat Torah Anthology*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1913.  
 26a  
 of *sukkah*  
 bound by the law  
 Sukkah 2.8

THE FOUR SPECIES

Just as a man cannot fulfill his obligation on the Feast of Tabernacles unless all Four Species are bound together, so Israel can only be redeemed when all Israelites hold together.

*Yalkut Shimoni* 188a

Of the four kinds [of plants] used for the *lulav* . . . the [absence of] one invalidates the others for it is written, *you shall take* (Leviticus 23:40), signifying the taking of them all. . . . It was taught: Of the four kinds used for the *lulav* two are fruit-bearing [the citron and the palm branch] and two are not [the myrtle and the willow]; those which bear fruits must be joined to those which bear no fruits and those which bear no fruits must be joined to those which bear fruits. And a man does not fulfill his obligations unless they are all bound in one band. And so it is with Israel's conciliation with God, [it is achieved] only when they are all in one band.

*Menahot* 27a

*You shall take . . . branches of palm trees* (Leviticus 23:40): Like the palm tree which has a single heart that keeps reaching upwards, so Israel has a single heart reaching upwards—up to their Father in heaven.

Of the four plants that make up the *lulav* cluster, two bear fruit and two do not. Those that bear fruit must be bound closely to the ones that do not bear fruit. The former represent disciples of the wise whose prayers, in keeping with the admonition from Palestine, are meant to bear fruits of mercy for ordinary householders. . . . On the other hand, the plants that do not bear fruit must be bound close to those that bear fruit, since the former represent those persons who are meant to provide a shelter of physical comfort for the Sages and their disciples.

In another comment the verse is read *Take for your own sake . . . [a cluster including] the product of goodly trees, etc.* (Leviticus 23:40), *the product of goodly trees* [the *etrog* standing for [some men in] Israel: even as the *etrog* has aroma and has edible fruit, so Israel have in their midst men who have knowledge of Torah and also have good deeds. *Branches of palm trees* (ibid.) also stands for [some men in] Israel: as the palm tree has edible fruit but no aroma, so Israel have in their midst men who have knowledge of Torah but have not good deeds. *Boughs of leafy trees* (ibid.) also stands for [some men in] Israel: as the myrtle tree has aroma but has not edible fruit, so Israel have in their midst men who have good deeds but have not Torah. *And willows of the brook* (ibid.) also stands for [some men in] Israel: even as the willow has neither edible fruit nor aroma, so Israel have in their midst men in whom there is neither knowledge of Torah nor good deeds. The Holy One says: In order to make it impossible for Israel to be destroyed, let all of them be bound together as plants are bound into a cluster, so that the righteous among them will atone for the others. Hence Moses charged Israel: *Take for your own sake on the first day* [a cluster], etc. (Leviticus 23:40).

*Pesikta Rabbati* 51.2.6

*All my bones shall say: "Lord, who is like unto Thee"* (Psalms 35:10). This verse was said in allusion to nought else than the *lulav*. The rib of the *lulav* resembles the spine of a man; the myrtle resembles the eye; the willow resembles the mouth, and the *etrog* resembles the heart. David said: There are none among all the limbs

greater than these, for they outweigh in importance the whole body. Therefore [when the four species are held it is as David said in Psalms], *All my bones shall say*.

*Leviticus Rabbah* 30.14<sup>a</sup>

A dry *lulav* is not permissible. R. Abun in the name of R. Yudah Bar Pazzi said: Because it is written, *The dead praise not the Lord* (Psalms 115.17).

*Yerushalmi Sukkah* 53c

R. Ammi said, A withered [palm branch] is invalid because it is not *goodly* (Leviticus 23.40); a stolen one is invalid because it constitutes a precept fulfilled through a transgression.

*Sukkah* 30a

If the larger part of the *etrog* is covered with scars, or if its nipple is removed, if it is peeled, split, perforated, so that any part is missing, it is invalid. If its lesser part only is covered with scars, if its stalk is missing, or if it is perforated but naught of it is missing, it is valid. An Ethiopian [black] *etrog* is invalid. If it is green as a leek, R. Meir declares it valid and R. Judah declares it invalid.

The minimum size of an *etrog*. R. Meir says, is that of a nut. R. Judah says that of an egg. The maximum [size] is such that two can be held in one hand. These are the words of R. Judah. R. Jose said, Even one [that he can hold only] in both his hands.

*Sukkah* 3.6-7

The *lulav* [the festive wreath consisting of the palm, myrtle and willow branches] may be bound only with [strands of] its own species, so R. Judah. R. Meir says it may be bound even with a cord. R. Meir observed, It actually occurred that the men of Jerusalem used to bind their *lulavim* with strands of gold. The Rabbis answered him, but they bound it with [strands of] its own species underneath [the strands of gold, the former serving as binders and the latter as mere ornaments].

*Sukkah* 3.8

Rabbah stated, The *lulav* [must be held] in the right hand and the *etrog* in the left. What is the reason? The former constitutes three commandments [those of the palm, the myrtle and the willow which are bound together] and the latter only one [as the right hand

is regarded as the more important, and in it, therefore, one must hold the more important part of the species].

R. Jeremiah enquired of R. Zerika, Why in the blessing do we say only "to take the palm branch"?—Because it towers above the others.

*Sukkah* 37b

And where [in the course of the recital of the Hallel psalms on Sukkot] is [the *lulav*] waved? At the commencement and the conclusion of the psalm, *O give thanks unto the Lord and at Save now, we beseech Thee, O Lord*. These are the words of Bet Hillel. Bet Shammai say, Also at *O Lord we beseech Thee, send now prosperity*. R. Akiba stated, I watched R. Gamaliel and R. Joshua, and while all the people were waving their *lulavim* [at other verses], they waved them only at *Save now, we beseech Thee, O Lord*.

*Sukkah* 3.9

R. Johanan explained, [One waves them] to and fro [in honor of] Him to whom the four directions belong, and up and down [in acknowledgment of] Him to whom are heaven and earth.

*Sukkah* 37b

Formerly the *lulav* was taken for seven days in the Temple, and in the provinces for one day only. When the Temple was destroyed, R. Johanan b. Zakkai instituted that the *lulav* should be taken in the provinces for seven days in memory of the Temple.

*Sukkah* 3.12

R. Eleazar b. Zadok stated, This was the custom of the men of Jerusalem. When a man left his house he carried his *lulav* in his hand; when he went to the synagogue his *lulav* was in his hand, when he read the *Shema* and his prayers his *lulav* was still in his hand, but when he read in the Law or recited the priestly benediction he would lay it on the ground. If he went to visit the sick or to comfort mourners he could go with his *lulav* in his hand. . . . What does this teach us?—It serves to inform you how zealous they were in the performance of religious duties.

*Sukkah* 41b

A story is told that a certain man had two sons, one of whom practiced charity while the other did no charitable deed at all. The

**SUCCAH GROUP #1**

sixteenth century, there were a number of compendiums of laws that guided Jews in the Diaspora. The systematic compilation of a code of Jewish law, entitled *Shulhan Arukh* ("Prepared Table"), by Joseph Karo (1488-1575), together with the additions of Moses Isserles (c. 1515-1572), is the authoritative basis for traditional practices to this day. *Orah Hayyim* ("Way of Life"), the first part of this massive work, deals with the obligations of daily life, including the laws pertaining to the festivals. Solomon Ganzfried (c. 1800-1886) adapted the *Shulhan Arukh* for everyday usage in his *Kitzur Shulhan Arukh* ("Abridged Prepared Table").

The selections from the *Mishneh Torah* and the *Kitzur Shulhan Arukh* in this chapter point up both the variety and the complexity of the laws of Sukkot. There are detailed instructions concerning the construction and use of the *sukkah*, and the selection and usage of the Four Species. The selected examples of the Sukkot laws that follow should be read for edification; they are not necessarily intended as rules for practical guidance.

## ❖ 5 ❖

# SUKKOT AND SIMHAT TORAH IN JEWISH LAW

Goodman, Philip. *The Sukkot and Simhat Torah Anthology*. Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia. 1973.

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The continuous development of Jewish law based on the Torah, the Talmud, and the later writings of Jewish sages created a large and diffuse corpus of literature by the twelfth century, when it was codified by Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), renowned philosopher and legalist, in his *Mishneh Torah* ("Second Torah"). This monumental work presented Jewish laws, collected from numerous sources, in an organized and logical sequence, thus facilitating their observance. The *Mishneh Torah*, although not completely acceptable to all rabbis, had to be taken into consideration in practically every discussion of Jewish law.

Halakhic literature continued to grow at a rapid pace. By the

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## LAWS CONCERNING THE BOOTH

MOSES MAIMONIDES

The standard dimensions of a booth for the Feast of Tabernacles are as follows: its height must be not less than ten handbreadths\* nor more than twenty cubits,† and its area must be not less than seven handbreadths square. One may, however, add to this minimum area. . . .

If a booth has many doors and windows in its walls, it is nevertheless valid—provided that none of the doorways is more than ten cubits wide—even if the total of open space exceeds the total of boarded space. If, however, one of the openings, be it even an opening with "the shape of a doorway," is more than ten cubits wide, the total of open space may not exceed the total of boarded space.

If the inside height is more than twenty cubits, but the palm leaves

\* handbreadth = the width of four fingers joined, about 2½ to 4 inches.

† cubit = the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, approximately 18 inches.

in the covering hang down to within twenty cubits of the floor and the shade cast by them exceeds the sunlight which they let through, they are regarded as part of a thick roof, and the booth is valid.

Anything whatsoever is fit to serve as the wall of a booth, for all that is required is a partition of some kind. . . .

If a booth is covered with something which did not grow from the soil, or has not been detached from the soil, or is susceptible to ritual impurity, the booth is invalid. If, however, the covering, though still in violation of the law, consists of something that merely withers or sheds its leaves, or has an evil odor, the booth is valid, for the sages forbade the use of this kind of covering only as a safeguard, lest a person should be tempted to leave the booth and go elsewhere. One should also take care that the twigs and leaves in the covering do not hang down to within ten handbreadths of the ground, as this would make the booth uncomfortable to sit in.

If the booth is covered with green vegetables which shrivel up as they wither and are reduced to almost nothing, the space they occupy is regarded as empty air space and they themselves as nonexistent, even though at the moment they are still fresh.

Planks less than four handbreadths wide may be used to cover a booth, even if they have been planed smooth. If they are four or more handbreadths wide, they may not be used, even if they have not been planed smooth—this being a precaution, lest one should sit under an ordinary house ceiling and imagine that he is sitting in a booth.

Any kind of booth made in conformity with the law, even if not made specifically for the purpose of fulfilling the commandment, is valid, as long as it was made to provide shade.

If a garment is spread over the booth covering—or underneath it, for protection against falling leaves—the booth becomes invalid. If the garment is spread to beautify the booth, the booth remains valid. Similarly, if a booth has a valid covering, and this is subsequently decorated with various kinds of fruits, delicacies, and utensils in order to beautify it, the booth remains valid, whether these decorations are suspended from the covering itself or from the walls.

How is the commandment to dwell in a booth to be observed? One should eat, drink, and reside in the booth day and night throughout the whole of the seven days of the festival, exactly as one resides in his house during the rest of the year. During these seven days one should regard his house as a temporary home and the booth as his

permanent home, in accordance with the verse "You shall live in booths seven days" (Leviticus 23:42). Thus one's finest utensils and bedspreads should be kept in the booth, as well as one's festive drinking vessels, like goblets and cups. Eating vessels, like pots and dishes, however, should be kept outside the booth. One's candelabrum should normally be kept in the booth, but if the booth is small, it may be left outside.

Both by day and by night, one should eat, drink, and sleep in the booth throughout the whole of the seven days. No meal may be eaten outside the booth on any of the seven days, unless it is merely a casual snack—an egg's bulk, or a little less, or a little more—and not even a casual nap may be taken outside the booth. It is permissible, however, to drink water or eat fruit outside the booth, but one who is strict with himself and does not drink even water outside the booth is to be commended.

It is obligatory to eat in the booth on the first night of the festival. Even if one eats as little as an olive's bulk of bread, he has fulfilled his duty. Therefore the matter is optional: if one wishes to eat a regular meal, he must eat it in the booth, but if he prefers to eat only fruit or parched ears outside the booth during the remainder of the seven days, he may do so. This is thus analogous to the law concerning the eating of unleavened bread during Passover.

Throughout the seven days, one should do his reading inside the booth, but if he wishes to cogitate and examine the implications of what he has read, he should do it outside the booth, in order that his mind should be more at ease. Prayers may be recited both in the booth and outside. . . .

Whenever one enters a booth during the seven days in order to sit in it, he should recite the following benediction before sitting down: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with Thy commandments and commanded us to dwell in a booth." On the first night of the festival, one should recite first the benediction for the booth and then the seasonal benediction. All the benedictions should be recited over a cup of wine. Hence first the sanctification benediction is recited standing, then the benediction ending with "to dwell in a booth," whereupon one sits down, and then the seasonal benediction. This procedure, with the sanctification benediction recited standing as just explained, was the one customarily observed on the first night of the Feast of Tabernacles by my teachers and the other rabbis of Spain.

they avow penitence, men, women, and children. Indeed they avow complete penitence, for they put on white garments though they are bare of foot like the dead. They say, "The universe, we are two things at once: in like the angels who are eternal, but in like the Holy One who sees Israel." He forgives all sins and avenges you of all your sins (Leviticus 23:34). [implying therefore] a made atonement for the sins of the Holy One has off their debt, what do they do on the Day of Atonement and the booths and fetch myrtle and willows and palm fronds and sing praises to the Holy One. The Lord says: Let bygones be bygones. From this moment on, let bygones be bygones. From this day in, let bygones be bygones. Today is to be the first day of reckoning of iniquities. As Scripture says, *On the first day* (Leviticus 23:40).

When the Holy One sees Israel, He forgives all sins and avenges you of all your sins (Leviticus 23:34). [implying therefore] a made atonement for the sins of the Holy One has off their debt, what do they do on the Day of Atonement and the booths and fetch myrtle and willows and palm fronds and sing praises to the Holy One. The Lord says: Let bygones be bygones. From this moment on, let bygones be bygones. From this day in, let bygones be bygones. Today is to be the first day of reckoning of iniquities. As Scripture says, *On the first day* (Leviticus 23:40).

*Pesikta Rabbati* 51.8<sup>1</sup>

## BOOTHS TO THE LORD

I [the Lord] have an easy commandment which is called *sukkah*; go and carry it out.

*Avodah Zarah* 3a<sup>2</sup>

*This is my God and I will glorify Him* (Exodus 15:2). R. Ishmael says: And is it possible for a man of flesh and blood to add glory to his Creator? It simply means: I shall be beautiful before Him in observing the commandments. I shall prepare before Him a beautiful lulav, a beautiful *sukkah*, beautiful fringes and beautiful phylacteries.

*Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, Shirata* 3<sup>3</sup>

He who makes a *sukkah* for himself recites: "Blessed art Thou O Lord, our God, King of the universe, who has kept us in life and

has preserved us and has enabled us to reach this season." When he enters to sit therein he recites: "Blessed . . . who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us to dwell in a *sukkah*."

*Pesahim* 7b

What is Bet Shammai's reason [for declaring an old *sukkah* invalid]?—Scripture says, *there shall be the Feast of Booths to the Lord, [to last] seven days* (Leviticus 23:34), [implying therefore] a *sukkah* made expressly for the sake of the Festival. And Bet Hillel [who pronounced an old *sukkah* valid]?—They need that [verse] for the same deduction as that of R. Sheshet, R. Sheshet having said in the name of R. Akiba, Whence do we know that the wood of the *sukkah* is forbidden [to be used for secular purposes] all the seven [days of the festival]? From Scripture which states, *The Feast of Booths to the Lord, [to last] seven days*, and it was taught, R. Judah b. Bathya says: Just as the Name of Heaven rests upon the festival offering, so does it rest upon the *sukkah*, since it is said, *the Feast of Booths to the Lord, [to last] seven days*: just as the Festival [offering] is to the Lord, so is the *sukkah* also to the Lord. And Bet Shammai also, do not they need the verse for this deduction?—Yes, indeed. What then is Bet Shammai's reason?—There is another Scriptural verse: *You shall make the Feast of Booths for seven days* (Deuteronomy 16:13). This implies a *sukkah* made expressly for the sake of the festival. And Bet Hillel?—They need this [verse for the deduction] that a *sukkah* may be made in the intermediate days of the festival [if one did not make it prior to the festival]. And Bet Shammai?—They hold the same opinion as R. Eliezer, who laid down that no *sukkah* may be made in the intermediate days of the Festival.

*Sukkah* 9a

*The Israelites journeyed from Raamses to Succoth* (Exodus 12:37), to the place where they actually put up booths, as it is said: *But Jacob journeyed on to Succoth, and built a house for himself and made booths for his cattle* (Genesis 33:17)—these are the words of R. Eliezer. But the other sages say: Succoth is merely the name of a place, for it is said: *They set out from Succoth and encamped at Etham* (Numbers 33:6). Just as Etham is the name of a place, so also is Succoth. R. Akiba says: Succoth here means only clouds of glory, as it is said: *And the Lord will create over the whole habitation*

of Mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory shall be a canopy. And there shall be a pavilion for a shadow in the daytime (Isaiah 4:5-6).

Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, Pisha 14<sup>a</sup>

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## THE SUKKAH CONSTRUCTION

A *sukkah* that is more than twenty cubits high is not valid; R. Judah, however, declares it valid. One that is not ten handbreadths high, or that has not three walls, or that has more sun than shade, is not valid.

If one made his *sukkah* under a tree, it is as if he made it within the house [as though there are two roofs, and it is, therefore, invalid]. If one *sukkah* is erected above another, the upper one is valid but the lower is invalid. R. Judah said, If there are no occupants in the upper one, the lower one is valid.

*Sukkah* 1.1-2

If one erects his *sukkah* on the top of a wagon [though it is on the move] or on the deck of a ship [where it is exposed to gales], it is valid and they may go up into it on the festival. If he made it on the top of a tree, or on the back of a camel, it is valid, but they may not go up into it on the festival. . . . This is the general rule: whatever can stand by itself if the tree were taken away is valid, and they may go up into it on the festival.

*Sukkah* 2.3

He who erects his *sukkah* on the deck of a ship, R. Gamaliel declares it invalid and R. Akiba valid. It happened with R. Gamaliel and R. Akiba when they were journeying on a ship [in the week of the festival] that R. Akiba arose and erected a *sukkah* on the deck of the ship. On the morning the wind blew and tore it away. R. Gamaliel said to him, Akiba, where is thy *sukkah*? Abaye said, All are in accord that where it [a *sukkah*] is unable

to withstand a normal land breeze it is nothing; if it can withstand an unusually [strong] land breeze, all are in accord that it is valid. Where do they dispute? Where it can withstand a normal land breeze, but not a normal sea breeze; R. Gamaliel is of the opinion that the *sukkah* must be a permanent abode, and since it cannot withstand a normal sea breeze, it is nothing, while R. Akiba is of the opinion that the *sukkah* must be a temporary abode, and since it can withstand a normal land breeze, it is valid.

*Sukkah* 23a

R. Judah, holding in accordance with his own principle, that the *sukkah* must have the character of a permanent residence, considers [the *sukkah*] is liable to a *mezuzah*, while the Rabbis, following their own principle, hold that the *sukkah* must have the character of an incidental residence, and hence requires no *mezuzah*.

Yoma 10b

If one covered it [the *sukkah*] according to law and decorated it with hand-made carpets and tapestries, and hung therein nuts, almonds, peaches, pomegranates and bunches of grapes, vines, [decanters of] oils and fine meal, and wreaths of ears of corn, it is forbidden to make use of them [to eat, for instance, any of the fruits] until the termination of the last day of the festival.

Betzah 30b

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## DWELLING IN BOOTHS

R. Eliezer said, A man is obliged to eat fourteen meals in the *sukkah* [during the seven days of the festival]. One on each day and one on each night. The sages however say, there is no fixed number except on the first night of the festival alone [when one must eat a meal in the *sukkah*]. R. Eliezer said in addition, If a man did not eat in the *sukkah* on the first night of the festival, he may make up for it on the last night of the festival.

*Sukkah* 2.6

What is the reason of R. Eliezer?—*You shall live in booths* (Leviticus 23.42) implies just as you normally dwell. As in a [normal] abode [a man has] one [meal] by day and one by night, so in the *sukkah* [he must have] one meal by day and one by night. And the Rabbis?—[They say that the implication is] like an abode. Just as in an abode a man eats if he desires and if he does not so desire he does not eat, so also with the *sukkah*; if he desires he eats, and if he does not so desire he does not eat.

*Sukkah* 27a

Our Rabbis taught, If he was eating in the *sukkah*, and rain fell, and he left [the *sukkah* in order to finish his meal in the house], he need not trouble to return there until he has finished his meal. If he was sleeping in the *sukkah* and rain fell and he left, he need not trouble to return until it is dawn.

*Sukkah* 29a

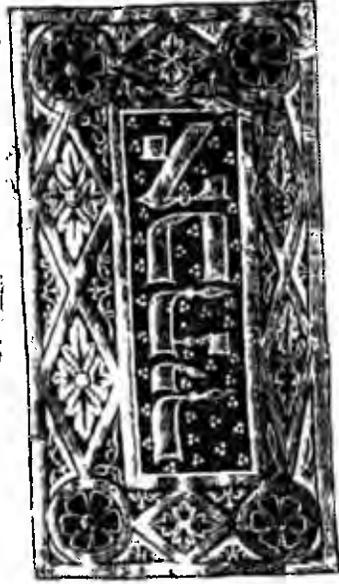
R. Eliezer said, Just as a man cannot fulfill his obligation on the first day of the festival with the palm branch of his fellow since it is written, *On the first day you shall take the product of goodly trees, branches of palm trees* (Leviticus 23.40), i.e., from your own, so a man cannot fulfill his obligation with a *sukkah* of his fellow, since it is written, *you shall hold the Feast of Booths for seven days* (Deuteronomy 16.13), i.e., of your own. The sages, however, say, Although the Rabbis said that a man cannot fulfill his obligation on the first day of the festival with the palm branch of his fellow, he may nevertheless fulfill his obligation with the *sukkah* of his fellow, since it is written, *all citizens in Israel shall live in booths* (Leviticus 23.42) which teaches that all Israel are able to sit in one *sukkah*.

*Sukkah* 27b

Raba said, He who is in discomfort is exempt from the obligation of *sukkah*. But have we not learnt: *Invalids and their attendants are free from the obligation of sukka*, [from which it follows] only an invalid but not one who is merely in discomfort?—I will explain: An invalid is free together with his attendants, whereas he who is in discomfort is himself free, but not his attendants. . . .

Our Rabbis taught, Day travellers are free from the obligation of *sukkah* by day [since one is to live in the *sukkah* as in a house. As a day traveller does not use his house during the day so he need not

בית המדרש של סוכה



## זהו המדרש לסוכה עלילת

בבית של סוכה רבב מלכה מה רבב מלכה  
לכבוד הכבוד מה רבב מלכה רבב מלכה  
אמר

הלכה כרובב מלכה רבב מלכה

הרש בבית של סוכה רבב מלכה רבב מלכה  
הלכה כרובב מלכה רבב מלכה רבב מלכה  
כבוד רבב מלכה רבב מלכה רבב מלכה

זהו סוכה רבב מלכה רבב מלכה רבב מלכה  
הלכה כרובב מלכה רבב מלכה רבב מלכה  
כבוד רבב מלכה רבב מלכה רבב מלכה



3. Mahzor. Southern Germany. Circa 1320. See Chapter 9.

dripping. If rain fell, when may he clear out?—When a dish would be spoiled. They made a comparison. To what can the matter be compared?—To a slave who came to fill the cup for his master and he poured the jug over his face.

1 Of matzah. 2 The matzah. 3 Of porridge. 4 By the dripping rain, also if one feels uncomfortable for any reason such as extreme cold, stench, or flies. 5 Or they propounded a parable. 6 Literally mix. 7 The master. 8 Or pitcher, ladle. 9 The slave's face. In Mishnah 11 it is stated that rain during Succoth is a symbol of God's wrath, and thus Israel wishes to serve Him by observing the law of the matzah but He rejects them and shows his displeasure.

CHAPTER 3

פרק ג

קטנה א

Mishnah 1

A palm-branch that has been obtained through robbery or that is dry is invalid; one from a grove or from a condemned city is invalid; if its tip be broken off or if its leaves were split, it is invalid; if its leaves were separated, it is valid. R. Judah says, One should tie it up at the top end. The stone-palm of the Iron Mount are valid. A palm-branch that is three hand-breadths long, sufficiently long to shake it, is valid.

ולקבל תבולה ותעבט פסול; של יאשינה; של עיר תבולה פסול; נקטם יראשו ונפרצו עליו פסול; נקדו עליו פסול. רבי יהודה אומר, יאשינה, תבולה, יאשינה יורה הפירות פסולות. לקבל שלש בו יורה הפירות פסולות. לקטנה בו שלש. \* Or יאשינה.

1 The לולב, used in the ritual. (It is composed of ערבה קטנה, four kinds of plants: (1) לולב, a branch of the palm-tree, (2) תבולה (three) myrtle branches, and (3) יאשינה (two) willow twigs (these three are tied together with a strip or strips of palm-leaf), and, separately, (4) תרומה, the citron. In accordance with a Mishnaic interpretation these species represent four different types, the תבולה beautiful in form but lacking fragrance, the ערבה inferior in form but with pleasant fragrance, the יאשינה plain in form and possessing no agreeable fragrance, and the תרומה which possesses both beautiful form and delightful odour, as a lesson to be grateful to the Almighty for His plentiful and varied bounties. 2 i.e., withered over the greater part of its leaves. 3

Hillel once visited R. Jochanan ben Hahoroni and they found him sitting with his head and the greater part of his body inside the Succah and his table within the house?—And they said naught to him. The School of Shammai replied to them, 'Is there evidence from that? But they even said to him, 'If thou hast never in thy life fulfilled the obligation of Succah?'

1 Because in those days it was customary to sit on couches leaning to the left at meals, hence this injunction. 2 Their view is accepted. 3 Their opinion is rejected. 4 Some texts have חזקתן חזקה, Jochanan Hahoroni. 5 Or proof. 7 Even though נאמרה לו (or נאמרה לו), as enjoined by the Law, it is permitted. 8 Because it is forbidden קודם שיתקן, as instituted by the Law, Sages.

Mishnah 8

Women, (and) slaves and minors are exempt from the Succah, but a minor who no longer needs his mother is bound to observe the Succah. It once happened that the daughter-in-law of Shammai the Elder gave birth and he broke away some of the ceiling-plaster and covered it with Succah-roofing over the bed for the sake of the child.

קטנה ה  
נשים תבנות וקטנים פסולין קטן  
אשה תבולה וקטנה פסולה  
תבולה; קטן שאינו צריך לראותו  
תבולה; קטנה פסולה. תבולה  
תבולה פסולה. תבולה פסולה  
תבולה פסולה. תבולה פסולה  
תבולה פסולה. תבולה פסולה  
תבולה פסולה. תבולה פסולה

1 i.e., from the law of the Succah. 2 Above five or six years of age. 3 One who does not persist in waking and calling for his mother. 4 i.e., to observe the law of the Succah. This is an accepted ruling. 5 During Succoth, 6 Or roof-plaster. 7 i.e., קטן. 8 But his example has not been accepted as a ruling.

Mishnah 9

Throughout the seven days a man must make his Succah his principal abode and his house a temporary

קטנה ט  
כל-שבועתו תבנה אדם עולמו  
כף-שבועתו תבנה עולמו. יבנה  
סוכתו קבוע ובייתו עולמו.

1 To be attached to the לילך *Lesiticus 23, 40*. 2 Or *withered*. 3 See *Mishnah 1* of this *Chapter*, *Notes 3, 4*. 4 Or *broken away*. But the ruling is that if this is broken off it is valid. 5 Or *split*. 6 It grows in wastelands and has round leaves. 7 But not most of the leaves. 8 Not irrigated. Actually if obtainable it should be of קרבי גזל, the species that grows by the water-side.

Mishnah 4

R. Ishmael says, Three myrtle-branches, and) two willow-branches, one palm-branch and one citron—even if two be broken off and one be not broken away. R. Tarfon says, Even if the three of them be severed. R. Akiba says, Just as one palm-branch and one citron, even so one myrtle-branch and one willow-branch.

1 That the four species here mentioned are required to make the ritual לילך. 2 i.e., even if two of the myrtle-branches have their tips severed. 3 The לילך is still valid. 4 His view is accepted. 5 The לילך is valid. 6 Are required. 7 Or קודם. 8 Are all that is needed. One may fulfil his obligation with such a לילך in an emergency.

Mishnah 5

A citron that has been obtained through robbery or which is dried up is invalid; if from a grove or from a condemned city, it is invalid; if it were of *Oriah*, fruit it is invalid; if it were of *priest's-due*, it is invalid; if it were of clean *priest's-due*, one should not take it, but if one did take it, it is valid; if it came from *doubtfully tithed fruit*, the School of Shammai declare it invalid but the School of Hillel declare it valid; if it came from *second-tithe fruit* in Jerusalem, one should not take it, but if one took it, it is valid.

Devoted to idolatry. *Deuteronomy 12, 3*. 4 i.e., an apostate city (given up to idolatry), those responsible were executed by stoning, those condoning were executed by the sword, and the town itself with everything in it was destroyed by fire. 5 The top leaves. 6 Or *broken away, severed*, and hang down. 7 i.e., spread apart. 8 His opinion is rejected. 9 Or *thorn-palms*. 10 A hill near Jerusalem. Some of the branches of the palms growing there were too short for valid לילכים. 11 לילכה = 3.65 inches or 9.34 cms. (לילכה = קטף). The קטף and ענבה should be twelve אצבעות (or לילך) and the middle leaf of the לילכה sixteen אצבעות (i.e., three טפחים as stated and one extra טפח for holding it). See *רמב"ם*, Page 18f.

Mishnah 2

A myrtle-branch obtained through robbery or which is dry is invalid; if from a grove or from a condemned city, it is invalid; if its tip be broken away or if its leaves were split or if its berries were more numerous than its leaves, it is invalid, but if one reduced their number, it is valid; but the number must not be decreased on a Festival.

1 With three leaves on top. *Lesiticus 23, 40*. It forms part of the לילך. 2 i.e., withered entirely. 3 See the preceding *Mishnah*, *Notes 3, 4*. The ruling is the reverse, viz., it is valid if the tip is severed. 4 Or *severed, broken off*. 5 Or *severed*, was less than that of the berries were pinched off until their number black, but if they are green it is valid. 6 i.e., some of the berries are red or Holyday-day.

Mishnah 3

A willow-branch obtained through robbery or that is dry is invalid; one from a grove or (if) from a condemned city is invalid; if its tip be severed or its leaves were broken off or if it be a mountain-willow, it is valid; if it be shrivelled or if some of its leaves had fallen off or if it grew in a field, it is valid.

מלכה ב  
 יקדם הנזיל ויקבש פסול; של  
 יאשרה ושל יעיר הנדחת פסול;  
 יקבש ראשו ויפרצו עליו או שקרו  
 ענביו קרובות מעליו פסול, האם  
 יקטעו קשר; האין מקטעוין ביום  
 טוב.

מלכה 1  
 יערבה ונזלה ויקבשה פסולה; של  
 יאשרה ושל יעיר הנדחת פסולה;  
 יקבשם ראשו ויפרצו עליהם  
 ויקטעו פסולה פסולה; במדקה ושקרו  
 יקטעו עליהם ושל יקבש קשרה.

Jerusalem) Talmud. 6 His opinion is not accepted. 7 His ruling is accepted. 8 i.e., even one which can be held only.....

Mishnah 8

The Lulav must not be tied up with aught except of its own species; this is the view of R. Judah; but R. Meir says, Even with a cord. R. Meir said, It is a fact that the men of Jerusalem used to bind up their Lulavim with threads of gold. They answered him, With strands of its own species did they bind it up below.

1 The whole Lulav, i.e., not only the palm-branch but also the willow branch and myrtle branch. 2 His opinion is rejected. 3 His view is accepted. 4 The Mishnah says. 5 But the top end did not need binding up so that the golden threads might be used.

Mishnah 9

And where do they wave?—At the beginning and end of Gize Hanuk into the Eternal and at We beseech Thee, O Eternal, save us we pray; this is the view of the School of Hillel. The School of Shammai says, Also at We beseech Thee, O Eternal, send us prosperity, we pray. R. Akiba said, I was observing Rabban Gamaliel and R. Joshua, and all the people were waving their Lulavim but they themselves did not wave them except at We beseech Thee, O Eternal, save us, we pray. If one were on a journey and did not have a Lulav ready to hand when he returns home he must take it up even at his table. If one had not taken it up in the morning, he should take it up in the evening, for the whole day is valid for the Lulav.

1 Or withered. 2 See Mishnah I of this Chapter, Notes 3, 4. 3 See Appendix, Note 10. 4 See Appendix, Note 1. 5 Or carry, i.e., use it for ritual purpose. 6 This view is rejected. 7 Their opinion is accepted. 8 i.e., even in Jerusalem.

Mishnah 6

If the greater part of it be covered with lichen, or if its nipple, or if removed, or if it were peddled, or if it were cracked, or if it were holed and lacked ever so little, it is invalid. If the smaller part of it were covered with lichen, or if its stalk were removed, or if it were holed yet lacked nothing whatever, it is valid. An Ethiopian citron is invalid; but one green like a leaf—R. Meir declares it valid, but R. Judah declares it invalid.

1 i.e., the citron. 2 i.e., lichen, scabs or scars, like thin blisters. 3 The pedicel-like protuberance on the blossom end of the citron. 4 Or split. 5 Or pierced right through. If the hole is not wide nor right through it is valid. 6 Or in the Jerusalem (or Palestinian) Talmud. 7 But in this case however little the lichen is covered with the remains of the stalk. 8 But the hollow in the citron must be filled with the remains of the stalk. 9 Or a citron resembling an Ethiopian, or a dark-coloured citron. 10 His opinion is rejected. 11 His view is accepted. But if from any cause it changes to the appearance of an ordinary citron it is valid.

Mishnah 7

The smallest size for a citron.—R. Meir says, Like that of a nut; R. Judah says, Like that of an egg. And the largest size—such as one can hold two in one hand; this is the opinion of R. Judah; but R. Jose says, Even one in one's two hands.

1 To be valid. 2 His view is rejected. 3 His opinion is accepted. 4 Or carry, i.e., use of them, in the Jerusalem (or Palestinian) (or



all other days of the Festival. The Succah—seven days. How so?—When one has finished eating<sup>1</sup> he must not pull down his Succah, but he may bring down the utensils<sup>2</sup> from the afternoon and later out of respect<sup>3</sup> for the last Holyday\* of the Festival of Tabernacles.

1 See Mishnah 1 of this Chapter. 2 i.e., How were they fulfilled? Leviticus 23, 36. 4 See this Chapter, Mishnah 1. 5 The last meal, in the morning of the seventh day of Pesach. 6 i.e., remove. 7 And other objects in the Succah. 8 To honour the Festival by not being in such haste to clear up from the Succah. Nowadays as we observe Pesach for eight days the clearing up may be done on the eighth day after the meal. \* Compare 2<sup>a</sup>, 3<sup>a</sup>, 4<sup>a</sup>, 5<sup>a</sup>.

Mishnah 9

The water-libation.<sup>1</sup> How so?—A golden flagon<sup>2</sup> holding three log<sup>3</sup> was filled from the pool of Shiloah.<sup>4</sup> When they arrived at the Water Gate<sup>5</sup> they sounded<sup>6</sup> a prolonged blast, (and) a quavering note, and a prolonged blast. He<sup>7</sup> went up the ramp<sup>8</sup> and turned to his left<sup>9</sup> where there were two silver bowls.<sup>10</sup> R. Judah says, They<sup>11</sup> were of plaster, but their surfaces were blackened because of the wine. And they each had a hole like a narrow spout, one wide<sup>12</sup> and the other narrow,<sup>13</sup> so that both were emptied out together,<sup>14</sup> the one to the west was for water and that to the east for wine. If one emptied out<sup>15</sup> that for water into the one for wine or that for wine into the one for water, it was valid.<sup>16</sup> R. Judah says, With one log they could carry out the libations all the eight days. To him who performed the libation they used to say, 'Raise thy hand!'<sup>17</sup> for on one occasion he<sup>18</sup> poured it over his feet and all the people pelted him with their citrons.<sup>19</sup>

their parting words were..... 23 Have we given homage understood as conclusion to these phrases, i.e., We give thanks to the Eternal and we give praise to thee that thou art so loved by Him that thou art able to atone for us.

Mishnah 6

Just as the rite was carried out on a week-day so was the rite fulfilled on a Sabbath,\* except that they used to gather them<sup>1</sup> on the eve of the Sabbath and placed<sup>2</sup> them in golden vessels<sup>3</sup> that they might not wither. R. Jochanan<sup>4</sup>, ben Baroka says, They used to bring palm twigs and beat them on the ground at the sides<sup>5</sup> of the Altar, and that day was called The day of beating the palm twigs.<sup>6</sup>

1 The rambot, willow-branches. 2 Or תפוחים. 3 Or tanks, caubs, tubs, filled with water. 4 His opinion is rejected! 5 Or according to some לך עליו on top. 6 Or תפוחים דרים (or hardened or inflexible) tuft (or twig) of a palm. \* Or יצאנו, on the Sabbath.

Mishnah 7

Forthwith<sup>1</sup> the children threw<sup>2</sup> away their Lulavim and ate<sup>3</sup> their citrons.<sup>4</sup>

1 On the seventh day when the congregation left the Temple. 2 Literally threw. 3 Literally eat. 4 Some render this Mishnah thus: They straightway took away the Lulavim from the children and ate their citrons. Here there was no question of an act of 'robbery' because it was carried out in the customary spirit of festivity.

Mishnah 8

The Hallel and the Rejoicing—eight days.<sup>1</sup> How so?<sup>2</sup>—This is to teach us that a man is in duty bound to recite the Hallel and to observe the Rejoicing and the honours due to the last Holy-day\* of the Festival of Tabernacles<sup>3</sup> as on

**SUCCAH GROUP #2**

In what manner is the reading done? They blow the trump throughout Jerusalem and erect a large, wooden platform in the center of the Women's Court. The king seats himself upon it so that his reading could be heard, and all Israelites who have made the pilgrimage for the festival gather about him. The minister of the synagogue takes a Scroll of the Torah and gives it to the chief of the synagogue, and the chief of the synagogue gives it to the prefect, and the prefect gives it to the high priest, and the high priest gives it to the king. This procedure is followed in order to honor the Torah in the presence of the multitude of people. The king receives the Scroll while standing, and, if he wishes, seats himself, and opens the Scroll and pronounces the benediction customarily recited by all who read from the Torah in the synagogue. He then reads the chapters indicated above and pronounces the closing benediction as it is customarily recited in the synagogue. Following that he adds seven benedictions. . . .

This commandment is to be observed at the time that Israel is upon its land.

*Sefer ha-Hinukh 612<sup>b</sup>*

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## THE LESSON OF THE SUKKAH

ISAAC ABOAB

The commandment to dwell in the *sukkah* is intended to teach us that a man must not put his trust in the size or strength or salutary conveniences of his house, even though it be filled with the best of everything; nor should he rely upon the help of any man, even though he be the lord of the land. But let him put his trust in Him whose word called the universe into being, for He alone is mighty and faithful, and He does not retract what He promises.

*Menorat ha-Maor 3.6.1*

Goodman, Philip. *The Sukkot and Simhat Torah Anthology*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1973.

\* \* \*

## BOOTHS TEACH HUMILITY

SAMUEL BEN MEIR

Do not say in your heart, "My own power and the might of my own hand have won this wealth for me" (Deuteronomy 8.17); you should remember the Lord your God, as it is He who gives you strength to make progress. Therefore, the people leave [their] houses, which are full of everything good at the season of the ingathering, and dwell in booths, as a reminder of those who had no possessions in the wilderness and no houses in which to live. For this reason, the Holy One established the Feast of Tabernacles at the time of the ingathering from the threshing floor and the wine press, that the people should not be proud of their well-furnished houses.

Rashbam, *Leviticus* 23.43

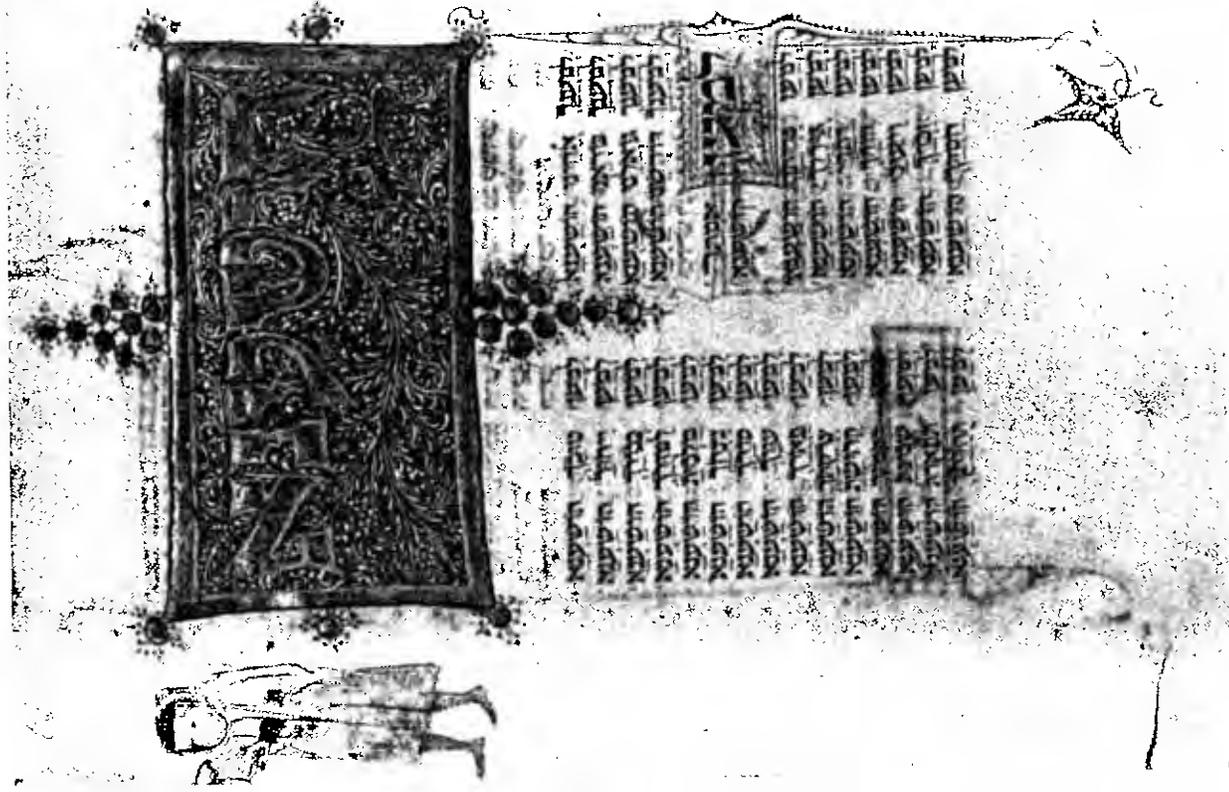
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## THE SUKKAH AS A MEMORIAL

MOSES BEN NAHMAN

" . . . that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths" (*Leviticus* 23.43). Rashi's explanation is [that the booths are] clouds of glory. In my opinion this is correct as it is the literal meaning. He ordered that the generations should know the great deed of God that He wondrously performed for them by causing them to dwell in clouds of glory. . . . As it has already been clarified that the cloud of glory was over them during the day and the pillar of fire at night (*Exodus* 13.21-22), it is merely said: "I made the Israelite people live in booths," that is to say: "I made for them clouds of My glory as booths to protect them."

At the beginning of the summer He commanded them about the memorial of the exodus from Egypt in its month and season; and He commanded about the memorial of the effective miracle which was performed for them during all the days of their stay in the desert,



at the beginning of the rainy season. He who holds that they made actual booths for themselves, [it can be explained that] they began making them at the onset of winter due to the cold, in accordance with the custom of [nomad] camps; therefore, He commanded them at that time. The memorial is that they will know and remember that they were in the desert for forty years where they did not enter any house nor did they find any city for residing; and God was with them and they lacked for nothing.

Ramban, *Leviticus* 23:43

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### SEVEN DAYS OF JOY

DON ISAAC ABRAVANEL

"After the ingathering from your threshing floor and your vat, you shall hold the Feast of Booths for seven days . . . in the place that the Lord will choose . . . and you shall have nothing but joy" (Deuteronomy 16:13-15). The reason one remains in Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths for seven days, while only one day for Passover and Shavuot, because it is said [with respect to Sukkot], "and you shall have nothing but joy." This implies that on the festivals of Passover and Shavuot when you make the pilgrimage [to Jerusalem] your mind is preoccupied with the crops in your field, but now, when you have gathered them in and the Lord your God has blessed all your crops and all your undertakings, you can surely rejoice without any other thought. . . .

Regarding Passover it is said that after the first day "in the morning you may start back on your journey home" (Deuteronomy 16:7), as one was then concerned about his crops; for the same reason Shavuot is observed only one day so that one need not tarry in Jerusalem and can return to gather his crops. Surely now [on Sukkot] that you have gathered in [the produce] from your threshing floor and your vat, it is proper that you remain in Jerusalem all seven days as your mind will not be anxious at all, "and you shall have nothing but joy." Furthermore, the statement "and you shall have nothing but joy"

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army *sukkah*. During the intermediate days of the holiday a group of judges examines the booths in all units and chooses one as the most beautiful *sukkah* in the Israeli Army. The criteria for selection are strict conformity with religious regulations, and beauty of construction and decorations. Special credit is allotted to combat units engaged in field activities.

Some of the army *sukkot* are erected under the most extraordinary conditions. There are *sukkot* on wheels and mobile *sukkot* carried on special army vehicles which serve field units. There are booths—fulfilling every religious requirement—built on the decks of naval boats and ships. Indeed, the Mishnah—“If a man builds his booth on the top of a wagon [read “army truck”] or on the deck of a ship, it is valid” (*Sukkah* 2.3)—comes to life in the Israeli Army.

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### THE ADORNMENT OF THE BOOTH

While the construction of a *sukkah* for the Festival of Tabernacles is a comparatively simple matter, its embellishment with varied decorations to emphasize its significance has always been of serious concern to pious Jews. The mere fulfillment of the letter of the Law by erecting a booth was never considered sufficient. The biblical verse “This is my God and I will adorn Him” (*Exodus* 15:2) was interpreted by the rabbis of the Talmud to imply that one is obligated to “make a beautiful *sukkah* in His honor” (*Shabbat* 133b).

The Talmud discusses the adornments for beautifying the festival booth in several passages. It states that if one owns beautiful vessels and beautiful divans he should bring them into the *sukkah* (*Sukkah* 28b). The Talmud also describes the use of murals, fruits, and bottles of wine and oil. These decorations are not to be treated lightly, for once they are hung they play a role in the performance of the commandment. “If one covered the *sukkah* to meet its requirements, and adorned it with embroidered hangings and sheets, and hung therein nuts, almonds, peaches, pomegranates, clusters of grapes, wreaths of ears of corn, [phials of] wine, oil or fine flour, it is forbidden to make use of them [for instance, to eat any of the

Goodman, Philip. *The Sukkot and Simhat Torah Anthology*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia. 1973.

fruit] until the conclusion of the last day of the festival" (Sukkah 10a-b). It is still customary in Israel and in other lands to suspend from the booth's roof the seven species of Erez Yisrael mentioned in Deuteronomy 8.8: wheat, barley, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives, and honey. Thus the *sukkah* is decorated with choice fruits and other products to symbolize gratitude for the Lord's bounty during the Festival of Ingathering.

With the passage of time new embellishments were conceived. Rabbi Jacob Molin (c. 1360-1427) in his *Sefer Maharil* described the manner of decorating the *sukkah* prevalent in his time in Germany. In oriental countries expensive rugs, colorful tapestries, and bright tablecloths were used to cover the walls. In Europe a wide variety of decorations were created; for example, embroidered samplers with verses related to the festival, artfully designed paper cutouts, paper flowers, and chains made with colored paper were frequently found in the booths. Pictures of the holy sites in Jerusalem and of

15. *Mizrah* for a *sukkah*. Colored lithograph. Tel Aviv. 1940.



Jewish sages and other personalities were hung. Birds, made with empty eggshells on which feathers were pasted for the wings and tails, were suspended from the rafters. The source of this practice is shrouded in mystery, although some claim that it alludes to the words of Isaiah 31.5: "As birds hovering, so will the Lord of hosts protect Jerusalem." Johannes Buxtorf, a seventeenth-century Christian Hebraist, wrote that he saw a *sukkah* decorated with eggs on which were inscribed verses pertaining to Sukkot. Illustrations from the Middle Ages reveal elaborate adornments in the booths, including beautiful domes, ornamental festoons, and lanterns. Indeed, in the course of centuries there developed an entire folk art of *sukkah* decoration.

Wealthy Jews engaged artists to enrich their tabernacles. A portable *sukkah*, made in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century, with charming hand-painted murals depicting Jerusalem's holy places and other scenes, is now in the possession of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

Children were always encouraged to participate in the *mitzvah* of decorating the *sukkah*, and they did so with much zest and fervor. They made the paper chains and garlands, strung cranberries, and aided in hanging the twigs and leaves.

One of the popular appurtenances conspicuously displayed in many booths is the *Ushpizin*—the special prayer of invitation to "holy guests" which is recited as one enters the *sukkah*. As these sainted persons would undoubtedly refuse to dwell in a booth where the poor are not welcome, it is customary to invite indigent persons to dine and celebrate the festival. The "open door" is an integral part of the *sukkah*. It is told that Rabbi Hayyim Halberstam of Sandz, who was known for his generosity, increased the amount of charity he gave before Sukkot. He explained, "It is incumbent upon everyone to adorn the *sukkah*, which I have not done properly. Is there any more beautiful ornament for the *sukkah* than the distribution of charity to those who do not have the means to be glad in the 'Season of Our Rejoicing'?"

(Nehemiah 8.15-16). It is further related that the ceremony was observed by all the people who returned from the exile, and the festival was celebrated in the manner unknown in Israel since the days of Joshua the son of Nun. "And there was very great gladness."

The law about the erection of booths is found only in Leviticus, although the name *Hag ha-Sukkot* is found both in Numbers and in Deuteronomy, while in Exodus the festival is designated "the Feast of Ingathering," pointing to the original agricultural character of the feast.

In later generations, the building of booths was regarded as obligatory upon every householder. It was one of the religious acts which people performed with much joy and alacrity. In many instances, the booth was built anew every year, although some would keep the same frame from year to year. The young people of the household usually undertook the labor connected with the construction, under the supervision and with the aid of their elders. There are no special provisions for the building itself except that it should be of convenient size and should have four walls. The walls need not all belong to the booth; a wall of a house or of a fence may be utilized. Great importance, however, was attached to the roofing. The roof must consist of branches of trees, detached from the trunk, sparsely spread over so that the stars may be seen through them. In the small Polish and Lithuanian Jewish towns, the peasants round about would do a brisk business in the branches which they would bring to town for the use of the Jewish population. The olive and myrtle branches of biblical days were substituted by the branches of humbler trees that were plentiful in the particular vicinity. The flimsy covering was intended to indicate the ephemeral nature of the structure and thereby emphasize its symbolic significance.

While much of the material may have been brought together weeks before the festival, the actual construction did not start until after Yom Kippur. The devout Jew, weakened by a day of fasting and prayer, would repair immediately after the fast day to place the first stake for the building of the *sukkah*. Often the booths, built by inexperienced hands out of stray boards of all shapes and dimensions, would present a most ungainly appearance. The more opulent would have an elaborate frame, made by an artisan, which they needed only to put together for the festival. In some houses, special wings were set aside for the *sukkah*, which may have been used for other purposes during the year. The roof was made movable, and

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## THE SUKKAH

Goodman, Philip. *The Sukkot and Simhat Torah Anthology*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1973.

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### BUILDING THE SUKKAH

JULIUS H. GREENSTONE

The only reference found in the Bible to the actual construction of the *sukkah* is in connection with the religious reformation brought about by the activities of Ezra and Nehemiah, after the return from the Babylonian exile. A proclamation was issued to the people: "Go forth unto the mount and fetch olive branches, the branches of the wild olive, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written. So the people went out, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the broad place of the water-gate and in the broad place of the gate of Ephraim"

decorated, thanks to the women of the sisterhoods who devote much energy and ingenuity to this task. Most of these booths are portable, dismantled every year and then put up again before the festival.<sup>1</sup>

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### SOME BOOTHS I HAVE KNOWN

ISRAEL ABRAHAMS

My earliest *sukkah* was my mother's. In those days—how many years ago I do not care to count—my summer holiday lasted exactly nine days a year. We needed no train to take us to our country destination—we just stepped into our little city garden. In brief, our one and only annual outing was spent in our *sukkah*, and we young boys and girls enjoyed our change of scene far more than I have relished longer and more distant excursions in recent years. It has been said that the pleasures we make for ourselves are fuller and fairer than the pleasures which are given to us. Perhaps this is why we loved our *sukkah*—for we made it ourselves. We did not employ a professional carpenter to put in a single nail or plane a single beam. We bought rough logs and boards at the city timber yard. We planed the logs and grazed our fingers, but the pain did not count. Though all these preparatory stages occurred a fortnight beforehand, the actual building operations never began until the night, when the Great Fast was over. Old traditions clung to us, and somehow we knew it was a special merit to close the Day of Atonement, hammer in hand, putting in the first nail of the *sukkah*, passing as the palmist has it "from strength to strength."

Our *sukkah* was much admired, but no critics were more enthusiastic than we were ourselves. It goes without saying that we had many visitors, for people in those days had a keen eye for a *sukkah*. People who neglected us all the year rubbed up their acquaintance-ship as Tabernacles came around. We did not wonder that our *sukkah* was popular, for we really believed that our architectural design was an original one, and I retained that notion until only a few days ago, when an old illustrated jargon book, printed in Amsterdam in 1723, was cruelly placed in my hands, and on page 45 I beheld to



14. *Sukkah* tablet. Hand-colored woodcut. Germany. Eighteenth century. See Chapter 9.

before the holiday it was removed or suspended and the branches were laid on top of the rafters made for that purpose. Such a room had to be either on the top floor of the house, or in a shed or bungalow built alongside the house....

In the poorer neighborhoods, several families would join in the building of a large *sukkah* which would accommodate all the people of the vicinity, each family sitting at a separate table and indulging in an exchange of dishes with the other families. The housewives had to be on the alert in their culinary preparations, so as to forestall the criticism that might come to them from their sisters at the other tables.

From a home institution, the *sukkah* has been relegated in Western lands to the synagogue, serving the entire community, although many individuals still adhere to the ancient practice of having booths in their homes. The synagogue *sukkahs* are often very elaborately

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## LAWS CONCERNING THE SUKKAH

SOLOMON GANZFRIED

It is a duty to build the *sukkah* on the day immediately following the Day of Atonement, even if it is the eve of the Sabbath, for when one has an opportunity to fulfill a commandment he should not delay it. He should select a clean site on which to erect it. Every man is obligated to participate in the building of the booth and in the laying of its roof covering, even if he be an eminent personage, since it is an honor for one personally to fulfill a precept. One should be zealous to beautify the booth and to adorn it with attractive vessels and fine dining couches, according to his means.

Since not everyone is well versed in the many diversified laws concerning the walls of the booth, it is obligatory to make complete, strong walls so that the wind will not shake them nor extinguish the candles; if one does not have sufficient [boards or other materials] for the walls, it is preferable that he make three complete rather than four incomplete walls.

If one possesses the means, it is incumbent upon him to have a booth with a roof that can open and close on hinges, so that he may close it when it rains and open it when the rains cease; thus the thatching will remain dry for the proper observance of the precept.

There are also many laws concerning the roof covering. We observe the custom of covering [the booth] with branches of trees or with canes that grow in the soil and are detached from it.

It is necessary to place [sufficient] covering so that there will be more shade than sunlight [entering the booth]; if there is more sunlight than shade, it is unfit for use according to the Torah. Therefore, it is necessary to be careful to place an amount enabling the shade to predominate even after the covering dries up. It is also essential that there be no open space of three handbreadths in any one place. At the beginning, there should be a little open space in the thatching sufficient to render the stars visible; nevertheless, even if it is so opaque that the stars are not seen, it is fit for use. However, if the booth is so densely covered that heavy rains cannot penetrate inside, it is considered like a house and unfit for use.

Concerning a booth with a [solid] roof that can be opened, the roof must be raised before the laying of the covering. If subsequently one closes the roof and then opens it again, no harm is done; it is tantamount to spreading a sheet on top [as a protection during a rainfall, for example] and then removing it. In every circumstance, one should strictly observe [the precept] that the roof is open at the commencement of the festival. Furthermore, it is essential that the roof be wide so that it is perpendicular with the wall of the booth; if it is not perpendicular but inclines slightly over the booth covering—even though this may not be enough to invalidate the booth—one should avoid sitting in the place over which the roof slopes.

It is not permitted to use the wood of the booth, both of the walls and of the covering, until after Simhat Torah, as they were set aside for [the fulfillment of] a religious duty; it is even forbidden to take a splinter for a toothpick. The decorations of a booth, even if they fall down, are also prohibited from being used.

On the afternoon before Sukkot one should not partake of food in order that he may dine in the booth with a [hearty] appetite. On the day prior to Sukkot one should increase [his deeds of] charity.

One should maintain the booth respectfully, as precepts are not to be regarded with irreverence. Therefore, one should not bring into it unbecoming vessels, such as pots, water pails, receptacles in which flour is held, kneading troughs, cooking kettles, frying pans, mortars, and the like. After the meal, the plates should be removed, but drinking cups may remain in the booth.

Dining in the *sukkah* on the first night [of Sukkot] is an obligation requiring the eating of bread, at least an amount equal to the size of an olive. Even if one is distraught, he is obligated to eat in the booth. If it rains and it appears that the rain will stop in an hour or two, he should wait [until it ceases], then pronounce the Sanctification and eat in the booth in the proper manner. If he sees that the rain is not stopping, or if he waited and it did not cease, he pronounces the Sanctification and the blessing "who has granted us life" (*shehehyanu*); he must be aware that this blessing applies also to the *sukkah*, but he need not recite the blessing "to dwell in a booth." He then washes his hands, blesses the bread, eats a piece of bread about the size of an olive, and proceeds into the house to finish his meal.

Concerning sleeping in a booth during a light rain that disturbs

one's sleep, one is permitted to leave. If he went into his house and lay down to sleep, and later the rain ceased, he is not duty bound to return to the booth the entire night; he should sleep in his house until morning.

One who is exempted from the *sukkah* and does not leave it is called a simpleton. He neither receives merit for it, nor is he permitted to pronounce the blessing ["to live in a booth"], since it would constitute a benediction said in vain.

Kitzur Shulhan Arukh 134-135

Goodman, Philip.  
Anthology, Jewish  
1973.

\* The Sukkot and Simhat Torah  
Publication Society, Philadelphia

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much as a dry one is unfit for use except in an emergency.

If one does not have Four Species of choice quality, it is preferable that he fulfill his obligation with those of a friend. However, he is duty bound to possess his own Four Species, according to his means, with which to perform the waving ceremony during *Hallel* and for the circuits [around the synagogue].

One should hold the *lulav* wreath in his right hand with the palm branch spine facing him and the *etrog* in his left hand. The citron must be held in its growing position, that is, the stalk cut from the tree should be on the bottom and the pestlelike protuberance on top. Since a benediction must be recited for all commandments before performing them, when taking the citron before reciting the blessing, one should hold it in the reverse position—the stalk on top and the protuberance on bottom—thereby he will not yet be performing the commandment. He pronounces the blessing "on

## GUIDE TO TEXTS: Midrash

### **what is it?**

Midrash is the name given to certain collections of writings that are ordered around the layout of the Tanach. The Midrash is distinguished by the high amount of Aggadah it contains. Aggadah is the name given to a certain kind of writing (be it history, story, legend, allegory, scientific observation or such like) that is *not* legal or concerned with law. The Midrash is, therefore, mostly collections of stories that relate to words, themes, or narratives in the Tanach.

The word Midrash comes from the Hebrew root 'darash', meaning to search or investigate. Midrash attempts, through minute examination and interpretation of the Tanach, to bring out the deeper or ethical meaning of the text.

There are many different collections of Midrash. The largest collection is called Midrash Rabbah (The Great Midrash), which consists of a number of volumes. Other collections include Pesikta (Divisions), Mechilta (Treatise), Sifra (Book), and Sifre (Books).

### **what is it about?**

The Midrash is about a wide variety of topics. Faced with opposition from those who interpreted Torah in a strictly literal sense, the Rabbis sought to find more subtle meanings within the words of Torah. The Midrash often includes whole stories from an examination of a word or words. Other times, the Midrash will fill in an apparent gap in a story. The Midrash can be thought of as an attempt to discover the inner meaning of Tanach.

There are two main types of Midrash - Midrash Aggadah and Midrash Halachah. Midrash Aggadah is the most common and contains stories and legends, concerned with ethical teachings or other topical issues. Midrash Halachah expounds upon the legal aspects and implications of texts in Tanach. Midrash Halachah and Midrash Aggadah exist side by side in the same way that Halachic (to do with Jewish Law) and Aggadic (not to do with Jewish Law) material exist together in the Talmud. However some volumes contain mostly Midrash Halachah, and others mostly Midrash Aggadah.

Midrash Rabbah contains volumes on the Chumash (Five Books of Moses) and the Hamesh Megillot (Five Scrolls, from Ketuvim).

The Pesikta (Divisions) is really three different works, based around the Shabbat and festival readings from the Prophets (the Haftorot).

- Mechilta (Tractate) is a Midrash to Shemot (Exodus).
- Sifra (Book) is a Midrash to Vayikra (Leviticus).
- Sifre (Books) is a Midrash to Bamidbar (Numbers) and Devarim (Deuteronomy).

All are mainly Halachic (to do with Jewish Law). Different Midrashim are sometimes repeated in different collections.

### **where does it come from? who wrote it down?**

The Midrashim are thought by some to have been divinely inspired and so are part of the religious corpus. Some are meant to be interpreted literally and others aren't, but all are meant to be taken seriously.

The material of the Midrash is mostly from the time of the Amoraim (200 - 500 CE). Some of the Midrash (particularly Mechilta, Sifra, and Sifre) can be traced back to the Tannaim (400 BCE - 200 CE). Different Midrashim were written down at different times, over a period of almost a thousand years, from 300 - 1200 CE. The compilers of the different collections of Midrash are generally unknown.

### **what do we do with it?**

Because of the accessibility of a story, and the ethical messages that they contain, Midrashim are often used in preaching. Rabbis' sermons often start with a Midrash, which is used to bring out the deeper meaning of a passage from Tanach.

Many of the stories that are taught about characters from the Tanach are from Midrash. Because the Midrash is written to fill in gaps in the narrative, any attempt to reconstruct the lives of characters from Tanach will necessarily include a use of the Midrash. The film, 'Prince of Egypt', for example, was full of material taken from collections of Midrash.

Midrash was translated into Modern Hebrew by early Zionists writers such as Bialik who collected various stories from Midrash, and published them to encourage Jews to read from the actual body of Jewish tradition. Today Midrash is often studied as literature, as well as a religious text.

### **what language is it in?**

The Midrash, like the Talmud, is written in a combination of Hebrew and Aramaic. Some parts are in Hebrew, most are in Aramaic, and others are a combination of the two.

### **if I want to read it...**

There is a translation of the Midrash Rabbah published by Soncino. This comes in ten volumes, including an index. It is a well-written and fairly straightforward translation.

The Sefer HaAggadah (Book of Legends) by Bialik and Ravinitzky is a compilation of many stories from both Midrash and Talmud. It is very well written and contains a very wide range of material, with a clear indication of the source. It is an expensive book, but can frequently be found in Jewish libraries.

<http://www.wujs.org.il/activist/learning/guide/midrash.shtml>

## Midrash Sample

### Why do we build Sukkahs?

1. **Rashbam:** God wants us to remember that the Children of Israel lived in fragile tents for forty years in the desert, and were given all they ever needed to eat. When they came to live in the land of Israel, they were able to grow all the good things they would need, such as grains, wine, and oil. God does not want us to think that all these good things are from our own power or strength. All these good things are a gift from God. When we build the Sukkah, we remember where all our blessings of food came from. We should learn to be humble when we live in the Sukkah.
2. **Sefer HaChinuch:** Well, that is all true rabbi, but I think it is not so much to make us feel humble, as it is to make us just plain grateful for all our blessings.
3. **Isaac Arama:** I think the Sukkah is to remind us that we really don't need a big house and fine furniture to be happy. We can be just as happy if we live a simple life, as if we live with riches. When we are in the Sukkah, we can look up and see the sky, and all the heavenly bodies God put there. This is to remind us that God created the world, God is perfect, there is nothing to be afraid of if we live by God's rules.
4. **Malbim:** I think the Sukkah is to remind us of how fragile and precious our lives are. We should not think that if we fill our houses with riches, we are really great people. Our lives in this world are only temporary, and our riches don't mean very much unless we are rich in other ways.

### Teacher Study Guide

**Text Background:** The priests of Israel are given detailed instructions regarding contact with the dead and who they can marry. They are told that they may work in the Sanctuary only if they are in good physical, mental, and spiritual health. Similar rules apply to animals used for the Sacrificial services. Many of the annual holidays, including the festival of building booths, the sukkah, are listed and rules for how they are to be observed.

**Objective:** In the past several decades there has been a remarkable resurgence of interest in the holiday of Sukkot, and in particular, in the construction of the fragile "booths" which God commanded the Israelites to dwell in (Leviticus 23:43) during the week long celebration.

As late as 1969, when the Editor of Torah Productions first decided to put up one of these fragile dwellings, while living in a major metropolitan center, an elderly lady with a European accent stopped by. With tears in her eyes, she said, "I have not seen a Sukkah since I was six years old!"

Why we do it is easy -- just ask anyone who has ever fulfilled the joy of this mitzvah. The more difficult question, and object of this exercise, is to ask why God made the commandment in the first-place?

**Suggestion:** Have students first read a comment, explain its meaning in their own words, defend or attack the argument from their personal perspective, and challenge them to think.

Rashbam:

- a. Why would God think it a good thing for us to feel humble when we realize where all our blessings come from?
- b. How would remembering the hardships our ancestors faced in the wilderness make us feel more humble?
- c. Why do we still celebrate the festival of Thanksgiving when there are no more Pilgrims to share their crops with native Americans? Where do you think the Pilgrims got the idea for such a holiday in the fall of the year, rather than the spring, when most agricultural festivals are held? (They knew their Old Testament!)

Sefer HaChinuch:

- a. What is the difference between feeling humble and feeling grateful?
- b. Have you ever helped build a Sukkah? Did it make you feel more humble or more grateful? What else did you feel?

Isaac Arama:

- a. Do you believe that you can be just as happy in a big house with fine furniture, as in a modest house and a simple life?
- b. If the Sukkah is to remind us that riches aren't all that important, then what is?
- c. How do you feel when you look up at the clear night sky?

Malbim:

- a. How does the Sukkah remind us that our lives are "fragile and precious"?
- b. Why aren't rich people necessarily great people? Aren't you a very important person when you are rich?
- c. In what other ways do you think we can be "rich"?

**SUKKOT CULMINATING ACTIVITY**

Atseret/Simchat Torah is the day on which we finish reading the last verses of Deuteronomy and immediately begin again with the first verses of Genesis. The Torah scrolls are removed from the Ark and carried around the synagogue. The celebration is one of unbridled joy as we express our happiness at having lived to complete the reading of the Torah yet another time and to begin reading it again.

D. SUKKOT (INCLUDING ATSERET/  
SIMCHAT TORAH)

D-1 The *mitzvah* of observing Sukkot

It is a *mitzvah* to observe Sukkot from the fifteenth of the Hebrew month of Tishri for seven days and to conclude on the twenty-second (the eighth day) with the observance of Atseret/Simchat Torah. As the Torah says, "On the fifteenth day of the seventh month there shall be a Feast of Booths to the Lord seven days. . . . On the eighth day you shall observe a holy day" (Leviticus 23:34, 36).

D-2 The *mitzvah* of rejoicing

It is a *mitzvah* to rejoice on Sukkot. As the Torah teaches, "You shall rejoice on your festival . . . for the Lord your God will bless all your crops and all your undertakings, and you shall have nothing but joy" (Deuteronomy 16:14, 15). While rejoicing is a *mitzvah* on all of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals, it is characteristic of the observance of Sukkot. So much so that the tradition has designated it as "*Zeman simchatenu*," the season of our rejoicing.

D-3 The *mitzvah* of *Tzedakah*

It is always a *mitzvah* to give *Tzedakah*.<sup>183</sup> However, since on Sukkot we give thanks for the harvest, all the more should we feel obliged to share with those who are less fortunate than we.

SUKKOT begins on the fifteenth of the Hebrew month of Tishri, and concludes on the twenty-second with Atseret/Simchat Torah. Sukkot is the fall harvest festival.<sup>179</sup> The eighth day, Atseret, functions as the conclusion of Sukkot but is also a separate festival.<sup>180</sup> Since Reform Jews follow the calendar of the Torah and (like the Jew living in Israel) do not add a ninth day to the Festival, they celebrate Simchat Torah and Atseret on the same day.

More than any other of the Pilgrimage Festivals, Sukkot has retained its agricultural character. However, Sukkot is also the commemoration of a significant event in the life of the Jewish people: the journey through the wilderness toward the Land of Israel. The Torah identifies the *Sukkah* (booth) with the temporary dwellings in which the Israelites lived during that journey (Leviticus 23:42).

The mood of Sukkot is particularly joyous. Its beautiful symbolism of the successful harvest provides a welcome change of religious pace from the solemn days of prayer and introspection of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. While all of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals are times of rejoicing, Sukkot is specifically designated as "*Zeman simchatenu*," the season of our rejoicing.<sup>181</sup> Even while we rejoice, the *Sukkah's* temporary and fragile structure reminds us how precarious life may be.

Through the use of the *Lulav* and *Eirog*<sup>182</sup> we acknowledge our dependence upon God for the food we eat. Living in an urban environment, it is easy to forget that both human labor and divine blessing make the world fruitful. On Sukkot our thoughts turn to the wonder and beauty of the world, to our responsibilities as its caretakers, and to our obligation to share, for God is the true owner of the land and its produce.

#### D-4 The *mitzvah* of building a *Sukkah*

It is a *mitzvah* for every Jew to participate in the building and decoration of a *Sukkah*.<sup>184</sup> It is particularly meritorious to begin the construction of the *Sukkah* immediately after the conclusion of Yom Kippur services (see "Yom Kippur," C-13, page 54). The *Sukkah* may be built in a yard or on a roof or balcony. Since many Jewish people live in apartments and in other locations where the construction of a *Sukkah* is not feasible, it is suggested that one aid in the building or decorating of the *Sukkah* at the synagogue, the community center, or the home of friends.

סִכְּוָה

#### D-5 The *mitzvah* of *Lulav* and *Eitrog*

It is a *mitzvah* to take up the *Lulav* and *Eitrog* and recite the appropriate blessing at any time during the whole day of Sukkot.<sup>185</sup>

לִלְבָב  
אֶתְרוֹג

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לִלְבָב.

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam, a-she-  
r ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav ve-tsi-va-nu al ne-ti-lat lu-lav.

*Blessed is the Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, by Whose mitzvot we are hallowed, Who gives us the mitzvah of Lulav.*

The text of the blessing and additional prayers may be found in *Gates of the House*, page 78, and *Gates of Prayer*, page 524. By taking up the *Lulav* and *Eitrog* and waving them in all directions, one symbolically acknowledges the sovereignty of God over all nature.<sup>186</sup>

אֶרְבֵּעָה מִיָּנִים אֶתְרוֹג, לִלְבָב הַיָּדָס, עֶרְבָבָה

The *Lulav* and *Eitrog* are also called the four species (*Arba-ah Minim*). They consist of *Eitrog* (citron), *Lulav* (palm), *Haadas* (myrtle), and *Aravab* (willow). The identification of the four species is based on the Rabbinic

interpretation of Leviticus 23:40, "On the first day you shall take the product of the *Hadar* trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook."<sup>187</sup>

הָדָר

The *Eitrog* has maintained a separate identity. Two willow branches and three myrtle branches are bound together around one palm branch and are called the *Lulav*.<sup>188</sup>

It is desirable to acquire a *Lulav* and *Eitrog*, and it is preferable, where possible, to select one's own set.<sup>189</sup> By selecting a beautiful *Lulav* and *Eitrog* one enhances the performance of the *mitzvah* (see "*Hidur Mitzvah*," *The Aesthetics of Mitzvot*," pages 162-164).

#### D-6 The *mitzvah* of celebrating in the *Sukkah*

It is a *mitzvah* to celebrate in the *Sukkah*. The Torah says, "You shall live in booths seven days in order that the future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 23:42-43).

The Torah speaks of living in the *Sukkah* for seven days. Where climate and circumstances permit, some will want to do so. However, others will prefer to fulfill this *mitzvah* by eating in the *Sukkah* (either a whole meal or a symbolic meal or by making *Kiddush* there). When eating or reciting *Kiddush* in the *Sukkah*, a special blessing is recited:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ לֵישֵׁב בְּסֻכָּוָה.

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam, a-she-  
r ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav ve-tsi-va-nu lei-shev ba-su-ka.

*Blessed is the Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who hallow us with His mitzvot and commands us to celebrate in the Sukkah.*

When circumstances do not permit one to fulfill this *mitzvah* in one's own *Sukkah*, one should seek out the *Sukkah* at the synagogue, at the community center, or at the home of friends.

### D-7 The *mitzvah* of hospitality (*Hachnasat Orechim*)

תְּנִינָם  
אוֹרְחֵיכֶם  
אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּן

As part of the *mitzvah* of hospitality we are urged to share our meals in gratitude for God's gifts.<sup>190</sup> There is a ceremony of welcoming guests known as *Ushpizin*, which evokes the presence of the patriarchs and matriarchs as our spiritual companions in the *Sukkah*. (The text may be found in *Gates of the House*, pages 77–78.)

### D-8 Reading of Koheler

קְהֵלֶיךָ

The Book of Koheler (Ecclesiastes) is read on the Shabbat during Sukkot.<sup>191</sup> Like the *Sukkah*, it reminds us of the transitory nature of life.

### D-9 *Chol Hamo-ed*

וְהָיָה יוֹמְךָ

The intermediate days of Sukkot are known as *Chol Hamo-ed*. The *mitzvot* of celebrating in the *Sukkah* and blessing the *Lulav* can be performed. Each day can be an opportunity for rejoicing and for preserving the festival atmosphere.<sup>192</sup>

### D-10 Atseret/Simchat Torah

Atseret/Simchat Torah follows the seventh day of Sukkot<sup>193</sup> and is celebrated as a day of rejoicing. The *mitzvot* which are common to all the other Festivals are observed on Atseret/Simchat Torah (see "The Pilgrimage Festivals," A-3, page 61).

### D-11 The *mitzvah* of completing and beginning the Torah cycle on Atseret/Simchat Torah

It is a *mitzvah* to participate in the Torah procession honoring the completion and beginning of the Torah-reading

תְּלַמְדוּ תוֹרָה

### D-12 The *mitzvah* of *Yizkor*

יִזְכֹּר

While it is the practice of the majority of Reform congregations to recite *Yizkor* only on Yom Kippur and the seventh day of Pesach, some congregations follow the tradition of having *Yizkor* services on Atseret/Simchat Torah.<sup>195</sup> In such cases, it is a *mitzvah* to join with the congregation in reciting *Yizkor*. It memorializes our deceased friends and relatives as well as the martyrs of our generation and previous generations (see *Gates of Mizvah*, page 63, D-10, and "Yizkor," pages 153–155).

### D-13 Consecration

Since Simchat Torah is a joyful affirmation of the *mitzvah* of Torah Study, some congregations hold a special ceremony for children entering religious school for the first time. The ceremony, called Consecration, emphasizes the importance and joy of *Talmud Torah* in Jewish tradition. It is also the custom at Consecration to give the children something sweet so that they may look upon the learning of Torah as sweet.<sup>196</sup> In addition, many congregations present the children with miniature Torah scrolls, which the children then keep in a special place.

## Building a Sukkah

☞ Immediately after the Havdalah for Yom Kippur (if this is recited at home), a symbolic beginning might be made with the building of the Sukkah, so that the first act after the conclusion of Yom Kippur may be the performance of a Mitzvah. This is followed by the breaking of the fast. The actual building of the Sukkah is preceded by the following ritual:

יהוה מי־יגור בְּאֵהֶלְךָ? מִי־יִשְׁכַּן בְּבֵית קִדְשֶׁךָ?  
הוֹלֵךְ תְּמִים וּפְעֵל צְדָק, וְדֹבֵר אֱמֶת בְּלִבּוֹ,  
לֹא־רָגַל עַל־לִשְׁנוֹ, לֹא־עָשָׂה לְרַעְהוּ רָעָה,  
וְחִרְפָּה לֹא־נָשָׂא עַל־קִרְבוֹ. נִשְׁבַּע לְהִרְעוּ וְלֹא יִמַר,  
כִּסְפוֹ לֹא־נָתַן בְּנִשְׁךְ, וְשֹׁחַד עַל־נְקִי לֹא לָקַח.  
עֲשֵׂה־אֱלֹהִים לֹא יִמוּט לְעוֹלָם.

Eternal God:

Who may abide in Your house?

*Who may dwell in Your holy mountain?*

Those who are upright; who do justly,

*all whose hearts are true.*

Who do not slander others, nor wrong them,

*nor bring shame upon their kin.*

Who give their word and, come what may, do not retract it.

*Who do not exploit others, who never take bribes.*

Those who live in this way shall never be shaken.

*From Psalm 15*

Eternal God, let Your presence dwell among us, and let us abide always in the shelter of Your peace. Be with us on this festival, as with love and awe we celebrate Your goodness to all the living.

We build this Sukkah with joy and gratitude for the gift of life and for all that sustains our bodies and enriches our spirits.

SHABBAT, FESTIVALS AND SPECIAL DAYS

*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu  
meh-lech ha-o-lam ah-sheh  
ki-d'sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav  
v'tzi-va-nu lei-sheiv ba-su-kah.*

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו  
מלך העולם, אשר  
קדשנו במצותיו  
וצונו לישב בסוכה.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You hallow us with your Mitzvot, and command us to fulfill the Mitzvah of building a Sukkah.

☞ *Kiddush is said on the eve of the first day of Sukkot. The ritual begins on page 65.*

*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu  
meh-lech ha-o-lam, sheh-heh-cheh-ya-nu,  
v'ki-y'manu, v'higi-a-nu la-z'man  
ha-zeh*

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו  
מלך העולם, שהחיינו  
וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן  
הזה.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

## Welcoming Guests in the Sukkah (Ushpizin)

☞ *According to the Zohar, the great men and women of Scripture are our invisible companions in the Sukkah, and we are urged to invite the poor to share our meals with us, in gratitude for the gift of spirit that comes to us from entering into the Sukkah with the great ones of our past.*

Eternal One, our God, God of our mothers and fathers, be present among us, let us dwell always in the shelter of Your peace, and surround us with Your radiance. Inspire us to feed the hungry and to give drink to all who thirst. Praised be the Eternal One for ever. Amen and Amen.

To this meal we summon sublime guests; their memory blesses us, their presence inspires us:

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David.  
Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel; Miriam, Hannah, and Deborah.

☞ *The following passages are said on the appropriate day:*

### 1

בְּמִטּוֹ מִנֶּגֶד, אֲבִרְהֵם, אֲשֵׁפִיזוּ עִלָּאֵי, דִּי־תִבּוּ עִמִּי וְעִמָּךְ כָּל אֲשֵׁפִיזוּ  
עִלָּאֵי: יִצְחָק, יַעֲקֹב, יוֹסֵף, מֹשֶׁה, אַהֲרֹן וְדָוִד.

בְּמִטּוֹ מִיִּנְיָהּ, שָׂרָה, אֲשֵׁפִיזְתִּי עִלִּיתָא, דִּי־תִבֵּן עִמִּי וְעִמָּךְ כָּל אֲשֵׁפִיזְתָּא  
עִלִּיתָא: רִבְקָה, לֵאָה, רָחֵל, מִרְיָם, חַנָּה וְדִבּוֹרָה.

Abraham, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David.

Sarah, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Miriam, Hannah and Deborah.

2

בְּמָטוֹ מִנֶּגֶד, יִצְחָק, אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּ עִלָּאֵי, דִּיתְבוּ עִמִּי וְעִמָּךְ כָּל אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּ עִלָּאֵי:  
אֲבָרְהָם, יַעֲקֹב, יוֹסֵף, מֹשֶׁה, אַהֲרֹן וְדָוִד.

בְּמָטוֹ מִיְנִיךְ, רִבְקָה, אֲשֶׁפִּיזְתִּי עִלִּיתָא, דִּיתְבְּן עִמִּי וְעִמָּךְ כָּל אֲשֶׁפִּיזְתָּא  
עִלְהֶתָּא: שָׂרָה, לֵאָה, רָחֵל, מִרְיָם, חַנָּה וְדִבּוּרָה.

Isaac, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Abraham,  
Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David.

Rebekah, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Sarah,  
Leah, Rachel, Miriam, Hannah and Deborah.

3

בְּמָטוֹ מִנֶּגֶד, יַעֲקֹב, אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּ עִלָּאֵי, דִּיתְבוּ עִמִּי וְעִמָּךְ כָּל אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּ עִלָּאֵי:  
אֲבָרְהָם, יִצְחָק, יוֹסֵף, מֹשֶׁה, אַהֲרֹן וְדָוִד.

בְּמָטוֹ מִיְנִיךְ, לֵאָה, אֲשֶׁפִּיזְתִּי עִלִּיתָא, דִּיתְבְּן עִמִּי וְעִמָּךְ כָּל אֲשֶׁפִּיזְתָּא  
עִלְהֶתָּא: שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל, מִרְיָם, חַנָּה וְדִבּוּרָה.

Jacob, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Abraham,  
Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David.

Leah, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Sarah,  
Rebekah, Rachel, Miriam, Hannah and Deborah.

4

בְּמָטוֹ מִנֶּגֶד, יוֹסֵף, אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּ עִלָּאֵי, דִּיתְבוּ עִמִּי וְעִמָּךְ כָּל אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּ עִלָּאֵי:  
אֲבָרְהָם, יִצְחָק, יַעֲקֹב, מֹשֶׁה, אַהֲרֹן וְדָוִד.

בְּמָטוֹ מִיְנִיךְ, רָחֵל, אֲשֶׁפִּיזְתִּי עִלִּיתָא, דִּיתְבְּן עִמִּי וְעִמָּךְ כָּל אֲשֶׁפִּיזְתָּא  
עִלְהֶתָּא: שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, לֵאָה, מִרְיָם, חַנָּה וְדִבּוּרָה.

Joseph, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Abraham,  
Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron and David.

Rachel, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Sarah,  
Rebekah, Leah, Miriam, Hannah and Deborah.

5

בְּמִטּוֹ מִנֶּגֶד, מֹשֶׁה, אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּ עִלָּאֵי, דִּיתְבוּ עִמִּי וְעַמְךָ כָּל אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּ עִלָּאֵי:  
אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק, יַעֲקֹב, יוֹסֵף, אֶהְרֵן וְדָוִד.

בְּמִטּוֹ מִיִּנְיָהּ, מִרְיָם, אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּתִי עִלִּיתָא, דִּיתְבִּין עִמִּי וְעַמְךָ כָּל אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּתָא  
עִלְהֶתָּא: שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, לֵאָה, רָחֵל, חַנָּה וְדִבּוֹרָה.

Moses, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Aaron and David.

Miriam, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Hannah and Deborah.

6

בְּמִטּוֹ מִנֶּגֶד, אֶהְרֵן, אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּ עִלָּאֵי, דִּיתְבוּ עִמִּי וְעַמְךָ כָּל אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּ עִלָּאֵי:  
אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק, יַעֲקֹב, יוֹסֵף, מֹשֶׁה וְדָוִד.

בְּמִטּוֹ מִיִּנְיָהּ, חַנָּה, אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּתִי עִלִּיתָא, דִּיתְבִּין עִמִּי וְעַמְךָ כָּל אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּתָא  
עִלְהֶתָּא: שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, לֵאָה, רָחֵל, מִרְיָם וְדִבּוֹרָה.

Aaron, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and David.

Hannah, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Miriam and Deborah.

7

בְּמִטּוֹ מִנֶּגֶד, דָּוִד, אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּ עִלָּאֵי, דִּיתְבוּ עִמִּי וְעַמְךָ כָּל אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּ עִלָּאֵי:  
אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק, יַעֲקֹב, יוֹסֵף, מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן.

בְּמִטּוֹ מִיִּנְיָהּ, דִּבּוֹרָה, אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּתִי עִלִּיתָא, דִּיתְבִּין עִמִּי וְעַמְךָ כָּל אֲשֶׁפִּיזוּתָא  
עִלְהֶתָּא: שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, לֵאָה, רָחֵל, מִרְיָם וְחַנָּה.

David, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Aaron.

Deborah, exalted guest, you are welcome here, along with Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Miriam and Hannah.

SHABBAT, FESTIVALS AND SPECIAL DAYS

**Lulav**

☞ *The Lulav and Etrog may be taken up, except on Shabbat, and the following meditation recited silently or aloud:*

I take Lulav and Etrog, in remembrance of these words of Torah:  
*On the first day, take for yourselves the fruit of a goodly tree, branches of palms, leaves of the myrtle and willows of the brook.*

With these four species I reach out to the Source of all life, the Sovereign of all creation. Let the graciousness of our Eternal God be with us, and may our work have lasting value.

*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu  
meh-lech ha-o-lam ah-sheh  
ki-d'sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav  
v'tzi-va-nu al n'ti-lat lu-lav.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לֻלָב.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You hallow us and command us to fulfill the Mitzvah of the Lulav.

*Hoshanot*, supplications for divine deliverance, mostly composed by the great ninth-century liturgical poet Eleazar Kalir, are unique to Sukkot and an integral part of the service. On Hoshana Rabbah, the Great Hosanna, many *Hoshanot* are chanted during the seven processions encircling the synagogue while the Four Species are held aloft by the congregants.

*Yizkor*, the memorial prayer, which is recited also on the other two festivals and on the Day of Atonement, and *Geshem*, the prayer for rain, are features of Shemini Atzeret.

Over eight hundred *piyyutim* in Hebrew, Aramaic, Ladino, Yiddish, and Judeo-Arabic were written for recital on Simhat Torah, much more than for any other festival. Of the above number, 250 hymns were composed for chanting during the circuits with the Scrolls of the Law.

The *hatan Torah* (bridegroom of the Law), and the *hatan Bereshit* (bridegroom of Genesis) are called to the Torah reading with elaborate introductions befitting those whom the congregation honors with these titles.

The entire Sukkot festival is marked by cheerful worship voicing gratitude for the Lord's bounty, and reaffirming love of His sacred Law.

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## THE WELCOME TO GUESTS IN THE SUKKAH

*The cabalist Isaac Luria (1534-1572) established the custom, based on the Zohar, of extending an invitation to "holy guests" to enter the sukkah. The elaborate invitation is concluded with a special mention of one of the "holy guests," as on each of the seven festival days a different one is invited.*

Enter, holy guests from on high, enter, hallowed fathers, to take your place under the protecting cover of exalted faith in the Holy One, blessed be He. Enter Abraham, and with you also Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and David.

I am spiritually ready and prepared to fulfill the command of dwelling in a booth as the Creator, blessed be His Name, com-

# ❖ 6 ❖

## SUKKOT AND SIMHAT TORAH LITURGY

Goodman, Philip. *The Sukkot and Simhat Torah Anthology*. Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia. 1973.

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The liturgy of the three pilgrimage festivals—Pesah, Shavuot, and Sukkot—is basically similar, although each has its own distinctive elements. Likewise, each of these holidays has special readings from the Torah.

Since the Festival of Tabernacles, also called *Zeman Simhatenu*, Season of Our Rejoicing, is a period of joyous thanksgiving and reverent exuberance, these motifs predominate in the additional prayers and *piyyutim* (poetical hymns) for those days. *Hallel* (a selection of psalms of rejoicing) is recited as on all festivals.

The rich Sukkot symbolism gave rise to meditations or introductory prayers when one is entering the *sukkah* and on holding the *etrog* and *lulav*.

manded me to do in the words "You shall dwell in booths seven days, all that are Israelite born shall dwell in the booths, in order that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt."

Take your place, take your place, guests from on high. Take your place, take your place, hallowed guests. Take your place, take your place, guests of exalted faith under the protection of the Holy One, blessed be He. A holy privilege is this our lot and the lot of Israel, for it is written that "the portion of the Lord is His people, Jacob the lot of His inheritance." It is our precious privilege in carrying out this command to glorify the sacred name of Thy hallowed unity and Thy indwelling presence among us and among all Israel.

"Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; establish for us the work of our hands, the work of our hands establish Thou it."

I invite to my meal exalted spiritual guests, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David.

Translated by David de Sola Pool

## MEDITATION ON ENTERING THE SUKKAH

*This meditation or introductory prayer is recited, as one enters the sukkah, to invoke God's acceptance of the performance of this commandment.*

Lord God, and God of our fathers, this command of dwelling in the tabernacle we are fulfilling with reverence and love for the divine unity of Thy holy name, blessed be Thou. May it be Thy will that in Thy recognition of this Thou wilt set Thy Divine Presence among us and spread over us Thy Tabernacle of Peace. As the eagle stirs its nest, so mayest Thou in the empyrean o'er our heads strengthen us from the sublimity of Thy pure and hallowed glory.

For those who know hunger and thirst mayest Thou give food and drink that shall not fail. Implant in me, Thy servant, the desire

cleanse me from sin." I have gone forth from my home to this tabernacle because I would walk firmly in the way of Thy commandments wherever they may take me.

Lord, pour out on me Thy great blessings and give me life, and when the time must come that I shall leave this world, may mine be the merit of dwelling in the cover of Thy protecting wings. Yet may it be my lot to be sealed in the Book of Life on earth for many days to come, and living in the Holy Land in reverent service of Thee. Blessed evermore be the Lord. Amen. Amen.

Translated by David de Sola Pool

## PRAYER FOR SUKKOT

*In the Reform ritual, the reader offers this prayer at the evening service of Sukkot.*

Creator of the universe, we come before Thee on this harvest festival to extol Thy greatness and goodness. Thou art revealed to us in the glorious promise of spring, in the mysterious power of summer's growth, and in the rich fulfillment of autumn's harvest.

In this season of the year, when our fathers had gathered the fruits of the field, they made joyous pilgrimage to Thy sanctuary to voice their gratitude for Thy loving care. To us today, as to our fathers of old, Thou art the fountain from which all blessings flow. In all the experiences of life, we recognize that Thy guiding hand establishes our work and that Thy love lifts our lives to nobler effort.

May the inspiration of this day strengthen our faith in Thee. Purify our spirits that in our daily tasks we may be conscious of Thy presence. As when we plant so when we reap, may we turn our thoughts to Thee and to Thy plan for the children of men. Help us to see that no work truly prospers unless it bring blessing to other lives, and no gain truly enriches if it add not to the happiness of others. Grant that we may never seek to dispossess others of what they have planted, nor build our joy on the misfortune of our fellow-men. Help us so to live that when we shall have gathered our final harvest, many shall rise up and call us blessed.

**ADDITIONAL LEARNING  
OPPORTUNITIES**

## SUKKOT AND THE COMMANDMENT TO ENJOY!

*By Shelton J. Donnell*

### MATERIALS

- A photocopy of the Text Study with reflection for each of the participants
- A photocopy of the blessings for each of the participants
- A selection of wines, breads, pastries, fruits, nuts, vegetables, and cheeses

### GOALS

- To use the technique of פּרְדֵּס, PaRDeS, to examine various Jewish texts relating to the celebration of Sukkot.
- To explore the significance of enjoying food and wine as a way to deepen our understanding of this festival.

### INTRODUCTION

Sukkot, the Feast of Booths, is called זְמַן שִׂמְחָתֵינוּ, *Z'man Simchateinu*, the "Season of Our Rejoicing." It is the only festival on which we are commanded to rejoice. Sukkot is also referred to as חַג הָאָסִיף, *Chag Ha-Asif*, the "Festival of the Ingathering," when we give thanks for the bounty of the earth at the occasion of the fall harvest. For our farmer ancestors, this was the time for abundance, when the hunger and careful rationing of food that marked the rest of the year gave way to feasting and drinking in accordance with the success of the harvest. Also during the fall, the new crush of grapes meant that something had to be done with last year's vintage: Fermentation jars had to be emptied to make room for the new wine. Food was plentiful, the wine flowed, and we can only imagine what Sukkot must have been like for our ancestors and why it was called חַג הָאָסִיף, "The Festival," by the Rabbis. It must have been everyone's favorite festival.

Abundance and the enjoyment of God's bountiful blessings provide us with opportunities for thanksgiving and appreciation but also challenge us to find spirituality in the sensual, hedonistic milieu of our "harvest times."

A technique utilized by the Rabbis to view texts from various perspectives in order to understand their layered meanings is characterized by the acronym פּרְדֵּס, PaRDeS.

This acronym stands for **פְּשָׁט**, *p'shat*—the plain meaning of the Torah text; **רֵמֵז**, *remez*—the inferences extrapolated from the text; **דְּרָשׁ**, *drash*—the homiletical interpretation of the text; and **סוּד**, *sod*—the esoteric and mystical meanings hidden within the text.

### **FOR THE FACILITATOR**

The Text Study is divided into four sections: *P'shat*, *Remez*, *D'rash*, and *Sod*. Explain to the participants that these are four different methods of inquiry into the Torah text. Distribute the Text Study with reflection to each of the participants. Then share the above introductory material with them. Feel free to experiment with the format for the program: You may choose to guide the participants through some of the texts and reflection questions in each of the four sections; you may decide to divide the participants into small groups or *chevruta* (paired study groups) for study on their own; or you may divide the participants into four groups, each of which will focus intensively on one of the four sections of the Text Study: *P'shat*, *Remez*, *D'rash*, or *Sod*. To conclude this activity, discuss some or all of the teachings of the Chasidic masters in the *Sod* section regarding how to focus one's attention during eating. (If some of the participants have studied these texts as part of the *Sod* group, have them review what they learned with the whole assembly.) Teach the blessings for the different kinds of foods and lead a food tasting. *B'tei-avon!*

## TEXT STUDY

### פֶּשֶׁט

*P'shat: The Plain Meaning of the Torah Text*

#### Deuteronomy 16:13–15

(יג) חג השבועות תעשה לך שבועת ימים באספך מגרנך ומיקבך: (יד) ושמחת בחגך אתה ובנך ובתך ועבדך ועמדת והלוי והגר והיתום והאלמנה אשר בשעריך: (טו) שבועת ימים תחג ליהוה אלהיך במקום אשר יבחר יהוה פי יברכך יהוה אלהיך בכל תבואתך ובכל מעשה ידיך והיית אף שמח:

<sup>13</sup> You shall observe the Feast of Booths seven days after you have gathered in your grain and your wine.

<sup>14</sup> Then you shall rejoice in your festivity, you and your son and your daughter and your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger, the orphan, and the widow who are inside your gates.

<sup>15</sup> Seven days shall you observe a festival for *Adonai* your God in the place that *Adonai* shall choose; because *Adonai* your God shall bless you in all your produce and in all the works of your hands; therefore you shall surely rejoice.

#### Reflection עיון

- Sukkot is celebrated at the time of the harvest and the crushing of the grapes for wine. Based on this text, what do you think is the main mitzvah of this holy day?

## TEXT STUDY

### רמז

Remez: The Inferences from the Text

#### Talmud, *P'sachim* 109a

Our Rabbis taught: A man is in duty bound to make his children and his household rejoice on The Festival, for it is said, "Then you shall rejoice in your festivity [you and your son and your daughter, etc.]." Wherewith does he make them rejoice? With wine. R. Judah said: Men with what is suitable for them and women with what is suitable for them. Men with what is suitable for them with wine. And women with what? R. Joseph recited: In Babylonia, with colored garments; in *Eretz Yisrael*, with ironed linen garments.

It was taught, R. Judah ben Bathyra said: When the Temple was in existence, there could be no rejoicing save with meat, as it is said, "And you shall sacrifice peace offerings and shall eat there; and you shall rejoice before *Adonai* your God." But now that the Temple is no longer in existence, there is no rejoicing save with wine, as it is said, "Wine gladdens the human heart."

#### Mishnah, *Sukkah* 5:1–4; Talmud, *Sukkah* 51a–b

One who has not seen the rejoicing at **בֵּית הַשּׂוֹאֵבָה**, the "Place of the Water-Drawing," has never seen rejoicing in his life. At the conclusion of the first festival day of Sukkot, they [the priests and Levites] descended to the court of the women, where they had made a great enactment. There were golden candlesticks with four golden bowls on the top of each of them, and four ladders to each, and four youths drawn from the priestly stock in whose hands were held jars of oil containing 120 *log* [a *log* is equivalent to approximately .3 liters]. From the worn-out drawers and girdles of the priests they had made wicks, and with them they kindled the lamps. And there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illumined by the light of the Place of the Water-Drawing.

Men of piety and good deeds used to dance before them with lighted torches in their hands and sing songs of praise. And Levites without number with harps, lyres, cymbals, trumpets, and other musical instruments were there upon the fifteen steps leading down from the court of the Israelites to the court of the women, corresponding to the fifteen Songs of Ascents in the Psalms. It was upon these [steps] that the Levites stood with their instruments of music and sang their songs. Two priests stood by the upper gate that leads down from the court of the Israelites to the court of the women. With two trumpets in their hands, when the cock crowed, they sounded a *t'ki-ah* [long, drawn-out blast], a *t'ru-ah* [tremulous note], and again a *t'ki-ah*. When they reached the tenth step, they sounded a *t'ki-ah*, a *t'ru-ah*, and again a *t'ki-ah*. When they reached the court, they also sounded a *t'ki-ah*, a *t'ru-ah*, and again a *t'ki-ah*.

### Talmud, *Sukkah* 53a

It was taught: They said of R. Simeon ben Gamliel that when he celebrated at the **בית השואבה**, "Rejoicing at the Place of the Water-Drawing," he used to take eight lighted torches [and throw them in the air] and catch one and throw one, and they did not touch one another; and when he prostrated himself, he used to dig his two thumbs into the ground, bend down, kiss the ground, and draw himself up again, a feat that no other man could do, and this is what is meant by *kidah* [a form of prostration consisting of the leverage of the body without bending or using the hands].

### Reflection עיון

It appears our Rabbis acknowledged that Sukkot was a time when wine flowed freely and people enjoyed themselves. While the Torah text instructs that we are to rejoice on Sukkot, the Rabbis of the Talmud began to elaborate on the Torah's injunction and describe the celebrations of the festival during Temple times, including this description of the celebrations and parades that were all part of the festivities. The rejoicing at the **בית השואבה**, "Place of the Water-Drawing," must have really been something to behold and to experience!

- Might this celebration have been influenced by the injunction in Isaiah 12:3, "And with joy shall you draw water"?

The parade was led by "men of piety and good deeds." Even Rabbi Simeon ben Gamliel, the head of the Sanhedrin, let loose with quite a performance of acrobatics. With all that wine flowing, it is not surprising that they did not allow "just anyone" to lead the festivities!

- Sukkot must have been one sensational party. But what about excess? Is there the possibility that enjoying the good life can lead to excess?

## TEXT STUDY

### דרש

*D'rash*: The Homiletical Interpretation of the Text

#### From Chasidic Literature

*Adam HaRishon*, the first human being, possessed great spiritual insight: As it states in Genesis, the *adam* gave a name to each of the animals that God brought before him that (the commentaries state) perfectly expressed the spiritual essence of that creature. And yet, the midrash says, when the Holy One, Blessed be God, asked the *adam* what his own name should be, the *adam* answered, "I am fit to be called Adam, for I was created from the ground [אֲדָמָה, *adamah*]." Should not Adam have chosen a name reflecting the divine soul, which is truly the essence of all human beings? Why be named after the transient physical part of human nature, אֲדָמָה [*adamah*], physical matter?

Perhaps Adam, indeed, understood the essence of human beings and the purpose of our creation. Our purpose is to make use of the physical matter [of our bodies and of our world] in our service of God, to transform the physical into a vessel for holiness and spirituality. That is our challenge and our glory: to elevate and sanctify everything in our nature and our surroundings.

Rabbi Chaim Friedlander, *Siftei Chayim*, volume 3, p. 96

#### From the Musar Literature

The idea of watchfulness is for a person to exercise caution in his actions and undertakings: that is, to be deliberate and watch over his actions and his accustomed ways to determine whether or not they are good, so as not to abandon his soul to the danger of destruction, God forbid, and not to walk according to the promptings of habit like a blind person in pitch darkness. This is determined by one's intelligence. For considering the fact that a person possesses the knowledge and the reasoning ability to save himself and flee from the destruction of his soul, is it conceivable that he would willingly blind himself to his own salvation? There is certainly no foolishness worse than this.

Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, *M'silat Y'shavim [The Path of the Just]*

#### Reflection עיין

Our Rabbis teach that our human essence is made up of two aspects: a יֵצֶר הַטוֹב, *yetzer hatov*—inclination to good—and a יֵצֶר הַרַע, *yetzer hara*—inclination to evil, our animal instincts.

- What does the text from Chasidic literature teach us about the relationship between these two aspects of the human psyche?
- Luzzatto suggests that through watchfulness we can avoid excess and the possible surrender to the יֵצֶר הַרַע—inclination to evil, our animal instincts. Do you think that this precludes the enjoyment of food and drink?

## TEXT STUDY

### דוד

Sod: The Esoteric Meanings Hidden within the Text

#### **Jerusalem Talmud, Kiddushin 4:12**

Rabbi Hizkiyah quoted Rabbi Kohen in the name of Rav: "A human being will have to give account for all that his eye beheld and he did not eat."

[This is usually interpreted to mean that we will be held accountable for not enjoying those blessings that are permitted to us.]

#### **From Chasidic Literature on the Enjoyment of Food**

When you eat, you should clear your mind of all else and meditate on the Holy One, blessed be God, with each and every swallow, as it is written about the seventy elders on Mount Sinai: "They beheld God while they ate and drank" [Exodus 24:11]. And this is similar to what our Sages said about the verse "Let every soul praise God" [Psalms 150:6]: With each and every breath, give God praise.

*Reishit Chochmah, Sh'ar HaK'dashah, chapter 15, #90*

The root of the *kavanah* [spiritual intention] in eating is to prepare yourself to receive love from God, who delights in kindness; for this is the will of the Master of kindness.

*Yifrah BiYamav Tzaddik, p. 45b*

When a man takes a fruit or other piece of food and makes a blessing over it with focused attention and says, "Blessed are You, O Adonai" and mentions the name of God [Adonai], he, at that moment, arouses the life-energy that created the fruit and resides within it... And this life-energy is the food of the soul, ... for the soul is nourished by the spiritual side of the food.

*Baal Shem Tov, Keter Shem Tov, p. 43; cf. p. 100*

When you eat and drink, you will certainly experience enjoyment and pleasure from the food and drink. So you should be careful to arouse yourself every moment to ask yourself in wonder, "What is this enjoyment and pleasure, and where is it coming from?" And answer yourself, "This is nothing but the holy sparks from the upper holy worlds that are within the food and drink."

*K'dushat HaShulchan, p. 24*

You should accustom yourself when you sit down to eat or when you take in your hand something to drink to think that within this food or drink there are spiritual holy sparks, and it is from them that the pleasurable taste and the enjoyment of the food and drink come. And certainly, when you think about this before eating and drinking, you will not be coarsened by the pleasure (which is from the holy sparks) that you experience when you are eating and drinking.

*K'dushat HaShulchan*, p. 25

When you eat, your thought should be that the taste and the sweetness of the food you are eating are coming from God's enlivening power and from the supernal sweetness that is the life of the food.

*Baal Shem Tov, Tzava-at HaRibash*, p. 14

When you eat something pleasurable, you should think that all of the pleasure is coming to you from God.

*Darhei Tzedeck*, p. 6, #36

If you eat something from which you derive pleasure, have in your mind that this pleasure you are enjoying is the radiance of the *Shechinah*.

*Or HaGanuz L'Tzaddikim*, p. 34

### **Reflection עיני**

- What do these texts tell us about the enjoyment of food? What would a gourmet say about the Chasidic interpretation of eating? How would a food critic and a wine connoisseur describe savoring food? Do you think that their descriptions would be similar?
- How do you think that this understanding of the enjoyment of food and drink relates to the meaning of Sukkot?
- What other rituals and traditions of Sukkot further this understanding?
- What experiences can you create for the celebration of Sukkot that would convey this idea of the spirituality of enjoyment?

## CONCLUDING ACTIVITY

Using the blessings below, prepare a food tasting while thinking about the teachings of the Chasidic masters in the above texts.

### Blessings for Enjoying Wines, Breads, Pastries, Fruits, Nuts, Vegetables, and Cheeses

Before drinking kosher wine:

*Baruch Atah Adonai,*

*Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,*

*borei p'ri hagafen.*

בָּרַךְ אַתָּה יי  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

We praise You, *Adonai* our God, Eternal Soul of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Before eating bread:

*Baruch Atah Adonai,*

*Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,*

*humotzi lechem min ha-aretz.*

בָּרַךְ אַתָּה יי  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

We praise You, *Adonai* our God, Eternal Soul of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Before eating pastries or foods other than bread made of barley, wheat, rye, oats, and spelt:

*Baruch Atah Adonai,*

*Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,*

*borei minei m'zonot.*

בָּרַךְ אַתָּה יי  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
בוֹרֵא מִיְנֵי מִזְנוֹת.

We praise You, *Adonai* our God, Eternal Soul of the universe, who creates a variety of foods.

Before eating fruits or nuts that grow on trees:

*Baruch Atah Adonai,  
Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,  
bonei p'ri ha-eitz.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

We praise You, *Adonai* our God, Eternal Soul of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

Before eating fruits or vegetables that grow from the ground:

*Baruch Atah Adonai,  
Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,  
bonei p'ri ha-adamah.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

We praise You, *Adonai* our God, Eternal Soul of the universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

Before eating meat, fish, eggs, cheeses, etc., or drinking any liquor except wine:

*Baruch Atah Adonai,  
Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,  
shehakol nih'yeh bid'varo.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיֶה בְּדַבְּרוֹ.

We praise You, *Adonai* our God, Eternal Soul of the universe, by whose word all came into being.

*Shelton J. Donnell serves as the rabbi of Temple Beth Shalom in Santa Ana, California. He loves fine wine, good food, and, therefore, Sukkot.*

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