



אור חדש

New Light Congregation

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New Light News April 2024

The Flashlight

We cannot deny that the Jewish story is not told without suffering and trauma. The Haggadah that we prepare this month to use at our seder tables continually refers to in the foods we eat and the declarations that we make. “In every generation people rise up to destroy us.” We have suffered trauma ever since we fled Egypt with the Egyptians on our tails. Even when they were no longer in the distance and the sea had collapsed on their battalions, we kept looking over our shoulders for the next attack.

We read the statement in the Haggadah that Rabban Gamliel that the subject of Passover (the Roasted Lamb), the Matzah (the Bread of Liberation), and the Maror (the Bitter Herbs of Slavery), in that order, must be discussed and eaten at the Seder table. One may ask: Why in that order? Why is the Maror listed last? While the Passover and Matzah are symbols of Divine Protection and Freedom, respectively, the Maror representing slavery should chronologically be listed first!

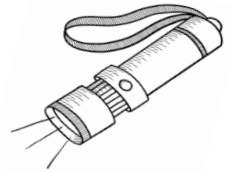
Allow me to tell a parable by way of explanation:

Once there was a farmer whose horse ran away. All the people of the village came to console him. “Oy vey, your horse ran away.” “I don’t know,” said the farmer, “Maybe it’s bad, maybe it’s not.” A few days later, the horse returned home with an entire stable-full of wild horses that it befriended along the way. All the villagers came to congratulate him. “Oh, such good luck – your horse ran away and now you’ve got a whole stable full!” “I don’t know,” said the farmer. “Maybe it’s good, maybe it’s not.” A few days later, the farmer’s son was out riding one of the wild horses and got thrown off – breaking his leg. All the villagers came to console him. “Oy vey, your son broke his leg.” “I don’t know,” said the farmer. “Maybe it’s bad, maybe it’s not.” A few days later, the government sent representatives to the village with orders to draft every able-bodied young man into the army. All the sons were taken away, except for the farmer’s son who had a broken leg. “Now I know,” said the farmer, “It’s good that my horse ran away.”

Sometimes bitter times are for the best, sometimes they are not. We don’t know the future that stands before us. We need time for waiting and for grieving, until enough time has elapsed so that we can understand more fully why things happen the way they do. Even though we intellectually may know that bitterness is ultimately for the best, we cannot appreciate while we are “in it.” We can only appreciate it emotionally and spiritually by looking back. This is the reason why Maror is listed last. First, we taste God’s love for us (Passover) and the freedom bestowed upon us (Matza) and only then can we really taste the true lesson of trauma (Maror) for our lives. Rabban Gamliel wants us to follow the natural course of human thought that correctly puts off the effect of trauma on our lives. Trauma is not necessarily a gift like love and freedom; it is a cost that makes us appreciate what we have now.

The Haggadah is a wonderful tool for reflection and to get conversations going about the subjects it raises. At our seder, I assign each one of the participants ahead of time a section of the Haggadah to interpret and discuss. We all become emigres; we all become survivors; we share a journey in the drama that unfolds on Seder night. But most importantly, we become meaning-makers, making sense of the existence that we share collectively with people everywhere.

Rabbi P.



Congregational / Board Meeting

The New Light Congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, April 7, 10:30 AM, in Helfant Chapel and on Zoom (use the same Zoom connection as for Shabbat). The April board meeting will follow.

The congregational meeting is a time to nominate officers and board members, review and propose dues structure for 2024-2025, and raise any other issues to be addressed at the annual meeting on June 2.

April 2024 Presidents' Report

This morning's newspaper (March 26, 2024) reported that Tree of Life, Inc. (TOLI) has received two separate \$1 Million grants from the Federal Government as part of the recent legislation. According to the Post-Gazette, the first grant of \$1 Million is to help convert the synagogue into a memorial and education center; while the second grant of \$1 Million is to assist in the development of a curriculum for elementary and secondary schools on preventing antisemitism and identity-based hate. We are pleased and fully support TOLI in making the memory of 10.27 a symbol for the future. Our Congressional Representative, Rep. Summer Lee, voted against the second appropriation.

There is an ongoing debate since October 7th about what is an anti-semitic act. One definition is straightforward – an anti-semitic act is the denial of employment or services, or any overt hostile action targeting individual Jews because they are Jewish; because of their religion. We have all been personally confronted by this form of anti-semitism. The second, broader definition, favored by the U.S. State Department and many supporters of Israel, according to an article in the New York Times, conflates actions against a country, Israel, with acts against individual Jews. Acts protesting actions by the Israeli Government, be it by a demonstration or by divesting funds are, by this broader definition, just as anti-semitic as actions against an individual. For many of us, this is new.

As anything related to 10.27.18 reflects on our Congregation – whether or not we are part of the TOLI process - we hope that there continues to be a robust, public conversation about this issue.

JOINT FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICES WITH CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM

New Light is pleased to announce that we will be combining our Friday night services with Congregation Beth Shalom, beginning Friday, April 5. Services will be held in Helfant Chapel, using our prayer book, Sim Shalom; and using our Zoom credentials for those who wish to join online. The two congregations will alternate regarding leaders, special tunes, English readings and the D'var Torah. Beth Shalom will continue to hold a separate Friday Night service in the Main Sanctuary for selected Fridays.

PURIM/PESACH

Over forty members and guests joined together for a fun-filled Purim celebration last Sunday. Much thanks to Cantor Henry Shapiro for his special selection of Purim songs. Now, Passover is fast approaching. Spring has begun and sunshine, daffodils, tulips are here and trees are budding. It is a time of hope, renewal and sunshine for all of us.

With the best wishes for a Healthy, Joyous and Sweet Passover to each and every one of our New Light Family.

Stephen and Barbara
Co-Presidents

Passover Schedule

- Days 1 & 2 - April 23 & 24 - Services, 9:45 AM
- Days 7 & 8 - April 29 & 30 - Services, 9:45 AM. Yizkor on April 30.

All services will be held in Helfant Chapel and on Zoom; use the same Zoom connection as for Shabbat.

Rabbinical Assembly Pesach Guide

The detailed guide can be downloaded at:

<https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/pesah-guide-5783-3.27.23.pdf>

How to prepare for Passover - Some Tough Questions Answered by the Rabbi

1. **Chametz** is any food product made from wheat, barley, rye, oats or spelt that has come into contact with water and been allowed to ferment and “rise.” In practice, just about anything made from these grains—other than Passover matzah, which is carefully controlled to avoid leavening—is to be considered Chametz. This includes flour (even before it is mixed with water), cake, cookies, pasta, breads, and items that have Chametz as an ingredient, like malt. The Torah prohibits the ownership of Chametz, the eating of Chametz and benefiting from Chametz (such as keeping an animal fed). We embark on an “operation zero Chametz” to rid our homes of all edible Chametz. The main purpose of cleaning and searching for Chametz is to remove any Chametz that one may come to inadvertently eat or derive benefit from during Passover. This obligation of getting rid of Chametz does not extend to inedible Chametz or tiny crumbs or particles of Chametz that are soiled or spoiled. The hunt for Chametz concludes the evening before Passover (14th Nissan). In the morning of the 14th, we say a formula of nullification to declare of all remaining and unseen Chametz null and void.

2. **Kosher l’Pesach Food.** Packaged foods are certified “kosher for Passover” and have a small “p” next to the heksher of kosher trademark. Many foods without this trademark include Chametz as an admixture. One must be very careful and rely on the appropriate heksher. Vegetables and fruits, meats and fish are generally kosher for Passover. Ashkenazim do not eat kitniot or beans, peas, corn, and legumes because of their similarity to Chametz (they puff up when boiled). (Conservative Jews may now eat kitniot during Pesach.)

3. **Selling of Chametz.** The Torah teaches: “No leaven shall be seen of yours, and no leavening shall be seen of yours throughout all of your borders.”

Ridding one’s home of all Chametz or leavened foods during Passover is not simple. Most of us have pantries and freezers which are full of items which are not kosher for Passover. In addition, eliminating all Chametz would also include thoroughly scouring every utensil, pan and pot which were used together with Chametz items, to rid them of Chametz residue.

The rabbis conceived a halachic device whereby all Chametz foods are stored in a closet or room (or more than one), which are then closed and sealed for the duration of the eight days of the holiday. On the morning before Passover the Chametz is sold, and the areas wherein they are stored are rented, to a non-Jew. In this manner, the Chametz no longer belongs to us, until the end of Passover when the Chametz is bought back from the non-Jew.

Incidentally you need to sell the Chametz which may be in any properties you own or rent. This would also include your office or business premises. If you have a home on the beach or in the mountains, whether you use it or not, you still need to sell the Chametz that is within it, too. Please see the “Sale of Chametz” guide or speak to the rabbi for more information.

4. **Two Marors on the Table?** Many have the custom of using both horseradish and romaine lettuce to fulfill the obligation to consume maror (bitter herbs) on Passover night.

The sages of the Mishnah list five vegetables which may be used for maror. Unfortunately, it is difficult to be certain as to the identity of these five vegetables mentioned in the Mishna by their ancient Hebrew names. Two of them, however, we have a clear tradition regarding their identity: horseradish and lettuce.

The Talmud says that of the five species mentioned in the Mishna, the preferred one for use is the lettuce -- which is surprising, considering that it is not bitter. The reason for this is its symbolism. If lettuce isn't harvested, its stem hardens and becomes very bitter. i.e. it starts off sweet, and its end is bitter.

This is a perfect metaphor for our ancestors' slavery in Egypt. Originally they were enticed to work with promises of full wages, and they were sweet-talked into joining the work campaign; their patriotism to the Egyptian homeland was invoked. Eventually, however, this led to full-fledged bitter enslavement.

Nevertheless, many have the custom of having horseradish as well, apparently this stems from a desire to consume actual "bitter" herbs, to recall the great pain that the Jewish nation endured for the duration of their slavery.

5. **The Haggadah.** All haggadahs are different. In many homes, the standard has become the Maxwell House Haggadah. Each religious movement publishes their own Haggadah and then some! Many old commentaries have been translated and published to understand a particular commentary's take on the haggadah. It is okay to add songs and your own commentary to the haggadah. You can also skip sections if the old material is holding you back. The essential features of the seder meal is telling the story and eating the symbolic foods. Don't forget about finding the afikoman!

6. **Arrangement of the Seder Plate** (Ka'arah) includes most of the ingredients that go into the making of the Seder. Its three matzahs and the six other items are arranged in a formation dictated by their mystical significance and relationship vis-a-vis each other.

Here's how you set it up:

On top of a large plate, tray or cloth place three whole matzahs, one on top of the other. It's best to use round, hand-baked shmurah matzah. Cover the matzahs with a cloth or tray. On top, position the following six items in a counter-clockwise position:

1) "Zeroa" - a roasted chicken bone with most of the meat removed. This will represent the Passover offering. It will not be eaten.

2) "Beitzah" - a hard-boiled egg, representing the festival offering.

3) "Maror" - grated horseradish (just the horseradish -- not the red stuff that has vinegar and beets added) and/or romaine lettuce, for use as the "bitter herbs."

4) "Charoset" - a paste made of apples, pears, nuts and wine. We'll be dipping the bitter herbs in this.

5) "Karpas" - a bit of vegetable, such an onion or potato.

6) "Chazeret" -- more bitter herbs, for use in the matzah-maror sandwich.

We'll also need a wine cup or goblet for each participant, and plenty of wine (four cups each), and a dish of salt water (in which to dip the Karpas).

A Zissen and Healthy Pesach to you and your families!

Form for the Selling of Chametz

Note: Please contact Rabbi Perlman by noon on Sunday, April 14th if you wish to authorize the sale of your Chametz. You can mail this form to him at 6536 Darlington Rd, Pittsburgh, 15217.

If possible, all Chametz – food not acceptable during Pesach (Passover), or materials containing such unacceptable food –should be destroyed or given away before the holiday begins. Should this be impossible, the Chametz may be stored in such a way that we are sure not to use it during the holiday and its actual ownership is transferred to a non-Jew until the holiday ends.

Please complete the form below and return to Rabbi Perlman. Remember to call him no later than **Sunday, April 14th, by noon.**

I, the undersigned, fully empower and permit Rabbi Perlman to act in my behalf to sell all Chametz possessed by me – knowingly or unknowingly – as defined by Torah and rabbinic law, and to lease all places wherein Chametz owned may be found. This transaction will be in effect for the duration of Pesach, which this year begins with sundown of April 22 and runs through April 30, 2022.

And to this I hereby affix my signature on this _____ day of _____, in the year _____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____



Purim 2024

On Sunday, March 24, New Light members and friends met for a festive meal, followed by the reading of the Megillah. Rabbi Perlman and Beth were our expert readers (with character voices!), Carol Black kept us on track, and Cantor Henry Shapiro led us in song.



April Birthdays

Arnold Epstein
Barbara Epstein
Karen Coburn
Ileen Portnoy
Honey Sapir
Jerry Sapir
Eileen Snider

April Anniversaries

Honey & Jerry Sapir

Reminders

- To purchase Memorial Plaques, Simcha Tree Leaves or Stones contact Ileen Portnoy.
- To purchase bricks for our "Garden of Freedom" contact Barbara Caplan.
- To purchase Giant Eagle gift cards contact Karen Coburn.
- For information on our cemetery contact Stephen Cohen.

NEW LIGHT CONGREGATION

5915 Beacon Street
412-421-1017

www.newlightcongregation.org

Rabbi
Co-President/Social VP/Yahrzeits
Co-President/Cemetery/Website
Membership
Sisterhood
Treasurer/Men's Club
Simcha Tree/Plaques
Religious Committee
Recording Secretary
Corresponding Secretary/Calendar

Jonathan Perlman rabbi@newlightcongregation.org
Barbara Caplan barbaracaplan@comcast.net
Stephen Cohen info@newlightcongregation.org
Debbi Salvin dgsalvin@pobox.com
Sharyn Stein
Harold Caplan haroldcaplan@comcast.net
Ileen Portnoy ileenportnoy@gmail.com
Eric Cohen, Bruce Hyde
Karen Coburn
Janet Cohen janet@newlightcongregation.org

New Light Congregation April 2024 22 Adar II 5784 - 22 Nisan 5784

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 22 ADAR II	2 23 ADAR II	3 24 ADAR II	4 25 ADAR II	5 26 ADAR II	6 27 ADAR II
7 28 ADAR II ▲ Congregational/ Board Meeting, 10:30 AM	8 29 ADAR II	9 1 NISAN ☀ Rosh Chodesh Nisan	10 2 NISAN	11 3 NISAN	12 4 NISAN	13 5 NISAN
14 6 NISAN	15 7 NISAN	16 8 NISAN	17 9 NISAN	18 10 NISAN	19 11 NISAN	20 12 NISAN
21 13 NISAN	22 14 NISAN ☀ Erev Pesach 7:47	23 15 NISAN ☀ Passover - Day 1 Services, 9:45 AM	24 16 NISAN ☀ Passover - Day 2 Services, 9:45 AM	25 17 NISAN ☀ Passover - First Intermediate Day	26 18 NISAN ☀ Passover - Second Intermediate Day Services, 6:00 PM	27 19 NISAN ☀ Passover - Third Intermediate Day Services, 9:45 AM
28 20 NISAN ☀ Passover - Fourth Intermediate Day 7:53	29 21 NISAN ☀ Passover - Day 7 Services, 9:45 AM	30 22 NISAN ☀ Passover - Day 8 Services, 9:45 AM, Yizkor				