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April 2024

[www.congregationAmHaYam.com](http://www.congregationAmHaYam.com)

From the Rabbi's Study



## A Passover Lesson: Don't Let Opportunities Become *Chametz*

Why did the matzah quit his job?....Because it didn't get a raise.  
 What army base is off limits on Passover?....Fort Leavenworth.  
 Why did the matzah go to the doctor?....Because it started feeling crumbly  
 Why did the matzah baker rob the bank?....He needed the dough.  
 Do you know why the matzah was so humble?....It never rose to the occasion!

We are all preparing for Passover, and so matzah comes to mind. We get rid of our chametz to make way for the five-pound package of matzah!

The mitzvah of matzah comes from the biblical book of Exodus:<sup>1</sup> וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-הַמַּצוֹת, "You shall observe/guard the matzah." The Rabbis saw this verse and used a play on words to make a deeper point. Thus, Rabbi Yoshiya taught<sup>2</sup> that we should not read the phrase as written וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-הַמַּצוֹת, but, rather, וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת הַמִּצְוֹת, "You shall observe/guard the mitzvot (responsibilities)." Notice that not a single letter of the biblical text has been changed. As the Torah does not contain any vowels, Rabbi Yoshiya cleverly imagined different vowels to come up with a different understanding.

Rabbi Yoshiya continues his teaching with another clever use of words: כְּדֶרֶךְ שְׂאִין מְחַמֵּצִין אֶת, קְדָה, הַמַּצָּה, כִּי לֹא יִחְמִצּוּ אֶת הַמַּצָּה, אֲלֵא אִם בָּאת מְצוּה עַל יְדָה, עָשָׂה אוֹתָהּ מִיָּד, "Just as matzah is not postponed (because it will "sour" the matzah and no longer be kosher for Passover), so, too, a mitzvah should not be postponed (because it might "sour" the mitzvah). Therefore, when a mitzvah presents itself, we should perform it immediately.

Notice that I highlighted the three letters at the root of the Hebrew word for "postpone" or "sour." They spell *chametz*! Postponement of a mitzvah is like waiting around and permitting perfectly good matzah to become chametz!

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 12:17.

<sup>2</sup> See Rashi on 12:17 and the *Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishmael* 9:13.

Now, here's a lesson we might well consider not only during Passover, but every day of our lives. So often when we have the chance to do or say something worthwhile, we let it pass and find ourselves regretfully muttering to ourselves, "If only I had done it."

If you have something nice to say, say it now.

If a grand/child does something good, compliment them now.

If someone in the community achieves something, "*yasher ko'ach*" them now.

And how much better to say loving things to your friends and family now—while they can still hear them—rather than saving your praises for a shivah house. If you have time and money to give, give some of it now.



*Matzah suggests a ready to go attitude; chametz symbolizes delay.*

As the old Silverman *Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book* told us,

*They who give when well, their gift is gold;  
They who give only when ill, their gift is silver;  
They who give only in their will, their gift is copper.*

Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein (1901-1985) understood the matter of urgency. He served as advisor to the U.S. Army in World War II and after the war ended, helped find homes for over 200,000 Jews. In his book, *What the Jews Believe*, he offered:

*If there is goodness in life and beauty in the world to share, do it now.  
If there lies within you the possibility of a contribution to make the world better,*

When we delay a gift, a compliment, or a kindness, it starts to sour, to turn into *chametz*. Let's avoid that by tendering our love today, now, while it is as newly baked.

*Chag kasher v'samei-ach*. May you and yours have a meaningful and delicious Passover!

*Rabbi J.B. Sacks*

**Message From**

**Brenda Rich**



Greetings: Welcome to April. But I do hope that our showers are behind us and our days will be filled with sunshine.

I hope you all enjoyed your Purim boxes. A lot of effort went into creating the card, shopping for items, boxing the items and delivering the boxes. There is an article elsewhere in the Migdalor that goes into more detail. But I want to thank everyone who participated, and I appreciate your support.

We had many interesting classes and events in March. But due to space constraint, I will mention just one – Graceful Aging. Each session was amazing and so much useful information was dispensed. You can go to our website at [www.congregationamhayam.com](http://www.congregationamhayam.com) and see for yourself what I am writing about. Extreme thanks to Rabbi Sacks for arranging for each speaker and to Fran Lande for being the hostess of each session. More detailed information is elsewhere in the Migdalor.

Passover is this month and I hope you will be attending our community Seder on Tuesday, April 23 at 5 p.m. at CAH. This is the perfect way to spend the holiday with your family and friends and your special CAH family. Please take the flyer that is elsewhere in the Migdalor and send in your reservations.

Passover services live and live streamed at CAH will be at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, April 24, the 2nd day of Passover and on Monday, April 29th and Tuesday, April 30 – the 7th & 8th days. There will be a Yizkor service on the 8th day.

Please read all the Passover information in the Migdalor.

Shalom & Happy Passover,  
Brenda

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**June 9<sup>th</sup> 2024**  
**12pm**

**Luncheon honoring the services of  
Rabbi J. B. Sacks  
at Congregation Am HaYam**

**No Charge**



Ways and Means News

We hope you enjoyed your mishloach manot. I think the stickers on our letters reminded us of what is important to us. It was a delicious box of goodies.

It takes people to order, shop, prepare letters, track participants, box and deliver to your door. Thanks to Brenda, Fran, Miriam, Esther, Cliff, Ruth, Mark and Gerson.

We are so grateful to the following people who participated this year in a project that is both meaningful and a fundraiser for CAH.

Bill Amplo & Bill Snellenberger

Fil Barton

Alma Boronkay

Sydell & Bernie Bubman

Stephen Goch

Martha Harris

Ken Hailpern

Lois Lebman

Miriam & Darryl Mack

Ruth Resnick

Brenda Rich

Rabbi J.B. & Steven Karash

Evan Skotchdopole

Esther Taxon & Josh Lampel

Sincerely,

Ruth Resnick

## **Passover Preparation, Seder, and Services This Year**

This year we will hold our annual **Am HaYam Passover Seder on Tuesday, April 23**, the second night of Passover, **at 5:00 p.m.** Rabbi Sacks will be leading the seder.

For services this year, we will be holding services on the second morning of Passover, **Wednesday, April 24.**

We will have services this year on **both the seventh and eighth mornings of Passover: Monday, April 29 and Tuesday, April 30.** Yizkor will be marked during services on April 30.

All morning services begin at 10 a.m. All services will be held both in person at our premises and live streamed via our YouTube channel.

You may have questions about Passover preparation. [Here is a link](#) to the Rabbinical Assembly Pesach Guide.

If you have questions about preparing your home, or about the Seder, or Passover services, please contact the Rabbi at: [rabbijbsacks@gmail.com](mailto:rabbijbsacks@gmail.com).

I wish you all a *chag kasher v'samei-ach*, a healthy, meaningful, and joyful Passover!

Neal Abramson, on behalf of  
Rabbi Sacks and the Ritual Committee

**See our special Passover section including the document of Permission/Sh'tar Harsha'ah For Sale of Chametz beginning on page 14**

# Congregation Am HaYam

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Night Passover Seder

Join us for a Community Seder that's just like being with family  
Leave the cooking and cleaning to the pros.  
We'll laugh, sing and eat.... laugh, sing and eat some more....and  
Have a Seder you'll be talking about next year.

**Date: Tuesday April 23, 2024**  
**Time 5:00 PM**



**Cost: \$40.00 Per person**  
**Children \$9.00**  
**6 & under No charge**

Volunteer Underwriters  
Accepted

Checks Payable to CAH  
Please remit to:

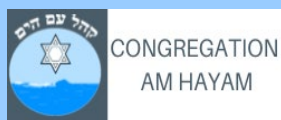
Congregation Am HaYam

4839 Market St, Unit C

Ventura CA 93003

Ph 805-644-2899

**DUE BY APRIL 17<sup>th</sup>**



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Adults # \_\_\_\_\_

Children # \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_



## **Program Review—*Limnot Yameinu Kein Hoda: Graceful Aging***

Our recent set of programs, ***Limnot Yameinu Kein Hoda: Graceful Aging***, helped us to frame our situation at this life juncture, offering coping mechanisms, ways to manage one's mental wellness and thrive under today's conditions, and wisdom and best practices from the worlds of mental health and Jewish tradition. The programs framed important concepts about aging with Jewish texts, values, and rituals, reminding us that Judaism and Jewish learning can have a significant place in our mental wellness plan.

**Rabbi Laura Geller** of Temple Emanuel in Beverly Hills inaugurated the series on **February 21** in a conversation with Rabbi Sacks. She encouraged us to manage life changes through movement and mindfulness, and gave practical techniques to enable us to mark and celebrate transitions that occur as we age. [A recording of this session can be found on our website's program page here.](#)

**Rabbi Richard Address**, founder and director of Jewish Sacred Aging explored a way to frame the shifting landscape of social relationships as we age, on **February 28, 2024**. He spoke of creating new relationships and strengthening current ones in families and communities. [A recording of this session can be found on our website's program page here.](#)

**Rabbi Jennifer Flam** taught spiritual aspects of aging on **Saturday, March 2** live in our sanctuary and via live stream. She led a thought provoking discussion through text study, focused on her idea of "spiritual grief." [A recording of this session can be found on our website's program page here.](#)

Wellness gift bags were given to those in attendance at our Shabbat program. They included a copy of the book, ***Getting Good at Getting Older*** (in advance of our March 20 discussion), resources for Ventura County seniors, a large-print puzzle book, jigsaw puzzle, water bottle opener, a tool to strengthen hands, and some healthy snacks.

**Rabbi Dayle Friedman** headlined the **Wednesday, March 13** Zoom session, focusing on the lessons we can learn as we or some family and friends we know, cope with a decline in mental functioning. [A recording of this session can be found on our website's program page here.](#)

Fran Lande led a special session of our Significant Jewish Book Club on **Wednesday, March 20**, discussing ***Getting Good at Getting Older***, co-authored by our inaugural speaker Rabbi Geller and Rabbi Geller's late husband Richard Siegel, z"l.

The series was very valuable to those who participated. Some participants have commented that they had begun to have difficult and necessary conversations with those closest to them. Others shared that throughout the sessions, they were motivated to find ways to continue to live a life of purpose and eagerly finding ways to enhance their lives.



Additionally, it was expressed how important it was to come together to learn and share this important part of life's journey with their community.

I would personally like to thank the following who made this series so successful:

- The **Pacific Southwest Region of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism** for their grant and support, and **Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Home** for their sponsorship.
- **Rabbi J.B. Sacks** for the tremendous amount of work and dedication he brought to this program. It was his vision that enabled CAH to receive the funding. His connections to colleagues and the wider Jewish community enabled us to have these phenomenal presenters.
- **Brenda Rich** for creating the Wellness Bags that were so well received. She also prepared a phenomenal kiddush lunch for the Shabbat morning program. As always she went above and beyond.
- **Janice-Aharon Ezer** for her help in gathering the handouts for the Wellness bags of the resources available in Ventura County.
- **Mark Rich** for publicity for the programs. He also made sure that the recordings of the events were converted and then posted on our website. He does so much behind the scenes to help out.
- Those who helped with the clean-up following the Shabbat program. Your dedication is so valuable.

Fran Lande  
Lifelong Learning Chair

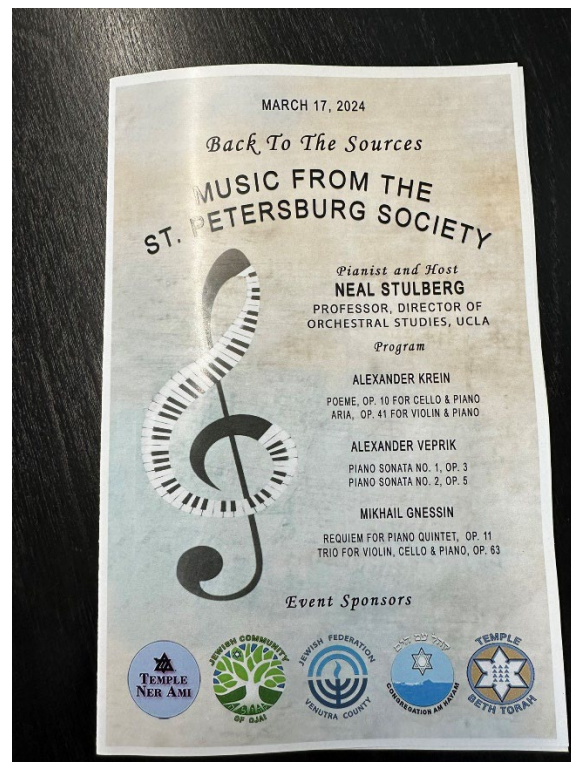
**A review of the “Music from the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music” concert, Sunday March 17, 2024, at Temple Beth Torah in Ventura.**

For those who attended this chamber orchestra event, it was different, intriguing, and interesting; I am glad I purchased a ticket and then showed up. The title of the event may have led people to expect more traditional Jewish music, so a few might have been a bit disappointed to find that the music was from Russian Jewish composers of the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, and not so much Jewish “folk” music, but more Russian than Jewish. When you hear “Russian” you may think revolutionary, intense, and even industrial, and you would be mostly correct; the music was quite intense (at least the first two composers on the program – Alexander Krein and Alexander Vepruk) but the third on the program (Mikhail Gnessin) was more traditional and not as “heavy” in the pieces presented. I found all of the works very moving, wonderfully performed by the young but accomplished musicians on piano, viola, violin, and cello.

Professor Neal Stulberg, Director of Orchestral Studies at UCLA, presented the works with interesting historical information, and a bit of welcome humor around the “darker” pieces. At the end of the program, I told the Professor that he encouraged me to learn more about these and other composers of the era and schools in Russia. He also performed some of the pieces (piano). I am glad Rabbi Sachs was able to bring this cultural event to our community. I hope concerts (like this and others) continue to bring us together.

By the way, some nosh and alcohol were available for purchase at this event. So please try to attend the next one!

---Neal Abramson



**Jewish Life through Music led by Rabbi Sacks  
Mondays at 7 p.m. via Zoom resumes**

Rabbi Sacks continues his course designed to help us to think more deeply about the American Jewish experience, and our own relationship to Judaism and Jewishness through stories of the evolving nature of Jewish music. Rabbi Sacks co-authored the curriculum used in this course, developed for Stories of Music, a project of the Center for Music of American Jewish Experience at The UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music.

Rabbi Sacks is now teaching a unit entitled ***Tzedek, Tzedek (Tashir v') Tirdof--Music in Doing Justice***. So far, this unit has explored two facets of doing social justice work--and the music that propels it:

- Rallying and protesting against injustice in real time: **The Power of Protest**
- Teaching and mobilizing against injustice: **The Power of Ritual**

Beginning in March, Rabbi Sacks will highlight a third facet:

- Advocating and galvanizing against injustice: **The Power of Performance**

We will highlight:

- several key protests against injustice in American history, music that propelled and sustained them, and Jewish involvement in both;(especially) the era of the civil rights movement, with other eras explored as well;
- how the Passover seder serves as an example of and model for the revisioning, refocusing and utilization of rituals/liturgical moments in service of social justice values and concerns;
- Jewish involvement in many aspects of most entertainment genres and moments that served to reflect and/or forward the work of justice.
- several key moments in the history of musical performance, especially in the era of the Civil Rights Movement, and how music served them or responded to them;
- Jewish involvement in many aspects of most entertainment genres and moments that served to reflect and/or forward the work of justice;
- how Jewish creativity continues to draw from and motivate the call to social justice.

Please come prepared to learn, grow, and appreciate your own connection to the richness of Jewish life through our music. This course is to savor and enjoy!



## Mussar: Deepening Our Character

Fran Lande, Lifelong Learning chair, will continue her class on Thursdays in March at 7 PM via Zoom. We will be looking at Jewish Values and helping to create a life of meaning and purpose. Through a variety of materials, participants will have the opportunity to discover and wrestle with key Jewish concepts.

So far we have explored the middot of Humility/Anavah and Patience/Savlanut. Together we gained insight into the meaning of each and how to better balance the role they play in our daily interactions. Our next middah will be Gratitude/ HaKarat HaTov.

No previous knowledge of Hebrew or text study required, just a desire to learn and make sense of our lives! You can join us even if you have not been able to attend the previous classes.

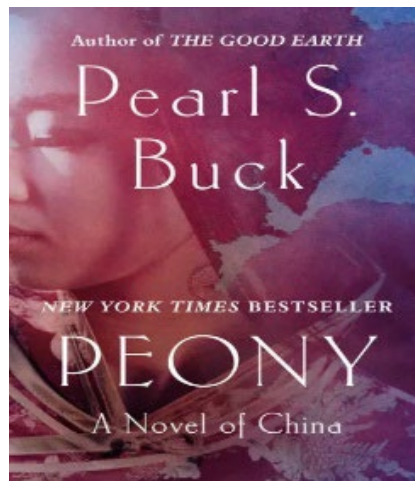


## Reviewing Our Past Session and Looking Forward to Our Next

On **Wednesday, March 20, via Zoom**, a special convening of our Significant Jewish Book Club was held. It also served as the final program in our series, *Limnot Yameinu Kein Hoda: Graceful Aging* (see a report on this elsewhere in this *Migdalor* issue). Fran Lande led a discussion of the book ***Getting Good at Getting Older***, co-authored by Rabbi Laura Geller—the inaugural speaker in our series of programs on aging—and Richard Siegel, z”l, Rabbi Geller’s late husband. The work, a National Jewish Book Award finalist, empowers us to navigate our “golden” years. It brings humor, warmth, and more than 4,000 years of Jewish experience to the question of how to shape this stage of life. This session was offered as part of our recent program on Graceful Aging.

Participants explored the sections of “Getting Good at Gaining Wisdom” and “Getting Good at Giving Away.” After exploring the concept of “gaining a heart of wisdom”, various avenues of study/learning, mindfulness, and community were shared. The concept of legacy was also.

On **Wednesday, May 22, 2024 at 7:00 PM on Zoom** we will discuss ***Peony***, by the acclaimed Nobel laureate Pearl S. Buck. *Peony* tells of a Chinese woman in love with a Jewish man in nineteenth-century China. Noted for its subtle and balanced treatment of colliding traditions, the novel concerns love, identity, and the tragedy and beauty found at the intersection of two disparate cultures.



For more information, please contact Fran Lande, Lifelong Learning Chair at [fblande@gmail.com](mailto:fblande@gmail.com)

## Empty Seat in the Sanctuary

**There are still 200+ hostages under Hamas control, and each one needs our prayers for liberation. Congregation Am HaYam has been matched with hostages**

**Yarden Romann &  
Romi Bat Merav**

**We are thrilled that Yarden has been released!**  
**However, we will continue keep empty seats for them at our synagogue and pray for their and all the hostages safe return.**



## PASSOVER LORE—DO YOU KNOW?

### NAMES OF THE FESTIVAL:

**Chag Ha-Matzot** (“Festival of the Unleavened Bread”), *reflects the centrality of matzah* in the celebration of Pesach.

**Chag Ha-Pesach** (“Festival of the Paschal Lamb Offering”), *recalls the offering that was brought to the Beit HaMikdash* (Holy Temple) in Jerusalem in former times, even as the word “Pesach” (from the Hebrew, “to protect”) links us to the biblical account of the tenth plague during which the Angel of Death “protected” our ancestors’ homes.

**Chag He-Aviv** (“Festival of the Semi-ripe Barley”; in later Hebrew this name connotes “Festival of Spring”), *reminds us of the agricultural dimensions and seasonal significance* of the Festival.

**Z’man Cheruteinu** (“Season of Our Freedom”), *marks the attainment of the goal of freedom* from bondage by our ancestors. The Sages chose this name for use *in every Amidah* (central prayer) *and Birkat HaMazon* (the Blessing after Meals/Nourishment) throughout Passover.

### MA-OT CHITTIM (“Wheat Money”):

For Passover, special **care must be taken to provide for the poor, as the costs for Passover observance are greater than usual**. Less fortunate Jews should yet be able to celebrate free of worry on the Festival of Freedom. The practice of distributing *ma-ot chittim* (also known as *kimcha d’Pischa*, literally “Passover flour”) was instituted so that the needs of the indigent might be met. This custom has given rise, in local communities, to the creation of special Passover funds. The money for selling one’s chametz (see below) is generally channeled into such a fund.

### CHAMETZ:

**Any product that is fermented or that can cause fermentation may not be eaten on Passover. Only five grains are included in this prohibition: wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt.** Any food or drink made from one of these grains, or which contains one of these grains, even a most miniscule amount, is considered chametz. Obviously, matzah is made from one of these five grains, although careful attention has ensured that no leavening has occurred.

In addition, all utensils that come into contact with chametz may not be used during Pesach or even on the day preceding it. These and any non-Pesach foods we are saving are stored where we won’t see them or get into them. (The prohibition includes not seeing chametz in one’s domain.) The surfaces upon which we prepare food, cook food, and eat food are scoured and usually covered for the duration of the Festival.

The refrigerator is likewise cleaned to remove any trace of chametz. Many utensils may be “kashered” for Passover, that is, they might be rendered usable for the holy day by following the traditions for doing so.

**Ashkenazi Jews have in the past followed the minhag (custom) of treating rice, corn, peanuts or members of the pea family as chametz** because these products swell when cooked and so resemble a leavening process. Some Ashkenazi commentators do allow the use of derivatives of these products (e.g. oil). Sephardic tradition allows these products, in any form,

to be eaten.

That said, the **Committee on Jewish Law and Standards (CJLS) of the Conservative Movement has ruled** unanimously in separate rulings **that peanuts and string beans are not members of the pea family** and hence should not fall under this minhag (**and are hence fully acceptable for Passover use in all forms by all Jews**). Moreover, in 2015, the CJLS published two separate rulings **allowing Ashkenazi Jews to eat rice, corn, peanuts, et al, just as our Sephardic brothers and sisters do.** [Here is a link](#) to the one written for our North American context. The permissibility for Ashkenazi Jews to eat these products is *not* a requirement, of course, but a possibility, one that can be especially helpful to those on certain restrictive diets.

**Whether one follows Sephardic or Ashkenazic tradition, one is keeping kosher for Passover.** For those who choose to follow the Sephardic practice, please note a number of caveats. For Ashkenazic Jews, please note that eating off kosher-for-Passover plates that have had items like corn on them does not in any way adversely affect your own keeping of Passover. In addition, **Ashkenazi Jews are fully able to eat derivatives of rice, peanuts, et al, such as peanut oil.** Please contact me with any specific questions.

Finally, in addition to a prohibition on eating chametz, one cannot get any advantage from it. So, for example, Jewish bakeries often close during the week of Passover to not make money from chametz during the holy day.

M'CHIRAT CHAMETZ (Selling Chametz):

Since one must not own any chametz during Pesach, **any chametz stored is sold (to a non-Jew) for the duration of Pesach.** The transaction is technically an actual sale: People sign a document appointing the Rabbi as their legal agent for this purpose. Food that is sold must be placed out of the way and covered, along with the year-round ("chametz-dik") dishes, so that one does not encounter the chametz during Pesach itself.

At the end of the holiday, the agent (i.e.the rabbi) arranges for the reversion of ownership of the now permitted chametz. Some who do not change dishes nevertheless should consider selling their actual chametz. **Those needing or desiring Rabbi Sacks' help** to accomplish this mitzvah **should contact him by 10 p.m. Saturday, April 20 or mail/scan the form elsewhere in this Migdalor to him so that it arrives to him before Sunday, April 21.** The Rabbi's address is: Rabbi J.B. Sacks, 78759 Platinum Drive, Palm Desert, CA 92211.

B'DIKAT CHAMETZ/BI-UR CHAMETZ (Search for/Burning of Chametz):

**After thoroughly cleaning one's home, a search for leaven takes place, usually on the evening before Pesach begins, i.e. the night before the first seder.** This year the search takes place on **Sunday, April 21.** So as not to make this search in vain, a few crumbs or pieces of chametz are conspicuously placed, searched for by candlelight and when "found," swept onto a wooden spoon with a feather. (Obviously, it is helpful to count how many pieces of bread/candy/whatever you have conveniently placed throughout the house so that no chametz remains!) Children (of all ages) delight in this tradition. One does not have to have a wooden spoon and/or feather to conduct the search. A blessing is recited before the search, and a declaration is recited following it. [Here is a copy of these](#) for convenience.

The following morning before 10:00 a.m. or so (consult the Rabbi if more specificity is required), these last crumbs/pieces are burned (in some places, flushed or thrown in the outside garbage



can). A short declaration is recited both evening and morning, [which you can find here](#).

Any other chametz found in the house is then considered to be “mere dust” and not food (and hence, the household is still considered to be fully kosher for Pesach for the family that worked so hard to clean. (A humane remedy if there ever was one!!!) Many modern young families, whether traditionally kosher for Pesach or not, have now incorporated this Ritual in whole or in part as a feature of their family’s preparation for Pesach. **This year the first seder takes place on Monday, April 22, so the search for chametz takes place on Sunday evening, April 21, with the burning/disposal of chametz the next morning.**

ON MATZAH and MATZAH SH’MURAH ("Watched Matzah"):

One may eat matzah at any time during Passover (and during the year), but **the mitzvah** ("commandment") **to eat matzah applies only to the seder on the first night**—and even then one only needs to eat matzah immediately following the recitation of the blessing for matzah recited during the seder. The general standard for matzah is that the process is supervised “from the time the grain is milled (into flour).” From that point on, it is to be stored in cool conditions and kept away from water or moisture until the time for baking it into matzah.

Some, however, have the custom, especially for seder evenings, of applying a stricter level of supervision called *sh’murah mish’at k’tzirah*, "supervised from the time of reaping." The grain for this matzah is watched from the time it is harvested to ensure that no moisture has affected it. Such a stricture is apparently post-Talmudic. Chassidim use only this *matzah sh’murah* for all of Pesach. Most of us are not this strict. Nonetheless, many of us enhance our own *s’darim* (plural of seder) with *matzah sh’murah*.



***Matzah sh’murah*** usually comes in large round cakes, with a different taste and texture. It **more closely simulates what our ancestors actually ate in haste when they were leaving Egypt**. Although one can find this matzah in the square or rectangular prepackaged format like the more common plain matzah as well, we prefer the round, handmade kind specifically to better recall the original Exodus experience.

TA’ANIT B’CHOROT (*Fast of the Firstborn*):

**Firstborn Jews fast from sunrise the day before Passover, i.e. daytime leading up to the first seder.** This fast, Ta’anit B’chorot (also known as Ta’anit B’chorim), commemorates the miracle that the firstborn Jews were spared from the tenth plague that killed every firstborn

Egyptian. Some authorities insist that both firstborn women and firstborn men should fast. Since we in the Conservative Movement promote equality of women and men, we adopt the approach that *all* firstborns should fast—unless they attend a *siyyum* (see next paragraph).

However, a Jewish legal principle emphasizes the importance of Torah study. A *siyyum* ("conclusion") finalizes the study of a block of text (often a tractate of Talmud) by formally studying the final lines. Usually held immediately after shacharit (morning) services, a *siyyum* is followed by a *se'udat mitzvah*, a mandatory "feast" to celebrate the completion of significant learning by someone. This brings any fast observed up to that point to an abrupt end for all who are present. If you are looking for a *siyyum*, you may be able to attend one virtually with a sister Conservative Movement synagogue.

However, some firstborn choose to absent themselves from a *siyyum* because they prefer to fast—not only to connect with this piece of history and tradition, but in order to heighten the taste, both gastronomic and spiritual, of the seder—or, alternatively, to commemorate the three-day fast in the time of Queen Esther which took place at Passover time (and not at Purim!). For those fasting, this year's Ta'anit Bechorot starts at sunrise on Monday, April 22, and continues until after sundown that evening, that is, until the seder itself!

S' FIRAT HA-OMER ("Counting of the Omer"):

**The Torah commands us to count seven full weeks from the time we bring the omer.** On the fiftieth day we are to bring an offering of new grain to the Holy One (*Leviticus 23;15-16*). An omer was a sheaf or a dry measure of barley from the new spring harvest that was brought to the Temple on the second day of Passover. We still count these seven weeks.

**The purpose of the counting**, according to the Kabbalists (mystics), **is to join Passover, the festival of physical redemption and emancipation, with Shavuot, the festival when the Israelites entered into the brit, the covenant with God** (and receiving the Torah), making it the festival of spiritual freedom. In this understanding, the purpose of the Exodus was to get to Mount Sinai. While it is true that without Pesach, there would not have been Shavuot, it is equally clear that without the goal of Shavuot, Pesach would be divested of much of its significance. Thus the days between the two festivals are anxiously and expectantly counted, just as one awaits a close friend by counting the days until her or his arrival.

**Starting on the second night of Passover (Tuesday, April 23)**, during the second seder, until the evening of Shavuot, **we count the omer by reciting a special benediction** concerning the counting of the Omer **and then enumerate what day of the omer period we are in**. We do so using two methods: by the exact number of days (e.g. the twenty-third day) and by the number of weeks (e.g. three weeks and two days). Enumerating in both methods helps avoid any confusion.

MAIMUNA

**Among Maghrebi Jews** (Jews of Northwest African descent), **Passover is somewhat extended by celebrating the day after Pesach** (evening and next day, April 30-May 1) as Maimuna.

The holiday's name is unclear. Some point to **Maimun (Abu Nuh), king of the Djinns**, a supernatural spirit among indigenous religions of North Africa, known as the ruler of Saturday and who was associated with the color black and with the metal gold.



*Maimun (Abu Nuh), king of the Djinn*

A second understanding is that it is related to **the Arabic word for wealth and good fortune, *ma'amoun*, literally “protected by God.”** The word seems linguistically related to the Aramaic and Hebrew *ma-mon*, meaning “money.” Since Passover is the beginning of the new agricultural year, when the world is judged for produce, it is a time to pray for plentiful crops, symbolic of general prosperity.

Finally, a third suggestion is that the day may be **the *azkarah* (anniversary of the death) of Maimon ben Joseph**, the father of the great Jewish philosopher Rambam (Maimonides). Maimon was a scholar in his own right who lived in Fez (Morocco) and wrote on Jewish-Islamic relations. Perhaps the title is meant to be ambiguous and incorporates all of these possibilities

Coins, candy, and grass are thrown to the children upon returning from synagogue. The coins and candy represent the wealth (*mamon*) and food that the Israelites brought out of Egypt on their way to freedom, and the grass symbolizes the reeds of the Red Sea. (The Red Sea will again part; however, in this case someone must sweep up the grass!)

The table is set with various types of good luck symbols: pitchers of milk, garlands of leaves and flowers, branches of fig trees, ears of wheat, a plate of fresh flour with a coin, a jar of honey, various greens and a fish bowl complete with (raw, fresh) fish, the latter an obvious and common symbol of fertility. The menu consists of an array of sweets, including coconut macaroons, marzipan stuffed dates and walnut pancakes known as *mufleta*. Since the sweets were prepared during *Chol ha-Moed*, the intermediate days of Pesach, they are prepared with attention to the laws of Pesach food preparation.



*A Maimuna gathering: Look at the gorgeous spread of food!*

Traditionally, Maimuna is the time for matchmaking among the young. In Israel, Maimuna takes place outdoors in a picnic-like atmosphere characterized by (what else?) much eating, drinking, and singing. Exactly how this festival originated is obscure—yet it reflects an immediate transition to the agricultural themes and dairy foods of the Omer period and Shavuot respectively.

#### **ON KASHERING YOUR HOME and BUYER'S GUIDE**

For information on kashering your kitchen and home, and for information on buying for Pesach, please use the [Pesach guide](#) produced by our Conservative Movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards (CJLS). Of course, for all specific questions you have, please contact Rabbi Sacks.

## DOCUMENT OF PERMISSION/*SH'TAR HARSHA'AH* FOR SALE OF CHAMETZ

This sale is usually executed by appointing someone knowledgeable as your agent by completing a *Sh'tar Harsha'ah*, or Document of Permission. The agent then sells your chametz by writing a *Sh'tar M'chirah*, or Document of Sale. Because one should not own chametz, you should sell your chametz even if you will be away for the duration of the holiday. Rabbi Sacks is honored to serve as your agent for this purpose. For up-to-date information on prohibited and permitted foods, check out the [Committee on Jewish Law and Standards' guide for Pesach](#).

In order to make your home fully ready for Pesach you should:

1. Fill out the form below and mail/scan to Rabbi Sacks so that it arrives to him by the end of the day Saturday, April 20. Otherwise, Email him and give him the information by Saturday evening April 21 after Shabbat until 10 p.m.
2. Search your home (*b'dikat chametz*) on the evening of Sunday, April 21 (See elsewhere in this Migdalor for more of an explanation).
3. On Monday, April 22 remove and burn all chametz by 10:00 a.m., if possible. Your home should be completely kosher for Pesach at this time.

---

### ***Sh'tar Harsha-ah*--Document of Permission**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby designate Rabbi J.B. Sacks as my agent to sell all my chametz, including but not limited to any leavened food, dishes, pots, pans and utensils, which may be in my possession. I understand that the sale will be in effect at noon on Monday, April 22 until after sundown Thursday, April 30, 2023.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please either:

1. Download, sign, and scan--and then email to Rabbi Sacks at: [rabbijbsacks@gmail.com](mailto:rabbijbsacks@gmail.com), or
2. Send completed form to Rabbi Sacks at:  
Rabbi J.B. Sacks  
78759 Platinum Drive  
Palm Desert, CA 92211

## WHAT'S COOKIN' FOR PESACH?--LET MY PEOPLE ENJOY!

Shalom, friends!

Enjoy the following recipes for/during Passover. Dishes are pareve, except where noted, with suggestions for making pareve.

*Chag kasher v'samei-ah--a joyful, meaningful, kosher Pesach!*

*Rabbi Sacks*

### Chinese Charoset

Time for something different on your seder plate? Soy sauce, pine nuts and honey. In contrast with most charoset recipes, this one is slightly savory.

#### INGREDIENTS

½ lb. of dates (about 1½ cups, finely chopped)	3 T soy sauce
4 apples (finely chopped)	4 T honey
½ c. pine nuts	juice of one orange

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat all ingredients in a saucepan until soft and smooth (about 5 minutes).
2. Let cool.

Makes approximately 6 cups.

### ULIFLOWER POPPERS

#### INGREDIENTS

1 lg. head of cauliflower (or frozen)	1½ t. Paprika
1 T. garlic powder	½ t. Salt
1 t. chili powder	vegetable oil spray

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut up cauliflower into bite-size pieces. Place in large Ziploc bag.
2. Sprinkle in all of the spices and shake until the cauliflower is evenly coated.
3. Spray a baking sheet with vegetable spray and place the cauliflower on it.
4. Bake at 400 degrees for about ½ hour, or until cauliflower is cooked through.
5. Serve warm.

## **CARROT KUGEL**

### **INGREDIENTS**

3 c. grated carrots	1½ c. finely ground matzah meal
1 c. apple sauce	1 T. baking powder
½ c. honey (date honey is best)	1 t. cinnamon
½ c. oil	raisins, to taste (optional)

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Mix all the ingredients together.
2. Oil a baking pan.
3. Pour into the baking pan.
4. Bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes.

## **MUSHROOM STEAKS**

### **INGREDIENTS**

1 pkg. Portobello mushrooms	¼ c. water
2 cloves garlic, chopped	1 t. thyme
¼ c. olive oil	

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Gently remove stems from mushrooms. (Save them for another recipe!)
2. In a Ziploc bag, add all the ingredients.
3. Let mushrooms marinate for a couple of hours.
4. Heat oven to 350 degrees.
5. Remove mushrooms from marinade and roast on a cookie sheet for 20 minutes.
6. Flip mushrooms and cook for 5 more minutes.
7. Serve warm.

## **MACADAMIA NUT BANANA CREAM**

### **INGREDIENTS**

3 c. macadamia nuts	1 t. vanilla
3 T. coconut oil.	¼ c. maple syrup
3 large bananas	

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Place ingredients in a strong food processor.
2. Process until smooth.
3. Serve chilled.

## MATZAH TOFFEE BAR CRUNCH

### INSTRUCTIONS

6 sheets matzah (or enough  
to cover baking sheet)  
1 c. (2 sticks) margarine/butter  
1½ c. brown sugar

1 t. vanilla  
1¼ c. chocolate chips  
sea salt, to taste (*optional*)  
slivered almonds, tasted (*optional*)

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with foil. Cover with matzah.
2. In a small saucepan over medium heat, bring margarine/butter and brown sugar to a boil, stirring constantly as margarine melts.
3. Add vanilla and boil 2-4 minutes.
4. Pour over matzah. Bake for 15 minutes.
5. Immediately sprinkle with chocolate chips. Wait 5 minutes as chocolate melts. Using a spatula, spread chocolate in an even layer. Sprinkle with optional garnish.
6. Chill in the freezer to set. Break into pieces. Store in an airtight container.





## WHAT DO YOU PUT IN YOUR RECYCLE BIN ?

If you are putting newspapers, magazines, shredded mail, frozen meal containers and glass in your bin for the city to pick up that is great. **If you are still putting in soda cans and water bottles, please consider saving them for CAH.**

Soda cans are recyclable. Plastic water bottles, both plain and flavored can be recycled. From the small 4 ounce to the large half gallon bottles can bring money in to CAH.

If you think a few cents doesn't matter, I can tell you a small income on a regular basis adds up. Since we started in 2014 CAH has earned \$ 1,173.32. You can bring the recycles to services or you can save them in 13 or 33 gallon bags and I will be happy to pick them up.

There are lots of holiday parties coming up between now and New Years Eve. You might ask neighbors to save them.

Call me for any questions or to pick up. You can call me at home or leave a message on the temple phone at 805-644-2899.

Thank you so much.

Ruth Resnick



## **GIVING**

**SUPPORT YOUR SYNAGOGUE WHEN YOU DINE, SHOP,  
TRAVEL OR FOR ENTERTAINMENT**

**PURCHASE GIFT CARDS ([SCRIP](#)) FOR YOUR FAVORITE  
RESTAURANT, STORE (INCLUDING MARKETS), GAS  
STATIONS AND/OR MOVIE THEATERS, ENTERTAINMENT  
VENUES AND MORE.**

**YOU GET DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR VALUE FOR  
WHATEVER YOU PURCHASE, WHILE AM HAYAM GETS A  
PERCENTAGE.**



**Click picture above for link to retailer list.**

**April: Get in on All the Excitement Here at CAH!**

Here at CAH we offer an extensive set of ongoing, recurring events.

Brenda sends out the link for the Zoom or YouTube link ahead of time, so that it will be towards the top of your Email inbox. Services are coordinated by Rabbi Sacks; all other events are coordinated by our Life-Long Learning Chair, Fran Lande. If you have questions about our non-service offerings or have suggestions for other events, please contact Fran. Please contact [fblande@gmail.com](mailto:fblande@gmail.com)

EVENT	LEADER	DAY and TIME	DATES
Erev Shabbat (Friday night) services	Rabbi Sacks	Friday, 7:30p at CAH and Streaming	April 5
Shabbat services	Rabbi Sacks	Saturday, 10a at CAH and Streaming	April 6
Erev Shabbat (Friday night) services	Fran Lande	Friday, 7p on Zoom	April 19
Shabbat Services	Fran Lande	Saturday, 10a on Zoom	April 20
Passover 2 <sup>nd</sup> Morning Services	Rabbi Sacks	Wednesday, 10a at CAH and Streaming	April 24
Passover 7 <sup>th</sup> Morning Services	Rabbi Sacks	Monday, 10a at CAH and Streaming	April 29
Passover 8 <sup>th</sup> Morning Services	Rabbi Sacks	Tuesday, 10a at CAH and Streaming	April 30
Community Seder at CAH	Rabbi Sacks	Tuesday 5p Live Only	April 23
Jewish Life through Music	Rabbi Sacks	Mondays, 7p on Zoom	April 1, 8
Mussar: Deepening Our Character	Fran Lande	Thursdays, 7p on Zoom	April 4, 11
Ritual Meeting (via Zoom)	Neal Abramson	Sunday 10a on Zoom	April 14
Board Meeting (Via Zoom)	Brenda Rich	Sunday 11a on Zoom	April 14

## Get Well

Fil Barton

Steven Goch

Alma Boronkay

Fran Lande

Sheila Myles

Arlene Davis

Lee Rothschild

Jerry Davis



## Birthdays

April 7 Evan Karash

April 8 Lois Lebman

## Yahrzeit

### Friday April 5th & Saturday, April 6

Henry Gordon (Chaminia ben Samuel), Father of Joel Gordon  
Ruth Goch, Mother of Steve Goch  
\*George Kunstadt, Husband of Hilda Kunstadt z'l

### Friday, April 19 & Saturday, April 20

\*Rosalyn Lee Gustafson, 1st Wife of Henry Gustafson z'l  
\*Morris Rosenthal, Father of Alma Golden-Boronkay  
Jack Prilook, Brother of Elaine Hanig

May their memories be for a blessing

## **CAH Protocols for Moving Back into Our Building**

*(Revised, February 2022)*

Now that the Omicron surge has waned, we look forward to again having services live in our own CAH home. To do so, these are the protocols we will be following. We thank you in advance for helping make our synagogue space warm, welcoming, and safe for all.

1. Everyone must be fully vaccinated to come to services and events held in our CAH home. Proof of vaccination should be shown the first time entering.
2. Social distancing will be maintained. All rows can be utilized.
3. Wearing masks is optional (as all are fully vaccinated).
4. For those who cannot attend services, we will continue live-streaming our services.
5. Service will continue as we have been doing, with aliyot and honors from the front of the Sanctuary, and not from the bimah.

### **Best Practices/Etiquette Upon Moving Back**

Not everyone is equally comfortable with touch at this time, whether it is a handshake, a hug, or a Shabbat shalom kiss. We can express our joy in seeing each other without these, but if it's something any of us want to do, please ASK the person you are about to greet in a physical way first. Please do not take anyone's "NO" as a rejection. Please support everyone in the comfort level in which they find themselves.

## ORDERING MEMORIAL WALL PLAQUES AT CAH

Jewish tradition sees memory as a sacred act, allowing us to be inspired by the good in a loved one's life and live more fully in our own days. A yahrzeit plaque allows for a permanent remembrance of a loved one, ensuring that his or her name will be recalled in perpetuity in our congregation. It is very meaningful to see the memorial plaque of your loved one on the High Holy Days, especially at the Yom Kippur Yizkor (Remembrance) service, on the Shabbat close to the yahrzeit, and at other special moments (including Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot Yizkor services).

Names on the plaque are automatically recalled publicly at the Shabbat prior to the yahrzeit at both our Friday night and Saturday morning services just before Mourner's Kaddish.

Ordering a plaque is a wonderful way to pay tribute to that special person or persons of blessed memory.

The current cost of ordering a bronze plaque for the memorial wall is \$360.00 per plaque. If you would like to order two plaques now, the cost will be \$330.00 per name. For 3 or more plaques the cost is \$300.00 per name.

Thank you for considering doing this for your loved ones. Their lives will be remembered and an inspiration to many.

Sincerely,

Brenda Rich

PLAQUE #1–Name of deceased: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name \_\_\_\_\_ (son/daughter of) \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Date of death English

Date of death Hebrew

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Before or after sundown \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

PLAQUE #2–Name of deceased: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name \_\_\_\_\_ (son/daughter of) \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Date of death English

Date of death Hebrew

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Before or after sundown \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

PLAQUE #3–Name of deceased: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Name \_\_\_\_\_ (son/daughter of) \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Date of death English

Date of death Hebrew

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Before or after sundown \_\_\_\_\_

If you have more than three plaques, please place information on additional sheets of paper.

Please mail this form with your check for the amount in full to:  
Congregation Am HaYam; Attn: Brenda Rich; 4839 Market St. Unit C; Ventura, CA 93003



# April 2024

## Adar II/Nissan 5784

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Jewish Life through Music 7p on Zoom		IMO Stella Berman	Deepening Our Character 7p on Zoom	Erev Shabbat Services 7:30p at CAH  Light Candles 7:04p	Shabbat Services 10a at CAH  Shabbat ends at 8:00p
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Evan Karash B/D	Jewish Life through Music 7p on Zoom  Lois Lebman B/D	IMO Henry Gordon		Deepening Our Character 7p on Zoom	Light Candles 7:09p	Shabbat ends at 8:06p
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Ritual Meeting 10a  Board Meeting 11a  IMO Ruth Goch	IMO George Kunstadt				Erev Shabbat Services 7p on Zoom  Light Candles 7:15p	Shabbat Services 10a On Zoom  Shabbat ends at 8:12p  IMO Rosalyn Lee Gustafson
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	Passover  Light Candles 7:17p	Passover Seder at CAH 5p	Passover 2 <sup>nd</sup> Morning Service at CAH 10a  IMO Morris Rosenthal	Passover	Light Candles 7:20p  Passover	Shabbat ends at 8:19p  Passover
28	29	30				
Passover	Passover 7 <sup>th</sup> Morning Service 10a at CAH  IMO Jack Prilook	Passover 8 <sup>th</sup> Morning Service w/Yitzkor at CAH				



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Arnie Fingerhut z'l  
Jerry Ruthman z'l  
Peter Shack z'l  
Brenda Rich

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Oneg Shabbat - Fil Barton  
Tributes - Lois Lebman  
Purchasing - Ruth Resnick  
Yahrzeits - Brenda Rich  
Migdalar - Mark Rich  
Webmaster - Mark Rich

## Rabbi J.B. Sacks

rabbijbsacks@gmail.com Phone # 323-387-0096

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