



SH'MA YISRAEL
HEBREW CONGREGATION INC.



PASSOVER
AND THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

פסח

וחג המצות

Passover is an appointed season which the children of Israel are commanded to observe every year on the 14th day of the first month on the Hebrew calendar at dusk (Leviticus 23:5). This month is called Abib (Exodus 13:4, 23:15, 34:18; Deuteronomy 16:1) and is the beginning of months for the children of Israel (Exodus 12:2). Immediately following Passover is the Feast of Unleavened Bread which begins on the 15th day of Abib lasting seven (7) days concluding on the 21st day of Abib.

Both Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread commemorate the first Passover in Egypt and the subsequent Exodus from Egypt. Passover was the night that God “passed over” Egypt slaying all firstborn from man to beast. The service which is to be held regarding the lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs serves as a memorial of the events surrounding the Passover in Egypt. The Feast of Unleavened Bread which follows is a reminder that the children of Israel left Egypt in haste insomuch that they were not able to allow their bread to rise and ate unleavened bread during the initial stages of the Exodus. Exodus 11-13 explains explicitly this series of events.

This is a joyous occasion which connects God with the children of Israel and is a memorial of the “birth” of the nation.

With the Feast of Unleavened Bread come certain laws. These include no eating of anything “leavened” (bread, cake or other baked goods) and the removal of “leavening” from houses (Exodus 12:15, 19-20). The term “leavening” refers explicitly to bread. The words relating to this subject are **שָׂאֵר** and **חֲמִץ**. **שָׂאֵר** means sourdough/yeast and can refer to any agent used to make bread rise and appears five times in the Holy Scriptures. (Exodus 12:15, 12:19, 13:7, Leviticus 2:11 and Deuteronomy 16:4). In modern-day translations the word “fermentation” is often used but does not apply itself in these passages. However, ancient methods used to make bread using sourdough, barm and yeast do apply. By definition fermentation is a process in which an agent causes an organic substance to break down into simpler substances; especially, the anaerobic breakdown of sugar into alcohol and this could not be the **שָׂאֵר** which was commanded to be removed. **חֲמִץ** means to be leavened, cruel or red or in terms of this subject leavened bread when used as a noun (sometimes used loosely to simply mean leaven). As a noun it appears eleven times (Exodus 12:15, 13:3, 7, 23:18, 34:25, Leviticus 2:11, 6:17, 7:13, 23:17, Deuteronomy 16:3 and Amos 4:5). As a verb it appears eight times (Exodus 12:19, 20, 34, 39, Hosea 7:4) all in connection with bread. The other three times **חֲמִץ** appears in the Holy

Scriptures for its other definitions are Psalms 71:4, 73:21 and Isaiah 63:1.

Based upon God's Law and the state of modern processes Sh'ma Yisrael teaches its members to eat only fresh foods and ground foods during this season. As a precaution canned foods, cheese, vinegar containing products, pastas and other flour products are also left alone. The following are a list of ingredients which should be avoided as well.

Ale	Pearlash (Potassium Carbonate)
Baker's Ammonia (Ammonium Bicarbonate)	Potash (Potassium Bicarbonate)
Baker's Yeast	Saleratus (Sodium Bicarbonate)
Baking Powder (Phosphate, Anhydrous Phosphate, Tartic Acid or Sodium Aluminum Sulfatephosphate)	Ammonium Carbonate
Baking Soda (Sodium Bicarbonate)	Ammonium Bicarbonate
Barm	Ammonium Phosphates
Brewer's Yeast	Calcium Phosphates (Mono, Di, Tri, Anhydrous)
Cornstarch	Phosphate
Cream of Tartar (Potassium Bitartrate, Tartic Acid)	Potassium Bicarbonate
Gluten	Potassium Bitartrate
Harts-Horn Powder (Ammonium Bicarbonate)	Potassium Carbonate
(Harts)horn Salt (Ammonium Bicarbonate)	Sodium Acid Pyrophosphate
	Sodium Acid Sulfate
	Sodium Aluminum Phosphate
	Sodium Bicarbonate
	Sodium Phosphate (Moni, Di)
	Tartic Acid

As mentioned before, this is a joyous season and not one which would be difficult to comply with. The Feast of Unleavened Bread merely prohibits the eating of leavened bread.