



# CONGREGATION NER TAMID

OF SOUTH BAY

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March 1, 2010 / 15 Adar 5770

Dear Friends:

I hope that this letter finds all of you after a most enjoyable *Purim* celebration. As the festival of *Pesach* - Passover - is rapidly approaching, **I have enclosed some very important material for your careful review and consultation.**

Included in the attached packet is the following:

A flyer-invitation to our CNT Community Seder on Tuesday evening, March 30<sup>th</sup>.

An order sheet for prepared food for your own Passover Seder, made available by the synagogue as a service to our community.

An authorization-form enabling me to act as your agent for the sale of your *Chametz* (foods you own that are forbidden for use or personal access on *Pesach*). **Please read the material on the form carefully and return the form to me in accordance with the instructions included upon it.**

A guide to pre-Passover observances and customs, including the **Search for Chametz**, the **Fast of The Firstborn**, and the **Burning of Chametz**.

Important reminders and suggestions regarding your Passover Seder, including an **appeal to all who can host individuals for a Seder** who might not have a Seder to attend and some **tips to enhance your family's Seder experience.**

***A guide to identifying Kosher for Passover products and to making your home Kosher for Passover.***

Please feel free to **call me at my CNT-study at (310) 377-6986 with any questions** that you might have as you prepare for *Pesach*.

Arianna, Jacob, and Judah join me in extending to you every blessing for a *Chag Sameach V'Kasher- A Happy and Kosher Passover!*

Rabbi Isaac Jeret  
Spiritual Leader

# **1. WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SALE OF CHAMETZ**

**SELLING YOUR CHAMETZ:** Our households should be cleaned and otherwise prepared for Passover even if they are not kept *Kosher* throughout the rest of the year. Our tradition recognizes that it may be a financial hardship or otherwise difficult to get rid of all of our *Chametz*. There is therefore a tradition of sealing in a cabinet or drawer *Chametz* that we cannot afford to give or throw away (tape the drawer or cabinet to remind all in your home to keep it closed) and then of selling the rights to this *Chametz* (with rights to it reverting to the original owner at the conclusion of the festival) to someone who is neither Jewish nor participating in any Passover observances (and who is therefore not bound by Jewish tradition to be rid of *Chametz*). I will arrange for this transaction on behalf of CNT members and others in our community. However, **I must be explicitly authorized by you to sell your *Chametz*. Please complete and return to me the written authorization found at the bottom of this page NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, MARCH 26<sup>TH</sup>, at 2:30 PM.**

**PLEASE NOTE:** *Chametz* sold on your behalf should be sealed by 7:30 PM on Sunday, March 28<sup>th</sup> and shouldn't be accessed until 9:00 PM on Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>.

**MA'OT CHITTIM - MONEY FOR WHEAT:** The selling of *Chametz* is combined with another *Mitzvah* known as *Ma'ot Chittim* -- Money for Wheat. **We have the responsibility of seeing to it that every Jew has food for *Pesach* or otherwise. It is customary to make a donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund for *Ma'ot Chittim* as part of the authorization process for the sale of *Chametz*. You are *not* "paying the rabbi" to sell your *Chametz*.** Rather, you are making a contribution that will help to ensure that those who are hungry, whether on Passover or otherwise, will have food to eat (funds collected are distributed to individuals in need or to organizations that provide food services for those in need). **Our tradition demands of us that we care for those who are hungry as we prepare to celebrate with all of our traditional Seder delicacies.**

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**Complete, sign, and return this form to Rabbi Jeret together with your check for *Ma'ot Chittim* no later than: Friday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, at 2:30 PM**

I / we \_\_\_\_\_, residing at \_\_\_\_\_

and / or working at \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

authorize Rabbi Isaac Jeret, Spiritual Leader of Congregation Ner Tamid of South Bay, to sell my / our *Chametz* in accordance with the custom of Jewish law. (If you are selling *Chametz* in your place of work, please list that address as well in the space above.)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*PLEASE NOTE: Please enclose with this authorization your check made out to "CNT Rabbi's Discretionary Fund". On the memo line, please write, "MA'OT CHITTIM."**

**\*\* PLEASE NOTE: *Chametz* sold on your behalf should be sealed up by 7:30 PM on Sunday, March 28<sup>th</sup> and cannot be accessed or used until 9:00 PM on Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>.**

## **2. PRE-PASSOVER OBSERVANCES AND CUSTOMS**

**QUESTIONS REGARDING PASSOVER (PREPARATIONS OR OTHERWISE):** Please feel free to consult with me regarding any questions that you may have in connection to making your home Kosher for Passover, your purchase of Kosher for Passover Products, or anything else related to the Passover Seder or the celebration of the Festival. **To reach me with a question related to Passover call me at my synagogue-study at (310) 377-6986.**

**BEDIKAT CHAMETZ -- SEARCH FOR CHAMETZ:** In order to divest ourselves of *Chametz* we follow several procedures. First, we clean all areas of our homes, as well as office space and cars. **The evening before *Pesach*, (Thursday night, in years when the first Seder falls on a Friday night) we engage in a special search of our homes called *Bedikat Chametz*.** It is traditional to do the following:

1. Place some breadcrumbs on an open surface in each room of our homes.
  2. Turn off all lights in our homes.
  3. Use a candle to light the way as we walk from room to room.
  4. Use a feather to sweep the crumbs off the surfaces and use a wooden spoon as a dustpan to collect the crumbs.
  5. Deposit the crumbs into a small paper or plastic bag that is brought along from room to room.
- Seal the bag and either burn it (see below) or discard it (beyond the boundary of your property) by 10:00 AM on Monday morning, March 29th.

You will find the procedure and blessing for this search toward the front of most Haggadahs. **Many families turn this search into a family-game of “hot and cold,” much like the search for the *Afikoman* the following night at the *Seder*.**

**BI'UR CHAMETZ -- BURNING OF CHAMETZ:** The crumbs collected the previous evening, the feather and spoon used to collect them, and the bag into which all of the above were placed must either be burned by 10:00 AM on the day prior to the first *Seder* or discarded (legally, of course) beyond the boundaries of your property. For those who practice the tradition of burning these items (in a ritual known as *Bi'ur Chametz* – The Burning of *Chametz*), **we will burn *Chametz* together at CNT on Monday morning, March 29<sup>th</sup>, just after the *Siyyum* and breakfast (see below). Please note that on Monday morning, March 29<sup>th</sup>, one should not eat *Chametz* after 10:00 AM.**

**FAST OF THE FIRSTBORN:** Our tradition encourages us always to remember that our Exodus from slavery necessitated the suffering of the ancient Egyptians. One custom by which we recall the plagues brought upon our oppressors is the *Fast of the Firstborn*, which takes place on *Erev Pesach* – the day of the first *Seder*. As the final plague brought upon the Egyptians was the slaying of their firstborn, some in the Jewish community observe a fast of our own firstborn just prior to the celebration of our People's freedom. *To alleviate those who abide by this custom of their obligation to fast, it has become customary to hold a Siyyum -- a celebration of the conclusion of a unit of study of Rabbinic Literature -- on Erev Pesach. Such a celebration is itself a cause for a blessing over food and drink and supersedes any obligation to fast. We will begin with a brief Shacharit Service at 8:15 AM on Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. We will conclude our Siyyum and breakfast by 9:15 AM. Everyone is welcome to attend -- not only our firstborn!*

### **3. SEDER NOTES**

**SEDER HOSPITALITY:** *None of us should ever be alone for a Passover Seder.* A Seder-table without guests is missing an essential element. **If you can host someone who would otherwise be alone, please let me know immediately by calling me at (310) 377-6986.** Likewise, if you haven't any plans as yet to attend a Seder, know that many in our community would take great pleasure in hosting you and would enjoy your company. **Please call me at the number above to inform me that you seek a place at a Seder. Arrangements will be made for you to attend a Seder locally.**

**CNT COMMUNITY SEDER:** *On the second night of Passover (Tuesday night, March 30<sup>th</sup>), I will lead a Community Seder, hosted by our congregation and held in the Levine Community Center. For reservations, please call Jackie at the CNT office.* Please note that space is limited and reservations will be accepted on a first-come / first-served basis.

**QUESTIONS REGARDING PASSOVER:** Please feel free to consult with me regarding any questions that you may have in connection to making your home Kosher for Passover, your purchase of Kosher for Passover Products, or anything else related to the Passover Seder or the celebration of the Festival. **To reach me, call me at my synagogue study at (310) 377-6986.**

**TOP TEN BEST SEDER PRACTICES:** The following ideas were compiled by *Synagogue 3000* as ideas to enliven our Seders:

1. Set an hourglass timer on Seder table. Don't let more than 5 minutes pass without someone asking a question.
2. Have participants sign their *Haggadah*. Each year, look back and see who has been with you in the past; remember funny stories, and be touched by people who can no longer be at your table. If you are not comfortable writing during the Seder, have people sign before the holiday begins!
3. Make a family-*Haggadah*. Assign everyone a page or section 1 month before. Collate each section & copy for all participants. Adults/teens can be responsible for the text and kids for drawings.
4. Bring props. Buy them at your local Judaica store (you can buy a "Bag of Plagues") or make them with your family. Props aren't limited to plagues. Turn your house into a Jewish/Egyptian home!
5. Personalize the Seder experience. Assign everyone a section of the *Haggadah* to study in advance. At the Seder, people bring readings/questions to the group, depending on their assignment.
6. Incorporate new traditions into your Seder. Learn about "The orange on the Seder plate," or Miriam's Cup rituals, or a Fourth *Matzah* for Jews who are not free today to have a Seder of their own.
7. Invite each person at your Passover Seder on the first night to come with a difficult question – either factual or spiritual in nature. Questions not answered are assigned to participants to find answers for the second Seder. The first day of Passover can then be spent in preparation for that night. If you won't all be together the 2<sup>nd</sup> night, circulate answers during the week (maybe via e-mail).
8. Enliven your Seder experience with some musical instruments. Encourage people to bring rhythm instruments like tambourines or egg shakers.
9. Try to have more than one version of the *Haggadah* at your Seder. While many *Haggadot* have essentially the same pieces, some include extra questions or phrase sections differently. Looking at differences can spawn more questions. Ask people to explain what strikes them about the differences.
10. Make *Pesach* fortune cookies for dessert. Create fortune cookies by tying two pieces of chocolate covered *Matzah* together with a colorful ribbon. In between the *Matzah*, include a note: it can be a silly joke, a Jewish fact, or a wish for the coming year. Don't forget to have everyone read theirs aloud!

## **4. A GUIDE TO KOSHER FOR PASSOVER PRODUCTS & TO MAKING YOUR HOME KOSHER FOR PASSOVER**

*\*Adapted from 2009 Rabbinical Assembly Pesach Guide*

The Torah prohibits the ownership of *Chametz* (leaven) during *Pesach*. By selling and storing your *Chametz*, as per page #1 of this packet, you will avoid ownership of *Chametz* on Passover. Since the Torah prohibits the eating of *Chametz* during *Pesach*, and since many common foods contain some admixture of *Chametz*, guidance is necessary when shopping and preparing for *Pesach*.

During the eight days of *Pesach*, *Chametz* cannot lose its identity in an admixture. Therefore, the minutest amount of *Chametz* renders the whole admixture *Chametz* and its use on *Pesach* is prohibited. However, during the rest of the year, *Chametz* follows the normal rules of admixture, i.e. it loses its identity in an admixture of one part *Chametz* and sixty parts of non-*Chametz* (*batel be-shishim*). This affords us the opportunity to differentiate between foods purchased before and during *Pesach*.

What follows is a general guideline. However, you should call me when doubt arises. In particular, consult me regarding products that have *Kosher L'Pesach* – Kosher for Passover -- labels that do not bear the name of a rabbi or one of the recognized symbols of rabbinic supervision, or which are not integral to the package (e.g., stickers bearing notice of "Kosher for Passover"). However, feel free to call me with any questions that might arise more generally as you prepare for Passover.

**Prohibited foods on Passover include the following: leavened bread, cakes, biscuits, crackers, cereal, coffees containing cereal derivatives, wheat, barley, oats, spelt, rye, and all liquids containing ingredients or flavors made from grain alcohol.**

Most Ashkenazic authorities have added the following foods (*Kitniyot*) to the above list of prohibited foods: rice, corn, millet, legumes (beans and peas; however, string beans are permitted). Peanuts and peanut oil are permissible. Legumes in a form other than their natural state are permissible (e.g., corn sweeteners, corn oil, soy oil). Sephardic authorities permit the use of all of the above.

**If you are of Ashkenazic descent, the custom is to practice the Ashkenazic custom. If you are of Sephardic descent, the custom is to practice the Sephardic custom. If your diet would be severely restricted as a consequence of adhering to the Ashkenazic practice, it may be permissible for you to adhere to the Sephardic practice even though you are of Ashkenazic descent (e.g., you are allergic to gluten and cannot eat Matzah, you are a strict vegan or vegetarian and would not have reasonable variety of diet and might risk sufficient nutrition if you were to practice the Ashkenazic custom, you are on a diet to lose weight per your Doctor's orders and your diet includes *Kitniyot* as important foods or ingredients in foods you must eat, etc.). In such instances, please be sure to consult with me.**

### **PERMITTED FOODS:**

- A. The following foods require no *Kosher L'Pesach* label if purchased prior to Passover: Unopened packages or containers of natural coffee without cereal additives (however, be aware that coffees produced by General Foods are not Kosher for Passover unless marked KP); sugar, pure tea (not herbal tea); salt (not iodized); pepper; natural spices; frozen fruit juices with no additives; frozen (uncooked) vegetables (for legumes see above); milk; butter; cottage cheese; cream cheese; ripened cheeses such as cheddar (hard), muenster (semi-soft) and Camembert (soft); frozen (uncooked) fruit (with no additives); baking soda.
- B. The following foods require no *Kosher L'Pesach* label if purchased before or during *Pesach*: Fresh fruits and vegetables (for legumes see above), eggs, fresh fish and fresh meat.
- C. The following foods require a *Kosher L'Pesach* label if purchased before or during *Pesach*: All baked products (*Matzah*, cakes, *Matzah* flour, farfel, *Matzah* meal, and any products containing *Matzah*); canned or bottled fruit juices (These juices are often clarified with *Kitniyot* which are *not* listed among the ingredients. However, if one *knows* there are no such agents, the juice may be purchased prior to *Pesach* without a *Kosher L'Pesach* label); canned tuna (since tuna, even when packed in water, has often been processed in vegetable broth and/or hydrolyzed protein--however, if it is known that the tuna is packed exclusively in water, without any additional ingredients or additives, it may be purchased without a *Kosher L'Pesach* label); wine; vinegar; liquor; oils; dried fruits; candy; chocolate flavored milk; ice cream; yogurt and soda.

- D. The following processed foods (canned, bottled or frozen), require a *Kosher L'Pesach* label if purchased during *Pesach*: milk, butter, juices, vegetables, fruit, milk products, spices, coffee, tea, and fish, as well as all foods listed in Category C.

**DETERGENTS:** If permitted during the year, powdered and liquid detergents do not require a *Kosher L'Pesach* label.

**MEDICINE:** Since *Chametz* binders are used in many pills, the following guidelines should be followed: If the medicine is required for life sustaining therapy, it may be used on *Pesach*. If it is not for life sustaining therapy, some authorities permit, while others prohibit. Consult with me if you have a question in this regard. In all cases, capsules are preferable to pills.

**KASHERING OF UTENSILS:** The process of *Kashering* (making Kosher – in this case for Passover) utensils depends on how the utensils are used. According to *Halakhah* – Jewish Law, leaven can be purged from a utensil by the same process in which it was absorbed in the utensil (*ke-voleo kakh poleto*). Therefore, utensils used in cooking are *Kashered* by boiling, those used in broiling are *Kashered* by fire and heat, and those used only for cold food are *Kashered* by rinsing.

- A. **EARTHENWARE** (china, pottery, etc.) may not be *Kashered*. However, fine translucent chinaware which has not been used for over a year may be used if scoured and cleaned in hot water.
- B. **METAL** (wholly made of metal) **UTENSILS USED IN FIRE** (spit, broiler) must first be thoroughly scrubbed and cleansed and then made as hot as possible. Those used for cooking or eating (silverware, pots) must be thoroughly scrubbed and cleaned and completely immersed in boiling water. Pots should not be used for a period of at least 24 hours between the cleaning and the immersion in boiling water. Metal baking utensils cannot be *Kashered*.
- C. **OVENS AND RANGES:** Every part that comes in contact with food must be thoroughly scrubbed and cleaned. Then, oven and range should be heated as hot as possible for a half hour. If there is a broil setting, use it. Self-cleaning ovens should be scrubbed and cleaned and then put through the self-cleaning cycle. Continuous cleaning ovens must be *Kashered* in the same manner as regular ovens.  
**MICROWAVE OVENS**, which do not cook the food by means of heat, should be cleaned, and then a cup of water should be placed inside. Then the oven should be turned on until the water disappears. A microwave oven that has a browning element cannot be *Kashered* for *Pesach*.
- D. **GLASSWARE:** Authorities disagree as to the method for *Kashering* drinking utensils. One opinion requires soaking in water for three days, changing the water every 24 hours. The other opinion requires only a thorough scrubbing before *Pesach*, or putting them through a dishwasher.  
Glass Cookware: There is a difference of opinion as to whether it is to be *Kashered*. One opinion is that it must be *Kashered*. After a thorough cleansing, there should be water boiled in them which will overflow the rim. The other opinion is that only a thorough cleansing is required.  
**Glass bakeware, like metal bakeware, may not be *Kashered*.**
- E. **DISHWASHER:** After not using the machine for a period of 24 hours, a full cycle with detergent should be run.
- F. **ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES:** If the parts that come into contact with *Chametz* are removable, they can be *Kashered* in the appropriate way (if metal, follow the rules for metal utensils). If the parts are not removable, the appliance cannot be *Kashered*. (All exposed parts should be thoroughly cleaned.)
- G. **TABLES, CLOSETS AND COUNTERS:** If used with *Chametz*, they should be thoroughly cleaned and covered, and then they may be used.
- H. **KITCHEN SINK:** A metal sink can be *Kashered* by thoroughly cleaning and then pouring boiling water over it. A porcelain sink should be cleaned and a sink rack used. If, however, dishes are to be soaked in a porcelain sink, a dish basin must be used.
- I. **CHAMETZ AND NON-PASSOVER UTENSILS:** Non-Passover dishes, pots and *Chametz* whose ownership has been transferred, should be separated, locked up or covered, and marked in order to prevent accidental use.