

Preparation

April 2012

הכנה

Nisan 5772

**Kehillat
Chovevei
Tzion**

*Kehillat Chovevei Tzion
Route 25A at Nicolls Road
P.O. Box 544
East Setauket, NY 11733
(631) 689-0257*

*Visit us on-line at
www.kct.org*

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*A Kehillah For Those
Wishing To Participate
In Traditional Religious
Service On Shabbat
And Yom Tov*

*Celebrating The Start
Of Our Nineteenth Year!*



**Preparing
to
Celebrate
Pesach
at
Kehillat
Chovevei
Tzion**



5772

SCHEDULE
OF
PASSOVER
SERVICES

KEHILLAT
CHOVEVEI
TZION



8 NISAN

SHABBAT HaGADOL *

FRIDAY MARCH 30 6:00 PM 6:57 PM
SATURDAY MARCH 31 9:00 AM

* *Happy Anniversary to the entire Kehillah Mishpacha!*

14 NISAN

BEDIKAT CHAMETZ

THURSDAY APRIL 5
After dark, *Bedikat Chametz* (Search for Chametz) is conducted

14 NISAN

EREV PESACH

FRIDAY APRIL 6
Siyyum HaBachor 7:00 AM
Dispose of all *Chametz* by 11:50 AM

15 NISAN

FIRST DAY PESACH

FRIDAY APRIL 6 6:30 PM 7:03 PM
SATURDAY APRIL 7 9:00 AM

16 NISAN

SECOND DAY PESACH

SATURDAY APRIL 7 7:30 PM 8:04 PM
SUNDAY APRIL 8 9:00 AM

21 NISAN

SEVENTH DAY PESACH

THURSDAY APRIL 12 6:45 PM 7:09 PM
FRIDAY APRIL 13 9:00 AM

22 NISAN

EIGHTH DAY PESACH

FRIDAY APRIL 13 6:30 PM 7:10 PM
SATURDAY APRIL 14 9:00 AM
(INCLUDING YIZKOR)

PESACH ENDS SATURDAY EVENING AT 8:12 PM

29 NISAN

SHABBAT SH'MINI

FRIDAY APRIL 20 6:10 PM 7:19 PM
SATURDAY APRIL 21 9:00 AM

ROSH CHODESH IYAR

SUNDAY APRIL 22 - MONDAY APRIL 22

6 IYAR

SHABBAT TAZRIA-SH'MINI

FRIDAY APRIL 27 6:15 PM 7:27S PM
SATURDAY APRIL 28 9:00 AM

קהילת חובבי ציון
Kehillat Chovevei Tzion

This form must be returned no later than Wednesday, APRIL 4, 2012

Contract for Selling Chametz

I, _____, hereby authorize Rabbi Moshe Edelman to sell the *chametz* in my possession (the sale will take place on Friday, April 6, 2012). I understand that all places enumerated below will be sold, will not belong to me, and may not be used by me from 11:50 AM EDT, on Friday, April 6, 2012. The *Chametz* which I have sold will be permitted for my use as of 8:12 PM EDT, on Saturday, April 14, 2012, if the buyer has not exercised his right to acquire it permanently.

Please print clearly:

The *chametz* and the areas are at:

Street address _____ City, State _____
_____ . . . in the following specifically
enumerated places:

***Note: A separate form must be completed for each address
(home, business, vacation home, etc.)***

Your signature _____ Date _____ It is proper to include a modest contribution for *Ma'ot Chittin*, to feed the poor for Pesach (\$18 or more, is suggested). Please make checks payable to Kehillat Chovevei Tzion. Before Pesach begins, you are urged to feed the non-Jewish poor with your *chametz*.

Return this form to: Charlie Mann 6 Settlers Way Setauket, NY 11733 689-9605

NO LATER THAN Wednesday, APRIL 4, 2012.

*Celebrating, studying and growing together as a community of the committed, the extended member families of **Kehillat Chovevei Zion** will again come together this year, for the start of its compelling **nineteenth year**, in its Setauket Beit Midrash for the Pesach holiday period. The KCT Ritual Committee is delighted to provide you with this compendium for self-study, for family and individual use, in preparation for the upcoming holiday.*

Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage, for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place. Shmot 13:3

Chag Sameach !

. . . . Mechirat Chametz

No matter how hard you try to remove the *chametz*, the job isn't quite complete until the "paperwork" is done. Kehillat Chovevei Zion has arranged with Rabbi Moshe Edelman to serve as our *shaliach* in selling the *chametz* on the morning of Friday, April 6. Accordingly, the change in ownership takes effect at precisely 11:50 AM Friday morning. For your convenience, a form is included along with this booklet, which you may complete, attaching your donation for the *Ma'ot Chitim* Fund and send along to Charlie Mann at the address shown on the form, being sure to arrange for him to receive it **no later than Wednesday, April 4.** ~K~

. . . . The KCT Memorial Wall

In the KCT Beit Midrash, the Memorial Wall represents the *Kehillah's* commemoration of our loved ones. Each plaque contains the name of the person recalled, in Hebrew and English, and the date of death in both the secular and Hebrew calendars. *Yahrzeit* lamps on each side of the plaque are lit during the week of the appropriate date and for *Yizkor*. New additions to the Memorial Panel are specially dedicated at the next *Yizkor* service following placement, and each is individually remembered at every *Yizkor* service that follows. Please let us know if you'd like to order a plaque or if you have any questions about the Memorial Wall. ~K~

. . . . The Kehillah Remembers

The *Yizkor* service is recited on the morning of the the last day of Pesach, Shabbat April 14. The Kehillah remembers with great fondness and respect all the loved ones whom we have individually lost

over the years and those whose names have been inscribed in the Kehillah's Book of Remembrance, which will be available at services. *Yizkor* is at once both a collective experience and an individual one, and is the timeless prayer of personal memory of the Jewish people. *Yizkor* is recited on Yom Kippur, on Shmini Atzeret, and then again on the last day of each of Shavuot and Pesach. ~K~

. . . . Tzedakah and Yizkor

Pesach offers two opportunities for tzedakah and gemillut chesed specifically associated with the spirit of this most unique of holiday celebrations . . . the Ma'ot Chitim donation to feed the hungry at the start of the holiday, and the yizkor donation associated with remembering and sanctifying the memories of departed family members.

The essence of *Yizkor* is an act of *tzedakah*, a contribution made on behalf of loved ones, of which the *Kodosh Baruchu* takes note, to earn merit for the deceased in His eyes. Our Kehillah has made a significant, ever-growing commitment to *tzedakah* over the years. We encourage you, as you plan your individual *tzedakot*, for whatever contributions are within your means and family custom, to consider **Kehillat Chovevei Zion** as a worthy beneficiary of your generosity and support at this time and throughout the year. ~K~

Special occasion coming up? Please ask us about sponsoring the Kiddush on a Shabbat or a Yom Tov morning.



... Helping Hands for Pesach

M'YAD L'YAD was founded in 1998 to serve the poor, the disabled, the elderly, and others in need on Long Island and in the New York metropolitan area. Volunteer sponsors are paired with recipients to provide assistance beyond the basic necessities, to enhance the lives of those in need. In keeping with one of the highest ideals of charitable giving within Judaism, our donors' and recipients' identities remain anonymous, thus maintaining the privacy and dignity of those participating.



KCT is an organizational sponsor and many of our families and individuals have become sponsors as well. Coming into Pesach would be a wonderful time for you to join these families in becoming a sponsor yourself . . . easy enough to do, by contacting Amy Engelberg at 471-8414 for more information, or by e-mail to MyadLyad@KCT.org. Contributions may be sent to KCT for forwarding or directly to M'YAD L'YAD at 74 Hauppauge Road, Commack NY 11725. ~K~

... The Spring Cleaning Ritual

Extracted from a poem by Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, the rabbi of Temple Beth Or of the Deaf in New York City

"Spring Cleaning Ritual on the Eve of the Full Moon Nisan" is a long and descriptive poem which concludes with these words:

Some destroy Chametz with fire
others throw it to the wind
others toss it to the sea.
Look deep for the Chametz

which still gives you pleasure
and cast it to the burning.

When all the looking is done we say:
All that rises up bitter
All that rises up prideful
All that rises up in old ways no longer fruitful
All ametz still in my possession but unknown to me
which I have not seen nor disposed of
may it find common grave
with the dust of the earth

Amen, Amen Selah . . .

~K~



... Preparation Through Study

Drawn from various sources, ancient, historic and modern, the following section of personal study materials is presented by the editors with a view toward stimulating thought, study, discussion, agreement and disagreement, and evaluation approaching and throughout the days of Pesach.

... The Higher Meanings of Chametz

The Torah tells us that before the holiday of Pesach we are to remove all *Chametz* from our dwelling places - we are not to see *Chametz*, own *Chametz*, or derive benefit from *Chametz*.

The rabbis tell us that there are two ways by which we comply with these laws:

1st - by *byur* - destroying the *Chametz* by burning;
and

2nd by *bitul* - nullification - any *Chametz* that we have not found is nullified - considered as dust of the earth.

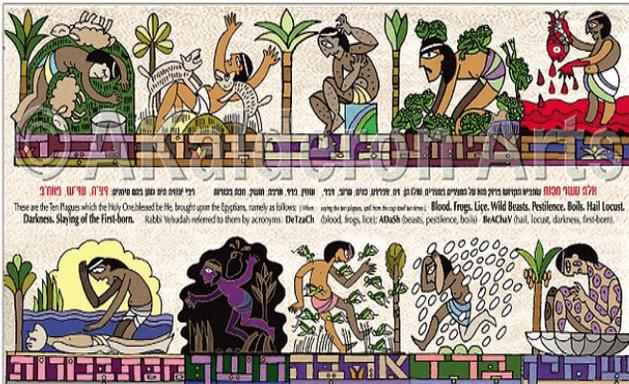
The rabbi also teach that the term *Chametz* has a higher meaning than just the physical leavened products that must be removed before Pesach. Based on the verse in the Torah that says: - *you*

shall destroy [by burning] the evil that is in your midst - the rabbis tell us that the removal of *Chametz* also involves the removal of evil from the Jewish heart and the Jewish people.

Specifically, the evil referred to is arrogance and pride. As leavened products have the ability to rise - to get puffed up, so does the human disposition. In preparation for Pesach we remove the physical *Chametz*. The rabbis teach us that this is also the time to remove arrogance from our individual and collective souls.

How should this be done?? The rabbis teach that we should strive for *byur*, total destruction of the evil inclination that resides in each of us. However, being realistic, it is clear that this will never be achieved - so we must settle for *bitul* the realization that arrogance and pride is part of each of us and humankind in general - and the attempt to nullify - to go to a higher level while accepting our human imperfections.

May each of us have a Pesach that is both *kasher* and *samach* and free from physical and spiritual *Chametz*. ~K~



"The Ten Plagues" by Kalderon

... Matzah and Morality

By Rabbi Irving Greenberg, this essay first appeared in the author's book "The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays". Rabbi Greenberg was the president of Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation and founding president of CLAL, the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership. He also is the author of *For the Sake of Heaven and Earth: The New Encounter Between Judaism and Christianity* (2004, Jewish Publication Society).

Unleavened bread represents both slavery and freedom.

Just as shunning *chametz* [leaven] is the symbolic statement of leaving slavery behind, so is eating matzah the classic expression of entering freedom.

Matzah was the food the Israelites took with them on the Exodus. "They baked the dough that they took out of Egypt into unleavened cakes [matzot], for it was not leavened, since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay; nor had they prepared provisions for themselves" (Exodus 12:39). According to this passage, matzah is the hard bread that Jews initially ate in the desert because they plunged into liberty without delaying.

However, matzah carries a more complex message than "Freedom now!" Made only of flour and water--with no shortening, yeast, or enriching



ingredients--matzah recreates the hard "bread of affliction" (Deuteronomy 16:3) and meager food given to the Hebrews in Egypt by their exploitative masters. Like the bitter herbs eaten at the seder, it represents the degradation and suffering of the Israelites.

Bread of Slavery, Bread of Freedom . . .

Matzah is, therefore, both the bread of freedom and the erstwhile bread of slavery. It is not unusual for ex-slaves to invert the very symbols of slavery to express their rejection of the masters' values. But there is a deeper meaning in the double-edged symbolism of matzah. It would have been easy to set up a stark dichotomy: matzah is the bread of the Exodus way, the bread of freedom; *chametz* is the bread eaten in the house of bondage, in Egypt. Or vice versa: matzah is the hard ration, slave food; *chametz* is the rich, soft food to which free people treat themselves. That either/or would be too simplistic. Freedom is in the psyche, not in the bread.

The *halakha* [Jewish law] underscores the identity of *chametz* and matzah with the legal requirement that matzah can be made only out of grains that can

become *chametz* – that is, those grains that ferment if mixed with water and allowed to stand. How the human prepares the dough is what decides whether it becomes *chametz* or matzah. How you view the matzah is what decides whether it is the bread of liberty or of servitude.

The point is subtle but essential. To be fully realized, an Exodus must include an inner voyage, not just a march on the road out of Egypt. The difference between slavery and freedom is not that slaves endure hard conditions while free people enjoy ease. The bread remained equally hard in both states, but the psychology of the Israelites shifted totally. When the hard crust was given to them by tyrannical masters, the matzah they ate in passivity was the bread of slavery. But when the Jews willingly went from green fertile deltas into the desert because they were determined to be free, when they refused to delay freedom and opted to eat unleavened bread rather than wait for it to rise, the hard crust became the bread of freedom. Out of fear and lack of responsibility, the slave accommodates to ill treatment. Out of dignity and determination to live free, the individual will shoulder any burden.

Stressing the Goodness . . .

The great Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, whose analyses always portrayed the people of Israel in a favorable light, insisted that the willingness of the Israelites to enter the desert with hard bread continues to evoke God's love. Levi Yitzchak asked: "Why does the Torah continually call Passover *chag hamatzot* – the feast of unleavened bread--while the Jews call it *chag haPesach*--the feast of Passover? Because as lovers, they stress each other's goodness. Israel praises God who passed over the homes of the Jews when destroying Egypt. God praises the Jews who went so trustingly out of the fertile plain of Egypt into a barren desert with meager food.

Tradition specifically requires eating unleavened bread on the first two nights of Passover. (Dieters will be happy to learn that during the rest of the holiday the only requirement is not to eat *chametz*.) Eating hard bread during the holiday of liberation stimulates appreciation for the flavor of freedom and summons up empathy for those still in need. At the seder, the Exodus retelling opens with the phrase, "This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in Egypt."

The moral consequence follows immediately, "Let all who are hungry enter and eat; let all who are in need come and join in the Passover with us. This year [we are] slaves. Next year [may the slaves be] free." The hard crust commands us to help the poor, the stranger, the outsider. ~K~

. . . . Reconnecting to Passover's Roots

By Leah Koenig, a freelance writer whose work has been published in The New York Times Magazine, Gastronomica, Jewish Living, Lilith, Culinate, Beliefnet and other publications.

Reconnecting to Passover's Roots: . . . Spring Greening.

One of the dirty little secrets about the Jewish calendar is that many of the holidays have agricultural subtexts, which over time have been muted or lost completely under the historical and religious themes that were layered on top of them. Two of these holidays, Sukkot and Shavuot, have maintained a relatively transparent relationship to their earthy roots. But finding the natural themes of Passover takes a bit more digging.

The first step is to forget about Moses – for now anyway – and recall that Passover, also known as *Chag Ha-Aviv* (holiday of spring), is one of the Torah's three mandated pilgrimage festivals. It is inextricably linked to the beginning of the barley harvest in Israel. Leviticus 23:10-11 describes the *omer* (sheaf) offering of barley (the first grain to ripen in the spring) that took place in the Temple on the second day of Passover:

When you enter the land that I am giving to you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest. He shall elevate the sheaf before the Lord for acceptance on your behalf.



This priestly grain dance symbolized prosperity and was the official green light that the season's harvest

could be consumed. Today, Jews count the Omer for 49 days, starting on the second night of Passover--to coincide with the date of the omer offering--and continuing through Shavuot (the beginning of the wheat harvest). In most cases, however, Omer practices have been almost completely disembodied--stripped of their connections to grain and ground.

The Seder Plate is Already Green . . .

Contemporary Jews are, of course, forbidden to bring sheaves of just-picked barley, which is chametz, to our seder tables. Still, if one is willing to look, signs of spring and nature's rejuvenation abound throughout Passover. This is especially true of the seder plate, which weaves together the historical and agricultural in one eating ritual.

The roasted lamb bone (*z'roa*), which commemorates lamb sacrifices made at the Temple is taken from one of spring's most iconic babies. The green vegetable (*karpas*) sitting next to it that gets dipped in saltwater is a symbol of the first sprouts that peak bravely out of the just-thawed ground in early spring. The roasted egg (*beitzah*) recalls both the sacrifices made at the Temple and also spring's fertility and rebirth.

Chametz as a Metaphor . . .

Even before Passover begins, the act of removing *chametz* from our homes offers other opportunities to connect to the natural world. This period of "Jewish spring cleaning" requires us to shake out our sheets and round up any bread or crumbs hiding in our kitchen cupboards. But removing *chametz* from our homes can also remind us to get rid of the excess "stuff" clogging up our lives--to liberate ourselves from any emotional or spiritual baggage from the year, and send bad habits packing.

It is a perfect time to recycle the stack of junk mail piling up on the desk (and stop more from coming), plant seedlings in the garden, start composting, switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs, or volunteer for a cleanup day at a nearby river, beach, forest, or park. It also offers a great opportunity to plan ahead, in order to avoid the all-too-common overuse of disposable dishware during Passover. As you clean out your kitchen cabinets, stock them with light-weight, recycled dishes and cutlery, like the stylish offerings from Preserve, which store easily and can be reused year after year.

While these actions might seem like a distraction on an otherwise busy pre-Passover to-do list, integrating them into our holiday preparations can imbue our celebration with deeper significance that lasts beyond the holiday.

During Passover, all Jews are challenged to remember the Israelites' journey from slavery to freedom, and feel as if they went through it themselves. But for those willing to dig even further, the story of Passover is not simply historical. It is rooted to the land, the giddy joys of spring, and to the reminder that after every period of dormancy and every experience of suffering, new life awaits just under the soil. ~K~

. . . . The Holiday of Believing in God

By Rabbi Yehuda Henkin of the Jeanie Schottenstein Center for Advanced Torah Study for Women in Jerusalem.

Pesach is the holiday of belief in God.

Sometimes we forget that. After all, isn't Pesach called *zeman cheiruteinu*—"the time of our freedom"? Yes, but Succot is called *zeman simchateinu*, and no one claims that the essence of Succot is simply our joy.

Instead, the three pilgrimage festivals represent different aspects of our relationship with God. Succot marks God's ongoing providence; Shavuot reaffirms the truth of the Torah; while Pesach is the holiday of belief in God Himself.

God's existence was proven by the miracles of the Exodus. This is explicit in Devarim: "Or has a god attempted to come and take a nation to him from the midst of another nation, by trials, signs and wonders...all of which haShem, your God, did for you in Egypt before your eyes. You were shown, in order to know that haShem is God; there is none besides Him" (4:34-35).

Other verses make the same point. When the Egyptians drowned in the sea, Israel "believed in haShem and his servant, Moshe" (Shemot 14:31). And the Ten Commandments begin, "I am haShem, your God, who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the abode of slaves" (20:2). In twenty places in the Torah, God is identified as having taken Israel

out of Egypt; nowhere, by contrast, does the Torah say, "I am haShem, your God, who gave you the Torah on Mount Sinai."

We say at the Passover seder, "Even if we're all learned, all wise, all elders and all knowledgeable in the Torah, it is incumbent on us to recount the Exodus, and the more one recounts the Exodus the more praiseworthy it is." If one already knows the story, why retell it over and over? The answer is that the Exodus is not simply history, but the source of belief in God. Retelling it is not a matter of increasing knowledge, but of strengthening our faith.

Moreover, *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim* encompasses, not only the Exodus from Egypt, but subsequent redemptions and salvations wrought by God throughout history. We read this in the Haggadah. Referring to God's promise to Abraham in Bereishit chapter 15, "*Vehi she'amdah...*, [the promise] has stood by our ancestors and ourselves. Not merely one adversary has loomed over us to [attempt to] destroy us. Rather, in every generation they loom over us to destroy us, but the Holy One, blessed be He, delivers us from their hands." The promise ostensibly refers to the Exodus, but the Sages saw Egypt and the Exodus as paradigms for all persecutions and deliverances.

On this basis we can understand the remarkable statement in Jeremiah: "No longer will it be said, 'Chai haShem who brought Israel up from the land of Egypt,' but rather 'Chai haShem who brought Israel up from the northern land and from all the lands where He had driven them' " (16:14-15). "Chai haShem" means "God lives." God exists! The indisputable proof of this will no longer be the historical Exodus, but our direct experience of redemption from exile.³

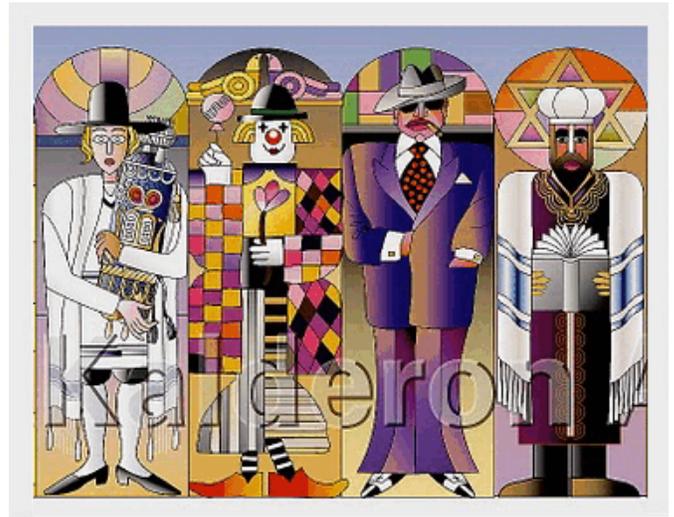
Around the seder table, we can recount persecution and deliverance, and confirm our belief in God from the witness of our own eyes. "We will sing a new song before Him, praise the Lord!" ~K~

... The Four Children: Annual Guests

Written for the Spring 2010 issue of Voices of Conservative Judaism, by Rabbi Robert Dobrusin, rabbi of Beth Israel Congregation in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

We welcome them to our seder table every year. Our holiday would not be complete without them.

They are fascinating creations, with their roots in the Torah and their identities crafted by talmudic rabbis who were perceptive about human nature. They run the gamut: one is wise, one is rebellious or perhaps wicked, one is simple, one doesn't even know how to ask. They have been portrayed in many different ways; you can see them wherever you look, across the history of Jewish art and interpretation.



From Asher Kalderon's *New Passover Haggadah*, appearing on picasaweb.google.com/akalderonarts

They don't talk to each other, but they definitely talk to us. They demand our attention and inspire us to talk back to them with our own commentary and our own conclusions. They appear at our table and demand that we recognize them and identify with them.

And we do identify with them. Each year we ask ourselves: Which one of these am I? As so many commentaries have suggested, each of us really is composed of all four, rolled into one complex person. We have our moments of wisdom. We can be rebellious. We have a need to confront the world with basic simplicity. We often don't even know where to begin to ask. Yes, that is what the commentaries say. But deep in our hearts, each year – depending on what has happened in our own lives or in the world at large – we identify more closely with one or the other.

These four children who are wise, rebellious, simple, and unable to ask represent us, and we know it.

But there is one thing about them that is not like us. Unlike us, they can never change. Each and every year, each asks or doesn't ask the same question;

and the question each asks or doesn't ask is written in stone, taken directly from the Torah's verses describing a father teaching his child about the Exodus.

[. . .] I am troubled by the fact that we don't let them change. Throughout history, they will always be wise or rebellious or simple or unquestioning. They are never allowed to be any different. How can we do this? How we can set them in stone the way we do? There is one simple reason. They don't change because they each have been given a name: wise, rebellious, simple, unquestioning. And once someone has a name, that name becomes his or her identity.

The wise child will never rebel; she will always be wise. The rebellious child will never conform; he will always be the *rasha*. The simple child will never understand; he will never grow. The fourth will never speak; she will forever be silent.

The rabbis usually were so on target in their educational technique, but here they have misled us. How much wiser would it have been had they introduced these four children as the one who asked a wise question, the one who asked a rebellious question, the one who asked a simple question, the one who did not ask at all?

It would have been a subtle difference, but it would have been instructive. For instead of labeling them, it would have been their question that would have been labeled, and there would have been the possibility of change. We would have freed them from their reputations and focused on action instead of personality. The high holy day machzor teaches us the same lesson. In the Yom Kippur Selichot prayers, we first say *anu k'shay oref*, we are obstinate. But a few paragraphs later, in the *Ashamnu*, we read *kishinu oref*, we have acted obstinately. This is the thought with which we are left, and it is a subtle reminder that it is our actions, not our labels, that truly count.

When we label ourselves or attach a label to someone else, it is nearly impossible to shake it. How many children have suffered because they have been labeled? How many adults have found the road to desired *teshuvah*, repentance, blocked because society has labeled them as a burden that cannot be shed? How many of us struggle to escape the labels we have internalized and allowed to dominate our lives?

[. . .] Of course, once we have acted in a certain way often enough, it does become difficult to break out of that pattern. Our rabbis taught, *sichar mitzvah mitzvah sichar avayrah avayrah*, the result of doing a mitzvah is doing another mitzvah, the result of sinning is sinning again. Our actions do become ingrained. But that is what *teshuvah* is meant to correct, breaking away from patterns. As difficult as it is, it is infinitely more difficult when our actions become identified with our very being.

Think back to those four guests at the seder table, and how horrible their lives have become because we've never let them be any different than they were at the one moment they opened up their mouths or sat silently. What a terrible injustice we have done to them and to so many of God's children who came after them.

This Pesach, let us resolve to change.

~K~

. . . . Miriam's Cup

Written by Tamara Cohen, a Jewish feminist writer and educator currently living in Gainesville, FL. She is the spiritual leader of a community in Litchfield County, CT and is on the board of Brit Tzedek V'Shalom: The Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace.

What is a Miriam's Cup? . . .

A Miriam's Cup is a new ritual object that is placed on the seder table beside the Cup of Elijah. Miriam's Cup is filled with water. It serves as a symbol of Miriam's Well, which was the source of water for the Israelites in the desert. Putting a Miriam's Cup on your table is a way of making your seder more inclusive.

There are many legends about Miriam's Well. It is said to have been a magical source of water that followed the Israelites for 40 years because of the merit of Miriam. The waters of this well were said to be healing and sustaining. Thus Miriam's Cup is a symbol of all that sustains us through our own journeys, while Elijah's Cup is a symbol of a future Messianic time.

When and How to Use Miriam's Cup . . .

As Miriam's Cup is still a new addition to the seder, its use is not fixed. Some fill Miriam's Cup at the very beginning of the seder. Miriam, after all, appears at

the very beginning of the Exodus story (watching over her brother Moses in the Nile). Starting with Miriam's Cup is also a way of letting people know right from the beginning that your seder is going to be a fully inclusive one. Also, since Elijah's Cup comes at the end of the seder, it is nice to use the two cups as a frame for your seder and begin with Miriam.



Others fill or raise Miriam's cup after the recitation of the Ten Plagues and before the song dayyenu, which carries the story of the Exodus through the crossing of the Red Sea and into the wilderness, moments during which Miriam played an important role. Others use Miriam's Cup along with Elijah's Cup toward the close of the seder, with Elijah representing the herald of the messiah, and Miriam, a prophet, urging us to do the work to bring about redemption.

Another suggestion is to close the seder by passing around Miriam's Cup for every one to take a drink and to commit to carrying the seder's themes with them beyond the night of the seder. Feel free to use anyone or any combination of these ideas for incorporating Miriam's Cup into your seder.

You can either fill your Miriam's Cup with water from a pitcher, or you can invite everyone at the table to pour some water from their drinking glasses into Miriam's Cup. Everyone contributing water emphasizes that we each have a role in reviving the stories of women and in sustaining the Jewish people on our journey.

There is no set blessing over Miriam's Cup but you might want to use the following declaration:

Zot Kos Miryam, kos mayim hayim. Zeikher l'yitziat Mitzrayim. . . . This is the Cup of Miriam, the cup of living waters. Let us remember the Exodus from Egypt. These are the living waters, God's gift to Miriam, which gave new life to Israel as we struggled with ourselves in the wilderness. Blessed are You God, Who brings us from the narrows into the wilderness, sustains us with endless possibilities, and enables us to reach a new place." ~K-

. . . . The Song of Songs

The book of Shir HaShirim – The Song of Songs usually read on Shabbat Chol HaMoed Pesach, this year will be read at KCT on the morning of Shabbat Pesach - Saturday morning April 14th.

Rabbi Dr. Louis Jacobs (1920-2006) was a Masorti rabbi, the first leader of Masorti Judaism (also known as Conservative Judaism) in the United Kingdom, and a leading writer and thinker on Judaism.

The Rabbis taught: All the writings are holy, but the Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies.

Song of Songs (Hebrew, *Shir Ha-Shirim*) is the book of eight chapters in the third section of the Bible, the *Ketuvim*, first of the five *Megillot* (scrolls).

Dating and Authorship . . .

According to the Rabbinic tradition generally, the author of the book is King Solomon (based on the heading: 'The Song of Songs by Solomon,' though this can also mean 'about Solomon') but in the famous Talmudic passage (Bava Batra 15a) on the authorship of the biblical books it is stated that the book was actually written down by King Hezekiah and his associates (based on Proverbs 25:1).

Modern scholarship is unanimous in fixing a much later date for the book than the time of Solomon, though opinions vary regarding the actual date. On the surface, the book is a secular love-poem or a collection of such poems and is considered so to be by the majority of modern biblical scholars.

No doubt because of this surface meaning, the ancient Rabbis, while accepting the Solomonic authorship, debated whether the book should be

שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לְשִׁלְמֹה יִשְׁכָּהּ מִצְּשִׁיקוֹת
כִּי טוֹבִים דְּדִיךְ מִיֵּץ לְרִיחַ שְׁמֵיךְ טוֹבִים
שִׁמְן תּוֹרֶה שִׁמְךָ עַל כֵּן עַל מוֹת אֱהַבּוֹךְ מִשְׁכָּחִי
אֲזַרִיךְ גְּרוּשָׁה הַבִּיאֲנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲזַרִיךְ וְגִילָה וְגִשְׁמוּזָה

considered part of the sacred Scriptures. The Mishnah (Yadaim 3:5), after recording this debate, gives the view of Rabbi Akiba, eventually adopted by all the Rabbis, that no one ever debated that the Song of Songs is sacred: 'for all the ages are not worth the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel; for all the Ketuvim are holy, but the Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies.'

In the liturgy of the synagogue, Song of Songs is recited during the morning service on the intermediate Sabbath of Passover. Under the influence of the Kabbalah, the custom arose in some circles, especially in Chasidism, of reciting the Song of Songs on the eve of the Sabbath.

Interpreting Song of Songs . . .

That the Rabbis in the second century CE could debate whether Song of Songs belongs to sacred Scripture, is evidence enough that in this period there were some who took it all literally as a dialogue of love between a man and a woman, sexual desire expressed exquisitely but with the utmost frankness.

One or two Orthodox Jews in the twentieth century did try to suggest that even on the literal level the book can be seen as sacred literature, since love between husband and wife is holy and divinely ordained. But, while there is no explicit rejection of such a literal interpretation in Rabbinic literature, the standard Rabbinic view, and the reason why Rabbi Akiba declared the book to be 'the Holy of Holies,' is that the Rabbis saw the 'lover' as God and the 'beloved' as the community of Israel.

The Rabbis also understood the opening verse as 'Song of Songs about Shlomo' and took the name as referring not to King Solomon but to God, *she-ha shalom shelo*, 'to whom peace belongs.'

Revealing in this connection is a passage in the Talmud (*Sanhedrin*, 101a) dating from the second century: 'He who recites a verse of the Song of Songs and treats it as a song and one who recites a verse at a banquet (this usually denotes a wedding feast), unseasonably, brings evil upon the world,' from which it would seem that it was only the profane and frivolous use of the book in its plain meaning to which the Rabbis objected.

Allegories Abound . . .

Nevertheless, throughout Rabbinic literature it is the allegorical meaning that is followed. The Midrash Rabbah to the book interprets the whole book in this vein. For example, the verse (1:2): 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth' is interpreted as referring to the revelation at Sinai when Israel took upon itself to keep the Torah and an angel was sent by God to kiss each Israelite.

The verse (1:5): 'I am black but comely' is given the interpretation that the community of Israel says to God: 'I am black through my own deeds, but comely through the deeds of my ancestors,' or 'I am black in my own eyes, but comely in the sight of God,' or 'I am black during the rest of the year, but comely on Yom Kippur.'

The verse: 'Like a lily among thorns, so is my darling among the maidens (2:2)' is interpreted as referring to Israel's oppression by the secular powers: 'Just as a rose, if situated between thorns, when the north wind blows is bent towards the south and is pricked by the thorns, and nevertheless its heart is still turned upwards, so with Israel, although taxes are exacted from them, nevertheless their hearts are fixed upon their Father in Heaven.'

In the Zohar and the early Kabbalah the dialogue of love is between the two Sefirot, Tiferet, the male

principle in the Godhead, and Malkhut, the Shekhinah, the female principle. In the opening passage of the Zohar, in current editions, the lily among the thorns is Malkhut attacked by the demonic forces but strengthened against these evil forces by the five strong leaves surrounding the lily, the other lower Sefirot.

The sixteenth-century mystic, Moses Cordovero, interprets the book as a dialogue between the individual soul and God. Even in an earlier period, Maimonides (Teshuvah 10:3) writes in the same vein, when discussing the love of God:

'What is the proper form of the love (of God)? It is that he should love the Lord with great, overpowering, fierce love to the extent that his soul is bound to the love of God and he dwells on it constantly, as if he were love-sick for a woman and dwells on this constantly, whether he is sitting or standing, eating or drinking.'

'Even more than this should be the love of God in the heart of those who love him, dwelling on it constantly, as it is said: "with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deuteronomy 6:5). And it is to this that Solomon refers allegorically when he says: "For I am love-sick" (Song of Songs 2:5) and the whole of Song of Songs is a parable on this topic.' ~K~

... Easter and Passover

This essay was written by Rabbi Ismar Schorsch, who served for sixteen years as the chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and is an historian specializing in the history of European Jewry.

This essay is reprinted at this time, because this year, the Christian holy days of Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday coincide with the first seder night and the first two days of Pesach.

Easter and Passover . . . Both celebrate spring and hope, though there are major differences between them also.

The frequent overlapping of Easter and Passover--of the Christian Holy Week with our eight-day celebration of Passover--merits attention. Unlike the yoking of Christmas and Hanukkah, Easter and Passover are festivals of equal gravity. Side by side they bring to light the deep structures of both religions.

Destined to Coincide . . .

First, their inviolable matrix is spring. In each case, the calendar is adjusted to ensure that the holiday is celebrated early in the spring. For the church, which believed that the resurrection took place on a Sunday, the First Council of Nicaea in 325 determined that Easter should always fall on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox. In consequence, Easter remained without a fixed date but proximate to the full moon, which coincided with the start of Passover on the 15th of Nissan.

By the same token, the rabbis understood the verse "You go free on this day, in the month of Aviv" (Exodus 13:4) to restrict Passover to early spring--that is in a transitional month when the winter rains end and the weather turns mild. The word "Aviv" actually means fresh ears of barley.

Moreover, since the Torah had stipulated that the month in which the exodus from Egypt occurred should mark the start of a new year (Exodus 12:2), the end of the prior year was subject to periodic extension in order to keep the Jewish lunar calendar in sync with the solar year. Thus, if the barley in the fields or the fruit on the trees had not ripened sufficiently for bringing the omer [the first barley sheaf, which was donated to the Temple] or the first fruits to the Temple, the arrival of Passover could be delayed by declaring a leap year and doubling the final month of Adar (Tosefta Sanhedrin 2:2).

In short, Easter and Passover were destined to coincide time and again.

History and Hope . . .

Second, in both festivals nature and history converge with a resounding message of hope. The renewal of nature that comes with spring amplifies the promise of redemption embedded in the historical events being commemorated. To each faith community, God's presence manifests itself in two keys, in nature and through history.

Yet, in both, the preferred medium is history, a legacy of the biblical shift to monotheism. Judaism and Christianity rest firmly on the foundation stories recounted ritually in their respective spring festivals. In Egypt, the family of Jacob had morphed into a nation welded together by the bitter experience of oppression.

Redemption by God imbued them with the national mission to create a body politic of a nobler order. Though their descendants failed, the body of religious literature which recorded their efforts and voiced their ideals would challenge humanity even as it would comfort them in their long exile. To recall the exodus in dark times nurtured the yearning for a future restoration, which is why Passover ends with the reciting of a haftarah [prophetic reading] that bristles with this-worldly messianism (Isaiah 10:32-12:6).

If Passover is largely about Egypt, Easter is largely about Passover. Its historical setting is Jerusalem at Passover, the Last Supper could well have been an embryonic seder, and Jesus is fated to become the paschal lamb. Indeed, the new Catechism of the Catholic Church calls Easter "The Christian Passover" (no. 1170) and speaks of the "Paschal mystery of Christ's cross" (no. 57).

The good news is that the death of one has the capacity to save many. The resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate affirmation of life or in the words of the Byzantine liturgy:

"Christ is risen from the dead!
Dying, he conquered death;
To the dead, he has given life" (no. 638).

Finally, because the message of both festivals is so central to the belief system of each faith community, it interlaces the liturgy year round. In the Haggadah we read that Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah was already advanced in years before he fathomed that the exodus from Egypt should be recalled by every Jew twice daily, in the evening as well as in the morning. That is the reason for the addition at the third paragraph of the Shema [a prayer said twice daily] in which this bedrock fact is affirmed. God's compassion obliges us to sanctify our lives.

Correspondingly, for Catholics and many Protestants the weekly sacrament of communion, reenacting the last supper, turns God's saving grace into a lived reality.

Communal vs. Individual Focus . . .

Still for all their commonalities, Passover and Easter diverge fundamentally. While both festivals are about delivery from a state of despair, be it slavery or sin, Passover heralds the birth of the Jewish people as a force for good in the comity of nations.

In contrast, Easter assures the individual Christian life eternal. Passover summons Jews collectively into the world to repair it; Easter proffers a way out of a world beyond repair.

Passover reflects a worldview that devalues life after death and privileges the community over the individual. Easter bespeaks a religion that reverses both sets of priorities, enabling it to comfort those who had lost faith in the gods of Rome.

Passover and Rosh Hashanah . . .

It is well known that Passover is not the only Jewish new year, that in fact it came to share that role with Rosh Hashanah. Whereas our months are numbered from Nissan, the years are counted from Tishrei [the month in which Rosh Hashanah falls]. The reason for that anomaly is the development of Rosh Hashanah, after the canonization of the Hebrew Bible, perhaps concomitantly with the emergence of Christianity, into a festival that addressed itself solely to the fate of the individual.

The Mishnah stresses that on Rosh Hashanah alone God has "all inhabitants of the world pass before Him, like flocks of sheep" (Rosh Hashanah 1:2). On the other three pilgrimage festivals, including Passover, the world is judged by God collectively. The expansion of the nameless first day of the seventh month, when loud blasts were to be sounded (Leviticus 23:24 and Numbers 29:1), into a solemn day of judgment for every single member of humanity suggests a Jewish response to a society with a heightened sense for the importance of the individual.

The result, however, is not a transformation of Judaism. Its deep structure remains intact. Rosh Hashanah joins Passover; it does not replace it. While the individual is definitely elevated, the priority of the group is not devalued. Judaism continues to be animated by a spirit of communitarianism.

Likewise, the dominant orientation stays this-worldly. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are not about getting into heaven. Our profusion of prayers carries aloft a modest request of God: to give us but one more year to try again, to live our life in such a manner as to make a difference. Our task is to mend the world, not flee it. The retention of two new years, one in the spring, the other in the fall, bespeaks the remarkable effort to keep polarities in balance. ~K~

... The Blood Libels Remembered

Entitled "The Color of Wine", this essay, written by historian Larry Domnitch, provides a brief overview of the centuries-old libel that seems destined to not die away.

Have you ever taken a really close look at the wine on the table at the Passover Seder table? To the Jews of medieval and modern era Europe, the presence of ordinary red Passover wine in Jewish homes could bring grave consequences.

The Jews once celebrated Passover in an environment of absolute terror. It was a season when forces of violence could be unleashed against Jews in an instant on the pretext of the most absurd accusations. In an instant, a Jewish community could be immersed in holiday celebration, the next, amidst a horrid living nightmare. The time of Passover often coincides with the Easter season when Christians commemorate the crucifixion. Too often, the Jews, who were blamed for the crucifixion and bitterly resented for their rejection of Christian beliefs, became targets of hatred and superstitions. Often, it was their use of wine on Passover that triggered those attacks.

On, or around the time of Passover, blood libel accusations were often leveled against the Jews. These accusations often led to violent attacks against Jewish communities. There were hundreds of blood libels throughout history resulting in countless deaths. The blood libel theme rarely deviated. A child – always a young boy – somehow was lost. Accusations soon arose that the Jews murdered the boy and used his blood for ritual purposes. Often those issuing the accusations murdered the child themselves in order to level the charges. Sometimes the child was a victim of an accident or later found unharmed. The cruelest methods of torture were often used to force confessions and the fabricated charges would serve as a pretext to slander and attack Jewish communities.

By the fourteenth century, ritual murder charges became common at Passover time. The fact that human sacrifice and the use of animal blood for any purpose is strictly forbidden according to Jewish law, did not matter to the perpetrators and believers of lies. Reason is abandoned when hatred and ignorance rules. Repudiations of blood libels by many popes throughout the ages occasionally

helped to protect some communities but by and large did little to stop them.

The first case of a ritual murder accusation in history against the Jews goes back to Egypt about 40 BCE when an anti-Semitic grammarian and propagandist named Apion, intent upon fomenting the masses against the Jews of Alexandria, publicized a blood libel accusation. Josephus Flavious records that Apion accused the Jews of slaughtering a gentile boy in order to use the remains for ritual purposes and cannibalism.

Over one thousand years later, the accusation resurfaced. On Passover 1144, in Norwich, England a young man named William, a tanner's apprentice, disappeared during the week of Easter. Charges immediately arose that the Jews killed him as part of a ritual murder. According to the accusation, the Jews "bought a Christian child before Easter and tortured him and on Long Friday hanged him on a rod" Since no body was found, the Sheriff of Norwich ignored the charges and granted the Jews protection. But the story was not forgotten and the missing boy, William, became a martyr among the town's people. A short time later, the Jews of Norwich were attacked by mobs seeking vengeance and were forced to flee.

Eleven years later, the blood libel resurfaced in England bringing horrific consequences to a group of Jews attending a wedding in the city of Lincoln. A Christian boy named Hugh was found in a cesspool in which he apparently had fallen. After subsequent forced tortured confessions, nineteen Jews were hanged. Soon, the anti-Semites of England accused all of England's Jews of participating in ritual murder.

On May 26, 1171, two months after Passover, the blood libel reached France. In the city of Blois, rumors spread that Jews committed a murder in order to extract blood for Passover Matzot. The Blois Jewish community of thirty-three, which included seventeen women, were burned at the stake after they refused the chance to save themselves by accepting Christianity. French Jewry was shocked and horrified. The rabbinical scholar Rabbeinu Jacob Tam proclaimed the day of the massacre, the 20th of Sivan, a fast day to commemorate the tragedy. Tragically, many more such horrors would follow. Ten years later the accusation reached Spain at Sargasso. The blood-libel spread like a wildfire in Europe.

Catastrophe struck Polish Jewry in the mid-seventeenth century as Cossack troops under the leadership of Bogdan Chmielnicki attacked Jewish communities. During three years of horrific attacks, a significant portion of Polish Jewry was wiped out. Rabbi David Halevy Siegel, lived during that era and authored a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law) entitled the Turei Zahav, (Taz) issued a ruling intended to protect Jews from the blood libel.

He ruled that the traditional red wine used at the Seder should be substituted with white wine in lands of persecution in order not to arouse suspicion, "In lands where false accusations are made, we refrain from using red wine." On Passover night thereafter, white wine was used. In his own life, Rabbi Siegel managed to flee the horrors of the Chmielnicki massacres, but was not spared great personal suffering when two of his sons were murdered in a Pogrom in Lvov, Poland in 1654.

Over the next three hundred years, as the modern era approached, blood libels continued, still used as a pretext for incitement. In 1840 the Damascus blood libel drew protests from Jews worldwide, and signified the entry of blood libels in the Middle East. The infamous Kishinev pogrom of 1903 began on the last day of Passover as the result of a blood libel. In 1911, the well-publicized case of the blood libel against Mendel Beilis in Russia set opposing camps in Russia between his supporters and detractors.

Over time, the rhetoric of blood libels helped to set the stage for new conspiracy theories. With the approach of the era of modernization and the industrial revolution, accusations arose of the 'Jewish conspiracy' for world domination, which became the new theme for the hate propagandists. The weekly publication of Nazi Germany 'Der Sturmer' made frequent use of the blood libel as part of its propaganda.

As Jews celebrated Passover in bygone eras, they were aware of the risks. At the Passover Seder, they drank the four cups of wine that symbolized freedom, but not in the traditional color. When they gazed at the white wine, which adorned their holiday tables, they were reminded of their own sufferings and of their precarious existence.

They lived in hostile environments and they suffered, but celebrated the freedom experienced by their ancestors as they had exited Egypt and they could

nonetheless sit and recline in the manner of nobility and drink white wine and celebrate their legacy as Jews. Today, Jews no longer facing public blood libels, can sit at their Seders and drink red wine, and ponder the plight of their ancestors of Europe as well as Egypt, and their trials and triumphs. ~K~

... Why the Cup of Elijah?

By Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner, a Conservative rabbi in the greater Philadelphia area who explains the need to compromise when there is a difference of opinion.

The cup of Elijah derives from a problem in Talmudic Law. The problem is not knowing exactly how many cups of wine to drink at the Seder, four or five. The number of cups is based on the four expressions of deliverance, but there is actually a fifth expression of deliverance.



The Cup of Elijah (Szyk Haggadah)

So, the rabbis came up with the perfect Jewish compromise. We fill the fifth cup, but we don't drink from it. And since Elijah will proceed the Messiah, who will be able to tell us whether four or five cups are correct, we make the fifth cup of wine Elijah's cup.

In some Seder services, each person at the Seder contributes some wine to the fifth cup, symbolizing everyone sharing in the messianic hope. At other Seder services, wine from the cup of Elijah is mixed with the fourth cup.

Others point out historically, and in my opinion correctly, that the door is opened to show everyone outside that Jews do not in any way use the blood of Christians for Passover, often called the "blood libel." To "cover" this ritual, we send children to the door to open it for Elijah the prophet. In general, Sefardim do not open the door for Elijah. ~K~

... The Prayer for Dew

The beautiful Prayer for Dew, Tefillat Tal will be recited at KCT at the beginning of the Musaf Service on the first morning of Pesach, Shabbat April 7th.

By Rabbi Ronald H. Isaacs, the spiritual leader of Temple Sholom in Bridgewater, NJ, who has served as the publications committee chair of the Rabbinical Assembly.

Israel's rainy season formally ends on Passover. The forthcoming dry season is long and hot, but it is lessened by breezes that come in from the Mediterranean Sea and bring dew at night. This bit of moisture is very important, and so Jews say this prayer, wherever they are. Because dew appears at night and helps plants to grow though there is no rain, it is a symbol of revival, and thus the prayer for dew also speaks of the hopes for a fully rebuilt Jerusalem and Land of Israel.

The special prayer for dew (*Tefillat Tal*) injects into the festive mood of the Passover liturgy a mood of solemnity, normally associated with a period of judgment. Passover, according to the Talmud (*Rosh Hashanah 16a*), is the time when God blesses the crops. In keeping with the spirit, it is customary for the Cantor to don a white robe for the Musaf service of the First Day of Passover.

"Give us dew to favor Your land, grant us a blessing of Your joy. Make us strong with plentiful grain and wine. Restore Jerusalem, Your delight, as flowers are renewed by dew. Let this be a good year for dew, crowned with proud and beautiful fruit. May the city of Jerusalem, once empty, be turned into a crown that sparkles like the dew.

"May dew fall upon the blessed land. Fill us with heaven's finest blessings. May a light come out of the darkness to draw Israel to You as a root finds water from dew.

"May You bless our food with dew. May we enjoy plenty with nothing lacking. Grant the wish of the people that followed You through the desert like sheep – with dew.

"You are Hashem our God, who causes the wind to blow and the dew to fall.

For blessing and not for curse. *Amen.*

For life and not for death. *Amen.*

For plenty and not for lack. *Amen.* ~K~



Please consider this your invitation to make the joy of that special personal or family moment last forever by endowing an engraved leaf on the **KCT Tree of Life** on the **Dedication Wall** of the KCT Kiddush Area. Join the many families in our community who have chosen this method to provide needed support for the Kehillah's important year-round educational and religious programming. Your \$180 donation will be gratefully acknowledged by the placement of a beautifully engraved leaf honoring this special moment in your family's life. ~K~

... The Celebration Continues

The celebration of the eighteenth anniversary of Kehillat Chovevi Tzion continues this Spring on

...

Wednesday evening, June 13, 2012

**The Chai Anniversary
Gala Dinner Celebration**

Please place the date on your calendar and be sure to the mailings for details about the dinner and announcements of upcoming programs in this most "magical" eighteenth year!

Simmon Tov u'Mazal Tov! ~K~



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