



Carnegie Shul Chatter

March 23, 2021



Notable Times

Light Shabbat candles, 7:20pm

Shabbat Zoom service, 10am

Light Passover candles, 8:20 (1st night), 8:21 (2nd night)

Zoom in for Services

Our abbreviated Shabbos service begins at 10 am and lasts approximately an hour. Click here to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87328411074?pwd=eWVVBZEdVZWpISVAzNWx5SUDRYVnZuQT09>

Find the Birnbaum siddur at: <https://opensiddur.org/compilations/liturgical/siddurim/kol-bo/hasiddur-hashalem-by-paltiel-birnbaum-1949/>

Passover Memories

When I was a little kid growing up, we always went to my bubba and zayde's house for Passover. Sadly, my memories of those Passovers are not that great. We had to get all dressed up, and in those days that meant putting on a starched white shirt, which I hated, and a wool suit, which was scratchy.

The seder seemed very, very, very long, and even a child dared not talk during the seder. The highlights were my bubbe's gefilte fish, homemade and delicious, and, of course, the hunt for the afikomen.

We also had the "children's model seder" at our shul, Parkway Jewish Center, and that was something that I absolutely looked forward to.

As I got a little older, there was a period of time when I was the youngest boy at the seder, and it was I who got to sing the four questions, which I thoroughly enjoyed. I was proud of my progress in Hebrew school, and everyone made a big fuss about my delivery.

Now, as an adult, it is I who conduct the family seder every year. We usually have about a dozen or so people in attendance and I truly enjoy leading these seders. My wife, Ellen, is a fantastic cook, and the meal is always exceptional.

Tzav in a Nutshell

Leviticus 6:1–8:36

From *chabad.org*

G-d instructs Moses to command Aaron and his sons regarding their duties and rights as kohanim (“priests”) who offer the korbanot (animal and meal offerings) in the Sanctuary.



The fire on the altar must be kept burning at all times. In it are burned the wholly consumed ascending offering; veins of fat from the peace, sin and guilt offerings; and the “handful” separated from the meal offering.

The kohanim eat the meat of the sin and guilt offerings, and the remainder of the meal offering. The peace offering is eaten by the one who brought it, except for specified portions given to the kohen. The holy meat of the offerings must be eaten by ritually pure persons, in their designated holy place and within their specified time.

Aaron and his sons remain within the Sanctuary compound for seven days, during which Moses initiates them into the priesthood.

Passover

Passover begins this Saturday evening and for the second year in a row many Jews will be restricted as to how many guests will be able to attend their Seder because of the continuing pandemic. But things are slowly moving in the right direction and, as more and more of us receive our Covid vaccinations, there is hope that we will soon be able to once again gather with family and friends. In fact, at this week’s Carnegie Shul Board meeting, the Board decided to resume holding in-person services in the Sanctuary on April 24.



Our services will be similar to our last High Holiday services with socially-distanced seating. The Torah scrolls will be removed from the Ark, but aliyahs will be taken from one’s own seat rather than on the Bimah. Masks will not be required.

Passover is the holiday when we celebrate our exodus from Egypt and our journey to the Promised Land. Let us pray that this Passover will be a celebration of our exodus from our in-home isolation due to the pandemic and the start of our journey to a return to normalcy.

For this week’s Chatter, I have decided to include some articles from previous years’ Passover editions of the Carnegie Shul Shofar. I hope you enjoy them.

The Seder Plate

One thing that is common to every seder table is the seder plate. You can buy one made in Israel. You can buy a very fancy and expensive one. You can use a very simple plate. It doesn't matter what kind of plate is used. What does matter is what you put on the plate.

The items to be included on the seder plate are defined in your Hagaddah, but still, some people use slight variations. For example, Eastern European Jews are apt to use boiled potatoes instead of fresh green vegetables as karpas.

Here is an article from dummies.com discussing the traditional items that are placed upon the seder plate:



Seder plate: The seder plate (there's usually one per table) holds at least six of the ritual items that are talked about during the seder: the shankbone, karpas, chazeret, charoset, maror, and egg. While the booming seder plate industry would like you to buy a beautiful, ornate, and expensive plate, you can use any plate. If you have kids, get them involved by decorating a paper plate with pictures of the events or things the seder foods symbolize.

Roasted lamb shankbone: One of the most striking symbols of Passover is the roasted lamb shankbone (called zeroah), which commemorates the paschal (lamb) sacrifice made the night the ancient Hebrews fled Egypt. Some people say it symbolizes the outstretched arm of God (the Hebrew word zeroah can mean "arm"). If you don't like the idea of a bone sitting on your table, you may consider using a roasted beet instead. (That's what vegetarians usually do.) This isn't a new idea; the great Biblical and Talmudic commentator Rashi suggested it back in the eleventh century.



Roasted egg: The roasted egg (baytsah) is a symbol in many different cultures, usually signifying springtime and renewal. Here it stands in place of one of the sacrificial offerings which was performed in the days of the Second Temple. Another popular interpretation is that the egg is like the Jewish people: the hotter you make it for them, the tougher they get. This egg isn't even eaten during the meal; the shell just needs to look really roasted.



Maror ("bitter herb"): Any bitter herb will work, though horseradish is the most common. Bitter herbs bring tears to the eyes and recall the bitterness of slavery. The seder refers to the slavery in Egypt, but people are called to look at their own bitter enslavements, whether addiction or habit.





Charoset: There's nothing further from maror than charoset ("kha-ROH-set"), that sweet salad of apples, nuts, wine, and cinnamon that represents the mortar used by the Hebrew slaves to make bricks.

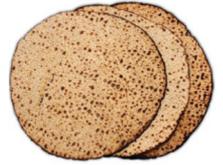
Karpas: Karpas is a green vegetable, usually parsley (though any spring green will do). While karpas may symbolize the freshness of spring, others say people eat it to make them feel like nobility or aristocracy. Some families still use boiled potatoes for karpas, continuing a tradition from Eastern Europe where it was difficult to obtain fresh green vegetables.



Chazeret: The chazeret ("khah-ZER-et") is a second bitter herb, most often romaine lettuce, but people also use the leafy greens of a horseradish or carrot plant. The symbolism is the same as that of maror.

Salt water: Salt water symbolizes the tears and sweat of enslavement, though paradoxically, it's also a symbol for purity, springtime, and the sea, the mother of all life. Often a single bowl of salt water sits on the table into which each person dips their karpas during the seder. Then, it's traditional to begin the actual seder meal with each person eating a hardboiled egg (not the roasted egg!) dipped in the bowl of salt water.

Matzah: Perhaps the most important symbol on the seder table is a plate that has a stack of three pieces of matzah (unleavened bread) on it. The matzot (that's plural for matzah) are typically covered with a cloth. People have come up with numerous interpretations for the three matzot. Some say they represent the Kohen class (the Jewish priests in ancient times), the Levites (who supported the priests), and the Israelites (the rest of the Jews). What symbolism you attribute to this trinity isn't all that important, as long as you're thinking about it.



During the struggles of Soviet Jewry, a fourth piece of matzah was added to the seder plate to symbolize the struggles of Jews who were not yet free enough to celebrate the Passover. Today, some families still use that fourth matzah as a way of remembering all people who are not yet free to celebrate as they wish.

Wine cups and wine (or grape juice): Everyone at the seder has a (usually very small) cup or glass from which they drink four cups of wine. Traditionally, the four cups represent the four biblical promises of redemption: "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you from their slavery, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments. And I will take you to me for a people . . ." Others say the four cups represent the four letters in the unspeakable Name of God.



Some of the symbols aren't eaten, such as the roasted lamb shankbone and the roasted egg. However, when it comes time to eat the karpas, the charoset, and the other symbols, different families have different traditions. Some eat the symbols from the seder plate; others give each person their own mini-seder plate to eat from; at larger events, these items may be served family style, with large bowls being passed around so that people can serve themselves.

Nachshon ben Aminadab

A Man of Courage and Faith

The plagues have been put upon the people of Egypt. The first born have been put to death. And finally Pharaoh lets the people go. But Pharaoh's heart is hardened one more time, and this time Pharaoh's chariots are about to overtake Moses and the Children of Israel near the Red Sea.

With the waters of the Red Sea in front of them and Pharaoh's army approaching from behind, the destruction of the Jewish people certainly appears to be imminent. But God tells Moses to lift up his staff and the sea splits, allowing the Israelites to pass through. Then, when the Israelites have reached safety on the other side, Moses lifts his staff once more and the waters of the sea engulf the pursuing Egyptians. At last, the Children of Israel have been delivered from Pharaoh and slavery in Egypt. What an incredible story!

But wait, there is even more to the story than that.

According to the Talmud, the waters of the Red Sea did not part immediately upon Moses lifting of his staff. Here is what happened next according to the book, *The Complete Story of Passover* : Moses lies prostrate before G-d, and calls out for Divine assistance. Israel is desperate. And on top of it all, the sea breaks out in a raging storm. It screams and howls and threatens to bury the people beneath its waves. Suddenly Moses rises, and through the uproar of noise and fear calls out in a strong voice: "My brethren, G-d commands us to keep on our way!"

For a second the entire camp is frozen motionless with terror. Deadly silence spreads through the night. Endless moments of horror and confusion. Now that Moses' command has sounded, they realize that G-d's will has spoken to their hearts. They storm across the sands of the beach and jubilantly their voices sing out: "Who is with God, follow us!"

Nachshon, the son of Aminadab, prince of Judah, is first. He jumps into the rolling sea. The heaving waters rise higher and higher; but he does not care. He wants to die for the Almighty in selfless love. To His glory he offers his most precious possession, his life.

After Nachshon, the entire people jumps into the sea. Exultantly they shout: "Hail our youth, the pride of our old age!" The roaring of the stormy east wind turns into crashing thunder. Like the call of a clarion sounds the voice from heaven: "To life, not death!"

High stood the floods, and firm like walls. The Red Sea was rent asunder! And from the lips of the saved comes the call: "Judah is His sanctuary, Israel His kingdom!"

Wow! What incredible courage. What an incredible act of faith.



Donations to the Carnegie Shul

Sharon and Larry Block, for the General Fund

Sharon and Larry Block, in memory of Sidney Weiss

Sharon and Larry Block, for the yahrzeit of Harry Block

Gerrie Ketler, in memory of Sidney Weiss, Rick Kelson, Maxine Brunwasser, and Rhonda Averbach

Paul Lederstein, for the yahrzeit of Harvey Lederstein

Frances and Harvey Merenstein, for the yahrzeit of Melvin Weiss

Myron Roth, for the yahrzeit of G. Bernard Roth

Roger Wilk, for the yahrzeit of Morris Wilk



Passover Humor

The Passover seder is a very serious event. After all, we are retelling the story of our ancestors' bondage in Egypt and their miraculous deliverance from slavery. But not only are we retelling that story, we are also celebrating that miracle of deliverance. So why not add a little humor to the celebration.

Here are some Passover-related jokes that will, hopefully, add a few chuckles to your evening:

What do you call someone who derives pleasure from the bread of affliction?

Answer: A matzochist.

A small group of leading medical people have published data that indicates that Seder participants should NOT partake of both chopped liver and charoses. This combination can lead to Charoses of the Liver.

A blind man is sitting on a park bench. A Rabbi sits down next to him. The Rabbi is chomping on a piece of matzoh. Taking pity on the blind man, he breaks off a piece and gives it to the man. Several minutes later, the blind man turns, taps the Rabbi on the shoulder and asks, "Who wrote this?!!"

This is a little known tale of how G-d came to give the Jews the Ten Commandments.

G-d first went to the Egyptians and asked them if they would like a commandment. "What's a commandment?" they asked. "Well, it's like, THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," replied G-d. The Egyptians thought about it and then said, "No way, that would ruin our weekends."

So then G-d went to the Assyrians and asked them if they would like a commandment. They also asked, "What's a commandment?" "Well," said G-d, "It's like, THOU SHALT NOT STEAL." The Assyrians immediately replied, "No way. That would ruin our economy."

So finally G-d went to the Jews and asked them if they wanted a commandment. They asked, "How much?" G-d said, "They're free."

The Jews said, "Great! We'll take TEN!"

A British Jew is waiting in line to be knighted by the Queen. He is to kneel in front of her and recite a sentence in Latin when she taps him on the shoulders with her sword. However, when his turn comes, he panics in the excitement of the moment and forgets the Latin. Then, thinking fast, he recites the only other sentence he knows in a foreign language, which he remembers from the Passover seder:

"Ma nishtana ha layla ha zeh mi kol ha laylot."

Puzzled, Her Majesty turns to her advisor and whispers, "Why is this knight different from all other knights?"

A little boy once returned home from Hebrew school and his father asked, "What did you learn today?"

He answered, "The Rabbi told us how Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt."

"How?"

The boy said "Moses was a big strong man and he beat Pharaoh up. Then he got all the people together and ran towards the sea. When he got there, he had the Corps of Engineers build a huge pontoon bridge. Once they got across, they blew up the bridge while the Egyptians were trying to cross."

The father was shocked. "Is that what the Rabbi taught you?"

The boy replied, "No. But you'd never believe the story he DID tell us!"

