



Rabbi Weiner's April 2007 Bulletin Article

As we get ready for Passover, busily shopping, cooking, cleaning and making all kinds of preparations for this important holiday, we often overlook an important ceremony known as *Bedikat Chametz*, the traditional search for the *chametz* (leavened products) on the night before the first seder.

This year the first Seder will be held on Monday evening April 2, 2007. Earlier that day, our *chametz* needs to be burned (approximately 11:55am). But according to the Passover observance that goes all the way back to the time of the Mishnah, on the night before Passover (this year Sunday evening April 1st) we are commanded to search each of the rooms of our home where we might have taken *chametz* and remove any *chametz* we might have forgotten about. In my home even after many days of preparation, it is not uncommon for us to discover candy we might have left in a bowl in the living room, or a glass that was left on a desk. It reminds us that the search is not a silly old custom, but a real way for us to make one final effort to remove as much *chametz* in our home as is humanly possible.

How is the *Bedikat Chametz* conducted? As the sun goes down, it is customary to turn off the lights and search the house by the light of a candle. (*While using a candle is traditional, do not allow children to conduct this search unattended. You may certainly use a flashlight instead. While we revere our traditions, it is not a mitzvah to injure yourself or your family in the process.*) It is also customary to place ten pieces of bread in various places in the house to encourage children to participate as well. After the search concludes, we gather any *chametz* we might have found, including the ten pieces of bread, and recite a formula, which nullifies any *chametz* that may be encountered in your home during Passover as well.

Our Rabbis derive an important lesson from this important pre-Passover ritual. They see in the removal of *chametz* from our homes not only a fulfillment of the commandments, but also an opportunity for self-improvement as well. Just as we are commanded to remove leavened products from our homes in preparation for Passover, and we spare no effort to achieve this, they challenge us to be as diligent and as careful to remove the behavior and actions which are beneath the high standards we are capable of achieving. In this way, both physically and spiritually we may observe and enjoy Passover in all of its profundity.

We have “searching for chametz kits” in the synagogue office. They are free and contain the blessings, and other items necessary for traditional search for the chametz in your home. Use them. Enjoy them. Allow this wonderful ritual and the lesson it teaches to enrich your holiday experience.

I wish you all a *Chag Kasher V'sameach*—a Happy and Kosher Passover.

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I want to thank the Board of Directors and the membership of the Jewish Community Center of Paramus for the beautiful 10th anniversary Service and Kiddush luncheon on March 3, 2007. The entire anniversary celebration was truly one of the greatest moments of my life, and I am honored that so many members of my JCCP family and the greater community were able to participate.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to have served this congregation for the past 10 ½ years. I have truly enjoyed working with you and our synagogue officers to strengthen Jewish life in our community.

G-d willing, I look forward to continuing to serve the Jewish people for as long as I have the strength to do so. Each day as I go about my Rabbinical duties, I do so with the knowledge of your support and friendship. I am grateful to you all and I am proud to be the Rabbi of this wonderful congregation.

I want to thank each and every member of the committee that planned this wonderful event. From the street naming ceremony on Thursday, March 1st through the beautiful Shabbat of March 3rd, everything was as perfect as could possibly be. Shira and I will never forget your kind words, your tremendous efforts, and most importantly, the loving atmosphere you created.

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