

The Festival of Freedom

For many of our parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents—new immigrants to this country—the pressing financial circumstances of years gone by made it impossible to observe the holidays as our tradition requires: to refrain from work, instead spending the holiday at home and in the synagogue. Today, social and financial circumstances are different, and most Jews can much more easily arrange time away from work and school in order to observe *Yomtov*. To put it another way, most of us are far more free than previous generations to observe our holidays fully.

Public schools are legally required to accommodate observance of religious holidays—permitting rescheduling of tests and homework assignments, as well as excusing absences—and most schools are responsive (sometimes with a little “reminding” by assertive parents or rabbi) to this requirement.

We urge you to observe *Pesach* as you should, by being at home and at *shul* during the major days of the holiday. (If you can’t arrange to take the entire days off, perhaps you can take a few hours of comp time to come to services.) A “good crowd in *shul*” on *Yomtov* is the sign of a vibrant congregation—and participating in *Yomtov* services is your obligation and your opportunity to more fully observe our Festival of Freedom.

“Rabbi Alexandrai, after finishing his prayers, used to say the following: ‘Master of the universe, it is revealed and known before You that our desire is to do Your will. And what prevents us? *Chametz* in the dough.’”

Talmud, B'rakhot 17a

Rashi explains that “*chametz* in the dough” means: the *yetzer ha-ra*—the evil inclination in our hearts that puffs us up.

Pesach Schedule

- Sun., Apr. 9 *B'dikat Chametz* [search for leaven] in homes in the evening.
- Mon., Apr. 10 *Minyan* and *Siyyum B'khorim* [service for firstborn sons], 6:45 am. *Chametz* may not be eaten after 10:58 am. *Chametz* must be burnt/nullified no later than 12:04 pm. *Yomtov* candles, 7:23 pm. No pm *Minyan* in the synagogue. First *seder* in homes in the evening.
- Tue., Apr. 11 First day of *Pesach*. *Shabbat* and *Yomtov* Morning Service, 9:30 am. *Yomtov* candles, 8:24 pm. No pm *Minyan* in the synagogue. Second *seder* in homes in the evening.
- Wed., Apr. 12 Second day of *Pesach*. *Yomtov* Morning Service, 9:30 am. *Mincha*, *Study*, *Ma'ariv*, 7:30 pm.
- Thu., Apr. 13 *Hol Ha-mo'ed Pesach*. Morning *minyan*, 6:30 am. Evening *minyan*, 7:30 pm.
- Fri., Apr. 14 *Hol Ha-mo'ed Pesach*. Morning *minyan*, 7:45 am. *Erev Shabbat*. *Ma'ariv*, 6:30 pm. *Shabbat* candles, 7:27 pm.
- Sat., Apr. 15 *Shabbat Chol Ha-mo'ed Pesach*. *Shabbat* morning services, 9:30 am.
- Sun., Apr. 16 Morning *minyan*, 9:00 am. *Mincha* and *Ma'ariv* for *Yomtov*, 6:30 pm. *Yomtov* candles, 7:29 pm.
- Mon., Apr. 17 Seventh day of *Pesach*. *Yomtov* Morning Service, 9:30 am. *Mincha*, *Yizkor* and *Ma'ariv* Services, 7:30 pm. *Yomtov* candles, 8:30 pm.
- Tue., Apr. 18 Eighth day of *Pesach*. *Yomtov* Morning Service (including *Yizkor*), 9:30 am. *Mincha*, 7:30. *Chametz* may be eaten after 8:31 pm.

NOTE: There will be no evening *minyan* on Monday and Tuesday, April 10 and 11, the evenings of the *sedarim*.