

Preparing for the Feast of the Unleavened Bread

I. What is Leaven?

Leaven or yeast is a substance used to make dough rise. Leavening is a fermenting process in which yeast turns the food sour. The rules of leavening apply to foods prepared from five types of grain; barley, wheat, rye, oats and spelt. Although wine is fermented, it is not placed into the category of leaven because it is not made from one of these five grains.

Removing food products that contain leaven (yeast, baking soda, baking powder, sodium bicarbonate) has its roots in the Passover preparation. Based on tradition, the women of every household began removing all leaven (known as "*chametz*" in Hebrew) from their homes thirty days before the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. According to Exodus 13:7, as long as leaven remains in the house, a person cannot celebrate Passover. Removing leaven is a spiritual as well as a physical cleansing. Christ spoke of leaven as a type of sin in I Corinthians 5:6-8.

II. Instructions for Removing Leavened Food Products

The Lord requires us to clean our homes of any food products that contain leaven, yeast, baking powder, baking soda, or *sodium bicarbonate*. Foods with leaven include breads, cereals, cakes, pies, crackers, and soups. Read the labels on all of your foods, especially in the pantry and freezer. You may be surprised about the foods that contain leaven. Please note that leaven may be represented on a food label by the word "sodium bicarbonate."

The observance of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a symbol of our commitment to turn towards righteousness and turn away from sin. Explain to your family that, after partaking of the Passover, we should ask God for the power to choose His will and strive to live a sin-free life of obedience as we observe the seven days of Unleavened Bread.

Beginning the week of March 21st and before our first Seder Celebration on March 29th, **LET'S GET THE LEAVEN OUT!** You may eat leavened products until, Sunday evening, March 28th. However, please begin to remove them from your home (by eating or discarding them), now. On Sunday evening, March 28th or Monday morning, March 29th, conduct a final inspection of your home for any leavened products. Traditionally, the head of the household does the final inspection. **By sundown on the evening of Monday, March 29th, all leavened products should be out of your home.** You may begin to purchase and consume them again after Sundown, April 6th.

The only type of bread eaten during the eight days of Passover/Unleavened Bread is matzah.