

CONGREGATION AGUDATH JACOB

APRIL 2025 NISAN/IYYAR 5785

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From the Desk of
Rabbi Ben-Zion Lanxner

Eating "Kitniyot"
this year on
Passover
5785 - 2025

Some Clarity &
Practical
Considerations



As Passover is less than two weeks, many of us are getting ready to start preparing for this very important holiday, and therefore I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you some of the last "changes" in the way we, Ashkenazin Jews consider holding on or not, to certain of our old-time traditions.

Why Are Kitniyot Such a Big Deal?

The origins of this tradition are somewhat mysterious. The earliest mentions we have come from medieval Ashkenaz (the border region between western Germany — the Rhineland — and northeastern France — Alsace, Lorraine, and Champagne). And while

that is an old tradition, it is not nearly as old as the laws of not eating chametz (Biblical) and the interpretation of specifically what grains may become chametz (Talmudic).

The Conservative movement has been celebrating Passover for a few years now in light of several papers which permitted Ashkenazi Jews to eat Kitniyot, legumes and other products on Passover.

Some of these particular products are rice, beans, and corn as well as a long list of products which were added to the list of Kitniyot over the centuries.

The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly approved two separate legal Responsa's by large majorities in 2016 which argued that it is permissible for Ashkenazi Jews to eat Kitniyot on Passover.

These two papers can be found at the following links: Rabbi David Golinkin, "Rice, beans, and Kitniyot on Pessach – are they really forbidden?"

<http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/halakhah/teshuvot/2011-2020/Golinkin-Kitniyot.pdf> (20 pages Responsa).

Rabbis Amy Levin and Avram Israel Reisner,

"A Teshuva (Responsa) Permitting Ashkenazim to eat Kitniyot on Pessach"

<http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/halakhah/teshuvot/2011-2020/Levin-Reisner-Kitniyot.pdf> (8pages Responsa).

I encourage everyone to read these papers regardless of whether you are interested in eating Kitniyot or not. Either way, this is an opportunity for greater understanding of the holiday of Passover and the laws and traditions surrounding it.

You will see a list of practical guidelines for those who are interested in eating Kitniyot at the conclusion of "A Teshuva Permitting Ashkenazim to Eat Kitniyot on Pessach".

Nevertheless, I would like to add a few words about the practicalities for those who are planning to incorporate Kitniyot into Pessach this year.

One piece in particular that I find myself repeating quite a bit in the past few weeks is the definition of Chametz.

The only foods that can become Chametz are products which contain wheat, barley, spelt, oats, or rye.

Of course, Matza is made from wheat, and it isn't Chametz. Right!

It is the combination of one of these five grains with liquid that cause it to rise and become Chametz. But anything other than these five grains can't become Chametz and can't 'treif up' your kitchen.

While Ashkenazim have avoided eating Kitniyot on Passover in the past, Kitniyot have never been Chametz. We know this, of course, because Sefaradi Jews have always eaten Kitniyot. One of the challenges of Kitniyot is to make sure that we understand clearly what this permission means as well as its limitations.

The standard caution that goes along with having a Kosher kitchen generally (and on Pessach in particular) should be observed as you incorporate Kitniyot. It seems to me that for those who would like to incorporate Kitniyot this Passover, the best place to look for it is in the produce aisle.

In most of our supermarkets you won't find the five types of grains that can become Chametz in the produce aisle.

However, there are stores in our area that sell beans and other food out of bins that may have contained a variety of products.

I personally would not purchase Kitniyot out of these bins out of a concern that there could have been Chametz in there in the past. The other items I would suggest are dried beans and rice in a bag even without Kosher certification as long as the only ingredient is beans or rice.

One other important note about rice--- Only unenriched rice should be purchased for Pessach. The enriching process can create problems for the Kosher for Passover status of enriched rice. All rice/beans purchased should be purchased in their plain state--- dry/uncooked and without any seasonings.

The recommendation is that people should sift or check rice and beans prior to Passover to make sure that there aren't any stray grains of wheat or other grains in it. Here is a caution----Even if you decide that you are going to eat beans or corn this Passover, I want to make sure that people understand that they shouldn't simply get canned corn or beans unless it has a label which says Kosher for Passover.

While many have argued that peanuts were never Kitniyot, many have avoided peanuts for many years now, assuming that they are Kitniyot. With the permission to eat peanuts, some may want to have peanut butter.

Theoretically this would be fine, but practically speaking, I don't think that you will be able to have peanut butter on your Matza this year because it is unlikely that you will find Kosher for Passover peanut butter in the stores. As with so many packaged products on Pessach (with a few exceptions), we should be purchasing them with a Kosher for Passover symbol.

Of course, in an American Jewish community that is mostly Ashkenazi, there aren't that many packaged Passover products that contain Kitniyot. Still, there are more products on the shelves of local stores now which are labeled Kosher for Passover for those who eat Kitniyot than in the past.

I have spoken with people who feel that there is no reason for them to change the way they have kept Passover for their entire life. In fact, they worry that by adding additional foods to the holiday, the holiday will feel less special.

To be honest about it, my personal view is that there is little chance that adding these foods for Passover is going to change the sense that there is a holiday.

In a house that is fully celebrating the holiday, there are constant reminders that it is Passover.

Nevertheless, there is nothing in these papers that would suggest that people **must** eat Kitniyot. I would imagine that to the extent that people incorporate Kitniyot into Pessach, this will happen slowly.

A final word about changing Jewish tradition.

Earlier Rabbinic sources very clearly state that such foods (rice and beans) are perfectly acceptable for consumption on Passover. In conjunction, a number of significant rabbinic opinions within the Ashkenaz region discounted the tradition, some referring to it as nonsense, or even potentially bad due to imposing hardships on people.

It is for this reason that I have repeatedly used the word "**tradition**" rather than "custom." **Custom, or minhag in Hebrew**, has a serious weight in Halacha (Code of Jewish Law). They are considered almost as powerful as actual laws or rules. However, not every practice that many Jews have started doing is considered to be a true Minhag

(custom), according to Halacha. Whether or not Kitniyot is one is continually argued about, and one of the core issues at play here.

You will find discussions about the implications of changing tradition in the papers mentioned above. While I regularly encourage people to feel a close connection with our ancestors and dedication not only to Jewish law but also to Jewish tradition, I don't feel comfortable insisting on this particular tradition.

Rabbi Golinkin's Teshuva (Responsa) in particular highlights the fact that the Ashkenazi custom of not eating Kitniyot on Passover is a late tradition without a clear reasoning behind it. (*Rabbi Golinkin is a Scholar and lives in Jerusalem since 1972. He is the President Emeritus of the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies and Professor of Jewish Law at the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem*).

And if the reasoning was unclear at the outset, in our day the reasons are unpersuasive.

The tradition of refraining from eating Kitniyot has been recognized by many important Rabbis over the centuries to be an unfortunate development which detracts from, rather than adds to, the celebration of Passover.

While some may insist on tradition, for tradition's sake alone, most of Jewish tradition can be explained in ways which are meaningful and important to our lives.

Jewish communities have made changes (and resisted other changes) for centuries. While I have written, discussed, taught and explained about Kitniyot and the changes that had begun to happen in regard to Ashkenazi practice over the past few years, I did not feel that it was my place to encourage people to begin considering incorporating Kitniyot until now.

I thought it would be important for the Conservative Movement as a whole to decide that this was a permissible change.

I'm grateful for these new Responsa's which pave the way for this change.

Should you have any concerns or questions about this issue, please contact me at cajrabbi@grandecom.net or rebbenzion@gmail.com or 248-640-0606.

Chag Pessach Kasher veSame'ach!

Don't forget to sell your Chametz by April 10, 2025.

Looking forward to seeing y'all at our First Passover Seder!

Reservations should be in the office no later than April 2, 2025!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This month's holidays of *Pesach* and *Yom Hazikaron Lashoah* are occasions that carry tremendous emotional weight, and, as such, provide opportunities for us to look back and also to look inward. There can be a lot for us to digest.

This kind of introspection and self-reflection can be difficult, but is also of great value to us, individually and as a people. In both of the historical instances that we commemorate with these holidays, out of the ashes arose something great. In one instance, our exodus from Egypt; in the other instance, the reestablishment of our homeland. As we look back, decades from the latter event, millennia from the former, we can experience gratitude for the great blessings from G-d that our ancestors experienced even though the challenges that they faced in the lead-up to these blessings—the nightmares of slavery and of the *shoah*, respectively—were horrific.

Spiritual maturity means not defaulting to a reactive state of mind where everything negative that happens requires us immediately to be consumed by our hate of the other party. Now, of course, said party may well be at fault—think of the violent enemies of our people, for example, now and throughout our history. They fully merit our response and deserve far worse from us than they may ever receive. But, still, we must draw on the wellsprings of our faith to ground us and steady us so that we can respond to every challenge from a place of strength and balance—not from rage or instability or a state of being out of control, like they are. Aside from the psychological harm that this inflicts upon ourselves, such a mindset hinders our awareness and consciousness and wisdom and renders us more vulnerable to failure in responding to whatever wickedness it is that we are confronting.

To be very clear, none of this is meant as any kind of a veiled reference to any current partisan political issue here or in Israel or any of the ongoing evil that has been done to our people. It is meant solely as food for thought for each of us as all of us in our wonderful religious community here at CAJ continue

to remain strong and vigilant and even-keeled and to grow together in our collective spiritual journey as observant Jews.

Rabbi David Sutton, a contemporary Orthodox rabbi, in his commentary on Rabbi Yosef Zundel of Salant writing on *bitachon* (trust in G-d), stated, "Everything that happens is an opportunity to grow or slip. But this awareness is possible only if we spend time with ourselves, free from distractions, and notice what we are thinking and feeling." During this month's holidays, despite their emotional weight, taking time to reflect, look inward, and make time for a deeper self-assessment is a wonderful way to honor the memories of all those who came before us and to strengthen ourselves for whatever challenges we will face in the future.

L'shalom,
Jeff Levin

SELLING OF *CHAMETZ* 2025

Congregation Agudath Jacob



As Passover quickly approaches, there are many preparations that are incumbent upon us, chief among them is the selling of *Chametz*. In addition to the prohibition of eating *Chametz* (leaven) on Passover, we are also not allowed to own or benefit from *Chametz*. The Torah and

Rabbinic Law requires us to rid our homes (and also our business locations) of all leaven and leaven products. To accomplish this, we isolate all existing *Chametz* in secured cabinets and pantries and seal them, and sell this leaven to a non-Jew prior to Passover.

In order to accommodate you, we have prepared a Power of Attorney for the sale of *Chametz* form for you to fill out, sign and return to us. This means that you designate Rabbi Ben-Zion Lanxner to be your agent for the transaction.

It is customary to make a donation to the Rabbi or to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund for this transaction. Should you have any questions you can contact him at rebbenzion@gmail.com.

April Service Schedule

Friday, April 4
 Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 pm
 Candle Lighting 7:32 pm

Saturday, April 5
 Shacharit 10:00 am
 Shabbat Ends 8:28 pm

Friday, April 11
 Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 pm
 Candle Lighting 7:37 pm

Saturday, April 12
 Shacharit 10:00 am
 First Seder 6:00 pm
 Shabbat Ends 8:33 pm

Friday, April 18
 Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 pm
 Candle Lighting 7:42 pm

Saturday, April 19
 Shacharit 10:00 am
 Yizkor 11:00 am
 Shabbat Ends 8:48 pm

Friday, April 25
 Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 pm
 Candle Lighting 7:47 pm

Saturday, April 26
 Shacharit 10:00 am
 Shabbat Ends 8:44 pm



April 1
 Semyon Papernov

April 5
 Jo Spark

April 8
 Sarah Via

April 10

Susan Lanxner

April 21

Melanie Bauer

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

April 4

**Michael & Michelle
Desses**

April 8

Paul & Paula Farmer



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ❖ Please see the attached forms for the selling of Chametz.
- ❖ Please remember to RSVP, with payment, for Seder.
- ❖ On Wednesday, April 23rd, at 6 pm, we are hosting the annual Holocaust Remembrance event, co-sponsored with the Greater Waco Interfaith Conference and Temple Rodef Sholom.

THANK YOU for your donations in March!

Shabbat

Javis Howeth

Joseph Settle

Susan Raphael

Jeff Levin
Michael Pesses
Inez Bonneville

Judy Hersh
Susan Lanxner
Steve & Carrie Draher

George & Kathleen
Keller
Jori Samuel

In Memory Of

Dr Stanley Hersh
Judy and Florence
Hersh

Ruth Budin
Judy and Florence
Hersh

Goldman Hersh
Judy and Florence
Hersh

Tama Settle
Joseph Settle

Jack Blutman
Barbara Dankenbring

Birdie Citrin
Jeff Levin

YAHREZEITS

The following names of dearly departed will be read aloud by the Rabbi preceding the Mourner's Kaddish on Shabbat morning. It is fitting and customary that the nearest of kin be present in the synagogue for the recitation of this special prayer in their memory. Attendance not only honors the departed but also enhances and guarantees that a Minyan is present to recite the Kaddish.

Kaddish will be read on April 4

Nissan 5	A Adelman*
	Lum Howeth
	Dora Torchin*
Nissan 6	Ada Ellis
	Minnie Hornstein Feldt*
	Sophia Harris*
Nissan 7	Somone Bauer*
Nissan 8	Minnie Hoffman*
	Lena Aronson Lynn*
Nissan 9	Abraham Berkman*
	Bella Citrin
	Shirley Lynn Hoppenstein*
Nissan 10	Abe Greenberg*
Nissan 11	Willie Bauer*
	Frank Chazanow*
	Evelyn Chernoff

Kaddish will be read on April 11

Nissan 12	Harry Leeson Adler*
Nissan 13	Bernard Rapoport*
Nissan 14	Mitchell M Marcus
	Jack Ruttenberg*
Nissan 15	Mrs Adolph Rubel*
	David Stein
	Mollie I Wiseman*
Nissan 16	H B Cohen*
	Mrs L Fred*
	Anna S Hashfield*
	Jacob Wizig*
Nissan 18	Jennie Wizig*

Kaddish will be read on April 18

Nissan 19	Saide Goltz*
Nissan 20	Louie Genecov*
	Donald Clare Stuckey

Nissan 21 Mildred Fetter*
Mrs Ida B Fred*
Nissan 22 Irving Stupak*
Nissan 23 Abe Jacobs*
Dora Schneiderman Sacks*
Louis Wise*
Nissan 25 Ruby Campbell Howeth

Kaddish will be read on April 25

Nissan 26 Murray Hersh*
Mrs E (Bessie) Levin*
Nissan 27 George Adelman
Mrs Mitchell Stein
Julia Moes
Nissan 28 Leah Beerman*
Rebecca Genecov*
Rachel Kestner*
Morris Miller*
Alex Stein
Nissan 29 Ida Berkman*
Don Tocker*
Nissan 30 Betty E Lejsal Schiller