

March 2010 Message From Rabbi Bob Mark

Anyone attending the class on American Jewish History heard how difficult it was for the Jews suffering through an inquisition that lasted for four hundred years to celebrate our holidays. All kinds of deceptive ideas were put into place to fool the inquisitors into believing that the *Conversos* (Jews who pretended to convert but who made efforts to observe Jewish practices and traditions) were not practicing Judaism. Yet, they tried and did so at substantial risk to their lives.

Today it is remarkably easy to observe Passover. There are all kinds of foods available for Passover that only ten years ago were a figment of someone's vivid imagination. Nobody is looking in your window to punish you for having a *Seder*, lighting candles or keeping our traditions. Yes, it takes a bit of effort to do the extra cleaning and change the dishes and yes there are still some things one cannot eat. No question, some might consider it an inconvenience to make the extra effort, but it's a whole lot easier than 210 years of slavery and 400 years of horrible persecution.

Passover marks the exodus from Egypt and it is about this very exodus that we speak in our prayers all year long. Even our Shabbat Kiddush mentions the exodus from Egypt. Passover is the time for all of us to better understand the trials and tribulations that our ancestors went through for the privilege of being Jewish. Passover is a holiday that can bring a far flung family together, bring a community together and bring out the best in both. It celebrates the very point in time that marks our existence as a nation.

I am looking forward to celebrating this Passover with what I hope will be many of our congregants and perhaps some guests (which would be nice) at our community *Seder* on the second night of Passover. I am also looking forward to making sure that we have a minyan to welcome in the Passover holiday on the eve of the first and second days of Passover as well as for the eves of days seven and eight.

Our ancestors over the years have suffered just to be able to observe our holidays and traditions. We have the privilege to celebrate and observe the Festival of Freedom observe **IN** freedom and comfort. Why not use our freedom to do what others could not do and that is to celebrate our holidays openly and with joy. Please join me at our evening services for Passover and let's make sure that we have saved more than the building that houses Beth Tikvah. Let's continue to save the congregation that occupies it as well.

Please see the Passover schedule for the sale of Chametz and times for services.
On behalf of myself and my family I wish everyone a *Chag Kasher V'sameach, a happy and kosher Passover*

Just for the record, if you are wondering why day two starts at 8:00PM it is because one cannot start a holiday day prior to the one before it ending. Hence, to start earlier would be starting the second *Seder* on the first day.

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