

Preparing for Passover & the Days of Unleavened Bread



A Brief Guide for Believers

Each year in the spring followers of the way spend time in introspection before they take the solemn symbols associated with the suffering and sacrificial death of Messiah. At this same time we also prepare to change our way of living by getting physical leaven out of our homes and lives in accordance with the commandment of God in the books of Exodus and Leviticus.

The Apostle Paul taught Gentile believers in Corinth to continue the practice of “un-leavening” their lives

and taught that Yeshua [Jesus] is *both* the Messiah and our Passover lamb.

1 Corinthians 5:7-8 (KJV)

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. **For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:**

8 Therefore **let us keep the feast**, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

Distorted Self-Image. . . . Every year we

hear sermons that explain why we do what we do during the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. These sermons inspire us to do a self-inspection to make certain that the main lesson of the Days of Unleavened Bread is not lost on us. The specific lesson is that sinful pride puffs-up people like leaven puffs up baked goods. We get proud and it results in a **distorted self-image**.

This is what happened to the evil adversary, Satan the Devil. He became so proud of his attributes that he was puffed up and thought he could take the place of the Creator God. As believers, we need to learn from his bad example and fight against the natural tendency to be puffed up by sin.

This brief booklet is intended to provide you with guidelines for preparation for the Passover season and basic understanding about how to go about “un-leavening” your home. This is information gathered and utilized over decades of observing and celebrating these special times that point to the character and mission of the Messiah.

What is Leavening?

So, where do we start? In order to clean out the leavening from our homes (which is symbolic of our putting sin out of our daily lives) we must know just what leavening is. The logical starting point would seem to be to DEFINE just what constitutes leavening. One might think that this would be simple enough to do, but in our modern world it is becoming increasingly confusing. But fear not, we will try to shed some light on the subject.

Leavening is the act of causing baked products to rise and be puffed up. This can happen as a result of a chemical reaction such as occurs when baking powder and baking soda mix with an acid (like buttermilk, vinegar, lemon juice) and form bubbles of carbon dioxide within the body of the dough.

Leavening can also be accomplished by whipping air into batter or dough, whipping egg whites, and even leaving dough or batter exposed to the open air for too long. (Batter or dough exposed to



the air for more than a few minutes can become leavened by airborne yeast spores, thus unleavened bread is the “bread of haste”, cooked before it can rise.)

We should remove all leavened products such as ordinary baked goods, breads, cakes, cookies etc. and leavening agents from our homes before the first day of unleavened bread arrives. This is in keeping, both with the literal law of God and also with the spiritual intent of the days. It is my opinion that those who think they can understand the spiritual knowledge while refusing to participate in the physical aspects fool only themselves.

Watch for these Words/Items Which Will Leaven Products Made with Grains

- Leavening
- Yeast
- **Baking powder** (baking soda, calcium phosphate, and sodium aluminum sulfate)
- **Baking Soda** (Sodium bicarbonate)
- **Cream of Tartar**
- **Brewer’s Yeast**
- **Baker’s Ammonia** (Ammonia Carbonate)
- **Sourdough Starter**



These items and food products containing them should be removed from our homes for the days of unleavened bread. What should you keep? What should you throw out? As a rule of thumb, we should remember to always “Use Good Sense”, but - “When in doubt, throw it out!” is a safe way to go.

In the past some have taught that Cream of Tartar is not a leavening agent; however, the Encyclopedia Britannica (15 Th. Edition, Volume 7, article “leavening agent”) clearly shows it to be a leavening agent in the same way that baking soda and baking powder are leavening agents.

The fact that they require some other agent (an acid) to activate them does not negate the fact that they are all in fact leaven. In fact Britannica states that batters or dough in which cream of tartar are used must be baked quickly to get the full effect of the fast dissipating gas (carbon dioxide) which it releases even at room temperature.³

In the past some have taught that Brewer’s Yeast is not a form of leavening, but rather, simply a by-product of the fermentation of beer. However, the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language gives the following definitions for “leaven” and “brewer’s yeast” respectively:

- **Leaven** (noun) An agent, such as yeast, that causes batter or dough to rise, especially by fermentation. (Emphasis mine).
- **Brewer’s Yeast** (noun) A yeast of the genus *Saccharomyces*, used as a ferment in brewing and also as a source of B-complex vitamins. (Emphasis mine).

Clearly the indication is that brewer’s yeast does contain live yeast spores. Funk and Wagnall’s describes the means by which Brewer’s Yeast reproduces its spores. As such, I believe it best to remove products containing brewer’s yeast for the Passover season.

The following are **NOT** Leavening, But Take Note...

YEAST EXTRACT - This is used as a flavoring in canned goods and soups. It contains no live spores and does not leaven. Some say that *Yeast Extract* is MSG (monosodium glutamate) renamed to disguise its use.

EGGS - Of course they are NOT leavening. Nevertheless, the whites can be whipped up with air to make fluffy dough, thereby causing the bread/cake to be puffed-up.

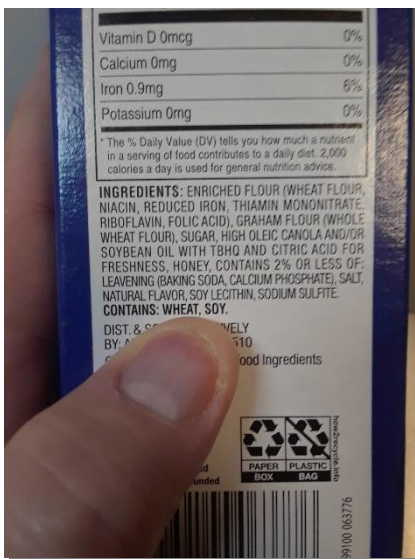
You should feel free to keep your eggs during the days of unleavened bread. You just shouldn't whip up the whites to circumvent the intent of these days; namely that we daily eat the "bread of affliction/the bread of haste".

AIR - When whipped into dough or batter causes bubbles to form and lighten the texture. Also, airborne yeast spores can leaven batters and doughs when they are left exposed to the open air for very long.

Obviously you cannot get the air out of your home. But the point is that you should not leave pre-baked goods to set or rise, nor should you whip air into them during the Passover season.

STEAM – Believers should remember the spirit of the law. The point is to keep baked products from being puffed up. So we should not use steam to achieve puffing-up of batters or doughs.

BEER (or other carbonated beverages) – beer is sometimes used in batters for fried fish. The beer leavens the batter and makes it lighter and fluffier. Carbonated beverages *could* be added to batters and dough (such as soda pop in fruit cobblers) as a leavening agent, so just don't use them in that manner and the beer & soft drinks need not be thrown out.



Believers need to be LABEL-READERS. Leaven sometimes is found in weird and unexpected places. Recently we found that the brand of bottled drinking water we purchase contains bicarbonate of soda [added for flavoring]. Will it leaven anything? No. So, if your conscience is not stirred so that you feel led of the Spirit to remove it; you could keep your drinking water.

NOW WAIT JUST A MINUTE! Are you saying that some folks believe we must get rid of any beer, carbonated beverages, and even bottled water during the Passover season?!!!

I have had other believers laugh at me and remind me that it is the days of *unleavened bread*, not the days of unleavened beer, soda, or bottled water. I can appreciate their humor, and what they say is true.

The scriptures tell us that we are to eat unleavened bread. They do not tell us anything about refraining from the use of any type of beverages, including alcoholic beverages like beer. If it were God's intention for us to not drink beer or carbonated beverages, the scriptures would surely have made that clear. So, keep a good attitude and sense of humor.

However, if we continue to keep and drink those beverages, we should just realize that we are not free to use these beverages in baked goods in an attempt to circumvent the law of God and puff up breads and cakes.

Watch Out for The Following When Checking Labels for Leavening

- Sodium Phosphates
- Aluminum Phosphates
- Calcium Phosphates
- Any kind of Pyro-Phosphates

The reason to watch for these items in baked goods or products that use breadcrumbs is that sometimes the labels on food products will not list the word "leavening". Instead, they may list the constituent ingredients of baking soda and baking powder, such as phosphates and pyrophosphates.

Be aware, you can also find these ingredients in LOTS of food products that are NOT leavened. So, don't be overwhelmed or freak out. You will find that these and other leavening agents are often added to non-grain foods.

These ingredients are added for non-leaving purpose, such as anti-clumping agents in powdered products. For instance, pudding mixes, cheese sauce mixes, powdered drink mixes, and gravy mixes will frequently have phosphates in them. They are not leavened and cannot be used to leaven baked goods.

So, when you see leavening agents in soups and processed cheese foods, that is the likely reason. So, if you find them in your cocoa mix or tomato soup, I wouldn't fret or consider them "leavened".

Some meat products have phosphates listed on their product label. For instance, our brand of turkey bacon has phosphates listed. If a meat product says it has yeast in it, I would not have it in my house during unleavened bread. But meat itself cannot be leavened, so unless a meat product contains grains in the form of filler, batter, dough, or breadcrumbs. I would not feel obliged to get rid of it for unleavened bread.

Eating-out during Unleavened Bread:

We must be careful when dining out during the Passover season. We cannot simply assume that the breading on the fried chicken or fish etc. is really *unleavened*.



A phone call to ask ahead of time, or a visit to their website to check menu ingredients, may be a good idea. Since much of the fare available in restaurants is bread-centered in nature (i.e. burgers, pizza, sandwiches), it would be a good idea to eat as many meals as possible at home and with family and fellow believers during the days of unleavened bread. Besides, it is a great time to get reacquainted with your family and friends!

Conclusion: There are many wonderful spiritual lessons we can learn from observing the days of unleavened bread. But the one I seem to learn over and over again is this: No matter how hard I try, I can't get all the sin (leavening) out of my life. I always seem to discover something out of sight, something hidden which I failed to get rid of. This reminds me of David's words in Psalm 19:12:

"Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

We always have to rely on our Heavenly Father to apply the blood of our Passover lamb, Yeshua Messiah, (Jesus the Christ), to our hearts. When we repent, He forgives all our sins, even the ones we miss, or maybe don't even recognize until later on.

So we remember Messiah's suffering and sacrifice in the bread and wine at Passover, but we join him in newness of life as we put leaven [sin] out of our lives and take in the Word of God, the true bread of life as pictured by the unleavened bread we must eat daily for seven days.

Frequently Asked Questions:

WHAT ABOUT PET FOODS?



Pets are certainly an important part of our modern lives. If you read the labels on the food containers, you will likely discover leavening in the ingredients list. Many folks have voiced concern about this in the past. **Should I throw out the dog food or cat food?**

The key to understanding what to do about Fido or Kitty's food is to remember to ask [yourself] this question:

Am I planning to eat the dog or cat food?

Well, of course we are NOT going to be consuming their kibble. Also, you cannot use their food to leaven anything else, so it is a judgment call, but I see no reason to think you need to remove the pet foods from your home during the days of unleavened bread.

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