

## Torah Thoughts Tzav

5778:

The Shabbat which precedes Pesakh is called 'Shabbat haGadol,' 'the great Sabbath,' in part because of the great length of the sermon that day. It was a tradition among some Ashkenazic rabbis to expound upon the rules for Pesakh that day and even to review part of the haggadah so that seder could be entered with some foresight.

Even though that is not our practice at EBJC, it is still a good idea to review and prepare for Pesakh in advance. In addition to cleaning out the hametz from our homes, we should discuss how we will be running our seders: Who leads? Who reads? What will the ratio of Hebrew to English be? How much time will we allow for discussion and personal reflection on 'leaving Mitzrayim'? By talking through the content and structure beforehand, we can maximize our appreciation of the holiday's theme of redemption. Rather than rushing through to get to dinner, we should plan on snacking through the first half of the seder to keep hunger at bay. Asking questions about each element of the rituals, we enter into dialogue with each other and with our tradition.

This Shabbat would be an excellent time to have that discussion. Families that gather for a Shabbat meal should take a little time and do some planning for next week. It is a sad irony that too many Jews feel the seder itself to be a form of enslavement. This year, we should redeem ourselves from that kind of slavery in favor of the freedom of time enjoyed together, reflecting on the meaning of that freedom.

Shabbat shalom