

**Topics you might talk about before Yom Tov to make sure you both are aware an on the same page.**

### *Family minhagim/traditions/memories*

- Talk about Pesach family traditions/rituals: days leading up to the Yom Tov, special foods, the first seder, the second seder, Chol Hamoed, last days of Pesach, Acharon shel Pesach, wrapping up after the Yom Tov.
- How would you like to incorporate those into your family? What about those aspects are so meaningful to you? How might you work out conflicting minhagim (be creative: do both, alternate years, create a mix of both of yours, determine who has a stronger attachment to the minhag, accommodate the other, come up with something entirely new).
- You might also talk about things that happened in your upbringing or you observed in other homes that you do or do not want to happen in your own home.

### *Yom Tov Meals*

#### As guests:

- Where are you eating each meal? What time are you expected at your host's home? What should you bring? What ought you know about the host family?
- Exact address and apartment number. The route will you be taking from home/shul to get there (this is helpful when one of you might be running late and/or need support, the other can walk toward you).

#### As hosts:

- Who is coming to each meal? What time are the guests expected to arrive? What ought you know about each guest? Will any need explanation about what is happening at the meal (who will do the explaining)?
- How will you involve the guests? How will you balance that out with your own children (your kids come first!)?
- What will you be serving; is it enough/ too much? Which will be bought or homemade? Any specific foods either wants? Food budgets.
- Who will be setting, serving, clearing the table, putting the room back together, putting away food after?
- Topics to discuss or to absolutely not discuss at the table; and how to stop the conversation.
- Review the minhagim before the Yom Tov, so that you are not figuring out at the table.

#### The children:

- How will you involve the children (and all their crafts and Dvar Torahs)?
- What are your expectations for the children's participation and behavior? Who/how will you address the inevitable 'children acting as children' during the meals (think of each meal separately).
- Who will take care of cranky, tired, hungry children during the Seder and meals? How will the meal proceed while one is tending to the children?

### *The davening/ shul*

- Discuss the shul's schedule – when is shachris, krias hatorah, birchas kohanim, and end of davening.
- Exact address and route you will be taking to and from shul.
- What both of you can do to ensure that davening and shul participation is not stressful. (This might include preparing the children in the morning, snacks for the children, etc.)

### *The shopping before*

- Realistic budgets for food, wine, matzoh, clothing, paper goods and table décor, etc.
- When and who will do the shopping? Where? What be ordered online, ordered from the store? What must be bought in the stores? What needs to be bought close to Yom Tov, what can be bought in advance?
- Who will unpack the purchases? Where will things be stored?

### *The children*

- How might you include the children in the buildup for the Yom Tov; how can they be part of physical preparations? How can you get them excited for Yom Tov?
- What can you do to prepare the children for the change of schedule?
- What can you do to help the children be inspired by and have happy memories of the Yomim Tovim?
- Chol Hamoed experiences – wake up times, trips, meals (what if one or both of you have to work).
- Erev Yom Tov schedule – balancing preparing for Yom Tov, eating on erev Yom Tov, napping, etc.

### *Making Yom Tov as stress-free as possible*

- Figure out which aspects are most stressful for each of you. Work on those first. Be creative. Share cooking responsibilities with a friend or family member. Buy some prepared foods (pre-cleaned chicken or meat that doesn't need cleaning). Share shopping responsibilities (one friend goes to store A for both of you, you go to store B for both of you).
- Get help for your most stressful responsibilities. Some people prefer someone take the kids, others prefer food prep help, others prefer cleaning help, other prefer shopping help.
- Schedule 'me time' for each of you – coffee, exercise, a walk, alone time to read, etc.

### *Don't forget to nurture your own relationship*

- Schedule some alone time in the busyness of the Yom Tov. A cup of tea after the table is cleared, a walk around the block. Get a babysitter for a short while.
- Little gifts of appreciation (doesn't have to be expensive).
- Be nice. Lots of expressions of appreciation – in the busyness of the Yom Tov, there are lots of things that each of you do that can be noticed and appreciated.
- Give your spouse some 'me-time' to do as they please.

**MAKE A VERBAL PACT ABOUT SIMCHA OVER YOM TOV— AND HOW WE WILL ADDRESS THE POSSIBLE CHALLENGES TO THAT SIMCHA.**

– Rabbi Dr. Dovid Fox (podcast with MASK)

*Spending Yom Tov with parents or in-laws*

- Respect your parents' / in-laws' styles even if they are somewhat different from yours. As a team, both of you should discuss what you can and absolutely cannot accept, and how you will address when something crosses your bottom line.
- In most cases, the wife should speak to her parents and the husband to his. It is important to speak with a united front, so it may be worthwhile for both of you to first have a conversation about how to bring up whatever it is.
- Allow your spouse to spend time with family (parents, siblings, other relatives) that they may not have seen in a while – even if it makes things a bit harder for you.
- Anticipate the possible areas of challenge and plan how to address those. Internally – what personal adaptations do I need to make in my expectations, bottom lines, what I will look the other way. In the schedules, physical space.
- MORE ON THIS TOPIC: [https://adaid.org/free-downloads/choose Talking about In-laws](https://adaid.org/free-downloads/choose-Talking-about-In-laws)

*Yom Tov with children not living to your standards*

- It is important to be cognizant of the subtle messages that you are imparting to them. It is important that they get only positive messages about Yom Tov and family time together.
- You show your joy of Yom Tov and at the same time, do not expect that they will have the same attitude to Yom Tov. This is not the time to judge or try to alter your child's course in life. You can however plant happy memories about Yom Tov and family.
- While Pesach may have some stresses (the hard work, change of schedule, etc.), it is important that those are not part of their Pesach experience.

*When one spouse wants to change the level of observance*

- Try to understand what is going on for your spouse – what was the thought process that brought this on. They need to know that you are listening.
- If the change will impact the other's schedule or workload, be understanding in their hesitation. Try to accommodate or compromise. Don't insist.
- If the change is about dropping some family practices, it is important to understand how and why their relationship to Yiddishkeit is changing. Is it only about Pesach or is it in other areas?
- MORE ON THIS TOPIC: <https://adaid.org/pesach-chumros-shalom-bayis/>