

~FESTIVAL OF UNFERMENTED CAKES (626)

[Hebrew, *mats-tsohth*]

- Significance
- Pre-Exilic Observances
- Post-Exilic Observance
- Prophetic Significance

• This festival began Nisan 15, the day after Passover, and continued for seven days through Nisan 21. Its name is derived from the unfermented cakes Hebrew, *mats-tsohth*, the only bread allowed during the seven days of the festival.

• Unleavened bread is kneaded with water but without yeast. It has to be hurriedly prepared if fermentation is to be prevented.

See Also PASSOVER

• The first day of the **Festival of Unfermented Cakes** was a solemn assembly, also a Sabbath. On the second day, Nisan 16, a sheaf of the firstfruits of the barley harvest, the first crop to ripen in Palestine, was brought to the priest.

• Prior to this festival no new grain, bread, or roasted grain from the new harvest could be eaten. The priest offered such firstfruits to Yehowah symbolically by waving a sheaf of the grain to and fro, while a sound ram in its first year was offered as a burnt offering along with a grain offering moistened with oil and a drink offering.

• And on the fifteenth day of this month is the **festival** of unfermented cakes to Yehowah. Seven days you should eat unfermented cakes. (**Leviticus 23:6**)

• On the first day you will have a holy convention occur. No sort of laborious work may you do. (**Leviticus 23:7**)

• But you must present an offering made by fire to Yehowah seven days. On the seventh day there will be a holy convention. No sort of laborious work may you do. (**Leviticus 23:8**)

• And Yehowah continued to speak to Moses, saying; (**Leviticus 23:9**)

- **Speak to the sons of Israel, and you must say to them; When you eventually come into the land that I am giving you, and you have reaped its harvest, you must also bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. ([Leviticus 23:10](#))**
- **And he must wave the sheaf to and fro before Yehowah to gain approval for you. Directly the day after the Sabbath the priest should wave it to and fro. ([Leviticus 23:11](#))**
- **And on the day of your having the sheaf waved to and fro you must render up a sound young ram, in its first year, for a burnt offering to Yehowah. ([Leviticus 23:12](#))**
- **And as its grain offering two tenths of an ephah of fine flour moistened with oil, as an offering made by fire to Yehowah, a restful odor, and as its drink offering a fourth of a hin of wine. ([Leviticus 23:13](#))**
- **And you must eat no bread nor roasted grain nor new grain until this very day, until your bringing the offering of your God. It is a statute to time indefinite for your generations in all places where you dwell. ([Leviticus 23:14](#))**
- **There was no command to burn any of the grain or its flour on the altar, as was practiced later by the priests. Not only was there a public or national firstfruit offering but provision was also made for each family and every individual who had a possession in Israel to offer thanksgiving sacrifices during this festive occasion.**
- **The best of the first ripe fruits of your ground you are to bring to the house of Yehowah your God. You must not boil a kid in its mother's milk. ([Exodus 23:19](#))**
- **And it must occur that when at last you enter into the land that Yehowah your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you have taken possession of it and dwelt in it. ([Deuteronomy 26:1](#))**
- **You must also take some of the firstfruits of all the fruitage of the soil, which you will bring in from the land of yours that Yehowah your God is giving you, and you must put them in a basket and go to the place that Yehowah your God will choose to have his name reside there. ([Deuteronomy 26:2](#))**

See Also FIRSTFRUITS

· Significance

- The eating of **unfermented cakes** at this time was in harmony with the instructions Moses received from Yehowah, as recorded at;
- And this day must serve as a memorial for you, and you must celebrate it as a **festival** to Yehowah throughout your generations. As a statute to time indefinite you should celebrate it. (**Exodus 12:14**)
- Seven days you are to eat unfermented cakes. Yes, on the first day you are to take away sourdough from your houses, because anyone eating what is leavened, from the first day down to the seventh, that soul must be cut off from Israel. (**Exodus 12:15**)
- And on the first day there is to take place for you a holy convention, and on the seventh day a holy convention. No work is to be done on them. Only what every soul needs to eat, that alone may be done for you. (**Exodus 12:16**)
- And you must keep the **festival of unfermented cakes**, because on this very day I must bring your armies out from the land of Egypt. And you must keep this day throughout your generations as a statute to time indefinite. (**Exodus 12:17**)
- In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, in the evening you are to **eat unfermented cakes** down till the twenty-first day of the month in the evening. (**Exodus 12:18**)
- Seven days no sourdough is to be found in your houses, because anyone tasting what is leavened, whether he is an alien resident or a native of the land, that soul must be cut off from the assembly of Israel. (**Exodus 12:19**)
- Nothing leavened are you to eat. In all your dwellings you are to eat **unfermented cakes**. (**Exodus 12:20**)
- Which includes the strict injunction, at verse 19. Seven days no sourdough is to be found in your houses. In
- You must eat nothing leavened along with it for seven days. You should eat along with it unfermented cakes, the bread of affliction, because it was in haste that you came out of the land

of Egypt, that you may remember the day of your coming out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. (**Deuteronomy 16:3**)

- The unfermented cakes are called the bread of affliction, and they were a yearly reminder to the Jews of their hurried departure from the land of Egypt, when they did not have time to leaven their dough.
- Consequently the people carried their flour dough before it was leavened, with their kneading troughs wrapped up in their mantles upon their shoulder. (**Exodus 12:34**)
- They thus recalled the state of affliction and bondage from which Israel had been delivered, even as Yehowah himself said; that you may remember the day of your coming out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.
- The realization of their present freedom as a nation and their acknowledgment of Yehowah as their Deliverer set a fitting background for the first of the three great annual **festivals** of the Israelites.
- Three times in the year every male of yours should appear before Yehowah your God in the place that he will choose, in the **festival** of the unfermented cakes and in the festival of weeks and in the festival of booths, and none should appear before Yehowah empty-handed. (**Deuteronomy 16:16**)

•• Pre-Exilic Observances

- There are three accounts recorded in the Scriptures of the keeping of the **Festival of Unfermented Cakes** following the Israelites entry into the Promised Land and prior to their Babylonian exile.
- But the fact that no other observances are mentioned should not be taken to mean that such were not held. Rather, in the first account, there is a general reference to all the festivals and Solomon's arrangements to observe them.
- It was then that Solomon offered up burnt sacrifices to Yehowah upon the altar of Yehowah that he had built before the porch. (**2 Chronicles 8:12**)
- Even as a daily matter of course to make offerings according to

the commandment of Moses for the Sabbaths and for the new moons and for the appointed **festivals** three times in the year, at the **festival of unfermented cakes** and at the **festival** of the **weeks** and at the **festival** of the **booths**. (2 Chronicles 8:13)

- In the other two instances the circumstances are outstanding. One is the revival of the observance of the **Festival of Unfermented Cakes**, after a time of neglect.
- This revival was during the first year of faithful King Hezekiah's reign. Interestingly, in this case there was not enough time to prepare for the annual festival on Nisan 15, because the work of cleaning and repairing the temple took until Nisan 16. So, advantage was taken of the Law to celebrate the festival during the second month.
- Thus they got started on the first day of the first month at sanctifying, and on the eighth day of the month they came to the porch of Yehowah, so that they sanctified the house of Yehowah in eight days, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished. (2 Chronicles 29:17)
- And they proceeded to gather themselves together at Jerusalem, a numerous people, to hold the **festival** of the unfermented cakes in the second month, a congregation very multitudinous. (2 Chronicles 30:13)
- So the sons of Israel that were found in Jerusalem held the **festival of the unfermented cakes** seven days with great rejoicing, and the Levites and the priests were offering praise to Yehowah day by day with loud instruments, even to Yehowah. (2 Chronicles 30:21)
- Moreover, Hezekiah spoke to the heart of all the Levites who were acting with fine discretion toward Yehowah. And they proceeded to eat the appointed feast for seven days, sacrificing communion sacrifices and making confession to Yehowah the God of their forefathers. (2 Chronicles 30:22)
- Speak to the sons of Israel, saying; Although any man of you or of your generations should happen to be unclean by a soul or off on a distant journey, he too must prepare the Passover sacrifice to Yehowah. (Numbers 9:10)
- In the second month, on the fourteenth day between the two

evenings, they should prepare it. Together with unfermented cakes and bitter greens they should eat it. (**Numbers 9:11**)

- It was such a joyous occasion and resulted in such a religious revival that the celebration of seven days proved to be just too short, and so another seven days were set aside.
- Then all the congregation decided to hold it for seven more days, and so they held it for seven days with rejoicing. (**2 Chronicles 30:23**)
- King Hezekiah and his princes contributed generously, giving 2,000 bulls and 17,000 sheep to supply food for the multitudes attending.
- The **festival** observance was the start of a great campaign against false religion, and in many cities this was carried out before the worshippers returned to their homes.
- For Hezekiah the king of Judah himself contributed for the congregation a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep, and the princes themselves contributed for the congregation a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep, and priests kept sanctifying themselves in great number. (**2 Chronicles 30:24**)
- And as soon as they finished all this, all the Israelites that were found there went out to the cities of Judah, and they proceeded to break up the sacred pillars and cut down the sacred poles and pull down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin and in Ephraim and Manasseh until they had finished, after which all the sons of Israel returned to their cities, each one to his own possession. (**2 Chronicles 31:1**)
- The keeping of this **Festival** of Unfermented Cakes brought about Yehowah's blessing as well as freedom from demon worship, and it is a fine example of the beneficial effects that the keeping of these festivals had upon the Israelites.
- The last recorded account of pre-exilic observance of the **Festival of Unfermented Cakes** was its celebration during the reign of King Josiah when he made a courageous effort to restore the pure worship of Yehowah in Judah.
- Then Josiah held in Jerusalem a Passover to Yehowah and they

slaughtered the Passover victim on the fourteenth day of the first month. (2 Chronicles 35:1)

- **So he stationed the priests over the things under their care and encouraged them in the service of the house of Yehowah. (2 Chronicles 35:2)**
- **And he went on to say to the Levites, the instructors of all Israel, those holy to Yehowah. Put the holy Ark in the house that Solomon the son of David the king of Israel built, it is not yours as a burden upon the shoulder. Now serve Yehowah your God and his people Israel. (2 Chronicles 35:3)**
- **And make preparation by the house of your forefathers according to your divisions, by the writing of David the king of Israel and by the writing of Solomon his son. (2 Chronicles 35:4)**
- **And stand in the holy place by the classes of the house of the forefathers for your brothers, the sons of the people, and the portion of a paternal house belonging to the Levites. (2 Chronicles 35:5)**
- **And slaughter the Passover victim and sanctify yourselves and make preparation for your brothers to do according to the word of Yehowah by means of Moses. (2 Chronicles 35:6)**
- **Josiah now contributed to the sons of the people flocks, male lambs and male kids, the whole for the Passover victims for all who were to be found, to the number of thirty thousand, and cattle, three thousand. These were from the goods of the king. (2 Chronicles 35:7)**
- **And his princes themselves made a contribution as a voluntary offering for the people, for the priests and for the Levites. Hilkiyah and Zechariah and Jehiel themselves as leaders of the house of the true God gave to the priests for the Passover victims two thousand six hundred, and three hundred cattle. (2 Chronicles 35:8)**
- **And Conaniah and Shemaiah and Nethanel his brothers and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, the chiefs of the Levites, contributed to the Levites for Passover victims five thousand, and five hundred cattle. (2 Chronicles 35:9)**

- **And the service was prepared and the priests kept standing at their places, and the Levites by their divisions, according to the kings commandment. (2 Chronicles 35:10)**
- **And they proceeded to slaughter the Passover victim and the priests sprinkled the blood from their hand, while the Levites were stripping the skins off. (2 Chronicles 35:11)**
- **Further, they prepared the burnt offerings so as to give them to the classes by the paternal house, to the sons of the people, so as to make a presentation to Yehowah according to what is written in the book of Moses, and thus also with the cattle. (2 Chronicles 35:12)**
- **And they went boiling the Passover offering over the fire according to the custom, and the things made holy they boiled in cooking pots and in round-bottomed pots and in banquet bowls, after which they brought it quickly to all the sons of the people. (2 Chronicles 35:13)**
- **And afterward they prepared for themselves and for the priests, because the priests the sons of Aaron were engaged in offering up the burnt sacrifices and the fat pieces until night, and the Levites, for their part, prepared for themselves and for the priests the sons of Aaron. (2 Chronicles 35:14)**
- **And the singers the sons of Asaph were at their office according to the commandment of David and of Asaph and of Heman and of Jeduthun the visionary of the king, and the gatekeepers were at the different gates. There was no need for them to turn aside from their service, because their brothers the Levites themselves prepared for them. (2 Chronicles 35:15)**
- **And all the service of Yehowah was prepared on that day to hold the Passover and to offer up the burnt offerings upon the altar of Yehowah, according to the commandment of King Josiah. (2 Chronicles 35:16)**
- **And the sons of Israel that were to be found proceeded to hold the Passover at that time and also the festival of the unfermented cakes for seven days. (2 Chronicles 35:17)**
- **And there had never been held a Passover like it in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet, neither had any of the other**

kings of Israel themselves held a Passover like that which Josiah and the priests and the Levites and all Judah and Israel that were to be found and the inhabitants of Jerusalem held. (**2 Chronicles 35:18**)

- In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign this Passover was held. (**2 Chronicles 35:19**)
- Although these are the only observances specifically mentioned, prior to the kings the faithful judges and priests of Israel were doubtless concerned with keeping the **festivals**.
- Later, both David and Solomon made extensive arrangements to keep the priesthood functioning properly, and other kings of Judah must have seen to it that the festivals were regularly observed. Also, the Festival of Unfermented Cakes was kept quite regularly in postexilic times.

•• **Post-Exilic Observance**

- Following the Jews release from Babylon and their return to the Promised Land, the temple at Jerusalem was rebuilt and completed under the vigorous encouragement given by Yehowah's prophets Haggai and Zechariah.
- And Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the grandson of Iddo the prophet prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and in Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. (**Ezra 5:1**)
- It was then that Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jehozadak got up and started to rebuild the house of God, which was in Jerusalem, and with them there were God's prophets giving them aid. (**Ezra 5:2**)
- In **515 B.C.E.** the rebuilt house of Yehowah was inaugurated with great joy and with all the appropriate sacrifices attending the **Festival of Unfermented Cakes**. The record at;
- And they went on to hold the **festival of unfermented cakes** seven days with rejoicing, for Yehowah caused them to rejoice, and he had turned the heart of the king of Assyria around toward them to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of the true God, the God of Israel. (**Ezra 6:22**)

- The book of Malachi shows that in time, notwithstanding the zealous start toward restoration of true worship when the exiles returned from Babylon, the priests became careless, proud, and self-righteous. The temple service became a mockery, even though the **festivals** were kept in a formalistic way.
- A son, for his part, honors a father, and a servant, his grand master. So if I am a father, where is the honor to me? And if I am a grand master, where is the fear of me? Yehowah of armies has said to you, O priests who are despising my name. And you have said; In what way have we despised your name? (**Malachi 1:6**)
- And when you present a blind animal for sacrificing; It is nothing bad. And when you present a lame animal or a sick one; It is nothing bad. Bring it near, please, to your governor. Will he find pleasure in you, or will he receive you kindly? Yehowah of armies has said. (**Malachi 1:8**)
- But you men are profaning me by your saying; The table of Yehowah is something polluted, and its fruit is something to be despised, its food. (**Malachi 1:12**)
- And you have said; Look! What a weariness! And you have caused a sniffing at it, Yehowah of armies has said. And you have brought something torn away, and the lame one, and the sick one, yes, you have brought it as a gift. Can I take pleasure in it at your hand? Yehowah has said. (**Malachi 1:13**)
- And cursed is the one acting cunningly when there exists in his drove a male animal, and he is making a vow and sacrificing a ruined one to Yehowah. For I am a great King, Yehowah of armies has said; And my name will be fear-inspiring among the nations. (**Malachi 1:14**)
- And now this commandment is to you, O priests. (**Malachi 2:1**)
- If you will not listen, and if you will not lay it to heart to give glory to my name, Yehowah of armies has said; I shall also certainly send upon you the curse, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have even cursed the blessing, because you are not laying it to heart. (**Malachi 2:2**)

- Look! I am rebuking on your account the sown seed, and I will scatter dung upon your faces, the dung of your **festivals**, and someone will actually carry you away to it. (**Malachi 2:3**)
- Will earthling man rob God? But you are robbing me. And you have said; In what way have we robbed you? In the tenth parts and in the contributions. (**Malachi 3:8**)
- With the curse you are cursing me, and me you are robbing, the nation in its entirety. (**Malachi 3:9**)
- Bring all the tenth parts into the storehouse, that there may come to be food in my house, and test me out, please, in this respect, Yehowah of armies has said; Whether I shall not open to you people the floodgates of the heavens and actually empty out upon you a blessing until there is no more want. (**Malachi 3:10**)
- Jesus found the scribes and Pharisees scrupulously keeping the details of the Law, besides their added traditions. They zealously observed the **festivals**, including the **Festival of Unfermented Cakes**, but Jesus condemned them, for, because of their hypocrisy, they had lost sight of the real significance of these fine arrangements of Yehowah for their blessing.
- Then there came to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes, saying; (**Matthew 15:1**)
- Why is it your disciples overstep the tradition of the men of former times? For example, they do not wash their hands when about to eat a meal. (**Matthew 15:2**)
- In reply he said to them; Why is it you also overstep the commandment of God because of your tradition? (**Matthew 15:3**)
- For example, God said; Honor your father and your mother, and, Let him that reviles father or mother end up in death. (**Matthew 15:4**)
- But you say; Whoever says to his father or mother; Whatever I have by which you might get benefit from me is a gift dedicated to God. (**Matthew 15:5**)
- He must not honor his father at all. And so you have made the

word of God invalid because of your tradition. (**Matthew 15:6**)

- You hypocrites, Isaiah aptly prophesied about you, when he said; (**Matthew 15:7**)
- This people honors me with their lips, yet their heart is far removed from me. (**Matthew 15:8**)
- It is in vain that they keep worshiping me, because they teach commands of men as doctrines. (**Matthew 15:9**)
- Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you give the tenth of the mint and the dill and the cummin, but you have disregarded the weightier matters of the Law, namely, justice and mercy and faithfulness. These things it was binding to do, yet not to disregard the other things. (**Matthew 23:23**)
- Blind guides, who strain out the gnat but gulp down the camel! (**Matthew 23:24**)
- And he entered into the temple and started to throw out those who were selling. (**Luke 19:45**)
- Saying to them; It is written: And my house will be a house of prayer, but you made it a cave of robbers. (**Luke 19:46**)

.. Prophetic Significance

- Jesus Christ gave the interpretation as to the symbolic significance of ferment, or leaven, as recorded at;
- Jesus said to them; Keep your eyes open and watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (**Matthew 16:6**)
- How is it you do not discern that I did not talk to you about loaves? But watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (**Matthew 16:11**)
- Then they grasped that he said to watch out, not for the leaven of the loaves, but for the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (**Matthew 16:12**)
- When he warned his disciples; Keep your eyes open and watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. When his disciples

reasoned incorrectly among themselves as to what he meant, he spoke plainly:

- How is it you do not discern that I did not talk to you about loaves? But watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then they grasped that he said to watch out, for the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. ([Matthew 16:11](#))
- Also, Luke reports that Jesus stated specifically on another occasion; Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.
- In the meantime, when the crowd had gathered together in so many thousands that they were stepping upon one another, he started out by saying first to his disciples; Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. ([Luke 12:1](#))
- The apostle Paul applies a similar significance to leaven in connection with the **Festival** of Unfermented Cakes when he describes the course that Christians should take. At;
- Your cause for boasting is not fine. Do you not know that a little leaven ferments the whole lump? ([1 Corinthians 5:6](#))
- Clear away the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, according as you are free from ferment. For, indeed, Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. ([1 Corinthians 5:7](#))
- Consequently let us keep the **festival**, not with old leaven, neither with leaven of badness and wickedness, but with unfermented cakes of sincerity and truth. ([1 Corinthians 5:8](#))
- He gives this counsel to his Christian brothers; Do you not know that a little leaven ferments the whole lump? Clear away the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, according as you are free from ferment.
- For, indeed, Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. Consequently let us keep the **festival**, not with old leaven, neither with leaven of badness and wickedness, but with unfermented cakes of sincerity and truth.
- On Nisan 16, the second day of the **Festival** of Unfermented Cakes, the High Priest waved the firstfruits of the barley harvest, which

was the first crop of the year, or what might be called the **first** of the firstfruits of the land.

- **Speak to the sons of Israel, and you must say to them; When you eventually come into the land that I am giving you, and you have reaped its harvest, you must also bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. (Leviticus 23:10)**
- **And he must wave the sheaf to and fro before Yehowah to gain approval for you. Directly the day after the Sabbath the priest should wave it to and fro. (Leviticus 23:11)**
- **It is significant that Jesus Christ was resurrected on this very day, Nisan 16, in the year **33 C.E.** The apostle compares Christ with others who are resurrected, saying,**
- **However, now Christ has been raised up from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep in death. (1 Corinthians 15:20)**
- **For since death is through a man, resurrection of the dead is also through a man. (1 Corinthians 15:21)**
- **For just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:22)**
- **But each one in his own rank. Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to the Christ during his presence. (1 Corinthians 15:23)**
- **Because those whom he gave his first recognition he also foreordained to be patterned after the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:29)**