

WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

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CH # 223

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AFIKOMEN BAG CREATING A SPECIAL HEIRLOOM FOR PESAH

As we get ready to celebrate this awesome and wonderful holiday, the days leading to the Festival are filled with preparations. The house is koshered and made Pesahdik; inventory is taken of the haggadot to be sure that they are in good condition and adequate in number for our guests at the seder, dishes and other utensils are checked and readied for use, and an inspection is made of the table linens and other household textiles in readiness for the holiday. As you check your table linens, I hope that you will pay special attention to your matzah covers. Are they in good condition for use? Are there special matzah covers that reflect the family's history and hold special memories of past celebration? Will you bring those heirloom covers out for use this year? Will you choose to secure or to make a new matzah cover for this Pesah? If the latter, see CH # 15, # 95, # 171, # 189, # 195, # 221.

As you look through your linens, do you have a special fabric holder for the afikomen? You probably have used a napkin to hold that special half-matzah known as the afikomen. I would like to suggest that for this Pesah you consider creating a special fabric bag for the afikomen, thereby creating a special heirloom for your family or for those special people in your life with whom you share Pesah.

Pesah is known by various names, "Z'man Hayrutaynu" – the Season of our Liberation; "Hag Hamatzot" – The Holiday of the Unleavened Bread, and "Hag Haaviv" – the Holiday of Spring. The afikomen bag designed here focuses on this last title, the Holiday of Spring. The bag features the shasta daisy, a vivacious and colorful expression of Spring, bracketing the word afikomen in Hebrew on the overlap flap of the envelope bag.

Since counted cross stitch is the principal medium in which I work, the design employs counted cross stitch. However, if you are a surface embroiderer you can trace the design on broadcloth, linen or another fabric and complete the bag. If you are a fabric painter, you also can trace the design on broadcloth and paint the bag, using either a fabric marker or liquid embroidery paint. Both are available at any good craft store. Regardless of the medium that you choose to use, all of the assembling of the bag can be done by hand sewing, so you need not fret if you do not have a sewing machine.

MATERIALS

Counted Cross Stitchers will need the following supplies:

1. a piece of 14ct Aida cloth 8 ½" x 13 ½" (color of your choice)
2. DMC Floss as indicated by the chart
3. #26 or #24 tapestry needle
4. a piece of muslin or similar lining fabric 8 ½" x 13 ½"
5. a sharp sewing needle
6. regular sewing thread

Surface embroiderers will need broadcloth, linen or a similar fabric (color of your choice) in the same dimensions as the Aida cloth and all of the other materials listed above.

Fabric painters will need:

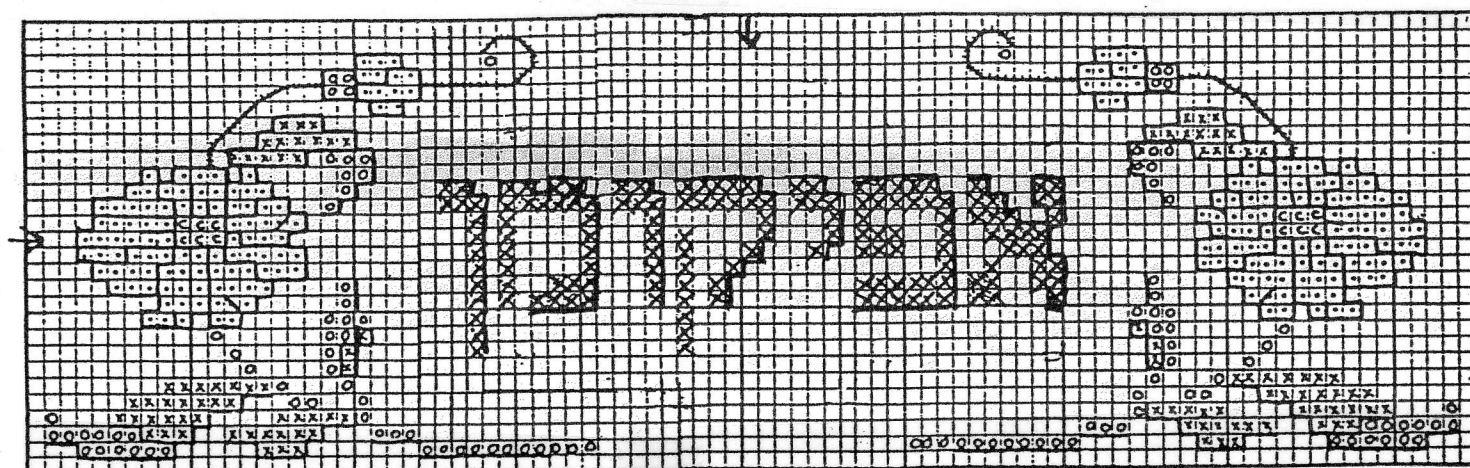
1. broadcloth, linen, or similar fabric (color of your choice) in the same dimensions as the Aida cloth
2. fabric markers or paints
3. muslin or lining fabric
4. sharp sewing needle and thread

DIRECTIONS

1. Fold the fabric into thirds yielding three panels, each of which is 4 ½" by 8 ½". Baste lines across the folds, thereby indicating the front, back, and overlapping flap of an envelope.
2. Lift the overlapping flap of the envelope and turn it so that its lower edge is toward you. Locate the vertical and horizontal middle. Baste a vertical and horizontal axis on the flap.
3. Go to the chart and locate the vertical and horizontal middle by following the linear path indicated by the arrows at the top and side of the chart.
 - * For cross stitchers, the point at which the vertical and horizontal axes cross on the chart corresponds to the point at which the vertical and horizontal basted axes on the flap intersect. Start your stitching at that point.
 - For the surface embroiders and the fabric painters, position your traced design matching the center point on the chart to the center point you basted on your flap.
4. Complete the design for the flap (the shasta daisies bracketing the word afikomen in Hebrew) using the medium you choose. Be sure to sign your work.
 - * Cross stitchers will use two strands of floss for each cross stitch and one strand of floss for all outlining. Follow the color symbols shown on the chart.
 - Surface embroiderers may use a combination of stitches. Backstitch, chain stitch or satin stitch should yield a very nice effect. The selection is yours.
5. Place the lining fabric on top of the now completed design. Stitch a ¼" seam along three sides of the 8 ½" by 13 ½" piece, leaving one side open to enable you to turn the piece right side out.
6. Turn the piece right side out. Press the piece with a damp pressing cloth on the lining side, and stitch the open end closed, turning a small amount of the envelope fabric and the lining to face each other.
7. Make the envelope by folding the lining side of the piece toward the middle third. Whip stitch the edges on the right and left side. Turn the envelope right side out and press.

Now you have completed your afikomen bag, your new heirloom. Hag Samay'ah.

AFIKOMEN BAG DESIGN CHART



NOTE: Floral portion of the design is an adaptation of a Victorian white daisy bracket.

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SYMBOL	DESIGN ELEMENT	DMC	COLOR
.	Flower	776	Pink
c	Flower	743	Yellow
x	Leaf	987	Green
o	Leaf	3347	Lt. Green
X	Hebrew	783	Gold
—	Flower Outlines	893	Dk. Pink
----	Leaf outline & vines	3345	Dk. Green
	Letter outline (top and right side of the letter except Alef)	3345	Dk. Green