

Lesson 2: Celebrating Middle Eastern Jewish Clothing

Appendix B - Mimouna Fact Cards

Appendix A- Mimouna Fact Cards

Note to Teacher:

Students partner up and receive one Mimouna Facts Card. They are required to read the information and share what they learned with their peers. Students present the information in a creative manner. They can use the facts card and draw a picture(s), using a phrase or term in Hebrew or Arabic,

Below, are some ideas. Each pair of students should enact something from what they read.

Here are some ideas:

- Students enact a Mimouna celebration by greeting each other with the traditional greeting “be prosperous and lucky” in Hebrew and/or Arabic
- Recite something from the siddur
- Say the *bracha* for dates
- Have images of fish, meaning-splitting of the red sea.
- Jews would go to the vineyards to see the trees. We are blessing the land with the Muslim. *Boreh pri ha'etz*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

- How do you celebrate Mimouna? Provide Picture of *mufleta*, it reminds me of....



[citation](#)

MIMOUNA

CARD #1:

What is the Source of the Mimouna?

The celebration of the Mimouna began several centuries ago.

What is the source of the name Mimouna?

There are those who believe that the source of the name is Maimon, the father of the *Rambam* (Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon), and that the day of the Mimouna marks the date of his birth or his death. There are others who believe that the name **Mimouna comes from the Arab word for "luck."** The Jews of Morocco began celebrating the Mimouna on the evening after Passover because they believed that during this night the heavens are open to our prayers. Prayers are more likely to be answered when asked at this time.

In your opinion, is there any connection between the completion of the Passover holiday and the desire of Jews that God will answer their prayers?

Because of this belief, it was customary in many places in Morocco to set up matches between young men and women on the eve of Mimouna.

There are those who believe that the name Mimouna is derived from the word Hebrew word "*emunah*" which means "faith"; as it says: "In *Nisan*, the Jews were redeemed and in *Nisan* they will be redeemed in the future."

When Passover ends, and the Jews are still not redeemed, the Moroccan Jews do not lose their faith; as the Sages said: "Even if He tarries, I will expect him every day."

- 1) **When North African Jews celebrate Mimouna, does this express their faith that there will be a redemption of Israel?**
- 2) **What does it mean to be redeemed? What is redemption?**
- 3) **How so?**

MIMOUNA

CARD #2:

The Link Between Passover and the Customs of the Mimouna

The Israelites left Egypt on the 15th of Nisan. They were sent away when the Egyptians discovered their first-born sons had died. However, they immediately regretted what they had done and set off in pursuit.

By the time the Egyptians reached the Red Sea, it was already the seventh night of Passover, which is the last day of the holiday. When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were in pursuit, they thought that their leaving Egypt had been in vain since the Egyptians would now take them back into slavery. Only when they saw the Egyptians drowning in the Red Sea did they believe in God and his messenger Moses.

And so, it states in the Midrash: "...**and there were gems floating in the sea which were washed up on the shore. And the Israelites went down to collect them.**" (*Tanhumah, Beshalach*)

Only after the Israelites had seen what was washed up on shore and believed in God, did they understand that all that Moses had done had been at the command of God.

If we look at the customs of the Mimouna, we see that most of them are connected to the **splitting of the Red Sea** and the **plunder**.

- A. The Mimouna is celebrated right after the last day of Passover when the Red Sea was split.
- B. People greet each other with "**Be prosperous and lucky**" since all the Israelites took part in the plunder.
- C. It is a day for going to the beach where the miracle occurred.
- D. **Expensive clothes** are worn, and tables are decorated with **silver and gold coins** in remembrance of the plunder at the Red Sea.
- E. **Fish** are put on the table (some people use live fish) in remembrance of the splitting of the Red Sea.

There are more customs of the Mimouna.

1) What are they and how are they linked to Passover and the splitting of the Red Sea?

MIMOUNA

CARD #3:

How was the Mimouna celebrated in Morocco?

The Nature of the Mimouna

In North Africa, where there are eight days of Passover, Jews began celebrating the Mimouna following *Mincha* services on that last day of the Passover holiday.

The Jews would go out to the **vineyards** and **orchards** to see the **trees** in bloom and to recite the **Blessing for the Trees**.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שְׁלֹא חָסַר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ כָּלֹם
וּבְרָא בּוֹ

בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְהִנּוֹת בָּהֶם בְּנֵי אָדָם

Important: Why did the Jews go out to the vineyards and orchards?

MIMOUNA

CARD #4

Celebrating Mimouna with Muslim neighbors

After returning to their homes, the Jews, as was customary, took a basket full of Passover delicacies to a Moslem acquaintance. The basket contained an egg and meat pie (a Jewish delicacy), matzah and salads.

The good relations between Jews and Moslems continued for many generations. The Moslem host received the Jew according to the traditional Eastern ceremony of hospitality. He would serve the Jew delicacies, especially fruit. The Moslem would also give the Jew a basket which would contain primarily milk, leben, butter, flour and yeast. It was not possible to obtain yeast at the end of Passover and the Jews of course did not have any at home.

The gift of the yeast made it possible for the Jews to prepare dough for bread right after Passover.

Ask members of your family about other examples of the relations between Jews and Moslems in North African countries.

"Mimouna symbolized North Africa, and specifically the close relations between Jews and Muslims there. In many places it was the Muslims who brought wheat, milk and butter to the Jews at the end of the holiday, so they could make food. Jews in Morocco were viewed as ones who blessed the land for the entire year, and the Muslims saw the holiday as an opportunity to pay back their Jewish neighbors. In the city of Azemmour, Muslims allowed the Jews to use their fields and gardens for the entire day, out of a belief that the Jews would bless the land and leave it fertile."

[Ten things you didn't know about Mimouna](#)

MIMOUNA

CARD #5

The Mimouna as the Festival of Bread

Mufleta – crepes, coated with honey and butter.

The Mimouna festivities basically began with the ceremony of kneading the dough. All the members of the family were present for the ceremony. Its importance derived from the fact that the Jews had not eaten bread for over a week.

The matzah that was prepared at home was sometimes difficult to eat, especially for babies and the elderly. Thus, there was a great deal of anticipation for the new bread. This bread was eaten at a special meal and had a special taste, especially because it was the first bread to be eaten after all those days of matzah.

Essentially, the Mimouna was a bridge between the glory and splendor of Passover and the rest of the year.

Write about the special experience of the family at the dough kneading ceremony.

Ask your parents about the ceremony as they experienced it in their home in North Africa.

MIMOUNA

CARD #6

"Be Prosperous and Lucky"

While the **honored housewife** was kneading the dough, the most valuable coins of the family would be brought out.

When the **men** had finished singing their hymns, the woman would take the coins in her hand and declare:

This coin is for (one of the **daughters** of the family). During the coming year she will, God willing, meet her groom.

This coin is for the **young couple** ... During the coming year may a son be born to them.

The coins would then be placed within the dough. The next day, before baking the bread, the coins would be removed, and everyone would wish, the traditional blessing of the festival.

"Be successful, be prosperous!"

"Have good luck!"

Why were coins used to bless family members and why were the coins placed within the dough?

The Mimouna was celebrated among the family and the bigger the family, the happier the celebration.

MIMOUNA

Card #7

Symbols of Plenty Decorating the Mimouna Table

On Mimouna eve, it is the custom to leave one's door open. All guests are welcome without an invitation. The number of hosts and their guests in Israel is in the hundreds of thousands.

Family members welcome the guests and guide them to the prepared table according to tradition. It is customary to lay the table with a tablecloth from the family heirloom and to cover it with a transparent white tablecloth.

The woman of the house, dressed in traditional festive garb, serves the guests tea with mint along with **Mufleta** dipped in honey and butter.

On Mimouna eve, the table is decorated with the following items. Explain the significance of each:

- 1) Live fish – placed on a plate with a bed of lettuce and vegetables.
- 2) A plate of flour – decorated with seven green bean pods.
- 3) A tray of flour – scattered within it are seven gold coins and, in its center, a full cup of oil.
- 4) Milk jugs – around them are lettuce and vegetables.
- 5) Sheaves of grain – scattered on the table.
- 6) Trays of fruit – oranges, apples, almonds and nuts.
- 7) Honey and butter wafers.
- 8) *Zaben* – white almond nougat.
- 9) *Marozia* – fried raisins decorated with nuts.
- 10) *Mazun* – jam made from grapefruit, oranges, turnips, carrots and beets.
- 11) Dates – stuffed with nuts and marzipan.
- 12) *Mufleta* – crepes dipped in honey and butter.

What other dishes were customary in your family?

MIMOUNA

Card #8

Opening of the Mimouna in the Synagogue

Following the evening services at the end of Passover, Moroccan Jews had the custom of reading certain verses in honor of the Mimouna festival. The verses were from the book of Proverbs and captured the spirit of the holiday.

So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding
(Proverbs 3:4-5)

The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it (Prov. 10:22)

Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established. (Prov. 16:3)

He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honor.
(Prov. 21:21)

Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so, he that waiteth on his
master shall be honoured. (Prov. 27:18)

The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe. (Prov.
18:10)

For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased. (Prov.
9:11)

Blessed be God forever, Amen and Amen (Psalm 89)

Read the biblical verses above and write how the Mimouna festivities express what is being said: