

# 5766 / 2006 SEDER SUPPLEMENT

of

READINGS  
ACTIVITIES  
RESOURCES

for your

הגדה של פסח חינוך למשפחה יהודית

HAGGADAH SHEL PESAH HINUKH L'MISHPAHA YEHUDIT

*JEWISH FAMILY EDUCATION HAGGADAH*

Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner

*Author, Editor, Collector*

**5766 / 2006**

**version 5766.3 (updated 04-12-08)**

## Dedication

**In Memory of my Father, David Lerner  
David ben Moshe u'Batsheva, 25 Elul 5765**

In Gratitude To

**Barbara Mollin Lerner, Wife and Partner**  
Who has made Pesah and our Sedarim every year truly special  
experiences for our Family and Friends

Our children and grandchildren who will celebrate Pesah and  
this Seder with us this year: May they celebrate Pesah for many  
years to come in a world at peace

**Reuven Moshe and Shira Lerner-Friedman  
Atara Margalit  
Shikma Bruria  
Amotz David**

**Dr. Shulamit Esther  
Moshe Samuel**

**Avi Barak Lerner**

**SEDER SUPPLEMENT**  
**of**  
**READINGS, ACTIVITIES, and RESOURCES**  
**for your**  
***JEWISH FAMILY EDUCATION HAGGADAH***

based on the  
HAGGADAH MISHPAHATI HINUKHI SHEL PESAH  
5766/2006  
version 5766.1 (updated 04-12-08)

**The Festival of Passover** (Hebrew – “Pesah” or “Pesach”) has a unique place in the Jewish home because of the Seder, the many changes that take place and the special atmosphere in the home during the Passover week. This Passover home atmosphere is something created by the family. One makes "Pesach" at home by the enthusiastic, cheerful observance of the traditional rules and regulations especially pertaining to foods, unique family and ethnic food customs, their preparation and serving.

Please note that each of these Readings, Resources and Activities is printed on its own page facilitating printing a master from which you can select those pages you wish to include in your own Haggadah. **You are encouraged to use these materials to create a Haggadah in a way that makes sense for you**, your family and guests. For myself, I prefer to use a 3-ring notebook, or at least for my Leader’s Guide. It encourages me to edit, to add and subtract every year what does or does not make for a meaningful Seder experience.

While Seder means “the Order of the rituals,” it does not mean to create an “**either / or**” choice. **Better to do it your way than not at all.** If Hebrew, even in transliteration, is beyond you - use the English. If you need to abbreviate a section because of the age of the children, do what must be done. If some of the older children are learning Hebrew, encourage them to prepare - but without pressure - to lead a section with which they will feel comfortable.

**Several formats of Haggadah are available to you on-line at [www.jewishfreeware.org](http://www.jewishfreeware.org).** They are based upon “The Family Participation Haggadah: A DIFFERENT NIGHT” by Noam Zion and David Dishon, with their permission. We follow their “Bare Bones Seder” and suggests that items 1-17 occur before the meal, and all in all, you should have a one hour Seder plus the meal. Zion and Dishon also have written a Leader’s Guide that is also enthusiastically commended to you.

**“Bare Bones Seder”**

1. Signposts of the Seder: **Kadesh Urhatz**
2. First Cup: **Kiddush**
3. Dips: **Karpas**

4. Breaking the Matza: **Yahatz**
5. The Story of the Matza: **Ha Lachma**
6. Four Questions: **Ma Nishtana**
7. Storytelling – “We were slaves”: **Avadeem Hayeenu**
8. Four Children
9. The Promise: **V’hee She-am-da**
10. The Tale of the Wandering Jew
11. Ten Plagues
- 12. Dayeinu**
13. Explaining **Pesah, Matza** and **Maror**
14. “In Every generation”
15. Psalm 114: **Hallel**
16. Second Cup of Wine
17. Eating **Matza, Maror** and **Korekh**
18. ***The Meal***
19. **Afikoman**
20. Blessing after eating: **Barekh**
21. Third Cup of Wine
22. Elijah’s Cup and opening the door
23. Fourth Cup of Wine
24. Seder Songs traditional and new
25. Next Year in Jerusalem: **La-Shana Haba-a**

**These Haggadot and Supplementary materials** are intended to assist those who are going to celebrate the Passover Seder as “novices, that is for the first time or for the first time in a while:” (1) for those who may have gone to family or friends where someone else conducted the Seder; (2) those who may not feel familiar with all of the words in English or Hebrew (Aramaic as well); (3) those who aren’t sure what elements should or must be said for a “complete” or “kosher” Seder; (4) those who aren’t sure about the when/where/why/how of the ritual acts - washing, breaking, covering, drinking etc; (4) or for those who aren’t sure even how long a “good” seder should be conducted.

We want you to have a fulfilling Seder experience - that will insure that you return to it on the Second Night and then again Next Year and for years to come - for you, your family and your friends. Next year or in a couple of years you may want to venture into a more complicated, longer and engaging Seder - and now God willing - we have a copy for you free on this same web-site.

In addition to participating in communal Passover projects of tzedakah and caring, to attending synagogue services with your family, potential precious family holiday activities empower you to create and offer your family a beautiful and meaningful Passover heritage. The treasures of childhood memories are immeasurably enriched by the indelible impressions left on the young through sharing in Passover preparations, the Seder meal and the holiday services.

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The following pages have been collected, edited, written and re-written numerous times, and they have been shared in congregational bulletins, faxes and now over the Internet. Wherever possible I have tried to give proper attribution. I hope that as we learn who has written which of these pieces we can give credit properly in the years to come.

This is a work still in progress. There are a number of revisions and additions this year that I have not indicated differently because it would have been a “messy” text. I would hope that if you would like to make a contribution of materials - readings, new rituals, songs, etc. - that can

be used, I would be grateful to incorporate it into this supplement and of course give you credit. Please note that spellings and transliteration will vary and indeed some readings will certainly provoke discussion, both agreement and disagreement which is the intention of the Passover Seder.

NOTE: This is FREEWARE. Feel free to copy, share, or in any other fashion allow others to use this resource - not quantity limit. This year we already have more than 170,000 hits as Pesach approaches. Many are writing about printing multiple copies for nursing home, community and synagogue Sedarim. We believe we have reached hundreds of thousands of people - and that is our only goal. That’s “Jewish FreeWare:” Web distribution of a free product for non-commercial use.

Please note our gratitude: These materials would not have been possible without the permission of Davkewriter software and the use of Davka text software. We thank the Rosenbaum family and our long personal association with them.

Preparing this Passover Seder Supplement in various formats - mimeograph, xerox, and now the for our family and our congregations has been a labor of love since 1970. I hope that all of it or parts of it will be helpful to you and your family as well as friends for a sweeter and more meaningful Seder and Pesach Festival. With best wishes from our home to yours for a “zissen Pesach”

*Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner*

## RECOMMENDED HAGGADOT

### FOR ADULTS AND LEADERS:

**A Different Night: The Family Participation Haggadah**, Noam Zion and David Dishon. The Shalom Hartman Institute, 5757. **Leader's Guide** by Zion and Dishon also available.

**Passover Haggadah: The Feast of Freedom**, Ed. Rachel Anne Rabinowicz. New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 1982.

**The New American Haggadah : Haggadah Shel Pesah**, Ed. Mordecai Menahem Kaplan, Eugene Kohn, Ira Eisenstein, Gila Gerirtz. New York: Berhman House.

**A Passover Haggadah**, Ed. Herbert Bronstein. Central Conference of American Rabbis.

**Family Haggadah/Book and Audio Cassette**, Shoshana Silberman. Kar-Ben Copies Publishers.

**The Art of Jewish Living**, Ron Wolfson. New York: The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, 1988.

**The Women's Haggadah**, E. M. Broner with Naomi Nimrod. San Francisco: Harper, 1994.

**Passover Survival Kit**, Shimon Apisdorf. Columbus: Leviathan Press, 1994.

**The Family Haggadah**, edited by Rabbi N. Scherman, Mesorah Publications Ltd, 1981.

**The Passover Haggadah**, edited by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, Carta Publishers, Jerusalem, 1983.

### FOR CHILDREN:

**Why On This Night?** Rahel Musleah. Alladin Paperbacks, 1999.

**The Story Haggadah**, Sol Scharfstein. New York: KTAV, 1990.

**The Ten Plagues of Egypt**, Shoshana Lepon. New York: The Judaica Press, 1988.

**The Santa Cruz Haggadah Kids Passover Fun Book**, Karen Roekard. Berkeley: The Hineni Consciousness Press, 1994

**My Very Own Haggadah**, Judyth R. Saypol and Madeline Wikler, Rockville: Kar-Ben Copies, 1993.

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**We Tell It To Our Children**, Mary Ann Barrows Wark. St. Paul: Mt. Zion Hebrew Congregation Rabbi's Publication Fund and Mensch Makers Press, 1988.

**Haggadah Shel Pesach: A Singing Haggadah**, Ellen M. Egger. Princeton: L'Rakia Press, 1986.

**My Favorite Family Haggadah**, Shari Faden Donahue. Los Angeles: MAZON, 1994.

**UH! OH! Hidden Passover Objects You'll (Almost) Never Find**, Janet Zwebner. Israel: Yellow Brick Road Press, 1994.

### FOR ADDING BEAUTY TO PASSOVER AND THE SEDER:

**Haggadah and Woodcut**, by Rabbi Charles Wengrov, to accompany the Passover Haggadah by Gershom Cohen, Prague, 1526 (New York: Shulsinger Brothers, 1967).

**The Polychrome Historical Haggadah for Passover**, edited by Rabbi Jacob Freedman, Court Square Press, Inc., Boston, 1974.

### FOR RESEARCH:

**Haggadah Shleima**, Ed. Rabbi Menachem Kasher (New York: Sentry Press for United States Distribution, 1961).

**Lehman's Passover Haggadah**, (London: Honigson Publishers, 1969)

**Haggadah She Pesach Im Peirush Yalkut Shimoni**, Ed. Shimon Neuman (Jerusalem: S. Monzun, 1965) from Krakow edition.

**A Feast of History**, Chaim Raphael, Gallery Books, New York, 1972.

**The Passover Anthology**, Philip Goodman, JPS, New York, 1973.

**Seasons of Our Joy: A Handbook of Jewish Festival**, Rabbi Arthur Waskow, Summit Books, New York, 1982.

**Living the Jewish Way: Observing Jewish Holidays**, Rabbi Irving Greenberg, Summit Books, New York, 1988.

## PASSOVER ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

### Suggested Activities That Involve Children in Preparing and Participating:

(Barbara M. Lerner, Jewish Family Educator for Greater Philadelphia, ACAJE)

Making the seder a fun experience for the entire family does not have to entail huge amounts of time. Think of the seder as an opportunity to re-enact the Exodus through the ages and the senses.

1. Hang sheets from a corner of the ceiling to think of the tents that desert nomads like B'nei Yisrael must have used in their travels.
2. Get a bucket of rocks from a garden supply store. Keep family members busy piling up rocks to symbolize the types of walls used in Canaanite homes and settlements. Who can build the highest wall? If you are a rock collector, rocks from Eretz Yisrael could be a special present for each guest.
3. Use Israeli salt for your salt water. Find Israeli or Egyptian spring water for filling a Miriam's Well Goblet.
4. (In preparation for the seder) Have the younger set make mud pies -- or clay bricks, but have them make them in old ice cube trays. Have half of the mud bricks made with grass clippings and half without any reinforcement. Check the strength of each \*brick\* with a clamp. Can be messy, but fun. Someone could give the background of putting re-bars in cement buildings and patios (try it with tooth-picks).
5. Give home-work to your guests. Each family or person can be responsible for a different part of the Haggadah, a particular commentary, or explanation. This division of the seder makes for more participation and anticipation of who is the next presenter.
6. Remember to save the palm branch from your Sukkot lulav to use in whisking away any hametz during the ritual bedikat hametz.
7. Encourage children to plan on the ten plagues and make up their own "bag of plagues" bringing symbols of the traditional Ten Plagues. Also ask the children to make up a "Modern Plagues Bag" and discuss with the children what is the difference between the plagues then and today.

## PASSOVER ON THE INTERNET

**One word of caution:** On the Web there are **Hebrew-Christian** missionary sites that list themselves as Jewish and authentic Passover resources; you must read everything very carefully. Similarly, these **Christian and missionary** groups publish low-cost Haggadot in an effort to place their materials in unsuspecting homes because the cost of many Haggadot can put off Jews from providing an authentic Jewish Haggadah for each participant. Remember: if it seems too good to be true – it often is!

**The following PASSOVER Web sites** are available on-line at **Jacob Richman's Hot Sites:** <http://www.jr.co.il/hotsites/j-hdaypa.htm> and are current as of Passover 2006. Each is listed there currently as a Web link link. This not a total listing of ALL the Web Passover sites, and ideologically, they extend from one end of the Jewish spectrum of belief and practice to the other. There is no intended hierarchy of preference or usefulness in the listing. Therefore, read through the materials at each web site to be certain that it is appropriate to your Seder.

### **Selected Passover Sites**

Jewishfreeware.org  
 Foundationforfamilyeducation.org  
 Passover @ JTS  
 OU Torah Guide to Passover  
 Aish: Pesach Cleaning Made Easy  
 Pesach - Aish HaTorah  
 The Ohr Somayach Pesach Pages  
 Virtual Jerusalem - Virtual Haggadah  
 From Pesach to Shavuot (includes musical intro)  
 Chabad / Lubavitch Passover.Net  
 613.org Passover Audio Classes  
 The Red Sea Haggadah  
 JA Pedagogic Center  
 Project Genesis: Pesach  
 Robert Parnes: A Passover Haggadah  
 Davka: A Growing Haggadah  
 Torah from Dixie: Passover  
 Shokel: Articles about Passover  
 Congregation Ohave Shalom (Young Israel): Passover Articles  
 Judaism 101: Passover  
 Darche Noam: Passover  
 Zipple: Passover FAQ  
 Torah Outreach Program: Passover  
 Everything Jewish: Passover  
 Jewish Heritage Online Magazine  
 The Jewish Magazine - Passover Issue  
 Midrash Ben Ish Hai Pesach Page (Sephardi Customs)  
 VBS Haggadah for Passover (conservative shul)  
 Yeshivat Har Etzion Peasch Journal

About.com: All About Passover  
Pesach at Shema Yisrael Torah Network  
Jewish.com: Passover Area  
Camp S'dei Chemed: Thoughts on the Haggadah  
Breslov: Passover  
The Passover Haggada Site  
Neveh Zion: Passover  
Lazer's Talmud Torah: Introduction to Passover  
Gates to Jewish Heritage: Passover  
Tzemach David: Essays Regarding Passover  
Kosher 4 Passover  
Article: Learning by Doing  
My Hebrew Dictionary - Passover Related Words  
Jewish-Holiday: Passover Articles  
The Constantia Shul (S.A.): The 10 Plagues  
JNUL National Sound Archives - Passover Worldwide (MP3's)  
Passover on the Net  
The Holiday Spot: Passover Celebrations  
Pardes: Denial or Integration? (Dvar Torah)  
Celebrate with JOI: Pesach  
WZO: The Seder of the Seder  
Seder Ritual of Remembrance (of the Holocaust)  
Passover Hagaddah for Jews in Recovery (alcoholism, drugs)  
Passover Cleaning Trivia (04/2000)

**Children Sites (whole site)**

Torah Tots: Stories, Fun and Games  
JDC: Passover (multimedia, in English or Russian)  
Akhlah for Kids (4 questions transliterated)  
Uncle Eli's Haggadah  
Childfun - Moses Coloring Book  
Kid's Domain - Passover Printables  
Billy Bear's Pesach Holiday  
Passover Activities for Preschool Children  
Lilmode B'Shimcha  
Diaspora Yeshiva: Passover Coloring Book  
Passover Word Search Game

**Kosher for Passover Product Lists**

The OU Guide to Kosher for Passover Foods (PDF)  
Clalit : Kosher for Passover Medicines (Eng. & Heb.)  
Kosher Finder Passover Products Information  
Kosher Quest Passover Products Information  
Kashrut.Com: Articles about Kosher for Passover  
Rotter.net: Kosher for Passover Medicines (Eng. and Heb.)  
Shemesh: Kosher for Passover Medicines (Israel and USA lists)  
eLuna Partner Restaurants Open on Pesach (Israel)

**Online Hebrew Haggadah**

RTF Hebrew Haggadah (for download, req. Hebrew support)

Zooloo: Haggadah Online (Graphic format)

Lametayel: Haggadah Online (Graphic format)

Daphna: Haggadah Online (html format, Hebrew)

**Hebrew Sites (requires Hebrew font and support)**

Galim.org: Pesach

Chagim.org: Pesach (includes musical intro)

Chabad: Pesach

Jewish Agency: Pesach activities

Galil: Pesach Activities

Daat: Pesach Artilces

Yeshiva Bet-El: Pesach Laws

Kipa: Articles on Pesach

Israel Ministry of Education

Israel Ministry of Education: Download Lessons in Word

Israel Ministry of Education - Toranit Articles

Bar-Ilan Essays on Passover

Amit: Passover Lessons

Shevanet: Article on Passover

Moreshet: Articles on Passover

Torah Outreach Program: Passover

**Russian**

Machanaim: Passover (Russian)

Matza.ru (Russian)

Istok.ru (Russian)

**Spanish**

Chabad: Passover (Spanish)

Jewish Agency: Passover (Spanish)

Aish HaTorah: Passover (Spanish)

**Portugese**

Chabad Brazil - Passover (Portugese)

Netjudaica - Passover (Portugese)

**French**

Chabad: Passover (French)

Jewish Agency: Passover (French)

Alliance - Pesach (French)

IsraelFR: Includes Full Hebrew/French Haggadah (PDF)

Planet-Shalom: Passover (French)

**German**

Jewish Agency: Passover (German)

Hagalil: Includes Hebrew/German Haggadah

**Italian**

Chabad: Passover (Italian)

Menorah: Passover (Italian)

**Passover Art**

CyberSeder - Passover Haggadah Images  
Yale University: The Passover Haggadah Exhibit  
Archie Granot Papercut Haggadah  
The Sarajevo Haggadah  
Haggadah Happening (1996 student art)  
Marc Chagall: The Parting of the Red Sea (a pic.)  
The Virtual Israel Bible Museum: Exodus  
National Gallery of Art: Waters into Blood (a pic.)  
Museum of Fine Arts: Seventh Plague of Egypt (a pic.)  
The Route of the Exodus (map)  
The Four Sons in Haggadot Illustrations

**Celebrating Passover**

Passover celebration by Jewish soldiers in the Union Army  
Confederate Passover  
American Soldiers Observe Passover in Dahn (1946)  
Survivors Preserving the Religion During the Holocaust

**Clipart / Graphics**

About Passover Clipart: Matzo  
Bitsela Artz: Passover Clipart  
Judaic Graphics: Passover Clipart  
Yram Free Animated Passover Gifs  
Microsoft Clipart Gallery (search on: Passover)  
Gillian's Pesach Stationary  
Animation Library: Jewish (includes Passover animated gifs)

**Electronic Greeting Cards**

Care2 Passover Cards  
Oh My Goodness Passover Cards  
123 Greetings Passover Cards  
Postcards.org Passover Cards  
Sealingwax Passover Cards  
Free Web Cards: Passover Cards  
Awesome Passover Greeting Cards  
Holiday Notes Passover Cards  
Russian Passover Cards

**Food Recipes**

A Guide to Matzah Baking Video (real audio)  
RFCJ Jewish Recipe Archives - Passover Recipes (many)  
Jewish-Food Recipe Archives (many, right side)  
Jewish-Food List Recipe Archives (many)  
Passover at Mimi's Cyber Kitchen  
Kosher Express Passover Recipes  
Kosher Finder Passover Recipes  
Shema Yisrael Passover Recipes  
Aish Passover Recipes  
Vegetarian Pesach Recipes from Beit HaChatulim

Vegetarian Fatfree Passover Recipes  
The Vegetarian Kitchen - Sephardic Passover Recipes  
Oat Matzos  
Online Video: How to Make Matzo Ball Soup (Media Player)  
Pesto Pesach Recipes (in Hebrew)  
Galim Pesach Recipes (in Hebrew)  
Good Food Pesach Recipes (in Hebrew)

**Humor**

Passover Humor

**Words to Passover Songs**

My Hebrew Songbook (graphic format with vowels)  
Zemel: Words to English Passover Songs  
Passover Songs

**Passover Songs (audio)**

Aish  
A7 Jukebox (scroll to bottom)  
Kosher 4 Passover  
Jewish Heritage  
613.org  
OU.org  
Reggae Passover

**Passover Midi Music**

JR Passover Midi Music  
Lehrer Passover Midi Music  
Kosher4Passover Midi Music

**Counting the Omer**

Project Genesis: Counting the Omer  
OU: Sefirat HaOmer  
Darche Noam: The Omer and Character Building  
The Homer - Omer Calendar (Humor + Educational)

## SUPPLEMENTARY SEDER READINGS

(Note that some of these supplementary Seder Readings reflect geo-political realities from a long time ago, e.g. the fight for freedom for Soviet Jews before the break-up of the Soviet Union. Consider how quickly conditions have changed. We can discuss these changes as well as the new circumstances challenging the Jewish People and heritage. Discuss with the Seder participants how relevant each of these readings still is today and why each is or is not still necessary.)

## MY MEMORIES OF A SEDER IN DACHAU

Rabbi Solomon Kaplan, zt"l

In order to understand the so-called Seder in a concentration camp, I must first explain life in a camp. In the central cap of Dachau, they didn't keep any Jewish slaves; the conditions were too good for Jews. There were 12 camps around Dachau within a distance of 60 miles. I, and over 4000 Jews were in branch #1. This camp was located near the city of Landsberg, near the river Lech in Bavaria. According to the history of the Third Reich, Hitler wrote his book Mein Kampf in that vicinity.

The Germans were building underground camouflaged plants for the famous Messerschmit airplanes. We worked there day and night schlepping 100 kilograms or 225 pounds of cement bags for mixing with sand and water. The average worker didn't weigh more than 100 pounds. Our food rations for the day was a little less than 4 oz. of bread. Flour was mixed half with sawdust and a so-called soup: water and potato peels. We worked 14 hours a day at hard labor for this food, unlike the Jews in Egypt who were fed fish and vegetables (Num. 11).

We slept 60 men in a ditch. In the ditch that I was in, there was a Jew whose name I don't remember. He had hidden among his schmattes a gold ring and on erev Pesach in 1945 he exchanged it through a German foreman for a cup of white flour. We closed ourselves in that ditch and started the Seder.

We brought with us from work a few branches and the empty paper cement bags that we used to put on our bodies to keep warm because the winter in that part of Bavaria is very cold. So, withes bags and branches, we made a fire in an old rusty tin oven. With palpitation and fear in our hearts, and with an overwhelming Yom Tov feeling, we all watched as the man took the cup of flour and water and made one large round matzah and put it on top of the oven to bake. Every few moments, we changed guards at the opening of our palace, so an unfriendly eye shouldn't observe us because if we were caught, we would pay dearly for this.

That was a real watch night. As much as we could remember by heart of the Haggadah we chanted very quietly in unison. We sang the traditional Passover songs. Among us was a 14 year-old orphaned boy from Hungary whose entire family had perished. He asked the four questions; but there were more than four questions to ask. Why this night was different but up to this date there is still no answer for him and there never will be.

Symbols for the Seder plate were unnecessary; everything was original. Instead of salt water, we had our tears; instead of bitter herbs recalling our lives was bitter

enough. We didn't need charoset to remind us of the mortar and brick day and night the cement penetrated our bodies, face and mouth, because we weren't allowed to wash. If we wanted to know how we looked we just looked at the others around us and knew how we appeared.

Instead of a shank-bone and burnt egg to remind us of the Pascal Lamb when we talk of the sacrifice, my command of the English language is too poor to bring out all of the sacrifices we brought to the Seder, more than enough. In the Temple, the Pascal Lamb was roasted, but not burned. But we, ourselves, without fathers, mothers and entire families in the crematorium were the burnt offerings. Half of Europe was steeped in Jewish blood. We, the survivors were sacrifice enough, living between five and six years through the Holocaust.

For the four cups of wine, we used water. We all said Hamotzi over the one matzah and everyone got a taste.

For Elijah's cup, we found an empty can and filled it with water. We stood up to greet Elijah and with so much pain in our hearts said the SHFOCH CHAMOSCHA. What those wicked people did to us and to Klal Yisrael.

I would say our Seder was more spiritual because gefilte fish, knaidlach and all the Passover goodies weren't even deamt of. It was all Kosher L'Pesach. We concluded the Seder with Next Year in Yerushalayim. That was a night to remember.

Our parents and those before them cried out their eyes for Zion and Jerusalem. They didn't live to see it. Our generation who went through such destruction lived to see the nachas and comfort for our bitter years of the Nazi era. We are the fortunate ones who lived to see the establishment of Israel.

*Rabbi Solomon Kaplan, zt"l was the Ritual Director Emeritus of Scarsdale Temple, Scarsdale, N.Y.*

## Why are There Different Versions of the Haggadah?

Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner

Consider the various versions of a story of a meeting between Dr. Louis Finkelstein, zt"l, whom we called affectionately and respectfully "Professor." Does each version tell the same story, make the same point? If so, then why the variations? If not, what are the differences that each version teaches?

### Version One

Serge Koussevitsky, a conductor of the Boston Symphony, had been born a Jew in Russia, but to enter the Conservatory had been required to accept Russian Orthodoxy. Late in life, through Hannah Arndt, he became interested in learning about the heritage he had abandoned as a child.

Dr. Arndt arranged for a meeting with my father, which turned out to be an invitation to dinner. Before sitting down to eat, Dr. Koussevitzky observed that Finkelstein meticulously washed his hands, dried them and recited a blessing, without speaking took a piece of bread, recited another blessing and then having broken bread, continued with a conversation.

The conductor then asked (since whatever religious training he had had did not familiarize him with the concept of rituals in the home) why Finkelstein insisted on performing these seemingly archaic practices (related to purity not cleanliness) in the contemporary world.

"Dr. Koussevitzky," Finkelstein asked, "if I asked you to play a piece of music but to leave out some notes, would you be willing to do so? Of course not was the reply, the conductor had to be faithful to the composer. Just so was Finkelstein's response, he too could not leave out notes from the work of the composer."

### Version Two

A slightly different version of this story (focusing on why Rabbi Finkelstein did not eat the cookies served by the maestro at his home in Boston) appears in Bernard Mandelbaum's "Tales of the Fathers of the Conservative Movement" - an 80 page paperback published by Shengold in 1989. The punchline there is that Rabbi Finkelstien suggests that a donor with a sense of humor would make up the orchestra's \$50,000 deficit if they would play Beethoven's 5th with one wrong note as a practical joke. Kousevitsky says "never" because "the integrity of the music depends on certain rules, discipline".

### Version Three

Matt's inquiry about Dr. Finkelstein and "the musician" has a background that goes beyond the account of Bernard Mandelbaum. I know that background because Leonard Bernstein and his family sat near our family at the old Mishkan Tefila in Roxbury. I knew Leonard's father quite well. He came from a Hasidic family and had studied at a Yeshiva. Because of his son, he knew the famous conductor of the Boston Symphony, Serge Koussevitzky. Koussevitzky had been born a Jew but had converted. At the end of the war, discovered that members of his family (I think his mother was included) had survived the Nazi horror. He was deeply effected emotionally and asked Mr. Bernstein how he could respond as a Jew. Mr. Bernstein put him in touch with Dr. Finkelstein and the famous dialogue took place. Koussevitzky never found his way back to Judaism but, because of that encounter, left all of his musical effects to the Hebrew University. Leonard once told me that, if Koussevitzky had been younger, he would definitely have returned as did Arnold Schonberg and Otto Klemperer. Gerald I. Wolpe

#### **Version Four**

For what its worth, I also found the maestro story to make a nice devar Torah. What was interesting though is that when I formulated it I was struck not only by the message of the discipline required to tow the line in either halakha or conducting, but also the room for creativity. While Koussevitzky would never have agreed to change that A-sharp to A-flat, certainly he would also say that every time he conducted Beethoven's Fifth Symphony it was a new and original experience. And a musician understands what kind of variations of tempo and instrumentation, and even, in some cases, improvisation can be played authentically from the original score.

I compared this to the "score" of the 15 steps of the seder and the way are called upon to enhance it without having to play a "false" note. It also helped that my community is so close to Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra" and the name "Koussevitzky" conjures up an immediate image of warm nights on the lawn outside the music shed that bears his name. Thank you again to all who embellished on this story. Harei zeh Meshubach.

The complement to this story is a famous musician who said that although he now has practiced his pieces so many times, he interrupts the routine of mindless playing from time to time and almost dares himself not to hit the wrong note. Being the genius he is, he is able to still play flawlessly, but the interruption reminds him of the soul and delicacy of the music he is playing, which would be lost otherwise. I have used this story from time to time in teaching about Keva and Kavanah in prayer. Elu v' Elu. Divrei Elohim Hayim.

## Miriam's Cup Ritual in the Family Seder

<http://www.miriamscup.com/RitualPrint.htm>

*Filling Miriam's Cup follows the second cup of wine, before washing the hands. Raise the empty goblet and say:*

**“Miriam's cup is filled with water, rather than wine. I invite women of all generations at our Seder table to fill Miriam's cup with water from their own glasses.”**

*Pass Miriam's cup around the table(s); explain the significance of filling Miriam's cup with water:*

**A Midrash teaches us that a miraculous well accompanied the Hebrews throughout their journey in the desert, providing them with water. This well was given by God to Miriam, the prophetess, to honor her bravery and devotion to the Jewish people. Both Miriam and her well were spiritual oases in the desert, sources of sustenance and healing. Her words of comfort gave the Hebrews the faith and confidence to overcome the hardships of the Exodus.**

**We fill Miriam's cup with water to honor her role in ensuring the survival of the Jewish people. Like Miriam, Jewish women in all generations have been essential for the continuity of our people. As keepers of traditions in the home, women passed down songs and stories, rituals and recipes, from mother to daughter, from generation to generation. Let us each fill the cup of Miriam with water from our own glasses, so that our daughters may continue to draw from the strength and wisdom of our heritage.**

*When Miriam's cup is filled, raise the goblet and say:*

**We place Miriam's cup on our Seder table to honor the important role of Jewish women in our tradition and history, whose stories have been too sparingly told.**

*Continue by reciting this prayer:*

**"You abound in blessings, God, creator of the universe, Who sustains us with living water. May we, like the children of Israel leaving Egypt, be guarded and nurtured and kept alive in the wilderness, and may You give us wisdom to understand that the journey itself holds the promise of redemption. AMEN."**

*(from Susan Schnur)*

*Next, tell the story of a Jewish woman you admire. Begin by saying:*

**Each Passover, we dedicate Miriam's cup to a Jewish woman who has made important contributions in achieving equality and freedom for others. This year, we honor....(see "Biography").**

*Dancing in honor of the prophetess Miriam follows the rituals for the prophet Elijah after the meal. Lift Miriam's cup and say:*

**Miriam's life is a contrast to the life of Elijah, and both teach us important lessons. Elijah was a hermit, who spent part of his life alone in the desert. He was a visionary and prophet, often very critical of the Jewish people, and focused on the messianic era.**

**On the other hand, Miriam lived among her people in the desert, following the path of hesed, or loving-kindness. She constantly comforted the Israelites throughout their long journey, encouraging them when they lost faith. Therefore, Elijah's cup is a symbol of future messianic redemption, while Miriam's cup is a symbol of hope and renewal in the present life. We must achieve balance in our own lives, not only preparing our souls for redemption, but rejuvenating our souls in the present. Thus, we need both Elijah's cup and Miriam's cup at our Seder table.**

*Sing and dance with tambourines. First hold up a tambourine and say (from Exodus 15:20-21):*

**"And Miriam the prophetess, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam sang unto them, Sing ye to the Lord, for He is highly exalted; The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." As Miriam once led the women of Israel in song and dance to praise God for the miracle of splitting the Red Sea, so we now rejoice and celebrate the freedom of the Jewish people today.**  
<http://www.miriamscup.com/RitualPrint.htm>

Karpas:

( Responsively By Rabbi Geela Rayzel Raphael)

*Reader:*

**The green, the root vegetable, growing wild,  
growing deep within the earth, deep with our souls  
echoes from within-  
the story of Rachel and Leah**

*Kahal:*

**Two sisters who were wise in weeds,  
masters of herbal lore, mistresses of ancient women's secrets  
stewed for centuries for perfection,  
hung on the hearths,  
stirred in the kettles,  
mixed in the bowls in the kitchens of women**

*Reader:*

**Recipe from grandmothers and mothers and daughters and sisters  
sweetenings for the bitters of life**

*Kahal:*

**magic cooking around a fire,  
healing powders  
ointments and liniments and soothing ingredients  
to calm the nerves  
cleanse the wounds  
tend the ill ones  
and even cause one to love.**

*Reader:*

**yes, Rachel and Leah knew the secrets of the mandrakes, which cure  
infertility, and they bartered a night of passion for a potion of power.**

*Kahal:*

**so tonight we dip twice  
once for Rachel and once for Leah  
We dip our Karpas, our greens to cause our fertile passionate places to  
blossom.**

*Readers:*

**We restore our memories of grandmothers recipes and kitchen wisdom so often lost in the pace of modern life.**

*Kahal:*

**We mourn our loss of mothers teachings and pledge to remember our heritage as we cook for the seder. We reclaim our art of cooking , concocting, boiling, brewing, stewing, savoring, adjusting spices to taste, to fill the belly and to heal and nourish.**

## PRAYER FOR THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN LANDS OF OPPRESSION

*(Can be recited after "HA LACHMA ANYA," "This is the bread of affliction" at the beginning of the Seder)*

Behold this matzah, the symbol of our affliction but also of our liberty. As we look at it let us remember our brethren everywhere who are in distress. On this festival of our freedom, may our hearts be turned to our brothers and sisters in Russia and in Arab lands who are not able to celebrate this Passover in the traditional, reclining attitude of free men. Rock of Israel, hasten the day when all of our brethren will know true freedom and in consort with the whole house of Israel give thanks to Thee for Thy wondrous deeds and Thy redemption. And may the redeemer come unto Zion. Amen.

## LET ALL WHO ARE HUNGRY

*(The following reading has been prepared by "MAZON: a Jewish response to hunger" to be read at "HA LACHMA ANYA":)*

"The words are a pledge, and the pledge is a privilege. Surrounded by the hungry and the homeless, we can redeem the pledge. This evening, so that the hungry may eat, we contribute to Mazon, A Jewish Response to Hunger, and we say, together:

*Barukh eloheinu sheb'tuvo he'vianu v'zikanu l'mitzvat matan mazon.*

Blessed is our God through whose goodness we have been brought to the privilege of sharing our bread."

## MATZAH OF HOPE

*(A fourth Matzah is added to the traditional three on the main Seder place and the following prayer is recited after "HA LACHMA ANYA" at the beginning of the Seder. It was recited with fervor during the years of the struggle for Soviet Jewry and now that struggle takes on a different form. Discuss to what extent each element is historically true and which is still meaningful – for them and for all of the Jewish People.)*

This Is The Matzah of Hope: This matzah, which we set aside as a symbol of hope, for the three million Jews of the Soviet Union, reminds us of the indestructible link that exists between us. As we observe this festival of freedom, we know that Soviet Jews are not free to learn of their Jewish past, to hand it down to their children. They cannot learn the languages of their fathers. They cannot teach their children to be the teachers, the rabbis of future generations.

They can only sit in silence and become invisible. We shall be their voice, and our voices shall be joined by thousands of men of conscience aroused by the wrongs suffered by Soviet Jews. Then shall they know that they have not been forgotten and they that sit in darkness shall yet see a great light.

## SEDER READING FOR ETHIOPIAN JEWRY

(This was written by Jeri Roth Lande, [rothland@erols.com](mailto:rothland@erols.com))

*(Some add a fourth additional symbolic matzah to the traditional three covered matzot in order to remember oppressed Ethiopian Jewry, Jewry of Arab lands and Soviet Jewry still waiting to be redeemed. We then read:)*

It has become customary at the Seder to set aside a few minutes for Jews in other lands, especially the Soviet Union and those in Arab lands, who are not free to celebrate Passover.

We also remember another group of our brothers and sisters, perhaps less familiar to us, but living in even more dire circumstances. These are the Ethiopian Jews or "Falashas" as they were called by the Ethiopians. Even their name, "Falasha," means "stranger," though this group of

Jews has been living in Ethiopia at least since the time of the Second Temple. They call themselves instead "Beta Yisrael," "The House of Israel."

Though their origins may be mysterious, their current problems are not. Once a proud and prosperous community of 500,000, their numbers have dwindled in recent years due to poverty, disease, drought, civil war and missionary efforts. Today, while most have been resettled in Israel for which they hoped, some still remain in Ethiopia. Their only desire is to be able to return to the land of their ancestors, Israel.

## AN ETHIOPIAN JEW'S PRAYER

*(We celebrate the successful in-gathering of Ethiopian Jews in the State of Israel for which they prayed and waited for so many years. We shall not forget their oppression and the modern miracle of their redemption even as they are rapidly becoming mainstream Israelis. We also want to preserve their heritage of values and liturgy.)*

Do not separate me, O Lord, from the chosen  
From the joy, from the light, from the splendor,  
Let me see, O Lord, the light of Israel,  
And let me listen to the words of the just  
While they speak about the Law.  
To teach fear of Thee, O Lord, King forever.  
Thou are blessed, O Lord, be merciful to me.  
By day be Thou my shepherd, and my guardian at night.  
When I walk be my guide, when I sit be my guardian.  
When I call Thee, keep Thou not silent.  
I love Thee, hate me not;  
I have confidence in Thee,  
Abandon me not.

## THE GLORY OF PESACH

*(From United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism collected materials by Rabbi Moshe Edelman)*

All three Pilgrim festivals (Pesach, Shavuot and Succot) contain elements that make of them complete joyous occasions. However, it is Pesach, more than the others, which combines all elements into a most harmonious and soul-satisfying whole.

**Pesach is a festival of the head.** It calls upon the Jew to meditate on the ideal of freedom. It transports you back in history to the period of bondage in Egypt and it asks that you put yourself in the place of your ancestors who were released from Pharaoh's yoke. It is not enough to regard the Exodus as history. "In every generation a person is obliged to regard oneself as if you had left the land of Egypt. To translate Pesach into contemporary terms is one of the elements of the festival.

**Pesach is a festival of the heart.** It calls upon us to rejoice, to feel the presence of God as the source of human happiness. The Seder, with its song and rites, with the objects to delight children and the ease to relax adults, join in producing a feeling of well-being. The observance of Pesach is not a solemn ceremony but a delightful celebration.

**Pesach is a festival of hand.** Before it arrives, the Jew is asked to give what is called "Maot Chittim," money to provide for those in need of Matzot and other food for the festival. When the holiday actually arrives, we usher it in, at the very outset, by saying "Let all who are hungry come and eat with us." The spirit of hospitality dominates the festival, and the concern if the Jews is turned to our fellow man. But it is not a vague feeling of sympathy and concern of others which fills us. It is the act of giving, of extending one's hand to the needy that is an essential element of our celebration. For a least one week of the year, we remove the leaven of selfishness from our lives and we want to share life's blessing with others.

**Pesach is the festival of the head, the heart and the hand - an ideal combination for producing the wholeness, the integration, which religion should bring.**

THE FIFTH CHILD - THE ONE WHO CANNOT ASK

On this night, we remember a fifth child.

This is a child of the Shoah (Holocaust), who did not survive to ask.

Therefore, we ask for that child -- Why?

We are like the simple child. We have no answer.

We can only follow the footsteps of Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, who could not bring himself to mention the Exodus at night until Ben Zoma explained it to him through the verse: *In order that you REMEMBER the day of your going out from Egypt, all the days of your life. (Deut. 16.3)*

We answer that child's question with silence. In silence, we remember that dark time. In silence, we remember that Jews preserved their image of God in the struggle for life. In silence, we remember the Seder nights spent in the forests, ghettos, and camps; we remember that Seder night when the Warsaw Ghetto rose in revolt.

FIFTH CUP (IN MEMORY OF THE SIX MILLION)

*(To be recited after opening the door for Elijah)*

On this night of the Seder we remember with reverence and love the six million of our people of the European exile who perished at the hand of a tyrant more wicked than Pharaoh who enslaved our fathers in Egypt. Come, said he to his minions, let us cut them off from being a people, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more. And they slew the blameless and pure, men and women and little ones, with vapors of poison and burned them with fire. But we abstain from dwelling on the deeds of evil ones lest we defame the image of God in which man was created.

Now, the remnants of our people who were left in the ghettos and camps of annihilation rose up against the wicked ones for the sanctification of the Name and slew many of them before they died. On the first day of Passover the remnants in the Ghetto for Warsaw rose up against the adversary, even as in the days of Judah the Maccabee. They were lovely and pleasant in the lives and in their death they were not divided. They brought redemption to the name of Israel throughout all the world.

And from the depths of their affliction the martyrs lifted their voices in a song of faith in the coming of the Messiah, when justice and brotherhood will reign among men.

*"Ani ma-amin be-emuna sh'layma b'viat ha-mashiach;  
V'afal pee she-yit-may-mayah im kol ze ani ma-amin."*

**(I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah;  
and, though he tarry, none the less I believe.)**

## THE FIFTH CUP - IN THANKFULNESS FOR ISRAEL

*(To be recited after drinking the fourth cup of wine at the conclusion of the Seder.)*

We read in the Talmud: “These four cups correspond to the four expressions of redemption that the Torah uses in relating the events of Egypt: **Vehotzeti** and *I shall bring forth*; **Vehitzalti** and *I shall save*; **Vegaalti** and *I shall redeem*; **Valakahti** and *I shall take*. Rabbi Tarphon would add a fifth cup to correspond to **Veheveti** and *I shall bring*.

And now, in our own time, when we have been privileged to behold the mercies of the Holy One, blessed is He and His salvation over us; in the establishment of the State of Israel which is the beginning of redemption and salvation, as it is written: "And I shall bring you into the land which I swore to give unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob and I have given it unto you as an inheritance; I am the Lord! it is fitting and proper that we observe this pious act, the drinking of the fifth cup as a form of thanksgiving.

We give thanks unto the Eternal for the wartime miracles and wonders He wrought for us. The mercies of the Eternal stood us in good stead in time of dire peril, when seven nations united to destroy and annihilate the

Jewish state at the very time of its birth and yet once again they pledge do annihilate the land and its people and plunge it into rivers of blood and fire. The Eternal, in His loving kindness, frustrated the designs of our enemies and vouchsafed victory unto us bringing us again to Jerusalem in joy.

RECITED BEFORE THE RECOUNTING OF THE TEN PLAGUES

*(Using the little finger, remove a drop of wine and touch it to a saucer or napkin for each plague.)*

As we prepare to spill wine from our cup at the mention of each plague, we recall the sentence of the Bible, "Rejoice not when your enemy falls". Our Rabbis taught that when the children of Israel sang songs of praise to God as the Egyptians drowned in the sea, the angels on high wished to join in these songs and were stopped by God who said, "These are my creatures who are drowning in the sea! For this you would sing songs of praise?". Thus we too lessen our joy at Passover time at the mention of these plagues, for there can be no rejoicing at the death or suffering of human beings, even our enemies. And so we diminish this cup of joy, for our redemption had to come through the destruction of others.

PESACH, BERGEN-BELSEN 1944

*(To be recited when describing the Matzah and the Seder Plate.)*

The Jewish prisoners in the German concentration camp at Bergen Belsen did not have matzah for the observance of Pesach in 1944. Under the circumstances the sages at the camp permitted the eating of leavened bread for which occasion this benediction was composed:

“Our Father in heaven, behold it is evident and known to three that it is our desire to do they will and to celebrate the festival of Pesach by eating matzah and by observing the prohibition of leavened food. But our heart is pained that the enslavement prevents us and we are in danger of our lives. Behold, we are prepared and ready to fulfill they commandment; "And ye shall live by them and not die by them.

We pray to thee that thou mayest keep us alive and preserve us and redeem us speedily so that we may observe thy statutes and do thy will and serve thee with a perfect heart. Amen.”

## MAROR - AN ADDITIONAL TRADITION

*(Before reciting the blessing for Maror, the leader holds up the Maror and recites this statement together with the Seder participants.)*

The Maror represents bitterness. Lest we become complacent let us remember on this Seder night that millions of our people still taste the maror of servitude. Cruel tyrants refuse to permit them to practice their faith or teach their children the beauty of Judaism. Strengthen them in their struggle to be free men and say again the words: "Let My People Go, that they may serve Me." On Pesach we pray that another Exodus will come to pass. May the maror, the bitterness of selfishness, give way to the sweetness of sharing. Reward our efforts, so that next year may see the emancipation of our people and the advent of a world-wide Pesach replete with justice, equality and Shalom.

## SEARCHING FOR THE AFIKOMEN

*(This was written by Jeri Roth Lande, [rothland@erols.com](mailto:rothland@erols.com))*

*(To be read as the children search for the afikomen)*

Before the Seder can continue the afikomen or dessert is eaten in memory of the Pesach offering. Another name for this part of the service is tzafun or literally the "hidden". Many interpretations have been given for the custom of breaking the afikomen and hiding a portion of it for the children to find and ransom. One interpretation is that the hidden portion of the afikomen represents those parts of the Jewish people who have become lost or separated from us.

One such group is the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel who became separated from the rest of the Jewish nation after the Assyrian conquest of Israel in 722 B.C.E. Another consists of Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity during the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions but who secretly maintained some part of their Jewish heritage.

Just as we recover the hidden afikomen during this part of the Seder, in recent years some descendants of each of these groups have discovered their hidden Jewish roots and returned to Judaism. For example, the Shinlung in India believe that they are descended from Menasha, one of the Ten Lost Tribes. More than 5,000 are now practicing Judaism, and more than 200 have made aliyah and formally (re)converted. Recently, some descendants of "Marranos" or "conversos" in Portugal, Mexico, Brazil, the United States and elsewhere have begun reclaiming their roots and returning to Judaism.

Let us welcome each returning Jew with warmth, enthusiasm and joy. Their return to Judaism completes our community as the afikomen completes our Seder meal.

A READING FOR THE RANSOM OF THE AFIKOMAN:

*(When the child finds and prepares the return of the Afikoman, the following dialogue is read. If necessary, an adult or older child may assist in reading the "child's" part.)*

CHILD: (Holding the Afikoman, a child addresses the Seder leader:)  
Father...(Grandfather, Mother...) I have found this half of the Matzah...the Afikoman.

LEADER: And, I have the other half. Where did you find your half of the matzah?

CHILD: I found it. . . . .

LEADER: And now, we who have enjoyed this bountiful Seder must share what you have found. We will share the Afikoman as our dessert and also remember and provide for those still in bondage.

CHILD: How much will you pay me for this dessert?

LEADER: I will pay you whatever we agree upon. And, in memory of our own escape from Egypt and to free those still in bondage in Ethiopia, we at this table will give generously to free Beta Yisrael, the Jews of Ethiopia.

(Child hands the Afikoman to the Leader.)

LEADER: As I receive this Afikoman, may it be an offering for all our people who still suffer. May this be the fulfillment of Rabbi Maimonides' conviction that the greatest of all Mitzvot is the "redemption of captives."

## THE AFIKOMAN PLEDGE

*(When the Afikoman is found, the following is an alternative or supplementary reading on the part of all Seder participants:)*

"Tonight we read together:

Lo! This is the bread of poverty that our ancestors ate.

Let all who are hungry come and eat!

Let all who are in need share in the hope of Passover!

This year we all are slaves,

Next year may we all be free.

Tonight, to redeem the Afikoman:

We renew our commitment to help all who are hungry round the world,

So that next year we may all be free."

From An Israeli Woman:

I am not the least afraid to go any place,  
By bus or to a mall.  
I didn't change or stop doing anything  
I used to do before this mess began!

People tend to forget that twice the casualties  
From terror get killed on the roads!  
More people still die  
From heart attack, cancer,  
And other things,  
They just don't show them on TV.

Don't misunderstand me,  
There is a war going on,  
It's not pleasant,  
But, lets face it:  
WE HAVE NEVER BEEN BETTER OFF!!!!  
It's only TV and the media  
That make people think  
That the end of the world is coming.

Only 60 years ago,  
They were leading Jews to their death  
Like sheep to the slaughter!  
No Country, No Army. 55 years ago!!

Seven Arab countries declared war  
On the small Jewish State,  
Only a few hours old!!  
We were then 650,000 Jews!  
Against the rest of the Arab world!  
No IDF [Israel Defense Force].  
No mighty Air Force,

Just tough people  
With nowhere to go.  
Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt,  
Libya, Saudi Arabia, attacked all at once.

This country the U.N. "gave us"  
Was 65 % desert.  
The country started from scratch!

35 years ago!! We fought  
The three strongest armies in the Middle East,  
And wiped them out in six days.

We fought against  
Different coalitions of Arab countries,  
With modern armies,  
And masses of Soviet Russian weapons,  
And we still won!!!

We have today  
A country,  
An army,  
A strong Air Force,  
A Hi-Tech Economy, exporting millions.  
Intel - Microsoft - IBM develop their stuff here.

Our doctors win world prizes  
For medical developments.  
We made the desert flourish,  
Selling oranges and vegetables to the world.  
Israel has sent its own satellite into Space!!  
Three satellites all together!!  
We sit proudly,  
With the U.S., with 250 million people,  
With Russia, with 200 million people,  
With China, with 1.1 billion people,  
With the Europeans -- France, England, Germany,  
with 350 million people,  
The only countries in the world  
To shoot something into space!!

Israel is today  
In the world nuclear power family  
With the U.S., Russia, China, India, France, and England. [We don't  
admit it, but every one knows...]

To think that only 60 years ago,  
We were led,  
Shameful,  
With no hope,  
To our death!!

We crawled out of the burning ashes of Europe,  
We won our wars here with less than nothing  
in our hands,  
We built an "empire" out of nothing.

Who the hell is Mr. Arafat  
To make me Scared?  
To make me be Terrified?  
You make me laugh!  
Passover was celebrated;  
Let's not forget what the story is all about.

We overcame Pharaoh,  
We overcame the Greeks,  
We overcame the Romans,  
We overcame the Inquisition in Spain,  
We overcame the Pogroms in Russia,  
We overcame Hitler,  
We overcame the Germans,  
We overcame the Holocaust,

We overcame the armies of the seven Arab countries,  
We overcame Saddam.  
Take it easy, folks,  
We will overcome  
The present enemies too.  
No matter  
Which part of human history you try!

Think of it,  
For us,  
The Jewish people,  
Our situation has never been better!!!

So,  
Let's Lift our Heads High,

Let's Remember:  
Any nation or culture  
That tried to mess around with us  
Was destroyed - while we kept going!!!

Egypt?  
Anyone know where their empire disappeared to?

The Greeks?  
Alexander of Macedonia?

The Romans?  
Does anyone today speak Latin?  
The Third Reich?  
Anyone heard any news about it lately?

And look at us,  
The Nation from the Bible,  
From Slavery in Egypt,

We are still here,  
Speaking the same language!!  
Right here, right now.  
The Arabs don't know it yet,  
But, they will learn that there is one God.

As long as we keep our identity,  
We are eternal.

So, sorry for not worrying,  
Not bitching,  
Not crying,  
Not being scared.  
Things are O.K. here.

They surely can be better,  
But still:

Don't fall for the media junk:

They won't tell you  
That there are  
Festivals going on,

That people keep on living,  
That people are going out,  
That people are seeing friends.

Yes, our morale is low,  
So what?  
It's only because we weep for our dead  
While they enjoy the blood.

This is the same reason why,  
We will win, after all.

You can forward this e-mail  
If you choose.  
To the whole Jewish community,  
And to people throughout the world.  
They are part of our strength.  
And,  
It might help some of them  
To keep their heads up high.

Tell them  
That there is nothing to worry about.

Tell them to think BIG, and  
To see the whole picture.

"See You Next Year in Jerusalem."

## A Pesach Message

Rabbi Paul Freedman

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Dear Friends:

In just over a week, it will be Pesach – Passover, “The Festival of Freedom.” Freedom from what? Or, perhaps also, freedom to what purpose?

For the individual and the family who wearily packed up their belongings on the night of the first Pesach, it was doubtless the freedom from having to face an Egyptian whip and an Egyptian taskmaster the next morning. For Moses and Aaron, and for the God Who redeemed them, the agenda was much grander and indeed encompassed the future of the civilized world.

So what do we tell our grandchildren – because for every immigrant to this land, the story of the Exodus also requires the story of one’s personal Exodus, one’s personal decision?

This is what we will tell Ma’ayan, Yonatan, Adi, Yair, Ariella, and Ilana (Ayala and Noa will be in Efrat with their grandparents from Boston who come here to be with them several times a year)

Saba and Savta did not come from a land where we were slaves. . We came from the United States – and Savta, originally, from England –where, on the whole, Jews were free to function like any other citizen. However, Saba and Savta had a dream, HAVE a dream after an exile (what’s an exile, you ask?) of two thousand years, and we wanted to be part of the New Jewish State. Because we have a question: why did it take us two thousand years to return? And perhaps you have a question why are you different from some other Sabas and Savtas?

So, we have another question for you (yes, we know, tonight, you get to ask the questions) What’s your dream going to be? What will you want when you sit around your own Seder table some day, here in Israel, with your own grandchildren?

A land at peace, freedom from fear, freedom to roam the land of your grandchildren, freedom to practice the faith of your grandchildren as you will teach them?

The fifth question: why is this land different from all other lands? That, my grandchildren, is what you have to know for yourselves, and what you will, please God, in your turn, help your own grandchildren to discover for themselves.

Next year in Jerusalem. And this year, too, and the years after. Hag Sameach friends.  
From Jerusalem

Rabbi Paul Freedman

## Why We Stay In Israel

Sherri Mandell, [smandell@actcom.co.il](mailto:smandell@actcom.co.il)

It feels crazy to live in Israel right now. A few people are leaving.

I understand them. It's horrible to live with the violence, and the attendant stress and anxiety. We Israelis are so vulnerable: travelling in a car or bus, going to a cafe, even staying home. All have been woven with terror. Every time of day and night, we know we are targets.

One recent Friday night, we were awakened at 1 in the morning by the loudspeaker in our community. The announcement said: "There is a warning that there is a terrorist in Tekoa. Lock your windows and doors, sleep with gun, guard your children. Turn out all of the lights."

We quickly turned off the lights even though we are Sabbath observers. We locked the doors and windows. We put a chair in front of the front door. Then the phone rang. Our neighbor was calling to make sure that we had heard the warning.

The kids were scared, shaking. I told them that we would protect them, take care of them. That they should try to go to sleep.

The kids fell to sleep, all of them in our bed. I prayed and then slept fitfully, hoping that morning would soon be on its way.

Around 3:00 the loudspeaker came on again. The warning was over.

For now. But as I told my children, it's rare that terrorists warn you.

They certainly didn't warn my son, Koby, 13, before they stoned him and his friend Yosef to death, crushing their skulls so they were unrecognizable. Koby and Yosef were hiking near our home in Tekoa. The two boys wanted to know the canyon beyond our house like the backs of their hands.

They were killed for their love of the land. They were killed for being Jews.

My friend was at a movie in Jerusalem on Saturday night, the night of the massacre at the Moment Cafe when a terrorist killed 11 people. The manager stopped the movie and told the patrons what had happened and asked if they wanted the movie to continue. They didn't. They all went home.

Why do people continue to stay here even though we are being slaughtered by terrorists? Because many of us feel a deep sense of connection here, to our country, our heritage, and to each other.

The sense of connection manifests itself in surprising ways. Today I go to the makollet,

the grocery store, and there is a man filling a cardboard box with goodies to send to his son in the army. The man picks out a bar of chocolate, plain milk chocolate. And the makollet lady, Rena, says: "Your son doesn't like that kind of chocolate. Noam likes crunchy chocolate."

Another story: My friend Ruth is at a kiosk buying a drink. A little girl says shyly to the proprietor: "What can I get for 2 shekls?" He says, "nothing." Then he hands her a shekl. "But now you have three. You can buy gum or a candy." Ruth fishes into her pocket. "Now you have four."

Here there is a feeling of family. Here in the face of pain and suffering, we don't feel alone. We feel that we are a net that is woven together and though it is full of holes, it is strong enough to lift us up.

If we make a hole in the net, the net is weakened. Of course it can be mended. But it will never be quite the same.

We don't want to make a hole in the net. We don't want to leave the place where our son is buried. We don't want to leave the only place in the world where time is measured by a Jewish calendar, where the celebrations center on the Jewish holidays, where the language is the language of the Bible. We don't want to leave the center of Jewish history. Now we are part of that long, hard history. We are part of the struggle of the Jewish people trying to live in their land.

My son died for being a Jew. I want to live as one.

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## The Seder in the Bay of Naples

By Rabbi Mayer Abramowitz

The Bay of Naples is a delightful sight, with Capri on the horizon and the Vesuvius and the Vomero Hills at each end of the bay.

But a more splendid sight for me was to see five of Israel's Navy corvettes (fast, lightly-armed warships) steaming in to the Port of Naples. That's the stage setting of this column. The time is April, or Passover, 1950.

I was there not as a rabbi but as the head of JDC's operation in Naples. I was invited, as a courtesy, to greet the incoming ships and to visit with the ships' personnel aboard one of the corvettes. I thought it would be a lot of fun, so I brought along my wife and several members of the Naples' Jewish community to be part of my anticipated simcha.

As we were shown about the ship, we learned that the squadron of five corvettes -- which comprised the entire Navy of Israel -- were in Naples to use the city's dry docks for maritime repairs. At an impromptu ceremony, the officers and crew members, who were all young, were eager to "show-off" Israel's naval power.

When it was my turn to speak (in Hebrew, of course), I told our Israeli friends about JDC's emigration activities and then announced that the Naples Jewish community had a program of tours and entertainment planned for them. I closed by putting on my *kippa* and read two verses from the Bible:

"There is the sea, vast and wide, with its creatures without number ... There go the ships ... all of them look to You to give them their food..." (Psalm 104:25-26)

At the refreshment table, I "confessed" to the captain that I was an American rabbi. He then asked me to remain on board following the welcoming ceremony, inviting me to attend a meeting with the crew. I had no idea what he wanted of me but I sensed an urgency in his voice and realized that this was to be no social club meeting. I therefore accompanied my group back to the port, drove my wife to my office, and returned to the port. I was shown the stern of the ship where the meeting, consisting of about sixty men, was already in progress.

They were not discussing a naval operation nor was there any mention of special assignments while they were in Naples.

They were discussing the Passover *Seder*.

They were not discussing, they were arguing, with passion, with intensity, with vehemence -- about the forthcoming *Seder*!

First there was Yossi, a religiously-observant officer who insisted on a full-traditional *Seder*. Then there was Micha, a secular extremist who insisted that those who did not want to attend a *Seder* were to be given shore leave. And, finally there was the *kibbutznik* Noam, who wanted the *Kibbutzniks* to run their own *Seder* with their own "nationalistic" agenda.

Yossi demanded that in order to strictly observe the laws of *kashrut*, the galley was to be shut down for kashering purposes and new utensils had to be purchased. He also raised the question of a *mashgiach* (supervisor) to be on duty to make certain that *chametz* food not be mixed with *Pesach* dishes. Micha, the non-religious person, waxed poetic about the concept of freedom of religion; hence, he insisted that the non-religious men must be informed of their right not to have to be present at any religious service. And the *Kibbutznik* Noam made a simple suggestion: there was to be two *sedarim*, an Orthodox one on one ship, and his on another.

The captain introduced me to this buzz saw.

I started by telling them the classic Yiddish joke about two litigants who come to the rabbi to judge their demands. After the first litigant stated his case, the rabbi said, "My son, you are right." When the second litigant stated his case, the rabbi again said, "My son, you are right." The rebbetzin asked: "How can they both be right?" The rabbi replied: "My darling wife, you are also right."

That quieted the tempers but provided no solution. I asked the captain to appoint one individual from each side to meet with me because nothing could be resolved in a mob session. The group agreed that Yossi, Micha, and Noam would represent their respective groups. I stayed on the ship the rest of the day, had lunch with the men, and got to know them rather well. I met with the three "representatives" to hammer out a compromise. You won't believe what was my winning argument.

I compared a *Seder* to a ship at sea. The helmsman and the engineer, the radio and communication people, the bos'n mates and even the commodore had to act together as a unit if the ship was to safely reach its port. You might consider this argument a bit trite, but they bought it.

I suggested to Noam the *Kibbutznik* to prepare his own readings which would be included in the traditional *Seder*. To Micha, I bluntly stated that his very presence at the *Seder*, even not reading a word of the *Haggadah*, would achieve the ideal of unity. To Yossi, no amount of arguing helped. I finally invited him to meet with a rabbi in the Bagnoli DP (Displaced Persons) camp, who would help him solve the kashering problems aboard a ship. (I had previously worked with the rabbi to make a *kosher* kitchen in the camp.)

I spent most of the day with the crew. I walked privately with Micha and asked him to read the *Ho Lachma Anya* ("This is the bread of affliction...Let all who are hungry come and eat thereof...), challenging him to discover any phrase therein with which he could not agree.

At the mess that evening, the commodore informed me that the three who met with me asked that I return on Passover evening to conduct the *Seder*. I tried to hide my exhilaration at the invitation but didn't succeed because the commodore jokingly asked if he should issue special orders for me to come to the *Seder*.

That *Seder* a week later was one of the highlights of my six-year experience in Europe. Although the tables were set in the cramped quarters of the ship, the *Seder* in the Bay of Naples was an awe-inspiring event.

How could anyone forget Micha, my non-religious friend, who opened the *Seder* with an emotional reading of *Ho Lachma Anya*. How can I express the sheer magnificence of the *Kibbutzniks'* incredible presentation of songs, poems, and dramatic readings describing the birth of Israel. And, even Yossi, who, despite the lateness of the hour refused to skip even one line, one passage of the *Haggadah*, admitted to the crew that this *Seder* was the best he ever attended.

But I will always remember the commodore's closing remarks to his crew. He reminded them that in a few weeks they would celebrate Israel's second anniversary of statehood and stressed that the display of unity aboard that ship was a positive omen for Israel's future.

## Ashkenazic Passover Customs and Traditions

(Elimelech David Ha-Levi Web, Inc. <http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/>)

Ashkenazic Passover customs and traditions can vary from region to region, country to country, city to city, community to community, and family to family. Many Ashkenazic customs and traditions involved assimilating Passover rituals with the culinary, musical, and linguistic traditions of the surrounding peoples in the areas where Ashkenazim lived. The following is a selected list of Ashkenazic Passover customs and traditions:

#1: Passover Food: Ashkenazim are forbidden to consume any of the 5 forbidden grains during the Passover holiday (barley, oats, rye, spelt, and wheat), except when making matzah, in which case any of the 5 grains **MUST** be used so that it simulates the situation that the Hebrews experienced when they tried to bake their bread as they prepared to flee Egypt. Furthermore, Ashkenazim are forbidden to come in contact with or even have in their possession in their household any chametz. Chametz includes leavened foods, drinks and ingredients that are made from or contain wheat, rye, barley, oats or spelt. Therefore, all grain products such as breads, cereals and other breakfast foods, grain alcohol, grain vinegar and malts, are forbidden during Passover. Ashkenazim are also forbidden to eat kitniyot [generally speaking, kitniyot (plural form: "kitniyos") include small fleshless seeds of annual plants that an individual might ground into flour], and their derivatives in other products. Examples are: ascorbic acid, calcium ascorbate, caraway seeds, castor sugar, chick peas, citric acid, corn, custard powder, dextrose, dried beans, dried peas, glucose, green beans, icing sugar, lecithin, lentils, mustard, rice, sesame seeds, soya beans, soya products, starch, sunflower seeds, tofu, and any other pulse or legumes (pods which contain edible seeds), and their derivatives in food and beverage products in cooking during the Passover holiday. Despite these restrictions, Sephardim and Ashkenazim agree that having possession of kitniyos (but not consumption of kitniyos for most Ashkenazim and some Sephardim) is permitted during the Passover holiday.

However, since this rabbinical ban was initiated in the Middle Ages, Ashkenazic rabbinical opinions have since differed concerning the ban on using kitniyot as well as the use of baking soda and baking powder during the Passover holiday. Some rabbis say that to make the Passover holiday unique and to avoid confusion with fermenting foods used as ingredients in baking, they will forbid the use of baking soda and baking powder during the Passover holiday. Other rabbis claim that since baking soda is simply sodium bicarbonate which is not on the banned list

of foods and ingredients for Passover, they will allow its use for Passover. These and/or other rabbis also say that as long as baking powder does not contain cornstarch or other banned foods or ingredients to be avoided during Passover, they will also permit the use of baking powder during the Passover holiday. In fact, there are "Kosher for Passover" versions of baking soda and baking powder.

However, breads, cookies, and cakes and any other fermented or leavened products made with fermenting or leavening grains or yeast are forbidden during the Passover holiday. However, the Ashkenazic rabbis ruled that potatoes were permitted to be eaten during Passover because they were the primary food staple in Europe in medieval times when many Jews lived there.

Although Ashkenazim are forbidden to eat barley, oats, rye, spelt, and wheat in foods, they must use any of these five grains when making matzah to fulfill the description of the events told in Exodus 12:39 which state that the dough used by the Israelites to bake their bread while fleeing Egypt was unleavened when they ate it because they did not have time to wait for it to become leavened. This means that the Israelites used dough that could have become leavened but wasn't when they ate it. Similarly, the five grains mentioned above - barley, oats, rye, spelt, and wheat - have the potential to become leavened when any of them are combined with water, but they are baked before they become leavened, similar to the events told in Exodus 12:39.

#2: Passover Food: The basic charoset recipe of honey, wine, nuts, fruit, and spices is common to all Ashkenazim. The species of the ingredient may vary from one community or family to the next; in the case of the nuts, one family may add almonds whereas another family might add cashews for the charoset recipe.

Ashkenazic Passover Customs and Traditions #3: Passover Food: Ashkenazi Ultra-Orthodox Jews will not eat matzah meal dumplings (called "Knaidlach" in Yiddish), or matzah and chocolate layer cake, because they are concerned it may ferment slightly. However, Lithuanian Jews - even the Ultra-Orthodox Jews - will eat a fermented beet soup called Risel Borscht. Other Ashkenazim will also eat borscht and Khreyn, a condiment made with grated horseradish and colored with beet juice.

#4: Passover Food: Ashkenazi Jews eat honey cakes, cinnamon balls, various Passover tortes, plava cake (a sponge cake with ground almonds replacing the flour), candies containing either carrots, ginger, or cinnamon, made-for-Passover mandelbroit (also: mandelbrot. Meaning of mandelbroit: "almond bread" in

German and Yiddish. It is a kind of bread-shaped cookie with eggs, almonds and cinnamon in it), and coconut cakes as well as other kinds of made-for-Passover cakes such as nut cakes and sponge cake. Compote is also another favorite Passover dessert.

#5: Pre-Passover Custom: Bedikat Chametz (the search for leaven): The pre-Passover custom of searching for and picking up leavening in the household means that certain tools are used to pick up the leaven. Ashkenazim use a feather and wooden spoon to pick up the chametz.

#6: The Four Questions in the Passover Haggadah: Ashkenazim recite The Four Questions in the following order: 1. "On all other nights we eat bread or matzah, but on this night we eat only matzah. Why?"; 2. "On all other nights, we eat all kinds of herbs, but on this night we eat only maror. Why?"; 3. "On all other nights, we do not dip even once, but on this night, we dip twice. Why?"; and 4. "On all other nights, we eat either sitting or reclining, but on this night, we eat reclining. Why?". Ashkenazim also reserve the recitation of The Four Questions for the youngest child at the Passover seder table.

#7: Passover Symbolic Foods - Some, but not all, Ashkenazim use a second bitter vegetable as a symbolic food on the Passover seder plate, called chazeret.

#8: Passover Symbolic Foods: Ashkenazim will traditionally mix apples, walnuts, honey, sweet wine, and cinnamon when creating charoset.

#9: The 10 Plagues of Passover: Ashkenazim customarily recite each of the 10 plagues of Passover and as each plague is recited, everybody at the Passover seder table will dip their pinky into the wine in their wine glass and shake a drop of wine onto a plate or into a bowl, totalling 10 drops for 10 plagues. Since wine symbolizes joy and freedom, diminishing the wine by one drop at the mention of each plague symbolizes a diminishment of joy and freedom by that amount. Based on this diminishment of joy, this ritual also symbolizes and is performed in memory of the Egyptians who suffered during the time of the 10 plagues in Egypt and the Egyptian army that drowned in the Red Sea when they were pursuing the Israelites.

#10: Passover Symbolic Foods: Ashkenazic Jewish rabbis forbid Ashkenazim to eat lamb during the Passover seder meal and for the remainder of the Passover holiday ever since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. However, beef brisket, for instance, is permitted to be used and served as the main course.

#11: Passover Symbolic Foods: Participants at an Ashkenazic Passover seder each have a hard-boiled egg placed before them to be eaten.

#12: Passover Haggadah: Some Ashkenazic families have each member at the Passover seder table read sections from the Passover Haggadah, while other Ashkenazic families will have just the leader of the Passover seder read everything from the Passover Haggadah, and still other Ashkenazic families will ask for volunteers at the Passover seder table to read sections from the Passover Haggadah.

#13: Passover Seder Plate: Most Ashkenazic families will have six symbolic Passover foods on the Passover seder plate [(1) Marror (usually horseradish), (2) Beitzah (hard-boiled or roasted egg), (3) Karpas (usually celery, parsley, or lettuce), (4) Zeroah (shankbone of a lamb), (5) Charoseth (a mixture of apples, honey, cinnamon, sweet red wine, and either walnuts or almonds), and (6) Chazeret (a second marror or bitter herb, different from the marror; examples are: watercress, cucumber, romaine lettuce, endive, or radishes)], while other Ashkenazic families will have only five items on the Passover seder plate, excluding the second maror, the chazeret. Another symbolic food - the salt water - is placed in a small cup set apart from the Passover seder plate. For all Ashkenazic families, the three matzahs will be placed in their own compartments on a separate plate set apart from the Passover seder plate, where each matzah is separated from the other by a divider.

#14: The Four Questions: Many Ashkenazic Russian and Belarussian Jewish families have each child at the Passover seder table recite The Four Questions; some families may start from the oldest to the youngest child. Other families may just have the youngest child recite The Four Questions.

#15: Passover Foods: Ashkenazim traditionally serve matzah-ball soup as an entre for the Passover seder meal. Matzah-ball soup is basically chicken soup broth with a big matzah ball in it. Knaidlach means "dumplings" in Yiddish, and refers to the matzah ball itself which is made with ground matzah, otherwise known as matzah meal. Other soups that may be served during the Passover holiday include cold soups such as (1) Borscht ("Borscht" is beet or beet-root soup. The word "borscht" is from the Russian word "borshch" which means "cow parsnip".) and (2) Schav ("Schav" is sorrel soup. Schav means "sorrel" and is derived from the Yiddish word "shtshav" which in turn, is derived from the Polish word "szczaw"). Schav soup is usually a mixture of sorrel leaves, onions, lemon juice, eggs, and sugar. Schav is also served with sour cream. Appetizers for Passover may include egg

plant, cole slaw, gefilte fish with chrain ("gefilte" means "stuffed" in Yiddish and "chrain" means "horseradish" in Yiddish), various cooked vegetables, and chopped liver. Matzoh meal pancakes, called "chremslach" in Yiddish, are another favorite. These matzah meal pancakes can either be regular-sized pancakes or bite-sized honey-flavored pancakes. Other favorites are variations of matzah brei or matzah brie (a type of Passover French toast in which matzah or matzah meal is soaked in milk and eggs and deep-fried), matzah kugel or potato kugel (kugel means "pudding" in Yiddish, but not the sweet Jello type of pudding. Kugel is either casserole-type pudding or a pudding-like mixture of eggs, potatoes and other vegetables, usually onions.), tzimmes (tzimmes literally means to make "a fuss about something", however in cookery it is a sweet mixture of specific foods and most often means a mixture of stewed carrots, prunes, raisins, and honey. It can also be a casserole of various fruits, vegetables and/or meats.), sweet vegetable preserves known as eingemachts ("eingemachts" is derived from the Yiddish word "einmachten", which means "to preserve food"; the vegetable most often used is grated beets, while other vegetables may include pumpkin, turnips, carrots, and black radish), ingberlach (also: "imberlach"; "ingberlach" means "ginger" in Yiddish, and refers to "ginger candies" made with carrots), blintzes (although the word "blintz" means "pancake" in Ukrainian, Jewish blintzes are essentially crêpes), and Holishkes (Holishkes means "stuffed cabbage" in Ukrainian and refers to a dish made with cabbage leaves stuffed with meatballs and covered in a sweet and sour tomato sauce). Main courses may be stewed chicken, pot roast, veal, turkey, or beef brisket. Matzah flour (finely ground matzah), matzah meal (coarsely ground matzah), and matzah farfel (little chunks of matzah) are used in lieu of regular flour in Passover cooking.

#16: Miriam's Cup: Some Ashkenazic families have a custom that honors the sister of Moses who played a prominent role in the Book of Exodus. They place a cup filled with water on the Passover seder table in honor of Miriam, and refer to it as Miriam's Cup. This cup also honors the contribution of Jewish women throughout Jewish history. The cup is filled with water to symbolize the miraculous well which God gave Miriam to help sustain the Hebrews through their journey in the Sinai desert after they fled Egypt.

#17: Matzah: In many Ashkenazic households, it is customary not to dip any matzah in any kind of liquid because any contact of matzah with liquid might create chametz - or leavening - of the matzah even though Halachic Jewish law does not mention that this possibility exists. Jewish law simply refers to properly prepared matzah as not being able to be made into chametz even if liquid is added to it. Nevertheless, some Ashkenazic families, including most Chassidic Jews,

entertain the possibility that traces of yeast grain left over from baking the matzah may still exist in the matzah, and as a result they do not eat any matzah or matzah products that have come into contact with any liquid.

## Sephardic Passover Customs and Traditions

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/sephardicpassovercustoms.html>

Sephardic Passover customs and traditions can vary from region to region, country to country, city to city, community to community, and family to family. Many Sephardic customs and traditions involved assimilating Passover rituals with the culinary, musical, and linguistic traditions of the surrounding peoples in the areas where Sephardim lived. The following is a selected list of Sephardic Passover customs and traditions:

#1: Passover Food: Sephardic Passover dietary law rulings permit the use of kitniyot [generally speaking, kitniyot (plural form: "kitniyos") include small fleshless seeds of annual plants that an individual might ground into flour], and their derivatives in other products. Examples are: ascorbic acid, calcium ascorbate, caraway seeds, castor sugar, chick peas, citric acid, corn, custard powder, dextrose, dried beans, dried peas, glucose, green beans, icing sugar, lecithin, lentils, mustard, rice, sesame seeds, soya beans, soya products, starch, sunflower seeds, tofu, and their derivatives in food and beverage products in cooking during the Passover holiday. In practice, most - but not all - Sephardic communities eat products containing these grains and legumes and their derivatives during Passover. However, like Ashkenazim, Sephardim forbid the use of chametz grains, which include: barley, oats, rye, spelt, and wheat, during the Passover holiday, except when making matzah, in which case any of the 5 chametz grains **MUST** be used so that it simulates the situation that the Hebrews experienced when they tried to bake their bread as they prepared to flee Egypt. Furthermore, Sephardim, like Ashkenazim, are forbidden to come in contact with or even have in their possession in their household any chametz. Chametz includes leavened foods, drinks and ingredients that are made from or contain wheat, rye, barley, oats or spelt. Therefore, all grain products such as breads, cereals and other breakfast foods, grain alcohol, grain vinegar and malts, are forbidden during Passover. Some Sephardic communities will eat rice and kitniyot during Passover but must check them three times prior to the Passover holiday to make absolutely certain there are no kernels of chametz in the rice or kitniyot, in accordance with the Passover dietary laws for chametz. In addition, out of the concern for an accidental mixture of kitniyot flour with chametz flour, Sephardim will only use fresh legumes and not dried legumes, unless the dried legumes were dried for the specific purpose of being used for the Passover holiday. Despite these restrictions, Sephardim and Ashkenazim agree that having possession of kitniyos (but not consumption of kitniyos for most Ashkenazim and some Sephardim) is permitted during the

Passover holiday.

#2: Passover Food: A typical Sephardic seder might have an introductory dish called "Huevos Haminados" ("Huevos Haminados" is a Ladino - meaning Hebrew-Spanish - phrase. It essentially means "brown eggs". The term "huevos" means "eggs" in Spanish and "haminados" is derived from the Hebrew word "hamin", which means "oven" but more specifically, it means "a low-temperature oven in which food could be kept warm all night", and refers to the fact that the eggs must be cooked at a low temperature for a 24 hour period. The -ados suffix is the Spanish ending of the word. Greek Jews call these type of eggs either "Selanlik yamurta", meaning "Salonika eggs" which refers to the city of Salonika, Greece or "Yahudi yamurta" meaning "Jewish eggs". Italian Jews refer to these eggs as "Turkish eggs"). Primarily served on Sabbath lunches and for life-cycle events, Huevos Haminados has also been served on different Jewish holidays such as Passover. Originally, Huevos Haminados were cooked on top of meats and legumes in hamins, meaning Sabbath stews that were braised at a low temperature for a 24 hour period. Today, Huevos Haminados is also cooked Pareve, (meaning without having contact with meats and dairy products) and placed in onion skins which are then gently simmered overnight either in the oven or on top of the stove. Either tea leaves or spent coffee grinds are added to the roasting materials for added flavor. Huevos Haminados or browned eggs cradled in onion skins tastes somewhat like hard-boiled eggs, however, the fact that they have been simmered for a long period of time gives them a softer and tender texture without being rubbery, as well as having a rich, oniony fragrance.

Huevos Haminados might be followed by leek soup, then a fish appetizer. For the main course at the Passover seder meal, Sephardim typically serve lamb or fish sprinkled with various fruits and/or vegetables or even white truffles. The meat may be accompanied by mimulim ("mimulim" are "meat-stuffed vegetables"), green beans, okra, kibbe ib gheraz ("kibbe ib gheraz" are "Syrian meatballs with cherries"), and apio ("apio" is "sweet-and-sour celeriac or celery"), which is often "con safanoria", meaning "with carrots". Greek Jews may serve Greek lamb stew, usually with romaine lettuce and dill. Various rice or bean salads and soups are also served, as well as various mixed vegetable dishes with different sauces and spices like coriander, cumin, cardamom, tarragon, turmeric, ginger, mint, fennel, basil, saffron, and chili powder. Artichokes, salmon, vegetable frittatas, Mrouziya ("Mrouziya" are either "currant preserves" or "currant and walnut preserves"), and baked okra are also favorites. For the remainder of the Passover holiday week, Sephardim might serve stuffed lamb intestines. Artichokes and leek soup are another favorite. Mint tea is usually served as a drink.

#3: Passover Food: Sephardim usually do not cook with matzah meal. Instead, they use matzah with eggs and in meat dishes. Olive oil is usually used in Passover cooking.

#4: Passover Food: Moroccan Sephardim traditionally eat white truffles, French-style doughnuts called "beignets" that are made with matzah meal, and cakes of honey, almonds, and cinnamon during Passover. Another favorite Sephardic Passover food are fritters called "bimuelos" in Ladino.

#5: Passover Food: For Passover dessert, Sephardim may eat either a sponge cake called Bisquitte pan d'Espagne (alternate spelling: "pan de Espagne"), nut cake ("torta de muez"), nut crescents ("mustachudos"), or a syrup-drenched cake called "tishpishti".

#6: The Four Questions in the Passover Haggadah: Sephardim recite The Four Questions in the following order: 1. "On all other nights, we do not dip even once, but on this night, we dip twice. Why?"; 2. "On all other nights we eat bread or matzah, but on this night we eat only matzah. Why?"; 3. "On all other nights, we eat all kinds of herbs, but on this night we eat only maror. Why?"; and 4. "On all other nights, we eat either sitting or reclining, but on this night, we eat reclining. Why?". Sephardic custom is to have all participants at the Passover seder table chanting "The Four Questions" in unison.

#7: Passover Symbolic Foods: Most Sephardim use celery leaves, parsley, or a boiled potato for the karpas, and romaine lettuce or another herb for the maror. The celery leaves are dipped in either salt water or vinegar. The karpas vegetable should not be the same type of vegetable as the maror. All Sephardim use a second bitter vegetable, called chazeret, as part of the symbolic foods of Passover. Instead of the Ashkenazic preference for horseradish that would represent one of the bitter herbs, Sephardim use either escarole or endive.

#8: Passover Symbolic Foods: The basic charoset recipe of honey, wine, nuts, fruit, and spices is common to all Sephardim. However, Sephardic families will use a variety of ingredients that reflect the cuisines of their country or community, or what is available in their community to make charoset. Either one or a combination of crushed, chopped or boiled dates, figs, chestnut paste, raisins, pomegranates, apricots, or oranges might be used as the fruit ingredient, chopped pistachio nuts or chopped walnuts might be used as the nut ingredient, and a variety of spices might be used in place of using cinnamon as the traditional spice to make charoset. Other charoset combinations include the use of date honey, known as Haleq, or mixing

figs, apples, nuts, cinnamon, and wine. Charoset is the Passover food that has the greatest variety of recipes of any Passover food.

#9: Passover Haggadah: For Sephardim, the Passover Haggadah is recited using both the local language and Hebrew, or in the Sephardic dialect known as Ladino, which is primarily a mixture of Hebrew and/or Judeo-Arabic and 14th and 15th century Spanish, or by using a combination of Ladino and the local language and/or Hebrew, depending on the community.

#10: Re-enacting the Exodus from Egypt: Following either the Passover seder step of Yachatz (breaking of the middle matzah) or of reciting Ha-Lachmah Anya ("We were slaves in Egypt...") in the Passover seder step of Maggid or in the middle of reciting Ha-Lachmah Anya, most Sephardim (except for Spanish-Portuguese Sephardim) re-enact the exodus from Egypt. The afikoman is tied in a large napkin, given to one of the children at the Passover seder table, and then the child slings the napkin over his or her shoulders. The leader of the Passover seder then asks a series of three questions to the child: 1. "From where have you come?" The child answers: "I have come from Egypt". 2. The Passover seder leader then asks: "Where are you going?" The child answers: "I am going to Jerusalem". Finally, the Passover seder leader asks: "What are you taking with you?" The child then points to the sack or napkin full of matzah. A variation of this is performed among Sephardic Egyptian Jews, where not just a child is given the chance to re-enact the Passover story and be asked the questions, but each person at the Passover seder table will take turns re-enacting the exodus from Egypt. Also, the person at a Sephardic Egyptian Passover seder will first sling the napkin of matzah over their right shoulder and then be asked by the leader of the Passover seder: "Where are you from?" The person answers: "Egypt". The leader then asks: "Where are you going?". The person then slings the napkin of matzah over their left shoulder and says: "Jerusalem!". Another variation of the exodus play comes from Iraq and Kurdistan. Sephardic Iraqi and Kurdistan Jews will begin the Passover seder by re-enacting the exodus from Egypt in a dramatic fashion. A child will go outside the house and then knock on the door to the house. The Passover seder leader will then ask the child the series of questions as mentioned before: "Where are you from?", "Where are you going?", and "What are you taking with you?". After answering the questions, the child will then recite The Four Questions to open the Passover seder. There are other slightly different variations of this re-enactment in other Sephardic communities. North-African Sephardim will have the seder leader leave the room and return with a walking stick and the afikomen in a cloth on his shoulder. The children would then ask the seder leader: "Where are you coming from?", and the seder leader will then proceed to tell the story of his

exodus from Egypt. Yemenite Jews will conduct the re-enactment of the Exodus from Egypt by having the seder leader throw a bag with the afikomen matzah in it over his shoulder like a knapsack. He then circles the table while leaning on a cane. As the seder leader walks around the room, he tells everyone at the Passover seder table about his experiences and the miracles he witnessed as he came forth from Egypt. Finally, in the Eastern Judeo-Spanish ritual (Turkish and Greek Sephardim of Judeo-Spanish descent), the seder leader will leave the room and return with a walking stick and the afikomen in a sack or cloth over his shoulder, along with a tightened belt. The children then ask: "Where are you coming from?", the seder leader replies: "From Egypt.", and then the children ask: "Where are you going?", and the seder leader replies: "To Jerusalem!"

#11: Participants at a Sephardic Persian (or Iranian) Passover seder will simultaneously chant the Passover song "Dayenu" and hold bunches of either celery, chives, leeks or scallions in their hands and lightly beat each other on the back and shoulders to symbolize the sting generated by the whip of the Egyptian taskmasters. A variation of this custom with Sephardic Persian Jewish families will have participants at the Passover seder table take turns being an Egyptian taskmaster, lightly beating another person with the celery, chives, scallions, or leeks. Once one person is done, they then pass the chives, scallions, or leeks on to the next person at the table who will then repeat the custom, and so on until all at the table have had their turns. While Sephardim are performing this ritual, all at the Passover seder wish each other "Sentak Khadhra", which is a blessing for a green, fruitful year for everyone. Iraqi Jews will say to each other "Sant-il-Khadra", meaning "a year of good fortune".

#12: Passover Seder Plate: Moroccan Sephardic Jews will hold the Passover seder plate aloft and pass it over the heads of all those at the Passover seder table while announcing to each participant that they have left Egypt and are now free.

#13: Tunisian Sephardic Jews follow a similar custom as the Moroccan Sephardic Jews as mentioned in Sephardic Passover Customs and Traditions #13, but instead of passing the tray over the heads of each person, they touch the heads of each person with the tray which serves as a reminder to each person that they once carried burdens upon their heads as slaves in Egypt.

#14: Passover Seder Plate: Many Sephardic Moroccan Jewish families have a bit of a ceremony when bringing in the Passover seder plate to the Passover seder table. They may cover the plate with either a fine piece of embroidery or the finest piece of embroidery in the household, while everyone at the Passover seder table sings a

devotional song about Israel. While everyone is singing, the person who brought the Passover seder plate to the table then places the plate on the head of a child and turns it around on the child's head for all to see it.

#15: The 10 Plagues of Passover: When reciting the 10 plagues, the leader at a Sephardic Passover seder will spill a bit of wine from a special cup of wine into a bowl at the mention of each plague, for a total of 10 spills of wine. The leader usually will then wash his or her hands to symbolically cleanse himself of the 10 plagues. Some Sephardic families in countries such as Turkey and other Balkan countries will not even look at the wine that is spilled out of the cup when reciting each of the 10 plagues, while other Sephardic families in other countries will only permit the leader of the Passover seder to recite the 10 plagues lest they be "poisoned" or "contaminated" from the recitation. Many Sephardic Greek Jewish families will pour vinegar into a basin beside them as the 10 plagues are recited, followed by the singing of "Dayenu".

#16: Sephardim, unlike Ashkenazim, usually do not hide the afikoman matzah or have a Cup of Elijah. However, Sephardim want to protect themselves from the "Evil Eye", and in so doing they take the symbols of Passover food and use them as good omens for the entire year. For instance, Sephardim in different communities might save a piece of afikoman matzah to be used as an ornament or even carried on one's person for protection against the "Evil Eye", or dip their hand in charoset to make an imprint of a hamsa hand on a sheet of paper to be hung on their door which serves as protection against the "Evil Eye".

#17: Sephardic Passover Foods: Foods served at a Sephardic Passover meal might include lamb served as the main course, vegetable or meat matzah pies, called "Mina", haminados eggs boiled with red onion skins, saffron and vinegar, fava bean soup as an entrée, leek croquettes, and for dessert, almond torte and/or nut cake.

#18: Passover Symbolic Foods: Sephardim use a single hard-boiled egg, cut it up, and then distribute a piece of it to each participant at the Passover seder table to be eaten.

#19: Post-Passover Celebration: Mimouna (alternate spellings: Maimuna, Mimuna, Mimunah, Maimunah, Mimounah, Maimouna, Maimounah) : At the close of the Passover holiday at sundown on the 8th day (7th day for Reform Jews and Jews in Israel), Moroccan and Turkish Sephardic Jews worldwide have a celebration called Mimouna which is celebrated in their homes. Mimouna is a celebration of freedom,

community values, togetherness, friendship, and is a demonstration of great hospitality. It is also a celebration of the renewal of Spring, and fertility. On the eve of Mimouna, family members, friends, and cousins visit each others' homes, going from house to house. There is a certain order to these visits. On their way home from synagogue services, Mimouna celebrants will visit the Rabbi's family, the Hazzan (Cantor), their parents, friends, and then their neighbors, in that order. Traditional embroidered dress is worn by members of the household. A big banquet, buffet, and feast are hosted by each household. Some believe that Mimouna represents a symbolic new beginning of freedom from slavery, and so sweets are set out on a table with a white tablecloth decorated with flowers and wheat sheaves which is the centerpiece of the Mimouna Day. In the sense of Mimouna being a new beginning, eating these sweets symbolizes a sweet year.

Originally, the central event of Mimouna used to be the baking of the first leavened bread after Passover. The yeast of the bread was considered a symbol of Israel, and so great care was taken to ensure it rose properly. While the dough was being prepared, songs were sung in hopes that the rising bread would be a good omen. Some communities kept and poured wine from the cup of Elijah over the yeast. As mentioned, the festive table is the central point of the Mimouna celebration and contains and is decorated with many symbolic foods and items, respectively. Symbolic foods of Mimouna include milk or buttermilk, white candies, and flour that symbolize purity; eggs, bean pods that symbolize fertility; and dates and preserves that symbolize a sweet year. Other symbolic foods include: butter, honey, fruits, candies, cakes made with yeast, plain yeast, coin-shaped chocolate, and nuts. Fresh raw fish and various other greens are also present. All the above-mentioned symbolic foods also symbolize good luck. Wine is also present on the table, which is decorated with flowers and stalks of wheat. Sweet Moroccan mint tea is also served. The table of sweets may contain gold-wrapped chocolate coins to symbolize one of the meanings of Mimouna: prosperity and riches. Mimouna is also the time when a popular Pareve confection called "Zabane" is made ("Pareve" means "neutral" in Hebrew and refers to a food that has no dairy or meat products in it.). Zabane is made with sugar and whipped egg-whites, and beaten until a thick consistency is achieved. The goal is to reach a consistency that resembles caramel. There may be peanuts or chopped walnuts added in to the mixture for variety. Once prepared, zabane is poured into a bowl and eaten with a spoon. Chocolate-covered apricots are another popular candy. A famous dish called "Muffaletta" or "Mufleita" - a thin, round, fragrant pancake-like food that is rolled up similar to a type of French crêpe - is served hot and contains butter and honey. Stuffed dates are also popular. Pita bread would be dipped in honey and butter to symbolize the togetherness of the family. Mimouna is

celebrated with great vigor in Israel, where families gather at picnics in parks and on beaches to eat, drink, sing and dance. There is also a custom that courting and matchmaking are performed on Mimouna, and so after eating, many women and men meet and mingle in the streets in order to meet an ideal mate on Mimouna, but are also under the watchful eye of their parents. There is also another custom that parents of an engaged couple invite them over to eat muffaletta and grilled fish. Jews who lived in coastal areas of Morocco would customarily go to the seashore early in the morning on the first day after Passover and dip their bare feet into the water and wash their hands to symbolize the crossing of the Red Sea by the Hebrews, which took place on the final day of the first Passover. People who lived inland would go to rivers, wells, springs, or swimming holes to re-enact the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, which took place on the final day of the first Passover. These people would pour water over their hands and feet and even on the threshold of their houses to symbolize the crossing of the Red Sea by the Hebrews. Once this ritual was done, people would then go to an outdoor setting where they would set up tents and picnics complete with music, laughter, singing and dancing.

In Turkey, during Mimouna festivities, Turkish-Jewish men throw coins and candy (both of these items are symbols of the wealth and food that the Jewish people brought with them when they left Egypt), and grass (a symbol of the reeds of the Red Sea) to children who eagerly await them.

The origin and meaning of Mimouna is not definite. Mimouna (alternate spellings: Maimuna, or Mimuna) means either "wealth", or "good fortune" in Arabic, or the word Mimouna may mean "Maimon" in reference to the father of Maimonides. Maimonides was born Moses Ben Maimon (Hebrew meaning: "Moses, son of Maimon" or Maymun) in Cordoba, Spain, who lived from 1135 to 1204. He was a famous Jewish rabbinical scholar, philosopher, and physician who first lived in Spain then in Cairo, Egypt. Mimouna was said to have originated in Fez, Morocco, in honor of Maimonides' father who lived and died there. Mimouna honors the death date of Maimonides' father. Since Maimonides' father died on the final day of Passover and in Jewish tradition death is seen as a reunion of man with his Creator, a celebration is held on the anniversary of the death. To avoid having both the Passover celebration and the anniversary celebration of the death of Maimonides' father on the same day, the anniversary celebration of Maimonides' father's death was moved up to the day after the final day of Passover. Mimouna might also mean "emunah", which means "faith" in Hebrew, faith in the sense that redemption for the Jewish people will come in the month of Nisan, as it came to pass in the month of Nisan during the exodus from Egypt. Another possibility is that Mimouna derives from the word "mammon" in Aramaic or Hebrew, which

means "prosperity" or "riches". This definition originates from the belief that both one's personal productivity, prosperity and wealth as well as the national productivity, prosperity and wealth of one's country will be determined on Mimouna Day. At the evening synagogue service, people greet each other, wishing each other "tarbah" (Tarbah means "success" in Hebrew), as well as reciting to each other the special Mimouna blessing: "Alallah Mimouna, Ambarka mas'uda", and drink "Mahya", a honey-based drink. After the evening service, there are customary visits to the Rabbi's house, the Hazzan or Cantor's house, followed by the house of one's parents, friends, and neighbors. Laughter and jokes with much music and rejoicing characterize the Mimouna evening well into the night!

#20: Post-Passover Celebration: Sephardic Turkish Jews have a celebratory custom after the close of the Passover holiday. The father or grandfather of the household throws coins, candy, and grass for the children to collect. Grass symbolizes the reeds of the Red Sea, and the coins and candy symbolize the wealth that the Israelites or Hebrews brought out of Egypt. At the same time, this ritual represents a wish that the coming year should be "green" and productive.

#21: Post-Passover Celebration: Persian (or Iranian) Jews have a post-Passover celebration called "Shabeh Sal". This is similar to the Moroccan Mimouna in terms of having a festival complete with sweets except that it takes place in the home of the eldest member of the family. Visitors to the eldest member's home bring sweets to add to the festivity. To symbolize the conclusion of Passover, family members in the eldest member's household prepare foods made with dairy products because kosher for Passover milk and milk products are not available in Iran. Following this event, Iranian Jews have a tea drinking ceremony in which tea is served with dates rather than sugar because kosher for Passover sugar is also not available in Iran. The following day, Persian Jews go out to picnic in a grassy area, shaded from the sun. Persian Jews adopted this picnicking custom called "Roozeh Sal" that pre-dates Islam in Persia.

#22: Pre-Passover Custom: Bediqath Hametz (the search for leaven) - In the evening on the day before Passover, the head of the household searches for leavening carrying a lit candle with only one wick. He also holds a knife which he uses to check all nooks and crevices in the household for any traces of hametz (leaven). He also carries a bowl containing a piece of bread in it, and usually adds a little salt in the bowl. The reason for the salt derives from superstition. Salt is known to deter Satan, and since it is thought Satan is jealous of this custom, salt is then used to ward him off.

#23: Candle-lighting: Sephardic Jews usually light seven candles on the eve of each Passover seder, and this is traditionally done by the lady of the household. The reason for seven candles is rooted in Kabbalistic opinions. According to the Kabbalah, the Passover seder night radiates an extremely powerful light - in a spiritual sense.

#24: Passover Symbolic Foods: Jews of Syrian, Indian, and Iraqi heritage may substitute lemon juice for salt water. They may also use celery instead of parsley for the karpas vegetable, and use a thick date syrup called "Halek" (or Haleq) as part of the charoset mixture.

#25: Passover Cooking: Unlike Ashkenazim, Sephardim rarely cook with matzah meal. Sephardim prefer to moisten whole or coarsely crumbled matza in water and mix it with eggs or meat in casseroles.

## Sephardic and Ashkenazic Passover Differences

*(Elimelech David Ha-Levi Web, Inc. <http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/>)*

Sephardic - The term Sephardic is derived from the ancient Biblical name "Sepharad", which came to be associated with Spain. "Sepharad" is a Hebrew word. Jews who live in, or whose ancestors came from Spain and Portugal before the expulsion of the Jews from those countries in 1492 and 1497 respectively are culturally known as "Sephardic" Jews, singularly known as a "Sephardi" Jew, and collectively referred to as "Sephardim" (the plural form of 'Sephardi').

Ashkenazic - The term Ashkenazic is derived from "Ashkenaz", which was the medieval Hebrew term for "Germany". Jews who live in, or whose ancestors came from Central or Eastern Europe are culturally known as "Ashkenazic" Jews, singularly known as an "Ashkenazi" Jew, and collectively referred to as "Ashkenazim" (the plural form of 'Ashkenazi').

There are also Yemenite Jews (Jews from Yemen), Asiatic or Oriental Jews (Jews from Central, South, and Eastern Asia, and the Middle East, known as "Mizrahi" Jews, where 'Mizrahi' means "Eastern" in Hebrew), Ethiopian Jews (Jews from Ethiopia), and many other African Jews whose linguistic, musical and culinary customs are different from those of the Sephardim and Ashkenazim and from each other, including their customs relating to Passover. Each has integrated the influences of linguistic, musical and culinary traditions in their countries into their celebration of Passover.

Here is a list of the differences between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Passover practices. This list concentrates on differences in relation to the dietary laws of Halachah and rabbinical opinions, and includes some differences between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Passover customs. To read about additional differences in Passover customs and traditions between Sephardim and Ashkenazim, just click on the: Sephardic Passover Customs and Traditions page, and Ashkenazic Passover Customs and Traditions page, respectively.

Sephardic and Ashkenazic Passover differences in the dietary laws of Halachah are mainly with the subject of kitniyos (approximately translated as "bits" in Hebrew), that is, with the permission or prohibition against eating kitniyot (generally speaking, kitniyot are small fleshless seeds of annual plants that an individual might ground into flour), and their derivatives in other products. Kitniyos ("kitniyot" in the singular tense) can be ground into flour and baked and/or cooked

in a similar manner as the five grains that can become chametz (barley, spelt, rye, oats, and wheat). Examples of kitniyos include: ascorbic acid, calcium ascorbate, caraway seeds, castor sugar, chick peas, citric acid, corn, custard powder, dextrose, dried beans, dried peas, glucose, green beans, icing sugar, lecithin, lentils, mustard, rice, sesame seeds, soya beans, soya products, starch, sunflower seeds, tofu, and their derivatives in food and beverage products. Sephardim follow the opinion of the Bait Yosef (or Beit Yosef), written by Rabbi Joseph Karo (16th century, Israel), which permits the use of kitniyot in Passover cooking and its consumption during Passover. Most, but not all of the Sephardim use kitniyos in their Passover cooking and consume kitniyos during the Passover holiday. It varies from community to community. Ashkenazim follow the opinion of "The Smak" (an acronym for Rabbi Moshe of Kouchi, 13th

century, France), an Ashkenazic rabbi who stated that the products of kitniyot look like products from chametz. Chametz includes leavened foods, drinks and ingredients that are made from or contain wheat, rye, barley, oats or spelt. Therefore, all grain products such as breads, cereals and other breakfast foods, grain alcohol, grain vinegar and malts, are forbidden during Passover. For instance, rice flour (kitniyot) might be difficult to distinguish from wheat flour (chametz). So to prevent this potential confusion, all kitniyot were banned for Ashkenazim. Later on, Rabbi Moshe Isserlis (16th century, Poland), who is known as the "Ramah", supported the prohibition by "The Smak" and banned the consumption of any foodstuffs or foodstuffs made with kitniyos. Why is there a prohibition of kitniyos on Passover with the Ashkenazic Rabbis? In medieval Europe, grains that fell into the kitniyot category were sometimes made into a fine powder and then baked like a bread. Since Jewish law stated that matzah must be made using leavening flour that was ground from any of the five leavening grains (barley, oats, rye, spelt, and wheat), there was a concern on the part of the rabbis that the general public would confuse the non-leavening kitniyot flour with the leavening (chametz or leavened) flour of the 5 forbidden grains (barley, wheat, rye, oats, and spelt), and so the safest thing to do was to ban the use of kitniyos altogether. Another reason for the ban was that foods other than matzah that were made with kitniyot might be confused with foods that were made with chametz (the 5 forbidden grains) and anything made with chametz grains outside of making matzah with chametz grains was forbidden during the Passover holiday. As a result, the Ashkenazic rabbis decreed that there should be no consumption of any grain that might have risen with the exception of previously prepared matzah. Since rice and legumes could be used as fermenting agents, this decree was meant to ensure that rice and legumes were not to be used as fermenting agents. However, potatoes were permitted because they were the primary food staple in Ashkenazic

communities in Central and Eastern Europe. For the same reason, Sephardic rabbis permitted the use of rice in Sephardic communities. Since Sephardim follow the rulings of Rabbi Joseph Karo and allow the use of kitniyos and Ashkenazim forbid their use, this results in different foods being served at the Passover seder meals in the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities. However, since the original ban on kitniyot ruling of the Ashkenazic rabbis ("The Smak", and "The Ramah"), there have been rabbinical differences of opinion between Jewish denominations and even within each denomination concerning what is and what is not kitniyot.

Another difference between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Passover customs in terms of Jewish law or Halachah, is that unlike Ashkenazic Jews, Sephardic Jews do not recite blessings over the second and fourth cups of wine, claiming that the sanctification blessing over the first cup of wine, Kiddush, and the Grace After Meals blessing over the third cup of wine, also apply to the second and fourth cups of wine.

Another difference between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Passover celebrations is with the Passover seder plate. There are six symbolic foods that are placed on the Passover seder plate, with the seventh symbolic food being salt water that is set apart from the plate in a small cup. Some Ashkenazim use only five symbolic foods, excluding the second marror known as the chazeret. Since Sephardim put all the symbolic foods of Passover plus the three matzot (matzot is the plural form of matzah) on the Passover seder plate, their Passover seder plate is usually bigger than the Passover seder plate used by the Ashkenazim, who use a separate plate for the three matzot. Sephardim also do not have anything in between their three matzot while the Ashkenazim have dividers between their three matzot so that the three matzot are each in their own compartments.

Most Sephardim follow the rabbinical opinion of Rabbi Isaac Ben Solomon Luria (acronym: the "Arizal") concerning the arrangement of the symbolic foods of Passover on the Passover seder plate while most Ashkenazim follow the rabbinical opinion of Rabbi Moses Isserlis (acronym: the "Ramah"), and arrange the symbolic foods of Passover in a slightly different arrangement. An interesting footnote is that the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of The Netherlands use three Passover seder plates. They place three symbolic foods on each plate. In this case, the nine symbolic foods that are divided into groups of three for each seder plate comprise the following: maror, chazeret, karpas, roasted hard-boiled egg, zeroah, charoset, and the three matzahs. See below for a Sephardic and Ashkenazic difference concerning the Kabbalistic meanings attached to each symbolic food on the

Passover seder plate. Also, see our Passover Seder page to find out how both the Sephardic and Ashkenazic Passover seder plates are arranged.

Another Sephardic and Ashkenazic Passover difference is that the Sephardim add Kabbalistic meanings to each of the symbolic foods of Passover that are on the Passover seder plate, while the Ashkenazim do not. Kabbalah means "receiving", "reception", "receptivity" or "received tradition" in Hebrew, and is a Jewish mystical doctrine that refers to receiving and learning the ongoing traditions of teachings and practices in Judaism which seek to uncover the deeper levels of divine and human reality, found in the Book of Zohar, in other ancient religious Jewish texts, and in exchanges between religious teachers of Judaism and their students. The Book of Zohar (Zohar means "brilliant light" or "splendor" in Hebrew) contains mystical interpretations of the Torah (first five books of the Hebrew bible, written by Moses). Sephardim arrange each symbolic food on the Passover seder plate in a way that is similar to the kabbalistic tree of life, and each symbolic food - and the Passover seder plate itself - corresponds to a sefirah. In this context, sefirah (plural form: "sefirot") means "holy emanation" in Hebrew, meaning an attribute of God. According to Kabbalistic tradition, there are 10 sefirot, or attributes of God, and these sefirot created and sustain the world. The 10 sefirot are arranged in a tree-like fashion according to Kabbalistic tradition, hence the term kabbalistic tree of life.

The following describes the Sephardic arrangement of Passover food symbols on the Passover seder plate and their corresponding sefirah meaning on the kabbalistic tree of life for each of the 9 food symbols (3 matzot and the 6 other symbolic foods) and the Passover seder plate, which total 10 symbols for the 10 sefirot. The Hebrew word for the attribute of God (or sefirah) is followed by its English translation.

#### Kabbalistic Arrangement of Symbolic Passover Foods on the Passover Seder Plate.

The three matzot correspond to the three sefirot on the upper branches of the kabbalistic tree.

- \* 1st Matzah = Keter (or Keter Elyon) = Crown, or The Supreme Crown
- \* 2nd Matzah = Hokhmah = Wisdom
- \* 3rd Matzah = Binah = Intelligence, Discernment, or Understanding

\* Below the three matzot, on the left side on the kabbalistic tree, the Beitzah (roasted egg) corresponds to the sefirah or attribute of Din (or Gevurah), meaning Judgment, Might, or Power.

\* Below the three matzot, on the right side on the kabbalistic tree, the zeroah (shank bone) corresponds to Hesed (or Gedullah), meaning Grace, Lovingkindness, Love, or Compassion.

\* In the center of the kabbalistic tree, the marror is placed, which corresponds to Tiferet, meaning Beauty.

\* Below and to the left of marror, karpas is placed, which corresponds to Hod, meaning Majesty, or Glory.

\* Below and to the right of marror, charoset is placed, and charoset corresponds to Netzah (or Nezah), meaning Triumph, Endurance, Victory, or Eternity.

• At the bottom of the Passover seder plate, Chazeret (or Hazeret) is placed, which corresponds to Yesod, meaning Foundation.

• \* The whole - meaning the Passover seder plate itself (the trunk of the kabbalistic tree which supports the tree) - corresponds to Shekhinah (or Malkhuth), meaning Kingdom (or God's Presence).

Sephardim and Ashkenazim also differ on Passover when it comes to meat. The sacrifice of the lamb on Passover was permitted until the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in biblical times. Since the destruction of the Temple, Ashkenazim have been forbidden to eat lamb meat, but some Sephardim permit lamb to be served as the feature dish at their Passover seder meals.

While the text in Passover haggadahs are basically identical for Sephardim and Ashkenazim, the flexibility and variety of Passover songs towards the end of the Passover seder is greater among the Sephardim when compared with the Ashkenazim. For both Sephardim and Ashkenazim, the text and songs in the Passover Haggadah may be read and sung in the local language, or a mixture of the local vernacular and Hebrew, or a combination of the local language, Hebrew, and other languages.

Over the past three centuries, new religious streams of Judaism for Ashkenazim were born out of Ashkenazic Jewish Orthodoxy due to the desire of some Ashkenazim to adapt to changing times as well as having different opinions concerning the practices of traditional Jewish Orthodoxy. These new religious streams were called Conservative Judaism, Reform Judaism, Reconstructionist Judaism, and Humanistic Judaism. In contrast, Sephardic Jews have continued to practice Orthodox Judaism without dividing up into different religious streams. In the context of Passover, this has allowed Ashkenazic Jews to practice Passover rituals and customs in a more flexible manner due to the varying opinions of its many streams.

The issue of women reclining at the Passover seder table is another practice which differs between Sephardim and Ashkenazim. Ashkenazic women were customarily exempted from the ritual of reclining, however many Sephardic woman choose to recline.

In Passover seder step 5, Maggid, the Four Questions are recited in a slightly different order in a Sephardic and Ashkenazic Passover seder. Sephardim ask them in the following order (in summarized form): 1. Why dip twice?; 2. Why eat matzah?; 3. Why eat maror?; and 4. Why recline?; whereas Ashkenazim ask them in the following order (in summarized form): 1. Why eat matzah?; 2. Why eat maror?; 3. Why dip twice?; and 4. Why recline?

Sephardim from Maghreban nations (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya) will first recite the 4 Questions in Hebrew, and then, depending on the family tradition, recite the 4 Questions in either Judeo-Berber, French, Judeo-Arabic, or Ladino. Sephardim who reside in the region known as the "Levant" ("Levant" means "the East", and it generally refers to the eastern parts of the Mediterranean, notably the coasts of Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor. The word is Italian, and signifies rising, alluding to the sun rising in the east.) will first recite the 4 Questions in Hebrew, then depending on the family tradition in either Ladino or Arabic. Furthermore, the 4th Question is asked in a slightly different manner for Sephardim in Turkey and Greece of Judeo-Spanish descent, and for Spanish-Portuguese Sephardim. Whereas other Sephardim will say (in detailed form): "For on all other nights, we eat sitting up or leaning, on this night we all eat leaning?", Sephardim in Turkey and Greece and of Spanish-Portuguese descent will say (in detailed form): "For all other nights we eat and we drink sitting up or leaning, on this night we all lean."

Some Sephardim also do not reserve the asking of The Four Questions for the youngest child at the Passover seder table. Instead, all participants at a Sephardic Passover seder chant The Four Questions in unison. Ashkenazim have the custom of reserving the recitation of The Four Questions for the youngest child at the Passover seder table.

Following either the Passover seder step of Yachatz (breaking of the middle matzah) or of reciting Ha-Lachmah Anya ("We were slaves in Egypt...") in the Passover seder step of Maggid or in the middle of reciting Ha-Lachmah Anya, most Sephardim re-enact the Exodus from Egypt. After the reciting of the Four Questions, Sephardim of North-African descent will conduct a re-enactment of the Exodus from Egypt. The Passover seder leader will leave the room and return with a walking stick and the afikomen in a cloth on his shoulder. The children at the

Passover seder table would then ask the leader: "Where are you coming from?" whereupon the Passover seder leader would then proceed to tell the story of his Exodus from Egypt. Sephardim of Eastern Judeo-Spanish descent (Turkey and Greece) will conduct the re-enactment further on in Passover seder step 5: Maggid. The seder leader will leave the room, return with a walking stick and the afikomen in either a sack or cloth on his shoulder, plus a tightened belt. The children then ask the seder leader: "Where are you coming from?", and the seder leader says: "From Egypt." The seder leader then recites his story of the Exodus from Egypt. Then the children ask the seder leader: "Where are you going?" To which the seder leader says: "To Jerusalem!" Yemenite Jews will conduct the re-enactment of the Exodus from Egypt by having the seder leader throw a bag with the afikomen matzah in it over his shoulder like a knapsack. He then circles the table while leaning on a cane. As the seder leader walks around the room, he tells everyone at the Passover seder table about his experiences and the miracles he witnessed as he came forth from Egypt. Essentially, the ceremony surrounding the re-enactment of the Exodus from Egypt varies according to: (1) when it is done during the Passover seder (before the seder begins or after the Yachatz ritual or in the middle of or at the end of the reciting of "Ha Lachma Anya"); (2) who performs the ceremony [(A) sometimes only the seder leader performs this ritual, or; (B) sometimes a child will be selected to go outside either the house or the room where the Passover seder takes place and knock on the door to either the house or the room where the Passover seder is being held which will begin the exchange of questions and answers. After the child has knocked on the door to the house or room, all at the Passover seder table will ask: "Who's there?" The child will then reply: "An Israelite." All at the seder table will then ask:

"Where are you coming from?" The child replies: "From Egypt" All at the seder table then ask: "Where are you going?" The child then says: "To the Land of Israel (or to Jerusalem)!" The child then enters the house or room and the Passover seder begins. Sometimes there is an extra question asked by all those at the seder table. All at the seder table may ask: "What are your supplies?" To which the child will respond: "Matzah (the afikomen matzah) and Marror (bitter herbs)"; and (3) how the afikoman is wrapped and held (in a napkin or a bag, held on the right shoulder or thrown over the shoulder) which holds the Hebrews' remaining possessions as they fled Egypt (the afikomen matzah and marror). However, not all Sephardim conduct this re-enactment, though. Spanish-Portuguese Sephardim do not re-enact the Exodus from Egypt. Similarly, following the recitation of the Four Questions, Ashkenazim continue on with Passover seder step 5 (Maggid) and do not conduct a re-enactment of the Exodus from Egypt.

Which Passover dietary law issues do Sephardim and Ashkenazim agree on? Both agree that having any contact with and possession in one's household of chametz bread (leavened bread) is forbidden on Passover as well as any foods made with chametz ingredients (barley, spelt, rye, oats, and wheat) outside of matzah. Sephardim and Ashkenazim also agree that any non-chametz items (edible or non-edible) that come in contact with chametz items are then classified as secondary chametz and as such, are prohibited during Passover. As mentioned, most Ashkenazic rabbis forbid an additional set of grains and legumes called kitniyos, whereas most Sephardic rabbis do not. In practice most - but not necessarily all - Sephardim eat foods or derivatives of foods containing kitniyos on Passover. Some Sephardic communities and individuals agree with the Ashkenazic ban on kitniyot and will refrain from eating kitniyot and rice during Passover. Other Sephardim will eat rice and kitniyot during Passover but must check them three times prior to the Passover holiday to make absolutely certain there are no kernels of chametz in the rice or kitniyot, in accordance with the Passover dietary laws for chametz. Still other Sephardim will not even perform the checking ritual of rice for chametz. Sephardim and Ashkenazim also agree that having possession of kitniyos (but not consumption of kitniyos for most Ashkenazim and some Sephardim) is permitted during the Passover holiday.

Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews also differ when it comes to step 1 in the Passover seder: Kadeish (or "Kaddesh"). Besides Ashkenazim saying the blessings over wine 4 times while the Sephardim only say the blessings over wine twice, there is a Moroccan custom during Kadeish where the leader of the Passover seder will raise the Passover seder plate over the heads of the people present at the Passover seder table while reciting: "Bibhilu Yatzanu MiMitzraim Bene Horin," which is transliterated Hebrew, meaning in English: "In haste we left Egypt, a free people." Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews differ when it comes to Passover seder step 4: Yachatz (or "Yahatz"). Whereas Ashkenazim break the middle matzah into two pieces, some Sephardic communities such as the Syrian community will add a Kabbalistic aspect to this ritual by matzah by breaking the matzah into the shape of two Hebrew letters, a dalet, which corresponds to the Hebrew numeric value of 4, and Vav, which corresponds to the Hebrew numeric value of 6, which adds up to 10, with 10 representing the 10 Sefirot of the Kabbalah ("sefirot" means "holy emanation" in Hebrew, meaning an attribute of God.). Sephardim from the Maghreban nations

(Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya) will break the matzah in such a way as to form the Hebrew letter Heh (corresponding to the Hebrew numeric value of 5). They then designate the larger piece as the Afikomen and usually place it in either

a napkin or a large cloth. Another difference between Sephardim and Ashkenazim pertains to the Afikomen. Ashkenazim have the custom of hiding and "stealing" the Afikomen, whereas Sephardim do not have this tradition. Ashkenazim will hide the Afikomen and then later on in the Passover seder, the children present at the seder table will look for the Afikomen. Once a child finds or "steals" the Afikomen, he or she will then hold it for "ransom" while the person who hid the Afikomen will "pay" the ransom to the child, usually a chocolate coin or other similar token, to "recover" the Afikomen. This custom may have originated from a desire to keep children interested in the lengthy Passover seder proceedings.

Greek and Turkish Sephardim of Judeo-Spanish descent differ from Ashkenazim when it comes to opening the door for Elijah the Prophet. Greek and Turkish Sephardim of Judeo-Spanish descent will open the door for Elijah following the retelling of the Passover story and after that, at a specific point when reciting Ha-Lahmah 'Aniah ("This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. All who hunger, come and eat. All who need, come and celebrate Pessah." (The door is then opened, followed by the conclusion of Ha-Lahmah 'Aniah: "This year, we are here, next year in the Land of Israel. This year we are slaves, next year we shall be free.")) in Passover seder step 5: Maggid. Most other Sephardim do not open the door for Elijah. Most Ashkenazim will open the door for Elijah at the beginning of Passover seder step 14: Hallel, although some will open the door for Elijah at the start of Passover seder step 13: Bareich.

Following the Passover seder, there is a custom among some Sephardim to take the haroseth (or charoset) and put it in 5 places [symbolizing the khamsah hand (God's protective hand) of 5 fingers] at the entrance to the household, such as on the doorposts, near the mezuzah, and so on. This is also done for good luck. Ashkenazim do not perform this ritual.

Many Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews also conclude the Passover holiday by gathering near midnight either in a synagogue or in a town square to dance and sing the "Song of the Sea" from the Book of Exodus, Chapter 15. There is also a celebration and re-enactment of the "parting" of the Sea of Reeds or the Reed Sea (often mistranslated as the Red Sea). The Sea of Reeds was a deep body of water and when the Hebrews reached the shores of the Sea of Reeds as they were fleeing the pursuing Egyptian army, tunnels opened up for the Hebrews to walk through to safety to the opposite shore. This event occurred in the evening on the seventh day of the first Passover hence the reason for commemorating this event by dancing and singing the "Song of the Sea" (Exodus 15) near midnight on the final evening of the Passover holiday.

Eating Kitniyot (Legumes) on Pesach

(OH 453:1)

**Question:** In light of the ingathering of the exiles, would it be possible to eliminate the Ashkenazic custom of not eating legumes on Pesach?

**Conservative Responsum,** Israel Rabbinical Assembly Committee:

1) In our opinion it is permitted (and perhaps even obligatory) to eliminate this custom. It is in direct contradiction to an explicit decision in the Babylonian Talmud (Pesachim 114b) and is also in contradiction to the opinion of all the sages of the Mishnah and Talmud except one (R. Yochanan ben Nuri, Pesachim 35a and parallels). It also contradicts the theory and the practice of the Amoraim both in Babylonia and in Israel (Pesachim 114b and other sources), the Geonim (Sheiltot, Halakhot Pesukot, Halakhot Gedolot, etc.) and of most of the early medieval authorities in all countries (altogether more than 50 Rishonim!).

2) This custom is mentioned for the first time in France and Provence in the beginning of the thirteenth century by R. Asher of Lunel, R. Samuel of Falaise, and R. Peretz of Corbeil - from there it spread to various countries and the list of prohibited foods continued to expand. Nevertheless, the reason for the custom was unknown and as a result many sages invented at least eleven different explanations for the custom. As a result, R. Samuel of Falaise, one of the first to mention it, referred to it as a "mistaken custom" and R. Yerucham called it a "foolish custom".

3) Therefore, the main halakhic question in this case is whether it is permissible to do away with a mistaken or foolish custom. Many rabbinic authorities have ruled that it is permitted (and perhaps even obligatory) to do away with this type of "foolish custom" (R. Abin in Yerushalmi Pesachim, Maimonides, the Rosh, the Ribash, and many others). Furthermore, there are many good reasons to do away with this "foolish custom": a) It detracts from the joy of the holiday by limiting the number of permitted foods; b) It causes exorbitant price rises, which result in "major financial loss" and, as is well known, "the Torah takes pity on the people of Israel's money"; c) It emphasizes the insignificant (legumes) and ignores the significant (hametz, which is forbidden from the five kinds of grain); d) It causes people to scoff at the commandments in general and at the prohibition of hametz in particular - if this custom has no purpose and is observed, then there is no reason to observe other commandments; e) Finally, it causes unnecessary divisions between Israel's different ethnic groups. On the other hand, there is only one reason to

observe this custom: the desire to preserve an old custom. Obviously, this desire does not override all that was mentioned above. Therefore, both Ashkenazim and Sephardim are permitted to eat legumes and rice on Pesah without fear of transgressing any prohibition.

4) Undoubtedly, there will be Ashkenazim who will want to stick to the "custom of their ancestors" even though they know that it is permitted to eat legumes on Pesah. To them we recommend that they observe only the original custom of not eating rice and legumes but that they use oil from legumes and all the other foods "forbidden" over the years, such as peas, beans, garlic, mustard, sunflower seeds, peanuts etc. Thus they will be able to eat hundreds of products, which bear the label "Kosher for Pesah for those who eat legumes." This will make their lives easier and will add joy and pleasure to their observance of Pesah.

**Rabbi David Golinkin**

**Approved Unanimously 5749**

Eating Kitniyot (Legumes) on Pesach

(OH 453:1)

**Question:** In light of the ingathering of the exiles, would it be possible to eliminate the Ashkenazic custom of not eating legumes on Pesach?

**Orthodox Responsum:**

The Torah instructs a Jew not to eat (or even possess) chometz all seven days of Passover (Exodus 13:3). "Chometz" is defined as any of the five grains (wheat, spelt, barley, oats, and rye) that came into contact with water for more than 18 minutes. This is a serious Torah prohibition, and for that reason we take extra protective measures on Passover to prevent any mistakes.

Which brings us to another category of food called "kitniyot" (sometimes referred to generically as "legumes"). This includes rice, corn, soy beans, string beans, peas, lentils, peanuts, mustard, sesame seeds and poppy seeds. Even though kitniyot cannot technically become chometz, Ashkenazi Jews do not eat them on Passover.

Why?

The Smak (Rabbi Moshe of Kouchi, 13th century, France) explains that products of kitniyot appear like chometz products. For example, it can be hard to distinguish between rice flour (kitniyot) and wheat flour (chometz). Therefore, to prevent confusion, all kitniyot was prohibited.

The Beit Yosef (Rabbi Yosef Karo, 16th century, Israel) notes that grains may become mixed together with kitniyot, and one may inadvertently come to eat actual chometz.

In Jewish law, there is one important distinction between chometz and kitniyot. During Passover, it is forbidden to even have chometz in one's possession (hence the custom of "selling chometz"). Whereas it is permitted to own kitniyot during Passover and even to use it - not for eating - but for things like baby powder which contains cornstarch. Similarly, someone who is sick is allowed to take medicine containing kitniyot.

Interestingly, the Sefardi Jewish community does not have a prohibition against kitniyot. This creates the strange situation, for example, where a Sefardi family could be eating rice on Passover - whereas their Ashkenazi neighbors will not!

What about derivatives of kitniyot - e.g. corn oil, peanut oil, etc? This is a difference of opinion. Many will use kitniyot-based oils on Passover, while others are strict and only use olive or walnut oil.

Finally, there is one product called "quinoa" (pronounced "ken- wah" or "kin-o-ah") that is permitted on Passover even for Ashkenazim. Although it resembles a grain, it is technically a grass, and was never included in the prohibition against kitniyot. It is prepared like rice and has a very high protein content. (It's excellent in "chollent" stew!) You should be able to find it at most health food stores. Of course, it needs to be from a closed container that is new for Pesach.

Some other things - like chestnuts and alfalfa sprouts were not included in the original prohibition of Kitniot.

To learn more, see Maimonides - Laws of Chometz and Matzah 5:1; Code of Jewish Law - OC 453; Igros Moshe OC 3:63.

With blessings from Jerusalem,  
**Rabbi Shraga Simmons**

## Changing the seder of the Seder

Rabbi Gil Nativ

In the Sedarim I have conducted in the past thirty years I introduced a change in the seder (=order) of the Seder with two aims in mind:

- A. Restoring (only partially) the ancient order which prevailed in the first centuries of the common era, before and after the destruction of the Second Temple. In this ancient ritual, the Passover (roasted lamb), the Matza and Maror were eaten in the earlier part of the evening and then the younger participant asked questions which were related to what had ALREADY been eaten and experienced, and the elder participants 'replied' with the story of the Exodus.
- B. This change also ensures that the participants will not be too hungry, while reading (and hopefully questioning and discussing) the essential Haggadah passages which fulfill the requirement of 'Retelling the Exodus' (leSapper biYetziat Mitzrayim). If the participants are too hungry they get impatient during the first half of the Haggadah (before "Shulchan 'Orekh") and they tend to 'run through' the pages.....

C. Here is my order of the Passover Order:

**Kadesh** -

**uRchatz** (without blessing 'Al Netilat Yadayim) -

**Karpas.** Following the Karpas, we wash the hands again.

**Rachtza.** I break the middle matza and hide half of it (**without speaking!**) and while the other half is in my hands. (in order not to touch anything else), I recite/sing **Ha Lachma** 'Anyah, then lift also the upper unbroken matza, and recite the two blessings of '**haMotzi**' and '**Al Akhilat Matza**' followed by everyone eating Matza.

This is followed by '**Maror**' and '**Korech**' (=the famous 'sandwich' of Hillel).

One can return now to the **Four Questions and the Maggid**, however in my Seder we now eat a hard boiled egg. (I eat the one which is on the Seder plate) announcing beforehand: 'Zekher leKorban Hagiga'. Only after eating the eggs we return to the printed 'routine' of the Haggadah. (Mah Nishtanah etc.).

Once we get to Shulchan 'Orekh some of us wash their hands again (Third time!) but without reciting a blessing..

May you have a kosher and meaningful Passover!

Gil Nativ

## Drinking water from Kinneret may not be "Kosher for Passover"

By Ellis Shuman March 18, 2004

National Infrastructure Minister Yosef Paritzky (Shinui) ordered Mekorot, the national water carrier, to continue pumping water from Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) during the week of Passover in early April. Ultra-Orthodox Jews are protesting the decision, due to their fear that pieces of *hametz* -- leavened bread religiously prohibited for consumption during the eight-day festival -- thrown into the lake will enter the country's drinking water supply.

In previous years, Mekorot has stopped pumping water from the lake during Passover out of consideration to the ultra-Orthodox population. But this year, due to a plentiful rainfall, the government had to decide whether to risk the wasteful disposal of some of the precious resource or continue pumping.

The Kinneret is currently some 16 centimeters (6 1/2 inches) below the "red line" marking its maximum level. If the lake level continues to rise, Mekorot will be forced to open the Deganya dam and release fresh water into the Jordan River, from which it will flow southward to the Dead Sea. Not opening the dam when the lake is at full capacity would risk flooding in Tiberias and other low areas along the shoreline.

"As long as stopping the pumping of water doesn't cause damage to the economy, we can take into consideration the Haredi population," Paritzky said on Sunday. "But in the present circumstances, if we stop pumping (and open the Deganya dam) we will waste water at a cost of three million dollars. I don't see any reason to transfer these costs to the public," he said.

Government officials, and leading rabbinical authorities, say the risk of tap water being *hametz* (not kosher for Passover) is slight and can be eliminated by filtering. Several years ago, ultra-Orthodox congregations in Jerusalem appealed to members not to drink tap water because of reports that Arabs were seen throwing sandwiches into the Kinneret. Some very observant members of the community continue to only drink certifiably kosher bottled mineral water during the holiday.

Paritzky's decision drew protests from the ultra-Orthodox, who said the secular minister was demonstrating *chutzpah*.

"It was the Holy One, blessed be He, who filled the Kinneret in response to the

Jews' many prayers," MK Moshe Gafni (United Torah Judaism) said. "It is the right of all those faithful Jews who prayed to the Holy One, blessed be He, and asked that he open up the skies and bring rain to the Land. Now along comes Paritzky and wants to steal the water that the Jews prayed for. He will make it so Jews won't be able to turn on the tap during the holiday, and will have to filter their water," Gafni said. Gafni said he would ask Paritzky to cancel his decision, and if not, he would raise the issue for urgent discussion in the Knesset.

Shas party leader MK Eli Yishai said, "Paritzky wants to turn all the people of Israel, the majority of whom are scrupulous about *hametz*, into sinners." Yishai said he believed that it was possible to find a solution that would be acceptable to the ultra-Orthodox population.

Shas spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, said, however, that it was permissible to drink water from the Kinneret during Passover "as long as it is filtered properly."

MK Hemi Doron (Shinui) tried to ease the concerns of Gafni and Yishai by saying they could be assured that bread would not come out of their water taps. "In my house, I have a water filter that makes sure nothing 'foreign' comes out with the water. All the Kinneret's water purification facilities have filters, and therefore any excuse to not drink the water due to a fear of *hametz* being present seems to me a bit absurd, and gives me a great laughing fit."

Doron said he could understand not pumping from the Kinneret if the lake was nearly empty, "but to stop it out of a fear of bread crumbs? That's ridiculous."

MK Roman Bronfman (Meretz) criticized Paritzky's decision and charged that it apparently came to compensate Shinui's voters for their party's failure to support a civil marriage bill in the Knesset last week.

## What a Country!

*(Ephraim Kishon, Israel's most well-known satirist.)*

It's the only country where the cross country highway stops in the middle of the state;

Ben Gurion Airport 2000 is still not opened in 2003;

water imports start at the most raining year of the decade,

and the Gelilot Camp is being evacuated for 8 years now, but is still operational. It's the only country where the unemployed strike.

It's the only country in which the 60-year-old folks still hate the corporal they had 42 years ago.

It's the only country where you have 2 ministers of finance and neither of them has money.

It's the only country where the minister of transportation placed a sign on the road reading: "Kohanim, drive on the left side of the road".

It's the only country where the mother of a soldier has the cell number of his officer and he'd better beware.

It's the only country which sent a communication satellite to the sky, but nobody there knows how to communicate with each other.

It's the only country where you already had scads from Iraq, katiushas from Lebanon, explosives from Gaza and bombs from Syria and where still, a 3 bedroom-apartment costs more than in Paris.

It's the only country where porno starlets are asked what their moms think about their job, soccer players bring their dads to the games to yell at their coach, and on Friday night everyone goes to their parents for a peaceful Shabbat diner.

It's the only country where a typical Israeli meal consists of an Arab salad, Rumanian Kebab, Iraqi Pita and Bavarian cream. We must like to eat anti-Semites.

It's the only country where the man with the open, stained shirt is the honorable minister, and the one next to him with the suit and tie is his chauffeur.

It's the only country where when someone says: "I didn't interrupt you", he really means to interrupt you.

It's the only country where Moslems sell holy memorabilia to Christians and get paid with Jewish currency.

The only country where you leave home when you're 18 and still live there when you're 24.

The only country where no woman gets along with her mother, but talks to her at least three times a day.

The only country where the rich belong to the socialist left, the poor to the capitalist right and the middle class pays for all of them.

The only country where you can easily get computer programs to build and send satellites, but you have to wait 7 days for your washing machine to be repaired.

The only country where you ask a girl on your first date where she was in the army, and find out she was more combative than you.

The only country in which between the happiest day of the year and the saddest one, you have exactly 60 seconds.

The only country in which most of its citizens can't explain why they live there, but they have a lot of reasons why they can't live elsewhere.

The only country where, if you hate politicians, you hate clerks, you hate the taxes, the quality of service, and the weather - it shows that you love the country.

It's the only country where I could live.

It is my only country.

OR LA-YEHUDIM NISAN 5764:  
MA NISHTANA? HALLEL ON PESACH

Hallel is recited as part of the Seder. These psalms of praise highlight our faith in God. But there are questions that arise regarding the Seder's Hallel that call for answers.

1. At all other times we recite Hallel in the synagogue. Why on this night do we recite Hallel at home?
2. At all other times we recite Hallel with an opening *bracha*. Why on this night do we recite Hallel without a *bracha*?
3. At all other times we recite Hallel standing up. Why on this night do we recite Hallel sitting down?
4. At all other times we recite Hallel during the day. Why do we chant it this Seder night?
5. At all other times we recite Hallel as a unit. Why on this night is Hallel divided? We sing the Hallel on Pesach as a sign of our celebration and freedom. *Oz yashir Moshe u'vnay Yisrael*. The children of Israel joined Moshe in singing after crossing the Sea of Reeds. There are scholars who therefore conclude that Hallel is *M'd'Oraita*, a Torah command. Thus the *bracha* at the beginning of Hallel reflects the Toraitic nature of the *mitzvah*. Those who hold that Hallel recited at the Seder is *M'd'Rabbanan* believe it is *shira* and not *kriyah* – songs not psalms. They conclude that no *bracha* is invoked which makes it a *shira*.

Rambam says the Hallel is to be recited in the synagogue on the eve of Pesach and many communities follow this *minhag*. They reason that Hallel is never recited "at home" and this night should not be an exception. We do chant Hallel at home as part of the Seder because the telling of the story in the Hagadah reflects the *geulah* brought by *God*. In praise of the *geulah*, we sing Hallel.

The Hallel at home is recited sitting down as a sign of *herut*. In our freedom, we reflect our status by sitting for all the Hagadah except *Kiddush* and to welcome Eliyahu HaNavi.

Hallel is recited at night because the redemption wrought by Divinity occurred at

the midnight hour. The songs are an emotional expression that reflect the moment and the response that is appropriate when experiencing God's love. We do not delay the songs until the morning. The non-recital of the *bracha* in the evening reflects that it is an emotional and personal response and not a "commandment," which would be denoted by that *bracha* "who has commanded us to recite the Hallel."

The Hallel begins in the Hagadah as the *geulah*, redemption, is experienced. The *geulah* is concretized by the *matzah*, the *maror*, the *haroset* and the Pesach sacrifice which are then eaten. This leads to the *seudah* which is part of the celebration. The Hallel's conclusion after the *seudah* places the *seudah* as an intimate portion of the totality.

Could we have the entire Hagadah through Nirtzah and then the *seudah*? Could we have the entire *seudah* and then do the entire Hagadah?

While we avoid a split Hallel in either of the two options above, we reduce the flow of story and celebration with symbols.

The Hallel is another aspect of the Hagadah's intention: to cause us to think and to inspire questions anew, and to involve us in the search for God and *geulah*.

*With thanks to Rabbi Kenneth Hain for the original presentation and Dr. Alfred Mann of Port Jefferson, NY for teaching these ideas at our Seder.*

## WE RECALL THE WOMEN

(Recited before the fourth cup of wine)

Leader: With the fourth cup of wine, we recall women throughout our history who have been ignored, forgotten, and left nameless. We remember those whose names we may never know. Let them be known as the mothers of our matriarchs, the matriarchs of all womankind.

*All: Throughout time women have kept our faith alive.*

Leader: For the women who stood at the base of the pyramids, watching and waiting for a glimpse of freedom, a sign of a better future.

*All: Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are we in Your hand.*

Leader: For the women who stood at the base of Mt. Sinai, rejecting the golden idol while accepting the commandments.

*All: Like stone in the hand of the mason, so are we in Your hand.*

Leader: For the women who witnessed the destruction of the Temple, and kept the Torah intact.

*All: Like iron in the hand of the blacksmith, so are we in Your hand.*

Leader: For the women who stood at the gates of Auschwitz, protecting their children and waiting for a miracle.

*All: Like a pen in the hand of a poet, so are we in Your hand.*

Leader: For the women who stood at the intersection of Ben Yehuda and Yaffa, shielding children from the flying debris.

*All: Like the score in the hand of a musician, so are we in Your hand.*

Leader: For the women who stood at the base of the Twin Towers, helping those who could not help themselves, offering comfort and revealing a super-human inner strength.

*All: For the sake of the unnamed, we were delivered from Egypt, and we continue to be delivered this day. We lift the fourth cup of wine in their honor, and recite:*

Leader: Barukh ata Adonai elokeynu melek haolam, borei prei hagafen.

*All: Let us bless the wellspring of life that ripens the fruit on the vine as we sanctify the Pesach festival to commemorate our liberation.*

Composed by Susan W. Schonberger

PESACH – THE FESTIVAL OF FREEDOM

*Leader: You haven't fully celebrated Pesach...*

Family: Unless you have actually tasted the bitterness of bondage, and resolve never to inflict it upon another person's spirit or will

*Leader: You haven't fully celebrated Pesach...*

Family: Unless you have felt the anguish of those whose daily fare is not much more ample than unleavened bread, and have resolved to help alleviate their plight.

*Leader: You haven't fully celebrated Pesach...*

Family: Unless you take fresh delight in the glories of the new Spring season, and profound exultation in the redemption of our people from slavery to freedom, in days past, and in your own times.

*Leader: You haven't fully celebrated Pesach...*

Family: Unless you have truly said "*Dayenu*" – Thank You, O Lord our God, for the blessings which You have bestowed upon us. Even a fraction of them would call forth my gratitude.

*Leader: You haven't fully celebrated Pesach...*

Family: Until you totally realize that like Moshe, you are obligated to resist that evil which threatens not yourself alone, but others... and that your fate is inexorably bound up with the fate of humankind everywhere in the world.

*Leader: You haven't fully celebrated Pesach...*

Family: Until every Jew, every human being, lives in freedom and dignity, in a world in which nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

## LIVE THE JEWISH CALENDAR: THE MESSIAH DEPENDS ON US

Thirty-three days following the first day of Pesach, Jews celebrate a holiday called Lag B'Omer, the 33<sup>rd</sup> day of the Omer. It is an oasis of joy in the midst of the *Sefirah* period.

The seven weeks between Pesach and Shavuot are the days of the "Counting of the Omer," the harvest festivities that were observed in the Land of Israel when the Temple stood on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem. This 50-day period should have been a time of joyful anticipation. Having experienced the Exodus from Egypt on Pesach, every Jew literally "counts the days" from the second night of Pesach until Mattan Torah – the revelation of Torah at Mt. Sinai that took place on Shavuot, exactly 50 days after the Exodus. While the Exodus marks the physical birth of the Jewish nation – the giving of Torah completes the process through the spiritual birth of the Jewish nation.

Clearly then, the *Sefirah* days should have been days of joy; but instead, they are observed as a period of semi-mourning. Weddings and music are curtailed or not permitted until Lag B'Omer is over.(except on Rosh Hodesh, Yom HaAtzm'ut, and Yom Yerushalayim). It is on the sad side of Sefirah that we come across the holiday of Lag B'Omer when, universally among Jews, our mourning is halted.

What is the reason for sadness during what should have been a period of joyful anticipation? The reason is that during this period, Rabbi Akiva's 24,000 students, who lived 1,850 years ago, died from a mysterious plague. Why did they die? The Talmud teaches, "They did not show proper respect to one another." Lag B'Omer is celebrated on the 33<sup>rd</sup> day because on that day the plague ended and Rabbi Akiva's students stopped dying.

What were Rabbi Akiva's students guilty of that they deserved to die? If Rabbi Akiva's students died as a result of God's punishment for their sins, why should we mourn them? Didn't they deserve their punishment? Why is Lag B'Omer a day of "celebration" if all that happened on Lag B'Omer was but a temporary halt in the dying?

In order to obtain a true picture of what happened, we must piece together the story from various historical sources and Talmudic hints. The Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in the year 70 C.E. Jerusalem and the surrounding

countryside lay in ruins from border to border. But even in defeat the spiritual leaders of the Jewish people struggled to rebuild Jewish life and recreate Jewish institutions. They were so successful that around 135 C.E. a Jewish military leader named Bar Kosiba succeeded in organizing a fighting force to rid the Land of Israel of the hated Romans.

Many of Rabbi Akiva's contemporaries felt that a new revolt against the Romans was doomed to failure and urged the avoidance of blood shed. Rabbi Akiva disagreed and won over a majority to his point of view. He felt if the revolt succeeded it could bring about the Messianic Era.

Rabbi Akiva gave Bar Kosiba a new name, "Bar Kochba" – Son of the Star – in fulfillment of the prophecy, "A star will go forth from Jacob." Bar Kochba trained an army capable of igniting the powder keg of rebellion and Rabbi Akiva lit it with one of the most dramatic proclamations in Jewish history – he proclaimed that Bar Kochba was the long-awaited Messiah.

On Lag B'Omer, say some, Bar Kochba's army reconquered Jerusalem, and we celebrate that great event today. For four years, Jewish independence was restored. Bar Kochba and his army were destroyed in the great battles defending the fortress city of Betar.

It is for this reason that we mourn today. The mourning of *Sefirah* is not for the students alone, but for the failure of the Jewish people to bring about the Messianic Age, for the fall of Jewish independence, Jewish hopes and Jewish Messianic ambitions. Every anti-Semitic outbreak for which Jews suffered since that day, every pogrom, massacre, crusade, Holocaust, and banishment that took the toll of so many millions during the 2,000 year long exile, wandering and persecution, can be traced directly to the failure of Bar Kochba – but ultimately to the failure of the students of Rabbi Akiva who did not support the rebellion.

Yet, on that very Lag B'Omer day, almost 2,000 year ago, a new hidden light of hope emerged. In the midst of defeat, the great sage, Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai, revealed to a small number of students the secrets of the mystical Zohar, the primary text of Kabbalah. On Lag B'Omer, the plague stopped, the dream was delayed, but it was not destroyed. It is not enough to wait for the Messiah's coming. We must actively work to bring about his speedy arrival. Only if we learn from the lesson of Rabbi Akiva's students will we understand that the coming of the Messiah depends on us.

YOM HASHOAH PRAYER

By Rabbi Israel Zoberman

*(Recited before the singing of Eliyahu HaNavi and opening the door for Elijah.)*

*Elohei hazikaron vehatikva*, God who bids us to carve hope out of remembrance: This awesome Spring season, no less so than the Days of Awe in the Fall, is dedicated to memories. Memories are the building blocks of Jewish history, which, in turn, provides for our own distinct consciousness. Pesach's themes of oppression and redemption assume contemporary relevancy. Ruthless bondage in ancient Egypt finds a terrifying parallel in the Shoah, and past liberation is reenacted through Israel's rebirth.

To be a Jew is living with history's extremes, enduring the tension between despair and exultation and turning them both into life-shaping forces. A child of the covenant is keenly aware of history's impact to bless and to curse. We thus remain bereft in face of the Shoah's overwhelming magnitude.

When words freeze and the link to life threatens to disengage, we turn to the Kaddish prayer for supportive reassurance. Its consecrated spirit does not drag us to the dwelling place of utter desolation, to consume our souls as were the bodies of unforgettable kin whose tragic loss ever diminishes the joy of celebration. The hallowed prayer of sanctification allows us to preserve our very humanity, enabling us, hopefully, to gradually climb from the hollowness of the valley of the shadow of death to the mountain where faith abounds, so that we may trust again man and God and live to be sustained by both.

The intoning of the Kaddish, bringing us closer as a family sharing the lingering pain of the past, is a negation and an affirmation. It is a negation of the creators of the Kingdom of Night who conspired to uproot the commanding presence of *El Melech Chai Verachum*, our Living and Compassionate God and King, whose praise we dare proclaim even when enveloped by impregnable darkness hiding His own essence of goodness. It is a repudiation of messengers of evil who would rob the human experience of its sweet promise.

It is no wonder that in our tradition, affirmation transcends negation, for the people of Israel have resolved not to succumb to a vision of a world devoid of blessing. We have chosen to embrace the power of hope, witnessing that our people discover meaning when there seems to be none, and creating life when faced with death. The only kind of prisoners we freely elect to be is prisoners of hope. That is our Jewish vocation, for *Hatikvah* is our anthem. Amen.

### THREE APPROACHES TO THE HAGGADAH

In the Haggadah, there are actually three different *hagadot*, three approaches to the idea of telling of the exodus from Egypt:

1. Samuel, a Babylonian (from the third century) holds that: "We start on a shameful note and end with praise." In this case, the shameful note is physical: we were slaves (as seen in the "*Avadim Hayenu*" paragraph which answers four questions). The praise at the end is the "*Barukh Ha Makom*" paragraph.
2. Rav, a contemporary of Samuel, agrees with the idea of beginning on a shameful note and concluding with praise. However, for Rav the shameful note is not physical but spiritual: our forefathers were originally idolators, "*ovday avoday zarah hayu avoteynu*." The four sons in this version parallel the four questions of the first one above. The praise here is the many miracles that God has done for us, as enumerated in *Dayenu*.
3. Rabban Gamliel, who lived in Yavneh in the first century CE (after the destruction of the second Temple), has a totally different approach to the telling of the Pesach story. We remember Pesach not by the history, as Rav and Samuel argue, but by the *mitzvot* associated with it: *Pesach, matzah, maror*.

Thus, there are three *hagadot*, or stories, in the Pesach *Haggadah*. Of course you may want to choose another entirely different way of telling the story to add to these three, in keeping with the dictum "the more one tells about the exodus from Egypt, the more he is praised."

## THE MYSTERY OF THE HAGADAH: (The Seder and Kabbalah)

*(Prepared by Rabbi Adler for the Rabbinical Assembly, 1980)*

Students of the Hagadah always noted that there were at least three layers in the Hagadah which could be chronologically identified and which made distinct contributions to the formation of the booklet. The oldest portion from Temple days includes the major rituals of the *matzah* and *maror*, Hallel and some basic portions of Grace after Meals. The second, post-temple portion, includes the Rabbinic interpretation of the Exodus account of the Bible, the *haroset* and wine, the shankbone and egg as well as all the blessings and prayers of the Seder.

The last layer of our Hagadah is of the medieval period and includes the prologue "Ha Lachma" and the epilogue "Chasal Sidur" as well as other additions interspersed here and there, but especially the songs and *piyutim* at the very end of our Seder.

With our new interest in Kabbalah and our longing for modern religious creations, we have become more intrigued with the more recent additions to the Hagadah. Not that we have become disrespectful of the ancients, but we are also looking today for continuity of Jewish creativity in the hope that this will lead us to modern additions of present-day Jewish religious expressions, to be added to those of the hoary past.

### THE KITTEL

The emphasis will be on Kabbalistic influences in the Hagadah. The custom in some households is to wear a kittel (white shroud) by the one conducting the Seder. It is well known that the kittel is also worn on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and the mystics point out that in both cases, Peasch and Yom Kippur, the service is called "Avodah," Temple worship, and should be performed in white linen, the garments of the priest. According to Jewish mysticism, white is the color of redemption and the messianic era of perfection, and both months, Tishrei and Nisan, are associated in the Talmud with these events.

### THE TEN ITEMS OF THE SEDER PLATE

We usually begin the Seder by carefully arranging the ritual items on the Seder plate. According to the Kabbalists there should be ten *Sefirot* (Divine emanations) that are the most significant manifestations of God in the life of man and the cosmos, and the most frequent subject of discussion in Kabbalah. The three *matzot*,

(Kohen, Levi & Yisrael) the shankbone (4), the roasted egg (5), *maror* (6), *haroset* (7), the greens (8), the ground horseradish (9), and the Seder plate (10) are usually counted in this fashion for a total of ten items.

### THE SIMANIM

Most printed Hagadot begin with an outline of procedure, called *Simanim*. This too may be of Kabbalistic origin since their number was 15 (Yod-Hei, God's name) or 12 (zodiac). Moreover, according to the Zohar, the last sentence of Psalm 92 consisting of 12 words was also recited in this connection and the Midrash tells us that Moshe recited these words at the building of the first Tabernacle, pointing to the hope that the Temple be restored as in years past. Finally, the word "*siman*" like "*mazal*" means good fortune and it was a mystic request for the one leading the Seder, the proper conduct of which could bring about the final redemption of Israel.

### THE NUMBER FOUR

In the Hagadah we find a heavy emphasis on the number four which is based on a continuation of the early Talmudic Kabbalists, insisting on the four expressions of freedom, the four sons, and the four cups of wine. To this the medieval Kabbalists added the reciting of "*Baruch*" four times, itself a word of four letters, the use of "*Makom*" and "*Hakadosh Baruch Hu*", both of four letters or four letters of abbreviation (HKBH). This was followed by two other words, "*v'hee*" and "*haya*" both of four letters.

### DAYENU

Joseph Gigatilla, a medieval Kabbalist, informs us that the poem "*Dayenu*" consists of 15 verses, equal to the first two letters of the Tetragrammaton, and the 15 steps leading to the ancient Temple as well as the mystic steps from Earth to God. He connects the number 15 also with the seven heavens, seven spaces between them, and our Earth. There is also a play on words as far as the word "*maalot*" is concerned, since it can mean steps as well as favors of God (*Maalot Tovot*).

### ELIJAHU, THE PROPHET

Although the early Midrash (Mechilta) connects mystically the first redemption of Pesach (*Lel Shimurim*) with the final redemption of the Messianic era, it was the later Kabbalah which stressed the person of Elijah as the harbinger of this event. Two customs, the opening of the door to welcome Eliyahu and the fifth cup, called the cup of Eliyahu, must be attributed to the mystics.

"L'SHANAH HABA'AH"

Most traditional Hagadot suggest that we recite the formula, "*L'shanah Haba'ah B'Yeru-shalayim*," just as we do at Neilah on Yom Kippur, since both are seasons of redemption, stressing either physical or spiritual freedom. It was the Kabbalist who always yearned for the Holy Land and the restoration of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

FINAL HYMNS OF THE SEDER

At a somewhat later date three *piyutim* were added, authors unknown, but all with Kabbalistic tendencies. "*Adir Hu*" begins with a four-lettered word, referring to God, and the entire poem is an acrostic, anticipating the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. "*Echad Mi Yodea*" begins with 10 words, pointing to the ten *Sefirot*, it contains 13 verses referring to the 13 *Midot* (attributes of God) and ends with an emphasis on the oneness of God. All of these items are Kabbalistic features.

The last and final song is "*Chad Gadya*", in Aramaic, the language of the mystic Zohar. It contains 10 verses representing the ten *Sefirot*, and features ten persecutions and periods of redemption of Jewish history, the last of which will be permanent, with God ruling over death and reigning supreme in the Messianic era. Most *Hagadot* end here, but some recite the Song of Songs (Mesechet Sofrim), a mystic suggestion to emphasize the continued love between God and Israel at this time of spring renewal. It is based on the early mystical interpretation of *Shir HaShirim* by Rabbi Akiba, one of the first and foremost mystics in Israel, who suggested that the entire love drama does not refer to human lovers but depicts the love of God and Israel. The mystics wanted to impress upon us that God still loves Israel although we are now in exile and temporarily unredeemed.

## PERPETUATING JEWISH LIFE

*Originally published in Olam Magazine*

An idea mentioned in the Talmud years ago concerned the sons at the Seder table, commonly known as the Four Sons. The Lubavitcher Rebbe introduced the idea that there's a fifth son.

Who else is there besides the wise son, the wicked son, the simple son, and the one who doesn't know how to ask? There's a fifth son. The fifth son is the one who refuses to come to the Seder. He didn't just forget; he won't come.

Traditionally, this was the lost member of the family, the one we don't talk about anymore: the one "who stopped being Jewish." The fifth son is a Jew and we have to reach out to him and invite him to come to the Seder table.

What part of him refuses to come to the Seder? His Jewish part. His Jewish soul is objecting because the Judaism that is being offered does not live up to his expectations. He wants a better Judaism, not a lesser Judaism. His Jewish soul is asking us to listen.

By hearing what the fifth son has to say, Judaism can be all that it's meant to be. The fifth son is like a safety valve; like a regulator that reacts when something is not working properly. He is a warning bell that tells us when we're drifting, becoming too petty, too insular, or simply just too bland.

For example, the fifth son doesn't come to the Seder because it's just for Jews. He doesn't like that. Why do we have to separate ourselves? Why do we have to make ourselves different? Why do we have to be a small minority when we could be part of the bigger world? He's absolutely right. If God wanted us to be insulated, if God wanted us to be a little community living someplace in our own little enclave, why would we be scattered all over the world? Why are we everywhere if we don't belong anywhere? The fifth son is right. ***Judaism is not just for Jews.***

Of course, there are parts of Judaism that are just for Jews – "Speak to the children of Israel" and they should do such and such. But in the bigger picture, ***Torah is not only for Jews, it's the blueprint of creation.*** And this is the truth that the fifth son knows in his heart.

The fifth son gets upset because at the Seder we mention the verse of Jeremiah:16 asking God to pour His wrath out on all the rebellious nations. But the fifth son

doesn't want to have anything to do with that. He's not like the frustrated people who think the whole world is against them at the Seder table and vent. He doesn't want to do this. He doesn't think this is acceptable. He's right.

He's right because nobody explained that passage to him. If you look at it at face value, it seems like we're venting. The greatest compliment you can give a human being is: I hold you to the same standards that I hold myself. Once again, we see a challenge from the fifth son rooted in the Divine.

Another idea the fifth son doesn't like: He cannot accept the suggestion that if he comes to the Seder, then he's Jewish; if he doesn't come, he's not really Jewish. *Mitzvot* don't make a Jew.

Jews make *mitzvot*. The fifth son is right again.

There are other things the fifth son objects to. The fifth son doesn't like division. He wants unity, just as God does. The fifth son doesn't like negativity; he wants joy. He is searching for a Creator with a vast eternal plan and a Jewish people with a historic purpose. He wants Godliness with teeth. He wants a God he can worship with all his devotion – a God who needs him and his service.

The fifth son says, something's wrong with you guys, I'm out of here. Call me when you've got your act together. Call me when you're ready to speak to my Jewish soul. Call me when you're ready to give me a Judaism that doesn't patronize, that doesn't pander, that just is. Call me. You know where I am.

This Pesach, let's all try to welcome a fifth son or daughter to our Seder tables. It would truly make it a night different from all others.

## A Proposal to Foster Jewish Unity: A New Custom

by Benjamin Mordecai Ben-Baruch (Reconstructionist proposal)

### **Preface**

I am asking you to join the "Rice for Passover Campaign" by placing rice (or other "qitniyot") on the Seder table next to Elijah's cup to symbolically indicate our vision of a Jewish community that acts affirmatively to promote tolerance and mutual respect of different customs and that acts decisively against institutionalized forms of discrimination and racism within our community.

Eastern and Central European Jews traditionally do not eat rice, beans or similar items on Passover while Jews from other parts of the world prepare traditional Passover dishes from these items. Why? In the following short essay I attempt to answer this question and provide some guidelines for celebrating Passover now that Jews from all over the world live together in the same communities. I rely to a large extent on a responsum (tshuvah) from the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel (affiliated with the Masorti/Conservative movement).

### **Introduction and Definition of Qitniyot**

There is a strange custom of unknown origin and of unknown halakhic purpose or reason among Jews of European origin to prohibit the eating of qitniyot on Passover. Qitniyot, usually translated as "legumes", is a rabbinic (and not a botanical) category of foods that includes rice, beans, chick peas (hummus), peas, soy products (including tofu or bean curd), vanilla beans, cola beans, wild rice, peanuts, maize, caraway seeds, potatoes, garlic, radishes, coffee, poppy seeds, sesame, mustard, sunflower seeds, etc. (There is no single agreed upon list of the "forbidden" items in this category which adds to the confusion.) Essentially, the category of qitniyot includes virtually all food items not included within the five prohibited grains, which over the years since the 13th century have been declared "prohibited" to European Jews by one or more rabbinic authorities. The five grains which can be used to make halah, and therefore can become hamaiz and are prohibited on Passover are:

*Hitim* - wheat [Triticum durum and vulgare]

*Se'orim* - 6- and 4-rowed barley, [Hordeolum sativum and vulgare]

*Kusmim* - {Even Shoshan=Triticum dicoccum, J Cohen=spelt}emmer/lesser spelt/  
rice wheat [Triticum dicoccum]

*Shibbolet Shu'al* - {Even Shoshan=Avena; J Cohen=oats}2-rowed barley  
[Hordeolum distichum]

*Shippon* - {Even Shoshan=Secale=rye, J Cohen=rye} spelt wheat [Triticum spelta].

These are the only items which can become hamaiz. While there is virtually total rabbinic agreement since Talmudic times that these Biblical Hebrew terms comprise the sum total of items which can become hamaiz, there is not agreement regarding the proper translation of the terms kusmim and shibbolet. Some authorities include oats in the above list but it is doubtful whether oats should be included.

Cereal foods such as buckwheat ("kasha") and grains such as rye are sometimes mistakenly included in the above group because of mistranslations of the Hebrew or upon modern Hebrew

usages which should not be applied to terms in their Biblical contexts. [NOTE: This does not make rye breads made of a combination of rye and wheat flour kosher for Passover.]

For years I have had a "Rice for Passover" campaign. I believe that it is time to have a unified halakhah that facilitates all Jews freely and comfortably eating at each other's homes on Passover. This Ashkenazi prohibition was originally promulgated by mistake and there is no reason to perpetuate this custom other than it has become traditional. On the other hand, there are many reasons to abolish this custom.

Maintaining the prohibition against eating qitniyot serves to perpetuate the power and influence of the worst segments of the Ashkenazi clerical establishments, implicitly denigrates Sephardic customs and traditions, and stifles the natural and desirable process of incorporating Sefardi traditions into the traditions of all Jews. Personally, I recommend that all Ashkenazi Jews show their acceptance in principle of such a change by placing qitniyot on Elijah's place-setting regardless of whether they personally are accustomed to eating qitniyot.

### **Proposed Modern Practice**

To those who feel that eating qitniyot violates the feeling of Pesah and the customs they practice, I still recommend the following:

- (1) place qitniyot on Elijah's plate to symbolize the fact that you are acting out of a feeling towards your own personal and family traditions and NOT out of acceptance of misguided rabbinic rulings that were wrong and foolish when they were promulgated and which today are divisive;
- (2) place qitniyot on Elijah's plate to symbolize a vision of a time to come very

soon when there will be unity among the different Jewish communities (even while different traditions are preserved as customs);

(3) follow the wise recommendations of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel: "Undoubtedly, there will be Ashkenazim who will want to stick to the "custom of their ancestors" even though they know that it is permitted to eat legumes on Pesach. To them we recommend that they observe only the original custom of not eating rice and legumes but that they use oil from legumes and all the other foods "forbidden" over the years, such as peas, beans, garlic, mustard, sunflower seeds, peanuts, etc. Thus they will be able to eat hundreds of products which bear the label "Kosher for Pesach for those who eat legumes." This will make their lives easier and will add joy and pleasure to their observance of Pesach."

But let us also think about customs we want to preserve and customs we want to change: We do not pass on to our children a 17th, 18th or 19th century version of Judaism or a heder education (which is available in this country today) or most other archaic aspects of Eastern European Jewish culture. Our homes are modern homes and our children observe 20th century Judaism -- and this is good.

"But there is something about that traditional food." Let's stop and think about that for a moment. The traditional European Passover menu is basically not all that traditional. (Remember, the potato wasn't even known in Eastern Europe until 1819! And some authorities

put it in the same category as rice and beans and still prohibit this "new" food!) Secondly, it is primarily a menu based upon the culture of an impoverished people who even in the best of times were living in a geographical area where there were very limited food items available.

There is value in preserving old culinary traditions. There is also value in integrating customs from other Jewish communities into our lives and deepening our appreciation of Jewish traditions by eating other traditional foods. Can we do both? Wouldn't there be greater value in doing both -- eating the foods we grew up with and eating other "traditional" foods? I think so.

### **How can we do this?**

The first Seder might be based on a European culinary tradition, but other foods eaten after that. Perhaps foods from different traditions can be eaten at the same meal. Perhaps one Seder can be European and another Seder be based on Mediterranean Jewish cuisine. There is no single answer.

In the final analysis, people have to go with their heart and do what gives them the feelings appropriate for the holiday. But we also have to act according to our values. As Reconstructionists we affirm that there is value to our food traditions. But we also believe that preserving divisions and conflict between Ashkenazim and Sefardim is against our values and that preserving an absolute prohibition against eating qitniyot is therefore against our values. We value the sharing of the many Jewish traditions -- which means preserving all of them and learning to share and participate in many of them. Many of us may choose to not eat qitniyot but we should all recognize that this should be a personal choice and should no longer be a matter of halakhah for anyone.

*(Note: I have translated large sections of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel's Tshuvah [responsum] regarding the eating of rice and qitniyot on Passover. I summarized sections that I did not translate and have thus "reduced" a 21 page printed Hebrew document to a 5 page English text. While my translation and summary do not substitute for the complete text, you may find it valuable and informative. If you are interested in this translation, please contact me (email: [bbenbaruch@earthlink.net](mailto:bbenbaruch@earthlink.net)).*

## PASSOVER RECIPES - COOKING and BAKING

(Elimelech David Ha-Levi Web, Inc. <http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/>)

( NOTE: This is a listing of websites as of 2006. Many have been added which can be found with a search engine and some appear to have gone to their own just desserts. )

Passover Recipes - Note that the Passover recipes at the following websites may or may not be "Kosher for Passover." Check with either the owner of that website and/or the author of the recipe in question to determine whether or not that recipe is "Kosher for Passover" or with your Rabbi regarding ingredients and process.

The websites are arranged alphabetically by domain name in each category. Upon clicking each link, a new and smaller browser window will open.

### Websites With Assorted Passover Recipes: Sephardic and Ashkenazic Passover Recipes

\* About.com : More Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: Turkish charoset, matzah meal muffins, and more!

\* About.com : Passover Home Cooking Recipes - Passover recipes include: Sephardic matzah ball soup, Ashkenazic matzah ball soup, and more!

\* About.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: Light matzah balls, pecan cookies, and more!

\* About.com : Still More Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: Sephardic brisket, "High-tech" gefilte fish, and more!

\* Aish.com : Aish's Passover Cookbook - Passover recipes include: matzah pizza, matzah apple kugel, and more!

\* Aish.com : Passover Recipes - Menu Suggestions - this website includes Passover recipes for a traditional seder, an alternatively traditional seder, a seder to impress your mother, a seder to impress your mother-in-law, and more!

\* AllRecipes.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: Passover spinach fritatta, Passover zucchini-stuffed chicken, and more!

\* Cooking.com : Passover Appetizers, Desserts, Salads, Sauces, and more - Passover recipes include: Passover hazelnut sponge cake, apricot cake and berry compote trifles, and more!

\* Cyber-Kitchen.com : Passover Cyber-Kitchen - Passover recipes include: veal with artichokes, Passover toffee squares, and more!

\* Cyber-Kitchen.com : Passover Recipe Archives of the rec.food.cuisine.jewish Newsgroup - tons of Passover recipes for cakes, pies, cookies, charoset, matzah balls, meats, fish, and much more!

\* Epicurious.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: chocolate,

orange and honey cake, baked whitefish with dill and tomato-cucumber relish, and more!

\* FabulousFoods.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: Passover pancakes or waffles, low-fat matzoh latkes, and more!

\* Floras-Hideout.com : Low-Fat Passover Brownies Recipe - a Passover recipe for Low-fat Passover Brownies.

\* FreeRecipeCollection.com : Tons of Passover Recipes - tons of Passover recipes for apple crisps, banana cakes, beets in orange sauce, meat borscht, roasted chicken with orange and lemon and ginger, and a whole lot more! Seemingly endless amounts of Passover recipes.

\* Galim.org.il : Galim Pesach Recipes (in Hebrew) - this website includes an assortment of Passover recipes.

\* GlobalGourmet.com : Essential Easter and Passover Buffets - Passover recipes include: salmon and spinach terrine, tournedos of salmon, lamb follarin, crisp potato kugel, baked asparagus with toasted walnuts, and more!

\* GlobalGourmet.com : Passover Cuisine: Ashkenazic and Sephardic Dishes - Passover recipes include: braised chicken with tomatoes and honey, baked fish with bitter lettuces, bumuelos de masa, and more!

\* GoodFood.co.il : Good Food Pesach Recipes (in Hebrew) - this website includes an assortment of Passover recipes.

\* Gourmania.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: chopped liver, low-fat matzo balls, chicken soup, easy salsa fish fillets, gefilte fish patties in tomato sauce, spinach moussaka, coke brisket, Pesach-stuffed turkey breast, meat and leek patties, limelight roast chicken, quinoa, mango-date haroset, acorn squash with ginger-orange glaze, Passover rolls, homemade matzo, praline cake, marble cake, and much more! Highly recommended site.

\* Haruth.com : Passover Recipes - tons of Passover recipes for matzah brie, desserts, breakfast, side dishes, tortes, mandelbread, vegetables, salads, meat and fish, and a whole lot more!

\* HolidayRecipe.com : All Kinds of Passover Holiday Recipes - Passover recipes include: Roast Lemon Herb Chicken, apricot brisket, and more! Includes an article about the art of roasting lamb, and making chicken stock.

\* Holidays.net : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: turkey stuffing, brisket in marinade, and more!

\* IGrandparents.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: watercress, frisee, tangerine, and blood orange salad, flourless chocolate cake with whipped cream and raspberries, Passover poppyseed cake, Passover vegetable casserole, and more!

\* Jewish.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: citrus salmon fillet, albondigas (Spanish meatballs), fillet of sole Florentine, kabsah ("Lebanese

hamburger"), matzah Neapolitan, traditional Ashkenazi charoses, vegetarian kishke, and more!

\* JewishFood-List.com : Lots of Passover Recipes - tons of Passover recipes for appetizers/snacks, beef, breads, breakfast/brunch, cakes, candies, charoset, cookies, desserts, fish, gefilte fish, kugels, lamb, poultry, salads, side dishes, soups, vegetables, and recipes for vegetarians!

\* JoansKitchenOnline.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: Israeli charoset, Ashkenazi charoset, Persian charoset, Russian tea sorbet, Sephardi chocolate cake, roasted pears with almonds crunch, and more!

\* Kashrut.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: sweet gefilte fish, tomato gefilte fish, crisp lemon chicken, sweet and sour meta balls, quinoa pilaf, Spanish potato omelet, Passover potato latkes (including low fat version), and more!

\* Kosher4Passover.com : Passover Recipes - lots of Passover recipes for kugel, poultry, breakfast, desserts, soups, and more!

\* KosherCooking.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: matzoh meal apple cake, chocolate espresso torte for Passover, Passover lemon torte, Persian fruit salad, Passover apple squares, honey golden chicken (Sabra style), pastelli (matzah with ground meat), Sephardic Greek roast chicken with cinnamon, apricots and apples, chicken in orange sauce (low-fat), Passover master barbecue sauce, and more!

\* KosherDelight.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: Venetian haroset, Egyptian haroset, seven-fruit haroset from Surinam, Hungarian chocolate-walnut torte, Passover confectioner's sugar, huevos haminados (browned eggs), Veronese rolled turkey loaf, Iranian stuffed chicken with fresh green herbs and golden soup, salmon gefilte fish poached in fennel-wine broth with ginger beet horseradish, and more!

\* MidEastWeb.org : Passover Haroseth Recipes - Passover haroseth recipes include: simple European haroseth, American haroseth, gourmet haroseth, Turkish haroseth, Yemenite haroseth, Bukharan haroseth, and more!

\* Minutemeals.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: rich chicken soup with herbed matzo balls, beef brisket with apricots, prunes, and sweet potatoes spicy roast chicken with carrots and potatoes broccoli with lemon vinaigrette, and more!

\* OldFashionedLiving.com : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: apple matzah kugel (Pareve), Passover matzah meat pie, matzah candy buttercrunch, matzah brittle candy, and more!

\* Passover.net : Classic Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: horseradish, borscht, meaty borscht, tzimmes, Passover noodles, and more!

\* Pesto.co.il : Pesto Pesach Recipes (in Hebrew) - this website includes an

assortment of Passover recipes.

\* [RecipeSource.com](http://RecipeSource.com) : Lots of Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: cinnamon-apple-apricot cake for Passover, banana Passover sponge cake, Viennese chocolate torte for Passover, Kosher For Passover cheesecake, Passover loukoumades (Greek version of beignets drizzled with honey and dusted with cinnamon and nuts), Passover glazed chicken with matzo-nut stuffing, Hammin Di Pesach (lamb, meatballs and spinach for Passover), Passover rhubarb cobbler, and more!

\* [RecipeSource.com](http://RecipeSource.com) : More Pesach (Passover) Recipes - Passover recipes include: Moscardini de Pesach (Italian cookies), Minestra Di Riso Per Pesach (Passover Chicken Soup with Rice), and more!

\* [Shemayisrael.co.il](http://Shemayisrael.co.il) : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: quick pareve ice cream, special tzimmes, cooked carrot cake, chremslach (or chremslach), and more!

\* [StarChefs.com](http://StarChefs.com) : Chefs and User-Contributed Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: spring compote with hazelnut macaroons, braised lamb with artichokes, cajun matzah balls with green onions, Los Angeles Italian Caponata (Caponata is a salsa of sorts. It is a Sicilian vegetable dish which includes diced grilled eggplant, with roasted onions + red peppers, olives, capers and balsamic vinegar), American charoset, Prince Albert cake, matzah chicken pie, low-cholesterol vegetable casserole, traditional matzah meatballs, brisket with sub-dried tomatoes, and more!

\* [WIZO.org.il](http://WIZO.org.il) : Passover Recipes and a Light-Hearted Editorial About The Holiday - Passover recipes include: chrain (horseradish), beet salad, tzimmes, and more!

Websites With Diabetic Passover Recipes.

\* [DiabeticGourmet.com](http://DiabeticGourmet.com) : Spinach Vegetable Kugel Passover Recipe - this website includes a diabetic Passover recipe for spinach vegetable kugel.

\* [Diabetic-Lifestyle.com](http://Diabetic-Lifestyle.com) : Diabetic Passover Recipes - diabetic Passover recipes include: spring vegetable soup with scallion and dill-flecked matzo balls, grilled pineapple with raspberry puree, roasted root vegetables with prunes, and more!

\* [Diabetic-Recipes.com](http://Diabetic-Recipes.com) : Passover Seder Menu Ideas - Part 1 - Passover recipes include: horseradish and beet sauce, fresh asparagus with lemon, new potatoes with arugula (arugula is an herb in the form of a leaf consisting of a strong smell), and more!

\* [Diabetic-Recipes.com](http://Diabetic-Recipes.com) : Passover Seder Menu Ideas - Part 2 - Passover recipes include: roasted root vegetables with prunes, beef brisket with oranges, and more!

\* [Diabetic-Recipes.com](http://Diabetic-Recipes.com) : Passover Seder Menu Ideas - Part 3 - Passover recipes include: baked pears, spinach and mushroom matzo stuffing, roast turkey with

orange, lemon and fresh ginger, and more!

\* [MidEastWeb.org](http://MidEastWeb.org) : Passover Diabetic Haroseth Recipe - this website includes a Passover haroseth recipe for diabetics.

Websites With Sephardic Passover Recipes.

\* [Foodstyles.com](http://Foodstyles.com) : Italian Sephardic Passover Recipes - Italian Sephardic Passover recipes include: crostini de fegatini (Italian chopped liver toasts), Italian charoset, spinach and fennel salad, Passover boned stuffed leg of lamb, torta di noci (Italian walnut torte), and more!

\* [FoodStyles.com](http://FoodStyles.com) : Sephardic Passover Recipes - Sephardic Passover recipes include: haminados (Sephardic roasted eggs), Sephardic chicken soup, Sephardic olive and orange salad, Syrian nut cake, and more!

\* [JewishFamily.com](http://JewishFamily.com) : Sephardic Dishes For Passover - Sephardic Passover recipes include: Sephardic Meat and Potato Croquettes (Meat), Sephardic Spinach or Eggplant Pie (Pareve), and more!

\* [Midrash.org](http://Midrash.org) : Sephardic Passover Recipes - Sephardic Passover recipes include: Jose & Haleq (Jewish Baghdadian Dish. Jose means "walnuts", and "Haleq" means charoset.), massah (matzah) cake from Israel, Georgian Haleq, and koukhi (Jewish Georgian dish. It is a kind of relish).

\* [Rumela.com](http://Rumela.com) : Afghani Haroseth Recipe for Passover - An exotic haroseth recipe for Passover from Afghanistan.

\* [SephardiConnect.com](http://SephardiConnect.com) : Sephardic Passover Haroseth Recipes - Sephardic Passover recipes include: Turkish charoset, Maghrebi charoset, Bukharan charoset, and Holland and Surinam charoset.

\* [Sephardim.com](http://Sephardim.com) : Lots of Sephardic Passover Recipes - Sephardic Passover recipes include: binuelos (also known as "Bimuelos": matzo balls - these matzo balls are made from sheet matzos, not matzo meal) from Salonika, Greece, tezpishti (a Passover nut cake in syrup, from Turkey), and Passover kugel.

\* [SheepsCreek.com](http://SheepsCreek.com) : Moroccan Tagine of Lamb - a website containing a Sephardic Passover recipe for Moroccan tagine of lamb.

\* [VegKitchen.com](http://VegKitchen.com) : Some Vegetarian Sephardic Passover Recipes - Vegetarian Sephardic Passover recipes include: spinach and potato matzo pie, Sephardic wine and fruit pudding, sweet and sour artichoke hearts, roasted pepper salad, and more!

\* [VegSource.com](http://VegSource.com): Some Sephardic Passover Recipes - Sephardic Passover recipes include: lemony leek and mushroom soup, eggplant matzah mina (matzo minas are layered casseroles or pies), Turkish eggplant stew, and more!

## Websites With Vegetarian Passover Recipes.

\* About.com : Vegetarian Passover Recipes - Vegetarian Passover recipes include: Matzoh Polenta (polenta means porridge), Passover vegetable soup, Passover baked stuffed zucchini, cauliflower fritters, and more!

\* JewishFamily.com : Vegetarian Options For Passover - Vegetarian Passover recipes include: spinach squash ring (pareve or dairy), matzah brie and your favorite stir fries (pareve), and more!

\* Vegetarian Fat-Free Passover Recipes - Vegetarian Passover recipes include: leek, potato and matzo gratin, Passover granola, English trifle, winter squash with apricot stuffing, yam pudding, orange pudding, tzimmes, vegetarian kishke, vegetable pie with a cabbage crust, cabbage soufflé pudding, spinach pie, and lots more!

\* Vegetarian Passover Recipes - Vegetarian Passover recipes include: vegetarian chopped liver, applesauce matzoh kugel, stuffed cabbage, fruit and vegetable tzimmes, and more!

\* Vegetarian Passover Recipes - Vegetarian Passover recipes include: Passover jam squares, Passover mandel bread, banana-nut matzoh kugel, sweet and sour cabbage, and more!

\* VegKitchen.com : Sephardic Vegetarian Passover Recipes - Sephardic vegetarian Passover recipes include: Moroccan-style matzo ball soup, Turkish eggplant stew, spinach and potato matzo pie, Sephardic date haroset, and more!

\* VegSource.com : Vegetarian Passover Recipes for an Ashkenazic and Sephardic Passover Seder - Ashkenazic and Sephardic vegetarian Passover recipes include: (1) Ashkenazic - mock chopped liver, haroset (or charoset), Russian potato mushroom croquettes, baked root vegetables, and more! (2) Sephardic - date haroset, sauteed carrots with almonds, Sephardic orange and olive salad, sabbath rice pilaf with saffron, and more!

\* Vrg.org : Low-Fat Jewish Vegetarian Passover Recipes - Vegetarian Passover recipes include: broccoli and lemon dish, chopped "liver" spread, sweet potato kugel, potato/kale casserole, and more!

A Website With A Matzah Baking Guide

( Elimelech David Ha-Levi Web, Inc. <http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/>)

\* Halacha Yomit : Guide to Matzah Baking - this website describes how to make matzah.

Want to convert weights, temperatures, and volumes? Check out our Passover Cooking Conversion Calculator and our oven temperature conversion table to find out what the exact measurements are! Phenomenal!!

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/passover-cooking-conversion-calculator.html>

Passover abbreviations:

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/passover-cooking-abbreviations.html>

## JOKES AND STORIES

An elderly man in Phoenix calls his son in New York and says, "I hate to ruin your day, but I have to tell you that your mother and I are divorcing. Forty-five years of misery is enough."

"Pop, what are you talking about?" the son screams. "We can't stand the sight of each other any longer," the old man says. "We're sick of each other, and I'm sick of talking about this, so you call your sister in Chicago and tell her," and he hangs up.

Frantic, the son calls his sister, who explodes on the phone, "Like hell they're getting divorced," she shouts, "I'll take care of this." She calls her father immediately and screams at the old man, "You are NOT getting divorced! Don't do a single thing until I get there. I'm

calling my brother back, and we'll both be there tomorrow. Until then, don't do a thing, DO YOU HEAR ME?" and hangs up.

The old man hangs up his phone and turns to his wife. "Okay," he says, "They're coming for Passover and paying their own airfares."

A group of leading medical researchers has published data indicating that Seder participants should NOT partake of both chopped liver and charoses. It seems that this combination can lead to Charoses of the Liver.

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At our seder, we had whole wheat and bran matzoh, fortified with Metamucil. The brand name, of course, is..."Let My People Go."

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Old Jewish men in Miami get hernias from wearing chai's which are too heavy. This condition is called chaiatal hernia!"

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If a doctor carries a black bag and a plumber carries a tool box, what does a mohel carry? A bris kit!

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JEWISH JEOPARDY: We give the answer, you give the question

A: Midrash

Q: What is a Middle East skin disease?

A: The Gaza Strip

Q: What is an Egyptian Belly Dance?

A: A classroom, a Passover ceremony, and a latke

Q: What are a cheder, a seder, and a tater?

A: Sofer

Q: On what do Jews recline on Passover?

A: Babylon

Q: What does the rabbi do during some sermons?

A: Filet Minyan

Q: What do you call steaks ordered by 10 Jews?

A: Kishka, sukkah, and circumcision

Q: What are a gut, a hut, and a cut?

And speaking of circumcisions: An enterprising Rabbi is offering circumcisions via the Internet. The service is to be called..."E-MOIL."

## PESAH BACKGROUND

The story of the Exodus from Egypt is found in the first half of the Book of Exodus with chapters 12 and 13 serving as the focal point of the historical narrative.

Leviticus 23:5-8 contains the biblical injunctions to celebrate the Festival of Pesach: "in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a passover offering (Pesach) to the Lord, and on the fifteenth day of that month is the Lord's Feast of Unleavened Bread (Chag HaMatzot). You shall eat unleavened bread for seven days. The first day shall be for you a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. Seven days you shall make offerings by fire to *Adonai*. The seventh day shall be a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations."

Efforts to probe the origins of the Jewish holiday are in no way intended to denigrate the importance or the meaning of the festivals. Rather, they help to demonstrate the genius of the Jewish people who drew from their environment, transforming what might have begun as a pagan idea or practice into something with universal and timeless significance.

According to such scholars as Hayyim Schauss and Theodor Gaster, the modern festival of Pesach is a combination of a shepherd's festival and an agricultural festival. Leviticus 23 reinforces that idea.

It is possible that a Pesach festival had its earliest stirrings among semi-nomads who thousands of years ago wandered the desert and the semi-arid environs around Palestine. Nisan was the month when sheep most often gave birth. These nomads came to observe a festival at the time of the full moon. Just before nightfall, a sheep or goat was sacrificed. The animal was then roasted, and the family ate a hasty meal so that all of the animal would be eaten by daybreak. No bones of this sacrificial animal could be broken. Tent posts were daubed with the blood of the slain animal as an antidote to plagues, misfortune, and illness. The original meaning of the Hebrew word "*pesach*" is lost. The interpretation signifying "skip over" or "pass over" was later given to the word.

Perhaps the Feast of Unleavened Bread was a six or seven day festival marking the beginning of the spring harvest period that was celebrated by the fathers of Canaan. It was started with the cutting of the barley and the offering of the first sheaf of the newly cut barley to the priest as a sacrifice to God. The elimination of *chamaytz* may have originally been precautionary so as not to infect the new incoming crop. Or, it may have been a way of propitiating the priests and God so as to assure

health and bounty.

As Judaism moved away from being agriculturally based, new interpretations and new customs were added to the Pesach ritual so that Jews living all over the world and in all ages could meaningfully celebrate Pesach. The prototype *Haggadah* finds its way into the Mishnah as Tractate *Pesachin*. By the end of the Talmudic period, its form and much of its content were as they are today. It must have been widely accepted, because the *Haggadah* was included in the very first prayer book of Rav Amram in the eighth century, as well as in the prayer book of Saadia Gaon in Babylonia (tenth century). Somewhere around the twelfth century, it began to be copied as a separate book. It attracted many commentaries, and became the favorite subject of Jewish artists who found the subject liberating. Illuminated *Haggadot* were especially prevalent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Prague, Amsterdam, and Venice, among other important cities. A magnificent Sephardic *Haggadah* made its way from Spain eastward in the fifteenth century and is named after the city which claimed it -- *The Sarajevo Haggadah*. Today, the making of *Haggadot* is without end. The artistry and commentaries continue to delight and amaze. Often such works are not only used at the *Seder* table, they become treasured possessions.

### Central Themes

The four names for Pesach reflect four aspects of this festival:

**Chag HaPesach** is linked with the account of the tenth plague when God passed over the homes of the Israelites, and with the Pesach offering that was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem.

**Chag HaMatzot**, the Festival of Unleavened Bread, is an outgrowth of an early agricultural festival and reflects the centrality of *matzah* in the celebration of Pesach.

**Chag HaAviv**, The Festival of Spring, reflects the seasonal significance of Pesach. **Z'man Chayrutaynu**, The Season of Our Freedom, marks the attainment of freedom from bondage by the ancient Israelites.

Pesach can be viewed as a time of release, accompanied by a positive achievement. This theme is seen on three levels. On a seasonal plane, there is the release of the earth from the grip of winter, and the time of the reaping of the grain. The grain is harvested by people, but could not have been grown without God's help. On a historical plane, there is the release of the Children of Israel from the grip of Egypt, and the birth of the Jewish nation in Covenant with God. On a universal plane, Pesach symbolizes the hoped for release of all people from physical and spiritual

bondage, and the ability of all to live indignity.

While Pesach was at first an agricultural festival, through the centuries it became a festival of freedom and deliverance. This gradual shift took place in response to the growing numbers of Jews living outside of *Eretz Yisrael* and to the reality of the end of the biblical period and the beginning of the Rabbinic era. Change brought added new symbolism, concepts, and dimensions to the festival.

Pesach marks the emergence of Israel as a nation and as a people, freely accepting Torah as its constitution, and as the basis for Jewish life. Until Sinai, God made covenants with individual Jews; this time it was with *Am Yisrael*, the entire Jewish People.

## Passover Holiday Names

*(Elimelech David Ha-Levi Web, Inc. <http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/> Very traditional but also very helpful. BDL)*

**Passover as a name** is traditionally associated with the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt, but the story of how the name "Passover" became associated with the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt is a multifaceted one. Originally, Passover was actually two separate holidays celebrated by the Hebrews in Springtime: the first and older of the two festivals was the pastoral festival known as Chag-Ha-Pesach, meaning the "Festival of the Pesach" in Hebrew, and the second festival was known as Chag Ha-Matzot, meaning the "Festival of Unleavened Bread" in Hebrew. Neither of these festivals had any connection with the event concerning the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt which came later on. The Hebrews celebrated the arrival of the Spring season by organizing a "Festival of the Pesach". This involved sacrificing a "paschal" or "Pesach" lamb to God. This sacrifice was meant to give thanks to God for the renewal of Springtime. Therefore, the original meaning of the word "Passover" or "Pesach" meant "lamb" in reference to this sacrifice, and later came to also mean the event in the 10th plague, where God "passed over" the Hebrew households and instead slew the firstborn sons of the Egyptians in the Egyptian households. The Hebrews also celebrated a second festival called the "Festival of Unleavened Bread" which was an agricultural festival where farmers would celebrate the beginning of the grain harvest. Before the farmers cut the grain, they would perform a ritual for this celebration by discarding all sour or fermented dough which was used instead of yeast for leavening bread. Both of these festivals were celebrated at different times during the month of Nissan. After the events of the first Passover recorded in the Book of Exodus, these two celebrations or festivals merged in time with the event of the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt which also occurred in the Springtime. The result was that all three festivals which commemorated different events were celebrated as one holiday beginning on the 15th of the month of Nissan.

What is the origin of the "Festival of the Pesach" and "Festival of Unleavened Bread" which the Hebrews celebrated as their "Passover" prior to the events of the Hebrews' exodus from Egypt? It is believed that the Hebrews borrowed the rituals associated with both the "Festival of the Pesach" and the "Festival of Unleavened Bread" from the ancient Canaanitic peoples who inhabited the area of Canaan when the Hebrews arrived there from Mesopotamia approximately 4,000 years ago.

How did the rituals from the "Festival of the Pesach Lamb" and the rituals from the

"Festival of Unleavened Bread" become connected to the events of the first Passover? In the case of the "Festival of the Pesach", the paschal or Pesach lamb which was central to the "Festival of the Pesach" became associated with the events of the 10th plague which occurred just before the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt in which God "passed over" the Hebrew homes and instead slew the firstborn sons in the Egyptian households. In the case of the "Festival of Unleavened Bread", its central aspect concerning the start of Springtime and the cultivation of grains which were used for making breads among other food items became associated with the hasty departure of the Hebrews from Egypt when the Hebrews "took their dough before it was leavened". Incidentally, the seven types of agricultural produce which were farmed by the Hebrews included wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. Willows and citrons were also farmed, but were connected with the festival of Sukkot which occurs at the end of the agricultural season in Israel.

Due to the historical connections of ancient celebrations with the traditional meaning of Passover or Pesach as explained above, Passover became known by five different names. The following are the five names of Passover: each starts with the Hebrew name followed by its translation into English. Each Passover name represents an event in the Passover story, and these events occur in their proper historical order:

\* Chag Ha-Pesach (alternate spelling: Hag Ha-Pesach) - The Festival of the Paschal Offering : This Passover name symbolizes the event when the Hebrews in Egypt offered the sacrifice of the lamb to God so that its blood could be spread over the doorposts of their homes. When the Angel of Death approached their homes, it saw the blood on the doorposts of the Hebrews' homes, causing it to 'pass over' the Hebrews' homes as it sought to slay the firstborn son of every Egyptian family as told in the 10th Passover plague.

\* Chag Ha-Matzot (alternate spelling: Hag Ha-Matzot) - The Festival of Unleavened Bread : This Passover name represents matzah, the unleavened bread eaten during Passover which was baked and eaten by the Hebrews because they did not have time to wait for the bread to become leaven as they were fleeing Egypt.

\* Chag Ha-Cheirut (alternate spelling: Hag Ha-Cheirut) - The Festival of Freedom or Redemption : This Passover name recalls how the Hebrews left Egypt, towards freedom and redemption.

\* Chag Ha-Aviv (alternate spelling: Hag Ha-Aviv) or Zeman Cherutenu - The Festival of Spring or The Season of Our Liberation : This Passover name recalls when the Hebrews entered Canaan (Palestine) after they left Egypt during the Spring season. This 'passing over' into Canaan also represented a new phase of

Jewish cultural life.

\* Pesach - Passover : From the four previous Passover names and their representations came the name Passover. The four previous Passover names collectively represent the transition of the Hebrews from being confined by the Egyptians in mind and heart to being free of those limitations to realize and maximize their potential as human beings. It then follows that the name Passover symbolizes the Hebrews' leap from their former reality in Egypt to a new reality in Canaan where their rediscovered self-assertion had given them the opportunity to achieve the highest state of being, self-assertion, and self-realization.

What are some translations of the word "Passover" in other languages?

'Pesach' means 'Passover' in Hebrew and it originally meant "lamb" in reference to the sacrifice of the Pesach or paschal lamb that was a ritual of the Hebrews which was established long before the events of the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt. It eventually came to also be associated with the 10th plague in the Passover story, where God "passed over" the homes of the Hebrews in sparing their firstborn sons. An alternate spelling of 'Passover' or 'Pesach' is 'Pesah'. In French, the word for 'Passover' is 'Pessah' and in Spanish, the word for 'Passover' is 'P̄saj'.

Why is this Jewish holiday called Passover?

An excellent question, not just because I thought of it. The 10th and final plague that God created in order to free the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt involved God instructing Moses to tell the Hebrews to spread the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of each Hebrew home, so that when the Angel of Death approached a household to slay the first born son in a family as God had warned, it would 'pass over' the Hebrew homes, and instead slay the first-born male of every Egyptian family. The Hebrews were saved from this tragedy, but nonetheless were later ordered by God to remember to say prayers for the slain Egyptian sons and later on, the drowned Egyptian army, because God declared that no one shall celebrate the destruction of any of His human creations.

Although the name of this festival is Passover, which refers to the 'passing over' or 'sparing' of the first born sons in Hebrew families in ancient Egypt, the Hebrew bible refers to the word "Passover" with respect to the Passover lamb sacrifice which took place on the eve of the exodus from Egypt which was on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Nissan. The Hebrew bible then refers to observing eating only unleavened bread from the 15th of Nissan until the 22nd of Nissan, hence one of the names of Passover being the "Festival of Unleavened Bread".

SiddurAudio.com website

*Rabbi Mark Zimmerman Congregation Beth Shalom*

I finally added an audio Passover Seder page to my SiddurAudio.com website. This site should be helpful for your congregants, religious schools, etc to learn the Haggadah melodies. Here is the link and feel free to post links wherever you like, just not the individual sound clips. Yes, it's completely free (my techno-hobby):

For the Seder material: <http://www.sidduraudio.com/pesach.html>

The SiddurAudio.com home page:<http://www.sidduraudio.com>

**Message for Passover 5766: Accepting the Present and Dream  
of the Future**

*The Window*

A great note for all to read. It will take just 37 seconds to read this and change your thinking. What is the message of Passover for this year, one filled with so much pain and sorrow, fear and apprehension, loss and promise.

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.

The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation. Every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene. One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band - he could see it. In his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words.

Days and weeks passed. One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away.

As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the real world outside. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall.

The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

Epilogue: There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations. Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared, is doubled. If you want to feel rich, just count all the things you have that money can't buy.

"Today is a gift, that's why it is called the present. Tomorrow will be the promise of Passover and the new Spring-time, the rains and the new growth, the memories of who we have been and who we truly wish to be."