

חינוך יהודי למשפחה:  
הגדה של פסח

HINUKH YEHUDI LAMISHPAHAH:  
HAGGADAH SHEL PESAḤ

*JEWISH FAMILY EDUCATION  
PASSOVER HAGGADAH*

5769 Seder Supplement: Readings

NOTE: All selections were found on the Internet, copied as presented without changing the spelling or editing.

Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner  
*Editor, Collector, Author*

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Dear Friends,

Hag Kasher v'Sameah!

The following selections have been gathered over the course of this past year. They are intended to provide additional readings, explanations, essays, even humor to supplement your Seder.

The theme of the Foundation For Family Education, Inc. 501c3, created ten years ago has been to "Making Memories," not just for Passover but for the entire range of moments in the Jewish Calendar-cycle and Jewish Life-cycle in addition to specific topics such as kashrut/dietary guidelines.

Each of the following has been kept in the same presentation as they were found on the internet, including spelling of the name of God/G-d/G?d and other alternatives. The spelling in Hebrew of terms from the Festival of Passover or the Haggadah will also vary as I preserved the original spelling, to the best of my ability.

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Otherwise, I continue to be grateful to Davka Corporation for the use of their software and fonts that are proprietary, as I am to the technology of the WWW which permits me to provide additional meaning each year to your celebration of Jewish life.

Additions will be accepted always at [bdlerner1@gmail.com](mailto:bdlerner1@gmail.com) for Seder Supplementary Readings for the coming years.

Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner  
President  
Editor, Author, Collector

## 1. CANDLE-LIGHTING

### A. THE WOMAN'S PRAYER - AT THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES (LA ORASION DE LA MUJER)

Melody by Flory Jagoda, recorded by Susan Gaeta

Lyrics: Traditional

Melody: Flory Jagoda, Balkan Sephardic composer

*An MP3 recording can be heard at*

<http://www.ritualwell.org/holidays/passover/candlelighting/primaryobject.2005-07-22.0265355985>

This traditional Sephardic blessing recited before candle-lighting, “La Orasion de la Mujer” (The Woman's Prayer), has been used by families since they were ousted from Spain around 1492. Along with being a beautiful prayer, the music is incredible – the Spanish matrix of the music and the overlay of the oriental/Balkan influence is enchanting.

#### LA ORASION DE LA MUJER

Kun estas kandelas  
Arrogamos al Dio  
El Dio de nuestros padres  
Avram, Isak i Yakov  
Ke muz de vida saludoza  
A todus miz keriduz  
I al mundo intero

Kun estas kandelas  
Arrogamos al Dio  
El Dio de nuestros madres  
Sara, Rifka, Lea i Rachel  
Ke muz de vida saludoza  
A todus miz keriduz  
I al mundo intero  
The Woman's Prayer

With these candles  
We pray to God  
The God of our fathers  
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob  
To grant us good life and health  
To all my dear ones  
And the whole world

With these candles  
We pray to God  
The God of our mothers  
Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel

To grant us good life and health  
To all my dear ones and the whole world

There are many more of these gorgeous prayers and benedictions, written in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), and chanted from the soul.

## **B. CANDLE-LIGHTING BLESSINGS**

Begin your seder by lighting the candles with one of the following blessings over the candles, followed by the shehechyanu prayer for special occasions and a techine, a private prayer to be recited after lighting the candles or a poem by Hannah Senesh (Senesz).

### **1. Traditional Blessing for Lighting Holiday Candles**

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-Olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik neir shel (Shabbat v'shel) Yom Tov.

You are Blessed, O God, Spirit of the World, who makes us holy with mitzvot and commands us to kindle the light of (Shabbat and of) the festival day.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-Olam shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu laz'man hazeh.

You are Blessed, Our God, Spirit of the World, who keeps us in life, who sustains us and who enables us to reach this season.

### **2. Candle Lighting Blessing Using Feminine God-Language**

B'rucha At Ya Eloheinu Ruach ha-Olam asher kid'shatnu b'mitzvotaha v'tzivatnu l'hadlik neir shel (Shabbat v'shel) Yom Tov.

You are Blessed, O God, Spirit of the World, who makes us holy with mitzvot and commands us to kindle the light of (Shabbat and of) the festival day.

B'rucha At Ya Eloheinu Ruach ha-Olam shehecheyatnu v'kiy'matnu v'higiatnu laz'man hazeh.

You are Blessed, Our God, Spirit of the World, who keeps us in life, who sustains us and who enables us to reach this season.

### **3. Techine / Private Woman's Prayer for Candle Lighting**

Techines are women's Yiddish prayers written in the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, in Eastern and Central Europe. Techines (from the Hebrew word le-hit'hanen, to supplicate) were used by women for prayer at home or in the synagogue. They often

refer to specific women's commandments like candle-lighting and contain references to the Matriarchs and other biblical women. For more on techines see Chava Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998.

*May it be Your will, my God and God of my ancestors, to be gracious to me and to all my family and to give us, and all Israel, a good and long life. Remember us with goodness and blessing, and grant us salvation and mercy. Grant us abundant blessing, and fortify the places we call home. May Your Presence dwell among us as we gather here tonight. May we be blessed with wise and learned disciples and children, lovers of God who stand in awe of You, people who speak truth and spread holiness. May those we nurture light the world with Torah and good deeds. Hear the prayers I utter now in the name of our mothers Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah. May Your light, reflected in these candles, surround us always. And let us say, Amen.*

Adapted by Nurit Shein and Sue Levi Elwell from a traditional Sephardic techine found in Cohen, Jonathon, ed. *The Sephardi Haggadah*. Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 1988.

#### **4. Blessed is the Match**

by Hannah Senesh

Blessed is the match that is consumed in kindling the flame.  
Blessed is the flame that burns in the secret fastness of the heart.  
Blessed is the heart strong enough to stop beating in dignity.  
Blessed is the match that is consumed in kindling the flame.

## 2. HOW TO MAKE A FAMILY FRIENDLY PASSOVER SEDER: New Ideas for an Age-old Tradition!

by Alice Langholt, February 06, 2006

Passover is the holiday that even the Jews who practice the least always seem to celebrate. So many of us sit with the same old dry, wine-stained Hagaddah published by Maxwell House that our family has used for generations. We try to get through it, the same old readings, the same rituals, and trying to keep the kids from spilling their grape juice, and our stomachs rumbling louder than we can sing "Dayenu." Sound familiar? Well, there is and can be more to a Passover Seder than this.

It isn't hard to change your family tradition and highlight the themes and meaning of Passover, while keeping the kids interested at the table. You will even manage to get to the meal without feeling like you'll pass out if we don't eat soon! Here are some ideas how.

Have snacks available all through the beginning of the seder. They are permissible! Especially vegetables and dip. Since we're dipping parsley into salt water, we can continue to have a little appetizer to get us through the beginning. Hard boiled eggs don't have to wait. So, don't be afraid to nibble.

Hand-washing: have everyone wash the hands of the person next to them. This can involve everyone, and symbolizes the freedom we enjoy now. Slaves couldn't stop and wash their hands. They couldn't do for others. Washing another person's hands (even wiping them with a warm, damp cloth), is a loving thing to do for someone, and shows that we are free to be caring people. Isn't freedom great?

For the plagues, here are some family friendly ideas. Assign people around the table to act out one plague when we get to it. Or, give everyone paper and colored pencils or crayons and assign them to draw an assigned plague, and then show it to the group, either having the group guess which it was, or explaining their drawing. Individual interpretations are always welcome at a Seder! Even adults can have a good time with this. Have sound effects prepared for a number of plagues. Play them as each one is listed. Have little toys that symbolize a plague at each place and have the people guess which is theirs, and then they have to explain why they think so. Examples of these can be band-aids for boils, RID for lice, stuffed animals for wild beasts, sunglasses for darkness, an obit for death of the firstborn. When that last plague is read, have each person at the table who is the first born in their family stand. At my family seder, we have a reading that the first born all read together. Have a discussion about modern plagues in our lives, such as greed, abuse of power, lying, violence, destruction of our earth's resources, apathy, etc. Kids can work on their plague drawings during the seder readings.

Have lots of songs to sing. [ **Editors note:** world's largest Seder Songbook is available for download <http://www.jewishfreeware.org/downloads/folder.2006-01-07.0640323187/>] Ask the kids for requests. Try to think of a song that uses a word from each plague. Have a special quiz after each symbolic part of the seder, asking for a modern meaning for

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each thing. For example, parsley is for spring, renewal. It can be for birth, new beginnings, too. Have each person talk about a new beginning in their lives. Or, ask for volunteers to talk about that. Maror, bitterness of slavery, can also be things that make our lives bitter. Ask questions around the table - what bitterness would you change from your own life? The seder is for asking questions! Charoset - a mixture of sweet things that represent mortar. What holds your life together as the mortar held the bricks? Ask everyone to tell something that keeps them "together." Yachatz, breaking of the middle matza, is about separating the matza into pieces, one which will be hidden. What kind of separations happened in our lives in the past year? Talk about that. What still remains hidden to us, as the afikoman is hidden? What do we still search for? Give the kids prizes for good answers. Incentives always help. Food is a great incentive, by the way! So are stickers and little cheap-o toys you can find in the discount store. Doing these things will add spice to your Seder and make it family friendly.

Begin the seder in the living room. Recline, let the kids run around a little. Have the first glass of wine there, and dip the parsley there and also have some veggies. That really sets the relaxing mood, and makes sitting at the table seem to be a shorter time. Hey, we're free. We are supposed to recline and relax at Passover time.

You may want to begin with something interesting and exciting by having a member of your family begin the seder pretending to be a guest traveler, just freed from Egypt. Or, a stranger who does not know the story of Passover, and he can ask the kids to tell him about what to expect from the story. Dramatics always are a great way to increase the family friendliness of your Seder.

If your Seder goes too long, and after dinner everyone is tired out, consider splitting the Hagaddah in half. Have a second Seder, and do the bare bones minimum and eat early. Then, spend some time on the after-dinner portion. Enjoy the singing, the door opening for Elijah. Discuss what it would take to save us from our plagues in our lives. Sing Hallel, and really have a good time! Use puppets to do Chad Gad Ya. Assign each child a part in that song. Have speed contests for "Who Knows One?" Do it in English and in Hebrew, or whatever your guests can do.

The idea is to get everyone thinking, having fun, and talking about the meaning behind all we do for Passover. There is so much meaning to be found if you try, that you could go on all night and never get tired of the discoveries. Good luck, and Chag Sameach!

**3. PREPARING FOR PASSOVER: READINGS FOR THE SEDER TABLE**

by Stewart Vile Tahl

Every year we celebrate Passover, commemorating our people's liberation from slavery over 3,000 years ago by retelling the story of our Exodus from Egypt. Every year we have the opportunity to find new meaning in that story. This year, 2003, Earth Day falls on the first day of Passover, providing an opportunity to focus on the connection between the story of our liberation from slavery and the current struggle to liberate ourselves from individual and societal patterns that are destroying our environment.

As part of Operation Noah, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) has developed the following materials for Passover to help you explore the ways in which over consumption and materialism "enslave" us as individuals and as a society and threaten the survival of other species and our planet. These materials use the concept of Dayenu, of "enoughness" as a concept that can liberate us and enrich our lives while protecting God's creation in all of its glorious diversity.

This exploration is based on four truths about us and our present world. A first truth is that while human beings have, in many different times and places, over-exploited their natural resource base and have perished or had to move elsewhere, never before in human history have we over-exploited on the same global scale as now. Major eco-systems across the planet are in trouble. The biological foundations of human life - the living systems that provide us with food, clean water, and a stable climate are in many ways seriously imperiled. These trends are already resulting in the extinction of thousands of species.

A second truth is that to a large extent, the material and human resources of the world are now organized to feed the consumption habits of the wealthiest 1/5 of the world's population. We tend to take for granted the material comforts of our society and tend not to see the real costs of those comforts to other people and ecosystems around the world. Our lifestyle seems "normal" to us, and most of us would not consider ourselves extravagant consumers. Yet we in the US consume, on average 10 or more times as much of the earth's resources as someone living in China, India, or another developing country.

A third truth is that the actions we can take to preserve our planetary ecosystem, reducing damaging consumption of the Earth's resources is among the most important and necessary. Many people assume that overpopulation is the biggest threat to the integrity of our planetary ecosystems, but the places where overpopulation is the biggest threat to the integrity of our planetary ecosystems, but the places where overpopulation seems to be the biggest problem are also the places where people consume the least. A child growing up in Bangladesh, for example, consumes less than 1/100th as much commercial energy (oil, gas, electricity, etc.) as a child growing up in the US. In order to successfully address the threats to our global environment, we in the industrialized countries, especially North America, need to change our consumption habits.

To fourth truth, a spiritual truth, is that once our basic physical needs are met, we have other, higher needs - spiritual fulfillment, self-esteem, family, community, and meaningful work. These needs are not satisfied through more material comfort. Indeed, having more in a material sense often stifles the satisfaction of our non-material needs. Studies have shown that above a certain level of material comfort, our relative happiness actually declines with increasing wealth.

Passover is rich with teachings we can use to live more sustainably and happily on earth. One of the names for Passover is Z'man Chay-Ru-Tay-Nu, the time of our freedom. As we go through this holiday, let's think about the degree to which we are enslaved by our addiction to material things. Let's think about what it costs us as individuals, families, and communities to pursue the consumptive lifestyle to which we have become accustomed. Let's think about what our real material needs are and how they might be satisfied at less cost to each other and to the rest of life on the planet. Let's think about who our Pharaohs are - the forces in our society and within each of us that make us want more and more. Let's think about who are Moses's are - who, within us and around us, can help us break out of patterns of over consumption and materialism? Let's think about the other ways in which Judaism in general and Passover in particular can help us lead happier, more fulfilling, and less consumptive lives.

Who is Rich? Those who are content with their portion. Pirke Avot

No matter what their income, a depressing number of Americans believe that if they only had twice as much, they would inherit the estate of happiness promised them in the Declaration of Independence. The man who receives \$15,000 a year is sure that he could relieve his sorrow if he had only \$30,000 a year: the man with \$1 million a year knows that all would be well if he had \$2 million a year...Nobody has enough.

- Lewis Lapham, Money and Class in America: Notes and Observations on Our Civil Religion, 1988

How does our consumption lead to the endangerment of other species? There are three major ways.

1. We physically alter or destroy the ecosystems in which many species live when we log virgin forests for wood and paper products; when we build sprawling cities that destroy wetlands; when we turn vast areas of land into agro-industrial zones.

2. We pollute habitats, putting toxic materials and excessive levels of nutrients into species' homes when we release toxic industrial byproducts into rivers, lakes, and oceans; when pesticides leach into water; when we release sulfur into the air which falls as acid rain on forests; when mining and processing of metals pollutes watersheds; when poorly managed land erodes into streams.

3. We contribute to changes in the world's atmosphere and climate in ways that cause harm to many species when we burn fossil fuels; when we destroy forests; when we release ozone-destroying chemicals into the atmosphere.

#### SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR PASSOVER

On the day before Passover, it is a custom to search throughout one's home for any

trace of chametz -- leavening. One way of looking at Chametz/Leaven is as the ways in which your life is "bloated" in a material sense - the stuff and activities that are superfluous to and distracting from the fulfillment of your deepest dreams and goals. Identifying your "Chametz"

Look around your house for the "stuff" that isn't really important to you. Identify the "stuff" that encumbers more than it liberates. Roughly calculate the hours of your life-energy you devoted to earning enough to acquire this "stuff". Examine how you spend your time and identify the activities that are "Chametzdik", unnecessary expenditures of your time and life-energy spent in pursuit of things that are irrelevant or distracting to the life purposes you identified above. What would living a "Chametz-free" life for a week be like?

#### IDENTIFYING YOUR "MATZAH"

Matzah is called "simple bread" or "poor man's bread." One way of looking at Matzah is as those simple activities and things that truly nourish you and help you accomplish your deepest dreams. What Matzah can you identify in your life? What are the physical items in your household that really do nourish you and assist you in the fulfillment of your dreams? What are the "Matzahdik" activities in your life, those activities that bring you closer to the fulfillment of your life's purposes?

Identifying your Mitzrayims

What Mitzrayims, what "straits and limitations," can you identify in your own life? To what are you enslaved? In what areas of your life are you in need of liberation?

Making a Personal Exodus

In every generation, a person is obligated to regard himself as if he personally left Egypt. The Haggadah

How might you use this information in preparing for and carrying out your own "Exodus", your own journey of liberation this Passover? What "Chametz" would you like to eliminate and what "Matzah" would you like to "ingest" more of during the week of Passover in order to help you break free from some of your "Mitzrayims"?

Making a Communal Exodus

The original Exodus was much more than a collection of personal liberations. It was a collective liberation, a liberation of an entire people. How can we engage our society in an Exodus from materialism and over-consumption? How do we begin the journey towards the Promised Land, a land rich in community, rich in opportunities for the development of our human potential, and rich in relationships with each other and the rest of the planet?

Their land is full of silver and gold, there is no limit to their treasure. Their land is full of horses, there is not limit to their chariots. And so their land is full of idols: they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have wrought.

-Isaiah 2:7-9

The upper classes in any society are more satisfied with their lives than the lower classes are, but they are no more satisfied than the upper classes of much poorer societies - nor than the upper classes were in the less affluent past. Consumption is thus a treadmill, with everyone judging their status by who is ahead and who is behind.

- Michael Argyle, *The Psychology of Happiness*

#### **4. PASSOVER: DIPPING PARSLEY INTO WATERS OF TEARS: THE EARTH CRIES OUT TO US**

By Rabbi Warren Stone, Washington, D.C.

Following is reading you can use during the seder at the time parsley or another green is dipped into salt water. You might also write your own!

##### **If the Earth Could Speak, It Would Speak with Passion.**

As you dip the beauty of greens into the water of tears, please hear my cry. Can't you see that I am slowly dying? My forests are being clear cut, diminished. My diverse and wondrous creatures -- birds of the sky and beasts of the fields -- small and large are threatened with extinction in your lifetimes. My splendid, colorful floral and fauna are diminishing in kind. My tropical places are disappearing before us, and my oceans are warming. Don't you see that my climate is changing, bringing floods and heat, more extreme cycles of cold and warm, all affecting you and all our Creation? It doesn't have to be! You, all of you, can make a difference in simple ways. You, all of you, can help reverse this sorrowful trend.

May these waters into which you dip the greens become healing waters to sooth and restore. As you dip, quietly make this promise:

Yes, I can help protect our wondrous natural places. Yes, I can try to use fewer of our precious resources and to replant and sustain more. I can do my part to protect our forests, our oceans and waters. I can work to protect the survival of creatures of all kinds. Yes, I will seek new forms of sustainable energy in my home and in my work, turning toward the sun, the wind, the waters. I make this promise to strive to live gently upon this Earth of ours for the good of all coming generations.

##### **Yachatz**

The Torah (Deuteronomy 16:3) calls Matzah "Lechem Oni", which is commonly translated as "Bread of Affliction", but means, more literally, "poor person's bread" or "peasant bread." For our ancestors, bread was the staff of life, symbolic of all food. One name for Passover is "The Festival of Matzah", but it might also be called "The Festival of Simple Food". Part of the great genius of this holiday is the way in which the simple peasant food of our slave past was transformed into the food of our redemption. How might Matzah as simple food redeem us now?

One way is our own personal health. Many of the serious diseases in our society have now been linked to over consumption of animal foods and processed foods of all sorts. In the past decade, medical authorities have begun to recommend less animal food and more whole grains and fresh vegetables.

A second way is by sharing food with the hungry. What do Matzah/simple food and hunger have to do with one another? If we all ate more simply, there would be more for others. This is an important lesson for the modern world and especially for us in

America. More than 70% of the grain grown in the US goes to feed livestock. The livestock flesh, in turn, will feed far fewer people than the feed that went into it. If all the grain grown for livestock were consumed directly by people, it would feed five times as many people as it does when fed to animals.

A third way is that eating simple, fresh food grown by local farmers who practice sustainable farming methods reduces pollution for fertilizers and pesticides which threaten the health of humans, other species, and whole ecosystems.

Is this not the fast that I have chosen? To loose the chains of wickedness, to undo the bonds of oppression, and to let the oppressed go free...Is it not to share thy bread with the hungry?

-Isaiah 58:6-7

This is the Lechem Oni, Simple Bread, that our ancestors ate when they were slaves in Mitzrayim. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in need celebrate Pesach with us. This year, we are still alienated from the land and its living communities. Next year may we be more connected to our people's homeland, Israel, and to the natural world that is homeland to us all. This year, we are still slaves, tied to materialistic and destructive consumption patterns. Next year, may we and all the peoples of the earth be redeemed by having enough to satisfy our needs without consuming beyond what the earth can sustain.

## 5. THE PESACH SEDER: MEANING-MAKING

by Marc Silverman

### OPENING

Anyone familiar with the main components of the festive ritual meal and celebration of the Pesach Leil HaSeder (the evening of the Passover feast) would readily agree that this occasion is a superb example of “embodied learning” at its highest level. Beautiful settings, dishes, wine glasses, and cutlery; the decorative Seder plate itself with its colorful display of foods, each symbolizing an aspect of the Passover story; textual readings, reciting, singing in unison or individually in turn, and the resulting sense of community and solidarity among the people around the table; the savoring of delicious foods and no-less-delicious wines; lively conversation and cross-generational dialogue: For the participants, all these elements combine to engender what can be a transforming cultural and educational experience and a life-enriching formative memory. The powerful “Seder experience” and its transformative potential perhaps explain why, of the rich array of Jewish holiday celebrations and traditions, the Seder ritual is the one most prominent and widespread among Jews today.

Yet despite our genuine praise of the Seder, we must acknowledge the all-too-frequent appearance of a painful gap between the real Seders (sedarim) we experience and the ideal transformational Seder we envision and only occasionally experience. By way of a brief personal testimony, I can honestly say that of the fifty-odd Seders I have experienced and can remember, no more than five actually yielded the kind of transformative learning referred to here.

Why is this gap so powerfully present in so many of our life experiences? What factors militate against the Passover Seder’s realization of its transformative potential? What forces derail its travel on the track of growth inducement?

In the following, I will try not only to identify these factors and forces, but also to suggest ways of overcoming them. I am hopeful (always!) and relatively certain that readers who share my frustrations concerning the gap between the real and the ideal Seder will find some of my arguments and suggestions fruitful and useful; at the same time, I hope that even those readers who are quite satisfied with the Pesach Seder as is will find these ideas thought-provoking.

### IDENTIFYING AND SURMOUNTING THE MILITATING FORCES

The main factors militating against an existentially meaningful, compelling, and transformational Seder experience are philosophical/ideological or personal/psychological, or a combination of both.

An overarching theme informs my view of these different forces: I believe that insensitivity to rich, diverse types of contexts on the one hand and a preference, whether conscious or unconscious, for texts rather than contexts on the other hand are at the core of the Seder’s inability to attain its transformative potential. Consequently, the philosophical/ideological forces least conducive and most hostile to a meaningful Seder experience are dogmatism, fundamentalism, fanaticism, and authoritarianism; the least conducive and most hostile personal/psychological forces are inflexible, rigid,

monologic rather than dialogic personality traits – the powerful “presence of the absence” of interpersonal or social intelligence.

This description of the forces hostile to the experience of a meaningful Seder assigns the responsibility for success or failure to those who conduct the ritual feast. Placing the onus on the leader(s) is consistent with our view of the Seder as an exceptionally rich cultural and educational opportunity. There is widespread agreement among educational theorists, from the most conservative to the most progressive, about the central role of teachers and educators: They hold primary responsibility for inspiring, facilitating, and guiding the learning and teaching processes. Those of us who are teachers and educators are well aware of the rabbinic maxim that though we humans are not necessarily expected to finish the work we’ve undertaken, we are duty-bound to remain committed to our tasks and to refrain from abandoning them!

Caring, wise teachers realize that the finite, partial nature of their control over the myriad and potent forces at play in educational contexts— forces that include things, occurrences, and persons—precludes any attempt to exercise full control in their classrooms and over their learners. Such teachers are not and cannot be “control freaks.” However, the converse is equally true and relevant: Teachers’ realization of the intrinsic and extrinsic limitations on their control does not excuse them from serious preparation for the educational encounters awaiting them on the one hand, or from responsibility for implementing and inspiring the learning processes they have so carefully planned on the other hand.

These reflections on the role of teachers and educators are also applicable to the role of Seder leaders. Bearing in mind the general points made in the opening section of this essay, we now turn to a more detailed analysis of the forces that keep a Seder from being meaningful.

#### TEXT VS. CONTEXT (1): AROUND THE SEDER TABLE

Not discounting the difficulty of arriving at a generalization that would encompass the diverse types, ages, and numbers of persons sitting around the Seder table, we can say that the participants rarely share a common commitment to and understanding of the Seder, its rituals in general, and the text of the traditional Haggadah in particular. Sedarim are quite often intergenerational, including male and female grandchildren, children, and young, mature, and elderly adults. Often they also include people with very different approaches to Judaism and Jewish religious tradition, whose respective learning styles differ in general and in particular, as concerns the correct balance between time allotted to cognitive learning (reading and discussing the Haggadah) and time devoted to experiential learning (eating the festive meal!).

It is more than clear and more than certain that enabling each member of the group at the Seder table to experience the going-out from Egypt and to free himself/herself or his/her community from enslavement in a personal way is predicated upon the Seder leaders’ sensitivity to the group members’ distinct cultural worlds and agendas on the one hand, and on the other hand upon the leaders’ ability to devise ways of responding to these particular worlds and agendas. It is no less certain and no less clear, however, that many Seder leaders are uninterested in exercising such sensitivity and in devising

learning strategies in its light.

Such disinterest usually derives from the leaders' commitment to conducting the Seder according to the dictates of clearly articulated Jewish tradition, often explained in the Haggadah. A powerful sense of the sanctity, the inviolability, of the Seder-related texts, textures, and ceremonies is at the core of this commitment. The reverence for tradition, the concern for its integrity and authenticity, the trustful approach to its interpretation, and the religious piety embodied in the uncompromising insistence on conducting a Seder entirely *kehilchato*—as designated by Jewish law, or *Halacha*--are both understandable and praiseworthy. At the same time, it would be disingenuous not to acknowledge the common, often very high educational price exacted by this faithfulness to tradition and to the traditional text.

This high cost is encapsulated in the pithy rabbinic phrase, “*yatza secharo behefsedo*” – losing more than one gains. The gains are canceled by the losses these very gains produced: The authenticity of the Seder readings and proceedings and the rereading and reenacting of the Seder ritual as defined and legislated by tradition (the gains) paradoxically create a rich array of negative emotions (the losses) in most of the people at the Seder table. Among these emotions one can identify anger, resentment, impatience, frustration, boredom, and ennui. Generalizing, we suggest that most, if not all, of these emotions can be subsumed in three interrelated categories: alienation, disaffection, and disenchantment.

By and large, these negative emotions are not due to any “mean-spiritedness” on the participants' part. They usually stem from genuine, specific difficulties encountered by each person or set of diverse persons comprising the group of Seder participants. For those unfamiliar with the basic parameters of rabbinic homiletics, or midrash-making, the midrash on the exodus from Egypt in the Magid section of the Haggadah is probably the most difficult to understand. I can think of several ways of relating to this centerpiece of the Haggadah text that would not estrange participants unfamiliar with rabbinic methods of exegesis, but enumerating them is beyond the scope of this essay. What can and must be stressed here, however, is our contention that the all-too-familiar rapid, impersonal reading through of this Haggadah section is a grave pedagogic error that almost certainly will alienate uninitiated yet interested and thoughtful Seder participants. From this particular pernicious error, we can deduce a pedagogic rule-of-thumb for conducting a Seder: Genuine, meaningful, educational, perhaps even transformational connections between the texts, textures, and ceremonies of the *Pesach Leil HaSeder* and the Seder participants can result only from courteous, dialogic learning processes; bullying, monologic learning processes imposed from without—the banking concept of education--produce only alienation between Jewish tradition and contemporary Jews.

#### TEXT VS. CONTEXT (2): AWAY FROM THE SEDER TABLE

To a significant degree, the specific aspect of the “text vs. context” problem that we discuss in the last part of this essay is a direct extension of the internal aspects investigated above: what goes on inside the room at the Seder table and within the relationship between the people sitting at the table and the person(s) leading the Seder. I refer here to the general global or particular (historical, national, political, social,

cultural, religious) contexts outside of—beyond and away from—the home in which the Seder takes place. These outside realities ultimately enter or already exist in the hearts and minds of the people who are inside their homes and gathered around the Seder table.

The aspect we refer to can be defined in terms of existing or emergent disjunctions between “burning” political, social, economic, cultural, and religious issues in societies where Jews make their homes and timeless themes, ideas, visions, and values honored on major Jewish holidays in the annual religious calendar. This disjunctive aspect often manifests itself throughout the year in different ways on different holidays. For our present purpose, we need to look at some of the disjunctions that have emerged or can emerge between contemporary issues of historical, national, political, or cultural interest and timeless major ideas and themes of Pesach.

In the process of investigating these disjunctions, we want to explain in greater depth our use of the term “timeless” to describe the themes and ideas reflected in Jewish holidays. To a considerable extent, the celebration of traditional Jewish holidays presently focuses on two distinct times: the past and the future: By remembering and reenacting the great redemptive events of the past and by hoping for and envisioning redeeming events in the future, the Jews find solace and the strength to survive the travails of the present. In light of these dual focal points, the present has no intrinsic meaning; it is viewed and experienced as a way station from which one simultaneously looks back at the past and looks forward to the (better) future. All the disjunctions to which we refer have their genesis here, at the moment when people in the modern world, including most Jews, grant intrinsic meaning to the events, problems, and challenges of the present and no longer view it primarily from the perspective of past or future situations.

In the specific case of Pesach, we are called upon to reenact our liberation from slavery by the grace and generosity of G-d’s will to redeem us; to express our boundless gratitude to this Being; and to envision and hope for the day in the distant future when we Jews and all other peoples will be wholly redeemed and liberated. But, alas, assuming we are among the majority of Jews today who take to heart the urgent political problems of our times and actively seek to resolve them, how can we possibly devote our thoughts, emotions, and energies at the Seder table, through the reading of the Haggadah, solely to our own liberation? Without in any way discounting the presence of human beings among the nations of the world who seek our destruction, are we not considerably more liberated than a great many other peoples? Indeed, if we are among those Jews who believe deeply that there is an ethical and moral basis to the argument for an independent Palestinian nation-state in areas now governed by Israel, how can we commemorate our liberation from Egyptian oppression without expressing a concern for Palestinian liberation? But can we simultaneously remain faithful to the integrity of our Pesach traditions and the Haggadah narrative and incorporate references to oppressed nations and groups, praying that they—including the Palestinian people—may be liberated?

As Jews, Jewish educators, and members of specific Jewish communities and

congregations, we are called upon to respond to these and other, related questions. It might be far more constructive and might inspire far more Jews to devote significant creative gifts to the study, celebration, and internalization of Jewish texts and ideas if we were to become less preoccupied with preserving the “authenticity” and “integrity” of our tradition and more concerned with authenticating the real struggles of contemporary Jews as they enter into a dialogue with Jewish religious traditions. I am deeply convinced that these traditions will only be enriched, broadened, and deepened, and never short-changed or depleted, by the dialogic encounter suggested here.

With the wish that we all may find our own specific ways to liberate ourselves from our respective enslavements and to assist others to liberate themselves from theirs,  
Be'birkat Chag Pesach Ve'Aviv Sameach,

*Marc Silverman has been a member of the Melton Centre for Jewish Education faculty in the School of Education of the Hebrew University for over 20 years; he teaches some BA and mainly MA courses. He also serves as a tutor to senior Jewish educators of the Diaspora studying for a year (Melton Centre's senior educational program) or two (the Jerusalem fellows program of the Mandel school for professional leadership) in Jerusalem; he is the academic director of short-term in-service Jewish educators' and teachers' enrichment programs at the Melton Centre and the Hebrew University representative academic head of the Jewish teaching/educational track at Moscow State University.*

**6. DARFUR— A SUPPLEMENT TO THE PASSOVER SEDER****INTRODUCTION AND NOTE TO THE SEDER LEADER**

Every year at this time, Jews are commanded to remember that we were slaves in Egypt. We tell each other the story of Exodus, of Moses, Aaron and Pharaoh, and give thanks to G-d for our freedom and redemption. But the commandment goes much further, according to Nachmanides: the Torah's reminder "you were strangers in Egypt" is a lesson that G-d stands by the persecuted in situations of oppression. The recollection of our redemption is meant to encourage Jews, who are G-d's partners, to help the oppressed, Jews and non-Jews alike.

In past years, Jews throughout the world have been asked to remember other oppressed groups in their Passover seders: Soviet Jews, Ethiopian Jews, etc. This Passover, as you remember our passage as a people m'avdut l'cherut (from slavery to freedom), we ask you to think of the genocide taking place in Darfur (a region in western Sudan). On the following pages, you will find background information, Jewish readings and prayers, and specific actions you and your family can take to help stop this terrible crime. Please find an appropriate moment in your Passover seder to read some of these, so that you and your guests can leave the seder inspired to take action.

Passover is about halfway between last Yom Kippur and the next, an excellent time for a "midyear review" of our progress with promises we made to G-d and to ourselves. In the prayer "Al Chayt" ("For the Sin"), we ask G-d to forgive us "in the matter of extending a hand." Let's make sure that next Yom Kippur, we can cross that sin off our list. There are actions each of us can take that can, and will, make a difference.

**BACKGROUND**

As our ancestors were faced with the genocidal intent and oppression of Pharaoh, so today the people of Darfur face enslavement and ethnic extinction. Since both the victims and the perpetrators are Muslim, this conflict is racial— between Arab raiders and the black African people of Darfur. Since February 2003, the Sudanese government have recruited and sponsored Janjaweed (literally, "armed men on horseback") militias to displace native black African civilians. Using rape, organized starvation and mass murder as tools of war, the Janjaweed have killed an estimated 400,000 people (with 6,000 more Darfuris killed each month), and displaced more than 2.5 million. According to reports by the World Food Program, the UN and the Coalition for International Justice, 3.5 million people are now hungry. The militias burn villages, systematically rape women and girls (as young as eight), abduct children, and destroy food and water supplies. Survivors of the raids have reported seeing government military planes participate in the attacks, bombing their villages. As the situation on the ground deteriorates, the Darfur crisis is spreading to eastern Chad, where Janjaweed are employing identical tactics against Chadian civilians (also non-Arab Africans), with similar consequences. "If no preventive action is taken, it may only be a matter of time before the refugee camps in Chad (which house Darfuri refugees) are threatened," warns Human Rights Watch Africa Director Peter Takirambudde.

Despite the efforts by the U.S. government to bring about peace in the North-South

conflict in Sudan, UN agencies report that the Janjaweed militias continue to abduct women and children in Darfur in the west, which is not covered by the peace talks. According to the American Anti-Slavery Group, "Since the mid-1980s, Sudan has experienced a surge in cases of slavery." When the Janjaweed raid black African villages, they murder the men, but take women and children as slaves. "Of over 1,000 female slaves recently freed, nearly 70% confessed they were victim to rape, 60% to gang rape, and nearly a third to genital mutilation." For more information, please visit the web sites listed in the "What Can We Do?" section of this supplement.

#### PASSOVER READINGS AND PRAYERS Shabbat 54b:

One who can prevent members of his household from committing a sin and does not do so, is punishable for their sin. If one can prevent his fellow citizens from committing a sin, and does not do so, he is punishable for their sin. If one can prevent the whole world from committing a sin and does not, he is punishable for the sin of the entire world.

The Four Children (To be discussed after "The Four Children" in the seder)

There is much rabbinic commentary on the Four Children (traditionally, Four Sons) in the seder. The Rabbis see them as representing four types of people. The types of people we are will determine our responses to human tragedies like the genocide in Darfur. Discuss the response to each of these Four Children— the wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one who does not know how to ask— about Darfur.

The wise child asks "What are our responsibilities, as Jews, to the oppressed people of Darfur?" The wicked child asks, "Why should we care what happens to a bunch of Muslims thousands of miles away?" The simple child asks, "What can we do to help those people?" And what shall we say to the child who does not know how to ask?

From Elie Wiesel (Remarks delivered July 14, 2004, in New York at the Darfur Emergency Summit, cosponsored by the American Jewish World Service and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.)

"Lo taamod al dam réakha" is a Biblical commandment. "Thou shalt not stand idly by the shedding of the blood of thy fellow man." The word is not "akhikha," thy Jewish brother, but "réakha," thy fellow human being, be he or she Jewish or not.

#### A CALL TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

Judaism is not simply a religious expression, an ethnic group or a nation. Our relationship with G-d is built on the principle of partnership— we are stewards of G-d's creation and the guardians of civilization.... Ecclesiastes Rabba explicates: When the Holy One created the first human, G-d took him and led him around all the trees of the garden of Eden, and said to him: "Behold my works— how beautiful, and how splendid they are. All that I have created, I created for your sake. Take care that you do not become corrupt and destroy My world. For once you become corrupt, there is none after you to repair it." Our b'rit (covenant) with G-d is predicated on our willingness to be a light to the nations. Our relationship with G-d obligates us as partners in the ongoing perfection of this world. As Jews living in a sacred community, it is our duty to look for

the divine spark in others, and to magnify that light by creating a world based on the principles of justice and righteousness. — Rabbi David B. Thomas, Congregation Beth El, December 21, 2001

**PRAYER FOR OVERCOMING INDIFFERENCE**

(Gates of Repentance, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1978)

For the sin of silence,  
 For the sin of indifference,  
 For the secret complicity of the neutral.  
 For the closing of borders,  
 For the washing of hands,  
 For the crime of indifference,  
 For the sin of silence,  
 For the closing of borders. For all that was done,  
 For all that was not done,  
 Let there be no forgetfulness before the Throne of Glory;  
 Let there be remembrance within the human heart;  
 And let there at last be forgiveness  
 When Your children, O God,  
 Are free and at peace.

**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

Will anything help? When asked why the United States didn't step in to stop the massacre of Tutsis in Rwanda, Bill Clinton's National Security Advisor, Tony Lake, answered, "Because the phones didn't ring." Politicians respond to issues that their constituents bring to their attention. If you don't care, your MP won't, either. David Kilgour, a former Liberal MP who left the Martin caucus, and voted against the initial Martin budget as a protest against Canada's inaction on Darfur, told a conference at the University of Western Ontario that an MP will pay attention if (s)he receives 5 letters or gets a visit from 3 voters. And, he said, Ottawa could never ignore a rally of 10,000 people.

Think Canada can't do anything? True, we're not a superpower, but Canada's traditional international role has been one of moral leadership, peacekeeping and persuasion. If Canada doesn't speak out, who will? So, make your voice heard— it really does make a difference!

Take these actions:

\* Write to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Minister of Foreign Affairs Peter MacKay, and your MP. Tell them you want Canada to use its international influence to SAVE DARFUR. A sample letter is included at the end of this supplement. You can reach all three at: House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6. No stamp is required. To find your MP's name, go to: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/index.asp?Language=E> and scroll down to "Current Parliamentarians." Type in your postal code and click "find."

\* If you have received this supplement in hard copy, you can get an electronic copy of it, and of the letter, at [www.narayever.ca](http://www.narayever.ca)

\* While a paper letter carries more weight, e-mail can also be effective. To contact

Members of Parliament, follow this pattern: ([surnameDOTfirstinitial@parl.gc.ca](mailto:surnameDOTfirstinitial@parl.gc.ca)). For example, Stephen Harper would be: [Harper.S@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Harper.S@parl.gc.ca)

\* Write to the media. Encourage your local papers and TV and radio stations to give Darfur more coverage. Write letters to the editor or submit an opinion piece. Express outrage that Michael Jackson and the Oscars get far more coverage than this important issue.

\* Get your friends and family involved. Numbers are important— the more people write, the more the politicians will respond. Send an e-mail to your whole address book, with some background information and the sample letter. Invite some friends over for coffee, a discussion and a letter-writing session.

\* Raise the issue of Darfur at your synagogue. Maybe your Social Action Committee will take it on, or you can start an Urgent Action Darfur Committee.

\* Sign up for newsletters at the following web sites: CASTS (Canadians Against Slavery and Torture in Sudan), [www.geocities.com/castsudan](http://www.geocities.com/castsudan) 416... STAND (Students Taking Action Now— Darfur), [www.standcanada.org](http://www.standcanada.org) Save Darfur Coalition, [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org)

\* Have a speaker come to your synagogue. Contact the above organizations for help and names of speakers.

\* Create awareness with SAVE DARFUR merchandise, available on the [savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org) website at: <http://store.yahoo.com/yhst-88482264721289/index.html>

\* Make a donation to any of the above organizations.

\* Educate yourself. Order a DVD on Darfur by sending an e-mail to [Darfur@ushmm.org](mailto:Darfur@ushmm.org). Visit these websites:

[www.SaveDarfur.org](http://www.SaveDarfur.org)    [www.standcanada.org](http://www.standcanada.org)  
[www.ajws.org](http://www.ajws.org)            [www.iabolish.com](http://www.iabolish.com)  
[www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)             [www.sudanreeves.org](http://www.sudanreeves.org)  
[www.geocities.com/castsudan/](http://www.geocities.com/castsudan/)  
[www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)

<http://www.narayever.com/socialaction/darfur-pesach.htm>  
 Uploaded 12 March 2006, converted from PDF.

## 7. THE WHY OF WOMEN'S SEDERS

By Rabbi Susan P. Fendrick

<http://www.ritualwell.org/holidays/passover>

In the words of longtime Jewish feminist Francine Klagsbrun, “Women's seders have become a phenomenon of our time...From New York to Nebraska, from Berlin to London, thousands of Jewish women throughout the world celebrate the Passover holiday every year with an evening of ceremony and remembrance led by women for women.”

Why—and how—a seder primarily for women? What is a “women’s seder”?

The timing of a women’s seder—most frequently just before Passover (obviating the need for the food to be strictly kosher for Passover), or on a night during Passover other than the first two evenings (when women might want to be or be expected to be participating in more typical seders with a mixed-gender group of family and friends)—already suggests its position in Jewish ritual life. The women’s seder stands a bit on the margin, critiquing, supplementing, and serving as an implicit commentary on the traditional seder experience with its haggadah text. While for some women this is their most important—or in some cases only—significant connection to Passover, for the most part attendance at a women’s seder serves to add a feminist, woman-centered dimension to the observance of the universally Jewish holiday of Passover.

Is all this really necessary? Haven’t women become fully integrated as equals into all aspects of Jewish communal life, both religious and secular? Why a separate women’s gathering for this Jewish national celebration?

To answer these questions, we need to return to the very beginnings of Jewish national life, to the Exodus story in the Torah. The biblical tale of slavery and redemption is replete with stories of magnificently courageous women playing key roles in the saving and liberation of the Jewish people—and crossing national boundaries as they do it:

- + The midwives, Shifra and Puah, either Hebrew women themselves or Egyptian women attending them, defying Pharaoh’s orders and helping male Hebrew babies live

- + Pharaoh’s daughter, adopting the baby she saves from the river Nile (did she know he was an Israelite?)

- + Miriam, Moses’ sister, first (according to one midrash, or rabbinic legend) ensuring that her parents would reunite and produce her people’s human redeemer, then connecting Pharaoh’s daughter with a nursemaid for the baby—Yocheved, his (and Miriam’s) mother

To read the biblical story of the Exodus with open eyes is to understand Passover as, among other things, a celebration of women’s heroism. But in the traditional haggadah, women are missing. True, Moses is absent too, and the telling of the biblical story focuses on God’s intervention and liberation, not human agency—but in the many references to human beings throughout the haggadah, it is men and boys who are

referred to, and women and girls who are invisible.

If it were simply the need for feminist critique that motivated the emergence and persistence of women's seders, *dayeinu*—that would be enough. But there is more: the Passover story is, at its core, one of freedom from oppression, from the expectation that one group of people will be subservient to another. It is fundamentally a story of liberation—a story the telling of which feminists not only critique, as above, but also embrace, as elemental to our own journey as Jewish feminists.

The first feminist seder was organized by Esther Broner, Marcia Freedman, and Naomi Nimrod in Haifa in 1975, and led to the production of the *The Women's Haggadah*, which followed the traditional seder outline but used that structure to speak of Jewish women in our ancient past as well as contemporary Jewish women's experience. Since then, feminist haggadot have continuously emerged—from the cobbled-together photocopied pages of a group of friends to the professionally published *The Journey Continues* by Ma'yan, pioneers and leaders in creating and developing large community women's seders—paying tribute to women past and present, raising feminist questions, re-interpreting familiar rituals and prayers, and articulating a feminist vision of redemptions yet to come.

Women's seders and other Jewish feminist practices in connection with Passover have had their impact on the shape of the seder experience as a whole in many homes and institutions. Already there is a generation of children who would be confused if there were no Miriam's cup on the table, filled with water (and often paired with Elijah's cup of wine)—a symbol of redemption and possibility. And in many homes the placement of an orange on the seder plate—whether to represent the importance of women's full inclusion in Judaism, or to symbolize the need for gay and lesbian equality in Jewish life—is already *de rigueur*.

Finally, with so many feminist readings and interpretations available for every element of the haggadah and the seder meal, many family seders benefit from the rich resources that have emerged from the liturgy prepared for women's seders and from the wider Jewish feminist engagement with Passover. Just as the emergence of the field of women's history has not let "regular history" off the hook from including women thoroughly in its rendering of the past, so too, women's seders help infuse other seders with a focus on women as well as men, and with a feminist voice.

Still, the Jewish feminist journey is far from over—and women's gatherings are an important part of that journey. With song, with ritual, with story and prayer, Jewish women all over the world gather each Passover to name what is, and to dream of—and works toward—what is yet to be.

## 8. INVOCATION FOR WOMEN'S SEDERS

From the Ma'yan Haggadah

<http://www.ritualwell.org/holidays/passover>

Why is this night different from all other nights?

On this night, we gather together to prepare for Passover, outside of our kitchens, in a way our foremothers could have never imagined.

On this night we join as a community to rid ourselves of a different kind of chameitz.

What do we cleanse ourselves of tonight?

The exhaustion of cleaning and cooking.

The echo of exclusionary language.

The weight of history.

The fear of women's voices.

The silencing of women's stories.

The violence done to women's bodies.

The pressure to conform to one image of who Jewish women are supposed to be.

The lingering belief that this tradition doesn't belong to women.

Let us gather all this together like crumbs. Like chameitz we are ready to burn. Let us enter into this seder as if there were no more chameitz anywhere.

As if God had forever delighted in the image of Herself in each and every one of us.

As if freedom had been ours always, fully - like an open sea.

From The Journey Continues: The Ma'yan Haggadah (Ma'yan, 2000)  
[infomayan@mayan.org](mailto:infomayan@mayan.org).

## 9. MIRIAM'S CUP

Parallel to the celebration of the Cup of Elijah

### A. Miriam Ha-N'viah

Lyrics by Rabbi Leila Gal Berner

This song focusing on the Prophet Miriam is sung to the traditional melody for Elijah's song.

Miriam ha-n'vi'ah oz v'zimrah b'yadah.  
 Miriam tirkod itanu l'hagdil zimrat olam.  
 Miriam tirkod itanu l'taken et ha-olam.  
 Bimheirah v'yameinu hi t'vi'einu el mei ha-y'shuah.

Miriam the prophet, strength and song in her hand  
 Miriam dance with us in order to increase the song of the world.  
 Miriam dance with us in order to repair the world.  
 Soon she will bring us to the waters of redemption.

### B. Miriam's Song

Music and Lyrics by Deborah Lynn Friedman

And the women dancing with their timbrels  
 Followed Miriam as she sang her song  
 Sing a song to the One whom we've exalted.  
 Miriam and the women danced and danced  
 the whole night long.

And Miriam was a weaver of unique variety.  
 The tapestry she wove was one which sang our history.  
 With every thread and every strand  
 she crafted her delight.  
 A woman touched with spirit, she dances  
 toward the light.

And the women dancing with their timbrels  
 Followed Miriam as she sang her song  
 Sing a song to the One whom we've exalted.  
 Miriam and the women danced and danced  
 the whole night long.

As Miriam stood upon the shores and gazed across the sea,  
 The wonder of this miracle she soon came to believe.  
 Whoever thought the sea would part with an outstretched hand,  
 And we would pass to freedom, and march to the promised land.

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And the women dancing with their timbrels  
Followed Miriam as she sang her song  
Sing a song to the One whom we've exalted.  
Miriam and the women danced and danced  
the whole night long.

And Miriam the Prophet took her timbrel in her hand,  
And all the women followed her just as she had planned.  
And Miriam raised her voice with song.  
She sang with praise and might,  
We've just lived through a miracle, we're going to dance tonight.

And the women dancing with their timbrels  
Followed Miriam as she sang her song  
Sing a song to the One whom we've exalted.  
Miriam and the women danced and danced  
the whole night long.

**10. Selections from the HAGGADAH L'YOM ZEKHUYOT SHEL ADAM: A Human Rights Haggadah**

By Sheila Peltz Weinberg and Margaret Holub

<http://www.ritualwell.org/holidays/passover/themeseders/primaryobject.2007-11-30.5366299169>

From the Authors: At the June 2006 board meeting of Rabbis for Human Rights-North America, we both expressed an interest in creating liturgical forms that could be used in the Jewish world and beyond to help people think about human rights issues in general and the specific issue of torture....The idea of a Seder popped into our minds simultaneously. It is such a magnificent educational and ritual form. Why not use the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the central study text? The early rabbis realized that education must work on the senses and the heart as well as the intellect. We could also incorporate some of the sensual ritual moments developed by the rabbis to instill a deeper awareness of human freedom through retelling the story of the exodus from Egypt

**KARPAS / SALTWATER**

After the reading and eating of Karpas, one person reads aloud:

We are about to pass around a glass of salt water. Each of us will be asked to drink deeply from that glass. The salt water is a symbol of the tears, the wounds, and the cruelty in our world today. Our tendency might be to shrink back from this taste of suffering. We might fear that we will be overcome by the grief. It might be tempting and safer to take a tiny sip and then turn away. We therefore call upon a source of receptivity and compassion that is much greater than our limited selves. We imagine this power as able to hold more than the greatest ocean. We know that we are connected to this power. We know it is much vaster and more spacious than our isolated and alone selves. We know this power will allow us to completely taste this bitter drink as we strive to witness and address abuse and cruelty of all kinds. We aspire to a courageous heart. We drink deeply.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh Ha-Olam (Nevarekh et M'kor Hayyeinu) Shehakol nihyeh bidvaro.

Blessed is the Source of Life, by whose word all things are created.

(Drink glass of saltwater.)

**MAGGID—UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The first ten of its 30 articles are reproduced here. For the full text, go to [www.unhchr.ch/udhr/](http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/).

At the Seder, you might:

- Read the entire Declaration aloud, taking turns around the table.
- Ask everyone to read silently and pick one article that especially resonates to read aloud.

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Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4: No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6: Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7: All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8: Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10: Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

#### MAROR

Our ancestors gave us the bitter herb as a symbol of Mitzrayim/Egypt: enslavement, constriction, bitterness. Tonight we eat maror not only to remember but to taste bitterness, not only in the past but in the present, not only in our families and community but wherever the human body is assaulted, wounded, and deprived of dignity.

May the Source of Life protect and sustain all who are tortured or imprisoned without recourse, all who are fleeing oppression or who suffer on account of their gender, tribe, faith, or color or the way they express their truth. May their misery end speedily, and may they be redeemed.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh Ha-Olam (Nevarekh et M'kor Hayyeinu) Asher

kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al akhilat maror.

Blessed is the Source of Life who has given us the sacred mandate to taste the bitter herb.

(Maror is eaten.)

**11. THE SEDER AS A CONSTRUCT FOR SPECIAL INTERESTS**

by Rabbi Susan P. Fendrick

The game: Jewish Trivia. The category: Jewish holidays.

The question: What is the holiday of Passover all about?

- a. women's role in Jewish history and the relationship between Judaism and feminism
- b. gay and lesbian liberation
- c. vegetarianism and animal rights
- d. Jewish-Christian understanding
- e. Black-Jewish relations
- f. Israeli-Palestinian peace
- g. labor rights and activism on behalf of workers?

If we look at the range of "theme seders" that have emerged in the past 35 years, we can hear the answer in the collective voice of many contemporary Jews: "All of the above!"

Passover is, paradoxically, a quintessentially particularistic Jewish holiday, yet one with quintessentially universal human themes. Despite (or because of) the fact that Passover marks the metaphorical birthing of the Israelite nation into freedom, and that the theme of *yitziat mitzrayim*—going out of ancient Egypt—pervades Jewish liturgy and life, the biblical exodus has inspired many peoples over the ages in their yearning to be free.

In the United States, African-American slaves sang "Go down Moses...tell old Pharaoh to let my people go," the biblical journey to freedom living in their hopeful hearts. Harriet Tubman, the best known of the conductors on the "Underground Railroad", smuggling escaped slaves to the free North, was known as Moses—her people's greatest human liberator. Zora Neale Hurston, a writer of the Harlem Renaissance, wove together the two stories in her novel, *Moses: Man of the Mountain*. The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. drew heavily on Exodus themes and images, comparing the struggle for civil rights to the Israelites' difficult but ultimately successful escape from oppression.

As we have done with the institution of Shabbat, living in the wake of the Exodus is something that Jews have made our specialty. We remember the going out from Egypt in our daily liturgy; we count (by rabbinic tradition) no less than 36 times the biblical commandment to "remember the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." But as we've seen, the story has had deep resonance for many other peoples. And many of the resonances for Jews ourselves—translated into contemporary theme seders and Passover haggadot—go far beyond the story of our own liberation and national formation.

Here are some examples of these modern adaptations:

\* Women's/feminist seders focus on women's role in the Exodus and in Jewish history and life; the incomplete liberation of women within Judaism; and feminist

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reimaginings of haggadah texts.

\* Gay and lesbian seders draw their inspiration from the ways in which GLBT Jews are still excluded from fully being welcomed into and participating in Jewish life, community, and ritual.

\* Vegetarian seders (using, e.g., A Haggadah for the Liberated Lamb) focus on respect for all living beings, not just human freedom.

\* Jewish-Christian seders focus on interreligious understanding, a shared biblical heritage, the Jewish roots of Christianity, and joint social justice concerns.

\* Black-Jewish seders reflect our common histories of slavery (one ancient, one modern) and our close connection to the biblical text and stories, and focus on (re)building Black-Jewish partnerships for the purpose of working for social change.

\* Arab-Jewish seders (using, e.g., “A Seder of the Children of Abraham” in The Shalom Seders) focus on building bridges between the two communities, and express a yearning for peace between Israel and the Palestinians and those who care about them.

\* Labor seders emphasize labor rights and activism on behalf of workers who are nearly enslaved to unsafe working conditions and poverty wages.

The haggadah texts for these seders are usually rich cut-and-paste productions, drawing on passages from a variety of sources as well as original writings. Each may be used for an entire seder on a given theme or to provide supplemental resources for a more conventional seder on the first or second night of Passover. Freestanding theme seders often take place just before Passover, or on one of its later nights, freeing participants to spend the traditional seder evenings with family and friends—and to import readings which reflect important liberation and social change themes, whether by way of incorporating them into a do-it-yourself original haggadah or just adding readings at the seder table.

Many of these specialized haggadot are available at Judaica shops and online. There is no centralized way to find out about different types of seders in all communities, but (along with the Internet) local Jewish organizations (especially more liberal congregations and havurot) as well as Jewish newspapers are good resources for connecting you with these and other Passover events in your community.

As a postscript, we should take note of those “seders” and “haggadot” which are not primarily (or at all) in observance of Passover, but which use the structure of the haggadah and Passover themes of growth, liberation, and transformation. Two examples which you can find on Ritualwell are a menopause seder and a haggadah focusing on adoption.

**12 .My Grandfather's Maror: Some bitter herbs cannot be eaten.**

by Chani Newman

"You cannot understand what it was like. You can't imagine."

Suddenly our family Seder, usually exuberant with words of Torah, song, and the telling of our ancestors' exodus from Egypt, becomes more solemn, as my grandfather approaches the Hagadda with the baggage of a Holocaust survivor.

"What about all the times when God didn't save us?"

He can't help but ask the unanswerable questions which continue to haunt his thoughts. The younger generations sitting at the table grapple to explain the "answers" we tell ourselves to support our beliefs -- beliefs my grandfather himself puts into practice even after years of questioning. But as soon as he says it, describing just two graphic examples of the horror, I know my grandfather is right: "You were not there. You can never understand."

I distract myself by casting my gaze downward toward the bowl of maror (bitter herbs) sitting before me. I hold a plastic fork in my hand, using it to mix around the ground up pieces of horseradish. The tiny pieces move around the bowl easily, ready to be swallowed with a minimum amount of challenge to the taste buds.

And then, my fork hits something solid. Mixed up among the tiny pieces lies a large chunk of the original horseradish root, as solid as ever. I try to cut it and stab it with my fork, but to no avail. This piece will not be broken up tonight. It is too large, too hard, and too strong and bitter for anybody to eat whole.

I look up at my grandfather. I attempt to say something worthwhile, some words of comfort. We are still here, getting stronger, still praising God for the good. Thoughts that evil is man-made flit through my head. Thoughts that perhaps, regardless, we just can't understand, mortal humans as we are. But as my eyes turn back to the maror, silence is my response.

Why can't that chunk just go away? It's so much easier to deal with the mixture that has gone through the food processor. Frustrated, I stab at the chunk again, thinking how this piece is more connected to its root than the other pieces. This piece contains more bitterness than any of the ground up pieces.

The images will not go away from my grandfather's brain. He speaks of rabbis humiliated by Nazis who cut their skin off together with their beards, of public hangings. The pain and bitterness is rock solid, indigestible. But for myself, my brothers, my parents, the pain is ground up into tiny, palatable pieces. What can we do about the troubled solid chunk sitting in the bowl?

My eyes divert from the bowl before me and shift to the other symbolic foods on the table. They stop and rest on the lump of charoset (a mixture of sweet ingredients,

including apples, wine, and nuts) on the Seder plate. We add sweet charoset to soften the maror's sharpness. The charoset, with its mortar-like texture and bloodlike ingredient of red wine, acknowledges the suffering and bitterness of the Hebrew slaves, while also introducing hope for sweetness in the future generations of our People.

The charoset contains fruits to which the eternal Jewish Nation is compared, and apples associated with Jewish women in Egypt giving birth to the next generation (Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 114a). I peer at my family, seated around the table, and think of my new six-month-old nephew, my grandfather's first great-grandchild, whose family celebrates the holiday in far-off Israel.

Taking in the Passover spirit, I realize there is but one thing we can do to respond to my grandfather at such a Seder. We dip the maror in the charoset.

**13. PASSOVER IN BLACK AND WHITE:**

Why the Passover Haggada considers Lavan to be the Jewish people's worst enemy.  
by Rabbi Doniel Baron

World history teems with evil villains who have tried to destroy the Jewish people. The Passover Hagadda reminds us that every generation has them, and God saves us every time. Yet the Haggada nonetheless singles out one individual who was worse than anyone else. And the winner is... Pharaoh? No. It's Lavan, our forefather Yaakov's (Jacob) sneaky father-in-law who tricked Yaakov under the wedding canopy and made every attempt to cheat him again and again.

One wonders why of all the miscreants, genocidal maniacs, and despots with Jewish blood on their hands during the almost 2000 years of Jewish history preceding the Haggada's composition, Lavan was the worst. Pharaoh, a king who literally bathed in the blood of 300 Jewish children daily to alleviate his skin condition, did not get the title.

The Hagadda explains that Pharaoh was less of an enemy than "Lavan since Pharaoh only sentenced the males to death, but Lavan wanted to uproot everything." What does this mean?

To understand the inner message of our Sages, we need to go back to the biblical showdown between Lavan and Yaakov. After years of loyally working for Lavan despite being tricked, Yaakov packed up his family and belongings, all begotten and earned in good faith, and left Lavan's house forever. Lavan pursued Yaakov, and confronted him with an accusation so outlandish that it begs explanation. "The daughters are my daughters, the sons are my sons, the sheep are my sheep, and all you see is mine" (Genesis 31:43). Lavan had the gall to make that claim after Yaakov reminded him of his 20 years of dedicated toil despite being tricked. What possible claim could Lavan have to all that Yaakov achieved?

**THE COLOR WHITE**

The answer lies in the name "Lavan." The Hebrew word *lavan* means white. It represents the potential for any color in the spectrum. One who places all the colors separately on a wheel and then spins it rapidly observes that the combination of colors turns to white.

The power of white lies within the contrast it offers. White is the starkest backdrop for black, and we often refer to something true as black on white. Yet white is committed to no color, and in its purest form, it remains white -- the potential to receive everything but dedication to nothing.

These unique features characterized the person named Lavan. Lavan was a *shyster*, one who would offer one deal but switch it with another. He could sound friendly one minute and hostile another, changing colors to suit his ends, but never becoming anything in particular. For Lavan, there was no absolute truth. Only the endless field of possibilities -- the potential for any color -- was real.

Yaakov was the exact opposite. Yaakov was completely dedicated and devoted, and personified unwavering commitment to fulfilling God's will. Yaakov was black on white, the truth made more apparent against the white background, the "Lavan" in whose home he built the family that would become the Jewish people.

#### AN ATTEMPT TO UPROOT EVERYTHING

Lavan understood this, and knew that Yaakov became more set and dedicated in his ways in the context of the "white" contrast Lavan provided. His claim to title over all that Yaakov had was not a legal one. It was a deeper accusation: "I helped make you who you are! You owe me." Lavan was technically correct about his contribution to Yaakov's identity. The intensity of Lavan's chicanery and dishonesty only made the difference between Yaakov and Lavan more obvious, and each became more set in his ways. With that argument, he wanted to take everything that Yaakov had, to claim the family as his own, and to establish the dominance of white over black, of remaining in the realm of possibilities without having to commit to any of them.

Lavan claimed Yaakov's family was his, but it was a claim without merit and was just another demonstration of Lavan's skill at twisting the facts to his advantage.

Had Lavan prevailed, he would have uprooted the Jewish people, and the potential to commit to anything higher would have been lost. Pharaoh could not have killed Jewish babies because there would not have been any Jewish babies -- ever. Yaakov resisted, and the black he stood for, the commitment to heaven, prevailed over the noncommittal theme Lavan represented.

The mystics saw this battle as the central theme of Passover, and Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna saw Yaakov's struggle with Lavan as foreshadowing our attempt to survive committed while immersed in Egypt's hedonistic society that celebrated all the possibilities in the world, but resisted commitment to anything. It was a society steeped in black magic to create even more possibilities when the natural range of options ran out.

#### EXPOSING. . . NOTHING

The exodus from Egypt gives us the tools to resist the same attempt in our generation to take that which is black on white, and reduce it to the spinning color wheel of possibilities. A story told by an Israeli rabbi illustrates this point. A simple peasant went to see a movie for the first time in his life. Fascinated by the vivid color and larger-than-life pictures, images that appeared so real to him, he moved close to the screen and lifted his lantern to get a closer look. To his dismay, all he saw was lavan, white.

The Haggada requires us to see ourselves as if we personally left Egypt. The wheel spins faster and faster, and some elements of society suggest that the whole idea of faith, the notion of absolute truth, is outdated. Yet when one shines the spotlight on relativism, one can see past the sophisticated sounding explanations and find only white. Nothing.

Passover empowers us to stand up for what we believe, to shine our lantern on the screen that others see as reality and expose it for the lavan it really is.

**14. DECONSTRUCTING DAYEINU: Would it really have been enough?**

by Rabbi Avi Shafran

Much of our Seder-night message to our children, mediated by the Haggadah, is forthright and clear. Some of it, though, is subtle and stealthy.

Dayeinu, for example.

On the surface, it is a simple song -- a recitation of events of Divine kindness over the course of Jewish history, from the Egyptian exodus until the Jewish arrival in the Holy Land -- with the refrain "Dayeinu": "It would have been enough for us." It is a puzzling chorus, and everyone who has ever thought about Dayeinu has asked the obvious question.

Would it really have "been enough for us" had God not, say, split the Red Sea, trapping our ancestors between the water and the Egyptian army? Some take the approach that another miracle could have taken place, but that certainly would weaken the import of the refrain. And then there are the other lines: "Had God not sustained us in the desert" -- enough for us? "Had He not given us the Torah." Enough? What are we saying?

Contending that we don't really mean "Dayeinu" when we say it, that we only intend to declare how undeserving of all God's kindnesses we are, is the sort of answer children view with immediate suspicion, and make faces at.

One path toward understanding Dayeinu, though, might lie in remembering that a proven method of engaging the attention of a child -- or even an ex-child -- is to hide one's message, leaving hints for its discovery. Could Dayeinu be hiding something significant in plain sight?

Think of those images of objects or words that the mind needs time to comprehend, simply because the gestalt is not immediately absorbed; one aspect alone is perceived at first, although another element may be the key to the image's meaning.

Dayeinu may be precisely such a puzzle. And its solution might lie in the realization that one of the song's lines is in fact not followed by the refrain at all. Few people can immediately locate it, but one of the events listed is pointedly not followed by the word "dayeinu."

Can you find it? Or have the years of singing Dayeinu after a cup of wine obscured the obvious? You might want to ask a child, more able for the lack of experience. I'll wait...

...Welcome back. You found it, of course: the very first phrase in the poem. Dayeinu begins: "Had He taken us out of Egypt..." That phrase -- and it alone -- is never qualified with a "dayeinu." For only it refers, so to speak, to a "non-negotiable." The exodus from Egypt was the singular, crucial, transformative point in Jewish history, when we Jews became a people, with all the special interrelationship that peoplehood brings. Had Jewish history ended with starvation in the desert, or even at battle at an unrippled Red

Sea, it would have been, without doubt, a terrible tragedy, the cutting down of a people just born -- but still, the cutting down of a people. The Jewish nation, the very purpose of creation ("For the sake of Israel," as the Midrash comments on the first word of the Torah, God created the universe), would still have existed, albeit briefly.

And our nationhood, after all, is precisely what we celebrate on Passover. When the Torah recounts the wicked son's question (Exodus,12:26) it records that the Jews responded by bowing down in thanksgiving. What were they thankful for? The Hassidic sage Rabbi Shmuel Bornstein (1856-1926) explains that the very fact that the Torah considers the wicked son to be part of the Jewish People, someone who needs and merits a response, was the reason for the Jews' happiness. When we were just a family of individuals, each member stood or fell on his own merits. Ishmael was Abraham's son, and Esau was Isaac's. But neither they nor their descendents merited to become parts of the Jewish People.

That now, after the exodus, even a "wicked son" would be considered a full member of the Jewish People indicated to our ancestors that something had radically changed since pre-Egyptian days. The people had become a nation.

And so the subtle message of Dayeinu may be just that, the sheer indispensability of the Exodus -- its contrast with the rest of Jewish history, its importance beyond even the magnitude of all the miracles that came to follow.

If so, then for thousands of years, that sublime thought might have subtly accompanied the strains of spirited "Da-Da-yeinu's," ever so delicately yet ever so ably suffusing Jewish minds and hearts, without their owners necessarily even realizing it.

In any event, it's an idea worth pondering. For now, dayeinu.

**15. THE HAGGADAH'S FOUR SONS ARE REALLY EACH OF US**

by Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf

King Solomon advises us to "educate the child according to his way." What this means is that every child is unique and must be related to in a way that befits his or her character. Our offspring are not mere replicas of ourselves, nor did they step off a page in the latest book on how to raise children. Moreover, there will never be another child who possesses the singular potential which we have been entrusted to nurture and polish.

Find that which is peerless in your child. Identify it, nourish it, praise it, love it, and most of all -- speak to it. The Seder night: there is no better time to focus on your children than now; no better time for launching a tailor-made educational dialogue than tonight.

**The Wise Son** asks: "What are these laws, statutes, and ordinances?"

When the Wise Son looks at Jewish life, he doesn't just see one monolithic mass of commandments. Rather, he breaks them down into various types and categories. The Wise Son has honed his perceptive skills and has learned to draw distinctions. In fact, the ability to be thoughtfully discerning is one of the hallmarks of wisdom.

Each and every one of us is the object of intense competition. Not only do manufacturers and advertisers compete for our attention, but there exist a host of would-be peddlers of ideas and values who vie for our time and energy, our support and commitment, our votes -- and, ultimately, our checkbooks.

Eventually everyone becomes a consumer. From the Wise Son we learn that one of the keys to freedom is becoming a thoughtful and discerning consumer, unless of course you don't mind being left with a bag of goods.

Since the **Evil Son** has excluded himself from the Jewish people, he has denied God.

When Jews in Ethiopia are in trouble, Israeli soccer fans in Tel Aviv, doctors named Greenfield and Schwartz in St. Louis, and Jews speaking Portuguese on the beaches of Rio all respond. In the last decade, Israel has absorbed almost one million immigrants, which is the proportional equivalent of the entire population of France suddenly relocating to the United States. To Israel's credit, with all the daunting social and economic strains this influx has placed on the country, never once has anyone of any political stripe even hinted that immigration should be slowed or halted.

What are we Jews anyway? Co-religionists, fellow nationals, compatriots -- or are we brothers and sisters? Born of one family and hewn of one stone? Are we bonded by a unifying relationship with God that is deeper than all which seems to divide us and render us strangers? And, could it be that when the rebellious son denies the quality of intrinsic Jewish connectedness, he not only turns his back on his brother, but on his Father as well?

You blunt his teeth... had he been there he would not have been redeemed

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Every Jewish child, and that includes us all, must be forced to consider this: Either you're with us or you're not; you can't have it both ways. Tonight, the choice is ours.

Don't mistake our harshness for anger. We love this child as much as we love you and every one else at the Seder tonight. If we didn't care deeply about him we would have told him to take his cynical skepticism and go somewhere else for Passover -- but we didn't. Intent as he may be on hurtling himself into the oblivion of a pseudo identity, we will always remain eager to teach him. We may have to say a few things that are painful for him as well as for us; but sometimes there is no choice.

**The Simple Son** asks: What is this?

When your child asks you a simple question like, "Why does a magnet stick to metal?" what are you going to say? Or how about this one: "Why doesn't it ever snow in the summer?" Most of us who are omniscient in the eyes of our children find ourselves running for cover when these types of "cute" questions arise. "I'll be right back," we sheepishly assure them, as we are suddenly reminded of an urgent call that has to be made. "Why don't you turn on the Discovery channel...?"

You know why we don't have a lot of answers for our kids? Because we did what we now secretly hope they will soon learn to do -- we stopped asking questions. What a tragedy. We have sacrificed our youthful curiosity, our simplicity, if you will, on the altar of intellectual sophistication.

Inside each and every one of us lives a child of wisdom. We sense that there is more to Judaism than meets the eye. That what distinguishes a statute from an ordinance is more than just Jewish legal jargon, but rather a deeper set of ideas and spiritual constructs. That what separates one holiday from the next is not just the taste of seasonal delicacies, but distinctive opportunities for expanded consciousness. That under the rubric of Judaism is to be found something not only profound and insightful, but deeply personal and meaningful.

Inside us all there is a voice that wants the privilege of a fully panoramic view of Judaism -- To comprehend each facet of the Seder and how every nuance relates to the message of freedom, and the meaning of being a Jew. Listen to that voice. Refuse to sit there and just go through the motions. Be wise! Think, inquire and ask questions. Of Passover and its meaning for starters, and of Judaism and what it says about life as an encore.

If the wisest person in the world was at your Seder and you could only ask two questions -- one about Judaism and one about life -- what would those questions be?

And then there is the **son who doesn't even know how to ask.**

We act with a sense of urgency to free Jews in Russia, Syria, and Ethiopia. While on many fronts our efforts have met with success, there still exists another form of tyranny

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which must also incur the force of our wrath. This is the silent tyranny of ignorance. Ignorance, whether forced, induced, or knowingly chosen, is still ignorance. And if you don't know who you are then you are a slave.

My experience with Russian Jews tells me that when seated at a Seder table they will look at the matzah, Charoset, and everything else and ask -- "What is this?" I'm not so sure that those of us who had the privilege to be raised "in the land of the free" are really very different.

Consider this: of the five and a half million Jews in America today, less than two million belong to synagogues. If most of them received a Jewish education, then at best maybe 30 percent of American Jews have ever learned about Judaism. Add to this the fact that most of these "educated" Jews finished their education at the age of 12 or 13; that one million American Jewish children are today being raised as non-Jews, or with no religion at all; and that another six hundred thousand Jewish adults are now practicing other religions, and what you've got is a tyranny of ignorance of immense proportions.

To date, over half a billion dollars has been spent to build Holocaust museums, memorials, and libraries in this country. While honorable monuments to the dead are being erected, the living are quietly exiting the stage of Jewish history.

The Russians can leave, the Ethiopians are home, there may yet be some semblance of peace in the Middle East -- but it is still premature to lay down our arms and our cries for Jewish freedom. Because if you don't know who you are, you will never be truly free.

How would you respond to a young Jew who says, "All my life I never had any religion and I was very happy. Why should I start doing anything Jewish now?"

For the son who doesn't know how to ask, you must initiate it for him. As it says: "You shall tell it to your son on that day." (Exodus 13:8)

At this point the Haggadah reminds us of what we already know -- that we are all responsible for one another. Whatever you know, you must teach. Whatever you possess as a Jew, you must share. At the moment when you stand face to face with a Jew who doesn't even know what to ask, then the responsibility becomes yours. Whether this is a Russian child, your own child, the child of a neighbor... or the child in the mirror.

Excerpted from the "Passover Survival Kit Haggadah" - [www.leviathanpress.com](http://www.leviathanpress.com)

## 16. THE EMPTY CHAIR PRAYER

by Rabbi Naftali Schiff

Do you remember Seder night 50 years ago?

We had empty seats in our family after the Nazi Holocaust.

Do you remember Seder night 20 years ago?

We had an empty seat in our home for a Jew in Soviet Russia.

This year, 50 percent of young Jews are being lost to apathy and assimilation.

Shouldn't we leave an empty seat tonight?

Please take a moment at your family Seder to join in this prayer:

*Dear God,*

*Thank You for allowing us to enjoy another Seder night together with our family and friends.*

*Just as our family joins together on Seder night, bridging all distances and differences, please help the Jewish people to heal the rifts of internal dissent. Please infuse us with the knowledge and inspire us with the awareness that Jewish people all over the world are part of our family.*

*Together we have survived the turmoil of 3,300 years, making a difference to civilization wherever we go.*

*Today we are losing every second Jewish child to the ravages of apathy and assimilation.*

*Dear God,*

*Help us to bring these young Jews back to us, back to You.*

*They are our children.*

*They are our grandchildren.*

*They are our future.*

*Fortify us with the resolve and the commitment to reach out to them, to relate the beauty and relevance of our precious heritage -- so that together, all Jews can forge our common destiny.*

*Next year, please God, let there be no empty seats at our family Seder.*

**17. LOOKING BACK: DENIAL OR INTEGRATION?**

By Rabbi Aryeh Ben David

If someone never changes, s/he never has to face the challenge of how to integrate the past with the present. There is no tension, no challenge, no struggle. A life bereft of growth progresses along a simple continuum, never needing to grapple with the integrating of dissonant moments.

But is life meant to be static? How does one who leads a dynamic life, replete with change and growth, regard his/her past? When one has outgrown former passionately avowed beliefs, discarded well-entrenched habits; when one has "moved on", how can one look back without feeling the agony that perhaps time and energies have been wasted, precious life squandered?

Pesach asks us to address this question. When in our history did the Jewish people ever undergo such cataclysmic changes: from Egypt to the desert, from slavery to freedom, from pointless acts of toil to those imbued with meaning and holiness. The fabric of their lives was forever and essentially altered. How should they look back?

One possibility is denial. They can simply refuse to deal with their past. Shut the door and erase their previous lives. Clearly, their previous lives as slaves cannot compare in majesty or depth to their present state of closeness to God. Its mention may even be the cause of discomfort or embarrassment. Perhaps the easiest solution is simply not to look back. To disregard it entirely and to focus on the present, to throw themselves fully into their lives and futures. Unfortunately, while this approach may be abundantly enticing, it entails a great measure of self-deception and repression. At least on a subconscious level, a human being is aware of his/her past; its delegitimization and denial will inevitably yield an unresolved tension, a latent anxiety. Reminders of this expunged past may often lead to reactions of aggression or anger.

A second possibility is recognition and acceptance. Looking back on the previous stages of one's life brings with it a smile and a sigh, "Ah, yes, that was a phase that I went through." Phases. Chapters in a life. Here there is no denial or repression, though also no integration. One's life remains a series of unconnected moments.

The Pesach Hagadah presents a third possibility of contending with one's past. The past, that which has been discarded and remains distasteful, is symbolically represented by the bitter herb, the maror. Rabban Gamliel states that whoever does not mention three things during the seder - Pesach, Matzah and Maror - has not fulfilled his/her obligation in the retelling of the story of the exodus. The Hagadah offers no alternative of denial. We must taste and talk about the bitterness.

But then the Hagadah instructs us to understand this bitterness of the past, the maror, on a deeper level. The Hagadah tells of Hillel who would make a sandwich of the matzah and the maror. Now the taste of freedom - matzah, and the taste of bitterness - maror, have become united. Now the joy of the present and the trials of the past have blended into one experience. In Egypt, the bitterness of their travail induced the Jewish

people to call out to God, ultimately catalyzing their redemption. The pain of this bitterness was the first step toward their freedom. God's bringing them out, their freedom, was the response to their distress. The bitterness was not simply a phase of their lives, rather the precipitating force behind their ultimate freedom.

What is Hillel trying to convey through this joining of the matzah and the maror? The truest integration of the past and the present is not when one recognizes that there were many stages in one's life, but when one understands that all of these stages ultimately enabled me to become whom I am today. That my being is not just the product of the "good moments" and the "good decisions", but rather that I am the composite whole of all of my previous moments and decisions. I could not have become who I am today without all of my previous experiences, since they all ultimately yielded this personality.

The deepest level of integration of one's past together with one's present occurs when one can look back and say, "The powers and qualities that I am blessed with today are the composite result of my entire life. These qualities would not exist as they are if not for all of my previous experiences." Hillel wanted to teach that the sweet taste of the present is inseparable from the bitter taste of the past. The sweetness would not exist if not for those times of bitterness. Looking back, even the maror becomes part of the taste of freedom.

No denial. Not merely a phase. Rather a whole life. That was the process necessary for the true freedom of the Jewish people. That is the process necessary for each individual Jew.

**18. PESACH IN THE HASSIDIC TRADITION**

By Rabbi Arie Strikovsky

It is a Torah commandment to retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The Hassidic masters felt that the mitzvah of retelling the Exodus story entailed more than just a directive to narrate what had occurred to our ancestors. Rather, they conceived of the Exodus story as an example of the mitzvah of narrative itself, which must be practiced by every Jew throughout the year. [One interpretation of Pesach is "pe" - mouth, and "sach" - speak, to connote the idea that we must continually tell our tale.] When the Baal Shem Tov felt that his prayer could not penetrate to heaven, he would begin telling a narrative, and the gates of heaven would open. . .

If this is what happens with a story told all year long, just think what can be attained by telling the story of the Pesach Exodus. R. Yehuda Leib Alter, the second Admor of the Gur [Hassidic] dynasty and author of the "Sfat Emet," stated that with the story of the Exodus from Egypt we are igniting the sparks of redemption. In the beginning God planned to bring complete redemption during the Exodus from Egypt. But only part of the redemptive plan was carried out; the rest was left, hidden away and preserved, for a future time. And where did God hide this redemption- to-come? In His Holy Torah, and especially in the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Thus, when we all sit around and narrate the story of the Haggadah, we are thereby drawing out and igniting the sparks of redemption. Therefore, says Rebbe Abraham Borenstein of Sokhochof, we must tell of the Exodus from Egypt with such great emotion and enthusiasm that we feel and see the miracles and wonders of the Exodus from Egypt for ourselves. But how do we do this?

Hassidism has two basic methods. According to one method, represented clearly by the Maggid of Mezeritch and Rabbi Schneuer Zalman of Liadi, "Baal HaTanya," man must humble himself, reach a state of self-effacement before the Lord, and direct his prayers to redeem the Divine Presence (Shekhinah) from Exile. According to this view, the individual who preoccupies himself and God with his personal problems will not contribute to the ushering in of God's kingdom on earth, and the realization of the prophetic vision for the end of days.

According to the second method, however, that is represented by most of the sages of Poland, man must express his personal concerns to God as one conversing with his friend.

With this introduction we can, if only in our imagination, listen in as a guest at the courts of the great Hassidic leaders of the past and hear their words, directed at each and every one of us.

One of the outstanding followers of R' Schneuer Zalman asked the rabbi: "Rebbe, what does my soul lack?"

The rebbe answered: "You are indeed a God-fearing person, and you are diligent in Torah. But, my son, you must expel from within yourself the hametz that represents

pride and coarseness, and allow to enter the Matzah that represents the negation of self. According to halakha, a hametz vessel that has been used in fire must be purified by fire, and the purification continues until sparks fly from the vessel [the word *kli* means vessel, but also can connote a person with the capacity to "contain" spirituality], or until its outer layer comes off [the "outer layer" in its earthly significance is the layer of dirt on the pot, and in the spiritual significance is the "layer" of defilement that covers the soul]."

Other Hassidic Sages upheld the view whereby they believed that man should not humble himself but should pour his heart and concerns out to his Creator. Among these Sages were Rav Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev. It is told that on the Seder night Rav Levi Yitzhak reached great heights of enthusiasm and appeared to be in "seventh heaven," when the Heavens revealed to him: "Do not be boastful; the Seder of Haim the porter is grander than your Seder!"

At that point, Hassidim who had already finished their Seder had come to the Rebbe's house to hear and see the Seder of the great Tzaddik. Rav Levi Yitzhak turned to them: "Do you know Reb Haim the porter?"

The Hassidim scattered throughout the streets of Berditchev looking for him, until they discovered where he lived. They knocked on the door for him to open up. A woman came out and said, "What do you need my husband for? He's drunk and asleep in bed." The Hassidim, of course, ignored her words, woke her husband up from his sleep and carried him on their shoulders until they reached the Tzaddik's home. The Tzaddik ordered them to seat the porter by his side, and turned to him with questions: "Dear Reb Haim, what inspirational thoughts did you have during the Seder?"

The porter fixed his bleary eyes on him, nodded his head and said: "I'll tell the Rav the truth. I heard that it was forbidden to drink alcoholic beverages for eight straight days, so this morning I drank a right proper amount that would last me for all eight days. I got so tired that I fell asleep. When night came, my wife woke me from my sleep and said, 'Why aren't you getting ready for the Seder tonight, just like all other Jews?' I answered her, 'What do you want from me? I'm just an ignoramus, son of ignoramuses. But see, I know this, our forefathers were captured by the Gypsies [he got 'Gypsies' and 'Egyptians' confused. Since he knew about Gypsies personally, he mixed them up with the ancient Egyptians.] We have a mighty God who led us out of there to freedom, and now we are again captives, and I know and will tell you, God will lead us to freedom again.' Afterwards I saw that the table was set with Matzot, wine and eggs. I ate and drank and gave my wife to eat and drink. After that I was overcome with joy and raised my cup to the Heavens and said, 'Look, my God, at the cup that I am drinking, to Your health! L'haim to You, God! Hear us and redeem us.' And then I went back to sleep."

The Saba [grandfather] from Shpola was also among those Tzaddikim who gained satisfaction from the simple people's worship of God. One Seder night, the Saba stood before God and complained: "Father in Heaven, now, on the Seder night, when You are returning from synagogue to Your seat of honor- wait a minute! Look at those who prayed before You this evening. They are tired, drained. And nonetheless they came to the synagogue and said 'Hallel' to You with great enthusiasm, pouring out their hearts.

Dear God, doesn't this make any impression on You! Redeem us, immediately, before, Heaven forbid, we grow weary of hoping. God, let me ask You one question: Why is this night different from all other nights? Why has this Exile gone on so much longer than other exiles we have undergone?"

When the Saba came to these words, he broke out in a cry, raised his arms to Heaven and cried: "Please, God in Heaven! Redeem us quickly from this Exile while our heart is still alive. God, You redeemed us with the expectation that the Exile would make us more observant. But I swear to You, that the Exile will not make us more observant. And if You tarry, You will end up redeeming 'goyim.'

The Hassidim who were there fell on their faces, cried long and hard and repented deeply, until the holy Saba arose and said: "Now we must make the Father in heaven rejoice, and show Him that His children can even dance when we are in the depths of darkness." And he gave the order to sing a song of joy, and began to dance with ecstasy.

The rebbe's complaint has great religious-sociological significance. He felt that the Exile had exhausted itself. In the Middle Ages, suffering had united the people with God, and the evil decrees in the Diaspora created a barrier between the Jewish people and the other nations of the world. During modern times, however, this barrier was disappearing, and the continuation of the Diaspora would increase assimilation among the nations.

Pesach is called "Hag Hamatzot" (the Holiday of Matzot) in the Torah, while the people called the holiday "Pesach."

Rav Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, the defender of Israel, found that this linguistic distinction reflected the mutual love between God and His people. He held that the name "Hag Hamatzot" praises the Jews, who hurried to leave Egypt before their dough had had time to ferment. God thus called this holiday "Hag Hamatzot," in order to give praise to His children. The name "Pesach" points to the miracle that God wrought when He passed over the homes of the Israelites and killed only the Egyptian first-born. Thus His children call the holiday "Pesach," in order to give praise to God.

Rav Levi Yitzhak himself applied what he taught. When, on the eve of Pesach, he saw women busy cleaning and making the home and utensils kosher through scraping and scrubbing, he would say (as is said when the Shofar is blown on Rosh Hashanah): "May it be God's will that those angels arising from the letters kuf, shin, resh, kuf (which normally stand for the Shofar notes but can also stand for kof = kritza = scrubbing; shin = shtifa = pouring; resh = rehitza = washing; kof = kirud = sanding) - may arise before His holy seat and recommend us before Him."

#### PESACH AS THE CREATION OF A CONVERT-ACCEPTING NATION

There is an additional, universal significance to Pesach. Three of the great Hassidic sages, Rav Nachman of Bratslav, Rav Schneur Zalman of Liadi and Rav Yehuda Leib of Gur, author of the "S'fat Emet," include the strangers who joined the Jewish people as one of the miracles of the Exodus from Egypt. While some of the sages had

reservations about the "great multitude," these rabbis see in this conversion the raising up of the "sparks" that fell "when the vessels were broken" before the creation of the world. According to Lurianic doctrine, at the beginning of the creation process God shone magnificent Divine lights at His world. However, the "vessels" were not strong enough to contain these lights, and they exploded into the "world of chaos," with the Divine sparks scattering throughout the countries of the world. In the next attempt, God radiated weaker lights on to his world, and this time the lights were accepted and the "world of tikkun" was created. The weakened lights of this world reached the Jewish people, while the sparks from the "world of chaos" were still scattered among the nations of the world. The task of the Jewish people is to reunite all these lost sparks and to incorporate them into the "world of tikkun." One way of achieving this is to absorb righteous converts. This is especially important because many of the converts have glorious souls that are rooted in the Divine sparks of the primary lights that had fallen when the "vessels were broken."

These Hassidic ideas can shed a new dimension on the Exodus narrative. One purpose of the Egyptian plagues was to bring the Egyptians closer to the worship of the Creator. And, indeed, in addition to the plagues in Egypt, Moshe added educational messages for both Pharaoh and the Egyptians: "And by this you shall know that I am the Lord" (Exodus 7:17); "So that you shall know that there is none like Me in all the land... in order to show you My power, and in order that My fame may resound throughout the world" (ibid. 9:14-16); "you yourself must provide us with sacrifices and burnt offerings to offer up to the Lord our God" (ibid., 10:25). These efforts produced several positive reactions: The sorcerers' statement, "This is the finger of God!" (ibid., 8:15); Pharaoh's request to Moshe and Aharon, "And may you bring a blessing upon me also!" (ibid., 12:32); and perhaps, most importantly, thousands of sensitive Egyptians who decided to join the Jewish people and were included in the "covenant at Sinai."

Had the Divine program been fulfilled in totality, all the Egyptians and, through them, all the peoples of the world, would have been included in the tikkun. But this vision remains for future redemption.

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**19. WAS RABBI HILLEL THAT HUNGRY?  
WHY DO WE EAT THE HILLEL SANDWICH AT THE PASSOVER SEDER?**

This response is adapted from Rabbi Aryeh Ben David's article "Looking Back: Denial or Integration?"

We eat the Hillel sandwich at the Passover Seder because of the verse that says, "You shall eat (the paschal lamb with) matzot and bitter herbs," and this way Hillel fulfilled the two commands at the same time.

The past, that which has been discarded and remains distasteful, is symbolically represented by the bitter herb, the maror. Rabban Gamliel states that whoever does not mention three things during the seder - Pesach, Matzah and Maror - has not fulfilled his/her obligation in the retelling of the story of the exodus. The Hagadah offers no alternative of denial. We must taste and talk about the bitterness.

But then the Hagadah instructs us to understand this bitterness of the past, the maror, on a deeper level. The Hagadah tells of Hillel who would make a sandwich of the matzah and the maror. Now the taste of freedom - matzah, and the taste of bitterness - maror, have become united. Now the joy of the present and the trials of the past have blended into one experience. In Egypt, the bitterness of their travail induced the Jewish people to call out to God, ultimately catalyzing their redemption. The pain of this bitterness was the first step toward their freedom. God's bringing them out, their freedom, was the response to their distress. The bitterness was not simply a phase of their lives, rather the precipitating force behind their ultimate freedom.

What is Hillel trying to convey through this joining of the matzah and the maror? The truest integration of the past and the present is not when one recognizes that there were many stages in one's life, but when one understands that all of these stages ultimately enabled me to become whom I am today. That my being is not just the product of the "good moments" and the "good decisions", but rather that I am the composite whole of all of my previous moments and decisions. I could not have become who I am today without all of my previous experiences, since they all ultimately yielded this personality.

The deepest level of integration of one's past together with one's present occurs when one can look back and say, "The powers and qualities that I am blessed with today are the composite result of my entire life. These qualities would not exist as they are if not for all of my previous experiences." Hillel wanted to teach that the sweet taste of the present is inseparable from the bitter taste of the past. The sweetness would not exist if not for those times of bitterness. Looking back, even the maror becomes part of the taste of freedom.

No denial. Not merely a phase. Rather a whole life. That was the process necessary for the true freedom of the Jewish people. That is the process necessary for each individual Jew.

**20. REFLECTIONS ON SHEFOCH CHAMATCHA: POUR OUT YOUR WRATH**

By Laura Levitt

**PROCLAIMING ANGER**

As we fill the fourth cup of wine and Elijah's goblet and open the door, the haggadah instructs us to read the following verses:

Pour out Your wrath upon those who do not know You and upon the governments which do not call upon Your Name. For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his dwelling place (Psalms 79:6-7). Pour out Your fury upon them; let the fierceness of Your anger overtake them (Psalms 69:25). Pursue them in indignation and destroy them from under Your heavens (Lamentations 3:66).

These are not verses that I remember reciting at past seders. In the seders I remember, we opened the door and sang "Elijah the Prophet." And yet, as I read these disturbing verses, I am struck by their power. They are a visceral reminder that part of the experience of oppression is the anger it produces in those of us who have been oppressed.

Revenge is not pretty; it is even embarrassing. And yet, these passages acknowledge that anger and the desire for revenge are a part of our legacy. They seem to suggest that before the Messiah can come, we must be able to express our rage at what has been done to us.

As I reread these passages from the haggadah, I am keenly aware of the necessity as well as the difficulty of expressing anger. As feminist poet Audre Lorde reminds us, anger is loaded with information and energy. It is not something to shy away from or to be afraid of. This is why the author of these verses devotes so much of his text to expressing his rage. Although those violent passages are difficult to read and recite aloud, I believe they need to be spoken.

Audre Lorde argues for the eventual translation of anger into "action in service of our vision and our future" but first demands that we claim our anger. There can be no final time, no messianic era unless we first acknowledge these brutal desires. If they cannot be expressed, we may never know a better future. And, for those of us less inclined to imagine this ritual as a step toward a distant messianic future, the expression of such emotions may simply enable us to live more fully in the present.

Although these brutal biblical passages express a real desire for revenge, it is important to remember that they are revenge fantasies—creative, imaginative interventions. They are to be recited, not acted out. For those of us who have been brutalized, whose lives have been threatened, who have known oppression in our bodies, these fantasies can be truly liberating only if we find the courage to fully express our indignation, our pain, and our fury.

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## **21. THIS IS THE BREAD OF AFFLICTION (Ha Lachma Anya)**

by Rabbi Joel Soffin of Temple Shalom in Succasunna, NJ

On this holiday when we are commanded to relive the bitter experience of slavery, we place a fourth matzah with the traditional three and recite this prayer:

(Recite while holding a Fourth Matzah to be added to the Three traditional matzot)

"We raise this fourth matzah to remind ourselves that slavery still exists, that people are still being bought and sold as property, that the Divine image within them is yet being denied. We make room at our Seder table and in our hearts for those in southern Sudan and in Mauritania who are now where we have been.

We have known such treatment in our own history. Like the women and children enslaved in Sudan today, we have suffered while others stood by and pretended not to see, not to know. We have eaten the bitter herb; we have been taken from our families and brutalized. We have experienced the horror of being forcibly converted. In the end, we have come to know in our very being that none can be free until all are free.

And so, we commit and recommit ourselves to work for the freedom of these people. May the taste of this 'bread of affliction' remain in our mouths until they can eat in peace and security. Knowing that all people are Yours, O God, we will urge our government and all governments to do as You once commanded Pharaoh on our behalf: 'Shalach et Ami! Let MY People Go!'"

This Pesach, as we recall our own slavery, we recommit ourselves to fight for freedom of all who are enslaved, wherever they are.  
BLESSING OF FREEDOM

After the meal has been eaten, ask everyone to stand, stretch their arms and legs and recite the following blessings of liberation:

"Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Master of the universe, Who releases those bound up."

Barukh Attah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-Olam, Mateer Asureem.

"Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Master of the universe, Who made me free."

Barukh Attah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-Olam, she-Asanee Ben/Bat Khoreen.

## 22. FIFTEEN WAYS YOU KNOW PESACH IS COMING TO JERUSALEM

By Judy Lash Balint

1. No alarm clock needed here-instead we have the clanging of the garbage trucks as they roll through the neighborhood every morning during the 2 weeks before Pesah to accomodate all the refuse from the furious Cleaning going on in every household. The day before the seder they make their rounds at least twice during the day.

2. Street scenes change every day according to what's halachically necessary: For the week before the holiday, yeshiva students wielding blow torches and tending huge vats of boiling water are stationed every few blocks and in the courtyard of every mikveh. The lines to toyvel(dunk) cutlery, kiddush cups and the like, start to grow every day, and, at the last minute, blow torches are at the ready to cleanse oven racks and stove tops of every last gram of hametz.

3. The day before the seder, the yeshiva students are replaced by families using empty lots to burn the remainders of their hametz gleaned from the previous night's meticulous search. Street corner flower vendors do great business too.

4. Most flower shops stay open all night for the two days before Pesah, working feverishly to complete the orders for delivery to grace Seder tables.

5. Meah Shearim and Geula merchants generally run out of heavy plastic early in the week before Pesah. In a panic, I make an early morning run to the Mahaneh Yehuda market to successfully snap up a few meters of the handy material.

6. No holiday here is complete without a strike or two. Last year, the doctors came to agreement to end their month long walkout just hours before the start of Pesah and gas suppliers at Ben Gurion airport decided to use the opportunity to cause havoc to the plans of 200,000 Israelis who travel abroad for the holiday. A wildcat strike caused delays in arrivals and departures at the airport too.

7. Good luck if you haven't scheduled an appointment for a pre-Pesah/Omer haircut. You can't get in the door at most barber and beauty shops.

8. Mailboxes are full of Pesah appeals from the myriad of organizations helping the poor celebrate Pesah. Newspapers are replete with articles about selfless Israelis who volunteer by the hundreds in the weeks before the holiday to collect, package and distribute Pesah supplies to the needy.

9. The biggest food challenge to those of us ashkenazic, non-kitniyot (legume) eaters is finding cookies etc. made without kitniyot. But most years, many restaurants in the city stayed open offering special Pesah menus-most without kitniyot, to accommodate the largely Ashkenazic tourist population that used to be their bread and butter (matzo & butter?) This year, with the dearth of tourists, we may end up spending most meals at home.

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10. Since most of the country is on vacation for the entire week of Pesah, all kinds of entertainment and trips are on offer, despite the jihad being waged against us. Ads appear for everything from the annual Carlebach festival to a "Tour de Pesah" bicycle extravaganza at the Bloomfield Science Museum. There's Jewish Film Week at the Jerusalem Cinematheque and Tel Aviv weighs in with Drag Festival 2001.

11. Pesah with its theme of freedom and exodus always evokes news stories about recent olim. Last year's focus was the Jewish community of Cuba. Hundreds of Cuban Jews and their non-Jewish relatives arrived in Israel during the year to fill up absorption centers in Ashkelon and Beersheva.

12. This just in: According to Israel's Brandman Research Institute study, 43 million people hours will be spent nationwide in Israel's cleaning preparations for Passover this year. How does that break down? Of those cleaning hours, 29 million are done by women and 11 million by men. Persons paid to clean do the remaining 3 million hours at a cost of NIS 64 million (\$15.6 million).

13. On erev Pesah, dozens of members of various movements intent on preserving our connection to the Temple, re-enact the ritual Pesah sacrifice on Jerusalem's Givat Hananya. The hill is located in the neighborhood of Abu Tor and is named for the High Priest Hananya of the Second Temple period. Participants emphasize that their slaughter and roasting of a young goat is a preface to making the sacrifice, since they are wary of creating the impression that they are renewing the sacrificial act outside the Temple Mount.

14. Israel's two chief rabbis sell the nation's hametz to an Arab resident of Abu Ghosh. Estimated worth: 150 million shekel.

15. In the Galut (Diaspora), Pesah is observed...in Israel it's celebrated.

**23. WHAT IS THE “YaK N’HaZ” ACRONYM?**

By Rabbi Joshua Hammerman

What is YaK N’HaZ?

No, it has nothing to do with sharing a chuckle on the bima with the cantor; but it has lots to do with the beginning of this year’s first Seder. As we see often in our prayer books and in the Haggadah (check out the Ten Plagues), the rabbis loved utilizing acrostics and mnemonics, or whatever you want to call them, as memory-aids. Since Judaism has always looked for God “in the details,” and since the Seder means “order,” ways had to be devised to assist people in memorizing the correct order of detailed procedures.

When the first night of Passover this year is a Saturday night (a rare occurrence, which happened just 11 times in the 20th century), there are a number of blessings to be recited right off the bat:

- 1) The Kiddush over wine (boray pri ha-gafen)
- 2) The additional blessing over the festival (recited typically as part of the Kiddush)
- 3) The Havdalah prayer, ending Shabbat, including the blessings over the fire of the Havdalah candle and the Havdalah blessing itself.
- 4) The Shehechianu blessing, always recited at the beginning of festivals and to mark other special occasions.

After much discussion, the Talmud opts for the exact order detailed above. It’s interesting to note how the lines are somewhat blurred between the ending of Shabbat and the beginning of Passover. So we have 1) wine (Yayin), 2) Kiddush, 3) candle (Ner), 4) Havdalah, and 5) the seasonal blessing (Z’man). Put it all together and you have YaK N’HaZ.

Now here is where it goes from simply interesting to downright fascinating. The Haggadah, more than any other document, reflects both the amazing continuity and equally remarkable diversity of Jewish expression over the ages. There are over 4,000 known versions, including a number of illuminated manuscripts from the middle ages that depict YaK N’HaZ in an intriguing manner. In the 1560 Mantua Haggadah (found in the Israel Museum), the Prague Haggadah (1526), and the Rylands Spanish Haggadah (mid 14th century), among others, YaK N’HaZ is depicted in illustrations showing a hunter with a hound chasing a rabbit.

Come again?

This, ladies and gentlemen, is a pictorial mnemonic, an instant reminder to our European ancestors as to what the verbal mnemonic was all about. Why? Because the German phrase “Jag den Haz” closely resembles YaK N’HaZ, and “Jag den Haz” means “hunt the hare.”

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So when our kids start clamoring to watch the Rugrats Passover special or to sing one of those crazy newfangled Seder songs like “Haggadah Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair,” think of those hunted hares in medieval Germany. And recall that the word Haggadah means “telling,” and the essence of the Seder, is that the ancient story be retold in ways that will resonate for this generation. Your Seder will not be exactly the same as your grandparents’, or as your neighbor’s down the street. But it will be representative of this generation – yet tied intimately to ancient traditions and an equally ancient story.

So if you’ll excuse me, I’ve got to go share some “Yucks with the Haz” up on the bima.

## **24. WHAT IS THE CORE SPIRITUAL METAPHOR OF PASSOVER?**

By Rabbi Goldie Milgram

The Torah and Pesach are road maps to the Promised Land of our dreams. How does this work?

When we choose to make a major life change from a situation that feels oppressing, after the initial elation we often notice a major glitch. Our resumes suddenly have as their most recent entry: "experienced slave."

It seems colossally unfair after all the stress of deciding to leave that we don't find ourselves in the promised land. Like the Israelites, we too need to be reformatted through the knowing pains and growing pains which come during the wilderness periods after major departures. (Divorces, job changes, emigrations.) This process adds valuable new experience and skills to the resume of our soul.

We can recreate ourselves and attain the promised lands of our dreams. We are energized and supported to do this through our awareness of connection to The Source and nurtured and comforted by the sacred stories of our Jewish tradition, which point the way.

Love and blessings for a sweet season of increased freedom for all.

## **25. GUIDED VISUALIZATION FOR SEDER OR SHABBAT SHIRAH**

By Laura Vidmar and Rabbi Goldie Milgram

Allow your eyes to close. Inhale and exhale. Listen to the sound of your breath. Do you not hear the distant sound of an ancient sea? Listen to your breath from that part of your heart that remembers being there at the time of the Exodus from Mitzrayim. Inhale and exhale and hear the moving of the waters echoing in your innermost ear as you inhale and exhale.

Keeping your eyes closed, look up as if you were looking at the top of the pillar of cloud that is guiding us out of Egypt. Observe the form and color of the cloud and feel the hope and promise that this pillar of cloud represents. Feel its pull on your soul drawing you toward freedom. Now allow your eyes to slowly slide down the length of the cloud, down and down, until your eyes reach the horizon. Notice the mass of people moving with you.

Feel yourself moving toward the Sea in that ocean of Israelites. Are you leading children by the hand? Or are you a child yourself, moving quickly to keep up with the big people. Wondering that there is no work to be done today. No bricks to be made, no taskmasters with whips.

Listen! In the distance you can hear the dim clatter of spears and shields, horses' hooves and the rumble of chariot wheels. The whinny of a horse, a muffled command

barked by one of the charioteers or Egyptian Captains. The rumbling of the chariots. Pharaoh's great army is coming behind us.

We are approaching the sea. Inhale the tangy salty, watery smell of the sea. Feel the sand sift through your toes in your sandals. Listen! Perhaps you can hear the bleating of sheep. And the children saying "Mommy, Daddy, where are we going?" "What will happen to us?"

The familiar, the known, is behind. The sea lies ahead, and the wheels of Pharaoh's chariots are rumbling - coming closer. The wind is picking up. A strong wind from the East. A persistent, steady, seemingly purposeful wind. A wind that could change everything.

Your hair is flying and there are white caps on the sea. And then - Look!! Moshe is holding out his hands - - MY God - the sea is beginning to split. It is a miracle! The sea has parted and there is a path on dry land before us. There is a huge, quivering wall of water on the left and a wall of water on the right.

What is in your heart at this moment? Will you rush into the sea with a trusting heart, running toward freedom, praising God ...OR.... do you hang back - afraid of the unknown, afraid the walls of water will close and drown you - afraid of being caught - afraid of change. (Pause) This is not an illusion.

Both choosing and being propelled by the crowd. Almost numb with fear, curiosity, hope, and awe you are moving forward into the sea. Even the children and animals fall eerily silent as you walk between the towering walls of water.

You can see the intense blue green of the sea on either side. Perhaps a dolphin cavorts along side you in the wall of water. What do you see in the wall of water? Light filters through the waters and casts dancing blue shadows on everyone.

Now we're half-way across. The wall of water on the left and right stretch as far as you can see in front and as far as you can see behind. Incredible ! We are walking on dry land in the midst of the sea.

What an exhilarating moment - she-he-khe-yanu, to be alive at this time to experience this . Even if we drown or Pharaoh's army overtakes us - dayenu. This would have been enough.

The chariots sound different now - their wheels scraping and groaning against the sea floor. You are beginning to hear the suggestion of a melody (pause...if you happen to have an instrument begin playing a version of mikha mokha off-key and grating...) beckoning in the distance as you move toward the opposite shore. Could it be animals? No, voices? Singing?

Despite exhaustion, growing elation lightens our footsteps. (Modulate...move onto key if using instrument, or else humming could work) Your heartbeat quickens. The

pace of everyone increases, surges.....soon you are running, flying..... eager to reach the opposite side.

A woman is singing.....you join her.....(burst into full melody with instrument, do not break the sacred trance....allow everyone to experience the fullness of their vision.) (After a while ask people to notice their breath, to place their vision into their sacred memory chest and return to active awareness.)

[How does this work and why? Guided visualization actually is reported not to work with about 10% of people, some of us are simply hard wired for different forms of spirituality. I mention this so those who have this difference won't wear themselves out trying.

For those who can benefit from guided visualization it is a very powerful spiritual tool. Several major medical research centers have discovered that it can even be a tool for active healing (called psycho-neuro-immunology), although this meditation is primarily designed for shifting consciousness.

Be sure to read slowly, with feeling and honor all the pauses fully, they are very important elements...like rests between the notes of a score.] Copyright 2003 Rabbi Goldie Milgram

## 26. A TOAST TO FREEDOM

By Leonard Fein

Reprinted from The Family Participation Haggadah: A Different Night by Noam Zion and David Dishon

Each cup we raise this night is an act of memory and of reverence. The story we tell, this year as every year, is not yet done. It begins with them, then; it continues with us, now. We remember not out of curiosity or nostalgia, but because it is our turn to add to the story.

Our challenge this year, as every year, is to feel the Exodus, to open the gates of time and become one with those who crossed the Red Sea from slavery to freedom.

Our challenge this year, as every year, is to know the Exodus, to behold all those in every land who have yet to make the crossing.

Our challenge this day, as every day, is to reach out our hands to them and help them cross to freedomland. We know some things that others do not always know - how arduous the struggle, how very deep the waters to be crossed and how treacherous their tides, how filled with irony and contradiction and suffering the crossing and then the wandering.

We know such things because we ourselves wandered in the desert for forty years. Have not these forty years been followed by 32 centuries of struggle and of quest? Heirs to those who struggled and quested, we are old-timers at disappointment, veterans at sorrow, but always, always, prisoners of hope. The hope is the anthem of our people (Hatikvah), and the way of our people.

For all the reversals and all the stumbling blocks, for all the blood and all the hurt, hope still dances within us. That is who we are, and that is what this Seder is about. For the slaves do become free, and the tyrants are destroyed. Once, it was by miracles; today, it is by defiance and devotion.

**27. DOMESTIC WORKERS' RIGHTS: A MATTER OF ETHICS**

By Marjorie Ingall, *The East Village Mamele*

My childhood Sedarim involved a slight disconnect. Perhaps yours did, too. Here we were, a big tableful of upper middle class white folks, reclining on pillows around a beautifully set dining room table, discussing our history as slaves... while Mrs. Dyer, our cleaning lady, bustled about in the kitchen, ladling out the matzoh ball soup and scrubbing the haroset-smearred dishes.

A lot of us employ minority women in our homes — not just as Seder helpers, but as house-cleaners, nannies and elder care providers. Many of these helpers are immigrants, just as our people once were. These women come from the Caribbean, Asia and Latin America rather than Russia and Germany, but they want the same American Dream our grandparents did. Our great-bubbes and -zeydes often began their lives as Americans working in low-wage jobs too.

And unfortunately, like our ancestors who sweated in places like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, these immigrants have very little protection from exploitation. Domestic workers are exempt from protection under most labor laws. Most of us want to treat our employees humanely, but unfortunately, that's not universally so. Every few months a story breaks about someone holding an immigrant woman as a virtual slave, paying less than minimum wage, forcing her to work horrid hours. Two years ago, a Long Island couple held two Indonesian women as prisoners in their home, beating them, slashing them with knives, working them day and night, making them sleep in closets and never allowing them outside except to take out the garbage. And for every Grand Guignol horror story like that one, there are thousands of small-scale tales of dehumanizing, un-mensch-like employer behavior. Yes, even among Jews.

That's why Jews for Racial and Economic Justice campaigns for fairness toward domestic workers. Its program, Shalom Bayit, or "peace in the house", is based on the notion that justice begins at home. As Jews, people who've historically been active in the union movement, vocal about the need for fair and safe workplaces, fierce in our pursuit of justice on behalf of oppressed people in America and throughout the world, we need to look into our own kitchens and living rooms to make sure we're being good employers. I've heard too many stories of people (yes, tribe members!) trying to underpay nannies, letting them go with little notice and no severance, expecting them to be on constant call.

That's why I think it's cool that JFREJ, in partnership with Domestic Workers United, an association of immigrant women in the home-care labor force, helped pressure the City Council to pass New York's first legislation to protect domestic workers' rights. Now they're aiming to pass a Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights in the New York State Senate.

These rights would include wages of no less than \$12 an hour (\$14 in 2010); at least one day off per week; up to 12 weeks of family and medical leave; paid sick-days, vacations and holidays; advance notice of termination, and severance in accordance with number of years worked. The bill seems realistic in its scope — it doesn't address

the immigration status of domestic workers, and doesn't require anything massively financially untenable.

It seems particularly appropriate to take a hard look at our own domestic-helper-related practices when Passover rolls around. After all, this holiday wouldn't have happened without the efforts of Shifra and Puah — two midwives, the contemporary equivalent of domestic workers — who saved Jewish male newborns. And then we have Miriam, and Pharaoh's daughter, who had their own big roles to play in the story of Jewish liberation from slavery.

So JFREJ has produced a Haggadah supplement that draws parallels between our people's experiences in Egypt and domestic workers' current struggles. (There's currently a link to it from JFREJ's home page at [jfrej.org](http://jfrej.org).) The supplement includes a question from a kindergartner: "What does it mean to be a slave? Is it like being the cleaning lady who doesn't speak English?"

Often, when our kids say innocent things that feel racially insensitive to us, our instinct is to hush them immediately, to brush their comments away and to bobble the teachable moment. If a kindergartner at a Seder only interacts regularly with one person of color, the one who mops his family's floors and doesn't speak his language, it's no wonder he's jumped to certain conclusions. But educating him doesn't mean hastening to stammer, "Consuela isn't a slave! Ha ha! Someone fill the fourth cup, fast!" You owe it to the kid and to the planet to provide a diverse picture of our country. We now have a bi-racial president from a multiracial and multicultural family. Being insular doesn't play anymore.

The issue of treating people of color respectfully as well as with economic fairness is the subject of a whole other column. But I can't tell you how many clueless, if well-meaning, comments I've heard about the fundamental suited-ness of entire ethnic groups as sitters. "I'd only hire a Filipino nanny!" one acquaintance of mine gushed. (Note: People who say things like this never know they mean "Filipina.") "They're so caring," my acquaintance continued.

"That's why there are so many Filipino nurses." I've also heard, more than once, "Jamaicans are good nannies for boys, because they're the best disciplinarians and they play very physically." And "Tibetans are the gentlest by nature. They're Buddhist so they're very loving." (Tibetan nannies, in certain NYC communities, are huge status symbols. They make you look gloriously enlightened. They're like human prayer beads, or a red string bracelet with legs! And I'm told you can pay them less than you do other ethnic groups — huge bonus!) Guess what, parents? Humans are individuals. No group is "by nature" anything. Hey, stop counting your gold coins and controlling the media and listen to me.

Hiring someone to take care of your children is perhaps the most important decision you make as a working parent. This person cuddles, feeds, changes and disciplines the people you love most in the universe. How can you nickel-and-dime someone who has such a vital role in your family's functioning? How can you view a caregiver as an ethnic

signifier with given personality traits, instead of as a human being? The people who take care of our children are real heroes today, and in the Passover story. Write to Marjorie at [mamele@forward.com](mailto:mamele@forward.com).

**28. SLAVERY IN OUR TIME**

By David Arnow

Slavery in Our Time: A fifth question: Why is this night no different from all other nights?  
From the 2002 New Israel Fund Haggadah supplement, "From Darkness to Light"

When you've finished reading the Four Questions at your Seder, ask a participant to read the Biblical verses that follow, the Fifth Question, and the vignette about slavery as practiced in Pakistan. Then either summarize or lead a short discussion on the information that follows. (Much of this has been taken from Kevin Bales' Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy, © 1999 The Regents of the University of California.) Copy and distribute the section called "Four Things You Can Do to Help End Slavery." Urge your guests to get involved with the issue!

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt ... The Egyptians ruthlessly compelled the Israelites to toil with rigor ... Ruthlessly, they made life bitter for them with harsh labor at mortar and bricks... (Deuteronomy 6:21 and Exodus 1:13-14).

A Fifth Question

Why is this night no different from all other nights? Because on this night millions of human beings around the world still remain enslaved, just as they do on all other nights. As we celebrate our freedom tonight, we remember those who remain enslaved.

Brick Making in Pakistan: A Vignette

Since the 1960s, an estimated 750,000 landless Muslim peasants have hand molded hundreds of millions of mud bricks each year in Pakistan. The bricks are fired in some 7,000 vast but primitive kilns spread throughout the country. With no other hope for sustenance, desperate families drift to kilns where they borrow money to buy food and tools from the owners. On a good day, a family will mold about fourteen hundred bricks for which they are paid two dollars. But their debts keep growing because kiln owners undercount the number of bricks produced, inflate the debt, and charge exorbitant prices for food and clothing. Impoverished families, including young children, work as a unit. Without putting their children to work, these families would sink even deeper in debt. Even so, most families incur debts they will never earn enough to repay. If kiln owners suspect that a family may be planning to run away, they take a child to another location as a hostage. According to one former kiln owner, "to intimidate brick makers, the owner just comes along and smashes all the freshly made raw bricks, a whole day's work, for no reason. If a young worker lifts his head or causes trouble, they will put his leg in the kiln oven for a second to burn it. This is common and brick makers are forced to watch." When a parent dies, the children inherit their mother's or father's debts, assuring another generation of bonded brick makers.

Now either briefly summarize the information that follows or describe the three current forms of slavery and lead a discussion asking participants to define slavery, estimate how many slaves there are in the world today, what factors allow slavery to persist, etc.

Current Forms of Slavery

- Slavery--a definition: the total control of one person by another for the purpose of economic exploitation. Slaves are controlled by violence and denied all of their personal freedom in order to make money or provide labor for someone else.

- Chattel slavery: closest to slavery as practiced during the transatlantic slave trade. A person is captured, born or sold into permanent servitude. Ownership is often asserted. Represents a small percentage of slaves, practiced in northern and western Africa and some Arab countries.

- Debt bondage: the most common form of slavery. A person pledges him- or herself against a loan of money, but the length and nature of the service are not defined and the labor does not reduce the original debt. Ownership is not normally asserted, but there is complete physical control over the bonded laborer. Most common in India and Pakistan.

- Contract slavery: the most rapidly growing form of slavery. Contracts are offered that guarantee employment, perhaps in a workshop or factory, but when the workers are taken to their place of work they find themselves enslaved. Most often found in Southeast Asia, Brazil, some Arab states and parts of the Indian subcontinent.  
How many slaves are there?

According to conservative estimates, there are twenty-seven million slaves. This number is more than all the slaves shipped from Africa during the transatlantic slave trade.

What kind of work do slaves do?

Simple, non-technological and traditional labor. Most slaves work in agriculture, but many also work in mining, quarrying, prostitution and the manufacture of everything from charcoal and cloth to chocolate.

What factors allow slavery to persist?

The world's population explosion, which has produced a reservoir of poor and vulnerable people. The modernization of agriculture, which results in huge numbers of dispossessed farmers. Greed, corruption and violence created by economic change in much of the developing world, and a breakdown of the social norms that protected potential slaves. Widespread ignorance about slavery.

The kind of slavery most of us learned about in school was abolished in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Many are unaware of the ways in which new forms of slavery have evolved. Powerful nations often fear that taking a strong stand against slavery will jeopardize economic or military interests deemed to be more compelling national interests.

Food for thought or discussion

When he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said: "The sovereignty of states must no longer be used as a shield for gross violations of human rights." Do you agree? How high a priority should the United States make the protection

of human rights in foreign countries? Imagine that one thousand Jews were enslaved in a foreign country. What would you do to help them? What would you expect America or Israel to do?

[ Abolish: American Anti-Slavery Group - <http://www.iabolish.org/passover/> ]

**29. THE PASSOVER SEDER TAKES SHAPE IN THE RABBINIC PERIOD.**

By Rabbi Ronald H. Isaacs

Passover and the Passover seder assumed a renewed importance following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, when the contemporaneous Jewish community's hope for redemption was felt to be foreshadowed in the story of the redemption from Egypt. Excerpted with permission from Every Person's Guide to Passover (Jason Aronson, Inc).

The special home ceremony on the night of Passover, the seder (which literally means "order"), is based on the biblical injunction to parents to inform their children of the deliverance, or Exodus, of the Israelite slaves from Egypt. "And you shall tell your son in that day, saying: It is because of that which God did for me when I came forth out of Egypt" (Exodus13:8).

According to the scholar Abraham Bloch, the first step leading to the creation of the home Passover seder service was taken during the period of the great Temples in Jerusalem, when the Jews who had slaughtered the paschal (Passover) offerings joined the Levites in the chanting of the Hallel (psalms of praise).

The second significant step in the development of the home ritual of the seder was the provision for the Hallel to be chanted not only at the slaughtering of the offering, but also at the family feasts when the paschal lamb was eaten (Talmud Pesachim 95a). The paschal lamb was eaten in private homes throughout the city of Jerusalem, and the chanting of the Hallel was likely a forerunner of the seder service. (Today, the Hallel prayer remains a part of the seder service.) It is conjectured that the head of the household informally told the story of the Exodus in keeping with the biblical injunction that one should tell his children about the Exodus.

Beginning with the period of the Tannaim (teachers living in the first two centuries of the common era), we begin to find Talmudic references to various phases of the seder ceremony as we know it today. Thus, for example, Rabbi Eliezer ben Tzadok discusses haroset, the nut and fruit mixture we eat at the seder (Talmud Pesachim 114a), and Rabbi Joshua ben Haninah discusses the sequence of the kiddush (blessing over the wine) and Havdalah (ceremony bidding fare well to the Sabbath) on a festival night following the Sabbath (Talmud Pesachim 103a).

From page 116a of the Talmudic tractate of Pesachim, it is clear that considerable portions of the seder service were already adopted prior to the destruction of the Temple in the year 70 CE:

"They filled a second cup for him. At this stage the son questions his father. If the son is unintelligent, his father instructs him to ask, "Why is this night different from all other nights? For on all other nights we eat leavened and unleavened bread, whereas on this night we eat only leavened bread. On all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs, but on this night bitter herbs?"

The development of the seder in the first century was guided by the specific function of the celebration--the reenactment of the historic events of the fourteenth of the month of

Nisan, the night the Exodus took place. This led to the introduction of herbs, which were dipped in vinegar, or possibly red wine, and then eaten. The Talmud (Pesachim 114b) at a later period explained this practice as an incentive to children to be curious about the procedure and ask questions. Some trace the origin of the custom to the reenactment of the biblical account of the dipping of the hyssop in the blood of the Passover lamb and the smearing of the blood on the doorposts of Jewish homes. The haroset, reminder of the mortar (Talmud Pesachim 116a), also fitted in with the broad objective of the early version of the Seder meal.

The questions asked by the child during the course of the seder meal have been changed over the centuries. The earliest version of these questions was preserved by the Jerusalem Talmud (Chapter 10 of Pesachim). This text contains only three questions, the first one beginning with the Hebrew phrase "mah nishtanah"--why is it different?--which is used in our day as well.

The Seder in the Post-Temple Era

The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE brought an end to the pilgrimages to Jerusalem. This made for the discontinuance of the paschal lamb, and the chanting of the Hallel at home was no longer required. The ritual of the bitter herbs, which was linked to the eating of the paschal lamb, was also likely eliminated. There was even serious doubt whether the biblical obligation to eat unleavened bread survived the destruction of the Temple.

All that definitely remained was the negative injunction to refrain from eating hametz (leavened bread and food). The duty to reevaluate the seder now fell upon Rabban Gamliel II, the first head of the academy after the destruction of the Temple. The first basic statement of the reevaluation of the Passover ceremony was given in the famous dictum of Rabban Gamliel, "He who does not stress these rituals on Passover does not fulfill his obligations: the paschal lamb, matzah, and maror [bitter herb]" (Talmud Pesachim 116a).

The commemoration of the paschal lamb (called the "pesach") was to be stressed as a lesson pointing to the fact that God had passed over ("pasach") the homes of the Israelites in Egypt during the slaying of the first-born Egyptian children. With this addition, the pageantry of the seder was no longer confined to only a reenactment of the events of the 14th of Nisan. The plague of the death of the firstborn took place after the historic feast of the paschal lamb, and now the doors were opened for the recitation on the Seder night of wondrous events occurring both prior and subsequent to the departure of the Israelites from Egypt.

Regarding the unleavened bread, Rabban Gamliel's dictum associated the symbolism of matzah with redemption rather than affliction. This added a note of hopefulness to the Passover meal. The symbolism of the maror, the bitter herbs, remained the same as in previous centuries, representing the tears of the Israelites in Egyptian slavery.

The recitation of Rabban Gamliel's new interpretation was made obligatory for all Jewry, thus assuring widespread compliance. The answer of the father to the child's questions,

once spontaneous, was now part of a prescribed formula. According to most scholars, the content of the pre-meal portion of the Haggadah was well established by the first third of the second century. But its final form and sequence was not yet entirely determined, as can be attested to by the fact that debates loomed in the Talmud (tractate Pesachim) regarding various texts to be included in the Haggadah.

Rabban Gamliel's reinterpretation of the seder led to the practice of reclining at the seder table (Talmud Pesachim 99b), a sign of freedom because slaves ate their meal in a standing position.

#### FOUR CUPS, FOUR SONS

The obligation to drink four cups of wine on the seder night was another rabbinic provision introduced within several decades after the destruction of the temple (Talmud Pesachim 109b). The most quoted reason for the four cups of wine is that they symbolize the fourfold divine promise of liberation contained in Exodus 6:6-7 ("I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians, I will deliver you from their bondage, I will redeem you, I will take you as my people"). The wine was intended to add joy and gaiety to the seder meal, and the drinking of the cups was spaced properly to produce joy but to prevent intoxication. To each cup was assigned a special place in the seder ritual: the first two cups when the story of slavery is recited, and the last two cups when the glory of freedom is related (Talmud Pesachim 108a).

Another high point of the Passover seder is the section of the four sons. The narrative of the four sons is based on the Bible speaking four times of "your sons" inquiring about the meaning of Passover and each time poses his question in different terms. Once (Deuteronomy 6:20), he is represented as asking, "What means these testimonies and statutes and judgments that the Lord our God has commanded us?" Another time (Exodus 12:26), he demands brusquely, "What means this service of yours?" A third time (Exodus 13:14), he asks simply, "What is this?" And a fourth time (Exodus 13:8), the question is not even framed but merely implied. This variation, said the sages, is purposeful. In each case, the form of the question typifies the character and attitude of the inquirer, who is respectively wise, wicked, simple, and too young to ask. Each must be answered differently, in appropriate fashion.

#### IN EVERY GENERATION

Properly understood, the seder ceremony is no mere act of pious recollection, but a unique device for blending the past, present, and future into a single comprehensive and transcendental experience. The actors in the story are not merely the particular Israelites who happen to have been led out of bondage by Moses, but all the generations of Israel throughout all time.

In an ideal sense, all Israel went forth out of Egypt and all Israel stood before Sinai. The conception of the seder meal as an experience rather than simply a recitation of text runs like a silver thread through the whole of Jewish tradition and finds expression on every page of the Haggadah. "Every person in every generation," says a familiar passage in the Haggadah, "must look upon himself as if he personally had come forth

out of Egypt." The deliverance by Egypt paved the way for Mount Sinai and Israel's acceptance of its divine mission. The seder narrative relates the whole story of how the Israelites move progressively from darkness to light.

Rabbi Ronald H. Isaacs is the spiritual leader of Temple Sholom in Bridgewater, New Jersey. He has served as the publications committee chair of the Rabbinical Assembly and has written more than 60 books.

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**30. THIS YEAR WE ARE SLAVES. NEXT YEAR, MAY WE ALL BE FREE** - Haggadah

Adapted from the Religious Action Center's Pesach: A Season for Justice

Each year, through the Passover seder, we re-enact the experience of our people's liberation from slavery to freedom. The Haggadah commands us that in every generation we are to experience the seder as if we ourselves went out from Egypt to freedom. The seder reminds us that while we are not literally slaves, our freedom may be affected by old attitudes, negative thoughts, overwhelming worries or out-of-sync values. "Slavery does offer a certain freedom that can be attractive: the freedom from responsibility for yourself and others, the freedom from having to establish goals, figure out how to reach them, or think beyond the moment. It takes strength and guts to walk out of a known situation, which for all its pain, is predictable. It is human nature to want to stay put within the stability of the status quo." (Ross, "Self Liberation" in Celebrate! The Complete Jewish Holiday Handbook) But Judaism has never been satisfied with the status quo and each year, with the coming of spring and the acknowledgement of new growth and renewal, we remind ourselves and teach our children that freedom is a worthy goal.

For teens who are gaining more freedoms, the holiday can teach the message that freedom also comes with responsibility. For our ancestors in Egypt, freedom meant entering into a covenantal relationship with God. It was only after we were freed that we were given the Ten Commandments, which obligated us in ways that continue to forge our relationship with the Divine.

Like our ancestors in Egypt, we can escape from the things that enslave us, the things that hold us back. Once the Israelites encountered God and saw that God could bring them into freedom, "they gave up the comfort of the familiar, without concern for provisions or how they would get to or exist at their destination. They left Egypt because they believed a better life awaited them elsewhere. As Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav counseled, when you are about to leave [Egypt] 'mitzrayim' you should not worry about how you will manage in a new 'place.' Anyone who does or who stops to get everything in order for the journey will never pick himself or herself up." (Ross)

**QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT**

Parents and teens often have unique struggles over the issue of freedom. Below are some questions to help you explore the issue together.

- \* What makes a person free?
- \* In what ways are you enslaved?
- \* What does it mean for you as a teen when you get new freedoms?
- \* What does it mean to you as a parent to give your teens new freedom?
- \* What would you like to be freed from in this coming year?
- \* How can we help each other gain new freedoms? Work together to identify those responsibilities your teenagers must undertake as they enjoy more freedoms and what your teens can do to alleviate concerns you face as you allow more freedom.

**SEDER PROJECTS FOR MEANING**

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During Passover, we celebrate and thank God for delivering us from Egypt by singing Dayeinu (It would have been enough). We enumerate each step along the way, recognizing that each one was a miracle—parting the sea, providing for us in the desert, giving us Shabbat, bringing us to Mount Sinai, giving us the Torah, and more. At this time of year, while we remember our own oppression and redemption from Egypt, we often forget that Jews around the world are still oppressed whether by their governments or as a result of the economies they live in. Take some time with your family to learn about these communities. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee has information about Jewish communities all over the world who have yet to experience all the freedoms we have come to cherish. Learn about a few and then write a prayer to include in your seder that will teach your family and friends about this community as you pray that they may soon know the freedom that you do.

### POTATOES

Following Operation Solomon, the Ethiopian Jews who arrived in Israel were unable to digest much substantial food. Israel's doctors fed the new immigrants simple boiled potatoes and rice until their systems could take more food. To commemorate this at the seder, you may choose to eat small red potatoes alongside the parsley for karpas. Potatoes can serve as a reminder of the wondrous exodus in our own time from Ethiopia to Israel.

### ORANGE

Many families and congregations have begun adding an orange to the seder plate as a way of acknowledging the role of women in Jewish life.

This custom began with Susannah Heschel, who explains: In the early 1980s, the Hillel Foundation invited me to speak on a panel at Oberlin College. While on campus, I came across a Haggadah that had been written by some Oberlin students to express feminist concerns. One ritual they devised was ... a sign of solidarity with Jewish lesbians. At the next Passover, I placed an orange on our family's Seder plate. During the first part of the Seder, I asked everyone to take a segment of the orange, make the blessing over fruit, and eat it as a gesture of solidarity with Jewish lesbians and gay men, and others who are marginalized within the Jewish community (I mentioned widows in particular). ...I felt that an orange was suggestive of ... the fruitfulness for all Jews when lesbians and gay men are contributing and active members of Jewish life. In addition, each orange segment had a few seeds that had to be spit out—a gesture of spitting out, repudiating the homophobia that poisons too many Jews.

### ADDITIONAL SERVING OF MAROR

Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom in Montreal created a special addition to the Passover seder to raise the profile of the issue of human trafficking. To “Remember the Enslaved of our Time” they recommend adding an extra serving of maror. After doing the blessing over the bitter herbs and eating them, and after making the “Hillel Sandwich” with bitter herbs and charoset, prepare a small piece of matzah with maror and say:

In remembrance of today's slaves, up to 4 million people trafficked each year, now, in our own time, some in our very own country, we eat this extra portion of maror. We

remember women entrapped by criminals who promised them a better life abroad. We think of children sold into slavery who knot carpets or tend crops at this moment. We recall refugee men swept into captive labor. With this extra maror, we who are free share the bitterness of the lot of today's slaves, resolving to appeal to governments, leaders, and communities to end human trafficking for all time.

#### MIRIAM'S CUP

This modern custom celebrates Miriam's role in the deliverance from slavery and her help throughout the wandering in the wilderness. An empty cup is placed alongside Elijah's cup. Each attendee at the seder then pours a bit of his or her water into the cup, symbolizing Miriam's life-giving well that followed the wandering Israelites. With this new custom, we recognize that women are equally integral to the continued survival of the Jewish community. With a social action lens, we see the pouring of each person's water as a symbol of everyone's individual responsibility to respond to issues of social injustice, and that together we can make a positive difference.

#### YOUR OWN SYMBOL

Discuss the freedoms for which your family is especially thankful, or those for which you feel we need to fight in today's world. Then choose an object together that will symbolize this freedom or plight.

**31.**

**32. WHAT WOULD YOU TAKE WITH YOU?**

By Rabbi Goldie Milgram

After asking the four questions, in some Moroccan families, the person leading the seder leaves the room and returns with the afikomen in a napkin draped over their shoulder (Tom Sawyer fashion, for Mark Twin fans) and then recounts the story of the exodus out of Egypt. This got me to thinking, if I was told overnight that I was leaving Egypt - what would I take with me? I recalled a Holocaust survivor showing me the little stack of photos she'd sewn into the leg of her pants just before she was taken prisoner.....what would you take?

1. In advance make sure there is a large napkin at each place.
2. You could begin by teaching the Reb Nachman song: Kol ha olam kulo gesher tzar mo'od, v'ha eekar lo l'fakheyd klal. All of the world is a very narrow bridge and the main thing is not to fear at all."
3. Tell participants to "imagine you are being forced to leave your home immediately. Everything you can take with you must fit into your napkin. You can take two kinds of things with you. Material things and the qualities of yourself that be your best assets for this part of your journey. Take a few minutes in silence to decide what you will pack into your napkin, and when you are ready, sling it over your shoulder and stand in your place. We will go on a meditation walk exodus when everyone is ready and has their napkin filled.
4. When many people are standing begin the Reb Nachman song until everyone likely to rise has done so. Now begin to walk around the room (if feasible) chanting, on a nice day you can do as some eastern Jews do and walk around the outside of the house and back in.
5. Return to seats or if not walking, quiet down the chant to silence. After several minutes of silence invite people to share what they decided to take - objects and qualities.
6. Breaking into a joyful version of the Reb Nachman song work out great at this point.

The Torah says that those who left Egypt were an eyrev rav, a "mixed multitude." Point out how those gathered at your table compose the "erev rav" - the mixed multitude of multi-talented people composing our community and people at this time in history. We are always leaving an Egypt in our lives; by its nature life is full of narrow places, which is the meaning of the root word which makes up the Hebrew term for Egypt. (Mitzrayim.....root is "maytzar" which means narrow place, birth canal or strait.") Because we have each other we are strengthened in our journeys through such times.

This is the importance of having a minyan in our lives. To remind us that life is like a sine wave, full of ups and downs, that nothing stays the same, that we are precious beings and together we can safely remember our Egypt-times, that we can do our best to support each other when being reformatted in the wilderness and know that achieving our desired changes will ready us for entering the promised lands of our dreams.

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### **32. ALTERNATIVE SEDER STYLES FOR A PERSONALIZED PASSOVER: GREEN, FREE, FEMALE, INTERFAITH, OR VEGGIE**

By Tamar Fox, April 1, 2008

Less-than-inspired by the traditional Passover seder? Burnt out on the same old Four Questions? Searching for soup sans chicken, or a song to replace "Who Knows One"? Why not shake things up with an alternative or themed seder? Here are five ideas to get you started. Try one, or mix them up.

#### **ECO-SEDER**

- \* Buy all organic foods, from local vendors, when possible.
- \* When you're dealing with fresh veggies and kosher meat or fish you don't have to worry about things being kosher for Passover, so you won't spend insane amounts of money buying margarine made in Monsey or whatever.
- \* The Jew and the Carrot has a great list of Kosher Organic wines for your four cups.
- \* Plan on talking about freedom from oil dependency, and about the benefits of living a greener life. Remember, we were heading towards a land of milk and honey, not of formula and corn syrup.
- \* You can list ten plagues of waste, four sons who react differently to global warming, and four questions about how we can change our individual and collective behavior in the future.
- \* Birkenstocks optional.

#### **FREEDOM SEDER**

- \* There are still literally millions of slaves in the world. On a holiday when we celebrate our freedom as Jews, it makes sense to spend some time exploring the issue of contemporary slavery.
- \* Head to Not For Sale to get educated on the issue, learn about abolition activism, and donate money to free slaves.
- \* Stories of redemption told side by side, whether they involve crossing the Red Sea or using the Underground railroad, are always thought provoking, and you can brainstorm ways to get the larger community more involved in abolition advocacy and programming.

#### **INTERFAITH SEDER**

- \* If you can gather a mix of faiths at one table and talk about how each person views their personal slaveries and redemption (because remember, it's as if you personally came out of Egypt), you're bound to have an interesting evening.
- \* If you want some help guiding your seder, try the one at Interfaith Family.
- \* Ask each guest to bring a kosher for Passover interpretation of a classic dish from their community, and host a discussion about the ways that communities pigeonhole each other, and how interfaith dialogue can redeem us from self-imposed slavery.
- \* Open the door for a Unitarian, instead of Elijah. Be sure to have grape juice on hand for those who can't drink wine, and ask everyone to teach a song at the end.

### WOMEN'S SEDER

- \* There are a number of feminist haggadahs and women's seders available.
- \* If you want to start your own, invite your girlfriends for a night of female bonding over good wine and Miriam's cup.
- \* Retell all the parts of the haggadah focusing on the female characters—the midwives, Shifra and Puah, Pharaoh's daughter, and Miriam.
- \* Put some Debbie Friedman on the stereo - if you use electrivity/audio on Festival
- \* Ask your guests to each bring a short story, essay, or poem to share by or about a
- \* Make sure to have plenty of oranges on hand for the seder plate.

### VEGGIE/VEGAN SEDER

- \* There's nothing free or fair about the lives of animals raised for food. Passover is an opportunity to reflect on our own freedom, as well as the lack of freedom other living creatures face.
- \* Pick up some copies of Haggadah for the Liberated Lamb, which focuses on vegetarianism and animal rights.
- \* The Jewish Vegetarian Year Cookbook includes a menu for a seder table. Better yet, the Vegetarian Pesach Cookbook features recipes specific to the holiday.
- \* Talk about what you can sacrifice in your own lives to replace and honor the symbolic,
- \* Replace the egg on the traditional seder plate with a flower to represent life and Spring.
- \* Replace the shank bone on the traditional seder plate with a beet, as allowed in the Talmud.
- \* Use this quote from Einstein as a jumping off point for discussion: "A human being is a part of the whole, called by us the 'Universe', a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest - a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. Nobody is able to achieve this completely, but the striving for such achievement is in itself a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security."

**33. THE SONG OF SONGS**

By Eliyahu Kitov

It is customary to read the Song of Songs on the first night of Passover at the end of the Seder. In the Diaspora, where the Seder is repeated on the second night of Passover, the reading of this book is sometimes spread over the two nights, but it is more common for the whole book to be completed on the first night.

In Ashkenazic communities, the Song of Songs is read publicly on Shabbat Chol HaMoed, before the reading of the Torah. In some communities it is read from a scroll, hand written on parchment, and the reader recites two blessings: " . . .Who has commanded us to read the Megillah" and Shehecheyanu, but in many places it is read from a printed book without a blessing, each person reading it for himself.

Not only is there a mention of Pharaoh in this book but its contents are symbolic of the four different exiles and Israel's redemption from each one.

The Zohar tells us that Song of Songs embodies the entire Torah, the story of the exile in Egypt, and the redemption of Israel from there, as well as from the other oppressors, so that by reading it we are enhancing the mitzvah of recounting the story of the Exodus.

Another reason for reading Song of Songs that Passover is a time of love between G-d and Israel, who entered into a covenant and became betrothed to Him through the Exodus from Egypt [see Ezekiel, 16].

**34. A NIGHT THAT IS “GUARDED”**

By Eliyahu Kitov

Within the space of a single verse, the Torah twice refers to the night of the Seder as leil shimurim, a night that is guarded: It is a night that is guarded by G-d to take them (Israel) out of Egypt, this night remains to G-d a night that is guarded throughout the generations (Exodus, 12:42).

Our Sages offered a number of explanations of this phrase.

A night that is guarded: a night of anticipation and waiting, for G-d guarded and anticipated this night when He would fulfill His G-d guarded promise to take them out of the land of Egypt (Rashi).

A night that is guarded: a night that is specially set aside for a two-fold redemption: for G-d and for His nation. [This explanation is based on the use of the plural shimurim.] We see that throughout the period of bondage, it is as if the Divine Presence were also enslaved in Egypt.

Moreover, we find that whenever Israel went into exile, the Shechinah went with them in their exile (Yalkut Shimoni, Exodus, 210).

A night that is guarded: a night that is reserved for the future redemption. Why is the word shimurim repeated in this verse? Because on this night, in other times and places, G-d did great things for the righteous, just as He had done for Israel in Egypt.

On this night He saved Chizkiyahu from Sennacherib and his armies; on this night He saved Chananyah, Misha'el, and Azaryah; on this night He saved Daniel from the lion's den; and on this night Elijah and Mashiach are made great (Shemot Rabbah 18). This is why the verse ends with the words: It is a night that is guarded for all Israel for all their generations.

A night that is guarded: a night on which there is protection from harmful elements. For this reason we do not recite the entire Shema and the other prayers asking for G-d's protection that are usually said before going to sleep. We read only the first paragraph of Shema because on this night we enjoy special protection from G-d (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 481).

The Talmud (Pesachim 109b) notes that though we are enjoined to drink four cups of wine at the Seder, and this has a potentially deleterious effect, we may do so because this is a night that is guarded.

Ma'aseh Roke'ach notes that he heard of a great Sage who would never lock the doors of his house on this night.

He adds that it has become customary to leave the doors open so that we may go out to greet Elijah without delay, for it is written that Israel is destined to be redeemed on the

night of Passover. It is a night that has been guarded and reserved for redemption, ever since Creation.

Magen Avraham, quoting Maharil, writes that while one should not bolt the doors, he may close them since a person should not rely on a miracle for protection.

A night that is guarded: Ibn Ezra writes that this means a night of guarding, of wakefulness, for it is customary to refrain from sleeping so that we might occupy ourselves with praises of G-d and relate His mighty deeds when He brought us out of Egypt.

**35. THE HAGGADAH MENTIONS THE SAGES OF BNEI BRAK:**

who remained awake until it was time for the recital of the morning Shema.

By Eliyahu Kitov

**INTRODUCTION**

A year after the Exodus, G-d instructed the people of Israel to bring the Passover offering on the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nissan, and to eat it that evening, roasted over the fire, together with matzah and bitter herbs, as they had done on the previous year just before they left Egypt. "There were, however, certain persons who had become ritually impure through contact with a dead body, and could not, therefore, prepare the Passover offering on that day. They approached Moses and Aaron...and they said: '...Why should we be deprived, and not be able to present G-d's offering in its time, amongst the children of Israel?'" (Numbers 9).

In response to their plea, G-d established the 14th of Iyar as a "Second Passover" (Pesach Sheini) for anyone who was unable to bring the offering on its appointed time in the previous month. The day thus represents the "second chance" achieved by teshuvah, the power of repentance and "return." In the words of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch, "The Second Passover means that it's never a 'lost case.'"

It is customary to mark this day by eating matzah, shmurah matzah if possible.

**HISTORY OF THE HAGGADAH**

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/haggadah-chronology-timeline.html>

Ever wondered about the history of the Haggadah? We did, and so we developed a chronology of the Haggadah or timeline of the Haggadah with dates of events in the development of the Haggadah.

Late Tanaaim Period (Circa 170 C.E. - 200 C.E. or 220 C.E.) - Amoraim Period (200 C.E. or 220 C.E. - 500 C.E.): Why circa 170 C.E. as the starting point? Since Rabbi Yehudah bar Elai, who lived circa 170 C.E., is the last of the Talmudic Tanaaim to be mentioned in the teachings of the Haggadah, the Haggadah is therefore believed to have been compiled into its present form in Judea starting from the approximate date of circa 170 C.E. to 500 C.E. The Tanaaim were the rabbis who compiled the Mishnah section of the Talmud while the Amoraim were the rabbis who compiled the Gemara section of the Talmud. Together, the Mishnah and the Gemara comprise the Talmud. Another theory postulates that since much of the text of the Haggadah dates from the Second Temple period, it was compiled at an earlier time, during the Second Temple Period (520 B.C.E. - 70 C.E.) in Judea.

90 C.E.: the first mention of a Seder service was in the Mishnah of the Talmud (Talmud, Mishnah, Pesachim 10:5) by Rabbi Gamaliel the Elder (or Rabbi Gamaliel I), who was President of the Jewish legislative body in Jerusalem (known as the Sanhedrin), who declared: "One who has not said (I.E. not understood the spiritual implications of) these three words, Pesah, Matzah, and Maror has not done his duty" (or "Whoever has not discussed these three things at Pesach has not fulfilled his obligation: the Pesach,

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Matzah, and Maror").

7th Century C.E. - 8th Century C.E.: The Geonim (the leaders of the Jewish academies of learning in Sura and Pumbeditia, Babylonia, now Iraq) compile the version of the Haggadah as it is known today.

9th Century C.E. (circa 860 C.E.): The earliest version of the Haggadah that is still in existence is the Haggadah contained in the prayer book ("Siddur" or "Seder" in Hebrew) of the prominent Gaon (singular form of Geonim) Amram Gaon (died either 875 C.E. or 876 C.E.). His Siddur is simply entitled: "Siddur (or Seder) Rav Amram" ("Order of Prayers of Rabbi Amram" in Hebrew). Rav Amram Gaon was the leader of the Jewish academy of learning in Sura, Babylonia, from 856 C.E. to either 875 C.E. or 876 C.E. A relatively complete fragment of this Haggadah was found in the Cairo Genizah - a repository/archive for ancient Jewish sacred writings/manuscripts located in the synagogue, built in 882 C.E., of the Egyptian city of Fostat (now Cairo). These sacred writings were placed in the Cairo Genizah because they were either discarded or were worn from age or use - and although this is a relatively complete fragment, it is sparse in its content. It contained liturgy text for an after-dinner service.

Mid-10th Century C.E. - 11th Century C.E.: The second-earliest version of the Haggadah that is still in existence appeared in the prayer book ("Siddur" or "Seder" in Hebrew) of the prominent Gaon (singular form of Geonim) Sa'adiah ben Yosef Gaon (882 C.E. or 892 C.E. – 942 C.E.), who was the leader of the Jewish academy of learning - known in Hebrew as a Yeshivah or Yeshiva - at Sura, Babylonia, from 928-942. The title of this prayer book in Hebrew is "Siddur (or Seder) Rav Saadia Gaon" ("Order of Prayers of Rabbi Sa'adia Gaon", since the contents of the prayer book follow a specific, structured order or arrangement). A fragment of Rav Saadia Gaon's Haggadah was found in the Cairo Genizah. In this fragment, it is clear that the written text that is supposed to guide the oral telling of the Exodus from Egypt story was far from uniform. In addition, there is no mention of the Four Sons, and there are only Three Questions mentioned, instead of the now-traditional Four Questions. These omissions were characteristic of the Passover / Pesach service for the ancient Israeli rite.

13th Century C.E.: the first Haggadah appears as a separate volume/book (earlier versions of the Haggadah were appended to the Siddur, or Jewish prayer book).

Circa 1300 C.E.: The earliest illuminated Haggadah manuscript for Ashkenazi Jews (Jews whose ancestors came from either Central, Northwestern and/or Eastern Europe) is created. Its title is: the Bird's Head Haggadah, so called because many of the persons depicted in the manuscript have the head of a bird, while other persons have the head of another animal, likely because of the belief not to show human heads, as that would have constituted displaying graven images alongside sacred text, forbidden in Judaism as stated in the Second Commandment of the Ten Commandments in the Torah of the Hebrew Bible. The angels in this Haggadah are shown with blank faces. The Bird's Head Haggadah is the first Haggadah that introduced the baking of matzot (matzos) into the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The Bird's Head Haggadah is housed in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Israel.

Circa 1320 C.E.: The earliest illuminated Haggadah manuscript for Sephardi Jews (Jews whose ancestors came from either Spain and/or Portugal) is created. Its title is: the Golden Haggadah, created in or near Barcelona, Spain. It is a magnificent and opulent Haggadah that was likely created for a wealthy Jewish family.

Circa 1350 C.E. - Circa 1370 C.E.: The best known illuminated Haggadah manuscript written in Hebrew is the Sarajevo Haggadah, a brilliantly illuminated Haggadah that was likely commissioned as a wedding gift to a young Jewish couple in Barcelona, Spain. However, after miraculously surviving centuries of expulsion, oppression, genocide, and two modern wars, it is now housed in the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1482 (or circa 1482) C.E.: First Printed (text-only) Version of the Haggadah\* in Guadalajara ("Wadi al Hijara" in Arabic), Spain. Its title is: "Haggadot Shel Pesah", meaning the "Haggadahs (or Tellings) of Passover" in Hebrew. There is only one existing copy, and it is housed in the Jewish National University Library in Jerusalem, Israel. This Haggadah was created by Shlomo (Solomon) ben Moshe (Moses) Alkabez.

\* the year 1482 as the date for the first printed Haggadah (text-only) is an unconfirmed date, since there is no evidence of a place of publication and date of publication or colophon in the text of this Haggadah, therefore the date of 1482 is merely speculation.

1486 C.E.: First confirmed printing of the Haggadah (text-only) by the printing press of the Italian-Jewish Soncino family of Soncino, Italy. The Haggadah is of the German-Jewish prayer rite and is one book of a two-book volume. The other book is a mahzor or machzor (another name for a prayer book in Hebrew) entitled "Sidorello" or "Prayer Book" in Italian, and this prayer book is of the Roman-Jewish, or Italian-Jewish, prayer rite.

1505 C.E.: the first Haggadah that was printed with a commentary was entitled "Zevach (or Zevah) Pesach" ("Passover Sacrifice" in Hebrew). It was printed in Constantinople (now Istanbul), Ottoman Empire (now Turkey). It was created by one of the leading figures from the exiled Spanish-Jewish community, Yitzchak ben Yehuda Abravanel (in English, Don Isaac Abrabanel, or Abarbanel, or Abravanel), and printed by David and Samuel ibn Nahmais. This Haggadah has since been printed in English well over one hundred times.

1526 C.E. - 1527 C.E.: Earliest confirmed printing of an illustrated Haggadah (text and illustrations) that still exists in its entirety today. Using printing woodcuts to create illustrations, this illustrated Haggadah was illustrated and printed by Gershom ben Shlomo ("Solomon" in Hebrew) Ha-Kohen (or Ha-Cohen) (or Gershon ben Shlomo Ha-Kohen or Ha-Cohen) in Prague, now the capital city of the Czech Republic. Together with his brother Gronem (in English, Jerome) Katz, he completed and printed the first illustrated Haggadah on December 30, 1526. Its title in Hebrew is simply: Haggadah shel Pesah ["Haggadah (or Telling) of Passover"]; an alternate title of this work in Hebrew is:

"Haggadah Shel Gershom Cohen (or Gershon Cohen)" ["Haggadah (or Telling) of Gershom Cohen (or Gershon Cohen)"]. Gershom or Gershon Cohen was also known as Gershom or Gershon HaKohen ("the Priest" in Hebrew). He used his own printing press, known in Hebrew as: Mi-Bet (or Mi-Beth) Defuso Shel Gershom (or Gershon) Kohen [From the Publishing House of Gershom (or Gershon) Kohen]. The Prague Haggadah of 1526-1527 was a continuation of the fine illumination that was previously done for and in Haggadah manuscripts. Although there had been illustrations in Haggadahs prior to the Prague Haggadah of 1526-1527, none had used their illustrations quite as extensively and as support for the printed text as did the Prague Haggadah of 1526-1527. After the invention of printing, the first Hebrew book was printed in 1475, and the Prague Haggadah of 1526-1527 was the first Haggadah to be printed north of the Alps in Central Europe after the Spanish-Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, and its tastefulness and beauty and ability to capture the feeling of the text served as the prototype for later editions of illustrated Haggadahs. This was also the Haggadah where the popular Passover song "Adir Hu" ["Mighty is He (G-d)" in Hebrew] first appeared in a printed Haggadah.

1545 C.E.: The "Sefer Zevach Pesach" ("Passover Sacrifice Book" in Hebrew) Haggadah that was first printed in 1505 C.E. is printed in a second edition in Venice, Italy. This is the first Haggadah that was printed in Venice. Marco Antonio Guistiniani, a Christian, printed and published this Haggadah as Jews were not permitted to own printing presses in Italy at that time.

1560 C.E.: The Mantua Haggadah of Mantua, Italy, was entitled "Haggadah Shel Pesach" ("Telling of Passover" in Hebrew). It copied the text of the 1526 C.E. - 1527 C.E. Prague Haggadah as a facsimile, but unlike the Prague Haggadah, which had just three pages of borders surrounding the text, the Mantua Haggadah had all of its pages surrounded by borders. In addition, new illustrations were added to the Mantua Haggadah. This Haggadah was printed using the printing press of Giacomo ("Jacob" in Italian) Rufinelli, who was a Christian as Jews were not permitted to own printing presses in Italy at that time, although the printing was supervised by a Jewish sexton at a Mantua synagogue named Isaac ben Solomon Bassan. New decorations in the margins were also added. The type of artistic expression also differed from the Prague Haggadah: where the artwork of the Prague Haggadah had a Germanic/Teutonic feel to it, the Mantua Haggadah used artwork throughout the Mantua Haggadah - including the decorations in the margins - that reflected the Italian Renaissance period.

1590 C.E.: the first printed Haggadah to contain the popular Passover song known as "Chad Gadya" ["An Only Kid (with "Kid" meaning a baby goat)" in Aramaic], as well as the Passover song "Echad Mi Yodea" ("Who Knows One" in Hebrew) appeared in Prague. "Chad Gadya" is distinguished by being the only Passover song that is written in Aramaic. It was originally written in Judeo-German and then it was translated into Aramaic for the 1590 C.E. Prague Haggadah. In the 1590 C.E. version of the Prague Haggadah, it was printed in both Judeo-German and Aramaic. The 1590 C.E. was published by the family of Gershom Cohen, the one who printed and illustrated the first illustrated Haggadah to be printed in 1526 C.E. - 1527 C.E. in Prague.

1609 C.E.: the first Haggadah that was printed which depicted the Ten Plagues in illustrations was the "Seder Haggadah Shel Pesah" ["Telling Order of Passover" in Hebrew]. It was printed in Venice, Italy by an Italian-Christian named Giovanni da Gara, using his printing press, as Jews were not permitted to own printing presses in Italy at that time. He was aided by an Italian-Jewish printer named Israel ben Daniel Zifroni of Guastalla, Italy, located near Padua, Italy. This Haggadah is also known as the Venice Haggadah of 1609 and it was created for Israel ben Daniel Zifroni. The Venice Haggadah appeared simultaneously with translations in Judeo-Italian, Judeo-Spanish and Judeo-German, the languages of the Jewish communities living in Venice at the time. The Venice Haggadah of 1609 has Hebrew written down the center of the pages with Ladino (primarily a Hebrew-Spanish dialect) translations in columns down the sides of the pages. In the 17th century, Jews in Venice lived in ghettos, and that is where the term "ghetto" was coined. The Venice Haggadah of 1609 is currently housed in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Israel.

1695 C.E., 1712 C.E. (two editions): the first printed Haggadah to use copper-engraved illustrations (copperplates) instead of woodcut-engraved illustrations was the Amsterdam Haggadah. Copper-engraved illustrations provided more refinement and detail as opposed to woodcut-engraved illustrations. The Amsterdam Haggadah is housed in the Jerusalem collection of Michael Kauffman. The Amsterdam Haggadah was the first printed Jewish publication to include a map of Canaan (Land of Israel), complete with the route of the Exodus and the boundaries of Canaan (Land of Israel), which was added on a folding page at the end of the book. This map was also the first map to be printed in Hebrew. The Amsterdam Haggadah was printed by Solomon ben Joseph, and was illustrated by a convert to Judaism named Abraham ben Jacob, who borrowed most of the illustrations from a Christian artist named Mathaeus Merian of Basel, who, while living in Frankfurt, produced a large number of illustrations for the Old and New Testaments as well as for history books between 1625 and 1630 which were well-known across Europe at that time. This Haggadah became very popular among Southern European Jewish communities and was imitated often. It therefore had a lasting influence on the Haggadahs that were produced in the world of the Ashkenazim (Jews whose ancestors came from either Central, Northwestern, and/or Eastern Europe). The 1712 edition of the Amsterdam Haggadah added two new illustrations and the frontispiece (the illustration that either faces or immediately precedes the title page of a book, section of a book, or magazine) was changed.

1837 C.E.: the first Haggadah printed in the United States of America was by Solomon Henry Jackson, an immigrant from England. Its title was: "Service for the Two First Nights of the Passover in English and Hebrew, First American Edition". It was printed in New York City and it was a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Liener Temerlin. It is currently housed in the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

1886 C.E.: the first Haggadah of the Reform-Jewish stream of Judaism to be translated into English from German was written and published in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. It, however, was misnamed "Easter Eve". It was created by Rabbi Herman M. Bien, and had an alternate (and correct) name: the "New Hagodah Shel Pesach" ("New Telling of Passover" in Hebrew).

1889 C.E.: the first Haggadah to use modern style illustrations was created by Rabbi Dr. Alexander Kisch (1848-1917), who was the leader of the Maisel Synagogue in Prague (now the capital city of the Czech Republic). This Haggadah is written in German and Hebrew and is entitled in Hebrew: "Seder Hagadah Shel Pesah" ["Telling Order of Passover"]. This Haggadah is also known as the Kisch Haggadah.

1892 C.E.: "Tefilot Yisrael ["Prayers (of) Israel ("Israel" in this context means the Hebrews/Jewish people)" in Hebrew]: The Union Prayer Book", first edition, a Reform-Jewish prayer book, published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, consisted of a ritual for the Seder meal, and it was based on and adapted from the earlier 1841 C.E. German version of the first Reform-Jewish Haggadah, authored by the Reform-Jewish German Rabbi Leopold Stein (1810-1882). Subsequent editions of the Union Prayer Book omitted the Seder ritual, the latter which was authored by I.S. Moses, who published the Seder ritual as a separate book in 1902 C.E. in New York City, and it was entitled: "Seder Hagadah ["Order (of the) Telling" in Hebrew] : Domestic Service For The Eve of Passover".

1907 C.E. - 1908 C.E.: the first official Haggadah of the Reform-Jewish stream of Judaism to be translated into English from German was "The Union Haggadah", published in New York City by the Bloch Publishing Company, for the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the official body of the Reform-Jewish movement in the United States.

1934 C.E.: the classic Maxwell House Haggadah was published for the first time by the Joseph Jacobs Advertising Agency of New York City, the latter at that time owned by the founder, Joseph Jacobs. The story begins with Jewish people of Ashkenazi descent (Ashkenazi Jews are Jews whose ancestors came from either Central, Northwestern, and/or Eastern Europe) following a traditional custom not to drink coffee during the Passover festival on the mistaken belief that the coffee bean was an actual bean that therefore fell into the category of legumes, and any food which fell into this category was religiously forbidden to be consumed during Passover. In 1923 C.E., Joseph Jacobs, an advertising genius of New York City, consulted an Orthodox rabbi, Rabbi Hersch Kohn, to determine if the Maxwell House coffee bean was, in a technical sense, more similar to a berry - a fruit - than a bean and therefore, kosher for Passover, meaning it would be permitted by the Orthodox rabbi to be consumed during Passover. After the Orthodox rabbi issued his approval and certification that the Maxwell House coffee bean was in fact, kosher for Passover, General Foods, with the help of the Joseph Jacobs Advertising Agency, started to market Maxwell House coffee for Passover to Jews in New York City in 1923 C.E. Sales of Maxwell House coffee during Passover among the Jewish population rose dramatically. The success of this strategy led Joseph Jacobs to reinforce the kosher-for-Passover message by developing a Haggadah for Maxwell House in 1934 C.E. which, while marketing Maxwell House coffee as kosher-for-Passover to the Jewish population of New York City, was to be printed and then distributed for free to supermarkets across the United States, with free copies of the Maxwell House Haggadah being offered with the purchase of any Maxwell House coffee product, in a clever and successful effort to become a household name among American Jewry. Orthodox rabbis were again consulted to ensure the accuracy of the

Haggadah. Since the Maxwell House Haggadah, noted for its simplicity, was given away at no cost, it became one of the most popular Haggadahs not only among American Jewry, but also among Canadian-Jewry. In fact, the Joseph Jacobs Advertising Agency still produces the Maxwell House Haggadah as of this writing in 2008 and as such, it is now the longest running sales promotion in advertising history, with over 50 million Maxwell House Haggadahs having been printed, making it the most widely used Haggadah in the world, and the most widely circulated Judaica item in the world. The result of this advertising campaign was that Maxwell House coffee became the preferred coffee in Jewish households. In the mid-1960's, the Haggadah used a more modern English-language translation, and in 1997, the color scheme, traditionally a blue color, was changed to a multicolor scheme. Today (2008 as of this writing), Maxwell House is owned by Kraft Foods.

1941 C.E.: the first Haggadah published by the Reconstructionist movement of Judaism was entitled: "The New Haggadah for the Pesah Seder". It was edited by the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, Rabbi Mordecai Menahem Kaplan (1881-1983), his son-in-law Ira Eisenstein, and Eugene Kohn, and it was illustrated by Leonard Weisgard. It was sponsored by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation of Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, and was published by Behrman's Jewish Book House Publishers of New York City, with revisions done in 1942 and 1978. It has Hebrew text with English translations.

1953 C.E.: From 1953 C.E. until the 1970's C.E., both Conservative-Jewish and Orthodox-Jewish congregations in North America had widely used a traditional Passover Haggadah that was compiled and edited by Rabbi Dr. Philip ("Paltiel" in Hebrew) Birnbaum (1904-1988) in 1953 C.E. It is entitled: "Seder Hagadah Shel Pesach ["Order (of the) Telling of Passover" in Hebrew, or simply, The Passover Haggadah; it is also known as the Birnbaum Haggadah] and was published in New York City by the Hebrew Publishing Company. A reprint edition was issued in 1976 by the Hebrew Publishing Company. Both editions have Hebrew text with English translations.

1972 C.E.: Rabbi Morris Silverman (1894-1972), a Conservative-Jewish rabbi, compiled and edited a Conservative-Jewish Haggadah simply entitled "The Passover Haggadah ("Haggadah Shel Pesach" in Hebrew)". It has Hebrew text with English translations. It was designed and illustrated by Ezekiel Schloss, and published in Bridgeport, Connecticut by Prayer Book Press of Media Judaica, Inc.

1976 C.E.: the first edition of the Haggadah from the Artscroll Series is published. A new approach is used in publishing Judaica: the translation from Hebrew into English and anthologized commentary continued to follow traditional Orthodox sources and was presented in a way that enabled those with a limited comprehension of Hebrew and Aramaic to learn Torah literature with the same clarity and understanding that their grandfathers had understood it, but unlike past publications in the Judaica publishing industry, the presentation utilized the most modern and sophisticated graphics, layout, and typesetting, similar to that of the secular publishing industry. Many Orthodox-Jewish congregations and families as well as Conservative-Jewish congregations and families have since used the Artscroll Haggadah, authored by Rabbi Joseph Elias and first

published by Mesorah Publications Ltd. of Brooklyn, New York, in 1976 C.E., as well as its subsequent editions, for their Seder, although there are many other types of Haggadahs that are used among Orthodox and Conservative Jews.

1979 C.E.: the first Haggadah of the Humanistic Jewish movement was entitled: "The Humanist Haggadah". It was edited by the founder of Humanistic Judaism, Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine (1928-2007). It was published by the Society for Humanistic Judaism in Farmington Hills, Michigan, and its text is in English.

1982 C.E.: the Rabbinical Assembly, which is the international association of Conservative-Jewish rabbis, published its own Haggadah for the first time. This is the first official Haggadah for the Conservative-Jewish movement. It was edited by Rachel Anne Rabinowicz and is entitled: "Passover Haggadah : The Feast of Freedom". It includes colorful illustrations by prominent Israeli artist, Dan Reisinger.

1998 C.E.: the first Haggadah to treat all texts of the three major cultural streams of Judaism (Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Mizrahi) on an equal footing, "The Scholar's Haggadah: Ashkenazic, Sephardic, and Oriental Versions" was authored by Heinrich Guggenheimer. It was published by Jason Aronson Publishers, Inc. of Northvale, New Jersey, which was acquired by Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. in December 2003.

The styles of the four earliest Haggadot or Haggadahs that were printed and included illustrations - the Prague Haggadah of 1526 C.E. - 1527 C.E., the Mantua Haggadah of 1560 C.E., the Venice Haggadah of 1609 C.E., and the Amsterdam Haggadah of 1695 C.E. - were so influential in Jewish communities across Europe that in subsequent printed editions of the Haggadah, all the Haggadot or Haggadahs from the 18th century, 19th century, and even into the 20th century were based on these four Haggadot or Haggadahs. The 20th century has seen new styles of Haggadot or Haggadahs not based on the four aforementioned Haggadot or Haggadahs, and as a result, the number of unique editions of the Haggadah has blossomed to where there are now at least 3,000 different versions of the Haggadah and counting, each styled according to the political, social, and/or religious views of the audience for which it is intended.

What were the factors that enabled the Haggadah to proliferate among Jewish communities worldwide, enabling the Haggadah to become one of the most popular books in Jewish religious literature? The answer is that the comparatively small size of the Haggadah vis-à-vis other Jewish religious literature enabled it to be purchased or commissioned at a relatively inexpensive price. In addition, the small size of the Haggadah made it not very labor-intensive for a Jewish scribe to write and complete, and an artist to illuminate.

Since the 16th century, the Haggadah has been translated from Hebrew into the vernacular Jewish language of countries where Jewish people have lived. This includes languages such as Yiddish [a mixture of Hebrew (about 10%), medieval German (about 70%), Russian and Polish (about 20%), it also includes a sprinkling of other European languages as well], Ladino (primarily a mixture of Hebrew and Castilian Spanish, but

also influenced by Aramaic, Arabic, Turkish, and Greek and, depending on the geographic location of the speaker, also including words from Portuguese, French, Turkish, Greek, Bulgarian, and Bosnian), Yevanika (also known as either Yevanic, Judeo-Greek, or Romaniote, it is a mixture of Hebrew and Greek), Judeo-Arabic [including Baghdad Arabic (Jewish), Judeo-Iraqi Arabic (also known as Yahudic), Judeo-Moroccan, Judeo-Tripolitanian Arabic, Judeo-Tunisian Arabic, and Judeo-Yemenite], and Judeo-Persian [includes the 14 different Judeo-Iranian languages spoken in various areas of Persia/Iran: Dzhidi (Judeo-Persian in literature), Bukhori (the language of the Jews of Bukhara, Uzbekistan), Judeo-Golpaygani (traditionally spoken in the town of Gulpaigan and western Isfahan Province, Iran), Judeo-Yazdi (spoken in the city of Yazd and elsewhere in Yazd Province, in central Iran), Judeo-Kermani (spoken in the city of Kerman and elsewhere in Kerman Province, in south-central Iran), Judeo-Shirazi (spoken in the city of Shiraz and elsewhere in Fars Province, in southwestern Iran), Judeo-Esfahani (spoken in the city of Isfahan and in the surrounding area, as well as elsewhere in central and southern Isfahan Province, Iran), Judeo-Hamedani (spoken in the city of Hamadan and elsewhere in Hamadan Province, in western Iran), Judeo-Kashani (spoken in the city of Kashan and elsewhere in northern Isfahan Province, in western Iran), Judeo-Borujerdi (spoken in the city of Borujerd and elsewhere in Lorestan Province, in western Iran), Judeo-Nehevandi (spoken in the city of Nahavand and elsewhere in northern Hamadan Province, in western Iran), Judeo-Khunsari (spoken in the city of Khansar and elsewhere in far-western Isfahan Province, in western Iran), Juhuri (Judeo-Tat), and Judeo-Kurdish (not to be confused with several Jewish Neo-Aramaic languages which are also sometimes called "Judeo-Kurdish")].

### 36. PASSOVER RECIPE RESOURCES

#### WEBSITES WITH ASSORTED PASSOVER RECIPES

(Sephardic Passover Recipes 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 follin, 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 Napoleon, 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, Ashkenzai 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 : 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 : 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 : Passover Recipes - Passover recipes include: quick pareve ice cream, special tzimmes, cooked carrot cake, chremslich (or chremslach), and more!

\* 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 : 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 : Spinach Vegetable Kugel Passover Recipe - this website includes a diabetic Passover recipe for spinach vegetable kugel.

\* 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 : 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 : Passover Seder Menu Ideas - Part 2 - Passover recipes include: roasted root vegetables with prunes, beef brisket with oranges, and more!

\* 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 : Passover Diabetic Haroseth Recipe - this website includes a Passover haroseth recipe for diabetics.

#### WEBSITES WITH SEPHARDIC PASSOVER RECIPES.

\* 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 : 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 : Sephardic Dishes For Passover - Sephardic Passover recipes include: Sephardic Meat and Potato Croquettes (Meat), Sephardic Spinach or Eggplant Pie (Pareve), and more!

\* Midrash.org : Sephardic Passover Recipes - Sephardic Passover recipes include: Jose and 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 : Afghani Haroseth Recipe for Passover - An exotic haroseth recipe for Passover from Afghanistan.

\* SephardiConnect.com : Sephardic Passover Haroseth Recipes - Sephardic Passover recipes include: Turkish charoset, Maghrebi charoset, Bukharan charoset, and Holland and Surinam charoset.

\* 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 : Moroccan Tagine of Lamb - a website containing a Sephardic Passover recipe for Moroccan tagine of lamb.

\* 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: 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, ½ 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.

\* 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!

**37. PESAH SHEINI - THE "SECOND PESAH CELEBRATION"**

What is Pesach Sheini or Pesach Sheni or the Second Passover ?

Pesach Sheini (also: "Pesach Sheni") means "Second Passover" in Hebrew, and refers to the provision in the biblical Book of Numbers which provides a flexible alternative for people who could not attend the traditional or first Passover in order to sacrifice their paschal lamb at dusk (in this case, the darkest stage of twilight just before the sky is completely dark, indicating nightfall) on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Nissan or Nisan. Pesach Sheini or Pesach Sheni or the Second Passover has its origin in the Torah. According to the biblical Book of Bamidbar or Numbers (Bamidbar or Numbers, Chapter 9), a number of Hebrews approached Moses and told him that they had not observed Passover on its proper date, beginning in the evening on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Nissan or Nisan, because they had been ritually impure. As a result, they could not sacrifice the paschal lamb in the evening on the 14th day of Nissan or Nisan. Moses then consulted with G-d, who, in turn, provided the Second Passover. In this provision, a person who could not attend the Passover celebration to sacrifice the paschal lamb because they lived too far away from the Temple in Jerusalem or because they were ritually impure or ill, could celebrate a "Second Passover" or "Minor Passover" called "Pesach Sheini" or "Pesach Sheni" in Hebrew, which was to take place exactly one month after the start of the first Passover, in the evening on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Iyyar or Iyar (Bamidbar or Numbers 9:1-14, Bamidbar or Numbers 9:9-25). Therefore, those who were not able to sacrifice the paschal lamb for reasons of ritual impurity or from being too distant from the Temple in Jerusalem on the traditional date for the start of Passover - the 14th day of Nissan or Nisan in the evening - could sacrifice a paschal lamb on Pesach Sheini or the Second Passover which began on the 14th day of Iyar in the evening. However, only one instance of observing Pesach Sheini is recorded in the Hebrew Bible, that by King Hezekiah\*, ruler of the Kingdom of Judah, after consulting with the "princes of the congregation in Israel" (Divrei Hayamim 2 or 2 Chronicles 30:2). The result of this consultation is mentioned in the biblical book called the Second Book of Chronicles. After he consulted with the "princes of the congregation of Israel", King Hezekiah discovered that the "priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem" (Divrei Hayamim 2 or 2 Chronicles 30:3). From post-Temple times onward (after 70 C.E.), the only trace of having observed the Second Passover or Pesach Sheini from biblical times has been the omission of supplicatory prayers, called "Tahanun". "Tahanun" means "supplication" in Hebrew, and refers to penitential prayers. Penitential prayers are prayers that are characterized by asking forgiveness from G-d for sins or transgressions committed, which was connected to one of the reasons for needing to observe a Second Passover in biblical times, that of being ritually impure on the traditional date for Passover, the 14th of the Hebrew month of Nissan or Nisan. The omission of Tahanun prayers or penitential prayers from the observance of Pesach Sheini beginning in the evening on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Iyar was invoked to prevent the worshipper from feeling even more remorse for the transgressions committed (being ritually impure on the traditional date for Passover, for instance), or in the case of Pesach Sheini being a joyous festival - meaning celebrating the Second Passover - Tahanun prayers were omitted to prevent lessening the joy of celebrating the Second

Passover or Pesach Sheini. In addition to omitting Tahanun prayers as being evidence of having observed Pesach Sheini in biblical times, in some communities Pesach Sheini is marked by the eating of a piece of matzah. Furthermore, some Orthodox Jews will put aside three pieces of matzah on Pesach or Passover and save them for Pesach Sheini, when they eat the three pieces of matzah.

**38. MIMOUNA and MIMOUNA RECIPES**

Mimouna recipes (also spelled: Mimuna recipes, Maimouna recipes, Mimounah recipes, and Mimunah recipes) include leavening in them, as the Mimouna festival takes place immediately after the close of the Passover / Pesach holiday, and so leavening is permitted to be used in Mimouna recipes.

A Mimouna recipe will almost always be a recipe that contains sweet ingredients to symbolize the sweetness of physical freedom that the Hebrews' experienced after being saved from the pursuing Egyptian army at the "Red Sea" or "Sea of Reeds" on the seventh day after fleeing Egypt. But there are also Mimouna recipes for fish which symbolize the fish in the "Red Sea" or "Sea of Reeds".

The following Mimouna recipes are just a sample of the many traditional Mimouna foods eaten at this joyous Moroccan-Jewish post-Passover or post-Pesach festival which celebrates the saving of the Hebrews by G-d at the "Red Sea" (or "Sea of Reeds") on the seventh day after the Hebrews fled Egypt.

Mimouna foods symbolize prosperity and good luck and there are also foods that symbolize the "Red Sea" or the "Sea of Reeds" where the miracle that G-d performed for the Hebrews took place on the seventh day after the Hebrews fled Egypt, that is, the miracle of the "splitting" of the "Red Sea" or "Sea of Reeds" by G-d through Moses' strike of his staff on the Sea that allowed the Hebrews to escape the pursuing Egyptian army. For instance, there will be various Mimouna recipes for dates that are stuffed with marzipan and nuts, crepes dipped or coated in honey and butter called "mofleta", "muffleta", or "mouffleta" which is traditionally the first food to be eaten after the Passover / Pesach holiday for Moroccan-Jews, a white almond nougat called "zabane", fried raisins decorated with nuts and/or currant preserves, both called "mrouziya" or "marozia", a jam made from oranges, grapefruit, carrots, turnips, and beets known as "mazun", as well as Mimouna recipes for butter wafers.

All of the above-mentioned Mimouna foods are placed on a table covered with a white tablecloth that serves as the centerpiece of the Mimouna festival in the Moroccan-Jewish household. Other foods that symbolize prosperity that are placed on the table include: a tray of flour containing seven gold coins in it and a full cup of oil in the center of the tray - usually chocolate gold coins are used, a plate of flour that is decorated with seven green bean pods, nuts and fruit such as almonds, apples, and oranges, honey, sheaves of grain that are scattered across the table, and milk jugs surrounded by vegetables and lettuce.

In addition, Mimouna foods that symbolize the "Red Sea" or "Sea of Reeds" that are placed on the table include: fish or live fish on a plate with a bed of vegetables and lettuce. The seven coins that are placed in the tray of flour also symbolize the coins that were washed up on the shoreline after the Egyptian army drowned in the "Red Sea" or "Sea of Reeds" after the "split" waters came together while they were in the Sea pursuing the Hebrews, who had just emerged from the Sea when the two walls of water came together after G-d instructed Moses to strike his staff on the water again to "close"

the Sea. As well, the number "seven" is reflected in the seven chocolate gold coins and seven green bean pods to symbolize the seventh day after the Hebrews left Egypt when the miracle of the "Red Sea" or "Sea of Reeds" took place.

Although Mimouna is a Moroccan-Jewish festival, Moroccan-Jews have migrated to other countries, including Israel, Turkey, France, and others, taking the celebration of the Mimouna festival with them.

There are many other Mimouna customs that don't involve Mimouna foods or Mimouna recipes. Our focus is on the Mimouna recipes and foods that symbolize the Mimouna festival. The following are just some of the many Mimouna recipes that reflect the spirit of the festival.

### 39. YOUR SEDER AND THE YERUSHALMI, CHAROSET

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You already know at least one Yerushalmi for your seder: the story of the four sons (Y. Pesachim 10:4//Mekhilta Bo 18). Let's add some more for you in time for you to use at your seder!

Mishnah Pesachim 10:3 talks about the bitter herbs (or lettuce) and charoset. There is a revealing bit in the Yerushalmi regarding the reality of these two items:

Merchants of Jerusalem used to say: Come and take the spices of the commandment! Isi's wife said in her husband's name:

And why is the charoset called dokhah (i.e. pounded)? Because the charoset is pounded with bitter herbs.

Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: It needs to be thick. This implies that the charoset is a remembrance of the mud.

There are those who teach: It needs to be soft. This implies that the charoset is a remembrance of the blood (of the 10th plague and/or the blood on the doorposts that protected the Israelites from that plague). (Y. Pesachim 10:3)

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. I love that we get a bit of a view on what is one of the most salient features of Passover (for me, at least): the hawking of wares for the seder meal. Our local grocery store gave over a huge space for Passover goods two weeks before Purim. It fills me with guilt and dread each time I enter as it reminds me of all the cleaning and cooking that will come. These grocers have ancient roots (no pun intended) apparently.
2. Both in Jerusalem and in Lod (T. Pesachim 10:10), merchants were hocking these spices. Why do you think it is this cry that both Tosefta and the Yerushalmi remember? Is it because the merchants were saying that the spices were a commandment? If so, need they be referring to bitter herbs (which are commanded in the Torah) or could they be referring to the spices needed for the charoset? Is it either/or or both?
3. On a more visceral level, I'm interested to know if anyone shares my sense of dread when seeing all those Passover goods in the grocery store. Please tell me!
4. There seems to be a great deal of confusion about who Issi is (see B. Pesachim at the bottom of 113b) and all the more so about his wife. It certainly seems that she knows what her charoset has: something pounded and bitter herbs. Will you, perhaps, make some <sup>3</sup>Issi's wife charoset<sup>2</sup> this year made with bitter herbs? Let me know.

**40. CHAROSET and RECIPES**

Charoset : What is it?

Charoset - and its other English transliterations charoses, haroset, charoeth, haroeth, haroses, kharoset, kharoeth, and kharoses - is, in its most basic form, a mixture of apples, nuts, wine, cinnamon, and honey. Charoset symbolizes the mortar which the enslaved Hebrews used to make bricks when they were building store-houses and buildings in the cities of ancient Egypt, particularly the cities of Pithom and Ra'amses [not to be confused with the Pharaoh (King) Ramses] in the land of Goshen, which is an area of ancient Egypt that today is located between the city of Cairo and the Suez Canal. The cities in which the enslaved Hebrews toiled were used as supply centers for the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt.

What does charoset mean?

The word Charoset is a variant transliterated spelling of the Aramaic word Charoses, which is a word that was used to describe a food that contained a mixture of various fruits, nuts (usually almonds and/or walnuts or combinations of other types of nuts), ginger, cinnamon, occasionally honey, and either wine or grape juice. Since this mixture symbolizes the clay that the Hebrews used as slaves in ancient Egypt to make bricks in building store-houses and supply centers for the Pharaoh (King) of Egypt, particularly the supply centers of Pithom and Ra'amses (as mentioned, not to be confused with the well-known Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II), an allusion was made to the Hebrew words for clay, either "Charsis" or "Ceres", and so in Hebrew, the word Charoset that was used to describe this mixture became associated with the Hebrew words for clay, that is, "Charsis" and "Ceres".

Why is the traditional taste of charoset usually sweet in nature yet we are recalling the bitterness of slavery?

Passover contains a series of apparent contradictions. In this case, our first thought is in recalling the mortar used to make bricks as slaves in ancient Egypt yet upon tasting the sweetness of charoset, our perspective is broadened by reminding us of the current sweetness of our physical freedom. There is also another interesting point: as mentioned, the Hebrew word for "clay" that is used for building things is "cheres", and the Hebrew word for "destruction" is "heres". The closeness of the Hebrew word "cheres" to "heres" and vice-versa reminds us that all "building" can be used for both the sweet and the bitter.

The color of charoset : is there any meaning or symbolism to it?

The charoset mixture is usually a deep to dark color. The ancient rabbis wanted to simulate the color of the mortar in the charoset mixture and that was one of the reasons for the selection of the ingredients for charoset. The goal was to simulate reality as much as possible in the symbolic foods of the Passover holiday so that in every generation each Jewish person would feel as if he or she had personally left ancient

Egypt which maintains an unbroken chain of commemoration of G-d's commandment to observe the Passover of Egypt event in the past, present, and future.

Is there just one standard charoset recipe?

Charoset recipes come in a wide variety of ingredients. In fact, charoset recipes come in more varieties than any other Jewish recipe. This is due to families in different Jewish communities adding in local ingredients on top of the basic charoset recipe that reflect the local culture of the city and/or country of their residence. Individual families also add in their own unique ingredients to the charoset recipe on top of the basic charoset recipe and local ingredients taken from what is and/or was available where they live/lived.

The following charoset recipes are just some examples of the wide assortment of charoset recipes that have been created:

### ASHKENAZI CHAROSET

An Ashkenazi charoset recipe or Ashkenazic charoset recipe consists of the most basic ingredients of all charoset recipes. The word "charoset" comes from the Hebrew word "cheres", meaning "clay", however, some Jewish scholars have claimed that the word "cheres" was mentioned in the writings of the Rashbam, the acronym for Rabbi Shmuel the son of Meir (1085-1174, born near Troyes, France), a biblical commentator and Talmudist and a grandson of the great Jewish scholar Rashi, but was misread as "charoset".

Charoset symbolizes the mortar with which the Hebrews used as slaves of the Pharaoh (King) in ancient Egypt to make bricks in building store-houses and cities that served as supply centers such as Pithom and Ra'amses in ancient Egypt. Just about all Jewish communities try to use ingredients for charoset that will make the color of charoset as close as possible to the color of the mortar that was used by the Hebrews. In fact, Jews in Salonika, Greece will even add a pinch of ground brick into their versions of charoset to make the charoset contain actual mortar! (Yummy!)

An Ashkenazi charoset recipe or Ashkenazic charoset recipe (also transliterated into English from Hebrew as: Ashkenazi charoses, Ashkenazi haroset, Ashkenazi charoseth, Ashkenazi haroseth, Ashkenazi haroses or Ashkenazic charoses, Ashkenazic haroset, Ashkenazic charoseth, Ashkenazic haroseth, and Ashkenazic haroses) refers to the Ashkenaz (short form for the both the plural form "Ashkenazim" and the singular form "Ashkenazi" and the descriptive adjective "Ashkenazic") and their versions of the charoset recipe. Who are the Ashkenaz, or Ashkenazim?

The Hebrew name "Ashkenaz" was first mentioned in the Tanakh or Hebrew Bible as the designation of a son of Gomer and a grandson of Japheth (Genesis 10:3). By the early Middle Ages, with the settlement of Jews in the Early and Middle Ages initially occurring in the Rhineland area of Germany and France in Central Europe, the name "Ashkenaz" became identified with Germany.

Thus, the term "Ashkenazim" in the geographic sense literally means "Inhabitants of Ashkenaz" or "Inhabitants of Germany", meaning the Jews who lived in Germany and German-controlled areas in the Middle Ages. Many Ashkenaz eventually migrated from Central Europe to Northwestern and Eastern Europe, and so the cultural and religious influence of the Ashkenaz in Germany eventually extended in scope to the Jews who lived in Northwestern and Eastern Europe, so much so that the term "Ashkenaz" was extended as well to include Jews who lived in these areas. In the broader sense of the word, the term "Ashkenaz" is applied to the entire complex of Ashkenazi culture, legal concepts, mores, religious traditions, etc., as well as to the Jews who adopted them.

Today, the name "Ashkenaz" in the narrowest sense of the word refers to either "Germany", to "German-Jews", or to a "German-Jew" in Hebrew, but in the geographical sense of the word, "Ashkenaz" refers to the German-ruled jurisdictions where Jews lived or currently live as well as to the Jews who lived or currently live in those areas (German-Jews or "Ashkenazim" in Hebrew; singular form: "Ashkenazi" or "German-Jew" in Hebrew). In addition, in the cultural sense of the word, the term "Ashkenaz" today refers to Jews who lived in or currently live in Central, Northwestern, and Eastern European countries who were influenced by and hence adopted the entire complex of Ashkenazi culture, including the prayer rites ("nusach", "nusah" or "nusakh" in Hebrew), legal concepts, mores, religious traditions, etc. of the German-Jews or Ashkenazim.

As a result, the names "Ashkenaz", "Ashkenazi", "Ashkenazim" as well as the descriptive adjective "Ashkenazic" today refer not only to the German-Jews, but also loosely refer to the Jews who lived or currently live in Central, Northwestern, and Eastern European countries as well as to the Jews whose ancestors came from Central, Northwestern and/or Eastern Europe but who were influenced culturally and religiously by the German-Jews or Ashkenazim as they spread across Central, Northwestern, and Eastern Europe, migrating from different areas of Germany and France in the Middle Ages to Poland, Russia, Hungary, England, Romania and many other European countries.

An Ashkenazi charoset recipe will reflect the ingredients that were available to Jewish families in the cities and countries where Jews resided in Central, Northwestern, and Eastern Europe from the Middle Ages onward. There will also be Ashkenazic charoset recipes that will take into account one's religious philosophy, and symbolisms will be attached to various ingredients to reflect that philosophy. An example would be an Ashkenazi charoset recipe for the Chassidic (or Hassidic) sect known as the Chabad-Lubavitch, where mystical interpretations will be attached to specific ingredients. The most basic form of an Ashkenazi charoset recipe consists of nuts (usually either walnuts or almonds), wine, cinnamon, honey, and apples. I imagine one can refer to it as the "original" Ashkenazi charoset recipe. The following Ashkenazi charoset recipe is the most basic version.

#### ASHKENAZI CHAROSET RECIPE

2 apples, unpeeled  
1 cup ground walnuts

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1 teaspoon cinnamon  
 3 tablespoons sweet Passover wine  
 honey or sugar to taste

Instructions for the Ashkenazi Charoset recipe:

1. Chop apples in food processor.
2. Add rest of ingredients.

## EGYPTIAN CHAROSET

An Egyptian charoset recipe (also spelled: Egyptian charoses, Egyptian haroset, Egyptian charoseth, Egyptian haroseth, or Egyptian haroses) is a must for any charoset recipe collection. After all, ancient Egypt is where the Passover / Pesach story takes place, and where charoset derived its symbolism, that is, charoset represents the mortar that the enslaved Hebrews used to make bricks in building store-houses and supply centers for the Pharaoh of ancient Egypt, particularly the supply center cities of Pithom and Ra'amses. In fact, "charoset" derives from the Hebrew word "cheres", which means "clay". An Egyptian charoset recipe will typically contain fruits that are native to Egypt. There are various Egyptian charoset recipes depending on the individual Egyptian-Jewish family recipes for charoset handed down through the generations. The following Egyptian charoset recipe contains raisins and dates that serve as the fruit, and almonds that serve as the nut ingredient.

## EGYPTIAN CHAROSET RECIPE (Makes about 4 cups)

1 pound raisins  
 8 ounces pitted dates  
 2 cups water, about  
 1/4 cup sugar  
 1/4 cup chopped almonds

Instructions for the Egyptian Charoset recipe:

1. Combine raisins and dates in bowl.
2. Add 2 cups water (or enough to cover).
3. Let stand overnight.
4. Drain.
5. Place mixture in food processor or blender.
6. Add sugar and process until mixture is well chopped.
7. Serve sprinkled with almonds.
8. Makes about 4 cups.

Nutrition Information Per Tablespoon: Calories: 37; Protein: 4 grams; Carbohydrates: 9 grams; Fat: 3 grams; Cholesterol: 0 milligrams.

## GREEK CHAROSET

Try this Greek charoset recipe version for the Passover / Pesach Seder, one of many Greek charoset recipe versions, depending on the individual Greek-Jewish family charoset recipe and also on the availability of charoset ingredients where Greek-Jewish families have lived in Greece.

Greek charoset (also spelled: Greek charoses, Greek haroset, Greek charoseth, Greek haroseth, and Greek haroses) comes in many varieties based on the cultural origin of the Greek-Jewish family. For instance, Greek-Jews who are of Romaniote Greek origin, meaning they descend from Jews who came to Greece following the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 C.E. [the modern Hebrew/Jewish calendar date; 68 C.E. according to the Seder Olam Rabbah, a 2nd-century C.E. work by Rabbi Jose Ben Halafta, a student of Rabbi Akiva.

The Seder Olam Rabbah ("Great Order of the World" in Hebrew) is the oldest record of Hebrew/Jewish chronology in Judaism and the chronology followed by Orthodox rabbis] - hence the term Romaniote - will have particular ingredients in their Greek charoset recipes while Greek-Jews who are of Sephardic origin, meaning they descend from Jews who came to Greece after being expelled from Spain and Portugal in 1492 and 1497 respectively, will have their own versions of a Greek charoset recipe.

Further added to these cultural groups are Greek-Jews of Ashkenazic descent, meaning Jews whose ancestors came from either Central and/or Eastern Europe and they will have their own versions of a Greek charoset recipe as well. Some of these Greek charoset recipes include various amounts of tropical fruits such as lemons, dates, and oranges, and there is one version that even tries to re-create the original event by including a bit a ground brick in their Greek charoset recipe! However, to save you from that Greek charoset recipe, the following is a general version of a Greek charoset recipe.

**GREEK CHAROSET RECIPE** (Active Work and Total Preparation Time: 15 minutes plus 1 hour chilling) (Makes 2 1/2 to 3 cups)

2 cups pitted dates, cut in half  
 1/2 cup raisins  
 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts  
 1/4 cup chopped pine nuts  
 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger  
 1/2 cup sweet Passover wine

Instructions for the Greek Charoset recipe:

1. Blend dates and raisins in bowl of food processor until very finely minced.
2. Transfer to large bowl and add walnuts, pine nuts, ginger and wine and mix well.
3. Cover with plastic wrap and chill 1 hour.

Nutrition Information Per Tablespoon: Calories: 44; Sodium: 1 milligram; Cholesterol: 0; Fat: 2 grams; Carbohydrates: 7 grams; Protein: 1 gram; Fiber: 0.28 grams.

Greek Charoset

Greek Charoset Recipe For Passover - Pesach

## ISRAELI CHAROSET

Check out this Israeli charoset recipe for the Passover / Pesach Seder, one of many Israeli charoset recipes found in the Land of Israel, since there are a plethora of Jews who have migrated to Israel from many Jewish communities scattered throughout the world with each adding to the variety of Israeli charoset recipes in the Holy Land.

Israeli charoset (you can also spell it: Israeli charoses, Israeli haroset, Israeli charoseth, Israeli Haroseth, or Israeli Haroses) will be the general, overall term for a plethora of charoset recipes from many Jewish cultural and ethnic groups in Israel. An Israeli charoset recipe will have any number and amount of ingredients in it. Further adding to the number of Israeli charoset recipes are the individual family charoset recipes passed down from generation to generation, with their unique ingredients and amount of each ingredient, usually reflecting the ingredients of the region and/or city in the country from which the family had emigrated.

An Israeli charoset recipe based on a cultural difference will be an Israeli charoset recipe for Ashkenazim (Jews whose ancestors came from Central and Eastern Europe), Sephardim (Jews whose ancestors came from either Spain or Portugal), and Mizrahim (Jews whose ancestors came from either the Middle East or Asia in general). Besides Jewish cultural and ethnic groupings, an Israeli charoset recipe can also reflect a particular religious, political, or social philosophy of a group, such as an Israeli charoset recipe for the Kibbutz movement, Zionist religious movement, or Jewish Humanistic movement, to name a few. Symbolisms added to the selected ingredients for an Israeli charoset recipe will be based on re-interpreting the original symbolic interpretation for charoset to reflect one's religious, political, and/or social philosophy. The following Israeli charoset recipe for the Passover / Pesach holiday is, as mentioned, but one of many versions.

ISRAELI CHAROSET RECIPE (Makes 4 cups; Approximate Preparation Time: 1 hour)

1/2 pound dried raisins  
 1/2 pound dried apricots  
 1/2 pound pitted dates  
 2 cups water  
 1/4 cup sugar  
 1 tablespoon sweet red wine  
 1/4 to 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Instructions for the Israeli Charoset recipe:

1. Soak the raisins, apricots and dates in the water for an hour.

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2. Add the sugar and wine to the water-fruit mixture. Chop the mixture, a third at a time, in a blender or food processor for about a minute.
3. Transfer the chopped fruits to a heavy saucepan and let simmer about 20 minutes over low heat until the fruit is cooked and the liquid absorbed.
4. Remove from heat and cool, then mix in the chopped nuts.

Nutrition Data Per Serving: Calories: 321; Protein: 3 grams; Fat: 4 grams; Carbohydrates: 76 grams; Sodium: 10 milligrams; Saturated Fat: 0 grams; Monounsaturated Fat: 2 grams; Polyunsaturated Fat: 1 gram; Cholesterol: 0 milligrams.

## ITALIAN CHAROSET

Try this Italian charoset recipe for the Passover / Pesach Seder, just one of many Italian charoset recipe versions, depending on the individual Italian-Jewish family charoset recipe and on the city where Italian-Jewish families live in Italy, since the availability of charoset ingredients has varied depending on one's location, and Italian-Jewish families have used fruits that have been available where they have lived in Italy as part of developing their unique version of an Italian charoset recipe.

Italian charoset (also spelled: Italian charoses, Italian haroset, Italian charoseth, Italian haroseth, Italian haroses, Italian kharoset, Italian kharoseth, and Italian kharoses) varies widely depending on the region, city, and even family. An Italian charoset recipe will contain different ingredients and in different quantities, depending on which fruits and other ingredients are available in the area where one is located in Italy. An Italian charoset recipe will also vary with each Italian-Jewish family, many of which have a charoset recipe passed down through the generations. There are also general versions of Italian charoset recipes, and the following Italian charoset recipe is but one such general version.

Charoset is a symbolic food of the Passover / Pesach holiday, symbolizing - and deliberately looking like - the mortar with which the enslaved Hebrews used to make bricks in building store-houses and supply centers for the Pharaoh of ancient Egypt. Although charoset is usually eaten only during the Passover / Pesach holiday, it can be used throughout the year as a spread or as an addition to other foods, such as a filling.

## ITALIAN CHAROSET RECIPE

1/2 pound pitted dates  
 1/2 pound shelled walnuts  
 3 large apples, peeled and cored  
 1 large unpeeled seedless orange, thoroughly washed  
 2 large bananas  
 1/2 cup sweet Passover wine (see note below)  
 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves  
 1 tablespoon lemon juice  
 Matzo meal as needed

Instructions for the Italian Charoset recipe:

1. Very finely chop dates, walnuts, apples and orange, and place them in a bowl.
2. Mash bananas; add them to the bowl. Add wine, cinnamon, cloves and lemon juice.
3. Mix well. Add matzo meal as needed to make a mortar-like paste.

Makes about 6 1/2 to 7 cups.

Note: You can use Concord grape Kosher-for-Passover wine to make an excellent charoset. Also, matzah meal is optional for this recipe, it is not absolutely necessary.

Nutrition Information (per 1/2-cup serving): Calories: 216; Calories From Fat: 87; % Daily Value: Total Fat: 10 grams = 15%; Saturated fat: 1 gram = 5%; Cholesterol: 0 milligrams = 0%; Sodium: 3 milligrams = 0%; Total Carbohydrates: 29 grams = 10%; Dietary Fiber: 4 grams = 14%; Sugars: 20 grams; Protein: 3 grams; Vitamin A: 1%; Vitamin C: 22%; Calcium: 3%; Iron: 5%.

## MOROCCAN CHAROSET

Try this Moroccan charoset recipe (or Moroccan haroset recipe) for the Passover / Pesach Seder, one of many Moroccan charoset recipe versions depending on the personal charoset recipes of individual Moroccan-Jewish families and on the location and availability of charoset ingredients for the Moroccan-Jewish family in Morocco.

Moroccan charoset (also spelled: Moroccan charoses, Moroccan haroset, Moroccan charoseth, Moroccan haroseth, and Moroccan haroses) comes in many varieties. A Moroccan charoset recipe will vary depending on the Moroccan-Jewish family's use of different ingredients and the amount of each ingredient, but all the ingredients in traditional Moroccan charoset recipes are usually taken from what is available during the time of the Passover / Pesach holiday in Morocco. A typical Moroccan charoset recipe will contain dates, raisins, and, in many cases, local spices plus added fruits mixed in for uniqueness. The nut ingredient in a Moroccan charoset recipe will vary from almonds, to walnuts, to hazelnuts. There is also a tradition in Moroccan-Jewish families to roll up charoset into balls, and that is the Moroccan charoset recipe that is presented below.

## MOROCCAN CHAROSET BALLS RECIPE

500 grams hazelnuts  
 250 grams almonds  
 250 grams dates  
 250 grams sultana raisins

Note: 500 grams = 1 pound + 1.65 ounces; 250 grams = 8.825 ounces.

Instructions for the Moroccan Charoset Balls recipe:

1. Using a food processor, grind the nuts together coarsely.
2. Add dates and raisins and process until consistency is smooth but still has some texture.
3. Prepare balls of the mixture about 2 centimeters in diameter (about 0.79 inches in diameter).
4. Can also be served as a dessert during Pessah.

#### PERSIAN CHAROSET - IRANIAN CHAROSET

How about an exotic Persian charoset recipe (or Persian haroset recipe; also Iranian charoset recipe or Iranian haroset recipe) for the Passover / Pesach Seder? I thought you might be daring enough! Persian charoset recipes or Iranian charoset recipes will vary depending on individual family charoset recipes and on the availability of charoset ingredients where the Persian-Jewish/Iranian-Jewish family lives in Persia/Iran. A Persian charoset recipe / Iranian charoset recipe will usually contain many different kinds of fruits that reflect the variety of fruits available in one's location and that also makes for a healthy food that is rich in vitamins.

Persian charoset or Iranian charoset (it has many spelling variations in English from transliterated Hebrew such as Persian charoses, Persian haroset, Persian charoseth, Persian haroseth, Persian haroses, and Iranian charoses, Iranian haroset, Iranian charoseth, Iranian haroseth, and Iranian haroses) reflects the many fruits and spices of ancient Persia (since 1935, known as Iran).

Persia or Iran is the world's largest producer of saffron, a very expensive spice. A Persian charoset recipe or Iranian charoset recipe will almost always include saffron as an ingredient in the recipe, along with the many tropical fruits that grow in Persia or Iran, such as dates, bananas, and oranges, to name a few. Jews have lived in Persia for over 2,500 years, so they have had plenty of time to create a plethora of Persian charoset recipes for the Passover / Pesach holiday!

#### PERSIAN CHAROSET RECIPE / IRANIAN CHAROSET RECIPE

1 unpeeled pear, cored and finely chopped  
 1 unpeeled apple, cored and finely chopped  
 1 cup finely chopped walnuts  
 1 cup finely chopped almonds  
 1 cup finely chopped hazelnuts  
 1 cup finely chopped pistachio nuts  
 1 cup chopped pitted dates  
 1 cup chopped raisins  
 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
 2 teaspoons grated ginger root  
 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
 Sweet wine

Instructions for the Persian Charoset recipe / Iranian Charoset recipe:

1. Combine pear, apple, walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, pistachio nuts, dates and raisins in a large bowl, and blend well, being careful not to chop the mixture into a paste. Add cinnamon, ginger root, cider vinegar and enough wine to bind.
2. Place on a platter and shape into a pyramid. Cover and refrigerate.

## SEPHARDIC CHAROSET

A Sephardic charoset recipe (also spelled: Sephardi charoset, Sephardic charoses, Sephardi charoses, Sephardic haroset, Sephardi haroset, Sephardic charoseth, Sephardi charoseth, Sephardic haroseth, Sephardi haroseth, Sephardic haroses, or Sephardi haroses; some also use the spelling variations Sefardic, Sefardi, Sefarad, Sepharadic, Sepharadi, or Sepharad) can vary according to where the Sephardic family is located as well as the individual family recipes passed down through the generations.

A Sephardic charoset recipe will reflect the ingredients that are available in the community where one lives, although the resulting Sephardic charoset recipe will reflect a visual similarity to what charoset represents, that is, the mortar that the enslaved Hebrews used to make bricks in building store-houses and supply centers for the Pharaoh of ancient Egypt as recalled in the Passover / Pesach story. Sephardic charoset recipes will contain fruits such as oranges, dates, apricots, as well as raisins, and different kinds of spices.

The tropical fruits and exotic spices such as saffron, cardamom, and others that are available where Sephardim live differentiate a Sephardic charoset recipe from an Ashkenazic charoset recipe, which uses apples as the primary fruit, and cinnamon as the primary spice, however, there are some Sephardic charoset recipes that will add in apples as part of the recipe mixture, such as the Sephardic charoset recipe given below. The nut ingredient may be the same for both Sephardic charoset recipes and Ashkenazic charoset recipes, with either walnuts or almonds used in either recipe.

What does "Sephardic" mean? The Hebrew words "Sephardic" (descriptive adjective in Hebrew), "Sephardi" (singular form in Hebrew), and "Sephardim" (plural form in Hebrew) originally derived from the Hebrew word "Sepharad", a district located near the Bosphorus in Asia Minor (now in Turkey) that is mentioned in the biblical book of Obadiah (Obadiah 1:20).

Later on, when Jews settled in Spain and Portugal in the early Middle Ages, the term "Sepharad" became identified with Ispamia (either Spain or the Iberian Peninsula, meaning both Spain and Portugal) according to Jewish biblical commentators in the Middle Ages (Rashi, Ibn Ezra). In the cultural sense of the word, the word "Sepharad" also eventually referred to the entire complex of Sepharad culture, specifically Spanish-Jewish culture but in the broader sense of the word, Iberian-Jewish culture (meaning both Spanish-Jewish and Portuguese-Jewish culture), including the prayer rites ("nusach", "nusah" or "nusakh" in Hebrew), legal concepts, mores, religious

traditions, etc. After the peak of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions of 1492 and 1497 respectively in which both Spain and Portugal expelled from their countries all non-Catholics, the Spanish-Jewish and Portuguese-Jewish communities, collectively known as "Sephardim" which means the "Inhabitants of Sepharad", meaning either Spain and/or Spain and Portugal, specifically the Jewish inhabitants, migrated either to North Africa or to other European countries, namely Italy, France or even to European countries where Ashkenazi Jews lived joining the Jews who had already settled in those countries.

In some cases, the Sephardim even joined and integrated into the Ashkenazi Jewish communities and as a result, some Ashkenazim have some Sephardic ancestors. In addition, some Spanish-Jews and Portuguese Jews migrated to Middle Eastern and Asian countries such as the Ottoman Empire (now Turkey), Greece (not in the Middle East or Asia but part of the Ottoman Empire at the time of the Sepharad migration after the Inquisitions), Syria, Iraq, and Iran, thus bringing Sepharad culture to Asia and the Asian-Jewish and Middle Eastern-Jewish communities. Thus, the cultural and religious influences of the Sepharad of Spain and Portugal spread to other Jewish communities in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia and hence the descriptive adjective "Sephardic" was extended to refer to Jews who were influenced specifically by Spanish-Jewish culture but in a broader sense, by both Spanish-Jewish and Portuguese-Jewish culture.

As a result, while "Sephardi" originally referred to a "Spanish-Jewish" and/or a "Portuguese-Jewish" person, "Sephardi" eventually came to mean either a Jewish person who is or has ancestors from Spain and/or Portugal, or a Jewish person who was influenced and had adopted the Sepharad culture. With the migration of the Sepharad after the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, the particularly highly-developed and strong influence of Spanish-Jewish culture developed by the Jews that lived in Spain in the Early to Middle Ages became a major influence in North African, southern European, Middle Eastern, and some Asian Jewish communities, and so the Hebrew definitions for "Sephardic", "Sephardi", and "Sephardim" which originally described Sepharad culture, a Spanish-Jewish and/or a Portuguese-Jewish person, and Spanish-Jewish and/or Portuguese-Jewish people respectively, were eventually extended to include all Jews who either lived in and/or were influenced, had ancestors from, or had adopted the Sepharad culture of the Spanish-Jews and Portuguese Jews.

The following Sephardic charoset recipe includes dates, apricots, and apples as the featured fruits, and allspice as the featured spice, with walnuts tossed in to represent the nuts in the Sephardic charoset recipe.

**SEPHARDIC CHAROSET RECIPE** (Active Work and Total Preparation Time: 15 minutes plus 1 hour chilling) (Makes 2 cups)

1/2 cup dates, pitted and cut in half  
 1/2 cup dried apricots, cut in half  
 1 apple, unpeeled, cored and diced  
 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice

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1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Instructions for the Sephardic Charoset recipe:

1. Blend dates, apricots, apple and allspice in bowl of food processor until very finely minced.
2. Add walnuts and pulse on and off until mixture is blended.
3. Do not purée.
4. Transfer to bowl, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate 1 hour.

Nutrition Information Per Tablespoon: Calories: 24; Sodium: 1 milligram; Cholesterol: 0; Fat: 1 gram; Carbohydrates: 4 grams; Protein: 0; Fiber: 0.20 grams.

## TURKISH CHAROSET

Try this Turkish charoset recipe (or Turkish haroset recipe), just one of many Turkish charoset recipe versions found in Jewish communities throughout Turkey and in Turkish-Jewish families who have migrated from their towns or cities in Turkey to other parts of the world.

Turkish charoset can be spelled many ways. You can spell it as Turkish charoses, Turkish haroset, Turkish charoseth, Turkish haroseth, or Turkish haroses. The reason is that transliterations from Hebrew into English result in many ways to spell charoset. A Turkish charoset recipe can vary depending on where a Turkish-Jewish family resides in Turkey: there are regional, city, family, and even cultural grouping variations in Turkish charoset recipes. By cultural groupings, I am referring to different groups of Turkish-Jews. For instance, Turkish-Jews who are of Romaniote-Jewish descent, that is, Jews who have lived in Turkey since the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. by the Romans [the modern Hebrew/Jewish calendar date; 68 C.E. according to the Seder Olam Rabbah, a 2nd-century C.E. work by Rabbi Jose Ben Halafta, a student of Rabbi Akiva.

The Seder Olam Rabbah ("Great Order of the World" in Hebrew) is the oldest record of Hebrew/Jewish chronology in Judaism and the chronology followed by Orthodox rabbis], hence the name Romaniote, will have their version of a Turkish charoset recipe, and Sephardic-Turkish Jews, who are descendants of Jews who came to Turkey (then known as the Ottoman Empire) after being expelled from Spain and Portugal in 1492 and 1497 respectively will have their version of a Turkish charoset recipe. Turkish charoset recipes are further varied by the individual charoset recipes from different Turkish-Jewish families that have been passed down through the generations. The following Turkish charoset recipe is a general version.

## TURKISH CHAROSET RECIPE (Makes about 3 cups)

1/2 cup pitted dates  
 2 cups peeled and sliced apples  
 1/2 cup dried apricots

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1/2 cup chopped walnuts  
 1/3 cup walnuts, finely chopped

Instructions for the Turkish Charoset recipe:

1. Cook fruits together with water just to cover until apricots and dates are tender enough to mash with a fork and mix until blended.
2. Add nuts.

## YEMENITE CHAROSET

An exotic Yemenite charoset recipe (or Yemenite haroset recipe) will add intrigue to any Passover / Pesach Seder. A Yemenite charoset recipe will usually include figs, dates, and many exotic spices that are available where the Yemenite-Jewish family lives in Yemen. In addition, different Yemenite charoset recipes will contain variations in quantities of the spices and variations in the kinds of fruits added to the Yemenite charoset recipe.

For many centuries, Yemenite-Jewry was considered one of the purest forms of Judaism. Since Yemenite Jews were uninfluenced by other non-Jewish communities and lived unto themselves for many centuries, practicing their version of Judaism uninterrupted since the 1st century B.C.E., their version of Judaism was similar to the Judaism that was practiced in late Temple times in Israel.

Yemenite charoset usually contains many ingredients. A Yemenite charoset recipe will contain fruits and spices native to Yemen, and different amounts of each ingredient will be present in different Yemenite charoset recipes. There are cooked and uncooked versions of Yemenite charoset recipes. The following Yemenite charoset recipe contains dates, figs, and spices such as coriander, ginger, and cayenne pepper, typical fruits and spices that are found in Yemenite charoset recipes for the Passover / Pesach holiday.

They continued to practice Judaism as it was practiced in the 1st century B.C.E. in Israel until Sephardic Jews from Syria and the Ottoman Empire arrived in Yemen after the start of the 17th century C.E. to bring printed Sephardic prayer books to the Yemenite Jews, who until then, had their own handwritten prayer book, called the "Tikhlal".

There are three groupings of Yemenite Jews: the Baladi, Shami, and Maimonideans or "Rambamists" (followers of the 12th century C.E. Jewish scholar and physician Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon or Moses Maimonides, also known by his acronym, the "Rambam", who was born in Spain and lived in both Spain and Egypt). The Maimonideans are close in philosophy to the Baladi Jews and so are considered a type of Baladi Jew. The "Dor Daim" ("generation of knowledge" in Hebrew) was another Maimonidean group created in the early 20th century and served as a sub-group of the original Maimonideans. The Dor Daim's goal was to bring Yemenite Jewry back to the original Maimonidean method of understanding Judaism that existed in pre-1600's Yemen. The Baladi Jews were

originally Maimonidean, but after Syrian-Sephardic Jews brought the Jewish Kabbalistic mystical book known as the Zohar to Yemen after the 1600's, the Baladi Jews modified their liturgy to be a compromise between Maimonidean philosophy and the Kabbalistic philosophy of Rabbi Isaac Luria, the latter which was followed for the most part by the Shami Jews after they came into contact with the Syrian-Sephardic Jews after 1600.

**YEMENITE CHAROSET RECIPE** (Active Work and Preparation Time: 15 minutes)  
(Makes 1 1/2 cups)

One way of making a unique presentation of this dessert is by rolling the charoset into 1-inch balls and dropping the balls into 8 ounces of melted semi-sweet chocolate. Smooth over, then refrigerate until firm.

1 cup pitted, chopped dates  
1/2 cup chopped dried figs  
1/3 cup sweet Passover wine  
3 tablespoons sesame seeds (Note: Ashkenazim are prohibited from eating sesame seeds during Passover)  
1 teaspoon ground ginger  
Ground coriander  
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
2 tablespoons matzo meal or Passover potato starch

Instructions for the Yemenite Charoset recipe:

1. Blend dates, figs and wine in bowl of food processor.
2. Transfer to bowl, add sesame seeds, ginger, dash coriander, cayenne and matzo meal and mix thoroughly.

Nutrition Information Per Tablespoon: Calories: 40; Sodium: 1 milligram; Cholesterol: 0; Fat: 1 gram; Carbohydrates: 9 grams; Protein: 0; Fiber: 0.42 grams

#### 41. PASSOVER SEDER HAGGADAH HUMOR AND GAMES

##### MAH NISHTANA

A Jewish man is waiting in line to be knighted by the Queen of England. He is supposed to kneel and recite a sentence in Latin.

When it comes his turn, the Queen taps him on the shoulders with the sword -- and in the panic of excitement he forgets the Latin line. Thinking quickly, he recites the only other line he knows in a foreign language, which he remembers from the Passover Seder: "Mah nishtana ha-lailah ha-zeh mi-kol ha-leilot."

The puzzled Queen turns to her advisor and asks, "Why is this knight different from all other knights?"

##### A FISH STORY

As Moses and the children of Israel were crossing the Red Sea, the children of Israel began to complain to Moses of how thirsty they were after walking so far. Unfortunately, they were unable to drink from the walls of water on either side of them, as they were made of salt water.

A fish from that wall of water told Moses that he and his family could help the people with their drinking water problem. Through the fishes gills they could remove the salt from the water and force it out of their mouths like a fresh water fountain for the Israelites to drink from as they walked by.

Moses accepted this kindly fish's offer. But before the fish and his family began to help, the fish had a demand. That they and their descendents would always be present at the seder meal that would be established to commemorate the Exodus.

Moses agreed to this, and when he did, he gave them their name which remains how they are known to this day, for he said to them, "Go filter, fish!!"

##### GREEN EGGS AND . . . .

The National Education Association is celebrating "Read Across America" by encouraging adults to read to children. Of course, Green Eggs and Ham is one of the most popular Dr. Seuss books. And, there's the dilemma. How can Jewish kids celebrate with green Eggs and HAM? So, in honor of (and with apologies to the estate of Dr. Seuss) here's a new ending for the story:

Will you never see?  
 They are not KOSHER, So let me be!  
 I will not eat green eggs and ham.  
 I will not eat them, Sam-I-am  
 But I'll eat green eggs with a biscuit!  
 Or I will try them with some brisket.  
 I'll eat green eggs in a box.

If you serve them with some ! lox.  
 And those green eggs are worth a try  
 Scrambled up in matzo brie!  
 And in a boat upon the river,  
 I'll eat green eggs with chopped liver!  
 So if you're a Jewish Dr. Seuss fan,  
 But troubled by green eggs and ham,  
 Let your friends in on the scoop:  
 Green eggs taste best with chicken soup!

BEN & JERRY'S ICE CREAM IS NOW AVAILABLE IN ISRAEL: In the following flavors

Wailing Walnut

Moishmellow

Mazel Toffee

Chazalnut

Oy Ge-malt

Mi Ka-mocha.

Soda & Gamorra

Bernard Malamint

Berry Pr'i Hagafen

Choc-Eilat Chip

and finally (drum roll, please).....Simchas T'oreo.

It should also be noted that all these flavors come in a Cohen.

[http://funehumor.com/fun\\_doc6/fun\\_0621.shtml](http://funehumor.com/fun_doc6/fun_0621.shtml)

TEN WAYS TO TELL YOU'VE TOO MANY PEOPLE AT YOUR SEDER

10. You can't find anywhere out of sight to hide the afikomen.
9. To recline while drinking the wine, you all have lean in unison.
8. You have to sketch your living/dining room on graph paper.
7. You have to use a microscope to divvy up the knaidlach.
6. When you rotate the verses of "Echad Mi Yodea?", someone ends up singing "Who knows 39? I know 39."
5. You start looking at ads for closed circuit TV and auxiliary speakers.
4. While waiting for everyone to wash their hands the second time, the matza rises.
3. Even the kids complain that they don't have enough maror.
2. When you recite the names of the ten plagues, the locusts really ring a bell.
1. When Elijah shows up, and you have to give him his wine "to go.

IF YOU KNEW WHAT I HAVE

A little old lady gets onto a crowded bus and stands in front of a seated young girl. Holding her hand to her chest, she says to the girl, "If you knew what I have, you would give me your seat." The girl gets up and gives up her the seat to the old lady. It is hot. The girl then takes out a fan and starts fanning herself.

The woman looks up and says, "If you knew what I have, you would give me that fan." The girl gives her the fan, too.

Fifteen minutes later the woman gets up and says to the bus driver, "Stop, I want to get off here." The bus driver tells her he has to drop her at the next corner, not in the middle of the block. With her hand across her chest, she tells the driver, "If you knew what I have, you would let me off the bus right here."

The bus driver pulls over and opens the door to let her out. As she's walking out of the bus, he asks, "Madam, what is it you have?"

The old woman looks at him and nonchalantly replies, "Chutzpah."

### PASSOVER STORY

A Jewish man took his Passover lunch to eat outside in the park. He sat down on a bench and began eating. A little while later a blind man came by and sat down next to him. Feeling neighborly, the Jewish man passed a sheet of matzoh to the blind man.

The blind man ran his fingers over the matzoh for a few minutes, looked puzzled, and finally exclaimed, "Who wrote this crap?"

<http://www.haruth.com/jhumor/Jhumor19.html>

### LAMB FOR PESAH?

It's hard to make generalizations about Sephardim cause of the various minhagim of different edot. However, in Ashkelon numerous families from Sephardic backgrounds living in private homes near the kehilla would buy a lamb by the end of the winter, fatten her up for Pesah keeping her in the front yard or back yard, and have the shohet come the week of the hag to the house. We had one child whose mother swore that the because of the neighbor's lamb her son's first word was "mehhhhhh".

Others simply bought lamb meat for cooking at the supermarket.

### TEN QUICK CHEESY WAYS TO ENHANCE YOUR SEDER

10. Two Words: Plague Charades

9. Preface every paragraph by saying "DID YOU KNOW..."

8. Go around the table mentioning which of the 4 sons you'd like to date

7. Sing Dayenu to the tune of Labamba (Di, Di, Di, Di Di Aynu!)

6. To get kids really asking questions, cancel Seder... in favor of Séance

5. Come up with alternative uses for "Shank Bone"

4. Promise \$1000 to the first kid who finds Moshe's name in the Haggadah twice

3. Ask, "If you were an Egyptian stranded on an island, and you could only have one plague for the rest of your life which one would it be?"

2. Haggadah "Taboo" (taboo words: Slaves, Free, Plague, Outstretched)

1. Spontaneous Seder Table Wave

## 42. FOUR SONS / CHILDREN

### The Four Parshiot and the Four Children

Dr. Meir Ben-Yitzhak, Bar Illan School of Education

The Sages established the formulation of the Haggadah and the rules of the Seder evening as an educational array to strengthen faith through an unparalleled family experience celebrated in Jewish homes. In the spirit of the vacations taken during this holiday, I might define the special characteristics of the Seder as the “4 X 4 Israel Trail” – four cups of wine, four questions, four sons and four (or five) expressions of Redemption. It is important to note, however, that this route does not begin on the Seder eve, nor does it end there.

The Sages established a preparatory routine of four special Torah readings, leading up to Passover. The order of these readings points to four essential stages in building the Jewish people:

- 1) Parashat Shekalim, symbolizing belonging and mutual responsibility as a precondition to establishing the nation.
- 2) Parashat Zakhor, symbolizing trust in G?d defending us against outside foes who threaten our survival.
- 3) Parashat Parah, teaching us about the need to differentiate between the ritually clean and ritually unclean in the life of the people as a precondition for a proper society.
- 4) Parashat ha-Hodesh, symbolizing the destiny of the Jewish people – to uphold the Torah and its commandments.

The four special Torah readings can also be viewed as a detailed didactic response to the four sons mentioned in the Haggadah:

1) What does the wicked son say? “What is this worship of yours?” Yours, not his. This son does not see himself as belonging. Parashat Shekalim is the answer to the wicked son, for the half-shekel paid by every Jew completes that of his fellow. Thus, through this commandment we are taught the fundamental value of mutual responsibility and belonging to the Jewish people.

2) He who does not know to ask – you begin to tell him. This son does not understand why he must belong to the Jewish people, so acquainted with grief. So how shall we begin to explain? Begin with Parashat Zakhor, which teaches us to have faith and trust in G?d, who delivers us from our enemies that have risen up against us in every generation in an effort to annihilate us, since the time of Amalek in the wilderness, through Purim, until this very day.

3) What does the simple son say? “What is this?” This son does not understand the

need for the commandments in the context of his life. Parashat Parah teaches Jews about an important principle: to distinguish between the ritually clean and the ritually unclean precisely when they are intermingled in the daily life of each of us, and in general to observe the commandments even if the reasons behind them are not at all clear to us, as typified by the ritual of the Red Heifer.

4) What does the wise son say? “What mean the decrees, laws, and rules that the Lord our G?d has enjoined? The wise son knows to distinguish between laws and rules and takes an interest in the details of the commandments. The answer to his question is Parashat ha-Hodesh, symbolizing precise detailing of the commandments which relate to the Passover sacrifice, matzah and hametz. This son is on a level where he can accept the burden of performing the commandments without question.

Let us pray that this “Israel Trail” lead us to a rebuilt Jerusalem, speedily in our day.

**43. FOUR SONS AND THE YEUSHALMI**

It is taught in Talmud Yerushalmi Tractate Pesachim 10:4 the story of the four sons. But did we realize that the sages taught that they were not referring literally to four different people, but to each one of us, and the various ways we can act or react to spiritual situations? In a sense using modern terms, the four sons story is one of spiritual schizophrenia, when we are not in shlema, integration.

The Talmud tells us that our Yetzer ha Ra never leaves us. Good is not the absence of Bad. One can be righteous and wise while the evil inclination persists in trying to dominate him. The Kabbalah takes the Gemetria numerical equivalent of Echad (one) son, which is 13, and multiplies it by four to arrive at 52. Fifty-two is the Gemetria numerical equivalent of Ben (son).

Passover's story of the four sons is a lesson in becoming integrated and not being spiritually schizophrenic any longer.

Talmud Yerushalmi Tractate Pesachim 10:3 : "Merchants of Jerusalem used to say: Come and take the spices of the commandment! Rabbi Issi's wife said in her husband's name: And why is the charoset called dokhah (pounded)? Because the charoset is pounded with bitter herbs."

"Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: It needs to be thick in remembrance of the mud used as mortar."

"Some teach: It needs to be soft. Charoset is a remembrance of the blood (of the first plague and/or the blood on the doorposts that protected the Israelites from the tenth plague of the killing of the first born)."

Answering the question of dreading Passover "cleaning and cooking." The cleaning is a spiritual act of removing the chumatz, the puffed-up-ness, the ego, from our lives. "Leaven represents the evil impulse of the heart" (Talmud Bavli Tractate Beracoth 17a). Since all of us have been now taught this, none of us find doing this dreadful. As far as cooking, since we are doing the mitzvot of not only ahavath chesed by having guests over, and fulfilling Rabbi's Huna's edict in Talmud Bavli Tractate Ta'anit 20b of "Let all who are hungry, let them come and eat, all who are in need, let them come and share- Kol Dichpin Yeatay Vayachol, Kol Ditsreech Yeatay V'yifsach," as well as preparing for the countless mitzvot of Pesach, none of us feel dread. We have all agreed that over the years we have learned to make the seders about God and spirituality and not about food, and not about wowing guests with food preparation either. One of us is serving on paper plates and plastic cups this year. But all have us have grown to use a full Hagaddah and many will study Talmud Tractate Pesachim till beyond midnight at our seders.

Who was Rabbi Issi? The famous Rabbi Solomon Schechter says the following: "Rabbi Issi is a tanna of the beginning of the third century. The name "Issi" or "Assa" is derived from "Jose," and was borne by many tannaim and amora'im; hence the confusion that

prevails in the Talmud concerning the identity of each of them, the same halakic or haggadic saying being attributed sometimes to one and sometimes to another of that name. Thus the prohibition against riding on a mule is reported in the Yerushalmi (Kil. 31c) in the name of Issi ben A'abya, while in the Tosefta (Kil. v. 6) it is attributed to Issiha-Babli, who is undoubtedly identical with Issi ben Judah. Bacher supposes that Issi ben A'abya was the brother of Hananiah ben A'abya, the interpreter ("meturgeman") of R. Judah. Issi was a diligent student of the Bible, and some of his interpretations have been preserved in the midrashic literature. From I Kings viii. 64 he infers that the expression (Ex. xx. 24) means an altar of copper filled with earth (Mekilta to Ex. xx. 24). In reference to Ex. xxi. 14 he says that though the murderer of a heathen can not be convicted by a Jewish tribunal, he must answer for his crime to God (Mekilta, ad loc. 80b). The permission expressed in Deut. xxiii. 25 is, according to Issi, extended to everybody and not only to the workers in the field; but the permission applies only to the harvest-time (Yer. Ma'as. 50a)."

But back to Charoset. Do we really know its meaning? We say it symbolizes the mortar at our seders, yet it is sweet, and made with wine and other pleasant spices. And in the Talmud Yerushalmi we have a hint it symbolizes blood. As Jews, are we not forbidden to eat blood? What is going on with Charoset?

Why is there no beracha, blessing, mentioned to do for the charoset? And what is the real reason it is on the seder plate?

Dovid Melach [King David] tells us to make at least 100 berachoth a day, and here is an opportunity to make one over the spices, the fruit and nuts, in the charoset (Borei minei v'samim for the spices, Borei p'ri ha-etz for the fruit, Borei p'ri ha adamah if the nut is grown below ground, or ha-etz, if it is picked from a tree). We have already blessed the wine which is an ingredient, and while some use honey to make charoset, that beracha would be 'sher ha kol neeh yeh biid vah ro.'

The Passover Hagaddah is very specific on why we eat foods, their symbolism, and when we eat them during the meal, and even as to how we eat them. The Seder, which means order, defines this orderly way of doing things. Yet when it comes to charoset, little is said.

The Hagaddah as well as the Talmud is very clear about Matzah, bitter herbs, greens, salt water, egg, shank bone, and their symbolism of turning the bread of haste and of the poor into the bread of freedom, eating hot foods to the tongue to remind us the bitterness of slavery, eating greens to remind us of spring and that hope always springs Eternal with faith in the Holy One, the egg to remind us of the daily sacrifice at the Temple, and the shank bone to remind us of the Pascal lamb offering as well as the sign our ancestors put on the door frames of their homes so the Angel of Death Passed them Over.

The last chapter of the Tractate of Pesachim (daf 115b-116a) describes the Seder rules from nearly 2000 years ago. Charoset is introduced as one of the items to be "brought forth, even though it is not considered a mitzvah."

Rabbi Eliezer the son of Rabbi Tzadok disagrees, and declares it to be a mitzvah.

The Gemara, the Talmud's discussion of this Mishnah poses the following question: "If it's not a mitzvah, what are they bringing it for?" The Gemara answers: For dipping, so that it neutralizes the poisonous effect of the horse radish.

Then the Gemara asks what is the mitzvah of charoset? The Gemara gives answers that are familiar to many of us. Charoset symbolizes the mortar of the bricks we as slaves made in Egypt, hence its thickness. Charoset alludes to the verse in Song of Songs, "Under the apple tree I aroused you." The rabbis saw this as a metaphor that refers to the fact that the Israelite women gave birth without pain, and were thus able to hide their sons from the Egyptians.

There is a midrash that Rashi quotes which states the "mirrors of legions" which were donated for the "Mishkan" (the tabernacle) were used by our mothers, the Israelite women, to arouse their husbands when they returned to the fields so that a Jewish future could be built. Moshe did not want to accept the mirrors because of their association with desire, but God said these mirrors are the most dear to me, so you, Moses, are to accept them. Thus it is written, "Under the apple tree I aroused you."

Everyone agrees that charoset should be part of the meal, but there is a disagreement on its status. If charoset is a mitzvah, why is there no blessing as there is for marror (bitter herbs)? Why would charoset not be a mitzvah if we have perfectly good reasons for it to be included in the seder? When Rabbi Eliezer the son of Rabbi Tzadok said that charoset is a mitzvah, is he saying that it is a mitzvah from the Torah, or is it a rabbinic decree? If it's a rabbinic decree, why don't the rabbis know about it? Yet, the Talmud says the Song of Songs compares the Jewish people to the qualities of apples, pomegranates, figs, dates, walnuts and almonds. And the Charoset should be made from these items. The Talmud further adds roots of ginger and sticks of cinnamon, to remind us of the straw used as mortar. And to use tangy apples to remind us of how Hebrew women gave birth without pain, so they didn't cry out, so that Pharaoh's soldiers could not find and kill their first born. (Song of Songs 8:5). But the Rabbis of the Talmud are still confused if Charoset belongs on the seder plate or it should be sweet, tangy, or 'muddy', but end up deferring to the spice sellers in the souk, who for generations have been shouting, a week before Pesach, 'get your spices for the Mitzvah of making Charoset.'

Charoset, unlike Marror (bitter herbs) is not mentioned explicitly in the Torah. The fact that we made bricks is recounted in the Torah, and we are commanded to tell the story. Part of telling the story is making it real by having tangible symbols. The Torah not only gives us matzah and marror, but gives us guidelines for how to make every aspect of the meal symbolic. When Rabbi Eliezer Bar Tzadok calls charoset a mitzvah, he is signaling that irrespective of the original reason for having charoset, there is an opportunity to symbolize another aspect of the story. It is a mitzvah to take charoset and give it a kind of meaning that enriches the story of the Hagaddah. For anyone who tells more of the story is considered praiseworthy.

Chasoret is on the seder plate also, but not explained. Its mentioned in the "telling" part of the Hagaddah. Yet it is on every seder we have been to in every part of the USA, and in China, India, Brazil, Argentina, Germany, cruise ships, and other countries. And each recipe varies. But the basics are the same. It is a mixture, chopped finely, of fruit, nuts, spices and wine.

In Egypt, it is made only of dates, raisins, walnuts, cinnamon and sweet wine. In Greece and Turkey, it consists of apples, dates, chopped almonds and wine. In Iraq and Central Asia it sometimes consists of grape jelly In Italy, it can include chestnuts In Spanish and Portuguese communities of the New World, such as Surinam, it may include coconut.

The Four Questions of the seder lead us to the eating of Charoset. The answer to one of the questions is: "On all other nights, we do not 'dip' even once; on this night, twice." The Hagaddah directs us to dip our green vegetable into salt water and bless God for this fruit of the earth, *Borei p'ri ha adamah*. The text does not mention what the second dipping is. It is dipping matzah in the Charoset. And the Hagaddah, as mentioned above, has no beracha for this food.

So - "Why is there charoset on the Seder plate?" The answer, by word of mouth, from 2500 years of generations from our first Rabbis in Babylon, is that charoset is the mortar that we slaves used between bricks when Pharaoh forced us to build him cities. Charoset derives from the Hebrew word "cheres", which means "clay".

Charoset is sweet. While there is always left over marror (bitter herbs), we have never gone to a seder, world wide, where there is left over Charoset. If Charoset is to remind us of mortar, the recipe is 'off', or the true explanation has been lost.

Jewish tradition requires that we read, no actually sing, the Song of Songs of Solomon during Passover. And this, world wide, we have rarely seen at a Seder. Some Rabbis wanted to ban this text as too sexy. But it was included in the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, as other Rabbis posited it was a love poem between man and God or Israel and God, and not man and woman. Charoset symbolizes the Song of Songs, and not mortar!

Songs of Songs actually has the recipe for Charoset. But it is also read on Passover, not just because Israel is in love eternally with God and God is in love with Israel eternally, via the Covenant on Sinai, but because as humans, we are liberated to be free to love one another.

It is also read on Passover, because just as Moses' name is never mentioned in the Hagaddah, just God's name is, in the Song of Song's, God's name is never mentioned. The only other book where God is not mentioned in the Jewish Bible, the Tanach, is Esther.

It is also read this time of year because love and spring is a time when animals give birth, and flowers and trees bloom, and the earth is re-born after a dark winter.

Remember the roots of Passover as a spring holiday, go further back that the Hebrew's holiday of Passover.

Here is the hidden recipe for Charoset from the Song of Songs:

"Then I went down to the walnut grove."  
 "Feed me with apples and with raisin-cakes; "  
 "Your cheeks are a bed of spices; "  
 "The scent of your breath is like apricots;"  
 "Your kisses are sweeter than wine; "  
 "The fig tree has ripened; "

Other fruits, spices and nuts are mentioned in the Song as well. Persian Jews take this very seriously in their recipe.

Not all Jews use the term charoset. Some of the Jews of the Middle East instead use the term "halegh". The origin of halegh is not clear. Rav Saadia Gaon uses the word and attributes it to a kind of walnut that was a mandatory ingredient in the preparation of the halegh.

Parts of the Jewish Diaspora in Persia have a tradition of including 40 ingredients in the halegh. The 40 signify the forty years of wandering in the desert. Included are all the fruits mentioned in the Song of Songs : apples 2-3, figs 2-13, pomegranates 4-3, grapes 2-15, walnuts 6-11, dates 7-7 with the addition of wine 1-2, saffron 4-14 and cinnamon 4-14. To arrive at the magical number of forty some recipes include the following ingredients:

- 1 to 5: five different varieties of apples
  - 6 to 7: two different varieties of pears
  - 8 to 10: three different varieties of grapes
  - 11 to 12: two different varieties of dried figs
  - 13: fresh ginger, grated
  - 14: dates
  - 15 to 18: dried apricots, dried peaches, dried cherries and dried prunes
  - 19 to 21: red raisins, yellow raisins, currants
  - 22 to 26: the following nuts - walnuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios and filberts [all dried roasted without any oils and unsalted]
  - 27: pomegranate juice
  - 28 to 35: the following spices – cinnamon as the dominant spice, cardamom, allspice, nutmeg, fenugreek seeds, saffron, cloves and black peppers [all crushed]
  - 36 to 39: white wine, red wine, rose wine, vinegar
  - 40: starting with the late 1950s bananas were added as well
- And they shape it into a Pyramid before serving. (It is a historical inaccuracy that Hebrews built the pyramids).

Like with any lovemaking, (and haven't we heard that food is love from our bubbies?), there is no exact recipe. Every Jew, every Seder, in every country, makes its own charoset. As the Song of Song says: "Do not stir up love until it pleases. Do not rouse the lovers till they're willing." Chop it, stir it, blend it, smooth it, caress it, put things in,

make things moist, for as long as you would like. If it takes you more than four hours, please consult your Rabbi.

#### 44. BLENDER CHAROSET BLUES

With Apologies to Bonnie Raitt:

Let me be your blender, baby  
 Don't ya know I can whip, chop and puree  
 Won't you let me be your blender, baby  
 Honey, I can whip, chop and puree  
 I'm gonna whip you to a charoet honey  
 I'm gonna chop it up today.

Model is so special, honey  
 Gives you everything you need  
 Guaranteed to blend it right.  
 It's built for comfort, not for speed  
 My motor's most unique  
 There's a style for every size  
 You push the right track, honey,  
 Sit back and watch me Osterize

Let me be your blender, baby  
 I can whip, chop, grate, cube and puree  
 I'm gonna whip you to a charoet  
 I'm gonna chop you up today.

If you bring the right ingredients  
 I'll make any sauce you choose  
 I'll brisket-aise or kugel-aise  
 Any recipe you use  
 I can whip some matzah batter  
 I can blend some pesadik buns  
 And if we get done blending,  
 We might even get some cooking done

Let me be your blender, baby  
 I got a cookbook all my own.  
 I call it a thousand and one ways, baby,  
 to make my little motor moan.

Start off slow and easy, honey.  
 I get up to a fine puree.  
 You work those gears just right,  
 We'll make a real love charoet soufflé.

My motor never quits  
 I don't know how long you're gonna last  
 If you don't want your cubes diced, honey,  
 You'd better push that button fast.

Let me be your blender, baby.  
 I whip the freshest charoset in town.  
 Don't you know what they're saying about me, baby.  
 Can't no one bear my Waring down.

Happy Pre Pesach from The Jewdee Jewbilation Chavurah, with thanks to our daily Jewish Spiritual Renewal rabbi for giving us the information for the above.

#### **45. SUGGESTED RESOURCES ON PASSOVER IN DUAL-FAITH FAMILIES**

Wondering whether you should go to Easter dinner at your mother-in-law's during Passover Is it okay to eat matzah--and peeps Learn how to solve the spring holiday dilemma with articles, resources and links from the InterfaithFamily.com website.  
 Helpful Documents on Passover/Easter in Interfaith Families

- \* Guide to Passover for Interfaith Families (also available in Word format)
- \* Tips for Interfaith Families: How to Make a Seder Inclusive
- \* Passover in Interfaith Families: Three Essays from InterfaithFamily.com, with Discussion Guide, Tips, Recommended Resources and Activities for Children (also available in PDF format)
- \* Report: What We Learned from the 2008 Passover/Easter Survey (also available in Word format)
- \* Report: What We Learned from the 2007 Passover/Easter Survey (also available in Word format)
- \* Ten Tips to Enliven the Seder: Ways to Delay That Fifth Question by Ron Wolfson
- \* Four Modern Questions for Passover by Zell Schulman
- \* Five Interfaith Passover Readings You Can Add to Your Hagaddah by Rabbi Geela Rayzel Raphael
- \* Ay Vey! A Kosher-for-Passover Easter... with Recipes by Teresita Levy
- \* A Different Spring Dilemma by Penina Hoffnung

Visit our partner MyJewishLearning.com for more information on Passover:

- \* Primer: Passover
- \* Overview: Passover History
- \* Overview: Passover Themes and Theology
- \* Commemorating the Exodus
- \* Jewishfreeware.org - Free downloads haggadahs and haggadah templates.

### Books

- \* Friedland, Ronnie and Case, Edmund, ed. The Guide to Jewish Interfaith Family Life: An InterfaithFamily.com Handbook. Jewish Lights, 2001. Read a review.
- \* Strassfeld, Michael. The Jewish Holidays: A Guide and Commentary. HarperCollins, 1985. In addition to in-depth discussion of each holiday, this book includes commentaries, ideas for family holiday involvement, and suggestions for new traditions.
- \* Wolfson, Dr. Ron. The Art of Jewish Living. Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, 1990. Written by a well-known family educator, this series of books includes volumes on Shabbat, Hanukkah and Passover. Each includes recipes, crafts and family activities to enhance observance.
- \* Kimmel, Eric A. A Passover Companion: Wonders and Miracles, illustrated with art spanning three thousand years. Scholastic Press, 2004. Read our review.
- \* Kay, Rabbi Alan and Jo Kay. Make Your Own Passover Seder: A New Approach to Creating a Personal Family Celebration. Jossey-Bass, 2004. Read our review.

If you know of other Passover/Easter resources--or if you'd like to see additional resources on a particular aspect of Passover or Easter--please email us at [network@interfaithfamily.com](mailto:network@interfaithfamily.com) and let us know what you'd like us to provide.