

A Concise Passover Haggadah

הגדה של פסח



A Concise Passover Haggadah prepared by
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A Concise Haggadah for Passover – הגדה של פסח

Here we are together to celebrate the holiday of springtime and freedom. We are happy that after the harshness of winter, we can enjoy the sunshine and the budding of flowers of spring. We are also happy to be free people living in a free land.



Candlelighting – נרות

We welcome the festival of Passover by lighting the holiday candles. Just as candles bring joy and light to our seder, so may we bring joy and light to all people in every corner of the world. (Light candles and say a blessing.)

Baruch ha-or ba-olam. Baruch ha-or ba-adam. Baruch ha-or shel haz'man hazeh. Precious is light to the world. Precious is light to humanity. Precious is the light of this season.



On Passover we drink four cups of wine. We raise our cups to signify our gratitude for life, and for the joy of knowing inner growth which gives our life meaning.

B'rucheem ha-cha-yeem ba-olam. Precious are life, health, and love that enable us to enjoy this holiday. (sip wine - first cup)

The Four Questions – מזה בשתנה

Ma nish-ta-na ha-lai-lah hazeh mikol ha-lay-lot?

Why is this night different from all other nights?



1. On all other nights we eat leavened bread or matsa. Why, on this night, do we eat only matsa?
2. On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables. Why, on this night, do we deliberately eat bitter herbs?
3. On all other nights we do not dip our herbs. Why, on this night, do we dip them in salt water and charoses?

4. On all other nights we do not dine with special ceremonies. Why, on this night, do we relax and tell this story?

The Passover seder is our means of celebrating a spring festival. We celebrate earth's freedom from winter's icy bonds; we celebrate our ancestors' freedom, for it is said that they were freed from slavery at this season many centuries ago.

For these reasons we prepare a seder, and linger at the Passover feast with songs and stories that speak of the precious value of freedom.

Carpas, a green vegetable - כרפס



Parsley or celery, with its green color, reminds us of spring, when many growing things come to life. The salt water reminds us of the tears of the Israelite slaves. For vegetables that grow in the ground we say:

Precious are the fruits of the earth, which nourish us, sustain us, and give us life and health. (Dip parsley or celery in salt water and eat it.)



Maggid - The Story of Passover - מגיד

The tale of our people's quest for freedom was written so long ago that no one is certain how much of it is fact and how much is fiction. Like all good stories, however, it provides us with insights valid for every generation.

Long ago, it is written, our ancestors were slaves in the land of Egypt. Their lives were embittered with the pain of hard labor and the agony of life without hope. A leader named Moses arose from the tribe of Levi. He demanded from the king of Egypt to let his people go. The king, or pharaoh, was stubborn and refused. Legend relates that ten plagues were visited upon Egypt until the pharaoh was convinced that the Israelite slaves should be freed. Many times Moses risked his life to insist on the freedom of his people, until he finally succeeded.

It is traditional to enumerate the plagues while removing a drop of wine from our cups with our little finger. They are: **Blood, Frogs, Lice, Beasts, Cattle Disease, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, Smiting of the Firstborn.**

Moses led the people out of the house of bondage into the wilderness of freedom. Their journey was marked by hunger and fear. Many turned against Moses demanding that he return them to Egypt. They remembered only the cucumbers and melons they had eaten in slavery; they forgot their degradation and their tears. They preferred the hardships of slavery to the risks of freedom.

Moses led a people unprepared for the challenges of freedom. As slaves, they had been fed, clothed, and sheltered. Slaves are dependent upon their masters for the necessities of life. Now they were cast into the wilderness to fend for themselves, and they were frightened.

Our ancestors' quest for freedom was long and difficult. Their courage faltered many times, yet they did not return. They borrowed the courage of their leader and persevered, until at last, they earned their own courage.

Only then were they entitled to enter the "promised land," a land where they enjoyed the dignity and satisfactions only a free people can know.

The Passover Symbols ℘

We notice that this night is different because of the unusual foods that we eat at the seder. We will find explanations of these symbolic foods in the story we have just told.

מצה

What is the meaning of matsa?



Matsa is the best known symbol of Passover. According to the story, the Israelites fled from Egypt in great haste. They had no time to allow their bread to rise, so they baked unleavened bread.

Matsa is known as the “bread of affliction,” perhaps for its dull, dry taste, which reminds us of a life without freedom. There are three covered matsot. The middle matsa is now broken in memory of the poor who must always save a part of their food in order to be eaten at a later time. The larger half is hidden and called the “aphikomon,” which means “dessert,” and is eaten after dinner. (Give 3 pieces of matsa to each person, all eat one piece)

חרוסת

What is the meaning of charoses?



Charoses is the color of clay or mortar. It reminds us of the bricks the Israelites are said to have made when they built the pharaoh’s cities. The taste of the charoses is sweet, however, and it reminds us of the sweetness of freedom.



מרור

What is the meaning of maror?

“Maror” means bitter. We eat a bitter vegetable such as horseradish or romaine lettuce, to remind us of the bitterness of our ancestors’ life of slavery. For many centuries, our people combined these three symbols of Passover - matsa, maror, and charoses - and ate them together.

(Make a sandwich of two pieces of matsa, maror, and charoses.)

פסח

What is the meaning of pesach, the roasted shank bone?



Passover was originally an amalgamation of an agricultural holiday and a shepherd festival. Families sacrificed a lamb in order to assure a healthy flock. The presence of a shank bone on the seder plate recalls the primitive beginnings of our festival, and impresses us with the antiquity of our holiday celebrations.

עבדים חיינו עתה בני חורין

(Take wine cup) **A-va-dim ha-yi-nu, a-ta b’nay cho-rin.** We were once slaves, now we are free. Let us drink this second cup to freedom. (sip wine - second cup)

THE HUMAN QUEST FOR FREEDOM

Sages among our people have advised us to respond to the Passover story as if each of us personally had been freed from Egyptian bondage. The course of every human life represents a quest for freedom.

Children, much like slaves, are not their own masters. As children we are provided with life's necessities; we depend upon others for survival.

As we grow and mature, we pass through the wilderness of fear and self-doubt. Along the way the risks of freedom threaten to overwhelm us. We look back on our youth with longing. We imagine the young to be free – free from the responsibilities that seem to enslave us. We tend to remember only the warmth and security of the past. We tend to forget that those who fed, and clothed, and loved us also planned, and sometimes even thought for us.

A life of dependency is not satisfactory for long. The urge to break free – to dream our own dreams – to live our own lives – is irresistible. Each of us must eventually release ourselves from the bonds that tie us to the past, for even bonds of love can make us slaves.

Only when we find the courage to stand alone shall we earn the right to enter our "promised land." That land promises the incomparable dignity and fulfillment which accompany the mature acceptance of responsibility.

Responsibility for oneself is not a burden to be shunned or evaded, but a reward to be treasured and protected. Responsibility for oneself is the privilege of one who has successfully braved the wilderness in his quest for freedom.

Our ancestors learned a lesson of value, their legendary journey through the wilderness teaches a lesson of value to all mankind: Though the risks of freedom are great, security at the price of freedom is an impossible choice for any human being of dignity.



Dayenu - It is enough - דינו

Dayenu is still another way to recall the Exodus. The Hebrew word *dayenu* means "it is enough."

This traditional recitation urges us to celebrate each victory in our lives as if it were enough, and then to start out fresh, and work for the next one. It cautions: If we reject any step because it does not achieve the total goal, we will never succeed. It challenges us never to be satisfied with short-term accomplishments.

We sing: **Da-dayenu, da-dayenu, da-dayenu, dayenu, dayenu!** (2 times)

ביצה

What is the meaning of the egg?



What more fitting symbol of spring and new life than the egg? The egg embraces the miracle of life. Its presence on the seder plate reminds us of the new life that this season awakens, of the new growth that spring calls forth, and of the hope for freedom, peace, and rebirth that has marked the Passover holiday throughout the ages.

(Take wine cups) Let us drink this third cup of wine to hope. (sip wine - third cup)

The Festive Meal - ארוחה



The Cup of Elijah - כוס של אליהו

This is the cup of Elijah the Prophet. According to tradition, Elijah denounced the slavery of his day. Legend teaches us that one day Elijah will return to lead the world to peace and freedom. At this point in the seder it is customary to open the door for Elijah to enter. It is our hope that universal peace may soon be at hand. (open door - then close door)

Aphikomon - אפיקומן (Break remaining matza in pieces and distribute to each.)

Conclusion of the Seder - גרצה

We dedicate the last cup of wine to Jerusalem, the City of Peace. Let us look forward to the day when Jerusalem is truly a city of peace and love for *all* people. Let us drink this last cup to life: **L'Chaim! להי**

(sip wine - fourth cup)





Shalom Aleychem - Peace Be With You

Peace be with you, wherever you go
Peace be with you, whatever you do
Peace be with you, 'til we meet again
Peace be with you, my friend.

Love be with you, wherever you go
Love be with you, whatever you do
Love be with you, 'til we meet again
Love be with you, my friend.

Joy be with you, wherever you go
Joy be with you, whatever you do
Joy be with you, 'til we meet again
Joy be with you, my friend.

Shalom aleychem, shalom, shalom
Shalom aleychem, shalom, shalom
Shalom aleychem, shalom, shalom
Shalom Aleychem Shalom!



Seder Table Preparation Guide

Seder means "order" or "sequence," and the ritual of this holiday requires the use of symbolic foods.

The following foods are displayed on a special Passover plate and set before the leader of the Seder.

- Maror - bitter herb (horseradish and /or Romaine lettuce)
- Z'roa - roasted lamb bone, or beet
- Charoses - condiment of fruits and nuts
- Carpas - a green vegetable such as celery or parsley
- Baytsa - a roasted egg

Also needed for the Seder:

Holiday candles

A bowl of salt water

A plate with three matsot on it, covered

Elijah's Cup

Extra matsot

