

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF ALBERTA

PASSOVER

SEDER HANDBOOK



APRIL 15-APRIL 23, 2022 • NISSAN 15-NISSAN 22, 5782



Foreword

Passover, or “Pesach” in Hebrew, is the joyous Jewish festival of freedom. This year, it begins at sunset on **April 15** and continues through nightfall on **April 23**. Passover marks our ancestors’ liberation in 1313 BCE from centuries of Egyptian bondage, through unprecedented Divine intervention. Consequently, it marks the birth of our nationhood and of our special relationship with G-d.

The highlight of Passover is the *seder* that is observed this year on the night of April 15 and repeated on the following night, April 16.

Although couched in terms of the past, the Passover *seder* is very much about the present. Jewish tradition urges us to reexperience the liberation personally—“In each generation, we are obligated to view ourselves as if we personally left Egypt” (Talmud, Pesachim 116b). Hence the many rituals peculiar to the Passover *seder*, including the matzah, the four cups of wine, and the “*seder* plate”—the platter of symbolic foods that serve as edible props to personally experience the Passover story.

By way of illustration, consider the *charoset* on our *seder* plates—a fruit-nut paste made to resemble the clay with which our ancestors labored to produce bricks and mortar for Pharaoh. This physical servitude reflected a spiritual rut that our ancestors struggled with: like an object stuck in clay, they were unable to grow and advance. This can apply to our lives. Our clay pits are the specific mindsets, habits, assumptions, and lifestyles to which we have grown accustomed and in which we have become stuck. We cannot imagine achieving beyond their limits and are thereby trapped in a self-made Egypt.

Passover empowers our extraction. It motivates us to tear ourselves free, leap forward, and liberate the boundaries of our aspirations. And for that, we must reflect on the festival’s more profound messages.

This Passover Handbook offers fuel for an emancipating Passover: intriguing insights that inform and inspire, paired with practical guidance to facilitate a meaningful commemoration of our past, while supplying redemptive tools for the present.

Best wishes for a festival of liberating inspiration,

Rabbi Menachem M. & Rebbetizn Rochel Matusof

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CHAMETZ

Throughout Passover, the Torah (Exodus 13:6) prohibits owning, eating, or benefiting from *chametz*, “leaven”—any food in which grain or flour contacted water for a duration that could cause fermentation.

In the weeks prior to Passover, we meticulously remove all *chametz* from our homes. We only buy commercially produced foods certified as “Kosher for Passover” for use during the festival.

On the night before Passover—this year, on **Thursday night, April 14**—we conduct *bedikat chametz*, searching our property for any remaining *chametz*. The following morning, we burn what we found and then formally renounce ownership of *chametz* that may have escaped our notice.

If we wish to preserve *chametz* for post-Passover use, it must be sold to a non-Jew for the duration of Passover. This sale must be enacted properly; to sell online, see the web address on the back of this booklet.

Leaven's Lessons and Matzah's Messages

→ EGO DETOX

Rising dough, *chametz*, represents a bloated ego—the source of multiple undesirable traits. Even a slight trace of *chametz* is forbidden, because Passover is the time for a complete detox from unhealthy ego. By engaging in this process over the course of the holiday, we allow ourselves to experience an exodus from our personal Egypt and to discover authentic liberty throughout the year.

→ FALSE INDEPENDENCE

Repeated successes of daily life—earning a living, meeting goals—nurture false independence, as if our success is self-made, not G-d sent. Our search for *chametz* reminds us to conduct a self-probe to purge ourselves of this attitude and to obstruct its return during the coming months.

DIFFERENCE OF ONE LETTER

In concept and reality, matzah and *chametz* are contraries. In Hebrew spelling, however, they are almost identical three-letter words. They share a *mem* (מ) and *tzadik* (צ); they differ in their third letter: matzah has a *hei* (ה), *chametz* has a *chet* (ח). Even these are twins, distinguished only by a gap in the *hei*'s left leg. But that gap makes a world of difference.

The *chet* and the *hei* are ajar at their base, signifying the pit of human failure. The *chet* is enclosed in all other directions, leaving no option but to sink in a downward spiral. It is the defining letter of *chametz*, egotism, which breeds self-justification that drags us lower.

By contrast, the *hei* sports an exit near its roof. It is small, for we must shrink our ego to fit through, but that humility allows us to recover from our failure, rectify our wrong, leap upward, and emerge on top. It requires a shift in perspective, which can take but a moment—a Passover moment that turns bloated, forbidden *chametz* into flattened but sacred matzah.



Culled from the insights of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory.

A POSITIVE FORCE ←

Spiritual *chametz*, an inflated ego, can be reinvented as a force for good. For example, Rabbi Mordechai Lieplier, a student of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745–1812), used ego as a tool to avoid temptation—“Should a veritable scholar such as I commit a sin? Should a pious fellow like me succumb?”

POWERED BY THE SOUL ←

Jewish law insists we hunt for *chametz* by candlelight. Spiritually, a flame represents a soul. It is our internal Divine flame that empowers and encourages us to honestly examine our characters for subtle flaws (*chametz*) and to strive to transform each weakness into a strength.

CHAMETZ

חמץ



CHET

downward spiral

MATZAH

מצה



HEI

upward leap

SOURCES: Ego Detox *Haggadah Shel Pesach im Likutei Taamim Uminhagim* 2, p. 736. False Independence Ibid. A Positive Force Ibid., p. 737. Powered by the Soul Ibid., p. 794. Difference of One Letter *Likutei Sichot* 1, pp. 129–130.



MATZAH

The Torah instructs us (Exodus 13:5) to eat matzah on Passover eve, to recall the miraculous speed with which G-d extracted our ancestors from Egypt. The dough that our ancestors prepared did not have time to rise, and on their first stop outside of Egypt, they hurriedly baked it into matzah.

It is especially preferable to use *shemurah* (Hebrew: “protected”) matzah, at least for the *seder*. Beginning with its harvesting, its grain is protected against contact with water; it is circular, without start or end, symbolizing G-d’s infinity; and it is handmade, replicating the original matzah baked in Egypt and used by Jews ever since.

One should eat at least one ounce of matzah at each *seder*, which corresponds to about a third of one handmade *shemurah* matzah.

The proper time to celebrate the *seder* is after nightfall (on April 15th and April 16th). The local time for nightfall is indicated on the back page. If, due to circumstances, one must start their *seder* earlier, then be sure at least to eat the matzah for the *afikoman* after nightfall.

Exile and Redemption



1743 BCE

G-d strikes a covenant with Abraham known as the "Covenant between the Parts." G-d informs Abraham that his children will be enslaved in Egypt and then return to Israel to inherit the land.



1533 BCE

On Rosh Hashanah, Pharaoh has two disturbing dreams, and Joseph—known to interpret dreams—is brought before Pharaoh. Joseph's interpretation foretells of seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. He advises a nationwide food storage program. Pharaoh is impressed and appoints Joseph viceroy of Egypt.



1400 BCE

The conditions of Jewish slavery grow exceedingly harsh and bitter.



1523 BCE

After two years of famine, Jacob and his family come to Egypt, where Joseph provides for them and where they are treated with honor as Joseph's family.

BCE

1750

1700

1600

1500



1545 BCE

Abraham's grandson, Jacob, fathers twelve sons, including Joseph. The brothers sell Joseph into slavery and he is taken to Egypt. Thus begins the saga of Jewish slavery in Egypt.

1429 BCE

Levi, Jacob's last surviving son, passes away. With the last of Joseph's brothers gone, Pharaoh grapples with how to handle the growing Jewish population in Egypt and decides to enslave them.



1394 BCE

Pharaoh decrees that all Jewish male newborns be drowned in the Nile.



1393 BCE

On the seventh of Adar, Moses is born. His mother, Jochebed, places him in a basket in the Nile. Pharaoh's daughter discovers him and raises him in Pharaoh's palace.

1373 BCE

Moses kills an Egyptian for beating a Jewish slave. This is reported to Pharaoh, who decrees Moses's execution. Moses flees to Midyan.



EGYPT

SPLITTING OF THE SEA

MOSES ESCAPES TO MIDYAN
ROUTE OF THE EXODUS
JOURNEY TO ISRAEL

1314 BCE

Exactly one year before the Exodus, G-d appears to Moses in a burning bush and orders him to return to Egypt and liberate the Jews. Moses appears before Pharaoh and relays G-d's instruction, but Pharaoh refuses.



1314 BCE

Nine and a half months before the Exodus, the Ten Plagues commence.



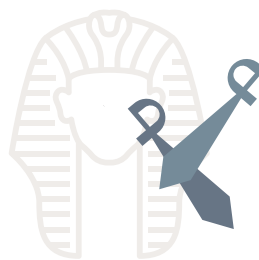
1314 BCE

On Rosh Hashanah, as the third plague commences, Egypt loses control of its Jewish slaves, who are henceforth free of oppression.



1313 BCE

On the first of Nissan, G-d instructs the Jews to designate a Paschal lamb to be eaten on the eve of their Exodus.



1313 BCE

On the tenth of Nissan, the Egyptian firstborns demand that the Jews be liberated. When Pharaoh refuses, a civil war ensues.

1313 BCE

On the fourteenth of Nissan, Jews slaughter the Paschal lamb and paint their doorposts with its blood.



1400

1314 TISHREI | CHESHVAN | KISLEV | TEVET 1313 SHEVAT | ADAR | NISSAN | IYAR | SIVAN | TAMMUZ | AV | ELUL

1313 BCE

On the eve of the fifteenth of Nissan, Jews eat the Paschal lamb and celebrate the first Passover *seder* in history. At the stroke of midnight, the tenth plague strikes all Egyptian firstborns but passes over the Jewish homes. Jews spend the night collecting valuables from their Egyptian neighbors and baking matzah for their journey. At midday, the Jews leave Egypt.

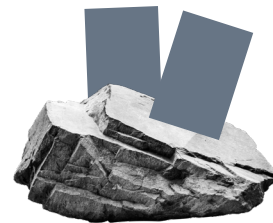


1313 BCE

On the twenty-first of Nissan, Pharaoh and his army reach the Jews at the Sea of Reeds. G-d splits the sea miraculously, the Jews pass through, and the pursuing Egyptians drown.

1313 BCE

On the sixth of Sivan, seven weeks after the Exodus, the Jews receive the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai.



SOURCES

Mechilta, Shemot 12:40, 12:41; *Yalkut Shimoni*, Shemot 1, *Tanchuma*, Shemot 8, Shemot 2:11-15; Rashi, Shemot 6:16, Rabbeinu Bechaye, Shemot 10:5, Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 11a, Sotah 12a, Kidushin 38a, and Shabbat 86b

1313 BCE

One month after the Exodus, the matzah provisions run out, and G-d commences a miraculous daily ration of heavenly manna that continues for forty years.



The Eight Items of the Seder Plate

For the seder, a table is set with the matzah, a cup for wine, and a kaarah (plate) that holds six items. The arrangement of these six items varies with local tradition; the Chabad custom is illustrated below.



A MATZAH

The Torah instructs us to eat matzah on Passover eve to recall the incredible speed with which G-d extracted the Jews from Egypt. Our ancestors did not have time for the dough they had prepared to rise, and on their first stop outside of Egypt they hurriedly baked it into matzah. We use three *matzot* for the *seder*.

B WINE

For the *seder*, the sages ordained that each person drink a total of four cups in the course of the proceedings. If wine is unworkable due to young age, health, or other factors, grape juice may be used.

C ZERO'A

("Arm"); a small roasted segment of meat or poultry. Some use a shank bone; others, a chicken leg or neck. It recalls the Passover offering in the Jerusalem Temple, itself a commemoration of the Paschal lamb eaten in Egypt. This item is *not* eaten at the *seder*.

D BEITZAH

A cooked egg; to recall the *chagigah*—personal festive offering brought on all festivals, including Passover. The absence of the Holy Temple evokes a sense of mourning. Hence the egg, a traditional mourner's food (its oval shape symbolizes the life cycle). It is a prevalent custom to dip it into salt water and eat it at the start of the *seder's* meal.

E MAROR

"Bitter herbs," invokes the bitter agonies of servitude. *Maror's* precise identification is debated; prevailing customs call for romaine lettuce, horseradish, or both. Note that romaine is not bitter unless it is left unharvested for too long; similarly, our ancestors arrived in Egypt as royal guests of their relative (Joseph, the viceroy), but as their stay lengthened, their fate became increasingly bitter.

F MAROR

A second helping, because *maror* is used twice during the *seder*.

G CHAROSET

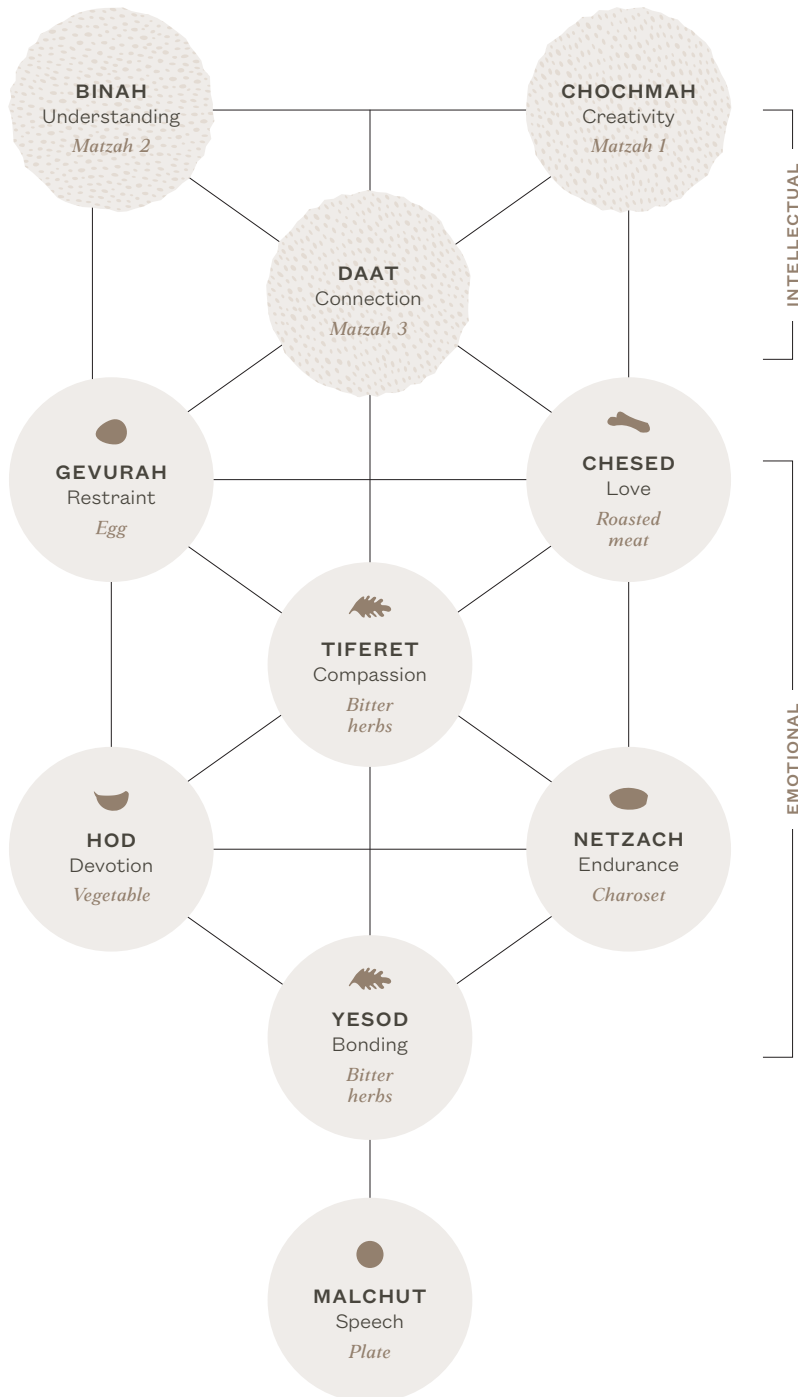
"Edible clay"; a mixture of ground raw fruit and nuts with a dash of wine to recall the thick mortar with which our enslaved ancestors constructed cities for Pharaoh. (The *maror* is dipped in *charoset* before it is eaten.)

H KARPAS

A vegetable. Prevalent options include celery, parsnip, radish, cabbage, raw onion, or cooked potato. It is dipped in salt water during the *seder* to pique the curiosity of children (of all ages!).

Kabbalah of the Seder Plate

The kabbalists taught that G-d vests Himself into ten sefirot (attributes) to create and sustain our universe. These sefirot are also reflected in the human experience, and they take a symbolic seat at our seder table.



THE PERSONAL ANGLE

According to Jewish mysticism, every human soul is comprised of ten attributes. Chochmah, Binah, and Daat are three distinct intellectual traits. The next six attributes, beginning with Chesed and Gevurah, constitute the human's emotional life. Malchut is the capacity for human speech, the linchpin of human relationships.

In connection with Passover, the mystics shared that the three matzahs of the *seder* represent the three intellectual faculties, the six items on the *seder* plate represent the six emotions, and the *seder* plate itself represents human speech.

By placing the three matzahs beneath the *seder* plate, serving as its foundation, we signify that a healthy and productive emotional life becomes possible when it is harnessed and regulated by an intellect that is itself imbued with a matzah-like spirit of humility.

Now, can you suggest a possible link between each item on the seder plate and its corresponding trait?

SOURCES

*Peri Etz Chayim, Shaar Hamatzot, ch. 6;
Likutei Torah, Torat Shmuel 5626, p. 45.*

The Fifteen Steps of the Seder

1 *Kadesh* קִדֵּשׁ RECITE KIDDUSH

Recite the *Kiddush* over the first cup of wine. If you cannot drink wine, grape juice may be used.

While drinking the four cups of wine or eating matzah, we recline (lean to the left) as a sign of freedom and luxury.

It is appropriate for women and girls to light the festival candles on/near the *seder* table before sunset (and after nightfall on the second night). See the back page for the candle lighting blessings.



2 *Urchatz* וְרַחֵץ CLEANSE

Ritually wash your hands (as before eating bread), but without reciting a blessing.

3 *Karpas* כָּרְפַס GREENS

Eat a small piece of vegetable dipped in salt water in order to stir the children's curiosity, so that they ask about tonight's unusual practices.

In addition, dipped appetizers were a practice of royalty, hence a sign of freedom, whereas salt water evokes the tears of our enslaved ancestors.

4 *Yachatz* יָחַץ DIVIDE

Break the middle matzah in half. Put aside the larger half to be eaten at the end of the meal (Step 12—*afikoman*); reinsert the smaller half between the two whole matzahs; it is the symbolic “bread of poverty” over which we retell the story of the Exodus.

Some use the *afikoman* to keep the children *seder*-focused by appointing them as *afikoman* guardians and suspending it over their shoulders—reminiscent of the unleavened dough that accompanied our ancestors from Egypt, “bundled in their robes upon their shoulders” (Exodus 12:34).

Others hide the *afikoman* and reward the child who finds it.



6 *Rachtzah* רָחַץ WASH

Wash your hands ritually and recite the blessing that concludes with *al netilat yadayim*.

7 *Motzi* מוֹצִיא BRING FORTH

In preparation for eating the matzah, touch the three matzahs and recite the blessing Hamotsi—“Blessed are You, G-d . . . Who brings forth bread from the earth.” Proceed immediately to the next step.

5 *Magid* מַגִּיד TELL

- Pour the second cup of wine.
- If there are children present, they pose the Four Questions to the adults. If not, the adults pose them to each other. Those who are celebrating alone pose them aloud to themselves.
- In response, read the *Haggadah*'s narrative of the Exodus that incorporates history, textual analysis, prayers, and songs. For selected highlights, see pp. 12–13.
- At the conclusion of this step, drink the second cup of wine.



8 *Matzah* מַצָּה UNLEAVENED BREAD

Touch the top two matzahs and recite tonight's unique blessing over "the eating of matzah." Eat a piece from each of them.

Matzah reminds us of the speedy Exodus: Our ancestors prepared dough, but in the rush to leave Egypt they could not wait for it to rise. At their first stop outside Egypt, they hurriedly baked their unleavened dough into matzah.

9 *Maror* מָרֹר BITTERNESS

Recite the blessing over the *maror*, bitter herbs, symbolizing the bitterness of slavery. Before eating, dip it in *charoset*—the paste resembling the mortar used by our ancestors in forced labor.



10 *Korech* כּוֹרֵךְ WRAP

Dip a second portion of bitter herbs in *charoset* and place it between two pieces of matzah (use the bottom matzah) to create a matzah-*maror* sandwich.

11 *Shulchan Orech* SET TABLE

שְׁלַחַן עֹרֵךְ



Enjoy a festive meal. It is customary to begin with the egg from the *seder* plate.

12 *Tzafun* צִפּוֹן HIDDEN

Retrieve and eat the *afikoman* (see step 4), which represents the original *afikoman* ("dessert") eaten at the end of the *seder* meal—the meat of the Passover lamb.



13 *Berach* בִּרְךְ BLESS

Recite the *Haggadah's* "Grace after Meals" over the third cup of wine, and then drink the wine.

14 *Hallel* הַלֵּל PRAISE

- Pour the fourth cup of wine.
- Pour a fifth cup (just one for the table, not for each individual). This is not consumed; it is the Prophet Elijah's Cup, demonstrating that, in addition to the four cups of our past liberation, we anticipate our future, ultimate Redemption that will be heralded by Elijah the Prophet.
- Open the door of your home for the passage indicated in the *Haggadah*; it signifies trust in G-d's protection, as well as our longing to greet Elijah as he announces our final Redemption.
- Recite the *Hallel* (psalms of praise) to thank G-d for the miracles of the Exodus.



15 *Nirtzah* נִרְצָה ACCEPTED

Having fulfilled the *seder's* steps as prescribed, we are confident that G-d accepts our performance. In conclusion, we joyously proclaim:

"Next Year in Jerusalem!"



Essential Passages of the *Haggadah*



Mah Nishtanah

CALL FOR CURIOSITY

G-d instructed His liberated nation to discuss the Exodus on this night. We begin with curiosity arousing inquiries—for progenies to pose to parents, and for individuals to ask themselves.

מָה
נִשְׁתַּנָּה

What makes this night different from all [other] nights?

On all nights we need not dip even once; on this night we do so twice!

On all nights we eat *chametz* or matzah, and on this night only matzah.

On all nights we eat any kind of vegetables, and on this night *maror*!

On all nights we eat sitting upright or reclining, and on this night we all recline!

Avadim Hayinu

FOUR-SENTENCE SUMMARY

This is a lead-in to the *Haggadah* that sums up tonight's story, mission, and scope of duty.

עֲבָדִים הָייְנוּ

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt,

and the L-rd, our G-d, took us out from there with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm. If the Holy One, blessed be He, had not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our children and our children's children would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if all of us were wise, all of us understanding, all of us knowing the Torah, we would still be obligated to discuss the Exodus from Egypt; and everyone who discusses the Exodus from Egypt at length is praiseworthy.



Rabban Gamliel

EDIBLE MESSAGES

This section is indispensable. Reading it satisfies tonight's verbal obligations, and in clarifying the *seder's* edible duties it solves questions posed at the *seder's* start.

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיֵּאל

Rabban Gamliel used to say: Whoever does not discuss the following three things on Passover has not fulfilled his duty, namely: Passover (the Passover sacrifice), Matzah (the unleavened bread) and *Maror* (the bitter herbs).



פסח The Passover lamb that our fathers ate during the time of the Beit Hamikdash: For what reason [did they do so]? Because the Omnipresent passed over our fathers' houses in Egypt, as it is said: "You shall say, It is a Passover offering to the L-rd, because He passed over the houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians with a plague, and He saved our houses. And the people bowed and prostrated themselves."



מצה This matzah that we eat: For what reason? Because the dough of our fathers did not have time to become leavened before the King of the kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them. Thus it is said: "They baked matzah cakes from the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, because it was not leavened; for they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay, and they had also not prepared any [other] provisions."



מרור This *maror* that we eat: For what reason? Because the Egyptians embittered our fathers' lives in Egypt, as it is said: "They made their lives bitter with hard service, with mortar and with bricks, and with all manner of service in the field; all their service which they made them serve with rigor."

Bechol Dor

GETTING PERSONAL

This paragraph contains the *seder's* inspirational punchline. It thereby solves any remaining inquiries from the start of the evening.

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר

In every generation, we are required to view ourselves as having personally left Egypt...



Questions for Discussion

*Enliven your seder by posing and discussing
the following questions with family and friends.*



**What do you
enjoy most
about Passover?**

**What is your
funniest *seder*
memory?**

**In what way
are slavery
and freedom
relevant to our
lives today?**

**Can you suggest
a lesson that can
be derived
from Hillel's
korech
sandwich?**



**What is a unique
Passover custom
or tradition in
your family?**

**Matzah symbolizes
commitment while
wine symbolizes
appreciation.
In what ways
are these traits
important for one's
relationship?**

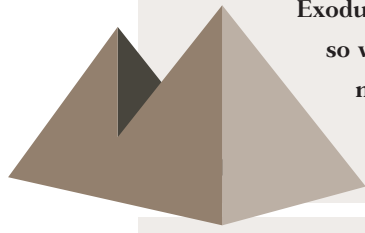
**What are some
pedagogic
lessons we
can learn from
the structure
of the *seder*?**

**When you
think of
Passover,
which one
person comes
to mind
more than
any other?**


**What are
some dos
and don'ts
for dealing
with the
Pharaohs of
our times?**




Do You Know?



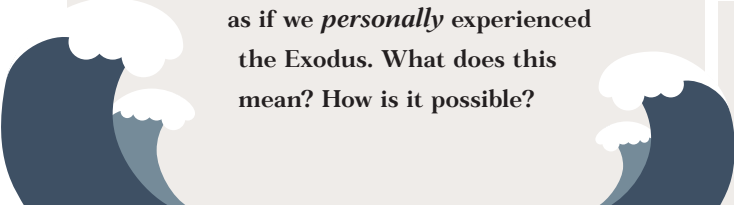
1. The Torah tells us to recall the Exodus *daily* (Deuteronomy 16:3), so what is unique about the mitzvah to retell the story of the Exodus on Passover eve?



4. What is the oldest extant *Haggadah*?



3. There were eras in which Jews refrained from using red wine at the *seder*. When was this, and why?



2. Our sages instructed that in each generation, we must view ourselves as if we *personally* experienced the Exodus. What does this mean? How is it possible?

5. Who were Shifrah and Puah? What is their association with the Passover story?

- 1 We can satisfy our *daily* obligation with a mental recollection, and as briefly as we wish. By contrast, our *Passover* recollection must be (a) verbal, (b) elaborate, and (c) delivered in response to an inquiry.
- 2 One interpretation: The true “we” is not our corporeal selves, but our Divine souls. Our souls are trapped and enslaved within a body that is antithetical to spirituality. It is our duty to facilitate its exodus, which is achieved by permitting our souls to bond with the infinite G-d through performing a mitzvah, studying Torah, and acting with kindness to others. Our body then becomes a companion instead of a captor.
- 3 Red wine is preferred for the four cups, according to the Code of Jewish Law (*Orach Chayim* 472:11). A seventeenth-century commentator to the Code, Rabbi David Segal (d. 1667), notes that red wine is appropriate because the Bible considers it fancier than white wine.
- 4 The framework of our *Haggadah*—arranged as an exposition to Deuteronomy 26:5–8—is already attested to in the Mishnah (Pesachim 10:4), which was itself redacted around the year 200 CE. The oldest surviving *Haggadah* manuscripts were discovered in the Cairo Geniza and (using paleographical considerations) have been dated to the eleventh century. One manuscript housed at the University of Pennsylvania (MS 9560) contains most of the *Haggadah*; fragmented selections from a different manuscript are stored at the JTS Library (MS 9560).
- 5 Shifrah and Puah ran midwife services for our ancestors in Egypt. Pharaoh ordered them to murder all male Hebrews at birth, but they heroically disobeyed. Pharaoh instead had his forces throw Jewish babies into the Nile. A Talmudic tradition (Sotah 11b) identifies the midwives as a mother-daughter team: Shifrah was Moses’s mother, Yocheved; and Puah was her daughter, Miriam. Rabbi Ephraim of Lunshitz (1550–1619), in his biblical commentary *Keil Yekar*, explores the possibility that they were Egyptian women who risked their lives to save innocent Jews.

ANSWERS

The Proto-Venice *Haggadah* (1629)

UNANTICIPATED DISCOVERY IN A STORIED JUDAIC LIBRARY

The Agudas Chasidei Chabad Library in New York houses the priceless Judaica collections of the Chabad rebbes. It includes some two thousand editions of the Haggadah that were printed over the past four and a half centuries, some of which are considerably rare.

The following presentation concerns pages of a famed illustrated Haggadah, published in Venice in 1629. The pages were discovered in the Chabad library, concealed within the binding of another seventeenth-century Judaic work. In the early centuries of printing, it was typical practice for bookbinders to use pages of discarded books to form and reinforce a new volume's spine. In recent times, these "books within books" have been discovered in libraries across the globe and have been separated from the host volume's binding.

The images are provided courtesy of Rabbi Shalom Dovber Levine, director and curator of the Agudas Chasidei Chabad Library.

HISTORY OF THE VENICE HAGGADAH

In 1609, Venetian printing presses endowed the Jewish world with one of the most beautiful printed editions of the *Haggadah*, including many detailed woodcut illustrations depicting Passover-related scenes. The publication was produced simultaneously in three editions: with translations in Judeo-Italian, Judeo-Spanish (Ladino), and Judeo-German (Yiddish)—the three languages common to the contemporary Venetian Jewish communities.

The *Haggadah's* popularity led to a 1629 reprint with several updates and alterations.

➔ INTRODUCTION PAGE

A notable addition in the 1629 edition is a commentary entitled *Tzeli Esh* (Roasted in Fire), authored by Venetian Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh of Modena (1571-1648), which offers a highly truncated version of Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel's (1437-1508) celebrated *Haggadah* commentary.

This page presents Rabbi Yehudah's introduction, in which he draws a poetic parallel to the Passover lamb: raw meat shrinks drastically when roasted but becomes more palatable; he has provided the same service to Abarbanel's lengthier work for this edition of the Venice *Haggadah*.

The page is adorned with classic Passover scenes, each with a caption in Judeo-Italian. Its two larger scenes depict matzah production: the upper scene shows flour being ground and sifted; the lower scene shows (moving from right to left) men and women (a) kneading dough, (b) continuously pressing dough to prevent leavening, (c) rolling flat, round portions, and (d) placing the portions into an oven..

The upper two of the six sidebar images depict Moses (right) and Aaron (left), while the lower four depict women preparing their homes for Passover.





REMOVAL OF CHAMETZ

This page presents instructions and liturgy for the obligatory nocturnal search for *chametz* and its burning the following morning. The columns contain a Judeo-Italian translation of the standard Hebrew and Aramaic texts.

The initial words of the main liturgical texts are accompanied with minor images—in the first, a man uses the customary candle and feather to search for *chametz*, and in the second, he burns the *chametz* he has found.

The two larger scenes at the bottom of the page depict a family's division of labor: the lady of the house searches for *chametz* in a wine cellar (under a rooster's gaze), while the father and young boy search a bedroom (under the watch of the family cat).

SLAVERY IN EGYPT

This page contains the passage of *Avadim Hayinu* ("We were slaves . . ."), the launch of the *Haggadah's* narrative of the Egyptian servitude and G-d's redemption.

Beneath the Hebrew liturgy, a Judeo-Italian translation is provided in a reduced font. The two columns feature the *Tzeli Esh* commentary.

The image depicts Pharaoh gazing from his palace window at Israelite slaves being beaten by Egyptian taskmasters while performing forced labor. The typically contemporary clothing and building is somewhat redeemed by the inclusion of two pyramids.



THE PROTO-EDITION

These pages present a puzzle. Their association with the 1629 Venice Haggadah is beyond doubt because they largely match extant copies of that edition. Conversely, they present subtle but unmistakable distinctions from the formal 1629 edition. For example, some of the line breaks and font sizes differ, and the arch displayed on each page is not identical either.

Most likely, these are early galley proofs of the 1629 edition, and the subtle differences between these leaves and the final edition reflect upgrades implemented after these pages were scrutinized. That also explains why folios of such a wonderful work were used to unceremoniously stuff the spine of other publications; once the 1629 Haggadah was published, its proofs were superfluous.

It is rare indeed to discover galley proofs of a seventeenth-century publication. The fact that they belong to a most spectacular printed *Haggadah* makes the find all the more marvelous.

A Cycle of Kindness

Around 1915, the rabbi of the northeastern Romanian town of Sculeni (Yiddish: Skulen) passed away. His seventeen-year-old son, Eliezer Zusha Portugal, was installed in his place. The young rabbi, known as “the Skulener Rebbe,” embarked on a lifelong mission of extraordinary kindness and outreach. His selflessness and self-sacrifice was the stuff of legends.

Rabbi Portugal relocated to Czernowitz to service a larger segment of his brethren, but during World War II, the city changed hands repeatedly and the Jews suffered under the brutality of the Romanians, Nazis, and Soviets. Rabbi Portugal was a ceaseless source of care and inspiration, and in the war’s waning months, he defied Communist oppression to personally shelter hundreds of Jewish orphans, many of whom called him their father for the rest of their lives.

In March 1945, food was scarce and restrictions rife. All around him, people dreamed of survival, but the rabbi dreamed of matzah to celebrate Passover. It had to be properly guarded and traditionally baked *matzah shemurah*. Unfortunately, prevailing conditions made supplies procurement and the manufacturing process equally impossible; the most devout Jews had resigned themselves to another matzahless Passover. But not Rabbi Portugal.

Incredibly, he obtained a quantity of fresh wheat grain and supervised the laborious steps of manufacturing a limited edition of the coveted food of freedom.

He promptly contacted the surviving grand rabbis of the region. He offered those saintly individuals, each of whom spiritually sustained hundreds of their fellows, a gift of three round *matzot*—enough for the first night of Passover.

One eager recipient was Rabbi Boruch Hager, the grand rabbi of Vizhnitz. He charged his own son with the risky task of collecting the treasured breads. However, to Rabbi Portugal’s dismay, Rabbi Hager insisted on receiving *six matzot*! A single matzah was a miracle;

three was a luxury. Six was unthinkable. But the rabbi’s son was adamant. His father demanded *six*, not three.

Rabbi Portugal had a heart of gold and relented. He consoled himself with the assumption that the righteous rabbi of Vizhnitz nursed an excellent reason for his unreasonable demand.

Imagine his surprise when Rabbi Hager’s son reappeared in Czernowitz weeks later—several hours before the start of Passover—with a fresh demand.

“My father insists on knowing whether you saved any matzah for yourself.”

Rabbi Portugal blushed.

“I was besieged with so many requests,” he stammered. “Can I turn down Jews pleading to observe Passover properly? I gave them all away. I kept none for myself . . .”

His visitor flashed a beautiful smile.

“My father knew you would do that!” came the enthusiastic reply. “That’s why he demanded three extra *matzot*. He could not benefit from your generosity without guaranteeing that you would have a set of *matzot* for yourself. These extra three are for you. Here they are! Enjoy your *seder*!”

That Passover night, the selfless rabbi enjoyed the sweet taste of his own thoughtfulness.

As matzah symbolizes Passover, Rabbi Portugal’s matzot symbolized the triumph of Jewish selflessness over unprecedented suffering. Rather than prioritize survival over principles, our nation responds to the worst experiences with the brightest of acts. Indeed, it is our proud tradition to answer adverse conditions with nobility, sanctity, and kindness.

The story continues with you and me. Our souls are aflame with mutual care, echoing the unity that binds us together at all times. The ideal of a Jewish community and the aspiration of each Jewish soul is the selfless dispensing of care, knowledge, and support.

Be someone’s Passover miracle—at any time of the year.



This Passover Handbook is dedicated to the Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson,
of righteous memory

In honor of the Rebbe's 120th birthday, 11 Nissan 5782 / April 12, 2022

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902–1994), known as “the Lubavitcher Rebbe” or simply as “the Rebbe,” was born in Nikolaev, Ukraine, on the 11th of Nissan, 5662 (April 18, 1902). During the World War II upheaval, he made his way to America and settled in Brooklyn, New York. The towering Jewish leader of the twentieth century, the Rebbe inspired and guided the revival of traditional Judaism after the European devastation, impacting virtually every Jewish community the world over. The Rebbe often emphasized that the performance of just one additional good deed could usher in the era of Mashiach.

There is hardly another topic that the Rebbe addressed verbally and in writing as frequently and passionately as education. The Rebbe's contributions have been recognized by leaders within the field of education, alongside leaders of the civic, religious, and political spheres. Each U.S. president since Jimmy Carter paid annual tribute to the Rebbe's vision and efforts, declaring the Rebbe's birthday “Education and Sharing Day USA,” while the U.S. Congress and many state and local governments have issued similar declarations.

The Rebbe insisted that society is mistaken in viewing education as a pursuit of knowledge that provides a stepping-stone to a career. Rather, an educator is charged with preparing a child for life in its entirety—a life of purpose, benevolence, justice, and morality. It is not what we know that counts, but who we are and how we act. Beyond a tool to earn a living, education requires teaching *how* to live.

To this end, the Rebbe promoted widespread adoption of “a moment of silence” in all schools. Youth would naturally ask their parents what they should consider during their silent reflection, and parents who lacked time or courage to discuss faith with their children will have both opportunity and incentive to do so. Many parents will impress upon their children to reflect at the genesis of each school day that their world is not a jungle—each individual is created for a specific purpose, and the Creator sees and cares about the choices they make.

The Rebbe's birthday is an opportune time to internalize these crucial messages: to become kinder, gentler, more mission oriented, and imbued with a Divine consciousness, for the betterment of our own lives, the lives of our children, and society at large.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT
				14 13 Nissan	15 14 Nissan	16 15 Nissan
				Search for <i>chametz</i> after nightfall 9:06 PM	Finish eating <i>chametz</i> before 11:16 AM Sell** and burn <i>chametz</i> before 12:26 PM Nightfall: 9:08 PM	after 9:27 PM* Passover First Day
17 16 Nissan	18 17 Nissan	19 18 Nissan	20 19 Nissan	21 20 Nissan	22 21 Nissan	23 22 Nissan
Holiday ends: 9:29 PM Passover Second Day	Passover (Chol Hamo'ed)	Passover (Chol Hamo'ed)	Passover (Chol Hamo'ed)	at 8:24 PM Passover (Chol Hamo'ed)	at 8:26 PM* Passover Seventh Day	Holiday ends: 9:41 PM Passover Eighth Day

*Light only from a preexisting flame.

**To sell your *Chametz* online, visit www.chabadalberta.org/Chometz.

Holiday Candle Blessings

*Baruch atah Ado-nai, Elo-heinu melech ha'olam,
asher kidshanu bemitzvotav, vetzivanu lehadlik ner*

For holidays

shel Yom Tov.

For Shabbat and holidays

shel Shabbat veshel Yom Tov.

On the first two nights of Passover add:

*Baruch atah Ado-nai, Elo-heinu melech ha'olam,
shehecheyanu, veki'yemanu, vehigi'anu lizman hazeh.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the

For holidays

Yom Tov light.

For Shabbat and holidays

Shabbat and Yom Tov light.

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.

ברוך אתה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר

For holidays

שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

For Shabbat and holidays

שֶׁל שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

On the first two nights of Passover add:

ברוך אתה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנָן הַזֶּה.