

Passover Haggadah

Welcome

Spring is here, and we have come together again to celebrate the Passover. We gather with family and friends to eat and drink and glory in the bounty that nature provides us, year after year. We rejoice in the coming of the spring and celebrate new beginnings. But our purpose is also solemn. We join with Jews all over the world to tell the story of our bondage in Egypt and our deliverance from slavery, that we may never forget the price that has been paid for our freedom or the sufferings of the generations before us. And we remember those around the world who still suffer the burdens of tyranny and oppression and pray that they too may find deliverance.

Lighting Candles

We begin our seder by lighting the candles. May the flames of these candles shine into our hearts and bring light to all those who still live in darkness.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam,
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Yom Tov.*

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified us with your commandments and commanded us to light the holiday candles.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהַחַיָּנוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה.

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-hehyanu v'kiy'manu v'higi'anu
la-z'man ha-ze.*

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Kiddush

Shabbat and holidays are differentiated from normal days by reciting the Kiddush. Kiddush means “holiness,” or “specialness.” This is a special, holy day, which we gather together to celebrate and remember.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל עַם וְרוֹמַמְנוּ מִכָּל לָשׁוֹן,
וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. וַתִּתֵּן לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה
מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה, חַגִּים וְיָמִים לְשִׂשׁוֹן,
אֶת יוֹם חַג הַמַּצּוֹת הַזֶּה, זְמַן חֵירוּתֵנוּ,
מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ, זְכוֹר לִיציאת מִצְרַיִם.
כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֵרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים,
וּמוֹעֲדֵי קֹדֶשׁ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מִקְדֵּשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַיָּמִים.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, asher bakhar banu mikol am,
v'rom'manu mikol lashon, v'kidshanu b'mitzvotav.*

*Va-titen lanu Adonai eloheynu, b'ahavah mo'adim l'simkha, hagim u-z'manim l'sason,
et yom chag ha-matzot hazeh, z'man cheruteinu, mikra kodesh, zecher l'tziat mitzrayim.*

*Ki vanu vacharta, v'otanu kidashta, mikol ha'amim
u-moadim kadshekha v'simcha uv-sason hin-khal-tanu.*

Baruch atah, Adonai, m'kadesh Yisrael v'hazmanim.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe. You have called us for service from among the peoples, and have hallowed our lives with commandments. In love You have given us festivals for rejoicing, seasons of celebration, including this Festival of *Matzah*, the time of our freedom, a commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt. Praised are You, our Eternal God, who gave us this joyful heritage and who sanctifies Israel and the Festivals.

The First Cup

In Exodus, God tells us, “I will bring you out, I will deliver you, I will redeem you, and I will take you to be my people.” Tonight we will drink four cups of wine to remember these promises of liberation.

The first cup reminds us of the first promise: *V'hotzaiti* “I will bring you out from oppression.”

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, bo're p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Karpas - Vegetables

We now eat a green vegetable, dipped in salt water. The parsley represents the renewal and rebirth of spring. The salt water represents the tears of our ancestors during their enslavement.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאָדָמָה.

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, bo're p'ri ha-adama.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

Blessing of the Matzah

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in need come and celebrate Passover. This year we are here, next year in the land of Israel. This year we are slaves, next year free people.

(The middle piece of matzah is broken and the afikoman is hidden.)

Ma Nishtana - The Four Questions

מָה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?
שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֲמִץ וּמַצָּה.
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלוּ מַצָּה?
שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת.
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מָרּוֹר?
שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מִטְּבִילִין אֶפִּילוּ פְּעַם אַחַת.
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים?
שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין.
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלָנוּ מְסֻבִּין?

Mah nishtanah, ha-laylah ha-zeh, mi-kol ha-leylot—

She-b'khol ha-leylot 'anu 'okhlin chameytz u-matzah, ha-laylah ha-zeh, kulo matzah?

She-b'khol ha-leylot 'anu 'okhlin sh'ar y'raqot, ha-laylah ha-zeh, maror.

She-b'khol ha-leylot 'eyn 'anu matbilin 'afilu pa'am 'achat, ha-laylah ha-zeh, shtey fa'amim?

She-b'khol ha-leylot 'anu 'okhlin beyn yoshvin u-veyn m'subin, ha-laylah ha-zeh, kulanu m'subin?

Why is this night different from all other nights?

On all other nights, we can eat bread or matzah. Tonight, why only matzah?

We eat matzah to remind us that, when we left Egypt, we were in such a hurry that our bread didn't have time to rise.

On all other nights, we can eat any kind of herbs. Tonight, why only bitter herbs?

We eat bitter herbs to remind us of the bitterness of slavery.

On all other nights, we don't dip our herbs. Tonight, why do we dip twice?

We dip into salt-water to remind us of the tears we shed in Egypt, and we dip into charoset to remind us of the bricks and mortar we had to use when we were slaves.

On all other nights, we can eat sitting or reclining. Tonight, why do we all recline?

In ancient times, only free people were allowed to recline while eating. We recline tonight to remind us that we are free.

Maggid – The Story

Now we will tell the story of Passover. The Torah tells us to explain the story four times, because there are four types of children.

The Wise Child says, “I know about Passover, and I want to learn more.”

This child has already learned what it means to be a Jew. We answer this child by teaching her the rules of Passover, the meaning and experiences of the Jewish people.

The Wicked Child says, “Why are you learning about Passover?”

This child has not included himself in this question, and acts like he is not a member of the Jewish people. We answer this child by saying, “It is because of what God did for us when we came out of Egypt.”

The Simple Child says, “What is all this?”

This child needs to understand why we are sitting here. We answer her by saying, “God brought us out of Egypt and the land of slavery for the Jewish people.”

And then there is **the Child Who Does Not Know Enough To Ask**.

This child needs to learn about Judaism. We begin by explaining to him, “All of this is because of what the Lord did for us when we came out of Egypt.”

The story of Passover begins 400 years before Moses and the plagues. It begins with Joseph. The one with the coat. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and taken to Egypt. But God did not forget Joseph, and one day he was summoned to Pharaoh, who had heard about Joseph’s skill at interpreting dreams. After hearing Pharaoh’s dreams, Joseph foretold seven years of great plenty, followed by seven years of famine. Pharaoh made Joseph his second-in-command, putting him in charge of collecting reserves of food during the fruitful years so there would be food during the famine.

As predicted, in seven years the famine came, affecting all the lands. Only Egypt had provisions, for Joseph had amassed great stores of food during the prosperous years. Joseph’s family were among the many who travelled to Egypt in search of food. Joseph immediately recognized his family and forgave them – he understood that their wickedness and deception had been part of God’s plan to bring him to Egypt so that he could gather the food that would save them. Though Egyptians did not generally care for foreigners – particularly the Hebrews – such was Pharaoh’s affection for Joseph that he welcomed Joseph’s family with open arms. And so the children of Israel flourished and multiplied in Egypt.

Centuries pass, and the Israelites continue to prosper in Egypt. Joseph is long dead, as is the Pharaoh who loved him. The new Pharaoh has no affection for the Israelites, though they had now lived peacefully alongside the Egyptians for generations. But their numbers had become so great that Pharaoh began to see them as a threat. They would be a

formidable force if they ever decided to take arms against Egypt, or if they were to join with an invading army. So he forced them into slavery. And to quell their growth he sent out an edict that all male Hebrew babies should be killed.

With the help of two midwives, one Hebrew woman saved her son. But for fear that he would be caught, she put him in a basket and sent him down the Nile, hoping someone would find him and take pity on him. It so happened that Pharaoh's daughter was bathing in the river that day and found the baby and took him into her home. She named him Moses. Moses grew up as a member of two worlds – a Hebrew raised in the Egyptian court. He was enraged by the Egyptian's treatment of the Hebrews, and eventually had to flee Egypt after murdering an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave. In the wilderness, God came to Moses in the form of a burning bush.

GOD: Moses. Here I am. I have heard the cries of my people. I have come to deliver them out of Egypt into a good land, flowing with milk and honey.

MOSES: That's great.

GOD: I will send you to Pharaoh to deliver my people from their bondage.

MOSES: Whoa there. Me? I can't go back to Egypt. I'm a wanted man. And nobody's going to listen to me. I was raised an Egyptian – the Hebrews won't trust me. And the Pharaoh's never going to listen to a Hebrew. And even if someone would listen, I'm no speech-maker.

GOD: Who gives speech to the mouths of men? Go, return to Egypt. Speak, and I will be with you.

MOSES: And when I tell everybody this and they don't believe me?

GOD: I will give you signs, that the world shall know you speak for me.

So Moses went back to Egypt. He met up with his brother Aaron, and together they talked to the Israelites and performed for them the wonders God had showed them. The people believed, and sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh.

MOSES: God asks that you let our people go into the wilderness for three days, that we may make a sacrifice and worship.

PHARAOH: Who is this god to me that I should lose my workforce for three days?

MOSES: Three days to worship is all we ask. Pray, grant our request, lest God become angry and vengeful.

PHARAOH: How dare you make demands of me! I do not fear your god. I will make you pay for this insolence with your backs! No longer will you be supplied with straw to make bricks; you must gather the straw yourself. But we will still expect the same output.

And so the Israelites were forced to work harder, and were beaten when they were unable to fulfill the Pharaoh's demands.

ISRAELITES: You promised to deliver us, but you have only increased our suffering. Leave off, lest you anger Pharaoh more.

But God assured Moses that the people would be delivered, and so Moses went again to Pharaoh. And when Pharaoh demanded a sign of God's power, Moses threw his staff to the ground, as God had commanded him, and it became a snake. But the Pharaoh summoned his magicians and they were able to turn staffs into snakes as well, so Pharaoh was not impressed and sent Moses away. Then God brought the first plague to Egypt: he turned the Nile to blood. The river stank and the Egyptians could not drink. But the Pharaoh's magicians performed similar feats, so he was not impressed.

After seven days, Moses went again to Pharaoh.

MOSES: Let my people go and worship, or God will send a plague of frogs.

But Pharaoh would not relent, and the second plague began. Frogs covered the land - in the river, in the palace, in their beds, and in their ovens. The Pharaoh's magicians brought frogs upon the land as well, so Pharaoh was not impressed. But the magicians could not make the frogs depart. Finally, Pharaoh could take it no more.

PHARAOH: I will let your people go and worship. Just get rid of the frogs!

And so God lifted the plague, and the frogs died. But once the frogs were gone Pharaoh had a change of heart and went back on his promise.

The pattern continued. Next came the plague of gnats. Then came the plague of flies, which covered all of Egypt except Goshen, where the Israelites lived. Then the Egyptian livestock were diseased, then all the Egyptian people and animals were covered in boils. Next came hail that killed all who were outdoors, and then locusts came and devoured what was left of the crops. And then God brought a darkness so deep that nothing could be seen. The Pharaoh's magicians could match none of these feats, and each time Pharaoh promised to let the Israelites go, but went back on his word once the plague had been lifted.

After the ninth plague Moses went to Pharaoh a final time.

MOSES: Let my people go.

PHARAOH: I will not.

MOSES: I warn you. The next plague will be the most deadly. Already your crops and livestock are demolished. If you do not let us go, God will strike in your very homes, and take from you the first-born son in every Egyptian family.

But still, after all that he had seen, Pharaoh doubted.

PHARAOH: This is beyond any god's power.

So Moses went back to his people and told them to prepare. Every family was to slaughter a lamb and smear its blood on their door. That night God came down and slaughtered all the first-born sons in Egypt. But God knew the houses of the Israelites because of the lambs' blood and passed over them.

In the morning a great cry went up in Egypt as mothers and fathers awoke to find their sons dead. Pharaoh called Moses to him, in mourning for his son.

PHARAOH: Be gone. Take all your people and your herds and leave this land.

And so the Israelites fled in haste, lest Pharaoh should again change his mind. They packed so quickly that they did not have time to let the bread they were baking that morning rise, so the only provisions they had for their journey were unleavened loaves.

Pharaoh watched this great multitude leaving his land forever and, forgetting all that he and his people had endured, could not stand to let such a workforce leave. He sent all the armies of Egypt after the Israelites to bring them back. But God was still looking after us. God commanded Moses to raise his staff, and the waters of the Red Sea parted, leaving a dry path for the Israelites to cross. When the Egyptians followed this path in pursuit, God brought the waters back down and drowned the Egyptian army.

And so God led the people out of Egypt toward the Promised Land. Though of course it took them a little while to get there.

The Ten Plagues

As we fill our glasses for our second cup of wine, we remember the ten plagues. Our liberation did not come without a price, and even our oppressors deserve our sympathy. So as we name each plague we spill a drop from our glasses, reminding us of the blood and the pain of the Egyptians.

דָּם	<i>Dam</i>	Blood
צְפַרְדֵּי	<i>Tzfarde'ah</i>	Frogs
כִּנִּים	<i>Kinim</i>	Gnats
עֲרוֹב	<i>Arov</i>	Flies
דְּבַר	<i>Dever</i>	Pestilence
שָׁחִין	<i>Sh'chin</i>	Boils
בָּרָד	<i>Barad</i>	Hail
אַרְבֵּה	<i>Arbeh</i>	Locusts
חֹשֶׁךְ	<i>Choshech</i>	Darkness
מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת	<i>Makat B'chorot</i>	Death of the First-Born

The Second Cup

The second cup of wine represents God's second declaration of redemption: V'hitzalti—"I will free you from slavery."

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, bo're p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

The Three Essentials

To fulfill our obligation on Passover, we need to say these three central words:

Pesach, Matzah, and Maror.

Pesach (Passover) is to remember that God passed over our houses during the slaying of the firstborn.

Matzah (unleavened bread) is to remember that when we were escaping from Egypt, there wasn't enough time for our bread to rise.

Maror (bitter herbs) is to remember the bitterness of slavery.

The Seder Plate

The items on our Seder plate symbolize the different parts of the story of our bondage and liberation and invite us to remember both our suffering and our freedom.

The *Maror*, bitter herb or horseradish, represents the bitterness of slavery.

The *Haroset*, a mixture of apples and nuts and wine, represents bricks and mortar – the tools we used in our time of slavery.

The *Lamb Shank* represents the sacrifices we have made to survive. Before the tenth plague, our people slaughtered lambs and marked our doors with blood, so that God would pass over our homes and spare us.

The *Roasted Egg* symbolizes the festival sacrifice made at the temple in Jerusalem. It is also a symbol of mourning, to remind us of the destruction of the Temple.

The *Karpas* or *Parsley* represents rebirth and new beginnings.

The *Salt Water* represents tears, both of our ancestors and those suffering now.

The *orange* and the *olive* are new additions to our Seder plate. There is a story that, when asked about the ordination of women, a conservative rabbi said that a woman belongs on the bima as much as an orange belongs on a Seder plate. So today we include an orange on our plate, to represent our openness and acceptance of all who come to our table and the fruitfulness this inclusion can bring to our lives. We include the olive as a prayer for peace, in the Middle East and everywhere war and oppression prevent people from enjoying the freedom we celebrate tonight.

Blessing of the Matzah

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמוֹצֵא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, ha-motzi lehem min ha-aretz.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al achilat matzah.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who sanctifies us with the commandment to eat matzah.

Now we will eat the matzah, haroset and maror together, combining the bread of liberation with the remembrance of the bitterness and toil of slavery.

The Third Cup of Wine

The third cup of wine represents God's third declaration of redemption: *V'go'alti*—"I will liberate you with an outstretched arm..."

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, bo're p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

A Cup for Elijah and Miriam

We have an extra place set at our table tonight for the prophet Elijah and Miriam, Moses' sister. It is said that when Elijah comes again, all the people of the world will be free. So we pour him a glass of wine and open our door, that he may find us and join our Seder.

As Elijah represents redemption at the end of time, Miriam represents redemption in our present lives. By honoring her we also acknowledge the many contributions women have made to Judaism and the world, which have often been overlooked. Miriam's cup is filled with water, evoking her well that followed the Israelites in the wilderness.

The Fourth Cup of Wine

The fourth cup of wine represents God's fourth declaration of redemption: *V'lakachti*—"I will claim you for me as a people, and I will be your God."

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, bo're p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Afikoman

It is now time to search for the Afikoman!

Closing

Our Seder is at an end. This is a ritual of remembrance, so let us not forget the bondage we have endured or turn a deaf ear to the sufferings of those around us. We pray for those who have yet to feel the bliss of freedom and stand by those who fight for liberation. We thank God for all that we have – the new beginning God gave our people when we left Egypt and the new beginning God gives us each year as winter ends and spring invites us to marvel in the bounty that surrounds us. We are thankful to be together on this special night, and we end the night as we have for thousands of years:

L'shanah ha-ba'ah b'Yerushalayim

Next year in Jerusalem!

The Meal

Time to eat!