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PASSOVER SEDER GUIDE



**CHABAD
ON CALL**

The heart & soul of healthcare™

WHAT IS A SEDER?

The Seder is a feast that includes reading, drinking wine, telling stories, eating special foods, and singing. It is held after nightfall on the first and second nights of Passover.

At the Seder, every person should feel as if he or she are personally going out of Egypt. We begin with the story of our patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and recount the Jewish people's descent into Egypt, recalling their suffering and persecution. We are with them as G-d sends the ten plagues to punish Pharaoh and his nation, and follow along as they leave Egypt and cross the Sea of Reeds. We witness the miraculous hand of G-d as the waters part, allowing the Israelites to pass, then return to inundate the Egyptian legions. As we eat bitter foods of affliction and poverty, the Exodus becomes a reality—as real as the festive meal and celebratory toasts that follow.





How to have a Seder?

The ceremonial foods are arranged on a ka'arah or a Seder plate - in our case the Seder Placemat. Match the labeled containers to their place on the mat.

The service and explanations are in a book called a Haggadah, which is included in your kit. Although the text is in Hebrew it is perfectly acceptable to read the Haggadah in translation if you don't understand Hebrew.

During the course of the evening you will have:

- ◆ four cups of wine or grape juice
- ◆ veggies dipped in saltwater
- ◆ flat, cracker-like bread called matzah
- ◆ bitter herbs and romaine lettuce, dipped into charoset (a paste of nuts, apples, pears and wine)
- ◆ a festive meal

Each item has its place in a 15-step choreographed combination of tastes, sounds, sensations and smells that have been with the Jewish people for millennia.

THE 15 STEPS OF THE SEDER



1 **KADESH** THE BENEDICTION

The Seder service begins with the recitation of Kiddush. This is said while holding a cup of wine or grape juice, and reclining (if possible) to the left.



2 **URCHATZ** WASHING

We wash our hands in the usual manner as is done before a meal, but without the customary blessing.



3 **KARPAS** THE "APPETIZER"

A small piece of vegetable is dipped into salt water and eaten (after reciting the blessing over vegetables).



4 YACHATZ BREAKING THE MATZAH

The middle matzah is broken in two. The smaller part of the middle matzah is returned to the Seder plate. This broken middle matzah remains visible as we tell the story of Exodus (step 5) and will be eaten shortly thereafter. The larger piece is put aside (hidden) for later use as the afikoman (step 12).



5 MAGGID THE HAGGADAH

At this point, a second cup of wine or grape juice is poured, and then comes the traditional question: “Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleilot? Why is this night different from all other nights?” Read inside the Haggadah.

The questions triggers one of the most significant elements of Passover, which is the highlight of the Seder ceremony: reading the Haggadah, which tells the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The answer includes a brief review of history, including how Abraham rejected idolatry and entered a pact with G-d, a description of the suffering imposed upon the Israelites, a listing of the plagues visited on the Egyptians, and a recounting of the miracles performed by the Almighty to redeem His people. We conclude by thanking G-d for having set us free from Egypt and a prayer for the Final Redemption.



6 RACHTZAH WASHING BEFORE THE MEAL

We conclude with the first part of the Haggadah by drinking the second cup of wine. We then wash our hands again, this time with the customary blessings, as is usually done before eating bread.



7-8 MOTZI MATZAH WE EAT THE MATZAH

Taking hold of the three matzahs (with the broken one between the two whole ones), recite the customary blessing before bread and then recite the special blessing “al achilat matzah.” Break a bit off the upper matzah and at least one ounce from the middle matzah, and eat the two pieces together while reclining (if possible.)



9 MAROR THE BITTER HERBS

Take at least one ounce of the bitter herbs. Dip it in the charoset, then shake the latter off and make the blessing “al achilat maror.” Eat without reclining.



10 KORECH THE HILLEL SANDWICH

Break two pieces off of the bottom matzah. Take at least one ounce of bitter herbs and dip it in the charoset, which is then shaken off. Place this between the two pieces of matzah, say “kein asah Hillel...,” and eat the sandwich while reclining (if possible).



11 SHULCHAN ORECH THE FEAST

The holiday meal is now served. We begin the meal by eating the hard-boiled egg dipped into salt water. Traditionally associated with mourning, the egg reminds us that our meal lacks the sacrificial lamb. *Note: The zeroa (the chicken neck on the Seder plate), is not eaten at the Seder.*



12 TZAFUN OUT OF HIDING

After the meal, the half-matzah that had been “hidden” and set aside for the afikoman is taken out and eaten. Everyone should eat at least 1 1/2 ounces of matzah, reclining if possible, before midnight. After eating the afikoman, we do not eat or drink anything except for the two remaining cups of wine or grape juice.



13 BERACH BLESSINGS AFTER THE MEAL

A third cup of wine or grape juice is filled and Grace After Meals is recited. After the Grace, we recite the blessing over wine and drink the third cup while reclining (if possible). We then refill our cup for the fourth and final time. We open the door and recite the passage inviting the Prophet Elijah in.



14 HALLEL SONGS OF PRAISE

At this point, having recognized the Almighty and His unique guidance of the Jewish people, we sing His praises as Lord of the entire universe. After reciting the Hallel, we again recite the blessing over wine or grape juice and drink the fourth cup, reclining (if possible).



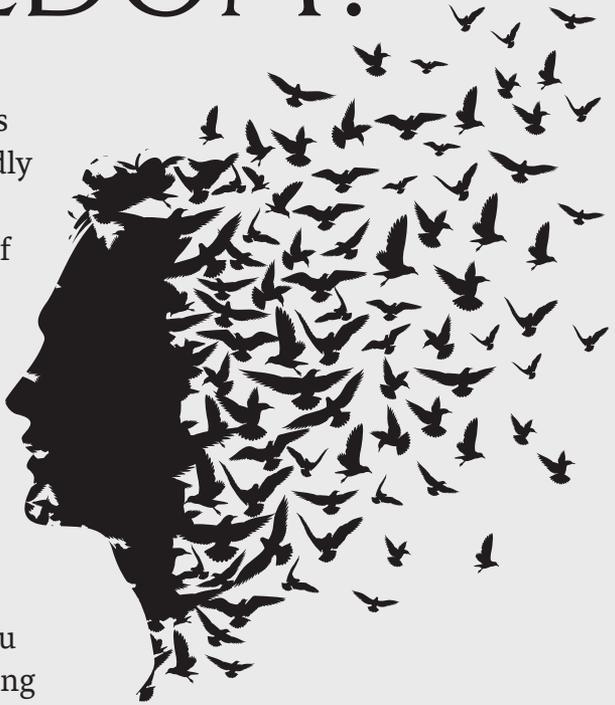
15 NIRTZAH ACCEPTANCE

Having carried out the Seder service, we are sure that it has been well received by the Almighty. We then wish each other: “Leshanah haba’a b’Yerushalayim— Next year in Jerusalem!”

THIS IS FREEDOM?

Passover is supposedly the festival of freedom

from slavery. But it seems ridiculous to celebrate freedom by not eating bread! Aren't restrictions the exact opposite of freedom? It depends on how you define freedom. If being free means doing whatever you want, with no rules or limits whatsoever, then you are right. If I am only free as long as no one tells me what to do and I can follow my every whim and fancy, then being forbidden to eat bread is indeed an infringement of my "freedom." But is that really



freedom? Am I not then just a slave to my whims and fancies? What if my fancies are not really coming from me? Maybe I have desires that were placed in my head by others. Am I truly free if I follow those desires? What if I have instinctive drives that are harmful to myself?

Can you call me free if I am bound by those drives? What about compulsive or addictive behavior? Bad habits? Can't you also be a slave to what you want?

Judaism defines freedom very differently. True freedom is the ability to express who you really are. If there are levels to your personality that have not been explored, if your soul has not had the opportunity to be expressed, then you are not yet free.

The Torah is the instruction manual to our souls. Even its seemingly restrictive laws are only there to allow us to tap in to our inner self. Because sometimes it is only through restrictions that our true self can come out. An example of restrictions being freeing can be found in the game of soccer. Compared to other sports, soccer is very limiting, because you can't use your hands. So is soccer a frustrating game to play?

For a beginner, perhaps it would be. If you constantly focus on the fact that you can't use your hands, then it would seem pretty annoying. But once you get the hang of it you would realize that precisely because in soccer you are restricted from using your hands, you are "free" to develop other skills like kicking, cheating and hindering that otherwise you would never have known that you had. Similarly, the underlying purpose of Jewish customs is not to tie us down. On the contrary, they serve to quieten the noise of our mundane, everyday existence and help us tune in to the deeper messages of life. On Passover, we are indeed limited in what we eat. But by changing our usual habits, we are liberated to see beyond the everyday. Our souls get a chance to be heard, and nothing can be more freeing than that.

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