



## **Virtual Passover Resource Booklet**



**Compiled by Rabbi Andrew Bloom**

**Dear Friends,**

**We hope that this Passover booklet reaches you at a time of safety and health. As we prepare to sit around our Seder Tables and celebrate the Holiday of Pesach (Passover) we wanted to offer all of us some resources that will help guide and enhance your Seder experience. May we all know the Exodus from the COVID-19 virus soon.**

**Chag Kasher V'Samech, (A Kosher and Happy Holiday)**

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## **Six Lessons of Passover**

### **1. Learn how to ask.**

Most great achievements in life begin with a question. Be curious. Speak up. Ask! Ask me about the salt water and the parsley. About the matzah and the pillows on our chairs. Ask about the Seder plate with the bitter herbs that bring tears to my eyes. All of this is here because I want you to ask me why.

### **2. Responsibility for each other.**

We invite all who are hungry to come and eat because we are responsible for one another. Some people are hungry for food, while others are hungry for wisdom. Whatever we have we should share as much as we can.

### **3. Embrace challenges.**

On our table is salt water which represents our tears. And there are bitter herbs that we will eat to remember the suffering we endured. We speak of our challenges and remember our tears because we can see now how they transformed us, how they moved us, how they taught us how to yearn for freedom. Embrace challenges. Learn from them. Remember them. They brought us to this place today.

### **4. Act.**

Thinking and preparing for change are important steps but what matters in the end is following through with our actions. Matzah teaches us the importance of acting quickly when we know something is the right thing to do. We didn't wait for the bread to rise. Instead we grabbed the matzah and ran. Act whenever you can and as soon as you can. The world is full of great ideas that have never been realized. Matzah teaches us to move, to do, to run towards our goal.

### **5. Practice Jewish gratitude.**

Tonight, we sing Dayenu. It would have been enough for us if all we did was wake up this morning, but You gave us water. And that would have been enough but in Your great kindness You gave us food, and sight and hearing and legs and hands. This is the kind of gratitude that teaches us during the hardest of days that we have so much to be thankful for. That all of life is an undeserved, precious gift.

### **6. The meaning of freedom.**

Some people think freedom means being able to do what we want whenever we want to. But the Jewish definition of freedom is the ability to create a meaningful life with authentic values and to create a close connection with our Creator. Freedom is living a life of constant growth and striving to live up to our potential.

## Order of the Seder

**Kadesh : (קדש)** The Seder is opened by reciting Kiddush and drinking the first of the four cups of wine.

**Orchatz : (ורחץ)** Orchatz is the ceremony of ritually washing hands without reciting the bracha “al netilat yadayim” before beginning the rest of the Seder.

**Karpas : (כרפס)** After washing hands, a bit of karpas is taken (leafy green herbs or even potatoes) and dipped into salt water, with the bracha “Boreh pree ha’adama.” This represents the growth of springtime (greens) but counterbalanced with the tears of slavery (salt water).

**Yachatz : (יחץ)** During yachatz the middle of the three matzot is taken and split in half. The bigger half is set aside to be used as the afikomen at the end of the seder.

**Maggid : (מגיד)** Magid is typically the longest section of the Seder. It includes the youngest child present asking the Four Questions, followed by the discussion about the Four Sons, the Ten Plagues, and the song Dayenu, along with many other topics focused on in the Hagaddah, like stories from the Torah and Talmud. Families often customize their seder and expand on different aspects of the storytelling with commentary, activities for children, and more (\*see our quick educational activities for Pesach below for some examples.) Magid ends with drinking the second cup of wine.

**Rachtzah : (רחצה)** Rachtzah is the section of ritually washing hands with the recitation of the bracha “al netilat yadayim” in preparation for eating matzah.

**Motzei Matzah ( מוציא מצה) :** The top two matzahs are eaten after reciting the bracha “ha’Motzei lechem min ha’aretz” along with a second bracha about the mitzvah of eating matzah.

**Maror : (מרור)** During Maror, a piece of bitter herbs is dipped in charoset and eaten. The bitter herbs used vary by custom (horseradish root and romaine lettuce are commonly used) and represent the bitterness of slavery. Charoset (a sweet mix which commonly includes apples, red wine, sugar/honey, and nuts, though recipes differ by tradition and cultural custom) symbolizes both mortar of slavery and the redemption.

**Korech : (כורר)** During Korech, a “sandwich” is eaten by putting maror and some charoset (varies by custom) between two pieces of matzah. This sandwich dates back from Talmudic times, when Hillel would combine meat from the Korban Pesach (sacrificial lamb offering), matzah and maror.

## Order of the Seder (continued)

**Shulchan Orech (שולחן עורך):** Shulchan Orech is the section of the Seder in which the main meal is eaten.

**Tzafun (צפון):** Tzafun is the section in which the afikomen– the bit of matzah that was set aside earlier- is eaten. It is customarily the last food eaten on the Seder night.

**Barech (ברך):** During Barech, Birkat Hamazon, Grace After Meals, is recited followed by drinking the third cup of wine.

**Hallel (הלל):** Hallel is the point in the Seder when psalms praising God are sung followed by drinking the fourth cup of wine.

**Nirtzah (נרצה):** Nirtzah is the section in which it is declared “Next year in Jerusalem!” and according to different traditions, various piyutim are sung (a famous one being “Chad Gadya”).

## The Seder Plate

**Egg – ביצה** The egg represents the chaggiga offering that was given on every holiday during the times of the temple. It also represents life cycle and spring.

**Shankbone – זרוע** The shankbone represents the korban pesach- the roasted lamb- which was a central mitzvah of pesach during the times of the temple and in the story of the exodus.

**Charoset – חרוסת** Charoset is a sweet mix frequently including apples, red wine, sugar/honey, and nuts that symbolizes both the mortar of slavery and the redemption.

**Maror – מרור** Horseradish root is commonly used to represent the bitterness of slavery.

**Chazeret – חזרת** In addition to the horseradish, bitter leaves like romaine lettuce are placed on the seder plate to represent the bitterness of slavery. This is what is generally used in the Hillel sandwich/korach.

**Karpas – כרפס** Sweet green herbs (like parsley) or potatoes are also placed on the seder plate. Different meanings are given as to why. Some say karpas is representative of spring and others say it is as an additional symbol of slavery.

Some people add other items such as an orange (as a symbol of inclusion) for modern symbolic purposes.

## The Four Children

We find The Four Children in the maggid (“telling”) section of the seder, during which we retell the Israelites’ journey from slavery to freedom. We remind ourselves of this redemption story in many ways as we proclaim that the matzah is the “bread of affliction,” ask the 4 Questions, recite the Ten Plagues and sing the song Dayeinu. The Four Children originated in four distinct passages in the Torah that instruct us to teach our children about the story of Pesach. The labels given to these children, as well as their questions, were compiled from the Torah and other Jewish sources over time.

1. The **wise child** asks details about the specific meaning of the laws of Passover observance: “What are the testimonies, the statutes, and laws which Adonai our God has commanded you?” to which we respond with one of the very specific laws of the Passover seder.
2. The **wicked child** asks, “Whatever does this mean to you?” The authors admonish this child as one who is not concerned about the laws personally, but only for others. This exchange reminds us of the importance of not separating ourselves from our community or from traditions that might seem uncomfortable or foreign to us, but rather to engage with them in ways that enable us to connect with our community.
3. The **simple child** asks, “What does this mean?” to which a straightforward summary of the story is given, directly from the Torah: “It was with a mighty hand that God brought us out from Egypt, the house of bondage.” (Ex 13:14).
4. The **child who does not know how to ask**, in response to the child who does not know how to ask we are instructed to “open it up” and explain, “It is because of what God did for me when I went free from Egypt” (Ex 13:8).

Reciting, The Four Children reminds us of the Jewish obligation to teach the next generation about this powerful story, and, importantly, not to tell the story in the one way that might be easiest for us. Rather, we should invite our children to be a part of the conversation, strive to meet the children where they are individually, respect the way each one learns and interacts in the world, and respond accordingly and appropriately.