

# Passover Seder

Passover celebrates the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt – the narrow place. It begins on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan and lasts for seven days (eight days in the Diaspora). The name Passover is taken from the Exodus story: During the tenth and ultimate plague inflicted on Pharaoh to break his will, G-d passed over the Israelites and struck down only the first born of the Egyptians.

It is a Festival of Freedom -- from slavery and other oppression, a Festival of Spring and Unleavened Bread which is observed by the Retelling of the story and the celebration with family and friends.

## Setting the Seder Table

- ❖ Two Candlesticks and Candles
- ❖ Haggadot - for each person
- ❖ Wine or Grape Juice – Four cups of wine symbolize G-d’s fourfold promise of redemption as mentioned in the Book of Exodus (I will bring you out, deliver you from bondage, redeem you with an outstretched arm, take you to Me for a people).
- ❖ Flowers
- ❖ Matzot – 3 covered plus extras
- ❖ Salt Water (for dipping parsley; a symbol of the tears the slaves shed)
- ❖ Elijah’s Cup – full of wine
- ❖ Pillows – for reclining
- ❖ Cup, Basin, Towel for handwashing

## The Seder Plate:

- ❖ **Karpas** – a green vegetable (parsley); symbolizing spring and rebirth.
- ❖ **Haroset** – a mixture of nuts, fruit, spices and wine; it symbolizes the mortar and bricks that the slaves made in Egypt.
- ❖ **Maror** – bitter herbs (horseradish); a symbol of the bitterness of slavery.
- ❖ **Beitzah** – Roasted egg (left in the shell); a symbol of the festival sacrifice which was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem – a symbol of life and new beginnings.
- ❖ **Zeroa** – Roasted Lamb Shank bone (or a broiled beet for vegetarians); a reminder of the lamb whose blood painted the doorposts in the Passover story and of the traditional Pesach sacrifice brought to the Temple in Jerusalem.
- ❖ **Hatzeret** – A second bitter herb (romaine lettuce) for the Hillel sandwich.

## Optional:

- ❖ Miriam’s Cup, or a small dish of spices to represent Miriam
- ❖ Orange: to represent inclusiveness/diversity
- ❖ Individual seder plates with karpas, maror and haroset
- ❖ Nuts, hard-boiled eggs to “snack” on before the meal

## **Outline of the Seder**

# Passover Seder

Lighting of the festival candles

*Kaddesh*: Blessing over the First Cup of Wine

- Variants for Shabbat and Saturday night
- Recitation of the she-che-heyanu blessing

*Ur'hatz*: Handwashing, no blessing

*Karpas*: Dipping of a vegetable into salt water

*Yachatz*: Breaking the Middle matzah

- Ha Lahma Anya - The Bread of Affliction
- Matzah of Hope

*Maggid*: Telling the Story

- Mah Nistanah - The Four Questions
- Arba banim - The Four Children
- The story of the Exodus
- The 10 Plagues and the crossing of the Sea
- Dayenu
- Second Cup of Wine

*Rachtzah*: Handwashing, with a blessing

*Motzi/Matzah*: Eating matza

*Maror*: Eating bitter herbs dipped in haroset

*Korech*: Hillel Sandwich (matzah and maror)

*Shulchan Orech*: The Festival Meal

*Tzafun*: eating the Afikomen

*Barech*: Blessings after the meal

- Birkat HaMazon
- Third Cup of Wine
- Cups of Miriam and Elijah

*Hallel*: Psalms of Praise (Psalms 115-118)

- Counting the Omer
- Songs
- Fourth Cup

*Nirtzah* – Conclusion