

“L’Shana Haba B’Yerushalaimi” – “Next Year in Jerusalem!”
 (The traditional ending refrain of the Passover Seder)

stock up on it for the year ahead.

Many people (including non-Jews in the know) excitedly await Passover each year, not only to celebrate the holiday, but also to enjoy real sugar in their Coca-Cola. Because of Ashkanazi tradition to avoid consuming Kitniyot (legumes), the cheaper to produce corn-syrup sweetened cola cannot be marketed if they want to sell Coke to the Passover consumer. The resulting soda with real sugar is preferred by many who will often

day” (Exodus 13:8), which provokes the Passover Seder.

The Hebrew name for the holiday, ‘Pesach’, is rendered into English as ‘Passover’ in reference to how it was used in Exodus 12:13 to describe God passing over the houses of the Israelites during the plague of the first born in Egypt. Additionally, it can be playfully broken into two Hebrew words ‘Peh’ and ‘Sach’ which means ‘the mouth speaks’. This hints at the essential element of retelling, “and you shall tell your child on that

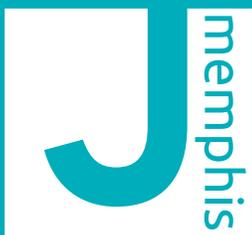
ritual, more so than any other holiday or activity. *Never been? Find out what you’re missing!*
 According to the latest Pew Research Center Survey, the Passover Seder remains the most practiced Jewish

Fun Facts

All about Pesach (Passover)

A celebration of our freedom and
the responsibilities that come with it

Night of Day of
March 30–April 7 / Nissan 15–22



“B’Chol Dor VaDor” – “In every generation”
we relive our inception to guide our path
toward perfection



The Backstory



Pesach celebrates our freedom and national birth resulting from God's redeeming the Israelites from Egypt. However, there is more to Passover than the narrative in the book of Exodus. Both in the Chumash (the Pentateuch) and in the understanding of the Rabbis in their crafting of the Seder narrative, the Passover story actually begins with Abraham.

God's covenant with Abraham included a promise that his offspring would be subjugated and oppressed in a land not their own, but

that ultimately they would be redeemed from that experience and thereby transformed into a great nation ready to fulfill their mission in the land of Israel. The Chumash often evokes our experience in Egypt to prime us with the necessary empathy to apply our freedom toward good purpose – caring for the vulnerable and oppressed.

How We Celebrate

No Chameitz! For the duration of the Passover holiday, leavened food made from the 5 grains (wheat, barley, spelt, rye, and oats) is forbidden from consumption, benefit, and even ownership. The mystics associate *Chameitz* with the Ego, and see an important message of humility present in this commandment.

Matzah: A simple unleavened bread which carries dual symbolism. Firstly, it recalls the haste of our ancestors leaving Egypt during which there was no time for dough to rise. This reinforces what the Talmud teaches - "God's salvation comes in the blink of an eye" - we are never without hope. It is also the bread of affliction and poverty, reminding us of our historical hardship and sensitizing us to those still in need.

Passover Seder: *Seder* means order, and refers to the highly structured ritual meal eaten on the first (two) night(s) of Passover. The focus of this meal is not the food but the fixtures; the various rituals and symbols, the story/re-enactment, and the shared multi-generational experience which ensures that our Jewish legacy successfully transmits from one generation to the next. A good *Hagaddah* (a *Seder* guidebook) is an invaluable tool to a successful night, along with pre-planning by the *Seder* leader and implementing unique family customs. A few choice highlights of the *Seder* are offered below:

Seder Plate - A central symbolic object present on the table throughout the meal, the *Seder* plate traditionally contains: 1) a roasted and charred egg symbolizing the *Chagigah* (festival) sacrifice brought during Temple times. 2) *Marror* and *Chazeret* (bitter vegetables like horseradish and romaine lettuce) remind us of the harsh and bitter lives we endured as slaves in Egypt. 3) *Zeroah* (a roasted shankbone) recalling the Paschal Lamb which was offered yearly in the Temple in commemoration of the original offering in Egypt who's blood was placed upon the doorposts. 4) *Karpas* (a vegetable, often parsley) which is dipped in salt water symbolic of the tears shed in Egypt. 5) *Charoset* - a mixture of apple, wine, and nuts, symbolic of the mortar used for construction during slavery.

Four cups of wine - Spread throughout the *Seder*, these four cups serve to symbolize the four promises of redemption God gives while liberating us from Egypt (Exodus 6:6-7) - "I will take you out..." "I will save you..." "I will redeem you..." and "I will take you as a nation..." A fifth expression of redemption - "I will bring you to the land [of Israel]..." (Exodus 6:8) is embodied in the Cup of Elijah, placed on the table during the *Seder* but not drunk.

Maggid - Story time. The core of the *Seder* experience, *Maggid* tells the story of the Exodus while modeling ways we can mine our history for meaning and relevance. It links our collective past to our future hopes, thereby giving context and importance to our present moment.

Ki Geirim Hayitim B'Eretz Mitzrayim - God reminds us that 'because you were once strangers in Egypt' you've been sensitized to the challenges faced by those less fortunate. We all face the responsibility of applying our human agency with the nobility and compassion befitting God's representative people.

This framing helps explain why Moses plays no role in the traditional retelling of the Exodus that takes place on Seder night. Passover is more than a recounting of History; it is a reorientation to the responsibilities demanded by our experience. *B'Chol Dor VaDor* - In every generation we must realize our freedom through gratitude and accountability. At the start of each Seder we recall "this is the bread of our affliction" and immediately respond with a statement of *Kol Dichfin* - let all who are hungry or needy, come join us at our tables. Together with God (and not an angel or agent), we (and not Moses or our ancestors - though certainly inspired by their legacy) resolve to face the Egypts of our generation with an enduring faith that while this year we are yet [metaphoric] slaves, next year we will be free.

Mah Nishtanah/The Four Questions - A scripted experiential tool used to teach children (and remind ourselves of) the enduring secret of Jewish engagement – authentic curiosity coupled with a readiness to always ask questions, seek personal growth, and aspire toward understanding.

Four Sons - Questions asked by, and answers given to, four archetypes of children. This caricature of interactions provides a critical reminder that education and inspiration must be responsive to the particular needs of each student.

10 Plagues - The recalling of God's miraculous intervention in Egypt is accompanied by a custom to remove wine from our cups. We simultaneously celebrate God hearing and responding to our suffering, while instilling moral sensitivity even for our enemies.

Afikoman - Symbolic of the *Korban Pesach* – the paschal sacrifice, this portion of *Matzah* is to be the last thing eaten on Seder night. Many families have personal customs around the *Afikoman* (ex: hiding it for children to find) designed to involve children and keep them engaged and awake into the late night.

