

bitter taste of the Maror reminds us of the suffering of the Children of Israel at the hands of the Egyptians.

Matzah—Unleavened bread served to remind us that the Israelites had to leave Egypt in haste and had no time to wait for their bread to rise.

Pesach—This is the Hebrew word for Passover, reminding us of how the Angel of Death passed over the homes marked with the blood of the lamb as God told the Jews to do the night of the last of ten plagues on Egypt. The Hebrew spelling is פסח, which is the word on the front of this booklet.

Seder—This is the Aramaic word for “order.” The Passover *seder* is the order of service for the Passover celebration. A seder book is called a Haggadah.

A Wandering Aramean—This refers to Jacob, named Israel by God. He came to settle in Egypt during a time of famine in Canaan. The Children of Israel would later be enslaved by the Egyptians and God would call Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand that he let the Israelites go.

Zero’a—A roasted lamb shankbone with some meat on it reminds us of the Paschal lamb sacrificed in the Temple at Passover.

“Next Year in Jerusalem”

Each Passover Seder ends with this saying. It was a hope and prayer for generations of Jews separated from their homeland. This prayer was answered in our lifetimes with the creation of the modern State of Israel in 1948. The saying also points to hope for an ultimate redemption for the world as Jerusalem has come not just to mean the earthly city of Jerusalem, but it also signifies the eternal Jerusalem, a symbol of everlasting peace.

# פסח

## Pesach Primer

A Passover Seder  
Word Book

## What is the Passover Seder?

For thousands of years, the Jews have remembered that their ancestors were slaves in Egypt. The passage from slavery to freedom is the central story of Judaism. It was only after being led from bondage that the Children of Israel were prepared to receive God's teaching (Torah) at Mount Sinai. Each generation is to renew this story of liberation in its own lives. The Passover Seder then is a central act of remembrance in the lives of the Jewish community and the time set aside for remembering bondage and liberation.

This booklet gives the meaning of a number of key Passover terms to better help in understanding the Seder and its many parts. You do not have to know all (or any) of these words to appreciate the Seder, but it can give you some additional context for what is taking place.

**Afikomen**—The “official” dessert of the Passover, this is a piece of matzah hidden during the meal by the head of the seder. Modern Jewish scholars think it is from *aphikomenos* the Greek for “he who comes,” referring to the Messiah.

**Betzah**—A roasted, hard-boiled egg. The egg is a symbol of birth and represents the festival sacrifice (*Hagigah*) that was offered at the Temple. Roasting the egg became a tradition to mourn the loss of the Temple, which was destroyed by the Romans in the year 70 and has yet to be rebuilt.

**Chametz**—This is the Jewish word for leaven. No leavened foods are served at the seder to remind us that the Children of Israel had to leave Egypt in haste as they escaped from the Pharaoh.

**Charoset**—This sweet mix of apples, nuts, cinnamon and a little red wine are said to remind us of the mortar the Israelites used to build store houses for the Egyptians.

**Dayenu**—Hebrew for “enough.” One seder song reminds us of all that God did for the Children of Israel, with each line end-

ing by saying that even just that one act of God's alone would have been enough. Through the song, we see how God has done well more than enough for us all. One tradition calls on people at the seder to add their own verses telling how God has acted in their lives.

**Elijah**—A great prophet of Israel who scripture tells us must return to prepare the way for the Messiah. A cup of wine is left out to welcome Elijah if he should come to the Passover celebration. Toward the end of the meal, a child is asked to go check at the door for the prophet.

**The Four Questions**—A child asks four questions which ask about why Passover is different from all other nights. Questioning itself is a sign of freedom and the Four Questions lead the seder to the answer that on this night we remember that *we* were slaves in Egypt. The key is that we remember that *we* were slaves, not *they* were slaves as we make their story of deliverance from bondage our story.

**Haggadah**—Literally, legend or telling, a Haggadah is a book which gives the Passover Seder, often with interpretive material. Plural is Haggadot. The Haggadah is the one Jewish book to traditionally be illustrated by artists and many stunningly beautiful Haggadot have been produced through the centuries.

**Hillel Sandwich**—Matzah is sandwiched together with maror and charoset to remind us of the great Jewish Rabbi Hillel who ate his Passover meal in this manner.

**Karpas**—Parsley, radishes or celery are dipped in salt water to remind us of the tears the Israelites wept in bondage.

**Kashrut**—The laws which tell us what foods are kosher. Some items, such as leaven, are kosher throughout the year, but not for Passover.

**Maror**—Sliced or grated horseradish or the root of lettuce. The