

Searching for Hametz בְּדִיקַת חֲמֵץ

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE SEDER

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל בְּעוֹר חֲמֵץ.

Ba-rukht ata Adonai / Elo-hei-nu me-lekh ha-olam /
asher kee-d'sha-nu b'meeetz-vo-tav / v'tzee-va-nu al bee-ur hametz.

Before the search recite this blessing:

Blessed are You, Adonai
our God, Ruler of the
Universe, who sanctified
us by commanding us to
remove all hametz.

After the search recite this formula in
Aramaic, for disowning any hametz still
undiscovered in the home:

כָּל חֲמִירָא וְחֲמִיעָא
דְּאַכְּמָא בְּרִשׁוּתִי,
דְּלֹא חֲמִתָּהּ וְדְלֹא בְּעִרְתָּהּ,
לְבָטִיל וְלֵהוּי הַפְּקָד
בְּעַפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

All hametz in my
possession, whether I have
seen it or not and whether
I have removed it or not,
shall be nullified and
ownerless as the dust of
the earth.

The Search for Hametz is the ceremonial culmination of several weeks of transforming the house into a sanctified setting for Pesach. The physical efforts help create a psychological readiness for the Seder.

“Hametz” refers to grain products that may have leavened, fermented and risen like yeast.

Jews usually clean all the rooms where food might have been eaten or stored. Many collect hametz products (like spaghetti or whiskey) in a sealed cabinet, mark it as hametz, and sell its contents to a non-Jew for the duration of the holiday. Generally a local rabbi will serve as an agent for the ritual “sale.”

After dark, on the night before the Seder, conduct a search for hametz into all the corners of the house. The search is conducted in the dark, with a candle or a flashlight for spotting the hametz, and a feather or a spoon for collecting it. All hametz found is burned the next morning.

When Seder night falls on Saturday evening, the search is conducted on Thursday night and the bonfire on Friday morning. Hallah is put aside in a special “hametz zone” in the house to be eaten by approximately 10 a.m. on Shabbat morning. The leftovers may be removed by means of a flush of the toilet.



Six bags of Hametz have been hidden in this illustration.
Good luck ferreting them out!

HIDE AND GO SEEK

A medieval custom perfectly suited to a children's game involves hiding ten pieces of bread throughout the house before the candlelight search for hametz begins. Originally this was done to guarantee that even after the scrupulous cleaning, the ritual search on the last night before Seder would still uncover some hametz. Today it provides an occasion for a game in which ten pieces of bread secured in closed plastic bags are carefully concealed. To enhance the fun for the children, a word, clue or question may be attached to each bag (the words can form a secret message or a Pesach song; the clues hint at the next hiding place; the ten questions constitute a quiz about basic Pesach facts).

Remember that besides finding the pre-hidden bags of hametz, one must genuinely check the typical "hang-outs" of forgotten hametz (like the car's glove compartment, coat pockets, etc.).

INSPECTION AND INTROSPECTION

"The human soul is the light, the candle of Adonai, for searching the hidden, innermost self" (Proverbs 20:27).

The Search for Hametz is not simply a search for leavened bread, but rather an opportunity for us to examine ourselves. On the night before Pesach, when each of us is at home within our own walls, where there is no one else around, and we are not troubled by daily affairs, it is then that we can sit alone and confront all of our outstanding obligations to

God, saying to our soul:

"Let us awaken and arise... let us examine our ways and turn away from all our sins. Let us cleanse and purify ourselves and remove our evil ways from God's sight. Let us become allies, my soul, and stand guard together. We will abjure slumber from our eyes day and night. We will not rest, rather we will be as gatekeepers lest we return to our evil ways. May God be with us as God was with our mothers and fathers..."

Rabbi **Moshe Alsheikh**, Safed Kabbalist, 16th C.

Burning the Hametz **בְּעוֹר חֶמֶץ**

THE MORNING BEFORE THE SEDER

כָּל חֶמֶץ וְחֵמִיעָא דְאַנָּא בְּרִשׁוֹתַי,
דְּחִזִּיתָהּ וְדִלָּא חִזִּיתָהּ,
דְּחִמַּתָּהּ וְדִלָּא חִמַּתָּהּ,
דְּבִעַרְתָּהּ וְדִלָּא בִעַרְתָּהּ,
לְבָטִיל וּלְהוּי הַפְּקָד בְּעַפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

All hametz in my possession,
whether I have seen it or not and
whether I have removed it or not,
shall be nullified and ownerless as
the dust of the earth.

Meditation

After nullifying the physical hametz, the Sephardic custom is to recite this prayer for purification from spiritual hametz and the power of the evil *Yetser* [selfish inclination]:

May it be your will, Adonai our God and God of our ancestors, that just as we burned the hametz out of our homes today, so You will help us to burn out the evil inclination from our hearts. Please God, remove from our hearts the bad part of our ego, and purify us lovingly, empowering the good sides of our ego. Let our souls shine and be empowered with your light, and be connected to You in the highest holiness, which shall be with us always.

Rabbi **Yosef Hayim**, the "Ben Ish Hai", Baghdad, 19th C.

The Burning of the Hametz marks the symbolic division between hametz and matza, winter and spring, the evil inclination and the desire for purity.

Before approximately 10 a.m. on the day of the Seder, we stop eating hametz and gather the leftovers for a ritual bonfire outside.

After the hametz has been burned (or rendered inedible in some other way), repeat the Aramaic formula disowning any undiscovered hametz on the premises. From now on no hametz may be eaten.

קְעֵרַת הַסֵּדֶר

PREPARING THE SEDER PLATE

OPTIONAL ADD-ONS FOR YOUR SEDER PLATE

The Seder plate has from time to time included some unusual additions:

One Brick: Jewish Union soldiers in the Civil War, fighting a war against slavery themselves, prepared their Seder in the wilderness of West Virginia. Lacking haroset, symbolizing mortar, they literally placed a brick on the Seder Plate.

Some Brick: The Jews in Gibraltar prepare their haroset using granules shaved off a real brick! One medieval rabbi condemned this custom as the height of idiocy.

Prepare haroset recipes from around the globe and label them. Ask your guests to taste each one and identify the ingredients (see Korekh, pg. 101).

Vegetarians often replace the roasted bone with something else that represents God's outstretched arm. Try a sugar cane.

Sweets: Add candies to the Seder Plate for the children, to arouse their curiosity.

Three Matzot

covered in a cloth, under or next to the Seder Plate. This is the food of poor slaves, but also the food of our liberation from Egypt. The three matzot symbolize the entire Jewish community with its three groups: Cohen, Levi and Israel.

Beitza

roasted, hardboiled egg symbolizing the second sacrifice offered on holidays (often dipped in salt water)

Zeroa

any bone, roasted symbolizing the sacrificial Pesach lamb and God's outstretched arm which liberated us from Egypt (not to be eaten)

Maror

bitter herbs symbolizing the bitterness of slavery (often romaine lettuce)

Karpas

greens for dipping in salt water or any tangy sauce (often celery, parsley or potato)

Haroset

sweet or tangy condiment symbolizing the mortar of slavery (often including apples, wine and cinnamon)

Hazeret

more bitter herbs (often horseradish, *khrein*)

The Seder Plate combines the various symbols of tonight's story and ritual.

Some families make one central Seder Plate, while others make many, ensuring that every participant can see the symbols as tonight's story unfolds.

Candle Lighting הַדְּלָקַת נֵרוֹת

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְּלִיק נֵר שֶׁל
(שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל) יוֹם טוֹב.**

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה.**

Ba-rukh ata Adonai / Elo-hei-nu me-lekh ha-olam /
asher kee-d'sha-nu b'meetz-vo-tav / v'tzee-va-nu l'ha-d'leek ner shel / [Shabbat v'shel] Yom Tov.

Ba-rukh ata Adonai / Elo-hei-nu me-lekh ha-olam /
she-he-khee-ya-nu / v'kee-ma-nu / v'hee-gee-anu / la-z'man ha-ze.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who sanctified us by commanding us to light the [Shabbat and] **holiday** candles.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has kept us alive and brought us to **this happy moment** in our lives.

Light at least two candles before the Seder. Some families light one candle for each family member, while others prepare two candles for each woman over bat mitzvah age. Many add the blessing *Shehekiyanu* when lighting the candles, while others recite it later with Kiddush. A silent personal prayer is often said after the blessing. See contemporary prayer on page 7.

Blessing our Children בְּרַכַּת הַיְלָדִים

יִשְׁמַךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּאַפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה.

יִשְׁמַךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּסָרָה רַבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.

יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחַנְךָ.

יִשָּׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.

For male children:

May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe.
(Genesis 48:20 from Jacob's blessing for his grandchildren)

For female children:

May God make you like Sarah and Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.

(See Ruth 4:11, the women's blessing for Ruth, a Jew by choice)

For all:

May God bless you and keep you.

May God's face shine upon you and favor you.

May God's face turn to you and grant you Shalom.
(Numbers 6:24-26, the priestly benediction)

The blessing of the children is recited. Parents and grandparents may place their hands on the head of each child (of whatever age) and bless them in their own words and/or using the priests' benediction of peace.

A WOMAN'S PRAYER TO REPAIR THE WORLD

O GOD, creator of Heaven and Earth, creator of humankind and of all living things, grant me the power to feel as others feel, the power to listen and to hear, to behold and truly see, to touch and be touched.

KEEP fresh within me the memory of my own suffering and the suffering of *Clal Yisrael* (the whole community), not in order to stimulate eternal paranoia, but rather that I may better understand the suffering of strangers.

MAY that understanding lead me to do everything in my power to alleviate and to prevent such suffering. Guide me in the ways of *Tikkun Olam*, of mending the world. Enable me to be like Yourself – to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, tend the sick, and comfort the bereaved.

AS I delight in a loving marriage of true minds, may I never forget the thousands of women battered and beaten by their spouses.

AS I rejoice in the bliss of my children and grandchildren, may I never forget the pleading eyes and swollen bellies of starving infants deprived of physical and emotional nourishment.

MAY there always be a place at my table for those who are homeless or hungry.

MAY my woman's capacities for concern, compassion, and caring never be dulled by complacency or personal contentment.

MAY my feelings always lead me to act.

Alice Shalvi, professor of Shakespeare, founder of the Israeli women's lobby and of a progressive religious girls' school in Jerusalem.

Everyone must know that within
them burns a candle
and no one's candle is identical
with the candle of another.
It is our obligation to work hard to
reveal the light of our candle,
and make of it a great torch to
enlighten the whole world.

Rabbi **Abraham Isaac HaCohen Kook**

A SOUL ON THE RISE

The Seer of Lublin interpreted the priestly blessing, *Veyi-shmer-ekha*, as derived from the Hebrew root *shemarim*, yeast:

"May God create yeast in your soul, causing you to ferment and mature, to rise and elevate, to your highest possibilities, to reach your highest self."



Karl Gabor, Swedish *A Different Night Haggadah*

Signposts for the Seder סימני הסדר

קִדֵּשׁ
 וְרַחֵם
 כַּרְפָּס
 יַחַץ
 מַגִּיד
 רַחֲצָה
 מוֹצֵיא
 מַצָּה
 מַרְוֵר
 כּוֹרֵךְ
 שְׁלַחן עוֹרֵךְ
 צָפוֹן
 בָּרֵךְ
 הַלֵּל
 נִרְצָה

All sing:

<i>Kadesh</i>	First Cup and Kiddush
<i>Urkhatz</i>	First handwashing
<i>Karpas</i>	First dipping: vegetables and dips
<i>Yakhatz</i>	Breaking the middle matza
<i>Maggid</i>	Exodus Storytelling
<i>Rakhtza</i>	Second handwashing
<i>Motzi</i>	First blessing over the matza
<i>Matza</i>	Second blessing over the matza
<i>Maror</i>	Second dipping: maror in haroset
<i>Korekh</i>	Hillel sandwich
<i>Shulkhan Orekh</i>	Festive meal
<i>Tzafun</i>	Afikoman (dessert)
<i>Barekh</i>	Birkat HaMazon (blessing after eating) and Third Cup
<i>Hallel</i>	Psalms of Praise and Fourth Cup
<i>Nirtza</i>	Concluding poem, songs and "Next Year in Jerusalem"

We review briefly the order of the Seder by singing the medieval poem by Rabbenu Shmuel of Falaise (France) that summarizes the Signposts of the Seder ("Kadesh Urkhatz").

Now is a good time to preview this year's Seder's "coming attractions," announce the menu, thank those who prepared, and introduce the participants. Invite people to add their own questions, comments and songs.



FROM SACRIFICE TO SYMPOSIUM

The term "Seder Pesach" once meant the Order of the Passover Sacrifice in the Temple. But after the Temple's destruction in 70 CE, the Rabbis remodeled the Seder after the Greco-Roman symposium (*sym* – together, *posium* – drinking wine). At these Hellenistic banquets, guests would recline on divans while servants poured them wine, washed their hands and served appetizers and dips before the meal. The guests would then take part in a philosophical debate, after which the meal was served. An ancient how-to manual for conducting such a symposium says:

"A symposium is a communion of serious and mirthful entertainment, discourse and actions. It leads to deeper insight into those points that were debated at table, for the remembrance of those pleasures which arise from meat and drink is short-lived, but the subjects of philosophical queries and discussions remain always fresh after they have been imparted." (Plutarch, *Quaestiones*, Greece, 2nd C)

Thus the Rabbis prescribed such a banquet for Passover: much wine (four cups); appetizers (*karpas*); reclining on pillows; having our hands ceremonially washed by others; a royal feast; and most importantly – a philosophical discussion on the story of the Exodus and the issues of freedom versus slavery. The Rabbis wanted Pesach to be an experience of freedom and affluence – thus they chose to borrow the dining habits of their aristocratic contemporaries.

However, there is a fundamental difference: The Greco-Roman feast was for the rich only, it exploited slaves, it restricted asking questions and exchanging opinions to the ruling class, men only. But at the Pesach Seder all people, including the spouses and the youngest children, are invited to eat like royalty, to ask questions and to express opinions. Alongside the wine of the rich, there is the bread of poverty. The needy must be invited to share our meal. Stylish banquets may easily turn corrupt, but the Seder encourages us to savor our liberty, without exploiting or excluding others.

4 CUPS, 4 PROMISES AND 4 MOTHERS

The Talmud connects the Four Cups of wine drunk at the Seder to God's **Four Promises** to Israel: "Tell the children of Israel: I am Adonai! I will **take** them out... I will **rescue** them... I will **redeem** them... and I will **marry** them taking them as my people and I will be their God" (Exodus 6:6-7, Jerusalem Talmud Pesachim 10:1).

However, two 16th C. mystic rabbis identify the Four Cups with the **Four Matriarchs** of Israel. The Maharal of Prague (famous for the legend of Golem) and Rav Isaiah Horowitz of Tsfat explain:

- (1) The Cup of Kiddush stands for **Sarah** who was the mother of a community of converts, believers by choice.
- (2) The Cup of Maggid is for **Rebecca** who knew how to mother both Esav and Jacob, two opposed natures.
- (3) The Cup of the Blessing after Eating represents **Rachel** whose son Joseph provided the whole family of Jacob with bread in a time of great famine.
- (4) The Cup of Hallel (Praise) is for **Leah** the first woman to praise God (Genesis 29:35).

בשבת:

וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי. וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל צָבָאָם.
וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְכַל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה.
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אוֹתוֹ
כִּי בּו שְׁבֹת מְכַל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל עַם וְרוֹמַמְנוּ מִכָּל לְשׁוֹן וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצּוֹתָיו.

וַתִּתֵּן לָנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה (שְׁבֻתוֹת לְמִנְחָה ו) מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה,

חַגִּים וְזִמְנִים לְשִׂשׁוֹן, אֶת יוֹם (הַשְּׁבֻת הַזֶּה וְאֵת יוֹם) **חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה,**

זְמַן חֲרוּתֵנוּ (בְּאַהֲבָה), מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ, זְכוֹר לִיְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם.

כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֻרָת וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁת מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, (וּשְׁבֻת) וּמוֹעֲדֵי קֹדֶשׁךָ

(בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרִצּוֹן). בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, מִקְדָּשׁ (הַשְּׁבֻת ו) יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים.

הבדלה:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמְּבָדִיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחָל, בֵּין אוֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין
יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשִׁשָּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֵׂה. בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ שְׁבֻת לְקֹדֶשׁת יוֹם
טוֹב הַבְּדִלָת, וְאֵת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִשִּׁשָּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֵׂה קֹדֶשׁת. הַבְּדִלָת וְקֹדֶשׁת אֶת
עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקֹדֶשְׁתָּךְ, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי הַמְּבָדִיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְקֹדֶשׁ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

שֶׁהַחַיִּנו וְקִיַּמְנו וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה.

The Kiddush sanctifies not the wine, but the holiday. On Pesach we dedicate ourselves to – “Remember the Day of your Exodus from Egypt” (Exodus 13:3).

Don't pour for yourself is the tradition tonight. At our banquet of liberation, let others fill your glass and you offer to pour for them.

When Seder falls on Friday night, we add the texts in shaded font and in parentheses in the body of the Kiddush to commemorate the Creation of the World as well.

Stand to recite the Kiddush, then recline to the left to drink the wine.

When Passover night falls on Saturday night we add a special Havdalah.

On Shabbat:

There was evening and there was morning, and the sixth day was over.
The sky and the earth and all their contents were completed.
On the seventh day God completed all the work. God ceased on Shabbat
from all activity. God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy,
because on that day God ceased from all the work of creation. (Genesis 2:1-3)

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe,
who creates the **fruit of the vine**.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe,
who has chosen us from among the nations and the languages,
sanctifying us by your mitzvot.

Lovingly, You have given us [Shabbat for rest and] **festivals for
happiness, including today** - [the Shabbat and] **the Holiday of
the Matzot**, the season of our liberation, a sacred day to gather
together and to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt.

For You have chosen us and sanctified us among the nations.

You have granted us [lovingly the Shabbat and] **joyfully the holidays**.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who sanctifies [the Shabbat and] **the people
of Israel and the festivals**.

Havdalah: When Seder falls on Saturday night:

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the lights of fire.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who differentiates between the holy and the secular,
between light and darkness, between Israel and the other nations, between the seventh day and the six days
of creation, between the sanctity of Shabbat and the sanctity of Yom Tov (the festivals).

You sanctified the people of Israel with your holiness.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who differentiates between the holiness of Shabbat and the holiness of Yom Tov.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe,
who has kept us alive and brought us to **this happy moment in our lives**.



Ba-rukhh ata Adonai /
/ Elo-hei-nu me-lekh ha-olam /
/ bo-rei pree ha-gafen.

Barukh ata Adonai / Eloheinu Melekh
ha-olam / asher ba-khar-banu mi-kol am
/ v'rom'manu mi-kol lashon / v'ki-d'shanu
b'mitz-votav / va-ti-tein lanu Adonai
Eloheinu b'ahava / (Shabbatot li-m'nu-kha
oo) / moadim l'simkha, khagim uzmanim
l'sason, et yom (HaShabbat hazeh v'et yom)
/ Hag HaMatzot hazeh / z'man kheiru-teinu
/ (b'ahava) mikra kodesh
/ zekher li-tzi-at Mitzraim.
Ki vanu vakhar-ta / v'otanu ki-dashta mi-kol
ha-amim / (v'Shabbat) u-moadei kodshekha
/ (b'ahava uv'ratzon) / b'simkha uv'sason
hin-khal-tanu.
Barukh ata Adonai / mika-desh (HaShabbat
v') haz'ma-nim.

Ba-rukhh ata Adonai / Elo-hei-nu me-lekh ha-olam /
/ she-he-khee-ya-nu / v'kee-ma-nu / v'hee-gee-anu / laz-man ha-ze.

Urkhatz וְרַחַץ

THE FIRST HANDWASHING



The **ritual handwashing** prepares us for eating finger foods, Karpas, the hors d'oeuvres of the Pesach banquet. Following the priestly tradition of washing hands before eating bread and even vegetables, the ritual handwashing is performed now in order to sanctify the eating of the Karpas. However, no blessing is said for this handwashing.

Ask for two volunteers:

one to carry a pitcher of water and to pour water over each guest's hands, and one to carry a basin and a towel. Having our hands washed by someone else is part of the Seder night experience of liberty and nobility.

Karpas כַּרְפַּס

THE FIRST DIPPING: SPRING GREENS

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God,
Ruler of the Universe,
who creates the fruit of the earth.

Ba-rukh ata Adonai / Elo-hei-nu me-lekh ha-olam / bo-rei pree ha-ada-ma.

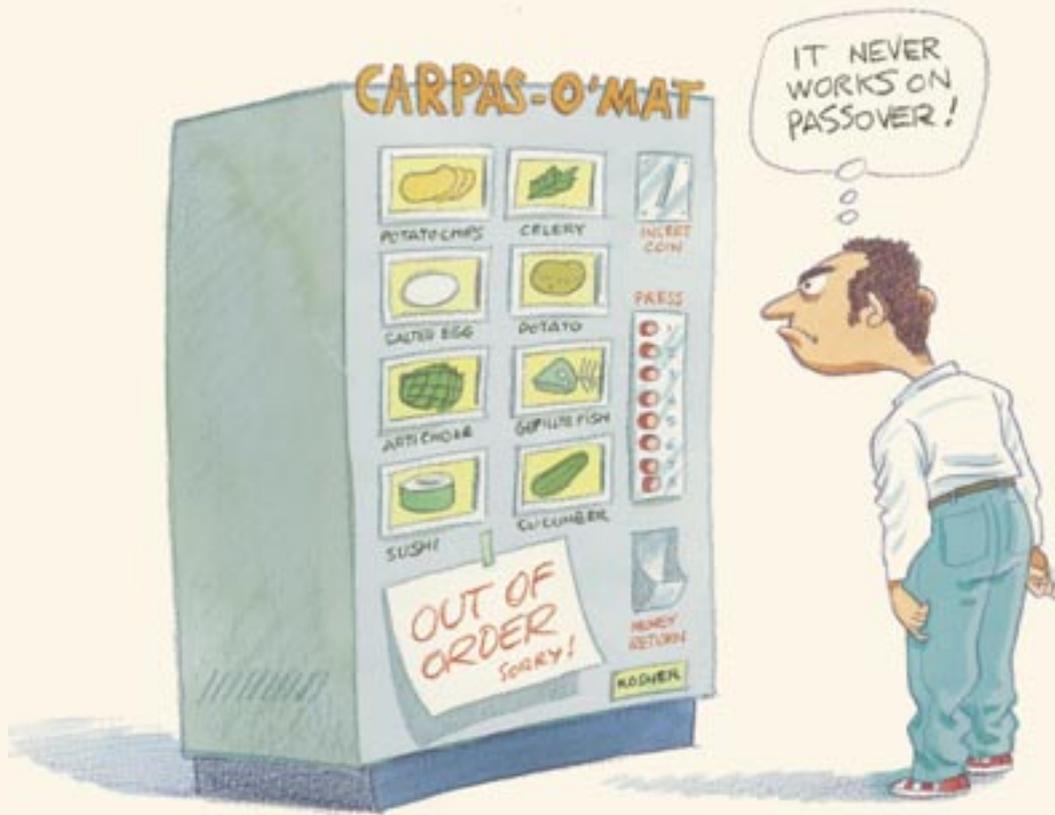


Distribute Karpas (a vegetable, often spring greens), dip in salt water (or a tangy sauce), and recite the blessing.

Originating from the Greek "karpos," meaning "fruit of the soil," this tradition borrows from the Greco-Roman symposium which always began with washing and dipping "karpos" accompanied by discussion.

While some medieval rabbis strictly forbid eating more than an olive's size of vegetable for Karpas, you may wish to revive the ancient custom of eating extensive appetizers – each with its own dip.

Continue dipping and tasting various fresh vegetables and other appetizers during the Seder until sufficiently full to persevere during the extensive storytelling (Maggid), but not so full as to ruin one's appetite for the matza eaten later.



A SEDER FOR DREAMERS WITH NOTHING TO DIP

In 1974, at the age of 26, I participated in my first Seder with a group of Jewish activists in the Soviet Union. Though we knew little about that night's rituals, identifying with the seminal story of freedom's triumph was not particularly difficult for us – especially with KGB agents waiting in a car downstairs.

[The mitzvah to publicly sacrifice the paschal lamb which was considered a god by Egyptians] challenged each Jew to decide whether to smear the blood of the false Egyptian god on his doorpost. By publicly

declaring our desire to emigrate to Israel, each of us refuseniks had chosen to challenge the Soviet god and stand up against tyranny. The same yearning for freedom that once drove our people felt as if it was literally pulsing through our veins.

Some years later, I led my own Seder for the first time. In truth, my memory of the text of the Haggadah was by then rather sketchy, and the Seder itself had none of the traditional trappings. There was [no celery to dip in salt water] and no unleavened bread to eat, no

bitter herbs to taste, no Haggadah to read and I was the only Jew present. In fact, I was the only person in the room. But my outside “guests” didn’t seem to mind. I retold the story of Pesach through the small window of my punishment cell to two fellow inmates and they too could immediately identify with its universal message.

The reason was simple. This isolated group of dissidents in the Soviet Union had already experienced the power of freedom to transform an individual and understood its power to transform a society. They needed no reminders. The idea that a nation of slaves could win its freedom and defeat the most powerful empire in the world was to us not an ancient legend, but an eternal truth...

Such thinking was extremely rare outside the Gulag. Western policymakers had largely forgotten the power of freedom. To them, sentiments about the triumph of liberty may have been inspiring but they were hardly practical. Like a Pesach tale that was nice to read but which no “serious” person would believe, most paid homage to the values of a free society but dismissed as hopelessly naive the notion of an imploding evil empire... But history would show that the so-called “realists” were completely divorced from reality. Their failure to appreciate the awesome power of freedom blinded them to the inevitable collapse of the Soviet superpower. They were the ones exposed as hopelessly out of touch, and the so-called dreamers proved astute pragmatists.

Nathan Sharansky, Soviet refusenik, prisoner of Siberia, and former Israeli Cabinet Minister

Yakhatz יַחַץ

BREAKING THE MATZA

ENTERING THE BROKEN WORLD

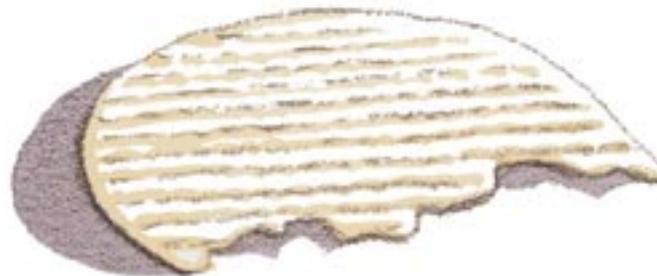
The Pesach story begins in a broken world, amidst slavery and oppression. The sound of the breaking of the matza sends us into that fractured existence, only to become whole again when we find the broken half, the afikoman, at the end of the Seder. This brokenness is not just a physical or political situation.

In Hebrew, Egypt is called *Mitzrayim*, reminding us of the word *tzar*, narrow. Thus, in Hassidic thought, *Mitzrayim* symbolizes the inner straits that trap our souls. Yet even here we can find a unique value, as the Hassidic saying teaches us: "There is nothing more whole – than a broken heart."

Or as Leonard Cohen wrote:

"There's a crack in everything /
That's where the light comes in."

Some families pass out a whole matza to every Seder participant, inviting them to take a moment to ponder this entrance into a broken world, before they each break the matza themselves.



Break the middle matza, place the larger portion, the afikoman, in a napkin to be hidden.

The afikoman game begins now! For instructions and variations of the game, see page 105.

Of the three **matzas**, the top matza is for the usual blessing over bread (*ha-motzi lekhem*).

The bottom matza is for the Hillel sandwich (*korekhi*) made with matza, maror, and haroset.

The middle matza has a dual purpose: The smaller portion will be eaten with the top matza when we begin the meal. The bigger portion will become the afikoman, to be eaten as the last taste of the Seder.

WHAT IF TOMORROW THERE IS NO BREAD?

Every year, on Seder night, when I break the matza in half and hide the afikoman, I am overcome with emotion as I recall my first day in Israel.

I arrived in Kibbutz Kedma together with other children, all of us new immigrants who had arrived in Israel without our parents after World War II. We were hungry, penniless and exhausted from our wandering and constant hunger.

On the table in the dining room, there were all kinds of delicious foods. There were plenty of vegetables, cheeses and bread, and we could take as much as we wanted. I couldn't believe my eyes. I couldn't believe that at the next meal, we would also have as much bread to eat as we wanted.

There were many days in Europe when I could think of nothing else except bread – of which there was never enough. There were many nights when I went to bed hungry. I would remain awake for hours, with my stomach growling from hunger, dreaming of bread. But now in Israel there was so much food.

What did I do in those first days in the kibbutz, when we sat down at the table, loaded down with so many good foods? I was filled with fear that maybe there wouldn't be any bread the next day. So I would break each slice of bread I received in half; I would eat half, and the other half I would hide in my pocket. I could not forget the days in which I was never sure if there would be bread tomorrow.

Retold by **Bina Talitman**, *Reliving Exodus*

HA(L)VES AND HAVE NOTS

Locate yourself in the Statistics on the Distribution of Wealth (2000):

If we could reduce the world's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all existing human ratios remaining the same, the demographics would look something like this:

80 live in substandard housing /
24 don't have any electricity /
50 malnourished and 1 dying of
starvation and 1 with HIV / 1 with
a college education and 7 with
Internet access / 5 control 32%
of the entire world's wealth, all
are US citizens /

If you have never experienced war, imprisonment, torture or famine
You are probably happier than 500 million people in this world.

If you are able to go to church, mosque or synagogue without fear of harassment – you are happier than 3 billion people in this world.

If there is food in your refrigerator, if you have shoes, a bed and a roof above your head, you are better off than 75% of people in this world.

If you read this text, you do not belong to those 2 billion people who cannot read.

This is your World! And you are able to make changes! Hasten to do good works!

BEING POOR

Being Poor is ...

having your heat shut off in the winter because your parents can't pay the bill

Being Poor is ...

having two blankets for seven people in the family

Being Poor is ...

wishing you could eat in a restaurant

Being Poor is ...

wearing shoes that someone else threw out

Being Poor is ...

lying when someone asks you what your father does for a living

Being Poor is ...

pretending that you don't care that you got no gift for your birthday

Being Poor is ...

waiting all day in a clinic to see a doctor you don't know

Being Poor is ...

a welfare worker asking your mother too many questions and making her cry

Being Poor is ...

not being afraid of the dentist because you've never seen one

Being Poor is ...

always feeling a little mad because you never have what you need

Based on **Janet Rosenberg**, *Being Poor is...*

Go around the table, adding your own continuation to the sentence "BEING POOR IS..."

Maggid מגיד

TELLING THE STORY

בְּבִהָלוֹ יֵצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם.

In haste we left Egypt!

(based on Deuteronomy 16:3)

Many families act out the Exodus itself, dressing their children, or a dramatically inclined adult, in travelers clothing, with Matza-rations on their shoulder or in a backpack. The "travelers" then go outside, knock at the door, enter and tell their story. Here is a semi-traditional script that may be used:

Children: Knock, knock!
Adults: Where are you coming from?
Children: From the land of Egypt, where we were slaves.
Adults: Where are you going now?
Children: To Jerusalem.
Adults: What is on your shoulder?
Children: That is the dough we brought from Egypt when we rushed out. We had no time to let it rise into bread.
Adults: Tell us about the harsh labor you did in Egypt!
Children: Yes we will, and about the plagues by which God rescued us...

The heart of the Seder is *Maggid* from the term *Haggadah* meaning to tell a story. We retell the Exodus in words but also in drama.

Some families wrap a matza in a napkin, place it on their shoulders, and recite: "The people took their dough before it was leavened, the kneading bowls wrapped in their cloaks upon their shoulders" (Exodus 12:34).

Consider the importance of family memories and storytelling.



Prague Haggadah, 1526

IN HASTE WE LEFT COMMUNIST RUSSIA

The story of my liberation is the story of my teeth and the ballet "Swan Lake."

In August 1991 I prepared to make aliyah from the Soviet Union: we sold the apartment, I left my job, I was issued a visa for Israel, and I had bought tickets for November. And then, suddenly... I was about to leave the house one morning for a final root canal appointment at the dentist. But when I turned on the television and saw that all the channels were broadcasting the same performance of "Swan Lake," I realized right away that dramatic political events must be happening. The Soviet Union always broadcast "Swan Lake" to cover up when important things were happening. It quickly became clear that a coup was taking place, and that the Communist regime was about to end.

But I was worried – all the borders would probably be closed, and I was afraid I'd be stuck in the Soviet Union. I went to the Jewish Agency representatives and they told me that they had chartered a second plane to Israel that very day! I called home and said, "We're leaving for the airport in two hours, start packing!" We managed to take documents and clothing, but I was forced to leave most of my books behind.

The root canal I should have finished that day left me with a gaping hole in my tooth that caused me great pain, but there wasn't time... I knew what I didn't finish in the crumbling Soviet Union, I would take care of in my own home, in the State of Israel.

Yigal Asnis, Alei Tzameret Haggadah



A TURTLE'S MEMORY

"Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations." (Deuteronomy 32:7)

Every year, hundreds of giant green sea turtles swim hundreds of miles from their natural habitat on the Brazilian coast to tiny Ascension Island in the Atlantic Ocean in order to mate.

For years, researcher and pioneer conservation biologist Archie Carr tried to understand how the turtles found their way to the island from so great a distance, when even airplanes had trouble locating it. Carr's conclusions were fascinating: he claimed that the turtles navigate using **genetic memory**. Millions of years ago, when a strip of land bisected the Atlantic, the journey from Brazil to the closest stretch of the eastern shore was only a short swim.

That land was submerged millions of years ago. But the turtles, driven by their genetic memory, still search and find the last remaining remnant of the world that disappeared into the ocean - Ascension Island. **Every year they return to perpetuate the species and the memory.**

MARGE PIERCY

MAGGID

The courage to let go of the door, the handle.
The courage to shed the familiar walls whose very stains and leaks are comfortable as the little moles of the upper arm; stains that recall a feast, a child's naughtiness, a loud battering storm that slapped the roof hard, pouring through.

The courage to abandon the graves dug into the hill, the small bones of children and the brittle bones of the old whose marrow hunger had stolen; the courage to desert the tree planted and only begun to bear; the riverside where promises were shaped; the street where their empty pots were broken.

The courage to leave the place whose language you learned as early as your own, whose customs however dangerous or demeaning, bind you like a halter you have learned to pull inside, to move your load; the land fertile with the blood spilled on it; the roads mapped and annotated for survival.

The courage to walk out of the pain that is known into the pain that cannot be imagined, mapless, walking into the wilderness, going

barefoot with a canteen into the desert; stuffed in the stinking hold of a rotting ship sailing off the map into dragons' mouths,

Cathay, India, Siberia, goldeneh medina, leaving bodies by the way like abandoned treasure. So they walked out of Egypt. So they bribed their way out of Russia under loads of straw; so they steamed out of the bloody smoking charnelhouse of Europe on overloaded freighters forbidden all ports -

out of pain into death or freedom or a different painful dignity, into squalor and politics.

We Jews are all born of wanderers, with shoes under our pillows and a memory of blood that is ours raining down. We honor only those Jews who changed tonight, those who chose the desert over bondage,

who walked into the strange and became strangers and gave birth to children who could look down on them standing on their shoulders for having been slaves. We honor those who let go of everything but freedom, who ran, who revolted, who fought, who became other by saving themselves.

REFUGEES GIVE REFUGE: A RHODE ISLAND MITZVAH

When we retell the story of our flight from Egypt, we come to appreciate all those who have been refugees and fugitives. The oldest standing synagogue in North America was built in 1763 in Newport, Rhode Island, by Spanish-Portuguese immigrants, descendants of persecuted Marrano Jews. They had come to America so they could, for the first time in generations, openly practice their Judaism in their new home. In the center of the synagogue, under the Bima, they built a special hiding place, as a lesson learned from their many years of persecution and their undercover Jewish practice. For a 100 years the congregants retold their story and passed on [the secret of the underground shelter](#).

Thankfully, Jews have never had to use this hideout. But there were other people who came to the synagogue in search of a hiding place

on their way to freedom from oppression: In the years preceding the Civil War and the emancipation of slaves in the United States (1863), many slaves were smuggled from the South to the North, on their way to safety in Canada. The Jewish community put their synagogue and its underground hiding place at the disposal of the refugee slaves, fugitives from injustice, on their way to freedom. In this way they gave a renewed interpretation to the *mitzvah*:

"If a slave has taken refuge with you from his persecutors, do not hand the slave over to the master. Let the fugitive slave live among you wherever he likes and in whatever town he chooses. Do not oppress the slave." (Deuteronomy 23:15-16)

NO FUTURE WITHOUT A PAST

"A self-made man is as likely as a self-laid egg."

Mark Twain

The parent is a story-teller who narrates a world the children never knew. Parents transmit a knowledge of reality outside the child's experience. The father and mother must provide frames of reference rooted in the memories and the history of the covenantal community of Israel.

A primary source for evil according to Jewish tradition is the loss of memory. Those who do not build upon their memory and who are frightened and ashamed of their past may manifest hostility towards others because their sense of worth and dignity is derived only by

manipulation and control of others.

The poor people who prevail through difficult struggles to attain wealth, and then block out the memory of their past, become harsh taskmasters. "Self-made men" can be sensitive to others only when they are unashamed to talk about their former destitution. If they cannot bear the thought of their former poverty, they will act with cruelty to those who remind them of their former degradation.

In recalling Egypt, the Jews are exhorted to remember that they were once slaves. Rather than deny it, they are to incorporate that slavery into their consciousness. Thus, "love the stranger because you too were outcasts in

Egypt." Have regard for the poor because you too were once servants; care for the oppressed because you too were persecuted. **Be cautious with power because you have suffered the perversions of another's might.**

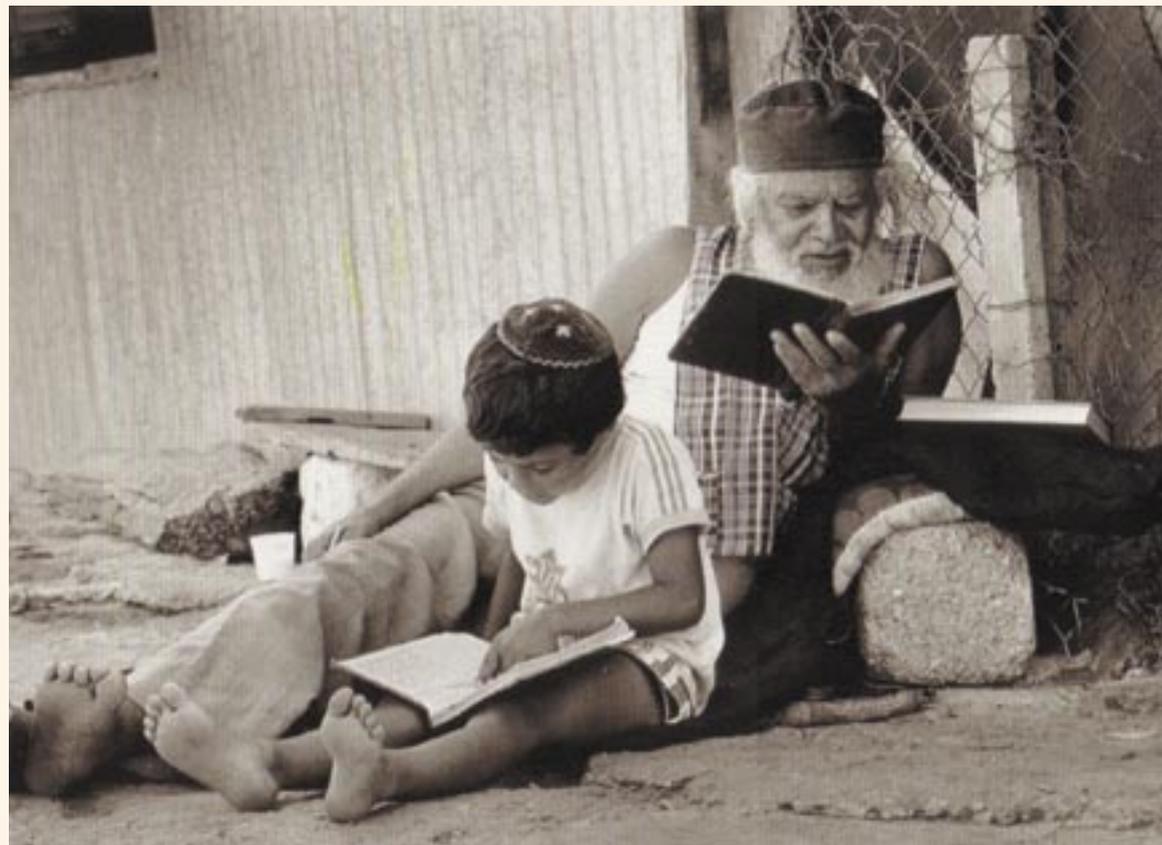
The role of parents is to develop in the identity of the child a sense of history, a temporal consciousness, an empathy for a whole world of experience that was not theirs. Whether these memories are relevant and meaningful, and how the child will live by them, are different issues. The mother's and father's task is not to decide how the children will use their memories. Their obligation is to see to it that the child does not enter into the future without a past.

Rabbi **David Hartman**, Jerusalem philosopher

YOU CANNOT NAVIGATE WITHOUT A POINT OF ORIGIN

I don't think you can be fully a member of the Jewish people and, creatively, a member of humanity, without knowing who you yourself are. **The only way you achieve a deep sense of self is to know your own beginnings.** That's why Torah is important to the Jews. Torah is a Jew's sense of self, the beginning of it, the foundation stones of it. Then you can pick and choose, quarrel with it, discard this, accept that; but at least know where the shoreline is before you begin to row away from it! If you are rowing and there is no shoreline at all, then you're navigating blind, and to navigate blind is to live in dread.

Rabbi **Chaim Potok**, American novelist and scholar



Ha Lakhma **הָא לַחְמָא**

THE STORY OF THE MATZA

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיא

דִּי אָכְלוּ אַבְהֹתָנָא

בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.

כָּל דְּכָפִין יִיתִי וְיֹכֵל,

כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ יִיתִי וְיִפְסַח.

הַשָּׁתָּא הָכָּא,

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה

בְּאַרְעָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל.

הַשָּׁתָּא עַבְדֵּי,

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוֹרֵינָן.

Ha la-kh-ma an-ya / Dee-akha-lu av-ha-ta-na / b'ar-ah d'meetz-ra-yeem /
Kol deekh-feen / yei-tei v' yei-khol / Kol dee-tzreekh, yei-tei v' yee-fsakh /
Ha-sha-ta ha-kha / I'sha-na ha-ba-ah / be-ar-ah d'Yis-rael /
Ha-sha-ta av-dei / I'sha-na ha-ba-ah / b'nei kho-reen.

This is the bread
of poverty and persecution
that our ancestors ate
in the land of Egypt.

Let all who are hungry,
come and eat.

Let all who are in need,
come and share the Pesach meal.

This year we are still here –
Next year
in the land of Israel.

This year we are still slaves –
Next year **free people**.

Ha Lakhma Anya is essentially the "Story of the Matza." Told in Aramaic, once the everyday language of Talmudic Jews, this story has three parts: a **memory**, an **action** and a **hope**. First we point out the Matza, the bread of poverty we ate in Egypt. Then, remembering our poverty in the past, we invite all needy persons to join our table tonight. Finally, we express the hope that while this year human beings are still enslaved in many ways, often lacking a home for themselves, next year we will all be free people, in our own personal and national home.

Remove the cloth covering the Matzot so that they are in plain view during the telling of the story, the Maggid. **Raise** the three Matzot and point out the broken middle Matza (remaining after the Afikoman has been hidden). **Open** the door, symbolizing our hospitality towards those in need.



The Wall of Indifference by Noam Nadav

"Break your bread with the hungry ... Do not ignore your own flesh and blood" (Isaiah 58:7).

NEEDY BUT NOT POOR

Although they may initially seem redundant, the **two invitations** we issue in *HaLakhma Anya* – “*Let all who are hungry, kol dikhfin, enter and eat*” and “*Let all who are in need, kol ditzrikh, come and celebrate the Passover*” – in reality are not. *Kol ditzrikh* means those who are in need – but not in need of bread. Whoever is in need of bread, *dikhfin*, is hungry. *Kol ditzrikh* refers to one who is alone, who has a lot of Matza and wine but no home or family. There are indeed many ways to be included among the *kol ditzrikh*. The invitation to “all who are in need” is not *yeitei ve-yeikhol*, “to eat with us;” rather, it is to spend the Pesach with us, *yeitei ve-yifsakh*, “to celebrate with us.” It is an invitation

addressed to unfortunate and lonely people. They might be millionaires; it is completely irrelevant. Whoever is in need should come and celebrate.

Ha Lakhma Anya is the renewal of a pledge of solidarity among the Jewish people – solidarity between individual and individual, and between the individual and the Jewish community as a whole. It is a proclamation that we are one people, and that we are ready to help one other. **Pesach night is a time of sharing**; if the sense of solidarity, responsibility, unity, and readiness to share and to participate are not manifested and demonstrated, the whole Seder becomes meaningless.

Rabbi **Joseph B. Soloveitchik**, leading twentieth-century Talmudist and philosopher, was Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in New York.

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

If one gives to another all the good gifts of the world, but shows a sour face, in the eyes of the Torah, it is as if nothing had been given. However if one welcomes a person in need cheerfully and kindly, then the Torah regards it as if all the good gifts in the world had been given.

Avot D'Rabbi Natan, elaboration on Pirkei Avot, Israel, 5th Century

OPENING DOORS: TONIGHT AND THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

David of Levov, a unique and humble Hassidic master, once taught: “If people come to you for assistance and you tell them, ‘**God will surely help you**,’ then you are acting disloyally to God. For you should understand that God has sent **you** to help the needy, not to refer the poor back to God.”

Passover has always been a time in which Jews redoubled their efforts to help the needy in their communities: Inviting itinerant guests to the Seder, giving out “*Kimkha DePiskha*” – Pesach flour, or “*Ma’ot Khitim*” – money for buying wheat, organizing Seders in hospitals, old age homes or remote locations. All assistance to the needy – be it material, psychological or spiritual – are all ways in which we can open doors to others.

As we open the door, symbolically inviting others to partake in our meal, invite the participants to answer the question:

What acts of hospitality and what volunteer work have you witnessed or participated in this year? Is there a Tzedaka project you would like to do this coming year?