



RAMAH AT YOUR *SEDER* TABLE

TEACHINGS, ACTIVITIES, AND DISCUSSIONS
FROM OUR RAMAH FAMILY TO YOURS



2018/5778

Table of Contents

Contents

A Note from the Executive Director	2
<i>Haggadah</i> Options for your Family	3
The “Four” Questions	3
Four Children Wax Museum	5
Making the Seder Fun for Everyone	5
Get Comfy at your Seder!	6
Let My People Go!	7
How Does a Cat Eat a Dog?	10
The Seder: As You Like It	12
Six Word Memoirs	13
We Celebrate Together	13
Pesach and the Five Senses	14
Charosets From Around the World	14
Nikayon ha-Kikar.....	16

A Note from the Executive Director

Rabbi Joel Seltzer

What if, instead of Pesach being *Chag HaAviv*, the Holiday of Spring; it were *Chag HaKayitz*, the Holiday of Summer?

- It would require an **EPIC** amount of *Nikayon* (clean-up!); We would have to charge up the leaf-blower and blow decades of old *chametz* out from the cracks in the floorboard of *Chanutiah* (Canteen)
- We could easily collect hundreds of pounds of *Karpas* from the Ramah Day Camp community garden, and even a *Beitzah* (egg) for the *Seder* Table
- For hiding the *Afikomen*, we would create a camp-wide scavenger hunt – and, of course, we all know it would end up under that secret hiding spot in the middle of *Gazeebo Banim* (Yes, I know about it.)
- *Hallel* and *Nirtzah* would involve standing on the *safsalim* (benches) in the *Chadar Ochel* (dining hall), and screaming at the top of our lungs each verse of the Psalms or of *Chad Gadya*.
- But, as with every *Seder*, there is one step that is more important than all the others – *Maggid*.

And if Pesach were in the summertime we would sit and tell stories for hours: stories of personal liberation; stories of triumph; stories of morality; and stories that make us our best selves as Jews and as people.

So even though we can't have Pesach in the summertime – we are happy to bring the teachings of the summer to your *Seder* table.

Please enjoy this 5th edition of Ramah at your *Seder* Table; a *Seder* supplement featuring teachings from Ramah educators and supports throughout our community.

We hope you enjoy this edition and that it brings a healthy amount of summer sunshine to your springtime *Seder* table.

From our Ramah family to yours:

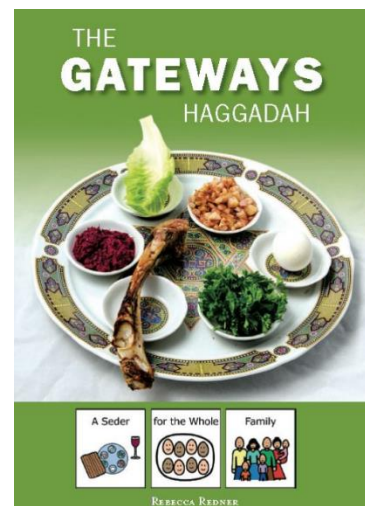
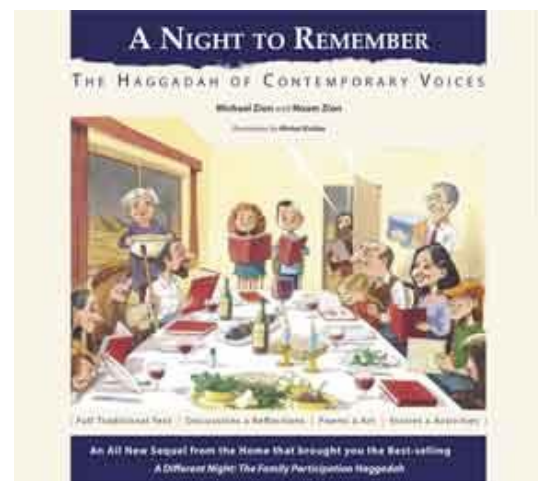
Chag Kasher v'Sameach,

Rabbi Joel Seltzer

Executive Director
Camp Ramah in the Poconos

Haggadah Options for your Family

The following *Haggadot* are all good options for *seders* for the whole family:



The “Four” Questions

Rabbi Joel Seltzer

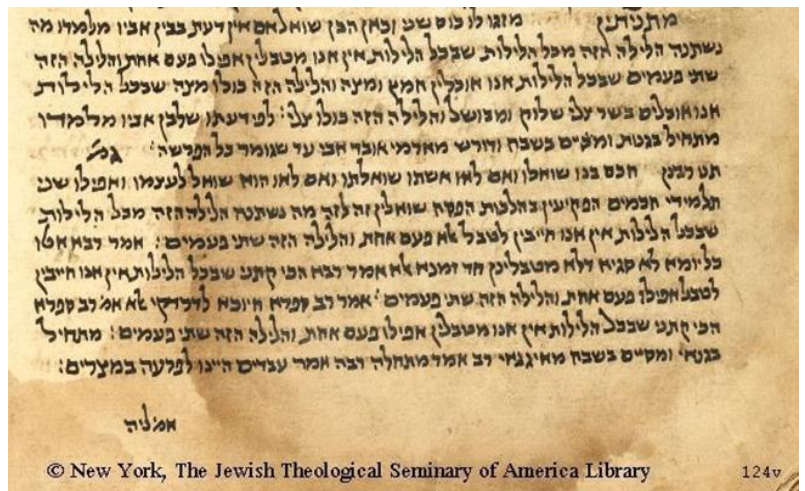
This past summer I taught a weekly Talmud *Shiyyur* on Shabbat afternoons in the *Sifriyah*. Even though it was during the heat of the summer, we focused our attention on the coming spring, and *Chag HaHeirut*, the Festival of Freedom, Passover.

We studied sections from the tenth chapter, known as *Arvei Pesachim*, which serves as the ancient prototype for the modern *seder*. In fact, in the manuscript pictured above, (start with the last word on the first line and begin reading from there) you might discover a slightly different version of the iconic *Mah Nishtanah*, or ‘The Four Questions’ (though more appropriately called ‘the Four Answers’.)

In the manuscript here, dated from 1623, we read:

“We mix for him the second cup [of wine] and here the child asks, or if the child is not yet of age, then the parent shall teach: “Why is this night different from all other nights?”

1. On all other nights we do not even dip once, but on this night we dip twice
2. On all other nights we eat leavened and unleavened bread, but on this night we eat only unleavened bread
3. On all other nights we eat meat that is roasted, baked or boiled, but on this night we only eat roasted meat”



Wait, that’s it? Just 3 questions? What happened to the 4th question; and furthermore, what is the 3rd question here? I don’t remember hearing Cousin Jonah say that one at the family *seder*!

In fact, what we know as the 4 Questions today, haven’t always existed in the same form as they do currently in the *Haggadah*. Here there are three, as there are in the Talmud Yerushalmi, but in the Talmud Bavli there are 4 (the three above, plus “On all other nights we eat all types of vegetables, but on this night – bitter herbs.”) And what happened to reclining?! “On all other nights we eat sitting or reclining on this night – we recline”? This ‘question’ was added much later, when people stopped reclining regularly at their meals.

Yes, like most things in life (and in camp), important memories and narrative are passed down from one generation to another, though along the way, some of the details of the story change.

What would be our questions, today, in this generation?

- On all other nights we eat distractedly, with our phones out, the TV on, or our schedules and meetings dominating our evenings, but on this night we pay attention to each other.
- On all other nights we eat in separate houses, in different cities, but on this night we eat under one roof.
- On all other nights we eat just to eat, to satisfy our personal needs, but on this night we think of others: our ancestors, those who fought for freedom in every time, and those who are less fortunate than us.

Four Children Wax Museum

Dr. Andrea Lieber, *Rosh Hinuch*

One of the most valuable elements of the camp experience is that it allows children to experience feelings of autonomy and freedom in an environment that is safe, comfortable, and supported by Jewish values. *Chanichim* (campers) learn to be independent, and are free to stretch themselves by trying new things.

At Passover we celebrate our freedoms, and the *seder* table is an opportunity to let our children shine as leaders and participants in the ritual. Try this activity as springboard for thinking about what it means to step back and let our children lead.

Four Children Wax Museum

When you reach the reading in your *Haggadah* about the Four Children, have your kids sculpt a “wax museum” using the grownups as their models.

Activity:

- Line up four adults in an area where they can be seen by everyone at the table.
- Invite a child to “sculpt” each adult into poses that represent the “four children” of the *Haggadah*.
- “Sculpting” should take place without speaking, if possible.
- Adults should allow the child to guide their bodies and faces gently into position, and hold the position as long as they are comfortable.
- Allow the children to explain why they chose the postures they did.

For discussion:

- Adults: What was it like for you to allow yourself to be sculpted by your child? Was it hard to give up control?
- Children: How did it feel to be the sculptor?
- Make a camp connection: Which *edot* (divisions) fit the description of each of the four children? How might our perspective on these four “types” change if we think of them as developmental stages that are part of growing up?

Making the Seder Fun for Everyone

Rabbi David Ackerman and Naomi Shapiro

For many years our family has worked to make our *seders* the way they were intended to be by the rabbis—fun and interactive for all! Beginning when our kids were little, we began to decorate our tables with objects related to the *seder*. Each year we try to bring an additional element. One of our favorites, as in many homes we’ve been to, is to place frogs of different sorts around the table. I have a box full of plastic jumping frogs, silly rubber ones, and our most favorites the origami paper frog. We have even used these as place cards. These are relatively simple to make—you just need to get some pieces of origami paper, (available at your local art store or Michaels). When we arrive at the plagues part of the *seder*, we allow a full throttled “throwing of the

plagues” as we sing the words either in Hebrew or to the tune of Harvey Belafonte’s “DAY-O”. (Day-O, me-say DAY-O, plagues are coming and I want to go home”).

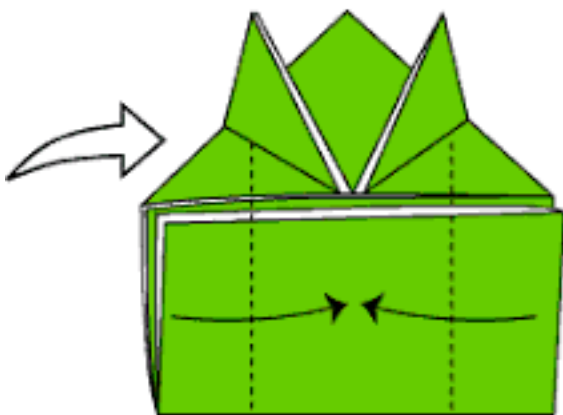
But don’t limit yourselves to the plagues. Put other items that could trigger conversations on your table—hide things under the plates, find ways to make the ubiquitous number 4 appear everywhere, create a game together (in our home it is always some version of PASSOVER JEWPARDY that our daughter creates) and have this be a part of the *MAGGID* section of the *seder*—especially when little ones get restless (and the adults do as well!).

One additional suggestion—if you are having guests and plan to change things up from years past, give them fair warning. Better yet, do as we do, and invite them to share a reading or a silly song or even prepare a section of the *seder* if they are willing. Allow them to feel a part of the planning.

Use the *Haggadah*—whichever you choose—as your guide and go with it! In our home, the past few years we have yielded spoofs of Passover ranging from the melodies and lyrics of FROZEN to HAMILTON! But don’t worry —we always allow for serious conversation even amidst the fun and silliness.

Over the years, as our kids have grown, we have come to realize that the memories and traditions that we create as a family together have come to mean the most to all of us. Some years our *seders* are magical, some years they are less so—but we always try to find a way to make each one unique and share its memories.

A zisen, sweet and meaningful Pesach to you all!



Please see attached origami directions below:

Jumping Frog

1. Fold the paper in half sideways to make a rectangle.
2. Fold the corners down and unfold them right away, repeating this for both top corners of your rectangle.
3. Flip the paper over and fold the top of the paper down at the spot where the diagonal creases meet.

web-japan.org/kidsweb/virtual/origami2/exploring01_06.html

Get Comfy at your Seder!

Staci Boiskin

At our Passover *seders*, we are required to be comfortable and recline in our seats when drinking the 4 cups of wine and when eating matzo and the *afikomen*. Reclining at our tables is a sign of freedom.

About a week before your *seder*, ask everyone who is coming to decorate and bring a *seder* pillow. Give instructions: ask someone to depict the 10 plagues, write the 4 questions, draw the scene of the sea splitting, etc. You can use sharpies, puffy paint, and any decorations you want. I like to use a hot glue gun, so my pillow will have lots of decorations! Each person can have a unique "Passover pillow scene" to get comfortable with at the *seder*. And, everyone can have a little fun getting creative before the *seder*, and then share their "art" at the table.

Let My People Go!

Rabbi Joshua Z. Gruenberg

This ten minute *maggid* is especially effective with a very young Seder crowd. We would often dress up for the play, and have the kids eat afterwards so that if the adults wanted to have some deeper discussion that was available as well.

Great for ages up to 10.

CAST: NARRATOR, JOSEPH, BENJAMIN, PHAROAH, ADVISOR, HEBREW 1, HEBREW 2, HEBREW 3, BOSS, BAT PHAROAH, MOSES, GOD, AARON (13 parts)

NARRATOR: Our story begins in the land of Egypt where Joseph, once a prisoner, is now the Pharaoh's chief advisor.

JOSEPH: So how are things back in Israel?

BENJAMIN: Oy! Terrible. Our gardens and crops are dying. There is no rain this year. That is why we had to come down to Egypt!

JOSEPH: Well, don't worry, life in Egypt is fantastic. Slime everywhere, High Definition Television, enough fidget spinners for everyone to have 10. This is the most powerful nation on the planet!

BENJAMIN: Did you have rain this year? Are the gardens and crops doing well?

JOSEPH: We don't have to worry about that. I've stored away tons of food in giant warehouses. The Pharaoh will be able to feed the people for three years at least, even if we get no rain.

BENJAMIN: What does the Pharaoh think of us Hebrews?

JOSEPH: He loves me. He welcomes the Hebrews into his land. Bring the entire family, we'll make a great life here.

Narrator: The Hebrews all moved to Egypt and had many children and lived a successful life. But after many years, after Joseph and his brothers had died, a new Pharaoh rose to power.

PHAROAH: Advisor, bring me the latest census report. I want to know all the people who I rule over!

ADVISOR: Yes, your Royal Highness. I have the numbers here.

PHAROAH: Let's see... Nubians, Midians, yes, very good. Are there really that many Hebrews?

ADVISOR: Oh yes, your highness. They are growing in number. They are very strong workers.

PHAROAH: Do you think that might be a danger? Perhaps they will challenge my rule – make demands. You know how these workers are always complaining about the size of the rocks for the new Pyramids. I am worried that they will use their strength in numbers to rise up against me!

ADVISOR: Yes, you are right, we must do something to break their spirits.

PHAROAH: First, let us begin with something small. We'll get them to make more bricks each day. If that doesn't work, we'll eliminate the fifteen-minute breaks. If that doesn't break them, then maybe we'll turn to harsher measures.

Narrator: The Hebrew workers struggled to keep up with Pharaoh's demands.

HEBREW 1: My hands are killing me. And my back, oy! I can't take this pace.

HEBREW 2: We can make a thousand bricks a day—but two thousand? No team can work that hard! We'll fall over!

HEBREW 3: Get back to work, the boss is coming!

BOSS: Efficiency, people! We have got to make 900 more bricks by sundown! Come on, let's work faster!

HEBREW 1: We are working as fast as we can, boss.

BOSS: Listen, smart aleck, I've got a lot of pressure on my shoulders. If Pharaoh doesn't get his bricks, I'm out of a job. I got a family to feed, too, you know. So get back down in the pit and start working!

HEBREW 2: We haven't had a break all day!

BOSS: And you are not going to get one! Work!

HEBREW 3: You know what, boss; you have become a real pain in the backside!

BOSS: What'd you say?

HEBREW 3: You heard me.

[The BOSS walks over and pushes Hebrew 3 to the ground]

BOSS: Now get back to work before I get really angry!

Narrator: Meanwhile, Pharaoh's daughter adopted a young Hebrew child. The child, Moses, was raised with the finest Egypt had to offer.

BAT PHAROAH: Here, sweetheart, eat your honey cakes before your flute lesson.

MOSES: I'm so excited about the party this evening.

BAT PHAROAH: Your new robe looks lovely, dear. I just hope that the Pyramid is finished. Your grandfather has the workers working double time just to get the place finished before the great assembly.

MOSES: I heard that the Hebrews were complaining.

BAT PHAROAH: Complaining? Don't worry about that. We take care of the needs of all our workers, dear. They are fed, given homes, and we give them a new pair of shoes each year. We are very generous. The only problem is that there are simply too many Hebrews. For that reason, we are cutting down their number. I know that it is sad that we have to kill off their baby boys, but we are really doing it for their own good.

MOSES: I know so little about the world. Someday I'd like to go out of the palace and see how they live.

BAT PHAROAH: They are not clean like us, dear. Especially the Hebrews. They throw garbage on the streets, and the smells are truly horrible.

Narrator: One day Moses decides to sneak out of the palace and see for himself the plight of the Hebrews.

HEBREW 1: I can't work, today, I'm sick! And I hurt my arm yesterday lifting stones!

BOSS: I don't want to hear excuses. This pyramid has got to be finished by Thursday! Today is Wednesday! So get moving!

HEBREW 1: I can't work. Please, listen to me, have some compassion!

HEBREW 2: Give him a break, boss!

BOSS: Shut up!

HEBREW 3: Don't get involved!

HEBREW 2: I'm tired of this, boss! My cousin there is hurt. He can't work today. And he's not working. So go tell Pharaoh that he'll have to hire some more workers or this isn't getting done!

BOSS: Shut up!

[Boss pushes Hebrew 2 to the ground.]

HEBREW 1: Stop it!

BOSS: I'm going to hurt you bad, you whiny Hebrew!

HEBREW 3: Stop! One of Pharaoh's princes is coming!

MOSES: What is happening?

BOSS: I am going to give this man the beating he deserves, your honor! Watch this!

MOSES: No!

[Moses hits the Boss, who falls to the ground]

HEBREW 3: Oh no! What did you do to the boss? We'll be blamed for this! We'll be punished!

MOSES: What have I done? What have I done?

Narrator: Moses ran away, far off into the wilderness. Where he is taken in by Yitro and marries one of Yitro's daughters, Zipporah. One day, as Moses is taking care of Yitro's sheep, he stumbles across a burning bush.

GOD: Moses, Moses!

MOSES: Who is that? What is going on? What is happening?

GOD: It is me, the God of your ancestors, Abraham, Issac, and Jacob.

MOSES: You must have the wrong number.

GOD: This is no time for jokes. You must go back to Egypt and stand up to Pharaoh! Then you will lead the people back to their homeland!

MOSES: How will I do that? The people do not know me! I have no power now that I have run away!

GOD: I will be with you. Go to your sister, Miriam, and brother, Aaron, and stand up to Pharaoh!

Narrator: Moses returns to Egypt, with his wife and son, Gershom. Aaron and Moses approach Pharaoh.

PHAROAH: What do you want?

AARON: Our people need a three-day vacation. We need to go outside of the city so that we can pray to God in our own way.

PHAROAH: Why can't you wait for the festival of the pyramids? Then your people will have a chance to celebrate with everyone.

MOSES: We do not wish to pray to your gods. We have one God, who is mightier than all of your gods.

PHAROAH: You must be joking. The gods have made Egypt a great nation. What has your God done for you?

MOSES: You'll see what our God can do! And then you'll give in to our demands!

PHAROAH: Don't count on it, Hebrew!

Narrator: Pharaoh was a stubborn man. Even after plagues of blood, frogs, lice, disease, hail, and darkness, he would not let the Hebrews take a day off. It wasn't until a disease struck and killed the first born of every Egyptian, that the Pharaoh changed his mind.

PHAROAH: Don't you understand what is happening?

ADVISOR: No, your highness, I don't know why our gods are not protecting us.

PHAROAH: Everything we did to the Hebrews is now happening to us!!!

ADVISOR: Maybe their God is powerful!

PHAROAH: Tell the police that are surrounding their neighborhood to let them go.

Narrator: That night, Moses, spoke to the people.

MOSES: Put on your sandals, we will not have time to bake the bread for tomorrow! Tonight we will leave Egypt, and set out for a new land! Our children, and our children's children will remember this night! They will tell the story of how we stood up to Pharaoh, and how God helped us to be free!

AARON: Let all who are hungry come and eat!

Narrator: And thus ends our little play.

Source : Rabbi Daniel Brenner, www.rabbidanielbrenner.blogspot.com

How Does a Cat Eat a Dog?

Dr. Joshua Kulp, Rosh Yeshiva of [Conservative Yeshiva of Jerusalem](#)

The two most popular songs found at the end of the *Haggadah* are “*Ehad Mi Yodea*” and “*Had Gadya*.” Clearly these songs were not created for the Pesach *seder* but were rather popular songs that eventually made their way into the *Haggadah*. The first *Haggadah* in which they appear is the Prague *Haggadah* of 1590, which also includes a translation into Yiddish (see below). It can easily be seen that “*Had Gadya*” is, at its core, not really a “Jewish” song but rather a folk or children’s song meant to be sung in a never-ending round, one thing coming and destroying the next.

The oddest part of the song, in my mind, has always been the very first line—“and came a cat that ate the goat.” We have plenty of cats in Israel, fearsome ones, for the most part. But I still can’t imagine a cat eating a goat. Luckily, the “*Had Gadya*” appears in a 13th-14th century manuscript from Provence. This manuscript is not a *Haggadah*, and it contains a slightly different version of the song, one that makes a lot more sense.

One goat which my father bought for two zuzim, one goat.	חד גדיא דזבן אבא בתרי זוזי חד גדיא.
<u>And a dog</u> came and ate the goat...	אתא כלבא ואכל גדיא...
And a stick came and hit the dog...	אתא חוטרא ומחא כלבא...
And a fire came and burned the stick...	אתא נורא ואוקיד חוטרא...
And water came and extinguished the fire...	אתא מיא וטפא נורא...
And an ox came and drank the water...	אתא תורא ושתא מיא...
<u>And a rope</u> came and tied up the ox...	אתא יתרא אקטר תורא דשתא מיא וכו'...
<u>And a mouse</u> came and ate the rope...	אתא עכברא ואכלא יתרא...
<u>And a cat</u> came and ate the mouse...	אתא שונרא ואכלא עכברא דאכל...

Here we have many of the elements that appear in our version of the *Had Gadya*, but there are several key differences. First of all, it is a **dog** that eats a goat, and while my little poodle could not eat a goat, I’m sure that a wild dog could (hungry dogs do, after all, run faster). The song follows the order we’re familiar with but there is no “*shochet*” to kill the ox. Instead a rope comes and ties up the ox. The cat appears at the end, this time eating a mouse, a more appropriate meal for a cat. The manuscript ends at this point, but we can assume that the song would have gone on and on, with people trying to come up with new things that eat or destroy the previous

one. Interestingly, the mouse returns in a 15th-16th century German *Haggadah* which reads, “the stick that hit the dog, that bit the cat, **that ate the mouse, that ate the goat!**” Obviously, this is a mistake, quite a hilarious one at that. But our canonized *Had Gadya* is also probably some sort of mistake in which the cat crept in between the dog and goat, probably because someone assumed that dogs eat more cats than goats.

The biggest difference between our version and the earlier, more original version is that the Pesach version has been given a “theologically correct” ending. Life is not just a series of one thing eating another; there is an ultimate purpose to life. Ultimately, God reigns over all, even over death. There is a morality that resides not in the strength of the being that eats the other, but in the virtues of justice, mercy, truth and love. In the end, this is what the *seder* is all about. The Egyptians were strong enough to enslave the Israelites, but ultimately God’s justice and God’s love for humanity won out.

It’s a beautiful message, but if I were you, I’d still watch out for those “hungry dogs”!



The Seder: As You Like It

(with apologies and gratitude to William Shakespeare)

By Judy Meltzer, Former Director of Adult Learning at Chizuk Amuno Congregation

Below is a different interpretation of the steps of the *seder*, especially designed for lovers of Shakespeare.

All the evening is a Seder

"And all the men and women merely players
They have their exits and their entrances;
And each guest in his time plays many parts."
(As you Like It)

His acts being in 14 stages. At first *kaddesh*
We say the *kiddush* over the first cup of wine
And then *urchatz*:

We lave our hands
And then, *karpas*

We dip a vegetable in salt water
Our mouths pronounce the blessing
and then the *Yachatz*

We break the middle matzah
Preparing for the quest of the *afikoman*:
And then *maggid*, ah yes, the tale,
"A tale of sound and fury, signifying" everything.
(Macbeth)

Four questions: "to be or not to be
That is the question."
(Hamlet)

"And yet another cup of wine.
Good wine is a good familiar creature if it be well
used."
(Othello)

Rachtza anon, we lave our hands
Bless and bless again the matzah
I had *Maror* "most need of blessing."
(Macbeth)

Maror, a second dipping, *maror* in *haroset*
Korech, a sandwich of matzah and herbs

"Eating the bitter bread of banishment."
(King Richard II)

And now we dine, *shulchan orech*.
Strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends.
(The Taming of the Shrew)

"Eat no onions nor garlic,
For we are to utter sweet breath."
(A Midsummer's Night Dream)

Tzafun, the *afikoman*
Barech, we say the blessing after the meal
And drink again.
"One draught above heat makes him a fool,
The second mads him,
And a third drowns him."
(Twelfth Night)

Hallel - songs of praise
"How many thinks by season season'd are
to their right praise and true perfection!"
(The Merchant of Venice)

Nirtzah, the completion of the seder.
We complete the seder in song and music
"The man that hath no music in himself
Nor is now mov'd with concord of sweet sounds
Is fit for treasons, strategems, and spoils."
(The Merchant of Venice)

"Now our joy, although our last, not least."
(King Lear)

"The end crowns all."
(Troilus and Cressida)

Six Word Memoirs

Elana Rivel, Ramah Day Camp Director

There is an old story that Ernest Hemingway was challenged to write a novel in six words. His story?

For sale: baby shoes. Never worn.

Smith Magazine has taken this storytelling device and challenged people to write their own stories – in six words (<http://www.smithmag.net/sixwordbook/about/>). At your *seder* – ask your guests to compose a six-word memoir that encapsulates the story of Passover. Or what it means to be free. Or their year since last Passover... Give them some time to consider and then share. You are bound to have both humorous and poignant responses!

We Celebrate Together

Rebecca Schwartz

Originally written for a women's *seder*, this song can be incorporated into a traditional *seder* by replacing the word female with Hebrew. To hear how it sounds, please click on [this link](#). The song is also available for purchase [here](#).

Music: Rebecca Schwartz, Text: Rebecca Schwartz & Liturgy

Chorus

We celebrate together, rejoice in what we've become
And unite the female/Hebrew spirit, we are many, yet we are one
We celebrate together, continue what we've begun
Holding hands with one another, we are many, yet we are one

As we praise God for our deliverance
From Egypt in days of yore
We will raise our cups and our voices high
Remember what this night is for... Chorus

Just as Miriam stood by the water's edge
And danced with timbrel in hand
We'll take time to bask in our freedom
Pray for peace in every land... Chorus

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha-olam,
Shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higi-anu laz'man hazeh*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהֵחַיְנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעַנוּ לְזִמְנוֹ הַזֶּה.

Chorus

We are many, yet we are one

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, for giving us life, sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this season.

Pesach and the Five Senses

Eliana Seltzer, Jewish Life Coordinator at [Kellman Brown Academy](#)

As we think about Passover, it's hard not to think about the sights, smells, tastes, touch and sounds that make this a holiday that we truly feel in our kishkas.

Go around your *seder* table, and see how many examples you can come up with for each of the senses.

Here are a few to get you started:

SIGHT: the *seder* plate filled with all the symbolic foods, family and friends sitting around the table

SMELL: matzah ball soup cooking on the stove, freshly grated *maror* (horseradish)

SOUND: the youngest child singing *Mah Nishtanah*, using Zaida's special tunes

TASTE: the four cups of wine, my mom's Matzah kugel

TOUCH: the crumbs from the matzah, Bubby's hugs and kisses

Charosets From Around the World

Eliana Seltzer, Jewish Life Coordinator at [Kellman Brown Academy](#)

The Talmud (Psachim 116a) teaches:

רבי אלעזר בר' צדוק אומר מצוה וכו': מאי מצוה רבי לוי אומר זכר לתפוח ור' יוחנן אומר זכר לטיט אמר אביי הלכך צריך לקהוייה וצריך לסמוכיה לקהוייה זכר לתפוח וצריך לסמוכיה זכר לטיט

The *mishna* states: **Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Tzadok, says** that eating *haroset* is a *mitzvah*. The Gemara asks: **What** is the nature of this *mitzvah*? The Gemara answers: **Rabbi Levi says:** It is **in remembrance of the apple**, as apple is one of the ingredients in *haroset*. The verse states: "Who is this who comes up from the wilderness, reclining upon her beloved? Under the apple tree I awakened you" (**Song of Songs 8:5**), which is an allusion to the Jewish people leaving Egypt. **And Rabbi Yoḥanan says:** The *haroset* is **in remembrance of the mortar** used by the Jews for their slave labor in Egypt. **Abaye said: Therefore**, to fulfill both opinions, one **must** prepare it **tart and one must** prepare it **thick**. One must prepare it **tart in remembrance of the apple, and one must** prepare it **thick in remembrance of the mortar**.

The instructions for making charoset are pretty vague, which has led to wide variations in recipes across the Jewish world. This Passover, mix it up by taking a culinary trip to different Jewish cultures and Judaisms, and do a taste test of charosets from around the world!

Recipes from Jamie Geller: <https://www.joyofkosher.com/2012/04/five-charoset-recipes-from-around-the-world/>

1) Syrian Charoset

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pound large pitted dates
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup sweet wine
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 to 2 tablespoon matzah meal, as needed to bind

PREPARATION

Place the dates in a saucepan. Add water to cover. Bring to a boil, the lower heat and simmer until the dates are soft. Pass the dates through a strainer or use a food processor. Add remaining ingredients.

2) Moroccan Charoset

INGREDIENTS

1 cup walnuts (almonds can be substituted)
1 green apple, peeled and cubed
½ cup pitted dates
½ cup raisins
½ cup pitted prunes
2 teaspoon grape juice
½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon sugar

PREPARATION

In the jar of a blender, add the walnuts, apple, dates, raisins, prune, juice, cinnamon, and sugar. Blend to desired consistency. Some prefer their Moroccan *charoset* more textured and nutty; others prefer to puree more and achieve a smoother consistency.

3) Surinam Charoset

INGREDIENTS

3 cups unsweetened coconut
2 cups walnuts or almonds, chopped
1/4 cup sugar
1 1/2 cups raisins
1 1/2 cups dried apples
1 1/2 cups prunes or plums
1/2 cup cherry jam
1 cup sweet red wine
1 tablespoon cinnamon

PREPARATION

1. In a large bowl, cover the dried fruit with water. Soak overnight in the refrigerator to soften. The next day, finely dice all the fruit.
2. In a large saucepan over low heat, add the ground coconut. Add the wine and bring to a simmer. Add the nuts and sugar. Keep stirring to prevent the coconut from sticking to the pan.
3. When the wine and coconut mixture is well combined (neither too wet nor too dry), add the fruits, continuing to stir until ingredients have come together. Stir in the cherry jam.
4. Remove from heat. Add cinnamon and mix thoroughly. Keep refrigerated until serving.

Nikayon ha-Kikar

נקיון הכיכר

A Spiritual Exercise In *Nikayon*/Cleaning

Rabbi Eric Yanoff

“Cleaning the *Kikar* – the Grounds/Public Square” “Cleaning the *Kikar* – the Loaf”




Explanation: Every Friday afternoon (and sometimes more frequently), part of the ritual of preparing for Shabbat at Camp is to take responsibility for the cleaning of our public grounds, with each *edah* (age group) assigned an area on which to pick up garbage and straighten up. This practice is called “*nikayon ha-kikar*” – literally, “cleaning the public area (*kikar*).” The Hebrew word “*kikar*,” however, can ALSO mean “loaf [of bread]” – so the act of preparing for Pesach by removing the bread is, in fact, “*nikayon ha-kikar*.”

Traditionally, our Rabbis encouraged a spiritual process of cleansing to parallel the work of cleaning the house of any *chametz* (leavened products, especially bread). They understood *chametz* (leaven) metaphorically: How can we remove that which “puffs us up” – in terms of ego, or large living – to return to a simpler existence.

Camp asks us to do the same: We shed our unnecessary “extras,” including technology and self-isolation... We share space, we live communally with attention and care of others, so we cannot put ourselves at the center of all importance... We think of ourselves as a small part of something bigger and more extraordinary, not “puffed up”...

While we do the “*nikayon ha-kikar*” of removing loaves of bread – can we spiritually prepare for our Camp lives, where things are simpler, more communal, and less egocentric? Here are some activities, and some questions to go along:

Bedikat Chametz/Nikayon ha-Kikar – Finding/Recognizing the “Puffed-Up Extras” in our Lives:

-  As we look for bread, let’s look for what is “too big” or “too cluttered” in our lives. What don’t we need? What might we leave behind when we go to camp, to a simpler (*and incredibly fun!*) life?
-  What might be difficult to leave behind? How might we “make do” with a matzah-like existence for a time?
-  When we do *nikayon ha-kikar* at Camp, we are taking responsibility for our common spaces. That means we are less focused on our own “stuff” – and more on what is EVERYONE’S responsibility. How can we do that NOW, to prepare for Camp? What can we take as our part of a SHARED responsibility?

USUALLY, roles in *nikayon* are given out by a chart or wheel that rotates among the family/tzrif/bunk/community. Here’s a sample *nikayon* chart for thinking beyond ourselves – but feel free to add in your own goals and practices! Chag Sameach!



If you want to make a real (spinning) *nikayon* chart/wheel, cut this extra copy out, and tack it to the center of the chart, over the printed template, label it with your family/friends, and then each person can have a turn at each of the goals of *nikayon*/cleaning our souls!

