



# THE 5 LEGGED SEDER TABLE

An Introduction to the Seder & Haggadah

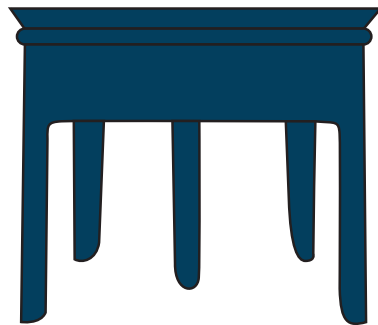


THE 5 LEGGED TABLE PROJECT



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# 1



## WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT?

For thousands of years the Israelites gathered as families to celebrate Passover with the sacrifice of the *Korban Pesach*. During two thousand years in exile, the Jewish people continued this tradition by formulating the text of the Passover Haggadah. The Haggadah was handed down from one generation to the next. The stories of the forefathers/mothers of the Israelites, the enslavement and the miraculous exodus of Egypt, the grand experience at Mount Sinai and the birth of our people are all in the Haggadah. It is filled with blessings and prayers, discussions and teachings that our scholars included in the official Haggadah text. The ancient scholars intended to establish a ritual that would be so inspiring that it would insure the continuity of the culture, faith and unity of the Jewish People throughout the long years of exile.

Did these scholars accomplish that goal? Did the establishment of the Hagaddah and Passover Seder help hold the Jews together through the generations?

Until about 250 years ago, even though the Jews were scattered all over the world in Exile, most of them had a clear understanding of what being a Jew meant. Everyone had certain basic elements of a common culture. The Jewish people in different countries might have lived very different everyday lives, but they shared an idea of what it meant to be a Jew. They all agreed that there was a God, they believed that God redeemed them from slavery, it was God they met at Mount Sinai and there they made a covenant with that God. It was commonly known among the Jews that at Mount Sinai, Israel accepted God's offer to be God's People. Jews all over the world acknowledged that the Children of Israel had agreed to fulfill God's commandments and God would give them a land. At Mount Sinai they made a covenant or agreement with God, that if they would take care of the land and follow the rules, then God would give rain. The Israelites—God's people—did not keep their side of the agreement, and as a result, they were punished and then exiled. The Jews of the exile had one more common belief, which was hope. They believed that one day the Messiah, the *mashiyach* would come, the people of Israel would return to their land and they would be a unified nation once more.

The ancient scholars were correct. Their hard work helped hold their people together, the Jews stayed on track for many generations. But, then came the time of Emancipation and Enlightenment in Eastern Europe where most Jews lived. The Enlightenment movement emphasized reason, intellectual pursuits and individualism rather than tradition. The beliefs of European Jewry of the 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries were shaken and that changed everything. Suddenly, laws of the land demanded the Jews blend in, it was a time of Nationalism and the Jews were expected to join. The Jews reacted to these expectations, but not as one united people, they reacted in many different ways.

The combination of these different reactions to Emancipation and Enlightenment and the horrific war era of the 19<sup>th</sup> century became the basis of the vast differences in Jewish practices of current times. These reactions shaped the large range of Jewish affiliations and movements that are spread throughout the Jewish world in the modern era.

Today, world Jewry is not unified, and the understanding of what it is to be a Jew is far from consistent as it was a few hundred years ago. These different views and approaches to Judaism are displayed clearly at modern Passover Seders. This night is different because it is one of the last celebrations that is still celebrated by most Jews today. On the Seder night Jewish families still join around the Seder table and read the Haggadah. It is one of the few core observances of our religion that is still performed today worldwide. On this evening, the Israelites come together to use of their memory and to tell the story of the Jewish family and discuss the lessons from Mount Sinai/Covenant. They think about their relationship with Israel (the land and/or the state) and many all over the world still try to do it in Hebrew, the language of their people.

# 2



## THE 5 LEGGED TABLE

*The 5 Legged Table* is a suggested approach to a meaningful Jewish life by Avraham Infeld. Avraham's writings and lectures are a celebration of the ideas and values that have influenced scores of Jewish educators from all around the Jewish world. Avraham's educational experiences from the 1950s until today are uniquely summarized by his famous description of the 5 Legged Table. Each leg represents a dimension of Jewish life, as conveyed by Avraham with great warmth and humor.

Here is an abstract from Avraham Infeld's lecture on his 5 Legged Table approach:



### Leg #1—Memory: "Jews do not have history—they have memory."

While history is about what happened in the past, memory is about how that past drives our present and our future. As Avraham says, if history is prose, memory is poetry. Jewish life and language are filled with opportunities to remember our past—*lizkor* and *zikaron* in Hebrew—so that the present can be a strong bridge to the future. The term "memory" is so significant that in all Jewish holidays, we are commanded to remember our past. Memory is part of every prayer and ritual. Memory is so important that sometimes it seems that Judaism should be defined as "a people prohibited from getting amnesia."



### Leg #2—Family: "Jews are not a religion, they are a family."

Jews are one big family, tied together by a common past and a shared future. And how do we know that? Because the Torah refers to us as *Bnei Yisrael*—The children of Israel—reminding us of our family origins. Plus, we argue all the time! Just like in any family, the inevitable fights and differences of opinion are balanced by a sense of closeness, mutual responsibility and belonging. You may be able to choose your friends, but your family are who you are born with, or what you are adopted into. And, once you are adopted, you are a full member not only of the close family but you are an equal member of the extended family, one of the Tribe, of the People.



### Leg #3—Mount Sinai/Covenant: "Sinai is important even if you think it never happened."

The Jewish people made a crucial stop on their way through the desert to Israel. What happened

there? We are still debating that amongst ourselves, but Avraham thinks that we made three commitments: 1) to recognize one God; 2) to make the world a better place for all people; and 3) to use certain rituals to define and shape Jewish time and space. To Jews who observe any or all of the *mitzvot*, and those who are committed to *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), and those who serve the Jewish community, or move to Israel, the covenant established at Mount Sinai is still a tie that binds.



#### Leg #4—Israel (the land and/or the state): “You’re a Jewish youngster. There’s the Jewish State. Goodbye!”

These are the words that sent Avraham to Israel, when he made aliyah as a teenager. Why? Avraham believes that Israel is the place where the Jews are writing the next chapters of the story of the Jewish People. The Land of Israel is the warehouse of Jewish memories. The

land of our birth where the family began, a land filled with the roots of our culture. Generations of Jews longed for this land by prayer and song and the land became the most supreme symbol of hope, promise and renewal. All of this inspired Zionism and from this idea the State of Israel became a reality. The State of Israel today is a Jewish and democratic state. There are many challenges to Israel’s sovereignty on its land, the 2000 year-old hopes and prayers face a modern reality, being Jewish and living in a country with a large minority. What are the implications arising from the definition of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state? Is this what we hoped for? We may or may not agree with Israel’s actions and policies; we may not be Zionists or believe in democracy, but yet we still long and pray for Israel. What is Israel’s further role in Jewish continuity?



#### Leg #5—Hebrew: “Why do Jews pray in Hebrew? Is it because God doesn’t understand English?!”

NO! The language of the Jewish People is Hebrew, because language is the way that every group transmits its culture to the next generation. The Hebrew language contains Jewish values and beliefs that teach and sustain us. Do Jews “fall in love”? No, we believe that we ‘rise in love’ and so we use the word *lehitavev*, which reflects mutuality and relationship. We know that the past and the future are connected, so the Hebrew word for before—*kedem*—and forward—*kadima*—come from the same root. These are just two examples of many.

Behind this approach stands an educational rationale. Avraham ends his lecture by arguing that all Jews should commit to at least three of the five legs. Choosing at least three of the components of Jewish identity, or “legs” provides a stable platform for living a Jewish life and contributing to the world. Less than three, and your table or platform of Jewish identity will topple over; more than three makes it sturdier.

Choosing three also means that every Jew shares at least something in common with every other Jew, even though they may look different and have very different lifestyles, cultures and customs. Despite the difference in Jewish expression, Jews share some of these elements through the way they build their own identities. Which legs make up the foundation for your Jewish identity?

Avraham Infeld often speaks about “Jewish people being unified but not uniform.” The 5 Legged Table is an opportunity to both celebrate Jewish unity and to creatively demonstrate the rich diversity of religious, cultural and ideological voices that make up the Jewish people. For Avraham, Jewish education that cannot answer the question “Why be Jewish?” is ultimately futile. Avraham’s approach suggests seeing the Jewish People in a new light where the Jewish People engaged in a mission of *tikkun olam* where they are asked everyday what can be done for the good of the world and taking part in making it a better place for all mankind.

This booklet is based on the teachings and wisdom of the 5 Legged Table. Its aim is to get new audiences interested in Avraham Infeld’s approach to a meaningful Jewish life. The festival of Passover and the Seder

night tradition, when Jewish families gather around the Seder table year after year, from one generation to next, throughout the Jewish world, telling the story of the Haggadah is the perfect example and testimony to the importance of a united people. It is also an opportunity for us to ask and explore the different customs and traditions that are practiced in different homes and communities on the Seder night. As we explore, we may find that not all Jews are similar and in so many aspects, we will most surely find that our people are not the same. The 5 Legged Seder Table wishes to impart to its readers the understanding of the importance of a continuous and unified Jewish people even if not uniform, working together to reach their goal of a brighter future.

The 5 Legged Seder Table will allow you a safe crossing through the long Seder night in a significant and enjoyable way. The Haggadah holds the family together as a unit, and, in addition, it teaches the family to open its door to everyone in need and to seat them around the Seder table as one of the family. The Haggadah is a wonderful example of how the Jewish people identify moments in their long tradition and memory and turn them into moments of education. The Jewish culture is filled with examples of this kind. What we learn from this long night ritual is the importance of identifying these moments in our memory and the responsibility that our generation has in bequeathing memories and creating more moments of education for the generations to come.

This booklet is not a Haggadah and it doesn't contain one. There will be some examples and quotes from the Haggadah and using it will make the Haggadah more comfortable and clearly understood.

Over the years and generations the Jewish people developed different approaches and traditions. Today we can find many versions of the Haggadah that are similar, but differ to fit the needs of the participant's traditions and affiliation. This booklet shows the relevance of the 5 Legged Table approach to the Passover Seder. Choose a Hagaddah that speaks to you, that inspires you and is right for your family. You may read this booklet before the Seder or bring it with you to the Seder, and use it along with a Haggadah of your choice. Learn more about Avraham Infeld's "The 5 Legged Table" at: [www.5leggedtable.com](http://www.5leggedtable.com).



# 3



## THE SEDER

How do I get through this long night  
without losing interest or even  
falling asleep? It's in Hebrew!!!  
Doesn't God know English? When do  
we get to eat already? Who invited  
that guy? I don't know him. Kids,  
isn't it bed time? What will happen  
if we don't find the Afikoman? What  
is Afikoman anyway? I'm a vegan!!!

These are just some of the concerns and fears we may face at the Passover Seder. It's all part of the pre-Passover excitement that comes once a year in the springtime.

This section is here to give you the basics of the Haggadah, the traditions and customs that surround the Seder table. You can go through it before the Seder as an introduction or as a guide and a source of information or read it step by step during the Haggadah reading, just to make things a little bit easier. If you have never been at a Seder and you have some concerns, then this booklet will help.

### What is the Passover Seder and Why Still Have One?

The Passover Seder is celebrated on the eve of the fifteenth of Nissan, the first night of the Passover holiday, the beginning of springtime. In the Torah there are two commandments specifically for this date. The first, from Exodus XIII: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בְּיוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר—You shall tell your child on that day—is the origin of reciting the Haggadah at the Seder. The second commandment is from Exodus XII: בָּעֶרֶב תֹּאכְלוּ מַצֹּת—in the evening eat unleavened bread (matzah)—this explains the reason for the unconventional menu at the Seder table. Our ancient scholars stated “In every generation people must see themselves as they personally had come out of Egypt.” It was not only our ancestors who were redeemed from slavery; we, too, were redeemed with them, as it is written: “God took us out from there so that God might take us to the land which God had sworn to our elders.” Since that day, once a year on this day, in times of peace and in times of war, in the land of Israel and in

the long years of exile, we keep the story of Passover alive. This night is all about telling the stories and singing songs, reciting and discussing the sacred texts. Children receive primary attention, are encouraged to participate and are urged to ask questions. There are special small dishes and blessings throughout the Seder and they are all significant.

**"In every generation people must see themselves as if they had personally come out of Egypt."**

### Transforming Memory Into Ongoing Personal Stories

The evening is here and the family gathers for the Seder, candles are lit as we get seated around the table and we fill the first cup of wine, one of four cups that we will drink throughout the night. Cushions are laid on the left armrest so we can rest upon them. Wine and cushions are symbols of freedom; they are here to show that on this night we are not the slaves, we are all masters. The head of the family recites the Kiddush, the blessing of the holy day by stating the following words *"God, has lovingly bestowed upon us, appointed times for happiness, holidays and seasons for joy, this Feast of Matzot, our season of freedom, a holy convocation recalling the Exodus from Egypt."* All are seated and participants drink the first cup of wine. (Caution: there are three more cups of wine on the way.)

Throughout the Seder we share the memory of the initial events that led to the formation of the Jewish people. We might ask what the significance of these past stories is to our life today? Is it possible to revive the stories of the past and associate the conditions of life in those days with today's reality?

In every generation people must see themselves as they had personally come out of Egypt, as it is written: "You shall tell your son on that day: This is on account of what God did for me when I came out of Egypt." It was not only our fathers whom the Holy One redeemed from slavery; we, too, were redeemed with them, as it is written: "God took us out from there so that God might take us to the land which God had sworn to our elders.

-From the Haggadah

On this night we feel the liberation of slavery, and we pass these feelings on to the next generation. How can you expect that a person feel and act as if he/she is attending an event that took place thousands of years ago? We do it by bringing the story to life and acting it out; we feast and drink wine when leaning to the side as free people do. When the matzah, the unleavened bread, is introduced at the Seder it comes with this explanation:


This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are needy come and celebrate the Passover. At present we are here; next year may we be in Israel. At present we are slaves; next year may we be free.

Opening the door and helping the needy is not only a good deed, there is a lesson to be taught about Jewish living. We celebrate in our homes with our family, but the door is open for all. Opening the door to all is not an act of charity because charity is when one feels sorry or one's heart goes out and therefore helps the unfortunate. Jews don't act because of charity, it is the value of *tzedek* (justice) that is commanded. In Hebrew you don't give charity, you give *tzedaka*, which means doing what is right. We feel the hard times of others and then act by doing what is right and just.

The old stories of the Seder night are read aloud and are told in a way that they come to life, they are told as if they are here and now. Different traditions of games and activities are common on the Seder night. The

Seder customs are designed to keep the children curious and awake. The children's involvement is essential and is a fundamental part of the Seder.

Here are some examples of transforming a memory into a current and relevant story in different Jewish Communities:


 **Kurdistan Jews** try to revive this memory by an act played by the children. One of the children knocks on the door of the home. The child then stands before the Seder's head of ceremony and answers his questions:


Q: Where did you come from? A: From Egypt

Q: Where are you going? A: To Jerusalem.


Q: What do you have with you? A: The *מה נשתנה*—The Four Questions.

And all the participants cry out “With honor”—*בְּכָבוֹד*—and the child will recite the Four Questions in Hebrew and Kurdish.

 **There is a Moroccan Jewish custom** that the head of the Seder leaves the room after the four questions and comes back via a side door, leaning on a stick and on his shoulder is the Afikoman, wrapped in a shawl. The guests reply to questions of the Seder participants.

 **There are Jewish Yemenite families** who raise the Seder table, read a passage from the Haggadah, and then lower the table back to the floor with a thump, to arouse the curiosity of the children and to prevent them from falling asleep.

 **Jews from Spain** wrap the Afikoman in a handkerchief and each member of the family carries it on his shoulders saying: “This is how we left Egypt.”

 **Another tradition** is to hide the Afikoman and give gifts to the child who finds it. In other homes it is customary that the children try to steal the Afikoman and are offered gifts to redeem it.

The custom that children should not fall asleep can be traced back to the days of the Talmud (P'sachim, Babylon Talmud):

Our Rabbis taught: everyone is ordered on drinking the four cups of wine, men, women and infants alike.

Rabbi Judah: and what good is the wine for infants? But rather, give the infants nuts (to play) on the eve of Passover, so that they don't fall asleep and ask questions.

They tell of Rabbi Akiva who distributes nuts to infants at the eve of Passover so they don't fall asleep and ask questions.

Tanya, Rabbi Eliezer says: The children steal the unleavened bread, in order not to fall asleep.

Tanya, it was told that Rabbi Akiva never let his students pause their learning except on the eve of Passover and the eve of Yom Kippur. The eve of Passover—to help their children not fall asleep and the eve of Yom Kippur—to feed their children.

# 4



## THE NUMBER FOUR: LESSONS AND SYMBOLISM

If you have read the Haggadah before or attended a Seder in the past, you may have noticed that in addition to the blessings and prayers, the Seder is full of symbols and short stories. The Seder uses many methods to help you remember its important lessons, one of them is the use of the number four. Here are some examples:

### The Four Names of Passover

- 1 חג האביב ~ Chag Ha-Aviv: The Festival of Spring.** This is a time of new beginnings. The buds and blossoms are seen in the land of Israel. It is time for spring cleaning and daytime begins to lengthen. This name is meant to fill our hearts with renewal and with hope and reminds us of the value of *tikkun olam*, the responsibility for “planting the seeds” for the future generations.
- 2 חג המצות ~ Chag Ha-Matzot: The Festival of Unleavened Bread.** Matzah is the result when you start baking bread and you don’t have time to finish. When the Israelites were finally freed from slavery and from the Egyptians, it was in haste and they could not wait for the dough to rise. As a reminder of this event we are forbidden to have any contact with leaven (חמץ) during the week of Passover. (Unleavened bread = matzah = מצה).
- 3 חג החרות ~ Chag Ha-Cheirut or The Festival of Freedom.** This marks the Exodus from Egypt and from the darkness of slavery to light, freedom and liberty and the long journey to the promised land of Israel. In the years of exile and banishment, this name for Passover was also about the longing and hope of a better future. In the days following the Holocaust in Europe, the Jews were refugees. Since the establishment of the State of Israel there are no more Jewish refugees. Today the vast majority of world Jewry lives in freedom with full human rights. It is now time to understand that with freedom comes responsibility. We need to remember that once we were the slaves and we were unhappy being ill-treated, and, therefore, we must treat all as equal.
- 4 חג הפסח ~ Chag ha-Pesach or Passover.** *Pesach* in English means to pass over. It comes from the offering of the *Korban Pesach* as stated: “Why did our fathers eat the Passover offering during the period of the Temple? It is because the Holy One, Blessed be He, passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt... who passed over the houses of the children in Egypt when God smote the Egyptians and spared our houses.”

## The Four Cups of Wine

Drinking four cups of wine at Seder night is a must, even the poor, living off *tzedakah*, must have no less than four cups.

We start the Seder with the first cup and the Kiddush (the holiday blessing). Drink the second cup on saying the first half of *Hallel* (praise) from the Book of Psalms. Participants drink the third cup with the Grace after Meals and a fourth at the end of *Hallel*.

## The Four Expressions of Salvation

Seder participants drink four cups of wine in connection to the four terms that are used for redemption, “The four languages of the redemption of the Torah” (Exodus 6, 6):

- 1 והוצאתי ~ *Vehotzeiti*: “And I brought you out from under the burdens of Egypt”
- 2 והצילתי ~ *Vehitzalti*: “And I saved you from hard work”
- 3 וגאלתי ~ *Vega’alti*: And I delivered you an outstretched arm and great trials”
- 4 ולקחתי ~ *Velakachti*: And I took you to be my people.”

## The Four Questions

Remembering and retelling the story of the Exodus from Egypt is a commandment from the Torah, and we fulfill this commandment by reciting the Haggadah. It is tradition that the youngest participant asks four questions followed by an answer given by all participants. It is a central idea of the Seder to stir encourage the children to ask questions, which gives us the opportunity to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

The second cup of wine is poured and the youngest person present asks the four questions:

**“Why is this night different from all other nights?”**

- 1 “On all other nights we eat *chametz* and matzah. Tonight, only matzah?”
- 2 “On all other nights we eat any kind of herbs. Tonight, only bitter herbs?”
- 3 “On all other nights we do not dip even once. Tonight, we dip twice?”
- 4 “On all other nights we eat sitting or reclining. Tonight, we all recline?”

The following reply is recited in unison:

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but our God took us out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Had God not taken our ancestors out of Egypt, then we, our children and grandchildren would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if we all were wise, and perceptive, experienced, and versed in Torah, it would still be our duty to tell about the Exodus from Egypt.

The more one talks about the Exodus, the more praise he deserves.

## The Four (Sons) Children

The Torah speaks of four sons; a wise one, a wicked one, a simple one, and one who is unable to ask a question. In the spirit of our times we may use the word children.

- 1 The wise child asks:** “What is the meaning of the testimonies, statutes, and laws which God has commanded us?” Explain to your child the laws of the Pesach—that “no dessert may be eaten after the Passover sacrifice.”
- 2 The wicked child asks:** “What does this service mean to you?” By the words “to you” the child implies that this service is only for you-not for himself. By excluding himself from the community, he denies God. So we bluntly tell this child: “This is done on account of what God did for me when I came out of Egypt.” For me, not for you; had you been there, you would not have been redeemed.”
- 3 The simple child asks:** “What is this all about?” Tell the child, “With a strong hand God brought us out of Egypt from the house of slavery.”
- 4 As for the child who is unable to ask a question,** you must open up the subject to him, as it is written: “You shall tell your son on that day: This is on account of what God did for me when I came out of Egypt.”

We may look at these four children as four different individuals or you may see them as examples of different approaches that one may choose to follow.

## The Four Sections of the Seder

The Seder night contains four major sections and in each section there are a number of parts which form the order of the night or in Hebrew, *HaSeder*.

### Seder = Order = סדר

#### 1 First section: *Kadesh*

- קִדֵּשׁ *Kadesh*: The Kiddush blessing
- וּרְחַץ *Urchatz*: Washing hands
- כָּרַפַּס *Karpas*: Dipping vegetable in salt water
- יַחַץ *Yachatz*: Breaking the middle matzah

#### 2 Second section: *Magid*

- מַגִּיד *Magid*: Recite the Haggadah
- רְחַצָּה *Rachtza*: Wash the hands for the meal
- מוֹצֵיא *Motzei*: Blessing on the bread/Matzah
- מַצָּה *Matzah*: The bread of Passover
- מָרֹר *Maror*: The bitter herbs
- כוֹרֵךְ *Korech*: Maror and matzah sandwich

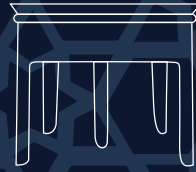
#### 3 Third Section: Dinner

- שְׁלַחַן עֹרֵךְ *Shulchan Orech*: Serve the Passover dinner
- צִפּוּן *Tzafun*: Eating the Afikoman
- בִּרְךְ *Barech*: Grace after meals

#### 4 Fourth section: *Hallel*

- הַלֵּל *Hallel*: Saying of the Hallel
- נִרְטָזָה *Nirtzah*: Acceptance

# 5



## THE SEDER PLATE: SYMBOLS AND MEANING



When starting the Haggadah we have a long way to go before we get to dinner. There are some tastings that are offered on the way. These dishes supply a significant and important way of connecting to the memory. It is not only by story and play that we pass on our traditions, we use our sense of taste. The Seder plate holds six dishes and is placed on the Seder table for all to see. It is one more example of how we make the participants, particularly the children curious and ask questions.

Here is the common explanation of the Seder plate dishes; but you can add your own ideas, the more the merrier.

### זרוע ~ *Zroa*: Leg of lamb or a chicken bone

In the days when the Temple existed it was the duty of every family to sacrifice the *Korban Pesach* (Passover offering). In the days without a Temple we place the *zroa* on the Seder plate to remind us of the *Korban Pesach*. You may consider using a beet alternative if you are vegan or vegetarian.

### ביצה ~ *Beitza*: Boiled egg

In addition to the Passover offering in Temple times there was an additional celebration offering. Today we use a boiled egg, in memory of the celebration offering.

It is a custom in many families not to eat the *zroa* and the *beitza* on that night.



### **מרור ~ Maror: Bitter herbs**

This dish is bitter and not tasty, but we eat it anyway. The oral tradition teaches us that we have blessings for both the good things in life and the harder things because both make our lives complete. Bitterness is part of life and we must learn from the hard times in order to make things better. The bitter herbs are here to remind us of the bitter days as slaves in Egypt. We had a bitter time doing hard work and carrying bricks. Tasting the bitter herbs is a way of keeping the memory alive in our generation.

### **חרוסת ~ Charoset: Sweet fruit paste**

We dip the bitter herbs in charoset to sweeten the bitterness a little. It is meant to resemble the clay of the bricks that we made. We remember the hard times but add some sweetness to it. There are many charoset recipes, you should try some and see which you enjoy or even come up with your own recipe.

### **כרפס ~ Karpas: Dipping the green vegetable in salt water**

One of the four questions is “On all other nights we do not dip even once. Tonight, we dip twice?”

The first time: bitter herbs in charoset

The second time: a seasonal vegetable in salt water before dinner.

This is here once again: to get the children to ask questions, but it also represents the season of *aviv*—spring.

### **חזרת ~ Chazeret: Second bitter vegetable**

Lettuce or another slightly bitter vegetable is placed (not by all traditions) on the Seder plate and is eaten with the charoset on matzah as the “Passover sandwich.”

The Jews of Yemen do not arrange a Passover plate, and they tend to eat all kinds of vegetables at the Seder night meal, they dip them in the charoset.

## **The Three Matzahs**

Above or next to the Seder plate, three matzahs are placed.

This practice of the three matzahs was already known during days of the *Geonim* (*Gaon* was the title of the yeshiva heads in Babylon between the end of the 6-7<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century).

The people of Kairouan asked Rabbi Shriria Gaon: why do we take three Matzahs on Passover night, and why not less? Rabbi Shriria Gaon replied: Three Matzahs we use on the night of Passover reference to the three Saim (a measured quantity), that Abraham told Sarah “Hasten three seah of meal [and] fine flour; knead and make cakes.” (Genesis 18:6); And it is told that was on the eve of Passover.

According to the Kabbalah, the top matzah represents the *Cohanim* (Priests), the middle matzah—the Levites and the bottom—Israel. (The *Cohanim* and Levites served in the Temple). The top and half of the middle matzahs are to fulfill the commandment of eating matzah. The second half of the middle matzah is for the Afikoman and the bottom matzah is for the *Korech*, the Passover sandwich.

### **כורף ~ Korech: Wrap, or the Passover Sandwich**

When the Temple existed, the Passover sacrifice was eaten with bitter herbs in a matzah wrap, as Hillel interprets



from the verse “the unleavened bread and bitter herbs will eat,” meaning a tiny bit of Passover sacrifice must be eaten with matzah and bitter herbs, they are bound together. In our time, we do it as a living memory of those days.

### **Afikoman**

After the meal, the head of the Seder gives pieces of the Afikoman to each participant. In ancient Greek, Afikoman means dessert, which in this case is a piece of hard Matzah, not the perfect choice if you are trying to act as a freeman, but it teaches us that the taste of hardship and slavery should remain with you, to remember our roots. The Afikoman must be eaten before midnight, just as the Passover sacrifice was eaten before midnight during the days of the Temple in Jerusalem. After the eating of the Afikoman, no food may be eaten for the rest of the night, other than the last two cups of wine at the Seder.

# 6



## STUDYING SELECTED PASSAGES FROM THE HAGGADAH

There are so many more symbols and meaningful aspects to the Haggadah and the Seder night. Commentary, discussions and teachings have been written about this since the days when our scholars first fixed the Haggadah text.

All throughout Jewish history these discussions and teachings have reflected their time. Generation after generation has told the Haggadah story and connected it to the challenges they faced, proving that the Haggadah is relevant and timeless.

Now it is your turn to discuss the Hagaddah in the context of your time and show its relevancy to your family and friends.

Here are four text studies that are taken from the Haggadah. Now that you have read this 5 Legged Seder Table booklet, try to study the texts on your own.


Try to find the 5 legs in the text—Memory, Family, Mount Sinai/Covenant, Israel (the land and/or the state) and Hebrew. First of all, read the text in a simple and light way, only then try to answer the questions:

 What is relevant to you? What is not?

 Do you think you could add a text or invent a new tradition?

 Did you learn anything new from this text? Do you see it as it reflects your daily life?

 Is there anything in the text that you would like to teach?

 Can you find inspiration in the text? If so, then what can it inspire you to do?

### Text 1

מעשה ברבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע ורבי אלעזר בן עזריה, ורבי עקיבא ורבי טרפון, שהיו מסבין בבני ברק, והיו מספרים ביציאת מצרים כל אותו הלילה, עד שבאו תלמידיהם ואמרו להם: "רבותינו, הגיע זמן קריאת שמע של שחרית!"

אמר אלעזר בן עזריה: "הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה, ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות, עד שדרשה בן זומא: שנאמר (דברים טז ג): "למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים, כל ימי חייך"; "ימי חייך" - הימים, "כל ימי חייך" - הלילות. וחכמים אומרים: "ימי חייך" - העולם הזה, "כל ימי חייך" - להביא לימות המשיח.

It happened that Rabbis Eliezer, Joshua, Elazar ben Azaryah, Akiva and Tarfon were reclining at the seder table in Bnei Brak. They spent the whole night discussing the Exodus until their students came and aid to them: “Rabbis, it is time for the recitation of the Shema.”

Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya said: “I am like a seventy-year old man and I have not succeeded in understanding why the Exodus from Egypt should be mentioned at night, until Ben Zoma explained it by quoting: “In order that you may remember the day you left Egypt all the days of your life.” The Torah adds the word all to the phrase the days of your life to indicate that the nights are meant as well. The sages declare that “The days of your life” means the present world and “all”

[illegible]

## Text 2

מתחלה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו, ועקשיו קרבנו המקום לעבדתו, שנאמר: ויאמר יהושע אל כל העם, כה אמר יי אלהי ישראל: בעבר הנה יושבו אבותיכם מעולם, תרח אבי אברהם ואבי נחור, ויעבדו אלהים אחרים. ואקח את אביכם את אברהם מעבר הנה ואולף אותו בכל ארץ כנען, ואברהם את זרעו ואתן לו את יצחק, ואתן ליצחק את יעקב ואת עשיו. ואתן לעשו את הר שעיר לרשת אותו, ויעקב ובניו ירדו מצרים.

At first our ancestors can use the word and spirit of our times worshiped idols, but now the Omnipresent has brought us near to His service, as it is written: “Joshua said to all the people: so says the God of Israel--your fathers have always lived beyond the Euphrates River, Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor; they worshipped other gods. I took your father Abraham from the other side of the river and led him through all the land of Canaan. I multiplied his family and gave him Isaac. To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau; to Esau I gave Mount Seir to inherit, however Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.

### Your Thoughts:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

### Text 3

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר כָּל שְׁלֹא אָמַר שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים אֱלוֹ בִּפְסֹחַ, לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי חוּבָתוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן: פְּסֹחַ, מִצָּה, וּמָרֹר.

Rabbi Gamliel used to say: Anyone who has not discussed these three things on Passover has not fulfilled his duty, namely: Pesach, the Passover Offering; Matzah, the Unleavened Bread; Maror, the Bitter Herbs.

## Pesach, Matzah, Maror

Pesach: Why did our ancestors eat the Passover offering during the period of the Temple? It is because the Holy One, Blessed be He, passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt, as it is written: “You shall say: It is the Passover offering for Adonai, who passed over the houses of the children in Egypt when he smote the Egyptians and spared our houses. The people knelt and bowed down.”

Matzah: Why do we eat this matzah? It is because the Sovereign of Kings, the Holy one, revealed Himself to our fathers and redeemed them before their dough had time to ferment, as it is written: “They baked the dough which they had brought out of Egypt into unleavened cakes; for they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared any provision for their journey.”

Maror: Why do we eat this bitter herb? It is because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our fathers in Egypt, as it is written: “They made life bitter for them with hard labor, with clay and bricks, and with all kinds of labor in the field; whatever work tasks they performed were backbreaking.”

### Your Thoughts:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## Text 4

חֶסֶל סְדוּר פֶּסַח כִּהְלִכְתּוֹ, כָּכָל מִשְׁפָּטוֹ וְחֻקְתּוֹ. כַּאֲשֶׁר זָכִינוּ לִסְדֹּר אוֹתוֹ בֶּן נֹזֶקֶה לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ. זֶה שׁוֹכֵן מַעֲוָנָה, קוֹמֵם קֹהֵל עֲדַת מִי מְנָה. בְּקֻרֹב נִהְלֵךְ נִטְעֵי כֹנֵה פְדוּיִם לְצִיּוֹן בְּרָנָה.

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם.

The Seder now concludes according to Halacha, complete in all laws and ordinances. Just as we were privileged to arrange it tonight, so may we be granted to perform it again?

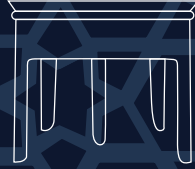
O Pure One who dwells in the heights above, establish us as a countless people once again, Speedily guide Your plants Israel as a redeemed people, To the land of Zion with song.

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM.

### Your Thoughts:

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# 7



## "EXODUS. NOW." DELIVER YOUR OWN WORKSHOP

Discussing the values that emerge from the Passover Haggadah and learning from components like memory, slavery and liberty and exodus from Egypt is another recommended way to prepare for the Seder. Having an early and deepened review of the Haggadah can enable you to have new observations and understandings. By having a group discussion with family or friends you can explore the personal and public meaning of the Haggadah, and examine the significance of these values in our lives today.

Here is an example of a discussion activity that you could perform in five steps:

### The "Exodus. Now." Discussion

#### **1 Create an Atmosphere**

Ask the participants to bring along their Haggadah, have them tell in turn about a memory of a past significant Seder or about their feeling towards the coming Seder.

#### **2 Introduce the Topic**

The Haggadah tells the story of the exodus of the people of Israel—the passage of slaves to a free people, from an ethnic group (Hebrews) to the formation of the People of Israel—unified around a common faith and a common ethos. Discuss the Exodus from Egypt—symbols, liberty and slavery, responsibility, memory and free choice.

Ask what the significance of exodus is in our personal and public lives. Do we identify differences between then and now?

#### **3 Facing the Issues**

Q: What in your opinion are the most significant issues that arise from the story of the exodus from Egypt?

#### **4 Quote Cards**

Scatter quote cards taken from the Haggadah in front of the participants.

Ask the participants to read the quotes and select one or more of the quotations. Each participant is asked to present their personal opinion: What do you think of the quote? Did the quote trigger something in you? Is the quote relevant to our lives today? What values arise from the quote?


Optional quote cards:


1. "In every generation people must see themselves as they had personally come out of Egypt."


2. "This promise has sustained our ancestors and us. For not only one enemy has risen against us to annihilate us, but in every generation men rise against us."
3. "Even if we all were wise, and perceptive, experienced, and versed in Torah, it would still be our duty to tell about the Exodus from Egypt."
4. "He said to Abram, Your descendants will surely sojourn in a land that is not their own, and they will be enslaved and afflicted for four hundred years; however, I will punish the nation that enslaved them, and afterwards they shall leave with great wealth."
5. "Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that do not know you, upon the governments which do not call upon your name."
6. "Pour out Your love upon the nations that know you, upon the governments which call upon your name. "
7. "Has God ever attempted to take unto Himself, a nation from the midst of another nation by trials, miraculous signs and wonders, by war and with a mighty hand and outstretched arm and by awesome revelations."
8. "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt... now we are free."


## 5 The Heart of the Discussion

Ask the participants to talk about one of the statements/quotes. What are the messages coming from the statement? What is the practical meaning and its relevance today (is there one?)

 "Exodus" on a national level implies to the formation of the people of Israel. Is there an "Exodus" today? Should the Jewish people go through a new "Exodus" in your eyes? Are there other ways to take shape as a nation and as a society?

 "We were slaves." What does it mean to be a slave? What does it mean to be free? What is needed for a society/people to gain freedom?

 When observing the reality in Israel today: as individuals and as a society, are the Jews in Israel free? Are other people in and around Israel free? (Aspects of economic freedom, social situation, economic disparities, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, human rights, status of women, etc.)

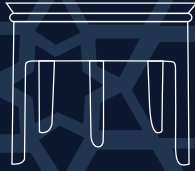
 How do these statements reflect on Jewish identity and our attitude towards others? Are they helpful/unhelpful? Is it possible to give a contemporary interpretation of these statements? What is the connection between these statements and reality in Israel today?

### Optional Summary:

Each participant writes his/her personal "Exodus" goal on a blank card. What act of freedom should take place in their private lives? Sharing can be optional.



# 8









## SLAVERY AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUOTES

The Haggadah contains a story with lessons and values, our sages hoped we would learn from this story. For the 5 Legged Table approach, that means ensuring that the world tomorrow will be a better place than it is today. In Hebrew it is called *tikkun olam*.

One more way to prepare for Passover is by taking notice of our surroundings, asking if people can improve our moral situation and what can be done to make things better.

Here are some text studies that are taken from famous declarations and documents in reference to human rights issues. After reading the quotes try to answer the following questions:

-  What is relevant to your life and the lives of those around you? What is not?
-  Can you think of acts of injustice in your surroundings? What could you do to help?
-  What do these quotes have in common with the Haggadah?
-  Did you learn anything new from these quotes? In what way?
-  Is there anything in the quotes that you would like to teach?
-  Can you find inspiration in the text? If so, then what can it inspire you to do?

And, once again, try to find the 5 legs in the text – (Memory, Family, Mount Sinai/Covenant, Israel (the land and/or the state) and Hebrew)

### Quote 1

The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, May 15, 1948

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. —That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

### Quote 3

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people, Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law, Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations, Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The United Nations (UN), 1945

### Your Thoughts:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

### Quote 4

We have dissolved the late Union chiefly because of the Negro quarrel. Now, is there any man who wished to reproduce that strife among ourselves? And yet does not he, who wished the slave trade left for the action of Congress, see that he proposed to open a Pandora's Box among us and to cause our political arena again to resound with this discussion. Had we left the question unsettled, we should, in my opinion, have sown broadcast the seeds of discord and death in our Constitution. I congratulate the country that the strife has been put to rest forever, and that American slavery is to stand before the world as it is, and on its own merits. We have now placed our domestic institution, and secured its rights unmistakably, in the Constitution. We have sought by no euphony to hide its

name. We have called our Negroes ‘slaves’, and we have recognized and protected them as persons and our rights to them as property.

An Address to the Citizens of Alabama on the Constitution and Laws of the Confederate States of America, Robert Hardy Smith, 1861

**Your Thoughts:**

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## Quote 5

No free-man shall be taken, or imprisoned, or dispossessed, of his free tenement, or liberties, or free customs, or be outlawed, or exiled, or in any way destroyed; nor will we condemn him, nor will we commit him to prison, excepting by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the laws of the land. To none will we sell, to none will we deny, to none will we delay right or justice.

Magna Carta (The Great Charter of Liberties), February 11th AD. 1224/2, King Henry the Third

**Your Thoughts:**

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## AVRAHAM INFELD & MELITZ

On the Seder night, when you, your friends and family come together, make use of your Memory and tell your Family (The Jewish People) story. Discuss the stories from Mount Sinai/Covenant, think about your relationship to Israel (the land and/or the state) and like your sisters and brothers all around the world you can try to do it in Hebrew, the language of your people.

We hope that this 5 Legged Seder Table introduction to the Seder & Haggadah will give you a better understanding of the Haggadah in preparation for this coming Passover. This booklet is a new initiative by Melitz and is part of the 5 Legged Table Project, dedicated to the teachings and long life wisdom of Avraham Infeld, the founder of Melitz.

Avraham Infeld, a well-known innovative educator, created Melitz to provide informal Jewish and Zionist identity education programs for high school students. Since its inception, Melitz has since grown to be a leader in the development of educational tools and opportunities for Jews of all ages, providing unique and diverse programs and training, and promoting a democratic Jewish Israel with strong connections to Jews world-wide.

Avraham Infeld is currently working on writing a book that will integrate his core ideas about Jewish identity, Israel, and Jewish education with his reflections on his own life and the experiences that inspired him and led him to develop the famous 5 Legged Table approach. The book is expected to be available by November 2017.

Learn more about Avraham Infeld and his “5 Legged Table” educational approach to a meaningful Jewish life at: [www.5leggedtable.com](http://www.5leggedtable.com).

We intend to keep adding new materials about Jewish life and peoplehood, and more about the 5 Legged Table. Keep watching our website for updates.

We ask you to take part in this important initiative by forwarding this booklet to your friends and family. Information on how to support Melitz and the 5 Legged Table Project can be found on the website or at these links: [www.5leggedtable.com/support](http://www.5leggedtable.com/support); [www.melitz.org/donate](http://www.melitz.org/donate).



In the early 1970s, young people all over the world were questioning heretofore unchallenged assumptions. In the context of those times, a group of Israeli high school students who were about to be drafted for their compulsory army service wrote a letter to then Prime Minister Golda Meir, asking why they were putting their lives on the line for the State of Israel. PM Meir, shocked by their lack of knowledge about Jewish historical connections to the people and land of Israel, approached Jewish educational leaders for solutions.

It is against this backdrop that Avraham Infeld, a well-known innovative educator, created Melitz to provide informal Jewish and Zionist identity education programs for high school students. Since its inception, Melitz has since grown to be a leader in the development of educational tools and opportunities to Jews of all ages, producing unique and diverse programs and training, and promoting a democratic Jewish Israel with strong connections to Jews world-wide.

**Our mission** is to serve as a platform for transformative inquiry and learning about the challenges of contemporary Jewish identity, based on the recognition of the complexity of Jewish existence in the era of globalization.



**Our vision** is to develop far-reaching educational resources for Jewish identity management, making Jewish identity relevant and meaningful, celebrating pluralism and diversity, and strengthening the connections among the Jewish people.