

Passover

The Passover and the Festival of unleavened bread were once different.

The Festival of unleavened bread was a festival based on crops, relating to the need for farmers to remove old bread and leaven that came from the previous year's crop.

The Passover had pastoral roots so that Pesach was based on the birth of new born lambs in Spring.

These agricultural festivals of crop farmers and shepherds were combined with the celebration and remembrance of the exodus from Egypt. Festivals of cyclical seasons of the year (as seen in Pagan religions in many lands) became a festival looking back to an historical moment.

Exodus 12: 3-6 demonstrates the one command to offer and eat a lamb. The Torah later said that this sacrifice of a lamb should be done every year in recall. Deuteronomy 16: 6-7 refers to the Passover lamb. However, Deuteronomy 16:3 talks of the unleavened bread of affliction.

So as the Passover festival developed from two agricultural sources and one recall of community history, it emphasized:

- God's control of nature
- Spring
- God's control of history facilitating the liberation of the Hebrew people from slavery

Exodus shows the 10 plagues of God's doing:

Floods	Frogs	Lice	Wild beasts	Cattle disease
Boils	Hail	Locusts	Darkness	Death of the first born

After Pharaoh released the Hebrews he changed his mind, and Exodus 14 describes the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 10:19). This could be the Sea of Reeds, however, near where the Suez Canal was built. The Egyptians still failed. The story of this liberation makes the Jewish people a community. It is both a happy and a bitter memory in parts.

Seder means order and is about recreating the experience of the exodus.

This ceremony shows the strong symbolism of food with the communal history of the Jewish people. Leaven (yeast) makes bread rise and so represents inflated egos; to do without emphasises dependence on God. So before Passover leaven items are searched for and removed, including food utensils in contact. There are two prayers.

Before the search	After the search
Blessed are You, our Eternal God, Ruler of the world, who has sanctified us by your commandments, and enjoined us to remove leavened food from our homes.	All hametz in my possession, which I have not seen or removed, or of which I am unaware, is hereby nullified and ownerless as the dust of the earth.

Before the Seder Meal begins three Matzot are placed in a special cover with three sections. The middle one is known as the bread of affliction. It is broken in two by the service leader, the first half eaten during the service and the second half called Afikomen is hidden. Children search for this and when required the service cannot continue without it. An extra wine glass or goblet is put out for Elijah the prophet.

The Seder Meal is guided by the book called the Haggadah or "Telling" and it tells the Exodus story. The process it lays out is in 15 steps:

1. Sanctification or kiddush of the day (**Kaddesh** first cup) with wine - each person is special.
2. Washing the hands (no blessing) (**Urchatz**) - Children ask why?
3. Dip the karpas (vegetable into salt water) (**Karpas**) - What's bitter is for the best.
4. Breaking the middle matzah (**Yachatz**) - waiting longer term
5. The narration (**Maggid**) where the broken Matzah is raised until the Four questions (the Seder Plate is removed, the youngest asks *why*: eat unleavened bread, eat bitter herbs, dip the herbs, recline). "We were all slaves in Egypt" is the basic answer but may vary. Wine glasses are raised and drunk with people leaning leftwards. Ten plagues are recited with spilling a drop of wine each for suffering (plus 3 for blood, fire, smoke and 3 for Rabbi Yehudah's abbreviation).
6. Hands are dirtied by scratching head or shoe and then water is poured over right then left hand and dried (**Rach'tzah**). There is no talking until the matzah is eaten.
7. Hamotzi blessing for bread from the ground (**Motzi**) - mitzah is eaten leaning left.
8. The matzah is blessed again and eaten (**Matzah**).

9. The marror is dipped in the charoset and then blessed and eaten without leaning (**Marror**).
10. The hillel sandwich is broken matzah held by bitter herbs and charoset. It's like a glue for the Jewish nation even when divided (**Korech**)
11. Eat a festive meal (**Shulchan Orech**) without roasted meat (the Temple had roasted lamb, so this is different).
12. The last eaten is the afikoman (**Tzafun**) when not hungry but higher reasons.
13. Wine cups are rinsed and filled for the third cup (**Barech**).
14. Abandon the intellectual in favour of the emotional (**Hallel**)
15. Next year in Jerusalem (**Nirtzah**).

Chazeret	Lettuce	Pleasant first but then a bitter taste
Karpas	celery/ parsley/ boiled potato	Branches that daubed lambs' blood on doorposts/ rebirth of nation
Roasted Egg (Beitzah) Not eaten	Main course of the Seder Meal in Temple, now egg as it's not in the Temple	The new life/ destruction of Temple
Bitter Herbs (Marror & Chazeret)	Horseradish for Marror and Romaine lettuce for Chazeret	Hebrew slaves own bitter experience
Shank bone (Zero'ah) Not eaten	Chicken (little meat)	The roast lamb eaten before leaving
Charoset	Nuts/dates/ apple/ wine/ cinnamon	Mortar of the buildings the slaves built/ antiseptic reduce the impact of Marror

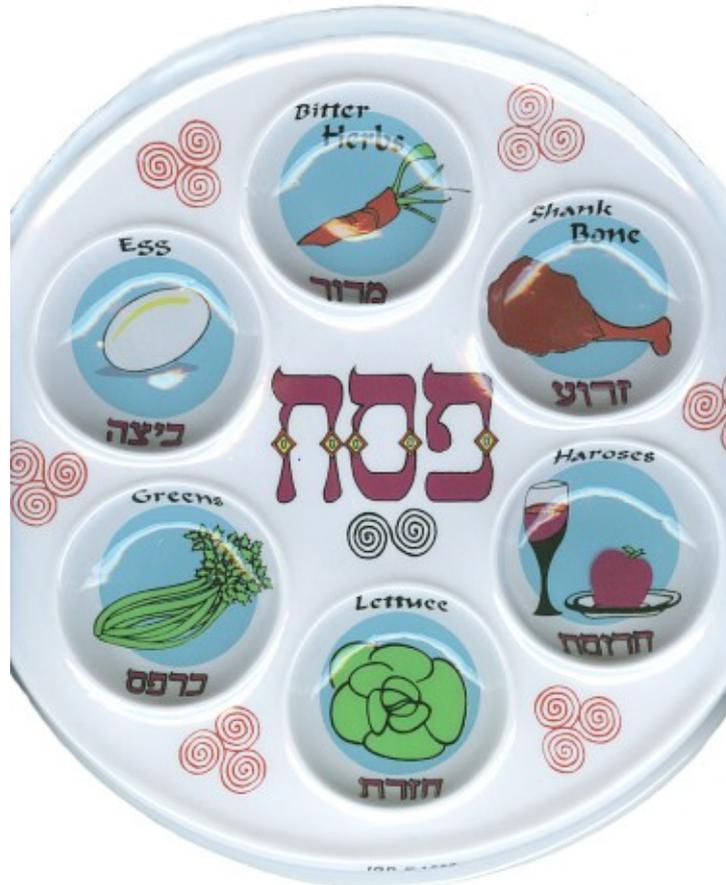
Exercise

Decide on **something significant** in your life. This could be moving house, getting a step-parent, half sisters and brothers, joining a religion, a new school, or you decide: something that has both **good** and **bad** points to it.

Find **six in all** good and bad changes, for example gaining a new bedroom, new friends, lost friends, whatever. You will need to write a list.

Now associate some **foods** with each item of change. For example, sardines in salt water might represent sadness because salt water is like tears. The links between event and food can be slight but have an explanation in mind.

If you cannot think of an event you have actually had, or you do not want to do this with such a real event, imagine a change and what might be involved. Draw a plate with six circles in. Try and draw the food in each circle as would be eaten or referred to in a clockwise direction and label the foods and associations.



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