

10 WAYS TO MAKE Passover Meaningful THIS YEAR: 2019/5779



"The Exodus from Egypt occurs in every human being, in every era, in every year and even on every day."

— Rebbe Nachman of Bratslav

1 Passover is about the move from the narrowness of slavery into the open possibilities of freedom. *It's also a metaphor* for the expansion of consciousness from limited thinking to wide openness.

What is your "Mitzrayim"? (Egypt is called *Mitzrayim* or constricted place in Hebrew.)

2 We are supposed to imagine *ourselves* in the story. The rabbis who created the Seder wanted to make it real for all times. The Seder and the lessons are present tense.

How can you make your seder experiential this year?¹

3 The Seder as practiced today is not specifically in the Torah (Hebrew Bible), although the origin is the Exodus story. The Seder is the creative brainchild of the rabbis of the Mishnah (~200 CE) who believed that a home ritual would keep the profound lessons alive.

How might your Seder be a unique expression of you and your family, within the larger framework of the story?

4 Before they can be free, the Israelites need to take a steps on their own behalf. Before God takes them out of Egypt, they slay a lamb, which symbolizes an Egyptian god (Maimonides). The blood on the doorposts is for us, not God. We are intended to participate in our own redemption.

This year, what steps on your own behalf are you willing to take to become disentangled?

5 The Seder continues to evolve. Today, many people put an orange on their Seder plate to recognize the increased inclusion of women or LGBTQ people in Jewish life. Some people add Miriam's Cup with water in addition to Elijah's cup to their table.

What new symbol might you want to add this year?

6 Questions are a central theme of the Seder. Questions open us up, as they allow us to find new meaning.

What hard questions are you sitting with this year?

7 The Israelites are freed from slavery for the purpose of being holy and living lives of goodness. People who are enslaved cannot make their own choices. Understanding what that means is challenging and takes 40 years of wandering.

How would your life be different if you were free from what enslaves you?

8 The Seder is not the end of the journey. It's also a beginning. On the 2nd night of Passover, we begin to "Count the Omer" – a 49-day journey counting up from when we celebrate our freedom until we arrive at Mt. Sinai and are given the Torah with its teachings on how to live.

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9 Because the Passover story has such deep teachings about oppression and liberation, it has been utilized to bring attention to modern-day communities in need of support.

What communities are suffering right now, and how might you support them to achieve justice?

10 The Exodus story begins with suffering. The Israelites cry out in pain after 400 years of oppression, which in turn "causes" God to "remember" them.

What is broken in your life or the world that you feel called to wake up to this year?

For more creative ways of looking at Jewish tradition, please visit www.ravjill.com.

1. "In every generation one is obligated to see oneself as one who personally went out of Egypt, as it says: 'You shall tell your child on that very day: 'It is because of this that God did for me when I went out of Egypt'" (Exodus 13:8).