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PESACH פסח

Rabbi Berditchev explained as follows:

We, the Jewish People love Hashem so much, we always want to talk about the wonderful things He has done, and does for us, and we love to praise Him.

Hashem loves the Jewish People so much, He always wants to remember the good things we did and do for Him, and Hashem loves praising us.

That is why...

WHO	CALLS IT	WHY
Hashem	Chag HaMatzot	Hashem calls it "Chag HaMatzot", to remember and praise us - for leaving Egypt towards the desert as soon as He told us to do, without taking the time to let our dough rise into bread. We didn't prepare any other food for the journey in the desert, even though we knew we would be there for a while... We trusted that Hashem would take good care of us!
The Jewish People	Pesach	Hashem skipped the Jewish homes, when He was striking the Egyptian firstborn. We thank Hashem for this, by calling the Holiday by the name which "tells" us about His kindness: "Pesach!"

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THE PESACH CALENDAR

We celebrate Pesach for 8 days. Notice the word "Holiday" is made of these 2 words: "Holy Day", Jewish Holidays are really Holy Days.

There are 2 "levels" of holiness during Pesach and other Jewish holidays.

There are days when we observe the holiday day similar to Shabbat, in which we do not use electricity, write or do business.

This level is called: **Mevad** meaning "special, appointed time" and "Mikra Kodesh" meaning "A holy gathering (when people are called together for a holy purpose)".

The other level of holiness is called: **Chol Hamoad** - "the weekday of the holiday". On Chol Hamoad the rules are less strict. We may drive and do all kinds of weekday things, although we are still in the midst of a Holiday.

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We have both kinds of days during Pesach - as you see here:

Date	Day	We...
Nissan 15	1	1 st day of Yom Tov - Holy Day Celebrate 1 st Seder
Nissan 16	2	2 nd day of Yom Tov - Holy Day Celebrate 2 nd Seder
Nissan 17	3	1 st day of Chol Hamoad Family time!
Nissan 18	4	2 nd day of Chol Hamoad Family time!
Nissan 19	5	3 rd day of Chol Hamoad Family time!
Nissan 20	6	4 th day of Chol Hamoad Family time!
Nissan 21	7	7 th day of Yom Tov - Holy Day Yom Tov - Holiday
Nissan 22	8	8 th day of Yom Tov - Holy Day Yom Tov - Holiday

All this occurs outside of Israel. In Israel however, the holiday schedule is a little different. In Israel, they celebrate only *one* day of Yom Tov - in the beginning. They have only one Seder. They celebrate 5 days of Chol Hamoad and celebrate only the seventh day of Pesach.

CHAMETZ - LEAVENED BREAD

שִׁבְעַת יָמִים עוֹרְלוֹ יִמָּצֵעַ בְּבֵיתְכֶם
For seven days, Chametz may not be found in your homes
וְלוֹ יִעָרֵחַ לֶחֶם חָמֵץ
No Chametz may be seen

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During Pesach, even the tiniest amount of Chametz is forbidden to eat. If the smallest crumb of Chametz falls into the largest amount of "non-Chametz", it is all forbidden, and must be burnt.

What is Chametz?

When any one of the five grains: wheat, barley, spelt, oats or rye - mixes with water and rests for 18 minutes or more - it is Chametz.

To make a long story short... cookies, cakes, bread and pasta are not the only Chametz foods. Most processed and packaged foods you can buy in stores today, contain some form of Chametz. You are safe with natural untouched foods like raw fruits, vegetables, eggs, chicken and meat. On Pesach we are forbidden to even *own* Chametz.

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THE SPIRITUAL CHAMETZ

There is also a spiritual Chametz we must take great care to remove.

Chametz is compared to our Yetzer Hara - the little bad guy inside us who tries to convince us to do wrong. Matzah is compared to our Yetzer Tov, our Holy Neshama who wants us to be good, and close to Hashem.

We see the Chametz vs. Matzah spirit a few ways:

1. Chametz usually looks better than Matzah. Similarly, the Yetzer Hara tries to make wrong things look better and nicer than they really are.
2. Chametz is "puffy" and blown up, while Matzah is flat.

Similarly, Chametz is inflated, haughty and boastful - although the same ingredients (flour and water) as Matzah. While Matzah is flat, humble and modest.

What is the difference between a humble person and a haughty one? A humble person knows that everything comes from Hashem, including his or her health, wealth, success, skills, talents and beauty. S/he is deeply grateful to Hashem for everything s/he has and thanks Hashem for everything s/he is able to do.

The humble person always tries to find the good in other people, and compliments them.

A haughty person is proud of his/herself and his/her accomplishments, thinking that s/he is the one who is successful - without giving the proper credit to Hashem.

The haughty person looks for faults, or "not so good" things about others and makes fun of others.

The humble person knows that the better you are, the more good you see in others and the more you become "bigger" by putting others down.

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The Ba'al Shem Tov was a holy, wise man. He taught, that when we look at others, it is like looking in a mirror. If we see good in others - we are good. If we see not good in them Hashem is showing us that we need to fix that same thing in ourselves.

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The words Chametz and Matzah, are composed of similar letters. Both words have a מ (Mem) and a צ (Tzadi). The only difference is the ה (He). Even these two letters are very similar, only a very small line sets apart the ה from the ח.

We can see that the ה of the Chametz has no opening at the top of the letter, while the ה of the Matzah does. This tells us that when one that acts in a "way of Chametz" he can get stuck and have a hard time "getting out", (the only way is down...) while the "Matzah person" has an "easy escape route", and can go higher and come closer to Hashem easier.

This tiny difference in the letters also shows us that Matzah can turn into Chametz very easily.

Another beautiful lesson: In order for the dough of Matzah to become Chametz, you don't even have to do anything - just let it rest. It will automatically turn into Chametz.

We, too, must always "work" with ourselves to be better. If we just "rest" and "relax" in our personal spiritual growth - we

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MATZAH SHMURAH / WATCHED/GUARDED

Ushmarstem Et Hamatzot (וישמרתם את המצות)
And you shall guard (- be careful with) the Matzot (Shemot 12:17)

The Matzah we use for Pesach is called *Matzah Shmurah*.

The word Shmurah means "watched" or "guarded". The careful watch begins while the wheat is still on the field and continues through its harvesting, selecting, grinding into flour - all the way to the sizzling brick Matzah oven. It is constantly under the supervision of trained Rabbis. And you must know, that Rabbis - like teachers - have eyes behind their ears...

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The water used to bake Matzah is called "Mayim Shelanu" - "water that rested overnight." This water is drawn from a well. The one who draws the water must have in mind, that this water is being drawn for the Mitzvah of baking Matzah.

Matzah is baked in a special "Matzah Bakery". There are only a few real Matzah Bakeries in the whole world!

From the moment the flour and water touch, we have up to 18 minutes for the Matzah to be baking - in the oven. Any more time than that can cause the flour and water to begin rising, and become Chametz.

In this exclusive Matzah Bakery - the timer is set to 18 minutes... the adrenalin begins to flow... and the race is on!

Under constant, careful supervision, flour and water are speedily mixed - the dough is rushed to the kneading table where it is kneaded, rolled and "holed"; (these are the special Matzah holes that are poked into the dough for the oven). (The Matzah is cooked in a very hot oven, so the dough is cooked very quickly.)

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(For a truly extraordinary experience...
- Visit a real Matzah bakery!
Guided tours are available in Brooklyn NY's Matzah Bakery.)

This hand baked Matzah is the best Matzah to eat on Pesach.

There are other kinds of Matzah that are also Kasher for Pesach. However, if at all possible, then, at least for the Seder nights, one should get the hand baked Matzah - which is closest to "the real thing" our ancestors ate on their way out of Egypt.

* Don't get confused with the common translation of the word מצות = mitzvot... this is NOT that word. Here the מצות is מצות = sleeping overnight.

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CLEANING FOR PESACH!!!

AS THE DUST SETTLES FROM THE PURIM NOSH AND EXCITEMENT...
MOMMY GETS INTO A CONTAGIOUS PESACH CLEANING MODE...
AS WE ALL GET INFECTED... THE CLEANING FRENZIES BEGINS!

We spend the few weeks between Purim and Pesach preparing our homes for Pesach. Our Mission: To remove all the Chametz from our homes.

How do we fulfill our Mission?

We sweep and wash floors, vacuum carpets, scrub tables and chairs, check our drawers, cabinets and clothes pockets and wipe our toys and books clean.

Here are some effective strategies to ensure our victory in our War Against Chametz (WAC), Pesach Cleaning Experience:

1. Strategy: Divide and Conquer.
 - a. Split up the jobs and rooms of the house amongst the family members, each child is responsible for a specific room and job.
2. Positioning:
 - a. The latest Reports from the battlefield tell us that the best way to succeed is to enter the room from the back of the room - the Kitchen - the back door.
 - b. As a room is inspected, the door should be closed.
3. Final Battle: The Kitchen!

The Kitchen is the final battleground... as we need to eat regularly until Pesach starts, our kitchen in the last to get cleaned.

Some things that are used for Chametz year round can be "Kashered" (made Kosher) for Pesach use.

The way to Kasher something is to boil or torch it, bringing it to a level of heat, at least as hot as it ever was while it was in contact with Chametz.

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There are many different levels of Kashering things.

1. Stoves, ovens and grills need to be Kashered with FIRE.
2. Pots, pans, silverware, sinks and countertops can often be Kashered with BOILING WATER.

The Kashering Mission is a dangerous one. It must be done by qualified adults with instructions from a qualified Rabbi. Don't try to Kasher at home alone!

Within the kitchen itself, here are some more areas to tackle:

1. Food:
 - a. All foods that are not Kosher for Pesach must be removed from our home or quarantined for the future Sale to our non Jewish Ally (as we will discuss soon).
2. Dishes:
 - a. Most Kosher homes today use a separate set of dishes and silverware for Pesach. It is VERY difficult, and sometimes impossible - to Kasher some utensils to be fit for Pesach use, after they've been used in Chametz.
3. Counters:
 - a. Counter tops must be covered with a special plastic cover & cover their countertops for extra protection.
4. Sinks:
 - a. Sinks must be Kashered for Pesach use. Many homes Kasher & Cover their sinks for extra protection.
5. Stove:
 - a. Sinks must be Kashered for Pesach use. If your stove has a "Self Cleaning" feature - running it (best 2x) is the easiest way to Kasher it.
6. Grills must be Kashered for Pesach use.
 - a. Grills need to be torched by fire until they are sizzling red hot.
7. Fridge:
 - a. Fridges and freezers need to be thoroughly cleaned for Pesach use. Many homes cover the shelves of the fridge for extra protection.

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THE SEARCH FOR CHOMETZ - BEDIKAT CHAMETZ

The night before Pesach, after the stars come out, we search our homes and property for Chametz.

Before our search begins, we prepare:

- Ten pieces of Chametz
- A beeswax candle
- A feather
- A wooden spoon
- A paper bag

During our search for leftover Chametz we may have missed in our home, we also "find" some "planted" pieces of Chametz. This is how it works:

Before the search, hard - no crumbs, tissue or plastic wrap.

Someone hides these ten pieces of Chametz all around the house. It is very important to note - on paper - where the Chametz was hidden in the house. It is easy to forget exactly where you hid your Chametz, and not finding it can cause an unnecessary Pesach Panic!

One of the reasons we hide the Chametz and then "find" it is because we recite a Bracha (blessing) before we start our search, and some say that if we do not find any Chametz - this would be considered a blessing in vain. Therefore we make sure that there is Chametz to be found!

A spiritual reason for setting ourselves up to "find" the Chametz is to teach us that even if we clean up our act very well, and even if we are very honest and try, we can still find some more to clean up!

For the search, we use a (single wick, beeswax) candle to direct the light in all the nooks, crannies and corners of our home.

We use a feather to "sweep" the Chametz we find into a large wooden spoon - somewhat of a makeshift dustpan. The Chametz goes from the spoon into a paper bag.

All these items will be burned the next morning, in our Chametz Burning Ceremony!

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BURNING THE CHOMETZ - B'UR CHAMETZ

בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן טָפוּרְתוּ מִבֵּיתְכֶם
On the first day you shall remove Chametz (leaven) from your homes (Shemot 12:15)

During Pesach, we are forbidden to own Chametz, see it in our possession or benefit from it in any way.

The Torah tells us to remove Chametz from our possession before Pesach.

We remove our last bits of Chametz by burning it.

We gather all the leftover Chametz into a safe area, or metal can, and burn it. We say a short prayer proclaiming that any Chametz that may still be in our possession - about which we do not know - is hereby nullified and canceled out: we give up our ownership of it. It is not ours anymore.

The Torah forbids... person may have Chametz that he doesn't want to burn or get rid of, because it is valuable. For example, if someone owns a store in which there are \$1000's of Chametz products, or even if we have our home cabinets full of crackers, pastas maybe even whisky and other Chametz items.

In this case, we are allowed to sell the Chametz to a non-Jewish person before Pesach.

The Chametz that will be sold to a non-Jew, should be removed from our house and given to the non-Jew. If the Chametz needs to stay in our home, it must be closed off - locked or

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CANDLE LIGHTING – HADLAKAT NEROT

On Pesach evening - before sunset, we light the Yom Tov - Holiday candles.

WHAT	HOW	WHY
We light Yom Tov - Holiday candles	Women and girls light the Yom Tov - Holiday candles before sunset. The blessings are: BARUCH ATA, ADD-NAY E-LO-HEI-NU ME-LEH HA-OLAM ASHER KI-DESHANU BE-MITZVOT-TAV VE-TZI-YANU LE-HADLIK NER SHIEL YOM TOV. (If Yom Tov - Holiday falls on Shabbat, then we end with: <i>om Tov – to</i>)	1. To honor the day, we light candles for it. 2. It adds peace in the home, when we light candles for Shabbat and Yom Tov - Holiday. 3. We wait until nightfall on the second night, because we are not allowed to prepare from


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We then say the special BRACHA thanking Hashem for keeping us alive and healthy to celebrate this occasion:
BARUCH ATA ADD-NAY
E-LO-HEI-NU ME-LEH HA-OLAM
SHE-HICHE-YA-NU VE-KI-YI-MA-NU
VE-HIG-A-NU LIZ-MAN HA-ZEH.

On the second night, the candles are lit after three stars appear.

We should also light these candles from a fire that was already burning during Yom Tov.

We are not allowed to create a new fire on Yom Tov.



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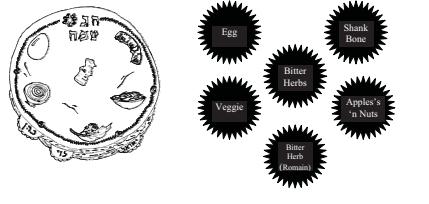
THE SEDER PLATE

For the Seder, we stack three Matzot, on top each other.

WHAT	WHY
We prepare three Matzot for the Seder plate	1. We need two Matzot for the usual double loaf that we have every Shabbat and Yom Tov - Holiday. The third Matzah is the bread of affliction / poverty (of poor people), specifically for the Seder night. 2. The three Matzot represent our three forefathers: > Abraham > Isaac

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The Seder plate itself is called the "Ka'arah - Bowl"
The Ka'arah has six things on it, and is set up in the following way.



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Zero'ah: A piece of roasted meat: Usually a shank bone or the neck of a chicken.

This represents the Pesach Offering. It is called the "Zero'ah" from the words: "Uv'zero'ah Netuyah" – referring to Hashem's "outstretched arm" with which He took us out of Egypt.

Beitzah: A hard boiled egg.

This represents the Festival Offering.
An egg is used here, because the egg is round, and as the "Wheel Of Destiny" turns it is a sign of our mourning over the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash – the Holy Temple.

Maror: Bitter Herbs, usually horseradish and/or romaine lettuce.

To remember the hard and bitter work the Jews were forced to do for the Egyptians.

Charoset: A mixture of grated apples, nuts and red wine.

Other fruits, and spices are sometimes added (i.e. dates, pears, cinnamon etc.). Resembling the cement the Jewish People were forced to make.

Karpas: A vegetable, most com

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The vegetable will be d... shed in Egypt.

Chazret: Romaine lettuce.

This is considered a kind of Bitter Herb, because it starts out sweet and grows increasingly bitter. So too, in Egypt, the Jews began working for Pharaoh for pay (sweet) then it developed into a slavery (bitter). The lettuce is used for the sandwich of Koresch – the tenth section of the Seder, when we "sandwich" the Matzah and Maror.

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THE FOUR CUPS

During the Seder we drink four cups of wine. Why four?
Each of the "Four Cups" of wine have their own purpose:

Cup # 1 - is for Kiddush, which we make every Shabbat and Yom Tov.
Cup # 2 - for the Haggadah - we drink it after we read from the Haggadah.
Cup # 3 - is for Birkat Hamazon/Bentsching (grace after the meal).
Cup # 4 - is for Hallel – the praise we say to Hashem, in section #14 of our Seder!

Some other reasons for the 4 cups:
Just as the 3 Matzot represent our 3 Fathers, the four cups represent the four Mothers:

Sarah Rebekka Rachel Leah

The most famous reason for the 4 cups is that they represent the "Four Expressions of Redemption" which Hashem uses while describing our redemption:

Ve'hotzati	and I will take you (out)	וְהוֹצֵאתִי
Ve'hitzalti	and I will save you	וְהִצַּלְתִּי
Ve'ga'alti	and I will redeem you	וְגִאֲלֹתִי
Ve'takalti	and I will take you	וְתִקַּחְתִּי
Ve'neveti	And I	וְנִבְעַתִּי

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We drink one cup for each of the...
The fifth expression "Ve'veveti" – And I will bring you into the land... also reminds us of our future redemption - and for that we have the "fifth cup" – the cup of Elijah the Prophet.

Quick Cup Chart:

CUP #	REASON #1	REASON #2	REASON #4
1	Kiddush	Sarah	And I will take you out
2	Haggadah	Rebekka	And I will save you
3	Birkat Hamazon	Rachel	And I will redeem you
4	Hallel / Praise	Leah	And I will take you

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THE SEDER – ORDER OF THE NIGHT

What do we do on Pesach night? We have a Seder of course! What does that mean? We sit down to a festive meal, and do lots of different things, some of which seem pretty strange to the untrained eye...
The Seder usually lasts quite a few hours. The problem is that children might fall asleep before it is over, and the Seder really is mainly for the children!

Therefore, our Rabbis established that we do things during the Seder that will help keep the children awake. These are unusual things, some of which seem pretty strange to the untrained eye...
The child will then be asked about all the interesting things that are happening, and will stay awake.

This also gives the parents the opportunity to answer the question, by telling the child the reason for this Seder. "...Long, long ago, we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem took us out with a strong hand..."

You will also notice that during our Seder we do seemingly contradictory (opposite) things. We recline towards our left side while we eat, as that is the custom of Kings, a sign of royalty and freedom, and we also eat the bitter Maror as a sign of slavery!

These opposite feelings are expressed throughout the Seder, because on this night, we remember both our slavery in Egypt, and our freedom and redemption from Egypt. For, in order to really appreciate our freedom, we need to remember our slavery. Therefore we do many things that represent freedom and others that symbolize slavery.

On a deeper level:

The message of Pesach is freedom from slavery. Sometimes we are slaves to our habits, feelings and emotions. Pesach is our time to free ourselves from our personal slavery. Pesach inspires us to take control of our thoughts, speech and actions, to better ourselves in our daily lives.

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THE SEDER SIGNS – SIMANIM HASEDER

KADESH	MAGGID	MAROR	TZAFUN
URCHATZ	RACHTZAH	KORECH	BARECH
KARPAS	MOTZIE	SHULCHAN -	HALLEL
YACHATZ	MATZAH	- ORECH	NIRTZAH

The word Seder means order. Since there are so many important laws and customs regarding the Seder Pesach, our Rabbis arranged the Seder in a very orderly 15 steps. They also gave us 15 signs to help us remember the "order" of the Seder. These signs are called the "Signs of the Seder." Here is a quick tour through the seder.

KADESH KIDDUSH

We make Kiddush on wine, just as we do on every Shabbat and Yom Tov, to honor the day and make it holy.
This is the first cup of the four cups. We drink the entire cup reclining towards our left side (leaning on a pillow if possible) as a symbol of freedom.

KADESH: **NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE**
The beginning of all journeys is actually walking out the door: you've got to leave somewhere to go somewhere else. It is also the first step towards freedom: We ignore the voice of our internal Pharaoh/Yetzer Harah inside that mocks us, and tries to keep us in the same spiritual place by saying, "Who are you to even begin such a transformative journey?"
Step one is leave. Just get up and rise above your current condition.
This is the first meaning of the word, "Kadesh" – to rise above / leave our current condition. Then we are ready for the second meaning: Once we've set ourselves free, we've got the power to transform and sanctify a similar situation, to make it a holy one.
When we take real steps to being better, less selfish and more selfless – we have begun our Journey to Personal Freedom.

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URCHATZ WASHING

We wash our hands.
We wash our hands to purify ourselves before we touch the vegetable we will (next) dip into the saltwater.
One of the reasons for this is, to arouse children's curiosity so they will ask "Why?"

URCHATZ: Washing our hands.
We use our hands to hug, to work, to play, and sometimes G-d forbid, for no good.
Our hands obey our feelings. You love your Mom - you'll reach out and hug her. Angry at someone? You may lash out at him.

It's our mind's job to control our emotions and tell us when to back off, cool down or go ahead and hug it out.
But sometimes the mind sees one way, while the heart feels another way, and we end up doing what the heart wants, instead of what the mind knows.
Water represents the healing power of wisdom, our mind's power to control our feelings. Water flows downward, carrying its life-giving power to each thing, helping it grow. We pour water over our hands to symbolize our own mind's wisdom pouring downward, passing through our heart, thoughts and feelings and then on to our body – our actions.

When is any in Good?

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THE DIPP

Now we take a small piece of a vegetable, usually parsley, a potato or onion, we say the Bracha: Borei Pri Haadama, and we eat it.
The dipped veggie is like an "appetizer" or "Entrée", which symbolizes our freedom and royalty.
It is also designed to arouse children's curiosity, that they should ask "Why is this night different...?"
The dipping into salt water is to remember our slavery.
KARPAS: Remembering the Bitterness.
Sometimes we need to taste the back-breaking, soul-crushing labor of Egypt to free ourselves from it once again. Our years in slavery prepared us for freedom by making us humble and able to accept Hashem's wisdom.
Being humble means realizing that "I am not the most important thing in this world, and I don't need to get my way all the time." It means

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YACHATZ THE SPLIT

recognizing that "I was created by Hashem just like everyone else – and all other creatures and insects, plants and minerals. Hashem put me here in this world for a reason. And I'd better get to it..."
How can we become humble today without slavery and suffering?
Look up at the stars above. Gaze at the marvelous world around you. When we realize how small we are relative to this great world Hashem created, and the creation of this world is such an insignificant, tiny part of what Hashem can do, we can become humble.
We are on Stop #3 of our Personal Spiritual Journey to Freedom! Keep on truckin'!

YACHATZ: Our Journey to Freedom

THE SPLIT

We break the middle Matzah into two uneven parts (one bigger than the other). We put away the bigger piece for the Afikoman. We put the smaller half back between the two Matzot.
Some have the custom to hide the Afikoman from the children... Why? When you reach the Afikoman section you will see!
The Matzah is called Lechem Oni – "the bread of affliction or poverty" or "the poor bread", reminding us of the hard times in Egypt.

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YACHATZ: Our Journey to Freedom

As long as we feel whole and complete, there is no room left for us to grow. The broken Matzah lets us realize how small we are in this big world, that we need Hashem's help – and the help of others around us, that are not perfect. When we come to this conclusion - miracles begin in our lives.
Humility brings us to the place where we can actually start to feel Hashem in our lives, because we made room for Him.
So move over, and invite Hashem to help you drive. Now we are really going places!

Some break the 1000g into 5 pieces.

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MAGGID STORY TIME


We read the Haggadah. Why do we need the Haggadah - isn't drinking for cups enough...?
The word Haggadah which means "telling" comes from the Pasuk in the Torah which says "Yehigadilta Levincha - And you should tell your child." This is the commandment to parents, to tell, talk about and remember the story of our Exodus from Egypt.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

KI Yish'alcha Bincha...	כי יִשְׁאֵלְכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם...
When your son will ask...	וְשִׂאֵלְכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם...
Ve'amarta Elav...	וְאָמַרְתָּ לָּם...
And you shall say to him...	וְאָמַרְתָּ לָּם...

The Torah says "When your child will ask you - you should tell your child..."
We learn from this that on Pesach night, we need to tell the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim (= the Exodus from Egypt) in questions / answer form.
The child must first...
This also teaches us, that parents should welcome and encourage questions from their children. Our children are the future leaders and the more they know – the better our future will be.

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THE FOUR QUESTIONS
(In Hebrew, Yiddish and English)

Father I would like to ask you four questions: טאטען איך ווילן יך דער פאנצער פראגען

טען וועגן דעם הלילה הזה בכל הלילות? וועט איר זאגן דעם די נאכט פון פסח פון אלע נאכטן פון א פאנצער פראגען?

Why is this night different from all other nights?
The first question is: ארויסקעט שטיין איר: **●** עפעס וועגן דעם הלילה הזה בכל הלילות

On all other nights we may eat Chametz and Matzah, and on this night only Matzah. אירע נאכטן פון א פאנצער פראגען וועט איר זאגן דעם די נאכט פון פסח פון אלע נאכטן פון א פאנצער פראגען?

The second question is: ארויסקעט שטיין איר: **●** עפעס וועגן דעם הלילה הזה בכל הלילות

On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables, and on this night only Maror. אירע נאכטן פון א פאנצער פראגען וועט איר זאגן דעם די נאכט פון פסח פון אלע נאכטן פון א פאנצער פראגען?

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The third question is: ארויסקעט שטיין איר: **●** עפעס וועגן דעם הלילה הזה בכל הלילות

On all other nights we are not required to dip our vegetables even once, and on this night we are required to do so twice. אירע נאכטן פון א פאנצער פראגען וועט איר זאגן דעם די נאכט פון פסח פון אלע נאכטן פון א פאנצער פראגען?

The fourth question is: ארויסקעט שטיין איר: **●** עפעס וועגן דעם הלילה הזה בכל הלילות

On all other nights we eat sitting upright or reclining, and on this night we all recline. אירע נאכטן פון א פאנצער פראגען וועט איר זאגן דעם די נאכט פון פסח פון אלע נאכטן פון א פאנצער פראגען?

Father, I've asked you four questions, now, please answer me.

טאטען איך ווילן יך דעם פאנצער פראגען נאך, נאך, נאך, נאך.

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Then the father replies – in answer to the 4 questions: "Avadim Hayim" "We were enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt... and Hashem freed us with awesome wonders and miracles." Therefore we tell the story at length.

"And Hashem arm - (with gr...)"

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The Torah hints to us that there are differing attitudes towards our Tradition, as we see in THE FAMOUS FOUR SONS:

- The Wise Son: The Wise Son shows wisdom and interest in Hashem and His commandments.
- The Wicked One: The Wicked One excludes himself from the Jewish community.
- The Simple Son: The Simple Son asks simple questions.
- He Does Not Know To Ask: This child is not yet mature enough to ask (real) questions.

As we read about the 10 plagues, we pour some wine out of our cup, into a bowl.

- Some dip their little finger into the cup and remove the wine with a "lick."
- Some pour the wine from the cup into a bowl.

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MAGID: RUN FOR YOUR LIFE...
Magid isn't just the retelling of an event that happened to us in our past. When we left Mitzrayim, we became a holy nation. This is the story of each one of us, happening over and over again. It is our constant, personal fight with our Yetzer Hara, our struggle to free ourselves from his clutches, to enable us to be who we are meant to be.

From Judah the Macabbees to Samson the Mighty to Houdini the Magician, Jews have always been trying to get freedom from something. It's in our blood to escape from where we are to move ever higher.

Leaving our personal Mitzrayim is like breathing to our Neshama's strength. We actually "feed" our Neshama when we eat Matzah! When we talk about the Exodus, we are reminding ourselves why we came into this world, and what our job is here: to break through our own "chains", to grow spiritually and share the beauty of Hashem's Torah with the world.

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28 פסח PESACH

Rachtzah Washing

We wash our hands the way we do before eating bread. Three times on the right, then three times on the left. (Some wash 2 times on each hand.) We say the usual blessing "Al Netilat Yadayim" and prepare for the next Bracha – coming soon!

ROCHTZA: Dig something – wash your hands!

When Hashem took the us out of Egypt, he gave us more than freedom. He gave us the power to always free ourselves from the slavery of our Yetzer Hara, and become better people.

We have the power to go higher and become closer to Hashem. But every time we get closer to Hashem, we are reminded:

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We need to take that love and connection we feel towards Hashem and bring it down into an act of a Mitzvah.

Throughout the Seder, and throughout our lives as well, there is a constant cycle that brings us first closer to Hashem, and then back to "the real world". We need to take the energy and strength we get from our special connection to Hashem, and put it into action: doing Mitzvah and learning Torah.

Matzah! Hey – I haven't had that in a while – my mouth is watering!

Motze Knead the Hamotze

While holding all three Matzot in our hands, we say the customary bracha over bread (in this case Matzah) ... "Hamotzei Lechem Min Ha'arets"

MOTZIE: Food's Journey

Do you ever wonder why we enjoy our food so much? It's because we have a lot in common with food!

We and the bread share a common journey. The bread begins as a seed buried beneath the ground. And then, a miracle occurs: As it rises and loses its original form, it comes alive, and it sprouts and grows. As spring arrives, it pushes its way above the earth to find the sun, and then bears its fruits for the world.

We also began buried in Egypt, all but losing our identity as Jews. But that terrible place of slavery was like a fiery furnace that made us pure. Our birth as a nation came when we left Egypt in the month of spring.

So in this step in our road trip, as you prepare to enjoy your matzah, think about how much work and effort goes into creating the flat, crispy and crunchy treat. Then think about how much Hashem has done for us to prepare us for our journey towards Freedom.

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Matzah Bless and each the Matzah!

MATZAH: The Ultimate Energy Bar.

Q: When do you get to actually EAT a Matzah?

A: Only on Pesach! Since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, Matzah is the only opportunity we have to actually eat a mitzvah. That's right, the matzah you are eating is pure G-dliness. In fact, it has enough G-dly energy to blast your soul out of the deepest ditch into the highest heights.

The Zohar calls matzah "Bread of Emunah" and "Bread of Healing". Emunah means a lot more than just faith. Emunah is when you touch that place where your Neshama and the essence of Hashem's light are one.

Eating matzah helps us plug into Hashem's essence, and gives our Neshama strength. We actually "feed" our Neshama when we eat Matzah!

How in the world, you may ask, can a mixture of water and wheat from the ground baked in an oven contain a spiritual cure?

Well, welcome to the world of the Jewish People, where there is no separation of body and soul, where objects become holy - like Tefillin, and our soul powers our emotions, mind and body. It's a place where bodies are led by the physical and spiritual alike.

So on this stop, we focus on doing things with our body - eat, sleep, laugh - to strengthen our Neshama and our connection to Hashem.

Bitter Herbs

We take about a spoonful of Maror (horseradish), dip it into the Charoset, say the Bracha... and outch! This stuff is strong!

MAROR: Bitterness that works!

So here we are, zooming along on the highway of life, and we've come to this POTHOLE. It's huge. It's dangerous, and lots of cars have lost their tires and even their wheels flying over this big crack in the ground. Let's take a minute and think about how many lives have been endangered because the Highway maintenance people haven't been doing their jobs. In fact, while I think about this I am getting angry, and even a little bitter. What's good about bitterness? Why do we want to remember bad things, the horror of our years of slavery and hardship?

Actually, our bitterness in Egypt was and is the key to our redemption.

We never got used to Egypt. We never felt we belonged there.

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We never said, "They are the masters and we are the slaves and that's the way it is." It always remained something we felt sad and angry about, something that was unjust and needed to change.

If it hadn't been that way, we probably would never have left. In fact, tradition tells us that 80% of the Jews said, "This is our land. How can we leave it?" And they stayed and died there.

But as for the rest of us, when Moses came and told us we were going to leave, we believed him. It was our bitterness that had preserved our faith.

But while we remember the sad times, and even cry about them, we need to know that we do not need to stay in that sad mood. We need to focus on what we can do to make sure things get better. Just like the sweet charoset we put on the bitter herbs, we need to direct the energy of our anger and bitterness towards making this world a better place.

Personally, we all have our own Egypt. You've got to know who you are and what your limitations are. But heaven forbid, don't make peace with them. The soul within you KNOWS NO LIMITS. Know you aren't perfect! Well, it's about time you realized that. But don't stop now. Get to work on yourself and make yourself better. You CAN do it!

So put on your yellow construction hat and FIX THAT POTHOLE. And tell everyone else to slow down as they drive by, because you are a Man (or Woman) at Work, fixing up the road of life!

Korach

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Let's get into orbit for this part of our trip. Sometimes we need to be above the world to get the right angle on things, and Korach is a perfect opportunity to blast off into outer space.

How does earth look from outer space? Well, I've never been there, but the pictures taken from space show our world glowing in beautiful greens, tans and blues.

We all know that when we zoom in on the detail, our world does not look like that. Streets can be dirty, not all people act nice, and in some places, we can't even find a tree. But we know that from the Hagar picture, the world is by far the best planet to live on... simply because there is no other place for us to live!

When we are living our life down below in this world, we see things like people fighting, or caring about things that aren't important like fancy cars, clothes or the latest Play Station or pure. Sometimes we see our Mitzvah as a bunch of do's and don'ts, and life is tough, full of responsibility and problems.

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But from up high in Korach orbit, things look different.

We can see that all the Mitzvot are different expressions of a single spiritual path, all of us Jews are multiple faces to a single soul, and all the problems we encounter are testing our commitment to our journey.

Like separate instruments in a single orchestra, the world creates beautiful music in harmony under the leadership of the Great Conductor: Hashem.

Like astronauts blasting off into space, we need to think of everything we do and face in this world as part of our mission from Hashem. Taking out the garbage? Part of the job detail. Doing homework? That's preparing for our space walk.

When you start to think that way, then all the bitter, all the sweet and all the boring parts of life wrap together in a single tasty sandwich.

Preparing to land... Space Mission Accomplished!

Meal Time

Finally... we eat the festive Yom Tov meal...

Shulchan Orech

SHULCHAN ORECH: Bring your food along!

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We're back on the ground, and now we start the process again - on a higher level. Because each time we reach higher, we turn around and bend down, and bring the parts of ourselves and our world that are not as high up to our higher place. That's what freedom is: when you can turn around and free ALL the elements of your world and make them holy, not just your soul.

That's what we do when we eat every day - we take foods which grow from the earth, say a blessing over them and bring them into our journey as human beings. And when it's Shabbat or another Jewish holiday, we elevate them further and make them even holier. As for tonight, this meal is going to be truly Divine.

So those road stops for Matzah, Maror and Korach were just a taste for what's to come. Don't imagine we're just finally getting to sit down to a real meal now. We're reaching a higher state. And what a great way to do it!

Pass the chicken, please!

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Tafkin Hidden

We bring the Matzah that we put away for the Afikoman, and distribute a piece of it to all the people in the house. Afikoman means "desert", and it is in the place of the Pesach offering they would bring.

The Afikoman - like the offering - must be eaten last, after the meal. We do not eat anything after the Afikoman!

Why do some "hide" the Afikoman?

It all started, many years ago... when people wanted to be extra careful not to eat it during the meal - so they so they put it away for later. These poor unsuspecting parents... had to deal with their kids... who found the spot and decided that if Mom & Dad want the Afikoman bad enough - they will need to pay for it!

Another reason is similar to most of the other strange things we do on this night: to arouse the curiosity of the children and keep them awake!

Some families do not follow this "disappearing Afikoman" custom, because, although the children "take" the Afikoman with their parents' knowledge, it is just a little too similar to stealing, and we should not get used to doing things that are "similar" to wrong things!

TZAFKIN: THE INSIDE STORY...
We've been talking a lot about our soul. Do you know there is something even deeper for government leaders who are trying to control our lives with their power. The only way we can touch that part inside of us is when Hashem gives us the power to do it.

On Pesach night, we have that power. But only after all the steps are done before. Destroying our personal charmes, preparing our homes for freedom, the eleven steps of the Seder until now. When we have done all this work, and connected every part of ourselves to Hashem, that's when that power comes to us. Whether we feel it or not, tasteless as it may seem to have that dry cracker on a full stomach... the Matzah we eat now reaches deep into our core and transforms our very being.

We learn an important lesson from this step on our journey: Things you find to be inspiring or nice will take you forward in life. But to really make a real change, you need to do something that may go against our nature. You might find it embarrassing, or difficult, or even painful, but when you get past those barriers, you will get to a place where never imagined you could be. So don't let those roadblocks stop you. Find a way around them. Hashem has given you that power. Use it!

