



# The Seder

**אדם**

**BETH ADAM**  
JUDAISM WITH A  
HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE

## INTRODUCTION

**T**he long history of our people is one of contrasts — freedom and slavery, joy and pain, power and helplessness. Passover reflects these contrasts. Tonight as we celebrate our freedom, we remember the slavery of our ancestors and realize that many people are not yet free.

Each generation changes — our ideas, our needs, our dreams, even our celebrations. So has Passover changed over many centuries into our present holiday. Our nomadic ancestors gathered for a spring celebration when the sheep gave birth to their lambs. Theirs was a celebration of the continuity of life. Later, when our ancestors became farmers, they celebrated the arrival of spring in their own fashion. Eventually these ancient spring festivals merged with the story of the Exodus from Egypt and became a new celebration of life and freedom.

As each generation gathered around the table to retell the old stories, the symbols took on new meanings. New stories of slavery and liberation, oppression and triumph were added, taking their place next to the old. Tonight we add our own special chapter as we recall our people's past and we dream of the future.

For Jews, our enslavement by the Egyptians is now remote, a symbol of communal remembrance. As we sit here in the comfort of our modern world, we think of the millions who still suffer the brutality of the existence that we escaped thousands of years ago.

The opportunities and the need to create a less violent, less oppressive world are enormous. But cruelty and apathy are still with us — across the ocean, across the border, across the street. It is up to each of us, each day, in small but profound ways to move our world one step closer to its potential.

(Lift matzah)

This is the bread of affliction,  
the bread which our ancestors ate in Egypt.  
All who are hungry — come and eat.  
All who are needy — come share our Passover  
dream, a dream which only we can create.

Ha lach-ma an-yah di-a-cha-lu  
av-ha-ta-na b'ar-ah d'mitz-ra-yim.  
Kol dich-fin yay-tay v'yay-chul,  
kol ditz-rich yay-tay v'yif-sach  
Ha-sha-tah ha-cha la-sha-nah ha-ba-ah  
b'ar-ah d'yis'ra-el, ha-sha-tah  
av-day, la-sha-nah ha-ba-ah  
b'nay chor-rin.

הָא לַחְמַא עֲנִיָא דִּי אֲכַלּוּ  
אֲבֹהֵתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.  
כָּל דְּכָפִין יִיתִי וְיִכַל,  
כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ יִיתִי וְיִפְסַח.  
הַשָּׁתָא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה  
בְּאַרְעָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל. הַשָּׁתָא  
עֲבָדִי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה  
בְּנֵי חוֹרִין.

## MATZAH

*What is the meaning of Matzah?*

Matzah is both a reminder of our past and a symbol of our future. It was first used to celebrate the spring festival when our farming ancestors threw out their sour dough — the leavening — and baked unleavened bread to welcome the New Year.

Later the Matzah became associated with the Exodus from Egypt. As the Torah says, “And they baked unleavened bread from the dough which they brought out of Egypt. There was not sufficient time to allow it to rise, for they were fleeing Egypt and could not wait.” Matzah recalls the slavery of our ancestors, their triumph over tyranny.

In our own generation, Matzah has become a symbol of hope, urging us to speak for those who do not yet know freedom. We who celebrate Passover commit ourselves to the continuing struggle against oppression. We become the voices for those locked within prison cells, for those exiled from their homes, their families, their communities. We who know freedom are the guardians of their ideas.

(Eat Matzah)



