

Passover

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא
לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

**Blessed are You, Adonai, Ruler of the universe who brings forth
bread from the earth.**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל-אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.

**Blessed are You, Adonai, Ruler of the universe who sanctifies us
and commands us to eat matzah.**

The Four Questions

The youngest participant recites or sings the Four Questions

Followed by a group recitation (singing) of the following:

Why is this night different from all other nights, from all other nights?	Mah nishtanah ha-lahylah ha-zeh mi-kol ha-layloht, mi-kol ha-layloht?
On all other nights, we may eat chametz and matzah, chametz and matzah. On this night, on this night, only matzah.	She-b'khol ha-layloht anu okhlin chameytz u-matzah, chameytz u-matzah. Ha-lahylah ha-zeh, ha-lahylah ha-zeh, kooloh matzah.
On all other nights, we eat many vegetables, many vegetables. On this night, on this night, maror.	She-b'khol ha-layloht anu okhlin sh'ar y'rakot, sh'ar y'rakot. Ha-lahylah ha-zeh, ha-lahylah ha-zeh, maror.
On all other nights, we do not dip even once. On this night, on this night, twice.	She-b'khol ha-layloht ayn anu mat'bilin afilu pa'am echat, afilu pa'am echat. Ha-lahylah ha-zeh, ha-lahylah ha-zeh, sh'tay p'amim.
On all other nights, we eat either sitting or reclining, either sitting or reclining. On this night, on this night, we all recline.	She-b'khol ha-layloht anu okhlin bayn yosh'bin u'vayn m'soobin, bayn yosh'bin u'vayn m'soobin. Ha-lahylah ha-zeh, ha-lahylah ha-zeh, koolanu m'soobin.

The Story of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt

Slavery

Jacob brought his family to Egypt to be with his son Joseph, who had become Viceroy of all Egypt. Over time, the children of Israel multiplied in the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh feared the Israelites were becoming too influential and powerful. He started to oppress and enslave them as a way of weakening them. The Israelites were forced to build cities, erect monuments, construct roads, work in the quarries and hew stones.

Despite the oppression, the Israelites continued to multiply. So Pharaoh decreed that all male newborns of Jewish mothers be killed.

Moses

Jacob's great-grandson, Amram, who married Yocheved, had a daughter Miriam and a son named Aaron. Yocheved then gave birth to a third child. To save him from being killed by Pharaoh's soldiers, she placed him in a basket which she hid amongst the reeds at the edge of the Nile River.

When Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe in the Nile she discovered the baby. She called the baby Moses (drawn from the water) and decided to raise him herself in the palace. She hired the baby's mother, Yocheved, to be his nurse. As Moses grew, Yocheved taught him about his Jewish heritage.

Plagues

The suffering of the enslaved Jewish People increased. When Moses was 80 years old and his brother Aaron was 83 years old, they entered the palace of King Pharaoh to deliver a message: "The God of Israel said, 'Let My people go, that they may serve me.'" Pharaoh did not believe in the God of the Israelites, and he refused to let the Jewish slaves go free.

When Pharaoh continued to refuse to liberate the children of Israel, Moshe and Aaron warned him that God would punish both him and his people with plagues.

First, the waters of the land of Egypt turned into blood. Then the entire land was covered by the plague of frogs. The third plague had lice crawling forth from the dust to cover all of Egypt. Despite the plagues, Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go.

The fourth plague consisted of hordes of wild animals roving all over the country destroying everything in their path. After this plague, Pharaoh promised to let the Jews go on condition that they would not go too far. Moshe prayed to God, and the wild animals disappeared. But as soon as they had gone, Pharaoh changed his mind and decided not to let the Jewish slaves go free.

Then God sent the fifth plague - a fatal pestilence that killed most of the domestic

animals of the Egyptians. In the sixth plague, boils burst forth upon man and beast throughout Egypt.

Now Moses announced to Pharaoh that a violent hailstorm would kill everything that was outside and not sheltered. Pharaoh started to relent and agreed to let the Jewish men go free, but Pharaoh insisted that the Jewish women and children and all their possessions remain in Egypt. Moshe and Aaron could not accept his offer.

With the eighth plague, swarms of locusts devoured everything green that had escaped the hail and previous plagues. The ninth plague was a blanket of darkness that enveloped all of Egypt except for Goshen, where the children of Israel lived.

Finally at midnight on the 15th of Nissan all firstborn in the land of Egypt began dying, including the firstborn of King Pharaoh, exactly as Moshe had warned.

At this point, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said to them: "Arise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel; and go, serve God as you have said, and go, and bless me also."

Exodus

The Jews departed Egypt in haste. They assembled in groups to eat the roasted paschal lamb and the unleavened bread (matzah). Then after the sun rose on the 15th day of Hebrew month of Nissan, the Jewish nation rose together to leave the land of Egypt.

After three days, Pharaoh started to regret that he had permitted the Israelites to leave. He mobilized his army in hot pursuit of his former slaves. He reached them near the banks of the Red Sea.

Moses led the Israelites onwards until they came to the very borders of the Red Sea. Then God spoke to Moshe: "Lift up your rod, stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it; and the children shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground." Moshe did as God ordered. Then a strong east wind blew all night, and the waters of the Red Sea divided. The Israelites marched along a dry path through the Red Sea until they reached the opposite side in safety.

The Egyptians continued their pursuit, but the waters of the Red Sea closed over them and drowned Pharaoh's army.

Birth of the Jewish Nation

Thus, God liberated the children of Israel from the Egyptians. And the children of Israel saw God's great power and believed in God.

The story of Passover recounts the birth of the Jewish people as a nation whose ultimate goal is to be a "light unto the nations."