

Connect With Israel Through Your Seder

The Passover seder is a special experience, a unique observance quite fitting for the Jewish people who pride ourselves on the preservation of our history; both our success and our suffering, through our collective memory.

Each culture celebrates with unique customs that reflect its adaptation to life in different countries all over the world. These customs enrich our understanding and appreciation of the holiday, and they point to the diversity of age-old Jewish traditions that evolved from the cultures in which they were nurtured.

In Israel, each of these Diaspora cultures continues to be represented on Seder Night—Leil HaSeder – ליל הסדר. Yes, here in the homeland we only have one, while around the world it is celebrated with two recountings of the Exodus story.

Could it be that, in addition to the halachic reasons, this is so that every Jewish home around the world should have that extra reminder of their home so far away?

Every child in Israel has been singing about the arrival of spring and Pesach for weeks, helping to clean the gan and taking part in a traditional seder. Every restaurant, car and home goes through a spring cleaning—regardless of how observant one might be. It is tradition. It is our history. And even the most secular Israelis will find themselves at a Passover seder of some type.

As we turn another page of the Haggadah, how can we remind ourselves that this is the story of our return to Israel? Must it wait until the very, very end for the declaration of “next year in Jerusalem?” And since we all know how tough it is to find the time and money to get to Israel, can we somehow

fulfill this declaration of commitment from wherever we may be in the world?

Haggadah of Independence:1950s

We sing of the release of the nation of Israel from slavery, we recount the passing over of the angel of death of the houses of the children of Israel. But within the text itself, it is easy to forget that the questions being asked cannot only connect us with this ancient history, but also with our wanderings and our journey as a people en route to our destination—our ancient home in the land of Israel.

Not only should we think, “how are we to remember the plagues and our escape from bondage,” but we should remember as well the land of freedom to which our destiny is bound.

“Just as in my youth we had a ‘matzah of hope’ to carve out time from the historic ritual to remember the contemporary challenges of Soviet Jewry, we need to use this most popular Jewish ritual to delight in the miracle of Israel’s surviving—and thriving.” —*Virtual Citizen of Israel Gil Troy*

As you prepare for your seder night(s), take a moment to consider how you and your family can bring a touch of Israel to your seder ceremony.

Add a reading, or any of the unique Passover traditions celebrated in Israel’s diverse culture as evidence of the ingathering of the exiles—from Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco, Poland, everywhere. Or reflect upon the meaning of Israel to you today. At your seder, awaken a pride in the state for which the exiles from Egypt could only dream.

Do as the Iraqi!

Children hoist bags over their backs and reenact the journey through the desert. One child asks, “Where are you coming from?” “From Egypt,” replies another child. “Where are you going?” the third child asks. “To Jerusalem,” the fourth child smiles.

Honor a Moroccan Tradition

While at the seder, the Moroccan Jews pass a seder plate over the head of each person as they recite a Hebrew phrase about fleeing Egypt as a slave. Incorporate this into a nightly ritual for any dinner during the week of Passover.

Many, if not most Israelis, have a passion for ecology. Thus was born the “ecological seder.” A combination of a celebration of nature, of earth and our obligation to it, the story of Passover can indeed be intertwined in a most interesting way with the geographical, geological and ecological significance of the land of Israel.

Israel has opened her doors to refugees from a number of countries seeking asylum from their native country, or having returned to land from which they believe they—as descendants of the tribes of Israel—are linked. Take a moment with your family to reflect on both the meaning and challenge of Israel’s role as a haven for refugees, considering our long history as refugees ourselves.

However you choose to celebrate this important historical event in our nation’s history, let it always serve as a reminder of the freedom we have achieved by having returned home to the land that the nation of Israel dreamed of on their journey home, and our connection to our ancestral land from near and far.

Just as we are to learn of the Passover story and the exodus from Egypt as if we were there, so, too shall we share in the connection to Israel from our corner of the world as if we are there.

For the original article, visit .