



# PASSOVER

SWEET MORTAR ON FREEDOM BREAD

*The Taste of Liberation Is Sharper with Pain*

# HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

## *Passover*

### **What Is Passover?**

The eight-day festival of Passover is celebrated in the early spring, from the fifteenth through the twenty-second of the Hebrew month of Nisan. It commemorates the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt. And, by following the rituals of Passover, we have the ability to relive and experience the true freedom that our ancestors gained.

### **The Story in a Nutshell**

After many decades of slavery to the Egyptian pharaohs, during

which time the Israelites were subjected to backbreaking labor and unbearable horrors, G-d saw the people's distress and sent Moses to Pharaoh with a message: "Send forth My people, so that they may serve Me." But despite numerous warnings, Pharaoh refused to heed G-d's command. G-d then sent upon Egypt ten devastating plagues, afflicting them and destroying everything from their livestock to their crops.

At the stroke of midnight of 15 Nisan in the year 2448 from Creation (1313 BCE), G-d visited the last of the ten plagues on the Egyptians, killing all their

firstborns. While doing so, G-d spared the Children of Israel, "passing over" their homes—hence the name of the holiday. Pharaoh's resistance was broken, and he virtually chased his former slaves out of the land. The Israelites left in such a hurry, in fact, that the bread they baked as provisions for the way did not have time to rise. Six hundred thousand adult males, plus many more women and children, left Egypt on that night and began the trek to Mount Sinai and their birth as G-d's chosen people.



# HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

## Passover

### Passover Observances

Passover is divided into two parts:

The first two days and last two days (the latter commemorating the Splitting of the Red Sea) are full-fledged holidays. Holiday candles are lit at night, and Kiddush and sumptuous holiday meals are enjoyed on both sets of nights and days. We don't go to work, drive, write, or switch on or off electric devices. We are permitted to cook and to carry outdoors (except on Shabbat).

The middle four days are called *Chol Hamo'ed*, semi-festive "intermediate days," when most

forms of work are permitted.

To commemorate the unleavened bread that the Israelites ate when they left Egypt, we don't eat—or even retain in our possession—any *chametz* from midday of the day before Passover until the conclusion of the holiday. *Chametz* means leavened grain—any food or drink that contains even a trace of wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt, or their derivatives, and which wasn't guarded from leavening or fermentation. This includes bread, cake, cookies, cereal, pasta, and most alcoholic beverages. Moreover, almost

any processed food or drink can be assumed to be *chametz* unless certified otherwise.

Ridding our homes of *chametz* is an intensive process. It involves a full-out spring cleaning, search-and-destroy mission during the weeks before Passover, and it culminates with a ceremonial search for *chametz* on the night before Passover and then a *chametz*-burning ceremony on the morning before the holiday. *Chametz* that cannot be disposed of can be sold to a non-Jew for the duration of the holiday.



# HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

## *Passover*

Instead of *chametz*, we eat matzah—flat unleavened bread. It is a *mitzvah* to partake of matzah on the two *seder* nights, and during the rest of the holiday (except Shabbat) it is optional.

The highlight of Passover is the *seder*, observed on each of the first two nights of the holiday. The *seder* is a fifteen-step, family-oriented tradition, and a ritual-packed feast.

# TEXT 1

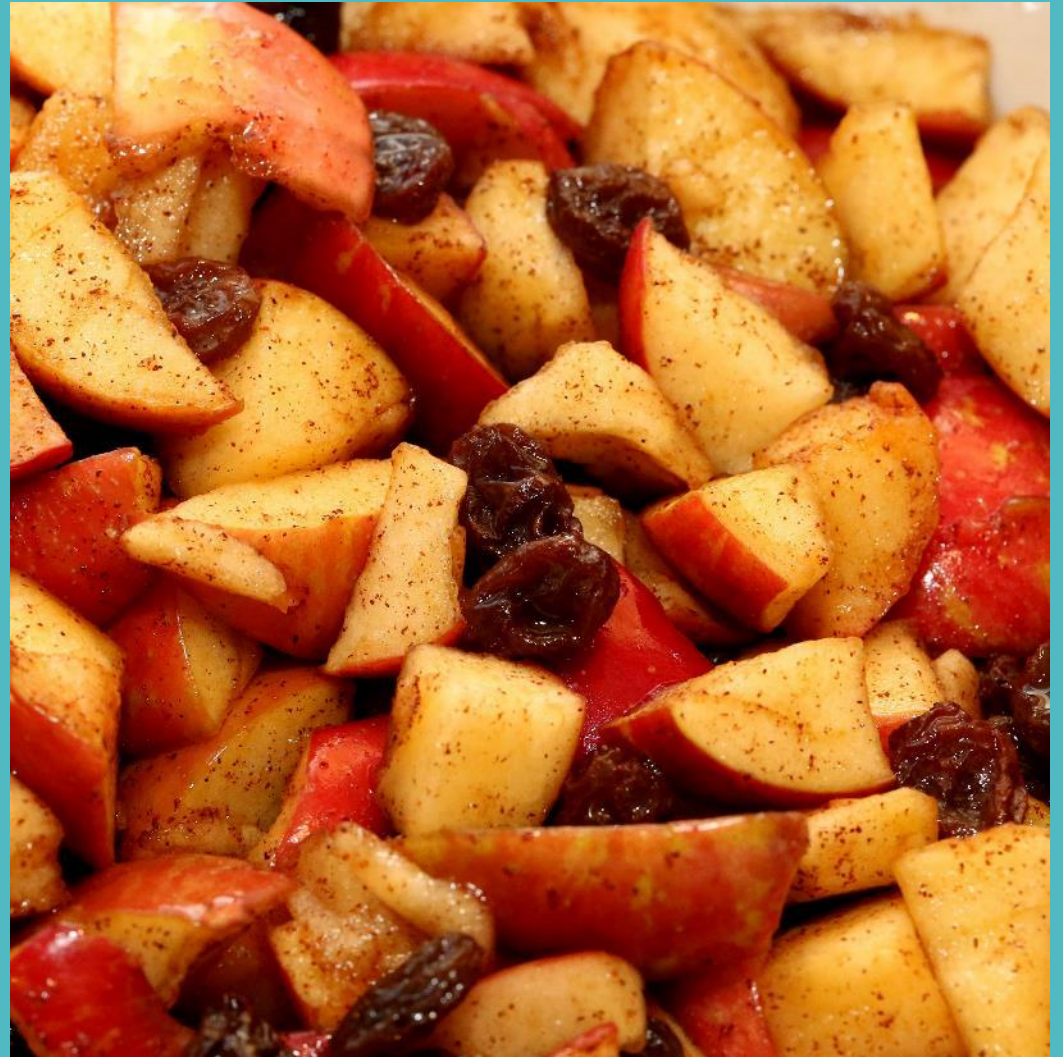
Liz Rueven, "What's  
Your Charoset Story?"  
[www.kosherlikeme.com](http://www.kosherlikeme.com)

Desperate for something to eat as the Passover *Seder* progression delays the dinner, we welcome the moment when we are free to pile *charoset* on matzah.

Ironic, isn't it, that while *charoset* represents the mortar used to make bricks when we were slaves in Egypt, it is somehow the tastiest symbol at the Passover *Seder*?

## QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Why is there such a craze and quest for sweetness in something associated with suffering?



## TEXT 2

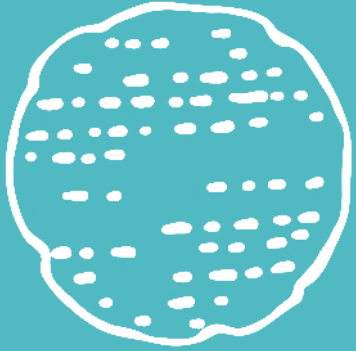
Rabbi Yaakov ben  
Asher, Arbaah Turim,  
Orach Chayim, ch. 475

כָּתַב רַב עֲמֵרָם, "וַיְבָרֵךְ הַמוֹצֵיאַ וַיִּטְבֹּל בְּחַרוֹסֶת וַיֹּאכַל". וְכֵן כָּתַב  
הַרְמַ"ם זְכוֹרֹנוּ לְבִרְכָה.

וְאִינִי יוֹדֵעַ טִיבוֹל זֶה בְּחַרוֹסֶת לָמָּה . . . הַקְּשָׁה בְּעַל הַמְּנַהִיג לְדַבְּרֵיהֶם,  
שְׂמִצָּה הִיא זֵכֶר לְחֵירוֹת וְחַרוֹסֶת זֵכֶר לְטִיט, וְהֲאִיךְ יִתְחַבְּרוּ זֶה עִם זֶה?

Rabbi Amram wrote, "One should recite the Hamotzi blessing, then dip matzah in *charoset* and eat." Maimonides also encoded this rule.

"I don't understand the reason for this dipping. . . ." [Rabbi Avraham son of Natan, who authored] the *Manhig*, asked, "If matzah represents liberation and *charoset* represents the mortar, how can they be combined?"



**MATZAH**

- Represents liberation



*MAROR*

- Represents suffering



*CHAROSET*

- Represents suffering

## TEXT 3A

*Passover Haggadah*

מָרוֹר זֶה נִשְׁאַנּוּ אוֹכְלִים עַל שׁוֹם מָה?  
עַל שׁוֹם נִשְׁמְרוּ הַמִּצְרִים אֶת חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם.

Why do we eat bitter herbs?

Because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt.

## TEXT 3B

*Rashi, Sanhedrin 101b*

כְּדַמְפָּרֵשׁ בְּאַגְדָּה שֶׁאָמַר לוֹ מֹשֶׁה לְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, "אַתָּה  
הִרְעוֹתָ לְעַם הַזֶּה" (שְׁמוֹת ה, כב), שֶׁעֲכָשׂוּ אִם אֵין לָהֶם  
לְבָנִים מְשִׁימִין בְּנֵיהֶם שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּבְּנִין.

Moses famously complained to G-d, "Why have You harmed this nation?" (Exodus 5:22). Our sages explain in the Agadah that this was a reference to the mortar. For when the Jewish people ran short of mortar to make bricks, the Egyptians ground Jewish babies into powder and used them as filler for the mortar.

## QUESTIONS

1. Why do we enjoy *charoset*, a symbol of our unspeakable suffering?
2. Why do some spread *charoset* on matzah, the symbol of liberation?

# TEXT 3C

*Passover Haggadah*

מַצָּה זוֹ נֶאֱמָרוּ אוֹכְלִים עַל שׁוֹם מָה?

עַל שׁוֹם שְׁלֹא הִסְפִּיק בְּצִקָּם שָׁל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְהַחְמִיץ, עַד  
שֶׁנִּגְלָה עֲלֵיהֶם מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא וַיִּגְאָלֵם.

Why do we eat matzah?

Because our ancestors had no time to let their dough rise before the King of all kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them.



## MATZAH

Represents the joyous and long-awaited moment when the Jews were finally liberated from Egypt.

## TEXT 4

*Rabbi Avraham  
ben David, Gloss  
to Mishneh Torah,  
Laws of Chametz  
and Matzah 8:8*

אָמַר אַבְרָהָם: זֶה הֶכֶל. וְאַף כָּאן לֹא בִירַר בְּזֶה טַעַם.  
וּבְאַמֶּת שְׁהַרְבֵּה מִן הָאֲחֵרוֹנִים זְכוֹרוֹנָם לְבִרְכָה סוּבְרִין שְׂאִין  
טִיבוֹל בְּמִצָּה כְּשֶׁהִיא לְבִדָּה. וְכֵן נִהְגוּ.

Avraham said: This is nonsense. Once again, Maimonides failed to identify a reason for his ruling.

The truth is that over the last few centuries, many of our teachers of blessed memory believed that the matzah over which we recite the Hamotzi blessing should not be dipped in *charoset*. And this is the prevailing custom.



RABBI AVRAHAM

We should not dip  
matzah into *charoset*.



MAIMONIDES

We are obligated to dip  
matzah into *charoset*.

## CONTRAST

By controlling light and darkness, we shape the way an image is perceived.



# TEXT 5

*Jeff Kent, "Knowledge  
is Power,"  
[www.ppa.com](http://www.ppa.com)*

Good photographic lighting entails more than understanding how light works; it also requires an understanding of the emotion that lighting scenarios portray. . . . How the lighting sculpts, forms, or informs the emotional elements of an image helps drive a photograph's narrative. Then light becomes more than a way to illuminate a scene; it becomes the determining factor of the image and how the viewer perceives the people or objects in it.



## CONTRAST

Underscoring the  
darkness and  
suffering highlights  
the joy of liberation.

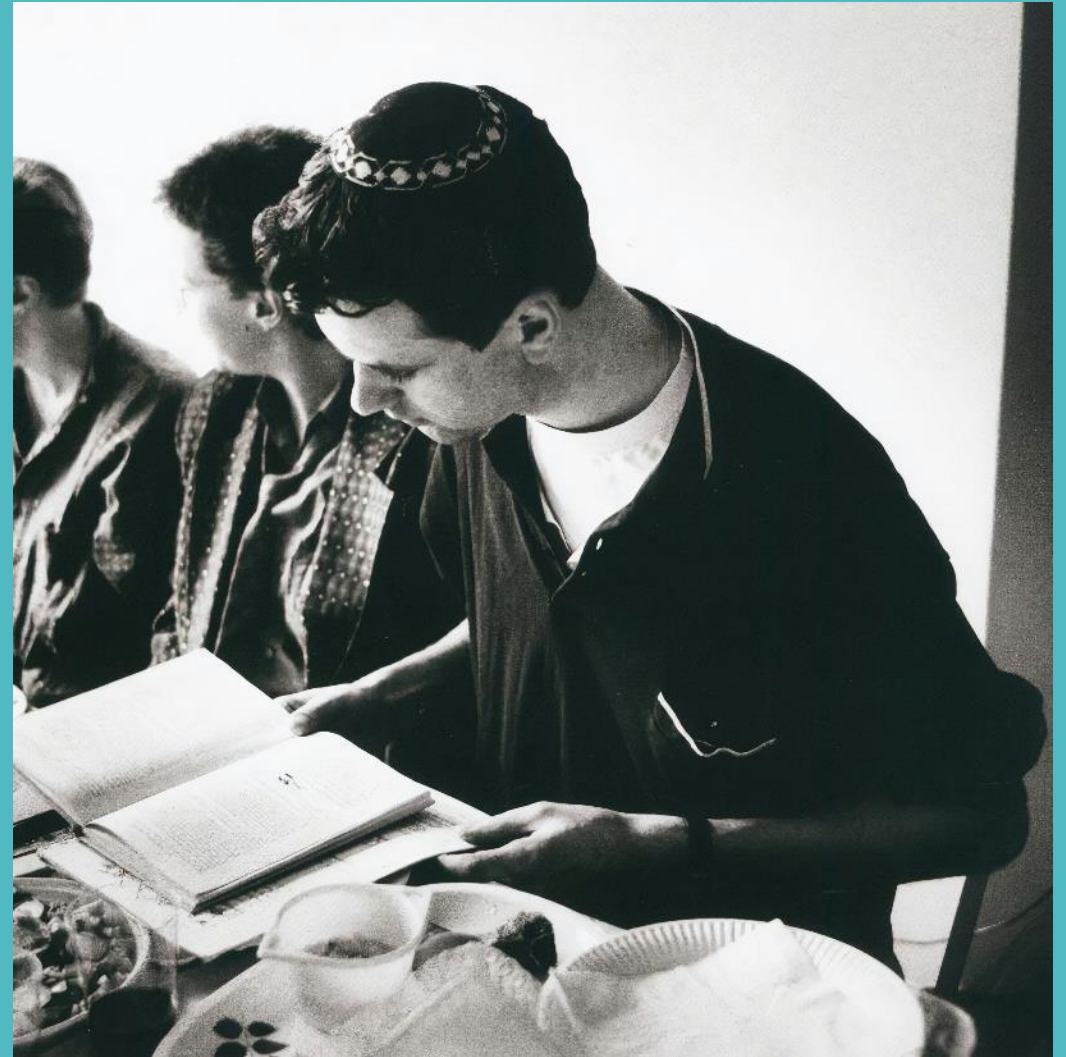
## TEXT 6

*Maimonides, Mishneh  
Torah, Laws of  
Chametz and Matzah  
7:4*

מִתְחִיל וּמוֹדִיעַ שְׁעַבְדִים הָיִינוּ לְפַרְעֹה בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְכָל  
הָרָעָה שֶׁגָּמְלוּנוּ. וּמַסִּים בְּנַסִּים וְנִפְלְאוֹת שֶׁנַּעֲשׂוּ לָנוּ  
וּבְחֵרוּתָנוּ.

We begin by declaring that we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and describe all the suffering he imposed on us. Then we conclude with the miracles and wonders performed for us and with our liberation.

At the *seder*, we relive the Exodus as our own redemption, not as a distant moment in history.



# TEXT 7

*Passover Haggadah*

בְּכֹל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ  
הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּלִבְדָּ גָּאֵל  
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֲלָא אַף אוֹתָנוּ גָּאֵל עִמָּהֶם.

In every generation, we are required to visualize ourselves exiting Egypt. G-d did not only liberate our ancestors; He liberated us with them.



Eating the bitter *maror*  
makes the story of Jewish  
suffering visceral.

## QUESTION

Why do some spread *charo-set* on matzah, the symbol of liberation?

## ANSWER

Dipping matzah into *charo-set* creates contrast that accentuates the relief of liberation from dark exile.

## TEXT 8

Rabbi Yoel Sirkis,  
Bayit Chadash, Orach  
Chayim 475

אֶפְשָׁר לֹאמַר דְּכַוֵּנְתִּינוּ לְהוֹרוֹת בְּטַבּוּל זֶה שֶׁהוֹצִיאָנוּ  
מֵעֲבָדוֹת שֶׁהוּא מְטִיט, שֶׁהִתְרוֹסֵת זֵכֶר לוֹ, לְחֵירוֹת,  
שֶׁהַמַּצָּה זֵכֶר לוֹ.

We might suggest that the purpose of dipping matzah into *charoset* is to remember that G-d liberated us from the bondage of mortar as symbolized by the *charoset* and granted us freedom as symbolized by the matzah.



MAIMONIDES

Invoking trauma to heighten the sense of redemption is worth the risk.



RABBI AVRAHAM

While we are in Exile, we feel pain more than freedom, so *charoset* will reinforce sadness instead of highlighting joy.

## QUESTION

How can we celebrate freedom on the *seder* night if, since our liberation from Egypt, we've experienced many more exiles and traumas?

## TEXT 9

*Rabbi Yehudah Loew,  
Gevurot Hashem, ch. 61*

כִּאֲשֶׁר יֵצְאוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם קִבְּלוּ הַטּוֹב בְּעֵצָם עַד שֶׁהָיוּ רְאוּיִם  
בְּעֵצָמָם לְהִיּוֹת בְּנֵי חוֹרִין מִצַּד מַעְלָתָם. וְזֹאת הַמַּעֲלָה עֲצָמִית לְיִשְׂרָאֵל  
שֶׁהֵם רְאוּיִם לְהִיּוֹת בְּנֵי חוֹרִין מִצַּד עֵצָם מַעְלָתָם, וְדָבָר מִקְרִי לֹא  
יְבַטֵּל דָּבָר עֲצָמִי כָּלֵל. כִּי עַדִּיּוֹן עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמַּעֲלָה הַזֹּאת שֶׁהֵם בְּנֵי  
חוֹרִין בְּעֵצָם עִם הַשְּׁעָבוֹד בְּמִקְרָה.

When Jews exited Egypt, they became recipients of intrinsic G-dliness and, therefore, remain forever free. Jews are inherently free because they are intrinsically holy. Circumstantial factors cannot undo inherent truths. Even when Jews are under circumstantial subjugation, they are inherently free.

## ANSWER

After the Exodus from Egypt, we received our Jewish souls.

Jewish souls always remain free no matter what our outside circumstances are.



The Previous Rebbe  
taught us that our souls  
can never be imprisoned.

# TEXT 10

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak  
Schneersohn, Sefer  
Hamaamarim  
Kuntresim 1, pp.  
350-351

דאס דארפֿען אלע עמים וואס זיינען על  
פֿני האַדמָה וויסן אז נאר אונזערע גופים  
זיינען איבערגעגעבען אין גלות וְשֶׁבֹוד  
מִלְכּוּת, אָבער אונזערע נשמות האט מען  
אין גלות נישט פֿארטריבען און אין שֶׁבֹוד  
מִלְכּוּת נישט איבערגעגעבען. מיר דארפֿען  
זאָגען גלוי לַעֵינַן כּל אַז וואס עס איז נוֹגַע  
צו אונזער דת, תּוֹרָה, וּמִצְוֹת, וּמִנְהַגֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל, האָבען מיר אידען אויף זיך נישט  
קיינ דעזע זאָגער. און קיין שום צווינג  
קראַפֿט קען אויף דעם נישט אויפֿגענוצט  
ווערען. מיר מוזען זאָגן מיט דער  
גֵרֶעסְטער, שְׁטאַרְקער, אידישער עקשנות,  
מיט דעם טוֹיזֶענְט יאַריקען אידישן מְסִירַת  
נְפֻשׁ, "אל תִּגְעוּ בְּמִשְׁיחִי וּבְנְבִיאֵי אֵל  
תִּרְעוּ" (תהלים קה טו) . . .

Every nation on earth must know that only our bodies were subjected to exile and the control of other countries. Our souls, however, were never driven into exile and never subjected to the power of others. We must declare openly for all to know that concerning our religion, Torah, *mitzvot*, and Jewish customs, we have no overlords. No method of compulsion can be effective against us. We must declare with our powerful, intense Jewish intransigence, backed by the thousands of years of Jewish self-sacrifice, "Touch not my anointed one and persecute not my prophets" (Psalms 105:15).



# TEXT 10

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak  
Schneersohn, Sefer  
Hamaamarim  
Kuntresim 1, pp.  
350-351

דער איבערשטער זאל אונז געבען די  
ריכטיקע שטארקייט ניט נתפעל ווערען פון  
די יסורי הגוף. אדרבה לקבולי בשמחה. אז  
יעדער עונש, חס ושלום, וואס מיר קריגען  
פאר אויסהאלטען א חדר, פאר לערנען  
תורה, פאר היטן מצוות, דארף אונז געבען  
מער שטארקייט אין דער הייליגער ארבעט  
פון חיזוק היהדות.

מיר דארפען געדיינקען אז טורמע און  
קאטארגע איז מער ניט ווי א צייטווייליגע  
זאך. און תורה ומצוות וישראל זיינען אייביג.

. . . May G-d grant us the courage not to  
be swayed by the bodily torture [they  
inflict on us]. On the contrary, may we  
accept it with joy. Every punishment we  
receive, G-d forbid, for sustaining a  
Jewish school, studying the Torah, and  
observing the *mitzvot* must fortify our  
courage in the sacred work of  
bolstering Judaism [in the Soviet Union].

We must remember that imprisonment  
and hard labor are transient. The Torah  
and *mitzvot* are eternal.

Our bodies can be  
imprisoned, but our  
essence is always free.





MAROR

represents our ancestors'  
physical slavery.



*CHAROSET*

represents our ancestors'  
spiritual slavery.

The *charoset* tells us that the Egyptians had a hold over the Jews' souls.

## TEXT 11

Rabbi Yehudah Loew,  
Gevurot Hashem, ch.  
63

וַיֵּשׁ מְרִירוֹת לְאָדָם בְּעִבּוּדָה קָשָׁה אֲבָל אֵינוּ מְרִירוֹת  
גְּמוּר. לְכַף עוֹשֵׁין זֵכֶר לְטִיט וְאֵין דְּבָר יוֹתֵר קָשָׁה מִן  
מְלֶאכֶת הַטִּיט.

The hard labor they imposed on us was bitter, but it was not entirely unbearable. The mortar was a breaking point; nothing was harsher than the mortar episode. This is why we place a symbol of the mortar on our *seder* table.



The *charoet* on the *seder* table declares that Egypt and all subsequent enemies cannot hold power over our essence; we remain inherently free.



MAIMONIDES

By dipping the matzah into *charoset*, we affirm that even if we're not fully free, we're free in essence. That is what we celebrate on the *seder* night.



RABBI AVRAHAM

If we're not fully free, highlighting partial freedom can backfire and cause Jews to focus on what we're lacking.

# TEXT 12

*The Rebbe, Rabbi  
Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, Likutei  
Sichot 32, pp. 50-51*

על פי זה, יש לבאר פלוגת הרמב"ם  
והראב"ד בנוגע לטיבול מצה בחרוסת,  
והחילוק בזה בין זמן המקדש לזמן הזה.

בזמן המקדש, כיון שנמצאים במצב  
דחירות, אפשר לקיים מצות זכירת שעבוד  
וגאולת מצרים בשלימותה. "וזכרת כי עבד  
היית" (דברים ה, יד), כלומר פאלו אתה  
בעצמך היית עבד ויצאת לחירות ונפדית.  
ולכן כולי עלמא מטבילין מצה בחרוסת,  
המורה על זה שהוציאנו מעבדות לחירות.

אבל בזמן הזה, שנמצאים במצב ד"עבדין",  
ואי אפשר לקיים החיוב ד"וזכרת כי עבד  
היית" ויצאת לחירות בתכלית השלימות,  
השאלה היא אם יכולים לקיימו על כל  
פנים בקלקו. קיום ה"וזכרת" דיציאה  
משעבוד המיוחד דמצרים (שזה ישנו אפילו  
כשנמצאים בגלות כנתבאר לעיל).

Based on the above, we can explain the dispute between Maimonides and Rabbi Avraham about dipping matzah into *charoset* and the distinction between the era of the Temple and the era of exile.

When the Temple stood, it was possible to entirely fulfill the commandment to remember being enslaved in Egypt and going free because we were still free. We could "remember that *you* were enslaved" (Deuteronomy 5:15), as if we were ourselves enslaved and then granted our freedom. Therefore, all agreed that it was appropriate to dip the matzah in *charoset* to demonstrate that G-d took us from slavery to freedom.

However, today, now that we are in exile, we can't fulfill in its entirety the commandment to "remember that *you* were enslaved" and liberated because we are no longer free. Therefore, the question is whether it is possible to fulfill it in part. Can we celebrate being redeemed from the unique [intrinsic] subjugation in Egypt (since we are still free of intrinsic subjugation despite being back in circumstantial subjugation, as we explained above)?



# TEXT 12

*The Rebbe, Rabbi  
Menachem Mendel  
Schneerson, Likutei  
Sichot 32, pp. 50-51*

הַרְמַב"ם סְבִירָא לִיהַּ שְׂאֲפָשֶׁר לְקַיְימוּ. וְלִכְן  
מְטַבֵּל מַצָּה בְּחָרוֹסֶת, לְהוֹרוֹת שְׂהוּצִיאָנוּ  
מֵעֲבָדוֹת, שֶׁהוּא מְטִיט שְׂהַחְרוֹסֶת זָכָר לוֹ.  
שְׂהַכְּוֹנָה בְּזָה לְהִצִּיאָה מִהַעֲבָדוֹת דְּמַצְרַיִם  
שְׂנַרְמַז בְּטִיט.

וְלְהַרְאֵב"ד אֵינוֹ מִתְחַלֵּק וְאֵין גְּאוּלָּה לְחַצְצָאֵין.  
וּבְמִלָּא, אַף שְׂמַקְיִים סִיפּוֹר בִּיצִיאַת מַצְרַיִם  
בְּכָל הַפְּרָטִים . . . מְכַל מְקוֹם, אֵי אֲפָשֶׁר  
לְקַיִים "וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ" (דְּבָרִים ה', יד)  
וְיִצְאָתָּ לְחֵירוֹת בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְּשָׁלִימוֹתוֹ כְּאֲשֶׁר  
הוּא נִמְצָא בְּמַצָּב דְּעֲבָדִין.

Maimonides believed it is possible to fulfill this commandment in part. He, therefore, rules that we dip matzah into *charoset* to celebrate that we were liberated from intrinsic (mortar) subjugation symbolized by the *charoset* [though we remain in circumstantial subjugation].

Rabbi Avraham disagreed and held that freedom can't be parsed; we are either free or not. Accordingly, although we tell the story of the Exodus in detail . . . we nevertheless can't fulfill in its entirety the commandment to "remember that you were enslaved" and went free while we are back in circumstantial subjugation.

## WHAT'S PRACTICED TODAY

Practical Halachah sides with Rabbi Avraham. We do not dip our matzah into *charoset* while we are still in circumstantial exile.



## QUESTION

Why do we enjoy *charoset*, a symbol of our unspeakable suffering?

## ANSWER

*Charoset* carries the bitter theme of suffering but simultaneously reminds us that our *pintele Yid* always prevails.

# TEXT 13

Rabbi Shneur Zalman  
of Liadi, Shulchan  
Aruch HaRav, Orach  
Chayim 473:32

הַחֲרוֹסֶת צָרִיךְ לְהִיּוֹת עָב, לְפִי נִשְׁהוּא זֶכֶר  
לְטִיט נִשְׁנַשְׁמַעְבָּדוּ בּוֹ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְאַחַר כֵּן  
צָרִיךְ לְרַכֵּךְ אוֹתוֹ בְּמַשְׁקָה זֶכֶר לְדָם. וַיֵּשׁ  
לְרַכְכוֹ בְּמַשְׁקָה אֲדָם, כְּגוֹן חֲמֶץ אוֹ יַיִן  
אֲדָמִים.

וַיֵּשׁ לַעֲשׂוֹת הַחֲרוֹסֶת מִפְּרוֹת שְׁנַמְשָׁלוּ  
בָּהֶם כְּנֹסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל. כְּגוֹן תְּאֵנִים, שְׁנַאֲמַר  
"הַתְּאֵנָה חֲנִטָּה פִּגְיָה" (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ב,  
יֵד). וְאַגֻּזִים, שְׁנַאֲמַר "אֵל גִּנַּת אֲגֻזִים"  
(שָׁם ו, יֵא). וְתִמְרִים, שְׁנַאֲמַר "אֶעֱלֶה  
בְּתִמְרֵי" (שָׁם ז, ט). וְרִמּוֹנִים, שְׁנַאֲמַר  
"כְּפֹלַח הָרִמּוֹן" (שָׁם ז, ג). וְתַפּוּחִים, זֶכֶר  
לְ"תַחַת הַתַּפּוּחַ עוֹרְרָתִיךְ" (שָׁם ח, ה),  
שֶׁהָיוּ יוֹלְדוֹת נָשִׁים בְּנִיָּהֶם בְּלֹא עֶצֶב.  
וְשִׁקְדִים, עַל נֶשֶׁם שֶׁשָׁקֵד הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ  
הוּא עַל הַקֶּץ לַעֲשׂוֹת.

*Charoset* should be thick because it is a testament to the mortar by which our ancestors were subjugated. Then we must soften the consistency with a liquid to remember the blood. It is appropriate to soften it with a red liquid such as mead or red wine.

It is appropriate to make the *charoset* of fruits that serve as metaphors for the Jewish people: such as figs, as it is written, "The fig tree has put forth its green figs" (Song of Songs 2:13); nuts, as it is written "[I went down] to the nut garden" (ibid., 6:11); dates, as it is written, "Let me climb up the palm tree" (ibid., 7:9); pomegranates, as it is written, "Like a split pomegranate" (ibid., 4:3); apples, as it is written, "Under the apple tree I awoke you" (ibid., 8:5), where the Jewish women gave birth without pain; and almonds, for G-d was diligent about ending our exile.



*Charoset* is sweet because while it is a testament to the Jews' unbearable suffering, it also celebrates the Jewish souls' perseverance.

With the coming of  
Mashiach, we will be able to  
feel complete freedom and  
dip our matzah into *charoset*.



## KEY POINTS

1. Matzah represents the Exodus from Egypt. *Charoset* represents the harshest form of suffering in Egypt when Jewish babies were crushed and mixed into the mortar.
2. In Egypt, Jews were intrinsically subjugated; the Egyptians had the power to crush them and own their souls, as indicated by the *charoset*. Since the Exodus, our bodies can be enslaved, but our souls are always free. We can be in circumstantial bondage but never inherently subjugated.
3. Dipping matzah (symbol of freedom) into *charoset* (symbol of soul-crushing exile) declares that though we are still in Exile, we are free (matzah) concerning anything related to our soul (*charoset*).

## KEY POINTS

4. However, Jewish law determines that we should not dip matzah into *charoset* while in Exile. Drawing any attention to subjugations of which we are free also draws attention to oppression we still suffer. This can lead to dejection on a night that should celebrate freedom.
5. As we draw closer to the era of Mashiach, the freedom of our soul becomes more accentuated, which explains the delicious recipes we make for *charoset* and the fact that so many people eat it with relish these days.

