

WRITERS' THOUGHTS



# YOUR SEDER MATTERS

DRINKING WINE, EATING MATZAH & READING THE HAGGADAH

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FOLLOWING IS HOW YOUR SEDER CAN FREE YOU TO CREATE AN INCREDIBLE FUTURE BY FRAMING YOUR PAST AND ANCHORING IN THE PRESENT. WE BEGIN THE HAGGADAH WITH *HA LACHMA ANIAH* (THIS IS THE POOR MAN'S BREAD; COME AND JOIN US), NEXT YEAR WE WILL CELEBRATE IN JERUSALEM.

## 2 Questions:

*What do we mean by the "poor man's bread, come join us?"*

*Why do we start the story of Exodus with the punchline "next year in Jerusalem?"*

## Answer:

This "Bread" means spiritual sustenance or fuel, and the "poor man" is someone hungry for the word of the Almighty and wants to get close to him. Come join us in the simple man's fare is an encouragement to embrace simple faith and belief.

Because we believe that Hashem created and runs all of the creation. He alone is the one who did, does and will do. Even if a person doesn't feel like they believe, know that deep inside belief exists. When we release ownership of the Chametz (leaven), we negate our ego and surrender to the Almighty.

We are blessed to live in the U.S.A. and have all types of freedoms.

*We have our own private schools.*

*We are allowed to own businesses.*

*We are integrated into society at every level.*

*We are entitled to move about freely and travel nationwide.*

*We can wear whatever we want, whenever we want, wherever we want.*

All this can change in a moment.

*V'hi She'amda* - In every generation, nations have ganged up on the Jews, trying to kill us all, and wipe us off the face of the planet. Each person must see themselves as if they personally got out of slavery in Egypt.

We see, hear, and feel what's happening in Ukraine. You have an opportunity to use this as a teaching moment as a lesson for your children.

It's a tangible, practical example of what our parents, grandparents and great grandparents for generations lived through, most recently, the Holocaust in Europe and the

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expulsion from Middle Eastern countries over the last few hundred years. We are always conscious of this reality but the memory of these events are not always at the forefront of our minds.

On the Seder nights, you have the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the historical events of coming out of Egypt, going into the desert, and receiving the Torah at Har Sinai, along with your current existence and anticipation of the future.

The mitzvah of retelling the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim—Exodus from Egypt is to instill in yourself and your children a foundation of emuna (faith). When we tell the story out loud, we implant it in our hearts. Eating matzah is an opportunity to connect with the events of the past, present, and future. Even the Jews leaving Egypt, who experienced the splitting of the sea, worked on their beliefs. Faith and belief are infinite and actually begin at the end of our ability to comprehend logically or intellectually. The miracles they witnessed and experienced were tangible. From this, they believed even more in G-d's might.

This year at the Seder table, when reading from the haggadah and singing songs praising the Almighty for rescuing us from the depths of despair and hopelessness, let the four cups of wine be a reminder of G-d's might and the promise to rescue us from suffering and extinction. You can also acknowledge your deep relationship with the Almighty, appreciating the miracles of being saved from extinction time, after time, after time. We anticipate and embrace the ultimate redemption and the revelation of the glory of G-d Almighty and the end of oppression and darkness—envisioning a peaceful world, basking in the glow, and honoring the Almighty.

From the skies to the streets, the Almighty is running the show and making things happen for us everyday. At the Seder table we experience freedom and we can carry this feeling forward in our lives.

Everyone has multiple masters and many times, we feel like a slave to those masters. Our own self-limiting beliefs, lack of confidence, sadness, and pain, overwhelm and trap us in being less than whole. They block us from living fully. Many times we get lost, confused and overwhelmed, preventing us from living in abundance and having a beautiful, amazing, and fulfilling, spiritually-engaged life.

The Seder is an opportunity to embrace a most abundant, enlightened, and connected experience with family and friends and deepen our faith and relationship with the Creator of the universe.

**Personal Story**

Recently, I challenged myself to write and post daily on LinRecently, a business platform for networking. Among my many gifts, I am talented, creative, and really strategic. I'm great at helping people and coming up with solutions. Many are terrified of speaking (yes, I used to be too.) I overcame this and even get paid to speak. Yet, writing has been a mental struggle my entire life. Writing articles for IMAGE Magazine requires time, attention, and effort but it's only once a month. Writing a post every single day for 30 days was an extremely challenging undertaking.

I got myself a coach to help me with my writing and I did it. I broke out of the prison in my own mind, and even enjoyed it. Yes, it was difficult, challenging, and stressful. But the good kind of stress, the kind of stress that makes you a better person, that drives you to perform—the kind



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*Perhaps you can help deliver Passover food to the needy this year*

of stress that brings something forward from inside of you and elevates you.

You too can break free and carry forward the abundance of the Seder. This year you have the opportunity to teach your family a practical and relatable example of what it's like to be evicted from your homeland. They will see what it's like to have everything they know destroyed and decimated and have to run away in the middle of the night with bombs falling around them. Tell them to imagine having just the shirt on their backs, escaping into a foreign country and not knowing if they'll ever be able to come back again. Explain that when this happens, people worry if they'll even make it out alive or if they'll see their family members ever again. The Jews have survived by maintain-

ing their faith and connection because this has happened everywhere we have settled. This is the story of being in Galut while we await Moshiach.

What challenge, struggle or overwhelming situation will you take on to conquer this year in the spirit of breaking free?

Chag Kasher V'Sameach □

**Rabbi Ezra Max**, PCC, MHMP, Xchange Guide & Creator of "The Max Method" assists businesses and professionals deal with stress and achieve success. Rabbi Max has witnessed 20 years of results helping executives, parents and teens overcome struggles, improve communication and thrive. He lives in New York with his wife and five children.