



*"The State of Israel will be founded
on the principles of freedom,
justice and peace in light of the
vision of the prophets of Israel."
– Excerpt from Israel's Declaration of
Independence*

Additional questions and readings for your Passover Seder



דה-מו-קרט-יהו!



On Freedom and Democracy

"In the next year, as free people"

It is during Passover that we come to realize that freedom should not to be taken for granted, neither as individuals nor as a collective people. Passover invites us to remember the essence of freedom, why did we leave the land of Egypt, and what is the Promised Land?

It is not enough that we are not under foreign rule. Freedom may also be threatened from within. In order for freedom to exist in Israel, the utmost attention is required to ensure the freedom of all its citizens. The Jewish tradition is full of rich and inspiring sources for establishing Israel's character as a free and equal state, and as a Jewish and democratic state – it is upon us to invest every day on strengthening its founding principles of freedom, justice, and peace.

*"Passover, a people preserves
for thousands of years the day
[They] came out of slavery.
And all the ways the diseases of subjugation,
the inquisition, the destruction, and the riots
The nation carries in its heart the longing for freedom
In an ancient memory, all of which is directed to the
reading of the future.
From ancestors to sons, through all generations,
The Exodus was handed down as a personal memory.
Which is not pale and not faded.
What a creature of freedom deeply embedded in the
heart of a people,
That he could have in the spring his days to create
A creation like this and hand it down from generation to
generation."
- Berl Katznelson*

Questions to open conversations
about freedom:

- Why do you think the principle of freedom is so important in the Jewish tradition?
- What is the difference between "freedom from" and "freedom to"?
- What does freedom mean to you?
- What type of freedom calls you to act?



"Your whole misfortune in Egypt is that you 'lived' there and, as such, you were not entitled, according to the peoples' view, to the land, to the homeland, to existence...

You were deprived of rights in Egypt, and this was the root of the slavery and torture imposed on you. Therefore, beware, lest you place human rights in your country on a basis other than pure humanity, which resides in the heart of every human being. Any deprivation of human rights will open a gate to arbitrariness and abuse – it is the root of all the abomination of Egypt."

- Rabbi Raphael Hirsch, interpretation of Exodus 22:2

These days we are in an unprecedented struggle for the freedom of Israelis. Hundreds of thousands are taking to the streets against the government's attempt to create a situation that does not exist in any democracy: of unlimited governmental power, with no guarantee of preserving individual freedoms.

As we come together around the Passover table for the Seder, we must remember that freedom is not something to be taken for granted, and that we must work to preserve it every day.

The Israel Reform Movement has as its primary goal to protect individual freedoms: To show that there is more than one way to be Jewish; to act against discrimination against women, members of the LGBTQ community, and those who are not Jewish. In these difficult and complex days, let us remember the importance of our freedoms and the need to fight to preserve them every day for others.

- Orly Erez Likhovksi, Executive Director, Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC)

A Prayer for Democracy / Rabbi Oded Mazor

God of our ancestors

Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel, Leah, Bilha, and Zilpah,

Bless those who stand in defense of democracy, equality, and peace,

From among our people and those all over the world who work to repair society in the face of the threat to the justice system and the rule of law

May the Holy One protect them and save them from all trouble and distress, and from every plague and illness,

From all harassment and injury and any attempt to humiliate them and undermine their commitment

In the fight against indifference, inaction, and noninvolvement.

May their efforts be successful, and may they have:

A good eye (to see wrongs done)

A good heart (so as not to stand idly by)

And the strength to act

To protect the rights of all

To do justice and bring peace to every person made in the image of God in the world.

May the words of the Torah be fulfilled: "For because of this thing God will bless you in all of your efforts and in all of your undertakings" (Deut. 15:10)

And let us say: Amen



On Freedom, Love, and Community

"The attempt to establish a society where people connect with each other out of free feelings, still does not have enough to bring about community. True community arises when the people are caring not only towards each other - but they also care about what unites them, what is revealed between them.

And these are the two things by which a community is established: by the fact that the people in it are connected to something greater than themselves, and also by the fact that they are attentive to each other. The basis of the relationship is not what happens in each of the parties per se."

- Excerpt from the Hebrew book, Besod Hamifgash (In the Secret of the Meeting): Commentary on the Book I and Thou by Martin Buber, by Akiva Ragan

*It's hard to love out of slavery,
That is why we find it difficult to love people in
whose company we feel bound.
Although in truth, they are not the cause of
slavery
They are just the excuse we use to give up
freedom.
And when we understand this, and return to our
freedom,
We can discover within ourselves an ocean of love
Precisely to those that we discussed just a
moment ago
that they are taking away our freedom"
- Dan Lasry*

Questions to open conversations
about freedom:

- What degree of freedom do we have in our lives? By what are we bound?
- Who can I think of this Passover that needs help in order to break free? How can I or we act to free them?
- What binds me to love others and accept them as they are?

"Freedom is the deepest longing of the soul"

- Dan Lasry



Every person needs Egypt / Rabbi Amnon Ribak

Every person needs to have
A kind of Egypt
To be Moses his or herself within it
With a strong hand,
Or with the gnashing of teeth.
Every person needs terror and great
darkness,
And comfort, and assurance, and salvation,
That s/he will know to raise her/his eyes to
the sky.
Every person needs one prayer,
That rests like a routine on her/his lips.
A person needs to bend down once -
Every person needs a shoulder.
Every person needs to have
A kind of Egypt
To redeem his/ her self from it, from a
house of slaves,
To go out in the middle of the night to the
desert of fear,
To march straight into the water,
To see them open from her/his face to the
sides.
Every person needs a shoulder,
To carry upon the bones of Joseph,
Every person needs to stand upright.
Every person needs to have
A kind of Egypt.
And Jerusalem,
And one long journey,
To remember it forever
On the soles of the feet.

*"Your whole misfortune in Egypt is that you
'lived' there and, as such, you were not
entitled, according to the peoples' view, to the
land, to the homeland, to existence... You
were deprived of rights in Egypt, and this was
the root of the slavery and torture imposed
on you. Therefore, beware, lest you place
human rights in your country on a basis
other than pure humanity, which resides in
the heart of every human being. Any
deprivation of human rights will open a gate
to arbitrariness and abuse - it is the root of
all the abomination of Egypt."*

*- Rabbi Raphael Hirsch, interpretation of
Exodus 22:2*

*And it is necessary to make a free person in
truth*

Need constantly (even accidentally)

To be what we were

Before the moment

In which we forgot who we are

We need to approach life (and maybe also

Death) as a burden and a business gift

*That even if everything has already been
determined*

We are free at any moment

To renew the litigation

*As if before us, there are no general
summary clauses*

- Israel Eliraz