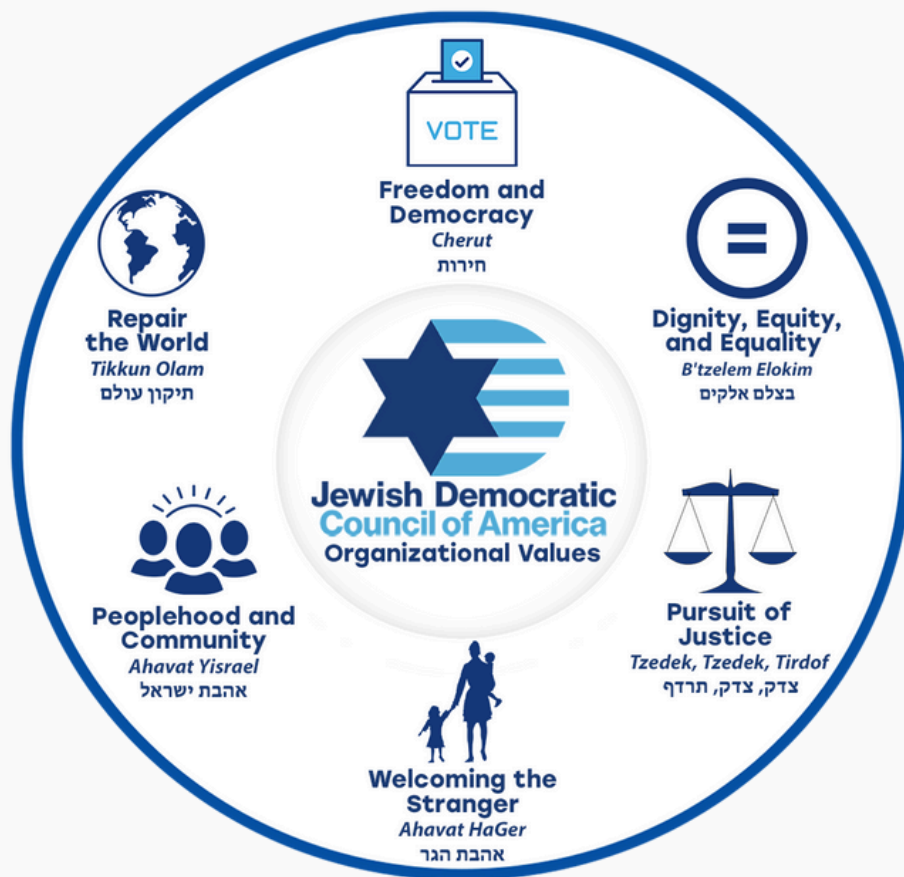


JEWISH DEMS PASSOVER SEDER COMPANION



Brought to you by the Jewish Democratic Council of America, the political home and voice of Jewish voters, advocating for policies and supporting Democrats who share our core values.

The Jewish Democratic Council of America (JDCA) is the political home and voice of Jewish voters, advocating for policies and supporting Democrats who share our core values.

Each year, we gather to celebrate Passover, the festival of freedom and liberation. Around our Seder tables, we tell the story of freedom from oppression. While our Haggadot focus on the Jewish liberation from bondage in Egypt, we also reflect on different forms of oppression in the modern day. This year, as we read about an autocratic ruler implementing cruel and degrading policies, we can't help but think of Donald Trump and Republicans' attempts to erode our democratic norms, divide and dehumanize us, and curtail freedom in the United States.

This Seder supplement looks at the parallels between the Passover story, current events, and political dynamics, and provides steps we all can take to ensure elected officials represent our values and protect our freedoms.

Passover serves as a reminder to speak out against tyranny and to act in solidarity with the oppressed. It is a call to defend the rights of others and to stand up against any form of oppression, be it religious, racial, economic, or political. ***We, too, were strangers in a foreign land. The need for empathy and collective action is stronger today than ever before.***

At the end of the Seder, we commit to "next year in Jerusalem," which has different meanings to each of us. For some, it may be a call to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem next year. As we reflect on the horrific attacks by Hamas on October 7, 2023, it could also mean doing all we can to ensure the release of the 59 hostages still held by Hamas. For others, it may mean helping to defend our freedoms and the freedom of the Jewish people worldwide. For us at JDCA, it means reaffirming our commitment to electing those who share our values. In this spirit, we encourage you to add a fifth question to tonight's Seder and to consider how this Passover is different from all others:

What actions will you take to defend democracy, justice, freedom, and our safety in the United States, Israel, and worldwide?

This Passover, we hope you'll take action with JDCA and [support our work](#) advocating for our shared values.

Chag Pesach Sameach from JDCA!

חג פסח שמח!

HOW IS THIS PASSOVER DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER PASSOVERS?

This Passover is different from all others because our democracy, rights, and freedoms have never been more at risk in the United States. Pesach is the festival of freedom and liberation, but this freedom is not guaranteed. It is our collective responsibility to protect and extend our freedom and liberation to others.

Jews are called to welcome the stranger more than any other commandment in the Torah, and the Passover celebration is a reminder that we were once strangers in a foreign land. We are obligated to act with compassion toward all oppressed and marginalized peoples, including refugees and immigrants, as we too know what it is like to experience marginalization and oppression.

Donald Trump's actions represent the antithesis of our values. In his second term, Trump has sought to limit voting access through unreasonable voter ID laws and the purging of voter rolls, which disproportionately affect marginalized communities. Trump's federal authorities are rounding up legal residents and attempting to deport them without due process for exercising their freedom of speech. Speech is protected under the Constitution, even if it is hateful and even if we vehemently disagree with what is being said. We cannot cede our freedoms and rights to the whims of what Donald Trump thinks is "right". Trump's illegal deportations include U.S. citizens who have been mistakenly detained and deported.

This Passover is different from all other Passovers because this president is different from all other presidents. He is dangerous, vengeful, and eroding democracy before our eyes.

This year, the story of Pesach takes on a new meaning.

What does freedom look like today? How can the Jewish people, once enslaved in Egypt, fight back against modern authoritarians and defend our freedom?

10 WAYS TO PLAGUE THE TRUMP REGIME

In the Passover story, we read of a ‘new Pharaoh’ who fomented fear of our ancestors and issued evil decrees stripping people of their freedoms and safety. Like Pharaoh, Donald Trump is attempting to consolidate power through fear and bigotry. Today, we are called upon to learn from the midwives who risked their lives by refusing to obey Pharaoh’s orders and take action to defend our democracy and the rights of all Americans.

God sent 10 plagues to Egypt to free the Israelites. We are calling on you to take 10 actions to combat Trump’s tyranny. Read more by clicking [here](#).



1. Protect Jewish Communities:

[Tell Trump to reinstate security grants to protect Jewish Americans.](#)



6. Host an Event:

[Are you ready to put your network into action? Host a parlor meeting or fundraiser with JDCA.](#)



2. Reject Mass Deportations:

[Tell your elected officials to reject Trump’s mass deportation plan.](#)



7. Follow JDCA:

JDCA is here to keep you informed. Make sure you are following us on [Instagram](#), [Bluesky](#), [Facebook](#), and [TikTok](#).



3. Protect Jewish Students:

[Tell Trump to protect Jewish Students and fund the Department of Education.](#)



8. Share JDCA with your Network:

[Ask your friends and family to sign up for JDCA email alerts so we can grow our community and impact.](#)



4. Support JDCA:

[Deepen your support of JDCA to strengthen our work as we defend our Jewish and Democratic values.](#)



9. Share Your Story:

[Share your story with JDCA, and we may use it \(anonymously if you prefer\) to raise awareness of the impact of Trump’s policies.](#)



5. Volunteer with JDCA:

[Join a JDCA Regional Network for more opportunities to support Democrats and bring your community into our work.](#)



10. Volunteer in your Community:

[Check with your local school, food bank, or homeless shelter to see if they are in need of supplies or volunteers, and then contribute.](#)

DISCUSSING OUR VALUES AT THE SEDER



Freedom & Democracy

חירות | *Cherut*

Throughout history, the Jewish people have thrived in pluralistic democracies that guaranteed the rights and freedoms of all. We believe that only a vibrant democracy can ensure freedom and protect against tyranny, and we support measures that strengthen and safeguard our democratic institutions.

Dignity, Equity, and Equality

בצלם אלקים | *B'tzelem Elokim*

We believe that all peoples are created in the image of the divine and that we should treat each other as we would like to be treated. We work toward a more equitable world in which the basic human dignity of all people is realized, and where the government works equally for all people to achieve their potential and aspirations.

DISCUSSING OUR VALUES AT THE SEDER

Justice

צדק, צדק, תרדוף | Tzedek, Tzedek, Tirdof

The concept of a just society upheld by a system of laws, ethics, and accountability is a central principle of our Jewish tradition. **The pursuit of justice** compels us to work toward a fairer world that includes **racial, social, economic, environmental, and reproductive justice**. We support policies that uphold the rule of law and build a more just world for all.

Peoplehood & Community

אהבת ישראל | Ahavat Yisrael

As Jewish Democrats, we celebrate the histories and traditions that have sustained the Jewish people throughout time. Our sense of belonging and shared purpose, including our connection and ties to Israel, drives our work to ensure **thriving, safe, and secure Jewish communities** in the U.S., Israel, and around the world.

Welcoming the Stranger

אהבת הגר | Ahavat HaGer

Jews are called to **welcome the stranger** more than any other commandment in the Torah, and are reminded that we were once strangers in a strange land. We are obligated to act with **compassion toward all oppressed and marginalized peoples, including refugees and immigrants**, as we too know what it is like to experience marginalization and oppression.

Repairing the World

תיקון עולם | Tikkun Olam

Our Jewish tradition compels us to make a more **liveable, sustainable, and just world through advocacy and action**. We are commanded to not stand idly by, and while we are not obligated to complete the work, neither are we free to abstain from it.

Use these conversation starters to discuss what the Seder can teach us about creating a world that reflects our Jewish and Democratic values.

On Passover, we reflect on our liberation from Egypt. Throughout history, the Jewish people have been displaced from our homes, becoming refugees searching for security around the world. As Jewish Americans, we recognize the importance of welcoming others in their quests for safety and opportunity.

How does the history of our people inform our advocacy for present-day immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers? What can we do to fight for and protect them?

When the Israelites left their homes in Egypt to begin their journey to the land of Israel, they did not know what lay before them. Now, we are at a pivotal moment here in America, in Israel, and around the world.

How do we summon the strength to keep working toward a better future – and a stronger democracy – when there is so much uncertainty? What grounds us as we pursue our path to a more just and equitable world?

Our tradition teaches that each year at the Seder, we must tell the story of the Exodus as if we, ourselves, were leaving Egypt.

Today, what are our stories if we retell our modern-day experiences as Jewish Americans? What are the stories and moments we would want future generations to tell? What are you doing to fight for our freedoms?

Passover is referred to as “Z’man Cheiruteinu” or “The Time of Our Freedom.” However, there are two words for freedom in Hebrew: *chofesh* and *cheirut*. While *chofesh* means “freedom from,” the sages of our tradition chose *cheirut*, or “freedom to,” when referring to Passover because freedom is not guaranteed. Much like our democracy, freedom is something we must all actively take part in to ensure it continues for ourselves and others.

What are some ways we can advocate for our rights, defend democracy, and safeguard freedom?

THE FOUR CHILDREN: FOUR APPROACHES TO COMBATTING FASCISM

The Wise Child | חכם:

The wise child asks detailed questions about the laws of Passover, seeking to understand their deeper meaning. This child represents intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and thoughtful understanding. The wise child actively resists authoritarian ideologies, questions power, and seeks to understand the roots of injustice. As fascist leaders seek to suppress knowledge that threatens their power, the wise children will help lead us toward a better future.

The Simple Child | תם:

The simple child asks basic questions. This child represents innocence and a desire to participate without fully understanding the deeper meaning. During the rise of fascism, some may fall into the role of the simple child, passive or vulnerable to manipulation. As fascist leaders continue to lie with impunity, we cannot allow the simple child to be swept up in populist rhetoric. We also cannot allow ourselves to become like the simple child by ignoring what is happening around us. If we stop paying attention, fascist leaders will act with impunity.

The Wicked Child | רשע:

The wicked child asks, "What is this service to you?" and separates themselves from the community. This child challenges the meaning of the rituals, questioning their relevance and significance. The wicked child rejects our democratic norms and views the values of equality as a threat to their personal standing. Fascist leaders can appeal to the wicked child by making them feel alienated from mainstream society, promising them power through division.

The Child Who Doesn't Know How to Ask | שאינו יודע לשאול:

This child does not ask any questions because they don't know how or because they are too passive to engage. This child represents the silent observers who are indifferent to the political process or who feel powerless to make a change. Fascist leaders thrive on complacency, and it is up to each of us to teach the child who doesn't know how to ask.

A PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY

*Our G-d and G-d of our ancestors,
bless this country and all who dwell within it.
Help us to experience the blessings of our
lives and circumstances,
To be vigilant, compassionate, and brave.
Strengthen us when we are afraid,
Help us to channel our anger, so that it
motivates us to action.
Help us to feel our fear, so that we do not
become numb.
Help us to be generous with others, so that
we raise each other up.
Help us to be humble in our fear,
knowing that as vulnerable as we feel,
there are those at greater risk, and
that it is our holy work to stand with them.
Help us to taste the sweetness of liberty,
To not take for granted the freedoms won
in generations past or in recent days.
To heal and nourish our democracy,
that it may be like a tree planted by the
water
whose roots reach down to the stream;
it need not fear drought when it comes,
its leaves are always green (Jeremiah 17:8).*

*Source of all Life,
Guide our leaders with righteousness
Strengthen their hearts, but keep them from
hardening.
That they may use their influence and
authority to
speak truth and act for justice (Isaiah 16:3-5).
May all who dwell in this country
share in its bounty, enjoy its freedoms,
and be protected by its laws.
May this nation use its power and wealth
to be a voice for justice,
peace, and equality for all who dwell on earth.
May we be strong and have courage
To be bold in our action and deep in our
compassion,
To discern when we must listen and when we
must act,
To uproot bigotry, intolerance, misogyny,
racism,
discrimination, and violence in all its forms,
To celebrate the many faces of God reflected
in the wondrous diversity of humanity,
To welcome the stranger and the immigrant
and to honor the gifts of those who seek refuge
and possibility here, as they have since
before this nation was born.
Let justice well up like waters, and
righteousness
like a mighty stream (Amos 5:24)*

And let us say, Amen.

-Rabbi Ayelet S. Cohen

A PRAYER FOR THE HOSTAGES

Avinu Shebashamayim, bless and protect the land of Israel and all who dwell within it. We urgently pray that those held hostage in Gaza will return home to their loved ones, and we pray for ongoing healing for those who have been released.

We pray to see the day when Israelis and Palestinians will live together in peace. May there be no more death, no more senseless loss. May we see the day when there is safety, justice, self-determination, hope, and a healthy future for all, b'karov u'v'yameinu.

*Acheinu kol beit yisrael,
han'tunim b'tzara uvashivyah, haomdim
bein bayam uvein bayabasha. Hamakom
y'racheim aleihem v'yotziem mitzara
lirvacha, umi'afaila l'orah umishibud
lig'ulah, hashta ba'agala uvizman kariv,
V'nomar: Amen*

אחינו כל בית ישראל,
הנתונים בצרה ובשביה, העומדים
בין בים ובין ביבשה, המקום
ירחם עליהם, ויזיאו מצרה
לרחוקה, ומאפלה לאורה, ומשעבוד לגאולה,
השתא בעגלא ובזמן קרוב.
ונאמר: אמן.

*Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech
Ha'olam, matir asurim.*

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם,
מתיר אסורים.

Our brothers, our sisters, the entire family of Israel, all who have been forced into distress or taken into captivity, whether on the sea or on dry land, may the Divine bring them from suffering to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption, now, speedily, and soon. And let us say, Amen.

Blessed is the Divine, who frees the captives.

FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE

As we gather to celebrate Passover, we remember the story of liberation from oppression. This holiday reminds us of the power of standing up against tyranny and injustice.

Today, our fight for democracy is threatened by autocratic actions that undermine our freedoms. We must stand united against any force that seeks to strip us of our rights and liberties, and your support helps us continue the crucial work of holding those in power accountable and defending the values that make our democracy strong. Together, we can ensure a future of justice and freedom for all.

[Your continued support makes our work possible, providing the foundation for our efforts to defend our Jewish and Democratic values.](#)

Thank you for welcoming us into your homes as part of your Seder. We encourage you to visit jewishdems.org to learn more about our policy priorities and how you can join us as we work toward a better future for us all.

Chag Pesach Sameach!

חג פסח שמח!