

## **Guided Pesach Seder Meditation**

*Chag Sameach. This is "Inspired-j" a platform to build experiences for Jews across the globe that connect us to our past, present and future.*

*This meditation can be utilized at your seder to bring presence, connection and a new experience for your guests. Wishing you and your family a chag kosher v'sameach.*

### **Meditation reading**

For over three millennia, our people have gathered for Seders world-wide to celebrate the emergence of our identity as a people, and to re-live the experience of journeying from slavery to freedom.

The Passover ritual is not a commemoration of one single historical event, but each year invites the possibility of a personal, and real journey to freedom right now.

For the next ten minutes our intention is to support you in making this night truly different from all other nights, as you find new meaning, intention and presence at your Seder.

We encourage you to listen without judgement and notice the feelings that arise. Lean in to any discomfort if you can and trust the spirit of the Seder ...

For many, this year has felt particularly hard, heartbreaking and heavy. In recognition of the pain many have endured, if available to you, we invite you to dip your finger into your wine-glass & spill a single drop onto your plate.

Notice the colour... the splash... the symbolic mark.

We invite you to take a few moments to notice how you are feeling right now.

Whatever arises, whether it's discomfort, sadness, excitement, frustration, indifference or plain hunger, become present to exactly where you are at this moment.

Take three deeper than usual breaths with eyes open or closed and simply witness this.

As described in the Torah, the Israelites descended to Egypt in search of food, and in the process, became enslaved for 400 years. Undoubtedly, many felt hopeless, unable to change their predicament. In time, disempowered, they stopped noticing they were in fact slaves and simply believed this was their lot in life.

Can you relate to this hopelessness?

In the Passover story, it took one leader – Moses - who, despite his royal privilege growing up in Pharaoh's palace, awoke, and questioned his situation, gave up life as he knew it, and helped his people recognise their enslavement And believe in their power to institute change.

An important first step towards freedom is – introspection - to bring our curiosity to the table and invite awareness. What might we be enslaved to in this very moment in our lives?

If available to you, we invite each of you to reach for a piece of matzah to hold, as you begin reflect on the idea of enslavement.

*(Sing Avadim Hayinu Le'Pharoah Bemitzrayim...)*

With a piece of matzah in your hand, I invite you to close your eyes or lower your gaze. Feel the weight of the matzah in your hand.

Is it lighter or heavier than you remember?

Does it feel smooth or rough?

Can you trace the irregular lines that remind you of the ebb and flow of your year?

Is your piece sharp, or round, gentle?

Still with eyes closed, bring the matzah to your nose. Smell. Inhale. Breathe.

Can you sense the fire of the oven that baked this Matzah?

Can you breathe in the parched earth, the inconsistent rains that fed the wheat, and the many callused hands that worked to deliver the Matzah to you for this very moment?

Let's all together take one slow deep breath, in and out and connect with how we might be feeling holding this matzah.

Perhaps you noticed a sense of gratitude, a simultaneous sadness or another emotion.

Is your heart feeling open or guarded?

Is this feeling foreign or familiar?

Do you feel nostalgic to Seders past?

Do you ache for those not present this year?

Or are you feeling nothing at all?

Every one of these feelings is welcome here. Allow whatever is arising to be just as it is...

*Sing: Vehi she-amda, la'avoteinu velanu... ELLA she'bechol dor v'dor, omdim aleinyu lechaloteinu, vehakadosh baruch hu.*

As we hold this ancient symbol of matzah in our hands, let's keep our eyes closed a little longer. Consider that matzah contains nearly the identical ingredients required to make bread - flour and water. And so really, how are they different?

Very simply, matzah lacks one significant ingredient - *time*.

Bread is created by allowing flour and water to mix and react over time. Matzah in contrast, within 18 minutes of water touching flour, the dough is kneaded, fired, complete.

Let's allow ourselves to contemplate on our own relationship with this ingredient of time.

Here is a question for you: choose an area of your life where you feel there may be a time imbalance – perhaps it is something you spend too much time on or too little time on. It may be with

1. work
2. family life
3. friendships, or
4. your own self-care

As we sit in this reflection - take a deep breath...

Now that you have landed on an area of imbalance, consider what drives this decision of how you choose to use and divide your time.

Does it involve a sense of duty?

A lack of boundaries?

Something you're avoiding?

Old ideas of who you *should* be?

What feelings arise when you recognise that a part of your life might be out of balance?

Is it sadness, fear, guilt?

Does it trigger stress or anxiety?

Or something else?

Our sages, by design, created the Seder to ask questions.

As you look within, gently and kindly ask yourself - are you truly following your own good guidance with regards to the way you want to live your life, or are you working towards what others expect of you?

Could it be that, like the Israelites, enslaved in Egypt, you too have not noticed your own imbalance and slavery?

*Sing: AVADIM HAYINU*

Taking stock of our choices and recognising we might not be as free as we thought we were can be confronting. It is not unusual to accidentally fall into a kind of bondage to some of the forces in our lives, or even to time itself. Keep in mind that, no matter what you have recognised, it is the mere recognition itself that is ultimately your first step towards freedom.

In a symbolic gesture of your willingness to free yourself, we now invite you to break, crush, snap, or change your matzah in some way and forcefully say enough... *Dayenu...*

*Sing: Dai Dai Dayenu*

As you look at this changed piece of Matzah, reimagine it as a *breaking* or a parting of ways with what *was*. The broken Matzah represents a break from your own personal bondage and allows you to envision it as a way

forward, seeking a new relationship to time and to what's important to your heart. This journey to your own heart is a journey *only you* can make.

As the Israelites came together in unity against Pharaoh - miracles occurred. Water turned to blood, hail to fire, and ultimately, they achieved an exodus and the building of our nation.

In our final breath together, we invite you to make an intention or *kavanah* to make this year truly different from all other years. One word. One commitment, One small thing you will do differently...

With this resolve, though we and others may not yet be free, we are commanded to celebrate the internal freedom that is possible to us now.

Let's embrace this awakening and the choices we bring to our own lives, no matter where we find ourselves today.

I hope you can experience gratitude for being here, alive, in this moment, surrounded by the connection of the people you sit with, the gratitude for the gift of the Seder. Breathe into the Light and lightness within your heart, and may this light illuminate your world...

## **The end**

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Chag sameach...