

Passover Seder in the Spirit of Israel's Declaration of Independence

An addendum to the Seder and to the
ongoing debate on future of Israeli Democracy
Passover, 2023

Wishing you a joyous Festival of Freedom! a suggested
addition to the Seder service

To Be Read During the Explanation of the Seder Plate

Thus, we shall say on this important day: In every generation, all People must feel compelled to uphold the values of justice and freedom.

On this night of nights, we emphasize the connection between Passover, the "Holiday of Liberation" and the State of Israel's 1948 Declaration of Independence.

How is This Seder Different from Others?

At this year's Seder, 75 years after the birth of the State of Israel, on this specific "Festival of Freedom", we have added the flag of Israel to the Seder Plate and quote from our nation's Declaration of Independence.

We shall remember and remind ourselves that the Festival of Freedom applies to us all, regardless of race, religion, creed, national origin, gender, or sexual orientation; without prejudice towards one's ethnicity, religious or secular beliefs, or place on the political spectrum; with no distinction between Jews and others - "for we were once strangers in the strange land of Egypt". We shall emphasize the vision of and legal precedent for a democratic Jewish Nation-State as we say together:

"Let All Who are Hungry Come and Eat"

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; It will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture.

We raise a glass of water in blessing:

Water is the Source of Life

This is a symbol of the liberty into which we were born and have taken for granted.

We give thanks for a democratic Israel that quenches our thirst for freedom and justice, that allows us to celebrate the Passover Seder in our chosen manner.

We offer full support to those who fight for Liberty, whose actions follow in the ancient footsteps of the Jewish People.

We sanctify this moment and dedicate it to friends, family, and community, who together form one, large family-like unit. Sometimes, we mistakenly take them for granted, but they are the waters of life that nourish all that is sacred and good in our existence.

Therefore...

We lift a glass of blessing in honor of all who are with us - in body and spirit - on this night.

L'chaim! L'chaim! L'chaim! - To Life!

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A Tale of Wise Women and Men Who Discuss Democracy

And even if we are all intelligent, insightful, and well-versed in the learning of Torah, it is incumbent upon us to discuss the values of justice and equity in connection with the Festival of Liberty and the story of the Exodus from Egypt - All who frequently extoll the virtues of Democracy worthy of praise.

A True Democracy is one that leaves freedom in the hands of the individual, but at the same time ensures that they will not abuse that freedom.

Albert Einstein

Democracy is not merely the right of a majority to rule and govern, but is primarily, the right of a minority to be different, but equal.

Dr. Achmad Tibi

Anarchy should be eschewed by all who are wise; Dictatorship should be halted by all who are free. Reason and liberty generally require the support of the majority, on condition that the majority respects the rights of the minority.

Menachem Begin

'Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

You are Invited to update the words of Wise Child in the allegory of the four children

The Torah Speaks of Four Children...

one wise, one wicked, one simple and one who cannot even ask...

The Wise Child, what does s/he say?

"For which Diasporic group was our nation built? Upon which laws and precepts was our nation founded?"

And you shall answer the child and say:

"The Nation of Israel is open to immigrants; it seeks to ingather the exiles of all Jewish Diasporas. It is founded on the principles of liberty, justice, and peace, in accordance with the vision of the Prophets of Israel."

"Haggadah of Independence" (Aaron Megged, 1952)

We Sing in Strong, Clear Voice:

Dayenu - It is Enough!

Were we, on this evening, singing in praise of our forebearers who established a Jewish and Democratic State of Israel headed by three governing authorities, but had not framed a Declaration of Independence for the glory of the State of Israel **Dayenu—It Would Be Enough**

Were we, on this evening, recalling how our Mothers and Fathers framed a Declaration of Independence for the glory of the State of Israel, but had not sought to ingather the Diaspora, built education systems, promoted the arts and culture and made the wilderness bloom..... **Dayenu—It Would Be Enough**

Were we, on this evening, telling the story of how our mothers and fathers sought to ingather the Diaspora, built education systems, promoted the arts and culture, and made the wilderness bloom, but not that we have been fortunate to have reached peace agreements with some of our neighbours. **Dayenu—It Would Be Enough**

Were we, on this evening, remembering how we have reached peace agreements with some of our neighbors, but not that we developed the "Iron Dome" anti-missile system to protect us from those who remain our enemies..... **Dayenu—It Would Be Enough**

Were we, on this evening, proud of how we developed the "Iron Dome" anti-missile system to protect us from external enemies along with protection from internal attacks on our democratic system. **Dayenu—It Would Be Enough**

HOWEVER

This year, our democracy is under internal attack. Thus, we cannot simply say "Dayenu" as is our custom. Therefore, we shall exclaim in a loud and clear voice a new form of "Dayenu" one that warns of the dangers that may soon befall us—this is DAH-ee! Enough..... **this is DAY-ee! Enough!**

DAH-ee! Enough! To the destruction of all that we have built! **DAH-ee! Enough!** To the shattering of our democracy!


DAH-ee! Enough! To the uprooting of the Justice System! **DAH-ee! Enough!** To the erosion of our liberty!

DAH-ee, Dayenu, DAH-ee, Dayenu, DAH-ee Daynu, Dayenu, Dayenu, Dayenu x2

Blessed in the hope that fills our hearts. We bless our sisters and brothers who have joined the struggle to preserve democracy, liberty, equality, peace, and fellowship. We pledge to reach the day when the sounds of democratic victory shall echo in the in the House of Israel and in all the world's city squares; the voices of joy and gladness, mirth, delight and rejoicing, harmony and peace, companionship and fellowship.

Special Thanks to

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The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel

On May 14, 1948, on the day in which the British Mandate over a Palestine expired, the Jewish People's Council gathered at the Tel Aviv Museum, and approved the following proclamation, declaring the establishment of the State of Israel. The new state was recognized that night by the United States and three days later by the USSR.

ERETZ-ISRAEL [(Hebrew) - the Land of Israel, Palestine] was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom. Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, ma'pilim [(Hebrew) - immigrants coming to Eretz-Israel in defiance of restrictive legislation] and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.

In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country.

This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and re-affirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people - the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe - was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the comity of nations. Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to Eretz-Israel, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland.

In the Second World War, the Jewish community of this country contributed its full share to the struggle of the freedom- and peace-loving nations against the forces of Nazi wickedness and, by the blood of its soldiers and its war effort, gained the right to be reckoned among the peoples who founded the United Nations.

On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable. This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

ACCORDINGLY WE, MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ERETZ-ISRAEL AND OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, ARE HERE ASSEMBLED ON THE DAY OF THE TERMINATION OF THE BRITISH MANDATE OVER ERETZ-ISRAEL AND, BY VIRTUE OF OUR NATURAL AND HISTORIC RIGHT AND ON THE STRENGTH OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HEREBY DECLARE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JEWISH STATE IN ERETZ-ISRAEL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

WE DECLARE that, with effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate being tonight, the eve of Sabbath, the 6th Iyar, 5708 (15th May, 1948), until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the Constitution which shall be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October 1948, the People's Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People's Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, to be called "Israel".

THE STATE OF ISRAEL

will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz-Israel.

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building-up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the comity of nations.

WE APPEAL - in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months - to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

WE EXTEND our hand to all neighbouring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

WE APPEAL to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream - the redemption of Israel.

PLACING OUR TRUST IN THE "ROCK OF ISRAEL", WE AFFIX OUR SIGNATURES TO THIS PROCLAMATION AT THIS SESSION OF THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE, ON THE SOIL OF THE HOMELAND, IN THE CITY OF TEL-AVIV, ON THIS SABBATH EVE, THE 5TH DAY OF IYAR, 5708 (14TH MAY, 1948).

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