

# Introduction and Welcome

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**Source:**



## Happy Passover!

Tonight we gather together to celebrate Passover, our holiday of freedom. We will eat a great meal together, enjoy (at least!) four glasses of wine, and tell the story of our ancestors' liberation from slavery in Egypt. We welcome our friends and family members from other backgrounds to reflect with us on the meaning of freedom in all our lives and histories. We will consider the blessings in our lives, pledge to work harder at freeing those who still suffer, and begin to cast off the things in our own lives that oppress us. As we get started, get comfortable! Find a pillow to help you recline. In ancient times, eating while lounging on a pillow or couch was a sign of freedom. Enjoy!

The Seder night is an experience that walks us through the steps of liberation from slavery to freedom. The Haggadah is not only a text; it's an intricate pattern of words, actions and emotions that let us experience a process of reclaiming freedom. Set as columns to hold up this process are the four cups of wine we drink, representing the four stages described in the emancipation of our ancestors from Egypt.

The sages say that the four cups of wine represent these reference points. The stages of a process are best represented by cups of wine. The wine itself represents a process; the distillation of good wine can take years, the final product being so special because we gave it time to happen. Even the drinking of wine is a process; wine is not drunk quickly, in order to get to a final goal. Instead, it usually accompanies a meal or is brought out to help enjoy people's company. This does not mean that there is no final liberation; the stages of liberation from Egypt are not instead of liberation. But they allow the Jews to be part of the story, to achieve and enjoy each stage, not to arrive at a given reality.

