

# Introduction

Contributed by [Hillel at the University of Rochester](#)

Source:

Welcome to all as we celebrate the Pesach. It is a time for joy and relaxation, a time to lie on pillows and drink wine. A time to ponder our history, and find its relevance in our lives today. And it is a time to renew our courage in order to transform our planet into a place of peace and justice. Tonight, we will read the story of Passover, drink our four cups of wine, sing the songs of freedom and justice... and we will try to do so with a joy that honors our history. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel once said that freedom is when you dare to leave your old ways behind... when you are not enslaved by your own small needs, and instead surrender to the greater needs of the time. Perhaps he spoke of a good greater than the engagement of small children, but we take the sentiment as justification all the same. The word SEDER means "order" and tonight, the order remains, rooted in the values of justice and activism that are never lost at this table. The first words in the story of the creation of the universe were "let there be light." We begin our seder as we begin every Jewish holiday celebration with the lighting of the holiday candles. It is the fundamental aspects of hope and faith in Judaism, as well as the obligation of our people, to make the light of justice and knowledge penetrate the darkness of our time.

Please join us in bringing in Passover with the lighting of the candles:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל [שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל] יוֹם טוֹב

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Yom Tov.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified us with laws and commanded us to light the festival lights.