

8. Maror (Bitter Herbs)

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Source:

We now come to eat the bitter herbs. While we eat it, we remember the bitterness of the lives of our ancestors and think about the bitterness in the lives of others around the world.

The following is adapted from the CCJ's Freedom Seder Haggadah:

The traditional Haggadah doesn't specify what the bitter herbs should be, traditions include horseradish or lettuce. The bitter taste is meant as a reminder of the hardship experienced by the Israelites in slavery. This empathy can be extended to considering the suffering of those who are still enslaved or in bonded labour. Slavery and trafficking for the purpose of labour can take many forms and covers a wide range of industries from textiles to shing and manual labour in factories or on farms. Debt bondage is a specific form of slavery in which a person is employed to pay off a debt, but 'the value of these services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined'. While we recall the Biblical Exodus story and the slavery and bitter hardships it describes, we should be aware that these conditions and experiences still exist in our world.

We will revisit human trafficking in our section on the 10 plagues.

ברוך אתה יי אל הינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצוותיו, וצונו על אכילת מרור.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat maror.

[Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments and ordained that we should eat bitter herbs.]