

The Symbols of Passover

Contributed by [Muslim-Jewish Solidarity Committee](#)

Source:

Elijah's Cup- In Jewish tradition, Elijah is the harbinger of the Messiah, or the Messianic era, a time of peace, solidarity, friendship, and wholeness. Elijah's cup is filled and left untouched, waiting for his arrival.

Miriam's Cup- A recent addition to the Passover table, Miriam's Cup is filled with water and serves as a symbol of Miriam's Well, which was the source of water for the Israelites in the desert.

Matzah- The Israelites left Egypt in a haste and did not have time to let their bread dough rise, that is why during Passover we eat matzah, unleavened flatbread.

The Seder Plate

Maror and Bitter Herbs- Horseradish and lettuce. Their bitter taste reminds us of the bitterness of slavery and the life of hard labor the Israelites experienced in Egypt.

Karpas- Passover is also called Hag HaAviv, the Spring holiday. Karpas, from the Greek word Karpos, which means raw vegetable, is eaten to celebrate the newness, the hope, the possibility that spring brings. Many Jewish communities use parsley for Karpas.

Egg- The hard boiled egg is a symbol of the *korban chagigah*, festival sacrifice, that was offered in the Temple. It is also a symbol of rebirth and spring.

Shank bone- We use a lamb bone to represent the special sacrifice made in the days of the Temple for the Passover holiday, it is there as a reminder but does not play an active role during the seder.

Charoset- A sweet past made of fruit and nuts. It symbolizes the mortar that the Israelite slaves used to construct buildings for Pharaoh.