

## CULTURE & HISTORY

# History of the Freedom Seder

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Source:

The idea for the Freedom Seder was hatched 51 years ago, and took place in Washington DC, eight days after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. People in the city were rebelling, and a Jewish man and civil rights activist named Arthur Waskow was deeply affected by the military presence in the city brought on by the violence. A year later, he wrote his own Haggadah, and over 800 Washingtonians, black, white, Jewish and Christian, came together in a church for a solidarity gathering seder with his Haggadah.

From a Washpo article about the event:

The huge crowd in 1969 sat at long tables in front of candles and matzah. They read from Waskow's book, which invoked nuclear disarmament and police brutality as modern problems in need of solutions alongside the traditional "Dayenu" recitation of ancient problems that God solved, and listed King and Gandhi as "prophets" alongside Elijah. The worshipers raised their wine glasses and proclaimed not "L'chaim" but "Liberation now!" and sang a hymn common to black Christians and to Jews: "Go Down, Moses."

Today we have gathered friends in the name of freedom and solidarity, remembrance of our ancestors to share a communal seder and meal and ask ourselves and our beloved guests....

What does freedom mean to you in 2019?