

# Four Answers

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Source: Telling the Story: A Passover Haggadah Explained

Later, we will read and explore the whole story of the Exodus from Egypt, but first we give a simple answer to each of these four questions.

We eat matzoh because when our ancestors were told by Pharaoh that they could leave Egypt, they had no time to allow their bread to rise, so they baked hurriedly, without leavening.

At the Seder, we eat bitter herbs to remind us of the bitterness our ancestors experienced when they were oppressed as slaves.

At the Seder table, we dip food twice; once in salt water to remind us of the tears shed in slavery and again in haroset, to remind us that there is sweetness even in bitter times.

In ancient times, slaves ate hurriedly, standing or squatting on the ground. Symbolically, as a sign of freedom, we lean and relax as we partake of wine and symbolic food. The Haggadah tells the story of Rabbi Akiba and other Talmudic scholars sitting at the Seder table in B'nai B'rak all night long discussing the events of the liberation from Egypt. They talked all night until their students came in to announce it was time for the morning prayers. If great scholars can find the theme of freedom so fascinating that it keeps them up all night, our Seder too, will be made more interesting with questions, comments and discussion on this theme.