

Maror/Charoset

Contributed by [18Doors](#)

Source: [Rabbi Geela Rayzel Raphael, Five Interfaith Passover Readings You Can Add to Your Haggadah](#)

Maror (bitter herbs, such as horseradish)—the symbol of bitterness and slavery of the Israelites in Egypt. Today, in a Jewish community that is free, this bitterness takes on another layer of meaning. We acknowledge that there are many among us who are embittered by their feelings of resentment, discomfort, and fear. We know that there is just cause for some of these feelings of fear, for Jews were "other" for so many centuries and mistreated just because they were different.

This laden history has often contributed to some of our families' inability to accept the idea of intermarriage. We acknowledge that Jewish people have struggled and been enslaved in the past and we stretch to transform this defeated posture. We also know that sometimes our own enslavement or emotional bondage prevents us from being open to hearing each other in our marriage. Loyalties to families of origin need to be honored, unless they prevent us from creating true intimacy. Bitter places are stuck places, and we commit ourselves tonight to moving beyond our own positions to find new points of intersection and connection.

Tonight we dip our bitterness in the sweetness of charoset. Charoset, the sweet mixture of fruits and nuts, symbolizes the mortar of the bricks of the Israelites. It is also the mortar of commitment and interdependence that enabled the Jewish community to survive through those centuries of oppression. It is the building blocks of hope and tradition, which are sweet. We take our maror of fear, and by dipping it into the sweetness we create a new model that honors the fear and suffering yet holds out hope for the future.

By blending our maror and charoset, we acknowledge the blending of faiths and traditions that sit around this table here tonight. We know it is not always sweet and it is not always bitter, but that life is a mixture of both. Just as our taste buds are designed for sweet, salty, sour and bitter, so we taste the range of textures of our relationships. By our dipping tonight we bring together the bitter and the sweet for something new to emerge.