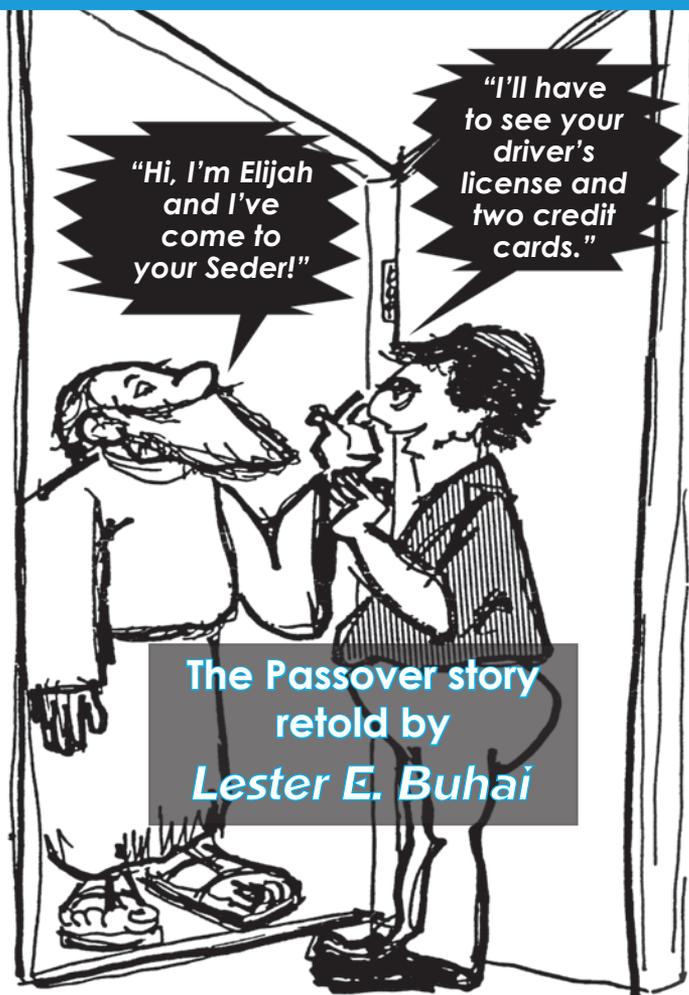
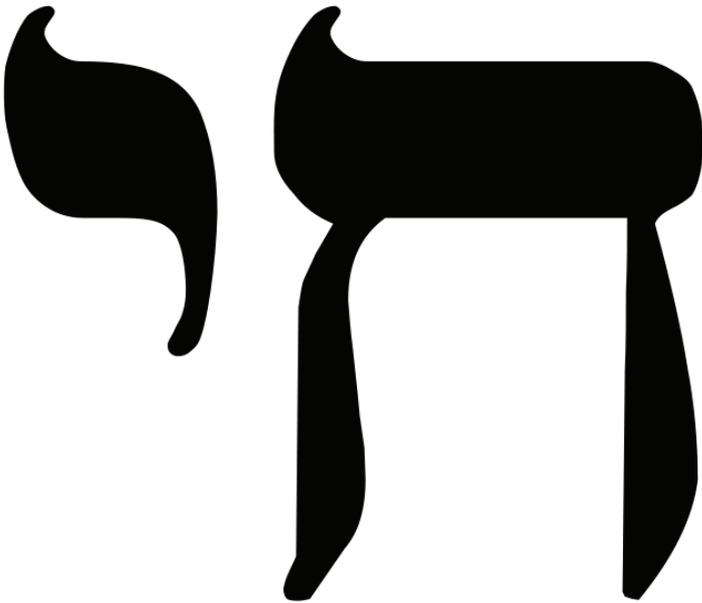


# A Slightly Different Passover Seder

## MAGGADAH



*A Light, Joyous and*  
*UNORTHODOX*  
*Introduction To A Very*  
*Heavy Meal*



# A SEDER



**WHEREAS:** It has taken so much time and effort to prepare the seder meal, and...

**WHEREAS:** By our attendance here we have shown a desire to be with each other on the first night of Passover, and...

**WHEREAS:** The kitchen staff says that a slight delay will not cause the gefilte fish to crumble nor the matzo-balls to harden.

**THEREFORE:** What could it hurt if we took just a few minutes to talk about the significance of the Seder? After all the Seder is not just another meal. It is a tradition that predates even the oldest among us. Maybe we can learn something from it.

But before we begin, I should also tell you that during every Seder four wine toasts are offered, and the management has requested that these toasts be made in Hebrew.

Listen, we think nothing about learning toasts in Spanish like: *“Salud, amor y dinero y el tiempo en que gustarlos,”* so what will it hurt if we learn one in Hebrew? Especially if it makes the management happy?

Okay. Let's try the first toast. Repeat after me:

**“BARUCH ATAH ADONAI, ELOHAYNU MELECH HA-OLAM,  
BORAY PRE HAGAFEN.”**

How about that? **Just one sip of wine and we're all bilingual already!** Now will the next reader begin.

## Reader Number 2

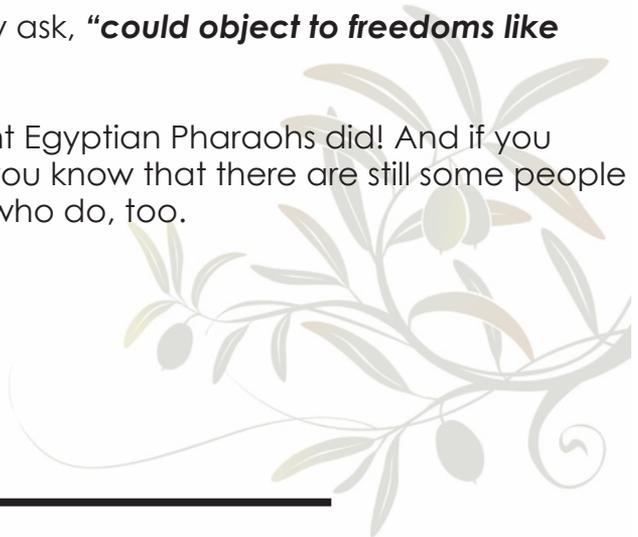
The Seder is a celebration of freedom.

Specifically it celebrates the freedom of the Jews in Egypt from the bondage of the Pharaoh. Of course, in today's vernacular "bondage" has taken on a different meaning. It sounds like we are accusing the Pharaoh of some kinky sex practices. But we are not. Actually we are talking about slavery—the real old fashioned kind just like the kind that once existed here in America. We're talking about unbearable conditions under which people work for a starvation wage, or no wage at all; without protection of their human rights and without the freedom to seek a better life elsewhere.

And we're talking about: the right to live and think as we like; and the right to practice those of our beliefs which do not harm others; and the right to accept responsibility for the welfare of others; and to have the freedom to fulfill our obligation to decency without the disapproval nor the interference of the government.

***"Who" you may ask, "could object to freedoms like that?!"***

Well the ancient Egyptian Pharaohs did! And if you think about it, you know that there are still some people around today who do, too.



## Reader Number 3

First, it would be in order to recapitulate the Passover story as first told in the Bible.

Once upon a time an old Jewish patriarch named Jacob, who lived in Canaan, sent his sons and their families to Egypt to look for food because the old farm in Canaan wasn't producing much.

Egypt looked so good compared to the dust bowl from which they had come, that Jacob's sons and relatives stayed there much longer than anyone had anticipated.

In fact, they stayed there so long and begat (as they say in the Bible) so profusely, that the Egyptians became more than mildly alarmed by the multitude of Jewish aliens in their midst.

**"THE JEWS ARE BEGATTING US RIGHT OUT OF OUR OWN COUNTRY,"** cried the Egyptians.

And so, the Egyptians, being a fun-loving people, decided to discourage the Jews from their libidinous and fecund activities by playing little dirty tricks on them like this: conscripting all Jews into forced labor; and chucking all male, Jewish babies into the Nile, without first teaching them to swim.

**THE JEWS SAW NO HUMOR IN THIS SITUATION WHATSOEVER!!!**



## Reader Number 4

Now, just like in the movies, a little flashback.

Picture this: a nice Jewish couple living in Egypt, have a new baby boy. They name the kid Moses (these days they would probably call him Monty).

After his bris Moses' mama and papa become frantic because they know that if everything goes according to Hoyle an Egyptian soldier will soon knock on their door and ask, ***“Do you have any nice, new baby boys for me to throw in the river today?”***

The parents, a truth loving couple, do not want to tell the soldier a lie but on the other hand they do not want their baby boy thrown in the Nile, either.

Do you see the conflict, the pathos—just like in real life in the movies—**TO LIE OR DIE!**

Well, rather than face that hard decision they develop a plan. When the soldier comes to the door they will stall him and ask him to come back the next day. As soon as he leaves, they will put little Moses on an air mattress and float him in the river right where the Pharaoh's daughter regularly goes skinny dipping. They figure that when the Princess sees what a cutey Moses is, she will take him home and adopt him.

Then Moses' mother will offer her services to the princess as a baby sitter, and everything will be hunky-dory.



## *The Princess Finds Moses*

## Reader Number 5

Well, **“MAZELTOV”**—the scenario worked!

The Pharaoh's daughter found the baby; brought him home; adopted him; and he grew up in luxury's lap just like a Jewish American Princess—only he wasn't a Princess and he wasn't American.

But don't gloat. For many years, while Moses lived high on the brisket, all the other Jews in Egypt were doing poorly indeed. They were slaving on the pyramids from morning to night without a pot to show for it. Eventually things got so bad for them that they sent a representative to see Moses.

*“Listen Moe,” said the envoy “even though you're one of us, you've got it pretty good living here with the Pharaoh and all those other Egyptians who walk sideways with both shoulders showing. But for the rest of us Jews, life in Egypt is really rotten! Please go to your buddy, the Pharaoh, and convince him to let us Jews get the hell out of here.”*

Moses was about to make up some excuse because he didn't want to confront the Pharaoh, but the representative looked Moses straight in the eye and said, **“MOE, YOU OWE US!”**

Moses, feeling guilty about living so well, agreed. “Nu, he said, “I'll give it a try”

My friends, before we continue the story, lets drink to Moses' imminent success. Repeat after me:

**“BARUCH ATAH ADONAI, ELOHAYNU MELECH HA-OLAM, BORAY PRE HAGAFEN.”**

## Reader Number 6

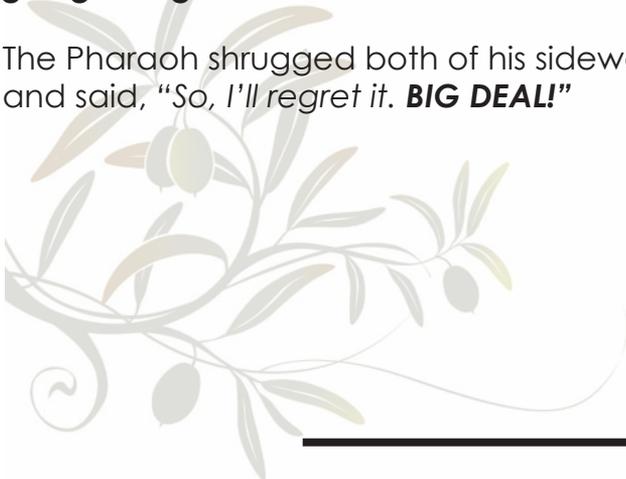
Moses went to the Pharaoh and said, “**Pharaoh, let my people go!** Slavery is not their favorite occupation, and being a career-oriented group, they want equal opportunity for upward mobility. To achieve that they must have territorial mobility. In words of one syllable, Pharaoh, **they want out!**”

The Pharaoh looked in disbelief at Moses and said, “Have you got chopped liver for brains, or what? If I let your people go, who will build our cities and pyramids for free? Who will bake the bagels that everyone in my court has learned to love? My answer to you is absolutely, positively **NO!**”

Moses shook his head and said sadly, “Pharaoh, I’m sorry you feel that way because just the other day I was talking to the Lord and he said to me, ‘Moe, you can threaten the Pharaoh with anything you can think up to make him free the Jews, and I will back you up.’”

“So Pharaoh, my advice to you is to let the Jews get out of here to go to Jerusalem or else Pharaoh, **you are going to regret it!**”

The Pharaoh shrugged both of his sideways shoulders and said, “So, I’ll regret it. **BIG DEAL!**”



## Reader Number 7

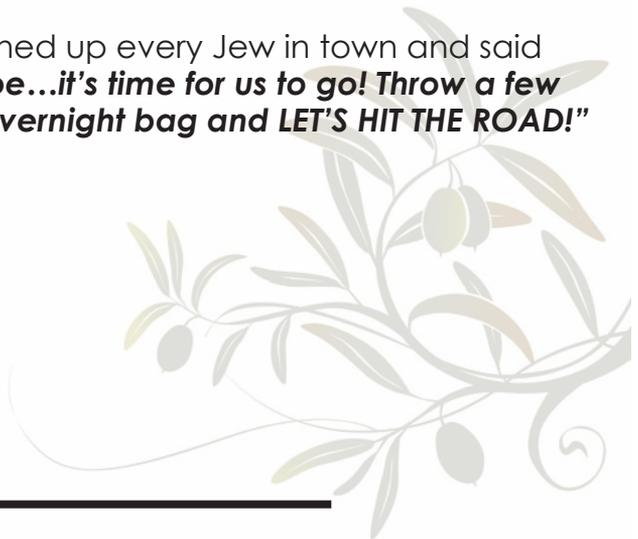
Well, Moses left the Pharaoh's place plenty mad. He talked to the Lord again and together they concocted some awful events to plague the Egyptians. In fact, that's what they called them—**The Ten Plagues**.

Things like: giving all the Egyptians mosquito bites and having all their fingernails fall out so they couldn't scratch; giving them boils on their bottoms and then making their feet hurt so much that they had to sit down; putting sand in the crotch of every Egyptian's bathing suit and then making the suit shrink two sizes; having the IRS audit every Egyptian's income tax; and several other diabolical things. But the real clincher was when they took out a contract with the heavenly Mafia to eliminate every Egyptian's eldest son.

### THAT DID IT!

That threw the Egyptians into such a rage and a tumult that Moses decided it was time for all the Jews, including himself, to make a fast break for freedom.

He quickly phoned up every Jew in town and said ***"Hello this is Moe...it's time for us to go! Throw a few things into an overnight bag and LET'S HIT THE ROAD!"***



## Reader Number 8

One lady by the name of Rose Manischewitz said, “Give me a couple of minutes and I’ll bake a few cookies—we’ll have something to nosh on the road.”

**“Nosh, shmosh!”** Cried Moses in exasperation, **“WE’VE GOT TO GET STARTED!”**

Well, Moses was right about some things and wrong about others. It was smart to have the Jews leave Egypt quickly; to be free and to never be in slavery again.

But on the other hand, he never did find a place in the desert to buy baked goods, nor a grocery store to buy yeast, nor anyone who would accept credit cards.

And when Rose Manischewitz finally got around to making something to nosh, all she could bake were some very flat crackers with perforated little lines on them. She called these crackers **“MATZOS”** and later sold them to other Jews and made quite a nice living for herself.

I digress, but an interesting thing to think about is that matzos, no matter how hard you try, can never be broken neatly along those teeny perforated lines. (Try it later during the meal) This is known as the **“Manischewitz Theory of Atypical Lineal Fragmentation”** or why Jews can’t get an even break!

But, back to our story...

## Reader Number 9

The Jews fled Egypt for Jerusalem in the middle of the night. Free forever from the bondage of the Pharaoh.

That, briefly, is the story of the Exodus, as it is called, stripped down to the—you should pardon the expression—bare essentials.

Actually, the Bible's uncut, full length version is chock-full of sensational anecdotes—it's a regular Biblical **National Inquirer** with lurid tales about an entire army drowning in the Red Sea; the walls of Jericho tumbling down during all acoustic, heavy metal concert led by Joshua; and Moses climbing to the top of Mount Sinai to rap with the Lord, returning with the Ten Commandments!

For the sake of clarity, celerity and credibility, we have purposely omitted any reference to those events. Our Seder is primarily concerned with the concept of freedom.

It is customary at every Seder for the youngest person present to ask four special questions. You see, long before Freud, Jews were amateur psychologists who figured out that if they gave the youngest kid some responsibility, **maybe he or she would pay attention.**

Tonight we will have a volunteer ask the questions that are known as the **"FEER KAH-SHESH."** Will the volunteer who can document the fact that he or she is the youngest amongst us please read the next page.



## The Four Questions

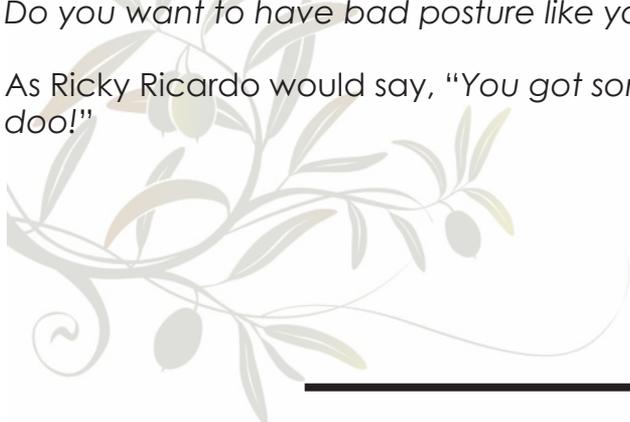
**QUESTION ONE:** Why is this night different from all other nights? On other nights we eat rye bread, bagels, croissants, tacos and/or matzos, but tonight we **only** eat matzos. What's the big deal with this matzos meal?

**QUESTION TWO:** On all other nights we eat all kinds of spices and herbs but tonight we are fixated on **"MORROR"**—ground horseradish. Please explain!

**QUESTION THREE:** On all other nights we usually don't dunk anything but doughnuts, but tonight we dip parsley into salt water, and horseradish into nuts, fruits and cinnamon. How come, all of a sudden, we have become such big dunkers?

**QUESTION FOUR:** On all other nights we make every effort to be very proper and formal, but tonight everything we do is very relaxed and casual. How come on this night a mother doesn't say to her child *"Sit up straight! Elbows off the table! Don't slouch in your chair! Do you want to have bad posture like your father?"*

As Ricky Ricardo would say, *"You got some splainin' too doo!"*



## Reader Number 11

Youngster, it is interesting that you ask those questions. They are the same questions that have been asked at Seders for thousands of years. Frankly, I am getting very tired of hearing the same queries over and over again. Please **PAY ATTENTION** to the answers this time and maybe we can eliminate them next year!

First let me explain the symbols of Passover which are on the table. (Reader raises the Matzos Plate.) Here we have three matzos made from the original Mrs. Manischewitz' recipe. Notice there are three matzos on the plate representing the unity of the Jewish people. Not only are the three matzos placed together to indicate unity, but also wouldn't a plate with one or two matzos look a little skimpy? This is, after all, a celebration feast!

(Reader raises the Seder Plate.) The second symbol is a roasted shank bone which represents the roasted lamb cooked up in the Temple of Jerusalem. Some say that the early Jews sacrificed a lamb on the altar on Passover, but in deference to the **"Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals"** we prefer not to believe it.

The third symbol is a roasted egg. The egg represents life. Tradition says that the egg was the second offering brought to the Temple on Passover. But who knows?

The fourth symbol is morror (horseradish) to remind us of the bitterness of slavery. Go ahead everyone, take a taste of it on a piece of matzos.

## Reader Number 12

The fifth symbol, “**CHAROSIS**,” (a mixture of nuts and fruit made to resemble mortar) is to remind us of the bricks that the Jews had to make and lug around while building Egyptian cities for free. Please pass it around for a taste.

Finally the last symbol, “**KARPAS**” (parsley), is to celebrate the Spring harvest. In olden days Passover coincided with the Spring harvest so those wise old Jews figured, “*Why shouldn’t we combine the two events?*” “**Who**” they asked, “**is going to wash all the dishes if we have two big celebrations back to back?**”

Okay, now we can proceed to answer the questions.

As you know, we only eat matzos to remind us of the days in the desert when there were no ingredients to bake cookies or rye bread. We eat morror to remind us of how awful life can be if we are not free. We dip parsley into salt water to replace tears with happiness, and we dip morror into charosis to sweeten bitterness and suffering.

To answer your last question about formality, let me ask you a question. Can you think of a more comfortable way to demonstrate freedom than to sit at this table, as casually as we like, figuratively thumbing our noses at all those uptight autocrats and arbiters of etiquette who would dictate what we do and how we do it?

Now let us drink to freedom. Please repeat:

**“BARUCH ATAH ADONAI, ELOHAYNU MELECH HA-OLAM,  
BORAY PRE HAGAFEN.”**

## Reader Number 13

**B**efore we end this Seder program Let me tell you about one more Passover tradition.

It is the cup of wine set out on the table for the Prophet Elijah, who, legend says, is the prophet of Peace, and who will return one day with some good news.

It is also customary to let the front door open so Elijah can walk in.

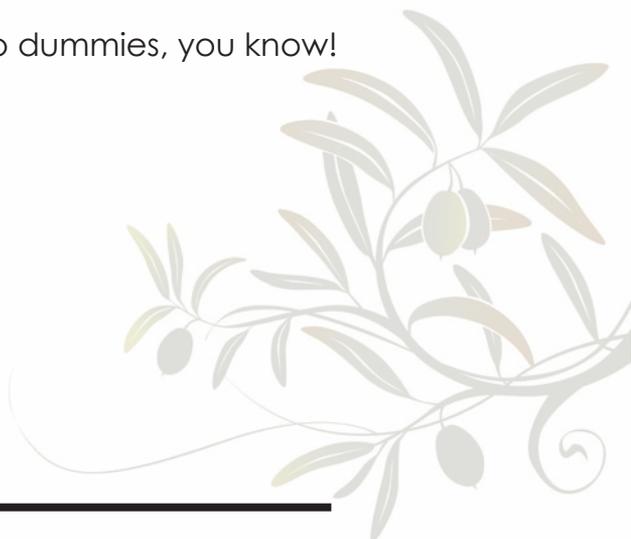
But listen, I'll give you some advice: **Keep the door Shut!**

And even more important, if some guy knocks on your door and says, "*Open up. It is the Prophet Elijah!*" **Don't be a fool! Don't let him in!** Better you should quickly double lock the door and call the police.

### **THAT MAN IS AN IMPOSTER!**

If Elijah is going to drop in somewhere for a free drink, he will go to the Bel Air Hotel.

Prophets are no dummies, you know!



## Reader Number 14

Now let us do a little summing up.

Let us each ask, “What can I learn from all this history and tradition? How does it apply to me?”

Obviously, we can conclude that if the Jews, who are known for their adaptability, could not adjust to slavery then, believe me, nobody can adjust to slavery. **Therefore, to be decent, honest individuals we must stand up for everyone’s freedom, everywhere.**

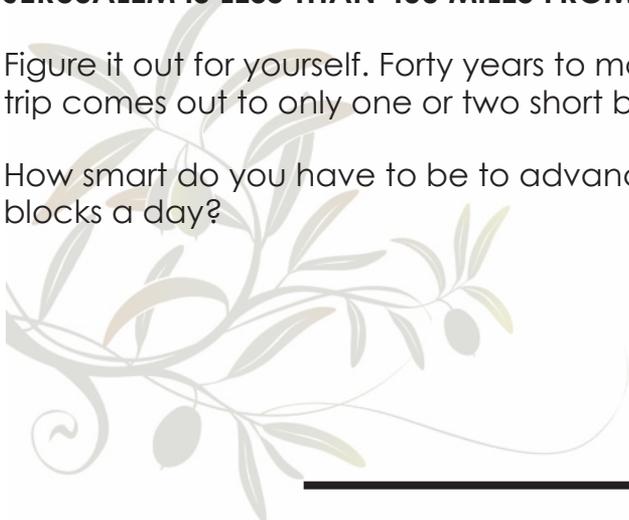
And there is another lesson that we can learn from the Passover story, namely: **The more often people help each other, the better off they are.**

This derives from a part of the story which has yet been told. But listen to this: Although the Jews were very smart to escape from slavery by going into the desert to head for Jerusalem, the truth is that it took them 40 years to make the trip.

### **JERUSALEM IS LESS THAN 400 MILES FROM CAIRO!**

Figure it out for yourself. Forty years to make a 400 mile trip comes out to only one or two short blocks a day.

How smart do you have to be to advance one or two blocks a day?





***40 years to go 400 miles.  
That's worse than Amtrak!***

## Reader Number 15

Don't you believe that those wandering Jews could have benefited from the skills of a Sherpa guide? An Amerind scout? A Scandinavian navigator?.

Don't you think they could have benefited from a hot lunch program, a day-care center, low-cost podiatry and a fifty cents-off coupon on the purchase of sunblock? Couldn't they have benefited from other people of good will reaching out to help during those days of burning need?

### **YOU BET THEY COULD HAVE!**

And to their credit these roving Israelites, our ancestors, learned that lesson quickly.

From that time onward, responsibility for the freedom and well-being of friends and strangers alike has been a basic tenet of Judaism. We are the inheritors of that tradition.

Without fear of contradiction, we can say that Jews became the world's first Boy and Girl Scouts—collecting merit badges for doing good deeds. (Jews call them **"MITZVAHS."**)

But of course, as we all know, life gets a little hectic and hurtful at times, and then some of us forget our responsibility to each other.

And our merit badges get tarnished!

But not to worry. Our wise, old ancestors were aware of human frailties, so they invented the Seder.

## Reader Number 16

**B**asing their strategy on the old adage that “the way to one’s heart is through the stomach” those wise old Jews devised the Seder meal as an annual, gustatory goading, a nutritious nudging, a palate-pleasing prodding, to remind us that freedom and fellowship are always our responsibility to be treasured and shared. And that doing mitzvahs is our duty.

Please think about that sometime during tonight’s feast. If you are so moved to polish up only one of your merit badges, or to even consider adding a few new ones, you will understand why the Seder is truly a wonderful devious and delicious ploy.

It is the ultimate behavior modification therapy—with the help of matzo-balls and perhaps a little indigestion, it has proved effective for over thousands of years.

And now if there are no further questions, the management has asked me to thank you for your indulgence and to announce that **DINNER WILL BE SERVED!**

But before the food arrives, let us raise our glasses for the fourth time. This time with a double purpose: first to remember loved ones who sat with us at the Seder table, but are here no more; and finally to celebrate the joy and simple goodness of our being here together tonight, sharing this most remarkable heritage.

Repeat with me:

**“BARUCH ATAH ADONAI, ELOHAYNU MELECH HA-OLAM,  
BORAY PRE HAGAFEN.”**

**L’chayim! Salud! Bon Appetit! Enjoy!**

## Reader Number 17

Now, following the tradition held by Jews for thousands of years, we end this Seder by exclaiming:

**“Next Year In Jerusalem!”**

### *Historical Note*

Do you know that after slaving day and night for years the Egyptian Jews were the first workers ever to take off together to go on an unguided, economy-class, group tour of the desert?

Thus, they were the inspiration for today's billion dollar **Desert-Vacation Travel Industry!**

Wouldn't you think that there would be a nice, bronze plaque in Palm Springs thanking them?

**WELL THERE ISN'T!!!**



# A Seder Song

*(To be sung to the tune of "Bye, Bye, Blackbird")*

We're packin' up our cares and woe  
And giving up our status quo  
Bye, Bye, Pharaoh

Were off to trudge through heat and sand  
While looking for the promised land  
Bye, Bye, Pharaoh

Nothing you can say that will detour us  
We've had our fill of misery and tzourus

We detest your knavery  
And slavery's unsavory  
So, Pharaoh Bye, Bye!

# Bye, Bye Pharaoh

With Freedom  $\text{♩} = 69$

We're pack-in' up our cares and woe And giv-ing up our stat-us quo Bye, Bye Phar — aah

We're off to 'trudge through heat and sand While loo-king for the prom-ised land Bye, Bye Phar — aah

No-thing you can Say that will de — tour us We've had our fill of mis - ery and tzour — us

We de - test your knav-er - y And slave-er - y's un — sav-or — y So, Pha — aah, Bye, Bye!

## *Lester E. Buhai*

Lester Buhai, a man of keen wit and exceptional talents, was born in Evanston, Illinois in 1919 and died in Los Angeles, California in 2007. His family moved to Los Angeles in 1936 and he attended UCLA from 1938-42. At UCLA he was an economics major and art minor. This unusual combination of studies served him well for a varied and distinguished career in advertising and marketing. Early in his career Lester worked as an ad manager for a women's undergarment manufacturer and then the director of public relations for the Mt. Sinai-Duarte National Medical Center. For sixteen years he worked for Food Giant Foods as the vice president of marketing. Lester also successfully ran his own marketing and advertising firm in Los Angeles.

Lester's love of whimsy is fondly remembered. He delighted his friends with the clever greetings left on his answering machine, changed on a daily basis, for over 20 years.