



Chicago Rabbinical Council
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cRc Passover Introduction

The Mishna (Pesachim, 10:5) tells us, "In every generation one is obligated to envision himself as if he left Egypt." In copying this particular passage into his compendium of Jewish law, Maimonides altered the text slightly, to read, "...as if he himself has just left Egypt."

What did Maimonides aim to teach us with this change? Very simply, that Passover is not like other holidays, in which we commemorate a particular miracle or event. Rather, the obligation is upon us to feel as though we have just been physically and emotionally redeemed from slavery in Egypt.

The matter of fulfilling this obligation, however, is the subject of much debate among our Rabbinic authorities. One of the most fascinating explanations (again, Maimonides in his interpretation of the Mishna) is that the various mitzvot and customs of Passover exist so that we might make it apparent to others that we have just been granted the most miraculous salvation by Hashem. On a practical level, what is it that we actually do to impress upon others that we are now free?

We drink four cups of wine in a reclining position — the drink and posture of free people. We speak openly about our redemption from slavery in Egypt, and our subsequent receipt of Hashem's Torah on Mount Sinai. In short, the Jew must **demonstrate** his freedom by playing the part of the free man and actively celebrating that freedom.

Every Passover grants us the opportunity to educate our children about the beauty of our Torah, and the freedom we have always fought to protect, through the Seder and the many beautiful mitzvot of the holiday. In this spirit, the Chicago Rabbinical Council offers this Passover Guide to the community, with the prayer that our observance of Hashem's redemption of our People more than 3,300 years ago will lead to the Ultimate Redemption in 5768.

Passover begins with the first Seder on the eve of the 15th day of Nissan, corresponding to Saturday evening, April 19, 2008, and ends outside of Israel at the conclusion of the 22nd day of Nissan, corresponding to Sunday evening, April 27, 2008. For specific times relevant to the Chicago area and Chicago Rabbinical Council member communities for the 2008 Passover festival [click here](#).

