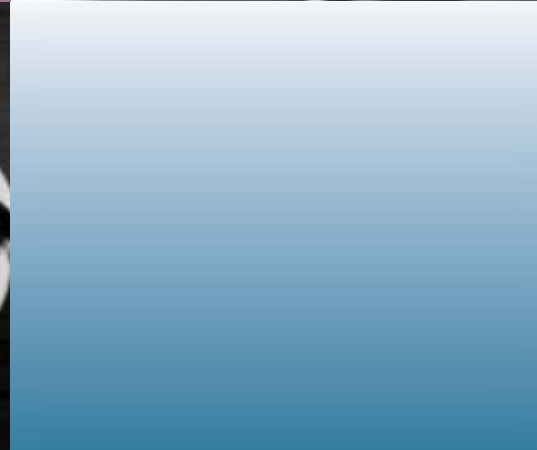
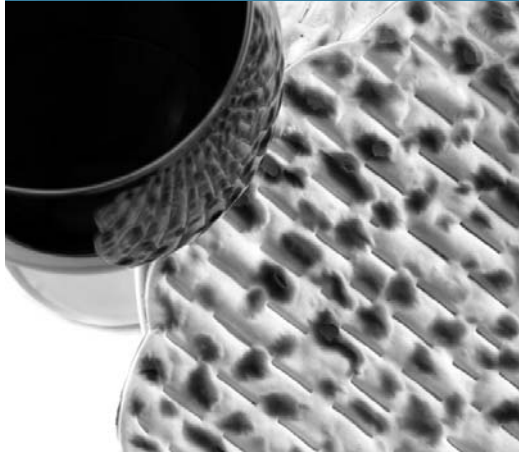
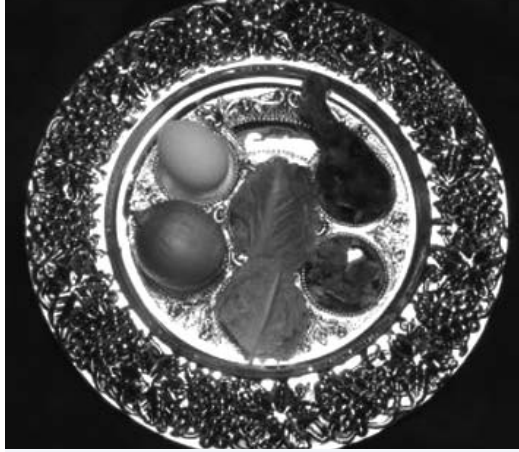


celebration  
of freedom  
**2008**  
**5768**



passover dinner  
for educators

Sydney Girls High School, April 9 2008



# welcome

**Celebration of Freedom: Passover Dinner for Educators 2008 - 5768** is a project of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies Education Committee and has been made possible due to the generosity of the trustees of the JCA LotBen Fund, in loving memory of Lotka and Bernard Ferster, and the support of the Jewish Communal Appeal.

## The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies

The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies is the official roof-body of the Jewish community in New South Wales, with 63 major communal organisations as its constituents. It is recognised and acknowledged by the NSW State Government, its agencies, the media and other ethnic and religious groups as the representative body of the Jewish Community.

The Board of Deputies' Education Secretariat represents the Jewish community in the education sector. It works with state and national departments of education, teacher organizations, professional associations, unions, universities and others. The Education Committee Chairperson is Susi Brieger and the Education Secretariat Manager is Lynda Ben-Menashe.

The Board of Deputies is committed to fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding, in line with the Toledo guiding principles in teaching about religion and beliefs in public schools (2007 Organisation for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, ODIHR, Warsaw): that teaching about religions, beliefs and cultures can reduce harmful misunderstandings and stereotypes, and that there is positive value in teaching that emphasises everyone's right to freedom of religion and belief.

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners of country where we are gathered, upon whose land we now live and work, the Gadigal Clan of the Eora Nation.

We walk with respect on the land that sustains the spirit of these people.

We offer respect to the descendants of the first people who continue to live within the community.

We acknowledge the vital contribution that Indigenous people and cultures have made and still make to the nation that we share, Australia.

“Let all who are hungry  
come and eat.  
Let all who are needy  
come and celebrate the  
Passover with us.”

(From the Passover  
Haggadah)

The New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies welcomes educators from across New South Wales to this historic Passover Dinner. This booklet is dedicated to all of you here tonight who have come together within the framework of the Jewish festival of Passover to celebrate universal freedom and peace.

We invite you to share our traditions, customs, stories, songs and food as we recall the journey from slavery to freedom.



# tonight's program

## Welcome

Susi Brieger, Chairperson,  
Education Committee,

## Acknowledgement of Country

NSW Jewish Board of Deputies  
Dr Margaret Varady AO, Principal,  
Sydney Girls High School

## Launch of IJS website

David Knoll, President, NSW Jewish Board  
of Deputies

## Special Address

The Hon. John Della Bosca MP, Minister for  
Education and Training

## Introduction

Associate Professor Mark Baker

Song: Hevenu Shalom Aleichem

## First Cup of Wine: Our Journeys

Renée Ferster Levy & Associate Professor Mark Baker

Songs: Shechecheyanu; Bechol Dor VaDor

## Passover Theme 1: Slavery

Songs: Seder Order Song; Avadim Hayinu; Close Every Door

## Passover Theme 2: Education

Songs: Ma Nishtana; We All Need An Education

## Second Cup of Wine: Asking the right questions

Joanne Atkins, Principal, Brigidine College & Robert Goot AM, SC, President,  
Executive Council of Australian Jewry

## Main Meal & Musical Medley

## Passover Theme 3: Leadership

Songs: Vehi Sheamda; Heal The World

## Third Cup of Wine: Local and Global Responsibility

Michael Coutts-Trotter, Director-General, Department of Education and  
Training & Ilona Lee AM, Chairperson, Social Justice Committee, NSW Jewish  
Board of Deputies and President, The Shalom Institute

## Passover Theme 4: Freedom

Personal Narratives: Sabina Van Der Linden-Wolanski, Joseph Barda, Alla  
Pilman

Songs: Ani Ma'amin; Dayenu

## Fourth Cup of Wine: Tikkun Olam (Healing the World)

Geoff Newcombe, Executive Director, The Association of Independent Schools  
of NSW & Felicia Huppert

## Closing Remarks

Vic Alhadeff, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies

## Freedom Medley

Hylton Chilchik, Joel Scheftz and Student Choir

## Close and Good Night

Tonight's programme is  
led by Associate  
Professor Mark Baker

Mark Baker is Director of  
the Australian Centre for  
Jewish Civilisation,  
Monash University and  
Associate Professor of  
Holocaust and Genocide  
Studies. He teaches  
widely in the areas of  
the Holocaust, modern  
Jewish history and Israel  
and is a regular  
columnist for the  
Australian Jewish News.  
He is the author of the  
award-winning book, *The  
Fiftieth Gate*.



# what is passover?

Passover or *Pesach*, as the festival is called in Hebrew, historically commemorates the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, and recalls their mass Exodus from Egypt about 3,500 years ago. The Pesach story is recounted within Exodus, Chapters 1-15 and is a focal point in Jewish history. Not only does it represent the Israelites' birth as a free people, but also their shift from tribal communal life to nationhood.

*Pesach is a celebration of human freedom, and an annual recommitment to the dignity of humankind.*

In addition, the lessons derived from the Egyptian slavery and the resulting redemption provide a powerful base for Jewish faith and ethics. The journey initiated during Pesach, that of a nation of slaves racing towards freedom, reaches its climax with the festival of Shavuot seven weeks later, commemorating their rendezvous with God at Mt. Sinai. Here the Jews' new-found freedom finds its purpose as they receive the Ten Commandments and the Torah (Jewish law).

Passover is observed from the 15<sup>th</sup> of the Hebrew month of Nissan, at the full moon, for eight days in the Diaspora (only seven days in Israel).

The agricultural significance of Pesach is that it marks the start of the early harvest period in the land of Israel. The harvesting of the barley grain was marked by a special offering at the Holy Jewish Temple in Jerusalem called the *Omer*, commencing on the second day of Pesach and continuing for forty-nine days, concluding at Shavuot.

Passover is therefore one of the 3 Jewish 'Pilgrim Festivals', those marked in Temple times by the pilgrimage of all the Jews of Israel to Jerusalem with their offerings.



# how do Jewish people celebrate passover?

## How do Jewish people celebrate Passover?

There are three central customs connected with Passover. These are the eating of *matzah*, the prohibition against eating or even owning *chametz* and the conducting of the Passover *Seder*.

## What is Matzah?

Matzah is unleavened bread made from wheat, rye, barley, oats or spelt and water. The entire baking process, from the time that the flour and water are mixed into dough, must not exceed eighteen minutes. To eat *matzah* during Passover is a biblical commandment. *Matzah* is also referred to as 'the bread of affliction'. It represents the harshness of the Israelites' lives in Egypt, the haste of the Exodus and the paschal offering at the Temple in Jerusalem.

## What is Chametz?

Chametz is any one of the five major grains, wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt, that has come into contact with resting water for at least eighteen minutes, by which the leavening process is considered to have begun. Any food or drink that has even a minute quantity of *chametz* as an ingredient is forbidden during Passover.

"You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements shall you eat *matzah*" (Exodus 12:20). As part of the Jewish family's preparation for Passover, a complete cleansing of the home from all forms of *chametz* is performed. Any *chametz* found within the confines of the house is to be disposed of.

The process called *Bedikat Chametz* the 'search for the leaven' is the prototype of the 'spring cleaning' that we do as all creation moves through the changing of the seasons. The entire family cleans the house from top to bottom, and any *chametz* that is found is either eaten, sold or destroyed.

It is traditional on the night before Passover to lead the children of the family on a candlelit search through the home. Any *chametz* found is swept up with a feather. In addition, any food preparation materials, such as pots, pans, dishes, etc. that have been in contact with *chametz* are stored or made kosher for Passover.





# the passover seder

This information about Passover is adapted from [www.bje.org.au](http://www.bje.org.au) the website of the NSW Board of Jewish Education.

The Passover Seder (*seder* literally means 'order') is the ritualized meal eaten during the first one or two nights of the festival. The Seder is the most consistently maintained Jewish ritual observance in the home, regardless of the level of observance of the family.

Pesach Seders take an extremely wide range of forms. Each family's Seder is shaped by local and regional customs, in addition to traditions passed down from generation to generation.

The purpose of the Seder is to serve as a framework for the telling of the Exodus story, while allowing each new generation to engage the narrative in a deeply personal and intimate manner. Above all, the Seder is a venue for the telling of the story of the Israelites' redemption from their harsh slavery in Egypt.

It is a commandment not only to tell the story as if from afar, but rather to relive it every year at the Seder table. In the narrative it is not 'the Israelites' who leave Egypt each time but 'we'. The commandment is to relive the Exodus as if we were experiencing it ourselves. The Jewish people make conscious and explicit their focus of the importance of human freedom.

Everything concerning both the conduct of the Seder and the objects upon the Seder table is there to evoke questions and dialogue. The questions are meant to engage not only the adults, but also the children. The singing of the song "*Ma Nishtana*" ("Why is this night different?") is a focus of the Seder and is traditionally done by the youngest child present. The framework for conducting the Seder is set out in the book called the *Haggadah*.

## The Haggadah

The *Haggadah*, literally 'The Telling', is the text that in its pure form has provided the foundation for the Passover Seder for thousands of years. It contains the order of the Seder and all the blessings, stories, instructions that are needed for the participants to re-live the narrative of the Exodus. It should be noted that although the *Haggadah* is the text of the Seder, the sages teach us that it is praiseworthy to expand on the text, thus building on the tradition and personally engaging with the story.

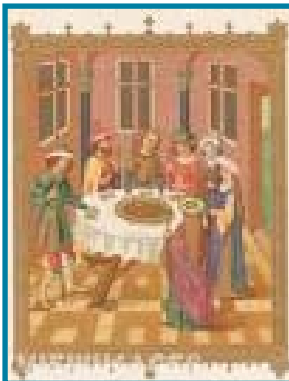
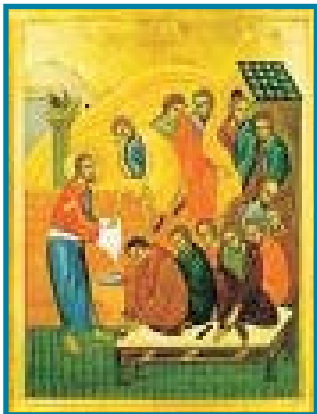
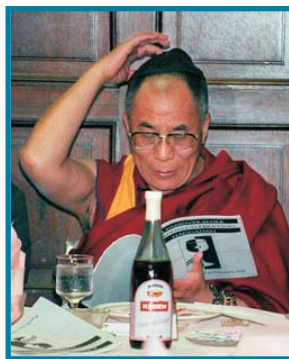
There are many forms of *Haggadah* to choose from, each representative of the many diverse communities comprising the Jewish world of today. But with all that is included within the *Haggadah*, one figure is either mentioned extremely rarely or not at all: Moses. For the most part, Moses is missing from the text of the *Haggadah*. The rabbis who created the text of the *Haggadah* felt that including Moses in the text would tempt people to deify him, so he is barely mentioned.

# introduction

to tonight's programme

Song: "Hevenu Shalom Aleichem", a song of welcome and peace

Passover Seders throughout history and throughout the world...



Themes of the Passover Seder include slavery, education, leadership, freedom & 'journey'.

Jewish tradition encourages us to expand on the Seder text and build on our tradition to personally engage each person present. The themes of the Seder are relevant to all people and all times.

# kiddush

sanctification of wine

## Kiddush in English

“Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine. (Amen)”

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe ... And You gave us, Lord our God, with love, festivals for happiness, holidays and times for joy, this day of the Festival of Matzot, the Time of Our Freedom. A holy convocation, a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt...

You have given us as a heritage. Blessed are You, God, Who sanctifies Israel and the holiday seasons. (Amen)”

The four cups of wine drunk at the Passover dinner symbolise joy and gladness; also recalling the four verses in the *Torah* concerning redemption from Egypt (Exodus 6:6-7):

1. "I will bring you out..."
2. "I will deliver you..."
3. "I will redeem you..."
4. "I will take you..."

**Elijah's Cup** is a fifth cup of wine that is set on the table in the hope that the prophet Elijah will grace the table and hearken the coming of the Messiah, a time of universal peace. Elijah's cup also symbolizes the hope of welcoming others, especially those in need, hungry or even just lonely into our home to share in our joy during Passover.

## First Cup of Wine: Our Journeys

Song: “Shechecheyanu”, a gratitude to God for sustaining us to enable us to reach this point:

*“Blessed are You, God, our God, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion”.*

Song: “Bechol DorVador”, “In Every Generation”

B'chol dor va-dor cha-ya-vim a-nu lir-ot et atz-mei-nu, k'i-lu (2x)  
K'i-lu ya-tza-nu (3x) mi-Mitz-ra-yim (2x)

*In every generation all of us are obligated to see ourselves as though we personally left Egypt..*





## theme 1

# slavery

The symbolic meanings of matzah and other items on the Seder table...

There are many symbolic objects upon the Seder table. There are several rabbinic meanings connected with each. However one should not be limited to the traditional view of each object. Jewish people mentally 'play' with each symbol and see what new insights they can bring both to the Seder and to Jewish tradition.

### Matzah

Three *matzahs* are placed on the table (*matzot* is the plural form in Hebrew). Two because two loaves of *challah* (traditional plaited bread) are required as on every festival and the Sabbath and a third to be broken in two with half being hidden as the *Afikoman* to be found at the conclusion of the meal. It is customary for an adult to hide the *Afikoman* during the meal so that the children can find it at the end. This is another example of how important the rabbis felt it was to engage the children in the Seder.

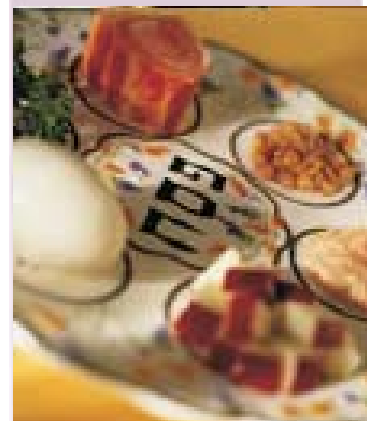
### On the Seder plate

- **Maror** (bitter herbs) the bitterness of enslavement under the Egyptians
- **Charoset** (a mixture of nuts and wine) the mortar used to build the Egyptian cities
- **Salt water** the tears shed during enslavement
- **Karpas** (vegetable) spring, of rebirth, also that a vegetable that grows under ground can be elevated to sacredness, and a slave people to freedom
- **Shankbone and roasted egg** the offerings at the Temple in Jerusalem that was destroyed in 70 C.E. The shankbone is used because God brought the Israelites out of Egypt with an "outstretched arm".

Song: Order of the Seder

### The steps of the Seder are as follows:

*Kadesh* sanctify the wine; *Urhatz* wash hands (without blessing); *Karpas* bless and eat a vegetable dipped in saltwater; *Yahatz* break the middle matzah (to make the 'Afikoman') ; *Magid* tell the story of the Exodus; *Rachatz* wash hands (with blessing); *Motzi-Matzah* bless and eat the matzah ; *Maror* bless and eat bitter herb; *Korech* - make a 'sandwich' with matzah; *Shulhan Orech* eat the festive meal; *Tsafun* eat dessert (including the Afikoman); *Barech* say grace after the meal; *Hallel* praise God; *Nirtzach* hope that God has heard our prayers.

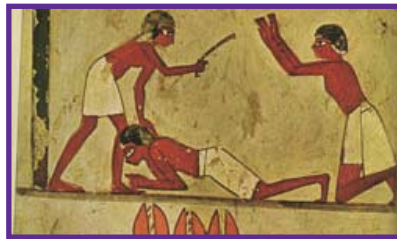


## "Next year in Jerusalem"

The Seder is concluded with the hope "L'shanah haba-ah b'Yerushalayim!" "Next year in Jerusalem!" With these words Jews across the world end their Seders. Jerusalem is a central focus in Judaism and the Jews' holiest city. It is in the direction of Jerusalem that Jews face when they pray three times daily. The prayers themselves contain numerous references to Jerusalem and Zion and God is praised as the Builder of Jerusalem. In many prayers is expressed the messianic belief that God will restore the Jewish people to His holy city, Jerusalem. Not only on Passover, but also on the Day of Atonement, Jews conclude services with the fervent hope: "Next year in Jerusalem!"

Song: "Avadim Hayinu", "We Were Slaves"

This song expresses one of the central principles of the Seder- that we were enslaved under the Egyptian Pharaoh, but now we are free to celebrate our deliverance.



Egyptian slaves



Roman slaves



Chinese slaves



African slaves



Korean WW2 slave



Russian sex slaves

Discuss with the people sitting near you:

1. How would you define 'slavery'?

# Activity

2. Does slavery exist today? Give some examples of slavery in the modern world.

3. To what am I a slave in my own life?



Song: "Close Every Door"

"Close Every Door" is a song from the musical Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber, which is based on the biblical story of Joseph told in Exodus. It is sung by Joseph during his imprisonment for his supposed relationship with Potiphar's wife.

Close every door to me,  
Hide all the world from me  
Bar all the windows  
And shut out the light  
Do what you want with me,  
Hate me and laugh at me  
Darken my daytime  
And torture my night  
If my life were important I  
Would ask will I live or die  
But I know the answers lie  
Far from this world  
Close every door to me,  
Keep those I love from me  
Children of Israel  
Are never alone

For I know I shall find  
My own peace of mind  
For I have been promised  
A land of my own

Close every door to me,  
Hide all the world from me

Bar all the windows  
And shut out the light

Just give me a number  
Instead of my name  
Forget all about me  
And let me decay  
I do not matter,  
I'm only one person  
Destroy me completely  
Then throw me away  
If my life were important I  
Would ask will I live or die  
But I know the answers lie  
Far from this world

Close every door to me,  
Keep those I love from me  
Children of Israel  
Are never alone  
For we know we shall find  
Our own peace of mind  
For we have been promised  
A land of our own



## theme 2

# education

Song: "Ma Nishtana" - The four questions  
(traditionally sung by the youngest person at the Passover Seder)

Ma Nishtana, halaila hazeh, mikol ha'leilot? mikol ha'leilot?  
*Why is this night different from all other nights?*



She bechol ha'leilot, anu ochlim - CHAMETZ U'MATSAH;  
CHAMETZ U'MATSAH  
*On all other nights we eat chametz or matzah...*

Ha'laila hazeh, ha'laila hazeh - KOO'LOH MATSAH, KOO'LOH MATSAH.  
*But on this night we eat only matzah*



She bechol ha'leilot, anu ochlim - SHE'AR YERAKOT;  
SHE'AR YERAKOT  
*On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables...*

Ha'lailah hazeh, ha'lailah hazeh - KOO'LOH MA'ROR;  
KOO'LOH MA'ROR.  
*But on this night we eat only bitter herbs*



She bechol ha'leilot, ein anu matbilim - AFILU PA'AM ECHAT;  
AFILU PA'AM ECHAT  
*On all other nights we don't dip our food even once...*

Ha'laila hazeh, ha'laila hazeh - SHE'TEI PE'A'MIM; SHE'TEI PE'A'MIM.  
*But on this night we dip it twice*



She bechol ha'leilot, anu ochlim - BEIN YOSHVIN U VEIN MESUBIN,  
BEIN YOSHVIN U VEIN MESUBIN  
*On all other nights we eat sitting upright or reclining...*

Ha'laila hazeh, ha'laila hazeh - KOOLANU MESUBIN,  
KOOLANU MESUBIN.  
*But on this night we all recline*



The value of education to Jews and the Passover Seder as the ultimate Jewish educational experience...

The Passover Seder as an educational experience contains four key elements:

- 1 a clear message (and the responsibility to pass this message on)
- 2 triggers to arouse curiosity and stimulate questions
- 3 multi-sense engagement, including roleplay
- 4 appeal to different learning styles/multiple intelligences

Jewish parents have a clear pedagogic function to fulfil at the Passover Seder - to tell their children about the Exodus from Egypt. This obligation is outlined in a number of Jewish sources:

“And you shall explain to your child on that day, it is because of what the Lord did for me when I went free from Egypt.” (Exodus, 13:8)

“Take to heart these instructions which I charge you this day. Impress them upon your children.” (Deuteronomy, 6:6-7)

“Because we were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt and the Lord our God brought us out from there 'with a strong hand and an outstretched arm'. And if the holy one had not brought our fathers out of Egypt, we and our children and our children's children could still be slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt. So even if we are all wise, all people of knowledge and understanding, all advanced in years and all versed in the Torah, we are nonetheless commanded to relate the going out of Egypt and whosoever does so at great length is surely to be praised.” (Passover Haggadah)



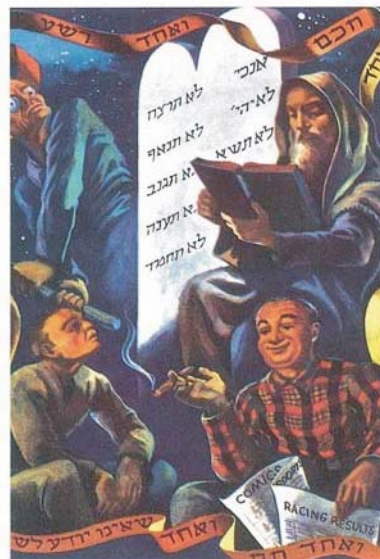
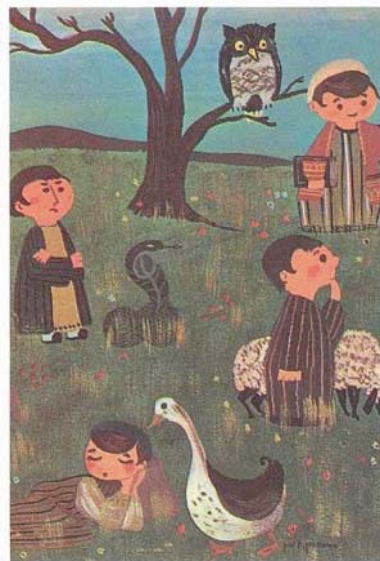
“Judaism places before parents an essential task of the highest order: to tell their children about the history of their people. The parents cannot, of course, dictate to the children what they are to do with this information (but) they must see to it that the children are impressed with memories which will follow them all their lives. The inheritance which they give to their children is many generations old the awareness that their own history begins with their ancestor Abraham.” (Memory and Values, Shalom Hartman Institute for Teacher Education, Jerusalem)

“The family framework is the primary educational arm, beginning with the weekly Sabbath meal and ending with the Passover Seder. This is especially apparent at the Seder, where the child plays a central role. The whole Passover Haggadah is designed as an answer to the child's Four Questions (Ma Nishtana). By structuring the most important festival (Passover) around children and granting them full social participation, we stimulate their social awareness and their perception of their roles and responsibilities in the society.” (Udi Leon, Israeli teacher educator)





## The Four Children



Discuss with the people sitting near you:

1. What do the varied images at left of the four children say to you as an educator?

2. Which set of four speaks the most to you personally and why?

Song: “We All Need an Education” (rewrite of the Pink Floyd classic)

We all need an education  
We don't need no thought control  
A theme of tolerance in the classroom  
Teacher help us kids along  
Hey teacher Teach us right from wrong!

Second Cup of Wine: Asking the right questions



# leadership

Song: "Vehi Sheamda", "God Has Stood By Us"

This short passage from the Haggadah, is a repetition of God's promise to Abraham to take our ancestors out of Egypt and redeem every generation of Jewish people. In every generation there have been those who have sought to destroy us, but God has always rescued us from their hands. Faith in this promise has given hope to Jews over the centuries, particularly in times of oppression.

Ve'hi she'amdah, ve'hee she'amdah, la-avotenu vela-nu (x2)

*And who has stood by us, and who has stood by us, by our ancestors and by us*

Shelo - echad - bil'vad, a'mad aleinu le'chalotenu (x2)

*There isn't just one (people) who has tried to destroy us*

Ela, she bechol dor va dor, omdim aleinu le'chalotenu (x2)

*But in every generation there are those who try to destroy us*

Vehakadosh baruch hu, matzilenu mi-yadam (x2)

*And the holy one rescues us from their hands*

## The 10 Plagues

The plagues as they appear in the Bible are:

1. Rivers and other water sources turned to blood, killing all fish and other water life. (*Dam*)
2. Frogs (*Zfardeia*)
3. Lice (*Kinim*)
4. Flies (*Arov*)
5. Disease on livestock (*Dever*)
6. Boils (*Shkhin*)
7. Hail (*Barad*)
8. Locusts (*Arbeh*)
9. Darkness (*Choshech*)
10. Death of the first-born (*Makat Bechorot*)

As we chant the names of the plagues during the Seder, we dip a finger into wine and take off a drop for each plague. This represents the Jewish admonition against rejoicing in the suffering of one's enemies.





Song: "Heal The World"

There's A Place In Your Heart  
And I Know That It Is Love  
And This Place Could Be Much Brighter  
Than Tomorrow

And If You Really Try  
You'll Find There's No Need To Cry  
In This Place You'll Feel There's No  
Hurt  
Or Sorrow

There Are Ways To Get There  
If You Care Enough For The Living  
Make A Little Space, Make A Better  
Place...

CHORUS  
Heal The World  
Make It A Better Place  
For You And For Me And The Entire  
Human Race  
There Are People Dying  
If You Care Enough For The Living  
Make A Better Place For You And For  
Me

If You Want To Know Why  
There's A Love That Cannot Lie  
Love Is Strong It Only Cares For Joyful  
Giving  
If We Try We Shall See  
In This Bliss We Cannot Feel  
Fear Or Dread We Stop Existing And  
Start Living

Then It Feels That Always  
Love's Enough For Us Growing  
So Make A Better World  
Make A Better World...

CHORUS

And The Dream We Were Conceived  
In  
Will Reveal A Joyful Face  
And The World We Once Believed In  
Will Shine Again In Grace  
Then Why Do We Keep Strangling  
Life  
Wound This Earth, Crucify Its Soul  
Though It's Plain To See, This World  
Is Heavenly  
Be God's Glow

We Could Fly So High Let Our Spirits  
Never Die  
In My Heart I Feel You Are All My  
Brothers  
Create A World With No Fear  
Together We'll Cry Happy Tears  
See The Nations Turn Their Swords  
Into Plowshares

We Could Really Get There  
If You Cared Enough For The Living  
Make A Little Space To Make A Better  
Place...

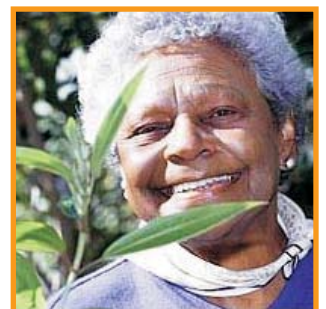
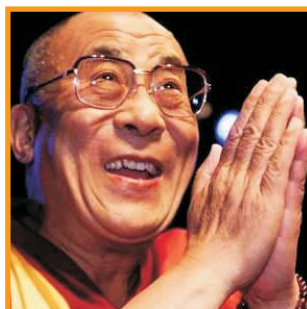
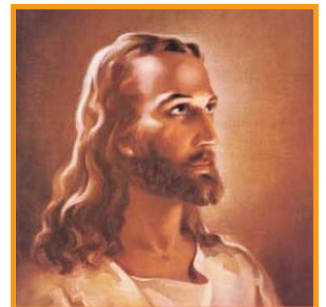
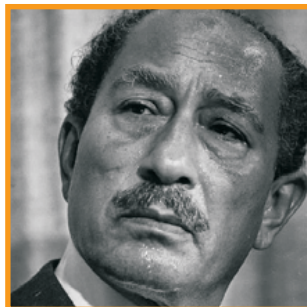
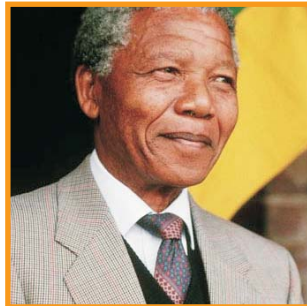
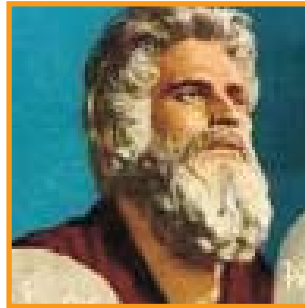
CHORUS (X3)

There Are People Dying If You Care  
Enough For The Living  
Make A Better Place For You And For  
Me

There Are People Dying If You Care  
Enough For The Living  
Make A Better Place For You And For  
Me

You And For Me  
Heal the world we live in  
Save it for our children (Repeat to  
end)

With the people sitting near you, look at these images of leaders throughout world history and come up with a list of 4 qualities of leadership you feel they all share.



# Activity

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

# theme 4 freedom

“The integrity and, in fact, the historicity of the Exodus narrative do not depend on dutiful historical ‘proof’ of any of its particular events. The power of the biblical saga stems from its being a compelling and coherent narrative expression of the timeless themes of a people’s liberation, continuing resistance to oppression, and quest for social equality. It eloquently expresses the deeply rooted sense of shared origins, experiences, and destiny that every human community needs in order to survive.” (Finkelstein, I. and Silberman, N. (2001) *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology’s new vision of ancient Israel and the origin of its sacred texts*, p.318)





## Passover and The Shoah (Holocaust)

The event in modern Jewish history most often associated with the Jews' slavery under the Pharaohs is the Shoah (Holocaust). The Shoah was the systematic annihilation of six million Jewish people, including 1.5 million children, by Germany's Nazi regime over the period January 30, 1933 to May 8, 1945.

There is an important distinction, however, between the Shoah and the Jews' experience in Egypt. For while genocide (in the Pharaoh's decree to kill all firstborn Jewish sons) was an element of that experience, the aim was to enslave the Jews permanently and ensure that they did not challenge their subjugation.

In the Shoah the aim was genocide of the entire Jewish people, annihilation, not merely enslavement. Most of the Jews of Egypt walked free in the Exodus. Two thirds of the Jews of Europe were slaughtered in the Shoah.



Song: “Ani Ma'amin”, “I Believe”

“Ani Ma'amin” is a rendition of the thirteen principles of the Jewish faith as set out by the famous 12<sup>th</sup> century Spanish-Jewish philosopher and royal physician Moses Maimonides. This popular version is from a later date and differs from the original. Its tune is attributed to religious Jews who sang it as they were herded into the gas chambers of the Nazi death camps. It was adopted by other Jewish prisoners and became known as “The Hymn of the Camps”. Post World War II it has been sung at Passover Seders around the world in memory of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which began on the first night of Passover in 1943.

Ani ma'amin be'emuna shlemah

*I believe with a complete belief*

B'viathamashiach

*In the coming of the Messiah*

V'af al pi sheyitmameha

*And even though he may tarry*

Im kol zeh achake lo, B'chol yom sheyavo

*I will wait for him, whenever he comes*



## Personal Narratives: 'My Journey to Freedom'



Personal Narrative 1  
**Sabina Van Der  
Linden-Wolanski**  
(out of the Holocaust)



Personal Narrative 2  
**Joseph Barda**  
(out of Egypt)



Personal Narrative 3  
**Alla Pilman**  
(out of the Soviet  
Union)

For full texts of these three narratives, see Appendix 1.

Song: "Dayenu"

'Dayenu' means 'It would have been enough for us'. It is a song that expresses the Jewish people's heartfelt gratitude to God for the miracles performed during our ancestors' 40-year journey out of slavery into freedom. In the song we list all the miracles and say that even if God had performed only one of them, it would have been enough for us.

It begins with the verse

*Ilu Ilu hotsyanu, hotsyanu mimitzrayim, Dayenu*

*Even if God had only taken us out of Egypt, it would have been enough for us!*

The chorus is:

*Dai-dai-yenu (x3) Dai-yenu, dai-yenu, dayenu! Dai-dai-yenu (x3)*

*Dai-yenu, dai-yenu!*

Fourth Cup of Wine: Tikkun Olam (Healing the World)

Freedom Medley including:

"Od Yavo Shalom Alenu" ("Peace Will Still Come Unto Us")

This song was written by Israeli singer David Broza after September 11th as a call for tolerance, sanity and peace between all nations and religions. He specifically used the Arabic word for peace ('Salaam') in the chorus.

"Down Under"

Written and sung by the Australian band Men at Work, "Down Under" achieved international success in the 1980s when it became the unofficial anthem during Australia's successful challenge for the America's Cup. It was also performed at the closing ceremony at the Olympic Games in Sydney. It is an iconic song that reminds us of how blessed and privileged we are to be living in this magnificent country, Australia





# resources

## for educators

### Online Resources

#### Judaism

[www.ijs.org.au](http://www.ijs.org.au) - NSW Jewish Board of Deputies "Israel & Judaism Studies"

[www.bje.org.au](http://www.bje.org.au) - NSW Board of Jewish Education

#### Israel and Arab-Israel Conflict

[www.ijs.org.au](http://www.ijs.org.au) - NSW Jewish Board of Deputies "Israel & Judaism Studies"

#### Holocaust

[www.holocaust.com.au](http://www.holocaust.com.au) NSW Jewish Board of Deputies "Australian Memories of the Holocaust"

[www.sydnejewishmuseum.com.au](http://www.sydnejewishmuseum.com.au) Sydney Jewish Museum

[www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org) - Yad Vashem

#### Other Useful Content Links, plus links to all Sydney Jewish day schools

<http://www.ijs.org.au/Teachers-Resources/default.aspx>

#### Speaker Service on any of the above topics and more

Contact the Education Manager of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies on 93601600 or go to [www.nswjbd.org](http://www.nswjbd.org)

#### Teacher Professional Development in syllabus-related learning areas

Contact the Education Manager of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies on 93601600 or at [benmenashe@nswjbd.com](mailto:benmenashe@nswjbd.com) for information or to arrange relevant PD courses at Jewish institutions including the NSW Jewish Board of Education, The Shalom Institute, The Sydney Jewish Museum and others. For updated listings of teacher and student programmes and events including professional development, also go to [www.ijs.org.au/Activities-page/default.aspx](http://www.ijs.org.au/Activities-page/default.aspx)

#### Local Providers of Judaism, Holocaust and Israel Content

**NSW Jewish Board of Deputies** [www.nswjbd.org](http://www.nswjbd.org) and [www.ijs.org.au](http://www.ijs.org.au)

The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies is the elected representative roof body of NSW Jewry. Its Education Secretariat facilitates the provision to the wider NSW community of educational resources and activities from all organisations with the Jewish community. It also offers its own Speaker Service for schools and community groups on topics related to Judaism, the Jewish Experience in Australia, Racism and the Holocaust, Israel and The Middle East and more. Contact the Education Manager on 02-93601600 or at [benmenashe@nswjbd.com](mailto:benmenashe@nswjbd.com).

[Academy BJE, The NSW Board of Jewish Education - www.bje.org.au](http://www.bje.org.au)  
Academy BJE provides Jewish education to Jewish students in state and non-Jewish private schools in NSW. It also offers school and teacher groups study programmes including visits to synagogues, the Sydney Jewish Museum and other sites of Jewish interest. Its website is the most comprehensive Judaism resource in the southern hemisphere.

[The Great Synagogue, Sydney - http://www.greatsynagogue.org.au/Visiting.html](http://www.greatsynagogue.org.au/Visiting.html)  
The Great Synagogue offers educational tours and access to its extensive library of Judaica.

[The NSW Board of Progressive Jewish Education - www.bpje.org.au](http://www.bpje.org.au)  
The Board of Progressive Jewish Education oversees Jewish education for all ages from five to 18 who affiliate with Progressive Judaism. It provides programmes and activities that foster an ongoing and thriving education, dialogue and experience for all participants. The Board of Progressive Education offers school programmes including visits to synagogues and speakers on topics related to Judaism.

[The Sydney Jewish Museum - www.sydnejewishmuseum.com.au](http://www.sydnejewishmuseum.com.au)  
The Sydney Jewish Museum is a museum of Australian Jewish History and the Holocaust. It offers a wide range of educational materials and programmes related to syllabus learning areas including History and Studies of Religion, from resource packs and lesson plans to student visits and Teacher Professional Development courses.

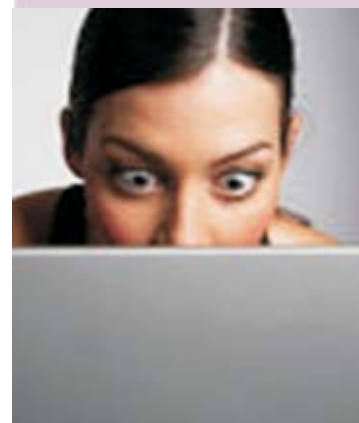
[The Shalom Institute - www.shalom.edu.au](http://www.shalom.edu.au)  
The Shalom Institute is NSW's adult Jewish education institute, presenting lectures, seminars, courses and communal events. Its Mosaic Programme offers courses in subjects related to Judaism, the Holocaust and Israel.

[Mandelbaum House - www.usyd.edu.au/colleges/mandelbaum/home.htm](http://www.usyd.edu.au/colleges/mandelbaum/home.htm)  
Mandelbaum House offers educational events and courses in subjects related to Judaism.

[Courage to Care - www.couragetocare.com.au](http://www.couragetocare.com.au)  
Courage to Care is a travelling exhibition which has been developed by B'nai B'rith and is designed to convey a message of communal tolerance and living in harmony. It travels to regional areas of NSW for showings of around 4 weeks in each location.

For resource packs, speaker presentations and/or other learning experiences for your students, as well as teacher professional development, please contact

Lynda Ben-Menashe, Education Manager  
NSW Jewish Board of Deputies  
[benmenashe@nswjbd.com](mailto:benmenashe@nswjbd.com) 93601600 or 0439875035



# appendix 1

## Personal Narrative 1

Sabina  
Van Der Linden-Wolanski

Personal Narrative 1: 'My Journey to Freedom' Sabina Van Der Linden-Wolanski

I am a child of the Holocaust. I survived in Poland and am the only survivor from my entire family. My parents had a wholesale business and my father was also the managing director of a commercial bank. We were fairly comfortable and fairly assimilated. I was aware that we were Jewish because we celebrated Jewish holidays but I don't know whether we had a kosher home. I did eat ham, for instance, and had school on Saturday and we spoke Polish at home. Sabina with her brother Joseph, in Poland before the war

Life was very comfortable until 1939, when the war started. We were occupied by the Russians, and our home was nationalised; we were declared enemies of the state. My father was arrested and imprisoned but he was released after a while. In the first few months, there were many adjustments which had to be made. I lived before in a very nice home, I had a governess, and all that had to go. We feared being sent to Siberia, so we used to hide and sleep in different homes until it all settled down. In a certain way, we were happy because my mother worked full-time before and we were brought up by the governess and suddenly my mother was at home. It's amazing how you adapt to circumstances, if they are fairly reasonable, of course.

The war between Germany and Russia broke out in 1941, and within three days of the Nazis occupying the town, the first pogrom took place. The change was just incredible, there was nothing to compare it to. I was eleven years old. It was the most horrific, terrifying experience. Murder, killing, maiming, raping. That was the first taste of what was in store for us. Afterwards, there were many very well-organised deportations. One was never safe in such a climate of fear. Then came the order to wear a yellow star. The killings continued, catching people in the street, people disappearing, taken to the forest and killed there. People were not fully aware as yet of what would become of the Jewish population. And despite everything that was happening, somehow people still held on to a sense of hope, that things would stabilise.

But things did not settle, of course. After the Wannsee conference of 1942, in which the Nazis formulated the Final Solution to European Jewry, it became clear to us that very little hope remained for the future of the Jews. On the 6th, 7th and 8th of August of that year, approximately 8,000 Jews from our city were rounded up and deported. At that time, my family was in hiding and were discovered. My father and brother were rounded up and taken away and I was taken away with my mother along with many others to a local cinema, used as a holding centre by the Nazis. I was desperately holding onto her hand but along with several other girls was taken away to another place and was put to work sorting through the belongings of deported Jews. I was never to see my mother again, they were all transported elsewhere. It was only some weeks later that we learnt they were sent to Belzec, an extermination camp. Several days later, I was allowed to return to our house and was incredibly happy to find that my father and brother were already there.



Two months later, the Nazis created a ghetto, forcing the remaining Jewish population to move into it. Concentrating the Jews in such a small area provided the Nazis with efficient means of controlling the Jewish population of Boryslaw. Within ten days, a labour camp was established in our city and all those able to work were taken there, with only the elderly, sick and the very young remaining in the ghetto. The ghetto was later liquidated, with its remaining population murdered in the forests on the city's outskirts, or deported to concentration camps.

Partly due to my age, being 12 at the time, and partly due to luck, I was not officially registered either in the ghetto or the labour camp. The danger of being discovered, however, was very real and it became necessary to find some hiding place for me. Fortunately, with my looks, I could pass for a Polish girl quite easily. I also had papers under my mother's maiden name of Kulawicz, which was not a Jewish-sounding name, identifying me as a Catholic. My father and brother approached a number of their non-Jewish friends, who were prepared to take me in despite the danger to their own lives should I be discovered. Living in a small community, people are naturally very inquisitive. The arrival of someone new into a household naturally raised suspicion. Who is that person? Is it your sister's child? Where did she come from? So I would stay with a family until people began to suspect something and when it became too dangerous I had to move on to the next family and the next.

Eventually, the time came when we ran out of families who were prepared to risk their own lives by providing me with a place to hide. At that time, together with several of his friends, my brother was building a hiding place in the forest surrounding our city. It was a bunker or, in fact, a reinforced hole dug into the earth and covered with branches and small trees. Faced with no alternative, I had to move into the forest, into this bunker, where I lived for a number of months. It was a terrible situation, to be confined with perhaps ten other people in a very small space. For food, we were totally dependent on our friends, who would risk their lives with each trip from the city. During the day, we were not allowed to move and it was only at night that we would go out to get some air, go to the toilet and do all the other things. Here, I existed from one day to the next, with the constant fear of being discovered at any moment.

After several weeks of hiding in the bunker, I didn't hear from my brother or father so I was getting very anxious. I didn't know at the time what happened to them. I later learnt that my brother was taken from our city to another labour camp where an airstrip was being built. He ran away from there, I think because he wanted to see that I was all right, and came back to Boryslaw, although I did not know this.

While still living in the bunker, I was sent a message by the head of the Jewish police, to go see him in the labour camp. He was the father of my brother's best friend and someone I loved very much. He had been on the first transport from our labour camp. Then, as head of the police, he was brought back by the Nazis, from Plaszow to Boryslaw, in order to calm the remaining Jews in preparation for the second deportation.

Sabina aged 17,  
passing as a Christian,  
in 1944



So, I was taken to see him and spent several hours with him, in which he didn't say one word to me, he just took me in his arms, hugged me, cried and then arranged for the person who brought me, a non-Jewish person, to take me back to the forest. I asked him about my brother and he didn't answer me, asked about my father and didn't get any answer either. So I went back to our bunker, which took several hours of walking, and there was nobody there. Not only our bunker - the whole forest was cleaned up. I will never know if he asked especially for me to come in order to save me, whether he knew the police were going to surround the forest and clear it of Jews.

I was then left standing in the forest with the guide who had taken me there, with the bunker empty and not knowing what to do next. After spending an agonising night in the forest, there was no alternative but to make the trek to the labour camp once again the next day in the hope of perhaps finding my father or brother there. The guide took me as far as the outskirts of town, beyond that, the chance of being discovered was too great, and I went on alone from there to the labour camp itself. I knew that there was an entrance at the rear of the camp which was less guarded than the front one.

I went there hoping to sneak in but as I got there so did the German police on horses and they started shouting at me, "What are you doing here? You know you are not allowed to talk to Jews", thinking that I wasn't one. So I quickly ran to the front entrance because I knew there were still the Jewish police there, that I'll recognise somebody there and they'll let me in. When I got there, I approached a Jewish guard, whom I knew, and asked to be let in and he said, "Are you crazy? What are you doing here?" And I said, "I want to come in." And he said, "What for? You know what is happening?" I said I had to because I wanted to join my father and brother who I thought may be in the camp, and he said, "Didn't you hear what happened yesterday?"

He then told me that my brother, my father and my best friend were executed publicly the day before. That's how I found out. My brother attempted to run away again and was caught and, to set an example to all the others who remained, that that was what happens to Jews who attempted to run away, they were executed. I was in a state of complete shock. I said to myself, Well, I've got nothing to live for, I'm just going to go in; and he said, "No, I'm not going to let you in, go away," and just as I was walking away I could see the German police arriving and surrounding the camp completely.

I didn't have any idea what to do next, where to turn. I was trying to think of somewhere to turn, someone to turn to and I remembered a Polish friend of mine whose parents were very decent people. But one has to remember that hiding a Jew was punishable by death. The danger was great and immediate. So I went over there and they were very nice to me, particularly the mother and her son, who was my friend. But the father was terrified of being caught. I had a shower there and the family allowed me to stay one night only and I left them in the morning. There was a little park nearby which had a few trees and a bench so I went and sat on the bench and said to myself, "Well, what do I do now, where do I go?" And as I was sitting there I saw the whole transport being marched from the labour camp to the railway station surrounded by SS men, right before my eyes.



That, I later learnt, was the last transport from our city, the Nazis having liquidated the labour camp, sending the Jews to Auschwitz. I sat there actually watching those people being marched by with all the police, all the dogs, and I even thought that someone would recognise me and say something. But so what? I mean, I didn't know what to do and, in any case, at that stage, I did not really care. But while I was sitting there, I thought of a place where a man I knew of was hiding a group of Jewish people. I decided to go there and to ask him to help me - there was nowhere else for me to go. He took me in and, 17 days later, the Russian troops liberated our town and that's how I survived. It was 1944 and I was 14 years old.

For the next couple of days, as word of liberation broke out, the survivors started emerging from their hiding places, heading for the main street, trying to find out who of their family had survived. I, of course, knew that no one from my family had survived; I was 14 and completely alone. As I wandered through the street, I saw the auntie of my brother's best friend. She, her daughter and the daughter's husband, had miraculously survived. When they learnt that I was left completely alone they immediately offered to take me into their home.

As incredible as it seems, life, in fact, did have to return to some semblance of normality and as part of that, I was to return to school. It is impossible to adequately describe what adjusting to this new life was like. I did not trust anyone: not my teachers, not those around me at school. But there was a certain zest for learning in me and I began concentrating on my studies.

A few years went by and in 1947, being a Polish citizen, I was faced with the option of remaining in what was now the Ukraine in the Soviet Union or being repatriated in Poland. I did not wish to remain and decided to go to Poland, where I met my future husband and we married a year later. We did not wish to remain in Poland and we planned to emigrate to the United States. But the Polish quotas for the US were small and there was a very lengthy waiting list. A few friends of ours who had emigrated to Australia wrote and told us how wonderful it was there and that it was a country which had opened up its doors. So in 1950, as I was expecting our first child, we emigrated to a safe haven, to Australia.

The immigrant's life is not an easy one. I spoke French, Polish, Russian and German but not English, so there was a period of adjustment for us. But we settled fairly quickly and my husband was very entrepreneurial, very capable. My daughter was born and very soon we led fairly normal lives. Once I had the language, it was, of course, easier.

Living in Australia, while I no longer hid my Jewish identity as I had done just after the war, I was still not fully comfortable identifying as a Jew. In fact, I did not feel a part of any particular group and was not a member of any Jewish organisation or synagogue. Things changed, however, when my son's children were born. At that time, he came to me and during our conversation said, "Well Mama, maybe it's time to make peace." Largely because of his influence, I then joined the Reform temple in Sydney, originally doing this for him. But then I discovered that I felt very comfortable there, that I finally found a little corner where I could belong. And although I'm not a religious person - I'm now married to a non-Jew - I do celebrate Jewish holidays.

Sabina in Australia  
1960s



So, having found some peace, I often thought that there had to be a meaning to my survival and I felt a need to contribute. So how could I contribute? I tried, for instance, to work in the Jewish Museum as a guide but I found that I couldn't cope with that, it was too emotional. Then a dear friend of mine approached me and told me she was developing an oral history project for schools and asked if I would be prepared to talk to children about my experiences. At first, I was very hesitant because up until that time I had not spoken a lot about it. But I agreed and I actually found the experience to be a wonderful one, a cleansing experience in a way. Then I was asked whether I would like to join the Speaker Service of the Jewish Board of Deputies which gave me the opportunity to speak to non-Jewish school children, which I was pleased to do.

While giving these talks is very satisfying, it's also very difficult. And it doesn't get easier, no matter how many times I speak to groups. Each time I speak about the past I have to reconstruct it in my mind, in order to portray it to young people, so that they may understand what happened. I remember the past but I do not live in it. My concern is for the present and the future. I feel very strongly about prejudice and people who remain silent. It happened to me so often that I was in the company of non-Jews and they would say something derogatory about Jews and I would remain silent. I wouldn't say anything because I was too afraid. We have to speak up, we cannot remain silent.

I'm not an atheist. I believe in something larger than us, some cosmic consciousness. I can't believe it's all just an accident. And yet, when I think of the horrors that have happened, the way the children died, and I think is it just we're here and we go and that's the end of it? I don't know, I don't have a clear-cut answer. I have, for instance, a friend of mine who went to Auschwitz, she's an atheist, it's very clear-cut with her. But it's not with me. When I'm in trouble I pray to God, I suppose.

I try to explain my survival to myself, which of course I can't. But I think it is important to convey to people, especially young people, the injustices and hatreds of the past, and the present. And if in same way I have been able to affect some young people through relaying my experiences, then perhaps I have achieved something, perhaps my survival is serving a purpose. But I am also extremely grateful for my survival because since the horrors of the war life has been good to me. When people ask what my greatest achievement has been I tell about my children who have grown to become compassionate, caring and very decent people. There can be no greater achievement or reward in life.

Sabina today  
with husband Kjeld



My personal journey to freedom started in September 1956 at the age of 22, when my father bundled me out of Egypt on the pretext of resuming my university studies in Italy. What was the reason behind my hasty departure? What was the reason behind the hasty departure between 1948 and 1967 of over 80,000 Jews from Egypt? I am sure you can guess those reasons. But first I would like to tell you a little about the Jews of Egypt in general and my family in particular.

There was a Jewish presence in Egypt from biblical times, but the Jewish population of modern Egypt was mostly the product of immigration from the old Ottoman Empire, North Africa, Eastern and Western Europe from the mid-nineteenth century. The majority of Egyptian Jews were Sephardim, with a small minority of Ashkenazim (about six or seven thousand) and another five thousand Karaites.

My great-great-grandfather and two of his brothers, who were silk weavers by trade, migrated from Tuscany to Alexandria, Egypt in the mid 1830's when Mohamed Ali, the ruler of the day, was busy reforming and modernising the country, seeking the financial and technical expertise of countries such as France, Great Britain and Italy. By 1934 when I was born, the family had been in Egypt for five generations, but had retained its Italian citizenship in order to be protected against a corrupt and arbitrary indigenous judiciary.

Through education, hard work and initiative, the Jews flourished and contributed well beyond their numbers to the prosperity and development of modern Egypt. My own grandfather Joseph established a thriving cotton ginning and export enterprise that exported high quality cotton to Europe. His four sons (including my father) took over the business after his death. They employed thousands of people and brought millions of Sterling Pounds of foreign currency into the country.

The rise of Egyptian nationalism occurred at a time when there was tolerance and understanding between the various non-Muslim minorities and the Muslim majority. However, with the phasing out of foreign protection and the trouble emerging in Palestine, things started to change for the Jews and later on for all non-Muslim residents. While the acquisition of Egyptian nationality became essential for employment, the government made it exceedingly difficult for Jews to do so. My grandfather's application for Egyptian nationality was rejected. No reason was given, but it became obvious that it was because we were Jewish.

A more militant Arab-Islamic form of nationalism was also emerging, pushing for the end of British presence in Egypt and promoting the Palestinian cause as a global Muslim and Arab issue. In 1945 the Jewish quarter of Cairo was attacked by the Muslim Brothers; scores of Jews were injured, some died, their properties were looted and the only Ashkenazi synagogue was burned.

With the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and the ensuing war the Jewish population in Egypt was 'implicated' and all Jews were under suspicion. Many were imprisoned for six to twelve months and then expelled from the country. Prominent members of the community had their businesses and assets sequestered. (About 16,000 Jews migrated to Israel between 1949 and 1951). My family was lucky to come out of that period unscathed. After a while things settled down and we were all lulled into believing that we could resume our lives as before.

## Personal Narrative 2

'My Journey to Freedom'  
Joseph Barda

Joe, Racheline, Enid & Felix, Alexandria, 1957



In January 1952, rioters burned and looted modern Cairo, targeting mainly British and Jewish establishments. The Cairo fire is seen as the forerunner to the overthrow of King Faruk by the Free Officers six months later. In March 1954, the hardline nationalist Gamal Abdel Nasser became the new ruler and by then Egyptian Jews felt insecure and alienated.

When Nasser unilaterally nationalised the Suez Canal in July 1956, my father was warned of my imminent arrest, although I was totally innocent of any wrongdoing.

This was why he sent me away to Italy in such haste. Little did he know that a few short months later, after the Suez War of 1956, he and my whole family would be expelled and all our assets sequestered. They were not alone. Hundreds of Jews were jailed, harassed physically and economically, sequestered and eventually expelled. They finally realised it was no longer possible to survive in peace or security and thousands fled the country. The few who had managed to acquire Egyptian nationality were forced to renounce it. All had to sign an undertaking never to return, under a one-way exist visa. All were required to forgo all rights to assets left behind. With the help of the Jewish Agency, JOINT and HIAS (the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), Israel and many other countries such as France, the USA, Brazil, Canada and Australia took in these refugees.

The outbreak of the third Arab-Israeli war in June 1967 and the defeat of the Arab coalition sealed the fate of the few remaining Jews in Egypt. Most of the male population was imprisoned, some for over three years. The rest were gradually allowed to leave with even more restrictions than after the Suez War. Today, only a handful of Jews remains in Egypt.

Our own flight to freedom was not easy. Immigration never is. We had no money. HIAS helped us with the boat fares to Australia. We were lucky to be reunited with other family members and we helped each other. The Australian Jewish Welfare Society (today called JewishCare) lent us a deposit (£3,500) for our first house in Beverly Hills (South West of Sydney). We lived six of us in a 2-bedroom house with three mortgages and 2 personal loans. It was tough! Nevertheless, for those of us who were young (i.e. under 30), this forced move was a blessing in disguise. Thanks to the high level of education we had received in Jewish and French Schools and our early exposure to multiculturalism in Egypt, we acclimatised well and eventually prospered.

However, my parents' generation, being older, unskilled and without assets, suffered enormously from the drop in status. My father, after being a director and part owner of one of the most prestigious cotton companies in Egypt, was forced to work 6 days a week, 12-14 hours a day selling Italian Gelato to restaurants in Sydney. Later on, when I established my own business, my father worked for me, which he did with grace and competence. He never complained, but I am sure he must have felt somewhat diminished by the role reversal. From being the family provider, he had become dependent on his own son.

Joe & Racheline at  
Beverly Hills Station  
on their first day at  
work in Australia,  
June 1958





My mother was much more severely affected. Whereas in Egypt she had a maid, a male servant, a cook, a chauffeur, a gardener and a concierge at the family villa, she found herself with no money and no help, in a country where she hardly spoke the language, having to cook and care for a family of six. My dad, my wife Racheline and I went to work every day. My brother Felix was working and studying at night for his matriculation and my sister was still in high school. Hard work, loneliness and an undiagnosed heart ailment took their toll on her health and she died at 59 of heart failure.

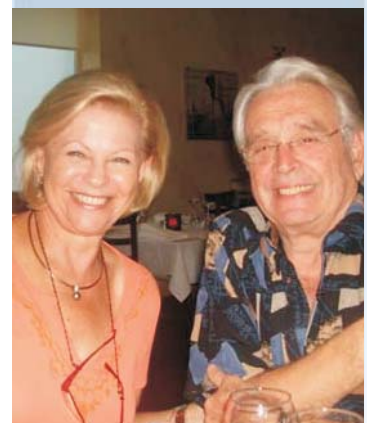
In spite of that sadness, I feel that our escape from Egypt allowed us to strengthen our identity as Jews. Just like 4,000 years ago, the exodus from Egypt liberated the ancient Hebrews from slavery and allowed them to forge a new nation based on the ethical principles of monotheism and dependence on moral laws, our own exodus liberated us from the tyranny of a modern day Pharaoh, allowing us to integrate into a strong Jewish community and discover a new world based on Western values, democracy and the rule of law.

We read in the Passover Haggadah:

“In each and every generation a person ought to look on himself as if he had gone out of Egypt. As the Bible says: On that day you should tell your son: 'I do this because the lord helped me when I left Egypt'”.

For the Jews of Egypt and for myself these words hold a very special significance.

Joe and Racheline today



# Personal Narrative 3

'My Journey to Freedom'  
Alla Pilman

## Personal Narrative 'My Journey to Freedom' Alla Pilman

"What is freedom? Freedom is the right to choose: the right to create for yourself the alternatives of choice. Without the possibility of choice and the exercise of choice a man is not a man but a member, an instrument, a thing."  
- Archibald MacLeish (American modernist poet)  
There are different kinds of freedom.

To most, freedom means a condition of being free; the power to act or speak or think without externally imposed restraints. The cognisant desire to be liberated from religious, financial, personal or other constraints that one might encounter in life.

But then there is also the kind of freedom when you don't realise that you need to be freed. That kind was my freedom and this is my story.  
A textbook by-product of communist Russia, my life was perfect. A straight 'A' grade student, a good achiever at a prestigious music school, a proud Young Pioneer, and an avid activist, my life, rich in meaningful ideals, marked achievements and close friendships, could only get better.

Then, at the ripe old age of 14, my world collapsed. My parents informed me that in two months we were leaving Russia and emigrating to the wicked West. They tried to explain that as a Jew there were not many options open to me when I finished school; that they didn't have enough money to bribe university officials to let me enter even with a good entrance score, or enough money to secure a good job if I finished one. Numb with grief, I called them traitors, and went from teachers to youth workers, endeavouring to secure help and to remain in Russia. Needless to say, all my endeavours failed.

When I was informed that I would be expelled from the Young Pioneers at an assembly in front of the entire school and regional Party officials, my humiliation and devastation were complete.  
As I stood in the middle of the school sports oval, with everyone staring at me, the elaborate process of naming me a traitor to the Motherland and the demonstrative stripping of the Young Pioneer kerchief off my neck made me wish that the earth would open up and swallow me right there and then. Anything would be better than this.

As I trudged home alone, the only thing that was on my mind was how much I hated my parents for shattering my blissful life, and that even if they forcibly took me out of Russia, the minute I was an adult and got my passport, I would return.

The six months of transit are hazy. I cried through the first four, ignored my parents for most of the time, and lived for the day when I would turn 18 and return. On 16 August 1976 we left for Sydney. I turned 15 three days before.  
My first impression was on a par with my bleak mood. As the plane circled above Bondi Beach waiting for landing, a multitude of red roofs is what I remember the most. My mind compared this vista with the history-steeped architecture of Russia and Europe, and immediately rejected this as my new homeland.

Alla,  
aged about 6 in Russia



The times that followed were darker still. While my parents threw themselves into establishing a new home, I was convinced that for me this was only a temporary measure and in another three years I will be gone from this god-forsaken place, so far away from everything I loved.

I was sent to a public school, with no English, no friends and not wanting to make any. A week later I thumped another student, thinking she was laughing at me. An interpreter and my parents were called, something was said; I didn't care.

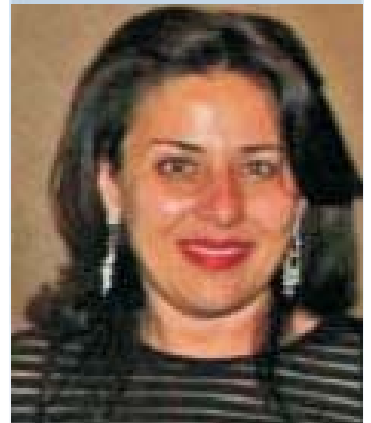
Fast forward 32 years.

Today I look at my three beautiful children and utter a heartfelt apology and gratitude to my parents for having the courage and the hindsight to leave their entire family and way of life behind and start again in an alien country.

I ensure that I tell my children often of their immeasurable inheritance, all made possible by the sacrifice of their grandparents all those years ago.

My children's gift was to be born in a free country; their legacy the right to choose - the legacy of Freedom.

Alla today



# appendix 2

## Mizrachi Jewish Tradition

*Mizrach* is the Hebrew word for 'east', and the Mizrachi Jews are those whose ancestors were the people of Judea exiled to Babylonia in 586 BCE, when the Babylonians destroyed the First Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Some of those Jews returned to the land of Israel when permitted around 550 BCE, but many remained in Babylonia (modern-day Iraq). Those who did not return to Israel or remain in Babylonia spread to countries including Persia (Iran), Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and later India. Most of the Jews of Iraq stayed there from the 500s BCE until persecuted during the 1930s and forced out after the re-establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.



Yemenite Jews, c. 1900



Jewish wedding in Aleppo, Syria, 1914

For much of the time over the centuries Mizrachi Jews who lived in Arab countries were not actively persecuted, although their lives did include many restrictions. Known as *dhimmis* in Arabic, Jews were second-class citizens who could not build any structure higher than a mosque, or ride horses, and had to wear distinctive clothing. In terms of their ability to trade and practise their religion, however, they were often better off than their Jewish neighbours in Christian lands.



Syrian-Jewish American singer  
Paula Abdul



Yemenite-Jewish Israeli singer  
Achinoam Nini



### PESACH SOUP WITH GREEN BEANS

*Serves 4-6*

1 kg mutton or lamb cubed  
1 kg green beans  
3-4 potatoes  
1 teaspoon white pepper  
½ cup fresh coriander, chopped  
3-4 litres water  
2 carrots  
2 turnips  
2-3 celery stalks  
2-3 marrow bones  
2 shallots  
Salt to taste

Peel all vegetables. Wash and dice into small pieces. The beans should be cut at the ends and slit in the middle. Put vegetables and meat into a large pot with water. Cook for about half an hour.

Blend the vegetables in a blender or electric mixer. Return blended vegetables into the saucepan.

Add coriander and spices. Cook for a further 30 minutes.

### SEMOLINA CAKE

2 eggs  
1 teaspoon bicarbonate soda  
½ cup unsalted margarine  
1 teaspoon vanilla essence  
2 cups fine semolina  
1½ cups water  
2½ cups sugar  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
Blanched almond halves for topping

Oven should be preheated to 180 degrees. Grease 22 x 30cm tin.

Blend together margarine, ¾ cup sugar, vanilla essence and eggs in a bowl until mixture is light and fluffy. Add the semolina with baking powder and bicarbonate soda. Mix well.

Pour batter into baking dish, bake for 35 minutes. Cool.

Meanwhile, combine remainder of sugar and lemon juice in a saucepan, melt sugar and let mixture come to the boil. Cook for 10 minutes. Take off flame and let this syrup cool. Spoon syrup on top of cake so that it is absorbed.

Cut into small squares. Top each square with half almond. Keep refrigerated.

## Ashkenazi Jewish Tradition

The Jews who settled in Northern and Eastern Europe after the destruction of the Second Jewish Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 C.E. came to be known as *Ashkenazi* Jews - Ashkenaz being the Hebrew name for Germany. Despite intense persecution and periodic disruption, the customs and lifestyle of Ashkenazi Jewry survived from the Middle Ages until the Holocaust, when more than 2/3 of the Jews of Europe were systematically murdered.

The Jews of Europe usually governed themselves, running their own rabbinic courts and levying two kinds of taxes: those which provided services to the Jewish community, and those which in turn were paid to the local non-Jewish ruler. The elected Jewish officials were responsible for running Jewish ritual bathhouses, burial societies, cemeteries, kosher butchers, hospitals, orphanages and schools.



Polish Jewish  
klezmer musicians



19th century Jews praying  
in what is today Ukraine



2/3 of Ashkenazi Jews  
perished in the Holocaust

In Germany and other European centres where Ashkenazim lived, their main language was Yiddish (*Judisch* being the German word for 'Jewish'). Hebrew became increasingly the language of prayer and holy books, and Yiddish the language of everyday life. Yiddish is still spoken today in many parts of the Jewish world. Yiddish music, in particular the klezmer tradition, is enjoying a revival.

## Ashkenazi Jews



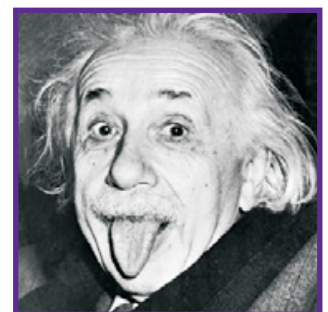
Sir John Monash



Natalie Portman



Natan Sharansky



Albert Einstein

## Ashkenazi Passover Recipes

### TASTY CHICKEN SOUP

1 boiling chicken  
3 carrots  
2 onions  
Fresh continental parsley  
Fresh coriander  
3 bay leaves  
Salt & black pepper  
Telma chicken soup stock powder

Prepare vegetables, dicing if desired or whole. Wash and clean chicken, stuff a whole onion inside. Put all ingredients into a large saucepan and cover with water. Bring to boil, then remove scum, and cook till chicken is tender. Cool, and leave in fridge till needed. Remove fat from top before heating.

### MATZAH BREI

*Serves 2*

During Passover, dozens of little goodies are made with matzah and matzah meal.

2 eggs  
Salt & pepper  
2 whole matzot, broken into small pieces  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter or vegetable oil for frying

Lightly beat the eggs with salt and pepper. Soak the matzot in cold water for 1-2 minutes, until they soften, then drain and gently squeeze the excess water out. Drop it into the beaten eggs and mix well. In a frying pan, heat the oil or butter until it sizzles and pour in the mixture. Cook on low heat for about 2 minutes, until the bottom sets, then turn and brown the other side, or put under the grill till brown on the top. Serve hot.

At breakfast or teatime, sprinkle with a little sugar and cinnamon and serve with jam or honey, a fruit preserve or compote.

## Sephardi Jewish Tradition

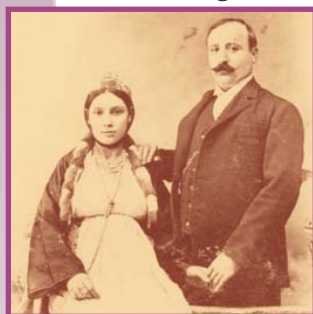
Jews who ended up in Spain and Portugal after the destruction of the Second Temple (see above) are called Sephardi Jews. *Sepharad* is the Hebrew word for 'Spain', which is why Jews from this region are known as Sephardim.

Jews flourished in Spain between 900 and 1200, in what became known as a Golden Age under Muslim Rule. During this period, the Jewish community produced such luminaries as Moses Maimonides, Court Physician to the Sultan Saladin and author of the most famous commentary on the Talmud. The Golden Age also produced several outstanding Jewish poets, among them Shmuel HaNagid, who is said to have built the magnificent palace in Granada called the Alhambra.

During the 13th and 14th centuries a struggle for power in Spain resulted in a takeover by the Catholics from the Muslims. By 1391 Judaism had been outlawed and any Jews living in the country were forcibly converted to Christianity. These New Christians were known as *conversos*, or by a slang term meaning 'pigs': *marranos*. The Church's Holy Office of the Inquisition was established to root out regression to Judaism or heresy. Those deemed guilty were executed by burning at the stake.

In 1492 King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella decided to expel the Jews from Spain altogether. This decree was in force until 1968 and Sephardim carried their culture and Judaism to the Ottoman Empire, Poland, Holland and the New Worlds of North and South America.

Sephardi Jews spoke a language among themselves called Ladino, that included words from Hebrew and Spanish. Some Sephardi Jews still speak and write in Ladino today. They also have a distinctive pronunciation of Hebrew, now recognised as the Israeli and world Jewish standard.



Sephardi couple  
Salonika, mid 1890s



Sephardi synagogue  
in Amsterdam, 1600s



Hebrew street sign on old  
Jewish quarter of Palma, Spain

## Sephardi Jews



Benjamin Disraeli



Singer Yasmin Levy



NSW Jewish Board of Deputies CEO, Vic Alhadeff



*In Sephardi communities people are permitted to eat rice and nuts during Passover, while in other communities these foods are prohibited.*

## Sephardi Passover Recipes

### FRITADA DE ESPINAKA

#### Spinach and Cheese Cake

Serves 6

The Judeo-Spanish word for an omelette-type cake is more Italian than Spanish, as indeed is the style of adding mashed potato for a firmer texture. This is a legacy of the Jews who left Italy at various times for Ottoman lands.

400g spinach  
5 eggs  
1 medium potato, boiled, peeled and chopped  
200g feta cheese, mashed  
¼ teaspoon nutmeg  
Pepper  
2 tablespoons olive or light vegetable oil

Wash the spinach. Remove the stems only if they are tough. Drain, and put the spinach in a large pan on a low heat with the lid on. It will steam and collapse very quickly in to a soft mass. Drain, and when it is cool enough, press the excess water out. Cut the spinach coarsely or leave it whole.

In a bowl, lightly beat the eggs. Add the potato, spinach, cheese, nutmeg and pepper and stir well.

In a frying pan, heat the oil. Pour in the spinach and egg mixture and cook over a low heat for about 10-15 minutes, until the bottom of the omelette has set. Then cook under the grill until firm and lightly browned.

Turn out and serve hot or cold, cut in wedges. A usual accompaniment is yoghurt.

### TORTA DI MANDORLE E CIOCCOLATA

#### Chocolate and Almond Cake

Serves 10-12

Marrano Jews (Spanish Jews who had been forced to convert to Christianity by the Inquisition but still practised their Judaism in secret) were involved in the early export of cocoa from Venezuela. They were responsible for founding the chocolate industries in Amsterdam in the mid-seventeenth century and later in France in Bayonne and Bordeaux. Jewish chocolate cakes often have Marrano roots.

250g blanched almonds  
200g dark, bittersweet chocolate  
250g sugar  
7 egg whites  
Oil and flour or matzah meal for the cake tin.

Finely chop the almonds and chocolate together in a food processor, then add the sugar and mix well. Beat the egg whites stiff and fold into the chocolate and almond mixture. Oil a 23cm non-stick springform cake tin, then dust with matzah meal. Bake in a preheated 150 degree oven for 1 hour until firm.

## Celebration of Freedom: Passover Dinner for Educators 2008 / 5768

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