



*Spin the Seder*

**EXPLORE THE  
JEWISH JOURNEY**



**jewish  
futures**

*Pesach Pack*



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# EXPLORE THE JEWISH JOURNEY



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# Ancient Egypt



EGYPT

Nile

SIN  
PEN

1



*One of the most ancient civilisations in all of human history, the story of Egypt and that of the Israelites is closely intertwined throughout Scripture. From Abraham and Sarah's first descent there to escape famine in Canaan, to Joseph being sold into slavery - eventually leading to Jacob and his entire tribe moving there and settling in the north Nile Delta in a fertile region called 'Goshen'.*

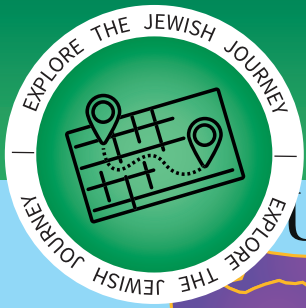
*But our shared histories don't end there. Throughout the Book of Kings, and especially in the prelude to the destruction of the First Temple, the Egyptian empire's role as a regional power-broker is crucial to the unique way in which Israelite society develops.*



*In the Torah itself, the world of the pharaohs represents the consequences of unchecked power. The pharaohs of antiquity were self-styled gods, ruling supreme over the lives of millions. Many of the pharaohs, most notably Rameses II, were renowned builders, overseeing the construction of statues and temples that boggle even modern architects.*

*It is against the backdrop of a vast construction project that the idea of a limitless pool of slave labour begins to take shape...*





# Bnei Brak





The 'Bnei Brak' mentioned in the Haggadah is not to be confused with the modern-day town of the same name. Rather, the town that would have hosted the five Rabbis' seder was closer to modern-day Hiria, a small town roughly 10km south of Bnei Brak and - crucially - close to the port city of Jaffa.

Some commentaries place this narrative within the historical context of the Bar Kohba Revolt of 132-136 BCE. Four of the Sages were returning from just receiving word that the Romans were sworn to destroy the Jewish people. They knew the only person that could lift their spirits was Rabbi Akiva, the spiritual leader of the revolt and an outspoken supporter of Bar Kohba himself.

The cryptic message passed to them by their students ("the time for the morning prayers has arrived") is interpreted by some as a coded signal to re-inspire the people in their uprising.

Seen in this context, the 'seder in Bnei Brak' forms a link in the same chain as the clandestine seder nights in the Warsaw Ghetto and Inquisition Spain.







# Ur Casdim

Abraham's resistance to Nimrod's cult of idolatry is seen as one of the origins for the term 'Hebrew', meaning 'from the other side'. Either taken literally to mean 'from the other side of the river (Euphrates)', this term has been interpreted metaphorically to mean 'he who stood on the opposite side in his beliefs to the rest of society'.



Ur Casdim or 'Ur of the Chaldees' is mentioned in the Torah and identified by the sages as Abraham's birthplace. Located in the south of modern-day Iraq, tradition teaches that it was the site of a great theological showdown between Abraham and Nimrod, a tyrant king who ruled over the lands of ancient Akkad (Babylon).

Tiring of Abraham's monotheistic teachings, Nimrod had his nemesis cast into a fiery furnace (linked phonetically to the word 'Ur', which means 'fire'), but Abraham emerged miraculously unscathed.





# IRAN



Persian Gulf



# Haran

*Abraham's journey to Canaan, which would become the Land of Israel, was a seminal moment, coinciding with the 'Covenant Between the Parts'. This covenant, sealed when Abraham was 70 years old, was the moment that God established him and his descendants as the chosen people. God also forewarned Abraham of the coming exile and slavery in Egypt.*



*The Torah recounts how in the wake of the story of the Tower of Babel, Terach made the decision to relocate his entire family from Ur Casdim (see previous page) to a city called Haran (now Syria).*

*With him were Abraham, Sarah and their nephew, Lot. It would be many years until Abraham received God's fateful call to leave his father's home and travel southwest into Canaan.*







SYRIA

*Euphrates*

JORDAN

IRA

ON



# Padan Aram

*Padan Aram is also known as 'Aram Naharayim', meaning 'Aram between the two rivers'. The origin of this name is due to its location between the region's two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates.*

*In the Haggadah, the 'Ha Lachma Anya' section is written in Aramaic, a language that was spoken by Jews during the years of exile, after the destruction of the first Temple. There are still Jewish communities today that use Aramaic!*



*Padan Aram was the city in which Jacob lived for more than 20 years of his life, having fled Canaan to escape Esau's murderous intent. Here he married Leah and Rachel and established the twelve tribes of Israel.*

*Jacob's years in Laban's house set the stage for future exiles of Jews to foreign cultures and lands. As in the story of Jacob, Jews who maintained a strong connection to their heritage and past were able to thrive and continue the Jewish story.*





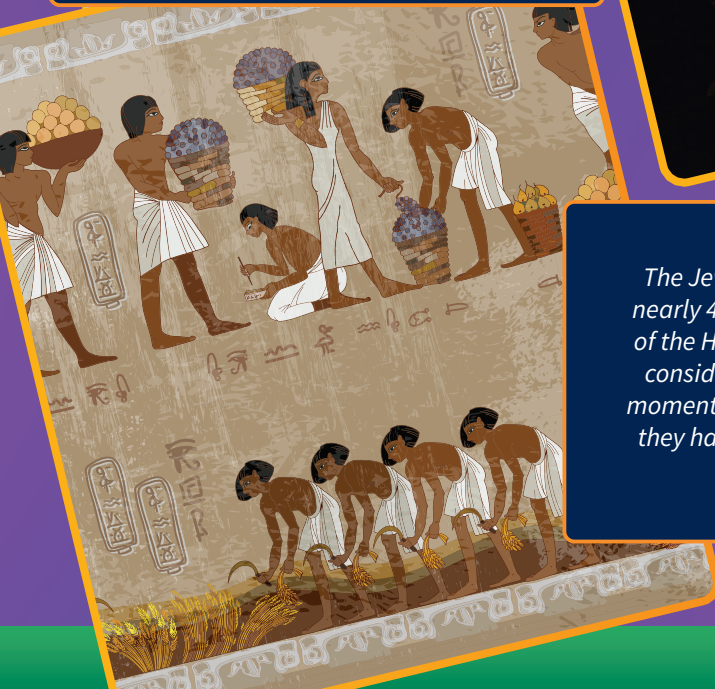


# Pithom & Rameses



*Pithom and Rameses are the two cities in Egypt that the Torah describes as the sites where the Jewish people were enslaved, and charged with the construction of huge, fortified storage cities.*

*Opinions differ as to the exact location of these construction sites. Rabbi Saadyah Gaon (10th century) cites the town of Fayum, which is 60 miles southwest of Cairo and therefore quite a distance from Goshen. Modern egyptologists suggest that the cities were located near the northeastern border of Egypt, close to the Nile Delta.*



*The Jews were enslaved in Egypt nearly 4000 years ago. This section of the Haggadah encourages us to consider the difficult and painful moments of Jewish history and how they have shaped our people over thousands of years.*



# Crossing of the Red Sea





7



*The Torah presents the splitting of the Red Sea as the climax of the Exodus. It is described as the moment when God exacted a final judgement on Pharaoh and his pursuing army. Beyond this, the Israelites were so thankful to finally be free not just in name but in act, that they joined together in a joyous song called the ‘Song at the Sea’.*

*The miracle was so great that it inspired the Israelites to have faith in God and Moses, striking awe into the hearts and minds of the entire nation.*



*It is worth noting that just 12 weeks after the splitting of the sea, the sin of the Golden Calf occurred. This raises the question: In Jewish thought, what is the role of miracles and is there a reason their effects sometimes appear to be short-lived?*



# Mount Sinai





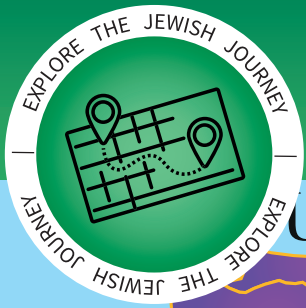
*Mount Sinai was the location where God transmitted the Ten Commandments and the Torah to Moshe. The precise location may remain unknown, but the events that unfolded there have been part of an ongoing, unbroken narrative for thousands of years.*

*The Mount Sinai experience was highlighted by the revelation of God to the Jewish people. While at the splitting of the sea God performed an open miracle, at Mount Sinai, God communicated with each individual in the nation of Israel.*



*Judaism is the only known religion that claims a 'national revelation'. Namely, that God spoke directly to a group of hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of individuals at the same time. The Revelation at Sinai is therefore seen as the cornerstone of Jewish belief.*

*Why do you think the Torah was given in the middle of nowhere, in a desert?*



# Jerusalem





Jerusalem has been the epicentre of Jewish geography since the very beginning. The location of the Binding of Isaac, the site of the ladder in Jacob's dream, the capital established by King David and the city that hosted King Solomon's Temple. Jerusalem is the beating heart of the nation, then, now and for eternity.



The Pesach sacrifice was eaten in the homes and buildings near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. This practice was in celebration of the commandment to rejoice in Jerusalem on the three pilgrimage holidays of Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot.

The Pesach sacrifice commemorated God's protection of the Jewish homes on the night of the final plague of the firstborn in Egypt. It was eaten with a group, usually family members, and in proximity to the sanctity of the Temple Mount.

Also mentioned in the Haggadah is the 'First Fruits' ceremony celebrated on Shavuot when the Jewish people would gather to celebrate in Jerusalem. This offering was a selection of the seven species which bless the agriculture of the Land of Israel: Wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. The ceremony incorporated a thanksgiving offering to God for the produce that had grown in the previous year.





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