

In this week's Parashah of Bo we read about the last three of the ten plagues that struck Egypt, the last of which coincides with the first ever Seder Night. This week's NLI resource features a postcard from the 19<sup>th</sup> century depicting the well-known Seder entry, Mah Nishtanah.

Kerem  
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Parashat Bo  
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## "Why Is This Night Different"

"Surely it's not Pesach already", I hear you ask yourself. But don't worry, we still have a bit of time before the annual panic begins! The reason for our Pesach-themed picture this week is that our Parashah sees the last three of the ten plagues, followed by the first ever Seder night. In the Parashah, HaShem tells the Jewish People to take matza, maror and the Korban Pesach on the night that the Egyptian firstborns were to be killed.

In the drawing, a child enthusiastically tastes a piece of matza whilst stood in between two sacks of matzot that appear to have been prepared ready for the holiday of Pesach.

The famous words, "מה נשתנה הלילה הזה" (Mah Nishtanah Halaila Haze) with which we begin the 'maggid' section of the Seder night are emblazoned across the top of the image, which immediately ensures that our minds are turned towards the Seder night.

The painting is part of a series of postcards created in the late 19th century depicting the different Jewish holidays and distributed around Western Europe. These cards were used as Shanah Tovah cards.



## Best Thing Before Sliced Bread?

As anyone who has had the (mis?) fortune of standing in a Kosher Kingdom queue on Erev Pesach will know, the choice of matza available to us nowadays is beyond belief. Square or round, Shemurah or regular, machine baked or hand baked, gluten-free or flavour-free, chocolate coated or honey infused. The list is seemingly endless. And to think that matza is known as 'the poor man's bread' or 'the bread of affliction' (the bread that afflicts us?).

And yet, not long ago, matza really was that plain, simple, crumbly, sharp-cornered Pesach necessity. It may well have been the case that you were not sure whether you were eating the contents of the box or the box itself, but it nobly fulfilled its role of enabling us to carry out the mitzvah of eating matza on Pesach.

Originally, matzot were decorated with doves, animals and flowers and were apparently sometimes baked in the form of chains to symbolise the time of our slavery. This practice was brought to a halt by the Rabbis of Talmudic times; they decreed that the extra embellishments added too long to the cooking time of the matza which could result in it becoming chametz. Instead, the dough would be pierced with a special toothed rolling device to prevent it from rising in the oven.

Matza baked in medieval bakeries was always circular, possibly due to the verse in Shemot (Exodus) 12:39 which mentions "oogot matzot" – oogot meaning either cakes or circles. The tradition of round matza continued up to the 1850's which brought with it the invention of the first matza-making machine.

By 1908, a New York bakery was producing an annual 2 million pounds of matza. In 1950, *The New York Times* divulged that, "In the USA this year, 12,000,000 pounds of matza will be consumed. If laid one next to the other, the matza would stretch for 21,000 miles."

Perhaps that queue in Kosher Kingdom doesn't seem so long after all.

### Activities:

How does matza symbolise slavery?  
Think about its ingredients, taste, texture etc.



Something to discuss

To watch the Matzo-Man cartoon, see here:



### Rainy Sunday Activity:

Try to build a matza house. You could use melted chocolate, jam etc to 'stick' the walls together and lots of dried fruits, marshmallows etc to decorate the outside.



To watch the matza-baking process, see here.

Q. What kind of cheese do we eat on Pesach?

A. (Matzo-rella!)

### Matza: How much do you know?

1. What are the ingredients used to make matzah?
2. What are the names of the grains used to make matzah?
3. What does shmura matzah mean?
4. How long does one have to wait before matzah dough becomes chametz?
5. What are two reasons for eating matzah at the seder?
6. When does one have the mitzvah to eat matzah?

