

Pine Nut Charoset Recipe

Charoset Chanina ("Charoset of Clemency")

Liza Berkowitz Mazo

Charoset is our symbol of mortar, recalling the brutal work conditions experienced by the Israelite slaves in Egypt. This year, we introduce a Charoset recipe that includes pine nuts.

Makes approximately 5-6 cups Charoset:

- 4 medium sized granny smith apples, cored, peeled, and 1/4 inch diced
- 1 cup dates (about 15-20)
- 3/4 cup pine nuts
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1/2 cup sweet red wine (can be slightly sweeter table wine, not necessary to be kiddish wine)
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp finely grated orange zest

1. Heat brown sugar in large saucepan over medium for 1 minute. Add pine nuts in a single layer and decrease to medium low heat until nuts are fragrant but not brown. Remove from pan promptly. If the sugar melts that is even better and produces a great crunch! Set aside.

2. Process dates until they barely form a paste.

3. Add nuts and all remaining ingredients except orange zest to the processor. Process until apples are finely chopped and date mixture is evenly distributed in the apples, or to desired consistency.

4. Pour mixture into bowl and mix in orange zest.

To explore ways of becoming active in Racial Justice work visit:

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism www.rac.org

The NAACP www.naacp.org

Temple Israel of Boston www.tisrael.org

THE PASSOVER PINE CONE:

Putting Prisons on the Seder Plate



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The Passover Pine Cone: Putting Prisons on the Seder Plate

To be read while explaining the symbols on the Seder plate.

LEADER: We “pass over” pine cones every day. Inside each of these pine cones is among the most precious of all nuts - the pine nut. Most of us pass more pine nuts in a single day than one could count in a year. Yet, they remain hidden, unseen. Moreover, they’re nearly impossible to extract with our own hands. The pine cone “imprisons” its seeds, and only hard work on the part of nature compels it to open up. The cones of Fire Pines, for instance, are glued shut by resin, and only a raging fire can force the cone to release its seeds. Thus these seeds, the glorious pine nuts all around us, remain “out of sight, out of mind.”

We pass over prisons every day as well, and so rarely do we ever see what is inside. Inside U.S. prisons are approximately 25% of all prisoners in the world, despite that our country amounts to a mere 5% of the global population (United States Census Bureau and International Center for Prison Studies). People of Color constitute approximately 67% of the incarcerated even though they make up less than 37% of the U.S. population; Black men are imprisoned at more than 6 times the rate of White men (sentencingproject.org). Through inhumane, excessive punitive laws, unfettered institutional racism, and widespread ignorance and apathy, our system of laws and justice has lost its way: we have “recidivated” back into Egypt.

Leader holds up the Pine Cone from Seder Plate and continues.

LEADER: Therefore, this year we add a pine cone to our Seder Plate, as a reminder of mass incarceration and the work it will take to repair this injustice.

ALL: This Passover, we refuse to pass over the pine cone because we know that hidden inside is something precious.

LEADER: This Passover, we refuse to pass over our prisons because we know that inside is God’s most precious fruit of all: the human soul.

ALL: This Passover, we recognize that God passed over Israelite homes on the eve of their liberation *for a reason*: So that we, the community of Israel, will forever serve the continuous movement from darkness to light, cruelty to compassion, slavery to redemption. *Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh HaOlam Matir Asurim*. Blessed are You, Eternal Our God, who frees the captive. *Amen*.



Four More Questions: Confronting our Criminal Justice System

To be read following the chanting of the Four Questions.

1. The Torah demands, “Justice, justice shall you pursue!” (Deut 16:20). What are the obstacles to fulfilling this commandment in the context of criminal justice?
2. The Sage Hillel taught: “That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow” (BT Shabbat 31a). At the heart of our Passover story is the remembrance of being slaves in Egypt. How do we internalize this narrative of “imprisonment” and express it in our own public lives?
3. In Genesis we read that God created human beings, “b’tzelem Elohim, in God’s image.” How does institutionalized racism undermine this teaching? Do you feel obliged to assign this teaching to all human beings, including those who have committed heinous crimes?
4. The Talmud teaches, “The person who destroys one life, it is as though that person has destroyed the whole world; and the person who saves one life, it is as though that person has saved the whole world” (JT Sanhedrin 4:1). It is naive to overlook the societal necessity of a working criminal justice system. Imagine a criminal justice system that fulfills the supreme Jewish value of saving lives: What does it “look like”?