

THE VELVETEEN RABBI'S

הגדה של פסח



HAGGADAH FOR PASSOVER

ASSEMBLED BY RACHEL BARENBLAT;
WRITTEN, AT LEAST IN PART, BY YOU

FOR IT IS WRITTEN:
WHOEVER ENLARGES ON THE TELLING OF THE EXODUS
IS PRAISEWORTHY

(VERSION 5.0)

FOREWORD: ON USAGE

Welcome to the Velveteen Rabbi's Haggadah for Pesach! Here are some 'liner notes' to start you on your journey. Read these before the seder, not during.

This haggadah can be used anytime during Passover. Traditionally a Passover seder is held on the first night of the holiday; in many Diaspora communities seders are held on the first two nights; and some hold extra seders at other times during the week.

Feel free to use every word in this haggadah, start to finish—or to choose only the parts which are most resonant for you—or to augment this with selections from other haggadot (or other readings/prayers/poems/meditations that move you)—or to use this to augment the haggadah you're accustomed to using.

In preparing for your seder, make sure you have:

- a goblet of wine or juice for Elijah and a goblet of water for Miriam;
- salt water on the table (in which participants will dip something green;)
- wine or grape juice for everyone, enough for four symbolic cups apiece;
- matzah (at least three pieces; enough for everyone at the table to taste;)
- a seder plate.

A traditional seder plate includes five items:

- *zeroa*, a roasted shank bone representing the Paschal lamb, the holiday offering made in Temple days (vegetarians today often use a roasted beet for its blood-red color, or a roasted sweet potato for the pun of calling it the Paschal Yam;)
- *beitzah*, a roasted egg (with various symbolism; many see it as a symbol of re/birth. I recommend hardboiling it, then pricking the shell, before roasting;)
- *maror*, the bitter herb (usually horseradish), symbolizing the bitterness of slavery;
- *karpas*, the green vegetable, symbolizing spring growth and renewal;
- *charoset*, a mixture of apples/nuts/cinnamon (following the Ashkenazic recipe) or dates/nuts/honey (following the Sefardic one), representing the clay or mortar used by the Israelite slaves.

Optional additions include:

- *an orange*, representing the inclusion of all genders and sexualities at the table;
- *an olive*, representing hopes for peace in the Middle East and everywhere in the world where strife constricts and poisons our lives.

In this, as in the whole seder experience, do what feels right to you, and don't be afraid to take risks. The Passover story is all about risk and its reward. May your celebration of Passover be sweet and meaningful, and may it enrich and expand your sense of yourself, your relationship with your community, and your connection with your Source!

Rachel Barenblat

ON PARTICIPATION

You may be wondering why this Haggadah claims to be written by you. The answer is that parts of tonight's service will be uniquely yours. The written Haggadah is our road map, but what we see along the way will be based on who we are.

Judaism has evolved into a tradition without high priest, sage, or ultimate leader. It is the joy and responsibility of every Jew to engage with the tradition. Because of this, our seder has no leader and no followers. It is incumbent upon all of us to lead, follow, create space, ask, and answer.

ON GOD-LANGUAGE

This haggadah uses several different terms and names for God. They include *Adonai* (Lord), *Shekhinah* (the Jewish mystics' name for the Divine Presence embodied in creation), *ayn ha-chayyim* (source of life), *melech* (king), and *ruach* (breath or spirit).

Following a Renewal tradition, sometimes we render YHVH (the unpronounceable Name) as Yahh, which resembles what those four Hebrew letters might sound like if they were aspirated—and which also resembles breathing, appropriate since one of our oldest names for God is *Nishmat Kol Chai*, Breath of All Life.

Jewish tradition teaches that our Creator is beyond language: our words can only approach the Infinite. May our use of different names remind us that our names are only substitutes; that God is beyond any words we can speak.

Following standard Jewish practice, the Hebrew letters of the tetragrammaton are implied by the abbreviation " ", to make it possible for you to recycle this haggadah post-Pesach if you want.

OPENING PRAYER

We read responsively:

Long ago at this season, our people set out on a journey.

On such a night as this, Israel went from degradation to joy.

We give thanks for the liberation of days gone by.

And we pray for all who are still bound.

Eternal God, may all who hunger come to rejoice in a new Passover.

Let all the human family sit at Your table, drink the wine of deliverance, eat the bread of freedom:

Freedom from bondage *and freedom from oppression*

Freedom from hunger *and freedom from want*

Freedom from hatred *and freedom from fear*

Freedom to think *and freedom to speak*

Freedom to teach *and freedom to learn*

Freedom to love *and freedom to share*

Freedom to hope *and freedom to rejoice*

Soon, in our days *Amen.¹*



[Woodcut by Yaron Livay]

WELCOME

In the northern hemisphere, Passover coincides with the beginning of spring: a time for renewal, rethinking, rebirth. We throw open the windows of our houses, we sweep away winter's grit and dust. The story of Passover is a story of liberation and new beginnings: what better time to rethink our own liberation than now, as new green appears?

May this Passover spring give us the insight and courage to create ourselves anew.

ORDER! ORDER!

Seder literally means order, from the Hebrew *l'sader*, to arrange, and there's a set order to the proceedings:

<i>Kadesh</i>	Recite the kiddush	<i>Initiate special time</i>
<i>Urchatz</i>	Wash the hands	<i>Clear the grime</i>
<i>Karpas</i>	Eat a green vegetable	<i>Open senses to growing green</i>
<i>Yachatz</i>	Break the middle matzah	<i>Separate dessert from need</i>
<i>Maggid</i>	Tell the Pesach story	<i>Tell a tale from your spiritual past</i>
<i>Rakhtzah</i>	Wash the hands	<i>Raise up the energy in your hands</i>
<i>Motzi</i>	Say the Ha-Motzi	<i>Call forth what nourishes you</i>
<i>Matzah</i>	Say the blessing for matzah	<i>Increase faith/prepare to heal</i>
<i>Maror</i>	Eat the bitter herb	<i>Allow the bitter to move you</i>
<i>Korekh</i>	Eat bitter herb with matzah	<i>See the sandwich of both sides</i>
<i>Shulkhan Orekh</i>	Serve the festive meal	<i>Feast and enjoy</i>
<i>Tzafun</i>	Eat the Afikomen	<i>Nourish the self with mystery</i>
<i>Barekh</i>	Say the grace after meals	<i>Bless all nourishings in your life</i>
<i>Hallel</i>	Recite the Hallel	<i>Sing the song that is a prayer</i>
<i>Nirtzah</i>	Conclude the seder	<i>Say "I am loved here today."²</i>

Order

Breakfast on kosher macaroons and Diet Pepsi
in the car on the way to Price Chopper for lamb.

Peel five pounds of onions and let the Cuisinart
shred them while you push them down and weep.

Call your mother because you know she's preparing
too, because you want to ask again whether she cooks

matzah balls in salted water or broth, because you can.
Crumble boullion cubes like clumps of wet sand.

Remember the precise mixing order, beating
then stirring then folding, so that for one moment

you can become your grandfather.
Remember the year he taught you this trick,

not the year his wife died scant weeks before seder
and he was already befuddled when you came home.

Realize that no matter how many you buy
there are never quite enough eggs at Pesach

especially if you need twelve for the kugel
and eighteen for the kneidlach and another dozen

to hardboil and dip in bowls of stylized tears.
Know you are free! What loss. What rejoicing.

(—Rachel Barenblat)

ORIGINS

Once we had two spring festivals: Pesach, a lambing holiday, and Chag Hamatzah, a holiday celebrating the year's first grain. When Israel left Egypt, the two celebrations became one. The name Pesach comes from *pasach*, to "pass over" (as God "passed over" the houses of the Hebrews), and *matzah* came to mean the unleavened bread which represents the haste of our departure.

Passover has four aspects. It is seasonal, rejoicing in spring. It is historical, marking the "birthday" of the Jewish people. It is a festival of freedom. And it is a ritual of preparation for an ultimate redemption, of which our first redemption was a hint and a promise.³

KADESH: SANCTIFYING THE DAY

May the light of the candles we kindle together tonight bring radiance to all who still live in darkness. May this season, marking the deliverance of our people from Pharaoh, rouse us against anyone who keeps others in servitude. In gratitude for the freedom we enjoy, may we strive to bring about our own liberation and the liberation of all people everywhere. Lighting these candles, we create the sacred space of the Festival of Freedom; we sanctify the coming-together of our community.

ברוך אתה, יי, אלהינו רוח העולם
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של יום טוב.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam,
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Yom Tov.*

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Breath of Life,
who sanctifies us with your commandment
to kindle the holiday lights.



[Woodcut by Yaron Livay]

FIRST CUP OF WINE

Tonight we drink four cups of wine. Why four? Some say the cups represent our matriarchs—Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah—whose virtue caused God to liberate us from slavery. Another interpretation is that the cups represent the Kabbalists' four worlds (physicality, emotions, thought, and essence). Still a third interpretation is that the cups represent the four promises of liberation God makes in the Torah: I will bring you out, I will deliver you, I will redeem you, I will take you to be my people. (Exodus 6:6-7) The four promises, in turn, have been interpreted as four stages on the path of liberation: becoming aware of oppression, opposing oppression, imagining alternatives, and accepting responsibility to act.

This first cup of wine reminds us of God's first declaration: *V'hotzaiti* —“I will bring you out from the oppression...”

ברוך אתה, יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

[After the blessing, drink a sip or the whole glass, however you prefer, and then refill.]

KIDDUSH

Anyone who wishes may chant the kiddush in Hebrew.

ברך אתה, יי, אלהנו מלך האולם, אשר בחר בנו מכל עם
ורוממנו מכל לשון וקדשנו במצותיו.
ותתן לנו יי אלהינו, באהבה מועדים לשמחה, חגים וזמנים לששון,
את יום חג המצות הזה, זמן חרותינו, מקרא קדש, זכר לציאת מצרים.
כי בנו בחרת, ואותנו קדשת, מכל העמים.
ומועדי קדשך, בשמחה ובששון הנחלתנו.
ברך אתה, יי, מקדש ישראל והזמנים.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, asher bakhhar banu mikol am,
v'rom'manu mikol lashon, v'kidshanu b'mitzvotav.
Va-titen lanu Adonai eloheynu, b'ahavah mo'adim l'simkha, hagim u-z'manim l'sason,
et yom chag ha-matzot hazeh, z'man cheruteinu, mikra kodesh, zecher l'tziat mitzrayim.
Ki vanu vacharta, v'otanu kidashta, mikol ha'amim
u-moadim kadshekha v'simcha uv-sason hin-khal-tanu.
Baruch atah, Adonai, m'kadesh Yisrael v'hazmanim.*



[Woodcut by Yaron Livay]

We read together in English:

We praise You, Sovereign of Existence! You have called us for service from among the peoples, and have hallowed our lives with commandments. In love You have given us festivals for rejoicing, seasons of celebration, including this Festival of *Matzot*, the time of our freedom, a commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt. Praised are You, our Eternal God, Who gave us this joyful heritage and Who sanctifies Israel and the Festivals.

A NOTE ON "ISRAEL"

Passover celebrates freedom, exemplified in the story of our Exodus from Egypt. That story leads to our entry into Israel—not exactly a simple redemption tale. Especially not now, as Israelis and Palestinians continue to shed blood in pursuit of its ownership.

In light of that situation, some may have complicated feelings about identifying with Israel. But "Israel" doesn't refer only to the Land. "Israel" is the name which was given to Jacob after he spent the night wrestling with an angel of God. Therefore "the people Israel" can be interpreted as "people who take on the holy obligation of engaging with the divine."

PREPARATIONS

As Passover approaches, we go through our homes and discard the hametz, literally, food which is leavened (from the Hebrew *l'chimutz*, to sour or ferment). This process is symbolic of a spiritual house-cleaning: the opportunity to discard the puffery of ego in ourselves and our communities.

Spring Cleaning Ritual on the Eve of the Full Moon Nisan

Removing the Hametz
In the month of nisan
with the death of winter
and the coming of spring
our ancient mothers
cleaned out their houses.

They gathered brooms, mops, brushes,
rags, stones, and lime
they washed down walls
swept floors
beat rugs
scoured pots
changed over all the dishes in the house.
They opened windows to the sun
hung lines for the airing out of blankets and covers
using fire
air
and water
in the cleaning.

In the month of nisan
before the parting seas
called them out of the old life
our ancient mothers
went down to the river
they went down to the river
to prepare their garments for the spring.

Hands pounded rock
voices drummed out song
there is new life inside us
Shekhinah
prepares for Her birth.

So we labor all women
cleaning and washing
now with our brothers
now with our sons
cleaning the inner house
through the moon of nisan.

On the eve of the full moon
we search our houses
by the light of a candle

for the last trace of winter
for the last crumbs grown stale inside us
for the last darkness still in our hearts.

Washing our hands
we say a blessing
over water...
We light a candle
and search in the listening silence
search the high places
and the low places
inside you
search the attic and the basement
the crevices and crannies
the corners of unused rooms.
Look in your pockets
and the pockets of those around you
for the traces of Mitzrayim.

Some use a feather
some use a knife
to enter the hard places.

Some destroy Hametz with fire
others throw it to the wind
others toss it to the sea.
Look deep for the Hametz
which still gives you pleasure
and cast it to the burning.

When the looking is done
we say:

All that rises up bitter
All that rises up prideful
All that rises up in old ways no longer fruitful
All Hametz still in my possession
but unknown to me
which I have not seen
nor disposed of
may it find common grave
with the dust of the earth
amen amen
selah . . .⁴

(—Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb)

Anyone who wishes to may now name a hametz that s/he would like to discard in the coming year.

URCHATZ: WASHING THE HANDS

The symbolic washing of the hands that we now perform recalls the story of Miriam's Well. Legend tells us that this well followed Miriam, sister of Moses, through the desert, sustaining the Jews in their wanderings. Filled with *mayimei chayyim*, waters of life, the well was a source of strength and renewal to all who drew from it. One drink from its waters was said to alert the heart, mind and soul, and make the meaning of Torah become more clear.⁵

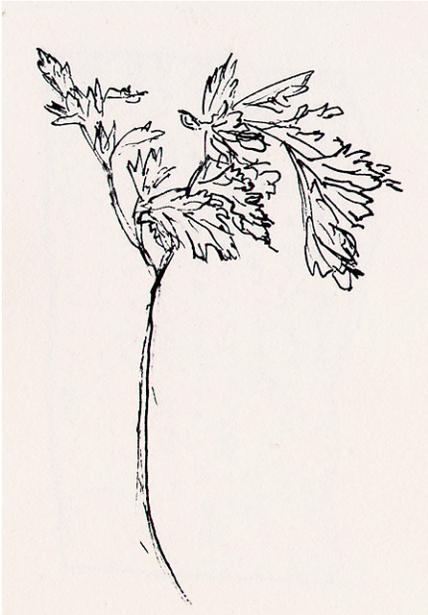
In Hebrew, *urchatz* means "washing" or "cleansing." In Aramaic, sister language to Hebrew, *urchatz* means "trusting." As we wash each others' hands, let us rejoice in this act of trust, and reflect on the sources of hope and trust we want to bring into the world for ourselves and each other.

When we wash hands again later, just before eating the festive meal, we will say blessings to sanctify that act. Because the feast is still a few pages away, this hand-washing is purely symbolic, and therefore the blessing is unspoken.

*Pass the bowl & pitcher around the table, each pouring a few drops of water onto her/his neighbor's hands.
Alternately, symbolize the uplifting of cleansed hands by raising hands into the air
as in sign-language applause.*

KARPAS: EAT A GREEN VEGETABLE

At this point in the seder, it is traditional to eat a green vegetable dipped in salt water. The green vegetable represents rebirth, renewal and growth; the salt water represents the tears of enslavement.



יוֹחַ הָעוֹלָם , בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאָדָמָה .
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה , יְיָ , אֱלֹהֵינוּ

*Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam,
borei p'ri ha'adamah.*

Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life,
creator of the fruit of the earth.

[Illustration by Allan Hollander]

YACHATZ: BREAK THE MIDDLE MATZAH

Open the door as a sign of hospitality; lift up matzah for all to see.

הא לחמא אניא, די אכלו אהבתנא,
בארעא דמצרים.

*Ha lakhma anya, di akhalu avhatana,
b'ara d'mitzrayim.*

כל דכפין ייתי וייכל,
כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח.

*Kol dikhfin yei-tei v'yeikhul,
kol ditzrikh yeitei v'yipsach.*

השתא הכא,
לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל.

*Hashata hakha,
l'shanah haba'ah b'arah d'yisrael.*

השתא עבדי,
לשנה הבאה בני חורין.

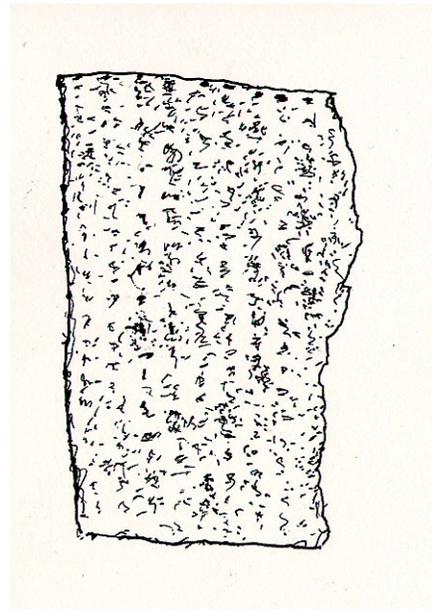
*Hashata avdei,
l'shanah haba'ah b'nei khorin.**

This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat; let all who are needy come and celebrate the Passover with us. Now we are here; next year may we be in the Land of Israel. Now we are slaves; next year may we be free.

Close the door. Break a middle matzah and wrap the larger half in a cloth or napkin. This piece of matzah is now called the "afikoman," and must be eaten before the seder concludes. Often it is hidden away by adults, for the children to find; the children may request a ransom before giving it back.

We break the matzah as we broke the chains of slavery, and as we break chains which bind us today. We will no more be fooled by movements which free only some of us, in which our so-called "freedom" rests upon the enslavement or embitterment of others.⁷

Traditionally, seders require three matzot. Why three? Three are our patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Three are the segments of the people Israel, *Kohen*, *Lev* and *Yisrael*. The three matzot could ever represent thesis, antithesis and synthesis: the two opposites in any polarized situation and the solution which bridges them.



[Illustration by Allan Hollander]

* The *Ha-Lakhma Anya* passage, inviting all who are hungry to come and eat, originated in Babylonia. Hence, this passage is in Aramaic, rather than Hebrew.

MAGGID: TELL THE STORY

Memory is not a static deposit; it is neither rules nor happenings that confront us unchanging. Jews continually re-remember; we retell and recast our past in light of changing communal experience and changing communal values.

Maggid, the Hebrew word for “story,” is at the root of the word *haggadah*. We are commanded to tell the story of the Exodus as though each of us were personally liberated from Egypt. Hasidic tradition holds that not only did God speak the universe into being in the time before time, but God continues to speak us into existence even now. In re-telling the story of the Exodus, we speak ourselves into our communal past.

A STORY ABOUT STORIES

When the founder of modern Hasidism, the Baal Shem Tov, saw misfortune threatening the Jews, it was his custom to go into a certain part of the forest to meditate. There he would light a special fire, say a special prayer, and the trouble would be averted.

Later, when his disciple, the Rabbi Maggid of Mezritch, had occasion for the same reason to intercede with heaven, he would go to the same place in the forest and say: “Master of the Universe, listen! I cannot light the fire, but I know the place and I can say the prayer.”

Still later, Rabbi Moshe-Leib of Sasov, in order to save the Jewish people, would go into the forest and say: “I cannot light the fire, I do not know the prayer, but I know the place.”

Then it fell to Rabbi Israel of Rizhyn to overcome misfortune. Sitting in his house, his head in his hands, he spoke to God: “I am unable to light the fire and I do not know the prayer; I cannot even find the place in the forest. All I can do is tell the story, and this must be sufficient.” And it was sufficient.⁹

THE QUESTIONS

It is traditional for the youngest person at a seder to ask four questions. (It’s actually one question with four answers.) We know the question, and we know the answers, but we ask anyway because there is always something to learn. No matter how “wise” we become, we must remember to question.

The youngest child (in years, or “at heart”) chants the Four Questions; then we read them aloud in English.

Mah Nishtanah-The Four Questions

Israeli tune

Voice

Mah nish-ta-nah ha-lai-lah ha-zeh mi-kol-ha-lei-
 lot, mi-kol-ha-lei-lot, She-b'chol ha-lei-lot
 a-nu och-lin cha-meitz-oo-ma-tzah, cha-meitz-oo-ma-
 tzah, ha-lai-lah ha-zeh, ha-lai-lah ha-zeh ku-lo-ma-
 tzah- ha-lai-la ha-zeh, ha-lai-la ha-zeh ku-
 lo-ma-tzah.

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?
 שבכל הלילות, אנו אוכלין המין ומצה; הלילה הזה, כלו מצה.
 שבכל הלילות, אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות; הלילה הזה, מרור.
 שבכל הלילות, אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת; הלילה הזה, שתי פעמים.
 שבכל הלילות, אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין; הלילה הזה, כלנו מסבין.

Mah nishtanah halaila hazeh mikol halaylot?

Shebakhlot halaylot anu okhleen khamaytz u'matzah, halaila hazeh kulo matzah.

Shebakhlot halaylot anu okhleen sh'ahr y'rakot, halaila hazeh maror.

Shebakhlot halaylot ayn anu matbeeelen afeilu pa'am akhat, halaila hazeh sh'tay f'ameem.

Shebakhlot halaylot anu okh'leen beyn yoshveen u'vayn m'subeen, halaila hazeh kulanu m'subeen.

Why is tonight different from all other nights?

1.

On all other nights we may eat either leavened bread or matzah; tonight, only matzah, that we may recall the unleavened bread our ancestors baked in haste when they left slavery.

2.

On all other nights we need not taste bitterness; tonight, we eat bitter herbs, that we may recall the suffering of slavery.

3.

On all other nights we needn't dip our food in condiments even once; tonight we dip twice, in saltwater to remember our tears when we were enslaved, and in haroset to remember the mortar and the bricks which we made.

4.

On all other nights we eat sitting up; tonight, we recline, to remind ourselves to savor our liberation.

...and 5.

In addition to the Four Questions, tonight we ask ourselves a fifth:

We are commanded to celebrate as if each one of us were personally liberated from Egypt. In the next year, how do you hope to bring yourself closer to your place of freedom?

Anyone who wishes to may answer the Fifth Question.

Passover Remembered: A Mandate for Ministry

Pack nothing. Bring only your determination to serve and your willingness to be free.

Don't wait for the bread to rise. Take nourishment for your journey but eat standing, be ready to move at a moment's notice.

Do not hesitate to leave your old ways behind: fear, silence, submission.

Only surrender to the need of the time: to do justice and walk humbly with your God.

Do not take time to explain to the neighbors. Tell only a few trusted friends & family members.

Then begin quickly, before you have time to sink back into the old slavery.

Set out in the dark. I will send fire to warm and encourage you. I will be with you in the fire and I will be with you in the cloud.

You will learn to eat new food and find refuge in new places. I will give you dreams in the desert to guide you safely to that place you have not seen.

The stories you tell one another around the fires in the dark will make you strong and wise.

Outsiders will attack you, and some who follow you; and at times you will get weary and turn on one another from fear and fatigue and forgetfulness.

You have been preparing for this for hundreds of years. I am sending you into the wilderness to make a new way and to learn my ways more deeply.

Some of you will be so changed by weathers and wanderings that even your closest friends will have to learn your features as though for the first time.

Some of you will not change at all. Some of you will be abandoned by your dearest loves and misunderstood by those who have known you since birth and feel abandoned by you.

Some will find new friendships in unlikely places, and old friends as faithful and true as the pillar of God's flame.

Sing songs as you go, and hold close together. You may at times grow confused and lose your way.

Continue to call each other by the names I've given you, to help remember who you are.

You will get where you're going by remembering who you are.

Touch each other and keep telling the stories.

Make maps as you go, remembering the way back from before you were born.

So you will be only the first of many waves of deliverance on these desert seas. It is the first of many beginnings.

Remain true to this story.

Pass on the whole story.

Do not go back.

I am with you now and I am waiting for you.

(—Alla Bozarth-Campbell)

ONCE WERE SLAVES

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים, ויציאנו יי אל הינו משם
ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה...

*Avadim hayyinu l'far'oh b'mitzrayim, v'yotzi-ehnu Adonai Eloheynu mi-sham
b'yad khazakah u'vizro'a n'tuyah...*

We were slaves to a Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Eternal led us out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Had not the Holy One led our ancestors out of Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would still be enslaved.

Therefore, even if all of us were wise, all-discerning, scholars, sages and learned in Torah, it would still be our duty to tell the story of the Exodus.

Avadim Hayinu

traditional

Voice

A - va dim ha yi nu ha yi nu. A ta b' nei cho rin b' nei cho rin.
A va dim ha yi nu, a - ta, a ta, b' nei cho rin. A - va dim
ha yi nu, a ta a ta b' nei cho rin b' nei cho rin.

“Avadim hayinu; ata b’nei chorin. We were slaves, but now we are free.” Is this true? Though we no longer labor under Pharaoh’s overseers, we may still be enslaved—now in subtler ways, harder to eradicate. Do we enslave ourselves to our jobs? To our expectations? To the expectations of others? To our fears?

Tonight we celebrate our liberation from Egypt—in Hebrew, *Mitzrayim*, literally “the narrow place.” But narrow places exist in more ways than one. Let this holiday make us mindful of internal bondage which, despite outward freedom, keeps us enslaved.

This year, let our celebration of Passover stir us to shake off these chains. Our liberation is in our own hands.

Let those who wish speak out loud something to which they have felt enslaved.

THE FOUR CHILDREN

Four times the Torah bids us tell our children about the Exodus from Egypt. Four times the Torah repeats: "And you shall tell your child on that day..." From this, our tradition infers that there are four kinds of children.

The Wise One says: "What is the meaning of the rules, laws and practices which God has commanded us to observe?"

You shall tell him the story of the Exodus and shall teach him Torah, midrash and commentary, down to the last detail.

The Wicked One says: "What is the meaning of this service to you?"

You shall tell her "I do this because of the wonderful things which God did for me when God brought me out of Egypt." You shall say "for me," not "for us," because in asking what the service means "to you" she has made it clear that she does not consider herself a part of the community for whom the ritual has meaning.

The Simple One asks, "What is this?"

You shall tell him of the deliverance from the house of bondage.

The One Who Does Not Know How To Question, for her you must open the way.*



[Woodcut by Yaron Livay]

* In the original Hebrew, the word for "you," *ah*, is feminine, suggesting that it is the mother who should teach this important lesson.

THE BALLAD OF THE FOUR SONS

(sung to the tune of "Clementine")

Said the father to the children
"At the Seder you will dine,
You will eat your fill of matzoh,
You will drink four cups of wine."

Now this father had no daughters,
But his sons they numbered four,
One was wise, and one was wicked,
One was simple and a bore.

And the fourth was sweet and winsome,
He was young and he was small,
While his brothers asked the questions,
He could scarcely speak at all.

Said the wise one to his father
"Would you please explain the laws.
Of the customs of the Seder
Will you please explain the cause?"

And the father proudly answered
"As our fathers ate in speed,
Ate the Pascal lamb 'ere midnight,
And from slavery were freed,"

"So we follow their example,
And 'ere midnight must complete,
All the Seder, and we should not
After twelve remain to eat."

Then did sneer the son so wicked,
"What does all this mean to you?"
And the father's voice was bitter
As his grief and anger grew.

"If yourself you don't consider,
As a son of Israel
Then for you this has no meaning,
You could be a slave as well!"

Then the simple son said softly,
"What is this?" and quietly
The good father told his offspring
"We were freed from slavery."

But the youngest son was silent,
For he could not speak at all,
His bright eyes were bright with wonder
As his father told him all.

Now, dear people, heed the lesson
And remember evermore,
What the father told his children
Told his sons who numbered four!



A STORY ABOUT SEDERS

In the traditional haggadah, without introduction or explanation, the following account is related:

A tale is told of five rabbis: Akiba, Yehoshua, Eliezer ben Azarya, Eliezer, and Tarfon, who were holding a seder in the town of B'nei Brak, and talked about Pesach until dawn broke, when their students had to interrupt them saying, "Rabbis, it is morning and time to recite the morning *shema!*"

Many questions have arisen about this snippet of text. What were these rabbis doing in B'nei Brak, which was the hometown of Rabbi Akiva only? Why didn't their students join them in celebrating the seder? Why didn't the rabbis themselves notice the rising of the sun?

Context is everything. This story takes place during the rule of the Roman emperor Hadrian, who ordered that the Temple be moved so he could put a temple to Jupiter on the Temple Mount. In the year 123 of the Common Era, a guerilla insurgency began, which resulted in a crack-down by the Roman authorities.

B'nei Brak was the headquarters of the rebellion against Roman occupation, a rebellion of which Rabbi Akiva was a leader. Because of rebel activities, the Roman authorities had forbidden gatherings of Jews, on pain of death. The seder described in this passage was used not only as a chance to discuss the liberation from Egypt—but also to plan a strategy of resistance against Roman occupation. The students were standing guard, ready to caution the rabbis to disband at daybreak, lest they be caught.

This tale may be read as an encouragement to become so joyfully immersed in the seder that we don't notice the passing of time...and it may also be read as a story of how one liberation begets another. Celebrating our freedom from servitude can be a radical act. It was Rabbi Akiva, after all, who famously answered the query, "Which is better, study or action?" with the response, "Study—if it leads to action."

ON MOSES

Moses does not appear in traditional haggadot, for fear that if Moses' role were lauded, we would venerate him like a saint. In this haggadah, however, Moses *does* appear.

Why? Because in fulfilling the mitzvah of hospitality, we welcome strangers at our seder table, and we want them to know the whole story. And because we want to remember the whole story for ourselves, too.

Just as midwives Shifrah and Puah shouldn't be edited out of our text, neither should Moses. We know he made mistakes. We respect him too much to make him superhuman. In fact, his greatness lies in his very humanity: he was a man like any other, and yet he helped God do wondrous things.

THE EXODUS: A STORY IN SEVEN SHORT CHAPTERS

1.

Once upon a time our people went into *galut*, exile, in the land of Egypt. During a famine our ancestor Jacob and his family fled to Egypt where food was plentiful. Through a complicated set of plot twists, his son Joseph had risen to high position in Pharaoh's court, and our people were well-respected and well-regarded, secure in the power structure of the time.

2.

Generations passed and our people remained in Egypt. As rulers came and went, a new Pharaoh ascended to the throne. He felt threatened by the strangers in his people's midst, and ordered our people enslaved.

In fear of rebellion, Pharaoh decreed that all Hebrew boy-children be killed. Two midwives named Shifrah and Puah defied his orders, claiming that "the Hebrew women are so hardy, they give birth before we arrive!" Through their courage, a boy survived.



[Woodcut by Yaron Livay]

Fearing for his safety, his family placed him in a basket and he floated down the Nile. He was found, and adopted, by Pharaoh's daughter, who named him Moshe because *min ha-mayim m'shitihu*, from the water she drew him forth. She hired his mother Yocheved as his wet-nurse. Thus he survived to adulthood, and was raised as Prince of Egypt.

3.

Although a child of privilege, as he grew he became aware of the slaves who worked in the brickyards of his father. When he saw an overseer mistreat a slave, he struck the overseer and killed him. Fearing retribution, he set out across the Sinai alone.

God spoke to him from a burning bush, which though it flamed was not consumed. The Voice called him to lead the Hebrew people to freedom. Moses argued with God, pleading inadequacy, but God disagreed. Sometimes our responsibilities choose us.

4.

Moses returned to Egypt and went to Pharaoh to argue the injustice of slavery. He gave Pharaoh a mandate which resounds through history: Let my people go.

Pharaoh refused, and Moses warned him that Mighty God would strike the Egyptian people. These threats were not idle: ten terrible plagues were unleashed upon the Egyptians. Only when his nation lay in ruins did Pharaoh agree to our liberation.

5.

Fearful that Pharaoh would change his mind, our people fled, not waiting for their bread dough to rise. (For this reason we eat unleavened bread as we take part in their journey.) Our people did not leave Egypt alone; a “mixed multitude” went with them. From this we learn that liberation is not for us alone, but for all the nations of the earth.

Even Pharaoh’s daughter came with us, and traded her old title (*bat-Pharaoh*, daughter of Pharaoh) for the name Batya, “daughter of God.”

6.

Pharaoh's army followed us to the Sea of Reeds. We plunged into the waters. Only when we had gone as far as we could did the waters part for us. We mourn, even now, that Pharaoh's army drowned: our liberation is bittersweet because people died in our pursuit.

7.

To this day we relive our liberation, that we may not become complacent, that we may always rejoice in our freedom.



[Woodcut by Yaron Livay]

There was a time when you were not a slave, remember. You walked alone, full of laughter, you bathed bare-bellied. You say you have lost all recollection of it; remember. . . you say there are no words to describe it, you say it does not exist. But remember. Make an effort to remember. Or, failing that, invent. (–Monique Wittig)

There Is A Man Come Into Egyp

Dm *G*
There is a man come into Egypt,
Dm *C* *Dm*
And Moses is his name.
Dm *G*
When he saw the grief upon us,
Dm *G* *A*
In his heart there burned a flame—
Dm *G* *C* *A*
In his heart there burned a flame, oh, Lord,
Dm *G* *A*
In his heart there burned a flame.
Dm *G*
When he saw the grief upon us,
Dm *C* *Dm*
In his heart there burned a flame.

There is a man come into Egypt;
His eyes are full of light,
Like the sun come up in Egypt,
Come to drive away the night—
Come to drive away the night, oh, Lord,
Come to drive away the night,
Like the sun come up in Egypt,
Come to drive away the night.

There is a man come into Egypt;
He's come for you and me.
On his lips a word is singing,
And the word is "liberty."
And the word is 'liberty,' oh, Lord;
And the word is 'liberty.'
On his lips a word is singing, and the word is "liberty."

There is a man come into Egypt,
To stir the souls of men.
We will follow him to freedom,
And never wear those chains again—
Never wear those chains again, oh, Lord,
Never wear those chains again.
We will follow him to freedom,
And never wear those chains again.

(—Peter, Paul & Mary)



Freedom. It isn't once, to walk out
under the Milky Way, feeling the rivers
of light, the fields of dark—
freedom is daily, prose-bound, routine
remembering. Putting together, inch by inch
the starry worlds. From all the lost collections.

(—Adrienne Rich¹⁰)

THE TEN PLAGUES

Midrash teaches that, while watching the Egyptians succumb to the ten plagues, the angels broke into songs of jubilation. God rebuked them, saying “My creatures are perishing, and you sing praises?”

As we recite each plague, we spill a drop of wine—symbol of joy—from our cups. Our joy in our liberation will always be tarnished by the pain visited upon the Egyptians.

דם	<i>Dam</i>	Blood
צפרדע	<i>Tzfarde'ah</i>	Frogs
כנים	<i>Kinim</i>	Lice
ערוב	<i>Arov</i>	Insect swarms
דבר	<i>Dever</i>	Cattle plague
שכין	<i>Sh'chin</i>	Boils
ברד	<i>Barad</i>	Hail
ארבה	<i>Arbeh</i>	Locusts
חשך	<i>Choshech</i>	Darkness
מכת בכורות	<i>Makat B'chorot</i>	Death of the First-Born

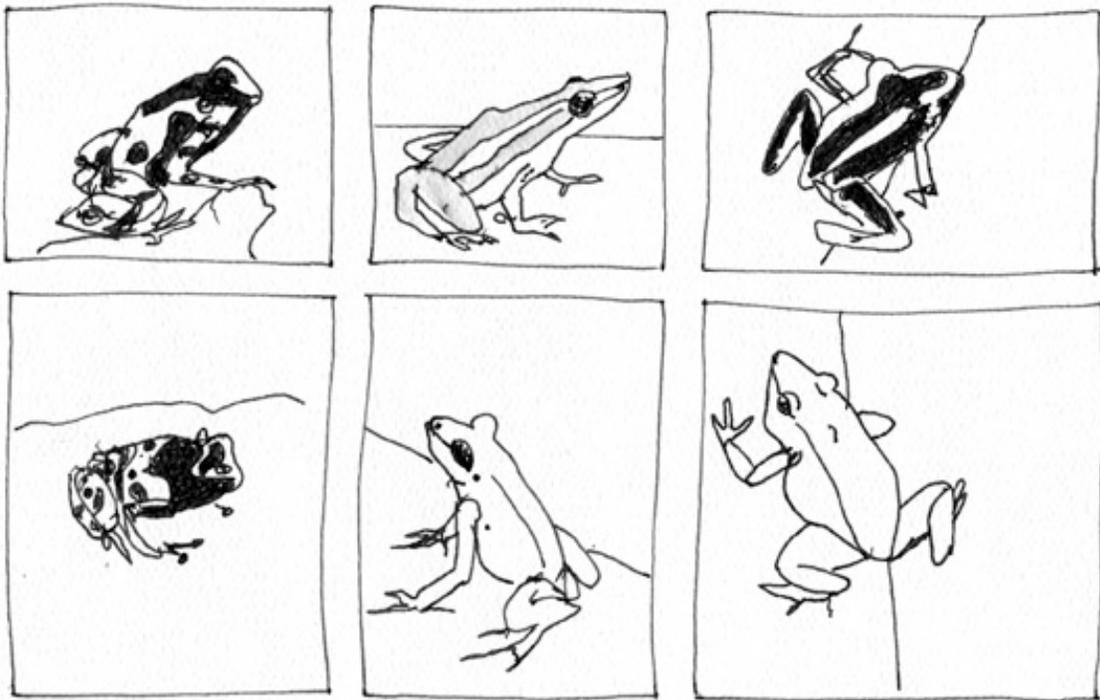
Today's world holds plagues as well. Let us spill drops of wine as we recite:

Apathy in the face of evil
Brutal torture of the helpless
Cruel mockery of the old and the weak
Despair of human goodness
Envy of the joy of others
Falsehood and deception corroding our faith
Greedy theft of earth's resources
Hatred of learning and culture
Instigation of war and aggression
Justice delayed, justice denied, justice mocked...¹¹

Shekhinah, soften our hearts and the hearts of our enemies. Help us to dream new paths to freedom, so that the next sea-opening is not also a drowning; so that our singing is never again their wailing. So that our freedom leaves no one orphaned, childless, gasping for air.¹²

THE FROG SONG

One morning when Pharaoh awoke in his bed
There were frogs on his bed and frogs on his head
Frogs on his nose and frogs on his toes
Frogs here!
Frogs there!
Frogs just jumping everywhere!



[Illustration Alison Kent]

DAYENU: IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH

What does this mean, "It would have been enough"? Surely no one of these would indeed have been enough for us. *Dayenu* means to celebrate each step toward freedom *as if* it were enough, then to start out on the next step. It means that if we reject each step because it is not the whole liberation, we will never be able to achieve the whole liberation. It means to sing each verse as if it were the whole song—and then sing the next verse.¹³

Had God:

Brought us out of Egypt and not divided the sea for us—*Dayenu*
 Divided the sea and not permitted us to cross on dry land—*Dayenu*
 Permitted us to cross on dry land and not sustained us for forty years in the desert—*Dayenu*
 Sustained us for forty years in the desert and not fed us with manna—*Dayenu*
 Fed us with manna and not given us the Sabbath—*Dayenu*
 Given us the Sabbath and not brought us to Mount Sinai—*Dayenu*
 Brought us to Mount Sinai and not given us the Torah—*Dayenu*
 Given us the Torah and not led us into the land of Israel—*Dayenu*
 Led us into the land of Israel and not built for us the Temple—*Dayenu*
 Built for us the Temple and not sent us prophets of truth—*Dayenu*
 Sent us prophets of truth and not made us a holy people—*Dayenu*
 For all these, alone and together, we say—*Dayenu!*¹⁴


 DAYEINU
 



I - lu ho-tzi ho - tzi - a - nu, ho - tzi a - nu mi - mitz - ra - yim,
 ho - tzi - a - nu mi - mitz - ra - yim da - yei - nu.
 (Chorus) Da - da - yei - nu, da - da - yei - nu, da - da - yei - nu, da -
 yei - nu da - yei - nu da - yei - nu. yei - nu da - yei - nu.

[TRANSLATION: Had God freed us from the Egyptians, & not wrought judgement upon them, dayenu!]

*Ilu asah va-tem s'fatim,
V'lo asah v'eloheyhem,
Dayenu!*

*Ilu asah v'eloheyhem,
V'lo harag et b'choreichem,
Dayenu!*

*Ilu harag et b'choreichem,
V'lo natan lanu et mamonom,
Dayenu!*

*Ilu natan lanu et mamonom,
V'lo kara lanu et hayam,
Dayenu!*

*Ilu kara lanu et hayam,
V'lo he'eviranu b'tocho b'charavah,
Dayenu!*

*Ilu he'eviranu b'tocho b'charavah,
V'lo sika tzarkenu b'tocho,
Dayenu!*

*Ilu sika tzarkenu b'tocho,
V'lo sipek tzarkenu bamidbar arba'im shanah,
Dayenu!*

*Ilu sipek tzarkenu bamidbar arba'im shanah,
V'lo he'echilanu et haman,
Dayenu!*

*Ilu he'echilanu et haman,
V'lo natan lanu et hashabbat,
Dayenu!*

*Ilu natan lanu et hashabbat,
V'lo kerbanu lifnei har Sinai,
Dayenu!*

*Ilu kerbanu lifnei har Sinai,
V'lo natan lanu et haTorah,
Dayenu!*

Had God wrought judgement upon the Egyptians, and not also on their gods, Dayenu!

Had God wrought judgement on their gods, and not smitten their firstborn, Dayenu!

Had God smitten their firstborn, and not given us their treasure, Dayenu!

Had God given us their treasure, and not divided the Red Sea for us, Dayenu!

Had God divided the Red Sea for us, and not let us pass through it dry-shod, Dayenu!

Had God let us pass through it dry-shod, and not drowned our oppressors in it, Dayenu!

Had God drowned our oppressors in it, and not sustained us in the wilderness for forty years, Dayenu!

Had God sustained us in the wilderness for forty years, and not fed us with manna, Dayenu!

Had God fed us with manna, and not given us Shabbat, Dayenu!

Had God given us Shabbat, And not brought us to Mt. Sinai, Dayenu!

Had God brought us to Mt. Sinai, And not given us the Torah, Dayenu!

SECOND CUP OF WINE

The second cup of wine represents God's second declaration of redemption: *V'hitzalti*— "I will free you from slavery."

Tonight we may bless wine using several variations on the traditional Hebrew, reflecting different ways of conceptualizing the divine. Choose one of the following two blessings for the second cup of wine: a feminine version, or the traditional.

ברוכה את, שכינה, רוח העולם, בוראת פרי הגפן.

Brucha At, Shekhinah, ruach ha-olam, boreit pri hagafen.

Blessed are you, Shekhinah, Breath of Life, creator of the fruit of the vine.

ברוך אתה, יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

SIGNS & SYMBOLS

It is written: she who has not explained the following symbols has not fulfilled her duty.

The *Maror*, bitter herb or horseradish, represents the bitterness of slavery.

The *Haroset*, a mixture of apples and nuts and wine, represents the bricks and mortar we made in ancient times, and the new structures we are beginning to build in our lives today.

The *Lamb Shank* represents the sacrifices we have made to survive.* Before the tenth plague, our people slaughtered lambs and marked our doors with blood: because of this marking, the Angel of Death passed over our homes and our first-born were spared.

The *Egg* symbolizes creative power, our rebirth.

The *Parsley* represents the new growth of spring, for we are earthy, rooted beings, connected to the Earth and nourished by our connection.

Salt water of our tears, both then and now.

Matzot of our unleavened hearts: may this Seder enable our spirits to rise.¹⁵

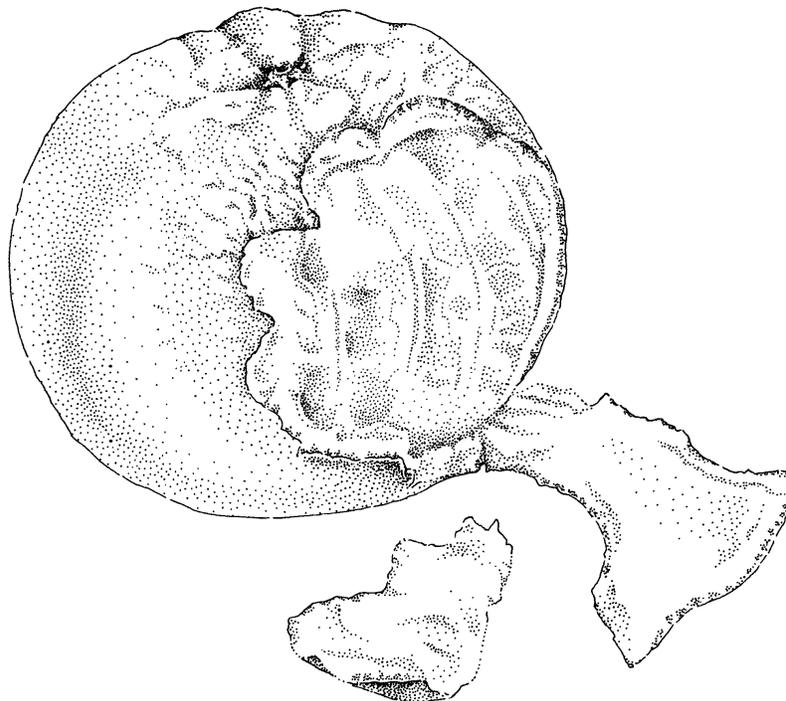
* *Pesach* was the name of the lamb-offering our ancestors brought to the Temple in antiquity at this season. It relates to the word *pasach*, passed-over, as the Angel of Death passed-over our homes during the Tenth Plague; the name of tonight's festival derives from this.

And what about the orange?

In the early 1980s, Susannah Heschel attended a feminist seder at which bread was placed on the seder plate, as a reaction to a rebbetzin who had claimed lesbians had no more place in Judaism than bread crusts have at a seder.

“Bread on the seder plate...renders everything *chametz*, and its symbolism suggests that being lesbian is transgressive, violating Judaism,” Heschel writes. “I felt that an orange was suggestive of something else: the fruitfulness for all Jews when lesbians and gay men are contributing and active members of Jewish life.”¹⁶ To speak of slavery and long for liberation, she says, “demands that we acknowledge our own complicity in enslaving others.”¹⁷

One additional item on our seder plate, therefore, is an *orange*, representing the radical feminist notion that there is—there must be—a place at the table for all of us, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. As Jews we constantly re-create ourselves; our symbol is a fruit that carries within the seeds of its own rebirth.



[Illustration by Emily Cooper]

And the olive?

The final item on our seder plate is an olive. After the Flood, Noah’s dove brought back an olive branch as a sign that the earth was habitable once again. Today ancient olive groves are destroyed by violence, making a powerful symbol of peace into a casualty of war.

We keep an olive on our seder plate as an embodied prayer for peace, in the Middle East and everywhere where war destroys lives, hopes, and the freedoms we celebrate tonight.

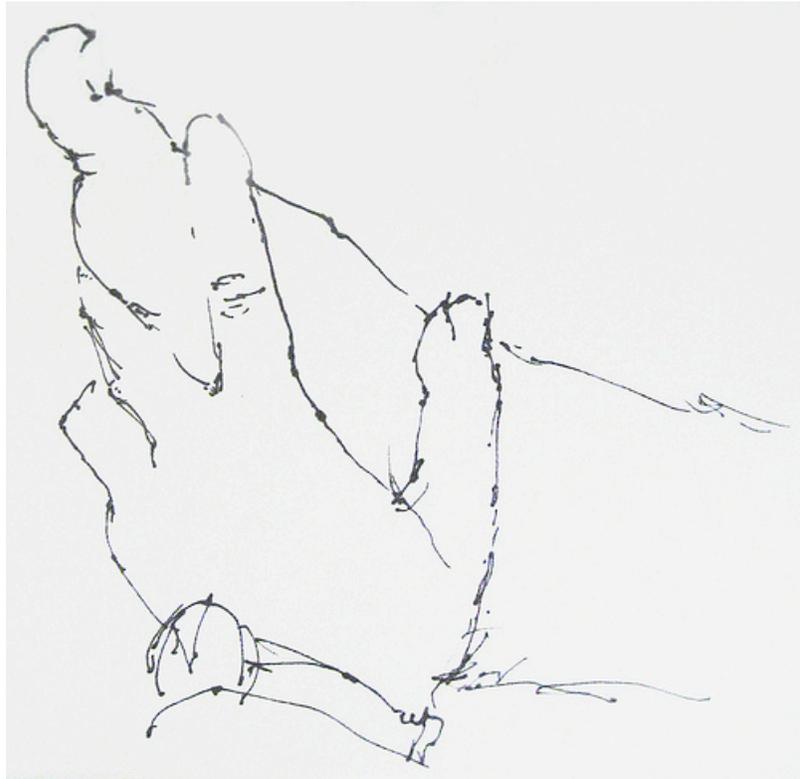
RACHATZ: WASH THE HANDS

Before eating, we wash our hands, thanking God for the commandment which impels us to mindfulness. What does washing our hands tell us? That we can become clean; that our bodies are sacred and deserving of care. Why wash hands, and not feet, as our Middle Eastern ancestors did? Not just because it's impractical for seder guests to doff shoes, but because hands are the instruments with which we work in the world. It is our hands which plant and write, which caress and create—and also our hands which strike and poison and smash. We wash our hands not to absolve ourselves of responsibility, but to affirm the need to make our hands holy. At this season of freedom and rebirth, we consecrate our hands to the task of building freedom for all who suffer.

ברוך אתה, יי, אלהינו רוח העולם
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על נטילת ידים.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al netilat yadayim.

Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life, who sanctifies us with the commandment to wash our hands.



[Illustration by Beth Budwig]

Season of the Egg

It's the season of the egg,
older than any named creed:
that perfect shape that signs
a pregnant woman, the moon

slightly compressed, as if
a great serpent held it
in its opened mouth
to carry or eat.

Eggs smell funky
slipped from under
the hen's breast, hotter
than our blood.

Christians paint them;
we roast them. The only
time in the whirling year
I ever eat roasted egg:

a campfire flavor, bit
burnt, reeking of haste
like the matzoh there was no
time to let rise.

We like our eggs honest,
brown. Outside my window
the chickadees choose partners
to lay tiny round eggs.

The egg of the world cracks
raggedly open and the wet
scraggly chick of northern
spring emerges gaunt, dripping.

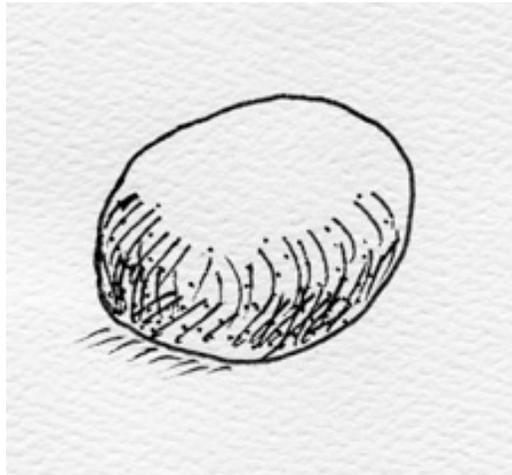
Soon it will preen its green
feathers, soon it will grow
fat and strong, its wings
blue and binding.

Tonight we dip the egg in salt
water like bowls of tears.
Elijah comes with the fierce
early spring bringing prophecy

that cracks open the head
swollen with importance.
Every day there is more work
to do and stronger light.¹⁸

(—Marge Piercy)

It is customary in many households to eat a hardboiled egg at this time, representing the new life of springtime.



[Illustration by Allison Kent]

MOTZI/MATZAH: BLESS AND EAT

Why do we eat matzah? Because during the Exodus, our ancestors had no time to wait for dough to rise. So they improvised flat cakes without yeast, which could be baked and consumed in haste. The matzah reminds us that when the chance for liberation comes, we must seize it even if we do not feel ready—indeed, if we wait until we feel fully ready, we may never act at all.

ברוך אתה, יי, אל הינו רוח העולם
המוציא לחם מן-הארץ.

ברוך אתה, יי, אל הינו רוח העולם
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על אכילת מצה.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al achilat matzah.

Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life, who sanctifies us with the commandment to eat matzah.

Everyone eats a piece of matzah.

from **Imagine the Angels of Bread**

This is the year that squatters evict landlords,
gazing like admirals from the rail
of the roofdeck
or levitating hands in praise
of steam in the shower;
this is the year
that shawled refugees deport judges
who stare at the floor
and their swollen feet
as files are stamped
with their destination....
This is the year that those
who swim the border's undertow
and shiver in boxcars
are greeted with trumpets and drums
at the first railroad crossing
on the other side;
this is the year that the hands
pulling tomatoes from the vine
uproot the deed to the earth
that sprouts the vine....

This is the year that cockroaches
become extinct, that no doctor
finds a roach embedded
in the ear of an infant....
If the abolition of slave-manacles
began as a vision of hands without manacles,
then this is the year;
if the shutdown of extermination camps
began as imagination of a land
without barbed wire or the crematorium,
then this is the year;
if every rebellion begins with the idea
that conquerors on horseback
are not many-legged gods, that they too drown
if plunged in the river,
then this is the year.
So may every humiliated mouth,
teeth like desecrated headstones,
fill with the angels of bread.¹⁹

(—Martín Espada)

MAROR: BITTER HERB

Why do we eat maror? Maror represents the bitterness of bondage. Why do we eat haroset? It symbolizes the mortar for the bricks our ancestors laid in Egypt. Though it represents slave labor, haroset is sweet, reminding us that sometimes constriction or enslavement can be masked in familiar sweetness.

Eating the two together, we remind ourselves to be mindful of life with all its sweetness and bitterness, and to seek balance between the two.

ברוך אתה, יי, אלהינו רוח העולם
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על-אכילת מרור.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat maror.

Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life, who sanctifies us with the commandment to eat the bitter herb.

Everyone eats some maror and haroset.

In Hebrew, the word for oppression is *saval*; the word for patience or tolerance is *savlanut*. The Kotzker Rebbe teaches that the Holy Blessed One made it impossible for the Israelites to have *savlanut* for their *saval*, to tolerate their oppression. Losing their taste for victimhood was the first step toward liberation.

THE HAROSET SONG

Make haroset, chop chop chop
Apples, nuts, & cinnamon
Add some wine, it's lots of fun!
Make haroset, chop chop chop!

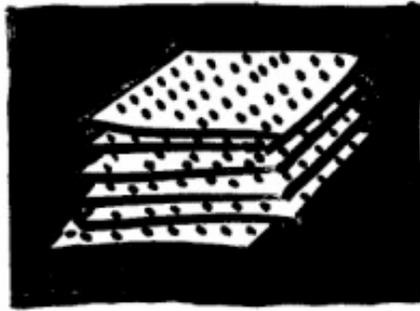
[Woodcut by Yaron Livay]



KORECH: HILLEL SANDWICH

The sage Hillel originated the tradition of eating matzah and maror together, combining the bread of liberation with a remembrance of the bitterness of slavery. In following his example, we create a physical representation of the holiday's central dialectical tension.

Everyone eats a Hillel Sandwich: maror between two pieces of matzah.



[Illustration by Yaron Livay]

SHULCHAN ORECH: THE FESTIVE MEAL

TZAFUN: AFIKOMAN

Find the afikoman and distribute it to all who are seated at the table.

When the Temple still stood in Jerusalem, it was customary to make an offering of a paschal lamb at this season. Now we eat the afikoman in memory of the offering.

Tzafun means “hidden,” and the afikoman is usually hidden for children to find. Why end the meal thus? Because we want the dinner to end with the taste of freedom in our mouths—thus the taste of matzah, rather than some unrelated sweet.

But this explains eating matzah late, not the charade of hiding it. The hiding works on two levels: it intrigues the kids—and it allows us to affirm our sense of the Hidden and Mysterious. On this theory, we hide the larger half of the broken matzah because we are affirming that there is more that is Hidden and Mysterious in the world than any information we can gather.²⁰

BARECH: BLESS THE MEAL

Here are several poems, readings, and songs which can be used, singly or all together, as our Birkat Hamazon, Grace After Meals.

Listen
with the night falling we are saying thank you
we are stopping on the bridges to bow from the railings
we are running out of the glass rooms
with our mouths full of food to look at the sky
and say thank you...²¹

(—W.S. Merwin)

Let us praise the Eternal, of Whose bounty we have partaken
and by Whose goodness we live.

On this Festival of Matzot, inspire us to goodness.
On this Festival of Freedom, make us a blessing.
On this Festival of Pesach, preserve us in life.

All-Merciful, You are our Source.
Sustain us with honorable work.
Make us worthy of the promise of a world that is yet to come.

May the One who blessed Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah,
bless this home, this table, and all assembled here;
and may all our loved ones share our blessing.

May the One who brings harmony into the spheres on high
bring peace to earth for all humanity.

Prayer After Eating

I have taken in the light
that quickened eye and leaf.
May my brain be bright with praise
of what I eat, in the brief blaze
of motion and of thought.
May I be worthy of my meat.²³

(—Wendell Berry)

From Your Abundance

(Sing to the tune of “Amazing Grace)

*Tzur mishelo achalnu,
Barechu emunai
Savanu v'hotarnu,
Kidvar Adonai.*

From Your abundance comes our food,
From Your delight, our wine
We've satisfied our hungers, God,
As in Your great design.

With love and thanks we bless Your name
And praise You with our song
May all on earth bless You, the One
To Whom we all belong.

[The Hebrew translates to: We have eaten from the rock, blessed be the Source; we are satisfied and blessed, according to the word of Adonai]

(—adapted from Naomi Steinberg)

May all be fed, may all be nourished, and may all be loved.

(Traditional post-meal blessing at Elat Chayyim)

HALLEL: PRAISE

The traditional Hallel consists of recitation of several psalms. In this haggadah, those psalms have been interspersed with contemporary readings and poetry. Feel free to use all, or only some, of what follows.

זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יי': נְגִילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בּוֹ.

Zeh hayom asah Adonai; nahgilah v'nismecha bo.

This is the day which God has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

FROM PSALM 113

O servants of God, give praise;
Praise the name of God.
Let the name of God be blessed
Now and forever.
From east to west
The name of God is praised...
God raises the poor from the dust,
Lifts up the needy from the refuse heap
To set them with the great,
With the great ones among God's people.

Concentrate on the differences between praising God on an empty stomach and a full stomach. How much easier it seems to call forth with the quick *hamotzi* when one is hungry and anxious to eat! And how much easier to forget the important *mitzvah* of praising the Holy One of Being when we are comfortable and sated...

We must find ways to split the roofs of our homes as we sing out in praise. We are redeemed; we are crossing the sea on dry land; we are free to serve God in full glory. Tonight we sing genuinely, knowing and feeling that truth...Tonight, let us bring our voices and rhythms to the praise of the Holy One of Blessing at our seder tables.²⁴

(—Lorel Zar-Kessler)

PSALM 114

When Israel went forth from Mitzrayim,
The house of Jacob from a people of strange speech,
Judah became God's holy one,
Israel, God's dominion.

The sea saw them and fled,
The Jordan ran backward,
Mountains skipped like rams,
Hills like sheep.

What alarmed you, O sea, that you fled,
Jordan, that you ran backward,
Mountains, that you skipped like rams,
Hills, like sheep?

Tremble, O earth, at the presence of Adonai,
At the presence of the God of Jacob,
Who turned the rock into a pool of water,
The flinty rock into a fountain.

Praise wet snow falling early

Praise wet snow
 falling early.
Praise the shadow
 my neighbor's chimney casts on the tile roof
even this gray October day that should, they say,
have been golden.
 Praise
the invisible sun burning beyond
 the white cold sky, giving us
light and the chimney's shadow.
Praise
god or the gods, the unknown,
that which imagined us, which stays
our hand,
our murderous hand,
 and gives us
still,
in the shadow of death,
 our daily life,
 and the dream still
of goodwill, of peace on earth.
Praise
flow and change, night and
the pulse of day.²⁵

(—Denise Levertov)

FROM PSALM 115

God is mindful of us.
God will bless us.
God will bless the house of Israel,
God will bless the house of Aaron;
God will bless those who live in holy awe,
Small and great alike...
May you be blessed by God,
Maker of heaven and earth!

Pied Beauty

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in a stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut falls, finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.²⁶

(—Gerard Manley Hopkins)

FROM PSALM 116

God is gracious and beneficent;
Our God is compassionate.
God protects the simple;
I was brought low and God saved me.
Be at rest, once again, my soul,
For God has been good to you...
O God, I am Your servant,
Your servant, child of your maidservant;
You have undone the cords that bound me.

נשמת כל-חי תתברך את שמך, יי אלהנו.

Nishmat kol chai titbarech et shimcha, Yahh eloheynu.

The breath of all life praises Your name, Yahh our God.

FROM PSALM 117

Hallelu et Adonai, kol goyim!

Shab'chu-hu kol ha-u-mim

Ki gavar aleynu chasdo

V'emet Adonai l'olam. Halleluyah!

Praise God, all nations,
Laud God, all peoples
For great is God's loyal love
And eternal is God's truth. Hallelu Yah!

הללו את יי כל גוים.

שבחוהו כל האמים

כי גבר עלינו חסדו

ואמת יי לעולם הללויה

Praise God

Who brings us forth from the waters
Who speaks to us from the flame
Who frees us from working the earth
Who breathes in us and through us

Who destroys the power-hungry
Who cries when creation is bent
Who gives us the courage to leap
Who parts the waters before we drown

Who births us from the Narrow Places
Who teaches us in the wilderness
Whose words aim us toward wisdom
Who fills every moment of our lives

Who endures beyond limitation
Who gathers us in when we sleep
Who wants us to heal the broken world
Whose rejoicing will move the heavens!

FROM PSALM 136

הודו ליי כי טוב : כי לעולם חסדו.

Hodu l'Adonai kee tov: kee l'olam chasdo.

הודו לאלהי האלהים : כי לעולם חסדו.

Hodu l'elohei ha-elohim: kee l'olam chasdo.

הודו לאדני האדנים : כי לעולם חסדו.

Hodu l'adonei ha-adonim: kee l'olam chasdo.

(We read responsively:)

Give thanks to God, Who is good:

Whose lovingkindness is everlasting.

Give thanks to the supreme God,

Whose lovingkindness is everlasting.

Give thanks to the supreme Ruler,

Whose lovingkindness is everlasting.

Give thanks to God who alone performs great wonders

Whose wisdom made the heavens

Who spread the earth over the waters

Who made the heavenly lights, the sun to rule by day,
The moon and stars to rule by night:

God's lovingkindness is everlasting.

THIRD CUP OF WINE

The third cup of wine represents God's third declaration of redemption: *V'go'alti*—"I will liberate you with an outstretched arm..." Choose one of the following variations for blessing this third cup of wine, Marcia Falk's non-gendered variant or the traditional.

נברך את עין החיים, מצמיחת פרי הגפן.

N'varekh et ayn ha-chayyim, matzmichat pri hagafen.

Let us bless the source of life that ripens fruit on the vine.

ברוך אתה, יי, אל הינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

MIRIAM AND ELIJAH

Three thousand years ago, a farmer arose in the Middle East who challenged the ruling elite. In his passionate advocacy for common people, Elijah sparked a movement and created a legend which would inspire generations to come.

Elijah declared that he would return once each generation in the guise of someone poor or oppressed, coming to people's doors to see how he would be treated. Thus would he know whether or not humanity had become ready to participate in the dawn of the Messianic age. He is said to visit every seder, and sip there from his cup of wine.

Tonight we welcome two prophets: not only Elijah, but also Miriam, sister of Moses. Elijah is a symbol of messianic redemption at the end of time; Miriam, of redemption in our present lives.

Miriam's cup is filled with water, evoking her Well which followed the Israelites in the wilderness.

After the crossing of the Red Sea, Miriam sang to the Israelites a song. The words in the Torah are only the beginning:

Sing to God, for God has triumphed gloriously;
Horse and driver, God has hurled into the sea.

So the Rabbis asked: Why is the Song of Miriam only partially stated in the Torah? And in midrash is found the answer: the song is incomplete so that future generations will finish it. That is our task.²⁹

Open the door for Elijah and Miriam.

We raise Miriam's goblet and pray together:

You abound in blessings,
God, creator of the universe,
Who sustains us with
living water. May we, like
the children of Israel leaving
Egypt, be guarded and
nurtured and kept alive in the
wilderness, and may You give
us wisdom to understand that
the journey itself holds
the promise of redemption.
Amen.³⁰

We rise to sing "Eliahu Hanavi."

ELIYAHU HANAVI

Fm (Em) *C7(B7)* *Fm(Em)*
E - li - ya - hu ha - na - vi E - li - ya - hu

C7(B7) *A♭(G)* *B♭m(Am)*
ha - tish - bi Ey - li - ya - hu Ey - li - ya - hu

Fm(Em) *B♭m(Am)* *C7(B7)* *Fm(Em) Fine* *C7(B7)*
E - li - ya - hu ha - gil - a - di bim - hey - ra v' -

Fm(Em) *C7(B7)* *Fm(Em)* *C7(B7)*
ya - mey - nu ya - vo ey - ley - nu im Ma - shi - ah

Fm(Em) *C7(B7)* *Fm(Em) D.C. al Fine*
ben Da - vid im Ma - shi - ah ben Da - vid

(Translation: Elijah, the prophet; Elijah, the Tishbite; Elijah, the Gileadite! Come quickly in our days with the Messiah, descendant of David.)

We close the door and are seated.



"I have come to look forward to the opening of the door for an Elijah who is always a no-show, and I have come to believe that precisely by not appearing, that great prophet is showing us something we need to know. What does it mean that there is never anyone at the door? What if, for all practical purposes, no messiah can be counted on? Would that make any significant difference in the way we engage in the present human enterprise?"

—Harvey Cox³¹

COUNTING THE OMER

ספירת העמר

(Second through eighth nights only; for first-night seders, skip this page)

“Omer” means “measures.” When the Temple stood in Jerusalem, it was customary to bring harvest offerings three times a year, at Sukkot, Pesach, and Shavuot. Some say the tradition of Counting the Omer dates to those days. We measured the seven weeks between planting new barley and harvesting it; then offered a measure, in thanks, to our Source.

Now that few of us are barley farmers, and those who are can no longer offer sacrifices at the Temple, practices like counting the Omer must take on new meaning or risk becoming outdated husks of observance. Today we focus less on Shavuot’s harvest roots, and more on its continuing relevance as the anniversary of the day the Israelites accepted the teachings of Torah at Sinai. One midrash holds that we were all, in some mystical way, present at Sinai to forge a personal bond with the essence of the Word: that’s a day worth commemorating.

Shavuot is a holiday to anticipate joyfully. We count the Omer the way we count days to birthdays or vacations, eager for what’s coming.

Tonight we celebrate our freedom from slavery; in fifty days we will celebrate our acceptance of the Torah’s teachings. Counting the Omer reminds us that we are freed not only *from*, but also *toward*. Passover and Shavuot are linked stages on our collective journey to mature, thinking, engaged Jewishness: we must be free in order to accept the joyful responsibility of connecting with God and healing the world.

ברוך אתה, יי, אל הינו רוח העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו
אל ספירת העמר.

Baruch atah, Yahh, eloheinu ruach ha’olam, asher kidshanu b’mitzvotav v’tzivanu al s’firat ha’omer.

Blessed are you, Yahh, Breath of Life, who sanctifies us with the commandment to count the Omer.

היום יום אחד לעמר!

Hayom yom echad la’omer!

Today is the first day of the Omer!

[A second-night seder marks the first day of the Omer. A third-night seder marks the second day, yom sheyni. A fourth-night seder marks the third day, yom shlishi. And so on...]

FOURTH CUP OF WINE

The fourth cup of wine represents God's fourth declaration of redemption: *V'lakachti*—"I will claim you for me as a people, and I will be your God." Choose one of the following variations to bless this fourth cup of wine:

בהתסף להדור היום, מתיקות פרי הגפן מברכת.

B'hit-a-seif la-hi-dor ha-yom, m'ti-kut pri hagafen m'vo-rakhet.

Our coming together in celebration blesses the sweetness of the fruit of the vine.

ברוך אתה, יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

(OPTIONAL) FIFTH CUP OF WINE

Once the State of Israel was formed, it became traditional in many American homes to drink a fifth cup of wine in honor of its creation. Today many drink a fifth cup in hopes that the Israelis and Palestinians will be released from the bondage of hatred and violence; that the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael may live once again as brothers, not as enemies.

We could as easily dedicate our fifth cup to those currently enslaved in southern Sudan and Mauritania, or to the Tibetan people forbidden to practice their religion. Commanded to "love the stranger, for we were once strangers in the Land of Egypt," we could drink to the tragic memory of Abner Louima and Amadou Diallo, strangers on our shores.

Kabbalist Isaac Luria taught that, when the world was made, God's infinity was too great to be contained, and creation shattered. The world that we know consists of broken vessels, with sparks of God trapped inside. We bless this cup to remind us of our obligation to find the holy sparks in our broken world, and to fix what must be mended.

ברוך אתה, יי, אלהינו רוח העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.

Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life, creator of the fruit of the vine.

PRAYER CLOSING THE HALLEL

All Your works shall praise You, our Creator; the righteous will praise You in joyous song. We will thank, exalt, revere and sanctify You. It is good to give thanks to You, and fitting to sing praises to Your name, for You are Eternal from everlasting to everlasting.

NIRTZAH: CONCLUSION

Redemption Seemed As Close As The Kitchen Sink

We have reached the end of the seder. We have traveled through sacred time, making the journey from slavery to freedom. We have pushed the limits of our imaginations, embracing the idea that we, too, were slaves in Egypt, and we, too, will celebrate next year's seder in a Jerusalem filled with peace. We have savored the taste of a dry, humble cracker—at once the bread of poverty and the symbol of our redemption. Tonight, we have shared our table with prophets and let the voices of our ancestors mingle with our own songs of praise. And now, that intensity begins to fade away. We look around through tired eyes—there is wine spilled on the table, matzah crumbs cover the floor. It is time to do the dishes.

We are poised, right now, somewhere between Jerusalem and our kitchen sinks. The demands of the ordinary pull us away from the seder's extraordinary delights, and we are faced with the task of keeping the songs of freedom ringing in our ears. There is no easy way to do this; no simple formula can guide every

one of us. But each of us needs to reflect: What does it mean to say that God brought our ancestors out of Egypt? What does it mean to say that we, too, were slaves in that place? What are the consequences of these words? What kinds of responsibilities do they place on us? How do we walk away from this table and still keep the teachings of this evening close to our hearts? Tonight, let's turn away from platitudes and easy answers. Let's acknowledge how hard it is to keep the seder with us, how difficult it is to stay in touch with wonder, gratitude, and the call to justice.

Soon we will clear away the glasses and sweep up the crumbs. But sometime in the coming year, we may notice the smallest crumb of matzah stuck between the cracks in the floor. And if that happens, perhaps we will hold that crumb in our hands and be brought back to this moment, when redemption seemed as close as the kitchen sink.³²

(—Deborah Glanzberg-Krainin)

Tonight we have acknowledged our ancestors. We vow that we will not allow their stories, their experiences, their wisdom to fade. These are our legacy, which we will study and teach to our friends and children. The task of liberation is long, and it is work we ourselves must do.³³

As the Talmud tells us: "It is not incumbent upon us to finish the task, but neither may we refrain from beginning it."

ברוך אתה, יי, אלהינו רוח העולם, שהחינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

Baruch atah, Yahh, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh.

Blessed are you, Yahh, Breath of Life, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

Benedictio: May your trails be crooked, winding,
lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing
views. May your mountains rise into and above the
clouds. May your rivers flow without end, meandering
through pastoral valleys tinkling with bells, past
temples and castles and poets' towers into a dark
primeval forest where tigers belch and monkeys howl,
through miasmal and mysterious swamps and down
into a desert of red rock, blue mesas, domes and
pinnacles and grottoes of endless stone, and down
again into a deep vast ancient unknown chasm where
bars of sunlight blaze on profiled cliffs, where deer
walk across the white sand beaches, where storms
come and go as lightning clangs upon the high crags,
where something strange and more beautiful and more
full of wonder than your deepest dreams waits for
you—beyond that next turning of the canyon walls.
So long.³⁴

(—Edward Abbey)

Day After

The day after the seder,
reality shoves back in

like a football player
with lowered shoulder.

Dishes to wash:
the browned kugel pan,

chopping knives, the eggbeater
that whipped the whites

for Eppie's matzah balls,
the gravy boats that held

haroset, the glass bowls
encrusted with salt.

All day humming
another list: the Holy One,

Praised be He,
the angel, the butcher,

all the way down
to the fire, the water,

the stick, the dog,
the cat, the one lone kid.

(—Rachel Barenblat)

We bend our right knee, lift our right leg, place our right foot down, and straighten our leg. We bend our other knee, lift our leg, place our foot in front and straighten our leg. Thus we begin our journey from slavery into freedom. When we bend our knees, we are reminded to be flexible—to stretch our bodies and minds so that we can open our hearts. We shake off the bonds that hold us chained in place. When we are stuck and cannot move, we are enslaved. Redemption is rediscovering that each of us has the capacity to bend our spiritual knees and walk toward God, step by step, one step at a time.

(—Karyn Berger³⁵)

Standing on the parted shores of history
we still believe what we were taught
before ever we stood at Sinai's foot;

that wherever we go, it is eternally Egypt
that there is a better place, a promised land;
that the winding way to that promise passes through the wilderness

that there is no way to get from here to there
except by joining hands, marching
together.

(—adapted from Michael Welzer³⁶)

NEXT YEAR IN...

It is traditional to end a seder with *L'shanah ha-ba'ah b'Yerushalayim*—Next Year in Jerusalem! The call speaks to a feeling of exile which characterized the Jewish Diaspora for centuries. But now that the State of Israel exists, the call is different. What are the chances that we will all be in Jerusalem next year? Wouldn't we rather be together?

But the meaning of the word *Yerushalayim* shows the cry has a double meaning. The word's root can be read as *Ir Shalem* ("City of Wholeness") or *Ir Shalom* ("City of Peace"). Even if we don't perceive ourselves as being in *galut* (exile) from the literal Land of Israel, we are still in exile from the state of wholeness and unity which only connection with our Source can provide. Next year, wherever we are, may we be whole and at peace.

We read together:

And then all that has divided us will merge
And then compassion will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind
And then both men and women will be gentle
And then both women and men will be strong
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the earth
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.³⁷

(—Judy Chicago)

(Or, we sing the singable version:

And then, and then, both men and women will be gentle!
And then, and then, both women and men will be strong!
And then all will be so very rich and free
And everywhere will be called Eden once again!)

L'Shanah Ha-Ba'ah B'Yerushalayim!

SONGS

WHO KNOWS ONE?

*E-chad mi yo-day-ah?
E-chad ani yo-day-ah!
E-chad Elo-hey-nu
She-ba-sha-may-yim u-va-ar-etz.*

*Sh'nay-im mi yo-day-ah?
Sh'nay-im ani yo-day-ah!
Sh'nay lu-chot ha-brit,
E-chad Elo-hey-nu
She-ba-sha-may-yim u-va-ar-etz.*

*Sh'lo-sha mi yo-day-ah?
Sh'lo-sha ani yo-day-ah!
Sh'lo-sha a-vot,
Sh'nay lu-chot ha-brit,
E-chad Elo-hey-nu
She-ba-sha-may-yim u-va-ar-etz.*

*Ar-ba mi yo-day-ah?
Ar-ba ani yo-day-ah!
Ar-ba ee-ma-hot,
Sh'lo-sha a-vot,
Sh'nay lu-chot ha-brit,
E-chad Elo-hey-nu
She-ba-sha-may-yim u-va-ar-etz.*

*Cha-mi-sha mi yo-day-ah?
Cha-mi-sha ani yo-day-ah!
Cha-mi-sha chum-shei To-rah,
Ar-ba ee-ma-hot,
Sh'lo-sha a-vot,
Sh'nay lu-chot ha-brit,
E-chad Elo-hey-nu
She-ba-sha-may-yim u-va-ar-etz.*

*Shi-sha mi yo-day-ah?
Shi-sha ani yo-day-ah!
Shi-sha sid-rei Mish-nah,
Cha-mi-sha chum-shei To-rah,
Ar-ba ee-ma-hot,
Sh'lo-sha a-vot,
Sh'nay lu-chot ha-brit,
E-chad Elo-hey-nu
She-ba-sha-may-yim u-va-ar-etz.*

Who knows one?
I know one!
One is our God,
In heaven and on earth.

Who knows two?
I know two!
Two are Sinai's tablets,
One is our God,
In heaven and on earth.

Who knows three?
I know three!
Three are our fathers,
Two are Sinai's tablets,
One is our God,
In heaven and on earth.

Who knows four?
I know four!
Four are our mothers,
Three are our fathers,
Two are Sinai's tablets,
One is our God,
In heaven and on earth.

Who knows five?
I know five!
Five are books of Torah,
Four are our mothers,
Three are our fathers,
Two are Sinai's tablets,
One is our God,
In heaven and on earth.

Who knows six?
I know six!
Six are books of Mishnah,
Five are books of Torah,
Four are our mothers,
Three are our fathers,
Two are Sinai's tablets,
One is our God,
In heaven and on earth.

אחד מי יודע ?

אחד מי יודע ?
אחד אני יודע !
אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שנים מי יודע ?
שנים אני יודע !
שני לחות ברית
אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שלשה מי יודע ?
שלשה אני יודע !
שלשה אבות
שני לחות ברית
אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

ארבע מי יודע ?
ארבע אני יודע !
ארבע אמהות
שלשה אבות
שני לחות ברית
אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

חמשה מי יודע ?
חמשה אני יודע !
חמשה חמשו תורה
ארבע אמהות
שלשה אבות
שני לחות ברית
אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

ששה מי יודע ?
ששה אני יודע !
ששה סדרי משנה
חמשה חמשו תורה
ארבע אמהות
שלשה אבות
שני לחות ברית
אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

Shiv-ah mi yo-day-ah?
Shiv-ah ani yo-day-ah!
Shiv-ah ye-may Sha-bat-ta,
Shi-sha sid-rei Mish-nah,
Cha-mi-sha chum-shei To-rah,
Ar-ba ee-ma-hot,
Sh'lo-sha a-vot,
Sh'nay lu-chot ha-brit,
E-chad Elo-hey-nu
She-ba-sha-may-yim u-va-ar-etz.

Sh'mo-na mi yo-day-ah?
Sh'mo-na ani yo-day-ah!
Sh'mo-na ye-may mi-lah,
Shiv-ah ye-may Sha-bat-ta,
Shi-sha sid-rei Mish-nah,
Cha-mi-sha chum-shei To-rah,
Ar-ba ee-ma-hot,
Sh'lo-sha a-vot,
Sh'nay lu-chot ha-brit,
E-chad Elo-hey-nu
She-ba-sha-may-yim u-va-ar-etz.

Ti-sha mi yo-day-ah?
Ti-sha ani yo-day-ah!
Ti-sha yar-chei lay-da,
Sh'mo-na ye-may mi-lah,
Shiv-ah ye-may Sha-bat-ta,
Shi-sha sid-rei Mish-nah,
Cha-mi-sha chum-shei To-rah,
Ar-ba ee-ma-hot,
Sh'lo-sha a-vot,
Sh'nay lu-chot ha-brit,
E-chad Elo-hey-nu
She-ba-sha-may-yim u-va-ar-etz.

A-sar-ah mi yo-day-ah?
A-sar-ah ani yo-day-ah!
A-sar-ah dib-ra-yah,
Ti-sha yar-chei lay-da,
Sh'mo-na ye-may mi-lah,
Shiv-ah ye-may Sha-bat-ta,
Shi-sha sid-rei Mish-nah,
Cha-mi-sha chum-shei To-rah,
Ar-ba ee-ma-hot,
Sh'lo-sha a-vot,
Sh'nay lu-chot ha-brit,
E-chad Elo-hey-nu
She-ba-sha-may-yim u-va-ar-etz.

Who knows seven?
I know seven!
Seven are days of the week,
Six are books of Mishnah,
Five are books of Torah,
Four are our mothers,
Three are our fathers,
Two are Sinai's tablets,
One is our God,
In heaven and on earth.

Who knows eight?
I know eight!
Eight are days 'til bris,
Seven are days of the week,
Six are books of Mishnah,
Five are books of Torah,
Four are our mothers,
Three are our fathers,
Two are Sinai's tablets,
One is our God,
In heaven and on earth.

Who knows nine?
I know nine!
Nine are months to birth,
Eight are days 'til bris,
Seven are days of the week,
Six are books of Mishnah,
Five are books of Torah,
Four are our mothers,
Three are our fathers,
Two are Sinai's tablets,
One is our God,
In heaven and on earth.

Who knows ten?
I know ten!
Ten are commandments,
Nine are months to birth,
Eight are days 'til bris,
Seven are days of the week,
Six are books of Mishnah,
Five are books of Torah,
Four are our mothers,
Three are our fathers,
Two are Sinai's tablets,
One is our God,
In heaven and on earth.

שבעה מי יודע ?
שבעה אני יודע !
שבעה ימי שבתא
ששה סדרי משנה
חמשה חמשו תורה
ארבע אמהות
שלשה אבות
שני לחות ברית
אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שמנה מי יודע ?
שמנה אני יודע !
שמנה ימי מילה
שבעה ימי שבתא
ששה סדרי משנה
חמשה חמשו תורה
ארבע אמהות
שלשה אבות
שני לחות ברית
אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

תשעה מי יודע ?
תשעה אני יודע !
תשעה ירחי לדה
שמנה ימי מילה
שבעה ימי שבתא
ששה סדרי משנה
חמשה חמשו תורה
ארבע אמהות
שלשה אבות
שני לחות ברית
אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

עשרה מי יודע ?
עשרה אני יודע !
עשרה דבריא
תשעה ירחי לדה
שמנה ימי מילה
שבעה ימי שבתא
ששה סדרי משנה
חמשה חמשו תורה
ארבע אמהות
שלשה אבות
שני לחות ברית
אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

A-chad a-sar mi yo-day-ah?
 A-chad a-sar ani yo-day-ah!
 A-chad a-sar koch-va-yah,
 A-sar-ah dib-ra-yah,
 Ti-sha yar-chei lay-da,
 Sh'mo-na ye-may mi-lah,
 Shiv-ah ye-may Sha-bat-ta,
 Shi-sha sid-rei Mish-nah,
 Cha-mi-sha chum-shei To-rah,
 Ar-ba ee-ma-hot,
 Sh'lo-sha a-vot,
 Sh'nay lu-chot ha-brit,
 E-chad Elo-hey-nu
 She-ba-sha-may-yim uva-ar-etz.

Who knows eleven?
 I know eleven!
 Eleven are the stars,*
 Ten are commandments,
 Nine are months to birth,
 Eight are days 'til bris,
 Seven are days of the week,
 Six are books of Mishnah,
 Five are books of Torah,
 Four are our mothers,
 Three are our fathers,
 Two are Sinai's tablets,
 One is our God,
 In heaven and on earth.

אחד אשר מי יודע ?
 אחד אשר אני יודע !
 אחד אשר כוכביא
 עשרה דבריא
 תשעה ירחי לדה
 שמנה ימי מילה
 שבעה ימי שבתא
 ששה סדרי משנה
 חמשה חמשו תורה
 ארבע אמהות
 שלשה אבות
 שני לחות ברית
 אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

Sh'naym a-sar mi yo-day-ah?
 Sh'naym a-sar ani yo-day-ah!
 Sh'naym a-sar shiv-ta-yah,
 A-chad a-sar koch-va-yah,
 A-sar-ah dib-ra-yah,
 Ti-sha yar-chei lay-da,
 Sh'mo-na ye-may mi-lah,
 Shiv-ah ye-may Sha-bat-ta,
 Shi-sha sid-rei Mish-nah,
 Cha-mi-sha chum-shei To-rah,
 Ar-ba ee-ma-hot,
 Sh'lo-sha a-vot,
 Sh'nay lu-chot ha-brit,
 E-chad Elo-hey-nu
 She-ba-sha-may-yim uva-ar-etz.

Who knows twelve?
 I know twelve!
 Twelve are the tribes,
 Eleven are the stars,
 Ten are commandments,
 Nine are months to birth,
 Eight are days 'til bris,
 Seven are days of the week,
 Six are books of Mishnah,
 Five are books of Torah,
 Four are our mothers,
 Three are our fathers,
 Two are Sinai's tablets,
 One is our God,
 In heaven and on earth.

שנימ אשר מי יודע ?
 שנימ אשר אני יודע !
 שנימ אשר שבתיא
 אחד אשר כוכביא
 עשרה דבריא
 תשעה ירחי לדה
 שמנה ימי מילה
 שבעה ימי שבתא
 ששה סדרי משנה
 חמשה חמשו תורה
 ארבע אמהות
 שלשה אבות
 שני לחות ברית
 אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

Sh'lo-sha a-sar mi yo-day-ah?
 Sh'lo-sha a-sar ani yo-day-ah!
 Sh'lo-sha a-sar mi-da-ya,
 A-chad a-sar koch-va-yah,
 A-sar-ah dib-ra-yah,
 Ti-sha yar-chei lay-da,
 Sh'mo-na ye-may mi-lah,
 Shiv-ah ye-may Sha-bat-ta,
 Shi-sha sid-rei Mish-nah,
 Cha-mi-sha chum-shei To-rah,
 Ar-ba ee-ma-hot,
 Sh'lo-sha a-vot,
 Sh'nay lu-chot ha-brit,
 E-chad Elo-hey-nu
 She-ba-sha-may-yim uva-ar-etz.

Who knows thirteen?
 I know thirteen!
 Thirteen are attributes of
 God,**
 Twelve are the tribes,
 Eleven are the stars,
 Ten are commandments,
 Nine are months to birth,
 Eight are days 'til bris,
 Seven are days of the week,
 Six are books of Mishnah,
 Five are books of Torah,
 Four are our mothers,
 Three are our fathers,
 Two are Sinai's tablets,
 One is our God,
 In heaven and on earth.

שלשה אשר מי יודע ?
 שלשה אשר אני יודע !
 שלשה אשר מדיא
 שנימ אשר שבתיא
 אחד אשר כוכביא
 עשרה דבריא
 תשעה ירחי לדה
 שמנה ימי מילה
 שבעה ימי שבתא
 ששה סדרי משנה
 חמשה חמשו תורה
 ארבע אמהות
 שלשה אבות
 שני לחות ברית
 אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

* The stars in Jacob's dream.

** According to Maimonides. Interestingly the word *echad* (one) also has a numerical value of 13.

HAD GADYA: AN ONLY KID

חד גדיא**

*Had gadya, had gadya!
Diz-van ab-ba bit-rei zu-zei,
Had gadya!*

An only kid, an only kid!
My father bought for 2 zuzim
An only kid!

חד גדיא, חד גדיא
דזבן אבא בתרי זוזי
חד גדיא!

*V'a-ta shun-ra
V'a-hal l'gad-ya
Diz-van ab-ba bit-rei zu-zei,
Had gadya!*

Then came a cat
Who ate the kid
My father bought for 2 zuzim
An only kid!

ואתא שנרא
ואכל לגדיא
דזבן אבא בתרי זוזי
חד גדיא!

*V'a-ta hal-ba
V'na-shah l'shun-ra,
D'a-hal l'gadya,
Diz-van ab-ba bit-ray zu-zei
Had gadya!*

Then came a dog
And bit the cat
That ate the kid
My father bought for 2 zuzim
An only kid!

ואתא כלבא
נשך לשנרא
דאכל לגדיא
דזבן אבא בתרי זוזי
חד גדיא!

*A'a-ta hut-ra
V'hi-ka l'hal-ba
D'na-shah l'shun-ra,
D'a-hal l'gadya,
Diz-van ab-ba bit-ray zu-zei
Had gadya!*

Then came a stick
And beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid
My father bought for 2 zuzim
An only kid!

ואתא חרטרא
והצה לכלבא
דנשך לשנרא
דאכל לגדיא
דזבן אבא בתרי זוזי
חד גדיא!

*V'a-ta nu-ra
V'sa-raf l'hut-ra
D'hi-ka l'hal-ba
D'na-shah l'shun-ra,
D'a-hal l'gadya,
Diz-van ab-ba bit-ray zu-zei
Had gadya!*

Then came a fire
And burned the stick
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid
My father bought for 2 zuzim
An only kid!

ואתא נרא
ושרף לחרטרא
דהכה לכלבא
דנשך לשנרא
דאכל לגדיא
דזבן אבא בתרי זוזי
חד גדיא!

*V'a-ta ma-ya
V'ha-va l'nu-ra
D'sa-raf l'hut-ra
D'hi-ka l'hal-ba
D'na-shah l'shun-ra,
D'a-hal l'gadya,
Diz-van ab-ba bit-ray zu-zei
Had gadya!*

Then came water
And quenched the fire
That burned the stick
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid
My father bought for 2 zuzim
An only kid!

ואתא מיא
וכבה לנורא
דשרף לחרטרא
דהכה לכלבא
דנשך לשנרא
דאכל לגדיא
דזבן אבא בתרי זוזי
חד גדיא!

** *Had Gadya* is in Aramaic, not Hebrew, and is very old. It became part of the official Passover canon when it was included in the Prague haggadah of 1590. The kid may represent the Jewish people, persevering throughout history.

V'a-ta tora
V'sha-ta l'ma-ya,
D'ha-va l'nu-ra,
D'sa-raf l'hut-ra
D'hi-ka l'hal-ba
D'na-shah l'shun-ra,
D'a-hal l'gadya,
Diz-van ab-ba bit-ray zu-zei
Had gadya!

Then came an ox
And drank the water
That quenched the fire
That burned the stick
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid
My father bought for 2 zuzim
An only kid!

ואתא תורא
ושתה למיא
דכבה לנורא
דשרף לחרטרא
דהכה לכלבא
דנשך לשנרא
דאכל לגדיא
דזבן אבא בתרי זוזי
חד גדיא!

V'a-ta ha-sho-hayt
V'sha-hat l'to-ra,
D'sha-ta l'ma-ya,
D'ha-va l'nu-ra,
D'sa-raf l'hut-ra
D'hi-ka l'hal-ba
D'na-shah l'shun-ra,
D'a-hal l'gadya,
Diz-van ab-ba bit-ray zu-zei
Had gadya!

Then came a slaughterer
And killed the ox
That drank the water
That quenched the fire
That burned the stick
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid
My father bought for 2 zuzim
An only kid!

ואתא השוחט
ושחט לתורא
דשתה למיא
דכבה לנורא
דשרף לחרטרא
דהכה לכלבא
דנשך לשנרא
דאכל לגדיא
דזבן אבא בתרי זוזי
חד גדיא!

V'a-ta malah ha-ma-vet
V'sha-hat la-sho-hayt,
D'sha-hat l'to-ra,
D'sha-ta l'ma-ya,
D'ha-va l'nu-ra,
D'sa-raf l'hut-ra
D'hi-ka l'hal-ba
D'na-shah l'shun-ra,
D'a-hal l'gadya,
Diz-van ab-ba bit-ray zu-zei
Had gadya!

Then came the Angel of
Death
And slew the slaughterer
That killed the ox
That drank the water
That quenched the fire
That burned the stick
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid
My father bought for 2 zuzim
An only kid!

ואתא מלאך המות
ושחט השוחט
ושחט לתורא
דשתה למיא
דכבה לנורא
דשרף לחרטרא
דהכה לכלבא
דנשך לשנרא
דאכל לגדיא
דזבן אבא בתרי זוזי
חד גדיא!

V'a-ta ha-Kadosh Baruch Hu
V'sha-hat l'malah ha-ma-vet,
D'sha-hat la-sho-hayt,
D'sha-hat l'to-ra,
D'sha-ta l'ma-ya,
D'ha-va l'nu-ra,
D'sa-raf l'hut-ra
D'hi-ka l'hal-ba
D'na-shah l'shun-ra,
D'a-hal l'gadya,
Diz-van ab-ba bit-ray zu-zei
Had gadya!

Then came the Holy One,
Praised Be God,
And smote the Angel of
Death,
That slew the slaughterer
That killed the ox
That drank the water
That quenched the fire
That burned the stick
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid
My father bought for 2 zuzim
An only kid!

ואתא הקדוש ברוך הוא
ושחט מלאך המות
ושחט השוחט
ושחט לתורא
דשתה למיא
דכבה לנורא
דשרף לחרטרא
דהכה לכלבא
דנשך לשנרא
דאכל לגדיא
דזבן אבא בתרי זוזי
חד גדיא!

M'KORIM: SOURCES

The calligraphy on the cover was contributed by Alison Kent. The art on the cover was contributed by Yaron Livay.

The artists whose work appears in this haggadah can be found at the following sites:

Beth Budwig: budwig.net
Emily Cooper: cooperhawk.com
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Allan Hollander and Alison Kent: www.magpienest.org
Yaron Livay: yaronlivay.com

¹ Adapted from Gates of Freedom, (New Jersey: Behrman House, 1982), p. 3.

² Adapted from Reb David Wolfe-Blank, z"l; found in Marcia Prager's haggadah for Pesach.

³ Adapted from Gates of Freedom, p. viii.

⁴ By Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb. Found in On Being a Jewish Feminist, ed. Susannah Heschel, (New York: Schocken Books, 1983) p. 278-80.

⁵ This translation of the Kiddush was adapted from the Passover Hagada Toolkit Version 1.0. courtesy of Ari Davidow, ari@ivritype.com.

⁶ Adelman, Penina V. Miriam's Well: Rituals for Jewish Women Around the Year, (New York: Biblio Press, 1986) p. 63-4.

⁷ Adapted from the Passover Hagada Toolkit Version 1.0. courtesy of Ari Davidow, ari@ivritype.com.

⁸ Adapted from the Passover Hagada Toolkit Version 1.0. courtesy of Ari Davidow, ari@ivritype.com.

⁹ Adapted from The Rheingold Family Haggadah, www.sirius.com/~ovid/haggadah.html.

¹⁰ Rich, Adrienne, from "For Memory," A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), p. 9.

¹¹ From Gates of Freedom, p. 31.

¹² Adapted from The Journey Continues: Ma'Ayan Passover Haggadah, by The Jewish Women's Project, a program of the JCC on the Upper West Side, p. 21.

¹³ The Shalom Seders, compiled by New Jewish Agenda, (New York, Adamah Books, 1984) p. 25.

¹⁴ This English translation, and the transcription of the melody that follows, come from The Parnes Haggadah, at www-personal.umich.edu/~bparnes/HAGGADAH/. The icons of the ten plagues and the sheet music for "Eliyahu HaNavi" came from there, too.

¹⁵ Adapted from The Women's Haggadah, E.M. Broner, (San Francisco: Harper, 1993).

¹⁶ Heschel Susannah, from The Women's Seder Sourcebook (Jewish Lights, 2002), p. 209.

¹⁷ Heschel, Susannah, from "Orange on the Seder Plate," in The Women's Passover Companion: Women's Reflections on the Festival of Freedom, (Jewish Lights, 2002), p. 73.

¹⁸ Piercy, Marge, from What Are Big Girls Made Of?, (Knopf, 1997).

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- ¹⁹ Martín Espada, from Imagine the Angels of Bread, 1997.
- ²⁰ Adapted from a text by Arthur Waskow, at www.shalomctr.org.
- ²¹ W. S. Merwin, from Earth Prayers (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), p. 244.
- ²³ Wendell Berry, from The Country of Marriage, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1991, p. 12.
- ²⁴ Lorel Zar-Kessler, excerpted from “We Will Sing A New Song Before You,” in The Women’s Seder Sourcebook, Jewish Lights 2002, p. 249.
- ²⁵ Denise Levertov, from Earth Prayers, p. 222.
- ²⁶ “Pied Beauty,” by Gerard Manley Hopkins.
- ²⁷ Ernesto Cardinal, from Earth Prayers, p. 224.
- ²⁸ “Pied Beauty,” by Gerard Manley Hopkins.
- ²⁹ Miriam’s Well, p. 28.
- ³⁰ From a special insert in *Lilith* magazine, www.lilithmag.com.
- ³¹ Cox, Harvey, Common Prayers (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), p. 127.
- ³² “Redemption Seemed as Close as the Kitchen Sink,” Deborah Glanzberg-Krainin, from The Women’s Seder Sourcebook, Jewish Lights 2002, pp. 259-260.
- ³³ Adapted from the Passover Hagada Toolkit Version 1.0. courtesy of Ari Davidow, ari@ivritype.com.
- ³⁴ Edward Abbey, from Earth Apples (New York: St. Martin’s 1994), p. 110.
- ³⁵ Karyn Berger, from *From Slavery to Freedom: A Passover Journey*, found online as [haggadah.pdf](#), p. 22.
- ³⁶ Michael Welzer, found in Mishkan T’filah, URJ Biennial Preview Edition, p. 73.
- ³⁷ Judy Chicago, from “Merger Poem.” Reprinted in a great many places, including The Women’s Seder Sourcebook, Jewish Lights, 2002, p. 233.

Tracing Ancestry

This haggadah was first created for home use on Noppet Road in Lanesboro, MA, for the 2001/5761 seder. It was compiled by Rachel Barenblat, David Markus, Elissa Shevinsky, and Lois Cooper, and was inspired by the Williams College Feminist Seder, an ongoing tradition which began in 1992 and which Rachel helped to perpetuate during her years at Williams. Since then, Rachel has continued to build and grow the service; a new version is released most years as Passover approaches, and the most recent version is always available in the “ceremony archive” section of velveteenrabbi.com.

Starting in 2003, the haggadah began to spread by word-of-mouth and e-mail and blog to friends around the country. You who are reading this should feel free to use the haggadah, or modify it and use it, or borrow parts of it, or simply be inspired by it. The only caveat is, please credit where appropriate, and please don't sell this—it should be shared freely.

If you have feedback, email Rachel at rachel@velveteenrabbi.com or rachel@inkberry.org. Find Rachel online at velveteenrabbi.com and velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/