



My Favorite Readings -
2013

By Eileen Levinson

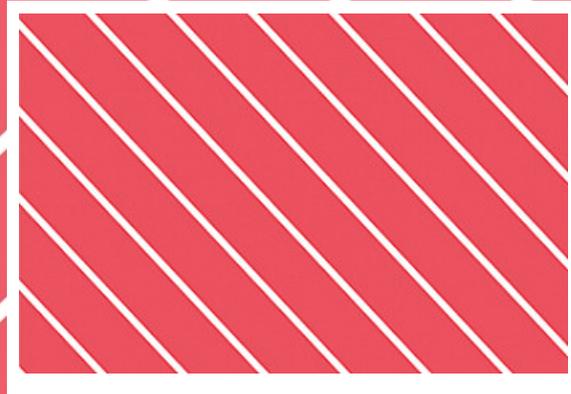


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Introduction

Opening Meditation

Contributed by [Alan Scher](#)

Source: The Women's Seder Sourcebook: Rituals & Readings for Use at the Passover Seder

We come together from our separate lives, each of us bringing our concerns, our preoccupations, our hopes, and our dreams. We are not yet fully present: The traffic, the last-minute cooking, the final details still cling to us. Our bodies hold the rush of the past few hours.

It is now time to let go of these pressures and really arrive at this seder. We do this by meditating together. Make yourself comfortable, you can close your eyes if you wish. Now take a few deep breaths, and as you exhale, let go of the tensions in your body. You'll begin to quiet within.

When you're ready, repeat silently to yourself: "Hineini," or "Here I am." Hineini is used in the Torah to signify being present in body, mind, and spirit. It means settling into where we are and simply being "here."

If you prefer, you can visualize the word. Let the word become filled with your breath. Merge with it, so that you experience being fully present. Everything drops away, and you're left in the unbounded state of here-ness. When a thought arises, just notice it and return to hineini again and again. Let yourself be held in the state of hineini.

Meditate in this way for several minutes, long enough to become more present. Slowly open your eyes, and look around the room at the people in your circle. Now, we begin our journey together.

Introduction

Being Human is a Guest House

Contributed by [Jon Klein](#)

Source: The Guest House by Rumi

This being human is a guest house. Every morning a new arrival. A joy, a depression, a meanness, some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor. Welcome and entertain them all! Even if they are a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture, still, treat each guest honorably. He may be clearing you out for some new delight. The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing and invite them in. Be grateful for whatever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.

Introduction

At Seder Table, Pledge Exodus from Negative Language

Contributed by [Kerry Olitzky](#)

Source: Jewish Telegraphic Agency

By Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky and Liz Offenbach

Whether in prayer or conversation, the words we use are not taken lightly in Judaism, especially when they are harmful to others. Jewish law actually likens the act of embarrassing a person to murder. And the Talmud, the primary source book for Jewish law, teaches that gossiping is equivalent to the murder of three people.

As you sit around the Passover seder table this year, be conscious of the words you use to describe others. Consider their impact because all too often we forget that words have the power to marginalize and oppress members of our society.

This holiday, we invite you to make this pledge and bring it your seder table: "I promise to the best of my ability to eliminate from my vocabulary all words that are hurtful, insensitive and oppressive of others, and include only words that are welcoming, sensitive and liberating."

Language defines us. It shapes who we are. Language can build, but it also has the potential to destroy through the extension and perpetuation of negative stereotypes. We are not "kikes"; we are not "cheap Jews." We bristle even at the mention of such words.

Similarly, those from other religious backgrounds who have chosen to cast their lot with the Jewish people through marriage are not "shaygetzes" or "shiksas," "intermarrieds" or "goys." They are women and men. They are Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and atheists. They do not "desecrate" nor are they "abominations."

During Passover, Jews and their loved ones recount the story of the Exodus and recite, "Now we are slaves, next year may we be free." This verse, from the "Ha Lachma Anya" (The Bread of Our Affliction) Passover table reading, is both symbolic and literal. During the seder we put ourselves in the place of the Israelite slaves, but we also remember those in other parts of the world

who today live without freedom. We are fortunate to live in a democracy where we can say and think whatever we choose, so let's use this upcoming holiday as an opportunity to choose words that will free people rather than enslave them.

When we choose to eliminate such language from our speech, we are able to welcome and include all those who wish to engage with Judaism in our Big Tent. Sometimes "negative language" is not obvious to all. What is negative to one person may appear to be positive to another. And some words have evolved to take on positive and empowering connotations when once they were negative and demeaning. For example, "queer" was once used as a derisive term to refer to gay individuals. Today it represents a term of empowerment.

This is something we are all learning. Even at the Jewish Outreach Institute, where we try to be inclusive of all, we recently received feedback about an article we had written that mistakenly compared those with mental and physical disabilities to those who are "well." Did we mean to imply that people with disabilities are therefore "unwell" and somehow less robust and dynamic members of the community? Of course not. We erred and have since apologized. We continue to learn.

This Passover, we ask that you do your best to end the "enslavement" of others through language. We are well aware of the grave nature of physical slavery, and we are not making light of this serious issue by raising the concern of verbal oppression. But it's clear through our work that using negative language makes some people feel like they are being relegated to a lower or outer edge of society.

Now is the time to stop defining those who are different from us by using negative words and stereotypes -- whether different means Jewish or another religious background, heterosexual or homosexual, American or any other ethnic group, disabled, male or female, single or married, old or young.

Inclusive language is the first step toward creating a truly inclusive -- and fully free from oppression -- Jewish community.

(Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky is the executive director of the Jewish Outreach Institute (JOI.org) and the author of many books, including "Preparing Your

Heart for Passover: A Guide for Spiritual Readiness." Liz Offenbach is the director of program at the institute.)

The Well of Tradition and Miriam's Well

Contributed by [Laura Horowitz](#)

Source: <http://www.jewishrecon.org/resource/well-tradition-and-miriam-well>

The Well of Tradition and Miriam's Well

One of our people's greatest strengths is using our tradition as a wellspring to renew our heritage as we pass it down from generation to generation. As Jews we have a living relationship with our past. Jewish history, Jewish traditions, and Jewish memories are not placed in museums and libraries for scholars to research. They are part of our people's daily lives.

When we study our sacred texts, retell our stories, celebrate our successes and mourn our losses, we seek to make deep personal connections to our people's heritage. When we succeed, we gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the richness and strength in Jewish life. Every generation needs to renew Judaism according to its vision and concerns. To teach Judaism to our children, we need to make it alive for ourselves. Each generation asks new questions and brings its own concerns and understandings to our sacred texts and cherished traditions.

One small example of our tradition's ever flowing well of inspiration comes from a traditional reading of the Torah portion, Hukat. We read about the death of Moses' sister, the prophet Miriam (Numbers 20:1). Joined with the announcement of her passing is a note that our ancestors had run out of water to drink (Numbers 20:2). The association of these two events provided the foundation upon which the sages of the Talmud built a beautiful legend about the abundant well of fresh water that followed Miriam as she wandered with her people throughout the desert. So long as she lived, the well was a fountain of living water that sustained the people. This source of strength and sustenance, however, dried up upon her death (Rashi on Numbers 20:2; b. Ta'anit 9a; Song of Song Rabba 4:14, 27).

This legend emphasizes the importance of Miriam in the forty years our people spent in the desert and shows her to be a full partner with her brothers, Moses and Aaron. Her courage and enthusiasm sustained our people. Her death was a great loss for our ancestors and her two brothers.

The Torah underscores this point by telling us that almost immediately after her death, Moses and Aaron are almost overwhelmed by the challenge to provide water for our people.

Recently, this story has taken on a new significance. Today, as women join men as never before as leaders of the Jewish people, we seek ways to acknowledge this new reality and bind it to the living tradition of our people. The legend of Miriam's Well gives us one such opportunity. Today, at many contemporary Passover Seders there is a new custom of placing a goblet of water on the table to represent Miriam's well. Its presence on the table provides an opportunity to talk about the significance of Miriam and the role women play in the Passover story and in the life of the Jewish people.

It helps us to relive the story by reminding us that real people and real families experienced the Exodus.

It reminds us of our people's abiding sense of God's protecting presence in the difficult weeks, months, and years after leaving Egypt.

It teaches us about the indispensable, life-giving power of righteous leaders.

We are living in a time of unbelievable change. Who could have predicted the tragedies and triumphs our people experienced in the past century? The science, politics, and economics of our world present new and unexpected challenges to Jews and to all people. As Jews we are also living in a period of extraordinary growth and creativity as we rise up and meet these challenges. We are blessed to possess a rich and deep sacred heritage that often, in surprising ways, helps us bind our present day concerns with the life giving waters of our faith and tradition.

Author: Rabbi Lewis Eron <http://www.jewishrecon.org/resource/well-tradition-and-miriam-s-well>

Kadesh

Kadesh

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

All Jewish celebrations, from holidays to weddings, include wine as a symbol of our joy – not to mention a practical way to increase that joy. The seder starts with wine and then gives us three more opportunities to refill our cup and drink.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree hagafen.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruit of the vine.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who chose us from all peoples and languages, and sanctified us with commandments, and lovingly gave to us special times for happiness, holidays and this time of celebrating the Holiday of Matzah, the time of liberation, reading our sacred stories, and remembering the Exodus from Egypt. For you chose us and sanctified us among all peoples. And you have given us joyful holidays. We praise God, who sanctifies the people of Israel and the holidays.

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שְׁהַחַיָּנוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה**

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
she-hechyanu v'key'manu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh.*

We praise God, Ruler of Everything,
who has kept us alive, raised us up, and brought us to this happy moment.

Drink the first glass of wine!

Kadesh

The Four Cups and FDR's Four Freedoms

Contributed by [Aurora Mendelsohn](#)

Source: Original

The Four Cups of Wine:

Traditionally each cup is linked to a promise made by God in these verses:

So say to the children of Israel: I am Adonai, and I will take you out of the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments; and I will take you to Me as a people, and I will be to you a God; and you will know that I am Adonai your God, who brought you out of the burdens of the Egyptians. (Exodus 6 :6-7)

לְכֹן אָמַר לְבְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲנִי יְהוָה, וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סְבִלַת מִצְרַיִם, וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מֵעַבְדוֹתָם; וְגָאַלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָהּ, וּבְשִׁפְטִים גְּדֹלִים וְלָקַחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם, וְהִיִּיתִי לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים; וַיִּדְעוּתֶם, כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, הַמּוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם, מִתַּחַת סְבִלוֹת מִצְרַיִם.

These verses contain four phrases describing liberation:

v'hotzeti, וְהוֹצֵאתִי, I will take you out

v'hetsalti, וְהִצַּלְתִּי, I will deliver you

v'ga'alti, וְגָאַלְתִּי, I will redeem you

v'lakakhti, וְלָקַחְתִּי, I will take you to me

FDR's Four Freedoms

The four cups can also be associated with the Four Freedoms first articulated by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt on January 6, 1941, which were an inspiration for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and were explicitly incorporated into its preamble.

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression--everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in their own way--everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want--which, translated into universal terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants--everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear--which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor--anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.

(President Franklin Roosevelt, adaptation and commentary by A. Mendelsohn)

Kadesh

On Account of the Righteous Women

Contributed by [Jennifer Kolker](#)

Source: Aviva Cantor, The Egalitarian Hagada

As we remember this struggle, we honor the midwives who were the first Jews to resist the Pharaoh. Our legends tell us that Pharaoh, behaving in a way common to oppressors, tried to get Jews to collaborate in murdering their own people. He summoned the two chief midwives, Shifra and Pu'ah, and commanded them to kill newborn Jewish males at birth. He threatened the midwives with death by fire if they failed to follow his commands.

But the midwives did not follow orders. Instead of murdering the infants, they took special care of them and their mothers. When Pharaoh asked them to account for all the living children, they made up the excuse that Jewish women gave birth too fast to summon midwives in time.

The midwives' acts of civil disobedience were the first stirrings of resistance among the Jewish slaves. The actions of the midwives gave the people courage both to withstand their oppression and to envision how to overcome it. It became the forerunner of the later resistance. Thus Shifra and Pu'ah were not only midwives to the children they delivered, but also to the entire Jewish nation, in its deliverance from slavery.

Urchatz

Washing of the Hands (Buddhist & Jewish Haggadah)

Contributed by [Lauren Kahn](#)

Source: The Buddhist & Jewish Haggadah

As Rachel welcomed strangers at the well with water, so do we welcome each other to this Seder by washing the hands of those at our table. We are not washing ourselves of dirt, but of attachment, guilt, and resentment. Each person in turn pours a little water over the hands of the person to the left, into the bowl. As the water is poured, think of something that you wish to let go of and imagine the water carrying it away.

Urchatz

Urchatz - Wash Your Hands To Prepare for the Seder

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

Water is refreshing, cleansing, and clear, so it's easy to understand why so many cultures and religions use water for symbolic purification. We will wash our hands twice during our seder: now, with no blessing, to get us ready for the rituals to come; and then again later, we'll wash again with a blessing, preparing us for the meal, which Judaism thinks of as a ritual in itself. (The Jewish obsession with food is older than you thought!)

To wash your hands, you don't need soap, but you do need a cup to pour water over your hands. Pour water on each of your hands three times, alternating between your hands. If the people around your table don't want to get up to walk all the way over to the sink, you could pass a pitcher and a bowl around so everyone can wash at their seats... just be careful not to spill!

Too often during our daily lives we don't stop and take the moment to prepare for whatever it is we're about to do.

Let's pause to consider what we hope to get out of our evening together tonight. Go around the table and share one hope or expectation you have for tonight's *seder*.

Karpas

Karpas

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

Passover, like many of our holidays, combines the celebration of an event from our Jewish memory with a recognition of the cycles of nature. As we remember the liberation from Egypt, we also recognize the stirrings of spring and rebirth happening in the world around us. The symbols on our table bring together elements of both kinds of celebration.

We now take a vegetable, representing our joy at the dawning of spring after our long, cold winter. Most families use a green vegetable, such as parsley or celery, but some families from Eastern Europe have a tradition of using a boiled potato since greens were hard to come by at Passover time. Whatever symbol of spring and sustenance we're using, we now dip it into salt water, a symbol of the tears our ancestors shed as slaves. Before we eat it, we recite a short blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree ha-adama.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruits of the earth.

We look forward to spring and the reawakening of flowers and greenery. They haven't been lost, just buried beneath the snow, getting ready for reappearance just when we most needed them.

-

We all have aspects of ourselves that sometimes get buried under the stresses of our busy lives. What has this winter taught us? What elements of our own lives do we hope to revive this spring?

Yachatz

Yachatz - Breaking the Middle Matzah

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

There are three pieces of matzah stacked on the table. We now break the middle matzah into two pieces. The host should wrap up the larger of the pieces and, at some point between now and the end of dinner, hide it. This piece is called the afikomen, literally “dessert” in Greek. After dinner, the guests will have to hunt for the afikomen in order to wrap up the meal... and win a prize.

We eat matzah in memory of the quick flight of our ancestors from Egypt. As slaves, they had faced many false starts before finally being let go. So when the word of their freedom came, they took whatever dough they had and ran with it before it had the chance to rise, leaving it looking something like matzah.

Uncover and hold up the three pieces of matzah and say:

This is the bread of poverty which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. All who are hungry, come and eat; all who are needy, come and celebrate Passover with us. This year we are here; next year we will be in Israel. This year we are slaves; next year we will be free.

These days, matzah is a special food and we look forward to eating it on Passover. Imagine eating only matzah, or being one of the countless people around the world who don't have enough to eat.

What does the symbol of matzah say to us about oppression in the world, both people literally enslaved and the many ways in which each of us is held down by forces beyond our control? How does this resonate with events happening now?

Maggid - Beginning

Maggid (Introduction)

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

Pour the second glass of wine for everyone.

The Haggadah doesn't tell the story of Passover in a linear fashion. We don't hear of Moses being found by the daughter of Pharaoh – actually, we don't hear much of Moses at all. Instead, we get an impressionistic collection of songs, images, and stories of both the Exodus from Egypt and from Passover celebrations through the centuries. Some say that minimizing the role of Moses keeps us focused on the miracles God performed for us. Others insist that we keep the focus on the role that every member of the community has in bringing about positive change.

– Four Questions

The Four Questions

Contributed by [JewishBoston](https://www.jewishboston.com)

Source: [JewishBoston.com](https://www.jewishboston.com)

The formal telling of the story of Passover is framed as a discussion with lots of questions and answers. The tradition that the youngest person asks the questions reflects the centrality of involving everyone in the seder. The rabbis who created the set format for the seder gave us the Four Questions to help break the ice in case no one had their own questions. Asking questions is a core tradition in Jewish life. If everyone at your seder is around the same age, perhaps the person with the least seder experience can ask them – or everyone can sing them all together.

מָה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת

Ma nishtana halaila hazeh mikol haleilot?

Why is this night different from all other nights?

שֶׁבִּיחַל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֲמֵץ וּמֶצֶה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלוּ מֶצֶה

Shebichol haleilot anu ochlin chameitz u-matzah. Halaila hazeh kulo matzah.

On all other nights we eat both leavened bread and matzah.

Tonight we only eat matzah.

שֶׁבִּיחַל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מְרוֹר

Shebichol haleilot anu ochlin shi'ar yirakot haleila hazeh maror.

On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables,

but tonight we eat bitter herbs.

שֶׁבִּיחַל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מְטַבֵּילִין אֶפְּלוֹ פְּעַם אַחַת הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים

Shebichol haleilot ain anu matbilin afilu pa-am echat. Halaila hazeh shtei fi-amim.

On all other nights we aren't expected to dip our vegetables one time.

Tonight we do it twice.

שְׁבַּחַל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלְנוּ מְסֻבִּין

Shebichol haleilot anu ochlin bein yoshvin uvein m'subin. Halaila hazeh kulanu m'subin.

On all other nights we eat either sitting normally or reclining.
Tonight we recline.

-- Four Questions

On The Importance Of Questions

Contributed by [FRANK SCARDINA](#)

Source: A Growing Haggadah

On The Importance Of Questions

The eldest reads:

Nobel Prize winning physicist Isaac Isadore Rabi's mother did not ask him: "What did you learn in school today?" each day. She asked him: "Did you ask a good question today?"

More Questions

The oldest teenager, or the person older than 19, yet closest to the teen years reads:

Why do the same questions get asked each year?

I probably have more questions than the youngest, why does a child ask the questions?

How come we ask these questions, but you rarely give a straight answer?

Does anyone have other questions to add?

Some Answers

Questioning is a sign of freedom, and so we begin with questions.

To ritualize only one answer would be to deny that there can be many, often conflicting answers. To think that life is only black and white, or wine and Maror, bitter or sweet, or even that the cup is half empty or half full is to enslave ourselves to simplicity.

Each of us feels the challenge to search for our own answers. The ability to question is only the first stage of freedom. The search for answers is the next.

Can we fulfill the promise of the Exodus in our own lives if we do not search for our own answers?

Does every question have an answer? Is the ability to function without having all the answers one more stage of liberation? Can we be enslaved to an obsessive search for the answer?

Do you have the answer?

-- Four Questions

Ask the Fifth Question

Contributed by [MAZON:](#)

Source: Original

Early in the Seder we say, "All who are hungry, let them enter and eat." We move ceremoniously through the Haggadah, reminding ourselves that we once were slaves in Egypt and explaining the meaning of each bite we eat. But millions of Americans and Israelis have only a few bites to eat, which has a very different meaning – it is a reminder that they are *still* enslaved.

This year, please join MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger as we again ask The Fifth Question:

Why on this night are millions of people still going hungry?

After the youngest person reads the four questions from the Haggadah, ask The Fifth Question and reflect as a group upon the crisis of food insecurity, why it persists and what you individually and collectively could do to end it. Then share your ideas with MAZON by emailing outreach@mazon.org.

– Four Children

The Four Children

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

As we tell the story, we think about it from all angles. Our tradition speaks of four different types of children who might react differently to the Passover seder. It is our job to make our story accessible to all the members of our community, so we think about how we might best reach each type of child:

What does the wise child say?

The wise child asks, *What are the testimonies and laws which God commanded you?*

You must teach this child the rules of observing the holiday of Passover.

What does the wicked child say?

The wicked child asks, *What does this service mean to you?*

To you and not to himself! Because he takes himself out of the community and misses the point, set this child's teeth on edge and say to him: "It is because of what God did for me in taking me out of Egypt." Me, not him. Had that child been there, he would have been left behind.

What does the simple child say?

The simple child asks, *What is this?*

To this child, answer plainly: "With a strong hand God took us out of Egypt, where we were slaves."

What about the child who doesn't know how to ask a question?

Help this child ask.

Start telling the story:

"It is because of what God did for me in taking me out of Egypt."

-

Do you see yourself in any of these children? At times we all approach different situations like each of these children. How do we relate to each of them?

-- Four Children

The Four Adults

Contributed by [Eileen Levinson](#)

Source: Love and Justice Haggadah, compiled and created by Dara Silverman and Micah Bazant

It is a tradition at the Seder to include a section entitled "the Four Children." We have turned it upside down, to remind us that as adults we have a lot to learn from youth. From the U.S. to South Africa to Palestine, young people have been, and are, at the forefront of most of the social justice movements on this planet. If there is a mix of ages of people at your seder, perhaps some of the older people would like to practice asking questions, and the younger folks would like to respond:

The Angry Adult – Violent and oppressive things are happening to me, the people I love and people I don't even know. Why can't we make the people in power hurt the way we are all hurting? Hatred and violence can never overcome hatred and violence. Only love and compassion can transform our world.

Cambodian Buddhist monk Maha Ghosananda, whose family was killed by the Khmer Rouge, has written: It is a law of the universe that retaliation, hatred, and revenge only continue the cycle and never stop it. Reconciliation does not mean that we surrender rights and conditions, but means rather that we use love in all our negotiations. It means that we see ourselves in the opponent – for what is the opponent but a being in ignorance, and we ourselves are also ignorant of many things. Therefore, only loving kindness and right-mindfulness can free us.

The Ashamed Adult – I'm so ashamed of what my people are doing that I have no way of dealing with it?!? We must acknowledge our feelings of guilt, shame and disappointment, while ultimately using the fire of injustice to fuel us in working for change. We must also remember the amazing people in all cultures, who are working to dismantle oppression together everyday.

Marianne Williamson said: "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate; our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually who are you not to be?"

You are a child of G-d. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of G-d that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give others permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

The Fearful Adult – Why should I care about 'those people' when they don't care about me? If I share what I have, there won't be enough and I will end up suffering. We must challenge the sense of scarcity that we have learned from capitalism and our histories of oppression. If we change the way food, housing, education, and resources are distributed, we could all have enough.

Martin Luther King said: It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. We are made to live together because of the interrelated structure of reality.

The Compassionate Adult – How can I struggle for justice with an open heart? How can we live in a way that builds the world we want to live in, without losing hope? This is the question that we answer with our lives.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote: Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy. And yet being alive is no answer to the problems of living. To be or not to be is not the question. The vital question is: how to be and how not to be... to pray is to recollect passionately the perpetual urgency of this vital question.

Anne Frank wrote: It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all of my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery, and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too; I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end and that peace and tranquility will return again. In the meantime, I must uphold my ideals, for

perhaps the time will come when I shall be able to carry them out."

Each of us bears in our own belly the angry one, the ashamed one, the frightened one, the compassionate one. Which of these children shall we bring to birth? Only if we can deeply hear all four of them can we truthfully answer the fourth question. Only if we can deeply hear all four of them can we bring to birth a child, a people that is truly wise.

Love and Justice in Times of War Haggadah.

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/14072054/Love-Justice-in-times-of-war-Haggadah>

-- Four Children

The Four Children

Contributed by [Progressive Jewish Alliance](#)

Source: American Jewish World Service

At Passover, we are confronted with the stories of our ancestors' pursuit of liberation from oppression. Facing this mirror of history, how do we answer their challenge? How do we answer our children when they ask us how to pursue justice in our time?

What does the Activist Child ask?

"The Torah tells me, 'Justice, justice shall you pursue,' but how can I pursue justice?"

Empower him always to seek pathways to advocate for the vulnerable. As Proverbs teaches, "Speak up for the mute, for the rights of the unfortunate. Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy."

What does the Skeptical Child ask?

"How can I solve problems of such enormity?"

Encourage her by explaining that she need not solve the problems, she must only do what she is capable of doing. As we read in Pirke Avot, "It is not your responsibility to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."

What does the Indifferent Child say?

"It's not my responsibility."

Persuade him that responsibility cannot be shirked. As Abraham Joshua Heschel writes, "The opposite of good is not evil, the opposite of good is indifference. In a free society where terrible wrongs exist, some are guilty, but all are responsible."

And the Uninformed Child who does not know how to ask...

Prompt her to see herself as an inheritor of our people's legacy. As it says in

Deuteronomy, “You must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

At this season of liberation, join us in working for the liberation of all people. Let us respond to our children’s questions with action and justice.

– Exodus Story

Telling our Story

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

Our story starts in ancient times, with Abraham, the first person to have the idea that maybe all those little statues his contemporaries worshiped as gods were just statues. The idea of one God, invisible and all-powerful, inspired him to leave his family and begin a new people in Canaan, the land that would one day bear his grandson Jacob's adopted name, Israel.

God had made a promise to Abraham that his family would become a great nation, but this promise came with a frightening vision of the troubles along the way: "Your descendants will dwell for a time in a land that is not their own, and they will be enslaved and afflicted for four hundred years; however, I will punish the nation that enslaved them, and afterwards they shall leave with great wealth."

Raise the glass of wine and say:

וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֶדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ.

V'hi she-amda l'avoteinu v'lanu.

This promise has sustained our ancestors and us.

For not only one enemy has risen against us to annihilate us, but in every generation there are those who rise against us. But God saves us from those who seek to harm us.

The glass of wine is put down.

In the years our ancestors lived in Egypt, our numbers grew, and soon the family of Jacob became the People of Israel. Pharaoh and the leaders of Egypt grew alarmed by this great nation growing within their borders, so they enslaved us. We were forced to perform hard labor, perhaps even building pyramids. The Egyptians feared that even as slaves, the Israelites might grow strong and rebel. So Pharaoh decreed that Israelite baby boys should be drowned, to prevent the Israelites from overthrowing those who had

enslaved them.

But God heard the cries of the Israelites. And God brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and outstretched arm, with great awe, miraculous signs and wonders. God brought us out not by angel or messenger, but through God's own intervention.

-- Exodus Story

The 21 Jump Street

Contributed by [David Wolkin](#)

Source: <http://wolkin.com/2012/04/1632/its-passover-son/>

I call this exercise The 21 Jump Street. It's a reference to the poker game that the characters play in the opening sequence of the show, but that's mostly me having fun with outdated cultural references. The title is less relevant than the exercise itself.

Materials: All you need are people, Post-It notes, pens/pencils and comfort with a writing exercise at your Seder.

The Context: At the Seder, we celebrate our ancestors' liberation from slavery in Egypt. Putting aside the debate about the historicity of that particular narrative, it is an essential part of the Jewish Story. One of the most important pieces of the Seder is that we are asked to step into the shoes and/or sandals of our ancestors and view ourselves as if we were also slaves in Egypt. The challenge in our modern lives is that most of us cannot truly relate to this type of experience. We do, however recognize that we have brothers and sisters in this world whose history sadly remains too close to this experience, and we must also recognize that there are those in this world who are in fact living as slaves. I strongly encourage you to incorporate a conversation about fair labor and human trafficking into your Seder, and we should both pray and work towards a time when all people can only think of slavery as a memory as opposed to something that still exists in today's world.

However, the purpose of this exercise is address the idea that we all have some version of personal bondage, something that holds us back from being the people that we would fully and truly like to become. Let me add that I do not intend to diminish actual slavery with this -the goal here is to create a different type of personal connection with the Passover experience.

The Exercise: Explain the notion of personal bondage, as I described it above. We all have something (or many things) in our lives from which we struggle to free ourselves. Perhaps it's an addiction of some sort, or over-commitment to our work lives over our personal lives. Everyone's got something. Pass a

Post-It note to everyone at your Seder, and ask them to write that challenge in a word or two. Wait until everyone is ready, and ask them to stick their notes to their foreheads at the same time. Ask the group look around at what everyone has written.

Ask folks to raise their hands if they see at least one other note that they can relate to (hint: everyone will always raise their hands).

It's a common experience. We all have those things that we wish we could change, that hold us back just a little bit. We want to be freed of them. All too often, we convince ourselves that we're alone in these struggles, but through making ourselves vulnerable with a bit of communal disclosure, we discover that nothing could be further from the truth.

It's not always easy to do so, but at the Passover Seder, we can create a moment where we symbolically try to let those things go. And sometimes we can use that as an opportunity to start fresh.

Close the activity by placing a bowl in the center of the table, do any one of the following:

- Ask each person to free themselves just for tonight by tearing up their Post-Its and placing them into the bowl.
- As an alternative, you can have people tear up the notes of others instead.
- A guest at a Seder of mine a couple years back pushed back against this framing and proposed a variation that I love: he said that we don't have to reject or ignore our struggles, but that instead we can embrace them as a part of our whole selves. He then lovingly moved his note over his heart and kept it there for the rest of the evening.

Leave the bowl at the table as a reminder of those little struggles in our lives and the intention to move past them.

Or you can pour wine on them or something like that. It's totally up to you.

-- Exodus Story

Freeing Your Inner Pharaoh

Contributed by [Jewish Meditation Center of Brooklyn](http://www.jmcbrooklyn.org)

Source: www.jmcbrooklyn.org



Freeing Your Inner Pharaoh

written by Alison Finkler and Benjamin Ross

How can we use the story of Passover to find freedom in our own lives?

For many, Passover is a time when we gather to re-tell the most famous narrative of the Jewish people. We read and remember the familiar story of how the Hebrews move from bondage in Egypt to freedom: the mighty Exodus. At the Seder, we eat matzah - the unleavened bread - to remind ourselves of the haste in which we left. We taste bitter herbs to remind us of the embittered state of slavery in which our ancestors lived. We dip foods in salt water to remind ourselves of tears shed. On Pesach, we use many symbols to invite us into the space of the enslaved. The Seder rituals of reading the Exodus story, sharing a meal, singing songs, allow us to travel to a place of freedom and spaciousness.

Throughout the Seder, we are reminded of the great leaders of our history: Moses, Aaron, Miriam. We reflect on their bravery, wisdom, and faith. We can use this story to call our attention to how we are leaders in our own lives and in our communities. The Hebrew word for Egypt, Mitzrayim (מצרים), literally translates to "narrow space." The holiday of Passover is an opportunity to think about how we are moving ourselves and others through narrow and constricted places.

Let's start in our own Egypt or constricted place. Go around the table and each person can say one way that they feel held back in their own lives (examples: "I'm too busy and don't have enough time in the day," "I don't feel fulfilled by my job right now," "sometimes I feel trapped in my routine and responsibilities," etc).

What can Pharaoh teach us about moving from a constrained space to a place of freedom and openness?

Pharaoh, the all-powerful Egyptian leader, sits on the other side of the Exodus narrative - he is the antagonist, the bad guy. He's unreasonable, rigid, and, honestly, nobody wants to be like Pharaoh. But, wait! What can we learn about Pharaoh's experience of the Exodus?

The story goes that before the first plague befalls Egypt, God tell Moses, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and I shall multiply my signs and my wonders" (Exodus 7:3). Interestingly, through the first five plagues Pharaoh hardens his own heart against liberating the Hebrews: streams turn to blood; every one is covered in frogs, lice, flies, and then all the livestock dies. After each plague Pharaoh is ready to relent and then changes his mind. He's stubborn and doesn't want to let his slaves go. "Pharaoh saw that there had been relief and kept making his heart stubborn" (Exodus 8:11).

Jewish Meditation Center of Brooklyn • www.jmcbrooklyn.org

Freeing Your Inner Pharaoh

How-to for the JMC Passover Haggadah insert:

Print it. Hand it out. Email to your seder-mates before the big night. Read online and go on a personal journey. Or just print it out and literally insert it into your haggadah(s) at a spot that works.

The glory of an insert is that you can make it work for you. Some might want to just keep it to themselves – using it as a personal prompt to prepare for Pesach from the inside out. Others might find it engaging to print out copies and rotate taking turns reading sections and asking one of the four questions embedded within the insert.

Knowing your table mates preferences, and willingness to explore the questions, you could also pick and choose one or more of the

questions to investigate, inviting everyone to take a turn responding. Truly, the options are limitless.

Finally, you can play with the concepts presented and come up with your own questions or interactive approach.

Enjoy!

– Ten Plagues

The Ten Plagues

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

As we rejoice at our deliverance from slavery, we acknowledge that our freedom was hard-earned. We regret that our freedom came at the cost of the Egyptians' suffering, for we are all human beings made in the image of God. We pour out a drop of wine for each of the plagues as we recite them.

Dip a finger or a spoon into your wine glass for a drop for each plague.

These are the ten plagues which God brought down on the Egyptians:

Blood | dam | **דָּם**

Frogs | tzfardeiya | **צַפְרֵדְיָע**

Lice | kinim | **כִּנִּים**

Beasts | arov | **עֲרוֹב**

Cattle disease | dever | **דֶּבֶר**

Boils | sh'chin | **שָׁחִין**

Hail | barad | **בָּרָד**

Locusts | arbeh | **אַרְבֵּה**

Darkness | choshech | **חֹשֶׁךְ**

Death of the Firstborn | makat b'chorot | **מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת**

The Egyptians needed ten plagues because after each one they were able to come up with excuses and explanations rather than change their behavior. Could we be making the same mistakes? Make up your own list. What are the plagues in your life? What are the plagues in our world today? What behaviors do we need to change to fix them?

-- Ten Plagues

The Ten Plagues - help us dream new paths to freedom

Contributed by [Kara, Corie, Karen, and Debbie Wentworth](#)

Source: 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 (in The Velveteen Rabbi's Haggadah for Passove

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.

-- Ten Plagues

Ten Modern Plagues

Contributed by [Jewish Women's Archive](#)

Source: JWA / Jewish Boston - The Wandering Is Over Haggadah; Including Women's Voices

The traditional Haggadah lists ten plagues that afflicted the Egyptians. We live in a very different world, but Passover is a good time to remember that, even after our liberation from slavery in Egypt, there are still many challenges for us to meet. Here are ten “modern plagues”:

Inequity - Access to affordable housing, quality healthcare, nutritious food, good schools, and higher education is far from equal. The disparity between rich and poor is growing, and opportunities for upward mobility are limited.

Entitlement - Too many people consider themselves entitled to material comfort, economic security, and other privileges of middle-class life without hard work.

Fear - Fear of “the other” produces and reinforces xenophobia, anti-immigrant sentiment, antisemitism, homophobia, and transphobia.

Greed - Profits are a higher priority than the safety of workers or the health of the environment. The top one percent of the American population controls 42% of the country’s financial wealth, while corporations send jobs off-shore and American workers’ right to organize and bargain collectively is threatened.

Distraction - In this age of constant connectedness, we are easily distracted by an unending barrage of information, much of it meaningless, with no way to discern what is important.

Distortion of reality - The media constructs and society accepts unrealistic expectations, leading to eating disorders and an unhealthy obsession with appearance for both men and women.

Unawareness - It is easy to be unaware of the consequences our consumer choices have for the environment and for workers at home and abroad. Do we know where or how our clothes are made? Where or how our food is produced? The working conditions? The impact on the environment?

Discrimination - While we celebrate our liberation from bondage in Egypt, too many people still suffer from discrimination. For example, blacks in the United States are imprisoned at more than five times the rate of whites, and Hispanics are locked up at nearly double the white rate. Women earn 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man. At 61 cents to the dollar, the disparity is even more shocking in Jewish communal organization.

Silence - Every year, 4.8 million cases of domestic violence against American women are reported. We do not talk about things that are disturbing, such as rape, sex trafficking, child abuse, domestic violence, and elder abuse, even though they happen every day in our own communities.

Feeling overwhelmed and disempowered - When faced with these modern “plagues,” how often do we doubt or question our own ability to make a difference? How often do we feel paralyzed because we do not know what to do to bring about change?

-- Ten Plagues

Our Pleasure Diminished By The Pain of Others

Contributed by [Machar Congregation](#)

Source: Machar

Leader:

Let us all refill our cups.

[Take turns reading. Each person is invited to read a grouped set of lines - or to pass.]

Tonight we drink four cups of the fruit of the vine.

There are many explanations for this custom.

They may be seen as symbols of various things:

the four corners of the earth, for freedom must live everywhere;

the four seasons of the year, for freedom's cycle must last through all the seasons;

or the four matriarchs: Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Rachel.

A full cup of wine symbolizes complete happiness.

The triumph of Passover is diminished by the sacrifice of many human lives when ten plagues were visited upon the people of Egypt.

In the story, the plagues that befell the Egyptians resulted from the decisions of tyrants,

but the greatest suffering occurred among those who had no choice but to follow.

It is fitting that we mourn their loss of life, and express our sorrow over their suffering.

For as Jews and as Humanists we cannot take joy in the suffering of others.

Therefore, let us diminish the wine in our cups

as we recall the ten plagues that befell the Egyptian people.

Leader:

As we recite the name of each plague, in English and then in Hebrew,

please dip a finger in your wine and then touch your plate to remove the drop.

Everyone:

Blood - Dam (Dahm)
Frogs - Ts'phardea (Ts'phar-DEH-ah)
Gnats - Kinim (Kih-NEEM)
Flies - Arov (Ah-ROV)
Cattle Disease - Dever (DEH-vehr)
Boils - Sh'hin (Sh'-KHEEN)
Hail - Barad (Bah-RAHD)
Locusts - `Arbeh (Ar-BEH)
Darkness - Hoshekh (KHO-shekh)
Death of the Firstborn - Makkat B'khorot (Ma-katB'kho-ROT)

[Take turns reading. Each person is invited to read a grouped set of lines - or to pass.]

In the same spirit, our celebration today also is shadowed by our awareness of continuing sorrow and oppression in all parts of the world.

Ancient plagues are mirrored in modern tragedies.

In our own time, as in ancient Egypt, ordinary people suffer and die as a result of the actions of the tyrants who rule over them. While we may rejoice in the defeat of tyrants in our own time, we must also express our sorrow at the suffering of the many innocent people who had little or no choice but to follow.

Leader:

As the pain of others diminishes our joys,
let us once more diminish the ceremonial drink of our festival
as we together recite the names of these modern plagues:

Hunger
War
Tyranny
Greed
Bigotry
Injustice
Poverty

Ignorance

Pollution of the Earth Indifference to Suffering

Leader:

Let us sing a song expressing our hope for a better world.

-- Ten Plagues

The Modern Plagues

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: JewishBoston.com with Rabbi Matthew Soffer

The Passover Haggadah recounts ten plagues that afflicted Egyptian society. In our tradition, Passover is the season in which we imagine our own lives within the story and the story within our lives. Accordingly, we turn our thoughts to the many plagues affecting our society today. Our journey from slavery to redemption is ongoing, demanding the work of our hearts and hands. Here are ten “modern plagues”:

Homelessness

In any given year, about 3.5 million people are likely to experience homelessness, about a third of them children, according to the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. A recent study by the U.S. Conference of Mayors showed the majority of major cities lack the capacity to shelter those in need and are forced to turn people away. We are reminded time and again in the Torah that the Exodus is a story about a wandering people, once suffering from enslavement, who, through God’s help, eventually find their way to their homeland. As we inherit this story, we affirm our commitment to pursue an end to homelessness.

Hunger

About 49 million Americans experience food insecurity, 16 million of them children. While living in a world blessed with more than enough food to ensure all of God’s children are well nourished, on Passover we declare, “Let all who are hungry come and eat!” These are not empty words, but rather a heartfelt and age-old prayer to end the man-made plague of hunger.

Inequality

Access to affordable housing, quality health care, nutritious food and quality education is far from equal. The disparity between the privileged and the poor is growing, with opportunities for upward mobility still gravely limited. Maimonides taught, “Everyone in the house of Israel is obligated to study Torah, regardless of whether one is rich or poor, physically able or with a

physical disability.” Unequal access to basic human needs, based on one’s real or perceived identity, like race, gender or disability, is a plague, antithetical to the inclusive spirit of the Jewish tradition.

Greed

In the Talmud, the sage Ben Zoma asks: “Who is wealthy? One who is happy with one’s lot.” These teachings evidence what we know in our conscience—a human propensity to desire more than we need, to want what is not ours and, at times, to allow this inclination to conquer us, leading to sin. Passover urges us against the plague of greed, toward an attitude of gratitude.

Discrimination and hatred

The Jewish people, as quintessential victims of hatred and discrimination, are especially sensitized to this plague in our own day and age. Today, half a century after the civil rights movement in the United States, we still are far from the actualization of the dream Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. articulated in Washington, D.C., a vision rooted in the message of our prophets. On Passover, we affirm our own identity as the once oppressed, and we refuse to stand idly by amid the plagues of discrimination and hatred.

Silence amid violence

Every year, 4.8 million cases of domestic violence against American women are reported. Each year, more than 108,000 Americans are shot intentionally or unintentionally in murders, assaults, suicides and suicide attempts, accidental shootings and by police intervention. One in five children has seen someone get shot. We do not adequately address violence in our society, including rape, sex trafficking, child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse, even though it happens every day within our own communities.

Environmental destruction

Humans actively destroy the environment through various forms of pollution, wastefulness, deforestation and widespread apathy toward improving our behaviors and detrimental civic policies. Rabbi Nachman of Breslav taught, “If you believe you can destroy, you must believe you can repair.” Our precious world is in need of repair, now more than ever.

Stigma of mental illness

One in five Americans experiences mental illness in a given year. Even more alarming, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, nearly two-thirds of people with a diagnosable mental illness do not seek treatment, and minority communities are the least likely to search for or have access to mental health resources. Social stigma toward those with mental illness is a widespread plague. Historically, people with mental health issues have suffered from severe discrimination and brutality, yet our society is increasingly equipped with the knowledge and resources to alleviate the plague of social stigma and offer critical support.

Ignoring refugees

We are living through the worst refugee crisis since the Holocaust. On this day, we remember that “we were foreigners in the land of Egypt,” and God liberated us for a reason: to love the stranger as ourselves. With the memory of generations upon generations of our ancestors living as refugees, we commit ourselves to safely and lovingly opening our hearts and our doors to all peace-loving refugees.

Powerlessness

When faced with these modern plagues, how often do we doubt or question our own ability to make a difference? How often do we feel paralyzed because we do not know what to do to bring about change? How often do we find ourselves powerless to transform the world as it is into the world as we know it should be, overflowing with justice and peace?

Written in collaboration with Rabbi Matthew Soffer of Temple Israel of Boston

– Cup #2 & Dayenu

Answering Our Questions

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

As all good term papers do, we start with the main idea:

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ הָיִינוּ. אֵתָהּ בְּנֵי חוֹרֵין

Avadim hayinu hayinu. Ata b'nei chorin.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. Now we are free.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and God took us from there with a strong hand and outstretched arm. Had God not brought our ancestors out of Egypt, then even today we and our children and our grandchildren would still be slaves. Even if we were all wise, knowledgeable scholars and Torah experts, we would still be obligated to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt.

-- Cup #2 & Dayenu

Dayeinu

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

The plagues and our subsequent redemption from Egypt are but one example of the care God has shown for us in our history. Had God but done any one of these kindnesses, it would have been enough – dayeinu.

אֱלֹהֵי הוֹצִיאֵנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, דַּיֵּינוּ

Ilu hotzi- hotzianu, Hotzianu mi-mitzrayim Hotzianu mi-mitzrayim, Dayeinu

If God had only taken us out of Egypt, that would have been enough!

אֱלֹהֵי נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, דַּיֵּינוּ

Ilu natan natan lanu, natan lanu et ha-Torah, Natan lanu et ha-Torah , Dayeinu

If God had only given us the Torah, that would have been enough.

The complete lyrics to Dayeinu tell the entire story of the Exodus from Egypt as a series of miracles God performed for us. (See the Additional Readings if you want to read or sing them all.)

Dayeinu also reminds us that each of our lives is the cumulative result of many blessings, small and large.

-- Cup #2 & Dayenu

The Passover Symbols

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

We have now told the story of Passover...but wait! We're not quite done. There are still some symbols on our seder plate we haven't talked about yet. Rabban Gamliel would say that whoever didn't explain the shank bone, matzah, and marror (or bitter herbs) hasn't done Passover justice.

The shank bone represents the Pesach, the special lamb sacrifice made in the days of the Temple for the Passover holiday. It is called the pesach, from the Hebrew word meaning "to pass over," because God passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt when visiting plagues upon our oppressors.

The matzah reminds us that when our ancestors were finally free to leave Egypt, there was no time to pack or prepare. Our ancestors grabbed whatever dough was made and set out on their journey, letting their dough bake into matzah as they fled.

The bitter herbs provide a visceral reminder of the bitterness of slavery, the life of hard labor our ancestors experienced in Egypt.

-- Cup #2 & Dayenu

In Every Generation & Second Cup

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיָּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ, כְּאִלוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם

B'chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et-atzmo, k'ilu hu yatzav mimitzrayim.

In every generation, everyone is obligated to see themselves as though they personally left Egypt.

The seder reminds us that it was not only our ancestors whom God redeemed; God redeemed us too along with them. That's why the Torah says "God brought us out from there in order to lead us to and give us the land promised to our ancestors."

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who redeemed us and our ancestors from Egypt, enabling us to reach this night and eat matzah and bitter herbs. May we continue to reach future holidays in peace and happiness.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree hagafen.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the second glass of wine!

-- Cup #2 & Dayenu

Dayenu: Reflections

Contributed by [EJ Moldow](#)

Source: Talitha/Adaption

From Talitha: Reflections

One of most beloved songs in the Passover seder is "Dayenu." The stanzas are read one at a time, and the participants respond, "Dayenu."

The word "Dayenu" means, "It would have been enough for us." Each of the 15 stanzas refers to a blessing that God gave our people, such as deliverance from oppression, manna in the desert, freedom in our own land.

I have pondered many time while hearing this song the importance of feeling and recognizing my own "Dayenu," or the bounty I have been given that would have been "enough." It is too easy to think about what we want or DON'T have, and forget all the good in our lives right before our eyes.

So let us never forget all the miracles in our lives. When we stand and wait impatiently for the next one to appear, we are missing the whole point of life. Instead, we can actively seek a new reason to be grateful, a reason to say "Dayenu."

For when we are truly grateful, we invite more blessings and miracles into our lives.

Rachtzah

Rachtzah

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

As we now transition from the formal telling of the Passover story to the celebratory meal, we once again wash our hands to prepare ourselves. In Judaism, a good meal together with friends and family is itself a sacred act, so we prepare for it just as we prepared for our holiday ritual, recalling the way ancient priests once prepared for service in the Temple.

Some people distinguish between washing to prepare for prayer and washing to prepare for food by changing the way they pour water on their hands. For washing before food, pour water three times on your right hand and then three times on your left hand.

After you have poured the water over your hands, recite this short blessing.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu al n'tilat yadayim.*

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who made us holy through obligations,
commanding us to wash our hands.

Rachtzah

Rachtzah

Contributed by [Haggadot](https://www.haggadot.com)

Source: Design by Haggadot.com



Rachtzah

Rachtza

Contributed by [Hillel at UCLA](#)

Source:

We wash our hands again now before we eat (yes, finally we're nearly there!). But why? Why do we not wash our feet like our Middle Eastern ancestors did? Because our hands are the instruments with which we work in the world. It is our hands that plant and write, that caress and create – and our hands which strike and smash, poison and pain. We wash our hands not to absolve ourselves of responsibility but to affirm the need to make our hands pure, to choose to make real decisions; to use our hands for good. This Pesach, let us consecrate our collective hands, to the task of building a better world.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat yadayim.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who made us holy through obligations, commanding us to wash our hands.

Motzi-Matzah

The Wandering is Over Haggadah - Motzi Matzah

Contributed by [JewishBoston](https://www.jewishboston.com)

Source: [JewishBoston.com](https://www.jewishboston.com)

The blessing over the meal and matzah | *motzi matzah* | מוֹצִיא מַצָּה

The familiar hamotzi blessing marks the formal start of the meal. Because we are using matzah instead of bread, we add a blessing celebrating this mitzvah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who brings bread from the land.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat matzah.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who made us holy through obligations, commanding us to eat matzah.

Distribute and eat the top and middle matzah for everyone to eat.

Maror

The Wandering is Over Haggadah - Maror

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: [JewishBoston.com](#)

Dipping the bitter herb in sweet charoset | *maror* | מָרוֹר

In creating a holiday about the joy of freedom, we turn the story of our bitter history into a sweet celebration. We recognize this by dipping our bitter herbs into the sweet charoset. We don't totally eradicate the taste of the bitter with the taste of the sweet... but doesn't the sweet mean more when it's layered over the bitterness?

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu al achilat maror.*

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who made us holy through obligations,
commanding us to eat bitter herbs.

Koreich

The Wandering is Over Haggadah - Koreich

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: [JewishBoston.com](#)

Eating a sandwich of matzah and bitter herb | *koreich* | כּוֹרֵיךְ

When the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the biggest ritual of them all was eating the lamb offered as the pesach or Passover sacrifice. The great sage Hillel would put the meat in a sandwich made of matzah, along with some of the bitter herbs. While we do not make sacrifices any more – and, in fact, some Jews have a custom of purposely avoiding lamb during the seder so that it is not mistaken as a sacrifice – we honor this custom by eating a sandwich of the remaining matzah and bitter herbs. Some people will also include charoset in the sandwich to remind us that God’s kindness helped relieve the bitterness of slavery.

Shulchan Oreich

The Wandering is Over Haggadah - Shulchan Oreich

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: [JewishBoston.com](#)

Eating the meal! | *shulchan oreich* | שְׁלֵחַן עוֹרֵיךְ

Enjoy! But don't forget when you're done we've got a little more seder to go, including the final two cups of wine!

Tzafun

The Wandering is Over Haggadah - Tzafoon

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: [JewishBoston.com](#)

Finding and eating the Afikomen | *tzafoon* | תפון

The playfulness of finding the afikomen reminds us that we balance our solemn memories of slavery with a joyous celebration of freedom. As we eat the afikomen, our last taste of matzah for the evening, we are grateful for moments of silliness and happiness in our lives.

Bareich

Bareich

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

Refill everyone's wine glass.

We now say grace after the meal, thanking God for the food we've eaten. On Passover, this becomes something like an extended toast to God, culminating with drinking our third glass of wine for the evening:

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, whose goodness sustains the world. You are the origin of love and compassion, the source of bread for all. Thanks to You, we need never lack for food; You provide food enough for everyone. We praise God, source of food for everyone.

As it says in the Torah: When you have eaten and are satisfied, give praise to your God who has given you this good earth. We praise God for the earth and for its sustenance.

Renew our spiritual center in our time. We praise God, who centers us.

May the source of peace grant peace to us, to the Jewish people, and to the entire world. Amen.

The Third Glass of Wine

The blessing over the meal is immediately followed by another blessing over the wine:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree hagafen.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the third glass of wine!

Hallel

The Wandering is Over Haggadah - Hallel

Contributed by [JewishBoston](http://JewishBoston.com)

Source: JewishBoston.com

Singing songs that praise God | hallel | הלל

This is the time set aside for singing. Some of us might sing traditional prayers from the Book of Psalms. Others take this moment for favorites like Chad Gadya & Who Knows One, which you can find in the appendix. To celebrate the theme of freedom, we might sing songs from the civil rights movement. Or perhaps your crazy Uncle Frank has some parody lyrics about Passover to the tunes from a musical. We're at least three glasses of wine into the night, so just roll with it.

Fourth Glass of Wine

As we come to the end of the seder, we drink one more glass of wine. With this final cup, we give thanks for the experience of celebrating Passover together, for the traditions that help inform our daily lives and guide our actions and aspirations.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree hagafen.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the fourth and final glass of wine!

Hallel

The Wandering is Over Haggadah - Cup of Elijah

Contributed by [JewishBoston](http://JewishBoston.com)

Source: JewishBoston.com

The Cup of Elijah

We now refill our wine glasses one last time and open the front door to invite the prophet Elijah to join our seder.

In the Bible, Elijah was a fierce defender of God to a disbelieving people. At the end of his life, rather than dying, he was whisked away to heaven. Tradition holds that he will return in advance of messianic days to herald a new era of peace, so we set a place for Elijah at many joyous, hopeful Jewish occasions, such as a baby's bris and the Passover seder.

אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּבִיאַ, אֱלֹהֵי הַתְּשֻׁבִיאַ אֱלֹהֵי, אֱלֹהֵי הַגְּלָעָדִי

בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ יָבוֹא אֱלֵינוּ

עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד

עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד

Eliyahu hanavi

Eliyahu hatishbi

Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu hagiladi

Bimheirah b'yameinu, yavo eileinu

Im mashiach ben-David,

Im mashiach ben-David

Elijah the prophet, the returning, the man of Gilad:

return to us speedily,

in our days with the messiah,

son of David.

Nirtzah

Nirtzah

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: The Wandering is Over Haggadah, JewishBoston.com

Nirtzah marks the conclusion of the seder. Our bellies are full, we have had several glasses of wine, we have told stories and sung songs, and now it is time for the evening to come to a close. At the end of the seder, we honor the tradition of declaring, “Next year in Jerusalem!”

For some people, the recitation of this phrase expresses the anticipation of rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem and the return of the Messiah. For others, it is an affirmation of hope and of connectedness with *Klal Yisrael*, the whole of the Jewish community. Still others yearn for peace in Israel and for all those living in the Diaspora.

Though it comes at the end of the seder, this moment also marks a beginning. We are beginning the next season with a renewed awareness of the freedoms we enjoy and the obstacles we must still confront. We are looking forward to the time that we gather together again. Having retold stories of the Jewish people, recalled historic movements of liberation, and reflected on the struggles people still face for freedom and equality, we are ready to embark on a year that we hope will bring positive change in the world and freedom to people everywhere.

In *The Leader’s Guide to the Family Participation Haggadah: A Different Night*, Rabbi David Hartman writes: “Passover is the night for reckless dreams; for visions about what a human being can be, what society can be, what people can be, what history may become.”

What can *we* do to fulfill our reckless dreams? What will be our legacy for future generations?

Our seder is over, according to Jewish tradition and law. As we had the pleasure to gather for a seder this year, we hope to once again have the opportunity in the years to come. We pray that God brings health and healing to Israel and all the people of the world, especially those impacted by natural tragedy and war. As we say...

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּיְרוּשָׁלַיִם

L'shana haba-ah biy'rushalayim

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM!

Commentary / Readings

Praise the Contrary and Its Defenders

Contributed by [Eileen Levinson](#)

Source: Sue Swartz, compiled in *Velveteen Rabbi's Haggadah* by Rachel Barenblat

For the chief musician, on common instrument: a song of rebellion.

Praise rising up. Praise unlawful assembly.
Praise the road of excess and the palace of wisdom.
Praise glass houses. Praise the hand that cradles the stone.
Praise refusal of obedience. Praise the young on Raamses Street.
Praise Galileo. Praise acceleration.
Praise bombshells and en masse.
Praise sit-down strikes. Praise outside agitators.
Praise Red Emma. Praise her pistol and praise her restraint.
Praise living your life. Praise Joan of Arc.
Praise wayward daughters. Praise their wayward sons.
Praise the power of indulgence.
Praise Luther's Ninety-Five Theses. Praise the nail
and the printing press. Praise the First Amendment.
Praise free verse. Praise yellow sunflowers.
Praise red wheelbarrows and transcendental leanings.
Praise illicit beauty. Praise the poets of Guantanamo.
Praise the poets of Burma. Praise the noisy streets.
Praise those who tear down walls and climb fences.
Praise Letters from Prison. Praise those who say yes.
Praise the bound notebook and what is within.
Praise Legal Aid attorneys. Praise kitchen-table conspiracies.
Praise insomnia. Praise our hunger. Praise days
we are the bread. Praise farmers' markets.
Praise Al Gore and quantum physics.
Praise Schrödinger and his cat. Praise jumping in.
Praise talking snakes. Praise history & run-on sentences.
Praise what are the odds? Praise purposeful wandering.
Praise the best minds of any generation. Praise John Brown.
Praise Newt Gingrich. Praise enough is enough.
Praise Walt Whitman and the self. Praise the body's

wild intelligence. Praise ACT UP and Vagina Monologues.
Praise getting satisfaction. Praise Gertrude Stein.
Praise cross-dressing. Praise untouchables,
partisans and riffraff. Praise slackers. Praise those
who talk back. Praise sympathy for the devil.
Praise the oldest profession. Praise mothers of the disappeared.
Praise mothers of the found. Praise mothers not yet mothers.
Praise not looking away. Praise realists and Cubists.
Praise prohibitionists & remorse. Praise hitting your head
against the wall. Praise giving peace a chance.
Praise Zionist conspiracies. Praise free elections.
Praise Selma, Alabama and early voting. Praise mutiny.
Praise backyard whiskey and those who cook with fire.
Praise Priscilla the Monkey Girl. Praise her admirers.
Praise Freud and Marx and Sinatra. Praise Earhardt.
Praise those who remember what they are told to forget.
Praise agnostics. Praise what we are not supposed to praise.
Praise the electrical storm and the still small voice.
Praise all the proverbs of hell. Praise those
who see it coming. Praise those who do it anyway.
Praise whatever happens next.

Songs

The Wandering is Over Haggadah - Who Knows One

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: [JewishBoston.com](#)

Who Knows One?

At some seders, people go around the table reading the question and all 13 answers in one breath. Thirteen is hard!

Who knows one?

I know one.

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows two?

I know two.

Two are the tablets of the covenant

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows two?

I know two.

Three are the patriarchs

Two are the tablets of the covenant

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows four?

I know four.

Four are the matriarchs

Three are the patriarchs

Two are the tablets of the covenant

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows five?

I know five.

Five are the books of the Torah

Four are the matriarchs

Three are the patriarchs

Two are the tablets of the covenant

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows six?

I know six.

Six are the orders of the Mishnah

Five are the books of the Torah

Four are the matriarchs

Three are the patriarchs

Two are the tablets of the covenant

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows seven?

I know seven.

Seven are the days of the week

Six are the orders of the Mishnah

Five are the books of the Torah

Four are the matriarchs

Three are the patriarchs

Two are the tablets of the covenant

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows eight?

I know eight.

Eight are the days for circumcision

Seven are the days of the week

Six are the orders of the Mishnah

Five are the books of the Torah

Four are the matriarchs

Three are the patriarchs

Two are the tablets of the covenant

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows nine?

I know nine.

Eight are the days for circumcision

Seven are the days of the week

Six are the orders of the Mishnah

Five are the books of the Torah

Four are the matriarchs

Three are the patriarchs

Two are the tablets of the covenant

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows ten?

I know ten.

Ten are the Words from Sinai

Nine are the months of childbirth

Eight are the days for circumcision

Seven are the days of the week

Six are the orders of the Mishnah

Five are the books of the Torah

Four are the matriarchs

Three are the patriarchs

Two are the tablets of the covenant

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows eleven?

I know eleven.

Eleven are the stars

Ten are the Words from Sinai

Nine are the months of childbirth

Eight are the days for circumcision

Seven are the days of the week

Six are the orders of the Mishnah

Five are the books of the Torah

Four are the matriarchs

Three are the patriarchs

Two are the tablets of the covenant

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows twelve?

I know twelve.

Twelve are the tribes

Eleven are the stars

Ten are the Words from Sinai

Nine are the months of childbirth

Eight are the days for circumcision

Seven are the days of the week

Six are the orders of the Mishnah

Five are the books of the Torah

Four are the matriarchs

Three are the patriarchs

Two are the tablets of the covenant

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows thirteen?

I know thirteen

Thirteen are the attributes of God

Twelve are the tribes

Eleven are the stars

Ten are the Words from Sinai

Nine are the months of childbirth

Eight are the days for circumcision

Seven are the days of the week

Six are the orders of the Mishnah

Five are the books of the Torah

Four are the matriarchs

Three are the patriarchs

Two are the tablets of the covenant

One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Songs

The Wandering is Over Haggadah - Chad Gadya

Contributed by [JewishBoston](http://JewishBoston.com)

Source: JewishBoston.com

Chad Gadya

חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא

דִּזְבִּין אַבָּא בִּתְרֵי זֻזֵי

חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא

Chad gadya, chad gadya

Dizabin abah bitrei zuzei

Chad gadya, chad gadya.

One little goat, one little goat:

Which my father brought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:

The cat came and ate the goat,

Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:

The dog came and bit the cat

That ate the goat,

Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:

The stick came and beat the dog

That bit the cat that ate the goat,

Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:

The fire came and burned the stick

That beat the dog that bit the cat

That ate the goat,

Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:

The water came and extinguished the

Fire that burned the stick

That beat the dog that bit the cat

That ate the goat,

Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:

The ox came and drank the water

That extinguished the fire

That burned the stick that beat the dog That bit the cat that ate the goat,

Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:

The butcher came and killed the ox,

That drank the water

That extinguished the fire

That burned the stick that beat the dog That bit the cat that ate the goat,

Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:

The angle of death came and slew

The butcher who killed the ox,

That drank the water

That extinguished the fire

That burned the stick that beat the dog That bit the cat that ate the goat,

Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:

The Holy One, Blessed Be He came and

Smote the angle of death who slew

The butcher who killed the ox,

That drank the water

That extinguished the fire

That burned the stick that beat the dog That bit the cat that ate the goat,

Which my father bought for two zuzim.

