

A Renewal Haggadah for 2016

By Jewish Guy



Made with  HAGGADOT.COM

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
Opening Prayer	3
Kadesh	5
Sanctifying the Day	5
Urchatz	11
Washing the Hands	11
Karpas	13
Eat a Green Vegetable	13
Yachatz	14
Break the Middle Matzah	14
Maggid - Beginning	16
A Story About Stories	16
-- Four Questions	18
The Questions	18
-- Four Children	20
The Four Children	20
-- Exodus Story	21
The Exodus: A Story In Seven Short Chapters	21
-- Ten Plagues	24
The Ten Plagues	24
-- Cup #2 & Dayenu	26
Conclusion of Maggid	26
Rachtzah	30
Washing the Hands	30
Motzi-Matzah	31
Bless and Eat	31
Maror	32
Bitter Herb	32
Koreich	33
The Hillel Sandwich	33
Shulchan Oreich	34
The Festive Meal	34
Tzafun	35
Afikoman	35
Bareich	36
Bless the Meal	36
Hallel	38
Praise	38
Nirtzah	43
Conclusion	43

Nirtzah

Conclusion

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source: Velveteen Rabbi

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. As it is written in *Pirke Avot*, a collection of rabbinic wisdom: "It is not incumbent upon us to finish the task, but neither may we refrain from beginning it."

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. How might we understand this today? A close look at the word *Yerushalayim* suggests an answer. The name can be read as deriving from *Ir Shalem* ("City of Wholeness") or *Ir Shalom* ("City of Peace"). No matter where we are or what our politics, we all slip into 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.

Freedom to hope

and Freedom to rejoice

Soon, in our days

Amen.

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.

Open the door for Elijah and Miriam; [rise.]

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 & kept alive in the wilderness and may You give us eyes to see that the journey itself holds

the promise of redemption. Amen.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַגְּבִיֵּא אֵלֵינוּ הַתְּשׁוּבָה

אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַגְּלֵעֵדִי

בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ יָבֹא אֵלֵינוּ

עַם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד, עַם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד

Eliyahu ha-navi, Eliyahu ha-Tishbi,

Eliyahu (3x) ha-Giladi.

Bimheirah v'yameinu, yavo ei-leinu

im Mashiach ben David (2x)

Elijah, the prophet; Elijah, the Tishbite; Elijah, of Gilead! Come quickly in our days with the Messiah from the line of David.

Miriam the prophet, strength and song in her hand; Miriam, dance with us in order to increase the song of the world! Miriam, dance with us in order to repair the world. Soon she will bring us to the waters of redemption!

I take upon myself the mitzvah of this first of four cups of wine, in the name of the unification of the Holy Blessed One with Shekhinah!

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 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: "I will bring you out from the

oppression..."

Kiddush

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם אשר בחר בנו עם כל העמים ורוממנו עם כל

לשון, וקדשנו במצותיו, ונתת לנו יי אלהינו באהבה שבתות למנוחה ומועדים

לשמחה, חגים וזמנים לששון את-יום השבת הזה ואת-יום המצות הזה. זמן

חרותנו, באהבה, מקרא קדש, זכר ליציאת מצרים. כי בו בחרת ואותנו קדשת

עם כל-העמים. ושבתי ומועדי קדשך באהבה ובכבוד בשמחה ובששון

הנחלתנו: ברוך אתה יי, מקדש השבת וישכאל והזמנים.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, asher bakhar banu im kol ha-amim, v'rom'manu im kol lashon, v'kidshanu b'mitzvotav. Va-titen lanu Adonai eloheynu, b'ahavah (shabatot limnucha u-) mo'adim l'simkha, hagim u-z'manim l'sason, et yom (ha-(shabbat hazeh v'et yom) ha-Pesach hazeh, z'man cheruteinu, (b'ahavah) mikra kodesh, zecher l'tziat mitzrayim. Ki vanu vacharta, v'otanu kidashta, im kol ha'amim u-moadim kadshekha (b'ahavah uvratzon) v'simcha uv-sason hin-khaltanu. Baruch atah, Adonai, m'kadesh

Bless those who fear Adonai, small ones and great ones.

May Adonai cause you to increase, you and your children

Be blessed of Adonai, maker of heaven and earth.

The heavens are the heavens of Adonai; the earth was given to humanity.

The dead cannot praise God, nor can those who descend into silence.

And we will praise God, from now and always: halleluyah!

Third Cup of Wine

הנני מוכן ומזמן לקיים מצות כוס שלישית מארבע כוסות לשם

יחוד קודשא בריך הוא ושכינתיה.

Hin'hi muchan u-m'zuman l'kayem mitzvat kos shlishit m'arbah cosot

l'shem yichud kudsha brich hu u-schinteh.

I take upon myself the mitzvah of this third of four cups of wine, in the name of the unification of the Holy Blessed One with Shekhinah!

The third cup of wine represents God's third declaration of redemption:

"I will liberate you with an outstretched arm..."

וּבְרַךְ אֶת עֵין הַחַיִּים, מְצַמֶּיחַת פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן.

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

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

May Our Anger Be Holy

Oppression breeds anger to which we must attend.

Once, we recited this text out of powerlessness. We asked God to pour forth wrath because we were unable to express our own. But in today's world, where we enjoy agency to an unprecedented degree, we must resist the temptations of perennial victimhood and yearning for revenge.

Hallel

Praise

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source: Velveteen Rabbi

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.

Psalms 115

Adonai, remember us and bless: bless the house of Israel, bless the house of

Aaron.

(ha-shabbat v') Yisrael v'hazmanim.

We praise You, Sovereign of Existence! You have called us for service along with other peoples, and have hallowed our lives with commandments. In love You have given us (Shabbat and) festivals for rejoicing, seasons of celebration, including this (Shabbat and 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 (Shabbat and) Israel and the festivals.

לְיָיִךְ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מִצִּיּוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁבֹּט וְיִבְרַךְ.

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

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

[After the blessing, drink the wine/juice and then refill.]

Three Questions

Who are you?

I'm Yisrael. I'm a God-wrestler. I'm someone who wrestles with the holy, with the Source of All Being, with my understanding of ultimate reality, and I expect God to wrestle back. I dance with God. I waltz with Torah. I stay up all night grappling with angels, and even if I come away limping, I know I come away blessed. I'm a wandering Aramean, and I'm wearing my traveling shoes. I'm a child of the house of Israel, and my community and I and anyone else who hears freedom's call—are walking into the wilderness together.

Where are you coming from?

I'm coming from Mitzrayim. From the narrow place. From slavery. From constiction. From the birth canal. I'm coming from hard labor. I'm coming from the surfeit of sweetness that lulls me into forgetting the world's imperfections. I've been settling for what hurts, too fearful to risk something new. I'm coming from suffering and isolation. I'm coming from addiction to my work, addiction to success, addiction to separation. I'm coming from "if I stopped working, I'm not even sure who I'd be."

Where are you going?

I'm going to Yerushalayim. I'm going to Ir Shalem, the city of wholeness. I'm going to Ir

Shalom, the city of peace. I'm going where talking to God is a local call. I'm heading toward my best imaginings of community and connection. I'm clicking my ruby slippers with fervent *kavanah* and moving toward the meaning of home. Maybe I'm going to a place; maybe I'm going to a state of mind. Maybe it's an asymptotic progression toward something that can't be reached. Maybe it's the journey that defines me.

I am Yisrael. I am coming from Mitzrayim. And the moon is almost full: tomorrow we're packing our bags. Grabbing the flatbread. And setting out. It's time to go.

When I see the word "Israel"

When I see the word

Israel

I see

Isra-el

wrestles with God

God is

Victorious

When I see the word

I do not see

the chosen few

I see those few who choose

Those few who choose

when all who hunger will eat and be filled.

Every human will know that Your love is a power
sustaining all life and doing good for all.

We bless you now Wholly One, for feeding everything!

Psalm 126: A Psalm of Ascents

When God returned us to Zion we were as dreamers.
Then we were full of mirth, and our tongues were full of gladness.
They said among the nations, "magnified is God, who has done these things."
We will magnify God, who has done this for us! And we were joyful.

Turn our captivity, O God, like dry streams in the Negev.

We had planted seeds in tears, but our harvest was gladness.

We went forth with crying-out, carrying seeds;

We return in gladness, carrying God's sheaves.

We bless you now, Wholly One, the power and majesty in all.

You gave us this food,

you sustain our lives

With your grace, with your love, your compassion.

You provide all the food that comes to us,

guiding and nourishing our lives!

Now we hope and we pray

for a wondrous day when no one in our world

will lack bread or food to eat.

We will work to help bring on that time,

to wrestle with You,

a contest

in which both wrestlers

are one

and in which the one

is victorious

I see those few who choose,

among the many nations among all people,

those few who choose

to make love

to you

and those who say:

I betroth myself to you

whether it feels like honey

or a thornbush

because even the thornbush

sometimes glows

with fire

of revelation

When I see the world

Israel

I know many claim it as their own

As a title a privilege a status
As if God chose them
they are right in this:
God chooses
but they are wrong in thinking:
only them
God breathes through many begotten sons
and daughters
God wrestles through his glorious perverts
and professors
and as there is only one contestant
for better or for worse...
this wrestling
is an embrace
of recognition
and delight
do you seek God? God seeks you.
Who will you allow
to be victorious?
(—Jay Michaelson)

Tzafun

Afikoman

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source: Velveteen Rabbi

[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 slavery/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.

Shulchan Oreich The Festive Meal

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source:

[eat]

This symbolic hand-washing recalls Miriam's Well. This well followed Miriam, sister of Moses, through the desert. Filled with 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 more clear.

When we wash hands again later, we will say blessings to sanctify that act. This hand washing is purely symbolic, and therefore the blessing is unspoken.

Passover

We will spend the night recounting

Far-off events full of wonder,

And because of all of the wine

The mountains will skip like rams.

Tonight they will exchange questions:

The wise, the goddess, the simple-minded and the child.

And time reverses its course,

Today flowing back into yesterday,

Like a river enclosed at its mouth.

Each of us has been a slave in Egypt,

Soaked straw and clay with sweat,

And crossed the sea dry-footed.

Urchatz

Washing the Hands

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source: Velveteen Rabbi

You too, stranger.

This year in fear and shame.

Next year in virtue and justice. (Primo Levi)

Koreich

The Hillel Sandwich

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source: Velveteen Rabbi

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.

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

Yachatz

Break the Middle Matzah

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source: Velveteen Rabbi

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

Are all who are hungry truly able to eat anywhere, let alone with us? How many of us would really invite a hungry stranger into our house today? How can we correct the systemic problems that create hunger, poverty, and oppression? (Rabbah Emily Aviv Kapor).

The Bread of Affliction

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; it is the afikoman.]

Pirkei Imahot 1:1 (Sayings of the Mothers 1:1)

On this night of doorways, the bread of our ancestors waits on our table.

It is easy to think of this round flat bread as a full moon, except the moon was once part of this planet and was ripped away and the seas keep longing for it and leaping upward.

The whole is already broken. The ball of the earth has its shifting tectonic plates; the skin has its pores where the air bores in. Everything whole in the world has an edge where it broke off something or was cut away. The bread

Motzi-Matzah

Bless and Eat

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source: Velveteen Rabbi

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.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

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

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

Baruch atah, Adonai eloheinu, melech 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.]

Rachtzah

Washing the Hands

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source: Velveteen Rabbi

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.

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, אדונאי, אלהינו מלעך הא-ולם, אשר קידשנו ב'מיתצותא,

v'tzivanu al n'tilat yadayim.

Blessed are You, Source of all Being, who sanctifies us with Your

commandments, and

commands us to wash our hands.

we are about to break is already broken.

We want to think it and we are perfect, but the loaf is an illusion, a

compromise with the shattering of light.

Yet maybe it's in slow breaking that wholeness happens. The bud of the

apple tree fragments into beauty and the stem of the iris tears its way

through the soil. The heart breaks as it grows.

You could call that wholeness: the movement of life toward a fuller version of
itself, the egg releasing its core into the world, the tree lurching its way
toward branches.

It's the splitting of the sea that lets us out of Egypt: severed from the old self

we thought invincible, we run toward a future that shatters the moment we

enter it, becoming the multiple and unknown present. Bless the world that

breaks to let you through it, Bless the gift of the grain that smashes its

molecules to feed you over & over.

This Passover night, time is cracking open. Wholeness is not the egg; it's the
tap tap of the wet-winged baby bird trying to get out. Break the bread at
the feast of liberation. Go ahead. Do it. The whole is already broken, and so
are you, and freedom has to have its jagged edges. But keep one half for
later, because this story isn't whole, and isn't over. (Rabbi Jill Hammer)

Maggid - Beginning

A Story About Stories

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source: [Velveteen Rabbi](#)

When the founder of 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.

Once Were Slaves

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; ata b'nei chorin. We were slaves, but now we are free."
Though we no longer labor under Pharaoh's overseers, we may still be

Blessed One also redeemed us with them, as it is said, 'And we went forth from there, in order that God might lead us to the land which had been promised to our ancestors.'"

Redemption wasn't a one-time thing that happened to our ancestors in bygone times; it is an ongoing experience, something that can ripple into our consciousness every day. We too were redeemed from Egypt, and we are perennially offered the possibility of living in a state of redemption if only we will open our hearts and our eyes.

This teaching ends with the understanding that God redeemed us from the Narrow Place in order to lead us to the land which had been promised to our forebears. What do we make of that idea? What does it mean to believe that God promised our ancestors a piece of land? Do we, or can we, own a piece of God's earth? Can a piece of earth own us?

What questions does this passage raise for you? How do you understand the notion that we are freed not only from but also toward? Toward what do you see yourself striving this year?

over our homes and our first-born were spared. The *Egg*, which symbolizes creative power, our rebirth. The *Parsley*, which 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.

And what about the orange?

Susannah 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." To speak of slavery and long for liberation, she says, "demands that we acknowledge our own complicity in enslaving others."

One additional item on our seder plate, therefore, is an *orange*, representing the radical feminist notion that there is—a place at the table for all of us, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. May our lives be inclusive, welcoming, and fruitful.

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 again habitable. 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 every place where war destroys lives, hopes, and the freedoms we celebrate tonight.

In Every Generation

In every generation one must see oneself as if one had personally experienced the Exodus from Egypt. As it is written: "You shall speak to your children on that day, saying, this is how the Holy Blessed One redeemed me from Egypt. It wasn't merely my ancestors who were redeemed, but the Holy

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.

– Four Questions

The Questions

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source:

[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 chants the Four Questions:]

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ 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?

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

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

Shebakhoh halaylot ayn anu matbeeleen afeelu pa'am akhat, halaila hazeh sh'tay f'ameem.

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

m'subeen.

Why is tonight different from all other nights?

1.

Second Cup of Wine

הנני מוכן ומזמן לקיים מצות כוס שנייה מארבע כוסות לשם

יחוד קודשא בריך הוא ושכינתיה.

Hin'hi muchan u-m'zuman l'kayem mitzvah kos shniyah m'arbah cosot

l'shem yichud kudsha brich hu u-schinteh.

I take upon myself the mitzvah of this second of four cups of wine, in the name of the unification of the Holy Blessed One with Shekhinah!

The second cup of wine represents God's second declaration of redemption: "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.

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.

Signs and Symbols

Rabban Gamaliel has said: one who has not explained the following three symbols has not fulfilled their duty: tonight we will explain seven! One for each day of the week; one for each of the seven lower *sefirot* / aspects of divinity. And they are:

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

The *Haroset*, a mixture of apples and nuts and wine, which 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* (or: *beet*) which 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

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.

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*!

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.

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 freedom?

– Four Children

The Four Children

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source:

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 four kinds of children...

The Torah speaks of four kinds of children: one wise, one wicked, one simple, and one who does not yet know how to ask.

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.

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...

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.

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

3.

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 Moshé 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.

light:

Through their courage, a boy survived; midrash tells us he was radiant with

“the Hebrew women are so hardy, they give birth before we arrive!”

Two midwives named Shifrah and Puah defied his orders, claiming that

In fear of rebellion, Pharaoh decreed that all Hebrew boy-children be killed.

He found our difference threatening, and ordered our people enslaved.

In time, a new Pharaoh ascended to the throne.

Generations passed and our people remained in Egypt.

2.

Once upon a time our people went into exile in the land of Egypt. During a famine our ancestor Jacob and his family fled to Egypt where food was plentiful. 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.

1.

– Exodus Story
The Exodus: A Story in Seven Short Chapters
Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)
Source: Velveteen Rabbi

Brutal torture of the helpless

Apathy in the face of evil

include:

Today's plagues may be less obvious or dramatic, but are no less insidious...and responsibility for their existence lies on our shoulders. They

מִיָּצֵד מִצְרָיִם: Makat B'chorot Death of the First-Born

אֲרָבִים. Choshach Darkness

אֲרָבִים. Arbeh Locusts

בָּרָד. Barad Hail

בְּיֹזֵף. Sh'chin Boils

דֶּבֶר. Dever Cattle plague

צִרְיָן. Arov Insect swarms

קִנָּיִם. Kinim Lice

טַרְדֵּיבָּרָךְ. Tzarde'ah Frogs

דָּם. Dam Blood

upon the Egyptians.

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

“My creatures are perishing, and you sing praises?”

Midrash teaches that, while watching the Egyptians succumb to the ten plagues, the angels broke into songs of jubilation. God rebuked them, saying

– Ten Plagues
The Ten Plagues
Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)
Source: Velveteen Rabbi

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.