

הגדה של פסח
HAGGADAH SHEL PESACH

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When the 14th day of Nissan arrives, we are like the members of some ancient worldwide association at its annual dinner. We set the table. We lay out the symbols of membership for every member. However, our membership is so large that no single hall can contain all of us, so the festive table is set in every home, each a link in a chain extending all over the world. A single thought, a single festive meal unites us all.

Even those of us who have remained aloof from the aims and functions of the association during the rest of the year now find ourselves reminded of our old ties and obligations. And so, year after year, this solemn occasion challenges us: Do we wish to share in the responsibilities and duties of our fellow Jews? We may perhaps conveniently forget these duties, but surely we can never entirely free ourselves from them.

**Long ago, at this season, a people—our people—set out on a journey.
On such a night as this, we went forth from degradation to joy.
We give thanks for the liberations of days gone by.
And we pray for all who are still bound, still denied their human rights.
Eternal G-d, may all who hunger come to rejoice in a new Passover.
Let all the human family sit at Your table, drink the wine of deliverance,
eat the bread of freedom.**

The Order of the Seder

- * קִידּוּשׁ—**Kadeish**: Kiddush, sanctification of the Festival
- * וְרַחֵץ—**Urchatz**: hand-washing in preparation for karpas
- * כַּרְפָּס—**Karpas**: eating greens dipped in salt water
- * יַחַץ—**Yachatz**: dividing the middle matzah and hiding the larger part
- * מַגִּיד—**Maggid**: telling the story of the Exodus and our liberation
- * רַחֲצָה—**Rachtzah**: handwashing before the meal
- * מוֹצֵיא—**Motzi**: blessing over the matzah

- * מַצָּה—**Matzah**: blessing before performing the mitzvah of eating matzah at the seder, and eating it
- * מַרְרוֹר—**Maror**: blessing before performing the mitzvah of eating the bitter herbs, and eating them
- * כּוֹרֵךְ—**Korech**: combining the maror and matzah, and eating them together
- * עוֹרֵךְ שְׁלֵחַן—**Shulchan Orech**: eating the festive meal
- * צָפוּן—**Tzaffon**: eating the afikoman
- * בְּרַךְ—**Barech**: birkat hamazon, giving thanks after the meal
- * הַלֵּל—**Hallel**: chanting psalms of praise to G-d
- * נִרְצָה—**Nirtzah**: concluding the Seder with the hope and prayer that it was acceptable to G-d

The Seder Plate

- * **Beitza**:: Egg, a remembrance of the Erev Pesach offering, and a symbol of springtime, fertility, and the giving of life. We are reminded of Pharaoh's threat to kill newborn Hebrew babies, and of the courageous midwives who refused to carry out his orders.
- * **Zeroah**: Shankbone (for which we have substituted a yam), symbolic of the animals sacrificed during the Exodus. The doorposts of the Hebrew homes were marked with blood so the angel of death would “pass over” and not take their firstborn children.
- * **Maror**: Horseradish, a bitter herb symbolizing the bitterness of slavery.
- * **Charoset**: A mixture of apples, cinnamon, wine, and nuts, symbolizing the mortar used with the bricks in building the pyramids. Also, some sweetness to balance the bitterness of the maror.
- * **Karpas**: Parsley, celery, or other greens, a reminder of springtime, the season of Passover, and the earth's fertility.

Kadeish—קדש

The matzot are covered and the first cup of wine is poured. With this cup we fulfill the requirements of reciting kiddush on yom tov over wine and of drinking the first of the four cups of wine.

During the Seder we are obligated to drink four cups of wine. According to Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch, the four cups represent the four stages of our liberation from Egyptian bondage and G-d's corresponding promises to Moses. (Exodus 6:6-7)

With the first cup of wine, we commemorate G-d's promise, saying together:

אָנִי יְיָ וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סְבִלַת מִצְרַיִם.

Ah-ni ah-do-nai, v'ho-tzei-ti et-chem mi-ta-chat siv-lot mitz-ra-yim.

I am Adonai and I will BRING YOU OUT from under the burdens of Egypt.

With this first cup we acknowledge our liberation from the physical burdens and oppression of slavery, the liberation of our nefesh (soul), without which all of our senses and bodily capacities would have remained enslaved.

In the words of Hazon (Rabbi Yosef ben Shlomo Hakohen), "Relief from [physical] burdens is not the result of freedom; it is its prerequisite!" Without the jettisoning of those burdens, there can be no liberation of the spirit and the supernal soul.

So the first cup of wine is dedicated to the One Who liberated us physically from Egyptian oppression.

First Cup of Wine

All say together:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

Ba-ruch ah-ta ah-do-nai eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam bo-rei
p'ri ha-ga-fen.

Blessed are You, Adonai, our G-d, Ruler of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל-עַם,
וְרוֹמַמְנוּ מִכָּל-לָשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְתַתֵּן-לָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה
(לשבת שבתות למנוחה ו) מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה, חֲגִים וְזִמְנִים לְשִׂשׁוֹן
אֶת-יּוֹם (לשבת השבת הזו ואת-יום) חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. זְמַן חַרוּתְנוּ,
(לשבת באהבה,) מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ, זִכָּר לִיְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֶרֶף
וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים. (לשבת וְשַׁבָּת) וּמוֹעֲדֵי קֹדֶשׁךָ (לשבת
בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרִצּוֹן) בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הַנְּחֻלָּתָנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מִקְדֵּשׁ
(לשבת השבת ו)יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים:

Blessed are You, Adonai our G-d, Ruler of the universe, Who has chosen us from all peoples and has lifted us up above all tongues and made us holy through His commandments. And You have given us, Adonai our G-d, in love, appointed times for rejoicing, feasts, and festive seasons for joy, this feast of matzot—the season of our freedom, a holy convocation, as a memorial of the departure from Egypt. For You haven chosen us and sanctified us above all peoples. And You have given us as a heritage Your holy festivals in joy and gladness. Blessed are You, Adonai, Who sanctifies Israel and the festive seasons.

G-d breathed, “Be Light!” And light came into being.

Light the candles:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

Ba-ruch ah-ta ah-do-nai eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam
ah-sheer kid-sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav v'tzi-va-nu
l'had-lik ner shel yom tov.

Blessed are You Adonai our G-d, Ruler of the universe, Who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to light the Yom Tov lights.

Recite the following blessing for the yom tov as well as all the mitzvot of the evening.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה:

Ba-ruch ah-ta ah-do-nai eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-olam
she-he-che-ya-nu v'ki-ya-ma-nu v'hi-gi-ah-nu laz-man ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, Adonai our G-d, Ruler of the universe, Who has kept us alive and preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Drink the first cup of wine.

Urchatz—ורחץ

**The cleansing power of water. Moisture. The essence of life, the flow of life.
Clearing out old ways of thinking, old ways of being—
the things we want to let go of right now.**

We wash our hands without making a blessing, in preparation for eating the karpas dipped in salt water. As we pour water over our hands, we remind ourselves of what we want to be liberated from at this time in our life, what we would like to have “washed away.”

Karpas—כרפס

We rejoice in the earth and thank G-d for its beauty and wonder. We eat the karpas as a sign of freedom from slavery, for slaves are not accustomed to appetizers. We dip it in salt water to remind us of the bitterness of bondage. But it also brings to mind the beauty of G-d’s creation.

Come with me, my love, come away

**For the long wet months are past,
the rains have fed the earth
and left it bright with blossoms**

**Birds wing in the low sky,
dove and songbird singing
in the open air above**

**Earth nourishing tree and vine,
green fig and tender grape
green and tender fragrance**

**Come with me,
my love,
come away**

Dip the green herbs in salt water and all say:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי האדמה:

Ba-ruch ah-ta ah-do-nai eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam
bo-rei p’ri ha-ah-da-ma.

Blessed are You, Adonai our G-d, Ruler of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the earth.

The green herbs are eaten.

Yachatz—יָחַץ

Leader breaks the middle matzah in two, the smaller part is put back between the two whole matzot, the larger piece is wrapped in a napkin and hidden.

Before we begin the narrative of the Exodus, we must place the matzah before us. The matzah is called *lechem oni*, which is interpreted by our Sages as *lechem sheonin alav devarim harbei*—the bread over which many things are said, namely the Haggadah. But the term *lechem oni* also means bread of affliction and poverty. A poor person does not feast over a whole loaf, because he is never certain that he will have food for the next meal. He takes a small piece, putting most of the bread away for later. Thus we break the matzah and put away the larger part for the Afikomen, keeping the smaller piece in front of us during the telling of the Haggadah. In a deeper sense, the hiding of the Afikomen symbolizes that the Exodus was only the beginning of the process of redemption. A part of our redemption is still hidden.

Maggid—מַגִּיד

Leader raises up seder plate with matzot uncovered.

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיא. . .

Ha lach-ma an-ya. . .

**This is the bread of dependence our ancestors ate
in the land of Egypt.**

**Let all who are hungry come and eat;
Let all who are in need come and celebrate
our Passover.**

**This year here,
next year in Israel;
today bound,
tomorrow free.**

The Bread of Dependence

Ha lachma anya accurately expresses the significance of matzah, for matzah is the bread of the slave, entirely dependent upon others.

It was in a hurry that we left Egypt, and our exodus bore the mark of חפזון, “being hurried on.” The hand of G-d bore down heavily on the Egyptians, and they *chased* us out to freedom, denying us the time to bake our bread properly. Even at the moment of redemption, we remained slaves. Liberation was not achieved through our own efforts—we received it from G-d *through our oppressors*.

This fact, that even at the moment of liberation we were subject to the will of others, and *forced* to depart, stamps the Exodus with the seal of the Almighty, defining it as an act of G-d. Thus matzah becomes the bread of our dependence on G-d. Once we are dependent on G-d, our spirits can no longer be subjugated by others.

Jewish resistance in the concentration camps took many forms. For some, it consisted of a refusal to allow themselves to feel degraded, even in the worst of circumstances. There were Jews who continued to live by halakhah [Jewish law] even there.

One such Jew addressed a question to Rabbi Ephraim Oshry: “Should a Jew, having to do forced labor for the Nazis, continue to recite the benediction in the morning service, ‘We praise You, Adonai our G-d . . . who has not made me a slave’? Rabbi Oshry answered: ‘Heaven forbid that they should give up reciting the B’rachah [blessing] that was established by the great sages of yesteryear. On the contrary, now of all times we are obliged to say this B’rachah, so that our adversaries and tormentors realize that, although we are in their power to do with us as their wicked machinations devise, we nonetheless perceive ourselves not as slaves, but as free people, prisoners for the time being, whose liberation will soon come and whose deliverance will quickly be accomplished.’” (Albert Axelrad)

Holy One of Blessing, it is evident and known to You that we desire to do Your will and to celebrate the festival of Passover—to acknowledge that we are liberated by Your hand—by observing the prohibition of leavened food. We pray that in this and in all things, You may guide us and keep us so that we may do Your will with a perfect heart. Amen.

Second cup of wine is poured. Leader covers the matzot.

It is customary for a child, or one who is a child to the tradition, or one who is young in spirit, to ask The Four Questions. It is also the custom that everyone repeat the questions, but our minhag (custom) will also be to ask the questions together in English.

מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכֹּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?
שֶׁבְּכֹל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמֵצָה.
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כֵּלּוּ מֵצָה:

Ma nish-ta-nah ha-lai-la ha-zeh mi-kol ha-lei-loht?
Sheh-b’chol ha-lei-loht ah-nu och-lin cha-meitz u-ma-tzah;
ha-lai-lah ha-zeh, ku-lo ma-tzah.

How does this night differ from all other nights? On all other nights we eat leavened and unleavened bread; on this night, only matzah, unleavened bread.

שְׁבֹכַל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שֶׁאֵר
יִרְקוֹת הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מְרוֹר:

Sheh-b'chol ha-lei-loht ah-nu och-lin sh'ar
y'ra-kot; ha-lai-la ha-zeh ma-ror.

On all other nights we eat all manner of herbs; on this night, only those that are bitter.

שְׁבֹכַל הַלֵּילוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מִטְּבִילִין אֶפְילוּ
פְּעַם אַחַת. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים:

Sheh-b'chol ha-lei-loht ein ah-nu maht-bi-lin ah-fi-lu
pa-ahm eh-chat; ha-lai-la ha-zeh, sh'tei f'ah-mim.

On all other nights we do not dip that which we eat even once; on this night, we dip the herbs twice.

שְׁבֹכַל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין
בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסַבִּין.
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלְנוּ מְסַבִּין:

Sheh-b'chol ha-lei-loht ah-nu och-lin
bein yosh-vin u-vein m'su-bin
ha-lai-la ha-zeh ku-la-nu m'su-bin.

Matzot are uncovered.

On all other nights, we eat either sitting or reclining; on this night, all recline.

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם. . . .

We were once the slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt. . . .

But our G-d brought us out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Had G-d not brought our mothers and fathers out of Egypt, our children and grandchildren would still be enslaved in Mitzrayim, a narrow place. Even if we were all wise and intelligent, learned and versed in the Torah, it would nevertheless be our duty to tell about the Exodus from Egypt. The more anyone discusses the Exodus from Egypt, the more praise he or she deserves.

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ, עַתָּה בְּנֵי חוֹרֵין.

Once we were slaves, now we are free people.

Ah-va-dim ha-yi-nu, ha-yi-nu
ah-ta b'nei cho-rin, b'nei cho-rin
Ah-va-dim, ha-yi-nu
ah-ta, ah-ta, b'nei cho-rin
Ah-va-dim, ha-yi-nu,
ah-ta, ah-ta, b'nei cho-rin, b'nei cho-rin

Through telling and retelling the story, we create a linked-chain back through the ages, all the way back to our ancestors who left the oppression of Mitzrayim—as we have left it through them.

**You are free to ask,
you are free to question,
free to learn the answers of tradition,
free to add answers of your own!**

The Four Children

The questions are many. Even before we can answer them, we must be able to ask them. In its tale of the four children—four types of Jewish questioners—the Haggadah tells us that there are many ways to ask and many ways to answer.

The wise child asks: What does the wisdom of our tradition teach? How do we achieve righteousness, truth, and justice, freedom, peace, and kindness?

This child knows the source of wisdom, not only sacred books but elders who are knowledgeable in the tradition. This child's question doesn't mention Pesach, but the answer is nonetheless, "We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt. . . ." The essence of this answer is that learning begins with the experience of our Exodus from Egypt.

The wicked child asks: What is this service to you?

The Torah is prepared for those times when children grow up following their parents' teaching and guidance. But it also foresees times when the bond between generations will be severed, when the younger generation will not only refuse to participate in festivals and observances of their parents, but will see their role as criticizing their parents for their observances with biting sarcasm.

Concerning children who are mockers, it does not say, "You shall say *to them*," but says merely, "You shall say"! To such children there is nothing one can say, for they expect no instruction from anyone. One cannot change their minds with words. The key to unlocking the hearts of such estranged children rests in the Hands of G-d. Only experience can bring them back—the experience of emptiness, futility and frustration, and disillusionment with the frivolous things to which they had turned.

But the less one speaks *to* such children directly, the more one should speak with

great conviction to *oneself* the teachings of Torah that guide one's day-to-day life. The object is to be a model for one's children, demonstrating the meaning and satisfaction to be found in fulfilling the mitzvot, firm and clear in the face of this child's skepticism, disbelief, and even decadence.

The simple child asks: What does this mean?

And we answer: "By the strength of His hand Adonai brought us out of from Egypt, from the house of bondage." (Exodus 13:14)

The essence of the answer is that we came out of Egypt through G-d's power—our freedom was *not* achieved by a natural course of events.

Where would the "natural course of events" in Egypt have led us? We would have perished in slavery and abject misery. In that place, the concepts of moral freedom and our resemblance to G-d were entirely absent. Our going to freedom, against all odds, was anything but the natural order of things.

And for the child who doesn't know how to ask, you must tell the story.

Matzot are covered and the cup of wine is raised.

In Every Generation

וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֶדָה לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׁלֹא אֶחָד בְּלֶבֶד, עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ.
אֲלָא שְׁבָכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר, עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. וְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם:

V'hi sheh-ahm-da la-ah-vo-tei-nu v'la-nu. Sheh-lo eh-chad bil-vahd
ah-mahd a-lei-nu l'cha-lo-tei-nu eh-lah sheh-b'chol dor va-dor
ohm-dim a-lei-nu l'cha-lo-tei-nu. V'ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch hu ma-
tzi-lei-nu mi-ya-dahm.

And it is this [promise] that sustained our ancestors and us, for not only one has risen up against us; but in every generation they rise up against us to destroy us, but the Holy One saves us from their hand.

Cup of wine is put down and matzot are uncovered.

The Passover Readers' Theatre

LET MY PEOPLE GO

PARTS

Narrator

Pharaoh

Counselor

Shifrah

Puah

Yocheved

Miriam

Moses

Batya

G-d

Officers

The People: THE WHOLE CONGREGATION

Egyptian #1

Egyptian #2

Egyptian #3

Magicians

Narrator: And it came to pass in those days that a new king rose up over Egypt who did not know Joseph. And one day he said to his counselor:

Pharaoh: There are too many of them for their own good!

Counselor: Your Majesty?

Pharaoh: The Hebrews! They have become a nation, an enemy nation.

Counselor: What did they do?

Pharaoh: Nothing . . . unfortunately.

Counselor: Unfortunately???

Pharaoh: They're too clever for that.

Counselor: I have heard it said that they hang together like one soul.

Pharaoh: Yes!! And if war breaks out, they'll join in with our enemies. In any case, if we don't do something, we'll have them spreading all over the place.

Counselor: But what can we do?

Pharaoh: We will make them pay for the air they breathe!

Counselor: Pay????!!!

Pharaoh: With a tax. . . .

Narrator: But the more they tried to limit their growth, the more numerous the Hebrews became and the more they spread out. So the king was forced to think up a new means of extortion.

Pharaoh: Hmmm. . . . We could . . . divide them off from everybody. . . .

Counselor: But Egypt is already divided into castes.

Pharaoh: All the better. We can give the Egyptians a lower class that they can oppress. We can make them the slaves of slaves.

Narrator: But what was slavery soon “progressed” to oppressive slavery. And then to killing. For Pharaoh gave orders to the Hebrew midwives Shifrah and Puah:

Pharaoh: When you deliver the baby of a Hebrew, you will watch closely to determine the sex of the baby before it is born. All of the male babies you will kill before they are born. Not even the mother will know what has happened.

Narrator: However the midwives were in awe of G-d, not Pharaoh. And they conspired against the king.

Shifrah: Don’t worry, we’ll find a way to get around him and his orders.

Puah: I’m not worried. I’ll get down on my knees, if I have to. No one will be able to say that I did anything to endanger a child’s life.

Narrator: However when the king discovered what had happened, he called again for the midwives:

Pharaoh: What do you think you’re doing? You kept the boy babies alive.

Narrator: But the midwives only shrugged their shoulders . . . and said:

Shifrah: What could we do? They’re so lively, they deliver before we get there. . . .

Narrator: So Pharaoh told the entire Egyptian people:

Pharaoh: If you see any Hebrew male babies, throw them into the river!

Narrator: Of course, there was one baby who escaped this fate. His mother’s name was Yocheved. And here is what she did.

Yocheved: I hid him for as long as I could, three months! But what could I do? Every-

one wanted to play with him and make him giggle. I couldn't keep it a secret anymore. So . . . I got a basket made of bullrushes. I coated it with pitch. And I set him in it. I put it in the river where the women bathe. I thought: maybe one of the mothers will take pity on him. . . .

Narrator: And one did. Miriam, the baby's sister, watched it happen.

Miriam: I waded into the reeds. I barely knew what I was doing. It was as if I were placed there by some higher power. Then I stopped and stood there waiting. My heart trembled. All I could think of was: What would happen to him? Would he drown? I was so afraid! And then . . . the unthinkable happened. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe in the Nile.

Narrator: So Batya, the daughter of Pharaoh, was the one who found him. And then she opened the basket. . . .

Batya: It's one of the Hebrew babies! How peacefully he looks up at me! Poor thing!

Narrator: So that was it. In that moment, he became her son. And Miriam ran and brought her mother as a nurse for the child. And Batya asked:

Batya: In Hebrew, how do you say: to take up from the water?

Miriam: Moshe.

Narrator: And so Batya said to the child:

Batya: Then, I name you Moshe. All your life you are never to forget that you were thrown into the water and that I drew you out of it. All your life you are to have a soft heart for other people's troubles.

Narrator: And so it was that Moses was cared for by his own mother. When he was five years old she took him to the palace and the daughter of Pharaoh raised him as her own son. Later he went to live in Midian, and he stayed there for 40 years, working for his father-in-law as a shepherd. One day when he was taking the sheep to graze at the farthest end of the wilderness, he came to the mountain of G-d. There, something caught his eye.

Moses: Hmmm . . . a burning bush. But why isn't it burning up?

G-d: Moses! Moses!

Moses: Here I am.

G-d: Don't get any closer! And take off your sandals! The place where you are standing is holy ground. I am the G-d of your forebears.

Narrator: Moses hid his face. He was afraid to look at G-d.

G-d: I have heard the cry of My people being afflicted by Pharaoh and his slave-drivers. I have felt for them with every lash of the whip, and with every bitterness that they have endured. I am the One who is shaping the new future. I am coming down to deliver them, and I'm sending you to bring them out of Egypt.

Moses: Me?! Why me?! Who am I to go to Pharaoh? Who am I to bring anybody out of Egypt?

G-d: I will be with you.

Moses: And when I come to the people and I tell them G-d sent me, and they say, "What is G-d's name?"—what do I tell them?

G-d: Tell them "I WILL BE" sent you. Tell them that together we can create a future world that is a better world. Tell them that I will be with you now and in your future troubles.

Moses: But they won't believe me! Why should they listen to me? I know what they're going to say: "G-d appeared to you? Sure!"

G-d: You will perform signs for them, and they will believe you.

Moses: But I'm not a talker. When I speak, I stumble and trip over my tongue. I think there's something wrong with my mouth.

G-d: Who do you think made your mouth? Am I not Adonai? Can I not make the stammerer into a speechmaker and a speechmaker into a stammerer? Now . . . go! I will be with your mouth. And I will teach you what to say. You can take your brother Aaron with you. He will help you. Now, grab your staff and go!

Narrator: And so Moses and Aaron did go to Pharaoh. And Moses said:

Moses: G-d says: Let My people go!

Pharaoh: Who is G-d, that I should pay any attention to you! Let the people go? I don't know any G-d and I'm not letting anyone go!

Moses: If we do not obey, pestilence and sword will overtake, not only us, but you and your people. So, for your own sake, let us go that we may praise G-d!

Pharaoh: Sacred festivals! My foot! You know quite well that I know, and I know quite well that you know, that all that is nonsense. Between mature educated people like you and me, all religion and worship of gods is simply a matter of policy. You're only doing this to get the workers out of work. And this is the

work they are born to do. Why do you put such ideas into their heads?

Narrator: Pharaoh was pleased that he seemed to be winning the argument.

Pharaoh: You ask for a whole week's holiday for the Hebrews! This will naturally give our hard-working Egyptians the idea of having a week or more of holiday. This would bring chaos to the whole industry of Egypt and might even lead to the downfall of the State. That I cannot and will never allow.

Narrator: Then Pharaoh spoke to the slave-drivers and the officers of the people.

Pharaoh: Don't give the slaves any more straw to make the bricks. Let them get their own straw! And don't be making it easy on them by cutting their daily quota of bricks! They're lazy good-for-nothings! That's why they sit around crying: "Let us go and make sacrifices to our G-d." Nothing but lies. Do you hear me? Lies!

Narrator: So the people scattered throughout the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. Of course they couldn't make as many bricks as before. And the Hebrew officers, who refused to add to the pressures on their fellow Hebrews, were beaten. So the officers went before Pharaoh.

Officers: Why do you treat us like this? You don't give us any straw, and then you say: Make bricks? You beat on us and it's not even our fault! It's your own people's fault!

Pharaoh: You dare to speak to me of fault?!! You think you have the right to complain? You have no right to be here. You are lazy! That's all you are—lazy! Do you hear me? . . . That's why you say: "Let us go and make sacrifice to the Lord." Get back to work!

Narrator: Then the officers met up with Moses and Aaron in the hallway.

Officers: Listen, you've made us stink to Pharaoh and his servants. Up till now we have been ill-treated, but at least, since they benefited from the work that we do, they tolerated us. But now we appear useless to them! You have put a sword in their hands to kill us with!

Narrator: So Moses went back to G-d. And he said:

Moses: Why are you doing this to Your people? From the very beginning I told you I wasn't able to do this job. And now I see that I was right! What have the people done that you should heap such misery on their heads? If this is how it's going to be, why did you send me?

G-d: You will see what I am going to do to Pharaoh. Only by a strong hand will he let you go. Tell the children of Israel that I am Adonai. Tell them that I will

bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. Tell them that I will deliver you from bondage, and that I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Tell them that I will take you to Me for a people and I will be to you a G-d—despite all that is happening. Go and tell Pharaoh: Let My people go!

Narrator: So Moses went and told them, but they were so troubled that they said:

The People: Do you see the heavy burdens we have to carry? Do you really think we have time to think about the future? We barely have time to breathe.

Narrator: Again, Moses felt like a failure. And he went back to G-d and said:

Moses: It's no good. Even if my speech wasn't so clumsy, I can't ever seem to come up with the right words. The people won't listen to me. And if the people won't listen—then, what makes you think that Pharaoh will?

Narrator: But G-d told Moses:

G-d: It's not for you to worry about whether you are good enough or not. Remember you are going in My place to Pharaoh. And remember to be patient with the people. Lead them gently. And also, you will need to perform some sign for Pharaoh. So cast down your walking stick before him.

Narrator: Why a walking stick? It had to do with how Pharaoh thought of himself, or rather, how he wanted the Egyptians to think of him.

Egyptian #1: Have you heard? He calls himself: The Great Crocodile.

Egyptian #2: The great what?

Egyptian #1: The Great Crocodile who sleeps in the Nile.

Narrator: For the Egyptians thought that the Nile was controlled by the water gods. By raising the staff over the water, Moses would be telling Pharaoh: You and your gods are no more than a stick in my hand! So Moses and Aaron came before Pharaoh and he said to them:

Pharaoh: Why should we believe you when you say that G-d sent you when you have not performed any wonders?

Narrator: So Aaron cast down his walking staff before Pharaoh, and it turned into a serpent, but the king was unimpressed, for all his sorcerers and magicians did the same.

Pharaoh: Ha! Is that all your G-d can do?

Narrator: To show the Egyptians that Aaron could do something with his staff that

their magicians could not do, G-d caused the serpent into which His staff had been changed to swallow up all the staffs of the magicians. But the magicians said:

Magicians: So what else is new! Of course one snake will eat another!

Narrator: So Aaron threw down the staff again, and this time it did not change into a snake, but still it swallowed up all the other staffs. This made Pharaoh wonder whether this wonderful staff of Aaron might also swallow up him and his throne. Nevertheless, he said:

Pharaoh: Listen, if your ancestor Jacob himself were here, I'd give him a bucket and a trowel and send him to work as a slave. And you, Moses and Aaron, it's only because you yourselves don't have to do the work, that you can afford to say: "Let us go and praise G-d."

Narrator: Then G-d said to Moses.

G-d: Tell Aaron to take the staff and stretch out his hand and strike the waters in the Nile and they will turn to blood.

Narrator: Why the Nile? It was because of the Nile that the Egyptians felt prouder than any other nation.

Egyptian #3: Other lands depend on the rain to water their crops.

Egyptian #1: We have the Nile. We don't need the rain.

Egyptian #2: Or G-d.

Narrator: So, by bringing the plague of blood in the river, it was as if G-d were saying:

G-d: Instead of bringing you a blessing, your beloved river will bring you foulness and disease and drive you out of the land. Then you will know what it feels like to be a stranger

Narrator: And so Aaron did what G-d had said. But Pharaoh was unmoved, since his magicians did the same. And he turned away and went up into his palace. And the Egyptians said:

Egyptian #3: Phew! What's that stench?

Egyptian #1: It's the river! It's turning into blood!

Narrator: Then G-d said to Moses:

G-d: Go to Pharaoh and tell him: Let My people go, so that they may serve Me. And if he refuses, tell him: I'm going to send frogs next.

Narrator: Why frogs? It had to do with how the Egyptians thought of themselves and of the Jews.

Egyptian #2: It is only natural that they should be our slaves.

Egyptian #3: Of course! They're not like us!

Narrator: And so Aaron did as G-d said, and the frogs came up and covered all the land of Egypt. Now the frog is normally one of the most fearful and shy animals. But now, the frogs were nervy and they were everywhere. And the Egyptians said:

Egyptian #2: Where did they come from?

Egyptian #3: The river, where else?

Egyptian #1: But why?

Egyptian #2: Who knows? I was making bread, and one jumped right into the kneading trough.

Egyptian #3: That's disgusting!

Egyptian #1: You're telling me. Did you hear what happened to the king?

Egyptian #3: Into the royal bedchamber?

Egyptian #2: Yes. And onto the royal bed, and even onto him.

Narrator: It was as if G-d were saying:

G-d: You exalt yourselves as gods over your slaves. I will teach you how even the lowest and smallest animal has lost all respect for you.

Narrator: And so, just as the Egyptians had made the lives of the Hebrews miserable, now the lives of the Egyptians were made miserable by the frogs. They jumped around like they owned the place and showed the Egyptians what it meant not to have any privacy, until finally Pharaoh said:

Pharaoh: Get my magicians in here!!!

Narrator: And Pharaoh's magicians did their best, but the frogs came up more and more over the land of Egypt. Until the King said:

Pharaoh: I didn't ask for more frogs! You are useless! Do you hear me?

Narrator: And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron:

Pharaoh: Moses!!! Get your G-d to take these frogs away and I'll let you go!

Moses: When do you want me to do it?

Pharaoh: Tomorrow.

Narrator: So Moses went out of the city and prayed. However, the frogs didn't go back to the river. They died—right where they were at, in the houses, in the courtyards, and in the fields. And the Egyptians gathered them together in stinking heaps.

Egyptian #1: More stink! There's no end to it. Why didn't they go back to the river?

Egyptian #2: Who knows? Don't stop shoveling, whatever you do!

Narrator: Of course, when Pharaoh saw there was relief, he changed his mind. Then G-d said to Moses:

G-d: Tell Aaron to stretch out the staff and strike the dust and it will become lice throughout the land.

Narrator: Why lice? It was as if G-d were saying:

G-d: I will cause these little bugs to crawl up and over the bodies of the proud and haughty "master race," as the Egyptians like to think of themselves.

Narrator: And Aaron did as G-d commanded. And there were lice everywhere on people and animals. And the magicians tried to do the same, but they couldn't. And the magicians said:

Magicians: This . . . is the finger of G-d!

Narrator: And G-d said to Moses and Aaron.

G-d: Get up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh when he goes into the water. Tell him: Let My people go! If he doesn't, I'm going to send a mixture of scorpions and snakes on him.

Narrator: Why scorpions and snakes? It was as if G-d were saying to the Egyptians:

G-d: So . . . you will have to leave your land and go into exile, and those whom you have treated as strangers, they will remain in the land.

Narrator: So G-d caused the scorpions and snakes to come into the house of Pharaoh and his servants, and all of Egypt was ruined. And, of course—what else is new—Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron.

Pharaoh: MOSES!!! Go! Go sacrifice to your G-d! You can do it here in Egypt!

Moses: We can't do that! You Egyptians worship sheep. If we sacrifice a sheep in front of the Egyptians, they'll stone us! We have to go out in the wilderness, three days journey.

Pharaoh: I will let you go, only don't go very far away, and ask G-d to take away these scorpions and snakes.

Moses: I'll plead for you tomorrow, but don't tell us any more lies.

Narrator: So Moses prayed, and G-d removed the scorpions and snakes—but, surprise, surprise, Pharaoh did not let the people go. And G-d said to Moses:

G-d: Go to Pharaoh and tell him: Let My people go! Tell him that if he refuses to let go of them with his hand, then, with My hand I will send disease on all your herds and flocks.

Narrator: Why pestilence? To the Egyptians, their horses, their donkeys and camels were everything. And so G-d sent the pestilence and all the cattle of Egypt died. But Pharaoh was stubborn and he still didn't let the people go. Then G-d said to Moses and Aaron:

G-d: Take two handfuls of soot from a furnace and you, Moses, throw it up toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. It will become boils on man and beast throughout the land.

Narrator: So he did, and boils with blisters broke out on people and animals throughout the land. And the magicians couldn't even stand still before Moses and Pharaoh because of the boils. But still Pharaoh did not listen. So G-d said to Moses:

G-d: Go before Pharaoh and say to him: "Still, you exalt yourself over My people and you won't let them go? I'm going to make it rain about this time tomorrow a terrible hail such as has never been seen in Egypt before. You'd better get everything in from the field, man and beast, because if you don't they will all die."

Narrator: Why hail? It never hailed in Egypt. It was as if G-d were saying:

G-d: You imagine yourself to be so wonderfully high above My people, but I will come out of the heights above you . . . with the hail.

Narrator: So Moses did as G-d said. And thunder and hail and fire came down on the earth. And it smashed every plant in the field, except in the land of Goshen where the Hebrews lived. Of course, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron.

Pharaoh: All right, all right. Adonai is righteous and I and my people are wicked! Tell

your G-d to stop this thundering and hail, and I'll let you go.

Narrator: Moses prayed, and the thunder and the hail stopped. But when Pharaoh saw that they were stopped, of course he backed out of the deal. Moses and Aaron went back to Pharaoh.

Moses: Our G-d says: "How long will you refuse to be humble before G-d? Let my people go! If you refuse, tomorrow I will bring locusts and cover the earth—you will not even be able to see the ground."

Narrator: Moses turned and went out from Pharaoh. And Pharaoh's servants said to Pharaoh:

Egyptians: How long will you allow this Moses to be a snare to us? Let them go!! Let them serve their G-d!!! Can't you see that Egypt is destroyed?!!

Narrator: And Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh: Go! Serve your G-d!! But first . . . who will you take with you?

Moses: Our young and our old, our sons and our daughters, our flocks and our herds—everyone and everything.

Pharaoh: Not so!!! Only the men will go!

Moses: We're only going for three days.

Pharaoh: You're lying! You're planning to go and never come back. I'll have nothing more to do with you. Get out!!!

Narrator: So Moses and Aaron were driven out from Pharaoh's presence. Moses raised his staff over the land of Egypt, and an east wind blew on the land all day and all night, and in the morning the wind brought the locusts. They ate everything, and not one green thing remained in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron.

Pharaoh: Okay, I admit it, I've sinned against your G-d, and against you. Forgive me just one more time, and ask your G-d to take away this death.

Narrator: So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to G-d. A strong wind came up, which took up the locusts and drove them into the sea. There was not one locust left in all of Egypt. But still, Pharaoh did not let the people go. And G-d said to Moses:

G-d: Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt.

Narrator: And Moses stretched out his hand and the darkness was so thick you could

almost touch it. People couldn't see each other and no one stood up for three whole days. And Pharaoh called to Moses:

Pharaoh: Go! Serve your G-d! Only . . . you will leave your flocks and your herds behind.

Moses: Not so! Not only will we take our own cattle—we will not leave one hoof behind—but you also will give us from your herds and flocks.

Narrator: Then Pharaoh refused again to let them go. Instead, he said:

Pharaoh: Go!! Get away from me!! And make sure you never see my face again, because on that day you will die.

Moses: You have spoken well. I never will see your face again. My G-d has told me: "About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die. There will be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever shall be."

Narrator: And Moses went out in hot anger from Pharaoh. And G-d said to Moses and Aaron:

G-d: Tell all the congregation of Israel! On the fourteenth day of this month you will slaughter a lamb and put some of its blood upon the doorposts of your houses. I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and all the firstborn will die. When I see the blood on your houses, I will pass over you.

Narrator: And it came to pass at midnight that G-d took all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh got up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians—and there was a great cry in Egypt. For there was not a house where there was not one dead. And the Egyptians also urged the people to get out of Egypt, saying:

Egyptians: We are all going to die!

Narrator: So, the people took their dough, which had not had time to rise, and they walked from Rameses to Succot. There were 600,000 of them, not counting the women and children. G-d led them by way of the wilderness to the Reed Sea. But when Pharaoh found out that the people had fled, he said:

Pharaoh: What have we done? We let Israel get away from us!

Narrator: And Pharaoh took 600 chariots and captains for each one, and went after the children of Israel. He and his army caught up to them where they were camped by the sea. And as the people lifted up their eyes and saw the Egyptians marching after them, they were horrified and they cried out to Moses:

The People: What?! There weren't enough graves in Egypt that you had to drag us out here to die? Didn't we tell you in Egypt to leave us alone? We were better off serving the Egyptians than dying out here in the wilderness.

Moses: Don't be afraid! G-d will work for you. You'll find out, after today you won't have to see these Egyptians any more.

Narrator: Moses was standing and praying, and G-d said to him:

G-d: What are you crying to Me for? This is not the time to be prolonging in prayer when the people is in distress. Tell the people to go forward! For the sea does not stand in their way!

We have seen the role that G-d played in the story of oppression and liberation. But how can we understand the role of the people? Close your eyes. Imagine that we personally have escaped. We're standing at the edge of the Sea of Reeds.

We arrive at the sea tired but momentarily renewed by what appears to be a successful escape. But as we rest, the futility of the situation begins to depress us. Before us stretches a seemingly endless sea. In the face of it, we argue among ourselves, and stand transfixed at the edge of the water—each of us thinking, “We're trapped.”

A lookout on a high bluff signals our camp. Chariots are sighted off in the distance, hardly three hours ride away. A palpable fear begins to ripple among us. Our speech and body movements quicken perceptibly. The ignorant are nervously prattling, “Leaving Egypt was a bad idea, so it's for the best that we'll be going back.”

As rising waves of confusion spread, even the most serene feel the oncoming menace. Near the water's edge, some of us look to the sea. It seems a nondescript moment in the tumult when, with the wind rising, one family, then another and a third, step into the water.

We move with great care, first by inches, then feet and yards. Slowly, with the waters receding, we advance.

At the water's edge others see that our small band of hardly a dozen has covered hundreds of yards. They shout to us, “come back”—and we shout to them, “join us.” Before long a trickle of bodies link those in the midst of the sea with the milling mass on shore on what seems to be an endless rocky path. Soon hundreds and then thousands are following our first careful steps. As we make our way, some of us fall or are accidentally pushed, only to be pulled along by others.

The last soul to exit has been in the midst of the sea no more than an hour, gone hardly a mile from shore, when the leading divisions of Pharaoh's army arrive. With horses panting and blood lust exuding from the ranks, they charge at us—only to sink out of sight.

It isn't long before both we and our pursuers know that our exit won't be blocked. While troops unhitch and re hitch horses in vain efforts, their officers watch in silent frustration as we disappear in the distance, a melting mirage in the midst of the sea.

That night we make our way to shore. As thousands of us emerge from the water, and the light of dawn breaks, we talk and weep and sing, extravagantly exalting G-d's miracle. We are ready to promise anything in gratitude for our salvation.

And so on that night we overcame our fear, as all must in every generation who would be free. For the human fate has been exile and oppression, again and again; and the human task: to find hope, to overcome. As it is said:

אֵל תִּירָא כִּי גֹאֲלִתִּיךָ; קָרָאתִי בְּשֵׁמִי, לִי אָתָּה. תַּעֲבוֹר בַּמַּיִם, אֶתְּךָ אָנֹכִי;
וּבִנְהָרוֹת, לֹא יִשְׁתַּפּוּךָ.

Have no fear, for I am redeeming you; I have called you by name, you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I am with you; when you pass through the torrents, they shall not overwhelm you.

No liberation is easy. As tyranny brings death and terror to its victims, so the struggle to overthrow it claims its casualties. There is no redemption without pain.

Israel suffered greatly before it was redeemed from Egyptian bondage. And we remember that our oppressors suffered many plagues before they were willing to let our people go.

Our rejoicing at the liberation of our ancestors is tempered by the memory of the suffering of the oppressor and the oppressed, and by the knowledge that tyranny and cruelty still abide; tyrants fall but others rise to take their place.

“Remember the day you went out of Egypt all the days of your life.” (Deuteronomy 16:3) Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah taught: “It is easy to remember your liberation when the sun is shining. But you must remember it ‘all the days of your life’—even when the sun has set, even when your day is dark. The ‘days of your life’ are also your days in this world—the world as it is. Let your remembrance of liberation help change the world as it is into the world as it ought to be.”

“Few are guilty, but all are responsible.” (Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel)

Wine is poured into any empty cups.

Ten (Contemporary) Plagues

G-d afflicted the Egyptians with ten plagues that left the people and the land desolate. It is traditional to spill a drop of wine from our cups as we recite each plague. Our cup of rejoicing cannot be full when sickness and death, our own and that of others, is all around us. In our own day many evils remain to plague us, both oppressors and oppressed. Each one suffering diminishes our cup of joy.

As long as the instruments and means of death are preferred over those of life, we drop wine from our cup of joy.

(Dam) דָּם

Blood: Breast cancer, AIDS, and other life-threatening illnesses without health insurance

(Tz'far-dei-ah) צַפְרֵי־אֵה

Frogs: Joblessness and low-wage employment that destroys families and communities

(Ki-nim) כְּנִיָּם

Vermin: Anti-Semitism, racism and all forms of bigotry

(Ah-rov) עָרוֹב

Wild Beasts: Organized criminals

(Deh-ver) דְּבַר

Cattle Disease: Political corruption

(Sh'chin) שְׁחִין

Boils: Poverty in the land of plenty

(Ba-rad) בָּרָד

Hail: Threat of acid rain and other toxic chemicals

אַרְבֵּה (Ar-beh)

Locusts: Corporate greed creating devastating pressures for workers

חֹשֶׁךְ (Cho-shech)

Darkness: Family violence and abuse of women, children and the elderly

מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת (Ma-kat B'cho-rot)

Death of Firstborn: Identifying with and acting like oppressors

The cups are refilled.

“Dayeanu”

אֱלוֹ אֱלוֹ הוֹצִיאָנוּ,
הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם,
הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, דַּיָּנוּ.

I-lu i-lu ho-tzi ya-nu
ho-tzi ya-nu mi-mitz-ra-yim
ho-tzi ya-nu mi-mitz-ra-yim,
dai-yei-nu.

(Had Hashem brought us out of Mitzrayim. . . .)

Dai-dai-yei-nu, dai-dai-yei-nu,
dai-dai-yei-nu,
dai-yei-nu, dai-yei-nu, dai-yei-nu.

(. . . it would have been enough.)

אֱלוֹ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשֶּׁבֶת, דַּיָּנוּ:

אֱלוֹ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, דַּיָּנוּ:

How much more so, then, should we be grateful to G-d for the manifold favors the Holy One conferred upon us: G-d brought us out of Egypt, and executed judgments; G-d gave us their wealth, and split the Reed Sea for us; G-d led us through the sea, on dry land and engulfed our oppressors in it; G-d sustained us in the desert for 40 years, and fed us with manna; G-d gave us the Sabbath, and brought us to Mount Sinai; G-d gave us the Torah, and brought us to Israel; G-d built the Temple for us, to atone for all our sins.

The Symbols of Passover

Rabbi Gamliel said: Whoever has not explained the following three things on Passover has not fulfilled his or her duty:

פֶּסַח (Pesach)

A roasted shankbone: Symbol of the Passover sacrifice eaten during the days of Temple to honor the fact that G-d passed over the houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt. (We substitute a roasted yam in place of the shankbone to symbolize the Passover sacrifice.)

Leader lifts the broken middle matzah for all the participants to see.

מַצָּה (Matzah)

Matzah: This matzah, like tortilla, chapati, johnny-cakes, or Indian fry-bread, is lekhem oni—poor people’s bread. There are no luxuries in this bread—no eggs, no salt, not even the luxury of time that allows it to rise. This is bread baked and eaten in haste, prepared quickly in the rush to embark on a long journey toward freedom. As it is said: “They baked the dough they had brought out of Egypt into unleavened cakes, for they were driven out of Egypt without being given time to prepare food.”

Leader lifts the maror for all the participants to see.

מָרֹר (Maror)

Bitter herb: Why do we eat maror? Because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt. As it is said: “They made life bitter for them with hard labor at mortar and brick, and with every kind of field work; they drove them in their work with utter ruthlessness.”

בְּכָל־דֹּר וְדֹר חָיֵב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ, כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֵצֵא
מִמִּצְרַיִם.

B'chol dor va-dor cha-yav ah-dahm lir-ot et atz-mo ki-i-lu hu
yah-tza mi-mitz-rai-yim.

IN EVERY GENERATION
WE ARE OBLIGED
TO UNDERSTAND
THAT WE PERSONALLY
HAVE BEEN LIBERATED
FROM MITZRAYIM.

The matzot are covered and the cup is lifted briefly.

We were given the spiritual power as a people to liberate ourselves from all forms of oppression in every generation. But the legacy of that spiritual empowerment can be truly known only through its actual exercise—reading the Haggadah is necessary but not sufficient.

The Seder is an opportunity to understand much more about the pain of slavery for our people in Egypt—in what particular ways Hebrew slaves were burdened, how they “cried out” or otherwise resisted their slavery, and why they were afflicted.

But we may also ask: What are the burdens, troubles, and afflictions we experience right now in our own lives? How can we act with our congregation to liberate ourselves?

וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַמַּצּוֹת כִּי בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
הוֹצֵאתִי אֶת־צְבָאוֹתֵיכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
לְדֹרוֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם:

Ush-mar-tem et ha-ma-tzot; ki b'et-zem ha-yom ha-zeh
ho-tzei-ti et tziv-o-tei-chem mei-eh-retz mitz-ra-yim;

Ush-mar-tem et-ha-yom ha-zeh
l'do-ro-tei-chem chu-kat o-lam.

And you shall observe the unleavened bread—“Do not read hamatzot [unleavened bread] but hamitzvot [the commandments]—just as one may not leaven unleavened bread, so one may not leaven [delay doing] a commandment, but if it comes to your hand, do it immediately” (Rashi in the name of R’ Josiah).

For on this very same day I brought out your hosts from the land of Egypt—It was not our own doing but the work of almighty G-d that liberated us from slavery and degradation, and thus we are bound in conscience to repay our obligation.

Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations, as an ordinance for ever—Since we and every generation are the direct beneficiaries of the Exodus, we are recipients not only of the divine gift of living free but the holy obligation to create freedom, that is, to create a community with G-d in which doing the commandments leads to a world of righteousness, truth, and justice, freedom, peace, and kindness, not only for ourselves but for our children and our children’s children.

Second Cup of Wine

With the second cup of wine, we commemorate G-d’s promise, “I shall rescue you from their bondage.”

With this cup we acknowledge the liberation of our spirit from the endless, fixed cycles of Egyptian life, in which all were destined to serve Pharaoh and the lesser rulers, and in which the children of Abraham were to become the slaves of slaves, crushing forever their spiritual capacity to choose and change themselves and the world around them.

But the Holy One liberated our spirit from its Egyptian bondage. And ever since, through every test of oppression and endless attempts at our annihilation and conversion, we remained spiritually clear-sighted, unwilling to abandon our human dignity.

So the second cup of wine is dedicated to the One Who liberated us from reacting out of fear to those forces that would oppress us, preserving within us instead the indomitable spirit of an eternally free people.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְרִי הַגֶּפֶן:

Ba-ruch ah-ta ah-do-nai eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam bo-rei p’ri
ha-ga-fen.

Blessed are You, Adonai, our G-d, Ruler of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

All drink the second cup of wine.

Rachtzah—רחיצה

Everyone dips their fingertips into the water basin, and say:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל גְּטִילַת יָדַיִם:

Ba-ruch ah-ta ah-do-nai, eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam
ah-sheer kid-sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav
v'tzi-va-nu ahl n'ti-laht yah-dai-yim

Blessed are You, Adonai our G-d, Sovereign of the universe, Who has sanctified us with Your commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of hands.

Motzi/Matzah—מוציא/מצה

As it is said: “They baked the dough they had brought out of Egypt into unleavened cakes, for they were driven out of Egypt without being given time to prepare food.”

Everyone puts their hands on the matzah or on someone who is touching the matzah, and recites the following two blessings:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ:

Ba-ruch ah-ta ah-do-nai, eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam
ha-mo-tzi le-chem min ha-ah-retz

Blessed are You Adonai, our G-d, Sovereign of the universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth.

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

Ba-ruch ah-ta ah-do-nai, eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam
ah-sheer kid-sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav
v'tzi-va-nu ahl-ah-chi-laht ma-tzah

Blessed are You Adonai, our G-d, Sovereign of the universe, Who has sanctified us with Your commandments, and Who commands us to eat matzah.

Maror—מרור

Before eating the maror, we dip it in the charoset. It looks like the clay and straw with which our people were forced to make bricks for Pharaoh's building projects in Egypt.

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

Ba-ruch ah-ta ah-do-nai, eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam
ah-sheer kid-sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav
v'tzi-va-nu ahl-ah-khi-laht ma-ror

Blessed are You Adonai, our G-d, Sovereign of the universe, Who has sanctified us with Your commandments, and Who commands us to eat maror.

Everyone eats the maror.

Korech—כורֶךְ

The charoset is a mixture of apples, nuts, wine, and spices combined together to form a paste, symbolic of the mortar that our ancestors used to build the pyramids of Egypt. But charoset is sweet; this is to remind us that in the midst of our slavery, our misery, there is always the possibility of freedom, with its sweet taste.

In remembrance of the Temple in Jerusalem, according to the custom of the great sage Hillel, we combine a piece of the third matzah with the maror and the charoset into a sandwich, and eat it. Thus we intensify our remembrance of the slavery and the redemption.

We hold the matzah of freedom, the “mortar” of forced labor, the bitter maror of bondage. We take into ourselves the joys and sorrows of the ages.

Shulchan Orekh—שֻׁלְחַן עֶרֶךְ

We begin our meal with eating a hard-boiled egg, dipped in salt water. Eggs have many meanings. They are the symbol of springtime, of death and its opposite, fertility, of the giving of life—new beginnings. Most foods become softer the longer they are in hot water; eggs, like Jews, become tougher.

צפון-Tzaffon

It is customary to hide the Afikomen at the beginning of the seder and to "buy" it back from the child who finds it to show how precious this mitzva is to us. After the adults have redeemed the Afikomen from the child who found it, we eat a piece of it (or another piece of matzah) to symbolize our hope for the ultimate redemption of ourselves and all peoples, from affliction and oppression.

This matzah is called tzaffon, that which was hidden or stored up. So we pray to the G-d of our ancestors and G-d of our descendants: May the time come when those who are lost will be found, the broken made whole, the hidden revealed.

ברך-Barech

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת בְּשׁוּב יְיָ אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הָיִינוּ כְּחֻלְמִים: אִזּוּ יִמְלֵא שְׂחוֹק פִּינוּ
וְלִשְׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה אִזּוּ יֵאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם הַגְּדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהֵי: הַגְּדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ
הָיִינוּ שְׂמֵחִים: שׁוּבָה יְיָ אֶת שְׁבִיתָנוּ כְּאֶפְיָקִים בְּנֹגֵב: הַזְרְעִים בְּדַמְעָה בְּרִנָּה
יִקְצְרוּ: הַלֹּחַ יִלֵּךְ וּבִכָּה נִשְׂא מִשֶּׁר הַזֶּרַע בָּא יָבֵא בְרִנָּה נִשְׂא אֶלְמֵתָיו:

Shir ha-ma'lot: b'shuv a-do-nai et shi-vat tzi-yon, ha-yi-nu k'chol-mim. Az yi-ma-lei s'chok pi-nu, u-la-sho-nei-nu ri-nah. Az yom-ru va-goy-im, hig-dil a-do-nai la'a-sot im a-leh. Hig-dil a-do-nai la'asot i-ma-nu, ha-yi-nu s'mei-chim. Shu-va a-do-nai et sh'vi-tei-nu, ka-a-fi-kim ba-ne-gev. Ha-zor-im b'di-ma b'ri-na yik-tzo-ru. Ha-loch yei-leich u-va-cho no-sei me-shech ha-za-ra. Bo ya-vo ve-ri-na no-sei a-lu-mo-tav.

When Adonai brought our exiles back to Zion, it was like a dream. Then our mouths were filled with laughter, joyous song was on our tongues. Then it was said among the nations: "Adonai has done great things for them." Great things indeed G-d did for us; therefore we rejoiced. Bring back our exiles, Adonai, as You bring back streams to Israel's desert soil. Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyous song. A hungry man will plant in sadness, bearing his few sacks of seed; but he will come home in gladness, bearing ample sheaves of grain.

Leader

חֲבֵרֵי נְבִרָךְ

Cha-vei-rai, n'va-reich.

Friends, let us give thanks.

Others

יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

Y'hi shem a-do-nai m'vo-rach mei-a-ta v'ad o-lam.

May Adonai be praised, now and forever.

Leader

בְּרִשׁוֹת מְרָנָן וְרִבְּנָן וְרַבּוֹתַי, נְבָרַךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׂאֵבְלָנוּ מִשְּׁלוֹ.

Bir-shut ma-ra-nan v'ra-ba-nan ra-bo-tai, n'va-reich eh-lo-hei-nu sh'ah-chal-nu mi-sh'lo.

With your consent, friends, let us praise G-d of whose food we have partaken.

Others

בָּרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׂאֵבְלָנוּ מִשְּׁלוֹ וּבְטוֹבוֹ חַיֵּינוּ.

Ba-ruch eh-lo-hei-nu sh'ah-chal-nu mi-sh'lo uv-tu-vo chai-yi-nu.

Praised be our G-d of whose food we have partaken and by whose goodness we live.

Leader

בָּרוּךְ הוּא וּבְרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ:

Ba-ruch hu u-va-ruch sh'mo:

Praised be G-d and praised be G-d's name.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַזֶּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוֹבוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד
וּבְרַחֲמִים הוּא נוֹתֵן לֶחֶם לְכָל בֶּשָׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ. וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל תָּמִיד לֹא
חָסַר לָנוּ, וְאֵל יַחְסֹר לָנוּ מְזוֹן לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל, כִּי הוּא זֶן
וּמְפָרְנֵס לְכָל וּמְטִיב לְכָל, וּמְכִיֵּן מְזוֹן לְכָל בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
הַזֶּן אֶת הַכֹּל:

Ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai, eh-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam, ha-zan et ha-o-lam ku-lo b'tu-vo b'chein b'ch-sed
u-v'ra-cha-mim. Hu no-tein le-chem l'chol ba-sar ki l'o-lam chas-do. Uv-tu-vo ha-ga-dol ta-mid lo cha-sar
la-nu v'al yech-sar la-nu ma-zon l'o-lam va-ed. Ba-a-vur sh'mo ha-ga-dol, ki hu zan um-far-neis la-kol
u-mei-tiv la-kol u-mei-chin ma-zon l'chol b'ri-yo-tav a-sheer ba-ra. Ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai, ha-zan et ha-kol.

Praised are You, Adonai our G-d, Ruler of the universe, who sustains the whole world with kindness and compassion. You provide food for every creature, for your love endures forever. Your great goodness has never failed us. Your great glory assures us nourishment. All life is Your creation and You are good to all, providing every creature with food and sustenance. Praised are You, Adonai, who sustains all life.

נוֹדָה לְךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל שֶׁהִנְחַלְתָּ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ, אֶרֶץ חֶמְדָּה טוֹבָה וְרַחֲבָה, בְּרִית
וְתוֹרָה, חַיִּים וּמְזוֹן. יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל־יְחִי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, בְּכַתּוּב. וְאַכְלֵתָ
וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבִרְכַתְּ אֶת־יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאֶרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְךָ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
עַל הָאֶרֶץ וְעַל הַמְּזוֹן.

No-deh l'cha a-do-nai eh-lo-hei-nu al sh'hin-chal-ta la-a-vo-tei-nu er-etz chem-da to-va ur-cha-va, b'rit v'to-ra,
cha-yim u-ma-zon. Yit-ba-rach shim-cha b'fi kol chai ta-mid l'o-lam va-ed. Ka-ka-tuv v'a-chal-ta v'sa-va-ta,
u-vei-rach-ta et a-do-nai eh-lo-heh-cha al ha-a-retz ha-to-va a-sheer na-tan lach. Ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai, al
ha-a-retz v'al ha-ma-zon.

We thank You, Adonai our G-d, for the pleasing, ample, desirable land that You gave to our ancestors, for the covenant and Torah, for life and sustenance. May You forever be praised by all who live, as it is written in the Torah: "When you have eaten your fill, you shall praise Adonai your G-d for the good land that He has given you." Praised are You, Adonai, for the land and for sustenance.

וּבְנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, בּוֹנֵה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. אָמֵן

U-v'nei y'ru-sha-la-yim ir ha-ko-desh bim-hei-ra v'ya-mei-nu. Ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai, bo-nei b'ra-cha-mav
y'ru-sha-la-yim. Ah-mein.

Build up Jerusalem, the holy city, in our time. Praised are You, Adonai, who in His mercy rebuilds Jerusalem.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הָאֵל אָבִינוּ, מְלַכְנוּ, הַמְּלִיךְ הַטּוֹב, וְהַמְטִיב
לְכֹל. הוּא הַטִּיב, הוּא מְטִיב, הוּא יֵטִיב לָנוּ. הוּא גְמָלְנוּ, הוּא גּוֹמְלָנוּ, הוּא
יְגַמְלָנוּ לְעַד חֵן וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים וַיִּזְכְּנוּ לַיְמֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ.

Ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam, ha-eil a-vi-nu, mal-kei-nu, ha-meh-lech ha-tov, v'ha-
mei-tiv la-kol. Hu hei-tiv, hu mei-tiv, hu yei-tiv la-nu. Hu g'ma-la-nu, hu go-m'lei-nu, hu yig-m'lei-nu la-ad
chein va'ch-sed v'ra-cha-mim vi-za-kei-nu li-mot ha-ma-shi-ach.

Praised are You, Adonai our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, Almighty our Father, Our King, who is good to all, whose
goodness is eternal. Favor us with kindness and compassion now and in the future as in the past. May we be worthy of
the days of the messiah.

הֲרַחֲמֵנוּ, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּגַן עָלֶיהָ.

Ha-ra-cha-man, hu y'va-reich et-ha-a-retz ha-zot v'ya-gein a-le-ha.

May the Merciful bless this land and protect it.

הֲרַחֲמֵנוּ, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת־אֲחֵינוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנְּתוּנִים בְּצָרָה וַיּוֹצִיאֵם מֵאֲפֵלָה
לְאוֹרָה.

Ha-ra-cha-man, hu y'va-reich et-a-chei-nu b'nei yis-ra-eil han-tu-nim b'tza-ra v'yo-tzi-eim mei-a-fei-la l'o-ra.

May the Merciful bless all of our people who suffer and bring them out of darkness into light.

הֲרַחֲמֵנוּ, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת־מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, רֵאשִׁית צְמִיחַת גְּאֻלָּתֵנוּ.

Ha-ra-cha-man, hu y'va-reich et-m'di-nat yis-ra-eil, rei-shit tz'mi-chat g'u-la-tei-nu.

May the Merciful bless the state of Israel, the dawn of our redemption.

Shabbat

הֲרַחֲמֵנוּ, הוּא יְנַחֵלְנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ שַׁבַּת וּמְנוּחָה לְחַיֵי הָעוֹלָמִים.

Ha-ra-cha-man, hu yan-che-lei-nu yom sh'ku-lo shab-bat u-m'nu-cha l'cha-yei ha-o-la-mim.

May the Merciful grant us a day of true Shabbat rest, reflecting the life of eternity.

On Festivals

הֲרַחֲמֵנוּ, הוּא יְנַחֵלְנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ טוֹב.

Ha-ra-cha-man, hu yan-chi-lei-nu yom sh'ku-lo tov.

May the Merciful grant us a day filled with the spirit of the festival.

וְנִשָּׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת יְיָ וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְנִמְצָא חֵן וְשִׂכָּל טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹהִים
וְאָדָם. עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ
אָמֵן:

V'ni-sa v'ra-cha mei-eit a-do-nai utz-da-ka mei-eh-lo-hei yish-ei-nu, v'nim-tza chein v'sei-chel tov b'ei-nei
eh-lo-him v'a-dam. O-seh sha-lom bim-ro-mav, hu ya-a-seh sha-lom, a-lei-nu v'al kol yis-ra-eil, v'i-ma-ru
ah-mein.

May we receive blessings from Adonai, lovingkindness from the G-d of our deliverance. May we find grace and good favor before G-d and all people. May He who brings peace to His universe bring peace to us, to all the people Israel and to all humankind. And let us say: Amen.

The Passover seder is divided into two parts—one part before the meal and one part after the meal. The readings from the Haggadah *before* the meal remind us of the past redemption—the physical and spiritual liberation of the Children of Israel from the land of Egypt. The readings from the Haggadah *after* the meal remind us of the future redemption—the coming of the messianic age.

Third Cup of Wine

With the third cup of wine, we commemorate G-d's promise, "I am redeeming you with an outstretched arm and with great judgements."

With this cup we acknowledge the liberation of our neshamah, which maintains our connection with G-d, Who is the source and sustenance of our freedom.

Without that connection to G-d, we inevitably become enslaved—first, to our physical drives and, second, to human rulers who would manipulate our desires to satisfy those drives, in order to subjugate our will and dignity to their own supposed divine purposes.

So the third cup of wine is dedicated to the One Who liberated our neshamah.

Cups are refilled with wine and all say together:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן:

Ba-ruch ah-ta a-do-nai elo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam
bo-rei p'ri ha-ga-fen

Blessed are You, Adonai, our G-d, Ruler of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

All drink the third cup of wine, except for a few drops.

The Prophet Eliyahu

There is a custom to set an empty place at the seder table and to begin the second part of the seder by opening the door for Eliyahu Hanavi, Elijah the Prophet. A reason for this custom may be found in the prophetic reading that is read on Shabbat before Passover. It reveals that G-d will send Eliyahu Hanavi just before the future redemption, as it is written: "Behold, I will send Eliyahu Hanavi before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Compassionate One." (Malachi 3:23) Since the second part of the seder is to remind us of the future redemption, we begin by welcoming Eliyahu Hanavi—the "forerunner" of that future redemption.

We fill Eliyahu's cup from each of our own cups. Open the door for Eliyahu.

Eliyahu (Elijah) was last seen ascending to heaven in a golden chariot pulled by fiery horses. A tradition grew up around Eliyahu that he would return to prophesy the arrival of the Mashiach.

"Golden Chariot"

Across a blackened and clouded sky
With pillars of smoke and ash
An envelop of fire flashes by
A golden chariot whipped by storming winds

See the angels praise the throne
It's the prophecy of Moshe and Aharon

The throne of glory lit by lightning bolts
The Patriarchs its wheels and spokes
Its legs of justice and compassion hold
A loving sovereign who reins its mighty team

See the angels praise the throne
It's the prophecy of Moshe and Aharon

Tonight let us take up the prophets' challenge to ask ourselves difficult questions.

We were slaves in the land of Egypt and tonight we are closer to freedom. Tonight others are enslaved, and next year they too will be free. Through their freedom, we take another step toward the prophetic dream.

May It Continue To Be So

To those who follow the examples of Abraham and Sarah, who show love, generosity, and welcome—to the lost, the lonely, the sick, the poor, and even to the parts of themselves they want to turn—we say:

Amen, may it continue to be so.

To those who treat all living creatures, starting with themselves and including planet earth, with respect and caring, we say:

Amen, may it continue to be so.

To those who give tzedakah, who help others to find work, and who help others to find mates, we say:

Amen, may it continue to be so.

To those who speak out for justice even when, all around them, others are silent, we say:

Amen, may it continue to be so.

To those who strengthen and build community and bring faith into action, we say:

Amen, may it continue to be so.

To those who take full responsibility for themselves—for their intentions, their actions, and their consequences, we say:

Amen, may it continue to be so.

To those who seek to create understanding, to make peace, to put an end to wars and killings, we say:

Amen, may it continue to be so.

To those who realize that life is short and universally precious, we say:

Amen, may it continue to be so.

To those who want to learn about Torah and being Jewish, starting with Shabbat, we say:

Amen, may it continue to be so.

“Lo Yisa Goy”

לֹא יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל גּוֹי חֶרֶב, לֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה.

Lo yisa goy el goy che-rev, lo yil-m'du od mil-cha-ma

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor ever again train for war.

Calling Down G-d's Blessings

R' Levi Yitzkhak taught: “There are two types of worshippers of G-d: one who worships G-d out of deep devotion and one who worships Him out of deeds. The difference between them is that the one who worships G-d out of deep devotion is in the realm of the Nothing while the one who worships Him out of good deeds is in the realm of being. Because of this, the former, being nothing in the realm of Nothing, cannot call down upon himself the flow of G-d's blessings while the latter, being rooted in the realm of concrete being and action, can indeed call down upon himself G-d's blessings.”

“Eliyahu Hanavi”

אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּבִיא אֱלֹהֵי הַתְּשֻׁבִי
אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי הַגִּלְעָדִי.
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ יָבֵא אֱלֵינוּ
עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד.
עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד.

Ei-li-ya-hu ha-na-vi, ei-li-ya-hu ha-tish-bi
Ei-li-ya-hu, ei-li-ya-hu, ei-li-ya-hu ha-gil-a-di.
Bim-hei-ra v'ya-mei-nu ya-vo a-lei-nu
Im ma-shi-ach ben da-vid,
Im ma-shi-ach ben da-vid.

Eliyahu the prophet
Eliyahu from Tishbi
Eliyahu, Eliyahu
Eliyahu from Gilad
In a hurry, in our lifetime
Let him come to us.
With the Messiah from the House of David,
With the Messiah from the House of David.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel taught that for the prophets, justice was the supreme manifestation of G-d—not simply because it is right for the each person, both the dispenser and the recipient, but because of the link between justice and world history. Justice will decide our social survival and success.

Thus the prophets were preoccupied not so much with the idea of justice but with the practical applications of injustice and oppression. “The prophet is a person who is not tolerant of wrongs done to others, who resents other people’s injuries.”

Without righteousness there is no truth. Without truth there is no justice. Without justice there is no freedom. Without freedom there is no peace. And without peace there is no kindness.

הלל—Hallel

יְיָ זָכְרָנוּ יְבָרֵךְ, יְבָרֵךְ אֶת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְבָרֵךְ אֶת בֵּית אֶהְרֶן. יְבָרֵךְ
יְרָאֵי יְיָ, הַקְטָנִים עִם הַגְּדֹלִים. יִסֵּף יְיָ עֲלֵיכֶם, עֲלֵיכֶם וְעַל בְּנֵיכֶם.
בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם לַיְיָ, עֲשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ. הַשָּׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם לַיְיָ, וְהָאָרֶץ
נָתַן לַבְּנֵי אָדָם. לֹא הִמְתִּים יְהִלְלוּ יְהוָה, וְלֹא כָּל יְרֵדֵי דוֹמָה. וְאַנְחָנוּ
נְבָרֵךְ יְהוָה, מִעֲתָה וְעַד עוֹלָם, הַלְלוּיָהּ:
הִלְלוּ אֶת יְיָ, כָּל גּוֹיִם, שִׁבְחוּהוּ כָּל הָאֲמִים. כִּי גִבֹר עָלֵינוּ חֲסֵדוֹ,
וְאַמַּת יְיָ לְעוֹלָם הַלְלוּיָהּ:

הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:
יֹאמֶר נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:
יֹאמְרוּ נָא בֵּית אֶהְרֶן, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:
יֹאמְרוּ נָא יְרָאֵי יְיָ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:

אוֹדֶה כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי, וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה.
אוֹדֶה כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה.
אֲבֹן מְאֹסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה.
אֲבֹן מְאֹסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה.
מֵאֵת יְיָ הִיְתָה זֹאת, הִיא נִפְלְאֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ.
מֵאֵת יְיָ הִיְתָה זֹאת, הִיא נִפְלְאֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ.
זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְיָ, נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׁמְחָה בּוֹ.
זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְיָ, נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׁמְחָה בּוֹ.

אָנָּה יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא: אָנָּה יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא:
אָנָּה יְיָ הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא: אָנָּה יְיָ הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא:

Fourth Cup of Wine

With the fourth cup of wine, we commemorate G-d's promise, "I shall take you to Me for a people."

With this cup we acknowledge that Torah contemplates not only the liberation of the individual soul, but the creation of a G-dly society by those souls.

We are liberated not only to serve G-d individually, but to be the creators of a social life that serves to teach all the peoples of the world how a nation—all of its individuals, families, and communities together—can serve as a sanctuary dedicated to G-d.

So this fourth cup of wine is dedicated to the One Who liberated our neshamah so that we could commit ourselves to create a G-dly society.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן:

Ba-ruch ah-ta a-do-nai eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam
bo-rei p'ri ha-ga-fen

Blessed are You, Adonai, our G-d, Ruler of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

Nirtzah—נִרְצָה

"Peace in Jerusalem"

**Our Seder now has ended
with its history-laden rites.
We have journeyed from Mitzrayim
on this storied night of nights.**

**We bore witness, we remembered
our covenant with you,
So we pray that you redeem us
as you pledged your word to do.**

**La shana, habah-ah,
B'rushalayim, shalom. (Repeat)**

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:

Next year in Jerusalem.

Counting of the Omer

What *is* this about? The Torah says: “You shall count seven complete weeks from the eve of the second day of Pesach, when the Omer of grain is to be brought as an offering. The day after the seventh week of your counting will make fifty days.” (Leviticus 23:15-16).

From the night of the second Seder until Shavuot, we are “*commanded*” to count each day.

But why?

On those 49 days, we may take a brief moment each day to consider how to stop thinking like slaves, and how to live like free people by receiving the Torah. For freedom without law leads to chaos and degradation.

In short, each day we count the Omer to prepare ourselves to live up to the Torah’s vision for our lives—so that we have more clarity about why we’re living, where we’re going, and how we’re going to get there.

The counting prepares us for Shavuot and mattan Torah, the giving and *receiving* of the Torah.

On the second night of Passover:

הַנְּגִי מוֹכֵן וּמוֹזֵן לְקִיּוֹם מִצֹּת עֲשֵׂה שֶׁל סִפְרַת הָעֹמֵר, כְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוּב
בְּתוֹרָה: וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת, מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאָכֶם אֶת עֹמֵר
הַתְּנוּפָה, שִׁבְעַת שָׁבָתוֹת תְּמִימוֹת תִּהְיֶינָה; עַד מַמְחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת
הַשְּׁבִיעִית תִּסְפְּרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם.

I am ready and prepared to perform the positive commandment concerning the counting of the Omer, as it is written in the Torah: “You shall count from the day following the day of rest, from the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven full weeks shall be counted; you shall count 50 days to the day following the seventh week.”

The Omer is usually counted in the evening, and the following blessing is said:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל
סִפְרַת הָעֹמֵר.
הַיּוֹם יוֹם אֶחָד לְעֹמֵר.

“Adir Hu”

אָדיר הוּא, יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב,
בְּמִהְרָה בְּמִהְרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב.
אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

בְּחֹר הוּא, גְּדוֹל הוּא, דָּגוּל הוּא, יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב,
בְּמִהְרָה בְּמִהְרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב.
אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

הַדּוֹר הוּא, נְתִיק הוּא, זָכַאי הוּא, חָסִיד הוּא, יבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב,
בְּמִהְרָה בְּמִהְרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב.
אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

“Who Knows One?”

אָחַד מִי יוֹדֵעַ? אָחַד אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:
אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ.

Eh-chad mi yo-dei-ah? Eh-chad ah-ni yo-dei-ah
Eh-chad eh-lo-hei-nu sh'ba-sha-ma-yim u'va-aretz

Who knows one? I know one.
One is our G-d, in heaven and on earth.

שְׁנַיִם מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁנַיִם אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:
שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית,
אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ.

Sh-na-yim mi yo-dei-ah? Sh-na-yim ah-ni yo-dei-ah.
Sh'nei lu-chot ha-brit,
eh-chad eh-lo-hei-nu sh'ba-sha-ma-yim u'va-aretz.

Who knows two? I know two.
Two are the tablets of the commandments;
One is our G-d, in heaven and on earth.

שְׁלֹשָׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:
שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית,
אָחַד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ.

Sh-lo-sha mi yo-dei-ah? Sh-lo-sha ah-ni yo-dei-ah.
Sh-lo-sha ah-vot, sh'nei lu-chot ha-brit,
eh-chad eh-lo-hei-nu sh'ba-sha-ma-yim u'va-aretz.

Who knows three? I know three.
Three is the number of the patriarchs;
two are the tablets of the commandments;
One is our G-d, in heaven and on earth.

אַרְבַּע מִי יוֹדֵעַ? אַרְבַּע אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:
אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית,
אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁבַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ.

Ar-bah mi yo-dei-ah? Ar-bah ah-ni yo-dei-ah.
Ar-bah i-ma-chot, sh'lo-sha ah-vot, sh'nei lu-chot ha-brit,
eh-chad eh-lo-hei-nu sh'ba-sha-ma-yim u'va-aretz.

Who knows four? I know four.
Four is the number of the matriarchs;
Three is the number of the patriarchs;
Two are the tablets of the commandments;
One is our G-d, in heaven and on earth.

“An Only Kid”

חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא,
דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתַרֵּי זִוְיָ,
חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

An only kid, an only kid.
My father bought for two zuzim, chad gadya.

וְאָתָא שׁוֹנָרָא, וְאָכְלָהּ לְגְדִיָּא,
דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתַרֵּי זִוְיָ,
חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

Then came the cat
And ate the kid

Chorus

וְאֶתָּא כְּלָבָא, וְנִשְׁךְ לְשׁוֹנָרָא,
דְּאֶכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זִוְיָ,
חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

Then came the dog
And bit the cat
That ate the kid

Chorus

וְאֶתָּא חוּטְרָא, וְהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא,
דְּנִשְׁךְ לְשׁוֹנָרָא, דְּאֶכְלָה לְגִדְיָא,
דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זִוְיָ,
חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

Then came the stick
And beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid

Chorus

וְאֶתָּא נוֹרָא, וְשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,
דְּהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׁךְ לְשׁוֹנָרָא,
דְּאֶכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זִוְיָ,
חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

Then came the fire
And burned the stick
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid

Chorus

וְאֶתָּא מַיָּא, וְכָבֵה לְנוֹרָא,
דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא,
דְּנִשְׁךְ לְשׁוֹנָרָא, דְּאֶכְלָה לְגִדְיָא,
דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זִוְיָ,
חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

Then came the water
And quenched the fire
That burned the stick

That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid

Chorus

וְאֵתָא תּוֹרָא, וְשָׂתָא לְמֵיָא,
דְּכַבָּה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא,
דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנָשַׁף לְשׁוּנְרָא,
דְּאֶכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוְיָ,
חַד גְּדִיָא, חַד גְּדִיָא.

Then came the ox
And drank the water
That quenched the fire
That burned the stick
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid

Chorus

וְאֵתָא הַשׁוּחֵט, וְשָׂחַט לְתוֹרָא,
דְּשָׂתָא לְמֵיָא, דְּכַבָּה לְנוֹרָא,
דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,
דְּנָשַׁף לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאֶכְלָה לְגִדְיָא,
דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוְיָ,
חַד גְּדִיָא, חַד גְּדִיָא.

Then came the butcher
And killed the ox
That drank the water
That quenched the fire
That burned the stick
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid

Chorus

וְאֵתָא מְלַאךְ הַמּוֹת, וְשָׂחַט לְשׁוּחֵט,
דְּשָׂחַט לְתוֹרָא, דְּשָׂתָא לְמֵיָא,
דְּכַבָּה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא,
דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנָשַׁף לְשׁוּנְרָא,
דְּאֶכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זַוְיָ,
חַד גְּדִיָא, חַד גְּדִיָא.

Then came the angel of death
And slew the butcher
That killed the ox
That drank the water
That quenched the fire
That burned the stick
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid

Chorus

וְאַתָּא הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְשַׁחַט לְמַלְאָךְ הַמּוֹת,
דְּשַׁחַט לְשׁוֹחֵט, דְּשַׁחַט לְתוֹרָא,
דְּשַׁתָּא לְמִיָּא, דְּכַבֵּה לְנוֹרָא,
דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהַכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,
דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאָכַלָּה לְגִדְיָא,
דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתַרְי זַוְיָ,
חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

Then came the Holy One, Blessed be G-d
And destroyed the angel of death
That slew the butcher
That killed the ox
That drank the water
That quenched the fire
That burned the stick
That beat the dog
That bit the cat
That ate the kid

Chorus