



15 Steps to Freedom

A  Street Haggadah



J Street organizes pro-Israel, pro-peace, pro-democracy Americans to promote US policies that embody our deeply held Jewish and democratic values and that help secure the State of Israel as a democratic homeland for the Jewish people. We believe that only a negotiated resolution agreed to by Israelis and Palestinians can meet the legitimate needs and national aspirations of both peoples.

Working in the American political system, in the Jewish community and with others with whom we share core values, we advocate for diplomacy-first American leadership and policies that advance justice, equality, peace, and democracy in Israel, in the wider region and in the United States as well.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, we, as a Jewish people, have faced persecution, violence and enslavement. However, for many in this generation, the events of October 7, were the most brutal and large-scale that our people have experienced in their own lifetime. The Israel-Hamas war required us to ask hard questions: How could this happen? What is the true cost of our freedom? How many lives must be lost in pursuit of that freedom? When is the cost too high? As war between the US, Israel and Iran threatens to widen the conflict and deepen fear across Israeli and American Jewish communities alike, many of us are again asking what security, restraint and leadership require in such a dangerous moment. We are grateful to celebrate this year as all the hostages have finally been returned, and yet in so many ways we still find ourselves in *Mitzrayim*, the narrow places.

In times of trauma and conflict, we must remind ourselves that freedom is not a given, but that the Passover Seder can be a roadmap to lead us all there. After all, we were all once slaves in the land of Egypt. The rituals of this Seder remind us to approach the world with empathy, compassion and concern. The experience of the Seder reminds us that while we who are sitting here tonight, are fortunate to be free, not everyone in the world has access to that same freedom.

J Street has compiled this Haggadah to apply the themes and lessons of the Passover Seder to what it means today, to be pro-Israel, pro peace and pro-democracy. What questions do we need to ask about our power and responsibility? How might we be responsible for the oppression faced by others? What plagues us, and how can we not simply celebrate our own freedom, but use our freedom to help others become free? This Haggadah provides a framework for envisioning ways we can fight to ensure that Israel flourishes as a secure, democratic homeland for the Jewish people and that Palestinians are able to achieve self-determination and independence in a state of their own – ensuring one day we will live in a world of peace, security and freedom for both peoples. It reminds us that as long as others are suffering, our own celebratory glasses of wine are never full to the brim.

This Haggadah includes pieces written by J Street friends and clergy. You can use the entire Haggadah, or pick out particular sections to add meaning to your Seder. As the Seder is one long question and answer session, we hope you'll feel inspired to ask challenging questions – and to listen closely to each other's answers.

Emily Kaiman
Director of Jewish Communal Engagement, J Street

Fifteen Steps

Rabbi John Rosove

**15 steps remembering
Our people's great liberation**

**15 symbols revealing
Our journey through time**

**15 stages lifting
In the telling to the told**

**15 phases carrying
From the low to the high**

**15 points shining
From exile to the promised land**

**15 keys opening
Gates for all peoples**

**Gates of justice and mutual
respect**

**Gates to two states for two
peoples**

Soon in our day

This year and in the next

In Israel and in Palestine

Life and history fulfilled

Amen!

THE 15 STEPS OF THE SEDER

Kadesh – קַדֵּשׁ	Sanctify; blessing over the first cup of wine
Urchatz – וּרְחֹץ	Washing the hands without a blessing
Karpas – כַּרְפָּס	Dipping a green vegetable into salt water
Yachatz – יַחַץ	Breaking the middle matzah; the larger piece is hidden for the afikoman
Maggid – מַגִּיד	Retelling the story of the Exodus
Rachtzah – רְחֹצָה	Second washing of the hands, this time with a blessing
Motzi – מוֹצִיא	Blessing over the bread (matzah)
Matzah – מַצָּה	Special blessing for eating the matzah
Maror – מָרֹר	Eating the bitter herbs
Korech – כּוֹרֵךְ	"Sandwich" of matzah and maror
Shulchan Orech – שְׁלֻחַן עוֹרֵךְ	Eating the festive meal
Tzafun – צָפוּן	Eating the hidden afikoman
Barech – בָּרַךְ	Giving thanks after the meal and the third cup of wine
Hallel – הַלֵּל	Songs of praise and the fourth cup of wine
Nirtzah – נִרְצָה	Conclusion of the Seder

The First Cup

The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture. (Israeli Proclamation of Independence, 1948).

Our hope is not yet lost / it is two thousands years old / to be a free people in our land / the land of Zion and Jerusalem (Hatikvah, Israel's National Anthem).

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, boreh p'ri ha-gafen

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁחֵחַיֵנו וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵן הַזֶּה

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu,

v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh

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

Drink for thought: The Israeli Proclamation of Independence promised equal rights for all inhabitants in 1948. Nearly 80 years later, we know that full equality has yet to become a reality for some Israeli citizens — and certainly not for the millions of Palestinians living in the occupied territories. Yet, as Hatikvah teaches us, we cannot give up on our values, even if we must persist for thousands of years.

Where do you find the hope to continue fighting for justice?

A Kavannah, A Word of Intention: Thresholds

Rabbi Sharon Brous

One of the first rites of the Seder is *urchatz*, the ritual washing of hands.

We stand at the threshold. Soon we'll tell the story that reignites our imagination every year, that reminds us that the world can look different than it does, that insists that every human being can live with dignity and love. This story has, for generations, held our most stubborn and audacious insistence: that peace, justice and liberation are not fantasy but reality. That we, every one of us, are called to be partners in our own redemption story.

But before we can hear this story, we have to transition from the mundane of our work lives to the holy and the hopeful of the holiday. The signpost of that transition is a symbolic hand washing.

This year, we also find ourselves, collectively, standing at a threshold. Like the first signs of spring after a long, dark winter, we yearn to embrace new possibilities, to chart a brave, new course.

It will take courage, faith and love to make our shared dreams a reality. First, we must wash away our bitterness and resentment, our exhaustion, narrow-mindedness and cynicism. It's only then that we can begin to reconnect with a world of expansive possibility.

Unlike nearly every other element of the Seder, this washing is unaccompanied by a blessing, perhaps because the washing, itself, is a blessing.

Wash hands without reciting a blessing.

KARPAS - כַּרְפָּס

The Seder includes numerous contrasting symbols: parsley in salt water and bitter maror in sweet *haroset*, death in the shank bone next to the egg of life on the Seder plate, matzah both as a symbol of freedom and bread of affliction. What is the connection between these contradictions and freedom?

Human beings are deeply conditioned to crave the pleasant and the sweet and avoid the unpleasant. This is a natural tendency. However, to be free means relating fully to all experience and choosing how to act because we wish to realize our values and commitments.

As free beings tonight we embrace all experience and are not shaken or driven by our fears and desires to make our experience conform to our expectations. We are free insofar as we do not automatically identify pleasant and unpleasant with good and bad, with desirable and undesirable, with true and false. Freedom entails a perspective that is wider than our likes and dislikes.

— Rabbi Sheila Peltz Weinberg

The saltwater of *Karpas* represents the tears shed in slavery. In the midst of ongoing conflict, Israelis and Palestinians alike know deep pain and loss. With so much suffering, it can be easy to grow numb.

This has been a time of tears for us all.

How might the ritual of *Karpas* help us open ourselves to grief — and through it, deepen our understanding of those who are suffering today?

Dip the karpas into the saltwater.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה

Neveleh et ruah ha'olam boreh peri ha'adamah

We bless the spirit of the world, who creates fruit of the earth.

Eat the karpas.

YACHATZ - יָחַץ!

Excerpt from *Just Mercy*

Bryan Stevenson

We are all broken by something. We have all hurt someone and have been hurt. We all share the condition of brokenness even if our brokenness is not equivalent...

Paul Farmer, the renowned physician who has spent his life trying to cure the world's sickest and poorest people, once quoted me something that the writer Thomas Merton said: We are bodies of broken bones. I guess I'd always known but never fully considered that being broken is what makes us human. We all have our reasons. Sometimes we're fractured by the choices we make; sometimes we're shattered by things we would never have chosen. But our brokenness is also the source of our common humanity, the basis for our shared search for comfort, meaning, and healing. Our shared vulnerability and imperfection nurtures and sustains our capacity for compassion. We have a choice. We can embrace our humanness, which means embracing our broken natures and the compassion that remains our best hope for healing. Or we can deny our brokenness, forswear compassion, and, as a result, deny our own humanity.



We now prepare to break the middle matzah, this bread that carries conflicting interpretations — the bread of affliction and the bread of freedom. As we divide the matzah into two uneven pieces, we remember our affliction. But as we break the matzah, can we break the habit of seeing ourselves only as afflicted-ones and eat our bread in peace, like free people?

Divide the middle matzah. Cover the afikomen to be hidden.

Here is where we begin to tell the Passover story. Turn to someone next to you and share a story from a memorable Passover Seder.

What makes this Seder stand out in your memory?

What traditions or practices made a particular impression on you?

Passover

Primo Levi z"l

Tell me: how is this night different
From all other nights?
How, tell me, is this Passover
Different from other Passovers?
Light the lamp, open the door wide
So the pilgrim can come in,
Gentile or Jew;
Under the rags perhaps the prophet is
concealed.
Let him enter and sit down with us;
Let him listen, drink, sing and celebrate
Passover;
Let him consume the bread of affliction,
The Pascal Lamb, sweet mortar and bitter
herbs.
This is the night of differences
In which you lean your elbow on the table,
Since the forbidden becomes prescribed,

Evil is translated into good.
We spent the night recounting
Far-off events full of wonder,
And because of all the wine
The mountains will skip like rams.
Tonight they exchange questions:
The wise, the godless, 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.
You too, stranger.
This year in fear and shame,
Next year in virtue and justice.

Ha Lachma Anya

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיָא דִּי אָכְלוּ אַבְהַתְנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דְּכָפִין יִיְתִי וְיִיכֹל, כָּל
דְּצָרִיף יִיְתִי וְיִפְסַח. הַשְּׁתָא הַכָּא, לְשָׁנָה הַבְּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל. הַשְּׁתָא עַבְדִּי,
לְשָׁנָה הַבְּאָה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין.

*Ha lachma anya dee achalu avhatana b'ara d'mitzrayim. Kol dichfin yeitei
v'yeichol, kol ditzrich yeitei v'yifsach. Hashata hacha, I'shana haba'ah b'ara
d'yisrael. Hashata avdei, I'shana haba'ah b'nei chorin.*

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. All those who are hungry, let them enter and eat. All who are in need, let them come celebrate the Passover. Now we are here. Next year in the land of Israel. This year we are enslaved. Next year we will be free.

We say at the Seder, "Let all who are hungry come and eat!" Despite our differences, we are members of a common human family, all of us equally worthy of a place at the table. The Egyptians wouldn't even dine with the Israelites, considering them abominable, subhuman (Gen. 43:32, 46:34; Ex. 8:22). We respond by saying that everyone is as deserving of a seat as are we..

That everyone has a place at the table is the Seder's dominant theme: We make space for the four widely different types of children, we lament the absence of the Egyptians who died during the Exodus, and we welcome the spirit of Elijah the Prophet. There's also a passage in the Haggadah describing a Seder about 2,000 years ago in B'nei Brak (near modern-day Tel Aviv). The attendees, who stayed up all night discussing the Exodus, were five of the greatest rabbis of their generation: Eliezer, Joshua, Elazar, Akiva and Tarfon. Many today don't realize the group's diversity: rich and poor, conservative and liberal, old and young, teacher and student. In its subtle way, the Haggadah conveys that a vibrant, viable Judaism gives everyone—regardless of age, class, status, or beliefs – a place at the table.

How do we ensure that everyone has a place at the table, even if they feel and think differently from us on Israel? On American politics? Or on any other hot-button issue that is typically divisive? How do we resist the impulse to alienate, avoid, or antagonize others at the Seder? How can our differences become a source of strength, rather than a force for polarization?

In times of war and societal trauma, when we are consumed with fear and outrage, and see only glimmers of hope, we can find small rays of healing and peace by learning with and from others across lines of difference. The Seder thus provides us an opportunity to create openings in the tight spaces of our minds and hearts for a little bit of light. As we see others around the table, and conversations unfold during Maggid, here are some questions we can hold:

- What is your inner state as you enter into this Seder?
- What are you noticing in your communities, your family?
- Where do you find hope?
- What is being asked of you? What must you let go of to make space for something new?

Listen for points of view from others that challenge your own assumptions. Listen with your wide open heart, putting yourself in the shoes of the other. Listen from the future and from the whole. The Seder is not a practice in advice-giving or problem solving. Just the act of deep listening, mirroring, being present for others and tuning in to collective insight creates the conditions for healing and possibly, something new to emerge.

Together, we can ensure that everyone has a place at the table.

— Rabbi Michael Knopf, Inspired Change; Rabbi Susan Leider and Liz Alperin Solms, Insyte Partners



The Four Questions

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?

Ma nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleilot?

Why is this night different from all other nights?

1st Question:

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה, הלילה הזה – כלו מצה.

Shebchol haleilot anu okhlin hametz umatzah; halailah hazeh, kuloh matzah.

On all other nights we eat leavened products and matzah, and on this night only matzah.

2nd Question:

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות – הלילה הזה (כלו) מרור.

Shebchol haleilot anu okhlin sh'ar y'rakot; halailah hazeh, maror.

On all other nights we eat all vegetables, and on this night only bitter herbs.

3rd Question:

שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת – הלילה הזה שתי פעמים.

Shebchol haleilot ein anu matbilin afilu pa'am ehat; halailah hazeh, shtei f'amim.

On all other nights, we don't dip our food even once, and on this night we dip twice.

4th Question:

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין – הלילה הזה כלנו מסבין.

Shebchol haleilot anu okhlin bein yoshvin uvein m'subin; halailah hazeh, kulanu m'subin.

On all other nights we eat sitting or reclining, and on this night we only recline.

The Four Questions: A Ma Nishtana for our Generation

Rabbi Claire Davidson Miller

Why is this generation different from all other generations?

מה נשתנה הדור הזה?

Throughout the Haggadah, we retell the story in the plural first person — we, as a community, relive what happened, and we bear some responsibility.

שְׁבַּכְל דּוֹר וָדוֹר

That in all other generations, we were wandering and oppressed, and now we — Israelis, yes, but also Jews — have our own state, government and army. Who, now, is powerless?

שְׁבַּכְל דּוֹר וָדוֹר

That in all other generations, we have sought justice for ourselves against outside forces, but now a portion of our people perpetuate injustice against the Palestinians. How can we continue working toward justice for others?

שְׁבַּכְל דּוֹר וָדוֹר

That in all other generations, we had no choice but to forgive our oppressors, yet we are now the ones who must seek forgiveness. Can we be forgiven for the ways in which we have mistreated Palestinians, and what actions on our part might be necessary before we are?

שְׁבַּכְל דּוֹר וָדוֹר

That in all other generations, love of Israel was often a unifying factor, but in this generation, we are blessed with the idea of critical love of Israel. How can we continue to be unified around Israel without being uniform?

עֲבָדִים הָיינו, עַתָּה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין
Avadim hayinu, atah b'nei chorin

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

Four Children for a Contemporary Passover Seder

Rabbi David Teutsch

At the heart of the Passover Seder are questions asked and questions answered. The four children of the Haggadah model the process of asking. Four contemporary people might ask their questions about what is happening in the State of Israel.

The wise child says, “Israel’s founding principles sound wonderful, but how can Israel be genuinely guided by them, recognizing the rights of Israelis and Palestinians, of Orthodox and secular, of Sephardi and Ashkenazi, of women and men, of poor and rich?”

The troubled child says, “How did you let all those settlements get built, and how do you tolerate the mistreatment of Palestinians by settlers and soldiers? And why have you allowed the protections for poor people to be gradually removed during Netanyahu’s term in office?”

The simple child says, “I love Israel. What’s wrong with that?”

The silent child is completely bewildered by all the contradictory news and perspectives. They simply don’t know what to say.

As people who love Israel but understand all the complexities, how can we discuss this difficult situation with calm and mutual caring? How do we bring ourselves to face all of the facts? Can we start tonight?



A Quick History Lesson

Rabbi Jessica Jacobs

Our story as a Jewish people begins with Abraham, who, through a call from God, is given the task to *lech lecha*, to blindly go to a place where God will show him. Our forefathers and foremothers, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel, and Leah eventually lead us to the land of Egypt.

Jacob's son Joseph and the Egyptians begin on good terms with one another. However, soon a Pharaoh arises over the land that does not know Joseph or his descendants, the Israelites. From his fear of their great numbers the Pharaoh enslaves the Israelites and forces harsh labor and poor conditions upon them. Israelite first-born boys are drowned so as to thwart the strength of the Israelite people.

But the cries of the Israelite people do not go unnoticed. God sends ten plagues upon the Egyptians, forcing Pharaoh to let the Israelite slaves go free. God brought the Israelites, and us, out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. God brought us to freedom, and now it is our blessing and burden to carry the weight of that freedom.



Before the Ten Plagues

Rabbi Toba Spitzer

When it comes time to recite the ten plagues, there is a tradition of dipping a bit of wine out of our cups as we say each plague, diminishing our joy just a bit as we recall the difficulties that befell the Egyptians.

This Seder tradition calls to mind a famous *midrash* (rabbinic commentary), on the moment during the Exodus when the Egyptian army was drowning in the sea, just after the Israelites crossed to freedom. The angels turned to one another to sing their daily praises, when God hushed them, saying, “The work of My hands is drowning in the sea, and you would sing songs before Me?!”

While we cannot erase the suffering of the Egyptians from our freedom story, we can acknowledge that a human price was paid. As we recite the plagues, as we drop a bit of wine onto our plates, we are invited to remember that our own freedom — as Americans, as Jews — often comes with a price paid by others. We can take this moment to reflect on the damage done, whether intentional or not, that has allowed us to enjoy our freedom and our privilege.

If I am economically privileged, what is the cost borne by others — in the U.S. and around the world — to allow me my comforts? If I am white, at what cost comes the relative ease with which I move through the world? As a Jew, as someone connected to Israel, how do I reckon with the terrible price paid by the Palestinian people for the creation of the Jewish state? This is not a moment for guilt, but for honest reckoning, for acknowledgment, and perhaps a commitment to make some kind of *tikkun*, repair, during this season of redemption.



The Ten Plagues

Blood	דָּם	<i>Dam</i>
Frogs	צְפַרְדֵּי	<i>Tzfardeyah</i>
Lice	כְּנִים	<i>Kinim</i>
Wild Animals	עֲרוֹב	<i>Arov</i>
Pestilence	דֶּבֶר	<i>Dever</i>
Boils	שָׁחִין	<i>Sh'chin</i>
Hail	בָּרָד	<i>Barad</i>
Locusts	אַרְבֵּה	<i>Arbeh</i>
Darkness	חֹשֶׁךְ	<i>Choshech</i>
Death of the Firstborn	מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת	<i>Makat Bechorot</i>

Rabbi Yehudah would use this acronym:

(we remove three additional drops)

DaTza"Ch – דְּצַ"ח

(*Dam, Tzfardeyah, Kinim*/Blood, Frogs, Lice)

ADa"Sh – אֲדַ"שׁ

(*Arov, Dever, Sh'chin*/Wild Animals, Pestilence, Boils)

BACha"v – בְּאֲחַ"ב

(*Barad, Arbeh, Choshech, Bechorot*/Hail, Locusts, Darkness, Firstborn)

Ten Modern Plagues of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Cantor Evan Kent

1. The Plague of Poor Leadership

Palestinians and Israelis have leaders who have served for too long and often promote their own personal political survival and ideological agendas over the interests of their people.

2. The Plague of Living in Fear

Palestinians and Israelis alike live in trauma and fear. Israelis live with the threat of violence and memories of devastating attacks; Palestinians too endure violence, airstrikes, military incursions, and displacement. Families on all sides carry grief, loss, and uncertainty about what tomorrow may bring.

3. The Plague of Home Destruction

Palestinian home destruction by the Israeli army has been shown again and again to be ineffective in deterring terrorism. Additionally, studies by the IDF have shown that collective punishment such as home demolition may actually encourage retaliatory terrorist attacks.

4. The Plague of the Humanitarian Crisis

Across our world, millions suffer from war, displacement, hunger, and devastation. Too often, this suffering is not inevitable but the result of human choices—of power without compassion, and policies without empathy. This crisis calls us to remember our Jewish obligation to uphold human dignity and care for the vulnerable.

5. The Plague of False Narratives

When borders, geography and mistrust limit interactions between Palestinians and Israelis, fictions are created about each other.

6. The Plague of Settlements

Israel's democratic and Jewish nature are severely threatened by the continual and seemingly unabated expansion of Israeli settlements and increased Settler violence in the West Bank.

7. The Plague of the Lack of Visions

In the midst of war, we search for leaders who offer us hope, rather than fear, and a path towards co-existence, rather than walls that divide.

8. The Plague of Restricted Movement

Israel stringently restricts the movement of Palestinians within the West Bank, in Gaza, and in East Jerusalem; restrictions compound the crisis, impede access to essential services, and exacerbate the suffering of vulnerable populations.

9. The Plague of Violence

Violence, instead of words, is used on all sides, by all parties, as a way to harm, intimidate, maim, destroy and kill others, perpetuating cycles of suffering and destruction with devastating consequences for civilians on all sides.

10. The Plague of Indifference

We become indifferent when we cease to see each other as human beings with legitimate hopes, dreams, aspirations and ambitions.



Dayeinu

T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

The song “*Dayeinu*,” which literally means “it would have been enough for us,” thanks God for all the miracles performed for the Jewish people: from the Exodus out of Egypt, to their journey through the desert, until they entered the land of Israel where they built a national home. In reality, no one of these alone would indeed have been enough. But we celebrate each step toward freedom before moving to the next step. If we dismiss small victories, we will never achieve the whole liberation.

CHORUS: *Dai-dai-yenu, dai-dai-yenu, dai-dai-yenu, dayeinu dayeinu (x2)*

Spoken: If the ETERNAL had taken the Jews out of Egypt and not brought them safely to Israel, *dayeinu!*

CHORUS

Spoken: If the ETERNAL had brought the Jews to Israel and not empowered them to build a sovereign state, *dayeinu!*

CHORUS

Spoken: If the ETERNAL had empowered the Jews to build a sovereign state and not inspired them to make it a democracy, *dayeinu!*

CHORUS

Spoken: If the ETERNAL had inspired the Jews to make Israel a democracy and not given them great power, *dayeinu!*

CHORUS

Spoken: If the ETERNAL had given the Jews great power and not ennobled them to wield it with compassion, *dayeinu!*

CHORUS

But the ETERNAL has ennobled us to wield power with compassion. In every generation, a person must see themselves as if they had personally gone out of Egypt. In past generations, Jews fled from oppression and persecution. Now we all draw courage from our pasts to extend a hand of aid and friendship to those in need.

Three Symbols

Rabbi Rachael Bregman

Rabban Gamliel used to say: Whoever does not discuss the following three things on Passover has not fulfilled his duty, namely:

Passover — פֶּסַח (the Passover-sacrifice),

Matzah — מַצָּה (the unleavened bread) and

Maror — מְרוֹר (the bitter herbs).

Rabban Gamliel answers the question, “What is required to feel the intensity and the urgency of the Seder enough to get you up out of your seat such that you must respond to injustice in the world?”

His answer: Passover, Matzah and Maror. These are the symbols we investigate to identify the wrongs which must be set right.

Especially when considering issues around justice in the Palestinian Israeli conflict, what do these symbols suggest?

Passover: Where are people or their rights being sacrificed for someone else to have power?

Matzah: Also known as the bread of affliction: Where is someone being afflicted or suffering under hardship imposed upon them so that someone else gains power?

Maror: Where have people’s lives been embittered for the sake of someone else to take away the power of others for their own gain?

בְּכֹל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיָּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ

כְּאִלוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם

B’chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et-atzmo,

k’ilu hu yatzav mimitzrayim.

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

The Second Cup

It is our duty, both to ourselves and our children, to see the new world as it is today, to examine the risks and explore the chances, and to do everything so that the State of Israel becomes part of the changing world. We are no longer an isolated nation, and it is no longer true that the entire world is against us. We must rid ourselves of the feeling of isolation that has afflicted us for almost fifty years. We must join the campaign of peace, reconciliation, and international cooperation that is currently engulfing the entire globe, lest we miss the train and be left alone at the station

— Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin z”l’s Inaugural Speech, 1992

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, boreh p’ri ha-gafen

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



Drink for thought: Many tell us that we have no choice — that Israel’s actions are necessary for its security. We know that not to be true. Just as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin did in 1993, we possess the capacity to reimagine a different and more promising future for both Israelis and Palestinians; we do have a choice.

How can we effectively convey to our leaders, to family and to friends that violence is a choice, but other choices exist. How do we help people see that the path we’re on isolates Israel further, bringing away from the world of Yitzhak Rabin.

How can we work to create a different and better reality, helping to end the cycle of violence, pursuing peace and striving for a sustainable resolution?

RACHTZAH - רְחִצָּה

This ritual hand washing is completed with a blessing, different from the first washing of the Seder. As we wash our hands we say the blessing ending with “*al netilat yadaim*”, often translated as praising God who has commanded us “on the washing of our hands.” However, the true translation hinges on the word “*netilat*” which literally means lifting or raising. Indeed, the more accurate translation praises God who has commanded us to “raise up” our hands. How might we use this more literal translation to take a moment as we wash and consider the times and places we have chosen to raise our hands this year? In what ways have we shied away from raising our hands, stepping up, lifting up others in need? Can we use this moment of handwashing as time to recommit ourselves to the holy act of raising our hands in service of the holy acts of *tikkun olam*, repairing our world?

Pour water over your hands and then recite this blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם
***Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al netilat yadayim.***

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

MOTZI + MATZAH - מוֹצִיא מַצָּה

Lift the three matzot and say the following two blessings:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz

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

Everyone takes a piece of matzah to eat.

MAROR - מָרוֹר

Maror symbolizes the bitterness in our lives. We taste it to remember the bitterness of slavery, past and present, inflicted upon us and inflicted by us. This year the bitterness seems almost too much to bear. Do we really need a reminder of the heartache of the hostages, the harshness of war, the tragedy of civilian suffering?

We hope though, that through tasting the bitterness, our senses can be awakened to empathy and camaraderie. As you taste the bitter herbs, pause to consider: How can you allow yourself to empathize with the pain experienced by both Israelis and Palestinians? How does tasting the bitterness of maror inspire you to have empathy for all those suffering, who are a part of our human family?

Say the blessing, then eat the maror (bitter herbs).

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

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

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

KORECH - כּוֹרֵךְ

The practice of combining bitter and sweet suggests that part of the challenge of activism is to taste freedom even in the midst of oppression, and to be ever conscious of the oppression of others, even when we feel that we are free.

— Jews Against the Occupation

Dip the bitter herb in the charoset.

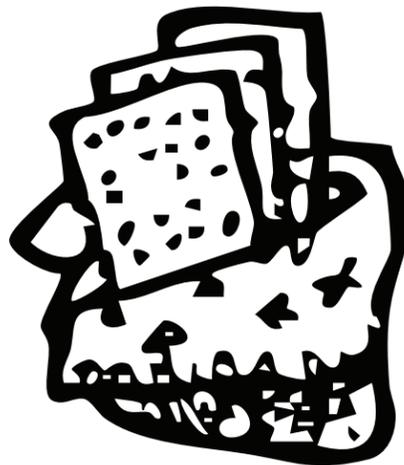
Food for thought (to discuss during the meal): In the midst of war and suffering, it can feel hard to stay connected to joy. Yet it's also so important to rejoice in the things that inspire us, give us energy and remind us why we are so committed to this work. Share a story around the table about an inspiring moment you or someone you know experienced in Israel. What are the aspects of Israel that bring you joy?

TZAFUN - צִפּוּן

Tzafun, which literally means “hidden”, is the part of the Seder where we seek what is not obvious, when we look for something other than what is in front of our faces. It is also when we return to that which was broken earlier in the evening and try to make it whole again. In this way, *Tzafun* serves as the organizing principle of the second half of our Seder, where we ask ourselves what world we want to see. Then we commit ourselves to making it real.

— T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

Search for, and then eat, the afikomen.



To the tune of “Sanctuary”

בָּרֵךְ רַחֲמָנָא מַלְכָּא דְעֵלְמָא מְרִי דְהַאי פְּתָא

Brich rachamana malka d'alma marey d'hai pita

Blessed is the merciful One, ruler of the world, creator of this bread.

Additional Song Lyrics:

1. You are the source of life for all that is and your blessing flows through me.
2. Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true, and with thanksgiving I'll be a living sanctuary to you
3. *Ve'asu li mikdash veshachanti betocham, va'anachnu nevareich Yah, me'atah ve'ad olam*

וְעִשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשִׁכְנֵתִי בְּתוֹכְכֶם. וְאֶנְחֵנוּ בְּבִרְךְ יְיָ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם



The Third Cup

Only when we imagine ourselves leaving whatever broken, exiled world we find ourselves in does God bring us out of it. In other words, our very belief in the possibility of redemption—a radical restructuring of political, spiritual, and social conditions—is part of what makes redemption possible. But it is not just our belief that brings such redemption into being. As Rabbi Avraham Chein insisted, ‘Redemption is sown with the thirst for redemption’: our yearning for a different world is also necessary.

— Rabbi Aron Wander

I Have No Other Land

Ehud Manor z"l

I have no other country
even if my land is aflame
Just a word in Hebrew
pierces my veins and my soul
With a painful body
with a hungry heart
Here is my home. [...]

To Our Land

Mahmoud Darwish z"l

To our land,
and it is the one near the word of God,
a ceiling of clouds
To our land,
and it is the one far from the adjectives of nouns,
the map of absence
To our land,
and it is the one tiny as a sesame seed,
a heavenly horizon... and a hidden chasm [...]

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, boreh p'ri ha-gafen

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

Drink for thought: Redemption begins with imagination, with the audacity to believe that the world as it is, need not be the world as it will be. If “redemption is sown with the thirst for redemption,” then our yearning for dignity, safety, and freedom for both Israelis and Palestinians is not naïve; it is necessary. Political change begins as moral insistence.

What does redemption look like in our time — not in theory, but in practice?

HALLEL - הלל

Hallelujah

Leonard Cohen z"l

Now I've heard there was a secret chord
That David played, and it pleased the Lord
But you don't really care for music, do you?
It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth
The minor falls, the major lifts
The baffled king composing Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

Your faith was strong but you needed proof
You saw her bathing on the roof
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew you
She tied you to a kitchen chair
She broke your throne, and she cut your hair
And from your lips she drew the Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

You say I took the name in vain
I don't even know the name
But if I did, well, really, what's it to you?

There's a blaze of light in every word
It doesn't matter which you heard
The holy or the broken Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

I did my best, it wasn't much
I couldn't feel, so I tried to touch
I've told the truth, I didn't come to fool you
And even though it all went wrong
I'll stand before the Lord of Song
With nothing on my tongue but Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah



Elijah's Cup

Adapted from Rabbi Michael L. Feshbach

We say that there are four cups of wine at the Seder. These are four cups based upon the promises in Exodus: "I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians; I will deliver you; I will redeem you; I will take you to be My people."

But there is a fifth cup of wine at the Passover Seder. And there was a fifth promise. The cup is Elijah's cup. And the promise was "I will bring you into the land."

But God did bring us into the land. We came, we conquered, we settled... and then we lost and left again. Elijah's cup sees coming into the land as a promise held for the future. Now the cup of Elijah has come to stand for a future hope of something deeper than mere presence. It is about redemption. It is about setting things right.

And we are not, now, in a place of full redemption. To truly share this cup we must find a way to truly share this space. Sadly we see ... that redemption is not yet complete. "Being there" alone is not enough. The suffering of others, the pain of the Palestinians, has to be part of our world, brought into our minds and our hearts before we can fully taste the sweetness of the final cup. So still we look to a future day, when we will dwell in peace, in two states, and the swords shall be beaten into the plowshares... and none shall make anyone — them or us — afraid.

Fill the fourth cup and open the door.

Eliyahu hanavi

Eliyahu hatishbi

Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu hagiladi

Bimheirah b'yameinu, yavo eileinu

Im mashiach ben-David,

Im mashiach ben-David

אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא

אֱלִיָּהוּ הַתְּשֻׁבִי

אֱלִיָּהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי.

בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ

יָבוֹא אֵלֵינוּ

עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד

Elijah the prophet, the returning, the man of Gilad:
return to us speedily,
in our days with the messiah,
son of David.

Miriam ha-n'vi'ah

oz v'zimrah b'yadah.

Miriam tirkod itanu

l'hagdil zimrat olam.

Miriam tirkod itanu

l'taken et ha-olam.

Bimheirah v'yameynu hi t'vi'einu

el mey ha-y'shuah.

מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה
עַז וְזִמְרָה בְּיָדָהּ,
מִרְיָם תִּרְקֹד אִתָּנוּ
לְהַגְדִּיל זִמְרַת עוֹלָם.
מִרְיָם תִּרְקֹד אִתָּנוּ
לְתַקֵּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם.
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ הִיא תְּבִיאֵנוּ
אֶל מֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה.

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.



Miriam's Song

Rabbi Ruth H. Sohn

I, Miriam, stand at the sea
and turn
to face the desert
stretching endless and
still.
My eyes are dazzled
The sky-brilliant blue
Sunburnt sands unyielding white.
My hands turn to dove wings.
My arms
reach
for the sky
and I want to sing
the song, rising inside me:
My mouth open
I stop.
Where are the words?
Where is the melody?
In a moment of panic
My eyes go blind,
Can I take a step
Without knowing a
Destination?
Will I falter

Will I fall
Will the ground sink away from under me?
The song still unformed—
How can I sing?
To take the first step—
To sing a new song—
Is to close one's eyes and dive
into unknown waters.
For a moment knowing nothing risking all—
But then to discover
The waters are friendly
The ground is firm.
And the song—
the song rises again.
Out of my mouth
come words lifting the wind.
And I hear
for the first
the song
that has been in my heart
silent
unknown
even to me.

The Fourth Cup

And there will be a time, not for long, a month is enough, or a week, when every single person will be able to completely fulfill what they were meant to be — everything their bodies and souls have offered them, not what other people have dumped on them

— David Grossman, *To The End of the Land*

We dedicate the final cup of wine to our hopes and dreams for the future.
We dream of a world not threatened by destruction.
We hope for a time when Jerusalem will be a beacon of brotherhood and sisterhood,
We dream of a world in which Jews and all other people are free to be themselves.
We dream of a world at peace.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, boreh p'ri ha-gafen

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

Drink for thought: To praise is not to ignore pain; it is to affirm what is still possible. Even amid heartbreak, we can give thanks for those who refuse despair. For the activists, leaders, and ordinary people who continue to choose coexistence over domination and partnership over fear. Praise is an act of faith in human potential.

What, and whom, can we lift up tonight as living expressions of the world we hope to build? How can our gratitude strengthen our resolve to help bring that world closer?

We drink the last cup of wine.
Next year may Jerusalem be at peace.

Now our Seder is completed
Every requirement fulfilled.
Just as we have been privileged
to observe it this year
May we continue to do so in years to come.

You who are pure, dwelling on high,
raise up your countless people.
Soon bring your offshoots strong
Redeemed to Zion in joyous song.

— Shalom Seders

We made it to the end! The Seder has concluded.

We have eaten matzah and maror, and dipped bitter herbs in the salt water.

We have reflected on the cost of conflict and occupation and discussed ways in which we can make an impact.

We have celebrated being a part of a community who loves Israel and who is concerned about the dangerous path the country's leaders are taking.

At the end of the Seder we say: *Next Year in Jerusalem!*

It is an aspirational idea. May we all be together in Jerusalem — the land of peace.

But in our reality, Jerusalem is also a symbol of conflict and confusion.

Whose Jerusalem? Municipal Jerusalem? The Old City? The Arab Quarter? East Jerusalem? Ben Yehuda Street?

Let us work together so that by next year, there will be real steps towards peace and away from the occupation.

Let's continue these conversations — around Seder tables, family tables and coffee tables — in which we openly wrestle with Israel.

Let's talk to our Jewish communal leaders and our elected officials.

Together, we will get to a Jerusalem of peace that embodies the national aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians.

— Shaina Wasserman

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם

Lashanah haba'ah birushalayim

Next Year in Jerusalem!

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T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

Rabbi Aron Wander

Shaina Wasserman

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With deep appreciation to Rachel Barglow, whose artistry and inspired design helped bring this Haggadah to life. May this telling deepen our commitment to freedom and dignity for all.

J[↑] Street

