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LET US BEGIN

THE SHAR'AR ZAHAV  
HAGGADAH

וְהַשַּׁרְיָה

וְהַשַּׁרְיָה

וְהַשַּׁרְיָה

## HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO BE

It is not upon you to finish the work;  
nor are you free not to begin.

*Rabbi Tarphon  
Pirkei Avot 2:21*

Welcome to the first published edition of the Sha'ar Zahav Haggadah. This book has, in a sense, been in the process of coming to you since Congregation Sha'ar Zahav began. That beginning was a commitment to live as Jews in the world today, and to welcome all who wanted to join, whatever their sexual orientation.

A corollary to the commitment to inclusion was a commitment to be involved liturgically. From the very early days, services have been created and led by members. Over the years, members began to want to share the CSZ Haggadah with their guests at home Seders, and the Congregation has gotten increasing numbers of requests for this Haggadah from people in other cities and countries.

Three years ago, we began the steps toward publication, working out the details, checking and cross-checking translations and transliterations, and reviewing and re-reviewing the texts and notes.

The English text of the Haggadah was written by Leslie Bergson, Jay Ladin, Jonathan Schwartz, Nancy Snow and other friends of the Congregation in 1989-90. The Publication Committee, under the direction of Rabbi Yoel Kahn, includes Susan Unger, coordinator; Frank Yellin, Hebrew and word processing; Paul Quin, design and typography; and Francie McGowan, calligraphy.

For many careful editorial reviews and proofing passes, we thank Daniel Chesir, Jonathan Funk, Tova Green, Alex Ingersoll, Josh Lee, Henry Mach, Jody Reiss, Terry Ryan, Lane Schickler, Kathy Simon and Dana Vinicoff. Technical help was provided by Chris Glazek, Donna Kelley, Irene Ogus and Steven Unger.

We also thank the many other members and friends who contributed their labor, comments and support to the project over the years.

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is a progressive Reform synagogue with a special outreach to gay and lesbian Jews, their friends, families and community. This Haggadah is our newest publication. Since our founding, we have published Shabbat and holiday prayerbooks and liturgies for special occasions. True to our spirit of growth and change, each year sees the advent of small supplements to the holiday and Passover liturgies. We have also published a cookbook, *Out of Our Kitchen Closets, San Francisco Gay Jewish Cooking*, now in its second printing.

Write us for information about ordering this and other publications, or to find out about our Congregation and its programs.

We welcome your comments and suggestions.



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***The printing of this Haggadah was made possible by an anonymous gift from a member of the Congregation. It is dedicated to the memory of all whom we love who are no longer here to celebrate with us.***

*May their memory be for blessing.*

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LET US BEGIN:  
A PASSOVER HAGGADAH

הַמַּתְּכֵנוּ

שְׁמַרְנוּ

הַמַּתְּכֵנוּ

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## WHY IS THIS HAGGADAH DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER HAGGADOT?

For 3,000 years, each generation of Jews has continued the tradition of the Passover Seder at which the story of our liberation is retold. Returning again and again to this ancient tale, the story retains its power with each retelling. Every generation and every community has made the story and the festival its own, modifying old customs and practices and adding new ones.

The continuity and creativity of our people can be seen in the countless different Haggadot lovingly assembled by Jewish communities throughout the ages. Each one tells the same story, using the same words and rituals; and each one reflects, in its illustrations or language or commentary, the meaning of the festival for its celebrants. We are proud to offer *Let Us Begin*, the Congregation Sha'ar Zahav Haggadah, as a new link in the chain of tradition.

*Let Us Begin* is unique in its blending of the traditional structure and elements of the Passover service with modern interpretations and contemporary concerns. This Haggadah embodies our Congregation's commitment to respect tradition and empower our members to make the tradition their own.

Even working principles guide the preparation of all CSZ liturgy, including this Haggadah:

To be faithful to the structure and rubrics of tradition. No element of the traditional Passover service has been removed.

To present all English text as egalitarian and non-sexist.

To present both transliteration and translation for the majority of Hebrew texts.

To reflect our people's understanding in the interpretation of traditional texts.

To include our experience as gay and lesbian Jews as an integral part of the ritual experience.

To use explanatory notes and directions to make the liturgy accessible to people of different backgrounds and with divergent interests.

To use translations, treatment of symbols and explanatory texts written by members of our Congregation.

**The Order.** Before the wide distribution of printed Haggadot, it was uncommon for more than a single person at a Seder to have a Haggadah. Various poems were composed listing the sequence of the Seder. Perhaps the most famous one, by Rashi, is still commonly printed in Haggadot. These traditional divisions are noted in the Hebrew on the Contents page. The sections in which we divide the text reflect our understanding of the significant parts and rituals of the Seder service. Symbolic drawings have been added to mark the principal ritual actions.

**Readings.** The service is an interaction among leaders, readers and the assembled guests. In this book, **bold** indicates important parts to be said in unison by all present. Other parts are read by one person, responsively by the guests and a leader, or in unison, as the group wishes.

**Translations.** Translations from the Hebrew were made by members of our Congregation. Instead of the word-for-word translation easily available elsewhere, we have worked to express the themes and moods of the original texts in contemporary English. Translations of biblical passages are based on the *Tanakh* from the Jewish Publication Society and on previous CSZ publications.

**Transliteration.** CSZ has adopted the conventions used in *Gates of Prayer*. Letters are shown using the closest English cognate. Syllables are divided by a · syllable mark. The sounded sh'va is represented by an *e*.

**Commentary.** Notes at the bottom of the page include material on the origin of Seder symbols and themes, along with modern and ancient readings and interpretations. This commentary is not intended for public reading during the Seder. Rather, it is a jumping-off place for discussion, a place for the eye to wander, something new to explore from year to year.

**Alternatives.** Alternative or supplementary ideas for celebrating the Seder are marked with four diamonds ❖. Various ways of using the Haggadah are suggested under *How to Begin* on the facing page.

## HOW TO BEGIN

*Let Us Begin* has been designed to be used in a variety of situations to make your Seder meaningful to you and your family and community. We encourage you to adapt it to your family's knowledge, attention span and circumstances. Here are some suggestions:

**First Seder.** At everyone's first celebration of Passover this year, everything is new again. Use the full text. In addition to the ritual elements, be sure to include a full retelling of the Exodus. You may invite the company to discuss customs or explanations learned in the past that differ from those here. Without interruption (*unlikely!*), the parts before the meal take about 45 minutes. The parts after the meal can take 15 minutes or more, depending on how many songs are sung.

**Second Seder.** A structured Seder, following the text, includes familiar symbols in a familiar order, but the interpretations are new and different. Ritual acts can also be mixed with discussion of the themes suggested in the commentary — but be sure to do the ritual acts. At the most basic level, use *Let Us Begin* as an outline for an evening of discussion and exploration. Remember that this second Seder is a wonderful opportunity to share favorite songs.

**Personalizing the Seder.** The commentary includes suggestions for discussion. You are encouraged to stop at any time to share experiences, discuss ritual, introduce other customs, or raise personal or social issues. Reading the Haggadah from front to back is not the goal; this book's purpose is to help you celebrate Passover, to celebrate freedom. To include discussions as part of your Seder, it helps to plan questions and ask people to think about them beforehand. Following the discussion, everyone should perform the appropriate ritual act together.

**Abbreviating the Seder.** For a Passover celebration to fulfill the tradition and to fill the spirits of those participating, it need not be long and drawn out. It is important to keep the central ritual acts and to pass the evening in a spirit of togetherness. However abbreviated your Seder, be sure to

- 1 Start together.
- 2 Do the ritual acts together.
- 3 Finish together.

This helps everyone feel that they have truly participated in the Seder. As an aid to using this book, each element is on a separate page or facing pages. This makes it easier for you to personalize the Seder.

**A Short Beginning.** These are the basic ritual elements that appear before the meal, with page numbers.

- 2 Convocation
- 3 Candlelighting
- 4 First Cup
- 8 Karpas
- 11 Yachatz
- 15 Four Questions
- 16 First Telling
- 20 Slavery to Freedom, *followed by a retelling of the Exodus story in which each person tells a part of the story, or one person tells all the story in her or his own words.*
- 26 Dayeinu
- 28 Seeing Ourselves
- 31 Second Cup
- 39 Symbols of the Seder

**After the Meal.** These parts of the Seder are often ignored or given only slight attention. *Let Us Begin* can help you make them accessible and meaningful. Instead of the customary order, we begin with

- 42 *The redemption and eating of the Afikomen.*
- 44 *If it is not your custom to sing Grace after the Meal, read one or more parts of it before you go to*
- 49 The Third Cup.
- 50 *Then open the door for Elijah and go directly to*
- 56 The Fourth Cup *and the*
- 57 Completion.

**Sing a Good Song.** The Hallel, with *Chad Gad'ya* and other Seder songs, appears before the Completion in order to affirm its importance in the celebration. Here's where everyone can share in singing favorite melodies. After the songs, the Completion ends the Seder, and people are invited to get up from the table.

## INVOCATION

From different moments in our lives, from diverse concerns and struggles, our heritage calls us together tonight, to eat unleavened bread and retell an ancient story. How varied are our lives, our strengths and weaknesses, our loves and commitments! But our tradition teaches that whatever we are now began with the events we recall tonight; for if God had not led us out, we would still be slaves in the land of Egypt.

For every generation, the miracle of redemption is new. We can never grow too old, or too wise, or too fortunate, or too broken-hearted to tell of it. The story of the Exodus arches above our history like the rainbow God set in the sky after the Flood: a promise that oppression will never utterly destroy the human spirit.

Tonight we celebrate redemption, but redemption is far from complete. Just as the light of creation takes many forms but then returns in a single stream to its Source, so it is with the light of redemption. The light that began with the Exodus shines in each of our lives; when each of us shares that light, the world will be redeemed.

Perhaps we cannot complete the task; perhaps our lights are scattered and few. But as we join in the work of redemption, our scattered lights merge in a human rainbow, and our promise shines throughout the earth.

**Now let us begin.**

### RAINBOW

The Torah tells that after the waters of the flood subsided, God placed a rainbow in the sky as a sign to Noah's family and all their descendants. Some associate the rainbow with God's *sukkah* of peace. In our times, the rainbow has also become a sign of the lesbian and gay community and its celebration of the blessings of diversity.

As for Me, behold I establish My covenant with you and your children,  
and with all the living things that are with you: the birds, the cattle and every wild beast as well —  
all that have come out of the ark, every living thing on earth.

This is the sign that I set for the covenant between Me and you,  
and every living creature with you for ages to come.

I have set My bow in the clouds, and it shall serve as a sign of the covenant  
between Me and the earth.

[Genesis 9:9-10, 12-13]

### WORK OF REDEMPTION

Redemption, the time of ultimate healing, reconciliation and realization, is more than an idealized image, dreamed of but never known. We have known foretastes of redemption in our own lives and history, and we seek to live our lives with the promise of redemption ever present. On these nights, therefore, we speak not of ideal Redemption, but of our own, obtainable redemption.



## CANDLELIGHTING

אֲשֶׁרִי הַגִּפְרוֹר שֶׁנִּשְׂרַף וְהִצִּית לְהַבּוֹת	<i>ash-rei ha-gaf-rur she-nis-raf ve-hi-tsit le-ha-vot.</i>
אֲשֶׁרִי הַלְהִבָּה שֶׁבְּעֶרְוַת בְּסִתְרֵי לְבָבוֹת	<i>ash-rei ha-le-ha-va she-ba-a-ra be-sit-rei le-va-vot.</i>
אֲשֶׁרִי הַלְבָבוֹת שֶׁיָדְעוּ לְחַדּוֹל בְּכַבּוֹד	<i>ash-rei ha-le-va-vot she-yad-u lach-dol be-cha-vod.</i>
אֲשֶׁרִי הַגִּפְרוֹר שֶׁנִּשְׂרַף וְהִצִּית לְהַבּוֹת	<i>ash-rei ha-gaf-rur she-nis-raf ve-hi-tsit le-ha-vot.</i>

Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame  
 Blessed is the flame that burns in the secret fastness of the heart  
 Blessed is the heart with strength to stop its beating for honor's sake  
 Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.

- ❖ *Name others who were "consumed in kindling flame" and reflect on what circumstances would bring you to become "the match consumed in kindling flame."*

**Light the candles while singing or saying this blessing:**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,	<i>ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam</i>
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,	<i>a-she-ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav</i>
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵיר שֶׁל (שַׁבָּת וְשָׁל) יוֹם טוֹב .	<i>ve-tsi-va-nu le-had-lik neir shel [sha-bat ve] yom tov.</i>

We praise the Eternal Source of life  
 who sanctifies us through mitzvot  
 and has commanded us to kindle the festival [and Sabbath] lights.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,	<i>ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam</i>
שֶׁהִחֲיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ	<i>she-he-che-ya-nu ve-ki-ye-ma-nu</i>
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה :	<i>ve-hi-gi-a-nu la-ze-man ha-ze.</i>

We praise the Eternal Source of life  
 who has kept us in life, and sustained us  
 and brought us to this joyous time.

### BLESSED IS THE MATCH

By Chanah Senesh. Born in Hungary to an assimilated family, she became a Zionist and made *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael*. In 1944, she parachuted into Hungary. She wrote these lines before infiltrating to support the resistance, saying: "If I don't come back, share this with our people." Chanah Senesh was captured, tortured and killed by the Nazis. She was 23. As we recite her words, we honor her martyrdom and the martyrdom of others who sacrificed their lives for our freedom.

## THE FIRST CUP

Fill and raise the first cup.

We raise the first of the four cups with which we mark our observance tonight; the cup of freedom, filled with the joyous news of liberation. As it is written:

You shall proclaim liberty throughout the land,  
for all its inhabitants.

[Leviticus 25:10]

On Friday nights, continue here:

וְיִהְיֶה עֶרֶב וְיִהְיֶה בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי, va-ye·hi e·rev va-ye·hi vo·ker yom ha·shi·shi.

וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צָבָאָם : va-ye·chu·lu ha·sha·ma·yim ve·ha·a·rets ve·chal tse·va·am.

וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, va-ye·chal e·lo·him ba·yom ha·she·vi·i me·lach·to a·sher a·sa

וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה. va-yish·bot ba·yom ha·she·vi·i mi·kal me·lach·to a·sher a·sa.

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ, כִּי va-ye·va·rech e·lo·him et yom ha·she·vi·i va-ye·ka·deish o·to

שֶׁבֶת מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ, אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת. ki vo sha·vat mi·kal me·lach·to a·sher ba·ra e·lo·him la·a·sot.

There was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.  
Then the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their hosts;  
on the seventh day God finished the work of creation  
and rested on the seventh day from all the work of creation.  
And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy,  
for in it God rested from the work of creation.

[Genesis 2:1]

On all nights, continue here:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֹךְ הָעוֹלָם, ba-ruch a·ta a·do·nai e·lo·hei·nu me·lech ha·o·lam

בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן : bo·rei pe·ri ha·ga·fen.

We praise the Eternal Source of life,  
Creator of the fruit of the vine.

The brief version of this blessing ends here; the longer version continues on the next page.  
Drink the first cup now if you are using the brief version and go on to page 7.

## WITH ALL PEOPLES

We celebrate not only the sanctification of our own people at the time of the Exodus,  
but God's sanctification of all peoples through Exodus' message of freedom.

- ❖ *On all nights, the long blessing continues here. On Friday and Saturday nights, include [Sabbath] items.*

<p>בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל-עַם, וְרוּמָמְנוּ מִכָּל-לְשׁוֹן,  וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וַתִּתֶּן-לָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ  בְּאַהֲבָה (שְׁבֻתוֹת לְמִנוּחָה וּמוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה,  חַגִּים וְזְמַנִּים לְשִׂשׁוֹן אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבֻת הַזֶּה  וְאֶת-יוֹם חַג הַמַּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. זְמַן חֲרוּתֵנוּ,  (בְּאַהֲבָה), מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ, זְכוֹר לִיציאת מִצְרַיִם.  כִּי בָנוּ בְּחַרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים.  (וְשֻׁבֹת) וּמוֹעֲדֵי קֹדֶשׁ (בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן)  בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,  מִקְדָּשׁ (הַשְּׁבֻת וְ)יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים:</p>	<p>ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam a-sher  ba-char ba-nu im kal am ve-ro-ma-ma-nu im kol la-shon  ve-ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav va-ti-ten la-nu a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu  be-a-ha-va [sha-ba-tot lim-nu-cha u] mo-a-dim le-sim-cha  cha-gim u-ze-ma-nim le-sa-son et yom [ha-sha-bat ha-ze  ve-et yom] chag ha-ma-tsot ha-ze ze-man chei-ru-tei-nu  [be-a-ha-va] mik-ra ko-desh zei-cher li-tsi-at mits-ra-yim.  ki va-nu va-char-ta ve-o-ta-nu ki-dash-ta im kol ha-a-mim  [ve-sha-bat] u-mo-a-dei ka-de-she-cha [be-a-ha-va u-ve-ra-tson]  ve-sim-cha u-ve-sa-son hin-chal-ta-nu. ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai  me-ka-deish [ha-sha-bat ve] yis-ra-eil ve-ha-ze-ma-nim.</p>
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We praise the Eternal Source of life,  
who has chosen us along with all peoples  
and sanctifies us through commandments.

In love, Adonai our God, have You given us [Sabbaths for rest],  
festivals for rejoicing, seasons of celebration,  
this [Sabbath and this] Festival of Matzot, the time of our liberation,  
a sacred gathering as a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt.

For You singled us out and sanctified us along with all other peoples  
and Your holy [Sabbath and] festivals [in love and favor] with joy and  
gladness have made our joyful inheritance. We praise You, Adonai,  
Who sanctifies [the Sabbath and] Israel and the festivals.

- ❖ *On Saturday night, you may continue on the next page with the Havdalah. On other nights, end here:*

<p>בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ  וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזְמַן הַזֶּה:</p>	<p>ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam  she-he-che-ya-nu ve-ki-ye-ma-nu  ve-hi-gi-a-nu la-ze-man ha-ze.</p>
--	--

We praise the Eternal Source of life,  
for You have kept us alive, You have sustained us,  
and You have brought us to this time.

*Drink the first cup.*

❖ On Saturday night, end the long blessing with the Havdalah:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶד הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא  
מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ : *ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam  
bo-rei me-o-rei ha-eish.*

We praise the Eternal Source of life  
Creator of the light of the fire.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶד הָעוֹלָם,  
הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחֹל בֵּין אוֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ,  
רְבִין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי  
לְשֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. בֵּין קֹדֶשֶׁת שַׁבָּת  
לְקֹדֶשֶׁת יוֹם טוֹב הַבְּדֻלָּת. וְאֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי  
מְשַׁשֶּׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה קֹדֶשֶׁת.  
הַבְּדֻלָּת וְקֹדֶשֶׁת אֶת-עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקֹדֶשֶׁתְךָ.  
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְקֹדֶשׁ : *ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam  
ha-mav-dil bein ko-desh le-chol bein or le-cho-shech  
bein yis-ra-eil la-a-mim bein yom hash-vi-i  
le-shei-shet ye-mei ha-ma-a-se bein ke-du-shat sha-bat  
lik-du-shat yom tov hiv-dal-ta. ve-et yom ha-she-vi-i  
mi-shei-shet ye-mei ha-ma-a-se ki-dash-ta.  
hiv-dal-ta ve-ki-dash-ta et am-cha yis-ra-eil bik-du-sha-te-cha.  
ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai ha-mav-dil bein ko-desh le-ko-desh.*

We praise the Eternal Source of life  
who distinguishes between the holy and the ordinary,  
between light and darkness, between the seventh day and the six days of work.  
You have separated the holiness of the Shabbat from the holiness of festivals,  
and you have sanctified the Sabbath apart from the six days of creation.

We praise the Eternal Source of life  
who distinguishes between holiness and holiness.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶד הָעוֹלָם,  
שֶׁהַחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ  
וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה : *ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam  
she-he-che-ya-nu ve-ki-ye-ma-nu  
ve-hi-gi-a-nu la-ze-man ha-ze.*

We praise the Eternal Source of life,  
for You have kept us alive, You have sustained us,  
and You have brought us to this time.

**Drink the first cup.**

#### HAVDALAH

This marks the end of the Sabbath. Since Passover is a festival, we “distinguish between holiness and holiness” by enjoying the light of the Passover candles instead of lighting the Havdalah candle, and by enjoying the Passover sweetness instead of using the customary spices that remind us of Sabbath sweetness.

**RITUAL HAND WASHING**

We prepare for the Seder by washing each other's hands — not as slaves washing the hands of taskmasters as it was in Egypt, but freely as equal members of a loving community. Here there are no slaves and no masters. As it is written:

As I would not be a slave, so would I not be a master.  
This expresses my idea of democracy.

[Abraham Lincoln]

*Service leaders and/or participants wash each others' hands.*

הַנִּי מָה טוֹב וּמָה נְעִים שְׂבֵת אֶחָיִם גַּם יָחַד *hi-nei ma tov u-ma na-im she-vet a-chim gam ya-chad.*

הַנִּי מָה טוֹב וּמָה נְעִים שְׂבֵת אֶחָיּוֹת גַּם יָחַד *hi-nei ma tov u-ma na-im she-vet a-chai-yot gam ya-chad.*

**How good it is, and how pleasant  
for brothers and sisters to live together.**

[Psalm 133]

**WE WASH EACH OTHER'S HANDS**

This preliminary washing of the hands, for which the usual blessing is not said, remains from the time when the Seder meal was eaten before the service.

## SPRING'S PROMISE OF RENEWAL

*Each person takes a piece of the greens.*

As people have done since before time, we celebrate the renewal of life and the promise of spring. Tonight's celebration coincides with the first full moon of spring.

We eat sprigs of fresh greens as a symbol of regeneration and the continuity of creation. We dip the greens in salt water in memory of the tears shed under oppression by our people and people everywhere.

In remembering our passage to freedom, let us not forget our own suffering as slaves; even as we rejoice in our liberation, we do not forget that pain continues in our world.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,     *ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam*  
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה:     *bo-rei pe-ri ha-a-da-ma.*

**We praise the Eternal Source of life,  
Creator of the fruit of the earth.**

❖ *Consider the signs of nature's spring renewal that you have observed this year.*

***Dip the greens in salt water and eat them.***

### THE FIRST FULL MOON

Passover absorbed ancient spring rites, including the eating of fresh greens and the egg on the Seder plate. These keep their original associations as symbols of nature's renewal and the continuity of creation, as well as assuming new meaning in the context of the Seder.

### DIP THE GREENS

In modern times, the salt water is seen as a reminder of the tears our people, and people everywhere, have shed under oppression. We dip the *karpas*, sign of growth, in the salt water in recognition that life persists and renews itself even in the midst of suffering.

## COME, MY BELOVED

The Song of Songs has long been associated with Passover. The Bible's only book of erotic and romantic poetry, it has often been interpreted as a *midrash* on the love of God for Israel. We can read it in this fashion as well as recalling its original evocation: Stories of passion and devotion and the celebration and triumph of relationships that family and society discouraged.

נִשְׁכַּיְמָה לְכַרְמִים    *nash·ki·ma la·ke·ra·mim*  
 נִרְאָה אִם פְּרָחָה הַגֶּפֶן    *nir·e im fa·re·cha ha·ge·fen*  
 פִּתַּח הַסֶּמָדָר הַנְּצוּ הַרְמוֹנִים    *pi·tach ha·se·ma·dar hei·nei·tsu ha·ri·mo·nim*  
 שָׁם אֶתְּנוּ אֶת־דַּי לָךְ :    *sham e·tein et do·dai lach.*

Come, my beloved, let us go out into the fields  
 Among the henna shrubs.  
 Let us go early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine has flowered,  
 If the blossoms have opened, if the pomegranates are in bloom:  
 There will I give my love to you. [Song of Songs 7:11]

עֲנֵה דוֹדִי וְאָמַר לִי    *a·nà do·di ve·a·mar li*  
 קוּמִי לָךְ רַעֲיָתִי וְלִכְי־לָךְ :    *ku·mi lach ra·ya·ti ya·fa·ti u·le·chi lach.*  
 כִּי־הִנֵּה חֹשֶׁתָיו עָבַר    *ki hi·nei chas·tav a·var*  
 הַגֶּשֶׁם חָלַף הַלֵּךְ לוֹ :    *ha·ge·shem cha·laf ha·lach lo.*  
 הַנְּצַנִּים נִרְאוּ בְּאֶרֶץ עֵת הַזְּמִיר הַגִּיעַ    *ha·ni·t·sa·nim nir·u va·a·rets eit ha·za·mir hi·gi·a*  
 וְקוֹל הַתּוֹר נִשְׁמַע בְּאֶרְצֵנוּ :    *ve·kol ha·tor nish·ma be·ar·tsei·nu.*

Rise up my love, my fair one, come away!  
 For now the winter is past, the rains are over and gone.  
 The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come.  
 The song of the dove is heard in our land. [Song of Songs 2:10-12]

### SONG OF SONGS

During this season of rebirth and renewal, we read from the Song of Songs and are inspired by its tender images of nature and erotic love. The Song of Songs is one of the five *megillot*, or scrolls, in the Bible, each of which is associated with a different holiday: Esther with Purim, Ruth with Shavuot, Lamentations with Tisha B'Av, Ecclesiastes with Succot, and the Song of Songs with Passover. If Israel and the Holy One celebrated their *kiddushin* at Sinai with the Torah as the *ketubah* then the Exodus must surely be the betrothal. As it is written:

Thus says Adonai:

I remember the devotion of your youth, your love in the time of our betrothal,  
 how you followed Me in the wilderness, through a land that was not sown.

[Jeremiah 2:2]

## REFLECTIONS ON THE MATZAH

### HA LACHMAH

This invitation is in Aramaic, the ancient Jewish vernacular. Its meaning is expanded in the saying,

As for the beggar, only a piece of bread;  
so for us, only a piece [of matzah].

[Talmud, Pesachim 11b]

### THE MIDDLE MATZAH

On every festival, as on Shabbat, we make the *motzi* blessing over two whole loaves, recalling the double portion of manna we received on Shabbat during our wandering in the desert. Since one matzah is broken for the *afikomen*, we need two more for the blessing.

### LET ALL WHO ARE HUNGRY COME AND EAT

First we must feed the hungry. When physical needs are satisfied, we can share the spiritual feast of Passover.

### MAOT CHITIM

The sharing of God's bounty with those who have less than we do is *tzedakah*, an act of righteous justice. At Passover, it is a custom to collect *maot chitim*, "money for wheat." Originally used to buy wheat for matzot for the poor, this collection is now a way our communities throughout the world face the problem of hunger in their midst. It is not in our power to feed all who are hungry, but in feeding one hungry person, we bring the time of redemption closer. Again we are reminded that saving a single life is like saving the entire world.

### IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL

Like most other Jewish liturgy, the Seder has central references to a return to the land of Israel. The journey we pray for is a spiritual one; even those who celebrate Passover in Jerusalem say,

Next year in a Jerusalem rebuilt!

For our generation, these images of returning to Israel or rebuilding Jerusalem raise immediate issues and deep and conflicting emotions. These issues and emotions are properly part of the Seder, which calls for a continuing exploration of the meaning of freedom, the nature of justice and the paths to redemption and peace.

### THIS YEAR . . . NEXT YEAR . . .

Passover falls on the first full moon of spring, during the month of Nisan. Because of the importance of the Exodus, the Torah declares that Nisan is to be "the first of months" to us, even though Rosh Hashanah, our new year, falls six months later in the month of Tishri. Since Nisan is the first of months, there is a sense in which the Seder takes place on the boundary between one year and another. The *ha lachmah*, then, could also be read:

Now we are here, in the unredeemed world;  
by the end of this Seder, may redemption be complete and the whole world the city of God.  
At this point in the telling, we, like our ancestors, are slaves;  
may the redemption that we tell of also make us free.

### BREAK IT IN TWO

The broken and separated pieces of matzah also symbolize the incompleteness of the world and the divisions between us. In the ritual drama of the Seder, our journey toward redemption is symbolized by the finding of the *afikomen*, when the lost is found and the broken made whole.

### WRAP THE MATZAH

When the Israelites left Egypt, they had bowls of dough wrapped in their garments. As it is written:

They took their dough before it was leavened,  
their kneading bowls wrapped in cloaks upon their shoulders.

[Exodus 12:34]



## AN OPEN INVITATION

We take this matzah, already called "the bread of poverty," and break it in half, for many do not enjoy even a whole piece of the poorest bread.

I shall wrap and hide the larger half. During the meal, it must be found. Later, we shall eat it as the *afikomen*, in promise that what is missing will yet be found, the exiled will return, and there will yet come a day when our loaves and our lives will be whole.

Let us now recite together the ancient words at the core of our festival of liberation that summon us to the work of redemption, beginning with this festival meal:

*Raise the middle of the three matzot as all say together:*

הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיָּא דִּי אַכְלוּ	<i>ha lach·ma an·ya di a·cha·lu</i>
אַבְהֶתְנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.	<i>a·va·ha·ta·na be·ar·a de·mits·ra·yim.</i>
כָּל דְּכַפֵּין יֵיתִי וְיִכּוּל,	<i>kal dich·fin yei·tei ve·yei·chul.</i>
כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ יֵיתִי וְיִפְסַח.	<i>kal dits·rich yei·tei ve·yif·sach.</i>
הַשְּׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבְּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל.	<i>ha·sha·ta ha·cha. le·sha·na ha·ba·a be·ar·a de·yis·ra·eil.</i>
הַשְּׁתָּא עַבְדֵּי, לְשָׁנָה הַבְּאָה בְּגִי חוֹרֵין:	<i>ha·sha·ta av·dei. le·sha·na ha·ba·a be·nei·rin.</i>

**This is the bread of affliction that 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 Passover.**

**This year, we are here;**

**next year in the land of Israel.**

**This year, we are still slaves;**

**next year, may all be daughters and sons of freedom.**

*Break the matzah in two.*

*Wrap and hide the larger half and replace the other piece.*

## A STORY BEFORE THE STORY

*Refill the cup.*

A story is told of Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Elazar, Rabbi Tarphon and Rabbi Akiva who long ago sat in the city of B'nei B'rak and spoke of the Exodus from Egypt from nightfall until the time for morning prayers, and still their telling of the story and their probing of its meaning was incomplete. (Perhaps, like their modern descendents, each answered a question with yet another question?)

Like the generations before us, we too shall not finish the story this evening, for redemption is still incomplete. Even in the time of redemption, taught Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues, we shall continue to retell this story. Even though we cannot finish the work of redemption or even the story tonight, we nonetheless are commanded to begin. As it is written:

It is not upon you to finish the task,  
nor are you free not to begin.

*[Pirkei Avot 2:21]*

**Let us begin.**

*Share with your table the concerns and thoughts you have as you begin tonight's celebration.*

### NEI B'RAK

Home of Rabbi Akiva, a leader in the resistance to Roman occupation. Some believe that the rabbis were that night in the midst of planning an uprising, and the announcement "the time for morning prayers" was a code warning of the danger of discovery. Or, perhaps, five learned rabbis simply became so engrossed in the story and its retelling that the discussion lasted until daybreak.

## THE FOUR QUESTIONS

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?	<i>ma nish-ta-na ha-la-ye-la ha-ze mi-kal ha-lei-lot?</i>
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה. הלילה הזה כלו מצה:	<i>she-be-chal ha-lei-lot a-nu o-che-lin cha-meits u-ma-tsa; ha-la-ye-la ha-ze ku-lo ma-tsa.</i>
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות הלילה הזה מרור:	<i>she-be-chal ha-lei-lot a-nu o-che-lin she-ar ye-ra-kot; ha-la-ye-la ha-ze ma-ror.</i>
שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת. הלילה הזה שתי פעמים:	<i>she-be-chal ha-lei-lot ein a-nu mat-bi-lin a-fi-lu pa-am e-chat; ha-la-ye-la ha-ze she-tei fe-a-mim.</i>
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין. הלילה הזה כלנו מסבין:	<i>she-be-chal ha-lei-lot a-nu o-che-lin bein yo-she-vin u-vein me-su-bin; ha-la-ye-la ha-ze ku-la-nu me-su-bin.</i>

Why is this night different from all other nights?

For on all other nights we eat leavened bread or matzah,  
but tonight we eat only matzah.

For on all other nights we eat various herbs,  
but tonight we especially eat bitter herbs.

For on all other nights we do not dip our food at all,  
but tonight we dip twice.

For on all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining,  
but tonight, we recline.

❖ *What additional questions should be asked at Passover this year?*

### THE FOUR QUESTIONS

When the Temple stood, there were only three questions:

1) matzah; 2) dipping twice instead of the customary once; and 3) roasting the Pesach offering.

When dipping foods was no longer a common practice, the second question was modified.

After the destruction of the Temple, the question about *maror* replaced the question about the Pesach offering.

The fourth question was added later.

### WHERE ARE THE ANSWERS?

The four questions are never directly answered in the Seder. Why not?

The right to question is a sign of freedom; insistence on a single, correct answer is intellectual slavery.

Simple questions often have complex answers, and some questions have no answer at all, everything is not either good or bad, matzah or *maror*. Taught Rabbi Wolfe of Zhitomoer,

For the believer there is no question; for the non-believer there is no answer.

Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in between.

## FIRST TELLING OF THE STORY

עֲבָדוֹת הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וַיֹּצִיאֵנוּ יְיָ	<i>a·va·dot ha·yi·nu le·far·o be·mits·ra·yim va·yo·tsi·ei·nu a·do·nai</i>
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה,	<i>e·lo·hei·nu mi·sham be·yad cha·za·ka u·viz·ro·a ne·tu·ya.</i>
וְאֵלֹהֵינוּ לֹא הוֹצִיאָהּ הַקְּדוּשָׁה בְּרוּכָה הִיא אֶת	<i>ve·i·lu lo ho·tsi·a ha·ke·do·sha be·ru·cha hi et</i>
אֲמוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, הָרִי אָנוּ וּבָנוּתֵינוּ וּבָנוֹת	<i>i·mo·tei·nu mi·mits·ra·yim ha·rei a·nu u·ve·no·tei·nu u·ve·not</i>
בָּנוּתֵינוּ; מִשְׁעַבְדוֹת הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם.	<i>be·no·tei·nu me·shu·ba·dot ha·yi·nu le·far·o be·mits·ra·yim</i>
וְאֶפְיָלוּ כְּלָנוּ חֲכָמוֹת, כְּלָנוּ נְבוֹנוֹת, כְּלָנוּ זְקֵנוֹת	<i>va·a·fi·lu ku·la·nu cha·cha·mot ku·la·nu ne·vo·not ku·la·nu ze·kei·not</i>
כְּלָנוּ יוֹדְעוֹת אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, מִצְוָה עָלֵינוּ לְסַפֵּר	<i>ku·la·nu yo·de·ot et ha·to·ra mits·va a·lei·nu le·sa·peir</i>
בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. וְכָל הַמְּרַבֵּה לְסַפֵּר	<i>be·ye·tsi·at mits·ra·yim. ve·chal ha·mar·be le·sa·peir</i>
בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, הָרִי זֶה מִשְׁבַּח:	<i>be·ye·tsi·at mits·ra·yim ha·rei ze me·shu·bach.</i>

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt,  
but our Almighty God brought us forth from there  
with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.

And if the Holy One, Blessed Be,  
had not brought our ancestors out of Egypt,  
then we, and our children, and our children's children  
would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.

So even if all of us were wise,  
all of us people of understanding,  
all of us elders, all of us learned in Torah,  
still would we be commanded to retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt.  
And all who expand upon the retelling of this story are worthy of praise!

All sing:

עֲבָדוֹת הָיִינוּ הָיִינוּ	<i>a·va·dot ha·yi·nu, ha·yi·nu</i>
עֲתָה בְּנוֹת חוֹרֵין בְּנוֹת חוֹרֵין	<i>a·ta be·not cho·rin, be·not cho·rin</i>
עֲבָדוֹת הָיִינוּ	<i>a·va·dot ha·yi·nu,</i>
עֲתָה עֲתָה בְּנוֹת חוֹרֵין בְּנוֹת חוֹרֵין	<i>a·ta a·ta be·not cho·rin, be·not cho·rin.</i>

Once we were slaves, now we are free.

## VADOT HAYINU

The entire Jewish people, not just men, participated in the Exodus. Thus, our English is gender neutral—but in Hebrew, it is impossible to be gender neutral. A logical solution would be to print half of the Hebrew with masculine nouns, verbs and adjectives, and half with feminine ones; but this would wreak havoc on traditional music and familiar prayer formulas. Our solution is to feminize the Hebrew of two central passages: *Avadot hayinu*, tonight's "mission statement," and *b'chol dor vador* on page 28, our commitment to see ourselves in the story.

## THE STRENGTH OF COMMUNITY AND FAITH

### Lift the cup.

וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֶדָה לְהוֹרִינוּ וְלָנוּ.	<i>ve·hi she·am·da la·ho·re·nu ve·la·nu</i>
שְׁלֹא אֶחָד בְּלֶבֶד, עֵמֶד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ.	<i>she·lo e·chad bil·vad a·lei·nu le·cha·lo·tei·nu</i>
אֶלָּא שְׁבָכַל דּוֹר וָדוֹר,	<i>e·la she·be·chal dor va·dor</i>
עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ.	<i>om·dim a·lei·nu le·cha·lo·tei·nu</i>
וְתִקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם:	<i>ve·ha·ka·dosh ba·ruch hu ma·tsi·lei·nu mi·ya·dam.</i>

And it is this which has sustained our ancestors and ourselves.  
 For it has not been just one person alone who has stood against us to destroy us;  
 but in every generation, groups and movements have arisen  
 who have sought to destroy us.  
 In each generation, we have come together with the help of the Holy One  
 and sustained each other  
 and were delivered from their hands.

### Replace the cup.

- ❖ *Consider how you have been sustained this year by your community and by your faith.  
 Consider how your family, your congregation, or this circle of friends has been sustained.*

#### WE WERE SLAVES

The story of Passover begins with degradation and ends with glory.

*[Talmud, Pesachim 116a]*

The telling of the story begins with our physical degradation as slaves in Egypt, also seen as a paradigm for our spiritual degradation, since, "In the beginning, our ancestors served idols."

#### WHERE IS MOSES?

The Rabbis, apparently concerned that he not be idolized, did not mention Moses. It is important not to lose sight of the contributions of heroes like Miriam and Moses, who do the leading, but we must remember that it is the entire community that must do the walking. Although Moses raised his staff that the sea might part, the *Midrash* tells us that the water did not move until the people actually began to walk into it.

## THE FOUR CHILDREN

Blessed is the Omnipresent; blessed are You, God!  
 For like a mother who treasures her children at each stage of their  
 growth, You see the spark of Your perfection in each of us, and teach us  
 to speak to one another of the Passover in words each can understand.

When I try to see the world according to Your wisdom, I ask:  
 What can these prayers, rules and customs mean to us?

And I am answered:

**To us, not to you or me alone.  
 Tonight we remember the bitterness of our oppression,  
 that we may renew our commitment to the continuing work of liberation;  
 for while any are still enslaved, none is truly free.  
 And so that we never forget, we retell the story.**

**Listen . . .**

When my mind is clouded with cynicism or embittered  
 by misfortune, I ask:

What good will all these rituals ever do for me?

And I am answered:

**Come celebrate the Passover with us and see!  
 For if in your bitterness you had stood aloof from us  
 on the night God took us out of Egypt,  
 you would still be standing there, and would not have been redeemed.**

**Join us for a while, and listen . . .**

### FOUR CHILDREN

In four places the Torah mentions children asking or being told about the Exodus (*Exodus 12:26, 13:14, 13:18; Deuteronomy 6:20*). Based on these verses, the Rabbis taught that each child must be addressed in a manner appropriate to their ability to listen and understand. While the traditional Four Children is elegant, we recast it to eliminate modern confusions—in particular that the bad child's question, *What does this mean to you?* seems more meaningful than the wise child's, *What are the laws, and statutes, and customs?*

### BLESSED IS THE OMNIPRESENT

The Hebrew passage begins *baruch hamakom*, "Blessed is the Place," usually interpreted, "Blessed is the One who is in all places at once." This is an apt blessing for God as parent.

When I just cannot understand, I ask a simple question  
in the hope of a simple answer:

What is all of this?

And I am answered:

**This is what we do to remember that God led us out of Egypt,  
from the house of slavery.**

Listen . . .

And sometimes the words stick in my throat,  
and I have no heart to ask.  
I can feel no bond with other Jews or with my gay sisters and brothers.  
My age, my disabilities, or my unmet needs seem to shut me out,  
and I am silent.

Yet I am answered:

**We hear your silence, and we miss you.  
There is a place for you here at our table.  
For each of us has bitterness to share;  
but together we can begin to seek the sweetness of redemption.  
Come help us find it.**

Listen . . .

❖ *What are the wise, the misguided, the simple, or the unasked questions for you this year?*

AND SOMETIMES THE WORDS STICK IN MY THROAT

The participants of the Seder in the Vilna ghetto, in 1942, invited  
. . . the souls of all who are missing,  
the souls of all who were snatched from our midst,  
to sit with us together at the Seder.

We repeat their invitation, for on this night all are united in history and in hope. We were all in Egypt. We all stood at Sinai.  
We all suffered in the Holocaust. And we will all be present when redemption is complete.

*[The Feast of Freedom, The Rabbinical Assembly]*

## FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM, FROM DEGRADATION TO DIGNITY

The traditional Haggadah retells the story of the Exodus in large part as a commentary on four simple yet eloquent verses from the Torah:

אֲרָמִי אֶבֶד אָבִי וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִמָּה    a-ra-mi o-veid a-vi va-yei-red mits-ra-ye-ma  
וַיָּגֵר שָׁם בְּמִתֵּי מֵעַט    va-ya-gar sham bim-tei me-at.  
וַיְהִי־שָׁם לְגוֹי גָדוֹל עָצוּם וְרַב :    va-ye-hi sham le-goi ga-dol a-tsum va-rav.

My ancestor was a wandering Aramean,  
and with just a few people went down to *Mitzrayim*  
and dwelt there and became a great nation, mighty and numerous.

וַיִּרְעוּ אֶתְנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ    va-ya-rei-u o-ta-nu ha-mits-rim va-ye-a-nu-nu  
וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה :    va-yit-nu a-lei-nu a-vo-da ka-sha.

The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us;  
and they imposed hard labor upon us.

וַנִּצְעַק אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ    va-nits-ak el a-do-nai e-lo-hei a-vo-tei-nu  
וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קִלְנוּ וַיִּרְא אֶת־עַנְיֵנוּ    va-yish-ma a-do-nai et ko-lei-nu va-yar et a-ne-yei-nu  
וְאֶת־עַמְלָנוּ וְאֶת־לַחֲצֵנוּ :    ve-et a-ma-lei-nu ve-et la-cha-tsei-nu.

We cried out to Adonai, the God of our ancestors;  
and Adonai heard our plea and saw our affliction,  
and our misery and our oppression.

וַיּוֹצֵאנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה    va-yo-tsei-nu a-do-nai mi-mits-ra-yim be-yad cha-za-ka  
וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה וּבְמַרְא גָדֹל וּבְאֹתוֹת וּבְמִפְתֵּימִים :    u-viz-ro-a ne-tu-ya u-ve-mo-ra ga-dol u-ve-o-tot u-ve-mof-tim.

Then Adonai took us out of *Mitzrayim*  
with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm,  
and with awesome power and signs and wonders.

[Deuteronomy 26:58]

As an alternative to reading the following section,  
have each person tell a section of the story in their own words.



## THE NARRATIVE OF THE EXODUS EXPANDED

In fulfillment of the teaching,

“All who expand on the retelling are worthy of praise,”

each phrase of these four verses is expanded and interpreted, usually by quoting complementary verses from other places in the Torah. Our retelling of the story focuses on new verses to expound on the text in the same manner as has been done for more than two thousand years.

However we retell the story, we are guided by this theme:

מַעֲבָדוֹת לְחֵרוֹת *mei-av-dut le-chei-rut*

מִגְנוֹת לְשִׁבְחָה *mi-ge-nut le-she-vach*

**Our history moves from slavery toward freedom;  
our story begins with degradation and rises to dignity.**

Go and learn how precarious our beginnings were. As it is written:

וַיְהִי כָּל-נַפְשׁ יִצְחָק יִרְדְּ-יַעֲקֹב שִׁבְעִים נַפְשׁ : *va-ye-hi kol ne-fesh yo-tzai ye-rech ya-a-kov shiv-im ne-fesh*

And all the souls of the line of Jacob, Rachel and Leah were seventy souls.

[Exodus 1:5]

There was famine in the land of Canaan, and we went down to sojourn in Egypt. In gratitude for Joseph's service, Pharaoh gave us the land of Goshen in which to live and pasture our flocks.

We prospered there, as it is written:

וַיְהִי-שָׁם לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל עָצוּם וְרַב : *va-ye-hi sham le-goi ga-dol a-tsum va-rav.*

There we became a great nation, mighty and numerous.

[Deuteronomy 26:6]

But Joseph died, and the Pharaoh who knew him. As it is written:

וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ-חָדָשׁ עַל-מִצְרָיִם *va-ya-kam me-lech cha-dash al mits-ra-yim*

אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדַע אֶת-יֹסֵף : *a-she-er lo ya-da et yo-seif.*

There arose a new Pharaoh in Egypt,  
who did not know Joseph.

[Exodus 1:8]

The new Pharaoh feared us, because we were numerous and strong,  
different from the Egyptians, and his fear became hatred.  
He determined to crush our spirit and to break our backs with hard  
labor. As it is written:

וַיִּשְׂמוּ עָלֵינוּ שָׂרֵי מִסִּים לְמַעַן עַנּוֹתוֹ בְּסִבְלָתָם *va-ya-si-mu a-lav sa-rei mi-sim le-ma-an a-no-to be-siv-lo-tam.*

Therefore they set taskmasters over them, to afflict them with burdens.

[Exodus 1:11]

We toiled beneath the Egyptian sun and the whips of the overseers,  
and we raised great brick cities amid the sands, Pithom and Ramses.  
But despite our oppression, we continued to thrive, and Pharaoh  
turned to murder.

He commanded the Egyptian midwives who attended our mothers to kill every  
male infant they delivered. But even their fear of the might of Pharaoh could not  
overcome the midwives' reverence for life. As it is written:

וַתִּירְאוּ הַמִּיּוֹלְדוֹת אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים וְלֹא עָשׂוּ  
כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהִים מֶלֶךְ מִצְרָיִם  
: וַתַּחֲיֶינָהוּ אֶת־הַיְלָדִים *va-ti-re-na ham-ya-le-dot et ha-e-lo-him ve-lo a-su  
ka-a-sheer di-ber a-lei-hen me-lech mits-ra-yim  
va-te-cha-ye-na et ha-ye-la-dim.*

The midwives feared God,  
and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded,  
but saved the boy-children alive.

[Exodus 1:17]

Pharaoh's thwarted hatred consumed him.

He ordered all his people to join against us. As it is written:

וַיִּצַו פַּרְעֹה לְכָל־עַמּוֹ לֵאמֹר כָּל־הַבֶּן הַיְלֹוֹד  
: הַיְאֹרָה תִּשְׁלִיכוּהוּ וְכָל־הַבַּת תִּחֲיֶינָהּ *va-ye-tsav par-o le-chal a-mo lei-mor kal ha-bein ha-yi-lod  
ha-ye-o-ra tash-li-chu-hu ve-chal ha-bat te-cha-yun.*

Pharaoh charged all his people, saying:  
"Every son that is born you shall throw into the river,  
and every daughter you shall keep alive."

[Exodus 1:22]

#### FEAR BECAME HATRED

In the Biblical account, Pharaoh announces his plan to enslave the Jews with, "Come, let us deal wisely with them."  
We learn that our fear of the different can become an excuse for oppression and cruelty in the guise of "wisdom."

#### MIDWIVES' REVERENCE FOR LIFE

So it has been in every generation; when tyrants have ordered our destruction, righteous people of their own nations have defied  
them, risking their lives for ours.

Yet again he failed.

Pharaoh's own daughter rebelled at his decree. As it is written:

וּתְפַתַּח וּתְרֹאֶהוּ אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד וְהִנֵּה־נֹעַר בֶּכֶה  
וּתְחַמֵּל עָלָיו וּתֹאמֶר מִי־לֵדֵי הָעִבְרִים זֶה :  
*va·tif·tach va·tir·ei·hu et ha·ye·led ve·hi·nei na·ar bo·che  
va·tach·mol a·lav va·to·mer mi·yal·dei ha·iv·rim ze.*

She opened the ark and beheld an infant boy, and it was crying.  
And she had compassion upon him and said:  
"This must be one of the Hebrew children."  
And she saved the child alive.

[Exodus 2:6]

We grew up in bondage, we grew old and died as slaves.  
One Pharaoh died and another took his place, and still our burden  
grew heavier. We were always hungry, our muscles ached, our bodies  
stank of mud. Each day we sank deeper into despair; it seemed our  
slavery would never end.

וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הָהֵם וַיָּמָת מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם  
וַיָּאָנְחוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָעֲבֹדָה וַיִּזְעֻקוּ  
וַתַּעַל שׁוֹעַתָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים מִן־הָעֲבֹדָה :  
וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָם  
וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ  
*va·ye·hi ba·ya·mim ha·ra·bim ha·hem va·ya·mot me·lech mitz·ra·yim  
va·yei·a·ne·chu ve·nei yis·ra·eil min ha·a·vo·da va·yiz·a·ku  
va·ta·al shav·a·tam el ha·e·lo·him min ha·a·vo·da.  
va·yish·ma e·lo·him et na·a·ka·tam  
va·yiz·kor e·lo·him et be·ri·to.*

And after many days passed, the children of Israel sighed because of their burdens,  
and they cried, and their cry came up to God,  
and God heard their groaning, and God remembered the covenant. [Exodus 2:23-24]

When we had almost forgotten ourselves, God remembered us,  
and we too began to remember.

#### SHE OPENED THE ARK

The word *teiva*, ark, appears in only two Bible stories, here and the story of Noah. Noah's ark saved all life, while the ark here sheltered a single infant. Again we are reminded that saving a single life is like saving the entire world.

#### WE GREW UP IN BONDAGE

We got used to standing in line at seven o'clock in the morning, at twelve noon, and again at seven o'clock in the evening. We stood in a long queue with a plate in our hand into which they ladled a little warmed-up water with a salty or a coffee flavor. Or else they gave us a few potatoes. We got used to sleeping without a bed, to saluting every uniform, not to walk on the sidewalks, and then again to walk on the sidewalks. We got used to undeserved slaps, blows and executions. We got accustomed to seeing piled-up coffins full of corpses, to seeing the sick amidst dirt and filth, and to seeing the helpless doctors. We got used to the fact that from time to time, one thousand unhappy souls would come here and that, from time to time, one thousand unhappy souls would go away . . . .

[From the writings of 15-year-old Peter Fischl, who died in Auschwitz in 1944.]

Then came days of blood and terror. It seemed as if all creation had turned against the people of Egypt because of the bondage with which they afflicted us. And day by day the hope of freedom grew, as we realized we lived in the time of redemption. As it is written:

וּיִצְאֵנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה      *va-yo-tsi-ei-nu a-do-nai mi-mits-ra-yim be-yad cha-za-ka*  
 וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה וּבְמַרְא גְדֹל וּבְאִתּוֹת וּבְמִפְתִּיּוֹת :      *u-viz-ro-a ne-tu-ya u-ve-mo-ra ga-dol u-ve-o-tot u-ve-mof-tim.*

Adonai brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand,  
 and with an outstretched arm; with great terror,  
 and with signs and wonders.

[Deuteronomy 26:8]

Adonai brought us forth, I and no angel;  
 Adonai brought us forth, I and no fiery messenger;  
 Adonai brought us forth, I and no Messiah;  
 Adonai brought us forth, I, Adonai, I and no other.

At last came the final, endless night. We splashed our door posts with lamb's blood and sat up late at our tables, robed and belted, our staffs at our sides, our few possessions bundled at our feet. It was the month of Nisan, and the night air was sweet with spring. We ate in haste. In the hushed night, we could hear the beating of our hearts. At midnight, a great cry shattered the silence. As it is written:

וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה וַיְהִי הַחֹהֵךְ כָּל-בְּכוֹר  
 בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּכֹר פְּרֹעֶה הַיֹּשֵׁב  
 עַל-בִּקְסָאוֹ עַד בְּכוֹר הַשֶּׁבִי אֲשֶׁר בְּבַיִת הַבּוֹר  
 וְכָל בְּכוֹר בְּהֵמָה :      *va-ye-hi ba-cha-tsi ha-la-ye-la va-a-do-nai hi-ka chal be-chor*  
*be-e-rets mits-ra-yim mi-be-chor par-o ha-yo-sheiv*  
*al kis-o ad be-chor ha-she-vi a-she-veit ha-bor*  
*ve-chol be-chor be-hei-ma.*  
 וַיִּקַּם פְּרֹעֶה לַיְלָה הוּא וְכָל-עַבְדָּיו  
 וְכָל-מִצְרַיִם וַתְּהִי צַעֲקָה גְדֹלָה בְּמִצְרַיִם  
 כִּי-אִין בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר אִין-שָׁם מֵת :      *va-ya-kam par-o la-ye-la hu ve-chol a-va-dav*  
*ve-chol mits-ra-yim va-te-hi tse-a-ka ge-do-la be-mits-ra-yim*  
*ki ein ba-yit a-she-er ein sham meit.*

At midnight, Adonai smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt;  
 and Pharaoh rose in the night, he and all his servants, and there was a great cry  
 in the land of Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

[Exodus 12:29-30]

But our dwellings were spared. In haste we rose from our tables, snatching our possessions, hurrying our children, packing the flat loaves that had not had time to rise. Our kneading troughs on our shoulders, we burst into the night, streaming through the streets of the cities that had been our prisons, through the great avenues we had built with our tears, past the lifeless eyes of the sphinxes and the dead stone of the tombs, and then beyond, out into the wide clean darkness — Free.

# SORROW AMID REJOICING

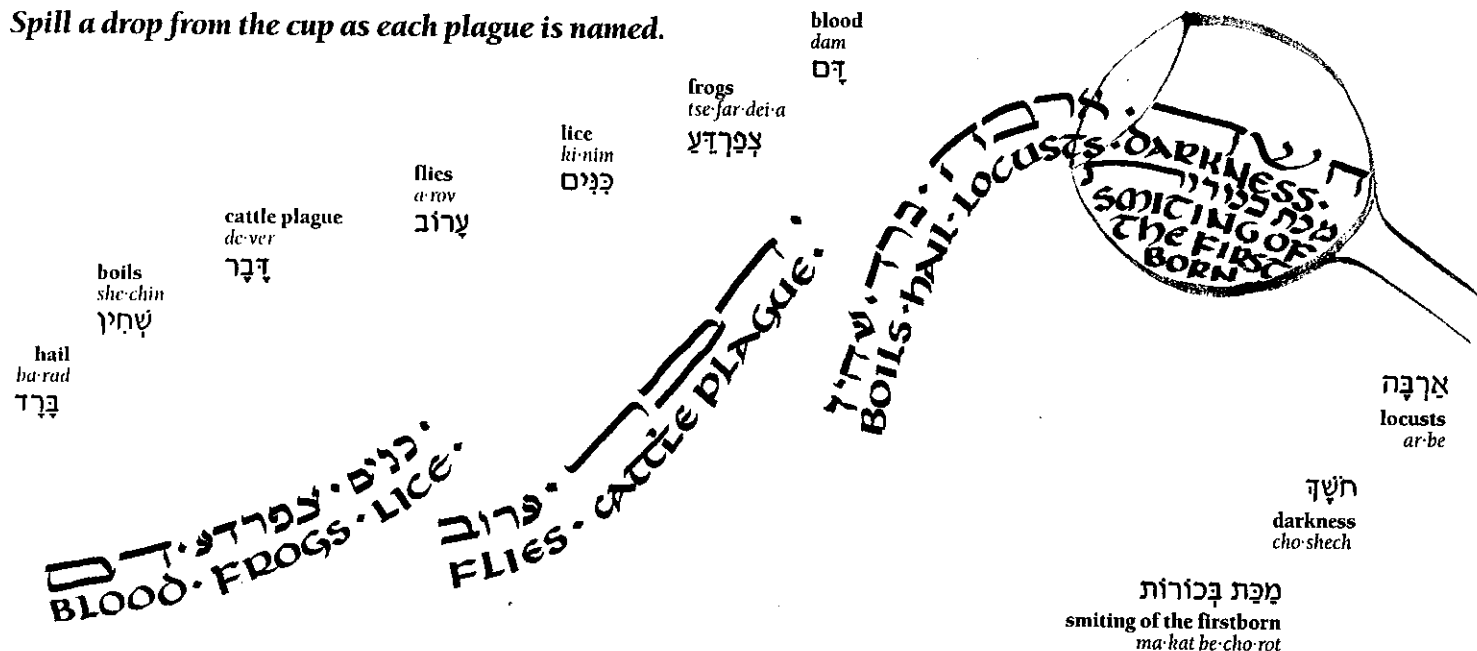
Tonight, our night of celebration, also has moments of sorrow. Before we continue with songs of joy, we pause and remember the suffering of the Egyptians that occurred in the course of our liberation. As it is written:

When the sea closed over the Egyptians, the angels began singing praises to God, but the Holy One called for silence, saying:  
 "My children are drowning in the sea;  
 how can you sing praises?"

[Talmud, Sanhedrin 39b]

We reduce our joy, removing a symbolic drop from our cup of celebration as we recall the ten plagues brought upon Egypt:

Spill a drop from the cup as each plague is named.



❖ Continue by naming the oppressions of our own day and spilling a drop as each is recalled, saying:  
 While the oppression of . . . continues, we diminish our joy, or: For the plague of . . . , we diminish our joy.

I ADONAI, I AND NO OTHER (facing page)

God, who previously had appeared in solitude to a few, chose at the Exodus to be revealed to all people. As it is written:  
 I appeared unto Abraham and Sarah as Eil Shaddai, the God who nurtures; but My Name I did not make known.  
 But speak unto Israel and tell them, I will bring you out of your slavery; and you shall know that I am Adonai, God.

[Exodus 6:7]

THE PLAGUES OF OUR OWN DAY

Our joy is diminished by the suffering of our oppressors long ago. Current sorrows also diminish the cup of our celebration.

THE CYCLE OF THE PLAGUES

Commentators note that the Egyptian plagues are in three cycles of three, each one stronger than the one before it. First affected is the external world (the environment), then the personal world (property), and then the person.

## DAYEINU!

אלו הוציאנו ממצרים,	<i>i-lu ho-tsi-a-nu mi-mits-ra-yim,</i>
ולא קרע לנו את-הים, דינו	<i>ve-lo ka-ra la-nu et ha-yam. da-yei-nu.</i>
אלו קרע לנו את-הים,	<i>i-lu ka-ra la-nu et ha-yam,</i>
ולא העבירנו בתוכו בחרבה, דינו:	<i>ve-lo he-e-vi-ra-nu ve-to-cho be-cha-ra-va. da-yei-nu.</i>
אלו העבירנו בתוכו בחרבה,	<i>i-lu he-e-vi-ra-nu ve-to-cho be-cha-ra-va,</i>
ולא ספק צרכנו במדבר ארבעים שנה, דינו:	<i>ve-lo si-peik tsa-re-kei-nu va-mid-bar ar-ba-im sha-na. da-yei-nu.</i>
אלו ספק צרכנו במדבר ארבעים שנה,	<i>i-lu si-peik tsa-re-kei-nu va-mid-bar ar-ba-im sha-na,</i>
ולא האכילנו את-המן, דינו:	<i>ve-lo he-e-chi-la-nu et ha-man. 'da-yei-nu.</i>
אלו האכילנו את-המן,	<i>i-lu he-e-chi-la-nu et ha-man,</i>
ולא נתן לנו את-השבת, דינו:	<i>ve-lo na-tan la-nu et ha-sha-bat. da-yei-nu.</i>
אלו נתן לנו את-השבת,	<i>i-lu na-tan la-nu et ha-sha-bat,</i>
ולא קרבנו לפני הר סיני, דינו:	<i>ve-lo kei-re-va-nu lif-nei har si-nai. da-yei-nu.</i>
אלו קרבנו לפני הר סיני,	<i>i-lu kei-re-va-nu lif-nei har si-nai</i>
ולא נתן לנו את-התורה, דינו:	<i>ve-lo na-tan la-nu et ha-to-ra. da-yei-nu.</i>

If You had brought us out of Egypt, And not liberated all the nation's oppressed,	<i>Dayeinu!</i>
If You had liberated all the nation's oppressed, And not split the sea for us,	<i>Dayeinu!</i>
If You had split the sea for us, And not led us in the wilderness for forty years,	<i>Dayeinu!</i>
If You had led us in the wilderness for forty years, and not sustained us with manna,	<i>Dayeinu!</i>
If you had sustained us with manna, And not given us the Sabbath,	<i>Dayeinu!</i>
If You had given us the Sabbath, And not brought us to Mount Sinai,	<i>Dayeinu!</i>
If You had brought us to Mount Sinai, And not given us the Torah,	<i>Dayeinu!</i>

**All sing.**

אלו הוציא הוציאנו	<i>i·lu ho·tsi ho·tsi·a·nu</i>
הוציאנו ממצרים,	<i>ho·tsi·a·nu mi·mits·ra·yim,</i>
דינו:	<i>da·yei·nu.</i>
אלו נתן נתן לנו	<i>i·lu na·tan na·tan la·nu</i>
נתן לנו את השבת,	<i>na·tan la·nu et ha·sha·bat,</i>
דינו:	<i>da·yei·nu.</i>
אלו נתן נתן לנו	<i>i·lu na·tan na·tan la·nu</i>
נתן לנו את התורה,	<i>na·tan la·nu et ha·to·ra,</i>
דינו:	<i>da·yei·nu.</i>

We surely must express our praise for the many wondrous deeds  
and boundless goodness we have enjoyed!

For You brought us out of Egypt,

Liberated all the nation's oppressed peoples along with us,  
Split the sea for us,  
Fed us in the wilderness,  
Gave us the Sabbath,  
Brought us to Mount Sinai,  
Gave us the Torah,  
Brought us to the land of Israel,  
Called us to be a light to the nations,  
Sustained us wherever we have dwelt,  
Enabled us to see each one of ourselves as a reflection of Your image,  
And summoned us to share in the labor of healing  
and completing the work of creation.

**TRANSLATING DAYEINU**

A literal translation of *dayeinu* is, "... [it would have been] enough for us."

But if God had brought us into the desert and had not fed us there, would it have been enough?

A more satisfying translation is, "... that alone would have amazed us." Each of the miracles which led to Sinai and the promise of redemption was inconceivable while we were slaves in Egypt, although liberation would not have been complete without them all. It pays not to look too far ahead in the struggle for freedom, and to rejoice in each forward step as a miracle in its own right. Another interpretation is that each miracle revealed the presence and the love of God. That knowledge was, indeed, "... enough for us."

**A REFLECTION OF YOUR IMAGE**

The "coming out" from Egypt proceeded on two levels, as physical and political liberation on the national level, and as a transformation on the personal level, of how each person understood themselves. We recall both levels of this transformation when we reexperience the Exodus "in every generation."

## SEEING OURSELVES IN THE STORY

בְּכָל־דֹּר וָדֹר חַיֵּיבֵת כָּל נֶפֶשׁ לִרְאוֹת  
 אֶת־עַצְמָהּ, כְּאִלוּ הִיא יֹצְאָה מִמִּצְרַיִם. *be·chal dor va·dor cha·ye·vet kol ne·fesh lir·ot  
 et ats·ma ke·i·lu hi yats·a mi·mits·ra·yim.*

In every generation, my obligation is this:  
 I must see myself as though I came out from Egypt.  
 As it is written:

You shall tell those who follow you, saying:  
 "This is done because of what God did for me  
 when I came out of Egypt."

[Exodus 13:8]

For it was not our ancestors alone whom God redeemed;  
 rather, we ourselves were redeemed with them.

*lift the cup.*

Therefore, we thank, bless, honor and praise the One  
 who blessed our ancestors, and ourselves, with all these miracles:  
 Who brought us from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to rejoicing,  
 From mourning to festivity, from darkness to light  
 And from servitude to redemption.  
 Now let us sing a new song before God. Halleluyah!

*replace the cup.*

*Retell a story about your own liberation, your coming out, or another journey you have made.*

### JUST SEE MYSELF

Again and again, Judaism asks us not just to remember the past, but to reenact it. Doing so requires us to internalize the history of our people and make it our own personal story.



## SONGS OF PRAISE

הַלְלוּיָהּ.	<i>hal-lu-yah</i>
הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְיָ. הַלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְיָ.	<i>hal-lu av-dei a-do-nai. hal-lu et sheim a-do-nai.</i>
יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם :	<i>ye-hi sheim a-do-nai me-vo-rach mei-a-ta ve-ad o-lam.</i>
מִמִּזְרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאוֹ. מְהִלָּל שֵׁם יְיָ.	<i>mi-miz-rach she-mesh ad me-vo-o me-hu-lal sheim a-do-nai.</i>
רַם עַל־כָּל־גּוֹיִם יְיָ. עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ :	<i>ram al kol go-yim a-do-nai al ha-sha-ma-yim ke-vo-do.</i>
מִי כִּי אֶלְהִינוּ. הַמְגַבִּיחַ לְשֶׁבֶת :	<i>mi kai-ya e-lo-hei-nu ha-mag-bi-hi la-sha-vet.</i>
הַמְשַׁפִּילֵי לְרֵאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ :	<i>ha-mash-pi-li lir-ot ba-sha-ma-yim u-va-a-rets.</i>
מְקִימֵי מַעְפָּר דָּל. מַאֲשֵׁפֵת יְרִים אָבוֹן :	<i>me-ki-mi mei-a-far dal mei-ash-pot ya-rim ev-yon.</i>
לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי עַם־נְדִיבִים. עַם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ :	<i>le-ho-shi-vi im ne-di-vim im ne-di-vei a-mo.</i>
מוֹשִׁיבֵי עֲקָרֹת הַבַּיִת אִם הַבָּנִים שְׂמֵחָה.	<i>mo-shi-vi a-ke-ret ha-ba-yit eim ha-ba-nim se-mei-cha</i>
הַלְלוּיָהּ :	<i>hal-lu-yah.</i>

Halleluyah!

From the rising of the sun until sunset, praise God's name.

Who is like Adonai our God, who dwells on high,

But who humbles Herself to see what transpires in heaven and on earth.

She lifts the poor out of the dust, and raises the abandoned from the junk-heap.

She returns the outcast to their homes, and the children's Mother rejoices.

Halleluyah!

[Psalm 113]

## HALLELUYAH

"Praise God." The instruction, "Let us sing a new song," is immediately realized. Psalms 113-118 are called the Egyptian Hallel. They were sung in the Temple on Passover and are one of the oldest sections of our liturgy.

## THE CHILDREN'S MOTHER REJOICES

While the Bible's portrayal of divinity is overwhelmingly male, there are some striking metaphors of God's female or feminine attributes, as this literal translation demonstrates.

בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם,      *be-tseit yis-ra-eil mi-mits-ra-yim*  
 בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מַעַם לַעֲזָ:      *beit ya-a-kov mei-am lo-eiz.*  
 הִיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקַדְשׁוֹ.      *ha-ye-ta ye-hu-da le-kad-sho*  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלוֹתָיו:      *yis-ra-eil mam-she-lo-tav.*  
 הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּנֹס,      *ha-yam ra-a va-ya-nos*  
 הַיַּרְדֵּן יָסַב לְאַחֹר:      *ha-yar-dein yi-sov le-a-chor.*  
 הַהַרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים.      *he-ha-rim rak-du che-ei-lim*  
 גְּבְעוֹת כְּבָנֵי-צֹאן:      *ge-va-ot kiv-nei tson.*

מֵה־לֶּךָ הַיָּם כִּי תָנוּס.      *ma le-cha ha-yam ki ta-nus*  
 הַיַּרְדֵּן תִּסָּב לְאַחֹר:      *ha-yar-dein ti-sov le-a-chor.*  
 הַהַרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים.      *he-ha-rim tir-ke-du che-ei-lim*  
 גְּבְעוֹת כְּבָנֵי-צֹאן:      *ge-va-ot kiv-nei tson.*  
 מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדוֹן חוּלֵי אֶרֶץ.      *mi-lif-nei a-don chu-li a-rets*  
 מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:      *mi-lif-nei e-lo-ah ya-a-kov.*  
 הַהֹפְכֵי הַצּוּר אֶגְסֵ-מַיִם.      *ha-ho-fe-chi ha-tsur a-gam ma-yim*  
 חֲלֹמֵישׁ לְמַעְיָנוּ-מַיִם.      *cha-la-mish le-ma-ye-no ma-yim.*

When Israel left Egypt, Jacob's children from a strange land,  
Judah became a sanctuary, and Israel, God's dwelling.

The sea saw and fled, Jordan River was driven back.

The mountains jumped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.

What ailed you, sea, that you fled? Or you, Jordan, that you were driven back?

Mountains, that you jumped like rams? And little hills, like lambs?

Meeting its Lover the earth shakes before the God of Jacob;

Who transforms stone into pools of water, and flint into flowing springs. *[Psalm 114]*

*Sing a favorite old or new song about liberation, joy, or similar experiences.*

## THE SECOND CUP

### Fill the cup.

We praise the Eternal Source of life,  
 who redeemed us and our ancestors from Egypt,  
 and who brought us to this night when we eat matzah and bitter herbs.  
 Adonai our God and God of all generations,  
 lead us to a time when we shall celebrate other festivals  
 and sacred celebrations in peace, joyfully sharing in the *tikkun*,  
 the building of Jerusalem and of the world.  
 Then we will sing a new song for our redemption and for the liberation  
 of our souls. Praised are You, Adonai, redeemer of Israel and all peoples.

We raise the second of the four cups with which we mark our  
 observance tonight: the cup of self-reliance, filled with the potential  
 and the responsibility that freedom brings us. For it is written:

See, I have set before you today life and death, good and evil,  
 therefore choose life,  
 that you and those who come after you live.

[Deuteronomy 30:15, 19]

### Lift the cup.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
 בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן : *ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam*  
*bo-rei pe-ri ha-ga-fen.*

We praise the Eternal Source of creation,  
 Creator of the fruit of the vine. Amen.

### Drink the second cup.

#### THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE

This verse is the climax of the Yom Kippur Torah reading and is the origin of the name for our High Holiday prayerbook.  
 As Yom Kippur is a day of private introspection in community, so Passover is a collective celebration whose fulfillment is  
 contingent on our personal action.

THE SYMBOLS OF  
THE SEDER



## רחצה

## WASHING

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
 אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,  
 וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם: *ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam*  
*a-sheer ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav*  
*ve-tsi-va-nu al ne-ti-lat ya-da-yim.*

We praise the Eternal Source of life  
 who sanctifies us through *mitzvot*  
 and has commanded us regarding the ritual washing of hands.

**Wash the hands.**

## BEITZAH

## ביצה

## THE ROASTED EGG

**Lift the egg.**

**Why do we eat this roasted egg?**

In every culture, the egg is a symbol of fertility and life.

The egg on our Seder table recalls the festival offerings that our people would bring in ancient days as a token of their thanksgiving.

This egg symbolizes the compassion we see in the constant renewal of life; it reminds us of our link with other peoples far and near.

**Replace the egg.**

## WASHING

Why do we wash our hands before the Seder meal, when we do not observe this custom at other times?

The ritual reminds us that the food tonight is not simply a meal, but also the central part of a sacred observance.

## THE SWEET MIXTURE

*Lift the charoset from the Seder plate.*

Why do we eat this mixture of apples, nuts, and seasonings?

Rabbi Yochanan said:

We eat the *charoset* to commemorate the mortar used by our ancestors when forced to make bricks for the Pharaohs.

We represent our bitter labors with a sweet mixture, for that is the pattern of our observance: a journey from despair into hope, a tale of shame that ends in praise.

*Replace the charoset on the Seder plate.*

*Distribute the other dishes of charoset, and each take some.*

## CHAROSET

Apples remind us of the legend that our mothers in Egypt would give birth in the shelter of apple trees, and hide the infants in the orchard to save them from the cruelty of Pharaoh. But did apples grow in the land of the pyramids? Perhaps the trees are only a legend, but the resourcefulness of Jewish women is not.

## APPLES, NUTS, AND SEASONINGS

Is it a coincidence that the foods and spices from which *charoset* is made are all images from the Song of Songs?

I went down to the garden of nut trees, to look at the rushes beside the stream.

Refresh me with raisins, comfort me with apples, for I am faint with love.

Your love is better than wine, more fragrant than perfume.

Your lips are an orchard of rare fruit, spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with every incense-bearing tree.

[6:11]

[2:5]

[1:2]

[4:13]

## THREE THINGS

Rabban Gamliel taught that unless we discuss three things at our Seder, we have not fulfilled our obligation to observe Passover:

*Pesach*, the Paschal lamb,  
matzah, the unleavened bread,  
and *maror*, the bitter herbs.

*Fill the cup.*

PESACH  
פסח

## THE BONE

*Lift the bone.*

Why do we display this roasted bone?

It recalls the Passover sacrifice that our ancestors ate when the Temple stood, to commemorate the final plague that passed over our houses in Egypt. As it is written:

You shall say,

"It is the Passover sacrifice of Adonai,  
who passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt  
when Egypt was struck; but our houses were spared." *[Exodus 12:27]*

On this Passover eve, we look back to the first Passover in gratitude for our safety and liberation; on this Passover eve, we look forward to the Great Passover to come, when all houses are safely marked with the rainbow of the covenant with Noah.

*Replace the bone.*

## THE UNLEAVENED BREAD

*Distribute parts of the middle matzah to all; if necessary, use extra matzot.*

*Each person holds up a piece of matzah.*

Why do we eat this unleavened bread?

Because before our ancestors' dough had time to rise  
the Holy One was revealed before them and redeemed them.

As it is written:

They baked the dough they brought from Egypt into unleavened cakes  
since they had been driven out of Egypt, and could not delay,  
and did not prepare provisions for themselves.

[Exodus 12:39]

Having wakened to the fact of their oppression, our ancestors  
hastened to leave. So too in our day may we neither hesitate nor tarry  
to move from the place of oppression towards liberation.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,  
המוציא לחם מן הארץ. *ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam  
ha-mo-tsi le-chem min ha-a-rets.*

We praise the Eternal Source of life,  
who brings forth bread from the Earth.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,  
אשר קדשנו במצותיו  
וצונו על אכילת מצה. *ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam  
a-she-r ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav  
ve-tsi-va-nu al a-chi-lat ma-tsa.*

We praise the Eternal Source of life,  
Who sanctifies us through *mitzvot*  
and has instructed us to eat matzah.

*Eat the matzah.*

### THEIR OPPRESSION

We have a special responsibility which derives from our history:  
You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger,  
having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt.

[Exodus 23:9]



## THE BITTER HERBS

Distribute pieces of maror.

Each person holds up a piece of maror.

Why do we eat this bitter herb?

Because their masters embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt through slavery. As it is written:

They made their lives bitter with hard labor,  
in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of field work;  
all the service forced upon them was harsh.

[Exodus 1.14]

In the season of our freedom we remember the bitterness of all oppression, that our liberation may be the beginning of our struggle and not the end.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר.    *ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam  
a-she-ri ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav  
ve-tsi-va-nu al a-chi-lat ma-ror.*

We praise the Eternal Source of life,  
who sanctifies our lives through *mitzvot*  
and has commanded us to eat the bitter herb.

at the maror.

## BITTER HERB

We held the Seder in a hurry, as in the time of the Exodus from *Mitzrayim*, since the camp authorities prohibited the holding of a Seder. Instead of *maror*, we ate slices of onion, and for *zeroa*, we used burnt soup cubes. We read from one Haggadah, the only copy we had, and when we reached *koreich*, we had nothing to put between the matzot.

Then Losif Mendelevich said,

"We do not need a symbol of our suffering.

We have real suffering and we shall put that between the matzot."

[*Refusenik Shimon Grilius, remembering a Seder in a Soviet labor camp.*]

**MATZAH AND MAROR TOGETHER**

*Distribute more matzah and maror.*

*Make a sandwich of matzah, charoset and maror.*

Remembering the days when our people would make pilgrimage to Jerusalem, we now do as Hillel did.

He would combine the Passover sacrifice, matzah, and bitter herb and eat them together. Thus, he and we fulfill the Biblical teaching exactly:

On matzah and bitter herbs shall they eat it.

[Exodus 12:8]

*Eat the sandwich.*

**MATZAH AND MAROR**

Why do we eat the matzah, reminder of freedom, before the *maror*, token of suffering ?

Did not the suffering come first ? Rabbi Simcha Bunam of P'zhysha explained,

As long as there was no prospect of release, the Israelites did not feel the full extent of their enslavement.

**KOREICH** But as soon as Moses spoke to them of freedom, they awoke to the bitterness of their lot.

We combine the matzah of freedom and the *maror* of slavery as a sign of the importance of continuity and remembrance. For in the time of freedom, we remember the bitterness of all bondage, and in the time of slavery, we maintain the hope of redemption.

## FINDING WHAT WAS HIDDEN

*The meal is served.*

*During the meal, everyone searches for the hidden matzoh.*

*After eating, the finder holds up the afikomen.*

The *afikomen* has been found!  
 We have found what was lost only after diligent searching  
 in the most unlikely places! The exiled has returned home.  
 Just as our story began with oppression and moved to redemption,  
 this piece of matzah, which began as the symbol of our ancestors'  
 oppression, has been transformed into the token of our liberation.

*Pass the afikomen around, so everyone gets a piece.*

*Eat the afikomen.*

Eating the *afikomen* begins the second half of our Seder.  
 As a reminder of the thanksgivings brought by our ancestors,  
 it remains a timeless symbol of our own thanksgiving  
 and the promise of a future time when all hiding will end,  
 the lost will be recovered, all exiles will return home,  
 and sorrow will be no more.

May we see this time speedily and in our own day,  
 and may our lives hasten its coming.

### TZAFUN

The larger half of the broken matzah has been hidden, for more is hidden than is revealed.  
 Within ourselves and our world, there are prayers to be fulfilled and promises to be redeemed.  
 Like the broken matzah, we are incomplete.  
 Neither the breaking of the matzah, *yachatz*, nor its rediscovery, *tzafun*, are accompanied by a blessing;  
 our innermost seekings and findings occur beyond the plane of language.

### HIDING AND FINDING

In the Seder, we relive the experiences of our ancestors in Egypt, as individuals and as a nation. At the beginning of the Seder, we broke the middle matzah and hid the larger half, for at that point in the story, our suffering was great and the light of redemption was hidden. Now that Adonai has brought us up out of Egypt, the broken half is again before us, and we share it as we have shared the miracle of liberation. The eating of the *afikomen* ends the Passover feast: we have tasted of redemption, and we will eat nothing more tonight.

### AFIKOMEN

The word is Greek, but its precise meaning is unknown. Some say it means "dessert." Others, that the *afikomen* is a substitute for the custom of partying from house to house after a festive meal. [Talmud, Pesachim 119b]

**AFTER THE MEAL:  
TOWARD LIBERATION**



## RACE AFTER THE MEAL

To shorten, read or sing Psalm 126 (below), the two prayers on page 46 and the final blessing on page 47.  
The Third Cup begins on page 49.

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת	<i>shir ha-ma-a-lot</i>
בְּשׁוּב יְיָ אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הָיִינוּ כְּחֻלְמִים :	<i>be-shuv a-do-nai et shi-vat tsi-yon, ha-yi-nu ke-cho-le-mim.</i>
אִז יִמְלֵא שְׁחוֹק פִּינוּ וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה	<i>az ye-ma-lei se-chok pi-nu, u-le-sho-nei-nu ri-na.</i>
אִז יֵאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם	<i>az yo-me-ru va-go-yim,</i>
הֲגִדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהִים :	<i>hig-dil a-do-nai la-a-sot im ei-le.</i>
הֲגִדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ הָיִינוּ שְׂמֵחִים :	<i>hig-dil a-do-nai la-a-sot i-ma-nu, ha-yi-nu se-mei-chim.</i>

When Adonai brought Zion back from exile,  
it was as if we were dreaming.  
Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with joy.  
Then it was said among the nations:

"Adonai has done great things for them!"

Adonai did great things for us and we rejoiced.

שׁוּבָה יְיָ אֶת שְׁבִיתֵנוּ	<i>shu-va a-do-nai et she-vi-tei-nu,</i>
כְּאַפִּיקִים בְּנֶגֶב :	<i>ka-a-fi-kim ba-ne-gev.</i>
הַזֹּרְעִים בְּדִמְעָה בְּרָנָה יִקְצְרוּ :	<i>ha-zo-re-im be-dim-a be-ri-na yik-tso-ru.</i>
הַלֹּחֵץ יִלְחַץ וּבָכָה לֵשָׂא מִשָּׂדֶה הַזֶּרַע	<i>ha-loch yei-leich u-va-cho no-sei me-shech ha-za-ra,</i>
בֹּא יְבֵא בְּרָנָה לֵשָׂא אֶלְמֹתָיו :	<i>bo ya-vo ve-ri-na, no-sei a-lu-mo-tav.</i>

Bring us back from our exiles, Adonai,  
as floodstreams through desert soil.  
Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy;  
those who go forth weeping, carrying their seed,  
will return joyfully, bearing their sheaves.

[Psalm 126]

### CHAT HAMAZON

While few of us say the Grace after Meals daily, it is appropriate to include it on festival occasions. Traditionally, we begin with Psalm 126. A responsive invocation follows, after which we give thanks for food and sustenance and for our material and spiritual blessings. We conclude with the hope of liberation for all.

### SONG OF ASCENTS

Psalm 126 describes the joy and wonder of the people of Israel when they returned from the Babylonian exile.

This psalm evokes the cycles of exile and return that have marked the years of our own lives and those of our people.

**The leader invites all to praise:**

חֲבֵרֵי נְבָרָךְ! *cha-vei-rai, ne-va-reich*

Friends, let us praise!

**All respond:**

יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם. *ye-hi sheim a-do-nai me-vo-rach mei-a-ta ve-ad o-lam.*

May God's name be blessed forever.

**The leader repeats the blessing and again invites all to praise:**

בְּרִשּׁוֹת חֲבֵרֵי, נְבָרָךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ *bir-shut cha-vei-rai, ne-va-reich e-lo-hei-yei-nu*  
שְׂאֲכַלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ. *she-a-chal-nu mi-she-lo.*

With your consent, friends, let us praise God,  
of whose food we have eaten.

**Again all respond:**

בָּרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׂאֲכַלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ *ba-ruch e-lo-hei-nu she-a-chal-nu mi-she-lo*  
וּבְטוֹבוֹ חַיֵּינוּ. *u-ve-tu-vo cha-yi-nu*

Praised be God of whose bounty we have eaten,  
and by whose goodness we live.

**The leader responds and concludes:**

בָּרוּךְ הוּא וּבָרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ: *ba-ruch hu u-va-ruch she-mo.*

Praised be the One and praised be God's name.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַזֶּן אֶת  
הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוֹבוֹ בְּחֶן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים  
הוּא נוֹתֵן לְכָל בָּשָׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד.  
וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל תִּמְיֵד לֹא חֶסֶר לָנוּ, וְאֵל  
יַחֲסֵר לָנוּ מִזֶּן לְעוֹלָם וָעֵד. בַּעֲבוּר שְׁמוֹ  
הַגָּדוֹל, כִּי הוּא אֵל זֶן וּמְפַרְנֵס לְכָל וּמְטִיב  
לְכָל, וּמְכִין מִזֶּן לְכָל בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַזֶּן אֶת הַכֹּל:

*ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam, ha-zan et  
ha-o-lam ku-lo, be-tu-vo, be-chein be-che-sed u-ve-ra-cha-mim,  
hu no-tein le-chem le-chal ba-sar, ki le-o-lam chas-do.  
u-ve-tu-vo ha-ga-dol, ta-mid lo cha-sar la-nu, ve-al  
yech-sar la-nu ma-zon le-o-lam va-ed. ba-a-vur she-mo  
ha-ga-dol, ki hu eil zan u-me-far-neis la-kol, u-mei-tiv  
la-kol, u-mei-chin ma-zon le-chal be-ri-yo-tav a-she-er ba-ra.  
ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai ha-zan et ha-kol.*

We praise the Eternal Source of life,  
who sustains all creation in goodness and compassion.  
You provide food for every living thing,  
for Your love endures forever.  
Your great goodness has never been insufficient for us,  
and will not fail us forever.  
You feed and sustain all things,  
providing food for all that You have created.  
We praise You, Adonai, Sustainer of all.

כְּתוּב, וְאָכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ, וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת יְיָ  
אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל הַמָּזוֹן:

*ka-ka-tuv. ve-a-chal-ta ve-sa-va-e-ta, u-vei-rach-ta et a-do-nai  
e-lo-hey-cha al ha-a-rets ha-to-va a-she-er na-tan lach.  
ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai, al ha-a-rets ve-al ha-ma-zon.*

As it is written:

You shall eat and be satisfied and praise the Eternal your God  
for the good earth which was given you.

[Deuteronomy 8:10]

We praise You, Adonai, for the earth and for its food.

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

*u-ve-nei ye-ru-sha-la-yim ir ha-ko-desh bim-hei-ra ve-ya-mei-nu.  
ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai,  
bo-ne ve-ra-cha-mav ye-ru-sha-la-yim. a-mein.*

Rebuild Jerusalem, the holy city, quickly, in our days.  
Praised are You, Adonai,  
merciful Rebuilder of Jerusalem. Amen.

❖ Many have the custom of tapping the table as they read "this table" in the following blessing.

הַרְחֵמוּ, *ha-ra·cha·man*  
 הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ בְּרָכָה מְרֻבָּה בְּבֵית הַזֶּה,  
 וְעַל שֻׁלְחָן זֶה שֶׁאָכַלְנוּ עָלָיו. *hu yish·lach be·ra·cha me·ru·ba ba·ba·yit ha·ze,*  
*ve·al shul·chan ze, she·a·chal·nu a·lav.*

Merciful One, generously bless this house  
 and this table upon which we have eaten.

הַרְחֵמוּ, *ha-ra·cha·man*  
 הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ אֶת אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא זְכוּר לְטוֹב,  
 וַיְבַשֵּׁר לָנוּ בְּשׂוֹרוֹת טוֹבוֹת יְשׁוּעוֹת וְנִחְמוֹת. *hu yish·lach la·nu et ei·li·ya·hu ha·na·vi za·chur la·tov,*  
*vi·va·sher la·nu be·sho·rot to·vot ye·shu·ot ve·ne·cha·mot.*

Merciful One, send us Elijah the Prophet —  
 may his memory be for good —  
 a messenger of good tidings, redemption and comfort.

**Include bracketed statements as appropriate:**

Merciful One, bless all who have gathered here:  
 myself [and my lover / my partner / my children / my parents /  
 my family and friends]  
 and all whom I love; my friends and community; us and all that is ours.  
 As Abraham and Sarah were blessed in everything,  
 so may we all be fully blessed.  
 And let us say, Amen.



הַרְחֵמוּ, *ha-ra·cha·man*  
 הוּא יִנְחֵלְנוּ יוֹם שְׂכָלוֹ טוֹב. *hu yan·chi·lei·nu yom she·ku·lo tov.*

Merciful One,  
 grant us a time when all is goodness.

הַרְחֵמוּ, *ha-ra·cha·man,*  
 הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת כָּל הַיְהוּדִים *hu ye·va·reich et kol ha·ye·hu·dim*  
 הַנְּתוּנוֹת וְנִתְּוִנִים בְּצָרָה *ha·ne·tu·not va·ne·tu·nim be·tsa·ra,*  
 וַיְגַעַל אוֹתָם. *ve·yig·al o·tam.*

Merciful One,  
 bless all our Jewish sisters and brothers who are oppressed  
 and redeem them.

הַרְחֵמוּ, *ha-ra·cha·man,*  
 הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת כָּל אֲחֵיוֹתֵינוּ הָעֲלִיזוֹת *hu ye·va·reich et kol a·chi·vo·tei·nu ha·a·li·zot*  
 וְאֲחֵינוּ הָעֲלִיזִים *va·a·chei·nu ha·a·li·zim,*  
 הַנְּתוּנוֹת וְנִתְּוִנִים בְּצָרָה *ha·ne·tu·not va·ne·tu·nim be·tsa·ra,*  
 וַיְבִיא אוֹתָם מֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹרָה. *ve·ya·vi o·tam mei·a·fei·la le·o·ra.*

Merciful One,  
 bless all our gay sisters and brothers who are oppressed  
 and lead them from darkness to light.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, *o·se sha·lom bim·ro·mav,*  
 הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם, *hu ya·a·se sha·lom a·lei·nu*  
 עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, *ve·al kol yis·ra·eil.*  
 וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: *ve·im·ru a·mein.*

Maker of peace in the high places,  
 make peace for us, for all Israel and for all Your world;  
 and let us say, Amen.

## THE THIRD CUP

### *Refill the cup.*

We thank all those whose labor made this meal and this celebration possible and praise the Source of all in whose image we are created. As it is written:

Ben Zoma taught:

What labor Eve and Adam had to do  
before they could obtain bread to eat!  
They plowed, sowed and reaped,  
threshed and winnowed the sheaves,  
ground and sifted the flour, kneaded and baked,  
and then at last they ate  
whereas I get up and find all these done for me.  
So many different people arise early  
so that all can be brought to me,  
that I may find everything prepared before me!

[Talmud, Berachot 58a]

We raise the third of the four cups with which we mark our observance tonight: the cup of community, filled with the strength that we gather from one another. As it is written:

Our world will be redeemed only when we form one single band,  
when all are united,  
we will receive the presence of the *Shechinah*.

[Tanchuma on Deuteronomy 39]

### *Lift the cup.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,     *ba-ruch a-ta a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam*  
בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן :     *bo-rei pe-ri ha-ga-fen.*

We praise You, Adonai, Source of creation,  
Creator of the fruit of the vine.

### *Drink the third cup.*

## THE CUP OF ELIJAH

At the Seder, we drink four cups of wine, and pour a fifth, which we leave untasted. The fifth cup is set aside for the future, a time when promises will be redeemed, when our cup of celebration will not be tempered by bitterness, when we can celebrate final liberation from all oppression.

We fill the fifth cup now, the cup of the future, by pouring from every other cup at the table. For each one of us has a contribution to make in the work of redemption.

***Refill each cup. Fill the cup of Elijah—each person pours a small amount from their own cup.***

Like generations before us, we now open the door to our Seder gathering. Again we invite all who are in exile to enter and join us. All who are afraid, all who think they have no place, those who fear they do not know enough to participate and those who have seen too much to believe in hope, we have set aside a place for you. We turn as well to those who hate us and those who would judge us, be they people or nations, and say:

If you will only overcome your fear, our door is open.  
We, the people who have known generations of hiding,  
open our door as a step towards our liberation.

***Open the door.***

With our doors and hearts opened, we turn to the Source of all in prayer:

Pour out Your blessing upon all nations,  
and Your compassion upon all Your creatures.  
May Your hand strengthen us to end all oppression,  
and may Your wisdom illuminate all hearts, now and forever.  
And let us say, Amen.

### THE CUP OF ELIJAH

The four cups correspond to four promises in Exodus 6:7. The Rabbis disagreed as to whether the fifth promise, in Exodus 6:8, should also be marked. We compromise by pouring a fifth cup but not drinking it. This cup has come to be called Elijah's, because it is said that in the time of redemption, Elijah will resolve all unanswered questions.

### FROM EVERY OTHER CUP

Each person must contribute for Elijah's arrival to become possible.

### POUR OUT YOUR BLESSING

This custom began during centuries of persecution. Our bitterness broke forth in an angry prayer, still found in the traditional Hagaddah, which begins:

Pour out Your wrath upon the nations, for they have consumed Your people.

*[Psalms 89:6]*

בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא אֵלֵיהוּ הַנְּבִיא *ba-ruch ha-ba, ei-li-ya-hu ha-na-vi!*

Be welcome, our prophet Elijah!

We open the door to you, prophet Elijah.

Your cup of promise is filled, taste it with us

that we may know together a time of complete redemption.

At that time, all of our exiles from one another will be healed.

As it is written:

הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי שֹׁלֵחַ לְכֶם אֶת אֵלֵיָהּ הַנְּבִיא *hi-nei a-no-chi sho-lei-ach la-chem eit ei-li-ya-hu ha-na-vi*

לִפְנֵי בּוֹא יוֹם יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא : *lif-nei bo yom a-do-nai ha-ga-dol ve-ha-no-ra*

וְהִשִּׁיב לְבַ-אֲבוֹת עַל-בְּנֵים וְלֵב בְּנֵים עַל-אֲבוֹתָם *ve-hei-shiv leiv a-vot al ba-nim ve-leiv ba-nim al a-vo-tam*

Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet  
to turn the hearts of the parents to the children  
and the children to the parents

before the coming of the great and awesome Day of Adonai!

[Malachi 3:23]

Enter now, Prophet Elijah!

Announce the end of all separation

parents from children and children from parents,

friends and family from one another,

our hearts and souls divided against ourselves.

Realize with us the promises of our faith!

**All sing:**

אֵלֵיָהּ הַנְּבִיא אֵלֵיָהּ הַתִּשְׁבִּי *ei-li-ya-hu ha-na-vi, ei-li-ya-hu ha-tish-bi,*

אֵלֵיָהּ הַנְּבִיא אֵלֵיָהּ הַגִּלְעָדִי *ei-li-ya-hu, ei-li-ya-hu, ei-li-ya-hu ha-gil-a-di,*

בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ יָבוֹא אֵלֵינוּ *bim-hei-ra ve-ya-mei-nu ya-vo ei-lei-nu*

עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד *im ma-shi-ach ben da-vid, im ma-shi-ach ben da-vid.*

Elijah the prophet, Elijah the Tishbite,

Elijah the prophet, Elijah the Gileadite.

Quickly in our days, may he come to us,

announcing the messianic days.

ENTER NOW

Our Sages tell that the Messiah sits weeping at the gates of our city, and waits. And if we ask,

How can you continue to see our suffering and still wait? What is it that you wait for?

The Messiah replies, "I wait for you."

**HALLEL:  
SONGS OF JOY**



*We celebrate with traditional and modern songs  
that resonate with the themes of the Seder.*

## CHAD GAD'YA

חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא	<i>chad gad'ya, chad gad'ya.</i>
דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוְזֵי	<i>diz·ban a·ba bit·rei zu·zei,</i>
חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא :	<i>chad gad'ya, chad gad'ya.</i>
וְאַתָּא שׁוּנְרָא, וְאַכְלָה לְגַדְיָא...	<i>ve·a·ta shun·ra ve·a·chal le·gad'ya . . .</i>
וְאַתָּא כְּלָבָא, וְנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגַדְיָא,...	<i>ve·a·ta chal·ba ve·na·shach le·shu·ne·ra de·a·cha·la le·gad'ya . . .</i>
וְאַתָּא חוּטְרָא, וְהִכָּה לְכְלָבָא, דְּנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוּנְרָא,...	<i>ve·a·ta chu·te·ra ve·hi·ka le·chal·ba de·na·shach le·shu·ne·ra . . .</i>
וְאַתָּא נוּרָא, וְשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִכָּה לְכְלָבָא,...	<i>ve·a·ta nu·ra ve·sa·raf le·chu·te·ra de·hi·ka le·chal·ba . . .</i>
וְאַתָּא מַיָּא, וְכַבָּה לְנוּרָא, דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,...	<i>ve·a·ta ma·ya ve·cha·va le·nu·ra de·sa·raf le·chu·te·ra . . .</i>
וְאַתָּא תּוּרָא, וְשַׂתָּא לְמַיָּא, דְּכַבָּה לְנוּרָא,...	<i>ve·a·ta to·ra ve·sha·ta le·ma·ya de·cha·va le·nu·ra . . .</i>
וְאַתָּא הַשׁוּחַט, וְשַׁחַט לְתוּרָא, דְּשַׂתָּא לְמַיָּא,...	<i>ve·a·ta ha·sho·cheit ve·sha·chat le·to·ra de·sha·ta le·ma·ya . . .</i>
וְאַתָּא מְלַאךְ הַמּוֹת, וְשַׁחַט לְשׁוּחַט,	<i>ve·a·ta mal·ach ha·ma·vet ve·sha·chat la·sho·cheit</i>
דְּשַׁחַט לְתוּרָא,...	<i>de·sha·chat le·to·ra . . .</i>
וְאַתָּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְשַׁחַט לְמְלַאךְ הַמּוֹת,	<i>ve·a·ta ha·ka·dosh ba·ruch hu ve·sha·chat le·mal·ach ha·ma·vet</i>
דְּשַׁחַט לְשׁוּחַט,...	<i>de·sha·chat la·sho·cheit . . .</i>

A single kid, a single kid, my father bought for two zuzim.

*Chad gad'ya, chad gad'ya!*

And then came a cat,

which ate the kid, my parents bought for two zuzim.

*Chad gad'ya, chad gad'ya!*

And then came a dog, which ate the cat . . .

And then came a stick, which beat the dog . . .

And then came a fire, which burned the stick . . .

And then came water, which put out the fire . . .

And then came an ox, which drank the water . . .

And then came a butcher, who slaughtered the ox . . .

And then came the Angel of Death, who slaughtered the butcher . . .

And then came the Holy One, Blessed Be, and slaughtered the Angel of Death,

who slaughtered the butcher, who slaughtered the ox,

which drank all the water, which put out the fire,

which burned the stick, which beat the dog,

which ate the cat, which ate the kid, my father bought for two zuzim.

*Chad gad'ya, chad gad'ya!*

## CHAD GAD'YA

In its origin a Jewish nursery rhyme, many have sought to explain this Seder tradition as an allegory for persecution. Each figure was said to represent a successive oppressor of the Jews, from the Assyrian cat to the Crusader slaughterer, each one being ultimately punished.

## ADIR HU

אָדיר הוּא, אָדיר הוּא, ...	<i>a·dir hu, a·dir hu,</i>
יבִּנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִירוֹב,	<i>yiv·ne vei·to be·ka·rov,</i>
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה,	<i>bim·hei·ra bim·hei·ra,</i>
בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִירוֹב.	<i>be·ya·mei·nu be·ka·rov,</i>
אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה,	<i>eil be·nei, eil be·nei!</i>
בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִירוֹב.	<i>be·nei vei·te·cha be·ka·rov!</i>
בַּחֹר הוּא, גְּדוֹל הוּא, דָּגוּל הוּא, ...	<i>ba·chur hu, ga·dol hu, da·gul hu . . .</i>
הַדּוֹר הוּא, וְתִיק הוּא, זָכָאֵי הוּא, חֲסִיד הוּא, ...	<i>ha·dur hu, va·tik hu, za·kay hu, cha·sid hu . . .</i>
טְהוֹר הוּא, יַחֲדֵי הוּא, כְּפִיר הוּא, לְמוֹד הוּא,	<i>ta·hor hu, ya·chid hu, ka·bir hu, la·mud hu . . .</i>
מֶלֶךְ הוּא, נוֹרָא הוּא, סְגִיב הוּא, עֲזוּז הוּא,	<i>me·lech hu, no·ra hu, sa·giv hu, a·zuz hu,</i>
פּוֹדֵת הוּא, צְדִיק הוּא, ...	<i>po·de hu, tsa·dik hu . . .</i>
קְדוֹשׁ הוּא, רַחוּם הוּא, שְׂדֵי הוּא, תְּקִיף הוּא, ...	<i>ka·dosh hu, ra·chum hu, sha·dai hu, ta·kif hu . . .</i>

Almighty are You,  
 Blessed are You, Champion are You, Delightful are You,  
 Eternal are You, Fair are You, Glorious are You,  
 Holy are You, Immeasurable are You, Jubilant are You,  
 Kind are You, Loving are You, Merciful are You,  
 Near are You, Omnipotent are You, Pure are You,  
 Quintessential are You, Righteous are You, Sovereign are You,  
 Tender are You, Unknowable are You, Victorious are You,  
 Wonderful are You, Excellent are You, Zion's Lover are You,

Almighty One, may Your house be built soon.  
 Quickly, in our days, soon.

## ADIR HU

This song is an alphabetical acrostic. Each letter of the alphabet, in Hebrew and in English, is an attribute of the Holy One. It first appeared in North European Haggadot in the 14th century and was often sung in the vernacular as well as in Hebrew.

## THE FOURTH CUP

### *Fill the cup.*

We raise the last of the four cups with which we mark our observance tonight: the cup of hope, filled with our commitment to create a community that embraces all people, in a world free of oppression.

As it is written:

None shall hurt and none shall do harm in all My whole mountain  
for the land shall be filled with the knowledge of God  
as the waters cover the sea.

[Isaiah 11:9]

### *Lift the cup.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,    *ba·ruch a·ta a·do·nai e·lo·hei·nu me·lech ha·o·lam*  
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן :    *bo·rei pe·ri ha·ga·fen.*

We praise the Eternal Source of life,  
Creator of the fruit of the vine.

We thank You, Eternal Source of creation,  
for the vine and for the fruit of the vine,  
which has flowed abundantly this night in celebration.

We thank You for the produce of the field,  
the grain which has given us matzah, through which we have tasted  
our ancestors' and our own suffering and liberation.

We thank you for the land and the earth,  
source of our sustenance, entrusted to us as our inheritance.

May we know joy on this Festival of Matzah  
as we give thanks for the earth and its abundance.

### *Drink the fourth cup.*



## COMPLETION

חַסַּל סֵדוּר פֶּסַח כְּהִלְכָתוֹ,	<i>cha-sal si-dur pe-sach ke-hil-cha-to,</i>
כָּכַל מִשְׁפָּטוֹ וְחֻקָּתוֹ.	<i>ke-chal mish-pa-to ve-chu-ka-to.</i>
כְּאֲשֶׁר זָכִינוּ לְסֵדֵר אוֹתוֹ,	<i>ka-a-sheer za-chi-nu le-sa-deir o-to,</i>
כִּן נִזְכֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ.	<i>kein niz-ke la-a-so-to.</i>
זֶד שׁוֹכֵן מְעוֹנָה,	<i>zach sho-chein me-o-na</i>
קוֹמֵם קְהַל עֲדַת מִי מְנָה.	<i>ko-meim ke-hal a-dat mi ma-na.</i>
בְּקָרוֹב נִהַל נְטַעֵי כְּנָה,	<i>be-ka-rov na-heil nit-ei cha-na,</i>
פְּדוּיִם לְצִיּוֹן בְּרָנָה.	<i>pe-du-yim le-tsi-yon be-ri-na.</i>

Complete is the Passover Seder as its law directs,  
Its customs and its rules obeyed.  
As we have enjoyed celebrating its rites,  
So may we go on to fulfill its purpose.

Dweller on high, Raise up all Your uncountable children,  
Bring to their inheritance the growth of all Your vineyards  
Redeemed, to Zion in joy.

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם : *le-sha-na ha-ba-a bi-ru-sha-la-yim.*

Next year in a Jerusalem at peace, in a world at peace.

## TO FULFILL ITS PURPOSE

Literally, the Hebrew reads,  
As you have let us Seder it (go through its order), so may you let us do it.

## A JERUSALEM AT PEACE

But we have also learned "Zeh hash'a'ar l'Adonai," the gate to God stands here before us.  
This city must become our Jerusalem; this world is all we are given with which to create the world to come.

## BASHANA HABA'A

בְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה נִשֵּׁב עַל הַמְרֻפָּסֶת	<i>ba-she-na ha-ba-a nei-sheiv al ha-mir-pe-set</i>
וְנִסְפּוֹר צְפָרִים נוֹדְדוֹת	<i>ve-nis-por tsi-pa-rim no-de-dot</i>
לְדִים בְּחֻפְשָׁה יִשְׁחָקוּ תּוֹפְסֵת	<i>ye-la-dim be-chu-fe-sha ye-sa-cha-ku to-fe-set</i>
בֵּין הַבַּיִת לְבֵין הַשְּׂדוֹת	<i>bein ha-ba-yit le-vein ha-sa-dot</i>
עוֹד תִּרְאֶה עוֹד תִּרְאֶה	<i>od tir-e od tir-e</i>
כִּמָּה טוֹב יְהִי בְּשָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה	<i>ka-ma tov yih-ye ba-she-na ba-she-na ha-ba-a</i>
עֲנָבִים אֲדוּמִים יִבְשִׁילוּ עַד הָעֶרֶב	<i>a-na-vim a-du-mim yav-shi-lu ad ha-e-rev</i>
וַיִּגְשׁוּ צוֹנְנִים לְשֻׁלְחָן	<i>ve-yug-shu tso-ne-nim la-shul-chan</i>
וְרוּחוֹת רְדוּמִים יִשְׂאוּ אֶל אִם-הַדְּרֹךְ	<i>ve-ru-chot re-du-mim yis-u el eim ha-de-rech</i>
עֲתוֹנִים יִשְׂנִים וְעָנָן	<i>i-to-nim ye-sha-nim ve-a-nan</i>
עוֹד תִּרְאֶה עוֹד תִּרְאֶה	<i>od tir-e od tir-e . . .</i>
בְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה נִפְרוֹשׁ כְּפוֹת יְדִים	<i>ba-she-na ha-ba-a nif-rosh ka-pot ya-da-yim</i>
מִוֵּל הָאוֹר הַנִּיגַר הַלָּבָן	<i>mul ha-or ha-ni-gar ha-la-van</i>
אֲנָפָה לְבָנָה תִּפְרוֹשׁ כְּאוֹר כְּנֹפִים	<i>a-na-fa le-va-na tif-rosh ka-or ke-na-fa-yim</i>
וְהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ תִּזְרַח בְּתוֹךְ	<i>ve-ha-she-mesh tiz-rach be-to-chan</i>
עוֹד תִּרְאֶה עוֹד תִּרְאֶה	<i>od tir-e od tir-e . . .</i>

Next year, we'll sit on the porch and count the migrating birds.  
Children on vacation will play tag between the house and the fields.

You'll see, you'll see  
How good it will be next year.

Red grapes will ripen by evening and will be served chilled at the table.  
Lazy breezes will carry to the crossroads old newspapers and a cloud.

You'll see, you'll see . . .

Next year we'll spread our hands to the streaming white light.  
A white heron will spread its wings in the light and the sun  
will shine from within them.

You'll see, you'll see . . .

## BASHANA HABA'A

This song moves from the simplest of hopes for a better life to an almost incomprehensible poetic vision. Perhaps both are necessary parts of redemption.