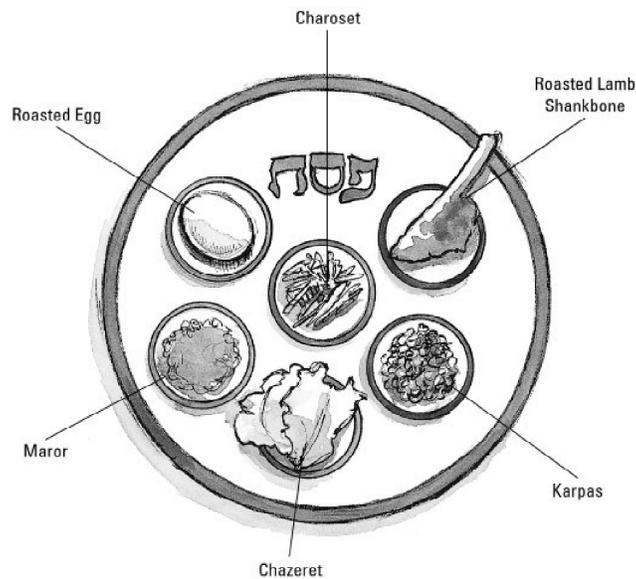


Paths of Liberation

The Spiritual Essentials of the Passover Seder

A Haggadah by Rabbi Ted Falcon, PhD



Any achievement that was attained, any great light that radiated at a certain time—when that time comes around again, the radiance of that light will shine again and the fruits of that achievement will be available for whomever is there to receive them.

—Rabbi Moshe Chayim Luzatto (1707-1747) in *Derech Ha-shem*

Components of the Seder Ritual

Festival Candles to be lit near the beginning of the Seder. On Saturday evening, a *Havdalah* candle can be lit prior to the festival candles.

A **pitcher of water, bowl, and towel** for the ceremonial hand washing during the Seder.

Wine or grape juice sufficient for four cups per person. While ancient tradition considered it essential to fill the cups and consume specific amounts, it is the symbol that is important, not the amount consumed. Enjoy each of the four blessings by drinking in ways appropriate for you.

Karpas is a green vegetable representing the fresh growth of spring, usually parsley or celery.

Salt water is used to dip the greens before eating. This is a symbol of both the tears of slavery and the sweetness of spring growth and need not be overly salty.

Place **three covered pieces of matzah** in front of the leader. Extra **matzah** should be on the table for participants to eat during the ritual and the meal. The **matzah**, a simple food of flour and water, represents both the bread of affliction and the bread of basic nourishment.

Maror, usually horseradish or romaine lettuce (**chazeret**), is the bitter herb we taste to remind us of the sharpness of slavery. With this herb, the senses are awakened to the too often suppressed pains of enslavement.

Charoset is usually a mixture of chopped nuts, spices, and apples, held together with wine or grape juice. It represents the mortar with which we built walls in ancient times of slavery. The fact that it is so tasty reminds us of the hidden sweetness of our enslavements.

On some Seder plates, there is a place for **chazeret**, additional **maror** that might be used for the **korech** sandwich, in which **maror** and **charoset** are together placed between two pieces of **matzah**.

The **zeroa** is a roasted bone, usually a shank bone or chicken neck. Vegetarians substitute a roasted beet or other vegetable. The bone or vegetable is scorched to approximate the *Pesach* (Passover) offering which it symbolizes. This symbol is not meant to be eaten.

The **baytsah** is a roasted egg, symbolic of the festival offering at the ancient Temple. The roasted egg is not eaten. It is customary for everyone at the Seder table to partake of hardboiled eggs at the beginning of the meal, since eggs symbolize renewal and birth and connect us to spring energies.

The **Cup of Elijah** is a special cup, filled with wine or juice, placed at the center of the seder table. The **Cup of Miriam** contains water representing the Living Waters that sustained our People in the ancient wilderness.

The **Orange** reminds us of the contributions of women during both ancient and modern struggles for freedom.

By Way of Introduction. . .

Welcome to the 2012 edition of *Paths of Liberation*, an evolving Haggadah text. Like the Torah, which reveals something new when read every year, different aspects of the Haggadah offer themselves to us each Passover. My intention, by focusing on the spiritual aspects of the Seder ritual, is to utilize the essential components of tradition to support a deeper awakening.

In order to encourage greater understanding and personal involvement, approaches to the key symbols, rituals and texts have been shortened and clarified. All four cups of wine are placed *before the meal* because too many of us never get to those parts of the Seder following dinner. As you use this text, you are invited to add your own memories, experiences, and understandings, bringing the Seder ritual more fully to life for you.

Some of the features of this Haggadah include:

- Clear instructions for those sharing the ritual
- An outline of the 15 traditional parts of the complete Seder
- A list of required ritual foods, along with a short description of their meaning
- Commentary on the crucial “seed thoughts” of the Haggadah
- Optional discussion topics for those who want to go deeper

The Haggadah celebrates the Exodus from an ancient place of enslavement. Our annual journey encourages us to recognize the ways in which we are still enslaved, and to seek greater freedom. Whether this is your first meeting with the Haggadah, or if it has always been a part of your life, it is my hope that you will find here words that will lead you to the living truths that have kept this ritual relevant for thousands of years.

Suggestions for Using this Haggadah

In any Jewish ritual observance, there is always some tension between *keva*, the already set texts and actions, and *kavvanah*, responses to the intentions of the ritual in the immediacy of the moment. If possible, take some time to read over the text in advance, so that you can meet it quietly and give its words time to germinate prior to your Seder.

- Proceed around the table during your Seder, with all who are able reading a paragraph at a time.
- One side of the table can read the non-indented paragraphs, and the other the indented. Those paragraphs presented in a different (sans serif) font are meant to be group readings.
- There are optional questions inviting more personal reflections. Sharing the traditional story is an important part of this process; sharing our personal journey is another.

May your experience of the Seder this year encourage a deepening appreciation of how freedom awakens from the inside as well as from the outside. May the moments you spend with friends and family inspire a deeper commitment to walk the principles of wholeness, love, and compassion into the world we share. May we all be available for the greater energies of this season.

With abundant blessings,

Rabbi Ted

The Journey Begins

This Haggadah is a work in process. Our journey is never complete, so our telling expands over time. The story of an evening is at once the story of a People and the story of each person.

The Passover Seder is meant to provide a form to support our journey from slavery to freedom. Some of us still feel enslaved by the demands of the outer world, but all of us are enslaved by the demands of our ego self. So we are asked to enter the journey experientially: to awaken to our own enslavements and to choose our own freedom.

Each year, we are given this opportunity to release ourselves from the slavery of old patterns and beliefs. Awakening to the stuck places in our lives begins the journey to a fuller sense of self. Each of us has responsibility for our unique piece of creation, but only from the deeper wisdom and compassion of our greater Self can we truly care for the world that is entrusted to us.

We seek to forgive old wounds, and release the resentments that keep us stuck in our past stories. And we seek to release any sense of blame for that which has been, that we might perceive more clearly the meaning and purpose behind the life we have lived. We seek to support the unfolding that is about to be.

We respond today to an ancient challenge: to remember, to tell, and to live this continuing journey. *And Moses said to the people: Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage, for with great strength the Eternal One brought you out, so you shall eat no leaven.* (Exodus 13:3)

So you shall tell your children on that day, saying: We eat unleavened bread because of what the Eternal One did for me when I came out from Egypt. (Exodus 13:7,8) “Egypt” in Hebrew is **Mitzrayim**, which literally refers to “places of constriction and limitation.” Mitzrayim becomes a metaphor for all the enslavements we meet.

We begin this journey with this symbolic meal called a **Seder**. Our Seder is the “order” of ritual acts, blessings, readings, and songs that continues to evolve over thousands of years.

We gather as a community with a shared intent: to begin a journey from Mitzrayim toward a Promised Land, from enslavement to freedom. We meet to tell the story of an ancient Exodus and to write our own stories of an exodus that begins even now.

OPTION: *Share a special memory of a past Seder. If this is your first Seder, what has brought you here?*

The Challenge to Personally Engage the Journey. . .

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חֵיב אָדָם לְרֹאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ, כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׁנֵאמַר:
וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יְיָ לִי, בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ בְּלֶבֶד, גָּאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֶלָּא אֲף אוֹתָנוּ גָּאֵל עִמָּהֶם,
שְׁנֵאמַר: וְאוֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם, לְמַעַן הִבִּיא אֹתָנוּ, לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע
לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וּלְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ.

B'chol dor va-dor cha-yav adam lir'ot et atzmo k'ilu hu yatza mi-Mitzrayim.

This is about us: In each generation, every one of us must feel that he, that she, has personally gone out of Egypt. As it is said: *You shall tell your child on that day, "I do this because of what God did for me when I came out of Egypt."* (Exodus 13:8)

Beginning with Light

Festival candles are lit. (On Saturday night, light the festival candles with the Havdalah candle, which is then extinguished.)

There is but one Light, and it awakens within each of us. We celebrate the reflection of our Inner Light kindling these candles. This is the Light that guides us through the wilderness that comes between every Egypt and every Promised Land.

(on Friday night include bracketed words)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל (שִׁבְת וְשֶׁל) יוֹם טוֹב.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech ha-olam asher kid'shanu
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel (Shabbat v'shel) Yom Tov.*

Blessed are You, Eternal One our God, Universal Creative Presence, Who sanctifies us with paths of holiness and gives us this path of awakening to (the Sabbath and) the festival light. Amen.

Fill the wine cup of the person sitting next to you with wine or juice.

The Cup of Sanctification — The Kiddush

According to rabbinic tradition, each cup should be filled to the brim, but we need only drink them halfway down. Today, when we are more sensitive to substance abuse, it is permissible to drink less wine in fulfillment of our ritual process. Wine itself is a symbol of enslavement for many, yet it also possesses qualities that can enhance the experience of liberation. Perhaps there is nothing in this world which in itself is only good or bad. We determine the nature of what we encounter by the ways in which we use or misuse it.

The Four Promises and the Four Sections of Our Seder

Tonight we bless four cups of wine or juice. These cups stand for the four promises of redemption related in Torah:

Therefore, say to the children of Israel, I AM the Eternal One, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of Mitzrayim, and I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments (Deuteronomy 6:6); and I will take you to me as a People, and I will be to you a God; and you shall know that I AM the Eternal One your God, Who brings you out from under the burdens of Mitzrayim (6:7).

There is a fifth promise of redemption, accounting for the fifth cup of wine, which is called the Cup of Elijah: *And I will bring you into the land, which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for a heritage; I AM the Eternal (6:8).*

Then, as now, we often cannot hear the promises we are offered. We strive to listen better, even in the midst of our own darkness. *And Moses spoke to the children of Israel, but they could not hear because of anguish of spirit and their cruel bondage (6:9).*

The four cups also relate to the four major sections of our Seder. The first cup marks the **kiddush**, the acceptance of the uniqueness of this moment. The second cup celebrates the telling of tonight's story, the **haggadah**. The third cup follows the symbolic **Seder meal**, celebrating the physical and spiritual nourishment we receive. And the fourth cup follows the **hallel**, words of praise celebrating our redemption.

(raise wine cups) This is the cup of sanctification. Telling the truth about the present moment is always the first step toward deep change. On Passover, our kiddush celebrates our redemption from Mitzrayim, past and present places of stuckness and limitation. *(set cups down)*

Like the Israelites in Egypt, we are not simply enslaved by others, by external taskmasters. It is not only a Pharaoh outside who keeps us in bondage—we carry Pharaoh within ourselves. We seek to remember that we hold the keys to our slavery and our freedom. We seek to recognize that the world reflects our own beliefs back to us.

We keep ourselves stuck with limiting thoughts like: *I can't, I'm not good enough, I'm not ready yet, and I don't deserve better.* And we trap ourselves by holding on to fear and anger and an unwillingness to forgive.

We confine ourselves by living in the past or future and never fully experiencing the present. And we imprison ourselves by acting according to what we think is in the mind of others. But we can set ourselves free.

The real slavery of Israel in Egypt was that we had learned to endure it. Our circumstances become an Egypt when they become excuses not to grow.

We are about to share the blessing of the first cup. Traditionally, we lean to the left to drink, just as we would have long ago if we were as free as the Romans who governed us. Our goal is to experience our freedom by choosing to be fully present in this moment.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, Boray p'ree ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, Eternal One our God, Universal Creative Presence,
Creator of this fruit of the vine.

Drink from the first cup, choosing to be present.

U'rechatz: A Symbolic Cleansing of the Hands

Song: Go Down Moses

Karpas: The Greens

The spring is a time of renewal and growth. Our green vegetable symbolizes the reawakening of life and the revival of hope. We dip the greens into salt water, a reminder of the tears we have shed through our suffering. The salt water also symbolizes the nourishment of plant and person. Perhaps even the tears we shed can support new growth and evolution in our lives.

Dip parsley or celery in salt water.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, Boray p'ree ha-adamah.

Blessed are You, Eternal One our God, Universal Creative Presence,
Creator of the fruit of the earth.

Eat the green vegetable dipped in salt water.

Yachatz: Break the Middle Matzah

The leader breaks the middle of the three matzot in half.

הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהֵתְנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דְּכַפִּין
יִיתִי וְיִכּוֹל, כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ יִיתִי וְיִפְסָח. הַשְׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבְּאָה
בְּאַרְעָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל. הַשְׁתָּא עַבְדִּי, לְשָׁנָה הַבְּאָה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין:

*Ha lach-mah an'ya di ah-cha-lu ah-va-ha-tana b'ar'a d'Mitz'rayim. Kol
dich'fin yay-tay v'yay-chol, kol ditz-rich yay-tay v'yif-sach. Ha-shata
ha-cha, l'shanah la-ba-ah b'ar'a d'Yis-ra-el. Ha-sha-ta av'day, l'shanah
ha-ba-ah b'nai chorine.*

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. It also is the bread of simplicity that we will share tonight. May all who hunger come and eat.

May all who hunger for freedom join in our seder. May we transcend our enslavements and discover greater inner and outer freedom. May our energies help reunite those separated by fear and distrust.

One of the pieces is returned to the plate, the larger half is hidden and will serve as the Afikoman (dessert).

Maggid: The Traditional Passover Story

This story of the Exodus has been told and retold for generations. Parents tell it to their children so that they, in turn, may tell it to theirs. But children are not alike. Each needs to be told the story in a different way. Some are very curious and ask lots of questions; others, who may be just as curious, are too young to know how to ask. Some are eager to know about their spiritual connectedness to the greater whole; others are in a place of rebellion against traditional practices.

Similarly, each of us grows and becomes aware in different ways and at our own individual pace. One of our greatest challenges is to honor and nurture the differences among us through patience, compassion, and forgiveness.

The Four Children

*Adapted from the "Ballad of the Four Sons"
by Ben Aronin and sung to the tune of "Clementine"*

Said the parents to their children, "At the Seder you will dine. You will eat your fill of Matzah. You will drink four cups of wine."

Now, these parents had four children; yes, their kids they numbered four. One was wise, one was a rebel, one was simple and a bore.

And the fourth was sweet and winsome; she was young, and she was small. While her siblings asked the questions, she could scarcely speak at all.

Said the wise son to his father, "Would you please explain the laws, of the customs of the Seder will you please explain the cause?"

And the father proudly answered, "Our ancestors ate in speed. Ate the Paschal lamb 'ere midnight and from slav'ry they were freed.

So we follow their example and 'ere midnight must complete all the Seder and we should not after twelve remain to eat."

Then the rebel son demanded, "What does all this mean to you?" And the father's voice grew bitter as his grief and anger grew.

"If yourself you don't consider as a part of Israel, then for you this has no meaning. You could be a slave as well."

Then the simple girl asked simply, "What is this?" And quietly the good mother told her daughter, "We were freed from slavery."

But the youngest girl was silent for she could not ask at all. Her eyes were bright with wonder as her mother told her all.

Now dear children, heed the lesson, and remember evermore, what the parents told the children, told their kids who numbered four.

Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev said:

The Haggadah speaks of four children: the wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one unable to ask. I am the one unable to ask. But the parent of the one unable to ask is told: 'You must take the first step.' Ruler of the world, am I not Your child? I do not ask to be told the secret of your ways—I could not bear it! But show me one thing: what You are telling me through my life at this moment. I do not ask You to tell me why I suffer, but only whether I suffer for Your sake!

We repeat the story of Passover in order to understand how we became slaves then and now. We study the past that we might expand our awareness in the present. We seek to reach beyond blame to blessing, that we might release ourselves from our Mitzrayim and discover new and fuller ways of being in the world.

Our story begins with degradation, and our telling ends with glory. This is the shape of our Passover story. Perhaps this is also the shape of the cycles of true growth in our personal lives.

OPTION: *Share a story of a time you got out of your own “stuck place” with unexpected inner or outer help.*

Several hundred years after Joseph brought us to Egypt to survive the drought, we became slaves to Empire in Egypt, and the Eternal One our God supported our awakening to the anguish of our enslavement. We experienced being led out from there with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm. Had not the Holy One led our ancestors out of Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would still be enslaved.

Song: Avadim Hayinu

Our tradition understands that the ultimate slavery springs from an inner hollowness that is called idolatry. Deeper than the physical manifestation of our enslavement is the spiritual emptiness within which we lose ourselves.

It was not so easy to leave Egypt, of course. Things had to get harder and harder. Greater suffering had to be endured. Plagues were sent as demonstrations to Pharaoh of the reality of the One Moses sought to serve.

But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, so the plagues grew more intense. Perhaps those plagues were also signs to help us learn to trust the Power behind all that is.

The plagues got progressively worse until the killing of the firstborn in every Egyptian household. The Israelites were untouched, having smeared lamb's blood over their doorposts so God would “pass over” their households.

Surely God would know which houses were to be left untouched and which visited by death. Perhaps, again, the symbol was meant for us. Perhaps in the darkness of that night some of us stole into Egypt's homes to do that violence.

The tenth plague was too much for Pharaoh to bear. He finally released the Israelites. They gathered up their flocks, their possessions, and even some Egyptian treasures, and headed out into the wilderness.

Pharaoh had yet another change of heart. He ordered his army after the Israelites, who found themselves trapped between the advancing Egyptians and the Sea. But the wonders were not over. The waters of the Sea parted; the Israelites crossed on dry land. When the Egyptians followed, the sea came crashing down.

The Israelite journey in that wilderness, like our own, held great difficulties and challenges. But we went on to Mount Sinai and the Torah and ever more expanded wanderings. We became a People.

It was hard getting ourselves out of Egypt. But the greater challenge emerged during our years of wandering: the task of getting the Egypt out of ourselves.

We often refuse to give up whatever we believe enslaves us until we feel compelled to do so by some outside force. Our bodies and our environments often seem to give us ever more emphatic messages until we finally listen and make changes in our lives. How much pain we cause when we resist the highest within ourselves.

As we name each of the plagues, we take a drop of wine from our cups to acknowledge that the destruction of any person, even an enemy, diminishes our own joy.

These are the plagues which in ancient times taught the awesome power of the One God Who manifests through all that exists:

1. Dahm	דָּם	6. Sh'chin	שְׁחִין
Blood		Boils	
2. Tz'fardaya	צְפַרְדֵּיָעַ	7. Barad	בָּרָד
Frogs		Hail	
3. Kinim	כְּנִים	8. Arbeh	אַרְבֵּה
Vermin		Locusts	
4. Arov	עֲרוֹב	9. Choshech	חֹשֶׁךְ
Flies		Darkness	
5. Dever	דֶּבֶר	10. Makat B'chorot	מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת
Cattle Disease		Death of the Firstborn	

Participants call out our own plagues as well as those we see in the world at large. Take a drop of wine on your finger from your cup to your plate for each plague you hear.

OPTION: Share a personal story of a time when things had to get very difficult before you recognized new possibilities.

We have poured away many drops of wine for the sorrows and evils of this world. And yet, a nearly full cup remains. We lift our cups in praise to the One who fills our lives with an abundance of joy and goodness. We do not deny the reality of our plagues. We allow, as well, the blessings.

Blessing the Second Cup — Celebration of the Past

(Lift cup) The second of the promises in the ancient verses speaks the remembering of our journey: “**I will deliver you.**” Looking back, our People understood themselves delivered from their enslavement because of their connection to God. We, too, are always connected to the Source of all salvation that speaks our freedom.

The inner release from Mitzrayim begins with blessing who and where we are right now. Blessing affirms the acceptance that releases us for true change. We remember that many of our problems were themselves once solutions to past problems. Our Egypts were once promised lands.

Blessing frees us in this moment so we can move on. Resignation binds us to this moment and to the past, condemning us to our enslavements. We seek blessings beyond blame; acceptance beyond accusation; forgiveness of self.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן:

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
Boray p'ree ha-gafen.*

Blessed are You, Eternal One our God, Universal Creative Presence,
Creator of this fruit of the vine.

Drink from the second cup, being as comfortable as possible.

Fill the third cup.

The Four Questions

It is customary for the youngest child to ask the following questions, but anyone may ask them. Although these questions have become standardized, they are meant to inspire our own questioning, that fuller answers may unfold in response to our own search.

מָה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכֹּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?
שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמַצָּה. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כֵּלּוּ מַצָּה:
שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שָׂאֵר יְרַקוֹת הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מְרוֹר:
שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מִטְבִּילִין אֶפְילוּ פְּעַם אַחַת.
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים:
שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין.
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כֵּלְנוּ מְסֻבִּין:

Ma nish-tana ha-lailah ha-zeh mi-kol ha-lay-lot?

Sheh-b'chol ha-lay-lot anu och-lin chametz u-matzah.

Ha-lai-lah ha-zeh ku-lo matzah.

Sheh-b'chol ha-lay-lot anu och-lin sh'ar y'ra-kot.

Ha-lai-lah ha-zeh ma-ror.

Sheh-b'chol ha-lay-lot ayn anu mat'bi-lin ah-fi-lu p'am achat.

Ha-lai-lah ha-zeh sh'tay famim.

Sheh-b'chol ha-lay-lot anu och-lin bayn yosh-vin u-vayn m'su-bin.

Ha-lai-lah ha-zeh ku-lanu m'su-bin.

Why is this night different from all other nights?

On all other nights we eat either bread or matzah.

Why on this night do we eat only matzah?

On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables.

Why on this night do we eat bitter herbs?

On all other nights we do not usually dip vegetables even once.

Why on this night do we dip them twice?

On all other nights we eat either sitting up or reclining.

Why on this night do we eat reclining?

OPTION: *The leader may invite other questions from the participants.*

Some Answers

You ask, “Why on this night do we eat only unleavened bread?” The simple answer is that our ancestors left Egypt very quickly; there was no time to bake bread for the journey. But the sun beat down on their dough as they carried it along and baked it into flat cakes called **matzah**.

On a more symbolic level, the leavening in ordinary bread—**chametz**—represents the puffed-up quality of our ego. This puffery enslaves us. Our ego becomes our taskmaster when it pretends to be the “all” of who we are. So for the eight days of Passover, we refrain from chametz in the outer world to symbolize a return to a simpler—and freer—inner world.

The Matzah

*Each participant takes **four bite-size pieces of matzah**, supplementing pieces from the Seder plate with other matzah on the table.*

We share this bread of simplicity after reciting the following blessings.

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

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
Ha-motzi lechem min ha-aretz.*

Blessed are You, Eternal One our God, Universal Creative Presence,
Who brings forth bread from the earth.

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

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitz-vo-tav v'tzi-vanu ahl ah-chi-lat matzah.*

Blessed are You, Eternal One our God, Universal Creative Presence,
Who hallows us with sacred paths like this *mitzvah* of eating matzah.

Eat one piece of matzah.

You ask, “Why do we eat bitter herbs?” We do so to remind us of the bitterness of slavery. May its harsh taste help us refrain from imposing suffering on ourselves and others.

In one sense, the bitter herbs are like a homeopathic remedy. The principle behind homeopathy is that by ingesting a substance with the characteristics of a particular disease, our body’s immunity is stimulated and strengthened. We ingest the bitter herbs to strengthen our resistance to the bitter bonds of inner and outer enslavement.

*Each participant takes a piece of bitter herb and dips it in the charoset before the blessing.
It may be placed on matzah to make dipping easier.*

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

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitz-vo-tav v'tzi-vanu ahl achi-lat maror.*

Blessed are You, Eternal One our God, Universal Creative Presence,
Who sanctifies us with paths of holiness and gives us this *mitzvah*
of eating the bitter herb.

Eat the bitter herb.

In the first century, the great teacher Hillel used to take **matzah** and make a sandwich with **maror** in the middle, a practice called **korech**. This symbolic act has been shared over the centuries since. Making this Hillel sandwich ties us to those who have traveled this way before and invites those who travel later to connect with us.

*The Hillel Sandwich is made and eaten.
Some add charoset and bind all three symbols together.*

Why do we dip herbs twice tonight? We dipped our parsley into salt water to remind us of the new life in the springtime, as well as the tears shed by slaves to whom springtime brings no new life.

And we dipped bitter herbs into **charoset**, a mixture that reminds us of the mixture of clay and straw our ancestors used in order to make bricks. **Charoset** is sweet. It reminds us that the security of slavery can be very enticing.

Why do we recline and relax at the table tonight? Because at the time of our ancestors, only free people—and not slaves—were permitted to relax and enjoy their meals.

Rabban Gamliel, the second-century sage, said that one who fails to explain three symbols at the Seder has failed in his or her responsibility. We have explained two of the symbols: **matzah** and the bitter herbs. The third symbol is the Passover offering, represented on the Seder plate by the shank bone of a lamb, a chicken neck, or a roasted vegetable. This Passover sacrifice is no longer to be eaten. We celebrate the ancient sacrifice, yet we do not repeat it.

The Hebrew word for Passover, **pesach**, refers to the lamb which the Jewish people ate on the night of the tenth and final plague. They smeared lamb's blood on their front doors so the Angel of Death would "pass over" (*pasach*) their houses and enter only Egyptian homes. Only those who performed this affirmative act were to be redeemed.

In the Midrash, an ancient expansion of Biblical myth and story, our people were seen standing at the edge of the Sea. The army of the Egyptians was fast approaching. We were terrified, caught between the two forces.

And in the Midrash, it was Naddav ben Aminadav who pushed to the front and then boldly began to walk into the water. It was not until the water was up past his neck that it parted, allowing all of us to cross over.

Like our ancestors enslaved in Egypt, we cannot commence our Exodus, our journey to freedom, unless we perform some conscious act. Such an act necessarily entails leaving behind that which is comfortable and secure. And such an act, therefore, involves some risk.

Blessing the Third Cup – Celebrating the Symbolic Passover Meal

We have met the moment. We have honored our past. And we have engaged in the symbolic meal of **karpas**, **matzah**, **maror**, **charoset**, and **korech**. We celebrate our participation in these ancient symbols with this third cup of our Passover ritual.

We have tasted from that which nourishes both body and soul. We allow ourselves to grow through our pain as well as through our joy, and affirm the sustenance of both past and present. We confirm the spiritual nourishment which supports the continuation of our journey as individuals, as a community, and as a People.

Viktor Frankl, Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist, wrote:

We who lived in the concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

(raise cups)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן:

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
Boray p'ree ha-gafen.*

Blessed are You, Eternal One our God, Universal Creative Presence,
Creator of this fruit of the vine.

Drink from the third cup, making yourself comfortable.

Fill the fourth cup.

Song: Dayeinu

Blessing the Fourth Cup – Toward Redemption

Hallel: Energies of Praise

According to the Zohar, the central text of the Jewish mystical tradition, our energies contribute to the universal field. Just as we are influenced by energies far greater than ourselves, so, too, our own consciousness affects the Whole.

As we open to this moment, as we honor our past, as we engage in symbolic nourishment, and as we share energies of praise, we touch more deeply the Source of our Being.

The Presence within each of us yearns to express through the uniqueness of our own Way. We seek to move beyond our enslavements to past ideas of self, of limitations once accepted, to reconnect to the deeper integrity of our own beings and risk the unfolding of our own Path.

When we express ourselves more fully, we discover the true joy of Being. Through our joy we nourish the Greater Identity we share. Let our praise and our joy bless the world in which we live.

(Wine cups are raised)

We give thanks and sing praise to the Eternal One who performed wonders for our ancestors and for us. That One Being is our Way out of slavery into freedom, out of sorrow into joy, out of darkness into light, and out of bondage into redemption.

(The wine cups are set down.)

הַלְלוּיָהּ הַלְלוּ עֲבָדֵי יי. הַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם יי.

Halleluyah, hal'lu avday Adonai, hal'lu et Shem Adonai.

Let all that live sing praises to Yah. HalleluYah!

(Raising cup) This is the cup that reaches toward redemption. **“I will take you to Me as a People.”** In our redemption we know ourselves to be where we are meant to be, doing what we are meant to be doing. In our redemption we are most ourselves.

The heart opens as we leave the constrictions of our Egypts. Now, with this fourth cup, we risk the journey that extends beyond this moment. We seek to open our hearts enough so we can trust new visions and dreams.

It is not our task to complete the work; nor are we free when we desist from it altogether. (Adapted from *Pirke Avot* 2:21)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, Boray p'ree ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, Eternal One our God, Universal Creative Presence,
Creator of this fruit of the vine.

Drink from the fourth cup.

The fullest freedom comes through blessing. We now bless who we are, where we are, and who we are with. A moment truly blessed opens us most profoundly to the possibility of change.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהַחַיָּנוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melech ha-Olam,
sheh-heh-chiyanu, v'keey'manu, v'heegeeyanu laz'man ha-zeh.*

Blessed are You, Eternal One, our God, Universal Creative Presence,
Who keeps us in Life always, Who supports our unique unfolding,
and Who brings us to this very moment for blessing.

Shulchan Orech: The Festival Meal

(It is customary to begin with hardboiled eggs)

Tzafun: The Afikomen

*To continue the Seder after the meal, find and eat the afikoman,
which has been hidden by the leader or others.*

The afikomen represents that which is hidden from us in our stuckness, that which we must recover if our journey from slavery to freedom is to be realized. We strive to reclaim those precious aspects of self, once hidden, to enlist them now for our journey.

Barech: Birkat Ha-Mazon—Blessing After the Meal

Leader:

Chavayrai n'varech! חַבְרַי נְבָרְךָ!
My friends, let us bless!

Group, then Leader Repeats:

יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.
Ye'hi Shem Adonai m'vorach may-atah v'ad olam.
The name of Adonai (the Eternal One) is blessed now and forever.

Leader:

בְּרִשׁוֹת חַבְרַי, נְבָרְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ.
Birshut chavayrai, n'varech Eloheinu sheh-achalnu mishelo.
With your permission, my friends, let us bless God
from Whose bounty we have eaten.

Group, then Leader Repeats:

בָּרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ וּבְטוֹבוֹ חַיֵּינוּ.
Baruch Eloheinu sheh-achalnu mishelo uv'tuvo chayinu.
Blessed is our God from Whose bounty we have eaten and through Whose Goodness we live.

Group and Leader Continue Together:

בָּרוּךְ הוּא וּבְרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ:
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַזֵּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כְּלוּ בְטוֹבוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד
וּבְרַחֲמִים הוּא נוֹתֵן לְחֵם לְכֹל בְּשֵׁר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד. וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל תָּמִיד לֹא
חָסַר לָנוּ, וְאֵל יַחְסֵר לָנוּ מִזּוֹן לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בְּעֶבֶר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל, כִּי הוּא אֵל זָן
וּמְפָרֵס לְכֹל וּמְטִיב לְכֹל, וּמְכִיז מִזּוֹן לְכֹל בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַזֵּן אֶת הַכֹּל:

Baruch Hu u-varuch Sh'mo.
Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, ha-zan et ha-olam kulo b'tuvo
b'chen b'chesed uv'rachamim. Hu notain lechem l'chol basar ki l'olam chasdo,
uv'tuvo ha-gadol tamid lo chasar lanu, v'al yechar lanu mazon l'olam va-ed.
Ba-avur Sh'mo ha-gadol, ki hu El zan um'farnes la-kol u-maytiv la-kol,
u-maychin mazon l'chol b'ri-otav asher bara.
Baruch Atah Adonai, ha-zan et ha-kol.

Blessed is the One and Blessed is the Name. Blessed are You, Eternal One our God, Universal Creative Presence, Who nourishes the entire world with goodness, with favor, with kindness, and with mercy. Who provides food for all flesh with unending kindness. Through that great goodness we never lack nourishment, for the sake of that Great Name. For the Almighty One nourishes and maintains all, does good, and prepares nourishment for all the creatures of creation. Blessed are You, Eternal One, Nourisher of all.

Alternative Blessings After Eating

V'achalta V'savata: You Shall Eat and Be Satisfied

וְאַכַּלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ:

V'a-chal-ta v'sa-va-ta u-vey-rach-ta. (Deut. 8:10)

We ate when we were hungry, and now we're satisfied,
We thank the Source of Blessing, for all that Yah provides.
Hunger is a yearning in body and soul,
Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit make us whole.
Giving and receiving, we open up our hands,
From seedtime through harvest, we're partners on the land.
We share in a vision of wholeness and release,
Where every child is nourished, and we all live in peace.

—Hannah Tiferet Siegal

B'rich Rachamana: Bless the Compassionate One

בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָא מַלְכָּא דְעֵלְמָא מְרִיבָה דְהַאי פִּיטָא.

B'rich Ra-cha-ma-na Mal-ka de-al-ma Ma-rey d'hai pi-ta.

You are the Source of Life for all that is,
And Your blessing flows through me.

—Aramaic from Talmud, words and melody Shefa Gold

Welcoming Elijah

Behold, I am sending to you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Eternal One: to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the hearts of children to their parents. (Malachi 4:5, 6)

Elijah the Prophet was a man of great vision and feeling who endeavored to bring peace to the world. According to tradition, Elijah will return one day to herald the coming of the Messiah and the beginning of an age in which humankind will live at peace in a world of abundance and love.

On a spiritual level, **Mashiach**, Messiah, is not a person or other external being, but rather a state of consciousness for which each of us must strive. When enough of us reflect that consciousness in our homes, workplaces and communities, we will know the compassion, forgiveness, and love that mark the Messianic Age.

We open a door now and invite the spirit of Elijah to fill our hearts, that we might celebrate the **Mashiach** in each of us.

A door is opened, and there is a moment of silence.

Elijah the Prophet

אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַתְּשִׁבִי, אֱלִיָּהוּ, אֱלִיָּהוּ, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי,
בְּמַהְרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ יָבֵא אֱלֵינוּ, עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד, עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד.

*Eliyahu ha-navi, Eliyahu ha-Tishbi, Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu ha-Giladi.
Bimhayra, v'yamaynu, yavo ayleynu,
Im Mashiach ben David, im Mashiach ben David.*

(Raise Elijah's cup)

This is the cup of Elijah, but it has been filled for us. It is the fifth cup at our Seder, ready if required for this ritual. It carries the energies of the Messianic, which we together share now. We take a moment to honor the greater Being seeking expression through us.

*Pass Elijah's cup around the table
so each participant holds it and shares its energies.*

Miriam's Cup of Living Water

We conclude our seder honoring **Kos Miryam**, Miriam's Cup, symbolically filled with **mayim chayim**, living waters from Miriam's Well.

Legend has it that God provided a well of water because of the merit of the prophetess Miriam, sister to Aaron and Moses. That well sustained us wherever we went, providing needed nourishment for our journey.

Without the contributions of the women in our community, past, present, and future, we would not be here on this journey today. We honor and appreciate the life-giving waters which still flow from Miriam's well.

(Lift Miriam's cup)

זֹאת כּוֹס מֵרִים, כּוֹס מַיִם חַיִּים. זְכֹר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם.

*Zot kos Miryam, kos mayim chayim,
zaicher litzi-at Mitzrayim.*

This is the Cup of Miriam, the cup of living waters,
that we share in remembrance of our journey from Egypt.

*Pass the cup of water around the table
so each participant holds it and shares its energies.*

Nirtzah: Conclusion

Our Seder is complete, its rites and customs done. We depart now on our individual and collective journeys into that wilderness which lies between every Egypt and every Promised Land. May we each have the faith, integrity, and perseverance to reach our own Promised Land, and may we be ready for the next stage of our journey when we celebrate Passover next year.

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם.
L'shanah ha-ba-ah bi-ru-sha-layim.
Next year in the Promised Land!

Songs for Passover

Avadim Hayinu

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ, עַתָּה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין.

Avadim hayinu, hayinu; atah b'nai chorin, b'nai chorin . . .

Avadim hayinu, atah atah b'nai chorin,

Avadim hayinu, atah atah b'nai chorin, b'nai chorin.

We were slaves, and now we are free.

Let My People Go

When Israel was in Egypt's land: Let My People go.

Oppressed so hard they could not stand: Let My People go.

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land.

Tell old Pharaoh to let My People go.

Thus spoke the One, bold Moses said: Let my People go.

If not, I'll smite your first-born dead: Let my People go . . .

No more shall they in bondage toil: Let My People go.

They shall go forth with Egypt's spoil: Let My People go.

Dayeinu

אֱלוֹ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, (3) דַּיְנוּ:

I-lu ho-tzi ho-tzi-anu, ho-tzi-anu mi-mitz-rayim,

Ho-tzi-anu mi-mitz-rayim dayeinu.

Had God just brought us out of Egypt, that would have been enough.

*Chorus: day-day-einu (yei-nu) (3)
dayeinu dayeinu (dayeinu) . . .*

אֱלוֹ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת, (3) דַּיְנוּ:

I-lu natan natan lanu, natan lanu et ha-Shabbat,

Natan lanu et ha-Shabbat, dayeinu . . . (Chorus)

Had God just given us the Shabbat, that would have been enough.

אֱלוֹ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, (3) דַּיְנוּ:

I-lu natan natan lanu, natan lanu et ha-Torah,

Natan lanu et ha-Torah, dayeinu . . . (Chorus)

Had God just given us the Torah, that would have been enough.

Who Will Sing Me?

Who will sing me of the number One? I will sing you of the number One.
One for Almighty God. . . Who reigns in heaven and upon the earth . . .

Who will sing me of the number two? I will sing you of the number two.
Two tablets of Torah, One for Almighty God . . .
Who reigns in heaven and upon the earth . . .

Who will sing me of the number three? I will sing you of the number three.
Three for the patriarchs, Two tablets of Torah, One for Almighty God . . .
Who reigns in heaven and upon the earth . . .

Four for the matriarchs.
Five for the Pentateuch.
Six days of creation.
Seven days are in the week.
Eight lights of Chanukkah.
Nine for the festivals.
Ten for the Commandments.
Eleven stars in Joseph's dream.
Twelve tribes of Israel.
Thirteen attributes of God.

It's in Every One of Us

It's in every one of us to be wise. Find your heart, open up both your eyes.
We can all know everything without ever knowing why. It's in every one of us by
and by.

It's in every one of us. I just remembered, it's like I've been sleeping for years.
I'm not awake as I can be, but my seein's better, I can see through the tears . . .

I've been realizing that, I bought this ticket and watching only half of the show.
But there's scenery and lights and a cast of thousands, who all know what I know,
And it's good that it's so . . .

(Repeat first verse)

—David Pomerantz

The Traditional Order of the Passover Seder

- Light** Light and Bless the Festival Candles
- Kaddesh** Recite the *Kiddush* celebrating the moment with **first cup of wine**
- U'rechatz** Wash the hands, reminiscent of ancient Temple ritual (no blessing)
- Karpas** Dip greens in salt water, bless, and eat
- Yachatz** Break the middle of three *matzot*. The larger piece serves as the *afikomen*, used later in the ritual; the smaller piece serves as the bread of poverty and affliction, as well as symbolizing simple nourishing foods.
- Maggid** The *Telling*, also called the *Haggadah* is shared, including:
Ha Lachma Anya, inviting the spiritually hungry to share the Seder
The Four Questions and Responses
Focus on central drama: We were enslaved, God freed us
Recognition that even our greatest sages repeated this telling
So it is our duty to tell the story
The Four Types of Children
Why we do this in the evening
Deeper spiritual aspects of enslavement and redemption
Midrashic elaborations on the Exodus story
Rabban Gamliel: Seder requires honoring *Pesach*, *Matzah*, and *Maror*
Chayav Adam emphasizes personal participation in the drama
Further praise of God
Second cup of wine
- Rachtzah** Washing hands in preparation for ritual meal (with blessing)
- Motzi** Bless bread
- Matzah** Bless then eat matzah
- Maror** Bless then eat bitter herb dipped in charoset
- Korech** Hillel sandwich of matzah, maror, and charoset eaten without blessing
- Shulchan Orech The Festival Meal**
- Tzafun** Reclaim and eat afikomen
- Barech** *Birkat HaMazon* after eating and drink **third cup of wine**
- Hallel** Psalms and praise and drink the **fourth cup of wine**
- Nirtzah** Completion of the Seder with focus on the Messianic