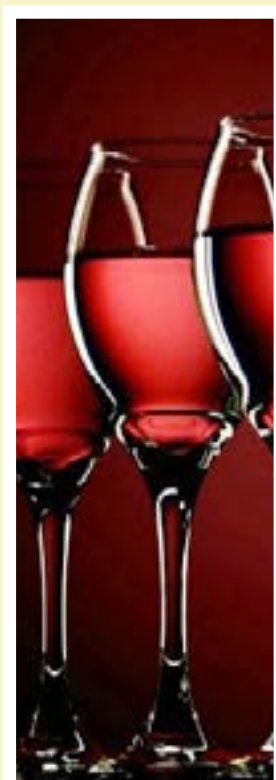




VALLEY BETH SHALOM

HAGGADAH



הגדה של פסח
עגדה מה פסח



VALLEY BETH SHALOM



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For generations, Jewish families have shared the ancient story of the Exodus at the Seder table. They found in this story a unique vision of human history and experience. They found a unique set of ethics. They found the strength to hope, despite the darkest of circumstances. This remarkable story forms the core of our identity as a people, and our philosophy of life. For the story of enslavement and liberation is not a one-time event, but an eternal process. We hope that your Seder is inspiring, stimulating, warm and fun.

"Seder" means order. The Seder is a service made up of ordered parts. The Seder is structured around the sharing of four cups of wine. Each cup conveys a theme of the Seder: Sanctification, History, Thanksgiving, and Hope. At the center of the Seder service — its very purpose — is the story of the Exodus. "Hagaddah" means a "story-telling." At the Seder table, we will tell the story, using symbolic props, dialogue, songs, and poetry. To best ensure a wonderful Seder, there are two kinds of preparations needed: Preparing the table and preparing the service.

SETTING THE SEDER TABLE

The Seder table reflects the festive nature of this holiday. The more special you make it, the more special it feels! Each participant will need a cup for wine/grape juice. We will share four cups of wine...good wine is highly recommended! At the center of the table is the "Seder Plate" (see the illustration on the back cover). This plate contains the symbolic foods we will use for "props" as we tell the story. These include:

- ✧ Bitter Herbs. Most families use horseradish. You will need enough so that everyone at the table can have about a teaspoonful.
- ✧ A green vegetable. Parsley is commonly used, although any green vegetable is acceptable -- lettuce, celery, green peppers, etc.
- ✧ Salt water. We will be dipping the greens in salt water.
- ✧ Charoset. This is a sweet "relish" made up of chopped apples, nuts, and sweet wine. Everyone will need about a tablespoonful. (But you'll probably want lots more!)
- ✧ A roasted shank-bone, or any bone, to represent the Passover offering that was made at the ancient Temple of Jerusalem.
- ✧ A roasted egg. This represents the holiday offering in the ancient Temple.
- ✧ On another plate, place three matzahs covered with a napkin or matzah-cover. Many families have special Seder plates, cups and other Passover implements. These enrich the Seder experience. But even a simple Seder plate containing the symbolic foods is all you really need.

LEADING THE SEDER

Many of us have memories of an aged grandfather or uncle leading a Seder in languages we never understood. The fact is you don't need a beard or a knowledge of ancient languages to lead a wonderful Seder. Remember that the most important part of the Seder is telling the story. Any way that you can make this story vivid and exciting is encouraged. Here are a few suggestions:

- ✧ Read through the Hagaddah before the Seder. Plan a little strategy. This Hagaddah is designed to give you many opportunities for digression, discussion and debate. Look for the boxes marked "How?" "Why?" and "In Depth." Encourage questions and discussion. Remember that the object is not to "get through" the Hagaddah text, but to share the sacred story. Don't worry if you don't finish the whole text... You'll always have the second night and even next year!
- ✧ The Seder story isn't confined to history alone. We all have stories of enslavement, liberation, and the struggle for freedom. Tell your stories. Encourage people at the table to tell theirs. Encourage participation. As you go through the Seder, let everyone at the table read a paragraph of the text. Sing the songs, or bring new songs to the Seder.
- ✧ Involve the children at the table. Ask them questions. Play games. Make them part of the Seder.
- ✧ Try to finish. The first half of the Seder deals with history. The second half — after the meal — reflects on our dreams and our hopes.

This symbol ☆ indicates a reading part. Go around the table and let everyone take a part.

WELCOME TO OUR SEDER!

- ☆ In every generation, we must see ourselves as if we personally were liberated from Egypt. We gather tonight to tell the ancient story of a people's liberation from Egyptian slavery. This is the story of our origins as a people. It is from these events that we gain our ethics, our vision of history, our dreams for the future. We gather tonight, as two hundred generations of Jewish families have before us, to retell the timeless tale.
- ☆ Yet our tradition requires that on Seder night, we do more than just tell the story. We must live the story. Tonight, we will re-experience the liberation from Egypt. We will remember how our family suffered as slaves; we will feel the exhilaration of redemption. We must re-taste the bitterness of slavery and must rejoice over our newfound freedom. We annually return to Egypt in order to be freed. We remember slavery in order to deepen our commitment to end all suffering; we recreate our liberation in order to reinforce our commitment to universal freedom.
- ☆ For our children, and for the children within us, we need to make our stories vivid. And so, tonight, our table is a stage. The Seder is like a play. This Hagaddah will be our script. Here are the props to bring life to the story: The Seder Plate contains foods symbolic of the story. The matzah so flat and plain — is the bread our ancestors ate in their rush to reach freedom. The wine is a symbol of our celebration: that we are here, together, as family and friends, partaking in the feast of freedom's sweetness. We begin our Seder with the lighting of holiday candles.



HOW? As on Shabbath, two candles are lit for Passover. Light candles, then recite:

LIGHTING THE CANDLES

הַדְּלָקַת נֵרוֹת

- ☆ The first words in the creation of the universe out of the unformed, void and dark earth were God's "Let there be light." Therein lies the hope and faith of Judaism and the obligation of our people: to make the light of justice, compassion, and knowledge penetrate the darkness of our time till the prophecy be fulfilled, 'that wickedness vanish like smoke and the earth shall be filled with knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea' (Isaiah 11:9).



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

Baruch atah Adonai Elohaynoo melech ha-olam, asher keedshanoo b'meetzvotav v'tzeevanoo l'hadleek ner shel yom tov.

Praised are You, Lord our God, Whose presence fills the universe, Who has sanctified our lives through Your commandments and commanded us to kindle the festival lights.

WHEN FIRST OR SECOND SEDER IS ON A FRIDAY NIGHT:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

Baruch atah Adonai Elohaynoo melech ha-olam, asher keedshanoo b'meetzvotav v'tzeevanoo l'hadleek ner shel Shabbat v' shel yom tov.

Praised are You, Lord our God, Whose presence fills the universe, Who has sanctified our lives through Your commandments and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath and festival lights.



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵימָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִצִּיעָנוּ לְזַמַּן הַזֶּה.

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohaynoo melech ha-olam, sheh'hech'eeyanoo v'keeyemanoo, v'heegeeanoo la-z'man ha-zeh.

Praised are You, Lord our God, Whose presence fills the universe, Who has given us life and strength and enabled us to reach this moment of joy.

The Order of the Seder

Sanctification	Kadesh	קדש
Purification	Oorchatz	ורחץ
Rebirth and Renewal	Karpas	כרפס
Brokenness and Concealment	Yachatz	יחץ
Telling the Story	Mageed	מגיד
Washing the Hands	Rachtza	רחצה
Tasting History	Motzee Matza	מוציא מצה
The Bitterness of Slavery	Maror	מרור
The Bitter and the Sweet	Korech	כורך
The Feast of Free People	Shulchan Orech	שלחן עורך
Dessert	Tzafoon	צפון
Thanksgiving	Barech	ברך
Celebration and Song	Hallel	הלל
Completion	Neertza	נרצה

The Cup of Sanctification **Kadesh**

קדש

☆ The Hebrew word “Kiddush” means sanctification. But it is not the wine we sanctify. Instead, the wine is a symbol of the sanctity, the preciousness, and the sweetness of this moment. Held together by sacred bonds of family, friendship, peoplehood, we share this table tonight with one another and with all the generations who have come before us. Let us rise, and sanctify this singular moment.



HOW? We will drink four cups of wine at the Seder in celebration of our freedom. (Grape juice is fine too.) We stand, recite the blessing, and enjoy the first cup. L'chaim!



IN DEPTH The blessing praises God for creating the "fruit of the vine." We recite the blessing, not over the whole grape, but over wine — squeezed and fermented through human skill. So, too, the motzee blessing is recited not over sheaves of wheat but over bread, leavened or unleavened, ground and kneaded and prepared by human hands. The blessing is over the product cultivated through human and divine cooperation: We bless the gifts of sun, seed and soil transformed by wisdom and purpose to sustain the body and rejoice the soul.

בָּרַךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:
 בָּרַךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל-עַם, וְרוֹמַמְנוּ
 מִכָּל-לְשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְחַתַּן לָנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה וְלִשְׁבֹּת: שִׁבְתוֹת
 לְמַטְוָה וְאֲמוּצִים לְשִׁמְחָה, חֲנִים וְזִמְמִים לְשִׁשׁוֹן אֶת-יוֹם (לִשְׁבֹּת: הַשְּׁבֹת
 הַזֶּה וְאֶת-יוֹם) חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. זְמַן חֲרוּמְנוּ, (לִשְׁבֹּת: בְּאַהֲבָה), מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ,
 זָכַר לִיציאת מִצְרַיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֵרָתָ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים. (לִשְׁבֹּת:
 וְשִׁבְתָ) וְאֲמוּצֵי קֹדֶשׁךָ (לִשְׁבֹּת: בְּאַהֲבָה וְבְרַצוֹן) בְּשִׁמְחָה וּבְשִׁשׁוֹן הַחֵלְתָנוּ
 בָּרַךְ אַתָּה יי, מִקְדֵּשׁ (לִשְׁבֹּת: הַשְּׁבֹת) וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמִינֵם:

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohaynoo melech ha-olam, boray pree ha-gafen. Baruch atah Adonai, Elohynoo melech ha-olam, asher bachar banoo meekol am, v'romemanoo meekol lashon, v'keedshanoo b'meetzvotav. Va'teetayn lanoo Adonai Elohaynoo b'bahava, mo'adeem Isimcha, chageem oo-z'maneem l'sason. Et yom chag ha-matzot ha-zeh, z'man chayrootaynoo, meekra kodesh, zecher leetzeeyat Meetzrayeem. Kee vanoo vacharta, v'otanoo keed-ashta meekol ha-ameem. Oo'mo'adday kodsheh'cha b'seemcha oo-v'sason heen'chaltanoo. Baruch ata Adonai m'kadesh Yisrael v'ha-z'maneem.

**Praised are You, Lord our God, Whose presence fills the universe. Who creates the fruit of the vine.
 Praised are You, Lord our God, Whose presence fills the universe, Who has called us for service
 from among the peoples of the world, sanctifying our lives with Your commandments. In love, You
 have given us festivals for rejoicing and seasons of celebration, this Festival of Matzot, the time of
 our freedom, a commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt.**

Praised are You, Lord, Who gave us this joyful heritage and Who sanctifies Israel and the festivals.

בָּרַךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵיט וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵה הַזֶּה.

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohaynoo melech ha-olam, sheh'hech'eeyanoo v'keeyemanoo, v'heegeeanoo la-z'man ha-zeh.

**Praised are You, Lord, our God, Whose presence fills the universe, Who has given us the gifts of life
 and strength and enabled us to reach this moment of joy.**

Purification **Oorchatz** **וּרְחַץ**

☆ Slaves eat quickly, stopping neither to wash nor to reflect.
 Tonight, we are free. We wash and we express our
 reverence for the blessings that are ours.



HOW? Pass a bowl of water, a small cup and a towel around the table. Everyone pours three cupfuls over their fingers. There is no blessing over this washing.

- ☆ We have become slaves to the cities we build and to the cars we drive. It is the soil from which humanity came, the earth which each year displays the miracle of creation!
- ☆ As Spring re-awakens all that is green, let us re-awaken our ties to the natural world and our bonds to the earth. We dip greens into salt water and acknowledge through our blessing that we are partners in the work of Creation.



HOW? Green vegetables represent the coming of Spring and the renewal of life. Many families use parsley for its rich green color. We dip vegetables in salt water, recite the blessing, then eat.

בָּרַךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה:

Baruch ata Adonai Elohaynoo melech ha-olam, boray pree ha- adamah.

Praised are You, Lord, our God, Whose presence fills the universe, Who creates the fruit of the earth.



HOW? At the center of the table, there is a plate with three matzahs. Take the middle matzah and break it in two. The larger piece is wrapped in a napkin, and hidden. The smaller piece is replaced between the other two on the Matzah plate. The hidden matzah is called the "afikoman" or dessert. It is a tradition that children search for this hidden matzah, and finding it, ransom it back at Seder's end. The Seder cannot end without this Afikoman, and so kids have been known to demand anything from a few candies to a new bike or a college education.

Brokenness and Concealment **Yahatz**

יִחַץ

- ☆ We are free, but we remember when we were slaves. We are whole, but we bring to mind those who are broken. The middle matzah is broken, but it is the larger part which is hidden. Because the future will be greater than the past, and tomorrow's Passover nobler than yesterday's exodus. The prospects for the dreamed future are overwhelming to the point of making us mute. So it is in silence, without blessing, that we break and hide the matzah and long for its recovery and our redemption.





IN DEPTH The central imperative of the Seder is to tell the story. The Bible instructs: “You shall tell your child on that day, saying: ‘This is because of what Adonai did for me when I came out of Egypt.’” (Exodus 13:8) We relate the story of our ancestors to regain the memories as our own. Elie Weisel writes: God created man because He loves stories. We each have a story to tell — a story of enslavement, struggle, liberation. Be sure to tell your story at the Seder table, for the Passover is offered not as a one-time event, but as a model for human experience in all generations.

הא לחמא ענינא די אכלו אבהותנא בארעא דמצרים. כל דכפין ייתי ויכל,
 כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח. השתא חכא, לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל. השתא
 עבדי, לשנה הבאה בני חורין:



Ha lachma anya d'achaloo avhatana b'ara d'metzrayeem. Kol dichfeen yay-tay vi'yachool, kol deetzreech yay-tay viyeesfsach. Hashata hach. Li'shana ha-ba-aa bi'arah di'yeesrael. Hashata av'day, li'shana ha-ba a bi'nay choreen.

☆ ***This is the bread of affliction, which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in need, come and celebrate Passover. Today, we are here. Next year, in the land of Israel. Today, we are slaves. Next year, we will be free.***

☆ Written in Aramaic, this statement begins the narration of the Seder by inviting the hungry to our table. Aramaic, Jewish legend has it, is the one language which the angels do not understand. Why then is Ha Lachma spoken in Aramaic? To teach us that where there is hunger, no one should rely upon the angels, no one should pray to the heavens for help. We know the language of the poor, for we were poor in the land of Egypt. We know that we are called to feed the poor and to call them to join our celebration of freedom.



The Four Questions

מה נשתנה

☆ Free people ask questions. We begin our Seder with questions. Although the custom is that the youngest at the table asks, tradition instructs that all must ask:

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה הלילה הזה בלע מצה?

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות הלילה הזה מרור?

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

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין הלילה הזה בלענו מסבין?

Ma Neeshtana ha-laila ha-zeh meekol ha-laylot? Sheh-bichol ha-laylot anoo ochleem chametz oo-matzah. Halailah hazeh chametz oomatz. Sheh-bi'chol ha-laylot anoo ochleem sheh-ar yerakot. Ha-lailah hazeh maror. Sheh-bi'chol ha-laylot ayn anoo mat-bee- leen afeeloo pa-am echad. Ha-laila hazeh sh'tay pi-ameem. Sheh-bi'chol ha-laylot anoo ochleem bayn yoshveen oo-bayn misoobeem. Ha-laila hazeh koolanoo misooveem.

Why is this night of Passover different from all other nights of the year? On all other nights, we eat either leavened or unleavened bread. Why on this night do we eat only matzah? On all other nights, we eat vegetables of all kinds. Why on this night must we eat bitter herbs? On all other nights, we do not dip vegetables even once. Why on this night do we dip twice greens into salt water and bitter herbs into sweet charoset? On all other nights, everyone sits up straight at the table. Why on this night do we recline and eat at leisure?



HOW? Asking questions is an important part of the Seder. Encourage everyone at the table to ask not just the questions listed in the book, but whatever question comes to mind during the Seder. The Seder is designed for distraction, digression, and discussion. So, if you don't finish the whole thing tonight...there's always tomorrow, or next year! What would be your four questions?

☆ In four different passages the Bible commands that we instruct our children about the Exodus. "Why this reiteration?" asked the teachers of the Tradition. Because there are different kinds of children - different kinds of people - with different attitudes and aptitudes.

כִּנְגַד אַרְבָּעָה בְּנִים דִּבְרָה תּוֹרָה. אֶחָד סָכֵם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד פֶּסֶם, וְאֶחָד שְׂמֵיט יוֹדֵעַ לְשֹׂאֵל:

K'neged arba baneem dee'bra Torah: Echad Hacham, Echad Rasha, Echad Tahm, V'echad Sheh'anyno Yodayah Leeshol.

☆ The Torah speaks of four types of children: one is wise, one is wicked, one is simple, and one does not know how to ask.

חָכָם מִה הוּא אוֹמֵר?

☆ **The Wise One asks:** "What is the meaning of the laws and traditions God has commanded?" (Deuteronomy 6:20) You should teach him all the traditions of Passover, even to the last detail.

רָשָׁע מִה הוּא אוֹמֵר?

☆ **The Wicked One asks:** "What does this ritual mean to you?" (Exodus 12:26) By using the expression "to you" he excludes himself from his people and denies God. Shake his arrogance and say to him, "It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt." (Exodus 13:8) "For me " and not for him - for had he been in Egypt, he would not have been freed.

פֶּסֶם מִה הוּא אוֹמֵר?

☆ **The Simple One asks:** "What is all this?" You should tell him, "It was with a mighty hand that the Lord took us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 13:14)

וְשֵׂמֵיט יוֹדֵעַ לְשֹׂאֵל, אַתָּה פֶּתַח לוֹ.

☆ As for **the One Who Does not know how to ask**, you should open the discussion for him, as it is written, "And you shall explain to your child on that day, it is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt: (Exodus 13:8)

FOR DISCUSSION Look again at the Four Sons, for the simplicity of the account is deceptive.

- ☆ What makes the Wise One wise? If he's wise, why must he ask a question?
- ☆ Who is this Wicked One? Why is he at the table, instead of staying home on Seder night? What is his wickedness? Why does the text say, "were he in Egypt, he would not have been freed?" Is cynicism a form of slavery? What is the motivation for his cynicism? How do you suppose he became wicked? What turns children against the values of their parents?
- ☆ Is the Simple One's simplicity a reflection of innocence and wonder, or indifference and apathy? Is there really ever such thing as an "innocent bystander" in life? Can one claim to be an "innocent bystander" to poverty, war, slavery, genocide?
- ☆ Have you ever been "The One Who Does Not Know How To Ask?" So thoroughly confused, baffled, or overwhelmed by life that you couldn't even form the question?
- ☆ Which one of these is you, now, in your life? Are you the Wise, the Wicked, the Simple, or the Silent?





IN DEPTH Five rabbis, living under the Roman oppression in the second century, gather for a Seder and lose track of the time, until reminded by their students that dawn has come. Some scholars suggest that they used this Seder, with its themes of liberation from oppression, to plan a revolution. With their students posted as look-outs to warn of the approach of Roman authorities, the debate raged all night long: Pacifism or militant revolt? Is there a right time to take up arms against an enemy? Do the ends of revolution justify the means of violence? Is war ever justified? Does Judaism require political freedom, political power to survive? May we step away from the world of politics and practice our spirituality, oblivious to the material conditions of human existence? Or is our spirituality tied intimately to the real lives of our people? Perhaps it was the passion of their teachers in debate, that moved the students to exclaim: Dawn has arrived!

מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרַבֵּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר, וְרַבֵּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, וְרַבֵּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן-עֲזַרְיָה, וְרַבֵּי עֲקִיבָא וְרַבֵּי טַרְפוֹן, שֶׁהָיוּ מְסֻבִּין בְּבֵית-בְּרוֹק, וְהָיוּ מְסַפְּרִים בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, כָּל-אוֹתוֹ הַלַּיְלָה, עַד שֶׁבָּאוּ תַלְמִידֵיהֶם וְאָמְרוּ לָהֶם: רַבּוֹתַינִי, הִגִּיעַ זְמַן קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע שֶׁל שַׁחֲרִית:

☆ A story is told of Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiba, and Rabbi Tarfon, who were sitting at a Seder in B'nay Brock. All night long, they told the story of the Exodus from Egypt until their students came and said to them: “Our teachers, dawn has broken, it is time to say the morning prayer!”



IN DEPTH “Pharonic oppression, deliverance, Sinai, and Canaan are still with us as powerful memories shaping our perceptions of the political world. The “door of hope” is still open; things are not what they might be even when what they might be isn’t totally different from what they are. This is a central theme in Western thought, always present though elaborated in many different ways. We still believe, or many of us do, what the Exodus first taught, or what it has commonly been taken to teach about the meaning and possibility of politics and about its proper form:

- ☆ First, that wherever you live, it is probably Egypt;
- ☆ Second, that there is a better place, a world more attractive, a promised land;
- ☆ Third, that “the way to the land is through the wilderness.” There is no way to get there from here to there except by joining together and marching.

—Michael Walzer

בָּרַךְ הַמָּקוֹם. בָּרַךְ הוּא. בָּרַךְ שֶׁנָּתַן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל. בָּרַךְ הוּא.



Baruch Ha-Mokum. Baruch Hoo. Baruch Sheh-Natan Torah L'amo Yisrael. Baruch Hoo.

***Praised is God. Praised is the One who gave Torah to the People Israel.
Praised is God.***

☆ There are many questions. Now we begin to answer. Our history moves from slavery toward freedom. Our narration begins with degradation and rises to dignity. Our service opens with the rule of evil and advances to the kingdom of God.

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וְיָצִיאָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְיָד נְטוּיָה

Avadeem hayeenoo le'Pharoah b'meezra-yeem

1 . We were slaves to Pharoah in Egypt and the Lord freed us from Egypt with a mighty hand. Had not the Holy One liberated our people from Egypt, then we, our children and our children's children would still be enslaved.

מִפִּתְחֵלָה עֲוֹבָדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיִינוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ. וְעַכְשָׁיו קָרַבְנוּ הַמָּקוֹם לְעֲבוֹדָתוֹ.

Mee-t'cheela ovdah adovah zara hayoo avotaynoo. V'achshav kayr'vanoo ha-makom la-avodato

2 . We were not born free men and women; we were not born believers in one God. We came from an ancestry of slaves and idol worshippers. Tonight, we celebrate not our genesis — what we were — but what we have become. We are a choosing people, and our choice has come out of tragic encounters with pagan superstition and political enslavement. We are a choosing people and we have discovered the meaning of our choice: to live as witnesses to one God who calls upon us to mend the world.

3 . The Torah recounts the early history of the Jewish people. It describes how God commanded Abraham to leave his country and his father's house and to go to the land of Canaan, where he would become the founder of "a great nation." Abraham and his wife, Sarah, obeyed God's command and journeyed to Canaan. There God blessed them and their family. Their son was Isaac, who married Rebecca. Their grandson was Jacob; and it was Jacob who went down to Egypt.

4 . Why did Jacob journey to Egypt? Because Joseph, his son by his beloved Rachel, had become prime minister to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. When a famine broke out in Canaan, Joseph asked his father and all his family to join him there. Then Joseph granted his father and his brothers land, as Pharaoh commanded. And Israel dwelt in the land of Goshen; and they were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly.

5 . Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all that generation. Now there arose a new Pharaoh over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that if there be a war, they join themselves unto our enemies and fight against us." Therefore Pharaoh set over them taskmasters to afflict them with burdens. But the more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more the Israelites multiplied and the more they spread through the land.



IN DEPTH The most devastating effect of slavery, ultimately, is that the slave internalizes the master's values and accepts the condition of slavery as his proper status. People who live in chronic conditions of poverty, hunger, and sickness tend to show similar patterns of acceptance and passivity. As with slaves, their deprivation deprives them of their political and economic status and then becomes moral and psychological reality. It is this reality that was overthrown in the Exodus.

—Irving Greenberg

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, another thousand unhappy souls would go away.

—Peter Fischel, age 15, perished at Auschwitz, 1944

6. The cruelest decree of all was the Pharaoh's order that every baby boy born to an Israelite woman be drowned in the River Nile. One couple, Amram and Yocheved, would not kill their newborn son. Instead, they hid him in their hut for three months. When his cries became too loud Yocheved placed him in a basket on the river. Their daughter Miriam watched to see what would happen.



FOR DISCUSSION: The Israelites were a prosperous, powerful people in Egypt. How did Pharaoh manage to enslave them so quickly? The Israelites were 'well connected.' How did Pharaoh persuade his people to join in the exploitation, enslavement, and ultimately, the genocide of their Israelite neighbors?

7. As the Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe in the river she discovered the basket. She felt pity for the helpless child and decided to keep him as her own. She named him Moshe (Moses), which means "drawn from the water." Bravely, Miriam asked the princess if she needed a nurse to help her with the baby. The princess said yes, and so it happened that Yocheved was able to care for her own son and teach him about his heritage.

8. Moses would have lived at the Pharaoh's palace forever, but he could not ignore the suffering of his people. Once when he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite slave, he could not control his anger, and he killed the Egyptian. Knowing his life would be in danger once the news of this deed spread, Moses fled to the land of Midian where he became a shepherd.



FOR DISCUSSION: Moses had two identities — son of slaves, and prince of Egypt. He could have spent his lifetime in the palace. Why did he "go out to his brothers?" Why did he choose to identify with the slave and not the master?

9. One day, while tending sheep on Mount Horeb, Moses saw a bush that seemed to be on fire, but was not burning up. From the bush, he heard God's voice calling him. God said, "I am the God of your ancestors. I have seen the suffering of the Israelites and have heard their cries. I am ready to take them out of Egypt and bring them to a new land, a land flowing with milk and honey."



IN DEPTH Here is a Midrash, an imaginative interpretation of the Bible's story from the first century: "God heard our suffering ... and God knew.(Ex 1:24-5) What did God know? When the Israelites had grown accustomed to their tasks, when the Hebrews began to labor without complaint, then God knew it was time that they were liberated.

Another Midrash: This is why and how God decided to put an abrupt end to the Jews suffering in Egypt: In accordance with his desire to inflict pain on his slaves, Pharaoh issued orders to seize all male infants and wall them alive inside the pyramids. And God stood by silently. The desperate parents cursed themselves for having brought children into the world. All the men and all the women agreed that they would not live together any more. And God stood by silently. Then one day an angel seized a newly-born infant, who had already been tortured, already been disfigured, and held him up to God, who, grief-stricken, remembered the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That was when He set into motion the events which resulted in the Exodus.

10. God told Moses to return to Egypt to bring the message of freedom to the Israelites and to warn Pharaoh that God would bring plagues on the Egyptians if he did not let the slaves go free. Moses was such a humble man that he could not imagine being God's messenger. "I will be with you," God promised Moses. With this assurance and challenge, Moses set out for Egypt.

11. When Moses asked Pharaoh to free the Israelites, he refused. It was only then that God brought ten plagues on the Egyptians. Each one frightened Pharaoh, and each time he promised to free the slaves. But when each plague ended, Pharaoh did not keep his word. It was only after the last plague, the death of the firstborn of the Egyptians, that Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites go. And so it was that God brought us forth out of Egypt, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with great terror and with signs and with wonders.

12. And so God's promise to our ancestor Abraham was fulfilled, "Your children shall be strangers in a land not their own, and they shall be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation they shall serve, and in the end, they shall go free with abundance." (Genesis 15:13-4)

**בָּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחוֹת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. בָּרוּךְ הוּא שֶׁהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא חָשַׁב
אֶת-הַשָּׂא, לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּמָה שֶׁאָמַר לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ בְּכִרְיֵת בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים.**

Baruch shomayr hav-tach-ato l'yeesrael, baruch hoo. Sheh-ha-kadosh baruch hoo cheeshayv et ha-kaytz la'asot kama sheh-amar l'avraham aveenoo bivreet bayn ha-betareem

13. The experience of the Exodus was transforming. It made us a free people forever. No matter how oppressed we are, deep inside we remain free. We know now that history has meaning. We know that power cannot forever vanquish freedom. We know that God has purposes in human history.



GO DOWN MOSES

When Israel was in Egypt land, "Let my people go!"

Oppressed so hard they could not stand. "Let my people go!"

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt Land.

Tell ol' Pharaoh: "Let my people go!"

The Lord told Moses what to do, "Let my people go!"

To lead the children of Israel through, "Let my people go!"



IN DEPTH Menachem Mendel of Kotzk maintained that "whoever believes in miracles is a fool; and whoever does not believe in miracles is an atheist."

How can the idea of the miraculous be meaningful to us today? We may be guided by the biblical Hebrew term for miracle, nes, which means "sign." A miracle is an event that signifies something of significance, something that makes an important difference in my life or in the life of my community. A miracle is an intimation of an experience of transcending meaning. The sign-miracle does not refer to something beyond or contrary to logic or nature. It refers to events and experiences that make us take notice of the extraordinary in the ordinary, the wonder in the everyday, the marvel in the routine. Signs do not violate reason or nature. They are natural moments in our lives that we recognize as transforming.

—Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis



FOR DISCUSSION: Pharaoh's stubborn refusal to free the Israelites, despite the many plagues that ravaged Egypt, is attributed in the Bible to the "hardening of his heart." Why do nations persist in evil policies even when those policies bring devastation and humiliation?

The Ten Plagues



HOW? As we recite each of the Ten Plagues, we dip out a drop of wine from our wine cup. When human beings suffer, even evil human beings, our joy cannot be complete.

☆ **God brought Ten Plagues upon the Egyptians, and they were:**

דם | צפנדע | כנים | ערוב | דבר | שחין | ברד | ארבה | חשך | מפת בכורות

Dam T'z'fardaya Keeneem Arov Dever Shecheen Barad Arbeh Choshech Makat Bechorot

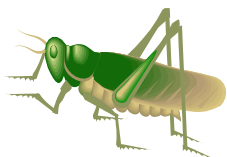
Blood | Frogs | Lice | Beasts | Blight | Boils | Hail | Locusts | Darkness | Death of Firstborn

Growing up, this was a favorite Seder song...

One morning when Pharaoh awoke in his bed,
there were frogs in his bed. And frogs on his head.

Frogs on his toes and frogs on his nose.

Frogs here! Frogs there! Frogs were jumping everywhere!





IN DEPTH When Israel saw the wondrous power which the Lord had wielded against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord; they had faith in the Lord and His servant Moses. Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord. They sang: "I will sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously." Midrash: At that moment, the angels of heaven wanted to sing praises to God. But God silenced them, saying: "My children are drowning in the sea and you want to sing before me?"

Moses confronts Pharaoh. The one represents the power of the moral, the other, a morality of power. Who will prevail? Can raw power extinguish the human spirit? Can the police state control the human imagination? The victory of God over Pharaoh is the foundation of the ultimate Jewish faith in the future. At the Red Sea, history became transparent — its pattern and meaning became visible.

A Song of Gratitude

Day'aynoo

דיינו

☆ We have so many reasons to be grateful to God tonight: for freedom and dignity, friendship and family, prosperity and health. Any one of these would have been enough - Day'aynoo!

דיינו כִּפָּחַ מַעֲלוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְמַקּוֹם עֲלֵינוּ

Kama ma'alot tovot la-Makom alaynoo, Day'aynoo!

How many are the gifts that God has granted us!

דיינו אֱלֹהֵי הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם,

Eeloo ho'tzee-anu me'meetzrayeem, Day'aynoo!

דיינו אֱלֹהֵי קָרַע לָנוּ אֶת הַיָּם,

Eeloo kara lanu et ha-yam, Day'aynoo!

דיינו אֱלֹהֵי טִפַּק אֶרְפָּנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה,

Eeloo seepayk tzarchaynoo ba-midbar arbaeem shana, Day'aynoo!

דיינו אֱלֹהֵי הִאֲכִילָנוּ אֶת הַמָּן,

Eeloo heh-eh-cheelanoo et ha-man, Day'aynoo!

דיינו אֱלֹהֵי קָרַבְנוּ לִפְנֵי הַר סִינַי,

Eeloo kayr-vanoo leefnay har seeni, Day'aynoo!

דיינו אֱלֹהֵי נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת, וַיָּנוּחַ

Eeloo natan lanoo et ha-Shabbat, Day'aynoo!

דיינו אֱלֹהֵי נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה,

Eeloo natan lanoo et ha-Torah, Day'aynoo!

Had God taken us out of Egypt...**Day'aynoo!**

It would have been enough! Had God carried us across the Sea... **Day'aynoo!**

It would have been enough! Had God cared for us for forty years... **Day'aynoo!**

It would have been enough! Had God given us the Sabbath... **Day'aynoo!**

It would have been enough! Had God given us the Torah... **Day'aynoo!**

It would have been enough! Had God brought us back to the Land of Israel... **Day'aynoo!**

It would have been enough! Had God returned us to Jerusalem... **Day'aynoo!**

It would have been enough! Had God helped us redeem our brothers and sisters... **Day'aynoo!**

It would have been enough!

In Every Generation

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדּוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ, כְּאִלוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם,
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְהַגִּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה יי לִי בְצֵאתִי
מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת־אֲבוֹתַי בַּלְבָּד גָּאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
גָּאֵל עַמָּהֶם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְאוֹתֵנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם לְמַעַן הִבִּיא אֹתֵנוּ לְאֶרֶץ לְנוֹ
אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ.

B'chol dor va'dor chayav adam leerot et atzmo k'eeloo hoo yatzah m'eemitzrayeem.

- ✪ In each generation we must look at ourselves as though we personally had been redeemed from Egypt. As the Torah teaches: You shall tell your children on that day, saying, "It is because of what the Lord did for me when I went free out of Egypt." (Exodus 13:8) For the Holy One redeemed not only our ancestors: God redeemed us with them, as it says, "God brought us out of there so that God might bring us to the land promised to our ancestors." (Deuteronomy 6:23)

The Biblical Lessons of Slavery and Freedom

- ✪ The Exodus gave us our freedom. It also taught us our ethics, our theology, our philosophy. How many commandments in the Torah are rooted in our experience of slavery and freedom?
- ✪ I am the LORD your God *who brought you out of the land of Egypt*, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods besides Me. (Exodus 20:1)
- ✪ You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, *for you were strangers In the land of Egypt*. You shall not ill-treat any widow or orphan. (Exodus 22:20)
- ✪ When you see the animal of your enemy lying under its burden and would refrain from raising it, you must nevertheless raise it with him. You shall not subvert the rights of your needy in their disputes ... 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: 5)
- ✪ When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, *for you were strangers in the land of Egypt*. I the Lord am your God. (Leviticus 19:33)
- ✪ If your kinsman becomes poor and his means fail, then you shall uphold him. Let him live by your side: do not exact from him advance or accrued interest, but fear your God. Let him live by your side as your kinsman. Do not lend him money at advance interest or give him your food at accrued interest. *I the Lord am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt* to give you the land of Canaan; to be your God. (Leviticus 25:35)
- ✪ Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; you shall not do any work — you, your son or your daughter, your male or female servant, your ox or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the stranger in your settlements so that your male and female servant may rest as you do. *Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt* and the Lord your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. (Deut.5:12-15)

- ❑ You shall not turn over to his master a slave who seeks refuge with you from his master. He shall live with you in any place he may choose among the settlements in your midst, wherever he pleases; you must not ill-treat him. (Deuteronomy 23:16)
- ❑ You shall not subvert the rights of the stranger or the fatherless; you shall not take a widow's garment in pawn. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that the Lord, your God redeemed you from there; therefore do I enjoin you to observe this commandment. (Deuteronomy 24:17)
- ❑ When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf in the field do not turn back to get it; it shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow -- in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings. When you beat down the fruit of your olive trees, do not go over them again; this shall go to the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not pick it over again; that shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. Always remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore do I enjoin you to observe this commandment. (Deuteronomy 24:19-22)

Pesach, Matzah, Maror

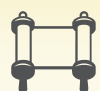
פֶּסַח, מַצָּה, וּמְרוֹר

Rabban Gamliel, the first-century sage who compiled the Hagaddah, taught: Those who have not explained these three things during the Seder have not fulfilled their obligation:

פֶּסַח PESACH When the great Temple of Jerusalem was still in existence, our ancestors ate a special sacrificial offering called the Pesach. The word "Pesach" means to "pass over." The offering was eaten as a symbol that God passed over the houses of the Israelites, as the Torah teaches, "You shall say: This is the Pesach offering we offer to God, because God passed over the houses of the Israelites when he destroyed the Egyptians, but our homes God saved." (Exodus 12:27)

מַצָּה MATZAH Why do we eat matzah? To remember that even before our ancestor's dough had time to rise, God was revealed to them and saved them. As the Torah teaches: And they baked the dough which they had brought from Egypt into matzah; it did not rise since they hurried out of Egypt, and they could not delay, nor had they prepared other provisions for themselves." (Exodus 12:39)

מְרוֹר MAROR Why do we eat bitter foods? To remember that the Egyptians, "embittered the lives of our ancestors with hard labor in mortar and brick, and in every manner of drudgery in the field and worked them ruthlessly in all their labor." (Exodus 1:14)



IN DEPTH The matzah for the Seder is baked out of wheat, rye, oats, barley, or spelt. When moistened and allowed to ferment and rise, these five types of grains become "chametz:" leavened foods which are prohibited on Passover. Matzah derives from the same grains which are chametz. So, too, are the vices and virtues of our lives interwoven; our energies for good and evil intricately connected. Of itself, the grain is neither good nor evil, neither matzah nor chametz. What makes it one or the other is the intention and use to which it is assigned. Each, in its proper place, has its purpose. It is we, not the neutral grain, who consecrate or desecrate, who turn it into leavened bread or matzah.

- ✧ On Passover, we eat theology and drink ethics. On our plates, in our cups, with the posture of our bodies, in the gesture of our hands, in the way we eat, drink and sing, in the way we converse with one another are found the teachings of our people.
- ✧ The bitter herbs may not be simply swallowed. They must be chewed and tasted. It is not enough to talk abstractly about oppression, to analyze the causes which led to slavery, to read about the forced labor camps. To the best of our ability we are to experience the lives embittered by totalitarian punishment. To taste the bitter herbs is part of the process of feeling the affliction of body and spirit which a subjugated people suffers.
- ✧ Yet, when the maror is eaten, it is mixed with the sweet charoset, to teach us that memory cannot be immersed only in darkness and despair. The sweet mixture is not meant to eradicate the bitter, only to remind us that there is goodness in the world, however small, and hope in the future, however slight. Without the charoset, the only lasting memory would be that of torture and shame.

Celebration and Song

Hallel

הלל

לְפִיכֹד אֲנַחֲנוּ חַיִּבִּים לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבַּח, לְפָאֵר, לְרוֹמֵם, לְהוֹדֹר, לְבָרוּךְ,
 לְעֵלֶה וּלְקַלֵּם, לְמִי שֶׁעָשָׂה לְאַבְרָהָם וְלֵנוּ אֶת־כָּל־הַנִּסִּים הָאֵלֶּה. הוֹצִיאָנוּ
 מֵעֲבָדוֹת לְחֵרֶת, מִיָּגוֹן לְשִׁמְחָה, וּמֵאֲבֵל לְיוֹם טוֹב, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹר גָּדוֹל,
 וּמִשְׁעָבָד לְגִאֲלָה.

Lefeekach, anachnoo chayaveem l'hodot, lhallayl, l'shah-bay-ach, l'fah-ayr, l'romaym, l'hadayr, l'varech, lalay, ool'ka-lays, l'mee sheh-asah lavotaynoo v'lanoo et kol ha-neeseem ha-ayloo. Hotzeeaynoo me'avdoot l'chayroot, meyagon l'seem-chah, oo'may'ay'vel li'yom tov, oo'may-ah-fay-lah l'or gadol, oo'mee-shee-ah-bood lee'gi-oo-lah.

Therefore, let us rejoice at the miracle of our liberation, and sing unto God who brought us from slavery to freedom, from despair to joy, from mourning to celebration, from darkness to light, from enslavement to redemption.

וְנֹאמַר לְפָנֶיךָ שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה הַלְלוּיָהּ

Ve'nomar li'fanav sheerah chadashash. Halehlooyah!

Let us sing before God a new song, Halleluyah!



בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם, בַּיַּת יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לֵעָז: הִיָּתָה יְהוּדָה יְהוֹדָה לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ. יִשְׂרָאֵל
 מִמְּשָׁלוֹתַי: הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּנֹס, הַיַּרְדֵּן יָשָׁב לְאַחֲזֹר: הַהַרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים.
 גְּבֻעוֹת כְּבָנֵי-צֹאן: מָה לָּךְ הַיָּם כִּי תָנֹס. הַיַּרְדֵּן תָּשָׁב לְאַחֲזֹר: הַהַרִים תִּרְקְדוּ
 כְּאֵילִים. גְּבֻעוֹת כְּבָנֵי-צֹאן: מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדוֹן חוֹלֵי אָרֶץ. מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:
 הַהֹפְכֵי הַצָּדָר אֲנִים-מֵיָם. חֲלָמֵיֶשׁ לְמַעַיְנוּ-מֵיָם.

☆ **Psalm 114:** When Israel went out of Egypt, Jacob's household from a foreign people, Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel His kingdom. The sea saw it and fled; the Jordan turned backward. The mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like lambs. Why is it, sea, that you flee? Why, O Jordan, do you turn backward? Your mountains, why do you skip like rams? Your hills, why do you leap like lambs? O earth, tremble at the Lord's presence, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turns the rock into a pond of water, the flint into a flowing fountain.

The Second Cup

The Cup of History

☆ We raise the Cup of History, and recite:

Praised are You, Lord, our God, whose Presence fills the universe, who redeemed us and our ancestors from Egypt, who has us to this night when we eat matzah and maror. Lord, God and God of our ancestors, enable us to celebrate in peace other holy days and festivals. Joyful in the rebuilding of Your city Jerusalem and joyful in Your service. We will sing a new song of thanksgiving for our redemption and for our spiritual liberation. Praised are You, Lord, redeemer of the people Israel.

בְּרַחֵם אֱתָהּ יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר גָּאֲלָנוּ וְגָאֵל אֶת-אַבוֹתֵינוּ
 מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְהוֹצִיעָנוּ לְלִילָה הַזֶּה, לֶאֱכֹל-בּוֹ מַצָּה וּמְרֹרֶת. כֵּן, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי
 אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יְגִיעָנוּ לְמוֹעֲדִים וְלִרְגָלִים אַחֲרִים, הַבָּאִים לְקִרְאתָנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם.
 שְׂמֵחִים בְּבִנְיַן עֵינְךָ, וְשֹׁשֵׁיִם בְּעִבּוֹדְתְּךָ, וְנוֹדָה לָּךְ שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ עַל גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ,
 וְעַל פְּדוּת נַפְשֵׁנוּ: בְּרַחֵם אֱתָהּ יי, גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 בְּרַחֵם אֱתָהּ יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

*Baruch ata Adonai, Elohaynoo melech ha-olam, asher gi'alanoo vi'ga-al avotaynoo mee-meetzrayeem, vi'hee'gee-anoo la'li-la hazeh le'echol bo matza oo'maror. Kayn Adonai Elohaynoo v'elohay avotaynoo, ya'gee-aynoo l'moadeem oo'li-rigaleem achayreem, haba-eem lee'krat-aynoo li'shalom, sem-aycheem biveen-yan eer-echa, v'sas-eem ba-avodatecha, vi'nodeh lecha sheer chadash al gi'oo-lataynoo, v'all pedoot nafshaynoo. Baruch ata Adonai, ga-al yestrael.
 Baruch ata Adonai, Elohaynoo melech ha-olam, boray pree ha-gafen.*

**Praised are You, Lord, our God, Whose presence fills the Universe,
 Who creates the fruit of the vine.**

Washing the Hands

Rochtza

רְחִיצָה



HOW? As before, everyone washes with three cupfuls of water over their fingers. The blessing is recited while drying the hands.

WHY? In the Torah, only the priests of the Temple are commanded to wash, and only before they partake of the sacrificial meal. Today, we have no Temple in Jerusalem, no altar, no priests and no sacrifices. Instead, every home can be a Temple, every table an altar, every meal a sanctified experience, and every Jew a priest. And eating, a mechanical biological function, can be transformed into a ritual filled with meaning.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל
נְטִילַת יָדַיִם

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynoo melech ha-olam asher keed-shanoo be'mitzvotav v'tzee'vanu al ne'teelat yadaim.

Praised are You, Lord our God, whose Presence tills the universe, who has sanctified our lives through Your commandments and commands us to perform this washing of the hands.

Motzi Matzah

Tasting History

מוֹצֵיאַ מַצָּה



HOW? Lift the three matzahs on the matzah plate, recite the blessings, then distribute pieces of both the top, and the remainder of the middle matzahs. Then enjoy your matzah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצֵיאַ לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynoo melech ha-olam ha-motzee lechem meen ha-aretz.

Praised are You, Lord our God, whose Presence fills the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

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

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynoo melech ha-olam asher keed-shanoo b'meezvotav v'tzee'vanoo al acheelat matzah.

Praised are you, Lord our God, whose Presence fills the universe, who has sanctified our lives through Your commandments and commanded us to eat matzah.

The Bitterness of Slavery

Maror

מָרֹר



HOW? Mix some of the bitter herb with the sweet charoset, recite the blessing, then eat. If it hurts... you've done it right. This is your taste of slavery's bitterness.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת
מָרֹר

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynoo melech ha-oalam asher keed-shanoo b'meezvotav v'tzee'vanoo al acheelat maror.

Praised are You, Lord our God, whose presence fills the universe, who has sanctified our lives through Your commandments and commanded us to eat maror.

The Bitter and the Sweet *Korech*

כּוֹרֵךְ



HOW? Pieces of the bottom matzah are distributed to everyone at the table. Sandwich some maror between two pieces of matzah, and recite, the following then eat.

זָכַר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהִלֵּל: כֵּן עָשָׂה הַלֵּל בְּזִמְנָן שֶׁבַיִת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קָיָם. הָיָה כּוֹרֵךְ פֶּסַח
מַצָּה וּמְרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד. לְקַיָּם מָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: עַל־מִצּוֹת וּמְרוֹרִים לֹא־לֶחֶד

Zaycher l'choorban k'hillel: Kayn asa Hillel b'zman sheh-bayt ha-meekdash haya kayam. Haya Korech pesach matzah oo-maror vi'ochel bi'yachad. L'Kayaym mah she'ne'amar: Al matzot um'roreem yochloohoo.

☆ To the sage Hillel, eating Matzah and Maror together was not a trivial matter. To him, slavery and freedom were merged into one historical event. The bread of poverty became the bread of freedom and should be tasted together with the bitter maror, so that one should know the bitterness of slavery and the joy of freedom. In time of freedom, we must not forget the bitterness of slavery; in times of oppression, we must keep alive the hope of freedom.

Dinner Is Served

Shulkhan Orech

שֵׁלְחָן עוֹרֵךְ



Sharing the Afikoman Dessert *Tzafoon*

צָפוּן



HOW? As the meal comes to an end, we "ransom" back the Afikoman from its finders. Afikoman is distributed as the official dessert. A third cup of wine is poured, and the Grace After Meals is recited.

A Blessing of Thanksgiving

Barech

בָּרַךְ

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת בְּשׁוּב יְיָ אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הָיִינוּ כְּחֹלְמִים: אִזּוּ יִפְלֵא שְׂחֹזֵק פִּינוּ
וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רָנָה: אִזּוּ יִאֲמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם הַגְּדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהֵי הַגְּדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת
עִמָּנוּ הָיִינוּ שְׂמֵחִים: שׁוּבָה יְיָ אֶת שְׁבִיתֵנוּ כְּאִפְיָקִים בְּנֵי־בְּנֵי־הָאָרְעִים בְּדַמְעָה
בְּרָנָה יִקְצְרוּ הַלֹּדֶי יִלְדוּ וּבָכָה נִשְׂא מְשֻׁדֵי הָאָרֶץ בָּא יִבֵּא בְרָנָה נִשְׂא אֲלַמְתָּיו

A Song of Ascent

When the Lord restores the exiled of Zion, we shall be as those who dream. Our mouths will be full of laughter then, our tongues with song. Then will they say among the nations: The Lord has done great things for them!

The Lord has done great things for us, and so we now rejoice. Restore us again. O God, like the sudden flood streams in the desert. Then, those who sow in tears will reap in joy. And though they go in weeping, carrying the seed, they will return bearing sheaves, with song and laughter.

המזמן: רבותי נְבָרֵךְ!
המסובין: יהי שם ?? מְבָרֵךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.
המזמן: יהי שם ?? מְבָרֵךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם. בְּרֵשׁוֹת מְרַן וְרַבָּן
וְרֵבֹתֵי, נְבָרֵךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ.
המסובין: בָּרַךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ וּבִטּוֹנוֹ הֵימֵנוּ.
המזמן: בָּרַךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ וּבִטּוֹנוֹ הֵימֵנוּ.
בָּרַךְ הוּא וּבָרַךְ שְׁמוֹ.

Add Eloheinu when 10 or more are present.

Leader: Hav-ay-ri nevarech. **All:** Yehee shem Adonai mevorah l'olam va-ed.

Leader: Yehee shern Adonai mevorah l'olam va-ed. b'rshoot hav-ay-ri, nevarech elohaynoo sheh-achalnoo meeshelo.

All: Baruch elohaynoo she h-achalnoo meeshelo, oov-too-vo chiy-eeenoo.

Leader: Baruch elohaynoo sheh-achalnoo meeshelo, oov-too-vo chiy-eeenoo. Baruch hoo oovaruch shemo.

Let us praise God of whose bounty we have partaken, and by whose goodness we live. We give thanks to God who endows us with the wisdom and goodness to turn sheaves into bread and grapes into wine. We who rejoice in the warmth of this company share a sacred mandate: to provide bread for the hungry, to cover the nakedness of the poor, and to loose the fetters of the bound. We will not hide ourselves from our fellow human beings.

בָּרַךְ אַתָּה ??, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הֵן אַתָּה הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בִּטּוֹנוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד
וּבְרַחֲמִים הוּא נוֹתֵן לֶחֶם לְכָל בָּשָׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ. וּבִטּוֹנוֹ הַגָּדוֹל תָּמִיד
לֹא חָסַר לָנוּ, וְאֵל יַחֲסֹר לָנוּ מִזֶּן לְעוֹלָם וָעֵד. בְּעָבוּר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל, כִּי הוּא אֵן
וּמִפְרִנֵּס לְכָל, וּמְטִיב לְכָל, וּמְכִין, מִזֶּן לְכָל בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא. בָּרַךְ אַתָּה
??, הֵן אַתָּה הַכֹּל

Baruch Ata Adonai Elohaynoo melech ha-olam hazen et ha-olam koolo b'toovo b'chen b'chesed oov'rachameem. Hoo notayn lechem l'chol basar kee l'olam chasdo, oov'toovo ha-gadol tameed lo chasar lanoo mazon l'olam va'ed. Ba'ayoor sh'mo ha-gadol kee hoo zan oom'farnes la-kol, oo'mayteev la-kol oo-maycheen mazon l'chol b'ree-otav asher bara. Baruch ata Adona hazan et ha-kol.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, whose Presence fills the universe, who feeds the entire world with goodness, with grace, with kindness and mercy. You give food to all, for Your kindness lasts eternally. Because of Your great goodness, we have never lacked food; may it never fail us because of Your great name. For You uphold all creatures and provide food for all You have created. Praised are You, Lord, Who gives food to everyone.

- ☆ The Biblical commandment states: "You shall eat and be satisfied and bless the Lord." Our tradition added that "a blessing does not enter the world except through the work of human hands." Strengthen our hands to rebuild the land of Israel, to support the needy, and to labor toward the Messianic era of world peace and justice.
- ☆ "And God saw everything that God made, and it was very good?" The earth is endowed with a plenitude of blessings.
- ☆ Let us add our blessings to those of God. We, who have received, know that we owe much to God's world. We are co-creators and co-sanctifiers with God, committed to mend the torn world.

נודה לך יי אלהים על שהתגלה לאבותינו, ארץ חמדה טובה דרובה, ועל שהוציאנו יי אלהים מארץ מצרים, ופדיתנו, מבית עבדים, ועל בריכת שחונת בבישרנו, ועל הודתה שלפוננו, ועל חסד שהודעתנו ועל חיים חן וחסד שחונתנו, ועל אכילת מזון שאפה ין תפירות אותנו פמיד, בכל יום ובכל שנת ובכל שעות.

ועל תכל יי אלהים אנוח מזדים לך, ומברכים אותך, מתפדך שמך בפי כל חי תמיד לעולם ועד. כפיתג, ואכלה ושבעת, וברכת את יי אלהיך על הארץ הטובה אשר נתן לך. ברוך אתה יי על הארץ ועל המזון.

V'al ha-kol, Adonai Elohaynoo, anachnoo modeem lach, oo'mevarcheem otach, yeet-barach sheem-chah, bi'fee kol chai tameed l'olam va-ed. Ka'katoov v'achalta v'sav'ata oov'ayrachta et Adonai eloche'cha al ha-aretz ha-tovah asher natat lach. Barch ata Adonai al ha-aretz v'al ha- mazon.

☆ The soul and the body are one. A people has spiritual and material needs. A people enjoys as much heaven above as it has land beneath its feet. We give thanks for the land of Israel and its citizens, our brothers and sisters, who have embraced the sick, the poor, the homeless and the fragile from the four corners of the earth. We join with them in the up building of the land and in the realization of our prophetic dreams for peace.

רחם נא יי אלהים, על ישראל עמך, ועל ירושלים עירך, ועל ציון משיכן כבודך, ועל מלכות בית דוד משימך, ועל תפית הודול והקדוש ששכר שמתך עליו. אלהים, אבינו, רענו, זמנו, פרוסת, ותלכנו, ותדונו, ותדונו לנו יי אלהים מהדה מכל צדדנו, ונא אל תצרינו יי אלהים, לא לידי מותו בשור ודם, ולא לידי הלאות. כי אם לידך השלחה, הפועלה, הקדושה ודרובה, שלא נבש ולא נבלם לעולם ועד.

אלהים ואלהי אבותינו, יעלה ויבא, וינע וידאת וידצת, וישמע ויפקד, ויגד זכרוננו ופקדוננו, ויטרונו אבותינו, ויטרונו משיח בן דוד עבדך, ויטרונו ירושלים עיר קדשך, ויטרונו כל עמך בית ישראל לפניה, לפליטה, לטובה, לטון ולחסד ולרחמים, לטובים (טובים) ולשלום, ביום | חג המצות | החדש זכרנו, יי אלהים, בו לטובת, ופקדוננו בו למרבה, והושיענו בו לטובים. פדונו ישועה ורחמים, וחסד ורחם, ורחם עלינו והושיענו, כי אלהי עמינו, כי אל מלך רחמן ורחום אמת.

ובנה ירושלים עיר הקדוש במהרה בימינו. ברוך אתה יי, בונה ברחמי ירושלים. אמן.

*Oov'ney ye'roo'shalayem eer ha-kodeh beem'hayrah b'yamaynoo.
Baruch ata Adonai bonay b'rachamay yeroo'shalayem. Amen*

ברוך אתה יי אלהים מלך העולם, האל אבינו, מלכנו, אדירנו בודאנו, נואלנו, יצרתנו, קדושת קדוש יעקב, רענו רעה ישראל. המלך הטוב, והמטיב לכל, שבכל יום ויום הוא הטוב, הוא מטיב, הוא יטיב לנו. הוא ממלנו, הוא גמלנו, הוא יגמלנו לעד לטון ולחסד ולרחמים ולרחם הצלה והצלה בידו וישועה, ורחם, פרוסת ותלכנו, ורחמים, וחסד ושלום, וכל טוב, ותכל טוב לעולם אל יספורנו.

והרחמן, הוא ימלך עלינו לעולם ועד. והרחמן, הוא יספדך בשמים ובארץ. והרחמן, הוא ישפח לרוב ימים, ויתפאר במו לעד ולנצח וצדק, ויטהר במו לעד ולעלמי עולמים. והרחמן, הוא יפרנסנו בכבוד. והרחמן, הוא ישפד עלינו מעל צארת והוא ילינו קוממיות לארצנו. והרחמן, הוא ישלח לנו ברכה מרבה בבית הזה, ועל שלחן זה שאכלנו עלינו. והרחמן, הוא ישלח לנו את אלהי הנביא זכור לטוב, ויבשר לנו בשורות טובות ושמחות וטובות. והוא יסדך את נאבי מורו בעל תפית החדש והאת (אפי מודול) בעל תפית החדש,

הַדְרֹמָן, הוּא יְבָרַךְ אוֹתוֹי (וְאֶתְּי הַרְבֵּי וְאֶתְּי וְדָעִי וְאֶתְּי כֹל אִישׁ לֵל הַדְרֹמָן, הוּא יְבָרַךְ אֶתְּי בְּעַל הַבַּיִת
הַזֶּה, וְאֶתְּי אֲשֶׁר־וּ בְּעֵלֵי הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה

אֲדוּמָם וְאֶתְּי בִּימֵי וְאֶתְּי דְּעַם הָאֵרֶץ כֹּל אִישׁ לְהֵם אֲדוּמָם וְאֶתְּי כֹל אִישׁ לְהֵם, כִּימוֹ שְׂמִתְּבִירוֹ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
אֲבֹתֵנוּם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב בְּבָל, מִכָּל, כֹּל כִּי יְבָרַךְ אוֹתֵנוּ בְּלֵנוּ יְהוָה. בְּבִרְכַּהּ שְׁלֹמֹה, וְאֲמָרוּ אָמֵן:

בְּמֵרוֹם יִלְפָדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם וְעֲלֵנוּ זְכוֹת, שְׂמֵחָה לְמַשְׁמֵחוֹת שְׁלֹמֹה, וְנִשְׂא בְרַכַּהּ מֵאֵת יְיָ וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְתִמְצֵא רַחֵם וְשִׁלֵּם טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹהִים וְאָדוּם:

[לְשִׁבֹת הַדְרֹמָן, הוּא יְבָרַךְ יָם שְׂכֵלוֹ שְׁבֹת תְּעִיבָה לְהוֹי הַעוֹלָמִים.]

הַדְרֹמָן, הוּא יְבָרַךְ יָם שְׂכֵלוֹ טוֹב הַדְרֹמָן, הוּא יְבָרַךְ לְשִׁבֹת הַמַּשְׁמֵחוֹת לְהוֹי הַעוֹלָם הַזֶּה
מִבְּהוֹל יְשׁוּעָה מִלְּפָנֶי, וְעֵשֶׂה חֶסֶד לְמַשְׁמֵחוֹ לְדוֹד הַלְּחָדוּ עַד עוֹלָם: עֵשֶׂה שְׁלֹמֹה בְּמֵרוֹמָם, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה
שְׁלֹמֹה, עֲלֵנוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַמְּבָרַךְ אָמֵן:

יְהוָה אֱתָּ יְיָ קֹדְשִׁי, כִּי אֵין מִחִסּוֹד לִפְנֵי אֵי: כִּפְיָם רֵשׁ וְרַעַם, וְדוֹרְשֵׁי יְיָ לֹא יִחַסְרוּ כֹל טוֹב: הוֹדוּ לֵי כִּי
טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חִסְדוֹ: פִּזְחוֹת אֶתְּי קִדְדוּ, וְתִשְׁבְּעוּ לְכֹל חַי רֹאשׁ: בְּרֹךְ הַגִּבּוֹר אֱלֹהֵי יְבִטְחָ בִּינֵי תְהִיָּה יְיָ
מִבְּטוּחוֹ: מִעַר הִיָּתוּי גַם זְקָמָי וְלֹא רִאיוֹנֵי צְדִיק נִעְטוּ, וְחָדַע מִבְּקֵשׁ לְחַם: יְיָ עוֹ לְעֹשֶׂה יָמֵינוּ, יְיָ יְבָרַךְ אֶתְּי
עַשׂוֹ בְּשְׁלֹמֹה:

Grant peace for us for all Israel and for all the families of the earth.

עֵשֶׂה שְׁלֹמֹה בְּמֵרוֹמָם, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלֹמֹה
עֲלֵנוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאֲמָרוּ אָמֵן.

Oseh shalom beem'romav hoo ya'aseh shalom alaynoo b'al kol yeesrael v'eemroo amen.

The Third Cup

The Cup of Thanksgiving

We raise the Cup of Thanksgiving, and recite:

בְּרַחֵם אֲתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohaynoo melech ha-olam, boray pree ha-gafen.

Praised are You, Lord our God, whose Presence fills the universe,
who creates the fruit of the vine.

In Every Generation

וְהִיא שְׂעֵמֶדָה

וְהִיא שְׂעֵמֶדָה לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׁלֹא אֶחָד בְּלָבָד, עָמַד עֲלֵנוּ
לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. אֲלָא שְׁבָכַל דוֹר וְדוֹר, עוֹמְדִים עֲלֵנוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. וְהַקּוֹדֵשׁ
בְּרַחֵם הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מֵיָדָם.

V'Hee shen-amadun lavolaynoo v'lanoo. Shen lo ehad beel-vad amad alaynoo li'chalotaynoo. Eilan, shen-e'chad sof
va'dor, omdeem alaynoo li'chalotaynoo. Vi'ha'kadosh baruch hoo matzeelaynoo mee-yadam.

In every generation there are those who seek our destruction,
but the Holy One saves us from their hands.

- ☆ The story is eternal -- it repeats itself again and again. After the Exodus, we continue to wander in the desert on our way to the Promised Land.
- ☆ These are the wanderings of the people Israel after they went out of Egypt.
 - And Israel traveled from Raameses and camped in Sukkot.
 - They traveled from Sukkot and camped in Eitam.
 - They traveled from Eitam and camped in Babylon.
 - They traveled from Babylon and camped in Spain.
 - They traveled, they camped... in France, in North Africa, in Germany, in Poland, in Persia.
 - These are the wanderings of the people Israel.
- ☆ Ours is not a happy history. We have suffered much for daring to be different, for the audacity of saying "no" to Pharaohs. But every "no" is a more powerful "yes." We say "yes" to the present and the future; "yes" to the real possibilities for shaping a happier society for ourselves and our children; "yes" to the men and women outside our own circle who are real and potential allies in the struggle to attain the Passover of the future.
- ☆ **And in every generation, there are those who join their hands with ours.** In the Bible, they were the midwives of Egypt, Shifra and Pooah, who defied the Pharaoh to save the sons of Israelite slaves from genocide. In our times their names are Schindler, Wallenberg, Sugihara — men and women of all cultures and faiths who opened the door and opened their arms to save us.
- ☆ **Pour out Your love on the nations who have known You and on the kingdoms who call upon Your holy name. For they show loving kindness to the seed of Jacob and they defend your people Israel from those who would devour them alive. May they live to see the shelter of peace spread over all Your children and may they share in the redemption of all peoples.**



HOW? Up to this point, the Cup of Elijah has sat empty on our table. Pass the cup around the table. Everyone should pour some of his or her wine to fill the Cup of Elijah. The door is opened.

Elijah's Cup

- ☆ The prophet Elijah symbolizes the dreams of the Jewish people. Elijah challenged the injustice of the powerful and overthrew worship of idols. He healed the sick and protected the helpless. At the end of his days, Elijah was carried off to heaven in fiery chariot. The prophet Malachi promised that Elijah will return one day to announce the coming of the Messiah, when all the world will celebrate universal freedom. Legend relates that Elijah returns to earth each day to carry forward the work of bringing justice and peace.
- ☆ This cup is Elijah's cup. In setting this cup at our table, we invite Elijah to join us, and we bring his passion for justice into our lives. But the cup is empty. No one has yet stepped forward to fill it.
- ☆ According to Hasidic custom begun at the table of the master Rabbi Naftali of Ropschutz, we pass Elijah's cup from person to person at the table, each person pouring a little wine into Elijah's cup from our own cups, until it is filled. In this way we recognize that we must act together, each contributing our best talents and energies, to bring Elijah's promise to the world. Only through the efforts of our hands will the world be redeemed. We open the door, we stand, and we sing of the Jewish dream of freedom.

אַלְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא. אַלְיָהוּ חַתָּשְׁבִי. אַלְיָהוּ, אַלְיָהוּ, אַלְיָהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי.

בְּמַתְרָה בְּיָמֵנוּ יָבֹא אֵלֵינוּ עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד.

*Eliyahu ha-navi. Eliyahu ha-tish-bee. Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu ha-gee-ladee.
Beem'hay'rah b'yamay'nu Yavo ay'laynu Eem mashiach ben daveed.*





IN DEPTH Legend relates that Elijah enters the world each day in disguise, waiting for someone to do him a simple act of kindness. That one, caring act will trigger the redemption of the world. Where is Elijah? He could be anywhere - with a homeless family living on the street; in the AIDS ward of your local hospital; in a delapidated inner-city kindergarten classroom. He could even be the person sitting beside you right now.

The Fourth Cup

The Cup of Hope

☆ We have completed the telling of our ancient story. Why do we tell this story, again and again, for hundreds of generations? Because it is the foundation of our hope, and the basis of our Jewish dreams. After Holocaust and Pogrom, Inquisition and Expulsion, this story gives us the strength to resist despair and resignation. We know that God has purposes in human history. We know that power and cruelty are not history's last words. We know that there is always hope. We raise this Cup of Hope, and we recite:

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

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohaynoo melech ha-olam, boray pree ha-gafen.

Praised are You, Lord our God, whose Presence fills the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Completion

Neertza

נִרְצָה

**חֶסֶל סִדּוּר פְּסַח כְּהִלְכָתוֹ, כְּכֹל מִשְׁפָּטוֹ וְחֻקָּתוֹ. כַּאֲשֶׁר זָכִינוּ לְסִדּוֹר אוֹתוֹ,
כֵּן נִיבְּחָה לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ. זֶד שׁוֹכֵן מִעוֹנָה, קוֹזֵמִם קָהֵל עֲזוֹת מִי מָנָה. בְּקָרוֹב נִהַל
נִטְעֵי כְּנָה, פְּדוּיִם לְצִיּוֹן בְּרָנָה.**

Chasal seedor pesach ke-heel-chato, ke-chol meeshpato vi'chookato. Ka-asher zacheenoo li'sadayr oto, kayno neez-keh la-asoto. Zach scochayn mi'onah, komaym ki'hal adat mee manah. Bi'karov na-hayl neetay chanah, pe'doo-eem litzee-on bi'reenah.

☆ Our Seder is complete. May we gather together as free people in years to come to sing these songs of freedom and share these ancient rites.

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם

L'SHANA HA-BA'A B'YEROOSHALAYEEM

**NEXT YEAR, MAY WE CELEBRATE IN A JERUSALEM AT PEACE. NEXT YEAR,
MAY WE CELEBRATE IN A WORLD HEALED AND FREE.**



Seder Songs

Who Knows One?

Echad Mee Yoday-ah

אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ

Who knows two, three, four... I know! Thirteen are the attributes of God's love. Twelve are the tribes of Israel. Eleven are the stars in Joseph's dream. Ten are the commandments at Sinai. Nine are the months to childbirth. Eight are the days to circumcision. Seven are the days of the week. Six are the sections of the Mishna. Five are the books of the Torah. Four are the matriarchs. Three are the patriarchs. Two are the tablets of the covenant. One is our God in heaven and on earth.

אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ אֶחָד אִמֵּי יוֹדֵעַ אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים שְׁבַעְשָׁנִים וּבְנֵי אֶרֶץ.

Echad, mee yodayah? Echad, anee yodaya. Echad Elohaynan she-ba-shamayem aa-va-aretz

שְׁנַיִם מִי יוֹדֵעַ שְׁנַיִם אִמֵּי יוֹדֵעַ שְׁנַיִם לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים שְׁבַעְשָׁנִים וּבְנֵי אֶרֶץ.

Shnay-yeem, mee yudeah? Shnayyeem anee yodeah. Shnay kochot ha-brit, Echad Elohaynan she-ba-shamayem aa-va-aretz.

שְׁלֹשָׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ שְׁלֹשָׁה אִמֵּי יוֹדֵעַ שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲבוֹת, שְׁנַיִם לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים שְׁבַעְשָׁנִים וּבְנֵי אֶרֶץ.

Shlosha, mee yodeah? Shlosha, anee yudeah. Shlosha avot. Shnay kochot ha-brit, Echad Elohaynan she-ba-shamayem aa-va-aretz.

אַרְבָּע מִי יוֹדֵעַ אַרְבָּע אִמֵּי יוֹדֵעַ אַרְבָּע אַפְסוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲבוֹת, שְׁנַיִם לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים שְׁבַעְשָׁנִים וּבְנֵי אֶרֶץ.

Arba, mee yudeah? Arba, anee yodeah. Arba eemahot. Shlosha avot. Shnay kochot ha-brit, Echad Elohaynan she-ba-shamayem aa-va-aretz.

חַמֵּשָׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ חַמֵּשָׁה אִמֵּי יוֹדֵעַ חַמֵּשָׁה רוֹמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבָּע אַפְסוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲבוֹת, שְׁנַיִם לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים שְׁבַעְשָׁנִים וּבְנֵי אֶרֶץ.

Chameesha, mee yudeah? Chameesha, anee yodeah. Chameesha chaamahay Torah. Arba eemahot. Shlosha avot. Shnay kochot ha-brit, Echad Elohaynan she-ba-shamayem aa-va-aretz.

שֵׁשׁ מִי יוֹדֵעַ שֵׁשׁ אִמֵּי יוֹדֵעַ שֵׁשׁ סוּדֵי מִשְׁנָה, חַמֵּשֶׁה רוֹמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבָּע אַפְסוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲבוֹת, שְׁנַיִם לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים שְׁבַעְשָׁנִים וּבְנֵי אֶרֶץ.

Sheesha, mee yudeah? Sheesha anee yudeah. Sheesha seeday meesna. Chameesha chaamahay Torah. Arba eemahot. Shlosha avot. Shnay kochot ha-brit, Echad Elohaynan she-ba-shamayem aa-va-aretz.

שִׁבְעָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ שִׁבְעָה אִמֵּי יוֹדֵעַ שִׁבְעָה יְמֵי שַׁבָּת, שֵׁשׁ סוּדֵי מִשְׁנָה, חַמֵּשֶׁה רוֹמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבָּע אַפְסוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲבוֹת, שְׁנַיִם לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים שְׁבַעְשָׁנִים וּבְנֵי אֶרֶץ.

Sheeva, mee yudeah? Sheeva, anee yudeah. Sheeva y'may shabbatah. Sheesha seeday meesna. Chameesha chaamahay Torah. Arba eemahot. Shlosha avot. Shnay kochot ha-brit, Echad Elohaynan she-ba-shamayem aa-va-aretz.

שְׁמֹנֶה מִי יוֹדֵעַ שְׁמֹנֶה אִמֵּי יוֹדֵעַ שְׁמֹנֶה יְמֵי מִילָה, שִׁבְעָה יְמֵי שַׁבָּת, שֵׁשׁ סוּדֵי מִשְׁנָה, חַמֵּשֶׁה רוֹמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבָּע אַפְסוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲבוֹת, שְׁנַיִם לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים שְׁבַעְשָׁנִים וּבְנֵי אֶרֶץ.

Shemonah mee yodeah? Shemonah anee yodeah. Shemona y'may meela. Sheeva y'may shabbatah. Sheesha seeday meesna. Chameesha chaamahay Torah. Arba eemahot. Shlosha avot. Shnay kochot ha-brit, Echad Elohaynan she-ba-shamayem aa-va-aretz.

תְּשַׁעָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ תְּשַׁעָה אֲצִי יוֹדֵעַ תְּשַׁעָה קָרָא לָדָה, שְׂמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַעַת יָמֵי שַׁבָּת,
שֵׁשֶׁת סֻדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חֻמְשֵׁי תּוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אַמְרָוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אַבֹּת, שְׁנֵי לְחֹזֵת הַבְּרִית,
אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים שְׁבַע־שָׁמַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ.

Teesha mee yodeah? Teesha anee yodeah. Teesha yarchay leyda. Shevona y'imay meela. Sheeva y'imay shabatah. Sheesha seedroy meeshna. Chameesha choomahay Torah. Arba eemahot. Shikaha avot. Sney lochat ha-brit, Echad Elohaym she-ba-shamayem oo-va-aretz.

עֶשְׂרֵה מִי יוֹדֵעַ עֶשְׂרֵה אֲצִי יוֹדֵעַ עֶשְׂרֵה דְבָרִים, תְּשַׁעָה קָרָא לָדָה, שְׂמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה,
שְׁבַעַת יָמֵי שַׁבָּת, שֵׁשֶׁת סֻדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חֻמְשֵׁי תּוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אַמְרָוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אַבֹּת,
שְׁנֵי לְחֹזֵת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים שְׁבַע־שָׁמַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ.

Anarak mee yodeah? Anarah anee yodeah. Anarah deeb'riyah. Teesha yarchay leyda. Shevona y'imay meela. Sheeva y'imay shabatah. Sheesha seedroy meeshna. Chameesha choomahay Torah. Arba eemahot. Shikaha avot. Sney lochat ha-brit, Echad Elohaym she-ba-shamayem oo-va-aretz.

אֶחָד עֶשֶׂר מִי יוֹדֵעַ אֶחָד עֶשֶׂר אֲצִי יוֹדֵעַ אֶחָד עֶשֶׂר פְּסוּקִים, עֶשְׂרֵה דְבָרִים, תְּשַׁעָה
קָרָא לָדָה, שְׂמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַעַת יָמֵי שַׁבָּת, שֵׁשֶׁת סֻדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חֻמְשֵׁי תּוֹרָה,
אַרְבַּע אַמְרָוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אַבֹּת, שְׁנֵי לְחֹזֵת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים שְׁבַע־שָׁמַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ.

Ahad asar mee yodeah? Ahad asar anee yodeah. Ahad asar koch'vayah. Anarah deeb'riyah. Teesha yarchay leyda. Shevona y'imay meela. Sheeva y'imay shabatah. Sheesha seedroy meeshna. Chameesha choomahay Torah. Arba eemahot. Shikaha avot. Sney lochat ha-brit, Echad Elohaym she-ba-shamayem oo-va-aretz.

שְׁנַיִם עֶשֶׂר מִי יוֹדֵעַ שְׁנַיִם עֶשֶׂר אֲצִי יוֹדֵעַ שְׁנַיִם עֶשֶׂר שְׁבַע־סֵפֶר, אֶחָד עֶשֶׂר פְּסוּקִים, עֶשְׂרֵה
דְבָרִים, תְּשַׁעָה קָרָא לָדָה, שְׂמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַעַת יָמֵי שַׁבָּת, שֵׁשֶׁת סֻדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה,
חֲמִשָּׁה חֻמְשֵׁי תּוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אַמְרָוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אַבֹּת, שְׁנֵי לְחֹזֵת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים
שְׁבַע־שָׁמַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ.

Shoaym asar, mee yodeah? Shoaym asar anee yodeah. Shoaym asar sheer'iy'a. Ahad asar koch'vayah. Anarah deeb'riyah. Teesha yarchay leyda. Shevona y'imay meela. Sheeva y'imay shabatah. Sheesha seedroy meeshna. Chameesha choomahay Torah. Arba eemahot. Shikaha avot. Sney lochat ha-brit, Echad Elohaym she-ba-shamayem oo-va-aretz.

שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשֶׂר מִי יוֹדֵעַ 1 שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשֶׂר אֲצִי יוֹדֵעַ 1 שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשֶׂר מִדְּבָרִים, שְׁנַיִם עֶשֶׂר שְׁבַע־סֵפֶר, אֶחָד
עֶשֶׂר פְּסוּקִים, עֶשְׂרֵה דְבָרִים, תְּשַׁעָה קָרָא לָדָה, שְׂמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַעַת יָמֵי שַׁבָּת,
שֵׁשֶׁת סֻדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חֻמְשֵׁי תּוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אַמְרָוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אַבֹּת, שְׁנֵי לְחֹזֵת הַבְּרִית,
אֶחָד אֱלֹהִים שְׁבַע־שָׁמַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ.

Shelasha asar mee yodeyah? Shelasha asar ani yodaya. Shelasha asar meedy-yah. Shoaym asar sheer'iy'a. Ahad asar koch'vayah. Anarah deeb'riyah. Teesha yarchay leyda. Shevona y'imay meela. Sheeva y'imay shabatah. Sheesha seedroy meeshna. Chameesha choomahay Torah. Arba eemahot. Shikaha avot. Sney lochat ha-brit, Echad Elohaym she-ba-shamayem oo-va-aretz.

Great is God! May God's house be rebuilt soon, in our time!

אָדיר הוּא, יְעִמְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה, אֵלֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְיִבְנֶה לָנוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ אֶת בְּיַתְיָהוּ, אֵלֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְיִבְנֶה לָנוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ אֶת בְּיַתְיָהוּ.
Adeer hoo, yeemeh hayto hi'karov. Beemhayta, beemhaytah, bi'yamaynoo, hi'karov. El hi'noy, el hi'noy. Bi'noy hayto hi'karov.

בְּחֹר הוּא, גָּדוֹל הוּא, דָּגוּף הוּא, יְעִמְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה, אֵלֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְיִבְנֶה לָנוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ אֶת בְּיַתְיָהוּ, אֵלֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְיִבְנֶה לָנוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ אֶת בְּיַתְיָהוּ.
Bochoor hoo, gadol hoo, dagoof hoo, yeemeh hayto hi'karov. Beemhayta, beemhaytah, bi'yamaynoo hi'karov. El hi'noy, Bi'noy hayto hi'karov.

הַדּוֹר הוּא, נֹטֵעַ הוּא, זָכִיךְ הוּא, חֲשֵׁעַ הוּא, יְעִמְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה, אֵלֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְיִבְנֶה לָנוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ אֶת בְּיַתְיָהוּ, אֵלֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְיִבְנֶה לָנוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ אֶת בְּיַתְיָהוּ.
Hadoor hoo, noteeck hoo, zakiy hoo, chuseed hoo yeemeh hayto hi'karov. Beemhayta, beemhayta, bi'yamaynoo hi'karov. El hi'noy, el hi'noy. Bi'noy hayto hi'karov.

טוֹהַר הוּא, אֵלֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְיִבְנֶה לָנוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ אֶת בְּיַתְיָהוּ, אֵלֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְיִבְנֶה לָנוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ אֶת בְּיַתְיָהוּ, אֵלֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְיִבְנֶה לָנוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ אֶת בְּיַתְיָהוּ.
Tahor hoo, yachved hoo, kabeeer hoo, kavood hoo, avelech hoo, nurah hoo, chageer hoo, esmaz hoo, padeh hoo, tzadeek hoo, yeemeh hayto hi'karov. Beemhayta, beemhayta, bi'yamaynoo hi'karov. El hi'noy, el hi'noy. Bi'noy hayto hi'karov.

קָדוֹשׁ הוּא, רַחוּם הוּא, שָׂדֵיךְ הוּא, טָהוֹר הוּא, יְעִמְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה, אֵלֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְיִבְנֶה לָנוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ אֶת בְּיַתְיָהוּ, אֵלֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְיִבְנֶה לָנוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ אֶת בְּיַתְיָהוּ.
Kadosh hoo, rachoom hoo, shadiy hoo, tahoref hoo, yeemeh hayto hi'karov. Beemhayta, beem haytah, bi'yamaynoo hi'karov. El hi'noy, el hi'noy. Bi'noy hayta hi'karov.



Beautiful Praise We Bring To God

Kee Lo Na-eh

כִּי לֹו נָאֵה, כִּי לֹו יָאֵה

אָדיר בְּמַלְאָכָה, בְּחַד פְּהַלְכָה, גְּדוֹלוֹת יַמִּי'רוּ לָהּ, יְחֹוּ אֹפְכָה, יְחֹוּזֵי יְחֹוּזֵי אֲמָרוֹ לֹוּ יָלְדֵי אֲלֵהּ, לֹוּ יָבִי לֹוּ יָבִי אִף לֹוּ, לֹוּ יִי הַפְּהַלְכָה יָבִי
לוֹ סָמָה, יָבִי לוֹ יָאֵה.

Adeer beemblocha, hadwer ki'halacha, gedolot yam'ru la, Icho aofcha, Ichahee Icha, Icha of Icha, Icha adnai ham'nilacha. Kee lo na-eh, kee lo ya-eh.

דְּגוּל בְּמַלְאָכָה, הַדְוֹר פְּהַלְכָה, וְהַגְּדוּלוֹת יַמִּי'רוּ לָהּ, יְחֹוּזֵי יְחֹוּזֵי אֲמָרוֹ לֹוּ יָלְדֵי אֲלֵהּ, לֹוּ יָבִי לֹוּ יָבִי אִף לֹוּ, לֹוּ יִי הַפְּהַלְכָה יָבִי לוֹ
סָמָה, יָבִי לוֹ יָאֵה.

Dogaol beem loacha, hadar ki'halacha, vateek yam'ru la, Icho aofcha, Icha kee Icha, Icho of Icha, Icho adnai ham'nilacha. kee lo na-eh, kee lo ya-eh.

זְכָיָא בְּמַלְאָכָה, חֲסִין פְּהַלְכָה, טוֹפְטוֹרֵי אֲמָרוֹ לֹוּ יָלְדֵי אֲלֵהּ, לֹוּ יָבִי לֹוּ יָבִי אִף לֹוּ, לֹוּ יִי הַפְּהַלְכָה יָבִי
לוֹ סָמָה, יָבִי לוֹ יָאֵה.

Zakiy beemblocha, chasen ki'halacha, tofirav yam'ru la, Icha aofcha, Icha kee Icha, Icha adnai ham'nilacha. Kee lo na-eh, kee lo ya-eh.

יָחִיד בְּמַלְאָכָה, כְּבִיד פְּהַלְכָה, לַפְּתוּחֵי אֲמָרוֹ לֹוּ יָלְדֵי אֲלֵהּ, לֹוּ יָבִי לֹוּ יָבִי אִף לֹוּ, לֹוּ יִי הַפְּהַלְכָה יָבִי לוֹ
סָמָה, יָבִי לוֹ יָאֵה.

Yacheed beemblocha, kabee ki'halacha, lemandav yam'ru la, Icha aofcha, Icha kee Icha of Icha adnai ham'nilacha. Kee lo na-eh, kee lo ya-eh.

מוֹשֵׁל בְּמַלְאָכָה, מְרָא פְּהַלְכָה, טוֹבִיבֵי אֲמָרוֹ לֹוּ יָלְדֵי אֲלֵהּ, לֹוּ יָבִי לֹוּ יָבִי אִף לֹוּ, לֹוּ יִי הַפְּהַלְכָה יָבִי
לוֹ סָמָה, יָבִי לוֹ יָאֵה.

Moshel beemblocha, morah ki'halacha, noveevav yam'ru la, Icha aofcha, Icha kee Icha, Icha of Icha, Icha Adnai ham'nilacha. Kee lo na-eh kee lo ya-eh.

עֵז בְּמַלְאָכָה, פְּדוּחָה פְּהַלְכָה, צַדִּיקֵי אֲמָרוֹ לֹוּ יָלְדֵי אֲלֵהּ, לֹוּ יָבִי לֹוּ יָבִי אִף לֹוּ, לֹוּ יִי הַפְּהַלְכָה יָבִי לוֹ
סָמָה, יָבִי לוֹ יָאֵה.

Anav beemblocha, podedi ki'halacha, tzadeekav yam'ru la, Icha aofcha, Icha kee Icha, Icha of Icha, Icha Adnai ham'nilacha. Kee lo na-eh kee lo ya-eh.

קְדוֹשׁ בְּמַלְאָכָה, רְחוּם פְּהַלְכָה, שְׂמַחֵי אֲמָרוֹ לֹוּ יָלְדֵי אֲלֵהּ, לֹוּ יָבִי לֹוּ יָבִי אִף לֹוּ, לֹוּ יִי הַפְּהַלְכָה יָבִי
לוֹ סָמָה, יָבִי לוֹ יָאֵה.

Kodosh beemblocha, rachum ki'halacha, seemavav yam'ru la, Icha aofcha, Icha kee Icha, Icha of Icha, Icha Adnai ham'nilacha. Kee lo na-eh kee lo ya-eh.

תְּקִיף בְּמַלְאָכָה, מְחַמֵּד פְּהַלְכָה, מְחַמְּסֵי אֲמָרוֹ לֹוּ יָלְדֵי אֲלֵהּ, לֹוּ יָבִי לֹוּ יָבִי אִף לֹוּ, לֹוּ יִי הַפְּהַלְכָה יָבִי
לוֹ סָמָה, יָבִי לוֹ יָאֵה.

Takeef beemblocha, taavech ki'halacha, v'chemavav yam'ru la, Icho aofcha, Icha kee Icha, Icha of Icha, Icha Adnai ham'nilacha. Kee lo na-eh kee lo ya-eh.

Explaining the Miracles of Passover to My Grandchildren

How am I, a believing Jew raised in a world of scientific culture, to speak to my grandchildren, about miracles? They who are taught to explain events in terms of natural cause and effect, how are they to understand the record of speaking serpents and donkeys, rivers turned into blood and frogs, seas split? They ask at different stages of their life, "Did it really happen? Could it really happen?" And I am caught between affirmation and denial of a literal proposition.

I remember one of my Hebrew school teachers putting us to the test: either the prophet spoke the truth or he was a liar. Faced with such either/or options, we are forced into the affirmation of fundamentalist literalism or the negations of literal scientism. The story either happened or did not happen; miracles are real or imaginary. It is an uncomfortable choice which turns us into naive fideists or sour atheists.

There are large segments of the rabbinic tradition that relieve me from the double bind. The tradition enjoys a healthy skepticism, the incredulity of the pious. Here, for example, we read in the Bible of Aaron and Hur on top of a hill, holding aloft Moses' tired arms during the battle between Amalek and the children of Israel: "When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed" (Exodus 17:11). There it is, a miracle of divine intervention, plain and simple. But the rabbis cannot abide such a literal interpretation. "Did the position of Moses' arms determine the outcome of the battle? To them it smacks of magical legerdemain. No, they insist, what the Bible means to inform us is that when Israel raised its eyes heavenwards, they were inspired to victory, and when they cast their- eyes downwards, they were defeated. The rabbis transformed a literal account of a miraculous intervention into a metaphoric narration of faith. The biblical story is not evidence of God's triumph over the laws of nature but an account of the natural power of faith over adversity.

We meet at parallel rabbinic deflation of a supernatural miracle in the Book of Numbers. The children of Israel, wandering in the desert, are attacked by biting serpents. God Himself tells Moses to construct an image of a fiery serpent made of brass and hoist it atop a stag so that "if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived" (Numbers 21:9). Despite the unambiguous biblical account of what prima facie appears to be a miracle, the rabbis are incredulous. "Could the copper serpent cause death or life? It means that when the Israelites, in gazing at the serpent, looked up on high and subjected their hearts to their Father in heaven, they were healed, but if they did not do this, they pined away."

The explanation cited by the commentator is found in the Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 29a). Again the biblical story of a literal miracle is transformed into a celebration of faith.

Such commentaries understand miracles differently than they are conventionally understood. What are nissim ve-niflaot - miracles and wonders? They are signs, otot, events of significance; events to be held aloft ensigns, standards marking occurrences that have special meanings. Nissim, signs, are set up to gain our attention. They are extraordinarily ordinary happenings that have significance beyond the surface of natural events. The significance is not in the literal raised arms or raised brazen serpent, but in their meaning.

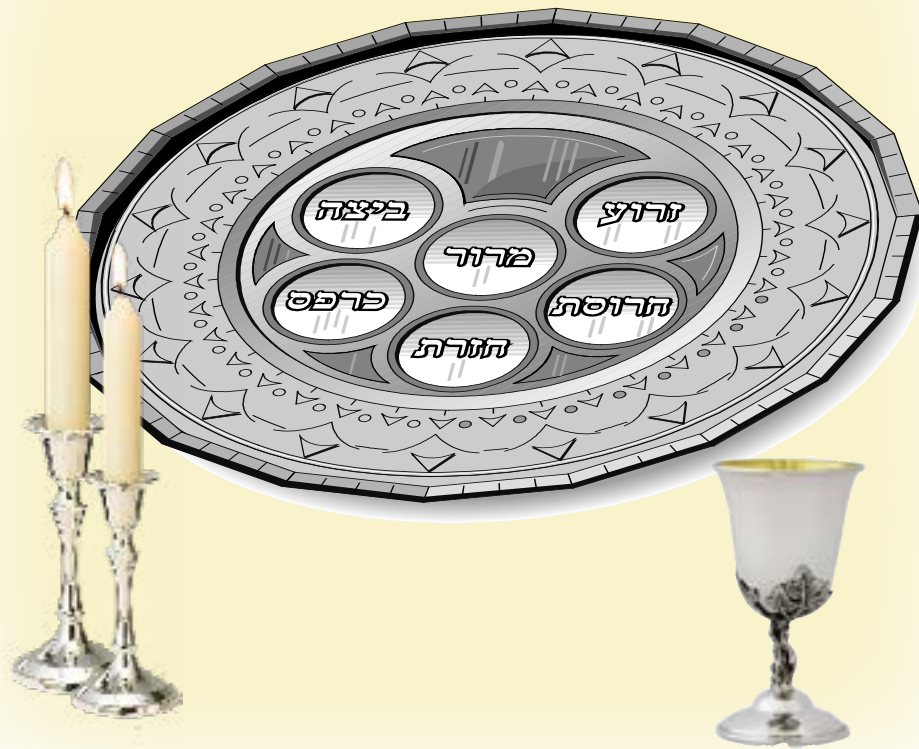
The rabbinic interpretations suggest a world of poetic truths, moral truths that are buried by a prosaic literalism. The Nile turning into blood is not Moses' magic. The redness of the water avenges the innocent blood of the Jewish infants drowned in the Nile. The frogs that choke the Nile are the worshiped gods of fertility, thus instructing a moral symmetry for the Egyptian policy of infanticide. This measure-for-measure (middah ke-neged middah) interpretation focuses on the moral meaning of the ten plagues and is less interested in questions of their facticity. The cause of the event may be as prosaic as dust, but moral faith breathes the life of meaning into them. Literalism, scientific or religious, misses the Spiritual and moral dimensions of story and history.

A passage in the Mechilta (on Exodus 17:5) reports that the Israelites complained about three things: the incense, the ark, and the rod. When the people said that the incense was a means of punishment, for it had killed Nadab and Abihu, the Bible showed it to be an atonement for the people. When they complained that the ark was but a means of punishment, for it smote Uzzah (II Samuel 6:7), the Bible showed how it was a blessing for David and the people (II Samuel 6:11-12). When they complained that the rod was only a punishment, for it brought ruin upon Egypt, the Bible showed how it had saved the children of Israel.

It is not to the rod of Moses that the rabbis call our attention. The rod has no intrinsic supernatural powers. The rod is an instrument that can save or destroy, relative to the moral intention of its use. For when the same rod that was used to split the sea was used by Moses to strike three times against the rock, forcing it, against God's will, to yield water, it led to the punishment of Moses. The same pans of incense that killed Nadab and Abihu and the 250 rebels against Moses and Aaron restrained the plague against the people and saved them (Numbers 17:13). There is no magic in genuine miracles, only moral meaning.

The "signs" of God are found not in the reports of the changes in the natural order of things, but in nature's orderliness. God is discovered in the intelligibility of the universe rather than in its capriciousness. For its intelligibility enables human beings to exercise their intelligence and will to hallow creation. The evening service (Ma'ariv) begins with the praise of God who with wisdom orders the cycles of time and varies the seasons. Significantly it is followed with a prayer that emphasizes the wisdom that the House of Israel shares through God's teachings. The miracles that are daily with us are in us and are revealed through us when we use our God-given moral wisdom to protect and enhance His creation.

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