Haggadah 2020
Excerpts from “A Different Night”

New Questions for This Year From
The Velveteen Rabbi (Rabbi Rachel Barenblat)

- How is this night the same as other Passovers in the past or in the imagined future?
- What does it mean to experience an Exodus from the Narrow Place when our lives may feel more constricted (by illness, quarantine, economic hardship, or grief) than ever before?
- How can the rituals of seder connect us across the chasm between what we’re experiencing now and what was "normal" before?
- We can’t physically invite all who are hungry to come and eat. (Then again, we probably didn’t do that last year before the pandemic either.) How can we reimagine that call in this time? What will we do to nourish those in need this year?
Signposts for the Seder

1. The official opening of the seder should begin by welcoming all the guests. Make sure to introduce all the participants, so that everyone will be made to feel part of the Jewish family – especially on a night when we recall what it felt like to be strangers in the land of Egypt. You may ask all the participants to say their Hebrew names as well.

2. We review briefly the order of the seder by singing the medieval poem by Rabbenu Shmuel of Falaise (France) that summarizes the Signposts of the Seder ("Kadesh Urchatz").

3. You may wish to give credit to all who have helped prepare this seder – its foods, its readings and its activities.

The 15 Steps of the Seder

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BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has chosen us from among the nations and the languages, sanctifying us by your mitzvot.
Lovingly, You have given us [Shabbat for rest and] festivals for happiness, including today - [the Shabbat and] the Holiday of the Matzot, the season of our liberation, a sacred day to gather together and to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt. For You have chosen us and sanctified us among the nations. You have granted us [lovingly the Shabbat and] joyfully the holidays. Blessed are You, Adonai, who sanctifies [the Shabbat and] the people of Israel and the festivals.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has kept us alive and brought us to this happy moment in our lives.

Now be seated, recline comfortably leaning to the left on a pillow, and drink most of the cup.

On Saturday night only, insert Havdalah here (page 9) before Shehecheeyanu.
Karpas

The First Dipping
Hors d’oeuvres of Spring Greens

1. Distribute Karpas (a vegetable) and dip it in salt water, while reciting the appropriate blessing. Some Jews dip in charoset.

2. While some medieval rabbis strictly forbid eating more than an olive’s size of parsley for Karpas, you may wish to revive the ancient custom of eating extensive appetizers – each with its own dip. You may continue dipping and tasting various fresh vegetables and other appetizers during the seder until sufficiently full to persevere during the extensive storytelling (Maggid), but not so full as to ruin one’s appetite for the matza eaten later.

For vegetables (like celery, parsley, or potatoes):

BLESSÉD ARE YOU, Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

Ba-ruch ata Adonai,
Elo-hei-nu me-lech ha-olam,
bo-rei pree ha-adamah.

Optional:
For appetizers (like gefilte fish in horseradish or boiled eggs in salt water):

BLESSÉD ARE YOU, Lord our God, King of the Universe who creates everything by the power of the Divine word.

Ba-ruch ata Adonai,
Elo-hei-nu me-lech ha-olam,
she-ha-kol nee-hee-ye bee-d’va-ro.

Optional:
Yachatz

Breaking the Matza

1. **Breaking the Matza** is one of many ritual acts that turn the food of the seder into a symbol of meaning.

2. **Count off** the matzot from top to bottom: 1, 2, 3, naming them, if you wish, “Cohen”, “Levi” and “Yisrael” (the three ritual classes of the Jewish people).
   The top matza is for the usual blessing over bread (motzi). Tonight that blessing is recited over matza.
   The bottom matza is for the Hillel sandwich (korech) made with matza, maror, and charoset.

3. **Break the middle** matza in two and explain that this is for a dual purpose: the bigger portion is to be hidden for the “afikoman” and eaten when retrieved from the children for dessert. It will be the last taste of food at the seder. The smaller portion will be eaten with the top matza when we say the special blessing over matza at the beginning of the meal.

4. **You may wish** to add a Tunisian custom: While breaking the matza recite:
   קַח קַחֵי מַתָּחֵי לְשׁוֹנִים חֲמֵרוֹת אֱלֹהִים. יְסָפְרָה מִפְּנֵי יֵשׁוּא אֶלֶּהָ.
   “This is how God split the Red Sea.”

5. **Warn the children** that they must keep their eye on the disappearing afikoman.
Ha Lachma Anya:
The story of the matza

"This is the Bread of Poverty and Persecution"

1. **The storytelling** continues with a look at the matza and its multiple meanings as explained in Aramaic, once the everyday language for Jews in Israel and Mesopotamia.

2. **Remove** the cloth covering the matzot so that they are in plain view during the telling of the story, the Maggid. Raise the three matzot and point out the broken middle matza (left after the afikoman has been hidden).

3. **Some Rabbis** require the seder plate as well as the matzot to be lifted up as if they were about to be removed from the table even before the meal has begun. This was originally designed to arouse the children to ask questions.

4. **Morrocan Jews** pass the matzot over everyone's head while reading together "ha lachma anya." Some families open the door as a sign of welcoming guests to the seder.

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**Ha Lachma Anya**

**This is the bread** of poverty and persecution that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. As it says in the Torah "seven days shall you eat... matzot - the bread of poverty and persecution" (Deut. 16:3) so that you may “remember that you were a slave in Egypt...”

(Deut. 16:12)

**Let all** who are hungry, come and eat
**Let all** who are in need, come and share the Pesach meal.

**This year** we are still here - Next year, in the land of Israel.

**This year** we are still slaves - Next year, free people.

Ha la-ch-ma an-ya
Dee-a-cha-lu av-ha-ta-na
B'ar-ah d'meetz-ra-yeem.

Kol deech-feen, yei-tei v' yei-chol,
Kol deez-tzech, yei-tei v' yee-foch.

Ha-sha-ta ha-cha,
L'sha-na ha-ba-ah
be-ar-ah d'israel.

Ha-sha-ta av-dei,
L'sha-na ha-ba-ah
B'nei cho-reen.

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Four Questions

1. Pour the second cup for everyone.
2. Let the younger children sing “Ma Nishtana.”

MA NISHTANA

HOW IS THIS NIGHT different from all other nights?

ON ALL other nights, we eat either leavened bread or matza, but on this night we eat only matza.

ON ALL other nights, we eat other kinds of vegetables, but on this night we eat maror (bitter herbs).

ON ALL other nights, we need not dip our vegetables even once, but on this night we dip twice.

ON ALL other nights, we eat either sitting upright or reclining, but on this night we all recline.

Ma nish-ta-na ha-lai-la ha-zeh, mee-kol ha-lei-lot?

She-b’chol ha-lei-lot, anu och-leen, cha-metz u-matza Ha-lai-la ha-zeh, ku-lo matza.

She-b’chol ha-lei-lot anu och-leen sh’ar y’ra-kot, Ha-lai-la ha-zeh maror.

She-b’chol ha-lei-lot ein anu mat-bee-leen, afee-lu pa-am achat Ha-lai-la ha-zeh, siete-p’ameem.

She-b’chol ha-lei-lot anu och-leen, bein yo-shveen u-vein m’su-been Ha-lai-la ha-zeh, ku-la-nu m’su-been.
In Search of the Four Answers

As often happens after the youngest child recites the four questions, the family and guests applaud but do not bother to answer the questions. Since a young child’s questions should not go unanswered, we shall present one answer to each of the four questions.

ON ONE HAND, the matza and the maror belong to the menu of the slaves and the oppressed:

1. Why eat plain matza which is hard to digest?
Poor laborers and slaves are fed matza not only because it is cheap but because it is filling and requires a long digestion period. The diet was designed by the oppressor to exploit the people efficiently.

2. Why eat raw, bitter vegetables?
Maror is eaten plain only by the most oppressed workers who are given little time to prepare their meals. With more time they would have made these herbs into a tasty salad.

ON THE OTHER HAND, dipping and reclining typify the manners of the leisure class in Roman times:

3. Why dip twice before eating?
On seder night we are obligated to dip twice – karpas in salt water and maror in charoset – before the meal begins. Even today, finger foods dipped in tangy sauces are typical hors d’oeuvres with cocktails (the first cup of wine) at banquets.

4. Why recline on pillows while drinking wine?
The body language of the free reflects their ease and comfort. Reclining on sofas or pillows, everyone – big and small alike – experiences the freedom of the upper classes. On seder night these foods and these table manners are props and stage directions in the script acted out by all.

(based on Don Isaac Abrabanel, Zevach Pesach)
The Four Children as a Screenplay

1. A simple reading of the Haggadah's midrash of the four children can obscure the fact that it provides the script for a dialogue. Let each character in the dialogue be played by a different seder participant.

2. The cast is as follows:
   - Narrator
   - Each of the four children
   - Four parents who answer.

3. The reading goes as follows:

   **Narrator:** What does the wise child say?
   **Wise Child:** "What are the testimonies, the statutes, and the laws which the Lord our God has commanded you?" (Deut. 6:20).

   **Narrator:** You must tell this child some of the laws of Pesach (from the Mishna):
   **1st Parent:** "We do not proceed to any afikoman (dessert or after dinner celebrations) after eating the Pesach lamb" (Pesachim X).

   **Narrator:** What does the wicked child say?
   **Wicked Child:** "Whatever does this service mean to **you**?" (Exodus 12:26).

   **Narrator:** This child emphasizes the meaning of the seder to "**you**" and not to the child's own self! Since the child excludes himself or herself from the community and rejects a major principle of faith, you should "set that child's teeth on edge" and say:
   **2nd Parent:** "It is because of this, that the Lord did for **me** when **I** went free from Egypt" (Exodus 13:8). "**Me**" and not that child! Had that child been there, he or she would not have been redeemed.

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Otto Geismar, the Wise Child and the Wicked Child, 1927
The Four Children Continued

**Narrator:** What does the simple child ask?

**Simple Child:** “What is this?” (Exodus 13:14).

**Narrator:** And you shall say to that child:

“By a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

**Narrator:** As for the child who does not know how to ask, you should prompt that child, as it is said:

“You shall tell your child on that day, saying:"

**4th Parent:** “It is because of this, that the Lord did for me when I went free from Egypt” (Ex 13:8).

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**“You shall tell your child” (Exodus 13:8)**

The Rabbis wondered about: “You shall tell your child on that day: ‘It is because of this, that the Lord did for me when I went free from Egypt.’”

Could this verse mean that you should begin to tell the story at the beginning of the month (in which the Exodus occurred)?

No, for the verse explicitly states “on that day” (of the Exodus).

Could that mean that we start when it is still daytime?

No, for the verse explicitly states: “because of this”. “This” refers to matza and maror laid before you (only on seder night) (Mekhila).

“This” implies that the parents must point at the matza and maror, using them as visual aids to tell the story (Rabbi Simcha of Viniti).
The Ten Plagues

The Holy One Blessed Be He brought ten plagues on the Egyptians in Egypt. These are the ten:

1. Da-am (drop of wine) - Blood
2. Tzefar-dei-ah (drop) - Frogs
3. Kee-neem (drop) - Lice
4. Ah-rov (drop) - Wild beasts (or insects)
5. Deh-ver (drop) - Cattle plague
6. Sh’cheen (drop) - Boils
7. Ba-rad (drop) - Hail
8. Ar-beh (drop) - Locust
9. Cho-shech (drop) - Darkness
10. Ma-kat B’cho-rot (drop) - Death of the Firstborn

Rabbi Yehuda used to abbreviate them as an acrostic:

D-Tza-Kh (drop)  (Da-am/Tzefar-dei-ah/Kee-neem)
A-Da-Sh (drop)  (Ah-rov/Deh-ver/Sh’cheen)
B-A-Cha-B (drop)  (Ba-rad/Ar-beh/Cho-shech/Makat B’chorot)
Dayeinu

“It Would Have Been Enough”

Dayeinu commemorates a long list of miraculous things God did for us, any one of which would have been pretty amazing just by itself. For example, “Had God only taken us out of Egypt but not punished the Egyptians – it would have been enough.” Dayeinu, translated liberally, means, “Thank you, God, for overdoing it.” (See the English on page 108).
In Every Generation

Identifying with the Exodus
"The Exodus from Egypt occurs in every human being, in every era, in every year and even on every day," said the Hassidic Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav. At the seder we must try to empathize with that original liberation and to discover its relevance throughout the generations.

In every generation one is obligated to see oneself as one who personally went out from Egypt. Just as it says: “You shall tell your child on that very day: ‘It's because of this that God did for me when I went out from Egypt’” (Ex. 13:8).

Not only were our ancestors redeemed by the Holy One Blessed Be He, but even we were redeemed with them. Just as it says: “God took us out from there in order to bring us and to give us the land God swore to our ancestors” (Deut. 6:23).
The Cup of Redemption

1. **We conclude** the long Maggid section (storytelling) by drinking the second cup of wine, the Cup of Redemption.

2. **Recline** on a pillow to the left and drink at least half the second cup of wine.

Here I am, ready to perform the mitzvah of the second of the four cups, the cup of redemption.

*BLESSED ARE YOU*, our God, King of the Universe, who redeemed us and redeemed our ancestors from Egypt, and who brought us to this night to eat matza and maror.

Lord, our God and God of our ancestors, may You bring us in peace to future holidays.

May we celebrate them in your rebuilt city, and may we be able to eat the Pesach lamb and the other sacrifices offered on the altar.

We will thank you for our redemption.

*BLESSED ARE YOU*, the Redeemer of Israel.

*BLESSED ARE YOU*, our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the Fruit of the Vine.

*Ba-ruch ata Adonai, Elo-hei-ne me-lech ha-olam, bo-rei pree ha-gafen.*

 והנה מוכן ומקים לוחם מצות כוס שיני של
והנה מצות כוס שיני של

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ברוך מָרְגֶּקָה, שְׁלוֹשָׁה יָשָׁרָאָל.
Rachatza
Washing Before Eating Matza

1. **Finally** we begin the Passover meal, the third section or “third cup” of the seder. Storytelling leads into communal eating, because on Passover, “Jews eat history.”

BLESSED ARE YOU, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who sanctified us with Divine mitzvot and commanded us on the washing of the hands.

Ba-ruch ata Adonai, Elo-hei-nu me-lech ha-olam, asher kee-d’shamu b’meeetz-v’o-tav v’tzee-va-nu al n’teelat ya-da-yeem.

Motzi/Matza
Eating the Matza

1. **This is the one time** during Pesach in which one is obligated to eat matza. (It must be plain matza without eggs or other ingredients that might enrich this bread of poverty).

   Take the three matzot in hand. Make sure the middle one is broken and the others are still whole. Recite the usual blessing for all forms of bread – the “motzi” – and the special blessing for matza – “al acheelat matza.”

    HERE I AM, ready to perform the mitzvah of eating matza.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who extracts bread from the earth.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who sanctified us by commanding us to eat matza.

Ba-ruch ata Adonai,
Elo-hei-nu me-lech ha-olam,
ha-mo-tzee le-chem meen ha-aretz.

Ba-ruch ata Adonai, Elo-hei-nu me-lech ha-olam, asher keed’sha-nu b’meetz-v’o-tav v’tzee-va-nu al acheelat matza.
Maror

1. Take an ounce of raw maror, preferably romaine lettuce, but almost equally good is horseradish ("chrein") which was popular in wintry northern Europe when lettuce was unavailable. Maror embodies the taste of slavery.

2. Dip it in charoset (but not so much that it eradicates the bitter taste). Recite the blessing, eat and savor the maror, but do not recline! Reclining is a custom of the free, while maror and charoset remind us of persecution.

Here I am, ready to perform the mitzvah of eating maror.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe who has sanctified us by commanding us to eat maror.

Ba-ruch ata Adonai, Elo-hei-nu me-lech Ha-olam, asher kee-d'sha-nu b'meetz-votav v'tzea va-nu al achelet maror.

A Meditation on Maror

Personally, I cannot imagine Passover without horseradish. Its combination of intense pleasure and pain makes a good analog for the bitter-sweet nature of our memories at Passover: We remember good times with family and friends, often with those who are no longer with us or are far away. We give our brief lives added dimension by linking them to the pain and triumph of Jewish history.

As the Irish fiddler Seamus Connolly once said in the name of his mother, "We're never so happy as when we're crying." We never enjoy the horseradish so much as when it brings tears to our eyes (Ira Steingart).
Adeer Hu
Mighty is God

The poet (15th C. Germany) recounts the Divine attributes in alphabetical order and prays for the building of the third Temple.

Adeer hu, adeer hu

Refrain: Yeev-neh veito b'ka-rov,
beem-hei-ra, beem-hei-ra,
B'ya-meri-nu b'ka-rov, Eil b'nei,
Eil b'nei, B'nei veit-cha b'ka-rov.

Ba-chur hu, ga-dol hu, da-gul hu,
Yeev-neh veito b'ka-rov . . .

Ha-dur hu, va-teek hu, za-kai hu,
Yeev-neh veito b'ka-rov . . .

Cha-sid hu, ta-hor hu, ya-cheed hu,
Yeev-neh veito b'ka-rov . . .

Ka-beer hu, ia-mud hu, me-lech hu,
Yeev-neh veito b'ka-rov . . .

No-ra hu, sa-gee hhu, ee-zuz hu,
Yeev-neh veito b'ka-rov . . .

Po-dek hu, tza-deek hu, ka-dosh hu,
Yeev-neh veito b'ka-rov . . .

Ra-chum hu, sha-dai hu, ta-keef hu,
Yeev-neh veito b'ka-rov . . .
Chad Gad-ya
Just One Kid

This is the Jewish "Old MacDonald Had a Farm." Preassign a stanza to volunteers who must produce an appropriate sound or gesture for each subsequent aggressor. For example, the goat might say "maa," the cat "meow," and the dog "woof." The stick could make a banging sound, the fire might "sizzle," and the water, "glug-glug." Think up appropriate sounds for the ox and the slaughterer. The angel of death and God require the greatest creativity and delicacy. Everyone sings the verses, while the preassigned participant adds a sound and/or visual effect each time. For example, "ata shunra (meow) v'achla l'gard-ya (maa-maa) . . . ." [The cat came (meow) and ate up the goat (maa-maa) that my Father bought for two coins]. The song, translated below, appears in Hebrew on p. 82.

Chorus:
Just one kid, just one kid
That my Abba bought for two zuzeem.
CHAD GADYA, CHAD GADYA.

1 Along came the cat ("meow")
and ate the kid ("maa")
that my Abba bought for two zuzeem.
CHAD GADYA, CHAD GADYA.

2 Along came the dog ("woof")
and bit the cat ("meow")
that ate the kid ("maa")
that my Abba bought for two zuzeem.
CHAD GADYA, CHAD GADYA.

3 Along came the stick ("bang")
and hit the dog ("woof") . . .

4 Along came the fire ("sizzle")
and burned the stick ("bang") . . .

5 Along came the water ("gurgle")
and quenched the fire ("sizzle") . . .

6 Along came the ox ("slurp")
and drank the water ("gurgle") . . .

Final Verse:
9 Then came the Holy One, blessed be He and destroyed the angel of death that slew the slaughterer that killed the ox ("slurp") that drank the water ("gurgle") that quenched the fire ("sizzle, crackle") that burned the stick ("bang") that beat the dog ("woof") that bit the cat ("meow") that ate the kid ("maa") that my Abba bought for two zuzeem.
CHAD GADYA, CHAD GADYA.