

The Haggadah of Passover



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Haggadah simply means a “telling” or a “narrative.” This year’s Haggadah is a tale being told in the midst of a plague, not unlike the plagues of old.

The guiding principle of a Haggadah is that for “each person in each generation to regard himself as having been personally freed from Egypt,” that person must share in the pain, the joy, the unrelenting hope and the universality of the Jewish and human experience.



The Seder begins with the lighting of candles and the Kiddush over a cup of wine as is customary on the eve of every Shabbas and holy day. Seder means “order,” indicating that the service and the meal have been prearranged with a definite purpose and with rich remembrances in mind.

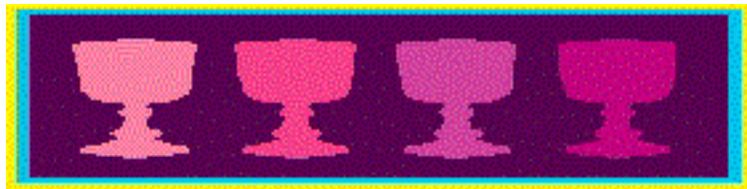
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדוֹ-נֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

BA-RUCH A-TA A-DO-NAI E-LO-HAY-NU ME-LECH HA-O-LAM A-SHER KI-DE-SHA-NU BE-MITZ-VO-TAV VE-TZI-VA-NU LE-HAD-LIK NER SHEL (SHABBAT V') YOM TOV.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדוֹ-נֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמַּן הַזֶּה

BA-RUCH A-TA A-DO-NAI E-LO-HAY-NU ME-LECH HA-O-LAM SHE-HE-CHE-YA-NU VE-KI-YE-MA-NU VE-HIG-I-YA-NU LAZ-MAN HA-ZEH.

Raise a glass:



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא, פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן.



Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.

(Drink from the first cup of wine)

There is more, as you can see, to the Seder than candles and wine, or even four cups of wine. There is a Seder plate. Most seder plates have six dishes for the six symbols of the Passover seder. They are:

- * Maror (bitter herb[s])
- * Karpas (vegetable)
- * Chazeret (bitter vegetable)

- * Charoset (apple, nut, spice and wine mixture)
- * Zeroa (shankbone)
- * Beitzah (egg)

Maror

Bitter Herbs (usually horseradish) symbolize the bitterness of Egyptian slavery. The *maror* is often dipped in charoset to reduce its sharpness. *Maror* is used in the seder because of the biblical commandment to eat the lamb "with unleavened bread and bitter herbs." Some prefer mild horseradish; others say that it doesn't serve to remind us of the bitterness of slavery unless it's hot enough to bring tears to the eyes. I side with the criers.

Karpas

Vegetable (usually parsley) is dipped into salt water, which represents the tears shed during Egyptian slavery. It is sometimes identified with the biblical description of the Hebrew slaves marking their doorposts at the time of the first Passover. A bunch of mint that was used for purification, was to be dipped in the blood of the lamb and dabbed on the doorposts so that the tenth plague (death of the firstborn) would not come to those households.

Chazeret

Bitter Vegetable (often a radish) is used, when it's not left out altogether, in addition to the maror as a bitter herb. The authorities are divided on the requirement of *chazeret*, so not all communities use it. Most seder plates have a place for *chazeret*. Some use a green vegetable, some use the green top of a bitter herb, while some use a second bitter (such as radish) for the *chazeret*.

Charoset

Ah, the good stuff. Apples, nuts, and spices ground together and mixed with wine are symbolic of the mortar used by Hebrew slaves to build

Egyptian structures. In order to enhance the symbolism of mortar, it is customary in some communities to mix in a small amount of sand. The *charoset* is sweet because sweetness is symbolic of God's kindness, which was able to make even slavery more bearable. According to legend, the use of apples in *charoset* stems from Pharaoh's decree that all male Hebrew children were to be killed at birth. Mothers would go out to the orchards to give birth, and thus save their babies (at least temporarily) from the Egyptian soldiers.

Zeroa

The ***Shankbone*** is symbolic of the lamb offered as the Passover sacrifice in biblical times. Vegetarian households often use beets for the shankbone on the seder plate. The red beets symbolize the blood of the lamb.

Beitzah

The ***Roasted Egg*** is symbolic of the festival sacrifice made in biblical times. On Passover, an additional sacrifice (the lamb) was offered as well. The egg is also a traditional symbol of mourning, and has been interpreted by some as a symbolic mourning for the loss of the Temple. It is also a symbol of spring - the season in which Passover is always celebrated.

Lots of symbolism on one plate.

Not so very long ago, a woman wanted to know why women can't be up on the altar (the "bimah"), holding a torah. She asked the rabbi, who said, stroking his beard, "A woman should be up on the bimah like an orange should be on the Seder plate." Now, each year at Passover, we place an orange on the Seder plate as a reminder that oppression can also come from within. Surely God never meant for women to be passed over.



As with most of the stories that are passed down, even the orange on the Seder plate story is open to discussion. Susannah Heschel, the daughter of Abraham Heschel, one of Judaism's most revered recent rabbis, says it started with her in the early 1980s after she discovered a Hagaddah done by young women at Oberlin College. They put a crust of bread on the Seder plate to protest how Judaism treated lesbians - out of place. At Susannah Heschel's next Seder, she put an orange on the plate instead because bread on Passover seemed like a sin and too offensive. She asked everyone to take a slice in solidarity for gay men and women and anyone else who's marginalized within the Jewish community. She included widows. She thought an orange was an appropriate symbol because one spits out seeds, marking that certain unsavory traditions often need to be cast away.

Along with the orange on the Seder plate, we also have Miriam's cup. Her cup is filled with water, not wine. Why? Because the Midrash tells us of a miraculous well that kept popping up in the desert for those many years. Miriam was a prophet who also popped up in some but not many stories of the years in the desert. She was a source of inspiration, strength and wisdom and often associated with songs and rituals that carry on from generation to generation.

So before we drink to Miriam, we will also sing for Miriam:

These are a few of our Pessadic Things

[Sung to the tune of "These are a few of my favorite things"]

Cleaning and cooking and so many dishes
Out with the hametz, no pasta, no knishes
Fish that's gefillted, horseradish that stings
These are a few of our Pessadic things.

Matzah and karpas and chopped up haroset
Shankbones and Kiddish and Yiddish neuroses
Nona who kvells when her grandchildren sing
These are a few of our Pessadic things.

When the plagues strike
When the virus hits,
When we're feeling sad
We simply remember our Passover things
And then we don't feel so bad.

Matzah and maror and trouble with Pharaohs
Famines and locusts and slaves with wheelbarrows
Matzah balls floating and eggshells that cling
These are a few of our Pessadic things.

When the plagues strike
When the the virus hits
When we're feeling sad
We simply remember our Passover things
And then we don't feel so bad.

It wasn't so long ago that one person did it all.

The Miracle
(By Bernice Mennis)

Each year you say that maybe next year you won't bother anymore to make the old foods.

Women bunched together shouting and then the chopping, grating, mixing.

Hard work for an old woman.

And nowadays they say the package is almost as good and cheaper even.

Yet each year, there on that clean, ironed, white, heavy cloth with its delicate stitches of leaf green and yellow red --

I hadn't noticed how small the stitch, how intricate the pattern --

The food there again.

Not simple or quick or fancy but hours of careful shaping.

It is nothing like packaged food. Nothing.

This year I was to make *tsimes* for another Seder.

We worked together, my mother and I in her kitchen of 45 years where the water drips cold and the hot water never gets really hot, where the oven must be watched and refrigerator strapped closed.

I was to grate 20 carrots. And I, the jogger basketball athlete invested in my woman's body strength grated 6 carrots with great difficulty, my arm exhausted, my fingers grated.

And you, my 4-foot 11-inch, 74-year-old mother grated 14 carrots without stopping, evenly, not easily or quickly, but calmly, silently, providing again the dark coarse uneven ground.

(Uncover the three tiers of ceremonial Matzah)

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let anyone who is hungry, we are ready to serve; let anyone who is needy, we are available to help in the name of Passover. This year we are here, many of us in isolation; next year we shall be together. This year we are slaves to a virus that knows no bounds; next year we shall be truly free.

Because We Can?

(by Jack Doppelt)

It is disorienting to be in the holy land as Passover looms, to be in occupied Palestine, pondering oppressor and oppressed.

The Passover Seder is my bedrock as a Jew. My father's stature in my eyes is rooted to his role as searching leader of the multi-hour dinner theater cabaret. I've never met either of my grandparents or anyone who came before them. Yet I take on faith, something more real than Biblical faith, that they read from the Haggadah from generation to generation. Did they honor the Passover story as one in which we were the Chosen People protected by a discriminating God or one in which we were the oppressed guided into liberation by a just but vengeful God? For generation after generation, the two parables were inextricable. Are they now?

Years ago, I wrote my first Haggadah and I've been revising it irregularly ever since. There are my emendations that call upon Sholem Aleichem's Helmites, Sandy Koufax, an Elijah who brings with him the tradition of the miracle, and Grace Paley's realization that there were neighbors where she grew up in New York who were not Jewish but who nonetheless "often seemed to be in a good mood."

To be sure, it is more confusing being a Jew with eyes open in the occupied territories than it is being a Jew with eyes restfully closed in the comfort of privilege. I process the story of Sheldon Adelson declaring from on high in Las Vegas that Republican candidates are not to use the term “occupied territory.” It is understandable for Jews to fear relenting, and to need to say with resoluteness that this land is our land to live in and to protect. It is also almost unbearable to ignore the arrogance and brutality that comes with being an occupier and an oppressor of others who share that land. It strains reason or imagination to see Adelson as Moses on the Mount and not Pharaoh on the throne. It also mocks my father’s sense of decency, and he was a learned man.

Still it is confusing. Within 15 minutes on the main road running the length of the West Bank of the Jordan River, I was drawn into the enigma of the day. I was being driven around by a young Palestinian couple who were kind enough to offer to show me the land. We were heading south from Nablus to Ramallah and we hit a traffic snag. We sat, as one car after another in front of us peeled off from the stalled line of cars, and paused to our left to explain briefly in Arabic that it was settlers raising some kind of ruckus. We complied, and turned around, not knowing what alternative road we would take. We knew nothing more, and my hosts thought better than to try to find out. I asked why, do they think, and they said, “because they can.” A few minutes later, on a different stretch of road, we encountered four young, loosely masked boys, in Palestinian red and green. They were gathering stones and preparing for a confrontation they seemed intent on provoking. My hosts again did not want to know more. We drove on.

Passover looms. It has always been a celebration of spirit and perseverance and justice for me, one in which we thank God as we recall grand gifts we’ve been given - getting out of Egypt, dividing the Red Sea, surviving 40 years in the desert, and being given the Sabbath,

the Torah, the Temple and a place to live. Dayena. Any of them would have been enough. And yet with that celebration, I feel a personal and collective shame that it is not enough, and we seem to rejoice in using our power to oppress. Why? Because we can?

(The middle matzah is divided and half is hidden for the Afikoman)

(fill the second cup of wine)

Rabbi Isodor Chemelwitz eulogizes Sarah Ironson, of the Bronx, at the beginning of Tony Kushner's play "Angels in America" [excerpted]

This woman. I did not know this woman. I cannot accurately describe her attributes, nor do justice to her dimensions. She preferred silence. So I do not know her...and yet I know her. She was not a person but a whole kind of person, the ones who crossed the ocean, who brought to America the villages of Russia and Lithuania - and how we struggled, and how we fought, for the family, for the Jewish home, so that you would not grow up *here*, in this strange place, in the melting pot where nothing melted. Descendants of this immigrant woman, you do not grow up in America, you and your children and their children with the goyische names. You do not live in America. No such place exists. Your clay is the clay of some Litvak shtetl, your air the air of the steppes, because she carried the old world on her back across the ocean, in a boat, and she put it down on Grand Concourse Avenue, or in Flatbush, and she worked that earth into your bones, and you pass it to your children, this ancient, ancient culture and home. You can never make that crossing that she made, for such Great Voyages in this world do not anymore exist. But every day of your lives the miles that voyage between that place and this one you cross. Every day. You understand me? In you, that journey is.

Pour water from your glass into Miriam’s cup

The displaying of the Matzah and the telling of stories is supposed to pique the curiosity of the younger members of the seder.

So.....They might just be thinking.....

Why is this night different from all the other nights?

Ma nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleilot?

On all other nights, we are together eating matzah
why, on this night—do we eat matzah in isolated places away from
each other;

On all other nights, we eat all kinds of herbs together
why, on this night, do we especially eat bitter herbs?

On all other nights, we do not dip herbs at all;
why, on this night, do we hope for dips in coronavirus numbers;

On all other nights, we eat in an ordinary manner;
why, tonight, do we recline, in fear of a continuing virus infection?

מה־נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה מְכַל־
הַלֵּילוֹת?

שֶׁבְּכָל־הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֻמֵץ
וּמִצָּה; הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה, כִּלּוֹ מִצָּה.

שֶׁבְּכָל־הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר
יִרְקוֹת; הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה, מְרוּר.

שֶׁבְּכָל־הַלֵּילוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מְטַבְּלִין
אֶפְלוֹ פֶּעַם אַחַת; הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה,
שְׁתֵּי פְעָמִים.

שֶׁבְּכָל־הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין
יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין מְסַבֵּין; הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה,
כָּלְנוּ מְסַבֵּין.

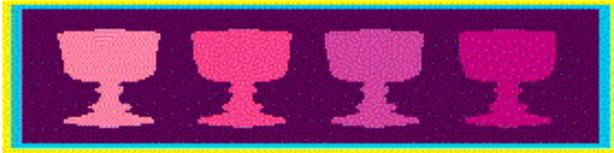
The simple answers to each of the Four Questions are:

We eat only Matzah to recall that when the Israelites were fleeing from Egypt, they could not wait for dough to rise and often were separated to survive.

We eat mainly bitter herbs to remind us of the painstaking labor the Israelites were forced to do as slaves in Egypt, and of the bitterness that comes when we least expect it.

We recline because in ancient times, reclining was a symbol of the comfort and freedom of Roman patricians more fortunate than we, and today, reclining can also be a symptom of fatigue.

(And now the second cup of wine)



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא, פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.



Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.

For the Four Children in Each of Us



The Wise Child in Us who seeks deep and thoughtful answers: For that child, we have some answers to what we do and why we do it. Reflections on denial and commitment.

The Rebellious Spirit in Us who demands personal relevance from the traditional text: For that child, we need provocative questions and debates. Contemporary stories, personal experiences, and empathy for others.

The Simple Curiosity in Us who listens and looks with wonder: For that child, we have the Exodus story, the Holocaust, global pandemics, thoughts connecting them, and thoughts beyond.

The Non-Verbal in Us who doesn't know how to ask but wants to experience: For that child, we find ways to explain how relatives and neighbors can disappear without notice.

The searching answer is: We were once slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt ... Moses, with his brother Aaron as his spokesman, went unto Pharaoh and demanded that the Israelites be freed. Pharaoh refused, and initiated a reign of terror against the Israelites. The Israelites were not released from bondage until a series of ten plagues befell the Egyptians. Though we celebrate the triumph of the sacred cause of freedom, happiness cannot be realized so long as others were sacrificed in the process.

A full cup is the symbol of unmitigated joy. We shall, therefore, diminish the wine in our cups as we recall the plagues visited upon the Egyptians, to give expression to our sorrow over the losses which each plague exacted.

A Talmudic story relates that after the Israelites safely crossed the Red Sea, they sang a song in praise of God, but when the angels began to join in, God thundered: "You shall not sing while my other children, the Egyptians, are drowning." So, we now recite the list of the ten ancient plagues, pouring off wine as each one is mentioned to symbolize that our triumph is not without sorrow. And be advised, don't lick the wine off your finger when you're done:

Dam – Blood

Tzefardea – Frogs

Kinim – Lice

Arov – Beasts

Dever – Pestilence

Shkhin – Boils

Barad – Hail

Arbeh – Locusts

Choshech – Darkness

Makat Bechoros – Death of Firstborn



This year we add an 11th plague for the one we are facing right now. May it not have been exacted on us because we were too arrogant to protect against it. And may we band together to show comfort and good will at all turns to those suffering.

Seeking Guidance from the Rabbis of Old
(by Jack Doppelt)

As I recall the Seders of my youth, what has stuck with me even more than the Maxwell House sponsorship was how ridiculous much of the service seemed to me at the time yet how much I cherished it.

If this year's Maxwell House is Zoom, may the children of today come to cherish it too.

I looked forward to Seders as a time when I would almost pish in my pants with laughter over some of the traditional passages that linked the core themes of slavery, freedom and Jewish survival.

It came right after the Kiddush and the Four Questions, right in the heart of the answer that started with, "Because we were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt." It seems that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Elazar the son of Azariah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarphon met in B'nai B'rak for "a pilpul" or a discussion of biblical text. From one store-

sponsored Haggadah to another, the names were spelled differently, so that I got hopelessly confused among Eliezar, Elazar, or Azariah. It was clear that they were the action figures of the Jewish people -- my people -- and my dad expected that I would come to revere them and respect their wisdom.

But they didn't seem to have much to offer. They were puzzling over the meaning of "a mighty hand and an outstretched arm" and over "the days of thy life" or "all the days of thy life" as it referred to how long we Jews were to recall the going forth from Egypt. They seemed to get mystical guidance from the son of Zoma, another action figure, who seemed to solve the riddle by concluding that we were to recall the Exodus even longer than life itself, into the time of the Messiah, whatever that meant to someone like me who was having a hard enough time recalling the earned run average and career strikeouts of Sandy Koufax, a true action hero.

Then later in the Seder service, we eavesdropped on another discussion of the sages. At some other time way back when, Rabbi Jose the Galilean, Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Akiva were puzzling over whether there were 10 plagues or 50 plagues, or 40 or 200 or 250. It became an involved math problem over whether each plague stood for four, that in the end was not resolved other than to break into song with a round of Dayenu.

Today we face one plague or is it thousands or tens of thousands for each inflicted person or family?

It seemed to me then, and seems to me now, that we the Jews, and we the people of the world, could use action figures who devote themselves to healing who are capable of summoning the grand and implausible miracles.

Pesach Has Come to the Ghetto Again
(By Binem Heller, Warsaw, April 19, 1943)

Pesach has come to the Ghetto again.
The wine has no grape, the matzah no grain,
But the people anew sing the wonders of old,
The flight from the Pharaohs, so often retold.
How ancient the story, how old the refrain!

The windows are shuttered. The doors are concealed.
The Seder goes on. And fiction and fact
Are confused into one. Which is myth? Which is real?
"Come all who are hungry!" invites the Haggadah.
The helpless, the aged, lie starving in fear.
"Come all who are hungry! And children sleep, famished.
"Come all who are hungry!" and tables are bare.

Pesach has come to the Ghetto again,
And shuffling shadows shift stealthily through,
Like convert-marranos in rack-ridden Spain
Seeking retreat with the God of the Jews.
But these are the shards, the shattered remains
Of the "sixty ten-thousands" whom Moses led out
Of their bondage...driven to ghettos again...
Where dying's permitted but protest is not.
From Holland, from Poland, from all Europe's soil,
Becrippled and beaten the remnant has come.
And there they sit weeping, plundered, despoiled,
And each fifty families has dwindled to one.

Pesach has come to the Ghetto again.
The lore-laden words of the Seder are said,
And the cup of the Prophet Elijah awaits,

But the Angel of Death has intruded instead.
As always -- the German snarls his command.
As always -- the words sharpened-up and precise.
As always -- the fate of more Jews in his hands:
Who shall live, who shall die, this Passover night.
But no more will the Jews to the slaughter be led.
The truculent jibes of the Nazis are past.
And the lintels and doorposts tonight will be red
With the blood of free Jews who will fight to the last.

Pesach has come to the Ghetto again.
And neighbor to neighbor the battle-pledge gives
The blood of the German will flow in the Ghetto
So long as one Jew in the Ghetto still lives!
In the face of the Nazi -- no fear, no subjection!
In the face of the Nazi -- no weeping, no wincing!
Only the hatred, the wild satisfaction
Of standing against him and madly resisting.
Listen! How Death walks abroad in the fury!
Listen! How bullets lament in the flight!
See how our History writes END to the story,
With death heroic, this Passover night!

It is February 2011 –
Over the last few weeks throughout the Arab World, hundreds of thousands of people of all social backgrounds have felt a surge of freedom to express themselves to one another out in the open, a fundamental human impulse. They are neighbors gathering in cities, bloggers and tweeters getting word to one another, and journalists covering what matters.

That so many Egyptians, Tunisians, Algerians, Jordanians and Yemenis are now freely and openly expressing their convictions and hopes

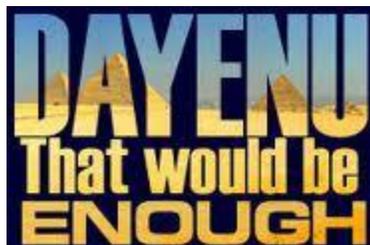
inspires us. We sense the pride of a people finding their voice, using it, and trusting that they will be heard and not squelched. We recoil as we hear of repressive efforts to intimidate neighbors, cut off cell phones and the internet, and arrest journalists and seize their equipment.

The world is watching and we appeal to Arab governments to remove barriers to free expression. Let your people speak.

Maggid

(By Marge Piercy)

...The courage to leave the place whose language you learned as early as your own, whose customs however dangerous or demeaning, bind you like a halter you have learned to pull inside, to move your load; the land fertile with the blood spilled on it; the roads mapped and annotated for survival. The courage to walk out of the pain that is known into the pain that cannot be imagined, mapless, walking into the wilderness, going barefoot with a canteen into the desert; stuffed in the stinking hold of a rotting ship sailing off the map into dragons' mouths...



Dayenu

Dayenu, it would have been enough-----

**Day-Dayenu, day-dayenu, day-dayenu, dayenu, dayenu
dayenu...[again]**

**Ilu hotsi hotsianu, hotsianu mi-Mitzrayim, hotisanu mi-Mitzrayim,
Dayenu.**

**Ilu natan natan lanu, natan lanu et ha-Shabot, natan lanu et ha-
Shabot, Dayenu.**

**Ilu natan natan lanu, natan lanu et ha-Torah, natan lanu et ha-Torah,
Dayenu.**

How many are the gifts God has bestowed upon us! Had God:

| | |
|--|--------|
| Brought us out of Egypt and not divided the sea for us, | Dayenu |
| Divided the sea and not permitted us to cross on dry land, | Dayenu |
| Permitted us to cross on dry land and not sustained us for forty years in the desert, | Dayenu |
| Sustained us for forty years in the desert and not fed us with manna, | Dayenu |
| Fed us with manna and not given us the Sabbath, | Dayenu |
| Given us the Sabbath and not brought us to Mount Sinai, | Dayenu |
| Brought us to Mount Sinai and not given us the Torah, | Dayenu |
| Given us the Torah and not led us into the land of Israel, | Dayenu |
| Led us into the land of Israel and not built for us the Temple, | Dayenu |
| Built for us the Temple and not sent us prophets of truth, | Dayenu |
| Sent us prophets of truth and not made us a holy people, | Dayenu |
| For all these--alone and together--we say... | Dayenu |

The story of the Jews going forth from Egypt is not only a Jewish story. It is a story of oppression and liberation for all, and a reminder that so many of the themes and stories Jews hold dear are shared by other

religions and peoples too, as in this Gospel version. [If there's a recording of the Seeger Sessions handy, we can sing along to it.]

O Mary Don't You Weep

[We Shall Overcome - The Seeger Sessions Bruce Springsteen album]

Well if I could, I surely would, Stand on the rock where Moses stood.
Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary don't you weep

Chorus: O Mary don't you weep, don't mourn, O Mary don't you weep, don't mourn

Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary don't you weep

Well Mary wore three links and chains, On every link was freedom's name

Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary don't you weep

Chorus

One of these nights about 12 o'clock, This old world is gonna rock
Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary don't you weep

Well Moses stood on the Red Sea shore, Smote the water with a two by four

Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary don't you weep

Chorus

Well old Mr. Satan he got mad, Missed that soul that he thought he had
Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary don't you weep

Brothers and sisters don't you cry, There'll be good times by and by
Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary don't weep

Chorus

God gave Noah the rainbow sign, "No more water but fire next time"
Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary don't you weep

Chorus [until exhausted]

Like Us

(by Grace Paley)

I lived my childhood in a world so dense with Jews that I thought we were the great imposing majority and kindness had to be extended to the other because, as my mother said, everyone wants to live like a person. In school I met my friend Adele who together with her mother and father were not Jewish. Despite this they often seemed to be in a good mood. There was the janitor in charge of coal and my father, unusually smart, spoke Italian to him. They talked about Italian literature because the janitor was equally smart. Down the hill under the Southern Boulevard El, families lived, people in lovely shades of light and darkest brown. My mother and sister explained that they were treated unkindly; they had in fact been slaves in another part of the country in another time. Like us? I said.

Like us, my father said year after year at seders when he told the story in a rush of Hebrew, stopping occasionally to respect my grandmother's pained face, or to raise his wine glass to please the grownups. In this way I began to understand in my own time and place, that we had been slaves in Egypt and brought out of bondage for some reason. One of the reasons, clearly, was to tell the story again and again -- that we had

been strangers and slaves in Egypt and therefore knew what we were talking about when we cried out against pain and oppression. In fact, we were obligated by knowledge to do so.

Liberation and Injustice

(By Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail)

Tonight we are, all of us, from the youngest to the oldest, brothers and sisters in the celebration of freedom, and our redemption is bound up with the deliverance from bondage of people everywhere. It is said in the Talmud that, in the days when the world is more perfect, we will remember not just the liberation from Egypt, but the liberation of all people from oppression. --“Truly, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Injustice to any people is a threat to justice to all people.”

The Plea

(By Sue Sabbagh, June 2002)

[Read softly]

To find me you must stop the noise:
Silence the guns and the tanks,
The shouted orders
And the shouts of defiance,
Screaming and weeping,
And listen.

My voice is very weak.
You must try to hear it.
You will have to come close
And pick away the tumbled stones
Carefully, gently.

When you find me, lift me out,

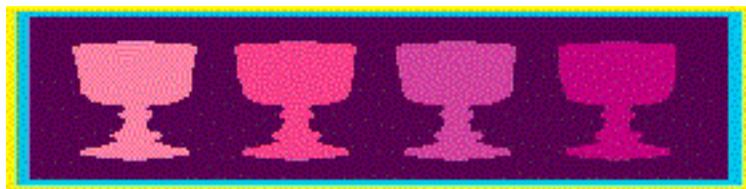
Help me to breathe.
Set my broken limbs
But don't think it's enough
To give me back a fragile existence.

I need food and water,
I need a home that will last,
Health and hope and work to do.
I need love.

You must embrace me
And take me to your heart.
My name is Peace.

(And now the third cup)

In the traditional Haggadah, the third and fourth cups of wine are saved for after the meal, often a time when all but the hosts are gone. I recall times when that left just my dad, my mom and me. Share some more wine with us. My dad would have liked that.



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.



Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.

(Open the door)

Elijah the Prophet

A child's view of plagues, miracles and the open door

(by Jack Doppelt)

They don't see him. They never do when they open the door. I've gone from one Seder to another and I see him. Maybe that's what happens when you grow up. You stop seeing and you stop believing. I've been seeing him for a few years now. I hope I don't stop seeing him now that I'm b'nei mitzvahed. He doesn't have a shape, like Santa Claus. No beard. But he carries the traditions with him. Not in a bag either. I can see them. I can hear them too.

The tradition of telling stories. The tradition of enough stories, of being antsy and hungry, of sneaking a peek at the last pages while no one's looking to see when Shulchan Orech -- the dinner being served -- will finally come. How many pages to go? That's the tradition of the matzah right there. No time, gotta go. Can't wait until it's finished. Can't wait for the dough to finish. Same thing really.

The tradition of the four questions, of watching us, the younger ones, show off for the grownups. Okay, they want us to show off. I get that tradition too. They call it qvelling. I like that word. What if, just what if, I didn't know the four questions or much of anything else about my past? As I think about it, I don't know much about the past, what my grandparents did or were like or thought about. But I do know they did the four questions. I can see them. I can hear them at a table just like this, with family, with friends, with strangers. Doing what we're doing. Eating what we're eating. Remembering the bad, fearing the worst, and finding hope in it all. Because it's there. That's what he comes to remind us about.

They keep talking about plagues, about ones I've never heard of. The grownups keep having to look them up. What's a boil? What kind of vermin? How bad can hail get anyway? There are real plagues around. Every day. Wars, famine, starvation, things people face every day, one worse than the last. I could count ten in just the people I know, at this table, at any table.

Who expected a global virus, with a name that people generations from now will have to look up too.

The part I really don't get, every time I hear it, is Dayenu. Don't get me wrong, I love the song. See, just thinking about it brings out the rhyme in me. But it's about all these miracles. One for each plague. More. Bringing the Jews out of Egypt, dividing the sea, providing Manna, the Sabbath, the Torah. And at the end of each line, we sing Dayenu. Any one would have been enough. I don't think so. It's not that I'm not grateful. I am.

But plagues don't go away. They're here all the time. We're not done needing miracles. Sometimes the plagues don't seem so bad, so the miracles don't have to be so miraculous. But they're still miracles. And they happen all the time. That's why he comes every year. The door is always open. And in walks the tradition of the miracle.

Hope and Magnificence

(By Howard Zinn)

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and

at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.

ELIYAHU HANAVI

The musical score is written on five staves in a 3/4 time signature with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The lyrics are written below the notes, and guitar chords are indicated above the staff lines. The chords include Fm(Em), C7(B7), Ab(G), Bbm(Am), and Fm(Em) Fine. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the instruction 'D.C. al Fine'.

E - li - ya - hu ha - na - vi E - li - ya - hu
 ha - tish - bi Ey - li - ya - hu Ey - li - ya - hu
 E - li - ya - hu ha - gil - a - di bim - hey - ra v' -
 ya - mey - nu ya - vo ey - ley - nu im Ma - shi - ah
 ben Da - vid im Ma - shi - ah ben Da - vid

(Close the door)

Karpas (GREEN VEGETABLE)

It is spring. The air should be growing warmer. The trees will be budding. Flowers will be blooming. Pesach is a springtime holiday. The karpas reminds us of springtime and hope. Sometimes we despair of the evil and disease in our world. Pesach calls us to hope again.

We now dip the karpas in salt water because tears taste salty. We remember the tears our people cried in Egypt when they were slaves. May we never be so comfortable that we become complacent or so self-absorbed that we ignore the pain of others.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה

Matzah

What is the meaning of the matzah? If we don't know by now, we're in trouble. Matzah reminds us of the dough our people baked the night they left Egypt. We left in such a hurry that we did not have time to allow the dough to rise.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

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

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

BA-RUCH A-TA A-DO-NAI E-LO-HAY-NU ME-LECH HA-O-LAM A-SHER KI-
DE-SHA-NU BE-MITZ-VO-TAV VE-TZI-VA-NU AL A-CHI-LAT MA-TZA.

Maror

What is the meaning of the maror? It is bitter and eating it makes us cry. [And if it doesn't, take some more.] On Passover, we try to feel the bitterness of slavery and shed the tears our people shed when they were enslaved in Egypt. In every generation, each person should feel as though he or she went forth from Egypt, as the Torah teaches: And you shall explain to your child, it is because of what was done for me when I, myself, went forth from Egypt.

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

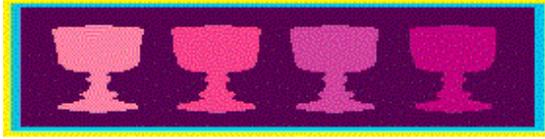
BA-RUCH A-TA A-DO-NAI E-LO-HAY-NU ME-LECH HA-O-LAM A-SHER KI-
DE-SHA-NU BE-MITZ-VO-TAV VE-TZI-VA-NU AL A-CHI-LAT MA-ROR.

(We break the bottom matzah, and use it to make a sandwich with maror and Haroset, which is the mixture of chopped apples, nuts, wine, and spices.)

In the tradition of the great teacher, Hillel, head of the rabbinic academy in Jerusalem around the time of the birth of Jesus, we follow the custom of making a matzah, maror and Haroset sandwich. We eat the maror of slavery together with the matzah of freedom and the Haroset of a sweet future. In times of slavery there is always the hope of freedom. In times of freedom, there is always the memory of slavery and the prospect of an unforeseen emergence of plagues.

So each of us will take a bit of the maror, the bitter herb, and dip it into the haroset. Thus, we dip our food a second time.

And now the fourth and final cup, the cup for singing:



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא, פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.



Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Adir Hu

Adir hu yivneh beito bekarov.
Bimherah, bimherah, beyameinu
bekarov.
El bneh, el bneh, bneh beito
bekarov.

Bachur hu, gadol hu, dagul hu
yivneh beito bekarov.
Bimherah, bimherah, beyameinu
bekarov.
El bneh, el bneh, bneh beito
bekarov.

Hadur hu, vatic hu, zakai hu yivneh
beito bekarov.
Bimherah, bimherah, beyameinu
bekarov.
El bneh, el bneh, bneh beito
bekarov.

אָדִיר הוּא יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקָרוֹב.
בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקָרוֹב.
אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקָרוֹב.
בְּחֹר הוּא, גָּדוֹל הוּא, דָּגוּל הוּא יִבְנֶה
בֵּיתוֹ בְּקָרוֹב.
בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקָרוֹב.
אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקָרוֹב.
הַדוּר הוּא, וְתִיק הוּא, זָכַאי הוּא יִבְנֶה
בֵּיתוֹ בְּקָרוֹב.
בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקָרוֹב.
אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקָרוֹב.
חָסִיד הוּא, טָהוֹר הוּא, יְחִיד הוּא יִבְנֶה
בֵּיתוֹ בְּקָרוֹב.
בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקָרוֹב.
אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקָרוֹב.

Chassid hu, tahor hu, yachid hu
yivneh beito bekarov.
Bimherah, bimherah, beyameinu
bekarov.
El bneh, el bneh, bneh beito
bekarov.

Kabir hu, lamud hu, melech hu
yivneh beito bekarov.
Bimherah, bimherah, beyameinu
bekarov.
El bneh, el bneh, bneh beito
bekarov.

Norah hu, sagiv hu, izuz hu yivneh
beito bekarov.
Bimherah, bimherah, beyameinu
bekarov.
El bneh, el bneh, bneh beito
bekarov.

Podeh hu, tzaddik hu, kadosh hu
yivneh beito bekarov.
Bimherah, bimherah, beyameinu
bekarov.
El bneh, el bneh, bneh beito
bekarov.

Rachum hu, shadai hu, takif hu
yivneh beito bekarov.
Bimherah, bimherah, beyameinu

בְּבִיר הוּא, לְמוֹד הוּא, מֶלֶךְ הוּא יְבָנֶה
בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב.

בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב.
אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

נֹרָא הוּא, סְגִיב הוּא, עִזּוּז הוּא יְבָנֶה
בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב.

בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב.
אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

פּוֹדֵה הוּא, צְדִיק הוּא, קְדוֹשׁ הוּא יְבָנֶה
בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב.

בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב.
אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

רַחוּם הוּא, שְׂדֵי הוּא, תְּקִיף הוּא יְבָנֶה
בֵּיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב.

בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב.
אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

bekarov.
El bneh, el bneh, bneh beito
bekarov.

Donna Donna

[Written first by Aaron Zeitlin for a Yiddish theater company in 1940]

On a wagon bound for market
There's a calf with a mournful eye
High above him there's a swallow
Winging swiftly through the sky

How the winds are laughing
They laugh with all their might
Laugh and laugh the whole day through
And half the summer's night

Donna Donna Donna Donna
Donna Donna Donna Don
Donna Donna Donna Donna
Donna Donna Donna Don

"Stop complaining", said the farmer
Who told you a calf to be
Why don't you have wings to fly with
Like the swallow so proud and free

How the winds are laughing
They laugh with all their might
Laugh and laugh the whole day through
And half the summer's night

Donna Donna Donna Donna
Donna Donna Donna Don
Donna Donna Donna Donna
Donna Donna Donna Don

Calves are easily bound and slaughtered
Never knowing the reason why
But whoever treasures freedom
Like the swallow has learned to fly

How the winds are laughing
They laugh with all their might
Laugh and laugh the whole day through
And half the summer's night

Donna Donna Donna Donna
Donna Donna Donna Don
Donna Donna Donna Donna
Donna Donna Donna Don

Chad Gadya [One Kid]

[House rule: No breathing within a verse. One suggestion: Take your breaths when you can get 'em.]

Chad gadya, Chad gadya
My father bought for two zuzim,
Chad gadya, Chad gadya.

And the cat came and ate the kid my father bought for two zuzim ,
Chad gadya, Chad gadya.

And the dog came and bit the cat that ate the kid my father bought for two zuzim, Chad gadya, Chad gadya.

And the stick came and beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid my father bought for two zuzim, Chad gadya, Chad gadya.

And the fire came and burned the stick that beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid my father bought for two zuzim, Chad gadya, Chad gadya.

And the water came that quenched the fire that burned the stick that beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid my father bought for two zuzim, Chad gadya, Chad gadya.

And the ox came and drank the water that quenched the fire that burned the stick that beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid my father bought for two zuzim, Chad gadya, Chad gadya.

And the slaughterer came and slaughtered the ox that drank the water that quenched the fire that burned the stick that beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid my father bought for two zuzim, Chad gadya, Chad gadya.

And the Angel of Death came and slew the slaughterer that slaughtered the ox that drank the water that quenched the fire that burned the stick that beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid my father bought for two zuzim, Chad gadya, Chad gadya.

And the Holy One, blessed is He, that came and killed the Angel of Death that slew the slaughterer that slaughtered the ox that drank the water that quenched the fire that burned the stick that beat the dog

that bit the cat that ate the kid my father bought for two zuzim, Chad gadya, Chad gadya.

SHULCHAN OREICH

The Meal is Served

It is customary to begin the meal with hard-boiled eggs flavored with salt water. This was the practice in Roman times. The egg is symbolic of new growth, of new life, of hope. The roasted egg on the Seder plate has come to represent the ancient Temple holiday sacrifice in Jerusalem, the holy city.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים

P.S. The following can be resorted to at any time to tame any poor, tired, hungry masses yearning to breathe free:

Take Me in To The Seder

[To the tune of, of course, "Take Me Out to the Ballgame!"]

Take me in to the Seder
Take me across the divide.
Feed me on matzah and chicken soup,
I don't care if the wine makes me looped,
And it's root, root, root for Elijah
That he will soon reappear.
And let's hope, hope, hope that we'll be
Together next year!

Take me in to the Seder
Take me across the divide.
Read the Haggadah

And don't skip a word.
Please hold your talking,
So the words can be heard.
And let's root, root, root for the ending
Where Shulchan Oreich reveals
We can nosh, nosh, nosh and by-gosh
We can eat the meal!!

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