

# Passover Haggadah

*Compiled by Jessie & Dani Duke from text from: Earth Justice Haggadah by Religious Action Center, Next Year in a Just World - The Global Justice Haggadah by American Jewish World Service, JewBelong Haggadah, My Radical Vegan Feminist Haggadah by Josephine Walker, The Wandering is Over Haggadah, NuRoots Marketing, Zack Lodmer, Jenn Green, RitualWell Source, Jewish Boston, At the Well, and The Kabbalah Centre*

Why tell the same story over and over and over again, year after year after year? Because it's f%cking miraculous. And because we need to hear it. That's why.

Compared to such supernatural happenings as frogs overtaking Egypt, the sea parting, and bushes burning (and talking), there are handfuls of oft-overlooked miracles in the Passover story:

1) **Man and God / source / HaShem work together.** Moses was a conduit to do God's work. Neither one could've achieved the end result of freedom for an entire peoplehood alone. This is an important reminder. Whether you think you can hear the voice of God by talking to a burning bush, or whether finding a quiet cove and listening to waves crashing on rocks is more your speed, find a quiet place where you can listen. Once you listen, only then can you tune in to what's going on inside. Once you tune in to what's going on inside, only then can you reflect your godliness, your purpose, your highest virtue. Once you reflect your highest virtue, only then can you be the best you, effectuate the most change, and do all the things you were born to do: be kind, heal the world, embody joy, etc.

2) **Teamwork makes the dream work.** The Israelites boned the hell outta Egypt in such haste, they couldn't even let their BREAD rise. Can you imagine? Leaving your home on a moment's notice? Anybody out there have kids? Can I tell you how challenging it was just getting them out the door to drop them off at school today? Can you imagine rounding up your kids, your shoes, your sheep, your belongings, your food, and racing your way out of a place where you've been living for years? Generations? In this day and age, when we're so isolated with our technologies and our opinions, the reminder that everybody in the community pitches in to make sure the community survives is an astounding lesson worth re-telling.

3) **It's so hard to say goodbye to yesterday.** Granted...when Boyz II Men sang this dope refrain, it was in great reverence to some positive memories / people / life experiences. But it's also hard to say goodbye to oppression. Even when miracles point the way to freedom. Even when you know HaShem's got your back. How many times have you stayed in a bad relationship? A bad job? Kept smoking those cigarettes? Even though you knew a better life was right around the corner? Freedom from oppression does not mean life's suddenly easy (remember: there's 40 years of wandering before you set foot in the promised land). And it takes great courage to walk away from the life you know (even if that life has some SERIOUS problems) to forge the life you were meant to live. Remember that next time you're at a crossroads and go easy on yourself.

Happy Pesach, homies. **Celebrate the small miracles. And let freedom reign supreme!!**

---- Zack Lodmer, Director of NuRoots, yoga teacher, and spiritual badass // 2016 Pesach Facebook Post

## ➤ **Opening Activity**

### *Setting Fire To Your Fears*

Mentioned 36 times in our written tradition, Passover requires us to remember that we were once strangers in a strange land. It's a reminder to never take our freedom for granted; that we fled from the hands of oppression. These age old lessons are as relevant today as they've ever been. So this gathering is about taking a moment to acknowledge our own personal Egypt: what's holding you back? Restricting your freedom? Making it hard to be yourself? At this seder, we will identify our own personal pharaohs and look deep within to find personal liberation.

In anticipation of Passover's ritual cleansing and rebirth, (some) Jews scour their homes to remove every last crumb of leavened bread (Chometz), donating or burning things that they find. Spiritually, Chometz is associated with elements of the ego or subconscious that keeps us constricted or bound. Part of our inner work during this month (Nissan) is to burn off all our psychological Chometz.

Meditation to be led by the person leading the seder:

*Close your eyes and visualize yourself on a cloud high in the sky. The warm light of the sun shining on your skin. Feel the cool soft air flowing through your hair. Down on the earth are the things you no longer need: acknowledge your old behavior, addictions, envy, ill will, attitudes, habits, and fears that are in some way keeping you hostage.*

*Let them go. Be willing to trust in your ability to fly and begin a new life. Before you is a wide open sky of endless possibilities; if only you are open to taking that leap and trying your new wings for the first time.*

*Right now, a new world is waiting for you. Take that first step, open wide your heart and wings, and soar into your new life.*

*Deepening your breath, begin to meditate on the mantra "This year I am leaving them behind as I walk towards a more free me."*

*How does it feel to let go of these limiting beliefs? Is there any tightness in your arms, shoulders, chest, stomach, or fists? After letting go, how do the sensations in your body shift?*

### ➤ **Tonight**

**AS WE BEGIN TONIGHT'S SEDER**, let's take a moment to be thankful for being together. We make a small community of storytellers. But, why this story again? Most of us already know the story of Passover. The answer is that we are not merely telling a story. We are being called to the act of empathy. Some at our table observe this holiday every year and some are experiencing it for the first time. Some of us are Jewish, others are not. Passover is enjoyed by people of various faiths because freedom is at the core of each of our stories. All who are in need, let them come celebrate Passover with us. Now we are here. Next year in freedom

### ➤ **What is Passover?**

Passover is a holiday during which we remember the story of Exodus, remember being slaves, and remember being taken out of slavery. *Passover is the one night of the year that we are given the invaluable opportunity to set ourselves free from negative patterns of behavior, thoughts, judgments, and embrace new positive ones. We are given the courage to burn away the parts of our lives that weigh us down and bring us negativity; self-involved behaviors and fears that hold us back from being all we can become.* This ritual is seasonally rooted: we remember our story of freedom in the spring, on one of our three harvest festivals, and eat seasonal foods of the springtime. This connection to renewal inspires our transformation on both physical and spiritual levels, as we act **intentionally** in terms of what we eat and what values we embody. *As spring begins to blossom, this night gives us the opportunity to throw off anything that once kept us small. Like the buds peeking out on every tree, you to are freed to bloom anew.*

### ➤ **What does it mean to be intentional?**

Ellen Langer, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, has built her career on studying mindfulness and the effect of mindless living. It's easy to understand why we don't always pay close attention to the world: we're able to move much more quickly and often more effectively when we rely on, habits, schemas and what we already know. If we had to pay full attention to everything we encountered and constantly start from scratch to figure out what everything means and how we should act, it would be much more difficult for us to move through the world. That said, taking the time to pay closer attention to certain aspects or behaviors in our lives can help us make changes to live more closely in line with our values instead of just acting automatically. When you set an intention about how you would like to act, you bring more conscious attention to how you're behaving. You give yourself more agency and control over how you respond because you're actually making decisions on purpose. For example, by setting an intention about how want to eat, you can make more conscious choices about how you'll nourish your body instead of relying on habits. By setting an intention about your emotional or mental responses to a situation, you can better choose how you'd like to respond rather than just reacting habitually. What intention do you want to set for this week of Passover?

### ➤ **What is your pharaoh?**

Pharaoh was the “bad guy” holding the Jews in slavery, unwilling to set them free or let them live their fullest selves according to their own wills. In our lives, we often have a sneaky Pharaoh that dictates how we think we are supposed to be or the harsh rules we need to live by. “You can’t be happy until X,” we tell ourselves. X is often: “til I get promoted, ‘til I lose 5 pounds, ‘til I get a boyfriend, ‘til I’m single, ‘til I’m getting paid for my art, ‘til I’ve paid off my debt, ‘til I or a loved one recovers from a health problem, ‘til this other person changes in the way that I want... until then I cannot be happy.’ The list goes on. Step back for a moment and consider: there will always be more to accomplish, more ways to improve and more things to get. While pain, work, and hardship are parts of life, we cause ourselves more suffering every time we put off allowing ourselves to be happy with what we have. While we might strive for a more whole self or to create a more healed world, we don’t have to be miserable until we get there. We can give ourselves permission to enjoy and be happy in the present moment, with exactly what we have, exactly as we are. Question the Pharaoh that’s denying you permission to be happy. You have the power to give yourself permission to experience peace and joy.

### ➤ **Why acknowledge this ancient story?**

Passover is Judaism’s dramatic blockbuster. Infanticide! Blood rivers! An 11th hour parting of a sea! And the Passover seder is Judaism’s ultimate experience of radical storytelling, playing wildly with form and encouraging us to lose ourselves in the story as we pour wine with a joyfully heavy hand.

By reenacting the Jews’ dramatic escape to freedom in an elaborate dinner ritual (a “seder”, which means telling), Passover makes sure we engage all five of our senses. Why? Because on Passover, we’re meant to remember that we left Egypt personally. That we walked with wonder through the miraculously parted sea personally, that we were there to receive divine teaching in the desert personally. Through song and ritual and food and praise and if there were kids here- even running wild through the house trying to find the Afikomen- Passover invites expansive freedom into our bodies, souls, and communities.

Inviting in this expansiveness, what would it look like to audaciously leave your narrow places behind? Whose restricting you from your highest self? What would it take for you to let go and know, deep down in your un-ownable bones, there can be miracles, if you believe?

Since Jews follow a lunar and a solar calendar system, it makes sense that this sense of expansiveness and freedom matches up with Spring. Passover and the energy of Nissan propel us to this free version of ourselves and sync us to the rhythms of Momma Earth.

The Hebrew name for Egypt is Mitzrayim, literal translation: “straits” or “narrow places”. This poetic naming emphasizes that now is time to leave behind the places that smush our spirits. During Nissan, and especially tonight, you are invited to burst vibrantly open and become your highest self.

*Author Joseph Campbell once wrote, “When we hang onto any form, we are in danger of putrefaction.” If we do not let go of the old, the new that is waiting for us cannot be experienced.*

### ➤ **Telling the story**

We will use this Haggadah (“telling”), to not just retell an ancient story. We are commanded to explore the story as if we ourselves had experienced the transformation from slavery to freedom. We are asked to actually experience and acknowledge the bitterness of oppression and the sweetness of freedom so we may better understand the hope and courage of all people, of all generations, in their quest for liberty, security, and human rights. Tonight we free ourselves from our Mitzrayim (Egypt). This haggadah attempts to relate the traditional story of Passover to our personal experiences and to the modern world around us. In the words of Audre Lorde: “I cannot afford the luxury of fighting one form of oppression only. I cannot afford to believe that freedom from intolerance is the right of only one particular group. And I cannot afford to choose between the fronts upon which I must battle these forces of discrimination, wherever they appear to destroy me. And when they appear to destroy me, it will not be long before they appear to destroy you.”

My wish for each of us is that we leave this seder with the strength and awareness to walk into the next week looking

inward at our own demons, our own darkness, our own personal Mitzrayim, our own personal Egypts,-- and that we can meditate on and eventually, figure out ways to face down and defeat whatever is holding us back, repressing us, keeping us from singing that freedom song with sunshine on our faces and arms outstretched. And most importantly, that we have the courage to march into the unknown with the deep belief that whatever lies before us is even greater than what we're leaving behind.

### ➤ ***How do we do this?***

One way is to look to the **past** and imagine ourselves as participants in the story of the Exodus: by tasting the bitter herbs, we taste the bitterness of hard labor and servitude. By eating the matza, we eat the bread of affliction and poverty, which also was the bread of the Jews' flight to freedom. By reciting Dayenu ("enough"), we sing of our joy at the many gifts the universe provided along the way.

Another way to experience the transformation from slavery to freedom, though, is to look to the **present**: in what ways are we enslaved today? How can we create freedom and justice today? When we pose these questions, we can think of many enslavements that exist in the present. We can think of a thousand situations that call for more freedom and justice in today's world.

In addition, what if we used the seder not only to feel as if we personally were present in the Exodus from Egypt, but also to experience ourselves in the **future** our grandchildren will live in, with all of the issues we are neglecting to work on now? If, in this generation, we looked upon ourselves as sitting side-by-side with those who'll gather around our families' seder tables in two or three generations, maybe we would feel sense of personal connection and responsibility with social justice issues present today, such as climate change.

### ➤ ***"This year we are slaves"***

*"This year we are slaves" is a common phrase seen in many Haggadahs, speaking to the commandment to tell the story of Passover as if we ourselves were freed from slavery in Egypt.*

What do these words mean? We are slaves because yesterday our people were in slavery and memory makes yesterday real for us. But we are also slaves because today there are still people in chains around the world and no one can be truly free while others are in chains.

We are slaves because freedom means more than broken chains. Where there is poverty and hunger and homelessness, there is no freedom; where there is prejudice and bigotry and discrimination, there is no freedom; where there is violence and torture and war, there is no freedom. And where each of us is less than who we might be, we are not free, not yet. And who, this year, can be deaf to the continuing oppression of the downtrodden, who can be blind to the burdens and the rigors that are now to be added to the most vulnerable in our midst? If these things be so, who among us can say that they are free?

### ➤ ***Why a Vegan Passover Seder?***

The Seder, which means "order" in Hebrew, is both a Jewish service and a meal in which we drink and eat symbolic foods. This ritual is seasonally rooted: we remember our story of freedom in the spring, on one of our three harvest festivals, and eat seasonal foods of the springtime. This connection to renewal inspires our transformation on both physical and spiritual levels, as we act purposefully in terms of what we eat and what values we embody. Everything we put into our bodies during the Seder and what we do not consume is meant to be very intentional and meaningful.

In line with the Passover theme of freedom, together with our desire for compassion and nonviolence, the items on the Seder plate and all this food we eat this evening did not require any sentient creatures to be enslaved, confined, tortured or killed. By acknowledging the right of the world's voiceless and powerless animals to live, we free ourselves from industries, traditions, and desires that require the suffering of others.

### ➤ ***A Time of Remembering***

On this Seder night, we recall with anguish and love our martyred brothers and sisters, the six million Jews of Europe who were destroyed at the hands of a tyrant more fiendish than Pharaoh. Their memory will never be forgotten.

### ➤ **Candle Lighting**

The day ends. The earth turns from sunshine to dusk and then to darkness. We assume for ourselves the task of kindling candles in the night, to enlighten the dark corners of our world. We still live in perilous times. Behind us, though receding into the memories of even the oldest among us, we can still sense the fires of Auschwitz and Hiroshima. Before us, the threat of acts of terrorism and gun violence. We gather tonight to create from fire, not the heat of destruction, but the light of instruction; indeed to see more clearly the wisdom, strength and caring that glows from within each of us.

May these candles, lit on the Festival of Freedom, bring light into our hearts and minds. May they renew our courage to act for justice and freedom here and now. May they illumine the path to truth, justice and peace. And so we repeat the ancient blessing:

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kiddishanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu lehadlik neir shel [Shabbat v'shel] Yom Tov.*

### ➤ **First Cup of Wine**

All Jewish celebrations, from holidays to weddings, include wine as a symbol of our joy – not to mention a practical way to increase that joy. The seder starts with wine and then gives us three more opportunities to refill our cup and drink.

We thank God // universe // who creates the fruit of the vine, gives us joyful holidays to celebrate, and who has kept us alive, raised us up, and brought us to this happy moment, surrounded by friends who might as well be family.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree hagafen.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, she-hechyanu v'key'manu v'higyanu lazman hazeh

### ➤ **Urchatz - Washing of the Hands**

When we were slaves in Egypt, we ate 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. The first hand-washing of the seder is unusual. The rabbis point out that even a child would wonder at least two things: why do we wash without a blessing and why do we bother to wash when we will not be eating our meal for some time. They suggest that we wash our hands here in order to raise questions. Questions, both of wonder and of despair, are crucial to our time at the seder and, more importantly, our growth as human beings. We have permission to ask questions, when we see and experience suffering.

Additionally, water is refreshing, cleansing, and clear, so it's easy to understand why so many cultures and religions use water for symbolic purification. Too often during our daily lives we don't stop and take the moment to prepare for whatever it is we're about to do. Let's pause to consider what we hope to get out of our evening together tonight. *Here, we'll stop if anyone wants to share an expectation for the seder tonight, please do.*

Another thought is that our hands can be vehicles for creation or destruction. We cleanse our hands and dedicate them to working for good in the world.

*One person will symbolically wash their hands for all of us seated here.*

### ➤ **The Seder Plate**

The seder plate holds the ritual items that are discussed during the seder. Traditional items on the seder plate include bitter herbs, to remind us of the bitterness of the slavery, and charoset, a mixture of apples, cinnamon, and wine,

which resembles the mortar and brick used by the Jews as slaves. Celery and/or parsley, known as karpas, stand for hope and renewal, and they are dipped into salt water, which alludes to the tears cried. At our seder, beet replaces a bone from a lamb and an egg, all of which represent Passover sacrifices. + new additions:

### **A Lock And Key On the Seder Plate**

Those of us who are lucky enough to live in our own homes tend to associate locks and keys with protection and access. Many of us have homes that keep us safe and that allow us to go in and out as we please. In contrast, for more than two million individuals who are incarcerated in the United States — the majority of whom are people of color — the lock represents the reality of being locked up and then locked out. Upon leaving prison with a felony conviction, these Americans “enter a hidden underworld of legalized discrimination and permanent social exclusion” (Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, p.13). They are locked out of jobs, housing opportunities, and in many places, voting rights. In Michelle Alexander’s words, “Today a criminal freed from prison has scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a freed slave or a black person living ‘free’ in Mississippi at the height of Jim Crow” (*The New Jim Crow*, p.141). We place the lock and key on our seder plate tonight to ally ourselves with those who are behind bars, with those who are labelled as felons in the community, and with the parents, children, and other family members of those who are locked up and locked out. The key represents our commitment, as Jews who know a history of oppression, to join the movement to end mass incarceration in the United States. The key reminds us of our potential to partner with the universe to unlock a more promising, dignified future for us all. The task may seem overwhelming, yet each of us can do our part to help transform the criminal justice system here in the United States. The first step to transformation is awareness, and thus we ask questions and learn from one another this seder night.

### **Tomato on the Seder Plate**

A tomato purchased in the United States between November and May was most likely picked by a worker in Florida. On this night when we remember the Jewish journey from slavery to freedom, we remember numerous cases of modern slavery that have been found in the Florida tomato industry. The tomato on our seder plate might have been picked by someone who has been enslaved. And slavery is just the extreme end of a continuum of abuse; perhaps this tomato was picked by someone facing other abusive working conditions, such as wage theft, violence, sexual harassment, exposure to dangerous pesticides, or poverty level wages. Until we know that the food that we eat isn’t tainted by forced labor and exploitation, none of us is truly free.

### **The Orange on the Seder Plate**

The custom originated with the teacher and writer Susannah Heschel, who first set it out as a symbol of inclusion for LGBTQ Jews, and in the following years, for all those who have been marginalized in the Jewish community. Thanks largely to the Internet, Jewish women adopted the fruit as a symbol of their own inclusion, and now there are oranges on seder plates all over the world. It represents the creativity of progressive Jews, who honor tradition by adding new elements to the old. The orange also announces that those on the margins have fully arrived as coauthors of Jewish history. The orange is a sign of change, and of Judaism’s ability to adapt and thrive. It is a mark of our confidence in the Jewish future, encouraging future generations to bring new things to the seder plate.

### **➤ *Karpas - Dipping a Vegetable in Salt Water***

Passover, like many of our holidays, combines the celebration of an event from our Jewish memory with a recognition of the cycles of nature. As we remember the liberation from Egypt, we also recognize the stirrings of spring and rebirth happening in the world around us. The symbols on our table bring together elements of both kinds of celebration. We now take a vegetable, representing our joy at the dawning of spring after our long, cold winter. Most families use a green vegetable, such as parsley or celery. Whatever symbol of spring and sustenance we’re using, we now dip it into salt water, a symbol of the tears our ancestors shed as slaves. Before we eat it, we recite a short statement of gratitude:

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p’ree ha-adama.*

When we dip the vegetable into the salt water, we see the tears of all who suffer injustice mingling with our hopes for life and new possibilities for justice.

### **➤ *Yachatz - Breaking of the middle matzah***

There are three pieces of matzah stacked on the table. We break the middle matzah in two, reflecting the deep brokenness in our world and our commitment to repair it.

We eat matzah in memory of the quick flight of the Jews from Egypt. As slaves, they had faced many false starts before finally being let go. So when the word of their freedom came, they took whatever dough they had and ran with it before it had the chance to rise, leaving it looking something like matzah.

At the Seder, we begin as slaves. We eat matzah, the bread of affliction, which leaves us hungry. These days, matzah is a special food and we look forward to eating it on Passover. However, imagine eating only matzah, or being one of the countless people around the world who don't have enough to eat.

While we will soon enjoy a large meal, millions of people around the world live with the daily reality of hunger. Let us awaken to their struggle. Let us work toward a time when all who are hungry have access to healthy food. Let local farms flourish. Let our world leaders recognize food as a basic human right and implement policies and programs that put an end to world hunger.

This year we are still slaves, next year may we be free people. This year, hunger and malnutrition are still the greatest risks to good health around the world. Next year, may the bread of affliction be simply a symbol, and may all people enjoy the bread of plenty, the bread of freedom.

### ➤ *The Four Questions*

The formal telling of the story of Passover is framed as a discussion with lots of questions and answers. The tradition that the youngest person asks the questions reflects the centrality of involving everyone in the seder. The rabbis who created the set format for the seder gave us the Four Questions to help break the ice in case no one had their own questions. Asking questions is a core tradition in Jewish life.

Ma nishtana halaila hazeh mikol haleilot?  
Why is this night different from all other nights?

Shebichol haleilot anu ochlin chameitz u-matzah. Halaila hazeh kulo matzah.  
On all other nights we eat both leavened bread and matzah. Tonight we only eat matzah.

Shebichol haleilot anu ochlin shi'ar yirakot haleila hazeh maror.  
On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables, but tonight we eat bitter herbs.

Shebichol haleilot ain anu matbilin afilu pa-am echat. Halaila hazeh shtei fi-amim.  
On all other nights we aren't expected to dip our vegetables one time. Tonight we do it twice.

Shebichol haleilot anu ochlin bein yoshvin uvein m'subin. Halaila hazeh kulanu m'subin.  
On all other nights we eat either sitting normally or reclining. Tonight we recline.

However, these are not the only things that make Passover different from all other nights. On most other nights, we allow the news of tragedy in distant places to pass us by. We succumb to compassion fatigue – aware that we cannot possibly respond to every injustice that arises around the world. On this night, we are reminded that our legacy as the descendants of slaves creates in us a different kind of responsibility – we are to protect the stranger because we were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Let us add a fifth question to this year's seder. Let us ask ourselves, What must be done? This year, this Passover, let us recommit to that sacred responsibility to protect the stranger, particularly those vulnerable strangers in faraway places whose suffering is so often ignored. Let us infuse the rituals of the seder with action: When tasting the matzah, the bread of poverty, let us find ways to help those who are poor and the hungry. When eating the bitter herbs, let us commit to help those whose lives are embittered by discrimination, persecution, and hate. When dipping to commemorate the plagues, let us pursue protection for those whose lives are threatened by violence, conflict, and

disease. When reclining in celebration of our freedom, let us seek opportunities to help those who are oppressed. At this season of liberation, join us in working for the liberation of all people. Help us respond to the seder's questions with action and justice.

### ➤ ***The Four Children***

At Passover each year, we read the story of our ancestors' pursuit of liberation from oppression. When confronting this history, how do we answer our children when they ask us how to pursue justice in our time?

*-What does the activist child ask? "The Torah tells me, 'Justice, justice you shall pursue,' but how can I pursue justice?* Empower them always to seek pathways to advocate for the vulnerable. Give them readings, invite them to protests and public speeches, and encourage them to engage.

*-What does the skeptical child ask? "How can I solve problems of such enormity?* Encourage them by explaining that they need not solve the problems, they must only do what they are capable of doing. "It is not your responsibility to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."

*-What does the indifferent child say? "It's not my responsibility."* Persuade them that responsibility cannot be avoided. "The opposite of good is not evil; the opposite of good is indifference. In a free society where terrible wrongs exist, some are guilty, but all are responsible."

*-And the uninformed child who does not know how to ask ...*

Prompt them to see themselves as an inheritor of our people's legacy. As it says in Deuteronomy, "You must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

At this season of liberation, let us work toward the liberation of all people. Let us respond to our children's questions with action and justice.

### ➤ ***The Passover Story***

The Passover story chronicles the Jewish people's exodus from slavery in Egypt. It celebrates the movement from oppression to liberation and our belief that tyranny can be thwarted and justice can prevail.

*Pour the second glass of wine for everyone.* The Haggadah doesn't tell the story of Passover in a linear fashion. We don't hear of Moses being found by the daughter of Pharaoh – actually, we don't hear much of Moses at all. Instead, we get an impressionistic collection of songs, images, and stories of both the Exodus from Egypt and from Passover celebrations through the centuries. Some say that minimizing the role of Moses keeps us focused on the miracles of the universe. Others insist that we keep the focus on the role that every member of the community has in bringing about positive change.

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote the essay, "The Heroic and Visionary Women of Passover" along with Rabbi Lauren Holzblatt. They wrote, "On Passover, Jews are commanded to tell the story of the Exodus and to see ourselves as having lived through that story, so that we may better learn how to live our lives today. The stories we tell our children shape what they believe to be possible—which is why at Passover, we must tell the stories of the women who played a crucial role in the Exodus narrative." [The full essay is a bit too long to include here.] "They were women of action, prepared to defy authority to make their vision a reality bathed in the light of the day. Retelling the heroic stories of Yocheved, Shifra, Puah, Miriam and Batya reminds our daughters that with vision and the courage to act, they can carry forward the tradition those intrepid women launched."

### ➤ ***The Ten Plagues***

As we rejoice at our freedom from slavery, we acknowledge that our freedom was hard-earned. We regret that our freedom came at the cost of the Egyptians' suffering, for we are all human beings. We dip our finger in our wine and place one drop on our napkin as we recite each plague, to diminish our joy with the memory of the sorrow of our enemies. This year, as we remember the plagues cast upon the Egyptians, we also remember 10 modern plagues after,

that have befallen the entire human race. We again take one drop out of our cup of wine for each plague, because our joy is diminished as humankind suffers.

1. Blood- we comfort and mourn those whose blood has been spilled
2. Frogs- we protest the proliferation of violence
3. Lice- we do our best to stop infestations of hatred and fear
4. Wild Animals- we appeal to all people to act with humanity towards other humans non-human animals
5. Disease- we overcome the sickness of racism and bigotry by putting our money where our mouth is
6. Boils- we tend to those who suffer from disease with empathy and care
7. Hail- we respond to storms and disasters that claim lives with action and compassion
8. Locusts- we fill the air with voices for change by speaking up, listening, and elevating others voices
9. Darkness- we help bring light to those who live in the shadows
10. Death of the First Born- we stand with the next generation to carry on the struggle for a better world

### ➤ *Dayenu*

The traditional Dayenu song recalls every step in our path to redemption: departure from Egypt, the splitting of the sea, sustenance in the wilderness, the giving of the Torah. However, in another sense, although we express gratitude for each moment in our journey from slavery to freedom, by saying, "It would have been enough," we know that all of these steps were necessary to achieve full freedom. Had the journey ended with the leaving of Egypt, we would not be free people.

**When all workers of the world receive just compensation and respect for their labors, enjoy safe, healthy and secure working conditions, and can take pride in their work... DAYEINU (that would be enough)**

**When governments end the escalating production of devastating weapons, secure in the knowledge that they will not be necessary... DAYEINU**

**When the air, water, fellow creatures and beautiful world are protected... DAYEINU**

**When all politicians work honestly for the good of all... DAYEINU**

**When all human beings are allowed to make their own decisions on matters regarding their own bodies and their personal relationships without discrimination or legal consequences... DAYEINU**

**When people of all ages, genders, races, religions, cultures and nations respect and appreciate one another... DAYEINU**

**When all human beings grow up and grow old in freedom, without hunger, and with the love and support they need to realize their full potential... DAYEINU**

**When all beings are free of the threat of violence, abuse, incarceration and domination... DAYEINU**

**When all people have access to the information and care they need for their physical, mental and spiritual well-being... DAYEINU**

**When food and shelter are accepted as human rights, not as commodities, and are available to all ... DAYEINU**

**When no elderly person in our society has to fear hunger, cold, or loneliness... DAYEINU**

**When people everywhere have the opportunities we have to celebrate our culture and use it as a basis for progressive change in the world... DAYEINU**

As today's freedom-seekers depart their own Egypts, they contend with obstacles as formidable as the raging sea and and the strength to persevere through the challenges that lie ahead. We stand with them proudly through the

duration of their journeys.

It is critical that we support survivors of disasters, wars and conflicts until they are able to rebuild their lives. We must stand with religious and ethnic minorities as long as the threat of violence or genocide rages. We must fight for the rights of women, girls and LGBT people until true equality is achieved. And we must persevere in defending the precious natural resources that sustain our world.

Just as the Jews needed support at each step of their journey, so too do those around the world who persist in lifting the shadow of suffering and oppression.

We recite Dayenu again:

If the world hears the cries of the oppressed, but does not come to their aid ... *It will not be enough.*

If we empower our brothers and sisters to escape violence, but fail to offer them refuge ... *It will not be enough.*

If our generosity supports the needs of today, but forsakes the needs of tomorrow ... *It will not be enough.*

However, if we persevere until stability, peace and justice have been attained ... *Dayenu! Then it will be enough.*

### ➤ ***The 2nd cup of Wine***

Our climate is changing at an accelerating rate. As global sea levels, temperatures, and the frequency of extreme weather events rise, we must join together to help the international community adapt. Adapting means recognizing that our disrupted climate has impacts on daily life for people around the world. Our second cup of wine is our second promise: We will provide the communities most vulnerable to the effects of climate change with the information and resources necessary to adapt. Forests are natural buffers for climate change, so protecting forests are an important component of adaptation too.

### ➤ ***The Meal (& The 3rd and 4th Cups of Wine)***

As we now transition from the formal telling of the Passover story to the celebratory meal, we once again wash our hands (symbolically, or if anyone really wants to) to prepare ourselves. In Judaism, a good meal together with friends and family is itself a sacred act.

### **Distribute and eat the top and middle matzah for everyone to eat.**

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz. We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who brings bread from the land · Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat matzah

### **Dipping the bitter herb in charoset on matzah**

In creating a holiday about the joy of freedom, we turn the story of our bitter history into a sweet celebration. We recognize this by dipping our bitter herbs into the sweet charoset. We don't totally eradicate the taste of the bitter with the taste of the sweet... but doesn't the sweet mean more when it's layered over the bitterness?

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat maror. We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who made us holy through obligations, commanding us to eat bitter herbs.

### **Matzah Sandwich**

### ➤ ***Cups of Elijah and Miriam***

As is tradition, we fill a cup of wine for Elijah, the prophet who symbolizes when all people will live in freedom. As is should be recognized traditional as well, we also add a cup of water for the prophet Miriam, who sustained the Jews during their years in the desert by calling forth a flowing well to quench their thirst. As we work to perfect our world in pursuit of the freedom promised by Elijah, we turn to Miriam's well for the sustenance to do this work.

**Serve the meal.**

**While eating dessert, read the conclusion.**

➤ *Conclusion*

Margot Meitner writes, "The story of Exodus that we recount at Passover has evolved into a spiritual model that inspires my statement making (aka, my progressive political work). The Exodus story of liberation depicts the centrality of the [universal] concern for the oppressed. Moving away from a source of oppression seems to be the immediate goal. But the beautiful thing about the Exodus story is that we wander through the desert never to quite reach our destination. This forces us to focus more on the journey and the struggle. I have come to accept that the world will never be the one I hope for in my lifetime. But heartbreaking as it sometimes is to know that I will never reach my destination, it is the value that Exodus places on the journey and the struggle that sustains my political work. It is my own vision of love, peace, and justice that guides me and enables me, each Passover, to continue to make my statements."

Though it has come to the end of the seder, this moment also marks a beginning. We are beginning the next season with a renewed awareness of the freedoms we enjoy and the obstacles we must still confront. Having retold stories of the Jewish people, and reflected on the struggles people still face for freedom and equality, we are ready to embark on a year that we hope will bring positive change in the world and freedom to people everywhere. "Passover is the night for reckless dreams; for visions about what a human being can be, what society can be, what people can be, what history may become." What can we do to fulfill our reckless dreams? What will be our legacy for future generations? As we had the pleasure to gather for a seder this year, we hope to once again have the opportunity in the years to come.