

## INTRODUCTION

*Mah nishtana?* With so many Haggadot available, what is different about this one?

*Wellsprings of Freedom* brings a fresh perspective to a familiar tale. As we tell our collective story — the journey of our people out of Egyptian slavery — this Haggadah helps us to make the Seder our own individual journey of liberation.

Contemporary scholars may doubt the literal truth of the events of the biblical Exodus, but the story's power is very real. It has been a source of hope, comfort and inspiration over the ages, not only to the Jewish people, but also to other nations suffering slavery and oppression. And it has fuelled the aspirations of individuals to grow in freedom, year after year.

To clarify the story-line, *Wellsprings of Freedom* includes more of the original Torah story of enslavement and liberation than is traditionally found in the Haggadah, and draws from a wider treasury of rabbinic *midrash* (legends). We highlight the human actors in this drama, from Joseph and his brothers to Moses, and emphasize the role of women — Yoḥeved and Miriam, of course, but also Shifra, Puah and Bitya.

This Haggadah tells the story in a “split screen” format. The collective, historical journey of our people is the spoken story-line, while the personal, inner journey is suggested in the commentaries “below the line.” Most of these commentaries are based on a previously untranslated collection of Ḥasidic insights into the Haggadah, *Be'er He-Ḥasidut*. I have selected and translated from those of the 18th- and 19th-century spiritual masters' commentaries that speak to the modern seeker.

*Wellsprings of Freedom* broadens our contemporary exploration of liberation in yet another way. Within the familiar structure of the traditional Passover Haggadah, each of the *simanim* or “guideposts” of the Seder has been linked to a theme that invites us to explore a facet of freedom in our lives today. Freedom is complex — we are privileged to enjoy basic liberties, but may well be in search of freedom in other aspects of our lives. The various themes evoke this complexity; for example, with *Kaddesh*, we consider the theme of freedom in relation to our use of time; with *Karpas*, we look at freedom from the perspective of our relationship to nature and the environment.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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RA

We also acknowledge the following permissions granted:

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## How to follow this Haggadah

You will see that this Haggadah uses different typographical features:

- **Text in green** provides the leader with user-friendly cues for conducting a fail-safe Seder.
- Regular black font indicates the leader's narrative voice that introduces, explains and connects the various components of the Seder. The leader may choose among these passages selectively, and invite others to share in reading them.
- **Bold type indicates the traditional core elements of the Seder.**
-  The pomegranate, a traditional symbol for Israel and Torah, will guide you through a **shorter, child-oriented Seder**.
- Passover is known for “the four questions.” In this Haggadah there are *questions in grey italic script* throughout. You may choose among them as ways to encourage discussion and stimulate questions of your own.
- **Readings in red** are optional; they convey the more personal, inner journey towards freedom. These include commentaries, notes and poetry that can enrich the Seder experience. You might ask those attending to select one or two of these readings to share at the Seder or to bring readings of their own.
-  The musical clef indicates passages that are sung. Melodies may be found at [www.wellspringshaggadah.com](http://www.wellspringshaggadah.com).

This Haggadah completes the *Hadesh Yameinu* liturgy series. Like the Siddur and the Maḥzor before it, this Haggadah attempts to guide the reader through the traditional liturgical texts, opening up the content and structure of the original, while recasting it in a contemporary idiom. The traditional concept of election, “who has chosen us above all people,” has been revised to focus on the concept of vocation, “who has distinguished us with holy service.” In biblical times, this was expressed with the charge: “be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). In contemporary terms, this translates into the pursuit of ethical nationhood. Similarly, all references to “messiah” or “messianic era” are understood not as any supernatural being or event, but rather as the traditional Jewish expression for a utopian vision of universal freedom and justice. Our messianic era will unfold in the natural world as the result of our own collective human efforts to fulfill that vision. One of the defining features of this series has been a line-by-line, gender-neutral translation that allows non-fluent readers of Hebrew to comprehend more of what they are reading, and at the same time allows the translation to act as a commentary on the original. The inclusion of contemporary poetry adds the voices of this generation to the treasury of Jewish liturgy across the millennia.

It is up to you to add your own voice to this ancient story of freedom. Collectively and individually, through this telling and retelling of our story, it is always possible to “renew our days.”

## Notes for the Leader

While the Seder has prescribed elements, it is in fact one of the most adaptable of the Jewish rituals, making the leader's role an especially important one. For a Seder to engage the participants, the leader must be sensitive to the interests and knowledge of the guests as well as to the context in which the Seder is being held. Imagine that you have the “four children” at the table; everyone's participation may take a different form. To encourage a more inclusive experience, the leader may invite participants to take turns reading passages, in either English or Hebrew. The key is to make sure that each person can participate as he or she wishes. At the same time, the leader needs to sense the mood of the guests and perhaps suggest that a given discussion might be continued over dinner.

The traditional order and required elements of the Seder are listed in *Simanei Ha-Seder*, Mapping the Seder, on Pages 4-5. The Seder table checklist on Page xi provides further guidance.

## PROLOGUE

### הדלקת נרות CANDLE LIGHTING

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר  
שֶׁל (שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל) יוֹם טוֹב:

You abound in blessings, Eternal One our God,  
Sovereign of all time and space,  
who brings holiness to our lives with  
the command to kindle the light  
of (Shabbat and) the festival.

Barukh attah adonai eloheinu melekh ha-‘olam asher kiddeshanu be-mitzvotav ve-tzivvanu le-hadlik ner shel (shabbat ve-shel) yom tov.

*Recited only on the first night.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמָּנוּ  
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה:

Praised are you, Eternal One our God,  
Sovereign of all life,  
who has kept us alive, sustained us  
and allowed us to reach this season.

Barukh attah adonai eloheinu melekh ha-‘olam she-heḥeyanu ve-kiyyemanu ve-higgi’anu la-zeman ha-zeh.

### ETCHING

The sky is dotted like th<sup>e</sup> unleavened bread,  
The moon a golden platter in the sky.  
Old midget Jews, with mediated tread,  
Hands clasped behind, and body stooped ahead,  
Creep from the synagogue and stare on high  
Upon a golden platter in a dotted sky.

– A.M. Klein

## Seder Plate

- **ZERO‘A** – Roasted Shank Bone: This recalls the Passover sacrifices offered in the time of the Temple; traditionally, a lamb bone is used. Vegetarians may substitute a roasted beet.
- **ḤAROSEṬ** – This mixture symbolizes the mortar the Israelites used for the bricks. There are many versions, reflecting different traditions. Recipes commonly include various elements of the “recipe” found in the biblical Song of Songs: “Feed me with apples and raisin-cakes; your kisses are sweeter than wine. The scent of your breath is like apricots; your cheeks are a bed of spices; the fig tree has ripened. Then I went down to the walnut grove....”
- **ḤAZERET** – Some Seder plates include a place for ḥazeret, which is an additional bitter herb, often used for the Hillel sandwich. It can be romaine lettuce or endive.
- **KARPAS** – Spring Greens: These remind us of the coming of spring; parsley, celery or watercress are often used.
- **BEITZAH** – Roasted Egg: This is a reminder of the additional festival sacrifice (ḥagigah) that was offered in the Temple.
- **MAROR** – Bitter Herbs: These symbolize the bitterness that the Israelites suffered as slaves in Egypt. Traditionally, this is horseradish, but any bitter-tasting green may be used.
- **ORANGE** – Recently, the custom has developed of including an orange to represent those who have been historically marginalized in Jewish life: lesbians and gay men, and women in general.



## 🍷 WELCOME TO OUR SEDER

Our tradition teaches: *Ve-higgadeta le-vinkha*, “You shall tell your child,” relating through story, song and ritual, the meaning of our Exodus from Egypt. Since we last gathered to tell our Passover story, much has happened to us, collectively and individually, on our journey to freedom.

For over 3,000 years, Israel’s liberation from slavery has inspired people and nations everywhere who seek freedom. This story lives on because there are still many forms of slavery in our world today. We are still struggling to leave “Egypt,” *mitzrayim* — literally, “the narrow place.” There are still narrow places that confine us, and battles for freedom yet to be won.

Our story of leaving Egypt is the shared narrative of a people, but it is also for each of us today to make it our own. In telling our story of freedom, each of us around the table is invited to reflect on our personal journeys toward freedom this year. As we say, *Be-khol dor va-dor hayav adam lirot et atzmo ke-ilu hu yatza mi-mizrayim* — “In every generation each of us must see ourselves as if we had personally gone out of Egypt.”

Tonight, our story of liberation continues. Tonight, we retell that ageless tale of freedom, the *haggadah*, once again.

*Fill the first cup of wine.*



מוֹצֵי־מַצָּה	Freedom and Memory <b>MOTZI MATZAH</b> – BREAKING BREAD . . . . .	80
מַרְרוֹר	<b>MAROR</b> – EXPERIENCING BITTERNESS . . . . .	81
כוֹרֵךְ	<b>KOREKH</b> – EVOKING HILLEL . . . . .	82
שְׁלַחַן עוֹרֵךְ	Freedom and Hunger <b>SHULHAN OREKH</b> – ENJOYING THE FESTIVE MEAL . . . . .	83
צְפוּן	Freedom and Concealment <b>TZAFUN</b> – FINDING THE AFIKOMAN . . . . .	84
בִּרְךְ	Freedom and Gratitude <b>BAREKH</b> – GIVING THANKS. . . . .	85
הַלֵּל	Freedom and Praise <b>HALLEL</b> – REJOICING. . . . .	106
נִרְצָה	Freedom and Fulfillment <b>NIRTZAH</b> – CONCLUDING THE SEDER. . . . .	124

## סימני הסדר **MAPPING THE SEDER**

Seder means “order.” We begin with the *simanei ha-seder*, “the guideposts of the Seder,” that provide direction and structure for our evening. Each offers another facet of freedom for us to consider; collectively, they map our journey.

קִדְּשׁ	Freedom and Time <b>KADDESH</b> – DEDICATING TIME. . . . .	8
וְרַחֵץ	Freedom and Trust <b>URHATZ</b> – WASHING IN MIRIAM’S WELL . . . . .	14
כַּרְפָּס	Freedom and Nature <b>KARPAS</b> – DIPPING GREENS IN SALT WATER. . . . .	15
יַחַץ	Freedom and Brokenness <b>YAHATZ</b> – BREAKING THE MATZAH . . . .	18
מַגִּיד	Freedom and Narrative <b>MAGGID</b> – TELLING OUR STORY . . . . .	19
רַחֲצָה	Freedom and Love <b>ROHTZAH</b> – SANCTIFYING OUR HANDS . . . . .	78



## כוס ראשונה THE FIRST CUP

We raise this first cup to spring and the perpetual renewal of our days.



הִנְנִי מוּכָן וּמְזֻמָּן לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת  
כּוֹס רִשׁוֹנָה מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת:

I am ready to fulfill the mitzvah of  
the first of the four cups of the Seder.

Hineni mukhan u-mezumman le-kayem mitzvat kos rishonah me-arba kosot.

*We lift the cup of wine and recite:*

*On Shabbat we start here and include the words in brackets.*

וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר  
יוֹם הַשֵּׁשִׁי:

It was evening and morning:  
the sixth day.

וַיִּכְלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ  
וְכָל־צְבָאָם:

Now the heavens and the earth were  
completed with all they contained.

וַיִּכַּל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי  
מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה

On the seventh day God completed  
all the work of Creation,

וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי

and ceased on the seventh day

מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:

from all that work.

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי  
וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ

Then God blessed the seventh day  
and sanctified it,

כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְלַאכְתּוֹ

for on that day God had ceased

אֲשֶׁר־בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

from making all the work of Creation.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

You abound in blessings, Eternal One  
our God, Source of Creation,  
who creates the fruit of the vine.

Barukh attah adonai eloheinu melekh ha-‘olam borei peri ha-gafen.

While on Shabbat we stand for Kiddush, on Pesah it is customary to remain seated as yet another difference that distinguishes this night from all others.

# קדש KADDESH DEDICATING TIME Time

*This month shall be for you the beginning of months.  
– Exodus 12*

Pesah signals the beginning  
of a new relationship with time,  
time marked not only by the endless cycles of nature  
but by the surprising events of our own history.  
By dedicating time, we become masters of the moment  
and make the moment eternal.

What is sacred time for us?

We say in the Kiddush of every Shabbat and festival that it is “a sacred occasion, recalling the Exodus from Egypt.” Every Shabbat and festival testifies to the godliness of Creation — cycles of work and rest and the renewal of the world. *This* is sacred time. We experience this sense of sacred time most clearly and powerfully as we celebrate the Exodus from Egypt. We therefore recall this experience — when time was made new with the concept of human freedom — in every Kiddush. (*Maor Va-Shemesh*)

# Freedom and

## כרפס KARPAS

### DIPPING GREENS IN SALT WATER

# Nature

*God showed Adam all the trees of the Garden and said: "See all My works how beautiful they are! Beware that you do not corrupt or destroy My universe, for if you do, there is no one to repair it after you."*  
 – Lamentations Rabbah 7:13

The *karpas*, symbol of new growth and the hope of spring, is dipped in salt water to remind us of the bitterness of slavery and that new blessings can yet emerge from our tears.

The greens dipped in salt water also remind us of our connection to nature. Our enslavement began with an environmental catastrophe — a famine; and it ended in further assaults upon nature — the ten plagues.

Tonight, as we eat the *karpas*, we are mindful that just as Adam was placed in the Garden “to tend and to till it,” we have a sacred obligation to be guardians of the earth. We are not free to despoil and deplete our environment.



*When everyone has received the greens dipped in salt water, we recite the following and eat the karpas:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה    You abound in blessings, Eternal One  
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם    our God, Source of Creation,  
 בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאָדָמָה:    who creates the fruit of the earth.

Barukh attah adonai eloheinu melekh ha-'olam borei peri ha-adamah.

*At this point in the Seder you may wish to follow the custom of eating other appetizers that may be dipped. These include other vegetables, hard-boiled eggs dipped in salt water, and gefilte fish dipped in horseradish.*

Does our “sacred obligation” to nature enhance or limit our freedom?

# Freedom and

## ורחץ URHATZ

### WASHING IN MIRIAM'S WELL

# Trust

*Blessed are those who trust in the Eternal ... they shall be like trees planted by streams of water. – Jeremiah 17*

Washing, *rehitzah*, in Aramaic, the language of the Talmud, means “trust.”

We recall tonight the waters that evoke trust: the waters of the Nile that gently rocked the infant Moses in his basket; and the parted waters of the Sea of Reeds, through which Israel emerged, new-born, into freedom.

Miriam was there at the Nile, watching over her brother, and Miriam was there at the Sea, leading the women in song and dance, celebrating their trust in the redeeming Life of the Ages.

Legend tells of Miriam’s Well, a well filled with *mayim hayyim*, living waters of hope and trust, that accompanied the Israelites throughout their wandering in the desert as long as Miriam was alive.

Tonight at our Seder, we are still on that journey, and recall all the women from Miriam’s time until our own who helped us know the waters of life and trust.



*We now fill Miriam’s Cup or Miriam’s Well in conjunction with the ritual of Urhatz, the washing of the hands without the blessing.*

When the Temple still stood in Jerusalem, it was the custom to wash the hands without a blessing before eating vegetables. Though no longer practiced, on Seder night we do so to bring us back to a time when holiness was our chief concern.

כתנות פסים  
כתנות פסים לבש הגן  
וכסות רקמה – מדי דשא,  
ומעיל תשבץ עטה כל עץ  
ולכל עין הראה פלאו.

### A JOSEPH-COAT

The garden wears a Joseph-coat,  
Its lawn sprouts embroidered robes.  
A patchwork cloak garbs every tree,  
Wonders of nature for all to see.

כל ציץ חדש לזמן חדש,  
יצא שוחק לקראת בואו,  
אף לפניהם שושן עבר –  
מלך, כי על הורם כסאו.

Each new-born bud renewed by time  
Emerges, rejoicing upon the vine.  
Behold! The pageantry of a rose.  
A regal beauty upon her throne.

יצא מבין משמר עליו  
וישנה את בגדי כלאו.  
מי לא ישתה יינו עליו –  
האיש ההוא ישא חטאו.

Liberated from sheltering leaves,  
She sheds her prison clothes with ease.  
Who dares not raise a glass of wine?  
To thus spurn nature would be a crime.

– משה אבן עזרא

– Moses Ibn Ezra

Our sages taught that a poor person who lacks bread should not eat vegetables before a meal for it awakens the appetite (*Talmud, Shabbat 140b*). Tonight we eat *karpas*, the green vegetable, to awaken all our senses and our appetite for freedom.

### The hard-boiled egg

Just as the Burning Bush signified that, though consumed in flames, the Jewish people shall never be destroyed, we eat a hard-boiled egg dipped in salt water as a symbol of determination in the face of adversity, of hope emerging from despair.

### Dipping twice

The custom of dipping on Seder night recalls two key events in our biblical history. The dipping of *karpas* in salt water reminds us of the tears of sadness Joseph's brothers caused their father. They bloodied Joseph's many-coloured cloak (*kutonet passim*) to make it appear as if a wild beast had eaten him, when in fact they had sold him into slavery. This was the beginning of our descent into Egyptian exile. The second dipping of the evening, the *maror* in *haroset*, reminds us of the signal of redemption: the dipping of hyssop in lambs' blood that was daubed on the doorposts of the Israelites' houses when God passed over and spared them from the final plague.

As we pass the *karpas*, the green leafy vegetables that symbolize *Hag Ha-Aviv*, this Festival of Spring, we recite and sing verses from the Song of Songs, the biblical love poetry associated with *Pesah*.

כי־הנה הסתו עבר  
כי־הנה הסתו עבר  
הגשם חלף הלף לו:  
הנצנים נראו בארץ  
עת הזמיר הגיע  
וקול התור נשמע בארצנו:  
התאנה חנטה פניה  
והגפנים סמדר נתנו ריח:

KI HINNEI HA-STAV AVAR

For now the winter is past,  
the rains are over and gone.  
The blossoms have appeared in the land,  
the time of singing has come;  
the song of the turtledove is heard in the land;  
the green figs form on the fig tree,  
the vines in blossom give off fragrance.

(Song 2:11-13)



אנה הלך דודך  
אנה הלך דודך היפה בנשים  
אנה פנה דודך ונבקשנו עמך:  
דודי ירד לגנו לערוגות הבשם  
לרעות בגנים  
וללקט שושנים:

ANA HALAKH DODEKH

Where has your lover gone, O beautiful one?  
Say where he is, and we will seek him with you.  
My love has gone down to his garden,  
to the beds of spices,  
to browse in the gardens to pick lilies.

(Song 6:1-2)

Ana halakh dodeikh ha-yafah ba-nashim, ana panah dodeikh u-nevakshenu 'immakh.  
Dodi yarad le-gano la-arugot ha-bosem (lir'ot ba-gannim ve-lilkot shoshannim).



דודי לי  
דודי לי ואני לו  
הרעה בשושנים.  
מי זאת עלה מן־המדבר...  
מקטרת מר ולבונה.

DODI LI

My beloved is mine and I am his;  
he feasts in a field of lilies.  
Who is that rising from the desert...  
fragrant with myrrh and frankincense.

(Song 2:16:3:6)

Do-di li va'ani lo, ha-ro'eh ba-shoshannim. (\*2)  
Mi zot 'olah min ha-midbar, mi zot 'olah?  
M'keturet mor mor u-levonah, mor u-levonah  
Do-di li...

# Freedom and מגיד **MAGGID** TELLING OUR STORY Narrative

*Reb Zebulun said, "Today we live, but by tomorrow today  
will be a story. The whole world, all human life, is one long story."  
– Isaac Bashevis Singer*

Our journey to freedom begins with three sentences that suggest our story must be told in all three dimensions of time: past, present and future.

Our story starts out by recalling our distant past, the time when "we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt."  
Now that we are free, our narrative tells us we must reach out to all who are in need:

"You shall not oppress the stranger; you know the heart of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (*Exodus 23:9*)

"You shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (*Leviticus 19:34*)

And always, our story leads us to imagine a time when all will one day be completely free:

"And each person shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, and none shall make him afraid." (*Micah 4:4*)

## ONCE IN A YEAR

Once in a year this comes to pass:  
My father is a king in a black skull cap,  
My mother is a queen in a brown perruque,  
A princess my sister, a lovely lass,  
My brother a prince, and I a duke.

Silver and plate and fine cut-glass  
Brought from the cupboards that hid them till now  
Banquet King David's true lineage here.  
Once in a year this comes to pass,  
Once in a long unroyal year. – A.M. Klein

# Freedom and יחץ **YAHATZ** BREAKING THE MATZAH Brokenness

*There is a crack in everything.  
That's how the light gets in.  
– Leonard Cohen*

We break the middle matzah in two, hiding the larger piece, for more is always hidden than revealed.  
This broken, hidden matzah will become the *afikoman*, that which requires searching out.

It is often some form of brokenness that sends us on our journey in search of freedom. At the same time, the path to liberation and redemption can come from the most unlikely sources, such as a lowly, broken piece of matzah.



*We now break the middle matzah, wrap it in the afikoman cover, and when attention is diverted, hide it. After the meal, the children will search for it and those who searched for it will receive a reward.  
(In some homes the tradition is for the children to "steal" the afikoman and hide it. The children can then hold the hidden afikoman until it is ransomed for a present.)*

What experiences of brokenness have contributed to our search for freedom?



## הא לחמא עניא THIS IS THE BREAD OF AFFLICTION



*We now uncover and raise the plate of matzah as we recite:*

הא לחמא עניא This is the bread of affliction  
די אכלו אבהתנא that our ancestors ate  
בארעא דמצרים. in the land of Egypt.

כל דכפין All who are hungry,  
ייתי ויכל let them come and eat;  
כל דצריך all who are in need,  
ייתי ויפסח. let them come celebrate Pesah.

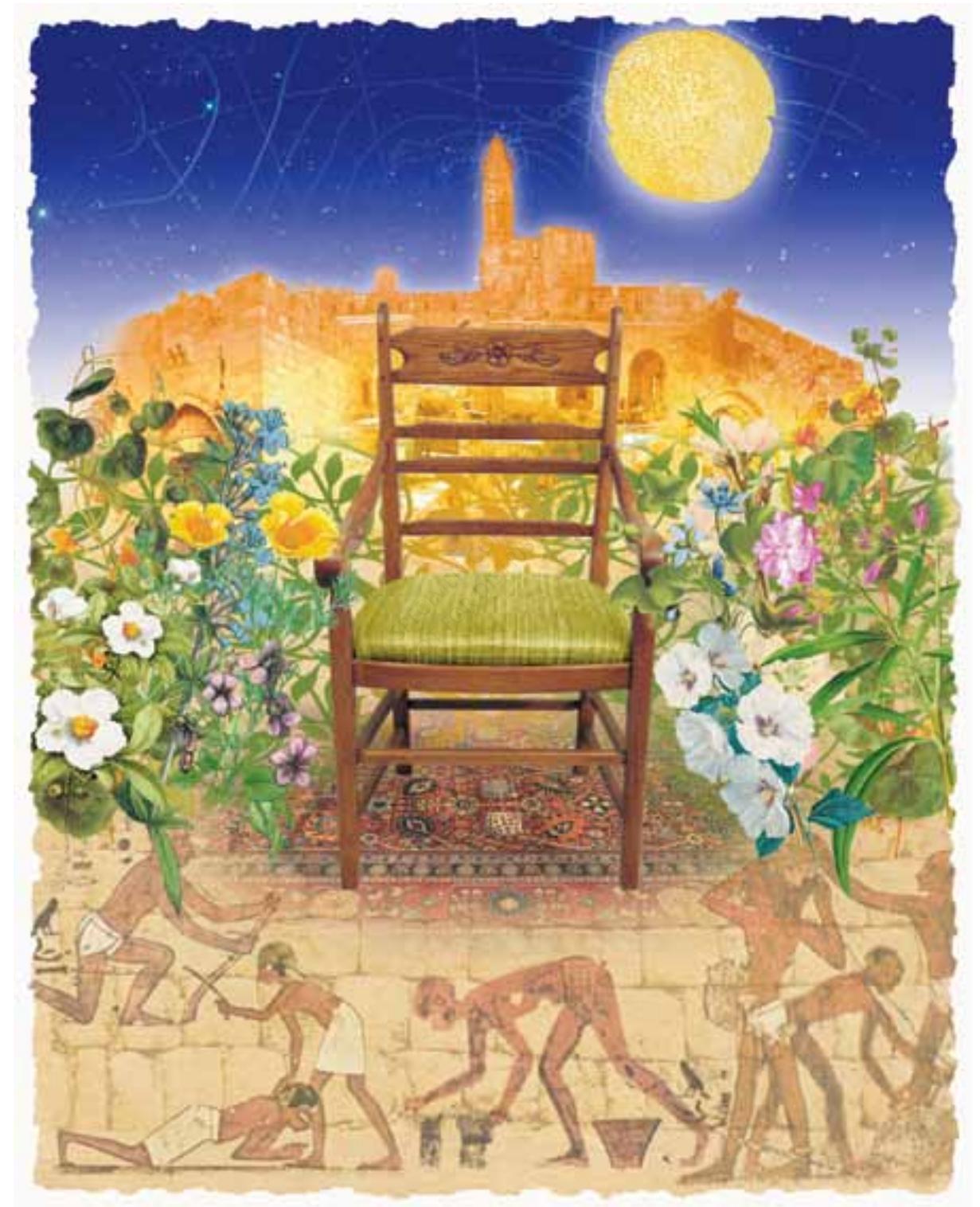
השתא הכא Now we are here,  
לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל. next year in the land of Israel;  
השתא עבדי now we are slaves,  
לשנה הבאה בני חורין: next year we will be free.

Ha lahma 'anya di akhalu avhatana be-ar'a de-mitzrayim.  
Kol dikhfin yeitei ve-yeikhul, kol ditzrikh yeitei ve-yifsaḥ.  
Ha-shata hakha, le-shanah ha-ba'ah be-ar'a de-yisrael.  
Ha-shata 'avdei, le-shanah ha-ba'ah benei ḥorin.

*We now fill the second cup of wine.*

### **Kol Dikhfin, Kol Ditzrikh – All who are hungry, all who are in need**

Those who are hungry know what they lack, “they may come and eat.” That is, they can gain the nourishment they need for body and soul. Those who are in need don’t yet understand what they truly lack in order to fulfill themselves. “Let them come and celebrate Pesah.” That is, let them talk tonight about going out of Egypt; let them discover what will truly set them free. This can only be accomplished through “a mouth that speaks,” *peh saḥ*. This is the essence of the Exodus from Egypt: telling the story makes our personal truth come alive. (*Beit Avraham*)





## עבדים היינו SAMUEL'S STORY

### **Avadim hayyinu – We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt.**

To be in Egypt is to be caught up in lies and deception. However, even a spark of truthfulness can lift a person up and liberate them from the oppression of falsehood. (*Degel Maḥaneh Ephraim*)

### **Had the Blessed Holy One not taken our ancestors out of Egypt, we would still be enslaved.**

Isn't this obvious? To understand this, we must remember that the essence of Israel's exile in Egypt was that their awareness was in exile; they were in a constricted state of mind. Only when greater awareness dawned upon Israel were they able to reject the outer constraints of Pharaoh's rule. This happens whenever a person achieves a more expansive state of mind. Attaining this inner awareness, however, is transitory, which is why we must tell our stories of liberation over and over again. (*Maor Va-Shemesh*)

### **We would still be enslaved to Pharaoh.**

Pharaoh is an anagram for evil speech, *PeH RA*, for his sole objective was to degrade their speech. When Moses, the stutterer, questioned his own ability to speak in such a way that Pharaoh would actually heed him, he intuited that the essence of redemption was to redeem speech. By virtue of striving to speak truthfully and clearly, our ancestors were deserving of freedom, as the *midrash* says, "They didn't corrupt their speech, on account of which they merited redemption." The battle against the corruption of speech is ongoing. "Even if we were all wise, understanding and learned," we require perpetual diligence and strength to purify and clarify our language. It is through telling (*sapper*) our story of going out from Egypt that we come to purify speech and aim for moral clarity (*sappir*). (*Maor Va-Shemesh*)

### **Whoever expands upon the telling of the Exodus**

At any time, not only on Passover, in whatever you say, let your words speak of the Exodus from Egypt, that is, words of truth. One's words should always tell a story of freedom. (*Maor Va-Shemesh*)

There are many forms of enslavement. From the entrapments of our own making — the constraints upon heart and mind — to the actual bondage of political and economic oppression, slavery limits our capacity to enjoy life fully.

Our Talmudic sages Rav and Samuel debated how this story should be told. Rav was more concerned with the inner enslavement of the human spirit, while Samuel argued that our priority must be to combat the obvious forms of physical slavery. Samuel begins our story of liberation this way:

🎵 עבדים היינו עַתָּה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין: Avadim hayyinu 'attah benei ḥorin.

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים.	We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt,
ויציאנו יהוה אלהינו משם	but the Eternal One our God took us out of
ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה.	there with a mighty hand and an
ואלו לא הוציא הקדוש ברוך הוא	outstretched arm. Had the Blessed Holy One
את אבותינו ממצרים	not taken our ancestors out of Egypt,
הרי אנו ובנינו ובני בנינו	then we and our children and our children's
משעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים.	children would still be enslaved
ואפילו כלנו חכמים	to Pharaoh in Egypt. Now even if all
כלנו נבונים כלנו זקנים	of us were wise, all of us understanding,
כלנו יודעים את התורה	all of us elders, all of us learned
מצוה עלינו	in Torah, it would still be our duty
לספר ביציאת מצרים.	to tell the story of the Exodus.
וכל המרבה לספר	And whoever expands upon the telling
ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משבח:	of the Exodus deserves praise.

*This is how our story of enslavement and freedom traditionally begins. How would you begin the story today?*

We have many praiseworthy sages who have expanded upon the story of the Exodus and its meaning. We know of five rabbis who became so involved in the discussion that they lost all sense of time.

מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ  
וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בְּרֵעֵזְרָה  
וְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא וְרַבִּי טַרְפוֹן.  
שָׁהוּ מְסַבִּין בְּבִנְיַבְרַק  
וְהָיוּ מְסַפְּרִים בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם  
כְּלֵאוֹתוֹ הַלַּיְלָה  
עַד שֶׁבָּאוּ תַלְמִידֵיהֶם וְאָמְרוּ לָהֶם:  
רְבוֹתֵינוּ הִגִּיעַ זְמַן  
קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע שֶׁל שַׁחֲרִית:

A tale is told of Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Joshua,  
Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah,  
Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon.  
They were gathered in Bnei Brak,  
telling about the Exodus from Egypt  
all through the night,  
until their students came to them and said,  
“Our teachers, the time has come  
to recite the morning Sh’ma.”

### Telling about the Exodus

In their telling (*sapper*) about the Exodus they brought the light and clarity (*sappir*) of that liberating moment into the night of exile. We, too, must train ourselves to speak with words of freedom, words that will liberate us from the dark times of our lives — words of hope and redemption.

### Until their students came

Even though the rabbis of Bnei Brak were “awake” all night talking about freedom, their students were reminding them to wake up to the message of *Shema Yisrael*, the essential wisdom of Torah — that God is One. This awareness of oneness, that we are all part of the One, gives us the greatest possibilities of freedom — the liberation from the separate self. We are not alone in our quest for freedom, nor can we do it all alone. No one can be truly free until all are free.





## חכם THE WISE

חכם מה הוא אומר?  
מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים  
אשר צוה יהוה אלהינו אתכם?  
What does the wise child ask? “What is the  
meaning of the statutes, laws, and rules that  
the Eternal our God has commanded you?”  
(Deuteronomy 6:20)

ואף אתה אומר-לו  
כהלכות הפסח.  
אין מפטירין אחר הפסח  
אפיקומן:  
You should tell this child,  
according to the laws of Pesah,  
we do not conclude the Pesah meal  
with anything but our *afikoman*.

**Hakham, the wise child.** The wise child is asking a sophisticated question. Why do we need all these rules and instructions for performing the rituals of Pesah when redemption comes from achieving a greater awareness, and not from just doing rituals? This awareness, however, comes and goes. Therefore the answer “we do not conclude” implies that we don’t stop with mere performance of rituals. In the eating of matzah and the telling of our story we are creating within ourselves vessels that will awaken and sustain greater awareness. (*Maor Va-Shemesh*)

**Questioning religious ritual.** The wise child, like the wicked, questions the significance of religious ritual. How then does this question differ from that of the wicked child who also says, “what does this ritual (*avodah*) mean to you?”

The wise one questions whether redemption can be achieved through rational, intellectual laws and rules. Redemption, after all, must be lived and experienced, not just talked about. The truly wise are those whose Torah is lived out faithfully. This is hinted at in the answer that we haven’t fulfilled Pesah until after we have incorporated the quality of *afikoman*, which the rabbis read as a word-play on the Aramaic words for “eating” and “manna” (*afiko man*). Manna could only be gathered on a daily basis; true redemption comes only when we learn to renew our faith day by day. (*Toledot Yaakov Yosef*)

**Afikoman.** The word *afikoman* is a Greek term referring to the lavish and sometimes obscene after-dinner desserts and entertainment of the Greek symposium. The rabbis distinguish the Jewish talk-feast with this last detail, namely: “After the Pesah meal, we do not turn to other forms of entertainment (*afikoman*).” In Jewish tradition the meaning of *afikoman* is transformed into the most modest of all desserts — the matzah — that the message of liberation might remain on our lips.



The Haggadah now takes these four verses and expands upon them in Talmudic style, offering commentary upon each verse and phrase. This is the core of the traditional Haggadah, which we could read as a drama in four acts:

ACT I — Descent into Egypt: Sojourners and Strangers

ACT II — Enslavement: Hardship and Suffering

ACT III — Outcry: Awakening to Freedom

ACT IV — Liberation: A Redeeming Life-Force

As we relate our story in this way, by connecting a phrase to other verses of Torah, we share in the rich tradition of learning that is part of our story. Learning through study and discussion has always been an integral part of Jewish culture and of fundamental importance to the Jewish soul. Especially in difficult times, our desire to learn has been an act of resistance, the mark of a free people, and a source of redemption.

### My father was a wandering Aramean.

According to some commentators, “my father” refers to Abraham; the majority, however, say that it was Jacob. In either case, in every generation we identify with the experience of being wanderers, just as in every generation we experience going out from Egypt.



## אָרְמֵי אֹבֵד אָבִי THE HAGGADAH'S STORY

Our ancestors were indeed idol worshipers. However according to legend, Abraham smashed his father's idols and broke out of that enslavement. How, then, did Abraham's grandson, Jacob, and his descendants become enslaved once again? Our Torah relates that drama in the following four verses that contain the entire story.

אָרְמֵי אֹבֵד אָבִי  
וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִם  
וַיֵּגֶר שָׁם בְּמִתֵּי מְעֹט. וַיְהִי  
שָׁם לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל עֲצוּם וָרַב:  
My father was a wandering Aramean who  
went down to Egypt and sojourned there  
with meagre numbers; but there he became  
a great nation, mighty and numerous.

וַיִּרְעוּ אֶת־נֹפְלֵינוּ וַיַּעֲבֹדוּנוּ.  
וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבָדָה קָשָׁה:  
The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and made us  
suffer; and they imposed hard labour upon us.

וַנִּצְעַק אֶל־יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קִלְנוּ וַיִּרְא  
אֶת־עֲנִיּוֹנוֹ וְאֶת־עֲמָלְנוּ וְאֶת־לַחְצָנוּ:  
We cried out to Adonai, the Everpresent,  
the God of our ancestors; and Adonai, the  
Compassionate One, heard our plea and saw  
our plight, our misery, and our oppression.

וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְהוָה  
מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה  
וּבְזְרֹעַ נְטוּיָה  
וּבְמִרְאָה גְדוֹלָה וּבְאֹתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים:  
Then Adonai, the God of Liberation,  
took us out of Egypt with a strong hand  
and an outstretched arm,  
with great awe, with signs and wonders.

(Deuteronomy 26:5-8)

## 🍎 ACT I — DESCENT INTO EGYPT: SOJOURNERS AND STRANGERS

*My father was a wandering Aramean who went down to Egypt and sojourned there with meagre numbers; and there he became a great nation, mighty and numerous.* — Deuteronomy 26:5

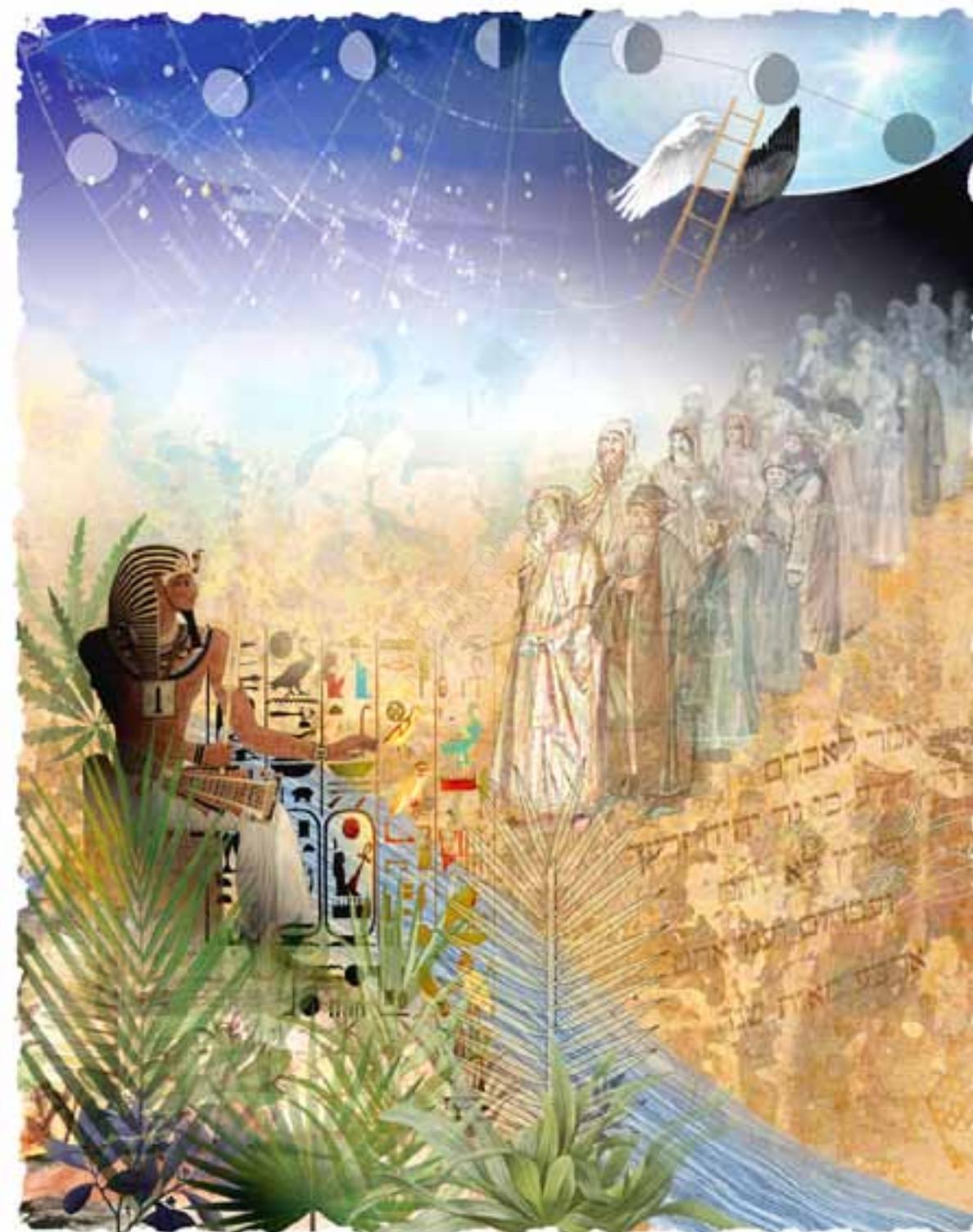
**וַיֵּרַד מִצְרַיִם וַיֵּגֵר שָׁם.  
מִכָּאֵן שְׁבַנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
הָיוּ גֵרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם  
כְּמוֹ שְׂאֵמֵר יְהוּהוּ לְאַבְרָהָם:  
יָדַע תְּדַע כִּי גֵר יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ  
בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם וְעֲבָדוּם  
וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה.** **He went down to Egypt and sojourned there.**  
It was foretold to Abraham that the Israelites were to become strangers in Egypt, as the Torah recounts, “Know well that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not theirs, and they shall be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.” (Genesis 15:13)

And so it was that during a time of great famine Abraham’s grandson, Jacob, sent his sons to find food in the land of Egypt and they became sojourners, strangers in a land that was not theirs.

**כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה  
לְגֹר בְּאֶרֶץ בְּאֵנּוּ כִּי־אֵין מְרֹעַ  
לְצֹאן אֲשֶׁר לְעַבְדֶּיךָ  
כִּי־כָבֵד הָרָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן  
וְעַתָּה יִשְׁבוּ־נָא עַבְדֶּיךָ  
בְּאֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן.** “And they told Pharaoh, we have come to sojourn in the land for there is no pasture for our flocks; for there is a heavy famine in the land of Canaan. So now let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.” (Genesis 47:4)

### and there he became a great nation

This means that the Israelites distinguished themselves, for they remained distinctive through the mitzvot. Israel’s attachment to holiness is the mark of their greatness and distinction as a nation. (Mekhilta, Bo, 5; Ohev Yisrael)



### He went down to Egypt.

“Descending into Egypt” is understood to mean “constrained in speech.” As long as their quality of speech was constrained, Israel was “in Egypt.” Their speech was mere cliché produced by force of habit. When our speech is forced, constrained, thoughtless, we are not truly free.

In order to leave Egypt, Israel had to repair that quality of thoughtless speech. This was necessary in order to receive Torah, that is, openness to hearing “the word of God” — new words and a new way of thinking. (*Meor Einayim*)

### and sojourned there

He didn’t descend to become immersed in Egypt, but only dwelled there temporarily. We should not get stuck in the low places of our lives, but see them as only a temporary condition. This is how we develop the faith and trust to overcome the difficult times in our lives. (*Zera Kodesh*)

### he became a great nation, mighty and numerous

Traditionally the Haggadah offers the following commentary: “As it is said, ‘I let you grow and multiply like plants of the field, and you became numerous and great.’” (*Ezekiel 16:7*)

When the root of our soul is revealed to us, we blossom and grow fruitfully (grow and multiply), like the plants of the field. (*Zera Kodesh*)

### grow and multiply

The hidden, spiritual meaning of going out from Egypt is that awareness had been in exile; we were in a constricted state of mind, unaware that the true service of God was to be in a joyful, expansive state of mind. As a result of our exodus from Egypt, from the narrow straits, our awareness of God grew and multiplied. That is, we attained a more expansive state of mind, and we increased our ability to be joyful. (*Meor Einayim*)

### the land was filled with them.

Their holiness filled their material, earthly selves (*ha-artziyut*, a word-play on *ha-aretz*, the land). They were so practiced in righteousness that their bodies remembered and supported their holy service; it had become ingrained in every fibre and every gesture of their beings. (*Noam Elimelekh*)

בְּמִתֵּי מְעוֹט. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:  
בְּשִׁבְעִים נַפְשׁ  
יָרְדוּ אֲבוֹתֶיךָ מִצְרָיִמָּה.  
יְכוֹל אָבְדוֹ  
בֵּין הַמִּצְרִים.  
תִּלְמוּד לֹא מֵר:  
וְעַתָּה שְׂמֵךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לְרַב:

“With meagre numbers,” as the Torah tells us, “Your ancestors went down to Egypt, seventy persons in all.” You might have thought that they would have disappeared amongst the Egyptians, but the verse continues, “and now the Eternal your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.” (*Deuteronomy 10:22*)

עָצוּם וְרַב כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:  
וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל פָּרוּ וַיִּשְׂרְצוּ  
וַיִּרְבוּ וַיַּעֲצְמוּ בְּמֵאֵד מְאֹד  
וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ אֹתָם:

“Mighty and numerous,” as the Torah says, “The Israelites were fruitful and prolific; they multiplied and increased very greatly, so that the land was filled with them.” (*Exodus 1:7*)



When have you felt like you were stuck in mitzrayim, a place of narrowness and constraint?

## 🍷 ACT II — ENSLAVEMENT: HARDSHIP AND SUFFERING

*The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and made us suffer;  
and they imposed harsh labour upon us. — Deuteronomy 26:6*

**וַיִּרְעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם.** “The Egyptians dealt harshly with us.”  
הָיוּ כְּפוּיֵי טוֹבָה שֶׁשָּׁלְמוּ רָעָה  
תַּחַת הַטּוֹבָה שֶׁעָשָׂה לָהֶם יוֹסֵף  
כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ חָדָשׁ עַל  
מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדַע אֶת-יוֹסֵף:  
(Exodus 1:8)

Jacob’s favourite son, Joseph, had been sold long ago by his jealous brothers to the Ishmaelites who brought him down into Egypt. There, Joseph interpreted Pharaoh’s dreams wisely and rose to power. During the years of plenty, Joseph stored up enough food to provide for all of Egypt throughout the years of famine.

When Jacob sent his sons down to Egypt in search of food they discovered, to their astonishment, that the one who governed and provided for all the people was none other than their brother Joseph. It was upon hearing from his sons that Joseph was still alive that Jacob and the rest of his family had gone down to Egypt.

### **The Egyptians dealt harshly with us.**

The Egyptians befriended us (*rei’ut*, a word play on *vayrei’u*), causing us to act like them, even in their wicked ways. This was their shrewdness. “They ruthlessly imposed labour” (*bafarakh*), that is, with kind, smooth speech (*ba-peh rakh*), beguiling us into loving them, teaching us their wicked, superficial wisdom. This drove us farther and farther from our own faith, and allowed them to overcome us. The essence of our power is when we are able to separate ourselves from the harmful influences around us and be true to ourselves. (*Zera Kodesh*)

### **who did not know Joseph**

Our loss of historical memory is the beginning of every form of enslavement.

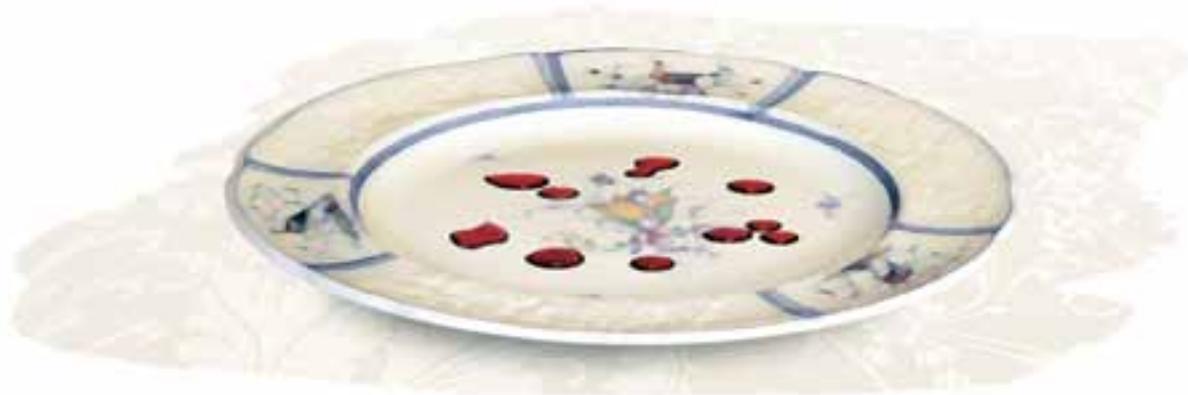


### the Holy One alone

Obviously, the Blessed Holy One could have given the Israelites the power to avenge themselves upon the Egyptians, but God did not want to sanction the use of their fists for self-defence even at that time; for, while at that moment they might merely have defended themselves against evil-doers, by such means the way of the fist spreads through the world, and in the end defenders become aggressors. (*Aharon Shmuel Tamares*)

### and on all the gods of Egypt

Based on the Torah's claim that "on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments," the plagues have been understood as an assault on the Egyptian gods as much as upon the Egyptians themselves. The first two represent an attack upon Hapi — the Nile god who, along with Osiris, irrigated the life-source of Egypt — and upon Heqt, the frog goddess. The last two plagues, darkness and death, may be seen as an attack upon the primary god of the Egyptian pantheon, Re, the sun god and source of all life.



## ACT IV — LIBERATION: A REDEEMING LIFE-FORCE

*Then Adonai, the God of Liberation, took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, with great awe, with signs and wonders.*

– Deuteronomy 26:8

**“Then Adonai, the God of Liberation, took us out of Egypt.”** Not by an angel, nor by a seraph, nor by a messenger. Rather, the Holy One alone, as the Torah recounts, “For that night I will pass through Egypt, and I will strike down every first-born in Egypt, both human and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments. I am the Eternal.” (*Exodus 12:12*)

**“With signs and wonders.”** These are the plagues, as it says “And I will give you wonders in the heavens and on earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke.” (*Joel 3:3*)

The Holy One brought ten plagues upon the Egyptians, and they were:

*What leads to the great moments of liberation in our own time?*



## רבן גמליאל RABBAN GAMLIEL'S STORY

We have now told our story of going out from Egypt, but for Rabban Gamliel, telling that story was not enough.

As leader of the generation who survived the destruction of the Second Temple, Gamliel faced the challenge of continuity: How will we Jews keep our traditions alive under new historical conditions? How can we experience the Judaism of our ancestors when we live in a world that is so radically different from theirs?

Rabban Gamliel's answer is that rituals can make our past come alive and live again in us. Sharing a Passover meal, eating the symbolic foods and discussing their meaning links us to our past, and leads us to create our own new experiences of Jewish life.

רבן גמליאל היה אומר:	Rabban Gamliel used to say:
כל שלא אמר	Whoever has not explained
שלושה דברים אלו בפסח	these three things on Passover
לא יצא ידי חובתו	has not fulfilled their obligation;
ואלו הן:	and they are:
פסח. מצה. ומרור:	the Passover sacrifice, matzah and <i>maror</i> .

*Do our rituals constrain us or make us free?*

### Had You only divided for us the sea

“And the Israelites walked on dry ground through the midst of the sea.” (*Exodus 14:29*)  
At the hour of the parting of the sea, Israel saw God's great wonders and exalted greatness. There are righteous people who always walk cleaving to God, and their hearts always beat with a sense of God's exaltation and greatness, as much as when the sea parted. For they see God's wonders even “on dry ground,” that they are endless and to be appreciated in each and every thing that exists in the world. This is the meaning of “Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea”: that even in the dry stretches, they experienced the spiritual flow of God, like at the sea. We turn the sea into dry ground whenever we can see the miracles and wonders that also exist even in the dry stretches of our life. (*Noam Elimelekh*)

### Mount Sinai

Mount Sinai suggests two opposites: “Mount” suggests the quality of pride, and “Sinai” (taken as a play on *sneh*, the burning bush) suggests lowliness. This is the meaning of “God spoke to Moses *be-har Sinai* at (with) Mount Sinai.” Every person needs to acquire Moses' awareness of these dual traits of “Mount” and “Sinai.” This will help a person weigh the temptation of the evil impulse that sometimes lures us with arrogance and sometimes with inferiority. We need to have the awareness of when to strengthen the right trait. (*Baal Shem Tov*)

### and brought us to Mount Sinai

Every Jew must imagine him- or herself, at every moment, always, as if he or she were standing at Sinai to receive the Torah. This is because while a person always carries a sense of past and future, only the Blessed Holy One is the Eternal Present, always expressing the present moment. Each and every day, God bestows upon us this Torah of the eternal present. (*Ohev Yisrael*)



מַצָּה זוֹ שֶׁאָנוּ אוֹכְלִים עַל שׁוּם  
 מָה? עַל שׁוּם שֶׁלֹּא הִסְפִּיק  
 בְּצִקָּם שֶׁל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְהִחַמֵּץ עַד  
 שֶׁנִּגְלָה עֲלֵיהֶם מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי  
 הַמַּלְכִּים הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא  
 וּגְאָלָם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:  
 וַיֹּאפּוּ אֶת־הַבֶּצֶק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ  
 מִמִּצְרַיִם עֲגַת מִצּוֹת כִּי לֹא הָיָה  
 כִּי גִרְשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם  
 וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְהִתְמַהֵּמָה  
 וְגַם צִדָּה לֹא עָשׂוּ לָהֶם:

This matzah that we eat — what is its meaning? It reminds us that our ancestors' dough did not have time to rise when the Holy One appeared to them and redeemed them, as the Torah tells us, "And they baked the dough which they had brought from Egypt into unleavened loaves. It did not have time to rise because they were driven out of Egypt and they could not delay; nor had they prepared provisions for themselves." (Exodus 12:39)

Matzah signifies the bread of affliction, the impoverishment of slavery before we left Egypt. It is also the bread of redemption that was offered together with the sacrifices following the liberation from Egypt. In the matzah that we eat tonight, we taste the bread of transition from slavery to freedom.

The matzah we eat tonight reminds us of the haste and difficulties required to escape from slavery. It is a reminder that our efforts on behalf of justice and freedom must never be delayed.

**Matzah: bread of faith**

In the Zohar, matzah is called "bread of faith, *meikhla de-mehemnuta*." We could say that after the baker has finished mixing the ingredients, the leavened bread (*hametz*) continues to rise until the dough is completed. This is not so of the matzah, which remains defined totally by the work of faithfulness; it requires constant effort and vigilance. (Bnei Yissakhar)

Matzah, also known as *lahma anya*, "poor man's bread" is the most basic food, just flour and water. Through eating this simplest of foods we come to know a simple and humble way of life. The Zohar calls it "the bread of faith" for faith requires humility and the ability to be satisfied with the bare essentials of life. (Rav Kook)



פֶּסַח שֶׁהָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אוֹכְלִים  
 בְּזִמְנֵן שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קָיָם  
 עַל שׁוּם מָה?  
 עַל שׁוּם שֶׁפֶּסַח הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ  
 הוּא עַל בְּתֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם  
 שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:  
 וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבַּח פֶּסַח הוּא לַיהוָה  
 אֲשֶׁר פֶּסַח עַל בְּתֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 בְּמִצְרַיִם בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם  
 וְאֶת־בְּתֵינֵנוּ הִצִּיל:  
 The Passover sacrifice that our ancestors ate when the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem — what is its significance? It reminds us that the Holy One passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt, as the Torah recounts, "You shall say, 'It is the Passover offering to the Eternal One who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when God smote the Egyptians, but saved our households'." (Exodus 12:27)

The original Passover sacrifice offered by our ancestors was an act of courage and defiance. The Israelites took the lamb, an animal sacred to the Egyptians, and sacrificed it as a symbolic challenge to the prevailing culture.

They smeared the blood of this lamb on the lintel and doorposts of their houses. Our ancestors were not afraid to identify themselves publicly in this way. On the contrary, this bold act of defiance was for them a sign of having God's protection.

Though we no longer have the Passover sacrifice, we must still summon the courage to be defiant for the sake of justice and freedom.

The Ashkenazi custom is not to eat roasted lamb, in order to emphasize that the Passover sacrifice can no longer be eaten. Among Sephardic Jews, however, lamb is a traditional Passover dish.

### In every generation

What does it mean that in each generation we must see ourselves as if we had gone out of Egypt?

It means that we must personally identify with the experience of our ancestors millennia ago. But it also means that even today, if we should find ourselves in exile, we should maintain an inner sense of being free. (*Sefat Emet*)

### not only our ancestors

When Israel was in Egypt, awareness was in exile. Just as a shell covers the fruit, so was our consciousness covered with a shell like that of the walnut. There is a hard outer shell, but underneath there is also a finer, inner shell encasing the fruit. In leaving Egypt, the hard outer shell was cracked open. This allowed the Israelites to see the fruit, but also the fine inner shell that still remained. When our inner essence will be completely revealed, our “messiah-time” of greater wakefulness will have come. (*Meor Einayim*)

The letters of “Egypt” (MiTZRaYiM) suggest “a constricted sea” (MeTZaR YaM), referring to the Sea of Wisdom, from which awareness comes. One who has no awareness at all is even today within that “constricted sea” of limited understanding. This is why the Haggadah says it was not only our ancestors who were redeemed from Egypt, but that we, too, were redeemed with them. For every year, we “leave Egypt,” as it were, as we peel away the finer, inner shells and expand our attentiveness to Wisdom. (*Meor Einayim*)

### to bring us to the land promised to our ancestors

Our redemption must be grounded in a place we can call home. This is the fulfillment of the covenant made with Abraham: to create a society on this earth in which, as it says, “You might teach your children to live with justice and righteousness.” (*Genesis 18:19*)



## בכל־דור ודור IN EVERY GENERATION

*We are now ready to recite the most important verse of the entire Haggadah.*



בְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר	In every generation,
חַיֵּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ	each of us must see ourselves
כְּאִלוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם:	as if we had personally gone out of Egypt.

Be-khol dor va-dor hayav adam li-re'ot et 'atzmo ke-ilu hu yatza mi-mitzrayim.

שְׁנֵאמַר: וְהַגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ	As the Torah says, “You shall tell your
בְּיוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה	child on that day, saying, ‘It is because of
עָשָׂה יְהוָה לִי	what the Eternal did for me
בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.	when I went free out of Egypt’.” ( <i>Exodus 13:8</i> )
לֹא אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּלֶבֶד	For the Holy One redeemed
גְּאָל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא	not only our ancestors,
אֶלָּא אַף אוֹתָנוּ גְּאָל עִמָּהֶם	but also redeemed us with them,
שְׁנֵאמַר:	as it says,
וְאוֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם לְמַעַן	“God took us out of there in order
הָבִיא אֹתָנוּ לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ	to bring us to the land
אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ:	promised to our ancestors.” ( <i>Deuteronomy 6:23</i> )



מוציא מצה **MOTZI MATZAH**  
 BREAKING BREAD  
 מרור **MAROR**  
 EXPERIENCING BITTERNESS  
 כורך **KOREKH**  
 EVOKING HILLEL

*Memory is the secret of redemption.*  
 – Baal Shem Tov

Keeping the past alive,  
 learning from it and bringing it creatively into our lives  
 is vital in order to become truly free.  
 As we eat of the symbolic foods  
 that Rabban Gamliel explained as the essentials of freedom,  
 we awaken our own memories of Seders past,  
 as well as the most ancient collective memories of our people.

We eat the matzah, and remember  
 how the bread of affliction becomes our bread of freedom.

We taste the *maror*, the bitter herb dipped in *haroset*,  
 and we are reminded that slavery often begins with sweet temptations,  
 but always ends in bitterness.

And while we no longer eat the Passover sacrifice,  
 we follow the custom of Rabbi Hillel,  
 whose sandwich of matzah and *maror* reminds us  
 that both freedom and slavery are always interwoven aspects of our lives.

What are the visceral memories — tastes, smells, sounds —  
 that awaken our experiences of enslavement and redemption?

רחצה **ROHTZAH**  
 SANCTIFYING OUR HANDS

*Even a fist was once an open palm with fingers.*  
 – Yehuda Amichai

Tightly held hands are closed to new possibilities;  
 clenched fists shut out love completely.

As we relax our hands, gently pouring water over open palms and fingers,  
 we invite gestures of generosity and compassion.

To explain the custom of raising one's hands following the ritual washing,  
 Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev taught,  
 “Hands allude to love, for when we raise our hands in gestures of love,  
 love spreads through all the worlds.” (*Kedushat Levi*)



*As a pitcher and bowl are passed around the table,  
 we now wash hands and recite:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
 אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
 וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם: You abound in blessings, Eternal One  
 our God, Sovereign of all time and space,  
 who brings holiness to our lives  
 with the mitzvah of sanctifying our hands.

Barukh attah adonai eloheinu melekh ha-‘olam asher kiddeshanu  
 be-mitzvotav ve-tzivvanu ‘al netilat yadayim.

How do our experiences of love help us understand  
 what freedom means?

# שלחן עורך SHULHAN OREKH

## ENJOYING THE FESTIVE MEAL

Freedom and

*This is the gate of the Eternal; all who feed the hungry let them enter.*

– Midrash on Psalm 118

*To be able to eat and drink is as extraordinary and miraculous as crossing the Red Sea. We do not recognize the miracle because for the moment, we live in a world of plenty and because our memory is so short.*

– Emmanuel Levinas

Hunger is oppressive.

Hunger makes us impatient; it constrains our ability to think clearly, and it often leads to revolt.

The Hebrew words for bread (*LeHeM*), war (*miLHaMah*) and battle (*LeHiMah*) all share the same root (*L-H-M*). The war against poverty and hunger is an eternal struggle for social justice. We are also in a perpetual struggle against spiritual impoverishment, the hunger of the soul.

What is it that we hunger for this year?

Let us begin our meal with an intention to satisfy our deepest desires:

מי יתן ויתברך שלחן זה	Let our table be blessed
בדברי תורה וכונה	with meaningful words of Torah
ובנכונותינו לפתח יד לעניים	and by our desire to provide for the poor,
זה שנאמר	as it is said:
זהו שלחן של עתיקא קדישא	“Such is a Godly table at which all have
שמשיביע לכל חי רצון:	been truly satisfied.” ( <i>Zohar II, 60</i> )

Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai said: “If three have eaten at one table and not spoken over it words of Torah, their meal is meaningless gluttony. But if three have eaten at one table and have spoken over it words of Torah, it is as if they have eaten from the table of God. (*Pirkei Avot 3:3*)

# כורך KOREKH

## EVOKING HILLEL



*We now take two pieces of the bottom matzah, place some maror inside as a sandwich and recite:*

זכר למקדש כהלל:	In memory of the Temple, as was Hillel's
כין עשה הלל	custom: This is what Hillel used to do
בזמן שבית המקדש היה קיים.	when the Temple still existed. He
היה כורך מצה ומרור	would make a sandwich of matzah and
ואוכל ביחד.	maror and eat them together (with the
לקיים מה שנאמר:	Passover sacrifice), in fulfillment of the
על מצות ומרורים	verse “with matzah and maror
יאכלהו:	they shall eat it.” ( <i>Numbers 9:11</i> )

*Eat while reclining.*

### In memory of the Temple

When a person is uplifted and has reached a high rung of attainment, feeling connected to the Divine Flow, it can be said of him or her that they are “residing in God’s Palace.” But when one falls to a lower rung, it’s called a disaster, a *ḥurban*, “like the destruction of the Temple.” When we fall to a lower rung, we must still cling to that same sense of attainment as when we were on that higher level, “in God’s Palace.” That is what we mean by “in memory of the Temple.” (*Meor Einayim*)

# Freedom and Gratitude

## ברך BAREKH GIVING THANKS

*For the Eternal your God brings you to a good land ... a land of wheat and barley, vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey. ... And when you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Eternal your God.*

– Deuteronomy 8

Freedom is not just about leaving Egypt. It is also about having a destination. We leave Egypt ultimately in order to go to the Promised Land, the place where our visions can take root.

The dream of being a free people in our own land has always been central to the Jewish idea of redemption. Our connection to the Land of Israel is found in the blessing after every meal. And so we offer thanks not only for the food, *ha-zan et ha-kol*, but also “for the land and the food,” *‘al ha-aretz ve-‘al ha-mazon* — “for the ample, desirable land which You gave to our ancestors, and for liberating us from the land of Egypt, redeeming us from slavery.”

Gratitude, as we learn from *Dayyenu*, is a practice that instills an inner freedom. When we learn to say “we have enough,” when we take a moment to be satisfied with what we already have, we are released from the oppressive demands of needing the next thing.

In offering a blessing of thanks, we celebrate the goodness and wonder of what is, and the joy of being alive.

*How do we get into the habit of expressing gratitude?*

# Freedom and Concealment

## צפון TZAFUN FINDING THE AFIKOMAN

*The nature of God is to conceal a thing,  
but the nature of kings is to search a thing out.*

– Proverbs 25

The *afikoman* reminds us that more is always hidden than revealed. We can never be fully free until we have liberated that which remains concealed.

Our search for freedom is a lifelong pursuit, for, as the broken *afikoman* suggests, “the Exodus from Egypt was only a partial redemption; there are aspects of redemption that still elude us.” (*Sefat Emet*)

And so our story of redemption will continue until we have welcomed the prophet Elijah, harbinger of that hoped-for time when all will be truly free.



*The afikoman is found, ransomed and eaten for dessert.*



**The Orange** — Another aspect of concealment is represented by the orange. The orange, which may be eaten before the *afikoman*, symbolizes the fruitfulness for all Jews when lesbians and gay men — and by extension all who are marginalized — contribute and are active members of Jewish life.

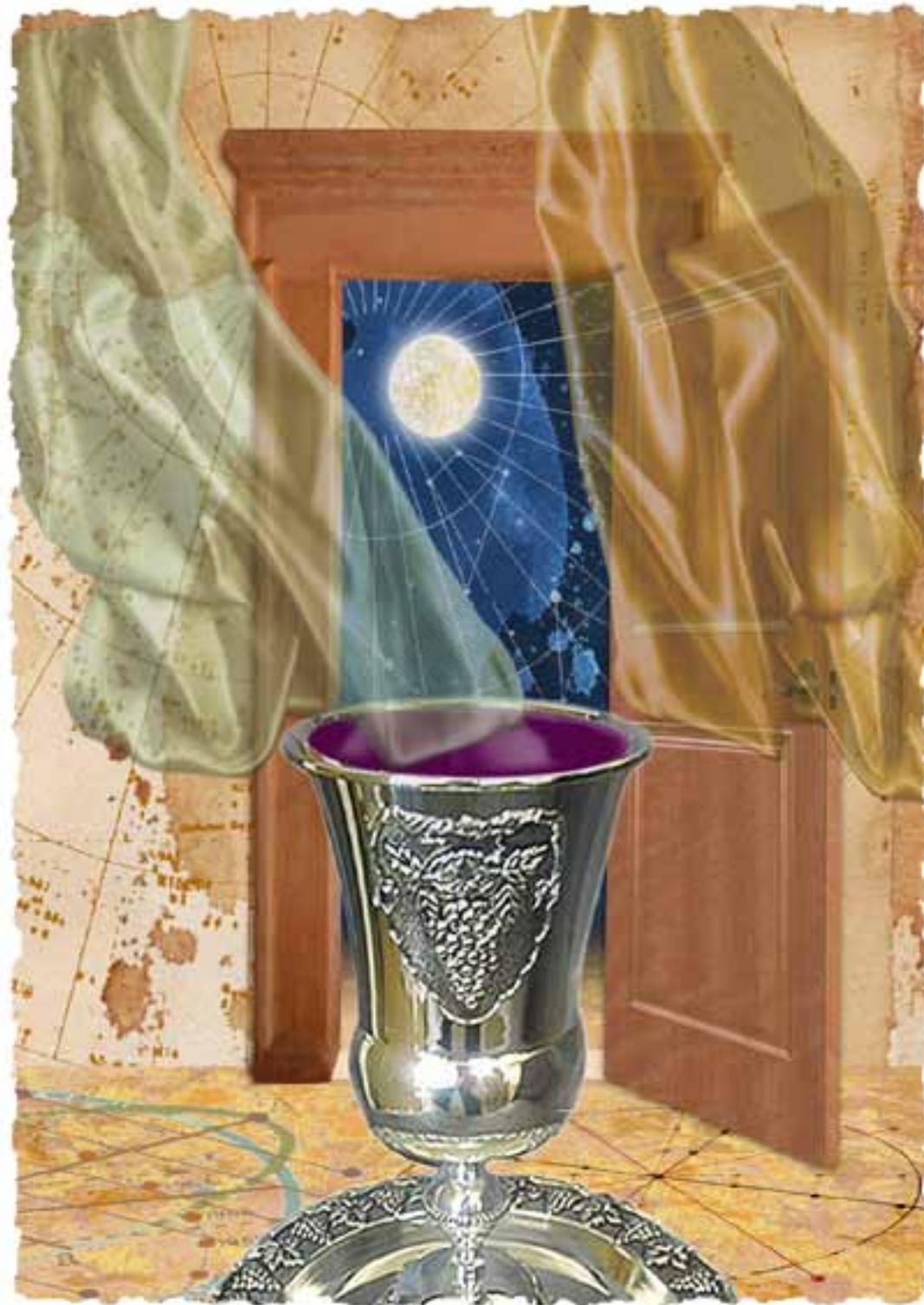
## והיא שעמדה THE PROMISE

*We now fill the fourth cup of wine.*

In anticipation of the fourth and final cup of wine, the cup of redemption, we invoke the presence of Elijah, prophetic harbinger of the ultimate redemption. After the Romans destroyed the Second Temple and sent us into exile, the lore of Elijah emerged to reassure us that God's "strong hand and outstretched arm" would once again be felt.

In every generation, Elijah's promise has given our people the hope that has sustained us through many bitter experiences. For it was not only Pharaoh who rose up against us, but, in every generation, there were those who sought to degrade and oppress us. The Crusades, expulsions, inquisitions, pogroms, the Shoah — each in its time has challenged our faith, but has not destroyed us.

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**Shoah** –The English term Holocaust, from the Greek term, meaning “burnt offering,” describes the murder of six million Jews at the hands of the Nazis as a sacrificial offering. The Hebrew term, *Shoah*, meaning “devastation,” makes no theological claims. Historical events, however, may radically transform us and our relationship with God, as shown below by the courageous faith of the Warsaw Ghetto Rebbe.

### Spiritual Resistance

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

### Physical Resistance

Erev Pesah 1943. The Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto started on the first night of Pesah. For twenty-eight shattering days, while the world watched in silence, a handful of men, women and children pitted their fragility against the massed might of the Nazi war machine. Although the flames have long been extinguished, the embers still smoulder. For Pharaohs come and Pharaohs go: the Sennacheribs, the Belshazzars, the Hamans. But the Freedom Fighters of the Ghetto will live forever, fiery testimony to the love of liberty kindled by the Exodus.

### The Road to Escape

We are those who have set themselves the aim of awakening the people. Our wish is to take this watchword to our people:

Awake and fight!  
Do not despair of the road to escape!

Know that escape is not to be found by walking to your death passively, like sheep to the slaughter. It is to be found in something much greater:

Let the people awaken and fight for its life.  
An end to despair and lack of faith!  
An end to the spirit of slavery amongst us!  
Be prepared to act!  
Be ready!

*(Call For Resistance by the Jewish Military Organization in the Warsaw Ghetto, January 1943)*

*We now lift the cup and recite:*

בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא.	Praised be the One who has kept the divine promise to Israel.
וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֻדָּה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׁלֹא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. אֲלָא שְׁבִכְל דּוֹר וְדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ.	It is this that has sustained our ancestors and us. For not one enemy alone has arisen to destroy us, but in every generation there arise those who seek to destroy us.
וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מַצִּילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם:	Yet the Blessed Holy One saves us from their hands.

Ve-hi she-'amda la-avoteinu ve-lanu. Shelo ehad bi-levad 'amad 'aleinu le-khaloteinu. Ella she-bekhol dor va-dor, 'omedim 'aleinu le-khaloteinu. Ve-ha-kadosh barukh hu matzileinu mi-yadam.

*Set the cup down.*

**It is this that has sustained us.** What is it that sustains us? Is it not that God saves us from their hands? God not only saves us before we fall into the hands of our enemy, but even after we are already in the hands of our enemy. With this faith we must strengthen our hope that even when it seems we are already in their hands, God will save us. *(Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, Rebbe of the Warsaw Ghetto, 1941)*

**The Blessed Holy One saves us from their hands.** In the Talmud (*Haggiga 5b*) we read, "God in the inner chamber is weeping, while in the outer chamber of the world, God smiles." We have no answer for why God is not saving us in the physical, outer world. But we still have the connectedness to a God who weeps for us, perhaps even more so because of our shared suffering. *(Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, Rebbe of the Warsaw Ghetto, 1942)*

*The evolution of the Warsaw Rebbe's theology in the above comments is striking. Following the tragic deaths of his only son and daughter-in-law, his mother and sister-in-law within days of the outbreak of the war, Kalonymus Kalman had been able to sustain a heroic faith in God's salvation, including the hope for physical redemption. As the war intensified and the collective fate of his people was being sealed, he relinquished that expectation. His faith is now transformed into a spiritual connection to a God who shares his pain and suffering.*

**in every generation.** As long as the world is not yet perfected in the way we would ultimately hope for, then we are always "going out from Egypt" and God is the Power that brings us out of Egypt. *(Divrei Hayyim)*



*Elijah's cup is now passed around the table, and each person contributes a little of his or her wine to fill it. Someone, usually a child, is sent to open the door for Elijah as we rise and sing one or more of the following verses:*



הִנֵּה אֶנְכִי שֹׁלַח לְכֶם אֶת  
אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא לְפָנַי בּוֹא  
יוֹם יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא:  
וְהִשִּׁיב לְבָ-אָבוֹת עַל-בָּנִים  
וְלֵב בָּנִים עַל-אָבוֹתָם.

“Behold, I will send to you  
Elijah the Prophet before that great and  
awesome day of the Eternal One arrives.  
He will turn the hearts of parents and children  
towards one another.” (Malachi 3:23)

Hinnei anokhi sholei'ah lakhem et eliyahu ha-navi lifnei bo yom adonai ha-gadol ve-ha-nora.  
Ve-heishiv lev avot 'al banim, ve-lev banim 'al avotam.



אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֱלִיָּהוּ הַתִּשְׁבִּי  
אֱלִיָּהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי:  
בְּמַהְרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ יָבֵא אֱלֵינוּ  
עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד:

Elijah the prophet, Elijah the Tishbite  
Elijah the Giladite.  
May he come speedily in our days,  
announcing the arrival of messianic days.

Eliyahu ha-navi, Eliyahu ha-tishbi, Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu ha-gil'adi.  
Bi-meheirah ve-yameinu yavo eileinu im mashiah ben david, im mashiah ben david.



מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה  
עַז וְזִמְרָה בְּיָדָהּ מִרְיָם תִּרְקֹד אֶתְנוּ  
לְהַגְדִּיל זִמְרַת עוֹלָם מִרְיָם תִּרְקֹד  
אֶתְנוּ לְתַקֵּן אֶת-הָעוֹלָם:  
בְּמַהְרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ הִיא תְּבִיאֵנוּ  
אֶל מֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה:

Miriam the prophetess, strength and song  
are in her hands. Miriam shall dance with  
us, increasing eternal song, Miriam shall  
dance with us, healing the world. Speedily  
in our days, may she bring us to the  
waters of deliverance. (Leila Gal Berner)

Miriam ha-neviah, 'oz ve-zimrah be-yadah; Miriam tirkod ittanu le-hagdil zimrat 'olam,  
Miriam tirkod ittanu le-takkein et ha-'olam.  
Bi-meheirah ve-yameinu hi tevi'einu; el mei ha-yeshu'ah, el mei ha-yeshu'ah.

*Close the door and be seated.*

*The cups of Elijah and Miriam remain before us as we now sing psalms  
of praise and songs of rejoicing for past redemptions and redemptions yet to come.*

## אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא WELCOMING ELIJAH

This is a Night of Protection, *leil shimurim*. This is a night for keeping promises, both human and divine (Exodus 12:42). On this night, we keep alive our visions for peace and justice and for universal freedom as we open our doors to welcome Elijah, harbinger of that better world to come.

Just as Elijah the Prophet symbolizes our hopes for the future, so, too, does Miriam the Prophet represent the strength and hope within us to sing and dance for deliverance and healing in the present.

What are your visions for “messianic days”?

### SONG

Fill the silver goblet;  
Make open the door-way;  
Let there be no sob; let  
Elijah come our way.

And let him come singing,  
Announcing as nigh a  
Redemption, and drinking  
The health of Messiah!

– A.M. Klein

# הלל HALLEL REJOICING Praise

*Praise cannot be forced. We are most free and our worship is the most uplifting when we do not seek to demand anything of God, but can offer joyful praise rooted in deep appreciation.*

– Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

Hallel gives genuine expression to the praise that flows from freedom: “When out of the narrow places I call to God, I am answered with God’s boundless spaciousness.”  
(Psalm 118:5)

Tonight we sing the praises of Hallel, for we have learned that even in our most constrained moments, even in the darkest nights of our lives, we can carry the wisdom of our going out from Egypt with us. That possibility is always there.



## תהלים קי"ה:ב-י"ח PSALM 115:12-18



יהוה זְכָרָנוּ יְבָרֵךְ	The Eternal One, mindful of us, will bring
יְבָרֵךְ אֶת בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל	blessing, blessing to the House of Israel,
יְבָרֵךְ אֶת בַּיִת אַהֲרֹן.	blessing to the House of Aaron,
יְבָרֵךְ יִרְאֵי יְהוָה	blessing to all God-fearing people,
הַקְּטָנִים עִם הַגְּדֹלִים.	the small and great alike.
יְסֹף יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם	May the Life-giver grant you increase,
עֲלֵיכֶם וְעַל בְּנֵיכֶם.	you and your children.
בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם לַיהוָה	You are the blessed of the Eternal One,
עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ.	maker of heaven and earth.
הַשָּׁמַיִם שְׁמַיִם לַיהוָה	The heavens belong to the Eternal One,
וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לַבְּנֵי אָדָם.	but the earth was given over to mortals.
לֹא הַמֵּתִים יְהַלְלוּ יְהוָה	The dead do not praise God,
וְלֹא כָל יוֹרְדֵי דוּמָה.	nor all who go down into silence.
וְאַנְחֵנוּ נְבָרֵךְ יְהוָה	But we, we shall bless God
מִעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.	now and forever,
הַלְלוּיָהּ:	Hallelujah.

Adonai zekharanu yevareikh, yevareikh et beit yisrael, yevareikh et beit aharon.  
Yevareikh yir'ei adonai, ha-ketannim im ha-gedolim.  
Yosef adonai aleikhem, aleikhem ve-al beneikhem.  
Berukhim attem l'adonai, oseih shamayim va-aretz.  
Ha-shamayim, shamayim l'adonai, ve-ha-aretz natan li-vene'ei adam.  
Lo ha-meitim yehallelu yah, ve-lo kol yordei dumah.  
Va-anahnu nebareikh yah, mei-attah ve-ad olam. Halleluyah.

One kid, one little kid that father bought for two zuzim.

Then came the cat and ate the kid that father bought for two zuzim; One kid, one little kid.

Then came the dog and bit the cat that ate the kid that father bought for two zuzim; One kid, one little kid.

Then came the stick and beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid that father bought for two zuzim; One kid, one little kid.

Then came the fire and burned the stick that beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid that father bought for two zuzim; One kid, one little kid.

Then came the water and quenched the fire that burned the stick that beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid that father bought for two zuzim; One kid, one little kid.

Then came the ox and drank the water that quenched the fire that burned the stick that beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid that father bought for two zuzim; One kid, one little kid.

Then came the slaughterer and killed 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 that father bought for two zuzim; One kid, one little kid.

Then came the angel of death and slew the slaughterer that killed 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 that father bought for two zuzim; One kid, one little kid.

Then came the Blessed Holy One and slew the angel of death that slew the slaughterer that killed 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 that father bought for two zuzim; One kid, one little kid.



## קרב יום KAREV YOM

קרב יום אשר הוא

Bring near a day

לא יום ולא לילה

that is neither day nor night;

רם הודע כי לה היום

Exalted One, make known that yours

אף לה הלילה

is the day and also the night.

שומרים הפקד לעירך

Set guardians over your city

כל-היום וכל-הלילה

all day and all through the night;

תאיר כאור יום חשכת לילה.

make bright as day the darkness of the night.

Karev yom asher hu lo yom ve-lo lailah; ram hoda ki lekha ha-yom af lekha ha-lailah. Shomrim hafked le-irkha kol ha-yom ve-khol ha-lailah; ta'ir ke-or yom heshkat lailah.

וְאֵתָא תּוֹרָא וְשָׁתָא לְמַיָּא  
דְּכַבְּה לְנוּרָא דְשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא  
דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא דְנִשְׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא  
דְּאַכְלָה לְגַדְיָא דְזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זׁוּזֵי  
חַד גַּדְיָא חַד גַּדְיָא.

Ve-ata tora ve-shata le-mayya,  
de-khavah le-nura, de-saraf le-ħutra,  
de-hikah le-khalba de-nashakh le-shunra,  
de-akhlah le-gadya de-zabbin abba bitrei zuzei,  
ħad gadya, ħad gadya.

וְאֵתָא הַשׁוֹהֵיט וְשָׁחַט לְתוֹרָא  
דְּשָׁתָא לְמַיָּא דְכַבְּה לְנוּרָא  
דְשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא דְהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא  
דְנִשְׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא דְאַכְלָה לְגַדְיָא  
דְזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זׁוּזֵי  
חַד גַּדְיָא חַד גַּדְיָא.

Ve-ata ha-shoheit ve-shahat le-tora,  
de-shata le-mayya, de-khavah le-nura,  
de-saraf le-ħutra, de-hikah le-khalba,  
de-nashakh le-shunra, de-akhlah le-gadya  
de-zabbin abba bitrei zuzei,  
ħad gadya, ħad gadya.

וְאֵתָא מַלְאָךְ הַמָּוֶת וְשָׁחַט לְשׁוֹהֵיט  
דְשָׁחַט לְתוֹרָא דְשָׁתָא לְמַיָּא  
דְכַבְּה לְנוּרָא דְשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא  
דְהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא דְנִשְׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא  
דְאַכְלָה לְגַדְיָא דְזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זׁוּזֵי  
חַד גַּדְיָא חַד גַּדְיָא.

Ve-ata malakh ha-mavet ve-shahat le-shoheit,  
de-shahat le-tora, de-shata le-mayya,  
de-khavah le-nura, de-saraf le-ħutra,  
de-hikah le-khalba, de-nashakh le-shunra,  
de-akhlah le-gadya de-zabbin abba bitrei zuzei,  
ħad gadya, ħad gadya.

וְאֵתָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְשָׁחַט  
לְמַלְאָךְ הַמָּוֶת דְשָׁחַט לְשׁוֹהֵיט  
דְשָׁחַט לְתוֹרָא דְשָׁתָא לְמַיָּא  
דְכַבְּה לְנוּרָא דְשָׂרְף לְחוּטְרָא  
דְהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא דְנִשְׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא  
דְאַכְלָה לְגַדְיָא דְזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זׁוּזֵי  
חַד גַּדְיָא חַד גַּדְיָא.

Ve-ata ha-kadosh barukh hu ve-shahat  
le-malakh ha-mavet, de-shahat le-shoheit,  
de-shahat le-tora, de-shata le-mayya,  
de-khavah le-nura, de-saraf le-ħutra,  
de-hikah le-khalba, de-nashakh le-shunra,  
de-akhlah le-gadya de-zabbin abba bitrei zuzei,  
ħad gadya, ħad gadya.



## LET MY PEOPLE GO

When Israel was in Egypt land,  
 Let my people go.  
 Oppressed so hard they could not stand,  
 Let my people go.

Refrain: *Go down Moses, way down in Egypt land,  
 Tell ol' Pharaoh, let my people go.*

Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said,  
 Let my people go.  
 If not I'll smite your firstborn dead,  
 Let my people go.  
*Go down Moses, ...*

We need not always weep and mourn,  
 Let my people go.  
 And wear these slav'ry chains forlorn,  
 Let my people go!  
*Go down Moses, ...*

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## O FREEDOM

O Freedom! O Freedom!  
 O Freedom over me!

Refrain: *And before I'd be a slave  
 I'd be buried in my grave  
 And go home to my Maker and be free!*

No more crying, No more crying,  
 No more crying over me,  
*And before I'd be a slave...*  
 No more moaning...  
*And before I'd be a slave...*  
 No more hunger,...  
*And before I'd be a slave...*  
 No more killing...  
*And before I'd be a slave...*



## זאג מאראן ZOG MARAN

זאג, מאראן, דו ברודער משינער,  
 ווו איז גרייט דער סדר דינער?  
 – אין טיפער הייל, אין אַ חדר,  
 דאָרט האָב איך געגרייט מין סדר.

Tell me how, Marrano, brother,  
 You hold Seder, under cover?  
 In a cave, deep in a crater,  
 There I make my humble Seder.

זאג, מאראן, מיר, ווו, ביי וועמען  
 וועסטו וויסע מצות נעמען?  
 – אין דער הייל, אויף גאָטס באַראָטן  
 האָט מין ווייב דער טייג געקנאָטן.

And how, Marrano, are you able  
 To find matzos for your table?  
 In the cave, while Heaven watches,  
 There my wife kneads dough for matzos.

זאג, מאראן, ווי וועסט זיך קליגן  
 אַ הגדה ווו צו קריגן?  
 – אין דער הייל, אין טיפער שפאלטן  
 האָב אין זי שוין לאַנג באַהאַלטן.

Tell me how, O wise Marrano,  
 Will you tell your tale tomorrow?  
 In the cave, since it's forbidden,  
 My haggadah's long been hidden.

זאג, מאראן, ווי וועסט זיך ווערן,  
 ווען מען וועט דיין קול דערהערן?  
 – ווען דער שונא וועט מיך פאַנגען,  
 וועל איך שטאַרבן מיט געזאַנגען.

And, Marrano, what of dangers  
 If you're overheard by strangers?  
 Should they hear our voices ringing,  
 I shall die while I am singing!

– אַברהם רייזען

– Avrom Reizen

Zog, maran, du bruder mayner, vu is greyt der seyder dayner?  
 In tifyn heyl, in a kheyder, dort hob ikh gegreyt mayn seyder.

Zog, maran, mir vu bay vemen vestu vayseh matzos nemen?  
 In der heyl, oyf gots barotn hob mayn vayb dem teyg geknotn.

Zog, maran, vi vest zikh klign a hagode vu tzu krign?  
 In der heyl, in tife shpaltn hob ikh zi shoyng lang bahalt.

Zog, maran, vi vest zikh vern, ven men vet dayn kol derhern?  
 Ven der soyne vet mikh fangen, vel ikh shtarbn mit gezangen.



## כוס רביעית THE FOURTH CUP

We raise the fourth cup to *shalom* — and the courage it takes to make it real.

הִנְנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזַמֵּן לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת כּוֹס רְבִיעִית מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת I am ready to fulfill the mitzvah of the fourth of the four cups of the Seder.

Hineni mukhan u-mezumman le-kayem mitzvat kos rivi'it me- arba kosot.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן: You abound in blessings, Adonai our God, Source of Creation, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Barukh attah adonai eloheinu melekh ha-'olam borei peri ha-gafen.

*Drink the wine while reclining.*

*The following blessing is recited after drinking the wine:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם עַל הַגֶּפֶן וְעַל פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן. Praised are you, Eternal One our God, Source of Creation, for the vine and for its fruit.  
וְעַל תְּנוּבַת הַשָּׂדֶה וְעַל אֶרֶץ חֲמֻדָּה טוֹבָה וְרַחֲבָה שְׂרָצִית וְהִנְחַלְתָּ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ לְאֹכֹל מִפְּרֵיהָ וּלְשָׂבוֹעַ מִטּוֹבָהּ. We thank you for the earth's bounty and for the pleasing, good and ample land which you desired our ancestors to inherit, that they might eat of its produce and be satisfied from its goodly yield.  
רַחֵם נָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמֶּךָ וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ וְעַל צִיּוֹן מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ. Eternal One, have compassion for Israel your people, for Jerusalem your city, and for Zion where your Presence dwells.  
וּבְיָמֵינוּ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ וְהָעֵלְנוּ לְתוֹכָהּ וְשָׂמְחֵנוּ בְּבִנְיָנָהּ וְנֹאכַל מִפְּרֵיהָ וְנִשְׂבַּע מִטּוֹבָהּ וְנִבְרַכְךָ עָלֶיהָ בְּקִדְשָׁהּ וּבְטָהֳרָהּ. Fully restore Jerusalem soon and in our day, bringing us rejoicing in its restoration to eat there of the land's good fruit in abundance, and to praise you in holiness;

# נִרְטָזָה NIRTZAH — CONCLUDING THE SEDER Fulfillment

*Passover is a night for daring dreams; for visions of what an individual can be, what society can be, what people can be, what history may become.*  
– David Hartman

We conclude our Seder with the refrain, “Next year in Jerusalem,” for Jerusalem embodies all our hopes and dreams for fulfillment.

Jerusalem in Hebrew stems from two words, *Yeru* and *shalem*: “On the mount of the Eternal you shall envision fulfillment, completeness, peace.” (Genesis 22)

Jerusalem, *Yerushalayim*, is the opposite of Egypt, *Mitzrayim*. If Egypt embodies “the narrow places,” that which constrains us, Jerusalem is that high place of expansive horizons.

Tonight we have gone out of Egypt once again. Jerusalem still beckons.

### THE STILL SMALL VOICE

The candles splutter; and the kettle hums;  
The heirloomed clock enumerates the tribes,  
Upon the wine-stained table-cloth lie crumbs  
Of matzoh whose wide scattering describes  
Jews driven in far lands upon this earth.  
The kettle hums; the candles splutter; and  
Winds whispering from shutters tell rebirth  
Of beauty rising in an eastern land,

Of paschal sheep driven in cloudy droves;  
Of almond-blossoms colouring the breeze;  
Of vineyards upon verdant terraces;  
Of golden globes in orient orange-groves.  
And those assembled at the table dream  
Of small schemes that an April wind doth scheme,  
And cry from out the sleep assailing them:  
*Jerusalem, next year! Next year, Jerusalem!*

– A.M. Klein