

TIK WE

**A Haggadah
of Many
Voices**

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About Anu

These pages present a chorus of voices sharing their thoughts and art in unique and singular ways. These in turn have been richly interpreted by succeeding generations. Each commentary is affected by its setting and the events of its time, giving great respect and close attention to historic sources.

The pages of ANU reflect the current time as experienced in different communities around the world. Our voices may be small and they may be soft, but our tones harmonize with the commentaries of the past and create a chorus of ideas. Our articulation of our ideas put us on the collective map of Jewish history and plant our feet on the long timeline of the Jewish people. Whether you use one reading from ANU or the entire Haggadah you will be part of our chorus. We hope that you will find meaning in these collected works of art and interpretation. Welcome to this community gathered at this time between the front and back covers of this book.

May we all merit peace and freedom and may we celebrate next year in Jerusalem.

Leann Shamash



Dayenu by Lisa Fliegel

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BEFORE לפני

Passover in Eight Words

Stephanie Margolis Stein

Stephanie Margolis Stein's assignment for ANU was to get a sense from people how they would express Passover in eight words. Here is a WordCloud with the answers. The WordCloud shows more common answers in larger font. You may be surprised by some of the answers.



Preparing For Passover

Debra Weiner-Solomont

I am flooded with memories as I think about Pesach preparation. Growing up, my mother had a designated cabinet in the kitchen with all of the Pesach needs, from dishes and haggadot to seasonings that she saved from year to year (who knew that they lose their potency overtime?). My memories are filled with excitement over setting the table and reviewing what we learned so that we could share something meaningful at the Seder. Kitchen counters were covered, and my sisters and I helped our mother peel vegetables and get the chicken soup going. But the most thrilling part was always the arrival of our grandmother, my mother's mother, who lived in Boro Park. We would anxiously await the Greyhound bus, and there she would be, my grandmother, holding 8 boxes of kosher for Passover cakes from Shiks bakery in Washington Heights.

These memories of excitement, learning, and enjoying family are what motivate me each year as I begin the Pesach preparations here in Jerusalem. My children, and now grandchildren, know that from Tu B'Shvat, we eat only in the kitchen and start using up all of the chametz. We always remember that Pesach cleaning is not just about spring cleaning. However, this year, the Pesach preparation excitement has been dampened by the ongoing Swords of Iron conflict in Israel. With sons and a nephew serving in the army, it has been difficult to get into the spirit of the holiday. But we will!

As of this writing, the war has gone on for 160 days, and 134 hostages are still being held captive. Pesach is the holiday commemorating freedom from captivity, and our prayer this year is that there will be peace and that we will experience *לשנה הבאה בירושלים* as the hostages are released.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים הבנויה

Next year in Jerusalem!



Pesach 1970 in Brookline, Ma. We hosted Israeli dental students for the second seder, who took photos.

1. The overnight brisket out of the oven 2. Preparing the Romaine lettuce for Karpas 3. The grill is sparkling clean 4. It can't be Pesach without the Pesach rolls 5. Our table last year- the vase was purchased from a ceramicist in Netiv Haasarah, she is now living in a hotel in Tel Aviv



Passover for Interfaith and Intercultural Families

Ruth Nemzoff

Passover is tailor-made for interfaith and intercultural families. Baked into the matzah are customs and melodies that Jewish communities have adopted from their host countries around the world. While each family may swear their traditions are the right ones, even if Maxwell House calcified or codified them in the 1950's, the fact is that other than telling the story and following the order of the service, there is already a great deal of variety in family Seders, thus, it is easy and appropriate to include our mishpacha (family) from different faiths and cultures.

The sages tell us even if we are all wise, all intelligent, all knowledgeable in the entirety of the Torah—we are commanded to recount the story of the Exodus from Egypt. It is this re-telling which is so important and so open to retelling from many perspectives.

You don't have to invent your own Seder. There are plenty of Haggadot and guides from the Passover Interfaith Seder to the Juneteenth Seder. It is very easy to pull elements from Seders that are inclusive of your machatanim's (in-laws) background. There are Haggadot for different age groups and levels of ability, from Children's Haggadot to the Gateways Haggadah for neurodiverse people. There are short seders, like the 30 minute Seder, or deeply historical ones, like the Holocaust Survivor's Haggadah.

While Passover is the story of the Jewish exodus from Egypt and their freedom from slavery, it is also a story of everyone's journey from being trapped to feeling free. Clearly, our forerunners have identified that there is much to be gained from telling this story and having a Seder. The guiding commandment of Passover is to tell the story. How each individual family chooses to do that is up to them. Within the Passover story, there are songs, dramatic scenes and parables, like the 10 plagues, and moments of great discussion between the sages of the past. While all of these things are quintessentially "Passover," they are not exclusive of

multi-faith families. In fact, they invite discussion. What better way to get below the surface of your families' different perspectives and to include their songs, their memories.

You could invite all participants to share songs that evoke the same feelings of freedom and liberation that Miriam felt at the Sea of Reeds. There are deep existential questions that Passover raises that you can discuss during your own Seders. Why does the Torah say that G-d "hardened Pharaoh's heart" each time he began to relent to Moses's request to free the Jewish people? Why is it important that the savior of the Israelites had a speech impediment? The list of questions is endless.

You could interpret the story metaphorically or historically. You can talk about how each one of you, personally, had an experience where you were freed from something restrictive, be it a relationship, addiction, stress, health issues, or more.

Everything I've mentioned is enhanced by participants of different backgrounds. Having diverse perspectives brings new songs, new interpretations of the symbols, and new answers to the old theological questions while preserving the story of the Jewish peoples' journey from slavery to freedom. Since the beginning of human history, telling stories has been how we have connected as communities. Telling stories is a way of making friends and finding shared experiences, which is what you want to do with your in-laws. The Passover story can help you deepen your knowledge of each other.

Some may resist making any changes to their traditional Seder. You don't have to change your Haggadah. You can tell the same stories in the same order and enjoy the fruits of the traditions you've cultivated for so long, but just by having new people in attendance, you will find new experiences, new answers, and new depth to parts of the holiday that can bring you closer with your extended family.

A Film to View Before Passover Arrives **What it takes to bring a family together in Nora's Will**

Gisela Savdie

I hesitated to write about the 2008 Mexican film "Cinco días sin Nora" (Nora's Will) because it deals with suicide — a generally dark topic. But the comedic relief throughout the film counterbalances its more dramatic elements. In the end, this is a film about all the things we leave unsaid, and the freedom that is possible when one person decides to speak up.

The story, which unfolds just before Passover, centers around Nora (Silvia Mariscal), a religious Jewish woman who has struggled for decades with mental illness, and her exhusband José (Fernando Luján), an atheist Jew. Early in the film, José receives a mysterious order of kosher meat at his door and knows Nora is behind it. He takes the meat to her home across the street, opening the door with the set of keys he still has. There, he discovers Nora has overdosed on pills.

Very quickly, he decides that Nora's death was not just any suicide. Starting with the fact that the fridge, which he opens to place the meat, is stock-full with Passover dishes, along with detailed sticky-note instructions about condiments, serving suggestions, and more. José suspects Nora of an elaborate, almost Machiavellian plan to burden him with the Passover seder and her religious rites of death. The series of events that follow unravel the mystery of the elaborate instructions Nora left behind.

The date Nora has chosen for her death puts José in a bind as far as religious precepts go. On the one hand,

the dead must be buried swiftly. On the other hand, Jewish law says the deceased cannot be buried during the Passover festivities or on Shabbat. In the end, they will have to wait five days to bury Nora.

Another religious requirement is that a corpse cannot remain alone at any moment, so José reluctantly agrees to accompany Nora's body, covered in ice, until a rabbinical student named Moisés (Enrique Arreola) arrives and offers to stay with the corpse. José also learns that the cemetery buries people who committed suicide in an isolated section — a source of shame for relatives.

José's humor and irony help him deal with the complex protocols. These include meetings with the Rabbi (Max Kerlow), Nora's psychiatrist (Juan Carlos Colombo), and Fabiana (Angelina Pelaez), Nora's lifelong maid, who has her own zany ideas about the Seder and burial preparations.

José resents Nora for burdening him with these tedious preparations and rebels against her impositions. But as the film progresses we see the intention behind Nora's every action. We see that the Seder arrangements, just like the funeral rites, are an excuse for alleviating some of the conflicts that Nora perceived in her relationships with her family.

For instance, neither Nora nor José have stopped thinking about each other; theirs was a separation without closure. While she is still alive at the beginning of the film, we see Nora spying out the window with binoculars on José, who likewise still has unfinished business with Nora. When later in the film he discovers a picture of Nora with another man, he grows impatient to find out if she ever was unfaithful. The two of them left much unsaid.

Death in *Nora's Will* is seen as a part of life, and as a sort of therapy for the living, insofar as it shakes things up, unravelling unsettled emotions. Time reveals Nora as a strong woman, even if in life she could not express many things, as happens with so many women of her generation and social background.

Like Passover, *Nora's Will* is full of nuance, but its bottom line is a message of reconciliation, where family members must confront issues they have been avoiding for years. It is also a love story where Jose gets to know his ex-beloved more in death than in life. We hardly see Nora throughout the film, and in the end we also don't see the Seder. However, both are present throughout.

The director, Mariana Chenillo, values the details, bringing out gestures of humanity from her characters through simple acts. This was Chenillo's directorial debut, and her smart, unassuming script won several awards, including the Ariel (Mexico's top prize) for Best Director, making Chenillo the first female recipient of the award.

Nora's Will is a tragicomedy that raises more questions than solutions. Although its subject may seem grim, the film makes us laugh until the end.

Removing Chametz From Our Midst

Debbie Forman

The true gift of the traditions of Pesach and the Seder, is inclusivity; from the youngest child to the oldest adult.

Bedikat Chametz, performed the night before Erev Pesach, captures the imagination of even the youngest child. When else do you and your parents, and if you're lucky, your grandparents get to go around the house in the dark, with only a candle to light your way, a feather and wooden spoon to aid in your search for Cheerios!

Why do we make such a big deal about ridding our houses of chametz? It is not only the physical chametz that we attempt to remove, to empathize with our brethren who escaped from Egypt with no time for their bread to rise, but our "spiritual" chametz.

Spiritual chametz is defined differently for all of us. Pesach is a time of renewal, out with the undesirable, whether it be thoughts, actions, or words, and in with a renewal of spirit.

Rabbi Arthur Waskow refers to this type of chametz as "the swollen sourness in our lives." It is the chametz that keeps us enslaved spiritually to the material trappings of our lives and prevents us from being free to encounter the world in a spiritual manner.

We work so hard in the months preceding Pesach to eventually rid our homes of our physical chametz. We should try to remember it is also a time to reflect on our spiritual chametz and commit to ridding ourselves of that as well.



Dirt is NOT Hametz by Amy Weiss

A Charoset Recipe For You To Try

Eli Kozukhin

Eli Kozukhin is the Chef de Cuisine at Johnny's Tavern in Amherst, Massachusetts. He worked on developing a recipe for Charoset for ANU.

"This particular Charoset recipe is a fusion of Yemenite and Sephardic traditions, and it was my personal favourite. I have also included, at the end of the recipe, a fun presentation idea that appealed to me as a chef, and could be fun for a family to do together."

Yemenite/Sephardic Charoset

2 cups dried figs – stemmed, diced	2 Tbsp ground cinnamon
2 cups dried dates – pitted, diced	2 tsp cayenne pepper
2 cups dried apricots – diced	½ cup honey
4 cups red wine (any variety that speaks to you)	2 tsp freshly grated ginger
2 oranges – zest and juice	1 tsp salt
½ cup za'atar herb (or thyme if unable to find, do not use a spice blend) – chopped fine	1 tsp fresh ground pepper
	2 Tbsp red wine vinegar
	1 cup toasted walnuts – coarsely chopped

- In a small pot, bring the wine and honey to a simmer and whisk. Do not boil. In a bowl large enough to give the fruit room to expand, pour the hot liquid over the diced figs, apricots, and dates. Cover and let sit for a minimum of 2 hours.

- Strain the mixture, but reserve the remaining honey-wine. (It is delicious and you don't want to waste it!)

- In a food processor, pulse the fruit mixture, adding the honey-wine slowly until the mixture is slightly chunky (you will not need all of the wine, approximately half, you don't want it to be so wet that it won't stick together). Any remaining wine, you can drink!

- Remove this mixture into a large mixing bowl, and add the orange zest/juice, za'atar, cinnamon, cayenne, ginger, salt, pepper, red wine vinegar to the mixture and mix by hand until well incorporated.

- Finally, mix the chopped walnuts into the charoset and serve as is

- !!Or!! -

For an interesting presentation at the seder table, rather than mixing the chopped walnuts into the charoset, hand-roll small balls of charoset and roll them in the chopped walnuts

Yesteryear

שנים שעברו

There are many memories of Seders in different communities and at different times. Each of us has our own Seder story. Here is a sampling of a few Passover experiences over the years.



The Shapiro Family 1939 in Chelsea, Massachusetts. Photo courtesy of Amy Gilman

In every generation...

Maurice Aghion

Pesach was always anticipated with great joy and trepidation. The walls of the kitchen had been scrubbed, the drapes washed and pressed, the smell of bleach lingered in the air and the Holy Days of spring were almost here.

It was the sixties, in Egypt, yes that very same Egypt of the Haggadah. It was prior to the Six Day War. I was in my teens. A new pharaoh had come to power and just like his predecessors, he hated the Jews and viciously maligned them. I painfully remember the caricatures showing a mean looking Jew as a midget with a big nose, and on top of him was the enormous boot of the brave Arab soldier, pressing on his neck, ready to crush him at any time. For a brief moment, that would be forgotten: The nights of the Seder were here, and we were getting together with the dwindling fragments of the family, to obliviously sing our happy prayers of old.

The highlight of the Seder was reenacting our hurried departure long ago, by wrapping 3 matzot in a towel and carrying this light bundle of our worldly possessions. Taking turns, each one would put it on his left shoulder, the leader would ask him: Ga'y menen? Where are you coming from? Min Mitzrayim, from Egypt. U rayech fein? And where are you going? You would shift the bundle to the right shoulder and answer: To Yerushalayim. He would then wish you: B'ezrat H' u'beshuato, with God's help and His salvation

Then came the prayer of "Ha Lachma Aniya", this is the bread of affliction, chanted with great fervor, with every one loudly joining in, more or less in harmony. That melody would stay with me for months afterward. Actually, it is still with me today, and, thank you H', it is also with the next generation.

A few painful years later, as with our ancestors, our time to depart longingly arrived. We now had real bundles to pack; what to take, what to leave. We did escape the grip of our oppressors but not before receiving a parting whip from them: I could not take my Tefillin with me. It would have been too dangerous, because when our bundles would be searched, the Tefillin could be suspected of hiding diamonds and risk canceling our departure.

Leaving Tefillin behind along with some dear ones and dear things, we came out. In time, I got new Tefillin, and I am glad to see that they too contain not just diamonds but an everlasting gift of freedom and unwavering purpose.

Happy Passover to us all

A Tale of Redemption **A Family's Journey Through Adversity in Kerman, Iran**

Sharona Mizrahi and Shohreh Mizrahi Elghanian

As I reminisce about my childhood in Kerman, Iran, one particular memory stands out vividly in my mind. It was the year 1984, and I was just thirteen years old, living at home with my two sisters and one brother. Our lives were forever changed by the events surrounding the Iranian Revolution, leaving an indelible mark on our family.

Six months prior, tragedy struck when my father was unexpectedly taken from us. He was walking down the street when he was apprehended by The Revolutionary Guards, simply because he was Jewish and had



The Mizrahi Family

addresses of people in Israel in his possession. It was a terrifying ordeal for our family as we grappled with the uncertainty of his fate.

For months, we lived in anguish, not knowing the whereabouts or condition of our beloved father. It wasn't until later that we discovered he was being held captive in a local prison, subjected to unspeakable torture in an attempt to extract information from him.

The authorities sought to exploit his connections within the Jewish community, seeking names of wealthy individuals to extort money from. In our desperation, my mother spared no effort to secure my father's release. She offered rugs and money to influential figures with ties to The Revolutionary Guards, even putting our family home up as collateral. The sacrifices she made were immense, driven by her unwavering love and determination to reunite our family.

As Erev Pesach approached in 1984, the absence of my father cast a shadow over our preparations for the holiday. I walked home from school, feeling a profound sense of longing for his presence. How could we celebrate Pesach without him by our side?

But as I stepped through the front door, I was greeted by a sight that filled me with overwhelming joy and relief. There, sitting on the last remaining red Persian rug in our home, was my father. The emotions that washed over me were indescribable – a mixture of happiness, gratitude, and sheer disbelief.

I rushed towards him, eager to embrace him after months of separation. Yet, we had to tread carefully, mindful of the physical and emotional scars he bore from his time in prison. Despite the challenges we faced, that moment of reunion remains etched in my memory as a symbol of resilience and hope.

Every year on Erev Pesach, as I gather with my family to celebrate the holiday, I am reminded of that miraculous day when we were reunited against all odds. It serves as a testament to the strength of our bonds and the power of love to triumph over adversity. Though we endured hardships that tested our resolve, we emerged stronger and more united than ever before.

In sharing our story, I hope to shed light on the struggles faced by marginalized communities in Iran and inspire others to cherish the precious moments of togetherness with their loved ones. For in the face of adversity, it is our resilience and unwavering faith that sustain us through the darkest of times.

The Seder As I Remember It

Barry Gershkowitz

The five of us piled into the white Cadillac around 6:30pm on our yearly trip to Uncle Julius and Auntie Rina's home for the Passover seder. I sat in the back seat along with my brother and sister. We took the back roads to Newton using Route 16. We passed through the skinny and winding four lane road through Arlington and Watertown, heading onto Beacon Street through Newton Center until we reached the destination on 343 Parker Street. We all jumped out of the car, rang the bell, and entered our Uncle Julius' home. As soon as the door opened, we could smell the aromas of our Aunt Rina's delicious feast. Once you entered the home, the first thing you noticed were the two couches in the living room, completely covered with thick plastic so that the fabric would never be exposed to human flesh.

We proceeded to our seats at the dining table that was meticulously set with fifteen chairs for the complete Gershkowitz side of the family; my father and his two brothers, Julius and George had come to the country in the late 1940s after surviving the Holocaust in Europe. They did not bring many possessions from the old country, but they carried their memories and traditions.

When the seder began, we recounted the Pesach story led by the three brothers, who introduced us to ancient tunes sung by their parents when they were children; these tunes still echo in our family Pesach get-togethers two generations later.

Throughout the meal, I kept an eye on the door that separated the kitchen from the dining room, waiting for my aunt to bring one delicacy after the other, with orders coming directly from her husband- "Reitze, bring the soup!" My Aunt Rina had a cherubic face, fair complexion, soft green eyes, and on her heels she almost reached 4'5".

As we drank one glass of wine after another, the volume got louder and louder. All of us had parts in the Seder and each head of the family would bless the wine in their own distinctive fashion. We always used the Maxwell House Haggadahs, as they accumulated more red stains from the Manischewitz and brown spots from the chicken schmaltz.

In between songs, Uncle Julius told jokes, but we were too young to understand. I always got into hysterics, not from the joke, but from the laughter that would emanate from my Uncle. My father's large ears would turn a bright red as he heard his brother laugh at his own jokes.

I can still remember the taste of my Aunt Rina's chicken Soup with Mandlan. We stuffed ourselves so much during the Seder and after dinner, we went downstairs to the TV room, and watched a Boston Bruin's playoff game. My very mild-mannered Uncle George would sit with us and anytime there was a hockey fight, he would yell: "Kill them!"

I don't remember the trips back from Newton to Medford. I must have been in a drunken stupor. But the memory of Passover always brings happy thoughts. I still love to sing the songs with my brother and sister in 2024 as if it were the 1960's.

A Seder in Morocco in the Early 1960's

Simon Levy

Before getting to the Haggadah, and in order to appreciate the setting for the Seder table, it is important to highlight unique features of a typical Moroccan household I grew up in the early 1960s:

1. There is no space to save chametz food, so all chametz has to be disposed off prior to the start of Pessah. The concept of “Sale of Chametz” is non-existent in Moroccan households.
2. Matzah is made & baked the day prior to Erev Pessah, so it is not available for purchase until the morning of Erev Pessah. It is sold in a bundle of 1 Kg, loosely wrapped in Kraft paper. 20 to 30 such bundles were brought home by our father, Z'L, by bicycle, his only mean of transportation. The matzah was square with holes (similar to today's matzah), but thick and extremely hard. It rarely broke during transportation! [February 2024: I recently bought some matzah at Costco, some 8 weeks before Pessah. That would have been unimaginable when I was growing up].

As a kid, I associate the Seder table & reading the Haggadah with wearing a new pair of pajamas. Each kid got a new pair. This meant being comfortable at the table, but also no risk of staining our holiday clothes before going to services the following day. The Haggadah was read in Hebrew, but had instructions in Judeo-Arabic. My mom didn't read Hebrew so all the instructions were given in Judeo-Arabic (a mix of Arabic, Hebrew & Spanish) by our dad. The Haggadah we used had instructions in Judeo-Arabic written in Hebrew. [Similar to written Yiddish?] We all read together the whole Haggadah while our dad would narrate key passages to our mom.



Two unique features of the Moroccan Seder:

1. YACHATZ (breaking the middle matzah): The Seder leader (always our dad) breaks the middle Matzah while chanting in Judeo-Arabic:

Haq'da Qssam L'lah lb'har âla tnass l'treq di'khrzeu zdoud'na min massar, âla yed sid'na oun'bina moussa ben amram haq'da n'khrzeu min had l'galouth. Amen ken yehi ratson.

This is how Hashem split the sea in twelve paths (!) when our ancestors left Egypt at the hand of our leader Moses ben Amram. May we also get out of this “galut”, amen kenn yehi ratson.

The largest half of the Matzah is then “hidden” under the tablecloth (to be used as Afikoman at the end of the meal); the other half goes back in the Seder plate.

There is no "Search for the Afikoman".

2. Before reading the Haggadah, it is a Moroccan custom for the Seder leader to raise the Seder plate over the head of each person present at the table while chanting:

Bibhilu Yatzanu MiMitzraim Ha'Lahma Hanya Bene Horinu yalala

In haste we left Egypt, a free people. This is the bread of affliction, yalala

Bibhilu is the favorite part of the Seder for our kids & grandchildren.

The anticipation for the meal was palpable. To save time and in preparation for the soup, the first course, the children would carefully break the matzah into the soup bowl. As soon as the soup was served, the matzah would typically absorb all the liquid and swell, reaching a giant mound! We would quickly gobble as much as we could, but invariably, none of us could finish the bowl.

Passover Growing up in Turkey in the 1960's

Ilya Kohen

As a child growing up in Turkey, my most profound memory of family seders was the time between "Halachma Anya" and dinner approaching infinity! Still, I loved being part of the quorum of men - my father, uncle(s) and men of guest families - reciting the Haggadah with a chant, whose monotony reverberated into a trance by the collective power of the voices. Although that chant is still alive in my head today, I never succeeded in recreating that trance performing it solo in the company of my wife, children and other Ashkenazim at the Seder table in the US.

With my town, Gaziantep, only 20 miles away from the Syrian border, Arabic was the second language among the elders. Once that midpoint of the Haggadah finally arrived, it was time for the "Tournament of Eggs", where each of the kids would pick a hardboiled egg for a match with another kid, with the victor moving on to the playoffs. Then came this long-awaited dinner, served by the women.

Needless to say, after the dinner none of us kids were awake to finish the Hallel and the rest of the second part. On a few occasions, I remember my uncle leading the rest to the finish line.

Another memory of Pesach was the arrival ceremony of the Matzah: With a total Jewish population of 150 Jews in town, there was no grocery store to buy Matzah from. Instead, The Matzah - enough for everyone in the community - would arrive in one gigantic bale from Istanbul to our house to be distributed to each family. Why our house, I never asked; maybe because my grandfather was the one who arranged it.

The Matzah was round in shape, riddled throughout with holes the size and shape of a vitamin C pill. I remember that being so special then. And as a once-in-a year event, I remember that anticipation of taking the first bite - but not before the Seder, of course.

Today, absent any of the above, the reciting of Haggadah is egalitarian with men, women, and children taking part. Each year, all our children and my brother's children ascend with their families either in our house or my brother's for a week-long gathering. With my brother being married to a Persian wife, a new custom was brought into our Seder involving scallions. During Dayyenu, the adolescent boys would strip their tops to engage in the competitive sport of whipping each other with scallions! And the Hardboiled Egg Tournament is still alive and well.

By the way, the time from the start to eat is not an eternity anymore :)

Passover Memories Growing Up in a Tiny Town in New Jersey

Marsha Canick

Passover was the most invigorating time of the year for me, growing up as one of 3 Jewish families in a small town, Cape May, at the southern tip of New Jersey. Passover meant more time with our family, especially my mother, who worked with my father 6 long days a week, except during Passover. “Pesach” also made me feel quietly proud of being Jewish. As my father was an immigrant with a starving childhood, I took to heart the Passover story and felt immensely grateful to be celebrating the story from bondage to freedom. Everyone in town knew we were Jewish/different, and if they didn’t at first, they would soon find out. Several times a year, my father would post a note, CLOSED FOR THE JEWISH HOLIDAYS on the front door of the restaurant/liquor store they owned (now it would be called a gastro pub.) After his sign went up, we were often greeted with have a “happy holiday” (even on Yom Kippur!)

My strongest memories revolve around the preparation for Passover and the Seder meal. The eight days of Passover was a major event in our family, one filled with anticipation and ritual. My mother was the general and we three “girls” were her foot soldiers: clearing out the non-Passadik food, giving away the chametz, bringing down my deceased aunt’s dishes to use, cleaning the house, preparing the food and setting up the extended tables for Seder. This was the most time we spent working together with our mother during the year. Every aspect of the holiday was considered important. There was even excitement and tension about purchasing the Passover food. The closest Jewish deli/market that sold Kosher for Passover items was an hour and a half drive away and we only went there before Pesach. Not only was the trip special but the timing of the trip was very important. My mother had some way of finding out when the Passover food would arrive in this market. She impressed on my father that we needed to get there early before they ran out of matzah, matzah meal, potato starch, brisket and more matzah: the food for our large Seder and the food our family of 8 would eat all week. Somehow, my mother would get a phone call and we all would begin hurrying to fit into the station wagon, including my grandmother. No one wanted to be left behind. We children were most hopeful that the store still have some of the “jellied fruit slices” left. I wanted to take a piece of this “treat” to school later in the week with the usual brown bag lunch of matzah and hard-boiled egg. The food was piled into the “outside kitchen,” an enclosed unheated porch area, until the house was cleaned of chametz and ready to receive the Passover food.

Cooking started after the house was cleaned and the night before the Seder, We spent the next day cooking as well, and I was always amazed it was all done in time for family and guests to arrive. We girls peeled and cut up bags of onions, potatoes, carrots, celery, fruit for a large fruit bowl and of course the charoset. We cut and chopped while my mother made her magically tall Passover spongecakes. When I was younger, I was not allowed to help with the cakes, but as I got older I recall the time my mother trusted me enough to fold in the egg whites, while watching carefully and coaching. That felt like a milestone. Making the dozens and dozens of kneidlach/matzah balls together was fun. Our wet slippery hands turned each ball of “matzah meal, egg, oil and water” over lightly, as directed, so that the kneidlach would float. Our family was 8 every night for dinner, 5 children, my parents and grandmother. For the Seder there were often over 20, when we were children and into the high 30’s once we married. My “out of town” grandparents, older relatives, and 1-4 unknown Coast Guard guests joined us. Our family Seder always included any “Jewish boys” who were training that year at the nearby Coast Guard training center. The Chief Petty Officer would tell our father

the day before how many “boys” were coming but not who they were until they appeared. Just before the guests arrived, our parents admonished us to act appropriately and not to embarrass them by getting into laughing fits during the Seder. Yearly, my older brother quietly started us laughing while we were supposed to be walking back sedately from opening the door for Elijah. He could stop laughing immediately as we re-entered the room, but we couldn't.

My father led the Seder, using the thin, stained Maxwell House Haggadahs. He took this role seriously and we were not to interrupt or ask questions. We knew that father would go around the table clockwise asking each person to read, so we tried to choose our seats strategically hoping we would not have to pronounce difficult names in front of strangers. Singing was not a strength in our family, so we three younger ones begged to sing the 4 questions together, and our family and guests sang only a few verses of Dayanu and Eliyahu. As an adult, I delighted in sharing Seder with friends who loved to sing, and to ask questions, so I made a Passover songbook, asked questions early, and added instruments and props to add the story telling.

Our parents wanted Passover to feel special for us and for us to feel proud/not embarrassed to be Jewish. Passover did feel special, as we ate dinner together nightly, which was not usual; we had matzah and eggs/ matzah brei for breakfast instead of cold cereal; and there was an air of togetherness in the house throughout the holiday. Passover was so central to our idea of family that as we each married and moved away, my mother made us promise that we would come back with our own families for Thanksgiving and Passover, which we did. These two holidays have always been linked in my head, in part because of the concept of remembering who we are, where we came from and giving thanks for where we live. Maybe also, in part, because we had much of the same food for both holidays. Even now when we gather with all of our adult children and grandchildren for Thanksgiving, the meal begins after blessings are said and matzah ball soup is served!

My Seder in Mexico in the 1950's

Tania Erlij

I have a very vague memory of having participated in a seder with my maternal grandparents, Bobbeh Genia and Zeide Mordechai. All the seders that I remember were celebrated at the house of my 'Tio'(uncle) Pedro and 'Tia' (aunt)Bela, who was my dad's sister, the only sister who was able to immigrate from Ukraine to Mexico with her younger brother, my dad. Tio Pedro (also named Pesaj) read a long Haggadah—all the way from cover to cover, at the speed of a thousand words per second—sitting on cushions. I remember the steaming chicken broth with kneidalaj that seemed like huge cannonballs to me, but very delicious. My aunt, a great cook prepared spiced cholent that all adults loved. My older cousin David, sitting to the right of his father (Tio Pedro), was trying to read the Haggadah together with his father; apparently he made mistakes often because his father slapped him every time, without even interrupting his reading. Poor David.

I was feeling special because I, together with my cousin Elena, asked the fir kashes, the four questions in Yiddish and we DIDN'T MAKE ANY MISTAKES, so they didn't kick us.

One last note of explanation: my cousins and I attended a Jewish day school in Mexico City, run by Polish and Ukrainian Jewish immigrants who were members of the Bund, thus we learned everything in Yiddish! I still feel sorry when I remember myself on Passover, being the only student bringing a ham and BREAD sandwich for lunch ...I learned how to hide under one of the tables.

Passover in Melilla, Spain

Esther Cohen Muhlfelder

Growing up in Melilla, Spain preparation for Pesach starts at least two months prior. All the painting and house repairs are taken care of. Then the cleaning!

The food was a very important part since you could not buy anything kosher for Pesach in Melilla. Everything was done in the house with the exception of the sh'mura (guarded) and everyday matzah and some cold cuts that someone was able to bring us from France.

I remember my grandfather making the wine – in wooden barrels - with flavors of delicious grapes. He also made a kind of Arak, an anis flavored liquor. It was fun to see my grandmother, my mom, and some of her sisters making salted and sweet delicacies. They worked hard but always with fun.

The Seder nights we celebrated at my parents. All was so festive and happy; everyone wearing new dresses and shoes as we did for each holiday. Before we started the reading the Haggadah, my dad, Z'L, would take the large seder plate and pass it over each of our heads tapping lightly three times each and singing "Bibhilu Yazanu mi Misrayim, Bibhilu Yazanu mi Mizrayim ("In a hurry we left Egypt"). We all felt the emotion as if we were really liberated. My dad, Z'L, then sang each verse of the Haggadah in Hebrew, and we, taking turns, repeated it in Spanish. Some parts we read together. Questions and answers were a big part of the Seder.

I still keep most of the traditions and have amended my husband's Ashkenazi Haggadah with my own. For example, when we recite the 10 plagues, my husband drops a little wine from his cup over a bowl that I hold with one hand, and with the other I drop water from a pitcher over each plague to dissolve it in the water.

After we have finished with the plagues, I pass the pitcher and wash the hands of everyone at the table.

We prepare our charoset from roasted ground almonds, dates, wine and a little apple and make into small balls rolled in cinnamon. We use Romaine lettuce leaves as the maror and dip it in a mix of charoset with apple cider. For the sandwich we wrap leaves of lettuce around pieces of matzah, charoset, and celery (karpas). This sandwich we eat without taking it out of our mouth until it's all finished. This was the cause of lots of laughter! We were very happy when the meal was served. There was the afikoman to hide and be found, the door to be opened for the prophet Elijah, and all the singing for the Hallel ... so happy.

May we are always be liberated both from inside of ourselves and from the outside world.

Themes

חג החרות Freedom

Time of Our Freedom? Papercut

Laura Conrad Mandel



This clock, a pocket watch that evokes layers of history, is filled with images that evoke top answers to the question “when do you feel free?”

Seder discussion questions:

- Which image resonates with you? What image would you include?

Freedom

Barbara Gold Marks

The exodus story is one of political liberation, the freeing of a people from physical bondage. Of course there are many ways people can be shackled: drugs, alcohol, bingeing, judging, ruminating about the past, worrying about the future... Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote: "Many things influence us – our genes, our parents, our early childhood, our race, creed, culture, class, and the persuasions and pressures of our environment." If our personal histories influence us, how can we truly be free?

Rabbi Sacks maintained that "influence is not control." On a personal level, freedom is stepping back from a habitual behavior or thought and choosing to proceed based on values. Freedom is the ability to notice and bring curiosity and openness. Freedom is the capacity to be in the moment. Freedom is committing to what you know really matters, undeterred by societal pressure. Viktor Frankl, a slave in concentration camps who later founded a school of psychotherapy, famously wrote: "Everything can be taken from a man 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."

Freedom is a consciousness of the other as well as of oneself, prioritizing freedom for both. Both personal freedom and political freedom rely on this concept.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel observed: "The glory of a free society lies not only in the consciousness of my right to be free, and my capacity to be free, but also in the realization of my fellow man's right to be free, and his capacity to be free." Consistent with this concept, Representative Jamie Raskin recently said that "democracy is necessary for freedom." Everyone counts and I don't count more than you, nor you more than me.

Finally, as Rabbi Sacks proclaimed, "Judaism is, among other things, a sustained tutorial in freedom; the ability to say No; to conquer instinct by conscience; to resist the madness of crowds and their idols."

Freedom

Amaresh Heli Sanka, Tel Aviv

שאלתי אנשים מהו חופש עבורם. חלקם ענו שחופש זה ללא דאגות, או חופש זה שיש לי כסף לעשות כל מה שאני רוצה, חופש זה שאני לא צריך לעבוד וכו'. ... המכנה המשותף בין כולם, היה חופש זה ללא גבולות.

גם בויקיפדיה, המילה חופש מוגדרת כ"מושג מופשט אשר מתאר, באופן כללי, היעדר אילוצים, הכרח או כפייה, ואפשרויות פעולה לא מוגבלות".

האמנם, משהו בתוכי עדיין לא התרצה מהתשובה. עבורי חופש זה הרבה יותר מחופש... לכן, המשכתי להרהר ולחפש את המענה לשאלה בתוכי. מאחר ועברו כמה ימים ועדיין לא מצאתי מענה שיביא אותי לסיפוק מחשבתי (לפחות לא כשעולה במוחי המילה "חופש"), החלטתי לנסות להרהר במילה הנרדפת לחופש - "חירות" ושיניתי את צורת החשיבה, החלטתי לענות תחילה בצורת שלילה ובמקום לענות מהו חופש/חירות נענה מהו לא... בתקווה שבסוף אוכל להגיע להגדרה המדויקת עבורי.

אם כך, חופש/חירות הוא לא מיקום גאוגרפי.
חופש/חירות הוא לא משהו שאפשר לתת או לקבל.
חופש/חירות הוא לא משהו שאני יכולה לתפוס או להרגיש.
חופש/חירות הוא לא משהו שיכול לבוא לידי ביטוי בחמשת החושים.
ובכן, חופש/חירות הוא מצב תודעתי.
הכלא הכי קשה הוא כלא תודעתי, אחד מגדולי המוזיקה אומר בשירו

"Emancipate yourselves from mental" slavery. None but ourselves can free our mind." -Bob Marley

בתנ"ך כתוב על עבדות בני ישראל במצרים, בשום מקום לא כתוב על גדרות תיל או שלשלאות שהגבילו את בני ישראל. זאת אומרת שבכל זמן נתון, יכלו בני ישראל לצאת ממצרים. אבל הם לא עשו זאת, מדוע? יכול להיות שהם היו בכלא תודעתי?

בני ישראל עבדו בפרך במצרים שבעה ימים בשבוע ללא מנוחה, אומרים שהשלב הראשון ביציאתם לחירות היה כאשר משה ביקש מפרעה יום אחד שבו יכלו בני ישראל לעבוד את ה', (הרבה לפני שהם יצאו למדבר), במעשה זה משה שבר את הרוטינה היום יומית שבה היו בני ישראל ולראשונה בני ישראל יכלו לעצור, להתבונן ולחשוב, הם יצאו מפעולת האוטומט.

כוח המחשבה הוא כרטיס היציאה שלנו לחירות. אם אנחנו מבינים זאת, נבין שהכוח לכלוא או לשחרר את עצמנו הוא בידינו בלבד.

ישנם לא מעט סיפורים על מקובלים שישבו פיזית בכלא אך במוחם היו חופשיים לחלוטין. אם כך חירות/חופש הוא מצב תודעתי רוחני, מצב מחשבתי שבא לידי ביטוי בחיי היום יום של האדם אך הוא מתחיל במחשבה.

את הכוח של המחשבה ניתן לראות גם בתפילת שחרית בחלק של "גילוי הדעת", שם אנו מתפללים ומבקשים למחוק כל מחשבה פגומה שחלילה לא תייצר את המציאות. הרי בסופו של דבר המציאות היא סובייקטיבית, אדם חווה את המציאות כפי שהיא נתפסת במוחו. מכאן אפשר להסיק כי אדם עם מחשבות פגומות חווה מציאות פגומה בדיוק ובהתאם למחשבותיו.

ואם כך, ניתן לגזור ולהבין מהנאמר ש-המחשבה אחראית על הרגש שלי ומולידה את המציאות שאני חווה.

אם אני יוצאת מנק הנחה זו אז חופש עבורי הוא מצב (אם אפשר רציף) של מחשבות אופטימיות אוהבות ונעימות. הדרך לקיים מצב תודעתי רציף של מחשבות טובות היא על-ידי ניווט המחשבה. ראשית עליי להיות מודעת למחשבות שלי, לדעת על מה אני חושבת ואחר כך עליי להיות ערה ולשים לב אם עולה במוחי מחשבה שלילית עליי לנקות אותה ממוחי, להתמיר את המחשבה השלילית במשהו חיובי.

מודעות, מוציאה אותנו מהחשיבה האוטומטית שמולידה פעולות אוטומטיות שלא בהכרח טובות לנו.

כולנו במידה כזו או אחרת עבדים, בשונה מבני ישראל אנחנו "עבדים מודרניים" - עבדים לסטטוס, עבדים לתכתיבי החברה, עבדים לכסף, עבדים לרשתות חברתיות/ מדיה עבדים למעמד, עבדים ליצרים שלנו ועוד...

ברגע שאנו בוחרים לקחת אחריות מודעת, אנו בחופש ב-חירות מכיוון שאנו חיים את הבחירות שלנו, סוף מעשה במחשבה תחילה.

מתי בפעם האחרונה בחרת משהו שנבע מחשיבה עצמאית שלך?

Translation

I asked people what freedom is for them. Some answered that freedom is without worries, or freedom is that I have money to do whatever I want, freedom is that I don't have to work, etc... The common denominator among all of them was that freedom is without limits.

Also in Wikipedia, the word freedom is defined as "an abstract concept that describes, in general, the absence of constraints, necessity or coercion, and unlimited possibilities of action."

Indeed, something inside me still did not give up on the answer. For me, freedom is much more than a vacation... Therefore, I continued to ponder and search for the answer to the question within myself. Since several days have passed and I still haven't found an answer that satisfies my thoughts (at least not when the word "freedom" comes to mind,) I decided to try to reflect on the synonym for freedom - "liberty" and it changed my way of thinking.

I decided to answer first in the form of a negative and instead of answering what freedom/liberty is the answer was what freedom/liberty is not... in the hope that in the end I could reach the exact definition for me.

So, freedom/liberty is not a geographical location.
Freedom is not something that can be given or received.
Freedom is not something I can grasp or feel.
Freedom is not something that can be expressed in the five senses.
Freedom is a state of mind.

The hardest prison is the prison of the mind, one of the greats of music says in his song,

"Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery; None but ourselves can free our mind. " -Bob Marley

In the Bible it is written about the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt; nowhere is it written about wire fences or chains that restricted the Israelites. This means that at any given time, the Israelites could leave Egypt. But they didn't, why? Could it be that they were in a mental prison?

The Israelites worked hard in Egypt seven days a week without rest, it is said that the first step in their freedom was when Moses asked Pharaoh for one day on which the Israelites could worship God (long before they left for the desert).

With this act Moses broke the daily routine of the Israelites and for the first time they could stop, contemplate and think, They came out of the automatic drive.

The power of thought is our ticket to freedom. If we understand this, we will understand that the power to imprison or free ourselves is in our hands alone.

There are quite a few stories about Kabbalists who were physically in prison but in their minds were completely free. So freedom/liberty is a spiritual state of mind, a mental state that is expressed in a person's daily life, but it begins with thought.

The power of thought can also be seen in the morning prayer part of the "Revelation of the Word", where we pray and ask to erase every flawed thought that, God forbid, will not create reality. After all, reality is subjective; a person experiences reality as it is perceived in his mind. From this it can be concluded that a person with defective thoughts experiences a defective reality exactly and in accordance with his thoughts.

And if so, it is possible to derive and understand from what is said that thought is responsible for my emotion and gives birth to the reality I experience.

If I proceed from this assumption then freedom for me is a state (if possible continuous) of loving and pleasant optimistic thoughts.

The way to maintain a continuous state of mind of good thoughts is by navigating the thought. First I have to be aware of my thoughts, know what I'm thinking about and then I have to be awake and notice if a negative thought comes into my mind I have to clear it from my mind, transform the negative thought into something positive.

Awareness takes us out of the automatic thinking that gives rise to automatic actions that are not necessarily good for us.

We are all slaves to one degree or another, unlike the Israelites we are "modern slaves" - slaves to status, slaves to society's dictates, slaves to money, slaves to social networks/media, slaves to status, slaves to our passions and more...

Once we choose to take conscious responsibility, we are at liberty because we live our choices,

Think before you act.

When was the last time you chose something that resulted from your independent thinking?

Spring

חג האביב

Nature knows this time of blossoming.
Of emerging from dormancy and the narrows.
Opening into our true beauty.



Image and Poem by Andrea DeSharone

חג המצות Matzot

Barry Ehrlich

Although there are many important elements of the Seder and the Seder plate, the star performer is certainly the matzah. It gets its own plate; a cover with 3 sections for the 3 matzot which are used during the Seder rituals; and even a special envelope that holds the afikoman. All this attention for an unglorified, bland oversized Passover cracker that nevertheless takes centerstage during the Seder.

Delicious, plump and doughy challah is beautifully braided and is easily torn apart and sliced. Raisins and other bits of dried fruit are sometimes added for additional flavor. Many people bake their own and bring it to friends' homes to make the Shabbat meal even more special. We look forward to passing it around the Shabbat table and eating it after reciting a single blessing. However, matzah is so ordinary in its appearance. It is flat, square and has no pleasing features. There is almost nothing that can be done to enhance its appearance or taste. Despite all of those perfectly placed linear perforations it is a challenge to cleanly break a sheet of matzah: It predictably crumbles when divided and leaves a mess behind. There is little enthusiasm for passing it around the table and eating it. Who brings a box of matzah to a friend's home during the Passover holiday? Yet, matzah garners two blessings during the Seder (*motzi lechem min haaretz; al achilat matzah*). Without matzah, what would do when it is time to bless/eat the charoset and the horseradish? Without matzah, there would be no afikoman, the ritual dessert of the Seder.

Matzah also reminds us of the humility and reserved nature of Moshe, the unassuming and reluctant leader of the Israelites. This ordinary and unspectacular man was chosen by Hashem to lead the Jewish people at a pivotal time during their history. Matzah reminds us that from the ordinary there can arise unexpected greatness.

To Matzah or Not to Matzah

That is the question... Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the pangs of over priced matzah or take arms against the commandments to consume unleavened bread at the Passover Seder.

Donald and Marcy Hoban

Back in 2004 eating matzah became a whole new experience for our family. Our son had recently been diagnosed with Celiac and our family opted to maintain a gluten free home in solidarity. Off to the Butcherie, our only option at the time, in search of Gluten Free Matzah.

The first box of matzah had a tag of "299" which was interpreted as 2.99 per box. How lucky was I?! Six boxes of matzah were placed in the cart and off to the cashier I went. Within seconds it was clear that each box was \$29.99!!! Needless to say, I was taken aback, burst into tears, left the store and called my husband from outside the Butcherie.

"There will be no Passover for us this year!" I exclaimed. No way were we going to succumb to a thirty dollar box of matzah! G-d will have to forgive us. We proceeded with our seder sans matzah that year.

Fast forward and in the grocery store we now find reasonably priced, delicious gluten free matzah of various flavors. Our family has returned to the tradition of eating Matzah on Passover. While technically, the potato based matzah does not "qualify" as the "real" gluten free matzah because it does not have the potential to rise, we maintain that the potato based gluten free matzah can serve as the symbolism of unleavened bread for our Passover Seder.

Seder Order

סדר

קִדּוּשׁ

Kadesh – Recite the Kiddush (Sanctification of the festival).

וּרְחֹץ

Urchatz – Wash hands without a blessing.

כֶּרֶפֶס

Karpas – Eat parsley or potato dipped in salt water.

יַחֲצֵץ

Yachatz – Break the middle Matzah, and hide one part to be eaten at the end of the meal as the Afikoman.

מַגִּיד

Magid – Tell the story of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

רַחֲצָה

Rachtza – Wash hands with a blessing.

מוֹצִיא מַצָּה

Motzi, Matzah – Recite the blessing before the meal, and the special blessing over the Matzah.

מָרֹר

Maror – Eat a bitter herb.

כּוֹרֵךְ

Korech – Combine Matzah, Maror and Charoset and eat them together.

שְׁלַחַן עוֹרֵךְ

Shulchan Orech – Partake of the festival meal.

צִפּוּן

Tzafun – Conclude the meal by eating the Afikoman.

בִּרְךְ

Barech – Say grace after the meal.

הַלֵּל

Hallel – Recite the remainder of the Hallel.

נִרְצָה

Nirtza – End with a prayer for the acceptance of the service.

The Order of the Seder

Barry Ehrlich

The order of the Seder is quite traditional and unquestioned. There is even a song which lists all the chronological steps of the Seder. Despite there being many versions, every Haggadah follows the same playbook. Why not? It is all very logical: start with Kiddush, once the chag officially begins; washing hands; Karpas; the four questions which leads us to the telling of the story of Passover; the four sons; the ten plagues; the various rabbinical commentaries; Dayenu; the various Passover symbols and rituals: matzah, charoset and maror; the meal and birkat hamazon; more cups of wine and Elijah; Hallel ; and conclude with some fun songs. And every now and then, mix in some commentary, an article, audience participation, discussion, etc. Just have the leader follow this script and everything will work out perfectly. Right??

The above traditional Seder order works fine for a gathering of inquisitive, Judaic-educated adults. However, what about a group of adults who are not so educated and are not interested in such a comprehensive Seder experience, with some wanting to leave after dessert if the Seder is far too long for them? What if there are quite a few children who can't pay attention for too long, wait so long to eat or stay up so late?? These are real challenges for many family Seders.

Accept the fact that creating the perfect Seder experience for every participant is not an achievable goal. However, I believe that making some creative alterations in the Seder order might partially solve many of these issues:

- Start earlier and simply say Kiddush a bit later in the Seder.
- Consider—dare I say it—skipping some parts of the Haggadah which may not captivate the interest in some members—even you— such as the rabbinical commentaries; shorten birkat hamazon and Hallel; remember, less is more.
- Accept the fact that you cannot read or discuss every commentary, article, etc that ever existed on Passover. Select a short few and save the rest for next year.
- In order to expedite the rituals, have at least two Seder plates, and appoint a person in charge of each so that items can be passed around more efficiently..
- Consider serving the soup somewhere between the start of the Seder and the meal so that children, as well as adults, don't have to go so long without eating. That would be a good time for discussions and short articles.
- Don't wait for the very end of the Seder to sing songs; Mix in one or two in the first half of the Seder.

Consider both streamlining and changing the order of the Seder to fit your particular audience and reflect what parts of the Seder are important to you. The result may make for a more enjoyable Seder experience for most.

The Egg

Ahuva Loewenthal

the egg came first
the egg - it's not like you think -
much older than a chicken
from so many ages ago that
you're afraid to ask
what squeezed it out
hard-shelled
upon the land
a trigger warning needed?
a monster
with the wrong number of eyes?
shuddering, you flee back to local convention
but trust me
that little lizard
meant you no harm
means you no harm
its little pearl in repose
triumphant in silence
persisting unchanged
and yet kaleidoscoping
through eons
branching and feathering
so that from the Exodus
to the Great Temple's fall
was just one cluck
and from the Great Temple's fall
to your seder tonight
was not quite a cluck and a half



Beitzah by Lisa Redisch

Artist Statement: The egg on the Seder plate, is meant to show the dichotomy of birth, growth, and renewal, in contrast to the mourning and death that a hard boiled egg represents. While an egg is a symbol of birth and the cycle of life, it is also a food that we eat while in mourning, often roasted to remind us of the Korban Chagigah or Festival sacrifice, and reminds us of the mourning of the destruction of the Temple. It also calls attention to birth and reproductivity as a feminist issue, with women at the forefront of bringing life into the world.

Zroa זרוע

Sheryl Ishai- Art and Commentary

Artist statement : What started out as a desire to explore and express on canvas the Zroa, which represents the Passover sacrificial lamb bone on the seder plate, became my expression of hope during a very difficult time in my life as a Jew living in Israel post October 7, 2024. Zroa -is literally the bone-arm or shoulder. In my painting, Gds arm is outstretched reaching down to fill the sea with "plenty", providing us with what we need and lifting us up to the light. The painting, like our history, has multiple textured layers; in places light and serene, others dark, heavy and scratched. Flowing lines cradle the eye, soothing colors express calm. Paint was heavily slathered on with brush and knife.

The root letters of Zroa in Hebrew זרע also translates as "seed" as in the seed for fruits or vegetables or the seed of future generations—the hope for our future whether it be for me personally or for us as a Jewish people. In my painting, the three seeds explode out of the plenty that Gd provides promising continuity and joy. Hope for a better future for us all.



Zroa Commentary

Sheryl Ishai

Zroa is literally a bone from the shoulder or arm. More specifically it is the bone from the lamb that was sacrificed—the sacrificial lamb—at the Holy Temple in Jerusalem then roasted and eaten by the High Priest before the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E.

On the eve of exiting slavery in Egypt on the 14th of the month of Nissan, we Jews were instructed to slaughter a lamb for each family, roast it and eat it completely, put its blood on the doorposts and walk out to become a free people on our journey as Gd's Holy People whereby our home would be like the Temple and our doorposts like the alter. Three examples of zroa will be discussed here. The bone of the sacrifice, the arm of Gd and the seed all stemming from the root of the word zroa. זרע-

At our seder table we are required to discuss the zroa (not eat it) along with the matzah and maror (bitter herbs) which we do eat in order to fulfill our obligation to retell the story from generation to generation of our slavery and redemption from Egypt by Gd.

Without the Beit Hamikdash, we no longer sacrifice; therefore we do not eat from the zroa but leave it on the seder plate after pointing it out. A turkey or chicken neck or wing, lamb or meat bone, or even a roasted beet is used to represent the zroa on the seder plate.

Zroa is also referred to as arm or shoulder. ויציאנו הי אלקנו משם ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה and Gd took us out of slavery from there with a strong and outstretched arm (Ex 6:6, Deut 26:8) to also be spiritually free.

Victor Frankl wrote "A person needs meaning." Wherever we read the hagaddah, whether it be in the desert or city, in the Warsaw ghetto on the eve of the uprising or during the aftermath of Simchat Torah on October 7, 2024 in Israel, we must celebrate our freedom and pass on our history to our children and future generations as proof of our continuity. We must see ourselves as if we came out of Egypt into Hashem's strong outstretched arms—a place where we can breathe, lean, rest freely and know that we carry with us thousands of years of tradition and existence in the Promised Land.

The third word from the root זרע means seed; a seed that leads to new fruit or vegetables or in this case the hope and promise of the seed of generations to come to whom we can hand down our history and legacy year after year.

The Seder Plate

Brett Gershkowitz & Michael Vonnoh

We are transported by the taste
Brought back to a bitter place
We remember our ancestors' history
And we are reminded of their misery

Gather around the seder plate
Learn about our people's fate
Tonight we recline in our seat
B"H, it is time to eat

The shankbone reminds us of the sacrificial lamb
Adonai saved our lives, He had a plan
Charoset bonded bricks in Pharaoh's land
We will not back down, we must take a stand

The bitter herbs attack our taste buds
40 years in the desert, we wait for great floods
Karpas sulks in salt water, representing our tears
Our peoples' continued strength causes our oppressors fear

An egg rounds out our seder plate
In painful times, we need to keep our faith
Remembering our story keeps us alive
We gather as a community so we can thrive.

Miriam's Cup

Miriam HaNeviah

Nancy Lerea, Elie Lerea

Valiant in her defiance to Pharaoh
to keep baby boys alive.
She saved them from the flowing waters
and answered only to her God.

Her brother born,
her mother wove a basket of reeds
and set him gently in the water.
Miriam followed from afar.

Pharaoh's daughter saw the basket floating.
She extended her arm and took him as her own.
Within the walls of royalty, he became a prince.

Time passed and ten plagues descended upon Egypt.
It was at midnight when Israel fled unto the sea
and the waters opened for them.

Egyptians pursued - arrogant, certain -
But the sea closed, and they were swallowed.

With a clear voice, Miriam led the women in song -
They danced with drums and timbrels,
Their voices conveyed their faith in God's redeeming waters.

From a rock sprang forth water
In Miriam's merit, cool water nourished thirsty souls.
Miriam's well followed them through the desert,
but when she died, the well and rock were lost.

Bring back that water that yearns for freedom!

At the Seder we remember Miriam
with a goblet of spring water.
The waters of the river, the well, the rock remind us
now more than ever.

We need Miriam's song and the heartfelt dancing
with the sound of timbrels -
We yearn for the embrace of her waters.



Miriam Crossing the Red Sea by Bette Ann Libby

Kadesh

קֵדֵשׁ

Kadesh

Rebecca Weinstein

With the first step of our Seder, Kadesh, we embark on the journey of stepping out of our everyday routines and beginning our collective entrance into the Pesach narrative.

Peninei Halakhah ("Pearls of Jewish Law") teaches about Kadesh in Pesach 16:5: *".....Unlike other kiddushim where only one person recites kiddush and drinks the majority of a cup of wine, on the Seder night each participant is poured a cup of wine, and after kiddush everyone reclines and drinks most of the wine in his cup. This is the first of the four cups of wine."*

According to Peninei Halakhah, our Seder Kiddush is distinctive in that it is recited as a community. As we journey back to our times as slaves in Egypt, we do so as a community. While we are told that each one of us is obligated to see ourselves as though "they had come forth out of Egypt", we are all doing this simultaneously together.

This act of unity during kadesh reminds me of one of my favorite stories about the power of community:

There once was a farmer, whose cart had become stuck in a deep, muddy pit.

So he tied his horse Charley onto the cart in order to drag it out. He stood in front of his horse and started encouraging him, shouting, "Come on Charley, come on Sam, come on Jeffery. Come on Charley, come on Sam, come on Jeffery." Over and over again until eventually the horse dragged the cart out of the pit.

A neighbor who had been watching asked why the farmer had been calling out three different names when there was only one horse present. The farmer looked at him and said, "To make him feel that he was not alone!"

I invite you to discuss the following questions:

1. How does Kiddush recited as a community align with the broader themes of the Passover Seder?
2. In what ways does the concept of journeying back to the times of slavery in Egypt take on a different significance when done as a community, as opposed to an individual reflection?

We pour the first cup. The matzot are covered

Make Kiddush

בשבת מתחילין
On Shabbat, begin here:

וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי. וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צָבָאָם. וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְכַל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה. וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אוֹתוֹ כִּי בּו שְׁבֹת מְכַל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת.

And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. And the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their host. And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because He rested on it from all of His work which God created in doing (Genesis 1:31-2:3).

בחול מתחילין:
On weekdays, begin here:

סְבָרִי מְרִנּוֹ וְרִבְּנִי וְרִבּוֹתִי. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרִי הַגֶּפֶן.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל-עַם וְרוֹמַמְנוּ מִכָּל-לָשׁוֹן וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. וְתָתֵן לָנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה (לשבת: שְׁבֹתוֹת לְמִנוּחָה ו) מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה, חַגִּים וְזִמְנִים לְשִׂשׁוֹן, (לשבת: אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבֹתָה הַזֶּה ו) אֶת יוֹם חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה זְמַן חֲרוּתֵנוּ, (לשבת: בְּאַהֲבָה) מְקַרָּא קֹדֶשׁ וְזָכַר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֵרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, (לשבת: וְשֹׁבֵת) וּמוֹעֲדֵי קֹדֶשׁ (לשבת: בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצּוֹן) בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הַנִּחְלָתָנוּ.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has chosen us from all peoples and has raised us above all tongues and has sanctified us with His commandments. And You have given us, Lord our God, [Sabbaths for rest], appointed times for happiness, holidays and special times for joy, [this Sabbath day, and] this Festival of Matzot, our season of freedom [in love] a holy convocation in memory of the Exodus from Egypt. For You have chosen us and sanctified us above all peoples. In Your gracious love, You granted us Your [holy Sabbath, and] special times for happiness and joy.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', מְקַדֵּשׁ (לשבת: הַשְּׁבֹתָה ו) יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְמָנִים.

Blessed are You, O Lord, who sanctifies [the Sabbath,] Israel, and the appointed times.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנוֹ הַזֶּה.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has granted us life and sustenance and permitted us to reach this season. Drink while reclining to the left and do not recite a blessing after drinking.

The Haggadah's Four Cups of Freedom

Marsha Martin



Cup #1: *Kiddush* “I will deliver you.”

I will deliver you to a place, an inner place, where you will experience the goodness and beauty of life ~ as symbolized by this lovely, fragile wine glass. Surrounded by such beauty and goodness, you will have the freedom to praise and to dream.

Cup #2: *Ge'ullah* “I will bring you out.”

You will no longer be enslaved. You will be free to venture forth, to travel, to learn new things, to do meaningful work ~ as symbolized by your traveling tumbler.

Cup #3: *Birkat ha-mazon* “I will redeem you.”

Just as I sustain the world with goodness, grace, loving kindness, and compassion, I will give you freedom from pretense; freedom to be honest, transparent; freedom to be your real G-d-given self; and the freedom of Humility ~ as the life-giving water in the water bottle that is always with you.

Cup #4: Nishmat hymn: "*Birkat ha-Shir*" “I will take you to be my people.”

You are a beloved part of my community. I will wrap you in the freedom to be comfortable and to relax, to be free from stress, free to share time with friends, to know you belong ~ as you unhurriedly sip from your mug while sitting around the table with my people, your ‘family’.

Four cups, four containers from our everyday life – ‘cups’ we use often.

Symbols of the gifts of freedom offered to us every day by Hashem, our Creator and Sustainer.

Freedoms that make a good life, a beautiful life, a meaningful life possible for each of us.

Praise be to Adonai!



Photo Courtesy of Marc Goldring

Shehecheyanu Blessing

Deborah Leipziger

Blessed are you
Guardian of the universe
who has given us imagination
hope and courage
born from our ancestors
born from our children
as we open a new chapter for the Earth.

And Wash

וַיִּרְחֹץ

Wash your hands but do not say the blessing "on the washing of the hands."

Water

Levi Gershkowitz

Water flows over our hands twice during the seder.

This beautiful video, created by Levi Gershkowitz, illustrates the cleansing nature of water—its source, its musicality and playful reflection of light.

To view this video, please scan or click on the QR code.



Still from Water by Levi Gershkowitz

Karpas Greens

כַּרְפָּס

Take from the greens less than a kazayit - so that you will not need to say the blessing after eating it; dip it into the salt water; say the blessing "who creates the fruit of the earth;" and have in mind that this blessing will also be for the bitter herbs. Eat without reclining

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.



Karpas- Image Courtesy of Jennifer Mawson

Break

יִתֵּץ

Split the middle matzah in two, and conceal the larger piece to use it for the afikoman.

Yachatz

Larry Cohen

We live in brokenness, and that condition becomes clearer as we age. We learn to deal with failing parts and to persevere with whatever is left. We learn that there are limits to what we can fix, and that brokenness is not failure. The world was created by breaking off light from dark, or, perhaps, by the breaking of a vessel that scattered bits of the divine Presence. The second story suggests the possibility of fixing the world. The first has no fix: no one has ever suggested that we need or might want to restore a unity of light and dark. And so we negotiate our broken world, taking our always failing bodies and fragile minds and focusing as we can on scattering bits of light where we have been. We split our matzah with intention, and we make its brokenness a source of celebration. Look, we made a world!



Yachatz by Larry Cohen

La dor va dor and the Afikoman

Fran Sherman and Aarav Chugh

When our children were young, the centerpiece of our multifamily seder was a child directed and acted play of the Passover story. Passover symbols and homemade costumes engaged the children's imaginations and they were a part of the Jewish story.

When our children became teens and young adults our seders were organized around themed conversations and discussions about the meaning of symbols. The debate and teaching engaged their intellects and they were part of the Jewish story.

Now, as grandparents, Passover is our favorite annual vehicle to transmit a love of Jewish tradition to our grandchildren. They help me make matzo balls and charoset and bring symbols of spring and love to the table to discuss with friends and families.

To honor the intergenerational Passover tradition that has been so meaningful to me, my grandson, Aarav, and I collaborated on our Afikoman art. I photographed the afikoman and Aarav (just 5-years-old) collaged and drew "Spring" onto the photograph. He captioned the image with the story of one Afikoman search. Aarav's contributions bring color and life to a monochromatic matzah photograph—and together we are part of the Jewish story.



"Baba hid the afikomen in the
Kitchen, in the Kitchen helper. And me
and Nana went to find it + we
found it and we brought it to the
table for dessert + we got chocolate!
-Aarav + Nana

Magid Stories

מגיד

About Storytelling At Our Seder-commentary

Berta Gershkowitz

My husband Barry rises from his seat at the front of the long table and his baritone voice fills every nook of the room: “When Israel was in Egypt’s land...”

I love this song. It’s the perfect mix of modern soul and ancient rhythm. “Go Down Moses” make me yearn for all that’s lost and all that’s yet to be.

Immediately, spontaneously, everyone at the table grabs any object they can find to make music. Forks, glasses, and salt shakers become instruments, and a chorus has formed, singing “Let my people go!”

“Louder!” yells Barry.

“Oppressed so hard, they could not stand,” he sings, banging his hand on the table to the beat of the song.

After a few glasses of wine, we don’t need much encouragement. We bellow, “Let my people go!”

Line by line, Barry walks around the table and sings to each of us, one by one. As his face gets close, you can’t help but smile at this wannabe rockstar. When the time comes, everyone eagerly replies, “Let my people go!”

Finally, Barry reaches the other end of the table, where he sings to our brother-in-law

Raymond, “You need not always weep and mourn.”

This rings true for Raymond, a real life Egyptian, who at one point suffered the type of pain “Go Down Moses” describes. When his family was forced to leave Cairo in 1954, they abandoned belongings, businesses, and bank accounts. Their old lives were wiped out.

There is an irony in singing “Let my people go” to someone who was told to go.

Still, for years Raymond has been our seder’s example of resilience after terrible loss. A lifetime later, he is free, surrounded by family, food, and love.



The Bread of Affliction

הָא לַחְמַא עֲנִיָּא

הָא לַחְמַא עֲנִיָּא דִּי אָכְלוּ אֲבֹהֵתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דְּכָפִין יִיתִי וְיִיכֹל, כָּל דְּצָרִיד יִיתִי וְיִפְסֹח. הַשְׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. הַשְׁתָּא עֲבָדִי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנִי חוֹרִין.

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Anyone who is famished should come and eat, anyone who is in need should come and partake of the Pesach sacrifice.

Now we are here, next year we will be in the land of Israel; this year we are slaves, next year we will be free people.

Commentary on Ha Lachma

Lila Kagedan

As a child, Passover was always the most anticipated holiday. Our family purchased matzah, specialty treats like coconut covered marshmallows and chocolate covered raspberry jelly, and we cleaned for weeks before the holiday. As a child I emptied the pockets of all of our coats, checking carefully for crumbs—ridding our home of even the slightest amount of leaven.

My birthday is on the seventh day of Passover, and for my bat mitzvah in my Orthodox home I had the great honour of learning the Mishna of Pesachim with my late father in preparation for my coming of age. To my great delight and with great reverence that year, I led the seder alongside my father. This was a big deal. My aunts and uncles, cousins and grandparents all gathered in our home to retell the story of our exodus and freedom. I remember so vividly the tastes and aromas of that seder with steaming bowls of soup, a contest of who could withstand the greatest amount of the fiery maror and the delicious vegetal crunch of the karpas—it was the first taste of spring! The pure white tablecloth that adorned the table held the beautiful seder plates that stood proudly along the middle of the table. It all felt special and sacred. Every year our family hosted new immigrants from the FSU. Our stacks of haggadot included those lovingly handmade in school, all Hebrew ones, the Maxwell House, scholarly publications, whimsical ones and Russian-Hebrew ones as well. We looked to these guests to remind us of the real freedom so hard-won in the present, not just something abstract that happened long ago. One year, upon his turn to read aloud, one of the guests cleared his throat, during our round robin of haggadah reading, when we reached him. He took a deep breath and in Russian he shared, while my grandfather translated, that it was still shocking to him to see tables full of food and even more so in a Jewish home with mezuzot on the walls and seder plates on the table. He had immigrated to Israel in 1991 with Operation Exodus and soon thereafter made his way to Canada. In Canada, he benefited from aid from JIAS (the Jewish Immigrant Aid Service) where my grandfather had served as president and

social worker for decades. He shared that reading Ha Lachma was not abstract to him. He shared that the greatest feeling of freedom to him was the ability to not only eat at a Passover seder out in the open but also to have enough to be able to share what was his with others and to have enough that he could share. He explained to us that he had to hide his Judaism for the entirety of his life and that in Canada on that night, he felt freedom differently. He could celebrate, yes, but he could also contribute. He proudly delivered a bottle of wine prior to the holiday to our home. This he told us was true freedom. Every year on Passover he would dream not only that next year he would be in Jerusalem, as the verses read, but that he would be the person who could invite others to his seder in the future as a true expression of freedom.

Ha Lachma is an extraordinarily optimistic part of the Haggadah. It doesn't say next year we might be free but rather next year we will be free. The verses insist that we not give up hope—that good things are coming!

Eight years later I traveled to Moldova to lead Passover seders there with Hillel International. I brought with me the Haggadah that this guest had read from at our home. Crumbs of matzah powdered its spine. I looked around the room and thought next year we will be in Jerusalem and, in fact, the following year many around the table were.

Ha Lachma serves as both inspiration and an imperative. We are told to invite all those who need to eat to come and eat with us, and to remember that we all have been in need of an invitation to eat when we have been hungry. We are also told, and we sing out loud year after year, that it will not always be this way. But, it will get better. Next year we will be free. Next year we will be in Jerusalem. Next year we will be able to offer someone else in need a seat at the table, as the truest expression of freedom is having enough such that we can give to others.



Anat Halevy Hochberg singing HaLachma

To listen to this song, please scan or
click on the QR code.



Four Questions

ארבע קושיות

The leader removes the plate from the table. We pour a second cup of wine. The child then asks:

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה, הלילה הזה – כלו מצה.

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות – הלילה הזה (כלו) מרור.

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

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין – הלילה הזה כלנו מסבין.

Why is this night different from all other nights?

On all other nights we eat chametz and matzah; this night, only matzah?

On all other nights we eat other vegetables; tonight only maror.

On all other nights, we don't dip [our food], even one time; tonight [we dip it] twice.

On all other nights, we eat either sitting or reclining; tonight we all recline.



The Four Questions by Elaine Abrams

Artist note: Here I was envisioning the hamsa, the hand of God, outstretched and beckoning the people towards monotheism, the 10 Commandments, Torah and all that was to follow. The symbols of the 4 questions are within the hamsa as reminders of the journey.

Avadim Hayinu

עבדים היינו

The leader puts the plate back on the table. The matzot should be uncovered during the saying of the Haggadah.

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים, ויציאנו ה' אלהינו משם ביד חזקה ובזרע נטויה. ואלו לא הוציא הקדוש ברו הוא את אבותינו ממצרים, הרי אנו ובנינו ובנינו ובנינו משעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים. ואפילו כלנו חכמים כלנו גבונים כלנו זקנים כלנו יודעים את התורה מצוה עלינו לספר ביציאת מצרים. וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משובח.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in the land of Egypt. And the Lord, our God, took us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched forearm. And if the Holy One, blessed be He, had not taken our ancestors from Egypt, behold we and our children and our children's children would [all] be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. And even if we were all sages, all discerning, all elders, all knowledgeable about the Torah, it would be a commandment upon us to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt. And anyone who adds [and spends extra time] in telling the story of the exodus from Egypt, behold he is praiseworthy.

Commentary on Avadim Hayinu

Jonathan Aghion

Avadim Hayinu conjures images of our ancestors toiling in backbreaking labor in the hot desert sun. In my household, Avadim Hayinu is sung in a halting, durge-like chant. It slowly increases in tempo and tenor until it is almost upbeat. It mirrors the ups and downs and eventual redemption from Egypt my ancestors and actual parents experienced. The Israelites go from the lowest of lows to elation as Moses finally leads them out from Egypt.

Interestingly, Avadim Hayinu states if Gd had not taken our ancestors out of Egypt, then our descendants would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. This phrase can be understood twofold: First, the Israelites would not have been able to free themselves without the Hand of Gd. It emphasizes Gd's role in the Exodus. The plagues were not coincidental natural events as some Bible critics have suggested.

Second, the Exodus brought together Moses and the unbending Pharaoh to set the stage for divine intervention at this very moment in time. Perhaps this is why the bondage in Egypt only lasted half as long

as prophesied. This was the convergence of Man's desire for freedom, Moshe's willingness to take on an uncomfortable role (we learn from the sages Moses had a speech impediment and did not feel qualified to speak to Pharaoh) and Gd hearing the pleas of the Israelites.

From this we learn to strive for goals, even against the odds and in uncomfortable roles. Although every achievement includes the insight or help from others, we must exercise our own free will to facilitate those events. May we all be blessed to see our goals come true.



Avadim Hayinu- Artwork Created by Amy Solomon

Story of the Five Rabbis

מַעֲשֵׂה חֲמִישֵׁי רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻעַ וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־עֲזַרְיָה וְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא וְרַבִּי טַרְפוֹן שֶׁהָיוּ מְסֻבִּין בְּבִנְיָבְרַק וְהָיוּ מְסַפְּרִים בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם כָּל־אוֹתוֹ הַלַּיְלָה, עַד שֶׁבָּאוּ תַלְמִידֵיהֶם וְאָמְרוּ לָהֶם רְבוּתֵינוּ הַגִּיעָה זְמַן קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע שֶׁל שַׁחֲרִית.

It happened once [on Pesach] that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon were reclining in Bnei Brak and were telling the story of the exodus from Egypt that whole night, until their students came and said to them, "The time of [reciting] the morning Shema has arrived."

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־עֲזַרְיָה הִרִי אֲנִי כְּבֹן שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה וְלֹא זָכִיתִי שֶׁתֹּאמַר יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלֹת עַד שֶׁדִּרְשָׁה בֶן־זוֹמָא, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, לִמְעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ. יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַיָּמִים. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַלַּיְלֹת. וְחֻכָּמִים אוֹמְרִים יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ לְהַבִּיא לִימּוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ:

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah said, "Behold I am like a man of seventy years and I have not merited [to understand why] the exodus from Egypt should be said at night until Ben Zoma explicated it, as it is stated (Deuteronomy 16:3), 'In order that you remember the day of your going out from the land of Egypt all the days of your life;' 'the days of your life' [indicates that the remembrance be invoked during] the days, 'all the days of your life' [indicates that the remembrance be invoked also during] the nights." But the Sages say, "'the days of your life' [indicates that the remembrance be invoked in] this world, 'all the days of your life' [indicates that the remembrance be invoked also] in the days of the Messiah."

Commentary on Magid

Barry Miller

הרי אני כבן שיבעים שנה

Behold, I am like a man of 70 years old.

We read the story in the haggadah of the five great rabbis that were sitting together at the first night seder in Bnei Brak. Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Tarfon, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Elazar Ben Azaria. Four older, extremely learned and white bearded rabbis and the leader (Nasi) is an 18-year-old dark bearded scholar.

This was a time, not unlike not too long ago, when white hair was a sign of experience and knowledge that could only be gained through years of learning. It's one thing to learn about something but even more intense when you experience it.

The miracle at this seder seems to be that Rabbi Elazar's beard turned white even though he was only 18 and that is why he said I am like a man of 70!

Nowadays, many young people practice ageism and feel that they know it all and that white hair and age means you are not as sharp and are behind the times. But here, a truly great Torah scholar, leader of the people, realized that older people are wise and have a lot to offer as far as knowledge about life. Therefore he finally felt comfortable being the leader when he exhibited the traits that go along with knowledge.

The Four Children

אַרְבַּעַת בָּנִים

בְּרוּ הַמָּקוֹם, בְּרוּ הוּא, בְּרוּ שְׁנֵתֵן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרוּ הוּא. כְּנִגְדֵי אַרְבַּעַת בָּנִים דִּבְרָה תּוֹרָה: אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לִשְׁאוֹל.

Blessed be the Place [of all], Blessed be He; Blessed be the One who Gave the Torah to His people Israel, Blessed be He. Corresponding to four children did the Torah speak; one [who is] wise, one [who is] wicked, one who is innocent and one who doesn't know to ask.

The Wise Child

חכם

חכם מה הוא אומר? מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלהינו אתכם. ואף אתה אמור לו כהלכות הפסח: אין מפטירין: אחר הפסח אפיקומן

What does the wise child say? "'What are these testimonies, statutes and judgments that the Lord our God commanded you?' (Deuteronomy 6:20)" And accordingly you will say to him, as per the laws of the Pesach sacrifice, "We may not eat an afikoman [a dessert or other foods eaten after the meal] after we are finished eating the Pesach sacrifice (Mishnah Pesachim 10:8)."



The Wise Child by Claudia Gotovnik

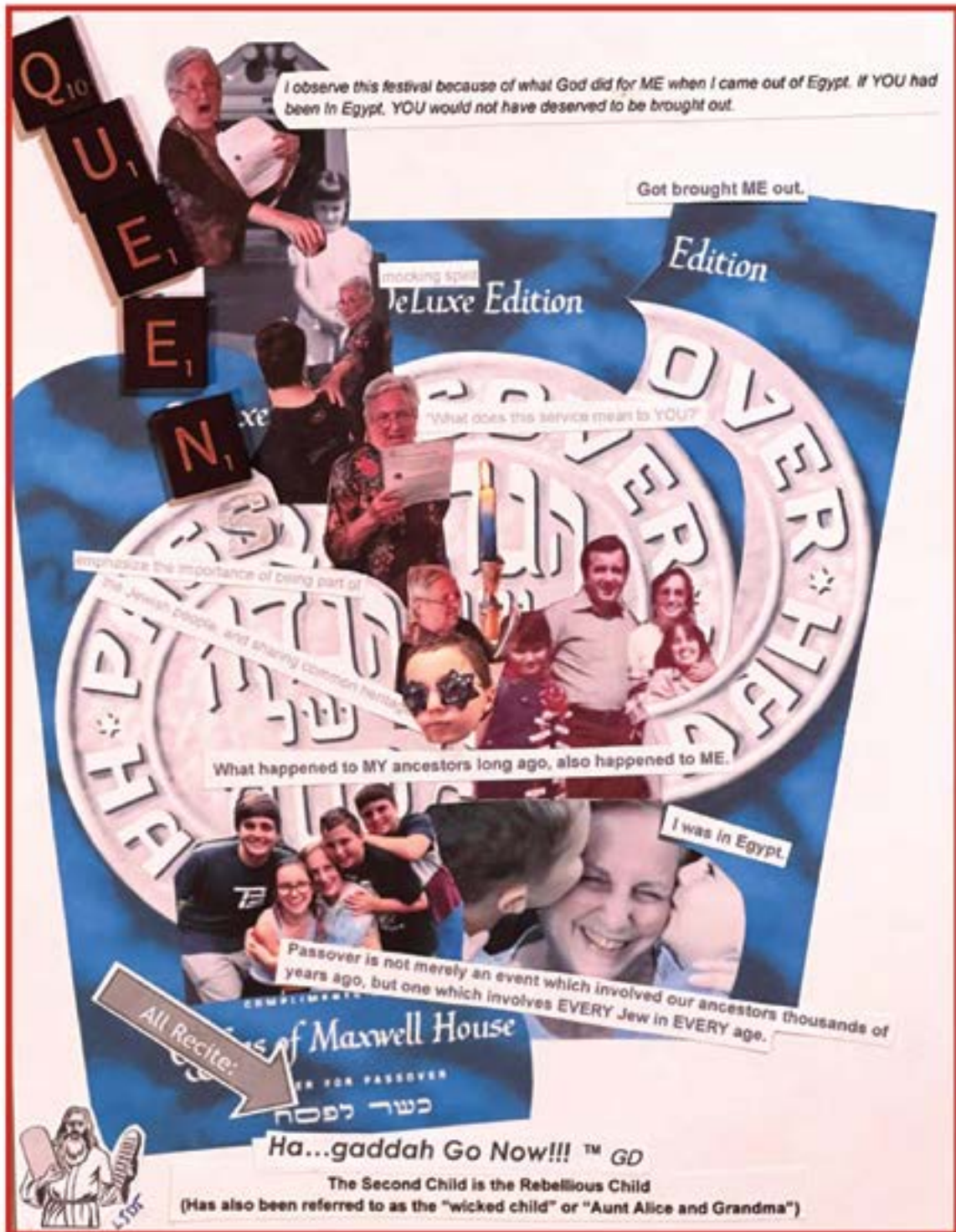
The Wicked Child

רשע

רשע מה הוא אומר? מה העבודה הזאת לכם. לכם – ולא לו. ולפי שהוציא את עצמו מן הפלל כפר בעקר. ואף אתה הקהה את שניו ואמור לו: "בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים". לי ולא-לו. אלו: ה'יה שם, לא ה'יה נגאל

What does the wicked child say? "'What is this worship to you?' (Exodus 12:26)" "To you' and not 'to him.' And since he excluded himself from the collective, he denied a principle [of the Jewish faith]. And accordingly, you will blunt his teeth and say to him, "'For the sake of this, did the Lord do [this] for me in my going out of Egypt' (Exodus 13:8)." 'For me' and not 'for him.' If he had been there, he would not have been saved.

Every year
at
Passover,
Mom
performs
as the
Wicked
Child.



She is quite funny yet aggressive with her rendition, yelling as she moves across the filled room of 30 or so people. Children plug their ears and hope she doesn't make a big deal next to them when shouting "It was for ME," or some other part of the script. She may come across on this day as evil, but in reality, my mom is an awesome, kind person; family is her top priority. We look forward to laughing and having fun at the seder. My dad (GD) was the punster of the family and we always end our family ceders with Ha...gaddah go now!

-Laura Dickstein Thompson (2024)



The Simple Child by Leeza Negelev

The Simple Child

תם

תם מָה הוא אומר? מָה זאת? ואמרת אליו
"בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם
מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים."

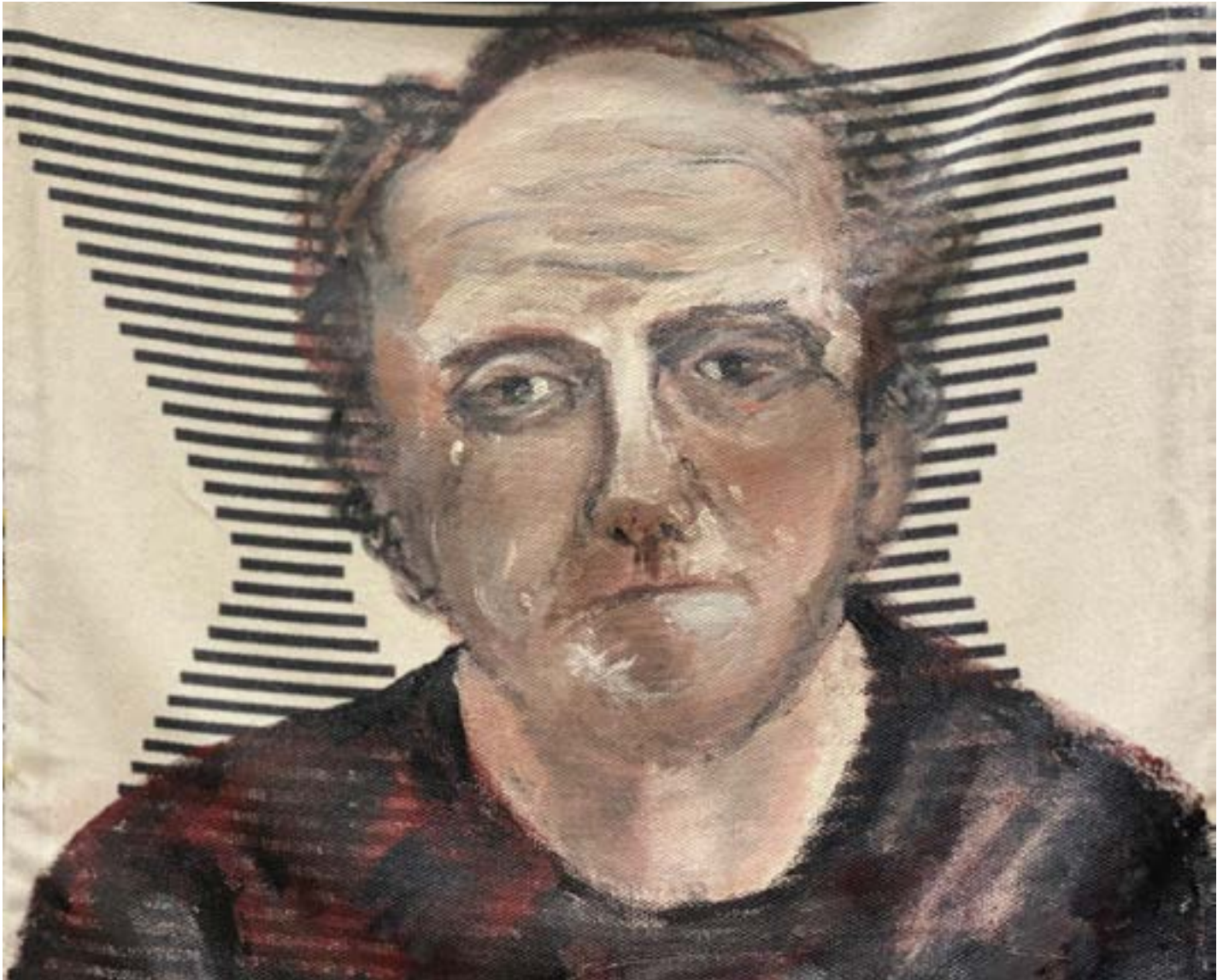
What does the simple child say? "What is this?" (Exodus 13:14)" And you will say to him, "With the strength of [His] hand did the Lord take us out from Egypt, from the house of slaves' (Exodus 13:14)."

The Child Who Doesn't Know How To Ask

שְׂאִינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לְשֹׂאוֹל

שְׂאִינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לְשֹׂאוֹל וְשְׂאִינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לְשֹׂאוֹל
– אֵת פֶּתַח לוֹ, שְׂנֵאָמָה, וְהַגְדָּת לִבְנֵי בְּיֹם
הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בְּעֶבְרַת זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי
בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.

And [regarding] the one who doesn't know how to ask, you will open [the conversation] for him. As it is stated (Exodus 13:8), "And you will speak to your child on that day saying, for the sake of this, did the Lord do [this] for me in my going out of Egypt."



The Child Who Knows Not How To Ask by Carol Daynard

Knowing How To Ask

A Short Story Written About the Four Children

Isaac Kozukhin

Wren's heart thudded in their veins. Sweat slicked their palms. Their right thumbnail took its habitual place between their teeth, and they idly scolded themselves for biting their nails like a little kid. They were in college now, making college friends – time to leave that stuff behind. They toyed with the idea of removing their thumbnail from their mouth, letting the anxiety pulse through them without the soothing balm of an old tic. Sensitive nailbeds seemed suddenly worth it.

Maybe she didn't hear my knock. But if I knock again, she might think I'm too—

Their thoughts were interrupted by the dorm room's door swinging open and revealing Hannah, the heartstopping girl from their film class group project who had invited Wren to her Passover dinner while Wren had actively forgotten how to breathe. That feeling was back, and Wren's eyes fixated on the girl's mouth, which they knew was weird, but looking at her eyes felt impossible.

"Chag Pesach Sameach!" said Hannah with a grin, her voice so self-assured that Wren had to remind herself that she was a freshman just like them.

"Uh, hi!" they stammered, "I don't really know what that means, but hi! I don't really know anything to be honest, I've never done this."

"Don't worry about it," Hannah intoned. "I'll walk you through it. Welcome to our inaugural queer Seder!"

A salt-lamp sat on a nightstand next to the bed on the right side of the room, casting the scene in soft, pink light. White plastic cubbies filled the back wall, stocked with neat rows of books about Judaism and film history tucked between well-loved stuffed animals and framed photos of people from Hannah's pre-college life. Wren felt a sudden pang of jealousy, though they swallowed it quickly.

Two other people sat on the floor at the center of the room, backs propped up against the wall and bed with school-standard pillows as cushion. One was a boy, frog-faced with one of those little Jewish hats nestled among his short curls. He looked even more nervous than Wren, his eyes following Hannah expectantly. He was dressed in a nice white shirt and black pants, like he was ready for an interview. Sitting next to him, dripping more confidence than Hannah, was a girl with dyed-blue hair in an undercut, tied behind her head in a severe-looking ponytail. Her eyes were lined in black, and her ears boasted an astonishing number of piercings. She lounged against her pillow like Cleopatra, idly swiping at something on her phone.

"Wren, these are Mike and Rivka," said Hannah, "I met Mike at Hillel, and Rivka is his friend from an engineering class. Mike and Rivka, this is Wren, I met them in History of American Film. This is their first-ever Seder!"

Mike looked confused for a second, before pushing his face into a welcoming smile. "Wow! Your first Seder, that's so exciting!" he said, "Are you Jewish?" Wren flushed and fought down the urge to put their thumbnail back in its habitual place.

"My mom was Jewish," they said, quieter than they'd like, "but I was raised by my dad's family and they're Baptist."

Rivka's phone went black, and her eyes came up to meet Wren's. She reminded them of a lioness stalking an animal, and their heart skipped a beat. "Was?" said Rivka. Her voice cut Wren like claws.

"My mom died when she had me," Wren stammered. "I never had any sort of Jewish upbringing, but my dad said she used to love Passover dinner. So I wanted to do it, you know. To honor her, and stuff. I don't know anything though."

"I'm so sorry to hear about your mother," said Hannah, placing an electrifying hand on Wren's back. "I'm sure she'd be so proud of you right now. The nice thing about Passover dinner is that there's a very specific order to things, so it's easy to teach the rituals! Come on, take a seat and a pillow. The pillow is mandatory – that's foreshadowing."

Wren's whole body clenched up as Hannah made eye contact with them before taking her seat. Catching their breath, they took the spot next to her. At the center of the four was a silver plate covered in seemingly-random food items, some big crackers under a washcloth, a silver cup full of crimson liquid, four red Solo cups, and a brick-shaped bottle of wine. Wren hadn't realized that underage drinking was a part of Jewish tradition, but they knew better than to question free booze.

Hannah brought out a stack of four little yellow hardcovers, and handed one to each of the guests. There was nothing on the front cover, but on the back it said Haggadah for Passover in embossed red letters. Something was written underneath in a language that Wren assumed was Hebrew.

They looked up to find Rivka and Hannah looking sidelong at each other. Tension sizzled between the two women, though Wren had no idea why. Mike flipped through the pages of his Haggadah uncomfortably.

"I thought I told you what Haggadah I wanted to use," Rivka growled.

"You did," said Hannah, unfazed. "As the host of this Seder, I decided to veto your choice. When you host a Seder, you can choose the Anarchist's Haggadah then. But I'm hosting, so we're using the one I used when I held Seders back home."

"If it means anything," croaked Mike, "I also used this one growing up. I think we should use it. So that makes two against one, right?"

Rivka gave an exaggerated roll of her eyes. "We're in college," she said. "It's time to experiment, try out new things. I actually found the Anarchist's Haggadah back in high school but never got a chance to use it, and I wanted to try it out in college. I figured that a queer Seder would be the perfect situation for it, like I texted you about. I guess that feeling wasn't mutual, though."

Hannah glowered at her as she crossed her arms petulantly.

"Don't you think it's a little ironic to have an anarchist Seder?" spat Hannah. "The whole point is order. That's literally what the word means."

"Anarchism doesn't mean no rules," hissed Rivka. "Try reading a book sometime. I'm trying to find a way for Passover to mean something to me, instead of just a fairy tale about God killing Egyptian civilians to get back at a Pharaoh that never existed. Did you know that our ancestors were never even slaves in Egypt? The whole thing is made up."

Thick silence hung heavy in the stale dorm room air.

Wren glanced towards Mike, and saw that his eyes were wet. "I just miss my family," he whimpered. "I hoped this would help me forget that I'm stuck here, having Pesach on the floor." Hannah shot him a glare.

"I worked *hard* on this Seder, Mike. I'd appreciate if you didn't patronize me like that. My Seder isn't going to be like your family's, either. It literally couldn't be, you told me yourself that your family is homophobic."

He shrank under her gaze, tears threatening to fall from his eyes at any moment. Rivka reached for her many-pinned canvas backpack.

"I think I'm gonna go," she said with pained matter-of-factness.

"Wait!" said Wren, suddenly uncomfortable with the idea of being stuck in a room with their high-strung crush and a homesick crying boy.

All three pairs of eyes snapped to them, snatching their breath for a moment.

"I don't want you to go," they continued. "I almost didn't come here today, because I was so afraid of getting stuff wrong and not knowing the rules. But I get here, and I come to find out that even in a group of three Jews, there's three sets of ideas about what Passover should be. And you know what? I don't know which one I agree with, because I don't know anything. So maybe, Hannah can lead us through the rituals because she put so much work into organizing this whole thing, and Rivka and Mike, you can pipe up and let me know where your traditions differ from hers. That way, we can all have a good time and maybe learn something about each other. Okay?"

Wren felt the tension leave their body as they finished their little rant. Mike wiped tears from his face. Hannah and Rivka looked at one another for a long moment.

"I can do that," said Hannah. "I'm sorry for losing my temper."

Rivka took a couple deep breaths and closed her eyes.

"Me too," she breathed, putting her backpack back where it was.

"The nice thing," offered Mike, his voice cracking a bit, "is we start off with wine!"

Yechol Me'rosh Chodesh

יכול מראש חֹדֶשׁ

יכול מראש חֹדֶשׁ? תלמוד לומר ביום ההוא. אי ביום ההוא יכול מבעוד יום? תלמוד לומר בעבור זה – בעבור זה לא אמרתי, אלא בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מנחים לפניך.

It could be from Rosh Chodesh [that one would have to discuss the Exodus. However] we learn [otherwise, since] it is stated, "on that day." If it is [written] "on that day," it could be from while it is still day [before the night of the fifteenth of Nissan. However] we learn [otherwise, since] it is stated, "for the sake of this." I didn't say 'for the sake of this' except [that it be observed] when [this] matzah and maror are resting in front of you [meaning, on the night of the fifteenth].

In the Beginning

מתחלה

מתחלה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו, ועכשיו קרבנו המקום לעבדתו, שנאמר: ויאמר יהושע אל כל העם, כה אמר ה' אלהי ישראל: בעבר הנהר ישבו אבותיכם מעולם, תרח אבי אברהם ואבי נחור, ויעבדו אלהים אחרים.

From the beginning, our ancestors were idol worshipers. And now, the Place [of all] has brought us close to His worship, as it is stated (Joshua 24:2-4), "Yehoshua said to the whole people, so said the Lord, God of Israel, 'Over the river did your ancestors dwell from always, Terach the father of Avraham and the father of Nachor, and they worshiped other gods.

ואקח את אביכם את אברהם מעבר הנהר ואולף אותו בכל ארץ כנען, וארבה את זרעו ואתן לו את יצחק, ואתן ליצחק את יעקב ואת יעקב לעשו אתהר שער לרשת אתו, ויעקב ובניו ירדו מצרים.

And I took your father, Avraham, from over the river and I made him walk in all the land of Canaan and I increased his seed and I gave him Yitschak. And I gave to Yitschak, Ya'akov and Esav; and I gave to Esav, Mount Seir [in order that he] inherit it; and Yaakov and his sons went down to Egypt."

ברוך שומר הבטחתו לישראל, ברוך הוא. שהקדוש ברוך הוא חשב את הקץ, לעשות כמו שאמר לאברהם אבינו בברית בין הבתרים, שנאמר: ויאמר לאברהם, ידע תדע כי יגר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם, ועבדים וענו אתם ארבע מאות שנה. וגם אתהגוי אשר יעבדו דן אנכי ואחרי כן יצאו ברבש גדול.

Blessed be the One who keeps His promise to Israel, blessed be He; since the Holy One, blessed be He, calculated the end [of the exile,] to do as He said to Avraham, our father, in the Covenant between the Pieces, as it is stated (Genesis 15:13-14), "And He said to Avram, 'you should surely know that your seed will be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they will enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation for which they shall toil will I judge, and afterwards they will go out with much property."

She covers the matzah and lifts up the cup and says:

והיא שעמדה לאבותינו ולנו. שלא אחד בלד עמד עלינו לללותנו, אלא שבכל דור ודור עומדים עלינו. לללותנו, והקדוש ברוך הוא מצילנו מידם

And it is this that has stood for our ancestors and for us; since it is not [only] one [person or nation] that has stood [against] us to destroy us, but rather in each generation, they stand [against] us to destroy us, but the Holy One, blessed be He, rescues us from their hand.

A commentary on V'Hi She'amdah

Iris Alpert

We Are a Miracle
And we are fragile
And we could not be,
 once more,
 As we were
before we were born.
 Only worse
Because we would have known
 The sweetness of life
 and a life of sweetness
 And sorrow and hope
A life fully lived and wanting
 To live more.
But we had forgotten.
 That we are fragile
 And we are tiny
in a very big world where many
 would be happy without us
 Or at best indifferent
 If we were gone.

So this year
May The One who stood with us
 Stand with us once again -
Remember us as in days gone by,
 As we are remembering
 And fighting
 For one another,
Beside one another,
 For the miracle
 For the life
 That we are.

She puts down the cup from her hand and uncovers the matzah.

צא ולמד מה בקש לבן הארמי לעשות ליעקב אבינו: שפרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים, ולבן בקש לעקר את-הכל.
שנאמר: ארמי אבד אבי, וירד מצרימה ויגר שם במתי מעט, ויהי שם לגוי גדול, עצום ורב.

Go out and learn what Lavan the Aramean sought to do to Ya'akov, our father; since Pharaoh only decreed [the death sentence] on the males but Lavan sought to uproot the whole [people]. As it is stated (Deuteronomy 26:5), "An Aramean was destroying my father and he went down to Egypt, and he resided there with a small number and he became there a nation, great, powerful and numerous."

A commentary on Arami Oved **The Cause and Consequence of our Actions**

Benjamin Chartock

Arami Oved Avi. ארמי אבד אבי. An Aramean destroyed my father. Or, my father was a wandering Aramean.

Here, we're often thinking of Laban the Aramean, father-in-law to Jacob and father to Leah and Rachel. Why did he "destroy" our father? Who is our father?

Jacob, the third of the forefathers, goes down to Egypt because of famine. Who does he find already there? Joseph, because his brothers had sold him into slavery. Why was he sold into slavery? Because his brothers envied him as getting the love of a first-born son without being first-born himself. Now, why was Joseph not the first-born? Because he was born to his mother Rachel when his father was already in old age. Why was he born to Rachel later, not first, given we know Jacob had a special love for Rachel? Because Laban tricked Jacob into marrying Leah first. Had only Laban not tricked Jacob, then Joseph might have come first, and then his finding favor in his father's eyes might have been less onerous on his brothers, and they might not have sold him to slavery. Had they not sold him to slavery, and had Joseph not welcomed them in Egypt, the descendants of Abraham might not have been enslaved under Pharaoh. From Laban's trickery, we get a long chain of effects. (R. Azriel Hildesheimer).

Why do we care about cause and effect?

Our actions have consequences. We speak, or touch, or do certain things and the effects of those actions matter. Another translation of Arami Oved Avi ארמי אבד אבי is 'My father was a wandering Aramean'. What does it mean to wander?

It means to live a life where the unknowable and infinite consequences of our actions take place around us every day. We can choose to wander carefully and with intention, or wander aimlessly, ignorant of the consequences of the things we do. We can engage in trickery and deceit or care and compassion. As we wander our path of life, we are reminded that actions speak louder than words.

A favorite quote of mine comes from the White House Office of Management and Budget: "Don't tell me your values. Show me your budget and I'll tell you your values." Our actions have consequences; our actions speak.

וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִם – אָנוּס עַל פִּי הַדְּבוּר. וַיֵּגֶר שָׁם. מִלֵּמַד שֶׁלֹּא יֵרֶד יַעֲקֹב אֲבִינוּ לְהִשְׁתַּקֵּעַ בְּמִצְרַיִם אֶלָּא לָגוּר שָׁם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה, לָגוּר בְּאֶרֶץ בְּאֵנוּ, כִּי אֵין מְרֻעָה לְצֹאן אֲשֶׁר לַעֲבָדֶיךָ, כִּי כִבֵּד הָרָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. וְעַתָּה יִשְׁבּוּ־נָא עַבְדֶּיךָ בְּאֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן.

"And he went down to Egypt" - helpless on account of the word [in which God told Avraham that his descendants would have to go into exile]. "And he resided there" - [this] teaches that Ya'akov, our father, didn't go down to settle in Egypt, but rather [only] to reside there, as it is stated (Genesis 47:4), "And they said to Pharaoh, 'To reside in the land have we come, since there is not enough pasture for your servant's flocks, since the famine is heavy in the land of Canaan, and now please grant that your servants should dwell in the Land of Goshen.'"

בְּמִתִּי מַעֲט. כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: בְּשִׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ יָרְדוּ אֲבוֹתֶיךָ מִצְרַיִם, וְעַתָּה שְׂמֶךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לָרֹב.

"As a small number" - as it is stated (Deuteronomy 10:22), "With seventy souls did your ancestors come down to Egypt, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars of the sky."

וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי. מִלֵּמַד שֶׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְצִינִים שָׁם. גְּדוֹל עָצוּם – כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל פָּרוּ וַיִּשְׁרְצוּ וַיִּרְבּוּ וַיַּעֲצֻמוּ בְּמֵאֵד מְאֹד, וַתִּמְלֵא הָאֶרֶץ אֹתָם.

"And he became there a nation" - [this] teaches that Israel [became] distinguishable there. "Great, powerful" - as it is stated (Exodus 1:7), "And the Children of Israel multiplied and swarmed and grew numerous and strong, most exceedingly and the land became full of them."

וְרֹב. כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: רַבְּבָה כְּצֻמַּח הַשָּׂדֶה נִתְתִּיךָ, וַתִּרְבִּי וַתִּגְדְּלִי וַתִּבְאִי בַעֲדֵי עַדִּים, שְׂדֵים נִכְנוּ וּשְׁעָרָךְ צִמַּח, וְאַתָּה עָרִם וְעָרְתָּה. וְאַעֲבֹר עָלֶיךָ וְאַרְאֶךָ מִתְּבוֹסֶסֶת בְּדַמִּיךָ, וְאֹמֵר לֹךְ בְּדַמִּיךָ חַיִּי, וְאֹמֵר לֹךְ בְּדַמִּיךָ חַיִּי.

"And numerous" - as it is stated (Ezekiel 16:7), "I have given you to be numerous as the vegetation of the field, and you increased and grew and became highly ornamented, your breasts were set and your hair grew, but you were naked and barren." "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee weltering in thy blood, I said to thee, In thy blood live! yea, I said to thee, In thy blood live!" (Ezekiel 16:6).

וַיַּרְעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ, וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. וַיַּרְעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם – כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: הִבָּה נִתְחַכְמָה לוֹ פֶּן יִרְבֶּה, וְהָיָה כִּי תִקְרָאנָה מִלְחָמָה וְנוֹסֶף גַּם הוּא עַל שְׂנְאֵינוּ וְנִלְחַם־בָּנוּ, וְעָלָה מִן־הָאֶרֶץ.

"And the Egyptians did bad to us" (Deuteronomy 26:6) - as it is stated (Exodus 1:10), "Let us be wise towards him, lest he multiply and it will be that when war is called, he too will join with our enemies and fight against us and go up from the land."

וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ. כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: וַיִּשְׁימוּ עָלֵינוּ שָׂרֵי מִסִּים לְמַעַן עֲנֹתוֹ בְּסִבְלָתָם. וַיִּבְּנוּ עָרֵי מִסְכָּנוֹת לְפָרְעָה אֶת־פִּתּוֹם וְאֶת־רַעַמְסֵס.

"And afflicted us" - as it is stated (Exodus 1:11); "And they placed upon him leaders over the work-tax in order to afflict them with their burdens; and they built storage cities, Pithom and Ra'amses."

וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָפָר.

"And put upon us hard work" - as it is stated (Exodus 1:11), "And they enslaved the children of Israel with breaking work."

וַנִּצְעַק אֶל־ה' אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת־קִלְנוֹ, וַיֵּרָא אֶת־עֲנִיָּנוּ וְאֶת עֲמָלָנוּ וְאֶת לַחֲצֹנוֹ.

"And we cried out to the Lord, the God of our ancestors, and the Lord heard our voice, and He saw our affliction, and our toil and our duress" (Deuteronomy 26:7).

A commentary on “And we cried out to the Lord”

Jack Riemer

We cried out to God
We cried out to God, the God of our fathers,
God heard our voice and saw our persecutions,
Our toil and our oppression.

I think that it was in Elie Wiesel’s Haggadah that I first learned the meaning of these words. He asked this question: Was this the first time that they cried out to God? During all the years of their persecution, did they not cry out?

His answer was that even the right to cry was taken away from them by their taskmasters. It was only when the Pharaoh died and all of Egypt were weeping at his passing that the Israelites were able to cry out to God and not be detected.

It is an interesting point that Elie Wiesel makes in this comment. The right to cry is part of what makes us human. The deepest need of a human being in trouble is to know that someone hears him, that someone cares about him, that he is not alone. And so it was *davke* this—the right to cry—that the Egyptians took away.

And God heard our voice.

There seems to be a contradiction in the story. In Genesis, God tells Abraham that his descendants will be slaves in Egypt for more than four hundred years, and yet here God hears the voice of the people in Egypt and announces that He will take them out in two hundred some years.

How do we reconcile these two passages?

Let me offer one possible explanation.

Think back to that scene in the book of Bereyshit, in which Sarah confronts Abraham and says: Drive out this woman from the house together with her son. Abraham does not know how to react to this demand. Hagar is a woman who has lived in their house for many years by now. How can he just send her away?

And her son, Ishmael, is his son too. How can he drive him out of his house?

At this point in the story, God intervenes. Without being asked, He says to Abraham: whatever Sarah tells you to do, *sh’mā bikolah*.

We usually understand that God is saying to Abraham: Do whatever Sarah tells you to do—do. But there is another way to understand the last two words of God’s statement. He may be saying: *Sh’mā bikolah*—listen to her voice, not just to her words.

If you listen to her voice, you will see that she is on the brink of a breakdown. If you listen to her voice, you will see that these two women can no longer live together. And therefore, you must send Hagar away or you will lose Sarah.

Perhaps this is what it means when it says here that God heard the voice of the Israelites. Perhaps it means that they had reached the lowest level of exile. And therefore, He must take them out now, or it will be too late.

The Kotsker Rebbe made a comment on the suffering of the Israelites in Egypt that we should take seriously. The Torah says that God took them out *mitachat sivlot mitzrayim*—which means that God took them out of the suffering of Egypt. The Kotsker reads it: He took them out *mitoch savlanut Mitzrayim*. God took them out because they had reached the lowest level of suffering in Egypt—namely, they got used to it.

They came to believe that this is the way it was and that this was the way it would always be. They came to believe that this state was normal. They got used to it. And this is why God had to take them out sooner than He had said he would to Abraham. If He had not taken them out then, they would never have been willing to leave.

I read these lines of the Kotsker's, and they feel like a mirror into our own time. We live in a time when so many of us have gotten used to the many different kinds of idolatries that enslave us. Some of us are enslaved to vanity. Some of us are enslaved to Mammon, the god of money. Some of us are enslaved to Mars, the god of war, and of ruthless competition. Some of us are engaged to Narcissus, the worship of the self. And many of us have worshipped these gods for so long that we think that it is normal to do so.

And so we need to be taken out of exile soon—or it will be too late. We need to be taken out of exile soon—before we sink to the level where we think that these enslavements are normal.

And then, what will become of us?

וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת קִלְנוֹ. כִּמָּה שָׁנְאָמַר: וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָם, וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם, אֶת־יִצְחָק וְאֶת־יַעֲקֹב.

"And the Lord heard our voice" - as it is stated (Exodus 2:24); "And God heard their groans and God remembered His covenant with Avraham and with Yitschak and with Ya'akov."

וַיֵּרָא אֶת־עֲנִינֵנוּ. זֶה פְּרִישׁוֹת דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ, כִּמָּה שָׁנְאָמַר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּדַּע אֱלֹהִים.

"And He saw our affliction" - this [refers to] the separation from the way of the world, as it is stated (Exodus 2:25); "And God saw the Children of Israel and God knew."

וְאֶת־עֲמָלָנוּ. אֵלּוּ הַבָּנִים. כִּמָּה שָׁנְאָמַר: כָּל־הַבֵּן הַיֵּלֹד הַיָּאֵרָה תִּשְׁלִיכֵהוּ וְכָל־הַבִּת תְּחַיֶּינָהּ.

"And our toil" - this [refers to the killing of the] sons, as it is stated (Exodus 1:22); "Every boy that is born, throw him into the Nile and every girl you shall keep alive."

וְאֶת לַחֲצֵנוּ. זֶה הַדְּחָק, כִּמָּה שָׁנְאָמַר: וְגַם־רָאִיתִי אֶת־הַלַּחֲץ אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם לֹחֲצִים אֹתָם.

"And our duress" - this [refers to] the pressure, as it is stated (Exodus 3:9); "And I also saw the duress that the Egyptians are applying on them."

וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיָד חֲזָקָה, וּבְזֶרַע נְטִיָּה, וּבִמְרָא גָדֹל, וּבְאֹתוֹת וּבִמְפֹתִים.

"And the Lord took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and with an outstretched forearm and with great awe and with signs and with wonders" (Deuteronomy 26:8).

B'yad Hazakah Uvizroa N'tuyah

בִּיד חֲזָקָה וּבִזְרוֹעַ נְטוּיָה

Amy Weiss

God took us out of Egypt with a strong
hand and an outstretched arm.
Two parts of the same metaphoric body

A strong hand
Angry. Fierce. Brave
Struggling to be free from slavery
Fighting to be our own people

An outstretched arm
Warm. Hopeful. Protecting
Shielding from the fears of the past
Cushioning against the unknown
battles to come

A hand made into a fist
An arm embracing

Can we also play both these roles? Hold these
parts of ourselves at the same time?
Do we fight with actual fists, and will we also be
able to protect our hearts with our physical arms?

When we are stumbling in the dark, can we tell
the difference between them, these two parts of
the same body?

We are not God.

With our own bodies,
Do we have the strength to lead ourselves?



With a Strong Hand and an Outstretched Arm by Amy Weiss

ובזרע ובזרע נטויה. זו החרב, כמה שנאמר: וחרבו שלופה בידו, נטויה על-ירושלים.

"And with an outstretched forearm" - this [refers to] the sword, as it is stated (I Chronicles 21:16),

"And his sword was drawn in his hand, leaning over Jerusalem."

ובמורא גדל. זו גלוי שכינה. כמה שנאמר, או הנסה אלהים לבוא לקחת לו גוי מקרב גוי במסת באתת ובמופתים ובמלחמה וביד חזקה ובזרע נטויה ובמוראים גדולים ככל אשר-עשה לכם ה' אלהיכם במצרים לעיניך.

"And with great awe" - this [refers to the revelation of] the Divine Presence, as it is stated (Deuteronomy 4:34), "Or did God try to take for Himself a nation from within a nation with enigmas, with signs and with wonders and with war and with a strong hand and with an outstretched forearm and with great and awesome acts, like all that the Lord, your God, did for you in Egypt in front of your eyes?"

ובאתות. זה המטה, כמה שנאמר: ואת המטה הזה תקח בידך, אשר תעשה-בו את האתות.

"And with signs" - this [refers to] the staff, as it is stated (Exodus 4:17),

"And this staff you shall take in your hand, that with it you will perform signs."

ובמפתים. זה הדם, כמה שנאמר: ונתתי מופתים בשמים ובארץ.

"And with wonders" - this [refers to] the blood, as it is stated (Joel 3:3),

"And I will place my wonders in the skies and in the earth:

The Ten Plagues

עשר המכות

And when they say, "blood and fire and pillars of smoke" and the ten plagues and "detsakh," "adash" and "ba'achab," they should pour out a little wine from their cups.

דם ואש ותימרות עשן.

Blood and fire and pillars of smoke."

דבר אחר: ביד חזקה שמים, ובזרע נטויה שמים, ובמורא גדל - שמים, ובאתות - שמים, ובמפתים - שמים.

Another [explanation]: "With a strong hand" [corresponds to] two [plagues]; "and with an outstretched forearm" [corresponds to] two [plagues]; "and with great awe" [corresponds to] two [plagues]; "and with signs" [corresponds to] two [plagues]; "and with wonders" [corresponds to] two [plagues].

אלו עשר מכות שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא על-המצרים במצרים, ואלו הן:

These are [the] ten plagues that the Holy One, blessed be He, brought on the Egyptians in Egypt and they are:

דֶם
Blood

צִפְרִידֵּעַ
Frogs

כִּנִּים
Lice

עֲרֹב
Wild Animals

דָּבָר
Pestilence

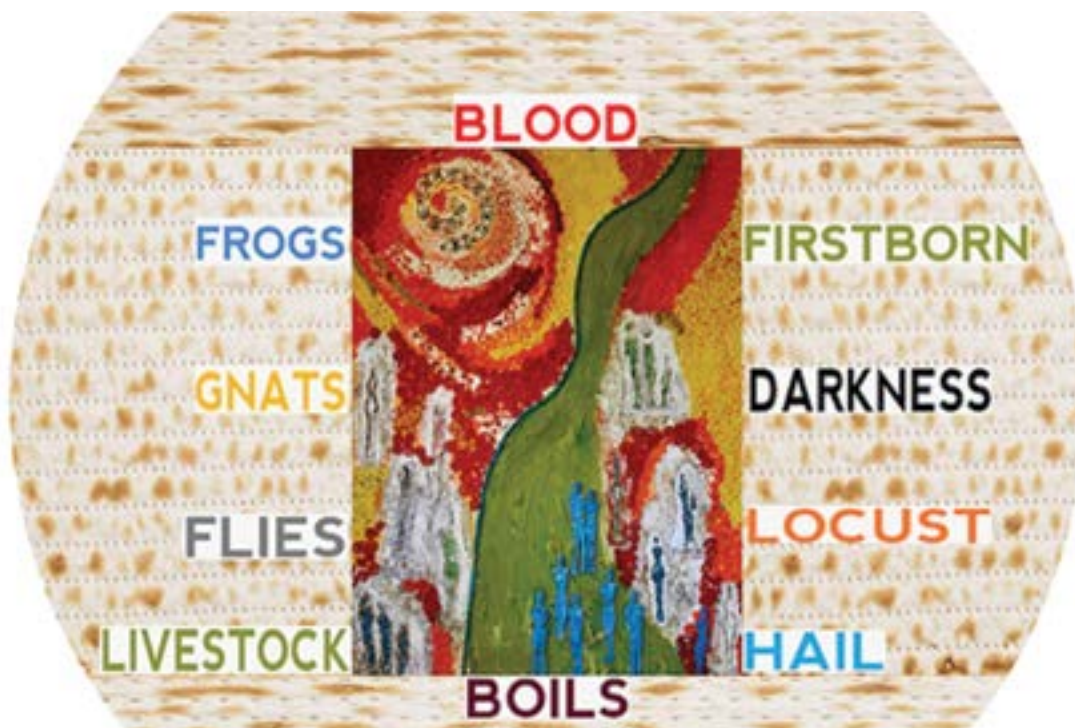
שֹׁחִין
Boils

בָּרָד
Hail

אַרְבֶּה
Locusts

חֹשֶׁךְ
Darkness

מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת
Slaying of the Firstborn



The Ten Plagues by Silvina Mizrahi

רבי יהודה היה נוהג בָּהֶם סִמְנִים: דַּצ"ךְ עַד"ש בָּאֵח"ב.

Rabbi Yehuda was accustomed to giving [the plagues] mnemonics: Detsakh [the Hebrew initials of the first three plagues], Adash [the Hebrew initials of the second three plagues], Beachav [the Hebrew initials of the last four plagues].

רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר: מנין אתה אומר שלקו המצרים במצרים עשר מכות ועל הים לקו חמשים מכות? במצרים מה הוא אומר? ויאמרו החרטום אל פרעה: אצבע אלהים הוא, ועל הים מה הוא אומר? וירא ישראל את-היד הגדלה אשר עשה ה' במצרים, ויראו העם את-ה', ויאמינו ביי ובמשה עבדו. כמה לקו באצבע? עשר מכות. אמור מעתה: במצרים לקו עשר מכות ועל הים לקו חמשים מכות.

Rabbi Yose Hagelili says, "From where can you [derive] that the Egyptians were struck with ten plagues in Egypt and struck with fifty plagues at the Sea? In Egypt, what does it state? 'Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh: 'This is the finger of God' (Exodus 8:15). And at the Sea, what does it state? 'And Israel saw the Lord's great hand that he used upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord; and they believed in the Lord, and in Moshe, His servant' (Exodus 14:31). How many were they struck with the finger? Ten plagues. You can say from here that in Egypt, they were struck with ten plagues and at the Sea, they were struck with fifty plagues."

רבי אליעזר אומר: מנין שכל-מכה ומכה שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא על המצרים במצרים היתה של ארבע מכות? שנאמר: ישלחם חרון אפו, עברה וזעם וצרה, משלחת מלאכי רעים. עברה – אחת, וזעם – שתיים, וצרה – שלש, משלחת מלאכי רעים – ארבע. אמור מעתה: במצרים לקו ארבעים מכות ועל הים לקו מאתיים מכות.

Rabbi Eliezer says, "From where [can you derive] that every plague that the Holy One, blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt was [composed] of four plagues? As it is stated (Psalms 78:49): 'He sent upon them the fierceness of His anger, wrath, and fury, and trouble, a sending of messengers of evil.' 'Wrath' [corresponds to] one; 'and fury' [brings it to] two; 'and trouble' [brings it to] three; 'a sending of messengers of evil' [brings it to] four. You can say from here that in Egypt, they were struck with forty plagues and at the Sea, they were struck with two hundred plagues."

רבי עקיבא אומר: מנין שכל-מכה ומכה שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא על המצרים במצרים היתה של חמש מכות? שנאמר: 'שלח-בם חרון אפו, עברה וזעם וצרה, משלחת מלאכי רעים. חרון אפו – אחת, עברה – שתיים, וזעם – שלוש, וצרה – ארבע, משלחת מלאכי רעים – חמש. אמור מעתה: במצרים לקו חמשים מכות ועל הים לקו חמשים ומאתים מכות.

Rabbi Akiva says, "From where [can you derive] that every plague that the Holy One, blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt was [composed] of five plagues? As it is stated (Psalms 78:49): 'He sent upon them the fierceness of His anger, wrath, and fury, and trouble, a sending of messengers of evil.' 'The fierceness of His anger' [corresponds to] one; 'wrath' [brings it to] two; 'and fury' [brings it to] three; 'and trouble' [brings it to] four; 'a sending of messengers of evil' [brings it to] five. You can say from here that in Egypt, they were struck with fifty plagues and at the Sea, they were struck with two hundred and fifty plagues."

Are Ten Not Enough?

Nir Maiman

"Sixty plagues," says Rabbi Yossi.

"240," says Rabbi Eliezer,

"Three hundred," says Rabbi Akiva.

As our sages in their wisdom amplify the plagues that Hashem landed on the Egyptians, one might wonder, for what reason? Is ten not enough? I also wonder, why stop at three hundred?

There are other ways we can further inflate the number of plagues. For example, hail. Hail damages cattle, crops, structures, and people. According to some scholars, each of these could count as a plague. Another way to view the plagues is through the efforts it took to bring about each plague. Scientifically speaking, nature as we know it, is composed of molecules. From the air we breathe, to the organs that compose us, we are molecules. Each organ is made from different cell types, each cell is composed of numerous complex structures and molecules, and each molecule made of many elements such as carbon, phosphate, nitrogen and more. Each element is composed of protons, neutrons and electrons traveling around the nucleus at speed calculated to be approximately 2200 kilometers per second.

Immersing in this knowledge brought to us by modern science, one can further appreciate the infinite amount of changes Hashem implemented to tweak nature in order to bring the plagues upon the Egyptians. Could each modification to the natural order count as plague? For example, turning the water of the Nile into blood. Blood is made of plasma, full of sugar, proteins fat and salts, red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. Just imagine the number of molecular modifications in order to complete this first plague. Thus, I could argue that Hashem brought infinite plagues on the Egyptians; however, our sages limit themselves. They stopped at 300. Whether to show us that Hashem is merciful, or just because 300 is enough to make their point.

But what is that point? I believe that the greatest hint to understanding the plagues and our sages attempt to amplify them lies in Hashem's instructions to Moses in Sefer Shemot. When Hashem first sends Moshe to speak to Pharaoh, the first words that Hashem commands Moshe to tell Pharaoh are: "Israel is my son, my first born" (Shemot 4:22). Hashem starts the plagues with a statement regarding his love for the people of Israel. In my view, amplifying the number of plagues does not serve the purpose of showing the greatness of Hashem or to enhance our perception of Hashem's brutality toward the Egyptians, but rather to amplify Gd's love toward the people of Israel. Hashem bends nature in infinite ways for us, for his people.

Sometimes in life we encounter harsh and unbearable realities. It is in these moments of hurt and suffering that we must remember the infinite love Hashem has for us and the connection between plagues or hardships and love. This is the message that Rabbi Yossie, Rabbie Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva are teaching us! God loves us and maybe, just maybe sometimes we must see it through the plagues.

Dayenu



Dayenu: A Reflection

Lisa Fliegel

I wanted to return the Jewish People to the means of production like I'd learned in my Zionist Youth Movement, Young Judaea, the imperative of Ber Borochov and socialist Zionism: To make the desert bloom as illustrated in the Jewish National Fund centerfold hanging above my teenage bed, next to a picture of a shirtless Israeli soldier. Dayenu?

I thought arriving at Ketura, our small not yet five-year-old kibbutz would be enough. I didn't consider that a desert has different weather, and that my physiology would reject the heat. The only sand I knew was Cape Cod. Walking up the front path from the Arava Road, I comforted my anxiety whispering a joke to myself as the wind picked up: Nice beach, they just forgot the ocean part. It's a stunning landscape; the color pallet of the mountain range on each side of the road changes minute by minute with the position of the sun in the sky. It was so beautiful I had to become an artist so I could paint it, Dayenu?

I was a failed agronomist. I got tangled in the irrigation hoses we were to unroll in straight lines along the melon fields, so the precious drops of water could drip directly onto the planted seeds. Relieved to find comfortable white square boxes below the trees bordering the melon fields, I took a seat during the harvest break, but was whisked off by an agitated Kibbutznik who pointed out that I'd just sat on the pollinators. Neither he nor the bees were pleased. Dejected, as I headed home up the hill to my house, I passed the brightly painted door on the gardening shed that was emblazoned with the glorious words: "Noy (gardening) is Joy." And yes, the flowers growing around me, in their stark reds and yellows spoke boldly amidst the contrast of beige sand. Let's face it, I was lousy at sowing and reaping. But I discovered watercolors and felt the joy. Dayenu?

Aliyah, which means ascent in a spiritual and ideological manner, is the word we use for moving to Israel. For my cohort that ascent did not stop with the unpacking of suitcases as we moved into our Israeli homes.

We were peace activists and women's rights advocates, we were advocates against sexual violence, social change agents and pioneers of Israel's green movement. We infused our unique brand of religious pluralism into kibbutz life and throughout Israel. Dayenu?

It turns out that there are many ways to make a desert bloom. I was studying for my teaching degree in Tel Aviv. My evenings were filled with homework and activism. My major was in Hebrew literature for middle school. I was enamored with the canon of Hebrew Literature and the blooming of it. I began writing and publishing Hebrew poetry, translating women poets, and working on my first book. One weekend I hosted my professor on the kibbutz. Lily Ratok was also a radio personality whose program "Words That Strive to Teach Us" was a popular weekend broadcast. I must have arranged for her to come down to the kibbutz to give a lecture or something, as I recently discovered an unfinished watercolor in my journal from 1985. In the left bottom corner of the painting I inked a quote from Professor Ratok's impression of Ketura: On Lisa's kibbutz there are one hundred people who believe that they are redeeming the world (each in their own way) and most importantly—they enjoy it. Dayenu

In my final years on the kibbutz I worked toward my degree in art therapy, was a journalist covering the Oslo Peace Process, and was active in human rights and reconciliation programs. Dayenu?

When I returned to the USA, I developed a unique specialty of embedded, real time, trauma treatment and advocacy. After the October 7th massacre I flew to Israel and deployed to Eilat to support survivors and train local teams. It was emotionally grueling, taxing the heart. But a half hour away Kibbutz Ketura was taking in hundreds of evacuees while still continuing their Arava Institute's programs of environmental diplomacy. On my days off I came home to Ketura and was resuscitated by my life-long family of friends. After 50 years we are still trying to soothe, improve, repair the world. I may have failed at being a plowing pioneer, but this will always be my community. Wherever I am in the world I find deserts of hurt, and try to be that drop of water targeting seeds of hope. That crazy tenacious belief in the possibility is my anchor of resilience. That's my kibbutz. While I have not been a member for many years, I will always belong. We're a special breed.

Dayenu, Dayenu!





כַּמָּה מַעֲלוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְמָקוֹם עָלֵינוּ!

How many degrees of good did the Place [of all bestow] upon us!

אֱלֹהֵי הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא עָשָׂה בָּהֶם שְׁפָטִים, דִּינָּה.

If He had taken us out of Egypt and not made judgements on them;
[it would have been] enough for us.

אֱלֹהֵי עָשָׂה בָּהֶם שְׁפָטִים, וְלֹא עָשָׂה בֵּאלֹהֵיהֶם, דִּינָּה.

If He had made judgments on them and had not made [them] on their gods;
[it would have been] enough for us.

אֱלֹהֵי עָשָׂה בֵּאלֹהֵיהֶם, וְלֹא הָרַג אֶת־בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם, דִּינָּה.

If He had made [them] on their gods and had not killed their firstborn;
[it would have been] enough for us.

אֱלֹהֵי הָרַג אֶת־בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־מָמוֹנָם, דִּינָּה.

If He had killed their firstborn and had not given us their money;
[it would have been] enough for us.

אֱלֹהֵי נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־מָמוֹנָם וְלֹא קָרַע לָנוּ אֶת־הַיָּם, דִּינָּה.

If He had given us their money and had not split the Sea for us;
[it would have been] enough for us.

אֱלֹהֵי קָרַע לָנוּ אֶת־הַיָּם וְלֹא הֶעֱבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּחֶרֶבָה, דִּינָּה.

If He had split the Sea for us and had not taken us through it on dry land; [it would
have been] enough for us.

אֱלֹהֵי הֶעֱבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּחֶרֶבָה וְלֹא שָׁקַע צָרָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ דִּינָּה.

If He had taken us through it on dry land and had not pushed down our enemies in [the Sea];
[it would have been] enough for us.

אלו שקע צָרְנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ וְלֹא סַפֵּק צָרְכֵנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה דִּינֹו.

If He had pushed down our enemies in [the Sea] and had not supplied our needs in the wilderness for forty years; [it would have been] enough for us.

אלו סַפֵּק צָרְכֵנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה וְלֹא הָאֵכִילָנוּ אֶת־הַמָּן דִּינֹו.

If He had supplied our needs in the wilderness for forty years and had not fed us the manna; [it would have been] enough for us.

אלו הָאֵכִילָנוּ אֶת־הַמָּן וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת, דִּינֹו.

If He had fed us the manna and had not given us the Shabbat; [it would have been] enough for us.

אלו נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת, וְלֹא קָרַבְנוּ לְפָנֵי הָרַי סִינִי, דִּינֹו.

If He had given us the Shabbat and had not brought us close to Mount Sinai; [it would have been] enough for us.

אלו קָרַבְנוּ לְפָנֵי הָרַי סִינִי, וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה. דִּינֹו.

If He had brought us close to Mount Sinai and had not given us the Torah; [it would have been] enough for us.

אלו נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה וְלֹא הִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, דִּינֹו.

If He had given us the Torah and had not brought us into the land of Israel; [it would have been] enough for us.

אלו הִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא בָנָה לָנוּ אֶת־בֵּית הַבְּחִירָה דִּינֹו.

If He had brought us into the land of Israel and had not built us the 'Chosen House' [the Temple; it would have been] enough for us.

עַל אַחַת, כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה, טוֹבָה כְּפֻלָּה וּמִכְפָּלָת לְמָקוֹם עָלֵינוּ: שֶׁהוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וַעֲשָׂה בָהֶם שְׁפָטִים, וַעֲשָׂה בְּאַלֹהֵיהֶם, וְהָרַג אֶת־בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־מִמּוֹנָם, וְקָרַע לָנוּ אֶת־הַיָּם, וְהַעֲבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּחָרָבָה, וְשָׁקַע צָרְנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ, וְסַפֵּק צָרְכֵנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה, וְהָאֵכִילָנוּ אֶת־הַמָּן, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת, וְקָרַבְנוּ לְפָנֵי הָרַי סִינִי, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, וְהִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבָנָה לָנוּ אֶת־בֵּית הַבְּחִירָה לְכַפֵּר עַל־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ.

How much more so is the good that is doubled and quadrupled that the Place [of all bestowed] upon us [enough for us]; since he took us out of Egypt, and made judgments with them, and made [them] with their gods, and killed their firstborn, and gave us their money, and split the Sea for us, and brought us through it on dry land, and pushed down our enemies in [the Sea], and supplied our needs in the wilderness for forty years, and fed us the manna, and gave us the Shabbat, and brought us close to Mount Sinai, and gave us the Torah, and brought us into the land of Israel and built us the 'Chosen House' [the Temple] to atone far all of our sins.

Rabban Gamliel's Three Things

רבן גמליאל היה אומר: כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח, לא יצא ידי חובתו, ואלו הן:
פסח, מצה, ומרור.

Rabban Gamliel was accustomed to say, Anyone who has not said these three things on Pesach has not fulfilled his obligation, and these are them:

the Pesach sacrifice, matzah and maror.

פסח שהיו אבותינו אוכלים בזמן שבית המקדש היה קיים, על שום מה? על שום שפסח הקדוש ברוך הוא על בתי אבותינו במצרים, שנאמר: וזבח פסח הוא ליי, אשר פסח על בתי בני ישראל במצרים בנגפו את מצרים, ואת בתינו הציל ויקד העם וישתחוו.

The Pesach [passover] sacrifice that our ancestors were accustomed to eating when the Temple existed, for the sake of what [was it]? For the sake [to commemorate] that the Holy One, blessed be He, passed over the homes of our ancestors in Egypt, as it is stated (Exodus 12:27); "And you shall say: 'It is the passover sacrifice to the Lord, for that He passed over the homes of the Children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and our homes he saved.' And the people bowed the head and bowed."

She holds the matzah in her hand and shows it to the others there.

מצה Matzah

מצה זו שאנו אוכלים, על שום מה? על שום שלא הספיק בצקם של אבותינו להחמיץ עד שנגלה עליהם מלך מלכי המלכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא, וגאלם, שנאמר: ויאפו את הבצק אשר הוציאו ממצרים עגת מצות, כי לא חמיץ, כי גרשו ממצרים ולא יכלו להתמהמה, וגם צדה לא עשו להם.

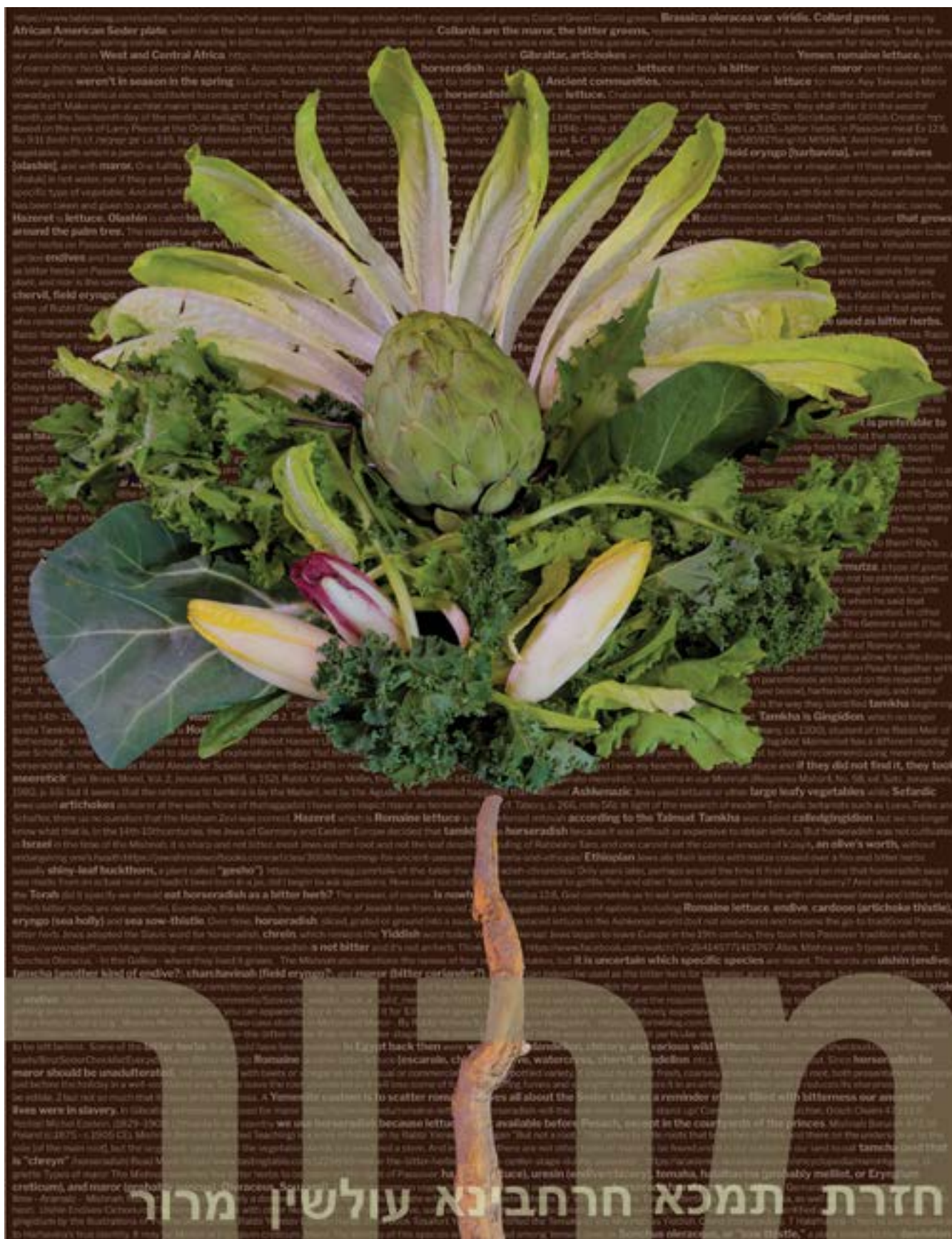
This matzah that we are eating, for the sake of what [is it]? For the sake [to commemorate] that our ancestors' dough was not yet able to rise, before the King of the kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed [Himself] to them and redeemed them, as it is stated (Exodus 12:39); "And they baked the dough which they brought out of Egypt into matzah cakes, since it did not rise; because they were expelled from Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they made for themselves provisions."

She holds the maror in her hand and shows it to the others there.

מרור Maror

מרור זה שאנו אוכלים, על שום מה? על שום שמררו המצרים את חיי אבותינו במצרים, שנאמר: וימררו את חייהם בעבדה קשה, בחמר ובלבנים. ובכל עבדה בשדה את כל עבדתם אשר עבדו בהם בפר

This maror [bitter greens] that we are eating, for the sake of what [is it]? For the sake [to commemorate] that the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt, as it is stated (Exodus 1:14); "And they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; in all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor."



The Bitter Herbs by Lisa Link

A Commentary on Maror

Erica Quigley

Plants don't want animals or people to eat them. The exception is ripe fruit; plants recruit animals to distribute their seeds. To defend their leaves, stems, roots, seeds, and unripe fruit, plants have evolved bitter-tasting chemicals that are often toxic. Plant-eaters, in turn, evolved ways to distinguish safe vegetation from harmful, and either avoid it or tolerate small quantities. It's been an arms race hundreds of millions of years long. Herbivores who couldn't avoid toxic plants didn't pass on their genes.

At first, our human ancestors learned ways to lessen bitter plant flavors through soaking, mashing, or cooking. Then they learned to tame plants. Agriculture has almost eliminated strong bitter flavors in plants. Horseradish is an extreme exception. Broccoli is not nearly as bitter as horseradish, but it does contain bitter-tasting compounds called glucosinolates. When kids refuse to eat broccoli, we should remember that humans, even small humans, have evolved to be wary of anything that might hurt them.

The ritual of eating maror immerses our tongues and throats in the sharp harshness that our ancestors learned to avoid or process into palatable forms. In a modern grocery store, we are free to choose from hundreds of plants, very few of which taste bitter. We can enjoy them either raw or processed into sweet or savory forms with an infinite array of seasonings and cooking implements. Maror is said to remind us of the bitterness of slavery. Perhaps we can also remember the bitter wild plants our forebears must have tasted for tens of thousands of years.

Source: Learn.Genetics: <https://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/basics/ptc>

B'chol Dor Vador

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדּוֹר

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדּוֹר חַיִּיב אָדָם לְרַאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בְּעֶבֶר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בִּצְאוֹתֵי מִצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּלֶבֶד גָּאֵל הַקְדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, אֲלֵא אִף אוֹתָנוּ גָּאֵל עָמָהֶם, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: וְאוֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם, לְמַעַן הָבִיא אוֹתָנוּ, לְתֶת לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם.

In each and every generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he left Egypt, as it is stated (Exodus 13:8); "And you shall explain to your son on that day: For the sake of this, did the Lord do [this] for me in my going out of Egypt." Not only our ancestors did the Holy One, blessed be He, redeem, but rather also us [together] with them did He redeem, as it is stated (Deuteronomy 6:23); "And He took us out from there, in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers."



Miracles of Passover by Giti Ganjei

A Note from Giti Ganjei on her art work: The magnificent parts of the Exodus from Egypt, where and how the Hebrew people survived by the miracle of parting the sea, to start their journey to the promised land, and by a second miracle, the presence of The Divine in the burning bush, giving the Hebrews ten commandments. This is a guiding light for all nations to follow to live in peace and harmony. Every year we sing Dor Va Dor, as a reminder of these miracles, to advocate for peace and harmony.

B'chol Dor Vador- commentary

Jack Eiferman

Bechol dor vahdor Chayav adam lirot et atzmo ke-ilu hu yatza mimitzrayim.

In every generation, each of us is obligated to see ourselves as one who actually left
Egypt in the days of the Exodus.

“Yatza mimitzrayim - Leaving Egypt”, going from that narrow place, is another way of saying human liberation. What would you do to encourage the perspective that we each are Egypt escapees, despite Egypt being tied to an event that’s three millennia old? Having the Seder be a time when family and friends all gather around the Seder table is a good start.

Warm feelings and the safety of being surrounded by those we love can be relaxing. And having special foods, especially unusual ones, symbols, song, wine, stories and more wine helps say that this evening is something unusual. Cleaning the house, starting afresh are all undercurrents to this evening.

Each year we tell that same story, we read from the same book. But human liberation is never completed. It began with them then; it continues with us now. We tell the story not out of curiosity or nostalgia, but because it is our turn to add to that story, to grow and develop from it. Our challenge in each year is to feel the Exodus, the powerful force of transformation. This theme of rebirth, of a new beginning, of the human capacity to change are all parts of seeing oneself as leaving Egypt. We are on the balancing point between changing into a new way of being, while not turning our back on history and heritage. This remarkable aspiration of the Seder looks to the future, to what is possible if we move from our current constrained place – our Mitzrayim - to the other side of the sea where freedom and self-actualization can be realized.

First Half of Hallel

Therefore

לְפִיכָךְ

לְפִיכָךְ אֲנַחֲנוּ חַיִּים לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבַּח, לְפַאֵר, לְרוֹמֵם, לְהַדָּר, לְבָרֵךְ, לַעֲלֹה וּלְקַלֵּס לְמִי שֶׁעָשָׂה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ
אֶת־כָּל־הַנִּסִּים הָאֵלֶּה: הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵעֲבָדוֹת לְחֵירוֹת מִיָּגוֹן לְשִׁמְחָה, וּמֵאֵפֶל לַיּוֹם טוֹב, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹר גָּדוֹל, וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד
לְנֶאֱלָה. וְנֹאמַר לְפָנָיו שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה: הַלְלוּיָהּ

Therefore we are obligated to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, lavish, bless, raise high, and acclaim
Him who made all these miracles for our ancestors and for us:

He brought us out from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to [celebration of]
a festival, from darkness to great light, and from servitude to redemption. And let us sing a new song
before Him, Halleluyah!

Halleluyah

הללויה

הללויה הללו עבדי ה', הללו את-שם ה'. יהי שם ה' מבך מעתה ועד עולם. ממזרח שמש עד מבואו מהלל שם ה'.
רם על-פלגים ה', על השמים כבודו. מי כפי אלהינו המגביה לשבת, המשפילי לראות בשמים ובארץ? מקימי
מעפר דל, מאשפת ירים אביון, להושיבי עם-נדיבים, עם נדיבי עמו. מושיבי עקרת הבית,
אם הבנים שמחה. הללויה.

Halleluyah! Praise, servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. May the Name of the Lord be blessed from now and forever. From the rising of the sun in the East to its setting, the name of the Lord is praised. Above all nations is the Lord, His honor is above the heavens. Who is like the Lord, our God, Who sits on high; Who looks down upon the heavens and the earth? He brings up the poor out of the dirt; from the refuse piles, He raises the destitute. To seat him with the nobles, with the nobles of his people. He seats a barren woman in a home, a happy mother of children. Halleluyah! (Psalms 113)

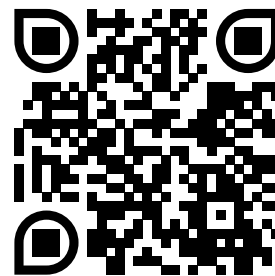
בצאת ישראל ממצרים, בית יעקב מעם לעז, היתה יהודה לקדשו, ישראל ממשלותיו. הים ראה וינס, הירדן יסב
לאחור. הרים רקדו כאילים, גבעות כבגי צאן. מה לך הים כי תנוס, הירדן – תסב לאחור, הרים – תרקדו
כאילים, גבעות כבגי-צאן. מלפני אדון חולי ארץ, מלפני אלוה יעקב. ההפכך הצור אגם-מים,
חלמיש למעינו-מים.

B'Tzeit Yisrael Video

Please watch the video below of Adva Yudkin and Rabbi Sara Cohen,
both of Kibbutz Ketura, sing B'Tzeit Yisrael.



To view the video scan
or click on the QR code.



**And more on Hallel, this song of praise
a paired art piece and a poem:**



Hallel by Elena Stone

The Stone's Hallelujah

Debra Cash

“The stone the builders rejected has become the corner stone”
tired of building crypts, temples, pyramids stone laddering the sky like a crag
containing swaddled bone and petrified flesh like a jar closed against weevils
the stone the builders rejected can be thrown
to shatter light thrown in the dark to change
everything
as it is written
“rock dissolves to pools of water; flint spews, a fountain.”

Artist's note:

In my Hallel image, a young girl looks out at a turbulent yet ever-beautiful natural world, and sings her praise, communion and gratitude. The initial inspiration for the piece was my childhood enchantment with Psalm 114, which had me giggling every seder at the thought of mountains and hills skipping like lambs and rams, and seas and rivers fleeing and running backwards. I was far too young to contemplate the meaning of the imagery, let alone the mysterious alchemy of boulder and flint becoming a pool and a fountain of water. But something in the latter idea deeply captured my imagination, and it stuck.

Decades later, I became enamored of a feminist anthem by Holly Near called “The Rock Will Wear Away”, and while working on this illustration, the memory of its chorus kept resurfacing: “Can we be like drops of water falling on the stone/ Splashing, breaking, dispersing in air/ Weaker than the stone by far but be aware/ That as time goes by the rock will wear away.” While not a perfect analogy to the psalm, these lyrics draw on the same archetypal awareness: that the hardness and immutability of rock can yield to the soft power of water, if not through supernatural transformation, then through the natural course of erosion as water exerts its force over time.

In her poem “The Stone’s Hallelujah”, my friend Debra Cash writes evocatively of the courage to pick up a rock and throw it as a metaphor for fully committing ourselves to the pursuit of freedom. My visual contribution flows from the call to “be like drops of water”, finding strength in vulnerability, connection and kinship with the earth. Both types of power are needed. But even as they complement each other, the Hallel offers a third essential element: the inspiration, gratitude and joy that comes from deep connection with the Source of life. In our time of profound instability and planetary crisis, may we all walk in this strength and wisdom.

Poet's Note:

Hallel, the song that thanks The Divine, describes radical, even violent, transformation.

It is a song of getting unstuck, a picture of a world where every element of the natural world is in motion: the poor raised from dirt to sit with nobles, the barren to be surrounded by their dreamed-for children, the sea turning against its original direction and mountains and hills losing their stability to tremble and jump like goats and lambs. In its complete traditional version (Psalms 113-118) Hallel affirms that grief will be replaced with tranquility, the fear of death and disaster with confidence and gratitude for Divine protection.

It is a song of instability and remaking. The most radical transformation affirms the unexpected transformation of stone to water. Who turns the boulder into a pond of water, the flint into a fountain. (Ps. 114) The earth, separated from the water at the very dawn of creation is no longer still but flowing, permeable. The stone that was left by the builders has become the cornerstone (Ps.118:22): rejected material is honored and recognized as foundational.

Yet Hallel does not come to the passive. It demands effort, an act of self-liberation. In my poetic rendering, the stone can be, must be thrown, just as the people had to choose to step into the water and travel across dry land until they reached the opposite shore.

In the Temple, it is said, Hallel was antiphonal, a song of call and response, a song that establishes a pattern and then is reflected in a changed, communal voice. In the Hallel, we are required to raise our voices to praise the miraculous change that is freedom.

Second Cup of Wine



Ga'al Yisrael by Elizabeth Ross

Artist Note: The second cup is the culmination of the Maggid. Here, phrases from the Maggid pour into flow from the raised cup as we say the blessing and celebrate God's rescue of us from our enslavement.

מגביהים את הכוס עד גאל ישראל.

We raise the cup until we reach "who redeemed Israel"

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר גאלנו וגאל את־אבותינו ממצרים, והגיענו הלילה הזה לאֲכִלְבֹּ מִצֵּה ויִמְרוּהָ כִּן ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ יִגְיַעֲנוּ לְמוֹעֲדִים וְלִרְגָלִים אַחֲרִים הַבָּאִים לְקִרְאָתֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם, שְׂמֵחִים בְּבִנְיַן עִירָךְ וְשִׂשִׁים בְּעִבּוּדְךָ. וְנֹאכֵל שֶׁם מִן הַזִּבְחִים וּמִן הַפְּסָחִים אֲשֶׁר יִגְיַע דָּמָם עַל קִיר מִזְבִּיחֶךָ לְרִצּוֹן, וְנוֹדָה לָךְ שִׁיר חֹדֶשׁ עַל גְּאֻלָּתֵנוּ וְעַל פְּדוּת נַפְשֵׁנוּ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who redeemed us and redeemed our ancestors from Egypt, and brought us on this night to eat matzah and maror; so too, Lord our God, and God of our ancestors, bring us to other appointed times and holidays that will come to greet us in peace, joyful in the building of Your city and happy in Your worship; that we shall eat there from the offerings and from the Pesach sacrifices, the blood of which shall reach the wall of Your altar for favor, and we shall thank You with a new song upon our redemption and upon the restoration of our souls. Blessed are you, Lord, who redeemed Israel.

שׁוֹתִים אֶת הַכּוֹס בְּהִסָּבָה שְׂמָאל.
We say the blessing below and drink the cup while reclining to the left

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Rachtzah

רַחֲצָה

נוֹטְלִים אֶת הַיָּדִים וּמְבָרְכִים:
We wash the hands and make the blessing.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדִים.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with
His commandments and has commanded us on the washing of the hands.

Motzi Matzah

מוֹצִיא מַצָּה

יִקַּח הַמַּצּוֹת בְּסֹדֶר שֶׁהֵנִיחַן, הַפְּרוּסָה בֵּין שְׁתֵּי הַשְּׁלֻמוֹת, יֵאָחַז שְׁלֹשָׁתָן בְּיָדוֹ וַיְבָרֵךְ "הַמוֹצִיא" בְּכוּוֹנָה עַל הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה, וְ"עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה" בְּכוּוֹנָה עַל הַפְּרוּסָה. אַחֲרַי כִּי יִבְצֵעַ כּוֹזֵית מִן הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה הַשְּׁלֵמָה וְכוֹזֵית שְׁנֵי מִן הַפְּרוּסָה, וַיִּטְבֹּל בַּמַּלַּח, וַיֹּאכַל בְּהִסָּבָה שְׁנֵי הַזֵּיתִים:
She takes out the matzah in the order that she placed them, the broken one between the two whole ones; she holds the three of them in her hand and blesses "ha-motzi" with the intention to take from the top one and "on eating matzah" with the intention of eating from the broken one. Afterwards, she breaks off a kazayit from the top whole one and a second kazayit from the broken one and she dips them into salt and eats both while reclining.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the ground.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments
and has commanded us on the eating of matzah.

Maror

מרור

כל אחד מהמסבים לוקח כזית מרור, מטבלו בחרוסת, מנער החרוסת, מברך ואוכל בלי הסבה.
All present should take a kazayit of maror, dip into the charoset, shake off the charoset, make the blessing and eat without reclining.

ברוך אתה ה', אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על אכילת מרור.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us on the eating of maror.

Korech

כורֶךְ

כל אחד מהמסבים לוקח כזית מן המצה השלישית עם כזית מרור, כורכים יחד, אוכלים בהסבה ובלי ברכה. לפני אכלו אומר.
All present should take a kazayit from the third whole matzah with a kazayit of maror, wrap them together and eat them while reclining and without saying a blessing. Before he eats it, he should say:

זֶכֶר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהִלֵּל. כֵּן עָשָׂה הֵלֵל בְּזִמְנֵן שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קַיָּם:
In memory of the Temple according to Hillel. This is what Hillel would do when the Temple existed:

הָיָה כּוֹרֵךְ מַצָּה וּמְרֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד, לְקַיֵּם מֵה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: עַל מִצּוֹת וּמְרֹרִים יֹאכְלֶהוּ.
He would wrap the matzah and maror and eat them together, in order to fulfill what is stated, (Numbers 9:11): "You should eat it upon matzot and marorim."

The Importance of the Charoset

Seth Rosenman

Some of us wake up every day and feel like the world is falling apart. There's violence in the world, there is anxiety in our culture, and there is turmoil that tries to take over our day-to-day lives. When faced with this kind of uncertainty, it is ever important to celebrate those who work to keep us together.

Those who work with their minds, who work with their hearts, who work with their hands. The charoset on our seder table this Passover encompasses our traditional interpretation: a symbol of the brick and mortar that the Hebrew slaves used to build Egypt for Pharaoh. This Passover, let us also employ the charoset as a symbol of celebration for those who bring sweet joy into the world, the do-gooders, those who lay the bricks that build up our communities for the better. As a teenager my generation doesn't always appreciate the adults in our lives. It's the teachers who give us mountains of homework, it's our parents who make us do our chores, it's our bosses who tell us to do the work even when we really really don't want to. As teens sometimes we can't fully value the adults in our lives because we have a harder time connecting with them. Yet these adults in our lives and so many others provide for us and give us the freedom to be who we are. They build, they create, they heal, and they educate. Their work, often underappreciated, is as vital as the bricks and mortar symbolized by the charoset. As we partake in the charoset this Passover, let us remember to honor these workers. Let us remember that each dollop of charoset we spread on our matzah is a tribute to their efforts, a recognition of their struggles, and a celebration of their invaluable contribution to our world.

This Passover, as we taste the sweetness of the charoset, let us commit to making the world a little sweeter for those who work tirelessly to hold it together.



Charoset by Leann Shamash

Shulchan Orech

שולחן עורֶךְ

Vayochluchu: And You Shall Eat

Ellen Krueger

Mom made gefilte.
Chicken soup with matzo balls.
Sponge cake and compote.

No recipes there.
She just cooked and I watched her.
Osmosis learning.

Twelve dozen fresh eggs
From great uncle's chicken farm
Were used up that week.

Today, fish is jarred.
But soup and kneidles are mine.
I learned what she taught.

Kitchen aromas
Build up anticipation.
A Jewish Siren.

Seder is sens'ry.
Hagaddah is the guide to
See...Touch...Hear...Smell...Taste.

Old recipe cards.
Yellowed, stained newspaper scraps.
Sisterhood cookbooks

They make the seder.
Fond memories for us all.
For generations.



And You Shall Eat by Ellen Krueger

Tzafun

צפון

אחר גמר הסעודה לוקח כל אחד מהמסבים כזית מהמצה שהייתה צפונה לאפיקומן ואוכל ממנה כזית בהסבה.
וצריך לאוכלה קודם חצות הלילה. לפני אכילת האפיקומן יאמר:

After the end of the meal, all those present take a kazayit from the matzah, that was concealed for the afikoman, and eat a kazayit from it while reclining. Before eating the afikoman, he should say:

זְכֹר לְקִרְבֵּן פֶּסַח הַנֶּאֱכָל עַל הַשׁוֹבֵעַ.

In memory of the Pesach sacrifice that was eaten upon being satiated.



Birkat Hamazon by Jayne Miller

Artist Statment: Saying “thank you” is such an easy and basic thing to do. When we interact with tiny babies and they hold out their hands to give or show us something, we say “thank you!” and smile and enter their “conversation”. After all that we have received at a meal, the sustenance and blessings, it just feels so natural to say “thank you” with a full heart and belly.

Barech

בָּרַךְ

מוזגים כוס שלישי ומברכים ברכת המזון.
We pour the third cup and recite the Grace over the Food

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת, בְּשׁוּב ה' אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הָיִינוּ כְּחֹלְמִים. אֲזַי מָלֵא שְׂחוֹק פִּינוּ וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה. אֲזַי אָמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם: הֲגָדִיל ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהֵי ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ, הָיִינוּ שְׂמִיחִים. שׁוּבָה ה' אֶת שְׁבִיתֵנוּ כְּאֶפִיקִים בְּנֶגֶב. הִזְרַעְתָּ בְּדִמְעָה, בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ. הַלּוֹךְ יֵלֵךְ וּבָכָה נִשְׂא מִשָּׁף הַדָּרֶעַ, בָּא יָבֵא בְרִנָּה נִשְׂא אֲלֻמֹּתָיו.

A Song of Ascents; When the Lord will bring back the captivity of Zion, we will be like dreamers. Then our mouth will be full of mirth and our tongue joyful melody, then they will say among the nations; "The Lord has done greatly with these." The Lord has done great things with us; we are happy. Lord, return our captivity like streams in the desert. Those that sow with tears will reap with joyful song. He who surely goes and cries, he carries the measure of seed, he will surely come in joyful song and carry his sheaves. (Psalms 126)

שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׂאֲכָלוּ כֶּאֱחָד חַיִּיבִים לִזְמַן וְהַמְזִמָּן פּוֹתַח:
Three that ate together are obligated to introduce the blessing and the leader of the introduction opens as follows:

רְבוֹתֵי נְבָרֶךְ:
My masters, let us bless:

הַמְּסַבִּים עִוְנִים:
All those present answer:

יְהִי שֵׁם ה' מְבָרֵךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.
May the Name of the Lord be blessed from now and forever. (Psalms 113:2)

הַמְזִמָּן אוֹמֵר:
The leader says:

בְּרִשׁוֹת מָרְנָנוּ וּרְבָנָנוּ וּרְבוֹתֵינוּ, נְבָרֵךְ [אֱלֹהֵינוּ] שָׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשָּׁלוֹ.
With the permission of our gentlemen and our teachers and my masters, let us bless [our God] from whom we have eaten.

הַמְּסַבִּים עִוְנִים:
Those present answer:

בָּרוּךְ [אֱלֹהֵינוּ] שָׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשָּׁלוֹ וּבִטְוֹבוֹ חַיֵּינוּ
Blessed is [our God] from whom we have eaten and from whose goodness we live.

הַמְזִמָּן חוֹזֵר וְאוֹמֵר:
The leader repeats and says:

בָּרוּךְ [אֱלֹהֵינוּ] שָׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשָּׁלוֹ וּבִטְוֹבוֹ חַיֵּינוּ
Blessed is [our God] from whom we have eaten and from whose goodness we live.

כלם אומרים:

They all say:

ברוך אתה ה', אלהינו מלך העולם, הן את העולם כלו בטובו בהן בחסד וברחמים, הוא נותן לחם לכל בשר כי לעולם חסדו. ובטובו הגדול תמיד לא חסר לנו, ואל יחסר לנו מזון לעולם ועד. בעבור שמו הגדול, כי הוא אל הן ומפרנס לכל ומטיב לכל, ומכין מזון לכל בריותיו אשר ברא. ברוך אתה ה', הן את הכל.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who nourishes the entire world in His goodness, in grace, in kindness and in mercy; He gives bread to all flesh since His kindness is forever. And in His great goodness, we always have not lacked, and may we not lack nourishment forever and always, because of His great name. Since He is a Power that feeds and provides for all and does good to all and prepares nourishment for all of his creatures that he created. Blessed are You, Lord, who sustains all.

נודה לך ה' אלהינו על שהנחלת לאבותינו ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה, ועל שהוצאתנו ה' אלהינו מארץ מצרים, ופדיתנו מבית עבדים, ועל בריתך שחתמת בבשרנו, ועל תורתך שלמדנו, ועל חקיך שהודעתנו, ועל חיים חן וחסד שחוננתנו, ועל אכילת מזון שאפה הן ומפרנס אותנו תמיד, בכל יום ובכל עת ובכל שעה:

We thank you, Lord our God, that you have given as an inheritance to our ancestors a lovely, good and broad land, and that You took us out, Lord our God, from the land of Egypt and that You redeemed us from a house of slaves, and for Your covenant which You have sealed in our flesh, and for Your Torah that You have taught us, and for Your statutes which You have made known to us, and for life, grace and kindness that You have granted us and for the eating of nourishment that You feed and provide for us always, on all days, and at all times and in every hour.

ועל הכל ה' אלהינו, אנחנו מודים לך ומברכים אותך, יתברך שמך בפי כל חי תמיד לעולם ועד. ככתוב: ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלהיך על הארץ הטובה אשר נתן לך. ברוך אתה ה', על הארץ ועל המזון:

And for everything, Lord our God, we thank You and bless You; may Your name be blessed by the mouth of all life, constantly forever and always, as it is written (Deuteronomy 8:10); "And you shall eat and you shall be satiated and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land that He has given you." Blessed are You, Lord, for the land and for the nourishment.

רחם נא ה' אלהינו על ישראל עמך ועל ירושלים עירך ועל ציון משכן כבודך ועל מלכות בית דוד משיחך ועל הבית הגדול והקדוש שנקרא שמך עלי: אלהינו אבינו, רענו וזיגנו פרנסנו וכלכלנו והרוחנו, והרוח לנו ה' אלהינו מהרה מפל צרותינו. ונא אל תצריכנו ה' אלהינו, לא לידי מתנת בשר ודם ולא לידי הלואתם, כי אם לידך המלאה הפתוחה הקדושה והרחבה, שלא גבוש ולא נכלם לעולם ועד.

Please have mercy, Lord our God, upon Israel, Your people; and upon Jerusalem, Your city; and upon Zion, the dwelling place of Your Glory; and upon the monarchy of the House of David, Your appointed one; and upon the great and holy house that Your name is called upon. Our God, our Father, tend us, sustain us, provide for us, relieve us and give us quick relief, Lord our God, from all of our troubles. And please do not make us needy, Lord our God, not for the gifts of flesh and blood, and not for their loans, but rather from Your full, open, holy and broad hand, so that we not be embarrassed and we not be ashamed forever and always.

בשבת מוסיפין:

On Shabbat, we add the following paragraph

רצה והחליצנו ה' אלהינו במצותיך ובמצות יום השביעי השבת הגדול והקדוש הזה. כי יום זה גדול וקדוש הוא לפניך לשבת בו ולנוח בו באהבה כמצות רצונך. וברצונך הנח לנו ה' אלהינו שלא תהא צרה ויגון ואנחה ביום

מנוחתנו. והראנו ה' אלהינו בנחמת ציון עירך ובבגן ירושלים עיר קדשך כי אתה הוא בעל הישועות
ובעל הנחמות.

May You be pleased to embolden us, Lord our God, in your commandments and in the command of the seventh day, of this great and holy Shabbat, since this day is great and holy before You, to cease work upon it and to rest upon it, with love, according to the commandment of Your will. And with Your will, allow us, Lord our God, that we should not have trouble, and grief and sighing on the day of our rest. And may You show us, Lord our God, the consolation of Zion, Your city; and the building of Jerusalem, Your holy city; since You are the Master of salvations and the Master of consolations.

אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, יעלה ויבא ויגיע ויראה וירצה וישמע ויפקד ויזכר זכרוננו ופקדוננו, וזכרון אבותינו, וזכרון משיח בן דוד עבדך, וזכרון ירושלים עיר קדשך, וזכרון כל עמך בית ישראל לפניך, לפליטה לטובה לחן ולחסד ולרחמים, לחיים ולשלום ביום חג המצות הזה זכרנו ה' אלהינו בו לטובה ופקדנו בו לברכה והושיענו בו לחיים. ובדבר ישועה ורחמים חוס וחס ורחמים עלינו והושיענו, כי אליך עינינו, כי אל מלך חנון ורחום אתה. ובנה ירושלים עיר הקדש במהרה בימינו. ברוך אתה ה', בונה ברחמי ירושלים. אמן.

God and God of our ancestors, may there ascend and come and reach and be seen and be acceptable and be heard and be recalled and be remembered - our remembrance and our recollection; and the remembrance of our ancestors; and the remembrance of the messiah, the son of David, Your servant; and the remembrance of Jerusalem, Your holy city; and the remembrance of all Your people, the house of Israel - in front of You, for survival, for good, for grace, and for kindness, and for mercy, for life and for peace on this day of the Festival of Matsot. Remember us, Lord our God, on it for good and recall us on it for survival and save us on it for life, and by the word of salvation and mercy, pity and grace us and have mercy on us and save us, since our eyes are upon You, since You are a graceful and merciful Power. And may You build Jerusalem, the holy city, quickly and in our days. Blessed are You, Lord, who builds Jerusalem in His mercy. Amen.

ברוך אתה ה', אלהינו מלך העולם, האל אבינו מלכנו אדירנו בוראנו גואלנו יוצרנו קדושנו קדוש יעקב רועה רועה ישראל המלך הטוב והמטיב לכל שבכל יום ויום הוא המטיב, הוא מטיב, הוא יטיב לנו. הוא גמלנו הוא גמלנו הוא יגמלנו לעד, לחן ולחסד ולרחמים ולרוח הצלה והצלחה, ברכה וישועה נחמה נחמה פריסה וכלכלה ורחמים וחסדים ושלום וכל טוב, ומפל טוב לעולם על יחסרנו.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, the Power, our Father, our King, our Mighty One, our Creator, our Redeemer, our Shaper, our Holy One, the Holy One of Ya'akov, our Shepherd, the Shepherd of Israel, the good King, who does good to all, since on every single day He has done good, He does good, He will do good, to us; He has granted us, He grants us, He will grant us forever - in grace and in kindness, and in mercy, and in relief - rescue and success, blessing and salvation, consolation, provision and relief and mercy and life and peace and all good; and may we not lack any good ever.

הרחמן הוא ימלוך עלינו לעולם ועד. הרחמן הוא יתברך בשמים ובארץ. הרחמן הוא ישתבח לדור דורים, ויתפאר בנו לעד ולנצח נצחים, ויתהדר בנו לעד ולעולמי עולמים. הרחמן הוא יפרנסנו בכבוד. הרחמן הוא ישבור עלנו מעל צוארנו, והוא יוליכנו קוממיות לארצנו. הרחמן הוא ישלח לנו ברכה מרבה בבית הזה, ועל שלחן זה שאכלנו עליו. הרחמן הוא ישלח לנו את אליהו הנביא זכור לטוב, ויבשר לנו בשורות טובות ישועות ונחמות. הרחמן הוא יברך את בעלי / אשתי. הרחמן הוא יברך את [אבי מורי] בעל הבית הזה. ואת [אמי מורתי] בעלת הבית הזה, אותם ואת ביתם ואת זרעם ואת כל אשר להם. אותנו ואת כל אשר לנו, כמו שנתברכו אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב בכל מכל כל, בן יברך אותנו כלנו יחד בברכה שלמה, ונאמר, אמן. בפרוס ילמדו עליהם

וְעָלֵינוּ זְכוּת שֶׁתִּהְיֶה לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת שְׁלוֹם. וְנִשְׂא בִּרְכָּה מֵאֵת ה', וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ, וְנִמְצָא חֵן וְשִׁכָּל טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹהִים וְאָדָם. בַּשַּׁבָּת: הֶרְחַמְנוּ הוּא יִנְחִילֵנוּ יוֹם שֶׁכָּל שַׁבָּת וּמְנוּחָה לַחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָמִים. הֶרְחַמְנוּ הוּא יִנְחִילֵנוּ יוֹם שֶׁכָּל טוֹב. [יוֹם שֶׁכָּל אָרוֹךְ. יוֹם שֶׁצְדִיקִים יוֹשְׁבִים וְעֲטֻרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרָאשֵׁיהֶם וְנִהְנִים מִזֵּיו הַשְּׂכִינָה וְיֵהִי חֶלְקֵנוּ עִמָּהֶם]. הֶרְחַמְנוּ הוּא יִזְכֵּנוּ לִימֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ וְלַחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. מִגְדוֹל יִשׁוּעוֹת מִלִּפְנֵי וְעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְמִשְׁיחוֹ לְדוֹד וּלְזֶרְעוֹ עַד עוֹלָם. עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶמְרוּ, אָמֵן. יִרְאוּ אֶת ה' קְדוֹשׁ, כִּי אֵין מַחְסוֹר לִירְאָיו. כְּפִירִים רָשׁוּ וְרָעִבוּ, וְדָרְשִׁי ה' לֹא יַחְסְרוּ כָּל טוֹב. הוֹדוּ לֵי כִי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ. פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדָהּ, וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רִצּוֹן. בְּרוּךְ הַגִּבּוֹר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בֵּי, וְהָיָה ה' מִבְּטָחוֹ. נַעַר הָיִיתִי גַם זָקֵנְתִי, וְלֹא רָאִיתִי צָדִיק נִעְזֵב, וְזֶרְעוֹ מִבְּקֵשׁ לָחֶם. יֵי עֲזָ לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן, ה' יִבְרַךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּשְׁלוֹם.

May the Merciful One reign over us forever and always. May the Merciful One be blessed in the heavens and in the earth. May the Merciful One be praised for all generations, and exalted among us forever and ever, and glorified among us always and infinitely for all infinities. May the Merciful One sustain us honorably. May the Merciful One break our yoke from upon our necks and bring us upright to our land. May the Merciful One send us multiple blessing, to this home and upon this table upon which we have eaten. May the Merciful One send us Eliyahu the prophet - may he be remembered for good - and he shall announce to us tidings of good, of salvation and of consolation. May the Merciful One bless my husband/my wife. May the Merciful One bless [my father, my teacher,] the master of this home and [my mother, my teacher,] the mistress of this home, they and their home and their offspring and everything that is theirs. Us and all that is ours; as were blessed Avraham, Yitschak and Ya'akov, in everything, from everything, with everything, so too should He bless us, all of us together, with a complete blessing and we shall say, Amen. From above, may they advocate upon them and upon us merit, that should protect us in peace; and may we carry a blessing from the Lord and charity from the God of our salvation; and find grace and good understanding in the eyes of God and man. [On Shabbat, we say: May the Merciful One give us to inherit the day that will be completely Shabbat and rest in everlasting life.] May the Merciful One give us to inherit the day that will be all good. [The day that is all long, the day that the righteous will sit and their crowns will be on their heads and they will enjoy the radiance of the Divine presence and my our share be with them.] May the Merciful One give us merit for the times of the messiah and for life in the world to come. A tower of salvations is our King; may He do kindness with his messiah, with David and his offspring, forever (II Samuel 22:51). The One who makes peace above, may He make peace upon us and upon all of Israel; and say, Amen. Fear the Lord, His holy ones, since there is no lacking for those that fear Him. Young lions may go without and hunger, but those that seek the Lord will not lack any good thing (Psalms 34:10-11). Thank the Lord, since He is good, since His kindness is forever (Psalms 118:1). You open Your hand and satisfy the will of all living things (Psalms 146:16). Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord and the Lord is his security (Jeremiah 17:7). I was a youth and I have also aged and I have not seen a righteous man forsaken and his offspring seeking bread (Psalms 37:25). The Lord will give courage to His people. The Lord will bless His people with peace (Psalms 29:11).

Third Cup of Wine

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

וְשׁוֹתִים בְּהִסְבִּיבָה וְאֵינוּ מְבָרְכִים בְּרַכָּה אַחֲרֵיכֶם.

We drink while reclining and do not say a blessing afterwards.

To be on my side

To be on my side,
A blessing, indeed.
I don't see you,
I don't hear you,
But I know you're there.
Looking out.
Always?!
I don't know why, and I
stop myself from asking.
I lean in. I appreciate.
I feel the comfort.
The safety.
I thank you.
I pour a glass and open
my door.
Please join us, Elijah!
This glass is for you!



Discussion questions:

Do you believe
there's someone
looking out for you?

What does it feel like
to believe in someone
or something you
cannot see?

What can you let go
of when you feel
someone/thing is
watching out for you?

By: Soreh Ruffman

Elijah the Prophet: To Be On My Side by Soreh Ruffman

Pour Out Thy Wrath

נִשְׁפֹךְ חֲמַתְךָ

מוזגים כוס של אליהו ופותחים את הדלת:
We pour the cup of Eliyahu and open the door.

שִׁפֹךְ חֲמַתְךָ אֶל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדְעוּךָ וְעַל־מַמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ לֹא קָרְאוּ. כִּי אָכַל אֶת־נֹוֹהוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם.
שִׁפֹךְ־עָלֵיהֶם זַעַמְךָ וְחֲרוֹן אַפֶּךָ יִשְׁיגֵם. תִּרְדֹּף בָּאָף וְתִשְׁמִידֵם מִתַּחַת שָׁמַי ה'.

Pour your wrath upon the nations that did not know You and upon the kingdoms that did not call upon Your Name! Since they have consumed Ya'akov and laid waste his habitation (Psalms 79:6-7).

Pour out Your fury upon them and the fierceness of Your anger shall reach them (Psalms 69:25)!

You shall pursue them with anger and eradicate them from under the skies of the Lord
(Lamentations 3:66).

Shfoch Chamat'cha -commentary

William Hamilton

“Pour out Your wrath on the nations who do not recognize You and upon the Kingdoms who do not know Your Name. For they have consumed Jacob and laid waste to his habitation. Pour out Your fury upon them and let Your burning anger overtake them. Pursue them with anger and let them be annihilated from under the skies of the Lord.” (Ps. 79:6,7; Ps 69:25; Lam 3:66).

It's often the most jolting passage of the Seder. Maybe it should be. Vengeance can be reckless. Alas, when it is, it can make you as bad or worse than your enemy. If it does, then your enemy has defeated you.

But vengeance also has a place. Because, when contained and meticulously disciplined, it keeps faith with commitments, particularly with the consequences for their violation. When those committing acts of savage cruelty tease joy, a conversation about divine retribution has a place at the Seder. To be clear, it's hardly the centerpiece. But, passing over the subject altogether might risk rewriting our history.

Historically, we asked it from God. Today, when we possess the capacity to bring it about, we need to continue to discipline that capacity as Israel's Security Forces rigorously do.

A final thought to consider in your conversation on this uneasy subject. I recently read a poignant account from an Auschwitz Sonderkommando that reminded me that the words “May those who despoil you be despoiled” (7th paragraph of Lecha Dodi) are enwrapped in Kabbalat Shabbat's central prayer. But the wrapping is so decorative, I'd barely noticed this sentiment before. Also, each weeknight, we introduce the Evening Service with a counter-voice that is much more dominant in the grammar of our theology:

“God is compassionate. God forgives iniquity and does not destroy. God suppresses His anger, not rousing His full wrath. Save us Lord our Sovereign, answer us on the day we call.”

Vengeance is far from an Essential Attribute. Still, perhaps the most jolting passages can become the most telling.

Hallel

הלל

מוזגין כוס רביעי וגומרין עליו את ההלל
We pour the fourth cup and complete the Hallel

לא לנו, ה', לא לנו, כי לשמך תן כבוד, על חסדך על אמתך. למה יאמרו הגוים איה נא אלהיהם. ואלהינו בשמים, כל אשר חפץ עשה. עצביהם כסף וזהב מעשה ידי אדם. פה להם ולא ידברו, עינים להם ולא יראו. אזנים להם ולא ישמעו, אף להם ולא יריחו. ידיהם ולא ימישו, רגליהם ולא יהלכו, לא ינהו בגרונם. כמוהם יהיו עשיהם, כל אשר בטח בהם. ישראל בטח ביי, עזרם ומגנם הוא. בית אהרן בטחו ביי, עזרם ומגנם הוא. יראי ה' בטחו ביי, עזרם ומגנם הוא.

יי זכרנו יברך. יברך את בית ישראל, יברך את בית אהרן, יברך יראי ה', הקטנים עם הגדלים. יסף ה' עליכם, עליכם ועל בניכם. ברוכים אתם ליי, עשה שמים וארץ. השמים שמים ליי והארץ נתן לבני אדם. לא המיתים יהללו יה ולא כל ירדי דומה. ואנחנו נברך יה מעתה ועד עולם. הללויה.

Not to us, not to us, but rather to Your name, give glory for your kindness and for your truth. Why should the nations say, "Say, where is their God?" But our God is in the heavens, all that He wanted, He has done. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have a mouth but do not speak; they have eyes but do not see. They have ears but do not hear; they have a nose but do not smell.

Hands, but they do not feel; feet, but do not walk; they do not make a peep from their throat. Like them will be their makers, all those that trust in them. Israel, trust in the Lord; their help and shield is He. House of Aharon, trust in the Lord; their help and shield is He. Those that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; their help and shield is He. The Lord who remembers us, will bless; He will bless the House of Israel; He will bless the House of Aharon. He will bless those that fear the Lord, the small ones with the great ones. May the Lord bring increase to you, to you and to your children. Blessed are you to the Lord, the maker of the heavens and the earth. The heavens, are the Lord's heavens, but the earth He has given to the children of man. It is not the dead that will praise the Lord, and not those that go down to silence. But we will bless the Lord from now and forever. Halleluyah! (Psalms 115)

אהבתי כי ישמע ה' את קולי ותחנוני. כי הטה אזנו לי ובימי אקרא. אפפוני חבלי מות ומצרי שאול מצאוני, צרה ויגון אמצא. ובשם ה' אקרא: אגא ה' מלטה נפשי. חנון ה' וצדיק, ואלהינו מרחם. שמר פתאים ה', דלותי ולי יהושיע. שובי נפשי למנוחתי, כי ה' גמל עלי. כי חלצת נפשי ממוות, את עיני מן דמעה, את רגלי מדחי. אתה לוף לפני ה' בארצות החיים. האמנתי כי אדבר, אני עניתי מאד. אני אמרתי בחפזי כל האדם כזב.

I have loved the Lord - since He hears my voice, my supplications. Since He inclined His ear to me - and in my days, I will call out. The pangs of death have encircled me and the straits of the Pit have found me and I found grief. And in the name of the Lord I called, "Please Lord, Spare my soul." Gracious is the Lord and righteous, and our God acts mercifully. The Lord watches over the silly; I was poor and He has saved me. Return, my soul to your tranquility, since the Lord has favored you. Since You have rescued my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. I will walk before the Lord in the lands of the living. I have trusted, when I speak - I am very afflicted. I said in my haste, all men are hypocritical. (Psalms 116:1-11)

מה אָשיב לִי כָּל תַּגְמוּלוֹהִי עָלַי. כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא וּבָשֶׁם ה' אֶקְרָא. נִדְרֵי לִי אֲשַׁלֵּם נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ. יִקָּר בְּעֵינַי ה' הַמּוֹתָה לַחֲסִידָיו. אָנָּה ה' כִּי אֲנִי עֲבָדְךָ, אֲנִי עֲבָדְךָ בֶּן אֲמָתְךָ, פִּתְחָתָ לְמוֹסְרִי. לֹךְ אֲזַבַּח זִבְח תּוֹדָה וּבָשֶׁם ה' אֶקְרָא. נִדְרֵי לִי אֲשַׁלֵּם נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ. בְּחִצְרוֹת בֵּית ה', בְּתוֹכֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם. הַלְלוּיָהּ.

What can I give back to the Lord for all that He has favored me? A cup of salvations I will raise up and I will call out in the name of the Lord. My vows to the Lord I will pay, now in front of His entire people. Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of His pious ones. Please Lord, since I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have opened my chains. To You will I offer a thanksgiving offering and I will call out in the name of the Lord. My vows to the Lord I will pay, now in front of His entire people. In the courtyards of the house of the Lord, in your midst, Jerusalem. Halleluyah! (Psalms 116:12-19)

הַלְלוּ אֶת ה' כָּל גּוֹיִם, שִׁבְחוּהוּ כָּל הָאֻמִּים. כִּי גִבֹּר עָלֵינוּ חֶסֶדוֹ, וְאַמֶּת ה' לְעוֹלָם. הַלְלוּיָהּ. הוֹדוּ לִי כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ. יֹאמְרוּ נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ. יֹאמְרוּ נָא בֵּית אַהֲרֹן כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ. יֹאמְרוּ נָא יִרְאִי ה' כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ.

Praise the name of the Lord, all nations; extol Him all peoples. Since His kindness has overwhelmed us and the truth of the Lord is forever. Halleluyah! Thank the Lord, since He is good, since His kindness is forever. Let Israel now say, "Thank the Lord, since He is good, since His kindness is forever." Let the House of Aharon now say, "Thank the Lord, since He is good, since His kindness is forever." Let those that fear the Lord now say, "Thank the Lord, since He is good, since His kindness is forever." (Psalms 117-118:4)

מִן הַמִּצָּר קָרָאתִי יְהוָה, עֲנֵנִי בְּמִרְחַב יְהוָה. ה' לִי, לֹא אִירָא – מֶה יַעֲשֶׂה לִּי אָדָם, ה' לִי בְּעִזָּרִי וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בְּשֹׁנְאִי. טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בִּי מִבֶּטֶח בְּאָדָם. טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בִּי מִבֶּטֶח בְּנִדְיָבִים. כָּל גּוֹיִם סָבְבוּנִי, בָּשֶׁם ה' כִּי אֲמִילֵם. סְבוּנִי גַם סָבְבוּנִי, בָּשֶׁם ה' כִּי אֲמִילֵם. סְבוּנִי כְּדִבְרִים, דַּעְכוּ כְּאֵשׁ קוֹצִים, בָּשֶׁם ה' כִּי אֲמִילֵם. דָּחָה דְּחִיתָנִי לְנֶפֶל, וַיִּי עֲזָרָנִי. עֲזִי וְזִמְרָת יְהוָה לִי לִישׁוּעָה. קוֹל רִנָּה וִישׁוּעָה בְּאֶהְלִי צִדִּיקִים: יָמִין ה' עֲשֵׂה חֵיל, יָמִין ה' רֹמְמָהּ, יָמִין ה' עֲשֵׂה חֵיל. לֹא אָמוּת כִּי אֶחֱיָהּ, וְאַסְפֵּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה. יִסֹּר יִסְרֵנִי יְהוָה, וְלִמּוֹת לֹא נִתְּנָנִי. פָּתַחוּ לִי שַׁעֲרֵי צֶדֶק, אֲבֹא בָם, אוֹדֶה יְהוָה. זֶה הַשַּׁעַר לִי, צִדִּיקִים יָבֹאוּ בּוֹ.

From the strait I have called, Lord; He answered me from the wide space, the Lord. The Lord is for me, I will not fear, what will man do to me? The Lord is for me with my helpers, and I shall glare at those that hate me. It is better to take refuge with the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge with the Lord than to trust in nobles. All the nations surrounded me - in the name of the Lord, as I will chop them off. They surrounded me, they also encircled me - in the name of the Lord, as I will chop them off. They surrounded me like bees, they were extinguished like a fire of thorns - in the name of the Lord, as I will chop them off. You have surely pushed me to fall, but the Lord helped me. My boldness and song is the Lord, and He has become my salvation. The sound of happy song and salvation is in the tents of the righteous, the right hand of the Lord acts powerfully. I will not die but rather I will live and tell over the acts of the Lord. The Lord has surely chastised me, but He has not given me over to death. Open up for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter them, thank the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous will enter it. (Psalms 118:5-20)



Min HaMetzar: From The Depths I Called to God. Jay Smith

אוֹדֶה כִּי עָנִיתָנִי וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. אוֹדֶה כִּי עָנִיתָנִי וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. אָבֵן מֵאֲסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פֶּנֶה. אָבֵן מֵאֲסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פֶּנֶה. מֵאֵת ה' הִיְתָה זֹאת הַיָּא נִפְלְאוֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ. זֶה הַיּוֹם עֲשֵׂה ה'. נְגִילָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בּוֹ. נְגִילָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בּוֹ.

I will thank You, since You answered me and You have become my salvation. The stone that was left by the builders has become the main cornerstone. From the Lord was this, it is wondrous in our eyes. This is the day of the Lord, let us exult and rejoice upon it. (Psalms 118:21-24)

אָנָּה ה', הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא. אָנָּה ה', הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא. אָנָּה ה', הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא.
Please, Lord, save us now; please, Lord, give us success now! (Psalms 118:25)

בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם ה', בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם ה', בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם ה'. אֵל ה' וַיָּאֵר לָנוּ. אֵסְרוּ חַג בַּעֲבָתִים עַד קִרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. אֵל ה' וַיָּאֵר לָנוּ. אֵסְרוּ חַג בַּעֲבָתִים עַד קִרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. אֵלֵי אַתָּה וְאוֹדֶךָ, אֱלֹהֵי – אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ. אֵלֵי אַתָּה וְאוֹדֶךָ, אֱלֹהֵי – אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ. הוֹדוּ לִי כִי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. הוֹדוּ לִי כִי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ.

Blessed be the one who comes in the name of the Lord, we have blessed you from the house of the Lord. God is the Lord, and He has illuminated us; tie up the festival offering with ropes until it reaches the corners of the altar. You are my Power and I will Thank You; my God and I will exalt You. Thank the Lord, since He is good, since His kindness is forever. (Psalms 118:26-29)

יְהַלְלוּהָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיָהּ, וְחֲסִידֶיהָ צְדִיקִים עוֹשֵׂי רְצוֹנָהּ, וְכָל עַמָּךְ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרָנָה יוֹדוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ, וַיִּשְׁבְּחוּ וַיִּפְאֲרוּ, וַיְרוֹמְמוּ וַיַּעֲרִיצוּ, וַיְקַדִּישׁוּ וַיְמַלִּיכוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ, מִלְכָּנוּ. כִּי לֹךְ טוֹב לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְשַׁמֵּךְ נָאָה לְזִמְרָה, כִּי מַעֲוֹלָם וְעַד עוֹלָם אַתָּה אֵל.

All of your works shall praise You, Lord our God, and your pious ones, the righteous ones who do Your will; and all of Your people, the House of Israel will thank and bless in joyful song; and extol and glorify, and exalt and acclaim, and sanctify and coronate Your name, our King. Since, You it is good to thank, and to Your name it is pleasant to sing, since from always and forever are you the Power.

Songs of Praise and Thanks

הוֹדוּ לִי כִי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. הוֹדוּ לְאֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. הוֹדוּ לְאֱדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. לַעֲשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת לְבָדוֹ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. לַעֲשֵׂה הַשְׁמִים בְּתַבּוּנָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. לְרוֹקַע הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. לַעֲשֵׂה אוֹרִים גְּדֹלִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. אֶת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְמַמְשָׁלַת בַּיּוֹם כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. אֶת הַיָּרֵחַ וְכּוֹכָבִים לְמַמְשָׁלוֹת בַּלַּיְלָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. לְמַכָּה מִצְרִים בְּבִכּוּרֵיהֶם כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. וַיּוֹצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֹרֹעַ נְטוּיָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. לְגִזֹּר יָם סוּף לְגִזְרִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. וַהֲעֵבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹכּוֹ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. וְנָעַר פְּרָעָה וַחֲמִילוֹ בַּיָּם סוּף כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. לְמוֹלִיךְ עַמּוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. לְמַכָּה מְלָכִים גְּדֹלִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. וַיַּהֲרֹג מְלָכִים אֲדִירִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. לְסִיחוֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֲמֹרִי כִי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. וּלְעֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. וְנָתַן אֶרֶץ לְנַחֲלָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. נַחֲלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדוֹ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. שִׁבְשֵׁפְלָנוּ זָכָר לָנוּ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. וַיַּפְרִקֵנוּ מִצְרֵינוּ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. נָתַן לָחֶם לְכָל בָּשָׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ. הוֹדוּ לְאֵל הַשְּׁמַיִם כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ.

Thank the Lord, since He is good, since His kindness is forever. Thank the Power of powers since His kindness is forever. To the Master of masters, since His kindness is forever. To the One who alone

does wondrously great deeds, since His kindness is forever. To the one who made the Heavens with discernment, since His kindness is forever. To the One who spread the earth over the waters, since His kindness is forever. To the One who made great lights, since His kindness is forever. The sun to rule in the day, since His kindness is forever. The moon and the stars to rule in the night, since His kindness is forever. To the One that smote Egypt through their firstborn, since His kindness is forever. And He took Israel out from among them, since His kindness is forever. With a strong hand and an outstretched forearm, since His kindness is forever. To the One who cut up the Reed Sea into strips, since His kindness is forever. And He made Israel to pass through it, since His kindness is forever. And He jolted Pharaoh and his troop in the Reed Sea, since His kindness is forever. To the One who led his people in the wilderness, since His kindness is forever. To the One who smote great kings, since His kindness is forever. And he killed mighty kings, since His kindness is forever. Sichon, king of the Amorite, since His kindness is forever. And Og, king of the Bashan, since His kindness is forever. And he gave their land as an inheritance, since His kindness is forever. An inheritance for Israel, His servant, since His kindness is forever. That in our lowliness, He remembered us, since His kindness is forever. And he delivered us from our adversaries, since His kindness is forever. He gives bread to all flesh, since His kindness is forever. Thank the Power of the heavens, since His kindness is forever.

(Psalms 136)



Photo by Lisa Berman



This is the Day That God Has Made. Let us Celebrate Together- Ellen Foust

נְשַׁמַּת כָּל חַי תְּבָרֵךְ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְרוּחַ כָּל בֶּשָׂר תִּפְאַר וּתְרוֹמָם זָכְרֶךָ, מְלַכְנוּ, תְּמִיד. מִן הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם אֶתָּה אֵל, וּמִבְּלַעֲדֶיךָ אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ גּוֹאֵל וּמוֹשִׁיעַ, פּוֹדֶה וּמַצִּיל וּמַפְרִיֵּס וּמַרְחֵם בְּכָל עֵת צָרָה וְצוּקָה. אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֵלָּא אַתָּה. אֱלֹהֵי הָרָאשׁוֹנִים וְהָאַחֲרוֹנִים, אֱלֹהֵי כָל בְּרִיּוֹת, אֲדוֹן כָּל תּוֹלְדוֹת, הַמְהַלֵּל בְּרַב הַתִּשְׁבָּחוֹת, הַמְנַהֵג עוֹלָמוֹ בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרִיּוּתוֹ בְּרַחֲמִים. וְיִי לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן – הַמַּעֲרֹרֵר יְשָׁנִים וְהַמְקִיץ נֹרְדָּמִים, וְהַמְשִׁיחַ אֲלֵמִים וְהַמְתִּיר אֲסוּרִים וְהַסּוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים וְהַזּוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים. לֵךְ לְבַדְּךָ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים.

The soul of every living being shall bless Your Name, Lord our God; the spirit of all flesh shall glorify and exalt Your remembrance always, our King. From the world and until the world, You are the Power, and other than You we have no king, redeemer, or savior, restorer, rescuer, provider, and merciful one in every time of distress and anguish; we have no king, besides You! God of the first ones and the last ones, God of all creatures, Master of all Generations, Who is praised through a multitude of praises, Who guides His world with kindness and His creatures with mercy. The Lord neither slumbers nor sleeps. He who rouses the sleepers and awakens the dozers; He who makes the mute speak, and frees the captives, and supports the falling, and straightens the bent. We thank You alone.

אֵלֹינוּ פִּינוּ מֶלֶךְ שִׁירָה כִּים, וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רָנָה בְּהִמּוֹן גָּלִיו, וְשִׁפְתוֹתֵינוּ שָׁבַח כְּמֶרְחֵבִי רִקִּיעַ, וְעֵינֵינוּ מְאִירוֹת כְּשֶׁמֶשׁ וְכִכָּר, וְיָדֵינוּ פְּרוֹשׁוֹת כְּנִשְׂרֵי שָׁמַיִם, וְרַגְלֵינוּ קְלוֹת כְּאַיִלוֹת – אֵין אֲנַחְנוּ מְסַפִּיקִים לַהֲדוֹת לָךְ, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֵּהֵינוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וּלְבָרְךָ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ עַל אַחַת מְאֹלָךְ, אֲלֵפֵי אֲלָפִים וְרַבִּי רַבּוֹת פְּעָמִים הַטּוֹבוֹת שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ עִם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְעִמָּנוּ. מִמַּצָּרִים גָּאֵלְתָּנוּ, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וּמִבֵּית עֲבָדִים פָּדִיתָנוּ, בְּרָעַב זָנַתָּנוּ וּבִשְׁבַע כָּלְכַלְתָּנוּ, מִחֶרֶב הִצַּלְתָּנוּ וּמִדָּבָר מְלֻטָּתָנוּ, וּמִחֲלִים רָעִים וּנְאֻמָּנִים דָּלִיתָנוּ.

Were our mouth as full of song as the sea, and our tongue as full of joyous song as its multitude of waves, and our lips as full of praise as the breadth of the heavens, and our eyes as sparkling as the sun and the moon, and our hands as outspread as the eagles of the sky and our feet as swift as deers - we still could not thank You sufficiently, Lord our God and God of our ancestors, and to bless Your Name for one thousandth of the thousand of thousands of thousands, and myriad myriads, of goodnesses that You performed for our ancestors and for us. From Egypt, Lord our God, did you redeem us and from the house of slaves you restored us. In famine You nourished us, and in plenty you sustained us. From the sword you saved us, and from plague you spared us; and from severe and enduring diseases you delivered us.

עַד הֵנָּה עֲזָרוֹנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ וְלֹא עֲזָבוֹנוּ חֶסֶדֶיךָ, וְאַל תִּטְּשֵׁנוּ, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לִנְצַח. עַל כֵּן אֲבָרִים שֶׁפִּלְגֶּתָ בָּנוּ וְרוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה שֶׁנִּפְתַּח בְּאַפֵּינוּ וְלָשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר שִׁמַּתָּ בְּפִינוּ – הֵן הֵם יוֹדוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ וַיִּשְׁבְּחוּ וַיִּפְאֲרוּ וַיְרֻמְמוּ וַיַּעֲרִיצוּ וַיִּקְדִּישׁוּ וַיְמַלִּיכוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ מְלַכְנוּ. כִּי כָל פֶּה לֹךְ יוֹדָה, וְכָל לָשׁוֹן לֹךְ תִּשְׁבַּע, וְכָל בֶּרֶךְ לֹךְ תִּכְרַע, וְכָל קוֹמָה לִפְנֶיךָ תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, וְכָל לְבָבוֹת יִירְאוּךָ, וְכָל קֶרֶב וְכָלִיּוֹת יִזְמְרוּ לְשִׁמְךָ. כְּדָבָר שְׂכַתּוֹב, כָּל עֲצָמֹתַי תֹּאמְרֶנָּה, ה' מִי כְמוֹךָ מַצִּיל עָנִי מִחֶזֶק מִמָּנוּ וְעָנִי וְאַבְיוֹן מִגִּזְלוֹ. מִי יִדְמָה לָךְ וּמִי יִשְׁוֶה לָךְ וּמִי יַעֲרֹךְ לָךְ הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל, הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיוֹן, קִנְיָה שְׁמַיִם וְאָרֶץ. נִהְלַלְתָּ וְנִשְׁבַּחְתָּ וּנְפָאֲרָתָּ וּנְבָרַךְ אֶת שֵׁם קְדֻשָּׁךְ, כְּאֹמֶר: לְדָוָה בְּרַכִּי נִפְשִׁי אֶת ה' וְכָל קֶרֶבִי אֶת שֵׁם קְדֻשָּׁךְ. הָאֵל בְּתַעֲצוּמוֹת עֲזָךְ, הַגָּדוֹל בְּכָבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ, הַגִּבּוֹר לִנְצַח וְהַנּוֹרָא בְּנוֹרְאוּתֶיךָ, הַמְלִיךָ הַיּוֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא רֵם וְנִשְׂא. שׁוֹכֵן עַד מְרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ. וְכָתוּב: רָנְנוּ צִדִּיקִים בִּי, לַיְשָׁרִים נְאוּהָ תִּהְלֶה. בְּפִי יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּתְהַלֵּל, וּבִדְבָרֵי צִדִּיקִים תִּתְבָּרַךְ, וּבְלָשׁוֹן חֲסִידִים תִּתְרוֹמָם, וּבִקְרֹב קְדוּשִׁים תִּתְקַדֵּשׁ.

Until now Your mercy has helped us, and Your kindness has not forsaken us; and do not abandon us, Lord our God, forever. Therefore, the limbs that You set within us and the spirit and soul that You breathed into our nostrils, and the tongue that You placed in our mouth - verily, they shall thank and bless and praise and glorify, and exalt and revere, and sanctify and coronate Your name, our King. For every mouth shall offer thanks to You; and every tongue shall swear allegiance to You; and every

knee shall bend to You; and every upright one shall prostrate himself before You; all hearts shall fear You; and all innermost feelings and thoughts shall sing praises to Your name, as the matter is written (Psalms 35:10), "All my bones shall say, 'Lord, who is like You? You save the poor man from one who is stronger than he, the poor and destitute from the one who would rob him.'" Who is similar to You and who is equal to You and who can be compared to You, O great, strong and awesome Power, O highest Power, Creator of the heavens and the earth. We shall praise and extol and glorify and bless Your holy name, as it is stated (Psalms 103:1), "[A Psalm] of David. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, His holy name." The Power, in Your powerful boldness; the Great, in the glory of Your name; the Strong One forever; the King who sits on His high and elevated throne. He who dwells always; lofty and holy is His name. And as it is written (Psalms 33:10), "Sing joyfully to the Lord, righteous ones, praise is beautiful from the upright." By the mouth of the upright You shall be praised; By the lips of the righteous shall You be blessed; By the tongue of the devout shall You be exalted; And among the holy shall You be sanctified.

ובמקהלות רבבות עמך בית ישראל ברנה יתפאר שמך, מלכנו, בכל דור ודור, שכן חובת כל היצורים לפניך, ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, להודות להלל לשבח, לפאר לרומם להדר לברך, לעלה ולקלס על כל דברי שירות ותשבחות דוד בן ישי עבדך משיחך.

And in the assemblies of the myriads of Your people, the House of Israel, in joyous song will Your name be glorified, our King, in each and every generation; as it is the duty of all creatures, before You, Lord our God, and God of our ancestors, to thank, to praise, to extol, to glorify, to exalt, to lavish, to bless, to raise high and to acclaim - beyond the words of the songs and praises of David, the son of Yishai, Your servant, Your anointed one.

ישתבח שמך לעד מלכנו, האל המלך הגדול והקדוש בשמים ובארץ, כי לך נא, ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, שיר ושבחה, הילל וזמרה, עז וממשלה, נצח, גדלה וגבורה, תהלה ותפארת, קדשה ומלכות, ברכות והודאות מעתה ועד עולם. ברוך אתה ה', אל מלך גדול בתשבחות, אל ההודאות, אדון הנפלאות, הבוחר בשירי זמרה, מלך אל חי העולמים.

May Your name be praised forever, our King, the Power, the Great and holy King - in the heavens and in the earth. Since for You it is pleasant - O Lord our God and God of our ancestors - song and lauding, praise and hymn, boldness and dominion, triumph, greatness and strength, psalm and splendor, holiness and kingship, blessings and thanksgivings, from now and forever. Blessed are You Lord, Power, King exalted through laudings, Power of thanksgivings, Master of Wonders, who chooses the songs of hymn - King, Power of the life of the worlds.

Hallel, Fourth Cup of Wine

ברוך אתה ה', אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

ושותה בהסיבת שמאל.

We drink while reclining to the left

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, על הגפן ועל פרי הגפן, על תנובת השדה ועל ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה שרצית והנחלת לאבותינו לאכול מפריה ולשבע מטובה. רחם נא ה' אלהינו על ישראל עמו ועל ירושלים עירך ועל ציון משכן כבודך ועל מזבחך ועל היכלך ובנה ירושלים עיר הקדש במהרה בימינו והעלנו לתוכה ושמחנו בבנינה ונאכל מפריה ונשבע מטובה ונברכה עליה בקדשה ובטהרה [בשבת: ורצה והחליצנו ביום השבת הזה] ושמחנו ביום חג המצות הזה, כי אתה ה' טוב ומטיב לכל, ונודה לך על הארץ ועל פרי הגפן.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, for the vine and for the fruit of the vine; and for the bounty of the field; and for a desirable, good and broad land, which You wanted to give to our fathers, to eat from its fruit and to be satiated from its goodness. Please have mercy, Lord our God upon Israel Your people; and upon Jerusalem, Your city; and upon Zion, the dwelling place of Your glory; and upon Your altar; and upon Your sanctuary; and build Jerusalem Your holy city quickly in our days, and bring us up into it and gladden us in its building; and we shall eat from its fruit, and be satiated from its goodness, and bless You in holiness and purity. [On Shabbat: And may you be pleased to embolden us on this Shabbat day] and gladden us on this day of the Festival of Matzot. Since You, Lord, are good and do good to all, we thank You for the land and for the fruit of the vine.

ברוך אתה ה', על הארץ ועל פרי הגפן.

Blessed are You, Lord, for the land and for the fruit of the vine



Grapes by Leann Shamash

Chasal Siddur Pesach

נִרְצָה

חֲסַל סִדּוּר פֶּסַח כְּהִלְכָתוֹ, כְּכֹל מִשְׁפָּטוֹ וְחֻקָּתוֹ. כַּאֲשֶׁר זָכִינוּ לְסִדֵּר אוֹתוֹ בֶּן נִזְכָּה לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ. זָךְ שׁוֹכֵן מְעוֹנָה, קוֹמֵם קֹהֵל עֵדֶת מִי מָנָה. בְּקֶרֶב נִהַל נִסְעֵי כִנָּה פְּדוּיִם לְצִיּוֹן בְּרָנָה.

Completed is the Seder of Pesach according to its law, according to all its judgement and statute. Just as we have merited to arrange it, so too, may we merit to do [its sacrifice]. Pure One who dwells in the habitation, raise up the congregation of the community, which whom can count. Bring close, lead the plantings of the sapling, redeemed, to Zion in joy.

L'Shana HaBaa

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם הַבְּנוּיָה.

Next year, let us be in the built Jerusalem!

“Next Year in Jerusalem!”

Dov Lerea

Rabbi Joseph ben Samuel Bonfils (Tov Elem), 11th century France, wrote *Qerovot* for the *Amidah* as well as *Yotserot*, liturgical poems inserted into the morning service. He composed a *Yotser* for Shabbat haGadol called, *El Elohe haRuchot*, “God, the god of all spirits.” That *Yotser* ends with what has, since the 14th century, been incorporated into most Haggadot in Ashkenazic traditions: *Hasal siddur Pesach*. Here are those words:

1. חסל סדור פסח כהלכתו, בכל משפטו וחקתו.
2. כאשר זכינו לסדר אותו כן נזכה לעשותו.
3. זך שוכן מעונה, קומם קהל עדת מי מנה.
4. בקרוב נהל נטעי כנה פדוים לציון ברנה.

1. The order of the Pesach meal is concluded /
According to each detail with all of its laws and statues.
2. As we have merited to learn its order / So may we merit to realize it.
3. Oh Pure One Who Dwells in a high place /
Support Your people, countless in number. (Devarim 34:27)
4. May You soon guide the shoots of the saplings (see, Psalms 80:16) /
May they be redeemed joyfully in Zion. (Psalms 126)

The final, climactic line that appears in the Ashkenazic Haggadot was not part of that poem: לשנה הבאה לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה Next year, let us be in Jerusalem! What is the main theme of the poem that ends with the coda, *Hasal Siddur Pesach*? Why was the final line, “Next year in Jerusalem” inserted? And how can we understand the juxtaposition of these two textual layers?

Contrary to some commentaries, the words of *Hasal Siddur Pesach* do not mean, “Now that we have completed the seder, may we merit to offer the korban Pesach next year in Jerusalem.” Jerusalem is not part of these lines. In addition, Rabbi Joseph Bonfils’ poem was composed as a liturgical review of all of the halachot of the seder to be read on Shabbat haGadol, the Shabbat before Pesach. The first two lines, therefore, express every educator’s dream: now that we have reviewed all of the halachot, may we merit applying those laws to the seder properly so that our seder will be authentic to Torah tradition.

Rabbi Bonfils then concludes with a redemptive message in the final two lines. Pesach is the celebration of our physical and spiritual redemption. This means not only the release from slavery, but the ability to build our lives in God’s eternal presence. Bonfils recalls God’s promise that we would have countless offspring, and alludes to an image of God in the divine me’ona, a dwelling place on high. Perhaps more important than physical freedom is bridging the distance between us and God. We had been close, but now, in exile, Rabbi Joseph evokes the yearning for that closeness from an earlier moment in our relationship with God.

The words, “May You soon guide the shoots of the saplings,” echo the language of Psalms 80:16 and capture that yearning. In this chapter of Psalms, the poet describes the Jewish people metaphorically as a sapling and a vine that God, the divine Gardener, has chosen to neglect. The voice in these verses of Psalms 80 yearns for God to return. The wording in Psalms 80:16 is so close to the second to last line of Rabbi Bonfils’ poem, that I imagine he had that chapter in mind. I read his final line to mean, “So please replant us in the soil of Israel so that we can grow once again, nourished and close to You.”

The earliest reference to the line, “Next year in Jerusalem,” appears in a Yotser poem from the end of the 10th century by Rabbi Joseph ibn Avitur. (see, Shulamit Elitsur in Tarbitz, 71:-12, Tishrei-Adar) At some point later in the Middle Ages, the line was appended both to the end of the Pesach seder and to the prayers at the conclusion of Yom Kippur.

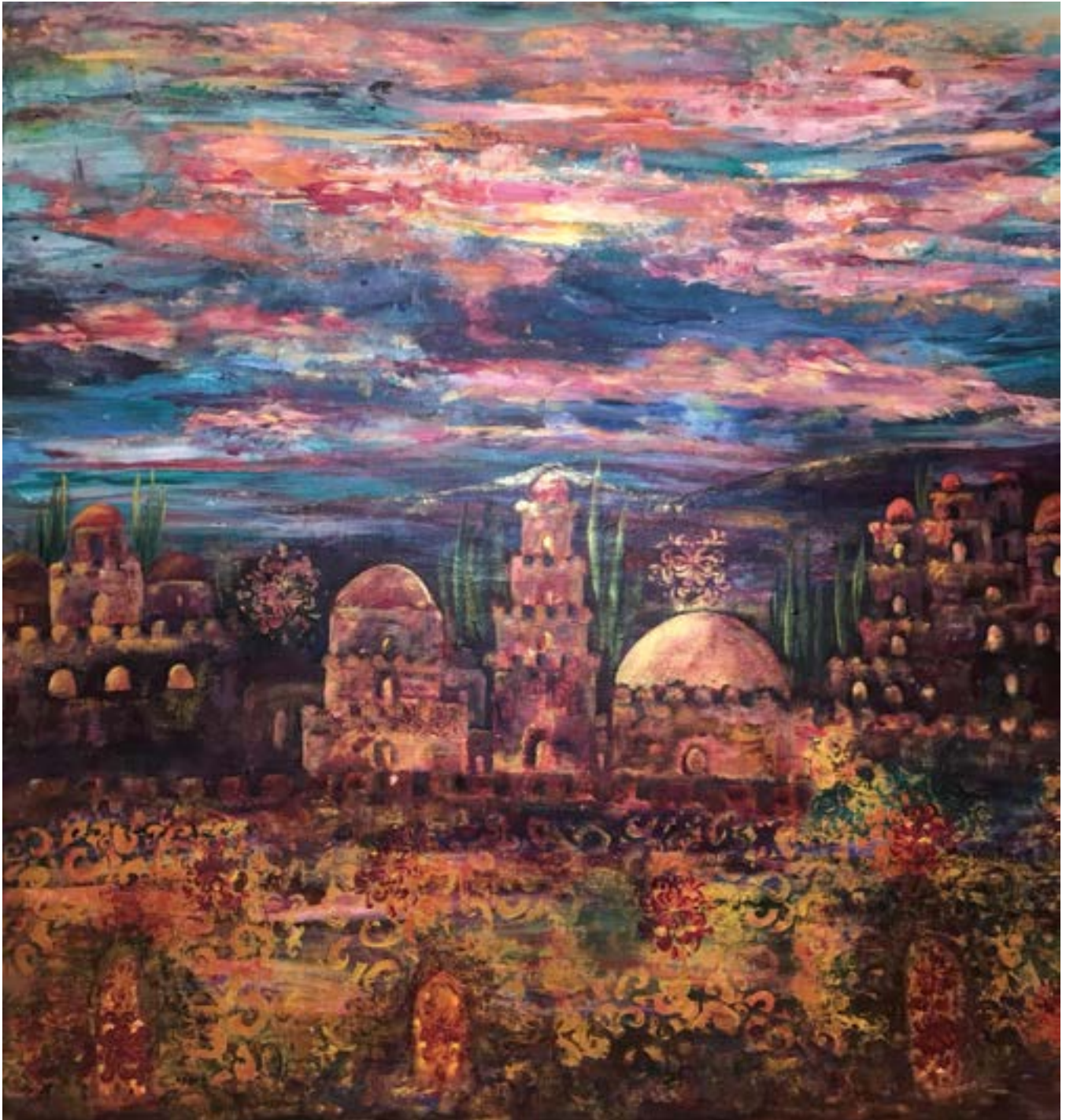
Recalling Jerusalem, meaning, the rebuilding of the Beit haMikdash, also expresses a redemptive yearning for living in God’s presence. According to some opinions, referencing Jerusalem after Pesach and Yom kippur echoes the Talmudic dispute between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua over when the Jewish people will be redeemed and the world thereby perfected:

It is taught: Rabbi Eliezer says: In Tishrei the world was created; in Tishrei the Patriarchs were born; in Tishrei the Patriarchs died;... on Rosh HaShana Sarah, Rachel, and Hannah were remembered by God and conceived; on Rosh HaShana Joseph came out from prison... Rabbi Yehoshua disagrees and says: In Nisan the world was created; in Nisan the Patriarchs were born; in Nisan the Patriarchs died; ... on Rosh HaShana Sarah, Rachel, and Hannah were remembered by God and conceived sons; on Rosh HaShana Joseph came out from prison; on Rosh HaShana our forefathers’ slavery in Egypt ceased; in Nisan the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt; and in Nisan in the future the Jewish people will be redeemed in the final redemption. (Talmud Bavli Rosh haShanah 10b-11a)

By recalling Jerusalem in both Tishrei and Nisan, we acknowledge both of these traditions of yearning for redemption. An additional perspective for reciting the words, “Next year in Jerusalem ” after the seder and at the conclusion of Yom Kippur has to do with our pilgrimages to God’s sanctuary. Yom Kippur ends three days before Sukkot; if we have not made the journey by then, our yearning remains unfulfilled. Similarly, Rabbi Bonfils’ poem was composed to be recited on Shabbat haGadol. If we have not made it to Jerusalem by then, we will have to yearn to make the journey next year.

I would add that although we fulfill spiritual yearnings in lived experiences, the yearning is always deeper than the reality. The way we see the world spiritually is nourished primarily by dreams and yearnings, rather than only physical presence. To me, I understand declaring, “Next year in Jerusalem” after the seder in light of Hasal siddur Pesach. We remain alienated from God’s presence. The world remains broken, filled with human cruelty, hatred, violence, and suffering. The Jewish people, and humanity at large, are like the neglected, cut vines of the language of Psalms 80. After a celebration of the freedoms of the past in the Haggadah, we immediately express our unfulfilled hope and yearning for a wholeness in the future. “Next year in Jerusalem” means, to me, “May we merit to be replanted and nourished in the soil of Your presence.”

This reading works well with the overarching structure of the seder, from opening to closing. Just as we opened the seder with Ha Lachma ‘Anyah, we close with “Next year in Jerusalem. The opening of the seder acknowledges human suffering, and the seder manifests a way to mitigate that suffering, by inviting victims to our table. Rabbi Akiva Eger and Rabbi Saul Lowenstam of Amsterdam (18th century) understand this imperative to include anyone who is suffering, Jew and non-Jew alike. By the end of the seder, we are left with that same yearning: will this year be any different? Will we be able to transform humanity, so that next year, our lives will become a sacred pilgrimage to God’s house? Our redemption, and the redemption of humanity as a whole, are in our hands.



Jerusalem by Ruthy Philosophe

And It Happened at Midnight

בליל ראשון אומרים:
On the first night we say:

ויבכו ויהי בחצי הלילה.

And so, it was in the middle of the night.

אז רוב נסים הפלאה בלילה, בראש אשמורת זה הלילה.

Then, most of the miracles did You wondrously do at night, at the first of the watches this night.

גר צדק נצחתו פנחלק לו לילה, ויהי בחצי הלילה.

A righteous convert did you make victorious when it was divided for him at night [referring to Avraham in his war against the four kings - Genesis 14:15], and it was in the middle of the night.

דנת מלך גרר בחלום הלילה, הפחדת ארמי באמש לילה.

You judged the king of Gerrar [Avimelekh] in a dream of the night; you frightened an Aramean [Lavan] in the dark of the night;

וישור ישראל למלאך ויוכל לו לילה, ויהי בחצי הלילה.

and Yisrael dominated an angel and was able to withstand Him at night [Genesis 32:25-30], and it was in the middle of the night.

זרע בכורי פתרוס מחצת בחצי הלילה, חילם לא מצאו בקומם בלילה, טיסת נגיד חרשת סלית בכוכבי לילה, ויהי בחצי הלילה.

You crushed the firstborn of Patros [Pharaoh, as per Ezekiel 30:14] in the middle of the night, their wealth they did not find when they got up at night; the attack of the leader Charoshet [Sisera] did you sweep away by the stars of the night [Judges 5:20], and it was in the middle of the night.

יעז מחרף לנופף אווי, הובשת פגריו בלילה, פרע בל ומצבו באישון לילה, לאיש חמודות נגלה רז חזות לילה, ויהי בחצי הלילה.

The blasphemer [Sanheriv whose servants blasphemed when trying to discourage the inhabitants of Jerusalem] counseled to wave off the desired ones, You made him wear his corpses on his head at night [II Kings 19:35]; Bel and his pedestal were bent in the pitch of night [in Nevuchadnezar's dream in Daniel 2]; to the man of delight [Daniel] was revealed the secret visions at night, and it was in the middle of the night.

משפת כר בכלי קדש נהרג בו בלילה, נושע מבור אריות פותר בעתותי לילה, שנאה נטר אגגי וכתב ספרים בלילה, ויהי בחצי הלילה.

The one who got drunk [Balshatsar] from the holy vessels was killed on that night [Daniel 5:30], the one saved from the pit of lions [Daniel] interpreted the scary visions of the night; hatred was preserved by the Agagite [Haman] and he wrote books at night, and it was in the middle of the night.

עוררת נצחך עליו בנגד שנת לילה. פורה תדרוך לשומר מה מלילה, צרח פשומר ושח אתא בקר וגם לילה, ויהי בחצי הלילה.

You aroused your victory upon him by disturbing the sleep of night [of Achashverosh], You will stomp the wine press for the one who guards from anything at night [Esav/Seir as per Isaiah 21:11]; He yelled like a guard and spoke, "the morning has come and also the night," and it was in the middle of the night.

קרוב יום אשר הוא לא יום ולא לילה, רם הודע כי לך היום אף לך הלילה, שומרים הפקד לעירך כל היום וכל הלילה, תאיר כאור יום חשבת לילה, ויהי בחצי הלילה.

Bring close the day which is not day and not night [referring to the end of days - Zechariah 14:7], High One, make known that Yours is the day and also Yours is the night, guards appoint for Your city all the day and all the night, illuminate like the light of the day, the darkness of the night, and it was in the middle of the night.

Zevach Pesach

כליל שני בחו"ל: ובכן ואמרתם זבח פסח.

On the second night, outside of Israel: And so "And you shall say, 'it is the Pesach sacrifice'" (Exodus 12:27).

אמץ גבורותיך הפלאות בפסח, בראש כל מועדות נשאת פסח. גלית לאזרחי חצות ליל פסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

The boldness of Your strong deeds did you wondrously show at Pesach; at the head of all the holidays did You raise Pesach; You revealed to the Ezrachite [Avraham], midnight of the night of Pesach. "And you shall say, 'it is the Pesach sacrifice.'"

דלתיו דפקת פחם היום בפסח, הסעיד נוצצים עגות מצות בפסח, ואל הבקר רץ זכר לשור ערף פסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

Upon his doors did You knock at the heat of the day on Pesach [Genesis 18:1]; he sustained shining ones [angels] with cakes of matzah on Pesach; and to the cattle he ran, in commemoration of the bull that was set up for Pesach. "And you shall say, 'it is the Pesach sacrifice.'"

זועמו סדומים ולוהטו באש בפסח, חלץ לוט מהם ומצות אפה בקץ פסח, טאטאת אדמת מוף ונוף בעברך בפסח. ואמרתם זבח פסח.

The Sodomites caused Him indignation and He set them on fire on Pesach; Lot was rescued from them and matzot did he bake at the end of Pesach; He swept the land of Mof and Nof [cities in Egypt] on Pesach. "And you shall say, 'it is the Pesach sacrifice.'"

יה ראש כל הון מחצת בליל שמור פסח, בביר, על בן בכור פסחת בדם פסח, לבלתי תת משחית לבא בפתיחי בפסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

The head of every firstborn did You crush on the guarded night of Pesach; Powerful One, over the firstborn son did You pass over with the blood on Pesach; so as to not let the destroyer come into my gates on Pesach. "And you shall say, 'it is the Pesach sacrifice.'"

מִסְגֶּרֶת סָגְרָה בְּעֵתוֹתַי פֶּסַח, נִשְׁמְדָה מְדִין בְּצִלְלִי שְׁעוֹרֵי עֶמֶר פֶּסַח, שׁוֹרְפוֹ מִשְׁמִנִּי פוֹל וְלוֹד בִּיקָד יְקוֹד פֶּסַח,
וְאָמַרְתֶּם זָבַח פֶּסַח.

The enclosed one [Jericho] was enclosed in the season of Pesach; Midian was destroyed with a portion of the omer-barley on Pesach [via Gideon as per Judges 7]; from the fat of Pul and Lud [Assyrian soldiers of Sancheriv] was burnt in pyres on Pesach. "And you shall say, 'it is the Pesach sacrifice'"

עוֹד הַיּוֹם בְּנֹב לַעֲמֹד עַד גָּעָה עוֹנֵת פֶּסַח, פֶּס יָד כְּתָבָה לְקַעֲקַע צוֹל בִּפְסַח, צָפָה הַצָּפִית עֲרוֹף הַשְּׁלֶחַן בִּפְסַח,
וְאָמַרְתֶּם זָבַח פֶּסַח.

Still today [Sancheriv will go no further than] to stand in Nov [Isaiah 10:32], until he cried at the time of Pesach; a palm of the hand wrote [Daniel 5:5] to rip up the deep one [the Bayblonian one - Balshatsar] on Pesach; set up the watch, set the table [referring to Balshatsar, based on Psalms 21:5] on Pesach. "And you shall say, 'it is the Pesach sacrifice'"

קָהַל כְּנָסָה הִדְסָה לְשִׁלֵּשׁ צוֹם בִּפְסַח, רֹאשׁ מִבֵּית רָשָׁע מִחֲצַתָּ בְּעֵץ חֲמִשִּׁים בִּפְסַח, שְׁתֵּי אֵלֶּה רָגַע תָּבִיא לְעוֹצִית בִּפְסַח, תַּעֲזֹ יָדְךָ תָּרוּם יְמִינְךָ כְּלִיל הַתְּקֻדָּשׁ חֵג פֶּסַח, וְאָמַרְתֶּם זָבַח פֶּסַח.

The congregation did Hadassah [Esther] bring in to triple a fast on Pesach; the head of the house of evil [Haman] did you crush on a tree of fifty [amot] on Pesach; these two [plagues as per Isaiah 47:9] will you bring in an instant to the Utsi [Esav] on Pesach; embolden Your hand, raise Your right hand, as on the night You were sanctified on the festival of Pesach. "And you shall say, 'it is the Pesach sacrifice'"

Ki Lo Na'e

כִּי לוֹ נָאָה, כִּי לוֹ יָאָה

Since for Him it is pleasant, for Him it is suited.

אֲדִיר בַּמְלוּכָה, בַּחֹר בְּהַלְכָּה, גְּדוּדָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ: לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ ה' הַמְּמַלְכָּה, כִּי לוֹ נָאָה, כִּי לוֹ יָאָה.
Mighty in rulership, properly chosen, his troops shall say to Him, "Yours and Yours, Yours since it is Yours, Yours and even Yours, Yours, Lord is the kingdom; since for Him it is pleasant, for Him it is suited."

דָּגוּל בַּמְלוּכָה, הַדוּר בְּהַלְכָּה, וְתִיקְיוֹ יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ: לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ ה' הַמְּמַלְכָּה, כִּי לוֹ נָאָה, כִּי לוֹ יָאָה.
Noted in rulership, properly splendid, His distinguished ones will say to him, "Yours and Yours, Yours since it is Yours, Yours and even Yours, Yours, Lord is the kingdom; since for Him it is pleasant, for Him it is suited."

יָכָאֵי בַּמְלוּכָה, חֲסִין בְּהַלְכָּה טַפְסָרָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ: לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ ה' הַמְּמַלְכָּה, כִּי לוֹ נָאָה, כִּי לוֹ יָאָה.
Meritorious in rulership, properly robust, His scribes shall say to him, "Yours and Yours, Yours since it is Yours, Yours and even Yours, Yours, Lord is the kingdom; since for Him it is pleasant, for Him it is suited."

יָחִיד בַּמְלוּכָה, כְּבִיר בְּהַלְכָּה לְמוֹדָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ: לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ ה' הַמְּמַלְכָּה, כִּי לוֹ נָאָה, כִּי לוֹ יָאָה.
Unique in rulership, properly powerful, His wise ones say to Him, "Yours and Yours, Yours since it is Yours, Yours and even Yours, Yours, Lord is the kingdom; since for Him it is pleasant, for Him it is suited."

מוֹשֵׁל בַּמְלוּכָה, נוֹרָא בְּהַלְכָּה סְבִיבָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ: לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ ה' הַמְּמַלְכָּה, כִּי לוֹ נָאָה, כִּי לוֹ יָאָה.
Reigning in rulership, properly awesome, those around Him say to Him, "Yours and Yours, Yours since it is Yours, Yours and even Yours, Yours, Lord is the kingdom; since for Him it is pleasant, for Him it is suited."

עֲנִין בַּמְלוּכָה, פּוֹדֶה בְּהַלְכָּה, צַדִּיקָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ: לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ ה' הַמְּמַלְכָּה, כִּי לוֹ נָאָה, כִּי לוֹ יָאָה.
Humble in rulership, properly restoring, His righteous ones say to Him, "Yours and Yours, Yours since it is Yours, Yours and even Yours, Yours, Lord is the kingdom; since for Him it is pleasant, for Him it is suited."

קָדוֹשׁ בַּמְלוּכָה, רַחוּם בְּהַלְכָּה שְׁנֵאֲנָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ: לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ ה' הַמְּמַלְכָּה, כִּי לוֹ נָאָה, כִּי לוֹ יָאָה.
Holy in rulership, properly merciful, His angels say to Him, "Yours and Yours, Yours since it is Yours, Yours and even Yours, Yours, Lord is the kingdom; since for Him it is pleasant, for Him it is suited."

תְּקִיף בַּמְלוּכָה, תּוֹמֵךְ בְּהַלְכָּה תְּמִימָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ: לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אַף לֵךְ, לֵךְ ה' הַמְּמַלְכָּה, כִּי לוֹ נָאָה, כִּי לוֹ יָאָה.
Dynamic in rulership, properly supportive, His innocent ones say to Him, "Yours and Yours, Yours since it is Yours, Yours and even Yours, Yours, Lord is the kingdom; since for Him it is pleasant, for Him it is suited."

Adir Hu

אָדיר הוּא

Adir Hu
Lisa Berman

It is getting late. It may already be late. The little ones are asleep. But we get a second, a third wind to sing Adir Hu. In its major key and with its upbeat feel, we perk up for a little bit longer, leaning in amidst its joyful familiarity.

There is an urgency to Adir Hu in its words and rhythm. We sing, “God, build*! God, build! Soon! Quickly! Quickly! And as we sing the litany of God’s virtues, we strike the table in tempo together, “Bachur hu, gadol hu, dagul hu...”—supreme is God, great is God, outstanding is God. We implore: God, we need you to create a sanctuary for your people—a place for them to come together in peace. We are under no illusion that it will be easy. But we remind ourselves how extraordinary you are, God; it helps us to have faith that it will happen.

There are 21 ways we describe God in Adir Hu. Some of the descriptors are, well, very God-like: exalted, faultless, sovereign, redeemer, almighty, holy. Others are quite human: faithful, unique, wise, compassionate.

What if, even at this late hour, we take a moment to think: what descriptors do we use for ourselves most often? We may not think of ourselves as exalted every day (nor should we, probably). But for right now, think of two or three descriptors for yourself. Not how someone else would describe you, but rather how you think of yourself—your core, your essence. Creative? Empathetic? Funny? Intellectual? Nurturing? Patient? Curious? Rambunctious? Scattered? Loyal?

Now, allow yourself to think of one attribute that you want to develop in this coming season of rebirth. Imagine yourself at the seder next year. What descriptor do you want to confidently own that is, perhaps, only nascent for you now?

And finally, what do you need to build to become that? Is it building in time during the day, the week, for learning, for creative pursuits, for volunteering? Is it building a space outside that will connect you to nature more easily? Is it building deeper relationships with one or two people? Change, especially deep change in ourselves, requires scaffolding, constructing—building—to happen. So start building. Quickly! Quickly!

*a reference to a plea to rebuild the Temple

אדיר הוא

אֲדִיר הוּא יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב. בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב. אֵל בָּנָה, אֵל בָּנָה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקֶרֶב.

Mighty is He, may He build His house soon. Quickly, quickly, in our days, soon. God build, God build, build Your house soon.

בְּחֹר הוּא, גָּדוֹל הוּא, דָּגוּל הוּא יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב. בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב. אֵל בָּנָה, אֵל בָּנָה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקֶרֶב.

Chosen is He, great is He, noted is He. Quickly, quickly, in our days, soon. God build, God build, build Your house soon.

הָדוּר הוּא, וְתֵיק הוּא, יָכֵאֵי הוּא יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב. בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב. אֵל בָּנָה, אֵל בָּנָה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקֶרֶב.

Splendid is He, distinguished is He, meritorious is He. Quickly, quickly, in our days, soon. God build, God build, build Your house soon.

חֲסִיד הוּא, טָהוֹר הוּא, יָחִיד הוּא יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב. בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב. אֵל בָּנָה, אֵל בָּנָה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקֶרֶב.

Pious is He, pure is He, unique is He. Quickly, quickly, in our days, soon. God build, God build, build Your house soon.

כְּבִיר הוּא, לָמוּד הוּא, מְלֹךְ הוּא יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב. בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב. אֵל בָּנָה, אֵל בָּנָה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקֶרֶב.

Powerful is He, wise is He, A king is He. Quickly, quickly, in our days, soon. God build, God build, build Your house soon.

נֹרָא הוּא, סָגִיב הוּא, עֲזוּז הוּא יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב. בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב. אֵל בָּנָה, אֵל בָּנָה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקֶרֶב.

Awesome is He, exalted is He, heroic is He. Quickly, quickly, in our days, soon. God build, God build, build Your house soon.

פוֹדֶה הוּא, צַדִּיק הוּא, קְדוֹשׁ הוּא יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב. בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב. אֵל בָּנָה, אֵל בָּנָה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקֶרֶב.

A restorer is He, righteous is He, holy is He. Quickly, quickly, in our days, soon. God build, God build, build Your house soon.

רַחוּם הוּא, שְׂדֵי הוּא, תְּקִיף הוּא יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב. בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב. אֵל בָּנָה, אֵל בָּנָה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקֶרֶב.

Merciful is He, the Omnipotent is He, dynamic is He. Quickly, quickly, in our days, soon. God build, God build, build Your house soon.

Sefirat HaOmer

סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר

ספירת העמר בחוץ לארץ, בליל שני של פסח:

*The counting of the omer outside of Israel on the **second** night of Pesach:*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
31 32 **33** 34 35 36 37 38 39
40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48
49

ברוך אתה ה', אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על ספירת העמר. היום יום אחד בעמר.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments
and has commanded us on the counting of the omer. Today is the **first** day of the omer.

Echad Mi Yodea

אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ

Counting Up

Keith Tornheim

Counting up
from one for the One
to His thirteen attributes,
and in between the enumeration
of our first ancestors,
the holy writings,
the days of the week and early life,
the months before birth,
the stars of a dream,
the tribes that became our people.
Numbers are important to us,
and so is this song,
sung yearly at the end of the seder—
perhaps a way of teaching
all the children how to count,
even the one too young to ask.

אחד מי יודע

אחד מי יודע? אחד אני יודע: אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שנים מי יודע? שנים אני יודע: שני לחות הברית. אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שלושה מי יודע? שלושה אני יודע: שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

ארבע מי יודע? ארבע אני יודע: ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

חמשה מי יודע? חמשה אני יודע: חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

ששה מי יודע? ששה אני יודע: ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שבעה מי יודע? שבעה אני יודע: שבעה ימי שבטא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שמונה מי יודע? שמונה אני יודע: שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבטא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

תשעה מי יודע? תשעה אני יודע: תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבטא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

עשרה מי יודע? עשרה אני יודע: עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבטא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

אחד עשר מי יודע? אחד עשר אני יודע: אחד עשר כוכביא, עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבטא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שנים עשר מי יודע? שנים עשר אני יודע: שנים עשר שבטיא, אחד עשר כוכביא, עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבטא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

שלושה עשר מי יודע? שלושה עשר אני יודע: שלושה עשר מדיא. שנים עשר שבטיא, אחד עשר כוכביא, עשרה דבריא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבטא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלושה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

Who knows one? I know one: One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Who knows two? I know two: two are the tablets of the covenant, One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Who knows three? I know three: three are the fathers, two are the tablets of the covenant, One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Who knows four? I know four: four are the mothers, three are the fathers, two are the tablets of the covenant, One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Who knows five? I know five: five are the books of the Torah, four are the mothers, three are the fathers, two are the tablets of the covenant, One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Who knows six? I know six: six are the orders of the Mishnah, five are the books of the Torah, four are the mothers, three are the fathers, two are the tablets of the covenant, One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Who knows seven? I know seven: seven are the days of the week, six are the orders of the Mishnah, five are the books of the Torah, four are the mothers, three are the fathers, two are the tablets of the covenant, One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Who knows eight? I know eight: eight are the days of circumcision, seven are the days of the week, six are the orders of the Mishnah, five are the books of the Torah, four are the mothers, three are the fathers, two are the tablets of the covenant, One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Who knows nine? I know nine: nine are the months of birth, eight are the days of circumcision, seven are the days of the week, six are the orders of the Mishnah, five are the books of the Torah, four are the mothers, three are the fathers, two are the tablets of the covenant, One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Who knows ten? I know ten: ten are the statements, nine are the months of birth, eight are the days of circumcision, seven are the days of the week, six are the orders of the Mishnah, five are the books of the Torah, four are the mothers, three are the fathers, two are the tablets of the covenant, One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Who knows eleven? I know eleven: eleven are the stars, ten are the statements, nine are the months of birth, eight are the days of circumcision, seven are the days of the week, six are the orders of the Mishnah, five are the books of the Torah, four are the mothers, three are the fathers, two are the tablets of the covenant, One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Who knows twelve? I know twelve: twelve are the tribes, eleven are the stars, ten are the statements, nine are the months of birth, eight are the days of circumcision, seven are the days of the week, six are the orders of the Mishnah, five are the books of the Torah, four are the mothers, three are the fathers, two are the tablets of the covenant, One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Who knows thirteen? I know thirteen: thirteen are the attributes, twelve are the tribes, eleven are the stars, ten are the statements, nine are the months of birth, eight are the days of circumcision, seven are the days of the week, six are the orders of the Mishnah, five are the books of the Torah, four are the mothers, three are the fathers, two are the tablets of the covenant, One is our God in the heavens and the earth.

Chad Gadya

חַד גָּדְיָא

חַד גָּדְיָא, חַד גָּדְיָא דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זַוְיָ. חַד גָּדְיָא, חַד גָּדְיָא.

One kid, one kid that my father bought for two zuz, one kid, one kid.

וְאַתָּא שׁוֹנֵרָא וְאָכְלָה לְגָדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זַוְיָ. חַד גָּדְיָא, חַד גָּדְיָא.

Then came a cat and ate the kid that my father bought for two zuz, one kid, one kid.

וְאַתָּא כִּלְבָּא וְנָשָׁף לְשׁוֹנֵרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגָדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זַוְיָ. חַד גָּדְיָא, חַד גָּדְיָא.

Then came a dog and bit the cat, that ate the kid that my father bought for two zuz, one kid, one kid.

וְאַתָּא חוּטְרָא וְהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא, דְּנָשָׁף לְשׁוֹנֵרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגָדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זַוְיָ. חַד גָּדְיָא, חַד גָּדְיָא.

Then came a stick and hit the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the kid that my father bought for two zuz, one kid, one kid.

וְאַתָּא נוֹרָא וְשָׂרָף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא, דְּנָשָׁף לְשׁוֹנֵרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגָדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זַוְיָ. חַד גָּדְיָא, חַד גָּדְיָא.

Then came fire and burnt the stick, that hit the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the kid that my father bought for two zuz, one kid, one kid.

וְאַתָּא מַיָּא וְכָבֵה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשָׂרָף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא, דְּנָשָׁף לְשׁוֹנֵרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגָדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זַוְיָ. חַד גָּדְיָא, חַד גָּדְיָא.

Then came water and extinguished the fire, that burnt the stick, that hit the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the kid that my father bought for two zuz, one kid, one kid.

וְאַתָּא תּוֹרָא וְשָׁתָה לְמַיָּא, דְּכָבֵה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשָׂרָף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא, דְּנָשָׁף לְשׁוֹנֵרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגָדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זַוְיָ. חַד גָּדְיָא, חַד גָּדְיָא.

Then came a bull and drank the water, that extinguished the fire, that burnt the stick, that hit the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the kid that my father bought for two zuz, one kid, one kid.

וְאַתָּא הַשׁוּחַט וְשָׁחַט לְתּוֹרָא, דְּשָׁתָה לְמַיָּא, דְּכָבֵה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשָׂרָף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא, דְּנָשָׁף לְשׁוֹנֵרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגָדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זַוְיָ. חַד גָּדְיָא, חַד גָּדְיָא.

Then came the schochet and slaughtered the bull, that drank the water, that extinguished the fire, that burnt the stick, that hit the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the kid that my father bought for two zuz, one kid, one kid.

וְאַתָּא מַלְאָךְ הַמָּוֶת וְשָׁחַט לְשׁוּחַט, דְּשָׁחַט לְתּוֹרָא, דְּשָׁתָה לְמַיָּא, דְּכָבֵה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשָׂרָף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִכָּה לְכִלְבָּא, דְּנָשָׁף לְשׁוֹנֵרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגָדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתָרֵי זַוְיָ. חַד גָּדְיָא, חַד גָּדְיָא.

Then came the angel of death and slaughtered the schochet, who slaughtered the bull, that drank the water, that extinguished the fire, that burnt the stick, that hit the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the kid that my father bought for two zuz, one kid, one kid.

וְאֵתָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְשָׁחַט לְמַלְאךְ הַמָּוֶת, דְּשָׁחַט לְשׁוּחַט, דְּשָׁחַט לְתוֹרָא, דְּשָׁתָה לְמֵיָא, דְּכָבָה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אַבָּא בְתַרִּי זַוְזִי. חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

Then came the Holy One, blessed be He and slaughtered the angel of death, who slaughtered the schochet, who slaughtered the bull, that drank the water, that extinguished the fire, that burnt the stick, that hit the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the kid that my father bought for two zuz, one kid, one kid.



Postscript

And so it is.
So many voices.
Add your voice to the chorus.
Let us sing together.

Leann Shamash

Biographies

Adva Yudkin

My name is Adva Yudkin, I was born and raised on Kibbutz Ketura. I am 35 years old and am now a resident in a group home for adults with special needs on my kibbutz. I am an active participant in Ketura's synagogue including leading services. I have loved to sing all my life.

Ahuva Loewenthal

Rabbi Ahuvah Loewenthal serves the Jewish Congregation of Oak Ridge (JCOR) in Tennessee. A 2012 graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia, she has served as a pulpit rabbi, chaplain, and Hillel advisor. Rabbi Ahuvah is the Chair of the Ethics Committee of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association.

Amaresh Heli Sanka

Amaresh Heli Sanka is an Israeli actress who lives in Tel Aviv.

Amy Solomon

Amy Solomon is a mixed media artist living and working in Brookline MA.

Amy Weiss

Amy Weiss was born in Brookline, MA. She started doodling on her schoolwork in first grade and never stopped. She has a BA from Brandeis University and an MFA from the University of Pennsylvania. You can find her most days working with her laser cutter or drawing on paper or on her computer. She is interested in how we interact with the world around us and is excited to participate in this group project.

Anat Halevy Hochberg

Anat Halevy Hochberg (she/her) is a musician, teacher, and ritual leader based in Boston. Her passions include leading song, empowering others to raise their voices, and working to reclaim the Yemenite melodies of her heritage. She has taught and led ritual at Eden Village Camp, Let My People Sing!, Hadar's Rising Song Intensive, and Linke Fligl. She co-produced Tishrei: the end is the beginning and Elul: Songs for Turning, and her debut album How can I keep (from) singing? was released in 2020. Learn more about her work at anathalevyhochberg.com.

Andrea DeSharon

Andrea DeSharone is a mother and grandmother, a mystic, a teacher and healer. Kabbalah and the Creative Arts infuse all her doings and ways of being.

Barbara Gold Marks

Barbara Gold Marks has been a psychotherapist for 35 years, a second career following some years in health care planning and administration. She loves dancing, biking, swimming, hiking, and of course, her husband of 36 years. She is the mother of two sons and grandmother of three granddaughters.

Barry Ehrlich

Camp Yavneh camper and parent; Prozdor high school division of Boston Hebrew College; Brandeis University and Tufts Medical School; career in Emergency Medicine and Urgent Care Medicine; Enjoys hiking, biking, beach time, cross country skiing and theatre; Fortunate to be married to Ruth and proud father of the four sons (!) and grandfather of five.

Barry Miller

Born, raised and still living these last 68 years (hopefully with many more to come) in NYC. Husband to Jayne, father of Liza, Aaron and Eve, and grandfather to Reuben, Isaac and Helena. A product of Holocaust survivors, Yeshiva and public education. My motto is you learn something new every day.

Berta Gershkowitz

Berta lives in Miami and tells stories.

Bette Ann Libby

Bette Ann Libby community mosaic murals are located at Vilna Shul, Temple Beth Avodah, schools, hospitals and libraries. Participant in Beit Midrash, Panim el Panim Boston/Haifa Connection, Boston Jewish Film Festival Board and currently serves on the Hebrew College Art Initiative. Solo exhibit: Mayyim Hayyim, group exhibitions: Hebrew College Centennial, JCC Newton. Represented by Kolbo Judaica Gallery, Brookline.

Brett Gershkowitz and Michael Vonnoh

Brett and Michael live in Boston, MA. Brett is a Conference Services Assistant at Mintz and Michael is an Associate Planner at TJX. Brett and Michael got married in September 2022 and moved back to Boston from Los Angeles shortly after their wedding. Brett and Michael have a 4-year-old chihuahua mix named Bruiser and enjoy going to the beach, traveling and trying new restaurants!

Carol Daynard

A mixed media artist, Carol observes the dance of life. She relies on memory, people, photographs and sketches, creating a representation of individuals and their experiences.

Claudia Gotovnik

I am Claudia Gontovnik. I am an artist and sociologist born in Barranquilla, Colombia living for the last 23 years in Miami with my husband and my two grown sons. I design one-of-a-kind wearable pieces of clothing. I love reinventing pre-loved and vintage pieces into something more sustainable for our world . My pieces are a statement for me and the person who chooses to wear it. My work can be found at <https://www.shopgontovnik.com/>

Debbie Forman

Debbie is and has been a nurse/nurse practitioner for her entire career. This is a choice her mother actually made for her, which worked out well! She enjoys the outdoors, especially, biking, hiking, and walking. Playing board games with her children and grandchildren is her favorite indoor activity. Israel is always on her mind as we all navigate this difficult time.

Deborah Leipziger

Deborah Leipziger is an author, poet, and advisor on sustainability. Born in Brazil, Ms. Leipziger is the author of several books on sustainability and human rights, and a poetry collection: Story & Bone. Deborah is a 2023-2024 Community Creative Fellow selected by the Jewish Arts Collaborative and Poet-in-Residence at the Vilna Shul.

Debra Cash

Debra Cash is Chief Development Officer for the Jewish Women's Archive. She was an arts critic for The Boston Globe for 17 years and is a founding Contributing Writer and Board Member of The Arts Fuse. Her poetry has appeared in Hanging Loose, AJS Perspectives, Persimmon Tree, the Open Siddur Project and elsewhere, and has been anthologized in Anita Diamant's books on the Jewish lifecycle and in the Reform and Reconstructionist prayer books. "The Stone's Hallelujah" is excerpted from her first book of poetry, Who Knows One, published by Hand Over Hand Press in 2010. A new collection, The Bumblebee's Diwan, is in development.

Debra Weiner-Solomon

I live in Jerusalem, Israel. I made aliya 30 years ago from Brookline, MA along with my husband Jay Solomont and 4 children-5th son was born in Israel. The family has since grown to include 4 daughters-in-law and 14 grandchildren, all in Israel! I have worked at Pardes Institute of Jewish Education for 25 years-most recently appointed Director of the Community Education program. I met Leann 40 years ago when Debra lived in Lowell MA and Leann in Westford MA. We connected through our passion for Jewish Education and having children at the Merrimack Valley Hebrew Academy. Thanks to the Daf Yomi learning with Yardeena Osband and Anne Gordon (Talking Talmud) we have reconnected and it has been wonderful.

Dov Lerea

Rabbi Dov Lerea has worked as an educator in school and camp settings for over 45 years. He lives in Riverdale, N.Y. and is currently the Head of Judaic Studies at The Shefa School.

Elaine Abrams

My initial love of painting was with Oriental art and calligraphy. It was later, about 2010, that I began watercolor painting with the hope of mingling both mediums in an expression of East and West. I am thrilled at the mixing of water and color blending on paper into unpredictable and endlessly beautiful combinations. My scenes are most often city, water, and landscapes. I paint loosely with a mix of impressionism and a hint of abstract, capturing the essence and leaving much to the viewer. I've lived and exhibited in Japan, and locally, and am a member of the Marblehead Art Association and the New England Watercolor Society.

Born and raised in Chelsea, I currently live in Winthrop, MA and may be reached at abramselaine@aol.com

Elena Stone

Elena Stone is a painter, mixed media artist and writer whose work flows from a lifelong passion for the creative process. Her art is about kinship with the earth community, the dance of spirit, light, and energy, the conversation between inner and outer landscapes, and the joy of improvisation and experimentation. She serves as Artist-in-Residence for the Center for Women's Health and Human Rights at Suffolk University, where she leads creativity workshops and shares art and writing through her ecofeminist blog Big Planet Love.

Eli Kozukhin

Eli Kozukhin was born in the Soviet Union and immigrated to the United States with his family at a young age. He developed an affinity for cooking and world cuisines, and attended Johnson & Wales University for culinary arts. He currently lives in Massachusetts with his wife and potbelly pig, and works as the Executive Chef de Cuisine at Johnny's Tavern in Amherst.

Elie Lerea

Elie Lerea grew up in Riverdale, NY. After completing a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Cooper Union, Elie moved to Israel where he studied for rabbinical ordination at Yeshivat Ma'aleh Gilboa. In 2022, he finished his Semicha exams and since then has been a rebbe at Yeshivat Siach Yitzchak where he teaches Gemara and Chassidut.

Ellen Foust

Ellen Foust is an artist and photographer with a passion for teaching. She received an MA in art history from Rutgers University and studied photography at the New England School of Photography. She is currently a photography instructor at the Brandeis and UMass Boston Osher Life Long Learning Institutes and LexArt (Lexington Arts and Crafts Society) in Lexington, MA. She is also available for one-on-one and group private tutoring/mentoring.

Ellen's images have been featured in exhibitions around Massachusetts and New York as well as journals and magazines. You can see her work at www.ellenfoust.com

Ellen Krueger

Ellen Krueger is a writer/baker/gardener who has been at these crafts for most of her life. Despite being retired, Ellen still spends many happy hours writing, baking and gardening. She lives in Acton, MA with her husband Allan. Having her children and grandchildren visit, and especially come for the holidays, brings special joy. Ellen is now enjoying Jewish studies with an exceptional teacher and creative class.

Esther Muhlfelder

I decided to make aliyah to Israel in my twenties. At that time living in Spain we needed to go to Marseille, France to fly to Lod since Spain did not have political relations. That was the best thing I ever did. Not only did I learn to read and speak Hebrew, but I also met my future husband from the US - Albany, NY.

After 2 years in Israel we married in Barcelona and came to live in Boston. We are the happy grandparents of Alana and Stella. We travel twice a year to Spain and every other year to Israel.

Erica Quigley

Erica Quigley is an educator, a gardener, and a mom of infant twins.

Fran Sherman and Aarav Chugh

Fran Sherman is a lawyer and a documentary photographer whose work focuses on the lives of women and girls and the meaning of family and community. She is also a grandmother and is proud to have collaborated for Anu with her grandson, Aarav Chugh. Aarav is five-years-old and loves painting, drawing and collaging (as well as basketball, maps, puzzles and games of all sorts).

Gisela Savdie

Gisela Savdie is a Colombian artist/writer living in Miami. She was recognized as an Alien of Extraordinary Abilities and became a US Citizen in 2007. She published a photography and poetry book called *Labradores de Sueños* based on the Carnival in Colombia, which won First Place for Design in Art Books in Colombia. Film has always been her passion, and she's been writing film reviews for the past 12 years in *El Heraldo*, a daily newspaper in Barranquilla, Colombia, and *Letra Urbana*, an online magazine in Miami. She covers The Cannes Film Festival and The Miami Film Festival annually and has covered the Sundance and Toronto Film Festivals. Last year she was a Jury for the Critics Award at the Miami International Film Festival. She is a board member of the Miami Beach Film Society.

Giti Ganjei

Giti, an Iranian woman with a compelling narrative, embarked on a courageous journey in her early 30s to flee Iran with her husband and son, navigating perilous paths to seek refuge in the US in 1989. Despite facing immense challenges she persevered and forged a new life for her family. As an artist her sensitive nature evokes emotions and a messenger for humane relationship toward peace.

Ilya Kohen

Ilya Kohen was born and raised in Gaziantep, Turkey in a community of 150 Jews among the city's 220,000 Moslem population. (He has profound memories of coexistence, mutual respect and acceptance between the two communities affording such coveted privileges as Kosher meat, Mikveh and a synagogue.) At 17, he came to the US to pursue an engineering degree on a full scholarship. Following a full career in engineering, he currently owns a custom window treatment business as a second gig. Ilya lives in Newton, Massachusetts with his wife, Elaine; they have three girls, married with children.

Iris Alpert

Iris Alpert is from the Chicago area. She's been in Boston since 1982, and now lives with her husband in Brookline.

Isaac Kozukhin

Isaac Kozukhin (he/them) is an aspiring novelist originally hailing from Acton, Massachusetts. He usually writes weird fiction, fantasy, and horror. He also loves small, slimy animals and doesn't think frogs would be a very scary plague. You can contact him at inkwriter.contact@gmail.com

Jack Eiferman

Jack is an (almost entirely) retired lawyer who focused his 40 years of law practice in representing nonprofit organizations and health care providers. He lives in Brookline with his wife, Fern Fisher. Their three children all graduated from Brookline public schools and have blessed them with three grandchildren - so far.

Jack Riemer

Rabbi Jack Riemer is the author of *Finding God in Unexpected Places* and *The Day I Met God in the Parking Lot of the Supermarket*.

Jay Smith

Jay Smith (they/them) is an illustrator based in Western Massachusetts. They have no formal arts education and credit their grandmother Sylvia with teaching them to paint at an early age. Their work explores themes of Jewish identity, ancestry, queerness, and longing. In 2015, Jay was the recipient of the Arts and Healing Network Award for Arts and Social Change. Their work was also displayed in 2016 in partnership with the Amplifier Foundation and the Women's March on Washington at the Center for Contemporary Art in Seattle. They currently reside in Florence, MA with their partner, Clare, and two fur babies Gene and Charlie. Their work can be seen at <https://www.mmmjaysmith.com/>

Jayne Miller

I believe that everyone is an artist, everyone is creative, and I've loved tapping into that for many years. I love working in a variety of mediums and then teaching them to others. I've worked with preschool children through adults and I love when I see any of them get so involved in their own work of art.

Jen Mawson

"Jen Mawson (b. 1994 Bamberg, Germany) is a photographer based out of Boston, Massachusetts. She received her MFA in Photography from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design and a BA from the University of Missouri in Interdisciplinary Studies, with an emphasis in Photography, Religious Studies and English. She surveys the endotic in order to further question our "truths" and foundations, looking for a deeper understanding of, not an answer to, the world around her."

Jonathan Aghion

Jonathan Aghion is an avid outdoorsman and local activist. He led a successful grassroots campaign for 2 miles of new sidewalk in his community and is currently lobbying his municipality for a pedestrian bridge over a stream. Jonathan's favorite role is being a dad.

Keith Tornheim

Keith Tornheim has six recent books, *The Sacrifice of Isaac*; *I Am Lilith, Dancer on the Wind*; *Spirit Boat: Poems of Crossing Over*; *Can You Say Kaddish for the Living?*; *Fireflies*; *Spoiled Fruit: Adam and Eve in Eden and Beyond*. His poems have appeared in *Ibbetson Street*, *The Somerville Times*, *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Muddy River Poetry Review* and *Poetica* and have been a part of *High Holiday* and other services of his congregation.

Larry Cohen

Larry Cohen grew up in Roxbury. He worked for many years at The MIT Press, where he became Editor in Chief and Associate Director. He now spends most of his time helping out in various ways at Congregation Kehillath Israel.

Laura Dickstein Thompson

Laura Dickstein Thompson (she/her) is an artist, meditation practitioner, museum curator, art educator, Kundalini Yoga teacher, and founder of the stress-reduction coaching business *Breathing Space* | Dr. Laura Thompson, LLC.

Laura Mandel

Laura Conrad Mandel, Executive Director of Boston's Jewish Arts Collaborative, is an artist, public art advocate, and social entrepreneur. She is currently Chair of the Board of the Council of American Jewish Museums, co-chair of the Boston Lyric Stage Advisory Committee, is a member of the MASSCreative Advisory Council, and the JCRC Boston Council. Mandel also writes a regular arts and culture blog for the *Times of Israel*. While Laura had made art of many forms, paper cutting is her go to and she has taught paper cutting classes across the US.

Leann Shamash

Leann is the author of the Parsha commentary website *Words Have Wings*. She has many interests, including writing, dancing, community building, gardening and photography, but her number one joy is her family. The ANU Haggadah of Many Voices was an idea that came to her suddenly and she is in awe of the voices expressed here.

Leeza Negelev

Leeza Negelev is a first-generation American artist. Born in New York City and raised in Boston by three generations of Soviets, Negelev's bicultural upbringing trained her aesthetic focus on the way we pay attention. Her work spans a variety of mediums—painting, sculpture, video, and installation. Negelev is a graduate of the Welch School of Art and Design in Atlanta, Georgia. Her work has been exhibited in the United States and internationally. She lives and works in Boston, Massachusetts.

Levi Gershkowitz

Levi George Gershkowitz is a photographer, musician and improvisational dancer, living on and farming land in the hilltowns of western Massachusetts with a profound love for the holy in nature.

Lila Kagedan

Lila Kagedan is a Rabbi and ethicist living in Brookline.

Lisa Berman

Lisa Berman is a full-time Cape Cod resident and former Mikveh & Education Director at Mayyim Hayyim Community Mikveh in Newton, MA. She now works at a small Episcopal church, a fact that brings a quizzical head tilt to many and a smile to Lisa.

Lisa Fliege

Lisa is a trauma specialist and American-Israeli writer based in Boston who has worked internationally, including in Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine. She is a special clinical consultant to The Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, a grassroots non-profit serving survivors of victims of homicide. Following the Boston Marathon Bombing, she worked with The Israel Trauma Coalition to provide services to Boston residents and was the featured trauma expert in a BBC broadcast following the bombing.

Lisa Link

I am a photo-based artist who lives and works in Boston, MA. My art projects—heavily influenced by *tikkun olam*—explore labor rights, ageism, water pollution, and climate change. After earning an MFA in photography, I taught at Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, in Pittsburgh, PA where I co-led public art projects on billboards and public buses. In Boston, I initiated the *WordWrap* series of community-engaged prints for public exhibits in Alaska, Maine and Massachusetts. I love to collaborate with others and was awarded a New England Foundation for the Arts grant to co-lead an intergenerational public art project displayed inside MBTA trains. Recently, I started an instagram artist series, @artagainstantisemitism and welcome you to join.

Lisa Redisch

Lisa Redisch is known in this community for her role as Director of Family Engagement at Congregation Kehillath Israel (KI). Professionally, she runs of all KI's children's educational programming including but not limited to our Religious School, our Bar/Bat Mitzvah program, Holiday and Shabbat Children's services, and Teen Programming. She is less commonly known for her identities as an artist, a feminist, and avid baker/cook. When she's not making some art, cooking up some elaborate recipe, or socializing with her friends, you may find her enjoying sunshine with a book or taking a walk at the Chestnut Hill Reservoir.

Marc Goldring

I makes photographs that capture the familiar in unfamiliar or unexpected ways. My recent work, including "The Edge of the Pond," "Imaginary Landscapes," and "Trees: Skin Deep" portray small slices of the natural world and the interplay between the natural and human worlds. I have shot in these places over the course of years, portraying reflections, colors, forms, and textures that make ambiguous and evocative images and portray decay in a new, elegant light.

Marcy and Donald Hoban

Don and Marcy are active members of their synagogue in Acton. They love music and travel; matzah not so much; gluten free Matzah? Much!

Marsha Canick

I am a grateful Jewish woman who has been fortunate to: grow up in the US, move to Newton, raise my family surrounded by friends, walk every day, and have a meaningful career that allowed me to watch both children and adults grow and become their best selves.

Marsha Martin

Marsha Martin is a member of Beth Elohim in Acton, MA, where she is a member of the Adult Education Committee and serves as pianist for the choir when called on. She loves teaching adults (and children and teens) how to play the piano and harpsichord. She is the founder and director of an adult special needs chorus called MUSIC MAKES ME HAPPY Chorus, whose motto is "Making the world happier one song at a time".

Maurice Aghion

I was born in Egypt in 1952 and spent the first eighteen years of my life there. It was a turbulent period of oppression and outright persecution that finally squeezed out the last few trickles of Egyptian Jewry out of there. My family and I were fortunate enough to come to the United States where we were received with open arms and helped restart a new life. As Jews everywhere, we were helped by the generosity of the local Jewish community to whom we are forever grateful.

Nancy Lerea

Having recently retired from SAR High School in Riverdale, NY where she had been Associate Principal and Director of Admissions, Nancy now works with students individually as a learning specialist, piano teacher, and bat mitzvah tutor. In addition, she finds many opportunities to enjoy her six grandchildren.

Rebecca Weinstein

Rabbi Rebecca Weinstein serves as the Mardricha Ruchanit and Lower School Jewish Life Coordinator at Schechter Boston. She resides in Wayland, MA, with her husband Dan and their two daughters, Leah and Ava. Rabbi Rebecca has a passion for teaching Jewish texts to children of all ages, using various creative mediums such as theater, arts and crafts, and film to bring them to life. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, baking, taking long walks, and doing arts and crafts whenever possible!

Ruth Nemzoff

Ruth, Nemzoff is the author of : Don't Bite Your Tongue: How to Foster Rewarding Relationships with Your Adult Children , Don't Roll Your Eyes: Making In-Laws Into Family. She frequently speaks on family issues. Her website is : RuthNemzoff.com

Ruth Philosophe

Ruthy Philosophe, native Israeli artist with strong connection to the land of Israel, the history and its people. Most her passion for art is reflected in her Jerusalem paintings.

Sara Cohen

Serves as a rabbi in the Eilat region, including rabbinic work on Kibbutz Ketura.

Seth Rosenman

Seth Rosenman is a senior at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School and will be attending the University of Wisconsin next year as a Political Science major. Seth serves as the teen President of the New England Region of BBYO, the world's largest pluralistic Jewish teen organization. He works as a teaching assistant at the Congregation Beth Elohim religious school in Acton, and in his free time Seth enjoys being with friends, spending summers at Camp YJ in New Hampshire, and competing for his school's debate team.

Sharona Mizrahi

I was born in Kerman to a loving family in South of Iran. We escaped from Iran in 1984 and arrived in the USA in 1985 where I attended high school and college. I worked as an accountant until I had my first child. I am an avid gardener and love cooking traditional Persian cuisine. I am very blessed to have three beautiful daughters.

Silvina Mizrahi

I am an Argentinian American interdisciplinary artist and art educator based in Boston. My work is fueled by my beliefs that art is a tool that helps us to connect, to heal and to embrace our differences. My works encompasses figurative bronze sculptures, abstract expressionist mixed media paintings, recycled materials which are created with communities and public art. I exhibit my works in galleries and museums internationally. I received several awards, including the Nathaniel Bushward Award from the Copley Society, the Juror Choice from the Thomas Menino Art Center in Boston and in 2017 was selected as "One of the 100 most influential people for the Latino community in Boston" by el Planeta, Boston. For more of my work please see my website at <https://www.silvinamizrahi.com/>

Sheryl Ishai

Sheryl Ishai began creating Judaica Papercut Ketubot, greeting cards and framed artwork, watercolor and acrylic painting and more recently mosaics. Art flowed in her veins from woodcarver great grandfather and painter mother and aunt.

Besides Judaica, beloved themes are nature especially the sea with its flowing movement and rich layered texture. She uses various techniques to bring out texture whether it be on canvas, handmade paper or with various mosaic materials.

Born in Rhode Island, she made aliya with her family where she lives with her family and enjoys the sea of Ashkelon.

Simon Levy

Simon Levy was born in Casablanca and lived in Morocco for 20 years before leaving for Europe and the US. He is a co-founder in 1986 of Beit Sasson, The Sephardic Congregation of Newton, Newton Centre, MA.

Soreh Ruffman

Soreh Ruffman is an educator and community organizer, with a background in trauma and disability informed special education, embodied Jewish ritual, sustainable Jewish farming and transformative justice. Soreh has the great privilege of leading the programming and immersions at Mayyim Hayyim, which allowed her to meet Leann. For this Haggadah contribution, Soreh was inspired by Elijah's ever-present support, his insightful wisdom and his undying commitment to helping us Jews in times of need.

Stephanie Margolis Stein

Stephanie Margolis Stein, originally from the Boston area, currently resides in Weehawken, NJ with her husband Guy. After attending UMass Amherst where Stephanie received degrees in Hospitality and Tourism Management as well as Judaic Studies, Stephanie began working for StandWithUs as the New England High School Manager. Now, Stephanie is the International Director of Events at StandWithUs and travels all over North America to put on conferences, galas, and receptions. Stephanie also serves on the Jewish partnerships committee for Sigma Delta Tau and serves as the chair of the Alums for Campus Fairness UMass Amherst chapter.

Tania Erlij

I was born and felt in love with my birth country Mexico! I am bat Fieña (Frida, Feigue), bat Shmuel(Dimitri, Ismael, Shmuel); carrying a bag with names constructs this story : the immigrant as children they were fleeing from the Soviet Union with their parents: my zeide Mordejai, bobe Geña, zeide David, bobe Ada They were my first protagonists... my Seder memories were inspired by my cousin Selma, a beautiful story teller!

William Hamilton

Rabbi William Hamilton has served as rabbi of Congregation Kehillath Israel since 1995.

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Iris Alpert and for Amy Solomon for help with organizing.*

TO THE VOICES OF ANU'S CHORUS, WITH GRATITUDE

Aarav Chugh, Adva Yudkin, Ahuva Loewenthal, Amaresh Sanka, Amy Gilman,
Amy Solomon, Amy Weiss, Anat Halevy Hochberg, Andrea DeSharone,
Barbara Gold Marks, Barry Ehrlich, Barry Gershkowitz, Barry Miller,
Benjamin Chartock, Berta Gershkowitz, Bette Ann Libby, Brett Gershkowitz,
Carol Daynard, Claudia Gontovnik, Debbie Forman, Deborah Leipziger,
Debra Cash, Debra Solomont, Donald Hoban, Dov Lerea, Elaine Abrams,
Elena Stone, Eleonore Weill, Eli Kozukhin, Elizabeth Ross, Ellen Foust,
Ellen Krueger, Erica Quigley, Esther Cohen Muhlfelder, Francine Sherman,
Gisela Savdie, Giti Ganjei, Ilya Kohen, Iris Alpert, Isaac Kozukhin, Jack Eiferman,
Jay Smith, Jayne Miller, Jennifer Mawson, Jonathan Aghion, Keith Tornheim,
Larry Cohen, Laura Dickstein Thompson, Laura Mandel, Leann Shamash,
Leeza Negelev, Levi Gershkowitz, Lila Kagedan, Lisa Berman, Lisa Fliegel,
Lisa Link, Lisa Redisch, Marcy Hoban, Marc Goldring, Marsha Canick,
Marsha Martin, Maurice Aghion, Michael Vonnoh, Nancy Lerea, Nir Maimon,
Rebecca Weinstein, Ruth Nemzoff, Ruth Philosophe, Sara Cohen,
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