



INTER { FAITH
NATIONAL
GROUP } SEDER

AJC SEATTLE COMMUNITY SEDER
HAGGADAH

AJC Seattle

AJC Seattle Haggadah

Based on the AJC New England Haggadah

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About the Passover Seder

Eight days long, Passover begins with a “Seder” (literally, “order”) on each of the first two nights of the holiday. More than just a meal, the Seder is the ritual recounting of the Israelites’ exodus from ancient Egypt and a celebration of their freedom from slavery. You will notice that the Seder is filled with symbolism and instruction. For example, at specified moments during the Seder, participants recline to the left to eat and drink as an ancient symbol of freedom; we drink four cups of wine or grape juice as a sign of liberation; and ten drops of wine/juice are spilled symbolizing the ten plagues.

The Haggadah is the guidebook for the Seder. “Haggadah” actually means a story that is told, and it is through the Haggadah that Jews fulfill the commandment of remembering the Exodus from ancient Egypt and teaching the story to our children.

About the Seder Plate

The Seder plate, which is a central focus of the Seder table, contains six different foods: a shank bone, charoset, two kinds of bitter herbs, green vegetables, and an egg. Many of the foods incorporated into the Seder are used to convey educational messages.

The bitter herbs recall the suffering of the Israelites in bondage, and the matzah (unleavened bread) is symbolic of the Israelites’ departure from Egypt; in their haste, they did not have time to wait for their bread to rise.



Reflection

The First Thing God Wants Us To Know

The very first thing God tells us about himself at Sinai is this: “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt.” God tells us that, before telling us not to steal and not to kill, before telling us to observe the Sabbath day and not to worship other gods. It is as if God thinks we need to be reminded of the great favor done for us in order to be sure that we will reciprocate by observing God’s commandments.

“I brought you out of the house of bondage” is the first of the Ten Commandments. It commands us to know for all time that our God is a **God of freedom**, that the commandments God offers us are gifts, not burdens, that the acceptance of those commandments is not a form of self-denial but a form of liberation. God does not want our gratitude; God wants us to understand that nothing matters to God more than our freedom, and then to teach us that freedom depends upon law.

Tonight, at the great festival of our freedom, we are, all of us, from the youngest to the oldest, colleagues in the celebration of freedom. At the same time, we are partners in a Seder- which means order. We might have chosen to celebrate and remember our liberation with noisy carnivals; others have. But we have been taught something different.

-Leonard Fein, author, social activist.

Order of the Seder

KADESH

URHATZ

KARPAS

YAHATZ

MAGGID

ROHTZAH

MOTZI

MATZAH

MAROR

KOREKH

SHULHAN OREKH

TZAFUN

BAREKH

HALLEL

NIRTZAH

Kadesh

Four Cups of Wine

The four cups of wine or grape juice, which one drinks at prescribed intervals during the Seder, toast divine redemption and are based on the four expressions of redemption reflected in the book of Exodus: "I will bring you out," "I will deliver you," "I will redeem you," and "I will take you as a nation."

Wine is considered a royal drink, one that symbolizes freedom. It is the appropriate beverage for the night when we celebrate our freedom from Egyptian bondage.



The blessing of Kiddush over wine or grape juice sanctifies the holiday meal by focusing on God as the creator and redeemer of the universe. During the Seder, it is customary to drink four cups of wine.

We lift our cups to say the blessing over the first cup of wine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן.

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam, bo're p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.



Urhatz

(Ritual Hand washing)

Karpas

In this part of the Seder, we dip a sprig of parsley or potato into salt water. The parsley is a symbol of spring-time, and the salt water a reference to tears of slavery. By commingling the two, we call forth the memory of degradation and the aspirations for hope and renewal.



ברוך אתה יְהוָה אלוהינו מלך העולם,
בורא פרי האדמה.

*Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'ol-
am, bo're p'ri ha'adamah.*

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the earth.

Yahatz

(Breaking of the Matzah)

Maggid

This is the section of the Seder where we fulfill the mitzvah (commandment) of telling the story of Exodus— a beautifully woven compilation of song, rabbinic discourse, hymns, and praise. This is the heart of the Seder.



According to Jewish tradition, every person in every generation is obligated to see him or herself as though he/she personally has gone forth from slavery to freedom. By telling the same story, year after year, we attempt to step into the shoes of our forebears and take a journey into liberation. Reenacting the Exodus is also a vivid reminder of the fact that there are many people in the world who are still enslaved, and who continue to yearn for freedom. We recite the following as if we were the ancient Israelites:

We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt and God brought us forth with a mighty hand. Had not the Holy One, blessed is He, delivered our people from Egypt, then we, our children, and our children's children would still be enslaved. Pharaoh set taskmasters over us with forced labor, and we built garrison cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Ramses. The Egyptians embittered our lives with harsh labor with mortar and bricks. But the more we were oppressed, the more we increased and spread out, so that the Egyptians came to despise and dread the Israelites.

Pharaoh charged all his people, saying "Every boy that is born shall be thrown into the Nile, but let every girl live." We cried out to our Lord, the God of our ancestors, and God heeded our plights, our misery, and our oppression. As we recall God's promise of redemption, we remember that in every generation and in every age some rise up to plot our destruction, even in our own time.

Ha Lakhma

The Story of the Matzah

This is the bread of poverty and persecution that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

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

This year we are still here— Next year in the land of Israel.
This year we are still slaves— Next year free people.

הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אבהתנא בארעא דמצרים. כל דכפין ייתי ויכל. כל
דצריך ייתי ויפסח. השתא הכא. לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל. השתא עבדי.
לשנה הבאה בני חורין

Ha lachma anya /di achalu avhatana /b'ara d'mitzrayim.
Kol dichfin / yeitei v'yeichol / kol ditzrich, yeitei v'yifsach./
Hashata hacha / l'shanah habaah /b'ara d'Yisrael/ Hashata
avdei / l'shanah habaah/ b'nei chorin.

The Four Questions

The “Four Questions,” traditionally asked by the youngest person at the table, reflect the educational function of the Passover Seder and ensure that the children inquire about and then discover the meaning of the holiday.

מַה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?

Mah nishtanah ha-lailah ha-zeh mi-kol ha-laylot?

Why is this night different from all other nights?



שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת, אֲנוּ אוֹכְלִים חֻמֶּץ וּמָצָה; וְהַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, כָּלוּ מָצָה.

Sh'bechol ha'leilot, anu ochlim chametz u'matzah;

v'halya ha'zeh koo'lo matzah.

On all other nights we eat either leavened bread or matzah; why on this night only matzah?

שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת, אֲנוּ אוֹכְלִים שָׂאֵר יֵרָקוֹת; וְהַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, מָרוֹר.

She'bechol ha'leilot, anu ochlim she'ar yerakot,

v'halya ha'zeh maror.

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

שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת, אֵין אֲנוּ מִטְבִּילִין אֶפְלוּ פַּעַם אַחַת; וְהַלַּיְלָה

הַזֶּה, שְׁתֵּי פְעָמִים.

Sh'bechol ha'leilot, ain anu matbilin afilu pa'am achat,

v'halya ha'zeh she'tei pe'amim.

On all other nights we do not dip herbs at all; why on this night do we dip them twice?

שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת, אֲנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין; וְהַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה,

כָּלֵנוּ מְסֻבִּין.

She'bechol ha'leilot, anu ochlin bein yoshveen u'vein mesubin,

v'halya ha'zeh kulanu mesubin.

On all other nights we eat sitting up or reclining; why on this night do we all recline?

Reflection

A Key to Freedom

Why were the rabbis so insistent that the Exodus story open with a spontaneous question?



On a deeper level, the rabbis may have reflected that questioning is an essential part of the freedom celebrated on the Seder night. The whole Talmudic literature is in the form **of questioning and dialogue**.— not the meek questioning of inferior to superior but the give and take interaction of adamant rivals pitted against one another, and sometimes even against God! (B.T. Bava Matzia, 59 b)

An essential characteristic of free people is that they notice the world around them, make distinctions and search for meaningful patterns. They want understanding, not inscrutability. **For a slave mentality, nothing is “different”**— all tasks are part of the same meaningless arbitrariness. There is no point in asking if no one answers, no place for questions in a world where the master’s arbitrary orders are the ultimate justification for the way things are.

The Answer

Avadim Hayinu

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and Adonai freed us
from Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

Go Down Moses

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

Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt's land.
Tell ol' Pharaoh,
Let my people go.

We need not always weep and mourn,
Let my people go.
And wear these slavery chains forlorn,
Let my people go.

Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt's land.
Tell ol' Pharaoh,
Let my people go.



Reflection

Memory is not a static deposit; it is neither rules nor happenings that confront us unchanging. Jews continually re-remember; we retell and recast our past in light of changing communal experience and changing communal values.

-The Velveteen Rabbi's Haggadah

Waitings

The waitings which make up the life of a slave:
first he waits for a spokesman
and for plagues
to plead his cause,
then he waits for the waters
to open before him,
then he waits for the desert storms
to name themselves,
then (being a slave) he asks in his heart:
why did I wait for the parting of the waters?
why did I wait for all this uproar and these burnings?
then (being a slave) he waits for answers.

- Stanley Chyet



"Hope is Saying 'No!'"

"Hope is saying 'no' to the world immediately experienced. Optimism is the belief that things will be different, will be better."

-President Havel of the Czech Republic (playwright and former prisoner in communist Czechoslovakia)

The 10 Plagues

When Moses asked Pharaoh to free the Israelite slaves and Pharaoh refused, God visited ten plagues upon the Egyptians. We now recite those plagues. As each is named, we pour a drop of wine or grape juice from our cup of joy. The tradition explains this custom by reminding us that our own joy is diminished in the face of the pain of others; even though the plagues are an essential element in the saga we celebrate, we derive no pleasure from them, we do not gloat at the suffering they caused.

<i>Dam</i> , Blood	דָּם
<i>Tzfardeyah</i> , Frogs	צְפַרְדֵּי
<i>Kinim</i> , Lice	כְּנִים
<i>Arov</i> , Wild Beasts	עֲרוֹב
<i>Dever</i> , Blight	דֵּבֶר
<i>Sh'chin</i> , Boils	שַׁחִין
<i>Barad</i> , Hail	בָּרָד
<i>Arbeh</i> , Locusts	אַרְבֶּה
<i>Chosheh</i> , Darkness	חֹשֶׁךְ
<i>Makat B'chorot</i> , Slaying of the First-Born	מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת

Antidotes to the Plagues of our Time

Freedom	Acceptance	Democracy	Equality
Human Rights	Peace	Security	Respect
Coexistence	Pluralism		



Reflection

Human reason is beautiful and invincible.
No bars, no barbed wire, no pulping of books,
No sentence of banishment can prevail against it.
It establishes the universal ideas in language,
And guides our hand so we write Truth and Justice
With capital letters, lie and oppression with small.
It puts what should be above things as they are,
Is an enemy of despair and a friend of hope.
It does not know Jew from Greek or slave from master,
Giving us the estate of the world to manage.
It saves austere and transparent phrases
From the filthy discord of tortured words.
It says that everything is new under the sun,
Opens the congealed fist of the past.
Beautiful and very young are Philo-Sophia
And poetry, her ally in the service of the good.
As late as yesterday Nature celebrated their birth,
The news was brought to the mountains by a unicorn and an echo.
Their friendship will be glorious, their time has no limit.
Their enemies have delivered themselves to destruction.

Czeslaw Milosz, widely considered one of the greatest contemporary Polish poets, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1980.



Reflection

In the Biblical story, the ancient Egyptians speak of Israel always as a collective, not as individuals. We too, often speak of those we don't know well as though they were all alike. But we would like to think that if the ancient Egyptians had known each of us here tonight, they would never have seen us as aliens, nor would they have afflicted us.



I prefer liberty with danger than peace with slavery.

—*Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a Franco-Swiss philosopher of the Enlightenment.*

And what is my life span? I'm like a man gone out of Egypt: the Red Sea parts, I cross on dry land, two walls of water; on my right hand and on my left Pharaoh's army and his horsemen behind me. Before me the desert, perhaps the Promised Land, too. That is my life span.

—*Yehuda Amichai, and Israeli poet, is considered by many, both in Israel and internationally, as Israel's greatest modern poet.*

We are a people in whom the past endures, in whom the present is inconceivable without moments gone by. The Exodus lasted a moment, a moment enduring forever. What happened once upon a time happens all the time.

—*Abraham Joshua Heschel was a Warsaw-born American rabbi and one of the leading Jewish theologians and Jewish philosophers of the 20th century.*

Dayeinu

אֱלֹהֵינוּ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם

Ilu hotzianu mimitzrayim

If He had brought us out from Egypt

דִּינֵנוּ

dayeinu!

Dayenu, it would have sufficed!

אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת

Ilu natan lanu et ha'Shabbat

If he had given us the Sabbath

דִּינֵנוּ

dayeinu!

Dayenu, it would have sufficed!

אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה

Ilu natan lanu et ha'Torah

If He had given us the Torah

דִּינֵנוּ

dayeinu!

Dayenu, it would have sufficed!



DAYEINU



I - lu ho-tzi ho - tzi - a - nu, ho - tzi a - nu mi - mitz - ra - yim,
ho - tzi - a - nu mi - mitz - ra - yim da - yei - nu.
(Chorus) Da - da - yei - nu, da - da - yei - nu, da - da - yei - nu, da -
1, 2. yei - nu da - yei - nu da - yei - nu. 3. yei - nu da - yei - nu.

Reflection

For ten years, they beat me every morning. They made me sleep with the animals, and they gave me very bad food. They said I was an animal... But every day I prayed to God. One day, I asked my master a question: "Why do you call me 'abeed'? [Related to *eved*, the Hebrew word for slave.] And why do you feed me bad food all the time and make me sleep with the animals? Is it because I am black?" My master was very angry. "Where did you learn to ask this question?" he said. "Never ask me this again." And he beat me and beat me. When I was 17, I decided to escape. I would rather die than be a slave.

-Francis Bok, a former slave in Sudan who escaped in 1999



Second Cup of Wine

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam, bo're p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who creates the fruit of the vine.

Reflection

A strange appetizer awaits us: the maror, the bitter vegetable.

A sharp reminder that the matzah of freedom
Often needs roots of bitterness from which to sprout.

Many here have personally known the bitterness of pain,
of disappointment, of loss.

If we have been fortunate,

We have learned from our pain,

Matured through our disappointment,

And compensated for our loss

Through a new awareness of our own strength.

Bitterness, we have learned,

Can be transformed into a blessing.

And that is why we offer a blessing when we eat the bitter herb:

“We thank you, Source of all existence,

For the understanding and compassion that can be released

When we eat the fruit of bitterness.”

Rohtzah

(Ritual Hand washing)

Motzi Matzah

Matzah (unleavened bread) is symbolic of the Israelites' departure from Egypt; in their haste, they did not have time to wait for their bread to rise.

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

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam, ha'motzi lehem min ha'aretz.

Blessed are You, Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who brings forth bread from the earth.



Maror

Maror, or bitter herbs, (usually fresh horseradish) are symbolic of the bitterness of slavery. However, we do not eat the maror alone, but temper it with a small amount of charoset to signify that there is some sweetness, even in the most bitter of times.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרֹר.

*Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'ol-
am, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu
al achilat maror.*

*Blessed are You, Lord, our God, Ruler of
the universe, who sanctifies us with com-
mandments and calls upon us to eat maror.*



Charoset also symbolizes the mortar that the Israelites used to build the pyramids in Egypt. Tonight's Seder features a traditional charoset, a mix of apples, nuts, wine and cinnamon. Distribute pieces of matzah so that each guest may prepare a "sandwich" of matzah, maror, and charoset.



Korekh

(Hillel Sandwich)

Shulhan Orekh

(Dinner)

Tzafun

(Afikoman)

Barekh

(Grace after the meal)

Reflection

Saying grace is an act of the greatest importance. To be able to eat and drink is a possibility as extraordinary, as miraculous, as the crossing of the Red Sea. We do not recognize the miracle this represents because we live in a world which, for the moment, has plenty of everything, and because our memory is short. Yet those who live in less fortunate countries understand that to be able to satisfy one's hunger is the marvel of marvels...the route which takes bread from the earth in which it grows to the mouth which eats it is one of the most perilous. It is to cross the Red Sea...

Emmanuel Levinas, a Lithuanian-born French philosopher and Talmudic commentator.

Third Cup of Wine

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹאֵה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.
Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam, bo're p'ri
hagafen.

Blessed are You, Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who creates the fruit of the vine.

The Cup of Elijah

Soon, in our days, the prophet Elijah will come, bringing the
Messiah.

*Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu hatishbi,
Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu hagiladi.
Bimheirah b'yameinu yavo eileinu,
Im Mashiah ben David, im Mashiah ben David.*

Close the door and be seated. Elijah's cup remains on the
table as we rejoice, in psalm and song, for past redemptions
and for the future redemption song to dawn upon us.

Reflection

Israel will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all
its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as
envisaged by the Prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality
of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of reli-
gion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience,
language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of
all religions; and it will be faithful to the Principles of the Charter of
the United Nations.

*From the Israeli Declaration of Independence which was issued on
14 May 1948.*

An Antidote to Fanaticism

Personal good and evil are not the assets of any religion. They are not necessarily religious terms. The choice whether to inflict pain or not to inflict it, to look it in the face or to turn a blind eye to it, to get personally involved in healing pain, like a devoted country doctor, or to make do with organising angry demonstrations and signing wholesale petitions - this spectrum of choice confronts each one of us several times a day.

As a very nationalistic, even chauvinistic, little boy in Jerusalem of the 1940s, I vowed never to set foot on German soil, never even to buy any German product. The only thing I could not boycott were German books. If you boycott the books, I told myself, you will become a little bit like "them". At first I limited myself to reading the pre-war German literature and the anti-Nazi writers. But later, in the 1960s, I began to read, in Hebrew translations, the works of the post-war generation of German writers and poets. In particular, the works of the Group 47 writers led by Hans Werner Richter. They made me imagine myself in their place. I'll put it more sharply: they seduced me to imagine myself in their stead, back in the dark years, and just before the dark years, and just after.

Reading these authors, and others, I could no longer go on simply hating everything German, past, present and future.

I believe that imagining the other is a powerful antidote to fanaticism and hatred. I believe that books that make us imagine the other, may turn us more immune to the ploys of the devil, including the inner devil.

Imagining the other is not only an aesthetic tool. It is, in my view, also a major moral imperative. And finally, imagining the other - if you promise not to quote this little professional secret - imagining the other is also a deep and very subtle human pleasure.

—Amos Oz, Israeli novelist, upon receiving the Goethe Price, Frankfurt, Germany, 2005.

We Shall Overcome

(To be sung together)

We shall overcome, we shall overcome
We shall overcome some day
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
We shall overcome some day

The Lord will see us through, the Lord will see us through
The lord will see us through some day
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
The Lord will see us some day

Hallel

(Psalms of Praise)

Nirtzah

(Fourth Cup of Wine)

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.
Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam, bo're p'ri
hagafen.

Blessed are You, Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who creates the fruit of the vine.



Next Year in Jerusalem



A Wish for Harmony

It is traditional to end a Seder with the words, *L'shanah ha-ba'ah b'Yerushalayim*—Next Year in Jerusalem!

Next year, wherever we are, may we be whole and at peace. May the coming year be one of equality and inclusiveness. May we all be able to live free, peaceful lives so that we may come together and celebrate again!

And then all that has divided us will merge.
And then compassion will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind.
And then both men and women will be gentle.
And then both women and men will be strong.
And then no person will be subject to another's will.
And then all will be rich and free and varied.
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many.
And then all will share equally in the earth's abundance.
And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the old.
And then all will nourish the young.
And then all will cherish life's creatures.
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the earth.
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

—Excerpt from the “Merger Poem”, Judy Chicago.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים

L'shanah haba'ah b'yerushalayim!

Next year in Jerusalem!

Od Yavo Shalom Aleinu

Od yavo shalom aleinu (x3)
ve'al kulam

Salaam, aleinu ve'al kol ha'olam.

Again peace will come upon us (x3)
And upon everyone

Salaam ("peace" in Arabic), upon us and on all the world.

עוד יבוא שלום עלינו
עוד יבוא שלום עלינו
עוד יבוא שלום עלינו ועל כולם.

סאלם, עלינו ועל כל העולם
סאלם, סלאם
סלאם, עלינו ועל כל העולם



AJC's mission is to enhance the well-being of the Jewish people and Israel, and to advance human rights and democratic values in the United States and around the world.

