

# Racial, Social and Economic Justice



## Haggadah (the telling)



compiled by Rachel Carey-Harper

## OPENING PRAYER

Long ago at this season, our people set out on a journey.

We give thanks for the liberation of days gone by.

We pray for all who are still bound.

Let all the human family drink the wine of deliverance,  
eat the bread of freedom:

Freedom from bondage and freedom from oppression

Freedom from hunger and freedom from want

Freedom from hatred and freedom from fear

Freedom to think and freedom to speak

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn

Freedom to love and freedom to share

Freedom to hope and freedom to  
rejoice

## ORDER! ORDER!

Seder literally means order, from  
the Hebrew l'sader, to arrange,  
and there's a set order to the pro-  
ceedings:

Kadesh  
Urchatz  
Karpas  
Yachatz  
Maggid  
Rakhtzah  
Motzi  
Matzah  
Maror  
Korekh  
Shulkhan Orekh  
Tzafun  
Barekh  
Hallel  
Nirtzah

Recite the kiddush  
Wash the hands  
Eat a green vegetable  
Break the middle matzah  
Tell the Pesach story  
Wash the hands  
Say the Ha-Motzi  
Say the blessing for matzah  
Eat the bitter herb  
Eat bitter herb with matzah  
Serve the festive meal  
Eat the Afikomen  
Say the grace after meals  
Recite the Hallel  
Conclude the seder



## KADESH: SANCTIFYING THE DAY

May the light of the candles we kindle together tonight bring radiance to  
all who still live in darkness. May this season, rouse us against keeping  
others in servitude. In gratitude for the freedom we enjoy, may we strive  
to bring about our own liberation and the liberation of all people every-  
where.

Lighting these candles, we honor sacred space of the Festival of Freedom;  
and the coming together of our community.

ברוך אתה יי' להינינו רוח הקול

אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר יום טוב

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam,

asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner  
shel Yom Tov.

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Breath of Life,  
who connects with us with your Light as we kindle  
these holiday lights.

## I. KADDESH / Kiddush FIRST CUP OF WINE/ Grape Juice

Tonight we drink four cups of wine. Why four?

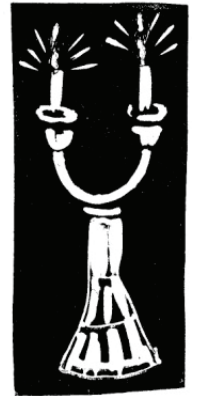
Some say the cups represent our matriarchs—Sarah,  
Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah—whose virtue caused

God to liberate us from slavery. Another interpretation is that the cups  
represent the Kabbalists' four worlds (physicality, emotions, thought, and  
essence). Still a third interpretation is that the cups represent the four  
promises of liberation God makes in the Torah: I will bring you out, I will  
deliver you, I will redeem you, I will take you to be my people. (Exodus 6:6-  
7) The four promises, in turn, have been interpreted as four stages on the  
path of liberation: becoming aware of oppression, opposing oppression,  
imagining alternatives, and accepting responsibility to act. This first cup of  
wine reminds us of God's first declaration: V'hotzaiti —“I will bring you out  
from the oppression...”

ברוך אתה יי' להינינו מלך הולם בור פרי הגפן

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, creator of the fruit  
of the vine.



## II. URHATZ: WASHING THE HANDS

The symbolic washing of the hands that we now perform recalls the story of Miriam's Well. Filled with mayimei chayyim, waters of life, the well was a source of strength and renewal to all .

In Hebrew, urchatz means "washing" or "cleansing." In Aramaic, sister language to Hebrew, urchatz means "trusting." As we wash each others' hands, let us rejoice in this act of trust, and reflect on the sources of hope, trust and justice we want to bring into the world for ourselves and each other. Pass the bowl & pitcher/washcloths around the table, each pouring a few drops of water onto her/his neighbor's hands.

## III. KARPAS: EAT A GREEN VEGETABLE

At this point in the seder, it is traditional to eat a green vegetable dipped in salt water. The green vegetable represents rebirth, renewal and growth; the salt water represents the tears of enslavement.

ברוך אתה יי' לַחֲיֵנו רוּחַ הַחַיִּים בּוֹרְאֵי הָאָדָמָה  
Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, borei  
p'ri ha'adamah.

Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life, creator of  
fruit of the earth.



## IV. YAHATZ / Divide -

We break the matzah as we broke the chains of slavery, and as we break chains which bind us today. We will no more be fooled by movements which free only some of us, in which our so-called "freedom" rests upon the enslavement or embitterment of others.

## V. MAGID / Narrate

A. lift up the plate -- explain  
STORY ABOUT STORIES

When the founder of modern Hasidism, the Baal Shem Tov, saw misfortune threatening the Jews, it was his custom to go into a certain part of the forest to meditate. There he would light a special fire, say a special prayer, and the trouble would be averted.

Later, when his disciple would go for the same reason to the same place in the forest and say: "Master of the Universe, listen! I cannot light the

fire, but I know the place and I can say the prayer." Still later, another Rabbi in order to save the Jewish people, would go into the forest and say: "I cannot light the fire, I do not know the prayer, but I know the place."

Then it fell to Rabbi Israel of Rizhyn to overcome misfortune. Sitting in his house, his head in his hands, he spoke to God: "I am unable to light the fire and I do not know the prayer; I cannot even find the place in the forest. All I can do is tell the story, and this must be sufficient." And it was sufficient.

## SECOND CUP OF WINE

The second cup of wine represents God's second declaration of redemption: V'hitzalti— "I will free you from slavery  
Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.  
Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, creator of  
the fruit of the vine.

## THE SEDER PLATE

The **Maror**, bitter herb or horseradish, represents the bitterness of slavery.

The **Haroset**, a mixture of apples and nuts, represents the bricks and mortar we made in ancient times, and the new structures we are beginning to build in our lives and world today.

The **Lamb Bone** represents the sacrifices we have made to survive.

The **Egg** symbolizes creative power, our rebirth.

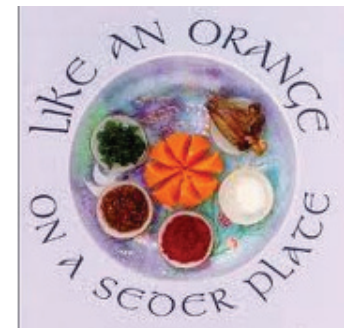
The **Parsley** represents new growth, for we are earthy, rooted beings, connected to the Earth and nourished by our connection.

**Salt water** of our tears, both then and now.

**Matzot** our unleavened hearts: may this Seder enable our spirits to rise

**And what about the orange?**

In the early 1980s, Susannah Heschel attended a feminist seder at which bread was placed on the seder plate, as a reaction to a rabbi who had claimed lesbians



had no more place in Judaism than bread crusts have at a seder. "Bread on the seder plate...suggests that being lesbian is transgressive, violating Judaism," Heschel writes. "I felt that an orange was suggestive of something else: the fruitfulness for all Jews when lesbians and gay men are contributing and active members of Jewish life." To speak of slavery and long for liberation, she says, "demands that we acknowledge our own complicity in enslaving others."

One additional item on our seder plate, therefore, is an orange, representing the radical feminist notion that there is—there must be—a place at the table for all of us, that as with the fruit, we carries within the seeds of its own rebirth.

## VI. RAHTZAH - Lave / Washing

It is our hands which plant and write, which caress and create—and also our hands which strike and poison and smash. We wash our hands not to absolve ourselves of responsibility, but to affirm the need to make our hands holy. At this season of freedom and rebirth, we consecrate our hands to the task of building freedom for all who suffer.

ברוך אתה יי' להינינו רוח הולמ

אָר קדִּשְׁנוּ בַּמִּצְוֹתַי וְצוּנוּ לְגִילַת יָדַיִם

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al netilat yadayim.

Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life, who sanctifies us with the commandment to wash our hands.

## VII - VIII MOTZI/MATZAH: BLESS AND EAT

During the Exodus, our ancestors had no time to wait for dough to rise. The matzah reminds us that when the chance for libera-



tion comes, we must seize it even if we do not feel ready—indeed, if we wait until we feel fully ready, we may never act at all.

תָּהָּ יי' להינינו רוח הולמ

ברוך

הַמוֹצֵץ לַחֵם מִן־הָאֶרֶץ

תָּהָּ יי' להינינו רוח הולמ

ברוך

בַּמִּצְוֹתַי וְצוּנוּ לְכִילַת מַצָּה

אָר קדִּשְׁנוּ

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al achilat matzah.

Everyone eats some matzah



## IX. MAROR: BITTER HERB

Why do we eat maror? Maror represents the bitterness of bondage. Why do we eat haroset? It symbolizes the mortar for the bricks our ancestors

laid in Egypt. ברוך אתה יי' להינינו רוח הולמ

אָר קדִּשְׁנוּ בַּמִּצְוֹתַי וְצוּנוּ לְכִילַת מָרֹר

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat maror.

Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life, who sanctifies us with the commandment to eat the bitter herb.

Everyone eats some maror.

## X. KORECH: HILLEL SANDWICH

The sage Hillel c.110 BC originated the tradition of eating matzah and maror together, combining the bread of liberation with a remembrance of the bitterness of slavery. In following his example, we create a physical representation of the holiday's central dialectical tension. Though it represents slave labor, haroset is sweet, reminding us that sometimes constriction or enslavement can be masked in familiar sweetness. Eating the two together, we remind ourselves to be mindful of life with all its sweetness and bitterness, and to seek balance between the two. Everyone eats maror and haroset between two pieces of matzah



## XI. SHULHAN OREKH / Festival Meal

## XII. TZAFUN /AFIKOMAN / Dessert

If someone has “stolen” it, let the children look for it during the meal to win a prize, it is now time to redeem the Afikoman as we redeem the world. Then, each person eats a portion of the Afikoman.



## XIII BARECH: BLESS THE MEAL

[ Fill the cup before the Birkat HaMazone / grace.

Prayer After Eating

I have taken in the light  
that quickened eye and leaf.

May my brain be bright with praise  
of what I eat, in the brief blaze  
of motion and of thought.

May I be worthy of my meal. (—Wendell Berry)

### - THIRD CUP

We fill the Cup of Elijah on the table. We rise, and generally send the youngest child(ren) still awake to open the door and call for Elijah, the harbinger of hope. Sing “Eliyahu Ha-Navi” and then close the door.



Eliyahu Ha-navee  
Eliyahu Ha-tish-bee  
Eliyahu, Eliyahu  
Eliyahu Ha-giladee  
Bim Heira B'yameinu  
Yavo eileinu  
Eem mashiah ben David  
Eem mashiah ben David

As we open our doors and our hearts to Elijah, we pray that there soon will be an end to all evil deeds in the world. God has shown us the paths to peace.

## Hallel

[ The fourth cup of wine is filled and after the following berakha we drink this final cup.

Kabbalist Isaac Luria taught that, when the world was made, God's infinity was too great to be contained, and creation shattered. The world that we know consists of broken vessels, with sparks of God trapped inside. We bless this cup to remind us of our obligation to find the holy sparks in our broken world, and to fix what must be mended. Hallel means “Praise”, we praise the source of all.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.  
Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life, creator of the fruit of the vine.

## XV. NIRTZAH

With this traditional formula, the Seder is ended.

“This Passover Seder is concluded, according to each traditional detail with all its laws and customs. As we have been privileged to celebrate this Seder, so may we one day celebrate it in a peaceful Jerusalem. “



Freedom. It isn't once, to walk out  
under the Milky Way, feeling the rivers  
of light, the fields of dark—  
freedom is daily, prose-bound, routine  
remembering. Putting together, inch by inch  
the starry worlds. From all the lost collections.  
(—Adrienne Rich)

The Haggadah was compiled circa 170 BC.

The oldest fully intact Haggadah (probably Barcelona c. 1320) depicts scenes from the Old Testament and not only breaks tradition by depicting the human form, but it also portrays the world as round, an heretical concept during the middle ages.