PREPARING THE SEDER TABLE

The preparation should involve the whole group or family if possible. Children can help set the table, color place cards, make matzah covers, and take charge of the salt water. The more people participate, the greater the sense of their involvement—and the lighter the burden on those doing the planning and cooking. In honor of the festival, and in celebration of freedom, many people set the table with their finest dishes. In honor of spring and the festival, some buy or pick flowers for the table.

In addition to copies of the Haggadah and whatever food will be served at the meal, the main items needed for the seder are the seder plate, matzot, wine or grape juice, salt water, and the cups for Miriam and Elijah. You will also need extra bowls of haroset, karpas, and maror.

THE SEDER PLATE

The seder plate contains all the symbols of the seder. While any dish can be used, many people own special seder plates with places marked for each item. One seder plate is enough, though some people provide more if the seder is very large. The items on the seder plate include:

1. Karpas—a vegetable, usually green such as parsley, symbolizing spring and rebirth. It is dipped in salt water near the beginning of the seder.
2. Haroset—a mixture of chopped apples, nuts, wine or grape juice, and spices. The haroset symbolizes the mortar that the slaves made for bricks in Egypt and is used to offset the taste of the bitter herbs. Recipes vary widely among Jews, though the above list is the most common among Ashkenazi Jews. Sephardic recipes often include figs, dates, raisins, and bananas as well.
3. Maror—the bitter herbs. Either romaine lettuce or freshly ground or sliced hors-radish is used as a symbol of the bitterness of slavery.
4. Beitzah—roasted egg, symbol of the festival sacrifice. The egg should be hard-boiled and then, still in its shell, placed on a stove burner or in the oven until part of it is scorched.
5. Zeroa—roasted shank bone, symbol of the Pesah sacrifice. The rabbis of the Talmud also allow a broiled beet, which is helpful for vegetarians.

Some seder plates have a sixth symbol, hazgret, additional maror to be used for Hillel's sandwich.
THREE MATZOT placed one atop the other, are used during the seder. They are customarily covered with a napkin or matzah cover and placed next to the seder plate. Use plain flour-and-water matzah for the seder, symbolizing *lehem oni*—the plain bread of affliction.

FOUR CUPS OF WINE or grape juice are drunk during the course of the seder. The drinking of the four cups is a mitzvah, not an endurance test. Since it is important to be fully conscious at the seder, rather than sleepy or tipsy, you can alternate wine and juice or use only juice. If for reasons of health you cannot drink grape juice or wine, any other drink can be used.

BOWLS OF SALT WATER are placed on the table as a symbol of the tears of slavery. The *karpas* or green vegetable is dipped into the salt water early in the seder.

A LARGE GOBLET is set in the center of the table at the beginning of the seder, symbolizing the well of Miriam that sustained the Israelites during their journey in the desert. It should be filled with spring water. A large goblet is set aside for Elijah, who represents the longing for messianic days, which according to legend will be heralded by Elijah. Some legends hold that the prophet visits every home on Pesah and drinks from his cup. Elijah’s cup is filled by seder participants toward the end of the seder.

People use pillows to lean on whenever we are called upon to recline during the seder. The custom of reclining goes back to ancient times, when slaves ate standing up while free people ate while reclining.

Some people use a special kind of matzah made from wheat that is “watched” (*shamor*) from the time it is harvested to prevent any contact with water that might cause leavening to ensue. Regular matzah is watched only from the time the grain is ground.
CANDLELIGHTING

We welcome the festival of Pesah as darkness descends. As we kindle these lights, we remember that our ancestors discovered freedom in the midst of the dark final night in Egypt. Let the candles we now light be a reflection of the light that shines within each one of us, and let that light radiate throughout our home. We praise the Source of Light that keeps alive the hope of freedom amidst the darkness of oppression.

Light the candles and recite:

Baruh attah adonay eloheynu melekh ha’olam asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel [shabbat ve] yom tov.

Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds, who has made us holy with your mitzvot and commanded us to kindle the [Shabbat and] festival lights.

or

Nevareh et ruah ha’olam asher kideshatnu bemitzvoteha vetzivatnu lehadlik ner shel [shabbat ve] yom tov.

We bless the spirit of the world, who has made us holy with the mitzvot and commanded us to kindle the [Shabbat and] festival lights.
THE ORDER

קַדְשׁ KADESH blessing over wine or grape juice
וּרֵה HATZ hand washing
כַּפָּס KARPAS dipping a vegetable in salt water
יָחַזֶּה YAHATZ breaking the middle matzah
מָגִיד MAGID telling the story
רֹטֶה ROITZAH hand washing
מֹצִיא מָצָא MOTZI MATZAH eating matzah
מָרָר MAROR eating bitter herbs
כוֹרָה KOREH eating matzah and maror sandwich
שׁוּלְחַן אוֹרֶה SHULHAN OREH the meal
צָפוּנTZAFUN eating the afikoman
בַּרְכִּי BAREH blessings after the meal
חַלְכִּי HALLEL reciting Psalms
נִרְצוּת NIRTZAH the conclusion

The enduring reality of the Exodus has been apparent in our own time by the rescue of thousands of Ethiopian Jews who were flown to Israel in Israeli jets, finally safe from the danger of annihilation in Ethiopia. For the Ethiopians, lining up to board the planes was like stepping into the Sea of Reeds. Danger was at their backs, while both the promise of freedom and the fear of the unknown lay ahead. What other people have faced such choices? Jeffrey Schrier
INTRODUCTION TO THE SEDER

We begin our journey through the Pesah seder, our journey from slavery to freedom. Through word and song, story and ritual, questions and more questions, we will relive the story of our ancestors’ exodus and liberation.

We tell the story not only to preserve the memory. We tell the story because Egypt is not only one physical place. The Exodus was not just one moment in time.

We step into this story because it is both our story and the story of all people who have experienced oppression and liberation. When we recall the story of our oppression, we resolve to fight oppression everywhere. When we recall the story of our liberation, we renew our dream for freedom everywhere.

Tonight, we raise our voices as individuals and members of this seder community committed to marching together out of Egypt.

Miriam’s Cup has become part of the seder ritual only in the last few years, but its origin lies in the midrash, which says that Miriam’s well accompanied the Israelites through the wilderness until Miriam’s death. Miriam, the sister of Moses, is thus associated with the ongoing redemption represented by water in the desert. In Miriam’s Cup, filled with water, we have the parallel of Elijah’s cup, which appears toward the end of the seder. But whereas Elijah stands for the redemption yet to come, Miriam reminds us of the redemption occurring daily in our lives.  

David Teutsch

Place Miriam’s Cup, filled with spring water, on the seder table.

Even as we begin our story, we know its “end.” Israel will leave Egypt and wander in the desert for forty years on the way to the promised land. According to legend, a well of water accompanied the Israelites on their journey in the desert.

This miraculous well was provided because of the merit of Miriam, the sister of Moses. She watched over her brother as he floated down the Nile, and later joined with him to lead the people across the sea. Tonight, we recall the well of water as we place Miriam’s cup on our seder table.

In every generation, we experience both oppression and liberation. In our wanderings, both as a people and as individuals, Miriam’s well still accompanies us as a sustaining presence in the desert, enabling us not just to survive, but to thrive.

Miriam’s well reminds us that our journey has both direction and destination—to a place where freedom is proclaimed for all.

In this illustration, Miriam’s well is represented by a water jug superimposed on a map. It is as though the sea itself was flowing from the mouth of the jug, which is held by graceful yet powerful hands. Jeffrey Schrier
Pesah focuses on what can be called the “already/not yet” syndrome of Judaism. At our seder, we note a paradox: the festival celebrates freedom and redemption, and simultaneously reminds us that we are neither free nor redeemed! Pesah is replete with perpetual tensions—between slavery and freedom, between redemption and exile, between homeland and wandering, between what has already happened and what has yet to occur.

Thus we open our seder with the words of the Kiddush: “this festival of matzot, the season of our freedom.” But almost immediately afterwards, we uncover the matzah and recite: “Now we are enslaved, next year [may] we all be free.” At the very beginning, the Haggadah articulates the paradox that will occur as a refrain several times throughout the seder—that while we are indeed “free” because of what happened back then, we remain enslaved until full liberation is achieved for all people. Richard Hirsh

Raise a full cup and recite, adding the [bracketed words] on Shabbat:
The phrase (Nevareh et ruah ba’olam) is an alternative form of blessing, See page 13 for a full explanation.

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu melekh ha’olam (Nevareh et ruah ba’olam) borey peri ha’agafen.
Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds (We bless the spirit of the world), who creates the fruit of the vine.

Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds (We bless the spirit of the world), who has called us to your service, and made us holy with your mitzvot, and given us, Eternal One our God, in love [the Shabbat for rest], the festivals for happiness, the holidays and seasons for rejoicing, this day of [the Sabbath, and of] the festival of matzot, time of our freedom [with love], a holy convocation, a remembrance of the going-out from Egypt.

For you called to us, and made us holy for your service, and [with love and favor, the Shabbat and all] your holy Festivals, in happiness and joy, have given us, to have and to hand on. Blessed are you, Eternal One, (We bless the spirit of the world) who raises up to holiness [Shabbat,] the people Israel and their festive times.

On Saturday night, insert Havdalah (p. 34) here. On each night, conclude the Kiddush with the following:

ברוך אתה הוה אלוהינו מלך העולם (ברכה אבה)
שחיתינו וקיבינו את נוהך.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheynu Melech Ha’olam (Nevareh et Ruah Ha’olam) Sheheheyanu Vekiyemenu Venigi’anu Lazeman Hazeh.

Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds (We bless the spirit of the world), who gave us life, and kept us strong, and brought us to this time.

Drink while reclining.

We recline at the seder because in Roman times those who were free would eat while reclining (think of Cleopatra’s couch as a typical dining room chair). On the other hand, slaves would eat while standing. The custom is to lean to the left on a pillow or the arm of your chair. We recline during the seder whenever we partake of a symbol of freedom (like wine or matzah).

Michael Strassfeld
Dip a vegetable in salt water and recite:

ברוך אתה ישות אלוהים מלך העולם בוראו פריו הראtempts.

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu melech ha’olam borey peri ha’adamah.

Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds, who creates fruit of the earth.

or

נברך אתה רוח העולם בוראת פריו הראtempts.

Nevareh et ruah ha’olam boreyt peri ha’adamah.

We bless the spirit of the world, who creates fruit of the earth.

Eat the vegetable.

Overleaf:

Broken fragments of matzah are like pieces of a puzzle in this illustration. Some segments depict the bread of affliction while others represent the journey and destination of the Israelites. Perhaps the piece of matzah may be seen as the unknown pieces of ourselves that, when known and understood, carry us forward toward a worthwhile destination. Putting together our “pieces” can be a kind of tikun—a repair. Sheila Peltz Weinberg

The seder includes numerous contrasting symbols: parsley in salt water and bitter maror in sweet haroset; death in the shank bone next to the egg of life on the seder plate; matzah both as a symbol of freedom and bread of affliction. What is the connection between these contradictions and freedom?

Human beings are deeply conditioned to crave the pleasant and the sweet and avoid the unpleasant. This is a natural tendency. However, to be free means relating fully to all experience and choosing how to act because we wish to realize our values and commitments.

As free beings tonight we embrace all experience and are not shaken or driven by our fears and desires to make our experience conform to our expectations. We are free insofar as we do not automatically identify pleasant and unpleasant with good and bad, with desirable and undesirable, with true and false. Freedom entails a perspective that is wider than our likes and dislikes. Sheila Peltz Weinberg
The phrase “now we are slaves” sets up the dramatic tension that embraces the entire seder. On the one hand we are proclaiming, “Thank God we are free!” and we soon say, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt... and had God not taken our ancestors out of Egypt, we... would still be enslaved.” Liberation happened long ago, and as good, faithful Jews we still remember it. But here we say the opposite: We are still slaves! Our liberation never quite succeeded. This seder is about present and future liberation, not only that of the past. We still need to come forth from Egypt.

Both of these versions of liberation are true. When seen from the viewpoint of our one-time total bondage and that of Jews and others within our own memory, we indeed have every reason to be grateful. But the human condition is such that we still struggle to be free. Conversation at the seder table should attempt to encompass both of these truths. Arthur Green

Uncover the matzot.

This is the bread of our poverty, which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in need come and celebrate Pesah. Now we are here—next year in the land of Israel. Now we are slaves. Next year we will be free.

As we invite all who are hungry, we symbolically include all who are oppressed throughout the world.

We understand the invitation to include “all who are hungry,” but why then does the Haggadah add the words, “all who are in need”? Perhaps the second phrase refers to those who would be alone at the seder.

Having suffered affliction ourselves, we should be more sensitive to the needs of others. So the seder begins with a reminder to care for others through tzedakah and ha’nasat arim, inviting others who are lacking to come partake in the festive meal. Michael Cohen
If anyone at the table does not understand Hebrew, the Four Questions must be translated. In the Yemenite ritual, a child recites a short version of the entire Haggadah in Judeo-Arabic. Our family’s custom is to ask people to recite the Four Questions in their native language. Mordechai Liebling

Pesah gave the Jews, through the ritual of the seder, a lesson in education. It is a lesson to the Jewish people, intended to point to the spirit in which a person must learn to educate the young. If we study the seder from that standpoint, we note that it is intended to serve as a token of three important principles: First, that education can and should constitute a religious experience. Second, the parental responsibility for the education of the child should be prior to that of the state. Third, the most important training should be training in freedom. Mordecai M. Kaplan, adapted

Language can be very powerful. At my family’s seder, our custom is to go around the table, reading in both English and Hebrew. When my grandmother was alive, she always asked the next person to read when it was her turn, claiming that she had forgotten her glasses. Even as a young child, I sensed her embarrassment at reading in public in a language that wasn’t her first tongue.

One year, I brought my college roommate home for the seder. A Russian major, she began to speak with my grandmother in Russian, and soon my grandmother was quoting Pushkin by heart. This woman whom I had believed to be illiterate was finally able to give voice to memories of her childhood that she had buried in order to be an American.

Joy Levitt

Mah nishtanah halaylah hazeh mikol haleylot!
Shebebol haleylot anu oblin hametz umatzah,
Halaylah hazeh kulo matzah.
Shebebol haleylot anu oblin she’ar yerakot,
Halaylah hazeh maror.
Shebebol haleylot eyn anu matbilin afilu pa’am ehat,
Halaylah hazeh shetey fe’amim.
Shebebol haleylot anu oblin beyn yoshvin uveyn mesubin
Halaylah hazeh kulanu mesubin.

Why is this night different from all other nights?

On all other nights we eat leavened or unleavened bread.
Why on this night do we eat only matzah?

On all other nights we eat various kinds of vegetables.
Why on this night do we eat bitter herbs?

On all other nights we need not dip our vegetables even once.
Why on this night do we dip them twice?

On all other nights we eat either sitting up or reclining.
Why on this night do we eat reclining?

The whole point of the seder is to ask questions. This is your time to ask about things that confuse you, things you don’t understand, or even things you don’t agree with. There really is no such thing as a stupid question, especially tonight.

Joy Levitt
How do we begin the story? The Talmud presents two views. The rabbinic sage Samuel began with physical enslavement:

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. The Eternal One our God brought us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Had God not taken our ancestors out of Egypt, then we and our children and our children’s children would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. And even if all of us were wise scholars, all of us were sages, all of us were experienced in the ways of the world, all knowledgeable in Torah, it would still be our responsibility to tell about the Exodus from Egypt. Whoever expands upon the story of the Exodus from Egypt is worthy of praise.

Avadim hayinu hayinu atah beney horin beney horin
Avadim hayinu atah beney horin
Avadim hayinu atah beney horin beney horin.
THE FOUR CHILDREN

Four times the Torah speaks about children in connection with the telling of the Exodus story, but nothing is said about the character of these children. Rabbinic midrash viewed these passages not as simple repetitions but as representing different types of children.

There are four verses in the Torah that imply four types of children:

One who is wise
One who is wicked
One who is simple and
One who does not know enough to ask.

Yet we know that no child is all wise, all wicked, all simple, or incapable of asking anything. At different points in our lives, we have been all of these children:

One who is eager
One who is hostile
One who is passive and
One who is bewildered.

We have asked the cleverest of questions; we have challenged provocatively; we have simply wanted to know the answer; we have been so confused that we could not speak. We have been all of these children:

One who is aware
One who is alienated
One who is direct and
One who is silent.
One morning when Pharaoh awoke in his bed. There were frogs on his head and frogs in his bed. Frogs on his nose and frogs on his toes. Frogs here, frogs there, frogs were jumping everywhere.

As each plague is mentioned, take a drop of wine from the cup and recite:

פּוֹנֶס, צְפָרְדֵּא, קִינִים, אוֹרֹב, דֶּבֶר, שֶהָחָה, בֶּרֶס, אַרְבֶּה, חַלֶּה,
Maftir Berorot

Dam, Tzefarde'a, Kinim, Arov, Dever, Shehin, Barad, Arbeh, Hosheh, Makat Behorot

The Holy One brought ten plagues upon the Egyptians, and they were:
Blood, Frogs, Lice, Beasts, Cattle Plague, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, Death of the Firstborn

The wise child says, “We spill the wine from our cup because our salvation came at the expense of the suffering of others. At the crossing of the sea, the ministering angels wanted to sing praises to God. But God silenced them, saying, ‘My children are drowning in the sea and you want to sing before me?’”

The vengeful child says, “We spill the wine from the cup because our blood has been spilled. There was a dispute in heaven about how much mercy God should show the Egyptians, until the angel Gabriel showed God a brick from Egypt with a baby entombed in it. ‘Master of the world,’ he said, ‘thus did they enslave the Israelites.’ God immediately sentenced the Egyptians and drowned them in the sea.”

The innocent child says, “We spill the wine from the cup because our blood was spilled and their blood was spilled. We are all diminished when blood is shed.”

The unaware child enjoys spilling the drops.
In what sense is each moment of liberation enough? Dayenu signifies deep acceptance and gratitude. We acknowledge the present moment. In the affirmation of dayenu, we are fully present to the preciousness of each act of redemption and care—dividing the sea, leading us across, caring for us in the desert, . . . We receive each moment with love. This acceptance allows us to move to the next moment and receive the waiting gift. When we greet each moment with conditions, judgments, and expectations—“well, this really isn’t quite where we need to be” or “wait a second, this is not what we were promised” or “hey, what’s coming next?”—our expectations keep us tense. We are not free. We are not available to receive the next moment. Our fantasies about the past and our desire to control the future cut us off from the wonders of this moment. They shut us in a prison of disappointment and suffering. Dayenu is a great liberator. It is a jolt into the presence of awe, compassion, attention, and freedom.

Sheila Peltz Weinberg

Ilu hotzi hotzianu mimitzrayim
hotzianu mimitzrayim dayenu
Day, dayenu (3) dayenu dayenu
Ilu natan natan lanu natan lanu et hashabbat
natan lanu et hashabbat dayenu
Day, dayenu (3) dayenu dayenu
Ilu natan natan lanu natan lanu et batorah
natan lanu et batorah dayenu
Day, dayenu (3) dayenu dayenu

The verse that proclaims that it would have been enough had God helped us reach Mount Sinai without giving us the Torah makes no sense according to Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev. What would have been the purpose of coming to Sinai if there was to be no Torah, no revelation?

The answer, he says, lies in what happened to Israel in the three days of preparation for the great event. Each one present, he says (and of course all of us were present at Sinai), sincerely and deeply opened his/her heart to Torah, casting aside all material concerns in order to hear God’s word. Then we were all able to discover the entire Torah already implanted within our own hearts. Each of us contains Torah within us; it is only our enslavement to exter nalss that keeps us from turning inward to find it. The promise of revelation was enough, he says, to evoke this discovery/revelation from within. Arthur Green

In what ways do the maps of the Sinai in this illustration complement Dayenu? Could Dayenu be telling us that, as important as the destination is, so too is the awesome process of the journey itself?

Jeffrey Schrier
We continue the process of liberation as we drink the second cup of wine. We have experienced the awareness of degradation that compelled the Israelites to resist enslavement. We drink this second cup in honor of redemption, even as we acknowledge the continuing struggle and the unknown road through the desert.

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha’olam borey peri hagafen.

Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds, who creates the fruit of the vine.

or

Nevareḥ et ruḥ ha’olam boreyti peri hagafen.

We bless the spirit of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink while reclining.
Hand washing

It is customary to wash our hands before reciting motzi. This reflects an important early democratization within Judaism that occurred when the rabbis suggested that each home is a mikdash me’at, a small sanctuary. Just as the priests in the time of the Temple washed before making a meal offering on the altar, so do we wash before reciting motzi at our table. In taking on this priestly function in our own homes, we accept the challenge to create holiness in our homes just as it was up to the priests to guard the sanctity of the Temple.

David Teutsch

Once again we wash our hands, but much has changed since the seder began. We have passed through the long night of Egypt, and we stand on the far side of the Sea of Reeds. We now wash our hands to celebrate our crossing the sea, our rebirth as a free people. Now we recite a blessing, for our hands are free to perform acts of holiness, to eat matzah, the symbol of liberation.

In this moment of celebration, may this water, symbolically drawn from Miriam’s well, cleanse us of all the wounds and pain of Egypt. For even as we remember the past, we are called to strive for a healing future.

Either have one person walk around the table with a pitcher of water and a basin or invite people to wash each other’s hands.

Barukh atah adonay eloheynu melekh ha’olam asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetziyonu al netilat yadayim.

Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds, who has made us holy with your mitzvot and commanded us to wash our hands.

In this illustration, the surrounding matzah creates the shape of a hand out of empty space. What deeds can fill the empty places in our world or in ourselves? How is tzedakah—the opportunity to perform acts of righteousness—like an outstretched hand? Jeffrey Schrier
Lift the three matzot and say the following two blessings:

ברוך אתה יהוה אללהיchein מлечת נמצית ללחם נוהגי

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu melech ha’olam hamotzi lehem min ha’aretz.

Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds, who brings forth bread from the earth.

ברוך אתה יהוה אללהיchein מлечת נמצית לプラス

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu melech ha’olam asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetziyanu al ahilat matzah.

Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds, who has made us holy with your mitzvot and commanded us to eat matzah.

Or

ברוך אתה יהוה אללהיchein ללחם נוהגי

Nevareh et ruah ha’olam hamotziyah lehem min ha’aretz.

We bless the spirit of the world, who brings forth bread from the earth.

ברוך אתה יהוה אללהיchein לプラス

Nevareh et ruah ha’olam asher kideshatnu bemitzvoteha vetzivanu al ahilat matzah.

We bless the spirit of the world, who has made us holy with the mitzvot and commanded us to eat matzah.

Although we add a second blessing for matzah, the first blessing continues to speak of lehem, bread. Matzah isn’t only a ritual food; it is also the “staff of life.” — Robert Goldenberg

Ordinarily we recite only one blessing over bread. Here there are two. The one said every day is in appreciation for the creation of the bread itself. The other is a recognition that at the seder we are required to eat matzah. Whereas all during the rest of Pesah we can simply forego all leavened breads, we are required to eat matzah at the seder because it is a stand-in for the first Pesah meal that signifies redemption. This shows itself in our tradition in many ways. Perhaps the most obvious is that the name for the blessing over bread is motzi, which is from the same root as yitzah, bringing forth or going forth. Bread is the symbol of the redemption embodied by food in our daily lives. Additionally, matzah symbolizes Pesah redemption. — David Teutsch

Eat from the top and middle matzah while reclining.
BITTER HERBS

Rabbi Bunam said: “We eat the seder meal in the following order: the matzah first, and the bitter herbs next, though it would seem the reverse order is proper, since we first suffered and later were freed. The reason for this, however, is that as long as there was no prospect of being redeemed, the Israelites did not feel keenly the bitterness of their lot. But as soon as Moses spoke to them of freedom, they awoke to the bitterness of their slavery.” Michael Strassfeld

MAROR: Why do we eat it? To remind ourselves that the Egyptians made life bitter for our ancestors in Egypt, as it is written, “Ruthlessly, they made life bitter for them with harsh labor at mortar and bricks, and with all sorts of tasks in the field.” Exodus 1:14

Take maror, dip it in haroset and recite:

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha’olam asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetziyatnu al ahilat maror.

Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds, who has made us holy with mitzvot and commanded us to eat maror.

or

Nevareh et ruah ha’olam asher kideshatnu bemitzvoteha vetziyatnu al ahilat maror.

We bless the spirit of the world, who has made us holy with mitzvot and commanded us to eat maror.

Eat the maror with the haroset.
sign of a true and free social intercourse is this, that the one who stands—relatively speaking—nearest the periphery of the circle gives the cue for the level on which the conversation is to be conducted. For this conversation must include everyone. . . . The freedom of a society is always the freedom of everyone who belongs to it.

Franz Rosenzweig

So pharaonic oppression, deliverance, Sinai, and Canaan are still with us, powerful memories shaping our perceptions of the political world. The "door of hope" is still open; things are not what they might be—even when what they might be isn't totally different from what they are. . . . We still believe, or many of us do, what the Exodus first taught, or what it has commonly been taken to teach, about the meaning and possibility of politics and about its proper form:
—first, that wherever you live, it is probably Egypt;
—second, that there is a better place, a world more attractive, a promised land;
—and third, that "the way to the land is through the wilderness." There is no way to get from here to there except by joining together and marching.

Michael Walzer
AN ALTERNATIVE BLESSING AFTER THE MEAL

בריה rahamana Malka de’alma mrey dehay pita.

You are the source of life for all that is and your blessing flows through me.

*Interpretative blessing after meals by Shefa Gold, based on Berahot 40b.*

THE THIRD CUP

We dedicated the first cup of wine to awareness—the first step taken in the journey toward liberation. We drank the second cup in celebration of the redemption from Egypt. We now drink this third cup in gratitude for all the gifts we have been given. The seder reminds us of the gifts of relationships—of friends and family; and of our material possessions—good food and drink. Yet most of all we offer thanks for the greatest gift—the ability to challenge, to question, to choose, and therefore to strive for freedom.

*Lift the cup and recite:*

ברוך אתה יadow אלוהים מלך עולם בורא פריית הָגַּפֶּן.

*Barukh atah adonay eloheynu melekh ha’olam borey peri hagafen.*

Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds, who creates the fruit of the vine.

*or*

נברך אתה רוח הָעָלָם בוראת פריית הָגַּפֶּן.

*Nevareh et ruah ha’olam boreyt peri hagafen.*

We bless the spirit of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine.

*Drink while reclining.*

98
Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome, fearful day of the Eternal One, who will reconcile parents with children and children with parents. *Malachi* 3:23

*Sing either Eliyahu Hanavi or Harahaman*

Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu hatishbi
Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu hagiladi.
Bimherah veyameynu yavo eleynu
Im mashiah ben David, im mashiah ben David.

Elijah the prophet come speedily to us hailing messianic days.

Harahaman hu yishlah lanu et Eliyahu hanavi (2)
zahur latov. Vivaser lanu lanu (2) vivaser lanu besorot
tovot yishuot venehamot.

May the merciful One send us the prophet Elijah, of blessed memory, who will bring us good tidings, deliverance, and comfort.

*Close the door.*
CONCLUSION

Awareness, redemption, and gratitude accompanied our first three cups. This fourth cup is the cup of hope: Hope that next year we will all be free, that next year children and parents, neighbors and nations will turn their hearts to one another. Hope that next year Jerusalem will be a city of peace.

_Lift the cup and recite:_

כתרך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולמים בורא רבי חן

_Hagafen._

Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds, who creates the fruit of the vine.

_or_

בברך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולמים בורא רבי חן

_Hagafen._

We bless the spirit of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine.

_In celebration, we add another blessing:_

כתרך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולמים שעשועי בוראו

_Horin._

Blessed are you, Eternal One our God, sovereign of all worlds, who has made me free.

_or_

בברך אתה יהוה העולמים שעשועי בורא את חורין.

_Hagafen._

We bless the spirit of the world, who has made me free.

_Drink while reclining._
Now our seder is completed
Every requirement fulfilled.
Just as we have been privileged to observe it this year
may we continue to do so in years to come.

You who are pure, dwelling on high,
raise up your countless people.
Soon bring your offshoots strong
Redeemed to Zion in joyous song.

The Pesah seder and Yom Kippur end on the same triumphant declaration: Next year in Jerusalem! On one side of the year, we are ending a day of fasting and introspection; on the other side, a feast and celebration. The spiritual cleansing of Yom Kippur makes us ready to listen, to care as individuals, to bring the messianic era closer. The physical cleansing and re-enactment of our enslavement remind us of our responsibility to make the world more ready for the messianic vision of justice and compassion. This credo represents the simple message that our job is not done—with freedom comes responsibility.

Naamah Kelman
1. Web of Women

Long ago on Egyptian soil
The Hebrew children multiplied
The Hebrew children toiled
Nasty Pharaoh, he made a lot of noise
He told Shifра and Puah to kill the baby boys

Chorus
It was a web of women, a web of women
That kept the Hebrew children alive
It was a web of women, a web of women
That helped the Hebrew children to survive

Now Shifra and Puah ignored Pharaoh’s law
They were lovin’ midwives
They knew right from wrong
Pharaoh was a madman
A monster through and through
But women have the power,
To do what they must do.

Chorus
The Hebrew women in those dark years
Just kept having babies
They pushed back their fears
Yocheved had a baby
Moshe was his name
And he would lead his people
To freedom once again

Yocheved had a baby
Moshe was his name
Miriam, his sister, watched him all the same
‘Til Pharaoh’s kindly daughter
Rescued him so brave
Without these holy women
We might still be slaves.
2. **The Passover Song** *(to the tune of “There’s No Business Like Show Business”)*

There’s no Seder like our Seder,
There’s no Seder we know,
Everything about it is fantastic
Nothing that the Torah won’t allow
Listen how we read the whole Haggadah
We read the Hebrew
‘Cause we know how!!

There’s no Seder like our Seder,
We tell a tale that is swell:
Moses took the people out into the heat
They baked the matzah
While on their feet.
Now isn’t that a story
That just can’t be beat?
Let’s go on with the show
Let’s go on with the show!!

3. **Mi Shebeirach**

Mi shebeirach avoteinu
M’kor habracha l’imoteinu

May the source of strength,
who blessed the ones before us,
help us find the courage,
to make our lives a blessing,
and let us say, Amen.

Mi shebeirach imoteinu
M’kor habracha l’avoteinu

Bless those in need of healing
with refua shelema,
the renewal of body,
the renewal of spirit,
and let us say, Amen.
4. Our Passover Things
(to the tune of “Our Favorite Things”)

Cleaning and cooking and so many dishes
Out with the Chametz, no pasta, no knishes
Fish that’s gefilleted, horseradish that stings
These are a few of our Passover things.

Matzah and karpas and chopped up charoset
Shankbones and kiddish and Yiddish neuroses
Tante who kvetches and uncle who sings
These are a few of our Passover things.

When the plagues strike
When the lice bite
When we’re feeling sad
We simply remember our Passover things
And then we don’t feel so bad.

Matzah and maror and trouble with Pharaoh
Famines and locusts and slaves with
wheelbarrows
Matzah balls floating and eggshells that cling
These are a few of our Passover things.

5. Buy Me Some Ch’rain
(to the tune of “Bei mir bistu shein”)

Buy me some ch’rain
and grind it again.

I just can’t abstain
Although I try.

I’ll say it again;
If I can’t obtain
My fill of ch’rain
I think I’ll die.

Don’t give me ketchup, pickles
I don’t go for Grey Poupon.
I want something that tickles
Up my nose, makes my eyes run.

Again I’ll explain;
I love my ch’rain.
So pass it again
And let’s all cry.
6. **We’ve Got Matzah**  
*(to the tune of “I Got Rhythm”)*

We’ve got matzah. We’ve got maror.  
We’ve got shank bones.  
Who could ask for anything more?

We’ve got manna in the desert.  
We’ve got Moses.  
Who could ask for anything more?

Old man Pharaoh, he’s behind us.  
You won’t find us at his door.  
We’ve got freedom.  
We’ve got Torah.  
We’ve got our God.  
Who could ask for anything more?  
Who could ask for anything more?

**7. Matzah Ball Tonight**  
*(to the tune of “Comedy Tonight”)*

Something historic, something caloric  
Something for everyone, a matzah ball tonight.  
Tales that are thrilling, food that is filling  
Something for everyone, a matzah ball tonight.

Waters that part, great pyramids,  
Bring on the yentas, kvetchers and kids.  
Something neurotic, something melodic

Singing of Hebrews taking flight!  
Matzah brei tomorrow, matzah balls tonight!

Some yadda yadda from the haggadah  
Something for everyone, a matzah ball tonight  
So much to question, such indigestion  
Something for everyone, a matzah ball tonight.

Hide your brioche, throw out your bread.  
Eat macaroons and matzah instead.  
Something observant, festive and fervent  
Praise Adonai with all your might!  
Matzah brei tomorrow, matzah balls tonight!

Something enduring, see Grandpa snoring  
Something for everyone, a matzah ball tonight  
Motzi and Kiddush, Hebrew and Yiddish  
Something for everyone, a matzah ball tonight.

Prayers to be prayed, songs to be sung  
Family and friends, the old and the young  
Something so Jewish, so Dayenu-ish,  
Thank God it all turned out alright!  
Matzah brei tomorrow, matzah balls tonight!