

Favorites 2020

By [Haggadot](#)

**2020 Pesach Seder: Kadesh,
Urchatz, Karpas, Urchatz, Yachatz,
Urchatz, Maggid, Rochtza, Motzi-
Matzah, Urchatz, Maror, Urchatz,
Korech, Urchatz, Shulchan Orech,
Urchatz, Tzafun, Urchatz, Barech,
Urchatz, and so forth...**

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Introduction

Passover 2020 Introduction

Contributed by [Haggadot](#)

Source: Haggadot.com Team

Though COVID-19 is quickly becoming a plague upon the world, we at Haggadot.com believe Passover does NOT need to be canceled! We can still let our people seder :)

With the help of video conferencing technology like Zoom and our online 2020 Haggadah Favorites, Haggadot.com is committed to helping you host a seder that is still community-oriented but also safety-first.

Passover has always been a holiday where space and time are like one of our favorite Jewish scientist heroes Albert Einstein said: relative.

Throughout history Jews have been called to imagine what it was like to be in the same time and space as their ancestral, enslaved Jews in Egypt.

And after the Jews reached their homeland, but were dispersed in the diaspora, Jews have since imagined that next year they will be back in the space of Jerusalem.

This year, with extensive travel restrictions in place and with immuno-compromised family members' health to take into consideration, your family may decide to gather online across the time zones to celebrate Passover.

Haggadot.com's flexible resources allow families to create a meaningful holiday together by printing and using their customized haggadot from anywhere in the world.

When we end our seder saying, "Next Year in Jerusalem," we might also want to add a wish of "Next year may we be physically together in the same space."

Thinking of time and space, what else about the Passover story can be a metaphor for these concepts? What ideas about being present in your mind are there to consider? What freedom from too many grievances from the past can we attain? And what feelings about living too much in fear about the future can we clear?

While we hope to add content related to the current events, this Haggadah mostly includes our favorite content that transcends these particular times. Hope you enjoy!

Stay safe & joyous,
Haggadot.com

Introduction

Seder Guests...

Contributed by [Rebecca Powell](#)

Source:

Seder Guests

To the tune of "Matchmaker"

Seder guests, seder guests lend me your ear

We've all arrived

Another year

Seder guests, seder guests look in your book

Tonight we drink wine, not beer.

For Papa, please pay attention

For Mama, get through *all* of the steps.

For me, well, I wouldn't mention

If matzah ball soup was just all we get

Seder guests, seder guests, mah nishtanah?

Let us find out

What Israelites saw.

We tell the *story to the* little ones...

So...let's do Kadesh

Next step urchatz

When do we eat?

That parts the best

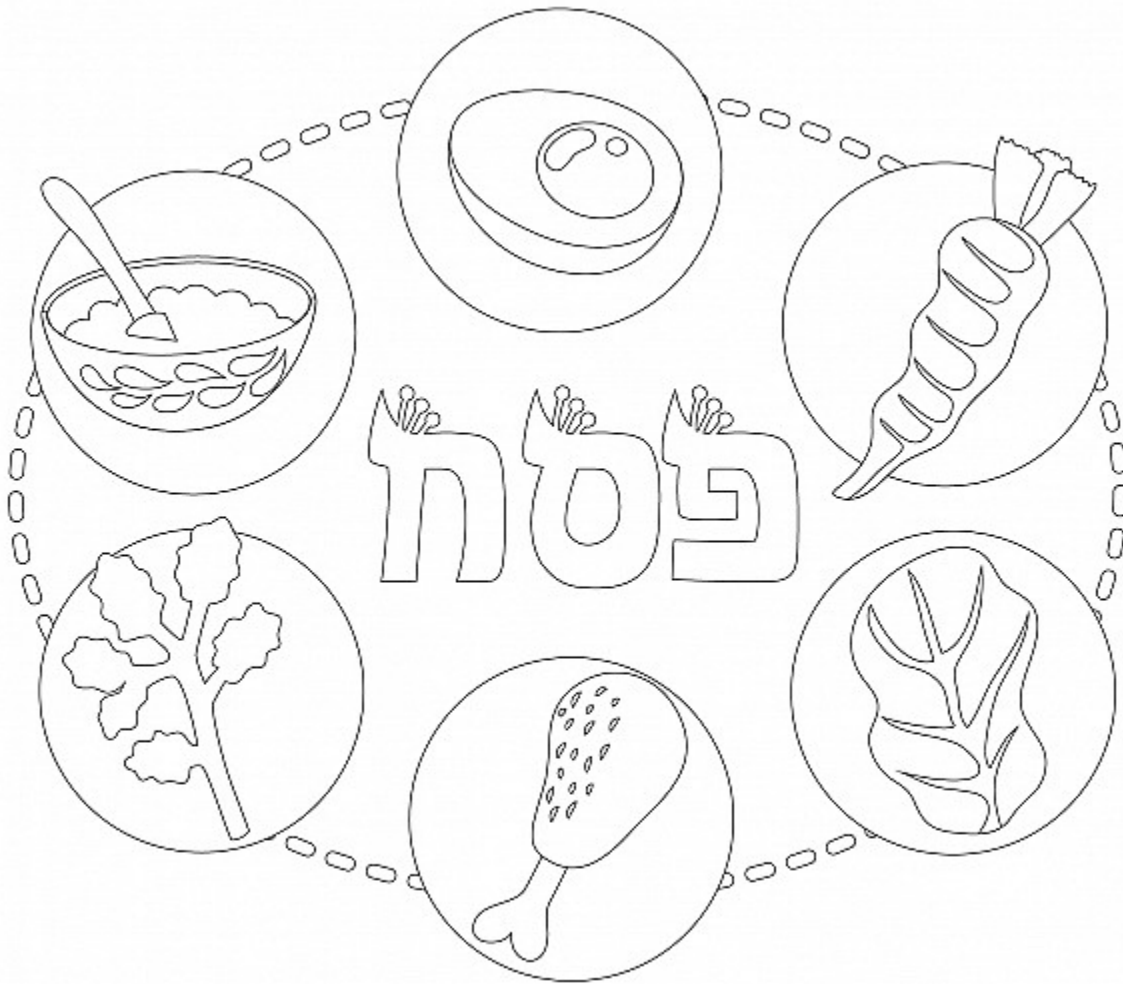
Our seder has now begun!

Introduction

The Seder Plate - Coloring Page

Contributed by [Haggadot](https://www.haggadot.com)

Source: [Haggadot.com](https://www.haggadot.com)

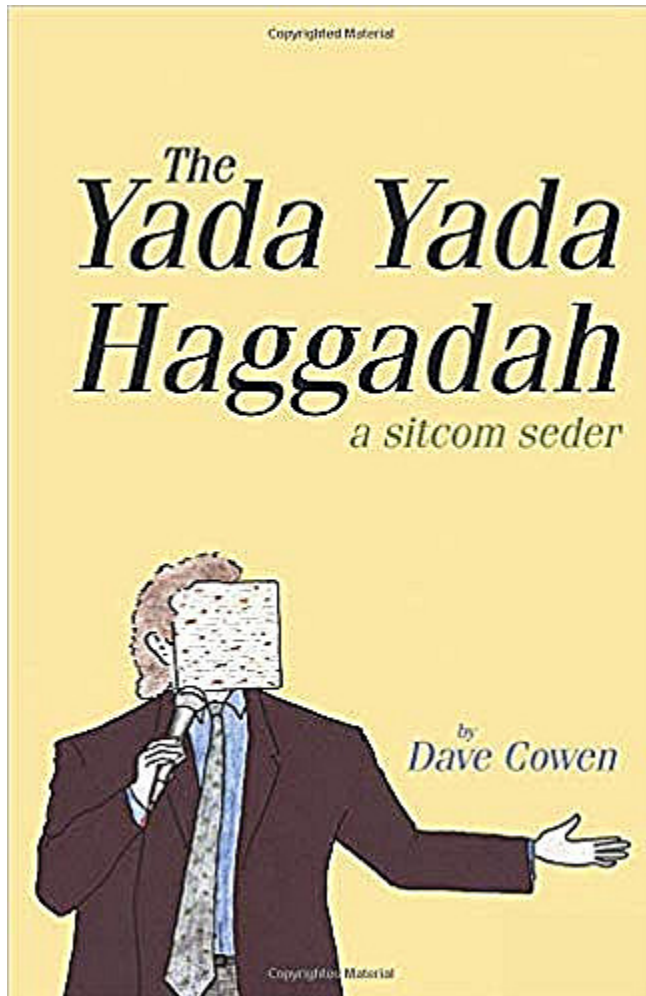


Introduction

Jerry Seinfeld's Passover Stand-Up Introduction

Contributed by [Dave Cowen](#)

Source: The Yada Yada Haggadah by Dave Cowen



INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

JERRY

Do you know why they call it Passover? G-d told Moses that the Israelites should mark their doorposts with lamb's blood. So that He could "pass over" their houses. And spare them from the plague of the killing of the first born. My question is: Who was put in charge of telling everyone? That's a big job. There's a lot counting on that job. What if someone isn't home? How did they tell them? Did they leave a note? Probably not. The Egyptians could see it. Would have ruined the whole plan. Did they just take the liberty of putting lamb's blood on the door? What about when that family gets home, sees blood all over their door? "Honey, do you see this?"

Someone put blood on our door. Someone's out to get us! You better get off the couch and wipe this off." "I'm busy! Have our first born do it!"

adapted from The Yada Yada Haggadah - <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1793219109>

Introduction

20 Table Topics for Your Passover Seder

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: [JewishBoston.com](#)

1. What do you consider your “promised land,” or heaven on earth?
2. In Hebrew, the word for Egypt is “Mitzraim,” which literally means “narrow place.” What is one way that you wish for our society to be more open?
3. Moses is considered one of the greatest leaders in our history — he is described as being smart, courageous, selfless and kind. Which of today’s leaders inspires you in a similar way?
4. Miriam was a prophetess and the sister of Moses who, after crossing the Red Sea, led the women in song and dance with tambourines. She is described as being courageous, confident, insightful and nurturing. Which musician or artist today inspires you in a similar way?
5. More recent and ongoing struggles for freedom include civil rights, GLBTQ equality, and women’s rights. Who is someone involved in this work that you admire?
6. Is there someone — or multiple people — in your family’s history who made their own journey to freedom?
7. Freedom is a central theme of Passover. When in your life have you felt most free?
8. If you could write an 11th commandment, what would it be?
9. What’s the longest journey you have ever taken?
10. How many non-food uses for matzah can you think of? Discuss!
11. Let’s say you are an Israelite packing for 40 years in the desert. What three modern items would you want to bring?
12. The Haggadah says that in every generation of Jewish history enemies have tried to eliminate us. What are the biggest threats you see to Judaism today?
13. The Passover seder format encourages us to ask as many questions as we can. What questions has Judaism encouraged you to ask?
14. Israel is central to the Passover seder. Do you think modern Israel is central to Jewish life? Why or why not?

15. The manna in the desert had a taste that matched the desire of each individual who ate it. For you, what would that taste be? Why?

16. Let's say you had to swim across the Red Sea, and it could be made of anything except water. What would you want it to be?

17. If the prophet Elijah walked through the door and sat down at your table, what's the first thing you would ask him?

18. Afikoman means "dessert" in Greek. If you could only eat one dessert for the rest of your life, what would it be?

19. What is something you wish to cleanse yourself of this year? A bad habit? An obsession or addiction?

20. The word "seder" means "order." How do you maintain order in your life?

Download the PDF here: <https://www.jewishboston.com/20-table-topics-for-your-passover-seder/>

Introduction

Blessing on Flowers

Contributed by [Dan Zed](#)

Source:

Passover is a holiday of renewal, of growth, of new birth and everything that spring has to offer. It has become tradition mainly in queer seders to bring flowers, sticks, and stones to symbolize what has lined the paths which brought us here today. Flowers obviously represent the beauty and growth we've experienced, while sticks and stones represent the challenges (yes, it's super cliché but *shrug emoji*). So let's take a look at this very handsome bouquet while *Blowing the Fluff Away* by Robyn Sarah is read:

The sprig of unknown bloom you sent last fall
spent the long winter drying on my wall,
mounted on black. But it had turned to fluff
some months ago. Tonight I took it down
because I thought that I had had enough
of staring at it. Brittle, dry and brown,
it seemed to speak too plainly of a waste
of friendship, forced to flower, culled in haste.
So, after months of fearing to walk past
in case the stir should scatter it to bits,
I took it out to scatter it at last
with my own breath, and so to call us quits.
—Fooled! for the fluff was nothing but a sheath,
with tiny, perfect flowers underneath.

Introduction

A Secular Humanistic Passover Blessing

Contributed by [Society for Humanistic Judaism](#)

Source: Society for Humanistic Judaism

This blessing can be recited as we light the candles to begin the Passover Seder and to celebrate the arrival of spring:

Blessed is the light in the world.
Blessed is the light within humanity.
Blessed is the light of Passover.

Barukh ha-or ba-olam
Barukh ha-or ba-adam
Barukh ha-ror ba-Pesakh

(If this blessing is different or new to you: Judaism is a constantly evolving conversation, practice, and identity. This text has been used by tens of thousands of Jews over the past fifty years.)

Introduction

Phrases

Contributed by [Jewish Language Project](#)

Source: Jewish Language Project Passover Supplement

Passover seder:

Judeo-Greek in Ioannina, Greece: *chova* (duty)

Judeo-Arabic in Mossul, Iraq: *fassah* (verb- conduct the seder)

Yiddish in Lvov/Lemberg, Ukraine: *praven/uprichtn dem sayder, saydern* (verb- conduct the seder)

(The evening of) searching for and getting rid of chametz:

Yiddish in Bialystok, Poland: *di nacht tsi chumets batlen* (the night to void chametz); *boydek chumets zaan* (search for chametz [to be])

Haketia in Tetuan, Morocco: *dechamezzar* (de-chametz - infinitive verb)

Ladino in Salonica, Greece: *des-hamesar* (de-chametz), *badkamiento* (search [badkar]-ing), *día de kal hamirá* (day of kal chamira - formula renouncing possession of chametz)

Judeo-Arabic in Bengazi, Libya: *lilet qto ' el-ḥamiṣ* (night of stopping the chametz)

Judeo-Arabic in Ksar Es-Souk, Morocco: *bdikt ḥamiṣ* (searching for chametz – also used by women as a curse, meaning ‘may [the person being cursed] become extinct’)

Kosher for Passover food and utensils:

Western Yiddish in Amrichshausen, Germany: *yontefdig*

Yiddish in Warsaw, Poland: *paysechdik*

Judeo-Georgian in Tbilisi, Georgia: *kasheria pesaxistvin*

Jewish Malayalam in Chennamangalam, India: *pesaholle sadhangle*

Judeo-Arabic in Sana'a, Yemen: *altavaqa almufatra* (kashered room for preparing/storing Passover grains)

Matzah:

Jews in most communities use variants of מצה, but here are some additional names for Passover unleavened bread:

Judeo-Tat/Juhuri in Derbent, Dagestan: *qoqol*

Judeo-Provençal in Comtat Venaissin, France: *coudolo*

Ladino in Salonika, Greece: *sensenya*

Judeo-Arabic in Baghdad, Iraq: *jərduqayi*

Judeo-Arabic in Cairo, Egypt: *faṭīr*

Judeo-Arabic in Ḥugariyyah, Yemen: *mašummōr*

Proverbs:

Jewish Neo-Aramaic in Zakho, Iraq: *‘ez moshe, qazele mnoshe* (Holiday of Moses, He provides Himself [God helps needy people celebrate Passover])

Yiddish in Vilna, Lithuania: *Matses un vayn muz zayn, shmaltz un eyer – nit zeyer* (matzah and wine are a must, chicken fat and eggs – not so much)

Wordplay:

In Judeo-Italian, *shefok* can mean “to vomit,” based on *shefoch chamatcha* (pour out your wrath) from the seder.

In Ladino the high costs of the holiday are summarized by interpreting *Pésah* as an acronym for *Parás sin hazbón* – Money [expenditures] without [keeping an] account.

Some Jews in Arabic-speaking lands avoid eating chickpeas on Passover, even though they eat other kitniyot. One explanation is that *hummus* (chickpea) and *hametz* (leavened products forbidden on Passover) sound very similar in Arabic.

Introduction

Greetings

Contributed by [Jewish Language Project](#)

Source: Jewish Language Project Passover Supplement

How do you say “Happy Passover”?

Jews around the world have come up with diverse Passover greetings, often involving creative blends of Hebrew and local languages. Many of these phrases were originally written in Hebrew letters or other alphabets.

Judeo-French in Bordeaux, France: ***Bonne fête*** (good holiday)

Judeo-Provençal in Avignon, France: ***Bon tsantou*** (good holiday [yom-tov])

Western Yiddish in Alsace, France: ***Bauet gut*** (build well, likely a reference to rebuilding of the Temple because of the song *Adir Hu*)

Judeo-Georgian in Kutaisi, Georgia: ***Bednieri pesach-i*** (happy Passover)

Judeo-Greek in Ioannina, Greece: ***Kalo pesach/pascha*** (good Passover)

Judeo-Italian in Rome, Italy: ***Buon mongedde*** (good holiday [moed])

Yiddish in Kovno, Lithuania: ***A zisn un koshern peysech*** (a sweet and kosher Passover)

Jewish Neo-Aramaic in Betanure, Iraq: ***Edəd patire brixā*** (blessed matzot festival)

Ladino in Izmir, Turkey: Men: ***Moadim lesimhá*** [times of happiness; Reply: *Hagim uzmanim lesasón* - holidays and times of joy]; Women: ***Pesach alegre*** (happy Passover)

Judeo-Arabic in Taroudant, Morocco: ***Ikun Šlik əl-Šid mḃark*** (blessed holiday to you)

Judeo-Tat/Juhuri in Quba, Azerbaijan: ***Nisonushmu shor giro*** (may your Passover [Nissan] pass happily)

Judeo-Persian in Tehran, Iran: ***Moedetun mubarak bashe*** (have a happy holiday [moed])

Jewish Malayalam in Parur, India: ***Nalle pesahə pernal*** (happy Passover)

Jewish Amharic in Gondar, Ethiopia: ***Melkam yeqita be'al*** (fine holiday of unleavened bread)

For more on diverse Jewish Passover traditions, see:

Abadi, Jennifer Felicia. 2018. *Too Good to Passover: Sephardic & Judeo-Arabic Seder Menus and Memories from Africa, Asia and Europe*. Jennifer Abadi.

Lowenstein, Steven. 2000. *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry: International Jewish Folk Traditions*. Oxford.

Raphael, Chaim. 1993. *A Feast of History: The Drama of Passover through the Ages*. Reprint edition. Bnai Brith.

Kadesh

Why Four Cups of Wine

Contributed by [Jane Taubenfeld Cohen](#)

Source:

Why four cups of wine by the seder?

By Naftali Silberberg

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

Many reasons are given for drinking *four* cups of wine. Here are some of them:

When promising to deliver the Jews from Egyptian slavery, G-d used four terms to describe the redemption (Exodus 6:6-8): a) "I shall *take* you out..." b) "I shall *rescue* you..." c) "I shall *redeem* you..." d) "I shall *bring* you..."

The four cups symbolize our freedom from our four exilesWe were liberated from Pharaoh's four evil decrees: a) Slavery. b) The ordered murder of all male progeny by the Hebrew midwives. c) The drowning of all Hebrew boys in the Nile by Egyptian thugs. d) The decree ordering the Israelites to collect their own straw for use in their brick production.

The four cups symbolize our freedom from our four exiles: The Egyptian, Babylonian, and Greek exiles, and our current exile which we hope to be rid of very soon with the coming of Moshiach.

The words "cup of wine" are mentioned four times in Pharaoh's butler's dream (Genesis 40:11-13). According to the Midrash, these cups of wine alluded to the Israelites' liberation.

According to Kabbalah, there are four forces of impurity (anti-divinity, or *kelipah*). On Passover, when we celebrate our physical freedom, we also celebrate our liberation from these spiritual forces. Our physical departure from Egypt was a reflection of our spiritual one—we were pulled

from the clutches of depravity and impurity and set on the path to receiving the Torah and connecting with G-d.

Why Four Cups?

Posted on June 7, 2002 By Rabbi Yehudah Prero |

Why do we drink four cups of wine at the Seder?

The most famous answer to this question revolves around two verses in Sh'mos/Exodus (6:6-7):

“Therefore, say to the children of Israel ‘I am Hashem, and I SHALL TAKE YOU OUT from under the burdens of Egypt; I SHALL RESCUE YOU from their service; I SHALL REDEEM YOU with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I SHALL TAKE YOU TO ME for a people and I shall be a G-d to you....”

In these two verses, we find what are termed “The Four Expressions of Redemption.” G-d said to the nation of Israel using four different expressions that they would be taken out of slavery in Egypt. We therefore drink a cup of wine, on this night that we commemorate our redemption, for each expression of redemption that G-d uttered.

The Sh”lah gives another reason. On this night, we celebrate the birth of the Jewish people as a nation. We read in the Hagadah about our forefathers. Avraham originally worshipped idols. His son Yitzchak had two children, Yaakov and Esav. Yaakov ended up in Egypt where his son Yosef was. However, we do not read of the contributions of our mothers to the development of the nation of Israel. Each cup of wine represents one of our matriarchs. The first cup of wine is used to recite Kiddush, the sanctification of the day. In the Kiddush, we read how G-d has sanctified the nation of Israel with His mitzvos (commandments), which makes the Jewish people unique. Sarah was known for her efforts to spread the word of G-d to those who previously worshipped idols. It is with Kiddush, where we speak of this sanctification of the nation of Israel, that we commemorate Sarah, who exerted efforts to bring others into this fold.

We drink the second cup of wine after we have told the story of the birth of our nation. We have read how Avraham originally worshipped idols. We have read how the nation grew and developed. Rivka’s life progressed in a similar fashion. She was born into a family of idol worshipers and she grew to be one of the matriarchs of the nation of Israel. With the second cup of wine, we commemorate Rivka, who overcame an idolatrous background to become the mother of the Jewish people.

After we conclude the Grace After Meals, we drink the third cup. Rachel was the mother of Yosef, who assured that the entire land of Egypt would have sustenance during the years of famine. It is fitting that we remember Rachel, the mother of the one who sustained a nation, after we have completed our meal.

The last cup of wine is drunk after we complete Hallel, the praises of G-d. Leah, upon the birth of her son Yehudah, said "This time I shall thank Hashem." Why did Leah thank G-d upon the birth of her fourth son, and not with the previous three? The answer is that Leah realized that Yaakov was to have 12 children between his four wives. When she had her fourth son, she realized that she was given one more than her "share" in the unit that was the base for the nation of Israel. Of course she was thankful with each child. But with Yehudah, Leah knew that she had received something truly special, above and beyond what she should get. Therefore, she thanked Hashem when Yehudah was born. It is fitting that after we finish thanking Hashem for taking us out of Egypt, we remember Leah, who taught the Jewish people how and when to say thank you.

Kadesh

Kaddesh

Contributed by [Shira Sacks](#)

Source:

On Pesach the four cups of wine remind us of four words of Freedom in Hashem's promise, and we drink them to show how happy we are to be free.

Write four things which make you feel happy or free.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Kadesh

Sanctification - Kiddush

Contributed by [Lawrence Bloom](#)

Source:

We recite the Kiddush on Passover as we do on Shabbat and other festivals. The Kiddush reminds all Jews that they have been chosen -- not for any special distinction or accomplishment -- but to perform the commandments of the Torah.

In reciting the Kiddush each one of us once again assumes the responsibility of keeping the vision of freedom alive for all people and to assist in the realization of freedom at home and around the world, even when to do so might cause harm or discomfort.

(insert Hebrew and translation)

Urchatz

2020 Seder Order

Contributed by [Haggadot](#)

Source: Various

**2020 Pesach Seder: Kadesh,
Urchatz, Karpas, Urchatz, Yachatz,
Urchatz, Maggid, Rochtza, Motzi-
Matzah, Urchatz, Maror, Urchatz,
Korech, Urchatz, Shulchan Orech,
Urchatz, Tzafun, Urchatz, Barech,
Urchatz, and so forth...**

Urchatz

Blessing For Hand Washing During a Pandemic

Contributed by [Trisha Arlin](#)

Source: www.trishaarlin.com

As we wash our hands
We pray,
Blessed is the Soul of the Universe,
Breathing us in and breathing us out.
May our breaths continue
And our health and the health of all
Be preserved
In this time of sickness and fear of sickness.
Holy Wholeness,
We take as much responsibility for this as we can
By observing the obligation to wash our hands
Thoroughly:
For as long as it takes to say this prayer.
Amen

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם

Urchatz

Hand Washing Coloring Page

Contributed by [Haggadot](#)

Source: Haggadot.com



WASH YOUR HANDS

Karpas

Seinfeld Karpas

Contributed by [Dave Cowen](#)

Source: The Yada Yada Haggadah by Dave Cowen

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT

ELAINE

Now do we eat? I'm starving.

KRAMER

Sort of. Next up is the Karpas. Who wants to do the Karpas? Yael?

George's love interest Yael replies:

YAEL

I'd be honored. For the Karpas, we dip fresh green vegetables into bitter, salty water. It symbolizes the celebration of a painful moment in Jewish history, by combining a metaphor of tears and slavery, the salt water, with one of spring and rebirth, the green vegetable, in this case, the big salad Elaine brought.

YAEL DIPS SOME OF THE BIG SALAD INTO THE SALT WATER. SHE BITES THE VEGETABLE.

YAEL

Mmm.

YAEL PASSES THE KARPAS TO GEORGE. HE TAKES THE BIG SALAD AND SALT WATER NEXT, DIPS, AND BITES.

GEORGE

Mmm.

YAEL SMILES. HOWEVER, GEORGE THEN RE-DIPS THE BITTEN VEGETABLE INTO THE SALT WATER AND TAKES ANOTHER BITE.

GEORGE

Mmmmmmm.

YAEL LOOKS AT GEORGE. SHE'S DISGUSTED.

YAEL

What are you doing?

GEORGE

What?

YAEL

You just double dipped the Karpas?

GEORGE

Excuse me?

YAEL

You dipped the Karpas. Bit it. And dipped it again.

GEORGE

So?

George's Father, Frank, yells at him:

FRANK

It's like putting your whole mouth in the Karpas, George!

GEORGE

I didn't get enough salt water the first time. I like to really feel the tears of our people. Is that so bad?

YAEL

There's no double dipping. In general. Of anything.

George's mother criticizes him:

ESTELLE

Who raised you to double dip? We didn't raise him to double dip. I can tell you that.

FRANK

I'm sorry you had to see that, Yael.

GEORGE

Can we just say the prayer already?!

EVERYONE:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, bo'rei p'ri ha'adama.

Praised Are You, Our G-d, who creates the fruit of the earth.

adapted From The Yada Yada Haggadah - <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1793219109>

Karpas

SALT WATER SUFFERING

Contributed by [Brock Pollock](#)

Source: Aish/Pollock

Salt Water

Salt is unique in that it is bitter on its own, yet sweetens and brings out the taste of that which it is added to. For this reason, salt is the staple of suffering.

There are two perspectives of suffering – Purposeless Suffering and Purposeful Suffering.

Purposeless Suffering is suffering without reason, value, or an end-goal, and is therefore completely bitter. It is based on a keyhole view of life: “What is right in front of my eyes is all there is and there is no grander scheme.”

We squint in order to focus on something in the distance.

The Kabbalists explain that for this reason, the reaction of a person in pain is to close his eyes, since physical eyes don't see the spiritual purpose. Just as a person squints, which is a partial closing of one's eyes in order to focus on something in the physical distance, one may close his eyes completely in order to focus on something in the "spiritual distance.”

Purposeful Suffering is sweetened by understanding the greater context – that all is from God and for the best.

At the Seder, we dip the Karpas into saltwater in order to embody the concept of Purposeful Suffering – that we view any suffering in life as a surgery for our ultimate betterment rather than meaningless torture. (Additionally, we dip Karpas into salt water to represent the tears cried by the Jewish people while enslaved under Egyptian rule.)

We see these two sides of salt expressed by the Dead Sea. Due to its high salt concentration, the Dead Sea contains no life within it, yet has an incredible capacity to heal. On its own, the Dead Sea is "bitter," but when a person dips into the Dead Sea, he is "sweetened."

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי האדמה

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree ha-adama.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruits of the earth.

We also dip Karpas to help us remember the sweetness of life. How the universe works in cycles and the spring will always come back around providing us with new life.

Yachatz

Afikoman Auction

Contributed by [Rodger Murry](#)

Source:

To get more people in on the act of hiding the afikoman, try an afikoman auction. Everyone will have a turn to bid on the afikoman, but you cannot bid money. You can bid a song you know, a poem, a joke, a story. Anything inside you is a good bid. The leader of the seder will select a winner and the winner will hide the afikoman, to be found after dinner.

YachatZ

The Strangers in Our Midst

Contributed by [Josh Feldman](#)

Source:

"We are instructed in the Holiness Code to treat the strangers in our midst with justice and compassion: "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall do him no wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:33). This teaching permeates Jewish tradition and is echoed 35 times in the Torah – the most repeated of any commandment. The history of the Jewish people from Egypt through the Holocaust until today reminds us of the many struggles faced by immigrants throughout the world. As a community of immigrants, we are charged to pursue justice, seek peace and build a society that is welcoming to all of God's creatures, regardless of their immigration status. In Genesis, three strangers visit Abraham, and he welcomes them into his home and into his heart without question (Genesis 18:1-22). This virtue of *hachnasat orchim*, welcoming the stranger, drives both our commitment to protecting undocumented immigrants from deportation and our dedication to the hospitality and inclusion of all people."

—Excerpt from the Union for Reform Judaism's Resolution on Protecting Individuals at Risk of Deportation from the United States

Yachatz

The Afflicted Matza

Contributed by [Trisha Arlin](#)

Source: Original: Trisha Arlin <http://triganza.blogspot.com/>

The top Matzoh

And bottom Matzoh are,

it is said,

Pesach substitutes

For the two loaves of challah on Shabbat,

Supposedly a reminder

Of the two portions of manna

They received in the desert

Every Friday before Shabbat.

But the middle matza?!

Ah,

That's for the seder.

We break it in half

And call it the bread of affliction,

Just like the unleavened bread

We ate as we fled slavery

Matza Number Two,

The afflicted matza,

We break it in half

And separate ourselves from joy

So we don't forget the pain

That has been ours.

We break it in half

And separate ourselves from the joy

So we can remember the pain

Of others.

All this pain

Lives in this first half of the afflicted matzoh

And we eat this half now,

So that we do not forget that we were slaves

So that we do not enslave others.

But--

We separate the second half of the afflicted matza

(The Afikomen)

From all that hurt

So that we don't forget the joy that can follow the sorrow.

So that we don't forget the times that we changed things for the better.

And after the meal we will search for that happiness

And we will find it.

And then we eat the Afikomen together

So we don't forget that it is good to be alive

And we are obligated to share that joy.

Blessed One-ness, we are so grateful for the obligations to remember pain and share joy.

Amen

Yachatz

Song - Don't sit on the Afikomen

Contributed by [Wexner LA15](#)

Source:



(Sung to the tune "Glory, Glory Halleluyah")

My dad at every Seder breaks a matza piece in two
And hides the Afikomen half --
A game for me and you.
Find it, hold it ransom for the Seder isn't through
'till the Afikomen's gone.

Don't sit on the Afikomen.
Don't sit on the Afikomen.
Don't sit on the Afikomen.
Or the meal will last all night.

One year daddu hit it 'neath a pillow on a chair
But just as I raced over, my Aunt Sophie sat down there.
She threw herself upon it - Awful crunching filled the air
And crumbs flew all around.

Don't sit on the Afikomen...

There were matzah crumbs all over - Oh, it was a messy sight.
We swept up all the pieces though it took us half the night.
So, if you want your seder ending sooner than dawn's light,
Don't sit on the Afiko-o-men.

Don't sit on the Afikomen...

Maggid - Beginning

Michael Walzer, Exodus and Revolution

Contributed by [Haggadot](#)

Source: Quote by Michael Walzer

*Standing on the parted shores of history
we still believe what we were taught
before we ever stood at Sinai:*

*that wherever we are, it is eternally Egypt
that there is a better place, a Promised Land,
that the winding way to the promise passes
through the wilderness*

*that there is no way to get from here to there
except by joining hands, marching together*

MICHAEL WALZER, EXODUS AND REVOLUTION

Maggid - Beginning

A Historical Perspective

Contributed by [Society for Humanistic Judaism](#)

Source: Rabbi Jeffrey Falick

When earlier we recalled the story of the Exodus, we acknowledged it as a work of fiction. Yet only one hundred years ago, most scholars still believed that the tale was true in many of its details.

Then they started digging ... literally ... with shovels and pails. It eventually became clear that the story we had told ourselves for millennia did not take place. There had been no mass flight from Egypt, no conquest of the land of Israel, otherwise known as Canaan. The Israelites were natives of the land; they were Canaanites themselves!

So how did the story come to be?

In the late second millennium B.C.E., Egypt dominated Canaan. The pharaohs demanded regular tribute from vassal kings who in turn exploited their own peasant populations.

According to some scholars, in the thirteenth century B.C.E. the region experienced significant upheavals and power shifts. Taking advantage of these changes, many peasants rebelled, throwing off the yoke of their vassal kings. Archeological remains reveal that some fled to and cleared Israel's central highlands, where tribes and towns began to form. In a long, complicated and gradual process they became known as the Israelites. Did this contribute to inspiring our story?

If so, the Exodus tale may have served as an allegory about liberation from Egypt's ongoing domination and exploitation of Canaan's populace. The narrative may also reflect other ancient regional instabilities. Famines and droughts provoked repeated migrations. The Torah's stories about Abraham and Sara's journey to Canaan and their grandchildren's descent to Egypt may disclose memories of these population shifts.

Other historians suggest an alternative possibility. They propose that the Exodus story was influenced by the experience of one tribe, the Levites, that may have come to Israel from Egypt. Many Levite names, including Moses and Aaron, are Egyptian in origin. The Levites were cultic experts and possessed no territory. Were they the outsiders who circulated the original Exodus tale?

The details are buried in history, but history gives wings to legends and legends yield heroes like Moses. Over hundreds of years, our story emerged with its account of one great man, dedicated to justice and to the liberation of his people. He challenged Pharaoh and led the Israelites to freedom. For millennia he has inspired many others who have been downtrodden or enslaved to bring about their own deliverance. And that's why we told it tonight!

For more on these ideas, see S. David Sperling, *The Original Torah: The Political Intent of the Bible's Writers* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); and Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Exodus* [New York: HarperOne, 2017].

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Rabbi Jeffrey L. Falick, Birmingham Temple Congregation for Humanistic Judaism

-- Four Questions

Hunger Seder: Four Questions

Contributed by [MAZON:](#)

Source: Mazon: Hunger Seder

The Four Questions we ask at our Hunger Seder challenge us to consider what is different about this night. Only when we ask the right questions can we understand the causes of hunger and take action to end this unnecessary plight.

1. Why during this seder do we focus on hunger?

Hunger remains a painful physical reality for far too many of our friends, neighbors, and family members. Hunger is an oppressive force that holds individuals back from realizing their full potential in life and limits our society from making greater progress. The Passover seder celebrates liberation from bondage and the joy of freedom. But in communities across our country, millions of Americans struggle to put enough nutritious food on the table and are bound by the hardships of their circumstances. As long as Americans continue to struggle with food insecurity, we will continue to dedicate this Hunger Seder to the goal of ending hunger and its causes.

2. Why isn't it better for local charities to feed people, instead of the government?

Charitable organizations — including MAZON's nationwide partners on the front lines — are not set up to feed every hungry person in their communities. Food pantries and soup kitchens were created to provide support during temporary or emergency situations, not to solve systemic problems. Many are open only a few days a week and for a few hours of each day. They are largely volunteer run, often out of basements or closets at their local houses of worship, and they primarily distribute food that has been donated from within their communities. They simply could never have the capacity to feed the number of people who need help. Government nutrition programs, on the other hand, have the ability to help millions of people get the food they need to lead healthy lives.

3. What are the costs of hunger for our country?

Being hungry can be all-consuming and distracting, which in turn decreases productivity in working adults and negatively impacts the ability for unemployed individuals to find work. Seniors are particularly vulnerable when it comes to food insecurity and face serious health risks from nutritional deficiencies. Without sufficient food and proper nutrition, children are at a much greater risk for developmental problems, chronic health conditions, and poor academic performance, and face reduced prospects for economic and professional achievement later in life. The many personal costs of hunger are magnified at the national level. Bread for the World Institute estimated in its 2016 Hunger Report that hunger and food insecurity increased health expenditures in the United States by \$160 billion in the previous year alone, largely due to preventable diet-related chronic diseases. In both the short and long term, having a substantial population of people struggling with hunger impedes our country's economic prosperity for everyone.

4. How could so many individuals and families still suffer from hunger when we live in a society of tremendous wealth?

The best adjective to accurately describe the amount of food available in the United States is abundant. Yet food insecurity affects more than 1 out of every 8 men, women, and children in America. Hunger persists in this country not because of a lack of food, but because of a lack of political will. Now is the time to act and ensure that all people have access to affordable, nutritious food.

-- Four Questions

Four Questions

Contributed by [Rachel Kann](#)

Source: Rachel Kann & David Guccione

We encourage you to ask four questions of your own... about anything... ask them of yourselves and of each other.

Can we be humble enough to admit when we do not know something, rather than pretending to have the answer? Can we be gracious enough to answer another's question without shaming them for not knowing? Can we be brave enough to inquire within, and ask ourselves our own hard questions? Can we open our hearts to the love that wants to come in, if only we will release our clever defenses?

-- Four Questions

Four Questions in Judeo-Persian/Farsi (Transliterated)

Contributed by [Jewish Language Project](#)

Source: Jewish Language Project Passover Supplement

Cherah een shab ba'ah shab hayeh deegar fargh dareht?

Dar shab hayeh deegar mah ya na'an ya fateer meekhoreem; valley em shab faghat fateer meekhoreem.

Dar shab hayeh deegar hameh jour sabzie meekhoreem; valley em shab faghat sabzayeh talkh meekhoreem.

Dar shab hayeh deegar mah sabzeeh-ra dar cirqueh hatah yek bar haleem nemizaneem; valley em shab dough bar meezaneem.

Dar shab hayeh deegar mah ghazayeh-mon rah hajourey khosteem meekhoreem; valley em shab kaj meesheeneem vah meekhoreem.

-- Four Children

The Four Adults

Contributed by [Haggadot](#)

Source: Love and Justice Haggadah

It is a tradition at the Seder to include a section entitled “the Four Children.” We have turned it upside down, to remind us that as adults we have a lot to learn from youth. From the U.S. to South Africa to Palestine, young people have been, and are, at the forefront of most of the social justice movements on this planet. If there is a mix of ages of people at your seder, perhaps some of the older people would like to practice asking questions, and the younger folks would like to respond:

The Angry Adult – Violent and oppressive things are happening to me, the people I love and people I don’t even know. Why can’t we make the people in power hurt the way we are all hurting? Hatred and violence can never overcome hatred and violence. Only love and compassion can transform our world.

Cambodian Buddhist monk Maha Ghosananda, whose family was killed by the Khmer Rouge, has written: It is a law of the universe that retaliation, hatred, and revenge only continue the cycle and never stop it. Reconciliation does not mean that we surrender rights and conditions, but means rather that we use love in all our negotiations. It means that we see ourselves in the opponent -- for what is the opponent but a being in ignorance, and we ourselves are also ignorant of many things. Therefore, only loving kindness and right-mindfulness can free us.

The Ashamed Adult – I’m so ashamed of what my people are doing that I have no way of dealing with it?!? We must acknowledge our feelings of guilt, shame and disappointment, while ultimately using the fire of injustice to fuel us in working for change. We must also remember the amazing people in all cultures, who are working to dismantle oppression together everyday.

Marianne Williamson said: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate; our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually who are you not to be? You are a child of G-d. Your playing small doesn’t serve the world. There’s nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of G-d that is within us. It’s not just in some of us, it’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give others permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

The Fearful Adult – Why should I care about ‘those people’ when they don’t care about me? If I share what I have, there won’t be enough and I will end up suffering. We must challenge the sense of scarcity that we have learned from capitalism and our histories of oppression. If we change the way food, housing, education, and resources are distributed, we could all have enough.

Martin Luther King said: It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. We are made to live together because of the interrelated structure of reality.

The Compassionate Adult – How can I struggle for justice with an open heart? How can we live in a way that builds the world we want to live in, without losing hope? This is the question that we answer with our lives.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote: Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy. And yet being alive is no answer to the problems of living. To be or not to be is not the question. The vital question is: how to be and how not to be...to pray is to recollect passionately the perpetual urgency of this vital question.

Anne Frank wrote: It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all of my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery, and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too; I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end and that peace and tranquility will return again. In the meantime, I must uphold my ideals, for perhaps the time will come when I shall be able to carry them out."

Each of us bears in our own belly the angry one, the ashamed one, the frightened one, the compassionate one. Which of these children shall we bring to birth? Only if we can deeply hear all four of them can we truthfully answer the fourth question. Only if we can deeply hear all four of them can we bring to birth a child, a people that is truly wise.

from the *Love and Justice in Times of War Haggadah* , compiled and created by Dara Silverman and Micah Bazant

-- Four Children

Why This Night: Four Children and Five Rabbis

Contributed by [Trisha Arlin](#)

Source: <http://triganza.blogspot.com/>

So this is Maggid,

The part of the seder where we tell the story

Of leaving Egypt.

Actually,

We spend more time talking about talking about the story

Then telling the actual story.

Very meta is our haggadah,

With many numbers,

Lots of fours:

Four questions

Four cups of wine

Four children,

Four ways of asking,

Why is this night different from all other nights?

The first child,

Book smart.

The wise child

Knows all the rules.

He's direct,

No messin' around,

This is what you do on Pesach:

Tell the story

Dip the herbs

Recline

Drink four cups

Don't eat leavened bread

Ask the questions

Know the answers.

It's obvious.

Duh.

The second child,

A smart ass,

Smart and an ass.

Doesn't care about the rules

Unless she knows what they're for,

She wants meaning

And is kind of obnoxious about it

Because sometimes it's hard to ask the next logical question

Without annoying someone.

What does this story mean to you? she asks.

And it comes off as a challenge, but it's not.

She really wants to know:

What does it mean?

So you tell her,

Freedom to be who you are,

To make choices, to seek God whether you find God or not,

To become a person and then a people,

To ask questions.

The third child,

A beginner,

Doesn't know what to do

Doesn't know why we're doing it

Doesn't know that he doesn't know.

A baby!

So you say to him,

We tell a really good story

With a beginning middle and end

And a hero

And a villain

And miracles and dancing and bugs and dead cows and blood,

You'll love it!

And this is why we tell the story:

So we don't forget we were slaves,

So we don't forget what God did for us,

So we don't forget Torah,

And the seder is what we do to remember.

And because we remember

We don't enslave others.

We bask in God's presence.

We study Torah

And we tell stories.

And then there's the child who doesn't even know that she can ask a question.

Is it because she doesn't care?

Doesn't have a context?

Too assimilated to know how interesting it all is?

Or perhaps no one will let her talk

So she doesn't even try?

Sitting in the back of the bus,

Not allowed to study Torah,

Married at 17,

Popping out babies at 18.

So let's not wait for either of them to say something.

Let's hold out our hands and say,

We were slaves

And now we're not.

And there is so much to know and do

And you can know and do it

And we will help you.

You are inspired,

You just don't know it yet.

Okay.

Contrast these four children

With the Five Rabbis sitting around talking

In Bnai Brak.

Each of them knows the direct meaning.

All of them plumb the depths of the hidden and symbolic.

Any one of them can tell a tale that bridges a gap.

Five out of five are inspired by God's revelations.

They know the rules and the meaning and the stories

And oh my God, are they empowered to talk.

They stay up all night

And talk and talk and talk!

Each one smarter than the other

But in the morning when their students come in,

They still haven't prayed.

Because they can't stop talking.

Hey you guys, say the students,

Shema!

Listen!

Why is this night different from all other nights?

-- Four Children

The Four Children Approach the Future

Contributed by [Ariel Kates](#)

Source: Ariel Kates

So, first of all, the four children appear in the Jerusalem Talmud, where Rabbi Hyyia, a student of Rabbi Judah the Prince, is quoted as bringing this parable. Hyyia's text varies quite a bit from the text we know today: for one, the simple child is not "simple" but stupid. But it is Rabbis at the time of the collection of the Mishnah and Talmud who are creating this rubric. And so we proceed:

The "Wise" Child asks about the rules and commandments that govern the Seder, and receives a full explanation of the details. This child looks to the future with the rules in mind, seeking structures and understanding that life necessitates systems. Looking toward the future, this child is savvy: what can I do within the structures I'm given, they might ask. In what ways do we search our surroundings for external rules that help us to structure our lives? How does this help, and how does this hurt? Do you look for structures, for open spaces? Sometimes one or the other?

The "Wicked" Child asks their interlocutor what Passover means to them. This is a separation that incurs wrath, and the statement that this child would not have been among those saved, because of a lack of collective self-identity. But, are they looking for a more personal explanation of how to connect individually with what's going on, and how to proceed? Taking in information from others' experiences in order to shape their own? This child might have done some self-education to ask a more targeted question, which might not have produced the same kind of wrath; perhaps we can ask each other "what does it mean to you to experience the Seder as though you were personally liberated from Egypt?" This child looks to the future, perhaps, with good boundaries and a different understanding of self - and what do we gain by othering this person who is a child in our midst? Do we really get to be arbiters of who would have been saved and who would not?

The "Simple" Child looks to the future, totally baffled. What does this all mean? What the heck is going on? This child has an open demeanor - there's not a lot of ego here, and it's clear from what's being asked, which isn't actually that different from the "wicked" child (the only difference is the absence of "to you"), but it's met with a much more tolerant kind of inclusion. By implying that we're all in this together, this child is given help understanding what's going on, approaching their communities with humility. Still, like the "wicked" child, their question doesn't show the deeper knowledge that would indicate self-education. This child is looking to the bigger picture, unlike the "wise" child who's looking for the micro-level of life.

The Child "Who Does Not Know How to Ask" is present but silent - looking to the future with a kind of carelessness, perhaps, or alternately with paralysis. The thing about silence is that you can't always tell which is which. The rabbis use "this is because of what god did for me" here -

it's the same othering and dividing language as we saw with the "wicked" child, who doesn't get to be included in our collective. Not super merciful? What would have happened if the Rabbis had asked this child a question? How do we embrace our ignorance with humility when we don't know how to ask? That's a lesson from the "simple" child, perhaps. Have there been times when we've assumed ignorance from someone's silence?

-- Four Children

Healthy Debate: How This Night Can Be Different

Contributed by [Moving Traditions](#)

Source: <https://www.movingtraditions.org/healthy-debate-how-this-night-can-be-different>



Moving Traditions believes that when we come together face-to-face to honestly explore challenging issues, we bring meaning and joy to our lives. This is the beauty of our programs, from b'nai mitzvah family education sessions to ground-breaking teen groups, Rosh Hodesh for girls, Shevet for boys and Tzelem for transgender and nonbinary teens. Here's a way for you to bring the experience to your Seder.

Step 1: Start with a Jewish idea or text and put a contemporary frame on it.

Ma nishtana halayla hazeh? Why is this night different from all other nights?

Because on all other nights we may not have the patience for differences of opinion, but tonight we create a brave space and welcome a diversity of perspectives.

Step 2: Pick a current topic to discuss and connect it to the Haggadah.

- Sexism and Antisemitism. How do women-identified Jews manage multiple oppressions?
- Welcoming the Stranger. How do our family immigration stories relate to what is happening today?
- When does it liberate us and when does it enslave us?

Step 3: Share discussion guidelines, such as those we use in our teen groups.

- Debate to solve problems rather than to win.
- Attack issues, not people—so you can preserve relationships.
- Check your motivations for engaging in a conflict.
- Listen to the other side and be open to admitting that you may be wrong.
- Consider that you might both be right, even if you hold opposite opinions.

Step 4: Add secular Inspiration, like this poem by Micky ScottBey Jones.

Together we will create *brave space*
Because there is no such thing as a “safe space”
We exist in the real world
We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.
In this space
We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world,
We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,
We call each other to more truth and love
We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow.
We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know.
We will not be perfect.
This space will not be perfect.
It will not always be what we wish it to be
but

It will be *our brave space together,*
and
we will work on it side by side

Step 5: Now go and do.

-- Exodus Story

Personal Mitzrayim

Contributed by [Wendy Kleinman](#)

Source:

It was not
enough to take
the Jews out of
Egypt. It was
necessary to
take Egypt out
of the Jews.

- H a s i d i c S a y i n g

-- Exodus Story

Donald Trump Tells The Exodus Story

Contributed by [Dave Cowen](#)

Source: The Trump Passover Haggadah by Dave Cowen

Donald Trump: You know, a lot of people don't know The Exodus Story, I didn't know it until very recently, not a lot of people know it, very complicated stuff. You got this guy, this Moses guy, leading his people. He's kind of like the Jew President, right? OK, he's the Jew President, I'm the U.S. President, he's the Jew President, I'm the U.S. President, so I know a thing or two about this. Some people say, I'm not saying this, but there are people saying, they're saying, Moses, if you look at it, if you really look at it, he wasn't such a good leader, not such a good guy, this Moses. I'm not saying that, but many people are.

Some of these people, they wish I had been Moses. They do. They say, if Trump was Moses, if Trump was Moses, they say, the Jews never would have been enslaved in the first place. They say if Trump was Moses, the Jews would have enslaved the Egyptians instead! And we would've enslaved them so well, like no one's ever been enslaved before. No doubt about it. Real tough slavery, folks. The toughest slavery you've ever seen. So tough the Egyptians would be the ones wanting to have Seders right now. To celebrate escaping from us. Except, if I was Moses, the Egyptians would never have escaped. So they wouldn't be having Seders. Because they'd still be our slaves.

But I'm not saying that. Other people are saying that. Many others. But not me. I will say, you probably wouldn't have been slaves for two hundred years, if I was leading you, but that's OK, that's OK. I'm here now. Can we, can we try something tonight, folks? Can we all pretend I'm Moses. Let's pretend. Why not? And then I'll tell you what I'd really do if I was Moses. Everyone close your eyes for the story. Close your eyes, children. Eric, no peeking. So Trump is Moses, Trump's the leader of the Jewish people, Trump's a prophet, Trump's been sent by G-d. Picture that. Not that hard, right? Kind of already what's going on, isn't it? But OK, here's what I'm going to do to about this Pharaoh. This Pharaoh, he's a real bad hombre. But we're going to deal with him. Oh boy, we're going to deal with him, bigly. Because I'm going to do something no one's ever done. I don't know why no one's ever done it before, but, most people aren't as smart as me, no one is, actually, I'm, like, the smartest guy in history, so that's probably why they never thought of this.

So people say, they say, Donald, if you're Moses, you gotta leave Egypt, you gotta take the Jews out of Egypt, we've always left Egypt, that's just how it's done. I tell you what, though, if I'm Moses, we're not leaving Egypt this time. That's establishment thinking. That's swamp thinking. And it stops now. We're gonna make THEM leave. The Egyptians, you hear that? You're gone, you're out of here, bye-bye. How are we going to do that? We're gonna do some real bad things to these Egyptians. The media's not going to like it. The media's going to say, "Oh, you can't do that to the Egyptian people, Donald, they've lived in Egypt for a long time, most of them since they were born, they have rights, too, you know." But bottom line? They treated us very unfairly.

So they're gonna get plagued. Serious plaguing, people. No one's ever seen plagues like these before. Because I'm not just Moses, I'm not just Donald Trump, I'm not just a Prophet sent by G-d. I'm also Hashem, G-d, President of the World, Ruler of the Cosmos, Dictator of the Universe, Blessed am I. That's right! So I do the plagues, too! I'm going to do it all! I alone can fix this!

Instead of DAM, turning the Egyptians' water into blood, and TZFARDEAH, releasing frogs on them, and KINIM, infecting them with lice, we're going to do some actual plaguing. We're going to pass some common-sense gun laws to keep mentally ill and criminal hands off of weapons and reduce mass shootings in their land. And we're going to tamper down coal, oil, nuclear, and fracking energy, and release the power of solar, water, and wind energy instead. We're also going to infect them with a tax reform similar to America's in the mid-20th century, when taxes were so progressive that it paid for infrastructure and welfare programs that created the best economy for the most amount of its citizens in our history, instead of the best economy for the least amount of its citizens like during the Gilded Age and today.

It's gonna be chaos. Turmoil. A total disaster.

Instead of AROV, sending wild beasts at them, DEVER, diseasing their livestock, and SH'HIN, giving them boils, which is some real light-weight stuff, we're going to give them universal healthcare. It's going to be so universal, even the boils will be covered. We're also going to make sure their food and drug regulatory agencies are well-funded and well-staffed, so that their livestock won't be secretly harboring hormones and other poisonous material that slowly diseases and kills people over a long period of time. And we're going to send them an actual environmentalist as the administrator of their Environmental Protection Agency, who won't cut National Park funding, so that the wild beasts have a place to run free, you know?

This is Egyptian carnage, people. This is scary scary stuff, OK? I don't have to tell you what kind of results we're going to see.

Instead of BARAD, thunderstorms of hail, and ARBEH, a dispersal of locusts, and HOSHEKH, darkness for three days, which— I actually kind of like the darkness for three days thing, that's pretty good. We'll do that one, and then we're going to let all of their immigrants, who work hard and enhance the culture of their community, stay. And cut their military budget just 5%, which would provide enough funds for free pre-school and college educations and completely end poverty without raising the debt and without even hurting the military, which would still be the best in the world.

Look, enacting these plagues will be a nightmare. Believe me. The Egyptians will be so determined to leave, even a wall wouldn't stop them. It'll be so bad for them, they're going to drown themselves in the Red Sea.

And if that doesn't work, instead of MAKAT B'KHOROT, the killing of their firstborn, we're just going to make sure contraceptives are available across the land. It's much better, because they'll have a lot less firstborns for us to kill, who their women might not have wanted anyway,

because they wanted to have a stable career first, or wanted to make sure they're with the right partner.

How about that? The worst, right, folks? There's never been a leader of the Jewish people who plagued the Egyptians so well. You're welcome.

MOSES: Hey, Donald!

DONALD TRUMP: Who's that?! Did you just muss my hair?!

MOSES: I just mussed whatever's on top of your bulbous head. It's me, Moses! Sheket bevakasha!

DONALD TRUMP: Moses?! How? What does sheket bevakasha mean?!

MOSES: It's Hebrew for, "You're fired!"

-

adapted from The Trump Passover Haggadah - <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1976722772>

-- Exodus Story

Let My People Go (song)

Contributed by [Joseph Zitt](#)

Source: =Traditional

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

Refrain:

Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt's land;
Tell old Pharaoh
To let My people go!

The Lord told Moses what to do,
Let My people go!
To lead the children of Israel through,
Let My people go!

You need not always weep and mourn,
Let My people go!
And wear these slav'ry chains forlorn,
Let My people go!

-- Exodus Story

Skit - Pharaoh and Moses Go To A Conflict Counselor

Contributed by [Dave Cowen](#)

Source: Original



Pharaoh and Moses Go To A Conflict Counselor

by Dave Cowen

Conflict Counselor

So what brings you two in today?

Pharaoh

Honestly, things have been pretty rough.

Conflict Counselor

Moses, would you say that's true?

Moses

I'd say it's been rough but it doesn't have to be anymore.

Pharaoh

I just don't understand, you really don't want to be my slaves anymore?

Moses

No, we don't.

Conflict Counselor

Pharaoh, what does it feel like to hear Moses say he and his people don't want to be your slaves anymore?

Pharaoh

You know, it really hurts. I feel like we've done some beautiful things together. I mean, we couldn't have built these pyramids if you weren't our slaves. And those pyramids wouldn't be a wonder of the world for years to come if it wasn't for what we built together.

Moses

But now it's time for us to go.

Pharaoh

But I think there's so much more we could still be and do together. We could keep building wonders of the world. We could build a Great Wall or a Hanging Gardens. We could build a Great Library. There's a site in Alexandria that I think would be perfect for a Great Library.

Moses

But me and my people don't want to do those things. We want to go to our homeland of Israel

Pharaoh

Ugh. This homeland. Always with this homeland. You think life's going to be so much better in this magical homeland? Well, I doubt it.

Moses

It's got to be better than this.

Conflict Counselor

Moses, what happens for you when Pharaoh disregards your wish to go to Israel?

Moses

It's more what happens to him. G-d's going to keep plaguing him and his people.

Pharaoh

It's the worst. First the water turned to blood. Then there were frogs and locusts. And so many other things. So many things.

Moses

And yet you keep resisting what He's telling you, which is that our relationship is over.

Conflict Counselor

Why do you keep resisting, Pharaoh?

Pharaoh

My heart, it just feels hardened.

Conflict Counselor

Why do you think that is?

Pharaoh

Well, I think I saw Moses's relatives Jacob and Joseph getting along so well with my Dad, the previous Pharaoh, all those years, and honestly, I feel jealous. Like, why can't I have that with the Jews, too?

Conflict Counselor

And yet, you have the exact opposite.

Pharaoh

It's true.

Conflict Counselor

Sometimes the best way to love someone is to let them go, Pharaoh.

Moses

This is your last chance. You saw what G-d just did to the first born.

Conflict Counselor

So what will you do, Pharaoh, will you let Moses and his people go?

Pharaoh

OK, Fine, fine, whatever, fine, OK, sure.

Conflict Counselor

That didn't sound very sure.

Pharaoh

I'm sure. I am. I'm sure. Just go. Just go.

Conflict Counselor

And you won't change your mind?

Pharaoh

As of this moment. As of this moment, I can promise I won't change my mind.

Conflict Counselor

Moses, what would happen if Pharaoh changes his mind again?

Moses

I don't know. But I don't think he wants to find out.

Pharaoh

So this concludes our counseling?

Conflict Counselor

I guess it does. If you think this is a real sea change for you, Pharaoh. Do you agree, Pharaoh, that this a real sea change for you?

Pharaoh

I believe it is.

Conflict Counselor

Do you agree, Moses?

Moses

We'll see what happens to the sea.

-- Ten Plagues

The Modern Plagues

Contributed by [JewishBoston](#)

Source: JewishBoston.com with Rabbi Matthew Soffer

The Passover Haggadah recounts ten plagues that afflicted Egyptian society. In our tradition, Passover is the season in which we imagine our own lives within the story and the story within our lives. Accordingly, we turn our thoughts to the many plagues affecting our society today. Our journey from slavery to redemption is ongoing, demanding the work of our hearts and hands. Here are ten “modern plagues”:

Homelessness

In any given year, about 3.5 million people are likely to experience homelessness, about a third of them children, according to the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. A recent study by the U.S. Conference of Mayors showed the majority of major cities lack the capacity to shelter those in need and are forced to turn people away. We are reminded time and again in the Torah that the Exodus is a story about a wandering people, once suffering from enslavement, who, through God’s help, eventually find their way to their homeland. As we inherit this story, we affirm our commitment to pursue an end to homelessness.

Hunger

About 49 million Americans experience food insecurity, 16 million of them children. While living in a world blessed with more than enough food to ensure all of God’s children are well nourished, on Passover we declare, “Let all who are hungry come and eat!” These are not empty words, but rather a heartfelt and age-old prayer to end the man-made plague of hunger.

Inequality

Access to affordable housing, quality health care, nutritious food and quality education is far from equal. The disparity between the privileged and the poor is growing, with opportunities for upward mobility still gravely limited. Maimonides taught, “Everyone in the house of Israel is obligated to study Torah, regardless of whether one is rich or poor, physically able or with a physical disability.” Unequal access to basic human needs, based on one’s real or perceived identity, like race, gender or disability, is a plague, antithetical to the inclusive spirit of the Jewish tradition.

Greed

In the Talmud, the sage Ben Zoma asks: “Who is wealthy? One who is happy with one’s lot.” These teachings evidence what we know in our conscience—a human propensity to desire more

than we need, to want what is not ours and, at times, to allow this inclination to conquer us, leading to sin. Passover urges us against the plague of greed, toward an attitude of gratitude.

Discrimination and hatred

The Jewish people, as quintessential victims of hatred and discrimination, are especially sensitized to this plague in our own day and age. Today, half a century after the civil rights movement in the United States, we still are far from the actualization of the dream Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. articulated in Washington, D.C., a vision rooted in the message of our prophets. On Passover, we affirm our own identity as the once oppressed, and we refuse to stand idly by amid the plagues of discrimination and hatred.

Silence amid violence

Every year, 4.8 million cases of domestic violence against American women are reported. Each year, more than 108,000 Americans are shot intentionally or unintentionally in murders, assaults, suicides and suicide attempts, accidental shootings and by police intervention. One in five children has seen someone get shot. We do not adequately address violence in our society, including rape, sex trafficking, child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse, even though it happens every day within our own communities.

Environmental destruction

Humans actively destroy the environment through various forms of pollution, wastefulness, deforestation and widespread apathy toward improving our behaviors and detrimental civic policies. Rabbi Nachman of Brezlav taught, "If you believe you can destroy, you must believe you can repair." Our precious world is in need of repair, now more than ever.

Stigma of mental illness

One in five Americans experiences mental illness in a given year. Even more alarming, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, nearly two-thirds of people with a diagnosable mental illness do not seek treatment, and minority communities are the least likely to search for or have access to mental health resources. Social stigma toward those with mental illness is a widespread plague. Historically, people with mental health issues have suffered from severe discrimination and brutality, yet our society is increasingly equipped with the knowledge and resources to alleviate the plague of social stigma and offer critical support.

Ignoring refugees

We are living through the worst refugee crisis since the Holocaust. On this day, we remember that "we were foreigners in the land of Egypt," and God liberated us for a reason: to love the stranger as ourselves. With the memory of generations upon generations of our ancestors living as refugees, we commit ourselves to safely and lovingly opening our hearts and our doors to all peace-loving refugees.

Powerlessness

When faced with these modern plagues, how often do we doubt or question our own ability to make a difference? How often do we feel paralyzed because we do not know what to do to bring about change? How often do we find ourselves powerless to transform the world as it is into the world as we know it should be, overflowing with justice and peace?

Written in collaboration with Rabbi Matthew Soffer of Temple Israel of Boston

-- Ten Plagues

Dom, Dom

Contributed by [Gary Teblum](#)

Source:

Dom, Dom, This Plague is Red

(sung to the song of Ding Dong, the Witch is Dead)

(by Gary Teblum)

Dom, Dom, this plague is red
Which bad plague
The bloody plague
Dom, Dom, the plague of blood is red

Pharoah – hear what I said
Let them go, or you'll be dead.
Pharoah, the plague of blood is red.

The Nile will turn to blood
Oh no, that's worse than flood
Yo-ho, yo ho, yo ho
Don't cling, just let them all out.

Dom, Dom, you'll worry so
Don't ask why, just let us go.
Don't you know the plague of blood is red!

-- Cup #2 & Dayenu

Dayenu

Contributed by [Rabbi Denise](#)

Source: Rabbi Denise Handlarski

At the seder we say/sing that:

If we had been brought out of Egypt, Dayenu

If we had received Torah, Dayenu

If we had received Manna, Dayenu

Etc.

Dayenu means “it would have been enough.” The idea is to be grateful for what one has; to count our blessings. Think of dayenu as a template for gratitude.

But think, too, about how actually it is to enough to be satisfied when there is still suffering and oppression. Some say “lo dayenu,” meaning, “it is not enough.”

When we are free and others are not, lo dayenu

We work to find the balance between being grateful for what is right with our lives and with the world, and also striving for more that fulfills us and more that increases justice in the world.

-- Cup #2 & Dayenu

Maroon 5/Adam Levine - "Memories (The 2nd Cup Parody Song)"

Contributed by [Dave Cowen](#)

Source: Dave Cowen

Here's to the Jews that we got
Cheers to the Jews we wish were here, but are not
'Cause the 2nd Cup brings back all the memories
Of the Passover we've been through
Toast to the Jews here today
Toast to the Jews that we lost on the way
'Cause the 2nd Cup brings back all the memories
And the memories bring back, memories bring back the Jews
There's a time that I remember, when the Jews knew lots of pain
When they were slaves forever, and thought everything would stay the same
In our hearts we must remember, what our people once became
They probably couldn't even imagine, they'd become free one day, yeah
Every Jews hurt sometimes
Every Jews hurt someday, aye aye
But everything gon' be alright
Go and raise the 2nd cup and say, aye
Here's to the Jews that we got
Cheers to the Jews we wish were here, but are not

'Cause the 2nd Cup brings back all the memories

Of the Passover we've been through

Toast to the Jews here today

Toast to the Jews that we lost on the way

'Cause the 2nd Cup brings back all the memories

And the memories bring back, memories bring back the Jews

Doo doo, doo doo, doo doo

Doo doo, doo doo, doo doo, doo doo

Jew Jew, Jew Jew, Jew Jew, Jew

Memories bring back, memories bring back the Jews

There's a time we must remember, when the Jews never felt so lost

When we felt the Pharaoh's hatred was too powerful to stop (ooh, yeah)

But God made Moses a leader, and he lighted up the dark

God carries the weight for us that you know He'll never drop, yeah

Every Jew hurts sometimes

Every Jew hurts someday, aye aye

But everything gon' be alright

Go and raise the 2nd Cup and say, aye

Here's to the Jews that we got (oh oh)

Cheers to the Jews we wish were here, but are not

'Cause the 2nd Cup brings back all the memories

Of everything the Jews have been through (no, no)

Toast to the Jews here today (aye)

Toast to the Jews that we lost on the way

'Cause the 2nd Cup brings back all the memories (aye)

And the memories bring back, memories bring back the Jews

Doo doo, doo doo, doo doo

Doo doo, doo doo, doo doo doo doo

Jew Jew, Jew Jew, Jew Jew, Jew

Memories bring back, memories bring back the Jews

Doo doo, doo doo doo doo

Doo doo, doo doo, doo doo doo

Jew Jew, Jew Jew, Jew Jew, Jew Jew (ooh, yeah)

Memories bring back, memories bring back the Jews

Yeah, yeah, yeah

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, oh, oh

Memories bring back, memories bring back the Jews!

Rachtzah

Rachtzah: A Deeper Washing

Contributed by [Truah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights](#)

Source: The Other Side of the Sea: T'ruah's Haggadah on Fighting Modern Slavery

Our hands were touched by this water earlier during tonight's seder, but this time is different. This is a deeper step than that. This act of washing our hands is accompanied by a blessing, for in this moment we feel our People's story more viscerally, having just retold it during Maggid. Now, having re-experienced the majesty of the Jewish journey from degradation to dignity, we raise our hands in holiness, remembering once again that our liberation is bound up in everyone else's. Each step we take together with others towards liberation is blessing, and so we recite:

--Rabbi Menachem Creditor, Congregation Netivot Shalom,
Berkeley, CA

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu bemitvotav vetzivanu al netilat yadayim.

ברוך אתה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

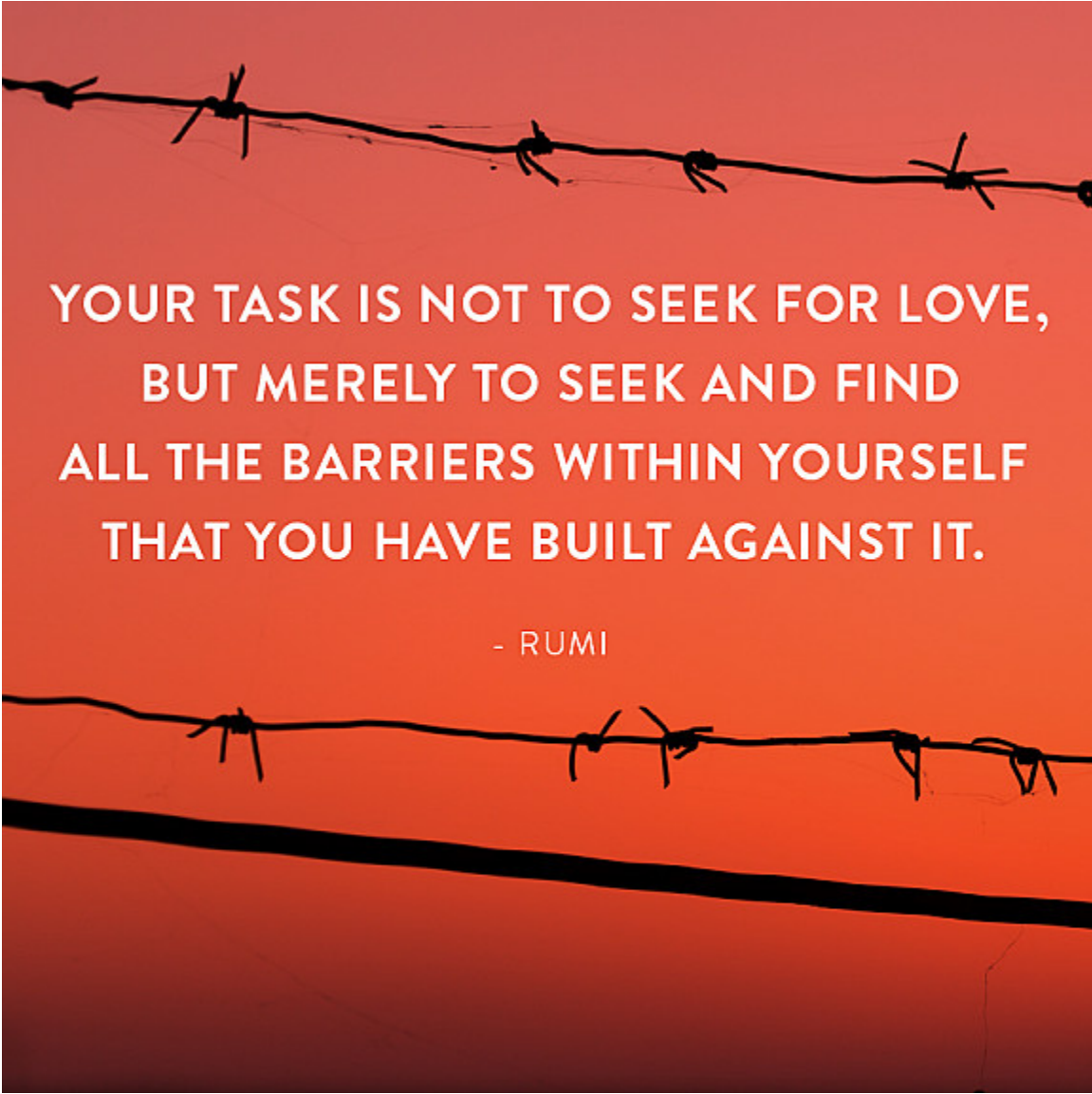
Blessed are You ETERNAL our God, Master of time and space, who has sanctified us with commandments and instructed us regarding lifting up our hands.

Rachtzah

Barriers to Love

Contributed by [Haggadot](#)

Source: Rumi Quote



YOUR TASK IS NOT TO SEEK FOR LOVE,
BUT MERELY TO SEEK AND FIND
ALL THE BARRIERS WITHIN YOURSELF
THAT YOU HAVE BUILT AGAINST IT.

- RUMI

Rachtzah

Bring, Deliver, Redeem, Take: Principles of Adulthood

Contributed by [Hal Stern](#)

Source: John Perry Barlow

Be patient.

Expand your sense of the possible.

Expect no more of anyone than you can deliver yourself.

Concern yourself with what is right rather than who is right.

Never forget that, no matter how certain, you might be wrong.

Learn the needs of those around you and respect them.

Avoid the pursuit of happiness. Seek to define your mission and pursue that.

Understand humility.

Foster dignity.

Endure.

10 of the 25 "Principles of Adult Behavior" , by John Perry Barlow.

Motzi-Matzah

No Pasta more Matzah

Contributed by [Lily Mosbacher](#)

Source: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/1nWNXO3CZkU/maxresdefault.jpg>



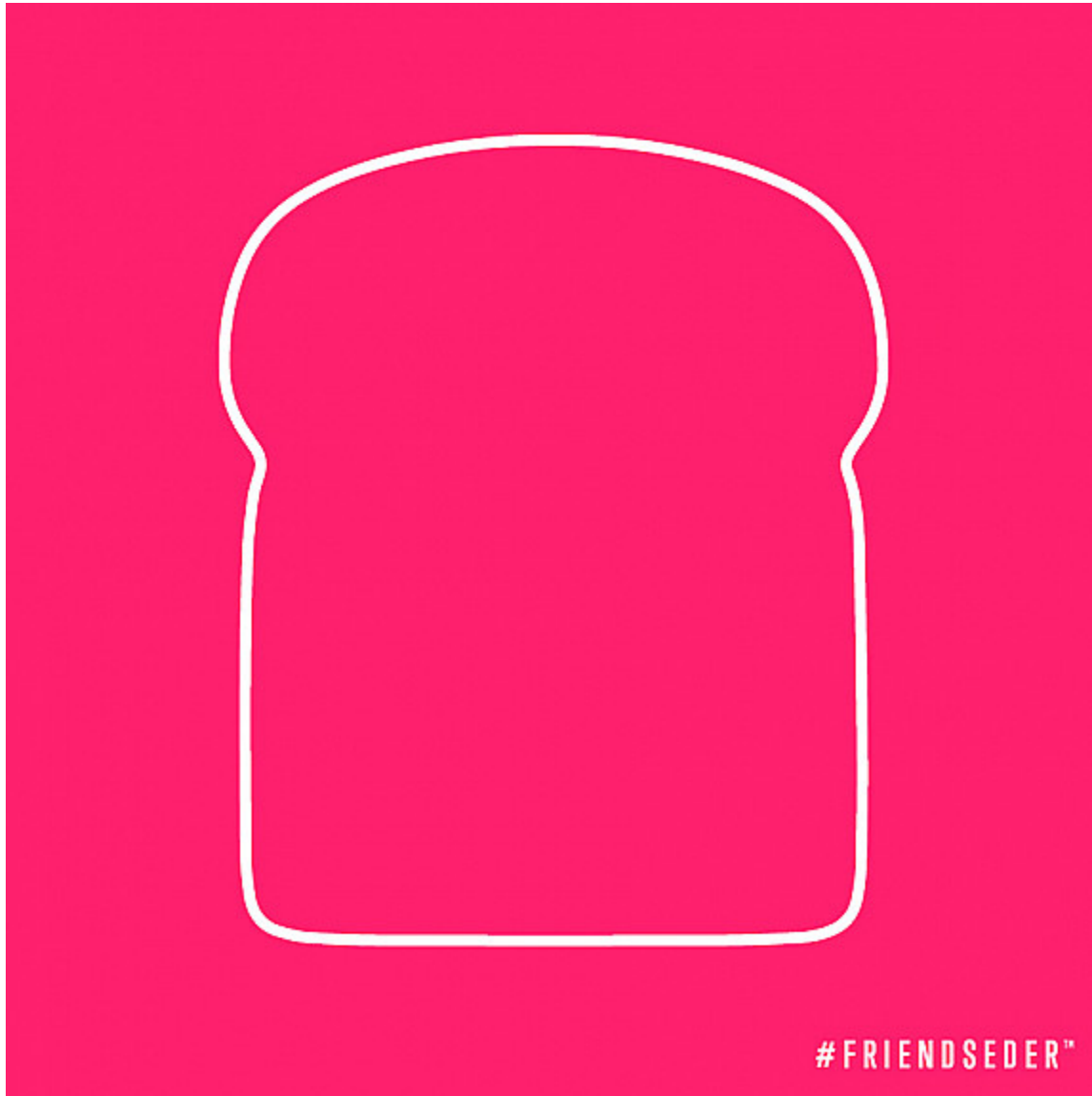
In this picture from Lady and the Tramp, they are no longer eating pasta. On Passover, we only eat MATZAH no PASTA

Motzi-Matzah

An Ode to Bread

Contributed by [#Friendseder](#)

Source: www.friendseder.com



APOLOGIES TO DR. ATKINS

Bread is a symbol of the partnership between humankind and the natural world – it doesn't just magically appear from the ground – it takes human partnership (and it's delicious).

Poet Pablo Neruda had some delicious things to say about bread. See poem below.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמּוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam Hamotzi Lechem Min Ha'aretz.

We acknowledge the Unity of All and express gratitude for bread from the earth.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam Asher Kideshanu B'mitzvotav V'tzivanu Al Achilat Matzah.

We acknowledge the Unity of All and express gratitude for the opportunity to connect by eating matzah.

Eat matzah. Discussion Question: What's your favorite kind of cracker and why?

A Selection from "Ode to Bread"

Bread,
you rise
from flour,
water
and fire.
Dense or light,
flattened or round,
you duplicate
the mother's
rounded womb,
and earth's
twice-yearly
swelling.
How simple
you are, bread,
and how profound!
You line up
on the baker's
powdered trays
like silverware or plates
or pieces of paper
and suddenly
life washes
over you,
there's the joining of seed
and fire,
and you're growing, growing
all at once

like
hips, mouths, breasts,
mounds of earth,
or people's lives.
The temperature rises, you're overwhelmed
by fullness, the roar
of fertility,
and suddenly
your golden color is fixed.
And when your little wombs
were seeded,
a brown scar
laid its burn the length
of your two halves'
toasted
juncture.
Now,
whole,
you are
mankind's energy,
a miracle often admired,
the will to live itself.

Maror

Have Yourself a Piece of Bitter Maror

Contributed by [Gary Teblum](#)

Source:

Have Yourself a Piece of Bitter Maror

By Gary Teblum

(sung to the tune of "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas")

Have yourself a piece of bitter maror
On each seder night
Then we'll feel
The toils and our people's plight.

Have yourself a piece of bitter maror
Hillel sandwich way,
We'll recall,
Our troubles weren't so far away.

Here we are as in a olden days,
Such sad slavin' days of yore.

Family, friends who are dear to us
gather near to us once more.

Through the years we all will be together
Just as we are now
Eating matzah, teaching all the children how.
And have yourself a piece of bitter maror now.

Koreich

Charoset Chanina (“Charoset of Clemency”)

Contributed by [Temple Israel of Boston](#)

Source: Temple Israel of Boston

Charoset is our symbol of mortar, recalling the brutal work conditions experienced by the Israelite slaves in Egypt. This year, we introduce a Charoset recipe that includes pine nuts.

Makes approximately 5-6 cups Charoset: 4 medium sized granny smith apples, cored, peeled, and 1/4 inch diced 1 cup dates (about 15-20) 3/4 cup pine nuts 2 tbsp brown sugar 1/2 cup sweet red wine 1 tsp cinnamon 1 tsp finely grated orange zest

1. Heat brown sugar in large saucepan over medium for 1 minute. Add pine nuts in a single layer and decrease to medium low heat until nuts are fragrant but not brown. Remove from pan promptly. If the sugar melts that is even better and produces a great crunch! Set aside. 2. Process dates until they barely form a paste. 3. Add nuts and all remaining ingredients except orange zest to the processor. Process until apples are finely chopped and date mixture is evenly distributed in the apples, or to desired consistency. 4. Pour mixture into bowl and mix in orange zest.

Are you putting a pine cone on your Seder plate this year? Are you making *Charoset Chanina* (“Charoset of Clemency”)? Share it with us on social media with the hashtag **#PassoverPineCone**.

Koreich

Hillel Sandwich: Freedom and Comfort

Contributed by [Religious Action Center](#)

Source: Earth Justice Seder

The great sage Hillel provided us with the tradition of constructing the Hillel sandwich, combining the bitterness of the maror with the sweetness of the charoset between the fortitude of the two pieces of matzah--the symbol of freedom. Through this ritual, we think about mortar and brick. We think of the Israelites traveling through the desert with no homes, no place to land and build up their strong communities, and only the matzah as a reminder of their freedom. It is not until they came to the biblical Promised Land that they experienced the sweetness of their redemption.

We sit tonight in a place of both freedom and comfort, while we remember the bitterness of the hardships of our ancestors. But what about those who cannot foresee their own redemption from the impending impacts of climate change, those who literally do not have the infrastructure that the mortar and brick of redemption affords? There are people all over the world on the edges of shorelines which are slowly slipping away, whose homes cannot withstand the rising waters and violent winds of extreme weather caused by climate change. Already over 22 million people a year are being displaced from their homes due to natural disasters (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 2014).

Tonight, as we eat this sandwich, let us remember the privilege of our infrastructure and the freedom and comfort that our homes provide us. The bitterness of the salty ocean waters continues to destroy many people's homes, for many a symbol of sweetness and freedom. Without proper adaptation and mitigation, people will continue to lose their homes. They will continue to be wandering, without a strong community or place they can call home.

{ GREENING TIP }

The world's poor are being hit hardest by climate change. Learn more: ([ActionAidUSA.org](#) > What We Do > Climate Change)

For more information on the environmental justice, please visit [rac.org/enviro](#) .

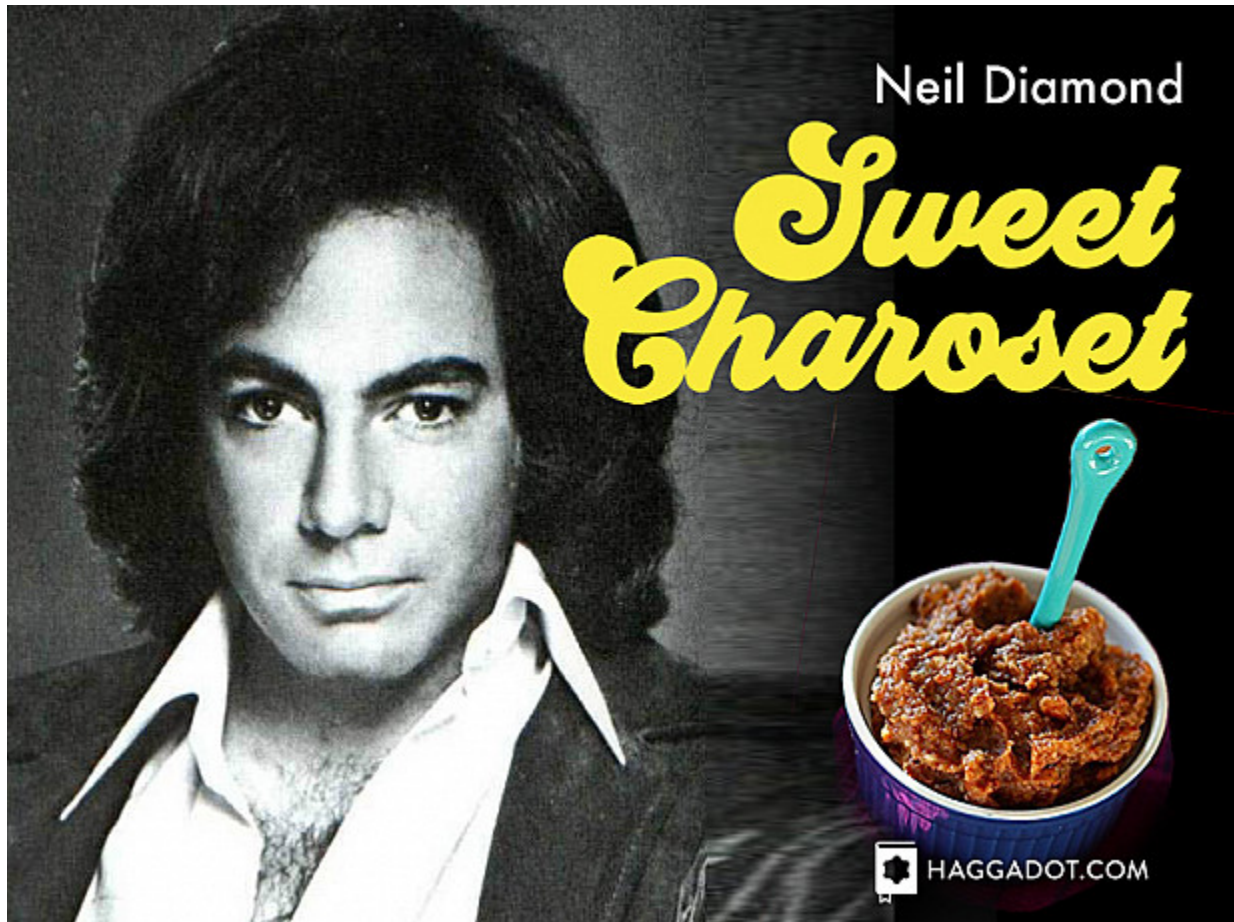
For all Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism resources, please visit [rac.org/Passover](#) .

Koreich

Sweet Charoset - parody song

Contributed by [Marc Leavey](#)

Source: Marc I. Leavey, M.D; artwork by Haggadot.com



Sweet Charoset to the tune of "Sweet Caroline"

May be shared with credit line: © 2020 by Marc I. Leavey, M.D., Baltimore, Maryland

-

Before it begins, I get some nuts and apples

And cinnamon to make it strong

Chag in the spring

Prepare for Seder table

The family comes to sing this song

Dip, carpas dip

Reaching out, some for me, some for you

Sweet Charoset

Every year it seems so good

We sit reclined

Tell the story as we could

And then we

Go through the night

And we read the Hagadah

We started with cups one and two

After we eat

We bentch and say the Hallel

Then it's time for the second two

Dip, carpas dip

Reaching out, some for me, some for you

Sweet Charoset

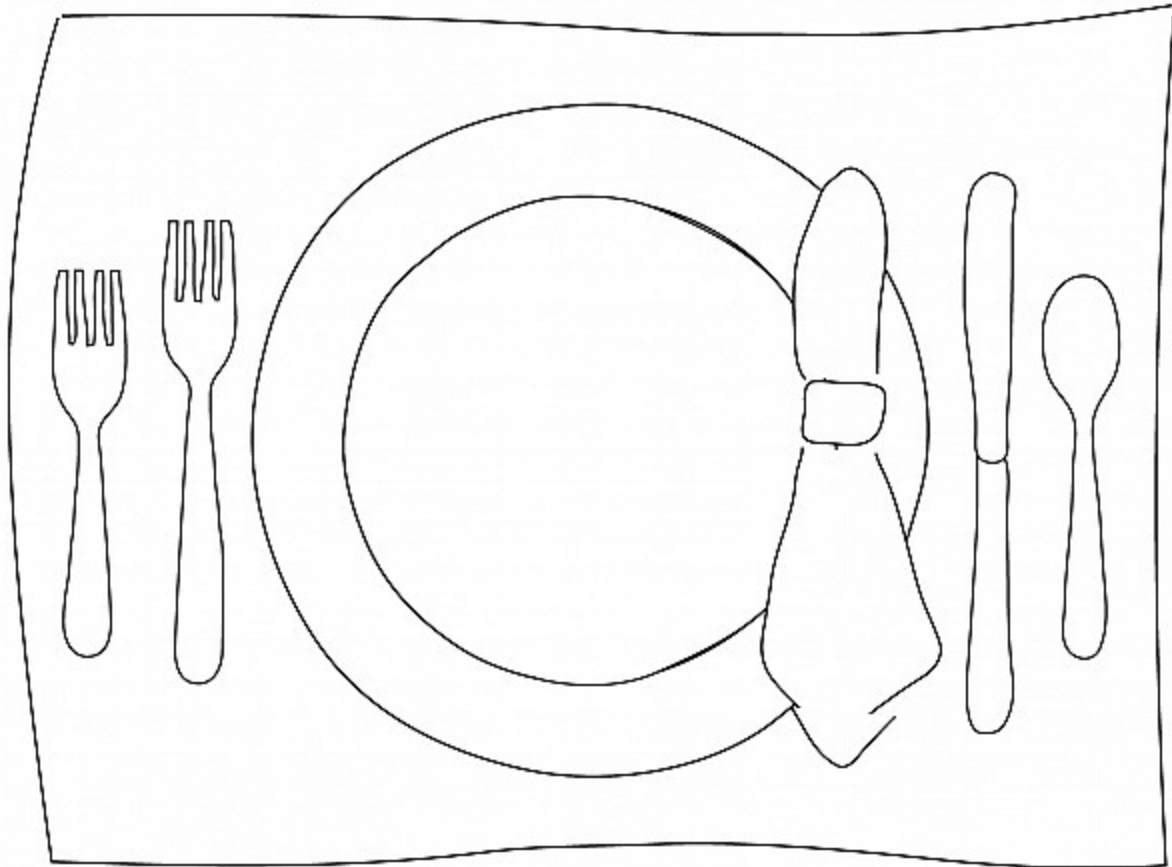
Every year it seems so good

Shulchan Oreich

Let's Eat!

Contributed by [Haggadot](#)

Source: Haggadot.com



What's on your dinner table?

Shulchan Oreich

If It Ain't Broke...

Contributed by [#Friendseder](#)

Source: www.friendseder.com

Enjoy the festive meal.

Talk about the things that matter in life: family, global refugee policies / solutions, Game of Thrones.

When you're wrapping up, take 5 minutes to reflect on the things in life you're grateful for (go beyond health, family and friends), and try to summarize them all into a single sentence that you write down to share later.

Bareich

Barech – Invitation to Gratitude

Contributed by [MAZON:](#)

Source: Mazon: Hunger Seder

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הֵזֵן אֶת הַכֹּל.

Baruch ata Adonai hazan et hakol.

Blessed are You Adonai, who provides food for all.

After we've eaten, we bless God for the good land that God has given us. We bless You, Adonai, for the land and for the food it yields. It is our responsibility to make sure that it is distributed so that every person gets the nutrition he or she needs to thrive.

Bareich

Ruth's Cup: A New Passover Ritual Celebrating Jewish Diversity

Contributed by [Be'chol Lashon](#)

Source: <https://globaljews.org/resources/publications/ruths-cup/>



Ruth's Cup: A New Passover Ritual Honoring Jewish Diversity

by Rabbi Heidi Hoover

Mitzrayim, the Hebrew word for Egypt, is also interpreted to mean “narrow places.” At Passover, we celebrate being released from the restrictions that limit us and make our lives smaller. We are not fully free as long as we are kept down by attitudes and conditions that are unjust.

Many Jews assume that “real Jews” look a certain way and have one path to Judaism — being born Jewish. When confronted with Jews who don’t fit these stereotypes, even well-meaning Jews may treat them as less Jewish. Jews of color and/or those who have converted to Judaism find that other Jews can act insensitively out of ignorance.

In the biblical book that bears her name, Ruth is a Moabite who marries an Israelite living in Moab. After her husband’s death, Ruth insists on accompanying her Israelite mother-in-law, Naomi, when she returns to Israel. There she cares for Naomi and ends up marrying one of her relatives. Because of Ruth’s declaration to Naomi: “Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God” (Ruth 1:16), she is considered the prototypical convert to Judaism. Ruth becomes the great-grandmother of King David, from whom our tradition says the Messiah will descend.

The following ritual—Ruth’s Cup—may be added after Elijah’s Cup or anywhere in the seder. It honors not only those who have converted to Judaism, but the overall diversity of the Jewish people:

Leader

At Passover we fill a cup with wine for Elijah and open the door to welcome him to our seder. Elijah symbolizes our hope for the Messianic age, when the world will be perfected, and all people will live in harmony and peace.

We also fill a cup of wine for Ruth, the first Jew by choice and great-grandmother of King David. We open the door to signify our welcome of Ruth and all who follow in her footsteps—those who become part of our people, part of our diversity.

All rise, face the open door, and read together:

We declare that we do not have to wait for the Messianic age to make sure that every Jew feels fully comfortable and integrated into our people, no matter what their skin, hair or eye color is; no matter what their name sounds like; no matter how they became Jewish—through birth or through conversion, as a child or as an adult.

Close the door and be seated.

May your Passover be liberating and enlightening!

***Optional discussion question** – Share a time when you felt like an outsider but were actively welcomed into a new community or space. How did that happen? How did it make you feel?*

download here:<https://globaljews.org/resources/publications/ruths-cup/>

Bareich

Miriam's Cup by Miriam Jerris

Contributed by [Society for Humanistic Judaism](#)

Source: Rabbi Miriam Jerris

The legends of our Rabbinic sages teach us that a miraculous well of healing waters accompanied the children of Israel throughout their journey in the desert, providing them with water. This well was given to Miriam, the prophetess, to honor her bravery and devotion to the Jewish people. According to the legend, both Miriam and her well provided comfort and gave our forbearers the faith and confidence to overcome the hardships of the Exodus. We fill Miriam's cup with water to honor her contribution to the Jewish people. Like Miriam, Jewish women in all generations have been essential for the continuity of our people. Women passed down songs and stories, rituals and recipes, from mother to daughter, from generation to generation. Let us each fill the cup of Miriam with water from our own glasses, so that our children may continue to draw from the strength and wisdom of our heritage.

We place Miriam's cup on our Seder table to honor the important and often unrecognized role of Jewish women in our tradition and history, to tell their stories that have been too sparingly told.

Hallel

Welcoming Others

Contributed by [Barry Louis Polisar](#)

Source: Telling the Story: A Passover Haggadah Explained

There is a word in Hebrew — Teshuvah — that means return. It is an acknowledgement that there is always a chance for forgiveness, redemption and change. Our traditions teach that Passover is open to all. Everyone is welcome at this table. There is always room. Because no one is ever turned away, there is always an opportunity for a rebirth of spirit.

As a sign of hospitality to all, we open the door to our homes and symbolically invite anyone who wants to join us to come inside.

At this point, the children open the door.

Hallel

Adrienne Rich on Freedom

Contributed by [Richard Schwartz](#)

Source: <http://jwa.org/blog/passover-poetry-re-telling-story-of-our-own-lives>

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.

"For Memory," *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far*

Hallel

The Promised Land

Contributed by [Nate Auerbach](#)

Source:

"God has allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the Promised Land."

— Dr. Martin Luther King, April 3, 1968, the night before his death.

Nirtzah

Next Year in Jerusalem

Contributed by [Elena Jawitz](#)

Source:

Every year at the end of the Seder we say "Next Year in Jerusalem!"

But that can't mean physically. It would get overcrowded. Some of us do not have the means to get there. Some of us are too old or young or sick to travel.

No. Not physically. Mentally. We need to open our minds and hearts to a level where we can accept who we are as people on every level. These traditions we have were around for thousands and thousands of years. Some things have adapted to fit the times. Some things have been rendered obsolete. But the message is the same. We are Jews. We survive. We are special.

We need to hold on to that message in our everyday lives. Not next year. Now. Jerusalem is now. Why wait a year to make your life and the lives of others better? We are on this earth for a very brief period of time. We need to utilize every second being the best we can be and living to our full potential.

We were once slaves. Some of us still are. Some of us are even killed for our beliefs. We need to band together as a community. As one. We need to stand up and say "We are Jews. We exist. We thrive."

We do not assimilate. We do not cower in fear. We do not pretend to worship other deities. We are warriors and poets and scholars.

We are Jews

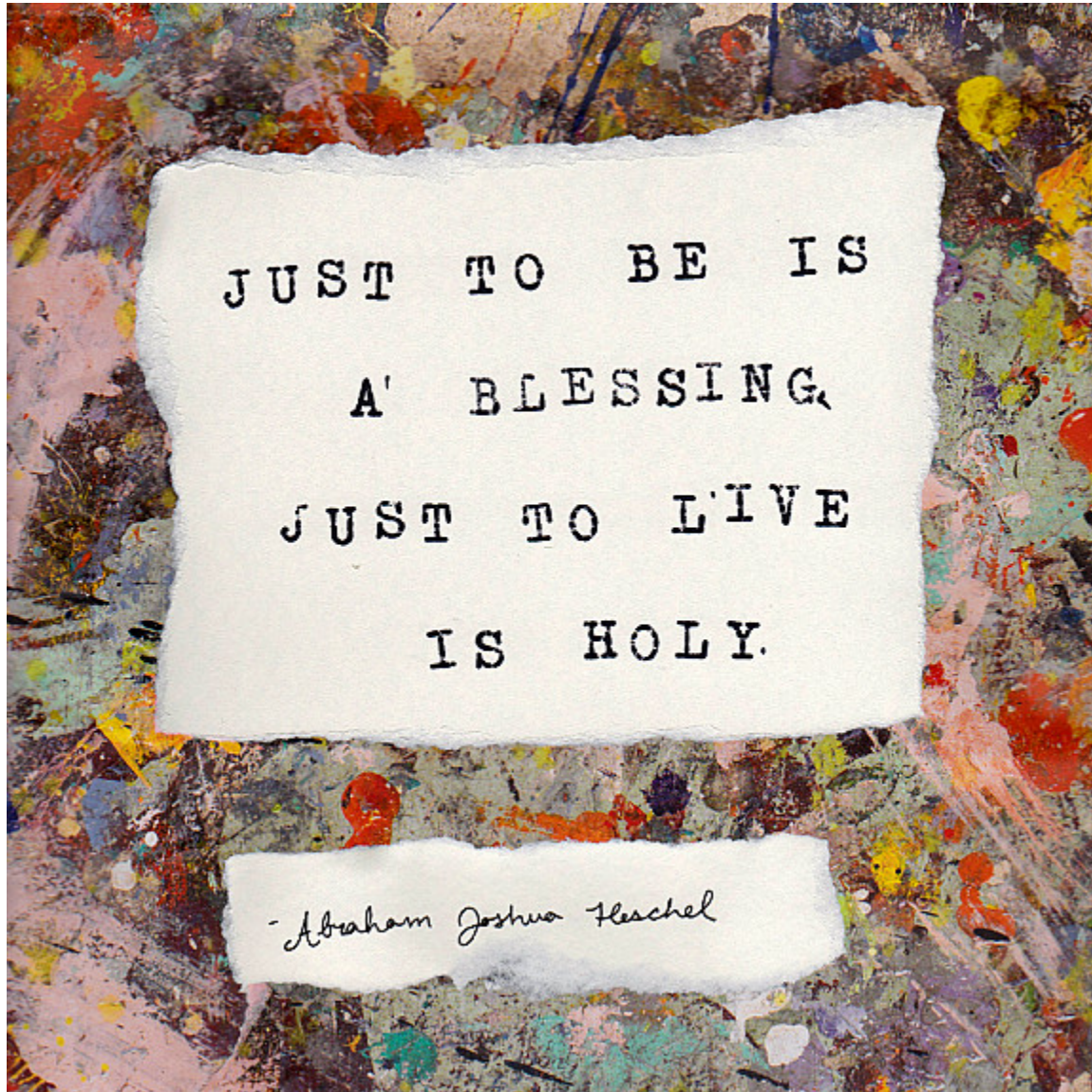
And we are proud

Conclusion

Just to be is a blessing...

Contributed by [Haggadot](#)

Source: Abraham Joshua Heschel Quote, Design by Haggadot.com



JUST TO BE IS
A BLESSING,
JUST TO LIVE
IS HOLY.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

The Ethical Problem of Hardening Pharaoh's Heart

Contributed by [JB](#)

Source: Prof. Shaul Magid

It seems unethical for God to deny Pharaoh free will and then punish him for his actions. Rashi, Nahmanides, and Maimonides all struggle with this problem, and each assumes that even Pharaoh deserves to be treated fairly.^[1]

Prof. Shaul Magid

Introduction: Reading the Bible for Philosophy

Whether the Hebrew Bible is a philosophical text or not has been debated,^[2] but in this piece I wish to read it as if it were one, especially as the text is read through the lens of Jewish medieval commentators.^[3] This is not because I accept the mythic origins of the Torah as a single document dictated by God to Moses. Rather, it is because my “text” as it were, is less the Bible per se and more the ways , readers grappled with some of the issues it raises,^[4] in particular philosophical issues, in this case the question of ethics.

Pharaoh's Hard Heart in Its Literary Context

Plagues as Motivation to Allow Israel to Leave

The exodus narrative arguably begins with Exodus 3:16 when God informs Moses, still in the wilderness of Midian, that God has heard Israel's cry, will take them out of Egypt and bring them to a *land flowing with milk and honey*. As a prelude to the event, God says to Moses (Exodus 3:19, 20):

וְאֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי לֹא־יִתֵּן אֶתְכֶם מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְהֵלֶךְ וְלֹא בְיַד חֲזָקָה: וְשַׁלַּחְתִּי אֶת־יָדִי וְהִכִּיתִי אֶת־מִצְרַיִם בְּכֹל נִפְלְאוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲעֲשֶׂה בְּקִרְבּוֹ וְאַתְּרִיבֵנּוּ יִשְׁלַח אֶתְכֶם:	Yet I know the king of Egypt will not let you go without a strong hand. So I will stretch out My hand and smite Egypt with various wonders which I will work upon them; after that he shall let you go.
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God's warning to Moses that Pharaoh will not listen seems quite plausible. Why would the king of the most powerful nation on earth agree to liberate his slave population merely because a turncoat Egyptian asks him to? God's “knowledge” of Pharaoh's response and solution is equally reasonable. God will bring about wonders that will cause enough suffering in Egypt that Pharaoh will grant Moses' request.

These verses do not imply that God wants anything more from Pharaoh than to simply liberate Israel.

Plagues as Divine Wonders: An Essential Part of the Exodus

The function of the plagues becomes problematic in the following chapter, when God adds a new explanation for them (Exodus 4:21):

וַיֹּאמֶר יְ-הוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בְּלִקְתָּהּ לָשׁוּב מִצְרָיִמָּה
רְאֵה פְלִי-הַמְּפֹתִים אֲשֶׁר-שָׂמֵתִי בְיָדְךָ וַעֲשִׂיתָם
יִשְׁלַח לִּי לִפְנֵי פַרְעֹה וְאֲנִי אַחְזַק אֶת-לְבָבוֹ
אֶת-הָעָם:

And the Lord said to Moses, When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the marvels that I have put within your power. I, however, will stiffen his heart, *so that* he will not let the people go.

Viewing this verse as a reformulation of Exodus 3:19,^[5] we now learn the source of God’s “knowledge” of Pharaoh’s recalcitrance: God will make Pharaoh *unable* to liberate Israel “so that” the plagues can continue. This “so that” is an important part of the verse because it essentially re-writes Exodus 3:20. The plagues are, now, more than merely a military tactic to overcome Pharaoh’s stubbornness; they are arguably the centerpiece of the entire episode. In almost every instance in which God hardens Pharaoh’s heart, the verse includes the clause “so that,” “in order that,” “to show that,” “to make known,” or “shall know.”

Both the plagues and the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart (which seem to be inextricably intertwined) are now given pedagogical value.

Unpacking the Problem of God Hardening Pharaoh’s Heart

Most readers are familiar with the problem: how is it fair of God to harden Pharaoh’s heart against the plagues and then punish Pharaoh for his obstinacy?—but allow me to unpack this a little more. For the sake of this philosophical analysis, the reader must “accept” three distinct presuppositions.^[6]

Equality of all Humans – The Bible assumes all human beings are created in the image of God (even as some later traditions may subvert that claim) with freewill and all thus have the capacity to repent for their sins. In other words, no ontological distinction between Israelite and non-Israelite exists in the biblical narrative.

Holistic Reading – The Bible should be read as a whole with a consistent message and no contradictions. I suggest that in principle, taking a source critical approach, and assuming that the Torah has no one approach to an issue or version of a story, undermines, or at least problematizes, the reading of the text as a philosophical “treatise.”

Ahistorical reading – The Bible should be understood outside the orbit of its own literary and theological world-view. If we were to view the Bible only as a literary document, limited in its historical and cultural scope, the “problem” of hardening Pharaoh’s heart may be “our” problem (i.e., that of the modern reader) but not the Bible’s. As Umberto Casutto writes (*Commentary on Exodus* , 56):

If we read these passages according to their simple meaning, and according to the reason of that period, and not in light of concepts that came into existence at a later epoch, we shall see in the

final analysis there is no problem or difficulty here, and that everything is clear in light of the original ideology of the Israelites.^[7]

Instead, we will treat the biblical text as speaking to every generation and containing wisdom for any readership.^[8] (Some would dub this “constructive theology” for working under this assumption.)

Once we accept these premises, God’s hardening of Pharaoh’s heart, which removes from Pharaoh the possibility of capitulation to God’s will or repentance, understandably raises the question of ethical reciprocity and just desserts.

Rashi: God Gave Pharaoh a Chance

In his gloss on Exodus 7:3, Rashi states,

ואני אקשה – מאחר שהרשיע והתריס כנגדי, וגלוי לפני שאין נחת רוח באומות עובדי עבודה זרה לתת לב שלם לשוב, טוב לי שיתקשה לבו למען הרבות בו אותותי ותכירו אתם את גבורותי.

וכן מדתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא מביא פורענות על האומות עובדי עבודה זרה כדי שישמעו ישראל וייראו. שנאמר: הִכַּרְתִּי גוֹלִים נְשַׁמְלֵי פְנוֹתֵם הִתְרַבְּתִי הוֹצִאתֶם מִבְּלִי עוֹבְרֵי נֶצְדוֹ עָרִיתֶם מִבְּלִי-אִישׁ מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב: אֶמְרִתִּי אֶדְ-תִּירָאִי אוֹתִי תִקְחִי מוֹסֵר וְלֹא-יִכְרַת מְעוֹנָה כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-פָּקַדְתִּי עָלֶיהָ אֶכֹּר הַשְׁקִימוּ הַשְׁחִיתוּ כֹּל עֲלִילוֹתֶם:

ואף על פי כן בחמש מכות הראשונות לא נאמר ויחזק ה' את לב פרעה, אלא ויחזק לב פרעה

“And I will stiffen” – After Pharaoh acted wickedly toward Me, and it was clear to Me that the idolatrous nations (‘ *umot*) do not have the sensitivity (*nahat ruah*) to repent with a whole heart. It is therefore good and just (*tov*) that God harden his heart in order to multiply His signs so that you will recognize His might.

This is the way of God (*midato shel Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu*). He brings calamity upon the nations in order that Israel hear and fear Him. As it says (Zephaniah 3:6-7), “I wiped out nations: Their corner towers are desolate. I turned their thoroughfares into ruins, With none passing by; Their towns lie waste without people, Without inhabitants. And I thought that she would fear Me, Would learn a lesson And that the punishment I brought on them Would not be lost on her. Instead, all the more eagerly They have practiced corruption in all their deeds.”^[9]

Even so, in the first five plagues, it does not say “and God stiffened Pharaoh’s heart” rather, “Pharaoh’s heart stiffened.”

Rashi’s comment is made up of three parts:

1. An observation about why God would harden Pharaoh’s heart (Rashi’s own reading).
2. Proof that this fits with God’s treatment of gentiles in general (Talmud).
3. An observation that God waited until the 6th plague to do this (*Midrash Tanchuma*).

In the first part, Rashi claims that God knows, due to Pharaoh’s previous wicked behavior, that he will not repent. God is thus justified to use this individual or collective as a tool to teach and

benefit those who can learn (i.e., Israel), and make sure that the Israelites get to see numerous plagues and learn about God's power.

Invoking Pharaoh's past wickedness, however, does not appear to be sufficient justification for Rashi. Thus, he appends a final point that he takes from *Midrash Tanchuma*,^[10] that Pharaoh had ample opportunity to comply, but that after a certain time, God punished him by refusing to allow him to repent. In my view, this addition suggests that Rashi is uncomfortable with the ontological distinction in the Talmudic position upon which his proof-text is based,^[11] and needs to justify this position in the narrative itself. *Tanchuma* helps him do that.^[12]

When read as a whole, Rashi's comment tells us that Pharaoh only lost his ability to comply with God's demands after he had five chances to do so and because God knew in advance that he wouldn't. This modifies the Talmudic dictum that God punishes the nations for the sake of Israel by adding the caveat that God does so only when they deserve it and have been given the opportunity to repent and avoid the punishment.^[13]

Nahmanides: Making Sure Pharaoh Is Sufficiently Punished

Cruel and Unusual Punishment

Nahmanides' gloss on Exod. 4:21 suggests that Moses might be upset at God's decision to harden Pharaoh's heart and might actually feel some sympathy for him.

ואני אחזק את לבו, ואל תתיאש
אתה מלעשותם בעבור כן, ועוד
תזהיר אותו במכה האחרונה אשר
בה ישלחם. “And I will stiffen his heart” – Moses, do not hold back from doing exactly what I say because of this (=my hardening his heart). Also, remember to warn Pharaoh about the last plague (the killing of the first born), the plague that will eventually set you free.

Implied here is that Moses will recognize Pharaoh's desire to liberate Israel and his inability to actualize that desire. While this could easily (and justifiably) result in Moses' protesting the ethics of this unfolding event, and the implications for Israel in the future, God warns him to not allow Pharaoh's suffering (his inability to change his mind) and God's torture (hardening his heart) to derail the process of Israel's liberation.

I use the term “torture” knowing it is understandably problematic and intentionally provocative. However, I think it suitably describes God's “cruel and unusual” punishment—as understood by Nahmanides—for two reasons:

1. Moses is warned not to have mercy on Pharaoh, implying that mercy would be warranted given that Pharaoh was at the mercy of a God who is causing him to suffer.
2. God reminds Moses to tell Pharaoh that he, through his obstinacy, will be the murderer of his own son, resulting from Israel's continued bondage, and that Pharaoh is powerless to reverse that decree.

Needed to Accomplish Sufficient Punishment

Nahmanides deepens his investment in the notion of cruel and unusual punishment in his gloss on Exod. 7:3:

והנה פירשו בשאלה אשר ישאלו הכל, אם השם הקשה את לבו מה פשעו, ויש בו שני טעמים ושניהם אמת.

האחד, כי פרעה ברשעו אשר עשה לישראל רעות גדולות חנם, נתחייב למנוע ממנו דרכי תשובה, כאשר באו בזה פסוקים רבים בתורה ובכתובים, ולפי מעשיו הראשונים נדון

והטעם השני, כי היו חצי המכות עליו בפשעו, כי לא נאמר בהן רק ויחזק לב פרעה (להלן פסוק יג, כב, ח טו), ויכבד פרעה את לבו (להלן ח כח, ט ז). הנה לא רצה לשלחם לכבוד השם, אבל כאשר גברו המכות עליו ונלאה לסבול אותם, רך לבו והיה נמלך לשלחם מכובד המכות, לא לעשות רצון בוראו. ואז הקשה... השם את רוחו ואמץ את לבבו למען ספר שמו

I will answer the question that all who read this narrative are want to ask; “If God hardens Pharaoh’s heart what is his sin?” There are two reasons both of which are true.

The first reason is that Pharaoh, in his wickedness, committed unwarranted acts of evil against Israel. As a result, his ability to repent was removed. There are many verses in Scripture that suggest that one can be judged by one’s earlier actions (*ma’asav ha-rishonim*) [*justifying the removal of repentance that would alleviate or soften the punishment for those earlier actions* – SM].

The second reason is that his sin was his unwillingness to liberate Israel resulting in the first five plagues, where it only says, “Pharaoh’s heart was stiffened,” or “Pharaoh’s heart was hardened.” This exhibits that he did not want to liberate Israel to honor God. However, when the plagues intensified and he began to suffer from them, his heart was softened and he was wont to free them because of the plagues and not in recognition of divine will. At that point, God hardened his spirit and strengthened his heart in order to make His name known...

The first reason could simply be an example of just punishment (*mida k’neged mida*). Pharaoh enslaves Israel and, in doing, so, takes away their free will, as slavery is the loss of agency. God then punishes Pharaoh by taking away his free will. Pharaoh becomes a slave to God as a punishment for enslaving Israel.^[14]

But why would God have to relinquish Pharaoh’s free will in order to “punish his earlier actions”? Couldn’t God just punish Pharaoh for his earlier actions *after* liberating Israel while allowing him to retain his free will? Apparently, according to Nahmanides, if Pharaoh had repented as opposed to simply given up and let them go, God could not have punished him as severely for his previous actions.

The second reason suggests that Pharaoh’s sin was (also) his unwillingness to liberate Israel out of recognition of God, since in the first five plagues Pharaoh was aware of God’s demand and chose to ignore it. But this answer seems problematic.

Why is it not sufficient for Pharaoh to liberate Israel by recognizing the force of the plagues alone? Why must he do so because he recognizes God?^[15]

Moreover, doesn't this second reason explicitly contradict Exodus 4:22, in which God says to Moses in the wilderness— *before* Pharaoh refuses God's demand in the first five plagues—that He will harden Pharaoh's heart. According to this verse, Pharaoh's sin could not have been his volitional refusal to liberate Israel (the first five plagues, constituting disobedience to God) but must be the act of enslaving Israel in the first place.^[16]

In my view, Nahmanides' solution is not sufficient, either for interpreting the biblical narrative or for addressing the larger ethical issues that arise from it.

Maimonides: Awareness of the Loss of Free Will and the Inability to Rectify It

Maimonides addresses this issue in two places: in his legal code, *Mishneh Torah*, the "Laws of Repentance," and in his introduction to his commentary on the Mishna tractate *Ethics of the Fathers*, called the "Eight Chapters."^[17]

Maimonides is not primarily a biblical exegete; he is not concerned with making sense of the verses in question (Rashi) or the story as a whole (Nahmanides). Rather, he uses these verses to illustrate a legal category (repentance) and a philosophical idea (free will). The nullification of Pharaoh's free will must make sense legally and philosophically and, I would add, universally, for it to work as an exegetical solution.

In *Mishneh Torah* (Laws of Repentance 6:2), Maimonides very cogently elucidates free will as the foundation of repentance:

... כשם שהאדם חוטא מדעתו וברצונו כך הוא ...Just as one sins willingly and knowingly, one must
עושה תשובה מדעתו וברצונו. repent willingly and knowingly.

Maimonides posits free will as the correlation between sin and repentance, but not without limits. He cites numerous examples, including both non-Israelites and Israelites, who were prevented from repenting because of their sinful behavior, concluding (Laws of Repentance 6:2),

כולן חטאו מעצמן וכולן נתחייבו למנוע מהן All of them sinned willfully and deserve to be prevented
התשובה. from repenting.

In his *Eight Chapters* Maimonides makes a similar argument. Here, he is more demonstrative and explicitly rejects the notion that God punished Pharaoh for not freeing Israel in the first five plagues.

Then [according to this assumption] God requested that [Pharaoh] set them free, though he was compelled not to set them free. Then God punished him and destroyed him and his followers for not setting them free. This would have been an injustice and contrary to everything we have previously set forth ("Eight Chapters," 90).

That is, the loss of free will is only a punishment resulting from free will (i.e., the continuous choice to act wickedly) and functions inside as well as outside God's covenant with Israel.

According to this, the exodus has a three-fold purpose:

- to liberate Israel from bondage,
- to show non-Israelites the power of God, and
- to show the Israelites that the covenant they are about to enter, while based on reciprocity (mitzvah-sin-repentance), includes the provision that God can remove Israel's ability to avert punishment through repentance.

This third purpose, I would argue, is the central one for Maimonides. The torturous element, according to Maimonides, is that the individual who loses free will is aware of that loss in the moment.

God may punish an individual by preventing him from choosing a certain action, and he knows it, but is unable to struggle with his soul and drive it back to make this choice ("Eight Chapters," 91).

As I understand Maimonides' point in this oblique passage, an individual may know that he or she cannot act in a certain way because God is preventing him or her from doing so (i.e., the punishment is the temporary erasure of his free will. Even that knowledge, however, is not sufficient for the individual to gain control of his behavior such that God will lift the punishment. That is, a person can be conscious that his inability to act is itself a punishment but still be unable to chose to do the very thing that would lift the punishment.

Covenantal Ethics

For Maimonides, for the Israelites to enter into a covenant with God properly, they need to understand that the power they are given to control their own actions and destiny is not fully their own, but still the property of God. That is, their autonomy is not an erasure of servitude but a particular expression of it. Abuse of this autonomous power through sin can result in the (temporary) loss of that power, i.e., the temporary removal of free will. But, the loss of power does not negate the covenantal relationship; it traps one side in the consequences of its own actions, acutely aware of that loss as they try hopelessly to enact their will.

In Maimonides' reading of this story, freedom of the will is never absolute in the biblical imagination, and thus covenantal ethics cannot be fully reciprocal as it includes the caveat of servitude. Ironically, in my reading of Maimonides, we do not learn this from any interaction between God and Israel. For this important lesson, Pharaoh is our teacher.

04/20/2016

[1] I dedicate this essay to the birth of my first grandson, Galil Magid.

[2] For an affirmative answer, see Yoram Hazony's *The Philosophy of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and the English translation of my teacher Eliezer Schweid's *The Philosophy of the Bible as Foundation of Jewish Culture* (Academic Studies Press, 2009).

[3] The sages throughout the Middle Ages were very cautious about reading the Bible in its naked form, that is, reading it without commentary. We even have cases where prohibitions were rendering forbidding such the practice of reading, or studying, Torah without canonical commentaries. The naked reading of the Torah was relegated to a ritual act performed in the synagogue and not an educational program enacted in the study house.

[4] My reading here is very much in the spirit of Paul Griffiths, *Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

[5] Source and redaction critics would argue that the two are not from the same pen. For a critical approach to the problem of God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart in Exodus, see David Frankel's TABS essays, "When Pharaoh's Stubbornness Caught God by Surprise," and "Taking Control of the Story: God Hardens Pharaoh's Heart." That said, in this piece I am reading the Torah as a single document.

[6] Again, I am not saying that these presuppositions are factually true, only that they are necessary stances for a philosophical reading.

[7] The only "problem" for critical scholars is when the Bible doesn't make sense on its own terms. The problems it raises for us as its readers may be a matter of philosophy and theology but not the Bible.

[8] On this see my, "Hasidism: Mystical and Non-Mystical Interpretations of Scripture," *Jewish Mysticism*, F. Greenspahn ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 139-158. The Hasidic master R. Jacob Joseph of Polonoy, a disciple of the Baal Shem Tov, expressed this idea by beginning many of his sermons with the well-known rabbinic adage, "Why mention these stories in the Torah? What happened, happened (*mah d'havei havei*). Why do we need to know this?" While the locution *mah d'havei havei* appears in rabbinic sources, R. Jacob Joseph deploys it to question the seeming superfluous nature of portions of the biblical narrative. For a discussion of history writing in the Bible and how this was understood by the Rabbis, see, Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (Routledge, 1998), and Isaiah Gafni, "Rabbinic Historiography and Representations of the Past," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* (eds. Charllotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 295-312.

[9] Rashi, and the Talmudic passage he is invoking, do not quote the verses in full.

[10] "Parashat Vayera," 3

ויחזק לב פרעה בחמש מכות הראשונות אין כתיב בהן אלא ויחזק לב פרעה כיון שבאו חמש מכות ולא שלח, אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא מכאן ואילך אם רצה לשלוח איני מקבל שכך כתיב בחמש מכות האחרונות ויחזק ה' את לב פרעה.

"And Pharaoh's heart stiffened" – in the first 5 plagues it only says, "Pharaoh's heart stiffened." Once these five passed, and he still refused to send [the Israelites away], the Holy One, blessed be He, said: "From now on, even if you wish to send them away I will not accept it." For this is what is written regarding the last five plagues, "And God stiffened Pharaoh's heart."

[11] Rashi's prooftext paraphrases a passage in b. *Yebamot* (63a):

א"ר אלעזר בר אבינא: אין פורענות באה לעולם אלא בשביל ישראל, שנאמר: הכרתי גוים נשמו פנותם ההרבתי חוצותם, וכתיב: אמרתי אך תיראי אותי תקחי מוסר.	R. Elazar bar Avina said: "Troubles come to the world only for the sake of Israel, as it says (Zeph 3:6), 'I wiped out nations: Their corner towers are desolate...' And it says (Zeph 3:7): 'And I thought that she would fear Me, Would learn a lesson...'"
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According to this passage, God pays no attention to gentiles, even to punish them, except when Israel is concerned. This theology flies in the face of the second postulate stated above, that all people are equal in God's eyes. Although admittedly, Rashi is making use of this concept, the other two parts of his comment seem aimed to soften this idea, perhaps expressing Rashi's own ambivalence to the concept.

[12] Rashi's commentary is almost exclusively built on the adaptation of rabbinic statements. Therefore, it is often difficult to determine what Rashi actually thinks any particular verse means. However, Rashi often includes more than one rabbinic dictum in his comment. In doing so, he juxtaposes two opinions that often represent two distinct rabbinic perspectives. This suggests that Rashi thinks *through* and *with* the canonical literature by means of what I am calling juxtapositional reasoning.

[13] The question that remains for Rashi is as follows: If it is the case that Pharaoh would not have repented, since he did not repent (or could not repent), why take away his ability to repent? Even if God had not intervened, Pharaoh's heart would certainly have hardened on its own accord? Rashi never addresses this issue because, as an exegete, he doesn't have to. By this I mean that for him the exegetical enterprise is devoted solely to making sense of the verses in question. The issues that arise from a sensible reading, while provocative and important, are beyond the assignment of the exegete. In this comment, Rashi claims to have made sense of two ambiguities: (1) what does the Bible mean when it says God hardened Pharaoh's heart? And (2) why does the phrase only begin after the fifth plague? Our question as to why he needed to harden his heart in general is not needed to make sense of the verses in question and is thus left unanswered.

[14] While this is a reasonable point, the parity between the slavery of Israel to Pharaoh and Pharaoh's slavery to God is limited at best. While Pharaoh may have deprived Israel of the free will to determine its fate, God, as absolute ruler, heard Israel's cry and answered that cry. That is, Israel's desire to be free was not muted even though they were slaves. Pharaoh, however, being the slave of God, had no recourse to any other authority that could hear his remorse. In Egypt, Israel had agency through prayer and a sovereign who could save them. I would argue that this is different from God hardening Pharaoh's heart.

[15] I would add that, granted that from the biblical perspective, recognition of God is an absolute good, nevertheless, this point is hard to justify from the vantage point of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Second, how could Pharaoh have known that what he was doing (enslaving and oppressing Israel) was so egregious? Slavery was normal in the ancient world; is Pharaoh sinful because he did *not* reject the norms of his society and culture?

[16] Nahmanides does not deal with any of these questions. Perhaps this is due to his unwavering commitment to viewing this episode inside the unfolding story of Israel's liberation, even as he acknowledges the more theoretical issues of covenantal ethics. That is, Nahmanides recognizes the need to justify God's action in a way Rashi does not but he does not see the need to justify God's actions outside this particular narrative.

[17] Maimonides repeats himself often in both sources, although each one, largely due to its intended purpose, offers different nuances and perspectives. In *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides is concerned with constructing the parameters of the legal category of repentance and uses the hardening of Pharaoh's heart as an illustration of the limits of repentance. In the *Eight Chapters*, Maimonides is concerned with the human disposition and, more specifically for us, the necessity of freewill as a foundation for covenantal responsibility.

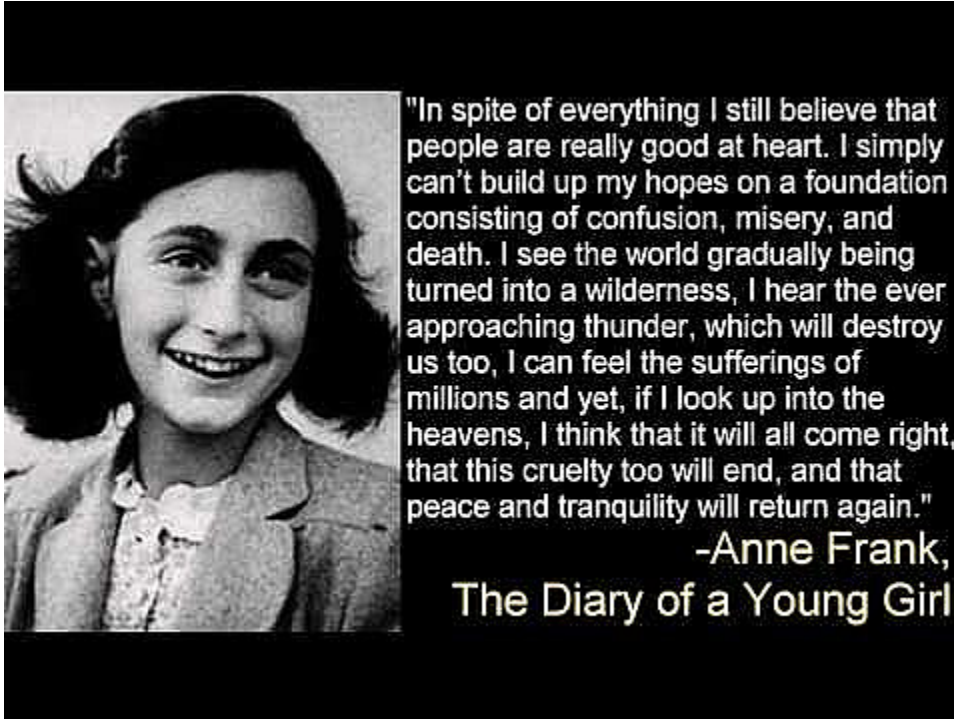
SOURCE: <https://thetorah.com/the-ethical-problem-of-hardening-pharaohs-heart/>

Commentary / Readings

Anne Frank Quote

Contributed by [Seth Malin](#)

Source:



A "Fifth" Cup for Justice

Contributed by [American Jewish World Service](#)

Source:



A "FIFTH CUP" FOR JUSTICE

And other new rituals to bring social justice to your Seder table

Greens dipped in saltwater tears... Four cups of wine for freedom... An open door ushering in redemption.

These Passover rituals remind us that we were once slaves in Egypt and inspire us to act in the ongoing fight for justice.

This year, we invite you to add a new tradition to your Seder—to represent your commitment to *tikkun olam*, our responsibility to repair our broken world.

Choose one or more of the following ideas for a Seder dedicated to advancing freedom for all people:

1. **"Let all who are hungry come and eat."** This year, act on this invocation from the Haggadah and invite someone in need to your Seder—perhaps a friend who is alone for the holiday or a refugee family that has settled in your neighborhood.
2. **Add a new food or other symbolic object to your Seder plate that represents freedom.** You may be familiar with adding an orange for women's rights. How about an olive to represent peace? Or a feather for the ability to rise above oppression? Explain why the symbol is meaningful to you and ask each guest to share what represents freedom to them.
3. **Place an empty "Fifth Cup" in the center of the Seder table.** Ask each person to pour a small amount of their own wine to help fill the cup, representing their commitment to do their part to build a better world. Once the cup is full, raise it up in honor of the powerful impact we can have when we pursue justice together.
4. **Ask your friends and family: What would a world where all people were free of persecution look like?** Racism, anti-Semitism, and discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation are still devastating realities for many of us—within and beyond the Jewish community. What role can we each play to uproot bigotry and ensure comfort, equality, and respect for the diverse spectrum of identities within Jewish communities and in society at large?
5. **Ask kids at your Seder to sing a song or put on a play about the freedoms they are lucky to enjoy in their lives.** Offer young children suggestions like the freedom to go to school or choose what they want to be when they grow up. Older kids might focus on civil liberties like the right to vote or participate in peaceful protest.
6. **Raise up women's role in history.** Fill a cup for Miriam along with the one for Elijah, and ask everyone at the table to share a story about a powerful woman who has fought for freedom and inspired them to do the same.
7. **Open your door to symbolically "welcome the stranger."** Make a firm commitment to aid and be an ally to people seeking refuge from persecution around the world.
8. **Lead a discussion about a social justice issue you're passionate about and take action together.** Visit www.ajws.org/action and www.ajws.org/blog for ideas.

To download AJWS's social justice Haggadah and other original resources for Passover, visit www.ajws.org/passover



Passover Themes Meaningful to Interfaith Families

Contributed by [18Doors](#)

Source:



The Passover story is the primary story in Jewish history, and one that Jews retell in short form at every prayer service in the words "...God, who freed us from Egyptian bondage..." Passover is an occasion to retell the whole story. But telling the story is not enough.

Passover is a holiday that the Jewish community has used, throughout the centuries, to remind us of our heritage of freeing others because we were freed. It is the "slavery to freedom" theme that is central to our command to be more than simply good people, but to be people who pursue justice for others.

Along with an end to slavery, in the literal sense, Passover also has the power to teach us about other types of liberation. We might focus on warfare, on poverty, on healthcare systems, on homelessness, on bigotry, on abuse in the home and a whole host of other issues important in a world of creating and restoring justice. A wonderful non-profit organization called American Jewish World Service (AJWS) offers free Passover resources that connect the Exodus story and

its moral mandate to current events, raising our awareness of those who still suffer in bondage, and offering ideas for how we can try to help these people. More about that [here](#).

Passover is also a story about journeys. Therefore it might be a time to tell our spiritual journeys to each other. We might help each other by discussing and attempting to solve problems that have been plaguing us (pun intended) for weeks or months. And each of the Passover foods that tell the Exodus story also helps us to tell our current stories.

Regardless of the themes chosen, by any particular seder gathering, conversation and supportive argument is key to a successful Passover meal. While some homes don't choose this path, it is customary in traditional Jewish homes.

For more information, check out our [Guide to Passover for Interfaith Families](#).

First Proposed Seal of the United States

Contributed by [Haggadot](#)

Source: US Diplomacy Center & Wikipedia



Interpretation of the first committee's design for the reverse of the Great Seal of the United States in 1776, which was never used. This was Benjamin Franklin's design, originally suggested for the obverse, but the committee chose Pierre Eugene du Simitiere's design for that side. This interpretation was made in 1856 by Benson J. Lossing. Franklin's design was: Moses standing on the Shore, and extending his Hand over the Sea, thereby causing the same to overwhelm Pharaoh who is sitting in an open Chariot, a Crown on his Head and a Sword in his Hand. Rays from a Pillar of Fire in the Clouds reaching to Moses, to express that he acts by Command of the Deity. Motto, "Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God." Thomas Jefferson, a member of the committee, liked the motto enough to later use it on his personal seal.

Scanned from *The Eagle and the Shield* by Patterson and Dougall, page 21 Originally printed in *The New Harper's Magazine*, Volume 13, Issue 74, July 1856, page 180, article Great Seal of the United States by Benson J. Lossing

Songs

Our Passover Things (Sung to the tune of "My Favorite Things")

Contributed by [Ayala Livny](#)

Source:

Cleaning and cooking and so many dishes

Out with the hametz, no pasta, no knishes

Fish that gefillted, horseradish that stings

These are a few of our Passover things.

Matazh and karpas and chopped up haroset

Shankbones and kiddish and Yiddish neuroses

Tante who kvetches and uncle who sings

These are a few of our Passover things

Motzi and maror and trouble with Pharoahs

Famines and locusts and slaves with wheelbarros

Matzah balls floating and eggshell that clings

These are a few of our Passover thing.

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!

