



VOICES OF FREEDOM: Multigenerational Pre-Seder Program

April 3, 2022



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Into the Light

Mosaic artwork by Robyn Abrams



Greetings and welcome!

It has been a true labor of love and the most amazing opportunity to work with so many women from our Sisterhood to create this Seder experience. My cup of gratitude is overflowing.

This year's Sisterhood Seder theme is based on the idea that freedom is more than our right to make choices in a way that allows us to reaffirm our wants and desires. After all, freedom comes with responsibility. **The program's focus is on how our freedoms offer the opportunity to place ourselves where we feel comfortable and secure enough to be present for others, confident and passionate enough to make a difference on behalf of our community and our world.**

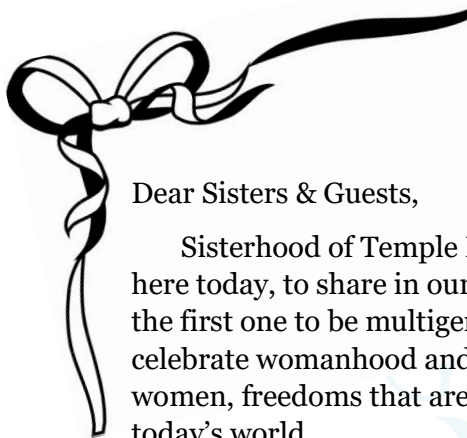
This program is meant to provide ideas, insight and inspiration for your Passover seders. While we will go through some elements of a seder, we will be introducing readings, music, art, dance, and interactive prompts to ensure a lively, fun afternoon.

I was inspired by the Sisterhood Seder programs created and chaired by Etta Gold and Judith Davidoff in the past. Together, they designed a path and set high standards for us to ensure continuation of a special tradition. Women from Temple Beth have shared written thoughts on a topic related to the theme outlined above. Those writings, along with quotes and excerpts from published resources, are scattered throughout your Haggadah.

We hope you will cherish this Haggadah as a keepsake and as reference for future seders or other programs you may plan.

With love in Sisterhood, –

Pamela Lear
Program Chair



Dear Sisters & Guests,

Sisterhood of Temple Beth Am is so happy to have you here today, to share in our triennial pre-Seder program, the first one to be multigenerational! We are gathered to celebrate womanhood and the freedoms that we have as women, freedoms that are key to making a difference in today's world.

I would like to thank Pamela Lear and her committee for taking on the monumental task of creating a new Haggadah filled with writing and artwork by our very own Sisters.

I would also like to thank the clergy, musicians and all of the artists that are present with us for sharing their beautiful thoughts, music and art for all of us to enjoy.

Get ready to sing, dance, nosh and create community with each other on this very special day!

Warmly,
Dilia Grossman
President, Sisterhood of Temple Beth Am

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All ***odd-number pages*** (on the right side) relate to the Passover Seder. Some items will be mentioned in the program on April 3, 2022; others are there for your reference and reading pleasure in the future.

To find a specific entry, we suggest using the index at the back of the Haggadah.

VOICES OF OUR WOMEN

PESACH SEDER

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VOICES OF OUR WOMEN

PESACH SEDER

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HOW TO USE THIS HAGGADAH

First, why do we need another Haggadah? The short answer is that we don't; there are thousands of Haggadot that have been written over many years.



Can anyone write a Haggadah? Pretty much. The “document” that is a Haggadah came about to fulfill a biblical injunction for parents to tell their children about the Exodus from Egypt. This obligation has traditionally been met in the form of a seder. As Vanessa Ochs says in *The Passover Haggadah: a Biography*,” the seder is “part Greco-Roman symposium, part study and prayer session, part holiday dinner at Grandma and Grandpa’s house, and with growing frequency, part teach-in for social justice or political protest.”

Our Sisterhood Haggadah is an opportunity for contributions from many of our women to be shared as part of a guide through the seder from the perspective of a small group of women. We revise it every few years. It is special because it is ours.

We encourage you to write in your Haggadah, make notes, color in some of the drawings shared throughout, etc. Make it your own!

In here, you will find:

Song lyrics—for songs we will be singing at the PreSeder program

Blessings—only the most basic blessings are included

Information about elements of the seder—a mix of history, background, trivia, and insightful stories

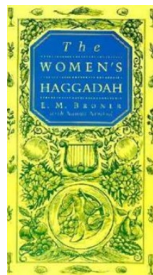
Space for you to make notes, jot ideas, even color ... and more!

The Haggadah has no single author and no single editor. It has grown into a commonplace book chronicling generations of verbal, illustrative, and ritual strategies that were considered, in their times and in their places suitable for the task of transmission.

Vanessa Ochs, The Passover Haggadah: A Biography



Mishkan Ha Seder: Reform Movement's Haggadah, 2022



Women's Haggadah, 1994



Image from Sarajevo Haggadah,

A Passover Lexicon

Lexicon: From the Greek "lexikon" meaning "word", "to speak".

Source for understanding the root of the word.

Achrayut: is translated in English as responsibility. coming from the Hebrew word *acher*, meaning "other." It refers to our moral commitment to others in a given situation - not just to answer for your actions, but also to make the another's needs and concerns your own. Freedom and responsibility are mutual and inseparable. Judaism believes people are free to choose their actions, but are responsible for their consequences. Freedom for all of us depends on responsibility by each of us.



Arba Kosot: refers to the four cups of wine drunk by each participant at a Passover seder. Prescribed by the *Mishnah*, there are four cups as the rabbis interpreted Exodus 66-7 as having four different terms of deliverance: "I will bring you out ... deliver you ... redeem you ... and I will take you to Me for a people."

Chofesh: In Modern Hebrew the word *chofesh* means vacation but it also means freedom and liberty. *Chofesh* appears in the Torah in the context of freeing slaves such as in Exodus 21. Freedom and responsibility (*achrayut*) are mutual and inseparable as freedom for all of us depends on responsibility by each of us.

Exodus: English word adapted from the Greek *exodos* meaning "the road out." Exodus refers to a mass departure of people; immigration. It particularly refers to the Israelites leaving Egypt.

Haggadah: is a Hebrew word meaning *narration* or *telling*. It refers to a command in the book of Exodus' requiring Jews to "tell your children on that day because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt." The *Haggadah* is written to accompany the Passover Seder and includes a collection of Jewish prayers, readings, and songs telling the story of the Exodus. It accompanies a ritual meal that was formalized in the second century, following the example of a Greek symposium, in which philosophical debate was fortified by food and wine.



Sample of illustrated medieval Haggadah page

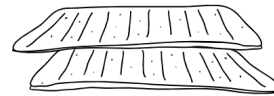
"When you realize that listening to views different from your own is not threatening but enlarging, you have discovered the life-changing idea of argument for the sake of heaven."

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (z"l)

Kadesh vs. Kiddush: *Kadesh* is the Hebrew word for holy. In the Torah, it is used to describe God, the people, and certain places. In the Seder, *Kadesh* means to sanctify or make holy. We do this by reciting the *Kiddush* or blessing over wine together. The Hebrew word *Kiddush* means sanctification or separation and we say *Kiddush* blessing to sanctify the Shabbat and festivals such as Passover. By separating this day from all other days, we make it holy.

Kavannah—the Hebrew word for intention, the desired direction or purpose. It refers to concentrating the mind in a spiritual, ritual, and/or religious act, ensuring we don't devolve into rote, mechanical action. *Kavannah* is a concept that applies to all mitzvot. 11th century philosopher *Bahya Ibn Pakudah* is often quoted in this regard: "Prayer without *kavannah* is like a body without a soul."

Magid: (also commonly spelled *Maggid*) means narrator or teller; referring to an itinerant Jewish preacher whose discourse on biblical text was often embellished by parables drawn from rabbinical commentaries and Jewish folklore. The stories were often delivered in a chant. The classic *magid* is the Passover *Haggadah*; the telling of the Exodus story. We are commanded to tell the story. We can find our own personal, creative ways to tell it each year.



Matzo, Motzi, Matzah: from the Hebrew word *matsa*, called *matzoh* in Yiddish, known as both "the bread of affliction" and the "bread of freedom" matzo made specially for Passover is not tainted by any leavening agents. Other "not for Passover" *matzot* can be eaten year round. *Matso Shmurah* (guarded) is made from grain that has been under special rabbinical supervision from the time it was harvested to ensure that no fermentation has occurred before use on the first night of Passover.

Mi Chamocha: Hebrew for "who is like you?" Moses offers a song of praise and exhalation to G-d in Exodus 15:11 after the Israelites cross the Red Sea safely while the Egyptian army drowns under the closing waters. This is one of the greater miracles G-d performed for the Israelites in bringing them out to freedom. "Who is like you, O God among all the gods that are worshiped? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, working wonders?" The phrase has become a prayer/blessing set to a variety of musical arrangements. It is sung during Shabbat service and its placement after the *Shema* reiterates the rhetorical nature of the question; the answer is obvious: there is no other.

Mizraim/Mitzrayim: the Hebrew word for Egypt, translated as "narrow place." Slavery in Egypt confined the Israelites to a narrow place, with constrictions on their physical, emotional, and spiritual lives.

Plague: is an English word meaning disastrous, evil, affliction, and calamity. The *Torah* and the *Haggadah* recount the story of ten plagues sent to Egypt after each of Pharaoh's refusals to demands from Moses that he "let my people go to their freedom. The plagues were: blood, frogs, lice, flies, pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and the killing of firstborn Egyptian sons. Scholars and curious minds have wondered if there is scientific evidence that the plagues really happened. Regardless, they stand as lessons for our spiritual foundation.

סימן לסדר של פסח Order of the Seder

The Table of Contents is, of course, the order of a book. Most readers glance at the table of contents of a book and then move on quickly.

This is not what happens with the Haggadah at the Seder. We sing it—yes, we sing the table of contents! On this Festival of Freedom, we are so insistent on order that we sing the table of contents. It is almost weird.

Mark Gerson, The Telling

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Kadesh | Create a Holy Time |
| 2. Urchatz | Washing Hands (no blessing) |
| 3. Karpas | Renewal at Springtime |
| 4. Yachat | Breaking & Hiding Matzah |
| 5. Maggid | Telling the Story |
| 6. Rachtzah | Ritual Hand Washing with Blessings |
| 7. Motzi | Hamotzi Blessing |
| 8. Matzah | Special Blessing for Matzah |
| 9. Maror | Eat Bitter Herbs |
| 10. Koreich | Eat Bitter Herb with Matzah |
| 11. Shulchan Oreich | Serve the meal |
| 12. Tzafun | Eat Hillel Sandwich |
| 13. Borech | Grace After Meal |
| 14. Hallel | Sing Praises |
| 15. Nirtzah | Conclude Seder |

Hinei Mah Tov

(Written by Elana Arian)

Hinei mah tov umah na'im
Shevet achin gam yachad
Hinei mah tov umah na'im
Shevet achin gam yachad (x2)

How good it is (how good it is)
How sweet it is (how sweet it is)
To be together on this day
(x2)

Hinei mah tov umah na'im
Shevet achin gam yachad
Hinei mah tov umah na'im
Shevet achin gam yachad

Shalom aleichem
Assalamu alaikum

The Seder Plate

KARPAS—Parsley (or any spring green) for salt-water-dipping; reminds us that both tender produce of the earth and the salt of the sea are joined together to sustain life

HORSERADISH—a reminder of the bitter enslavement of Israelites in Egypt; some people eat lettuce instead

BEITZAH—Hard-boiled egg (symbol of ancient Temple sacrifice)

MAROR—a vegetable such as lettuce that hardens and becomes bitter if left in the ground too long; can represent transformation in attitude



ZEROAH—roasted lamb shankbone, chicken wing, or beet (symbols of ancient Passover sacrifices)

Lexicon word!

CHAROSET- From the Hebrew *cheres* meaning “clay,” this is a dish found on the Seder plate representing the mortar the Hebrews worked with during their enslavement. It symbolizes the hard labor that embittered their lives. The traditional Ashkenazi recipe is made with chopped apples, walnuts, wine, and honey. The Sephardi version may include dates, raisins, almonds, cinnamon, and gin-

Why add an orange to the seder plate?

The orange represents anyone marginalized by our society. It has a place of honor by representing women and giving us a full voice at the Passover seder. There have been many versions of how the orange came about, including a popular (but untrue) story about a man saying a woman belonged on the bimah no more than an orange belonged on a seder plate. For more about the oranges on the Seder plate, check out page 61.

ORANGE:
a recent addition to the seder plate

Haggadah Cover Story:

When tragedy strikes, there is a choice to either dwell in the darkness or seek the light of hope and understanding.

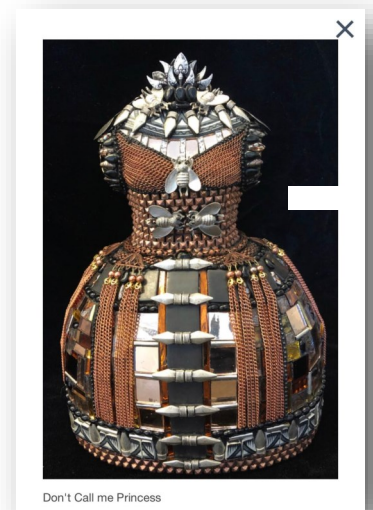
This mosaic is one of thirty-six tiles created by artists around the world in response to the tragedy at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA. Currently displayed in the Skirball Museum in Cincinnati, OH, the installation will be transferred to the Tree of Life Synagogue when it reopens.



Into the Light

Mosaics Inspired by Tragedy

Sample of Miriam’s Cups made by Sisterhood women:



Don't Call Me Princess

was created during the confirmation hearings of Justice Brett Kavanaugh. As the trial unfolded, it became clear that our daughters and granddaughters needed a new narrative and images that portrayed them as strong, independent women warriors. This mosaic sculpture won best in show at the Main Line Art Show in Haverford, PA

Robyn Abrams is a self-taught artist who enjoys painting and mosaics. She believes in the healing power of art, and gladly participates in community projects that raise awareness.

“Working with Susan Lampen and the women at Temple Beth Am has been a truly rewarding experience. Each Miriam’s Cup was as unique and special as the woman who made it.”



Robyn Abrams

KADESH

Create a holy time/Sanctify

קַדֵּשׁ

As we begin our venture through the experience of a Seder, Kadesh is step #1 of the seder. It can be seen as an act of Jewish freedom, a commitment to making the time for a Seder. This ritual reminds us that when we carve out the intention to create and commit to important celebrations and memories, we are honoring the past and building the future at the same time.

DID YOU KNOW?

Singing in together induces the release of oxytocin or “the love hormone” in your body.

Mark Gerson
THE TELLING

During Kadesh, we will:

1. Light the festival candles
2. Bless the first glass of wine
3. Say the Shechechyanu

(blessings on page 17)

SANCTUARY

Song written by Julie Silver

When one of us is suffering
We all feel pain
When one of us is stumbling
We fall again and again
All of us are slaves
Until all of us are free
Everyone needs sanctuary

When some of us go hungry
All of us can't eat
When words don't mean enough to us
We pray with our feet
We pray for the dreamers who pray for you and me
We can be their sanctuary

So let us set a table
Wide and long
Where everyone has plenty
And everyone belongs
Where everyone agrees to disagree
Underneath this canopy

I will be a shelter
Open on all sides
I will take you in
And stand by your side
No matter where you come from
Or where you'd rather be
I will be your sanctuary

Where everyone agrees to disagree
Underneath this canopy

So stand up and sing
Let your voices ring
Bring what you can bring
And be a sanctuary

Gratitude and Exercise

Now that I am only teaching part time, Social Security and my pension support me. I do not need to search for another job. I have plenty of free time to practice random acts of kindness; this is my favorite thing to do.

Today I visited my 86 year old friend. I invited her outside into the parking lot of her apartment complex to practice Qigong. She loves to sing oldies such as: “Daisy Daisy” and “My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean.” I sing and lead some exercises and she smiles and moves. She gets some sunshine, exercise, and companionship.

In this garden apartment complex there are terraces on each level. Two years ago when Covid began, an unknown woman and her “Senior” mother heard us and stood up to sing-a-long. Now they are part of a bi-weekly group that I lead on Zoom. Today was such a beautiful day. While I was leading my friend, a six year old girl came out on her patio with her four year old brother; they too joined me and followed all the exercises.



Fran-Ivy Ames

“The most powerful advantage of money is the ability to think of things besides money. That’s what money does. It frees your mind for living.”

Tara Westover

Love in Any Language

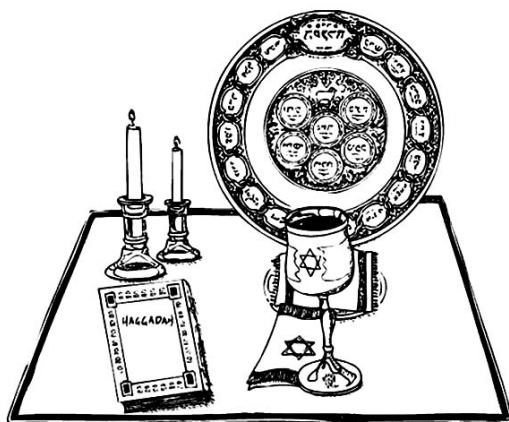
This beautiful piece of textile art with hand-dyed velvet fabric is held together with stitched threads.

The threads look delicate but are quite strong, representing how reliable and secure Love should be to hold each of us together.



Nancy Billings





Lighting the Festival Candles A Blessing to Share*

Leader: We light these candles together with our grandmothers and mothers and their grandmothers and mothers;

Participants: We light these candles for all our loved ones who are no longer with us;

Leader: We light these candles for all who work the earth and provide us with sustenance;

Participants: We light these candles for all the seasons that help make things grow;

Leader: We light these candles for the full moon of Passover, the moon which comes to us every month and whose full phase is a time of renewal;

Participants: And we light these candles for all who are with us now—for all our love and friendship;

All Together: To honor all these, we bless the time of Passover.

The Passover Seder is built around four cups of wine, each a symbol of overflowing blessing and joy.

Please pour the wine, grape juice, or alternate drink (anything except water) for you're the women seated to her left and say

Kosi Reva-yah— May our cups runneth over

The 1st Cup of Wine: Kos Rishon

This cup is drunk after telling the Story of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. The wine of the four cups loosens up our consciousness and helps us suspend our critical faculties.



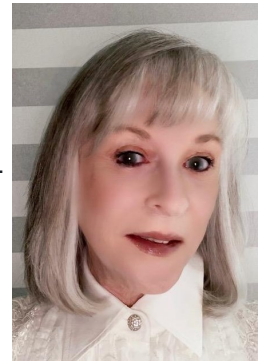
Speaking Out For Freedom

As I think back, my very first memory of freedom was in the 1950s when I received a bicycle and was allowed to ride it to elementary school. Riding the back streets in the quiet early morning was exhilarating. I felt so free I could almost fly! I could smell that freedom in the air and hear it in the songs of the birds. Yet, I knew that with that freedom came enormous responsibility. I had to be careful and safe. I could not stop along the way and I had to call home once I got to school. If I failed in those responsibilities, I would lose my newfound freedom quicker than I gained it.

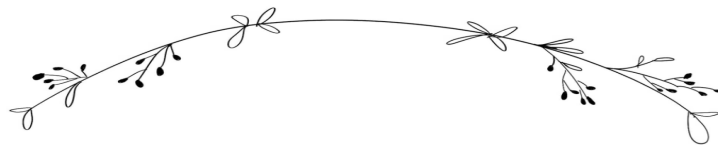
Freedom in America is somewhat similar. We are given the freedom to think and believe in whatever manner we desire. We are given the freedom to pray how we choose. We are given the freedom to vote and to choose our elected officials. These freedoms are not to be taken lightly. One only needs to watch the nightly news to see how these freedoms are being chipped away by those who believe they have the right to do so and what do we do when confronted by such people, even in a social situation? Often we stay silent so as not to offend.

Dr Joachim Prinz was the President of the American Jewish Congress in 1963. He was a community organizer and he spoke just prior to Dr. Martin Luther King when he delivered his famous “I Had A Dream” speech. Dr. Prinz’s address is most famous for its contention that in the face of discrimination, and I add, in the face of freedoms being lost or diminished, “the most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence. “

Freedom is precious. Our community in Miami and right here at Temple Beth Am, are filled with families who know first-hand what it is like to live without the freedoms we very often take for granted. We must nurture and preserve our freedoms. And, we must never be silent.



Jodi Hessel



The goal of our patient labor is not our own liberation per se, but a deepened capacity to give it away, with an ever-diminishing attachment to outcome.”

Maggie Nelson, On Freedom



The Israelites were liberated from Egypt and we celebrate Passover on the **fifteenth** day of the Hebrew month of Nisan.

There were **fifteen** steps on the southern side of the Temple Mount that led up to the sacred Temple in Jerusalem.

In the Torah scroll, the Song at the Sea (sung by the Israelites after God rescued them from the pursuing Egyptian legions—Exodus **15**) is written as a poem in three vertical columns. The center column, which appears to be an ascending ladder, has **fifteen** steps.

15

There are **fifteen** psalms (Psalms 120-134) that begin with the words *Shir HaMa'alot*, The Song of the Steps.

There are **fifteen** steps (*Maalot Tovot*) for which we praise God when all the participants at the Seder join together to sing *Dayenu*.

There are **fifteen** words in the Priestly Blessing.

One name for God - Yah — equals **fifteen** in gematria, a Jewish mystical system of numerology equating Hebrew letters with their corresponding numbers.



The watercolor here was lovingly designed and painted by Wendy Kornfield, as Sisterhood's tribute to Cantor Rachele Nelson on becoming Cantor Emerita at Temple Beth Am after 29 years of service.

Below is a representation of Wendy's work.



Wendy Kornfield



In the light of faith we do not seek to unveil or to explain but to perceive and to absorb the rarities of mystery that are gleaming softly from all things; not to know more, but to know what is more than anything we can grasp. How can our soul be insensitive to the fragrance of the unknown that is bestowed upon our life? What is most dear and real is neither known or knowable.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

In *Here All Along*, Sarah Hurwitz shares how Jewish holidays “are supposed to move us, inspire us, challenge us, and shake us up. All too often,” she says, “they’re just kind of boring. Or pleasant, but not particularly meaningful. Or a bit confusing. Passover is simultaneously a commemoration of the exodus, a celebration of freedom, and an ancient harvest festival.”

Hurwitz came to realize that Passover (and Shavuot) aren't just major plot points in the Torah's account of the Israelites journey from oppression to freedom thousands of years ago. Rather, “these holidays are also yearly reminders of who we are and our mission in the world as Jews today.”

LIGHTING THE CANDLES



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, asher kid'shanu
b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu l'hadlik ner shel Yom Tov.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who sanctified us with the commandment of lighting the holiday candles.

BLESSING OVER THE WINE



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

SHECHECHEYANU



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ
לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, shehecheyanu
v'kiy'manu v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

Using My Voice to Stand Up for Voting Rights

*“Democracy means the right to vote for your leaders.
It is so simple; and that right to vote is under attack today.
It’s under attack every time we try to prevent people from voting....”*

Doris Kearns Goodwin, noted Presidential historian and Pulitzer Prize winning author, on the Late Show with Stephen Colbert, February 16, 2022

Why does the alarm need to be sounded, per Doris Kearns Goodwin’s quote? It is clear that voter suppression and disenfranchisement of many already registered voters is underway in state legislatures following the last presidential election, including here in Florida. Clearly, the United States is going in the wrong direction when it comes to the right to vote.

My mother never missed an election and instilled that sense of responsibility in her children. She took me and my sister to the polls when she voted, allowing us to flip the levers in the voting booth. In college while studying Political Science, I interned in the Executive Office of then Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter. In addition to duties there, I worked on Carter’s presidential campaign, and also assisted with other political campaigns for an Atlanta mayor and a U.S. Congressman. In those days, I often drove people to the polls, and their right to vote became a passion of mine. An expression of our free will, voting is one of our most important freedoms. Other countries look to the United States as a model.

Considering that African Americans got the right to vote in 1870 and women got voting rights in 1919, it should be shocking that until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (which was partially drafted in the Religious Action Center (RAC) of Reform Judaism in Washington, D.C.), there existed numerous impediments created by individual states to prevent Black people from voting. Only recently, Floridians voted in favor of Amendment 4 to restore voting rights to former felons who have served their time.

Since the 2012 Presidential election season, I have volunteered as a part of the Miami-Dade County Democratic Party Voter Protection team. I’ve worked in the boiler room (a clearing house/triage center/hub for coordinating poll observers and addressing immediate issues effecting voters and voting), and as a poll observer during voting.

In that role, I’ve seen the look of dismay when a woman who came with her 7-year-old granddaughter was turned away, and when an older Cuban American who proudly walked in to vote with her entire naturalization file in hand was also turned away. I’ve kept quiet when an observer for the other party said, “They shouldn’t let people like that vote” referring to a woman wearing a hijab. I’ve called police departments and a mayor’s office when voters’ cars were being towed from a parking lot adjacent to a polling place, and I have encouraged voters to return to a polling place after being told they couldn’t vote there.

I’ve encouraged a homeless woman to return to the polling place and persist. My letter to the editor on the voter registration process was published in the Miami Herald. Along with other voter protection team volunteers, I have spent hours answering questions and reporting incidents of harassment, intimidation, and long lines outside of polls. I have encouraged voters to understand that their vote will count if they vote by mail. I have participated in two manual recounts before the Canvassing Board, once at counsel table arguing why a vote should be counted for our candidate and once going through ballots to interpret voter intent when the ballot might not be clearly filled out.

I continue this work even though there is no election on the immediate horizon. We are tracking proposed and newly enacted legislation in Florida that affects voting rights. I often say that when you help someone you get so much more in return; it enriches your soul and your heart. Helping others exercise their right to vote is one of the ways I find that to be true.



Lisa Heller Green

URCHATZ

וְרַחֵץ

Ritual Washing of Hands with no blessing

In step #2 of the Seder, we wash our hands by pouring water that should be warm enough to be pleasant. First the right, then the left hand. There is no blessing at this time. The ritual of Urchatz is acknowledgement we are beginning a holy meal and a holy time together.



As we wash hands and experience the warmth of each other's presence, we think of the traditions we will pass on, the hopes and dreams we have for our progeny and/or future generations. It is human nature to want to leave something behind for others: a memory, a trinket, or a hand-written letter. There is a custom in our tradition for parents to write a *tzava'ah*, an ethical will, to our children (or anyone else we may want to leave a message for) in which we convey life lessons, values and beliefs, and hopes and dreams. The tradition goes back to biblical times.

Of course, we all understand that our true legacy is how we live our lives, how we impact others on a daily basis. When a holiday like Passover comes around, the time seems ripe to consider the messages we want to leave behind. It is a good time to have conversations based on a list of questions designed to inspire thoughtful answers, often with parents or elders. A sampling of some questions might be:

- ⇒ What really matters most to you?
- ⇒ Who impacted your life and in what ways?
- ⇒ What do you like best about yourself?
- ⇒ What did you dream of doing when you were young?

Leaving a legacy is not only a gift to the loved ones and generations to come, but it is also a gift to yourself. The gift you give to others will repay you many times over and could become the gateway to a wider vision of your life. Your responses and reflections may cover a purpose you might not have known or realized, an awareness or a resolution of your life's fullness.

**Information from “*Living and Leaving Your Legacy*”
class with Merle Saferstein**

The Strength of Leadership

As I write these words today, it is with great pride that I see the vast numbers of women leaders that our temple enjoys.

Some 35 years ago when I first started volunteering at Beth Am, women were already serving in important roles but not so much at the higher levels of leadership. Not from the bimah and not as lay leaders.

When I first joined the executive committee, I was the only woman serving. Evelyn Goodman z”l had previously served as President of our congregation following in the footsteps of her husband.

Before and after Evelyn only men followed until I became President in 1996. It only takes one look at the pictures of the President to see a different story; a story of leadership and partnership where gender no longer defines a role.

Today, our community celebrates all contributions and welcomes all on an equal footing. The empowerment and freedom that is fostered in such an environment enriches our congregation every day.

I have had the honor of mentoring many leaders over the years. I have had the privilege of seeing the results of the hard work of countless committees and major campaigns. From all those accomplishments the one that makes me the proudest is to have, not only witnessed, but helped change the role of women as leaders at Beth Am.

Equality is freedom and freedom is empowerment; may we continue growing from strength to strength.



Lily Serviansky



We are the product of all those lives which have touched and entered our own— parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters, teachers and friends; those who have loved us and betrayed us, those who have sustained and strengthened us. In other words, our lives draw from their many wells. And then we build our own.”

Rabbi Sidney Greenberg

VIDEO FEATURE!

Women with No Names

Featuring Cantor Tifani Coyot and Cantor Lizzie Weiss

*“... and our mothers eat
And our sisters read,
And our daughters sing in chorus.
And we the women raise a glass
To those who came before us ...”*



I AM _____
(your name—English or Hebrew)

DAUGHTER OF _____
(your mother’s name, English or Hebrew)

GRANDDAUGHTER OF _____
(your maternal grandmother’s name, English or Hebrew)

PROUD MOTHER OF _____

(names of your sons and daughters, English or Hebrew)



Have you every thought about how many biblical women had no names?

There are Cain and Abel’s sisters, Noah’s wife, and Noah’s daughter-in-laws.

Who was Abraham’s mother? And what about Lot’s wife and his daughter? Remember Potiphar, whose wife seduced Joseph? She was simply referred to as Potiphar’s wife. Pharaoh’s daughter, Job’s wives, David’s mother, and the Queen of Sheba were never referred to by name.

Consider how important our names are to us— as identifiers, as unique messages about who we are, as beloved memories of those who have passed on. Names offer ways of understanding the world around us, A surname roots us in history and family tradition; you may become quite attached to your name, or you may wish you were called something else. How do you feel about your name?

Here We Are ...

Here we are, gathered to celebrate the oldest continually practiced ritual in the Western world, to retell what is arguably the best known of all stories, to take part in the most widely practiced Jewish holiday. Here we are, as we were last year, and as we hope to be next year. Here we are, as night descends in succession over all the Jews of the world, with a book in front of us.

Jews have a special relationship to books. The Haggadah has been translated more widely, and reprinted more often, than any other Jewish book. It is not a work of history or philosophy, not a prayer book, users manual, timeline, poem or palimpsest, and yet it is all of these things. A Haggadah is a book of living memory.

We are not merely here to tell the story we are being called to a radical act of empathy. Here we are, embarking on an ancient, perennial attempt to give life, human life - our lives - dignity.



Kafka once wrote in his journal:

“You can hold yourself back from the sufferings of the world . That is something you are free to do and it accords with your nature. But perhaps this very holding back is the one suffering you could avoid.”

New American Haggadah, Edited by Jonathan Safran Foer



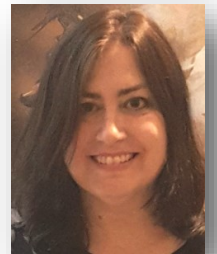


COPYRIGHT 2018 BY TRACY ELLYN

MAGIC SOUL RIDE

Originally entitled *Creatures on the Land and Sea*, Tracy shares that this artwork references little bits of everything, all kinds of creatures, that all came together and made a world, a good world. She also sees it as the mass of humanity swirling around, trying to make sense of the world.

This piece is part of a permanent installation at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. Our own Sisterhood of Temple Beth Am donated funds for framing the artwork there.



Tracy Ellyn

Where can a hamsa fit into our Passover Seders?

The hamsa prayer, *Birkat HaBeytin* in Hebrew, is a traditional blessing on wall plaques placed at the entrance of Jewish homes in or near windows. These plaques can be simple or very ornate and are often given as a housewarming gift.*

Tracy Ellyn

“Let no sadness come through this gate.

Let no trouble come to this dwelling.

Let no fear come through this door.

Let no conflict be in this place.

Let this home be filled with the blessing of joy and peace.”



* from <https://jewish.shop/35404/hamsa-hand-meaning>

KARPAS

Renewal at Springtime

כַּרְפָּס

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה:

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.



Step #3 in the Seder

Karpas is one of the traditional rituals in the Passover Seder. It refers to the vegetable, usually parsley or celery, that is dipped in salt water and eaten. The karpas

Because Passover comes in the springtime, it is seen as a time of rebirth and renewal. The Torah describes Passover as *chag he-aviv*, the “spring festival.”

Mishkan HaSeder



Opening the Gates of Freedom

We seek freedom in our daily lives physically, emotionally, and financially as well as religiously. Freedom for our circumstances, I believe people come into each other's lives not by happenstance but by a divine strategic plan.

As a real estate agent, I know it has not been an accident that most of my clients were/are going through a challenging passage in their lives. From divorce, loss, illness, financial struggles to the simcha of growing their family and need for more space. Selling or buying a home is what they want to accomplish, and they want an empathetic listener to help them on their journey from here to there. Freedom from their circumstance. Someone to see the forest through the trees when they cannot.

Being a realtor is the conduit to meet my clients; but being human, humanity happens, and we are instruments of the divine plan and the divine gift my clients and I are given is a lifelong bond of friendship.

If we think about it, all of us have opened the gate to freedom with people in our lives. Through our tzedakah and Social Justice we help someone experience freedom. How amazing is that?! Friends and strangers may confide in us to be a shoulder to cry on, an ear to listen and an empathetic heart. The true blessing is we are helping them out of a circumstance through the gate to freedom.

So next time someone reaches out in a time of need you may say to them "I hear you, I understand you and thank you for inviting me on this journey with you, the journey to Freedom!"

On Cantor Nelson's The Jewish Voice Live on Facebook, she featured a Jewish singer songwriter Sue Horowitz whose music I have loved for years. She wrote a version of *Pitchu Li*. Some of the lyrics are "Open the gates of justice Pitchu Li, Open the gates of righteousness, Pitchu Li, Open the gates of kindness, Pitchu Li, Open the gates of Freedom Pitchu Li... If we are present in the moments, there are gates to be opened for ourselves and others, Freedom can be ours."

Freedom is not promised into perpetuity. Each passage of life we are challenged to find freedom again. And again, there will be a strategic divine plan from God, another person will come into our lives to hear us, and freedom will be ours again and again.

Yes, there are reasons our paths cross, but the divine purpose and blessing becomes facilitating my client's freedom from their circumstances. To transition from darkness to light, from here to there, we must help each other open the gates and Freedom will be ours.



Tina Forster

We are, each of us, angels with only one wing,
and we can only fly by embracing one another.

Luciano de Drescenzo



A Poem For Spring

Shimmering, radiant air
Alive with new warmth.
Sunshine waking the earth,
Calling the grasses to grow,
Bulbs to prepare flowers.
Winds clear the last remnants of seasons past,
Old leaves and dry branches
Making way for new life.
And the rain joins the sun to feed the land.
Bless this day, God of seasons.
Bless the Spring with energy and hope.
Be present with us as we celebrate the glory of Creation
Planting the land and our lives with Your gifts,
These gardens of holiness and love.

God of time and space,
May this season be a blessing and a teacher.
Make me like the of light.
Make me like the earth, a source of bounty, ready to give.
Bless my days with service and my nights with peace.
Make me like a garden,
A source of beauty and purpose,
Sustenance and splendor.

By Alden Soloway © 2017 CCAR Press from This Grateful Heart: Psalms and Prayers for a New Day

The Book of Exodus tells us how the Jewish People, in the beginning of their stay in Egypt, took root in the land and achieved extraordinary fecundity; how they grew from a single family of seventy souls into a teeming, nation within a nation. This growth represented an actualization of God's blessing to humanity in the Garden of Eden: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." (Gen. 1:28)

The Seder tells us an identical tale of extraordinary, bountiful growth using symbolic tools. We take in our hands the karpas, a vegetable, preferably green, symbolizing vitality and fertility, which grows abundantly; we dip the vegetable in salt water and bless God, who created the fruit of the ground.

A Strong Voice for Women

If she were alive today, my dear wife Lynn Cromer would be sitting among you. She was an advocate for women and felt most comfortable in the Beth Am community. Yes, she would have loved to have been present at this event.

Early in our relationship, Lynn did not have the strong voice she eventually became to be known for. Her life was dominated by men, who for the most part, meant to be loving. She had had a few boyfriends which were not necessarily equal relationships, with Lynn on the “weaker” side. When we met, Lynn worked for her father in the family travel agency. While he was a loving father, his style was to be in control. Lynn had enormous energy and creativity that needed to be expressed. She started to learn more about herself and become more comfortable with who she wanted to be. She left her family business and ventured into a real estate career. She became more confident in herself, her work and began exploring opportunities to give back to the community.

In Lynn’s Beth Am Woman of Valor acceptance speech she stated that, “I feel it important to mention the good fortune that I grew up in a time when the movement for women’s rights was gaining momentum in our country. We recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of Betty Friedan’s book, *The Feminine Mystique*, in which she galvanized the call for women to be empowered, employed, equal, & free. Women like Gloria Steinem, Barbara Walters, and many of our own women here in Miami were paving the way for the future of women’s rights and opportunities.”



Lynn would have been so proud of the women of Temple Beth Am Sisterhood and this Women's Seder.

Lynn Cromer z”l

(submitted by Tom Cromer)



From ***Shirat Ishah***

Esther Raab (trans. Harold Schimmel)

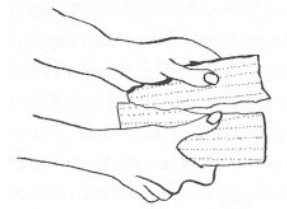
- Genesis 1:26-28, 2:18-24

Blessed by the One who made me a woman—
that I’m earth and Adam
and a tender rib;
Blessed who made me

circles upon circles—
like wheels of planets
and like circles of fruits—
who gave me a living flesh
which blossoms
and made me like plant of the field—
that bears fruit.

Yachatz

Breaking & Hiding Matzah



Afikomen: a term that comes from a variety of ancient languages and has many meanings: It is from the Aramaic “fikuman” meaning “bring out the food.” Also from a Greek word meaning “dessert” referring to the piece of matzah hidden in the course of the Seder, to be found and eaten at the end of the meal. The Jerusalem Talmud derives the word from epikomion” meaning “after dinner”, “revelry” or “entertainment.”

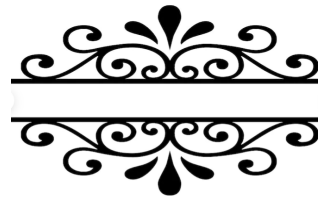
Yachatz is step #4 in the seder.

BLESSINGS

(song written by Laura Story)

We pray for blessings, we pray for peace
Comfort for family, protection while we sleep
We pray for healing, for prosperity
We pray for Your mighty hand to ease our suffering
And all the while, You hear each spoken need
Yet love us way too much to give us lesser things.

We pray for wisdom, Your voice to hear
And we cry in anger when we cannot feel You near
We doubt Your goodness, we doubt Your love
As if every promise from Your word is not enough
And all the while, You hear each desperate plea
And long that we'd have faith to believe



When friends betray us
When darkness seems to win
We know that pain reminds this heart
That this is not,
This is not our home

'Cause what if Your blessings come through raindrops
What if Your healing comes through tears
And what if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near

What if my greatest disappointments or the aching of this life
Is a revealing of a greater thirst this world can't satisfy
And what if trials of this life
The rain, the storms, the hardest nights
Are Your mercies in disguise

Freedom To Be Me

After being married to my ex-husband for 34 years and raising two adult daughters together, I came to an epiphany when I realized I was gay. How could that be? How could I be such a slow learner when it came to something so personal? It sounds ridiculous, but I came to this realization in my 50's after watching episodes of the "L Word," a program that depicted gay women in San Francisco. Now, what was I to do with this information?

I read everything I could about coming out and after many months, I bravely informed my parents. Since they were in a mausoleum at the Star of David, I didn't face the wrath that so many others experienced when telling to their parents. Next, I had to come out to my now ex-husband. But how could I do this to my now ex-husband, a man I had loved since college? How could I come out to my daughters? And what if I was wrong? Since I had never "acted" on my realization, wasn't there a chance that it was all in my head?

I knew intrinsically that I had not been happy for many years, but I didn't know why that was. I had the house in suburbia and a wonderful husband, I loved being an attorney and I had two amazing daughters who were studying to be lawyers. However, once I had the realization, there was no going back. I was determined to be the person God intended me to be.

Coming out to my ex-husband and our daughters was, without question, the hardest thing that I have ever done in my life. My ex-husband and I are both remarried to other people now. I met a wonderful woman, Joan Schaeffer, who is as entrenched in the South Dade Jewish community as I am. We were married under a Chuppah by three Miami Rabbis, each of whom played a special part in our lives.

It is a blessing to live in a time when gay marriage is a reality, and to live in a community where I feel comfortable and secure enough to live my life as a gay woman. Freedom comes with responsibility, and I have made myself available to counsel others who may be struggling with their own identities. I hope that I can make a difference in other people's lives by encouraging them to express their authentic selves.



Roberta Mandel

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 tarry worlds. From all the lost collections.

Adrienne Rich,
For Memory, A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far



Magid

Telling the Story

מגיד

Magid is the primary storytelling portion of the seder, step #5. Here we share the story of the Exodus from Egypt, beginning with a description of the matzoh as the bread of affliction followed by an invitation for all who need a place to be. Next, we move onto *Mah Nishtanah*, the Four Questions traditionally recited by a young child, that begin with “Why is this night different from any other night?”

The remainder of the Magid is an extended answer to the questions, including the segment traditionally known as the “Four Sons,” which we have re-named the Four Children, and the recitation of the ten plagues, concluding with Dayenu as a poem or song of gratitude and a brief Hallel (poetry and song praising God.) This Haggadah provides alternative ideas, and ways to think about these traditional elements of the Seder. The pages include the following:

Magid II (p. 33) - Four Questions

Magid III (p. 35) - Four Children

Magid IV (p. 37) - What really happened? (the Exodus story)

Magid V (page 39) - Dayenu, Hallel

Magid VI (pages 41 & 43) Let’s talk about Miriam!!

CONVERSATION:

Four talked about the pine tree. One defined it by genus, species, and variety. One assessed its disadvantages for the lumber industry. One quoted poems about pine trees in many languages. One took root, stretched out branches, and rustled

Dan Pagis (from Seder HaMishkan).

For Consideration:

Which would you be?

Which ones do you surround yourself with?

What other kinds could be included here?

Evolving

We truly are born free
 But are shaped by parents and teachers and others to be
 In their image, not our own.

As we mature and gather back any lost freedoms,
 We can make our own mark in the world
 And make demands of the world.

The more evolved we become (not merely age)
 The more our true nature blossoms
 Allowing us to reach out to others to teach, assist, and “bring along,”
 Because we have been there, we feel our own security to the core!



Joan A. Marn

“Remaking the treasure for another,
 I rediscover the treasure for myself.”

Margo McLoughlin

According to Tara Mohr, “a women’s seder is not a single, coherent revision of texts and tradition guided by feminist principles; there is no one “women’s seder.” Rather, women’s seders are, in all their forms, a kind of space—for questing, recovering, creating, healing and discovering. In this separate space, women begin to develop an authentic relationship to the texts, ideas, and traditions of the holiday. In all their myriad forms, women’s seders are the fruits of something new: women’s communal, sustained, authentic embrace of a Jewish tradition.”

***From: Why Women’s Seders ,
 an essay in The Women’s Passover Companion.***

Questions for thought & discussion:

What does participation in a Women’s Seder mean to you?

In what ways does the Women’s Seder make a difference in the world?

The Four Questions:

Why is this night different from all other nights?

1. *On all other nights we eat either leavened bread or unleavened (matzah); on this night, why only unleavened bread?*

2. *On all other nights we eat herbs of any kind; on this night, why only bitter herbs?*

QUESTIONING AND CURIOSITY

We must once again be dreamers of a better world, binding our children to us with the intensity of our moral worth, the beauty of our historical and ethical vision. Our children will join us if they see us engaged in the heroic and moral journey of Jewish destiny;

The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when they contemplate the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery everyday. Never lose a holy curiosity.

Albert Einstein

How best to tell the Passover story?

“Storytellers are blessed four times. They are steeped in the tear of the Schekhinah’s cloth, obliterated and lulled, infused and cleansed by the waves. They are traversed by the fire of the word and subdued by the breath.

They gather the smiles and the tears across the faces of their fellows that are invited to the feast. See the gift they have received. They study day and night to liberate and assemble stories. “

*Patrick Fischmann,
Jewish Stories of Wisdom*

3. *On all other nights we do not dip our herbs even once; on this night why do we dip them twice?*

4. *On all other nights we eat our meals in any manner; on this night why do we sit around the table in a reclining position?*

FILLING MY SOUL

To fill our souls with what they need, and to help others do the same, is a powerful freedom. Through Judaism, I was able to find the meaning and the home my soul desperately yearned for.

Knowing how deeply Judaism has nourished my own soul inspired me to begin leading a community of young professionals and to create opportunities for them to meaningfully connect to their Judaism. Recently, I met with someone who often avoided engaging in Jewish spaces because she felt disconnected from her Judaism. However, she had been feeling a new pull to begin reengaging. She was hesitant at first, but as we continued to meet, and as she began to attend events and programming, realized just how deeply her soul needed the sense of belonging that engaging with a community of fellow young Jewish professionals gave her.

This woman shared that “this experience has been a reminder to always appreciate the value of community and to never take the feeling of belonging for granted.” Through this, I have learned the beauty that comes when your nourished soul is able to help others nourish their own. May we all use our freedoms to listen to what our souls need and to support others on their journeys of doing the same.



Brittany Addams



“Passover, with its message of hope, tells us that like the Egyptian slaves, we can escape from our straits. Once they had tasted freedom with the paschal lamb, the Israelites gave up the comfort of the familiar, without concern for provisions or how they would get to or exist at their destination. They left Egypt because they believed a better life awaited them elsewhere. As Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (an 18th-century Hasidic leader) counseled, “When you are about to leave *mitzrayim* you should not worry about how you will manage in a new place. Anyone who does or who stops to get everything in order for the journey will never pick himself or herself up.”

Rabbi Nathan Laufer, Leading the Passover Journey

This idea is represented in many places, and is shared in a popular Jewish song:

Kol Ha'Olam Kulo

Kol ha'olam kulo
Gesher tzar me'od
Veha'ikar lo lifached k'lal.

The whole world
Is a very narrow bridge
and the main thing is to
have no fear at all



BTW, check out www.JewishRockRadio.com for the oldies-but-goodies and the new-and-eclectic Jewish music you love!

Once upon a time, there were four children ...

In the traditional Haggadot, the four children are all sons, but we've come a long way baby, so we'll call them children. At a seder, we want everyone to be engaged in the telling of the story of the Exodus.. This is also a tale of redemption, and there are many ways to share the story. In the biblical text, there are hypothetical children asking various sorts of questions. Ideally at a seder, or any gathering of diverse people, everyone will have an opportunity to talk, share, ask, and learn.

The traditional children referenced are a wise child, a wicked child, a simple child, and a child who does not know how to ask. When you write your own Haggadah, you can modify attributes and learning differences for children. Here is just one example of different types of participants we may see at our seders.

The studious yet cautious child: They brought a book in their backpack in case they are bored, but ask why we have a Seder? What is it supposed to accomplish? What part of it will be on the test? Can I have a Haggadah at least a week prior so I can study it?



The spirited child: She doesn't ask any questions; rather, she tells you that she will not eat gefilte fish, matzo ball soup, or charoset. In fact, she will only eat matzoh with butter and wants to go play with her dolls just five minutes into the meal.

The child who is shy and easily distraught: This child asks why so many visitors are coming for dinner, and he wonders if he must talk to them? He doesn't want a part in the Seder and starts to cry as soon as you begin setting the table.

The child who would rather play games on his parents iPhone. He asks, "Why should I care about this silly meal where most of it is in a language I don't even understand?" I'm almost at World 6 in Super Mario 3D! I don't have time to read a Haggadah.



Tell all the truth but tell it slant —

Success in Circuit lies

Too bright for our infirm Delight

The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children
eased

With explanation kind

The Truth must dazzle gradually

Or every man be blind —

Emily Dickinson

Maybe you don't have children at your seder this year, but you have guests who have never experienced a seder or who are not Jewish. What questions might they ask?

Maybe you are only two people for the seder, as family is far away and Covid is still interfering with travel plans. What questions might you ask each other?



Our Human Spirit is Our Freedom

Our human spirit is our freedom.
 Unencumbered, unchained
 It seeks to fly and radiate
 Like the sun waking in the morning
 Spreading its rays like butterfly wings
 Like a kite catching the wind
 Like waves randomly rushing
 forward and pulling back

We are enslaved when we fail to use
 it to be compassionate and seek equity.

When we smile a simple smile, look into another's eyes,
 Speak a small hello or
 When we wear no blinders, nor carry fear and
 When we are not influenced by familiar comforts and
 When we try turning left instead of right or
 right instead of left
 We gain connection, harmony, peace in our souls.
 We fly high and we are free!



Sharon Socol



Sharon Socol has been a photographer for over 50 years. Her art always intrigues us and is thought-provoking. *

In the image shared here, Sharon notes that it speaks to her about how someone's history frames their life.

On the beach in Tel Aviv, two women, most likely of similar age, sit "side by side" doing what so many do: "soak" in the sun.

Yet the differences are vast. One has a child and is completely covered (even the water toy is covered) while the other one easily bares herself to the beach community. The other, potentially an off duty Israeli soldier whose job is to protect her country from the other woman's family. Each one protecting what they love. Have they spoken or do they remain embraced in silence? (note the coincidence of the towel that says "United Colors of Benneton) This tiny space contains both separation and hope.

One can only pray that the door of human connection found a way to open.

** See more of Sharon Socol's artwork on page 42*

How best to tell the Passover story?

Where to begin? What message to include?

“The Torah teaches us that the boundaries between past, present, and future are permeable, that history is significant only insofar as it has meaning for us. The historian examines the past in order to determine what happened; we, as Jews, look at the past, asking: “What does this mean for us, and what claims does it make in our lives?”

From “Women of Exodus” essay in Women’s Sourcebook

Here is a 15-part version of the Exodus story, with prompts for discussion:

1. The Israelites came to *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) because a famine in Canaan drove them to search for food. They became important to the economy and were a visible, self-affirming minority. *How does this relate to migration and immigration today?*
2. Pharaoh came to fear that the Jews would upset the social balance, so ruled that all Jewish males were to be drowned. The midwives Shifra and Puah were ordered to kill all the Jewish newborn boys. They rebelled. *How do we rebel against injustice?*
3. Moses was born and his sister Miriam floated him down the river in a basket. Pharaoh’s daughter found him and raised him as her own. Miriam appeared and offered to bring the baby to someone who could nurse him (Moses’ mother!) *What kind of subterfuge is necessary to benefit what is right?*
4. Moses grew up in the palace, and he began questioning the concept of slavery and brutality. When he was 40, he killed an Egyptian who had been whipping a Jewish slave. *What should we be questioning in society today?*
5. Moses ran away to the desert fearing for his life. He married Tziporah, had children, and tended his flocks. *How do we avoid things we fear?*
6. Moses encountered a burning bush with a message from God to go back to Egypt and free his people. *Where might we be missing or ignoring important messages?*
7. Moses headed back to Egypt; by now, he was 80 years old. He went to talk with Pharaoh and demanded that the Israelites be let go. *How do we make demands for what we need?*
8. Moses threatened a series of plagues would come until Pharaoh let the people go free. Ten plagues rained down on the people of Egypt. *What plagues are we dealing with today?*
9. Finally, Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites leave, but he went back on his word and sent troops after them. *How do corruption and lies impact our ability to be forward-thinking?*
10. When the Israelites saw the troops, the Red Sea parted and they were able to walk across and become free people. The Egyptians perished in the waters. *Where do we see miracles in our modern world?*
11. There was great celebration after crossing the Red Sea; it was led by the prophetess Miriam. *How are women making a bigger difference than ever before?*
12. The Israelites then wandered in the desert for forty years. It wasn’t an easy trek, but the people persisted through adversity. *In what ways do we see ourselves in the desert, between what was in the past, and our hopes/dreams for the future?*
13. At one point in the journey, Miriam cried out for sustenance and “Miriam’s Well” appeared. *What sustenance might we be more grateful for?*
14. The Exodus from Egypt was a very significant time for the Israelites, who became the Jewish people with the issuance of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai. *What can be identified as some of the most significant changes in society today?*
15. Although the Exodus freed the Jews, the persecution and oppression has continued throughout the centuries. *What will it take for all people to be free? Is it possible?*

Memories Of Seders Past

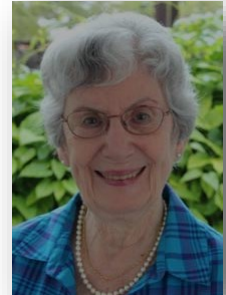
Preparing for the Seder is a wonderful experience of sights, sounds, symbols and smells that set the stage for the family and friends gathering. Who will cook the special holiday foods and recipes? Who will set the table and the seder plate? Who will get the flowers? Who will organize the readers and singers of the Haggadah? Everyone has an assignment. Why do we do this every year? The answer is to be with our family as we remember, zachor, the Exodus from Egypt.

Passover recalls the time when our ancestors were delivered from slavery to freedom. This historic story has served as a constant challenge to our people to strive for freedom and democracy. It has filled our hearts with hope, courage, and strength. It has made possible the achievement of freedom for the Jewish People, and the rebirth of a Jewish homeland in Israel.

When I participate in a Passover Seder with my family, I remember the many memories of the past, and I renew the enduring ideas that have inspired me to learn and teach others;

- The message of hope and freedom for those who are oppressed
- An expression of gratitude that we have been rescued many times from difficult situations and continue to survive
- A connection to our historic sense of community and continuity.
L'dor vador, from generation to generation

In the true spirit of the Haggadah, "... even if we were all wise, all persons of great understanding, all learned in the Torah, it is still our mitzvah (responsibility) to tell and retell the story."



Lenore C. Kipper

Gratitude

While standing at Auschwitz some years ago and trying to take in the enormity of the camp and the incomprehensible brutality and dehumanization that took place, I was completely at a loss.. Our people endured such hatred, privation, humiliation, sickness and anguish. Most did not survive. I felt it was impossible that anyone could survive the torture of that place. It was just too vast, too indiscriminate, too crushing.

It is a miracle that some did survive, and, thankfully, have told their painful stories and insisted we "never forget." I thought when leaving Auschwitz that I was a Jew living an incredible life of freedom and privilege. How could I ever dare to complain about anything? Some of our people survived against the greatest of odds. I have been brought back to that moment so many times and always tried to feel gratitude for my enormous good luck. At those times, I center myself, close my eyes and say, "Remember, you stood at Auschwitz." It's like the admonition we find in the Passover story which requires us to remember and re-live the slave experience in Egypt. We must never forget what our ancestors endured and how they emerged stronger, more determined and more resilient. That has been our history.



Colleen Fain

Dayenu

(It Would Have Been Enough)

Ee-loo ho-tzi, ho-tzi-anu, ho-tzi-anu me-Mitz-ra-yim
Ho-tzi-anu me-Mitz-ra-yim, Dayenu!

DAY-DAY-ENU, DAY-DAY-ENU, DAY-DAY-ENU
DAYENU, DAYENU

Ee-loo natan, natan lanu, natan lanu et ha-Shabbat
Natan lanu et ha-Shabbat, Dayenu!

Ee-loo natan, natan lanu, natan lanu et ha-Torah
Natan lanu et ha-Torah, Dayenu!

If God had only taken us out of Egypt, that would have been enough.

If God had only given us the Shabbat, that would have been enough

If God had only given us the Torah, that would have been enough.

Dayenu is traditionally sung at Passover Seders; it has 15 verses; the three above focus on [freedom](#), [Shabbat](#) and [Torah](#).

Other verses acknowledge the plagues in Egypt, the sustenance received while journeying through the dessert for forty years, the land of Israel, and the Holy Temple. The chorus *Dayenu*, "it would have been enough," is repeated over and over again.



Repetition has deep roots in Jewish literary tradition. We read the same Torah portions, in the same order, every single year, year after year after year. And, because the world has changed in the year that passed, the insights we have into the words of the same text are inevitably different.

Rabbi Debra J. Robbins, Opening Your Heart with Pasm 27

The 2nd Cup of Wine: Kos Sheni

This cup is drunk after telling the Story of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. The wine of the four cups loosens up our consciousness and helps us suspend our critical faculties.



Freedom versus License

By Lois Palmer

Freedom is beautified by the guiding hand of responsibility, justice, tolerance, discretion, mercy, and charity. All too often license is mistaken for freedom. How often have we heard people say "I'll say and do whatever I want," implying there should be no consequences. However, such irresponsibility and ignorance bring about hate, oppression, bigotry, segregation, want, and even more. When I think of women who came before me to pave the way for the liberties I enjoy, I am reminded of Miriam, Queen Esther, Ruth, Deborah, Adah, and the suffragettes. I feel privileged to have examples of women during my lifetime who exemplify the quality of working for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, all while fighting injustice and other social ills, women such as Shirley Chisholm, Golda Meir, Mother Teresa, Sandra Day O'Connor, and Hazel Chu.



A Voice for Freedom in the 50's

by Marty Palmer

My mother was riding the bus downtown on Flagler Street. An African American woman got onto the bus when the driver told her to step to the back of the bus. My mother who heard this said to the woman "come sit by me". My mother then introduced herself and said "hello my name is Ann, and the woman said "hello my name is Rosa".

The driver then became irate and said again step to the back of the bus or I will stop it and throw you off. My mother said with calm dignity "if you throw Rosa off this bus, you will have to throw me off too". My mother then said to the driver "I don't think my father who is one of the City of Miami Commissioners, and is friends with the Mayor, and a prominent judge, would be too happy that you threw his daughter and Rosa off the bus." The driver then started to use obscenities to both ladies. However, he did back down. Then the woman asked my mother "do you know who I am"? My mother replied "No I am sorry I do not."

The woman said to my mother "My name is Rosa Parks and thank you Ann, for all of your help, God Bless you". This is an example of how my mother spoke out for freedom and justice, and against segregation and bigotry, and how we all should not take our freedom for granted, and also we should continue to work for justice.



Blessing over Miriam's Cup

זאת כוס מרים, כוס מים חיים
זכר ליציאת מצרים

“Zot Kos Miryam, kos mayim hayim. Zeikher l'yitziat Mitztrayim.

This is the Cup of Miriam, the cup of living waters. Let us remember the Exodus from Egypt. These living waters were God's gift to Miriam. They gave new life to Israel as we struggled in the wilderness.

Blessed are You God, Who brings us from the narrows into the wilderness, sustains us with endless possibilities, and enables us to reach a new place.

In an essay entitled “Miriam and Our Dance of Freedom: Seder in Prison” by Judith Clark, a Jewish woman incarcerated since 1981, she shares the joy of creating a Women's Seder at the prison.

“We debated over the appropriateness of adding new elements, like a Miriam's Cup to the Seder.”

“Our Pesach night was different from all other nights as we felt the energy and excitement of something new, of honoring tradition through change, of finding new meaning in familiar words, spoken by a new voice and sharing new rituals that strengthen the women's sense of participation in the seder.”

As we each poured water into Miriam's cup, we were serious. Joyful. Finally, we were giving life and the responsibility of holding life sacred. Through using water—so simple and so plentiful – as a key element of sacred ritual, we celebrated the sacredness in the ordinary.



—*The Woman's Passover Companion*

New Traditions: Miriam's Cup

For Discussion at Your Table:

- ◆ Have you made or purchased a Miriam's cup? If so, what was important to you in its design?
- ◆ At your Seder, are there Miriam's Cup Rituals? There is a Jewish expression: “Three times a *chazaka*,” meaning that once a ritual is performed three times, it acquires the status of *minhag*, a tradition that has all the weight of law. Are there rituals you have incorporated simply by repeating them year after year?
- ◆ How do you feel about the addition of the Miriam's Cup to a Seder? What do you think of opening the door for both Elijah





Statement from Sharon Socol, artist.

“This image’s strength, for me, lies in the variety of women touching, clutching, bowing, and pressing into The Kotel, the holiest place for the Jewish people. The image’s design is

strong because of the power of the woman’s hands in the center as she lifts them to embrace the stones. Moreover, I feel all these women are pressing their entire beings into this holy place as if to say we are simultaneously individuals and yet a part of the greater family of Jewish people. “



Words Matter



This spectacular piece of art was created by **Nancy Billings** and **Marlene Kohn** as a challenge for an art exhibition. The task was to create a joint artwork that reflected social justice. Nancy, a textile mixed media artist and Marlene, a mixed media artist, decided the best way to do this would be with pertinent words describing how they felt during this time. The piece includes a mix of size, color and materials, each woman using her own technique and style.

MIRIAM'S SONG (song by Debbie Friedman)

And the women dancing with their timbrels
 Followed Miriam as she sang her song
 Sing a song to the One whom we've exalted
 Miriam and the women danced and danced the whole night long

And Miriam was a weaver of unique variety
 The tapestry she wove was one which sang our history

When Miriam stood upon the shores and gazed across the sea
 The wonder of this miracle she soon came to believe
 Whoever thought the sea would part with an outstretched hand
 And we would pass to freedom and march to the promised land

And Miriam the prophet took her timbrel in her hand
 And all the women followed her just as she had planned
 And Miriam raised her voice in song
 She sang with praise and might
 We've just lived through a miracle

Rabbi Aklepi writes:

“When we each add water to Miriam’s Cup, it is as if we are adding our merits as Jewish women to the life our people. Our acts of tzedakah, justice, learning, and leading create the next chapter of Jewish life and history. Remembering the deeds of Miriam connects us to a rich heritage of Jewish women who changed the world. As did Miriam, so can we.”



Miriam is mentioned in Hebrew scripture only six times: twice as “the sister of ...” and once as a “Prophetess.” The other three times were about her sedition, her leprosy, and her death. Yet she prophesized Moses’ birth, saved the newborn and returned him to his mother. She encouraged Moses to confront the Pharaoh. Miriam led the women in song and dance on the far side of the Red Sea. Because of her goodness, a well provided the Jews with water until the day she died. Miriam now lives through of us, and we proudly reclaim her story as one of our foremothers.

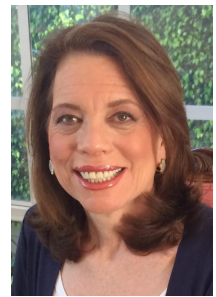
Like An Orange on a Seder Plate

FINDING MY VOICE

My FREEDOM to choose, prize and act on my values came in early adulthood after reading a “Values Clarification” book by Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum. Prior to that time, I was truly afraid to speak up; my voice would crack, and I would blush. Those two physiological reactions didn’t particularly enhance the message I was trying to get across. In fact, I remember having to publicly apologize to a teacher for standing up for a student who was being repeatedly bullied by that teacher. The experience and others like it inhibited my self-confidence to the point where I rarely took a stand on behalf of anything until I was asked to present a workshop on the values clarification process.

The class of adults shared their personal experiences, and I quickly became aware of the emotional and physical impact of how not having a voice affects relationships with family, friends, teachers, mentors, and colleagues. The freedom to Choose what we want to convey freely, the importance of Prizing our words and holding them near and dear to our hearts, and finally, repeatedly Acting on those words and behaviors because they reflect our values enhances all aspects of our truth.

It is important that my children, grandchildren, extended family, friends, and Sisterhood members are respected for their values whether I agree with them or not. As we share this women and girls intergenerational Seder, I reflect on our Exodus from Egypt, the value of freedom we share as Jewish women as well as our value of welcoming the stranger to our community. I hope these times allow for connections both old and new that challenge us to utilize our freedoms to encourage peace, health, and fulfillment for ourselves and those people we meet.



Susan Lampen



If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now that they are asking to do it, the men better let them! Obligated to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner has got nothing more to say.

*Sojourner Truth, **Ain't I a Woman**
Reprinted in
Freedom & Responsibility,*

Rachtzah

Ritual Hand Washing WITH A Blessing

רְחִיצָה

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוֵּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu al netilat yadayim.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His laws and commanded us to wash our hands.

We wash our hands as a ritual ablution by pouring water onto each other's hands from a pitcher, first over the right, and then the left hand. The water should be warm enough to be pleasant. This is step #6 in the seder.

There have been various reasons posed for washing the hands at this time. Some say it is because the washing here is an unusual activity that prompts the children to ask questions. Questions are highly encouraged at a seder.

Turn to someone next to you and ask them a Seder-related question. You might consider a question about the feeling you get when taking care of another, as we are doing when we help each other wash hands. However, any question will do!

Because we are not eating bread, we do not say a blessing.



The Jewish tradition of handwashing is at its root about sacred service. The Hebrew noun *Rachtzah* means “cleansing” which is how this step of the seder is known. However, the blessing that we intone is not over any act of cleansing, but rather in fulfillment of the mitzvah of *n'tilat yadayim*, literally “the elevation of our hands.” In this ceremonial cleansing, we may dedicate our hands to the work of repairing the world.

Mishkan HaSeder

What If No One Listens?

When we feel the freedom to speak up and share a concern or opinion, we expect to have our voices heard.

But what if no one listens?

Often, the greatest gift we can give another person is our attention.

Whether we are speaking to others or voting at the polls, it is easy to become disillusioned, thinking our vote won't matter. It is even worse to be disenfranchised, believing your vote won't count, or that you will not be permitted to vote either by circumstances or by law.

I became passionate about the freedom to vote and the opportunity to be heard when I served as an official observer for the recount vote in Florida, spending many days "counting chads" to ensure every voice was heard and every vote counted. At the end of those few months I became disillusioned and disappointed yet I still believed I retained my right and responsibility to vote.

A few years later, serving as Chair of the Miami Dade County Community Relations Board (CRB), I was involved in planning and moderating a community forum we called "Making Sure Your Vote Counts." Joining me on the stage were the Supervisor of Elections, several county commissioners, and grassroots community organizers. The program was designed to provide a forum for people in the community to share concerns and frustrations. There was a widespread belief that people in this community had been denied a full and fair opportunity to vote in the previous election cycle.

With hundreds of people in attendance, more than fifty people signed up to speak. The two-hour event stretched to four hours. I stayed, and allowed all who had signed up the chance to speak, believing it important for all voices to be heard.

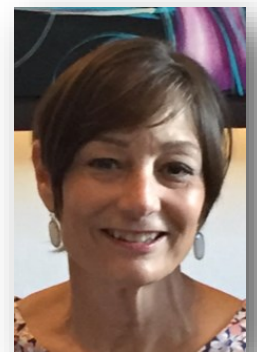
Afterward, walking to my car in the near-empty parking lot I was physically and emotionally drained. A small group of people walked toward me. I expected them to still be angry and frustrated. They offered to walk with me to my car so we could talk for a minute. They told me how much it meant to have the opportunity to be heard that evening. "Thank you for listening to us."

Wow. My heart sank and at the same time my heart was lifted. I had not realized how much it would mean to simply allow those voices to be heard and for me—for us—to listen.

Since then, some election rules and procedures have been shifted or changed and implemented because of the night's discussion. But I remain absolutely changed by the experience.

I've never questioned my freedom to vote or my freedom to be heard - my voice acknowledged. And yet, there I was given the freedom (no, responsibility) to go and listen to people share how they felt and how they felt they were perceived.

Now, more than fifteen years later it seems we are once again fighting for voting rights. When there are no obstacles in our way, it's easy to take our freedoms, including our right to vote, for granted. But speaking up or giving voice is not enough. What if no one listens?



Joanne Harvest Koren



Creating a Mindful Seder

For so many of us, the Seder is a ritual to ‘get through.’ There is someone rushing through the words, another person checking the clock, another drooling over the smells from the kitchen. What if as the seder unfolds, we knew we could look forward to an opportunity for pause and reflection?

Let’s look at *Ratzah* as a time to introduce more mindfulness, So much of the seder is talking and listening. Finally, here’s a part that has almost no talking.

After you say the hand washing blessing, choose a niggun (simple wordless melody) that you and your guests can carry until everyone has finished washing. Use eye contact and the raising of the matza for motzi to signal the end of the blessing.

Source: Haggadot.com

I Have a Voice (written by Elana Arian)

Verse #1

I will open my eyes,
I will not look away,
I will use this gift I’ve been given,
Every day.

Chorus

I have a voice,
My voice is powerful,
My voice can change the world
(repeat)

Change the world

Verse #2

I will give of myself,
I will reach out my hand,
I will use this heart I’ve been given,
To take a stand.

Chorus

Verse #3

I will fight for the truth
I will stand up for what’s right
I will use this strength I’ve been given
To be alive!

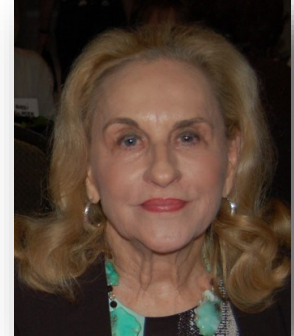
Chorus



Southern Hospitality

As a six year old I grew up in the Navy town of Portsmouth, Va. I Remember being called from playing in the street on December 7th about WWII. It made a lasting impression on me. My Mother was an ardent Zionist and Daddy owned a tavern that catered to our servicemen. We always had young men for dinner at our home.

Our temple was a place where many of our boys came to meet Jewish families in an unfamiliar area. We welcomed them with open arms. Many of the men in our family, including my Mother's brother, served. We were going to make sure our men felt at home especially during Jewish holidays. We southerners are known for hospitality and that was a time we really showed it to the fullest.



Sandy Reisman

inhale

Personal Freedom

Personal freedom is a twofold journey of self-love and acceptance. It is a struggle with which I am very familiar. I have developed various ways to deal with both internal and external struggles that have accumulated throughout my life.

Most people are acutely aware of the scrutiny they receive with self criticism being the harshest. In the world of performance, this self criticism is inflated exponentially. My face, my body, my talent, my choices- so many areas in which to be judged. I had to decide to begin the journey of self acceptance. Learning to hear and filter external opinions without affecting self worth is integral to this process. I began conquering these inner demons out of necessity.

As I grow in my journey of self love and acceptance, I have more courage to assert myself in both personal and professional contexts. I'm developing the confidence to allow myself to be vulnerable, to change my mind, and to make mistakes period to hear ideas and opinions that differ from my own without seeing them as personal attacks. Many people feel invisible while simultaneously being under constant scrutiny.

By accepting myself I have the freedom and ability to give other people the opportunity to be seen and heard. I focus on approaching and listening to others without casting personal or external judgment, giving them the freedom to be vulnerable, to explore alternative opinions, to accept their own mistakes, and to pursue their own journeys of personal freedom. Some days are harder than others and require more self-kindness and celebration of small victories. My journey is a regular process of looking in the mirror and saying "I accept and love the person I am in this moment."



Jessica Bass

Motzi/Matzah

Blessings Over Bread & Matzah

מוציא מצה

Saying the Motzi (traditional blessing over bread) is the 7th step of the seder. Saying the special blessing for Matzah is the 8th step.

The word *motzi* means “bring forth,” and is the Hebrew word contained in the traditional blessing recited when eating bread: Below is the unique blessing for the first eating of *matzah* on Passover. Eating Matzah on Passover is so important that the Torah refers to *Pesach* (Passover) as *Chag HaMatzot*, the “Holiday of Matzot.”

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו על אכילת
מצה

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu al achilat matzah.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His laws and commanded us to eat matzah.

Fourteen Freedoms

Let us recite as we eat the bread of freedom

Leader

Freedom from Bondage

Freedom from Hunger

Freedom from Hatred

Freedom to Think

Freedom to Teach

Freedom to Love

Freedom to Hope

May we cherish and

preserve those freedoms

Members of Sisterhood

and Freedom from Oppression

and Freedom from Want

and Freedom from Fear

and Freedom to Speak

and Freedom to Learn

and Freedom to Share

and Freedom to Rejoice

Amen

Haggadah Quiz Questions

Test Yourself— All answers are somewhere in the Haggadah
(and at the bottom of this page)

(1) What do Pharaoh's daughter, Job's wives, and King David's mother have in common?

- A. They are all women in the Exodus story
- B. They each gave birth to a son who would be a king.
- C. They are all women in the Bible who were never given names
- D. They all preferred their gowns to be cotton with a daisy print.

(2) Passover is not:

- A. the oldest continually practiced ritual in the Western world
- B. the most widely practiced Jewish holiday
- C. a time when we tell one of the most famous stories of all time
- D. always celebrated in the month of March

(3) Miriam's Cup is special because:

- A. At a seder, it is partnered with Elijah's Cup to welcome the Feast of Tabernacles.
- B. At a seder, it is a better symbol of femininity than an orange.
- C. In ancient times, Miriam decorated her own cup to demonstrate how sacred it was to drink from a well in the desert.
- D. Remembering Miriam's deeds connects us to a rich heritage of Jewish women who changed the world.

(4) The following items and elements of a Seder are symbolic:

- A. Hiding and then finding the Afikomen
- B. an apricot on a seder plate
- C. A sandwich made of matzah, horseradish, and gefilte fish
- 4. All of the above

(5) Which of the following statements is true:

- A. Dense, rich matzo balls are better than light, fluffy matzo balls.
- B. A seder should always be exactly 5 hours long.
- C. Passover is also referred to as *Pesach* and as *The Lengthy Feast*
- D. All of the above
- E. None of the above.



Answers: (1) C, (2) D, (3) D, (4) A, (5) E

Passover: A Time to Make a Difference

Making a difference on behalf of our community reminds me of when I was the director of the inaugural class of Miami Fellows Initiative, a two-year leadership program experience, which uses the community as a learning laboratory. Funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, we identified eighteen men and women who were inspired by Miami-Dade's potential and wanted to give back. (Note: The number 18 was not a coincidence – I chose it because of its Judaic significance.)

Perhaps our most powerful three-day learning laboratory was the lab about ethical leadership. Our facilitator believed that ethical leadership began with an understanding of one's core values. What we discovered was that there were several values that were on everyone's list: family, authenticity, justice, integrity and trust.

These inherent ties overshadowed our cultural and racial differences. The web of friendship and socialization that linked us together then became interlaced with ideas to promote the common good: to move the community from the status quo to a more uplifting future.

Think: Moses! If Moses had rescued his people from slavery in Egypt and brought them to freedom in the Promised Land - but omitted the canons of law and morality (i.e. 10 Commandments) - the people would have remained ethically and spiritually bereft. In other words, with freedom, comes rules and responsibilities.

I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to shape this life-changing journey for the Fellows. I was energized by how 'fully present' everyone was. They used their liberties and privilege to make a difference in Miami because they looked not at what might be BUT what ought to be.

At the closing exercises, I shared this poem, written by Bill Holm:

*Someone dancing inside us
Learned only a few steps:
The 'Do-Your-Work' in 4/4 time, and
And the 'What-Do-You-Expect' waltz.*

*He hasn't noticed yet
The woman standing away from the lamp.
The one with the black eyes
Who knows the Rumba
And strange steps in jumpy rhythms
From the mountains of Bulgaria.*



*If they dance together,
Something unexpected will happen.
If they don't,
The next world will be a lot like this one.*



Sandy Baer

Maror

Eating Bitter Herbs

מָרֹר

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוֵּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת
מָרֹר

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu al achilat maror.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His laws and commanded us to eat bitter herbs.

Did You Know ...

Horseradish is a spicy root vegetable in the mustard family with a strong, biting flavor. Besides being an aromatic root vegetable, it has been used medicinally all over the world for centuries. It can help reduce inflammation, fight cell damage, and even improve respiratory



Step#9 in the Passover seder, the word *maror* means “bitter.” It is an Ashkenazi tradition to use horseradish to remind us of the bitterness of slavery. Sephardic and Middle Eastern Jews favor bitter lettuces, like endive and chicory.

It is interesting to note that this is only the first time we eat maror at the seder. We eat it alone to represent the bitterness of the Israelites in slavery. We eat it again in the next step of the seder, *Koreich*, mixed with charoset, which is sweet.

In a blog post by Rabbi Noah Leavitt, he suggests that these repetitive instances of the bitter herb could be teaching us that there are “stages we go through as we seek to overcome challenges. First, we must acknowledge the pain and bitterness that we feel without any attempt to qualify it, but then in time we need to be able to look and see the challenges we faced as an experience that pushed us towards an ultimate goal.”

Freedom to Find Your Voice

When I was young, my mom Evelynne (Chava) was a go-getter; a full-time mother and homemaker, she ran the show and was always busy involving herself in “good works.” She was even President of her ORT chapter. I was quite shy, and fortunately or unfortunately my mom had no qualms about giving me the push that didn’t always make me feel comfortable. I wasn’t ready yet, but she was definitely a great role model for when the time would come for me to step out of my comfort zone.

Now, I have been a Psychologist in practice for almost 40 years. At work, I have the privilege to help my patients see that they have the power to understand and take charge of things in life that are challenging. Even though there are things like public speaking that I still shy away from, my training has also given me the opportunity to share my knowledge at Temple, my safe space, especially within the Sisterhood. There I can help women find the freedom to step out of their comfort zones, through teaching, sharing, listening, and supporting in a non-judgmental way.

Sisterhood's **Caring for the Soul** is one of my favorite programs. It is a series of workshops on important topics including suicide, alcoholism, ageing, and mental health issues in general. It's clear our society has moved toward encouraging freedom of expression relative to issues like these that tend to be stigmatized. For years, we all kept quiet, not speaking up for fear of embarrassment or being shunned. I've always encouraged people to see that it's ok to talk about anything in a safe environment and I am so happy to see our community openly supporting the mental health needs of our friends, fellow congregants, and community members. It has been such an honor to call this program "my baby."

I know my mom's influence made a difference, and I believe my actions are making a difference as well. I see myself as a go-getter like my mom was, encouraging women to find their voice, and stand up and be heard. I intend to continue being a catalyst for encouraging the freedom to keep on opening the door to discussion, understanding, and ultimately healing.



Joanne Bauling-Ciminero

If we look long enough and hard enough ... we will begin to see the connections that bind us together, and when we recognize these connections, we will begin to change the world.”

Muriel Rukeyser

Below is an excerpt from an article entitled “A Chassidisher Pesach: Passover Traditions and Insights from Chassidic Perspectives” by Diane Mizrahi. It is an interesting take on Judaism as a feminine religion. Does this resonate with you and/or with the Judaism you believe in and practice?

Miriam’s Spirit of Rebellion

Judaism is essentially a “feminine religion.” As a religious and ethical system, it seeks to change the world into a better place, but its approach to achieving this goal is uniquely feminine. “A man's nature” says the Talmud, “is to conquer, but it is not a woman's nature to conquer,” (Yevamot 65b.)

But a woman desires to nurture. She takes a fertilized egg and for nine months provides all the support required for it to develop. When a child is born, the task continues. In the home, the woman excels in bringing beauty and serenity to her environment. Everything she touches is enhanced... and the overall mood in the home is largely to her credit.

In other words, a woman transforms her world from within by nurturing it, bringing its latent qualities to the surface, and helping it to grow at its own pace. Judaism’s mission is monotheism to demonstrate how the diverse aspects of this world are expressions of one God. This can be done in two ways. A masculine approach would be to ‘impose’ God on the world, to show how everything is insignificant compared to its creator, and to coerce people to be righteous.

But if God is truly one then we can do more than that: we can reveal how even the tiniest detail of this world is significant because it contains a spark of the divine and its inner identity is nothing other than an expression of God. We can embrace people as they are, encouraging them to come to an awareness of the truth by themselves and support their efforts to become better people.

So, true monotheism is feminine. It seeks to nurture the inner sanctity of every being on this planet, not by degrading it, conquering it, or replacing it with something else, but by bringing its true godly intention to the surface.



Jewish Women's Archive. "Miriam Holding a Timbrel."

Miriam, the sister of Moshe, is attributed with many leadership roles that led to the redemption. Beyond her actions as a midwife and the well known story of her saving her brother in the bulrushes, the midrash describes how her words ultimately encouraged the people to rebel against Pharaoh’s cruel laws. Miriam's leadership of the Israelite women after a miraculous passing through the Red Sea is also well known. Upon safe shores, the people began to sing, expressing their gratitude.

The men sang with their voices, but each woman’s song was composed with voice, tambourines, and dance. The women embraced Miriam’s spirit of rebellion: a feminine strength borne from bitterness; a faith sewn amidst despair.”

**An Annotated Passover Haggadah,
Edited by Zev Garber & Kenneth Hansen, 2021**

Coming to America

I always knew I would come to the United States. My older brothers were the trailblazers who made that idea a real possibility when they went to NYU for college.

Growing up on the island of the Dominican Republic as a child of Holocaust survivors, my family was surrounded by embracing, warm people but with different ethnic and religious identities that highlighted the ways our family was different and foreign. Immigrants.

The Revolution of 1965 and all its instabilities pointed to the fact that the journey to freedom was not yet complete. For my parents, having the incalculable luck of surviving the horrors of the War and finding a tropical oasis to live free of persecution, a place where they could build family and community, might have been enough.

For my brothers and I, continuing on to the US was the next step in a journey to reach even higher levels of freedom and the opportunity for a fuller life. It was time for me to become the immigrant. After all, what was the benefit of being smart and a good student? It was the ticket out.

When I was eighteen, I went to The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Throughout my freshman year the cheeks on my face hurt from smiling all the time; I was so happy! Over time I came to realize that my freedom put me in a position of responsibility towards others: my family first of all, friends, and community at large.

As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, my chosen career was a formalization of my interest in helping people find their own freedom: from abuse, disabilities, illness, loss, difficult life transitions, etc. I was always surprised, but so gratified, when some clients and patients would later tell me, "What you told me then, changed my life". Many times I would not remember exactly what I had said, but it filled me with satisfaction all the same.



Genia Neuhaus

Now it's up to the next generation to appreciate the freedom they have and move forward having a positive impact on the lives of others in their communities in whatever ways fit their talents and preferences. Our job is to remind them of where they came from.

"And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music."

Nietzsche

When day comes, we step out of the shade,

Aflame and unafraid.

The new dawn blooms as we free it.

For there is always light

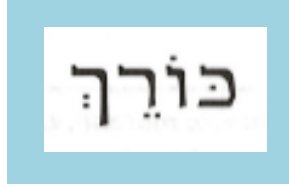
If only we're brave enough to see it,

If only we're brave enough to be it.

**Amanda Gorman,
The Hill We Climb**

Koreich

Make a sweet & bitter sandwich



This is step #10 in the seder. By combining the bitter herb and the sweet charoset (a paste usually made of apples, nuts and cinnamon) between two pieces of matzah, we build a “sandwich.” Number 10 in the Passover seder *Koreich* is ideal for discussion of how we create new ideas, sensations, concepts, and even rituals in our world.

What happens if we mix blue paint and red paint?

That’s an easy one—we get purple.

What happens if we allow a two-year old child to choose their own clothes?

They are likely to match green and yellow polka dot leggings with a blue sweater on the warmest day of the year.

And, what do we do when a participant at the Seder table wants more Charoset, less horseradish, and no matzo? Is it still an acceptable Passover sandwich if each participant modifies it to their tastes?

“The Jewish way to create a sacred and enduring community with common values and a shared vision is by respecting the uniqueness of each participant. It is by enabling each member to identify and develop what he can uniquely contribute that the community becomes stronger.”

Mark Gerson, The Telling

How good are we at recognizing and allowing for unique, separate people?

How do we enhance our understanding by observing them— allowing them the bit of space they need to show us who they are and what they need?

Follow Your Calling

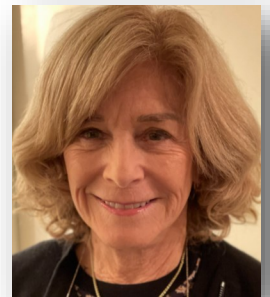
There are certain professions in life for which there is what is known as a “calling.” That is, one just doesn’t obtain the skills but also feels an inner need that is met by being or becoming what you are called to do. This can be true of many professions, and we often think of the professions where the person being called as helping humanity in some form. This is true of clergy, medical care providers, and teachers.

My becoming a physician wasn’t a goal to impress, but a goal to help and provide care to those in need. I must admit, it was one of the best decisions I made in my life. Looking back at this point, I would not have it any other way.

The ability to care for people, doing everything possible to ensure their return to health, is so rewarding. Every year I get a note from a patient I met when he was an eighteen year old college student with a diagnosis of acute leukemia. He is now in his early fifties, married with three children, and healthy. I also hear from the woman with bilateral breast cancer who I met when she was in her forties; now, she is in her seventies and is disease free all these years to see her children grow and grandchildren come to be.

I also appreciated the ability to impact lives in other ways. As one of eight women students in my medical school class, I was a relative rarity when I finished training. The opportunity to be a role model for and to teach the young women physicians of today has had many personal rewards.

My advice to young people is to try to do what your heart is telling you. Whatever that may be. If you have a dream, go for it. It is when you are young that you have the luxury of exploring various avenues and if your heart tells you that it wants you to help humankind, even more power to you.



Judith Ratzan



Miriam’s Cups made by Sisterhood women

“A great deal of how we think and feel is spontaneous, habitual, and tied to forces larger than ourselves, be they our traditions, our times, or our temperament. There is no reason to presume it fixed. Awakening to the choices we have in such matters is a practice of freedom, and one worth our time.

Maggie Nelson, On Freedom,

Shulchan Oreich

Time for the Meal!

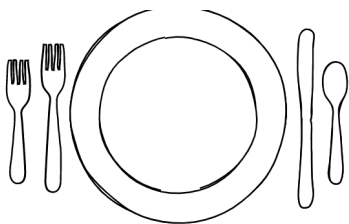
The words **Shulchan Oreich** refer to setting a table, and at this point in the seder, they signify a luxuriant Passover meal. This is step #11 in the seder.

שְׁלֻחַן עוֹרֵיךְ

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצֵי לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, hamotzi lechem min haaretz.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.



In writing her recent cookbook *King Solomon's Table*, Joan Nathan notes that Jewish food is not influenced by one land like Italian or French food would be. She says, “The main feature of Jewish food is the dietary laws. They and the precepts of Judaism are in the back of your head if you’re a Jew, no matter where you are.”

Part of what her book does so well is show just how far-flung the Jewish people are. She’s gone to Indian Jewish homes to learn about Passover, to England to learn about Iraqi-Jewish Passover. Some of the best Sephardic and Middle Eastern food is in Europe and Latin America. In South Africa, she found some of the best Lithuanian Jewish food.

When asked the all-important question “Do you prefer a dense matzo ball or a fluffy one?” her answer was: “I like not dense-dense but I like al dente matzo balls. I learned that if you just make matzo balls and set them in the soup for an hour or so before you serve them, they’ll be nice and fluffy.”

Finally, the most important thing about a seder, according to Joan Nathan, is to create tradition. She recommends always having something new, but always making the old foods also.

Information from NYTimes article

“How a Jewish Legend Cooks Passover” - published April 2017.

The Hostess with the Most...Schtick!

As a self-proclaimed “professional Jew,” my job as Program Director at Temple Beth Am requires me to channel my Judaism every day as I work to create meaningful Jewish experiences for our congregants. This commitment extends to my personal life, and my home has become a hub for my friends—both Jewish and not—where I offer a space to learn about Judaism and embrace our traditions in a way that speaks to them.

The rooftop at the townhouse I share with my husband (and very Jewish dog) is a frequent space for Shabbat dinners and holiday celebrations, plus it has given me a great audience to test out my favorite holiday recipes: latkes, hamantaschen, short ribs, and of course...challah! Whether you are an old friend, or I just met you last week, you are always welcome in my home if you are looking for a place to connect Jewishly.

I love having the opportunity to share my passion for bringing people together in my cool outdoor space; it puts me in a unique position to model what a modern Jewish home can look like for other young professionals, and it allows me to demonstrate how we can make ancient rituals feel contemporary, relevant, and special.

I feel so fortunate to have a career where I have the freedom to express my authentic self every day, where I have the chance to share important traditions with others in my home, and am

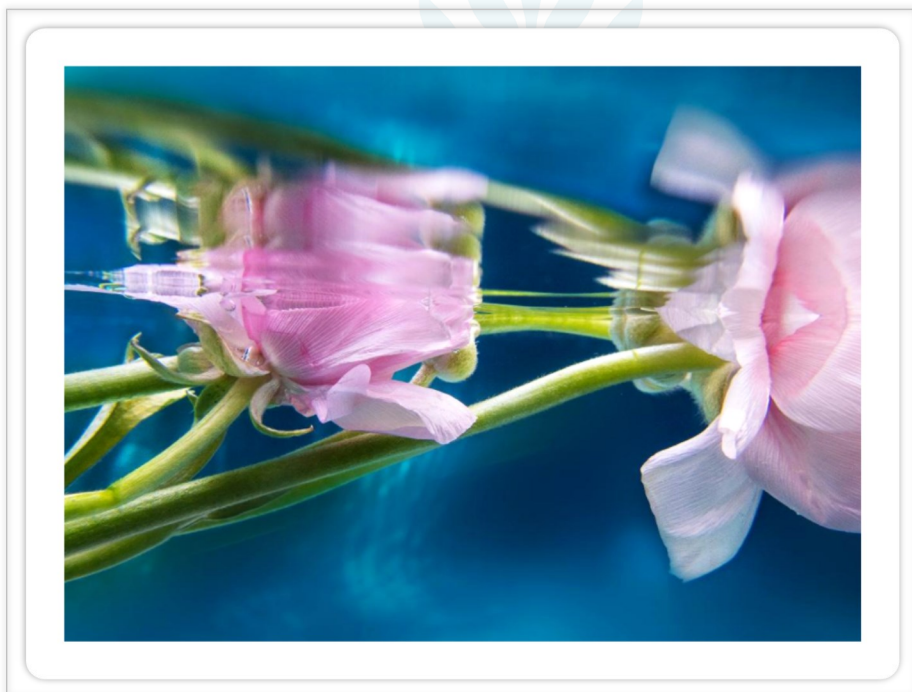


Andrea LeVine Kay

Every life has a right to move toward its own fulfillment.



Janet Kelfer



**Per Susannah Heschel in
The Forward, March 19, 2013**

***The REAL reason
we put an orange
on the seder plate***

At the height of the Jewish feminist movement of the 1980s, inspired by the abundant new customs expressing women's viewpoints and experiences, I started placing an orange on the Seder plate.

At an early point in the Seder, when stomachs were starting to growl, I asked each person to take a segment of the orange, make the blessing over fruit and

eat the segment in recognition of gay and lesbian Jews and of widows, orphans, Jews who are adopted and all others who sometimes feel marginalized in the Jewish community.

When we eat that orange segment we spit out the seeds to repudiate homophobia and we recognize that in a whole orange, each segment sticks together. Oranges are sweet and juicy and remind us of the fruitfulness of gay and lesbian Jews and of the homosociality that has been such an important part of Jewish experience, whether of men in yeshivas or of women in the Ezrat Nashim.

I discovered some years ago that an urban legend was circulating: Strangers told me they placed an orange on their Seder plate because of an incident in Miami Beach in which a man angrily denounced me when I gave a lecture, saying that a woman belongs on the bimah of a synagogue no more than an orange belongs on the Seder plate.

That incident never happened! Instead, my custom had fallen victim to a folktale process in which my original intention was subverted. Moreover, the power of the custom was subverted: By now, women are on the bimah, so there is no great political courage in eating an orange, because women ought to be on the bimah.

For years, I have known about women whose scientific discoveries were attributed to men, or who had to publish their work under a male pseudonym. That it happened to me makes me realize all the more how important it is to recognize how deep and strong patriarchy remains, and how important it is for us to celebrate the contributions of gay and lesbian Jews, and all those who need to be liberated from marginality to centrality. And Passover is the right moment to ensure freedom for all Jews

***Susannah Heschel is a professor of
Jewish studies at Dartmouth College.***

I Am One of the Lucky Ones

At least 10 years into my recovery, I was at an NA meeting when a young woman raised her hand. She said, “I am Rosie; I just got out of treatment, and I’m struggling. My dad passed away last week and I need help coping so I don’t pick up any substance.” I spoke to her, sharing that I had been in her shoes. I understood her hurt and pain. I had entered recovery on October 13, 1981 after putting myself in danger daily. I am one of the lucky ones who survived. Years of recovery taught me that by being there for other women, no matter their age, God would use me to be of help.

As the months passed, Rosie and I became good friends. She invited me to her home where she lived with her mother, a warm, gentle Cuban woman named Analisia, who reminded me of my beloved mother-in-law.

At the back of the house, a collection of artwork was displayed on a yellow stucco wall. A framed needlepoint picture of a little boy pushing a girl on a swing caught my attention.



It reminded me of a piece my mother Sylvia made when my son Josh was born. Rosie and Analisia had purchased the piece at a garage sale a few years before. I asked to look more closely at the artwork.

Analisia carefully took the picture off the wall and handed it to me. On the back I noted the name of the framing company in Brooklyn. Imagine my surprise when I realized this was my mother’s needlepoint!

During my active addiction in the late 1970’s, I liquidated everything I owned. At the time, my neighbors bought this needlepoint and then later sold it in a garage sale, which is where Rosie and her mother found it.

I might not be able to see my God physically or hear the exact words of my God, but if I look around and listen, I know God is always there for me. I have no doubt that Rosie and I were supposed to meet and become good friends. It has been an honor to work with women that needed support; it has been a huge gain for me in my personal growth, and in my life.



Rita Diaz



“The goal of our patient labor is not our own liberation per se, but a deepened capacity to give it away, with an ever-diminishing attachment to outcome.”

Maggie Nelson, On Freedom

Tzafun

Find & Eat Afikomen



After the meal, step #12 in the seder is when the Afikomen is found and divided amongst all to be eaten.

Why is there such joy in the finding?

“Children love treasure hunts. They like to search for hidden prizes as they discover and capture the world around them. Children also like to play hide-and-seek, the game of hiding from others.

And grown-ups too go on treasure hunts. What are the treasures we search for?

Grown-ups play hide-and-seek, hiding ourselves from others, sometimes even from ourselves. When do we play this game, and why?

Perhaps we are seeking to uncover our own questions and find our own answers. Perhaps each uncovering will contain the potential for discovery, bringing heightened awareness and making visible the breadth of our choices, the breadth of our freedom.”

*Marcia Falk, Night of Beginnings:
A Passover Haggadah*

What Passover symbols might represent what you search for your life?

What would discovery of those missing things mean?

Cancer “Freedom”

Many of you reading this, hopefully, never experienced hearing words, “you have cancer”. Hearing the shocking words said, made me feel that my freedom was gone and that I was to succumb to a different life instantly with a medication I would have to take for the rest of my life. I was about to lose control, having to let go and feeling helpless. And it was a different life and things were not going to be the same. Medication began three months after diagnosis. Within days, tiredness set in, walking was laborious, feeling nauseous and too weak that even taking a shower was a chore. This was going to be a lifetime predicament for me in 2003. I no longer felt in control.

With all this going on, giving up was not an option. I did not want my two sons (both in college) nor my husband to know what I was feeling. I had to show strength. Water running in the background never getting wet, I began my mission. I would go into that shower and for ten minutes, getting wet only from tears, as I allowed myself to cry out and just be me releasing my frustrations. I would then wrap myself in a towel so that my husband would think I took a shower. NO ONE could take emotions away. I felt myself get control not mattering how small. My husband did not know until about three years later.

This small step helped me gain freedom by helping others along while I traveled this new journey. Beginning a support group for blood cancers in 2004 at the **C**ancer **S**upport **C**ommunity was empowering and it continues to thrive today at Miami Cancer Institute after the CSC closed its doors in 2015. We continued our group on Zoom despite the pandemic. The control and freedom I felt, by helping others, was a true gift by touching others in the process.

As of 2015, I was taken off the medication as an experiment, being watched every three months until I am off for eight years. I just celebrated six years this past October 2, 2021.



Susan Rosenthal



ON RESILIENCE

At the close of a radio interview, the host asked me, “I understand that after a loss, you have to find a new sense of normal. Is that true?” I thought about it and then answered, “No, I don’t think so. Normal isn’t enough. One has to find a new extraordinary.”

Resilience isn’t bouncing back to a new normal. It’s a heightened feeling of life, a sense of greater engagement and enlargement, an awareness and realization of the extraordinary.

Sherri Mandel

The Road to Resilience: From Chaos to Celebration

What is Ritual?

A spiritual approach to Ritual:

Ritual is the exhaled breath, an extrusion, the enlarged self, leaving with thread, capturing in a web, marking a space of our own.

It is a magician's trick. Begin with the familiar, then do something sleight of hand unfamiliar with it. I begin with the concept of scrolls, familiar looking, standing in a case draped in a talit, but empty, waiting to be illuminated.

Ritual is an occasion in which one takes the chaos of the world into oneself and pours it into a vessel that gives it shape, order and form.

Ritual is the enactment of a wish, the display of a state of mind, a performative enterprise in ritual it is the doing that is the being- the doer is one's own body.

Ritual dwells in invisible reality, gives it vocabulary, props, costume, gesture, scenery... ritual makes things separate... sets them apart... from ordinary affairs and thoughts.

By being orderly and repetitious, the ritual assures predictability. In the end ritual gives us the assurance about the unification of things ritual subverts the cognitive and critical powers and glosses them

Skepticism, that grain of salt is appropriate for which there's a delicate flavor to ritual, a certain fragility. We make it up. We proclaim and orderliness were none existed, a rhythm where there was no discernible beat, I'm marking of time in a blank calendar, and arithmetic made of irregular lives,

Barbara Meyerhoff

Hiddur Mitzvah



The Jewish idea of *hiddur mitzvah* refers to our taking a mitzvah and making it beautiful. The concept comes partly from Exodus 14:2: "This is my God and I will enshrine him," a call that may be interpreted to "enshrine" God by fulfilling mitzvot not in a perfunctory way, but in ways that are

magnificent, exquisite, lovely. We embellish our rituals and, we make them beautiful - - in tangible ways and in sacred ways.

Torah Walks Us Through the World

There are stars whose radiance is visible on Earth though they have long been extinct. There are people whose brilliance continues to light the world even though they are no longer among the living. These lights are particularly bright when the night is dark. They light the way for humankind.

Hanna Szenes

First, say to yourself, what you would be and then do what you have to do.

Epictetus

strong, so I lifted the bag and carried it for her. I then walked her to her gate, even though it was not in the same wing as mine. We didn't talk. It just felt like right thing to do.

On the way home, the flight out of Charlotte was delayed due to storms in Miami. They announced this over the PA in the airport, but the Spanish speaking Miamians did not understand. I watched as people began to approach the gate attendant, who could only repeat herself in English. (She even commented to a co-worker that "those people" need to learn English.) Again, I don't speak Spanish, but I took out my phone and used Google translate. I was able to communicate with my fellow travelers about what was happening and how they could change their flights. I saw my ability to speak English as a privilege.

I am constantly reminded that we all have opportunities every day to help other people. It may be in the form of long marches or small gestures. When we use our privilege and our gifts to help others, we allow Torah to walk through the world.

I grew up with that famous photo of Abraham Joshua Heschel, Dr. King, and Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, then President of the URJ, holding the Torah as they marched from Selma to Montgomery. It captures how the Torah is something to be lived and not just admired. So, when the NAACP organized an 860 mile march from Selma to Washington DC and invited clergy to join, I jumped at the chance to carry the Torah on one leg of the journey.

The march was in pursuit of voting rights, education reform, and economic equality. I did not want to stand idly by. I wanted to use my pulpit for good. As I rabbi, I have both the freedom and privilege to speak out for justice. I also have the authority to tell our leadership what the Torah instructs us: When making a decision we consult the people and listen to the majority; we are obligated to educate all our children; and the mark of a just society is how we treat the poor, the widow, the orphan.

What I really want to share about this experience is related to the flights to and from Charlotte, NC. As I waited in Miami's security line, I noticed an older Spanish speaking woman pushing her bag across the floor with her foot. I am not a Spanish speaker, but I knew this was not going to work. How would she lift her bag to put it through security? How would she get to her gate? This woman needed help. It is a privilege to be mobile and



**Rabbi Rachel
Greengrass**



Borech

Blessings after the Meal

בִּירְךָ

FIND YOUR VOICE

(Written by Stacy Beyer)

Time moves on
And the world keeps turning,
Day by day,
On this journey,
Each moment that passes
Is just another chance
To give,
To love,
To learn,
To dance.

So, find your voice,
Sing it out to the world.
Don't let the truth go unspoken,
Don't rest til the silence is broken.

Find your voice,
And all the dreams you've been keeping
inside
Will finally find wings to fly

Take a chance,
Make a noise,
Find your voice.



So, if you're there sitting on the sidelines,
Looking for a signal or sign,
Don't let a whole lifetime pass you by.
This is your moment,
This is your time,
To find your noise,
Find your voice.

Take a chance,
Make a noise,
Find your voice.

Stopping the Stigma

When asked about the opportunity to use my freedoms to help others, the first thing that comes to mind is volunteer work. I always feel that I get more than the recipient, and I just hope we both find satisfaction.

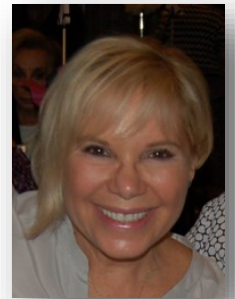
As an advocate for mental health awareness, my passion comes from the knowledge that I can reach out to touch someone in a dark place, open a tiny bit of chance, offer hope, be trusted just enough, and am able to hear the unspoken cries.

In 2015 I worked with the University of Miami Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Services to create a program called STOP THE STIGMA. The ever-present stigma keeps our shame and our secrets locked in the proverbial closet. It closes doors, prevents funding, creates invisible barriers, and results in both physical and emotional scarring.

The word **stigma** comes from the Greek stigmata (meaning to mark something) and in modern society has come to figuratively refer to a “mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person.” **Stigma** is a word that grates at me to the extent that I had to raise funds, create opportunity and programs for those in need, and do everything possible to ensure that no sense of stigma would hold us back.

In a Miami Herald newspaper article on the subject, I was touted as being brave in coming forward and sharing family stories. I never felt brave. I was simply the storyteller for some other brave and tortured souls. I hoped to be of assistance in moving their lives in a new direction. Rather than feeling brave, I felt fortunate that those in need had faith in me at a time when they seemed to have lost faith in themselves.

I truly feel blessed that my deep, abiding faith and my love of Judaism has taught me how to stand strong for what I believe is right. I have found the strength there to offer some guidance and words of optimism to those who may talk about the stigma of another. I know that together we can eliminate this damaging word and replace it with compassion, love, and knowledge that being there for each other is what makes the difference.



Donna Bitterman Shepard

Wisdom can be found in all people and all places. This may sound like common sense, but it is not commonly acknowledged.

In a section of the Talmud known as *Pirkei Avot, Wisdom of Our Fathers*, the sages asked, “Who is wise?”

Their answer: “One who learns from all people.”



Artwork by Barbara Epstein-Levi at Haggadot.com

Note: Haggadot.com is a free website with ideas for Seder programs; terrific resource!!

Mussar includes **gratitude** as a key character trait (middah) in the ongoing process of challenging ourselves to improve upon habits that impact our lives.

“The Hebrew term for gratitude is *hakarat ha'tov*, which means, literally, “recognizing the good.” The good is already there. Practicing gratitude means being fully aware of the good that is already yours. If you've lost your job but you still have your family and health, you have something to be grateful for. If you can't move around except in a wheelchair but your mind is as sharp as ever, you have something to be grateful for. If your house burns down, but you still have your memories, you have something to be grateful for. If you've broken a string on your violin, and you still have three more, you have something to be grateful for.

“Though there is great spiritual value in seeking the good in everything that happens, we have to be careful not to set ourselves up to being too much of a Pollyanna. All we want is to confirm that in everything that happens there is a possibility of good, if only we could perceive it, and while it may not be visible now, perhaps in time will see the bigger picture. And perhaps that bigger picture will include dimensions that are beyond this world and beyond our known experience.”

Alan Morinis,

Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar

The 3rd Cup of Wine: Kos Sh'lishi

In between the blessings that follow our meal and the Hallel portion of the service, we drink this 3rd cup of wine.

Drinking the wine throughout the seder allows our imaginations to hover in the period of 1250 B.C. It helps smooth over the bumpy roads of time travel and journey from one pivotal moment in history to the next.



A Special Message to Our Women *From Rabbi Barras—*



Women and Apple Trees in Egypt

There is a debate in the Talmud (Pesachim 116a) as to whether eating *charoset* is an optional custom or an obligatory mitzvah. The rabbis who argue that *charoset* is obligatory base their decision on a fascinating legend from elsewhere in the Talmud (Sotah 11b). When Pharaoh decreed that all Jewish baby boys were to be drowned at birth, the Israelite men decided that they would no longer have relations with their wives in order to prevent the murder of the male babies.

According to legend, the Israelite women accused the men of being worse than Pharaoh. While he decreed that all male babies were to be drowned, the Israelite men were refusing to allow the female children to live as well. It was under apple trees that the women convinced their husbands and seduced them, thus allowing for Israelite continuity. According to another legend, the Israelite women would give birth near the apple trees. There a miracle occurred where the apples became so plentiful that they hid the women and allowed them to give birth quietly in order to evade Egyptian soldiers.

Each year when we sit down to our Seder tables the apples in the *charoset* reminds us that the incredible faith of the Israelite women in Egypt allowed for the survival of the Jewish people. If not for Yocheved convincing her husband Amram not to give up on his belief in the Eternal One, and the fate of the Jewish people, Moses and his entire generation would never have been born. The story of the Jewish people would have ended in Egypt before it even started. The Passover Seder must always remind us that the Jewish people are sustained in every generation by the faith of its women. They inspire our souls to heed the wisdom of our tradition, and they make possible to furtherance of the Torah from one generation to the next.



Rabbi
Jeremy Barras

I write to provoke dialogue and to transform how we think about what it means to live and breathe in the world.

Claudia Rankine

Hallel

Sing Praises

The Hallel is step #14 in the seder and represents Moses's and the Israelite's songs of praise after the parting of the Sea.



Psalm 150 is a climactic conclusion to a collection of five praise Psalms (146–150) where everyone and everything are to praise God everywhere.

PSALM 150:1–6

HALLU YAH!

Hal'lu El b'kodsho,
hal'luhu bir'kia uzo.
Hal'luhu big'vurotav,
hal'luhu k'rov gudlo.
Hal'luhu b'teika shofar,
hal'luhu b'neivel v'chinor.
Hal'luhu b'tof umachol,
hal'luhu b'minim v'ugav.
Hal'luhu b'tziltz'lei shama,
hal'luhu b'tziltz'lei t'ruah.
Kol han'shamah t'haleil Yah,
Hal'lu Yah!



הַלְלוּ יְהוָה!
הַלְלוּ־אֱלֹהִים בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ,
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּרִקְיעַ עֲזָא.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּגִבּוֹרֹתָיו,
הַלְלוּהוּ כְּרֹב גִּדְלוֹ.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתִקְעַ שׁוֹפָר,
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּנֵבֶל וְכִנּוֹר.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתוֹף וּמַחֲוֹל,
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּמִנִּים וְעוּגָב.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי־שִׁמְעַ,
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי־תְרוּעָה.
כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהַלֵּל יְהוָה,
הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה!

HALLELUJAH!

Praise God in God's sanctuary;
praise God in the sky, God's stronghold.
Praise God for mighty acts;
praise God for God's exceeding greatness.
Praise God with blasts of the horn;
praise God with harp and lyre.
Praise God with timbrel and dance;
praise God with lute and pipe.
Praise God with resounding cymbals;
praise God with loud-clashing cymbals.
Let all that breathes praise God.
Hallelujah!

HEART & SOUL

Music is the heart and soul of our human connection. As the director of music for over 40 years, I have had the pleasure of working with many of our youth in multiple generations. Whether it's teaching a new Torah or Haftarah portion, traditional or new melodies for a prayer, fun and wonderful holiday songs, or holding discussions about God, the joy of music is shared by all.

When I lead our youth in singing and prayer together while learning about Jewish values, I realize that I'm part of building a Jewish future. With the holy honor and responsibility for teaching and leading our High Holy Day choir, year after year I see how much all the music matters to each of us, deep in our souls. I hope they realize a deep sense of belonging and community through our time together.

Every musical note impacts the kids; the bond they create with fellow musicians is profound. The connection to ritual and tradition lasts a lifetime.

I believe these youth, many of whom are now grown with children of their own, are sharing their musical influences with the greater world. By being grounded in their own tradition and the encouragement it offers to explore and question, these students are creating new, experimental activities and rituals.

My daughter Rachel is a cantor in Pennsylvania and she teaches her youth choir many of the same songs and tunes she learned in youth choir at Beth Am. My daughter Lisa is a rabbi in Los Angeles where many of the old tunes she introduces become new again while inspiring musical depth that flows down to her children. Both girls talk about creating family memories with their children similar to those they developed as girls growing up in my home.



By being part of a musical choir, our youth are learning to co-
operate, collaborate, support and encourage each other. They are taking those skills and their knowledge to college and far beyond.

Jackie Berney

It is a good feeling to know that the time they spent at Beth Am, in Day School or Religious School, was just the beginning of a lifetime love of music and Jewish tradition. I feel so lucky; I have the best job ever!



“Pesach without children is like a cantor without a song, like an actor without any lines, or a storyteller without an audience.”

Joe Bobker, prolific author of Jewish humor books

Women's Seders & the Sacred Schmatta

The idea for a woman's Haggadah born in Israel in 1975, when Esther Broner and Naomi Nimrod organized a seder that took women out of the kitchen and to the head of the table. It included women's prayers and poems in retelling the Passover story. This prompted the two to write their own service for a feminist telling of the Passover story.

The next year, in the spring of **1976**, thirteen women gathered in Broner's New York City apartment for the first women's seder. Among the attendees at this first seder were Gloria Steinem, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, and Phyllis Chesler.

Now, 46 years later, women's seders are an ongoing tradition. Here at Temple Beth Am, we've held numerous Women's Seders over the years, the two most recent in 2016 and 2019, both of which were chaired by Judith Davidoff and Etta Gold; they set the "gold" standard for our Sisterhood Seder programs, and introduced a tradition begun by the NYC women in 1976—the **Sacred Schmatta**.

As our Haggadah in 2019 shared:

Author Letty Cotton Pogrebin, a founding editor of Ms. Magazine, tells us: "At the end of every seder, we always stand in a circle, wrap ourselves in a motley-looking rope tied-together fabric scraps which we call 'the sacred schmatta,' and sing a song of peace."

This year's feminist seder ended the way it always does: with participants wrapping themselves in "the Sacred Schmata."

The reference subverts the Yiddish word for "rag" (as in "what's that *schmata* you're wearing?" and as in the cloths women once used to scrub floors by hand) elevating it into something that is at once a little silly, and holy.

Portions excerpted from
<https://www.jta.org/2006/04/21/ny/donning-the-sacred-shmata>

The 4th Cup of Wine: Kos Revii

This cup is drunk after concluding the Hallel. With this cup of wine, we are enabled to really believe that we were slaves of Pharaoh about to be liberated from Egyptian bondage. We can imagine standing at the foot of Mt. Sinai.



Billyfest

Looking back at old videos that span the years of our lives together, it is amazing to see how an idea that got its fledgling flight right after Hurricane Andrew has been repeated yearly. Now, it has become one of the strongest and dearest experiences our children recall.

In the beginning it was just a block party that was held each December to bring our neighbors together. My husband Billy and I thought that it would be fun to all enjoy some live music together after all the stress of hurricane recovery. Billy is a musician and music teacher. Each of our five children play musical instruments and some of us sing also. We delivered a flyer to each house on the block, and other neighbors in nearby streets were also invited.

The “entrance charge” for each neighbor was to bring finger food to share, and to supply their own folding chairs or blanket. That first block party was a success, which led to planning for the next year, organizing who would appear as well as arranging and practicing the music. Each year was a little different musically. We featured local talent of all ages. We would highlight different genres of music and feature singers and musicians that our neighbors may not have heard of before.

At some point, our yearly party became dubbed the *Billyfest*. Friends and neighbors would contact us each fall to ask what day we would be having it, so they could be sure to attend. They invited their families and friends to join us. Some who attended came all the way from Broward and Palm Beach counties. We have had over a hundred people on our front lawn in most of the recent *Billyfests*.

Neighbors have helped us bring in extra tables, ice, and a few even allowed visitors that came from a distance to park on their lawn, since there was not enough parking on the street for so many guests. Those neighbors that still live on our block speak fondly of *Billyfest* as being a highlight of their year. Teens that performed with us in middle school and high school, usually students/former students of Billy’s and now attending college, reach out here and there to share how much the experience meant to them, and to their families.

Our children still revisit the old videos to watch themselves playing “back in the day,” with lots of commentary about what was going on behind the scenes!

We could never have imagined that a small event meant to be a diversion after Hurricane Andrew would have blossomed and grown to be anticipated by families living in three south Florida counties!



Deanna Whitman

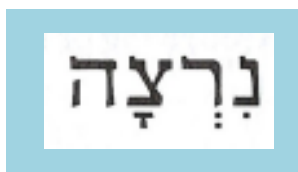


“The ability to ask beautiful questions, often in very unbeautiful moments, is one of the great disciplines of a human life. And a beautiful question starts to shape your identity as much by asking it as it does by having it answered. And you don’t have to do anything about it. You just have to keep asking. And before you know it, you will find yourself actually shaping a different life, meeting different people, finding conversations that are leading you in those directions that you wouldn’t even have seen before.” –

David Whyte

Nirtzah

Conclusion



“In Jerusalem itself for this 15th and final step of the seder, the evening concludes with the call “Next Year in a *rebuilt* Jerusalem.”

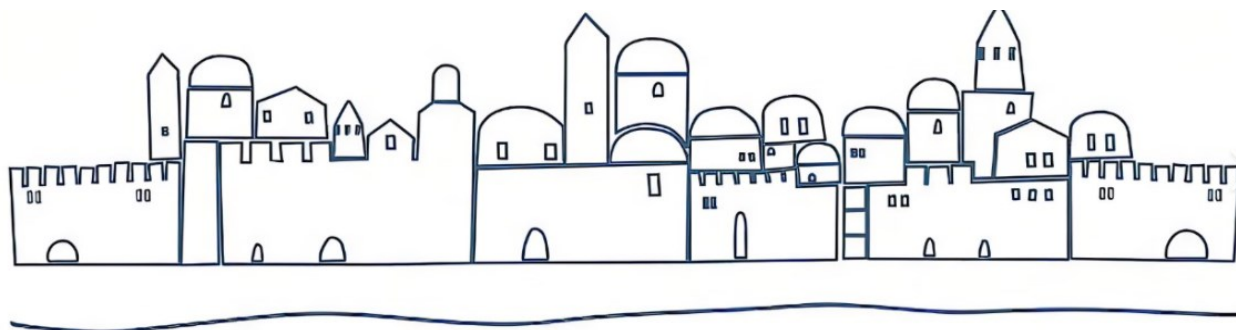
The Jerusalem that Jerusalemites are striving for something else altogether, the Jerusalem are high. Jerusalem is the symbol of peace, the holiest place on earth, the purest expression of the profound Jewish belief that the world will one day be a better place.

It is this idea of Jerusalem for which we reach. When we reach it—and we will, for that is a core Jewish belief— there will be no more need for seders and Haggadot: We will live in a world in which the poor are fed and sheltered and the sick are healed; in which the enslaved are free. Until that day arrives, we will continue to gather around the Passover table, to remind ourselves in each other of the work we must do.”

New American Haggadah, Edited by Jonathan Safran Foer

Next Year in Jerusalem!

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:



My Seders of Freedom

As a young child being Jewish meant celebrating holidays with family, singing in the choir on Friday nights and having a community of friends. It also meant that my father Marched on Washington with Martin Luther King Jr., my mother marched for reproductive rights, and I marched to free Soviet Jewry and in Israel Day Parades. Passover brought all these events together. Standing up for freedom for the oppressed was and is a core value of my Judaism. Passover was a celebration of everything my family believed. Passover was almost like a second thanksgiving; a time to be grateful for our unprecedented freedom as Jews and a celebration of our empowerment. We felt the significance of reliving the Exodus from Egypt in our very souls.

The seders I made for my children were very different from my childhood seders. A generation later, our lives as Jews were celebrated even more freely. The seders were filled with toy plagues, modern day questions, Miriam's Cups, and oranges on the seder plate. They were musical and colorful less formal but no less empowering. My wish for the future is that my daughters embrace creating their own seders, complete with musical parodies and vegan seder plates. May their celebrations of freedom reflect their commitments to make the world a safer, kinder and better



**Rabbi
Jaime Aklepi**



Note: the following excerpt is from an essay by Alice Walker called Only Justice Can Cure a Curse which begins with a curse-prayer collected in the 1920's by Zora Neale Hurston. The curse is angry, absolute in its bitterness, and hatred of its enemies. This excerpt's last line relate to that curse.

There is always a moment in any kind of struggle when one feels in full bloom. Vivid. Alive. One might be blown to bits in such a moment and still be at peace. Martin Luther King Jr. at the mountaintop. Gandhi dying with the name of God on his lips. Harriet Tubman exposing her revolver to some of the slaves she had freed, who, fearing an unknown freedom, looked longingly back toward their captivity, thereby endangering the freedom of all. To be such a person or to witness anyone at this moment of transcendent presence is to know that what is human is linked, by a daring compassion, to what is divine.

I have seen fear turn into courage. Sorrow into joy. Funerals into celebrations. Because whatever the consequences, people standing side by side have expressed who they really are and that ultimately they believe in the love of the world and each other enough *to be that* - which is the foundation of activism. It has become a common feeling, I believe, as we watch our heroes falling over the years, that our own small stone of activism, which might not seem to measure up to the rugged boulders of heroism we have so admitted, is a paltry offering toward the building of an edifice of hope. Many who believe this choose to withhold their offerings out of shame. That is the tragedy of our world.

Jewish Relationship to Books

Like all Haggadahs before it, this one hopes to be replaced. Here we are: individuals remembering a shared past and in pursuit of a shared destiny. The seder is a protest against despair. The universe might pierce death to our fears and hopes, but we are not - so we gather, and share them, and pass them down. We have been waiting for this moment for thousands of years- more than 100 generations of Jews have been here as we are- and we will continue to wait for it. And we will not wait idly.

As you read these words - as our peoples ink-stained fingers turn it's wine-stained pages- new haggadas are being written. And his future Jews at future tables read those haggadahs other haggadahs will be written. New haggadahs will be written until there are no more Jews to write them. Or until our destiny has been fulfilled, and there is no more need to say "Next year in Jerusalem."

Here we are, gathered to celebrate the oldest continually practiced ritual in the western world, to retell what is arguably the best known of all stories, to take part in the most widely practiced Jewish holiday period here we are as we were last year, and as we hope to be next year. Here we are, as night descends and succession over all the Jews of the world, with a book in front of us.

Jews have a special relationship to books, and the haggadah has been translated more widely, and reprinted more often, than any other Jewish book. It is not a work of history or philosophy not a prayer book, users manual, timeline, poem or palimpsest and yet it is all of these things. They had a is a book of living memory. We are not merely here to tell the story we are being called to a radical act of empathy. Here we are, embarking on an ancient, perennial attempt to give life human life- our lives- dignity.

New American Haggadah, Edited by Jonathan Safran Foer



Images of ancient Haggadot

from Magnes Collection of Jewish Art & Life, UC Berkeley

And the 6th graders said ...

We spent some time with Rabbi Aklepi's 6th grade class, and they shared their thoughts on how they make a difference in the world, thanks to the freedoms they have:

...I can help the earth by saving the planet and make it greener, doing mitzvahs while having fun!

... I can be free to love people, bringing people together and show peace. I feel in my heart that people should treat each other with kindness and accept others for who they are

... Flowers make me think of freedom because they can grow wherever they want. I can help others by saying nice and encouraging things to them.

... Freedom and voting allows people to share their opinion. If someone says it doesn't matter you can defend your opinion so that it truly matters. By voting your opinion is heard.

... I do what I love because it makes me happy. I feel freedom because I can help people that are creative and different racially

... I think of praying and imagine people touching the Western Wall and praying for freedom because of their religion. I help others to realize that we can all pray, want freedom, and do the same things.

... Freedom allows for voting which helps people make the world a better place. I can help others by taking care of the world.

... Do what I love to do. When I see birds and flowers, it makes me think of freedom because it is in the air and the bird is free.

... Women's rights are important because is everyone should have equal rights for anything.

... Flowers make me think of freedom because a flower can grow where ever it wants. I can help others by saying nice and encouraging things to them.

... I know that there is "Love" in different languages all around the world. With freedom we have the right to speak and even if we don't agree we can still show love.

... Flowers remind me off freedom because we are all different and grow in our own ways.

... When I pray, I can help and love others . I can pray for those who are ill and those who need comfort. When I visit the sick, I would encourage them to stay strong because when they get better they have so much to do.



Redemption

By Rabbi Zoe Klein

There are three regions in each of our souls,
There is Egypt, there is the Desert,
And there is the Promised Land.
Many of us have glimpsed our Egypt,
Or perhaps some are still there,
Wearing the chains,
Bearing the burdens of fear, insecurity,
doubt, and weakness, mustering the strength,
to clamber up ...

*Still fewer of us have glimpsed our Promised Land,
Our Destiny, Fulfillment of dreams,
Our fruitfulness, our blossoming, our purpose,*

We talk of Egypt often ... Every holiday, every
prayer service mentions we were once slaves,
Recalls our hardships under Pharaoh.

*We talk of the Promised Land often,
Every holiday, every prayer service longs for
Israel, for the Voice to come forth from Zion,
We turn to the east, reminisce Jerusalem.*

But rarely do we talk of, or pray about, the
Desert ... Yet that is the region in which
most of us are.

Pushing forward in the wilderness,
Dragging our footsteps across that forty year
stretch of pristine, barren, moonscape,

*It is there we encounter the truth,
It is there we encounter miracle.*

We are all nomads still,
At the shore of some sparkling oasis,
And we sing our nomad song ...

HELPING THOSE WHO ARE OFTEN UNSEEN

In 2014, my husband and I visited Thailand. In a town called Pattaya, I noticed young Thai girls often accompanying older white men. There were brothels next door to 7-11's on the street, and it was clear that sex trade and prostitution were thriving. Watching those girls walk hand-in-hand with men old enough to be their grandfathers broke my heart.

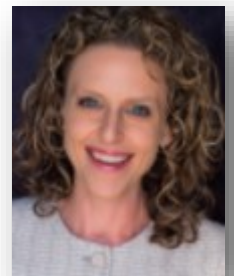
Shocked and saddened, I returned to the U.S. only to discover that modern slavery is still very present here, 150 years after it was abolished. Granted, it is concealed beneath layers of deception so many of us are not aware of what is happening. Meanwhile, people are deprived of their freedoms and these practices are violating our nation's promise that every person in the U.S. is guaranteed basic human rights. There are approximately 30-million people enslaved across the world, with over 400,000 in the United States.

In Los Angeles, where I lived at the time, I spoke of the situation from the bimah. While many congregants were supportive, there were a few who felt that bringing up prostitution in front of their teenage daughters was disturbing and indicated they'd rather it not be discussed on the pulpit. For me, it was an eye-opening experience to realize that we have the privilege of shutting the door on awareness and the obligation to become involved and assist individuals who are caught up in such horrific situations.

Fortunately, we were able to discuss the subject more and our temple joined a coalition against slavery and trafficking. In fact, our temple team was the first cohort to serve as mentors to women who escaped and survived slavery in our local area. I learned of a local woman named Ima who was a survivor of human trafficking. She had been enslaved for years at a home within walking distance of my former congregation. Another girl named Maria was taken from her hometown in Mexico at the age of 15, with promises of a well-paying job as a housekeeper for a family in Los Angeles. Instead, the woman who offered her the job sold her into slavery to a single, white older male for \$200.

As part of the coalition, we helped women who had been freed to learn English and work toward citizenship. We were assigned to mentees and got to know each other by playing games, attending events together, visiting restaurants, and more. We taught the women how to care for themselves and prepare for jobs, all while balancing work and life challenges. The first graduates became a leadership cohort who mentored more women and spoke about the issue to groups.

As Jews, we should understand that freedom is never to be taken for granted. With freedom comes the responsibility to dream, demand, and act on behalf of those who need our help. I wanted to use my voice and my influence to help these women achieve their freedom. This was an important example of the idea that with freedom comes the responsibility to dream, demand and act on behalf of those who need our help.



**Cantor
Tifani Coyot**



COUNTING THE OMER

Thousands of years ago, Israelite people brought a portion of their spring barley harvest to the Temple in Jerusalem as an offering of gratitude for a successful harvest. Then they would count forty-nine days to the next harvest of wheat, which was essential to survival over the following months.

Leviticus 23:10-11 says “You shall bring an omer of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest; and he shall wave the omer before God to be accepted for you.” The Bible then goes on to command the seven weeks of counting.

Immediately following the Seder, we begin a period called *S’firat Ha-Omer*, when we count each day for the next fifty, concluding with the holiday of Shavuot. Originally designed to calculate the agricultural season, rabbinic tradition used it to establish a connection between the two holidays. While Passover celebrates redemption of Hebrew slaves from Egypt, Shavuot commemorates receiving the Torah. We needed to be free in order to receive the Torah.

As an example of how we might look at the elements of the sefirot (representing manifestations of God) as they come together each day:

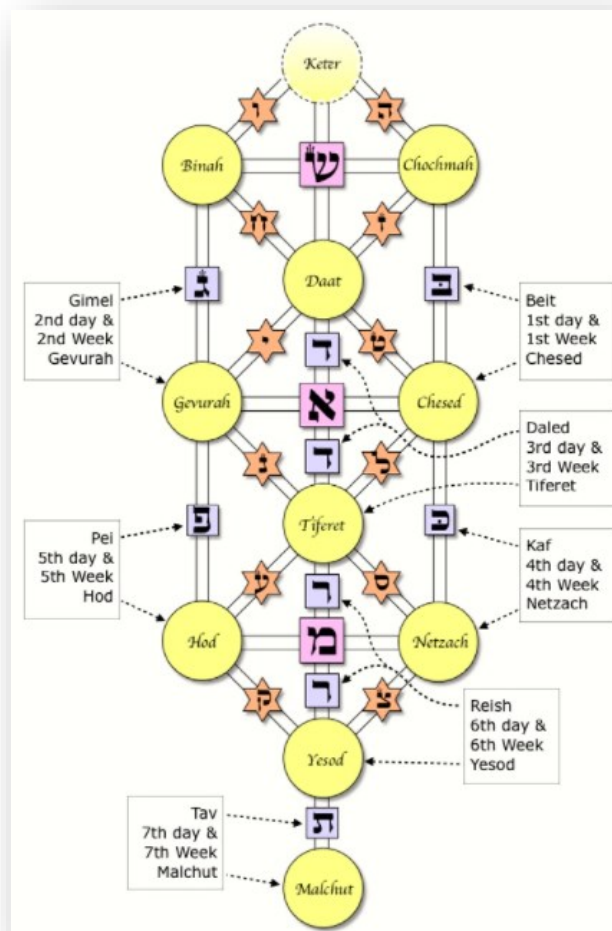
On Day 11, we study **Netzach she b’Gevurah**, the idea of Endurance within Discernment, about continuing efforts to overcome obstacles, to celebrate spiritual stamina.

On Day 20, we study **Yesod she b’Tiferet**, the idea of Foundation within Harmony. It can relate to the idea of being centered, focusing on internal stability.

Day 42 focuses on **Malchut/Shechina she b’Yesod**, an Indwelling Presence within Foundation. This could refer to our inviting the Divine Presence to increase a desire for righteousness.

Like so many things we study, we can make meaning in a variety of ways, often based on what is happening in our world at a given time.

The examples above are culled from *Counting the Omer*, by Rabbi Min Kantrowitz



FREEDOM “FROM” AND FREEDOM “TO”

Below is a poetry excerpt that touches on people and freedom. Freedom connotes many things to many people. One way to look at it is freedom “to” and freedom “from.” The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states in its preamble that “freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people.”

In trying to achieve these goals, we often face resistance from those who are focused on freedom “to,” who see an aspiration towards freedom “from” as a threat to individual liberty. Everyone on this planet is responsible for everyone else on this planet and even the health of the planet itself.

As Maya Angelou puts it “hands can strike and life can be sapped yet those same hands can touch with healing and tenderness.” We have the power to make on this earth a place where every man and woman can live freely without crippling fear. Out of confusion and argument we learn that we are neither devils nor angels. When *we come to it*, we learn we are the only possible ones who can make “freedom for all” a reality. All human rights are interrelated and essential for human flourishing.



Karen Frost

Excerpt from:

We Come To It *By Maya Angelou*

We, this people, on this small and drifting planet
 Whose hands can strike with such abandon
 That in a twinkling, life is sapped from the living
 Yet those same hands can touch with such healing, irresistible tenderness
 That the haughty neck is happy to bow
 And the proud back is glad to bend
 Out of such chaos, of such contradiction
 We learn that we are neither devils nor divines

When we come to it
 We, this people, on this wayward, floating body
 Created on this earth, of this earth
 Have the power to fashion for this earth
 A climate where every man and every woman
 Can live freely without sanctimonious piety
 Without crippling fear

When we come to it
 We must confess that we are the possible
 We are the miraculous, the true wonder of this world
 That is when, and only when
 We come to it.

Where is the *Spirituality* in Passover?

We hear so often these days, people proclaiming. “I’m spiritual, but not religious.” Being religious is a personal connection to an established basis of faith, ritual, and community, and it is up to each of us to determine just how “religious” we choose to be.

So, what does it mean to be spiritual, and how do we bring that into our Passover seder? According to David S. Ariel, “Spirituality is a highly personal outlook about what is sacred to us; it is the expression of our most deeply held values, and it is that sense of higher purpose that guides our daily lives. It is what you know in your heart to be true.”

In traditional Haggadot it is written “In each generation each person is obligated to see themselves as though they personally came forth from Egypt.” We can choose to see the Exodus story as a metaphor for elements of our lives and may ask:

How can I feel freed?

Who is the internal Moses or Miriam that can liberate me?

What are the internal voices, like Pharoah, that enslave me?

Rabbi Yael Levy writes that “Passover’s call to leave *mitzrayim*, the narrow place, is a call to leave the habits of mind and body that narrow our vision and distort our ability to act with love and generosity. *Yitziat mitzrayim*, the going forth out of Egypt, can be experienced as the continual practice of leaving attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that keep us bound in isolation and fear.”

Our heart is an altar. In whatever you do, let a spark of the holy fire burn within you so that you may fan it into a flame.

- Baal Shem Tov

Welcome Stranger

Our plane landed at New York City's LaGuardia Airport from Havana, Cuba on Election Day in 1960. The moment the plane touched down, my parents, younger sister, and I became strangers in a strange land. My family was heartbroken to leave our home in Santiago de Cuba but more than grateful to be in America. My parents never dreamed of leaving their beloved country. However, without the freedom and the rights they previously enjoyed, they felt they had no choice other than coming to America. This was our exodus. Although I did not know a word of English, I felt welcomed when I attended kindergarten; I learned English, made friends, and was treated kindly, as if I had always been here.

On one lucky day in 1984, I met Harvey Gurland who would become my best friend and the love of my life. Harvey was a member of Temple Beth Am. We spoke about Judaism in the plans for our future together. Being in a country with freedom meant I could choose my religion based on what was in my heart and soul. After becoming a Jew by choice I could have been viewed and treated as an unwelcome stranger, but the TBAM community was accepting, gracious, and inviting. Ironically the root of Gurland is *ger*, which in Hebrew means stranger in a strange land.

Welcoming the stranger has special meaning to Jews as the Torah teaches “You know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt.” Building meaningful connections within our community is important to me. As VP of Membership, I am now among those who welcome others. I do my best to reach out in friendship to make others feel at home, just as I was welcomed. What we offer to families and groups matters and makes a difference.



Carolina Gurland

Freedom

Freedom is the faculty of the human being to act according to the values, will, and desires with no limitation, other than respect for the freedom of others.

SE QUE SOLO HAY UNA LIBERTAD, LA LIBERTAD DEL PENSAMIENTO writes Antoine de Saint Exupéry

Total freedom is in our thoughts; It is the only one that has no limit.

What is the Hebrew word for FREEDOM? Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (z”l) wrote, *CHERUT* because we say that God brought us me *avdut le cherut*.



From slavery to freedom we call *PESACH* the festival of *FREEDOM ZEMAN CHERUTENU*. The other word of FREEDOM is *chofesh* (*chofshi*); this is the freedom to pursue your desires. We are living in a free society, with laws and regulations that don’t allow us to act freely.

Hadassah Blum

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My thoughts ... notes ... ideas ... doodles

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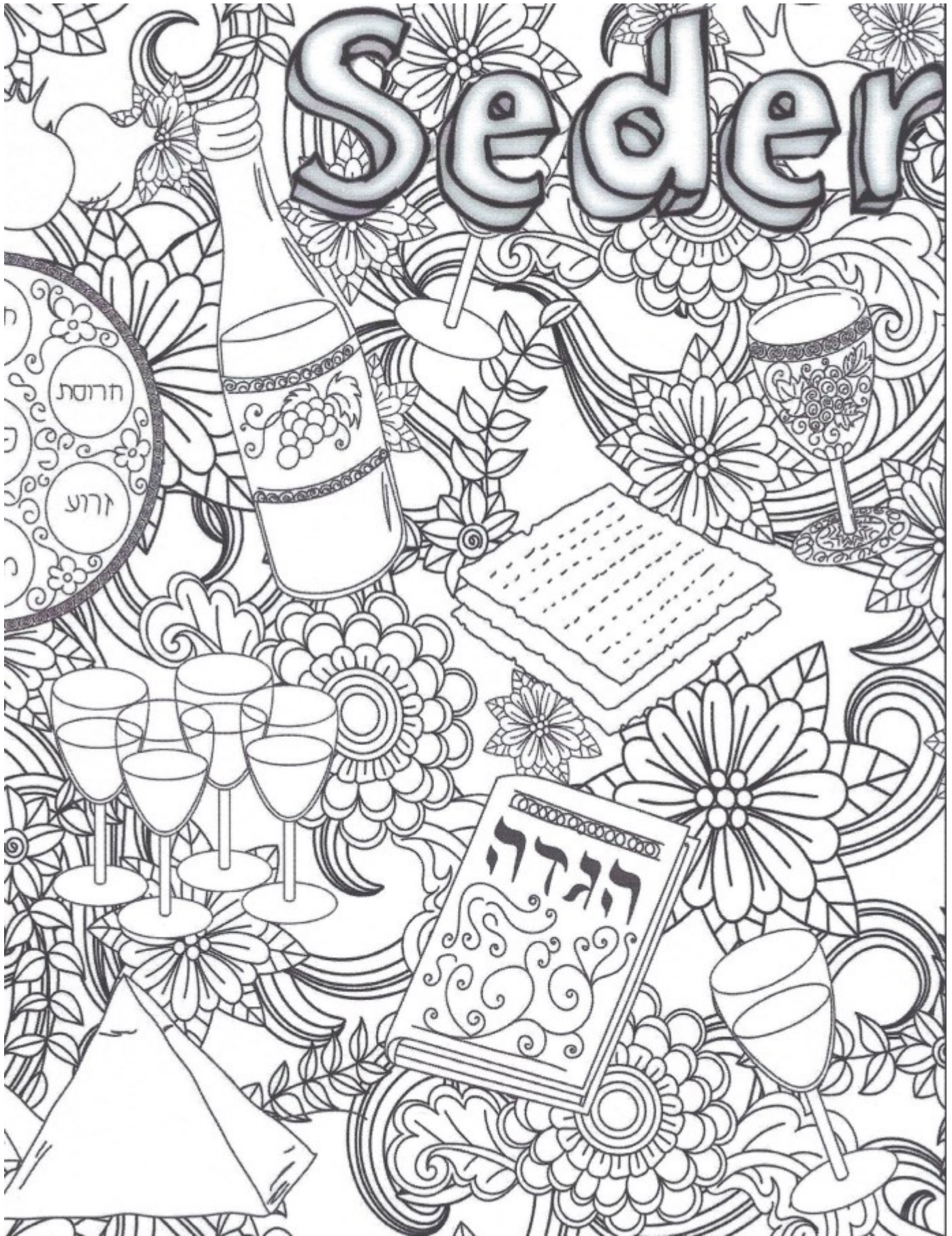
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When a project of this scope comes together, it can be challenging to acknowledge everyone who contributed - - this is our best attempt:

Thank you!!

All ***Sisterhood women*** who have contributed their time, talent and creativity above and beyond for:

Communications

Food

Décor

Logistics

Haggadah Writers & Proofreaders

Mosaic Miriam's Cup Creators

Prompts & Inspiration

Music Coordination & Performance

... and so much more

Our special thanks to all the musicians, and to the Temple Beth Am for their support and guidance.

And to all our guests—- your participation truly completes everything we do. Thank you for joining us.

