



JEWS FOR RACIAL & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Mixed Multitudes: Nobody's Free 'til Everybody's Free

A Racial Justice Haggadah for Pesach





**Introduction by 2016 Racial Justice Seder Planning Committee:
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Chayav adam lirot et atzmo k'ilu hu yatza mimitzrayim.

Each person must see themselves as though they came out of Mitzrayim

Tonight we come together, as Jewish communities have for countless generations, to retell an ancient story. But while the story is old, we come together with a new purpose, to tell the story firmly planted in and committed to the reality that we are the mixed multitude. We tell this story today together as part of our collective fight for racial and economic justice, for collective liberation, and for the expanse of freedom.

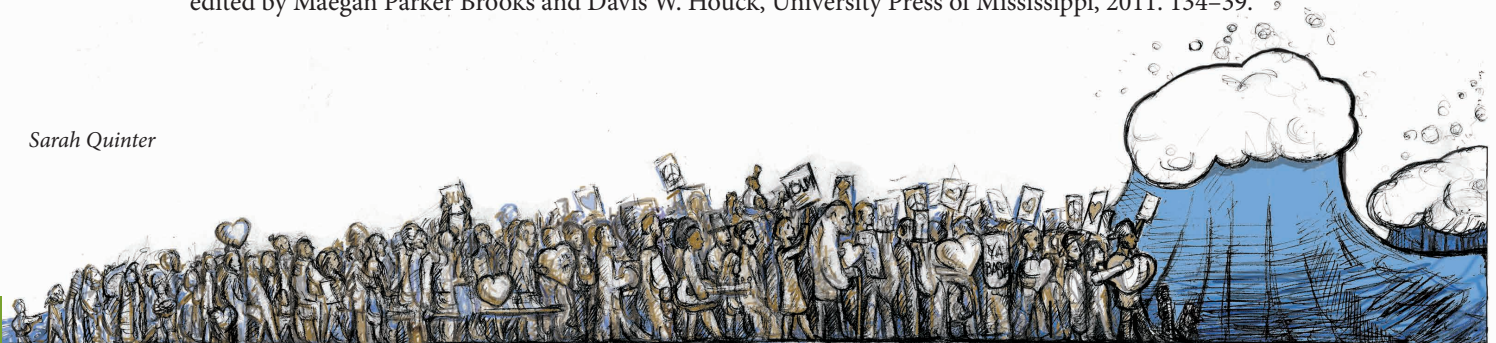
Tonight we celebrate the freedom of the Israelite slaves. And we imagine for ourselves today: What would the world look like if everyone was free? In the narrative of the haggadah, we wonder: what is the moment of freedom? Is freedom achieved? Are liberation and freedom the same? And: at whose expense does Israelite freedom come? Is the exodus of the mixed multitude from Mitzrayim a moment of collective liberation, involving Egyptians and other non-Israelites suffering under Pharaoh's rule? Or does collective liberation also demand the liberation of Pharaoh from his hardened heart and the fortress of power around him?

Our tradition tells us: "*B'chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et atzmo k'ilu hu yatza mimitzrayim.* In every generation, each person must see themselves as if they had come out of Mitzrayim." As though we ourselves are coming into liberation during this time. As we celebrate our own freedom tonight, we will think about people whose freedom has yet to be won and the ways in which we ourselves are still not free. For we know from Fannie Lou Hamer "the changes we have to have in this country are going to be for liberation of all people—because nobody's free until everybody's free."¹ Maybe this is the core of our tradition of returning to this story every year, of telling it as though we ourselves were there. We do it to remind ourselves: our freedom is bound up in collective liberation.

The traditional haggadah ends with "next year in Jerusalem." Tonight, we will end ours with: Next year, in freedom. It voices our deepest aspirations: that freedom and liberation will come speedily, and in our days. And, also, it reminds us that there will likely be a "next year" of the struggle to continue on in, until we are all free.

This haggadah we're using tonight is based on the traditional one, but is meant to be interrupted, questioned, embellished and edited. The five of us writing this haggadah are diverse in race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, and Jewish experience, but all come from Ashkenazi traditions. We invite you to adapt the seder to include your own traditions and to meet the needs of your communities. For those of you who have never been to a seder before, it is a collective activity, a communal storytelling. ***This this ritual belongs to all of us.***

¹ Hamer, Fannie Lou. "Nobody's Free Until Everybody's Free," (Speech Delivered at the Founding of the National Women's Political Caucus, Washington, D.C., July 10, 1971). In *The Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer: To Tell It Like It Is*, edited by Maegan Parker Brooks and Davis W. Houck, University Press of Mississippi, 2011. 134–39.





Some notes about moving through this Haggadah...

The mixed multitude, or ערב רב, comes from Exodus 12:38. In the Israelites departure from Mitzrayim, the biblical text says: “moreover, a mixed multitude went up with them.” A mixed multitude of others - Egyptians and others living in Mitzrayim who, like the Israelites, needed to escape from the narrow place. We have always been a mixed multitude.

Throughout this haggadah, when possible we use “Mitzrayim” instead of “Egypt.” In this time of anti-Arab racism against non-Jewish Arabs and against Mizrahim (Jews of Arab descent), it is not generative to focus our story of liberation on just one Arab/North African location - but rather to understand Mitzrayim as a metaphor for the narrow, stuck state of injustice and oppression. A state that continues today.

One challenge for many seders is the variety of approaches to Judaism and religion, including that we often host a mix of humanists, theists, atheists, agnostics, and people who are not Jewish. We have strived to have a balance in our shaping of this haggadah. Where possible, blessings include both traditional blessings, replacing ruach (spirit) for melech (king), and humanistic blessings, and include Hebrew, transliteration, and translation. ה' denotes the four-letter name for God, and should be read as “Adonai.” Humanist blessings come from or are modeled off of the blessings found in the *Humanist Haggadah for Passover*.¹

So much gratitude to all who have contributed to the creation of this haggadah. The text was written cooperatively by Graie Barasch-Hagans, Robin Blanc, Ruben Brosbe, Megan Madison, and Mackenzie Reynolds. We are grateful as well for the additional writings offered by Ora Batashvili, Yasmin Safdie, Emma Shakarshy, and Keren Soffer Sharon from the *Jews for Racial & Economic Justice Mizrahi Haggadah 2015*, and by Graie Barasch-Hagans, Sarah Barasch-Hagans, Leo Ferguson, KB Frazier, Evan Traylor, and Yehudah Webster from the *Jews for Racial & Economic Justice #BLM Haggadah Supplement*. Artwork was originally designed for the *#BLM Haggadah Supplement* by Raul Ayala and Sarah Quinter. **Many, many thanks to you all for all your vision, creativity, and work.**

¹ Machar - The Washington Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism. *The Humanistic Haggadah for Pesach*. 2002. http://uuja.org/holidays/lit/Humanist_Haggadah.pdf.

The Seder

- קידוש Blessing the Day over Wine
- יְרַחֵץ Handwashing
- כֶּרֶס Eating a Green Vegetable
- יִפְתֹּחַ Breaking the Middle Matzah
- מַגִּיד Telling the Exodus Story
- רַחֵץ Handwashing Before the Meal
- מוֹצֵיא מַצָּה Eating the Matzah
- קָרוֹר Eating the Bitter Herb
- כֶּרֶס Eating the “Hillel Sandwich”
- שְׁלֵחַן עֵרָף Eating the Festival Meal
- צִפּוֹן Eating the Afikomen
- הַלֵּל Gratitude
- הַלֵּל Songs of Praise
- נִרְצָה Conclusion

The Seder Plate

זרוע – **Z'roa**: a shankbone or beet, which represents the mighty hand and outstretched arm that liberated us from Mitzrayim.

מרור – **Maror**: horseradish, which represents the bitterness of slavery in Mitzrayim.

חזרת – **Chazeret**: collard greens, which represent the bitterness of racial injustice, oppression, and state-sanctioned violence towards and criminalization of black and brown people.

חרוסת – **Charoset**: a mixture of dried fruits and nuts, which represents the mortar used to lay bricks, the work done while enslaved in Mitzrayim.

קפה – **Kafe**: coffee beans, which represent the bitterness of modern slavery, through forced migrant labor, bonded labor, slavery, human trafficking, sex trafficking, and child labor.

ביצה – **Beitzah**: an egg, which represents life, wholeness, and liberation.

כרפס – **Karpas**: parsley, which represents growth, change, and life.

מי מלח – **Salt Water**: which represents our tears while enslaved, and our tenacity andchutzpah in fighting for liberation.

תפוז – **Tapuz**: an orange, which represents gender and sexual equality and justice, especially for queers, trans and gender variant people, and women.

זית – **Zayit**: an olive, which represents solidarity with Palestinians and Palestine and the struggle for justice and peace in Israel and Palestine.

A Note about the Orange...

The orange was first placed on the seder plate in the 80s by Susanna Heschel, daughter of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. One year, while speaking at Oberlin College Hillel, she found a suggestion in a feminist Haggadah to add a crust of bread to the seder plate as a sign of solidarity with Jewish lesbians. The bread, it was said, referred to the idea that there's as much room for lesbians in Judaism as there is for bread on a seder plate. Bread on the seder plate renders the plates, table, meal, and house not kosher for Passover, so this idea essentially says that lesbians in Judaism transmit impurity into Judaism. Uncomfortable with connecting queer Jews with impurity, Heschel decided instead to put an orange on her seder plate, as a symbol of inclusion and the fruitfulness that queer Jews bring to Judaism.

Candlelighting

*From now on I will make burning my aim,
for I am like the candle: burning only makes me brighter.*

Rumi

Light, using one of these blessings

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת הָאוֹר בְּאֶשֶׁר נִקְבֵּץ בְּצוֹתָא לְהַדְלִיק
נְרוֹת שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב. בְּאוֹר הַחֲרוּת נְבָרֵךְ אֶת
הַחַיִּים.

*N'varech et ha'or k'asher nikavatz b'tzavta
l'hadlik neivot shel yom tov. B'or ha'cherut
n'varech et ha'chayim.*

Let us celebrate the light
as we gather together
to kindle the festival candles.
With the light of liberation, let us celebrate life.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu ruach ha'olam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner
shel yom tov.*

Blessed are you, God, Spirit of the universe,
who has made us holy through the
commandments, and has commanded us to
light the candles of this holiday.

Originally in the Jews for Racial & Economic Justice #BLM Haggadah Supplement

When drinking the four cups and eating the matzah, we lean on our left side to accentuate the fact that we are free people. In ancient times only free people had the luxury of reclining while eating. We ask that this year you consider what it means to recline when so many are not yet free from oppression. This is not a simple question, and so there is no simple answer. In solidarity, you may choose not to recline. Or perhaps we can rest tonight in order to let go of the weight of our fears — our fear of others; of being visible as Jews; of committing to work outside of what is familiar and comfortable — so that we may lean into struggle tomorrow.

Blessing the Day Over Wine - Kadesh - קִדֵּשׁ
The First Cup: Hope

Tonight we open ourselves up as a community with our minds stayed on freedom.

Torah tells us that the first promise of God to our ancestors was to be taken out of the narrow place that had defined our generations. In this promise we are gifted with the hope of not only escape but of new life in the open. For many this gift is met with skepticism - for what we all we know is our bondage and our limits. We invite you tonight to join us in stepping out of the narrowness of skepticism, and into the openness of hope.

"If you are only skeptical, then no new ideas make it through to you. You never learn anything new. You become a crotchety old person convinced that nonsense is ruling the world. (There is, of course, much data to support you.) But every now and then, maybe once in a hundred cases, a new idea turns out to be on the mark, valid and wonderful. If you are too much in the habit of being skeptical about everything, you are going to miss or resent it, and either way you will be standing in the way of understanding and progress." - Carl Sagan

Choose one blessing

סְבְּרֵי חֲבֵרַי! בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם
בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן: פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן - אִתּוֹ נִשְׁתֶּה, "לְחַיִּים!"

P'ri hagafen, ito nishteh, "l'chayim!"

The fruit of the vine, with it let us drink "to life!"

*Sav'ri chaverai! Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu
ruach ha'olam borei p'ri hagafen.*

Attention, friends! Blessed are You God, Spirit of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

As we sip this first cup of wine we reflect not only on the promise of being taken out of narrow places but on the hope, opportunity, and responsibility of being and building in wide spaces.

*When have I been extended an opportunity and hope to leave a narrow space?
What open spaces have I found or been part of building?*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁחַיָּינוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה:

*Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu ruach ha'olam she'hechyanu,
v'ki'i'manu, v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh.*

Blessed are You God, Spirit of the universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.



Handwashing - Urhatz - וּרְחָץ

Handwashing offers a moment of preparation, of gathering ourselves together before we move forward together in the seder. During the first hand-washing, we ritually handwash without saying a bracha, a blessing. Take a moment to physically center yourself.

Wash hands by pouring water over each hand 3 times, or by rubbing your hands together in emulation of washing your hands.

Eating a Green Vegetable - Karpas - סַפְרָק

Why as we celebrate our freedom do we pause to remember the tears and the suffering of those before us? In this small action we honor those in our collective history who have come before us. We remember those who existed so that we could now partake in freedom.

“It’s a struggle but that’s why we exist, so that another generation of Lesbians of Color will not have to invent themselves, or their history all over again.” - Audre Lorde

Dip a green vegetable in salt water and recite one of these blessings:

פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה - נֹאכְלָהּ בְּהוֹדָאָה. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה:

P’ri hagafen, nokhlah b’hoda’ah.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu ruach ha’olam borei p’ri ha’adamah.

The fruit of the earth, let us eat it with gratitude.

Blessed are you God, Spirit of the universe,
Creator of the fruit of the earth.

Breaking the Middle Matzah - Yachatz - יָחַץ

Break the middle matzah and set the larger piece aside to hide as the Afikomen.

“We are all broken by something. We have all hurt someone and have been hurt. We all share the condition of brokenness even if our brokenness is not equivalent. I desperately wanted mercy for Jimmy Dill and would have done anything to create justice for him, but I couldn’t pretend that his struggle was disconnected from my own. The ways in which I have been hurt—and have hurt others—are different from the ways Jimmy Dill suffered and caused suffering. But our shared brokenness connected us....

“There is a strength, a power even, in understanding brokenness, because embracing our brokenness creates a need and desire for mercy, and perhaps a corresponding need to show mercy. When you experience mercy, you learn things that are hard to learn otherwise. You see things you can’t otherwise see; you hear things you can’t otherwise hear. You begin to recognize the humanity that resides in each of us.”¹ - Bryan Stevenson

¹ Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2014. 289-90.

Jimmy Dill was a client of the Equal Justice Initiative who was executed by the state of Alabama in 2009. Like many of EJI’s clients, and many victims of state-sponsored murder, Jimmy was poor, black, and living with an intellectual disability.

According to EJI’s press release at the time of Dill’s execution, “Jimmy Dill’s case is an extraordinary one because he received such grossly inadequate legal assistance that neither the jury nor the courts had the evidence needed to make a reliable decision about whether Mr. Dill was guilty of capital murder or whether a death sentence was appropriate.

Because he was poor, Mr. Dill had only an appointed lawyer whose pay was limited to \$1000 and who did not investigate or present evidence in Mr. Dill’s defense. Some 70% of the people on Alabama’s death row were represented at trial by lawyers whose compensation was capped at \$1000.”¹

¹ Equal Justice Initiative. *Alabama Executes Jimmy Dill*. April 17, 2009. <http://www.eji.org/node/293>.



Telling the Exodus Story - Maggid - מגיד

Uncover the matzah and pour the second cup to contain the story of the Exodus

Ha lachma anya... The bread of poverty

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

This is the bread of poverty that our ancestors ate in the land of Mitzrayim. Let all who are hungry come and eat! Let all who are needy come and partake of the Passover offering! Now, we are here; next year, may we be in freedom.¹ Now, we are slaves; next year, may we be free.

¹ Traditionally written לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל - next year in Israel. Tonight, we focus on the spirit of liberation and freedom into which we are being lead, and so we say instead: next year, in freedom, לשנה הבאה בחרות.

We start the story by uncovering the matzah, and many recite Ha lachma anya...the bread of poverty. This piece of the haggadah reminds us that this bread was all we had while we were fleeing Mitzrayim, but also emphasizes its bounty - let all who are hungry come and eat. It speaks to the hope of freedom and plenty, that we will not only make it out of the narrow place, out of servitude and bondage, and out of the long journey from Mitzrayim. Now we are slaves, next year we will be free: May we be free from the continuation of modern slavery, from racism, white supremacy, and xenophobia, and from persistent economic disparity. Next year, may we make it, finally and together, to a world of freedom and plenty. *Ken yehi ratzon*. May it be so.

Some of Us are Still In Exodus by Ora Batashvili, Yasmin Safdie, Emma Shakarshy, and Keren Soffer Sharon

Excerpted from the Jews for Racial & Economic Justice Mizrahi Haggadah 2015

As we begin the Exodus story, we read that the oppression and enslavement of the Israelites in the land of ancient Egypt resulted from Pharaoh's fear that the growth of the Israelites would overwhelm the Egyptian nation. We are all too familiar with a reading of the Haggadah that tells a trans-historical story of Jewish liberation that involves fleeing Arab lands, Arab rule, and Arab culture. This reading of the story confirms that anything or anyone Arab is, and always has been, the "natural enemy" of the Jewish people. At many of our families' Seders, the story of Passover is used as an ideological justification for modern-day violence and enslavement against anyone who is deemed the "enemy" of the Jewish people and the Jewish state – namely, Palestinians and Arab Muslims.

The Palestinian exodus, also known as Al-Nakba, displaced 700,000 Palestinians from their indigenous land with the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. As a result, over 4,000,000 Palestinian refugees now yearn to return to their homes, many of whom live under military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza.

Many of our parents and grandparents were forced to flee their countries, and some of us are still in exodus, unable to return to the lands our families lived in for centuries, because of the harsh effects of colonialism and imperialism. Even in the State of Israel, Mizrahi Jews have faced systemic and interpersonal oppression for over 60 years. The Arab Jews from Yemen, Iraq, and other parts of the Middle East and North Africa were placed in transit camps upon their arrival, denied access to education, treated as second-class citizens, and relegated to blue collar jobs.¹ This oppression is in relationship with, though incredibly different from, the displacement, colonization, and occupation that Palestinians have and continue to face.

¹ Shohat, Ella. "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims." Social Text 19/20 (Autumn 1988). 1-35.

Just as we are taught, through the story of Exodus, that anything and anyone Arab is and always will be the enemy of the Jewish people, we have been taught that anything Arab inside of us, is, too, the enemy. We have been told that European Ashkenazi Jews “saved” us from “harsh” Arab rule, lives of primitivism and barbarianism, and perpetual anti-Semitism. Mizrahi Jews have been forced to choose between an Arabness that is “anti-Zionist,” and a Jewishness that is “inherently” pro-Israel (at risk of being “Anti-Semitic”). We have been taught that Arabness and Jewishness are antonyms. Our identities carry that tension. Some of us are still in exodus, still trying to find the history that has been erased, pick up the parts of ourselves that were lost, the parts of ourselves we were told were different or “not the right kind of Jewish,” the parts of ourselves that we’ve been taught to hate, that we’ve struggled to love for all the years of hatred.

Together, we can identify and confront the intersections between anti-Arab racism, Islamophobia, anti-Jewish oppression, and Christian hegemony; hold onto and reproduce our shared history, experiences of Mizrahi diaspora/s, and culture; and continue to work toward our liberation, and the liberation of all people.

The Five Questions

One: What would it take for this community to be different from all other communities? What would it mean to commit to leaving no one behind in our exodus from the narrow places to freedom?

Two: What is one way you can nourish/take care of yourself starting tonight? (On this night we eat matzah.)

Three: What is one way you can make the sometimes bitter work of fighting for freedom sweeter for yourself and others? (On this night we eat maror.)

Four: How can we/you create abundance in our work for liberation and justice? (On this night we dip twice.)

Five: When is a time when you’ve felt completely free? If you cannot think of a memory, what do you imagine when you think of complete freedom? (On this night we recline.)

Ma Nishtanah...

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה. הלילה הזה בלוי מצה.

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות. הלילה הזה מרור:

שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת. הלילה הזה שתי פעמים:

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין. הלילה הזה כלנו מסבין:

Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleilot?

Sheb'chol haleilot anu ochlin hametz u'matzah.

Halailah hazeh kulo matzah.

Sheb'chol haleilot anu ochlin sh'ar y'rakot.

Halailah hazeh maror.

Sheb'chol haleilot anu matbilin afilu pa'am

echad. Halailah hazeh sh'tei pa'amim.

Sheb'chol haleilot anu ochlin bein yoshvin u'vein

m'subin. Halailah hazeh kulanu m'subin.

How different this night is from all other nights?

On all other nights, we eat both leavened bread and matzah. On this night, we eat only matzah.

On all other nights, we eat all kinds of herbs.

On this night, we eat bitter herbs.

On all other nights, we do not dip our food even once. On this night, we dip twice.

On all other nights, we eat either sitting or reclining. On this night, we all recline.



Originally in the Jews for Racial & Economic Justice #BLM Haggadah Supplement

“Why on this night when we remember the oppression and resistance of Jews should we also think about the lives of people of color?” **Because many Jews are people of color. Because racism is a Jewish issue. Because our liberation is connected.**

White Ashkenazi Jews have a rich history but are only a part of the Jewish story. Mizrahi & Sephardi Jews; Yemeni Jews; Ethiopian Jews; Jews who trace their heritage to the Dominican Republic, to Cuba & Mexico; to Guyana & Trinidad; descendants of enslaved Africans whose ancestors converted or whose parents intermarried.

Jews of color are diverse, multihued and proud of it — proud of our Jewishness and proud of our Blackness. But though our lives are joyous and full, racism forces us down a narrow, treacherous path. On the one hand we experience the same oppression that afflicts all people of color in America — racism targets us, our family members, and our friends. On the other hand, the very community that we would turn to for belonging and solidarity — our Jewish community — often doesn’t acknowledge our experience.

Jews of color cannot choose to ignore the experiences of people of color everywhere, anymore than we would ignore our Jewishness. We must fully inhabit both communities and we need all Jews to stand with us, forcefully and actively opposing racism and police violence.

But in order to do so, we must pare our past trauma from our present truth: our history of oppression leaves many of us hyper-vigilant and overly preoccupied with safety. As Jews we share a history that is overburdened with tales of violent oppression. Though different Jewish communities have varying experiences, none of us have escaped painful legacies of persecution, including genocide. This past is real, and part of why we gather today is to remember it. *But the past is past.* However seductive harsh policing, surveillance and incarceration may be in the short term, it will never serve us in the end. Not when those tactics brutalize other communities, humiliating and incarcerating our neighbors and perpetuate a status quo that leaves low-income communities of color on the other side of a sea of fear — still trapped; still stranded. The only real way out of the Mitzrayim of our fears is solidarity. Only by forging deep connections and sharing struggle with other communities will we creating the lasting allies who will walk with us into the promised land of our collective liberation. That is true Jewish freedom — true and lasting safety.

They cried to Moses, “What have you done to us, taking us out of Egypt ... it is better to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness” (14:11-12).

When Moses led the Jews out of Egypt, it was a moment of great risk and great change. As the passage above shows us, though life under Pharaoh was cruel and crushing, it was also familiar — a known fear. After a century of servitude, freedom. What changed? It was the Jewish people daring to imagine for themselves something greater. Daring to take great risks and face great fears to find liberation. This willingness to stand up for justice is a strength we have found again and again. When the oppression of economic exploitation demanded it, our grandparents found it in the labor movement; when the civil rights movement demanded it, our parents travelled to the South to register voters.





Now this moment demands again that we take risks for justice.

What our neighbors in communities of color are asking — what the Jews of color in our own communities need from their fellow Jews — is that we push past the comfortable and move to action. In the streets, in our synagogues and homes, with our voices, our bodies, our money and resources, with our imaginations. In doing so we must center the voices and the leadership of Jews of color and other communities of color, while forming deep partnerships and long-term commitments to fight for lasting change.

Passover is a time of remembrance but also one of renewal — of looking ahead toward the spring and new growth that will sustain us through the seasons to come. Once we spent spring in the desert. It was harsh and difficult but from that journey grew a people who have endured for centuries. What would happen if we took that journey again, not alone in the wilderness but surrounded by friends and allies, leaving no one behind?

The Four Children of Racism

How does white supremacy shape the way we view our children?

The Wise Child: Who is considered wise?

In 2006 6.7% of US public school children were Gifted and Talented. However the percentage of white public school children was more than double the percentage of Black public school children, which was the lowest of any race/ethnicity. Studies show that white teachers are less likely to view black students as high achieving and college bound and more likely to expect them to drop out of school.

How can we work toward building a more just world where every child is seen and loved for who they are?

The Wicked Child: Who is considered wicked?

Studies show that teachers of all races are more likely to punish black children than their white counterparts. In fact Black children are more likely to be viewed as angry, violent and even older by white study participants. This has very real and deadly consequences ranging from the creation of a school to prison pipeline, the physical abuse of children by school safety officers and the murder of Black children like Tamir Rice.

The Simple Child: Who is considered simple?

Black and Latino youth, particularly boys, are disproportionately classified as students with disabilities. They are especially likely to be classified with “stigmatized” learning disabilities such as emotional disturbance, mental retardation or intellectual disabilities and some other categories while they are underrepresented in categories like autism, speech and language.

The Child Who Does Not Yet Know How to Ask: Whose voices do we listen to?

Are there children who don’t know how to speak? Or are we not listening to the words they’re using?

The language of our Black and Brown children is often devalued. “Speak English” is the common rejoinder to students trying to express themselves in African American Vernacular English, Spanish or other (neo)indigenous languages.

But as Teachers College professor Jamila Lyiscott asks, “Who controls articulation?”

In Lyiscott’s “Three Ways to Speak English,” Lyiscott breaks down the undervalued and unexamined complexities of “street” and patois languages.

“I’m here to tell you that even our language has rules/ So when Mommy mocks me and says “ya’ll-be-madd-going-to-the-store”/ I say “Mommy, no, that sentence is not following the law/ Never does the word “madd” go before a present participle/ That’s simply the principle of this English.”¹

¹ Lyiscott, Jamila. “Three Ways to Speak English.” TEDSalonNY2014. February 2014.

https://www.ted.com/talks/jamila_lyiscott_3_ways_to_speak_english.

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לַפַּרְעֹה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וַיּוֹצִיאֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם בְּיָד חֲזָקָה וּבְזְרוֹעַ נְטוּיָה.

Avadim hayinu l'Pharaoh b'Mitzrayim. V'yotzieinu Adonai Eloheinu misham b'yad chazakah uviz'roa n'tuiyah.

“Our ancestors were slaves to Pharaoh in Mitzrayim. And our God brought us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.”

With a strong hand and an outstretched arm. How fitting this is for the work of justice, freedom, and liberation. We must have the strength to stand up for justice, to fight for ourselves and each other, to fight for the world we all deserve to live in - one flowing with milk and honey. With resources, nourishment, and abundance. But we must also hold a hand out - to catch each other, to welcome each other, to hold each other, and to pull each other along. ***How, this year, can you model having a strong hand and an outstretched arm in working with your communities for justice in this world?***

Telling the story...

“Until lions tell the tale, the story of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.” - African Proverb.

Have you heard the Passover Story before? If so, what version of the story do you know? What narratives have you heard told and retold? What narratives are codified--written up, put in books, and made “official”? Whose voices are missing, ignored, or glossed over?

Tonight, instead of telling one story, we will tell it with many voices, creating a contemporary *midrash* (a type of storytelling to fill in missing details or questions we have about biblical narratives). Working together, we will tell a collection of stories that together compose the Exodus narratives. Each chapter has a different character focus, ranging from Moses to Shiphrah and Puah, to the Egyptians and the non-Israelites who joined in the mixed multitude during the Exodus. You can start with the biblical text,¹ or you can alternate telling about an experience of the Exodus from each character's position.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Chapter 1 | Shiphrah and Puah, the midwives who rescued Moses at his birth |
| Chapter 2 | “His sister” - Moses sister, who is unnamed in the narrative of the Exodus |
| Chapter 3 | Jethro and Zipporah, Moses's father-in-law and wife, who in Deuteronomy are said to be Cushite |
| Chapter 4 | Aaron, Moses' brother |
| Chapter 5 | Foremen supervising the Israelite slaves |
| Chapter 6 | Moses |
| Chapter 7 | Fishermen during the plague on the Nile |
| Chapter 8 | Pharaoh's Courtiers |
| Chapter 9 | Pharaoh |
| Chapter 10 | Egyptians |
| Chapter 11 | Children |
| Chapter 12 | A non-Israelite member of the mixed multitude |
| Chapters 13 & 14 | Israelites during the exodus from Mitzrayim |

¹ Exodus 1-14. Tagged Tanakh (NJPS). Jewish Publication Society, 1999. <http://www.taggedtanakh.org/Chapter/Index/english-Exod-1>.



Escalating Tactics: The Plagues

According to tradition, these are the ten plagues that God brought against the Egyptians. Many of us have at this time have also listed contemporary plagues of injustice and oppression. Tonight, instead, we invite another reading. The plagues were the escalating tactics used to build up towards the release of the Israelites from bondage in Mitzrayim. They were not oppressive plagues that prevented Israelite liberation, but were used to agitate Pharaoh, to push towards the inevitable break of freedom for the Israelites and for the mixed multitudes who were also oppressed in Pharaoh's narrow kingdom.

For each plague, dip your finger into your cup, and drop the wine or juice onto your plate or napkin. It is customary for many of us to not lick our fingers after doing this, so as not to gain pleasure from any of the destruction that happened from these plagues in agitating for our freedom. Though we celebrate our freedom, we do not celebrate the loss of life. Freedom is not a simple or neutral process, and there are losses faced that are painful to bear.

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| dam | דָּם. | blood, |
| tz'far'dea | צָפָרְדֵּעַ. | frogs, |
| kinim | כְּנִים. | lice, |
| arov | עֲרוֹב. | wild beasts, |
| dever | דָּבָר. | disease of livestock, |
| sh'chin | שָׁחִין. | boils, |
| barad | בָּרָד. | hail, |
| arbeh | אַרְבֶּה. | locusts, |
| choshech | חֹשֶׁךְ. | darkness, |
| makot b'chorot | מַכּוֹת בְּכוֹרוֹת: | death of the firstborn. |

Dayeinu

Why do we say Dayeinu? Dayeinu means that if we reject each step towards justice because it is not a complete liberation, we will never be able to achieve liberation. We must continue to push ourselves and our communities to radical change, and recognize that “nobody is free ‘til everybody’s free.” And in Dayeinu, we have an opportunity to celebrate each step toward freedom as if it were enough for that moment, and to immediately, with renewed commitment and power, start out on the next step.

The word Dayeinu, means “it would have been enough.” What does this mean within the context of collective liberation? Surely, each step in the exodus narrative would not have been enough (lo dayeinu) on its own. We must work together to progress from Lo Dayeinu to Dayeinu, where Dayeinu is a time, in the future, of full and collective liberation for everyone. The work of racial justice brings us, together, from the narrow place, Mitzrayim, to freedom and collective liberation.



Originally in the Jews for Racial & Economic Justice #BLM Haggadah Supplement

Singing Dayeinu is a 1000-year old Passover tradition. The 15-stanza poem thanks G-d for 15 blessings bestowed upon the Jews in the Exodus. Had G-d only parted the seas for us, "It would have been enough" we say for each miracle or divine act, thus humbly appreciating the immensity of the gifts. KB Frazier's reworking of the poem addresses us, rather than G-d. It calls us to greater action for justice, saying "lo dayeinu" (it would not have been enough) in recognition of the work still unfinished.

1. If we had sparked a human rights revolution that would unite people all over the world and not followed our present day Nachshons as they help us part the sea of white supremacy and institutional racism — **Lo Dayeinu**
2. If we had followed Nachshons like the youth leaders in Ferguson and not heeded the words they spoke from Black Liberation Leader Assata Shakur: *It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains* — **Lo Dayeinu**
3. If we had learned and chanted the words from Assata Shakur and not protested violence by militarized police — **Lo Dayeinu**
4. If we had protested police use of tear gas, rubber bullets, pepper spray and rifles pointed at protesters and forgotten that we are all *b'tselem elohim*, created in G-d's image — **Lo Dayeinu**
5. If we had remembered that we are all created in G-d's image and not affirmed Black Lives Matter — **Lo Dayeinu**
6. If we had chanted and cried out that Black Lives Matter and not remembered Rekia Boyd, Alyanna Jones, Shantel Davis, Yvette Smith and Tyisha Miller, Black women and girls also killed by police — **Lo Dayeinu**
7. If we had marched for those killed, chanting *Hands up Don't shoot* and not recalled the words of Eicha: *Lift of thy hands toward Hashem for the life of the thy young children, that faint for hunger at the head of every street.* — **Lo Dayeinu**
8. If we had recalled the words of Eicha and not called to attention the school to prison pipeline and the mass incarceration of Black and brown people — **Lo Dayeinu**
9. If we had called attention to the "new Jim Crow" system — and did not truly *sh'ma* (listen) — **Lo Dayeinu**
10. If we had truly listened to the stories, pain and triumphs of our brothers and sisters of color without feeling the need to correct, erase or discredit them and did not recognize the Pharaohs of this generation — **Lo Dayeinu**
11. If we had worked to dismantle the reigns of today's Pharaohs and had not joined the new civil rights movement — **Lo Dayeinu**
12. If we had marched, chanted, listened, learned and engaged in this new civil rights movement and not realized that this story is our story, including our people and requiring our full participation — **Lo Dayeinu**
13. If we had concluded that our work is not done, that the story is still being written, that now is still the moment to be involved and that we haven't yet brought our gifts and talents to the Black Lives Matter movement — **Lo Dayeinu**



אלו הוציאנו ממצרים. דינו:

אלו נתן לנו את השבת. דינו:

אלו נתן לנו את התורה. דינו:

Ilu hotzi'anu mimitzrayim, dayeinu.

Ilu natan lanu et haShabbat, dayeinu.

Ilu natan lanu et haTorah, dayeinu.

If God had brought us out of Mitzrayim, it would have been enough.

If God had given us Shabbat, it would have been enough.

If God had given us Torah, it would have been enough.

Rabban Gamliel would say: Anyone who does not mention these three things on Passover does not fulfill his obligation, and these are they: the Passover offering, the matzah, and the bitter herbs.

What does the Passover offering represent? The strong hand and outstretched arm, through which we move together towards freedom.

What does the matzah represent? The nourishment we can make happen, even when it seems like nothing is there, when we are moving from the narrowest of places into openness, hope, and freedom

What do the bitter herbs represent? The bitterness of oppression in Mitzrayim, for us, and for all those who formed the mixed multitude with us as we made our Exodus.

The Second Cup: Promise

In drinking our second cup of wine we reflect on God's promise that we will be saved. In freedom we remember not only the narrowness of our bondage but also the freedom of our liberation.

What signs give you assurance that the freedom of our liberation will come to pass?

Choose one blessing

פרי הגפן - אתו נשתה, "לחיים!"

P'ri hagafen, ito nishteh, "l'chayim!"

The fruit of the vine, with it let us drink "to life!"

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו רוח העולם בורא פרי הגפן:

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu ruach ha'olam borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You God, Spirit of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

Handwashing Before the Meal - Rachatz - רחץ

Handwashing, in Judaism, is a way to engage our bodies in the celebration of holidays and Shabbat. In handwashing, there is an opportunity to clear our minds, hearts, and (symbolically) our bodies to be present to the celebrations at hand. During the seder, we wash our hands twice. At the beginning, did a handwashing/personal preparation moment without a blessing. Now, take a moment to take in the community around you, and to feel your body in this space.

Wash hands by pouring water over each hand 3 times and recite one of the following blessings.

על-נטילת ידיים - להיות במקום הזה בזמן הזה.

Al n'tilat yadaim - lihiyot b'makom hazeh biz'man hazeh.

Concerning the washing of hands - to be in this place at this time.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו רוח העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על-נטילת ידיים:

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu ruach ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat yadaim.

Blessed are You God, Spirit of the universe, who sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us regarding hand-washing.

Eating the Matzah - Motzi Matza - מוציא מצה

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov said: "If someone needed to flee from a dangerous situation...one wouldn't think about *parnassah* (sustenance) or preparations, lest one be set-upon by thieves or robbers or wild beasts from which one would further need to be freed. One wouldn't pause in that moment of self-extrication to worry about making a living."

The Israelites and the mixed multitude, similarly, could not be bothered to worry about how they would be sustained once they made it out of Mitzrayim. They grabbed what they could, including their unleavened dough, and it baked on their backs as they fled. This matzah is what gets us by in the hardest of times. Everyone who has fled a difficult or violent situation, who has fought until stretched to the edges for justice and liberation, who has worked tirelessly but there is still not enough money to get by, knows how miraculous it is when out of seemingly nothing, there is dinner on the table. Matzah is not the bread of affliction: it is the sustaining bread of life and liberation. Matzah is the miracle of sustenance and life when you thought you had lost everything.

As we turn to make motzi together, turn to your neighbor and share: what has sustained you in fighting for freedom and liberation this year?

***Take the three matzot, holding the broken one between the two whole ones,
and hold them while reciting one of these blessings.***

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו רוח העולם המוציא לחם מן-הארץ.
נוציא מצה - לחם מן הארץ - כדי שנסתפק ונתכלכל כלנו.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו רוח העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על-אכילת מצה:

Notzi matzah - lechem min ha'aretz - k'dei sh'nistapek v'nitkalkel kulanu.

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

Let us bring forth matzah - food from the land - so we all may be satisfied and sustained.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu ruach ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat matzah.

Blessed are You God, Spirit of the universe, who brings bread from the earth.

Blessed are You God, Spirit of the universe, who sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us regarding the eating of matzah.

Eating the Bitter Herb - Maror - מרור

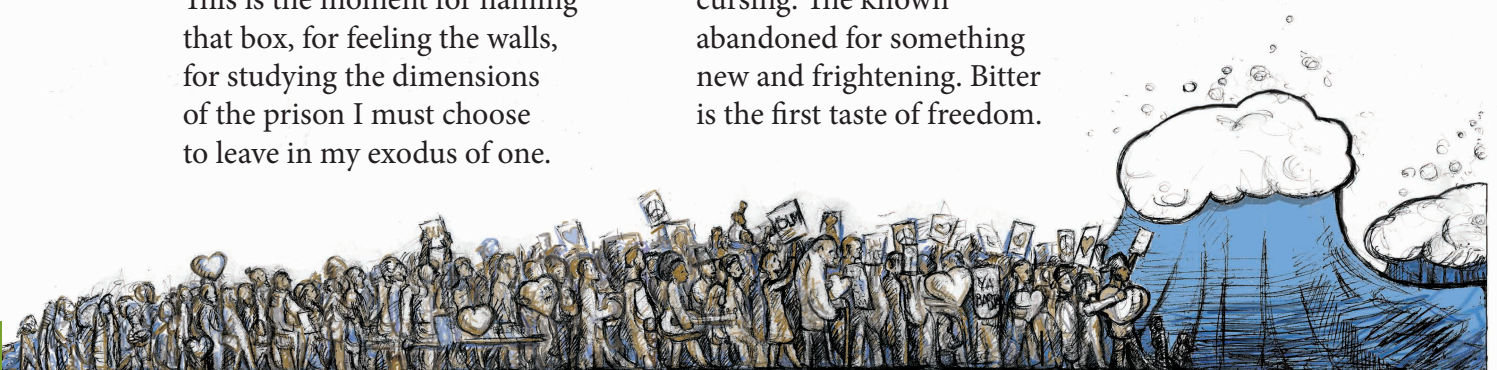
from Maror, by Marge Piercy

A bitter cud.
Biting into the bitter, that bites back.
Of all the gross tastes, sweet and salty,
sour, we seek it the least.
We spit it out.
But not tonight. ...

This is the moment for naming
that box, for feeling the walls,
for studying the dimensions
of the prison I must choose
to leave in my exodus of one.

I can join with no one else,
I cannot walk out with you
until I measure my walls
then break them down.
Darkness into light.

Fear and silence into
cursing. The known
abandoned for something
new and frightening. Bitter
is the first taste of freedom.





Take an olive-sized amount of charoset on your matzah or rolled into charoset, and bless it saying:

עַל-אֲכִילַת מָרֹר - לִזְכוֹר אֶת עֲבָדוֹת שְׁלָנוּ
בְּמִצְרַיִם.

*Al achilat maror – lizkor et avidut shelanu
b'mitzrayim.*

Regarding the eating of maror - to remember our
slavery in Mitzrayim.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל-אֲכִילַת מָרֹר:

*Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu ruach ha'olam asher
kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat maror.*

Blessed are You God, Spirit of the universe, who
sanctified us with Your commandments and
commanded us regarding the eating of bitter
herbs.

בוֹרֵךְ - Korech - The Hillel Sandwich

We are told that Rabbi Hillel would make a sandwich of the Passover sacrifice, matzah, and bitter herbs together, as an innovation to completely and at once fulfil what he understood from the Torah, that we are commanded to eat the Passover offering with matzah and maror. This innovation led to a practice that continues today, by eating “Hillel sandwiches” of matzah, maror, and charoset. Innovations like these are central to how many of us approach Judaism today, by bringing to bear our experiences of this world on our Jewish practices and communities.

The Hillel sandwich brings together the sweet and the bitter: our lives are not only sorrow and suffering or sweetness and joy. Freedom, like our lives, is a composite of many tastes: bitter, salty, sour, and sweet. As you eat your Hillel sandwich, think about the flavors you taste, and savor them. How do they complement, balance, or overpower each other? What tastes are you drawn to most?

Blessings over the Rest of the Seder Plate

“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.” - Harriet Tubman

We have added many items to our seder plate, representing areas where we are demanding justice and liberation. By placing these items on our seder plates, we honor the mixed multitude that we are and always have been, acknowledge the pain of oppression and injustice, and honor the strength and leadership of all the fierce freedom fighters who have led the way before us, who we join in struggle for our collective liberation.

For each item, take a moment to give thanks to leaders, activists, and ancestors who have shown you what it means to take action for justice.

Collards

We add collards as *chazeret*, our second bitter green, symbolizing the bitterness of racial injustice, oppression, and state-sanctioned violence towards and criminalization of black and brown people.

Bless, saying one of the following.

פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה - נֹאכְלָה בְּהוֹדָאָה.

P'ri hagafen, nokhlah b'hoda'ah.

The fruit of the earth, let us eat it with gratitude.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי
הָאֲדָמָה:

*Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu ruach ha'olam borei
pri ha'adamah.*

Blessed are you God, Spirit of the universe,
Creator of the fruit of the earth.

Each of the following items use the same blessing.

Bless each item individually, saying one of the following.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ: פְּרִי הָעֵץ - נֹאכְלָהּ בְּהוֹדָאָה.

P'ri ha'etz, nokhlah b'hoda'ah.

The fruit of the tree, let us eat it with gratitude.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu ruach ha'olam borei p'ri ha'etz.

Blessed are you God, Spirit of the universe,
Creator of the fruit of the tree.

Coffee Beans We add coffee beans to represent the bitterness of modern slavery, through forced migrant labor, bonded labor, slavery, human trafficking, sex trafficking, and child labor.

Olives We add olives to represent solidarity with Palestinians and Palestine and the struggle for justice and peace in Israel and Palestine.

Oranges We add oranges to represent gender and sexual equality and justice, especially for queers, trans and gender variant people, and women.

The Meal - Shulchan Orech - שְׁלֻחַן עֹרֵךְ

Far too often, food is a struggle. We don't have money or access to healthy, healthful food. We eat alone, separated from caring community. We eat so fast we can't taste the food that nourishes our bodies. We live in a world of beauty standards that make truly free and enjoyable relationships with food difficult. Learning to eat, eating nourishing food, and eating together in liberatory community is all part of healing justice work and collective liberation. Tonight, as we nourish ourselves, let your bodies and your spirits be nourished.

The Afikomen -Tzafun - צָפֻן - The Afikomen

Afikomen comes from the Greek, *epikomen* - that which comes after. The Afikomen is broken piece of the middle matzah that was hidden earlier in the seder. We eat it now to end the meal, before we move into the last stages of the seder.

Finding the Afikomen gives us a moment to really seek out - what is left for us here? What are the sometimes hidden parts of life that give us meaning and joy, that brings closure, or that points us towards the next thing? Those moments are Afikomen moments. The moments after experiences and events, when, in processing, we can see lead us ever clearer towards the vision we want to be living in.

Gratitude -Barech - בָּרַךְ

In this moment we lift up our voices in gratitude for this meal, for the community we have surrounded ourselves with, and the opportunity to do the work of justice. For vision, history and tradition, storytelling, this shared meal, and us, this community here today - the mixed multitude - gathered in the essential work of collective liberation, we give thanks.

Don't Hesitate, by Mary Oliver

"If you suddenly and unexpectedly feel joy, don't hesitate. Give in to it. There are plenty of lives and whole towns destroyed or about to be. We are not wise, and not very often kind. And much can never be redeemed. Still life has some possibility left. Perhaps this is its way of fighting back, that sometimes something happened better than all the riches or power in the world. It could be anything, but very likely you notice it in the instant when love begins. Anyway, that's often the case. Anyway, whatever it is, don't be afraid of its plenty. Joy is not made to be a crumb."

בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָא מַלְכָּא דְעָלְמָא מִרְיָה דְהָאִי פִיתָה.

Brich rachamana malka d'alma marei d'hai pita.

You are the source of life for all that lives and
your blessing flows through us.

Blessed is the Compassionate One, Spirit of
the universe, Source of this food.

The Third Cup: Healing and Redemption

With the third cup, we are reminded of the promise to be fully redeemed. It is not enough to be taken out of bondage or to remove the conditions of oppression. We must seek healing and redemption. We must move through the narrow places, mitzrayim, through the desert, the *midbar*, into freedom and liberation. The promise of healing and redemption is the promise that we, too, will experience this healing and redemption. That we will know the racial and economic justice, freedom, and collective liberation we are fighting for.

Where do you find healing communities and practices?

In what ways could your healing be supported by community?

Choose one blessing

פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן - אֶתוֹ נִשְׁתֶּה, "לַחַיִּים!"

P'ri hagafen, ito nishteh, "Ichayim!"

The fruit of the vine, with it let us drink "to life!"

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן:

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu ruach ha'olam borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You God, Spirit of the universe,
creator of the fruit of the vine.

Elijah's and Miriam's Cups

Adapted by Graie Barasch-Hagans from the *Jews for Racial & Economic Justice #BLM Haggadah Supplement*

Elijah's cup stands alone as we continue to seek liberation and freedom. When we open the door for the prophet always hoping that next year he will come, we end our celebration of our freedom with the hope that someday soon we shall all be free.

Miriam's cup holds for us the reminder that many of us are left behind in our narratives. We include Miriam and her story as a giver of life and prophetess so that we may never leave behind women as we pursue our collective liberation.

Where do you find hope? Who do you see being pushed out of liberation narratives and spaces? Who haven't we made room for?

"As Jews we know that we are loved by a G-d that calls us to love our neighbors as we love the stranger. To love G-d as we love the least among us. To pursue justice as we pursue the fulfillment of all commandments. We know that we are people because G-d so chose us through our suffering to be the carriers of the burden. We are a people centered in loss and justice. We are a people who know that there is a better world and that it our responsibility, our duty to love and support one another. The stranger, the beggar, and the familial. For those of us who live our lives through Blackness we cannot separate our duty as Jews from our fears of being strange in a land that though of our birth still does not recognize us fully as present."

It is customary to open the door before singing to welcome the prophet Elijah.

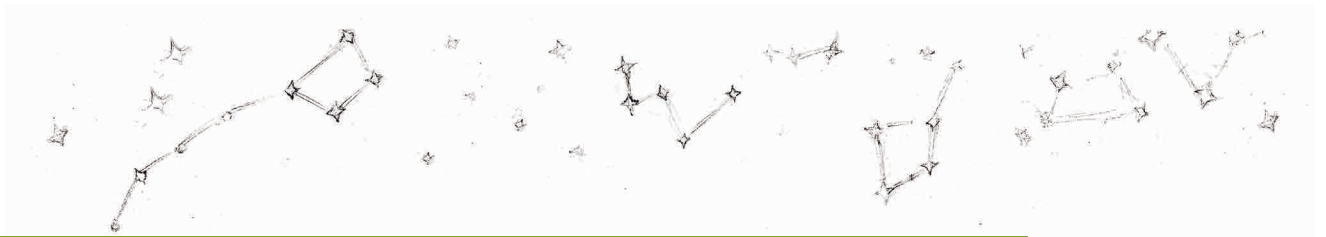
*Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu hatishbi,
Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu, hagiladi.
Bimheira beyameinu, yavo eleinu
Im moshiaich ben David (2x)*

*Miriam han'vi'ah oz v'zimrah b'yadah.
Miriam tirkod itanu l'taken et haolam.
Bimheirah v'yameinu hi t'vi'enu
El mei hay'shuah (2x)*

Elijah, the prophet; Elijah, the Tishbite; Elijah, the Gileadite! Come quickly in our days with the Messiah from the line of David.

Miriam the prophet, strength and song in her hand; Miriam, dance with us in order to increase the song of the world! Miriam, dance with us in order to repair the world. Soon she will bring us to the waters of redemption!





Hallel - הלל

Min hametzar karati yah anani vamerhav yah.
From my distress, I cried out: "Yah!" Yah
answered me, bringing release.

Freedom, oh freedom, oh freedom, freedom is
coming oh yes I know.

*Kol ha'olam kulo gesher tzar me'od, gesher tzar me'od,
gesher tzar me'od.*

Kol ha'olam kulo gesher tzar me'od, gesher tzar me'od.

V'ha'ikar v'ha'ikar, lo lifakeid, lo lifakeid klal.

V'ha'ikar, v'ha'ikar, lo lifakeid klal.

The whole world is a very narrow bridge.

The important thing is not to be afraid.

Go Down Moses Do we all truly know that Black lives matter? by Evan Traylor

Originally in the Jews for Racial & Economic Justice #BLM Haggadah Supplement

Go Down Moses is a Negro Spiritual, originally sung by enslaved Africans in the American South. It describes the Exodus story and so it has become common for Jews to sing it during the Seder. As we use the beautiful songs of Black people to enrich our Jewish traditions, Evan Traylor asks you to reflect on what it means to sing a song of freedom when so many are not free.

On this Passover, as we remind ourselves of the preciousness of freedom, let us be reminded that we are not all free. Black people in the United States continue to suffer from oppression. And while Black people are not physically enslaved as during the dark part of our nation's history, they still suffer from education inequality, mass incarceration, police brutality, and other forms of both blatant and subtle racism.

Do we all truly know that Black lives matter?

Just as during the Exodus story, may all of us have the leadership of Moses, the spirit of Miriam, and the undying courage of Nachshon to stand with Black people and ensure that everyone knows and believes that Black lives matter. Just as the Israelites did not turn back from the Red Sea, we must not turn back from the enormous challenges that are wounding and killing Black people in the United States. Mirroring the Israelites crossing the Red Sea with danger at their backs, we too must join hands, face the challenges, and overcome. **Through faith and fellowship, we shall overcome.**

The Fourth Cup: Healing and Redemption

With our final cup we are reminded of the promise to be that we will be free together. Through the Exodus we imagine not only ourselves but everyone who has broken bread with us, comforted us, stood with us, wept with us, and even those who have hurt us as being promised the hope and promise of freedom and liberation. As we left Mizrayim we left stronger, not as an enslaved people but as a nation of multitude.

How have you been comforted, strengthened, or healed through struggles for collective liberation?

"If the concept of God has any validity or any use, it can only be to make us larger, freer, and more loving. If God cannot do this, then it is time we got rid of Him."
-James Baldwin

Choose one blessing

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו רוח העולם בורא פרי הגפן: פרי הגפן - אתו נשתה, "לחיים!"

P'ri hagafen, ito nishteh, "l'chayim!"

The fruit of the vine, with it let us drink "to life!"

*Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu ruach ha'olam borei
p'ri hagafen.*

Blessed are You God, Spirit of the universe,
creator of the fruit of the vine.

Originally in the Jews for Racial & Economic Justice #BLM Haggadah Supplement

In most discussions of racial justice, interracial families are often made completely invisible. This is ironic, as these families constantly deal in a microcosm with the larger issues of white supremacy and thus have much to teach us. This piece began as a way of addressing the complexities of oppression within interracial families and pushing against how abstract and disconnected most conceptions of “allyship” can feel for white members of interracial families. The language of fighting for family may make more sense for everyone to acknowledge the experiences of an interracial family unit and of a larger multiracial human family.

The Exodus story is filled with allies and oppressors, with many of the characters inhabited both roles at different points. The Exodus story, and particularly the story of wandering afterwards, is populated by family members wrestling with what it means to be allied with each other. Since our current struggles can feel like we too are in a desert, let us pause in the desert this Passover to listen for justice, just as the Midrash tells us that entire Jewish family did at Sinai. If everywhere is a desert then the sand we stand is always shifting, and so is our relationship to each other. Let us take a moment to imagine ourselves thus...

Sometimes we are Bat Pharaoh...

...Pharaoh's daughter, choosing “compassion”¹ without hesitation, pulling the baby out of the river and giving him a home. But when we pull him from the river, he is taken from his people and forced to pretend to be someone else in order to survive. And we know that he is family and **we love him as our son, but we ask impossible things of him.** We ask him to pass for Egyptian, we cut him off from his heritage in the hopes of keeping him safe. We do not recognize the futility, that safety is always an illusion. We do not use our proximity to power to try to change the situation for other babies like him. We can sleep at night because **we tell ourselves we are good people living in a cruel system,** but we do not admit that we could change things if only we would convince our synagogue to support the protests, or to at least stop hiring police officers to protect High Holiday services without questioning whether they make all of our community feel safe.

Sometimes we are Moses...

...conditionally white with Cossack eyes and a quick sunburn, passing but keeping a suitcase by the door just in case. Feeling mostly safe in the palace walls, guilty but not knowing why, until one day everything changes. Until one day we see the Egyptian striking the Israelite and know he is hurting our family—**and this time we do not run away.** We know that Moses killed the taskmaster, but we do not do not strike anyone, knowing that violence will not lead to greater justice for our families because violence by those of us who ‘pass’ would be met with greater violence and retaliation against those who cannot hide behind conditional whiteness. So sometimes we are standing next to our Black husband at the protest, and we are both chanting peacefully but the policeman strikes him and all we can do is choose not to run away, to stand firmly with our hands raised so that we both get hit. **Because family means if you hit him then you hit me.**

Sometimes we are Miriam...

...hoping our brother Moses survives the river, knowing danger and feeling unsafe in our Jewish skin, knowing what it means to be hated because of who we are. And then we are Miriam who, given time,

¹ Exodus 2:6





a few chapters later mocks Moses' Black wife Tzipporah.² **She confounds us because she is us**, Ashkenazim with conditional whiteness and generations distanced from legal discrimination, not seeing the contradictions in our own character. We are white-skinned Jews celebrating Fifty Years of Freedom Summer and putting on commemorative panels but escorting out anyone who yells #BlackLivesMatter. Or, acknowledging Tzipporah but refusing to defend her interracial, interfaith family when Jewish talking heads warn that families like hers are the end of Judaism. **We are descendants of slaves who do not yell back** that Moses had a Black wife and Black children and that #BlackLivesMatter to our people whether or not we acknowledge it.

Sometimes we are Tzipporah...

...fully capable of defending ourselves but **in need of a few more allies**. Ready to be an ally when it means leaving our family, circumcising our children, and wandering in the desert for decades. And some of us are still Tzipporah. Marveling at how quickly you forget this when our children are killed by the police. Wondering if you will claim us as family when the news paints our children as deserving of their deaths. We wonder why we stand in community to say Kaddish for those we've lost and stand on street corners shouting for justice for those who have been stolen from us. **We wonder why our many parts cannot become whole and why our children cannot be a blessing**. Picking up a sign because we have no choice, hoping to see you at the protests even though you do.

Sometimes something miraculous happens...

...an event out of time, an act of God who comes with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and leads us out of Egypt. And in the desert we become a people, shedding the divisions and mentality of slavery so that we become whole—none of us palace people, all of us desert people. **Wandering together towards wholeness**. So that Miriam, a prophet who is human, can choose to change. When she is struck with illness as punishment for her slander of Tzipporah, she can heal and choose new words. And her healing prayer spoken by her brother Moses—*El Na Refa Na La*—becomes liturgy that can inspire us to overcome the disease of our own racism. We can choose to challenge the narrative, write an editorial or interrupt a General Assembly, **tell the pundits that we have always been an Erev Rav, a mixed multitude**³ and if you do not embrace all of our family, then you cannot love any of us. We can choose to pick up our sign and join them in the street, to face the tear gas and the rubber bullets because they are killing our family.

Sometimes, we are all in the street, and the street becomes Sinai...

...but only if everyone shows up, Moses and Miriam and Bat Pharaoh and Tzipporah and all the rest, wrestling with the commandments and trying to hear God. Maybe we are Tzipporah and Bat Pharaoh meeting at a Mother's March. And maybe we talk about being there because **we are both mothers and Mike Brown could have been our son**. Or maybe we talk about having ensured the survival of the Jewish people, yet isn't it ironic that now our community will not march for anyone that looks like us? Or maybe we have nothing to talk about, but **a look passes between us and God is there**.

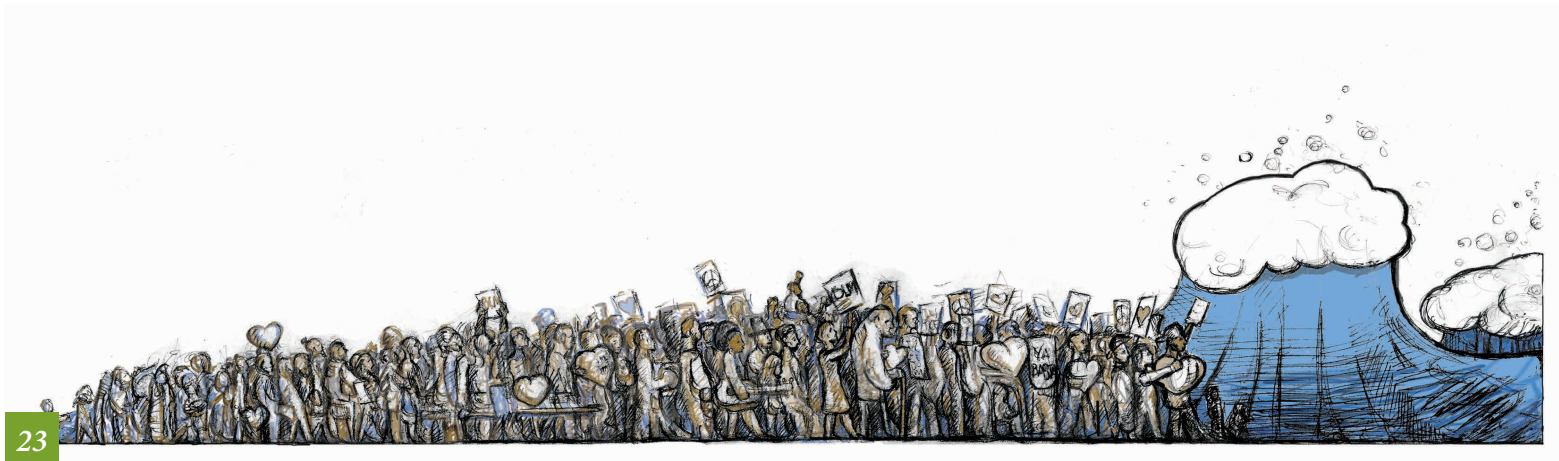
*And maybe our imagining their conversation is a holy act that we desperately need. Because sometimes, if we imagine the rally as Sinai then we listen for God, and when we do we get **one step further through the desert and one step closer to redemption**.*



לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּחֵירוּת!

L'shanah haba'ah b'cheirut!

Next year in freedom!





JEWS FOR RACIAL & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Jews for Racial & Economic Justice pursues racial and economic justice in New York City by advancing systemic changes that result in concrete improvements in people's everyday lives. We are inspired by Jewish tradition to fight for a sustainable world with an equitable distribution of economic and cultural resources and political power. The movement to dismantle the interdependent systems of racism and economic exploitation will be led by those most directly targeted by oppression. We believe that Jews have a vital role to play in this movement, and the future we hope for depends on Jews forging deep and lasting ties with our partners in struggle.