

A Secular Seder:
The Haggadah
for Cultural Jews, their Families and Friends

By Herbert J. Levine

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Acknowledgements

I am deeply appreciative of the family members and friends who read drafts of *A Secular Seder: The Haggadah for Cultural Jews, their Families and Friends* and offered comments. Thank you!

Dedication

To my grandchildren, Riley Hannah (Chana Rayna), Teagan Rebecca (Elia Tamar) and Finley Juliana (Ziva Shai), so they can make the Seder their own.

Introducing *A Secular Seder*:
The Haggadah for Cultural Jews, Their Families and Friends

More than the Jewish people have kept Passover, Passover has kept the Jewish people. More than any other Jewish ritual, the Seder continues to be observed. There is something profound about what we do when we participate in a Seder, which both expresses and shapes who we are. This applies both to Jews and to non-Jewish family members and friends who celebrate Passover.

Most Jews who say 'I am Jewish, but not religious' mean that they identify with the values and customs of Judaism, the culture, but not the theology. If you define yourself in this way, this Haggadah is for you. Studies show that even many who belong to synagogues and pray do not believe in the God to whom they pray. *A Secular Seder* begins with the premise that the Jewish people needs a Passover Haggadah in keeping with who we are -- a this-worldly people with a persistent identity, driven by a unique cultural DNA. We gave to the world the idea of "loving your neighbor as yourself" and "loving the stranger," based on our experience as strangers in Egypt. The celebration of Passover over the centuries has shaped our appreciation of our own freedom and our commitment to the freedom of others. Our pursuit of freedom and justice for all is how we express our love for our fellow human beings and our responsibility toward others.

A second premise of *A Secular Seder* is that the ritual elements of the Seder are as important as the story we tell. All groups need rituals to pass on their identities and values; the Seder is the most important ritual that cultural Jews participate in. Yet previous tellings that sought to be cultural or secular have largely ignored the rituals within the Seder. The idea of acknowledging a supernatural God as the originator of the Jewish people and controller of its destiny makes little sense to many who have embraced the modern, secular world. So how can cultural Jews adapt the practice of blessing, the central ritual feature of the Seder we have inherited from our ancestors?

A Secular Seder formulates blessings in a new way. The blessings affirm that this world, not a supernatural presence, is the source of our gifts—natural gifts, such as food and wine, and cultural gifts that come through Judaism, such as our celebration of freedom through the ceremonies of Passover. The blessings we make should allow us to express our gratitude for the ever-evolving world, our awe at the unique nature of the world we inhabit and our hope that we can responsibly embody the best values of the Jewish people. They can help hone our intention to prioritize the health of the planet and to bring all who live on it ever closer to freedom and wholeness.

These new blessings are presented in both Hebrew and English so that the Seder can evolve in the primary languages that Jews around the world speak. The Hebrew is transliterated, so that all can participate. You should know that the 'ch' in Hebrew is always pronounced as the 'ch' in the name of the composer, Bach.

The text of this Haggadah can be read straight through or households can stop for discussion at any of the indented questions. Two or three such discussions are probably enough for most Seders. Of course, Seder participants should feel free to bring in contemporary issues that make the message of the Seder relevant and urgent each year. How much time your Seder takes depends upon the leader and upon each of you.

May this *Secular Seder* fulfill a need that has gone for too long unfulfilled in our Jewish lives. Happy Passover! Chag sameach! May it be truly liberating for you who have assembled with family and friends to celebrate this ancient and contemporary festival of freedom.

I am offering this Secular Seder to the Jewish community in an open source format, with a request for attribution. If you enjoy using this work or have any constructive comments to offer, please share them with me at levine6670@gmail.com. If you would like to see more of my bilingual work aimed at putting Jewish secularism on the Jewish shelf, please look at my books of poems, *Words for Blessing the World* (2017) and *An Added Soul* (2020), both from Ben Yehuda Press.

BEFORE THE SEDER:

The Freedom Plate

A wonderful way to involve your guests and to enhance their experience of the Seder is by creating a collective Freedom Plate. At the time that you extend invitations, ask each person or household to bring an object that represents freedom. The Freedom Plate should have a place of honor on the table next to the traditional Seder Plate.

The Seder Plate

The Seder Plate needs to be prepared before the meal, as the ceremony cannot begin without it. It contains most of the symbolic foods that we discuss, in some of which we also partake. Most Seder plates contain five or six compartments for the following:

- 1) Spring vegetable - כַּרְפַּס – Karpas. Most often, sprigs of parsley are used, though celery, potato and onion are known to be traditional choices as well.
- 2) Bitter herbs - מַרֹר – Maror. Slivers of horseradish root are a common choice; some Seder plates have a second opening for a bitter lettuce - תַּזְרֵן. Romaine is often chosen as a second species of Maror because its bitterness is hidden in the root. Where an actual horseradish is unavailable, some substitute store-bought preparations.
- 3) Shankbone - זֵרוֹעַ – Zeroa. This roasted bone is meant to evoke the power of an arm. In biblical days, when a Passover sacrifice was brought, the foreleg of the lamb was used. Today, it is customary to use a roasted chicken neck. Many substitute a roasted beet.
- 4) Egg - בַּיִצָּה – Baytza. A hard-boiled egg is roasted, reminding us of the special holiday offering, a sacrifice made in addition to the Passover lamb. Eggs are a universal symbol of renewal, appropriate to the themes of the holiday and spring.
- 5) Fruit and nut paste - חֲרוֹסֶת – Charoset. Representing the mortar used as a building material by the enslaved Israelites, the most common recipe is apples, walnuts and sweet red wine. Sefardi tradition uses many dried fruits in addition to nuts.

Matzah and Wine

Matzah, unleavened bread. The matzah is placed in a three-part container, usually something specially sewn and decorated for this purpose. It should be placed close to the leader of the Seder.

Wine (or grape juice), both a symbol of and a means to experience joy. Four cups are drunk, so an adequate supply should be on hand.

Water

Hands are washed twice during the Seder. It is helpful to have on the table a pitcher of water (and a bowl to pour into) that can be passed around with a napkin for drying the hands.

Elijah's and Miriam's Cups

Two ceremonial cups are placed on the Seder table, one for each of these legendary figures. Elijah's cup is filled with wine and Miriam's with water. These can be filled before the Seder. An alternate custom is to have Seder participants fill them with water and wine from their own cups.

THE ORDER OF THE SEDER

סֵדֵר הַסֵּדֵר

Seder means order, so to celebrate the Seder, we begin with the order of the Order.

§ Throughout this Haggadah, the indented sections can be read aloud or not, as the leader chooses.

קִדְשׁ

KA-DESH

§ We signify the specialness of the day, setting it apart from other days, by focusing our attention through blessing the light of the candles, the wine and the purpose of the holiday.

וְיָרְחַץ

OO-R'CHATZ

§ We wash each other's hands.

כָּרַפַּס

KAR-PAS

§ We bless and dip a spring vegetable in salt water.

יָרַח

YA-CHATZ

§ We break the middle matzah and hide the larger half, which we call the Afikoman, from a Greek term meaning 'after the banquet.'

מַגִּיד

MA-GEED

§ We tell the story of our slavery and liberation and its implications for us.

רַחֵץ

RACH-TZA

§ We bless and wash before eating.

מוציא

MO-TZI

§ We bless our eating of the meal.

מצה

MA-TZA

§ We bless our eating of matzah on Passover.

חרור

MA-ROAR

§ We bless our eating of bitter herbs, dipped in charoset, a paste made from fruit and nuts.

כורף

KO-RECH

§ We make a ritual sandwich.

שלקחן עורף

SHOOL-CHAN O-RECH

§ We eat the meal.

צפון

TSA-FOON

§ We search for and find the larger missing half of the original middle matzah; everyone eats a piece as the last food of the meal.

ברך

BA-RECH

§ Through blessing, we express gratitude for the sources of our food.

הלל

HALLEL

§ We sing songs of deliverance and hope.

נְרָצָה

NEER-TSA

§ We affirm that our ceremony is complete.

Now, we take each step in turn, many of them quite brief.

קִדְשׁ

KA-DESH

§ We mark the specialness of the day with blessings over candles and over the first of four cups of wine. (On Friday nights, we add the words in parentheses)

הַדְּלָקַת נְרוֹת לְיוֹם טוֹב

Had-la-kat nay-rot l'yom tov

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה עוֹלָמְנוּ, יְחִיד וּמְיֻחָד,
אֲשֶׁר לָמַד אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ וְאוֹתָנוּ
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר נֶשֶׁל (שַׁבַּת וְ) יוֹם טוֹב.

Ba-rooch ata o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed oo-m'you-chad,
a-sheer lee-made et a-vo-tay-noo v'ee-mo-tay-noo v'o-ta-noo
le-had-leek nayr shel (shab-bat v') yom tov.

Blessed are you, our unique world,
for teaching our ancestors and us
to light the candles (for Shabbat and) for this holiday.

קדוש

KEE-DOOSH

We mark the specialness of the day with blessings over a cup of wine. This is the first of four cups of wine that we bless.

§ This version is singable to the traditional tune in Hebrew or English. As a gesture of caring and being cared for, we fill each other's cups, rather than filling our own. On Friday nights, we add the words in parentheses.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה עוֹלָמְנוּ, יְחִיד יְחִיד וּמְיֻחָד, בּוֹרָא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה עוֹלָמְנוּ, יְחִיד וּמְיֻחָד,
אֲשֶׁר גָּדַל מְסוֹרוֹת עַמּוֹנוֹ וְהִנְחִיל לָנוּ
(אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה, וְ) אֶת יוֹם חַג הַמַּצּוֹת הַזֶּה,
זָכַר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם.
בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׂוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּ לָנוּ
חַג מְקַדָּשׁ לְחִגְיַת הַחַרּוֹת
וְאֶת זְמַן חַרּוֹתֵנוּ הַזֶּה בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן נִקְבְּלָה.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, עוֹלָמְנוּ, מְקַדָּשׁ אֶת חַג הַמַּצּוֹת.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה עוֹלָמְנוּ, יְחִיד וּמְיֻחָד,
שְׂהַחֲיֵנוּ וְקִיָּמְנוּ! הִגִּיעָנוּ לְזְמַן הַזֶּה!

Ba-rooch a-ta, o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed u-m'yoo-chad,
bo-rey p'ree ha-ga-fen.

Ba-rooch a-ta o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed oo-m'you-chad,
a-sheer gee-dayl me-so-rot a-may-noo
v'heen-cheel la-nu (et yom ha-shabbat ha-zeh
v') et yom chag ha-ma-tzot ha-zeh,
z'man chay-roo-tay-noo, meek-ra ko-desh,
zay-chayr l'y'tsee-at meetz-ra-yeem.

B'seem-cha oo-ve-sa-son heen-cheel la-noo
chag mook-dosh l'cha-gee-gat ha-chay-root

v'et z'man chey-roo-tay-noo ha-zeh b'a-ha-vah oo-v'sa-son n'-kab-b'lah.
Ba-rooch a-ta o-la-may-noo me-ka-desh et chag ha-ma-tzot.
Ba-rooch a-ta, o-la-may-noo ya-cheed u-m'yoo-chad,
she-he-che-ya-noo, v'kee-yi-ma-noo, v'hi-gee-a-noo
la z'man ha-zeh!

Blessed are you, our unique world,
for producing this fruit of the vine.
Blessed are you, our unique world
for nurturing our people's traditions
and handing down to us this day (of Shabbat and) of the Holiday of Matzot,
celebration of our freedom, a distinctive gathering
to remember our going out from Egypt.
Happily, joyfully, a holiday dedicated
to freedom has been passed down to us,
so let us accept this time of freedom in conscious love.
Blessed are you, our world, for setting apart this Festival of Matzot.
Blessed are you, our unique world,
for keeping us alive, sustaining us
and enabling us to reach this day!

יְרַחֵץ

OO-R'CHATZ

§ A bowl of water and towel is passed around for hand-washing. At the time that the Seder was formulated, washing was understood as an act of purification. At this Seder, you are invited to pour a small amount of water over your fingers, after which the person next to you dries your hands. The ancient ritual thus becomes an expression of kindness to one another.

כַּרְפָּס

KAR-PAS

§ Choose from among the spring vegetables on the Seder table and dip one in salt water.

The spring vegetable reminds us to pay attention to this season, the time in the northern hemisphere when we again see flowers blooming and hear birds chirping.

The salt water in which we dip the vegetable recalls the salty tears our ancestors shed when they were enslaved as well the tears of those today who are oppressed or enslaved.

The blessing we recite heightens our awareness and gratitude for this moment, when we are free to celebrate together.

בְּרַחֵךְ אֶתְּהָ עוֹלָמְנוּ, יְחִיד וְקַיּוּחָד,

בוֹרָא פְּרֵי הָאָדָמָה.

Ba-rookh a-ta o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed u-m'yoo-chad,

bo-ray p'ree ha-a-da-ma.

Blessed are you, unique world of ours, for producing the fruit of the earth.

§ Some households serve a salad of seasonal vegetables at this point, to take the edge off people's hunger and thus to allow greater ease for telling and discussing the Passover story.

יַחַד

YACHATZ

§ The Seder leader chooses from the middle one of three matzot and then breaks it in half, setting aside the larger portion to be hidden, and then says:

Matzah is called le-chem o-ni, the bread of affliction or poverty. Applying a second meaning of the root, some commentators have noted that le-chem o-ni could also mean the bread over which we answer questions. Tonight we welcome all questions and comments about slavery and freedom.

מַגִּיד

MAGGID

§ We point to the matzah and say:

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

All who are hungry, let them come and eat.

All who are needy, come celebrate Passover with us.

This year we are here; next year, may we be in a land of Israel where all free.

Now we are still slaves; next year, may we be fully free.

§ Those who wish may say it in Aramaic, the common language of most Jews when the Haggadah was first written down.

הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיא

.דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהֵתְנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְמִצְרַיִם.

.כָּל דְכָפִין יִיתִי וְיִיכֹל.

.כָּל דְצָרִיךְ יִיתִי וְיִפְסַח.

.הַשְׁתָּא הֶכָא,

.לְשָׁנָה הֶכָא בְּאַרְעָא דְיִשְׂרָאֵל.

.הַשְׁתָּא עֲבָדִי,

.לְשָׁנָה הֶכָא בְּנֵי חוּרִין.

Ha lach-ma an-ya
dee a-cha-loo av-ha-ta-na b'ar-a d'meetz-ra-yeem.
Kol deech-feen yay-tay v'yay-chol.
Kol deetz-reech yay-tay v'yif-sach.
Ha-sha-ta ha-cha,
l'sha-na ha-ba-ah b'ar-a d'yis-ra-el.
Ha-sha-ta av-day, l'sha-na ha-ba-a v'nay cho-reen.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

§ The youngest person present recites in either English or Hebrew:

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה
מכל הלילות:
נשככל הלילות
אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה,
הלילה הזה — כולו מצה?
נשככל הלילות
אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות,
הלילה הזה — מרור?
נשככל הלילות
אין אנו מטבילין
אפילו פעם אחת,
הלילה הזה — שתי פעמים?
נשככל הלילות
אנו אוכלין
בין יושבין ובין מסבין,
הלילה הזה — כלנו מסובין?

Ma neesh-ta-na ha-lai-lah ha-zeh
mi-kol ha-lay-lot.
She-b'chol ha-lay-lot
a-noo och-leen cha-maytz oo-ma-tza,
ha-lai-lah ha-zeh —
koo-lo ma-tza?
She-b'chol ha lay-lot,
a-noo och-lin
sh'ar yi-ra-kot,
ha-lai-la ha-zeh —
ma-roar?
She-b'chol ha-lay-lot,
ain a-noo mat-bee-leen
a-fee-loo pa-am a-chat,
ha-lai-la ha-zeh —
sh'tay f'ah-meem?
She-b'chol ha lay-lot,
a-noo och-leen
bayn yosh-veen oo-vane m'su-been,
ha-lai-la ha-zeh —
koo-la-noo m'soo-been?

How different this night is from all other nights!
On all other nights we eat leavened and unleavened bread,
but on this night, why only unleavened?
On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables,
but on this night, why do we eat bitter herbs?
On all other nights we don't dip even once,
but on this night, why do we dip twice?
On all other nights we sit upright or leaning,
but on this night, why do we all lean?

THE FOUR WAYS OF ANSWERING

Four times the Torah asks us to tell the story of Passover -- as if to say, there are at least four different ways to tell it and to hear it. The ancient rabbis who interpreted the Torah personified these as four kinds of children: one wise, one rebellious, one simple, and one that does not yet know how to formulate a question. Alternatively, each type of "child" can be seen as a part of each of us.

1. THE FIRST WAY

For the person -- or that part of us -- that does not yet know how to formulate a question about what's going on, we say simply, "Isn't it amazing! What an awesome thing it is to be here."

אַנְחֵנוּ פֹּה.

A-nach-noo po.

2. THE SECOND WAY

For the person -- or that part of us -- that can only formulate a simple question, such as "what is all this about?" we say: We were enslaved in Egypt and now we are free.

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ, הָיִינוּ.

עֲתָה כְּנִי חֹרֵין, כְּנֹת חֹרֵין.

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ,

עֲתָה, עֲתָה כְּנִי חֹרֵין כְּנֹת חֹרֵין

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ,

עֲתָה, עֲתָה כְּנִי חֹרֵין, כְּנֹת חֹרֵין.

A-va-deem ha-yee-nu, ha-yee-noo.

A-ta v'nay cho-ree-een, b'not cho-reen.

Ah-vah-dee-eem ha-a-yee-noo

a-ta, a-ta, v'nay cho-ree-een, b'not cho-reen

a-va-dee-eem ha-a-yee-noo,

a-ta, a-ta, v'nay cho-reen, b'not cho-reen (2x).

3. THE THIRD WAY

For the rebellious person—or that rebellious part of us—that may not want to be here at the Seder, yet is here nevertheless, we say:

Your being here is very important to all of us.

We welcome your questions and your challenges.

בָּרוּךְ הַבָּא, בָּרוּכָה הַבָּאָה בְּשֵׂאֵלָה.

Bah-rooch ha-bah, v'roo-cha ha-ba-a bi-sh'ay-lah.

Blessed is he or she who comes with a question.

We know that it is hard to stay committed to Jewish identity when we live in a society where some see the thriving of Jews and Jewish culture as threatening. So we must work together to dismantle anti-Jewish stereotypes, because if we don't, we will end up internalizing them.

4. THE FOURTH WAY

For the person—or that part of us—that loves being at a Seder, the one who wants to deepen his or her knowledge of Jewish tradition, we expand on the story of Passover, ending with the statement that we don't go partying after the Seder.

אֵין מִפְטִירִין אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֶפִּיקוֹמָן.

Ayn maf-tee-reen ah-char ha-peh-sach ah-fee-ko-mahn.

In other words, our celebration tonight should be complete in itself.

FOR DISCUSSION: FOUR PARTS OF US

Do these four voices exist within you?

If so, how can you make each of these parts of yourself helpful to you and to others?

THE STORY OF SLAVERY AND EXODUS

§ This Haggadah provides both a continuous narrative and aversion of the Exodus story told in dramatic monologues by some of the key actors (indented with a ¶). This allows for various mix- and-match approaches.

What we know about the history of our enslavement in Egypt is drawn from the Bible. The Bible's stories were told in order to create a national memory among the people who claimed descent from the ancient Hebrews. Tonight, we tell the story that our ancestors learned, but instead of focusing on God as the central character, we focus on the human beings who were caught up in a mighty conflict in difficult times.

While the Haggadah is the story of a particular group of refugees at a particular time, it is also a universal one. In times of scarce resources, various peoples move about our world looking for food to survive. That is how the ancient Hebrews first arrived in Egypt. In our time, people from Africa and Latin America have been coming to the northern hemisphere, looking for resources to overcome the harshness of their situations. And when they come, our past experience teaches us that they will be vulnerable to oppression and exploitation. The Passover story is our ancient witness to this ongoing challenge. The Jewish tradition of social justice calls each of us to respond with goodness and generosity.

FAMINE IN THE LAND

We begin our telling with how the Hebrews-- who became the Jews-- first got to Egypt. At a time of famine in the land of Canaan where the Hebrews were living, our ancestor Jacob and his family went down to Egypt. They said to the ruler of Egypt, the Pharaoh: "We've come as refugees because there is no food in the land of Canaan. We seek permission to dwell in your land."

Joseph, Jacob's son, was already in Egypt. Twenty years earlier, he had been sold into slavery by his brothers, but was liberated after a few years to become the Pharaoh's right-hand man. In that role, Joseph was arranging to store surplus grain to feed people in the event of a potential famine. Now he took charge of making sure that his father, his brothers and their families were also cared for, giving them land in Goshen, where they could pasture their flocks. There they thrived. Their number grew until they were a sizeable group.

FORCED LABOR

The old Pharaoh died and a new king arose to rule in his place, one who did not remember Joseph's role in saving the Egyptian people. He didn't see Jacob's descendants, the Hebrews, as legitimate Egyptian citizens, but rather as aliens swarming over the land. He feared that if enemies ever invaded Egypt, these foreigners could be enlisted to rebel against him and help to break his rule.

▮Where did these upstarts come from anyway?
I've heard that they came from somewhere across
the desert. Our eastern flank is so exposed
and these awful people just sneak in with their
stinky sheep and goats-- you really
have to hold your nose when you come
close to them. And how about
all the aliens that are already here,
like frogs spawning in the Nile.
We have to put them to work for the State,
clearly. They're all in one place, Goshen,
so that should make it easy to round them up
and force the dirty shepherds to work for us.
Later, we'll find a way to get rid of them.

So the Pharaoh decided to exploit the Hebrews as forced labor to build up his military defenses. He ordered his armed guards to force the Hebrews to make bricks out of straw and clay and to erect new garrison cities. Once these defensive cities were under way, he decided to reduce the number of the Hebrews by decreeing that all their baby boys be killed.

SAVED FROM THE WATER

The midwives, Shifra and Puah, refused to carry out this command.

▮What a fool he is to think
we're going to follow his orders
and kill the babies of the Hebrew women.
We are midwives, not killers.
We help women every day
give birth to new lives. What could be
greater than that? Ours is a power
much greater than the Pharaoh's!

One Israelite family from the Levite tribe made sure that their baby boy would be saved. They set him in a water-tight basket to float on the Nile, near the Pharaoh's palace. The boy's older sister, Miriam, stayed nearby to make sure that the basket would be found and that her brother would be adopted.

▮He is small, Mother, but he's strong.
You can hear it when he cries out
for you to feed him. This wicker
basket is strong and I've coated it with
this black pitch so it won't sink.
See, it floats perfectly. I'm going to
follow it down the river, just
till over there, where the princess
and her attendants come down to bathe.
You can see the palace from here.
Oh, I so hope my brother gets the chance
to grow up there!

Soon enough, the Pharaoh's daughter found him. When she picked up the child, Miriam approached and offered to provide a wet-nurse for the baby. Thus the baby continued to be cared for by his own mother, Yocheved. It was the unnamed Egyptian princess who named him Moses, an Egyptian name, which translated into Hebrew means, "I drew him from the water."

MOSES COMES OF AGE

Moses grew up as an adopted grandchild in the Pharaoh's palace. When he was old enough to leave the palace on his own, he went to where the Hebrew slaves were building Pharaoh's new cities. There he saw an Egyptian overseer yelling at and beating one of the slaves.

▮Get to work, you slackers. You're always
looking to take a break, put
down your pails, get a drink of water.
You think I'm going to put up with your
laziness one minute more? What's that
you say? I'll show you what real
slave-driving is. Here, take this,
you vermin, you!

Moses acted to defend the slave, struck down the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. The next day when he went again to see the Hebrew slaves, he tried to intervene in a quarrel between two of them. They said to him, "Are you going to strike us down the way you did the Egyptian?" Moses realized that what he had done was widely known, so he had to flee from Egypt.

MOSES LEAVES AND RETURNS

Moses wandered into the desert and stayed away for many years. He met a woman, Tziporah, who became his wife and with her raised two sons, all the while working as a shepherd alongside his father-in-law, Jethro. But no matter how happy a life he had in this new place, he could not forget the suffering of the Hebrew slaves. He developed a burning awareness that he had to go back to Egypt and work to free them. Once back in Egypt, he enlisted his brother, Aaron, as a partner.

▣Brother, as you see, I've come back
to this horrible place where I was raised
to see what has become of our brothers
our sisters, our fathers and mothers,
all the Hebrews and also the other wandering people
who have been enslaved by this tyrant Pharaoh.
I was a hot-headed youth and I accomplished nothing
by killing a slave driver.
I'm sure another one just took his place.
Now we must work together -- you and I --
and get the people to back us.
We can be their voice speaking truth to power.

Together they went to the Pharaoh and demanded that he let the people go. Pharaoh responded in anger and immediately sought to punish the Hebrews, commanding his overseers to stop giving them straw to make bricks, so they had to take extra time to collect it on their own.

TERRIBLE THINGS

Just as this dispute was heating up, terrible things started to happen to the ecosystem of Egypt. Mud piled up in the Nile and turned the river brownish-red, the color of blood. With the flow of the river disrupted, frogs came out onto the banks and multiplied everywhere, but there was not enough food for them, so they died in heaps. This coincided with an invasion of locusts, which ate up all the grain in the fields. With no food to eat in the fields, the rodents scattered and without rodents to eat, the larger beasts came into the cities looking for food. People were infested with head lice. People and animals also got

boils on their skins. Hail stones rained from the sky. The sky itself turned black, as if filled with volcanic ash. Legends have grown up about this period of natural disasters. Our forebears saw these calamities as a series of plagues from God, topped by the most dire one, the seemingly sudden death of Egyptian children. In this legendary telling, the Israelites were spared all these calamities, as they were living in Goshen, away from the Nile delta.

As we recall these disasters that befell the Egyptians, our joy is not complete, because we know that the Egyptian people suffered as our Hebrew ancestors were liberated. We signify this by removing ten drops of wine from our cups, as we call out the ten plagues.

דָּם

צָפָרְדֵּי

כְּנִים

עָרוֹב

דָּבָר

שָׁחִין

בָּרָד

אֲרָבָה

חֲשֵׁךְ

מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת.

Dom

T'sfar-day-ah

Kee-neem

O-rov

De-ver

Sh'cheen

Bo-rod

Ar-be

Cho-shech

Ma-kat b'cho-rot.

Blood

Frogs

Lice

Wild Beasts

Pestilence

Boils

Hail

Locusts

Darkness

Killing of the first-born.

FOR DISCUSSION: CONTEMPORARY PLAGUES

In our world where there are millions of people fleeing from war and famine, what are some of the plagues that refugees face?

What can we do about these challenges?

What do global pandemics teach us about our interconnectedness as one human race?

THE SLAVES GET REPARATIONS

The Egyptians concluded that all these terrible things were the consequence of not letting the Hebrews go, as Moses and Aaron had demanded. Under a lot of popular pressure, the Pharaoh capitulated, telling Moses and Aaron that the Hebrews could finally leave Egypt. The Hebrew slaves knew that they deserved to be paid for their years of unpaid labor, so they went throughout the cities of Egypt asking for their back pay.

▮Your son is dead, your cattle are dead,
your fields are barren. Why? Because you treated us
like dirt and the land too. You've dug it all up
and forced us to build your massive garrisons
and storehouses. No more. These plagues
are your punishment for what you've done to us
and to the land. All my life and my parents' lives
and my grandparents' lives we've worked for you
under armed guard -- without pay.
Now you can't wait for us to go, you say
we have to be gone by morning. Well, we're not
leaving here without what's coming to us.
Give us the gold and silver you've got in your house
and we'll be even.

The Egyptians paid them off, hoping never to see them again.

THE EGYPTIANS ARE DEFEATED

But seven days later, Pharaoh changed his mind and commanded his cavalry to chase after the Hebrews. Pharaoh and the army encountered them on the shores of the sea, where fierce winds disturbed the normal tides. The Israelites saw their chance and took it.

▮The sea is in front of us
and Pharaoh's war chariots are behind us!
What are we supposed to do now?
There's no time to go around.
We'll just have to wade into the water.
Maybe it will be OK.
Yes, it will be.

Follow me!

They marched into the sea while the winds pushed the waters aside, allowing them to walk through on dry land. But when the Pharaoh and his army rode after them, the winds reversed the tide, drowning the Egyptians, leaving Egypt leaderless and in chaos.

WISE LEADERSHIP AT WORK

Moses and Aaron responded to the crisis of newfound freedom as leaders of the men; Miriam, as leader of the women. They had a ragtag band to lead and knew that they had to work wonders to bring this people together. Their radical idea was that the Hebrews would now take responsibility for one another to begin their new life as a free people. So these leaders and their Levite cousins came together to create laws for the people. The Torah is the repository of these laws, the foundation of our Jewish approach to living in society.

Don't worship false gods.

Honor your parents.

Observe the Shabbat, a day of rest from work every week.

Do not murder.

Do not stray from your husband or wife.

Do not steal.

Do not swear falsely against your neighbor.

Do not jealously wish for something that another person has.

Love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Living in a society of just laws, fairly administered, is both a legacy and an ongoing commitment of the Jewish people, a people that was enslaved and deeply knows the meaning of injustice.

MAKING THE STORY OUR OWN

Our story has been an inspiration for peoples around the world who have overthrown their oppressors.

A proposed design for the Great Seal of the United States featured an image of the Israelites crossing the sea on dry land. The newly independent Americans understood that they too had freed themselves from a tyrannical power, Great Britain's king.

Africans enslaved in America for two hundred and fifty years by white slave-owners also saw themselves in the story of the Hebrews' exodus from slavery.

§ The famous spiritual, "Go Down Moses," has become a highlight of the Seder.

When Israel was in Egypt land,
Let my people go,
Oppressed so hard, they could not stand,
Let my people go,
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land,
Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go.

No more shall they in bondage toil,
Let My people go!
Let them come out with Egypt's spoil,
Let My people go!
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land,
Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go.

The rabbis of old who created the Seder explained that our essential obligation on Passover is to make the story of slavery and freedom our own. So we recite together:

In every generation, one is required to see herself or himself as if she or he came out of Egypt. This act of identification helps us to empathize with those who are afflicted today and need liberation.

בְּכֹל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיֵּב אִישׁ
לְרַאות אֶת עַצְמוֹ,
בְּכֹל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיֵּבֶת אִשָּׁה
לְרַאות אֶת עַצְמָהּ
כְּאִילוּ הוּא יָצָא, כְּאִילוּ הִיא יָצְאָה
מִמִּצְרַיִם.

B'chol dor va-dor cha-yav eesh
lee-rot et atz-mo,
b'chol dor va-dor cha-ye-vet ee-sha
lee-rot et atz-mah
ki'ee-loo hoo yah-tzah, ki'ee-loo hee yah-tz'ah
mee-meetz-ra-yeem.

The story of Jewish history since that first liberation is not an easy one to tell. Jews have been committed to a particular way of life, but we have not always been free to practice it. Yet we have continued to do so, despite the fact that:

- conquered by Assyria and Babylonia, we were exiled from our land;
- allowed to return by the Persian empire, we were then conquered by Greece and by Rome;
- in lands under Christian rule, where we were blamed for the death of Jesus, we have been tormented, murdered in Crusades and pogroms, forced to convert or exiled;
- in lands under Islamic rule, where we were tolerated only as second-class citizens, we have sometimes been humiliated and our businesses and our lives taken by mobs;
- under the totalitarian rule of Nazism, where we were deprived of rights and persecuted, two-thirds of our people were destroyed; whenever and wherever anti-democratic forces have been in power, Jews have been targeted.

Yet in spite of all this, the Jewish people have survived to tell our story of liberation from slavery. We know that many of our ancestors left danger zones to come to places where it

has been safer to live as Jews. But why did they remain Jews? Tonight, we affirm that our Jewish values -- our commitment to justice and compassion -- have guarded and preserved us as Jews.

§ Can be sung to a traditional tune for "v'hi she'amda"

מה שמר (2) על אבותינו ועלינו
כשעמדו אויבים
בכל דור ודור לכלותינו?
אהבנו את הרע, אהבנו את הגר:
זה שמר עלינו להושיענו.
אהבנו את הרע, אהבנו את הגר,
זה שמר עלינו להושיענו.

Ma sha-mar, ma sha-mar
al a'a-vo-tay-noo v'a-lay-noo
k'she am-doo oi-yi-veem
b'chol dor va-dor l'cha-lo-tay-noo?
A-hav-noo et ha-ray-ah, a-hav-nu et ha-gayr:
Zeh sha-mar a-lay-noo l'ho-shee-ay-noo.
A-hav-noo et ha-ray-ah, a-hav-noo et ha-gayr,
Zeh sha-mar a-lay-noo l'ho-shee-ay-noo.

What protected our ancestors and us
when enemies rose against us in every generation?
We loved our neighbors, we loved the stranger:
that is what protected us and saved us.

FOR DISCUSSION: JEWS & JUSTICE

Can someone at the table say something about liberation struggles of the last century in which Jews participated, motivated by empathy for those who suffer injustice?

DAYENU

We express our gratitude in the song, Dayenu. Dayenu means "it would have been enough for us." How can we learn to be satisfied with what we have? We are grateful to be alive and to be here at this table. We are grateful for our ancestors -- all the people that shaped us to be the people we are. With gratitude, comes an acknowledgement that not everyone is as lucky as we are to have the good fortune that we have. As we sing Dayenu, let's remember that we have to continually strive for a world in which everyone truly has enough.

§ Both Hebrew and English versions can be sung to the traditional tune.

אֵילֹוּ יִצְאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, (3)

דַּיְנוּ.

אֵילֹוּ שְׁמַרְנוּ אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת, (3)

דַּיְנוּ.

אֵילֹוּ רָדְפָנוּ אַחַר צַדִּיק, .. (3)

דַּיְנוּ.

אֵילֹוּ אֶהְבְּנוּ אֶת הַגֵּר, (3)

דַּיְנוּ.

Ee-lu ya-tza-noo mee-meetz-ra-yeem, (3x)

Dai-yeh-noo.

Refrain: Dai-dai-yeh-noo.

Ee-lu sha-mar-nu et ha-shabbat, (3x)

Dai-yeh-noo.

Dai-dai-yeh-noo.

Ee-lu ra-daf-noo a-char tzeh-dek (3x)

Dai-yeh-noo.

Refrain: Dai-dai-yeh-noo.

Ee-lu a-hav-nu et ha-gayr (3x)

Dai-yeh-noo.

Refrain: Dai-dai-yeh-noo.

If we'd only gone out of slavery (3x),

it would have been enough.

Refrain: Dai-dai-yeh-noo.

If we'd only kept the Shabbat (3x),

it would have been enough.

Refrain: Dai-dai-yeh-noo.

If we'd only pursued justice (3x).

it would have been enough.

Refrain: Dai-dai-yeh-noo.

If only we'd loved the stranger (3x),

it would have been enough.

Refrain: Dai-dai-yeh-noo.

SECOND CUP

כוס שני

§ We fill each other's cups with wine or grape juice and make two blessings over the second cup.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה עוֹלָמְנוּ, יְחִיד וּמְיֻחָד,
אֲשֶׁר גִּילָה אֶת מִשְׁמַעוֹת הַחִירוֹת
בְּסִפּוּר אֲמָנוּ.

Ba-rooch a-ta o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed oo-m'you-chad,
a-sheer gee-lah et mash-ma-oot ha-chey-root
b'see-poor a-may-noo.

Blessed are you, O unique world of ours,
for revealing the meaning of freedom
in the story of our people.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה עוֹלָמְנוּ, יְחִיד וּמְיֻחָד,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch a-ta o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed u'myu-chad,
bo-ray p'ree ha-ga-fen.

Blessed are you, our unique world,
for producing the fruit of the vine.

§ We drink, while leaning to the left.

Why do we lean when we drink the wine?

Because tonight we are a free people; we are not standing behind our guests as servants would, but rather lounging as only people with leisure can.

We have told the story, we have made it our own through song and ritual, but have we fully answered the opening four questions?

Not completely. We have delayed some of the answers until just before we eat the symbolic foods on the table and dip for the second time, so that they are in our minds as we perform these actions.

There is also a fifth question that used to be part of the Seder: why is there a roasted bone and a roasted egg on the Seder plate?

Because when the Temple stood in Jerusalem, our ancestors offered animals and other sacrifices as a way of marking their holidays and special occasions.

What is our Passover offering that takes the place of ancient sacrifice? We offer to do all we can to seek justice and liberation for all.

רַחֲצָה

RACH-TZA

§ Once again, we pass around a clean bowl of water to pour over our fingers and a towel for drying. This time we make a blessing.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה עוֹלָמְנוּ, יְחִיד וּמְיֻחָד,

אֲשֶׁר לָמַד אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאוֹתָנוּ

עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

Ba-rooch a-ta o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed oo-m'you-chad

a-sheer lee-made et a-vo-tay-noo v'o-ta-noo

al n'tee-lat ya-da-yeem.

Blessed are you, unique world of ours,

for teaching our ancestors and us

to make a sacred custom of washing our hands before meals.

מוֹצֵיא

MO-TZEE

מַצָּה

MAT-ZAH

Why Matzah?

We eat simple, flat Matzah because in our ancestors' hasty departure from Egypt, they did not have time for their bread to rise.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה עוֹלָמְנוּ, יְהוּד וּמְיֻחָד,
הַמוֹצֵיא לָחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Ba-rooch a-ta o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed u'mi-yoo-chad,
ha-mo-tzee le-chem meen ha-a-retz.

Blessed are you, our unique world, for granting us the resources to transform grain into bread.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה עוֹלָמְנוּ, יְהוּד וּמְיֻחָד,
אֲשֶׁר לָמַד אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ וְאוֹתָנוּ
עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.

Ba-rooch ata o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed oo-m'you-chad,
a-sheer lee-made et a-vo-tay-noo v'ee-mo-tay-noo v'o-ta-noo
al a-chee-lat mat-zoh.

Blessed are you, O unique world of ours,
for teaching our ancestors and us to make a sacred custom
of eating matzoh on Passover.

קרור

MAROR

Why Maror?

We taste maror, the bitter root, because the Egyptians embittered our lives with harsh treatment and forced labor.

Why Dip in Charoset?

Before we eat the maror, we dip it in charoset, the sweet mixture that reminds us of the mortar between the bricks, because our lives as Jews have been full of the sweetness of shared traditions.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה עוֹלָמְנוּ, וּמְיוֹחַד,

אֲשֶׁר לִמַּד אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ וְאוֹתָנוּ

עַל אֲכִילַת קְרוֹר.

Ba-rooch ata o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed oo-m'you-chad,
a-sheer lee-made et a-vo-tay-noo v'ee-mo-tay-noo v'o-ta-noo
al a-chee-lat ma-ror.

Blessed are you, O unique world of ours,
for teaching our ancestors and us to make a sacred custom
of eating bitter herbs on Passover.

כוֹרֵךְ

KO-RECH

§ We make a sandwich, following an ancient custom of bringing together all the elements of the holiday in one dish, the last symbolism before the meal. The bitterness of maror is offset by the sweetness of charoset, while the matzah in its modesty and simplicity reminds us to focus on essentials, like freedom and justice, rather than the excesses made possible by material success.̄

שְׁלַחַן עוֹרֵךְ

SHULCHAN ORECH

§ The meal is served. In many homes, the first course is hard-boiled eggs. The roundness of the eggs represents the cyclical nature of the seasons, as we return to springtime and the renewal of life around us. Some households serve them with salt water, continuing to taste the salty tears of slavery. A wonderful artistic project for the afternoon before the Seder is decorating the hard-boiled eggs with images from the story of the Exodus, such as the headdress of the Pharaoh. Breaking the shell off the egg becomes one more defeat for the tyrant!

The Seder resumes here after the meal.

תפיל

TSA-FOON

§ Toward the conclusion of the meal, the search for the Afikoman takes place. In some households, it has been hidden by the leader of the Seder, while in others, by the children. In either case, it is usually ransomed through a gift to the children. When it has been found, the leader makes sure that everyone eats a piece of it as the last taste of the Seder. After eating the Afikoman, we resume the Seder till it reaches its climax.

בָּרַךְ

BARECH

§ This grace after meals can be sung to the traditional tune in either in Hebrew or English.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה הֵעוֹלָם,
עוֹלָמְנוּ יְחִיד וּמְיוֹחָד,
הֵזַן כּוֹלְנוּ לְצוּרְךָ הַחַיִּים
וּמְשַׁבֵּיעַ לְכֹל חַי לְפִי צָרְכָם,
וּמַחֲלֵק לֶחֶם לְרַעְבוֹת וְלִנְצָרָכִים.
וּמְטוֹבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל, לֹא חָסַר לָנוּ וְנָא אֵל יְחַסֵּר לָנוּ,
מָזוֹן לְעוֹלָם וָעֵד.
בְּעִבוּר הַמִּשְׁפָּה הֵעוֹלָם, בְּנִשְׁטוּף פְּעוּלָה נְפָרְגֵס לְכֹל
וְנִטִּיב לְכֹל וְנִכְיִן מָזוֹן
לְכֹל הַבְּרִיאוֹת שְׂחַיִּים בְּעוֹלָם.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, עוֹלָמְנוּ, הֵזַן אֶת הַכֹּל.

Ba-ruch a-ta ha-oh-lam,
o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed, u-m'yu-chad,
ha-zan koo-la-noo l'tzo-rech ha-cha-yeem.
u-mas-bee-a l'chol chai li-fee- tzor-cham
oo-me-cha-lake le-chem la-re-ay-vot
v'la-neetz-ra-cheem
oo-mee-too-vo ha-ga-dol,
lo cha-sar la-noo,
v'na al yech-sar la-noo
ma-zon, l'o-lam va-ed.
Ba'a-voor hem-shech ha-o-lam,
nay-teev la-kol, v'nay-cheen ma-zon
l'chol ha-b'ri'ot she-cha-yeem ba-o-lam.

Ba-rooch a-ta o-la-may-noo, ha-zan et ha-kol.

Blessed are you, O world,
our world, single and unique,
for feeding us all for the sake of life,
and according to their needs,
apportioning food unto the hungry
and also to the needy.
Through the world's great goodness,
none of us lack right now
and no one should lack
any food as long as we live.
For the sake of continuing the world,
let's be good to all and prepare much food
for all of the creatures living on the earth.
Blessed are you, our world, sustaining all.

THIRD CUP

כּוֹס שְׁלֵינֵינוּ

§ We fill each other's cups for the third time and together bless our freedom to celebrate together.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה עוֹלָמְנוּ, יְחִיד וּמְיֻחָד,
בוֹרָא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Baruch a-ta o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed u'myu-chad,
bo-ray p'ree ha-ga-fen.

Blessed are you, our unique world,
for producing the fruit of the vine.

§ We drink, while leaning to the left.

APPROACHING OUR GOAL: REDEMPTION

During the Seder, we experience freedom in new ways as the evening progresses. Enlivened by food, wine and good company, we get in touch with our deepest yearnings for ourselves, our families, for the Jewish people and for the planet.

Yearning for transformation of what is into what could yet be, we welcome Elijah and Miriam, prophets of old, who represent our people's hope for continued repair of the world.

§ At this point, we can pour wine from each of our glasses to fill an empty goblet at the center of the table (if it was not filled earlier). This is Elijah's cup. In Jewish tradition, Elijah was transformed from a fierce, passionate prophet to a loving grandfather, reconciling parents and children. Tonight, we aspire to follow his example of love and peace-making.

§ Likewise, we can pour water from each of our glasses into a second cup at the center of the table. This is Miriam's cup. In legend, Miriam is associated with a well that was always available to give our people water as they traveled in the desert. Miriam's cup represents our hope that we can live cooperatively, sharing resources with all the people on our planet.

We open the door and welcome the symbolic energies of Elijah and Miriam to advance our work for freedom, equality, justice and the liberation of all. We rise as we sing:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַנְּבִיאָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַתְּשֻׁבִי,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַגְּלָעָדִי,
בְּחֵרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ יְבוֹא אֵלֵינוּ
לְהַגְשִׁים תְּקוּוֹתֵינוּ, לְהַגְשִׁים תְּקוּוֹתֵינוּ.

Ay-lee-ya-hoo ha-na-vee,
ay-lee-ya-hoo ha-tishbi,
ay-lee-ya-hoo, ay-lee-ya-hoo, ay-lee-ya-hoo ha-geel-a-dee,
beem-hay-rah v'ya-may-noo ya-vo ay-lay-noo

l'hag-sheem tik-vo-tay-noo, l'hag sheem tik-vo-tay-noo.

Elijah the prophet, Elijah the Tishbite
Elijah, the Gileadite,
soon, in our days, may he come to us
to fulfill our hopes.

מְרִים הַנְּבִיאָה,
עַז וְזַמְרָה בְּיָדָהּ,
מְרִים תְּרַקוּד אֲתָנוּ לְהַגְדִּיל זְמַרְת עוֹלָם,
מְרִים תְּרַקוּד אֲתָנוּ לְתַקֵּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם.
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ הִיא תְּבִיאֵנוּ
אֵל מַי הַיְּשׁוּעָה, אֵל מַי הַיְּשׁוּעָה.

-- Hebrew lyrics with permission of Leila Gal Berner

Mee-ree-yam ha-ni-vee-a
oz v'zeem-rah b'ya-da
mee-ree-yam teer-kod ee-ta-noo
l'ta-kane et ha-o-lam.
Beem-hay-rah v'ya-may-noo hee t'vee-ay-noo
el may ha-yi-shoo-a, el may ha-yi-shoo-a.

Miriam the prophet,
bringing strength and song,
may she dance with us to repair the world;
soon, in our days, may she bring us
to the healing waters.

FOR DISCUSSION: WHAT IS REDEMPTION?

Martin Luther King once said:
"None of us is free until all of us
are free."

What does that statement mean
for you right now?

הלל

HALLEL

§ We sing songs of deliverance and praise of freedom and justice. Below, we offer a selection of songs to heighten the festive mood and to deepen the meaning of our celebration.

1.

If I had a hammer,
I'd hammer in the morning,
I'd hammer in the evening
all over this land;
I'd hammer out danger,
I'd hammer out a warning,
I'd hammer out love between
my brothers and my sisters
all over this land.

If I had a bell,
I'd ring it in the morning,
I'd ring it in the evening
all over this land;
I'd ring out danger,
I'd ring out a warning,
I'd ring out love between
my brothers and my sisters
all over this land.

If I had a song,
I'd sing it in the morning,
I'd sing it in the evening
all over this land;
I'd sing out danger,
I'd sing out a warning,
I'd sing out love between

my brothers and my sisters
all over this land, oh oh...

Well, I've got a hammer,
and I've got a bell,
and I've got a song to sing
all over this land.
It's the hammer of justice,
it's the bell of freedom,
it's a song about love between
my brothers and my sisters
all over this land.
It's a hammer of justice,
it's a bell of freedom,
it's a song about love between my brothers and my sisters
all over this land.

-- lyrics by Pete Seeger and Lee Hayes (1949)

2.

Circle round for freedom,
Circle round for peace,
For those of us imprisoned,
Circle for release.
Circle round the planet,
Circle for each soul,
For our future generations
Keep the circle whole.

-- lyrics by Linda Hirschhorn (1982)

(with permission from <http://www.lindahirschhorn.com>)

3.

עוֹד יְבוֹא שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
עוֹד יְבוֹא שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
עוֹד יְבוֹא שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
.וְעַל כּוֹלָם.
עוֹד יְבוֹא שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
עוֹד יְבוֹא שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
עוֹד יְבוֹא שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ

יְעַל כּוֹלָם.
סְלָאם, עָלֵינוּ יְעַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם
סְלָאם, סְלָאם;
סְלָאם,
עָלֵינוּ יְעַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם
סְלָאם, סְלָאם.

Od ya-vo sha-lom a-lay-noo
Od ya-vo sha-lom a-lay-noo
Od ya-vo sha-lom a-lay-noo
v'al koo-lam.

Od ya-vo sha-lom a-lay-noo
Od ya-vo sha-lom a-lay-noo
Od ya-vo sha-lom a-lay-noo
v'al koo-lam.

Sa-laam
a-lay-noo, v'al kol-ha-o-lam
sa-laam, sa-laam.

Still, peace will come upon us (3x)
and on everyone.

Still, peace will come upon us (3x)
and on everyone.

Salaam, on us and on the whole world,
salaam, salaam;
salaam,
on us and on the whole world,
salaam, salaam.

-- Hebrew lyrics by Moshe Ben-Ari
(<https://www.transcontinentalmusic.com/>)

4.

By the shores, by the shores,
Of the Red, Red Sea,
By the shores of the Red, Red Sea;
The light of day lit up the night
The children, they were free.

CHORUS:

And Miriam took her timbrel out and all the women danced. (2X)
Va- tee-kach Mee-ree-yam ha-ni-vee-a et ha tof b'ya-da,
va'tay-tze-na kol ha-na-sheem a-cha-re-ha.

וַתִּקַּח מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה אֶת הַתּוֹף בְּיָדָהּ
וַתִּצְאֶנָּה כָּל הַנְּשִׂיִם אַחֲרֶיהָ.

They danced, they danced
Oh, how they danced
They danced the night away
Clapped their hands and stamped their feet
With voices loud they praised.
They danced with joy
They danced with grace
They danced on nimble feet
Kicked up their heels, threw back their heads
Hypnotic with the beat.

CHORUS

They danced so hard, they danced so fast;
They danced with movement strong
Laughed and cried, brought out alive
They danced until the dawn.
Some carrying child, some baking bread
Weeping as they prayed
But when they heard the music start
They put their pain away.

CHORUS

Enticed to sing, drawn to move
Mesmerized by such emotion
The men saw us reach out our hands

Stretching across the ocean.
As they watched, and they clapped, they began to sway
Drawn to ride the wave
and all our brothers began to dance
They dance with us today!
They danced, we dance
Shechinah dance
They danced the night away
And all the people began to sing
We're singing 'til this day!!

FINAL CHORUS: And Miriam took her timbrel out and all the people danced. (2X)

וַתִּקַּח מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה אֶת הַתּוֹף בְּיָדָהּ

וַתִּצַּא כָּל הָעָם אֲחֻרָיָהּ.

Va- tee-kach Miriam ha-ni-vee-a et ha-tof b'ya-da,
va-tay-tzay kol ha-am a-cha-re-ha.

CODA: and the children were rockin' just as far as you could see,
by the shores, by the shores, we were free, we were free, we were free!

-- lyrics by Geela Rayzel Raphael (1984)

(with permission from <http://shechinah.com>)

5.

Chad Gadya

חַד גַּדְיָא טוּזִימ

§ This most dear of Seder songs is thought to be an allegory of the Jewish people's survival. This version can be sung to the traditional tune.

Chad gadya, chad gadya.

One little goat that Papa bought for two zuzim, chad gadya, chad gadya.

Then came a cat and ate the goat, that Papa bought for two zuzim, chad gadya, chad gadya.

Then came a dog and bit the cat, that ate the goat, that Papa bought for two zuzim, chad gadya, chad gadya.

Then came a stick and beat the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the goat, that Papa bought for two zuzim, chad gadya, chad gadya.

Then came the fire and burnt the stick, that beat the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the goat, that Papa bought for two zuzim, chad gadya, chad gadya.

Then came water and quenched the fire, that burnt the stick, that beat the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the goat, that Papa bought for two zuzim, chad gadya, chad gadya.

Then came the ox and drank the water, that quenched the fire, that burnt the stick, that beat the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the goat, that Papa bought for two zuzim, chad gadya, chad gadya.

Then came the butcher and slaughtered the ox, that drank the water, that quenched the fire, that burnt the stick, that beat the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the goat, that Papa bought for two zuzim, chad gadya, chad gadya.

Then came death and killed the butcher, that slaughtered the ox, that drank the water, that quenched the fire, that burnt the stick, that beat the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the goat, that Papa bought for two zuzim, chad gadya, chad gadya.

FOURTH CUP

כּוֹס רְבִיעִי

§ We fill each other's cup for the fourth and final time and together bless our freedom to celebrate.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה עוֹלָמְנוּ, יְהוָה יְחִיד וּמְיֻחָד,
בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch a-ta o-la-may-noo, ya-cheed u'myu-chad,
bo-ray p'ree ha-ga-fen.

Blessed are you, our unique world
that produces the fruit of the vine.

§ We drink, while leaning to the left.

נֶרְצָה NEER-TZAH

Our Seder is finished according to the plan we laid out at its start.
We have journeyed from slavery to freedom, fortunate to celebrate together and hoping we may do so again in another year.

May we continue our journey with actions we take after tonight, working for the continued liberation of the Jewish people into what it can yet become, a people actively seeking the liberation of all.

Our people's historic symbol of completion is Jerusalem -- Yerushalaim -- a city of peace, open to all. May we see that vision of Jerusalem come to fruition, speedily in our days. We sing together: Next year in Jerusalem!

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּיְרוּשָׁלַיִם.

L'sha-na ha-ba-a v'y'-roo-sha-lai-yeem.