



JCRC
BAY AREA

30th Annual

— JCRC BAY AREA —

FREEDOM SEDER



An Intercultural, Multifaith Celebration

Welcome

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) Bay Area introduced the Freedom Seder to the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1990s, and it has since become a cherished Passover tradition in our region. Inspired by the original 1969 Freedom Seder in Washington, D.C., which celebrated the deep ties between Jewish and African American communities, our gathering continues to embody the Jewish commitment to social justice.

Over the years, the JCRC Freedom Seder has evolved to reflect our dedication to community-building, civic engagement, and democracy. While honoring the traditions of Passover, we also shine a light on pressing contemporary issues—from racial justice to immigration reform—infusing our celebration with a distinctly Bay Area spirit.

This year, as we recite the story of Moses and Miriam leading the Israelites out of slavery to freedom, we recognize civic, elected, and community leaders who are bravely standing up for the people and communities suffering from the rise in antisemitism, racism, xenophobia, transphobia, and hate. The Passover story, with its themes of liberation and resilience, remains deeply relevant as we confront systemic injustices and the fractures threatening our society and democracy today.

For over 75 years, JCRC Bay Area has convened, educated, and taken action to build a more just world where everyone can thrive. We foster partnerships across ethnic, faith, political, and civic communities, working in coalition to strengthen our democracy and promote a society where people of all backgrounds can live authentically and embrace the vibrancy of diverse Jewish identities.

LEARN MORE AT [JCRC.ORG](https://www.jcrc.org).



Welcoming Others

BARRY LOUIS POLISAR

There is a word in Hebrew—*Teshuvah* תְּשׁוּבָה—that means return. It is an acknowledgment that there is always a chance for forgiveness, redemption, and change. Our traditions teach that Passover is open to all.

**Everyone is welcome at this table.
There is always room.**

Because no one is ever turned away, there is always an opportunity for a rebirth of spirit. As a sign of hospitality to all, we open the door to our homes and symbolically invite anyone who wants to join us to come inside.



ORDER OF THE *Seder*

קִדְשׁ, וּרְחִיץ, כַּרְפָּס, יַחֵץ, מַגִּיד, רְחִיצָה, מוֹצֵיא, מַצָּה,
מָרֹר, כּוֹרֵךְ, שְׁלַחַן עֹרֵךְ, צְפוּן, בְּרַךְ, הַלֵּל, נִרְצָה.

*Kadesh, Urchatz, Karpas, Yachatz, Maggid, Rachtza, Motzi, Matzah,
Maror, Korech, Shulchan Orech, Tzafun, Barech, Hallel, Nirtzah.*

Praise God for fruit of vine, and you may drink one cup of wine.
In salt you dip some green. Break the *matzah* in between.
Of three *matzot* on the tray, take one piece to hide away.
Read how God set Israel free, rescued us from slavery.
Matzah you bless and eat. With bitter herbs, charoset sweet.
At last the meal takes place. But before you say the grace.
Find the afikoman. Bring the supper to its end.
Then recite the psalms of praise, final thanks to God we raise.

THE PASSOVER *Seder Plate*

This Seder plate and table have their origins in both the Ashkenazi (Central and Eastern European) and Sephardic/Mizrahi (Spain, Middle East, and North Africa) Jewish traditions. There are many traditions that reflect the diversity of the Jewish diaspora.



KARPAS כַּרְפָּס

A spring vegetable, in this case parsley, which is a symbol of renewal and hope for the future. In the service, it is dipped in salt water, which represents the tears of slavery.

MAROR מָרוֹר

A bitter herb symbolizing the bitterness endured by the Israelites during their years of bondage in Egypt.



BETZA בֵּיטָא

An egg, which symbolizes rebirth and reminds us of the continuity of life.

Z'ROAH זְרוּעַ

A lamb shank bone that commemorates the paschal sacrifice that ancient Israelites brought to the Holy Temple during Passover. Today we replace the lamb shank bone with a beet due to its blood-red color.



CHAROSET חַרוֹסֶת

A mixture of chopped fruit and nuts, representing the mortar used by the Israelites in building Egyptian monuments.

ORANGE תּוֹפֹז

A modern-day symbol of the importance and value of women and LGBTQ+ people in both Jewish and non-Jewish societies.



MATZAH מַצָּה

The bread of affliction, reminding us of the flight from bondage, when the Israelites left Egypt in such a hurry that there was no time for the bread to rise.

Candle-Lighting

As we light these candles, we think of the journeys our ancestors took as people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. We marvel that we all have come together today to celebrate the Bay Area's pluralistic society, as we have experienced freedom here in our own way. We commit ourselves to keep the flame of justice alive to sustain our communities. The candles' brightness and warmth symbolize hope and the coming of redemption for oppressed people everywhere, and we pray that they will guide us to take action to ensure freedom for everyone.



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

Baruch ata Adonai, elohaynu melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel yom tov.

Blessed are You, Creator of the universe, who makes us special with your commandments and teaches us to light the holiday candles.

PRAYER OF Thanksgiving

This prayer is offered to celebrate new beginnings and joyous occasions, such as eating the fruits of a new harvest or reaching a milestone in life. Today we recite this blessing in gratitude for the opportunity of being able to celebrate our freedom together.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.

Baruch ata Adonai, elohaynu melech ha'olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh.

We Praise You, Creator of the universe, who has brought us forth, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Kiddush

Traditionally we drink four cups of wine to symbolize the four times the Israelites were promised that they would be freed from slavery. Tonight, each of our four cups of wine or grape juice will be dedicated to exploring a vital issue currently impacting the Bay Area. We invite you to reflect on these themes, as well as the lived experiences shared by our speakers, and consider the work that needs to be done to strengthen and sustain us all.

First Cup WELCOMING THE STRANGER



HACHNASAT ORCHIM הַכְּנֻסַת אוֹרְחִים

As we bless this cup of wine, we remember the story of Passover is a journey of seeking safety and freedom, a theme that resonates deeply with the value of *hachnasat orchim*, welcoming the stranger. As we recall our ancestors' experiences as foreigners in a strange land, we affirm our commitment to opening our doors and hearts to those in need of refuge. At our Seder, we celebrate the richness that a society welcoming and inclusive of immigrants brings to our lives and pledge to foster hospitality, understanding, and community.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch atah Adonai, eloheynu melech haolam, bo're p'ri ha'gafen.

Blessed are You, Creator of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the glass of wine or juice.

Karpas כַּרְפֹּס REBIRTH AND RENEWAL



We dip these herbs, the *karpas*, into salt water in order to mingle the fresh taste of freedom with the sad memories and tears of slavery. As we do this, we become mindful of all those who still suffer under the yoke of oppression today and the need to continue to fight for freedom.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, borei p'ri ha'damah.

Blessed is the Force of Life, the strength of workers, who brings forth the fruits, grains and vegetables from our bountiful earth.

Eat the parsley dipped in salt water.

Yahatz יָחַץ BREAKING OF THE MATZAH

Matzah is the bread that the Hebrew ancestors hastily prepared as they fled from Egypt. We break this *matzah* in half as a reminder that although the process of redemption began with the Exodus, part of the story remains hidden. After dinner, we will share the afikoman, so that we may savor the taste of redemption and be reminded to do our share to bring about a better world.

AFIKOMAN

The hidden piece of *matzah* represents the stories hidden from view—which tell of the lives of many immigrants and their families, members of the LGBTQ+ community waiting for society to accept them, Jews who today cover or remove the Star of David or *kippah* out of concerns about antisemitism, and others targeted simply for who they are. Until these divided parts are made one again, our Seder cannot conclude. Reuniting the afikoman symbolizes that it is in our power to make whole that which is broken and to work toward bringing freedom to everyone in the world.

Maggid מַגִּיד TELLING THE STORY

The heart of the Seder is the *maggid*, a Hebrew term derived from the word Haggadah, which means “storytelling.” The story is the longest section of the Seder and is a time for thinking, discussion and, most of all, questions.

STORY OF THE EXODUS

Approximately 4,000 years ago in Egypt, an Israelite named Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers. Joseph predicted an upcoming famine, which the Pharaoh heeded; his timely advice saved the Egyptians from the famine. Joseph’s family came to Egypt searching for food and were allowed to stay.

Generations later, a new Pharaoh, who did not remember Joseph, noticed the growing Israelite population. Fearing they would become a danger to Egypt, he enslaved them and decreed, “Every baby boy born to an Israelite woman shall be drowned in the river.”

In response, one mother hid her child in a basket on the riverbank. Pharaoh’s daughter found the baby and took him home to the palace, naming him Moses; which means, “brought out of the water.” One day, Moses came upon an Egyptian taskmaster beating an Israelite slave. In a fit of rage over the injustice, Moses beat the Egyptian to death. Fleeing the scene, Moses wandered the desert, and joined a family of shepherds in the land of Midian. One day while tending his sheep, Moses came upon a burning bush and heard God’s voice tell him to free his people from slavery in Egypt.

Moses went to see the Pharaoh with his brother, Aaron, as his spokesperson. Moses demanded “Let my people go!” ten times. Each time was followed by a plague, and each time Pharaoh refused. After the tenth plague, the Israelites were finally freed. They left Egypt at midnight in such a hurry they did not have time to let their dough rise, baking it immediately, and it came out flat and hard—the first *matzah*.



The Israelites escaped to the Red Sea with the Egyptians in pursuit. As Pharaoh’s army caught up with them at the Red Sea, God told Moses to hold up his staff and the waters parted allowing the Israelites to cross over on dry land.

From the Red Sea, the Israelites traveled to Mount Sinai where God gave them the Torah. At Sinai, they entered into a covenant with God that sustains us to this day and teaches us to cherish a vision of the world free of oppression, discrimination, and suffering.

Four Questions מה-נְשִׁיתָנָה MAH NISHTANAH

Gathering at the Seder table was—and is—a time to ask and discuss, a time to search for answers. It is a time to ask without fear. That, too, is a mark of our freedom.

WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER NIGHTS?

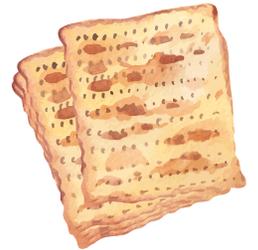
MAH NISHTANAH, HA-LAYLAH HA-ZEH, MI-KOL HA-LEYLOT?

מה-נְשִׁיתָנָה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל-הַלַּיְלוֹת?

1. Why is it that on all other nights during the year we eat either bread or *matzah*, but on this night we eat only *matzah*?

She-b'khol ha-leylot 'anu 'okhlin chameytz u-matzah, ha-laylah ha-zeh, kulo matzah?

שֶׁבְּכָל-הַלַּיְלוֹת, אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֲמֵץ וּמַצָּה; הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, כָּלוּ מַצָּה



2. Why is it that on all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs, but on this night we eat only bitter herbs?

She-b'khol ha-leylot 'anu 'okhlin sh'ar y'raqot, ha-laylah ha-zeh, maror?

שֶׁבְּכָל-הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יַרְקוֹת; הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, מְרֹר



3. Why is it that on all other nights we do not dip our herbs even once, but on this night we dip them twice?

She-b'khol ha-leylot 'eyn 'anu matbilin 'afilu pa'am achat, ha-laylah ha-zeh, shtey fe'amim?

שֶׁבְּכָל-הַלַּיְלוֹת, אֵין אָנוּ מְטַבִּילִין אֶפְלוּ פַּעַם אַחַת; הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים



4. Why is it that on all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining, but on this night we eat in a reclining position?

She-b'khol ha-leylot 'anu 'okhlin beyn yoshvin u-veyn m'subin, ha-laylah ha-zeh, kulanu m'subin?

שֶׁבְּכָל-הַלַּיְלוֹת, אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין; הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, כָּלְנוּ מְסֻבִּין



Second Cup SOLIDARITY

בְּיַחַד B'YACHAD



As we bless this cup of wine, we uplift those who choose to stand together in solidarity—*b'yachad*, in togetherness. Our shared wellbeing is rooted in relationships across faiths, cultures, and communities, and in the understanding that none of us can thrive alone. In a pluralistic society, the health of our democracy depends on our willingness to work across differences, to defend one another's dignity, and to show up for those most vulnerable to harm. Our safety and security are bound together, and when we act *b'yachad*, especially in moments of tension or uncertainty, we strengthen not only our communities, but the moral fabric of the society we share. We give thanks for all who commit to this shared responsibility and collective care.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch atah Adonai, eloheynu melech haolam, bo're p'ri ha'gafen.

Blessed are you, Creator of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the glass of wine or juice.

2025 AAPI-JEWISH NEW YORK SOLIDARITY TRIP

JCRC and the API Council launched an AAPI-Jewish Roundtable in 2023 to foster relationships and joint advocacy. Roundtable members travel to New York City to deepen connections and engage in collaborative discussions. Participants (below) at the Asian Community Center on the initiative's second NYC trip last November.



THE TEN PLAGUES

In the story of Exodus, when Moses first approached Pharaoh to request that the Israelites be set free, Pharaoh refused. God responded by sending a series of 10 plagues. After each one, Moses again asked Pharaoh to free the people, and each time Pharaoh refused—or agreed, only to change his mind soon after. Finally, after the 10th and worst plague, the killing of the first-born sons of Egypt—including Pharaoh’s own child—he let the Israelites go. Even as we are grateful for our freedom, we are pained by the knowledge that our freedom came at the expense of great misfortune to the Egyptian people.

As we recite each ancient plague, we must also reflect on the plagues that impact our world today. These plagues disproportionately impact people of color and the most vulnerable among us. As we gather together at this Seder, let us look around our tables, and recommit to the shared work of addressing these societal ills.

Ancient Plagues



1. BLOOD



2. FROGS



3. LICE



4. BEASTS



5. BLIGHT



6. BOILS



7. HAIL



8. LOCUSTS



9. DARKNESS



10. KILLING OF THE FIRST BORN

AS WE RECITE EACH ANCIENT PLAGUE, WE MUST ALSO REFLECT ON THE PLAGUES THAT IMPACT OUR WORLD TODAY.

Modern Plagues



ECONOMIC
INJUSTICE



HOMELESSNESS
AND HUNGER



BARRIERS TO
HEALTH CARE AND
REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM



GUN VIOLENCE



CLIMATE CHANGE



REFUGEE REFUSAL
AND PERSECUTION OF
IMMIGRANTS



POLITICAL
CORRUPTION



ATTACK ON
LGBTQ+ RIGHTS



ANTISEMITISM, BIGOTRY,
AND RACISM



INEQUITABLE CRIMINAL
JUSTICE SYSTEM

Dayenu יִדְּנֵנוּ

One of the most beloved songs in the Passover seder is "Dayenu." After each stanza is read everyone should respond, "Dayenu," meaning, "it would have been enough."

How many times do we forget to pause and notice that where we are is exactly where we ought to be? Dayenu is a reminder to never forget all the miracles in our lives. When we stand and wait impatiently for the next one to appear, we are missing the whole point of life. Instead, we can actively seek a new reason to be grateful, a reason to say "Dayenu."

If God had brought us out from Egypt, and had not carried out judgments against them

Dayenu, it would have been enough!

If God had carried out judgments against them, and not against their idols

Dayenu

If God had destroyed their idols, and had not smitten their first-born

Dayenu

If God had smitten their first-born, and had not given us their wealth

Dayenu

If God had given us their wealth, and had not split the sea for us

Dayenu

If God had split the sea for us, and had not taken us through it on dry land

Dayenu, it would have been enough!

If God had taken us through the sea on dry land, and had not drowned our oppressors in it

Dayenu

If God had drowned our oppressors in it, and had not supplied our needs in the desert for forty years

Dayenu

If God had supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and had not fed us the manna

Dayenu

If God had fed us the manna, and had not given us the Shabbat

Dayenu

If God had given us the Shabbat, and had not brought us before Mount Sinai

Dayenu

If God had brought us before Mount Sinai, and had not given us the Torah

Dayenu

If God had given us the Torah, and had not brought us into the land of Israel

Dayenu

If God had brought us into the land of Israel, and not built for us the Holy Temple

Dayenu, it would have been enough!

FUN FACT

Persian and Afghani Jews hit each other over the heads and shoulders with scallions every time they say *Dayenu*! They especially use the scallions in the ninth stanza which mentions the manna that the Israelites ate every day in the desert, because Torah tells us that the Israelites began to complain about the manna and longed for the onions, leeks, and garlic.

Merger Poem

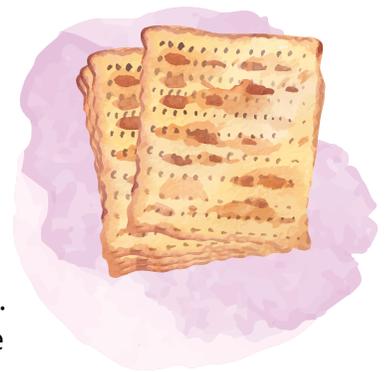
Judy Chicago

And then all that has divided us will merge
And then compassion will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind
And then both men and women will be gentle
And then both women and men will be strong
And then no person will be subject to another's will
And then all will be rich and free and varied
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many
And then all will share equally in the Earth's abundance
And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the old
And then all will nourish the young
And then all will cherish life's creatures
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the earth
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again

Matzah מצה

Everyone should take a piece of *matzah* now and eat it after the prayers.

This is the bread of affliction. It reminds us of the flight from bondage, when the Jews left Egypt in such a hurry that there was no time for the bread to rise. When we eat it we remember, and in the sharing of *matzah* we strengthen the bonds that unite us in our quest to fight slavery today.



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.

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

Baruch atah Adonai, eloheynu melech haolam, asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al achiylat matzah.

Blessed is the Source of Nourishment who brings forth bread from the Earth.

Blessed is the Source of Nourishment who requires that we eat the bread of affliction at this season, so the memory of slavery will not be far from us.

Maror מרור

Everyone takes a piece of bitter herb.



The bitter herb stings the eyes and awakens the heart. It reminds us how the Egyptians embittered the lives of the Jewish people. It reminds us that when there is oppression anywhere, we all shall taste its bitterness.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר.

Baruch ata Adonai elohaynu melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al achilat maror.

Blessed are You, Source of Salvation, who has sanctified us by the commandment to eat bitter herbs, and commanded us to taste and reflect upon the bitterness of human repression.

Eat the bitter herbs.

Korech כּוֹרֵךְ

MATZAH, MAROR, AND CHAROSET EATEN TOGETHER

Two thousand years ago, in memory of the Temple, religious sage Hillel the Elder would combine *matzah* and *maror* and eat them together, in order to fulfill the teaching, "They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herb." The "Hillel sandwich," composed of bitter herbs and *charoset* between pieces of *matzah*, challenges us to taste freedom in the midst of oppression. It represents the bitter and sweet that coexist in our world, and our responsibility to tip the scales toward sweetness, justice, and redemption.

Combine maror and charoset between two pieces of matzah.

As you taste the bitterness and sweetness, discuss some of these ideas with those at your table:

Share a moment of sweetness that helped to sustain you during the past year.

What can we do to extend those moments into an even sweeter future so all people can thrive?

What is one thing that you will do to bring sweetness to another person?

Adapted from: Until We Are All Free: A Global Justice Haggadah by American Jewish World Service and HIAS.

LET ALL WHO ARE HUNGRY COME AND EAT.

LET ALL WHO ARE IN NEED COME AND SHARE THE PASSOVER MEAL.

THIS YEAR, WE ARE STILL HERE—NEXT YEAR, IN THE PROMISED LAND.

THIS YEAR, WE ARE STILL SLAVES—NEXT YEAR, FREE PEOPLE.

Third Cup **CELEBRATING JEWISH IDENTITY**
בְּצֵלֶם אֱלֹהִים B'TZELEM ELOHIM



As we bless this cup of wine we focus on the concept of *b'tzelem Elohim*, that every person is created in the image of God, affirming the inherent worth, dignity, and beauty of each individual. Grounded in this universal truth, we turn our attention to the richness of the Jewish people themselves. At our Seder, we celebrate the many expressions of Jewish identity and honor the unique contributions of all Jews and their many intersectional identities. We lift up a people whose resilience has allowed Jewish people living in Israel and across the worldwide diaspora to endure and thrive despite numerous historical persecutions and modern challenges. Together, we embrace the full spectrum of Jewish experience, affirming that our diversity strengthens and enriches our shared heritage. This Passover, we celebrate the vibrancy of our community and the enduring values that guide us.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch atah Adonai, eloheynu melech haolam, bo're p'ri ha'gafen.

Blessed are You, Creator of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the glass of wine or juice.

HINEI MAH TOV *Behold How Good*

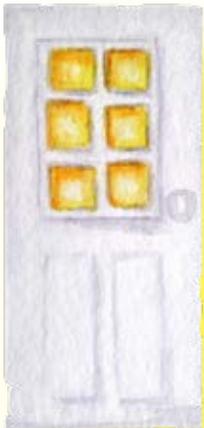
This well-loved song's lyrics are from the first verse of Psalm 133, which is translated as, "How good and how pleasant it is that brothers dwell together." In the version we are using this evening, *kulanu*, which means "all of us," is substituted for the original *achim* (brothers), to be fully inclusive of all genders.

הִנֵּה מַה טוֹב וַיְמָה נְעִים שְׁבֶת כּוֹלְנוּ גַם יַחַד.

Hinei mah tov u'mah nayim shevet kulanu gam yachad.

How good and how pleasant it is for all of us to dwell together in unity! Psalms 133:1

CUP OF *Elijah*



Throughout history, the name of Elijah has been the sound of hope. We open the door at this time to welcome Elijah's spirit. The open door also symbolizes the doors we must open for ourselves and for others who seek freedom from injustice.

On this night, we welcome the prophet Elijah and speak of ancient promise. On this night, we reclaim a tradition of dreams.

On this night, we open wide the door of hope.

As the spirit of Elijah enters this room and our lives, it reminds us that hope is something we have with us here and now. Hope is not a feeling we wait for; it is a commitment to a future we want to create.

CUP OF *Miriam*

To honor Miriam, the first woman prophet, and the other heroines of the Exodus story, we lift our cups, filled with spring water, recalling Miriam's well.

Miriam the Prophet, sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her, dancing with timbrels.

Exodus 15:20



Fourth Cup **SAVING A LIFE**

פִּקּוּאֵחַ נֶפֶשׁ פְּקוּחַ נַפְשׁ



As we bless this cup of wine, we center the value of *pikuach nefesh*—the sacred obligation to save a life. Jewish tradition teaches that preserving life outweighs every other commandment, reminding us that human life is infinitely precious. Today, we understand the broad and urgent nature of this call: to protect the lives and dignity of those impacted by violence, displacement, discrimination, and hate. Our work for immigrant justice, gun violence prevention, LGBTQ rights, reproductive freedom, and the safety of all targeted communities is not separate from our faith—it is an expression of it. When we act together, across communities and differences, we affirm that safeguarding life requires collective responsibility. In honoring *pikuach nefesh*, we recommit ourselves to building a society where everyone can live with safety, freedom, and dignity.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Baruch atah Adonai, eloheynu melech haolam, bo're p'ri ha'gafen.

Blessed are You, Creator of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the glass of wine or juice.

Where will we be?

Rabbi Sari Laufer, Stephen Wise Temple

excerpt from JTA interview

By design, the Seder is unfinished. The conclusion, as it were, is an aspirational one. From our vantage point in the wilderness, we look forward to the Promised Land. From our vantage point at our own seder tables, we look ahead with our own hopes and visions, both personal and communal. “Where will we be,” the Seder asks, “a year from now?” And is that where we want to be?

The prophet Zechariah described the Israelites as prisoners of hope. We carry hope with us in the narrow places, we hold on to hope in the overwhelming expanse of the wilderness. We cling to hope in our darkest moments. “Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope,” Zechariah demands. Hope, then, creates the walls that surround us; it is our protective armor. Even if I might struggle to imagine, even if I cannot see—I will close with these words of hope that next year, I will be different. We will be different. And, offering those as words of prayer, the world will be different too.

THE PATH TO PEACE IS THROUGH LOVING OTHERS

“... Hillel says: Be among the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people and bringing them close.”

This quote from the Mishnah suggests that in order to pursue peace, one has first to love it. Otherwise, the love, the message, the overture, although potentially packed with symbolic value, is essentially empty of substance.

Peace is arguably the noblest goal anyone can pursue, especially these days. Every individual has a spiritual mountain to climb. The Torah is both our map and our goal. The result of such a pursuit can only be that most elusive of ideals: peace, *shalom*.

Excerpt from: Yaakov Astor, AISH.com

Did you know?

The Book of Exodus says that after the Israelites' freedom from slavery in Egypt, while Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments for the second time, God was described as a being “compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and granting pardon.” The Torah’s use of these various ethical attributes (and more) encouraged us to freely explore descriptions of God in our translations of the prayers in this Haggadah.

Oseh Shalom

Oseh shalom bimromav, Hu yaseh shalom aleinu, V'al kol Yisrael, V'al kol yoshvei teiveil, V'imru. Amen.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

May the One who makes peace in the high heavens make peace for us, for all Israel, and all who inhabit the earth.

Amen.

NEXT YEAR IN *Jerusalem*

L'SHANA HABA'AH B'YIRUSHALAYIM לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּיִרוּשָׁלַיִם

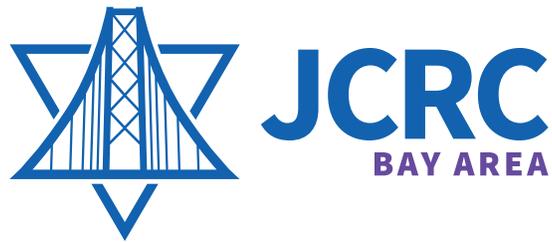
Rabbi David Hartman writes in *The Leader's Guide to the Family Participation Haggadah: A Different Night*,

"Passover is the night for reckless dreams; for visions about what a human being can be, what society can be, what people can be, what history may become. That is the significance of 'Le'shanah ha'ba'a b'Yerushalayim' (Next year in Jerusalem)."

Closing

We end our Passover Seder by saying in unison:

MAY SLAVERY GIVE WAY TO FREEDOM, MAY HATE GIVE WAY TO LOVE
MAY IGNORANCE GIVE WAY TO WISDOM, MAY DESPAIR GIVE WAY TO HOPE
NEXT YEAR, AT THIS TIME, MAY EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE, BE FREE!



JCRC Bay Area is the largest collective voice of the Jewish community across the Bay Area. We advocate for Jews to be able to live their own authentic Jewish lives and believe that by working together with other communities, the full vibrancy and diversity of Jewish identity will be embraced and celebrated. We mobilize Bay Area Jews and our allies to counter antisemitism and rising hate, advance social justice, strengthen civic engagement, and ensure a combined response to critical issues we all face.

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