

AJC CINCINNATI 28TH ANNUAL

# COMMUNITY INTERGROUP SEDER

March 15, 2021





**AJC CINCINNATI**  
**28<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL COMMUNITY INTERGROUP SEDER**  
**Celebrating Freedom for All People**  
**March 15, 2021**

**Seder Leader:** Rabbi Matthew Kraus, Head, Department of Judaic Studies, University of Cincinnati

<b>Four Questions:</b>	<b>Students from Northern Hills Synagogue</b>	<b>Translated by</b>
	1st question: Bar Azouz	Clem Luken
	2nd question: Norah Amor	Alfonso Cornejo
	3rd question Mia Arutunian	Charleston Wang
	4th question: Maayan Ganson	Yasue Kuwahara

**Seder Committee:** Jan Armstrong Cobb, Rob Craig, Martha Brand Dave, Carolyn Gilbert, Kurt Grossman, Ken Heldman, Scott Joseph, Sandy Kaltman, Chuck Kessel, Don Shuller, Rick Stern, Jeanne Weiland, and Julie Glazer Weisser

**ABOUT AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE (AJC)**

AJC is the global advocate for the well-being of the Jewish people and Israel, and for the advancement of human rights and democratic values for all. Through the bridges we build, the understanding we develop, and our quiet and effective diplomacy, AJC works to build a safer, more tolerant world for ourselves, our children, and generations to come. AJC is a global voice for a global era.

Since 1943, AJC Cincinnati connects our community with AJC's global advocacy work, advancing AJC's broader global priorities to: Combat Antisemitism; Help Ensure Israel's Security and Prosperity and Cultivate New Allies; and Promote Pluralism and Protect Democratic Values for All.

AJC Cincinnati engages in sustained advocacy with local and national government officials, offering substantive public programming, and developing long-standing relationships with many cultural and faith communities.

AJC Cincinnati brings together civic leaders and local cultural, religious, and ethnic communities for our three annual signature programs, Thanksgiving Diversity Lunch, Simon Lazarus, Jr., Human Relations Awards, and Community Intergroup Seder.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## WELCOME TO OUR SEDER TABLE

"The message of Passover remains as powerful as ever. Freedom is won not on the battlefield but in the classroom and the home. Teach your children the history of freedom if you want them never to lose it." The late **Lord Jonathan Sacks**, *former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth (1991-2013)*



## INTRODUCTION: Silent Reading

We have gathered here today to celebrate our Festival of Freedom. Passover, with its rich ceremonies, its folk songs and colorful symbols, has been celebrated by our ancestors for many hundreds of years. At this spring season each year, when the world of nature renews itself, the Jewish people look back upon their emergence from their slavery in Egypt to the freedom of nationhood in their native homeland, Israel.

And this Seder ritual which we are about to conduct--what part does it play in our celebration? The Seder is the central ritual of Passover. The word is Hebrew, meaning "order," and it refers to the special order of today's ceremonies. But it has another meaning. Seder means the intimate warmth of a family, of a group of friends seated about a festive table, telling and retelling the story of Egyptian bondage, the story of the Jewish struggle for freedom throughout the ages, and the eternal saga of humanity's search for freedom, human dignity and respect leading to the fulfillment of the human right to life and liberty.

The book we use for this ceremony is the "Haggadah." Haggadah is derived from the Hebrew word "Maggid"--to tell--for God commanded, "And thou shalt tell thy children."

Today, Passover is as significant as it has ever been. It is significant not only for us, but for the entire world. Slavery in open or in veiled form still embraces vast sections of humanity. We dedicate the Passover, our festival of hope and courage, to the world which is slowly, painfully, emerging to a new and beautiful freedom. May it never be destroyed.

Today we participate as members of many communities, ethnic and religious groups, and nations which have struggled for freedom. We all share common dreams of equality, justice, and peace. Many of the symbols we use may be strange to some, but their message will be familiar. And so today, we join together to celebrate our dream and send out a message of freedom which we hope will ring throughout our community and across both our land and the homelands from which we came to America.

History tells us that many people were enslaved by tyrants. As most nations observe an Independence Day, so too the Israelites instituted this holiday commemorating their freedom from tyranny. The uniqueness of this observance stems from its profoundly religious character. Every Jewish home becomes a sanctuary, every table an altar, where gratitude is expressed to God, the Author of Liberty.

But the Passover Seder is more than just a ceremony marking an historical event. We are taught that "in every generation, all are obligated to regard themselves as if they had personally gone forth from the Land of Egypt." Through prayer and song, ritual and symbol, custom and ceremony, we look upon ourselves as though we were among those enslaved and then brought forth unto freedom. Thus, the Seder is a re-creation and a re-living of that historical Exodus, of God's redemptive power and the wonder of freedom.

The Seder, which keeps alive in us the love of liberty, has significance also for all humankind. Freedom, which is one of humanity's most precious gifts, must not be taken for granted. In every age, it must be won anew. The Pharaoh of the Exodus is symbolic of the tyrants of our day as well as the tyrants of every era in history.



# The Seder Plate

## Bitter Herbs (Horseradish):

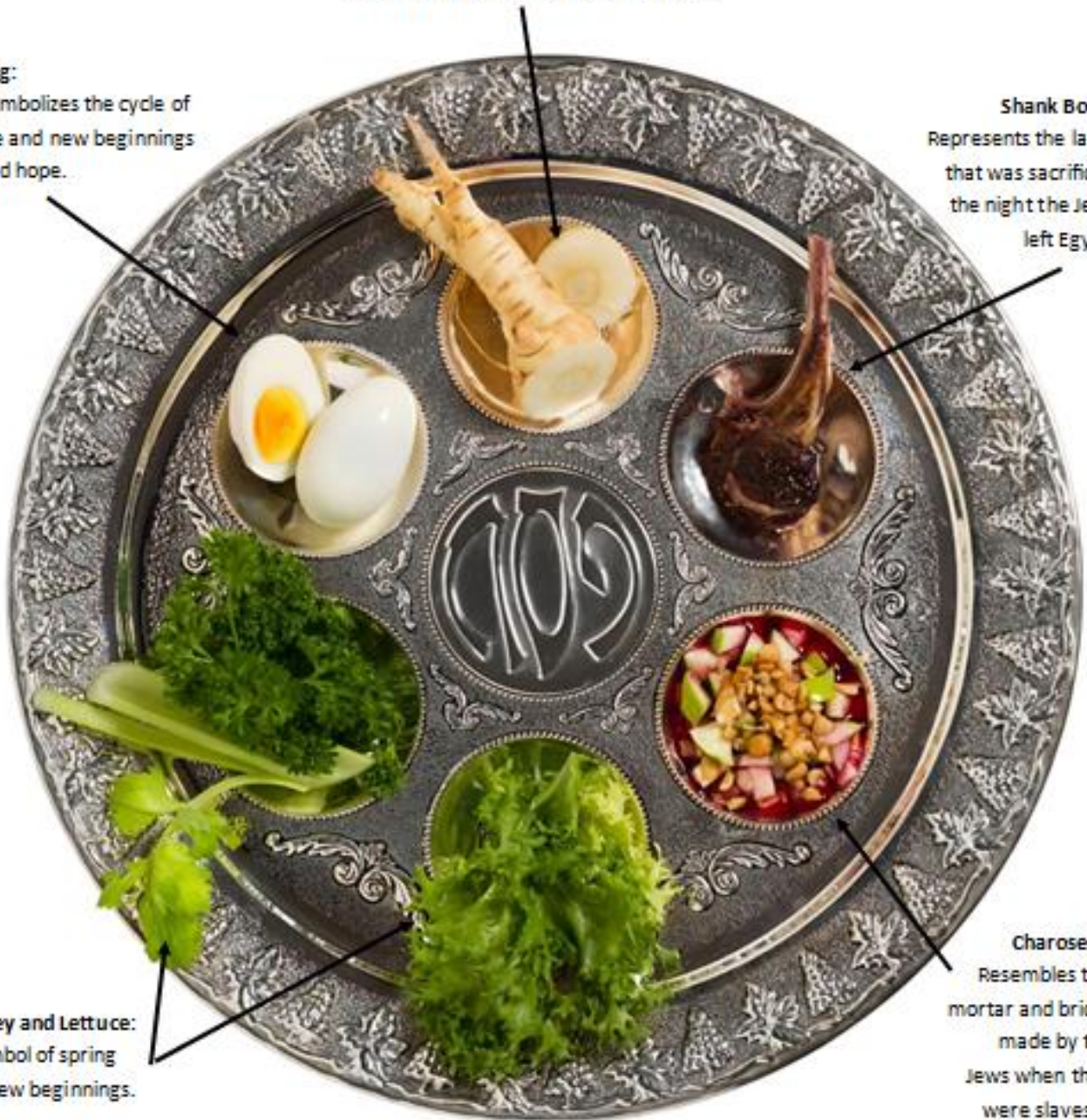
Reminds the Jews of the bitterness of the slavery their ancestors endured in Egypt.

## Egg:

Symbolizes the cycle of life and new beginnings and hope.

## Shank Bone:

Represents the lamb that was sacrificed the night the Jews left Egypt.



## Parsley and Lettuce:

A symbol of spring and new beginnings.

## Charosets:

Resembles the mortar and bricks made by the Jews when they were slaves in Egypt.



## **THE FIRST CUP: KIDDUSH (PRAYER OF SANCTIFICATION)**

### **LEADER**

During the Seder, we normally drink four cups of wine. The use of four cups is based on a biblical verse, Exodus 6:6-7, which uses four different verbs to describe God's deliverance of the Children of Israel. These four cups were each imbued with their own distinct significance. For there are different forms of deliverance and redemption. We seek personal redemption, and we seek redemption for our community; we seek deliverance for our generation, and we seek deliverance for future generations. The first cup is called Kos Kiddush, the cup of sanctification.



*Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu, melech haolam, borey peri hagofen.*

Blessed is the Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

### **READER:**

We praise You, God, Sovereign of Existence! You have called us for service from among the peoples and have hallowed our lives with commandments. In love You have given us the Sabbath for rest, festivals for rejoicing, seasons of celebration, this Festival of Matzot (Unleavened Bread), the time of our freedom, a commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt. Praised are You, our God, Who gave us this joyful heritage and Who sanctifies the Sabbath, Israel, and the festivals.

## **REBIRTH AND RENEW**

### **READER:**

The Passover festival of freedom was grafted onto a yet more ancient holiday: one celebrating the spring harvest. Spring is a time of rebirth. The snow of winter has melted. Once again, the bare trees have begun to bud. Soon the flowers will bloom, filling the air with their scent and our hearts with their life.



### **READER:**

The fresh greens of spring serve a special purpose at this time in our Seder. As we dip these greens, the karpas, into salt water, a symbol of our ancestors' bitter slavery, we remember all those who still suffer under the yoke of oppression. The sorrow of their tears is evident when we taste the salt water.

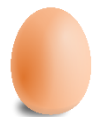
(EACH PERSON TAKES SOME GREENS AND DIPS THEM IN SALT WATER)

*Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu, melech haolam, borey p'ri ha-adamah.*

Blessed is the Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the earth. (EAT THE GREENS)

### **READER:**

This egg is the symbol of springtime and new life. We have it on our Passover table as a sign of our thanksgiving for spring. It also makes us think of the new life and hope the children of Israel felt when they were delivered from slavery to freedom.



## YAHATZ- SHARING OF THE MATZAH

### READER:

There are three pieces of matzah, the bread of affliction, on this plate. We break the middle matzah and conceal one half as the *afikoman*, a word of Greek origin meaning a kind of dessert. Later we will share it, as in days of old the Passover offering itself was shared at the service in Jerusalem. Among people everywhere, sharing of bread forms a bond of fellowship.

Ha lachma anyah: This is the bread of affliction; the poor bread,  
Which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

Let all who are hungry come and eat.

Let all who are in want share the hope of Passover.

For the sake of our redemption, we say the ancient words of *Ha lachma anyah* which join us with our own people and with all who are in need, with the homeless, with the wrongly imprisoned and the unjustly oppressed. For our redemption is bound up with the deliverance -from bondage of people everywhere.

## THE FOUR QUESTIONS

The Four Questions, traditionally asked by the youngest person at the Seder, symbolize the educational function of the Passover ceremony.

Mah nishtannah haLailah hazeh  
Mi kol ha lailot (2x)  
Sheh b'chol halailot  
anu ochlin  
chametz u'matzh (2x)  
HaLailah hazeh (2x)  
kulo matzah.  
(repeat last two lines)

Sheh b'chol haLailot  
anu ochlin  
She'ar yirakot (2x)  
HaLailah hazeh (2x)  
Maror.  
(repeat last two lines)

Sheh b'chol haLailot  
ein anu matbilin  
Afilu pa'am ehad (2x)  
HaLailah hazeh (2x)  
Sh'tei f'amim.  
(repeat last two lines)

Sheh b'chol haLailot  
Anu oclin  
Bein yoshvin  
u'vein m'subin (2x)  
HaLailah hazeh (2x)  
Kulanu m'subin.  
(repeat last two lines)

Why is this night different from all other nights?

On all other nights we eat either leavened bread or matzah; why on this night only matzah?

On all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs; why on this night do we especially eat bitter herbs?

On all other nights we do not dip herbs at all; why on this night do we dip them twice?

On all other nights, we eat either sitting up or reclining; why on this night do we all recline?

## WE WERE SLAVES

### **READER:**

We observe the Passover rituals because we were once in cruel bondage in the land of Egypt, and through the greatness of God's help, we came out into freedom. Had not God the Holy One strengthened us with courage and guided our way, we, our children, and our children's children would still be slaves. Therefore, however well we may know the story of our deliverance, however often we may have heard it told, it is right for us to tell it again with new thankfulness every year. The Torah, our great law book of Jewish moral instruction, tells us that we must answer our children's questions about this celebration, so that each one will learn the meaning of Passover and the many meanings of freedom.



## MAGGID: THE TELLING OF THE STORY OF THE EXODUS

### **READER:**

There is a beginning to everything, except to God, who was and is and will always be. The beginning of this story took place before any of us can remember--so long ago that if it had not been told over and over again by parents to their children, as we are telling it now, it would have been forgotten and never found in our Bible.

There was Abraham, the first Jew, and then Abraham's son, Isaac, and then Isaac's son, Jacob. These long-ago men are called our forefathers because they came before all the rest of our history.

Those many years ago, Jacob lived in a country called Canaan. For year after year in Canaan, there was no rain and there was a great famine. So, Jacob, with his large family and his shepherds and flocks, went down to the land of Egypt, where there was water and food to spare, and where his long-lost son, Joseph, lived and served as the viceroy of Egypt.

### **READER:**

That is how the children of Israel came into Egypt, and they lived there in peace while a friendly king Pharaoh ruled over them.

But the good years ended. Joseph died, and the kind Pharaoh died. A cruel Pharaoh who had not known Joseph came to power. This Pharaoh said, "There are too many of the children of Israel living among us. They are different from us, and their God is different from our gods. We must not waste kindness on them. We will force them to be our slaves. We will make them bake bricks and build cities and storehouses for us, and we will not pay them for their work."





**READER:**

So it happened that the Israelites lost their freedom. But the more they were oppressed, the more they increased and spread out, so that the Egyptians came to despise and dread the Israelites. Then when our people suffered so greatly, they called to God for help, and God heard their cry. God called one of our people, Moses, to lead us, and Moses dared to say to Pharaoh again and again, "Let my people go!"

Again and again, nine times, in Egypt there were strange happenings. Frogs overran the land. The rivers turned red as blood. Insects ate all the grain. Each time a new trouble came; Pharaoh was frightened and promised Moses to set his people free. But nine times Pharaoh hardened his heart and broke his promise.

**SONG: "GO DOWN, MOSES"**

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

CHORUS: Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land. Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go!

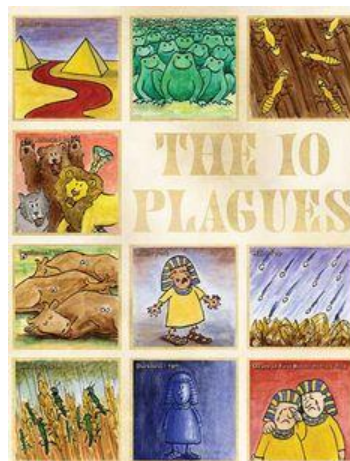
O let us all from bondage flee, Let my people go!  
And soon may all this world be free, Let my people go!

Repeat CHORUS.

**THE TEN PLAGUES OF EGYPT****READER:**

As we recall the ten plagues that befell the Egyptians, we remove a drop of wine from our cups for each plague. We do this to demonstrate that we cannot drink a full cup of joy when other people suffered in the course of our own liberation.

- Dam* - Blood
- Tzfardeyah* - Frogs
- Kinim* - Lice
- Arov* - Wild Beasts
- Dever* - Blight
- Sh'hin* - Boils
- Barad* - Hail
- Arbeh* - Locusts
- Hoshek* - Darkness
- Makat B'horot* - Slaying of the First Born



**DISCUSSION:** During this past year, the COVID 19 felt to some like the eleventh plague. What strategies have been helpful in dealing with the global pandemic?

**READER:**

"The time the Israelites remained in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. At the end of the four hundred and thirtieth year, to the very day, all the Israelites departed from the land of Egypt. That same night is God's watch-night for the children of Israel throughout the generations." (Exodus 12:40-42)

On that night, the worst trouble came in Egypt. The first-born son in every Egyptian home died. But the sorrow passed over the homes of the children of Israel and did not harm them. All the families together, with their bundles on their shoulders and God in their hearts, fled from the cruel Pharaoh.

The Torah tells us that on the night of marvels, the waters of the Red Sea parted and the Israelites, led by Moses, crossed out of Egypt as if on dry land. Then the waters came back, and no one could follow them. They sang and rejoiced in their freedom on the other side of the sea.

Because the 10th plague passed over their homes and because our ancestors passed over the Red Sea, we have ever after, in thankfulness, called our holiday Passover. Let us give thanks for our freedom, then and now.

**DAYENU** (pronounced "die-yay-new.") - **WE WERE GRATEFUL****READER:**

How many are the wonderful things that God has done for us in the long years of our history! Let us say them over and over, and give thanks for them, though we know there are too many wonders for us to count them all.

Had God brought us out of Egypt and not divided the sea for us, Dayenu!  
 Had God divided the sea and not permitted us to cross on dry land, Dayenu!  
 Had God permitted us to cross the sea on dry land and not kept us alive for forty years in the desert, Dayenu!  
 Had God kept us alive for forty years in the desert and not fed us with manna, Dayenu!  
 Had God fed us with manna and not given us the Sabbath, Dayenu!  
 Had God given us the Sabbath and not brought us to Mt. Sinai, Dayenu!  
 Had God brought us to Mt. Sinai and not given us the Torah, Dayenu!  
 Had God given us the Torah and not led us into the land of Israel, Dayenu!  
 Had God led us into the land of Israel and not built for us the Temple, Dayenu!  
 Had God built for us the Temple and not sent us prophets of truth, Dayenu!  
 Had God sent us prophets of truth and not continued to let us know Holiness, Dayenu!

**Dayenu (traditional song)**

Ilu hotzi, hotzianu  
 Hotzianu miMitzrayim  
 Hotzianu miMitzrayim  
 Daiyenu.

Ilu natan natan Inu  
 Natan lanu et haShabbat  
 Natan lanu et haShabbat  
 Dayienu

Ilu natannatan lany  
 Natan lanu et ha Torah  
 Natan lanu et ha Torah  
 Daiyenu

Chorus:  
 Dai, dai, yenu (3x)  
 Daiyenu daiyenu.

Chorus:

Chorus:

**DISCUSSION:** Due to COVID-19, many of our freedoms were taken away this past year. What is coming back with you from exile and what did you miss? \_

**THE THREE SYMBOLS OF PASSOVER: PESACH, MATZAH, MAROR**  
**(PASCHAL LAMB, UNLEAVENED BREAD, BITTER HERBS)**



**READER:**

Rebban Gamliel used to say, "Whoever does not consider well the meaning of these three--pesach, matzah, and maror--has not fulfilled the purpose of the Seder."

***(Leader lifts shank bone from the plate)***

The Pesach, or shankbone, is a reminder of God's instruction to the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb and mark their door posts with its blood so that the Angel of Death would know not to kill their first-born sons.

**READER:**

The matzah was meant to recall that the dough prepared by our people had no time to rise before the final act of deliverance. "And they baked unleavened cakes of dough since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves." (*Exodus 12:39*).

**READER:**

We eat maror, or bitter herbs, to remind us how the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors. A taste of this strong herb will bring tears to our eyes, like the tears that were shed in slavery, like the salt water in which we dipped the parsley. Today we remember that even in our own time, there are people whose lives are bitter because of injustice, need, or lack of opportunity or education.



**OUR PERSONAL DELIVERANCE**

**READER:**

To see these symbols, to touch them, and later on to taste them, helps us to bring the first Passover to our own table and makes us feel that we are a part of it. In every age, each person who celebrates the Seder should feel as if he or she had been brought out of Egypt. God has saved from slavery each one of us here and now as well as our ancestors long ago.

**READER:**

The struggle for freedom is a continuous struggle, for never does humanity reach total liberty and opportunity. In every age, some new freedom is won and established, adding to the advancement of human happiness and security.



## **MOTZI MATZAH - BLESSING AND EATING OF THE UNLEAVENED BREAD**

### **READER:**

We link ourselves with our brothers and sisters in this world who are not yet free as we fulfill the commandment to eat the matzah, the bread of affliction.

“You shall not eat anything leavened with it; for seven days thereafter, you shall eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, for you departed from the land of Egypt hurriedly, so that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt all the days of your life.” (Deuteronomy 16:3)



*(The uppermost of the three matzah is broken and distributed among the group. Then all read together.)*

**LEADER:** *Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu, melech haolam, hamotzi lehem min ha-aretz.*

Blessed is the Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

*Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu, melech haolam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanua al ahilat matzah.*

Blessed is the Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who hallows our lives with commandments, and has commanded us, on this holiday, to eat matzah. (EAT THE MATZAH)

## **MAROR**

### **READER:**

Today, as we taste the bitter herbs, we share in the bitterness and disappointment of the lives of our forbearers while they were in slavery in Egypt.

*(A bit of horseradish is dipped in haroses and the following blessing is said.)*

**LEADER:** *Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu, melech haolam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al ahilat maror.*

Blessed is the Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who hallows our lives with commandments, and Who has commanded us regarding the eating of bitter herbs. (EAT THE MAROR)

## **HILLEL SANDWICH**

### **LEADER**

The haroses is a mixture of apples, nuts, wine and spices made into a paste. It symbolizes the mortar our ancestors were forced to use to build the Pharaoh's pyramids. Its sweetness is symbolic of the blessings of freedom.

## **DINNER IS SERVED**

## **THE SEARCH FOR THE HIDDEN AFIKOMEN**

*Following the meal and before the service is resumed, the Afikomen, the hidden Matzah, is searched for by the children and returned to the Leader who "buys it back" from the finder with a prize. The word "afikomen" is not a Hebrew word, but is Greek, and means "dessert." Traditionally, no food is eaten after the Afikomen.*

## **THE CUP OF ELIJAH**

### **READER:**

Elijah, the prophet from the village of Tishbi in Gilead, challenged the injustice of the king and overthrew the worship of Baal. He healed the humble sick and helped the widowed. Legend has it that Elijah returns to earth, from time to time, to befriend the helpless.

This man of mystery became associated with the End of Days, with the Messianic hopes of our people. The prophet Malachi promised that Elijah would come to turn the hearts of parents to children, and the hearts of children to parents, and to announce that time when all humankind would celebrate freedom.

Hence, he has a place in every Seder. We open the door to welcome Elijah and his message of peace. We open the door as a promise that we will try to live so that the perfect time will be brought closer by our good deeds. We set aside a cup of wine in honor of Elijah who represents the coming of the Messiah/Messianic Age ushering in the triumph of justice and freedom for all God's children. *(A child or children open the door.)*

## **NIRTZAH—THE CONCLUSION**

### **READER:**

The festive service is now completed. We have told the story of our deliverance. We have tasted the symbols of our feast. We have given thanks for the blessing of freedom.

As we have lived to celebrate the Passover this year, so may we live to celebrate other holidays and other seasons. May all of us here grow in strength and wisdom throughout the year, and may we again give thanks for the Passover together in another spring.

### **LEADER**

The Seder service now concludes

Its rites observed in full,

Its purposes revealed.

This privilege we share will ever be renewed.

Until God's plan is known in full,

God's highest blessing sealed.

Peace!

Peace for us! For everyone!

For all people, this, our hope:

Next year in Jerusalem!

Next year, may all be free! L'SHANA HABA-AH B'YERUSHALAYIM!

## SELECT PASSOVER SONGS

### **THE BALLAD OF THE FOUR CHILDREN**

By Ben Aronon (Sung to the tune of "Clementine")

Said the parents to their children, "At the Seder you will dine.  
You will eat your fill of matzo, You will drink four cups of wine."

Now the couple had four children, and in sum they numbered four.  
One was wise and one was wicked, one was simple and a bore.

And the fourth was sweet and winsome, she was young and she was small,  
While her siblings asked the questions, she could hardly speak at all.

Said the wise one to his father, "Would you please explain the laws?  
Of the customs of the Seder, will you please explain the cause?"

And the father proudly answered, "As our ancestors ate in speed,  
Ate the paschal lamb 'ere midnight' and from slavery were freed.

So we follow their example and 'ere midnight must complete  
All the Seder, and we should not after twelve remain to eat.

Then did sneer the son so wicked, "What does all this mean to you?"  
And the father's voice was bitter as his grief and anger grew.

"If yourself you don't consider as a son of Israel,  
Then for you this has no meaning, you could be a slave as well."

Then the simple child said simply, "What is this?" and quietly,  
The good mother told her offspring, "We were freed from slavery."

But the youngest child was silent, for she could not ask at all,  
Her bright eyes were bright with wonder as her parents told her all.

Now dear children heed the lesson and remember evermore,  
What the couple told the children, told their children who numbered four.

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## Chad Gadya (Folk Song)

Chad gadya (2x)  
My father bought for two zuzim  
Chad gadya (2x).

Then came the cat  
And ate the kid  
My father bought for two zuzim  
Chad gadya (2x).

Then came the dog  
And bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two zuzim  
Chad gadya (2x).

Then came the stick  
And beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two zuzim  
Chad gadya (2x).

Then came the fire  
That burned the stick  
That beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two zuzim  
Chad gadya (2x).

Then came the water  
That quenched the fire  
That burned the stick  
That beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two zuzim  
Chad gadya (2x).

Then came the ox  
That drank the water  
That quenched the fire  
That burned the stick

That beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two zuzim  
Chad gadya (2x).

Then came the butcher  
That slew the ox  
That drank the water  
That quenched the fire  
That burned the stick  
That beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two zuzim.  
Chad gadya (2x).

Then came the Angel of Death  
And killed the butcher  
That slew the ox  
That drank the water  
That quenched the fire  
That burned the stick  
That beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two zuzim  
Chad gadya (2x).

Then came the Holy One  
Blessed be G-d  
And destroyed the Angel of Death  
That killed the butcher  
That slew the ox  
That drank the water  
That quenched the fire  
That burned the sticks  
That beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two zuzim  
Chad gadya (2x).

