

# ***EVOLUTIONARY PASSOVER HAGGADAH***



*Woven by Tree Bressen*

*2007*

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## ***Opening Meditation***

We come together from our separate lives, each of us bringing our concerns, our preoccupations, our hopes, and our dreams. We are not yet fully present: The traffic, the last-minute cooking, the final details still cling to us. Our bodies hold the rush of the past few hours.

It is now time to let go of these pressures and really arrive at this seder. We do this by meditating together. Make yourself comfortable, you can close your eyes if you wish. Now take a few deep breaths, and as you exhale, let go of the tensions in your body. You'll begin to quiet within.

When you're ready, repeat silently to yourself: "Hineini," or "Here I am." Hineini is used in the Torah to signify being present in body, mind, and spirit. It means settling into where we are and simply being "here."

If you prefer, you can visualize the word. Let the word become filled with your breath. Merge with it, so that you experience being fully present. Everything drops away, and you're left in the unbounded state of here-ness. When a thought arises, just notice it and return to hineini again and again. Let yourself be held in the state of hineini.

Meditate in this way for several minutes, long enough to become more present. Slowly open your eyes, and look around the room at the people in your circle. Now, we begin our journey together.

*(by Nan Fink Gefen)*

## ***Introductions Around the Table . . .***

### ***Transformation***

Ever since Rabbi Akiva used the Passover seder to plan a revolutionary struggle against the Romans, Jews have used the seder to begin work on *tikkun olam*, the healing and transformation of the world. The Hebrew word YHVH, sometimes pronounced "Adonai," really means something like "The movement of the present into the future" or "That which makes possible the transformation of that which is into that which can and should be."

So allow time at your table to ask: What needs to be honored in what is, and what needs to be changed? How will we move together into the future? Ask together about our world, ask privately about ourselves. The central message of Passover is this: oppressive realities can be changed; God is the force that makes it possible to move from what is to what ought to be. Recognizing that Transformative Force is the central point of the seder.

*(adapted from Michael Lerner)*

## ***Introduction***

The seder celebration in which we are participating this evening is the product of a tradition which has evolved over 2000 years of Jewish history. Its ritual is a synthesis of various historical periods which have found the Jewish people faced with different material realities, and therefore, different relationships to themselves and the religious and philosophical themes they have chosen to emphasize.

Originally, *Pesach* was commemorated by our nomadic ancestors as a celebration of spring, honoring the season of rebirth and the cyclical process of nature. As Jews became increasingly agrarian, *Pesach* assumed an agricultural emphasis. It was during this period that Jews began to celebrate, as a grain festival, the Festival of Unleavened Bread (*Hag Ha-Matzah*); the actual historical antecedent to the pre-Pesach ceremony of searching for *chametz* (leavened bread) and the use of matzah in the seder ritual.

Traditionally Passover recounts the story of the Exodus, the liberation of the Jews from bondage in Egypt and the start of their journey to the promised land. In contemporary times, there are more options for how to celebrate than ever before. If you search online nowadays you can find versions ranging from ecofeminist to messianic (*afikoman* as representing Christ risen), and from humanist to a reading in the style of Dr. Seuss.

The expression we will be participating in tonight draws from the inspiration of the Universe Story, also known as “The Great Story.” This tradition has been developed by theologian Thomas Berry, physicist Brian Swimme, Dominican Sister Miriam MacGillis, and many others. The Great Story tells the evolution of the universe, stars and galaxies, and the myriad beings of Planet Earth. It treats this tale as a sacred myth, a central story that, like sacred myths of earlier times, tells us our place in things. It offers us guidance for finding meaning in a universe continuously expanding in size and complexity.

As the universe evolves, so it is with this haggadah. Traditionally in Judaism there are a thousand names for God(dess). Our version tonight will include a variety of names for *Ha-Shem* (“the Name”) in both English & Hebrew.



## ***The Open Door***

It is traditional to leave the front door of the house open during the Passover seder. As for many traditions, there are a variety of explanations for this. We are told that Miriam and Elijah, famous prophets of old, must be invited to join our celebration, and that they may walk in at any time. In the desert where our ancestors spent years upon years, hospitality was an extremely important virtue, and on Passover eve all passersby were welcome to enter and receive food. It symbolizes that no person is shut off from other humyn beings. Tonight let it also stand for the constant interchange of atoms between each of us and our environment: the door that is always open between our bodies and the world.

## ***Elijah's Cup***

Our extra cup of wine and bowl on the table are intended as additional welcome for Elijah and Miriam.

Historically the extra cup originated out of a dispute as to whether to drink four cups of wine at the seder or five. The compromise that the rabbinical scholars eventually agreed on was to have a fifth cup present without drinking from it.

## ***Miriam's Bowl***

Rabbinic legend teaches that a magical well accompanied the Israelites on their journey from Egypt toward the Promised Land. This well is said to have appeared because of the merit of the prophetess Miriam. According to Jewish tradition, the waters of the well dried up after her death.

We place Miriam's bowl on the seder table as a counterweight to the cup of Elijah. The latter is a symbol of messianic redemption at the end of time; the former, of redemption in our present lives. Elijah lived in the desert as a lone, howling visionary, focused on the millennium. Miriam sojourned in the same wilderness, but she accompanied the Hebrew people. Tireless tribal parent, she offered hope and renewal at every stage of the journey.

As we pour water from our glasses into Miriam's bowl, let it symbolize each of us giving of ourselves to this ritual. For no ritual is alive of itself, it is only alive insofar as we bring life to it.

## *Eliyahu haNavi • Miriam haNevia*

Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu hatishbi,  
Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu hagiladi.  
Bimheryra b'yamenu, yavo eleynu,  
Im machiach ben Daveed, im machiach ben Daveed.

Miriam hanevia, oz v'zimra b'yada,  
Miriam rikdi itanu l'takeyn et-ha'olam.  
Bimheryra b'yamenu, tavo eleynu,  
El mei ha'yeshua, el mei ha'yeshua,

O Prophet Elijah,  
come to us in our own day  
with the Messiah, child of David.

O Prophet Miriam,  
strength and music in your hand,  
come dance with us to heal the world,  
come to us in our own day with the waters that transform us.



*Read silently:*

The cup of Elijah holds wine;  
the cup of Miriam holds water.  
Wine is more precious  
until you have no water.

Water that flows in our veins,  
water that is the stuff of life  
for we are made of breath  
and water, vision

and fact. Elijah is  
the extraordinary; Miriam  
brings the daily wonders:  
the joy of a fresh morning



like a newly prepared table,  
a white linen cloth on which  
nothing has yet spilled.  
The descent into the heavy



waters of sleep healing us.  
The scent of baking bread,  
roasting chicken, fresh herbs,  
the faces of friends across

the table: what sustains us  
every morning, every evening,  
the common daily miracles  
like the taste of cool water.

*(by Marge Piercy)*



## Kadeish

(Sanctifying the Day)

Tonight we celebrate the story of the universe, the vast unfoldment from the first flaring forth of the “Great Radiance” down to this very moment. We give thanks for the perdurability and infinite creativity of life. We give thanks for the preservation of our spirit, especially in our ability to notice and reflect back to the universe its ineffable beauty. We give thanks for the existence of our bodies, four billion years in the making on this planet. And we pray for the wisdom to bring about the Great Turning of culture on Planet Earth, so that life may continue in all its beauty, joy and diversity.

## Shehechiyatnu

This blessing is said at beginnings: of holidays, seasons, festivals and new undertakings. It reminds us of the continuous wonder of being alive.

**“Blessed are you, unnamable One, our Goddess, breath of the world, who has kept us alive, lifted us up, and brought us to focus on this very moment.”**

*Brucha at Yah elotaynu,  
ruach ha-olam,*

*shehechiyatnu, v'kimatnu,*

*v'higgiatnu, lazman hazeh. Amen.*

בְּרַכָּה אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁהַחֵינֵנוּ,  
וְקִמַּתְנוּ, וְהִגִּיתְנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

SCH ECH IYATNU

B'ro - cha a' Vah e - lo - tay - nu ru - ach ha - o - lam

she hechi - yatnu v'ki - matnu v' higgiatnu laz -

man ha - zeh shehechi -

A

A

men

## Lighting of the Candles



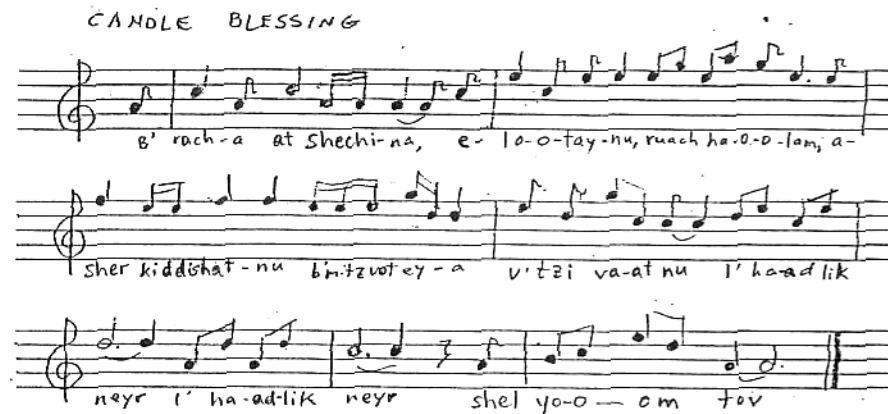
When we light candles we are creating a new space. We light candles to signify the beginning of the Passover seder. Just as the lighting of candles is a transformation from darkness to light, may we all recognize that we as individuals are capable of transformation. As the candles are lit, hold the intention that you are helping to spark a new kind of consciousness that is necessary in the “ecozoic” era.

**Light the candles and recite the following blessing:**

**“Blessed are you, Source of Life, our Goddess, breath of the world, who enables us to attain holiness through connections and connects us with the lighting of the holiday candles.”**

ברכּאתּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיִךְ וְצִוֵּנוּ  
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל (שָׁבֵת וְשָׁל) יוֹם טוֹב.

*Brucha at Shechina, elotaynu, ruach ha-olam  
asher kiddishatnu b'mitzvoteya, v'tzivatnu,  
l'hadlik neyr shel yom tov.*





קידוש

## ***Recitation of the Kiddush***

*Everyone at the table has a glass or cup of wine before them.*

### ***1<sup>st</sup> Cup of Wine • For the Power of the Seas***

*One person reads the directions for this meditation slowly aloud, with pauses:*

Close your eyes for a moment. . . . Notice the saliva in your mouth. . . . Then let your attention be with your eyes, notice the liquid that lets them move around. . . . Picture the blood moving through your veins, circulating all over your body. . . . These and more are the places of water in your body. When creatures emerged from sea onto land, we learned to carry the salty waters with us, and there they are still, in the tang of our blood and the taste of our tears.

The power of the sea is the power of absorption. The sea shows us the power of the universe to dissolve itself. When a proton interacts with an electron, its state vector changes; it has integrated something from the encounter. We cannot be in relationship without being changed—this is a fundamental sensitivity. Every time we watch the moon, a patterned wave of light flows through us; through this conflux our very particles are changed, and we become a new creation.

*Everyone open your eyes and read together:*

We call to honor the spirit of Water. The power of confluence, the power of relationship, the feelings this gives rise to in us. With this cup, in awe and in gratitude, we honor the enchantment of life.

*All recite the blessing over the wine:*

**“Blessed is the Infinite, that fills all creation  
and brings forth the fruit of the vine.”**

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן:  
ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, אשר בחר בנו מכל  
עם, ורוממנו מכל לשון, וקדשנו במצותיו. ונתת לנו, יי  
אלהינו, באהבה (שבתות למנוחה ומועדים לשמחה, חגים  
וזמנים לששון, את יום (השבת הזה, ואת יום) חג המצות הזה,  
זמן חרותנו, (באהבה) מקרא קדש, זכר ליציאת מצרים. כי  
בנו בחרת, ואותנו קדשת מכל העמים, (ושבת) ומועדי  
קדש (באהבה וברחמים) בשמחה ובששון הנחלתנו. ברוך  
אתה, יי, מקדש (השבת ו) ישראל והזמנים.

(sing) *Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri hagafen.*

(say) *Baruch Ata, Adonai Eloheinu, melech haolam, asher bachar banu mikol  
am, v'rom'manu mikol lashon, v'kid'shanu b'mitzvotav. Vatiten lanu Adonai  
Eloheinu b'ahava (shabbatot lim'nucha u) moadim l'sim'cha chagim uz'manim  
l'sason et yom (hashabat hazeh v'et yom) chag hamatzot hazeh z'man  
cheiruteinu (b'ahava) mik'ra kodesh zeicher litziat Mitz'rayim. Ki vanu  
vachar'ta v'otanu kidash'ta mikol ha-amim (v'shabat) umoadai kod'sh'cha  
(b'ahava uv'ratzon) b'sim'cha uv'sason hin'chal'tanu. Baruch Ata, Adonai,  
m'kadeish (hashabat v) Yisraeil v'haz'manim.*

*Everyone drinks the first cup of wine.*

**Urchatz**

(Washing Hands)

*Ceremonial washing of hands by leader*

ורחץ



## *Karpas*

(Eating Greens Dipped in Salt Water)

114 million years ago, in the Cretaceous period of the Mesozoic era, flowers appeared. Imagine that, there was a time before flowers! The explosion of color and scent attracted insects who transport pollen from one flower to the next, fertilizing the plants on which they feed in an elegant dance between the Earth's adornment and the creatures of the sky.

As we bless and eat these greens, we honor the renewal of the earth each spring, and the intimacy between plants and water, the earth and the sea.



## *The Tremor in the Seed*

Long before the struggle upward begins,  
There is tremor in the seed.  
Self-protection cracks,  
Roots reach down and grab hold.  
The seed swells, and tender shoots  
Push up toward light.  
This is *karpas*: spring awakening growth.  
A force so tough it can break stone.

(from *Ronnie M. Horn*)

## *Song of Songs*

(2:10-13)

My beloved spoke thus to me,  
“Arise, my darling;  
My fair one, come away!  
For now the winter is past  
The rains are over and gone.  
The blossoms have appeared in the land,  
The time of pruning has come;  
The song of the turtledove  
Is heard in our land.  
The green figs form on the tree  
The vines in blossom give off fragrance.  
Arise, my darling;  
My fair one, come away!”



*Everyone takes a portion of greens, and each person dips their greens in salt water.*

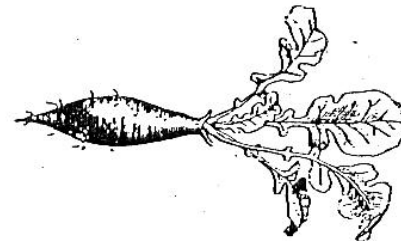
*All recite the blessing:*

**“Blessed are You, Goddess among us, Queen of Existence,  
Creator of the fruit of the earth.”**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, יְאֱלֹהֵינוּ מַלְכֵּךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי  
הָאֲדָמָה.

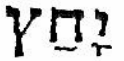
***Brucha At, Shekhina, malchat ha-olam,  
borei p'ri ha-adama.***

*Eat greens dipped in salt water.*



## ***Yachatz***

(Breaking the Middle Matzah)



It is the custom to divide the matzah of freedom in two. One part we keep here with the rest of the matzot. The second part, called the *afikoman* (a Greek word meaning dessert), we hide. After the meal, we will hunt for it and the finder will be rewarded. When the hidden part is found, we will put the two halves together again, and this will be a sign that what is broken can be repaired, and what is lost can be regained, if we remember and search. Each of us will then eat a bit of the ceremonial matzah.

One of the explanations for the significance of the matzah, the unleavened bread, dates back to the time of our agrarian foreparents, when Pesach was the first grain festival of the year. On the second day of Pesach, a new sheaf of barley was brought to the sanctuary and waved over the altar. This day began the counting of the “*omer*” (Hebrew for “sheaf”). The Jews would count 49 days, at the end of which the barley was harvested and a festival held called Shavuot (“weeks”).

Later on, when Pesach became the celebration of the liberation from slavery in Egypt, matzah became the symbol of the “bread of affliction” which our ancestors had to eat during their exodus because there wasn’t enough time for leavened bread to rise.

Commentators have variously interpreted the three pieces of matzah as representing: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; creation, revelation and redemption; the three aspects of life expressed in assertion (which requires one), tension (which requires two), and resolution (which requires three); and many other threads of meaning.

In all probability, our foreparents ate matzah as slaves, too, as simple, flat bread was commonly eaten by people of many cultures. It continues to serve throughout the world as poor people’s bread, whether in the form of matzah, tortillas, chapati or johnnycake. It can be kneaded and baked quickly by overworked wimmin, is filling and practical, and is easy to pack and preserve for several days.

*Someone breaks the middle matzah and places one part back under the cover.*

*Hide the afikoman.*

## *Maggid* (Telling the Story)

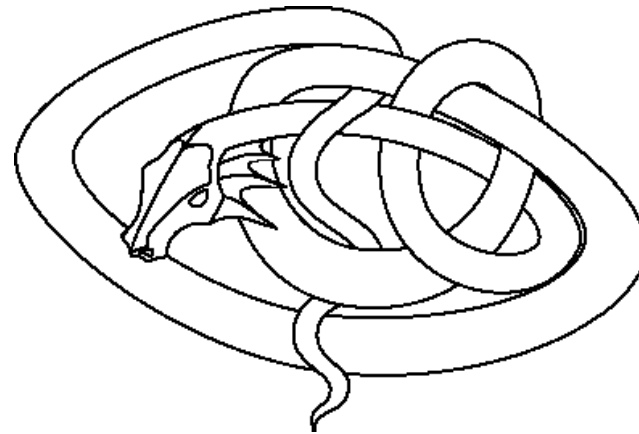
מגיד

*Someone holds aloft the plate with the uncovered matzot.*

Now we repeat the call to Passover:

*All recite:*

This is the bread of life. Let all who are hungry, come and eat. Let all who are in need, come and celebrate the Passover. Now we are here—next year, may we be children of freedom!

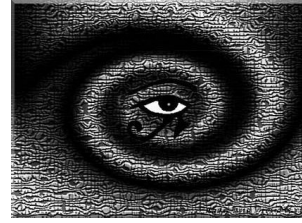


*Read aloud:*

The words “*haggadah*” and “*maggid*” share the same Hebrew root, which means “to tell.” “Telling” is the defining obligation of the Passover seder; we tell the story of our Exodus, our journey from slavery to freedom; or, in this case, our journey from the Great Rapture to now. There are other holidays during which we are specifically obligated to listen. On Purim, we are commanded to hear the reading of the Book of Esther. On Rosh Hashanah, we are required to hear the call of the shofar. But on Passover, we must open our mouths and speak; we are obligated to tell this story in our own voice.



*hieroglyphic stairway*



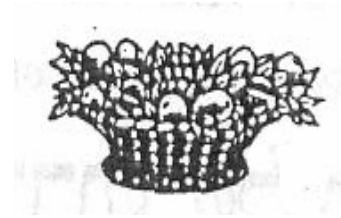
(by Drew Dellinger)

it's 3:23 in the morning  
and I'm awake  
because my great great grandchildren  
won't let me sleep  
my great great grandchildren  
ask me in dreams  
what did you do while the planet was  
plundered?  
what did you do when the earth was  
unraveling?  
surely you did something  
when the seasons started failing?  
as the mammals, reptiles, birds were all  
dying?  
did you fill the streets with protest  
when democracy was stolen?  
what did you do  
once  
you  
knew?  
I'm riding home on the Colma train  
I've got the voice of the milky way in my  
dreams  
I have teams of scientists  
feeding me data daily  
and pleading I immediately  
turn it into poetry  
I want just this consciousness reached by  
people in range of secret frequencies  
contained in my speech  
I am the desirous earth  
equidistant to the underworld  
and the flesh of the stars

I am everything already lost  
the moment the universe turns  
transparent and all the light shoots  
through the cosmos  
I use words to instigate silence  
I'm a hieroglyphic stairway  
in a buried Mayan city  
suddenly exposed by a hurricane  
a satellite circling earth  
finding dinosaur bones  
in the Gobi desert  
I am telescopes that see back in time  
I am the precession of the equinoxes,  
the magnetism of the spiraling sea  
I'm riding home on the Colma train  
with the voice of the milky way in my  
dreams  
I am myths where violets blossom from  
blood like dying and rising gods  
I'm the boundary of time  
soul encountering soul  
and tongues of fire  
it's 3:23 in the morning  
and I can't sleep  
because my great great grandchildren  
ask me in dreams  
what did you do while the earth was  
unraveling?  
I want just this consciousness reached by  
people in range of secret frequencies  
contained in my speech

## *On Questioning at the Seder*

The Four Questions asked at the Passover seder are understood as a celebration of children's curiosity and a manifestation of our tradition's high regard for the act of asking good questions. The idea that "organizations grow toward what they persistently ask questions about" is also a core philosophy of Appreciative Inquiry (a method for working with groups). A powerful question provokes thought, generates energy, and opens new possibilities. "A vital question focuses the creative power of our minds" (Verna Allee).



## *The Four Questions*

Let us all be wise here, and full of questions. Everything in the Seder has meaning. Even if we were full of wisdom, venerable sages all, it would still be incumbent upon us to recount this story for ourselves, to consider and examine each piece.

### *Why is this night different from all other nights?*

On all other nights, we eat either leavened bread or matzah; on this night—only matzah.

On all other nights, we eat all kinds of herbs; on this night we especially eat bitter herbs.

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

On all other nights, we eat in an ordinary manner; tonight we dine with special ceremony.

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות. שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין

חמץ ומצה. הלילה הזה כולו מצה.

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות. הלילה הזה מרור.

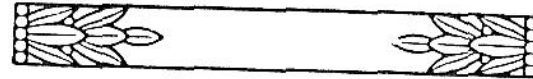
שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת. הלילה הזה

שתי פעמים.

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מקבצין. הלילה הזה

כולו מחדש

1. *Ma nish'tana halai'la hazeh mikol haleilot, mikol haleilot?*  
*Sheb'chol haleilot anu och'lin chameitz umatzah, chameitz umatzah.*  
*Halai'la hazeh, halai'la hazeh, kulo matzah. Halai'la hazeh, halai'la hazeh,*  
*kulo matzah.*
2. *Sheb'chol haleilot anu och'lin sh'ar y'rakot, halai'la hazeh maror.*
3. *Sheb'chol haleilot ein anu mat'bilin afilu pa-am echat, halai'la hazeh sh'tei*  
*f'amim.*
4. *Sheb'chol haleilot anu och'lin bein yosh'vin uvein m'subin, halai'la hazeh*  
*kulanu m'subin.*



***Why on this night do we eat only matzot?***

*Avadot hayinu*—we were slaves. We were slaves in the land of Egypt. Our mothers in their flight from bondage in Egypt did not have time to let the dough rise, so they baked flat bread, called matzah. The Bible tells us, “They were thrust out of Egypt and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victuals” [Exodus 12:39]. In memory of this, we eat only matzot, no bread, during Passover.

***Why on this night do we eat bitter herbs?***

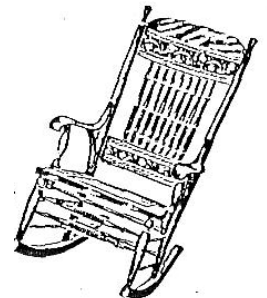
*Avadot hayinu*—we were slaves. As we eat the bitter herbs, we remember our own suffering as slaves in Egypt and acknowledge the pain of the earth under our hands. Let us affirm that we will not do to the earth, nor to other peoples, as the Egyptians did to us. When in your life do you stand in the role of oppressor? What can you do to change this?

***Why do we dip our greens twice?***

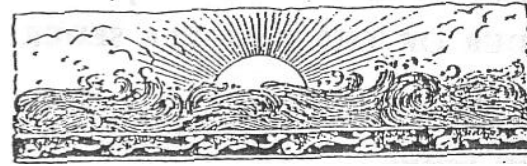
*Avadot hayinu*—we were slaves. The first time we dip our greens to taste the brine of enslavement. But the second time, we dip to remind ourselves of all life and growth, of earth and sea, combined through divine power to give us sustenance.

***Why do we recline while we eat?***

*Avadot hayinu*—we were slaves. Reclining at the table was a sign of freedom in olden times. Since our ancestors were freed from slavery, we recline to remind ourselves that we, like our ancestors, can overcome bondage in our own time.



*INSERT SONG HERE: AVADOT HAYINU*

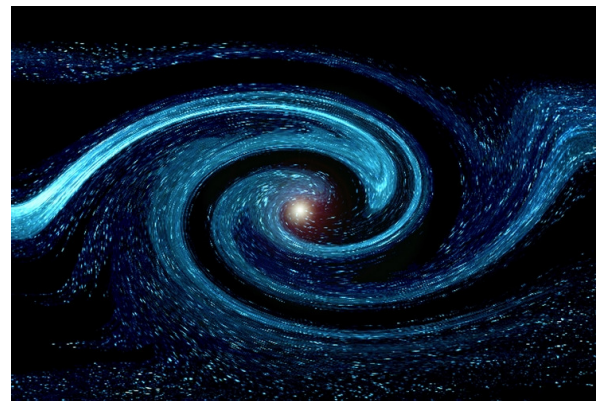


## *Searching for Yourself, Searching for the Whole*

*How can we put care at the center of humyn social systems, instead of pushing it to the margins?*

*How do we scale up to bring about the social evolution we know needs to happen—broadly, deeply, and with joy?*

*Please take a short time to share in small groups with those seated near you.*



## ***Egg***

## ***Beitzah***

*Someone holds up the egg from the passover plate.*

350 million years ago, amphibious frogs and toads which had been returning to water to lay their eggs somehow started carrying eggs within their bodies instead. This grand innovation enabled these creatures to move inland, and the Great Age of Reptiles began.

Whether laid outside in water or on land, or carried within the body all the way to birth, every creature you have ever seen, whether zebra or humyn or house cat, bluejay or garter snake, was once in the form of a tiny egg. The egg on our seder plate reminds us of the birth & death & rebirth cycle of which all life is a part.



## ***Shank Bone***

## ***Z'Roa***

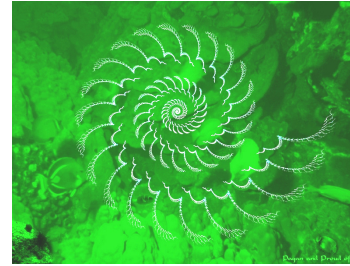
*Someone holds up the shank bone.*

This shank bone is the reminder of the Passover lamb, of the Divine instruction to the Hebrews in Egypt to sacrifice a lamb and mark their doorposts with its blood. This was a sign for the Angel of Death to “pass over” their houses and strike only Egyptians, to cause them to set free their slaves.

Blood is both the symbol and the substance of life.

Again we ask ourselves, how did life come to be on this planet?

## *The Story of Evolution*



This is a story, the story of the universe, the story of Earth, the story of the human, the story of you and me. It is a narrative of one single integrated activity, the universe. We desire to communicate something of its mystery, something of its beauty.

In the beginning was the mystery, the churning foam of quantum potentiality. Through the mystery all things come to be.

From the void, from the dark, come the light and the spark, lit by the power of the eternal matrix of being. Fifteen billion years ago, a great ball of fire expands outward into the creation of the Universe. Time, space, and energy become the gifts of existence. The universe expands and cools rapidly. Energy organizes itself into fundamental particles, new beings with new powers, and they in turn transform into atoms of hydrogen and helium, new beings with new powers.

A billion years later, Galaxies come forth. Stars are born, live, and die. Larger stars transform their hydrogen and helium into heavier elements: carbon, oxygen, aluminum. Many of these stars die and cool slowly to become dark tombs. But the larger stars in their death throes explode and become supernovas, blasting out into the cosmos their precious gifts of elements. These treasures will be gathered together in the life of second-generation stars. Birth, death, and resurrection is an ancient theme of the universe. Supernovas are the mothers of the universe, creating in their wombs the elements of life.

10 billion years later or 4.6 billion years ago, our Grandmother Star becomes a supernova. She gives up her life in an explosion of possibilities.

4½ billion years ago, our Solar System forms from the remains of that supernova explosion. The sun and a great disk of matter emerge—all the planets and other members of our solar system family. Here begins the story of what will become one blue-and-white pearl of a planet.

Over hundreds of millions of years, Earth grows from dust particles to a large, hot, molten planet with a thin rocky crust. The crust thickens as cracks and exuberant volcanoes expel hotly agitated magma to the surface.

Great Bombardment! Comets and meteorites pelt the Earth's thickening crust as it cools off. The moon is born when Earth is impacted by a Mars-sized body that causes the Earth to tilt to the side, giving rise to the seasons of the year.

As the surface of Earth quiets and cools, an atmosphere begins to form. Then a miracle of transformation: the first rain! As steam condenses above the Earth, torrential rains fall on and on, until rivers run over the land and pool into great seas.

This rich chemical brew brings forth the wonder of life. Invisibly small creatures that we call bacteria. The first living cells! 4 billion years ago.

A mere 100 million years later, bacteria run out of free food supplies. They invent photosynthesis to capture energy from the sun, which they then use to create new sources of food from water and simple minerals. In the process, however, they give off oxygen, a deadly corrosive gas that eventually piles up in the atmosphere and threatens all life, leading to the first global environmental crisis 2 billion years ago.

The crisis is averted when cells emerge that can breathe in oxygen and use its energy, like we do. Oxygen levels continue to rise until they reach near present-day levels.

Individual bacteria learn to cooperate and specialize within giant cell cooperatives. Within one cell, some creatures make food while others invent tiny electric motors that move the colony into sunlight, where others capture the energy of the sun. The individual parts become less independent but more secure as inseparable parts of the new wholes. These types of organisms are the same stuff of all plants and animals today. It's all co-ops!

1½ billion years ago, life is mysteriously drawn toward union, and sexual reproduction begins. Different strands of genetic memory are combined in the new offspring. By relinquishing their own immortality, these cells bequeath to their progeny an extravagance of novelty.

One billion years ago, organisms begin to eat one another in the predator-prey dance that promotes the vast diversity of life, as predators pick off the least healthy members among their prey species.

700 million years ago, some organisms, still in the sea, begin living together in colonies, finding ways to communicate with each other using chemical messages. These communities of multicellular organisms rapidly expand creativity throughout the waters.

600 million years ago, light-sensitive eyespots evolve into eyesight. The Earth sees herself for the first time.



The first animals to evolve in the oceans are soft-bodied. Over the next 70 million years, previously naked animals protect themselves with shells. Jaws, beaks, and skeletons follow.

425 million years ago, the first life forms leave the oceans, having learned to develop a membrane within which they can carry their own water, and through which they can withstand the pull of gravity. They become the first land plants, evolving as mosses. Algae and fungi venture ashore as well. They are followed 35 million years later by animals such as worms, mollusks, and crustaceans who seek the adventures of breathing air and surviving weather.

385 million years ago, the first amphibian animals, frogs and toads, hop and lumber onto land, trading in their gill slits for air-breathing lungs, transforming fins into stubby legs and continuing to return to the water to lay their eggs.

335 million years ago, the first forests evolve. Over generations, these forests load themselves with carbon extracted from the atmosphere, which later becomes fossilized as coal and oil.

330 million years ago, nearly weightless insects take to the air. The Earth learns to fly!

235 million years ago, following the 4th and greatest mass extinction, dinosaurs emerge. They flourish for 170 million years. Dinosaurs are social creatures that often travel and hunt in groups. Dinosaurs develop a behavioral novelty unknown previously in the reptilian world: parental care. Some of them carefully bury their eggs and stay with the young after they hatch, nurturing them toward independence.

225 million years ago, the first mammals, small and nocturnal, jump, climb, swing, and swim through a world of giants. Some rodent-sized insect-eaters evolve lactation, enabling mothers to spend more time in the nest keeping their young both fed and warm. Molten rock has reorganized itself to be able to express a parent's love for its child.

210 million years ago, responding to the intense pressure at her core, Earth shifts, her land mass cracked. The continents drift apart, and the Atlantic Ocean is born.

150 million years ago, birds emerge as direct descendants of certain dinosaurs whose foreleg bones evolve into wing bones, jawbones into beaks, and scales into feathers. Some of these birds have wingspans of 40 feet! They follow the insects into the vast vault of the sky.

Shortly after primates appear on the scene about 65 million years ago, the Cretaceous period ends with the 5th mass extinction, after an asteroid 6 miles across strikes the Yucatan peninsula. This leads to a severe drop in temperature and marks the end of the age of dinosaurs and the beginning of the age of mammals, the

Cenozoic era. With the dinosaurs gone, the once dark and sheltered small mammals stride into daylight, moving quickly to occupy available ecological niches.

114 million years ago, the first placental mammals develop, warm-blooded creatures who, like the supernova, carry their unborn young within their own bodies, and nourish them from their own substance both before and after birth.

4 million years ago, Hominids leave the forest, stand up, and walk on two legs. The savanna offers the challenges and opportunities for these early creatures to evolve into humans. They spread out over the surface of the Earth.

100,000 years ago, modern Humans emerge. Language, shamanic and goddess religions, and art become integral with human life.

11,000 years ago, agriculture is invented. Humans begin to shape the environment, deciding which species shall live and which shall die.

5,200 years ago, yet unable to understand the diversity among them, humans begin an age of chronic war-making, a behavior pattern which continues into the present.

3,200 years ago, the exodus of Israel out of the land of Egypt. The other classical religions emerge around this time as well: Confucianism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.

2,300 years ago, highly evolved Mayan civilization flourishes and spreads throughout the Americas.

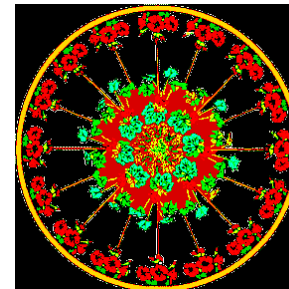
257 years ago, scientists begin to calculate the Age of the Earth. Humans try to understand how old the Earth is through empirical observations.

77 years ago, empirical evidence of an Expanding Universe is discovered, along with the interior depths of its atomic structures.

37 years ago Earth is seen as Whole from space. The Earth becomes complex enough to witness her own integral beauty.

Today the Story of the Universe is told as our sacred Story. The Flaring Forth continues at this moment, through us.

*(Adapted from Miriam MacGillis, Larry Edwards, and others)*



## *Dayeinu*

In traditional haggadot, we express our gratitude for all that was done for our people from the time we fled Egypt until the Temple was built in Israel. We say that each of those blessings alone “would have been enough.” At this seder, we recite the following, to honor the development of stars and stardust into life.

How many miracles has the universe bestowed!

If the primordial fireball had exploded any faster, matter would have spread out into formlessness. Any slower, and the universe would have collapsed in upon itself. Had the universe merely come into stable existence, it would have been enough.

If through the force of gravity clouds of hydrogen and helium had come together only to light up stars, if that were all, it would have been enough.

If our sun had only just been born, granddaughter star of a supernova sacrificed, just this would have been enough.

If the Earth had only come together at just the right size to be a spherical furnace of molten rock, neither solidified, nor a permanent swirl of gas, and at just the right distance from the sun, it would have been enough.

If complex molecules had only just formed bacteria, if that were the only life that ever emerged on this planet, it would have been enough.

If the bacteria had only discovered photosynthesis and done no more, finding a way to break light out of water and store the energy in chemical bonds, it would have been enough.

If bacteria had only learned to love each other and reproduce, to eat each other and eventually to internalize each others’ functions, if all cells did was learn to cooperate, it would have been enough.

If these organic “co-ops” had only just grown into eyes and wings, hearts and feet, emerging from water onto land, surely it would have been enough.

Then how many blessings, doubled and redoubled, has the universe bestowed upon us!

For the fireball exploded,  
and the universe came into being,  
and the atoms came together to light up stars,  
and our grandmother star gave up her elements for our sun and planets,  
and the magnificent Earth condensed with its molten mantle,  
and complex molecules did form, and from them bacteria,  
and bacteria discovered the light of the sun, and sexing, and eating, and working together,

and growing into beings with the ability to behold themselves, each other, and this glorious planet.

And from that we have music and art, language and culture, and the knowledge of our own being.

From this we can hold each other as the wondrous expression of the Divine, honor each being as a miracle of becoming.

How many blessings to be grateful for!

DAYEINU

The musical score for "Dayeinu" is written on five staves. The first four staves contain the main melody with the following lyrics: "I-lu ho-tsi ho-tsi a-nu ho-tsi-a-nu", "mi-mits'ra-yim ho-tsi-a -nu mi-mits'ra-yim", "da-yei-nu da da-yei-nu da da-yei-nu", and "da da-yei-nu da-yei-nu da-yei-nu da-yei-nu". The fifth staff contains the Hebrew text "אלו דו צאנו ממצרים לך" and the lyrics "yei-nu da-yei-nu".

Verses:

- 1) *Ilu hotzi anu mi-mitzrayim, dayeinu.*
- 2) *Ilu natan lanu et hashabat, dayeinu.*
- 3) *Ilu natan lanu et hatorah, dayeinu.*

Had God only taken us out from the bondage of Egypt it would have been enough!

### Query:

***What do you think is the role of humyns in the story of evolution?***

*Please take a short time to share in small groups with those seated near you.*

### Rachtzah

(Washing of Hands by All)

רחצה

**“Blessed are You, our God, Creator of the Universe, Who makes us holy with**

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך  
העולם אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וציונו  
על-נטילת ידים:

**mitzvot and commands us concerning the washing of the hands.”**

***Baruch Ata, Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha-olam, asher kid’shanu b’mitzvotav  
v’tzivanu al-n’tilat yadayim.***

### The Ten Plagues

We take drops from our wine cup to decrease our joy.

*As each plague is read, dip your finger in your wine and take one drop onto your plate instead.*

We have already heard of the plagues of old. In modern times, our plagues are:



*Recite together:*

- |                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. War                   | 6. Racism                    |
| 2. Climate Change        | 7. Corporate Rule            |
| 3. Extinction of Species | 8. Greed                     |
| 4. Loss of Languages     | 9. Indifference to Suffering |
| 5. Hunger                | 10. Hopelessness             |



## ***Oseh Shalom***

May the One who makes peace in high places  
Grant peace to all of the people Israel, and to all people everywhere,  
And let us say, “Amen.”

### ***Oseh Shalom Bim'romav***

***Hu ya'aseh shalom, aleynu, v'al kol yisrael  
v'imru, imru amen***

***Ya'aseh shalom, ya'aseh shalom, shalom aleynu, v'al kol yisrael***

## ***2<sup>nd</sup> Cup of Wine • For the Power of the Land***

Land is the place of memory. The crust of the Earth holds the storybook of life's adventure. The journeys of the continents as they crashed against each other and floated across the oceans on the spongy rock of the mantle has been recorded in mountain ranges, seas, and trenches left behind by the collisions. Our very flesh is memory poured into form, the legacy of thousands of generations of adaptation to circumstance.

Let us hold witness too for land as the place of contested memories among today's inheritors of the Jewish tradition and the land that Israel claims. Let us honor the ties binding generations to sacred places, and pray that Jews in Palestine turn back on the road of oppression, halting the building of the Apartheid Wall and choosing instead to honor the Palestinian people with love and respect.

*Lift the wine cup, saying:*

**“Blessed are you, Source of Life, our Goddess, breath of the world,  
Creator of the fruit of the vine.”**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן.

***Brucha at Shechina, elotaynu, ruach ha-olam, borei p'ri hagafen.***

*All drink the second cup of wine.*

## **Motzi Matzah**

(Blessing and eating the matzah)

מוציא  
מצה

### **Half-Baked Bread**

As the Jews hurried to flee from Egypt they took with them half-baked bread, pulled from the ovens before it was really ready. The bread was incomplete, unfinished—as it is in our world. Here we live, in a universe that is still a work in progress. Here we live in a world that is, like matzah, still broken, in need of wholeness and repair.

Rabbi Tarphon once said: “The day is short, and the work is great; the workers are sluggish, and the reward is much ... You are not required to finish the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.”

As we bless this unfinished bread we make a commitment to *tikkun olam*—the repair of the world. We set for ourselves the task of helping to bring about the unfoldment of the universe and all that is in us.

*All break off a small portion of ceremonial matzah, saying:*

**“Blessed are You, Goddess among us, Queen of Existence, who brings forth bread from the earth.”**

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם המוציא  
לחם מן הארץ:

***Brucha At Shekhina, malchat ha-olam,  
hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz.***

**“Blessed are You, our God, Creator of the Universe, who makes us holy with mitzvot and commands us to eat unleavened bread.”**

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,  
אשר קדשנו במצוותיו, וציונו על  
אכילת מצה.

***Baruch Ata, Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav  
v'tzivanu al achilat matza.***

*Everyone eat the matzah.*

## **Maror**

(Blessing and eating the bitter herb)

מָרֹר

### ***How Far Would We Go?***

Rabban Gamliel said: “Whoever does not discuss the meaning of the following three symbols of the seder on Passover evening has not fulfilled their duty”:

*Pesach*, *matzah*, and *maror*.

*Pesach*: What sacrifices would we make for freedom today? What would we leave behind? How far would we go? How deeply would we look within ourselves?

*Matzah*: Our ancestors had no time to wait for their bread to rise. Yet we, who have that time—what do we do with it?

*Maror*: We were slaves in Egypt, but now we are free. How easy it is for us to relive the days of historical bondage as we sit in the warmth and comfort of the seder. Yet our way of life must end soon, for all around us is the suffering of creatures and we are not apart from that. Let us commit to ensure that all our actions come from a place of love and respect for Life, acknowledging that we are all one.

Now we each will take a bit of the bitter herb to fulfill the commandment of this night to eat the bitter herb.

**“Blessed art Thou, our God, Creator of the Universe, who makes us holy with mitzvot and commands us to eat bitter herbs.”**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל  
אֲכִילַת מָרֹר.

***Baruch Ata, Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat maror.***

*Everyone eats the maror on matzah.*



## Koreich

(Continuity of Tradition)

Tradition adds another custom, in honor of the great teacher Hillel, head of the rabbinic academy in Jerusalem at the time of the Romans. In remembrance of the loss of the Temple, Hillel created the Koreich sandwich. He said that by eating the Koreich, we would taste the bitterness of slavery mixed with the sweetness of freedom. Being the color of clay or mortar, *charoset* reminds us of the bricks and mortar used by slaves in building the Pharaoh's palaces and cities. Yet the taste of *charoset* is sweet, reminding us of the sweetness of freedom. The practice suggests that part of the challenge of living is to taste freedom even in the midst of oppression, and to be ever conscious of the oppression of others even when we feel that we are free.

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?  
But if I am for myself only, what am I?  
And if not now, when?

*-Hillel*

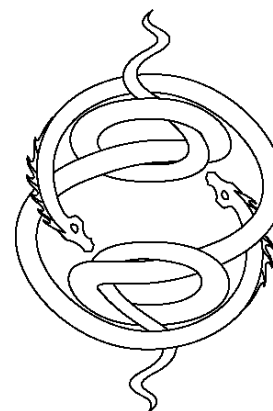
And if not with others, how?

*-Adrienne Rich*

A non-Jew asked Hillel to teach him the entire Torah while he stood on one foot. The rabbi said, "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you. That is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary. Now go and study."

In honor of the Temple and Hillel, we shall place the bitter herb with charoset on the matzah.

*Everyone eats their "Hillel sandwich."*



## ***B'chol dor vador***

It says in the Mishnah, the collection of Jewish law included in the Talmud, in the section Pesachim, that it is incumbent upon each person gathered at a Seder to recite the following words:

**In all generations it is the duty of a person to consider oneself as if one had come forth from the land of Egypt.”**

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיֵּיבֵת אִשָּׁה לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמָהּ כְּאִילוּ  
הִיא יֹצֵאת מִמִּצְרַיִם.

***B'chol dor vador chayevet isha lir'ot et'atz'ma k'ilu hi yatza mimitz'rayim.***

## ***Y'Hi Shalom***

May there be peace, goodness, blessing, kindness and compassion.

***Y'hi shalom, tovah, u-v'rachas,  
hen, hen, hen, va-chesed, chesed, v'rachamim.***

*Read silently:*

### ***Sermon: A Universe Story***

It's a seemingly fantastic story—fantastic in the original sense of the word: unreal or imaginary. Once upon a time, before time even existed, there was a strange ball of matter. My mind is already boggled by it—how could there be a before time? So, this theoretical strange ball of matter happens to contain within itself the makings of a universe—not just any universe—our universe. With no explanation for why this might happen, it is believed that this strange ball of matter, this universe seed, exploded 15 billion years ago and our universe was born.

Theologian Sallie McFague describes it this way: “From one infinitely hot, infinitely condensed bit of matter (a millionth of a gram) ... have evolved one hundred billion galaxies, each with its billions of stars and planets. On our tiny planet alone biologists have found in a single square foot of topsoil one inch deep an average of 1,356 living creatures ... including 865 mites, 265 springtails, 22 millipedes, 19 adult beetles, and various numbers of 12 other forms ... (not to mention the microscopic population that would include up to two billion bacteria and millions of fungi, protozoa and algae).”

It is seemingly fantastic. Out of the stars in their flight, out of the dust of eternity, here have we come, stardust and sunlight, mingling through time and through space.

This is the current scientific story of our universe

So, how does this particular story inform religion? First of all, it's inconclusive as far as God goes. Some might understand God as the origin or creator of the universe seed. A deistic view would suggest God set things in motion with a big bang and then chemistry and evolution took over from there. For some people, this is simply the description of natural events that don't include a God or Goddess. In process theology, God is thought to be present in every moment in every time in every place in the universe. A process God nudges things along in partnership with the natural world. For pantheists, such as myself, God is not outside of the universe—but *is* the universe—exploding out from the universe seed.

However you understand God's role, it's my personal belief that this story holds the key to salvation. Salvation. When I refer to salvation, I'm not talking about heaven or hell, or the requirements to get into heaven. I'm talking about our planet here and now. I'm talking about the salvation of our planet: the health and well-being of the world and the many bodies that constitute that larger organism.

I believe the stories we tell shape our world; they create the boundaries and limitations for what is possible. There is a children's story that tells of a tiger who

is captured and kept in a cage. Every day her captor comes to feed her and tells her she is puny, ugly, and weak. For years the tiger lives in that cage until one day a lion passes by and asks her, “What is a powerful, beautiful tiger such as yourself doing in this cage?” At first she thinks he’s teasing her—she’s bought into the story that she’s weak and ugly. Ultimately, he tells her a new story—that she is glorious, strong, and powerful—and she bursts out of that cage only to learn that it was never locked. The story itself imprisoned her.

I tell this universe story because I think if we listen to it, if we hear it enough times and allow it to shape our lives, to filter into our worldview, to become part of our religion, we will find important truths that are necessary for the health and well-being of our planet and its creatures.

*(Adapted from a sermon delivered by Alice Anacheke-Nasemann at the Unitarian Church of Marlborough and Hudson in Massachusetts, January 2006)*



# עֲטִי



## *Tzafun* (Finding the Afikoman)

## צִפּוּן

*After the meal, all the children (or the whole group) hunt for the Afikoman, for the seder cannot be concluded without it. The person who finds it is permitted to ransom it off to the gathering.*

*The afikoman is matched with the other part of the matzah from the plate.*

*The holder says:* We began by dividing this bread and hiding part of it; for if we hold tight to what we have, we keep ourselves in tight and narrow spaces. Only by sending forth part of ourselves into the unknown can we give birth to freedom.

What is broken shall be made whole. What is shattered shall be restored. Our hope is ourselves, to find what is lost, bring it together, and restore our faith.

*Distribute and eat the afikoman.*

***Birkat Hamazon***  
(Blessing After the Meal)

בִּרְכַּת הַמֶּזֶז

***Let Us Say Grace***

Friends,  
Let us say grace.  
Or shall we ask for grace?

God,  
Help us to be comforted by the faith that we are not alone,  
And the understanding that there is meaning and purpose to our lives.  
Help us to understand the desert journey.  
Though we wander in an apparent wilderness,  
The silence resounds with messages of comfort.  
Guide us, O God of Miriam, show us the way.

So much of life is the steep climb up a mountain  
That rumbles and shakes with Your presence, O God.  
Teach us not to be afraid to climb enormous heights,  
Though it takes our breath away  
Because it leads to truth and helps us befriend life's mysteries.

Friends,  
Shall we say grace?  
Or shall we acknowledge that we live in grace  
When we know that we are loved and chosen  
For unique and wondrous things,  
That we are called to greatness by our passion.

God, help me find my passion,  
My mission.  
Help me hear the melody of the silence.  
And see the possibility in the vastness.  
I know that the ground beneath my feet is holy  
I know that it is,  
Friends let us say grace.

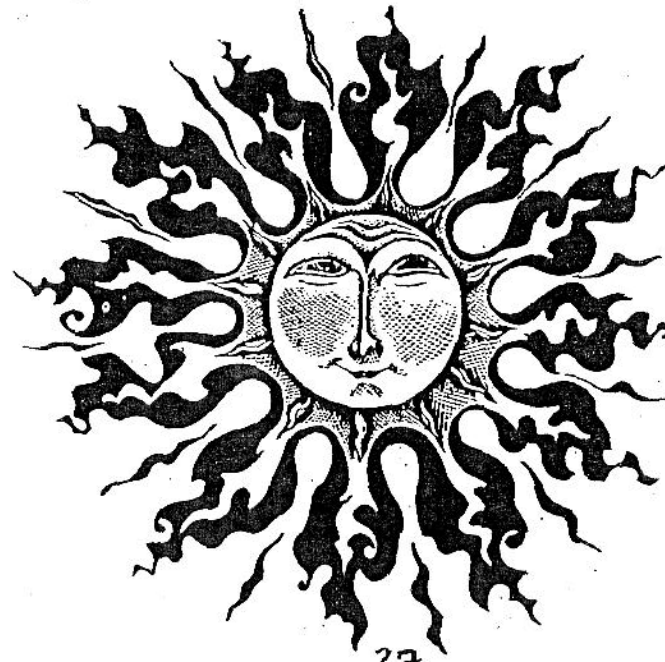
*(by Karyn D. Kedar)*

“Blessed are You, our God, Provider for the Universe, Who sustains the whole world with loving kindness and mercy. You give food to all creatures. With goodness and grace you have fed us. Thank you God, for continuing to nourish all people.”

בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּבְרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מַלְכֵּי הָעוֹלָם, הָעוֹן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ  
בְּטוֹבוֹ, בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים. הוּא נוֹתֵן לֶחֶם לְכָל בְּשָׂר, כִּי  
לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד, וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל תָּמִיד לֹא חָסֵר לָנוּ, וְאֵל יִחְסַר  
לָנוּ מִזֶּן לְעוֹלָם וְעַד בְּעֶבֶר טָמוּ הַגָּדוֹל. כִּי הוּא אֵל וְ  
וּמַפְרִינֵם לִבָּל, וּמַטִּיב לְכָל, וּמַכִּין מִזֶּן לְכָל בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר  
בָּרָא. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, הָעוֹן אֶת הַכֹּל.

*Baruch hu uvaruch sh'mo. Brucha At, Shekhina, malchat ha-olam. Hazan et ha-olam kulo b'tuvo b'chein b'chesed uv'rachamim hu notein lechem l'chol basar ki l'olam chas'do. Uv'tuvo hagadol tamid lo chasar lanu v'al yech'sar lanu mazon l'olam va-ed ba-avur sh'mo hagadol. Ki hu eil zan um'far'neis lakol umeitiv lakol umeichin mazon l'chol b'riyotav asher bara. Baruch Ata Adonai, hazan et hakol*



### ***3<sup>rd</sup> Cup of Wine • For the Power of Fire***

Consider a burning candle. The wick or wax can be changed, yet we still recognize it as a flame. The flame organizes color and temperature and these different materials into its own persisting process. A flame is an image of unseen organizing. It is an activity, a self-organizing power that spontaneously erupts and shows itself whenever it is able to. The same could be said of a tornado, a tree, or you. As we drink this 3rd cup of wine, we honor the self-organizing process of all living systems.

*Recite together:*

We call to honor the power of Fire. The power of social movements, for justice or for conscious evolutionary change, to burst out through this land, to rise suddenly from a simmer to an unstoppable force for change.

*Lift the third cup of wine and say:*

**“Blessed are You, Goddess among us, Queen of Existence,  
Creator of the fruit of the vine.”**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן:

***Brucha At, Shekhina, malchat ha-olam,  
borei p’ri hagafen.***

*Drink the third cup of wine.*

***Sing: Rise Up, O Flame, by thy light glowing. Sing to us beauty, vision & joy.***



## *The Long Road*

Alone, you can fight,  
you can refuse, you can  
take what revenge you can  
But they roll over you.

But two people fighting  
back to back can cut through  
a mob, a snake-dancing file  
can break a cordon, an army  
can meet an army.

Two people can keep each other  
sane, can give support, conviction,  
love, massage, hope, sex.  
Three people are a delegation,  
a committee, a wedge. With four  
you can play bridge and start  
an organization. With six  
you can rent a whole house,  
eat a pie for dinner with no  
seconds, and hold a fund-raising party.  
A dozen can hold a demonstration.  
A hundred fill a hall.  
A thousand have solidarity and your own newsletter;  
ten thousand, power and your own paper;  
a hundred thousand, your own media;  
ten million, your own country.

It goes one at a time,  
it starts when you care  
to act, it starts when you do  
it again after they said no,  
it starts when you say *We*  
and know who you mean, and each  
day you mean one more.

*(by Marge Piercy)*

## **Nirtza**

(Accepting God's Covenant)

נִרְצָה

### **4<sup>th</sup> Cup of Wine • For the Power of Wind**

Wind is created as heat moves from place to place. The entire universe expands in just this way: if we look into the night sky, we see that the galaxies are all moving away from us. This is the result of the initial explosion of the primeval fireball, when all matter was in a terrifically hot and dense form; it has all been rushing away from itself for 15 billion years. As we drink this 4th cup, we honor the cosmic dynamic of dispersal, as expressed through celebration.

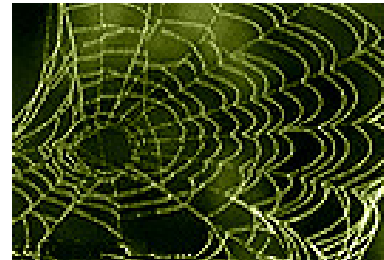
*Recite together:*

We call to honor the spirit of Wind. As we prepare to spread out from this gathering, out into the streets and on to our separate homes this night, we commit to keeping the dance of spirit alive in our hearts, through this holiday season and throughout our life in the coming year.

**“Let us bless the Wholly One, honoring our tradition as we taste the fruit of the vine.”**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן:

*Nevarech et YAH u'n'chabed et masorteinu b'ochleinu mi p'ri hagafen.*



## ***Redemption Seemed as Close as the Kitchen Sink***

We have reached the end of the seder. We have traveled through sacred time, making the journey from slavery to freedom. We have pushed the limits of our imaginations, embracing the idea that we, too, were slaves in Egypt, and we, too, will celebrate next year's seder in a Jerusalem filled with peace. We have savored the taste of a dry, humble cracker—at once the bread of poverty and the symbol of our redemption. Tonight, we have shared our table with prophets and let the voices of our ancestors mingle with our own songs of praise. And now, that intensity begins to fade away. We look around through tired eyes—there is wine spilled on the table, matzah crumbs cover the floor. It is time to do the dishes.

We are poised, right now, somewhere between Jerusalem and our kitchen sinks. The demands of the ordinary pull us away from the seder's extraordinary delights, and we are faced with the task of keeping the songs of freedom ringing in our ears. There is no easy way to do this; no simple formula can guide every one of us. But each of us needs to reflect: What does it mean to say that God brought our ancestors out of Egypt? What does it mean to say that we, too, were slaves in that place? What are the consequences of these words? What kinds of responsibilities do they place on us? How do we walk away from this table and still keep the teachings of this evening close to our hearts? Tonight, let's turn away from platitudes and easy answers. Let's acknowledge how hard it is to keep the seder with us, how difficult it is to stay in touch with wonder, gratitude, and the call to justice.

Soon we will clear away the glasses and sweep up the crumbs. But sometime in the coming year, we may notice the smallest crumb of matzah stuck between the cracks in the floor. And if that happens, perhaps we will hold that crumb in our hands and be brought back to this moment, when redemption seemed as close as the kitchen sink.

*(by Deborah Glanzberg-Krainin)*

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:

***L'shana haba-a biy'rushalayim!***

**Next year in Jerusalem!**

# HINEI MA TOV

Adapted from Psalm 133:1

Traditional tune

The musical score is written on ten staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are in Hebrew, with some words in English. The score includes a 'Fine' marking at the end of the third staff and a repeat sign at the end of the fourth staff. The lyrics are: 'Hi-nei ma tov u - ma na - im', 'she'vet a-chot gam ya-chad, hi-nei ma tov u -', 'ma na - im she-vet a-chot gam ya-chad.', 'Hi-nei ma tov, hi-nei ma tov, la la', 'la la la la la la la. Hi-', 'nei ma tov u - ma na - im she-vet a-chot', 'gam ya-chad, hi - nei ma tov u - ma na-im', and 'she-vet a-chot gam ya-chad. Hi- nei ma tov'.

Hi-nei ma tov u - ma na - im

she'vet a-chot gam ya-chad, hi-nei ma tov u -

ma na - im she-vet a-chot gam ya-chad. **Fine**

Hi-nei ma tov, hi-nei ma tov, la la

la la la la la la la. Hi-

nei ma tov u - ma na - im she-vet a-chot

gam ya-chad, hi - nei ma tov u - ma na-im

she-vet a-chot gam ya-chad. Hi- nei ma tov



Behold how good and how pleasant it is for sisters to dwell together.

## LO YISA GOI

Isaiah 2:4

Folk Tune



Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor ever again shall they train for war.

## SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

### *Next Year*

They arrived at the Seder,  
unannounced and tried to squeeze  
their thin bodies in a chair.  
They had more than four questions  
to ask. Four cups of wine  
could not slake their thirst.  
They were ghosts from Brazil,  
Iran, Russia, Poland; lost shtetls.  
Jews of the blackened chimneys.

They knew secret places  
to hide the *afikomen*. They sang  
and danced wildly to invisible  
violins. Later, exhausted,  
they reclined like noblemen  
at a grand feast.

When it was time to leave,  
they used threadbare sleeves  
to wipe the matzah crumbs  
from their grape-stained lips.

They vanished into the night.  
The host, sensing something  
amiss, ran outside. Gazing up,  
he found them clustered, like stars.  
He whispered hoarsely, "Come back,  
next year! Next year!"

*(by Gertrude Rubin)*

## *The Ballad of the Four Sons*

(to the tune of "Clementine")

Said the father to his children,  
"At the Seder you will dine,  
You will eat your fill of Matzah,  
You will drink four cups of wine."

Now this father had no daughters  
But his sons they numbered four.  
One was wise and one was wicked,  
One was simple and a bore.

And the fourth was sweet &  
winsome,  
He was young and he was small.  
While his brothers asked the  
questions  
He could scarcely 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 fathers 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 12 remain to eat.

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

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

Then the simple son said simply  
"What is this?" and quietly  
The good father told his offspring  
"We were freed from slavery."

But the youngest son was silent  
For he could not speak at all.  
His bright eyes were bright with  
wonder  
As his father told him all.

My dear children, heed the lesson  
And remember evermore  
What the father told his children  
Told his sons that numbered four.

## *The Other Children*



## ***Selections from the Song of Songs***

***Shir Hashirim***

*The Song of Solomon is traditionally chanted on Pesach, with different cantillations in the Mizrahi, Ashkenazi, and Sephardi traditions.*

*(another page with Song of Songs)*

# *Evolutionary Spirit*

*by Tom Hurley*

*(Inspired by the Evolutionary Salon, Whidbey Institute, January 2006)*

There is that in each of us  
that knows.

It is here now, waiting  
for us to open to it, waiting  
for us to tune ourselves, waiting  
for us to inquire, waiting  
for us to listen.

It is here now, resting  
in the tides of breath, roaring  
in the fire of our hearts, glowing  
in the depths of clear eyes,  
quickening our contact.

There is that in each of us  
that knows.



There is that among us  
that knows.

We hear it every time  
a word rings true; we feel it  
in our hearts relaxing. We glimpse it  
in the tears of a friend, and find it  
when we stop grasping.

Through it, we are led to our part  
in the great work; we come to our place  
in the world. We let go to let healing  
happen;  
we learn to nurture, be fearless,  
and surrender.

There is that among us  
that knows.



There is that in us together  
that knows.

We call it forth through  
clear intent and faithful tending  
to our presence. We hear it in the field  
of silence and the lightning  
power of speech.

We can be touched by it  
when we let ourselves be touched.  
What it reveals now is just what we  
need now. Spirit settles here,  
knowing home.

There is that in us together  
that knows.



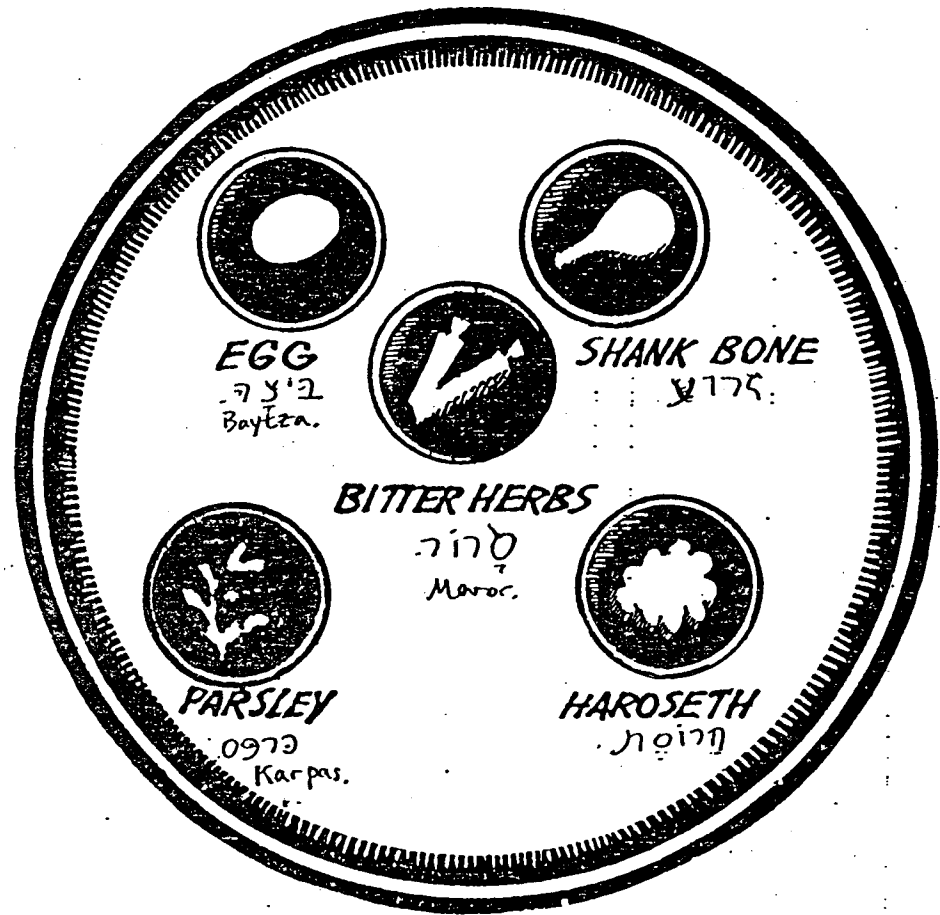
There is that in all things  
that knows.

The sacred web of life  
enfolds us. One heart pulses  
through our being. There is no place  
that is not home; we can walk  
in shadow and the light.

Not seeing the whole path,  
we may still sense our next step.  
Through our waking, work, and love  
the worlds that nourish life  
will come.

There is that in all things  
that knows.





SEDER PLATE

**“And the day came when the risk to  
remain tight in a bud was more  
painful than the risk it took to  
blossom.”**

**—*Anaïs Nin*  
(1903-1977)**

