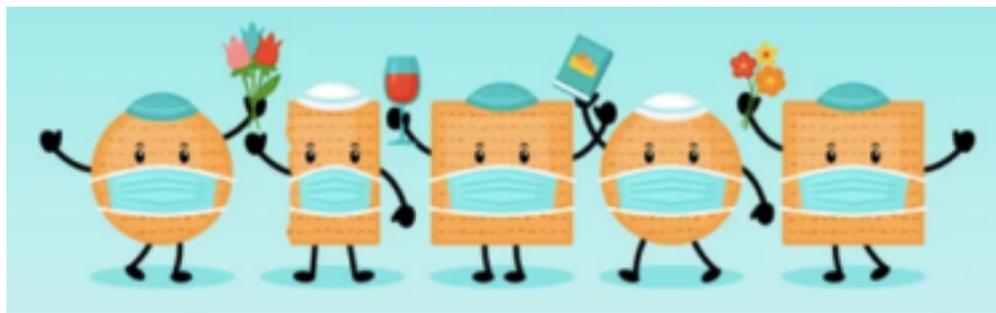




## Queer Passover Seder

Haggadah compiled by Cantor Laura Stein



### HINEIH MAH TOV

Hineih mah tov u'mah na-im  
shevet achim gam yachad.

הִנֵּה מַה־טוֹב וּמַה־נְּעִים  
שֵׁבֶת אַחִים גַּם־יַחַד.

How good and how pleasant it is that brothers and sisters dwell together.

*(Psalm 133:1)*

# Honoring This Moment: COVID-19 Haggadah Supplement

**By Rabbi Rachel Silverman**

This will be a Passover like no other, and it's important to honor where we are in this moment. While we are cautious and careful, we are less anxious and fearful than we were last year. We look toward a future that will be bright, but we know we aren't quite there yet. This seder supplement intends to mark this liminal moment in time, full of trepidation, yet also hopeful for a future that is brighter than the past.

## "Gatherings" by Alan Cook

The people gathered.  
They did not assemble in pews,  
did not congregate in the foyer.  
They did not linger over the oneg table  
for another cup of the Sisterhood's famous  
punch  
(which is merely ginger ale and sherbet,  
but is magically transformed into a Divine elixir  
when consumed in the service of celebrating  
Shabbat).  
The people gathered,  
though no cars jockeyed for space in the  
parking lot;  
though hugs and kisses and handshakes were  
not exchanged—  
verbal greetings from afar sufficed.  
The people gathered,  
as weeks stretched into months  
and the months stretched into a year.  
Living room sofas and dining room tables  
and office desks

became our mikdashei m'at, our personal  
sanctuaries.  
We looked at the assortment of windows,  
took an accounting of our community,  
welcomed new faces, reconnected with friends  
from afar.  
At times, we lamented the loss  
of our old manner of gathering.  
But we rejoiced in the new spaces of holiness  
that we have been able to construct.  
For we have learned, "It is not the places  
that confer holiness upon us;  
rather it is we  
who imbue places with holiness."  
So, until we can once again  
bask in the holiness  
of being physically present with one another,  
Let us rejoice in our sacred community  
still bound by heart and spirit,  
and let us derive strength  
from one another.

# MA NISHTANA

מה נשתנה  
A Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Ally Haggadah

*Leader:*

Why?

What does Passover have to do with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and ally (or - GLBTQA) issues? Can't a traditional seder stand on its own?" Often our Jewish tradition seems as though it has very little to say about our GLBTQA identities, and we can feel isolated within the Jewish tradition. These Jewish and GLBTQA identities, however, are not separate entities – they are always in conversation with one another.

*Leader:*

The seder table is the ideal place to bring multiple identities together in that the struggles for those identities as individuals and as communities are so integral to one another. We do not remove one identity to dawn another: we are all of our identities at all times. Just as we read of our past and the Jewish struggle for redemption, we relate our modern GLBTQA struggle for recognition, freedom, and acceptance. The seder is not something separate from our GLBTQA identities, but something strongly integrated – that speaks to us as whole, multifaceted people, in a celebratory and safe environment.

**How do we celebrate Passover  
and hold a Queer Seder during  
this crisis?**

## הַדְּלִיקַת נְרוֹת CANDLELIGHTING

READER:<sup>1</sup> As we bathe in the light of these candles, we remember all the candles we've lit as Jews, as LGBTQI<sup>2</sup> people and allies, and as those who struggle for freedom. Shabbat candles. *Yahrtzeit*<sup>3</sup> candles. Candles at AIDS vigils. And candles at Take Back the Night Marches.

READER: As we share in the light of these candles, we rededicate the flame each of us carries within, that small reflection of the Creator's light that is ours to use as a beacon in our work of *tikkun olam*—repairing the world.

READER: We rededicate this small spark that we can use as a match to give light to the hopes and dreams of all people.

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha-  
olam, asher kideshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu  
lehadlik neir shel Yom Tov.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר  
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁ לַיּוֹם  
טוֹב.<sup>4</sup>

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, sovereign of the universe, who sanctifies us with commandments and commands us to kindle the festival lights.

<sup>1</sup> The readings on this page are taken from Congregation B'nai Jeshurun's *The Stonewall Shabbat Seder* (June 27, 1997/23 Sivan 5757), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Different communities have different practices with respect to terminology and initials for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/ed, genderqueer, queer, intersex/ed, and ally communities. If we have left out an initial or label, it is not meant as a slight to those who identify under that label.

<sup>3</sup> Memorial candles commemorating the death of a loved one.

<sup>4</sup> This *haggadah* will use both masculine and feminine God-language. These human, bodily metaphors for God are intended not to limit our understanding of God, who is beyond space and time and body, but to expand our understanding. Because Hebrew is a gendered language, we cannot escape “he” and “she” throughout the *seder*; therefore, occasionally grammatical gender agreement has been intentionally eschewed as an effort to include genderqueer and transgendered interpretations.

## BLESSING DIFFERENCES

*TAKE A MOMENT TO INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THOSE AROUND YOU.*

*YOU MIGHT SHARE ONE MOTIVATION THAT BROUGHT YOU TO THIS SEDER TABLE.*

*OR PERHAPS ONE ANCESTOR OR INSPIRATIONAL TEACHER WHOSE MEMORY YOU CARRY WITH YOU.*

*TAKE A MOMENT TO SHARE WHAT DISTINGUISHES YOU FROM OTHERS.*

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha-*  
*olam, meshaneh ha-briyot.*

<sup>7</sup> בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם מֵשֵׁנֵי הַבְּרִיּוֹת.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, sovereign of the universe, who has made all creatures different.

## קִדְּוֵי KADEISH (SANCTIFICATION)

Tonight, our four cups are dedicated to יְצִיאָה *yetziah*—going forth, coming out.

We invite members of our community to share a story before dedicating each cup.

*A MEMBER OF OUR COMMUNITY SHARES A COMING-OUT STORY...*

*WE FILL, LIFT, AND DEDICATE THE FIRST OF FOUR CUPS OF WINE.*

*B'ruchah At, Yah, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam,*  
*boreit p'ri ha-gafen.*

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵאת פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, spirit of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

<sup>7</sup> This traditional blessing is recited upon seeing an unusual creature (like an elephant, for example) (*Babylonian Talmud, Brachot 58b*). Here, as in *The Stonewall Seder*, it serves as a way to express our gratitude for the differences and distinctions that make each human being unique.



## Kiddush for Passover Blessing over the wine

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. ותתן לנו יי  
אלהינו באהבה מועדים לשמחה, חגים וזמנים לששון,  
את יום חג המצות הזה, זמן חרותנו מקרא קדש, זכר  
ליציאת מצרים. כי בנו בחרת ואותנו קדשת מכל  
העמים, ומועדי קדשך בשמחה ובששון הנחלתנו.  
ברוך אתה יי, מקדש ישראל והזמנים.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, borei p'ri hagafen.*

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher bachar banu mikol am, v'rom'manu mikol lashon, v'kid'shanu b'mitzvotav. Vatiten lanu, Adonai Eloheinu, b'ahavah mo-adim l'simchah, chagim uz'manim l'sason, et yom Chag HaMatzot hazeh, z'man cheiruteinu, mikra kodesh, zeicher litziat Mitzrayim. Ki vanu vacharta v'otanu kidashta mikol haamim umo-adei kodsh'cha b'simchah uv'sason hinchaltanu.*

*Baruch atah, Adonai m'kadeish Yisrael v'hazmanim.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the world, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Blessed are You, Our God, Sovereign of the universe, who has chosen us from among the peoples, exalting us by hallowing us with mitzvot. In Your love, Adonai our God, You have given us feasts of gladness, and seasons of joy; this Festival of Pesach, season of our freedom, a sacred occasion, a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt. For You have chosen us from all peoples and consecrated us to Your service, and given us the Festivals, a time of gladness and joy.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who sanctifies Israel and the Festivals.

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

### Karpas by Yehudah Webster

A small piece of onion, parsley, or boiled potato is dipped into saltwater and eaten (after reciting the blessing over vegetables). Dipping the karpas is a sign of luxury and freedom. The saltwater represents the tears of our ancestors in Mitzrayim. **This year may it also represent tears of Black parents and families mourning the loss of their Black youth at the hands of police brutality. ♦**

## Some Information About Discriminatory & Abusive Policing

Here in New York City, “Broken Windows” policing disproportionately targets poor communities of color for low-level offenses. Being arrested or “summoned” for even minor violations such as riding a bicycle on the sidewalk can have extreme consequences such as loss of scholarships and financial aid, being evicted from public housing, or being fired for missing a day of work. There are other types of abusive policing in NYC such as the broad-based, and unconstitutional surveillance of Muslims. In Ferguson, the U.S. Department of Justice investigation of the local police force discovered what residents already knew — sweeping Civil Rights violations and pervasive racial bias among police. Equally corrosive and abusive police cultures and policies exist in departments across the nation.

### In New York City

- Between January 2004 and June 2012 the police stopped, questioned or frisked 4.4 million people. 94% of these stops uncovered no crime at all. (NY Times; NYCLU)
- Black & Latino New Yorkers made up almost 9 out of 10 stops. (NYCLU)
- In 2011, stops of young black men (ages 14–24) outnumbered the entire population of young black men in New York City. (NYCLU)
- The police patrol our public schools, where Black & Latino children make up 95% of those arrested. (NYCLU)

### In Ferguson, MO, the U.S. Department of Justice found that:

- African Americans experience disparate impact in nearly every aspect of Ferguson’s law enforcement system.
- Despite making up 67% of the population, African Americans accounted for 85% of traffic stops, 90% of citations, and 93% of arrests from 2012 to 2014.
- African Americans have force used against them at disproportionately high rates, accounting for 88% of all cases from 2010 to August 2014 in which an FPD officer reported using force.

### Nationally, police violence and the over-incarceration of people of color resembles a “New Jim Crow.”

- Blacks are only 12 percent of the population and 13 percent of drug users, but they constituted almost a third of those arrested in 2010. (CRF)
- An African American male born in 2001 had a 32% chance of going to jail in his lifetime, while a Latino male has a 17% chance, and a white male only 6%. (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics)
- In the first 6 months of 2012 a Black person was killed by the police or other authorities every 36 hours. (MXGM)
- 46% had no weapon at all at the time. (MXGM)

*How can we say that Black & Brown lives matter when we treat them so carelessly? Imprison, kill and humiliate them with such reckless abandon? As Jews we know what it feels like to be treated like this. This Passover, what will you commit to so that no one else has to experience this kind of discrimination?*

## Breaking the middle matzah | *Yachatz* / יָחַץ

There are three pieces of matzah stacked on the table. We now break the middle matzah into two pieces. Our host will wrap up the larger of the pieces and, at some point between now and the end of dinner, hide it. This piece is called the *afikoman*, literally “dessert” in Greek. After dinner, all of us will have to hunt for the *afikoman*, and whoever finds it will win a prize!

We eat matzah, unleavened bread, to remind us that when the Israelites were finally freed, they fled Egypt so quickly that their bread did not have time to rise.

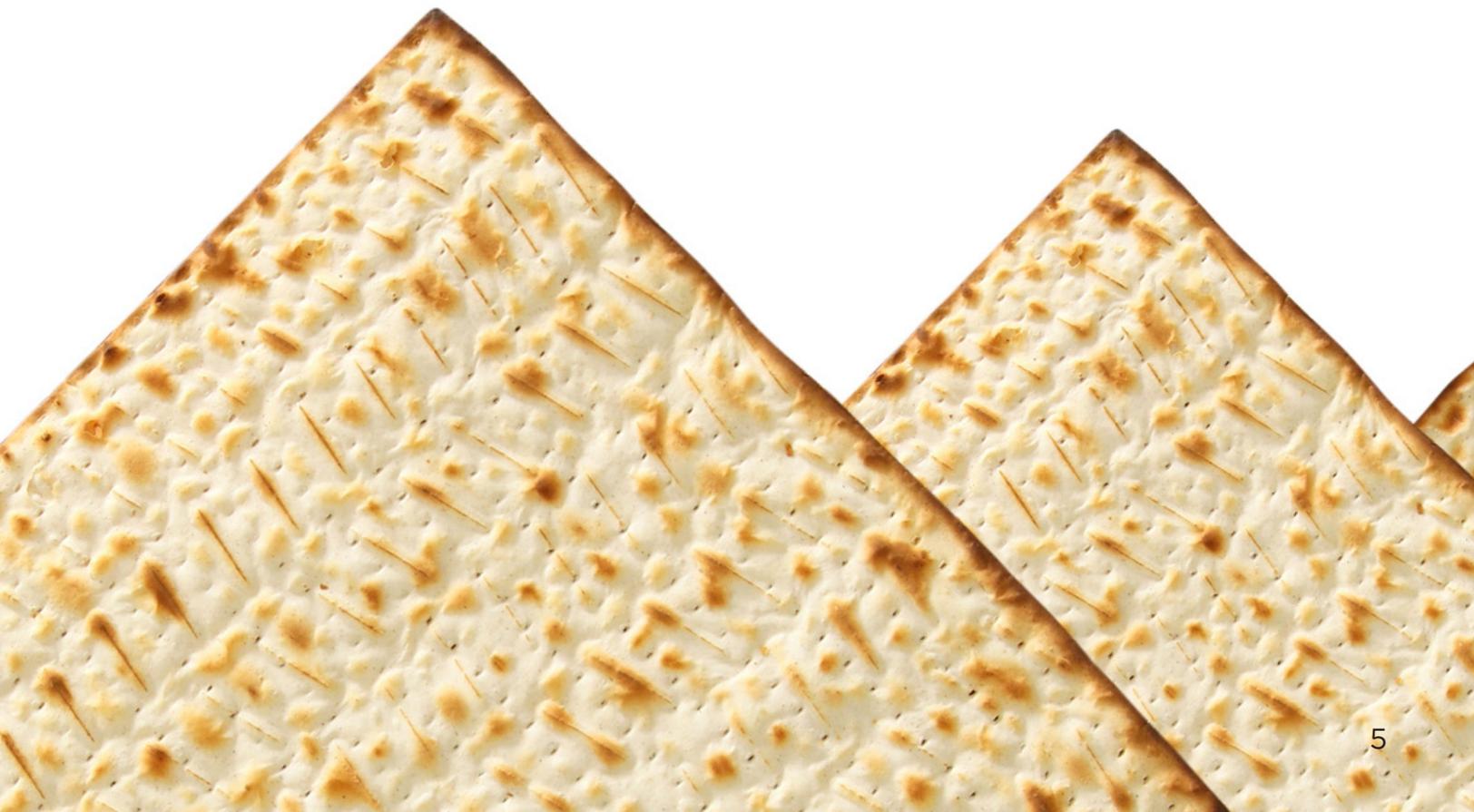
### ***Uncover and hold up the three pieces of matzah and say:***

“This is the bread of poverty that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat; all who are needy come and celebrate Passover with us. This year we are here; next year we will be in Israel. This year we are slaves; next year we will be free.”

While we recline and enjoy our Passover celebration, we are reminded not only of the history that we commemorate, but also of our obligation to make our world better for those still enslaved, whether in bondage or by poverty or circumstance. We are commanded to seek out those who are hungry, to share in our bread of affliction, as we seek to ensure that the story of slavery is our past, not our present or future.



*Unfortunately, slavery exists in many forms in our world and for each of us. How can we take these words to heart this Passover?*



*The seder plate meditation that follows could be offered alongside the COVID Seder Plate meditation, as part of the introduction to seder. Or it could be offered during Maggid, the part of the seder when we traditionally explain the seder plate and its meanings.*

## **A Seder Plate For Covid Times**

**Beitza:** The roasted egg - a symbol of renewal and rebirth, also a comfort food in trying times. What do we need to rebirth? What comfort are we seeking?

**Z'roa:** The shankbone symbolizes the Paschal lamb offered as the sacrifice in Biblical times. It also symbolizes redemption from slavery, from the narrows of *Mitzrayim*. During this holiday of freedom, many of us are still locked down, because of the virus and because of societal ills. How can we bring about salvation?

**Charoset:** The Mishnah describes a mixture of fruits, nuts and vinegar/wine symbolic of the mortar used by Israelite slaves to build. Mortar also connects us. In this crazy year, what is the charoset, the sweet mortar, that has kept us going throughout the pandemic and social upheaval we have experienced?

**Maror:** Bitter herbs symbolize the bitterness of slavery, of confinement. Eating bitter herbs, even smelling them, can bring tears to our eyes, a release. What bitterness do we need to let go?

**Karpas:** Greens symbolize spring, growth, hope and faith. At the Seder we dip greens in salt water, a reminder of tears shed during slavery in *Mitzrayim*. How can we ensure that next Pesach we are all free, easing the unseen bondage of essential workers, especially those unseen by dint of race, class, or gender: food harvesters, teachers, market staff, and more?

The traditional Seder plate's symbols are organic, alive. This year, our table will include hand sanitizer and face masks to protect us, an extra candle of hope and connection in memory of days when we put candles and rainbows in our windows to cheer each other, and an empty chair – not for Eliyahu or Miriam, but for those no longer with us or still unable to celebrate in person. Our computers will be open to Zoom, and we'll maintain connection to each other and Hashem however we can.

*R. Dara Lithwick*

## THE FOUR QUESTIONS

The formal telling of the story of Passover is framed as a series of questions and answers. The tradition that the youngest person at the seder asks the questions reflects the importance of sharing the story, symbolism and purpose with the next generation. Asking questions is a core tradition in Jewish life; the rabbis who formatted the seder sought to teach this important story through these questions.

**מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?**

*Ma nishtana halaila hazeh mikol haleilot?*

Why is this night different from all other nights?

**שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמָצָה. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלוּ מַצָּה:**

*Shebichol haleilot anu ochlin chameitz u-matzah. Halaila hazeh kulo matzah.*

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

**שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יֵרָקוֹת. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מְרֹר:**

*Shebichol haleilot anu ochlin shi'ar yirakot. Halaila hazeh maror.*

On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables. Tonight, we eat bitter herbs.

**שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מִטְבִּילִין אֶפְּלוֹ פַּעַם אַחַת. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פַּעְמִים:**

*Shebichol haleilot ain anu matbilin afilu pa-am echat. Halaila hazeh shtei pa-amim.*

On all other nights we aren't expected to dip our vegetables one time. Tonight, we do it twice.

**שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלָנוּ מְסֻבִּין:**

*Shebichol haleilot anu ochlin bein yoshvin uvein m'subin. Halaila hazeh kulanu m'subin.*

On all other nights we eat either sitting normally or reclining. Tonight, we recline.

## ANSWERING OUR QUESTIONS

**עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ. עַתָּה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין:**

*Avadim hayinu. Ata b'nei chorin.*

*We were slaves. Now we are free.*



# four allies | four questions

for LGBTQ Liberation at Pesach

*This insert was created by the Keshet Parent & Family Connection. We provide confidential support to other parents of LGBTQ Jewish children and family members. **Learn more:** [www.keshetonline.org/program/support-families](http://www.keshetonline.org/program/support-families)*

Every year, Jews gather at seder tables around the world to remember, retell, and reconnect with the story of our collective redemption. Passover compels us to ask ourselves how we are moving out of *Mitzrayim*, the narrow straits of oppression and brokenness that still mar our world, and toward liberation in our lives today. As mothers, fathers, parents, and family members of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Jews, we are inspired by our tradition's story to strive for LGBTQ recognition, freedom, and acceptance.

Allies can have a powerful voice in that struggle, supporting LGBTQ people in their coming out process and helping others to understand the importance of justice, fairness, acceptance, and mutual respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The role of allies is critical to the work of creating a Jewish community that is inclusive, safe, and supports all Jewish children, teens, and adults to be fully themselves.

At Passover, it is the family's responsibility to retell the story, to inspire each new generation to accept the task of living out our values, of remembering that we were once strangers, and therein find an obligation to those on the margins of our own societies. As gay and straight parents and family members of LGBTQ children, we invite you to join us in considering our role in assuring LGBTQ liberation for generations to come.

## WHO ARE THE FOUR ALLIES? WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

1. **The ally who asks what "LGBTQ" means:** The first step to taking bold action and advocating on behalf of others is to approach with curiosity, humility, and openness. An ally is open to learning new things and challenging their own assumptions.
2. **The ally who stands up for a friend:** The lives of people we care about, our friends, family, and colleagues can be powerful catalysts for action.
3. **The ally who speaks up about equality:** When we speak out against injustice because it's the right thing to do, regardless if someone we know and care about is affected, we act on behalf of our core values.
4. **The ally who comes out as an advocate to move equality forward:** As allies, we are often insulated from the vulnerabilities that LGBTQ people face in the world. However coming out publicly as an ally can also mean taking a risk on behalf of the values and people we care about.

## WHAT ARE THE FOUR QUESTIONS WE COULD BE ASKING OURSELVES? CONSIDER THESE:

1. **What other social movements for equality have you stood up for?**
2. **When have you been an ally or seen someone else be an ally?**
3. **What kind of ally would you like to be?**
4. **What are you risking by being an ally? What is on the line for you?**



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Working for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Jews in Jewish life

[www.keshetonline.org](http://www.keshetonline.org)

# SONGS

## “Let My People Go”

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

“Thus saith the Lord,” bold Moses said, “Let my people go”  
“If not I’ll smite your firstborn dead, let my people go”  
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land  
Tell old Pharaoh, let my people go

“No more shall they in bondage toil, let my people go”  
“Let them come out with Egypt’s spoils, let my people go”  
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land  
Tell old Pharaoh, let my people go

“When people stop this slavery, let my people go”  
“Soon may all the earth be free, let my people go”  
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land  
Tell old Pharaoh, let my people go



## Before the Ten Plagues

We are isolated, but as tempting as it is to lean into the imagery of the plagues, we do not want to do so. Because COVID-19 is a terrible pandemic, but not a plague. The most dangerous part of associating COVID-19 with the ten plagues is not about the malady's origin, but about our response. When the Israelites sequestered in their homes and painted blood on their doorposts, they did it to distinguish themselves from the Egyptian households. When we stay home, it is instead a recognition that **there are no distinctions** to this disease; whatever we do is not primarily for ourselves, but for our neighbors and coworkers and others we do not know. Our houses have no blood on the doorpost, neither for protection nor identification. We await not a personal salvation, but an all-clear for everyone. Unlike that midnight in Egypt — we, all of us, are in this together.

—Adapted from [Passover and the Pandemic](#) by Michael Bernstein

## THE TEN PLAGUES

As we rejoice at the Israelites' deliverance from slavery, we acknowledge this freedom was hard-earned. We regret that freedom came at the cost of others' suffering, for we are all made in the image of God. Therefore, we take away just a little bit of our joy of wine by placing a drop of it on our plates as we recite each of the Ten Plagues.

***Dip a finger or a spoon into your wine glass to get a drop for each plague.***

Blood   <i>Dam</i>	דָּם
Frogs   <i>Tzfardeiya</i>	צְפַרְדֵּי
Lice   <i>Kinim</i>	כִּנִּים
Beasts   <i>Arov</i>	עֲרוֹב
Cattle disease   <i>Dever</i>	דֵּבַר
Boils   <i>Sh'chin</i>	שָׁחִין
Hail   <i>Barad</i>	בָּרָד
Locusts   <i>Arbeh</i>	אַרְבֵּה
Darkness   <i>Choshech</i>	חֹשֶׁךְ
Death of the firstborn   <i>Makat b'chorot</i>	מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת



### 10 PLAGUES OF EGYPT



# THE MODERN PLAGUES

The Passover Haggadah recounts ten plagues that afflicted Egyptian society. In our tradition, Passover is the season in which we imagine our own lives within the story and the story within our lives. Accordingly, we turn our thoughts to the many plagues affecting our society today. Our journey from slavery to redemption is ongoing, demanding the work of our hearts and hands. Here are ten “modern plagues”:

## **Homelessness**

In any given year, about 3.5 million people are likely to experience homelessness, about a third of them children, according to the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. A recent study by the U.S. Conference of Mayors showed the majority of major cities lack the capacity to shelter those in need and are forced to turn people away. We are reminded time and again in the Torah that the Exodus is a story about a wandering people, once suffering from enslavement, who, through God’s help, eventually find their way to their homeland. As we inherit this story, we affirm our commitment to pursue an end to homelessness.

## **Hunger**

About 49 million Americans experience food insecurity, 16 million of them children. While living in a world blessed with more than enough food to ensure all of God’s children are well nourished, on Passover we declare, “Let all who are hungry come and eat!” These are not empty words, but rather a heartfelt and age-old prayer to end the man-made plague of hunger.

## **Inequality**

Access to affordable housing, quality health care, nutritious food and quality education is far from equal. The disparity between the privileged and the poor is growing, with opportunities for upward mobility still gravely limited. Maimonides taught, “Everyone in the house of Israel is obligated to study Torah, regardless of whether one is rich or poor, physically able or with a physical disability.” Unequal access to basic human needs, based on one’s real or perceived identity, like race, gender or disability, is a plague, antithetical to the inclusive spirit of the Jewish tradition.

## **Greed**

In the Talmud, the sage Ben Zoma asks: “Who is wealthy? One who is happy with one’s lot.” These teachings evidence what we know in our conscience—a human propensity to desire more than we need, to want what is not ours and, at times, to allow this inclination to conquer us, leading to sin. Passover urges us against the plague of greed, toward an attitude of gratitude.

## **Discrimination and hatred**

The Jewish people, as quintessential victims of hatred and discrimination, are especially sensitized to this plague in our own day and age. Today, half a century after the civil rights movement in the United States, we still are far from the actualization of the dream Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. articulated in Washington, D.C., a vision rooted in the message of our prophets. On Passover, we affirm our own identity as the once oppressed, and we refuse to stand idly by amid the plagues of discrimination and hatred.

## **Environmental destruction**

Humans actively destroy the environment through various forms of pollution, wastefulness, deforestation and widespread apathy toward improving our behaviors and detrimental civic policies. Rabbi Nachman of Breslav taught, “If you believe you can destroy, you must believe you can repair.” Our precious world is in need of repair, now more than ever.

### **Stigma of mental illness**

One in five Americans experiences mental illness in a given year. Even more alarming, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, nearly two-thirds of people with a diagnosable mental illness do not seek treatment, and minority communities are the least likely to search for or have access to mental health resources. Social stigma toward those with mental illness is a widespread plague. Historically, people with mental health issues have suffered from severe discrimination and brutality, yet our society is increasingly equipped with the knowledge and resources to alleviate the plague of social stigma and offer critical support.

### **Ignoring refugees**

We are living through the worst refugee crisis since the Holocaust. On this day, we remember that “we were foreigners in the land of Egypt,” and God liberated us for a reason: to love the stranger as ourselves. With the memory of generations upon generations of our ancestors living as refugees, we commit ourselves to safely and lovingly opening our hearts and our doors to all peace-loving refugees.

### **Powerlessness**

When faced with these modern plagues, how often do we doubt or question our own ability to make a difference? How often do we feel paralyzed because we do not know what to do to bring about change? How often do we find ourselves powerless to transform the world as it is into the world as we know it should be, overflowing with justice and peace?

*Written in collaboration with Temple Israel of Boston*



*Reader 36:*

The struggle for all people who consider themselves GLBTQA is a multifaceted struggle, reflecting not the external power dynamic of oppressor and slave, but the internal dynamic. All GLBTQA people must face a struggle within themselves, in addition to the struggle between themselves and God, their families, their communities, and their worlds. Even in the direst of circumstances, GLBTQA people have the ability to wrestle with what God has provided them, however unclear, and to thank God for creating us in God's image.

*All assembled:*

If God had given us life,  
but not the ability to love,  
**Dayeinu.**

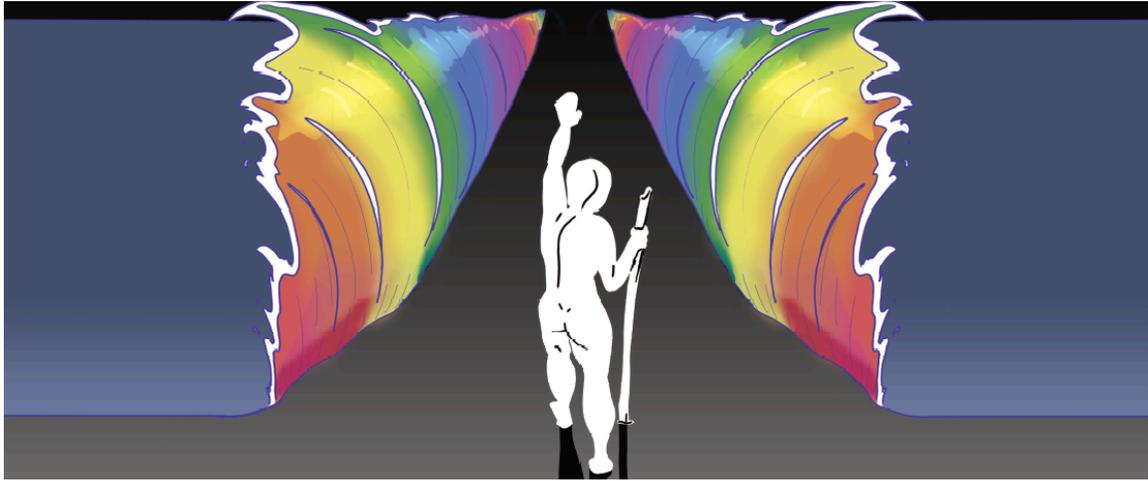
If God had given us the ability to love,  
but not the freedom to love whomever we choose,  
**Dayeinu.**

If God had given us the freedom to love whomever we choose,  
but not the freedom to be with whomever we choose,  
**Dayeinu.**

If God had given us the freedom to be with whomever we choose,  
but not to express our love however we choose,  
**Dayeinu.**

If God had given us the freedom to express our love however we choose,  
but not given the people around us the empathy to understand our love,  
**Dayeinu.**

If God had given the people around us the empathy to understand our  
love but not the willingness to celebrate it with us,  
**Dayeinu.**



## dayeinu

*Ilu hotzi hotzianu mi-Mitzrayim...  
dayeinu!*

*Ilu natan lanu et ha-Shabbat...  
dayeinu!*

*Ilu natan lanu et ha-Torah... dayeinu!  
Dai-dai-einu!*

אלו הוציאנו ממצרים... דַּיְנוּ!  
אלו נתן לנו את השבת... דַּיְנוּ!  
אלו נתן לנו את התורה... דַּיְנוּ!

If God had only brought us out of Egypt... it would have been enough for us!  
If God had only given us the Torah... it would have been enough for us!  
If God had only given us the Sabbath... it would have been enough for us!

## Miriam and Elijah

Three thousand years ago, a farmer arose in the Middle East who challenged the ruling elite. In his passionate advocacy for common people, Elijah created a legend which would inspire generations to come. Elijah declared that he would return once each generation in the guise of someone poor or oppressed, coming to people's doors to see how he would be treated. Thus would he know whether or not humanity had become ready to participate in the dawn of the Messianic age. He is said to visit every seder, and sip there from his cup of wine.

Tonight we welcome two prophets: not only Elijah, but also Miriam, sister of Moses. Elijah is a symbol of messianic redemption at the end of time; Miriam, of redemption in our present lives. Miriam's cup is filled with water, evoking her Well which followed the Israelites in the wilderness. After the crossing of the Red Sea, Miriam sang to the Israelites a song. The words in the Torah are only the beginning:

Sing to God, for God has triumphed gloriously;  
Horse and driver, God has hurled into the sea.

So the Rabbis asked: Why is the Song of Miriam only partially stated in the Torah? And in midrash is found the answer: the song is incomplete so that future generations will finish it. That is our task.<sup>37</sup>

*Open the door for Elijah and Miriam; rise.*

You abound in blessings,  
God, creator of the universe,  
Who sustains us with  
living water. May we,  
like the children of Israel  
leaving Egypt, be guarded  
and nurtured & kept alive  
in the wilderness  
and may You  
give  
us  
eyes  
to  
see  
that  
the  
journey  
itself holds  
the promise of redemption. Amen.

*(Adapted from an insert in Lilith Magazine.)*

**רוחצה rohtzah (handwashing)**

*we pass around the bowl and cup and wash*

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu,  
melech ha-olam, asher kideshanu  
b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al netilat  
yadayim.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.

**מוציא מצה motzi matzah**

READER: (*Lift the matzah*) The unleavened bread reminds us of life's brittleness. Too many among us come here with flattened hearts. May tonight's *seder* enable our spirits to rise.

*we each take and lift a piece of matzah*

*B'ruchah At, Yah, Eloheinu Ruach  
ha-olam, ha-motzi'ah lechem min  
ha-aretz .*

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיָּאָה לֶחֶם מִן  
הָאָרֶץ.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, spirit of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

*we bless and eat the matzah*

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu,  
melech ha-olam, asher kideshanu  
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al acilat  
matzah.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, sovereign of the universe, who sanctifies us with commandments and commands us concerning the eating of *matzah*.

## מרור maror

READER: (*Lift the maror*) We taste the bitter herb to remind us of the bitterness of Egyptian bondage. It stings, bringing tears to our eyes, as we recall contemporary discrimination.<sup>20</sup>

*we bless and eat the maror*

*B'ruchah At, Yah, Eloheinu Ruach  
ha-olam, asher kideshanu  
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat maror.*

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר..

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, spirit of the universe, who sanctifies us with commandments and commands us concerning the eating of bitter herbs.

## כּוֹרֵךְ korech

READER: (*Lift or point out the charoset*) This *charoset* represents the mortar that bound the bricks our ancestors labored to make for Pharaoh, and reminds us of the vibrant new communities we are building today.<sup>21</sup>

*we make a sandwich with matzah, maror, and charoset*

READER: This sandwich can remind us of aspects of this very community, or of ourselves—bitter and cracked surfaces that give way to the sharp, fresh evidence of our labors in the world, tempered with sweetness combined from many sources. We are bitter and sweet, stubborn and giving. It is with our diversity that we begin our festive meal.

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<sup>20</sup> Adapted from the 2012 Bronfman Center Queer *haggadah*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*.

## “Chad Gadya”

*Chad gadya, chad gadya*  
My father bought for two *zuzim*  
*Chad gadya, chad gadya*

Then came the cat that ate the kid  
My father bought for two *zuzim*  
Chad gadya, chad gadya

Then came the dog that bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two *zuzim*  
*Chad gadya, chad gadya*

Then came the stick that beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two *zuzim*  
*Chad gadya, chad gadya*

Then came the fire that burnt the stick  
That beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two *zuzim*  
*Chad gadya, chad gadya*

Then came the water that quenched the fire  
That burnt the stick  
That beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two *zuzim*  
*Chad gadya, chad gadya*

Then came the ox that drank the water  
That quenched the fire  
That burnt the stick  
That beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two *zuzim*  
*Chad gadya, chad gadya*

Then came the butcher that killed the ox  
That drank the water  
That quenched the fire  
That burnt the stick  
That beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two *zuzim*  
*Chad gadya, chad gadya*

Then came the Angel of Death  
Who slayed the butcher that killed the ox  
That drank the water  
That quenched the fire  
That burnt the stick  
That beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two *zuzim*  
*Chad gadya, chad gadya*

Then came the Holy One, Blessed Be He  
Who destroyed the Angel of Death  
Who slayed the butcher that killed the ox  
That drank the water  
That quenched the fire  
That burnt the stick  
That beat the dog  
That bit the cat  
That ate the kid  
My father bought for two *zuzim*  
*Chad gadya, chad gadya*  
*Chad gadya, chad gadya*



חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא,

דְּזָבִין אֲבָא בְּתַרֵּי זִנְיֵי

חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא.

## SHULCHAN ORECH: FESTIVE MEAL

And the people stayed home.  
And read books, and listened, and rested,  
and exercised, and made art, and played games,  
and learned new ways of being, and were still.  
And listened more deeply.  
Some meditated, some prayed, some danced.  
Some met their shadows.  
And the people began to think differently.  
And the people healed.  
And, in the absence of people living  
in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways,  
the earth began to heal!  
And when the danger passed,  
and the people joined together again,  
they grieved their losses,  
and made new choices, and dreamed new images,  
and created new ways to live  
and heal the earth fully,  
as they had been healed.

-Kitty O'Meara



**נְרָצָה conclusion<sup>25</sup>**

**May slavery give way to freedom.  
May hate give way to love.  
May ignorance give way to wisdom.  
May despair give way to hope.  
Next year, at this time, may everyone, everywhere, be free!**

***L'shana ha-ba'ah b'Yirushalayim!***

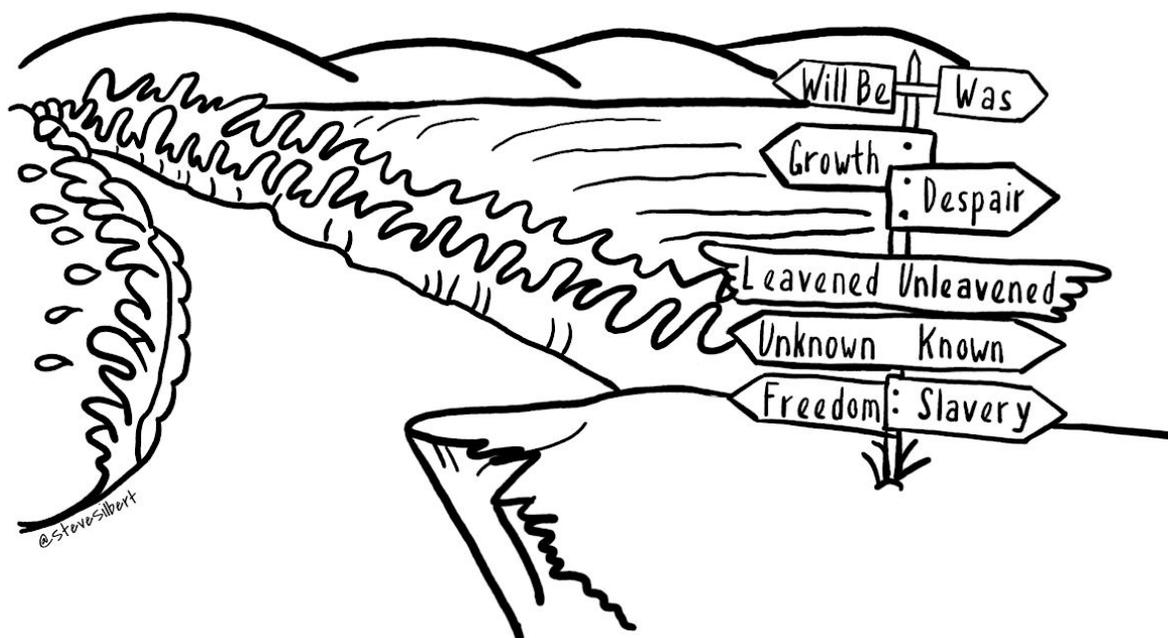
**לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם!**

**Next year in Jerusalem!**

The Way



Derech



The unknown is always before us,  
and our choices determine our path.  
What path do you want to walk toward freedom today?

*Illustration by Steve Silbert; find more contemplative coloring pages like this in Color The Omer!*

## SOURCES

This haggadah is a compilation of various pages from wonderful sources:

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*Mah Nishtana: A Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Ally Haggadah.* Written and edited by Margaux Buck et al. 2005.

*Seder 2020: A Onetable Guide.* Onetable.org

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