“In every generation, each person is obligated to see herself as if she had personally gone forth out of Egypt.”

“The commemoration of our Exodus from Egypt has a special resonance for contemporary Jewish women. Through this holiday women forge a powerful connection to the Jewish people, including biblical foremothers as well as female ancestors, and to their own oppression, liberation and journeys to the Promised Land. Despite women’s central role in the domestic holiday preparations, we have often played a marginal role in the Seder itself, unable to lead - or even fully participate in - telling the Exodus story. The Jewish feminist movement has reclaimed women’s place at the Seder table, in large part through the creation of a new ritual: the Women’s Seder.”

Women’s Seders have given women the chance to be the performers, not just the preparers, to highlight the role of women, like Miriam, to think more broadly about the “four daughters” and their questions, and “to discover some new insights, some new connection to the Passover story.”

(Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, Tara Mohr and Catherine Spector, The Women’s Passover Companion, and The Women's Seder Sourcebook)

The Women's Seder originated in 1976, with women who would become pillars of the feminist movement. Since then, Women's Seders have flourished and countless Women's Seder Haggadot have been written. For Temple Emanu-El's liturgy, we considered many and ultimately chose to work from three: The Westchester Women's Seder Haggadah; The Wandering is Over Haggadah, and a Haggadah compiled by Cantor Dana Anesi. Our Haggadah relies substantially on these three. Much of what we borrowed we updated or adapted, and we wrote other portions ourselves.

When we started this process, we had three goals:

• to create a Haggadah that highlights the courageous women who are integral to the story of the Exodus but who are often left out of the traditional telling;
• to relate the story of the Exodus, and its themes of oppression and liberation, to women’s collective history and to their individual experiences; and,
• to do both of the above while also including all the elements of a traditional Haggadah.

We hope that you enjoy this Women's Seder, that you learn something new, that you relate to the story of the Exodus in a different way, that you make new connections with the women in our community. We also hope that you will bring some of this spirit back to your own Seder at home. Please give us your feedback about what's written here and what we will retell together tonight.

The Temple Emanu-El Women's Seder Liturgy Committee:

Sarah Janover  Rabbi Amy Ehrlich  Cantor Lori Corrsin  Missy Bell

2014/5774

Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York
Joining Together

Reader 1:

Today we sit at this Passover Seder as a (kind of) family. We, the daughters of Judaism, seek to find the purest spirit of our heritage. The Seder is an invitation to all of us in this room to work together to make a sanctuary of blessings for our daughters and sons equally: in our hearts, in our homes, in our neighborhoods, and in our country. Each year, the celebration of Passover demands that we become aware of injustice and oppression wherever they might exist. Here we participate in the reenactment of the ancient drama of slavery and liberation and honor the deep need for redemption in us all. And so we say together:

All Together:

As we celebrate here,
We join with the women and men everywhere
Who are working to break down the barriers
To bring equality to our daughters and sons
For the sake of the earth and its children.

Bruchot Habaot (A Song of Welcome)

B’ruchot hab’ot tachat kanfei haSh’chinah
B’ruchim haba’im tachat kanfei haSh’chinah
May you be blessed beneath the wings of Sh’chinah
Be blessed with love, be blessed with peace

Introduce yourself in the chat box! What woman in your life are you honoring by being here today?
Kadesh
Sanctification of the Day

Reader 2:

The sages teach that the four cups of wine represent God’s promises of redemption:

Say, therefore, to the Israelite people: I am the Lord. V’hotzaiti—I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians, V’hitzalti—and I will deliver you from their bondage. V’ga’alti—I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary chastisements. V’lakachti-And I will take you to be My people, and I will be your God (Exodus 6:6-7).

Each expression marks a stage in the transition from slavery to freedom.

The First Cup of Wine

All:

Through the courage of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, who carried out God’s will, we are redeemed.

Reader 2:

We recite Kiddush, the blessing over the wine, every Shabbat, every Festival and on special occasions. Wine gladdens the heart, the psalmist tells us. We drink the first of four cups to recall our ancestors’ liberation from the chains of slavery three thousand years ago.

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן.

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

Hand-washing
Rabbi: As we wash our hands
We pray,
Blessed is the Soul of the Universe,
Breathing us in and breathing us out.
May our breaths continue
And our health and the health of all
Be preserved
In this time of sickness and fear of sickness.
Holy Wholeness,
We take as much responsibility for this as we can
By observing the obligation to wash our hands
Thoroughly:
For as long as it takes to say this prayer.
Amen

Barukh atah adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al netilat yadayim
Blessed are you, our God, ruler of the universe, who sanctified us with God's commandments and instructed us on washing hands

Marking This Special Occasion

What joyful moments in your life- small or large - would you like to lift up?
Whether from this past week, or this past year, share in the chat box.

All:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu v'ki-y'manu v'higi-anu laz'man hazeh.
Blessed are you, O God, Creator of the universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this day.
The *karpas* and the egg on the Seder plate symbolize new growth, rebirth, Spring, the stirring of new life, and freedom.

*All:*

> Our people, like all people, celebrated in ancient times the liberation of the earth itself from wintry darkness and rejoiced in the yearly rebirth of nature and the mystery of life.

*Rabbi:*

Salt water reminds us of the bitterness of slavery—the deprivation of freedom in our ancestors’ time, in the present time, and in all time.

*All:*

> Salt water is the tears of women whose voices were not recognized, listened to, or heard in the telling of our story.

*Rabbi:*

We take the parsley and dip it in the salt water...

*(Please do so now)*

When everyone is ready, we say the blessing:

*All:*

> ברוך אתה יהוה, מלך העולם, בורא פרי אדמה.

*Blessed are You, Adonai, Creator of the universe, who creates fruit of the earth.*

*Rabbi:*

We dip the egg, symbol of rebirth, in salt water before eating it…

What issues or concerns would you want symbolized on the seder plate? What issue or concern has filled your plate - heart, mind- most recently?
Tonight, we as women, sustainers of new life, celebrate the flowering of our spirit and our voices. Rejoicing in the coming of spring, we sing from the Song of Songs, which is our biblical text for Pesach. It symbolizes the covenant between God and the children of Israel, and it also celebrates this beautiful time of year. Winter is over, earth and spirit quicken.

**Dodi Li**  
My Beloved is Mine

**Chorus:**

Dodi li va’ani lo haro’eh bashoshanim  
My love is mine, and I am his, who browses in the lotus patch.

Mi zot olah min hamidbar, mi zot olah.  
Who is this coming up out of the wilderness perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?

Mekuteret mor, mor ul’vonah, mor ul’vonah.  
You have enlivened me, my sister-bride.

Libavtini achoti kalah, libavtini kalah.  
[repeat]
Reader 4:

No word is spoken, no blessing is uttered before yachatz (ya-ha-tz), the breaking of the middle matzah. We divide the matzah in two and set aside the larger portion. It will be brought out again before the end of the meal as the afikoman.

The matzah is broken and wrapped, for more is hidden than is revealed. We symbolically conceal it by setting it aside.

All:

Within us, individually and collectively, there are prayers to be fulfilled, promises to be redeemed. We, like the broken matzah, are incomplete.

To know there is concealment is to know that there is something to be completed, to be searched out, to be found.

With the generations that have come before us, and with one another, our search begins.

Reader 5:

Before we begin the Seder proper, we invite all who are hungry to share our humble bread, matzah, the bread of poor people and wanderers. The enslaved and oppressed are hungry not only for food, but they are also starved for freedom. Tonight we hold out a vision that both can be attained.

It was the custom of our ancestors to share their Seder meals with the poor, to open their doors to anyone who had no home or table at which to sit and eat. If we cannot literally seat the needy at our table, we can in our own way “open the door,” to enable others to eat and be satisfied. As long as there are women, men, and children living in the streets, going to bed hungry, we cannot—we may not—celebrate our own freedom with full heart.

All:

This is the bread of affliction, the poor bread, which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

Let all who are hungry come and eat.

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

As we celebrate here, we join with our people everywhere.

Now we are all still in bonds. Next year may we all be free.
Ha lachma, ha lachma anya
di achaloo, achaloo avhatana
be’ar-ha, be’ar-ha demitzrayim
be’ar-ha, be’ar-ha demitzrayim
The Three Symbols

Reader 6:

Rabbi Gamliel (grandson of the great sage Hillel) said: Everyone must consider the meaning of these three symbols in order to fulfill the duty of recounting the Passover story:

We now point to the symbols on the Seder plate as the three items are mentioned.

- **Pesach** - the Paschal lamb
- **Matzah** - the unleavened bread
- **Maror** - the bitter herb

All:

*What is the meaning of the shankbone?*

Reader 6:

Our ancestors were commanded to take a lamb for every household, to slaughter it, and to mark their homes with its blood. In this way they were spared during the tenth plague, the killing of the firstborn. If a lamb was too big for one family, they were commanded to share it with a neighbor. From this lesson we learn that redemption is achieved in community, not as individuals.

All:

*What is the meaning of the matzah?*

Reader 6:

The humble matzah reminds us of how quickly we had to leave Egypt. It is the bread that our foremothers pulled from the ovens before it was fully baked, as they hurried to gather up their households for departure.

All:

*What is the meaning of the maror?*

Reader 6:

The maror calls to mind the bitter taste of our ancestors’ slavery, the back-breaking labor and cruel conditions imposed on them. Let it serve to remind us that even today, there are still workers—disproportionately women—working as virtual slaves, enduring cruelty, underpaid, barely subsisting.
In every generation every individual should feel as if she or he had actually been redeemed from Egypt, telling the next generation.

All:

“It is because of what Adonai did for me when I went free out of Mitzrayim.”

Slavery comes in many forms--outward oppression, poverty, physical suffering--and also less visible forms of slavery--of mind, body, personality. The message of Passover is one of hope--freedom is attainable, for ourselves and for others.

All:

In every generation all women and men should consider themselves to have personally come out of Egypt.

Kiddush

The Second Cup of Wine

The second cup of wine recalls our deliverance from bondage throughout the ages. Through centuries of exile, expulsion, massacres, and deprivation many were destroyed. We recall and honor the fortunate women who survived and who did not forget--who continued to welcome the Sabbath, give charity to the poor, study Torah, speak God’s name to their children in praise. Through them, we are redeemed.

All:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheynu Melech ha’olam, borey peri hagafen.
Blessed are You, Adonai, Creator of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.
Now we come to the heart of the Seder. The telling of the story of our slavery and our exodus from Egypt begins with looking inward and asking questions. Who is part of the story and at the telling?

**Four Girls Within Us**

**WISE GIRLS**
At times, we are wise girls, strong and confident in what we know and in who we are, curious and eager to learn more, seeing clearly through tangled and complex dilemmas and able to make wise and appropriate decisions for ourselves and on behalf of others. Yet, as wise girls, we risk growing complacent in our knowledge, and so caught up in the pursuit of learning and producing that we neglect others around us and our own well-being.

**WICKED GIRLS**
At other times, we are wicked girls: angry, rebellious, critical, and negative. We set ourselves apart from our community, feeling, perhaps, that we don’t belong and not understanding that it is we, not others, who place ourselves on the outside. Yet it is as wicked girls that we are able to see our world from another perspective, to speak up and criticize what is wrong and what is unjust.

**SIMPLE GIRLS**
At times, we are simple girls, relaxed and playful, enjoying life without questioning, analyzing, or examining deeply, loving others with passion that cannot be expressed in words, and being loved in return without any logic or reason. Yet, as simple girls, we risk missing the color and texture of our complex universe, and we may forfeit the opportunity to contribute to tikkun olam, the repair and healing of the world.

**GIRLS WHO DON’T KNOW HOW TO ASK**
At other times, we are girls who don’t know how to ask, we don’t understand, we find that we cannot speak the language of the people in our company, we are struck silent by a profound or strange new experience. If we can remain silent, and tolerate our fear and our inability to speak for a while, we may discover worlds of riches we couldn’t possibly have imagined. But if our fear paralyzes us, if we lose confidence and withdraw from the world, or if it is fear of others that silences us, we truly need to be brought out from our slavery “by a strong and mighty arm.”
Each girl within us needs the other girls.

The wise girl needs the forcefulness of the wicked, the playfulness of the simple, and the sense of wonder of the speechless one.

The wicked girl needs the erudition of the wise, the self-acceptance of the simple, and the contemplative spirit of the speechless.

The simple girl needs the diligence of the wise, the clear vision of the wicked, and the confusion of the speechless.

And the one who is struck silent needs the words of the wise, the shout of the wicked, and the song of the simple.

All of these exist within us, sometimes in harmony and other times in cacophony. They also exist outside us, in our parents, siblings, children, friends and colleagues—the people in the world who are a multifaceted mirror through which we see ourselves. Passover is a time of liberation from slavery. May we all come to know and accept our own four girls, so that we can become whole and free.

Originally published in Lilith Magazine. By Ruth Berger Goldston, a psychotherapist in Princeton, New Jersey, and a former Chair of the National Havurah Committee.

Girls Within

Four Questions From the

1. Wise: Where have we grown complacent or overly confident?

2. Wicked: What aspect of the status quo do we want to challenge – in our world, our city, our families?

3. Simple: Where have we found joy – or created it for another?

4. Girls Who Don’t Know How to Ask: What perspective is not heard around the tables at which we dine?

The Four Questions

Mah nishtana halaila hazeh mikol haleilot, mikol haleilot?
Sheb’chol haleilot, anu ochlin chametz u’matzah, chametz u’matzah, Ha-laila hazeh, ha-laila hazeh, kulo matzah. (2X)

How is this night different from all other nights?
On all other nights we eat chamitz and matzah, why on this night do we eat only matzah?
On all other nights we eat other kinds of vegetables, why on this night do we eat only maror?
On all other nights we do not dip even once, why on this night do we dip twice?
On all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining, why on this night do we all recline?

We Were Slaves

Reader 9:

We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt...but God brought us out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

May we continue to be strong to support those generations to come, that they may stand securely upon our shoulders. We recall now four women of the original Exodus, whose stories are in the Bible and in the Midrash - the rabbinic exposition of the biblical account. Although their stories do not appear in the traditional Haggadah, we know that “Israel’s deliverance was in reward for these righteous women.”

All:

Indeed it was women who took the first steps of defiance, which led to our redemption from Egypt.

Reader 9:

The story begins with Pharaoh’s decree to kill all male Israelite babies. Two Hebrew midwives, Shifrah and Puah, whose lives were dedicated to supporting life, refused to kill babies: “But the midwives feared God and did not do as the King of Egypt told them, but kept the infants alive.” Their moral courage is a model of responsible, ethical behavior.
We were redeemed for the sake of the righteous midwives, Shifrah and Puah.  

In defiance of Pharaoh’s decrees, one brave woman hid her child at home. But, “when she could no longer hide him, she made a wicker basket for him and caulked it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child into it and placed it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile.” Yocheved opposed Pharaoh’s decree, risking not only her son’s life but the lives of herself and her whole family. She saved her son, who eventually saved her people.

We were redeemed for the sake of the righteousness of Yocheved, mother of Moses.

Yet another woman was responsible for the life of Moses: “And his sister stationed herself at a distance, to learn what would befall him.” Miriam watched over Moses, until an Egyptian princess pulled him from the water. Miriam dared to suggest to the princess a Hebrew nursemaid—the child’s biological mother, Yocheved.

We were redeemed for the sake of the righteousness of Miriam, faithful daughter and sister.

A non-Israelite woman also played a crucial role in the Exodus story. Had the Egyptian princess not shown compassion for the Hebrew baby, he might not have lived. Jewish tradition applauds the courage of this Egyptian heroine. A rabbinic commentary relates that God spoke directly to the princess, saying: “Moses was not your child, yet you treated him as such. For this, I will call you my daughter.” Therefore the princess, Pharaoh’s daughter, bore the name Bityah, “daughter of God.”

We were redeemed for the sake of the righteousness of an Egyptian woman, Bityah, daughter of Pharaoh, “daughter of God.”

No matter how much we know, how we learned or accomplished we are, we must repeat the story...to tell it to each other...to tell our children. For if God had not taken us out of Egypt, then we and our children and our children’s children would still be slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt.

Holy Sound

This is the sound of something quiet, This is the song of hearts wide open  
This is the sound of one small seed. This is the song of unity  
This is the sound that breaks the silence This is the song that can’t be broken
Come make a holy sound with me
Come sing this holy song with me
Come make a holy sound with me
Come sing this holy song with me

There is a harmony inside us
This is the sound of something quiet,
There is a harmony of peace
This is the sound of one small seed.
There is a harmony that binds us
This is the sound that breaks the silence
Come make a holy harmony
This is the sound, the song, the harmony, we need
Come make a holy harmony
Come make a holy sound with me
Come make a holy sound
Come make a holy sound
Come make a holy sound with me
With me.

The Ten Plagues

Rabbi: As we rejoice at our deliverance from slavery, we acknowledge that our freedom was hard-earned. We regret that our freedom came at the cost of the Egyptians’ suffering, for we are all human beings made in the image of God. We pour out a drop of wine for each of the plagues as we recite them.

Rabbi: Dip a finger or a spoon into your wine glass for a drop for each plague. We take these drops out, to slightly diminish our joy, out of respect for the Egyptians who suffered.

These are the ten plagues which God brought down on the Egyptians:

| Blood | damם |
| Frogs | tzfardeiya צפרדע |
| Lice | kinim קנים |
| Beasts | arovים עורבים |
| Cattle disease | dever ברע |
| Boils | sh'chin שיחה |
| Hail | barad ברד |
| Locusts | arbeh ארבע |
| Darkness | choshech חושך |
| Death of the Firstborn | makat b’chorot מות בכורות |

Rabbi: The traditional Haggadah lists ten plagues that afflicted the Egyptians. We live in a very different world, but Passover is a good time to remember that, even after our liberation from slavery in Egypt, there are still many challenges for us to meet.

DAM—BLOOD

We comfort and mourn those whose blood has been spilled.

TZFARDEIYA—FROGS

We protest the proliferation of violence.
KINIM—LICE
We stop infestations of hatred and fear.

AROV—WILD ANIMALS
We appeal to all people to act with humanity.

DEVER—PESTILENCE
We overcome the sickness of racism and bigotry.

SHECHIN—BOILS
We tend to those who suffer from disease.

BARAD—HAIL
We respond to storms and disasters that claim lives.

ARBEH—LOCUSTS
We fill the air with voices for change.

CHOSHECH—DARKNESS
We bring light to those who live in the shadows.

MAKAT B’CHOROT—DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN
We inspire the next generation to carry on the struggle for a better world.
Rescue at the Sea

Reader 14:

When Pharaoh heard that the Israelite slaves had fled, he had a change of heart. The Egyptians pursued the Israelites to the Red Sea, an army of soldiers and thundering chariots. The people heard and were afraid. Had they escaped their prison only to die by the sword?

All:

But God caused the waters of the sea to divide, and the Israelites passed through on dry land. When the Egyptians pursued them into the sea, the waters roared back and swallowed them.

Mee kha-mo-kha ba-ei-leem Adonai,
Mee ka-mo-kha neh-dar ba-ko-desh,
No-ra t'hee-loht o-sei feh-leh.

Adonai yeem-lokh l'o-lam va-ed.

Who is like You, Eternal God, among the gods that are worshipped?
Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders?
“The Eternal will reign for ever and ever!”
Miriam’s Song

Chorus:
And the women dancing with their timbrels
Followed Miriam as she sang her song
Sing a song to the one whom we’ve exalted.
Miriam and the women danced and danced
the whole night long.

When Miriam stood upon the shores and gazed across the sea,
The wonder of this miracle she soon came to believe.
Whoever thought the sea would part with an outstretched hand,
And we would pass to freedom, and march to the promised land.

And Miriam the Prophet took her timbrel in her hand,
And all the women followed her just as she had planned.
And Miriam raised her voice with song.
She sang with praise and might,
We’ve just lived through a miracle, we’re going to dance tonight.

Debbie Friedman
Jewish Women Throughout the Ages

Rabbi:
Our story continues. For centuries after the Exodus, through every period of our history, Jewish women continued the heroic tradition of Miriam. They maintained their faith, worked to sustain their families, and were the links from one generation to the next.

Eva Starr: A Story From Our Midst

Dayeynu
It Would Have Been Enough

Rabbi:
In the traditional Dayeynu hymn, we express gratitude to God for the gifts we have received— for taking us out of the land of Egypt, for Shabbat, for Torah, for bringing us to Israel. More than that, we say that each one of these events in and of itself was so wonderful, it alone would have been enough.

What have you had ENOUGH of? What would you like MORE of?”

All:

Ilu hotzi, hotzianu, hotzianu mimitzrayim, hotzianu mimitzrayim, dayeynu.
Ilu natan, natan lanu, natan lanu et hatorah, natan lanu et hatorah, dayeynu.
Ilu natan, natan lanu, natan lanu et hashabbat, natan lanu et hashabbat, dayeynu.

All:

If God had only taken us out of Egypt, It would have been enough!
If God had only given us the Torah, It would have been enough!
If God had only given us the Sabbath, It would have been enough!
Reader 15:
In our own day, as women in this society and as Jewish women, we have much for which to be grateful.

All:
We can choose our path in life with greater freedom than any previous generation of Jewish women. DAYEYNU!

Reader 15:
After 2,000 years of standing outside the cheder, we now can study Hebrew and Torah and the sacred writings, we can be teachers and scholars of Jewish subjects, we can be ordained rabbis and cantors, we can be professional and lay leaders of Jewish organizations, helping to shape the future of our community. All: DAYEYNU!

Reader 15:
We can be counted in the minyan, recite kaddish for our loved ones, and be called to the Torah. All: DAYEYNU!

Reader 16:
But it is only a beginning. We will truly be able to say dayeynu when all have justice, equality, and full recognition.

All:
When Miriam takes her equal place alongside Moses and Aaron.

Reader 16:
When Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah are given due recognition.

When we live in a world where women are respected and appreciated for their experience and knowledge.

All:
When we live in a world where girls and women are celebrated for who they are and not for what other people want them to be.

Reader 16:
When we live in a world where women are valued as much for their intellect and character as for their physical beauty.

All:
When we live in a world where women’s voices carry the same weight as their father’s, husband’s, brother’s, and son’s.
All:

WHEN EVERY GENERATION OF WOMEN, TOGETHER WITH EVERY GENERATION OF MEN, GOES OUT OF EGYPT IN FREEDOM AND EQUALITY...DAYEYNU!

Oh Freedom

Oh Freedom, oh freedom
Oh freedom over me
And before I'll be a slave
I'll be buried in my grave
And go home to my Lord and be free

Motzi Matzah
Blessing the Bread and Matzah

Rabbi:

Now it is time to eat the matzah. We say two blessings, the usual one for bread and the special one for Passover.

Please raise the plate of matzah.

All:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, hamotzee lechem min ha'aretz.
Blessed are You Adonai, Creator of the universe, who brought forth bread from the earth.

All:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat matzah.
Blessed are You Adonai, Creator of the universe, who makes us holy through the commandments and commands us to eat matzah.

Maror

Bitter Herb
Rabbi:

Why do we dip maror in charoset? Charoset represents the clay for the bricks we made in Egypt, another symbol of our slavery. Others say that the charoset, because it is sweet, is a sign of hope—it reminds us that by engaging in the struggle for freedom and redemption, we can overcome the taste of the maror.

כּוֹרֵכָה אֲשֶׁר קִדְשָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ ﬂ מָרֹור
Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha’olam, asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al achilat maror.

Blessed are You Adonai, Creator or the universe, who makes us holy through the commandments and commands us to eat maror.

Korech
Hillel Sandwich

Rabbi:

Please break some matzah and distribute pieces around the table. We each place some maror between two small pieces of matzah.

This is a reminder of the Temple and of the custom of Hillel, who would eat the Pesach offering together with matzah and maror, to fulfill the commandment, “With matzot and maror they shall eat it.” Numbers 9:11

All:

Our sages asked: Why did we taste the matzah, which represents freedom, before the maror, which represents slavery? After all, the historical events happened in precisely the opposite sequence!

Rabbi:

The reason they gave is this: Only after we have had a taste of freedom do we begin to understand the bitterness of our slavery. As Rabbi Hanoch of Alexander said: “The real slavery of the Jews in Egypt was that they learned to endure it.”
Hallel: Hymns of Praise

If Not Now

Let justice roll like a river, and kindness like a mighty stream,
Let the waters flow on forever, and let them wash, wash over me

For every heart, for every soul,
it’s time we go find it once more (So what are we waiting for?)

Now, If not now
If not now, then when? (what are we waiting for?)
Na na na… (What are we waiting for?)
Tzafun
Finding the Hidden Matzah

O-she sha-lom beem-ro-mav,
Hu ya-a-se sha-lom a-lei-nu
v’al kol Yis-ra-eil,
v’im-ru: A-mein.

May the One who causes peace in the heavens cause peace to be among us, and all Israel, and all the world. And let us say: Amen.

Kiddush
The Third Cup of Wine

All:

Baruch Ata Adonai,
Eloheynu Melech ha’olam
borey peri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Creator of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.
Reader 17:
This morning we came through the door not knowing what we would experience, hoping to take strides in our individual and collective journeys toward redemption. For too long, doors remained closed to women who wanted to explore their heritage, to deepen their religious experience, and to develop their own potential. In earlier generations, many women struggled to break through the doors that obstructed their journey.

All:
We are mindful that doors can be open, inviting, and hospitable. They can also be closed, limiting, and rejecting. Let us commit ourselves to fashioning a world that is full of open doors.

Reader 18:
At this point in the Seder we prepare to welcome Elijah the Prophet, the herald of the messianic era, with a special cup of wine. We must join together to heal the world.

All:
May our belief in a living God and in tikkun olam, repair of the world, be our source of inspiration and strength as we all work to make this earth a better place.

Symbolically we open the door to Elijah by opening our hearts to the mitzvah of tikkun olam.

All:
Eliyahu, the prophet, come speedily in our days, hailing the messianic era.
Miriam's Cup

Rabbi:

Miriam has long been associated with water. The rabbis attribute to Miriam the well that traveled with the Israelites throughout their wandering in the desert. In the book of Numbers, the well dries up immediately following Miriam’s death. Of course, water played a role in Miriam’s life from the first time we meet her, watching over the infant Moses on the Nile, through her triumphant crossing of the Red Sea. 

Fill the cup of hope: Share one hope you have for the welfare of the world. As we all add to this special cup we can connect to generations of women since Miriam.

May we all find inspiration in Miriam’s life and deeds, and may we be a source of blessing to those around us.

All:

Kiddush

The Fourth Cup of Wine

Rabbi:

The fourth cup of wine recalls God’s promise for the future of the Jewish people. We envision the children of today as the men and women of future generations, bound up in closeness to God and the blessings of Jewish life, fulfilling Mitzvot, helping to repair the world, leading communities, and retelling the story of Passover to their children.

Through them, we are redeemed.

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheynu Melech ha’olam borey peri hagafen.
Blessed are You, Adonai, Creator of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Nirtzah

Conclusion

All

Though it comes at the end of the Seder, this moment also marks a beginning. We are beginning the next season with a renewed awareness of the freedoms we enjoy and the challenges we must still confront. We are looking forward to the time that we gather together again.
Having retold stories of the Jewish people, recalled historic movements of liberation, and reflected on the struggles people still face for freedom and equality, we are ready to embark on a year that we hope will bring positive change in the world and freedom to people everywhere.

Our Seder is over, according to Jewish tradition and law. As we had the pleasure to gather for a Seder this year, we hope to once again have the opportunity in the years to come. We pray that God brings health and healing to Israel and all the people of the world, especially those impacted by natural tragedy and war. As we say...

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלָיִם

Leshana Haba’ah Birushalayim

Next Year in Jerusalem!

Shehecheyanu

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam,
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam,
Shehecheyanu v’kiyemanu v’higiyanu laz’man hazeh.

To life and to life and to life and to life l’chayim.
To life and to life and to life and to life l’chayim.
I want to hold on to this moment now l’chayim.