

# הגדה שיר געולה

*Haggadah Shir Ge'ulah*

**The Song of Liberation *Haggadah***

Emily Aviva Kapor

# ותכתב

Haggadah Shir Ge'ulah — The Song of Liberation Haggadah

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# הקדמה

## Introduction

The name of this *Haggadah* reflects the intention with which it has been crafted: שִׁיר גְּעוּלָה *Shir Ge'ulah* means “song of liberation”. The overriding theme of Passover is the transition from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to gladness, from the narrow places of oppression to a world of true liberation. But this is not a transition that simply happens on its own. Liberation will not come unless we take up its cause and *make* it happen.

It is a moral imperative for us to fight for the cause of liberation. Passover is a yearly reminder that this work may have taken some steps forward, but there is always much more to do. If we are not looking at liberation as something that is for *all* humanity, then we are helping to create the oppression that binds our fellow humans. If we espouse an “I got mine” attitude, then we are making it harder for others to “get theirs”. The fight for liberation must be intersectional: we must not abandon others because they are not like us in some way. We must lift up their voices, we must help them to sing their own liberation. This is the message of Passover.

One of the time-honored ways in which we participate in the work of liberation is through song. Miriam and Moses led the Children of Israel in song at the Sea of Reeds: they are our spiritual ancestors. Trans women of color sang at Stonewall, leading the way for a revolutionary moment to follow in their wake: they, too, are our spiritual ancestors. And we sing together tonight. It is the responsibility of Jews privileged with access to the traditional languages and texts to remove as many barriers as possible to the participation of all other people in the *seder*. To that end, this *Haggadah* provides a full transliteration for almost all the Hebrew (and other languages) that is sung or recited together in the course of the *seder*, with only a very few exceptions due to space constraints.

This *Haggadah* is at once traditional and subversive. It is traditional in its scope, its organization, and its text; I have tried to err mostly on the side of maximalism. There is more material here than can possibly be covered in a single night's *seder*. It is subversive in radicalness: going back to the roots of Jewish tradition, through its text and its commentary this *Haggadah* participates in a sacred colloquy. It is my hope that a traditional reader who encounters this *Haggadah* will find a lot familiar but will also be shocked in various ways, and conversely that someone who has never been to a *seder* before will find it engaging, provocative, and even a little shocking too.

Much text has been retained from the traditional *Haggadah*, but is *mut'kan*—adapted—for reasons of theology, ideology, and many others. For example, the

traditional invocation of God as מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם *melech ha-olam*, “ruler of the world” has been changed, most often to מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים *m’kor ha-hayim*, “source of life”, thereby de-emphasizing a theology of God as absolute sovereign and promoting one of the interconnectedness and sacredness of life. My inspiration for methods and goals of adaptation are greatly influenced by the ongoing Siddur Project of Havurat Shalom in Somerville, Massachusetts. Some of the liturgy, particularly *Nishmat*, is used here relatively unchanged from the Havurah’s *sui generis*, *mut’kan* liturgy. And some parts of the *seder* are not *mut’kan*. My hope is that everyone will find something to challenge them.

I have struggled over how to approach God-language. Hebrew grammar has a binary gender system with no neutral, so, as much as possible, personal pronouns and gendered language have been avoided. But this is not often possible, so many paragraphs alternate between speaking of God in the masculine and in the feminine. In *Hallel*, where the Hebrew text is not *mut’kan*, my English translation may (should!) be jarring for its use of nontraditional, non-binary pronouns for God. Where the *Haggadah* quotes from Biblical texts, my translation retains the four-letter name of God YHWH, but in the liturgical parts of the *seder*, I have stuck to the more conventional Adonai. In the transliteration, YHWH is used throughout. But these are simply placeholders. Participants must feel free to read these names however they wish: Hashem, Shekhinah, Yah, Lord, Allah, Goddess, Divine One...again, I hope that all participants, at all points from traditional and radical, will find something to challenge them.

Completing this *Haggadah* would not have been possible without the support of my partner Alexa Mater, an amazing, talented, and compassionate woman, the best companion I could have ever hoped for. I also owe a great debt to my dear friend Arielle Krnich, who has looked after me as a sister during some extremely difficult times. I am also indebted to Jonah Rank for proofreading assistance and for being a sounding board and *bar pluk’ta*. A multitude of friends, too many to enumerate, helped keep me on track, in many different respects, throughout this project. Finally, my thanks go to my mother, brothers, grandparents, extended relatives, family friends, and of course my father אבא for the family *sedarim* that we had for many years, which helped to shape me, and hence this work, in ways that, I would like to think, have only just begun to bear fruit.

As we celebrate Passover, let us remind ourselves of why we are here, what this holiday has meant through history, and what it means to us tonight. May this *Haggadah* be an impetus towards the sacred task of liberating of ourselves and others from slavery, from oppression, and from injustice. Let us sing a song of liberation together.

Emily Aviva Kapor  
Passover 5774 — 2014

The author dedicates this *Haggadah*  
to all her transgender siblings  
who live their lives in fear and danger  
simply for existing as who they are,

and to the memory of those  
who have been injured or murdered  
or driven to take their own lives,  
by a world that does not yet regard them as human.

May we soon see true liberation for all humanity.

המחברת מקדישה את הגדה זו  
לכל אחיותיה ואחיה העבריים  
אשר חיים את חייהם בפחד וסכנה  
פשוט על שם קיימותם כמו שהם

ולזכר נשמות כל אלה  
שנפצעו ונרצחו  
ונדחפו להתאבדות  
על ידי עולם שעדיין לא מעניק להם אנושיות

יהי רצון שנראה שחרור אמיתי לכל יושבי תבל בקרוב

ת' נ' צ' ב' ה'

# ערוב תבשילין Eruv tav'shilin

Since cooking is prohibited on Shabbat, when a holiday begins on a Wednesday night, lasting through Thursday and Friday, special preparations must be made to allow the cooking of additional food throughout the holiday in preparation for Shabbat. Therefore, a small quantity of food, called an eruv, is set aside on Wednesday before sunset, to ceremoniously “begin” the preparation for Shabbat, and the following is recited:

We bless You, Adonai our God,  
Source of life, who has sanctified  
us through the *mitz'vat*, and  
instructed us concerning the *eruv*.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל  
מִצְוַת עֵרוּב:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-hayim, asher kid'shanu  
be-mitz'vatav ve-tzivanu al mitz'vat eiruv.

The following paragraph constitutes a legal declaration, and should therefore be recited in a language that the person understands.

By means of this *eruv*, we and all  
who live in this community are  
permitted to bake, cook, and heat  
food, light flame, prepare, and  
make all necessary arrangements  
during the holiday for Shabbat.

בְּהֵדִין עֵרוּבָא יְהֵא שְׂרָא לָנָא לְמַפָּא  
וּלְבִשְׂלָא וּלְאַטְמָנָא וּלְאַדְלָקָא שְׂרָגָא  
וּלְתַקְנָא וּלְמַעֲבֵד כָּל-צְרָכָנָא מִיּוֹמָא  
טְבָא לְשַׁבְּתָא, לָנוּ וּלְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל  
הַדְרִים בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת:

Ba-hadein eiruva yehei sh'rei lana l'mefei u-l'vashala u-l'at'mana  
u-l'ad'laka sh'raga u-l'takana u-l'me'bad kal tzar'kana mi-yoma  
tava le-shabbata, lanu u-le-chol yisra'el ha-darim ba-ir ha-zot.

◇ On the surface, this seems like a strange ritual: it is, essentially, a legal fiction designed to permit something that, according to a strict reading of the law, would be impermissible. But it serves another function, which is to link different kinds of holiness: the holiness of the holiday with the holiness of Shabbat. This reminds us that we human beings are not in control of the calendar, or of time itself, and therefore we ought to raise up and sanctify moments which may appear to be separate. The interconnectedness of all kinds of holinesses becomes a reminder of the interconnectedness of all things.

# בדיקת חמץ

## The search for ḥametz

*The search for ḥametz takes place the night before the holiday. Before the search, the following blessing is recited:*

We bless You, Adonai our God,  
Source of life, who has sanctified us  
through the *mitzvot*, and instructed  
us concerning the removal of *ḥametz*.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר  
הַחַיִּים, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל בְּעוֹר חֲמֵץ:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-ḥayim, asher kid'shanu  
be-mitz'votav ve-tzivanu al bi'ur ḥametz.

*After the search, the following paragraph is recited. Since it constitutes a legal declaration, it should be recited in a language that the person understands.*

All *ḥametz* in my possession,  
whether I have removed it or not,  
whether I am now aware of it or not,  
I hereby declare nullified and  
ownerless as the dust of the earth.

כָּל-חֲמִירָא וְחֲמִיעָה דְאִכָּא  
בְּרִשׁוּתִי, דְלֵא חֲמִיעָה וְדֵלֵא  
בְּעֵרְתָהּ וְדֵלֵא יְדַעְנָא לֵיה, לְבָטֵל  
וְלֵהוּי הֶפְקֵר כְּעִפְרָא דְאַרְעָא:

Kal ḥamira ve-ḥami'a de-ika vi-r'shuti, de-la ḥamiteih u-de-la  
vi'ar'teih u-de-la yeda'na leih, libateil ve-lehevei hef'ker ke-af'ra  
de-ar'a.

*In the morning when the ḥametz is disposed of, the following legal declaration is recited, again in a language that the person understands:*

All *ḥametz* in my possession,  
whether I have seen it or not,  
whether I have removed it or not,  
I hereby declare nullified and  
ownerless as the dust of the earth.

כָּל-חֲמִירָא וְחֲמִיעָה דְאִכָּא  
בְּרִשׁוּתִי, דְחִזִּיתָהּ וְדֵלֵא חִזִּיתָהּ,  
דְּבִעֵרְתָהּ וְדֵלֵא בְּעֵרְתָהּ, לְבָטֵל  
וְלֵהוּי הֶפְקֵר כְּעִפְרָא דְאַרְעָא:

Kal ḥamira ve-ḥami'a de-ika vi-r'shuti, de-ḥaziteih u-de-la  
ḥaziteih, de-vi'ar'teih u-de-la vi'ar'teih, libateil ve-lehevei hef'ker  
ke-af'ra de-ar'a.

The following meditation on the removal of *ḥametz* is adapted from the Haggadah of the Ari, Rabbi Isaac Luria, of Safed, Israel (1534–1572).

May it be Your will, Adonai my God and God of my ancestors, that just as I have removed all *ḥametz* from my house and my domain, so too may I merit to remove the evil inclination from my heart, and may You remove all wickedness from the earth.

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יי אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי  
אֲמוֹתַי וְאֲבוֹתַי, שְׁכַשְׁמִשׁ שְׂאֵנִי  
מִבְּעֵר/מִבְּעֵרֶת חֶמֶץ מִבֵּיתִי  
וּמִרְשׁוֹתַי, כֵּן אֲזַכֶּה לְבָאֵר אֶת  
יְצֵר הָרָע מִלְּבִי, וְכֵן תְּבַעֵר אֶת  
כָּל-הָרְשָׁעָה מִן הָאָרֶץ:

Yehi ratzon mi-l'fanecha, YHWH elohai ve-elohai imotai va-avotai, she-ke-shem she-ani meva'er(et) ḥametz mi-beiti u-me-r'shuti, kein ez'keh leva'eir et yeitzer ha-ra mi-libi, ve-chein teva'eir et kol ha-rish'ah min ha-aretz.

◇ *Ḥametz* is, generally speaking, grain product that has become leavened or fermented. Refraining from eating *ḥametz* is one of the most recognizable things about the observance of Passover. One is not only prohibited from consuming *ḥametz*, but from possessing it or deriving any benefit from it. Instead of *ḥametz*, we eat *matzah*, which is bread baked without leavening agents and that has not been given time to ferment. The dichotomy between *ḥametz* and *matzah* is so central to this holiday, in fact, that the Torah refers to Passover simply as “the festival of *matzot*”.

◇ As we will explore during the *seder*, *matzah* is thought of as the bread of oppression: the leavening in *ḥametz* can be seen to symbolize “puffing up” with pride and arrogance. The prayer above, written by the *Ari*, reflects this notion. It is not only the physical *ḥametz* that must be removed from our possessions; we must also try our best to remove our spiritual *ḥametz*, which is the *יְצֵר הָרָע*, *yeitzer ha-ra*, the inclination to evil, from our hearts. Only when we battle our impulses to wickedness will we be able to carry on the work for liberation.



# הדלקת נרות

## Lighting the candles

*Before sunset, at least two candles are lit and the following blessing is recited.  
The words in brackets are added on Shabbat.*

We bless You, Adonai our God,      בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
Source of life, who has sanctified      אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְצִוָּתָנוּ  
us through the *mitzvot*, and      לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל [שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל] יוֹם טוֹב:  
instructed us to kindle the  
[Shabbat and] holiday lights.

B'ruchah at YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-hayim, asher kid'shat'nu  
be-mitz'votetah ve-tzivat'nu lehad'lik neir shel [shabbat ve-shel]  
yom tov.

*One who recites the following blessing here need not repeat it after Kiddush.*

We bless You, Adonai our God,      בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
who has kept us alive, sustained us,      שֶׁהַחַיִּים וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה:  
and enabled us to reach this time.

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-hayim, she-heheyanu  
ve-kiyemanu ve-higi'anu la-z'man ha-zeh.

◇ Flame is a divider between secular and sacred. Lighting candles for Shabbat and holidays marks a transition between different states of being and different ways of marking time, and encourages us to be present within those moments of existence and to bring the light into lives.

# סדר פסח

## The Passover Seder

<i>Kiddush</i> over wine,	Kadesh,	קִדְּשׁ
first handwashing,	u-r'hatz,	וּרְחַץ,
dipping a vegetable,	karpas,	כַּרְפַּס,
breaking the middle <i>matzah</i> ,	yaḥatz,	יַחַץ,
telling the story,	maggid,	מַגִּיד,
second handwashing,	roh'tzah,	רְחֹצָה,
blessing over bread,	motzi,	מוֹצִיא,
blessing over <i>matzah</i> ,	matzah,	מַצָּה,
blessing over <i>maror</i> ,	maror,	מָרוֹר,
the Hillel sandwich,	koreich,	כוֹרֵיךְ,
the festival meal,	shul'han oreich,	שְׁלַחַן עוֹרֵךְ,
eating dessert and the <i>afikoman</i> ,	tzafun,	צַפּוֹן,
grace after meals,	barech,	בָּרַךְ,
praise and thanksgiving,	hallel,	הַלֵּל,
conclusion.	nir'tzah.	נִרְצָה:

◇ The word סֵדֶר *seder* literally means "order". Everything in the *seder* has a set place in the evening's ritual. This poem that divides the fifteen discrete pieces of the *seder* into a set of rhymes, a mnemonic to help make it easier to remember what comes when.

◇ In many communities, it is traditional for the leader of the *seder* to wear a white robe known as a *kittel*, which is also worn on the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and during other special services, as well as during weddings. The *kittel* is also used as a burial shroud, symbolizing purity and simplicity. The *kittel* has no pockets: beyond this world, our physical accumulations are meaningless.

# קדש — Kadesh

## The first cup

*Four cups of wine are consumed as part of the seder. The Torah uses four verbs to describe the action of the exodus: "I shall take you out ... I shall rescue you ... I shall redeem you ... I shall bring you".<sup>1</sup>*

*On Friday night, Kiddush begins here:*

And there was evening and there was morning—

The sixth day. The heavens and the earth and all they contained were finished. God completed all the work that He had begun to do, and on the seventh day He rested from the work He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it God rested from all the work of creation that He had done.

Va-yehi erev va-yehi voker—

Yom ha-shishi. Va-y'chulu ha-shamayim ve-ha-aretz ve-chol tzeva'am. Va-yechal elohim ba-yom ha-sh'vi'i m'lach'to asher asah, va-yish'bot ba-yom ha-sh'vi'i mi-kol m'lach'to asher asah. Va-yevarech elohim et yom ha-sh'vi'i va-y'kadesh oto, ki vo shavat mi-kol m'lach'to asher bara elohim la'asot.

וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר—

יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי: וַיִּכְלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ  
וְכָל־צְבָאָם: וַיַּכֵּל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וַיִּשְׁבֹּת  
בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר  
עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ. כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת  
מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים  
לַעֲשׂוֹת:

*On all nights:*

By your permission, my friends—

We bless You, Adonai our God,  
Source of life, who creates the fruit  
of the vine.

Sav'ri, haverai va-ḥaveirotai—

B'ruchah at YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-ḥayim, boreit p'ri ha-gafen.

סְבָרִי, חֲבֵרָי וְחֲבֵירוֹתָי—

בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
בוֹרְאֵת פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן:

1. Exodus 6:6-8

On Shabbat, the words in brackets are added.

We bless You, Adonai our God, Source of life, who has chosen us along with all other nations, and exalted us together with all tongues, and sanctified us through the *mitzvat*. You, Adonai our God, have lovingly given us [Sabbaths for rest and] festivals for celebration, holidays and seasons for rejoicing, in particular [this Sabbath and] this Festival of *Matzot*, [lovingly] a holy convocation, a reminder of the exodus from Egypt. For you have chosen us and sanctified us along with all other nations, and [with love and pleasure] given us as an inheritance [the Sabbath and] these holy times. We bless You, Adonai, who sanctifies [the Sabbath,] the people Israel, and the holidays.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ עַם-כָּל-עַם,  
וְרוֹמַמְנוּ עַם-כָּל-לְשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. וַתִּתֵּן לָנוּ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ,  
בְּאַהֲבָה [שְׁבֻתוֹת לְמִנוּחָה וְ]  
מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה, חַגִּים וְזְמַנִּים  
לְשִׂשׂוֹן, אֶת-יוֹם [הַשְּׁבֻת הַזֶּה  
וְאֶת-יוֹם] חַג הַמַּצּוֹת הַזֶּה, זְמַן  
חַרוּתֵינוּ, [בְּאַהֲבָה] מְקָרָא קֹדֶשׁ,  
זָכַר לְיֵצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֻרְתָּ,  
וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ עַם-כָּל-הָעַמִּים,  
[וְשֻׁבַת] וּמוֹעֲדֵי קֹדֶשׁ [בְּאַהֲבָה  
וּבְרָצוֹן] בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׂוֹן  
הַנְּחַלְתָּנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, מְקַדֵּשׁ  
[הַשְּׁבֻת וְ] יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-ḥayim, asher baḥar banu im kol am, ve-romemanu im kol lashon, ve-kideshanu be-mitz'votav. Va-titen lanu, YHWH eloheinu, be-ahavah [shabbat li-menuḥah u-] mo'adim le-sim'ḥah, ḥagim u-zemanim le-sason, et-yom [ha-shabbat ha-zeh ve-et yom] ḥag ha-matzot ha-zeh, z'man ḥeiruteinu, [be-ahavah] mik'ra kodesh, zeicher li-y'tziyat mitz'rayim. Ki vanu vaḥar'ta, ve-otanu kidash'ta im kol ha-amim, [ve-shabbat] u-mo'adei kod'shecha [be-ahavah u-ve-ratzon] be-sim'ḥah u-ve-sason hin'hal'tanu. Baruch atah YHWH, mekadash [ha-shabbat ve-] yisra'el ve-ha-zemanim.

◇ Some Renaissance-era *Haggadot* rather incongruously have pictures of rabbit-hunting scenes at this point. The mnemonic for the order of the blessings when the holiday falls on a Saturday night derives from the initial letters of יין *yayin* "wine", קידוש *kiddush* "sanctification", נר *neir* "flame", הבדלה *havdalah* "separation", and זמן *zman* "holiday". The initial letters of these words spells out יקנהז *yaknehaz*, which sounds like the German phrase *jag den Has*—"hunt the hare"!

*On Saturday night, Havdalah, the ceremony separating between Shabbat and the rest of the week, is inserted here, where it comprises the following two blessings:*

We bless You, Adonai our God, Source of life, who creates illuminating fire.

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר  
הַחַיִּים, בּוֹרְאֵת מְאוֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ:

B'ruchah at YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-ḥayim, boreit me'orei ha-eish.

We bless You, Adonai our God, Source of life, who distinguishes between holy and secular, between light and darkness, between the seventh day and the six days of creation. You have separated the holiness of the Sabbath from the holiness of the holiday, and sanctified the seventh day above the six days of creation. You have distinguished and sanctified Your people Israel by means of Your holiness. We bless You, Adonai, who distinguishes between different holy things.

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר  
הַחַיִּים, הַמְבַדֵּלָה בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ  
לְחֹל, בֵּין אוֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יוֹם  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה.  
בֵּין קֹדֶשֶׁת שַׁבָּת לְקֹדֶשֶׁת  
יוֹם-טוֹב הַבְּדִלָּת, וְאַתָּה יוֹם  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְשַׁשֶּׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה  
קֹדֶשֶׁת. הַבְּדִלָּת וְקֹדֶשֶׁת  
אֶת-עַמּוּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקֹדֶשֶׁתךָ.  
בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמְבַדֵּלָה בֵּין  
קֹדֶשׁ לְקֹדֶשׁ:

B'ruchah at YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-ḥayim, ha-mav'dilah bein kodesh le-ḥol, bein or le-ḥoshech, bein yom ha-sh'vi'i le-sheishet y'mei ha-ma'aseh. Bein kedushat shabbat li-kedushat yom tov hiv'dalt, ve-et yom ha-sh'vi'i mi-sheishet y'mei ha-ma'aseh kidasht. Hiv'dalt ve-kidasht et ameich yisra'el bi-k'dushateich. B'ruchah at YHWH, ha-mav'dilah bein kodesh le-kodesh.

*On all nights:*

We bless You, Adonai our God, Source of life, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this time.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגַּעְנוּ לְזְמַן הַזֶּה:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-ḥayim, she-heḥeyanu ve-kiyemanu ve-higi'anu la-z'man ha-zeh.

*Drink the first cup while reclining.*

## ורחץ — U-r'hatz First handwashing

*Wash the hands without a blessing. In the Ashkenazi tradition, generally only the leader of the seder washes; in the Sefardi tradition, all participants wash.*

## כרפס — Karpas Dipping a vegetable

*Take a vegetable (other than the maror) and dip it. Most Ashkenazim use salt water; most Sefardim use vinegar. Then recite the blessing:*

We bless You, Adonai our God, בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
Source of life, who creates the fruit בּוֹרְאֵת פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה:  
of the earth.

B'ruchah at YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-hayim, boreit p'ri  
ha-adamah.

*Eat the vegetable while reclining.*

◇ Vegetables symbolize spring, and the renewal of the agricultural cycle. The agrarian nature of the ancient world depended much more heavily on cycles of seasonal rains than we do today; in our world, you can walk into a grocery store and buy any kind of fresh fruit and vegetables at any time of year. How did these vegetables we are now eating get to our table? How many hands did they pass through? Did those hands belong to workers who were treated and paid fairly?

## יחץ — Yahatz Break the middle matzah

*The middle matzah is broken in half. The smaller half is returned to the seder plate, and the larger half is wrapped up to become the afikoman.*

◇ Why do we break a *matzah* in half? Why not put a whole *matzah* away for later? In the next paragraph, we will point to a plate with two complete *matzot* and one broken one and we will say, "This is the bread of oppression." The bread of oppression is literally broken. When we are liberated, the bread will be whole.

## מגיד — Maggid Telling the story

*Uncover the matzot.*

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

Ha lah'ma anya da-achalu av'hatana be-ar'a de-mitz'rayim.  
Kal di-ch'fin yeitei ve-yeichul, kal di-tz'rich yeitei ve-yif'sah.  
Hashata hacha, le-shanah ha-ba'ah be-ar'a de-yisra'el.  
Hashata av'dei, le-shanah ha-ba'ah b'nei u-v'not horin.

Ieste el pan de la afrisiyon ke komiron nuestros padres en tierra de Egypto. Todo el ki tiene ambre venga i komer, todo el ki tiene di minister venga i paskwe. Ieste anyo aki, a el anyo el vienen en tierra de Israël. Ieste anyo aki siervos, a el anyo el vienen ijos e ijas foros.

הא לחמא עניא דאכלו אבהתנא  
בארעא דמצרים. כל־דכפין ייתי  
ויכל, כל־דצריך ייתי ויפסח.  
השתא הכא, לשנה הבאה  
בארעא דישראל. השתא עבדי,  
לשנה הבאה בני ובנות חורין:

יסטאיי חיל פאן דה לא אפריסיון קה  
קומירון מואסטרוס פאדרייס אן טיאהרה  
דה אגפטו. טודו חיל קי טיאניי אמצרה  
צאנגה י קומאר, טודו חיל קי טיאניי די  
מיניסטאר צאנגה י פאסקוויי. יסטאיי חניו  
אקי, א חיל חניו חיל ציאנין אן טיאהרה דה  
ישראל. יסטאיי חניו חיל קי טיארצום, א חיל  
חניו חיל ציאנין יגום איה יגאס פורום.

◇ The paragraph that begins the *seder* is in Aramaic, the everyday language of Talmudic-era Jews. Here, it is also given in Ladino, the Romance language spoken by many Sefardi Jews. It is supposed to be understandable by everyone, because it is not a prayer, but an invitation. But are all who are hungry truly able to eat *anywhere*, let alone with us? How many of us would really invite a hungry stranger into our house today? How can we correct the systemic problems that create hunger, poverty, and oppression?

*Cover the matzot. Fill the second cup.*

## ארבעה קושיות — The four questions

How different this night is from all other nights!

מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה  
מִכָּל־הַלַּיְלוֹת:

On all other nights, we eat both *ḥametz* and *matzah*; tonight, only *matzah*.

שֶׁבְכָל־הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֻמֶּץ וּמַצָּה, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כֻּלּוֹ מַצָּה:

On all other nights, we eat all kinds of vegetables; tonight, we eat *maror*.

שֶׁבְכָל־הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יַרְקוֹת, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מָרוֹר:

On all other nights, we do not dip our food even once; tonight, we dip our food twice.

שֶׁבְכָל־הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מְטַבֵּילִין אֶפְּלוֹ פַּעַם אַחַת, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פַּעַמִּים:

On all other nights, we eat either formally or informally; tonight, we eat with special ceremony.

שֶׁבְכָל־הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין מְסַבִּין, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלְנוּ מְסַבִּין:

Mah nish'tanah ha-laylah ha-zeh mi-kol ha-leilot.

She-be-chol ha-leilot anu och'lin ḥametz u-matzah,  
ha-laylah ha-zeh kulo matzah.

She-be-chol ha-leilot anu och'lin she'ar yerakot,  
ha-laylah ha-zeh maror.

She-be-chol ha-leilot ein anu mat'bilin afilu pa'am eḥat,  
ha-laylah ha-zeh sh'tei fe'amim.

She-be-chol ha-leilot anu och'lin bein yosh'vin u-vein mesubin,  
ha-laylah ha-zeh kulanu mesubin.

◇ In Temple times, there were three “questions”: roasting the meat for the Passover offering, dipping twice, and the *matzah*.<sup>2</sup> The list changed and evolved as the nature of the Passover observances changed: the current list comes from exilic Judaism, from a time when the Temple and animal sacrifices were relics of history.<sup>3</sup>

◇ The astute reader will notice that these statements, traditionally called the “four questions”, are not really framed as questions at all. Keep these statements in mind as we continue throughout the *seder*: have we succeeded in answering the questions they imply?

2. This version of the list is given in the Palestinian Talmud, *Pesachim* 60b.

3. Saadia Ga'on (882–942) and Maimonides (1135–1204) are responsible for the development of the list of questions into their present form. See *Mishneh Torah*, “Laws of *Hametz* and *Matzah*” 8:3.



## כמה תשובות — Some responses

*Uncover the matzot.*

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but YHWH our God took us out of there with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm. And if the Holy One had not taken our ancestors out of Egypt, then we and all of our descendants might still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.

Now, even if all of us were scholars, even if all of us were sages, even if all of us were elders, even if all of us were thoroughly learned in Torah, we would still be obligated to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt. Moreover, whoever elaborates upon the story of the exodus from Egypt is deserving of praise.

◇ Only by remembering oppression do we continue the fight in our times. If we are not continually repeating our own history, respecting the wisdom and knowledge of our elders, we have no hope of learning from it. And that wisdom will die with them when they pass out of this world if we do not hear it now.

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם,  
וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם בְּיַד  
חֲזָקָה וּבְזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָהּ. וְאֵלֹהֵינוּ לֹא  
הוֹצִיא הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת  
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, הָרִי  
אֵנּוּ וּבָנֵינוּ וּבָנוֹתֵינוּ מִשְׁעַבְדֵי  
הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם.

וְאִפְּלוּ כָלֵנוּ חֲכָמִים, כָּלֵנוּ נְבוֹנוֹת,  
כָּלֵנוּ זְקֵנִים, כָּלֵנוּ יוֹדְעוֹת  
אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, מִצְוָה עָלֵינוּ לְסַפֵּר  
בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. וְכָל־הַמְרַבֵּה  
לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הָרִי הִיא  
מְשַׁבַּחַת.

◇ We elaborate upon our story because there is nobody else to do it for us. This is our story to tell; therefore let us raise up our own voices. And when the story is not ours but that of other people, let us remember to lift up their voices so that they may tell their own stories. Let us not silence them, but let us let them speak for themselves.

There is a story about Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon. They were gathered together in B'nei B'rak and telling the story of the exodus from Egypt all through the night, until their students came to them and said, "Masters, it is time to recite the morning *Shema*."

מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ  
וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה וְרַבִּי  
עֲקִיבָא וְרַבִּי טַרְפוֹן, שֶׁהָיוּ מְסַבִּין  
בְּבֵנֵי בְרַק, וְהָיוּ מְסַפְּרִים בִּיצִיאַת  
מִצְרַיִם כְּלֵאֲתוֹת הַלַּיְלָה, עַד  
שֶׁבָּאוּ תַלְמִידֵיהֶם וְאָמְרוּ לָהֶם:  
רַבּוֹתֵינוּ, הִגִּיעַ זְמַן קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע  
שֶׁל שַׁחֲרִית.

◇ One theory about the enigmatic story in the preceding paragraph is that "telling the story of the exodus from Egypt" is a code for "plotting the Bar Kochba rebellion of 135 ce" and "it is time to recite the morning *Shema*" is a code for "Roman soldiers are coming, so break up the meeting!"

Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah said: See, I am seventy years old, but I never understood why the story of the exodus from Egypt should be told at night, until Ben Zoma explained it to me with this verse: "In order that you remember the day you went out of Egypt all the days of your life"<sup>4</sup>. He interprets "the days of your life" to mean "daytime", but the verse says "all the days of your life", which includes the nights as well. The Sages interpret "the days of your life" to mean this world, and "all the days of your life" includes the days of the Messiah.

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה: הֲרֵי  
אֲנִי כְּבֹן שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה, וְלֹא זָכִיתִי  
שֶׁתֵּאֱמַר יִצִּיאַת מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלֹת,  
עַד שֶׁדָּרְשָׁה בֶן זֹמָא, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:  
לִמְעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת־יוֹם צֵאתְךָ  
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ.  
"יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ" — הַיּוֹמִים. "כָּל־יְמֵי  
חַיֶּיךָ" — הַלַּיְלֹת. וְחֻכְמַיִם  
אוֹמְרִים: "יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ" — הָעוֹלָם  
הַזֶּה. "כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ" — לְהַבְיֵא  
לְיָמֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ.

Blessed is the All-Present One,  
blessed is She. Blessed is She who  
gave the Torah to Her people Israel.  
Blessed is She.

בְּרוּךְ הַמְּקוֹם. בְּרוּכָה הִיא.  
בְּרוּכָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּה תּוֹרָה לְעַמֶּךָ  
יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּכָה הִיא.

4. Deuteronomy 16:3

## ארבעה בנים — The four children

The Torah speaks of four types of children: one wise, one wicked, one simple, and one who does not know how to ask a question.

כַּנְגֵד אַרְבַּעַת בָּנִים דְּבָרָה תּוֹרָה:  
אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד  
תָּם, וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לְשַׁאֲוֹל.

◇ The Torah does not literally refer to any such specific children: rather, the rabbis extrapolate from various places in the Torah where the commandment of retelling the story of the Exodus comes up, and thereby come up with these four characters to expound upon those verses.

◇ The traditional Hebrew text conceives of the four children as sons, בָּנִים *banim*. Hebrew's two-gender grammar follows the widespread pattern of Afro-Asiatic languages: masculine and feminine, with no neutral, with the effect that the masculine gender is used where the gender should be unspecified. In the following Hebrew text, the first and fourth children are referred to in the feminine, and the second and third in the masculine.

What does the wise child say?  
“What are the laws, the statutes, and the ordinances which YHWH our God has commanded you?”<sup>5</sup> You should instruct her in all the laws of Passover, up to the detail that there should be nothing additional after dessert.

חֲכָמָה מָה הִיא אוֹמֶרֶת? “מָה  
הַעֲדוֹת וְהַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר  
צִוָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם?” וְאֵף אֶתָּה  
אֶמְרִי לָהּ כְּהִלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח, אֵין  
מִפְּטִירִין אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֲפִיקוֹמָן.

◇ The *seeder* is based on the Greek *symposium*, a party involving eating, drinking, entertainment, and discussion. A *symposiarch* was appointed to dictate how strong the drink would be and what any other activities would consist of. The rule that there should be nothing additional after dessert at the *seeder* probably means to discourage postprandial entertainment in the Hellenistic style, with flute-girls and dancers, both slaves and hired courtesans. In Plato's dialogue *Symposium* the characters purposefully dismiss the after-dinner entertainment so they may have a philosophical discussion.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps something similar is intended here.

5. Deuteronomy 6:20

6. Plato, *Symposium* 176c

What does the wicked child say? “What does this service mean to you?”<sup>7</sup> He says “to you” and not “to him”. Since he removes himself from this community, set his teeth on edge by replying with the verse, “It is because of what YHWH did for me when I went out of Egypt”<sup>8</sup>. “For me” and not “for him”—for had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.

רָשַׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? “מָה הַעֲבוּדָה  
הַזֹּאת לָכֶם?” “לָכֶם” — וְלֹא “לּוֹ”.  
וּלְפִי שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶת-עַמּוֹ מִן הַכְּלָל,  
כִּפּוּר בַּעֲקָר. וְאִךְ אֵתָּה הַקֵּהָה  
אֶת-שִׁנָּיו, וְאָמַר לוֹ: “בַּעֲבוּר זֶה  
עָשִׂיתָ יי לִי בְצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.”  
“לִי” — וְלֹא “לּוֹ”. אֱלֹהֵי הָיָה שָׁם,  
לֹא הָיָה נִגְאָל.

◇ The rabbis object to with the wicked child’s statement as the pronoun “to you”. Compare this carefully with the wise child’s question: “...which YHWH our God has commanded you”. Many ancient texts note this problem and change the wise child’s “you” to “us”, thereby altering a verse of Torah! Left unchanged, what is different about these characters’ questions?

◇ “What does this service mean to you?” The Hebrew seems to be a question, but the word *מה* *mah*, usually understood as “what”, can also indicate an exclamation, as it does in the four “questions” which we recited earlier. Perhaps we could understand the wicked child: “How important this service is to you!”

◇ Is this really a fair answer to the wicked child? The phrase *כִּפּוּר בַּעֲקָר* *kafar ba-ikar* literally means “he has committed heresy in this matter”. Should people who don’t see eye-to-eye with everyone in their community about all matters be excluded like this? Is the wicked child truly past rehabilitation?

What does the simple child say? “What is this?”<sup>9</sup> You should continue the verse for him: “It was with a mighty hand that YHWH took us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.”<sup>10</sup>

תָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? “מָה זֹאת?”  
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו: “בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ  
יי מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית-עַבְדִּים.”<sup>10</sup>

◇ The word for “simple” is *תָּם* *tam*, which also paradoxically means “perfect” or “extraordinary”. And indeed, this question is possibly the most profound one of all: the wise child gets caught up in minutiae and details, but the “simple” child asks the most basic question: “What is this?” And there really is no simple answer.

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7. Exodus 12:26  
8. Exodus 13:18  
9. Exodus 13:14  
10. *Ibid.*

As for the child who does not know how to ask a question, you should open the discussion for her, as it is written, “And you shall say to your child on that day: ‘It is because of what YHWH did for me when I went out of Egypt.’”<sup>11</sup>

וְשֵׂאִינָהּ יוֹדַעַת לְשֹׂאֵל, אֶת־  
פֶּתַח לָהּ. מִן הָאֲמֹר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ  
לְבִתְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר,  
בְּעֵבֹר זֶה עָשָׂתָה יְיָ לִי בְּצֵאתִי  
מִמִּצְרַיִם.

◇ This answer is the same as that which is given to the wicked child, but the question is framed differently. We are all the child who does not yet know how to ask a question. In our arrogance, we may think we are wiser, more knowledgeable than we really are, and we may shut our eyes and our ears to wisdom. It takes courage to be able to say “I do not know.” To be this child is to be honest, and this honesty engenders strength and true wisdom.

In the beginning, our ancestors worshipped other deities, but now the All-Present One has brought us into His worship, as it is said: “Joshua said to the whole people: Thus says YHWH, God of Israel: Your ancestors once lived across the river, Terah father of Abraham and Nahor. I took your father Abraham from across the river and brought him through the entire land of Canaan. I multiplied his descendants, and I gave him Isaac, and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave Mout Se’ir as an inheritance, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.”<sup>12</sup>

מִתְחִלָּה עֹבְדֵי עֲבוּדָה זָרָה הָיוּ  
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ, וְעָבְשׁוּ קִרְבָּנוּ  
הַמְּקוֹם לְעֲבוּדָתוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר  
יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם: כֹּה אָמַר יְיָ  
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: בְּעֵבֶר הַנָּהָר יֹשְׁבוּ  
אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵעוֹלָם, תֵּרַח אָבִי  
אֲבִרָהָם וְאָבִי נַחֹר, וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים  
אֲחֵרִים. וְאָקַח אֶת־אֲבִיכֶם  
אֶת־אֲבִרָהָם מֵעֵבֶר הַנָּהָר, וְאוֹלַךְ  
אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. וְאֲרָבָה  
אֶת־זֵרְעוֹ, וְאֶתֶּן לוֹ אֶת־יִצְחָק, וְאֶתֶּן  
לְיִצְחָק אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו, וְאֶתֶּן  
לְעֵשָׂו אֶת־הַר־שֵׂעִיר לְרִשְׁתּוֹ אוֹתוֹ,  
וַיַּעֲקֹב וּבָנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרַיִם.

◇ We get a compressed run-through of the entire history of the Israelite nation up to the point when Jacob and his family end up in Egypt. The word “Hebrew”—עִבְרִי *ivri*—derives from the root עבר *ayin-bet-resh*, meaning “across”: our ancestors once lived “across the river”. In fact, one beautiful modern-classical Hebrew word for “transgender” is *ivri*—“one who crosses over”—like our ancestors of old.

11. Exodus 13:18

12. Joshua 24:2–4

Blessed is the One who keeps Her promises to Israel. Blessed is She. For the Holy One foresaw what would happen to Abraham's descendants, as it is written: "God said to Abram: Know for a certainty that your descendants shall be strangers in a land not their own, and they shall be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But know also that I will judge the nation that enslaved them, and afterwards they will leave with great substance."<sup>13</sup>

בְּרוּכָה שׁוֹמְרַת הַבְּטָחָתָהּ  
 לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרוּכָה הִיא. שֶׁהִקְדוּשָׁה  
 בְּרוּכָה הִיא חֲשָׁבָה אֶת־הַקֶּץ  
 לַעֲשׂוֹת, כְּמָה שֶׁאִמְרָה לְאַבְרָהָם  
 אָבִינוּ בְּבְרִית בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים, מִן  
 הָאִמּוֹר: וְתֹאמַר לְאַבְרָם: יָדַע  
 תְּדַע כִּי גֵר יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא  
 לָהֶם, וְעִבְדוּם וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע  
 מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה. וְגַם אֶת־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר  
 יַעֲבֹדוּ דָן אֲנִכִּי, וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יֵצְאוּ  
 בְּרֶכֶשׁ גָּדוֹל.

*Raise the cup of wine.*

It is this promise that has stood for our ancestors and for us. For it was not one single person who desired to destroy us; rather, in every generation there are those who seek to destroy us, but the Holy One, blessed be She, saves us from their designs.

וְהִיא שֶׁעֲמָדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ  
 וְלָנוּ, שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ  
 לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, אֲלֵא שֶׁבְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר  
 עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, וְהִקְדוּשָׁה  
 בְּרוּכָה הִיא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם.

Ve-hi she-am'dah la-avoteinu ve-imoteinu ve-lanu,  
 she-lo ehad bi-l'vad amad aleinu lechaloteinu,  
 ela she-be-chol dor va-dor om'dim aleinu lechaloteinu,  
 ve-ha-k'doshah v'ruchah hi matziline mi-yadam.

*Replace the cup of wine.*

◇ The Jewish people have suffered through thousands of years of persecutions throughout the world. But now, in the early twenty-first century, we find ourselves in the unfamiliar position of being powerful and influential, and with access to privilege that our ancestors could only dream of. What is our responsibility to those people who are less privileged than we are? What about other human beings whose lives we dominate in the same way that we were once dominated?

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13. Genesis 15:13-14

## יציאת מצרים — The exodus from Egypt

Consider the verses: “My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt. He sojourned there with just a few people, and there he became a great nation, mighty and numerous. The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us, and imposed hard labor upon us. We cried out to YHWH, the God of our ancestors, and YHWH heard our voice, and saw our oppression, and beheld our labor and our struggle. Then YHWH took us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with awesome power, with signs and with wonders.”<sup>14</sup>

צא ולמד: ארמי אבד אבי, וירד  
מצרימה, ויגר שם במתי מעט,  
ויהי שם לגוי גדול, עצום ורב.  
וירעו אתנו המצרים ויענונו,  
ויתנו עלינו עבדה קשה. ונצעק  
אל-י אלהי אבותינו ואמותינו,  
וישמע יי את קלנו, וירא את  
ענינו ואת עמלנו ואת לחצנו.  
ויצאנו יי ממצרים ביד חזקה  
ובזרע נטויה, ובמרא גדל,  
ובאתות ובמפתים.

◇ The heart of the traditional text of the *Haggadah* is a long elaboration upon these four verses, a sort of catechism of the history of the Israelite people. The traditional *Haggadah* does not mention even once the names of Moses, Aaron, Miriam, or any other familiar human characters in the story of the Exodus (apart from Pharaoh, who is named only by his title). Why would the rabbis want to snub Moses and the rest? Is this fair to the heroes of the story?

◇ The first three words of these verses have engendered much discussion. Does *אָרַמִּי אָבֵד אָבִי* *arami oved avi* mean “My father was a wandering Aramean” or “The Aramean sought to destroy my father”? Who is the “Aramean”? The traditional *Haggadah* identifies the “Aramean” as Laban, father-in-law of the patriarch Jacob, but there are many problems with any answer to these questions. Some people understand “the Aramean” as a generic reference to all who commit persecution and foster oppression.

◇ The classical interpretive text of the *Haggadah* starts here with the Hebrew expression *צא ולמד* *tzei u-lmad*—“go out and learn”. In the Aramaic of the Talmud, the rabbis use the phrase *תא שמא* *ta shma*—“come and hear”. You cannot count on wisdom and knowledge to come to you of its own accord; you must go out and seek it, you must follow it, and you must see it through.

14. Deuteronomy 26:5–8

The Holy One brought ten plagues upon the Egyptians in the land of Egypt, namely:

עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת הֵבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא  
עַל הַמִּצְרַיִם בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן:

*At the mention of each plague and each symbol of the acrostic, remove a drop of wine from your cup:*

Blood,	Dam,	דָם,
frogs,	tz'far'de'a,	צַפְרֵדַע,
vermin,	kinim,	כְּנִים,
flies,	arov,	עֲרוֹב,
death of livestock,	dever,	דֵבַר,
skin boils,	sh'hin,	שִׁחִין,
hailstorms,	barad,	בָּרָד,
locusts,	ar'beh,	אַרְבֵּה,
darkness,	hoshech,	חֹשֶׁךְ,
death of the firstborn.	makat bechorot.	מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת.

Rabbi Judah made them an acrostic: רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הִיא גוֹתֵן בָּהֶם סְמָנִים:  
DeTZaCH, ADaSH, Be'AHaV. דְּצ"ךְ עַד"ש בְּאֲח"ב.

◇ Why an acrostic? Rabbi Judah does not give a reason. Is it that much harder to remember eleven words than three?

◇ What was the true purpose of the plagues? Pharaoh and the Egyptians are convinced God means business even before the Egyptians are struck with the plagues, and furthermore, it is God who is responsible for hardening Pharaoh's heart so that he doesn't let the Israelites go. Was it really Pharaoh that God was trying to convince?

◇ There is a famous *midrash* that the angels rejoiced as God split the sea and led Israel through, but God rebuked the angels: "My handiwork is drowning in the sea, and you wish to sing praises?"<sup>15</sup> Scripture says, "Do not rejoice when your enemies fall, and do not be happy as they stumble"<sup>16</sup> Is tonight's celebration justified? Which Egyptians suffered most as a result of the Israelites' victory? Is spilling a few drops of wine sufficient to recognize the human cost of our victory?

15. Babylonian Talmud, *Megillah* 10b

16. Proverbs 24:17



“YHWH said to Moses: ‘Why are you crying out to Me? Speak to the Children of Israel and order them to go forward. Lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea, and split it. Then the Children of Israel will cross over the sea on dry land.’”<sup>17</sup>

וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה מַה־תַּצְעֵק  
 אֵלַי דְּבַר אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְעוּ׃  
 וְאַתָּה הֲרִם אֶת־מִטְּדֶךָ וּנְשֹׂתָ  
 אֶת־יָדְךָ עַל־הַיָּם וּבִקַּעְתָּהוּ וַיֵּיבֹאוּ  
 בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּתּוֹךְ הַיָּם בַּיַּבֵּשָׁה׃

◇ This remarkable passage from the Torah has been commented upon greatly by scholars over the centuries. God tells Moses to *stop praying* and to actually *do something*. Midrashic tradition relates that the sea did not actually part until Nahshon ben Amminadav, a leader of the tribe of Judah, stepped into the waves, causing them to part.<sup>18</sup> Prayer is all well and good, but it can only take us so far.

“Then Miriam the prophetess, sister of Aaron, took her timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed after her dancing with their timbrels. Miriam led all the people thus: ‘Sing to YHWH, for He has excelled greatly; horse and rider He has hurled into the sea.’”<sup>19</sup>

וַתִּקַּח מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה אֶחָת אֶת־הַתֵּף בְּיָדָהּ וַתִּצְאֵן כָּל־הַנָּשִׁים  
 אַחֲרֶיהָ בַּתְּפִים וּבַמְחֻלָּת׃  
 וַתַּעַן לָהֶם מִרְיָם  
 שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־נָאֲתָה נָאֲתָה  
 סוּס וְרִכְבּוֹ רָמָה בַיָּם׃

◇ Where did Miriam and company get their timbrels from? The Israelites left Egypt in such a hurry that their bread had insufficient time to rise, but the women remembered to pack their musical instruments? One should always be prepared for a little spontaneous celebration!

◇ Miriam’s song begins with the word שִׁירוּ *shiru*, an imperative form in the plural, to both men and women. Miriam is not instructing only the women to sing, but the men as well. Contrast this with Moses’ song earlier in Exodus, which begins אֲשִׁירָה *ashirah*, “I shall sing.”<sup>20</sup> In fact, the Torah introduces the Song at the Sea with אַזּ יָשִׁיר מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל *az yashir moshe u-v’nei yisrael*, “Thus sang (singular) Moses and the Children of Israel.”<sup>21</sup> Miriam’s song is a communal celebration, meant to be celebrated not by one person, but by the entire community together, each according to how he or she is able to participate: song and dance that is greater than the sum of its parts.

17. Exodus 14:15–16

18. Babylonian Talmud, *Sotah* 37a; also Numbers Rabbah 8:7

19. Exodus 15:20–21

20. Exodus 15:1

21. *Ibid.*

## דין — Dayeinu: It would have been sufficient!

How many kindnesses has the All-Present One granted us!      בָּמָה מַעֲלוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְמָקוֹם עֲלֵינוּ:

Kamah ma'alot tovot la-makom aleinu!

If God had only taken us out of Egypt,      אֱלוֹ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, דֵּינֵנוּ!  
it would have been sufficient!

If God had only given us the Shabbat,      אֱלוֹ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת, דֵּינֵנוּ!  
it would have been sufficient!

If God had only given us the Torah,      אֱלוֹ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה, דֵּינֵנוּ!  
it would have been sufficient!

Illo hotzi'anu mi-mitz'rayim, dayeinu!

Illo natan lanu et ha-shabbat, dayeinu!

Illo natan lanu et ha-torah, dayeinu!

◇ The traditional version of this song tells the history of the Exodus and the Israelite people all the way up through the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, with a focus on God's role in defeating the enemies of the Israelite people. Many *Haggadot* reduce the litany of things God has done for us to the stanzas about the positive things God has given us, rather than focusing on the destruction of other people. The exodus from Egypt, the Shabbat, and the Torah are three things that have helped to define the Jewish people over the millennia.

◇ Persian and Afghani Jews have the rather strange custom of hitting each other over the head with green onions during the ninth stanza of the traditional text of *Dayeinu*, which states "If God had only supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, but not provided us with the manna, it would have been sufficient". The Torah records a passage wherein the Israelites see the manna—the food that God provided for them for forty years of wandering in the desert—and start to tell themselves that slavery in Egypt was preferable because of their more varied diet.<sup>22</sup> The custom of hitting one another with green onions is meant to remind the participants not to be fooled by apparent abundance: sometimes the abundance itself represents slavery.

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22. Numbers 11:5–6

Rabban Gamaliel used to say:  
Whoever has not discussed the  
following three things about  
Passover has not discharged their  
obligation, namely: the Passover  
offering, the *matzah*, and the *maror*.

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר: כָּל־שָׁלָא  
אָמַר שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים אֵלּוּ בַּפֶּסַח,  
לֹא יֵצֵא יָדוֹ חוּבָתוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן:  
פֶּסַח, מַצָּה, וּמְרֹר.

Indicate, in turn, the shank bone (or vegetarian substitute), matzah, and maror:

The Passover offering that our  
ancestors ate in the times when the  
Temple still stood: why did they eat  
it? Because the Holy One passed  
over our ancestors' houses in Egypt,  
as it is written: "You shall say: It is a  
Passover offering to YHWH, for He  
passed over the houses of the  
Children of Israel in Egypt when  
He struck the Egyptians, and He  
spared our houses, whereupon the  
people bowed and worshipped."<sup>23</sup>

פֶּסַח, שֶׁהָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ  
אוֹכְלִים בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה  
קַיָּם, עַל שׁוֹם מָה? עַל שׁוֹם  
שֶׁפֶּסַח הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל בְּתֵי  
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם,  
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְאִמְרַתֶּם זָבַח פֶּסַח הוּא  
לִי, אֲשֶׁר פֶּסַח עַל בְּתֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
בְּמִצְרַיִם בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת מִצְרַיִם, וְאֶת  
בְּתֵינוּ הִצִּיל, וַיִּקְדּוּ הָעַם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ.

This *matzah*—why do we eat it?  
Because our ancestors' dough had  
insufficient time to rise when the  
Holy One revealed Himself and  
redeemed them, as it is written:  
"They baked the dough which they  
had taken out of Egypt into  
unleavened cakes of *matzah* since it  
had not risen, for they were being  
sent out of Egypt and could not  
delay, and they had prepared no  
other provisions for themselves."<sup>24</sup>

מַצָּה זֶה שֶׁאָנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוֹם  
מָה? עַל שׁוֹם שֶׁלֹּא הִסְפִּיק בְּצֻקָם  
שֶׁל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ לְהַחְמִיץ,  
עַד שֶׁנִּגְלָה עֲלֵיהֶם הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ  
הוּא וּגְאָלָם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאפּוּ אֶת  
הַבֶּצֶק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם עִגְת  
מִצּוֹת, כִּי לֹא חָמֵץ, כִּי גִרְשׁוּ  
מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְהִתְמַהֵמֶה,  
וְגַם צָדָה לֹא עָשׂוּ לָהֶם.

23. Exodus 12:27

24. Exodus 12:39

This *maror*—why do we eat it? Because the Egyptians embittered our ancestors’ lives in Egypt, as it is written: “They embittered their lives with hard labor in mortar and brick, and work in the field; they worked our ancestors ruthlessly with every kind of forced labor.”<sup>25</sup>

מָרוֹר זֶה שְׂאֲנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוֹם  
 מָה? עַל שׁוֹם שְׂמִרְרוּ הַמִּצְרִים אֶת  
 חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרִים,  
 שְׂנֵאָמַר: וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם בְּעֵבֶדָה  
 קָשָׁה, בְּחֶמֶר וּבִלְבָנִים וּבְכֹל-עֵבֶדָה  
 בְּשָׂדֵה, אֶת-כָּל-עֲבָדְתָם אֲשֶׁר עָבְדוּ  
 בָּהֶם בְּפָרָה.

◇ In modern times, we do not offer a lamb as a sacrifice on Passover, and in fact there is a tradition to refrain from eating any roasted meat during Passover because of its resemblance to the Passover offering. Yet we still commemorate it by placing a shank bone on the *seder* plate. Many vegetarians substitute a beet for the bone.

◇ Rabban Gamaliel’s explanations cover only some of the symbols that we commemorate during the Seder. We have already used the vegetable for *karpas*, and we will shortly use the *haroset* along with the *maror*. Traditionally, a boiled or roasted egg is also placed on the Seder plate, and explanations for that practice vary: the egg symbolizes the *korban ḥagigah*, the festival sacrifice, but more generally, it also symbolizes new beginnings and new life.

◇ In many modern Jewish households, an orange is also placed on the Seder plate. This jarring, seemingly out-of-place symbol was created by Susanna Heschel, in response to the assertion that “there’s as much room for a lesbian in Judaism as there is for a crust of bread on the *seder* plate”. Heschel subsequently chose the orange as a symbol of the fruitfulness of all Jews, no matter their background, to make positive, affirmative contributions to the Jewish community.

◇ Some of the rabbinic fellowship of the organization T’ruah, formerly Rabbis for Human Rights, have started a new custom of placing a tomato on the *seder* plate. The tomato reminds us of the slavery that exists, even today, in the lives of millions of farm workers in the corporate-industrial agricultural sector in the United States and other so-called “first world” countries. Estimates of people who work in agriculture in conditions of enslavement today in the world range in the dozens of millions. “We imagine what it was like to be slaves and celebrate our freedom,” writes Rabbi Paula Marcus of California. “But the truth is, there are people in our own country who don’t have to imagine what it is like to be a slave.”

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25. Exodus 1:14

In every generation, each individual should regard themselves as though they personally have gone forth out of Egypt, as it is written: "You should tell your children on that say: It is because of what YHWH did for me when I went forth from Egypt."<sup>26</sup> For the Holy One redeemed not only our ancestors from Egypt but us along with them, as it says: "She took *us* out of there."<sup>27</sup>

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר תִּיבַת אֶשָׁה וְחִיב  
אָדָם לְרֵאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמָם כְּאִלוֹ הֵם  
יֵצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, מִן הָאֲמוֹר: וְהִגִּידוּ  
לְבָנוֹתֵיכֶם וּלְבָנֵיכֶן בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא  
לֵאמֹר: בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשְׂתָה יְיָ לִי  
בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
וְאֶת אֲמוֹתֵינוּ בַלְבָּד גָּאֲלָה  
הַקְּדוֹשָׁה בְרוּכָה הִיא, אֲלֵא אִף  
אוֹתֵנוּ גָאֲלָה עִמָּהֶם, מִן הָאֲמוֹר:  
וְאוֹתֵנוּ הוֹצִיָּאָה מִשָּׁם.

◇ In the Sefardi and Yemenite traditions, the word לְרֵאוֹת *lir'ot*, "regard themselves", is replaced with לְהֵרֵאוֹת *lehar'ot*, "conduct themselves". What does it mean to see oneself as if one personally has gone forth out of Egypt? What does this mean for how one behaves towards others in one's community and world?

*Raise the cup of wine.*

Therefore, we are obligated to praise, revere, extol, exalt, exclaim, adore, bless, honor, and sanctify the One who performed all these miracles for our ancestors and for us: taking us from slavery to freedom, from despondency to joy, from mourning to gladness, from darkness to light, and from oppression to liberation.

לְפִיכָךְ אֲנַחֲנוּ חִיבִים לְהוֹדוֹת,  
לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבַּח, לְפָאֵר, לְרוֹמֵם,  
לְהַדָּר, לְבָרֵךְ, לְעַלֵּה וּלְקַלֵּס לְמִי  
שָׁעָשָׂה לְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וּלְנוּ  
אֶת־כָּל־הַנְּסִים הָאֵלֶּה. הוֹצִיָּאָנוּ  
מֵעֲבָדוֹת לְחֵרוֹת, מִיָּגוֹן לְשִׂמְחָה,  
וּמֵאֲפֵל לְיוֹם־טוֹב, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה  
לְאוֹר גְּדוֹל, וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד לְגָאֲלָה.  
וְנֵאמַר לְפָנָיו שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה:  
הַלְלוּיָהּ! הַלְלֵנָה!

Let us sing before God a new song:  
Halleluyah! Hallelnayah!

☐ Ve-nomar lefanav shirah ḥadashah: Halleluyah! Hallelnayah!

*Replace the cup of wine.*

26. Exodus 13:18  
27. Deuteronomy 6:23

## Psalms 113

Halleluyah!  
 Praise, O servants of God,  
 praise the name of Adonai.  
 May the name of Adonai be blessed  
 from now until eternity;  
 from the sun's rise until its setting  
 may the name of Adonai be praised.  
 Adonai is exalted among the nations,  
 God's glory is upon the heavens.  
 Who is like Adonai our God,  
 who looks down low upon heaven and earth?  
 Ze raises up the wretched from the dust,  
 and lifts the needy up from heaps of dung,  
 that Ze may set them amongst princes,  
 even amongst the princes of Hir people.  
 Ze sustains the barren at home  
 just as one who rejoices with children.  
 Halleluyah!

הַלְלוּ-יְהוָה:  
 הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְיָ  
 הַלְלוּ אֶת-שֵׁם יְיָ:  
 יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ  
 מֵעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם:  
 מִמִּזְרַח-שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד-מְבֹאֵו  
 מֵהַלָּל שֵׁם יְיָ:  
 רַם בְּכָל-גּוֹיִם אִי  
 עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ:  
 מִי כִינּוֹ אֶל-הַיָּנוּ  
 הַמְנַבְיָהּ לְשָׁבֶת:  
 הַמְשִׁפִּילִי לְרֵאוֹת  
 בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ:  
 מִקִּמִּי מֵעַפָּר הָלַ  
 מְאֻשְׁפֵת יָרִים אֶבְיוֹן:  
 לְהוֹשִׁיבִי עִם-נְדִיבִים  
 עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ:  
 מוֹשִׁיבִי אֶעֱקֹרֵת הַבָּיִת  
 אֶם-הַבָּנִים שְׂמֵחָה  
 הַלְלוּ-יְהוָה:

Halleluyah. Hallelu av'dei YHWH, hallelu et shem YHWH.  
 Yehi shem YHWH mevorach me-atah ve-ad olam.  
 Mi-miz'rah shemesh ad mevo'o mehulal shem YHWH.  
 Ram be-chol goyim YHWH, al ha-shamayim kevodo.  
 Mi ka-YHWH eloheinu, ha-mag'bihi la-shavet.  
 Ha-mash'pili lirot ba-shamayim u-va-aretz.  
 M'kimi me-afar dal, me-ash'pot yarim ev'yon.  
 Le-hoshivi im nedivim, im nedivei amo.  
 Moshivi akeret ha-bayit, eim ha-banim s'meiḥah. Halleluyah.

## Psalms 114

When Israel went out of Egypt,  
 the house of Jacob from a foreign people,  
 Judah became sanctified to God,  
 Israel became Hir possession.  
 The sea beheld, and turned back,  
 the River Jordan reversed its course.  
 The mountains skipped like rams,  
 and the hills like lambs.  
 Why, O sea, did you turn back?  
 Why, O Jordan, did you reverse your course?  
 Why, from before the earth's ruler,  
 from before the God of Jacob,  
 who turns rock into flowing waters  
 and flint into watery fountains?

בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם  
 בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לֵעִז:  
 הִיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁ  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלוֹתָיו:  
 הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּגֹס  
 הַיַּרְדֵּן יָסַב לְאַחֹר:  
 הַהָרִים רָקְדּוּ כְּאַיִלִים  
 גְּבָעוֹת כְּבְנֵי-צֹאן:  
 מַה-לָּךְ הַיָּם כִּי תָנוּס  
 הַיַּרְדֵּן תִּסָּב לְאַחֹר:  
 הַהָרִים תִּרְקְדּוּ כְּאַיִלִים  
 גְּבָעוֹת כְּבְנֵי-צֹאן:  
 מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדוֹן חוּלֵי אֶרֶץ  
 מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:  
 תִּהְפְּכֵי הַצּוּר אֲנָם-מַיִם  
 חֲלָמִישׁ לְמַעַיְנוֹ-מַיִם:

Be-tzeit yisra'el mi-mitz'rayim, beit ya'akov me-am lo'eiz.  
 Hay'tah yehudah le-kod'sho, yisra'el mam'shelotav.  
 Ha-yam ra'ah va-yanos, ha-yardein yisov le-aħor.  
 He-harim rak'du che-eilim, geva'ot ki-v'nei tzon.  
 Mah lecha ha-yam ki tanus, ha-yardein tisov le-aħor.  
 He-harim tir'kedu che-eilim, geva'ot ki-v'nei tzon.  
 Mi-lif'nei adon ħuli aretz, mi-lif'nei elo'ah ya'akov.  
 Ha-hof'chi ha-tzur agam mayim, ħalamish le-may'no mayim.

◇ These two psalms constitute the beginning of *Hallel*, a collection of psalms traditionally recited on festivals. We will recite the rest of the psalms of *Hallel* after the meal. There are a number of explanations for why the psalms are broken up at this point: one is that this lets us round out the story of the exodus from Egypt with a psalm that speaks directly about those events, while the following psalms mention miracles that will, God willing, happen in future times.<sup>28</sup>

28. From *Zevach Pesach* by Rabbi Don Isaac ben Judah Abrabanel of Portugal (1437–1508).

כוס שני — The second cup

*Raise the cup of wine.*

We bless You, Adonai our God,  
Source of life, who redeemed us  
and our ancestors from Egypt,  
and enabled us to reach this night,  
when we eat *matzah* and *maror*.  
So may You, Adonai our God and  
God of our ancestors, enable us to  
reach many future festivals and  
observances in peace, happy and  
joyous in Your worship. We shall  
thank you with a new song for our  
liberation and for the redemption of  
our souls. We bless You, Adonai,  
Redeemer of Israel.

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
אֲשֶׁר גָּאֲלָתָנוּ וְגָאֲלָה אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְהִגִּיעַתָּנוּ  
לַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה לְאֶכֶל בּוֹ מַצָּה וּמְרֹר.  
כֵּן, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲמוֹתֵינוּ  
וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, תְּגִיעֵנוּ לְמוֹעֲדִים  
וְלְרִגְלִים אַחֲרִים הַבָּאִים לְקִרְאָתָנוּ  
לְשָׁלוֹם, שְׂמִיחִים וְשִׂשׂוֹת בְּעִבּוֹדְתֶךָ,  
וְנוֹדֵה לְךָ שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ עַל גְּאֻלָּתָנוּ  
וְעַל פְּדוּת נַפְשֵׁנוּ. בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ,  
גָּאֲלָה יִשְׂרָאֵל:

B'ruchah at YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-hayim, asher ge'al'tanu  
ve-ga'lah et avoteinu ve-imoteinu mi-mitz'rayim, ve-higi'at'nu  
la-laylah ha-zeh le-echol bo matzah u-maror. Kein, YHWH  
eloheinu ve-elohai imoteinu va-avoteinu, tagi'inu le-mo'adim  
ve-li-r'galim aheirim ha-ba'im lik'rateinu le-shalom, s'meiheim  
ve-sasot ba-avodateich, ve-nodeh lach shir hadash al ge'ulateinu  
ve-al pedut naf'shainu. B'ruchah at YHWH, ga'alalah yisra'el.

We bless You, Adonai our God,  
Source of life, Who creates the fruit  
of the vine.

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
בוֹרְאֵת פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

B'ruchah at YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-hayim, boreit p'ri ha-gafen.

*Drink the second cup while reclining.*



## רחצה — Roh'tzah Second handwashing

*Wash the hands ceremonially, and afterwards recite the blessing:*

We bless You, Adonai our God, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
Source of life, who has sanctified us אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל  
by the *mitzvat*, and instructed us to נְטִילַת יָדַיִם:  
wash our hands.

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-ḥayim, asher kid'shanu be-mitz'votav ve-tzivanu al netilat yadayim.

## מוציא — Motzi      מצה — Matzah Blessings over bread and matzah

*Take a piece of matzah, and recite the following two blessings:*

We bless You, Adonai our God, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
Source of life, who brings forth הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ:  
bread from the ground.

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-ḥayim, ha-motzi lehem min ha-aretz.

◇ Surely God brings forth *grain* from the ground; humans make the grain into bread. But unless we do so mindful of the interconnectedness of that grain with all things in nature, our relationship to the bread we eat is not a holy one.

We bless You, Adonai our God, בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
Source of life, who has sanctified us אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיהָ וְצִוָּתָנוּ עַל  
by the *mitzvat*, and instructed us to אַכִּילַת מַצָּה:  
eat *matzah*.

B'ruchah at YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-ḥayim, asher kid'shat'nu be-mitz'votaha ve-tzivat'nu al achilat matzah.

*Eat the matzah while reclining.*

## מרור — Maror

*Dip the maror into the ḥaroset and recite:*

We bless You, Adonai our God,  
Source of Life, who has sanctified  
us by the *mitzvat*, and instructed us  
to eat *maror*.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל  
אֲכִילַת מָרֹר:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-ḥayim, asher kid'shanu  
be-mitz'votav ve-tzivanu al achilat maror.

*Eat the maror but do not recline.*

◇ *Ḥaroset* is a sweet paste, consisting of nuts, wine, and fruits such as apples, dates, or figs. One of the many explanations for its presence in the *seder* is to remind us of the mortar employed in construction. But aside from its symbolic meaning, it simply serves to make the bitterness of the *maror* more palatable, which in itself is a reminder that even in the darkest of times there may still be sweetness to be found somewhere.

◇ During the American Civil War, Jewish Union soldiers made a *seder* while in the middle of West Virginia. They did not have access to the traditional ingredients for *ḥaroset*, so they improvised: they put a real brick on the *seder* plate instead.

There have also been several recorded incidents of medieval communities in the Mediterranean grating real clay or brick into their *ḥaroset* in memory of the clay bricks the Israelites were forced to make.<sup>29</sup> One rabbi condemned this hyper-literalism, saying, "Using this logic, on Purim they will draw blood in memory of the decree of death!"<sup>30</sup>

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29. This custom is recorded by Rabbi Zidkiyahu ben Avraham of Italy, circa 1250, and Rabbi Joseph Philosoph, the Bet David, of Salonica (Thessaloniki), Greece, 1740.

30. Rabbi Menachem di Lonzano, Italy, who died in 1708. I am indebted to my dear friends Andrew and Amanda Nusbaum for these two paragraphs, taken with permission from their *Smart-Ass Passover Haggadah*, first prepared in 2008.

## כורֵיך — Koreich The Hillel sandwich

*Take two pieces of matzah and sandwich some maror and ḥaroset between the pieces. Then recite:*

In memory of the Temple, we do as Hillel used to do when the Temple was standing. He would take the Passover offering, the *matzah*, and the *maror*, and eat them sandwiched together, in order to fulfill the verse: “You shall eat it [the Passover offering] upon *matzot* and *maror*.”<sup>31</sup>

זָכַר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהִלֵּל. בֵּין עֲשֶׂה  
הִלֵּל בְּזִמְן שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה  
קַיִם. הָיָה כּוֹרֵךְ פֶּסַח מִצָּה  
וּמְרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד, לְקַיִם מָה  
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: עַל מִצּוֹת וּמְרוֹרִים  
יֹאכְלֶהוּ:

Zeicher le-mik'dash ke-hillel. Kein asah hillel bi-z'man she-beit  
ha-mik'dash hayah kayam. Hayah koreich pesah matzah u-maror  
ve-ocheil be-yahad, lekayem mah she-ne'emar: al matzot  
u-m'rorim yoch'luhu.

*Eat the Hillel sandwich while reclining.*

◇ The *koreich* is one of the most enigmatic parts of the Passover *seder*. We just ate the *maror* and *ḥaroset* and now we're doing it again, but slightly differently. Why didn't we just eat it this way to begin with? And furthermore, doing it this way seems to make no sense in these times, given that we are not sandwiching a piece of roast lamb from the Passover offering into the *koreich*. One explanation is that doing it this way affords an opportunity to eat *maror* while reclining, thus showing our enjoyment even of the bitterest elements of the *seder*.

◇ The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE by the armies of the Romans marked a crisis within Judaism: a religion whose ritual had been dominated by its priestly caste suddenly found itself without the one place where the sacrificial cult could be practiced. The traditional Jewish liturgy includes many prayers for the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of animal sacrifice, but this would overthrow the religion that Judaism has become over the last two thousand years—is this really what we want for the future of Judaism?

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31. Numbers 9:11

# שולחן ערוך — Shul'han oreich

## The festival meal

### צפון — Tzafun

#### Dessert and the afikoman

*A piece of the afikoman is distributed to each participant, which is eaten while reclining. By custom, nothing is eaten after the afikoman has been consumed.*

◇ The word *afikoman* probably derives from the Greek ἐπι κομός, meaning “that which comes after”. It seems strange to end the meal with bare, unadorned *matzah*, but the rabbis wanted the taste of the *matzah* alone to linger in the mouth, thus bringing the *seder* back full circle: we began our meal with the bread of oppression, and we end it with the same bread, no matter what temporal expressions of wealth might have come in the middle.

◇ The custom of hiding or stealing the *afikoman* may go back to Talmudic times—Rabbi Eliezer states that one should “grab the *matzot*” so that the children don’t fall asleep during the *seder*.<sup>32</sup> In many circles it is customary for children to demand “ransom” for *afikoman*, without which the *seder* cannot be completed.

◇ There are many folk customs involving the *afikoman* and its protective powers. In seventeenth-century Poland, it was nailed to the wall after the *seder* for good luck. In Libya and Tunisia, it was given to sailors as a charm against storms. Jews in Persia kept pieces in their pockets to bring wealth and blessings. It was also used for fertility, curing the mute, protection against floods and bullets, and to ensure bountiful harvests.<sup>33</sup>

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32. Babylonian Talmud, *Pesachim* 109a

33. This paragraph reprinted with permission from Andrew and Amanda Nusbaum’s *Smart-Ass Passover Haggadah*.

## ברך — Barech Grace after meals

*Fill the third cup.*

*An alternative grace after meals may be found on page 51.*

A song of ascents.

When God returned Zion's exiles, it was as if we were dreaming. Our mouths were filled with laughter and our tongues with song. They declared among the nations, "God has done greatness with these!" God has indeed done greatness with us; we have become happy. Return, O God, our captives like tears shall reap in joy. One who carries seeds weeps, but will eventually return in exultation, bearing sheaves.<sup>34</sup>

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת:  
בְּשׁוּב יי אֶת־שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן, הָיִינוּ  
כְּחֹלְמִים. אִזּוּ יִמְלֵא שְׂחֹק פִּינוּ  
וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה. אִזּוּ יֵאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם,  
הִגְדִּיל יי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם־אֲלֹהֵי.  
הִגְדִּיל יי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ, הָיִינוּ  
שְׂמִיחִים. שׁוּבָה יי אֶת־שְׁבִיתֵנוּ  
כְּאֶפִיקִים בְּנֶגֶב. הַזְרְעִים  
בְּדַמְעָה בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ. הַלֹּוֹד  
יִלֵּךְ וּבִכָּה, נִשְׂא מִשָּׂדֶה הַזֶּרַע.  
בְּאֵיבָא בְּרִנָּה, נִשְׂא אֲלֻמֹּתָיו:

Shir ha-ma'alot.

Be-shuv YHWH et shivat tziyon, hayinu ke-ḥol'mim.

Az yemalei s'ḥok pinu u-l'shoneinu rinah.

Az yom'ru va-goyim, hig'dil YHWH la'asot im eileh.

Hig'dil YHWH la'asot imanū, hayinu s'meiḥim.

Shuvah YHWH et sh'viteinu ka-afikim ba-negev.

Ha-zor'im be-dim'ah be-rinah yik'tzoru.

Haloch yeileich u-vachoh, nosei meshech ha-zara.

Bo yavo ve-rinah, nosei alumotav.

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34. Psalm 126

Some people add:

May my mouth declare God's praises,  
and may all flesh praise God's holy  
name forever.<sup>35</sup> Let us bless God from  
now until eternity, Halleluyah.<sup>36</sup> Give  
thanks to God, for He is good, His  
lovingkindness endures forever.<sup>37</sup> Who  
can recount the mightiness of God,  
or declare the fullness of His praise?<sup>38</sup>

תְּהִלַּת יי יְדַבֵּר פִּי, וַיְבָרֵךְ  
כָּל-בָּשָׂר שֵׁם קֹדֶשׁוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.  
וְאֶנְחֵנוּ נְבָרֵךְ יְהוָה, מֵעַתָּה  
וְעַד-עוֹלָם, הַלְלוּיָהּ. הוֹדוּ לַיי  
כִּי-טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ.  
מִי יִמַּלֵּל גְּבוּרוֹת יי, יִשְׁמִיעַ  
כָּל-תְּהִלָּתוֹ:

Tehillat YHWH yedaber pi, vi-y'varech kol basar shem kod'sho  
le-olam va-ed. Va-anah'nu nevarech yah, me-atah ve-ad olam,  
halleluyah. Hodu la-YHWH ki tov, ki le-olam has'do. Mi yemallel  
gevurot YHWH, yash'mi'a kol tehilato.



A detail of an illustration of the roasting of the Passover lamb (folio 14 verso)  
from the Washington *Haggadah*, an illuminated manuscript produced in Northern Italy,  
and completed on January 29, 1478 by a scribe named Joel, son of Simeon,  
which is currently in the possession and display of the Library of Congress in Washington

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35. Psalms 145:21  
36. Psalms 115:18  
37. Psalms 118:1  
38. Psalms 106:2

When three or more adults have eaten together, one formally invites the others to join in the grace after meals. If there are at least ten adults, the words in brackets are added. If there are fewer than three adults, continue on page 40.

Leader:

Friends, let us bless!

חֲבֵרֵי וְחִבְרוֹתַי, נְבָרְךָ!

Ḥaverai va-ḥaverotai, nevarech.

Others:

May God's name be blessed  
throughout all time.<sup>39</sup>

יְהִי שֵׁם יי מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

Yehi shem YHWH mevorach me-atah ve-ad olam.

The leader repeats the previous line, and continues:

With your permission, let us bless  
[our God], the One of whose food  
we have partaken.

בְּרִשׁוּתְכֶם, נְבָרְךָ [אֱלֹהֵינוּ] שֶׁאֲכַלְנוּ  
מִשְׁלָה.

Bi-r'shut'chem, nevarech [eloheinu] she-achal'nu mishelah.

Others:

May [our God], the One of whose  
food we have partaken, and whose  
goodness sustains us, be blessed.

בְּרוּכָה [אֱלֹהֵינוּ] שֶׁאֲכַלְנוּ מִשְׁלָה  
וּבְטוֹבָה חַיֵּינוּ.

Baruch [eloheinu] she-achal'nu mishelah, u-ve-tuvah ḥayinu.

The leader repeats the previous line, and continues:

Blessed be God, and blessed be Her name.

בְּרוּכָה הִיא וּבְרוּךְ שְׁמָהּ:

B'ruchah hu u-varuch shemah.

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39. Psalms 113:2

*All continue here:*

We bless You, Adonai our God,  
Spirit of the world, who nourishes  
the whole world in His goodness,  
with grace, kindness, and mercy. He  
gives bread to all flesh, for His  
lovingkindness endures forever.<sup>40</sup>  
Because of His great goodness, we  
have never lacked, nor may we ever  
lack, nourishment for eternity. For  
the sake of His great name, for He is  
God who nourishes and sustains all,  
and benefits all, He prepares food for  
all His creatures that He created. We  
bless You, Adonai, who nourishes all.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם,  
הַזֶּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוֹבוֹ, בְּחֵן  
בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים. הוּא נוֹתֵן לֶחֶם  
לְכָל-בָּשָׂר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד.  
וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל תָּמִיד לֹא חָסַר לָנוּ  
וְאֵל יַחְסַר לָנוּ מִזֶּן לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.  
בְּעֵבֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל, כִּי הוּא אֵל זֶן  
וּמְפַרְנֵס לְכָל, וּמְטִיב לְכָל, וּמְכִין  
מִזֶּן לְכָל-בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַזֶּן אֶת הַכֹּל:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu ru'ah ha-olam,  
ha-zan et ha-olam kulo be-tuvo, be-hein be-hesed u-ve-rahmamim.  
Hu notein lehem le-chol basar, ki le-olam has'do.  
U-ve-tuvo ha-gadol tamid lo hasar lanu  
ve-al yeh'sar lanu mazon le-olam va-ed.  
Ba-avur sh'mo ha-gadol, ki hu el zan u-mefarneis la-kol,  
u-meitiv la-kol, u-meichin mazon le-chol b'riyotav asher bara.  
Baruch atah YHWH, ha-zan et ha-kol.

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40. Psalms 136:25



We are grateful to You, Adonai our God, for granting our ancestors a pleasant, good, and spacious land, and for taking us out of Egypt and redeeming us from the house of slavery, for Your covenant which You have sealed upon our hearts, and Your Torah which You have taught us, for Your laws which You have instructed us, and the goodness and kindness with which You have imbued our lives, and for the food and sustenance that You perpetually provide us at all times and hours.

נוֹדָה לְךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עַל שֶׁהִנְחַלְתָּ  
 לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ אֶרֶץ חַמְדָּה  
 טוֹבָה וְרַחֲבָה, וְעַל שֶׁהוֹצַאתָנוּ, יְיָ  
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, וּפְדִיתָנוּ  
 מִבֵּית שְׁפָחוֹת וְעִבָדִים, וְעַל  
 בְּרִיתְךָ שֶׁחֲתַמְתָּ עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל  
 תּוֹרַתְךָ שֶׁלִּמַּדְתָּנוּ, וְעַל חֻקֶּיךָ  
 שֶׁהוֹדַעְתָּנוּ, וְעַל חַיִּים חֵן וְחֶסֶד  
 שֶׁחֻנַּנְתָּנוּ, וְעַל אֲכִילַת מְזֹן  
 שֶׁאַתָּה זֶן וּמִפְרִיָס אוֹתָנוּ תָמִיד,  
 בְּכָל־יּוֹם וּבְכָל־עֵת וּבְכָל־שָׁעָה.

Nodeh lecha, YHWH eloheinu, al she-hin'hal'ta la-avoteinu  
 ve-imoteinu eretz hem'dah tovah u-r'havah, ve-al she-hotzeitanu,  
 YHWH eloheinu, me-eretz mitz'rayim, u-f'ditanu mi-beit sh'fahot  
 va-avadim, ve-al b'rit'cha she-hatam'ta al libeinu, ve-al torat'cha  
 she-limad'tanu, ve-al hukecha she-hodatanu, ve-al hayim hein  
 va-hesed she-honan'tanu, ve-al ahilat mazon she-atah zan  
 u-m'farnes otanu tamid, be-chol yom u-vechol eit u-vechol sha'ah.

For all this, Adonai our God, we thank You and bless You. May Your name be blessed in the mouths of all life for all eternity. As it is written: “You shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless YHWH your God, for the good land which She gave you.<sup>41</sup> We bless You, Adonai, for the land and for the food.

וְעַל הַכֹּל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים  
 לְךָ וּמְבָרְכוֹת אוֹתְךָ, יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמֶךָ  
 בְּפִי כָל־חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.  
 כְּכַתוּב: וְאָכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ וּבְרַכְתָּ  
 אֶת־יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה  
 אֲשֶׁר נָתַנָּה לְךָ. בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה, יְיָ, עַל  
 הָאָרֶץ וְעַל הַמְּזֹן:

Ve-al ha-kol, YHWH eloheinu, anah'nu modim lach u-mevar'chot  
 otach, yit'barach sh'meich be-fi kol hai tamid le-olam va-ed.  
 Ka-katuv: ve-achal'ta ve-sava'ta u-veirach'ta et YHWH elohecha  
 al ha-aretz ha-tovah asher nat'nah lach. B'ruchah at YHWH, al  
 ha-aretz ve-al ha-mazon.

41. Deuteronomy 8:10

Have mercy, Adonai our God, upon Your people Israel, and upon Your city Jerusalem, and upon Zion, resting place of Your glory, and upon the kingdom of David, Your anointed one, and upon the great and holy house upon which Your name is called. Our God, Father, tend us, sustain us, support us, nourish us, grant us relief from all our troubles. Let us not be dependent, Adonai our God, on the hands of others or their charities; we rely on Your full, open, generous, and bountiful hand, that we not come to shame or disaster ever.

רַחֵם נָא, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל  
עַמֶּךָ, וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ, וְעַל צִיּוֹן  
מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ, וְעַל מַלְכוּת בֵּית  
דָּוִד מְשִׁיחֶךָ, וְעַל הַבַּיִת הַגָּדוֹל  
וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ שֶׁנִּקְרָא שִׁמְךָ עָלָיו.  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ אָבִינוּ, רַעְנוּ זִוְנֵנוּ פְּרַנְסֵנוּ  
וּכְלַפְּלֵנוּ וְהַרְוִיחֵנוּ, וְהַרְוּחַ לָנוּ, יְיָ  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מִהֶרֶה מִכָּל-צָרוֹתֵינוּ, וְנָא  
אַל תִּצְרִיכֵנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לֹא לַיְדֵי  
מִתַּנְת בְּשָׂר וָדָם וְלֹא לַיְדֵי  
הַלְוָאָתָם. כִּי-אִם לַיְדֶךָ הַמְּלֵאָה  
הַפְּתוּחָה הַגְּדוּשָׁה וְהַרְחֲבָהּ, שְׁלֹא  
נִבּוֹשׁ וְלֹא נִכְלָם לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Raḥem na, YHWH eloheinu, al yisra'el amecha, ve-al  
yerushalayim irecha, ve-al tziyon mish'kan kevodecha, ve-al  
mal'chut beit david meshiḥecha, ve-al ha-bayit ha-gadol  
ve-ha-kadosh she-nik'ra shim'cha alav. Eloheinu avinu, re'einu  
zuneinu par'n'seinu ve-chal'k'leinu ve-har'viḥeinu, ve-har'vah  
lanu, YHWH eloheinu, meheirah mi-kol tzaroteinu, ve-na al  
tatz'richeinu, YHWH eloheinu, lo li-y'dei mat'nat basar va-dam  
ve-lo li-y'dei hal'va'atam. Ki im le-yad'cha ha-melei'ah ha-petuḥah  
ha-gedushah ve-ha-reḥavah, she-lo neivosh ve-lo nikaleim  
le-olam va-ed.

On Shabbat add the following paragraph:

May it please You, Adonai our God, to grant us rest through Your *mitzvat*, in particular the *mitzvah* of the seventh day, the great and holy Shabbat, for it is a great and holy day before You, on which to rest and be refreshed, lovingly according to the desires of Your will. May it please You, Adonai our God, that there be no distress or trouble of any sort on our day of rest. Let us behold the comfort of Zion, Your city, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, Your holy city, for You are the Source of deliverance and of comfort.

רְצֵה וְהַחֲלִיצֵנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,  
בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ, וּבְמִצְוֹת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי  
הַשַּׁבָּת הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה, כִּי  
יוֹם זֶה גָּדוֹל וְקְדוֹשׁ הוּא לְפָנֶיךָ,  
לְשַׁבֵּת בּוֹ וּלְנוּחַ בּוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה  
כְּמִצְוֹת רְצוֹנָךָ, וּבְרְצוֹנְךָ הַנִּיחַ לָנוּ,  
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, שְׁלֵא תִהְיֶה צָרָה וְיָגוֹן  
וְאַנְחָה בְּיוֹם מְנוּחָתֵנוּ, וְהִרְאָנוּ, יְיָ  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּנֶחֱמַת צִיּוֹן עִירֶךָ, וּבְבִנְיַן  
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קְדוֹשֶׁךָ, כִּי אַתָּה הוּא  
מְקוֹר הַיְשׁוּעוֹת וּמְקוֹר הַנְּחָמוֹת.

Retzei ve-hahalitzeinu, YHWH eloheinu, be-mitz'votcha,  
u-ve-mitz'vat yom ha-sh'vi'i ha-shabbat ha-gadol ve-ha-kadosh  
ha-zeh, ki yom zeh gadol ve-kadosh hu lefanecha, lish'bot bo  
ve-lanu'ah bo be-ahavah ke-mitz'vat retzonecha, u-vi-r'tzon'cha  
hani'ah lanu, YHWH eloheinu, she-lo tehei tzarah ve-yagon  
ve-anahah be-yom menuhateinu, ve-har'einu, YHWH eloheinu,  
be-nehamat tziyon irecha, u-ve-vin'yan yerushalayim ir  
kod'shecha, ki atah hu m'kor ha-yeshu'ot u-m'kor ha-nehamot.

Our God and God of our ancestors, may there arise, come, arrive, be noted, be favored, be heard, be remembered, and be recalled our considerations: the remembrance of our ancestors, the remembrance of Your anointed, descendant of Your servant David, the remembrance of Your holy city Jerusalem, the remembrance of Your entire people, the House of Israel, before You, for goodness, graciousness, mercy, life, and peace, on this Festival of *Matzot*. Remember us, Adonai our God, upon it for goodness, and recall us upon it for blessing, and save us on it for a good life, and have mercy upon us with words of deliverance and save us. For our eyes turn to You, for You are a loving and merciful God.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ,  
 יַעֲלֶה וְיָבֹא וְיָגִיעַ וְיִרְאֶה וְיִרְצֶה  
 וְיִשְׁמַע וְיִפְקֹד וְיִזְכֹּר וְיִזְכְּרוּנָנוּ  
 וְיִפְקְדוּנָנוּ, וְזִכְרוֹן אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
 וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, וְזִכְרוֹן מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן-דָּוִד  
 עַבְדְּךָ, וְזִכְרוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר  
 קֹדֶשְׁךָ, וְזִכְרוֹן כָּל-עַמְּךָ בֵּית  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֶיךָ, לְפִלִיטָה לְטוֹבָה,  
 לְחַן וּלְחַסֵּד וּלְרַחֲמִים, לְחַיִּים  
 וּלְשָׁלוֹם, בְּיוֹם חַג הַמַּצּוֹת הַזֶּה.  
 זְכַרְנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה,  
 וּפְקַדְנוּ בּוֹ לְבִרְכָה, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ בּוֹ  
 לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים, וּבְדַבַּר יְשׁוּעָה  
 וּרְחֻמִּים חוֹס וְחֹנֵן, וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ  
 וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ, כִּי אֵלֶיךָ עֵינֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל  
 חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה.

Eloheinu ve-elohei avoteinu ve-imoteinu, ya'aleh ve-yavo  
 ve-yagi'a ve-yeira'eh ve-yeiratzeh ve-yishama ve-yipakeid  
 ve-yizacheir zich'roneinu u-fik'doneinu, ve-zich'ron avoteinu  
 ve-imoteinu, ve-zich'ron mashi'ah ben david av'decha,  
 ve-zich'ron yerushalayim ir kod'shecha, ve-zich'ron kol am'cha  
 beit yisra'el lefanecha, li-f'leitah le-tovah, le-hein u-le-hesed  
 u-le-rahamim, le-hayim u-le-shalom, be-yom hag ha-matzot  
 ha-zeh. Zoch'reinu, YHWH eloheinu, bo le-tovah, u-fok'deinu vo  
 li-v'rachah, ve-hoshi'einu vo le-hayim tovim, u-vi-d'var yeshuah  
 ve-rahamim hus ve-honeinu, ve-raheim aleinu ve-hoshi'einu, ki  
 eilecha eineinu, ki el m'kor hanun ve-raham atah.

And rebuild Jerusalem, the holy city, speedily and in our days. We bless You, Adonai; You rebuild Jerusalem in Your mercy. Amen.

וּבְנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ  
 בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ  
 בּוֹנֵה בְּרַחֲמָיו יְרוּשָׁלַיִם: אָמֵן:

U-veneih yerushalayim ir ha-kodesh bi-m'heirah ve-yameinu.  
 Baruch atah YHWH, boneih ve-rahamav yerushalayim. Amen.

We bless You, Adonai our God, Source of Life, God, our Father, our Source, our Mighty One, our Creator, our Redeemer, our Creator, our Holy One, the Holy One of Jacob, our Caretaker, Caretaker of Israel, the Sovereign who is good and does good for all, for on each and every day He has done good, He does good, and He will do good for us. He has favored us, He favors us, and He will favor us forever, with goodness, lovingkindness, and mercy, the fullest extent of salvation and good fortune, blessing and deliverance, comfort, a good livelihood, gentleness, life, peace, and all good things. Let no goodness be lacking in our lives.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר  
הַחַיִּים, הָאֵל אָבִינוּ מְקוֹרֵנוּ  
אֲדִירֵנוּ בּוֹרְאֵנוּ גּוֹאֲלֵנוּ יוֹצְרֵנוּ  
קְדוֹשֵׁנוּ, קְדוֹשׁ יַעֲקֹב. רוֹעֵנוּ  
רוֹעֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַמְלִיךְ הַטּוֹב  
וְהַמְטִיב לְכָל, שְׂפָכֵל-יוֹם וַיּוֹם  
הוּא הַטִּיב, הוּא מְטִיב, הוּא  
יִיטִיב לָנוּ. הוּא גְּמָלָנוּ, הוּא  
גּוֹמְלָנוּ, הוּא יְגַמְלָנוּ לְעַד, לְחַן  
וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים, וּלְרוּחַ, הַצְּלָה  
וְהַצְּלָחָה, בְּרָכָה וַיְשׁוּעָה, נַחֲמָה,  
פְּרִיטָה וְכִלְכִּלָּה, וְרַחֲמִים וְחַיִּים  
וְשָׁלוֹם וְכָל-טוֹב, וּמְכַל-טוֹב  
לְעוֹלָם אֵל יַחֲסֵרְנוּ:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, ha-el avinu m'koreinu adireinu boreinu go'aleinu yotz'reinu kedosheinu, kedosh ya'akov. Ro'einu ro'eih yisra'el, ha-melech ha-tov ve-ha-mey'tiv la-kol, she-be-chol yom va-yom hu heitiv, hu meitiv, hu yeytiv lanu. Hu gemalanu, hu gom'leinu, hu yig'maleinu la-ad, le-hein u-le-hesed u-le-rahamim, u-le-revah, hatzalah ve-hatz'lahah, berachah vi-y'shu'ah, nehamah, parnasah ve-chal'kalah, ve-rahamim ve-hayim ve-shalom ve-chol tov, u-mi-kol tuv le-olam al yehas'reinu.

May the Merciful One dwell with us for all time. הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁכֵּן אֶתָּנוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

Ha-rahaman, hu yish'kon itanu le-olam va-ed.

May the Merciful One be blessed in the heavens and the earth. הַרְחֵמְנָה, הִיא תִתְבָּרֵךְ בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ:

Ha-rah'manah, hi tit'barach ba-shamayim u-va-aretz.

May the Merciful One be praised in every generation, and exalted among us forever, and ennobled among us throughout all time.

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁתַּבַּח לְדוֹר דּוֹרִים,  
וַיִּתְפָּאֵר בְּנוֹ לְעַד וּלְנֶצַח נְצָחִים,  
וַיִּתְהַדָּר בְּנוֹ לְעַד וּלְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים:

Ha-rahāman, hu yish'tabaḥ le-dor dorim, ve-yit'pa'ar banu la-ad u-le-netzah netzahim, ve-yit'hadar banu la-ad u-le-ol'mei olamim.

May the Merciful One sustain us with glory.

הַרְחֵמְנָהּ, הִיא תִפְרַנְסֵנוּ בְּכָבוֹד:

Ha-rah'manah, hi tefar'n'seinu be-chavod.

May the Merciful One shatter the yoke of oppression from our necks, and dispel the yoke of baseless hatred from all inhabitants of the world.

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁבֵּר עֲלֵנוּ מֵעַל  
צְוָאֲרָנוּ, וַיִּסֵּר עַל חָמַס מֵעַל  
כָּל-יְוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל:

Ha-rahāman, hu yish'bor uleinu me-al tzavareinu, ve-yasir ol ḥamas me-al kol yosh'vei teiveil.

May the Merciful One send abundant blessings to this house and upon this table from which we have eaten.

הַרְחֵמְנָהּ, הִיא תִשְׁלַח לָנוּ בְּרָכָה  
מְרֵבָה בַּבַּיִת הַזֶּה, וְעַל שֻׁלְחַן זֶה  
שֶׁאֲכָלְנוּ עָלָיו:

Ha-rah'manah, hi tish'lah lanu berachah merubah ba-bayit ha-zeh, ve-al shul'han zeh she-achal'nu alav.

May the Merciful One send us Elijah the Prophet, may he be remembered well, to bring us good tidings, deliverance, and comfort.

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ אֶת אֵלִיהוּ  
הַנְּבִיא, זְכוֹר לְטוֹב, וַיְבַשֵּׂר לָנוּ  
בְּשׂוֹרוֹת טוֹבוֹת, יְשׁוּעוֹת וְנַחֲמוֹת:

Ha-rahāman, hu yish'lah lanu et eliyahu ha-navi, zachur la-tov, vi-y'vaser lanu beserot tovot, yeshu'ot ve-neḥamot.

May the Merciful One bless... (and...) (וְאֵת... ) היא תְּבָרַךְ אֶת... (וְאֵת... )

- my father, my teacher, (guardian of this house), אָבִי מוֹרֵי (בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה),
- my mother, my teacher, (guardian of this house), אִמִּי מוֹרֵתִי (בְּעַלֹּת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה),
- my partner, בְּרִי-וּגִי/בַת-זוּגִי,
- my husband/wife, בְּעָלִי/אִשְׁתִּי,
- my/our children/household, זְרַעִי/זְרַעְנֹו/בֵּיתִי/בֵּיתֵנּוּ,
- my/our entire family/families, כָּל-מִשְׁפַּחְתִּי/כָּל-מִשְׁפַּחְתֵּנּוּ,
- all who partook of this meal, כָּל-הַמְּסֻבִּים כָּאֲנִי,

us and all that is ours, as our forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were blessed: “with all”<sup>42</sup>, “from all”<sup>43</sup>, “all”<sup>44</sup>, and our foremothers Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah were blessed: “with goodness”<sup>45</sup>, “goodly”<sup>46</sup>, “good”<sup>47</sup>, “good”<sup>48</sup>—so may She bless us all together with perfect blessing. And let us say: Amen.

אוֹתָנוּ וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר לָנוּ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְבָּרַכְנוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב: בְּכֹל, מִכֹּל, כֹּל, וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה לֵאָה רַחֵל בְּלָהָה וְזִלְפָּה: הֵיטִיב, טוֹבָת, טוֹב, טוֹב, בֵּן תְּבָרַךְ אוֹתָנוּ כָּלְנוּ יַחַד בְּבִרְכָה שְׁלֵמָה. וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן:

Ha-rah'manah, hi tevareich et... (ve-et...)

- avi mori (ba'al ha-bayit ha-zeh),
- imi morati (ba'alat ha-bayit ha-zeh),
- ben zug/bat zug,
- ba'ali/ish'ti,
- zar'i/zar'einu/beiti/beiteinu,
- kol mish'pah'ti/kol mish'p'hoteinu,
- kol ha-mesubim kan,

otanu ve-et kol asher lanu, k'mo she-nit'bar'chu avoteinu av'raham yitz'hak ve-ya'akov: ba-kol, mi-kol, kol, ve-imoteinu sarah riv'kah le'ah raheil bil'hah ve-zil'pah: heitiv, tovat, tov, tov, kein tevareich otanu kulanu yahad bi-v'rachah sh'leimah. Ve-nomar: Amen.

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42. Genesis 24:1  
43. Genesis 27:33  
44. Genesis 33:11  
45. Genesis 12:16  
46. Genesis 24:16  
47. Genesis 29:19  
48. Genesis 30:20

Upon both them and us, may there be a report of merit on high, and may it be a safeguard of peace. May we carry forth blessing from Adonai, and justice from the God of our deliverance. And may we find grace and good regard in the eyes of both God and the rest of humanity.

בְּמָרוֹם יִלְמְדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם וְעָלֵינוּ  
זְכוּת שְׂתֵּהָא לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת שְׁלוֹם.  
וְנִשָּׂא בְּרָכָה מֵאֵת יי, וְצִדְקָה  
מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעָנוּ. וְנִמְצָא חֵן  
וְשִׁכְל טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹהִים וְאָדָם:

Ba-marom yelam'du aleihem ve-aleinu zechut she-tehei  
le-mish'meret shalom. Ve-nisa verachah me-eit YHWH,  
u-tzedakah me-elohai yish'einu. Ve-nim'tza hein ve-seichel tov  
be-einei elohim ve-adam.

*On Shabbat, add the following paragraph:*

May the Merciful One grant us the inheritance of a Sabbath day of complete rest, for eternal life.

הִרְחַמְנָה, הִיא תִנְחִילֵנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ  
שַׁבָּת וּמְנוּחָה, לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָמִים:

Ha-rah'manah, hi tan'hileinu yom she-kulo shabbat u-m'nuhah,  
le-hayei olamim.

May the Merciful One grant us a festival day of complete goodness.

הִרְחַמְנוּ, הוּא יִנְחִילֵנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ טוֹב:

Ha-rah'man, hu yan'hileinu yom she-kulo tov.

May the Merciful One bring peace and fellowship between the children of Hagar and the children of Sarah.

הִרְחַמְנָה, הִיא תְּבִיא שְׁלוֹם וְאַחֻוּהָ  
בֵּין בְּנֵי וּבָנוֹת הָגָר וּבֵין בְּנֵי וּבָנוֹת שָׂרָה:

Ha-rah'manah, hi tavi shalom ve-ahavah bein b'nei u-v'not hagar  
u-vein b'nei u-v'not sarah.



May the Merciful One bless our brothers and sisters of the Jewish people who live in trouble and fear, and bring them out of darkness into light.

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת אֲחֵינוּ  
וְאֶחְיוֹתֵינוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנְּתוּנִים  
בְּצָרָה, וְיוֹצִיאֵם מֵאֲפֶלֶה לְאוֹרָה:

Ha-rahaman, hu yevareich et aḥeinu ve-aḥ'yoteinu beit yisra'el  
ha-n'tunim be-tzarah, ve-yotzi'eim me-afeilah le-orah.

May the Merciful One grant us the merit to see days of redemption and eternal life.

הַרְחֵמְנָהּ, הִיא תִזְכְּנוּ לַיְמֹת  
הַמְּשִׁיחַ וְלַחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא:

Ha-rah'manah, hi tezakeinu li-y'mot ha-mashi'ah u-le-ḥayei  
ha-olam ha-ba.

God is a tower of salvation for an earthly sovereign; He performs kindness for His anointed one David and his descendants forever.<sup>49</sup> May the One who makes peace in the heavens make peace over us, over all Israel, and over all creatures, and let us say: Amen.

מִגְדוֹל יְשׁוּעוֹת מַלְכוֹ וְעֹשֶׂה  
חֶסֶד לְמֹשִׁיחוֹ לְדָוִד וְלְזַרְעוֹ  
עַד-עוֹלָם. עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו,  
הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל  
כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַל כָּל-יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל,  
וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן:

Mig'dol yeshu'ot mal'ko ve-oseh ḥesed li-m'shiḥo le-david  
u-le-zar'o ad olam. Oseh shalom bi-m'romav, hu ya'aseh shalom  
aleinu, ve-al kol yisra'el, ve-al kol yosh'vei teiveil, ve-im'ru: Amen.

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49. 2 Samuel 22:51 (cf. Psalms 18:51)

Revere Adonai, you holy people,  
 for there is no deprivation  
 for those who revere Her.  
 Lions may be ravenous,  
 but those who seek out God  
 will not lack goodness.<sup>50</sup>  
 Give thanks to God, for She is good;  
 Her lovingkindness endures forever.<sup>51</sup>  
 God, You open Your hand, and provide  
 for the desires of every living thing.<sup>52</sup>  
 Blessed is one who trusts in Adonai;  
 God is their security.<sup>53</sup>  
 I have been young and I have aged,  
 but I have never seen righteous people  
 abandoning those seeking bread.<sup>54</sup>  
 God will grant strength to Her people;  
 She will bless Her people with peace.<sup>55</sup>

יִרְאוּ אֶת־יְיָ קְדוֹשֵׁיהָ,  
 כִּי אֵין מַחְסוֹר לִירְאֵיהָ.  
 כַּפִּירִים רָשוּ וְרַעֲבוּ,  
 וְדוֹרְשֵׁי יְיָ לֹא יַחְסְרוּ כָּל־טוֹב.  
 הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ כִּי־טוֹבָהּ,  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדָּהּ.  
 פּוֹתַחַת אֶת־יָדָהּ,  
 וּמִשְׁבִּיעָה לְכָל־חַי רָצוֹן.  
 בְּרוּךְ הַגֹּבֵר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בֵּי־יְיָ,  
 וְהִיטָה יְיָ מִבְּטָחוֹ.  
 גַּעַר הָיִיתִי, גַּם זָקַנְתִּי,  
 וְלֹא רָאִיתִי צְדִיקוֹת  
 שֹׁעֲזִבוּ מִבְּקֵשֵׁי לֶחֶם.  
 יְיָ עֲזוּ לְעַמָּה תַתּוֹן,  
 יְיָ תַבְרֹךְ אֶת עַמֶּיהָ בְּשָׁלוֹם:

Yir'u et YHWH kadoshehah, ki ein mah'sor li-y'rei'ehah.  
 Kefirim rashu ve-ra'eivu, ve-dor'shei YHWH lo yah's'ru chol tov.  
 Hodu la-YHWH ki-tovah, ki le-olam has'dah.  
 Potaḥat et yadech, u-mas'bi'ah le-chol ḥai ratzon.  
 Baruch ha-gever asher yiv'taḥ ba-YHWH,  
 ve-hay'tah YHWH miv'taḥo.  
 Na'ar hayiti, gam zakan'ti, ve-lo ra'iti tzadikot  
 she-az'vu mevak'shei laḥem.  
 YHWH oz le-amah titein, YHWH tevarech et amehah va-shalom.

50. Psalms 34:10–11

51. Psalms 136:1

52. Psalms 145:16

53. Jeremiah 17:7

54. Based on Psalms 37:25

55. Psalms 29:11

## ברכת המזון בקיצור — Alternative grace after meals

The following Aramaic blessing may be recited as an alternative to the full traditional grace after meals. This practice is ancient, going back to the Talmud.<sup>56</sup>

Blessed be the Merciful One,  
Sovereign of the world,  
Master of this bread.

בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָא, מַלְכָּא דְעֵלְמָא,  
מְרִיבָה דְהַאי פִּיתָא:

B'rich rahamana, mal'ka de-al'ma, marei de-hai pita.

- ☐ *You are the Source of life for all that lives,  
and Your blessing flows through me.*



The beginning of Psalm 114 from the Kaufmann *Haggadah*, an illuminated manuscript produced in Catalonia in the 14th century

56. Babylonian Talmud, *Berachot* 40b

# הלל — Hallel

## Remembrance and thanksgiving

### כוס שלישי — The third cup

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
Source of life, Who creates the fruit בּוֹרְאֵת פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:  
of the vine.

B'ruchah at YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-hayim, boreit p'ri ha-gafen.

*Drink the third cup while reclining.*

### זכרון — Remembrance

◇ Oppression is not something that happened long ago such that now we are completely free of it. Our *seder* turns somber for a moment. Who is not at our *seder* tonight? Why aren't they here? We hope for a better future when all may be able to celebrate with us, but we must do more than hope: we must commit to working together to make that future a reality.

◇ It may seem odd to begin the section of *Hallel*, psalms and songs of praise, with gloomy, almost depressing, reflections on oppression. Our joy and our fellowship tonight is diminished because it is incomplete. We feast and make merry, but we also are conscious of suffering. Our shouts of הַלְלוּיָהּ, הַלְלוּיָהּ, הַלְלוּיָהּ *halleluyah, hallelnayah*—"Praise God!"—must not silence the cries of הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא *hoshi'ah na—*"Bring salvation now!"

◇ Jews living under the violence of the Crusades in the Middle Ages added prayers at this point in the *seder* for God to pour our divine wrath. Many modern *Haggadot* sound a note of hope and trust rather than spite and enmity. We hope and work for a future in which justice is not retributive but restorative.

Pour out Your spirit upon all flesh,  
and let all nations come together  
in love and fellowship, peace and  
true equality.

שְׂפוֹךְ רוּחְךָ עַל-כָּל-בָּשָׂר,  
וַיָּבֵאוּ כָּל-הָעַמִּים יַחַד  
בְּאַהֲבָה וְאַחֲוָה, בְּשָׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת:

Sh'foch ruḥecha al kol basar, ve-yavo'u kol ha-amim yaḥad  
be-ahavah ve-aḥavah, be-shalom ve-rei'ut.

I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, even though he tarries, but nevertheless I wait for him every day.<sup>57</sup>

אֲנִי מְאֲמִין בְּאַמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה בְּבִיאַת  
הַמָּשִׁיחַ, וְאֵף עַל פִּי שְׂיִתְמַהֲמֶה,  
עַם-כְּלִי-זֶה אֶחָכֶה לוֹ בְּכָל-יּוֹם:

Ani ma'amin be-emunah sh'leimah be-vi'at ha-mashi'ah,  
ve-af al pi she-yit'mah'mei'ah, im kol zeh aḥakeh lo be-chol yom.

I believe in the sun even when it is not shining.  
I believe in love even when I cannot feel it.  
I believe in God even when He is silent.<sup>58</sup>

You shall not commit a wrong against a stranger, nor oppress them, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.<sup>59</sup>

וְגַר לֹא-תוֹנֶה וְלֹא תִלְחָצְנֶנּוּ,  
בֵּי-גֵרִים הֵייתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

Ve-geir lo toneh ve-lo til'hatzenu,  
ki geirim hayitem be-eretz mitzra'yim.

May the One who makes peace on high grant peace over us, over all the people Israel, and over all living creatures. And let us say: Amen.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיָהּ, הִיא תַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם  
עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַל כָּל-יְוֹשְׁבֵי  
תֵּבֵל, וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן:  
עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם  
עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַל כָּל-יְוֹשְׁבוֹת  
תֵּבֵל, וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן:

Osah shalom bi-m'romehah, hi ta'aseh shalom aleinu,  
ve-al kol yisra'el, ve-al kol yosh'vei teveil, ve-im'ru: Amen.  
Oseh shalom bi-m'romav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu,  
ve-al kol yisra'el, ve-al kol yosh'vot teveil, ve-im'ru: Amen.

57. This is the twelfth of the thirteen principles of faith devised by Maimonides in his commentary to the Mishnah, tractate *Sanhedrin*, chapter 10.

58. Found scratched onto the wall of a cellar in Cologne, Germany, where Jews were hiding during the Second World War.

59. Exodus 22:20

“What is an idol? Any god who is mine but not yours, any god concerned with me but not with you, is an idol. ...

“ ‘Again I saw all the oppressions that are practiced under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them!’ There is a form of oppression which is more painful and more scathing than physical injury or economic privation. It is public humiliation. What afflicts my conscience is that my face, whose skin happens not to be dark, instead of radiating the likeness of God, has come to be taken as an image of haughty assumption and overbearance. Whether justified or not, I, the white man, have become in the eyes of others a symbol of arrogance and pretension, giving offense to other human beings, hurting their pride, even without intending it. My very presence inflicting insult!

“My heart is sick when I think of the anguish and the sighs, of the quiet tears shed in the nights in the overcrowded dwellings in the slums of our great cities, of the pangs of despair, of the cup of humiliation that is running over. The crime of murder is tangible and punishable by law. The sin of insult is imponderable, invisible. When blood is shed, human eyes see red; when a heart is crushed, it is only God who shares the pain. In the Hebrew language one word denotes both crimes. ‘Bloodshed,’ in Hebrew, is the word that denotes both murder and humiliation. ...

“History is not all darkness. It was good that Moses did not study theology under the teachers of that message; otherwise, I would still be in Egypt building pyramids. ... The greatest heresy is despair, despair of men’s power for goodness, men’s power for love.

“It is not enough for us to exhort the Government. What we must do is to set an example, not merely to acknowledge the Negro but to welcome him, not grudgingly but joyously, to take delight in enabling him to enjoy what is due to him. We are all Pharaohs or slaves of Pharaohs. It is sad to be a slave of Pharaoh. It is horrible to be a Pharaoh. Daily we should take account and ask: What have I done today to alleviate the anguish, to mitigate the evil, to prevent humiliation? Let there be a grain of prophet in every man!”<sup>60</sup>

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60. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, “Religion and Race” (14 January 1963)

*The cups of Elijah and Miriam are filled. The door is opened, and we sing:*

Elijah the prophet, Elijah of Tishbi,  
Elijah the Gileadite,  
speedily in our days,  
may he come,  
bringing the Messiah,  
David's descendant.

אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַתְּשֻׁבִי,  
אֱלִיָּהוּ, אֱלִיָּהוּ, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי,  
בְּמַהֲרָה בְיָמֵינוּ יָבֵא אֱלֵינוּ,  
עִם מָשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד.

Miriam the prophetess,  
strength and song in her hand,  
may she dance with us  
to lift up the world's song,  
to repair the world.  
Speedily in our days,  
may she lead us  
to the waters of deliverance.

מְרִים הַנְּבִיאָה, עֵז וְזִמְרָה בְיָדָהּ,  
מְרִים תִּרְקֹד אֶתְנוּ לְהַגְדִּיל זְמַרְת עוֹלָם,  
מְרִים תִּרְקֹד אֶתְנוּ לְתַקֵּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם,  
בְּמַהֲרָה בְיָמֵינוּ הִיא תְּבִיאֵנוּ  
אֶל מֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה.

Eliyahu ha-navi, eliyahu ha-tish'bi,  
eliyahu, eliyahu, eliyahu ha-giladi,  
bi-m'heirah ve-yameinu yavo eileinu,  
im mashi'ah ben david, im mashi'ah ben david.

Miriyam ha-nevi'ah, oz ve-zim'rah ve-yadah,  
miriyam tir'kod itanu letakein et ha-olam,  
bi-m'heirah ve-yameinu hi tevi'einu  
el mei ha-yeshu'ah, el mei ha-yeshu'ah.

◇ We welcome Elijah the Prophet to our *seder*, the traditional herald of salvation and deliverance. Rabbi Leila Gal Berner added a second verse to this song, welcoming Miriam the Prophetess, sister of Moses and Aaron. Miriam's well of water, according to *midrash*, followed the Israelites through the desert. The well provided physical nourishment through water, but also provided spiritual nourishment, by being a constant reminder of the Divine presence within the community.

◇ Rabbi Naftali of Ropshitz, an early Hasidic leader (1760–1827), instituted the following custom: rather than filling Elijah's cup directly from the wine bottle, the cup is passed around the table and each participant pours some of their own wine into the cup to fill it. This custom teaches that deliverance and redemption, an end to oppression, will not simply appear out of nowhere, but will only come when we all contribute to making it a reality.

*The door is closed.*

Psalms 115:1–11

Not for us, Adonai, not for us,  
 but for Your name's sake grant honor,  
 for Your lovingkindness and Your truth.  
 Why should they say amongst the nations,  
 "Where now is their God?"  
 Our God is in Heaven;  
 a God does whatever Ze wishes.  
 Their idols' fingers are silver and gold,  
 the work of human hands.  
 Mouths they have but cannot speak,  
 eyes they have but cannot see,  
 ears they have but cannot hear,  
 noses they have but cannot smell,  
 hands they have but cannot feel,  
 legs they have but cannot walk,  
 they produce no sound in their throats.  
 Their makers, and all who put their trust  
 in idols, shall become just like them.  
 Israel trusts in Adonai;  
 God is their aid and their protector.  
 The house of Aaron trusts in Adonai;  
 God is their aid and their protector.  
 Those who revere Adonai trust in Adonai;  
 God is their aid and their protector.

לֹא לָנוּ ייִ לֹא לָנוּ כִּי־לִשְׁמֶךָ  
 תֵּן כְּבוֹד עַל־חַסְדֶּךָ  
 עַל־אֱמֻנָתְךָ: לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ  
 הַגּוֹיִם אֵי־הָיָא אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:  
 וְאֵלֵינוּ בִּשְׁמַיִם כָּל  
 אֲשֶׁר־תַּפְּץ עֲשֵׂה: עֲצִבֵיהֶם  
 כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם:  
 פֶּה־לָהֶם וְלֹא יִדְבְּרוּ עֵינֵיהֶם  
 לֹהֵם וְלֹא יִרְאוּ: אֲזַנֵּיהֶם לֹהֵם  
 וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אֶף לֹהֵם וְלֹא  
 יִרְחִיזוּ: יְדֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִמְשִׁיחוּ  
 רַגְלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִהְלְכוּ  
 לֹא־יִהְיוּ בְּגִרוֹנָם: כְּמוֹתֵהֶם  
 יִהְיוּ עֲשִׂיהֶם כָּל אֲשֶׁר־בַּטֶּחַח  
 בָּהֶם: יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּטַח בַּיְיָ  
 עֲזָרָם וּמְגַנָּם הוּא: בֵּית  
 אַהֲרֹן בָּטַחוּ בַּיְיָ עֲזָרָם  
 וּמְגַנָּם הוּא: יִרְאִי ייִ בָּטַחוּ  
 בַּיְיָ עֲזָרָם וּמְגַנָּם הוּא:

Lo lanu YHWH, lo lanu, ki le-shim'cha tein kavod al has'decha  
 al amitecha. Lamah yom'ru ha-goyim ayei na eloheinem,  
 ve-eloheinu va-shamayim, kol asher hafeitz asah. Atzabehem  
 kesef ve-zahav, ma'asei y'dei adam. Peh lahem ve-lo yedabeiru,  
 einayim lahem ve-lo yir'u. Oz'nayim lahem ve-lo yish'ma'u,  
 af lahem ve-lo yerihun. Yedeihem ve-lo yemishun, rag'leihem  
 ve-lo yehaleichu, lo yehegu bi-g'ronam. Kemothem yihiyu  
 osei hem, kol asher bote'ah bahem. Yisra'el betaḥ ba-HWH,  
 ez'ram u-maginam hu. Beit aharon bit'ḥu va-YHWH, ez'ram  
 u-maginam hu. Yir'ei YHWH bit'ḥu va-YHWH, ez'ram  
 u-maginam hu.



Psalms 115:12–18

May Adonai who remembers us bless us!  
 May Ze bless the House of Israel,  
 may Ze bless the House of Aaron.  
 May Ze bless all those who revere Hir,  
 the small along with the great.  
 Adonai will increase you greatly,  
 you and your offspring.  
 Blessed be you by Adonai,  
 who made heaven and earth.  
 Heaven belongs to Adonai,  
 but the earth Ze has given to mortals.  
 The dead do not praise God,  
 neither any who go down into silence.  
 But we shall praise God  
 from now until eternity.  
 Halleluyah!

יְיָ זְכַרְנוּ וְיִבְרַךְ  
 יְבָרֵךְ אֶת־בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 וְיְבָרֵךְ אֶת־בַּיִת אַהֲרֹן׃  
 יְבָרֵךְ יִרְאַיִי יְיָ  
 הַקְּטָנִים עִם־הַגְּדֹלִים׃  
 יִסַּף יְיָ עֲלֵיכֶם  
 שְׁלֵיכֶם וְעַל־בְּנֵיכֶם׃  
 בְּרִיכִים אַתֶּם לַיְיָ  
 עֲשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ׃  
 הַשָּׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם לַיְיָ  
 וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לַבְּנֵי־אָדָם׃  
 לֹא תִמְתִּים יְהַלְלוּ־יְהוָה  
 וְלֹא כָל־יֹרְדֵי דוּמָה׃  
 וְאַנְחֵנוּ׃ וְנִבְרַךְ יְהוָה  
 מִעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם  
 הַלְּלוּ־יְהוָה׃

YHWH zecharanu yevareich—  
 Yevareich et beit yisra'el, yevareich et beit aharon.  
 Yevareich yir'ei YHWH, ha-k'tanim im ha-g'dolim.  
 Yosef YHWH aleichem, aleichem ve-al b'neichem.  
 B'ruchim atem la-YHWH, oseh shamayim va-aretz.  
 Ha-shamayim shamayim la-YHWH, ve-ha-aretz natan li-v'nei adam.  
 Lo ha-meitim yehallelu yah, ve-lo kol yor'dei dumah.  
 Va-anah'nu nevareich yah, me-atah ve-ad olam. Halleluyah.

Psalms 116:1–11

I love that Adonai should listen  
to my voice and to my supplication.  
Ze inclines Hir ear towards me,  
and I call upon Hir all my days.  
The cords of death bound me,  
the straits of Sheol grasped me,  
I found only trouble and strife.  
But I called upon Adonai's name:  
"Deliver my soul, Adonai!"  
Adonai is kind and just,  
our God demonstrates mercy.  
Adonai preserves the meek;  
I was ignoble, but Ze redeemed me.  
Return my soul to my rest;  
Adonai has heaped good upon me.  
You have saved my soul from death,  
and my eyes from tears,  
and my feet from stumbling.  
I shall walk before Adonai  
in the land of the living.  
I trusted even when I said,  
"I am greatly afflicted."  
I exclaimed in my haste,  
"All mortals are deceitful."

אֶהְבֵּתִי כִּי־יִשְׁמַע אֲנִי  
אֶת־קוֹלִי תְּחַנּוּנָי  
כִּי־הִטָּה אָזְנוֹ לִי וּבִימֵי אֶקְרָא  
אֶפְפוּנֵי אֶחְבְּלֵ־מֹות  
וּמִצָּרֵי שְׁאוֹל מִצָּאוּנֵי  
צָרָה וַיְגַן אִמְצָא  
וּבְשֵׁם־יְיָ אֶקְרָא  
אָנָּה יְיָ מִלְּטָה נַפְשִׁי  
חַנּוּן יְיָ וְצַדִּיק וְאֵל־תִּינּוּ מֵרַחֵם  
שֹׁמֵר פְּתוּאִים יְיָ  
יִדְלֹתֵי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ  
שׁוּבֵי נַפְשִׁי לְמִנוּחַי  
כִּי־יְיָ נִמַּל עָלַי  
כִּי חִלַּצְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִמֹּות  
אֶת־עֵינֵי מִן־דְּמָעָה  
אֶת־רַגְלִי מִדְּחַי  
אֶתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יְיָ בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים  
הֶאֱמַנְתִּי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר אֲנִי עֲנִיתִי מֵאֵד  
אֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי בְּחַפְזִי כָּל־הָאָדָם כֹּזֵב

Ahav'ti ki yish'ma YHWH et koli taħanunai.  
Ki hitah oz'no li u-v'yamai ek'ra.  
Afafuni ħev'lei mavet, u-mi-tzareï she'ol metza'uni,  
tzarah ve-yagon em'tza.  
U-ve-shem YHWH ek'ra, ana YHWH mal'tah naf'shi.  
Ĥanun YHWH ve-tzadik, ve-eloheinu meraħeim.  
Shomer peta'im YHWH, daloti ve-li yehoshi'a.  
Shuvi naf'shi li-m'nuħaichi, ki YHWH gamal alaichi.  
Ki ħilat'za naf'shi mi-mavet, et eini min dim'ah, et rag'li mi-deħi.  
Et'haleich lif'nei YHWH ba-artzot ha-ħayim.  
He'emanti ki adabeir, ani aniti me'od.  
Ani amar'ti be-ħof'zi, kol ha-adam kozeiv.

Psalms 116:12–19

How can I repay Adonai  
 for the bounty Ze has heaped upon me?  
 I raise the cup of deliverance,  
 and call upon the name of Adonai.  
 I will fulfill my vow to Adonai,  
 truly, in the presence of all Hir people.  
 Adonai does not regard the death of  
 those who love Hir lightly.  
 I beseech You, Adonai,  
 for I am Your servant,  
 I am Your servant, child of Your servant,  
 You have loosened my bonds.  
 I will offer a thanksgiving sacrifice to You  
 and call upon the name of Adonai.  
 I will fulfill my vow to Adonai,  
 truly, in the presence of all Hir people,  
 in the courtyards of the house of Adonai,  
 in your midst, O Jerusalem.  
 Halleluyah!

מִה־אֲשִׁיב לַיהוָה  
 כְּל־תְּנֻמוֹלוּחֵי עָלַי:  
 כּוֹס־יִשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא  
 וּבְשֵׁם יְיָ אֶקְרָא:  
 נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשַׁלֵּם  
 נִגְדָה־נָּא לְכָל־עַמּוֹ:  
 יִקָּר בְּעֵינֵי יְיָ הַמּוֹתָה לְחַסִּידָיו:  
 אָנָּה יְיָ כִּי־אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ  
 אָנִי־עַבְדְּךָ בֶן־אֲמָתֶיךָ  
 פִּתַּח־תָּה לְמוֹסְרֵי:  
 לֵךְ־אֲזַבַּח זִבְחַ תוֹדָה  
 וּבְשֵׁם יְיָ אֶקְרָא:  
 נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשַׁלֵּם  
 נִגְדָה־נָּא לְכָל־עַמּוֹ:  
 בְּחַצְרוֹת אֲבֵית יְיָ  
 בְּתוֹכְכִי יְרוּשָׁלַם הַלְלוּ־יָהּ:

Mah ashiv la-YHWH kol tag'mulohi alai.  
 Kos yeshu'ot esa u-ve-shem YHWH ek'ra.  
 Nedarai la-YHWH ashaleim, neg'dah na le-chol amo.  
 Yakar be-einei YHWH ha-mav'tah la-ḥasidav.  
 Anah YHWH ki ani av'decha, ani av'decha ben amatecha,  
 pitaḥ'ta le-moseirai.  
 L'cha ez'baḥ zevaḥ todah, u-ve-shem YHWH ek'ra.  
 Nedarai la-YHWH ashaleim, neg'dah na le-chol amo.  
 Be-ḥatz'rot beit YHWH, be-tocheichi yerushalayim. Halleluyah.

## Psalms 117

Praise Adonai, all you nations,  
Extol Hir, all you peoples!  
For Hir love is great upon us,  
and the truth of Adonai is eternal.  
Halleluyah!

הַלְלוּ אֶת־יְיָ כָּל־גּוֹיִם  
שִׁבְּחוּהוּ כָּל־הָאֻמִּים:  
כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ אֱהוָה  
וְאֱמֶת־יְיָ לְעוֹלָם הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה:

Hallelu et YHWH kol goyim, shab'ḥuhu kol ha-umim.  
Ki gavar aleinu ḥas'do, ve-emet YHWH le-olam. Halleluyah.

## Psalms 118:1-5

Give thanks to Adonai, for Ze is good,  
Hir lovingkindness endures forever.  
Let now Israel say:  
“Hir lovingkindness endures forever.”  
Let now the house of Aaron say:  
“Hir lovingkindness endures forever.”  
Let now those who revere Adonai say:  
“Hir lovingkindness endures forever.”  
I have called upon God from the straits;  
God answered me with great abundance.

הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב  
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:  
יֹאמְרוּ־נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל  
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:  
יֹאמְרוּ־נָא בֵּית־אַהֲרֹן  
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:  
יֹאמְרוּ־נָא יְרֵאֵי יְיָ  
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:  
מִן־הַמֵּצָר קָרָאתִי יְהוָה  
עֲנֵנִי בַמְרִתֵּב יְהוָה:

Hodu la-YHWH ki tov, ki le-olam ḥas'do.  
Yomar na yisra'el, ki le-olam ḥas'do.  
Yom'ru na veit aharon, ki le-olam ḥas'do.  
Yom'ru na yir'ei YHWH, ki le-olam ḥas'do.  
Min ha-meitzar karati yah, anani va-mer'ḥav yah.

Psalms 118:6–14

Adonai is for me; I do not fear  
 anything that mortals can do to me.  
 Adonai is for me as my aid;  
 I shall gaze upon all who hate me.  
 It is better to trust in Adonai  
 than to trust in mortals;  
 it is better to trust in Adonai  
 than to trust in princes.  
 All the nations surround me,  
 but by Adonai's name I will endure them.  
 They surround me, they surround me,  
 but by Adonai's name I will endure them.  
 They surround me like bees,  
 they are quenched as the fire of thorns,  
 but by Adonai's name I will endure them.  
 I was hurt to the point of falling,  
 but Adonai helped me.  
 God is my strength and song;  
 Ze has become my deliverance.

יְיָ לִי לֹא אִירָא  
 מִזֶּה יַעֲשֶׂה לִי אָדָם:  
 יְיָ לִי בְעֶזְרִי וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בְשֹׂנְאָי:  
 טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בְּיְיָ  
 מִבְּטַח בְּאָדָם:  
 טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בְּיְיָ  
 מִבְּטַח בְּגֵדִיכִים:  
 כָּל-גּוֹיִם סָבְבוּנִי  
 בְּשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם:  
 סָבְבוּנִי גַם-סָבְבוּנִי  
 בְּשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם:  
 סָבְבוּנִי כַדְבוּרִים  
 דָּעֲכוּ כְאֵשׁ קוֹצִים  
 בְּשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם:  
 דַּחֲוָה דְחִיתַנִּי לְנַפְלַי וְיְיָ עֶזְרָתִי:  
 עֲזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה  
 וַיְהִי-לִי לִישׁוּעָה:

YHWH li lo ira, mah ya'aseh li adam.  
 YHWH li be-oz'rai, va-ani er'eh ve-son'ai.  
 Tov lahasot be-YHWH mi-b'to'ah ba-adam.  
 Tov lahasot ba-YHWH mi-b'to'ah bi-n'divim.  
 Kol goyim sevavuni, be-shem YHWH ki amilam.  
 Sabuni gam sevavuni, be-shem YHWH ki amilam.  
 Dahoh dehitani lin'pol, va-YHWH azarani.  
 Ozi ve-zim'rat yah, va-yehi li li-y'shu'ah.

Psalms 118:15–20

The sound of joy and deliverance  
 resounds in the tents of the righteous.  
 Your hand, Adonai, does mighty deeds.  
 Your hand, Adonai, is exalted;  
 Your hand, Adonai, does mighty deeds.  
 I shall not die, but I shall live,  
 and I shall declare the works of God.  
 Adonai has chastised me greatly,  
 but Ze has not given me over to death.  
 Open for me the gates of righteousness,  
 so that I will enter them, and praise God.  
 This is the gate of Adonai;  
 let the righteous enter through it.

קוֹל רִנָּה וְיִשׁוּעָה  
 בְּאֹהֲלֵי צְדִיקִים  
 יְמִין יְיָ עָשָׂה חֵיל:  
 יְמִין יְיָ רֹמְמָה  
 יְמִין יְיָ עָשָׂה חֵיל:  
 לֹא-אָמַוּת כִּי-אֶחְיֶה  
 וְאִסְפֹּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה  
 יִסֹּר יִסְרָנִי יְהוָה  
 וְלִמּוֹת לֹא נִתְּנָנִי:  
 פִתְחוּ-לִי שַׁעַר צְדָק  
 אֲבֹא-בָם אֹדְהָה יְהוָה:  
 זֶה-הַשַּׁעַר לַיהוָה  
 צְדִיקִים יָבֹאוּ בוֹ:

Kol rinah vi-y'shuah be-oholei tzadikim,  
 yemin YHWH osah hayil.  
 Yemin YHWH romeimah,  
 yemin YHWH osah hayil.  
 Lo amut ki eh'yeh, va-asapeir ma'asei yah.  
 Yasor yis'rani yah, ve-la-mavet lo netanani.  
 Pit'hu li sha'arei tzedek, avo vam odeh yah.  
 Zeh ha-sha'ar la-YHWH, tzadikim yavo'u vo.

## Psalms 118:21–29

*Many people have the custom to recite each of these verses twice:*

I praise You, for You have answered me,  
 and You have been my deliverance.  
 The stone that the builders rejected  
 has become the cornerstone.  
 This is Adonai's doing;  
 it is wondrous in our eyes.  
 This is the day that Adonai has made;  
 let us rejoice and celebrate on it.  
 Please, Adonai, deliver us now!  
 Please, Adonai, grant us success now!  
 Blessed is one who comes in Adonai's name,  
 we bless you from the house of Adonai.  
 Adonai is God; Ze has given us light.  
 Order the festival procession with branches  
 about the corners of the altar!  
 You are my God, and I shall praise You;  
 You are my God, and I shall exalt You.  
 Give thanks to Adonai, for Ze is good,  
 Hir lovingkindness endures forever.

אֹדְדָךְ כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי  
 וַתִּהְיֶה-לִּי לְיִשׁוּעָה:  
 אֲבֵן מַאֲסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים  
 הָיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פִּנָּה:  
 מַאֲת יְיָ תִּיתֶה זֹאת  
 הִיא נִפְלְאוֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ:  
 זֶה-הַיּוֹם עֲשֵׂה יְיָ  
 נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׁמְחָה בּוֹ:  
 אָנָּה יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא  
 אָנָּה יְיָ תַצְלִיחַהּ נָּא:  
 בְּרִיךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְיָ  
 בְּרַכְּנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְיָ:  
 אֱלֹהֵי יְיָ וַיֵּאֵר לָנוּ  
 אֶסְרוּ-חַג בְּעֵבְתִים  
 עַד-קָרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:  
 אֱלֹהֵי אֲתָהּ וְאוֹדְדָךְ  
 אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ:  
 הוֹדִינוּ לְיְיָ כִּי-טוֹב  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדֶוּ:

Odecha ki anitani, va-tehi li li-y'shuah.  
 Even ma'asu ha-bonim, hay'tah le-rosh pinah.  
 Me-eit YHWH hay'tah zot, hi nif'lat be-eineinu.  
 Ze ha-yom asah YHWH, nagilah ve-nis'me'ah vo.  
 Ana YHWH hoshi'a na, ana YHWH hatz'lihah na.  
 Baruch ha-ba be-shem YHWH, beirach'nuchem mi-beit YHWH.  
 El YHWH va-ya'er lanu, is'ru hag ba-avotim, ad kar'not ha-miz'be'ah.  
 Eli atah ve-odeka, elohai arom'meka.  
 Hodu la-YHWH ki tov, ki le-olam has'do.

## Psalms 136

*This psalm, the so-called "Great Hallel", is specially recited at the seder.*

Praise Adonai, for Ze is good;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Praise the God of gods;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Praise the Lord of lords;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Who alone does great wonders;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Who creates the heavens with wisdom;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Who sets the earth upon the firmament;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Who creates the great lights—  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 The sun to rule by day—  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 And the moon and stars by night—  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Who slew Egypt's firstborn;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Who took Israel out from there;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 With a mighty hand and  
 an outstretched arm;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Who split the Sea of Reeds in twain;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 And led Israel between its waves;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Who overthrew Pharaoh and his army  
 in the Sea of Reeds;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.

הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 הוֹדוּ לֵאלֹהֵי הַאֱלֹהִים  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 הוֹדוּ לַאֲדֹנָי הָאֲדֹנָיִם  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לַעֲשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת גְּדֹלוֹת לְבָרֵךְ  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לַעֲשֵׂה הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּתַבְנִיחַ  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לְרַקַּע הָאָרֶץ עַל-הַמַּיִם  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לַעֲשֵׂה אוֹרִים גְּדֹלִים  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 אֶת-הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְמַשְׁלַת בַּיּוֹם  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 אֶת-הַיָּרֵחַ וְכּוֹכְבֵי  
 לְמַשְׁלֹת בַּלַּיְלָה  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לְמַכּוּהַ מִצְרַיִם בַּבְּכוֹרֵיהֶם  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 וַיּוֹצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְיָרוּעַ נְטוּיָה  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 לְגַזֵּר יַם-סוּף לַגּוֹזְרִים  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:  
 וְהַעֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹכוֹ  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדוֹ:



Who led Hir people through the wilderness;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Who smote great kings;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 And slew mighty kings;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Who slew Sihon, king of the Amorites,  
 For His lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 And Og, king of Bashan,  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 And gave their land as an inheritance;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 An inheritance for Israel, Hir people;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Who remembered us in our misery;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 And redeemed us from our adversaries;  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Who grants food to all flesh,  
 For His lovingkindness is everlasting.  
 Praise the God of heaven,  
 For Hir lovingkindness is everlasting.

וְזָכַר פְּרָעָה וְחֵילוֹ  
 בְּיָמֵי-סוּף  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:  
 לְמֹלֵךְ עָמוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:  
 לְמֹכֵחַ מְלָכִים גְּדֹלִים  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:  
 וַיַּהַרְגֵם מְלָכִים אֲדִירִים  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:  
 לְסִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֲמֹרִי  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:  
 וְלִעֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:  
 וַיִּתֵּן אֶרֶץ לְנַחֲלָה  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:  
 גַּחְלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדוֹ  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:  
 שֶׁבַשְׁפָּלְנוּ זָכַר לָנוּ  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:  
 וַיַּפְרֹקֵנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:  
 נָתַן לָחֶם לְכָל-בָּשָׂר  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:  
 הוֹדוּ לְאֵל הַשָּׁמַיִם  
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:

*Nishmat (“The breath”) is part of the liturgy for Shabbat and holidays. Parts of it are very old, possibly going back to Temple times. One paragraph spells out the names “Isaac”—possibly the poem’s author—and “Rebecca” in acrostic.*

The breath of all life will praise Your name, O God, and the spirit moving in all flesh will make You glorious forever. From this world to the next You are God, and without You we have no one else: no other redeemer, no other salvation. You set us free, You save us for life and sustain us. You answer us with compassion in times of anguish or distress. We have no one who helps us or nourishes us in the way that You do. God of the first and the last, God of all creatures and all generations, You are the one who is blessed in every song of praise. You infuse the world with kindness and show mercy to the life You have created. God is awake. She does not rest, nor does She sleep, but awakens those lost in slumber, stirs those who wander in dreams. She gives speech to the silent, seeks freedom for those who are imprisoned. She supports the fallen and raises up those who are bowed low; She unravels deep mysteries. To God alone we give thanks.

If our mouths were as full of song as is the sea and our speech as full of exultation as the roar of the waves, if our lips could utter as much praise as the wide open spaces of heaven and our eyes could shine forth like the sun and the moon, even if our hands could reach out to You like the eagle’s wings spread out to the sky and our feet could run to You, swift as the deer, it would still not be enough. It would not be nearly enough to thank You, our God and God of our mothers and fathers, or to praise Your name for even one thousandth of the thousands and thousands of miracles and wonders that You have given to our ancestors and to us.

You brought us safely out of Egypt, redeemed us from the house of slavery; You nourished us through famine and supported us with abundance. You rescued us from the sword; delivered us from plagues and brought us through terrible sicknesses. Until now Your mercy has sustained us and Your kindness has never failed us; O God, do not ever abandon us.

נְשֵׁמַת כָּל־חַי תְּבָרַךְ אֶת־שִׁמְךָ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְרוּחַ  
כָּל־בְּשָׂר תִּפְאַר וּתְרוֹמִים זָכְרָךְ תִּמְדִּי. מִן־הָעוֹלָם  
וְעַד־הָעוֹלָם אֶת אֱלֹהֵי, וּמִבְּלִעְדֶּיךָ אִין לָנוּ גּוֹאֲלָת  
וּמוֹשִׁיעָה, פּוֹדָה וּמַצִּילָה וּמִפְּרָגְסָת, וְעוֹנָה  
וּמִרְחֻמָּת כְּבִלְעַת צָרָה וְצוּקָה. אִין לָנוּ עוֹזֵרָת  
וְסוּמְכָת אֵלֵא אֶת. אֱלֹהֵי הָרָאוּנוֹת וְהַאֲחֵרוֹנִים,  
אֱלֹהֵי כָל־בְּרִיּוֹת, אֲדוֹנָת כָּל־תּוֹלְדוֹת, הַמְהַלְלָת  
בְּכָל־הַתְּשׁוּבָחוֹת, הַמְנַהֶגֶת עוֹלָמָה בְּחֶסֶד  
וּבְרִיּוֹתֶיהָ בְּרַחֲמִים. וְיִי עֲרָה, הִנֵּה לֹא תָנוּם וְלֹא  
תִישָׁן. הַמְעוֹרְרָת יְשׁוּנִים, וְהַמְקִיץָה נִדְרָמוֹת,  
הַמְשִׁיחָה אֱלָמוֹת, מִמְתִּירָה אֲסוּרִים, וְהַסּוּמְכָת  
נֹפְלוֹת, וְהוֹזֶקֶפֶת כְּפוּפִים, וְהַמְפַּעֲנַחַת נַעֲלָמוֹת,  
וְלֵךְ לְבַדָּךְ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים וּמוֹדוֹת.

וְאֵלֹו פִּינוּ מְלֵא שִׁירָה כִּים, וּלְשׁוֹנָנוּ רִנָּה כְּהַמּוֹן  
גְּלִיו, וְשִׁפְתוֹתֵינוּ שֹׁבַח כְּמַרְחֵבֵי רִקְעוֹ, וְעֵינֵינוּ  
מְאִירוֹת כְּשֶׁמֶשׁ וּכְיָרַח, וְיָדֵינוּ פְּרוּשׁוֹת כְּנִשְׂרֵי  
שָׁמַיִם, וְרַגְלֵינוּ קְלוֹת כְּאַלְמוֹת, אִין אֲנַחְנוּ  
מִסְפִּיקוֹת לְהוֹדוֹת לָךְ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲמוֹתֵינוּ  
וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וּלְבָרַךְ אֶת־שִׁמְךָ, עַל־אֲחַת מֵאֵלֶיךָ, אֵלֶיךָ  
אֵלֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ וְרַבִּי וְרַבּוֹת פְּעָמִים הַטּוֹבוֹת, נָסִים  
וּנְפִלְאוֹת, שְׁעִשִׂיתָ עִם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ וְעַמָּנוּ.

מִלְפָּנִים מִמְצָרִים גְּאֻלְתֵינוּ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וּמִבֵּית  
עֲבָדִים פְּדִיתֵנוּ, בְּרַעַב וְזַתְנוּ וּבְשֹׁבַע כְּלַפְלִיתֵנוּ,  
מִחַרְבַּ הַעֲלִיתֵנוּ וּמִדְּבַר מִלְטִיתֵנוּ, וּמִחֲלָאִים רַעִים  
וְרַבִּים וְנֶאֱמַנִים דְּלִיתֵנוּ. עַד הִנֵּה עוֹרְנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ  
וְלֹא עֲזָבוּנוּ חֶסְדֶיךָ, וְאֵל תִּשְׁשֵׁנוּ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ,  
לְנֶצַח.

☐ Ilu finu malei shirah ka-yam  
*Let us have song to fill our mouths as full as the sea*

☐ י Be-fi yesharot tit'romam, ר  
צ U-ve-sif'tei tzadikim tit'barach, ב  
ח U-vi-l'shon ḥasidot tit'kadash, ק  
ק U-ve-kerev kedoshim tit'halal. ה

Therefore, the limbs which You have given us, the breath and the soul which You have breathed into us, the language that You have put into our mouths, all these thank You, praise, acclaim and glorify You. They sing out to You, exalt and adore You, and sanctify Your name forever, compassionate Mother. Every mouth acknowledges You, every tongue speaks to You with faith; every eye looks for You. Every knee will bend to You, and all who stand upright will bow down. All our hearts will seek You with reverence, even the vital organs inside us will praise Your name, as it is written: "All my bones will say: Who is like You, O God?" You save the poor from the oppressor and the helpless from the thieves who would prey upon them. You hear the cry of the weak; You listen and heed their plea for help.

Who is like You and who could be equal to You, who could possibly compare with You, O God, powerful and exalted, Creator of heaven and earth? We will praise and glorify You, and will bless Your holy name, saying: "Bless God, O my soul; let everything that is in me bless God's holy name."

God, powerful in strength and magnificent in the glory of Your name, heroic in endurance, revered for breathtaking wonders, You are like a ruler on a throne, lofty and eminent.

Dwelling in transcendent places,  
Your name is exalted, Your name is holy.  
The righteous sing joyfully to God;  
the just find beauty in prayer.

י In the mouths of the just You are exalted, ר  
 ז on the lips of the righteous You are blessed, ב  
 ט in the words of the faithful You are sanctified, ק  
 ט and amongst the holy ones, You are praised. ה

In the assemblies and the multitudes of Your people, Israel, Your name will be praised with joy, in this and every generation to come. It is the obligation of all who were formed by You, God of our fathers and mothers, to thank and praise You, to acclaim and glorify You, to exalt, honor and remember You always, to bless and esteem and adore You even beyond all the songs and the praises of David, Your anointed servant, offspring of Jesse and descendant of Ruth.

May Your name be praised forever, our Source, You who are great and holy on earth and in the heavens. God of our fathers and mothers, song and praise befit You, psalms and music belong to You. We acknowledge Your strength and governance, Your endurance, greatness and courage; beauty and splendor, holiness and majesty become You as we give blessings and thanks to Your magnificent holy name. Now and forever you are God. Blessed are You, God of great strength, who is praised in song, God of thanksgiving, Provider of miracles, Source of every soul and of all creation, the One who chooses songs and praises, the only God, the life of all worlds.

על־כֹּן, אַבְרָם שְׁפִלְגַת בְּנוֹ, וְרוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה שֶׁנִּפְחַתְּ  
 בְּאַפֵּינוּ, וְלִשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַתְּ בְּפִינוּ, הֵן הֵם יוֹדוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ,  
 וַיִּשְׁבְּחוּ וַיְפָאֲרוּ, וַיִּשְׁרְרוּ וַיְרוֹמְמוּ, וַתַּעֲרָצְנָה  
 וַתְּקַדְּשֵׁנָה אֶת־שִׁמְךָ, מְקוֹרֵנוּ, כִּי כִלְפָה לְךָ יוֹדָה,  
 וְכִלְלִישׁוֹן לְךָ תִּשְׁבַּע, וְכִלְעִיז לְךָ תִּצְפֶּה, וְכִלְבָּרְךָ  
 לְךָ תִּכְרַע, וְכִלְמוּמָה לְפָנֶיךָ תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, וְכִלְהִלְבּוֹת  
 יִדְאוּךָ, וְכִלְמִגְרָב וְכִלְיוֹת יִזְמְרוּ לְשִׁמְךָ, בְּדָבָר  
 שְׁכַתוֹב: כִּלְעִצְמוֹתַי תִּאֲמַרְנָה, יי מִי כְמוֹךָ: מִצִּילָה  
 עֲנִיהַ מַחֲזִיקָה מִמָּנָה, וְעֵנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן מִגּוֹזְלוֹ. שׁוֹעֵת  
 עֲנִיּוֹת אֶת־הַשְּׁמַעֲנִי, צַעֲקַת הַדָּל תִּקְשִׁיבִי וְתוֹשִׁיעִי.

מי תדמה לך, ומי ישווה לך, ומי תערך לך, האלה  
 הגדולה, הגבורה והנוראה, אלה עליונה, קונה  
 שמים וארץ. נהללך ונשבחך ונפארכך, ונברך  
 את־שם קדשך, ונאמר: ברכי נפשי את־יי,  
 וכל־קרבי את־שם קדשך.

האלה בתעצמות עזך, הגדולה בכבוד שמו.  
 הגבורה לנצח והנוראה בנוראותיה, המלכה  
 היושבת על כסא רם ונשא.

שוכן עז, מרום וקדוש שמו.  
 רגנה צדיקות ביי, לישרים נאנה תהלה.

בפי ישרות תתרום,  
 ובשפתי צדיקים תתברך,  
 ובלשון חסידות תתקדש,  
 ובקרב קדושים תתהלל.

ובמקהלות רבבות עמך בית ישראל רגנה יתפארו  
 שמו בכל־דור ודור, שכן חובת כל־היצור, לפניך יי  
 אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו ואמותינו, להודות, להלל,  
 לשבח, לפאה, לרום, להדר ולנצח, לברך, לעלה  
 ולקלם על כל־דברי שירות ותשבחות דוד בן־ישי  
 וזרע רות עבדך משיחך.

ובכן ישתבח שמו לעד, מקורינו, האלה הגדולה  
 והקדושה בשמים ובארץ. כי לך נאה, יי אלהינו  
 ואלהי אבותינו ואמותינו, שיר ושבחה, הלל וזמרה,  
 עז וממשלה, נצח, גדלה וגבורה, תהלה ותפארת,  
 קדשה ומלכות, ברכות והודאות לשמו הגדול  
 והקדוש, ומעולם ועד עולם את אלה. ברוכה את יי,  
 אלת שדי גדולה ומהללת בתשבחות, אלת  
 ההודאות, אדונת הנפלאות, בוראת כל־הנשמות,  
 רבונת כל־המעשים, הבוחרת בשירי זמרה, הויה  
 יחידה, אלה, חי העולמים:

# נרצה — Nir'tzah Conclusion

## כוס רביעי — The fourth cup

We bless You, Adonai our God, בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
Source of life, Who creates the fruit בּוֹרְאֵת פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:  
of the vine.

B'ruchah at YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-ḥayim, boreit p'ri ha-gafen.

*Drink the fourth cup while reclining.*

## ספירת העומר — Counting the omer

*On the second night of Passover, we begin to count the seven weeks to Shavu'ot, the holiday commemorating the revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai.*

We bless You, Adonai our God, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים,  
Source of life, who has sanctified אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל  
us by the *mitzvot*, and instructed סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר:  
us to count the *omer*.

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu  
be-mitz'votav ve-tzivanu al sefirat ha-omer.

Today is one day of the *omer*.

הַיּוֹם יוֹם אֶחָד לְעוֹמֵר:

Ha-yom yom eḥad la-omer.

◇ The Torah instructs us to count seven weeks from Passover, counting up the time from the exodus from Egypt to the revelation at Mount Sinai, which is commemorated at the holiday of Shavuot.<sup>61</sup> An *עוֹמֵר omer* is a measure of grain; in ancient times one was brought to the Temple every day for seven weeks as a physical representation of the counting. The counting represents spiritual preparation: freedom from physical slavery and freedom from spiritual slavery are two inextricable things.

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61. Leviticus 23:15–16

## ברכה אחרונה — Blessing after the wine

On Shabbat, the words in brackets are added.

We bless You, Adonai our God, Source of life, for the vine and for the fruit of the vine, for the produce of the field, and for the good and spacious land that you have pleased to give to our ancestors to eat of its fruits and be full of its goodness. Have mercy, please, Adonai our God, upon Your people Israel, and upon Your entire world that You created, and upon Your altar and Your sanctuary. Rebuild Jerusalem, the holy city, speedily in our days, and gladden us in its completion. Let us eat of its fruits and take pleasure in its goodness, and bless You therein in holiness and purity. [And be pleased with our rest on this Shabbat day.] Gladden us on this Festival of *Matzot*. For You, Adonai, are good and do good for all, and we thank You for the land and the fruit of the vine. We bless You, Adonai, for the land and for the fruit of the vine.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מקור החיים, על הגפן ועל פרי הגפן, ועל תנובת השדה, ועל ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה שרצית והנחלת לאבותינו ואמותינו לאכול מפריה ולשבוע מטובה. רחם נא, יי אלהינו, על ישראל עמך, ועל כל-עולמך אשר בראת. ובנה ירושלים עיר הקדש במהרה בימינו, ושמחנו בבנינה, ונאכל מפריה, ונשבוע מטובה, ונברך עליה בקדשה ובטהרה. [ורצה והחליצנו ביום השבת הזה.] ושמחנו ביום חג המצות הזה. כי אתה יי טוב ומטיב לכל, ונודה לך על הארץ ועל פרי הגפן. ברוך אתה יי על הארץ ועל פרי הגפן:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, al ha-gafen ve-al p'ri ha-gafen, ve-al t'nuvat ha-sadeh, ve-al eretz hem'dah tovah u-r'havah she-ratzita ve-hin'hal'ta la-avoteinu ve-imoteinu le'echol mi-pir'yah ve-lis'bo'a mi-tuvah. Raḥem na, YHWH eloheinu, al yisra'el amecha, ve-al kol olamecha asher barata. U-veneih yerushalayim ir ha-kodesh bi-m'heirah ve-yameinu, ve-sam'heinu be-vin'yanah, ve-nochal mi-pir'yah, ve-nis'bo'a mi-tuvah, u-nevarechecha alehah bi-kedushah u-ve-tohorah. [U-r'tzeh ve-haḥalitzeinu be-yom ha-shabbat ha-zeh]. Ve-sam'heinu be-yom ḥag ha-matzot ha-zeh. Ki atah YHWH tov u-meitiv la-kol ve-nodeh l'cha al ha-aretz ve-al p'ri ha-gafen. Baruch atah YHWH, al ha-aretz ve-al p'ri ha-gafen.

## כי לו נאה — Ki Lo Na'eh

*This song of uncertain authorship is arranged in an alphabetic acrostic.*

א	Adir bi-m'luchah,		אָדיר בַּמְלוּכָה,
ב	baḥur ka-halachah,		בַּחור בְּהַלְכָה,
ג	gedudav yom'ru lo:		גְּדוּדָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
	Refrain: L'cha u-l'cha, l'cha ki l'cha,		פזמון: לָךְ וּלָךְ, לָךְ כִּי לָךְ,
	l'cha af l'cha, l'cha YHWH ha-mamlacha.		לָךְ אַף לָךְ, לָךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.
	Ki lo na'eh, ki lo ya'eh.		כִּי לוֹ נֹאֵה, כִּי לוֹ יֵאָה:
ד	Dagul bi-m'luchah,		דָּגוּל בַּמְלוּכָה,
ה	hadur ka-halachah,		הַדור בְּהַלְכָה,
ו	vatikav yom'ru lo: Refrain	פזמון	וְתִקְוֵי יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
ז	Zakai bi-m'luchah,		זָכַאי בַּמְלוּכָה,
ח	ḥasin ka-halachah,		חֶסֶין בְּהַלְכָה,
ט	taf'serav yom'ru lo: Refrain	פזמון	טַפְסֶרָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
י	Yahid bi-m'luchah,		יְחִיד בַּמְלוּכָה,
כ	kabir ka-halachah,		כְּבִיר בְּהַלְכָה,
ל	limudav yom'ru lo: Refrain	פזמון	לְמוּדָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
מ	Melech bi-m'luchah,		מֶלֶךְ בַּמְלוּכָה,
נ	nora ka-halachah,		נֹרָא בְּהַלְכָה,
ס	sevivav yom'ru lo: Refrain	פזמון	סְבִיבָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
ע	Anav bi-m'luchah,		עָנָיו בַּמְלוּכָה,
פ	podeh ka-halachah,		פּוֹדֵה בְּהַלְכָה,
צ	tzadikav yom'ru lo: Refrain	פזמון	צַדִּיקָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
ק	Kadosh bi-m'luchah,		קָדוֹשׁ בַּמְלוּכָה,
ר	raḥum ka-halachah,		רַחוּם בְּהַלְכָה,
ש	shin'anav yom'ru lo: Refrain	פזמון	שִׁנְאַנָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
ת	Takif bi-m'luchah,		תְּקִיף בַּמְלוּכָה,
ת	tomeich ka-halachah,		תּוֹמֵחַ בְּהַלְכָה,
ת	temimav yom'ru lo: Refrain	פזמון	תְּמִימָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:

ℵ Mighty in sovereignty,  
⋈ distinguished on God's path,  
λ God's divine retinue will say to God:

Refrain: To You, and for You,  
To You, because of You,  
To You, particularly to You,  
To You, God, belongs sovereignty.  
For to God, it is fitting,  
For to God, it shall be fitting.

⍄ Exalted in sovereignty,  
⍅ glorious on God's path,  
⍆ God's faithful ones will say to God:

⍇ Faultless in sovereignty,  
⍈ kind on God's path,  
⍉ God's appointed ones will say to God:

⍊ Unique in sovereignty,  
⍋ illustrious on God's path,  
⍌ God's wise ones will say to God:

⍍ Supreme in sovereignty,  
⍎ awe-inspiring on God's path,  
⍟ those who surround God will say to God:

⍠ Humble in sovereignty,  
⍡ honorable on God's path,  
⍢ God's righteous ones will say to God:

⍣ Holy in sovereignty,  
⍤ merciful on God's path,  
⍥ God's followers will say to God:

⍦ Resolute in sovereignty,  
⍧ supportive on God's path,  
⍨ God's perfect ones will say to God:

## אָדיר הוּא — Adir Hu

*This song of unknown authorship is arranged in an alphabetic acrostic.*

א	Mighty is God,	Adir hu,			אָדיר הוּא,
	Refrain: Yiv'neh beito be-karov,				פּוֹמּוֹן: יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב,
	bi-m'heirah be-yameinu be-karov,				בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב,
	el, b'neih beit'cha be-karov.				אֵל, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקֶרֶב:
	May God build His house speedily, in our days. God, rebuild Your house!				
ב	Distinguished is God,	Baḥur hu,			בְּחֹר הוּא,
ג	great,	gadol hu,			גְּדוֹל הוּא,
ד	exalted, Refrain	dagul hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמּוֹן	דָּגוּל הוּא,
ה	Glorious is God,	Hadur hu,			הָדוּר הוּא,
ו	faithful,	vatik hu,			וְתִיק הוּא,
ז	faultless, Refrain	zakai hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמּוֹן	זָכַאי הוּא,
ח	Kind is God,	Ḥasid hu,			חָסִיד הוּא,
ט	pure,	tahor hu,			טָהוֹר הוּא,
י	unique, Refrain	yahid hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמּוֹן	יְחִיד הוּא,
כ	Powerful is God,	Kabir hu,			כְּבִיר הוּא,
ל	wise,	lamud hu,			לְמוֹד הוּא,
מ	sovereign, Refrain	melech hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמּוֹן	מֶלֶךְ הוּא,
נ	Awe-inspiring is God,	Nora hu,			נּוֹרָא הוּא,
ס	sublime,	sagiv hu,			סָגִיב הוּא,
ע	powerful, Refrain	izuz hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמּוֹן	עֲזוּז הוּא,
פ	Honorable is God,	Podeh hu,			פּוֹדֵה הוּא,
צ	righteous,	tzadik hu,			צְדִיק הוּא,
ק	holy, Refrain	kadosh hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמּוֹן	קְדוֹשׁ הוּא,
ר	Merciful is God,	Raḥum hu,			רַחוּם הוּא,
ש	almighty,	shaddai hu,			שְׁדֵי הוּא,
ת	preeminent, Refrain	takif hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמּוֹן	תְּקִיף הוּא,



## אחד מי יודע — Eḥad Mi Yode'a

*This is an accumative song; each verse counts up, all the way to thirteen. (The middle repeats are eliminated here for space.) The author is also unknown.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1: Eḥad mi yode'a?<br/>Eḥad ani yode'a:</p> <p>1 Eḥad eloheinu,<br/>she-ba-shamayim u-va-aretz.</p> <p>2: Sh'nayim mi yode'a?<br/>Sh'nayim ani yode'a:</p> <p>2 Sh'nei luḥot ha-b'rit,<br/>1 Eḥad eloheinu,<br/>she-ba-shamayim u-va-aretz.</p> <p>13: Sh'loshah asar mi yode'a?<br/>Sh'loshah asar ani yode'a:</p> <p>13 Sh'loshah asar midaya,<br/>12 Sh'neim asar shiv'taya,<br/>11 Aḥad asar koch'vaya,<br/>10 Asarah dib'raya,<br/>9 Tish'ah yar'hei leidah,<br/>8 Sh'monah y'mei milah,<br/>7 Shiv'ah y'mei shab'ta,<br/>6 Shishah sid'rei mishnah,<br/>5 Ḥamishah ḥum'shei torah,<br/>4 Ar'ba imahot,<br/>3 Sh'loshah avot,<br/>2 Sh'nei luḥot ha-b'rit,<br/>1 Eḥad eloheinu,<br/>she-ba-shamayim u-va-aretz.</p> | <p>אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ?<br/>אֶחָד אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:<br/>אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ, שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ:</p> <p>שְׁנַיִם מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁנַיִם אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:<br/>שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית,<br/>אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ, שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ:</p> <p>שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר מִי יוֹדֵעַ?<br/>שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:<br/>שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר מִדָּיָא,<br/>שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר שְׁבַטַיָּא,<br/>אֶחָד עָשָׂר כּוֹכְבֵיָּא,<br/>עֶשְׂרֵה דְבְרֵיָּא,<br/>תְּשַׁעַה יְרַחֵי לְדָהּ,<br/>שְׁמוֹנֵה יְמֵי מִלָּהּ,<br/>שֵׁבַעַה יְמֵי שַׁבְּתָא,<br/>שֵׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשֻׁנָּה,<br/>חֲמִשָּׁה חֻמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה,<br/>אַרְבַּע אִמָּהוֹת,<br/>שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת,<br/>שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית,<br/>אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ, שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ:</p> |
|---|--|

Who knows one? I know one. One is our God, in heaven and earth.

Who knows thirteen? I know thirteen. Thirteen are the attributes of God. Twelve are the tribes of Israel. Eleven are the stars in Joseph's dream. Ten are the commandments. Nine are the months of pregnancy. Eight are the days before *b'rit milah*. Seven are the days of the week. Six are the orders of Mishnah. Five are the books of Torah. Four are the matriarchs. Three are the patriarchs. Two are the Tablets of the Covenant. One is our God, in heaven and earth.

## חַד גַּדְיָא — Ḥad Gadya

*This song of unknown authorship has been expounded upon at great length by many famous scholars for centuries. The Vilna Ga'on (1730–1798) is said to have written more than ten different explanations.*

One little kid,  
that my father bought for  
two *zuzim*,  
*ḥad gadya*.

Ḥad gadya, ḥad gadya,  
di-z'van abba  
bi-t'rei zuzei,  
ḥad gadya, ḥad gadya.

חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא,  
דְּזַבֵּן אָבִיא בְּתַרֵי זֻזֵי,  
חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:

Then came a cat,  
that ate the kid,  
that my father bought for  
two *zuzim*,  
*ḥad gadya*.

Ve-ata shun'ra,  
ve-achal le-gadya,  
di-z'van abba  
bi-t'rei zuzei,  
ḥad gadya, ḥad gadya.

וְאַתָּא שׁוֹנְרָא,  
וְאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,  
דְּזַבֵּן אָבִיא בְּתַרֵי זֻזֵי,  
חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:

Then came a dog,  
that bit the cat,  
that ate the kid,  
that my father bought for  
two *zuzim*,  
*ḥad gadya*.

Ve-ata chal'ba,  
ve-nashach le-shun'ra,  
de-achal le-gadya,  
di-z'van abba  
bi-t'rei zuzei,  
ḥad gadya, ḥad gadya.

וְאַתָּא כְּלָבָא,  
וְנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוֹנְרָא,  
דְּאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,  
דְּזַבֵּן אָבִיא בְּתַרֵי זֻזֵי,  
חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:

Then came a stick,  
that beat the dog,  
that ate the kid,  
that my father bought for  
two *zuzim*,  
*ḥad gadya*.

Ve-ata ḥut'ra,  
ve-hikah le-chal'ba,  
de-nashach le-shun'ra,  
de-achal le-gadya,  
di-z'van abba  
bi-t'rei zuzei,  
ḥad gadya, ḥad gadya.

וְאַתָּא חוּטְרָא,  
וְהִכָּה לְכְּלָבָא,  
דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוֹנְרָא,  
דְּאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,  
דְּזַבֵּן אָבִיא בְּתַרֵי זֻזֵי,  
חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:

Then came a fire,  
that burnt the stick,  
that beat the dog,  
that ate the kid,  
that my father bought for  
two *zuzim*,  
*ḥad gadya*.

Ve-ata nura,  
ve-saraf le-ḥut'ra,  
de-hikah le-chal'ba,  
de-nashach le-shun'ra,  
de-achal le-gadya,  
di-z'van abba  
bi-t'rei zuzei,  
ḥad gadya, ḥad gadya.

וְאַתָּא נוּרָא,  
וְשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,  
דְּהִכָּה לְכְּלָבָא,  
דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוֹנְרָא,  
דְּאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,  
דְּזַבֵּן אָבִיא בְּתַרֵי זֻזֵי,  
חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:

Then came a water,  
 that quenched the fire,  
 that burnt the stick,  
 that beat the dog,  
 that ate the kid,  
 that my father bought for  
 two *zuzim*,  
*ḥad gadya*.

Ve-ata maya,  
 ve-chavah le-nura,  
 de-saraf le-ḥut'ra,  
 de-hikah le-chal'ba,  
 de-nashach le-shun'ra,  
 de-achal le-gadya,  
 di-z'van abba  
 bi-t'rei zuzei,  
 ḥad gadya, ḥad gadya.

וְאַתָּא מַיָּא,  
 וְכַבְּה לְנוּרָא,  
 דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,  
 דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,  
 דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא,  
 דְּאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,  
 דְּזָבַן אָבָא בְּתַרֵּי זׁזַי,  
 חַד גְּדַיָּא, חַד גְּדַיָּא:

Then came an ox,  
 that drank the water,  
 that quenched the fire,  
 that burnt the stick,  
 that beat the dog,  
 that ate the kid,  
 that my father bought for  
 two *zuzim*,  
*ḥad gadya*.

Ve-ata tora,  
 ve-shatah le-maya,  
 de-chavah le-nura,  
 de-saraf le-ḥut'ra,  
 de-hikah le-chal'ba,  
 de-nashach le-shun'ra,  
 de-achal le-gadya,  
 di-z'van abba  
 bi-t'rei zuzei,  
 ḥad gadya, ḥad gadya.

וְאַתָּא תּוֹרָא,  
 וְשָׂתָה לְמַיָּא,  
 דְּכַבְּה לְנוּרָא,  
 דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,  
 דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,  
 דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא,  
 דְּאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,  
 דְּזָבַן אָבָא בְּתַרֵּי זׁזַי,  
 חַד גְּדַיָּא, חַד גְּדַיָּא:

Then came a slaughterer,  
 who slaughtered the ox,  
 that drank the water,  
 that quenched the fire,  
 that burnt the stick,  
 that beat the dog,  
 that ate the kid,  
 that my father bought for  
 two *zuzim*,  
*ḥad gadya*.

Ve-ata shoḥet,  
 ve-shaḥat la-tora,  
 de-shatah le-maya,  
 de-chavah le-nura,  
 de-saraf le-ḥut'ra,  
 de-hikah le-chal'ba,  
 de-nashach le-shun'ra,  
 de-achal le-gadya,  
 di-z'van abba  
 bi-t'rei zuzei,  
 ḥad gadya, ḥad gadya.

וְאַתָּא שׁוֹחֵט,  
 וְשָׂחַט לְתוֹרָא,  
 דְּשָׂתָה לְמַיָּא,  
 דְּכַבְּה לְנוּרָא,  
 דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,  
 דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,  
 דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא,  
 דְּאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,  
 דְּזָבַן אָבָא בְּתַרֵּי זׁזַי,  
 חַד גְּדַיָּא, חַד גְּדַיָּא:

Then came the Angel  
of Death,  
who slew the slaughterer,  
who slaughtered the ox,  
that drank the water,  
that quenched the fire,  
that burnt the stick,  
that beat the dog,  
that ate the kid,  
that my father bought for  
two *zuzim*,  
*had gadya*.

Ve-ata mal'ach  
ha-mavet,  
ve-shaḥat la-shoḥet,  
de-shaḥat la-tora,  
de-shatah le-maya,  
de-chavah le-nura,  
de-saraf le-ḥut'ra,  
de-hikah le-chal'ba,  
de-nashach le-shun'ra,  
de-achal le-gadya,  
di-z'van abba  
bi-t'rei zuzei,  
had gadya, had gadya.

וְאַתָּא מַלְאָךְ הַמּוֹת,  
וְשַׁחַט לְשׁוֹחֵט,  
דְּשַׁחַט לְתוֹרָא,  
דְּשַׁתָּה לְמֵיא,  
דְּכַבֵּה לְנוֹרָא,  
דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,  
דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,  
דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוֹנְרָא,  
דְּאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,  
דְּזָבַן אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זׁזֵי,  
חַד גְּדֵיָא, חַד גְּדֵיָא:

Then came the Holy  
Blessed One,  
who slew the Angel  
of Death,  
who slew the slaughterer,  
who slaughtered the ox,  
that drank the water,  
that quenched the fire,  
that burnt the stick,  
that beat the dog,  
that ate the kid,  
that my father bought for  
two *zuzim*,  
*had gadya*.

Ve-ata ha-kadosh  
baruch hu,  
ve-shaḥat la-mal'ach  
ha-mavet,  
de-shaḥat la-shoḥet,  
de-shaḥat la-tora,  
de-shatah le-maya,  
de-chavah le-nura,  
de-saraf le-ḥut'ra,  
de-hikah le-chal'ba,  
de-nashach le-shun'ra,  
de-achal le-gadya,  
di-z'van abba  
bi-t'rei zuzei,  
had gadya, had gadya.

וְאַתָּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ  
הוּא,  
וְשַׁחַט לְמַלְאָךְ הַמּוֹת,  
וְשַׁחַט לְשׁוֹחֵט,  
דְּשַׁחַט לְתוֹרָא,  
דְּשַׁתָּה לְמֵיא,  
דְּכַבֵּה לְנוֹרָא,  
דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,  
דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,  
דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוֹנְרָא,  
דְּאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,  
דְּזָבַן אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זׁזֵי,  
חַד גְּדֵיָא, חַד גְּדֵיָא:

## חסל סידור פסח — Our seder is concluded

*This poem is by Rabbi Yosef Tur Elam (d. 1040).*

The *seder* has concluded as it should,  
according to its various laws and customs.  
As we have merited to celebrate it now,  
may we do so again in future years.

חסל סדור פסח כהלכתו,  
בכל-משפטו וחקתו.  
באשר זכינו לסדר אותו,  
בן נזכה לעשותו:

Hasal siddur pesah ke-hil'chato,  
ke-chol mishpato ve-ḥukato.  
Ka'asher zachinu lesader oto,  
kein niz'keh la'asoto.

Next year, in Jerusalem, the rebuilt!      לשנה הבאה בירושלים הבנויה:

Le-shanah ha-ba'ah bi-yerushalayim ha-b'nuyah!

◇ Why do we end the *seder* with this particular wish? This is not a wish to uproot ourselves, or, God forbid, to uproot other people by moving ourselves. Rather, "Jerusalem, the rebuilt" represents an ideal, something we strive to build by our lives. The Hebrew word for Egypt is מצרים *mitz'rayim*, which literally means "straits". The name of Jerusalem ירושלים *yerushalayim* derives in part from the word שלם *shalem*, meaning "complete". Tonight, we have taken a step out of the narrow places, the places of despair and hopelessness, into the places of wholeness and peacefulness. We commit ourselves to building world characterized by an end to oppression, a world of true liberation, filled with people who love their neighbors as they love themselves. This world will not magically spring into existence: we must build it ourselves, because nobody will do it for us. May this be so.