

הגדה שיר גאולה

Haggadah Shir Ge'ulah

The Song of Liberation *Haggadah*
Second Edition

Emily Aviva Kapor-Mater

ותכתב

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Haggadah Shir Ge'ulah — The Song of Liberation Haggadah

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מבוא

Introduction

The name of this *Haggadah* reflects the intention with which it has been crafted: שִׁיר גְּאוּלָּה *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 movement to follow in their wake: they, too, are our spiritual ancestors. Marchers from Selma to Montgomery, labor unions in protests, activists for peace and justice all around the world—these are all 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 that is recited or sung together in the course of the *seder*, to enable more engagement of people often gatekept out of Jewish ritual observance.

This *Haggadah* is at once traditional and subversive. It is traditional in its scope, its organization, and its text, trying to err on the side of maximalism. There is more material here than can possibly be explored adequately in a single night's *seder*, and much has been added since the first edition came out last year. It is subversive in its radicalness: going back to the roots of Jewish tradition, through its text and its commentary this *Haggadah* participates in a sacred colloquy. A traditional reader who encounters this *Haggadah* will find a lot familiar but will also be challenged in various ways, and conversely, someone who has never been to a *seder* before will hopefully find it engaging, provocative, and even a little challenging.

Much text has been retained from the traditional *Haggadah*, but is *mut'kan*—adapted—for many reasons including theology and ideology. *Shir Ge'ulah* finds much inspiration for methods and goals of adaptation in the ongoing *Siddur* and *Machzor* Projects of Havurat Shalom in Somerville, Massachusetts. Some of the liturgy, particularly *Nish'mat*, is used here relatively unchanged from the Havurah's *sui*

generis, *mut'kan* liturgy. And some parts of the *seder* are not *mut'kan*: for example, this *Haggadah* retains the traditional epithet for God מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם *melech ha-olam*, literally meaning “King” or “Sovereign of the world”. It is retained partly to engender a familiar environment for most *seder* participants, but also because the concept of *mal'chut*—“sovereignty”—can be extended from its earthly connotations of temporal rule to a transcendent, magnificent, and awe-inspiring guiding of the natural world. For that reason, this phrase is translated “Guide of the universe” in this *Haggadah*.

The Hebrew text of this *Haggadah* is based mostly on the traditional Ashkenazi texts, but the texts of the Hasidic *Nusach Sefard* and other versions of the *seder* liturgy have been incorporated in some places. The psalms of *Hallel* are presented with their full diacritical marks for cantillation (*trop*), to assist those who have the custom of chanting them in that manner during the *seder*.

Due to the inherent inequality in the masculine-feminine binary gender system of Hebrew, it is a challenge to craft truly egalitarian and affirmative Hebrew texts. As much as possible, personal pronouns and gendered language have been avoided. But this is not often possible, so some paragraphs alternate between speaking of God in the masculine and in the feminine. In addition, the “generic” singular and plural, uniformly appearing in the masculine in classical and modern Hebrew, is sometimes switched for the feminine equivalents in the Hebrew text, but is still to be read as equally “generic”.

In the translation and transliteration, YHWH is used to represent the name of God. But these are simply placeholders. Participants must feel free to read these names however they wish: Hashem, Shekhinah, Yah, Lord, Allah, Goddess, Divine One, and so forth. Again, this *Haggadah* is written with the hope that all participants, of all perspectives from traditional to radical, will find something to challenge them.

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 pursue the goal of *tikkun olam*—repairing the world—as we sing a song of liberation together.

Rabbi Emily Aviva Kapor-Mater
Seattle, Washington, 2015
ערב ראש חודש ניסן תשע"ה

תודות

Acknowledgments

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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 הרב שמחה ע"ה 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.

In addition to the ancient and medieval sources, I have consulted the following modern works for help with the Hebrew text, guidance, advice, and some readings. All citations are noted in the body of the work. Any omissions or errors are my responsibility alone.

Heinrich Guggenheimer, *The Scholar's Haggadah*. 1995, Jason Aaronson.

Joy Levitt and Michael Strassfeld, *A Night of Questions*. 1999–2009, The Reconstructionist Press.

Shoshana Silberman, *A Family Haggadah*. 1987, Kar-Ben Publishing.

Siddur Sha'ar Zahav, 2009, Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, San Francisco.

Rachel Anne Rabbinowicz, ed. *The Feast of Freedom*. 1982, United Synagogue Book Service.

The Other Side of the Sea: A Haggadah on Fighting Modern-Day Slavery. 2015, T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights.

הגדה של פסח עם פרושי הראשונים. 1998, מוסד הרב קוק.

E. A. K-M.

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:

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who has sanctified us through the *mitzvot*, and instructing us concerning the *eruv*.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִצְוֹת עֵרוֹב:

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

The following paragraph constitutes a legal declaration, so one must recite it in a language that one 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 לְמִפָּא
וּלְבִשְׂלָא וּלְאַטְמָנָא וּלְאַדְלָקָא שְׂרָגָא
וּלְתַקְנָא וּלְמַעְבַּד כָּל-צְרָכְנָא מִיוֹמָא טְבָא
לְשַׁבְּתָא, לָנוּ וּלְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל הַדְרִים בְּעִיר
הַזֹּאת:

Ba-hadein eiruva yehei sh'rei lana l'meifei 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, the *eruv tav'shilin* 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 וביעור חמץ

The search for ḥametz and its removal

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

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who has sanctified us through the *mitzvot*, and instructing us concerning the removal of ḥametz.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתַי וְצִוָּנוּ עַל בְּעוֹר חֶמֶץ:

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

After the search, the following paragraph is recited. Since it constitutes a legal declaration, one must recite it in a language that one 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-חֶמֶיֶרָא וְחֶמֶיֶעָה דְאַכָּא בְרִשׁוּתִי,
דְּלֹא חֶמְתָּהּ וְדְלֹא בְעֵרְתָּהּ וְדְלֹא יִדְעָנָא
לָהּ, לְבַטְלָא וְלִהְיוּ הֶפְקֵר כְּעַפְרָא דְאַרְעָא:

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

◇ The cleaning for Pesach is traditionally more or less complete by the evening of the holiday, and this “search” has a role that is more symbolic than practical. Many have the custom of “hiding” ten pieces of bread or other ḥametz material in various places. Some opinions hold that if one had thoroughly cleaned one’s house, and one searched it and found no ḥametz, one may have recited a *berachah* in vain.¹ But others authorities hold that that even if none is found, the blessing is not in vain. The ḥametz is then carefully set aside to be burned (or otherwise disposed of) the next morning.

◇ Traditionally, one searches the house by candlelight, using a wooden spoon and feather to gather up the pieces of ḥametz. The Talmud gives the reason why:² since the Torah commands “For seven days, no leaven shall be found in your house,”³ and one finds something by searching for it (as we learn from the story of Joseph’s brother Benjamin: “They searched ... and the goblet was found”⁴), we infer that searching is done by candlelight, as alluded to in the verses: “I will search Jerusalem with candles,”⁵ and “The soul of a human being is a candle of God, searching out the inmost parts.”⁶

1. Rabbi Moses Isserles, *Rema to Oraḥ Hayim* 432:2
2. Babylonian Talmud, *Pesaḥim* 8a
3. Exodus 12:19
4. Genesis 44:12
5. Zephaniah 1:12
6. Proverbs 20:27

In the morning when the *hametz* is disposed of, the following paragraph is recited. Again, since it constitutes a legal declaration, one must recite it in a language that one understands:

All *hametz* 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 דְאִפָּא בְרִשּׁוּתִי,
 דְחִזִּיתָהּ וְדָלָא חִזִּיתָהּ, דְבִעְרִיתָהּ וְדָלָא
 בִעְרִיתָהּ, לְבָטֵל וְלֹהֲוֵי הֶפְקֵר כְּעִפְרָא
 דְאַרְעָא:

Kal hamira ve-hami'a de-ika vi-r'shuti, de-hazitei u-de-la hazitei,
 de-vi'ar'tei u-de-la vi'ar'tei, libateil ve-lehevei hef'ker ke-af'ra de-ar'a.

May it be Your will, my God, that just as
 I have removed all *hametz* from my house
 and my domain, so too may I merit to
 remove the evil inclination from my heart,
 and thus may You remove all wickedness
 from the earth.⁷

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, יי אֱלֹהֵי, שְׁכֶשֶׁם שְׁאֲנִי
 מִבְּעִיר/מִבְּעֵרְתָּ חֲמֵץ מִבֵּיתִי וּמִרְשׁוּתִי,
 כֵּן אֶזְכֶּה לְבָאֵר אֶת יֵצֶר הָרַע מִלְבִּי,
 וְכֵן תִּבְעֵר אֶת כָּל־הָרִשָּׁעָה מִן הָאָרֶץ:

Yehi ratzon mi-l'fanecha, YHWH elohai, she-ke-shem she-ani
 meva'eir/meva'eret hametz 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.

<p>◇ Generally speaking, <i>hametz</i> is defined as any product made from the grains wheat, barley, oats, rye, and spelt, that has become leavened or fermented. Refraining from eating <i>hametz</i> is one of the most recognizable observances of Pesach. One is prohibited not only from consuming <i>hametz</i>, but from possessing it or deriving any benefit from it. Instead of <i>hametz</i>, we eat <i>matzah</i>, which is bread baked without leavening agents and that has not been given time to ferment.</p>	<p>◇ The leavening in <i>hametz</i> can be thought to symbolize “puffing up” with pride and arrogance. The prayer above, written by the <i>Ari</i>, reflects this notion. It is not only the physical <i>hametz</i> that must be removed from our possessions; we must also try our best to remove from our hearts our spiritual <i>hametz</i>, which is the יֵצֶר הָרַע <i>yeitzer ha-ra</i>, the inclination to evil. Only when we battle our impulses to wickedness will we be able to carry on the work for liberation</p>
<p>◇ Many Ashkenazi Jews also refrain from eating <i>kit'niyot</i>, literally “small things”. This generally includes corn, rice, beans, and lentils (and in some traditions, peanuts). <i>Kit'niyot</i> are not considered <i>hametz</i>, however, and one is not bound to the same restrictions regarding them as one is concerning <i>hametz</i>. There are multiple explanations, of various degrees of satisfactoriness, for how and why this custom developed, and to what extent it should be continued in modern times.</p>	<p>◇ Particularly among Hasidim, there is a custom to refrain from eating <i>matzah</i> that has become wet, called <i>gebrochts</i>, “broken” or “ground” in Yiddish. The reason behind this is to avoid the possibility that some flour in the <i>matzah</i> that was not properly mixed with water may come into contact, and thus become leavened, by the water. However, some non-Hasidic Ashkenazim deliberately eat <i>gebrochts</i> on Pesach, in order to demonstrate explicitly that it is permitted.</p>

7. Adapted from the *Haggadah* of the *Ari*, Rabbi Isaac Luria, of Safed, Israel (1534–1572)

הדלקת נרות

Lighting the candles

Before sunset, at least two candles are lit and the following blessing is recited.

On Shabbat, the words in brackets are added.

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who has sanctified us through the *mitzvot*, and instructed us to kindle the [Shabbat and] festival lights.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתַי וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל
[שַׁבָּת וְשֵׁל] יוֹם טוֹב:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu be-mitz'votav ve-tzivanu lehad'lik neir shel [shabbat ve-she]l] yom tov.

One who recites the She-heḥeyanu blessing here need not repeat it after Kiddush.

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, she-heḥeyanu ve-kiyemanu ve-higi'anu la-z'man ha-zeh.

◇ Fire is a powerful natural force of both creation and destruction, at once alluring and deleterious. Flame, in our tradition, 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 their light into lives.

◇ This blessing over the holiday lights is phrased in the singular: נֵר *neir* means “candle”, not “candles”. The custom developed to light two candles for Shabbat to represent the two different versions of the fourth of the Ten Commandments: we are enjoined to both “remember”⁸ and “keep”⁹ Shabbat. The custom has been extended to lighting candles for festivals as well as Shabbat. Some have the custom to light even more than two candles.

8. Exodus 20:8

9. Deuteronomy 5:12

סדר פסח The order of the seder

Kiddush over wine,	Kadeish,	קִדְּשׁ,
first handwashing,	u-r'hatz,	וְרַחֵץ,
dipping a vegetable,	karpas,	כַּרְפָּס,
breaking the middle <i>matzah</i> ,	yaḥatz,	יַחַץ,
telling the story,	maggid,	מַגִּיד,
second handwashing,	roh'tzah,	רְחֹץְהָ,
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 עוֹרֵיךְ,
eating the <i>afikoman</i> ,	tzafun,	צַפּוֹן,
grace after meals,	bareich,	בָּרַךְ,
praise and thanksgiving,	hallel,	הַלֵּל,
conclusion and singing.	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 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. However, the attentive *seder* celebrant will note that some of these pieces of ritual contain much more than their simple name might suggest.

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

קדש Kadeish – The first cup

On Friday night, begin with the following paragraph:

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 God had begun to do, and on the seventh day God rested from the work God had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it God rested from all the work of creation that God had done.¹⁰

וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר—

יּוֹם הַשֵּׁשִׁי: וַיְבָרְכֵם הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ
וְכָל-צִבְּאָם: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
מִלְאֲכֹתָו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וַיְשַׁבֵּת בַּיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלֶאכֶתָו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ
אֹתוֹ, כִּי בּו שָׁבַת מִכָּל-מְלֶאכֶתָו
אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

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.

On all nights, Kiddush begins here:

By your permission, my friends—

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

סְבָרִי, חֲבֵרוֹתַי וְחֲבָרִי—

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.

◇ During the *seder*, we drink four cups of wine, based on the four actions by which God promised to redeem the people Israel: “I will *bring* you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will *deliver* you from their servitude, and I will *redeem* you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments, and I will *take* you to Me for a people, and I will be God for you.”¹¹

◇ On normal days, even if wine is to be consumed with the meal, we do not make a ceremony of blessing it before the meal begins. But on Shabbat and festivals, we say *Kiddush* and drink wine before we start the meal, because we wish to bring in the holy day with joy and gladness. This makes the meal itself an extension of the *kiddush*, dedicating it to the happiness of the day.

↩

10. Genesis 1:31–2:3

11. Exodus 6:6–7

On Shabbat, the words in brackets are added.

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who has chosen us along with all other nations, and exalted us together with all tongues, and sanctified us through the *mitzvot*. You, our God, have lovingly given us [Shabbat for rest and] festivals for celebration, holidays and seasons for rejoicing, in particular [this Shabbat 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 [Shabbat and] these holy times. Praised are You, God, who sanctifies [Shabbat,] the people Israel, and holy occasions.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
בָּחַר בָּנוּ עַם-כָּל-עַם, וְרוֹמַמְנוּ עַם-כָּל-
לְשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. וְהַתָּן לָנוּ, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּאַהֲבָה [שְׁבֻתוֹת לְמִנוּחָה וְ]
מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה, חַגִּים וְזְמַנִּים לְשִׂשׁוֹן,
אֶת-יוֹם [הַשְּׁבֻת הַזֶּה וְאֶת-יוֹם] חַג
הַמִּצְוֹת הַזֶּה, זְמַן חֲרוּתֵינוּ, [בְּאַהֲבָה]
מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ, זִכָּר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. כִּי בָנוּ
בְּחֻרְתָּ, וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ עַם-כָּל-הָעַמִּים,
[וְשֻׁבַת] וּמוֹעֲדֵי קֹדֶשׁ [בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן]
בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הַנִּחְלָתָנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יְיָ מִקְדֵּשׁ [הַשְּׁבֻת וְ] יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher bahar banu im kol am, ve-romemanu im kol lashon, ve-kideshanu be-mitz'votav. Va-titen lanu, YHWH eloheinu, be-ahavah [shabbatot li-menuhah u-] mo'adim le-sim'hah, hagim u-z'manim le-sason, et yom [ha-shabbat ha-zeh ve-et yom] hag ha-matzot ha-zeh, z'man heiruteinu, [be-ahavah] mik'ra kodesh, zeicher li-y'tziyat mitz'rayim. Ki vanu va'har'ta, ve-otanu kidash'ta im kol ha-amim, [ve-shabbat] u-mo'adei kod'shecha [be-ahavah u-ve-ratzon] be-sim'hah u-ve-sason hin'hal'tanu. Baruch atah YHWH, mekadeish [ha-shabbat ve-] yisra'el ve-ha-z'manim.

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

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who creates illuminating fire.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא מְאוֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei me'orei ha-eish.

◇ 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 יַיִן *yayin* “wine”, קִדְּוֶשׁ *kiddush* “sanctification”, נֵר *neir* “flame”, הַבְּדֻלָּה *hav'dalah* “separation”, and זְמַן *z'man* “holiday”. The initial letters of these words spells out יַקְנֵהז *yaknehaz*, which sounds like the German phrase *jag den Has*—“hunt the hare”!

↩

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, 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 Shabbat 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. Praised are You, God, who distinguishes between different holy things.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךָ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחֹל, בֵּין אֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ,
בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה.
בֵּין קֹדֶשׁת שַׁבָּת לְקֹדֶשֶׁת יוֹם-טוֹב
הַבְּדֻלָּת, וְאֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִשֵּׁשֶׁת יְמֵי
הַמַּעֲשֶׂה קֹדֶשֶׁת. הַבְּדֻלָּת וְקֹדֶשֶׁת
אֶת-עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקֹדֶשֶׁתךָ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יי, הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְקֹדֶשׁ:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, ha-mav'dil 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'dal'ta, ve-et yom ha-sh'vi'i mi-sheishet y'mei ha-ma'aseh kidash'ta. Hiv'dal'ta ve-kidash'ta et amecha yisra'el bi-k'dushatecha. Baruch atah YHWH, ha-mav'dil bein kodesh le-kodesh.

On all nights:

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךָ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהַחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, she-heḥeyanu ve-kiyemanu ve-higi'anu la-z'man ha-zeh.

Drink the first cup while reclining.

◇ Why do we recline during the *seder*? As we will note later, the *seder* is based on the Greek *symposium*, during which participants reclined on couches. Reclining is a symbol of our freedom: taking time to enjoy our food in a comfortable way demonstrates our joy at being released from slavery on this night. We recline for all the cups of wine and ceremonial foods, except for the *maror*, because of its bitter symbolism.

◇ The *she-heḥeyanu* blessing dates back to the time of the Talmud. It is recited on special occasions, such as public holidays and significant life cycle events. We say it on the *seder* night in recognition of both: not only is Pesach an important holiday, but it also commemorates a significant transition in the collective life of the Jewish people.

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.

כוס מרים — Miriam's cup

Miriam's cup is filled from the same jar of water used to wash the hands, and placed on the table.

◇ Miriam's Cup rests on the table, welcoming Miriam the prophet, sister of Moses and Aaron. It is a symbol of the well of water that followed the people Israel through the wilderness. The well provided physical nourishment through water, but also spiritual nourishment, as a constant reminder of the Divine presence within the community. It remains on our table throughout our *seder*, guiding us in our journey as we reenact the exodus from slavery to freedom tonight.

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:

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-adamah.

Eat the vegetable while reclining.

◇ Vegetables symbolize spring and the renewal of the agricultural cycle. In our world, one can walk into a grocery store and buy any kind of fresh fruit and vegetables at any time of year. We fool ourselves into believing that the agrarian nature of the ancient world depended more heavily on cycles of seasonal rains than we do today. But our civilization is simply kicking the can down the road as we to deplete water supplies and harm our world's long-term health for our immediate needs.

◇ Tonight, we enjoy a bounty of food set before us, but where did it come from? 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? Tonight, when we celebrate our liberation from bondage, how can we fight for the freedom of others kept in virtual slavery so that we can eat?

יחז

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.

הָא לְחָמָא עֲנִיא דְאַכְלוּ אַבְהַתְנָא בְּאַרְעָא
דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל־דְּכַפִּין יִיתִי וְיֵבֵל, כָּל־דְּצָרִיד
יִיתִי וְיִפְסַח. הַשְּׁתָא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבְּאָה
בְּאַרְעָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל. הַשְּׁתָא עַבְדִּי, לְשָׁנָה
הַבְּאָה בְּנִי וּבְנוֹת חוֹרִין:

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.

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

יסטאיי איל פאן דה לא אפריסייון קה קומירון
מואסטרוס פאדרייס אן טיאהרה דה אג'יפטו. טודו
איל קי טיאניי אמברה צאנגה י קומאר, טודו איל
קי טיאניי די מיניסטאר צאנגה י פאסקוויי.
יסטאיי אנוי אקי, א איל אנוי איל ציאנין אן טיאהרה
דה ישראל. יסטאיי אנוי אקי סיארצ'רוס, א איל אנוי
איל ציאנין יגוס איה יגאס פורוס.

◇ The paragraph that begins the *seder* is in Aramaic, the everyday language of many 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 stranger into our house today? How can we fix the systemic problems that foster hunger, poverty, and oppression?

Cover the matzot. Fill the second cup.

ארבע קושיות — The four questions

How different this night is from all other nights!	מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל־הלילות:
On all other nights, we eat both <i>hametz</i> and <i>matzah</i> ; tonight, only <i>matzah</i> .	שבכל־הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה, הלילה הזה בלֹו מצה:
On all other nights, we eat all kinds of vegetables; tonight, we eat <i>maror</i> .	שבכל־הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות, הלילה הזה מרור:
On all other nights, we do not dip our food even once; tonight, we dip twice.	שבכל־הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת, הלילה הזה שתי פעמים:
On all other nights, we eat either formally or informally; tonight, we eat with special ceremony.	שבכל־הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין, הלילה הזה כלנו מסבין:

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

She-be-chol ha-leilot anu och'lin hametz 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 ehat,
ha-laylah ha-zeh sh'tei pe'amim.

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

◇ The astute reader will note that these “questions” are really statements: the word *mah* is an exclamatory “How!” In Temple times, there were three “questions”: roasting the meat for the Pesach offering, dipping twice, and the *matzah*.¹² 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. The early medieval scholars Saadia Ga'on and Maimonides are largely responsible for the development of the list of questions into their present form.¹³

◇ It is possible that the four “questions” were never meant to be codified as such, but rather meant to be a jumping-off point for discussion. The Talmud tells a story of Rabbah bar Nahmani, who had all the dishes and the *seder* plate removed from the table. His nephew, the rabbi Abaye, asked, “Why are you clearing the plates now, when we haven’t eaten yet?” Rabbah responded, “You have exempted us from reciting *Mah Nish'tanah*.”¹⁴ (Indeed, some today have the custom to remove the *seder* plate at this point, to provoke this very question.) The *seder* should prompt us to ask new questions, and be challenged by new answers.

12. Jerusalem Talmud, *Pesahim* 60b

13. See *Mishneh Torah*, “Laws of *Hametz* and *Matzah*” 8:3

14. Babylonian Talmud, *Pesahim* 115b

עבדים היינו — We were slaves

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. And 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.

A story is told about Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon. They were gathered together in B'nei B'rak, 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*."

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים, ותוציאנו
 יי אלהינו משם ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה.
 ואילו לא הוציאה הקדושה ברוכה היא
 את אבותינו ואמותינו ממצרים, הרי
 אנו ובנינו ובנותינו משעבדים היינו
 לפרעה במצרים. ואפילו כלנו חכמים,
 כלנו נבונות, כלנו זקנים, כלנו יודעות
 את התורה, מצוה עלינו לספר ביציאת
 מצרים. וכל-המרבה לספר ביציאת
 מצרים הרי היא משבחת.

מעשה ברבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע
 ורבי אלעזר בן עזריה ורבי עקיבא
 ורבי טרפון, שהיו מסבין בבני-ברק,
 והיו מספרים ביציאת מצרים כל-אותו
 הלילה, עד שבאו תלמידיהם ואמרו
 להם: רבותינו, הגיע זמן קריאת שמע
 של שחרית.

<p>◇ 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.</p>	<p>◇ 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.</p>
<p>◇ One theory about the enigmatic story about the five rabbis' <i>seder</i> in B'nei B'rak is that "telling the story of the exodus from Egypt" is a code for "plotting the Bar Kochba rebellion of 132 CE" and "it is time to recite the morning <i>Shema</i>" is a code for "Roman soldiers are coming, so break up the meeting!"</p>	<p>◇ The <i>Rit'va</i> (Yom Tov ben Avraham), a late medieval rabbi from Seville, suggests that the intention of this story is to show that even the greatest scholars, the wisest, the most learned among us are still obligated to expound upon the story of the exodus. Being a person of great stature does not take one outside of history.</p>

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 the land of Egypt all the days of your life”.¹⁵ 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” to include the days of the Messiah.

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה: הֲרֵי אָנִי
 כְּבֹן שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה, וְלֹא זָכִיתִי שֶׁתֵּאמַר
 יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם בְּלַיְלוֹת, עַד שֶׁדִּרְשָׁהּ
 בֶּן זֹמָא, שֶׁנֶּאמַר: לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת־יוֹם
 יְצִאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כָּל־יְמֵי תְּחִידָךְ.
 “יְמֵי תְּחִידָךְ” — הַיָּמִים. “כָּל־יְמֵי
 תְּחִידָךְ” — הַלַּיְלוֹת. וְחֻכְמַיִם אֹמְרִים:
 “יְמֵי תְּחִידָךְ” — הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה. “כָּל־יְמֵי
 תְּחִידָךְ” — לְהַבְיֵא אֶת יְמוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ.

◇ Even in Messianic times, we will still be required to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt. When we think that things have become “good enough” that problems that were once immediate are simply part of history, we still must remember and continually speak of that history, because our history may be someone else’s present.

ארבעה בנים ובעת — The four children

Praised is the All-Present One!

Praised is God.

Praised is God, who gave the Torah
 to the people Israel.

Praised is God.

Baruch ha-makom. Baruch hu.

B’ruchah she-nat’nah torah le-amah yisra’el. B’ruchah hi.

בְּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם.

בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

בְּרוּכָה שֶׁנָּתְנָה תּוֹרָה לְעַמָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל.

בְּרוּכָה הִיא.

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.

כְּנִגְדַּ אַרְבַּעַה בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת דְּבָרָה תּוֹרָה:
 אַחַת חֲכָמָה, וְאַחַד רָשָׁע, וְאַחַד פֶּתִם,
 וְאַחַת שְׂאִינָה יוֹדַעַת לְשֹׂאוֹל.

◇ 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.

◇ It would be naïve to say that the ancient rabbis were referring to “children” and not “sons”, but in modern times we include all children regardless of gender equally in learning Torah. In the following Hebrew text, the first and fourth children are referred to in the feminine, and the second and third in the masculine.

15. Deuteronomy 16:3

What does the wise child say? “What are the laws, the statues, and the ordinances which YHWH our God has commanded you?”¹⁶ 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 אֲתָכֶם?” וְאִם אָתָּה אָמַר לָהּ כְּהַלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח, אִין מִפְּטִירִין אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֲפִיקוֹמֵן.

◇ 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. Perhaps something similar is intended here.

What does the wicked child say? “What does this service mean to you?”¹⁷ “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”.¹⁸ “For me” and not “for him”—for had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.

רָשָׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? “מָה הַעֲבוּדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם?” “לָכֶם” — וְלֹא “לוֹ”.
וּלְפִי שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶת־עַמּוֹ מִן הַכְּלָל,
כִּפָּר בְּעֵקֶר. וְאִם אָתָּה הַקְּהָה אֶת־שִׁנְיֹו,
וְאָמַר לוֹ: “בְּעִבוּר זֶה עָשִׂתָּה יְיָ לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.” “לִי” — וְלֹא “לוֹ”. אֵלּוּ הֵיךְ שָׁם, לֹא הֵיךְ נִגְאָל.

◇ The rabbis’ objection to with the wicked child’s statement is the statement “to you”. Compare this carefully with the wise child’s question: “...which YHWH our God has commanded you”. Many ancient texts circumvent this problem by amending the wise child’s “you” to “us”, following the Septuagint and the *Mekhilta*.

◇ “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 *כִּפָּר בְּעֵקֶר* *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? Should every child be expected to believe exactly what their parents do?

◇ “The wicked child is saying that we only have to think about Egypt; the rituals and *mitzvot* are unnecessary, since simply remembering the Exodus is enough. He does not understand that one must work for redemption and live in it afterwards, that intellectualizing is not enough.”¹⁹

16. Deuteronomy 6:20

17. Exodus 12:26

18. Exodus 13:18

19. Rabbi Michael Strassfeld, *A Night of Questions*

What does the simple child say? “What is this?”²⁰ 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.”²¹

תָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? “מָה זֹאת?” וְאָמַרְתָּ
אֵלָיו: “בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם
מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים.”

◇ The word for “simple” is תָּם *tam*, which also paradoxically means “perfect” or “extraordinary”. Noah, Jacob, and Job are all described as *tam* in Scripture. 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

◇ Rabbi Joy Levitt asks, “Do you ever hold back from asking a question for fear that you ought to know the answer?”²² One problem that faces spaces inhabited by marginalized people is that we can create high barriers to entry with jargon, ritual, and knowledge. We should never be afraid to ask when we don’t know, but we must also never be afraid to *be asked* when we hold the key to participation.

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.’”²³

וְשֵׂאִינָהּ יוֹדַעַת לְשִׂאוֹל, אֶת פֶּתַח לָהּ.
מִן הָאָמֹר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִתְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
לֵאמֹר, בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשָׂתָה יְיָ לִי בְּצֵאתִי
מִמִּצְרַיִם.

◇ This answer is the same as that which is given to the wicked child, but this time 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.

◇ The pronoun אַתָּ *at* here is not the feminine singular, but rather the Jerusalem and Galilean form of the masculine singular אַתָּה *atah*. “In the sources, the pronoun ‘you’ is taken as singular: it is the obligation of every Jewish parent to teach [their] children. The pronoun could also be read as a collective, in form identical to the singular: the Jewish community has a collective responsibility to teach all its children.”²⁴

20. Exodus 13:14

21. *Ibid.*

22. *A Night of Questions*

23. Exodus 13:18

24. Heinrich Guggenheimer, *The Scholar’s Haggadah*

ברית הגאולה — The covenant of redemption

In the beginning, our ancestors revered other deities, but now the All-Present One has brought us to God's 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 Mount Se'ir as an inheritance, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt."²⁵

מִתְחִלָּה עֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, וְעַכְשָׁו קִרְבָּנוּ הַמָּקוֹם לְעֲבוֹדָתוֹ,
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי כָל־הָעָם: כֹּה
אָמַר יי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: בְּעֶבֶר הַנְּהַר יָשְׁבוּ
אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵעוֹלָם, תֵּרַח אָבִי אֲבִרָהָם וְאָבִי
נְחוֹר, וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים. וְאָקַח אֶת־
אֲבִיכֶם אֶת־אַבְרָהָם מֵעֶבֶר הַנְּהַר, וְאוֹלַךְ
אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. וְאַרְבָּה אֶת־זֶרְעוֹ,
וְאִתָּן לוֹ אֶת־יִצְחָק, וְאִתָּן לְיִצְחָק אֶת־יַעֲקֹב
וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו, וְאִתָּן לְעֵשָׂו אֶת־הַר־שְׁעִיר
לְרֶשֶׁת אוֹתוֹ, וַיַּעֲקֹב וּבְנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרָיִם.

God appeared to Abraham, in divine splendor and magnificence, and said, "Abraham, you shine out with understanding in My world! I am the One who created you and formed you by My hand. I am God and Lord; be My servant. I am the One who created you, and I shall raise you over My people. I am the One who created all the heavens and the earth. I am the sole Ruler; there is no god before Me and no god after Me. O, my beloved Abraham, I am your God, and you are My worshipper, I am the One who created You and formed you by My hand!" At that moment, Abraham went to his father Terah and said, "My father, please answer me truly: Who created the world in six days, and rested on the seventh? Who is the God who deserves our thanks and our praise?"

אֲתִגְלֹלָא עֲלֵיהּ הַרְבַּ צְבַחָאנוּ
בְּכִרְאֻמָּתוֹ וּבְגִלְאֵלָתוֹ
קָאֵל לוֹ יָא אֲבִרָהָם מֵאֲלֵךְ תַּתְּמִיִּיז פִּי עֲלַמִּי
אֲנָא אֵלְדִי כְּלַקְתְּךָ וְצִיּוֹרְתְךָ בִּידִי
אֲנָא הוּוּא לְאִילָה וְהָאֲדוֹן כְּוֹדְמִי
אֲנָא הוּוּא אֵלְדִי כְּלַקְתְּךָ
וְנַחֲב נַעֲלִלִיךָ עֲלָא גְמִיעַ קוּמִי
אֲנָא אֵלְדִי כְּלַקְתָּ גְמִיעַ הַסְּמָאוּאָת וְלֵאֲרִצִּי
אֲנָא הַצֵּלְטָאן לְוַחִיד
לֵא אִילָה קַבְּלִי וְלֵא אִילָה בַעֲדִי
יָא חֲבִיבִי אֲבִרָהָם אֲנָא אִילָאֲהֲךָ
וְאֲנֹתִי עַבְדִּי
אֲנָא אֵלְדִי כְּלַקְתְּךָ וְצִיּוֹרְתְךָ בִּידִי
פִּי דִיךָ הַסָּאעָה מִשָּׂא אֲבִרָהָם
לְעֵנַד אוֹבוּה תֵּרַח
וְקָאֵל לוֹ יָא אִבִּי נַחֲבִד תְּכַבְּרִנִי בְּצַחַח
הָאֲשַׁכּוֹן אֵלְדִי כְּלַק הַדִּינָא פִּי סַת אִיִּיאַם
וּפְסָאֲבַע רַתְּאָח
הָאֲשַׁכּוֹן הוּוּא לְאִילָה אֵלְדִי לִילֵו
נִשְׁכַּר וְנִמְדַח

◇ This segment of the Judeo-Arabic poem *Utqul Gafsa*, often recited at this point in the *seder* in the North African tradition, tells of Abraham's recognition of the oneness of God. The poem is a retelling of history from Creation through Abraham, which sets up the retelling of the history of the Abraham's descendants in the land of Egypt.

25. Joshua 24:2-4

Blessed is the One who keeps promises to Israel. Blessed is God. 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."²⁶

בְּרוּכָה שׁוֹמְרַת הַבְּטָחָתָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל,
 בְּרוּכָה הִיא. שֶׁהִקְדוּשָׁה בְּרוּכָה הִיא
 חֲשָׁבָה אֶת־הַקֶּץ לְעֲשׂוֹת, כְּמָה שֶׁאִמְרָה
 לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ בְּבְרִית בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים,
 מִן הָאָמּוֹר: וְתֹאמֶר לְאַבְרָם: יָדַע תֵּדַע
 כִּי גַר יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם, וְעֲבָדוּם
 וְעִנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה. וְגַם אֶת־
 הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָן אֲנִי, וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יֵצְאוּ
 בְּרִכְשׁ גָּדוֹל.

Raise the cup of wine.

It is this promise that has been upheld 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 God, saves us from their designs.

וְהִיא שֶׁעֲמָדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ,
 וְהִיא שֶׁעֲמָדָה לְאַמּוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ,
 שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד עֲמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ,
 אֲלָא שְׁבַכְל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ
 לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, וְהִקְדוּשָׁה בְּרוּכָה הִיא
 מְצִילֵתֵנוּ מִיָּדָם.

Ve-hi she-am'dah la-avoteinu ve-lanu,
 ve-hi she-am'dah le-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 matzilateinu mi-yadam.

Replace the cup of wine.

◇ The Jewish people have suffered 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?

◇ If God foresaw that the Israelites would be enslaved, why didn't God just avert the whole history of enslavement and its concomitant four hundred years of misery? Was it so that the Israelites would learn a lesson for their collective future about mistreating people subservient to them, or about denigrating those who are currently oppressed under slavery? If that is the reason, what does that imply about how we regard slavery as an institution?

26. Genesis 15:13–14

יציאת מצרים — The exodus from Egypt

Go and learn these 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.”²⁷

צא ולמד:
 אַרְמִי אֲבִד אָבִי וַיֵּרַד מִצְרַיִם
 וַיֵּגֶר שָׁם בְּמִתֵּי מֵעֹט
 וַיְהִי-שָׁם לְגוֹי גָדוֹל עַצוּם וְרַב:
 וַיַּרְעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ
 וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבָדָה קָשָׁה:
 וַנִּצְעַק אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
 וַיִּשְׁמַע יְיָ אֶת-קֹלְנוּ וַיֵּרָא אֶת-עַנְיֵנוּ
 וַאֲתֵּעַמְלָנוּ וְאֶת-לֶחְצֵנוּ:
 וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם
 בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה
 וּבְמַרְאֵ גָדֹל וּבְבֹאֲתוֹת וּבְמִפְתֵּיִם:

<p>◇ The heart of the traditional text of the <i>Haggadah</i> is a long elaboration upon these four verses, a sort of catechism of the history of the Israelite people. The traditional <i>Haggadah</i> 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? To what extent does history revolve around great individuals?</p>	<p>◇ The first three words of these verses have engendered much discussion. Does <i>אַרְמִי אֲבִד אָבִי</i> <i>arami oveid avi</i> mean “My father was a wandering Aramean” or “The Aramean sought to destroy my father”? Who is the “Aramean”? The traditional <i>Haggadah</i> 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.</p>
<p>◇ The classical interpretive text of the <i>Haggadah</i> starts here with the Hebrew expression <i>צא ולמד</i> <i>tzei u-l'mad</i>—“go out and learn”. In the Aramaic of the Talmud, the rabbis use the phrase <i>תא שמא</i> <i>ta sh'ma</i>—“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.</p>	<p>◇ The <i>midrash</i> tells a story of how Pharaoh gathered the Israelites and asked them, “Do me a favor, and work with me.” He took bucket and trowel and began to work, and everyone worked with him, all day long. But at nightfall, overseers counted every brick that had been made, and Pharaoh said, “This is your quota every day.”²⁸ Beware oppressors who claim to show solidarity but quit when solidarity becomes hard.</p>

27. Deuteronomy 26:5b–8
 28. *Yalkut Shimoni* 163

עשר מכות — The ten plagues

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

עָשָׂר מַכּוֹת הַבְּיָאָה הַקְּדוֹשָׁה בְּרוּכָה
הִיא עַל הַמִּצְרַיִם בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן:

For each plague and at each symbol of the acrostic, remove a drop of wine from your cup:

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

Rabbi Judah made them an acrostic:
DeTZaCH, ADaSH, Be'AHaV.

רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הִיָּה נוֹתֵן בָּהֶם סְמָנִים:
דַּצ"ךְ עַד"ש בְּאֲח"ב.

<p>◇ There is a famous <i>midrash</i> 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?!²⁹ Scripture says, “Do not rejoice when your enemies fall, and do not be happy as they stumble.”³⁰ 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?</p>	<p>◇ Pharaoh’s magicians successfully replicate the first two plagues: turning water to blood, and bringing forth frogs. But they are unable to replicate the third plague, whereupon they declare, אָצַבֵּעַ אֱלֹהִים הוּא etz'ba elohim hi, “This is the finger of God!”³¹ And Pharaoh seems convinced that God means business as well, but it is God who repeatedly hardens Pharaoh’s heart and keeps the people in a state of slavery. Who was God really trying to convince?</p>
<p>◇ Why an acrostic? Is it that much harder to remember eleven words than three? The Talmud records other instances of Rabbi Judah insisting upon acronyms “so that one should not err”,³² but it is unclear what error he wishes us to avoid. The first-century philosopher Philo suggests grouping the plagues into three groups of three, produced by different sources: Aaron with his staff first, then Moses and Aaron together, then Moses alone, and the final, Divine intervention.³³</p>	

29. Babylonian Talmud, *Megillah* 10b
 30. Proverbs 24:17
 31. Exodus 8:15
 32. Babylonian Talmud, *Menahot* 96a
 33. *Life of Moses* 1.113

שירת הים — The song at the sea

“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 the sea on dry land.’”³⁴

וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה מַה־תִּצְעַק אֵלַי
דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְעוּ: וְאַתָּה הָרִם
אֶת־מִטְּוֶה וְנָטָה אֶת־יָדְךָ עַל־הַיָּם וּבִקְעָהוּ
וַיָּבֹאוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ 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.³⁵ Prayer is all well and good, but it can only take us so far.

Raise Miriam’s cup.

“Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron’s sister, took her timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed after her dancing with their timbrels. Miriam led the people thus: ‘Sing to YHWH, for God has excelled greatly; horse and rider God has hurled into the sea.’”³⁶

וּתְקַח מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה אַחֹת אַהֲרֹן
אֶת־הַתִּמְבֵּל בְּיָדָהּ וַתָּצֵאנָּה כָּל־הַנְּשִׂאִים אַחֲרֶיהָ
בְּתַפִּים וּבַמַּחֲלָת: וַתַּעַן לָהֶם מִרְיָם
שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־נָאָה נָאָה
קוֹס וּרְכָבוֹ 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!

◇ “When we sing her song, we remember Miriam, who encouraged her people to sing and to dance on their way to freedom. We think of our own journey into uncharted landscapes, and of the song inside each of us waiting to be sung. Like Miriam, without knowing the steps, we take a chance and dance.”³⁸

◇ 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”—in fact, the Torah introduces the Song at the Sea with אַז יָשִׁיר מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל *az yashir moshe u-v’nei yisra’el*, “Thus sang (singular) Moses and the Children of Israel”.³⁷ Miriam’s song is a celebration of the power of individuals, each according to how he or she is able to participate, coming together to form community: a song greater than the sum of its parts.

Replace Miriam’s cup.

34. Exodus 14:15–16
 35. Babylonian Talmud, *Sotah* 37a; also Numbers Rabbah 8:7
 36. Exodus 15:20–21
 37. Exodus 15:1
 38. Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, *A Night of Questions*

Dayeinu — דיין — It would have been enough

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

Kamah ma'alot tovot la-makom aleinu!

If God had only taken us out of Egypt,
it would have been enough!

אֱלוֹ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, דֵּינָנוּ!

If God had only given us Shabbat,
it would have been enough!

אֱלוֹ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת, דֵּינָנוּ!

If God had only given us the Torah,
it would have been enough!

אֱלוֹ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה, דֵּינָנוּ!

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

Ilu natan lanu et ha-shabbat, dayeinu!

Ilu 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 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 enough." 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.³⁹ 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.

39. Numbers 11:5–6

רבן גמליאל היה אומר — The symbols of the seder

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

רבן גמליאל היה אומר: כל־שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח, לא יצא ידי חובתו, ואלו הן: פסח, מצה, ומרור.

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

The Passover offering (*pesah*) that our ancestors ate in the times when the Temple still stood: why did they eat it? Because the Holy One passed over (*pasah*) our ancestors' houses in Egypt, as it is written: "You shall say: It is a Passover offering to God, for God passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when God struck the Egyptians, but God spared our houses, whereupon the people bowed and worshipped."⁴⁰

This *matzah*—why do we eat it? Because our ancestors' dough had insufficient time to rise when the Holy One was made manifest, and God 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."⁴¹

This bitter food, *maror*—why do we eat it? Because the Egyptians embittered our ancestors' lives in Egypt, as it is written: "They embittered (*va-y'mararu*) 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."⁴²

פסח, שהיו אבותינו ואמותינו אוכלים בזמן שבית המקדש היה קיים, על שום מה? על שום שפסח הקדוש ברוך הוא על בתי אבותינו ואמותינו במצרים, שנאמר: ואמרתם זבח פסח הוא לי, אשר פסח על בתי בני ישראל במצרים בנגפו את מצרים, ואת בתינו הציל, ויקד העם וישתחוו.

מצה זו שאנו אוכלות, על שום מה? על שום שלא הספיק בצקם של אמותינו ואבותינו להחמיץ, עד שנגלה עליהם הקדוש ברוך הוא וגאלם, שנאמר: ויאפו את הבצק אשר הוציאו ממצרים עגת מצות, כי לא חמץ, כי גרשו ממצרים ולא יכלו להתמהמה, וגם צדה לא עשו להם.

מרור זה שאנו אוכלים, על שום מה? על שום שמררו המצרים את חיי אבותינו ואמותינו במצרים, שנאמר: ומררו את־חיייהם בעבדה קשה, בחמר ובלבנים ובכל־עבדה בשדה, את־כל־עבדתם אשר עבדו בהם בפרך.

40. Exodus 12:27

41. Exodus 12:39

42. Exodus 1:14

<p>◇ Rabban Gamaliel’s explanations cover only some of the symbols that we commemorate during the <i>seder</i>. We have already used the vegetable for <i>karpas</i>, and we will shortly use the <i>haroset</i> along with the <i>maror</i>. Traditionally, a boiled or roasted egg is also placed on the <i>seder</i> plate, and explanations for that practice vary: the egg symbolizes the <i>korban hagigah</i>, the festival sacrifice, but more generally, it also symbolizes new beginnings and new life.</p>	<p>◇ In recent years, a custom has developed of putting an orange on the <i>seder</i> plate. There are several different versions of the origin of this custom, told by the various people involved. The orange, full of seeds, has come to symbolize the fruitfulness of all Jews to contribute to Judaism and to Jewish life, regardless of their history, gender, race, (dis)ability, and any other way societies marginalize and divide “lower” or “unworthy” segments from whatever is considered normative.</p>
<p>◇ In modern times, we do not offer a lamb as a sacrifice on Pesach, and in fact there is a tradition to refrain from eating any roasted meat during Pesach because of its resemblance to the Passover offering. Yet we still commemorate it by placing a shank bone on the <i>seder</i> plate. Many vegetarians substitute a beet.</p>	<p>◇ Some <i>seder</i> plates contain a space for <i>hazeret</i>: additional <i>maror</i> that is used for the <i>koreich</i>, often is a different kind of bitter vegetable, particularly romaine lettuce. The Torah refers to <i>maror</i> in the plural when instructing the Israelites how they should eat the Pesach offering: “upon <i>matzot</i> and <i>merorim</i>.”⁴³</p>
<p>◇ Why did the Israelites bother baking their insufficiently risen dough at all? Why did they not simply abandon it? One would think it would save time, if they were really in such a rush. The Israelites had not prepared to leave, so they had no provisions at all, so they were forced to take time to bake their dough, in whatever state it was in, so they could take it along with them and not go hungry. And when this bread runs out—immediately after the crossing of the Sea of Reeds—the Israelites complain to Moses, “If only we had died by God’s hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, when we ate our fill of bread—but you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”⁴⁴ God answers their plea by causing manna to rain down from heaven, giving the people food in the wilderness. Their stubbornness worked to their advantage when they departed Egypt, but soon it becomes an annoyance for both Moses and God.</p>	<p>◇ Some of the rabbinic and cantorial fellowship of T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, an organization of Jewish clergy dedicated to social justice, have started a new custom of placing a tomato on the <i>seder</i> 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 “first world” countries. Estimates of people who work in agriculture in conditions of enslavement today in the world range in the tens of millions.</p> <p>“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.”</p>

43. Exodus 12:8, Numbers 9:11

44. Exodus 16:3

בכל דור ודור — In every generation

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 day: It is because of what God did for me when I went forth from Egypt.”⁴⁵ For the Holy One redeemed not only our ancestors from Egypt but us along with them, as it says: “God took us out of there.”⁴⁶

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר תִּיָּבֵת אִשָּׁה וְחִיָּב אָדָם לְרֵאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמָם כְּאִלוֹ הֵם יֵצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, מִן הָאָמּוֹר: וְהִגִּידוּ לְבָנֹתֵיכֶם וּלְבָנֶיכֶן בְּיוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעֵבּוֹר זֶה עָשִׂתָה יי לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֶת אֲמוֹתֵינוּ בְּלֶבֶד גְּאֻלָּה הַקְּדוּשָׁה בְּרוּכָה הִיא, אֲלֵא אִף אֹתָנוּ גְּאֻלָּה עִמָּהֶן, מִן הָאָמּוֹר: וְאוֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיאָה מִשָּׁם.

◇ In the Sefardi and Yemenite traditions, the word לְרֵאוֹת *lir'ot*, “regard themselves”, is replaced with לְהֵרֵאוֹת *lehar'ot*, “conduct themselves”. Consider the verse, phrased in the singular, “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt.”⁴⁷ What does it mean to regard 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?

◇ The great medieval scholar *Rashi* (Rabbi Shlomo bar Yitzchak) explains that God did not literally take us, in the present day, out of Egypt along with our ancestors, but in the sense that if God had not performed all the miracles of redemption for our ancestors, we would still be slaves in Egypt. But another interpretation holds that we indeed were there, just as surely as we are here today, just as we will all be present together at the final redemption.

Raise the cup of wine.

Therefore, we must 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.

לְפִיכֹךְ אֲנַחֲנוּ חַיִּיבִים לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבֵּחַ, לְפַאֵר, לְרוֹמֵם, לְהַדְר, לְבָרֵךְ, לְעֹלָה וּלְקַלֵּם לְמִי שֶׁעָשָׂה לְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ אֶת־כָּל־הַנְּסִים הָאֵלֶּן. הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵעֲבָדוֹת לְחֵרוֹת, מִיָּגוֹן לְשִׂמְחָה, וּמֵאֲפֵל לְיוֹם־טוֹב, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹר גְּדוֹל, וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד לְגְּאֻלָּה.

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

וְנֹאמֵר לְפָנָיו שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה:
הַלְּלוּיָהּ! הַלְּלֵנָיָה!

Ve-nomar lefanav shirah ḥdashah: Halleluyah! Hallelnayah!

Replace the cup of wine.

45. Exodus 13:18
46. Deuteronomy 6:23
47. Deuteronomy 16:12

תהלים קיג — Psalm 113

Halleluyah!

Praise, O servants of God,
praise the Name of God.

May the Name of God be blessed
from now until eternity;
from the sun's rise until its setting
may the Name of God be praised.

God is exalted among the nations,
God's glory is upon the heavens.
Who is like our God, who regards
heaven and earth?

God raises up the wretched from the dust,
and lifts the needy up from heaps
of dung,

that God may set them amongst princes,
amongst the princes of God's people.

God sustains the barren at home
just as one who rejoices with children.

Halleluyah! Hallelnayah!

Halleluyah. Hallelu av'dei YHWH, hallelu et sheim YHWH.

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

Mi-miz'rah shemesh ad mevo'o mehulal sheim 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'meihah.

Halleluyah! Hallelnayah!

הַלְלוּ-יְהוָה:

הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יי הַלְלוּ אֶת-שֵׁם יי:

יְהי שֵׁם יי מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם:

מִמְזֶרֶח-שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד-מְבֹאֵו מְהַלֵּל שֵׁם יי:

רַם בְּכָל-גּוֹיִם | יי עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ:

מִי כִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַמְגַבִּיהַי לְשֶׁבֶת:

הַמְשַׁפִּילֵי לְרֵאוֹת בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ:

מְקִימֵי מֵעַפָּר דָּל מֵאֲשָׁפֹת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן:

לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי עַם-נְדִיבִים עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ:

מוֹשִׁיבֵי | עֵקֶרֶת הַבַּיִת אֶם-הַבָּנִים שְׂמִיחָה

הַלְלוּ-יְהוָה: הַלְלֵנָה:

◇ 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.⁴⁸

◇ Why does the psalm start by addressing the people Israel as “servants”—*עבְדֵי* *av'dei*, the same literal word as “slaves”—“of God”? The Tosafist *Rashbam* (Rabbi Shmuel ben Me’ir), a grandson of *Rashi*, points to the Talmud,⁴⁹ commenting that at the Pesach *seder*, we are free to worship God, to be God’s servants, as it were, and not Pharaoh’s slaves. We can now distinguish between slavery and worship, between abject servitude and celebration and thanksgiving.

48. From *Zevah Pesah* by Rabbi Don Isaac ben Judah Abrabanel of Portugal (1437–1508)

49. Babylonian Talmud, *Megillah* 14a

When Israel went out of Egypt,
 the house of Jacob from a foreign people,
 Judah became God's holy concern,
 Israel became God's 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 לְעֹז:
 הֵיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ
 יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלוֹתָיו:
 הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּגֹס
 הַיַּרְדֵּן יָסַב לְאַחֹר:
 הַהָרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים
 גְּבְעוֹת כְּבְנֵי-צֹאן:
 מַה-לֵּךְ הַיָּם כִּי תָגֹס
 הַיַּרְדֵּן תָּסַב לְאַחֹר:
 הַהָרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים
 גְּבְעוֹת כְּבְנֵי-צֹאן:
 מִלִּפְנֵי אֲדוֹן חוּלֵי אֶרֶץ
 מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:
 הַהִפְכִי הַצּוּר אֲגַם-מַיִם
 חֲלֹמֵיֶשׁ 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-mai'no mayim.

◇ Can it be that “Judah became God’s holy concern” only after “when Israel went out of Egypt”? Rather, understand *קֹדֶשׁוֹ kod'sho* not as “sanctified to God”, but that Israel became a Sanctuary to God: a holy people became a holy place in the midst of which God could reside: “They shall make Me a sanctified place” — *מִקְדָּשׁ mik'dash*—“and I shall dwell among them.”⁵⁰ In order for God to truly dwell among us, we had to achieve liberation first.

◇ The juxtaposition of “Israel”, “Judah”, and “the house of Jacob” at the beginning of this psalm shows how far the Israelite people have come from the beginning of the story of the Exodus: we have gone from one family to a multifold and diverse people. “With but seventy souls”—the family of Jacob—“did your ancestors go down to Egypt, and now, YHWH your God has made you as numerous as the stars of the sky.”⁵¹

50. Exodus 25:8

51. Deuteronomy 10:22

כוס שני — The second cup

Praised are You, 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, 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.

Praised are You, God, Redeemer of Israel.

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְקוֹר הַחַיִּים, אֲשֶׁר
גָּאֳלָתָנוּ וְגָאֳלָה אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ
מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְהַגִּיעַתָּנוּ לְלֵילָה הַזֶּה לְאֵכֶל בּוֹ
מַצָּה וּמְרֹר. כֵּן, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי
אִמּוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, תְּגַיעֵנוּ לְמוֹעֲדִים
וְלְרִגְלִים אַחֲרֵים הַבָּאִים לְקִרְאתָנוּ
לְשָׁלוֹם, שְׂמֵחִים וְשִׂשׂוֹת בְּעִבּוֹדְתֶךָ, וְנוֹדֶה
לְךָ שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ עַל גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ וְעַל פְּדוּת
נַפְשָׁנוּ. בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יי, גָּאֳלָה יִשְׂרָאֵל:

B'ruchah at YHWH eloheinu m'kor ha-ḥayim, 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-elohei imoteinu va-avoteinu, tagi'inu le-mo'adim ve-li-r'galim aḥeirim ha-ba'im lik'rateinu le-shalom, s'meihim ve-sasot ba-avodateich, ve-nodeh lach shir ḥadash al ge'ulateinu ve-al pedut naf'shainu. B'ruchah at YHWH, ga'alah yisra'el.

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Drink the second cup while reclining.

רחצה

Roh'tzah — Second handwashing

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

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who has sanctified us by the *mitzvot*, and instructed us to wash our hands.

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

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

◇ There is a widely-followed custom (some authorities say a halachic requirement, but others disagree⁵²) to refrain from speaking between washing the hands and reciting the blessing over bread, in order to link the two observances and *berachot*.

52. Babylonian Talmud, *Berachot* 42a, followed by *Orah Hayim* 166:1

מוציא — מצה

Motzi and Matzah – Blessings over bread and *matzah*

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

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who brings bread from the ground. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, ha-motzi lehem min ha-aretz.

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who has sanctified us by the *mitzvot*, and instructed us to eat *matzah*. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה:

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

Eat the matzah while reclining.

מרור Maror

Take a piece of maror and dip it in haroset. Then recite the following blessing:

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who has sanctified us by the *mitzvot*, and instructed us to eat *maror*. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר:

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

Eat the maror without reclining.

◇ The usual constituents of *haroset* are sweet and hearty nuts and fruits, particularly apples, dates, or figs, blended together with wine to make a paste. 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 in West Virginia made a *seder*. They did not have ingredients for *haroset*, so they improvised: they put a real brick on the *seder* plate instead. There have also been several recorded incidents of medieval Mediterranean communities grating real clay or brick into their *haroset* in memory of the clay bricks the Israelites were forced to make.⁵³ One rabbi condemned this hyper-literalism, saying, “By this logic, on Purim they will draw blood in memory of the decree of death!”⁵⁴

53. 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

54. Rabbi Menachem di Lonzano, Italy, (d. 1708)

נורד

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 Pesach offering, the *matzah*, and the *maror*, and eat them sandwiched together, in order to fulfill the verse: “You shall eat it [the Pesach offering] upon *matzot* and *maror*.⁵⁵

זָכַר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהִלֵּל. בֵּין עֲשֵׂה הֵלֵל בְּזִמְנֵן
שְׂבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קִיָּם. הָיָה בּוֹרֵךְ פֶּסַח
מִצָּה וּמְרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד, לְקִיָּם מֵה
שְׁנֵאָמַר: עַל מִצּוֹת וּמְרוֹרִים יֹאכְלֵהוּ:

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 sandwich while reclining.

◇ *Koreich* is one of the strangest 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 inserting a piece of roast lamb from the Passover offering into the sandwich. 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 component 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. What would this mean for the future of Judaism?

55. Numbers 9:11

שולחן ערוך Shul'han oreich – The festival meal

◇ Many have the custom to begin the meal by eating boiled eggs, which are round, without beginning or end. There is a custom that boiled eggs are the first foodstuff given to a mourner after a funeral. The round shape of the egg symbolizes the cycles of nature; the egg itself expresses hope for the future and new life.

◇ So far, everything we have eaten in the course of the *seder* has had some ritual or symbolic significance. But one of the *mitzvot* of the holiday is to celebrate, and one of the traditional things we do to celebrate is partake of a festive meal. The ritual nature of the food of the meal is simply that it is there to be enjoyed, which itself is a *mitzvah*.

צפון Tzafun – Eating 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.

◇ 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.

◇ The custom of hiding or stealing the *afikoman* may go back thousands of years: Rabbi Eliezer states that one should “grab the *matzot*” so that the children don’t fall asleep during the *seder*.⁵⁶ In many circles it is customary for children to demand “ransom” for the *afikoman*, without which the *seder* cannot be completed.

◇ One must be careful to eat the *afikoman* before ritual midnight (*hatzot*). This is because the *afikoman* stands in for the *pesach* offering, which was judged ritually unfit after midnight.⁵⁷

56. Babylonian Talmud, *Pesachim* 109a

57. Mishnah, *Pesachim* 10:9

ברך

Bareich – Blessings after the meal

Fill the third cup.

An alternative blessing after the meal may be found on page 47.

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 springs
in the desert.

Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.

One who carries seeds weeps, but will
return in exultation, bearing sheaves.⁵⁸

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת:
בָּשׁוּב יי אֶת־שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן, הֵיִינוּ כְּחֹלְמִים.
אֲזַ יִמְלֵא שְׂחֹק פִּינוּ וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה.
אֲזַ יֵאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם, הֲגִדִיל יי לַעֲשׂוֹת
עִם־אֱלֹהִים.
הֲגִדִיל יי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ, הֵיִינוּ שְׂמֵחִים.
שׁוֹבָה יי אֶת־שְׁבִיתֵנוּ כְּאֶפְיָקִים בְּנִגְבָּה.
הַזְרַעִים בְּדַמְעָה בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ.
הַלֹּזֵד יִלְךְ וּבִכָּה, נִשְׂא מִשֶּׂדֶה הַזְרַע.
בְּאֵיבָא בְּרִנָּה, נִשְׂא אֲלֻמְתָיו:

Shir ha-ma'alot. Be-shuv YHWH et shivat tziyon, hayinu ke-hol'mim.

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

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

Hig'dil YHWH la'asot imanu, hayinu s'meihim.

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.

Some add:

Let my mouth declare God's praises, and let
all flesh bless God's holy Name forever.⁵⁹

Let us praise God from now until eternity,
*Halleluyah.*⁶⁰

Give thanks to God, for God is good,
God's lovingkindness endures forever.⁶¹

Who can recount the mightiness of God,
or declare the fullness of God's praise?⁶²

תְּהִלַּת יי יְדַבֵּר פִּי, וַיְבָרֵךְ כָּל־בְּשָׂר
שֵׁם קֹדֶשׁהּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

וְאֲנַחְנוּ נְבָרֵךְ יְהוָה, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם,
הַלְלוּיָהּ.

הַיְדוּד לִי כִי־טוֹבָהּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדָּהּ.
מִי יִמְלֵל גְּבוּרוֹת יי, יִשְׁמַע כָּל־תְּהִלָּתָהּ:

Tehillat YHWH yedaber pi, vi-y'varech kol basar shem kod'shah le-olam va-ed.

Va-anah'nu nevarech yah, me-atah ve-ad olam, halleluyah. Hodu la-YHWH ki

tovah, ki le-olam has'dah. Mi yemaleil gevurot YHWH, yash'mi'a kol tehillatah.

⇐

58. Psalm 126

59. Psalms 145:21

60. Psalms 115:18

61. Psalms 118:1

62. Psalms 106:2

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

Leader:

Friends, let us bless!

חֲבֵרֵי וְחִבְרוֹתַי, נְבָרֵךְ!

Haveirai va-ḥaveirotai, nevareich.

Others:

May God's Name be blessed for all time.⁶³ יְהִי שֵׁם יי מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

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

Leader:

May God's Name be blessed for all time. יְהִי שֵׁם יי מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.
With your permission, friends, let us bless בְּרִשּׁוֹת חֲבֵרֵי וְחִבְרוֹתַי, נְבָרֵךְ [אֱלֹהֵינוּ]
[our God], the One of whose food we have partaken. שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלָה.

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

Bi-r'shut ḥaveirai va-ḥaveirotai, nevareich [eloheinu] she-aḥal'nu mi-shelah.

Others:

May [our God], the One of whose food בְּרוּכָה [אֱלֹהֵינוּ] שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלָה,
we have partaken, and whose goodness וּבְטוֹבָה חִיֵּינוּ.
sustains us, be blessed.

B'ruchah [eloheinu] she-achal'nu mi-shelah, u-ve-tuvah ḥayinu.

Leader:

May [our God], the One of whose food בְּרוּכָה [אֱלֹהֵינוּ] שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלָה,
we have partaken, and whose goodness וּבְטוֹבָה חִיֵּינוּ.
sustains us, be blessed. בְּרוּכָה הִיא וּבְרוּךְ שְׁמָה:

B'ruchah [eloheinu] she-achal'nu mi-shelah, u-ve-tuvah ḥayinu.

B'ruchah hi u-varuch shemah.

◇ The *zimun*, or formal invitation, is issued to begin the blessings after the meal when there are at least three people present who have dined together. There are several sources for this, such as the verse: "Give greatness to God with me, and let us praise God's name together."⁶⁴ Since the imperative "give" is plural, it follows that there must be three persons present. The more people are present, the greater the thanks we should give for our food and our bounty.

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63. Psalms 113:2

64. Psalms 34:4

All continue here:

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who nourishes the whole world in goodness, with grace, kindness, and mercy. God gives bread to all flesh, for God's lovingkindness endures forever.⁶⁵ Because of God's great goodness, we have never lacked, nor may we ever lack, nourishment for eternity. For the sake of God's great Name, for God is the One who nourishes and sustains all, and benefits all, God prepares food for all the creatures that God created. Praised are You, God, who nourishes all.

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam,
ha-zan et ha-olam kulo be-tuvo, be-ḥein be-ḥesed u-ve-raḥamim.
Hu notein leḥem le-chol basar, ki le-olam ḥas'do.
U-ve-tuvo ha-gadol tamid lo ḥasar 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.

We are grateful to You, 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.

Nodeh lecha, YHWH eloheinu, al she-hin'hal'ta la-avoteinu ve-imoteinu
eretz ḥem'dah tovah u-r'ḥavah, 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-ḥatam'ta al libeinu, ve-al torat'cha she-limad'tanu, ve-al ḥukecha
she-hodatanu, ve-al ḥayim ḥein va-ḥesed she-ḥonan'tanu, ve-al aḥilat mazon
she-atah zan u-m'farnes otanu tamid, be-chol yom u-vechol eit u-vechol sha'ah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַזֵּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כְּלוּ בְּטוֹבוֹ, בְּחֶן בְּחֶסֶד
וּבְרַחֲמִים. הוּא נוֹתֵן לֶחֶם לְכָל-בָּשָׂר,
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ. וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל תָּמִיד לֹא
חָסַר לָנוּ וְאֵל יַחְסֹר לָנוּ מִזֶּזֶן לְעוֹלָם וָעֵד.
בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל, כִּי הוּא אֵל זֶן
וּמְפָרְנֵס לְכָל, וּמְטִיב לְכָל, וּמְכִיז מִזֶּזֶן
לְכָל-בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
הַזֵּן אֶת הַכֹּל:

נוֹדֶה לְךָ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עַל שֶׁהִנְחַלְתָּ
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ אֶרֶץ חֲמֻדָּה טוֹבָה
וּרְחָבָה, וְעַל שֶׁהוֹצַאתָנוּ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, וּפְדִיתָנוּ מִבֵּית שְׁפָחוֹת
וְעַבְדִּים, וְעַל בְּרִיתְךָ שֶׁחֲתַמְתָּ עַל לִבֵּנוּ,
וְעַל תּוֹרַתְךָ שֶׁלִּמַּדְתָּנוּ, וְעַל חֻקֶּיךָ
שֶׁהוֹדַעְתָּנוּ, וְעַל חַיִּים חֵן וְחֶסֶד שֶׁחִוֵּנְתָּנוּ,
וְעַל אֲכִילַת מִזֶּזֶן שֶׁאַתָּה זֶן וּמְפָרְנֵס אוֹתָנוּ
תָּמִיד, בְּכָל-יּוֹם וּבְכָל-עֵת וּבְכָל-שָׁעָה.

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65. Psalms 136:25

For all this, 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 God gave you.⁶⁶ Praised are You, God, for the land and for the food.

וְעַל הַכֹּל, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לְךָ
וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ, יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמִיךָ בְּפִי
כָּל־חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. כְּכַתּוּב:
וְאַכַּלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ
עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לָּךְ.
בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יי, עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל הַמָּזוֹן:

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.

Have compassion, 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, our Parent, tend us, sustain us, support us, nourish us, grant us relief from all our troubles. Let us not be dependent, 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, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמֶּךָ, וְעַל
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ, וְעַל צִיּוֹן מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ, וְעַל
מַלְכוּת בֵּית דָּוִד מְשִׁיחֶךָ, וְעַל הַבַּיִת הַגָּדוֹל
וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ שֶׁנִּקְרָא שְׁמִיךָ עָלָיו. אֱלֹהֵינוּ הוֹרֵנוּ,
רַעְנוּ זִוְגְנוּ פָּרְנִסְנוּ וּכְלַכְלָנוּ וְהַרְוִיחְנוּ, וְהַרְוִיחְנוּ
לָנוּ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מִהֶרָה מִכָּל־צָרוֹתֵינוּ, וְנָא
אַל תִּצְרִיכְנוּ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לֹא לִיַּדֵי מִתְּנַת
בְּשָׂר וְדָם וְלֹא לִיַּדֵי הַלְּוָאֲתָם. כִּי־אִם לְיָדְךָ
הַמְּלֵאָה הַפְּתוּחָה הַגְּדוּשָׁה וְהַרְחֲבָה, שְׁלֵא
נְבוֹשׁ וְלֹא נִכְלָם לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Rahem na, YHWH eloheinu, al yisra'el amecha, ve-al yerushalayim irecha,
ve-al tziyon mish'kan kevodecha, ve-al mal'chut beit david meshi'hecha,
ve-al ha-bayit ha-gadol ve-ha-kadosh she-nik'ra shim'cha alav.
Eloheinu horeinu, re'einu zuneinu par'n'seinu ve-chal'kleinu ve-har'viheinu,
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-petuhah
ha-gedushah ve-ha-rehavah, she-lo neivosh ve-lo nikaleim le-olam va-ed.

◇ Today, we should not pray that land be conquered or peoples may be subdued. We have been conquered and subdued ourselves far too often. Instead, we should pray for compassion: that God have compassion for Jerusalem, both Jerusalem the city where thousands of people reside and many diverse faiths and cultures coexist, and Jerusalem the metaphor, the hope for a whole and completed world of peace. Likewise, we pray for compassion for Zion: a land, so important and sacred to so many diverse people, that so desperately needs kindness, understanding, and hope.

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May it please You, our God, to grant us rest through Your *mitzvot*, 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 You desire, 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 comfort.

רְצֵי וְהַחֲלִיצֵנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ,
 וּבְמִצְוֹת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַגָּדוֹל
 וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה, כִּי יוֹם זֶה גָּדוֹל וְקְדוֹשׁ הוּא
 לְפָנֶיךָ, לְשַׁבֵּת בּוֹ וּלְנוּחַ בּוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה כְּמִצְוֹת
 רְצוֹנֶיךָ, וּבְרְצוֹנֶיךָ הַנִּיחִי לָנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
 שְׁלֹא תֵהְיֶה צָרָה וְיָגוֹן וְאַנְחָה בְּיוֹם
 מְנוּחָתָנוּ, וְהִרְאֵינוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּנַחֲמַת צִיּוֹן
 עִירֶךָ, וּבְבִנּוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קְדֻשָּׁךָ, כִּי אַתָּה
 הִיא מְקוֹר הַיְשׁוּעוֹת וּמְקוֹר הַנַּחֲמוֹת.

Retzi ve-haḥalitzinu, YHWH eloheinu, be-mitz'voteich, 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 lefaneich, lish'bot bo ve-lanu'ah bo be-ahavah ke-mitz'vat retzoneich, u-vi-r'tzoneich hanihi lanu, YHWH eloheinu, she-lo tehei tzarah ve-yagon ve-anahah be-yom menuḥateinu, ve-har'inu, YHWH eloheinu, be-neḥamat tziyon ireich, u-ve-vin'yan yerushalayim ir kod'sheich, ki at hi m'kor ha-yeshu'ot u-m'kor ha-neḥamot.

◇ Shabbat is referred to as גדול וקדוש *gadol ve-kadosh*, “great and holy”, twice in this paragraph. Even though Shabbat comes around every week, it is accorded a higher level of holiness than the holidays that come around once every year. When a holiday falls on a weekday, cooking, carrying, and transferring flame are permitted, but they are forbidden, along with other classes of labor, on Shabbat. Even when Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat, some liturgy is traditionally omitted because it is considered unseemly to make supplications on Shabbat. Why is the weekly Shabbat so important? The difference lies in the tradition that God personally observed the first Shabbat after doing all the work of creation, and that God continues to observe a divine Shabbat, as an example to be reflected in the observance of the Jewish people.



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, 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 זְכוּרֵנוּ וְיִזְכֹּרְנוּ וְיִזְכֹּר אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, וְיִזְכֹּר מְשִׁיחַ בְּנֵי דָוִד עַבְדְּךָ, וְיִזְכֹּר יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קֹדֶשְׁךָ, וְיִזְכֹּר כָּל-עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֶיךָ, לְפִלִּיטָה לְטוֹבָה, לְחַן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים, לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם, בְּיוֹם חַג הַמַּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. זְכַרְנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה, וּפְקֹדְנוּ בּוֹ לְבִרְכָה, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ בּוֹ לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים, וּבְדַבַּר יְשׁוּעָה וּרְחֻמִּים חוּס וְחַנּוּן, וּרְחַם עָלֵינוּ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ, כִּי אֵלֶיךָ עֵינֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל חַנוּן 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'leitha 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 eil hanun ve-raham atah.

And rebuild Jerusalem, the holy city, speedily and in our days. Praised are You, God; You rebuild Jerusalem with compassion. Amen.

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

U-v'nei yerushalayim ir ha-kodesh bi-m'heirah ve-yameinu. Baruch atah YHWH, bonei ve-rahamav yerushalayim. Amen.

◇ This *berachah* is unique in that it includes its own *Amen* response after the blessing, which is mandated by the Talmud.⁶⁷ The classical explanation is that the first three blessings of the grace after meals are *de-oraita* (ordained by the Torah) and the fourth is *de-rabanan* (rabbinic in origin), and this *Amen* marks the demarcation.

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Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, God, our Parent, 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 God has done good, God does good, and God will do good for us. God has favored us, God favors us, and God will favor us forever, with goodness, kindness, and compassion, the fullest extent of deliverance 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 מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַיָּל הוֹרְנוּ מְקוֹרְנוּ אֲדִירְנוּ בּוֹרְאֵנוּ
גּוֹאֲלֵנוּ יוֹצְרֵנוּ קְדוֹשֵׁנוּ, קְדוֹשׁ יַעֲקֹב.
רוֹעֵנוּ רוּעָה יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַמֶּלֶךְ הַטוֹב
וְהַמְטִיב לְכָל, שְׂבִיבֵי-יוֹם וְיוֹם הוּא
הַטִּיב, הוּא מְטִיב, הוּא יִיטִיב לָנוּ.
הוּא גְמָלְנוּ, הוּא גּוֹמְלָנוּ, הוּא יְגַמְלָנוּ
לְעַד, לְחַן וְלַחֶסֶד וְלִרְחָמִים, וְלִרוּחַ,
הַצֵּלָה וְהַצְלָחָה, בְּרַכָּה וְיִשׁוּעָה, נְחֵמָה,
פְּרִיָסָה וְכַלְכָּלָה, וְרַחֲמִים וְחַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם
וְכָל-טוֹב, וּמְכַל־טוֹב לְעוֹלָם אֵל יַחֲסֶרְנוּ:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, ha-el horeinu m'koreinu adireinu boreinu go'aleinu yotz'reinu kedosheinu, kedosh ya'akov. Ro'einu ro'ei yisra'el, ha-melech ha-tov ve-ha-mei'tiv la-kol, she-be-chol yom va-yom hu heitiv, hu meitiv, hu yeitiv lanu. Hu gemalanu, hu gom'leinu, hu yig'maleinu la-ad, le-hein u-le-hesed u-le-rah'amim, u-le-revah, hatzalah ve-hatz'lahah, berachah vi-y'shu'ah, neh'amah, parnasah ve-chal'kalah, ve-rah'amim 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 אִתָּנוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

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

May the Merciful One be blessed in the heavens and the earth.

הַרְחֵמְנָהּ, הִיא תִתְבָּרַךְ בַּשָּׁמַיִם 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,
וְיִתְפָּאֵר בָּנוּ לְעַד וְלִנְצַח נְצַחִים, וְיִתְהַדָּר
בָּנוּ לְעַד וְלְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים:

Ha-rahaman, hu yish'tabah 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.

הַרְחַמְנָה, 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 hatred from all inhabitants of the world.

הַרְחַמְנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁבֹּר עֲלֵנוּ מֵעַל צְוֹאֲרֵנוּ,
וְיַסִּיר עַל שְׂנְאָה מֵעַל כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל:

Ha-rah'man, hu yish'bor uleinu me-al tzavareinu, ve-yasir ol sin'ah 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.

הַרְחַמְנָה, הִיא תִשְׁלַח לָנוּ בְּרָכָה מְרֻבָּה
בְּבַיִת הַזֶּה, וְעַל שֻׁלְחָן 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.

הַרְחַמְנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ אֶת אֱלִיָּהוּ
הַנָּבִיא, זְכוּר לְטוֹב, וְיַבְשֹׁר לָנוּ בְּשׂוֹרוֹת
טוֹבוֹת, יְשׁוּעוֹת וְנַחֲמוֹת:

Ha-rah'man, hu yish'lah lanu et eliyahu ha-navi, zachur la-tov, vi-y'vaser lanu besorot tovot, yeshu'ot ve-nehamot.

May the Merciful One bless... (and...)

הַרְחַמְנָה, הִיא תְּבָרֵךְ אֶת... (וְאֶת...)

- my father, my teacher, (guardian of this house),

- אָבִי מוֹרִי (בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה),

- my mother, my teacher, (guardian of this house),

- אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי (בְּעַלַת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה),

- my partner,

- בְּנִזְוִגִי/בַת־זִוּגִי,

- my husband/wife,

- בְּעָלִי/אִשְׁתִּי,

- my/our children/household,

- זְרַעִי/זְרַעְנוּ/בֵּיתִי/בֵּיתֵנוּ,

- my/our entire family/families,

- כָּל־מִשְׁפַּחְתִּי/כָּל־מִשְׁפַּחְתֵּנוּ,

- all who partook of this meal,

- כָּל־הַמְּסַבִּים כְּאֵן,

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'ho'teinu,
- kol ha-mesubim kan,

us and all that is ours, as our forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were blessed: “with all”⁶⁸, “from all”⁶⁹, “all”⁷⁰, and our foremothers Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Rachel, were blessed: “with goodness”⁷¹, “goodly”⁷², “good”⁷³, “good”⁷⁴, and our foremothers Bilhah and Zilpah were blessed: “I have prevailed”⁷⁵, “I am enriched”⁷⁶—so may God bless us all together with perfect blessing. And let us say: Amen.

אוֹתָנוּ וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לָנוּ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְבָּרַכְנוּ
 אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב: בְּכֹל,
 מִכָּל, כָּל, וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רִבְקָה לֵאָה
 וְרָחֵל: הֵיטִיב, טוֹבַת, טוֹב, טוֹב,
 וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ בִּלְהָה וְזִלְפָה: יָכַלְתִּי,
 אֲשֶׁרוֹנִי—כִּן תִּבְרַךְ אוֹתָנוּ כְּלָנוּ יַחַד
 בְּבִרְכָה שְׁלֵמָה. וְנֹאמַר: אָמֵן:

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 ve-raheil: heitiv, tovat, tov, tov, ve-imoteinu bil'hah ve-zil'pah: yachol'ti, ish'runi—kein tevareich otanu kulanu yahad bi-v'rachah sh'leimah. Ve-nomar: Amen.

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 God, 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.

בְּמֵרוֹם יִלְמְדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם וְעֲלֵינוּ זְכוּת שְׂתֵהֵא
 לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת שְׁלוֹם. וְנִשְׂא בְּרַכָּה מֵאֵת יי
 וְצַדִּיקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעָנוּ. וְנִמְצָא חֵן וְשִׂכָּל
 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-elohei yish'einu. Ve-nim'tza hein ve-seichel tov be-einei elohim ve-adam.

On Shabbat:

May the Merciful One let us inherit a Shabbat which is a day of complete rest, for eternal life.

הֶרְחַמְנָה, הִיא תִּנְחִילָנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוּ שְׁבֵת
 וּמְנוּחָה, לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָמִים:

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



68. Genesis 24:1
 69. Genesis 27:33
 70. Genesis 33:11
 71. Genesis 12:16
 72. Genesis 24:16
 73. Genesis 29:19
 74. Genesis 30:20
 75. Genesis 30:8
 76. Genesis 30:13

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

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִנְחִילֵנוּ יוֹם שְׂכָלוֹ טוֹב:

Ha-rahāman, hu yan'ḥileinu yom she-kulo tov.

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

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

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

May the Merciful One wisely and fully liberate all of creation, and thereby enable us to reach our own truths, and to recognize the image of God in each other.

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁחַרֵּר אֶת-כָּל-הַבְּרִיאוֹת
בְּבִינָהּ וּבְשִׁלְמוֹת, וְיִתֵּן בְּכַחֲנוּ לְגִלוֹת
בְּעֲצָמֵנוּ, וְלִהְיֵר בְּצִלְם אֱלֹהִים:

Ha-rahāman, hu yeshah'reir et kol ha-b'ri'ot be-vinah u-vi-sh'leimut, vi-y'tein be-koḥeinu legalot be-atz'meinu, u-lehakir be-tzelem elohim.

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.

הַרְחֵמְנָהּ, הִיא תְּבָרֵךְ אֶת אֶחָיו
וְאֶחְיוֹתָיו בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנִּתְּוֹנִים בְּצָרָה,
וְתוֹצִיאֵם מֵאֲפֶלֶה לְאוֹרָה:

Ha-rah'manah, hi tevareich et aḥeinu ve-aḥ'yoteinu beit yisra'el ha-n'tunim be-tzarah, va-totzi'eim me-afeilah le-orah.

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

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִזְכֵּנוּ לְיָמוֹת 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, and performs kindness for God's anointed one David and his descendants forever.⁷⁷ May the One who makes peace in the heavens make peace over us and over the whole world, and let us say: Amen.

מִגְדוֹל יְשׁוּעוֹת מְלֹכוֹ וְעֵשֶׂה חֶסֶד לְמֹשִׁיחוֹ
לְדָוִד וּלְזֶרְעוֹ עַד-עוֹלָם. עֵשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם
בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל
כָּל-הָעוֹלָם, וְאָמְרוּ: 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 ha-olam, ve-im'ru: amen.

⇐

77. 2 Samuel 22:51 (cf. Psalms 18:51)

Revere God, you holy people, for there is no deprivation for those who revere God. Lions may be ravenous, but those who seek out God will not lack goodness.⁷⁸ Give thanks to God, for God is good; God's lovingkindness endures forever.⁷⁹ God, You open Your hand, and provide for the desires of every living thing.⁸⁰ Blessed is one who trusts in God; God is their security.⁸¹ I have been young and I have aged, but I have never seen righteous people abandoning those seeking bread.⁸² God will grant strength to God's people; God will bless God's people with peace.⁸³

יִרְאוּ אֶת־יְיָ קְדוֹשֵׁיֶיךָ, כִּי אֵין מַחְסוֹר
 לִירְאֵיֶיךָ. כְּפִירִים רָשׁוּ וְרַעֲבוּ, וְדוֹרְשֵׁי יְיָ
 לֹא יַחְסְרוּ כָּל־טוֹב. הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ בִּי־טוֹבָה,
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדְךָ. פּוֹתַחַת אֶת־יָדְךָ,
 וּמִשְׁבִּיעָה לְכָל־חַי רַצּוֹן. בְּרוּךְ הַגִּבּוֹר
 אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בֵּינֵי, וְהִיתָה יְיָ מִבְּטָחוֹ. נִגְעַר
 הָיִיתִי, גַּם זָקַנְתִּי, וְלֹא רָאִיתִי צְדִיקוֹת
 שְׁעִזְבוּ מִבְּקֵשֵׁי לֶחֶם. יְיָ עֹז לְעַמָּה תַתֵּן,
 יְיָ תִבְרַךְ אֶת עַמִּיָּךְ 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.
 Potaht et yadech, u-mas'bi'ah le-chol hai ratzon.
 Baruch ha-gever asher yiv'tah ba-YHWH, ve-hay'tah YHWH miv'tahoh.
 Na'ar hayiti, gam zakan'ti, ve-lo ra'iti tzadikot she-az'vu mevak'shei lahem.
 YHWH oz le-amah titein, YHWH tevarech et amehah va-shalom.

ברכת המזון בקיצור Alternative blessing after the meal

Fill the third cup. The following Aramaic blessing may be recited as an alternative to the full traditional blessings after the meal. This practice is ancient, going back to the Talmud.⁸⁴

Praised be the Merciful One, Guide of the universe, Master of this bread. בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָא, מְלִכָא דְעֵלְמָא,
 מְרִיָּה 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.⁸⁵

78. Psalms 34:10–11
 79. Psalms 136:1
 80. Psalms 145:16
 81. Jeremiah 17:7
 82. Based on Psalms 37:25
 83. Psalms 29:11
 84. Babylonian Talmud, *Berachot* 40b
 85. Interpretive translation and song by Rabbi Shefa Gold

כוס שלישי — The third cup

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Drink the third cup while reclining.

זכרון — Remembrance

<p>◇ Oppression is not something that happened long ago such that now we are completely free of it. Our <i>seder</i> turns somber for a moment. Who is not at our <i>seder</i> 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.</p>	<p>◇ It may seem odd to have a set of gloomy reflections on oppression as a prelude to <i>Hallel</i>, the psalms and songs of praise. 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 <i>halleluyah</i>—"Praise God!"—must not silence the cries of הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא <i>hoshi'ana</i>—"Bring salvation now!"</p>
<p>◇ Jews living under the violence of the Crusades in the Middle Ages added prayers at this point in the <i>seder</i> for God to pour out divine wrath. Many <i>Haggadot</i>, even going back to medieval times, sound a note of hope and trust rather than spite and enmity.</p>	<p>◇ As individuals and communities who commit ourselves to social justice, we must hope and work for a future in which justice is not retributive but restorative, a future in which the police state is curtailed and prisons can be a thing of the past. This is long and difficult work, but it must be our sacred calling.</p>

The following pages contain suggestions of songs and readings. Participants may wish to contribute their own suitable materials.

Pour out Your spirit upon all flesh,
and let all nations come together in love
and fellowship, peace and true
equality.⁸⁶

שְׁפֹךְ רוּחְךָ עַל-כָּל-בֶּשֶׂר, וַיָּבֵאוּ כָּל-הָעַמִּים
יחד בְּאַהֲבָה וְאַחֻוּהָ, בְּשָׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת:

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

You shall not commit a wrong against a
stranger, nor oppress them, for you were
strangers in the land of Egypt.⁸⁷

וְגֵר לֹא-תוֹנֶה וְלֹא תִלְחָצְנֶנּוּ, כִּי-גֵרִים
הֵייתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

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

86. Based on a meditation by Rabbi Leopold Stein, *Seder Ha-Avodah* (Mannheim, Germany, 1882)

87. Exodus 22:20

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.⁸⁸

לֹא־יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל־גּוֹי חֶרֶב,
לֹא־יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה:

Lo yisa goi el goi herev, lo yil'medu od mil'hamah.

May the One who makes peace on high
grant peace over us and over the world.
And let us say: Amen.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמֵיהָ, הִיא תַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם
עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל־הָעוֹלָם, וְאַמְרוּ: אָמֵן:
עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם
עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל־הָעוֹלָם וְאַמְרוּ: אָמֵן:

Osah shalom bi-m'romehah, hi ta'aseh shalom aleinu, ve-al kol ha-olam,
ve-im'ru: Amen.

Oseh shalom bi-m'romav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu, ve-al kol ha-olam,
ve-im'ru: Amen.

פֶּאַרְטִיזאַנער לִיד — The partisans' song

זאָג ניט קיין מאָל, אז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,
כאָטש הימלען בלייענע פֿאַרשטעלן בלויע טעג.
קומען וועט נאָך אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה –
ס'וועט אַ פּוּיק טאָן אונדזער טראָט: מיר זיינען דאָ!
ס'וועט די מאָרגן-זון באַגילדן אונדז דעם היינט,
און דער נעכטן וועט פֿאַרשווינדן מיטן פֿיינט,
נאָר אויב פֿאַרזאַמען וועט די זון אין דעם קאַיאָך –
ווי אַ פֿאַראַל זאָל גיין דאָס ליד פֿון דור צו דור.

Zog nit keyn mol, az du geyst dem letstn veg,
khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg.
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho,
s'vet a poyk ton undzer trot: mir zaynen do!
S'vet di morgn-zun bagildn undz dem haynt,
Un der nekhtn vet farshvindn mitn faynt,
Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun un der kayor-
Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor.

Never say this is the final road for you,
Though leaden skies may cover over days of blue.
As the hour that we longed for is so near,
Our step beats out the message: we are here!

We'll have the morning sun to set our day aglow;
Our evil yesterdays shall vanish with the foe.
But if the time is long before the sun appears,
then let this song go like a signal through the years.⁸⁹

88. Isaiah 2:4c

89. Hirsh Glick, an inhabitant of the Vilna Ghetto, 1943

“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!”⁹⁰

Shimon Grilius was held in a Soviet labor camp for five years for the “crime” of being a Jew who wanted to leave the country. He wrote in his prison diary:

“We held the *seder* in a hurry, as in the time of the exodus from Egypt, since the camp authorities prohibited the holding of a *seder*. Instead of *maror*, we ate slices of onion, and for *zero’a* we used burnt soup cubes. We read from one *Haggadah*, the only copy we had, and when we reached *koreich* we had nothing to put between the *matzot*. Then Yosif Mendelevich said, ‘We do not need a symbol of our suffering. We have real suffering and we shall put that between the *matzot*.’”

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

This year even the charoses tastes bitter,
salt water over everything. Enough

rejoicing at plagues—as though God
uproots olive groves and smites
first-born sons. Let the shank bone signify
orphaned arms and legs.
Let the roasted egg signify
eyes blinded by rubber bullets.
Let the matzo signify peace
without justice: fragile and tasteless.

Keep the door open all night for Elijah.
He has been wandering
since seven tanks swallowed his house in Gaza.⁹¹

We call to mind today young and old, of every race, faith, and gender experience,
who have died by violence. We remember those who have died because they would
not hide, or did not pass, or did pass, or stood too proud. Today we name them: the
reluctant activist, the fiery hurler of heels, the warrior for quiet truth, the one whom
no one really knew.

As many as we can name, there are thousands more whom we cannot, and for
whom no *Kaddish* may have been said. We mourn their senseless deaths, and give
thanks for their lives, for their teaching, and for the brief glow of each holy flame.
We pray for the strength to carry on their legacy of vision, bravery, and love.

And as we remember them, we remember with them the thousands more who have
taken their own lives. We pray for resolve to root out the injustice, ignorance, and
cruelty that grow despair. We pray, God, that those who perpetrate hate and violence
will speedily come to understand that Your creation has many faces, many genders,
and many holy expressions.

Blessed are they who have allowed their divine image to shine in the world. Blessed
are You, God, in whom no light is extinguished.⁹²

I believe with perfect faith in the coming of
the Messiah, even though he tarries, but
nevertheless I wait for him every day.⁹³

אָנִי מְאֲמִין בְּאַמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה בְּבִיאת
הַמָּשִׁיחַ, וְאֵף עַל פִּי שְׂיִתְמַהֲמָה,
עַם-כְּלֵזָה אַחְכָּה 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.

91. Susan Eisenberg, “Seder Plate”

92. Rabbi Reuben Zellman, “For Transgender Day of Remembrance”, *Siddur Sha'ar Zahav*

93. Based on Maimonides' commentary to Mishnah *Sanhedrin* chapter 10

Fill the fourth cup.

The cup of Elijah is filled with wine and placed beside Miriam's cup.

The door is opened, and we sing:

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

אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַתְּשִׁבִי,
אֱלִיָּהוּ, אֱלִיָּהוּ, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי,
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ יָבֵא אֱלֵינוּ,
עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד, עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד.

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

מִרְיָם הַנָּבִיאָה, עֹז וְזִמְרָה בְיָדָהּ,
מִרְיָם תִּרְקֹד אֲתָנוּ לְהַגְדִּיל זִמְרַת עוֹלָם,
מִרְיָם תִּרְקֹד אֲתָנוּ לְתַקֵּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם,
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ 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 lehag'dil zim'rat olam,
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.

The door is closed.

◇ We welcome Elijah the Prophet to our *seder*, the traditional herald of salvation and deliverance. Elijah is also welcomed at other Jewish occasions of both celebration and comfort, such as at the end of every Shabbat at *Havdalah*. Rabbi Leila Gal Berner added a second verse to this song, welcoming Miriam the prophet, sister of Moses and Aaron, whose cup of water has rested on our table, guiding us through the wilderness, as it has for thousands of years.

◇ Rabbi Naftali of Ropshitz, a Hasidic leader at the turn of the 19th century, instituted the following custom: rather than filling Elijah's cup directly from the wine bottle, the cup is passed around 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.

הלל

Hallel — Psalms of praise

תהלים קטו — Psalm 115

Not for us, God, 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; the One who does
 whatever God 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 God; God is their aid
 and their protector.
 The house of Aaron trusts in God; God is
 their aid and their protector.
 Those who revere God trust in God; God is
 their aid and their protector.

לֹא לָנוּ יי לֹא לָנוּ כִּי־לְשִׁמְךָ תֵּן כְּבוֹד
 עַל־חַסְדֶּךָ עַל־אַמְתֶּךָ:
 לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֵי־הָנָא אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:
 וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּשֵׁמִים כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־חָפֵץ עָשָׂה:
 עֲצִבְיָהֶם כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם:
 פֶּה־לָהֶם וְלֹא יִדְבְּרוּ
 עֵינַיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְאוּ:
 אַזְנוֹתֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ
 אָף לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְחִיחוּ:
 יָדֵיהֶם | וְלֹא יִמְשִׁיחוּ
 רַגְלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִהְלְכוּ
 לֹא־יִהְיוּ בְּגִרְוֹנָם:
 כְּמוֹתָם יֵהיוּ עֹשִׂיהֶם
 כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־בָּטְחָ בָהֶם:
 יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּטַח בְּיְיָ עֲזָרָם וּמַגֵּנָם הוּא:
 בֵּית אַהֲרֹן בָּטְחוּ בְּיְיָ עֲזָרָם וּמַגֵּנָם הוּא:
 יִרְאֵי יי בָּטְחוּ בְּיְיָ עֲזָרָם וּמַגֵּנָם הוּא:

Lo lanu YHWH, lo lanu, ki le-shim'cha tein kavod
 al ḥas'decha ve-al amitecha.

Lamah yom'ru ha-goyim ayei na eloheihem,
 ve-elohainu va-shamayim, kol asher ḥafeitz 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.

Kemohem yihiyu oseihem, kol asher bote'aḥ bahem.

Yisra'el betah ba-YHWH, 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.



May God who remembers us bless us!
 May God bless the House of Israel,
 may God bless the House of Aaron.
 May God bless all those who revere God,
 the small along with the great.
 God will increase you greatly,
 you and your offspring.
 Blessed be you by God,
 who made heaven and earth.
 Heaven belongs to God,
 but the earth God 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 זְכָרְנוּ יְבָרֵךְ
 יְבָרֵךְ אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
 יְבָרֵךְ אֶת־בֵּית אַהֲרֹן:
 יְבָרֵךְ יְרֵאֵי יְיָ
 הַקְּטָנִים עַם־הַגְּדֹלִים:
 יִסַּף יְיָ עֲלֵיכֶם
 עֲלֵיכֶם וְעַל־בְּנֵיכֶם:
 בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם לַיְיָ
 עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:
 הַשָּׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם לַיְיָ
 וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לַבְּנֵי־אָדָם:
 לֹא הַמַּתִּים יְהַלְלוּ־יָהּ
 וְלֹא כָל־יִרְדֵי דוּמָה:
 וְאַנְחֵנוּ | נְבָרֵךְ יְיָ
 מִמֶּתָה וְעַד־עוֹלָם
 הַלְלוּ־יָהּ:

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.

◇ The *Maharit* (Rabbi Joseph di Trani), who lived in Greece in the early seventeenth century, points out the distinction between “heaven” and “earth” in this psalm: why should the heavens be God’s province but the earth that of mortals? He suggests that the difference is one of free will and volition. “Heaven belongs to God” because the objects that inhabit the heavens have no control over themselves: the planets follow their course, the sun and moon rise and set, the stars are beyond our reach. “But the earth God has given to mortals” because we have the freedom to alter our own destinies and to choose our own roles in life.

תהלים קטו — Psalm 116

I love that God should listen to my voice
and to my supplication.

God inclines God's ear towards me,
and I call upon God 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 God's Name: "Deliver
my soul, God!"

God is kind and just, our God
demonstrates mercy.

God preserves the meek; I was ignoble,
but God redeemed me.

Return my soul to my rest; God 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 God 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."

Ahav'ti ki yish'ma YHWH et koli taḥanunai.

Ki hitah oz'no li u-v'yamai ek'ra.

Afafuni ḥev'lei mavet, u-mi-tzarei she'ol metza'uni, tzarah ve-yagon em'tza.

U-ve-shem YHWH ek'ra, ana YHWH mal'tah naf'shi.

Ḥanun YHWH ve-tzadik, ve-eloheinu meraḥeim.

Shomer peta'im YHWH, daloti ve-li yehoshi'a.

Shuvi naf'shi li-m'nuḥaichi, ki YHWH gamal alaichi.

Ki ḥilatz'ta naf'shi mi-mavet, et eini min dim'ah, et rag'li mi-deḥi.

Et'haleich lif'nei YHWH ba-artzot ha-ḥayim.

He'emanti ki adabeir, ani aniti me'od.

Ani amar'ti be-ḥof'zi, kol ha-adam kozeiv.

אָהַבְתִּי כִּי־יִשְׁמַע | יי אֶת־קוֹלִי תַחֲנוּנָי:

כִּי־הִטָּה אָזְנוֹ לִי וּבִימִי אֶקְרָא:

אֶפְפוּנִי | חַבְלֵי־מוֹת וּמַצְרֵי שְׂאוֹל מִצְאוּנִי

צָרָה וַיְגוֹן אִמְצָא:

וּבִשְׁמִי אֶקְרָא אָנָּה יי מַלְטָה נַפְשִׁי:

חַנּוּן יי וְצַדִּיק וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵרַחֵם:

שׁוֹמֵר פְּתָאִים יי דְּלֹתֵי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ:

שׁוּבֵי נַפְשִׁי לְמִנוּחֵיכִי כִּי־יִי גַמַל עָלַיְכִי:

כִּי חִלַצְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִמוֹת אֶת־עֵינַי מִן־דְּמִמָּה

אֶת־רַגְלִי מִדְּחִי:

אֶתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יי בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים:

הַאֲמַנְתִּי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר אָנֹכִי עֲנִיתִי מְאֹד:

אָנֹכִי אֶמְרַתִּי בַחֲפוּז כָּל־הָאָדָם כֹּזֵב:

◇ What does it mean that the Psalmist attributes deceitfulness to every human being, or to humanity in general? We humans surely have a lot to answer for with regards to how we have treated the world we inhabit: both the other humans and the other creatures whom we must live among and with whom we must share a world, but also the world itself. But in our haste, we may account humanity itself as deceitful, rather than recognize the potential for learning, growth, and sincerity in individual humans, and therefore in the collective of humanity.



How can I repay God for the bounty
 God has heaped upon me?
 I raise the cup of deliverance, and call
 upon the Name of God.
 I will fulfill my vow to God, truly, in the
 presence of all God's people.
 God does not regard the death of those
 who love God lightly.
 I beseech You, God, 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 God by name.
 I will fulfill my vow to God, truly, in the
 presence of all God's people,
 in the courtyards of the house of God,
 in your midst, O Jerusalem.

Halleluyah!

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'bah 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.

מֵה־אָשִׁיב לַיהוָה כֹּל־תַּגְּמוּלוֹהִי עָלַי:
 כּוֹס־יְשׁוּעוֹת אֶשָּׂא וּבְשֵׁם יְיָ אֶקְרָא:
 נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשַׁלֵּם נִגְדָה־נָּא לְכָל־עַמּוֹ:
 יִקָּר בְּעֵינַי יְיָ הַמּוֹתֶה לְחַסִּדָּיו:
 אָנָּה יְיָ כִּי־אֲנִי עֲבָדְךָ
 אֲנִי־עֲבָדְךָ בְּוַאֲמַתְךָ
 פְּתַחַת לְמוֹסְרֵי:
 לְךָ־אֲזַבֵּחַ זֶבַח תּוֹדָה וּבְשֵׁם יְיָ אֶקְרָא:
 נִדְרֵי לַיהוָה אֲשַׁלֵּם נִגְדָה־נָּא לְכָל־עַמּוֹ:
 בְּחֲצֵרוֹת | בֵּית יְיָ בְּתוֹכִי יְרוּשָׁלַם
 הַלְלוּ־יָהּ:

תהלים קיז — Psalm 117

Praise God, all you nations, extol God,
 all you peoples!
 For God's love is great upon us, and the
 truth of God is eternal.

Halleluyah!

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

הַלְלוּ אֶת־יְיָ כָּל־גּוֹיִם שִׁבְחוּהוּ כָּל־הָאֻמִּים:
 כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ | חַסְדּוֹ וְאֱמֶתֵי לְעוֹלָם
 הַלְלוּ־יָהּ:

◇ The two verses of this psalm constitute the shortest chapter in all of Scripture. Why should the non-Jewish nations and peoples praise the God of the people Israel? One of our tasks is to be a “light to the nations”, in the words of the prophet.⁹⁴ If we let God's love be “great upon us”, our light shine will forth as an example; by doing the work of holiness in the world, the glory of God will be reflected in that light.

94. Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, 60:3

תהלים קיח — Psalm 118

Give thanks to God, for God is good;

God's kindness endures forever.

Let now Israel say:

“God's kindness endures forever.”

Let now the house of Aaron say:

“God's kindness endures forever.”

Let now those who revere God say:

“God's kindness endures forever.”

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.

הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:

יֹאמְרוּנָא יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:

יֹאמְרוּנָא בֵּית־אַהֲרֹן כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:

יֹאמְרוּנָא יְרֵאֵי יְיָ כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:

I have called upon God from the straits;

God answered me with great abundance.

God is for me; I do not fear anything that mortals can do to me.

God is for me as my aid; I shall gaze upon all who hate me.

Better to trust in God than trust in mortals;

better to trust in God than trust in princes.

All the nations surround me, but by God's Name I will endure them.

They surround me, they surround me, but by God's Name I will endure them.

They surround me like bees, they are quenched as the fire of thorns, but by God's Name I will endure them.

I was hurt to the point of falling, but God helped me.

God is my strength and song; God has become my deliverance.

Min ha-meitzar karati yah, anani va-mer'ḥav yah.

YHWH li lo ira, mah ya'aseh li adam.

YHWH li be-oz'rai, va-ani er'eh ve-son'ai.

Tov laḥasot be-YHWH mi-b'to'ah ba-adam.

Tov laḥasot 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.

Sabuni chi-d'vorim, do'achu ke-eish kotzim, be-sheim YHWH ki amilam.

Daḥoh deḥitani lin'pol, va-YHWH azarani.

Ozi ve-zim'rat yah, va-yehi li li-y'shu'ah.

מִזְמַחַצְרֵי קָרָאתִי יְהוָה עֲנֵנִי בְמִרְחַב יְהוָה:

יְיָ לִי לֹא אִירָא מִהֵי־עַשָׂה לִי אָדָם:

יְיָ לִי בְעֲזָרִי וְאֲנִי אֲרָאָה בְשׂוֹנְאֵי:

טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בַּיהוָה מִבְּטֹחַ בְּאָדָם:

טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בַּיהוָה מִבְּטֹחַ בְּגִדִיבִים:

כָּל־גּוֹיִם סָבְבוּנִי בְשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם:

סָבְבוּנִי גַם־סָבְבוּנִי בְשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם:

סָבְבוּנִי כְדַבּוּרֵים דְּעָכוּ כְּאֵשׁ קוֹצִים

בְשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם:

דַּחַח דְּחִיתַנִּי לְנַפְלִי וַיְיָ עֲזָרַנִּי:

עֲזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה וַיְהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה:

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

קוֹל | רִנָּה וַיִּשְׁמְעָה בְּאֹהֲלֵי צְדִיקִים
 יָמִין יְיָ עָשָׂה חֵיל:
 יָמִין יְיָ רֹמְמָה יָמִין יְיָ עָשָׂה חֵיל:
 לֹא-אֲמוֹת בִּי-אֲחִיהַּ
 וְאֶסְפֹּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה:
 יִסֹּר יִסְרֵנִי יְהוָה וְלִמּוֹת לֹא נִתְּנָנִי:
 פָּתַח-לִי שַׁעֲרֵי-צֶדֶק
 אֲבֹאֲבָם אֹדְהָ יְהוָה:
 זֶה-הַשַּׁעַר לִי 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.

By tradition, the last nine verses of Psalm 118 are recited twice. Here, they are printed in both masculine and feminine.

I praise You, for You answered me,
 and You have been my deliverance.
 The stone that the builders rejected
 has become the cornerstone.
 This is God's doing;
 it is wondrous to us.
 This is the day that God has made;
 let us rejoice and celebrate on it.

אֹדְדָךְ כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי וַתְּהִי-לִי לִישׁוּעָה:
 (אֹדְדָךְ כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי, וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה):
 אֶבֶן מְאֻסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים הִיתָה לְרֹאשׁ פִּנָּה:
 (אֶבֶן מְאֻסוֹ הַבּוֹנוֹת הִיתָה לְרֹאשׁ פִּנָּה):
 מַאֲת יְיָ הִיתָה זֹאת הִיא נִפְלְאוֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ:
 (מַאֲת יְיָ הִיתָה זֹאת, הִיא נִפְלְאוֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ):
 זֶה-הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְיָ נִגְיָלָה וְנִשְׁמְחָה בוֹ:
 (זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂתָה יְיָ נִגְיָלָה וְנִשְׁמְחָה בוֹ):

Odecha ki anitani, va-tehi li li-y'shuah.

(Odeich ki anitini, va-tehi li li-y'shuah.)

Even ma'asu ha-bonim, hay'tah le-rosh pinah.

(Even ma'ashu ha-bonot, hay'tah le-rosh pinah.)

Me-eit YHWH hay'tah zot, hi nif'lat be-eineinu.

(Me-eit YHWH hay'tah zot, hi nif'lat be-eineinu.)

Zeh ha-yom asah YHWH, nagilah ve-nis'mehah vo.

(Zeh ha-yom as'tah YHWH, nagilah ve-nis'mehah vo.)

Please, God, deliver us now!

(אָנָּה יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעֵי נָא)

אָנָּה יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא

Please, God, grant us success now!

(אָנָּה יְיָ הַצְּלִיחֵי נָא)

אָנָּה יְיָ הַצְּלִיחָה נָא

Ana YHWH hoshi'a na (Ana YHWH hoshi'a na)

Ana YHWH hatz'lihah na (Ana YHWH hatz'lihi na.)

Blessed is one who comes in God's Name,
 we bless you from the House of God.
 God is Divine; God 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 God, for God is good,
 God's lovingkindness endures forever.

בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם יי בְּרַכְנוֹכֶם מִבֵּית יי:
 (בְּרוּכָה הַבָּאָה בְּשֵׁם יי,
 בְּרַכְנוּכֶן מִבֵּית יי):
 אַל | יי וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעֵבְתֵימ
 עַד-קַרְנֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:
 (אֱלֹהֵי יי וַתֵּאָר לָנוּ, אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעֵבְתֵימ
 עַד קַרְנֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ):
 אֱלֵי אַתָּה וְאוֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ:
 (אֱלֹתֵי אַתָּ וְאוֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ):
 הוֹדוּ לַיי בִּי-טוֹב בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
 (הוֹדוּ לַיי בִּי טוֹבָה, בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדָּה):

Baruch ha-ba be-sheim YHWH, beirach'nuchem mi-beit YHWH.

(B'ruchah ha-ba'ah be-sheim YHWH, beirach'nuchen mi-beit YHWH.)

Eil YHWH va-ya'er lanu, is'ru ḥag ba-avotim, ad kar'not ha-miz'bei'ah.

(Eilah YHWH va-ta'er lanu, is'ru ḥag ba-avotim, ad kar'not ha-miz'bei'ah.)

Eli atah ve-odeka, elohai arom'meka.

(Eilati at ve-odeich, elohai aromemeich.)

Hodu la-YHWH ki tov, ki le-olam ḥas'do.

(Hodu la-YHWH ki tovah, ki le-olam ḥas'dah.)

All Your works, our God, will praise You.
 Your pious ones, the righteous who do
 Your will, and all the house of Israel, will
 jubilantly thank, bless, acclaim, exalt,
 sanctify, and declare praises to Your
 name, our God. For to You it is good to
 give thanks, and about Your name it is
 good to sing, for You are God, forever
 and ever.

יִהְיֶה לְלוֹד יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְחֲסִידוֹתֶיךָ
 צְדִיקוֹת עוֹשׂוֹת רְצוֹנָךָ, וְכָל-עַמְּךָ בֵּית
 יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרָנָה יוֹדוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ, וַיִּשְׁבְּחוּ
 וַיְפָאֲרוּ, וַיְרוֹמְמוּ וַיַּעֲרִיצוּ, וַיְקַדְּשׁוּ וַיְהַלְלוּ
 אֶת-שְׁמֶךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. כִּי לְךָ טוֹב לְהוֹדוֹת
 וּלְשִׁמְךָ נְאֻם לְזִמְרָה, בִּי מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד עוֹלָם
 אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי:

Yehaleluch YHWH eloheinu kol ma'asayich, va-ḥasidoteich tzadikot osot
 retzoneich, ve-chol ameich beit yisra'el be-rinah yodu vi-y'var'chu, vi-y'shab'hu
 vi-y'fa'aru, vi-y'romemu ve-ya'aritzu, ve-yak'dishu vi-y'halelu et sh'meich
 eloheinu. Ki lach tov lehodot u-li-sh'meich na'eh lezameir, ki me-olam ve-ad
 olam at eilah.

תהלים קכ — Psalm 136

Praise God, for God is good!	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב
Praise the God of Gods,	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	הוֹדוּ לְאֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים
praise the Sovereign of Sovereigns.	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	הוֹדוּ לְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים
God creates great wonders alone.	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	לַעֲשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת לְבַדּוֹ
God makes the skies with wisdom.	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	לַעֲשֵׂה הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּתוּבוֹנָה
God sets earth on its foundation.	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	לְרַקַּע הָאָרֶץ עַל־הַמַּיִם
God makes great lights:	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	לַעֲשֵׂה אוֹרִים גְּדוֹלִים
the sun to rule by day;	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	אֶת־הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת בַּיּוֹם
the moon and stars to rule by night.	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	אֶת־הַיָּרֵחַ וְכּוֹכְבֵים לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת בַּלַּיְלָה
God smote the firstborn of Egypt,	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	לְמַכּוֹת מִצְרַיִם בְּבִכּוֹרֵיהֶם
and took Israel from their midst,	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	וַיּוֹצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם
by a strong hand and a mighty arm.	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	בְּיָד חֲזָקָה וּבְזְרוֹעַ נְטוּיָה
God split the Sea of Reeds in twain,	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	לְגַזֵּר יַם־סוּף לְגִזְרִים
and guided Israel through its waves,	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	וְהַעֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹכוֹ
and cast Pharaoh and his army in,	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	וְנָעַר פְּרַעְוֹה וְחִילוֹ בַיַּם־סוּף
and led the people in the wilderness.	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	לְמוֹלִיד עַמּוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר
God struck mighty kings,	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	לְמַכּוֹת מְלָכִים גְּדוֹלִים
and smote powerful tyrants:	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	וַיַּהֲרֹג מְלָכִים אֲדִירִים
Sihon king of the Amorites,	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	לְסִיחּוֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֲמֹרִי
and Og king of Bashan.	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	וּלְעוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן
God gave their land as an legacy	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	וְנָתַן אֶרֶץ לְנַחֲלָה
to God's people Israel.	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	נַחֲלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדּוֹ
God remembered us in our misery,	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	שֶׁבִשְׁפָּלָנוּ זָכַר לָנוּ
and redeemed us from our enemies.	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	וַיַּפְּרֹקֵנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ
God grants food to all flesh;	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	נָתַן לֶחֶם לְכָל־בֶּשָׂר
Praise the God of heaven.	בִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסָדוֹ:	הוֹדוּ לְאֵל הַשָּׁמַיִם

—for God's kindness endures forever!

Hodu la-YHWH ki tov,	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Hodu le-elohei ha-elohim,	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Hodu la-adonei ha-adonim,	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Le-oseh nif'la'ot gedolot levado	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Le-oseh ha-shamayim bi-t'nuvah	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Le-rokah ha-aretz al ha-mayim	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Le-oseh orim gedolim	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Et ha-shemesh le-memshelet ba-yom	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Et ha-yare'ah ve-chochavim le-mem'shelot ba-lailah	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Le-makeh mitz'rayim bi-v'choreihem	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Va-yotzei yisra'el mitochem	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Be-yad ḥazakah u-vi-z'ro'a netuyah	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Lig'zor yam suf li-g'zarim	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Ve-he'evir yisra'el betocho	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Ve-ni'eir par'oh ve-ḥeilo ve-yam suf	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Le-molich amo ba-mid'bar	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Le-makeh melachim gedolim	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Va-yaharog melachim adirim	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Le-siḥon melech ha-emori	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
U-le-og melech ha-bashan	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Ve-natan ar'tzam le-naḥalah	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Naḥalah le-yisra'el amo	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
She-be-shif'leinu zachar lanu	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Va-yif'rekeinu mi-tzoreinu	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Notein leḥem le-chol basar	ki le-olam ḥas'do.
Hodu le-eil ha-shamayim	ki le-olam ḥas'do.

◇ Psalm 136, the so-called “Great *Hallel*”, is recited during the morning service on Shabbat and holidays, as well as at the *seder*. Some modern commentators are troubled by its focus on conquering and conquest, especially with the juxtaposition of the constant assertion of God’s eternal kindness. On the *seder* night, it is thematically consistent, referring to God’s miracles and mighty deeds in taking the people Israel out of Egypt, and placing it in the context of the history of the world as recounted by the Torah. We will always have to wrestle with texts such as this, that constitute an uncomfortable and challenging part of our communal history.

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: God does not rest, nor does God sleep, but awakens those lost in slumber, stirs those who wander in dreams. God gives speech to the silent, seeks freedom for those who are imprisoned. God supports the fallen and raises up those who are bowed low; God 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 nearly enough to thank You, our God and God of our ancestors, 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.

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, our Source. Every mouth acknowledges You,

◇ Parts of *Nish'mat* are ancient, possibly going back to Temple times. The Talmud recommends it be recited as part of the Passover *seder*.⁹⁵ One paragraph spells out the names "Isaac"—possibly the poem's author—and "Rebecca" in acrostic.

נשמת כל־חי תִּבְרַךְ אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
וְרוּחַ כָּל־בֶּשֶׂר וְתַרְוָמָם זְכָרְךָ תָּמִיד.
מִן־הָעוֹלָם וְעַד־הָעוֹלָם אֶתְּ אֱלֹהִים,
וּמִבְלַעֲדֶיךָ אֵין לָנוּ גּוֹאֲלֵת וּמוֹשִׁיעָה,
פּוֹדָה וּמַצִּילָה וּמַפְרִינָסָת, וְעוֹנָה וּמְרַחֶמֶת
בְּכָל־עַתַּ צָרָה וְצוּקָה. אֵין לָנוּ עוֹזֶרֶת
וְסוּמְכַת אֲלָא אֶתְּ. אֱלֹהֵי הָרֵאשִׁיטוֹת
וְהָאֲחֵרוֹנִים, אֵלֹהֵי כָל־בְּרִיּוֹת, אֲדוֹנַת
כָּל־תּוֹלְדוֹת, הַמְהַלֵּלֶת בְּכָל־הַתְּשׁוּבָחוֹת,
הַמְנַהֶגֶת עוֹלָמָה בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרִיּוּתֶיהָ
בְּרַחֲמִים. וְיִי עֲרָה, הַנֵּה לֹא תָנוּס וְלֹא
תִישָׁן. הַמְעוֹרֶרֶת יְשֻׁנִים, וְהַמְקִיפָה
נִרְדָּמוֹת, הַמְשִׁיחָה אֱלֻמוֹת, וּמַתִּירָה
אֲסוּרִים, וְהַסּוּמְכַת נוֹפְלוֹת, וְהַזּוֹקֶפֶת
כְּפוּפִים, וְהַמְפַעֲנַחַת נַעֲלָמוֹת, וְלֹךְ לְבַדְדָּךְ
אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדוֹת.

וְאֵלֹו פִּינוּ מְלֵא שִׁירָה כִּים, וּלְשׁוֹנָנוּ רִנָּה
כְּהַמּוֹן גְּלוֹי, וּשְׁפֹתוֹתֵינוּ שֹׁבַח כְּמַרְחֵבִי
רְקִיעַ, וְעֵינֵינוּ מְאִירוֹת כְּשֶׁמֶשׁ וְכִכְיֹת,
וְיָדֵינוּ פְרוּשׁוֹת כְּנִשְׁרֵי שָׁמַיִם, וּרְגְלֵינוּ
קָלוֹת כְּאַיִלוֹת, אֵין אֲנַחְנוּ מִסְפִּיקוֹת
לְהוֹדוֹת לָךְ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲמוֹתֵינוּ
וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וּלְבַרְךָ אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ, עַל־אֲחַת
מְאֵלֶיךָ, אֵלֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ וְרַבִּי רַבּוֹת
פְּעָמִים הַטּוֹבוֹת, נְסִים וְנִפְלְאוֹת, שְׁעִשִׁית
עִם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ וְעַמָּנוּ.

מְלַפְנִים מִמַּצְרַיִם גְּאֻלְתֵינוּ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
וּמִבֵּית עֲבָדִים פְּדִיתֵנוּ, בְּרָעַב זָנְתָנוּ
וּבְשִׁבְעַת כָּל־כַּלְתֵינוּ, מִחֶרֶב הֲצַלְתֵינוּ וּמִדְּבַר
מְלֻטָתֵנוּ, וּמִחֲלָאִים רָעִים וְרִבִים וְנֶאֱמָנִים
דְּלִיתֵנוּ. עַד הַנֵּה עֲזָרוֹנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ וְלֹא עֲזָבוֹנוּ
חֶסְדֶיךָ, וְאֵל תִּשְׁנֶנּוּ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לְנִצָּח.

עַל־כֵּן, אֲבָרִים שְׁפִלְגַת בְּנוּ, וְרוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה
שֶׁנִּפְחַת בְּאַפֵינוּ, וְלִשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר שְׁמַת בְּפִינוּ,
הֵן הֵם יוֹדוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ, וַיִּשְׁבְּחוּ וַיִּפְאָרוּ,
וַיִּשׁוּרוּ וַיְרוּמְמוּ, וַתִּבְרָצְנָה וַתִּקְדָּשְׁנָה
אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ, מְקוּרֵינוּ, כִּי כָל־פֶּה לָךְ יוֹדֶה,

95. Babylonian Talmud, *Pesaḥim* 118a

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, Your Presence is enthroned, 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.

In the mouths of the just You are exalted, on the lips of the righteous You are blessed, in the words of the faithful You are sanctified, and amongst the holy ones, You are praised.

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, 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 ancestors, 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 You, now and forever. Blessed are You, God of great strength, who is praised in song, God of thanksgiving, Creator of every soul, the One who chooses songs and praises, God, the life of all worlds.

וְכָל-לִשׁוֹן לְךָ תִּשָּׁבַע, וְכָל-עֵין לְךָ תִּצְפֶּה,
וְכָל-בֶּרֶךְ לְךָ תִּכְרַע, וְכָל-קוֹמָה לִפְנֶיךָ
תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, וְכָל-הַלְּבָבוֹת יִירָאוּךָ, וְכָל-קֶרֶב
וְכָל־יֵת יִזְמְרוּ לְשִׁמְךָ, בְּדָבָר שְׁפֹתוֹב:
כָּל-עַצְמוֹתַי תִּאֲמַרְנָה, יי מי כְמוֹךָ. מִצִּלָּה
עֲנֵה מַחֲזֵקָה מִמֶּנָּה, וְעֵנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן מִגּוֹזְלוֹ.
שׁוֹמֵת עֲנִיּוֹת אֶת תִּשְׁמְעִי, צַעֲקַת הַדָּל
תִּקְשִׁיבִי וְתוֹשִׁיעִי.

מי תְדַמֶּה לְךָ, ומי יִשׁוֹה לְךָ, ומי תַעֲרֹךְ לְךָ,
הָאֱלֹה הַגְּדוֹלָה, הַגְּבוּרָה וְהַנּוֹרָאָה, אֱלֹה
עֲלִיּוֹנָה, קוֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ. נְהַלֵּךְ וְנִשְׁבַּחְךָ
וְנִפְאָרְךָ, וְנִבְרַךְ אֶת-שֵׁם קִדְשֶׁךָ, וְנֹאמֵר:
בְּרַכִּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת-יְיָ, וְכָל-קֶרְבִי אֶת-שֵׁם
קִדְשֶׁךָ.

הָאֱלֹה בְּתַעֲצֻמוֹת עֲזוֹךָ, הַגְּדוֹלָה בְּכְבוֹד שִׁמְךָ.
הַגְּבוּרָה לְנֶצַח וְהַנּוֹרָאָה בְּנוֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ, שְׂכִינָה
יֹשֶׁבֶת עַל כִּסֵּא רָם וְנֹשֵׂא.

שׁוֹכֵן עַד, מְרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ.
רַגְנָה צְדִיקוֹת בֵּינֵי, לְשִׁרְיִים נְאוּה תִהְלֶה.

בְּפִי יִשְׁרוֹת תִּתְרוֹמֵם,
וּבִשְׁפֹתַי צְדִיקִים תִּתְבָּרַךְ,
וּבְלִשׁוֹן חֲסִידוֹת תִּתְקַדֵּשׁ,
וּבְקֶרֶב קְדוֹשִׁים תִּתְהַלֵּל.

וּבְמִקְהֵלוֹת רַבּוֹת עִמָּךְ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרַנָּה
יִתְפָּאֵר שִׁמְךָ בְּכָל-דּוֹר וְדוֹר, שֶׁכֵּן חוֹבֵת
כָּל-הַיְצוֹר, לִפְנֵיךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבַּח, לְפָאֵר,
לְרוֹמֵם, לְהַדְרָה, לְבָרַךְ, לְעֵלָה וּלְקַלֵּם עַל
כָּל-דְּבָרֵי שִׁירוֹת וְתִשְׁבַּחוֹת דּוֹד בְּיִשְׁרֵי וְזָרָע
רוֹת עֲבָדֶיךָ מִשִּׁיחָךָ.

יִשְׁתַּבַּח שִׁמְךָ לְעַד, מִקּוֹרֵינוּ, הָאֱלֹה הַגְּדוֹלָה
וְהַקְדוּשָׁה בְּשִׁמְיִם וּבְאָרֶץ. כִּי לְךָ נְאֻה,
יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, שִׁיר
וְשִׁבְחָה, הַלֵּל וְזִמְרָה, עֵז וּמִמְשָׁלָה, נֶצַח,
גְּדֻלָּה וּגְבוּרָה, תִּהְלֶה וְתִתְפָּאֵרְתָּ, קִדְשָׁה
וּמְלֵכוּת, בְּרִכּוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.
בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ יי, אֵלֶת שְׂדֵי גְדוֹלָה וּמַהֲלָלֶת
בְּתִשְׁבַּחוֹת, אֵלֶת הַהוֹדָאוֹת, בּוֹרְאָת
כָּל-הַנְּשָׁמוֹת, הַבוֹחֲרֶת בְּשִׁירֵי וְזִמְרָה, אֱלֹה,
חַי הָעוֹלָמִים:

נרצה

Nir'tzah – Conclusion and singing

כוס רביעי — The fourth cup

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְרִי הַגֶּפֶן:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Drink the fourth cup while reclining.

ספירת העומר — Counting the omer

On the second night of Pesach, many Ashkenazim have the custom begin to counting the omer during the seder.

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who has sanctified us through the *mitzvot*, and instructing us to count the *omer*.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר:

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:

Hayom yom ehad la-omer.

◇ The Torah instructs us to count seven weeks from Passover, counting up the time from the exodus to the revelation at Mount Sinai, which is commemorated at the holiday of Shavuot.⁹⁶ An *omer* עוֹמֵר 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.

◇ Traditionally, before reciting the blessing over the counting of the *omer*, one should be careful not to say something like “Today is the *n*th day” because doing so is counting the day, which would mean that reciting the blessing after that would be a blessing in vain. Instead of doing this, one might say something like “Yesterday, we counted (*n* – 1) days” and thereby avoid the problem.

96. Leviticus 23:15–16

ברכה אחרונה — Blessing after wine

On Shabbat, the words in brackets are added.

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, 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, 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, God, are good and do good for all, and we thank You for the land and the fruit of the vine. Praised are You, God, for the land and for the fruit of the vine.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, על הגפן ועל פרי הגפן, ועל תנובת השדה, ועל ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה שרצית והנחת 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, ונשבע 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-gefen ve-al p'ri ha-gefen, 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. Raheim na, YHWH eloheinu, al yisra'el amecha, ve-al kol olamecha asher barata. U-v'nei 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-hahalitzeinu be-yom ha-shabbat ha-zeh]. Ve-sam'heinu be-yom hag 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.

One who consumed a beverage other than wine or grape juice says the following:

Praised are You, our God, Guide of the universe, who creates the diversity of life, each kind with its uniqueness, so that all life might be sustained and enriched thereby. Blessed is the Life of Worlds.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא נפשות רבות וחסרונן, על-כל-מה שבראת להחיות בהם גפש כליחי. ברוך חיי העולמים:

Baruch atah YHWH eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei nefashot rabot ve-hes'ronan, al kol mah she-barata leha'ayot ba-hem nefesh kol hai. Baruch hei ha-olamim.

Ki Lo Na'eh — כי לו נאה — For to God, it is fitting

א	Adir bi-m'luchah,			אָדיר בַּמְלוּכָה,
ב	bahur ka-halachah,			בַּחור בְּהִלְכָה,
ג	gedudav yom'ru lo:			גְּדוּדָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
	Refrain			פזמון לָךְ וּלְךָ, לָךְ כִּי לָךְ,
	l'cha u-l'cha, l'cha ki l'cha,			לָךְ אַף לָךְ, לָךְ יִי הַמְמַלְכָה.
	l'cha af l'cha, l'cha YHWH ha-mamlacha.			כִּי לוֹ נָאָה, כִּי לוֹ יָאָה:
	Ki lo na'eh, ki lo ya'eh.			
ד	Dagul bi-m'luchah,			דָּגוּל בַּמְלוּכָה,
ה	hadur ka-halachah,			הַדוּר בְּהִלְכָה,
ו	vatikav yom'ru lo:	Refrain	פזמון	וְתִיקְיוּ יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
ז	Zakai bi-m'luchah,			זָכַאי בַּמְלוּכָה,
ח	hasin ka-halachah,			חָסִין בְּהִלְכָה,
ט	taf'serav yom'ru lo:	Refrain	פזמון	טַפְּסֶרְיוּ יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
י	Yahid bi-m'luchah,			יָחִיד בַּמְלוּכָה,
כ	kabir ka-halachah,			כְּבִיר בְּהִלְכָה,
ל	limudav yom'ru lo:	Refrain	פזמון	לְמוּדָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
מ	Marom bi-m'luchah,			מָרוֹם בַּמְלוּכָה,
נ	nora ka-halachah,			נּוֹרָא בְּהִלְכָה,
ס	sevivav yom'ru lo:	Refrain	פזמון	סִבְּיָבּוּ יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
ע	Anav bi-m'luchah,			עָנָו בַּמְלוּכָה,
פ	podeh ka-halachah,			פּוֹדֵה בְּהִלְכָה,
צ	tzadikav yom'ru lo:	Refrain	פזמון	צַדִּיקָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
ק	Kadosh bi-m'luchah,			קָדוֹשׁ בַּמְלוּכָה,
ר	rahum ka-halachah,			רַחוּם בְּהִלְכָה,
ש	shin'anav yom'ru lo:	Refrain	פזמון	שִׁנְאָנָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
ת	Takif bi-m'luchah,			תְּקִיף בַּמְלוּכָה,
ת	tomeich ka-halachah,			תּוֹמֵךְ בְּהִלְכָה,
ת	temimav yom'ru lo:	Refrain	פזמון	תְּמִימָיו יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:

κ Mighty in sovereignty,
ϑ distinguished on God's path,
λ God's divine retinue will declare:

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.

τ Exalted in sovereignty,
η glorious on God's path,
ι God's faithful ones will declare: Refrain

ζ Faultless in sovereignty,
θ kind on God's path,
υ God's appointed ones will declare: Refrain

ϛ Unique in sovereignty,
ϝ illustrious on God's path,
ϟ God's wise ones will declare: Refrain

η Supreme in sovereignty,
ι awe-inspiring on God's path,
ο those who surround God will declare: Refrain

υ Humble in sovereignty,
ϟ honorable on God's path,
ϛ God's righteous ones will declare: Refrain

ϙ Holy in sovereignty,
η merciful on God's path,
ψ God's followers will declare: Refrain

π Resolute in sovereignty,
π supportive on God's path,
π God's perfect ones will declare: Refrain

Adir Hu — אדיר הוא — Mighty is God

א	Mighty is God,	Adir hu,			אָדיר הוא,
	Refrain Yiv'neh veito be-karov, bi-m'heirah, bi-m'heirah, be-yameinu ve-karov, eil, b'nei, eil, b'nei, b'nei veit'cha be-karov.				פּוֹמֵן יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב, בְּמַהְרָה, בְּמַהְרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב, אֵל, בְּנֵה, אֵל, בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקֶרֶב:
	May God build God's dwelling place speedily, in our days. God, rebuild Your dwelling place!				
ב	Distinguished is God,	Bahur hu,			בָּחוּר הוא,
ג	great is God,	gadol hu,			גָּדוֹל הוא,
ד	exalted is God,	dagul hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמֵן	דָּגוּל הוא,
ה	Glorious is God,	Hadur hu,			הַדוֹר הוא,
ו	faithful is God,	vatik hu,			וְתִיק הוא,
ז	faultless is God,	zakai hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמֵן	זָכַאי הוא,
ח	Kind is God,	Hasid hu,			חָסִיד הוא,
ט	pure is God,	tahor hu,			טָהוֹר הוא,
י	unique is God,	yahid hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמֵן	יְחִיד הוא,
כ	Powerful is God,	Kabir hu,			כְּבִיר הוא,
ל	wise is God,	lamud hu,			לָמוּד הוא,
מ	sovereign is God,	melech hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמֵן	מְלֶךְ הוא,
נ	Illuminating is God,	Na'or hu,			נְאוֹר הוא,
ס	sublime is God,	sagiv hu,			סְגִיב הוא,
ע	powerful is God,	izuz hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמֵן	עֲזוּז הוא,
פ	Honorable is God,	Podeh hu,			פּוֹדֶה הוא,
צ	righteous is God,	tzadik hu,			צַדִּיק הוא,
ק	holy is God,	kadosh hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמֵן	קְדוֹשׁ הוא,
ר	Merciful is God,	Rahum hu,			רַחוּם הוא,
ש	almighty is God,	shaddai hu,			שַׁדַּי הוא,
ת	preeminent is God,	takif hu,	Refrain	פּוֹמֵן	תְּקִיף הוא,

Eḥad Mi Yodei'a — אחד מי יודע — Who knows one?

אָחד מי יודע?
 1: Eḥad mi yode'a? Eḥad ani yode'a: אחד אני יודע:
 1 Eḥad eloheinu, she-ba-shamayim u-va-aretz. אחד אֱלֹהֵינוּ, שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ:

שְׁנַיִם מי יודע? שְׁנַיִם אֲנִי יודע:
 2: Sh'nayim mi yode'a? Sh'nayim ani yode'a: שְׁנֵי לַחֹת הַבְּרִית,
 2 Sh'nei luhot ha-b'rit, אחד אֱלֹהֵינוּ, שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ:
 1 Eḥad eloheinu, she-ba-shamayim u-va-aretz.

שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר מי יודע?
 13: Sh'loshah asar mi yode'a? שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר אֲנִי יודע:
 Sh'loshah asar ani yode'a: שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר מִדֵּיָא,
 13 Sh'loshah asar midaya, שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר שְׁבֻטֵיָא,
 12 Sh'neim asar shiv'taya, אֶחָד עָשָׂר בּוֹכְבֵיָא,
 11 Aḥad asar koch'vaya, עֲשָׂרָה דְּבִרְיָא,
 10 Asarah dib'raya, תְּשַׁעַה יְרַחֵי לְדָה,
 9 Tish'ah yar'hei leidah, שְׁמוֹנָה יְמֵי מִלָּה,
 8 Sh'monah y'mei milah, שְׁבַעַה יְמֵי שְׁבֻטָא,
 7 Shiv'ah y'mei shab'ta, שֵׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה,
 6 Shishah sid'rei mishnah, חֲמֵשֶׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה,
 5 Hamishah hum'shei torah, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוֹת,
 4 Ar'ba imahot, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת,
 3 Sh'loshah avot, שְׁנֵי לַחֹת הַבְּרִית,
 2 Sh'nei luhot ha-b'rit, אחד אֱלֹהֵינוּ, שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ:
 1 Eḥad eloheinu, she-ba-shamayim u-va-aretz.

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.

Had Gad'ya — חַד גַּדְיָא — One little kid

One little kid,
that my father bought
for two *zuzim*,
had gad'ya.

Had gadya, had gadya,
di-z'van abba bi-t'rei zuzei,
had gadya, had gadya.

חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא,
דְּזַבְּנ אַבְּא בְּתַרֵּי זְוּזֵי,
חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:

Then came a cat,
that ate the kid,
that my father bought
for two *zuzim*,
had gad'ya.

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

וְאַתָּא שׁוּנְרָא,
וְאַכַּל לְגַדְיָא,
דְּזַבְּנ אַבְּא בְּתַרֵּי זְוּזֵי,
חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:

Then came a dog,
that bit the cat,
that ate the kid,
that my father bought
for two *zuzim*,
had gad'ya.

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

וְאַתָּא כַּלְבָּא,
וְנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא,
דְּאַכַּל לְגַדְיָא,
דְּזַבְּנ אַבְּא בְּתַרֵּי זְוּזֵי,
חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:

Then came a stick,
that beat the dog,
that ate the kid,
that my father bought
for two *zuzim*,
had gad'ya.

Ve-ata hut'ra,
ve-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 חוּטְרָא,
וְהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,
דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא,
דְּאַכַּל לְגַדְיָא,
דְּזַבְּנ אַבְּא בְּתַרֵּי זְוּזֵי,
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*,
had gad'ya.

Ve-ata nura,
ve-saraf le-hut'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 נוּרָא,
וְשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,
דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,
דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא,
דְּאַכַּל לְגַדְיָא,
דְּזַבְּנ אַבְּא בְּתַרֵּי זְוּזֵי,
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*,
had gad'ya.

Ve-ata maya,
ve-chavah le-nura,
de-saraf le-hut'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 מַיָּא,
וְכַבֵּה לְנוּרָא,
דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,
דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,
דְּנָשַׁךְ לְשׁוּנְרָא,
דְּאַכַּל לְגַדְיָא,
דְּזַבְּנ אַבְּא בְּתַרֵּי זְוּזֵי,
חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:

←

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*,
had gad'ya.

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*,
had gad'ya.

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 gad'ya.

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,
 had gadya, had gadya.

Ve-ata shoheit,
 ve-shahat 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.

Ve-ata mal'ach ha-mavet,
 ve-shahat la-shoheit,
 de-shahat 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 תּוֹרָא,
 וְשָׁתָה לְמַיָּא,
 דְּכַבְּה לְנוּרָא,
 דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,
 דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,
 דְּנִשְׁחַד לְשׁוּנְרָא,
 דְּאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,
 דִּזְבֵּן אַבְא בְּתַרֵּי זׁזַי,
 חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:

וְאַתָּא שׁוֹחֵט,
 וְשָׁחַט לְתוֹרָא,
 דְּשָׁתָה לְמַיָּא,
 דְּכַבְּה לְנוּרָא,
 דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,
 דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,
 דְּנִשְׁחַד לְשׁוּנְרָא,
 דְּאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,
 דִּזְבֵּן אַבְא בְּתַרֵּי זׁזַי,
 חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:

וְאַתָּא מַלְאַךְ הַמָּוֶת,
 וְשָׁחַט לְשׁוֹחֵט,
 דְּשָׁחַט לְתוֹרָא,
 דְּשָׁתָה לְמַיָּא,
 דְּכַבְּה לְנוּרָא,
 דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,
 דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא,
 דְּנִשְׁחַד לְשׁוּנְרָא,
 דְּאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,
 דִּזְבֵּן אַבְא בְּתַרֵּי זׁזַי,
 חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:



Then came the Holy 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*,
 ḥad gad'ya.

Ve-ata ha-kadosh
 baruch hu,
 ve-shahat la-mal'ach
 ha-mavet,
 de-shahat la-shoheit,
 de-shahat 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 הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא,
 וְשָׁחַט לְמַלְאָךְ הַמָּוֶת,
 דְּשָׁחַט לְשׁוֹחֵט,
 דְּשָׁחַט לְתוֹרָא,
 דְּשָׁתָה לְמֵיָא,
 דְּכָבַה לְנוֹרָא,
 דְּשָׂרַף לְחוּטְרָא,
 דְּהָכָה לְכֵלְבָא,
 דְּנָשַׁח לְשׁוֹנְרָא,
 דְּאָכַל לְגַדְיָא,
 דִּזְבַּן אַבְא בְּתֵרֵי זוּזֵי,
 חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא:

חסל סידור פסח — The seder is concluded

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.⁹⁷

חַסַּל סְדוּר פֶּסַח כְּהַלְכָתוֹ,
 כְּכָל-מִשְׁפָּטוֹ וְחֻקָּתוֹ.
 כְּאֲשֶׁר זָכִינוּ לְסַדֵּר אוֹתוֹ,
 בְּן נִזְכָּה לְעִשְׂוֹתוֹ:

Ḥasal 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 city!

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם הַבְּנוּיָה:

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 מִצְרַיִם *mitz'rayim*, which literally means “straits”. The name of Jerusalem יְרוּשָׁלַיִם *yerushalayim* derives in part from the word שְׁלֵם *shalem*, meaning “complete”, the root of שְׁלוֹם *shalom*, “peace”.

◇ 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 *tikkun olam*, 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 our sacred task.

97. Rabbi Yosef Tur Elam (d. 1040)