I love all sorts of stories but I have a particular fondness for short stories. It’s an extraordinary challenge: telling a compelling narrative in an economical way with a beginning, middle, and end that makes you think and even inspires you to act in certain ways.

Passover is the quintessential Jewish storytelling time. Embedded in the Haggadah is the master narrative of our People. And whatever version you use—whether an old, stained Maxwell House edition or even one you’ve designed yourself—the essential message can be summed up quite succinctly: “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. God freed us for a purpose.”

This is our core story. Our empathy comes from our experience of having been strangers in a strange land. We were oppressed and so we have a special concern for the most vulnerable. And then we experienced the fulfilment of our collective dream: we were redeemed from bondage, we went forth a free people. But the story doesn’t end there, on the other side of the sea. We travel as a people to Sinai where the purpose of our freedom is revealed. Our job is to bring redemption to the world.

It’s the greatest story ever told and it’s a great mitzvah—a deep and holy obligation—to re-tell it every year, to be inspired by it so that we can live its message.

Chag Sameach.

Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback
HINEH MA TOV (PSALM 133)

הנה מה טוב והנה נאים שבע אחים גם יחד:
Hinei mah tov u-mah naim, shevet achim gam yachad.
How good it is!
How sweet it is!
To be together on this day.

LIGHTING THE CANDLES

The seder officially begins with a physical act: lighting the candles. In Jewish tradition, lighting candles and saying a blessing over them marks a time of transition, from the day that is ending to the one that is beginning, from ordinary time to sacred time. Lighting the candles is an important part of our Passover celebration because their flickering light reminds us of the importance of keeping the fragile flame of freedom alive in the world.

ברוך אתה עלים מלך עולם
אשר קדשנו במצוותיו
ואראנו לחלימ נר יום טוב
Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav,
v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Yom Tov.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God,
Ruler of the Universe,
who has sanctified us with laws and commanded us to light the festival lights.

As we light the festival candles, we acknowledge that as they brighten our Passover table, good thoughts, good words, and good deeds brighten our days.
WHAT’S ON THE TABLE
CONTRIBUTED BY GEOFF CHESMAN

The Seder Plate
We place a Seder Plate at our table as a reminder to discuss certain aspects of the Passover story. Each item has its own significance.

*Maror* – The bitter herb. This symbolizes the harshness of lives of the Israelite in Egypt.

*Charoset* – A delicious mix of sweet wine, apples, cinnamon and nuts that resembles the mortar used as bricks of the many buildings the Israelite slaves built in Egypt.

*Karpas* – A green vegetable, usually parsley, is a reminder of the green sprouting up all around us during spring and is used to dip into the saltwater.

*Zeroah* – A roasted lamb or shank bone symbolizing the sacrifice made at the great temple on Passover (The Paschal Lamb).

*Beitzah* – The egg symbolizes a different holiday offering that was brought to the temple. Since eggs are the first item offered to a mourner after a funeral, some say it also evokes a sense of mourning for the destruction of the temple.

*Orange* – The orange on the seder plate has come to symbolize full inclusion in modern day Judaism: not only for women, but also for people with disabilities, intermarried couples, and the LGBT Community.

Matzah
Matzah is the unleavened bread we eat to remember that when the Israelites fled Egypt, they didn’t even have time to let the dough rise on their bread. We commemorate this by removing all bread and bread products from our home during Passover.

Elijah’s Cup
The fifth ceremonial cup of wine poured during the Seder. It is left untouched in honor of Elijah, who, according to tradition, will arrive one day as an unknown guest to herald the advent of the Messiah. During the Seder dinner, biblical verses are read while the door is briefly opened to welcome Elijah. In this way, the Seder dinner not only commemorates the historical redemption from Egyptian bondage of the Israelites but also inspires us to work to bring redemption to the world.
Miriam’s Cup

Another relatively new Passover tradition is that of Miriam’s cup. The cup is filled with water and placed next to Elijah’s cup. Miriam was the sister of Moses and a prophetess in her own right. After the exodus when the Israelites are wandering through the desert, just as God gave them Manna to eat, legend says that a well of water followed Miriam and it was called ‘Miriam’s Well’. The tradition of Miriam’s cup is meant to honor Miriam’s role in the story of the Jewish people and the spirit of all women, who nurture their families just as Miriam helped sustain the Israelites.

On seder night, there are two moments where we metaphorically open our doors and invite others in. One is at the opening of the Magid portion of the seder, when we say, “All who are hungry come and eat.” There is a beautiful message here: we were once slaves; poor and hungry, and we remember our redemption by sharing what we have with others.

The other, comes towards the end of the seder, when we have the custom of pouring a fifth cup of wine, which we claim is for Elijah the Prophet. This is a statement of faith, a statement that says that although we are a free people, our redemption is not yet complete, and we believe that it will come.

From the most downtrodden to the most celebrated, the message is clear: everyone is welcome and everyone is necessary. Why is it that we go out of our way to include all at our seder table? Perhaps it is because when we make room for others, we have the opportunity to make room for ourselves as well. In fact, the Mishnah (Pesahim 10:5) teaches us that:

בְּכָל דُעֵרֶד וְדוֹרֶד חַיָּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת ﬠַצְמוֹ
הַאֲדָמָה לְרָאָה אֶת ﬠַצְמוֹ

In every generation a person is obligated to see themselves as if they left Egypt

The seder presents us with the obligation of identifying with the generation that left Egypt and internalizing that experience. And through that internalization, we come to feel the redemption as if it was our own as well to - לָרָא אֲנָה אֶת ﬠַצְמוֹ. Further, the reliving of the story of the Exodus affords us the opportunity see one’s true self. It is only when we are able to see ourselves clearly, that we are able to be redeemed. But perhaps the only way we are able to see ourselves, is when we are truly able to see those around us. This message of inclusion is Pardes’s message too, and our hope is that this Haggadah Companion which offers something for everyone, will add new meaning to your seder and help bring the Jewish people a little closer together.
The seder opens with kiddush (the sanctification over wine). This is certainly unremarkable after all, kiddush is the opening act of every shabbat and holiday meal. But kiddush – a ritual which sanctifies – has an intimate and unique connection to Pesach’s central theme: freedom. How so?

As Israel was about to be released from slavery, God instituted a new calendar: “This month shall (mark for you the beginning of months; the first of the months of the year for you.” (Exodus 12:2) Why is this the first mitzvah (commandment) communicated to a free nation?

A slave’s time is not his own. He is at the beck and call of his master. Even when the slave has a pressing personal engagement, her taskmaster’s needs will take priority. In contrast, freedom is the control of our time. We determine what we do when we wake up in the morning; we prioritize our day. This is true for an individual, but also for a nation. Our ancestors created a Jewish calendar because, as an independent nation, Israel should not march any more to an Egyptian rhythm, celebrating Egyptian months and holidays. Instead Israel must forge a Jewish calendar, with unique days of rest, celebration and memory. Controlling and crafting our time is the critical first act of freedom.

Kiddush says this out loud. We sanctify the day and define its meaning! We proclaim this day as significant, holy and meaningful. We fashion time, claim ownership of it, and fashion it as a potent contact point with God, peoplehood and tradition. This is a quintessential act of Jewish freedom.

Today, we often feel short of time; that time controls us. Kadesh reminds us that true freedom and self-respect is to master and control time for ourselves, to shape our life in accordance with our values.

All Jewish celebrations, from holidays to weddings, include wine as a symbol of our joy – not to mention a practical way to increase that joy. The seder starts with wine and then gives us three more opportunities to refill our cup and drink.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who chose us from all peoples and languages, and sanctified us with commandments, and lovingly gave to us special times for happiness, holidays and this time of celebrating the Holiday of Matzah, the time of liberation, reading our sacred stories, and remembering the Exodus from Egypt. We call ourselves chosen and sanctified and our holidays elevate our lives. We praise God, who sanctifies the people of Israel and the holidays.
Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha’olam, borei p’ri hagafen.


Blessed are You, Eloheinu Melech ha’olam, she-hechiyanu v’key’manu v’higianu lazman hazeh.

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

Blessed are You, Our God, Ruler of the world, You have chosen us from all peoples, exalting us and sanctifying us with mitzvot. In Your love, Our God, You have given us Sabbaths of rest, feasts of gladness and seasons of joy; this Shabbat day and this festival of matzot, season of our freedom, in love, a holy commemoration, a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt. God, You have chosen us from all peoples, consecrating us to your service, giving us the Sabbath, a sign of your love and favor and the Festivals, a time of gladness and joy.

Blessed are You, who sanctifies Shabbat, our people Israel, and the Festivals.

Drink the first glass of wine!
We begin our seder this evening with a special addition to Kadesh - we add in Havdalah, a ceremony usually marking the separation between Shabbat and the beginning of the week. Tonight, we mark the separation between the end of Shabbat and another day of chag, ben kodesh l’kodesh. The havdalah candle is comprised of many weeks braided to come together to create a large, single flame - much larger, brighter and warmer than if there were only a single wick. Why make such a big deal about the separate wicks if they are a single flame? And which is more important - the separate wicks or the single flame? How does this add meaning to our Passover seder tonight?

**The Blessing over Wine**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵֽינוּ מֶֽלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּֽפֶן

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech ha’olam, boray pri hagafen.*

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

**The Blessing over Spices**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵֽינוּ מֶֽלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא מִינֵי בְשָׂמִים

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech ha’olam, boray minay vesamim.*

Blessed are You, Adonai, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of the different spices.

**The Blessing over the Candle**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵֽינוּ מֶֽלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא מְאוֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech ha’olam, boray me’oray ha’aysh.*

Blessed are You, Adonai, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of the fire’s lights.
The Blessing over Havdalah

Baruch atah, Adonai, Elohaynu melech ha’olam, hamavdil bayn kodesh lechol bayn or lechoshech bayn Yisrael la’amim bayn yom hashevi’i leshayshet yemay hama’aseh. Baruch atah, Adonai, hamavdi bayn kodesh lechol.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Sovereign of the universe, who separates between the holy and the profane; between the light and dark; between Israel and the other nations; between the seventh day and the six days of the week. Blessed are You, God, who separates between the holy and the profane.

URCHATZ - WASH YOUR HANDS TO PREPARE FOR THE SEDER
CONTRIBUTED BY JEWISH BOSTON

Water is refreshing, cleansing, and clear, so it’s easy to understand why so many cultures and religions use water for symbolic purification. We will wash our hands twice during our seder: now, with no blessing, to get us ready for the rituals to come; and then again later, we’ll wash again with a blessing, preparing us for the meal, which Judaism thinks of as a ritual in itself. (The Jewish obsession with food is older than you thought!)

To wash your hands, you don’t need soap, but you do need a cup to pour water over your hands. Pour water on each of your hands three times, alternating between your hands. If the people around your table don’t want to get up to walk all the way over to the sink, you could pass a pitcher and a bowl around so everyone can wash at their seats... just be careful not to spill!

Too often during our daily lives we don’t stop and take the moment to prepare for whatever it is we’re about to do.

Let’s pause to consider what we hope to get out of our evening together tonight. Go around the table and share one hope or expectation you have for tonight’s seder.
Passover, like many of our holidays, combines the celebration of an event from our Jewish memory with a recognition of the cycles of nature. As we remember the liberation from Egypt, we also recognize the stirrings of spring and rebirth happening in the world around us. The symbols on our table bring together elements of both kinds of celebration.

We now take a vegetable, representing our joy at the dawning of spring after our long, cold winter. Most families use a green vegetable, such as parsley or celery, but some families from Eastern Europe have a tradition of using a boiled potato since greens were hard to come by at Passover time. Whatever symbol of spring and sustenance we’re using, we now dip it into salt water, a symbol of the tears our ancestors shed as slaves. Before we eat it, we recite a short blessing:

**Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p’ree ha-adama.**

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruits of the earth.

We look forward to spring and the reawakening of flowers and greenery. They haven’t been lost, just buried beneath the snow, getting ready for reappearance just when we most needed them.

**Discussion:**

We all have aspects of ourselves that sometimes get buried under the stresses of our busy lives. What has this winter taught us? What elements of our own lives do we hope to revive this spring?

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**DODI LI**

**CONTRIBUTED BY STEPHEN WISE TEMPLE**

Dodi li va-ani lo, ha-roeh
Bashoshanium dodi li
Mi zot ola min hamidbar
M’kuteret mor, mor ulevona, mor ulevona dodi Li

My beloved is mine and I am His,
The Shepherd among the lilies.
I will arise and go about the city;
In the streets and in the squares I will seek the one my soul loves.

- Song of Songs 2:16
There are three pieces of matzah stacked on the table. We now break the middle matzah into two pieces. The host should wrap up the larger of the pieces and, at some point between now and the end of dinner, hide it. This piece is called the afikomen, literally “dessert” in Greek. After dinner, the youngest at our seder will have to hunt for the afikomen in order to wrap up the meal… and win a prize.

We eat matzah in memory of the quick flight of our ancestors from Egypt. As slaves, they had faced many false starts before finally being let go. So when the word of their freedom came, they took whatever dough they had and ran with it before it had the chance to rise, leaving it looking something like matzah.

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

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

These days, matzah is a special food and we look forward to eating it on Passover. Imagine eating only matzah, or being one of the countless people around the world who don’t have enough to eat.

What does the symbol of matzah say to us about oppression in the world, both people literally enslaved and the many ways in which each of us is held down by forces beyond our control? How does this resonate with events happening now?
MY PASSOVER THINGS

[To the tune of “My Favorite Things”]
Cleaning and cooking and so many dishes
Out with the hametz, no pasta, no knishes
Fish that’s gefiltered, horseradish that stings
These are a few of our Passover things.
Matzoh and karpas and chopped up haroset
Shankbones and Kiddish and Yiddish neuroses
Tante who kvetches and uncle who sings
These are a few of our Passover things.
Motzi and maror and trouble with Pharoahs
Famines and locusts and slaves with wheelbarrows
Matzoh balls floating and eggshell that cling
These are a few of our Passover things.
When the plagues strike
When the lice bite
When we’re feeling sad
We simply remember our Passover things
And then we don’t feel so bad.

MAGGID (INTRODUCTION)
CONTRIBUTED BY JEWISH BOSTON

Pour the second glass of wine for everyone.
The Haggadah doesn’t tell the story of Passover in a linear fashion. We don’t hear of Moses being found by the daughter of Pharaoh – actually, we don’t hear much of Moses at all. Instead, we get an impressionistic collection of songs, images, and stories of both the Exodus from Egypt and from Passover celebrations through the centuries. Some say that minimizing the role of Moses keeps us focused on the miracles God performed for us. Others insist that we keep the focus on the role that every member of the community has in bringing about positive change.
PHAROAH, PHAROAH!
CONTRIBUTED BY STEPHEN WISE TEMPLE
SOURCE: MAH TOVU

[Chorus]
I say Pharaoh, Pharaoh
Oh baby let my people go!
Huh! Yeah, yeah, yeah
I say Pharaoh, Pharaoh
Oh baby let my people go!
Huh! Yeah, yeah, yeah

Well, the burning bush told me just the other day
That I should come over here and say
Got to get my people out of Pharaoh’s hand
And lead them on over to the Promised Land

[Chorus]
Well, all of God’s people came to the Red Sea
With Pharaoh’s army coming after me
I raised my rod, stuck it in the sand
And all of God’s people walked across dry land

[Verse 3]
Well, all of Pharaoh’s army was coming too
So what do you think that I did do?
I raised my rod and cleared my throat
And all of Pharaoh’s army did the dead man’s float

Well, that’s the story of the stubborn goat
Pharaoh should’ve known that chariots don’t float
The lesson is simple, it’s easy to find
When God says, “GO!” you had better mind!
The formal telling of the story of Passover is framed as a discussion with lots of questions and answers. The tradition that the youngest person asks the questions reflects the centrality of involving everyone in the seder. The rabbis who created the set format for the seder gave us the Four Questions to help break the ice in case no one had their own questions. Asking questions is a core tradition in Jewish life. If everyone at your seder is around the same age, perhaps the person with the least seder experience can ask them – or everyone can sing them all together.

מה נишטנא הלילה הזה מבול הלילות
Ma nishtana halaila hazeh mikol haleilot?
Why is this night different from all other nights?

שבייכלו הלילות יום אוכלין חמצו ומצזו
הליל הזה בול מצזו
Shebichol haleilot anu ochlin chameitz u-matzah. Halaila hazeh kulo matzah.
On all other nights we eat both leavened bread and matzah. Tonight we only eat matzah.

שבייכלו הלילות יום אוכלים שירא ירוחם
הלילה הזה מרור
Shebichol haleilot anu ochlin shi’ar yirakot haleila hazeh maror.
On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables, but tonight we eat bitter herbs.

שבייכלו הלילות 어ון אוכלים בני משכיבין ישבין פמים אלה
הלילה הזה ישב פימים
Shebichol haleilot ain anu matbilin afilu pa-am echat. Halaila hazeh shtei fi-amim.
On all other nights we aren’t expected to dip our vegetables one time. Tonight we do it twice.

שבייכלו הלילות יום אוכלים זה ישבין בני ישבין בני משבין
הלילה הזה בול בני משבין
Shebichol haleilot anu ochlin bein yoshvin uvein m’subin. Halaila hazeh kulanu m’subin.
On all other nights we eat either sitting normally or reclining. Tonight we recline.
THE FOUR CHILDREN  
SOURCE: JESSICA STEINBERG

This is a modern interpretation of an ancient standard, which is part and parcel of the Seder: the Four Children. By reading and discussing the Four Children, and then responding to it through modern themes, we can come to an understanding of who we are and our relation to the our Children. The source of this section are four verses from the Tanakh which briefly mention children asking, or being told about, the Exodus from Egypt. Using these very general verses, the Rabbis created four prototypes which are given to show us that we must teach a child according to the child’s level.

At the time the Haggadah was created, it was safe for the rabbis to assume that most Jewish adults had the knowledge available to teach their children about the Exodus. At that time, perhaps, all adults did know about the Exodus from Egypt and the Jews’ struggle against Pharaoh. However, in subsequent generations, not all adults are familiar with the story told in the Haggadah, with the people of Israel, with their history. It isn’t only the children that need to be taught, but their parents as well. To complicate matters, each Jew is coming from a different orientation with regard to his or her Judaism.

In today’s world, Jews may identify themselves in a variety of ways. One may be ritually, culturally, or intellectually oriented or unconnected. And yet, however modified one’s Judaism may be, there is still some level of concern about the Jewish people that causes Jews to at least ask the questions about the Exodus from Egypt. If they weren’t interested, they wouldn’t ask. We must answer them, and enable them to teach their children.

The ritual Jew asks: “What are the laws that God commanded us? “ This Jew defines herself by the rituals, the laws and guidelines of Pesach. We call on her to seek the meaning that underlies all of these acts, so that they have relevance for all of us today.
The unconnected Jew asks: “What does this ritual mean to you?” This Jew feels alienated from the Jewish community and finds it difficult to identify with the rituals, perhaps because of his upbringing or experiences. Yet we recognize that he is still interested, if only because he asks these questions, and we call on him to see these rituals as a way of affirming the universal beliefs that gave rise to them.

The cultural Jew asks: “What is this all about?” She shows little concern with the ritual or psychological ramifications of the Exodus, even while embracing this reenactment of our ancestors; flight from Egypt. We call on her to recognize that it was a deep sense of faith that enabled these rituals to transcend the generations. It was belief in a vision of future freedom that caused us to celebrate our first Exodus and hear the echo of the prophets’ call: “Let all people go!”

The intellectual Jew: refrains from asking direct questions because he doesn’t lean in any direction, preferring instead to let the text speak for itself. We call on him to understand that true freedom can only be obtained when we question authority and challenge power, even if that power be God Himself. It is our responsibility to question not only the text but the status quo too, and share this message of freedom with all people everywhere.

Discussion:

Do you see yourself in any of these children? At times we all approach different situations like each of these children. How do we relate to each of them?
Our story starts in ancient times, with the midrash of Abraham and Sarah, the the first people that tradition suggests had the idea that maybe all those little statues their contemporaries worshiped as gods were just statues. The idea of one God, invisible and all-powerful, inspired him to leave his family and begin a new people in Canaan, the land that would one day bear their grandchildren.

The Torah says that God had made a promise to Abraham and Sarah that their family would become a great nation, but this promise came with a frightening vision of the troubles along the way: “Your descendants will dwell for a time in a land that is not their own, and they will be enslaved and afflicted for four hundred years; however, I will punish the nation that enslaved them, and afterwards they shall leave with great wealth.”

Raise the glass of wine and say:

וְהִיא שֶׁﬠָמְדָה לַאֲבוֹתֵֽינוּ וְלָֽנוּ

V’hi she-amda l’avoteinu v’lanu.

This promise has sustained our ancestors and us.

For not only one enemy has risen against us to annihilate us, but in every generation there are those who rise against us. But God saves us from those who seek to harm us.

The glass of wine is put down.

In the years our ancestors lived in Egypt, our numbers grew, and soon the family of Jacob, Leah, and Rachel became the People of Israel. Pharaoh and the leaders of Egypt grew alarmed by this great nation growing within their borders, so they enslaved us. We were forced to perform hard labor, perhaps even building pyramids. The Egyptians feared that even as slaves, the Israelites might grow strong and rebel. So Pharaoh decreed that Israelite baby boys should be drowned, to prevent the Israelites from overthrowing those who had enslaved them.

But our tradition teaches that God heard the cries of the Israelites. And God brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and outstretched arm, with great awe, miraculous signs and wonders. God brought us out not by angel or messenger, but through God’s own intervention.
As we rejoice at our deliverance from slavery, we acknowledge that our freedom was hard-earned. We regret that our freedom came at the cost of the Egyptians’ suffering, for we are all human beings made in the image of God. We pour out a drop of wine for each of the plagues as we recite them.

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

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

- Blood | dam | דָּם
- Frogs | tzfardeiya | צְפַרְדֵּֽﬠַ
- Lice | kinim | כִּנִּים
- Beasts | arov | אֵרֹוּב
- Cattle disease | dever | דֶּֽבֶר
- Boils | sh’chin | שְׁחִין
- Hail | barad | בָּרָד
- Locusts | arbeh | עַרְבֶּה
- Darkness | choshech | חֹֽשֶׁ

Death of the Firstborn | makat b’chorot | מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת

The Egyptians needed ten plagues because after each one they were able to come up with excuses and explanations rather than change their behavior. Could we be making the same mistakes? Make up your own list. What are the plagues in your life? What are the plagues in our world today? What behaviors do we need to change to fix them?
Plague 1 - Homelessness
Los Angeles has the largest number of chronically homeless people in the nation—nearly 13,000. The lack of affordable housing and limited housing assistance programs have contributed to the current crisis. – Los Angeles Times (2016)

Plague 2 - Mass Incarceration
The U.S. prison population has increased nearly 700 percent since 1972. The incarceration rate for African Americans is nearly nine times higher than for whites, while Latinos are imprisoned at almost twice the rate of whites. – Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics Prisoner Series (2016)

Plague 3 - Inadequate health care
California’s Uninsured: Progress Toward Universal Coverage. Since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2014, the uninsured rate in California dropped by nearly half, from 16% in 2013 to an all-time low of 9% in 2016. However, 2.9 million Californians remained uninsured. (CA Health Care Foundation, 2018)

Plague 4 - Food insecurity
An estimated 1.4 million people in Los Angeles County live with food insecurity, which means that nearly 1 in 5 of our neighbors do not know where their next meal is coming from. – Los Angeles Regional Food Bank (2017)

Plague 5 - Environmental Destruction
Earth’s average temperature has risen by 1.5°F over the past century, and is projected to rise by as much as 8.6°F over the next hundred years. These changes are projected to have profound implications for our water supply, the natural environment, and human health and safety. – U.S. EPA (2017)

Plague 6 - Inadequate Education
Less than half of those who graduate from high school in the U.S. are proficient in math or reading. – Education Week (2016)

Plague 7 - Racism and Xenophobia
Los Angeles recorded its highest level of reports of hate crimes in a decade, with a nearly 13% increase in 2018 over the year before. (LA Times 2018)
Plague 8 – Refugees and Immigration
65.3 million people around the world have been forced from their homes. Among them are nearly 21.3 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. – UN Refugee Agency (2017)

Plague 9 - Human Trafficking
There are nearly 21 million victims of human trafficking worldwide, one quarter of which are children. California serves both as an entry point and as a destination for victims. – Polaris Project (2016)

Plague 10 - Economic Inequality
Economic inequality has grown dramatically over the last four decades, and wages have stagnated for the vast majority of workers despite an an expanding and increasingly productive American economy. – Economic Policy Institute (2016)

Discussion:
Which of these modern plagues disturbs you most?
What can you do this year to liberate the world from this affliction?
What are the first steps you might take?

ANSWERING OUR QUESTIONS
CONTRIBUTED BY JEWISH BOSTON

As all good term papers do, we start with the main idea:

Avadim hayinu hayinu. Ata b’nei chorin.
We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. Now we are free.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and God took us from there with a strong hand and outstretched arm. Had God not brought our ancestors out of Egypt, then even today we and our children and our grandchildren would still be slaves. Even if we were all wise, knowledgeable scholars and Torah experts, we would still be obligated to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt.
GO DOWN MOSES—LET MY PEOPLE GO!
CONTRIBUTED BY STEPHEN WISE TEMPLE

When Israel was in Egypt’s land
Let my people go.
Oppressed so hard they could not stand
Let my people go.
Refrain:
Go down, Moses
Way down in Egypt’s land
Tell old Pharaoh
Let my people go.
Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said,
Let my people go.
If not I’ll smite your first-born dead
Let my people go. (Refrain)
The Lord told Moses what to do
Let my people go.
To lead the children of Israel through
Let my people go. (Refrain)
When they had reached the other shore
Let my people go.
They sang a song of triumph o’er
Let my people go. (Refrain)

DAYEINU
CONTRIBUTED BY JEWISH BOSTON
SOURCE: THE WANDERING IS OVER HAGGADAH, JEWISHBOSTON.COM

The plagues and our subsequent redemption from Egypt are but one example of the care God has shown for us in our history. Had God but done any one of these kindnesses, it would have been enough – dayeinu.

אִלּוּ הָוצִיאָֽנוּ מִמִּצְרַֽיִם, דַּיֵּנוּ
If God had only taken us out of Egypt, that would have been enough!

אִלּוּ נָתַן לָֽנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, דַּיֵּנוּ
If God had only given us the Torah, that would have been enough.
The complete lyrics to Dayeinu tell the entire story of the Exodus from Egypt as a series of miracles God performed for us. (See the Additional Readings if you want to read or sing them all.)

Dayeinu also reminds us that each of our lives is the cumulative result of many blessings, small and large.

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**THE PASSOVER SYMBOLS**

**CONTRIBUTED BY STEPHEN WISE TEMPLE**

We have now told the story of Passover...but wait! We’re not quite done. There are still some symbols on our seder plate we haven’t talked about yet. Rabban Gamliel would say that whoever didn’t explain the shank bone, matzah, and marror (or bitter herbs) hasn’t done Passover justice.

**The shank bone** represents the Pesach, the special lamb sacrifice made in the days of the Temple for the Passover holiday. It is called the pesach, from the Hebrew word meaning “to pass over,” because God passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt when visiting plagues upon our oppressors.

**The matzah** reminds us that when our ancestors were finally free to leave Egypt, there was no time to pack or prepare. Our ancestors grabbed whatever dough was made and set out on their journey, letting their dough bake into matzah as they fled.

**The bitter herbs** provide a visceral reminder of the bitterness of slavery, the life of hard labor our ancestors experienced in Egypt.

**The Orange:** A symbol for all those who might feel excluded from this seder table: Queer Jews, Singles, Jews of color, non-Jews who are partners with Jews, Jews with special needs.

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**IN EVERY GENERATION & SECOND CUP**

**CONTRIBUTED BY JEWISH BOSTON**

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיָּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־ﬠַצְמוֹ, כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרָֽֽיִם

In every generation, everyone is obligated to see themselves as though they personally left Egypt.
The seder reminds us that it was not only our ancestors whom God redeemed; God redeemed us too along with them. That’s why the Torah says “God brought us out from there in order to lead us to and give us the land promised to our ancestors.”

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who redeemed us and our ancestors from Egypt, enabling us to reach this night and eat matzah and bitter herbs. May we continue to reach future holidays in peace and happiness.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p’ree hagafen.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the second glass of wine!

As we now transition from the formal telling of the Passover story to the celebratory meal, we once again wash our hands to prepare ourselves. In Judaism, a good meal together with friends and family is itself a sacred act, so we prepare for it just as we prepared for our holiday ritual, recalling the way ancient priests once prepared for service in the Temple.

Some people distinguish between washing to prepare for prayer and washing to prepare for food by changing the way they pour water on their hands. For washing before food, pour water three times on your right hand and then three times on your left hand.

After you have poured the water over your hands, recite this short blessing.

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

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who made us holy through obligations, commanding us to wash our hands.
The blessing over the meal and matzah | motzi matzah

The familiar motzi blessing marks the formal start of the meal. Because we are using matzah instead of bread, we add a blessing celebrating this mitzvah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵֽינוּ מֶֽלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמּוֹצִיא לֶֽחֶם מִן הָאָֽרֶץ

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who brings bread from the land.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵֽינוּ מֶֽלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָֽׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתַָיו וְצִוָּֽנוּ ﬠַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid’shanu b’mitzvotav v’tzivanu al achilat matzah.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who made us holy through obligations, commanding us to eat matzah.

Distribute and eat the top and middle matzah for everyone to eat.

Dipping the bitter herb in sweet charoset | maror

In creating a holiday about the joy of freedom, we turn the story of our bitter history into a sweet celebration. We recognize this by dipping our bitter herbs into the sweet charoset. We don’t totally eradicate the taste of the bitter with the taste of the sweet... but doesn’t the sweet mean more when it’s layered over the bitterness?

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיַָ אֱלֹהֵֽינוּ מֶֽלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָֽׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּֽנוּ ﬠַל אֲכִילַת מרוֹר

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid’shanu b’mitzvotav v’tzivanu al achilat maror.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who made us holy through obligations, commanding us to eat bitter herbs.
Eating a sandwich of matzah and bitter herb | koreich | כּוֹרֵי

When the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the biggest ritual of them all was eating the lamb offered as the pesach or Passover sacrifice. The great sage Hillel would put the meat in a sandwich made of matzah, along with some of the bitter herbs. While we do not make sacrifices any more - and, in fact, some Jews have a custom of purposely avoiding lamb during the seder so that it is not mistaken as a sacrifice - we honor this custom by eating a sandwich of the remaining matzah and bitter herbs. Some people will also include charoset in the sandwich to remind us that God’s kindness helped relieve the bitterness of slavery.

Eating the meal! | shulchan oreich | שֻׁלחָן עוֹרֵי

Enjoy! But don’t forget when you’re done we’ve got a little more seder to go, including the final two cups of wine!
The playfulness of finding the afikomen reminds us that we balance our solemn memories of slavery with a joyous celebration of freedom. As we eat the afikomen, our last taste of matzah for the evening, we are grateful for moments of silliness and happiness in our lives.

At our seder, all the children must find one of our hidden “Afikomens”. It is a cooperative hunt! Once all have found an afikomen the seder can continue.

(When the Afikoman is found, the following is an alternative or supplementary reading on the part of all Seder participants:) “Tonight we read together: Lo! This is the bread of poverty that our ancestors ate. Let all who are hungry come and eat! Let all who are in need share in the hope of Passover! This year we all are slaves, Next year may we all be free. Tonight, to redeem the Afikoman: We renew our commitment to help all who are hungry round the world, So that next year we may all be free.

Refill everyone’s wine glass.

We now say grace after the meal, thanking God for the food we’ve eaten. On Passover, this becomes something like an extended toast to God, culminating with drinking our third glass of wine for the evening:

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, whose goodness sustains the world. You are the origin of love and compassion, the source of bread for all. Thanks to You, we need never lack for food; You provide food enough for everyone. We praise God, source of food for everyone.

As it says in the Torah: When you have eaten and are satisfied, give praise to your God who has given you this good earth. We praise God for the earth and for its sustenance.

Renew our spiritual center in our time. We praise God, who centers us.

May the source of peace grant peace to us, to the Jewish people, and to the entire world. Amen.
The Third Glass of Wine

The blessing over the meal is immediately followed by another blessing over the wine:

ברוך אתה אלוהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p’ree hagafen.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the third glass of wine!
All those present answer:

יְהִי שֵׁם ה' מְבֹרָךְ מֵﬠַתָּה וְﬠַד עוֹלָם

May the God’s name be blessed from now and forever. (Psalms 113:2)

ברשות חביכי, בברך [אלוהינו] שאכלנו משלא

With the permission of our gentlemen and our teachers and my masters, let us bless [our God] from whom we have eaten.

ברוך [אלוהינו] שאכלנו משלא וטשו וחיינו

Blessed is [our God] from whom we have eaten and from whose goodness we live.

ברוך [אלוהינו] שאכלנו משלא וטשו וחיינו

Blessed is [our God] from whom we have eaten and from whose goodness we live.

ברוך אתה ה’, אלהינו מלך עולם, הוזא ה需要用 כל בוטה בוטה בבד

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Source of the Universe, who nourishes the entire world in goodness, in grace, in kindness and in mercy; [there is enough for all to eat] God’s [through our hands] kindness is forever. And in great goodness, we have not lacked, and may we not lack nourishment forever and always, because of God’s spirit. Since with God’s inspiration we can feed and provide for all and do good to all and prepare nourishment for all on this planet. Blessed are You, Adonai, who’s spirit sustains all.

Blessed be the Creator and the created,
Blessed be the sustainers and the sustained.
Blessed be the eaters and the eaten,
Blessed be the feeders and the fed.
Blessed be the cooks and the meal,
Blessed be the drinkers and the water.
Blessed be the farmers and the produce,
Blessed be the baker and the bread.
Blessed be them all.
Second Night  Passover Seder
Blessed be the questioners and the questioned,
Blessed be the musicians and the songs.
Blessed the comics and the jokes,
Blessed be the artists and the illustrations.
Blessed be the maggid and the stories,
Blessed be the rabbis and the learning.
Blessed be them all.

Blessed be the doers and the done upon,
Blessed be the freers and the freed.
Blessed be the leaders and the led,
Blessed be the tellers and the told.
Blessed be the prayers and the prayed for,
Blessed be the servers and the served.
Blessed be them all.

We do not lack the biggest and the smallest of blessings:
Blessing us, One-ness,
With a history, ancient and current, that is never boring.
We give thanks
Blessing us, One-ness,
With boundless Mercy
For all people,
All made in your image.
Those who remember and those who are remembered.
Blessed One-ness
Making peace
Sustaining wholeness
For each other
And all the world
On this Pesach
We give thanks.
As we come to the end of the seder, we drink one more glass of wine. With this final cup, we give thanks for the experience of celebrating Passover together, for the traditions that help inform our daily lives and guide our actions and aspirations.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p’ree hagafen.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruit of the vine.

*Drink the fourth and final glass of wine!*

We now refill our wine glasses one last time and open the front door to invite the prophet
Elijah to join our seder.

In the Bible, Elijah was a fierce defender of God to a disbelieving people. The Bible says that at the end of his life, rather than dying, he was whisked away to heaven. Tradition holds that he will return in advance of messianic days to herald a new era of peace, so we set a place for Elijah at many joyous, hopeful Jewish occasions, such as a baby’s bris and the Passover seder.

אֵלִיָּֽהוּ הַנָּבִיא, אֵלִיָּֽהוּ הַתִּשְׁבִּי
אֵלִיָּֽהוּ הַגִּלְavaşִי
בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵֽנוּ יָבוֹא אֵלֵֽינוּ
ﬠִם מָשִֽׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד

Elijah the prophet, the returning,
the man of Gilad:
return to us speedily,
in our days with the messiah, son of David.

Bashanah haba’ah neishev al hamirpeset

V’nispor tziporim nod’dot
Y’ladim bechufsha y’sachaku tosfeset
Beyn habayit l’veyn hasadot
Od tirei (2x) kamah tov yihyeh
Bashanah (2x) haba’ah

Soon the day will arrive when we will be together and no longer will people live in fear;
And the children will smile without their wondering whether on that day dark new clouds will appear.
NIRTZAH
CONTRIBUTED BY JEWISH BOSTON

Nirtzah marks the conclusion of the seder. Our bellies are full, we have had several glasses of wine, we have told stories and sung songs, and now it is time for the evening to come to a close. At the end of the seder, we honor the tradition of declaring, “Next year in Jerusalem!”

For some people, the recitation of this phrase expresses the anticipation of rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem and the return of the Messiah. For others, it is an affirmation of hope and of connectedness with Klal Yisrael, the whole of the Jewish community. Still others yearn for peace in Israel and for all those living in the Diaspora.

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

In The Leader’s Guide to the Family Participation Haggadah: A Different Night, Rabbi David Hartman writes: “Passover is the night for reckless dreams; for visions about what a human being can be, what society can be, what people can be, what history may become.”

What can we do to fulfill our reckless dreams? What will be our legacy for future generations?

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

L’shana haba-ah biy’rushalayim

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM!
Hey, Jews, don’t be afraid.
You were made to Escape Mitzrayim.
In Sinai, the Lord will help you to live
And He will give you all some mayim.
Hey, Jews, it’s time to start.
God will part all The Red Sea waters. Remember, pack matzah and be real brave.
God’s gonna save your sons and daughters.
The Lord will free you from your pain, The whip, the chain. Have faith, and you’ll all
be happy later.
Hey, Jews, your tales from days of old will all be told
By all your descendants at their seder. Da da da da da Da da da da da…

MIRIAM’S SONG

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

And Miriam was a weaver of unique variety
The tapestry she wove was one which sang our history
With every strand and every thread she crafted her delight!
A woman touched with spirit, she dances toward the light

Chorus{}

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

Chorus{}

And Miriam the prophet took her timbrel in her hand
And all the women followed her just as she had planned
And Miriam raised her voice in song-
She sang with praise and might
We’ve just lived through a miracle (yelled): We’re going to dance tonight!!
Who knows one?
I know one.
One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows two?
I know two.
Two are the tablets of the covenant
One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows three?
I know three.
Three are the patriarchs
Two are the tablets of the covenant
One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows four?
I know four.
Four are the matriarchs
Three are the patriarchs
Two are the tablets of the covenant
One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows five?
I know five.
Five are the books of the Torah
Four are the matriarchs
Three are the patriarchs
Two are the tablets of the covenant
One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows six?
I know six.
Six are the orders of the Mishnah
Five are the books of the Torah
Four are the matriarchs
Three are the patriarchs
Two are the tablets of the covenant
One is our God in Heaven and Earth
Who knows seven?
I know seven.
Seven are the days of the week
Six are the orders of the Mishnah
Five are the books of the Torah
Four are the matriarchs
Three are the patriarchs
Two are the tablets of the covenant
One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows eight?
I know eight.
Eight are the days for circumcision
Seven are the days of the week
Six are the orders of the Mishnah
Five are the books of the Torah
Four are the matriarchs
Three are the patriarchs
Two are the tablets of the covenant
One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows nine?
I know nine.
Eight are the days for circumcision
Seven are the days of the week
Six are the orders of the Mishnah
Five are the books of the Torah
Four are the matriarchs
Three are the patriarchs
Two are the tablets of the covenant
One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows ten?
I know ten.
Ten are the Words from Sinai
Nine are the months of childbirth
Eight are the days for circumcision
Seven are the days of the week
Six are the orders of the Mishnah
Five are the books of the Torah
Four are the matriarchs
Three are the patriarchs
Two are the tablets of the covenant
One is our God in Heaven and Earth
Who knows eleven?
I know eleven.
Eleven are the stars
Ten are the Words from Sinai
Nine are the months of childbirth
Eight are the days for circumcision
Seven are the days of the week
Six are the orders of the Mishnah
Five are the books of the Torah
Four are the matriarchs
Three are the patriarchs
Two are the tablets of the covenant
One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows twelve?
I know twelve.
Twelve are the tribes
Eleven are the stars
Ten are the Words from Sinai
Nine are the months of childbirth
Eight are the days for circumcision
Seven are the days of the week
Six are the orders of the Mishnah
Five are the books of the Torah
Four are the matriarchs
Three are the patriarchs
Two are the tablets of the covenant
One is our God in Heaven and Earth

Who knows thirteen?
I know thirteen
Thirteen are the attributes of God
Twelve are the tribes
Eleven are the stars
Ten are the Words from Sinai
Nine are the months of childbirth
Eight are the days for circumcision
Seven are the days of the week
Six are the orders of the Mishnah
Five are the books of the Torah
Four are the matriarchs
Three are the patriarchs
Two are the tablets of the covenant
One is our God in Heaven and Earth
Chad gadya, chad gadya
Dizabin abah bitrei zuzei
Chad gadya, chad gadya.

One little goat, one little goat:
Which my father brought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:
The cat came and ate the goat,
Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:
The dog came and bit the cat
That ate the goat,
Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:
The stick came and beat the dog
That bit the cat that ate the goat,
Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:
The fire came and burned the stick
That beat the dog that bit the cat
That ate the goat,
Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:
The water came and extinguished the
Fire that burned the stick
That beat the dog that bit the cat
That ate the goat,
Which my father bought for two zuzim.
Second Night Passover Seder

One little goat, one little goat:
The ox came and drank the water
That extinguished the fire
That burned the stick
that beat the dog
That bit the cat that ate the goat,
Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:
The butcher came and killed the ox,
That drank the water
That extinguished the fire
That burned the stick
that beat the dog
That bit the cat that ate the goat,
Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:
The angle of death came and slew
The butcher who killed the ox,
That drank the water
That extinguished the fire
That burned the stick
that beat the dog
That bit the cat that ate the goat,
Which my father bought for two zuzim.

One little goat, one little goat:
The Holy One, Blessed Be He came and
Smote the angle of death who slew
The butcher who killed the ox,
That drank the water
That extinguished the fire
That burned the stick
that beat the dog
That bit the cat that ate the goat,
Which my father bought for two zuzim.