



## **PESACH: A SEASON FOR JUSTICE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ask a group of Jews about their favorite holiday and many will be quick to respond, “Passover.” People of all ages enjoy the holiday for many reasons -- the food, the opportunity to celebrate as a family and the creative, interactive components of the Seder. Yet, delve deeper, and certain themes contained within the Exodus story and the observance of the holiday may resonate on a personal level and provide motivation to perform mitzvot. These themes, many of which have social justice implications, are indeed what make the holiday so poignant within, if not the centerpiece of, the Jewish experience.

Families, social action chairs, educators, youth group leaders, and other synagogue leaders will find many suggested programs and projects that join together the themes of Passover with social action concerns within the following pages. The programs are divided by suggested venue and audience: The Seder Table (for home or synagogue use); Home Observance; and Synagogue Programs, separated into youth and adult activities and religious school activities. Please keep in mind that these are merely suggested audiences – all programs can be adapted for other age groups or interests. Following the program suggestions are lists of websites and *Haggadot* for additional information, and appendices with sample resources, handouts, and background information on the various social action themes.

We hope this material will assist you in making your Pesach observance one which inspires acts of *tzedek* (justice) and *tzedakah* (righteousness).

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## PASSOVER AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Passover is rich in social justice themes. It is impossible to study the story of our redemption and not feel compelled to eradicate injustice in the world today. Among the primary social justice themes found in the Exodus story and in the Passover observance are hunger and homelessness and oppression and redemption.

*“This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all those who are hungry come and eat with us. Let all who are in want share the hope of Passover.” (Haggadah, “Ha Lachma Anya”)*

“*Ha Lachma Anya*” reminds us of a time when our diets were once restricted to matzah, considered the “bread of affliction.” Due to our hasty retreat from Egypt, we were limited to the food carried on our backs – the unleavened bread that we were unable to thoroughly prepare. Our experience with hardship following the exodus from Egypt inspires us to consider those who eat the metaphorical “bread of affliction” in present times, and to let all those who are now hungry join us at our Passover tables.

*-“Even the poorest person in Israel may not eat until he reclines, and they must not give him less than four cups of wine.” (Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 99b)*

The Babylonian Talmud reminds us that it is imperative for us to take care of all in our community, even the poorest person, during Passover and throughout the year. Four cups of wine, quite a luxury for some, is seen as an integral part of the Passover observance. The requirement that even poor Jews be provided with ample wine, and presumably, with all the ritual foods and courses for the one night of the Seder, leads to the expectation that we should **help the poor and the hungry year-round**.

*“My Father was a wandering Aramean who went down to Egypt and dwelled there.” (Haggadah, “Maggid”)*

The painful reminder of our status as strangers in the land of Egypt and our subsequent 40 years of wandering in the wilderness without a home raises awareness of **immigration and refugee concerns**. The memory instills in us a desire to eradicate **homelessness** in the areas around us, and ultimately, the world.

*“This year we are slaves. Next year, may we all be free” (Haggadah, “Ha Lachma Anya”)*

As we are commanded, we place ourselves directly into the story, remembering what it was like for us, the Children of Israel, to be slaves in the land of Egypt. This personal experience of slavery motivates us to examine the current international situation and wrestle with cases of injustice, oppression, and slavery today. Sadly, slavery did not end

at that time, but persists even to this day. Pesach is an opportunity for us to raise awareness of contemporary examples of **slavery and oppression throughout the world**. In our own nation, **domestic violence** traps victims within their homes, limiting their freedom as surely as if they were enslaved.

When we recall our immense joy at being freed from slavery to worship and live according to the dictates of our faith, we are inspired to celebrate the great strides made by various contemporary groups, such as women and African Americans, which have fought for redemption from oppression and won, as our ancestors did. The observance of Passover presents a rich opportunity for **interfaith sharing and celebration**.

### **SOCIAL ACTION CONNECTIONS AT THE SEDER TABLE**

In the Book of Exodus, we are taught how to observe the annual festival of Passover. We retell the story of our enslavement and subsequent redemption as an integral part of the observance. Torah commands us to teach our children, “It is because of what God did for **me** when I went forth from Egypt,” creating an immediate connection between the text and our lives today.

Like many of the Jewish holidays, Passover is observed primarily in the home. During the Seder, we do not rely on clergy or other synagogue leaders to shape the holiday for us – we create the holiday experience ourselves. To that end, many different *Haggadot* have been developed over the years to reflect the interests of different participants and also to speak to various populations or issues.

Generally, each *Haggadah* includes the same basic Seder format, including the teachings about the *matzah*, *maror* (bitter herbs), and *pesach* (the shank bone). The other items on the Seder plate are also explained. We learn about the four cups of wine, the four children, and recite the four questions. We discuss and commemorate the ten plagues. We open the door for Elijah the Prophet. We sing songs of redemption, praise, and thanks. Yet, the way each family interprets and expands upon each section of the *Haggadah* can vary greatly.

Within the *Haggadah*, there are many opportunities to add additional readings or elaborate on the social action themes already present. Many of today’s themed *Haggadot* contain similar points during the Seder at which creative interpretations are appropriate. The following are some of the most common opportunities, for home or synagogue use, for creativity.

**Four Cups of Wine:** While our tradition applies a specific meaning to the four cups found throughout the Seder, many modern *Haggadot* have begun to reinterpret the original four cups or add a “fifth” cup of wine. The four cups are derived from four

expressions of redemption found in Exodus 6:6-7: “I will bring you out,” “I will deliver you;” “I will redeem you;” and “I will take you.” Due to the positive, redemptive focus of each phrase, each cup could come to represent current groups that need to be “brought out, delivered, redeemed, or taken out.” A short teaching can take place before each cup is blessed. Groups for consideration include: refugees and slaves, victims of domestic violence, victims of sexual trafficking, and the poor and impoverished.

Rabbis for Human Rights suggests the following four interpretations for the four cups:

#### The First Cup: Freedom in America

As we lift the first cup, we envision an America – the “land of the free” – where everyone has a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of him/herself and of his/her family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services (from Article 25 of the Declaration of Human Rights).

#### The Second Cup: Deliverance in Israel

As we lift the second cup, we envision a modern day Israel, that fosters the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants. We envision an Israel that is “based on freedom, justice, and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel,” an Israel that “will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants” (from the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, 1948).

#### The Third Cup: Redemption from Overwork and Underwork

As we lift the third cup, we envision a world where everyone has work and, without any discrimination, receives equal pay for equal work. We envision a world where everyone also can enjoy rest and leisure, and periodic holidays with pay (adapted from Articles 23 and 24 of the Declaration of Human Rights).

#### The Fourth Cup: Liberation from Slavery All Over the World

As we lift the fourth cup, we envision a world where no one is held in slavery or servitude... a world without sweatshop laborers, where all workers are able to make a fair wage, regardless of which country they are born into. We envision a world where all products are fairly traded, and no one country or financial institution can dictate trade policies (adapted from Article 4 of the Declaration of Human Rights).<sup>1</sup>

**A Fifth Cup:** Some *Haggadot* include a “fifth” cup in the Seder as an opportunity for additional readings or prayers. This tradition dates back to the early rabbis and commentators, including Alfasi<sup>2</sup> and Maimonides<sup>3</sup>, who discussed this possible addition to the Seder. A Fifth Cup enables us to call attention to a current social justice issue or recognize a recent victory with regards to a prior injustice. This fifth cup could be passed around the table and filled with coins to be donated to tzedakah. An additional reading with specific hopes or social action goals (like a renewed focus on the homeless or implementation of a new, long-term tzedakah project) for the coming months can be included at this point.

As wine can serve as a symbol of abundance and luxury, the fifth cup is a perfect opportunity for a discussion on privilege and poverty:

Some Jews experience a high degree of privilege. Others are less privileged. A recent study points to 100,000 Jews living below the poverty line in New York City. What are the sources of our privilege? Has your family’s economic status changed over the last few generations? In what ways? What does it mean to experience the *Haggadah* from a place of privilege? From a place of poverty? All are invited to tell a short story of an ancestor who faced economic hardship, or came up against an economic system that did not acknowledge their humanity.<sup>4</sup>

***Ha Lachma Anya/This is the Bread of Affliction:*** This reading takes place near the beginning of the Seder in the *yachatz* section. It provides the primary textual inspiration for feeding the hungry during Passover, as well as calling for an end to slavery, which continues to exist around the world in various forms. It also prompts us to join together with members of the African American community for communal Seders recognizing our common experience of slavery. This passage inspires many of the social justice programs created around the observance of Passover:

This is the bread of affliction, the poor bread, which  
our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.  
Let all who are hungry come and eat.  
Let all who are in want share the hope of Passover.  
As we celebrate here, we join with our people everywhere.  
This year we celebrate here.  
Next year in the land of Israel.  
Now we are all still in bonds.  
Next year may we all be free.

The United Jewish Communities Rabbinic Cabinet offers a special “Matzah of Unity” reading to be added when breaking the middle matzah, reflecting on our many obligations to work toward a better world:

## The Matzah of Unity

Passover is the great Jewish family holiday -- but with a critical message about our ethics and values.

We eat the Karpas, the green vegetable -- and recall our concern for the environment.

We dip into the salt water of tears -- and remind ourselves to care for the oppressed.

We eat the bitter herbs -- and sharpen our concern for the stranger.

We taste the matzah, the bread of affliction -- and feel the memories of our servitude to Pharaoh.

We note the roasted egg, symbolic of the extra offering in the Temple in ancient days -- and ask ourselves, what are our own sacrifices?

Passover is so real and tangible, because we not only taste our freedom, but we also resolve to work for the liberation of all people. It is a time to ask ourselves: what are we doing to care for those in need? Can we reach out and assist with our tzedakah, our charitable contributions, or through our acts of loving-kindness?

Let us now take the middle Matzah and divide it in half. As we break this Matzah and set it aside, we link ourselves symbolically with all Jews throughout the world, especially those who have lived under the heel of the oppressor.

Our Seder meal will not conclude until the missing piece of Matzah is found and returned to the table. The Matzah, when restored, shows the desire of our people to be together as one, at peace. As Jews, we are a people of sacred fragments; we need help from God to bond together in everlasting unity.

Today the Star of David rises proudly in the former Soviet Union. Yet hundreds of thousands of elderly Jews struggle to survive. In Argentina, families, schools, community centers and synagogues face a difficult economic crisis and we provide basic services and supplies for tens of thousands of our fellow Jews.

Jews who left Ethiopia and other devastated countries experienced a modern exodus to live in freedom. They brought their children and grandchildren to Israel, a land sworn to us by our ancestors and God. Now we are committed to helping them to become full participants in all aspects of Israeli society.

But our work is not done. We need boundless love for the Jewish people in order to continue our efforts at caring for the most vulnerable, supporting of Jewish education, ingathering of the exiles and to rebuilding Israel.

May this Passover be a time of recommitment to our people and our faith.<sup>5</sup>

An additional reading offered by Jews for Racial and Economic Justice teaches that there are those whose affliction goes beyond food into all economic aspects of life:

In our city today, some of our neighbors are forced to work in order to receive their meager welfare benefits, which barely enable them to survive. Tonight we share their bread of affliction:

The affliction of work without dignity  
The injustice of no minimum wage  
The theft of protection from injury  
The anxiety of work with no future Panic  
at the threat of lost benefits. The stress  
of leaving a child for work The shame of  
forced placement  
The death of educational opportunity  
The robbery of the right to organize  
Silenced voices of protest.

Who speaks aloud alongside those whose speech has been muted? Who breathes together with those who cannot catch their breath? We can breathe the breath of life, we can join these struggles, we can face the Pharoahs and strip them of their power.<sup>6</sup>

The following additional reading by Rabbi Arthur Waskow, to be added to *Ha Lachma Anya*, reminds us that there are those who are not even able to eat the simple “bread of affliction:”

In the world today there are still some who are so pressed-down that they have not even this bread of oppression to eat. There are so many who are hungry that they cannot all come and eat with us tonight. Therefore we say to them, we set aside this bread as a token that we owe you righteousness, *tzedakah*, and that we will fulfill it. (Set aside one piece of matzah.) And to ourselves we say, not by bread alone, but by everything that is brought forth by the mouth of YHWH, lives the human; share your bread with the hungry, says YHWH. As the tradition says, "*Ha-sha-tah hakha; I-sha-nah ha-ba-ah b'ar-ah d'yis'ra'el*,"

This year we celebrate here, but the next year we hope to celebrate in the land of Israel, the land of God-wrestling.<sup>7</sup>

**Fourth Piece of Matzah:** To highlight the continuing existence of slavery, spiritual leaders and families may use the following original prayer, written Rabbi Joel Soffin of Temple Shalom in Succasunna, NJ, while holding up a fourth piece of matzah:

"We raise this fourth matzah to remind ourselves that slavery still exists, that people are still being bought and sold as property, that the Divine image within them is yet being denied. We make room at our Seder table and in our hearts for those in southern Sudan and in Mauritania who are now where we have been.

We have known such treatment in our own history. Like the women and children enslaved in Sudan today, we have suffered while others stood by and pretended not to see, not to know. We have eaten the bitter herb; we have been taken from our families and brutalized. We have experienced the horror of being forcibly converted. In the end, we have come to know in our very being that none can be free until all are free.

And so, we commit and recommit ourselves to work for the freedom of these people. May the taste of this 'bread of affliction' remain in our mouths until they can eat in peace and security. Knowing that all people are Yours, O God, we will urge our government and all governments to do as You once commanded Pharaoh on our behalf: 'Shalach et Ami! Let MY People Go!'"<sup>8</sup>

**Four Questions:** This reading allows for much creativity in the text and inclusion of social action themes or questions. Families might permit time for additional questions to be posed to the group, with opportunities for all to answer. Examples might include:

1. Why on this night are some people still enslaved today?
2. Why on this night do so many remain hungry in the world?
3. Why on this night do we invite the hungry and lonely to share our meal? 4. How can we eradicate hunger and homelessness tonight and every night?

A fifth question can be posed: "Why is this night *no* different from other nights? Because on this night millions of human beings around the world still remain enslaved, just as they do on all other nights. As a celebration of our freedom, we remember those who remain enslaved."<sup>9</sup>

**Four Children:** This reading allows for much personal identification and further interpretation in the text. A discussion can take place regarding with which of the four children each guest identifies most, followed by a consideration of which populations are

currently “unable to ask,” who might be considered “simple,” and more. Examples for a new set of four children may include:

1. One who sees the pain of others and works to relieve suffering.
2. One who cares only about him/herself.
3. One who cares only about other Jews but not other populations.
4. One who doesn’t know where to begin.

**Maggid/The Narration:** Amidst the retelling of the exodus from Egypt, additional stories can be shared surrounding the oppression or redemption of other peoples, such as the rescue of Ethiopian Jews<sup>10</sup> during the 1980’s, the emigration of Soviet Jewry<sup>11</sup> during the 1970’s and 1980’s, and current groups still found in slavery, such as those in Sudan.<sup>12</sup> Those who hold Black/Jewish Seders often focus on this portion of the *Haggadah* to tell the common story of slavery and freedom. A *Common Road to Freedom: A Passover Haggadah*, prepared by the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism in 1996, provides one example of the type of Black/Jewish Seder that a community could organize.<sup>13</sup>

The Maggid is also an excellent opportunity to study current immigration and refugee concerns. Consult a website such as [www.rac.org//issues/issueir.html](http://www.rac.org//issues/issueir.html), the Religious Action Center’s (RAC) focus page on Immigration and Refugees, or [www.refugeesinternational.org](http://www.refugeesinternational.org) for current statistics and areas of concern. Prepare onepage summary of current refugee hotspots for use during the Seder. During the Seder, focus on the theme of flight to freedom as a parallel experience of the Jews leaving Egypt, and today’s refugees leaving their homelands. Prepare sample letters regarding a current immigration concern, with reference to the special motivation that Passover provides, to congressional leaders for all guests to sign throughout the night, and then mail them the following day. (A sample summary and letter can be found in Appendix I.)

**Dayenu: It Would Have Been Enough:** This song, found in the Seder, thanks God for the myriad miracles that took place at the time of the Exodus. “Dayenu” can also allow us to express our gratitude for all that has taken place in recent times. In 1988, CLAL (The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership) produced this modern version of *Dayenu* to recall the many miracles of the modern state of Israel. This reading speaks of the Jewish community’s custom of reaching out to those in need, such as the Jews in the Former Soviet Union and Ethiopia. When we celebrate the successes of the past, we can also remember the ongoing need to help those who are oppressed in other communities.

Had God upheld us throughout two thousand year of Dispersion  
But not preserved our hope for return,

*Dayenu*

Had God preserved our hope for return  
But not sent us leaders to make the dream a reality, *Dayenu*

Had God sent us leaders to make the dream a reality  
But not given us success in the U.N. vote, *Dayenu*

Had God given us success in the U.N. vote  
But not defeated our attackers in 1948, *Dayenu*

Had God defeated our attackers in 1948  
But not unified Jerusalem, *Dayenu*

Had God unified Jerusalem  
But not led us toward peace with Egypt, *Dayenu*

Had God returned us to the Land of our ancestors  
But not filled it with our children, *Dayenu*

Had God filled it with our children  
But not caused the desert to bloom, *Dayenu*

Had God caused the desert to bloom  
But not built for us cities and towns, *Dayenu*

Had God rescued our remnants from the Holocaust's flames  
But not brought our brothers from Arab lands, *Dayenu*

Had God brought our brothers from Arab lands  
But not opened the gates for Russia's Jews, *Dayenu*

Had God opened the gate for Russia's Jews  
But not redeemed our people from Ethiopia, *Dayenu*

Had God redeemed our people from Ethiopia  
But not planted in our hearts a covenant of One People, *Dayenu*

Had God planted in our hearts a covenant of One People  
But not sustained in our souls a vision of a perfected world, *Dayenu!*

**Ten Plagues:** As we recite the plagues, we pour out ten drops of wine, lessening our joy, to remember the plagues set upon Egypt. In today's world, there are many societal cruelties and injustices that can cause us to diminish our joy. Many *Haggadot* contain

listings of modern day plagues, such as AIDS, breast cancer, child poverty, domestic violence, environmental destruction, homelessness, homophobia, hunger, illiteracy, and racism.<sup>14</sup> Families can discuss their “top ten” societal ills and discuss ways we can work to prevent them. Consider the following reading from *A Common Road to Freedom, A Passover Haggadah* for a Seder conducted with both Jews and African Americans:

Each drop of wine is our hope and prayer that people will cast out the plagues that today threaten everyone, everywhere they are found, beginning in our own hearts:  
The making of war,  
The teaching of hate and violence,  
Despoliation of the earth,  
Perversion of justice and government,  
Fomenting of vice and crime,  
Neglect of human needs,  
Oppression of nations and peoples,  
Corruption of culture,  
Subjugation of science, learning, and human discourse,  
The erosion of freedoms.

**Cup of Elijah:** This section of the *Haggadah* focuses on our hopes for the peace and redemption of messianic times, while also reminding us of what we can do *l’taken et haolam*, to repair the world in our own time. By way of example, North Shore Congregation Israel of Glencoe, IL’s *Women’s Seder* includes the following passage to be read while opening the door for Elijah. This reading reminds us that there are still injustices based on gender, and that we must continue to fight for equality in the Jewish community, in the workplace, economically and in society between men and women:

Elijah, we are told, Will precede  
the Messiah.  
He will be a sign to us.  
And so we welcome Elijah  
At the end of Shabbat,  
A taste of the ideal, the messianic.  
We pray, we sing.  
At the Seder we even open the door.

At a *bris* we welcome a baby boy into the covenant. There we place a chair for Elijah, reminding us that each child born bears the potential...could make the difference...could be the Messiah.

But some would say that the Messiah will truly come when we welcome our daughters into the covenant with Elijah’s chair present, bringing them into our people, recognizing their potential to make a difference.

We open the door. We welcome Elijah, girls and boys, women and men.  
Together, we realize potential.

(Lisa S. Greene)

## MODERN ADDITIONS TO THE SEDER

**Potatoes on the Seder Plate:** Following Operation Solomon, the Ethiopian Jews who arrived in Israel were unable to digest much substantial food. Thus, Israel's doctors fed the new immigrants simple boiled potatoes and rice, until their systems could take more food. To commemorate this at the Seder, you may choose to eat small red potatoes, alongside the parsley, for Karpas. Announce to those present that this is in remembrance of the wondrous exodus in our own time, from Ethiopia to Israel.<sup>15</sup>

**Orange on the Seder Plate:** Many families and congregations have begun adding an orange to the Seder plate as a way of acknowledging the role of women in Jewish life. The origin of this custom has been described in a variety of ways; however, the authoritative explanation comes from Susannah Heschel:

In the early 1980s, the Hillel Foundation invited me to speak on a panel at Oberlin College. While on campus, I came across a Haggada that had been written by some Oberlin students to express feminist concerns. One ritual they devised was placing a crust of bread on the Seder plate, as a sign of solidarity with Jewish lesbians ("there's as much room for a lesbian in Judaism as there is for a crust of bread on the Seder plate").

At the next Passover, I placed an orange on our family's Seder plate. During the first part of the Seder, I asked everyone to take a segment of the orange, make the blessing over fruit, and eat it as a gesture of solidarity with Jewish lesbians and gay men, and others who are marginalized within the Jewish community (I mentioned widows in particular).

Bread on the Seder plate brings an end to Pesach - it renders everything chometz. And its symbolism suggests that being lesbian is being transgressive, violating Judaism. I felt that an orange was suggestive of something else: the fruitfulness for all Jews when lesbians and gay men are contributing and active members of Jewish life. In addition, each orange segment had a few seeds that had to be spit out - a gesture of spitting out, repudiating the homophobia that poisons too many Jews.

When lecturing, I often mentioned my custom as one of many new feminist rituals that had been developed in the last twenty years. Somehow, though, the typical patriarchal maneuver occurred: My idea of an orange and my intention of affirming lesbians and gay men were transformed. Now the story circulates that a

MAN stood up after a lecture I delivered and said to me, in anger, that a woman belongs on the bimah as much as an orange on the Seder plate. My idea, a woman's words, are attributed to a man, and the affirmation of lesbians and gay men is simply erased. Isn't that precisely what's happened over the centuries to women's ideas?<sup>16</sup>

**Miriam's Cup:** This new custom celebrates Miriam's role in the deliverance from slavery and her help throughout the wandering in the wilderness. An empty cup is placed alongside Elijah's cup. Each attendee at the Seder then pours a bit of his/her water into the cup, symbolizing Miriam's life-giving well that followed the wandering Israelites. With this new custom, we recognize that women are equally integral to the continued survival of the Jewish community. With a social action lens, we see the pouring of each person's water as a symbol of everyone's individual responsibility to respond to issues of social injustice, and that, together, significant actions can take place.<sup>17</sup>



### **SOCIAL ACTION CONNECTIONS FOR HOME OBSERVANCE**

**The Search for/Removal of *Chametz* (leavening):** This ritual takes place before Passover begins. A Jewish equivalent of “spring cleaning,” this act requires the thorough cleaning of the entire house in a search for leavened products, down to the smallest crumb. This process reminds us of those who search daily for a nutritional meal to sustain themselves and their families. We are inspired to donate our *chametz* to food pantries or soup kitchens in order to help those who are hungry to come and eat.

**MAZON Donations:** An easy way to help the hungry and homeless is to donate to MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger. It is traditional for many families to donate enough to pay for one more guest at their homes. Congregational Seders can include a

donation to MAZON as part of the cost of the meal. More information can be found at [www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org), including texts, supplemental readings, and other programming ideas.

## **SOCIAL ACTION CONNECTIONS FOR THE SYNAGOGUE**

### **YOUTH AND ADULT PROGRAMS**

#### **Hunger and Homelessness**

***Maot Chittin:*** The tradition of contributing *maot chittin* or *kimcha dePischa*, funds for matzah, is an important one. Special Pesach or matzah funds are traditionally set up in Jewish communities to provide for the needy locally, as well as in distant Jewish communities. Congregations can set up a “Matzah Fund” in the weeks before Passover, with collected money going to families-in-need within the congregation, community, or in a selected international community. Passover can also serve as an excellent opportunity to support members of the armed services who are currently continuing the fight for freedom and justice. The Commission on Social Action has just created a resource with a number of examples of ways to support Jewish military personnel during the Passover season. Please visit [www.rac.org/pubs/sos.html](http://www.rac.org/pubs/sos.html) for more details.

**“Hunger No More:”** MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, with support of the Religious Action Center, created this study guide for both adults and children. It is intended to help congregations facilitate discussions regarding the issues of hunger and poverty in the developing world. The resources help congregations prepare to advocate for people worldwide who need our help.

**“Virtual Grocery Store:”** Create a “virtual grocery store.” Set up a large display board with pictures and prices of a variety of groceries necessary for a Seder. The items can start at \$0.25, and congregants can “buy” the items for Jewish families in need at Passover time. Once all the money has been collected, the groceries are purchased and donated to poor Jewish families.<sup>18</sup>

**Passover at City Hall:** Use Passover as motivation to call attention to local government issues or concerns. The Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) have begun a social justice ritual each year at Passover that focuses attention on the city government’s continued reduction of funding to social service programs. They believe that Passover time is no longer a period of renewal, but rather, a time of destruction, as it is the time when city and state social service budgets are slashed, and teachers, students, the homeless, the hungry, youth, the disabled, and people with AIDS begin to panic. JFREJ brings together rabbis, congregants, activists, and Jewish elected officials, labor leaders, educators, and community leaders to tie the theme of resistance to oppression, topics so

basic to the Passover narrative. They gather on the steps of City Hall, perform a short play retelling the Passover in relation to the pharaohs of our day, speak about the real-life effects of the budget cuts, and walk to the offices of key elected officials to speak to them with moral outrage about proposed cuts.<sup>19</sup>

**"You CAN Help" Project:** Synagogue members at Congregation Micah in Brentwood, TN, commit for a 3-month period to buying ONE extra can of food each time they go grocery-shopping and bringing the can to synagogue when they come to Shabbat services or Sunday School. Such a project would be very suited to beginning at Passover and continuing throughout the Omer<sup>20</sup> until Shavuot. It can then be extended into a yearround project, not a one-time food drive. It is a low-maintenance, convenient project for everyone involved. Once a week, the coordinators send an email reminder to "You CAN Help" participants and other synagogue members, along with a list of the food bank's most needed items. For more information, contact [projectnameless@yahoo.com](mailto:projectnameless@yahoo.com).

**Congregational Soup Kitchen:** Allow Passover to be the impetus for the congregation to start a soup kitchen or shelter. Funds can be collected leading up to the holiday, with the soup kitchen or shelter beginning the week following Passover.<sup>21</sup>

**Poverty Initiative:** The Commission on Social Action has a Poverty Initiative website, found at [www.rac.org//pubs/poverty.html](http://www.rac.org//pubs/poverty.html), which contains programming materials, a sample of the Reform Movement's publications relating to poverty, recent press releases, action alerts, Jewish text resources, and a list of helpful organizations. This information can be consulted to create additional Passover programming. (See sample letter in Appendix I.) In addition, the URJ's resolution on **Confronting and Combating Poverty in the United States**, adopted at the 2003 General Assembly, is available on this website along with an accompanying Q & A, which can be used to learn about policy and legislative challenges facing poor people within the context of the Reform Movement's positions.

## Immigration and Refugee Concerns

**Invite a Refugee:** Invite a refugee family to the congregational Seder, an individual family's Seder, a religious school class, or a Shabbat service to speak about their experience, and share the warmth of the congregation's hospitality.

**"Exodus!"**: Passover's multiple themes can inspire an extensive, multi-faceted social action program, like the one created by Northwestern University's Hillel. "Exodus!" which has been successful for multiple years, consisted of 40 hours (corresponding to the 40 years of wandering in the desert) worth of activities, including a walk to Chicago from Evanston. Along the way, the group stopped at different community sites to listen to speakers discuss issues affecting Tibetans in exile, Vietnamese refugees, and Black-Jewish

relations. The final destination of the walk was a JCC, where the students had *havdalah*, sang songs, and then watched a short documentary about the Ethiopian and Soviet exodus to Israel. Following an overnight stay at the JCC, they held a “PBJAM,” which involved making sandwiches for the homeless, a viewing of the film *Exodus*, and a “Chocolate Seder.” Profits from the entire event benefited the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.<sup>22</sup>

***Chol HaMoed Advocacy:*** Using some of the resources found in the Appendices, including a sample hot-spot summary and sample letter to Congress, congregants can be encouraged to take action during *Chol HaMoed Pesach* (the intermediary days of the holiday). An excellent opportunity for congregation-wide advocacy would be prior to Shabbat services at the synagogue on *Chol HaMoed Pesach*, the Shabbat that falls during Passover.

## **Modern-Day Slavery**

**Invite an Abolitionist:** Social Action chairs or rabbis can invite an abolitionist or escaped slave from such locations as Sudan and Mauritania to come and speak at an event. Many speakers are available. If a congregation would like to book a speaker, email or call Jeffrey Hipp of [www.iabolish.com](http://www.iabolish.com) at 1-800-884-0719 or [info@iabolish.com](mailto:info@iabolish.com).

## **Domestic Violence**

**Domestic Violence Seder:** Reach out to Jewish victims of domestic violence during Passover. For example, the DVORA Project of Jewish Family Service of Seattle created a Domestic Violence Seder entitled *A Journey to Freedom--A Passover Seder for Jewish Women Who Have Experienced Domestic Violence*, in which a number of area groups and congregations joined together. A participant from Temple B’nai Torah (Bellevue, WA) wrote: “we saw strong parallels between our ancient journey from enslavement in Egypt toward the freedom of the Promised Land and the contemporary experience of women surviving abuse. We wanted to bring together a group of women who have been fairly isolated within the Jewish community and offer them a way to draw support from each other in a meaningful Jewish context. Those who participated shared the pain and the joy of the journey to freedom. The Jewish community shared the pain that comes with recognizing that domestic violence occurs among us, and the joy of fostering a communal approach to healing.”<sup>23</sup>

**Chametz Donations:** Once individuals and families have cleaned out the *chametz* from their homes, the unopened packages can be collected at the synagogue and then donated to a women’s shelter in the area.

**Invite Attendees to Share Experiences:** Create a space during the Seder for you or anyone attending your Seder who has experienced oppression to share about those experiences and the relationship to Passover. The celebration of redemption from oppression is central to the observance of Passover.

**Advocacy:** Using the themes of Passover to raise awareness, we can promote and support local programs to aid women who are survivors of domestic or other types of violence and work to prevent future violence. Such programs may include shelters for women and their children, counseling, legal assistance and services designed to maximize self-help for the victims of violence. They can also include rehabilitation services for the perpetrators of violence. Advocates for victims of domestic violence might urge authorities such as police, judges, prosecutors, and crown attorneys to attend training courses on the issues of violence against women. We can support legislation at federal, state, provincial, and local levels to further address these crimes.

## Interfaith Relations

**A Common Road to Freedom:** Invite members of the African American and Jewish communities to join together for a Passover Seder, using the *Haggadah* entitled *A Common Road to Freedom: A Passover Haggadah*. The synagogue and church choirs can join together to lead songs of freedom shared by both communities, or learn each other's music.

**“Alliance for Freedom:”** A Passover program bringing together Blacks and Jews can be a springboard for building deeper relations between our communities. An example of such joint programming is Central Synagogue’s (New York, NY) “Alliance for Freedom.” A “Joint Heritage Seder” was part of a larger project between the two communities. Outraged by increasing racial and religious intolerance, as well as social injustice and human rights violations, the Central Synagogue Social Action Committee was saddened and frustrated by the failure of the African-American and Jewish communities to work together or communicate as effectively as they might. The moment for the two communities to work in partnership presented itself in the thirty-fifth anniversary of the murders of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, an African American and two Jewish freedom riders, who were murdered in 1964 in Philadelphia, Mississippi. Here lay an opportunity to assure that they did not die in vain.

On June 15, 1999, the Central Synagogue Social Action Committee, together with the New York Metropolitan Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolence and Grace United Methodist Church, (a predominantly African-American congregation) presented Advancing the Promise, an evening of inspiration and hope. Keynote speakers Representative John Lewis (D-GA), and Rabbi David Saperstein, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, spoke of the past, the reality of today and the need to confront racism if we are to hope for a better tomorrow. Members of the

Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner families, also spoke of efforts underway to further the promise. With this inspiring beginning, Central Synagogue's Social Action committee has undertaken a series of projects with Grace Church:

- A "Joint Heritage Seder" to tell the story of the two communities' common experience as slaves and the common hope of redemption;
- An inter-religious celebration to honor the memory of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;
- The participation of Grace Church in Central Synagogue's annual Mitzvah Day; and
- An ongoing program of study and dialogue to build trust and faith.

The partnership between Central Synagogue and Grace Church provides a wonderful model for other congregations seeking a deep and meaningful relationship.

**Black/Jewish Dialogue:** Sinai Temple (Springfield, MA) has created a series of study circles with a neighboring Black Baptist church in an effort to facilitate dialogue between the Black Christian community and the Jewish community. Passover and the common experience of slavery can serve as an excellent motivator to start a group. Members of the dialogue circle learn about each other's history, culture, liturgy, and social concerns. Many organizations can facilitate these types of dialogues, such as the local chapter of the National Council for Community and Justice ([www.nccj.org](http://www.nccj.org)).

**Seder for the Children of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah:** Many families and congregations host interfaith Seders that bring together Christians, Muslims, and Jews. The Shalom Center has prepared a *Haggadah* for use with Muslim and Jewish groups called *Seder for the Children of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah*. This Seder aims to connect Passover's symbols and rituals with the continuing conflict and hope for reconciliation among the "families of Abraham," connecting Passover with the struggles today between Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>24</sup>

## RELIGIOUS SCHOOL PROGRAMS

### Hunger and Homelessness

**Omer Tzedakah Project:** Religious School students can begin a special tzedakah collection for a local soup kitchen or homeless shelter that begins during Passover, continues throughout the Counting of the Omer, and culminates on Shavuot. The students can visit the recipient of their collection during *Chol HaMoed* (the week of Passover) to see where their donations will go, and also to spend a day volunteering or learning more about what takes place there.

**54 Ways You Can Help the Homeless:** This book by Rabbi Charles A. Kroloff contains many programming ideas that can be implemented around the season of Passover and infused with the teachings of the holiday to provide a spiritual foundation for the activities. Rabbi Kroloff includes ways to give money, food, talents, and other resources to the homeless; suggestions for volunteer opportunities in soup kitchens, shelters, and thrift shops; ways to get others involved; what children can do (such as teach their friends, collect toys and games); and how to be an advocate by writing letters, encouraging state homelessness prevention programs, and supporting civil rights of the homeless.<sup>25</sup>

## **Immigration and Refugee Concerns**

**“Lunch Sponsorship Program:”** the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry (NACOEJ) sponsors this program to provide basic meals for children living in refugee camps throughout Ethiopia who are waiting for their applications for immigration to be processed by the Israeli government. For only \$72 nutritious meals can be provided for one student for one year. Encourage religious school classes to use their tzedakah money to “adopt” a student. This and other sponsorship programs can be found at [www.nacoej.org](http://www.nacoej.org).

**The Million Quarters Project:** It is estimated that there are currently 25,000 Jews living in poverty in Ethiopia. Despite their hunger and poverty, these Jews still struggle to enrich their Judaism and live in a Jewish manner. It costs a quarter to feed a Jewish child one meal. Congregations and Religious Schools can help by collecting quarters in a central location, and then sending them to the Shalom Ethiopia headquarters. Before sending the donations, quarters can be counted in an effort to realize how many meals they will be providing, and how many children they will be helping to feed. More information, including tzedakah box labels and posters for advertising, can be found at [www.shalomethiopia.org](http://www.shalomethiopia.org).

## **Modern-Day Slavery**

**The Anti-Slavery Seder Centerpiece (Grades 3-6):** Religious School teachers can use the story of Passover to teach about modern manifestations of slavery and discuss the need for awareness. This age-appropriate activity, in addition to others available at the [www.iabolish.com](http://www.iabolish.com) website, will help children teach their parents about this critical issue:<sup>26</sup>

*Materials needed for each student:*

Scissors

Glue stick (or other Elmer’s)

A copy of the “templates” page (available at  
[www.iabolish.com/passover/center-template.htm](http://www.iabolish.com/passover/center-template.htm))                    A copy  
of the “photos” page (available at  
[www.iabolish.com/passover/centerpiecephoto1.htm](http://www.iabolish.com/passover/centerpiecephoto1.htm))  
Markers or other decorating supplies

1. Photocopy the “templates” and the “photos” pages so that you have one copy for each student in the class (plus a few spares).
2. Discuss modern slavery, Passover and the Jewish obligation to stop slavery (with the aid of the curriculum material at [www.iabolish.com/passover](http://www.iabolish.com/passover)).
3. Cut out the templates on the solid lines only, not the dashed lines. Two templates will result, one rectangular and the other rectangular with tabs.
4. Fold the two templates on all of their dashed lines and make creases. Then lay flat again.
5. Now it’s time to design how you want your centerpiece to look. You can use the photos provided as well as words and pictures of your own creation. To use the photos provided, cut out the pictures that you would like to use and glue them on the templates, within the lined squares. Be careful not to use too much glue so that it gets messy – use just enough for the photos to stick to the template.
6. Write and decorate other parts of your centerpiece as you see fit – perhaps you can write your own prayer, or boldly draw the phrase “Let My People Go” or sketch the word “slavery” inside a circle with a line through it.
7. When you are done decorating, refold the tabs on their dashed lines and glue them lightly. Then fold both templates into their box shapes, fit them together, and press the tabs into the inside of their connecting sides.
8. Let dry. Take home and place on your Seder table. Pick a point in the Seder to say the prayer (found on the Template) on your centerpiece (a good spot would be right before the four questions). Ask the adults at the table “Do you think slavery exists today?” See if they know! Tell them 27 million people are enslaved today. Tell them we can do something about it – just visit [iabolish.com](http://iabolish.com) to find out!

## **Domestic Violence**

**Special Seder Plates:** In the weeks before Passover, religious school students can create ceramic or paper Seder plates to be donated to Jewish women who have been victims of domestic violence. These plates can also be used if the congregation holds a Seder for victims of domestic violence (see above information).

## **Interfaith Relations**

**An Afternoon of Sharing:** Black and Jewish children can join together in an afternoon of learning, singing, and sharing about their common experiences. Each group can present to the other a short dramatic presentation of their respective histories of slavery and freedom. Teacher-led discussion can follow. Common songs of freedom can be taught and sung together. The children can also split into smaller groups with members from both communities, and together develop a modern version of “*Dayenu*.”

## **ADDITIONAL SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAMS FOR PASSOVER**

### **AIDS Awareness**

Temple Sinai of Sarasota, FL ([www.templexinai-sarasota.org](http://www.templexinai-sarasota.org)) holds a program entitled, “Seder of Hope: An Interfaith Passover Gathering for People Touched by AIDS.” The mission of this uplifting program is to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS in the local community and to bring support, healing and comfort to those affected. Approximately 150 people attend this event each year. Those who attend are from all segments of the Sarasota community, especially those individuals who are afflicted with HIV/AIDS, their friends and family members, and those who have lost someone to the disease. Temple Sinai’s Social Action Committee created a unique *Haggadah* for the Seder of Hope. Instead of discussing the ten plagues sent by God to liberate us from Egypt, this *Haggadah* enumerates the plagues that hinder liberation from AIDS. These plagues are ignorance, denial, hypocrisy, bigotry, apathy, shame, gossip, recklessness, impatience, and fatalism. The program takes advantage of the participation of many of the temple’s 500 members. Volunteers decorate the social hall with AIDS memorial quilts, and every guest is greeted with a red AIDS ribbon. The Seder has also helped the congregation build alliances with many diverse organizations, like the Diocese of Venice, Florida, Sun Coast Cathedral, PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), and the Doctors Hospital of Sarasota, which help to support this event. The Seder of Hope was initiated at Temple Sinai by a program chair who had lost her son to AIDS in 1992. It has become an inspiring vehicle through which many temple members have put their Jewish values to work. The Seder has served to educate both the congregation and the community-at-large about the problems associated with this disease. The Seder of Hope promotes social justice for a part of the population that is often persecuted by defending their civil rights, relieving their mental suffering and building positive community relations.

### **Women’s Seders**

Women’s Seders are perhaps the most prolific addition to the variety of Passover *Haggadot* available. Thirty years ago, Jewish women sought to alert the greater Jewish community to injustices and inequities suffered by women in Jewish society. Recent

times find liberal Jewish women on a much more equal standing with men. The observance of a Women's Passover Seder, which celebrates the great strides women have made to become equal participants in the Jewish world, has become widespread. References for many of these different *Haggadot* can be found in *The Women's Seder Sourcebook* and *The Women's Passover Companion*.<sup>27</sup>

## **Environmental Concerns**

There are many environmental themes that run through the Jewish holidays, including Pesach. Individuals and congregations may wish to incorporate special readings or blessings that highlight the agricultural roots of the holiday. The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) provides background information, sample readings and a special *Haggadah* with environmental reading on its website ([www.coejl.org](http://www.coejl.org)), including the following reading by Rabbi Warren Stone, which can be read while dipping the parsley or other greens into salt water:

### **If the Earth Could Speak It Would Speak with Passion:**

As you dip the beauty of greens into the water of tears, please hear my cry. Can't you see that I am slowly dying? My forests are being clear cut, diminished. My diverse and wondrous creatures -- birds of the sky and beasts of the fields -- small and large are threatened with extinction in your lifetimes. My splendid, colorful floral and fauna are diminishing in kind. My tropical places are disappearing before us, and my oceans are warming. Don't you see that my climate is changing, bringing floods and heat, more extreme cycles of cold and warm, all affecting you and all our Creation? It doesn't have to be! You, all of you, can make a difference in simple ways. You, all of you, can help reverse this sorrowful trend.

May these waters into which you dip the greens become healing waters to sooth and restore. As you dip, quietly make this promise:

*Yes, I can help protect our wondrous natural places. Yes, I can try to use fewer of our precious resources and to replant and sustain more. I can do my part to protect our forests, our oceans and waters. I can work to protect the survival of creatures of all kinds. Yes, I will seek new forms of sustainable energy in my home and in my work, turning toward the sun, the wind, the waters. I make this promise to strive to live gently upon this Earth of ours for the good of all coming generations.*<sup>28</sup>

## **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>*In Every Generation: A Haggadah Supplement on Economic Justice.* Published by Rabbis for Human Rights, Passover 2003. Available at [www.rhr-na.org/resources/Pesach\\_Haggadah/index.html](http://www.rhr-na.org/resources/Pesach_Haggadah/index.html).

<sup>2</sup> Rabbi Isaac Alfasi (also known as the Rif), an 11<sup>th</sup> century Talmud commentator, quotes from an alternate version of Pesachim 118a possessed by the Geonim: " 'On the fifth cup, one should recite the Great Hallel,' these are the words of Rabbi Tarfon."

<sup>3</sup> In response to the prior text quoted by Alfasi, Maimonides, a 12<sup>th</sup> Century commentator and legal codifier, writes: "One may pour a fifth cup of wine and recite 'The Great Hallel' over it. This cup is not an obligation like the other cups." (*Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Chametz u'Matzah* 8:10) This is also based on the fact that Maimonides identified a fifth redemption phrase, "I will bring you up," in Exodus 6:8. <sup>4</sup> *In Every Generation*, by Rabbis for Human Rights.

<sup>5</sup> Matzah of Unity, UJC Rabbinic Cabinet. Available in printer-friendly format on-line at: [www.ujc.org/content\\_display.html?ArticleID=105402](http://www.ujc.org/content_display.html?ArticleID=105402).

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from the Jews for Racial and Economic Justice website, [www.jfrej.org](http://www.jfrej.org).

<sup>7</sup> Rabbi Arthur Waskow, *The Rainbow Seder*. Available at [www.shalomctr.org/index.cfm/action/read/section/psch/article/seas41.html](http://www.shalomctr.org/index.cfm/action/read/section/psch/article/seas41.html).

<sup>8</sup> Available at [www.iabolish.com/Passover/prayer.htm](http://www.iabolish.com/Passover/prayer.htm).

<sup>9</sup> From [www.iabolish.com](http://www.iabolish.com), an anti-slavery website; Passover Project created by the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

<sup>10</sup>Ethiopian Jews, known also as Beta Israel, who trace their lineage to King Solomon, were rescued and brought to Israel in two major waves. Operation Moses began on November 18, 1984, and ended six weeks later on January 5, 1985. During that time, almost 8,000 Ethiopian Jews were rescued and brought to Israel through the Sudan. Because of news leaks, the mission ended prematurely as Arab nations pressured the Sudanese government to prevent any more Jews from using Sudan to go to Israel. Almost 150,000 Jews were left behind in Ethiopia. Operation Solomon, which took place over 36 hours beginning May 24, 1991, attempted to reach those who remained. In Operation Solomon, a total of 14,324 Ethiopian Jews were rescued and resettled in Israel, a modern exodus of the grandest design. The resettlement and immigration of Ethiopian Jews to Israel continues to this day. (Information found at [www.usisrael.org/jsource/Judaism/ejhst.html](http://www.usisrael.org/jsource/Judaism/ejhst.html).)

<sup>11</sup> Visit [www.ncsj.org](http://www.ncsj.org), the NCSJ: Advocates on behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States and Eurasia, for more information.

<sup>12</sup>For detailed information about slavery in Sudan see Appendix III. More information can be found on the Religious Action Center's website at [www.rac.org/issues/issuesudan.html](http://www.rac.org/issues/issuesudan.html) or at the Human Rights Watch website: [www.hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/sudanupdate.htm](http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/sudanupdate.htm).

<sup>13</sup> *A Common Road to Freedom*. Edited by Leonard Fein and Rabbi David Saperstein. Designed with Black/Jewish Seders in mind, the newest edition of this Black/Jewish Passover *Haggadah* is rich in new songs, ancient and contemporary writings, and reflections by Jewish and African American leaders. Scores of synagogues, communities and college campuses have held Black/Jewish Seders during the Passover season using *A Common Road to Freedom*. To order please call the Religious Action Center at 202-3872800.

<sup>14</sup> List adapted from the Hillel website's Passover Guide, found at [www.hillel.org](http://www.hillel.org).

<sup>15</sup>Ritual found at the Shalom Center's website, courtesy of Nechama and Howie Tamler, Palo Alto, CA: [www.shalomctr.org/index.cfm/action/read/section/psch/article/seas03.html](http://www.shalomctr.org/index.cfm/action/read/section/psch/article/seas03.html).

<sup>16</sup> Susannah Heschel, Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies Dartmouth College, April 2001. Available online at: [www.miriamscup.com/Heschel\\_orange.htm](http://www.miriamscup.com/Heschel_orange.htm).

<sup>17</sup> More information is available in *Visiting Miriam's Well: A Miriam's Cup Study Guide*, published by Women for Reform Judaism, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Idea courtesy of the Hillel Program Exchange at [www.hillel.org](http://www.hillel.org).

<sup>19</sup> More information about this type of activism can be found at [www.jfrej.org](http://www.jfrej.org).

<sup>20</sup> According to the Torah (Lev. 23:15), we are obligated to count the days from the second night of Passover to the day before Shavuot, seven full weeks. This period is known as the Counting of the Omer. An omer is a unit of measure. Beginning on the second day of Passover, in the days of the Temple, an omer of barley was cut down and brought to the Temple as an offering.

<sup>21</sup> A helpful guide for starting this process is *Housing the Homeless: A “How-To” Manual for “One Congregation-One Home,”* published by Micah House (Washington, D.C., 1992). <sup>22</sup> Information available on-line at:

<http://www.hillel.org/Hillel/exchange.nsf/92cd1468f71d16ef85256930004bf797/3E63921461255964852569620050ED57?OpenDocument>.

<sup>23</sup> Contact the Jewish Family Service of Seattle at 206-861-3159 for more information. Copies of this special *Haggadah* are available for purchase at [www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org).

<sup>24</sup> The *Haggadah* is available at  
[www.shalomctr.org/index.cfm/action/read/section/IsPal/article/peace01.html](http://www.shalomctr.org/index.cfm/action/read/section/IsPal/article/peace01.html).

<sup>25</sup> *54 Ways You Can Help the Homeless*, by Rabbi Charles A. Kroloff (West Orange, NJ: Behrman House Inc., 1993).

<sup>26</sup> Courtesy of [www.iabolish.com](http://www.iabolish.com).

<sup>27</sup> *The Women’s Seder Sourcebook* and *The Women’s Passover Companion*, edited by Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfield, et al. (Woodstock: Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> Available on-line at: [http://www.coejl.org/celebrate/pass\\_stone.shtml](http://www.coejl.org/celebrate/pass_stone.shtml).

## **SOCIAL ACTION WEBSITES**

### **Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism ([www.rac.org](http://www.rac.org))**

The official website of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism can be searched for resolutions, initiatives, and information on the social action themes of Passover. The social action program bank ([www.rac.org/social/bank.html](http://www.rac.org/social/bank.html)) contains many suggestions surrounding Passover themes and programming ideas.

### **NFTY ([www.geocities.com/nftysanet/Saprog.htm](http://www.geocities.com/nftysanet/Saprog.htm))**

NFTY’s “Social Action Presence on the Web” contains materials for social action chairs of youth groups around the country. The above link goes to NFTY’s Program Bank, which provides programs under categories including Children’s Issues, Hunger/Homelessness, and Political Action.

### **Kesher: Connecting Reform Jews on Campus ([www.keshernet.com](http://www.keshernet.com))**

Kesher provides a Social Action Resource page with programming ideas in a number of areas, including Hunger, Environment, Gun Control, Literacy, and more. They also include links to other major Jewish and social action oriented organizations.

### **Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life ([www.hillel.org](http://www.hillel.org))**

Hillel provides opportunities for Jewish students to explore and celebrate their Jewish identity through its global network of over 500 regional centers, campus Foundations and Hillel student organizations. The Hillel website provides a wide variety of materials for college students and beyond. Following the Jewish resources page, then clicking on “Holidays and Rituals” will link to the Passover section. Hillel offers extensive resources, readings, Divrei Torah, and Seders available for use.

### **MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger ([www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org))**

MAZON offers a number of readings and resources relating to issues of hunger for use during Passover and throughout the year.

### **Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life ([www.coejl.org](http://www.coejl.org))**

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) promotes environmental education, scholarship, advocacy, and action in the American Jewish community. Its website provides environmental program ideas for congregations and individuals during Jewish holidays, including a special *Haggadah*, available at: [www.coejl.org/celebrate/pass\\_hag.shtml](http://www.coejl.org/celebrate/pass_hag.shtml).

### **The Shalom Center ([www.shalomctr.org](http://www.shalomctr.org))**

The Shalom Center contains a number of excellent Social Justice *Haggadot*. Examples include *The New Freedom Seder* and *Seder for the Children of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah*. Consult the website for the most current programming ideas and newest publications. **Rabbis for Human Rights**

### **([www.rhr-na.org/resources/Pesach\\_Haggadah/index.html](http://www.rhr-na.org/resources/Pesach_Haggadah/index.html))**

Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR), founded in 1988, is an organization of over 100 Israeli rabbis and rabbinical students committed to defending the human rights of everyone in Israel and in the territories under Israeli control: Israelis and Palestinians, Muslims, Christians and Jews, young and old, rich and poor, citizens and foreigners. RHR includes members of the Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform and Renewal Movements. RHR has no affiliation with any party or ideology. The North American rabbinic associations of the Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist movements have endorsed RHR. The above link includes many additional readings and resources for the Passover Seder.

### **Jewish Social Justice Network ([www.jsjn.org/1157\\_PassoverGuide\\_c.pdf](http://www.jsjn.org/1157_PassoverGuide_c.pdf))**

Established in 2000, the Jewish Social Justice Network (JSJN) is a national network of Jewish organizations that promote the involvement of Jews in local social justice work across the United States through community organizing, advocacy, activism, training and education. JSJN's 2003 resource guide includes alternative *Haggadah* readings and *Divrei Torah*. The selections speak boldly, eloquently and at times with humor, about slavery, tyranny and oppression; freedom, liberation and resistance. Throughout they affirm that, "we remember our past in order to be engaged with our present," and that Jewish history, ritual and traditions compel us to *tikkun olam*, the healing and repair of the world.

### **Socialaction.com ([www.socialaction.com/jewish\\_holidays.html](http://www.socialaction.com/jewish_holidays.html))**

Socialaction.com is an online magazine dedicated to pursuing justice, building community, and repairing the world. A wealth of materials for social action-based programming, readings, and supplements related to Passover and other holidays can be found at the above link.

### **AVODAH: the Jewish Service Corps ([www.avodah.net](http://www.avodah.net))**

AVODAH: the Jewish Service Corps is a yearlong program combining front-line anti-poverty work, Jewish study, and community-building. It provides an opportunity for young adults to live out and deepen their commitments to Jewish life and social change through a year of work in low-income communities in New York City or Washington, DC. Its website contains the two sample text studies related to Passover and social action concerns which are included in Appendix II.

### **Foundation for Family Education**

([www.foundationforfamilyeducation.org/docs/passover/toc.htm](http://www.foundationforfamilyeducation.org/docs/passover/toc.htm))

A Jewish Free Resource website, run by Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner. A Passover Guide and Seder Supplement are available with many types of readings and ideas.

**Myjewishlearning.com** ([www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Passover.htm](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Passover.htm)) A great site for general information, applications, and study materials surrounding the observance of Passover.

### **RECOMMENDED HAGGADOT WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE CONTENT**

**Anisfield, Rabbi Sharon Cohen, et al. *The Women's Seder Sourcebook*. Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2003.**

**Anisfield, Rabbi Sharon Cohen, et al. *The Women's Passover Companion*. Woodstock: Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2003)**

Both of the above sources are excellent starting points for either a Women's Seder or the addition of readings focusing on the role of women and women's issues to a Seder.

**Bronstein, Herbert. *A Passover Haggadah, The New Union Haggadah*. Central Conference of American Rabbis. New York: Penguin Books, 1978.**

This edition of the CCAR *Haggadah* contains additional readings with a social action focus.

**Dishon, David and Noam Zion. *A Different Night: The Family Participation Haggadah*. Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 1997.**

This extensive Passover *Haggadah* and resource contains many suggestions for different readings, interpretations, and activities for the Seder and the week of Passover. Many social justice readings are included.

**Elwell, Sue Levi, ed. *The Open Door: A Passover Haggadah*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2002.**

The new CCAR *Haggadah* includes many readings and social action interpretations.

**Levy, Rabbi Richard N. *On Wings of Freedom: The Hillel Haggadah for the Nights of Passover*. Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1989.**

This *Haggadah* contains many social action readings and interpretations of portions of the Seder.

**Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. *A Common Road to Freedom: A Passover Haggadah*. Washington, D.C., 1996.**

The RAC prepared this *Haggadah* designed to provide material for a BlackJewish congregational Seder. It contains many relevant readings and adaptations of traditional rituals.

**Waskow, Arthur. *The Passover of Peace: A Seder for the Children of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah*. Tikkun Magazine, 1999.**

This *Haggadah* is suggested for use as an organizing tool for Israeli-Palestinian peace-making. The text and directions for its use in interfaith settings is available online at:

[www.shalomctr.org/index.cfm/action/read/section/IsPal/article/peace01.html](http://www.shalomctr.org/index.cfm/action/read/section/IsPal/article/peace01.html).

***The Shalom Seders: Three Haggadahs*. Israel: New Jewish Agenda, 1984.**

Includes 3 different Seders with a social justice focus: “The Rainbow Seder” was originally written in 1969 in order to bring together the black and Jewish communities at Passover time. “The Seder of the Children of Abraham” discusses peace between Jews and Palestinians. “A *Haggadah* of Liberation” focuses on redemption and social transformation in all lands.

## **APPENDIX I: SAMPLE SUMMARY AND ADVOCACY LETTER**

### **SAMPLE ONE-PAGE SUMMARY OF REFUGEE HOT SPOT**

*All information is courtesy of [www.refugeesinternational.org](http://www.refugeesinternational.org), and is current as of January, 2004.*

#### **Sri Lankan Refugees in India**

Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka began fleeing to India in 1983 when violence broke out in their country between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamil militant group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Although many of the refugees have been repatriated to Sri Lanka over the years, at present 61,000 Sri Lankan Tamils are living in 103 government-run camps in the South Indian state of Tamilnadu. An additional 20,000 refugees live outside the camps. The camp-based refugees said that they are grateful to the Indian government for permitting them to stay in India and making educational and health facilities available to their children.

Life in the camps, however, has been far from easy. They receive a small stipend each month and a few basic supplies from the Indian government, which are inadequate for survival. The refugees do whatever jobs they can find, such as construction work or house painting. In one camp more than 1,000 people have been living for a decade in crowded warehouses where each family lives in a 10 feet by 10 feet partitioned area. In other camps, refugees are living in “temporary” shelters, which were built prior to the refugee influx as short-term housing and are now falling apart. Toilet and water pump facilities, constructed by Indian authorities in the early 1990s, broke down long ago and have not been repaired. Refugees’ movement outside the camps is restricted and the camps have morning and evening curfews. The Indian Government does not permit international NGOs and aid agencies, including UNHCR, access to the camps. Refugees who disobey the rules may have their monthly stipend and rations cut off as punishment.

The Government of India has been asked to permit the UNHCR and other international aid agencies access to the camps to assist the refugees, and to ease its restrictions on the movement of Sri Lankan refugees living in the camps.

### **SAMPLE LETTER TO CONGRESS**

*Action alerts and sample letters such as this are available on the website of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism ([www.rac.org](http://www.rac.org)). The Chai Impact Legislative Action Center provides easy links to send such letters to your representatives by email: <http://capwiz.com/rac/home/>.*

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_:

As a Reform Jew deeply committed to economic justice, I am writing to urge you to oppose the House budget resolution when it is voted on later this week and to vote no on any budget enforcement package that contains one-sided “pay-as-you-go” rules that do not require Congress to pay for tax cuts.

The House budget resolution proposes massive tax cuts while cutting domestic programs that middle and low income Americans rely on. The large tax cuts—which would total \$138 billion in revenue in the next five years – pose a grave danger to the economy in the long run, threatening the viability of a range of social service programs. I fear that our children and our children’s children will pay the future price for these tax cuts.

The tax cuts in the budget primarily benefit the wealthiest Americans. Assuming that no tax cuts are allowed to expire, more than one-third of the 2001 – 2003 tax cuts go to the top one percent of taxpayers, the vast majority of whom are millionaires. The share going to people at the bottom one-fifth of the income ladder is a fraction of one percent. Meanwhile, the budget would cut funding for domestic discretionary programs by \$120 billion over five years. These include cuts to programs important to low and moderate income people including law enforcement, medical and scientific research, veterans’ medical care, housing and environmental protection. The budget resolution would likely lead to \$2.2 billion in cuts to Medicaid over the next five years, swelling the already large number of uninsured Americans. It will also slash humanitarian assistance to countries around the world.

It is unfair that the budget makes no room for more child care dollars, even though thousands of families are on waiting lists for child care help and fewer than one in seven children eligible for federal assistance gets help. The resolution would cut childcare assistance for at least 200,000 children. Additionally, the resolution’s steep cuts in funding for the Section 8 housing voucher program would lead to 250,000 fewer low-income families and elderly and disabled households receiving housing assistance in FY2005.

From the Torah’s commandment that we shall “open our hands to the poor and needy among us,” (Deuteronomy 15:7) Judaism has developed a rich tradition of communal social services. The United States’ community is in need, and the federal government has the responsibility to open its hands to the needy among us. We are particularly mindful of the needs of those struggling in poverty at this season of Passover, when we utter the words “Let all who are hungry come and eat.” While we open our homes to those in need, we hope these values will permeate the halls of Congress as well. Therefore I urge you to vote no on the House budget resolution and on H.R. 3973, the accompanying budget process bill.

Sincerely,

Your name

## **APPENDIX II: TEXT STUDY**

The following sample text study guides are from the website of AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps, available on line at: [www.avodah.net](http://www.avodah.net).

### **AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps**

#### ***Torah Im Derekh Eretz #239***

14 Nisan 5763 – April 16, 2003

Torah Portion: *Passover*

#### ***SHOWING LIBERATION***

וְלֹא לֵידָה וְלֹא תַלְחַצֵּנוּ כִּי גַּרְגָּרִים הָיִתֶם בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: כִּלְאַלְפָעָה וְנִתְּנוּ לָא  
תַּעֲנוּ: אַסְעָה תַּעֲנָה אָתָנוּ קַי אַסְעָה צַעַק אַלְיָ שְׁמַע אַשְׁמַע צַעַקְתָּו: וְפָנָה אַפִּי  
וְרָגָא תָּכַסְתָּ בְּחַרְבָּ וְהַע נְשִׁיקָל אַלְפָעָה וּבְנִיקָם יָתְמִים:

*You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not ill-treat any widow or orphan. If you do mistreat them, I will heed their outcry as soon as they cry out to Me, and My anger shall blaze forth and I will put you to the sword, and your own wives shall become widows and your children orphans.*

[Exodus 22:20-23]

The commandment to protect the defenseless in society from exploitation is the most often repeated injunction in the entire Torah, appearing more often than commandments to love God, keep kosher or observe the Sabbath. According to one count by the Talmud, we are warned to protect the most vulnerable among us no less than thirty-six times.

Refraining from taking advantage of the powerless, empowering them and protecting them from those who would attempt to exploit them is one of the chief obligations that the Jewish tradition places upon us. Perhaps this explains a variant text of the Passover haggadah preserved by Maimonides in his law code.

**It is well known that the hagaddah states:**

בְּכָל דָּוָר וְדָוָר חִיב אָדָם לְרֹאֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאֵילוּ הוּא בְּעַצְמוֹ יֵצֵא עַתָּה מִשְׁעָבוֹד מִצְרָיִם

"In every generation we are obligated to see ourselves as though we personally had escaped from slavery in Egypt."

**But Maimonides codifies the obligation in slightly different language:**

בְּכָל דָּוָר וְדָוָר חִיב אָדָם לְהֹרְאֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאֵילוּ הוּא בְּעַצְמוֹ יֵצֵא עַתָּה מִשְׁעָבוֹד נִצְרָם

"In every generation we are obligated to make it appear as though we personally had escaped from slavery in Egypt."

**QUESTION:** What is the difference between seeing ourselves as people who have experienced liberation and showing this to others ("making it appear so")?

**AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps**  
***Torah Im Derekh Eretz #184***  
14 Nisan 5762 – March 27, 2002  
*Torah Portion – Shabbat Pesah*

***WHEN DOES FREEDOM BEGIN? WHEN DOES IT END?***

Must we recline when we drink wine at the Passover seder?

Rav Nachman says:

- The first two cups require reclining because it is at that moment that freedom begins.
- The last two cups do not require reclining since freedom has already been achieved.

Another view says:

- The last two cups require reclining since it is from that point [in the recitation of the Hagaddah] onwards that we are free.
- The first two cups do not require reclining since at that point [in the recitation of the Hagaddah] we are still slaves.

Since arguments are offered on both sides, we recline for all four cups. [Pesahim 108a]

איתמור משמעיה דבר נחמן צרך הסיבה, ואיתמור משמעיה דבר נחמן אין צורך צרך הסיבה. ולא פלאי, ראי – בתרתניCSI קמאן, הא – בתרתניCSI קמאן, אמרוי לה להחי גיסא, ואמרוי לה להחי גיסא אמרוי לה להחי גיסא. תריCSI קמאן – בעו הסיבה, דהשתא הוא דקה מתחלא לה חירות. תריCSI בתרתני לא בעו הסיבה – מאי דוחה הוות. ואמרוי לה להחי גיסא. אדרבה, תריCSI בתרתני בעו הסיבה – היהיא שעתא דקה הויא חירות, תריCSI קמאן לא בעו הסיבה – דאכתי עבדים היינו קאמנו. השטא דחוימר הבי ואיתמור הבי – אדי ואדי בעו הסיבה –

**COMMENTARY:** Since it was the custom in the ancient world for free people to recline when they dined, we recline when drinking wine at the Passover seder, as a sign of our freedom. But the seder is a narrative that describes a journey from slavery to freedom, and the four cups of wine are spaced throughout the narrative at different moments in the journey. By asking which cups require us to recline as we drink them, the Talmud is really asking whether it's possible to identify a specific moment when freedom is achieved.

Rav Nachman implies that freedom is there from the beginning, and that the work of breaking from slavery is the real achievement of freedom. After freedom has been won, it becomes the regular state of affairs, so there is no more need to recline.

The other opinion suggests that struggling for freedom is not freedom itself. Only once we have our freedom can we recline. And even after the exact moment when freedom is achieved (the third cup), we still cannot take our freedom for granted. We need to recline on the fourth cup as well, indicating that achieving freedom is an ongoing task (In the words of Thomas Jefferson, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.")

Our tradition sees merit in both views – that freedom is both a process of throwing off oppression and that it is a matter of keeping those things that threaten our freedom at bay. Therefore, we recline for all four cups, making freedom the thread that runs throughout the entire exodus tale.

© AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps

### **APPENDIX III: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SOCIAL ACTION THEMES**

#### **Worldwide Slavery Today**

The 1927 League of Nations Slavery Convention outlawed slavery worldwide. Article 2 states that the signing nations would take the necessary steps "to bring about, progressively and as soon as possible, the complete abolition of slavery in all its forms." Slavery is defined as forced labor without pay under the threat of violence. A conservative estimate states that more than 27 million people are enslaved worldwide.<sup>1</sup>

The type of enslavement varies from chattel slavery (in which slaveholders maintain ownership through the use of violence), debt bondage (in which human beings are used as collateral against a loan), forced labor (any work or service that a worker performs involuntarily or under threat of penalty), and sex slavery (where girls forced into prostitution by their own husbands, fathers, and brothers earn money for the men in the family to pay back local-money lenders).

One of the most troubling regions in regard to slavery is the Sudan. Since the civil war began in 1983, slavery in Sudan has long been denounced by many human rights organizations. In this contemporary form of slavery, government-backed and armed militia of the Baggara tribes raid communities to capture children and women who are then held in conditions of slavery in western Sudan and elsewhere. They are forced to work for free in homes and in fields, punished when they refuse, and abused physically and sometimes sexually. Raids are directed mostly at the civilian Dinka population of the southern region of Bahr El Ghazal. The government arms and sanctions the practice of slavery by this tribal militia, known as murahleen, as a low cost part of its counterinsurgency war against the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), which is identified with the Dinka tribe of southern Sudan.<sup>2</sup>

Sexual trafficking of women in the United States is an increasingly serious issue. Using promises of high-paying jobs and better opportunities in America, traffickers have begun to lure women from countries such as Southeast Asia, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe. Due to such circumstances as widespread poverty, increased movement across borders, and lowered social status of women in countries of origin, the women are easily tricked into prostitution and trapped without either money or legal help to escape.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Statistic courtesy of [www.ibolish.com/faq.htm](http://www.ibolish.com/faq.htm).

<sup>2</sup> More information can be found on the Religious Action Center's website at [www.rac.org/issues/issuesudan.html](http://www.rac.org/issues/issuesudan.html) or at the Human Rights Watch website: [www.hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/sudanupdate.htm](http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/sudanupdate.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Information courtesy of the Center for Women Policy Studies, at [www.centerwomennpolicy.org/alerts/sextafficking.html](http://www.centerwomennpolicy.org/alerts/sextafficking.html).

Legislation should be aimed at criminalizing the trafficker's activities, and not those of the enslaved women.

**Additional Resources:** Many additional resources can be found at [www.antislavery.com/passover](http://www.antislavery.com/passover), a website maintained by the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and the American Anti-Slavery Group ([www.iAbolish.com](http://www.iAbolish.com)). It contains general information, sample Seders and creative readings, lesson plans, sample sermons, programming ideas and more. The site has materials designed for rabbis, educators, youth groups, social action committees, college students, and individuals looking to find out more about slavery.

### **Refugees and Immigration**

Around the world, millions of people are currently without the security of asylum or a homeland. According to the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1954), a refugee is a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." More simply, a refugee is a person in flight from a desperate situation, seeking safety in other countries but often being refused. Some are internally displaced, wandering within their homeland, yet unable to return home for fear of their lives. As Jews, we are familiar with wandering, and we relate to the feeling of being a stranger, from the days of our ancient experience in Egypt to more recent times. Therefore, we are motivated to help other peoples who find themselves wandering, and must work to find them homes and security.

**Additional Resources:** U.S. policy on immigration and refugees is becoming stricter. The Reform Movement has always supported family reunification and fair immigration policies.<sup>4</sup> The latest information and action alerts about refugees and immigration issues can be found on the RAC's special issue page ([www.rac.org/issues/issueir.html](http://www.rac.org/issues/issueir.html)) as well as on the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society website, at:

[www.hias.org/News/action\\_alerts.html](http://www.hias.org/News/action_alerts.html). In addition, there remain refugees and immigrants within the Jewish community who continue to need our support. Information about Jewish refugees can be found at The World Union for Progressive Judaism ([www.wupj.org](http://www.wupj.org)); the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry ([www.nacoej.org](http://www.nacoej.org)); and NCSJ: Advocates on Behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States and Eurasia ([www.ncsj.org](http://www.ncsj.org)).

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the Union for Reform Judaism's resolution on Immigration adopted in 1995, available at: <http://uahc.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=imm&year=1995>.

## **Black/Jewish Relations**

Crossing the Red Sea from slavery into freedom is one of the most powerful images in both Jewish and African American consciousness. The exodus from Egypt is one of the ultimate demonstrations of God's power and grace. Just as Jews retell the story of their redemption annually, African Americans find resonance in the Biblical story of their own redemption from slavery. This common experience of slavery and subsequent freedom ties our two populations together in a very deep, meaningful way. Passover can serve as an excellent opportunity to come together to learn from each other, study, pray, and celebrate while remembering our similar experiences.

**Additional Resources:** For more basic information on the history of slavery in America, visit the following websites:

African American History – <http://afroamhistory.about.com/cs/slavery/index.htm>

Social Studies for Kids: Slavery in America –

<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/slavery.htm>

PBS: Africans in America, “America’s Journey Through Slavery” -

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/>

## **Domestic Violence**

There are some women in our communities who are still struggling to be saved from violent relationships, or have only recently found freedom. Our Passover story of slavery and redemption reminds us of the terrible oppression that results from domestic violence in the Jewish community and beyond. Victims of domestic violence are finally finding a voice and recognition within the greater Jewish community. What was once imagined to be non-existent in Jewish households is now acknowledged and hopefully will be eradicated soon.

**Additional Resources:** The Union for Reform Judaism passed a resolution regarding domestic violence against women in 1991, which can be found at [uahc.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=violence&year=1991n](http://uahc.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=violence&year=1991n). The Religious Action Center has an extensive review of Domestic Violence legislation, which can be found at [www.rac.org/issues/issuedv.html](http://www.rac.org/issues/issuedv.html).

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Marci N. Bellows, Rabbinic Intern  
Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism Rabbi Marla J. Feldman, Director

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