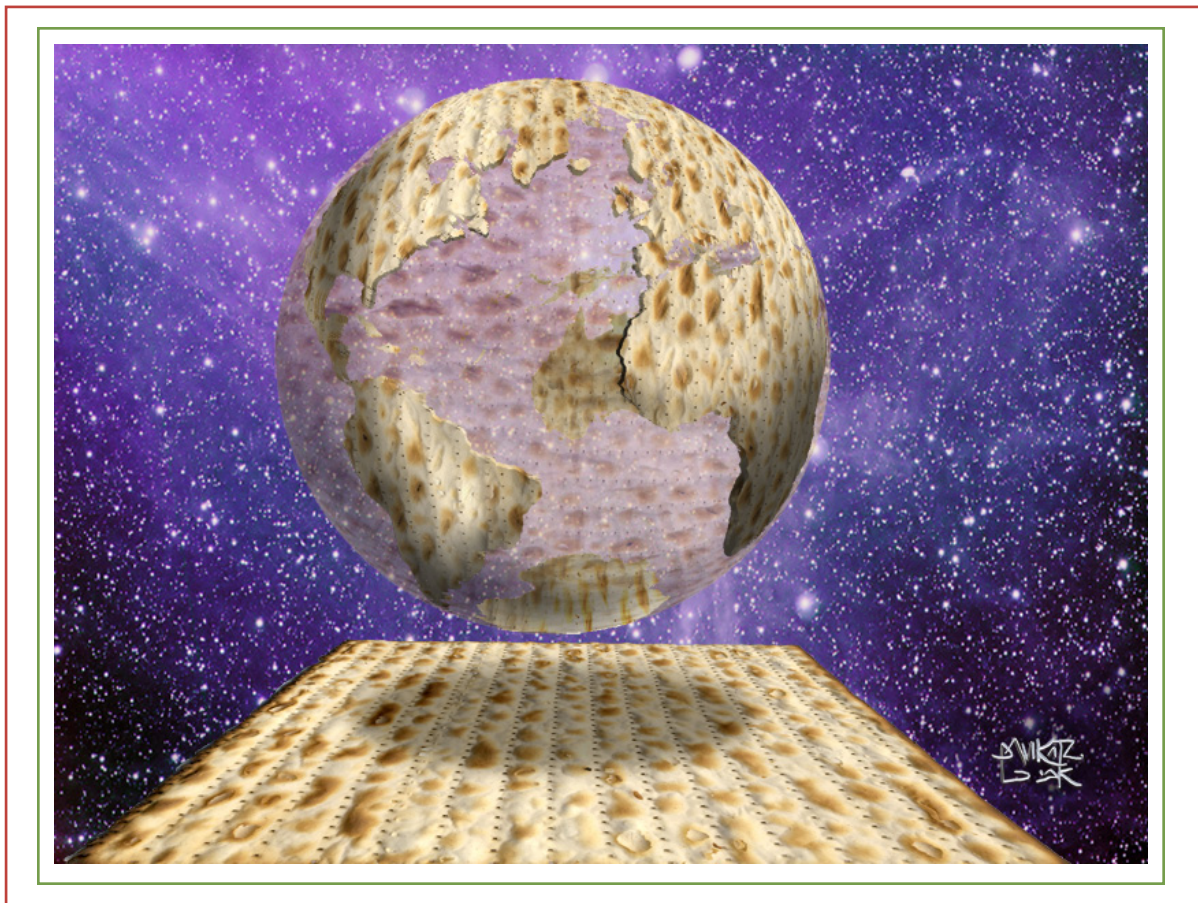


# FREEDOM SEDER FOR THE EARTH



## FACING THE PLAGUES AND PHARAOHS OF OUR GENERATION



THE SHALOM CENTER

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*The Shalom Center has created the text and the organizing mechanisms for you to shape a new Freedom Seder for the Earth in your own community, challenging the plagues and pharaohs of our day and undertaking healing actions by us all.*

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTES

*In every generation, Pharaoh.*

*In every generation, Freedom.*

About three thousand years ago, ancient Israelites fused a shepherds' spring celebration of the birthing of lambs and a farmers' spring celebration of the sprouting of barley into a spring celebration of their liberation from slavery and the downfall of a tyrant at the hands of YHWH, the Breath of Life. They celebrated the overthrow of tyrants by gathering a million strong, bringing barley-bread and newborn lambs to the Temple in Jerusalem.

About two thousand years ago, the Jewish people reshaped that celebration into a Seder, a story and meal that could be eaten and told at home. The Passover story and celebration entered the memory stream of Christianity as well, through the Palm Sunday demonstrations of a group of Jews who came to ancient Jerusalem one spring, part of the general Jewish ferment against the Roman Empire. This particular group was led by Jesus, waving palm branches as a symbol of resistance. It entered Christianity more deeply still through the teachings of Jesus in the Last Supper, which seems to have been a Passover Seder.

Still later, Islam welcomed Moses as a prophet, as it is written:

*"In the name of Allah, most benevolent, ever-merciful. These are the verses of the illuminating Book. We narrate to you from the history of Moses and Pharaoh in all verity, for those who believe. The Pharaoh became high and mighty in the land, and divided the people into different classes. He impoverished one class, slaying its males and sparing its women, for he was indeed a tyrant. We [God] wished him to favor those who were weak in the land and make them leaders and heirs and establish them in the country."*

(Al-Quran, 28: 1-6; Ahmed Ali translation)

In modern times, the experience of slavery for African-Americans and their hope of liberation were crystallized into dozens of songs and thousands of sermons about the Exodus of ancient Israelites from slavery.

In 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King was planning to take part in a Passover Seder with the family of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who marched and prayed and struggled alongside him against racism and

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militarism in America. But ten days before the Seder, Dr. King was murdered, called across a different river to a different Land of Promise.

His death called forth a Black uprising in many American cities, followed by the U.S. Army's armed occupation of many inner-city communities, including my neighborhood in Washington DC.

Walking past the troops as I prepared for that Passover 41 years ago, I was overwhelmed to find myself feeling and thinking, "This is Pharaoh's Army!"

That experience renewed and transformed my own understanding of the Seder. I felt myself called to write a Freedom Seder that would celebrate the freedom struggles of Black America and of other peoples alongside the Jewish tale of liberation. It was published in *Ramparts* magazine and as a tiny pocket-sized book in 1969, illustrated by Lloyd McNeill, a Black artist-activist.

On April 4, 1969, the first anniversary of Dr. King's death and the third night of Passover that year, a group called Jews for Urban Justice sponsored the first Freedom Seder. It was held in the basement of Lincoln Congregational Temple, the oldest African American Congregational Church in Washington, DC. About 800 people—Blacks, Jews, white Christians—took part. The Seder was broadcast in New York by WBAI and across Canada by the CBC.

In 1970, the Freedom Seder was published by Holt Rinehart Winston. It was celebrated by about 4,000 people in the Cornell University Fieldhouse, providing an opportunity for the brief liberation from underground of Father Daniel Berrigan, an anti-war resister who was being pursued by the FBI.

During the years since 1969, the original Freedom Seder has seeded a great harvest of new versions of the Seder that have spoken to many forms of freedom: feminism, peace between Israelis and Palestinians, ending the danger of nuclear holocaust, achieving eco-sanity, solidarity with Latin American movements against tyrannical rulers, personal spiritual liberation and more. For millennia, from year to year to year to year, the Seder has renewed the lives of families and friends, has welcomed the newborn and accompanied the dying.

Now it is we who renew the Seder, rebirthing the Telling of freedom itself as the Telling rebirths us.

Forty years after the first Freedom Seder, the profound questions Dr. King raised in his Riverside Church speech exactly one year before his death—militarism, racism, materialism as the triplets of danger corrupting American society—have risen before us again, as he warned they might. The link between constant warfare abroad and constant shortfalls in meeting human needs at home has become even clearer. Even larger numbers of people have lost their jobs and stand on the edge of the pit of poverty. Materialism run amok threatens to gobble up the earth, to kill thousands of species and disrupt the very climate that weaves our web of life .

Forty years after the first Freedom Seder, new Pharaohs have arisen. The institutional Pharaohs of our day are pressing down not just one people, one community, or another, but all the peoples on our planet and the web of life itself. In this Freedom Seder, we address Dr. Martin Luther King's warning about "the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism," which have threatened the very earth that sustains us all.

For the Passover story reminds us: not only do new Pharaohs arise in every generation; so also do new grass-roots movement to free ourselves from these new pharaohs. Forty years after the first Freedom Seder, America today stands also on the brink of hope, "mixing memory with desire, stirring dull roots with spring rain."

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So we celebrate and we join these grass-roots movements focused on concern for earth. After all, this festival began with shepherds and farmers celebrating the renewal of life in springtime. The miracles of barley sprouting and lambs being born inspired the earliest celebrations of the earth. The greens and herbs, unleavened bread and roasted eggs that are part of the Seder meal preserve this aspect of the journey.

In the biblical story of the Liberation and in the tale told during the traditional Seder, we recall that the ancient Pharaoh brought Ten Plagues upon the earth. All of them were ecological disasters: the rivers became undrinkable; frogs burst all boundaries as their natural predators vanished; cattle were struck by mad cow disease; locusts swarmed and devoured the crops; a climate disaster—unprecedented hailstorms—befell the Land; even those whose eyes had been closed to suffering were blinded by a sandstorm of darkness so thick it could be felt.

These plagues befell the land because of Pharaoh's stubbornness, his arrogance, his hardheartedness—his addiction to his own power, an addiction so strong that he could not abandon tyranny even when his stubbornness brought destruction on his own people, how own household.

Oppression of human beings and destruction of the earth go hand in hand. Our ancient forebears could see that there was a connection. They called it "YHWH, Yyyyyhhhhwwwwhhhh," the Interbreathing of all life, but they could not spell out the specific practices and processes by which these two oppressions were joined. Today we can.

Today as well, we face Plagues that trouble the earth and all humanity. Who and what are the institutional pharaohs in our time? What are the destructive Plagues of our own generation? What can we do to bring Ten Blessings, Ten Healings, on the earth in our own lifetimes?

It is time for a new birth of freedom, time for a new freedom seder.

—Rabbi Arthur Waskow, Director

—Arlene Goldbard, Chair of the Board



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## WISDOM TOWARD THE JOURNEY

*“Prayer is meaningless unless it is subversive, unless it seeks to overthrow and to ruin the pyramids of callousness, hatred, opportunism, falsehoods. The liturgical movement must become a revolutionary movement, seeking to overthrow the forces that continue to destroy the promise, the hope, the vision.”*

—Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1970

*“If we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a ‘thing-oriented’ society to a ‘person-oriented’ society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered. Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism...”*

—Dr. Martin Luther King, April 4, 1967

*“Before entering the Hajj [Pilgrimage to Mecca] which is the beginning of a great change and revolution, you must declare your intention. It is the intention of a ‘transferral’ from your house to the house of the people, from life to love, from the self to Allah, from slavery to freedom, from racial discrimination to equality, sincerity and truth, from being clothed to being naked, from a daily life to an eternal life and from selfishness and aimlessness to devotion and responsibility.”*

—Ali Shariati, Hajj

*“These trees and branches are part of us as we have each become part of this land. The water we have brought is our drinking water, the water that grows our gardens. We literally eat and drink the land. We pray that our homes and lives can be preserved as we struggle to learn, once again, how to integrate fire with this land, how to restore the balance that has been so lost.”*

—Starhawk, *The Earth Path*

## PREPARATIONS

This New Freedom Seder can be used by small groups of family and friends or by larger communal gatherings. In the latter case, it assumes there will be different tables of eight to ten people, with a combination of some readings that everyone hears and some discussion among the small groups at the different tables. It includes several different instructions for discussion and sharing among participants at the tables. In planning communal Seders, to manage time, it is best to choose one or two of these suggested discussions table discussions to focus on during the Seder.

If the text is longer than is possible for your family or communal Seder, use your own judgment about what to include or omit.

Before the Seder, invite everyone to bring a physical item that symbolizes their own sense of becoming free. They will be invited (not required) to explain to their table-mates the meaning of this item in their lives.

On each table there should be:

- ☛ matzah (unleavened bread) and some other breads of the poor in different cultures;
- ☛ parsley or mint;
- ☛ a beet;
- ☛ a bitter herb like horseradish;



- ☞ an egg;
- ☞ some olives;
- ☞ an orange; and
- ☞ charoset (a mixture of grape juice with chopped nuts, apples, and raisins with cinnamon and other sweet spices).

## A NOTE ON BLESSINGS AND THE NAME OF GOD

The most mysterious and most intimate Name of God in Jewish tradition was written as four Hebrew letters that in Western transliteration are YHWH. This Name is especially closely connected with the liberation from Egypt, since it was revealed to Moses at the Burning Bush as the Name of God he could give to the Israelites in preparing them for their birth of freedom.

We do not know how the name was pronounced in Biblical days. The “YHWH” had no vowels. It certainly was not pronounced “Jehovah,” and probably not “Yahweh.”

When the letters on the scroll or book said YHWH, Jews have usually said aloud “Adonai,” “my Lord,” and most translations say “Lord.” But this conveys a sense of God that is outside, above, dominating and not at all a sense of God as intimate, “in here,” liberating. So in our generation some Jews have struggled toward a new way of understanding and translating YHWH.

Two aspects of the Name could help us understand it better. One is that these four letters draw on the letters for the past, present, and future of the verb “to be” so that this Name of God might mean “The One Who Was/Is/Will Be.” Or they may represent the causative of the verb “to be”: that is, “The One Who brings Being into being.” Some translations have therefore used “The Eternal” or “Holy One of Being.”

Another aspect of YHWH is that if we were to “pronounce” these four letters without any vowels—“Yyyh h h h w w w h h h h”—the pronunciation would be simply a breath. In this way, we not only mentally understand but bodily experience God as the One Who is the breath and gives the breath to us and to all life. What the trees breathe out, we breathe in; what we breathe out, the trees breathe in. As the Jewish prayer book says, “The breath of all that lives praises Your Name.”

Understanding the “YHWH” in this way means that it is truly universal—for the Breath exists in all languages and every life-form. Indeed, the breath in the sense of the balance of Oxygen and Carbon Dioxide and other gases in our atmosphere is exactly the aspect of our planet that is now most endangered, and its deformation most dangerous to all forms of life.

In accord with this aspect of the Name, we could simply pause to breathe whenever we come to YHWH, or we could translate it as “Breath of Life,” or we could use as a substitute another of the ancient Names of God: “Yah,” as in “Hallelu-yah,” “Let us praise Yah.”

This Haggadah prints this Name as YHWH. Readers may choose, therefore, how to say these letters. We would encourage readers to pause and breathe so as to have an inner sense of God within and all around them, God Who breathes into us the urge toward freedom.

Not only the Name of God but the form of blessing should be open, and can vary from one recitation to another, using Hebrew or not, perhaps adding not only English but other languages as well. Some possibilities: “*Barukh atah Adonai elohenu melekh ha-olam...*; Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe... “*Nivarekh et eyn-hachayyim...*; We bless the Wellspring of Life... “We are thankful for the majesty of creation... “We celebrate Life... “We honor the breath, the sacred spirit... “

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## WE WALK THE PATH OF THE SEDER ITSELF

### BY MEETING EACH OTHER:

In each table-group, people say their names and in one sentence, no more, explain why they have chosen to come to this Seder.

### BY JOINING OUR VOICES:

*[All sing:]*

Circle 'round for freedom,  
Circle 'round for peace;  
For all of us imprisoned,  
Circle for release.  
Circle for the planet,  
Circle for each soul;  
For the children of our children,  
Keep the circle whole.

—Linda Hirschhorn

### BY CREATING LIGHT

*[All say together:]*

We are the generations/That stand between the fires.  
Behind us is the flame and smoke/That rose from Auschwitz and from Hiroshima,  
From the burning of our Towers/In jet fuel lit by rage,  
From the torching of our forests for the sake of fast hamburger;  
Before us is the nightmare of a Flood of Fire:  
The scorching of our planet/From a flood of greenhouse gases,  
Or the blazing of our cities/In thermonuclear fire/  
Or the glare of gunfire/Exploding in our children.  
It is our task to make from fire/Not an all-consuming blaze  
But the light in which we see each other;  
Each of us different,/All of us made in the image of God.  
We light this fire to see more clearly  
That the earth, the human race,/are not for burning.  
We light this fire to see more clearly/The rainbow in our many-colored faces.

Blessed are you, YHWH our God, Breathing Spirit of the Universe, who gives us light that we may become a light for peace and freedom and healing for all peoples and our planet.

Blessed are you, Yah, Breathing Spirit of the Universe, who has breathed life into us, lifted us up, and carried us to reach this moment.

*[Light candles at each table.]*

### BY CELEBRATING THE EARTH AND SPRING:

*[Use a chant without words to keep energy focused as people pass around a basin to wash and dry the hands.]*

Take pieces of parsley or mint, dip them in salt water, pass them around the table, and say:

Blessed are you, YHWH our God, Breathing Spirit of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

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Barukh atah YHWH elohenu ruakh ha-olam boray p'ri ha a-da-mah.

[Everyone then eats this piece of parsley. From here on, invite people to munch on carrots, celery, and other fruit or vegetables.]

[Someone speaks:]

If we cannot take joy in the return of spring, how can we be happy in utopia? The Song of Songs brings us the springtime when flowers rise up against winter, the juices of love arise from the depths of depression, and the night-time of history gives way to the sunlight of Eden, the garden of delight:

Come with me, my love, come away,  
For the long wet months are past,/The rains have fed the earth  
And left it bright with blossoms.  
Birds wing in the low sky,/Dove and songbird singing  
In the open air above,/Earth nourishing tree and vine,  
Green fig and tender grape,/Green and tender fragrance.  
Come with me, my love, come away.

[The reader passes a blossom from the flowers on the table—if possible on a living plant—to everyone. All sniff and look carefully at their flowers. All sing either verses in Hebrew from the Song of Songs, or the English song “Morning has Broken.”]

(Chorus) *Do-di li va-a-ni lo Ha-ro-eh ba-sho-sha-nim* (Repeat)

*Mi zot olah Min hamidbar Mi zat olah M'kituret mor Mor u-livonah Mor u-livonah* (Chorus)

*Uri tzafon u-vo-i teyman Uri tzafon u-vo-i teyman* (Chorus)

### **Morning Has Broken**

Morning has broken like the first morning/Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning! Praise for them springing fresh from the Word.  
Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven/Like the first dew fall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden, Sprung in completeness where Your feet pass.  
Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning, Born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, praise every morning, God's recreation of the new day!

—Eleanor Farjeon

## **BY BREAKING BREAD AND SETTING IT ASIDE:**

[Someone at each table: Break the middle matzah or other bread of the poor in two. Put the larger piece aside, leaving the smaller on the plate. Uncover the remaining piece of bread, lift up the dish and say:]

This is the pressed-down bread of the oppressed that our forebears ate in the Tight and Narrow Land (*Mitzrayim*, Egypt, where the Israelites were enslaved), and this [*lift up some other bread of the poor—tortilla, flatbread, etc.*] is the bread of the oppressed today. Let all who are hungry eat, and all who are in need come and celebrate the Passover.

[Put the matzah and bread back, covered, on the plate. Then lift the larger piece and say the following.]

Why do we break this bread in two? Because if we hold on to the whole loaf for ourselves, it remains the bread of oppression. If we break it in order to share it, it becomes the bread of freedom.

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 reminder that we owe you justice and a share of the earth's fruitfulness, and that we will work to make the sharing real.

In the same way, if we human beings try to gobble up all the abundance of the world and leave nothing for the other forms of life to eat and breathe and drink, the abundance withers away into the death of many life-forms and despair for ourselves.

If we renew the earth's abundance for other life-forms besides ourselves, the earth will flourish and all beings will have enough to eat. Share your bread with the hungry, says YHWH, the Breath of Life.

This year we share in a world of greed and war, but we pledge to work during this coming year so that we can share and celebrate in a world at peace.

## BY DRINKING THE FRUIT OF THE GRAPEVINE

We will drink from four cups of grape juice to honor four stages on the path of liberation. These cups are: (1) Becoming aware of oppression, (2) Opposing oppression, (3) Imagining alternatives, (4) Accepting personal and communal responsibility to act.

### **First, the cup of awareness: learning to recognize the reality of oppression.**

*[Pour cups of grape juice.]*

Each person at the table is invited to share a short story about an experience that opened his or her eyes to the suffering of others on account of their gender, ethnicity, physicality, orientation or group association, or ways in which they have experienced suffering imposed upon the earth and other life-forms.

*[The youngest person present asks:]*

Why is this night different from all other nights? On all the other nights we may eat either leavened or unleavened bread, but on this night only unleavened bread; on all the other nights we may eat any species of herbs, but on this night only bitter herbs; on all the other nights we do not dip even once, but on this night twice; on all the other nights we eat and drink either tense or relaxed, but on this night we all relax.

*Mah nishtanah ha-lai-lah hazeh mi-kol ha-le-lot? She-b'khol ha-le-lot anu okh-lin chametz u-ma-tzah, ha-lai-lah ha-zeh kulo ma-tzah. She-b'khol ha-le-lot a-nu okh-lin sh'ar y'ra-kot, halai-lah ha-zeh ma-ror. She-b'khol ha-le-lot eyn anu mat-bilin a-fi-lu p-am a-chat, ha-lai-lah ha-zeh sh'tay f'a-mim. She-b'khol ha-le-lot a-nu okh-lin beyn yosh-vin u-veyn m'su-bin, ha-lai-lah hazeh ku-la-nu m'su-bin.*

*[All sing:]*

### **B'chol Dor Vador (In Every Generation)**

*B'chol dor vador (4x)*

In every generation we relive a time  
we fled out of a narrow place with freedom on our mind

*B'chol ...*

We recall how we were dancing when we saw the waters part  
how we stood as one at Sinai and felt that Godbeat in our heart

*B'chol ...*

Now we chant the ancient prayers even as we sing new songs  
weave our future with the past keep the spirit in us strong

B'chol ...

Sing of Miriam sing of Deborah sing of Emma sing of Szold  
in every generation there's a story to be told

B'chol ...

Our rejoicing is a mixture of the bitter and the sweet  
until all live in freedom our journey's not complete

B'chol ...

We must put an end to hunger hatred crime and war  
in every generation that's what we're striving for  
Oh yes in every generation we relive a time  
we fled out of a narrow place with freedom on our mind

—© Linda Hirschhorn

*[A young person asks:]* Why is this Seder different from all other Seders?

*[Someone says:]* In all other Seders we tell the story of the liberation of human beings from oppression, from a Tight and Narrow Place. In this Seder we tell of the oppression of the earth itself and all its living beings.

*[An elder asks:]* Why is that we ask our children to ask these questions?

*[Someone says:]* The answer to both these questions comes from the same teaching. For long ago the Prophet whose name was Malachi, "My Messenger," God's Messenger—taught: "Before the coming of the great and awesome day when YHWH, Yah/the Breath of Life, comes as a hurricane of danger, God will send us Elijah the Prophet, to turn the hearts of parents to children and the hearts of children to parents, lest the earth be utterly destroyed."

So tonight we seek to hear not only with our ears but with our hearts. We seek to hear our children ask us, and we seek to ask them, how to save the earth from the danger of destruction. And we set aside this final cup of grape juice so that when we drink it we become Elijah, turning our hearts to each other.

*[Pour a special cup for Elijah, to set in the center of the table.]*

*[Someone says:]* These are not the only questions we could ask. Any question is a way in. And every question is an act of freedom. So let us ask new questions, our own questions, even if we do not yet know the answers.

*[Members of the community in their separate table-groups ask questions arising from their own life-experience about freedom, food and hunger, environmental degradation and healing, work and jobs, homelessness, war, etc—the more concrete the better.]*

*[A reader responds:]* All this we do because we were slaves to Pharaoh in the Tight and Narrow Space, and YHWH/Yah our God, the Breath of Life Who is the Wind of Change, brought us forth from there with a mighty hand and an arm outstretched to sow us as seed into the world.

*[Why bitterness? Turning workers into slaves. Someone reads:]*

*So the Tight Place made the Godwrestlers subservient with crushing-labor; they embittered their lives with hard servitude in clay and in bricks and with all kinds of servitude in the field all their serfdom in which they made them subservient with crushing-labor.*

—Exodus 1: 13-14

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*"'Look,' one Nicaraguan free trade zone worker says, 'Some people might say, 'What are you all complaining about? Wouldn't you rather work in a factory even if the conditions are bad and you don't get paid much, than to have no job at all?'" No. At least for me, as a woman, I work. I support my family and I like working. But that doesn't mean that gives other people the right to come and we always have to say, yes, yes, yes, for everything, and we'll have to be beaten and hit, just like a dog when it gets hit and it just moves its tail and it comes back. No, we're not going to do that. That's like slaves. That's past time. We came to the point where we said, "It's enough." And that's why we formed the union.'"*

—Source: National Public Radio, August 18, 2000

*[Why leavened or unleavened? Simple or puffed-up. Someone reads:]*

Traditionally, in preparation for Passover, we carefully rid our household of *"chametz,"* leavened bread and similar foods. *Chametz* can also symbolize "puffed-up" pride, greed and jealousy. On Passover, we each eat the simple bread to cleanse our minds and lives of "puffed-upness," to spring-clean ourselves as well as our surroundings. When we use coal and oil to warm ourselves, and let hot air blow out our doors and windows, that is "eating *chametz,"* puffing ourselves up. When we drive an auto belching CO<sub>2</sub> where we could bike or walk or share a train, that is "eating *chametz,"* puffing ourselves up. When we burn fossil fuels because it is convenient and ignore that it is lethal, that is being addicted to *chametz*, even though it is killing human beings and large parts of our planet.

*[Why tense or relaxed?]*

*[Someone speaks of how it feels to physically relax, the connection of the loosened body to a sense of freedom.]*

*[Why dip twice? First Into salt tears of Estrangement, then into the sweetness of Inclusion. Someone reads:]*

*"Said Pharaoh to his people: 'Look, these foreigners, these strangers, these Godwrestlers, become more and mightier than we! Come now, let us use our wits against them, lest they become still more numerous, and then, if war occur, they be added to our enemies and make war upon us!'"*

—Exodus 1: 9-10

*"I have been working with a Colombian asylum detainee. The day she finally got out of INS jail, where she had been for nine months, she looked back at the windows of the jail to wave goodbye to the women she was leaving behind. They knew and she knew that the windows were too high for the inmates to see out of but they knew she would be able to see the windows from the street. So the women inside stood up on chairs and pressed their palms to the windows. We stood there in this miserable warehouse district of Queens looking at all these hands held high."*

—Anne Pillsbury, attorney

*[Someone reads:]*

In the Bible's story of the Exodus, what are the plagues that resulted from Pharaoh's oppression? And what are the plagues that result from the Pharaoh's oppression today?

The plagues ruin the land and shatter its people. But they are not magical punishments upon the land or people rained down by a Super-Pharaoh in the sky. They are consequences of the Pharaoh's oppressive rule. They teach us: When rulers ignore human needs and destroy human lives, the earth itself writhes and rebels in agony.

The damage falls not on the powerful alone, but on us all. And so we pour from our glasses the juice of celebration, to affirm our grief at the sufferings of Mother Egypt.

We will recite the plagues of the ancient story. We welcome you to call out the plague of today that for you echoes with the ancient warning:

*[At each table, the group pauses after naming each plague, and the people drop grape-juice from the cup onto the plate. Have someone call out the next plague listed, and wait for communal response and the naming of other contemporary plagues. After this exploration, some invited speakers will name the ten most dangerous plagues of today.]*

- ☛ **Water into Blood** (Pollution and privatization of water; the flood that destroyed New Orleans)
- ☛ **Frogs** (Frogs, dead and maimed by chemicals)
- ☛ **Vermin** (Poverty)
- ☛ **Beasts** (Extinction of thousands of species)
- ☛ **Mad cow disease**
- ☛ **Boils/Pestilence** (Collapse of health system; disappearance of health insurance; asthma epidemic; environmental cancer; neglect of people with HIV and AIDS)
- ☛ **Hail** (Radical climate change, global scorching)
- ☛ **Locusts** (Famine, genetically modified foods, patented seeds)
- ☛ **Endless night** (Plague of blindness to each other, failure of empathy: no one can see us, we cannot see others. Prison system. Collapse of educational system—no “enlightenment.” Electrical blackouts.)
- ☛ **Slaying of the First-born** (War, terrorism, torture, prisons, AIDS, gun-violence dead, especially children).

*[Recite some of the names of children and adults killed in urban gun violence or dead of homelessness, those killed in the Twin Towers, in Iraq (both US soldiers and Iraqis), Israelis, Palestinians, AIDS]*

*[Also recite names of some of those killed while struggling to make change happen:]*

Martin Luther King, El-Hajj Al-Malik Shabazz (Malcolm X), John and Robert Kennedy, Oscar Romero, Medgar Evers, Chaney, Schwerner, & Goodman, Viola Liuzzo, Allison Krause, Orlando Letelier, Ronnie Karpen Moffitt, Harvey Milk, Barnett Slepian, Yitzhak Rabin, Anwar Sadat, John Africa and the MOVE family, Nizah Morris *[and others named by those present]*

*[Someone reads:]*

More than 2500 years ago, the Prophet Malachi spoke words that ring with danger and hope in the ears of our own generation:

*A day is coming that will burn like an oven, turning to ashes all the arrogant. But for those who revere my Name, the Interbreathing of all life, there is a remedy: A sun of justice, righteousness, shall rise with healing in its wings, its rays. Here! Before the coming of the awesome day of Yahh, the Breath of Life, I will send you Elijah the Prophet to turn the hearts of the parents to the children and the hearts of the children to the parents, lest the earth be utterly destroyed.*

From this ancient prophecy we today hear the danger of global scorching that may burn like a furnace not only the arrogant who have brought this danger on us but all the interwoven web of life on the earth; we hear the remedy of turning to solar and wind power; we hear the need to bring the generations of humanity together to honor and heal the Breath of Life—the breathing of oxygen and carbon dioxide through which what we breathe in is what the trees breathe out; what the trees breathe in is what we breathe out.

This danger is the greatest plague we face. And these are the forms and the Pharaohs of the plagues that afflict us today:

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### **Invited Speakers Talk About Ten Plagues of Today,**

such as drought, intensifying hurricanes, coastal flooding and Himalayas' melt-off.

*[All recite:]*

*Barukh atah YHWH elohenu ruakh ha-olam boray p'ri hagafen.*

Blessed are You, the Interbreathing Breath of Life, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

*[We drink from the first cup, the cup of awareness.]*

### **The Second cup: resistance to oppression**

*[All Read:]* In every generation, a Pharaoh rises up to enslave us. In every generation, every human being must seek to free the community anew.

*[All join in singing:]*

When Israel was in Egypt's land, Let my people go;

Oppressed so hard they could not stand, Let my people go!

(Chorus:) Go down, Moses, 'Way down in Egypt's land; Tell ol' Pharaoh, Let my people go!

Thus says the Lord, bold Moses said, Let my people go

If not I'll smite your first-born dead; Let my people go!

(Chorus)

No more shall they in bondage toil, Let my people go

Let them come out with Egypt's spoil, Let my people go!

(Chorus)

We need not always weep and mourn, Let my people go;

And wear these slav'ry chains forlorn, Let my people go!

(Chorus)

The devil thought he had us fast, Let my people go;

But we thought we'd break his chains at last, Let my people go!

(Chorus)

*[Pour cups of grape juice.]*

*[Someone different reads each passage:]*

*"Now the king of Egypt said to the midwives of the Hebrews—the name of one was Shifrah, the name of the second Puah—'When you help the Hebrew women give birth, if he be a son, put him to death; but if she be a daughter, she may live.' But the midwives held God in awe, and they did not do as the king had spoken to them, they let the children live. God dealt well with the midwives."*

—Exodus 1: 16-21

*"When I dare to be powerful—to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid."*

—Audre Lorde

*"I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government."*

—Martin Luther King, April 4, 1967



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"We didn't come all this way for no two seats when all of us is tired."

—Fannie Lou Hamer, leader of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, when the President of the United States offered the MFDP two symbolic seats at the Democratic National Convention instead of recognizing the whole MFDP as the legitimate delegation.

[Resistance to oppression of workers and the poor:]

*"God came into the picture. What was the sign that God had come? It was a bush that burned and burned and did not stop burning. Moses had had a fire kindled in his heart once, but it went out, or at least died down. God is the Being whose heart does not stop burning, in whom the flame does not die down. What was God all burned up about? The voice that came out of the bush said, 'I have seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt and have heard their cry by reason of their oppressors.'*

*"And the proof that God had entered into Moses, and that Moses had really been 'converted,' was that he had to go back and identify himself with his enslaved people 'organize them into Brickmakers' Union Number One' and lead them out of hunger and slavery into freedom and into 'a good land, and a large, a land flowing with milk and honey.'"*

—A. J. Muste , 1943

*"A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries, and say: 'This is not just.'"*

—Martin Luther King, April 4, 1967

[Resistance to war and militarism]

*"Pharaoh's heart and that of his servants changed regarding the people. They said, What have we done, sending free the Godwrestlers from serving us? So the king of Narrowness/ Mitzrayyim had his chariot harnessed, his soldiers he took with him, and he took six hundred selected chariots, every sort of Egyptian war-chariot. The Egyptians pursued the Godwrestlers and overtook them encamped by the sea, all of Pharaohs chariot-horses, his riders, and his army. YHWH caused the sea to go back with a fierce east wind all night, and the Godwrestlers came through the midst of the sea upon the dry land. But YHWH shook the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. The waters returned, they covered the chariots and the riders of all Pharaohs army, not even one of them remained."*

—Exodus 14:5-9, 27-28

*"A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war: 'This way of settling differences is not just.' This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into veins of people normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."*

—Martin Luther King, April 4, 1967

[Resistance to the destructions of the earth]

*"It's hard for people to realize that climate is an emergency, but climate is changing. The ocean is getting warmer, climate zones are shifting. We can see that the extremes of the hydrologic cycle of*

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*floods and droughts and storms are becoming more extreme. What has become clear from the science is that we cannot burn all of the fossil fuels without creating a very different planet. The only practical way to solve the problem is to phase out the biggest source of carbon, and that is coal. The science is very clear on that, yet the decision-makers are not taking the actions that are needed to do that. We have to send that message to Congress and the President."*

—James Hansen, head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies

*[Sing newer anti-oppression songs]*

### **I Never Was**

First they came for the Communists

I stood by silently

I never was a Communist

What did it matter to me

What did it matter (3) to me

Then they came for the Union Men

and I stood silently

I never was a Union Man

What did it matter to me

What did it matter (3) to me

Cry out cry out its still going on today

your neighbor is an Immigrant

they're coming to take him away

And when they came for Gays and Jews

I just closed my eyes

I wasn't Gay and I wasn't a Jew

so I stood silently by

What did it matter

how could it matter

why should it matter to me

Cry out cry out its still going on today

your neighbor is a Muslim

they're coming to take her away

And now I hear they're coming soon

They're coming soon for me

There's no one left who might cry out

cry out to set me free

No one of us is truly safe until we all are free

no one of us can truly say it matters not to me

Cry out cry out its still going on today

who is your next door neighbor

why have they gone away

—© Linda Hirschhorn 2009 (Inspired by Pastor Martin Niemoller)

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*[All say together:]*

*Barukh atah YHWH elohenu ruakh ha-olam boray p'ri hagafen.*

Blessed are You, Whose interwoven Breath of Life breathes forth the fruit of the vine.

*[We drink from the second cup, the cup of resistance.]*

**Third cup, Creativity: envisioning the new world.**

*[Pour Miriam's Cup, a cup of water because waters birth new possibility.]*

African Americans come from a uniquely American culture rooted in the even more ancient traditions of West and Central Africa. Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, Togo and Benin it is said, "Those who make themselves an enemy of water, make themselves an enemy of life." The African tradition honors the relationship between civilization and nature, between human beings and the earth. African proverbial wisdom and traditional knowledge teach us not only to refrain from poisoning our water sources with pollution, but to let the land and seas rest on sacred days, to take only what is necessary and to honor the sources of our substance. Their descendants brought this sense of the sacred to America where they saw holiness when they went down to the river, sought the Spirit in the Wilderness, and used nature to gain their freedom from human hands. The environment has been our shelter, our home, and our refuge. Those who make themselves an enemy of God's creation, make themselves an enemy of life.

—Michael Twitty

*[Someone reads:]* As a child, Miriam reached out to Pharaoh's daughter to save the life of her baby brother Moses; together they crossed boundaries of class and race and nation to give a new birth to freedom. As a grown woman, she led the women in rejoicing as the Red Sea waters broke and the birthing went forward. She had the courage to rebuke Moses; and she called forth the well of water that nourished the runaway slaves in the wilderness.

**Miriam: The Red Sea**

High above shores and times,  
I on the shore  
forever and ever.  
Moses my brother  
has crossed over to milk, honey,  
that holy land.  
Building Jerusalem.  
I sing forever on the seashore.  
I do remember  
horseman and horses,  
waves of passage  
poured into war,  
all poured into journey.  
My unseen brothers  
have gone over,  
chariots deep seas under.  
I alone stand here  
ankle-deep  
and I sing, I sing,  
until the lands  
sing to each other.

—Muriel Rukeyser

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## SYMBOLS OF TRANSFORMATION, OLD AND NEW

*[Someone says/does each of the following. One participant lifts up the matzah, showing it to the celebrants, and says:]*

Why do we eat this flat, unleavened matzah? Because the decision to act came upon our forebears so quickly that their dough had not yet risen when You, the Breath of Life, bore them to freedom through a hurricane of transformation.

*[All say:]*

Blessed are You, Yah, Breath of Life, who makes us holy by connecting us with all of life, and has breathed into us the wisdom to transform this unleavened, pressed-down bread of the poor into the bread of liberation.

*Barukh atah YHWH elohenu ruakh ha-olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu al akhilat matzah.*

*[Participant lifts up the bitter herbs, showing them to the celebrants.]*

These bitter herbs we eat, what is the reason for them? Because being forced into tight and narrow places cramps the abundance and creativity of all of life and makes life bitter.

*[All say:]*

Blessed are You, YHWH our God, Breathing Spirit of the universe, who makes us holy by connecting us to the eating of herbs so bitter they take away our breath.

*Barukh atah YHWH elohenu ruakh ha-olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu al akhilat maror.*

*[All eat the bitter herb.]*

Why this charoset? Because charoset embodies the Song of Songs, bringing nuts and raisins, apricots and apples, spice and juices, into a joyful celebration of the earth and springtime and each other.

Why do we eat the bitter herbs and the charoset together? Because in times of freedom it is necessary to remember the bitterness of slavery and in times of slavery it is necessary to remember the sweetness of freedom.

Why this egg? Because the springtime is a time of rebirth, when we can bring new possibility, new freedom, into our lives.

Why this olive? Because for millennia the olive branch has been the symbol of peace, and we seek to make peace where there has been war.

Why this orange? Because in olden days there was no orange on the Seder Plate and it was said that outsiders—gay men and lesbians, transgendered people, converts, those who lack some important ability or skill, the unlearned—all these no more belonged in the community than an orange belongs upon the Seder plate. So we place an orange to say firmly, All these belong in our communities.

*[Someone reads:]*

*"The power that flows upwards from the consent, support, and nonviolent activity of the people is not the same power that flows downward from the state by virtue of its command of the instruments of force, and yet the two kinds of power contend in the same world for the upper hand.*

*"The prosperous and mighty of our day still live at a dizzying height above the wretched of the earth, yet the latter have made their will felt in ways that have already changed history, and can change it more.*

*"Their cooperative power has as its chief instrument direct action, both noncooperative and constructive. This power can be spiritual in inspiration but doesn't have to be. Its watchwords are love and freedom, yet it is not just an ideal but a real force in the world.*

*"It must now be brought to bear on the choice between survival and annihilation. Whether combined with violence, as in peoples war, sustained by a constitution, as in democracy, or standing alone, as in satyagraha or living in truth, it is becoming the final arbiter of the public affairs of our time and the political bedrock of our unconquerable world."*

—Jonathan Schell, *The Unconquerable World*

*[Before the Seder, invite everyone to bring a physical item that symbolizes their own sense of becoming free. Put these also on the table; each person explains it.]*

*[All sing either the song that follows or "Soldarity Forever":]*

And every one 'neath vine and figtree  
Shall live in peace and unafraid (Repeat)  
And into plowshares beat their swords  
Nations shall learn war no more (Repeat)

### **Solidarity Forever**

Solidarity forever,  
Solidarity forever,  
Solidarity forever,  
For the movement makes us strong.  
In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold,  
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand fold,  
We shall bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old,  
For the movement makes us strong.

*[All say together:]*

*Nivarekh et eyn-hachayyim sheh hakol niihyeh bdvarah.*

We bless You, Wellspring of Life, through Whose flowing all is created.

*[We drink the Cup of Miriam.]*

### **Fourth cup: Responsibility and action**

*[Pour the cup. Someone reads:]*

*"In a free society, some are guilty. But all are responsible."*

—Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1944; 1964.

## TEN HEALINGS

Invited speakers set forth Ten Healings that we ourselves must bring to heal the earth from the Plagues we have discerned.

*[Someone reads:]*

All are responsible. Yet we are not all alike. Having heard some teaching about the Ten Healings now needed, we turn to each other, face to face, to ask ourselves: What can we do? What will we do? What can each one of us offer so that together we can reweave the flow of life?



At our tables, year by year, we meet four people:

- ☛ One who seeks wisdom in the teachings of the past.
- ☛ One who rebels, seeking new knowledge from a time of transformation.
- ☛ One who seeks truth through simplicity of heart.
- ☛ One who does not relate by asking but remains open, waiting to be filled with experience.

Which are you? What will you bring?

*[At each table, invite and wait for discussion on what people are prepared to do.]*

*[After discussion, all sing:]*

Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and everywhere.  
Go tell it on the mountain/To let my people go!  
Who are the people dressed in white?/Let my people go!  
Must be the children of the Israelite/ Let my people go!  
Who are the people dressed in red?/Let my people go!  
Must be the people that Moses led./Let my people go!  
Who are the people dressed in black?/Let my people go!  
Must be the hypocrites a-turning back./Let my people go!

### **The Night**

In the Name of God the Compassionate the Caring  
By the night when it falls  
By the day when it breaks  
By what has made the male and the female  
You strive toward different ends.

As for him who shares what he has and is mindful  
who affirms the right—  
him we will ease to the good life

As for him who hoards what he has  
thinking it makes him secure  
who denies the right—  
him we will ease to hardship  
Wealth will not save him from ruin

Ours is guidance  
Ours is the after and ours is the before

I warn you of a fire that sears  
One hard in wrong will burn there  
a denier, one who turns away

We will spare from it  
Whoever keeps the faith  
Who shares what he owns, making it pure  
Who looks to no one to return the favor  
Seeking only the face of his lord most high  
That one will know peace of mind

—Al-Quran, Sura 92

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## Prayer For The Great Turning

May the turning of the Earth save us.

May the turning of the seasons & the turning of the leaves save us.

May we be saved by the worms, the beetles & the microbes turning the soil.

May we be saved by the turning of vegetation into compost & the turning of compost into rich soil.

May the turning of seeds into plants & the turning of flowers into fruits save us.

May the grasses & weeds, the vines & mosses all conspire to save us.

May we be saved by the turning of sprouts into saplings, of saplings into trees,  
& the trees into forests.

May the scurrying, foraging, pouncing & lumbering of the animals save us.

May the breath of heaven in the breezes & the stormy winds save us.

May the dance of the butterflies, & the musical flight & return of the birds save us.

May we be saved by vapors turning into clouds & by the turning of the ever-changing clouds into  
rain.

May the waters flowing from springs into the lakes save us.

May the streams flowing into rivers, the rivers into seas, & the great heaving of the oceans save us.

May we be saved by the patient turning of the rocks, the hills, the mountains, & the volcanoes.

May the metabolism of the climates of the Earth save us.

May the turnings of all Beings great & small move us to find wisdom in our own turnings.

May we be saved by our waking & sleeping, by the rhythms of our blood & our appetites, by the  
cycles of birthing & nurturing, injury & healing, mating & nesting, loss & discovery, joy & mourning.

May we find in time the grace to turn to one another, & may this turning also become our salvation.

May we learn to benefit the life of Earth with peace, humble in our needs, & generous in our giving.

May we learn to celebrate the abundance of life with gratitude, & to embrace the Earth with our  
bodies in return.

—Joanne Sunshower

*[Raise the cup. All sing or recite:]*

### Dayenu

Had You taken us out of slavery,  
but not torn the Sea apart for us,  
it would have been enough for us!

Had You brought us through it dry,  
but not sunk our oppressors in its midst,  
it would have been enough for us!

Had You sunk our oppressors in its midst,  
but not freely fed us manna,  
it would have been enough for us!

Had You freely fed us manna,  
but not rested us with Shabbat,  
it would have been enough for us!

Had You rested us with Shabbat,

but not given us the Teaching,  
it would have been enough for us!

*I-lu ho-tzi ho-tzi-a-nu,  
ho-tzi-anu mi-mitz-ra-yim,  
ho-tzi-a-nu mi-mitz-rayim dai-ye-nu.*

*DAI-DAI-YE-NU, DAI-DAI-YE-NU, DAI-DAI-YE-NU, Dayenu, dayenu!*

*I-lu na-tan na-tan la-nu,  
na-tan la-nu et ha-sha-bat,  
na-tan la-nu et ha-sha-bat, dai-ye-nu.*

*DAI-DAI-YE-NU, DAI-DAI-YE-NU, DAI-DAI-YE-NU,*

*Dayenu, dayenu!*

[Someone says:] What does this mean, "It would have been enough?" Surely no one of these alone would indeed have been enough for us.

It means to celebrate each step toward freedom as if it were enough, then to start out on the next step.

It means that if we reject each step because it is not the whole liberation, we will never be able to achieve the whole liberation.

It means to sing each verse as if it were the whole song and then sing the next verse!

[All read:]

How many and how hard are the tasks the Redeemer has set before us!

If we were to free the peoples of the world,  
but not to beat the swords of every nation into plowshares,  
it would not be enough for us.

If we were to beat the swords of every nation into plowshares,  
but not to share our food and end all hunger,  
it would not be enough for us.

If we were to share our food and end all hunger,  
but not to cleanse our earth and air of poison,  
it would not be enough for us.

If we were to cleanse our earth and air of poison,  
but not to turn to wind and sun for energy,  
it would not be enough for us.

If we were to turn to wind and sun for energy,  
But not to set aside some time for love and laughter,  
it would not be enough for us

Then how great, doubled and redoubled, are the claims the Breath of Life makes upon our effort!  
You call us to struggle, work, share, give, think, plan, organize,  
sit-in, speak out, dream, hope, and pray for the great Redemption:  
to end the oppression of all peoples,

to prevent the extinction of a million species,  
to shape a planet joyful in our shared abundance,  
to turn to wind and sun for energy,  
and to set aside some time for love and laughter,  
All these!

*[Someone reads:]*

*“Before entering...the Hajj [Pilgrimage to Mecca], which is the beginning of a great change and revolution, you must declare your intention. It is the intention of a ‘transferral’ from your house to the house of people, from life to love, from the self to Allah, from slavery to freedom, from racial discrimination to equality, sincerity and truth, from being clothed to being naked, from a daily life to an eternal life and from selfishness and aimlessness to devotion and responsibility.”*

—Ali Shariati, Hajj

*“One of the most powerful, and deeply spiritual, ways to work for social change is for us to take action in the present that embodies—right now!—the future vision that we seek.*

*“Forty years ago, the sit-in movement had a vision of the future: integrated restaurants. The sit-ins did not beg legislators to change the law. They did not attack the restaurant-owners. They went, Black and white together, to integrate them.*

*“What happened next was up to the owners and the police. They could accept integration, they could beat people up, they could put them in jail, they could kill them, they could change the law. They did all those things, but mostly, ultimately, people changed the law.*

*“The vision of new possibility was not left in the hands of visionaries, for it was embodied in defiant love. It made real the spiritual teaching that the means and the ends are indivisible, for it made the ends themselves into the means, not in a far-off future but in Now. And it gave actual faces to the ‘issue.’ It was no longer a matter of courts and law books but of real live students, restaurant-owners, waitresses, police. So the public responded. The sit-ins seeded a fruitful American politics that is still nourishing us, even in days of Imperial War and Insatiable Wealth.”*

—Rabbi Arthur Ocean Waskow

*[All sing:]*

O Freedom! O Freedom! O Freedom over me!  
And before I'd be a slave I'd be buried in my grave  
And go home to my Lord and be free!  
No more killing... No more hunger... No more pollution..., etc.

*[Someone says:]* We join at the time of Passover to connect our separate stories in the telling of new freedom. Our telling cannot end tonight. We must name and number the different tribes to carry on the journey. We have a wilderness of change to cross before we can enter a new time of greater justice, greater freedom, greater peace, and deeper healing.

To begin this process, on this very night we will exchange our addresses and we will talk about the actions we feel drawn to take.

*[Hand around a paper for name, organization, address, phone, email. Seder hosts start the process by suggesting an action, inviting every person to write a letter to a designated Senator, Representative or newspaper letters editor, proposing some action in the spirit of the Seder for liberating human beings and the earth. Collect the letters and send them following the Seder to the designated recipient.]*

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*[At each table, someone pours juice from the Cup of Elijah, sitting untasted in the center of the table, into each person's glass.*

*[All say together:]*

I take responsibility to become the Prophet Elijah, "turning the hearts of the parents to the children and the hearts of the children to the parents, lest the earth be utterly destroyed."

*Barukh atah YHWH elohenu ruakh ha-olam boray p'ri hagafen.*

Blessed are You, YHWH our God, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

*[All drink the fourth cup, the cup of personal and communal commitment to action.]*

*"God has allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the Promised Land.*

—Dr. Martin Luther King, April 3, 1968, the night before his death.

*[All sing:]*

### **My Rainbow Race**

(Chorus:)

One blue sky above us

One ocean lapping all our shore

One earth so green and round

Who could ask for more

And because I love you

I'll give it one more try

To show my rainbow race

It's too soon to die.

Some folks want to be like an ostrich,

Bury their heads in the sand.

Some hope that plastic dreams

Can unclench all those greedy hands.

Some hope to take the easy way:

Poisons, bombs. They think we need 'em.

Don't you know you can't kill all the unbelievers?

There's no shortcut to freedom.

(Chorus)

Go tell, go tell all the little children.

Tell all the mothers and fathers too.

Now's our last chance to learn to share

What's been given to me and you.

(Chorus)

—Pete Seeger

## **BY EATING**

*[If there is a full-scale meal at this New Freedom Seder, it is eaten now.]*

*[At the end of the meal the children are invited to hunt for the Afikoman (the piece of matzah that was hidden earlier) and it is redeemed from the children who have found it, since it is necessary to have this taste*



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*of matzah as the last taste at the end of the meal. One way of redeeming it is to ask the children to name an organization that is working for social justice, freedom, peace, or healing of the earth, and the adults agree to contribute to that group in accordance with their own means.]*

*[The Afikoman is distributed among the Seder company, and every one eats a bite of it.]*

## BY PRAISING

*[There are many different traditions of songs to sing, praising the Breath of Life Who brings freedom and justice to birth. Read together:]*

All living are one and holy, let us remember  
as we eat, as we work, as we walk and drive.  
All living are one and holy, we must make ourselves worthy  
We must act out justice and mercy and healing  
as the sun rises and as the sun sets,  
as the moon rises and the stars wheel above us:  
we must repair goodness.

We must praise the power of the one that joins us.  
Whether we plunge in or thrust ourselves far out  
finally we reach the face of glory too bright  
for our eyes and yet we burn and we give light.  
We will try to be holy,  
we will try to repair the world given to us to hand on.  
Precious is this treasure of words and knowledge and deeds  
that moves inside us. Holy is the hand that works for peace and for justice,  
holy is the mouth that speaks for goodness  
holy is the foot that walks toward mercy.  
Let us lift each other on our shoulders and carry each other along.  
Let holiness move in us. Let us pay attention to its small voice.  
Let us see the light in others and honor that light.  
Remember the dead who paid our way here dearly, dearly  
and remember the unborn for whom we build our houses.  
Praise the light that shines before us, through us, after us. Amein.

—Marge Piercy, from *Amidah*

*[Or sing this translation of Psalm 149 to the tune of "Michael Row the Boat Ashore:"]*

Praise Yah in the heavens, halleluyah.  
Praise God in the heights, halleluyah.  
Praise God, all you angels, halleluyah.  
Praise Yah, all you hosts, halleluyah.  
Praise God, sun and moon, halleluyah.  
Praise Yah, you stars of light, halleluyah.  
Praise God, you high heavens, halleluyah.  
All that flows in all the world, halleluyah.  
Let them all praise God's Name, halleluyah.  
For God spoke and they appeared, halleluyah.  
With God they take their stand, halleluyah.  
God's rhythm none can break, halleluyah.

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Praise Yah from the earth, halleluyah.  
You sea-monsters and all deeps, halleluyah.  
Fire, hail, snow, and steam, halleluyah.  
Stormy wind to do God's word, halleluyah.  
Mountains high and small hills, halleluyah.  
Trees of fruit and cedars too, halleluyah.  
Wild beasts and quiet flocks, halleluyah.  
Creeping things and winged birds, halleluyah.  
Leaders and officials, halleluyah.  
Societies and peoples, halleluyah.  
Young men and women, too, halleluyah.  
Let us praise the holy Name, halleluyah.  
For God's Name includes us all, halleluyah.  
God's radiance shines out, halleluyah.  
And God lifts the people's hearts, halleluyah.  
For all who wrestle God, halleluyah.  
For all who bring God close, halleluyah.



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*And thanks to Avi Katz, who did the amazing "Globe of Matzah" illustration, for his extraordinary vision, as much prophetic as it is artistic. What does it mean to see our planet made of the "bread of the poor" that can—if we will it—become the bread of freedom? And if you look carefully, are there cracks in the matzah-continents themselves as our planet quakes and strains?*

*Avi Katz' body of work is at <http://www.avikatz.net>.*

***Feel free to quote passages or to use the whole Seder for your own Haggadah, on two conditions:***

- (1) Write to The Shalom Center at [Office@shalomctr.org](mailto:Office@shalomctr.org) to let us know how you are using it and to consult with us about a possible fee that fits your situation, and;*
- (2) include the following permissions line: "This passage is drawn from The Shalom Center's Freedom Seder for the Earth. Copyright © 2009 The Shalom Center. See [www.shalomctr.org](http://www.shalomctr.org)."*

***Thank you!***



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