

JWC WOMEN'S SEDER 5764



Welcome to the 12th annual JWC Women's Seder. We begin with a *niggun*, a melody without words.

Sing *niggun* into...

דודי לי

DODI LI • MY BELOVED IS MINE

Refrain:

דודי לי ואני לו
הרועה בשושנים.

Dodi li va-a-ni lo, ha-ro-eh ba-sho-shanim

מי זאת עלה מן-המדבר
מי זאת עולה
מקטרת מור ולבונה.

Mi zot o-la min ha-mid-bar

Mi zot o-la

Me-ku-te-ret mor u-le-vo-na

Refrain

לבבתי אחתי בלה
לבבתיני בלה.

עורי צפון ובואי תימן.

Li-bav-ti-ni a-cho-ti ka-la

Li-bav-ti-ni ka-la

U-ri tza-fon u-vo-i tey-man

Refrain

My beloved is mine, and I am his, who browses in the lotus patch. Who is this coming up out of the wilderness perfumed with myrrh and frankincense? You have enlivened me, my sister-bride. Awake, north wind, yes, come south wind!

INTRODUCTION

Our theme this year is particularly appropriate for a women's seder. Confirming, confronting and creating are exactly what we do when we, as Jewish women, explore the ritual of the seder. This most complex and beloved of Jewish rituals provides almost unlimited opportunities to address the challenges and joys of being a Jewish woman in the 21st century. The very depth of the seder makes it extraordinarily malleable-it contains so many moods, styles, and layers that adapting it to the perspective of any subset of Jews is easy. For this reason, the number of *hagaddot* has proliferated, as not only women, but gays and lesbians, people in recovery from addiction or violence, vegetarians, new Americans and many others have created new texts to make the seder their own. And this is as it should be, because the primary goal of the seder is to make the celebrant feel that she or he was truly there in *Mitzrayim*, truly there at the shores of the sea, and truly there on the other side when we regained our freedom after 400 years of slavery. We are proud that Jewish feminists led the way to the revitalization of the seder. Let the journey begin!

KABBALAT PANIM WELCOMING EACH OTHER

We introduce ourselves by saying our names in English and/or Hebrew along with the names of our mothers.

THE ORDER

Sanctify this holy day by blessing the first cup of chocolate milk	Kadesh	קדש
Purify ourselves by washing our hands	Urchatz	ורחץ
Dipping of the strawberry	Karpas	כרפס
Break the chocolate matzah	Yachatz	יחץ
Tell the story of how we became free to eat chocolate	Magid	מגיד
Wash our hands again	Rachatzta	רחצה
Blessing over the sweet treats we are going to eat	Motzi Matzah	מוציא-מצה

Bittersweet chocolate to remind us of the pain of our ancestors	Maror	מרור
The Hillel S'more	Korech	כורכ
The festive treats	Shulchan Orech	שלחן עורך
Finding the afikomen	Tzafun	צפון
A prayer of thanks for the chocolate	Barech	ברך
Final praises	Hallel	הלל
Conclusion	Nirtzah	נרצה

הדלקת נר

CANDLELIGHTING- HADLAKAT NEROT

Look! The day ends. The earth turns from sunshine to dusk and then to darkness. As so often before, we assume for ourselves the task of kindling candles in the night, to enlighten the dark corners of our world. Whenever we gather together with *kavannah* (proper intention) we create sacred space. We are a people of history, and through the observance of new ritual we create a sacred moment in time by adding to the substance of our tradition.

Together:

נְבָרֶךְ אֶת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיהָ וְצִוָּתָנוּ
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל [שַׁבָּת וְ] יוֹם טוֹב.

*Nevareh et ruah ha'olam asher kideshatnu bemitzvoteha
vetzivatnu lehadlik ner shel [shabbat ve] yom tov.*

We bless the spirit of the world, who has made us holy with the *mitzvot* and commanded us to kindle the [Shabbat and] festival lights.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁחַיֵּיתָנוּ וְקִיַּמְתָּנוּ וְהִגִּיעַתָּנוּ לְיָמֵינוּ
הַזֶּה.

*Nevareh et ruah ha'olam shehecheyatnu vekiyematnu
vehigi'atnu lazeman hazeh.*

We bless the spirit of the world, who gave us life, and kept us strong, and brought us to this time.

מָה טוֹבוֹ סִדְרֵינוּ בְּנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּאוֹר הַקֹּדֶשׁ הַמְּאִיר עוֹלָם:

Ma tovu sidreinu b'not yisrael k'or chadash ha'me'ir olam.

Women of Israel, the wonder of our seders brings new light to the world.

כּוֹס מֵרִים

MIRIAM'S CUP

LO ALECHA

לֹא עֲלֶיךָ הַמַּלְכָה לְגַמּוֹר וְלֹא אֶתָּה בֶן חוֹרִין לְהִתְבַּטֵּל מִמְּנָה.

*Lo alecha ham-la-cha lig-mor
V'lo ata ben chorin l'hit-ba-tel mi-me-na.*

Pass the Miriam's Cup at each table. Pour some water from your cup into Miriam's Cup. Say together:

זֹאת כּוֹס מֵרִים כּוֹס מַיִם חַיִּים. זֵכֶר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם.

Zot kos Miryam, kos mayim chayim. Zeicher litziat Mitzrayim.

This is the cup of Miriam, the cup of living waters, a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt. When fear blocks our path, when our travels deplete us, we seek sources of healing and wells of hope. May our questions and our stories nourish us as Miriam's Well renewed our people's spirits.

MIRIAM (Part One)

Narrow places we have left behind us
Never knowing what may lie ahead
Moving through a wilderness toward freedom
Feeding souls on hope as much as bread.

Miriam, it's gonna be a long journey
Miriam, we're gonna need a song
Miriam, it's gonna be a long, long road
And we'll keep moving on.

קדש

KADESH - FIRST CUP

... וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סְבִלַת מִצְרַיִם:

V'hotzeiti etchem mitachat sivlot mitzrayim.

"...I will bring you out from under the burdens of Egypt" (EXODUS 6:6).

In Volume I of *Lifecycles*, Rabbi Debra Orenstein lists several purposes of rituals. These include: "to shape, express and maintain relationships, to make and mark transitions, to heal from betrayal, trauma or loss, [and] to voice beliefs and create meaning," (p. 361). Seders generally, and our seder in particular, do all of these things. Our four cups will help illustrate the way this seder works as a feminist ritual.

Our first cup acknowledges the pain we have suffered as marginalized members of the Jewish community. For centuries our history was lost or buried, our voices silent. Our longing to learn and participate was frustrated and stifled, and we were told that this was the way God wanted things to be. Over the past thirty years we have taken remarkable strides in recalibrating the balance of Jewish life. We have been able to experience Judaism the way it was always meant to be. But we know that for many women in the Jewish community, and outside of it, equality is still only a dream. As we drink our first cup, we remember the burdens of our recent past and vow to work to free our sisters who still carry those burdens.

We fill our glasses and sing together:

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵאת פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Nevareh et ruah ha'olam boreyt peri hagafen.

We bless the spirit of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Shema Yisrael

I.

Sh'ma Yisrael
Listen Israel

Ani batekh
I am your daughter

Ani Yehudiah I
am a Jewess

Sheh 'pa 'am sharti Itakh
who once sang with you

B'k'ev In
pain

uv'r'nan'nah and
in joy.

Ani y'khola lirkod I
can dance

Etha'stav
the fall

v'ha'aviv
and the spring

mavet
death

v'khayim
and life

k'moh yehudiah
as a Jew.

va'ani yekhola liv'kot
And I can cry

k'moh yehudiah
as a Jew.

sheh 'lo ma 'aminah
who doesn't believe

she'at sho'ma'at
that you are listening

li yoter
to me anymore.

II.

Sh'ma Yisrael
Listen Israel

Hayeeti shelakh I
was yours

L'shanim raboth
for many years

b'li she'eyloth without
questions.

Aval akhshav
But now

Yesh li shlosa I
have three.

Oolai k'var shakhakht et HUM:
Perhaps you already forgot
Hillel:

(1) *Eem eyn ani li me li?*
"If I am not for myself, who
will be?"

(2) *u 'ksheh 'ani l 'atzmi mah ani?*
"And when I am only for
myself, what am I?"

(3) *v'eem loh akhshav ey'mahtai?*
"And if not now, when?"

III.

Sh'ma Yisrael.
Listen Israel

ko'evetli It
pains me

lomar lakh et zeh
to tell you this

bekol shell in
my voice,

bekolaynu sheh'mitromemet
in the collective voice that
rises

aval aht rak l'atzmekh but
you seem only for
yourself.

mah aht? What
are you?

IV.

Sh'ma Yisrael
Listen Israel

Poem by Pam Wax,
American

ורחץ

URCHATZ - WASHING THE HANDS

Please go to the water station and pour water over the hands of the person behind you, bringing her into a special space. The washing is done in silence, without a blessing.

קרפס

KARPAS - DIPPING THE GREENS

We celebrate the return of the spring and the season for growth. The Hebrew word for earth is “*adamah*”, a feminine form of “*adam*”, meaning humankind. We celebrate the greening of our planet and the potential for growth in ourselves.

The salt water represents our tears, bitter in slavery, joyful in the celebration of our freedom. We mix bitterness with sweetness, slavery with freedom, past with future. We live with contrasts because we know that no moment exists without a multitude of combinations-sorrow and joy, pain and comfort, despair and hope.

Together:

Divine Presence, grant that we may never forget how to cry, and may our hearts never be hardened against the tears of others.

נְבָרֶךְ אֶת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרְאֵת פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

Nevareh et ruah ha'olam boreyt peri ha'adamah.

We bless the spirit of the world, who creates fruit of the earth.

יחז

YACHATZ

BREAKING THE MIDDLE MATZAH

Break the middle matzah in half. The larger half is the afikomen.

מגיד

MAGGID - TELLING OUR STORY

HA LACHMA ANYA

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיא

Together:

This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. All who are hungry, come and eat. All who are needy, come and celebrate Passover with us. Now we celebrate in slavery. Next year may we be truly free. Let all who wish to explore the meaning of slavery and its consequences, and all who hunger to assert their spiritual freedom, join us in our observance of the Festival of Matzah.

Sing together:

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיא דִּי אָכְלוּ אַבְהֹתָנָא בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.
כָּל-דְּכָפִין יִיתִי וְיִכֹּל, כָּל-דְּצָרִיךְ יִיתִי וְיִפְסַח. הַשְּׁתָא הָכָא,
לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאֶרֶץ דִּישְׂרָאֵל, הַשְּׁתָא עַבְדִּי, לְשָׁנָה
הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוּרִין.

As we invite all who are hungry, we symbolically include all who are oppressed throughout the world.

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ כְּשֵׁם
שְׁלֹקְחָתָּ גּוֹי מִקְרֹב גּוֹי וְהַעֲבַרְתָּ אֶת־עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ
הַיָּם, בֵּן תִּרְחַם עַל אֶחָיו כָּל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל יוֹשְׁבֵי תְּהִלָּה
(וּבְפֶרֶט...) הַנִּתְּוֹנִים בְּצָרָה וּבְשִׁבְיָה, הָעוֹמְדִים בֵּין בָּיִם
וּבֵין בַּיִבְשָׁה. תִּצִּילֵם וְתוֹצִיאֵם מִצָּרָה לְרוֹחָה וּמֵאִפְלָה
לְאוֹרָה וּמִשְׁעֶבֶד לְגִאֲלָה, בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

May it be your will, Eternal One our God and God of our ancestors, that just as you took the Israelites from among the Egyptians and led them through the sea, so may you have mercy on those among the House of Israel and among all peoples (especially . . .) who are distressed and oppressed, whether on land or sea. Save them and take them from the narrow straits to abundant favor, from darkness to light, and from enslavement to redemption, speedily in our days and let us say: Amen.

Together:

B'av-dut ha-yi-nu- -we have been enslaved. Tonight, we vow: May we always be free!

Sing together:

*B'av-dut ha-yi-nu
A-ta b'not chorin.*

Once we were enslaved, but now we are free.

MA NISHTANAH - THE FOUR QUESTIONS

Sing together:

מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל-הַלַּיְלוֹת!

שֶׁבֶכֶל-הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמֶצֶה,
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלוּ מֶצֶה.

שֶׁבֶכֶל-הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שָׂרָר יִרְקוֹת,
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מְרוֹר.

שֶׁבֶכֶל-הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מִטְבִּילִין אֶפְּיֵלוּ פְּעַם אַחַת,
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים.

שֶׁבֶכֶל-הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵינ וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין,
הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלָנוּ מְסֻבִּין.

*Mah nishstanah halaylah hazeh mikol haleylot!
Shebehol haleylot anu oħlin ħametz umatzah,
Halaylah hazeh kulo matzah.
Shebehol haleylot anu oħlin she'ar yerakot,
Halaylah hazeh maror.
Shebehol haleylot eyn anu matbilin afilu pa'am eħat,
Halaylah hazeh shetey fe'amim.
Shebehol haleylot anu oħlin beyn yoshvin uweyn mesubin
Halaylah hazeh kulanu mesubin.*

FOUR QUESTIONS FOR JEWISH WOMEN:

What can we do as women to acknowledge each other in the continuous struggle to meet our own expectations and those imposed upon us?

How can we as women develop and maintain a sense of spirituality within this context of change?

How do we heal the fragmentation in ourselves as well as our community? How do we integrate our diversity and become whole?

Why do we seek to develop new rituals? How do we celebrate these new rituals without betraying our cherished traditions, our past or our future?

THE FOUR DAUGHTERS

The wise daughter asks, "Why do we gather women here tonight?"

To her we say: "The whole Jewish people left Egypt together, all of them, women and men. But our mothers' voices have been absent from our history, and we would find them again. As it is written: 'Then the prophetess took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her in dance.' This night, let us celebrate together, both their liberation and our own."

The irreverent daughter asks, "Why do you gather women here tonight?"

To her we say: "This is not about exclusion. We are not shutting men out of our lives, but bringing women to a safe space in which to share our stories. All women are not alike, but we do share some common history. Tonight is a time to focus on those issues which affect us as women, to help empower each other, and form the bonds of sisterhood."

The assimilated daughter asks, "Why do we need to celebrate our feminism in a Jewish context?"

To her we say:

Because we deny our history if we forget we are Jews.

Because we insult our foremothers if we forget we are Jews.

Because we diminish our own experience if we forget we are Jews.

Because we rob our children if we forget we are Jews."

To the daughter who is unable to ask because she is not here, we say:

"I must learn, so that I may teach you."

Shifra and Puah

Shifra and Puah they were two midwives
Famous for their saving Jewish babies' lives
They don't get attention but we have to mention
Without them we'd be in a jam

There was some confusion as to who was who
Miriam and Yocheved may have been those two
Shifra and Puah we don't know who you are
We know that you helped save the Jews

Chorus:

Midwives who took risks to see
Jews and their delivery

Shifra and Puah were the first to be
Rebels with a cause who fought the king's decree
The king of Mitzrayim knew not of their lying
So Shifra and Puah were saved

Shifra and Puah told by King Pharaoh
That the Jews were trouble and they had to go
They both ignored him, a fact they abhorred him
And Pharaoh did not have a clue

Chorus

Shifra and Puah really did exist
They changed the course of history, they were feminists
They saved little boys, and now we all rejoice
That they were courageous and bold

Chorus

Shifra and Puah they were two midwives
Famous for their saving Jewish babies' lives
They don't get attention but we have to mention
Without them we'd be in a jam

Our mother was a wandering Aramean. She descended into Egypt and resided there in small numbers. She became a nation, great, powerful and numerous. The Egyptians treated us badly. They persecuted us and forced us into hard labor. By doing this, they hoped to reduce our birthrate to nothing. But the Israelite women found ways to frustrate the Egyptians' plans. The women would go out to the fields where their husbands worked and give them food and wine. Then the women would take out their bronze mirrors and the couples would admire each other's beauty. Thus the women seduced their husbands and Jewish children continued to be born.

When Moses began to build the tabernacle in the desert, he asked the Israelites for their precious objects to use in the construction. The women donated their mirrors. Moses refused to accept them, since they were a symbol of sexuality. But God rebuked Moses, saying, "These mirrors are more precious to me than

all the other donations, because through these mirrors the women gave birth in Egypt to these multitudes. Take them and make them into the bronze basin with which the priests will purify themselves.”

Our sages teach, “Israel was redeemed from Egypt because of the merit of the women of that generation.”

קדש

KADESH - SECOND CUP

וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מֵעַבְדוֹתֵם V'hitzalti etchem mei'avodatam

“I will deliver you from under their bondage”

(EXODUS 6:6).

We fill our glasses and raise them for the kiddush.

As we drink our second cup, we mark the transition we have made as Jewish women from the bitterness of oppression to the beginnings of freedom. And by freeing ourselves, we have begun to free the Jewish people, for slavery enslaves both victim and oppressor. As the song reminds us, none of us is free until all of us are free.

נְבַרְךָ אֵת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵאת פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Nevarah et ruah ha'olam boreyt peri hagafen.

We bless the spirit of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine.

THE TEN PLAGUES OF JEWISH WOMEN

Why do we still include the plagues when few, if any of us here tonight feel oppressed as Jewish women? We are a people of long memory, and our gains are very recently won. We recite the plagues to remember that we still have work to do and that the time of oppression is within living memory. And we recite the plagues to remind ourselves that for many of our sisters, in this country and elsewhere, freedom is still only a dream.

We say the names of the plagues together as we remove a drop of wine for each plague to lessen our joy.

The consistently male image and language of God.

The loss of the Shechina, "she who dwells within us". We forget that we are not separate from our Creator and all of Creation is holy.

Tradition, custom, and religious decrees which exclude women from participation as leaders, scholars, and decision-makers in their communities.

The loss of our history both religious and secular.

The devaluation women suffer as we age.

The tradition of fear and loathing of female flesh that teaches us to hate our bodies.

Repressive, male-oriented legal systems which deny women justice.

The violence women suffer in a world ruled by and for men.

The violence towards all living creatures in a world ruled by the principles of greed.

The violence to the earth itself in a world where the quality of nurturing is not shared by men.

DAYEINU יָדַיִן

Take turns reading, and all join on Dayeinus.

*If we had been honored for our roles as wives and mothers, carried out with self-sacrificing love and not denigrated for our emotions, *Dayeinu!**

*If we had been allowed to participate in the richness of our own culture instead of being denied freedom and education, *Dayeinu!**

*If our stories and prayers had been written down and passed on, and not lost to invisibility, *Dayeinu!**

*If we speak truthfully about the pains, joys and contradictions of our lives, *Dayeinu!**

If we fight economic injustice, sexism, racism and homophobia where we live, *Dayeinu!*

If we teach our children to pursue justice with all of their strength, *Dayeinu!*

If we care for the earth as responsibly as we care for those we love, *Dayeinu!*

If we create art, music, dance and literature, *Dayeinu!*

If we realize our power to effect change, *Dayeinu!*

If we bring holiness into our lives, homes and communities, *Dayeinu!*

Sing together:

אלו הוציאנו ממצרים: דינו	<i>Ilu hotzi, hotzi'anu hotzi'anu mimitzrayim (2x) Dayeinu...</i>
אלו נתן לנו את השבת: דינו	<i>Ilu natan, natan lanu, natan lanu, et hashabat. (2x) Dayeinu...</i>
אלו נתן לנו את התורה: דינו	<i>Ilu natan, natan lanu, natan lanu et hatorah. (2x) Dayeinu...</i>

Had God only taken us out of Egypt:
It would have been enough

Had God only given us the Shabbat:
It would have been enough.

Had God only given us the Torah:
It would have been enough.

V'HI SHE'AMDA - GOD'S PROMISE

Sing together:

וְהִיא שְׁעָמְדָה	<i>V'hi she'amda</i>
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ.	<i>la'avoteinu ul'imoteinu velanu.</i>

And She stood by us and She protected us, and gently guided us to this day.

Why does it say “*v’hi*”, meaning, “and She”? According to the *Haggadah Yetziat Mitzrayim*, the She refers to *Shechinah*, the feminine manifestation of God’s presence. God, in the immanent aspect of *Shechinah*, always accompanies Israel in its exile, protects us and ensures that we will always be remembered.

RABBAN GAMLIEL’S SYMBOLS - AND ONE FROM SUSANNAH HESCHEL

Rabban Gamliel, a first century sage, said, “Whoever does not explain the following three things on Pesach has not fulfilled her duty: *pesach*, *matzah*, and *maror*.”

We do not point to or raise the shank bone on our seder plate because it symbolizes a sacrifice that was only offered in the time of the Temple.

The *pesach* our ancestors ate: why did they eat it? Why is this shank bone on our plates?

God *pasach* (passed over) the houses of our Israelite ancestors when the firstborn sons of the Egyptians were taken by the angel of death. The Israelites marked their homes with the blood of the lambs they offered to God. We keep the lamb bone on our seder plates and recall the countless times we have been spared from the angel of death. In how many places has God passed over our homes, even when the doorpost was unmarked?

Raise the matzah.

The matzah, why do we eat this unleavened bread?

Matzah is the symbol most strongly associated with Pesach. It represents humility and simplicity. Tonight we eat unleavened bread because our foremothers baked in haste. They were responsible for taking their families and possessions out of Egypt as quickly as possible and there was no time for the bread to rise. We also remember that the stories of our foremothers have been flat-they were given no character, no voice. They were one-dimensional images-daughters, mothers and wives. Tonight they rise out of history and into our imaginations, full-bodied.

Point to the maror.

The *maror*, why do we eat these bitter herbs?

The *maror* represents the bitterness of slavery. We eat bitter herbs so that regardless of our progress, we never forget the bitter taste of slavery and oppression. But we must not let our present and future be tarnished by past evils. We remember the past so that we may measure how far we have come.

But what about the other symbols on our seder plates?

Raise the egg.

The roasted egg, why do we put it on our plates?

The egg is always present on the seder plate but nowhere in the traditional *hagaddah* does the leader hold it up and explain its significance. Was its obvious female quality too problematic?

The egg symbolizes not only Passover, but also spring, birth and womanhood. The round smoothness of the egg reminds us of the continuity of life and the cyclical nature of rebirth. As we examine our lives and the many different paths we follow, never lose sight of the egg-filled with potential, waiting for the right moment to appear.

Raise the orange.

And this orange, what is it doing on our seder plates?

For years we have told the story of how the orange came to be on our seder plates-incorrectly! The true story can be found at the end of this *hagaddah*. Susannah Heschel, originator of the *minhag* of the orange, teaches us that our accomplishments, our stories are always in danger of being subsumed by the larger culture. Let us guard our accomplishments and make sure that our story is told accurately, with joy and pride.

Together:

In each generation, each of us is obligated to see ourselves as if we had personally left Egypt.

Sing together:

PSALM 118- HODU

*Hodu l'Adonai ki tov, ki l'olam chas'do.
Yo-mar na, yo-mar na, yo-mar na beit Yisrael.*

I give thanks and praise, it's understood,
Singing from the heart for God is good!

*Hodu l'Shi'china ki tov, ki l'olam chas'da.
To-mar na, to-mar na, to-mar na o-ha-vot Sh'china,*

רחצה

RACHTZAḤ - WASHING THE HANDS WITH BLESSING

Return to a water station to wash your neighbor's hands, this time with a blessing. Pour water over each hand. The persons whose hands are washed says:

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיהָ וְצִוָּתָנוּ עַל
נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

*Nevareh et ruah ha'olam asher kideshatnu bemitzvot_{eha}
vetzi_{vat}nu al netilat yadayim.*

We bless the spirit of the world, who has made us holy with
the *mitzvot* and commanded us to wash our hands.

מוציא מצה

MOTZI MATZAḤ - BLESSINGS FOR UNLEAVENED BREAD

Distribute pieces of the top and middle matzah.

Together:

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיָאָה לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Nevareh et ruah ha'olam hamotziah lehem min ha'aretz.

We bless the spirit of the world, who brings forth bread from the earth.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיהָ וְצִוָּתָנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.

Nevareh et ruah ha'olam asher kideshatnu bemitzvoteha vetzivatanu al ahilat matzah.

We bless the spirit of the world, who has made us holy with the *mitzvot* and commanded us to eat matzah.

מָרוֹר

MAROR - BITTER HERBS

Everyone takes a piece of maror and charoset.

We dip the maror in charoset to recall that our ancestors were able to withstand the bitterness of slavery, because it was sweetened by hope of freedom.

Together:

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיהָ וְצִוָּתָנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר.

Nevareh et ruah ha'olam asher kideshatnu bemitzvoteha vetzivatanu al ahilat maror.

We bless the spirit of the world, who has made us holy with *mitzvot* and commanded us to eat *maror*.

כּוֹרֵךְ

KORECH - HILLEL SANDWICH

The traditional *korech* is a sandwich of only matzah and *maror*. As Jewish women, we might think this is appropriate, for we face the double burdens of sexism in the Jewish community and anti-Semitism in the general community. But this seder is not about anger. We are proud and happy to be women, and Jews. So we add the *charoset* to our Hillel sandwich and the bitter and sweet merge into a special flavor of its own. So may each of us merge all of her disparate experiences into a greater whole.

Make a sandwich of matzah, maror and charoset and enjoy!

קדש

KADESH - THIRD CUP

וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מֵעֲבֹדָתָם V'hitzalti etchem mei'avodatam
"I will deliver you from under their bondage"
(EXODUS 6:6).

Our third cup reminds us that our struggle for freedom within Judaism was not for its own sake, but out of the desire to experience our Jewishness as completely as we could. We crossed our own Sea of Reeds in order that we could come to Judaism as free women. Only then could we pray and practice as full human beings. Being delivered from the constraints of traditional roles allowed us to celebrate Judaism with women's voices, with women's perceptions. We can now find our own meanings in our liturgy and rituals, making Judaism come alive within us as it never could before.

Together:

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵאת פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Nevarəḥ et ruah ha'olam boreyt peri hagafen.

We bless the spirit of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine.

[add Julie's mi chamocho or a reading here](#)

קדש

KADESH - FOURTH CUP

וְלִקַּחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם וְהָיִיתִי לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים V'lakachti etchem li l'am v'hayiti lachem leilohim

"And I will take you to be my people and I will be your God" (EXODUS 6:7).

This final cup honors the joy of relationship-the relationship between us and God. Perhaps this is the most important aspect of ritual for us as women. For although we all have rituals we do in private (like saying the *Shema* at bedtime), it is those rituals we do with others that resonate most deeply for many of us. The sharing of intense feeling is a very female practice, and one that Jewish feminism has encouraged since its beginnings. Our fourth cup reminds us that God seeks relationship for completeness, as do we. When we connect to one another, we emulate God.

Together:

נְבָרֶךְ אֶת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרְאֵת פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Nezareh et ruah ha'olam boreyt peri hagafen.

We bless the spirit of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine.

סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר

SEFIRAT HA'OMER

COUNTING THE OMER

In Judaism, no holiday stands alone. Each one carries echoes of the one just past and hints of the one to come. As we prepare for *Pesach*, we eliminate the last remnants of *Purim* from our homes. And as we celebrate our freedom during *Pesach*, we anticipate the coming of *Shavuot* and the joy of revelation. Counting the *Omer* each night gives us time to contemplate what revelation means to each of us.

You shall count from the eve of the second day of Pesach, when an omer of grain is to be brought as an offering. The day after the

seventh week of your counting will make fifty days. On that same day you shall hold a celebration; it shall be a sacred occasion for you.
(Lev. 23: 15-16, 21)

Together:

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם	B'rucha at yah eloheinu ruach ha'olam
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְצִוִּיתָנוּ	asher kid'shatnu b'mitzvoteha v'tzivatnu
עַל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר:	al s'firat ha'omer.

You are blessed, Our God, Spirit of the World, who makes us holy with *mitzvot* and commands us to count the *Omer*.

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם שִׁשִּׁי לַעֲמֹר

Hayom shishah yamim la'omer.
Today is the sixth day of the Omer.

כּוֹס אֵלִיָּהוּ

ELIJAH'S CUP - KOS ELIYAHU

Eliyahu and Miriam are two halves of one whole. Eliyahu reminds us to yearn for redemption. Miriam reminds us that the bringing of redemption is in our hands. Dreams and actions need each other.

אליהו הנביא

EILYAHU HANA VI

אליהו הנביא אליהו התשבי
אליהו אליהו הגלעדי
במהרה בימינו יבוא אלינו
עם משיח בן דוד:

*Eilyahu hanavi, eilyahu hatishbi,
Eilyahu, eilyahu, eilyahu hagiladi.
Bimheira v'yameinu, yavo eileinu,
im mashiach ben david. (2x)*

Elijah the Prophet, come to us soon,
for you herald Messianic days.

מרים הנביאה

MIR'YAM HAN'VI'A

מרים הנביאה עז וזמרה בידה.
מרים תרקוד אתנו להגדיל זמרת עולם.
מרים תרקוד אתנו לתקן את העולם.
במהרה בימינו היא תביאנו
אל מי הישועה אל מי הישועה:

*Mir'yam han'vi'a oz v'zimra b'yada.
Mir'yam, tirkod itanu, l'hagdil zimrat olam.
Mir'yam, tirkod itanu, l'takein et ha'olam.
Bim'heira v'yameinu, hi t'vi'einu.
El mei ha'y'shua. El mei ha'y'shua.*

Miriam the Prophet, strength and song are in her
hand. Miriam will dance with us to strengthen
the world's song. Miriam will dance with us to heal
the world. Soon, and in our time, she will lead us
to the waters of salvation.

שולחן עורך

SHULCHAN ORECH - THE TABLE IS SET

119

TZAFUN - EATING THE AFIKOMEN

ברך

BARECH

BLESSINGS AFTER THE MEAL

V'ACHALTA, V'SAVATA, U'VEYRACHTA

You shall eat, and be satisfied, and bless.

We ate when we were hungry
And now we're satisfied
We thank the Source of Blessing
for all that is provided

V'achalta, v'savata u'veyrachta (2x)

Hunger is a yearning
in body and soul
Earth, Air, Fire, Water
And Spirit make us whole

V'achalta, v'savata u'veyrachta (2x)

Giving and receiving
We open up our hands
From seedtime through harvest
We're partners on the land

V'achalta, v'savata u'veyrachta (2x)

We share in a vision
of wholeness and release
Where every child is nourished
and we all live in peace

V'achalta, v'savata u'veyrachta (2x)

HALLEL - PRAISES

Hallelu – Psalm 150

הַלְלוּיָהּ.	Hal'lu'yah. (4x)
הַלְלוּ אֱלֹהֵי בְּקֹדְשׁוֹ	Hal'lu eil b'kodsho,
הַלְלוּהוּ בִּרְקִיעַ עֲזָו:	hal'luhu birki'a uzo.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּגִבּוֹרֹתָיו	Hal'luhu bigvurotav,
הַלְלוּהוּ כְּרוֹב גִּדְלוֹ:	hal'luhu k'rov gud'lo.
הַלְלוּיָהּ.	Hal'lu'yah. (4x)
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתִקְעַ שׁוֹפָר	Hal'luhu b'teika shofar,
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּנִבְלֹת וְכִנּוֹר:	hal'luhu b'neivel v'chinor.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתוֹף וּמַחֹל	Hal'luhu b'tof umachol,
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּמִינִים וְעִגָּב:	hal'luhu b'minim v'ugav.
הַלְלוּיָהּ.	Hal'lu'yah. (4x)
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצִלֵי־שָׁמַע	Hal'luhu b'tziltz'lei shama,
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצִלֵי תְרוּעָה:	hal'luhu b'tziltz'lei t'rua.
כֹּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהַלֵּל יָהּ.	Kol han'shama t'haleil yah.
כֹּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהַלֵּל יָהּ.	Kol han'shama t'haleil yah.
הַלְלוּיָהּ.	Hal'lu'yah. (4x)

Halleluyah! Praise God in God's sanctuary;
Praise God whose power the heavens proclaim.
Praise God for mighty acts;
Praise God for surpassing greatness.
Praise God with shofar blast;
Praise God with harp and lute.
Praise God with drum and dance;
Praise God with strings and pipe.
Praise God with cymbals sounding;
Praise God with cymbals resounding.
Let every soul praise God. Halleluyah!

נִרְצָה

NIRTZAH - CONCLUSION

MIRIAM (continued)

Women reach to give birth to new spirit
The harmony of voices has begun
Asking all of the earth's life now to join us
Our singing bodies blazing in the sun

Chorus:

Miriam, it's gonna be a long journey
Miriam, we're gonna need a song
Miriam, it's gonna be a long, long road
And we'll keep moving on

Freedom is the ownership of choices
To choose my future I must know my past
History gives reason to our voices
Giving strength to visions that will last

Chorus

And we look back on darkness not to own it
But to see the lessons of the night
For the fear is ready to reclaim us
Though we're building courage in the light.

Chorus

We have completed this *Pesach* seder and fulfilled our obligations according to law and custom. We ask that our prayers be accepted. May we be led out of our own *mitzrayim* and into our own *Yerushalayim* – a place of beauty, abundance and peace, so that we may say:

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם.

Leshanah haba'ah birushalayim

Next year in Jerusalem!

Next year in a city of peace for all its inhabitants!

MAY THE SOURCE OF PEACE BRING PEACE TO THE PEOPLE
OF ISRAEL AND TO ALL OF HUMANITY. AMEN!

THE TRUE STORY OF THE ORANGE: A JEWISH URBAN LEGEND FOR OUR TIMES

This is the real story of the origin of the orange on the seder plate as told by its creator, Susannah Heschel. In an email sent to Rabbi Patricia Karlin-Neumann, Heschel gave Karlin-Neumann permission to “forward it to the four corners of the earth” so please feel free to take the story home to your own seder next year!

In the early 1980's, the Hillel Foundation invited me to speak on a panel at Oberlin College. While on campus, I came across a haggadah 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 a 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 chametz. And it 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 of Judaism.

When lecturing, I often mentioned my custom as one of the many new feminist rituals that have 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 said to me that a woman belongs on the bimah as much as an orange on the seder plate. 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?

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