

Eat maror.

CHAROSET חרוס

If the sting of maror impels us to act to alleviate the bitterness of pain, charoset reminds us that habit and hopelessness can lead us to experience pain as normal, even comforting. Making bricks for Pharaoh was brutal work. But it was what we came to know as normal, and even when we had escaped Egypt, some of us longed to return to what felt safe and familiar. The Haggadah cleverly inverts the meaning of maror and charoset, to remind us that not all pain is bad and not all sweetness is desirable.

KOREICH THE HILLEL SANDWICH פורך.

Is America a melting pot or a salad bowl? This section of the hagaddah shows us how to answer that question in a classically Jewish way: yes! First, we discuss at each of the foods on the seder plate individually. Then we blend several of them together to make something that tastes both familiar and different. We need and value each of the components of our koreich for what they are, AND we need and value the new creation that results when we combine them. Rabbi Hillel hid a message for contemporary American Jews (and all Americans) in his invention of koreich-that difference and unity need not be at odds with each other. So let's enjoy our diversity sandwich!

עורר שְׁלֵחַן :

**SHULCHAN OREICH - DINNER IS
SERVED**

THE FOURTH CUP

לְאֱלֹהִים לָכֶם וְהָיִיתִי, לְעַם לִי אֶתְכֶם וְלִקְחֹתִי

V'lakachti etchem li l'am v'hayiti etchem leilohim

I will take you to be my people and I will be your God.

נְבָרְךָ אֶת רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרְאֵת פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Nevarah et ruah ha'olam boreyt peri hagafen.

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

What makes this a feminist seder? Is it because everyone in attendance identifies as female? Is it because we use egalitarian God language and include Miriam as well as Elijah? Because there's an orange on our seder plates? Is it just because we say it is?

When the JWC started doing women's seders, they were explicitly seders for, by, and about women. The first women's seder was held in 1975; our first one was in 1993. Those early seders taught us about the women of the Pesach story: Miriam, Batya, Shifra and Puah. They inspired us to find our own place in Judaism. As we grew in knowledge and confidence, we began to consider what we as Jewish feminists could bring to larger questions of freedom and human dignity, social justice and tikkun olam.

If it were simply the need for feminist critique that motivated the emergence and persistence of women's seders, dayeinu—that would be enough. But there is more: the Passover story is, at its core, one of freedom from oppression, from the expectation that one group of people will be subservient to another. It is fundamentally a story of liberation—a story the telling of which feminists not only critique, as above, but also embrace, as elemental to our own journey as Jewish feminists. Francine Klagsbrun, <https://ritualwell.org/ritual/why-women%E2%80%99s-seders>

So what makes this a feminist seder? Writer Marie Shear's classic definition of feminism suggests an answer: Feminism is the radical notion that women are people). When we use the seder to remind ourselves that we are all people in need of love and worthy of respect, we bring feminism's dream closer to reality.

צפון TZAFUN

SHARING THE AFIKOMAN DESSERT

Pieces of the afikomen are distributed to each person to complete the meal.

BIRKAT HAMAZON וְהַמְזֵן תַּכְבֵּר

BLESSINGS AFTER THE MEAL

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ

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

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)

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

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)

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

COUNTING THE OMER ספירת העומר

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)

[W]hen we get caught up with the details of our lives, it's easy to forget, to wake up one morning and realize, "Oh, I think I forgot to count yesterday...or has it been two days?" It can be an effort just to differentiate one day from another. A recent ruling from the Conservative movement argues against the general view that a person who has lost count for more than a day can no longer bless the days that are left. It quotes the opinion of several sages that each day is unique, and that blessing each day is a mitzvah in and of itself, regardless of what one may or may not have done on previous days. This ruling reminds us that it is never too late to begin our spiritual journeys and never too late to refocus our efforts when we have become distracted.

<https://www.jewishboston.com/what-is-counting-the-omer-how-can-i-participate/>

הָעֹמֶר סְפִירַת עַל וְצִוְנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָהּ קִדְשָׁנוּ אֲשֶׁר הָעוֹלָם רוּחַ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהִי אֵת בְּרוּכָה

*B'rukhhah at Yah Eloheynu ruakh ha'olamim asher kideshanu bemitzvotaha
vetzivatnu al sefirat ha'omer.*

Blessed are you, ETERNAL, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who has made us holy with your mitzvot and commanded us concerning the counting of the Omer.

4. הַיּוֹם אַרְבָּעָה יָמִים לְעוֹמֶר

Hayom arba'ah yamim la'omer.
Today is the fourth day of the Omer.

HALLEL

Pitchu Li (Psalm 118:19)

בַּם אוֹדָה יְהוָה צְדָק אֲבֵא-לִי שְׁעָרֵי-פֶתַח

Pitchu li sha'arei tzedek

Pitchu li sha'arei tzedek
Avo vam odeh Yah
Avo vam odeh Yah

ELIJAH'S CUP

We comfort and mourn those whose blood has been spilled.
We tend to those who suffer from disease.
We respond to storms and disasters that claim lives.
We stop infestations of hatred and fear.
We overcome the sickness of racism and bigotry.
We protest the proliferation of violence.
We fill the air with voices for change.
We bring light to those who live in the shadows.
We inspire the next generation to carry on the struggle for a better world.
We appeal to all people to act with humanity.

<https://ajws.org/who-we-are/resources/holiday-resources/passover/global-justice-haggadah/10-plagues-suffering-affliction/>

*Eliyahu ha-navi, Eliyahu ha-tishbi,
Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu ha-giladi.
Bim-hei-rah be'yamenu, yavo eileinu,
Im mashiach ben David, im mashiach ben David.*

אֵלֵיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא, אֵלֵיָּהוּ הַתְּשֻׁבִי,
אֵלֵיָּהוּ, אֵלֵיָּהוּ, אֵלֵיָּהוּ, אֵלֵיָּהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי,
בְּמַהְרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ יָבֹא אֵלֵינוּ
עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד.

Elijah the Prophet, the Tishbite, Elijah of Gilead:
soon, in our days, Elijah will come to herald the redemption.

*Miriam ha-n'vi'ah oz v'zimrah b'yadah.
בִּידָה
Miriam tirkod itanu l'taken et ha-olam.
Bimheirah v'yameinu hi t'vi'einu
El mei ha-y'shuah; el mei ha-y'shuah!*

בְּזִמְרָה עִז הַנְּבִעָא מְרִים

הָעוֹלָם אֶת לְתַקֵּן אֶתְנוּ תְּרַקֵּד מְרִים
תְּבִיאֵנוּ הִיא בְּיָמֵנוּ בְּמַהְרָה
הַיְשׁוּעָה מִי אֵל, הַיְשׁוּעָה מִי אֵל

Miriam the prophet, strength and song in her hand;
Miriam, dance with us in order to increase the song of the world!
Miriam, dance with us in order to repair the world!
Soon she will bring us to the waters of redemption!

נְרִצָּה CONCLUSION

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:

L'SHANA HA-BA B'YERUSHALAYIM
NEXT YEAR, MAY WE CELEBRATE IN A JERUSALEM AND A WORLD AT PEACE

Want to learn more? Here are some links. Be aware that I don't necessarily endorse them. They're here to give you some perspective and help you start your own research if you are so inclined.

Intersectionality: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersectionality>,
<http://www.scarymommy.com/intersectional-feminism/>

American Anthropological Association on race:
<http://www.americananthro.org/ConnectWithAAA/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2583>

American Sociological Association on Race: <http://www.asanet.org/topics/race-and-ethnicity>

Napoleon and the Assembly of Jewish Notables: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Sanhedrin

Gender Identity: <http://www.transstudent.org/definitions>, <https://www.self.com/story/being-a-woman-uterus>, <https://medium.com/gender-2-0/i-am-a-cis-woman-you-are-a-trans-woman-and-here-is-why-that-distinction-does-not-matter-ad76ac4121e6>