

הגדה של פסח

The Memory Lives Forever

a new translation of the

Passover Haggadah

with explanations and commentary

Prologue

What is common to all Jews besides education and anxiety? What Jewish ritual do more than four out of five American Jews of all stripes and colors observe? It is not attending a synagogue on Yom Kippur. It is not the glorious Chanukah lights. It is the Passover Seder. No other Jewish national ritual even comes close.

Why is this so? It must be more than an opportunity to enjoy good food with family. It must be more than the celebration of the delivery of our ancestors from slavery over three thousand years ago. The retelling of the Exodus story through the ancient text in a Seder setting must fill a profound need in every Jewish person who is proud of his or her Jewish identity.

Etched deeply into the Jewish consciousness is the knowledge that this ancient ritual is more than just a religious or cultural ceremony. Somehow, we all seem to know, or at least intuit, that the future of the Jewish people requires that virtually all Jews participate. We all seem to

know, or at least intuit, that we have a duty to each other to celebrate the Passover Seder, that the Passover festival connects all Jewish people, regardless of their level of observance otherwise. What is the role of this ancient ritual in Jewish continuity, and how does it connect us all?

The answer, I believe, lies in the idea of a national memory.

Nations are large collective organisms, and their individual citizens are their cells. Each cell has its own personal existence and inner dynamics, but it is also a small part of a greater whole. Nations sign treaties and make commitments that endure long after all their citizens at the time have passed away and been replaced by new generations. “Societies never die,” states the Talmud.¹ Just as we are the same individuals we were seven years ago, even though our cells have by now been replaced almost completely, a society is not recreated when its citizens are replaced by new generations. The society as a collective whole remains the same, and its collective commitments and obligations remain in force.

Not surprisingly, societies also have collective memories; when we talk about national societies, we can also call them national memories. All the members of the society share and pass down the memories of the collective experience, not so much by testimony, but by giving these memories an important role in the lives they share with their children.

How do people in the United States know that the American blacks were enslaved for centuries and that it took a bloody civil war to free them? It is not from documents and photographs, which can be easily faked. It is not from recorded testimonies of public and private figures, which can be disputed as false. It is not from old newspaper articles that can be dismissed as based on false information or forged. As overwhelming as such evidence can be, it does not provide absolutely conclusive proof. We can only be certain that something is true if we remember it from our own experience. Individual memory is sometimes

¹ Bab. Tal. Temurah 15b.

mistaken. Memory shared by the collective and driven by emotion does not make mistakes.

American society knows there were centuries of slavery in its past because the collective remembers it. The American collective consciousness is permeated with strong feelings of hatred, bigotry, resentment, anger, recriminations and aspirations arising from the slavery experience. Students in China or Greece know about it from history books. Students in the United States know about it because it is very much part of their lives right now.

The Jewish national memory is the most precious treasure of the Jewish people. Judaism, besides its underlying philosophy and ideology, is constructed to preserve this national memory. Most of its celebrations, observances and rituals are designed to perpetuate the memory of the seminal event of Jewish peoplehood.

Over three thousand years ago, a group of Jewish tribes had an extraordinary encounter with God. They formed a covenant with Him and thereby with each other, and the Jewish nation was born, a nation with the divine mission to bring to the world, by example, spiritual enlightenment and the highest ideals of justice and equality.

This divine encounter began with the exodus of the Jewish tribes from bondage in Egypt and their arrival shortly afterward at the foot of Mount Sinai. There, in the desert, the people in their great multitude were granted a collective prophetic vision. We cannot understand or describe this vision unless we ourselves would be prophets, but the memory of this transcendent experience, that we were bonded with God, that we were chosen to bear that responsibility, is deeply embedded in our collective consciousness and tightly connected to our Jewish identity.

The genius of the Torah and the Sages is that they did not rely on the powerful emotions triggered by that event to carry the memory forward, just as hatred and desire for revenge drive national memories of other societies. Rather, they ritualized the memory by weaving it into the very

fabric of Jewish life. They chose to focus on the Exodus, the stage preliminary to the revelation, because it is easier for people to remember events they can conjure in their imaginations. People cannot be expected to share collective memories of an altered state of consciousness and a prophetic vision. It is beyond the grasp of the normal human mind.

The three major festivals of the Jewish calendar, therefore, all celebrate the Exodus.² The daily Shema speaks of the Exodus, as does the liturgy in numerous places. The Exodus is mentioned in the blessing over the Kiddush wine. Over a hundred commandments in the Torah relate directly or tangentially to the Exodus. Eat *matzah* on Passover to commemorate the *matzah* you ate during the Exodus. Be kind to strangers, because you were once strangers in the land of Egypt. Do not defile yourselves by eating vermin, because I am God the Lord who brought you forth from Egypt. And numerous others.

The principal conduit of the national memory, however, is the Passover Seder, when we are commanded to tell it to the children. This is the time when the collective memory is shared with the new generations, when the children are brought into the heart of Jewish peoplehood. From their earliest childhood, and thereafter year after year, the children learn that we as a people have been singled out by God to be a light unto the nations, that this is not just an honor but a profound responsibility. The ancient rituals of the Seder were designed with young children very much in mind, because they cannot be expected to become custodians of the national memory unless it is the background of their lives from the earliest age. And of course, the more emotion invested in these rituals the more powerful their effect.

Virtually all Jewish people are aware of this, if not in their individual consciousness, then in their collective consciousness. Therefore, they

² The liturgy of Shavuoth, the Festival of Weeks, mentions the Stand at Sinai, but the purpose of the festival is clearly stated in the Torah. "And you shall make the Festival of Weeks ... and you shall rejoice before God your Lord ... And you shall remember that you were enslaved in Egypt." (Deuteronomy 9-14)

feel a strong obligation to play their part in conveying the national memory into the future, and no matter what else is going on, they make sure to attend a Passover Seder.

The purpose of this Haggadah is to guide us through the celebration of the Seder, to illuminate how the different parts and rituals reinforce the national memory and to help us reaffirm our roles as custodians of our national treasure. The explanatory introductions are written in the form of a script that the leader of the Seder can read aloud to those assembled. Some additional information is provided in the footnotes.

The Seder Plate

הקערה

We prepare the Seder table by collecting the symbols and arranging them in front of the one who will lead the reading of the Haggadah and distribute the ritual foods to the group.

We begin the arrangement with a stack of three whole *matzahs*. We cover them with a handsome cloth and carefully place the Seder Plate upon them; some more elaborate Seder plates have shelves underneath for the *matzahs*. We place the symbols on the Seder Plate in the following order:

BEITZAH ביצה

hard-boiled egg

ZEROA זרוע

roasted chicken wing

MAROR מרור

bitter herbs such as horseradish head

KARPAS כרפס

greens or boiled potato

CHAROSETH חרוסת

apple-nut paste

CHAZERETH חזרת

romaine lettuce

The centerpiece is the stack of three *matzahs* concealed underneath. They symbolize freedom. Next in prominence are the bitter herbs and the romaine lettuce. They symbolize bondage and suffering. The apple-nut paste symbolizes the bricks we were forced to make. The roasted wing and the egg symbolize the ancient paschal service. The potato recalls the simple foods of the enslaved Jewish people in Egypt.

Sanctification

קידוש

Passover is a sanctified time. We gather around the Seder table to commemorate and celebrate our survival, our freedom and our good fortune. But most of all, we commemorate our ancient bond with God that continues to guide and preserve us through three thousand years of dangerous history. We reaffirm the bond with God that entrusts us with the divine mission of living exalted, sanctified lives, of setting a good example for all humankind.

The first step into the Passover Seder is Kadesh (Sanctification). As with all ritual meals, we begin with cups of wine filled to the brim in our hands and a blessing of sanctification on our lips, thus spreading an aura of holiness over all that follows. On Passover, we sip the wine while in a reclining position, a sign of social status.³

KADESH קדש

On the Sabbath, we say this first:

It was evening; it was morning,
The sixth day.

The heavens, the earth
and all their elements were
completed. On the seventh
day, God completed all
the work He had done, and
He rested on the seventh
day from all the work He
had done. God blessed the
seventh day and made it
holy, for on it God rested

³ In Middle Eastern countries, especially in earlier times, people enjoyed their feasts while sitting on cushions on the ground. Those of higher status would take the liberty of resting on their left elbows (assuming they were right-handed) while they ate. Leaning to the left has, therefore, become a traditional Passover symbol of emancipation for Jewish people all over the world.

from all the work He did
during Creation.

On a weekday, we begin:

Attention, my lords, masters
and counselors:

Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, Creator of the fruit
of the vine.

Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, who has chosen us
from among all nations,
raised us above all
nationalities and sanctified
us by His commandments.
And You, O God, our Lord,
have given us lovingly (*On the
Sabbath: Sabbaths for rest,*) festivals
for rejoicing, holidays and
seasons for gladness, (*On the
Sabbath: this Sabbath day and*) this
day of the Feast of Matzahs,
the season of our freedom (*On
the Sabbath: with love*), a holy
assembly, in memory of the
Exodus from Egypt.

For You have chosen us
and sanctified us from
among all the nations, (*On the
Sabbath: and the Sabbath*) and Your
holy festivals (*On the Sabbath:
with love and favor,*) with
gladness and joy, have You
granted us as a heritage.
Blessed are You, O God,
who sanctifies (*On the Sabbath:
the Sabbath,*) Israel and the
festive seasons.

On Saturday night:

Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, who creates the
lights of the fire.

Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, who separates
the sacred from the
mundane, light from
darkness, between Israel
from the nations, the
seventh day from the six
days of work. You have
distinguished between the
holiness of the Sabbath
and the holiness of a
festival and have
sanctified the seventh day
above the six days of
work. You have set apart
and made holy Your
people Israel with Your
holiness. Blessed are You,
O God, who distinguishes
between the holy and the
holy.

Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, who has granted
us life, sustained us and
enabled us to reach this
occasion.

We drink while leaning on the left side.

The First Rituals

The central rituals of the Seder are observed after the Narrative is complete. At this point, however, there are three preliminary rituals. We wash our hands to purify them from contaminants with which they may have come into contact. We eat a small piece of greens dipped into saltwater, which reminds us of our tears. And we prepare the *afikoman*,⁴ which will be eaten after the festive meal.

URCHATZ ורחץ

*We wash our hands in the ritual manner.
No blessing is recited.*

KARPAS כרפס

We dip a small piece of greens or potato into saltwater, and keeping in mind to include in the blessing the bitter herbs we will eat later, we say:

“Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, the Creator of the
fruit of the earth.

YACHATZ יחץ

*We break the middle matzah and set the larger piece aside
for the afikoman, leaving the smaller piece under the Seder Plate.*

⁴ The *afikoman* is a piece of *matzah* designated to be eaten after the Seder meal. It is a symbol of the paschal service celebrated in Egypt on the eve of the Exodus, after which food was forbidden until the next day; eating the *afikoman* last reminds us that the taste of the paschal offering lingered in our mouths. The *afikoman matzah* is taken from the Seder Plate to symbolize its importance as a central ritual of the Seder.

It is customary in many families to allow the young children to abscond with the *afikoman* and extract a gift for its return. This is meant to enhance the excitement of the Seder experience for them.

The Narrative

MAGGID מגיד

☞ The Preamble

We are now ready to tell the story of the Exodus, but first we must prepare our hearts and minds so that the story will be truly meaningful.

The Preamble is a declaration of hope, which is an appropriate feeling to express as we prepare to commemorate the past. Yet if we glance ahead at the text, we are puzzled. Why do we invite the needy after we lock our doors and sit down to the Seder? Shouldn't that have been done earlier and elsewhere? Why do we say, "Next year in the land of Israel," an expression that appears nowhere else in traditional Jewish liturgy or literature? Shouldn't we rather say the traditional, "Next year in Jerusalem"? Finally, are we really slaves? We may be a persecuted minority in various places and various degrees, but are we slaves?

Let us envision parents telling their children centuries in the future about how their ancestors had suffered in the German concentration camps. Would the children weep tears of sympathy? Perhaps. More likely, the story would be an abstract historical event too remote in the mists of the past to engage them emotionally. But if the parents could produce the threadbare rags their ancestors wore in the camps, if they could show the stains of blood, sweat and tears, it would make the ancestors real in the minds of the children. They would see them as flesh-and-blood grandparents, and they would share their suffering. Artifacts bring the past to life.

Before we begin the Narrative, we want to be engaged on an emotional level. Ritual keeps memory alive, but emotion makes it robust. It is, therefore, important that we feel the sorrow of the suffering and the

excitement of the Exodus, that we care about the people we are about to encounter. It is important that we bring them to life, but unfortunately, after three thousand years, we have no artifacts we can display for inspection. But we do have an artifact of sorts. We have a facsimile of their food. We display the broken *matzah* to recall “the bread of affliction,” the meager meal of the slave, not the *matzah* they ate during the Exodus.

We declare, “This is the bread of affliction our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.” And the rest of the Preamble is in the voice of our ancestors. And this is what they said while eating their dry unleavened bread during the short breaks from their labors.⁵ “All who are hungry, let them come and share this simple meal. All that need any kind of assistance, let them come, and we will help them. This year, we are here in the land of Egypt. Next year, we will be back in the land of Israel.⁶ This year, we are indeed slaves, but next year we will be free.”

And thus, the image of our ancestors comes to life. This was the bread they ate, and this was the state of their minds. They did not succumb to despair and selfishness. They shared their meager bread with the hungry and volunteered their aid to the needy. Their hearts were full of hope, optimism and faith in God’s promise to liberate them. These were our ancestors, and we are about to hear their story.⁷

We remove the Seder Plate, display the broken matzah and recite the following.

This is the bread of affliction
our ancestors ate in the land
of Egypt. All who are
hungry, let them come and

⁵ It is very common for the Bible or Talmudic literature to present a quotation without mentioning the speaker, as long as it is understood from the context. See Psalms 81:6.

⁶ At that time, they had no nostalgia for Jerusalem, because it had not yet become a Jewish city.

⁷ The Preamble is the only part of the Seder that appears in Aramaic rather than Hebrew. When the Sages composed the Haggadah during the fourth century before the common era, Aramaic was the dominant language of Israel. Therefore, the Sages, in recognition of the Preamble’s singular importance, composed it in the language most Jewish people best understood.

eat. All that are needy, let them come and join us. This year we are here. Next year, may we be in the land of Israel. This year, we are slaves. Next year, may we be free.

We replace the broken matzah and the Seder Plate and pour the second cup.

☞ **Mah Nishtanah: The Four Questions**

We begin to implant and reinforce our collective memory by the traditional method of Jewish teaching: questions and answers. The children proudly ask the probing questions they have practiced. The questions themselves, even before the response is given, enhance their excitement with the memorable rituals that form part of their lives.

Why does this night differ from all other nights?

The first question: All other nights, we eat leavened bread or *matzah*. This night, only *matzah*.

The second question: All other nights, we eat all kinds of vegetables. This night, bitter herbs.

The third question: All other nights, we do not have to dip even once. This night, twice.⁸

The fourth question: All other nights, we eat while either seated or reclining. This night, we all recline.

⁸ We dip the greens or potato into saltwater to remind us of the tears of our ancestors. We dip the bitter herbs, which recall our bondage, into the apple-nut paste, which recalls the bricks we were forced to make.

We replace the Seder Plate and continue saying the Haggadah.

☞ **The Response**

We respond with a brief statement that encapsulates the story of our bondage and liberation. And we emphasize the importance of telling and retelling the story no matter how well we know it. The ritual repetition of the story etches it into the collective memory.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but God, our Lord, brought us forth from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Had the Holy Blessed One not taken our ancestors out of Egypt, then we, our children and our children's children would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.⁹

Therefore, even if we were all wise, all insightful, all elders, all Torah scholars, we would still have to tell about the Exodus from Egypt. All who relate the story at length deserve to be praised.

☞ **The Ancient Sages**

Having said that even the wisest who know the story perfectly must retell it at length, we read that the greatest Sages of the Talmud stayed up all night at the Passover Seder.

Once Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon were dining

⁹ We emphasize that the bondage - physical, spiritual and psychological - was so deep that it could have gone on indefinitely.

together [at the Seder] in Bnei Brak. They discussed the Exodus from Egypt throughout the entire night until their students came and told them: “Teachers, it is time to recite the morning Shema.”¹⁰

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah said: “Behold, I am like a seventy-year-old man, and I was not fortunate enough to show that the Exodus must be recited at night until ben Zoma interpreted the verse: “in order that you remember the day you left Egypt all the days of your life,” as follows: “The days of your life” refers to the days; adding the word “all” includes the nights.

The Sages read the verse as follows: “the days of your life” refers to the present world; “all the days of your life” to the Messianic era.

The Four Children

Once again, the emphasis is on the children. We want them to participate fully in the Passover experience. We recognize, however, that there are different levels of interest among them and that we must tailor our approach to the needs of the individual child.

¹⁰ Ordinarily, the students would have participated in the Seder of their rabbis. This episode, however, took place during the Gezeirath Hashmad, the Decree of Destruction, issued by the Roman Empire, which outlawed the practice of Judaism in an effort to destroy the Jewish people. A well-attended Seder would have drawn too much hostile attention and was, therefore, too dangerous. This small group of great sages met in a windowless cellar. They did not know morning had arrived until their students came to tell it to them.

Blessed be God; blessed be He. Blessed be the One who gave His Torah to His nation, Israel; blessed be He. The Torah speaks of four children: one wise, one wayward, one ill-informed and one who is not informed enough to know what to ask.

What does the wise child say?

“What is the meaning behind the testaments, statutes and laws God, our Lord, commanded you?”

You should reply by teaching him all the laws of the Paschal service, concluding with not eating dessert after it is over.

What does the wayward¹¹ child say?

“Of what use is this service to you?” By saying “to you,” he set himself apart. Since he excluded himself from the Jewish collective, he denied the foundation of our faith.

You should, therefore, blunt his teeth¹² and say to him: “Because of this God acted for me when I went out of Egypt.”

¹¹ The Hebrew word used here is *rasha*, which is normally translated as a villain or a wicked one. In this case, it would be more appropriate to characterize a child sitting at the Seder table as merely wayward in his religious obligations.

¹² Figuratively, of course. We criticize him sternly for his cavalier attitude toward the hallowed rituals of Jewish tradition. When he sees our disapproval, he will take the rituals more seriously.

By saying “for me,” we reject his attitude. Had he been there, he would have been left behind.

What does the ill-informed child say?

“What is this?”

You should tell him:
“God brought us forth with a strong hand from Egypt, from the house of bondage.”

As for the child who is not even informed enough to know what to ask, you must lead into it, as the verse states: “You shall tell your son on that day, ‘Because of this God acted for me for me when I went out of Egypt.’”

The Date and the Time

Before we tell the Exodus story, we emphasize to those assembled at the Seder table that the date, the time and the setting are exactly as ordained by the Torah.

Does the obligation to tell the story of the Exodus begin on the first of the month of Nissan?

The Torah teaches: “[You shall tell your son] on that day [of the exodus] ...”¹³

From the phrase “on that day,” one might infer “while it is still daytime.”

¹³ The date of the Exodus was 15 Nissan.

The Torah, therefore, adds “it is because of this.”¹⁴ Tell it in the evening time when *matzah* and bitter herbs are placed before you.

☞ The Exodus Story

The Exodus story begins hundreds of years before the enslavement. We trace the important events that led the fledgling Jewish people to emigrate to Egypt. We then describe their gradual subjugation, their oppression and suffering and their ultimate liberation.

At first, our ancestors were idol worshippers, but now God has drawn us close to His service, as it is written, “And Joshua said to the whole nation, ‘So says God, the Lord of Israel, “Your ancestors had always lived beyond the [Euphrates] River - Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor - and they served other gods. And I took your patriarch Abraham, from beyond that river and I led him throughout all the Land of Canaan. And I multiplied his descendants and I gave him Isaac. And to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. And I gave Mount Se’ir to Esau as an inheritance for him and Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.”¹⁵

Blessed be He Who keeps His promise to Israel;

¹⁴ The demonstrative pronoun, this, indicates visual symbols.

¹⁵ Joshua 24:2-2.

blessed be He. The Holy Blessed One determined the end of our bondage time to fulfill the pledge He made to Abram in the Covenant of the Parts, as it is written, “Know full well that your offspring will be strangers in a foreign land. They will enslave and oppress them for four hundred years. But ultimately, I will punish the nation to whom they are enslaved. Afterwards, they shall leave with great wealth.”¹⁶

☞ **This Was Our Protection**

The Egyptians enslaved us and tried to destroy our spirits. But in the end, they failed. God saved us. During the next three thousand years, we have come under attack again and again, by Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Spaniards, Russians, Turks, Germans, Arabs and many others. We have suffered terribly, but in the end, by the grace of God, we have survived. Even when things seem to go well, we must never forget that the Jewish people are always at risk and that our survival is ultimately in God’s hands.

We cover the matzah, raise the cup and say:

This has protected our ancestors and us. More than just one enemy has threatened to destroy us. Indeed, there are some who threaten to destroy us in every generation. But the Holy Blessed One rescues us from them.

We put down the cups, uncover the middle matzah and continue.

¹⁶ Genesis 15:13-14.

Go learn what Laban the Aramean attempted to do to Jacob, our father. Pharaoh only attempted to destroy the males, but Laban tried to uproot everything, as it is written, **“An Aramean was my father’s destroyer. He descended to Egypt and dwelt there with a small number of people. There, he became a nation, great, powerful and populous.”**¹⁷

“He descended to Egypt,” compelled by God’s decree.

“And dwelt there” teaches that our patriarch Jacob did not go down to Egypt intending to settle there but merely to dwell there, as it says, “And [Jacob’s sons] told Pharaoh, ‘We have come to dwell in this land, for there is no pasture for the flocks of your servants, since the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now please, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.’”

“With a small number of people,” as it is written, “Your ancestors went down to Egypt with seventy individuals. Now God has made you as numerous as the stars of the sky.”

“There he became a nation” teaches that Israel became prominent there.

“Great, powerful,” as it is written, “The people of

¹⁷ The following quotations that appear in bold type are from Deuteronomy 26:5-8. The story of the Exodus is told in many chapters in the first part of the Book of Exodus. The Haggadah prefers the condensed version in Deuteronomy that encapsulates the story in just a few verses.

Israel were fruitful and prolific. They multiplied and became very powerful. The land was filled with them.”

“And populous,” as it is written, “I made you as numerous as the plants of the field. You grew and developed, becoming very beautiful, your breasts firm and your hair grown long; but you were naked and bare. I passed over you and saw you weltering in your blood, and I said to you: ‘Through your blood, you will live.’ And I said to you: ‘Through your blood you will live.’”

And the Egyptians were cruel to us. They made us suffer and imposed harsh slavery upon us.

“And the Egyptians were cruel to us,” as it is written, “Come, let us deal cleverly with them, lest they multiply. Then, if there would be a war, they might join our enemies and drive us from the land.”

“They made us suffer,” as it is written, “They placed taskmasters over them to oppress them with hard labor. And they built Pithom and Ramses as storage cities for Pharaoh.”

“And imposed harsh slavery upon us,” as it is written, “And the Egyptians made the people of Israel do backbreaking labor.”

We cried out to God, the Lord of our fathers. God

heard our voice. He saw our suffering, our difficult labor and our distress.

“We cried out to God, the Lord of our fathers,” as it is written, “And after those many days, the king of Egypt died. And the people of Israel groaned because of the work. And when they cried out because of their slavery, their pleas rose before God.”

“And God heard our voice,” as it is written, “God heard our cries and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

“And He saw our suffering” refers to the disruption of all family life, as it is written, “And God saw the people of Israel and God took note of it.”

“And our difficult labor” refers to the children, as it is written, “Every boy who is born must be cast into the river, but every girl shall be allowed to live.”

“And our distress” refers to the oppression, as it is written, “I have also seen the oppression which the Egyptians are applying to them.”

And God brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great visions, and with signs and with wonders.

“And God brought us out of Egypt,” not by an angel,

not by an archangel, not by a seraph, not by any agent. Rather, it was the Holy Blessed One Himself in His glory, as it is written, “And I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and I will slay every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from man to beast. I will execute judgments against all the gods of Egypt. I am God.”¹⁸

“And I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night.” I and not an angel.

“And I will slay every firstborn.” I and not an archangel.

“And I will execute judgments against all the gods of Egypt.” I and not an agent.

“I am God.” It is I and none other.

“With a mighty hand” refers to an epidemic,¹⁹ as it is written, “Behold, the hand of God will be against your cattle in the field, against the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the oxen and the sheep, with a very severe pestilence.”

“With an outstretched arm” refers to the sword,²⁰ as it is written, “His drawn sword is in His hand, directed against Jerusalem.”

¹⁸ This interpretation considers the tenth and final plague to have been the act of extraction, all the other plagues being preliminary.

¹⁹ The death of the firstborn was an epidemic.

²⁰ Pharaoh continued resistance after being warned that the firstborn were about to die sparked a revolt and civil strife.

“With great fear.” This is the revelation of the Divine Presence, as it is written, “Has the Lord ever performed miracles, coming to take a nation from the midst of another with miracles, signs, wonders, war, a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with terrifying events, as God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?”

“With signs” refers to the staff, as it is written, “Take this staff in your hand, with which you will perform the signs.”

“And wonders” refers to bloodshed, as it is written, “I will reveal wonders in heaven and earth.

We pour out three drops of wine, one for each word.

Bloodshed, fire and columns of smoke.”²¹

Another interpretation:²² “With a mighty hand” indicates two plagues.

“With an outstretched arm” indicates two more.

“With great visions,” two more.

“With signs,” two more.

“And with wonders,” two more.

²¹ This is the conclusion of the verse in Joel 3:3 that connects the mention of wonders with bloodshed.

²² This interpretation considers all ten plagues to have been part of one extended act of extraction.

These are the ten plagues
the Holy Blessed One
brought upon the Egyptians
in Egypt. And they are:

We pour out ten drops of wine; one for each plague.

Blood; frogs; lice; wild
beasts; cattle plague; boils;
hail; locusts; darkness;
slaying of the firstborn.

We pour out three more drops of wine.

Rabbi Yehudah formulated
acronyms for them:

Detzach. Adash. B'achav.

We refill our cups.

Rabbi Yosei the Galilean
declared: "How do we know
that the Egyptians were dealt
ten plagues in Egypt and
fifty by the sea? Concerning
the plagues in Egypt, the
Torah states, 'And the
magicians told Pharaoh, "It
is the finger of God."'"
Regarding those at sea, the
Torah states, 'Israel saw the
great hand God wielded
against the Egyptians, and
the people feared God. They
believed in God and in
Moses, His servant.' How
many plagues were they
dealt by the finger? Ten. It
follows that they were dealt
ten plagues in Egypt and
fifty by the sea."²³

²³ The statements of the following three sages are puzzling. What exactly do they mean? Were the Egyptians at the sea actually afflicted with fifty, two hundred or two hundred and fifty plagues? And if so, what were they? Why is it important to mention these unidentified plagues? What is the point of contention among these sages?

Perhaps the following Midrash can resolve these questions. "Even a simple person at the splitting of the sea saw a vision greater than the visions of all the future prophets." (Mekhilta Shirah 3) According to the Midrash, the people experienced a prophetic vision at the sea similar

Rabbi Eliezer said: “How do we know that each and every plague the Holy Blessed One brought upon the Egyptians consisted of four plagues? It is written, “He unleashed upon them His burning anger, wrath, fury, trouble and a band of evil messengers. ‘Wrath’ refers to one plague; ‘fury’ to a second; ‘trouble’ to a third; and ‘a band of evil’ messengers to a fourth. It follows that the Egyptians were dealt forty plagues in Egypt and two hundred by the sea.”

Rabbi Akiva said: “How do we know that each plague the Holy Blessed One brought upon the Egyptians consisted of five plagues? It is written, ‘He unleashed upon them His burning anger: wrath, fury, trouble and a band of evil messengers.’ ‘His burning anger’ refers to one plague; ‘wrath’ to a second; ‘fury’ to a third; ‘trouble’ to a fourth; and ‘a band of evil messengers’ to a fifth. It follows that the Egyptians were dealt fifty plagues in Egypt and two hundred and fifty by the sea.”

to the prophetic vision they experienced at Mount Sinai during the Giving of the Torah. This vision cannot be described or remembered, but the sages assure us that it was a revelation greater by many factors than the revelation of the Divine Presence in the physical world through the administration of the plagues. The sages arrived at this conclusion independently and are essentially making the same point. This prophetic vision, just as the prophetic vision at Sinai, should be remembered in the context of the memory of the Exodus.

☞ Dayenu: Expressions of Gratitude

We reflect on our good fortune, and we express our profound gratitude. By thanking God every year for every step of our deliverance,²⁴ we ensure that the national memory remains strong.

Consider how many wonderful benefits God has granted us.

Had He brought us out of Egypt but not punished them, it would have been enough.

Had He punished them but not smashed their gods, it would have been enough.

Had He smashed their gods but not slain their firstborn, it would have been enough.

Had He slain their firstborn but not given us their wealth, it would have been enough.

Had He given us their wealth but not split the sea, it would have been enough.

Had He split the sea but not led us through on dry land, it would have been enough.

Had He led us through on dry land but not drowned our foes, it would have been enough.

Had He drowned our foes but not provided for us in the desert for forty years, it would have been enough.

²⁴ When Rachel gave birth to Joseph after many years of infertility, she declared, “The Lord has removed my shame.” (Genesis 30:23) According to one opinion in the Midrash, she was grateful that she would finally have a child to blame if she ever broke a valuable vase. This seems strange. Was this why she was so anxious to bear Jacob a child? Actually, this statement illuminates the essence of gratitude. Rachel reaped numerous benefits from the birth of her son, the most insignificant of which was to be able to blame the broken vase on the child. In order to express her gratitude fully, she had to acknowledge even the most trivial benefit. When we thank God for liberating us, we thank Him for every step of our deliverance.

Had He provided for us in the desert for forty years but not fed us the manna, it would have been enough.

Had He fed us the manna but not given us the Sabbath, it would have been enough.

Had He given us the Sabbath but not brought us to Mount Sinai, it would have been enough.

Had He brought us to Mount Sinai but not given us the Torah, it would have been enough.

Had He given us the Torah but not brought us into the Land of Israel, it would have been enough.

Had He brought us into the Land of Israel but not built the Temple for us, it would have been enough.

How much more must we thank God for His repeated and many benefits.²⁵ He brought us out of Egypt. He punished them. He smashed their gods. He slew their first born. He gave us their wealth. He split the sea for us. He led us through on dry land. He drowned our foes. He provided for us in the desert for forty years. He fed us the manna. He gave us the Sabbath. He brought us to Mount Sinai. He gave us the Torah. He brought us into the Land of Israel. He built

²⁵ Gratitude is always an admirable quality, but it plays an especially important role on Passover as one of the powerful emotions that drive the collective memory.

the Temple for us to atone
for all of our sins.

☞ The Seder Symbols

Mementos keep our memories alive. Although we do not have actual mementos of our experiences in Egypt, we have symbols to remind us of those times.

Rabban Gamliel would say: Whoever does not discuss the following three things on Passover has not fulfilled his obligation.²⁶ They are:

We make the declaration but do not display the shank bone:

The paschal offering our ancestors ate during the Temple era, what did it represent? It recalled that the Holy Blessed One passed over the homes of our ancestors in Egypt, as it is written, “You shall say, ‘It is a paschal offering for God because He passed over the homes of the people of Israel in Egypt, striking the Egyptians and saving our homes.’ The people bowed down and prostrated themselves.”

We lift and display the middle matzah and declare:

This *matzah* we eat, what does it represent? It recalls that there was no time for the dough of our ancestors to rise before the King of

²⁶ The presentation of visual symbols is a powerful reinforcement of the collective memory. We connect those symbols with their historical role in the Passover rituals.

Kings, the Holy Blessed One, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them, as it is written, “They baked *matzah* cakes from the dough they had brought out of Egypt because it had not risen; for they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay; nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.”

We lift the bitter herbs and declare:

These bitter herbs we eat, what do they represent? They remind us that the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt, as it is written, “They made their lives bitter with hard service, with mortar and bricks, and with all manner of fieldwork; all the backbreaking labor they forced them to perform.”

☞ In Our Imaginations

The best way to strengthen our national memory is to recreate the experiences in our minds. We close our eyes and let our imaginations take over. We find ourselves laboring under the scorching sun in ancient Egypt, while the guards crack their whips over our backs. And just when we feel we cannot endure any more suffering, God sends Moses to defeat and liberate our people.

In every single generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he had gone out of Egypt, as it is written, “And you shall tell your son

on that day, “It is because of this that God acted for me when I went out of Egypt.” The Holy Blessed One redeemed not only our ancestors from Egypt, He redeemed us together with them, as it is written, “He brought us out from there, so that He might bring us to the land He promised our fathers and give it to us.”

Hallel: Songs of Praise

Having expressed our detailed gratitude for the miracles of the Exodus, we begin the traditional Hallel collection of beautiful psalms to God’s glory. We complete the Hallel after the holiday feast, which thus transcends the material and becomes a spiritual experience.

We cover the matzahs, raise the cup and declare:

Therefore, we are obligated to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, adore, bless and acclaim the One Who performed all these miracles for our fathers and for us. He brought us forth from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to festivity, from deep darkness to great illumination and from servitude to redemption. Therefore, let us recite a new song before Him. Hallelujah!

Hallelujah, offer praise, O servants of God, offer praise to God’s Name.

May God's Name be
blessed from now until
forever.

From the rising of the sun
until it sets, may God's
Name be praised.

God is exalted above all
nations, His honor extends
over the heavens.

Who compares to God, our
Lord, who ascends to His
dwelling place,

yet descends to look down
upon the heavens and the
earth?

He raises up the poor from
the dust, He lifts the
downtrodden from the
wasteyard

to install them with nobles,
with the nobles of his people.

He installs the barren
woman of the house as a
mother rejoicing over her
children, hallelujah.

When Israel went forth
from Egypt, the House of
Jacob from among a
barbarian people,

Judah became His holy
one, Israel became His
sovereign nations.

The sea saw, and it fled,
the Jordan turned backward.

The mountains cavorted
like rams, the hills like
young lambs.

What is with you, O sea,
that you flee, O Jordan, that
you turn backward,

O mountains, that you
cavort like rams, O hills, like
young lambs?

In the Presence of the
Master, Creator of the earth,
in the Presence of the Lord
of Jacob,

who transforms m into a
pool of water, the flintstone
into a fountain of water.

We hold the cup of wine and say:

Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, who redeemed us
and redeemed our ancestors
from Egypt and has enabled
us to reach this night so that
we may eat *matzah* and bitter
herbs on it. So too, O God,
our Lord, Lord of our
fathers, enable us to reach
other festivals and holidays
that will come to us in peace,
celebrating in the rebuilding
of Your city and rejoicing in
Your service. Then we shall
eat of the sacrifices and of
the Paschal offerings (*on a
Saturday night: of the Paschal
offerings and the sacrifices*),
whose blood shall be
sprinkled on the wall of
Your altar to be graciously
accepted. Then we shall sing
a new song for our
redemption and for the
deliverance of our souls.
Blessed are You, O God,
who redeemed Israel.

We make the blessing on the wine and drink while leaning to the left.

Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, the Creator of the
fruit of the vine.

🌀 The Seder Meal 🌀

Family time arrives with the beginning of the holiday feast, but first the Passover rituals are performed. The Seder meal is a memorable occasion during which new memories are made and old memories are preserved. This is a good opportunity to tell stories of deliverance, both national and personal. And it's time to enjoy the food and the company.

Rachtzah 🌀 רחצה

We wash our hands, this time with a blessing.

Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, who has sanctified
us with His commandments
and commanded us
concerning the washing of
the hands.

Motzi 🌀 מוציא

We take the first and second matzahs and make the first blessing.

Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, who brings forth
bread from the earth.

Matzah 🌀 מצה

We replace the second matzah and make the second blessing.

Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, who has sanctified
us with His commandments
and commanded us
concerning the eating of
matzah.

We eat a piece of the matzah while leaning to the left.

Marror 🌀 מרור

We dip the bitter herbs into the charosses and make the blessing.

Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, who has sanctified
us with his commandments
and commanded us
concerning the eating of the
bitter herbs.

We eat the bitter herbs without leaning.

Korach ❧ כורח

*We make a sandwich of a piece of the third matzah and bitter herbs
dipped in charosses, and while leaning to the left, we eat it and say:*

In remembrance of the
Temple, following the
custom of Hillel. When the
Temple was standing, Hillel
would do as follows: He
would combine the Paschal
offering, *matzah* and bitter
herbs together in a sandwich
and eat them together to
fulfill the instruction: “They
shall eat it with *matzah* and
bitter herbs.”

Shulchan Orach ❧ שולחן עורח

We enjoy the Seder feast.

❧ The Afikoman ❧

The *afikoman*, the small piece of *matzah* that reminds us of the
ancient paschal service, now emerges from the place where the
children have hidden it. It’s the last thing we eat, and its taste lingers in
our mouths until the following morning.

Tzafun ❧ צפון

*We take a piece of the afikoman and eat it while leaning to the left.
We eat no more for the rest of the night.*

☞ Grace after the Feast ☞

After we have enjoyed the wonderful holiday foods, we thank God for the bounty He has granted us. We begin with a psalm of hope, redemption and joy, and then we make the traditional blessings.

Barech ☞ בָּרַךְ

We pour the third cup of wine and say this preamble.

A song of the steps. When God returns the captives of Zion, we will be as in a dream.

Then our mouths will fill with laughter, our tongues with hymns, then it will be said among the nations, “God did great things for these people.”

God did great things for us,
and we rejoiced.

O God, return our captives,
like streams over parched
land.

Those who plant as tears
they weep will sing hymns
as they reap.

He goes off weeping,
carrying his seed bag, but he
comes back singing, carrying
his sheaves.

The leader begins:

My masters, let us say
Grace.

The assembled respond:

May God’s Name be blessed
from now until forever.

The leader continues:

May God’s Name be blessed
from now until forever.

With the permission of the
masters, teachers and

gentlemen, let us bless Him of whose bounty we have eaten.

The assembled respond:

Blessed is He from whose bounty we have eaten and by whose goodness we exist. Blessed is He, and blessed is His Name.

The Grace begins:

Blessed are You, O God, our Lord, King of the Universe, who nourishes the entire world in His goodness with grace, kindness and mercy. He gives food to all creatures, for His kindness is eternal. Through His great goodness we have never lacked, and may we never lack nourishment forever, for the sake of His great Name, for He is the Lord who nourishes, sustains and benefits all and prepares nourishment for all the creatures He has created, as stated, “You open Your Hand and satisfy the desire of every living being.” Blessed are You, O God, who provides food for all.

Let us thank You, O God, our Lord, for having given our ancestors as a heritage a precious, good and spacious land; because You, O God, our Lord, brought us out of the land of Egypt and redeemed us from the house of bondage; for Your covenant which You sealed in our flesh; for Your Torah which You taught us and for

Your statutes which You made known to us; for life, grace and kindness which You have lovingly bestowed on us; and for the food we eat with which You constantly provide us and sustain us every day, at all times and at every hour.

For all this, O God, our Lord, we thank and bless You. May Your Name be blessed by every living being continuously and forever, as it is written, "When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless God, your Lord, for the good land which He has given you." Blessed are You, O God, for the land and for the food.

Have mercy, O God, our Lord, on Your people Israel, on Your city Jerusalem, on Zion that dwelling place of Your glory, on the kingdom of the House of David, Your anointed, and on the great and holy House which is known by Your Name. O our Lord, our Father, shepherd us, feed us, support us, sustain us and grant us comfort. Speedily, O God, our Lord, relieve us from all our afflictions. Please, O God, our Lord, do not make us dependent on the gifts of men or on their loans, but only upon Your full, open, holy and generous hand, that we may not be shamed or disgraced forever and ever.

On the Sabbath:

May it please You, O God, our Lord, to strengthen us by Your commandments and by the commandments of the seventh day, this great and holy Sabbath. For this day is great and holy before You, to refrain from work and to rest on it with love, in accordance with the commandment of Your will. May You, O God, our Lord, in Your good will grant us tranquility, that there be no distress, grief or lament on the day of our rest. And show us, O God, our Lord, the consolation of Zion, Your city, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, Your holy city, for You are the Master of all help and the Master of all comfort.

Our God and the God of our fathers, may there ascend, come, be reached, be noted, be favored, be heard, be considered and be remembered before You our remembrance and notice, the remembrance of our ancestors, the remembrance of the Messiah, the son of David, Your servant, the remembrance of Jerusalem, Your holy city, and the remembrance of Your entire people, the House of Israel, for deliverance, well-being, grace, kindness, mercy, good life and peace on this day of the Festival of Matzahs. Remember us on this day, O God, our Lord, for good. Notice us on it for blessing. Save us on it for a good life. With the promise of deliverance and mercy, have compassion and be gracious to us, have mercy on us and

deliver us, for our eyes are directed to You, for You are the Lord, a gracious and merciful King.

Rebuild Jerusalem, the holy city, speedily in our days. Blessed are You, O God, who rebuilds Jerusalem in His mercy. Amen.

Blessed are You, O God, our Lord, King of the Universe, who is our Father, our King, our Might, our Creator, our Redeemer, our Maker, our Holy One, the Holy One of Jacob, our Shepherd, the Shepherd of Israel, the Good King, and who is good to all. On each and every day, He has done good for us, He does good for us, and He will continue to do good for us. He has bestowed, He bestows, He will forever bestow on us grace, kindness and mercy, relief, salvation, success, blessing, help, consolation, support, sustenance, mercy, life, peace and all manner of goodness. May He never deprive us of any good forever.

The Merciful One, may He reign over us forever. The Merciful One, may He be blessed on heaven and on earth. The Merciful One, may He be praised for generation after generation; may He be glorified through us forever; and may He be honored through us for eternity. The Merciful One,

may He sustain us with honor. The Merciful One, may He break the yoke of exile from our necks and lead us upright to our land. The Merciful One, may He send abundant blessing into this household and on this table upon which we have eaten. The Merciful One, may He send to us Elijah the Prophet, of benevolent memory, and may he announce good tidings to us, acts of salvation and words of consolation.

By parents' table:

The Merciful One, may He bless my honored father, master of this house, and my honored mother, mistress of this house, them, their household, their children and all that is theirs,

If married:

The Merciful One, may He bless me, my spouse, our children and all that is mine,

If a guest:

The Merciful One, may He bless this host and hostess, them, all their children and all that is theirs.

The Merciful One, may He bless us and all that is ours. Just as He blessed our forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in all things, by all things and with all things, so may He bless all of us together with a perfect blessing. Let us say, Amen.

A guest says:

May it be Your will that the host shall not be dismayed or shamed in this world or in the next, that his properties be

successful and close to the city,
that Satan have no control over
his handiwork, that he encounter
no sinful things or iniquitous
thoughts always and forever.

In the high heavens, may
merit be invoked upon them
and upon us to bring a
safeguarding of peace. May
we receive a blessing from
God and justice from the
Lord of our salvation. May
we find grace and good
understanding in the eyes of
God and man.

On Sabbath:

The Merciful One, may He
cause us to inherit the day which
will be completely Sabbath and
rest for eternal life.

The Merciful One, may He
cause us to inherit the day
which is all good.

The Merciful One, may He
grant us the privilege of
reaching the days of the
Messiah and the life of the
next world. He is a tower of
salvation for His king and
bestows kindness upon His
anointed, to David and his
children forever. The One
who makes peace in the
heights, may He make peace
for us and for all Israel. Let
us say, Amen.

Fear God, you His holy
ones, for those who fear Him
suffer no want. Young lions
are in need and go hungry,
but those who seek God will
not lack for any good. Give
thanks to God for He is
good, for His kindness is
everlasting. You open Your

Hand and satisfy the desire
of every living being.
Blessed is the man who
trusts in God; God will be
His trust. I was young and
now I have grown old, yet
never have I seen a righteous
man abandoned or his
children seeking bread. God
will give fortitude to His
people. God will bless His
people with peace.

We prepare to drink the third cup of wine.

Blessed are You, O God,
our Lord, King of the
Universe, the Creator of the
fruit of the vine.

We drink leaning to the left.

We pour the fourth cup. It is customary to open the door and say:

Pour out Your wrath upon
the nations that do not
acknowledge You and upon
the kingdoms that do not call
upon Your Name, for they
have devoured Jacob and
destroyed his dwelling. Pour
out Your anger against them,
and let the wrath of Your
fury overtake them. Pursue
them with anger and destroy
them from beneath God's
heaven.

☞ The Hallel Resumes

**Do not do it for us, O
God,** not for us, but to give
honor to Your Name, for
Your kindness and for Your
truth.

Why should the nations say, "Where then is their Lord?"

when our Lord is in Heaven, doing all that He pleases?

Their idols are of silver and gold, the handiwork of people.

They have mouths, but they do not speak, they have eyes, but they do not see.

They have ears, but they do not hear, they have noses, but they do not smell.

Their hands do not feel, their feet do not walk, they do not articulate with their throats.

Let their makers become just like them, all those who trust in them.

Let Israel trust in God, He is their support and their shield.

Let the House of Aaron trust in God, He is their help and their shield.

Let those who fear God trust in God, He is their help and their shield.

God who remembers us, may he give blessings. May He bless the House of Israel. May He bless the House of Aaron. May He bless those who fear God, the small with the great. May God heap blessings on you, on you and on your children. You are blessed before God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth.

The heavens are God's heavens, but he gave the earth to mankind. It is not the dead who praise God, nor those who descend to the crypt. But we can bless God, from now until forever, hallelujah.

I love that God hears my voice, my entreaties.

For He inclined His ear to me, and I call out in my troubled times.

Murderous gangs surround me, the outposts of the grave have found me, I have found misfortune and sorrow.

But I call out in the Name of God, "Please, O God, deliver my soul."

God is kind and righteous, our Lord is merciful.

God watches over the guileless ones, I was brought down, but He saved me.

Return to your rest, O my soul, for God has favored you.

For you delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from wandering.

I shall walk before God in the lands of the living.

I believed what I was told, I responded very harshly.

I said in my haste, "All people are treacherous."

How can I repay God for all His favors to me?

I shall lift up a cup of salvation, I shall call out in the Name of God.

I shall repay my vows to
God, may it be before all His
people.

May it be a grave thing in
God's eyes to bring death to
His pious ones.

I plead, O God, for I am
Your servant, I am Your
servant, the son of Your
maid, You have undone my
chains.

I will sacrifice a
thanksgiving offering to
You, I shall call out in the
Name of God.

I shall repay my vows to
God, may it be before all His
people

in the courtyards of the
House of God, in the midst
of Jerusalem, hallelujah.

All nations, praise God.
All peoples, acclaim Him.
But for us His kindness was
strongest, God's truth is
everlasting, hallelujah.

Give praise to God, for He
is good, for His kindness is
everlasting.

Say it now, O Israel, "For
His kindness is everlasting."

Say it now, O House of
Aaron, "For His kindness is
everlasting."

Say it now, O those who
fear God, "For His kindness
is everlasting."

From dire straits, I called
out to God, God returned me
to wide open spaces.

God is with me, I shall not
fear; what can people do to
me?

God is with me as my support, now I can look at my enemies.

It is better to take refuge in God, than to trust in people.

It is better to take refuge in God, than to trust in princes.

Though all nations encircle me, I will wither them in the Name of God.

Though they encircle me again and again, I will wither them in the Name of God.

Though they encircle me like bees, though they leap like fire among the thorns, I will wither them in the Name of God.

You pushed me hard to make me fall, but God supported me.

The might and the power of God were my salvation.

There is a sound of hymns and salvation in the tents of the righteous, God's right hand does great things.

God's right hand is upraised, God's right hand does great things. I will not die, but I will live, I will tell about the works of God.

God has tormented me severely, but He has not consigned me to death.

Open the gates of righteousness for me, I will come through them, I will thank God.

This is the gate of God, the righteous pass through it.

I thank You, for You answered me, You were my salvation.

I thank You, for You answered
me, You were my salvation.

The stone the builders
discarded became the main
cornerstone.

The stone the builders discarded
became the main cornerstone.

This was from God, it was
a wonder to our eyes.

This was from God, it was a
wonder to our eyes.

This is the day that God
made, let us delight and
rejoice in it.

This is the day that God made,
let us delight and rejoice in it.

I pray, O God, please send
salvation.

I pray, O God, please send
salvation.

I pray, O God, please send
success.

I pray, O God, please send
success.

Blessed is he who comes in
the Name of God, we bless
you from the House of God.

Blessed is he who comes in the
Name of God, we bless you
from the House of God.

God is the Lord, He gives
us light. Secure the festival
offerings with cords as they
await the corners of the altar.

God is the Lord, He gives us
light. Secure the festival
offerings with cords as they
await the corners of the altar.

You are my Lord, and I
thank You. My Lord, I shall
exalt You.

You are my Lord, and I thank
You. My Lord, I shall exalt You.

Give praise to God, for He
is good, for His kindness is
everlasting.

Give praise to God, for He is good. For His kindness is everlasting.

Give thanks to God, for He is good.

For His kindness is everlasting.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords.

For His kindness is everlasting.

Give thanks to the Master of masters.

For His kindness is everlasting.

To the One Who alone works great wonders.

For His kindness is everlasting.

To the One Who makes the heavens with understanding.

For His kindness is everlasting.

To the One Who spreads the land over the waters.

For His kindness is everlasting.

To the One Who makes great lights.

For His kindness is everlasting.

The sun to rule by day.

For His kindness is everlasting.

The moon and the stars to rule by night.

For His kindness is everlasting.

To the One Who struck Egypt through their firstborn.

For His kindness is everlasting.

And delivered Israel from among them.

For His kindness is everlasting.

With a strong Hand and outstretched Arm.

For His kindness is everlasting.

Who tore the Sea of Reeds to pieces.

For His kindness is everlasting.

And led Israel through it.

For His kindness is everlasting.

And cast Pharaoh and his
army into the Sea of Reeds.

For His kindness is everlasting.

He led His people in the
desert.

For His kindness is everlasting.

He struck down great
kings.

For His kindness is everlasting.

And slew mighty kings.

For His kindness is everlasting.

Sichon, king of the
Amorites.

For His kindness is everlasting.

And Og, king of Bashan.

For His kindness is everlasting.

He gave us their land as a
heritage.

For His kindness is everlasting.

A heritage for Israel, His
servant.

For His kindness is everlasting.

For when we were low, He
remembered us.

For His kindness is everlasting.

And delivered us from our
tormentors.

For His kindness is everlasting.

He gives bread to all flesh.

For His kindness is everlasting.

Give thanks to the Lord of
the heavens.

For His kindness is everlasting.

**The soul of every living
being shall bless Your
Name, O God, our Lord, and
the spirit of all creatures**

shall glorify and exalt Your renown, our King, forever. From the beginning to the end of the world, You are the Lord. Aside from You, we have no King who redeems and saves; who delivers and rescues; who supports and has mercy.

In all times of difficulty and stress, we have no King but You, O Lord of the first and last, Lord of all creatures, Master of all history, lauded by manifold praises, the One Who guides His world with kindness and His creatures with mercy. God does not slumber nor sleep. He awakens those who sleep, arouses those who slumber. He makes the speechless speak, releases the shackled, braces the fallen and makes the subservient stand erect. To You alone, we give thanks.

Were our mouths bursting with song like the sea, our tongues with rejoicing like its multitudinous waves and our lips with praise like the broad expanses of the sky; were our eyes luminous as the sun and the moon; were our hands spread wide like the eagles of the sky and our feet fleet as deer, we still could not manage to thank You, O God, our Lord and Lord of our ancestors, or to bless Your Name for even a thousandth, a millionth or a

billionth of all the good You have done for our fathers and for us.

O God, our Lord, You delivered us from Egypt and rescued us from the house of bondage. When we were starving, You fed us; in plenty, You provided for us. You saved us from the sword, delivered us from plague and spared us from harmful and grave maladies. Your mercies have supported us till now; Your kindnesses have not abandoned us. O God, our Lord, do not ever forsake us.

And so, the limbs You have arranged within us, the spirit and soul You breathed into our nostrils, the tongue You placed in our mouths, all these will thank, bless, praise, glorify, exalt, adore, sanctify and crown Your Name, our King, at all times. For every mouth shall thank You, every tongue shall swear by You, every knee shall kneel to You, all who stand shall bow down before You, every heart shall fear You and every person's innermost parts shall sing to Your Name, as it is written, "All my bones shall say: 'O God, who is like You, who rescues the poor from those who are stronger, the poor and destitute from those who would rob them?'"

Who resembles You? Who is equal to You? Who can compare to You, O great, mighty and awesome Lord, O supreme Lord, Master of heaven and earth? We will praise You, laud You, glorify You and bless Your holy Name, as it is said, “By David. O my soul, bless God, and all my innards His holy Name.” The Lord, in Your overwhelming power, great in the glory of Your Name, mighty forever, awesome through Your awesome deeds.

The King who dwells for eternity, exalted and holy is His Name. And it is written, “Sing hymns before God, O righteous ones; it is fitting for the virtuous to offer psalms.” By the mouths of the just You are exalted, by the words of the righteous You are blessed, by the tongues of the pious You are sanctified and among the holy You are praised.

And in the congregations of Your multitudinous people, the House of Israel, Your Name, O our King, is glorified in song in every generation. For this is the duty of every creation before You, O God, our Lord and Lord of our fathers, to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, beautify, bless, elevate, and acclaim as well as all the songs and praises by David,

the son of Yishai, Your servant, Your anointed.

Praised be Your Name forever, O our King, the Lord, the great and holy King of heavens and earth. For these are fitting for You, O God, our Lord, the Lord of our fathers: song and praise, laud and psalm, power and dominion, victory, greatness and might, glory and splendor, holiness and royalty, blessings and thanks to Your great and holy Name. You are the Lord from the beginning until forever.

All Your works shall praise You, O God, our Lord. Your pious ones, the righteous who carry out Your will, and all Your people, the House of Israel, with joyous song will give thanks, bless, praise, glorify, exalt, revere, sanctify and crown Your Name, our King. For it is good to thank You, and it is fitting to sing praise to Your Name, for from the beginning until forever You are the Lord. Blessed are You, O God, the King who is extolled in praises.

We prepare to drink the fourth cup of wine.

Blessed are You, O God, our Lord, the Creator of the fruit of the vine.

We drink while leaning to the left and then we say.

Blessed are You, O God, our Lord, King of the Universe, for the vine, for the fruit of the vine, for the crops of the field, for the desirous, good and spacious land that You favored to grant as a heritage to our ancestors that they may eat its fruits and be fulfilled with its goodness. Have mercy, O God, our Lord, on Your people Israel, on Your city Jerusalem, on Zion, the dwelling place of Your glory, on Your altar and on Your Temple. Build Jerusalem, the holy city, speedily in our days, and bring us up into it. Gladden us in its construction, that we may eat of its fruit and be fulfilled with its goodness. Let us bless You for it in holiness and purity. (*On the Sabbath: And may it please You to strengthen us on this Sabbath day*) and let us rejoice on this day of the Feast of Matzahs. For You, O God, are good and beneficent to all, and we thank You for the land and for the fruit of the vine. Blessed are You, O God, for the land and the fruit of the vine. (*On wine grown in Israel: And on the fruit of her vines.*)

✿ The Seder Concludes ✿

All the rituals, texts, prayers and blessings in the company of family and friends in an atmosphere of joy and festivity have combined to form an unforgettable experience, especially for the young children for whom this was the high point of their religious life. Old memories

have been implanted and reinforced and new memories have been created. Our thoughts now turn to the future festivals, because it takes a lifetime chain of Passovers, for generation after generation, to ensure that the memories live forever.

Nirtzah נרצה

The Passover Seder has been concluded properly, with all its rules and regulations. Just as we merited to celebrate it now, may we also merit to celebrate it in the future.

O Pure One, who dwells in heaven, raise up the congregation of the incalculable community and speedily guide the hardy saplings, redeemed at last, to Zion in joyous song.

Next year in Jerusalem!

Traditional Post-Seder Songs

On the first night.

☛ It Came to Pass at Midnight

And it came to pass
at midnight.
Then most of Your
wondrous miracles
 were performed at night
At the beginning of the
watches on this night
You granted victory to the
righteous convert
 when divided was the
night.

 And it came to pass at
midnight.

You judged the king of
Gerar in a dream at night
You frightened the Aramean
[Laban] in the dark night
Israel struggled with the
angel
and overcame him by night.

 And it came to pass at
midnight.

You crushed the Egyptian
firstborn at midnight
They didn't find their fortune
 when they woke at night.
The forces of the prince of
Charoshes [Sisra],
You swept away with the
stars of night.

 And it came to pass at
midnight.

The blasphemer raised his
hand
You withered his corpses at
night
Bel and its pedestal were
toppled in the dark night

You revealed to the beloved
man secret visions in the
night.

And it came to pass at
midnight.

The drunkard who used the
holy vessels was slain on
that very night.

From the lions' den, You
rescued the interpreter of
dreams in the night.

The Agagite hated in his
heart and wrote letters at
night.

And it came to pass at
midnight.

You roused Your victory
over him when You
disturbed sleep by night.
You will tread the winepress
to help those

who ask the watchman: "An
end to the night."

He will proclaim like a
watchman and say:

"Morning will come, and
also the night."

And it came to pass at
midnight.

Bring near the day that is
neither day nor night.

O Most High! Show that the
day is Yours

as well as the night

Appoint watchmen to guard
Your city the entire day and
the entire night

Illuminate with daylight the
darkness of night.

And it came to pass at
midnight.

On the second night:

☞ Announce the Passover Feast

And you shall say: “This is the Passover feast!”

The power of Your might,
You wondrously displayed
on Passover. You raised
above all festivals Passover.
You revealed to the
Easterner [Abraham] what
would happen at midnight on
Passover.

And you shall say: “This is the Passover feast!”

On his doors, You knocked
on the heat of the day on
Passover. He served the
brilliant ones [the angels]
cakes of matzah on Passover.
He ran to the herd, recalling
the ox prepared on Passover.

And you shall say: “This is the Passover feast!”

God, You cursed the
firstborn of Ohn [Egypt’s
god] on the guarded night of
Passover. Mighty One, You
passed over Your firstborn
because of the blood of the
Passover. Without allowing
the destroyer to enter my
doors on Passover.

And you shall say: “This is the Passover feast!”

The besieged and
beleaguered city [Jericho]
trembled on Passover.
Midian was destroyed with a
barley cake of the Omer of
Passover. The fat Pul and
Lud [Sennacherib’s
commanders] were burned in
a blazing flame on Passover.

And you shall say: "This is the Passover feast!"

This very day he [Sennacherib] will halt at Nov and wait until the season of Passover. A fragment of a hand inscribed the destruction of Tzul on Passover. They prepared the watch and set the table on Passover.

And you shall say: "This is the Passover feast!"

Hadassah [Esther] gathered a congregation for a three-day fast on Passover. You crushed the head of an evil house [Haman] on a fifty-cubit gallows on Passover. Two punishments You will suddenly bring on Utz [Rome] on Passover. Strengthen Your hand, and raise Your right Hand as on the night that has sanctified the holiday of Passover.

And you shall say: "This is the Passover feast!"

Praise Is His Due

To Him, praise is pleasant; to Him, praise is due!
Mighty in royalty, truly distinguished,
His legions say to Him: to You and only You,
To You and just for You, to You, yes, only You,
To You, O God, Kingship is due.

To Him, praise is pleasant; to Him, praise is due.

Distinguished in royalty,
truly glorious,
His faithful say to Him: to
You and only You,
To You and just for You, to
You, yes, only You,
To You, O God, Kingship is
due.

To Him, praise is pleasant;
to Him, praise is due.

Pure in royalty, truly
powerful,
His angels say to Him: To
You and only You,
To You and just for You, To
You, yes, only You,
To You, O God, Kingship is
due.

To Him, praise is pleasant;
to Him, praise is due.

Alone in royalty, truly
powerful,
His learned ones say to Him:
To You and only You,
To You and just for You, To
You, yes, only You,
To You, O God, Kingship is
due.

To Him, praise is pleasant;
to Him, praise is due.

Dominant in royalty, truly
awesome,
those around Him say to
Him: To You and only You,
To You and just for You, To
You, yes, only You,
To You, O God, Kingship is
due.

To Him, praise is pleasant;
to Him, praise is due.

Humble in royalty, truly
redeeming,

His righteous say to Him: To
You and only You,
To You and just for You, To
You, yes, only You,
To You, O God, Kingship is
due.

To Him, praise is pleasant;
to Him, praise is due.

Holy in royalty, truly
merciful,
His peaceful ones say to
Him: To You and only You,
To You and just for You, To
You, yes, only You,
To You, O God, Kingship is
due,

To Him, praise is pleasant;
to Him, praise is due.

Forceful in royalty, truly
supporting,
His true ones say to Him: To
You and only You,
To You and just for You, To
You, yes, only You,
To You, O God, Kingship is
due,

To Him, praise is pleasant;
to Him, praise is due.

He Is Mighty

He is Mighty.

May He build His Temple
soon
Speedily, speedily, soon in
our days
Build, O Lord, build, O
Lord,
build Your Temple soon.

He is chosen, He is great, He
is supreme.

May He build His Temple
soon
Speedily, speedily, soon in
our days
Build, O Lord, build, O
Lord,
build Your Temple soon.

He is glorious, He is faithful,
He is pure, He is pious.

May He build His Temple
soon
Speedily, speedily, soon in
our days
Build, O Lord, build, O
Lord,
build Your Temple soon.

He is immaculate, He is
unique, He is powerful,
He is learned, He is
King, He is awesome,
He is sublime, He is
strong, He is the
Redeemer, He is
righteous.

May He build His Temple
soon
Speedily, speedily, soon in
our days
Build, O Lord, build, O
Lord,
build Your Temple soon.

He is holy, He is merciful,
He is Almighty, He is
Forceful.

May He build His Temple
soon
Speedily, speedily, soon in
our days
Build, O Lord, build, O
Lord,
build Your Temple soon.

☞ Who Knows One

Who knows one? I know one!

One is our Lord in the heavens and on the earth.

Who knows two? I know two!

Two are the tablets of the covenant.

One is our Lord in Heaven and on earth.

Who knows three? I know three!

Three are the Patriarchs.

Two are the tablets of the covenant.

One is our Lord in Heaven and on earth.

Who knows four? I know four!

Four are the Matriarchs.

Three are the Patriarchs.

Two are the tablets of the covenant.

One is our Lord in Heaven and on earth.

Who knows five? I know five!

Five are the books of the Torah.

Four are the Matriarchs.

Three are the Patriarchs.

Two are the tablets of the covenant.

One is our Lord in Heaven and on earth.

Who knows six? I know six!

Six are the Orders of the Mishneh.

Five are the books of the Torah.

Four are the Matriarchs.

Three are the Patriarchs.
Two are the tablets of the
covenant.

One is our Lord in Heaven
and on earth.

Who knows seven? I know
seven!

Seven are the days of the
week.

Six are the Orders of the
Mishneh.

Five are the books of the
Torah.

Four are the Matriarchs.

Three are the Patriarchs.

Two are the tablets of the
covenant.

One is our Lord in Heaven
and on earth.

Who knows eight? I know
eight!

Eight are the days of
circumcision.

Seven are the days of the
week.

Six are the Orders of the
Mishneh.

Five are the books of the
Torah.

Four are the Matriarchs.

Three are the Patriarchs.

Two are the tablets of the
covenant.

One is our Lord in Heaven
and on earth.

Who knows nine? I know
nine!

Nine are the months of
pregnancy.

Eight are the days of
circumcision.

Seven are the days of the
week.

Six are the Orders of the Mishneh.

Five are the books of the Torah.

Four are the Matriarchs.

Three are the Patriarchs.

Two are the tablets of the covenant.

One is our Lord in Heaven and on earth.

Who knows ten? I know ten!

Ten are the Ten Commandments.

Nine are the months of pregnancy.

Eight are the days of circumcision.

Seven are the days of the week.

Six are the Orders of the Mishneh.

Five are the books of the Torah.

Four are the Matriarchs.

Three are the Patriarchs.

Two are the tablets of the covenant.

One is our Lord in Heaven and on earth.

Who knows eleven? I know eleven!

Eleven are the stars [in Joseph's dream].

Ten are the Ten Commandments.

Nine are the months of pregnancy.

Eight are the days of circumcision.

Seven are the days of the week.

Six are the Orders of the Mishneh.

Five are the books of the Torah.

Four are the Matriarchs.

Three are the Patriarchs.

Two are the tablets of the covenant.

One is our Lord
in Heaven and on earth.

Who knows twelve? I know twelve!

Twelve are the tribes [of Israel].

Eleven are the stars.

Ten are the Ten Commandments.

Nine are the months of pregnancy.

Eight are the days of circumcision.

Seven are the days of the week.

Six are the Orders of the Mishneh.

Five are the books of the Torah.

Four are the Matriarchs.

Three are the Patriarchs.

Two are the tablets of the covenant.

One is our Lord
in Heaven and on earth.

Who knows thirteen? I know thirteen. Thirteen are God's attributes of mercy. Twelve are the tribes. Eleven are the stars. Ten are the Ten Commandments. Nine are the months of pregnancy. Eight are the days of circumcision. Seven are the days of the week. Six are the Orders of the Mishneh. Five are the books of the Torah. Four are the Matriarchs.

Three are the Patriarchs.
Two are the tablets of the
covenant.

One is our Lord
in Heaven and on earth.

One Young Goat

One young goat! One young
goat that Father bought for
two coins.

One young goat,
one young goat.

Then along came a cat and
ate the young goat that
Father bought for two coins.

One young goat,
one young goat.

Then along came a dog and
bit the cat, that ate the young
goat that Father bought for
two coins.

One young goat,
one young goat.

Then along came a stick and
beat the dog, that bit the cat,
that ate the young goat that
Father bought for two coins.

One young goat,
one young goat.

Then along came a fire and
burned the stick, that beat the
dog, that bit the cat, that ate
the young goat that Father
bought for two coins.

One young goat,
one young goat.

Then along came the water
and put out the fire, that
burned the stick, that beat the
dog, that bit the cat, that ate
the young goat that Father
bought for two coins.

One young goat,
one young goat.

Then along came an ox and
drank the water, that put out
the fire, that burned the stick,
that beat the dog, that bit the
cat, that ate the young goat
that Father bought for two
coins.

One young goat,
one young goat.

Then along came a
slaughterer and slaughtered
the ox, that drank the water,
that put out the fire, that
burned the stick, that beat the
dog, that bit the cat, that ate
the young goat that Father
bought for two coins.

One young goat,
one young goat.

Then came the Angel of
Death and slew the
slaughterer, who slaughtered
the ox, that drank the water,
that put out the fire, that
burned the stick, that beat the
dog, that bit the cat, that ate
the young goat that Father
bought for two coins.

One young goat,
one young goat.

Then came the Holy Blessed
One, and slew the angel of
death, who slew the
slaughterer, who slaughtered
the ox, that drank the water,
that put out the fire, that
burned the stick, that beat the
dog, that bit the cat, that ate
the young goat that Father
bought for two coins.

One young goat,
one young goat.