

Bedikat Chamets	<p>>May we remember on this day that just as we do not own this chamets, we do not own this Earth. May we recall that Adam, the human, is made of <i>afar min ha'adamah</i>, soil, dirt from the ground, and that we belong to the soil. May we cherish the soil that comes from millenia of rocks breaking and life growing and decomposing. We too are "hewn from the rock and dug from the mine" of Abraham and Sarah. And so, may it be Your will, Adonai Eloheinu, that we give truth to Your promise to Abraham, that his progeny would become "like the soil of the earth, <i>ka'afar ha'arets</i>" – <i>k'afra d'ar'a</i> – and that, like the soil, we may live to nourish all Life. (based on Genesis 13:16 and Isaiah 51:1-2)</p>	<p>venture out would risk meeting the angel of death. "<u>And you all will not go out, no one, beyond the door of his house until the morning. And YHVH will pass through to strike down Egypt, and will see the blood on the lintel...and YHVH will skip over the door and not let the destroyer come in to strike down.</u>" (Exodus 12:22-23) <u>Imagine you are at that first seder. How do you feel being confined to your home?</u></p>	<p>"All the days"</p>
The seder plate	<p>Add hyssop/<i>za'atar</i> (or a sprig of oregano or thyme if you cannot find hyssop) to your <i>karpas</i>, to remember the connection both Jews and Palestinians have to the land of the promise. For Jews, hyssop (<i>eizov</i>) was used for purification, and for painting blood on the doorways during the plague of the firstborn. For Palestinians, <i>za'atar</i> is a symbol of steadfastness and an essential spice.</p>	<p>The children go up in levels of purity, presence, openness. 1) The <i>chakham</i> "wise one" is not having an experience of leaving Egypt. The response to the <i>chakham</i> is similarly disembodied: not "we don't add", but "they don't..."</p>	<p>The four children Wise</p>
Urchats	<p>><u>The ritual of handwashing elevates already clean hands. At the seder we do an extra handwashing – an even higher elevation. In the days of the pandemic, when we washed our hands so many times, we also reached for a higher elevation, for the sake of bringing healing.</u></p>	<p>2) "Knock his teeth (<i>hak'heh et shinav</i>)" – this is what Adam and Eve experienced when they ate the fruit from the tree of knowing. The <i>rasha</i> "wicked one" may be irreverent, but is ready to be engaged, knocked off balance.</p>	<p>Wicked</p>
Yachats/ Ha Lachmya Anya	<p>Break the middle matsah into unequal halves. The bigger half is the <i>afikoman</i>. The smaller half is the <i>lechem `oni</i> or poverty bread. This <i>matsah</i> is the <i>matsah</i> of slavery. Why would anyone want to share this meal of degradation? >How are we not free? Who is not free? How can freedom come? The small half represents not having enough. What else can it represent? It is a powerful custom to go out to the street and search for anyone in need of a meal. For the Syrian ritual with the <i>afikoman</i> that takes place at this point, see page 4.</p>	<p>The first time we mention the verse "<i>Ba'avur zeh</i>", it's used to exclude someone else. The teacher has not learned the lesson. 3) The <i>tam</i> is present and open, but the one who doesn't know to ask is the one who is ready for the deepest opening and transformation. 4) The answer to the fourth child is the first step in transforming the verse "<i>Ba'avur zeh</i>", from the meaning of excluding others to including oneself. The beginning of redemption is including the other. "You open." Open what? Open yourself. The word for you, "<i>ah</i>", is the feminine form in Hebrew. So this has also been interpreted by some to mean, enter the feminine part of oneself.</p>	<p>Simple The one who doesn't know to ask</p>
Were all of us wise	<p>The word for Passover, Pesach, can be resolved into two words: <i>Peh sach</i> – meaning, "mouth talking". The beginning of liberation is telling one's story. What stories do you have about seders you've been part of? You can share them here along with these rabbinic stories, or in place of them. What is your earliest memory of a seder? What's your funniest seder story?</p>	<p>The <i>matsah</i> and <i>maror</i>, symbols of the past, anchor us in the present. The third time we mention the verse "<i>Ba'avur zeh</i>", it describes engaging fully with the present: what is facing you? Why at this moment? And therefore: who are you, right now? Where are you coming from; where are you going to?</p>	<p>And you will tell – when should we tell the story?</p>
Stories about telling the story	<p>><u>During the pandemic, who did you celebrate with? Who was missing from your table? Who is missing tonight? Are you using technology to join your seder with others?</u> ><u>The first seder in Egypt was an all night affair. Each family was confined to its house; if two families joined together, they had to stay together in one house during the whole night when the last plague befell the Egyptians. To</u></p>	<p>>"When a stranger/refugee/<i>ger</i> sojourns with you in your land you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be for you like a native among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am YHVH, your God." (Lev. 19:33-34) >Do not despise an Egyptian, for you were a stranger/<i>ger</i> in his land. (Dt 23:7)</p>	<p>Magid: he dwell'd as-a-stranger (vayagar)</p>

<i>there he became a great nation, and many</i>	<p>>The Hebrew tribes in Egypt grew exponentially from 70 to 600,000. We live in a world where the human population can no longer grow like that. Before that time, Joseph enslaved the Egyptians, while protecting his family. (blogs.timesofisrael.com/learning-from-josephs-mistakes/)</p> <p>These verses appear in reverse order in Ezekiel 16, where “in your bloods live” refers to the blood on a newborn baby before it is cleaned. In the passage, God is speaking to Israel. By changing the order of the verses, the meaning of “bloods” shifts from birth to puberty and menstruation. “Your hair grew” means the beginning of puberty. “Squatting in your bloods” means the first menstruation.</p> <p>Midrash says that “bloods” means two: the blood of circumcision, and the blood of the lamb on the doorposts.</p>	<p><u>>What does it mean to live in a time when the government is trying to make it impossible to respond to climate change? How should we resist? You can take time during your seder to explore that.</u></p> <p><i>Would any of these really be enough? Would we say, having come to the sea but not being able to cross, at least we witnessed the revelation of God’s power? Or is it that we should recognize the miracle at each step?</i></p> <p><u>>What things do we need to ask for in this year of great danger to democracy? To which if any of them could you say “Dayeinu”?</u></p>	<p><i>Great Fear</i></p> <p><i>Dayeinu</i></p>
<i>And they eviled us</i>	<p>“They eviled us” can mean both they did evil to us, and, they saw us as evil.</p> <p>>Do we do this to our enemies? Has Israel done this to African asylum seekers? Bedouin? Palestinians?</p> <p>>You shall not detain/deliver a slave to his lord/master whom he has escaped... With you he will dwell, in your midst, in the place he chooses... where it is good for him. (Deut. 23:16-17)</p>	<p>The verse “And you all will say” comes before the last plague, though some say it came when the people first learned God was going to redeem them. If so, they were still innocent about the plagues and terror they would soon witness.</p> <p>This is the <i>matsah</i> of leaving Egypt. It is the first transformation of <i>matsah</i> from symbol of slavery to a symbol of freedom.</p> <p>“The Holy One was revealed” – earlier the haggadah pointed to “the revelation of the <i>Shekhinah</i>”. In Kabbalah, the Holy One is masculine and <i>Shekhinah</i> feminine. The two dimensions must come together to bring liberation.</p>	<p><i>R Gamliel</i></p> <p><i>1) Pesach</i></p> <p><i>2) Matsah</i></p>
<i>they oppressed us</i>	<p>The Torah assumes that anyone fleeing their overlord is being oppressed and must be given both asylum and freedom of movement.</p> <p>“<i>B’farekh</i>” – Hasidic midrash reads this “<i>b’feh rakh</i>”, “with a soft mouth” – deceiving with gentleness.</p>	<p>The climax of the seder! This section completes the transformation of the verse “<i>Ba`avur zeh</i>”. Hopefully when we get to this point of the seder we have understood the lesson: We cannot include ourselves by excluding others. Excluding others can only happen when we are telling a story about the past. Here, we become fully present, a part of the story, like the child, witnessing, experiencing. And only at this point can we know truly what our obligation is, what it means to give thanks.</p>	<p><i>In every generation a person must see themselves as if they left Egypt</i></p>
<i>wth heavy service</i>	<p>>You shall not mistreat or oppress/squeeze/<i>t’lacheits</i> a stranger/ refugee, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt... If you afflict him, and when he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry. (Exod. 22:20, 22)</p> <p>If we “squeeze” the other peoples in the land, we violate this solemn covenant.</p>	<p>>A <i>kavannah</i>: In thanks for this water we use to uplift our hands, may we use our hands to keep the waters pure.</p>	<p><i>Rachtsah</i></p>
<i>YHVH saw our oppression, and our being squeezed</i>	<p>“Squeezed” – not allowed to expand their dwellings when families grew.</p> <p>><i>Zoning has been used in East Jerusalem, and lack of government recognition in Bedouin villages, to “squeeze” their inhabitants.</i></p> <p>>You shall not oppress a hired worker who is poor and needy from your brothers or from your stranger that is in your land... You shall not distort the justice due a stranger... You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and YHVH your God redeemed you from there. (Dt 24:14-18)</p> <p>>We honor God who liberates slaves when we care for the stranger and poor.</p>	<p>Here are the mechanics of the blessing are: 1) Hold all three <i>matsot</i> together to make the <i>hamotsi</i> blessing. 2) Drop the bottom <i>matsah</i>. 3) Make the blessing “<i>al akhilat matsah</i>” on the top and middle (broken) <i>matsah</i>.</p> <p>After the blessings, everyone should get some of the broken piece of <i>matsah</i> – the bread of slavery, and some of the top piece – the bread of leaving Egypt. It is a custom to chew the first <i>matsah</i> in silence, to meditate on the taste and the experience. One is traditionally required to eat a substantial amount of <i>matsah</i>, “an egg’s volume”, so the pieces of <i>matsah</i> from the top two <i>matsot</i> are usually supplemented with extra <i>matsah</i>.</p>	<p><i>Motsi Matsah</i></p>
<i>Pestilence / dever</i>	<p>><i>The oppression committed by humans against each other always comes to harm the other creatures as well.</i></p>	<p>Don’t recline – it’s the taste of slavery!</p>	<p><i>Maror</i></p>
<i>Great fear</i>	<p><u>>What does it mean to live in a time of fear, when immigrants are “disappeared” by the U.S. government, when people on the right are trying to destroy democracy in the U.S and in Israel.</u></p>		

Charoset Some say *charoset* represents the mortar, but the symbolism of the *charoset* is never explained in the text of the haggadah. Why do you think that might be? The *charoset* is used to lessen the bitterness or burning, or, to remember the apple (*tapuach*), where the Israelite women seduced the men and where they gave birth, or to remember the mud, which used to make bricks, or to remember the blood.

On the eros of *charoset*, see Rabbi Arthur Waskow, <http://opensiddur.org/haggadot/passover-seder/the-seders-innermost-secret>

Charoset may also represent all the unresolved parts of our lives that don't fit into the seder's orderly progression from slavery to freedom. See: http://neohasid.org/torah/mystery_of_charoset/

Korekh *Korekh* is the matsah of the Temple, the redemption of the past, which didn't last. It is sweet and bitter, and so we eat it with maror, and with charoset.

Everyone should get some of the bottom matsah for the sandwich.

Shulchan Orekh To discuss: > Can we really be free when we (the Jews) are ruling over another people (the Palestinians)?

> *What freedom, or slavery, might arise when we imagine the land as God's gift solely to us?*

This time we eat the *matsah* without any words. (*Ashkenazim*)

(*Sefardim* say:) *Zekher l'korban Pesach hane'ekhal 'al hasova'*. A remembrance of the *Pesach* sacrifice, the one eaten on fullness.

**Tsafun
"Hidden
one"**

The *afikoman* is the fourth matsah, the hidden one, the missing half that completes what is broken. It is the *matsah* of redemption. Just as "we don't know what we will serve Hashem with until we come there" – the meaning of this *matsah* is concealed. It is a taste of fullness, of the *matsah* we will eat in the days and nights of *Mashiach* (Messiah) – which we let ourselves eat and savor even now, before we experience the fullness of redemption.

Everyone should get a piece of the actual *afikoman*. If someone needs to leave early, send them home with a piece.

Have compassion/mercy please *YHVH* our God on Israel Your people and on Jerusalem Your city and on Mt. Zion, that may it become the dwelling place of Your glory, and have compassion on all Your world, our healer, our provider and our sustainer, and protect all Your creatures, our relations, and sustain them, make abundance for all of us. Renew the face of the earth, please, and make Your land bloom with peace and Your reign with justice – soon and in our days.

**Barekh
3rd blessing
–eco/world
version**

> My custom is to go outside when the door is opened, recite *Sh'fokh Chamat'kha* aloud, and pour out the bowl of plagues from earlier in the *seder* onto the ground, with the *kavanah* (intention/consciousness) that the earth has the power to heal plagues, and that even our worst feelings can be turned into something fertile and life-giving.

An alternative to *Sh'fokh Chamat-kha* popularized by *A Different Night* reads, "Pour out Your love on the nations who have known you and on the kingdoms who call upon your name. For they show love to the seed of Jacob and they defend your people Israel from those who would devour them alive."

Many liberal *haggadot* leave out this paragraph, which calls on God to destroy the nations. But we need to do something with the anger we rightly feel when thinking about Jewish history. Should we repress or deny that anger? Act it out in a desire for vengeance? The *haggadah* instead asks God to take over our anger from us and find its right use. This only works if the moment is cathartic and not a hardening of anger or fear.

We can only welcome Elijah after we have given our anger over to God's custodianship and truly let it go. Only then can we come into "the land" in a manner that is redemptive, as it says, "I will bring you into the land".

The Talmud debates whether there should be four or five cups, corresponding to the steps of redemption mentioned in Exodus 6:6-8: "I will take you out", "I will rescue you", "I will redeem you", "I will take you for Myself", and "I will bring you into the land". We haven't merited the fifth stage yet, hence the debate. Since all such debates will be settled by Elijah the prophet when he returns to announce the Messiah, the fifth cup became "Elijah's cup".

> As we count the days of blessing the wheat crop, we also count the days til we are past the plague that is stalking our world. May the count be short as possible, and may we not lose sight of its ending.

> *May we be blessed with liberation, freedom from fear and want, freedom to act and create, power and wisdom to live in harmony and love, with honor towards all Creation and our fellow creatures.*

For the omer app and more omer resources, go to:

<http://neohasid.org/resources/omer/>

Download Earth prayers from neohasid.org, including one based on Pope Francis's ecumenical prayer and one based on the *P'ri Eits Hadar*, here:

<http://neohasid.org/resources/earthprayers/>

Download the whole haggadah at: <http://neohasid.org/zman/pesach/InnerSeder/>

**Sh'fokh
Chamatkha
/
Pour out
Your wrath**

Elijah's cup

**Counting
the Omer**

Supplement: some customs and additional commentaries found in the Haggadah of the Inner Seder

Yachats The Syrian custom: break the *matsah* so that the bigger half is like a letter *Dalet* (7 kind of like a Pacman), and the smaller half like a *Yud* (י). The two pieces then spell *Yad*, for the strong hand that redeemed us.

The *afikoman* is wrapped in a cloth. In the Syrian custom, each person takes a turn holding the *afikoman* in their right hand over their left shoulder. Then they say in Hebrew or English:

מְשָׁאֲרֵתֶם צְרָרֶת בְּשִׁמְלֹתֵם עַל שִׁכְמֵם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשׂוּ כְּדָבָר מִפֶּה

Mish`arotam ts`rurot b`simlotan `al shekhmam. Uv`nei Yisrael `asu kid`var Moshe...

“Their kneading bowls/ leftover things (were) tied up in their cloaks on their shoulder. And the children of Israel did according to Moshe’s word...” (Exod. 12:34-35)

The whole table then asks the one holding the *afikoman*, in Arabic or English:

“**Minwen Jaiyeh?** Where are you coming from?”

She or he answers: “**Mimitsrayim!** From Egypt.”

All: “**Lawen Raiyekh?** Where are you going to?”

Answer: “**Liy`rushalayim!** To Jerusalem.”

All: “**Ishu zawatak?** What are you bringing?”

Answer: “**Matsah umaror!** Matsah and maror.”

Afterwards, wave the *afikoman* around one’s head three times and pass it onto the next person.

Ha lachma Anya is the 1st time the haggadah begins to tell the story.

Ha Lachma Anya The Persian custom: each person takes a turn reciting *Ha Lachma `Anya*, one at a time.

People often sing “*Avadim Hayinu, Hayinu, `Atah B`nei Chorin, B`nei Chorin*” here, meaning “We were slaves, now we are free”, but in fact we are not yet free at this point in the seder. I save the song til after *Dayeinu*.

and the other times we begin the story

According to the Talmud, we should start the story from degradation and end it with praise, from “*g`nut*” to “*shevach*”. But there is a debate about whether degradation means slavery or idol worship. The haggadah includes both beginnings: slavery is represented in the 2nd beginning “We were slaves”, and idolatry by the 3rd beginning, “From beginning, our ancestors were servants of alien service/ idolatry, and now the Makom (Place) drew us near.”

The fourth beginning of the story is obscured by the drash about Lavan trying to “uproot all”, which patently ignores the contextual meaning of the verse. An Aramean wandering lost (was) my father... Why is the haggadah so cagey about finally beginning the story?

What the verse actually means: The Aramean who wandered lost is Jacob, who escaped from Esau to Padan-Aram where he acquired his wives, his children, and his wealth from Lavan, and then escaped Lavan, sojourning in Israel before he was forced down to Egypt by famine.

The leader in a Syrian *seeder* will pour out some wine for each plague into a bowl. Almost the whole rest of the cup is poured out at the intonation of *Makat b`khorot*. Traditionally this bowl of plagues was rushed to the toilet and flushed away. I save it and pour it out on the earth at *Sh`fokh Chamat`kha*.

Why do the rabbis perform mathematical tricks with the plagues? Are they trying to outdo each other? Convince themselves of God’s power?

The two sections multiplying the plagues are not found in the Rambam’s version of the *haggadah*. Many *seders* skip these sections, from “R’ Yosi the Galilean” through “two hundred and fifty blows”.

There is a Persian and Iraqi custom for everyone to grab scallions and hit each other on the head during *Dayeinu*. Some communities do a similar playlet with scallions earlier in the seder, at *Avadim Hayinu* or *`avodah kashah*. (That would be the time to sing “*Avadim hayinu, `atah b`nei chorin*”.)

2nd and 4th cup of wine: *Ashkenazim* say another blessing over wine for each. *Sefardim* do not.

It is customary to not talk between washing, the blessings for *motsi* and *matsah*, and eating the first *matsah*, in order to unite all three as one act. Many people sit silently while they eat the first bites of *matsah*, hearing only the sound of crunching.

For the *afikoman* we eat the *matsah* without any words. (*Ashkenazim*) (*Sefardim* say:) *Zekher l`korban Pesach hane`ekhal `al hasova`*. A remembrance of the *Pesach* sacrifice, the one eaten on fullness.

Hayom yom echad ba`omer | la`omer, Chesed sheb`chesed

Sefardim and *Hasidim* say *ba`omer*. Most other *Ashkenazim* say *la`omer*.

Counting the *Omer* can happen anytime during the *seeder*. Do it earlier if that’s when people will be there to participate. Learn a Hasidic dance *nigun* for counting the first night of the *Omer* (the second seder) on

<http://neohasid.org/resources/omer/>

Arami Ove Avi
(the fourth beginning of the story)

The Plagues

Dayeinu

End of Magid

Matsah

Afikoman

Omer at the second sede