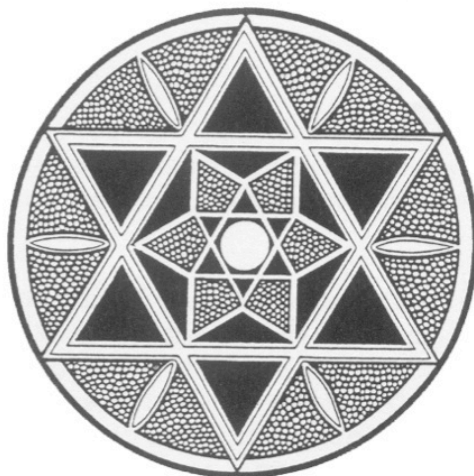




In Search of Freedom Exploring Common Ground *Passover Haggadah*



African-American Jewish Task Force Seder
March 29th, 2009

This Haggadah was written by Shahanna McKinney Baldon and Peter Goldberg and revised this year. Use it freely, giving credit to the Milwaukee Area Jewish Committee.

If you have questions or comments about this Haggadah or our Seder, or to order reprints, please send them to Harriet McKinney, Executive Director, at: milwaukee@majconline.org

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This afternoon we are together to participate in a Seder, to explore our common ground. Our goal is to share together the stories of how oppression and liberation have affected both of our communities. We recognize that not all of our stories can be told in our brief time together and that not everything has been included that could have been. Some of your favorite poems, songs, and readings may not be found in this Haggadah. The intent, the most important outcomes, have been that we gather together as African Americans and Jews and that we commit ourselves to each other and to both our peoples' complete liberation which will mean the ending of all forms of Racism and anti-Semitism.

The Passover Seder is the Jewish celebration of the Exodus from slavery in Egypt. Because our peoples share the similar histories of oppression and struggles for liberation found mirrored in the Exodus story, we Jews and Africans in America have found similar histories, experiences and consequently shared meaning reflected in the Seder. We want to explore those together today.

The primary purpose of our African American/Jewish Task Force is to achieve greater understanding of our common experiences and continuing struggles and to recommit ourselves to join together as allies in fighting bigotry and oppression.

The Task Force meets regularly to build relationships and address issues of mutual concern including the elimination of Racism and anti-Semitism. The focus is on building alliances both on the personal and the institutional levels.

For more information or to join this alliance, please contact Task Force Co-chairs Milton Bond, BoMilt@aol.com or Richard Schwalb, richardschwalb@yahoo.com or the Milwaukee Area Jewish Committee (414) 291-2140.

March 29, 2009

THE SEARCH FOR FREEDOM - EXPLORING COMMON GROUND



Shalom-A greeting of 'PEACE'.

WELCOME

LIBATION: Invoking Our Ancestors

[Reader 1]

The Libation is a tradition among many African peoples to enact before an important event or celebration. It is also the first part of the Kwanzaa ritual. We pour libation, in the form of water, as a way to honor those who came before us. Water is used because it is the substance of life--if there is no water, there is no life. We use the Kikombe Cha Umoja -- the Unity Cup. This symbolizes our oneness. We pour libation to the earth as a symbol of our promise to nurture the land that G-d has gifted us with--land that bears food, minerals, and other natural resources that we process to better serve us.

[Co-Leader]

At the Passover Seder, Jews recount and celebrate the story of the Exodus from Egypt, the tale of their freedom and birth as a people. *Seder* (the name of this ceremony), is Hebrew for "order;" *Haggadah* (the name of this book, which we use as a guide), is Hebrew for "the telling." But the Seder's order is more than a service, and the Haggadah is more than its tale. The Seder is not only a retelling of the past. In every time and place Jews have sought to find themselves in the Haggadah's story and have in turn added their own understandings and meanings. Julius Lester has written:

[Reader 2]

Passover is a blending of history and religion, of celebration and commemoration, a drama of remembering, of transforming history into personal memory so that it is I who is emerging from bondage in Egypt.

[Lovesong: *Becoming a Jew*]

[Co-Leader]

The Exodus story is also a universal tale that has meaning among many cultures and peoples. It has particularly rich meaning to African-Americans, due to our proximity to this experience of captivity and emancipation.

One of the great classical Jewish teachers, Rabbi Gamliel, taught that it is our duty to rewrite the Haggadah: "All who go beyond telling about the departure from Egypt-- all these are worthy of praise." Today let us make our own Haggadah. Though we have retained the basic order, the content is adapted for us. Today in that spirit and to begin this journey, let us join in singing "Woke Up This Morning"

[Together]

**Woke up this morning with my mind set on freedom (3x)
Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah!**

**Everyone 'round me has their hearts set on freedom (3x)
Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah!**

HADLAKAT NEROT: Lighting the Festival Lights

[Co-Leader]

Each Jewish festival begins with kindling sacred lights.

-At each table someone lights the candles-

[Reader 3]

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב:

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu lehadlik ner shel yom tov.*

[Together]

Blessed are You Lord our G-d, Sovereign of the Universe, who commands us to kindle the lights of this holy day.

קִדְּשׁ.

KADESH: Sanctification of the Day

[Co-Leader]

Most Jewish celebrations also begin with a *kiddush*, a blessing over wine, a symbol of joy and life itself. During the Passover celebration we are to drink four cups of wine, four cups to signify the four verbs used in Torah to describe the deliverance of the children of Israel – *v'hotschi*, bring you out; *v'hitsalti*, save you; *v'ga'alti*, redeem you; *v'lakakhti*, take you. Each of our cups tonight will commemorate our own necessary steps toward freedom.

The First Cup--The Cup of Redemption

[Co-Leader]

Let us raise our glasses.

[Reader 4]

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam borei p'ri hagafen.

[Together]

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Sovereign of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

- Drink the first cup of wine and refill the cups -

[Co-Leader]

Now we gather to observe the Passover as it is written:

[Together]

You shall keep the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, for on this very day; I brought your hosts out of Egypt. You shall observe this day throughout the generations as a practice for all times.

[Reader 5]

Remember the day on which you went forth from Egypt, from the house of bondage, and how the Lord freed you with a mighty hand.

[Reader 6]

For it is said that every person, in every generation, must regard his-or-herself as having been personally freed from bondage in Mitzrayim.

And where is Mitzrayim? In the Torah (Hebrew Bible), it is the land of Egypt. But the name, Mitzrayim, has in it the Hebrew word for narrow, constrained, or inhibited. It is thus the narrow place that squeezes the life out of the human soul and body. For some of us, it was Pharaoh's Egypt. For some of us, it was the Middle Passage. For some of us, it was the Spanish Inquisition or Nazi Germany. For some of us, it was the Jim Crow South or segregated Northern ghettos. For some of us, it is over-crowded housing and classrooms. For some of us, it is off-limits clubs and boardrooms. No one place is always Mitzrayim, but any place -- even our own -- can be turned into one. So tonight let us dedicate ourselves to break out of our own narrow straits. And tonight let us honor all people who have struggled and are struggling for their freedom.

[Co-Leader]

Around your tables-let's take a few minutes to answer the question...what's your narrow place, from what do you wish to be free?



URCHATZ: Washing the Hands

[Co-Leader]

Here we wash our hands as a symbol of our readiness to commence the Seder. It is a ritual washing that has nothing to do with personal cleanliness. This is an act of ritual preparation. Think about ridding yourself of the vestiges of your narrow place.

-pass around the water bottle and bowl-

The Seder Plate

-At each table someone holds up the Seder plate on which are the symbols of Passover-

[Reader 7]

On this plate are six symbolic foods of this festival meal: *Z'roah*, the Paschal lamb shank bone; *Beitzah* a roasted egg; *Maror*, the bitter herb; *Charoset*, a fruit, nut and wine paste; *Karpas*, greens; and *Chazeret*, a special maror or bitter herb. On another plate we have the seventh symbolic food, matzah unleavened bread, and for our service, hot-water corn bread, made with only water and cornmeal—a reminder of the abject poverty forced on Africans/African-Americans who were subjected to horrors of American slavery and Jim Crow. We'll discuss each of these during the course of this Seder.



KARPAS: Rebirth and Renewal

[Co-Leader]

Because Passover is the great spring festival of the Jewish calendar, the first symbol of Passover is a green vegetable, karpas, traditionally parsley, onion, or potato, and our first ritual is a reflection of spring.

Greens--turnip, mustard, and collard, are an important part of many southern meals. Greens are most often associated with the traditional African-American cuisine. The liquid that is left over from cooking greens is called pot liquor.

[Co-Leader]

Pot liquor became an important ingredient in the captive Africans' diet. It is said to have been given as a healing potion, used to cure chicken pox, measles, and mumps; and so these greens also symbolize vitality and rebirth.

[Reader 8]

"My grandmother was a firm believer in the power of pot liquor, and so am I. It's like the Jewish mother's faith in chicken soup. And what is chicken soup other than plain old chicken pot liquor?" (Jackie Torrence, The Importance of Pot Liquor)

[Co-Leader]

We dip the karpas twice: the parsley in salt water, and the greens in pot liquor. This is our hors d'oeuvre, the beginning of our festive meal, which we enjoy as free men and women. Festive meals are almost unknown to those in captivity. Let us dip the parsley in salt water (traditionally, a symbol of the tears of bondage), and the greens in pot liquor (a symbol of resistance to oppression), and say the blessing:

[Reader 9]

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam borei p'ri ha adamah

[Together]

Blessed are You Lord our G-d, Sovereign of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

- Eat the greens -

יָחַץ.

YAHATZ: A Bond formed By Sharing

[Co-Leader]

On this plate are three pieces of matzah, the unleavened bread the Jews are commanded to eat in remembrance of our enslavement in Egypt. Wrapped in foil is hot water corn-bread, the bread of American slavery.

I break the middle matzah and the piece of cornbread and wrap them in a napkin. We will conceal these halves as the *afikoman* (Greek for dessert). Later the children will search for it and redeem it, just as each generation must redeem itself with remembrance of our heritage. And then we will all share it as the Passover offering was shared in Biblical days at the Temple in Jerusalem.

Among people everywhere, sharing food forms a bond of brotherhood. In Nigeria, sharing the cola nut is a symbol of fellowship. Let's hear the ancient words of Ha

Lachma Anya, in Aramaic, the vernacular of Jesus. In this prayer we invite those in need to share with us.

[Reader 10]

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיא דִּי אָכְלוּ אַבְהָתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דִּכְפִּין יִיתִי וְיִכּוֹל, כָּל דִּצְרִיד יִיתִי
וְיִפְסֹחַ. הָשַׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. הָשַׁתָּא עַבְדִּי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי
חוֹרִין:

*Ha lakhma anya di-akhalu avahatana b'ara d'mitzrayeem. Kol dikhvin yetey v'yekhvul;
kol ditzrikh yetey v'yifsakh. Hashata hakha; l'shanah ha ba-ah b'a-ra d'yisrael. Hashata
avdai; l'shanah ha ba-ah b'nei chorin.*

[Together]

**These are the breads of affliction,
the poor breads, which our ancestors ate in Mitzrayim.
Let all who are hungry come and eat.
Let all who are in want share the hope of Passover.
As we celebrate here, we join with our peoples everywhere.
This year we celebrate here. Next year in the Promised Land.
Now we are still enslaved. Next year may all be free.**

[Co-Leader]

Today, our way of sharing with those who are in need is the tzedaka or charity box on your table. The funds are designated for the All Saints Commons, an incredible resource in our community offering hope and opportunity to women and children who find themselves homeless. Please fill the tzedaka containers with your coins and bills, as you meet Elizabeth Owens, Director of Outreach programs at All Saints Catholic Church.

[Co-Leader]

The following four questions were originally asked by the leaders of the Seder. Later, it became a tradition to have the children ask them.

MA NISHTANAH: The Four Questions

- All the children come forward –

מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?

שֶׁבֶכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמָצָה. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה בְּלוּ מָצָה:

שֶׁבֶכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מָרוֹר:

שֶׁבֶכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מַטְבִּילִין אֲפִילוּ פֶּעַם אַחַת. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שֶׁתֵּי פְעָמִים:

שֶׁבֶכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה בָּלָנוּ מְסֻבִּין:

Mah nishtanah ha lyla hazeh mikol halaylot? Shebechol halaylot, anu ochlin chametz umatzah. Halyla hazeh, kulo matzah.

Shebechol halaylot, anu ochlin she'ar yerakot. Halyla hazeh, maror.

Shebechol halaylot, ayn anu matbilin afilu pa'am echat. Halyla hazeh, shetay fe'amim.

Shebechol halaylot, anu ochlin bayn yoshvin uvayn mesu-bin. Halyla hazeh, kulanu mesubin.

[Children Together]

Why is this night different from all other nights?

On all other nights, we eat leavened and unleavened bread. Why on this night, only unleavened?

On all other nights, we do not dip our food. On this night, why do we dip twice?

On all other nights, we eat all herbs. Why, on this night, bitter herbs?

On all other nights, we eat sitting up and reclining. Why, on this night, do we recline?

The Four Children

[Co-Leader]

The Torah tells us four times "And on that day you shall tell your children. . . ."
The sages in turn have interpreted this to refer to four children, representing attitudes which we must confront in telling and understanding.

[Reader 11]

The wise one asks, "How can we walk together in unity?"

[Together]

This is the question that we wrestle with today. This is a question that goes beyond today. Only if we heal from the pain that creates anger, grief, despair and fear can we build unity.

[Reader 12]

The angry one asks, "Why shouldn't I be angry? Why should I care about anyone else's struggles?"

[Together]

And we answer that it is normal to be angry about anti-Semitism and Racism and that it is human to care about each other. The alternative is the mutual destruction, both moral and physical of our peoples.

[Reader 13]

The trusting youngster asks, "Why can't we just love each other?"

[Together]

And we answer that none of us can live as if history has not happened. It takes time to build trust. Let us reach out and listen to each other's stories. If we commit ourselves to listening to each other's pain, we will build trust.

[Reader 14]

The frightened one asks, "How can I be safe?"

[Together]

And we answer that we are both afraid. After what our peoples have endured, it will never feel safe enough. We must work to overcome our fears, to listen to each other with love, and to build safety. Talk with this child about the nature of freedom and justice and about the need to act to transform the world, in spite of how it feels.

The Fifth Child: The One Who Cannot Ask

[Co-Leader]

At this time, we also remember a fifth child. This is the child of the holocausts -- of the Shoah, of the Middle Passage (the journey on the slave ship from Africa to the West), of pogroms in the Pale (a restricted area in Europe where Jews were allowed to live) and brutality on plantations, of the current misery in the eastern Congo, of the

lynchings and the gas-chambers, Anne Frank and Emmett Till and the Tutsis of Rwanda, the children who did not survive to ask.

[Together]

Therefore, we ask for this child -- why?

But we are like the innocent child. We have no easy answers.

And so we answer the child's question with silence.

[Co-Leader]

Let us now observe a moment of silence.

[Co-Leader]

There is someone in this room for whom silence is insufficient. She believes in action. I'd like to have Cecilia Smith-Robertson come forward to introduce her.

[Co-Leader]

And now let us pray for children.

[Together]

We pray for the children, who sneak Popsicles before supper, who erase holes in math workbooks, who can never find their shoes.

[Reader 15]

And we pray for those who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire, who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers, who never "counted potatoes," who are born in places where we wouldn't be caught dead, who never go to the circus, who live in an X-rated world.

[Together]

We pray for children, who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions, who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money.

[Reader 16]

And we pray for those who never get dessert, who have no safe blanket to drag behind them, who watch their parents watch them die, who can't find any bread to steal, who don't have any rooms to clean up, whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser, whose monsters are real.

[Together]

We pray for children who spend all their allowance before Tuesday, who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick at their food, who like ghost stories, who shove dirty clothes under the bed, who never rinse out the tub, who get visits from the tooth fairy, who don't like to be kissed in front of the carpool, who squirm

in church and scream in the phone, whose tears we sometimes laugh at and whose smiles can make us cry.

[Reader 17]

And we pray for those whose nightmares come in the daytime, who will eat anything, who have never seen a dentist, who aren't spoiled by anybody, who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,

[Together]

We pray for children who want to be carried and for those who must, who we never give up on and for those who don't get a second chance, for those we smother with love and for those who will grab the hand of anybody kind enough to offer it. We pray for all children for they are all precious to us.

מַגִּיד.

MAGGID: The Narrative

[Co-Leader]

We now begin to answer the four questions. We do this by telling the story of enslavement, captivity, and emancipation, using accounts from the Torah and other holy writings.

[Reader 18]

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וַיּוֹצִיאֵנוּ י"י אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם, בְּיָד חֲזָקָה וּבְרָחוּם נִטָּיָה, וְאָלוּ לָנוּ הוֹצִיא הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, הָרִי אֶנּוּ וּבָנֵינוּ וּבְנֵי בָנֵינוּ, מִשְׁעָבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וְאִפִּילוּ בָלָנוּ חֲכָמִים, בָּלָנוּ נְבוֹנִים, בָּלָנוּ זְקֵנִים, בָּלָנוּ יוֹדְעִים אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, מִצָּוָה עָלֵינוּ לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. וְכָל הַמְּרַבֵּה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, הָרִי זֶה מְשַׁבַּח:

[Together]

"We were slaves to Pharaoh in Mitzrayim, and G-d brought us forth with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Had not the Holy One, Blessed is G-d's name, delivered our people from bondage, then we, our children and our children's children would still be enslaved." Therefore, even if all of us were wise, all of us people of understanding, all of us learned in the Torah, it would still be our obligation to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Moreover, whoever searches deeply into its meaning is considered praiseworthy.

[Reader 19]

In each and every generation, Jews and African-Americans have retold the story of slavery and freedom. It is an archetypal tale we have experienced or witnessed time and again throughout our histories. It is the sadly universal story of a people's migrations, whether for economic reasons, to escape oppression, or as exiles and captives. We retell this story because it is the key to our continued existence. We retell it lest it befall others and we remain indifferent to their plight.

[Reader 20]

"There was famine in all lands, but in the land of Egypt, there was bread.... and Pharaoh said to the Egyptians, 'Go to Joseph; whatever he tells you, you shall do'... and all the world came to Joseph in Egypt."

[Reader 21]

"After Joseph died and all his bothers and all that generation... a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, 'Look, the Israelite people have grown too numerous for us. Let us, then, deal shrewdly with them, lest they increase, and in the event of war, join our enemies in fighting against us and gain ascendancy over the country.'" [Exodus. 1:5, Genesis. 41:45, 54, 55, 57, Exodus. 1:6, 8-10]

"And the Egyptians considered us evil; they afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage" [Deuteronomy 26:6; T. H. 43]

[Reader 22]

The captive Africans came to the New World in slave ships. This six to eight--week trip from the Motherland to the Diaspora is called the 'Middle Passage.' Conditions on the ships were horrific. A yam and a splash of water a day were sustenance. Space was limited on the ships, so as to maximize the 'efficiency' of the voyages. Most people didn't have room enough even to sit up. Many died, some by suicide rather than see what fate lay at the end of the journey.

[Reader 23]

"[Israel was a] 'great nation.' [This] means that it was distinguished in character and tradition. Our people retained its uniqueness in Egypt. They did not alter their way of life, their convictions, their names, their heritage, their faith, their language. By virtue of this self-respect and dignity they merited redemption." [Mechilta: Pesachim]

[Reader 24]

It is estimated that some fifty million people were taken from the African continent during the years of the slave trade. Those fifty million were the youngest, the strongest, those most capable of bringing profit to the traders and owners. It was important that the captives become weakened by robbing them of their connections to their roots in Africa. The Africans who were enslaved did not have the luxury of keeping their names, their

heritages, their faiths, their languages. Nevertheless, they maintained self-respect and dignity, and left us all a rich and important legacy.

[Reader 25]

"And we cried unto the Lord, the G-d of our Fathers, and the Lord heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression." [Deuteronomy 26:7]

"And hearing our groaning, G-d remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" [Exodus 2:24].

[Co-Leader]

This tale has been told in word and song. Please join in singing the spiritual, "Go Down Moses":

[Together]

**When Israel was in Egypt's land,
Let my people go;
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go!**

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

**Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said,
Let my people go;
If not I'll smite your first-born dead;
Let my people go!**

(Chorus)

**We need not always weep and mourn,
Let my people go;
And wear these slavery chains forlorn,
Let my people go!**

(Chorus)

[Reader 26]

Just as pharaoh was reluctant to let the Israelite slaves go, so too has the liberation of Black people been a slow and arduous process. Lincoln 'freed the enslaved

Africans' with the Emancipation Proclamation hoping that England would not back the Confederacy in the Civil War--attempting to protect her interests in the Confederacy's cotton industry. The Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves in the states that were fighting against the Union, ignoring the slaves in states that weren't fighting the Confederacy but hadn't outlawed slavery. And of course, once freed, African-Americans still had to contend with the institutionalized racism that was, and still is, such an inherent part of our society.

[Co-Leader]

Just as the story of the Exodus teaches that a people forgets their roots at great risk to their well-being, freedom and even existence, so too it warns a ruling class that the surest way to make any minority a genuine threat to the status quo is to oppress them, the surest way to create a self-conscious identity is to single them out for differential treatment. Sooner or later a bone-weary Black woman is going to sit down on the bus and not be willing to give her seat up to a white man and a gay man is going to fight back when the police carry out an otherwise routine raid on the Stonewall Inn.

[Reader 27]

"In the act of resistance the rudiments of freedom are already present."

[Angela Davis, Lectures on Liberation]

[Co-Leader]

In 1946, in the face of a major nationwide wave of lynching, Black Paul Robeson invited Jewish Albert Einstein to join him as co-chair of the American Crusade to End Lynching.

[Reader 28]

"It is the duty of every man of good will to strive steadfastly in his own little world to make this teaching of pure humanity a living force, so far as he can. If he makes an honest attempt in this direction without being crushed and trampled underfoot by his contemporaries, he may consider himself and the community to which he belongs lucky."

[Albert Einstein]

[Reader 29]

"If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. [Frederick Douglass, letter, 1853]

[Reader 30]

Our gathering here now is an act of resistance. We are providing contradiction to the 'divide and conquer' technique that the oppressive system has used to keep us

separate. We have been made to feel that it is totally natural to be isolated from each other, when the truth is that human beings were always meant to be completely and lovingly connected. Let us take the opportunity to notice that this is the kind of contradiction for which we must continually strive in our everyday lives.

MAKOT MITZRAYIM: The Plagues of Egypt

[Co-Leader]

"And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders." [Deut. 26:8]

The Jewish sages taught "the sword comes into the world because of justice delayed and justice denied." They also taught that "G-d is urgent about justice, for upon justice the world depends." In that tradition Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. declared that "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, injustice to any people is a threat to justice to all people. I will not remain silent in the face of injustice." And the struggle for freedom may not be bloodless. The history of our liberations has not been bloodless.

[Reader 31]

It was on Passover eve that five great rabbis, Eliezer, Joshua, Elazar ben Azariah, Akiva and Tarfon, were so moved by the story of the Exodus that they plotted a revolt against the Roman Empire. And it was on Passover Eve that the Warsaw ghetto rose in revolt against the Nazis. So too the African-American struggle against oppression has included slave revolts such as that led by Nat Turner, bloody marches, freedom rides, sit-ins and urban insurrections.

[Reader 32]

But it is said that when the Israelites reached the safety of the far shore of the Red Sea and the sea rolled back upon the Egyptian armies, drowning them, the Heavenly Hosts broke out in songs of jubilation. The Lord, however, silenced them saying, "My creatures are perishing, yet you sing praises?"

[Co-Leader]

As we now recite the Plagues that G-d had to inflict on the Egyptians to gain the Israelites freedom, it is therefore tradition to take a drop of wine from our cups as we name each plague to symbolize the blood that may be spilled in the fights for freedom. By lessening our wine we lessen the joy we may take in celebrating such painful struggles and victories.

I will say the Hebrew name of the plague and together we'll read the English.

דם. צפרדע. כנים. ערוב. דבר. שחין. ברד. ארבה. חשך. מכת בכורות:

DAHM

Blood: think of the drugs, alcohol and other indulgences with which we poison our systems, or the actual blood of battery and abuse spilled in our homes and the blood of assaults and shootings flowing in our streets;

TSFARDAYAH

Frogs: think of the experimental subjects we've made, not just of animals, but of one another in educational, health and welfare pilot projects and wholesale social reform programs;

KINIM

Lice: think of the vermin and filth of poverty;

AROV

Dangerous Beasts: think of the over-crowded classrooms and underfunded schools, of deteriorating and sub-human housing stocks, of down-sized businesses and post-modern economics that reduce more and more to hopelessness, then to despair, then to desperation and inhumanity, after which we herd them into the jail and prison cages we fund so generously;

DEVER

Plague: think of AIDS or TB, of hurricanes and tsunamis, of black lung and brown lung, or of lead-poisoned children and illegal dump site play lots in our inner cities; think of all the illnesses and disfigurements preventable but for inadequate, underfunded health or safety systems - and in the same moment think of the cost of a single new high tech bomber or smart missile we are still building;

SHECHEEN

Boils: think of churches burned in Alabama, of a brick through a menorah-decorated window in Boseman, of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, of genocides in Rwanda, of JAP jokes and fraternity-show blackface minstrels, of red-lines and green-lines, of decaying inner cities and dangerously overcrowded barrios, of bus bombs in Jerusalem and massacres in Hebron, or of any other putrescence festering just beneath the surface of the body politick;

BARAD

Burning Hail: think of the white crosses flaming before churches and synagogues, on lawns of African- and Jewish-Americans alike and the ignorance at the core of this hatred;

ARBEH

Locusts: think of the waste we produce, and of the poor foraging through our trash bins and garbage dumps to try to survive;

CHOSHECH

Darkness: think of the unenlightening distances from which we suspiciously eye one another and call each other black or black-hearted, think of racism and anti-Semitism, and the demonization of the State of Israel;

MAKAT BECHOROT

Slaying of the First Born: think of every war, or act of terrorism, or for that matter every act of violence, or negligence, or selfishness, or omission that threatens the lives and well-being of our children and the generations to come.

[Together]

And as we diminish our joy, we ask how can human beings create, participate in and ignore such devastation?

DAYENU: When Is Enough Enough?

[Co-Leader]

Traditionally, following the recitation of the miracles that G-d wrought in Mitzrayim on behalf of the Israelites, we remark on how manifold have been the gifts G-d bestowed on us after our departure. After each we say *Dayenu*, *which means it*, would have been enough for us.

[Reader 33]

Had G-d brought us out of Egypt and not divided the sea for us,

[Together]

Dayenu!

[Reader 34]

Had G-d divided the sea and not sustained us for forty years in the desert,

[Together]

Dayenu!

[Reader 35]

Had G-d sustained us for forty years in the desert and not given us the Sabbath,

[Together]

Dayenu!

[Reader 36]

Had G-d given us the Sabbath and not given us the Torah

[Together]

Dayenu!

[Reader 37]

Had G-d given us the Torah and not led us into the land of Israel,

[Together]

Dayenu!

[Co-Leader]

Please join in this traditional Passover Song.

[Together]

אלו הוציאנו ממצרים, דינו:
אלו נתן לנו את-התורה, דינו:
אלו נתן לנו את-השבת, דינו:

*Illo hotzi, hotzianu,
hotzianu mi mitzrayim
hotzianu mi mitzrayim
Dayenu!*

(Chorus)
*Dai-dai-yeinu, (3x)
dayenu dayenu!*

*Illo natan, natan lanu
natan lanu et ha Torah
natan lanu et haTorah
Dayenu!*

(Chorus)

[Reader 38]

What does this mean, "It would have been enough?" Surely no single one of these would have been enough. It means to celebrate each step toward freedom as the accomplishment it is, then to start out on the next step. It means that if we reject each step because it is not the whole liberation, we will never be able to achieve the whole liberation. It means to sing each verse as if it were the whole song -and then to sing the next verse.

[Reader 39]

"Liberation is costly. Even after the Lord had delivered the Israelites from Egypt, they had to travel through the desert. They had to bear the responsibilities and difficulties of freedom. There was starvation and thirst and they kept complaining. They complained that their diet was monotonous, and what is worse, many of them preferred the days of bondage and the flesh pots of Egypt. We must remember that liberation is costly. It needs unity. We must hold hands and refuse to be divided. The ruler always wants to divide and rule. We must know that before we reach our promised land there will be imprisonments, there will be bannings, there will be detentions without trial, there will be deaths in detention, there will be exile, there will be division and there will be treachery and disloyalty. We must be ready. Some of us will not see the day of our liberation physically. But these people will have contributed to the struggle. Let us be united, let us be filled with hope, let us be those who respect one another."

[Bishop Desmond Tutu]

[Co-Leader]

To the enemy who would divide
And conquer us from within,
We say NO!
FREEDOM!
BROTHERHOOD!
DEMOCRACY!

To all the enemies of these great words:

We say NO!

[Langston Hughes, "*Freedoms Plow*"]

THE SECOND CUP OF WINE: The Cup of Resistance

[Co-Leader]

We now drink the second cup of wine and pledge to resist the forces of deprivation and oppression.

[Reader 40]

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam borei p'ri hagafen

[Together]

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Sovereign of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

קֶסֶחַ . מַצָּה וּמַרֹר:

Pesach, Matzah, Maror:

The Paschal Sacrifice, the Unleavened Bread and the Bitter Herbs

[Co-Leader]

Rabbi Gamliel used to say, "Whoever does not consider well the meaning of these three --*pesach* or the Paschal sacrifice, *matzah* or unleavened bread, and *maror* or bitter herbs -- has not fulfilled the purpose of the Seder.

There were two agricultural roots to Passover: Hag Ha-Pesach, the festival of the Paschal sacrifice, and Hag Ha-Matzot, the festival of the grain-offering. Early spring was the time of lambing and the Paschal sacrifice was the shepherd's offering; the grain-offering, the farmer's. The sacrifice represented a thanksgiving for both the bounty of the reclaimed land and a commemoration of the Exodus.

- Someone at each table holds up the bone from the Seder plate -

[Reader 41]

The lamb shank bone has primarily come to represent the slain lamb, the blood of which was painted on the doorposts of the Israelites in Mitzrayim so that the Angel of Death would pass over their homes when it slew the first-born of Egypt.

-Someone at each table holds up a portion of matzah-

[Reader 42]

The matzah, unleavened bread, has come to reflect that when the Israelites had to depart Mitzrayim in haste, the dough for their next day's bread had no time to rise.

- Someone at each table holds up a portion of corn bread -

[Reader 43]

At this Seder, we also use hot water corn bread as a symbol because it too was a bread of those who were enslaved.

[Co-Leader]

Today there are brothers and sisters of ours in Sefwei Wiawso, Ghana who are preparing for their observance of Passover as they have for generations. We wanted to share a glimpse of their preparations excerpted from a film made by Milwaukeean, Adam McKinney who sends greetings and wishes he were with us, today. In the film when they speak of someone blind, they are referring to Moses.

רחצה.

Rachtza: Washing the hands with a blessing

[Co-Leader]

We now wash our hands a second time. However, this time we say a blessing in accordance with the Jewish tradition of washing with a blessing before eating bread.

[Reader 44]

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קידשנו
במצותיו, וצונו על נטילת ידים:

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu al neteeilat yadayim.*

[Together]

Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, Sovereign of the universe, who has commanded us to wash our hands.

[Co-Leader]

We will now recite the two blessing over our breads.

[Reader 45]

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, המוציא לחם מן הארץ:

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam ha motzi lechem min
ha-aretz*

[Together]

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d. Sovereign of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

[Reader 46]

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על אכילת מצה:

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam asher kidshanu
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al akheelat matzah.*

[Together]

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d. Sovereign of the Universe, who has commanded us to eat matzah.

- Eat the matzah and cornbread -

-Someone at each table holds up the horseradish from Seder plate-

[Reader 47]

This is the bitter herb we eat to remind us of the bitterness of slavery.

"They made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and brick and in all manner of work in the field; all the labor which the Egyptians forced upon them was harsh." [Exodus 1: 13-14].

Both our peoples have tasted the bitterness of slavery and know its aftertaste. Tonight when we taste the bitter herb, let us consider the bitter consequences of all forms of oppression, exploitation, and neglect, whether in the actual or practical loss of lives from the waste of human potential.

[Reader 48]

"We who know how bitter the cup is of which the slave hath to drink, Oh, how ought we to feel for those who yet remain in bondage."

[Richard Allen, founder and first bishop of the AME Church, *The Life Experience and Gospel Labors of the Right Reverend Richard Allen*]

[Reader 49]

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על אכילת מרור:

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam asher kidshanu
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al akheelat maror.*

[Together]

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Sovereign of the Universe, who has commanded us to eat bitter herbs.

- Eat the bitter herb -

כּוֹרֵךְ.

KORECH: The Hillel Sandwich

[Co-Leader]

This is charoset. Its color and consistency is to remind us of the brick with which we were forced to labor in Egypt. We dip the bitter herb in the charoset, as we did the greens in salt water. We mix the charoset with the bitter herb, and, as the sage Hillel taught, eat it on Matzah, to cut the bitterness of oppression with the sweetness of hope.

- Eat the Hillel sandwich -

שְׁלֵחַן עוֹרֵךְ.

Shulchan Orech -- The Festival Meal

צִפּוּן.

TZAFUN: The Search for the Afikoman

[Co-Leader]

In order for us to move on with the Seder, we must first all share the afikoman. This is the pieces of matzah and cornbread that we set aside at the beginning of the Seder. It is our dessert. The 'Search for the Afikoman' has been made into a game in many cultures. It is one of the tactics that is used to keep young people engaged until the end of the Seder. Engagement is very important, as we are commanded to teach this story to our children.

- Eat a piece of afikoman -

בִּרְכַּת הַמָּזוֹן.

BIRKAT HAMAZON Grace After Meals

[Co-Leader]

We now recite the grace after meals together:

Blessed art thou, lord our G-d, king of the universe, who nourishes the whole world with grace, kindness and mercy. Thou givest food to all creatures, for thy kindness endures forever. Through this great goodness we have never been in want; may we never be in want of sustenance for His great name's sake. He: is the G-d who sustainest

all, doest good to all, and providest food for all the creatures, which he hast created. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who sustains all.

-Refill the wine cups-

THE THIRD CUP: The Cup of Thanksgiving

[Co-Leader]

We now return to our service by blessing the third cup of wine:

[Reader 50]

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam borei p'ri hagafen.

[Together]

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Sovereign of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

- Drink the third cup of wine -

KOS ELIJAHU: The Cup Of Elijah

[Co-Leader]

In Jewish history and lore, Eliyahu Ha'Navi, Elijah the Prophet, challenged the injustices of the King and overthrew the idol worship of Ba'al. In his challenge to power and privilege and his passionate advocacy on behalf of the poor and the oppressed, he became a legend. So righteous and severe was he said to have been that when the angel of death came for him, the angel was scared off and Elijah did not die. Rather he returns to earth in each generation and in the guise of a poor person comes to our doors to see how he will be treated. By this device he is viewed to be the harbinger of the messiah, for by our treatment of the poor it will be determined whether we are worthy to hail the dawn of the Messianic Era.

[Co-Leader]

Hence a place and a glass of wine is set out for Elijah at every Seder. And as we reach the point toward the end of the Seder where our intentions must now turn toward action, we open the door for Elijah and welcome him in song and watch the glass because it is said that he visits every Seder and takes a sip:

[Together]

אֵיךְ הַכּוֹס אֵיךְ הַכּוֹס אֵיךְ הַכּוֹס

Eliyahu HaNavi
Eliyahu HaTishbi
Eliyahu Eliyahu
Eli,yahu HaGil'adi

Elijah the prophet
Elijah the Tishbite
Elijah, Elijah
Elijah the Gileadite

Bim-hey-rah b'yameynu
Yavo eylaynu
Im Moshiach ben David
Im Moshiach ben David

Soon may he come,
Bringing with him,
The Messiah
Son of David.

Eliyahu HaNavi
Eliyahu HaTishbi
Eliyahu, Eliyahu
Eliyahu HaGil'adi

Elijah the prophet
Elijah the Tishbite
Elijah, Elijah
Elijah the Gileadite



HALLEL: Songs Of Praise

[Co-Leader]

Hallel means 'praise.' It is the root of the word 'hallelujah,' which means 'praise G-d.' Now let's join together in this Hallelujah.

[Together]

Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah
Hallelu, Hallelujah
-repeat-

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelu, Hallelujah
-repeat-



NIRTZAH: Songs of Celebration **The Fourth Cup of Wine: The Cup of Return**

- Refill the wine cups -

[Co-Leader]

It is customary to end a Seder with the wish that next year we shall celebrate in Jerusalem. The name Jerusalem is connected to the Hebrew words Ir (city), and Shalom (peace). The thought has been both the wish of the Jews in Diaspora to return to the homeland, and the symbolic longing for the Messianic City of Peace. Let us make this the expression too of this group's return to our climb together toward reaching the mountaintop and realizing our deepest common dreams for universal peace during our renewed year of growth.

[Reader 51]

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֵפֶן:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam borei p'ri hagafen

[Together]

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, Sovereign of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

[Co-Leader]

May God bless us with skepticism at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that we will live deep in our hearts.

[Together]

May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people and the earth so that we will work for justice, equity, and peace.

[Co-Leader]

May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer so we will reach out our hands to comfort them and change their pain into joy.

[Together]

May God bless the United States of America, our servicemen and women, President Barack Obama, Congresswoman Gwen Moore, Senators Russ Feingold and Herb Kohl and all of our elected officials as they strive to be true to the highest levels of justice, democracy and pluralism.

And may God bless each of us with the faith to believe that we can and do make a difference in the world, so we will have the courage to do the things that others say cannot be done.

[Co-Leader]

LeShanah Ha-Ba'ah B'Yerushalayim, and we all say together:

[Together]

Next Year in Jerusalem, the City of Peace!

[Co-Leader]

Please rise and join hands around your table for “Lift Every Voice and Sing”

**Lift every voice and sing
'Til earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmony
Of liberty
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea**

**Sing a song, full of the faith that the dark past has taught
Sing a song, full of the faith that the present has brought us**

**Facing the rising sun
Of our new day, begun
Let us march on 'til victory is won**

[Co-Leader]

And now let us make one big circle to join in singing for “We Shall Overcome”, but this time let the words be not someday but today.

**We shall overcome (3x)
We shall overcome today
Deep in my heart, I do believe
We shall overcome today**

**We'll walk hand in hand (3x)
We'll walk hand in hand today
Deep in my heart, I do believe
We'll walk hand in hand today**