



# Freedom Celebration

A Supplement to  
the Passover Haggadah

Jewish Social Policy  
Action Network



### About your Freedom Seder:

Beijing

The traditional Passover Seder is a composition of fifteen segments. After lighting candles, the official order of the Passover Seder is:

Kadesh, the recitation of Kiddush  
Urchatz, washing the hands  
Karpas, vegetable dipped in salt-water  
Yachatz, breaking of the middle matzo  
Maggid, the recitation of the story  
Rachtzah, second washing of the hands  
Motzi, recitation of the hamotzi  
Matzah, recitation of the matzo blessing

Maror, eating the bitter herbs  
Korech, eating matzo and bitter herbs  
Shulchan Orech, eating the festive meal  
Tzafun, eating the afikomen  
Barech, the recitation of grace  
Hallel, the recitation of Pesach songs  
Nirtzah, prayer that God accepts the service

This Haggadah Supplement includes suggestions at which point in the Seder to include each of its freedom poems, prayers and other readings. If yours is a family that hangs on every word of the “official Haggadah,” continuing to all hours as the children fidget or snooze, keep this for another night of Passover. Otherwise follow the suggestions below to intersperse the new with the old.

This 2012 JSPAN Passover Seder Supplement brings modern stories, poems and prayers about freedom to the ancient service, with suggested points in the Seder to introduce them. We extend our thanks to Leonard Fein, Prof. Josh Pasek, and Susan Myers for inspiration, content and editorial contributions to this effort.

Kenneth Myers and Stephen Sussman, Editors

### *Before Kadesh:*

The message of Passover can be viewed in many ways: traditionally as a retelling of the Exodus, or as an examination of women's role in Jewish history, or the relationship between Judaism and feminism. gay and lesbian liberation. vegetarianism and animal rights. Jewish-Christian understanding. Black-Jewish relations. Middle East peace. labor rights and activism on behalf of workers, or welcoming strangers in our land. "Theme Seders" develop these subjects and more. The universal element is the goal of relating a beautiful ancient home celebration to the challenges of today.

Jews have lived everywhere, under all conditions, suffering, adapting, often thriving, always surviving. We call out from our unique history: having found freedom, we challenge the world to bring freedom and human dignity to all.

This Passover Seder Supplement celebrates worldwide movements for freedom. We fully recognize that not every uprising or civil war is a true freedom movement. (For half of the participants in our own Civil War it was a battle to preserve the institution of owning slaves.) But across the world today, the inspiration of our American experience drives action by enslaved people to be free. And it is those true freedom movements that we celebrate.

Freedom movements sometimes fall short, sometimes overshoot the mark. First results can be very different than first intentions. We need to be very patient with our judgments.

Recall that Moses led the Jews in the desert for forty years, wandering here and there until a fully functioning, observant and obedient populace was ready to take control of the new land.

*And additional thoughts for discussion:*

We have enjoyed so much freedom for so long that we are perhaps in danger of forgetting how much blood it cost to establish the Bill of Rights.

- *Felix Frankfurter*

The greatest menace to freedom is an inert people. - *Louis D. Brandeis*

Our quarrel is not with Jews who are different, but with Jews who are indifferent.

- *Rabbi Stephen Wise*

*With the first cup of wine:*

**A Toast to Freedom**

**By Leonard Fein**

Each cup we raise this night is an act of memory and of reverence. The Story we tell, this year as every year, is not yet done. It begins with them, then; it continues with us, now. We remember not out of curiosity or nostalgia, but because it is our turn to add to the story.

Our challenge this year, as every year, is to feel the Exodus, to open the gates of time and become one with those who crossed the Red Sea from slavery to freedom.

Our challenge this year, as every year, is to know the Exodus, to behold all those in every land who have yet to make the crossing.

Our challenge this day, as every day, is to reach out our hands to them and help them cross to freedomland.

We know some things that others do not always know - how arduous is the struggle, how very deep the waters to be crossed and how treacherous their tides, how filled with irony and contradiction and suffering are the crossing and then the wandering.

We know such things because we ourselves wandered in the desert for forty years. Have not those forty years been followed by thirty-two centuries of struggle and of quest? Heirs to those who struggled and quested, we are old-timers at disappointment, veterans at sorrow, but always, always, prisoners of hope. The hope is the anthem of our people (Hatikvah) and the way of our people.

For all the reversals and all the stumbling-blocks, for all the blood and all the hurt, hope still dances within us. That is who we are, and that is what this seder is about. For the slaves do become free, and the tyrants are destroyed. Once, it was by miracles; today, it is by defiance and devotion.

*After the second cup of wine:*

Democracy

By Langston Hughes

Democracy will not come

Today, this year

Nor ever

Through compromise and fear.

I have as much right

As the other fellow has

To stand

On my two feet

And own the land.

I tire so of hearing people say,

Let things take their course.

Tomorrow is another day.

I do not need my freedom when

I'm dead.

I cannot live on tomorrow's bread.

Freedom is a strong seed

Planted in a great need.

I live here, too.  
I want freedom

Just as you.



Madrid

*During Karpas:*

We enjoy greens that remind us that spring is coming.

In the spring of 2011 the yearning of peoples for freedom broke out across the Middle East. Arab Spring began in Tunisia, spread to Egypt with the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak, and continued with the overthrow of authoritarian governments in Libya and Yemen. In Syria freedom fighters are in daily battle with the forces of al-Asad. Freedom uprisings and movements of one sort or another are busy in Algeria, Bahrein, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and Oman; and protests have occurred in Lebanon, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Western Sahara, even in Somalia and Tibet.

Once freedom was primarily the province of the United States and a few other democracies. Emma Lazarus celebrated freedom as a peculiarly American triumph in her famous poem.

## The New Colossus

By Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

*With Maggid tell another freedom story:*

This year we voice our prayers in support of true freedom movements all over the world.

Jews who live in America have enjoyed freedom and equality for over three centuries. But in this century there is a new desire of peoples around the world to live as free and equal masters of their own fates.

### Marino Faliero (excerpt)

By Lord Byron

They never fail who die  
In a great cause: the block may soak their gore:  
Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs  
Be strung to city gates and castle walls—  
But still their Spirit walks abroad. Though years  
Eclipse, and others share as dark a doom,  
They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts  
Which overpower all others, and conduct  
The world at last to Freedom.

Even in the remotest locations, furthest from western culture, Tibetans who have lived under the absolutist rule of China for over sixty years are yearning and striving for freedom.

I am Tibetan

By "Khampa Snow"

I am Tibetan

A black-haired and ochre-faced  
Tibetan

My feet have trod countless  
snowy peaks

In our proud realm of snowy  
extremes

Sincere smiles

Remain through summer rains and

winter snows  
Our will and grit shine yet  
through bitter cold and cruel heat

I am Tibetan  
A compassionate-hearted  
Tibetan Prayer  
wheels and beads have flown in  
my hand since time eternal  
Our piety was cast in  
Shambala's pure lands  
The six-syllable mantra is  
muttered  
Under the discriminatory gaze of  
others and the ridicule of  
misunderstanding  
We pray as ever for harmony and  
well-being for all living things

I am Tibetan  
A Tibetan who can sing and  
dance  
The seven colours of the  
rainbow are woven into my long  
flowing sleeves

And our jubilant dances raise the  
Yangtze and Yellow Rivers  
Our innocent dances and Songs  
of praise sound out in the golden  
era, delight dances through the  
soul

I am Tibetan  
A dream-cherishing Tibetan  
The wisdom and glory in the 30  
letters of the Tibetan alphabet  
Shine on the path of our  
progress  
The milk of ten bright cultures  
Fortifies our minds and bodies  
With the blessings of our  
ancestors' culture we stagger out  
with leaps and bounds into the  
ranks of the world

I am Tibetan  
The agitated blood in my veins is  
a constant reminder I am Tibetan  
In my lilted mother tongue I want  
to say loudly "I am Tibetan."



Cairo

*After reciting the biblical Ten Plagues:*

No liberation is easy. As tyranny brings death and terror to its victims, so the struggle to overthrow it claims its casualties. There is no redemption without pain.

Ours are no longer the biblical plagues, but there are modern plagues that confront us each day.

*A drop of wine is spilled with the recitation of each of these modern plagues:*

*Apathy in the face of evil*  
*Brutal torture of the helpless*  
*Cruel mockery of the old and the weak*  
*Despair of human goodness*  
*Envy of the joy of others*  
*Falsehood and deception corroding our faith*  
*Greedy theft of earth's resources*  
*Hatred of learning and culture*  
*Instigation of war and aggression*  
*Justice delayed, justice denied, justice mocked ....*

*- from Gates of Freedom Haggadah, by Chaim Stern et al*

*And a few additional thoughts for discussion :*

Thou shalt not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor. - *Lev. 19:16*

In Judaism social action is religiousness, and religiousness implies social action.

- *Leo Baeck, Essence of Judaism*

Freedom is the oxygen of the soul. - *Moshe Dayan*

If you want to be free, there is but one way; it is to guarantee an equally full measure of liberty to all your neighbors. There is no other.

- *Carl Schurz*

*Before the fourth cup of wine:*

Freedom movements can be messy. The plagues of the Exodus were not violent but were clearly bloody, culminating in the smiting of the firstborn.

Mahatma Gandhi, followed by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and in his earlier years Nelson Mandela, preached non-violent civil disobedience. The revolutions they led were surely less bloody than they otherwise might have been.

The essence of Gandhi's philosophy, Satyagraha (lit. 'insistence/holding of truth'), is that it seeks to eliminate antagonisms without harming the antagonists themselves. It is a "silent force" or a "soul force" (a term also used by Martin Luther King Jr. during his famous "I Have a Dream" speech). It arms the individual with moral power rather than physical power. Satyagraha is also termed a "universal force," as it essentially "makes no distinction between kinsmen and strangers, young and old, man and woman, friend and foe." [Wikipedia]

Arab Spring has changed some governments with little bloodshed, but in other countries many lives have been lost – sometimes without apparent progress toward freedom. Is the struggle for freedom worth any price? As Jews, we subscribe to the principle “Never again!” For ourselves, we will do everything to prevent another Masada or Holocaust. For other freedom movements that develop, do we agree with all that this implies?

### To a Freedom Fighter

By Maya Angelou

You drink a bitter draught.  
I sip the tears your eyes fight to  
hold  
A cup of lees, of henbane  
steeped  
in chaff.  
Your breast is hot,  
Your anger black and cold,

Through evening's rest, you  
dream  
I hear the moans, you die a  
thousands' death.  
When can straps flog the body  
dark and lean, you feel the blow,  
I hear it in your breath.

### *With Nirtzah – our prayer for return:*

For each Jew, the Seder must be a reliving of our exodus, the journey to freedom. Risking together what we never imagined possible on our own, we walk to freedom.

The sea rises to our nostrils. Then, with a breath, the waters part.

Following fire and cloud, we stumble through endless desert. At night we build fragile shelters that sway in the wind. The water is too bitter to

drink. Even manna sometimes tastes like sand.

Some cry out for Egypt, longing to return to slavery, even if it means a bitter existence, because it is a known place.

How does our journey to freedom continue? We glimpse new possibilities: for our lives and our communities, for our families and our world. Our success breeds dreams in others and those dreams lead to change.

When we close with a prayer for return to Jerusalem, we are really praying for liberty.

Liberty for whom? "Proclaim liberty throughout the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof." (Lev. 25:10) We must recall the teaching of the Talmud that our goal is liberty everywhere, in all the countries of the world including our own.

*With the prayer for return to Jerusalem:*

What constitutes the bulwark of our own liberty and independence? It is not our frowning battlements, our bristling sea coasts, our army and our navy. These are not our reliance against tyranny. All of these may be turned against us without making us weaker for the struggle. Our reliance is the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defense is in the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands everywhere. Destroy this spirit and you have planted the seeds of despotism at your own doors. Familiarize yourselves with the chains of bondage and you prepare your own limbs to wear them.

- Abraham Lincoln

Wake me up, God; ignite my passion, fill me with outrage. Remind me that I am responsible for Your world. Don't allow me to stand idly by. Inspire me to act. Teach me to believe that I can repair some corner of this world.

- *Rabbi Naomi Levy*

### Closing: A Passover Resolution

Passover is a Jewish new year celebration. It is a proper time for each of us to adopt a resolution to be active and effective in the pursuit of Tikkun Olam, the perfection of the world.

We resolve this night –

1. To be vigilant in the protection of our rights in this finest democracy on earth.
2. To speak out in support of true freedom movements in other lands.
3. To support the use of American economic power and influence to uphold real democracies and to encourage true freedom movements everywhere.
4. To support asylum under American immigration law for those freedom fighters facing unjust political persecution in other lands.

Next year in Jerusalem!



Passover at The Wall

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Budapest Synagogue



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