

PSYCHEDELIC HAGGADAH

April 19, 2024

Bicycle Day Seder

NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

This open-source haggadah is for you to use, modify, borrow, and share. It belongs to all of us and we hope everyone can find some inspiration and holiness within it. Ready every word, skip entire sections, or paste a paragraph you like into your haggadah. There are no "rules" here, but we do have some tips and ideas to help those facilitating this seder make it most meaningful.

TIPS



- Trust your intuition! Feel free to re-imagine any aspect of this haggadah and always adjust to the energy in the room
- Be intentional with who you invite and how many people participate. We believe intimacy is key here, and we limit our seder to no more than 12 participants
- This seder is intended to be a vulnerable space, so it's helpful to facilitate an intentional icebreaker at the beginning to nurture connection and trust
- On Passover we are asked to recline, so we like to sit on the floor in a circle so there is no "head.". We also place an "altar" in the center with personal objects that are important to each participant
- Make your space sacred. We darken the room, use light projectors, and place incense and candles around the space
- We offer the medicine via ginger and lemon tea. Be conscious of delivering it in an accessible and tasty way
- Reserve at least one private room for folks who may need their own space at any point throughout the experience
- Think about adding levity and lightening the mood, too. Are there silly rituals you can incorporate into the seder? How can the facilitator(s) model joy and that "family seder feel"?
- We do not offer a traditional meal, but we do have a lot of healthy and tasty snacks that everyone can enjoy at any point throughout and after the experience
- Make up your own rituals!
- *A note on page 12:* We collect the slips of paper in a clay pot and burn them in the center of our circle.

Prepare participants ahead of time.
See the next page for suggested pre-seder communications with participants

PREPARING PARTICIPANTS

All participants should feel prepared and safe entering the seder space. We encourage you to reach out individually to participants at least one week before to share the following prompts, offer a preview of what the journey will look like, let them know what to bring, and answer any questions they have.

PROMPTS

1. We'll be "inviting ancestors" into the space. So please feel free to consider a relative or ancestor, real or imagined, that you would like to honor during the seder.
2. As we think about the states of awareness we wish to cultivate, we first have to look at what's holding us back. What attachments and burdens in your life are preventing you from spiritual or emotional growth? What is constricting or blocking you?
3. As we look at the Israelite's journey from Egypt to Sinai, from slavery to redemption, think about what your emotional or spiritual journey has looked like. How have you moved away from Narrowness toward a place of Expansion.
4. Rituals are powerful tools of transformation. They help us to stay grounded and "tune in" to ourselves and the world. Think about the areas in your life where you have enacted rituals – or where you would like to.
5. As we look at the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians, we ask ourselves about the plagues we have faced in our own lives and we think about how those hardships have helped us to grow. How has suffering helped you to gain grace or soften your heart?

OTHER INFORMATION

Ask folks to arrive 30-60 minutes before the start of the seder.

Ask participants to wear comfortable all-white clothes to nurture a shared sacred container and intention. *Be conscious of the power of clothing as ritual*

Let participants know what medicine(s) will be available and guide them through any questions about the medicine, effects, and dosage

Encourage participants to reflect on the prompts above and prepare themselves for the ceremony - this may mean daily meditation, journalling, healthy eating, praying, etc.

Encourage everyone to bring a water bottle, journal, pen, and floor cushion

Invite everyone to bring a small personal object of importance to place on a community altar

If you decide to end with a jam (we do that), invite participants to bring instruments

WELCOME

This **G-d optional haggadah** uses a variety of names to refer to that energy and awe many of us have felt at some point in our lives (often described as G-d). Among others, they include:

G-ddess
Shekhina (Divine Feminine Presence)
Ruach (Spirit)

Great Mystery
Om
Source
Creator

Adonai (Lord)
Infinite
HaShem (The Name)
Flow

The mystics say that the Life Force beneath and within everything is beyond language; no words can capture the Ineffable or approach the Infinite. While these words reduce the vastness of Creator and Creation, we use them as subtitles to speak to something greater than language. **Feel free to use - or not to use - any of the metaphors you find in this Haggadah.**

Early in the story of Passover, when Moses experiences the call of the Great Mystery at the Burning Bush, he asks the Voice, "When people ask me what is your name, what should I tell them?" And G-d reaches beyond words and answers elusively, "I shall be what I shall be." The Spirit prods Moses to understand all of Creation as an eternally unfolding process of becoming.

In this name, we learn the entire story of Passover, the journey of our ancestors from Egypt. The Hebrew word for Egypt is **Mitzrayim**, which means a "narrow or constricted place." Our tradition has long told this story of Exodus literally, but in this haggadah we center the spiritual metaphor of the Exodus narrative. The Narrow Place, **Mitzrayim** (Egypt) is a place of spiritual constriction and narrow-mindedness. The journey through the Red Sea and Desert, from bondage to freedom, is the arduous path from narrowness toward expansiveness, from the boundaries of ego and habit that limit us to the infinite space of the human soul and creation.

THIS JOURNEY IS A PERENNIAL ONE

The traditional Haggadah commands us: **"In every generation, a person is obligated to see oneself as though one had gone forth from Egypt."** The rituals set forth here recognize that in every generation we experience narrowness that burdens & bounds us.

The ceremony is our opportunity to collectively re-enact the journeys of the generations before us, as we go forth from our Narrow Places toward expansiveness, from slavery toward possibility. As we ask ourselves how we are enslaved in narrow places, the Passover Seder is a gentle reminder to each of us that though the journey from constriction to redemption may be bitter, it is not impossible. We can be - in fact we already are - free.

We Shall Be What We Shall Be.

WHY A PSYCHEDELIC SEDER?

The etymological definition of the word *psychedelic* is "**mind manifesting**" or "**mind revealing**." Dr. Albert Hoffman, the Swiss chemist who was the first to discover and discovered and experience the compound lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), described acid as "medicine for the soul." Dr. Hoffman first synthesized LSD in 1938 and, five years later, felt called to revisit the chemical. Upon accidentally absorbing a tiny amount into his skin, he sank into "a not unpleasant intoxicated-like condition, characterized by an extremely stimulated imagination." On April 19th, 1943, at 4:20pm (seriously), he intentionally ingested 250 micrograms of the chemical to test its effect. Feeling disoriented, and unable to drive his car because of wartime restrictions, he got on his bicycle and headed home. Around the world, April 19th is now known as Bicycle Day.

Today, we recognize the intersections between the liberatory qualities of psychedelics and the Passover story of liberation. We relive the trip of the Israelites through a trip of our own. The injunction of Passover is to relive the emergence from the constriction of slavery to the enlightenment of Sinai, and the technology of the Seder ritual offers a fantastic set and setting for such consciousness expansion, allowing the mind to open and receive the divine influx.

The argument could be made that almost any holiday is the "most psychedelic of all Jewish holidays" [...] Pesach is an especially opportune time to think deeply about "tripping" and transformation. Whether applying the experiential wisdom gleaned from psychedelic experience to the broader themes or specific practices of Pesach, or adapting the structures and "goals" of Pesach to psychedelic experience, these two journeys function as magic mirrors for each other, reflecting and refracting the Infinite Light in a myriad of fractalizing hues.

The holiday of Pesach commemorates the Jewish people's process of expansion--breaking out of constriction and escaping slavery in a quest for freedom. It's not only a celebration of the Exodus from Egypt, but a reminder that liberation is always within reach, and is often, at least in part, a matter of shifting our consciousness.

The word pesach means to skip or jump over, most explicitly referring to when G-d, according to the Torah, bypassed Jewish homes during the terrible plague that killed the first-born sons of Egypt; but a broader interpretation might also point to the opportunity Pesach offers us to take a leap of faith from the familiar to the fantastic. Even if we can't see the outcome of taking such a leap, as we stand on the precipice, we are offered a radical opportunity to exercise our faith – in G-d, in the universe, in our communities, and in ourselves – to set off on a miraculous journey out of our own Mitzrayim, or narrow places, in order to transform life into a miraculous adventure beyond our wildest dreams.

– MADISON MARGOLIN & EDEN PEARLSTEIN

WHY DO RITUALS MATTER?

The ritual practices we are about to participate in are both ancient and modern, spiritual and emotional. For this journey to be meaningful, you need not enter it with a crystallized spiritual philosophy or even a belief in G-d. You need not be a Jew or a "believer" of any kind. All you need, in the words of Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, is a **"focused willingness to test some of the beliefs you already hold, and some you wish to hold, in the laboratory of your own experience."**

For as long as humans have existed we have created and practiced rituals to enliven our experiences, demonstrate gratitude, enter our interior, sanctify the sacred, and magnify the mundane. In Walter Benjamin's words, rituals compel an **"ecstatic contact with the cosmos."** It's fair to say that the Jewish world is a world of ritual, a universe of strange practices with immense practical power.

It's important to note that while spiritual practice - even psychedelics - are often viewed as abstract or "non-scientific" in Western frameworks, tonight we reclaim both as a practical means of achieving personal and emotional liberation. This ancient wisdom is our inheritance. These rituals and this medicine are life-changing, and we honor this Truth with our whole being.

The ritual infrastructure of our ancestors – Jewish and otherwise – are best practiced not from a place of compulsion or as an end in themselves, but as a means for limited human beings to access greater dimensions within and around us. Whether it's daily prayer practice, weekly Shabbat dinners, or annual seders, rituals remind us of the fundamental truths we know deep in our bones but too often forget. They foster awareness and connection, providing spiritual routine in an otherwise material world.

The seder is one such ritual.

SEDER MEANS "ORDER"

The seder is a set of rituals scaffolding Passover, which invite us to re-member that story of redemption, to re-enact it, and to prepare ourselves for a kind of redemption. By recalling the story of slavery to freedom we may put it into practice.

Every time we enter into a liberated or expanded state of consciousness – through prayer, ritual, dance, or plants – we are given another chance to incorporate that newborn consciousness into our everyday being. Everytime we intentionally step into an alternate model and mindset of existence, such as at the seder table, we are less likely to slip back into old patterns and habits.

Each element of the Passover seder thoughtfully serves to **invite curiosity**, embody the conceptual through **symbolic action**, and cultivate conditions for **consciousness expansion**. The seder is ripe with processes and objects which act as engines for psycho-spiritual liberation. The bread and herbs that nourish us hold sacred meaning. We eat different food and we eat the food differently. We are asked not to sit up but to recline and savor our freedom.

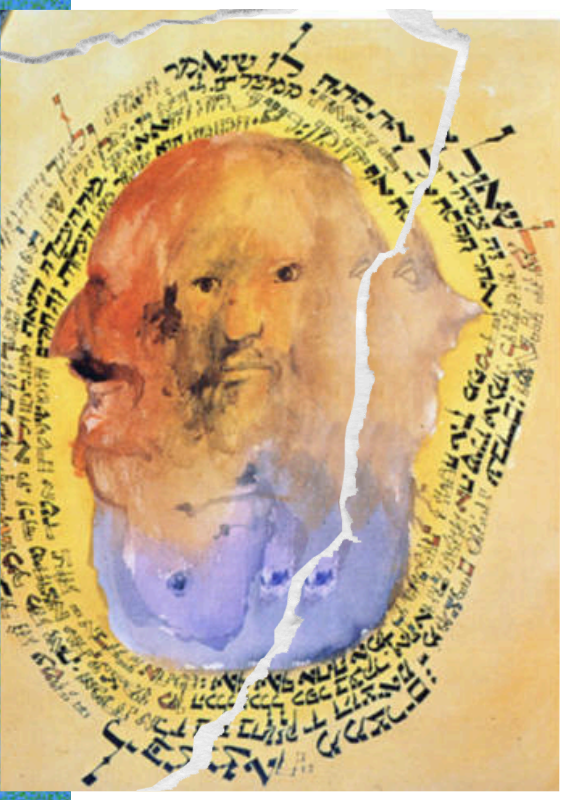


While each seder is different, for more than one-thousand years generations of Jews have followed a similar seder process inherited by mystics from long ago. Tonight, we reclaim this ritual and our right to the sacred and we respectfully re-imagine the seder. The evening ahead of us is spiritual, but it is also practical and rational.

We ask everyone to participate as you see fit. Everything is an invitation and nothing is required.

Before we begin, we will all go around, share our names, and share some reflections based on what we read above

THE RITUALS OF THE SEDER BEGIN HERE



OPENING PRAYERS

There are many languages, traditions, and rituals with which humans relate to and celebrate the Divine Presence. Whether you relate to another spiritual system or none at all, this space is yours. **However you sense the possibility of something greater within and around you is sacred. There is no one road to Ruach (Spirit)**. The paths to the mystical are many, but the secrets of the mystics are the same. We're all just returning to that place within our hearts.

WE CLAIM THIS HERITAGE AS OUR OWN

We have inherited this ritual from the ancient wisdom of those who came before us, but tonight **we re-purpose it for our own time and needs,** For thousands of years, our ancestors have experienced the Creative Force or Flow behind the veil and **have given it expression through the echo chamber of countless generations.** With thanks to those who came before us, we proudly and cautiously claim this spiritual heritage as our own.



In the legacy of our ancestors, we walk this particular path tonight. We sanctify the Divine Source with gratitude, with inspiration from the secrets of the sages, but beyond the ancient boundaries we inherited.

INVOKING THE ANCESTORS

In the Presence of the Infinite, we call upon the Spirit which dwelt in our ancestors, G-d of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, G-d of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah. G-d of the Israelites and the Egyptians. In their legacy and the legacy of all who came before us, may the Great Spirit bless us on this journey. May it be the will of the Infinite One that we are led toward peace and toward presence today. May we be refreshed and renewed, in body and spirit.

May we Return today.

May we feel safe in this space.

May we be present in this space.

May we each experience an *aliyat neshama,* an ascension of the soul.

May we welcome our ancestors into this space, into our hearts, and may they be among us to sanctify us with life and with gratitude.

While many seders begin by opening the door and pouring a glass of wine for Elijah, our ancestor and prophet who our legend tells us will herald an era of redemption and healing, we begin this seder by invoking our ancestors, relatives, or loved ones who have passed from their bodies.

Everyone, share the names of your relatives or ancestors - real or imagined - who you wish to honor and invite into this space.

INVITATION

READER 1

We have gathered here tonight for many reasons. We are here to be in the community. **We are here to honor the thousands-year-old tradition of our ancestors.** We are here because we are Jews or friends of Jews. We are here to re-member and re-tell an ancient story of an ancient people, **a story so profoundly universal that everyone can see themselves in it.**

READER 2

Tonight we retell and **relive the spiritual journey of our ancestors** who left The Narrow Place, Mitzrayim, the place of inner exile that constantly invades our consciousness, and journeyed through the desert of hardship from bondage to freedom, from narrowness toward expansiveness, from the boundaries of ego and habit that limit us to the infinite space within each of us. **Tonight, we long for a taste of redemption.**

READER 3

Tonight, we will **connect with Mitzrayim,** the Narrow Place, and we will take a journey to somewhere else. We will ask one another what narrowness and bitterness tastes like, what is holding us back from being our best selves, and what it means to **experience Oneness and Wholeness**.

TOGETHER

Long ago at this season, our people set out on a journey
On a night much like this, Israel realized a new state of Being was possible
Tonight, we open our door (open the door) to the entire human family
Tonight, we invite all to sit at our table, to taste and see freedom

FREEING OURSELVES

As we recite each plague we are freeing ourselves from, **we spill a drop of wine – as a symbol of our joy in liberation** – from our cups. Our joy in our liberation will always be tarnished by the pain visited upon the Egyptians.

WE READ RESPONSIVELY

Freedom from the bondage of self	*and freedom from the bondage of others*
Freedom in our bodies	*and freedom in our souls*
Freedom to love	*and freedom to be loved*
Freedom for our loved ones	*and freedom for our enemies*
Freedom from the curse of habit	*and freedom from complacency*
Freedom in mind	*and freedom in spirit*
Freedom to hope	*and freedom to rejoice*
Freedom for those who are empty	*and freedom for those who are full*
Freedom from captivity	*and freedom from oppression*
Freedom in my community	*and freedom in all communities*
Freedom to create ourselves anew	*and freedom to create*
Freedom for all at this table	*and freedom for all in the world*

Soon, in our days. Amen

ORDER OF THE SEDER

SET AND SETTING

Seder, this ritual-filled meal to commemorate Passover, comes from the Hebrew word for "**order**." The Seder itself is a container to cultivate a "set" and "setting" that nurtures a mind-expanding journey. Each element works to alter and elevate our consciousness so that, in every generation, we may escape from our Egypts and experience the unity of the Divine.

> Of course, the drug dose does not produce the transcendent experience. It merely acts as a chemical key - it opens the mind, frees the nervous system of its ordinary patterns and structures. The nature of the experience depends almost entirely on set and setting. Set denotes the preparation of the individual, including his personality structure and his mood at the time. Setting is physical - the weather, the room's atmosphere; social - feelings of persons present towards one another; and cultural - prevailing views as to what is real. It is for this reason that manuals or guide-books are necessary. Their purpose is to enable a person to understand the new realities of the expanded consciousness, to serve as road maps for new interior territories
>
> - TIMOTHY LEARY, RICHARD ALPERT (RAM DASS) & RALPH METZNER

MAY THE HAGGADAH BE OUR ROAD MAP TO CONNECTION & SPIRITUAL ELEVATION

(Sing together)

- **Kadesh**: Spiritual Intention
- **Urchatz**: Purification
- **Karpas**: Tasting Bitterness and Rebirth
- **Yachatz**: Breaking Open
- **Maggid**: The Story
- **Rachtzah**: Return, Reset, Renew
- **Motzi-Matzah:** Action
- **Maror**: Taste the Bitterness
- **Korech**: Taste the Sweetness
- **Shulchan Orech**: Taking It All In
- **Barekh**: Gratitude
- **Hallel Nirtzah**: Be Here Now

"We drink the four cups in order to relate to the higher level of redemption"
- Rabbi Yehuda Loew, the Maharal of Prague

KADESH: SPIRITUAL INTENTION

In ancient times, the mystics instituted a tradition to incorporate four cups of wine into the Passover Seder as a gateway to higher consciousness, to raise ourselves out of our inner exiles and restore our unity with the Infinite.

The Hasidic sage Rabbi Shmuel Bornzstain, the Rebbe of Sochotchov, teaches that the four cups of wine were instituted to "grant Israel a deeper and more exalted level of consciousness[...] when we surrender our awareness in service of this commandment, in exchange, we receive an elevated and lofty, sacred awareness."

"Aided by the wine and the other rituals of the night, the Seder is a unique time to access this direct quality of consciousness that is not accessible at any other time of the year. It is a taste of redemption and freedom that we experience within our own consciousness, that then permeates our entire reality and our way of relating to the Divine."

– The Four Cups of Consciousness:
A Shefa Haggadah Companion

An early mystic teaches that the four cups commemorate the fourfould process of redemption named by the Spirit in our Exodus story (6:6)

1. **I will take you out from the suffering of Mitzrayim (Narrowness)**
2. **I will deliver you from bondage**
3. **I will redeem you with great wonder**
4. **I will take you to Wholeness and Oneness**

"Not with a strong hand / And not with an outstretched arm / And not with great awe / And not with signs / And not with wonders / Rather hesitantly, with small steps, terrified by darkness / Softly / Dedicated / Purposefully / with accuracy / And love / Carrying little signs like the wrinkles of passing time, / The transition of seasons, my changing body, the pearls of my longings. Getting out of Egypt (Exodus)

– Hagit Ackerman

"The series of events that lead to Sinai begins in Egypt: the word cannot be spoken within us until the mind is freed from its own constrictions."
- Rabbi Arthur Greene

OPEN YOURSELF

With each cup of wine, we expand our consciousness and move through the four stages of the redemptive process. We invite everyone to open up to this journey and set some intentions for tonight.

AWARENESS

What is the state of awareness you wish to inhabit this evening? What do you desire?

RELEASE

As we think about state of awareness, we first have to look at what's holding us back. As the Israelites were taken out of Egypt, where do we wish to be taken out of?

ATTACHMENTS

What attachments and burdens in your life are preventing you from spiritual or emotional growth? What is constricting or blocking you?

PLACE SLIPS OF PAPER IN THE ALTAR BOWL AT THE CENTER OF THE CIRCLE

These attachments hold tremendous power over our lives. But they are also shallow illusions that dissolve from contact with the inner light.

Experience the inner light

TIME TO CONNECT

The first step toward Expansiveness requires **recognizing how we are spiritually constricted**. This requires "shaking the snowglobe" and knocking out our default mode networks. It is helped with ritual, medicine, and community. Tonight, we leaving narrowness behind, but we are not doing it alone.

While the medicine is prepared, we invite everyone to take 15 minutes to connect with the community taking this trip together. We ask everyone to take some time for conversation with those around you. While you do so, **please hold the sanctity of this communal space.**

RETURN WITH BREATHING EXERCISE

FIRST CUP OF WINE

With gratitude for the secrets of our sages, we honor the tradition of the four cups, but we make it our own. Our first step out of Narrowness tonight is aided not with wine, but with the sacred mushroom.

The ancient prayer we will recite upon eating this plant is the same blessing our ancestors said before eating manna in the wilderness of exile.

Ha-Motzi Lechem Min ha-Shamayim

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמּוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם.

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-Olam, ha-motzi lechem min ha-shamayim

Blessed are You, Eternal One, Divine Power, Guide of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the heavens.



BIRKAT KOHANIM

Moses' brother, Aaron, the first Priest of the Israelites, took on the sacred task of carrying out this blessing for the world, l'dor v'dor, in every generation. This magical and ancient incantation is the oldest known biblical text to have ever been discovered, found on amulets more than 2,600 years old. For nearly 3,000 years, Kohanim have offered this spell to ward off evil. It is said that, with this lifting of the hands, the Light of Creation will shine toward us:

יְבָרֶכְךָ יְיָ וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ׃
יָאֵר יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ׃
יִשָּׂא יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם׃

Y'var-ekh'cha A-do-nai v'yeesh'm'recha:
Ya-eir A-do-nai pa-nav ei-ley-cha vee-chu-nei-cha:
Yee-sa A-do-nai pa-nav ei-lay-cha v'ya-sem l'cha sha-lom:

I say unto all of creation:
May the Infinite Source bless you and keep you.
May Eternal light shine upon you and grace you.
May the Great Mystery turn toward you and give you peace."

We will take a few minutes of silence to take the medicine and set some private intentions.

TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

As we take in the medicine and begin this sacred journey, **we open ourselves up to surrender to the medicine, the ritual, and to ourselves**. We'll now listen to the song 'River,' by Leon Bridges, which embodies this theme of surrendering who we are and freeing ourselves to *be what we will be.*

River, by Leon Bridges

Been traveling these wide roads for so long
My heart's been far from you
Ten-thousand miles gone

Oh, I wanna come near and give ya
Every part of me
But there is blood on my hands
And my lips aren't clean

In my darkness I remember
Momma's words reoccur to me
"Surrender to the good Lord
And he'll wipe your slate clean"

Take me to your river
I wanna go
Oh, go on
Take me to your river
I wanna know

Tip me in your smooth waters
I go in
As a man with many crimes
Come up for air
As my sins flow down the Jordan

Oh, I wanna come near and give ya
Every part of me
But there is blood on my hands
And my lips aren't clean
I wanna know

Take me to your river
I wanna go
Go on
Take me to your river

I wanna know
I wanna go, wanna go, wanna go
I wanna know, wanna know, wanna know
Wanna go, wanna go, wanna go
Wanna know, wanna know, wanna know
Wanna go, wanna go, wanna go
Wanna know, wanna know, wanna know

Take me to your river
I wanna go
Lord, please let me know
Take me to your river
I wanna know

We ask everyone to name one intention out loud for our journey together. We will go around in a circle. After you have named one thing, all of us will respond, ***kayn yihee ratzon***, "**Let it Be So**" an ancient spell to bring your manifestation to life.

URCHATZ: PURIFICATION

As we continue on this journey, we are invited to physically prepare ourselves for this journey by washing our hands, just as our ancestors purified themselves before holy tasks. In our tradition, water has sacred cleansing powers to clear the grime – metaphorically and literally – and helps us to polish our mirrors. Water is the essence and flow of life.

"The most strongly enforced of all known taboos is the taboo against knowing who or what you really are behind the mask of your apparently separate, independent, and isolated ego."

- Alan Watts

We'll pass around this bowl and cup so each of us can wash the hands of the person sitting next to us. Through this act of service, care, and love we recognize that while we all must take this journey alone, we all take this journey together. As you wash the hands of the person next to you, by pouring three cups of water over each hand, we ask you to look them in the eyes, take one deep breath with them, and thank them for being here.

PASS AROUND THE BOWL UNTIL EVERYONE'S HANDS HAVE BEEN WASHED.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדָיִם:

Baruch Ata Adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kidishanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat yadayim

Blessed are You, Source of all Being, who sanctifies us with Your commandments, and commands us to wash our hands.

KARPAS

TASTING BITTERNESS & REBIRTH

This green vegetable before us represents birth, renewal, and transformation. And we dip it in saltwater, representing the tears of enslavement. Our ancestors in Egypt experienced bitterness but never lost hope for redemption. Passover arrives with Spring to remind us that emergence is always right here, right in front of us. While we eat the karpas with salt water, we remind ourselves that there is no rebirth without working through bitterness.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה.

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei peri ha-adama.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruits of the earth.

YACHATZ
BREAKING OPEN

Sometimes we must break ourselves open to build ourselves anew. In fact, it is this "breaking open" that psychedelics can be so helpful with. Now, we each break a piece of matzah in two to signify the breaking open of ourselves and our hearts on this journey.

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in

- Leonard Cohen

MAGGID
THE STORY

This is where we tell the story of Exodus to redemption, of slavery to Sinai.

Tonight, we choose to interpret this story as a spiritual journey rather than literal one. We understand the Israelites as representing each of us in this room. We recognize the meaning of **mitzrayim** (Egypt) is a "**narrow or constricted place**" and we see the Israelites and all of us as slaves in a culture of attachment, materialism, and separation.

When we read that Moses pleaded with G-d for seven days before accepting his mission, we see the ways each of us have resisted necessary and positive change.

"We all live lives that are tethered to the circumstances in which we find ourselves, so in a certain sense everyone is born in chains. There are moments of liberation and moments of captivity. Life seems to move between those two polarities."

- Leonard Cohen

We look at the story of crossing the Red Sea and we harken the truth that **change only happens when we are willing to surrender to the unknown.**

BORN IN CHAINS

Tonight, we begin our interpretations of this story by listening to a song about Exodus by Leonard Cohen, Born in Chains

I was born in chains but I was taken out of Egypt
I was bound to a burden, but the burden it was raised
Oh Lord I can no longer keep this secret
Blessed is the name, the name be praised.

I fled to the edge of a mighty sea of sorrow
Pursued by the armies of a cruel and dark regime
But the waters parted and my soul crossed over
Out of Egypt, out of Pharaoh's dream.

Word of words and the measure of all measures
Blessed is the name, the name be blessed
Written on my heart in burning letters
That's all I know, I do not know the rest

I was idled with my soul, when I heard that you could use me
I followed very closely, but my life remained the same
But then you showed me where you had been wounded
In every atom spoken is the name

I was lost on the road, your love was so confusing
And all the teachers told me that I had myself to blame
But in the arms? stands? the? illusion
The sweet unknowing unifies the name

Word of words, and the measure of all measures
Blessed is the name, the name be blessed
Written on my heart in burning letters
That's all I know, I cannot read the rest

I heard the soul unfolds in the chambers of this longing
As the bitter liquor sweetens in the amber cup
Ah but all the ladders of the night have fallen
Just darkness now, to lift the longing up.

Word of words and measure of all measures
Blessed is the name, the name be blessed
Written on my heart in burning letters
That's all I know, I cannot read the rest

Just darkness now, to lift the spirit up



SECOND CUP OF WINE

At this point in the ceremony, we traditionally drink the second cup of wine. The first cup takes us out from the suffering of **Mitzrayim** (Narrowness). With this second cup we deliver ourselves from bondage and begin the journey toward liberation. From this place, outside of the Narrowness of Egypt, we are clear-eyed enough to look backwards and then forward with clarity.

As we take in the second "cup of wine," we invite everyone to take another dose of medicine if you would like. We have mushrooms and joints available.

PAIRED CONVERSATIONS

For this second cup, we will turn to the person next to you and **share with them a story, any story, about your own journey from Mitzrayim (Narrowness) toward Expansion.**



As we look at the Israelite's journey from Egypt to Sinai, from slavery to redemption, think about what your emotional or spiritual journey has looked like. How have you moved away from Narrowness toward a place of Expansion?

We will take the next 10 or 15 minutes for this paired conversation.

We have all been slaves to the Pharaoh of Narrowness, and in each generation the Eternal offers us a path to lead ourselves out of Egypt with an outstretched arm.

Had we not the eyes to see this choice in front of us, we and our children and our children's children may still be enslaved. **Therefore, even if we feel like we are no longer in Egypt, it is our duty to remember the story of Exodus and to take the journey to freedom.**

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

As we re-tell the story of Passover we typically ask a set of questions about the rituals of the seder. We sing a song with the refrain "**Why is this night different from all other nights?**" For example, in one stanza we ask why we eat matzoh tonight when on all other nights we eat leavened bread. The song asks us to **interrogate the decisions we make in our lives and to remain curious** about the manifold ways to **infuse our lives with intentionality.**

From the tool of the Four Questions we are reminded of the power of ritual as a modality for transformation. We are asked to internalize the truth that every aspect of our life can be ritualized as an opportunity for connection and growth.

We invite everyone to reflect on the rituals you have or do not have in your life. Every moment, experience, and space in life can be honored and ritualized into grist for the mill of Awakening. Whether it's saying a prayer of gratitude when you wake-up in the morning, considering the way you eat or dress, being intentional with how you decorate your rooms and spaces, we have before us infinite tools to return to ourselves and connect with the world. How do you remember the capital-T Truths deep inside of you and "tune in" to that frequency? How do you use your actions as ritualistic vehicles to keep you "awake?"

Think about the areas in your life where you have enacted rituals - or where you would like to.

Whenever you're ready you hear the next message. The next message is where you are when you're ready to hear the next message. If you come here this evening and you don't know what the hell I'm talking about, you're not ready to hear this message and you could be sitting here and there's no message.

- Ram Dass

THE FOUR CHILDREN

Traditionally, we would learn about four children who all ask different questions about the Passover Seder. One child is **wise**, one **wicked**, another **simple**, and the fourth **does not know enough to even ask a question**. From the story of these children we learn a few profoundly powerful spiritual lessons. Each child is approached by the parent with a very different answer, because **we all can only be met with where we are at.** We can only receive the next message when and how we are ready to. **There's no shortcut to enlightenment.** We can only see others for who they are and meet them in that place.



We can also see these four children not as separate people but as different personalities, all of which we contain at different times in our lives. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks says, "It may be that the "four sons" are not different people but successive stages" in our spiritual development. **We begin as children "unable to ask" and grow intellectually until we ask "simple" questions about the way of things. As we experience the world our curiosity can darken in the face of pain and challenges, asking "wicked" questions with ulterior motives or arrogance. It is through this necessary and universal process that we reach a place of "wisdom."**

This process is the exercise of evolution that we are practicing right here, right now. Change is difficult and everyone among us has resisted necessary change countless times. Change is hard. But through reflection, community, and ritual we can transform ourselves and our consciousness.

As Alan Watts says, **"The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance."**

Or, in the words of Ram Dass, **"You can do it like it's a great weight on you, or you can do it like a dance."**

Guided embodied movement practice

"So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls wrapped in their cloaks upon their shoulders." —Exodus 12:34

You'll need to travel light.
Take what you can carry: a book, a poem,
a battered tin cup, your child strapped
to your chest, clutching your necklace
in one hot possessive fist.

So the dough isn't ready. So your heart
isn't ready. You haven't said goodbye
to the places where you hid as a child,
to the friends who aren't interested in the
journey, to the graves you've tended.

But if you wait until you feel fully ready
you may never take the leap at all
and Infinity is calling you forth
out of this birth canal
and into the future's wide expanse.

Learn to improvise flat cakes without
yeast.
Learn to read new alphabets.
Wear G-d like a cloak
and stride forth with confidence.
You won't know where you're going

but you have the words of our sages,
the songs of our mothers, the
inspiration
wrapped in your kneading bowl. Trust
that what you carry will sustain you
and take the first step out the door.

Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

THE TEN PLAGUES

Our tradition tells us that Pharaoh hardened his heart to the suffering of the Israelites, which is why the Ancient One brought ten plagues upon the Egyptians, to soften the heart of the Pharaoh. From this, we are reminded that suffering – even plagues – can be redemptive. As Ram Dass says, "**suffering is grace. It is given to you to show you where your mind is stuck. Suffering can be a gift to help one grow.**" As Leonard Cohen wrote, "**Suffering has led me to wherever I am.**"

You see, there is a tendency in us to find suffering aversive. And so we want to distance ourselves from it. Like if you have a toothache, it becomes that toothache. It's not us anymore. It's that tooth. And so if there are suffering people, you want to look at them on television or meet them but then keep a distance from them. Because you are afraid you will drown in it. You are afraid you will drown in a pain that will be unbearable. And the fact of the matter is you have to. You finally have to. Because if you close your heart down to anything in the universe, it's got you. You are then at the mercy of suffering. And to have finally dealt with suffering, you have to consume it into yourself. Which means you have to–with eyes open–be able to keep your heart open in hell. You have to look at what is, and say, "Yea, Right." And what it involves is bearing the unbearable. And in a way, who you think you are can't do it. Who you really are can do it. So that who you think you are dies in the process. **Ram Dass**

ON THE TURNING AWAY

We'll now listen to the song On the Turning Away, by Pink Floyd, which embodies the need to remain open in the face of the darkness and hardships that plague all of us.

On the turning away
From the pale and downtrodden
And the words they say
Which we won't understand

Don't accept that what's happening
Is just a case of others' suffering
Or you'll find that you're joining in
The turning away

It's a sin that somehow
Light is changing to shadow
And casting its shroud
Over all we have known

Unaware how the ranks have grown
Driven on by a heart of stone
We could find that we're all alone
In the dream of the proud

On the wings of the night
As the daytime is stirring
Where the speechless unite in a silent accord

Using words, you will find, are strange
Mesmerized as they light the flame
Feel the new wind of change
On the wings of the night

No more turning away
From the weak and the weary
No more turning away
From the coldness inside

Just a world that we all must share
It's not enough just to stand and stare
Is it only a dream that there'll be
No more turning away?

As we look at the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians, we ask ourselves about the plagues we have faced in our own lives and we think about how those hardships have helped us to grow. How has suffering helped you to gain grace or soften your heart? What hardships helped you to grow or awaken?

We will go around the space and each of us will have 60 seconds to share a brief story of a plague or hardship we faced and name the grace or healing we came out of it with.

RACHTZAH

RETURN, RESET, RENEW

At this point, we traditionally wash our hands a second time to help prepare our bodies for this journey.

In place of the handwashing ritual, we will take some time for a vocal exercise to open our throat chakras and create space for self-expression.

MOTZI-MATZAH: ACTION

Matzah is a potent symbol for a few crucial truths.

It is a reminder that there are moments when we have no time to wait and are called to take decisive and immediate action. Our ancestors teach us that when the time for liberation comes, we must walk through the door. We may not feel ready, the time may not be right, but the time is always right. And if we wait until we feel fully ready, we may never act at all.

There are other elements of this story which add greater Truth. Goddess instructs the Israelites to eat only matzoh – unleavened bread – for the entire week before they escaped the Narrow Place. If the Israelites did not eat matzoh out of haste, then what's with the tradition?

The mystics teach us at bread can be understood as a metonymy for ego and self-aggrandizement. It puffs up and represents abundance, signifying the material world which can simultaneously satiate us materially while constricting us spiritually. **But matzoh is humble. It is simple and cleansing.** We may idolize a fine French baguette, but no one is worshiping a piece of matzoh.

When we eat this matzoh, we remind ourselves that **spiritual and emotional liberation begins with a choice to act and answer the call**. And when we eat this matzoh **we remind ourselves of the power of humility in spiritual cleansing.**

EVERYONE EATS A PIECE OF MATZAH

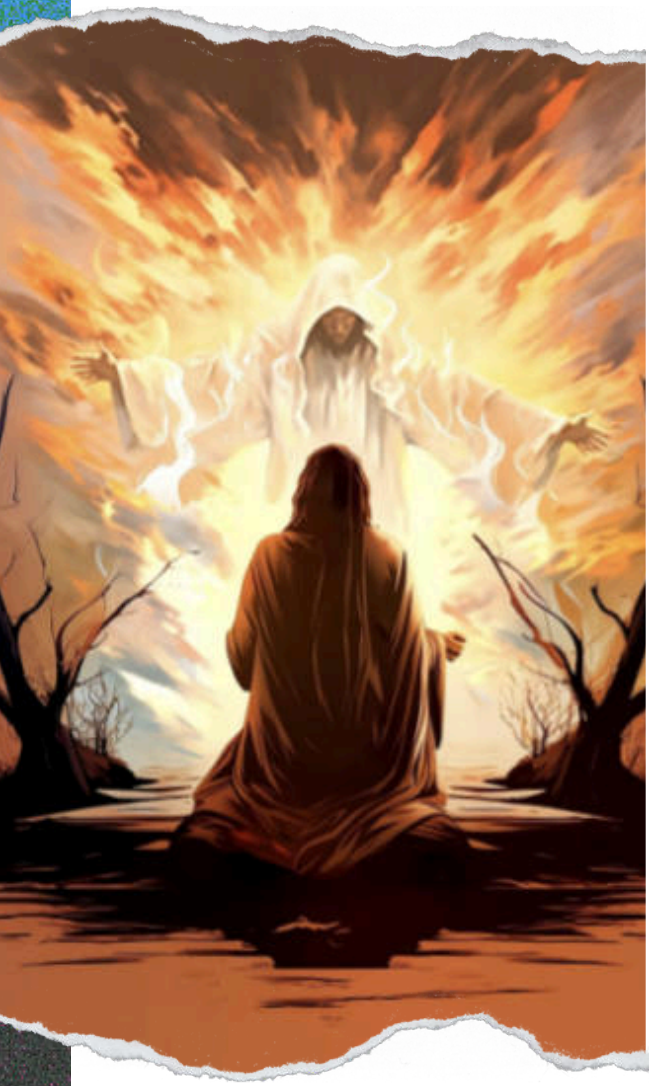
MAROR

TASTE THE BITTERNESS

The journey from Mitzrayim is both bitter and sweet. Our challenge is not to turn away from the bitterness, but to accept it without becoming bitter ourselves. Tonight, with the aid of community, ritual, and psychedelics we will try to to create this form of spaciousness. As a free people, we will reach toward the Expanse and embrace the bittersweet nature of existence.

"Bitterness is a necessary ingredient for change."
Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

For a taste of bitterness, everyone is invited to take a shot of fresh, pure ginger juice.



KORECH

TASTE THE SWEETNESS

Traditionally, this is the point when we many of us would eat charoset, often a mix of apples, nuts, wine, and spices. We imagine this mixture is symbolic of the mortar our ancestors used to build for the Egyptians. And we mix this sweet mixture with the bitter maror, creating a sandwich with the matzoh. Why do we mix in this sweetness with the bitterness? Why do we imagine that the mortar we used as slaves was sweet? We do this to remember the journey from slavery to redemption, from narrow consciousness to expansion. **Even amidst slavery, we can – we must – taste sweetness and remind ourselves of the potential for freedom.**

We have a sacred blend of lotus and jasmine which we will spray around the room for a taste of sweetness.

SHULCHAN ORECH TAKING IT ALL IN

Tonight, we have turned the high mountain of Sinai into a deep well. We have looked for transformation and expansiveness within – not outside – of ourselves. Rather than building a bridge to something else, we have broken down the walls between one another and ourselves.

The story of Passover is a testament that divinity is present to and accessible within all human beings, and that our challenge is to embody this presence and create a society that enables this truth, much like we have done in this room together.



THIRD CUP OF WINE

The mystics teach that this third cup is the cup of blessing.

By this point in a traditional seder, we have eaten and drank enough for a king or queen, so why do we pour a third cup? Not because we are empty but because we are full. In the words of our ancestor King David, our cups runneth over.

This cup relates to the third promise on the journey toward the Expanse, that we shall be redeemed with great wonder. At this point in our journey the miracles of progress begin to reveal themselves as our growing awareness glimmers before us.

As we take in the third "cup of wine," we invite everyone to take another dose of medicine if you would like. We have mushrooms and joints available.

TZAFUN BAREKH GRATITUDE

As this journey comes to a close, we look around this room with gratitude for everyone who co-created this experience. We invite everyone to take 60 seconds to **share with everyone something you are walking away with**.

What is an awareness you received tonight? What is an attachment or stage of your life you are committed to leaving behind? What is a change you plan to nurture? Speak out to the room what is on your heart as we transition out of this journey.

FOURTH CUP OF WINE

The final cup of our seder relates to Sinai. It is recognition and celebration of the fourth promise of this journey: I will take you to Wholeness and Oneness. We are now living as free people. We have left behind the Narrowness of Egypt and embrace the divine, the infinite, with love. We allow these vibrations to move through our bodies and our consciousness

וְיָדַעְתֶּם כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הַמּוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם
מִתַּחַת סִבְלוֹת מִצְרָיִם

"And you will know that I am Hashem your God, Who brings you out of the suffering of constricted consciousness."

Shemot 6:7

As we take in the fourth "cup of wine," we invite everyone to take another dose of medicine if you would like. We have mushrooms and joints available.

HALLEL: PRAISE

כל העולם כלו
גשר צר מאד
והעקר לא לפחד כלל

Kol ha'olam kulo
Gesher tzar me'od
Veha'ikar lo lifached k'lal.

The whole world
Is a very narrow bridge
and the main thing is to
have no fear at all

NIRTZAH: BE HERE NOW

"The series of events that leads to Sinai begins in Egypt: the word cannot be spoken within us until the mind is freed from its own constrictions."

- Rabbi Arthur Greene

This Haggadah was developed with thanks to the wisdom, words, and leadership of:

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- Rabbi Rachel Barenblat - **The Velveteen Rabbi's Haggadah for Pesach**
- **The Four Cups of Consciousness: A Shefa Haggadah Companion**

Psychedelic Seder

THANK YOU

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