

# **Machar's 2021 Humanistic Passover Seder**

סדר

# The Seder – A Call to Order

**Welcome / *B'rukhim Ha-Ba'im* / בְּרוּכִים הַבָּאִים**

**הִנֵּה מַה-טוֹב וּמַה נָּעִים שֶׁבֶת עַמִּים גַּם-יַחַד.**

*Hinei ma-tov u-ma na'im shevet amim gam yachad.*

See how good it is when peoples sit together.

*(Adapted from Psalm 133)*

# ***Seder* Means "Order" – Our Order Today**

*Kadesh v'Neirot*

Setting Aside the Day and Candles

*Mah Nishtanah*

The Four Questions (and a New One)

*Yachatz*

Break the Middle Matzah

*Maggid*

Tell the Story

*Arba T'shuvot*

Answer the Challenges

*Kos ha-Zikaron*

The Cup of Memory

*Kos ha-Tikvah*

The Cup of Hope

*Nirtzah*

Conclusion

## Kadesh v'Neirot

Setting Aside the Day and Candles

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת הָאוֹר בְּעוֹלָם  
נְבָרֵךְ אֶת הָאוֹר בְּאָדָם  
נְבָרֵךְ אֶת הָאוֹר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

*N'varekh et ha-or ba-olam,  
N'varekh et ha-or ba-adam,  
N'varekh et ha-or shel yom tov.*

Let us bless the light in the world,  
Let us bless the light in humanity,  
Let us bless the light of the holiday.

## Kadesh v'Neirot

Setting Aside the Day and Candles

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת יוֹצְרֵי פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

*N'varekh et yotzrei p'ri ha-gafen.*

Let us bless those who create the fruit of the vine.

# מָה נִשְׁתַּנָּה – *Mah Nishtanah*

The Four Questions (and a New One), or, Disorder

# *Mah Nishtanah* – The Four Questions

מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הלַיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?

*Mah nishtanah ha-lailah ha-zeh mi-kol ha-leilot?*

שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמֶצֶה, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה – כָּלוּ מֶצֶה.

*She-b'khol ha-leilot anu okhlin chametz u-matzah, ha-lailah ha-zeh – kulo matzah.*

שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שָׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה – מָרֹר.

*She-b'khol ha-leilot anu okhlin sh'ar y'rakot, ha-lailah ha-zeh – maror.*

שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מִטְבִּילִין אֶפִּילוּ פַּעַם אַחַת – הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים.

*She-b'khol ha-leilot ein anu matbilin afilu pa'am echat, ha-lailah ha-zeh sh'tei f'amim.*

שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין – הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלָנוּ מְסֻבִּין.

*She-b'khol ha-leilot anu okhlin bein yoshvin u-vein m'subin, ha-lailah ha-zeh kulanu m'subin.*



# ***Mah Nishtanah* – The Four Questions**

What makes this night different from all other nights?

1. On all other nights we eat either leavened bread or matzah – tonight, it's all matzah.
2. On all other nights we eat any vegetable – tonight, there is bitter herb.
3. On all other nights we don't dip even once – tonight, twice.
4. On all other nights we eat either sitting up or reclining – tonight, we are all reclining.

## ***Mah Nishtanah – a New Question***

שְׁבֹכָל פִּסְחִים אָנוּ יוֹשְׁבֵי פָנִים אֶל  
פָּנִים, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כִּלְנוּ מְרוּחָקִין.

*She-b'khol Pesachim anu yoshvin  
panim el panim, ha-lailah ha-zeh  
kulanu m'ruchakin.*

On every other Passover, we sit face-to-face – tonight, we are  
all forced to be distant.

# ***Mah Nishtanah* – Your Questions, or, No One Said There Would Be Homework!**

(There still isn't homework, but there's work to do, and you're probably at *someone's* home!)

In small groups, randomly assigned, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves to one another (if you don't already know one another) and share the questions that are nagging at you this Passover. Zoom will bring us all back together on its own.

## **Yachatz**

Breaking the Middle Matzah

We break the middle matzah and set it aside – traditionally for the *afikomen*, the Seder's final morsel of food.

The other half of the matzah remains between the other two.

Today, it reflects our brokenness, hidden within what appears to be whole.

# מַגִּיד – Maggid

Telling the Story

# The Bread of Affliction

הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיָּא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהָתָנָא.  
כָּל דְּכַפִּין יֵיתִי וְיֵיכֹל, כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ יֵיתִי וְיִפְסַח.

*Ha lakhma anya di akhalu avahatana.*

*Kol di-khfin, yeitei v'yeikhol. Kol di-tzrich, yeitei v'yifsach.*

This is the bread of affliction, which Jewish forebears ate.

All who are hungry – let them come and eat.

All who need to – let them come and celebrate Passover.

*This is the bread of brokenness.*

# The Traditional Story

The tale of the Jewish people's quest for freedom from Egyptian bondage was written so long ago that no one knows how much is fact. But like all good stories, its moral lessons are valid and important.

According to the story, the Israelites – a single family – traveled to Egypt in a time of famine, settled, and prospered.

Their prosperity, we are told, threatened the Egyptians, and the Israelites were enslaved.

After 400 years, a man arose among them, his life saved in childhood by midwives, Shifrah and Pu'ah, and his sister, Miriam.

Moses, we read, grew up in luxury among the Egyptians, and was cast out for an act of conscience.

# The Traditional Story

Moses, we read, returned to Egypt and demanded the release of the Israelites from slavery. His efforts eventually succeeded.

At our Seder, we celebrate the story of Moses and of the flight from freedom to slavery. We celebrate the struggle of all people to be free. This story has encouraged Jews and non-Jews alike in times of persecution and hardship.

The story of the Exodus was a particular inspiration to Americans of African descent, brought to America as slaves.

When they sang “Go Down Moses,” they thought of their own leaders and their own struggle for freedom.

Mindful of how much is still to be done, we now sing that song.



# “Go Down Moses”

When Israel was in Egypt land, Let my people go!  
Oppressed so hard they could not stand, let my people go!

(Chorus:)

Go down Moses, way down in Egypt land,  
Tell old Pharaoh, to let my people go.

When Moses took them from their toil, let my people go!  
He led them all to freedom's soil, let my people go!

(Chorus)

*(traditional)*

# The Ten Plagues

(Pour a second cup of wine or grape juice if you have them)

In the Torah's story of Moses and the Exodus, it describes ten plagues that forced Egypt to its knees. We recognize the cost to ordinary people such plagues would impose were they to occur all to one nation.

The ancient rabbi, Hillel, said that saving one life is like saving the entire world. Losing one life is like losing the entire world, and our humanistic values demand that we realize that we should not rejoice in human suffering – we should instead seek to end it.

# The Ten Plagues

In recognition of our obligation to lessen suffering, we lessen our enjoyment by diminishing our cups once for each of the ten plagues.

Blood	<i>Dam</i>	דָּם	Boils	<i>Sh'chin</i>	שְׁחִין
Frogs	<i>Ts'fardeia</i>	צְפַרְדֵּי	Hail and fire	<i>Barad</i>	בָּרָד
Gnats	<i>Kinim</i>	כְּנִים	Locusts	<i>Arbeh</i>	אַרְבֵּה
Beasts	<i>Arov</i>	עֲרוֹב	Darkness	<i>Choshekh</i>	חֹשֶׁךְ
Cattle disease	<i>Dever</i>	דָּבָר	Death of the first-born	<i>Makkat B'khorot</i>	מַכַּת הַבְּכוֹרוֹת

# The Ten Plagues

More homework!

Spend a few minutes – again in a randomly-assigned group – sharing what you think might be our modern plagues – the brokenness of our world. There are two ground rules:

- 1) *individual people are not plagues*, no matter how bad you might think they are;
- 2) ask whether each plague affects the powerful and the powerless alike, or affects mainly the powerless and disadvantaged.

Zoom will automatically bring us back together after a few minutes.

# The Ten Plagues

Having diminished our cups in recognition of freedom brought from suffering, we dedicate this second cup of wine to our hopes for peace and freedom, and to our recognition that we have a mutual obligation to repair our broken world.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת יוֹצְרֵי פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

*N'varekh et yotzrei p'ri ha-gafen.*

Let us bless those who create the fruit of the vine.

# Answer the Challenges

*Why is this night different?*

# Lo Dayeinu – It's Not Enough

Long ago our people learned  
Not even food that they had earned  
Could satisfy their dignity  
If they weren't free.

[Chorus:]

*Lo dayenu, lo dayenu,  
Lo dayenu, dayenu dayenu dayenu*

*(Adapted from the traditional song by Rabbi  
Daniel Friedman)*

So they roamed for many years  
With thirst and hunger, pain and  
tears  
They sought a land of liberty  
Where all are free.

(Chorus)

The moral of this story's clear  
People cannot thrive in fear  
Justice is security  
All must be free.

(Chorus)

# ***Pesach, Matzah, and Maror***

“Rabban Gamliel used to say, someone who has not mentioned these three things on Passover has not fulfilled his obligation; these are: *Pesach* (the Passover sacrifice), matzah (unleavened bread), and *maror* (bitter herb).”

Notice: he said “mention,” not “have” or “eat.”

Often on the Seder plate is the *zroa*, a shankbone, which is used to remember the Passover sacrifice that, in ancient days, was the central part of Passover’s celebrations – but one we no longer practice.

There is often matzah as a reminder of slavery, affliction, haste, and brokenness.

And there is often *maror* as a reminder of the bitterness of slavery.



# ***Pesach, Matzah, and Maror***

We eat matzah because it's just enough: flour and water, and nothing more – not even time to rise.

We eat matzah to remind us that we have known oppression – we must regard ourselves as though we ourselves came out of slavery – and that we are bound to those who are now oppressed.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת הַמוֹצִיִּים לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

*N'varekh et ha-motzi'im lechem min ha-aretz.*

Let us bless those who bring forth bread from the earth.

נְשַׂמֵּחַ כִּי נִגַעְנוּ לְזִמַּן אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.

*N'sameach ki naganu lizman akhilat matzah.*

Let us rejoice, for we have reached the time for eating matzah.

# *Pesach, Matzah, and Maror*

Why *maror*, bitter herb? Because its bitter taste reminds us of the bitterness of slavery. It reminds us: struggle is better than the complacent acceptance of injustice.

Why *maror*? Because it was eaten in ancient agricultural festivals, reminding us of the contrast of bitter and sweet.

(If you have it, take some *maror* and combine it with *charoset*.)

נְשִׂמַח כִּי נִגְעַנּוּ לְזִמַּן אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר.

*N'sameach ki naganu lizman akhilat maror.*

Let us rejoice, for we have reached the time for eating bitter herbs.

# ***Pesach, Matzah, and Maror***

It is said that Rabbi Hillel first ate the *korech*, a layering of matzah, *maror*, and *charoset*. Why *charoset*? Because its thick, sticky quality resembles the mortar used to stick bricks together, reminding us of the toil associated with slavery. And because, with the end of the *korban pesach*, the Passover sacrifice, another food was needed to commemorate Passover.

*Korech* means binder. By binding these three foods together, we commemorate the bittersweet combination of oppression, freedom, and the obligation to help heal ours and the world's brokenness.

(If you have matzah, *charoset*, and *maror*, combine them and eat the *korech*.)

# ***Pesach, Matzah, and Maror***

What else is on the Seder plate?

This year, it might not be very much!

Most often we find *karpas*, a green vegetable usually eaten at the very start of the Seder, before the Four Questions. We usually also find the *beitzah*, an egg, the second of two cooked items that were part of rabbinic tradition for the Seder's meal.

Many have the *tappuz*, an orange, a modern tradition that symbolizes inclusion and rejection of homophobia, transphobia, and other biases and systems of oppression.

Some may use a beet instead of a shankbone. Some may include olives or tomatoes or potatoes to symbolize specific quests for justice.

# ***Pesach, Matzah, and Maror***

This year – and every year – the important thing to remember is: whatever you are able to bring is enough.

No Seder has ever been perfect, and every Passover has had its own brokenness.

# The Cup of Memory

(If available, pour a third cup of wine.)

During this festival of life and of brokenness, we remember the victims of the Nazi Holocaust, resolving that their memories shall not be forgotten. We remember the victims of chattel slavery in our own country, and the persecution of all who suffered merely for who they were.

We remember that America's fears are the same as ever, and lift this cup to acknowledge that we cannot give in to fear.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת יוֹצְרֵי פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

*N'varekh et yotzrei p'ri ha-gafen.*

Let us bless those who create the fruit of the vine.

# The Cup of Hope

It is a long tradition at the Seder to include a cup of wine for Elijah, a symbol of hope for the future – and traditionally, of an expectation of a messianic redemption. It has long been customary to open a door for Elijah's – and a better age's – entrance.

A newer tradition is to include another cup on the table, filled with water. This is called Miriam's Cup, named for Moses's sister in the Torah's story of the Exodus, who finds water for the Israelites in the wilderness.

By remembering the stories of Elijah and Miriam together, we remember the hope of prior generations, and the role of women in our story. And we end with a song rooted in hope for the future and joy for the ,ixe

# The Cup of Hope

*Eliyahu ha-navi, Eliyahu ha-Tishbi,  
Eliyahu ha-Gil'adi.*

*Miriam ha-n'vi'ah, ha-achot ha-  
ahuvah.*

*Ba-tupim u-vim'cholot, tzahalal al  
ha-tovot.*

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

Miriam the prophetess, the beloved sister. With drums and dances she rejoiced.

(First verse traditional; second verse by Rabbi Jeffrey Falick)

אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַנְּבִיאַ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַתְּשֻׁבִי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
הַגִּלְעָדִי.

מְרִיָם הַנְּבִיאָה, הָאָחוֹת הָאֲהוּבָה,  
בַּתֻּפִּים וּבַמְּחֹלֹת, צָהָלָה עַל הַטּוֹבוֹת.



**נִרְצָה – *Nirtzah***

It is desirable.

# ***Nirtzah***

Nirtzah means “it is desirable” or “it is acceptable.” It is traditional to end the Seder with the statement that what has come before is acceptable.

Yet Seders traditionally end with “Next year in Jerusalem,” suggesting that in face, nothing that went before is acceptable.

We have not done all that is customary in the Seder. As in almost all years past, what has come before is not truly, fully acceptable. As in almost all years past, the Seder is, as we are, at least a little broken.

This year, as in all years, there’s more to do. And so long as there is more to do, there is hope.

# ***Nirtzah***

*Od yavo shalom aleinu*

*Od yavo shalom aleinu*

*Od yavo shalom aleinu*

*Ve-al kulam*

Peace will yet be upon us  
and the whole world.

Peace upon us and the  
whole world.

*Salaam*

*Aleinu ve-al kol ha-olam*

*Salaam, salaam*

*(Mosh Ben Ari)*

# Sources and Use Suggestions

This PowerPoint-based *Haggadah* was created in 2020 and revised in 2021 by Rabbi Jeremy Kridel for Machar, the Washington Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism. Much of the content was drawn from prior Machar *Haggadot* used by Machar in the past. Sources outside of Machar are identified whenever possible.

This presentation was created for use via Zoom or other web-based conferencing system that permits sharing of slides or other presentation materials, and this is reflected in several places where Zoom breakout rooms are mentioned.

Rather than have the leader of the Seder recite every slide, participation is encouraged! Machar's use involved having several volunteer readers, with each reader reading a single slide aloud for the participants. In order to avoid Hebrew knowledge difficulties, generally, the leader should reserve slides with Hebrew for themselves or for community members with established Hebrew knowledge.