

Pass Over to Freedom

A Spiritual Journey



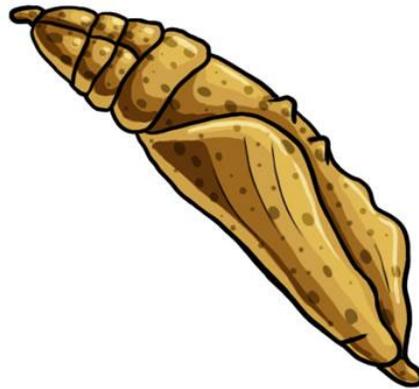
Written and arranged by
Dr. David Sanders

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Kabbalah
Experience

The progression from slavery to freedom comes from the “Four Languages of Freedom” in Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh’s Kabbalah text *Sod Adonay Lee-ray-av*. The material is © to Dr. David Sanders and can be shared with permission from the author. The goblets featured throughout the Haggadah are custom made by Bryan Gold <https://www.bgoldglass.com>. Thanks to Bonnie Houghton and Rita Sanders for invaluable help with the content and design of prior editions of this Haggadah.



**“How does one
become a butterfly?”
she asked pensively.
“You must want to fly so much
that you are willing to give up
being a caterpillar.”**

Trina Paulus, Hope for the Flowers

What you will need for this Seder:

Participants wanting to reflect on and address (silently or by sharing) their relationship with the past--what best serves and what does not serve them to be freer in their lives.

Symbolic foods and libations (some traditional, some new) and the freedom to innovate your own.

Your own flavor and flair: poetry, songs, meditations, games, media or any other activities you want to add.

The Seder plate serves as the centerpiece with its designated symbolic foods. We will be shaking things up by modifying the Seder “plate” to symbolize the spiritual work of moving from slavery (past) to freedom (the present). Participants reflect on their thoughts and feelings on the 5 common ways we relate to and get stuck in the past.

Comforts

Habits

Identities

Resentments

Procrastinations

Pass Over Seder Plate

In the center of your table, designate an area (plate, tray or surface) for the symbolic foods or items which will be used for each of the five obstacles to lining in the present moment.

If you have a whole *Matzah* for each participant that is ideal, if not people can share. For the Habits section, you will also need a bowl of salt water for dipping. Recipes for *Charoset* mixture (nut or nut-free) can be found on the web.

Habits

Hardboiled egg
root vegetable

Procrastination

Matzah

Resentments

Horseradish
Bitters (food or smell)

Comforts

Nut, apple or date mixture

Identity

Artichoke, onion, rose
(Matryoshka dolls)

All Read:

Mitz-ra-yim is Hebrew
for Egypt. Mitz-ra-yim
as a name connotes a
place of narrowness or
limitation. Mitz-ra-yim is
not merely a geographical
location, it reflects a state
of mind and emotion.
To be in your personal
Mitz-ra-yim means to
be in narrowness-
the experience of
what constrains
& constricts

you.

The

phrase

“leaving

Egypt”

appears

50 times

in the Bible

to suggest there are

(at least) “50 ways to leave”

and so many more ways to stay stuck.

“Personalize your experience to become aware of the constrictions and limitations you place upon yourself.”

Reader 1: Passover Seder is a time for reflection about our relationship to the present through deepening our awareness of what binds, limits and chains us to the past. The main symbol of Passover is *Matzah*—the thin “bread” which is unleavened and is eaten during the Seder and for the duration of Passover. In the narrative of the exodus from Egypt, the clock strikes 12 and the Egyptians chase out the Hebrew slaves, not affording them enough time to finish baking bread for their journey.

Reader 2: The Message is clear even when it is delivered by someone else: When you need to “*get out*” don’t procrastinate. There is comfort in habitual ways of feeling, thinking or acting. There can be fear or doubt associated with contemplating change. These are obstacles that need to be overcome.

Reader 3: Creativity Offers us an opportunity to move beyond the boundaries and limitations of continuing the Seder the “way it has always been done” and to innovate. What you will find in this approach to the Seder is our particular take. By implication, it is also an invitation for you to design a Seder that best fits your needs, sensibilities and circumstances.

Honor tradition and welcome innovation

David Kaetz in *Making Connections* explains the usefulness of tradition and how it transforms:

Reader 1: If wisdom is embedded in a tradition, it has a better chance of travelling safely through the centuries. For this to work the wisdom must be packed in things that do not degrade with time, things that can be unpacked at every station—things like symbols, myths, stories. These are things that no matter how often you unpack them will travel onward for another generation to unpack, and unpack differently. Sometimes the wisdom may emerge brilliant and obvious, sometime obscure and esoteric. But if the tradition continues, the wisdom will keep travelling, in the hope that, at another station in the flow of time, another generation will find it and embody it once more.

Reader 2: We could say that a wisdom tradition, such as the Passover Seder, travelling thousands of years, is packed in one of the least degradable items of all time: Matzah! Let's begin though to unpack it—differently.

Reflect and how these obstacles are a narrow place for you

5 Obstacles of the Past	Symbolic Food & Reflection
<p>Procrastination: <i>Crastin</i> (Greek) means “tomorrow.” Why get it done today when there’s tomorrow?</p>	<p><i>The difference between Matzah and leavened bread is time. Procrastinating leads to a bloated reality and you become a “gluten” for punishment.</i></p>
<p>Habits: <i>Habitus</i> (Latin) means appearance. Morphed from clothing or domicile to the behavior one “wears.”</p>	<p><i>A hard-boiled egg, or another cooked root vegetable remind us of habits that are hard to break. If you are unaware of your habits ask people close to you.</i></p>
<p>Resentments: <i>Resentir</i> (Old French) means to “feel again.”</p>	<p><i>Maror is bitter herbs connecting us to the poison of holding onto resentment. We want to remember, lest we not learn the lesson, but resentments keep us chained to the past.</i></p>
<p>Comforts: <i>Forfor</i> (Old English) meaning alleviation of anxiety- as in not facing our fears.</p>	<p><i>The sweet Charoset mixture (mortar) is a contrast to bitter herbs. Comfort food brings awareness of playing it safe and exploring the uncomfortable.</i></p>
<p>Identity: <i>Idem</i> (Latin) means sameness. We identify to belong, affixing a label instead of being more open and fluid.</p>	<p><i>Peeling away the layers of an onion, artichoke or rose, enhances our awareness of the myriad of masks we inhabit and who we are at our essence.</i></p>

For more in-depth explanation of the **5 relationships to the past** see page 41

With these five relationships to the past in mind, create your own list of questions to consider?

Suggested sample questions to consider:

How **Does** this Seder experience add to my awareness of the hold of the past on me?

How **Can** this Seder experience begin my process of liberation from that which enslaves, constricts and constrains me?

How **Will** this Seder make a difference for my life and the life of others?

Share questions that intrigue you?

Before We Embark on our personal inner Passover journey, we are cognizant that there are many who struggle to be physically free from slavery. We bring them now to our awareness. The names below belong to young women abducted in Nigeria in 2014 and 2018 who either remain in captivity or are still captive to their trauma.

All stand and read each name aloud:

Abigail, Aisha, Aishatu, **Amina**, Asabe, **Awa**, Awagana, Bintu, **Blessing**, Christiana, **Christy**, Comfort, **Confort**, Deborah, **Docas**, Eli, **Esther**, Falmata, Falta, Fati, **Fatima**, Fatsuma, Febi, **Filo**, Gloria, **Glory**, Godiya, **Grace**, Habiba, Hadiza, Hafsah, Hajara, **Halima**, Hamsatu, **Hana**, Hanata, **Hanatu**, Hasana, **Hauwa**, Helen, **Ihyi**, Jinkai, **Juliana**, Jummai, **Kabu**, Karima, Kauna, Khadija, **Kume**, Kummai, **Kwadugu**, Kwanta, **Ladi**, Laraba, **Leah**, **Liyatu**, Lugwa, **Lydia**, Maifa, **Maimuna**, Mairama, **Margret**, Mary, **Marya**, **Maryamu**, Monica, **Muli**, Muwa, **Mwa**, Naomi, **Nguba**, Palmata, **Patiant**, Pindar, **Rabi**, **Racheal**, Rahab, **Rahila**, Rakiya, **Rebeca**, Rejoice, **Rhoda**, Rifkatu, **Ruth**, Safiya, Salamuta, **Salomi**, Saratu, **Saraya**, Sicker, **Serah**, Solomi, **Suzana**, Tabitha, **Talata**, Walida, Yakurah, Yana, **Yanke**, Yayi, Zainab, **Zara**.

And now let us begin...

Two Readers (Mom and Jack):

Mom: *The mouse is on the other side of this wall.*

Jack: *What other side?*

Mom: *Jack, there's two sides to everything.*

Jack: *Not on an octagon.*

Mom: *Yeh, but an octagon has eight sides.*

Jack: *But a wall like this, okay, a wall like this, see?*

Mom: *We're on the inside and the mouse is on the outside.*

Jack: *In outer space?*

Mom: *No in this world. It's much closer than outer space.*

Jack: *I can't see the outside-side.*

From the film **Room**



How many sides are there to freedom?

Reader 1: In the film *Room*, a young woman and her son are held captive by a predatory man. With no hope of escape the woman decides it is better to die than to stay and devises a plan for escape. We learn in the opening scenes of the film that the boy has never been outside the confines of ROOM—this is what can be called his “pocket-universe,” the only reality he has ever known. What he cannot see he cannot even imagine.

Reader 2: We live in pocket universes. The vastness of a billion galaxies highlights that our corner of the universe is a very small pocket indeed. On a personal level, each of us constructs rooms in which the comfort of walls steady and prop us up with a sense of privacy and security. Can we expand our perspective? Indeed, we must if we are to grow.

Reader 3: Rooms and walls also limit us; they serve as places to hide, to be captive to perceived incapacities or to block us from exploring possibilities. There comes a time when each of us will experience those walls as a deterrent to growth, as an impediment to engaging with others or a stumbling block to a more realized self.

Reader 4: Is this a time to put a crack in the wall to see beyond the confines of our pocket universes? Can we make room to expand the possibilities of our life?

THERE IS A
CRACK IN
EVERYTHING.
THAT'S HOW
THE LIGHT
GETS IN.

The birds they sang at the break
of day, start again, I heard them say.
Don't dwell on what has passed away
or what is yet to be. Yeah, the wars they
will be fought again, the holy dove she will be
caught again, bought and sold and bought again,
the dove is never free. Ring the bells that still can ring,
forget your perfect offering there is a crack in everything
that's how the light gets in. 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

A five-stage process of liberating oneself from being stuck in the past

Reader 1: With any change considered—you must first contemplate the change (**Reflect**) before taking steps to change (**Resolve**). The change may appear sudden, but inevitably there have been precursors regarding the change.

Reader 2: Once you are determined to change you may falter, bargain with yourself or others, reconsider, feel the obstacles are too great. How many people with addictions, or a personal goal such as exercise, start down a path only to find their resolve shaken and retreat back to past attitudes and behaviors? The adage, “one day at a time” reflects the continuing effort (**Resolve**) to maintain the commitment to change.

Reader 3: The third stage of the process is to sense the change as more permanent--a relinquishing of the past (**Release**). We speak of a “new lease on life” to represent a firm awareness that you will never return to the old pattern. What remains is the need to adopt a new way of being, a new identity.

Reader 4: The next two stages are about shifting one’s identity—making use of lessons from the past to transform one’s story—to take on new ways of being (**Reveal**). In the final stage, there is a realization that any and all identifications are just ways to navigate our human existence—and we transcend them all through our awareness (**Realize**).

Take a few moments to meditate on these stages

Reflect to **Resolve** to **Release** to **Reveal** to **Realize**

Drinking five cups of wine, or another beverage of choice, symbolizes an inner “call and response” to liberate ourselves from the confines of our personal enslavement.

CUP ONE [REFLECT] You consider and think that change is possible (perhaps for the first time).

CUP TWO [RESOLVE] You begin to change—whether that means externally leaving something (or someone) or shifting internally.

CUP THREE [RELEASE] You release yourself—you know you will never to return as you fully commit to a new present, redeemed from narrowness; procrastinations, habits, comforts, resentments or identities.

CUP FOUR [REVEAL] You know who you are not—but who are you? To reveal who you are now, is to consider who you are transforming into—how the changes you are making express a more authentic you.

CUP FIVE [REALIZE] Your promise of realization is to not be confined to your newly acquired new identity. Beyond transforming is transcending: beyond any confining sense of separateness or new (even more preferred identity).

[For an in-depth (explanation of the 5 stages of change see page 42-43)]

Reflecting and Imagining: First Stage - Cup

Fill your cups with wine or another beverage, lift your cup high and before drinking, say in unison:

May this celebratory drink be for happiness, freedom, meaning and insight. May our hearts open to our family and friends and to all who gather tonight. Let this celebration connect us with all who are seeking respite and who are not yet free.

Reader: In order to start a process of liberation, an alternate way of being is contemplated or a new identity is imagined. We experience a glimpse of what is possible, what potential is not being realized, what is holding us back? Call into focus what outside-side you want to experience...to be free.



Reflect

*The caged bird sings
with fearful trill
of the things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom*

Maya Angelou



Breaking Matzah

Reader 1: Before proceeding to the next stage of liberation (second cup) take the Matzah in your hands and apply pressure to it until it breaks. The Hebrew word for breaking is *Ya-chatz*-related to the Hebrew word *La-chatz*, which means pressure. You will be eating both “halves” of the Matzah so keep them close by.

All Read:

S o m e t i m e s o n l y w h e n t h e
p r e s s u r e e a s e s i t b e c o m e s
a p p a r e n t t h a t y o u ' r e s t u c k
S o m e t i m e s i t r e q u i r e s t h e
s p i r i t t o b e t o t a l l y b r o k e n
a n d w h e n i t s n a p s i t l e a d s t o
a t i p p i n g p o i n t a n d c h a n g e
i n e v i t a b l y b e g i n s t o o c c u r

Reflect on: What do I need a break from? What do I need for a break through?

Eating Matzah

Reader 1: The leaving happened so fast. The slaves left in such a hurry that there was no time to let the bread rise. And so, matzah.

Reader 2: Matzah: Why do we eat it? To taste our resolve to be free, to recognize that sometimes you can't wait. Sometimes you have to let go even if you aren't completely ready. Sometimes you can only let go when you are not ready. No procrastination. No hesitation. No doubt.

Take the smaller piece of the Matzah you broke and say together before eating it: **It all starts with a first step.**

[The larger piece of the broken Matzah will be used later in the Seder to be eaten with *Charoset* for dessert]

Reader 3: Matzah is a symbol of procrastination—give consideration about your own attitude and behavior toward getting things done or making changes which are overdue.

Reader 4: What have you ignored on your “to do” list: a deadline passed, a neglected task, an overdue phone call, an unmade apology, a need for letting go or ending a relationship or an unfulfilled commitment.

Option: Share with others the uncomfortable friction procrastination generates for you and give an example of what action you will take to be more present.

Resolving and Committing: Second Stage -Cup

Refill your cup with wine or another beverage, lift your cup high and say together with others before drinking:

May this celebratory drink be for happiness, freedom, meaning and insight. May our hearts open to our family and friends and to all who gather tonight. Let this celebration connect us with all who are resolved--determined and committed to be fully free.

Reader 1: The second stage of freedom is represented by the image of crossing the border, an escape out of Mitz-ra-yim, first steps to freedom. We recognize that there are many obstacles to overcome and challenges to stay the course. There always is the pull of inertia, fear or doubt, possible regret, the comfort of habit and your identity.

Reader 2: Martin Luther King said: *Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase.*



Resolve

The Inner Ten Plagues

Reader: In resolving to change your relationship to the past--conceptualize the ten plagues from the vantage point of those inner qualities that can block your forward movement. You can rename the plagues your “inner Pharaoh” representing the constricting of your heart, the hardening of your arteries. Consider how these plagues act as plaque blocking the free flow of change.

A tradition is to remove drops of wine (or other beverage) with your finger (or spoon) as you call out one of the plagues

Blood (dam)	Can I tolerate my “disloyalty”?
Frogs (tzfar-day-ah)	Can I stop jumping around and get focused?
Lice (key-nim)	Am I getting lost in the details?
Wild Beasts (ah-rove)	Am I being impetuous?
Cattle Plague (deh-ver)	Can I overcome my apathy?
Boils (sh’chin)	Can I let go of guilt or shame?
Hail (ba-rad)	Is it just more comfortable to stay put?
Locust (ar-beh)	Why try again since I have failed before?
Darkness (cho-shech)	Will my pessimism overwhelm me?
Death of first born (ma-kat be-cho-rote)	What needs to die for me to be truly alive?

Freely discuss and add your own corollaries between outer and inner plagues

Hardened Habits

To symbolize hardened state of habits (yet still somewhat pliable) take a hard-boiled egg, boiled potato or cooked root vegetable in hand. The tradition of dipping your chosen food in salt water represents tears one has stored up from staying stuck---the stagnation of sitting water.

Before eating your now salty food, reflect silently on the emotions trapped or repressed in you.

After eating we continue with:

Reader 1: This is what respite and reflection offers: A chance to let ourselves feel the effects of oppression and constriction; to let the numbness thaw and to feel our pain and the pain of others regarding our enslavement to habits that keep us stuck in the past.

Reader 2: There are habits that don't belong to us as Ralph Abernathy is quoted as saying: *Former slaves still scratch where they don't itch, and laugh when they aren't tickled.* Habits or patterns of behavior come from our cultures, communities and families. We "do it" this way because...

Reader 3: While some habits are useful--to be habituated is to not be open to new ways of feeling, thinking, seeing or behaving. If you are unaware of your habits, observe yourself or ask people close to you about your habits.

Releasing the Past: Third Stage-Cup

Reader 1: In every journey to freedom we can feel unable to change or, if we started to change, the urge to turn back. Relapse is common because what is familiar is comfortable even if it is not wanted or is even intolerable.

Reader 2: For seven days, the slaves put one foot in front of the other. For seven days, they carried the fresh wounds and recent memories of their slavery. Each day, we imagine, them looking over their shoulders. Were they actually free? They left Mitz-ra-yim behind, but the baggage of the past slavery (identity) does not “fly free.” In the exodus story the moment of truth comes at the water’s edge, with the Egyptian charioteers at their heels and a giant sea blocking any possibility of moving forward.

Reader 3: Courage is acting despite fear—it is knowing full well that there is only one way “out”—forward. So, they waded into the sea and once the waters reached their nostrils the sea split. The opening often reveals itself only after we take the risk, after we accept that we must change and commit fully to never turning back.

Silently contemplate the following:

I will never return. I accept the risks of change, acknowledge my discomfort and solidly commit to move forward.

Read (Together)

*I was born in chains but I
was taken out of Egypt I
was bound to a burden but
the burden it was raised.
I fled to the edge of a
mighty sea of sorrow
pursued by the riders of
a cruel and dark regime.
The waters parted and
my soul crossed over
out of Egypt out of
Pharaoh's dream.
Leonard Cohen
Born in Chains*

We lift the Third Cup high and say together:

May this celebratory drink be for happiness, freedom, meaning and insight. May our hearts open to our family and friends and to all who gather tonight. Let this celebration connect us with all who are seeking respite and who are not yet free.

Reader: Moments of truth when we have to courageously enter the new and what can even appear as impassable or impossible. We have no idea what is on the other side. We enter the sea when we don't know if it will split open. We do know that if we insist, persist (or desist) we will get to new perception and perspective.

As you drink, imagine standing on the other side—on the opposite bank of the water and know that the past is no longer exerting a magnetic pull or constraining the creation of the new you!



Release

Experiencing Bitterness

All: Take a piece of the *Maror* (horseradish, romaine lettuce or other alternative bitter food or smell).

All say: *Maror: Why do we eat it?* We intend with *Maror* to fully reveal to ourselves the cost of remaining bitter, of not forgiving those who cause(d) us pain or hurt us. We may also feel the bitterness of our own negativity for not releasing ourselves sooner from resentment.

Reader 1: We could also be bitter at the circumstances or the person or persons who hurt us, kept us constricted or enslaved. During the third stage, we choose to release ourselves and others from the past—to recognize that now is the time to take in the lessons of the past, let go of resentments and forgive them.

Reader 2: We feel the bitterness as we eat or smell the *Maror* to clear out the past (and our sinus passages) and not bypass our emotions as we spiritually ascend in awareness.

Reflection: (As you eat or smell the Maror) *I choose not to forget resentments and hurts, but I still need to forgive so that the past will not continue to exert an undue influence on me.*

Letting Stories Go
(a transformed 'Negro' spiritual)

Go down Moses, way down in Egypt's land
Tell inner Pharaoh, let my stories go.

When we had our first reprieve.
Freedom we could not conceive.
We allowed ourselves to grieve.
Feeling powerless we did not leave

Go down Moses, way down in Egypt's land
Tell inner Pharaoh, let my stories go

The clock struck 12, and we did leave
Crossing the border of make-believe
Freedom we finally could achieve
Past chains we no longer perceive

Go down Moses, way down in Egypt's land
Tell inner Pharaoh, let my stories go

Let stories go which only deceive
Accepting reality over being naïve
Time that you can never retrieve
To the present you now cleave

Go down Moses, way down in Egypt's land
Tell inner Pharaoh, let my stories go

We have meditated on and enacted the first three stages toward liberation

A story before we break for dinner:

Reader 1: A hiker, having tarried too long, realizes she needs to head down the mountain despite the darkening of the sky. Nightfall overwhelms her sight and yet she has to get off the mountain. Cautiously, she measures her steps to a point of near exhaustion when she trips, stumbles, losing her footing and tumbles. While falling, she desperately grasps hoping to find a handhold, when, after what seems an eternity, her hands grab hold; a branch; a lifesaving branch from which she dangles.

Reader 2: But how long can she hold on, how long can her arms hold out till she can see if it is safe to move one way or another? Ah, the first lightening of the sky reveals her predicament. She is but a few inches from the ground, she is dangling from a tree at the base of the mountain.

Let us now partake of the festive meal followed by a blessing of gratitude!

A Story to Resume the Journey:

Reader 1: An elder monk and his young disciple are on a journey. They come to the bank of the river where they encounter a young woman who needs to get across. She is afraid to attempt this by herself. To the chagrin of the younger monk, the elder monk lifts her up and carries her across the river. Once across, he lets the woman gently down and the two monks continue on their journey.

Reader 2: After several hours, the younger monk can contain himself no longer. “Master,” he asks: “Have we not taken a vow of chastity? Is it not forbidden for us to look upon a woman, let alone touch her? Yet you lifted her up, with her body against yours, and carried her across the river!” The elder monk turns to his disciple: “I put that woman down hours ago at the river--you my friend, you are still carrying her.”

Reader 3: Notice the stories you are still carrying. Who we are or we think we are is wrapped up in the stories we tell—about ourselves, about others, about our history and about our (projected) future. What will it take to lay those stories down at the river’s edge? What will it be like to let the waters wash over them, dissolve them and leave them behind?

Reinventing your “Self”: Fourth Stage -Cup

Reader 1: We choose a new identity. It is not enough to “not be” as in to “no longer a slave.” It is not enough to even identify as a “former” slave (or any other limiting identity). We recognize that in our choice to be free, we will not hold onto a borrowed identity—we choose to reveal our authentic identity.

Reader 2: The saying goes: “Slip into something uncomfortable, it’s the only way to change.”

All say:

We notice our comfort zone
the lack of room, the interior
of a darkened cocoon.

We notice what is holding
us back, things or qualities
we feel we lack.

With curiosity we see a crack
a ray of light, the possibility
of escape this very night.

We notice a new mold
strong and bold
beginning to unfold.

We lift our cups high a fourth time and say together:

May this celebratory drink be for happiness, freedom, meaning and insight. May our hearts open to our family and friends and to all who gather tonight. Let this celebration connect us with all people who are aware of the possibility of transformation and are willing to risk letting go of former selves that no longer serve them to reveal who they are, now.



Reveal

[Traditionally this represents the final cup. Kabbalah adds a fifth cup, a drink to symbolize a fifth dimension of freeing oneself—beyond the formation of a new, healthier, more authentic identity].

Tabling Comfort

Reader 1: In the exodus story the slaves transform. They are no longer a band of slaves, they become a united people, a free people, capable of living fully in the present and fulfilling a mission that is greater than themselves.

Reader 2: To celebrate this awakening to the new self it is time for dessert and a final taste of the broken matzah. [Traditionally, this piece of Matzah was hidden and the person goes to find it—this too symbolizes the need to re-discover our original state of wholeness].

Reader 3: We were whole to begin with, we then became fragmented and now, we “reconnect our selves back together.” We return to wholeness and to celebrate we eat dessert on the broken matzah.

All: Take *Matzah* and spread *Charoset* on it with the intention of acknowledging the challenges of becoming free. Meditate on your own “comfort zones” which may hold you back from embracing fully a new identity. In eating “comfort food” we paradoxically challenge ourselves to take risks inherent in modifying or letting go of former identities.

Realizing the Promise: Fifth Stage-Cup

Reader 1: Doors are a metaphor in the Passover story. For hundreds of years the door to freedom had been shut and that night the door to freedom opened to walk through. But it is easier to *get the slave out of Egypt than to get Egypt out of the slave.*

Reader 2: The people thought the final exit from slavery culminated in taking on a new identity. For the newly formed people they entered a blank landscape on which to paint their own future. Perhaps they became bewildered by their new-found freedoms. They faltered. They did not enter “the promised land.”

Reader 3: How do we transcend identity? We will always carry many identities but we can become aware that they are only that—a chosen identity, a mask we choose to serve us.

Reader 4: Tradition has a fifth cup “reserved” for Elijah the Prophet—for a future yet to come. Elijah, in his time, was a messenger conveying a message of hope. Elijah, it is said, is still waiting to deliver that hope, waiting for us to open the final door.

Reader 5: The crowning stage in the process of change, living in the present, is full awareness of the past stories that bind and constrict us. The story we are in, now, is always evolving, ever-changing and never static.

We raise the Fifth Cup and say together before drinking:

[If you have a cup of water to honor Miriam mix it in with your other drink].

May this celebratory drink be for happiness, freedom, meaning and insight. May our hearts open to our family and friends and to all who gather tonight. With curious minds and courageous hearts, we clear new paths and open new possibilities. May we fully see what is happening right now. May we fully choose our stories. May we continue to reflect on our resistances, resolve to move forward, redeem what we can and find release, enter into the serenity of relaxation and come to full realization.



Realize

Experiencing Freedom

You can enact the peeling away of identities through eating an artichoke or an onion or you could choose to remove rose petals or open a nesting (Matryoshka) doll.

Reader 1: We all have layers upon layers of identities. Removing one layer we expose another.

Reader 2: What is at the center of an onion, the center of the artichoke heart? Do we think there is something or is there no thing anymore?

Reader 3: Who are we at our core? When we peel away all the layers of identity is there yet one more “doll” which represents an essential me? Or do we create a false sense of wanting stability by having the tiniest doll be solid? What if the last doll also opened to emptiness-- to ever evolving, ever changing possibility.

One Little Kid

(Sung to “There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly”)

<p>One little kid She learned her religion She learned her religion Before she was five She was told her god Was the only one alive</p> <p>She swallowed the whole story Hook, line and sinker I don't know why I don't know why If she doesn't let go She's going to comply</p>	<p>One little kid She ate the apple She ate the apple Before she was eight She learned to hate people her parents did hate</p> <p>She swallowed the whole story Hook, line and sinker I don't know why I don't know why If she stays in that cage She ain't go'in to fly</p>
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One little kid, in an enlightened state. Sought liberation
her Seder plate Now she was nine and gazed in the mirror
her lady divine. She swallowed the sea. Connected the water
don't know why. I don't know why. She is living now. So
on high.

Dayenu [Enough]

Postscript: While we work on our personal process of change, we also need awareness of how oppressed others are, so much so that their circumstances don't allow even for contemplating freedom. The following are textual excerpts expressing our compassion for those who suffer indignation, poverty, illness, imprisonment and enslavement.

Reader 1: If the world hears the cries of the oppressed, but does not come to their aid ...it is Not Enough.

Reader 2: If we support our brothers and sisters to escape violence, but fail to offer them refuge ...it is Not Enough.

Reader 3: If our generosity supports the needs of today, but forsakes the needs of tomorrow ...it is Not Enough.

Reader 4: If we persevere until stability, peace and justice have been attained ... Dayenu!

Then, and only then, will it be Enough.

Being Begin
Begin Being
Being Begin
Begin Being

Appendix

Procrastination: The etymology of the word “crastin” comes from Greek and means “tomorrow.” The longer you push things off that need to be done the more bloated they become. This is the story of Matzah—dough that is baked before the fermenting process (bloating) occurs. We all procrastinate about something and so we reflect this Passover about getting things done, clearing out what is irrelevant and making space for new opportunities.

Habits: From the Latin meaning clothing or domicile--came to mean “repeated actions, often done without awareness.” Habituation means that the action is running you rather than you consciously deciding what may fit or work better in the present. We have personal, familial and communal habits—all which are to be examined and up for change.

Resentments: From old French meaning “to feel again” captures the sense of how unresolved resentments and hurts keep us tied to the past. In order for us to let go and not be bound in chains of bitterness we have to release not only others but ourselves from the past. Easier said than done—forgiveness is an act of liberation.

Comfort: From old English, an “alleviation of anxiety” and a “sense of enjoyment” this is our preference to engage with things, people, emotions and ideas we are accustomed to; our comfort zone. A modicum of anxiety and fear, and a dose of doubt and risk may be indicators of our willingness to enter the uncomfortable and explore the new.

Identity: From middle French, “sameness,” the deepest layer of our relationship to the past is our static sense of self, our identifications with the masks we wear if we consider them our essence and not masks. While certain masks may have served us well in the past they may be irrelevant or harmful to maintain now. The Seder is an opportunity to review and reconsider stories behind the masks and recognize they are just stories.

Kabbalah constructs a schema from the biblical story of the Hebrew slaves (finally) exiting Egypt. The exodus is a paradigm for any individual or communal process in moving from a narrow (enslaved) place to an expansive place (promise land). What occurred for the slaves becomes a template for our awareness of the necessary stages toward freedom, the external and internal changes to the five relationships with the past.

STAGE ONE *REFLECT* (hoe-tzay-tee): Before any change can occur there has to be space for contemplation, to consider and think that change is possible. The slaves were in servitude for many generations—would there be a respite for them to consider freedom? This occurs in the story during the period of the ten plagues when the forced labor stops, but Pharaoh has not set them free. The respite gives them time to reflect on the possibility of freedom. You can reflect on what constrains you, even those engrained characteristics or behaviors--your places of narrowness. A respite from a situation or a recognition that one cannot continue as is, are stimuli for beginning the process of liberation. Many a time we contemplate change but then do not follow through.

STAGE TWO *RESOLVE* (he-tzal-tee): The stage of resolve incorporates the beginnings of change—whether that means externally leaving something (or someone) or shifting internally. The slaves finally leave, they cross the border of Egypt! Imagine both the exhilaration and trepidation of leaving the “comfort” of what you know and the deep fear of whether you are really capable of moving forward. Will others let you be free? Will self-doubt cause recidivism? With each step comes further resolve to overcome resistance, inertia or regret and move closer to liberation. We can imagine the slaves looking over their shoulders for quite a while, and us, in parallel, as we start to change, worrying how the past will “catch up to us.” Resolve keeps one foot ahead of the other—one day at a time. Resolve can falter and if it does one then returns to and resumes the status quo of their circumstance, attitude or behavior.

STAGE THREE *RELEASE* (ga-al-tee): When are you ready or when do you know with complete certainty that your resolve will never crumble, that you have released yourself from the past—never to return. The slaves face the ultimate challenge—an impassable sea in front of them and their enslavers in chariots on their heels. This time when they look over their shoulders they see that their past has caught up with them and there seems to be no way forward. In that moment of truth comes a “leap of faith.” They entered the sea and the water divided. To relinquish old ways you must be willing to “split” with the past, to fully commit to a new present, release yourself from the narrowness of habit, comfort or an identity that no longer serves you.

STAGE FOUR *REVEAL* (la-kach-tee): It is an incredibly powerful feeling to know you will never return—to be released from the past. No longer a slave (alcoholic, abused spouse, overly generous person) is an amazing step—but who are you when you are no longer who you were? *You know who you are not—but who are you?* Each day the specter of the past fades and the past identity further dissolves. For those leaving Egypt, arriving at Sinai is the next stage of freedom, the revelation and bold transforming from a slave to a person within a community that shares a destiny and mission. For you this is an opportunity to consider who you are becoming—how you want to express a more authentic you.

STAGE FIVE *REALIZE* (hay-vay-tee): We often makes changes only to realize— I took on a different mask (habit, identity, comfort), and while it may be a netter mask it is a mask never the less. What felt like an initial long trek for the slaves (a few weeks) turned into a generational wandering in the desert for 40 years. The former slaves were unable to transition to a new realization (they all died in the desert and didn’t enter the promise land). This reflects that change is difficult and transformation does not equal transcendence. The promise of realization is to not be confined by your “hard to acquire” new identity. To transcend means to relax into your true nature, your natural goodness, your essence, beyond any confining sense of separateness and expand your circle of concern for all who are still enslaved; physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.



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www.kabbalahexperience.com

2305 South Syracuse Way, #10
Denver, CO 80231
(303) 337-0959