Ramah at Your Seder Table

Teachings, Activities, and Discussions from Our Ramah Family to Yours



2016/5776

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A Note from the Director

Rabbi Joel Seltzer

Pop Quiz:

What were the two worst inventions in the history of Passover? (Hint – one of them is not the gross chocolate-covered marshmallow thingies, those come in 3rd.)

The answers:

The front and back cover of our *Haggadah*.

That's right, by placing a front and a back cover on our *Haggadah*, whether consciously or sub-consciously, we placed an arbitrary beginning and an end to the conversation we are supposed to have around our *Seder* tables: a conversation about *Pesach*, *Matzah*, and *Maror*; a conversation about moving from degradation to redemption. The result of these insidious covers – is a *Seder* that has become rote and ritualized, as opposed to the original intention of the *Seder* which was meant to be a scene of 'disruptive innovation.'

For example, the 4 questions (or more appropriately, 4 answers to 1 question) only truly work if you DON'T know the answers! "Why is this night different from all other nights? No really, please tell me!"

So, in our attempts to bring the power of the Ramah experience to your *Seder* table, we proudly offer you our 3rd annual edition of ***Ramah at Your Seder Table***; a collection of teachings, poems, and ideas which we hope will help you and your family 'rip the cover' off the *Haggadah* a bit this year.

From our Ramah family to yours:

Chag Kasher v'Sameach,

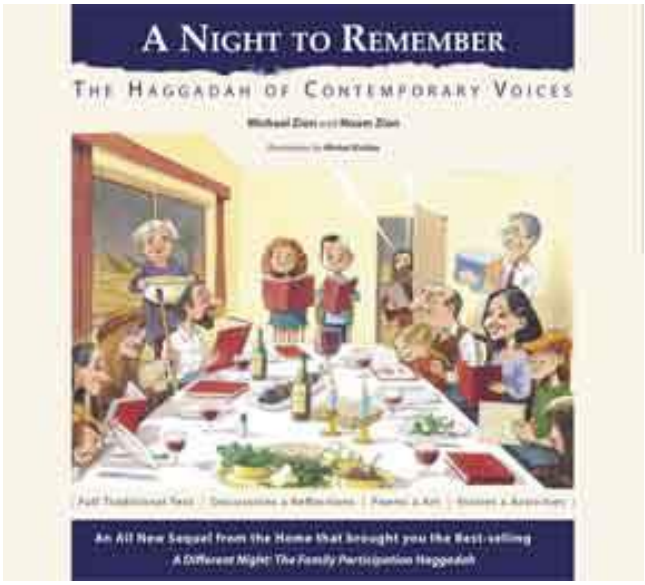
Rabbi Joel Seltzer

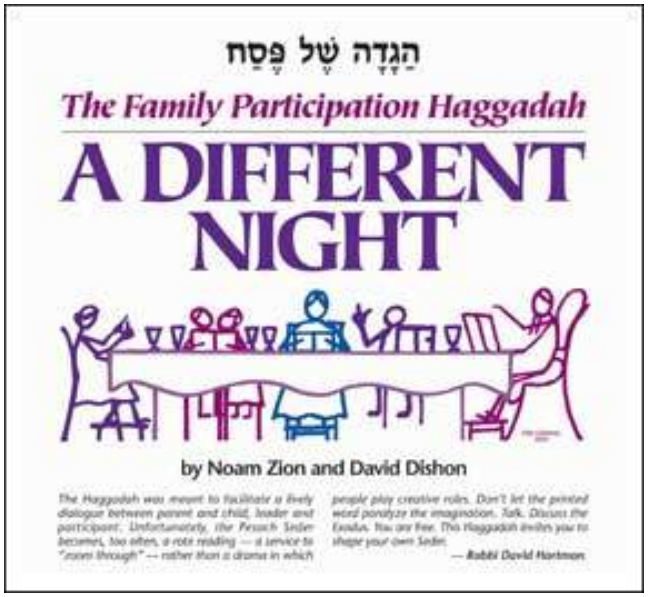
Executive Director, Camp Ramah in the Poconos

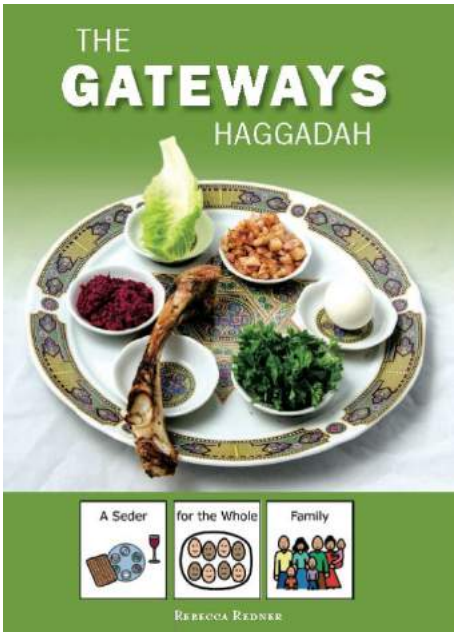
Haggadah Options for Your Family

The following *Haggadot* are all good options for *Seders* for the whole family:









Thinking Outside the Matzah Box:
Crazy Ideas for a New and Innovative Seder Experience
Rabbi Joel Seltzer

1. Biblical *Seder*
2. Mishnaic *Seder* (*Pesachim* Chapter 10)
3. A *Seder* out-of-*Seder*
4. Ask Questions! That is the whole point – What are your 4 questions you want answered at your *Seder* table?
5. Poetry!!!
6. Begin with the End in Mind – do you want to talk about God, Freedom, Politics, The Civil Rights movement etc? If so, how will you frame that conversation in the context of the *Seder*?
7. Use different *Haggadot* – like EVERYONE use different *Haggadot*.
8. Hide stuff under people's plates.
9. Bring Prizes!
10. Pesach Bingo – did Uncle Leo say 'Is it over yet?' BINGO!!!!
11. Roses and Thorns: *Karpas* Edition (Rabbi Eric Yanoff's idea!) – *Karpas* in Salt Water OR Strawberries in Dark Chocolate?
12. Google Image *Pesach* – what would be your google image for each section of the *Seder* – google it and print!
13. Invite People from Different Faiths!
14. *Pesach*/*Matzah*/*Maror* – that's it! Now discuss!

Poetry for Pesach
Rabbi Joel Seltzer

My favorite American Poet is Langston Hughes (1902-1967), the poet laureate of the Harlem Renaissance. What draws me to his poetry is both the rhythms of his words (if you listen, you can hear the syncopated beat of the Jazz movement of the 1920's) as well as their starkly political content.

Read these two poems and then use the discussion questions at the end to guide a meaningful conversation at your *Seder* regarding, race, religion, ethnicity, oppression, and freedom.

Harlem
By Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

- *Did you know that the title of the play 'A Raisin in the Sun', by Lorraine Hansberry was inspired by this poem?*
- *What does Hughes mean by 'a dream deferred'?*
- *What might be the parallels between this poem and the narrative of the Exodus from Egypt?*
- *What parallels might exist between the Jewish people's national story of slavery to redemption and the narrative of the African-American community? In what ways are they dramatically different?*

Likewise
By Langston Hughes

The Jews:
Groceries
Suits
Fruits
Watches
Diamond rings
THE DAILY NEWS
Jews sell me things.
Yom Kippur, no!
Shops all over Harlem
close up tight that night.

Some folks blame high prices on the Jews.
(Some folks blame too much on Jews.)
But in Harlem they don't answer back,
Just maybe shrug their shoulders,
"What's the use?"
What's the use
In Harlem?
What's the use?
What's the Harlem
use in Harlem
what's the lick?

Hey!
Baba-re-bop!
Mop.
On a be-bop kick!

Sometimes I think
Jews must have heard
the music of a
dream deferred.

- *Are there parts of this poem that make you feel uncomfortable as a Jew? If so, what are they, and why?*

- *What are the parallel's that Hughes is attempting to illustrate between the narrative of the Jewish people and the narrative of African-Americans in 1920's New York City?*
- *What are our modern daydreams (religious, ethnic, political, and national) that have been deferred?*

The "Kids" Seder

Elana Rivel, Director of Ramah Day Camp

A few years ago, our family was preparing to travel to Israel on the first day of *chol hamoed Pesach*. So we decided we were not going to host a *Seder* that year, and instead would seek an invitation. But our children would have none of that! They insisted that we host and offered to lead the *Seder*. Our only expectation for them was that they hit each part of the *Seder* somehow, and that we recited the *brachot*, the blessings. It was by far one of the most wonderful *Seders* I have attended! Some things they did to make this an interactive *Seder* that you could do at home as well:

We sat for the *Seder* in our living room on the couch and the floor with pillows.

As we began the *Seder* (which we always do, as my father did when I was a kid, with the words "Welcome To Our *Seder*!"), they asked us to think about the year since last *Seder* and share something that has changed for each of us, recognizing that while the ritual is the same this year as last, we are not the same as we were last year.

Urchatz* and *Rachatz: To minimize the getting up and down at the table, they passed around wipes so that everyone could wash easily at their seats.

Karpas: Instead of only using parsley (which neither child particularly cares for), we make a plate with as many green veggies and fruits we can identify and offer those for snacking (celery, cucumbers, green olives, kale chips, green grapes, kiwi…)

Maggid: Created a Jeopardy Game that hit on all of the key events in the telling.

Also, they put out bunch of random house items in the middle of the floor and asked us each to take one item, without telling us why. As we talked about the slaves becoming free, we were asked to share how the item we chose could have been useful in our exodus from Egypt.

Motzi, Matzah, Maror, Korech: They created posters with images and information about each item.

Tzafun: Instead of having people search the house, they created a Scavenger Hunt with clues that eventually led us to the *Afikomen*. They wrote enough clues for every person and the rule was that every person had to read at least one clue. This way, everyone felt part of the search and we worked together as a team instead of for our individual benefits.

***Hallel*:** We had a dance party! Using songs we knew with the words 'free', 'freedom', 'celebration' and 'thanks' we used tambourines and other shaker instruments and danced around the living room.

Nirtzah: As we concluded our *Seder* and thought about "next year in Jerusalem" we were asked to share something we loved about Israel.

We also sing our way through the *Seder* every year. There are so many family-friendly Passover songs and parodies, easily found on-line, many of which we have been singing since my childhood *Sedarim*.

Even the songs that are geared for very young children are sung (with maybe some slight embarrassment from our teens but much gusto from us older folks!).

Happy Planning!

Matzah House

Staci Boiskin



Last year, right before Passover, I attended a Hadassah event at the home of my friend Karen, a fellow Ramah Poconos parent. As we all gathered in her kitchen for coffee and goodies, there stood the most creative and delicious *matzah* house! This house was made out of five sheets of *matzah*, Passover chocolates, gummies, dried fruits, slivered almonds- yum!

I thought this was a wonderful idea, and a terrific project to make with your family for Passover. This house can be a lovely decoration for your table, and a great activity for the whole family to enjoy.

Roman Symposium

Sharon Bromberg

Imagine that inevitable plaintive little voice asking: "*Ma Nishtanah Halaylah Hazeh Mikol Haleylot*? Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights, we eat both *chametz* and *matzah*, but tonight, we eat only *matzah*! On all other nights, we eat either sitting upright, or leaning, but tonight, we only lean! On all other nights, we eat all manners of vegetables, on this night, we eat bitter herbs! On all other nights, we might only dip once, but tonight we dip twice!" The understanding is that the child is looking around, and seeing something completely mystifying and sparking questions.

The *Seder* as we know it, was set up originally in the times of the Mishnah (beginning approximately 100 C.E.), and there is modern scholarship that connects the structure of the *Seder* to the contemporary (to the Mishnaic Rabbis) Roman Symposium. Dr. Joshua Kulp, a Ramah Poconos alumnus, in his Schechter *Haggadah* explains:

> When the rabbis of the Mishnah wished to create a banquet meal to replace the sacrificial ritual lost when the Temple was destroyed, they did so in a form which was recognizable to them as the proper way to conducting a meal, all the while ensuring that they achieved their ultimate goals of studying Torah and recalling the Exodus. Indeed, we witness here a classic example of typical Greco-Roman practices (questions at a banquet) being combined syncretically with midrashic readings of the Torah (the child should ask the question). In contrast, children would not have participated in a typical Greco-Roman banquet. For the rabbis, a question to open the meal would affix their innovative practice of an ordered meal to their constitutive text — the Torah — all the while being recognized by people living at their time as the proper way of stimulating discussion at a meal.

The *Seder*, like the symposium, begins with questions, involves many cups of wine, the washing of the hands, dipping of bitter vegetables, a sandwich, and long discussions into the night. The piece that most intrigues me is the leaning.

I remember learning about leaning at one's *Seder* as a girl. “Kings and Queens get to luxuriate as they eat,” I was told. “Leaning to the left is healthier… you can swallow better that way, and won’t choke,” I was taught. Neither of these really worked for me. A few pillows at our seats didn’t negate the crazy work we had all done to prepare for the holiday, and if it was “healthier”, why didn’t we lean on the other 51 weeks of the year?

The symposium was an image that worked for me. The physical way that a symposium would be set up would be a basic U-shape. Everyone would be on their own chaise lounge around low tables. It would be U-shaped so that the servants could come in and serve food and clear as needed. (Add servants feeding grapes and slowly waving raffia fans, as needed). The majority of people are right-handed, which means that to have their eating hand most accessible, they would be leaning on their left side, sitting like the royalty of the times!

For years, my dream was to reenact this symposium-*Seder* at our own family *Seder*, but reality would not allow it. Last year, after having moved, we acquired a finished basement. We did not have chaise lounges for everyone, and we certainly did not have servants, but we adapted. We put down large sheets on the floor to make it a bit more comfortable, and to ease in clean up. We piled pillows everywhere. Those who felt comfortable with it, sat on the floor, leaning against walls, furniture, and all the pillows. We sat in a big circle around small coffee tables and the like (which held the *Seder* plates, wine glasses, *matzah*, etc.). It was quite informal and very conducive to discussion. [Note: for ease of serving and eating, we did all have *Shulchan Orech* at the dining room table.] We are hoping, that as long as we fit this year, we will do it again.

Walking in the Shoes of Refugees

Sharon Bromberg

The *Seder* provides us with an opportunity to explore the goings on of the world around us, as well as our reactions to them. If we are each to see ourselves “as if I myself have left the Land of Egypt”, that should certainly give us some compassion for the stories of the millions of refugees around the globe. While retelling the story of the Exodus from Egypt, retell your own family’s refugee story.

The following is a great story that was just told on WHYY (Philadelphia’s NPR station), which helps personalize the present day stories:

APRIL 8, 2016 NewsWorks.org
FOR A DAY, WALKING IN THE SHOES OF REFUGEES

By Elisabeth Perez-Luna

Every day, we hear reports about refugees fleeing areas of conflict.
But how does it really feel to be one among the 15 million displaced?

That was the question a group of about a hundred people explored by re-enacting the journey of some of

those families.

Most refugees live in a state of suspended animation. They lose their sense of place and time and future. But just hearing their stories do you truly understand what they're going through?

Doubt about that inspired Lilah Thompson, a Temple University public policy scholar, to create a large simulation exercise, "Between Borders," that would bring the refugees' feelings of displacement and uncertainty to life.

Thompson recently transformed spaces at Philadelphia's National Constitution Center into makeshift offices, refugee camps and health clinics, then populated them with volunteers who played the roles of officials. Thompson wanted to illustrate the refugees' personal journeys, which can range from six months to more than five years.

"It's putting individuals in another identity so that they take on the humanity of another person," she said. "Understanding every step of the process they go through -- from fleeing their country and leaving everything behind to going a refugee camp.

"Understanding what it's like to be there, what is the food like, schools ... the things you face on a daily basis."

Taking on the role of refugees

Each participant received an envelope with their refugee's story – along with instructions not to "break character" from the assigned role.

Law student Grace Shedun became a refugee from Syria going to Jordan.

"Both of my parents were killed in front of me and my only sibling was forced to enter the army, so I was by myself," she said.

At the end of the day, returning to her real identity, Shedun said the experience was powerful.

"I would like some day to help people in the situation of the lady I'm playing today," she said.

Story after story touched on fear, hardship, resilience and survival.

"The last convoy who was leaving for Monrovia was the only chance we had. We first tried going to Sierra Leone," a grandmother read from the family's assigned narrative.

This family ended up staying for months at a Sierra Leone camp. Outside each camp, staffers from the U.N. Refugee Agency registered and interviewed each family member to start the long process of relocation.

They received a fat envelope of old and new documents to carry from desk to desk, from checkpoint to checkpoint. After waiting and waiting, the family finally got news from a man playing the role of a U.S. immigration official.

"This family has been granted refugee status, and we are going to get them to the United States," said the official. "Within 18 months, mom and dad, hopefully, will get a job and will pay back the cost of the flight."

Once in the U.S., the refugees receive assistance for a limited time, and must find work, get settled and begin a new life on their own.

Most American families once sought refuge

In 2015, nearly 70,000 slots were allocated to refugees for admission to the U.S. This year, the proposed resettlement number is 85,000, said law professor Jaya Ramji-Nogales, the co-director of Temple's Institute for International Law and Public Policy.

An authority in refugee law and policy, Ramji-Nogales co-designed the Between Borders project. The takeaway, she said, is to remember that if you search the family trees of most Americans thoroughly, you'll find a history of refugees or displaced immigrants.

"People start to forget that who we are as a nation and compassion toward people who are fleeing situations that any one of us would flee from," she said. "I look at these people fleeing with their children.

"I have two small children, and you have to understand there has to be something really severe driving them to get on a dingy trying to get to Europe."

The overall experience of the Between Borders project was not lost on 21-year-old student Patricia Moore.

"I think it gave me more perspective over what refugees go through to make it to another country," she said. "What I have now is more respect for them and for their struggle."

This is one of the main reasons we celebrate *Pesach* each year and have a *Seder* -- so that we remember -- that we were once slaves in Egypt and now we are free.

When you retell your immigration story, what do you know about where your family left and where you arrived? Both are important. Discuss this at the singing of *Dayeynu*. Leaving Egypt (or Syria, or Sierra Leone, or Poland) would NOT have been enough! When is it enough?

Making an Inclusive Passover Seder

Sara Kreisman

"All who are hungry, come and eat; all who are needy come and celebrate Passover."

With the above quote taken directly from the beginning of the *Haggadah*, it is obvious that the Passover *Seder* sets itself up immediately to be inclusive. Of course, most of us relate this quote directly to food and the traditional view of hunger, yet there are different ways to be hungry; different ways to be needy. Addressing all the needs of all your guests is practically impossible, but with just a few quick and easy steps you can turn a Passover *Seder* into an inclusive Passover experience, one that is sure to make everyone—regardless of ability, Judaic knowledge, or observance—feel comfortable and one that will leave your guests feeling sated, in every way possible.

BEFORE

Pre-assign. Many of us already ask our guests to bring a food item to the *Seder* but think about what else they could bring with them. Pre-assigning parts of the *Seder* can help make your guests feel involved before they even arrive at your house and can help to alleviate any anxiety they might feel

about being put on the spot to participate. Consider parts that won't necessarily put too much pressure on someone who might not be able or ready for a big role—ask someone to be the designated "handwasher" for the group; assign someone the role of picking what songs are sung during *Hallel*; let someone be the elected "*afikoman* watcher". Remember, don't just assign parts to the adults—use those kids and give them roles too!

Food allergies. These days, food restrictions are more and more common. If someone is coming to the *Seder* that you do not know that well, call ahead to see if your guests have any food allergies, sensitivities, or restrictions. It will put their minds at ease and also make your food preparation less stressful since you can make sure there is something for everyone.

Make your own *Haggadah*. While many of us have used the same *Haggadot* for years, don't be afraid to get creative and make your own. You can include things you find online, incorporate funny family stories, feature word searches or crosswords for the kids (depending on your family's level of observance, or your child's particular need.), etc. Personalizing the *Seder* as much as possible makes everyone feel more comfortable. (As with the pre-assigning step above, you can also ask your guests to bring a "page" of something they would like to share at the *Seder*. Although it is true that there is a specific order to the *Seder*, what you do at each step is very much up for interpretation!)

Assign seats. Using name cards and pre-assigning seats puts people at ease and can take the guesswork and anxiety out of seating. But, be careful with your assignments—if you know someone has a hard time getting up, put them somewhere they won't feel badly about not being able to help; if you know someone needs to take frequent breaks, place them at the end of the table for easy, and less obvious, ins and outs; if you know someone who needs to feel useful, place them near you and near to the kitchen, and put them to work! However, should someone ask to switch, be flexible—making everyone comfortable is all that matters.

DURING

Use paper plates. No one wants a host to spend the whole night in the kitchen. Make it easier on yourself and set a more casual tone for your guests that will encourage them to get comfortable.

Forget the kids' table. Why separate the most entertaining and enthusiastic guests? Place the kids strategically around your *Seder* table and use that passion to your advantage. Also, allowing families to sit together will put them at ease and will hopefully encourage them to be more participatory.

Forget the table all together! Let's face it, the *Seder* is LONG. Why not start your *Seder* seated on your sofa, on your back patio, or in a make-shift tent in your living room? That way people won't get so much *schpilkas* after sitting for so long and will be excited when it's time to sit and eat.

Create a visual schedule. Use the order of the *Seder* to your advantage. Create a poster or a large piece of paper to demonstrate the steps of the *Seder* and use an icon to show your guests what part of the *Seder* you are on now, and what is coming up next. This helps to alleviate anxiety and allows people to anticipate what's coming. (It also lessens the chance of the kids asking "When can we eat?")

Plan activities. One of the reasons the search for the *afikoman* is so popular is because it allows people to get up and move around. Plan activities at your *Seder* that are interactive. It could be something as simple as acting out the 10 plagues using charades or roleplaying the 4 children. If you're OK with drawing during the holiday, why not line your table with butcher paper or a long paper tablecloth and set up crayons and pens for everyone to freely doodle during the *Seder*? At the end of the night you can walk around and see what everyone drew or wrote—it makes a nice keepsake for the next year too!

AFTER

Touch base. Checking in with your guests a day or two after the *Seder* is a nice touch. Thank them for coming and also find out what their favorite part was. Take notes and pack them up with your Passover dishes at the end of the holiday so that you don't have to try and remember everything you did the year before!

Pay it forward. Passover comes around just once a year but these ideas and methods can be used for any Jewish or secular holiday so use them to make your guests feel welcome all year round!

Eliya-WHO?
Seeing the Spirit of Redemption in Yourself and Others

Dr. Andrea Lieber

One of the most important guests we welcome at the Passover *Seder* each year is the Prophet Elijah, called in Hebrew, *Eliyahu ha-Navi.* Jewish tradition holds that *Eliyahu* appears among us at times of transition, and times of challenge.

Can you think of THREE Jewish rituals where we welcome *Eliyahu*?

(Answers: Brit Milah, Havdalah, Seder night)

- At a *brit milah (bris)*, we welcome a new child into the covenant of Israel.
- At *havdalah*, we say goodbye to Shabbat as we transition in to a new week.
- But, what is *Eliyahu* doing at our ***Seder***?

Since very ancient times, Judaism has taught that *Eliyahu's* presence in the world is a signal that the messianic era is near. In Talmudic legend, the rabbinic sages looked to *Eliyahu* for assistance with difficult legal decisions. When they couldn't agree on whether there should be 4 or 5 cups of wine at the *Seder*, the rabbis included a the 5th cup just in case, and called it *Kos Eliyahu*, Elijah's cup. At times when they could not come to agreement about a legal ruling, the wise rabbis declared that a decision would be reached "when Elijah comes!"

One of my favorite Hasidic traditions is the idea that *Eliyahu,* this most important and precious divine prophet, appears regularly in our world, among us, in disguise. Such legends about *Eliyahu* remind us that people are not always as they seem, and it is our challenge to treat everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of their external appearances. *Eliyahu* might appear as a beggar, a thief, or some other person on the margins of society. The homeless person you ignore, the stranger you bump in your haste to get where you are going, the kid in your *tzrif* you just can't seem to get along with—what if that person is the holy *Eliyahu ha-Navi,* sent by God into your life to help you through some particular challenge? Are you open to seeing the blessings and wisdom they have to offer? Or, will you miss an opportunity for redemption that is right in front of you?

A logical extension of this idea is the notion that **you** could actually be **someone else's** *Eliyahu* and not even realize it! Maybe you have just the right words of wisdom, just the right strength or skill to help someone when they need it most? Perhaps **you** might appear in a stranger's life (or a friend's) at a critical moment of challenge or transition? **Are we open to recognizing *Eliyahu* in ourselves and in others?**

This year, bring a hand mirror to your *Seder* table. Before opening the door for *Eliyahu*, pass the mirror around the table and ask your guests to look into it. Can you think of a time when you might have embodied the spirit of *Eliyahu*? If you prefer, hold the mirror up to the person sitting next to, or across from you at the table. Tell them about a time **they** were **your** *Eliyahu*! When everyone has had a chance to reflect and/or share, stand up and open your door to welcome Elijah to your *Seder* table with a truly open heart!

When We Dip

Rabbi Avi Katz Orlow

We have finished the first of our four glasses of wine. We have just sat down after the first of the two hand washings. Now, we partake of a vegetable dipped in salt water or vinegar. With the blessing of *borei pri ha'adamah* on our lips and the first sign of spring in our hands, we eat our first food of the evening. Like a reenactment of Persephone's return from Hades, we connect to this first taste of spring. However, our excitement of this rite of spring is overshadowed by the salty taste reminding us of the sweaty, backbreaking labor of slavery.

But what of those who dip in vinegar? How are they to connect the vinegar to a deeper message about the day or the ritual of dipping? There is a story from the Talmud that seems pertinent to us in this moment. We learn:

Berachot 5b

Once, four hundred jars of wine belonging to Rav Huna turned sour. Rav Yehudah, the brother of Rav Sala the Pious, and the other scholars—some say: Rav Adda ben Ahava and the other scholars—went in to visit him [Rav Huna] and said to him: The master ought to examine his actions.

He [Rav Huna] said to them: Am I suspect in your eyes?

They replied: Is the Holy One, blessed be God, suspect of punishing without justice?

He [Rav Huna] said to them: If somebody has heard of anything against me, let him speak out.

They replied: We have heard that the master does not give his tenant his [lawful share in the] vine twigs [i.e., fair wages for his work].

He replied: Does he leave me any? He [the tenant farmer] steals them all!

They said to him: That is exactly what people say: If you steal from a thief you also have a taste of it!

He said to them: I pledge myself to give it to him [in the future]. Some report that thereupon the vinegar became wine again; others that the vinegar went up so high [in value] that it was sold for the same price as wine.

ברכות ה :

רב הונא תקיפו ליה ארבע מאה דני דחמרא,
על לגביה רב יהודה אחוה דרב סלא חסידא ורבנן,
ואמרי לה: רב אדא בר אהבה ורבנן,
ואמרו ליה: לעיין מר במיליה.
אמר להו: ומי חשידנא בעינייכו?
אמרו ליה: מי חשיד קודשא בריך הוא
דעביד דינא בלא דינא?
אמר להו: אי איכא מאן דשמיע עלי מלתא לימא.
אמרו ליה: הכי שמיע לן דלא יהיב מר שבישא לאריסיה.
אמר להו: מי קא שביק לי מידי מיניה?
הא קא גניב ליה כוליה!
אמרו ליה: היינו דאמרי אינשי: בתר גנבא גנוב,
וטעמא טעים.
אמר להו: קבילנא עלי דיהיבנא ליה.
איכא דאמרי: הדר חלא והוה חמרא;
ואיכא דאמרי: אייקר חלא ואיזדבן בדמי דחמרא.

Rav Huna, a 3rd century CE amora, was unwilling to see his misfortune as mere happenstance. As the head of the Academy in Sura, it is clear that Rav Huna wanted to improve himself. After some coaxing, his peers informed him that he was not providing the tenants of his vineyard what was perceived as a fair wage. So, instead of punishing the tenants for stealing from him, Rav Huna paid them a fair wage.

The taste of the vinegar was a reminder to Rav Huna to be meticulous in his business dealings, and the ensuing miracle speaks to the significance of his redemptive act.

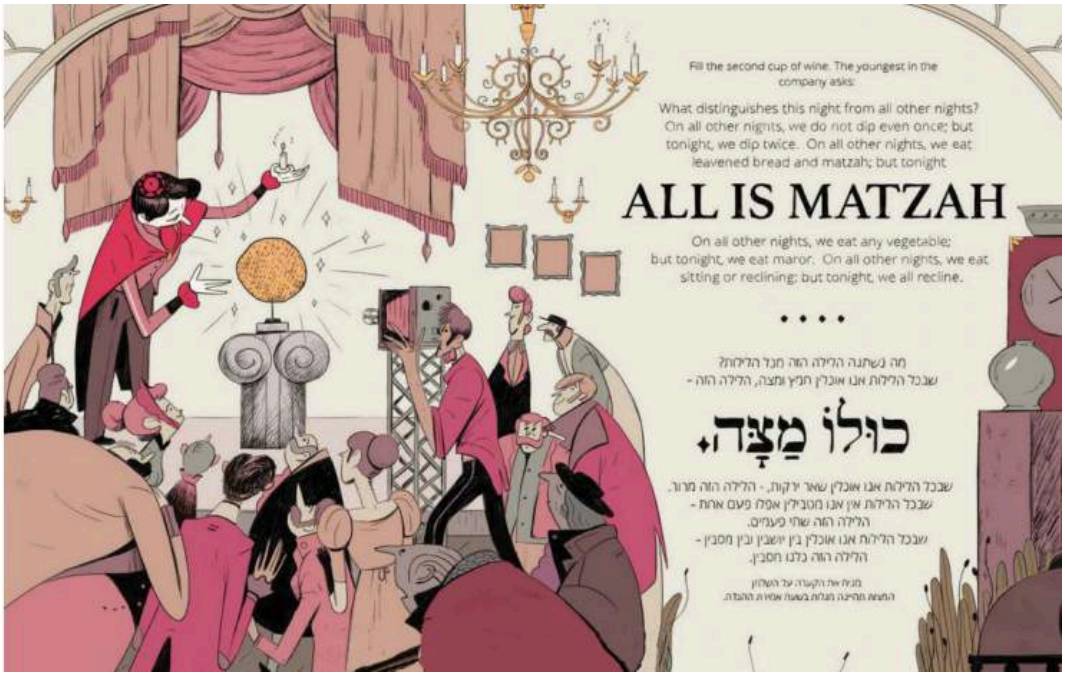
While there are profound demands on us to see to an end to dire poverty, the very same Rav Huna challenges us to say that this is not enough. We learn:

Taanit 20b
When he [Rav Huna] had a meal he would open the door wide and declare, "Whosoever is in need let him come and eat."

תענית כ:
כי הוה כרך ריפתא הוה פתח לבביה
ואמר: כל מאן דצריך ליתי וליכול.

It was not just on Passover that Rav Huna opened up his home to the needy. Rav Huna also teaches us that we need to be punctilious in business dealings and not just focus on the most needy or impoverished. Every working person needs to be paid a fair wage, especially those responsible for bringing food to our tables. Rav Huna further teaches us to open our homes and our hearts not only to those who are starving, but to anyone in need. Passover is an occasion for us to reflect on our behavior throughout the whole year. If we allow ourselves to taste the vinegar of the *karpas*, we will come to taste freedom all year.

All is Matzah
Rabbi Micah Peltz



Reciting the Four Questions is one of the highlights of the *Seder*. The youngest child in the family practices for weeks for that moment when s/he sings the *Mah Nishtanah*. These questions mark the beginning of the *Maggid*, or storytelling, section of the *Haggadah*. We begin the story of the Exodus with questions from children to help them feel like this story is their story, and to help us fulfill our duty to pass our stories on to the next generation.

This illustration of the Four Questions comes from *Asufa Haggadah*. Four years ago a group of more than 40 Israeli artists came together to illustrate a *Haggadah*. Now they produce new illustrations for the same text every year. This depiction is by Ovadiah Benishu. What strikes me about this picture is the emphasis on the second answer to the question of "Why is this night different from all other nights?" In most *Haggadot,* the Hebrew answer to that question, *kulo matzah*, is translated as "[we eat] only *matzah*." Here it is translated literally: "All is *Matzah*." And the illustration, with everyone oohing and ahhing a piece of *matzah*, drives home this point.

Certainly, a few days into the holiday, it can certainly feel like all is *matzah*. At the Seder, however, we pause to think about the meaning behind this bread we eat. *Matzah* is a contradiction. It is both "the bread of affliction" and the ultimate symbol of our redemption. It is made from grain that if cooked for more than 18 minutes is *hametz*, and forbidden on Passover, but if cooked for less than 18 minutes is *matzah*, which we are commanded to eat on Passover. *Matzah* represents the tensions that we feel at the Seder between slavery and freedom, sorrow and joy, good and evil. It also represents the tensions we feel in our world today between rich and poor, justice and injustice, and Jewish tradition and the secular world. This night is different because all is *matzah* – all these contradictions fade away when we tell our story, with the people we love, and celebrate our freedom to live Jewish lives.

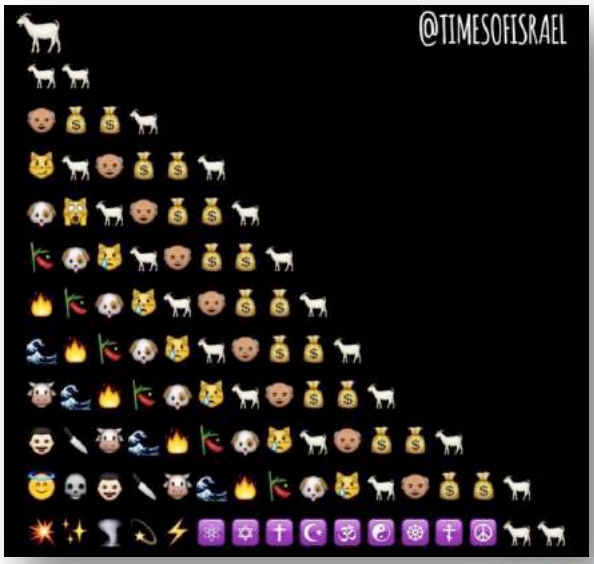
Questions for Young Children:

- *What questions do you have about Passover?*
- *If you had to choose one adult to sing the Four Questions, who would it be?*
- *What does matzah make you think of?*

Questions for Teenagers and Adults:

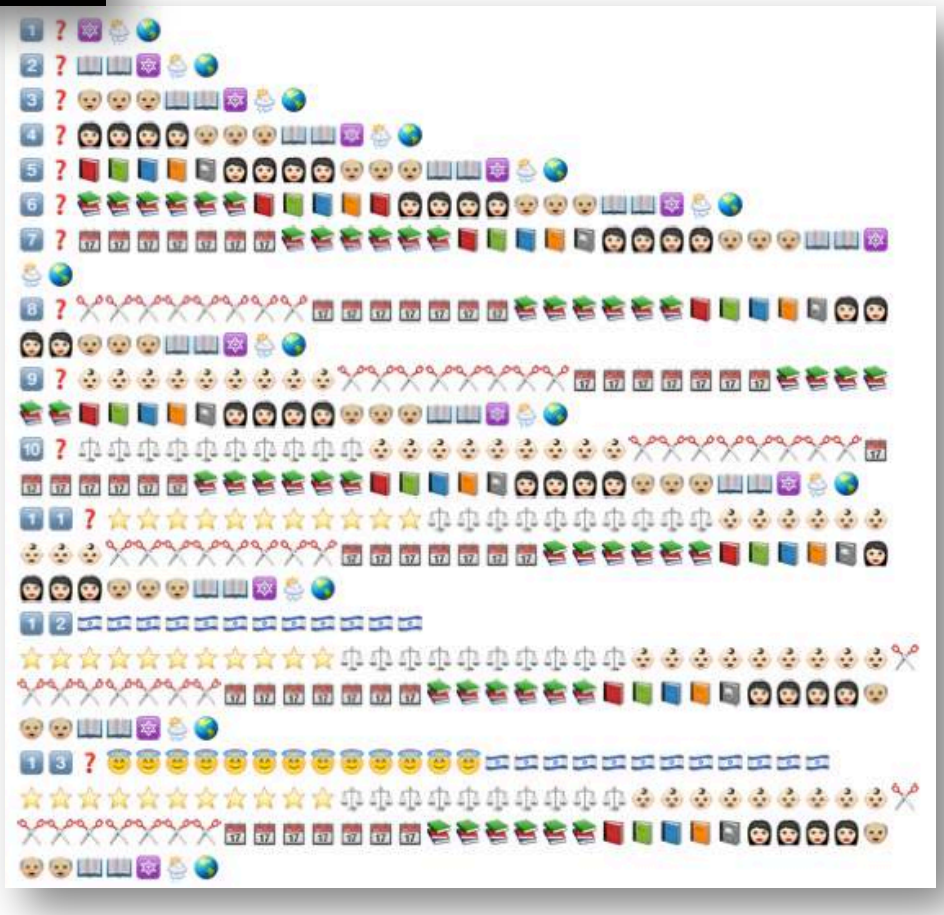
- *How are you different tonight from all other nights?*
- *What tensions do you feel most acutely in the world today?*
- *What other meaning do you see in this illustration of the Four Questions?*

As Told by Emojis



Chad Gadya
Sarah Tuttle-Singer

Ehad Mi Yodeah
Rabbi Joel Seltzer



Our deepest thanks go out to our friends, alumni, staff, and families who helped assemble these wonderful teachings.

L'KAYITZ HA-BA B'MACHANEH RAMAH!
L'SHANAH HA-BA'AH B'YERUSHALAYIM!