



A SEDER HOST'S COMPANION

With hope that these thoughts help move us all from slavery to freedom

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This handout moves through all of the steps of the seder. Urchatz and Karpas both have environmental / earth-based implications; the other stages in the seder journey are not explicitly ecological but can be invested with ecological meaning.

Kadesh- recitation of kiddush; sanctification of time, wine

Think of an experience in which time felt sacred. Where were you? What were you doing? How did you feel? How long ago was it? Identify these feelings and imagine how might you be able to re-experience these emotions more frequently?

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְמַנִּים.

Baruch Ata Ado-nai m'kadesh haShabbat v'Yisrael v'hazmanim.

Praised are You, God, who sanctifies Shabbat, the people of Israel and the festivals.

Urchatz -washing of hands; water, washing, ritual cleansing

Is there a situation or a relationship that makes you “well up due to a lack of justice?” What might you try to do to help rectify the situation? How can you bring more righteousness to the table and help ameliorate the situation or relationship?

וַיִּגַל כַּמַּיִם מִשְׁפָּט; וּצְדָקָה כְּנַחַל אֵיתָן

Vayigal ka-mayim mishpat; u'tzedakah k'nachal eytan.

Let justice well up as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. (Amos 5:24)

Karpas- green vegetable; vegetable, greens, spring

Envision your favorite green place—a forest, an arboretum, your backyard, a park, a beautiful tree. Hold this image in your mind and focus on the rebirth that happens in nature—the blossoming of the flowers or the growing of fruit. What is waiting to blossom in you? What is waiting to emerge this year?

בְּרִיךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

Baruch Ata Ado-nai, El-ohei-nu Melech ha'olam, borei p'ree ha'adamah.

Praised are You, Ado-nai, our God, Creator of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

Yachatz- breaking middle matzah; broken things, things that are hiding or hidden

Reflect back on a time this year when you felt broken or when you had to hide your “True Self.” What did you learn from this experience? How might you respond differently when presented with a similar situation?

הֵא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיָּא, דִּי אָכְלוּ אַבְהַתְנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.

Ha Lachma anya de'achalu avahatana b'-ar'a d'Mitzrayim.

This is the bread of poverty that our ancestors ate in the Land of Egypt. (Haggadah)

Magid- telling story of Exodus; a story that should be told/heard

What is one of the best stories that you heard, saw, or told this year? What made it such a great story? Think about how you might incorporate those great story elements into your life.

וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה, עָשָׂה ה' לִי, בְּיָצְאֹתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.

V'hegadta l'veencha bayom ha-hu laymore: ba'avore zeh, asah li, Ado-nai, b'tzeytee mee'mitzrayim

And you shall tell your child on that day, saying, It is because of what Ado-nai did for me when I came out from Egypt. (Exodus 13:8) 2

Rachtza -hand washing; water, washing, ritual cleansing

Water has been associated with purification for thousands of years. What in your life needs purifying? Identify what IT is and then find a body of water to take a dunk in, releasing what yearns to be set free.

בְּרִיךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

Baruch Ata Ado-nai El-o-heinu Melech ha'olam, asher k'dshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzevanu al n'tilat ya'dayim.

Praised are You, Ado-nai, our God, Creator of the Universe, who makes us holy with Divine mitzvot and has commanded us on washing of the hands.

Motzi Matzah- eating matzah; bread as sustenance, ridding of “chametz”

Reflect back on a time or an experience during this year that felt “flat” or uninspiring. What was missing that would have allowed the time to feel more “puffed up” or alive? Once you have established what was missing—be mindful to bring that element into your life more regularly.

וַיֹּאפוּ אֶת-הַבֶּצֶק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, עֲגֹת מִצּוֹת--כִּי לֹא חָמֵץ

Va'yofu et-habatzek asher hotzi-oo mee'Mitzrayim, oogoat matzot—kee lo chametz.

And they baked unleavened cakes of dough which they had brought out from Egypt, for it was not leavened. (Exodus 12:39)

Maror -eating bitter herbs; a bitter event

Think about a bitter experience--when things did not go as you would have liked. What could have been done to sweeten the experience? How can you introduce more sweetness into your life?

וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם בְּעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה

Va'y'marru et hayay-hem ba'avodah kashah.

And the (Egyptians) embittered their lives with hard work. (Exodus 1:14)

Korech- making a sandwich; the creation of a “whole” from “parts” (like a sandwich)

Has there been a time this year when you felt sandwiched between two competing values? How did you resolve this conflict? Were you comfortable with your decision? If so, pat yourself on the back. If not, what did you learn that might enable you to make different decisions in the future?

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר, כָּל שֶׁלֹּא אָמַר שְׁלוֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים אֵלּוּ בַּפֶּסַח, לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי חוּבָתוֹ--פֶּסַח, מַצָּה, וּמְרֹרִים

Rabban Gamliel used to say: “All who have not explained the significance of the three elements of the Passover Seder: the Passover offering, matzah, and the bitter herbs, has not fulfilled his/her obligation. (Haggadah)

Shulchan Orech- eating festive meal; meal, cooking, arranging table

Reflect back upon a really delicious meal that you enjoyed this year. What was served? Who was with you? Where were you dining? Be sure to plan another amazing meal in the upcoming year.

B'tayavon-Bon Appetit

Tzafun- eating afikomen; discovering something hidden

What part of yourself do you keep hidden? From whom? Why? What might it feel like to reveal it to others? Shhhh, *shtikah*, silence.

Barech- grace after meal; blessings

List ten blessings that you have in your life. Savor their sweetness and the beautiful presence that they add to your life.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' הַזֵּן אֶת הַכֹּל .

Baruch atah Ado-nai hazan et hakol.

Blessed are you, Ado-nai who nourishes all.

Hallel- praises to God; thanks to God

Think of three things for which you would like to thank God. Find a quiet place and speak them out loud. OR think about three people you would like to praise this year. What attributes do they have that you admire? Find the time to share your admiration with them.

לְפִיכָּ אֲנִי חַיְבִים לְהוֹדוֹת לְהַלֵּל לְשַׁבַּח לְפָאֵר לְרוֹמֵם וּלְהַדָּר

Therefore it is You we praise, laud, extol, glorify, adorn, and hold on high. (Haggadah/Siddur)

Nirtza- conclusion of seder; conclusion of ongoing event

Was there something that came to a close in your life this year? How did it end? Is there something in your life that needs to be brought to a close? How might you facilitate closure? What life lessons did you or might you learn from the experience?

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּים וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu lazman hazeh.

Praised are You, Ado-nai, our God, Creator of the Universe, who has sustained us and allowed us to reach this day.