

BRONFMAN CENTER

THE BRONFMAN CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDENT LIFE AT NYU

Different from All Other Nights: A Queer Passover Haggadah

Hosted by Keshet (LGBTQ Jews)

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PREFACE

Passover celebrates freedom and liberation from bondage. The Hebrew word for Egypt—מִצְרַיִם *Mitzrayim*—reminds us of the word מֵצָר *metzar*—“strait” or “narrow place.” We gather together to celebrate not only the Exodus from Egypt, but also our own coming out of narrow places.

Our journey tonight is not so very different from the narrative journey Jews take each and every year gathered around the *seder* table. We will tell stories of the Israelites’ hasty departure from Egypt and of their miraculous passage through the Sea. We will sing of how God liberated Israel with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. We will ask questions and, through the symbols and tastes of the Passover meal, begin to answer them—using the words of an evolving Jewish tradition and bringing our whole selves, all of our accumulated experience, with us to the table.

In some ways, this *seder* is like any other *seder*. And yet tonight is different. Tonight we especially honor those too often marginalized and ignored. We gather as a fully inclusive family with special attention to our queer community, broadly defined.

This *haggadah* comprises songs, blessings, and readings culled from several sources—from the Rabbinic Passover *seder* to contemporary queer *haggadot* produced by LGBTQIA organizations and synagogues (every effort has been made to cite when possible). It is a *seder* for all of us.

We celebrate Passover—פֶּסַח *Pesach*—as a commemoration of events long past. We recall the years of bitter bondage. We remember that final, terrible plague which “passed over” —פָּסַח *pasach*—the homes of the Israelites, who would that very night leave Egypt, their dough still unleavened. JQ International’s *GLBTQ Passover Haggadah* notes that “the holiday of Passover has grown to represent a time to remember the struggle for civil liberty in our current day lives—or in other words, individuals whose recognition of rights and validation of identity have been ‘passed over’” by the broader culture (Los Angeles, 2008, available online; 2). Tonight, we listen to voices that have been too long passed over, and we call out for stories of Exodus—of יֵצִיאָהּ *yetziah*. These are stories of going forth into freedom. Stories of coming out.

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INTRODUCTION: DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHERS...

Each year, Jews at *seder* tables across the world dutifully chant the first of four traditional questions: “Why is this night different from all other nights?”

But in Hebrew the question omits the word “why,” asking instead: “*Mah nishtanah ha-lailah ha-zeh mi-kol ha-leilot? What differentiates this night from all other nights?*”

Why don't you celebrate Christmas? Why don't you date girls? Why are you in the “wrong” bathroom? Why won't you just eat a cheeseburger? Why can't you make up your mind between gay and straight? Why don't you keep kosher? Why do you have to “flaunt” your difference?

Sometimes *why* questions put us on the defensive. We worry that we have to justify our difference, or even our very existence. Sometimes we feel we have to squeeze ourselves into a very narrow definition of what it means to be Jewish. Sometimes *why* questions imply a value judgment: Why are you this “strange” way rather than that “normal” way? Why are you different, unusual, problematic, “queer”? Why can't you just *fit in*?

Our *seder* tonight is a little queer, for tonight, we need not explain *why* each of us is different. We need only come to the table prepared and open to share and to celebrate what distinguishes us, one from the other.

WE SING TOGETHER.

Hinei mah tov u'mah naim shevet kulanu yachad. הִנֵּי מַה טוֹב וּמַה נְאֻמִּים שֶׁבְּתַכְּלֵנוּ יַחַד.

Behold! How good and how pleasant it is for us all to dwell together.

הַדְּלִיקַת נְרוֹת CANDLELIGHTING

READER:¹ As we bathe in the light of these candles, we remember all the candles we've lit as Jews, as LGBTQI² people and allies, and as those who struggle for freedom. Shabbat candles. *Yahrtzeit*³ candles. Candles at AIDS vigils. And candles at Take Back the Night Marches.

READER: As we share in the light of these candles, we rededicate the flame each of us carries within, that small reflection of the Creator's light that is ours to use as a beacon in our work of *tikkun olam*—repairing the world.

READER: We rededicate this small spark that we can use as a match to give light to the hopes and dreams of all people.

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha-
olam, asher kideshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu
lehadlik neir shel Yom Tov.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֵלֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁ לַיּוֹם
טוֹב.⁴

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, sovereign of the universe, who sanctifies us with commandments and commands us to kindle the festival lights.

¹ The readings on this page are taken from Congregation B'nai Jeshurun's *The Stonewall Shabbat Seder* (June 27, 1997/23 Sivan 5757), 1.

² Different communities have different practices with respect to terminology and initials for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/ed, genderqueer, queer, intersex/ed, and ally communities. If we have left out an initial or label, it is not meant as a slight to those who identify under that label.

³ Memorial candles commemorating the death of a loved one.

⁴ This *haggadah* will use both masculine and feminine God-language. These human, bodily metaphors for God are intended not to limit our understanding of God, who is beyond space and time and body, but to expand our understanding. Because Hebrew is a gendered language, we cannot escape “he” and “she” throughout the *seder*; therefore, occasionally grammatical gender agreement has been intentionally eschewed as an effort to include genderqueer and transgendered interpretations.

כּוֹס מִרְיָם MIRIAM'S CUP⁵

ALL: We include on our seder table כּוֹס מִרְיָם *kos Miryam*, Miriam's cup. Legend tells of a mysterious well filled with living waters that followed the Israelites through their wandering in the desert while Miriam was alive.

AS WE PASS AROUND MIRIAM'S CUP, EACH PERSON POURS SOME WATER FROM HIR⁶ OWN GLASS INTO THE CUP.

READER: In every generation, we experience both oppression and liberation. In our wanderings, both as a people and as individuals, Miriam's well still accompanies us as a sustaining presence in the desert, enabling us not just to survive, but to thrive.

READER: Miriam's well reminds us that our journey has both direction and destination—to a place where freedom is proclaimed for all. A land flowing with milk and honey.

RAISE MIRIAM'S CUP.

ALL: *Zot kos Miryam, kos mayim chayyim, zeicher litzit'at Mitzrayim.* This is the cup of Miriam, the cup of living waters, a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt. May the cup of Miriam refresh and inspire us as we embark on our journey through the *Haggadah*.

⁵ Readings adapted from the *The Journey Continues: The Ma'yan Passover Haggadah* (New York: The Jewish Women's Project, 2002 (2000)), 29-30 and from *A Night of Questions: A Passover Haggadah* (Philadelphia: The Reconstructionist Press, 2000), 29.

⁶ We use the newly-developed gender-neutral pronoun "hir" (pronounced *heer*) in place of "his" or "her" in an effort towards inclusivity.

BLESSING DIFFERENCES

TAKE A MOMENT TO INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THOSE AROUND YOU.

YOU MIGHT SHARE ONE MOTIVATION THAT BROUGHT YOU TO THIS SEDER TABLE.

OR PERHAPS ONE ANCESTOR OR INSPIRATIONAL TEACHER WHOSE MEMORY YOU CARRY WITH YOU.

TAKE A MOMENT TO SHARE WHAT DISTINGUISHES YOU FROM OTHERS.

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha-
olam, meshaneh ha-briyot.*

⁷ בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם מֵשֵׁנֵי הַבְּרִיּוֹת.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, sovereign of the universe, who has made all creatures different.

קַדִּישׁ KADEISH (SANCTIFICATION)

Tonight, our four cups are dedicated to יְצִיאָה *yetziah*—going forth, coming out.

We invite members of our community to share a story before dedicating each cup.

A MEMBER OF OUR COMMUNITY SHARES A COMING-OUT STORY...

WE FILL, LIFT, AND DEDICATE THE FIRST OF FOUR CUPS OF WINE.

*B'ruchah At, Yah, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam,
boreit p'ri ha-gafen.*

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרְאֵת פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, spirit of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

⁷ This traditional blessing is recited upon seeing an unusual creature (like an elephant, for example) (*Babylonian Talmud, Brachot 58b*). Here, as in *The Stonewall Seder*, it serves as a way to express our gratitude for the differences and distinctions that make each human being unique.

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha-
 olam, asher k'ra'anu la-avodato v'rom'manu
 bik'dushato, v'kideshanu b'mitzvotav. Va-titen
 lanu Adonai Eloheinu b'ahavah moadim
 l'simcha, chagim u'zmanim le-sason, et yom
 chag ha-matzot ha-zeh, z'man cheiruteinu,
 mikra kodesh, zeicheir litziyat Mitzrayim. Ki
 eileinu karata v'otanu kidasha la-avodatecha
 u'moadei kodshecha b'simcha u'v'sason
 hinchaltanu. Baruch Atah Adonai m'kadeish
 Yisrael ve-hazmanim.*

⁸ בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר
 קִרְאַנוּ לְעִבּוּדְתוֹ וְרוֹמַמְנוּ בְּקִדּוּשְׁתּוֹ, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ
 בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְנִתַּן-לָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה
 מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה חַגִּים וְזְמַנִּים לְשִׂשׁוֹן
 אֶת-יוֹם חַג הַמַּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. זְמַן חֲרוּתֵנוּ, מִקְרָא
 קֹדֶשׁ, זִכָּר לִיְצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. כִּי אֵלֵינוּ קִרְאתָ
 וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ לְעִבּוּדְתְּךָ וּמוֹעֲדֵי קִדְּשְׁךָ
 בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הַנִּחְלָתָנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,
 מְקַדֵּשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְמַנִּים.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, sovereign of the universe, who has called us to Your service, and made us holy with your *mitzvot*, and given us, Eternal our God, in love, the festivals for happiness, the holidays and seasons for rejoicing, this day of the festival of *matzot*, season of our freedom, a holy convocation, a remembrance of the going-out from Egypt. For you have called to us, and made us holy for Your service, and Your holy festivals, in happiness and joy, You have given us, to have and to hand on. Blessed are You, Eternal, who raises up to holiness the people Israel and their festival times.

*B'ruchah At, Yah, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam,
 shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu la-
 z'man ha-zeh.*

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיְינוּ
 וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזְמַן הַזֶּה.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Spirit of the Universe, who enlivened us, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

⁸ This *haggadah* uses the festival *kiddush* of the Reconstructionist movement, as it appears in *A Night of Questions: A Passover Haggadah*, which emphasizes the shared destiny of the Jewish people with the other peoples with whom we share this world (32). Language of chosenness and exaltedness has been altered to reflect both our unique relationship with the God of our ancestors and our responsibility to all peoples.

וּרְחַץ URCHATZ (SYMBOLIC WASHING)⁹

READER: In Hebrew, *urchatz* means “washing” or “cleansing.” In Aramaic, sister language to Hebrew, *urchatz* means “trusting.” As we wash each others’ hands, we reflect on this act of trust and welcoming, recalling the sources of hope and trust we want to bring into the world for ourselves and each other.

WE PASS AROUND THE BOWL AND CUP AND WASH. NO BLESSING IS SAID.

פְּרִי קָרְפָּס KARPAS (EATING GREENS)

WE DIP THE GREEN VEGETABLE TWICE IN SALT WATER, SYMBOLIZING THE TEARS OF THE PEOPLE ISRAEL IN SLAVERY.

Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech ha-
olam, borei p’ri ha-adama.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא
פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, sovereign of the universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

יָהֵץ YAHATZ (BREAKING THE MIDDLE MATZAH)

WE BREAK THE MIDDLE PIECE OF MATZAH, HIDING IT AS THE AFIKOMAN, THE RETRIEVAL OF WHICH WILL END OUR SEDER.

READER:¹⁰ No prayer is recited before we break the middle *matzah* on our *seder* table. This is a silent act. We realize that, like the broken *matzah*, we are all incomplete, with prayers yet to be fulfilled, promises still to be redeemed.

⁹ Adapted from the 2012 Keshet *haggadah* for NYU’s Bronfman Center, itself adapted from online sources. I regret that I was unable to locate the original sources in order to cite them properly.

¹⁰ Harold Schulweis, excerpted in *A Night of Questions: A Passover Haggadah*, 40.

מַגִּיד MAGID (NARRATION)

WE RAISE THE MATZAH AND SING...

*Ha –lachma, ha-lachma anya
di achalu, di achalu avahatana,
b'ara, b'ara d'Mitzrayim...*

הָא לַחְמָא הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיא
דִּי אֶכְלוּ דִּי אֶכְלוּ אַבְהַתָּנָא
בְּאֶרְעָא בְּאֶרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.

ALL: This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are needy come and celebrate Passover.

Now we are here; next year may we be in Israel. Now we are slaves; next year may we be free.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

READER:¹¹ Questions, even the most irreverent, seed the freedom that we celebrate tonight. When God, taking Abraham into his confidence, announced the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the man responded with rebellion. “Heaven forbid You to do a thing like this, to deal death to the innocent along with the guilty. Heaven forbid for You! Will not the Judge of all the earth do justice?!” (Genesis 18:24-25).

READER: The irreverence displayed here takes the breath away. But even more breathtaking is the divine response. God doesn't consume God's inquisitor in a pillar of fire. Instead God submits to Abraham's questioning. Had God instead flamed up in aggrieved piety, then the story we tell tonight could never have been written, not a word of it.

READER: Perhaps tonight there is one who sits at the table, harboring an irreverent question, one that challenges the assumptions that have brought this family to this table for many generations. If the struggles with their question lead them away from the answers of their ancestors, what then? Must lineage dictate the child's interpretation of the world?

¹¹ This interpretation of and introduction to the Four Questions has been adapted from Jeffrey Goldberg's Commentary (“Library”) to the Four Sons in editor Jonathan Safran Foer's *New American Haggadah* (New York: Little & Brown, 2012), 31.

ANYONE WHO WISHES MAY RAISE A QUESTION...

BEHIND THE RECITATION OF THE TRADITIONAL FOUR QUESTIONS ARE OUR OWN VOICED AND UNVOICED INQUIRIES.

Mah nishtanah ha-lailah ha-zeh mi-kol ha-leilot?
She-b'chol ha-leilot anu ochlim chameitz u'matzah—
ha-lailah ha-zeh kulo matzah.
She-b'chol ha-leilot anu ochlim sh'ar yerakot—ha-
lailah ha-zeh maror.
She-b'chol ha-leilot ein anu matbilin afilu pa'am
echat—ha-lailah ha-zeh sh'tei p'amim.
She-b'chol ha-leilot anu ochlim ochlim bein yoshvin
u'vein m'subin—ha-lailah ha-zeh kulanu m'subin.

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?
 נשכך הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה .
 הלילה הזה בלוי מצה :
 נשכך הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות
 הלילה הזה מרור:
 נשכך הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו
 פעם אחת. הלילה הזה שתי פעמים:
 נשכך הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין
 ובין מסבין. הלילה הזה בלנו מסבין:

What differentiates this night from all other nights?

On all other nights, we eat *chameitz* (leaven) and *matzah*. Tonight, why only *matzah*?

On all other nights, we eat any kinds of herbs. Tonight, why bitter herbs?

On all other nights, we do not dip even once. Tonight, why do we dip the greens twice?

On all other nights, we eat sitting or reclining. Tonight, why do we all recline?

READER: In addition to the Four Questions, tonight we ask ourselves a fifth. We are commanded to celebrate as if each one of us were personally liberated from Egypt. In the next year, how do you hope to bring yourself closer to your place of freedom?¹²

ANYONE WHO WISHES MAY ANSWER THE FIFTH QUESTION...

¹² Adapted from the 2012 Keshet *haggadah* for NYU's Bronfman Center, itself adapted from online sources. I regret that I was unable to locate the original sources in order to cite them properly.

ALL: We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Eternal our God brought us out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Had not God brought our ancestors out of Egypt, then we, our children and our grandchildren would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if we all were wise and perceptive, experienced, and versed in Torah, it would still be our duty to tell about the Exodus from Egypt.

THE FOUR CHILDREN ¹³

READER: Four times the Torah speaks about children in connection with the telling of the Exodus story, but nothing is said about the character of these children. Rabbinic *midrash* viewed these passages as representing different types of children: One who is wise, one who is wicked, one who is simple, and one who does not know enough to ask.

READER: Yet we know that no child is all wise, all wicked, all simple, or incapable of asking anything. At different points in our lives, we have been all of these children: One who is eager, one who is hostile, one who is passive, and one who is bewildered.

READER: We have asked the cleverest of questions; we have challenged provocatively; we have simply wanted to know the answer; we have been so confused that we could not speak. We have been all of these children: One who is aware, one who is alienated, one who is direct, and one who is silent.

*NOT EVERYONE AT OUR TABLE TONIGHT HAS FAMILIARITY WITH THE EXODUS STORY AS TOLD IN THE TORAH.
WE THEREFORE READ THIS ABRIDGED VERSION OF THE TALE.
ALL ARE ENCOURAGED TO ASK QUESTIONS.*

READER:¹⁴ “A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph” (Exodus 1:8). Pharaoh subjected the people Israel to hard labor and bitter bondage—yet, the more they were oppressed, the more they increased and spread out.

¹³Adapted from *A Night of Questions: A Passover Haggadah* 49.

¹⁴Adapted from the Book of Exodus.

READER: And so Pharaoh ordered Shifra and Puah, the Hebrew midwives, to drown all male Hebrew children in the waters of the Nile. But these brave women defied Pharaoh's edict, and Pharaoh turned instead to his subjects, declaring that all male Hebrew babies be killed.

READER: To save her son from this edict, Yocheved hid him in a basket among the reeds of the Nile, where his sister stood silently watching over as Pharaoh's own daughter took the child in, naming him Moses and raising him as her own. When he had grown up, he killed an Egyptian taskmaster who had beaten an Israelite slave, and he fled to the desert.

READER: There in the desert Moses encountered a bush that burned, but was not consumed by the flames. "I am the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob," said a Voice (Exodus 3:6). And Moses heeded the Eternal's command, returning to Egypt and demanding of the Pharaoh to let God's people go.

READER: But Pharaoh would not listen, stiffening his heart against the cries of a people enslaved and against the pleas of Moses. God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Again and again, Pharaoh refused to let the people go, until God performed such signs and wonders as had never been experienced before, bringing plague after plague upon Pharaoh and his people.

THE TEN PLAGUES

ALL: These are the ten plagues which God brought down upon Egypt:

AS EACH PLAGUE IS MENTIONED, EACH PERSON TAKES A DROP OF WINE FROM THE CUP AND RECITES:

<i>Dam.</i>	דָּם.	Blood.
<i>Tzfardei'a.</i>	צַפְרִידַעַ.	Frogs.
<i>Kinim.</i>	כְּנִים.	Lice.
<i>Arov.</i>	עֲרוֹב.	Beasts.
<i>Dever.</i>	דְּבַר.	Cattle Plague.
<i>Sh'chin.</i>	שֶׁכֶת.	Boils.
<i>Barad.</i>	בָּרָד.	Hail.
<i>Arbeh.</i>	אַרְבֶּה.	Locusts.
<i>Choshech.</i>	חֹשֶׁךְ.	Darkness.
<i>Makat bechorot.</i>	מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת.	Death of the Firstborn.

READER:¹⁵ “In the middle of the night the Eternal struck down all the first-born in the land of Egypt [...]. And Pharaoh arose in the night [...] because there was a loud cry in Egypt; for there was no house where there was not someone dead” (Exodus 12:29-30).

READER: Death and destruction had passed over the homes of the Israelites, their doorways and lintels smeared with lamb's blood. And on that long and terrible night, the people Israel fled Egypt, their bread unleavened, fleeing into the desert until they reached the shores of the Sea.

¹⁵ Adapted from the Book of Exodus.

READER: Suddenly they heard Pharaoh's chariots fast upon them. And God told Moses to stretch out his staff over the waters. And all through the night the wind blew, and the sea parted, and so Israel traversed the sea, with the waters like a wall to their right and to their left.

READER: Behind them Pharaoh's chariots pursued, but God caused the waters to return upon them, drowning them in the waters, just as Pharaoh's edict had drowned the Hebrew children in the waters of the Nile.

READER: "Then Miriam, the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went after her in dance with timbrels. And Miriam chanted for them: Sing to the Eternal, for God has triumphed gloriously; horse and driver God has hurled into the sea" (Exodus 15:20-21).

DAYEINU

Ilu hotzi hotzianu mi-Mitzrayim... dayeinu!

אלו הוציאנו ממצרים... דיינו!

Ilu natan lanu et ha-Torah... dayeinu!

אלו נתן לנו את השבת... דיינו!

Ilu natan lanu et ha-Shabbat... dayeinu!

אלו נתן לנו את השבועה... דיינו!

Dai-dai-einu!

If God had only brought us out of Egypt... it would have been enough for us!

If God had only given us the Torah... it would have been enough for us!

If God had only given us the Sabbath... it would have been enough for us!

READER:¹⁶ God did all this for our ancestors and for us. Therefore we should work, speak out, strive, and fight for the redemption of all the people of the world, as it is written: "You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt"(Exodus 23:9).

¹⁶ Adapted from *A Night of Questions*, 71.

SECOND CUP

A MEMBER OF OUR COMMUNITY SHARES A COMING-OUT STORY...

WE FILL, LIFT, AND DEDICATE THE SECOND CUP OF WINE.

B'ruchah At, Yah, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam, בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרְאֵת פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.
boreit p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, spirit of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

THE SYMBOLS¹⁷

READER: Our *seder* plate holds ancient and contemporary symbols, reminding us of our people's Exodus from Egypt and calling us to the ethical treatment of neighbor and stranger alike.

READER: (*Lift the vegetable*) Greens represent new growth, and our own potential to reinvent ourselves, to sink our roots deep into the earth, and to reach always toward the light. We dipped this potential into the salt water of our tears, both now and in times past

READER: (*Lift the egg*) The egg brings to mind rebirth and the cycle of the seasons; it calls us to consider our own generative possibilities: what will we create in our own lifetime?

READER: (*Lift the shank bone*). The lamb shank represents the sacrifices we have made to survive. Hiding our authentic selves, risking the revelation of the truth, entering a Jewish community where we were not sure we'd be welcomed—each of us has made sacrifices that brought us here.

READER: (*Lift the maror*) We taste the bitter herb to remind us of the bitterness of Egyptian bondage. It stings, bringing tears to our eyes, as we recall contemporary discrimination.

¹⁷ Adapted from the 2012 Bronfman Center Queer *haggadah*.

READER: (*Lift or point out the charoset*) This *charoset* represents the mortar that bound the bricks our ancestors labored to make for Pharaoh, and reminds us of the vibrant new communities we are building today.

READER: (*Lift the matzah*) The unleavened bread reminds us of life's brittleness. Too many among us come here with flattened hearts. May tonight's *seder* enable our spirits to rise.

READER: And our *seder* plate contains another symbol: the orange. A new and growing tradition, the orange represents the notion that there is—there must be—a place at the table for all of us, regardless of gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. As Jews we constantly re-create ourselves; our symbol is a fruit that carries within the seeds of its own rebirth.

רְהִצָּה ROHTZAH (HANDWASHING)

WE PASS AROUND THE BOWL AND CUP AND WASH.

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha-
olam, asher kideshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu
al netilat yadayim.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the universe, who hast sanctified us with commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.

מוֹצֵיא מַצָּה MOTZI MATZAH

*B'ruchah At, Yah, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam,
ha-motzi'ah lechem min ha-aretz .*

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמוֹצִיאָה לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, spirit of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

WE BLESS AND EAT THE MATZAH.

*Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha-
olam, asher kideshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al
acilat matzah.*

ברוך אתה יי, אל הינו מלך העולם, אשר
קדשנו במצות יו וצונו על אכילת מצה.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, sovereign of the universe, who sanctifies us with
commandments and commands us concerning the eating of *matzah*.

מָרֹר MAROR

WE BLESS AND EAT THE MAROR.

*B'ruchah At, Yah, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam,
asher kideshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al
achilat maror.*

ברוכה את יי, אל הינו רוח העולם, אשר
קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על אכילת מרור..

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, spirit of the universe, who sanctifies us with commandments
and commands us concerning the eating of bitter herbs.

פֶּרֶךְ KORECH

WE MAKE A SANDWICH WITH MATZAH, MAROR, AND CHAROSET.

READER: Perhaps this sandwich reminds us of Hillel's practice in the days of the Temple, when
he would fulfill the Torah's statement—that the people Israel would eat the Passover sacrifice
with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

READER: Perhaps, too, it reminds us of aspects of this very community, or of ourselves—bitter
and cracked surfaces that give way to the sharp, fresh evidence of our labors in the world,
tempered with sweetness combined from many sources. We are bitter and sweet, stubborn and
giving. It is with our diversity that we begin our festive meal.

שִׁלְחַן עוֹרֵךְ SHULHAN ORECH

THE PASSOVER MEAL IS SERVED!

AS YOU ENJOY YOUR FOOD, YOU MIGHT CONSIDER TURNING TO THOSE AROUND YOU TO ENGAGE IN CONVERSATION.

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE OFFERED AS SUGGESTIONS AND STARTING POINTS...

- What questions does this *haggadah* spark in you?
- With what characters in the Exodus story do you identify?
- What do the symbols on the *seder* plate mean to you?
- At what times in your life have you found yourself as the wise child? The wicked child? The simple child? The silent child?
- What other queer connections do you see to the tale of the Exodus, to the symbols on the *seder* plate, or to the Passover ritual?
- Have you ever, like Pharaoh, experienced a hardening of the heart? What helped to change your mindset toward liberation?
- Passover is a home ritual. For some queer people, going home can be complicated; home might even be the place from which you were expelled. How is it to celebrate this holiday here with this family?

צָפוּן TZAFUN (FINDING THE AFIKOMAN)

IN GOOD JEWISH TRADITION, PRIZES FOR THOSE WHO FIND THE AFIKOMAN!

בְּרֵיךְ BARECH (BLESSING AFTER THE MEAL)¹⁸

*B'rich Rachamana, malka d'alma,
marei d'hai pita.*

ברוך רחמנא מלכא דעלמא
מריה דהאי פיטא.

Blessed be the Merciful One, sovereign of the universe, master of this bread.

Oh, Lord, prepare me
to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true,
and with thanksgiving
I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

¹⁸ This blessing derived from the Babylonian Talmud (*Berachot* 40b), is usually recited only in times of duress or hurry. We adapt it for use here, employing a tune that also serves as a setting for the Christian song "Sanctuary." Thanking God, who is Full of Mercy, with these words, we also express our desire to reach across religious and cultural differences and welcome all to our table.

THIRD CUP

A MEMBER OF OUR COMMUNITY SHARES A COMING-OUT STORY...

WE FILL, LIFT, AND DEDICATE THE THIRD CUP OF WINE.

B'ruchah At, Yah, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam, בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרְאֵת פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.
boreit p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, spirit of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

SONGS (AND DESSERT)

Hava, hava nashira הבה הבה נשירה
shir haleluyah, shir haleluyah! שיר הללו-יה! שיר הללו-יה!

Let us sing a song of praise. Halleluyah!

Lo yisa goy el goy cherev; לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב
lo yilm' du od milchamah. לא ילמדו עוד מלחמה.

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; they shall never again study war (Isaiah 2:4).

Min ha-metzar karati, Yah! Anani ba-merchav מן המצר קראתי יְהוָה, עֲנֵנִי בְמִרְחֵב יְהוָה
Yah!

Out of the depths I called to you, Yah! God answered me with God's expansiveness!

Od yavo shalom aleinu עוד יבוא שלום עלינו
Od yavo shalom aleinu עוד יבוא שלום עלינו
Od yavo shalom aleinu v'al kulam. עוד יבוא שלום עלינו ועל כלם
Salaam! aleinu v'al kol ha-olam. סלאם עלינו ועל כל העולם
Salaam! Salaam! סלאם! סלאם!

Peace will surely come to us, to everyone. Salaam, for us and for the entire world. Peace!

FOURTH CUP

ALL:¹⁹ We cannot forget those who remain behind in any land—any environment—of persecution, fearful of anti-Semitism, religious intolerance, homophobia, or bigotry of any kind. To those still seeking liberty of life, to those striving courageously to build a community, and to those of all humankind that strive to live a free and equal existence with all people of the world, we pledge our continued vigilance, support, and solidarity.

ALL: And we take a breath in silence before blessing this, our fourth cup, to honor those who are as yet unable to emerge from their narrow straits.

WE FILL, LIFT, TAKE A BREATH, AND DEDICATE THE FOURTH CUP OF WINE.

B'ruchah At, Yah, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam, בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרְאֵת
boreit p'ri ha-gafen. פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, spirit of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

ELIJAH'S CUP

READER: We open the door for Elijah, that mysterious prophet whom tradition promises will resolve every dispute, smooth over every conflict, and reveal the Messianic Age—a time of peace and security for all of us. Tonight we voice our wish for peace and wholeness through the words of Jewish artist Judy Chicago, to remind us that Judaism has much to teach—and much to learn from—the wide world.

¹⁹ Adapted from theJQ International *LGBTQ Haggadah*.

WE LIFT ELIJAH'S CUP AND RECITE TOGETHER:

And then all that has divided us will merge.
 And then compassion will be wedded to power.
 And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind.
 And then both men and women will be gentle.
 And then both women and men will be strong.
 And then no person will be subject to another's will.
 And then all will be rich and free and varied.
 And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many.
 And then all will share equally in the earth's abundance.
 And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the old.
 And then all will nourish the young.
 And then all will cherish life's creatures.
 And then all will live in harmony with each other and the earth.
 And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

נְרִצָּה CONCLUSION²⁰

WE CONCLUDE OUR SEDER IN UNISON:

May slavery give way to freedom.
 May hate give way to love.
 May ignorance give way to wisdom.
 May despair give way to hope.
 Next year, at this time, may everyone, everywhere, be free!

L'shana ha-ba'ah b'Yirushalayim!

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּיְרוּשָׁלַיִם!

Next year in Jerusalem!

²⁰ Taken from the 2012 Bronfman Center/Keshet Queer *haggadah*.