

# MA NISHTANA מה נשתנה

A Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Ally Haggadah



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## Acknowledgements

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Thank You God for making us who we are and providing us this opportunity to strengthen our bonds with Judaism and with each other, to learn Torah, to grow as individuals, and to share our lives with those around us.

# The Seder (Order):

**קִדְּשׁ** 1. **Kadesh:** Recitation of the Kiddush

FIRST CUP

**וּרְחַץ** 2. **Urchatz:** Washing of the hands

**כַּרְפָּס** 3. **Karpas:** Greens

**יַחַץ** 4. **Yachatz:** Dividing the Middle Matzah

**מַגִּיד** 5. **Maggid:** The Story

Ma Nishtana - The Four Questions

The Four Children

The Ten Plagues

Dayeinu

THE SECOND CUP

**רַחֲצָה** 6. **Rachtzah:** Washing of the hands

**מוֹצִיא** 7. **Motzi:** The blessing for bread

**מַצָּה** 8. **Matzah:** The blessing for Matzah

**מְרוֹר** 9. **Maror:** Bitter Herbs

**כוֹרֵךְ** 10. **Korech:** Hillel Sandwich

**עוֹרֵךְ שְׁלֵחַן** 11. **Shulchan Orech:** The Meal

**צְפוּן** 12. **Tzafun:** Find the Hidden Afikomen

**בְּרַךְ** 13. **Barech:** Blessing

THIRD CUP

ELIJAH'S CUP

**הַלֵּל** 14. **Hallel:** Praise

**נִרְצָה** 15. **Nirtzah:** Acceptance

FOURTH CUP

*Leader:*

Why?

What does Passover have to do with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and ally (or - GLBTQA) issues? Can't a traditional seder stand on its own?" Often our Jewish tradition seems as though it has very little to say about our GLBTQA identities, and we can feel isolated within the Jewish tradition. These Jewish and GLBTQA identities, however, are not separate entities – they are always in conversation with one another.

*Leader:*

During the telling of the story of our exodus from Egypt, we hear about a seder at B'nai Brak, at which Rabbis Eliezer, Joshua, Akiba, Tarphon, and Elazar ben Azariah stayed up telling the story of redemption until the time for morning prayers. Tradition has it that this seder took place during the Bar Kochba rebellion against Rome, and the seder was both a telling of past redemption from slavery and a planning meeting for their current struggle against oppression. In relating their modern struggle with the story of redemption, these rabbis lived the obligation that "in every generation the ones telling the story must see themselves as having personally been a part of the redemption from Egypt." In every generation, we should not forget that redemption is an ongoing struggle.

*Leader:*

The seder table is the ideal place to bring multiple identities together in that the struggles for those identities as individuals and as communities are so integral to one another. We do not remove one identity to dawn another: we are all of our identities at all times. Just as we read of our past and the Jewish struggle for redemption, we relate our modern GLBTQA struggle for recognition, freedom, and acceptance. The seder is not something separate from our GLBTQA identities, but something strongly integrated – that speaks to us as whole, multifaceted people, in a celebratory and safe environment.

# קדש 1. Kadesh

## THE FIRST CUP

*Pour a cup of wine for the person on your left, and together let us raise our glasses.*

*Leader:*

We raise our cups in honor of...

Three artists who have shared their voices with the world.

*Reader 1:*

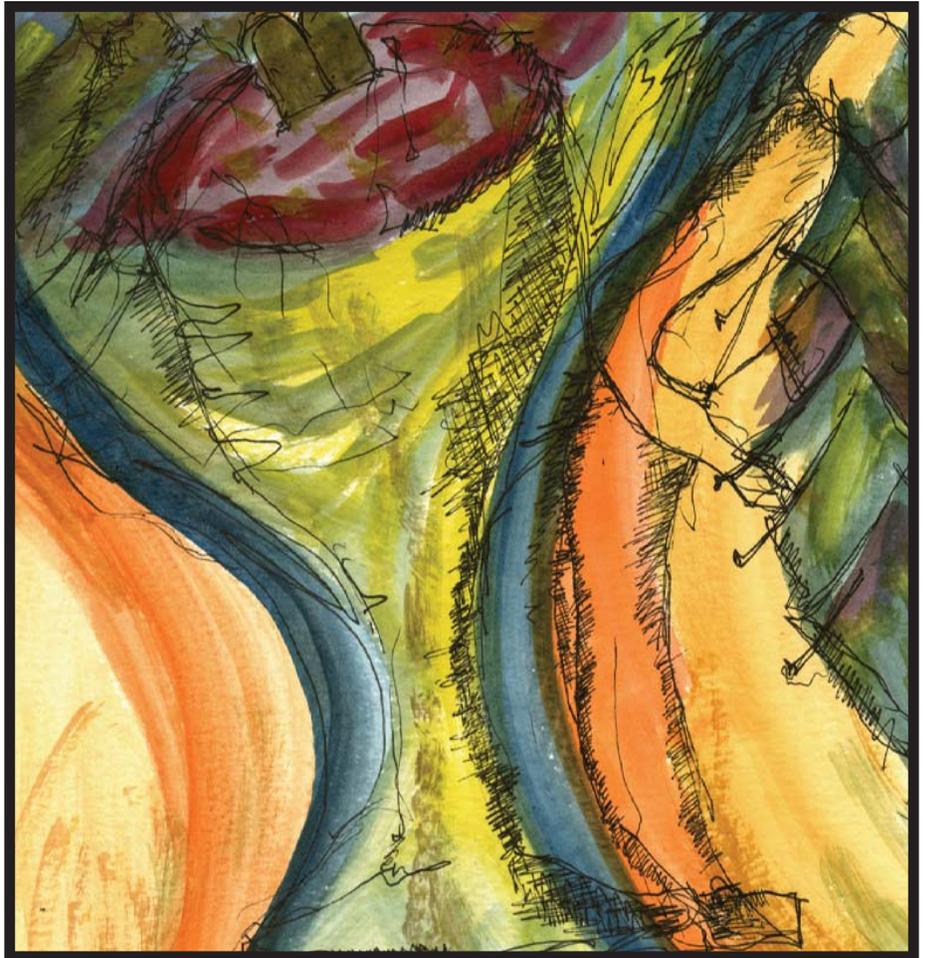
**Debbie Friedman ז"ל**, a Jewish folk singer who has created music and musical prayer sung by Jews throughout the world.

*Reader 2:*

**Sharon Cohen**, also known as Dana International, an Israeli transgender pop singer, whose hit “Diva” won international acclaim.

**Harvey Fierstein**, an award-winning playwright, actor and gay rights activist whose varied career includes the voice of Homer’s secretary on “The Simpsons” to Tony award-winning plays “Torch Song Trilogy” and “La Cage Aux Folles.”

*In gratitude* to God, and in gratitude for those who bring redemption with their voices, we rise to recite the first Kiddush.



*All Assembled:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁהַחַיְנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהַגִּיעְנוּ לְזִמְנוֹ  
:הַזֶּה \* *Baruch atah adonai, elohaynu melech ha-olam, she-heh-  
kheanu, v'key'yamanoo, v'hee-gee-anoo lahz-man ha-zeh.*

[Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, for keeping us alive, taking care of us, and bringing us to this season.]

*Drink the first cup while reclining.*

## פְּרִי 2. Urchatz: Washing of the hands



### *Leader:*

In this seder, we wash our hands twice: as tradition states, before eating wet vegetables and before eating bread. Often we wash our hands of each other's suffering – either because we do not feel as though we are a part of it, or because it is simply easier. Even when we recognize the suffering of others, we do not act on it – we wash our hands of responsibility. Before we begin the core of our seder tonight, let us wash our hands not to rid ourselves of responsibility, but to rid ourselves of apathy and inaction. Thank you for beginning this process with us.

*Wash your hands by pouring water from a cup, twice on the right hand and twice on the left hand without saying the regular blessing.*

## פְּרִי 3. Karpas: Greens

### *Reader 4:*

What do we really need to eat, to survive? Are we entitled to more? Especially when others cannot access even these necessities? Karpas questions our decadence, as others struggle to survive under the burden that our overconsumption places upon them – whose tears are more valuable?

*Take a small piece of the Karpas (green vegetable) and dip it in salt water. Recite the following blessing, and then eat the Karpas.*

### *All assembled:*

\* בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הָאֲדָמָה:

*Baruch atah adonai elohaynu melech ha-olam,  
boray pr'ee ha-adama.*

[Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the earth.]



## 4. Yachatz: Dividing the Middle Matzah



### *Reader 5:*

The breaking of the matzah reflects the struggle of dual identity most GLBTQA Jewish individuals face. When we are not free to live as we are, we are often compelled to put on a mask, dividing our Jewish selves and GLBTQA selves, our public selves and our private selves, and creating a rift we often navigate in silence. Just as we hide the afikomen, we hide parts of ourselves, compartmentalizing our lives in order to survive. God too hides from us.

### *Leader:*

*Silently, break the middle matzah.  
Set the larger piece as the afikoman  
and wrap it in a napkin. The smaller  
piece is saved for the hamotzi.*

### *Reader 6:*

God revealed only God's back and only to Moses on one special occasion. When the high priest entered the Holy of Holies – the place in which God dwelled – within the Temple, he would fill it with incense so that he would not see God and be killed by what he saw. God hides the meaning of God from us, just as GLBTQA Jewish people hide their identities, their purpose and meaning, from others and from themselves.

### *Reader 7:*

This hiding both protects us and destroys us. How much more peaceful and loving would our world be if we all knew the meaning of God? How much more peaceful and loving would it be if we were not compelled to hide the most meaningful parts of ourselves? And yet, God hides to protect us from God's power, and we hide to protect ourselves from loss. Hiding too, has its purpose.

## 4. Yachatz: Dividing the Middle Matzah

*All assembled (in song):*

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 in need, come and celebrate Passover.

Today, we are here. Next year, in the land of Israel.

Today, we are slaves. Next year, we will be free.

*Leader:*

*Ha lahma anya d'akhalu avhatana b'ara  
d'mitzraim.*



**מגיד 5. Maggid: The Story**  
**Ma Nishtana - The Four Questions**

*Reader 8:*

Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights we eat either chametz (leaven) or matzah, but tonight we eat only matzah! On all other nights we eat any vegetables, bitter or not bitter, but tonight we eat only bitter vegetables! On all other nights we do not have to dip our food even once, but tonight we dip twice! On all other nights we sit either straight or we recline, but tonight we all recline!

*All assembled (in song):*

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?

**Ma nish-tah-nah ha-lai-lah ha-zeh me-kal ha-lai-lote?**

- 1 שֶׁבֶּקֶל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמַצָּה. הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה בְּלוּ מַצָּה:  
 2 שֶׁבֶּקֶל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה מָרוֹר:  
 3 שֶׁבֶּקֶל הַלֵּילוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מְשַׁבְּלִין אֶפְסֵלוֹ פְּעַם אַחַת. הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים:  
 4 שֶׁבֶּקֶל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְדִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין. הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה בִּקְנוּ מְסֻבִּין:

- 1) *sheb-b'khal ha-lai-lote avnu okh-lean kha-maytz oo-matzah. ha-lailah ha-zeh koo-low matzah*  
 2) *sheb-b'khal ha-lai-lot avnu okh-lean sh'are y'rakot ha-lai-lah hazeh maror*  
 3) *sheb-b'khal ha-lai-lot ayn avnu maht-bee-lean ah-fee-loo pahm eh-khat. ha-lailah hazeh sh'tay ph-amim*  
 4) *sheb-b'khal ha-lai-lot avnu okh-lean bayn yosh-veen oo-vayn m'subean. ha-lai-lah hazeh koo-lah-nu m'subean.*

*Leader:*

**Because on all other nights we are either Jewish or GLBTQA, but on this night we are both.**

- Reader 9:* 1) Because on all other nights we eat leavened bread – representative of the “airiness” and artificial nature of our lives – but on this night we eat matzah – representative of transparency and plain honesty.
- Reader 10:* 2) Because on all other nights we enjoy a variety of tastes and vegetables, but on this night we focus on the maror – the bitterness of marginalization.
- Reader 11:* 3) Because on all other nights we weep – dip once – for specific reasons and particular people, but on this night we weep – dip twice – for those who suffer and have suffered from physical and psychological oppression.
- Reader 12:* 4) Because on all other nights we sit alert and rigid to an unsafe status-quo, but on this night we recline in safety as we hope to recline on all nights in the future.

## מגיד 5. Maggid: The Story The Four Children

### *Leader:*

The Torah speaks of four types of children: one is wise, one is wicked, one is simple, and one does not know how to ask.

### *Reader 13:*

**The Wise Child asks: “What is the meaning of the laws and traditions God has commanded?”**

You should teach your child all the traditions of Passover, even to the last detail.

### *Reader 14:*

**The Wicked Child asks: “What does this ritual mean to you?”**

By using the expression “to you,” your child excludes himself from our people and denies God. Shake your child’s arrogance and say to your child: “It is because of what Adonai did for me when I came out of Egypt...” “For me” and not for your child – for had your child been in Egypt, your child would not have been freed.

### *Reader 15:*

**The Simple Child asks: “What is all this?”**

You should tell your child: “It was with a mighty hand that Adonai took us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

### *Reader 16:*

As for the Child Who Does Not Know How To Ask, you should open the discussion for your child, as it is written: “And you shall explain to your child on that day, ‘It is because of what Adonai did for me when I came out of Egypt.’”



### *Leader:*

The following are questions a person at the beginning of the coming out process hears as they encounter a wise person, an evil person, a simple person, and one that does not know how to ask a question. Are these questions, in fact, wise, evil, simple or undeveloped? How is otherness related to these questions?

### *Reader 17:*

**The Wise Child**

What are the testimonies and laws and judgments that God commanded you?

How long have you been struggling with this?

Who else have you spoken with? How did they respond?

How, if at all, have you struggled with God?

### *Reader 18:*

**The Wicked Child**

Are you sure?

Have you tried dating someone of the opposite sex?

Do you realize that this will end our relationship?

Why do you have to rub it in my face?

Does this mean no grandchildren?

Have you really tried to live as you were born?

### *Reader 19:*

**The Simple Child**

What is this?

What does it mean to be gay? Or transgender? Or bi?

Why are you gay?

Can I be trans too?

Is it hard?

### *Reader 20:*

**The Child That Does Not Know How to Ask a Question:**

Start talking about your struggle. Understand that it may be difficult for the person to whom you are coming out or with whom you are talking – that that person also has a coming out process. So let this person know that you will be there when they are ready to ask questions.

## מגיד 5. Maggid: The Story The Ten Plagues

### Leader:

A full cup of wine is a symbol of joy. Because the Egyptians suffered under the ten plagues, our joy is diminished, calling on us to spill a drop of wine from our glass for each plague as it

### All assembled:

דָּם.	<i>Dam</i>	Blood
צַפְרֵדֵיִעַ.	<i>Tzfardeah</i>	Frogs
כִּנִּים.	<i>Kinim</i>	Lice
עֲרֹב.	<i>Arov</i>	Wild Beasts
דַּבֵּר.	<i>Dever</i>	Cattle Disease
שְׁחִין.	<i>Sh'hin</i>	Boils
בָּרָד.	<i>Barad</i>	Hail
אַרְבֵּה.	<i>Arbeh</i>	Locusts
חֹשֶׁךְ.	<i>Hoshekh</i>	Darkness
מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת:	<i>Makat B'khorot</i>	Death of the Firstborn

### Reader 21:

When we were leaving Egypt, God did two seemingly contradictory things. On the one hand, God protected us but on the other hand, God hardened Pharaoh's heart so his men and his chariots chased the Israelites. God made a pillar of clouds shift between the Egyptians and the Israelites to give us time to escape. Moses held his arm over the Sea of Reeds and God split the waters so that we could pass through.

### Reader 22:

We made it across safely, and Pharaoh's army followed after us. His entire army was swept up as the sea came back together. At this point, when we were free from pursuit, the Angels wanted to sing *Halleluyah* and God rebuked them: "How can you sing *Halleluyah* when My children are drowning?" (Megillah 10b.) God's lesson to the angels was that it was not fair for them to focus only on the redemption of the Jewish people, when other human beings, created in the image of God, were suffering.

### Leader:

Now, we notice that our cup is still very full.

Freedom is not the end of the struggle for liberation; it is the beginning.

Our joy is diminished by those plagues that are still in this world.

Please go around in a circle or in a small group, naming modern day plagues and spilling a drop of wine from your glass for each. (*Prejudice, homophobia, persecution, famine, natural disaster...*)

We do not let these things completely empty our glass. Though our joy is diminished, we still find joy in everything God has done for our people. We recognize that God is always with us, continually renewing our lives.

## מגיד 5. Maggid: The Story Dayeinu

*Leader:* The following passage chronicles how God raised us, step by step, from the degradation of slavery to the heights of freedom. We say Dayeinu after each act to express our thankfulness for that act alone. Dayeinu means “it would have been enough.” It would have been enough for God to take us out of Egypt, but God went on to provide us with many more freedoms. The haggadah teaches us that each step along our paths must be acknowledged and celebrated as “enough.” Only then can we approach life with a true awareness of what we have, and only then can we hope for change.

*Reader 23 begin, followed by the group.*

*Reader 23:*  
Had God taken us out of Egypt,  
And not done justice with the Egyptians

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

*Reader 24:*  
If God had done justice with the Egyptians  
and not with their Gods

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

*Reader 25:*  
If God had done justice with their Gods  
and not killed their first born sons

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

*Reader 26:*  
If God had killed their first born sons  
and not given us their wealth

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

*Reader 27:*  
If God had given us their wealth  
and not split the sea for us

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

*Reader 28:*  
If God had split the sea for us  
and not guided us through it on dry land

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

*Reader 29:*  
If God had guided us through it on dry land  
and not drowned our oppressors in it

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

*Reader 30:*  
If God had drowned our oppressors in it  
and not filled our needs in the desert for forty years

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

*Reader 31:*  
If God had filled our needs in the desert for forty years  
and not fed us manna

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

*Reader 32:*  
If God had fed us the manna  
and not given us the Sabbath

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

*Reader 33:*  
If God had given us the Sabbath  
And not brought us near before Mount Sinai

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

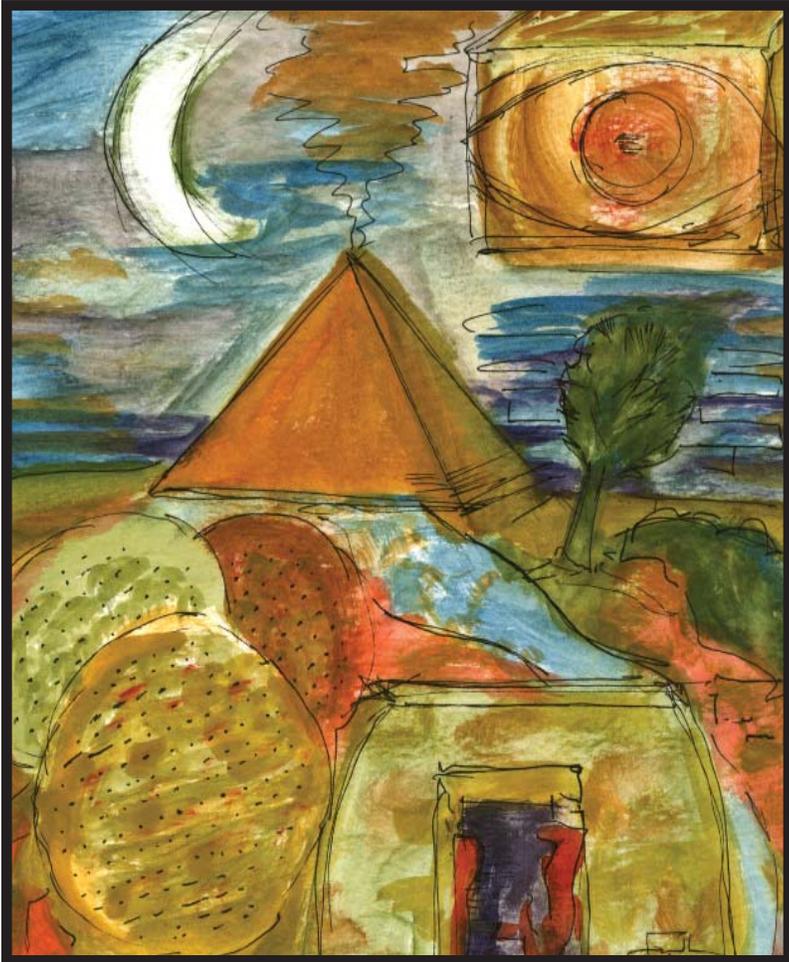
*Reader 34:*  
If God had given us the Torah  
and not brought us into the land of Israel

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

*Reader 35:*  
If god had brought us into the land of Israel  
and not built us the temple

*All assembled:*  
**It would have been enough.**

**מגיד** 5. Maggid: The Story  
Dayeinu



*All assembled (in song):*

Ilu ho-tsi, ho-tsi-a-nu,  
Ho-tsi-a-nu mi-Mitz-ra-yim,  
Ho-tsi-a-nu mi-Mitz-ra-yim,  
Da-ye-nu!

CHORUS:

Dai, da-ye-nu,  
Dai, da-ye-nu,  
Dai, da-ye-nu,  
Da-ye-nu, da-ye-nu, da-ye-nu!

Dai, da-ye-nu,  
Dai, da-ye-nu,  
Dai, da-ye-nu,  
Da-ye-nu, da-ye-nu!

Ilu na-tan, na-tan la-nu,  
Na-tan la-nu et-ha-Sha-bat,  
Na-tan la-nu et-ha-Sha-bat,  
Da-ye-nu!

(CHORUS)

Ilu na-tan, na-tan la-nu,  
Na-tan la-nu et-ha-To-rah,  
Na-tan la-nu et-ha-To-rah,  
Da-ye-nu!

(CHORUS)

## **מגיד** 5. Maggid: The Story Dayeinu

### *Reader 36:*

The struggle for all people who consider themselves GLBTQA is a multifaceted struggle, reflecting not the external power dynamic of oppressor and slave, but the internal dynamic. All GLBTQA people must face a struggle within themselves, in addition to the struggle between themselves and God, their families, their communities, and their worlds. Even in the direst of circumstances, GLBTQA people have the ability to wrestle with what God has provided them, however unclear, and to thank God for creating us in God's image.

### *All assembled:*

If God had given us life,  
but not the ability to love,  
**Dayeinu.**

If God had given us the ability to love,  
but not the freedom to love whomever we choose,  
**Dayeinu.**

If God had given us the freedom to love whomever we choose,  
but not the freedom to be with whomever we choose,  
**Dayeinu.**

If God had given us the freedom to be with whomever we choose,  
but not to express our love however we choose,  
**Dayeinu.**

If God had given us the freedom to express our love however we choose,  
but not given the people around us the empathy to understand our love,  
**Dayeinu.**

If God had given the people around us the empathy to understand our  
love but not the willingness to celebrate it with us,  
**Dayeinu.**

## **מגיד** 5. Maggid: The Story Dayeinu

*Leader:* While we say Dayeinu, and count each of God's many blessings, **we should not forget about our own work.** We must demonstrate our thanks to God by meeting God halfway, asking more of ourselves, in our congregations and communities.

As Jews, we are obligated to treat all people with humility and respect, regardless of differences. Sometimes it is difficult for members within the Jewish community to understand the struggle of GLBTQA people, and to treat GLBTQA people with the same respect as they do others. Jewish values are clear: we are asked to "be humble of spirit before all [people]." (Avot 4:10) and "Judge not your fellow until you stand in [their] place." (Avot 2:4).

**With the wisdom of our forbears in mind, we should settle for no less in our communities.**

Until all people in our communities and in our world are treated as equals, it will NOT be enough for us.

To express our personal responsibility and commitment to this tikkun olam (repairing of the world), we offer an alternate take on Dayeinu:

*Reader 37 begin, followed by the group.*

*Reader 37:*

If we were to ensure the Jewish people never return to slavery, but not to protect GLBTQA people from violence,

*All assembled:*

**It would not be enough for us.**

*Reader 38:*

If we were to protect GLBTQA people from violence, but not to include them in our ceremonies,

*All assembled:*

**It would not be enough for us.**

*Reader 39:*

If we were to include GLBTQA people in our ceremonies, but not to treat them with honor and respect,

*All assembled:*

**It would not be enough for us.**

*Reader 40:*

If we were to treat GLBTQA people with kindness, but not to make an effort to truly understand their struggle,

*All assembled:*

**It would not be enough for us.**

*Reader 41:*

If we were to end GLBTQA oppression, but allow others around us to remain oppressed,

*All assembled:*

**It would not be enough for us.**

## מגיד 5. Maggid: The Story The Second Cup

## THE SECOND CUP

### Leader:

We raise our cups in honor of...

### Reader 42:

**Rabbi Tracee Rosen**, spiritual leader of Congregation Kol Ami in Salt Lake City, Utah, a dually affiliated synagogue with the Reform and Conservative Movements. A graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, Rabbi Rosen is one of the first openly lesbian Conservative rabbis. Tracee lives with her partner Keren and loves to continue her study of Torah by sharing its teachings with people of all ages.

### Reader 43:

**Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum**, senior rabbi of Congregation Beth Simchat Torah in New York City, the largest GLBTQA congregation in the world. A Reconstructionist rabbi, Rabbi Kleinbaum is a passionate champion of human rights and justice for blacks, women, members of the GLBTQA community, immigrants, and Palestinians. She attended President Clinton's White House meeting of national religious leaders in 1999, and has been named as one of the country's top 50 Jewish leaders.

### Reader 44:

**Rabbi Steve Greenberg**, the only openly gay Orthodox rabbi. Rabbi Greenberg is a senior teaching fellow at CLAL, the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership think tank and resource center. He was ordained at Yeshiva University and serves as educational advisor at the Jerusalem Open House, *ha'bayit ha'patuach*, in Jerusalem. The Open House is a safe space for the Israeli GLBTQA community. In his recently released book, *Wrestling with God and Men*, Rabbi Greenberg shares the struggles he faced with his identity as an observant gay Jew.

### Reader 45:

**Rabbi Ayelet Cohen**, the associate rabbi of Congregation Beth Simchat Torah. She has been on the forefront of change in the Conservative Movement as a vocal straight ally. As an undergraduate at Brown University, she worked extensively on Arab-Jewish dialogue. Ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Rabbi Cohen served as the president of Keshet, the Jewish Theological Seminary's student group advocating for the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Jews into the fabric of Conservative Judaism.

### Leader:

**L'chaim to these pioneering rabbis who continue to take us to new spiritual and religious heights. May their holy and visionary work be an inspiration to us!**

### All assembled:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

*Baruch atah adonai elohanu melech ha-olam boray p'ree  
ha-gafen.*

[Blessed are You, Adonai our God, King of the  
universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.]



## **מגיד** 5. Maggid: The Story Pesach, Matzah, Maror

### *Leader:*

Rabban Gamliel, the first century sage who compiled the haggadah, taught: Those who have not explained these three things during the Seder have not fulfilled their obligation: PESACH, MATZAH, MARROR.

### *Reader 46:*

#### PESACH

When the great Temple of Jerusalem was still in existence, our ancestors ate a special sacrificial offering called the Pesach. The word “Pesach” means to “pass over.” The offering was eaten as a symbol that God passed over the houses of the Israelites, as the Torah teaches: “You shall say: This is the Pesach offering we offer to God, because God passed over the houses of the Israelites when God destroyed the Egyptians, but our homes God saved.”

### *Reader 47:*

#### MATZAH

Why do we eat Matzah? To remember that even before our ancestor’s dough had time to rise, God was revealed to them and saved them. As the Torah teaches: “And they baked the dough which they had brought from Egypt into Matzah; it did not rise since they hurried out of Egypt, and they could not delay, nor had they prepared other provisions for themselves.”

### *Reader 48:*

#### MARROR

Why do we eat bitter foods? To remember that the Egyptians, as the Torah teaches, “embittered the lives of our ancestors with hard labor in mortar and brick, and in every manner of drudgery in the field; and worked them ruthlessly in all their labor.”

### *Reader 49:*

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. God took us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Had God not taken our ancestors out of Egypt, we and our children and the children of our children would be slaves in Egypt. Even if we were all wise. All of us understanding. All of us elders. All of us knowing the Torah. We are commanded to tell the story of our exodus from Egypt. And anyone who increases in telling the story of our leaving Egypt, that is praiseworthy.

### *Reader 50:*

Blessed is God who keeps promises for Israel.

This is what has stood for our fathers and for us. Not one alone has stood against us to finish us. In every generation they stand against us to finish us. God who is holy and blessed saves us from their hands.

### *Reader 51:*

And the Jewish people went down to Egypt and lived there in small numbers and became a great nation, strong and populous. And the Egyptians were bad to us and tortured us. And they gave us hard work. And we called out to the God of our ancestors and God heard our voices and saw our poverty and our labor and our oppression. And God took us out of Egypt, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with fearsomeness and with signs and with miracles.

## רְחִצָּה 6. Rachtzah: Washing of the hands

### *Leader:*

*We wash our hands in preparation for the eating of matzah. Pour water from a cup, twice on the right hand and twice on the left and recite the blessing.*

### *All assembled:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל  
\* בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל  
נְטִילַת יָדַיִם: *Baruch Atah Adonai Elohaynu Melech ha-olam, asher  
kiddshanu b'mitzvo-tav, v'tzivanu al n'tee-lat ya-da-yeem.*

[Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has made us holy with God's commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of hands.]



## מוציא 7. Motzi: The blessing for bread

### Leader:

All three matzot are raised and the following two blessings are recited. Each person is then given a piece of the top two matzot, together with an extra amount of matzah. Eat the matzah immediately, while seated and reclining on the left side.

### All assembled:

\* בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה: *Baruch Atah Adonai Elobaynu Melech ha-olam, asher kiddshanu  
b'mitzvo-tav, v'tzivanu al ah-khee-lat matzah.*

[Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who made us holy with God's commands and commanded us to eat matzah.]

## מִצָּה 8. Matzah: The blessing for Matzah

### All assembled:

\* בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ:  
*Baruch Atah Adonai Elobaynu Melech ha-olam, ha-motzi lechem  
min ha-aretz.*

[Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.]



## מָרוֹר 9. Maror: Bitter Herbs

### Leader:

Take the bitter herbs say the following blessing. The maror is eaten without reclining.

### All assembled:

\* בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל  
אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר: *Baruch Atab Adonai Elohaynu Melech ha-olam, asher kiddshanu  
b'mitzvo-tav, v'tzivanu al ab-k-bee-lat marror.*

[Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who made us holy with God's commands and commanded us to eat the bitter herbs. ]

### Reader 52:

Why, in the telling of the Exodus, do we end with the memory of bitterness? We begin by eating the Pascal Lamb, which symbolizes our Exodus from Egypt and our freedom. Then we seem to trace backwards in time, eating the matzah which helped sustain our ancestors until their escape. And finally we end with maror, the symbol of slavery.

### Reader 53:

In the telling of the Exodus, we present the memory of freedom before the memory of the bitterness of slavery because the possibility of redemption and freedom is always present even in the midst of bitterness. Ralbag, in his commentary on the book of Kings, writes that "It is not the way of God to bring bad things to people except if good will come of them" (Ralbag on Kings I:19:11). This fundamental optimism is the essence of Judaism.

### Reader 54:

At times it is difficult for us to maintain an awareness of this optimism, and yet it is critical to our survival for us to do so. Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav went so far as to say that due to the possibility of redemption "It is forbidden to despair!"



## פּוּרֵךְ 10. Korech: Hillel Sandwich

### Reader 55:

Most commonly interpreted, this charoset represents the mortar we made when we were slaves in Egypt. But there is another meaning: Rabbi Levi proposed that we eat charoset “in memory of the apple tree.” (Pesachim 116a). Our Rabbis taught that despite being exhausted from work, forbidden from bearing children, and by extension from being in love, the women of Israel brought their husbands to the apple tree where their children were conceived (Rashi on Exodus 38:8). They refused to relinquish their ability to love even in the despair of slavery. Our Rabbis taught that the Israelites’ courage to express their love for one another was the sustenance that carried the children of Israel through the years of slavery and towards a long-awaited redemption.

### Reader 56:

One of the oldest recipes for charoset is comprised of the fruits named in the Song of Songs, fruits representing the various identities of the children of Israel and God’s love for all of them. As this recipe reexamines what is often conceived of as a negative symbol of mortar and oppression and transforms it into a positive symbol of identity and love, so too should we come together and realize our identities. When Hillel

combines bitter herbs, haroset, and matzah into what is referred to as the “Hillel Sandwich,” he merges the bitterness of slavery the sweetness of self-realization, and the promise of redemption. He emphasizes the individual’s and the community’s abilities to forge identity from painful experience. By repeating the seder each year, we grow as individuals and as a people, always from a new perspective and always in our search for true freedom.



### Leader:

**Let us each make a Hillel Sandwich.**

*Each person receives a piece of the bottom matzah together with some additional matzah and a second portion of maror. Put the matzah and maror together in the form of a sandwich and dip it in the charoset.*

## שְׁלֶחַן עוֹרֵךְ 11. Shulchan Orech: The Meal

*Eat the festival meal.*

## צפון 12. Tzafun: Find the Hidden

*Search for the hidden afikomen.*

### *Leader:*

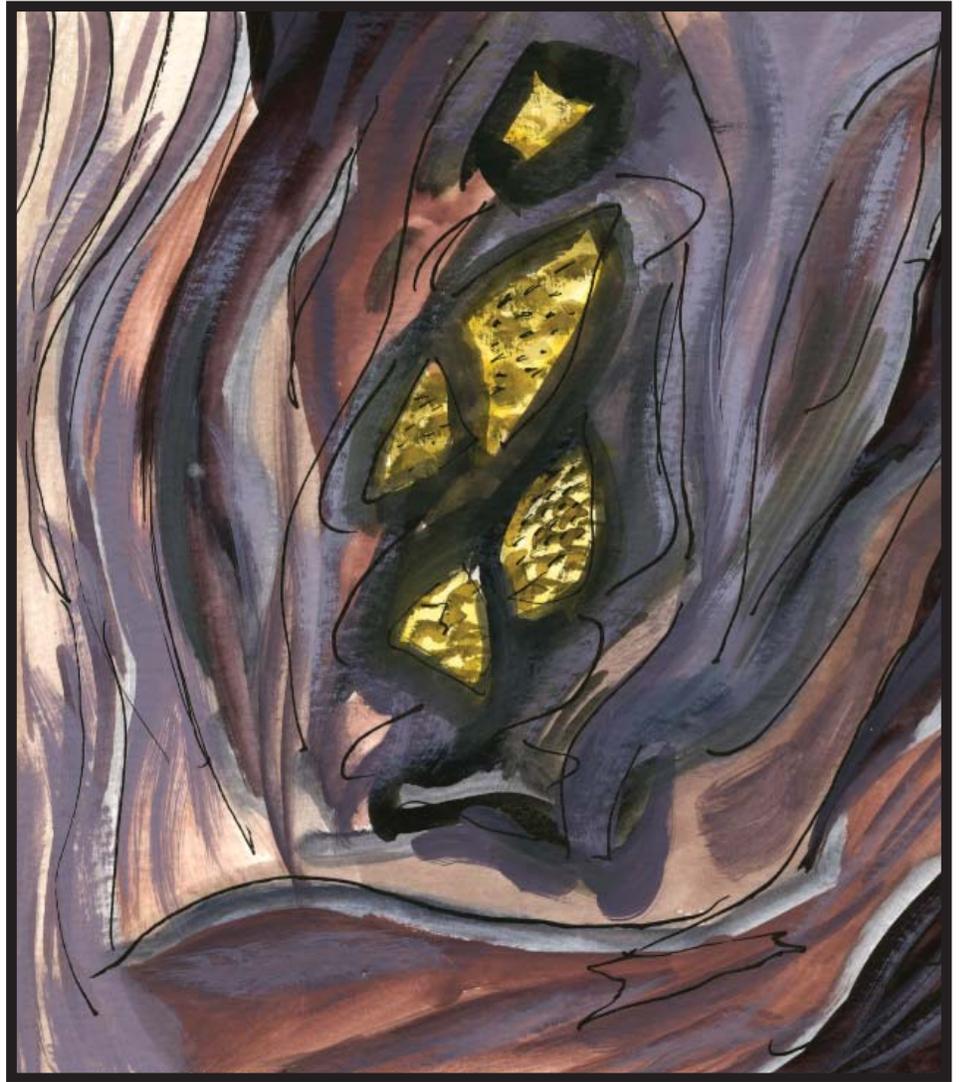
In the beginning of our seder, we compared hiding the afikomen to hiding parts of ourselves. While hiding sometimes has its purpose, the Passover meal is never complete until we find the afikomen. The story of freedom is never complete until we find that which is hidden. In our personal struggles as GLBTQA people, often our only true redemption can be found when we come out of hiding.

### *Reader 57:*

It is not easy to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or intersexed in a heteronormative world with strict gender roles. Why do we, as GLBTQA people - as GLBTQA Jews - continue living within our struggle? Why don't we just choose to try to fit into heterosexuality and more traditional gender roles? Why don't we just hide? In Genesis, God calls out to Adam after he eats from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and asks "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). Adam replies "I was afraid because I was naked, so I tried to hide myself" (Genesis 3:10)

### *Reader 58:*

Just like Adam, we often fall under the illusion that by hiding from ourselves or the people around us, we are also hiding from God. But by hiding from ourselves, we just make God, truth, and love harder to find. If we hide from ourselves, we relinquish all hope, and will never get the opportunity for redemption. After Adam reveals himself to God, God makes it known that Adam and Eve are in for hard times, but God also makes Adam and Eve garments with which to cover and protect themselves. Like Adam and Eve we will face hard times, but if we come out of hiding we can allow God to help us and protect us through it all.



*Break the afikoman into small pieces, and eat it while reclining to the left.*

### *Leader:*

This is the last food eaten during the seder. The taste remains in our mouths while we re-live the remainder of the Exodus from Egypt. As our dessert, it marks the end of the meal, but not the end of the seder process, or the process of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world. The story continues, as does oppression and the fight against it. As we learn from our discussion of the ten plagues, freedom is not the end of the struggle for liberation; it is the beginning.

## פּרֵי 13. Barech: Blessing

*At this point Birkat Hamazon, the prayer after a meal, is recited followed by the third cup of wine.*

*Leader:*  
We raise our cups in honor of...

### THE THIRD CUP

*Reader 59:*  
Congressperson Barney Frank, the only openly gay Jewish congressperson in the U.S. House of Representatives. Representing the Fourth Congressional District in Massachusetts, Congressman Frank has been an outspoken leader on social justice and human dignity for all Americans, especially on GLBTQA issues.

*Leader:*  
L'chaim to Congressperson Frank, who by advancing the Jewish values of chesed and tzedek helps to deliver the basic rights GLBTQA Americans and residents deserve.

*All Assembled:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן: *Baruch atah adonai elohanu melech ha-olam boray p'ree ha-gafen.*

[Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,  
Creator of the fruit of the vine.]



## 13. Barech: Blessing Elijah's Cup

### Opening the door for Elijah

#### *Reader 60:*

Doors open and close everywhere, and people on either side of the doors determine whether to make the doors into passages that unite, or walls that cut them off from others. People choose whether or not to enter and exit communities. In Egypt, God saw the sign of our faith on the exposed doors of our houses and passed over us, sparing our first-born sons. When we left, God transformed the wall that was the Red Sea into a doorway composed of dry land, opening it for us, and closing it against the Egyptians as they tried to return us to bondage.

#### *Reader 61:*

As our seders begin we invite the poor into our homes, where we have joined together, as families, as friends and as fellow Jews to remember a time when we were all trapped within the walls of slavery. Now, later in the seder, we open the doors of our houses, emphasizing our vulnerability, exposing us to the exterior world, asking God to protect us, out in the open as we are, from all of the nations of the world who do not fear God.. We stand in our open doorways, looking out at the dark, perhaps dangerous night, and we allow hope in.

#### *Reader 62:*

We are expecting Elijah to come.

We expect the same Elijah who lost his faith in the Jewish people. The Elijah who was jealous on behalf of God and felt that God would be justified in punishing the people for their misdeeds, for worshiping another God, who could not understand why it was that God did not take God's wrath out on them. The Elijah who stood in a mountain as God began the process that continues to this day of teaching Elijah that God is a parent and a teacher, Israel a child and a student of God.

#### *Reader 63:*

We learn that the spirit of God passed Elijah and that there was "A great and strong wind that broke hills and shattered boulders before God and God was not in the wind, and after the wind there was noise, and God was not in the noise. And after the noise there was fire, and God was not in the fire, and after the fire was the sound of a thin silence." (Kings I. 11-12) Ralbag explains that God was showing Elijah that God had the option of using the forces of destruction, wind, noise and fire, but he did not use them and instead, God could be found only in the subtlety of the sound of a thin silence. God was showing Elijah that his intention was not to punish the Jewish people, but only to teach them. According to Ralbag, Elijah did not learn his lesson at the time.

## **פרקי** 13. Barch: Blessing Elijah's Cup

### *Reader 64:*

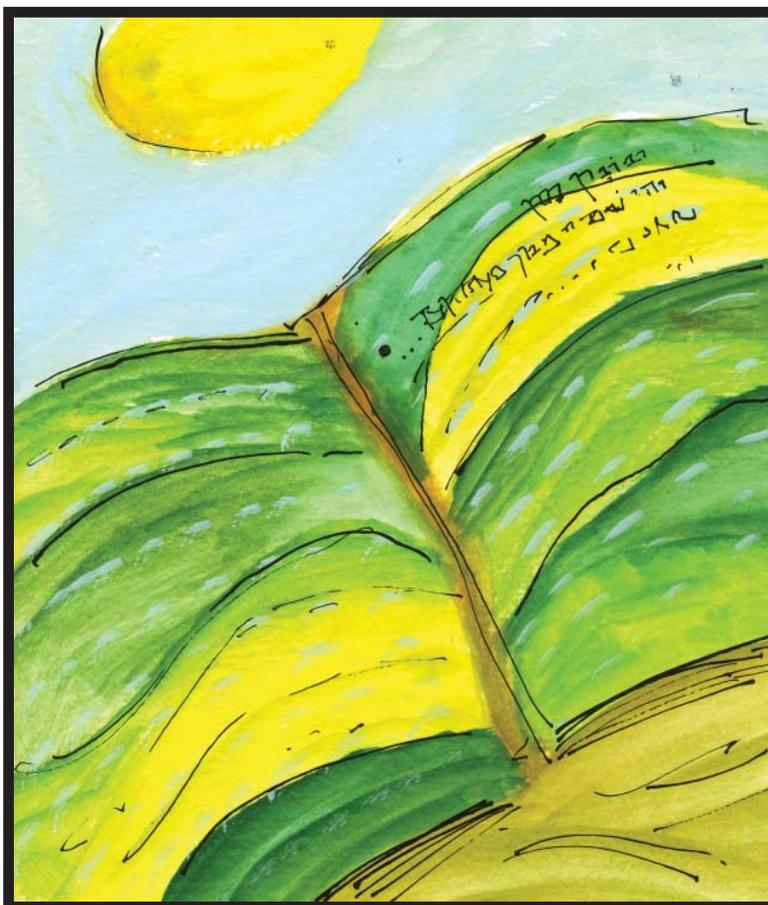
Rabbi Joseph Telushkin teaches that in our time Elijah wanders the earth and comes to every Passover seder, so that he can see that the people he was so pessimistic about survive to this day, and that the relationship between the Jewish people and God remains a strong one. Over the years, Elijah becomes a symbol of hope for the Jewish people. At various times, Elijah appears to great people, still serving the function of Gods messenger to the world. At a ruin he teaches Rabbi Yosi (Berachot 3a) that every day when the Jewish people come in through the doors of the synagogue or the house of study, God says “fortunate is the king who is praised this way in his house, like this, even for a father who has banished his children from his house (the temple), it is unfortunate for the sons who have been banished away from their fathers table.”

### *Reader 65:*

In this way, Elijah becomes a messenger of peace between God and the Jewish people. The prophet Malachi describes God as sending Elijah to the Jewish people so that he will “return the hearts of fathers to their sons and the hearts of sons to their fathers” (Malachi III 24). Now as we reflect on the chasm that divides us from God, the many families in which rifts have separated children and parents, we invite Elijah into our homes, Elijah the prophet, whose journey from judge to peacemaker gives us hope that God and all of mankind will move towards peace.

### *Reader 66:*

We open the door to the dark night, to those who are so distant that they are invisible, we break the wall that once separated our house, our seder, from the outside and welcome a blurring of barriers, ask God to split the Red Sea that divides us from each other and from God, pray that the door to Gods house is still open, show God that even if that door is locked we still come in, through the doors of our study houses and synagogues, back to praise God within the walls of Gods house.



## הלל 14. Hallel: Praise

*Leader:*

*We recite Hallel in joy and in thanks for all that God has given us. The Hallel service parallels our redemption: from the cry of distress through the freedom from slavery to the song of a liberated people in praise of God.*

*Reader 67:*

*Adonai Zacharanu Levarech (ps. 115:12-19)*

God has been mindful of us, God will bless--God will bless the house of Israel; the house of Aaron. God will bless them that fear God, both small and great. God will increase you more and more, you and your children. Blessed is God who made heaven and earth. The heavens are the heavens of God; but the earth God has given to us. The dead don't praise God, neither any that go down into silence; But we will bless God from this time forth and for ever. Hallelujah.

*Reader 68:*

*Hallelu et-Adonai Kol-Goyim (ps 117 – 118: 1-4)*

Praise God, all the nations; praise God, all peoples.  
For God's kindness overwhelmed us,  
and God's truth is eternal, halleluyah.  
Give thanks to God, for God is good:  
God's kindness is forever.  
Let Israel say: God's kindness is forever.  
Let the house of Aharon say: God's kindness is forever.  
Let those who fear God say: God's kindness is forever.

*Reader 70:*

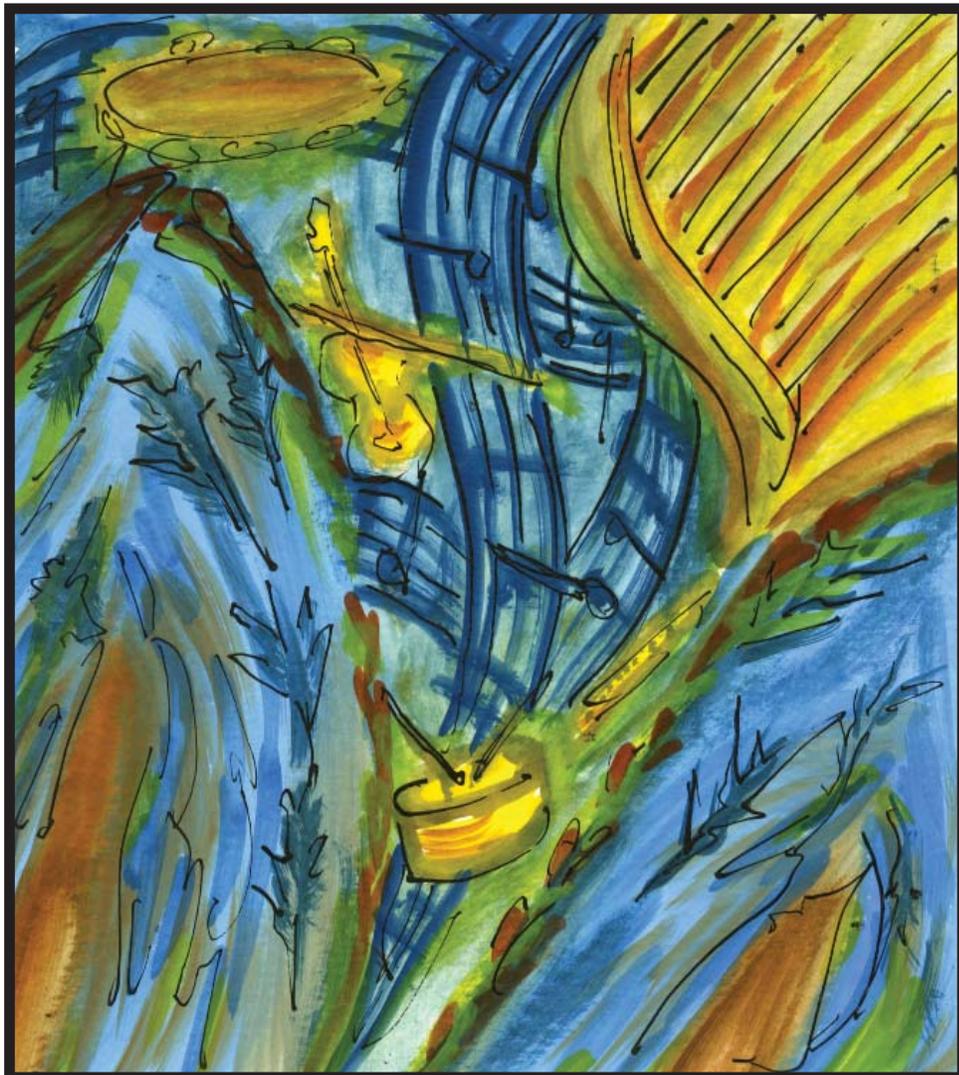
*Pitchu-Li Shaare Tzedek (ps. 118: 19-20)*

Open for me the gates of righteousness, I will enter then and thank God. This is the gate of God; the righteous will enter through it.

*Reader 69:*

*Odecha Ki Anitani (Ps. 118: 21-26)*

I thank You, for You answered me and were my salvation.  
The stone despised by the builders has become the cornerstone. This is from God; it is wonderful in our eyes.  
This day, God has made, we will rejoice and be glad in Him. God please save us; God please let us prosper.



*Leader:*  
We raise our cups in honor of...

*All Assembled:*

*Reader 71:*  
The first Jerusalem Pride Parade that took place in June of 2002, and the annual marches that have followed. L'Chaim to the Jerusalem Open House, the Israeli GLBTQA community center that opened in 1997 and continues to support GLBTQA people under a heterosexist government and homophobic Jerusalem community.

\*בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַנֶּפֶן:

*Baruch atab adonai elobanu melech ha-olam boray p'ree ha-gafen.*

[Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.]

**L'chaim, to those helping to redeem the GLBTQA Jewish community.**

*Leader:*  
The Passover seder is completed according to Jewish law – by completed, we mean “Jewishly” completed. It’s not over yet. Although the rabbis of up to earlier this century would not have imagined a GLBTQA-focused seder, we are continuing our and their tradition through our innovative haggadah and discussion. Ma nishtana? A new haggadah? Maybe it was hard to come here tonight? Maybe a seder is unfamiliar territory? And yet, nothing is different. Throughout the centuries, Jews have gathered under difficult communal and individual circumstances. And we continue that tradition of faith, perseverance, and hope that a modern Passover seder extends to us.

As we conclude this story of redemption, let us think about the next. God will return us to Jerusalem. Whether the city itself or the ideal it represents, this journey is a return to the right to autonomy, safety, self-determination;

the right to culture and language and spirituality; the right to be who we are as we are.

We merited to put together this seder, this haggadah, and to bring together this group of people. Let us merit it next in year in Jerusalem.

*All Assembled:*

L'shanah HaBa'ah

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:



## ***Ma Nishtana?* Resources**

Below is a list of GLBTQA Jewish resources. This list is by no means comprehensive. The websites represent only some of those available and for the sake of space, we've included descriptions of only some of the books and films. We encourage you to explore the links on these various websites and to further explore the topics of these books and films (recommended books and films are indicated by \* and those available at the St. Louis Hillel are indicated by ^).

### **GLBTQA Jewish Resources Online**

**ATID.** This site presents a comprehensive list of contemporary Orthodox responsa to issues of homosexuality. <http://www.atid.org/resources/ATIDbiblio1.asp>

**Congregation Beth Simchat Torah.** New York City's synagogue for the New York metropolitan area's 200,000 gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Jews, as well as our families and their friends. Founded in 1973, and under the leadership of Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum since 1992, CBST has become the largest gay synagogue in the world and arguably one of the most influential: an important voice in Judaism, in the world-wide discourse on the nature of religious community, and in the movement to secure basic civil rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in the United States and throughout the world. <http://www.cbst.org/>

**Jerusalem Open House.** The Jerusalem Open House (JOH) is a grassroots activist, support and social organization of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people in Jerusalem. [http://www.gay.org.il/joh/eng/home\\_eng.htm](http://www.gay.org.il/joh/eng/home_eng.htm)

**JQYouth.** A social/support group made up of frum/formerly frum gay, bi, trans and lesbian Jews ages 17-30. <http://www.jqyouth.org/>

**Keshet Ga'avah: The World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Jews.** The World Congress holds conferences and workshops representing the interests of lesbian, gay, bisexual, & transgender Jews around the world. <http://glbtjews.org/>

**Keshet** at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Keshet, formed at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 2002, aims to: explore the Jewish texts and interpersonal elements that impact the issue of homosexuality and Conservative Judaism; educate the broader Conservative community about the aforementioned resources; advocate for social and religious equality for Jews of all sexual orientations within the Conservative Movement. Site includes responsa on homosexuality from the Conservative Movement. <http://www.keshetjts.org>

**Mosaic: The National Jewish Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity.** Mosaic partners with Jewish organizations, communities, and individuals of every denomination to create a world where all Jews are fully included in Jewish communal life, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. <http://www.jewishmosaic.org/>

**Twice Blessed.** Archives of Jewish GLBT related material. <http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/tb/>

## Lesbian/Female Bisexual

**Orthodykes.** The purpose of this site is to provide a home on the Internet for Orthodox Jewish lesbians. At the moment, there are OrthoDykes groups in New York, in Israel and on the Internet. <http://www.orthodykes.org/>

## Gay/Bisexual Male

**Orthogays.** This is a list for Gay Jewish Men who are Orthodox. It was created to have a place where Orthodox Gay Jewish Men can meet or talk with others like ourselves, Gay Jewish Men, who are currently frum (Orthodox). This includes "Frum From Birth," "Ba'al Tshuvah," Modern Orthodox, Datti Le'umi, Haredi, Hardali, etc. <http://members.tripod.com/~orthogays/list.html>

## Transgender

**Trans Jews.** E-mail discussion list for transgendered, transsexual, genderGLBTQA and gender-questioning Jews (religious and secular) of all backgrounds and ages. Includes links to related sites. <http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Chelsea/1500/>

Website of **Leslie Feinberg**, trans Jewish author of renowned Stone Butch Blues. <http://www.transgenderwarrior.org/>

**Dina's List.** The purpose of this list is to provide a place for male-to-female and female-to-male transsexuals who are Orthodox Jews to meet and discuss things. The list will also be open to transsexuals who used to be Orthodox but aren't anymore provided that they retain a positive view of Orthodox Judaism. <http://www.starways.net/beth/dina.html>

## GLBT Jewish Books and Films

*Between Sodom and Eden: A Gay Journey Through Today's Changing Israel (Between Men--Between Women)* by Lee Walzer.

*Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out* edited by Loraine Hutchins and Lani Kaahumanu.

*Confessions of a Jewish Wagnerite: Being Gay and Jewish in America* by Lawrence D. Mass.

*Dancing on Tisha B'Av* by Lev Raphael.

*Independence Park: The Lives of Gay Men in Israel (Contraversions: Jews and Other Differences)* by Amir Sumaka'i Fink and Jacob Press.

*Journeys & Arrivals: On Being Gay and Jewish* by Lev Raphael.

*Kosher Meat* edited by Lawrence Schimel.

*Lesbian & Gay Subtext from a Cinema of Diaspora.* A video clips/lecture by Eve Sicular. <http://www.metropolitanklezmer.com/celluloid.html>

*\*^Lesbian Rabbis: The First Generation* edited by Rebecca T. Alpert, Sue Levi Elwell and Shirley Idelson.

*Lesbiot: Israeli Lesbians Talk About Sexuality, Feminism, Judaism and Their Lives* edited by Tracy Moore.

*Like An Orange on a Seder Plate: Our Lesbian Haggadah* by Ruth Simkin.

*Like Bread on the Seder Plate: Jewish Lesbians and the Transformation of Tradition* by Rebecca Alpert.

*Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology* edited by Evelyn Torton Beck.

\*<sup>^</sup>*GLBTQA Jews* edited by David Shneer and Caryn Aviv. Series of essays, each addressing what it means to be GLBT and Jewish in the modern American Jewish experience.

*Speaking for Ourselves: Short Stories by Jewish Lesbians* edited by Irene Zahava.

\**Stone Butch Blues* by Leslie Feinberg.

\*<sup>^</sup>*Trembling Before G-d*. Built around intimately-told personal stories of Hasidic and Orthodox Jews who are gay or lesbian, the film portrays a group of people who face a profound dilemma - how to reconcile their passionate love of Judaism and the Divine with the drastic Biblical prohibitions that forbid homosexuality. Site includes long and comprehensive list of resources. <http://www.tremblingbeforeg-d.com>

*Twice Blessed: On Being Lesbian, Gay and Jewish* by Christie Balka and edited by Andy Rose. "The essays address everything from growing up in a yeshiva to finding a new Judaism-based theology of gay sexuality, from the search for Jewish gay role models to Jewish marital commitment ceremonies. This is a necessary book, not only for Jews who live their sexuality in silence, or gays and lesbians who long to reclaim." - Kera Bolonik, amazon.com

\*<sup>^</sup>*Wrestling With God and Men* by Steven Greenberg. In this compelling and groundbreaking work, Greenberg challenges long-held assumptions of scriptural interpretation and religious identity as he marks a path that is both responsible to human realities and deeply committed to God and Torah. <http://www.wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/books/2576.htm>

\**Yentl's Revenge* by Danya Ruttenberg and Susannah Heschel.

\**Yossi & Jagger* directed by Eytan Fox, Israel. <http://www.yossiandjagger.com/>

\* indicates a recommended book or film

<sup>^</sup> indicates copy available at the St. Louis Hillel