



חג שמחה

5784/2024

Passover Seder

supplement

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The North Carolina Jewish Clergy Association (NCJCA) has created this Seder Supplement to be used around your holiday tables. NCJCA is an organization of rabbis and cantors of various streams serving congregations, agencies, organizations, and the broader Jewish community of North Carolina. In its gathering, it seeks to promote the interests of Judaism and the Jewish people in North Carolina and throughout the world and reflect the moral and religious voices of the Jewish community in North Carolina.



This year's contributors:



Rabbi Andy Koren became senior rabbi of Temple Emanuel, Greensboro, in 2021 after serving as director of religious education since 2003. He is a former executive director of NC Hillel (1993-95). In addition to his social justice, interfaith, educational, and civic work, he is a co-chair of the North Carolina Jewish Clergy Association.



Rabbi Judy Schindler has served North Carolina as a rabbi since 1998. She is rabbi emerita of Charlotte's Temple Beth El, Sklut Professor of Jewish Studies and director of the Stan Greenspon Holocaust and Social Justice Education Center at Queens University of Charlotte. She is the immediate past co-chair of the North Carolina Jewish Clergy Association.



Rabbi Michael Namath (he/him) is the program director at the DC-based Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.



Rabbi Emily Losben-Ostrov serves as the spiritual leader of Temple of Israel in Wilmington. Prior to that, she served as rabbi of Anshe Hesed in Erie, PA for three years. She is a member of the North Carolina Jewish Clergy Association steering committee



Rabbi Lucy Dinner has served as Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth Or in Raleigh, North Carolina since 1993. In addition to serving Temple Beth Or's vibrant congregation, she works with local and national organizations that promote social justice. She is an incoming co-chair of the North Carolina Jewish Clergy Association.

Leave an Empty Chair at Your Seder Table This Year

by Rabbi Andy Koren

Freedom is one of the central messages of the Torah. In the first of the 10 Commandments, God is identified as the Source of Freedom. Passover may be our time of gathering with family and/or friends, but its deepest significance is the Jewish people's mission statement: freedom from oppression.

I hope and pray every day, as I have since October 7th, that the hostages being held in Gaza by Hamas and other terrorist forces will be free and back where they belong: in Israel.

Our seders this year cannot only be about freedom for others. This year, our calls for freedom need to start with freedom for our own.

Which is why I hope that you will leave an empty chair at your seder this year.

This is not a new thing. When I was in college in the mid-1980s, we left an empty chair at our seder table to recognize the plight of Soviet Jews as well as Prisoners of Zion, heroes such as Natan Sharansky who was imprisoned by the KGB for the "crimes" of wanting to learn Hebrew and one day live in Israel.

For five years from the summer of 2006 until October 2011, Temple Emanuel (Greensboro) had an empty chair on our *bimah* for Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier kidnapped from Israel and held by Hamas terrorists in Gaza. Each year at Passover, we kept an empty seat open for him.

Once again, a chair is on our *bimah*. This time it is not just for one, but for 134. You can see them and their stories at: <https://stories.bringthemhomenow.net/>

For many months Tel Aviv's Hostage Square featured a number of "exhibits" with empty chairs.

This Passover, it is up to us to bring these calls for freedom from the open square into our homes. Some may decide to put a printout of the names of the hostages on their chair, others might put the pictures which has all of their faces on it, while still others might put a picture of one of the hostages. Other creative variations, the hallmark of seders from time immemorial, abound.

The key thing is to leave that empty chair. And talk about it.

As hard as it is, we must talk with family and friends about the times we are living through and how unacceptable it is that members of our extended family are being held captive. Moreover, we need to lift up how we and other Jewish communities have been subjected to a spike in antisemitism that has seen the following in Greensboro: a local Holocaust memorial defaced and students from

elementary school through the college level harassed. Sadly, other Jewish communities throughout our state have their own stories to tell of how they have been adversely impacted during these trying times. More generally, we have all been subjected to elected leaders and those seeking office pandering in hate speech against us and our people, and Jewish religious and communal gathering places needing to be on unprecedented alert.

This year, let's also say the following prayer at our seders, perhaps in the section before dinner or when we open the door for Elijah towards the end of the night:

For our family, the whole house of Israel, who are in distress, or in captivity – who stand either in the sea or on dry land – may God have mercy on them and take them out from narrowness to expanse, and from darkness to light, and from oppression to redemption, now, swiftly, and soon!

May the time come soon when our people, and all people, will be free from captivity, when war will no longer plague our world, and when all will live as kind and accepting neighbors.





The four children of the Seder and the four allies, neighbors and friends responding to the Israel-Hamas War

by Rabbi Judy Schindler

We teach about the Exodus and redemption through events of the past and events of today. We are meant to teach each child around our Seder table according to their capacity. The same holds true as we aim to educate our allies, colleagues, neighbors, and friends about the Israel-Hamas War.

The Chacham, the wise ally, who understands the conflict has a long history and is complex, who stands with Israel and with us in our fear, our pain, our sadness and in our struggle – even as they, like we, call Israel to accountability to ensure protection of all civilian life, to ensure humanitarian aid, and to work toward the goal of peace. To this colleague we regularly connect - to hear their pain and to share our own pain, and to ask them to speak with us, beside us, and for us during this fearful time.

The Rasha, the negative colleague, who uses every opportunity to demonize Israel and denounce Zionism in public settings and in private ones - creating polarization that endangers us all. They are not supportive of the Jewish people. They choose not to see that Zionism is not colonialism but was led by refugees from persecution seeking liberation. Their hatred for Israel is greater than their love of Palestine. When possible, we need to engage with them to ensure their words and our words do not invite and expand antisemitism or Islamophobia.

The Tam, the simple neighbor, who loves all and doesn't understand the history or the iceberg of the conflict which has so many layers beneath the surface. To this one, we hear their concern and connection to the struggle and share our own. We invite them in for conversation and dialogue in the hopes of building a better condition for two beleaguered and traumatized nations. We teach them the meaning of antisemitism and how it manifests today and why Israel's response to Hamas' brutal attack, its aim to neutralize Hamas' future threat, and struggle to redeem the hostages is so critical to Israel's survival.

And the one sheqyno yodea lishol, the friend who does not know enough to ask, and is silent. We call. We inquire. We ask questions as we teach – to help them know and understand and keep us, Israelis, innocent Palestinians civilians, Muslims, and Jews globally safe.

These four children are part of our liberation narrative.



Filling our Cups

by Rabbi Emily Losben-Ostrov

Four cups of wine
One cup of water

Wine our symbol of joy
Water our symbol of life

Celebrating Elijah the prophet who will come with the promise of Peace on Earth
And Honoring Miriam the prophetess who ensured we would live by providing water in the desert

With Elijah comes the hope of a better world
And with Miriam comes life, joy, and dancing

But how can we dance now?

How do we dance, like Miriam did, when we know that our peace-loving brothers and sisters were slaughtered when they were simply trying to celebrate in the desert?

And how do we dance when our brothers and sisters are still being held captive, even worse than the slaves we once were?

And how can we dance and drink wine, showing joy when all we want to do is shed our tears of salt water?

How do we fill our cup with the symbols of joy and life when we still feel so much pain and despair?

And, how can we not dance?

How can we not raise our cup and say "L'chaim?"

We acknowledge our pain and tears with the salt water and at the same time we honor our heroes and history of overcoming.

We are resilient.

Let us drink with life... to life.

We will dance again.

Modern-Day Plagues of Injustice and Inequality

by Rabbi Michael Namath

On [Passover](#), we recount the Ten Plagues that were inflicted upon the Egyptian people. Below you can find some of the "plagues" and injustices that afflict our present-day society and actions you can take.

1

ANTISEMITISM AND RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY

Antisemitism poses a direct, present threat to the Jewish people, inherently intertwined with the continuing rise of hate and white supremacy. Amidst rising antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, and other forms of religious bigotry, we must work to ensure that people of all faiths can worship safely.

[Urge Congress to strengthen security resources for houses of worship.](#)

2

ATTACKS ON LGBTQ+ PEOPLE

LGBTQ+ people are under attack across the country. Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill is just one of many anti-LGBTQ+ policies, present in almost every state, specifically targeting the rights, safety, and equality of LGBTQ+ people.

[Tell your governor to protect LGBTQ+ people.](#)

3

BARRIERS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Mental illness affects millions of people each year, yet mental health care remains inaccessible to many, including millions of young people. Schools are uniquely positioned to close this gap and expand mental health services for adolescents.

[Urge Congress to expand mental health services in public schools.](#)

4

BROKEN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Our immigration system is in desperate need of repair. 11 million people still require a pathway to citizenship, and in the midst of a global refugee crisis, our asylum system is not equipped to handle the overwhelming number of migrants fleeing dangerous home countries.

[Tell Congress to allow a pathway for Dreamers.](#)

5

GUN VIOLENCE

Every year, over 40,000 Americans die as victims of gun violence. Gun violence is the leading cause of death of American children and teens ages 1-19. The scourge of gun violence in America is a public safety issue and a public health epidemic.

[Demand Congress ends gun violence and save lives.](#)

6

HUNGER

In the U.S., pervasive hunger and food insecurity affect millions, with approximately 13% of households experiencing inadequate access to nutritious food. Economic disparities amplify this crisis, demanding urgent attention for equitable solutions.

[Urge Congress to Raise the Wage to combat hunger.](#)

7

POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION

There are nearly 120 million people who live in places with unhealthy pollution levels. Much of this pollution stems from the production of greenhouse gas-producing activities, which worsens the climate crisis, exacerbates ongoing environmental degradation, and harms public health.

[Urge Congress to Support Environmental Justice for All.](#)

[Activities for Children](#)

8

RESTRICTIONS ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Since the overturn of Roe v. Wade, states across the country have passed legislation limiting access to reproductive health care. Abortion bans, IVF restrictions, and attacks on birth control violate *kavod ha'briyot* (respect for individual dignity).

[Tell Congress to protect reproductive rights.](#)

9

UNQUALIFIED CHAPLAINS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

States across the country are introducing bills that would install chaplains in our public schools. This a threat to religious freedom and a failed attempt to address the need for mental health resources in schools.

[Tell your governor to protect students.](#)

10

VOTER SUPPRESSION

In a democracy, all rights begin with the right to vote. It is the bedrock of our democracy and essential for a strong democracy. Across the United States, states have enacted laws that have decreased voting accessibility and reduced representation.

[Urge Congress to pass the Freedom to Vote Act.](#)

[Send postcards to voters.](#)

This article originally appeared online on April 3, 2024 at: <https://rac.org/blog/modern-day-plagues-of-injustice-and-inequality>. It is reprinted with the author's permission.

Dayenu

by Rabbi Lucy Dinner

Dayenu, “it would have been enough.” After three cups of wine, we sing out robustly of the many intersections with the divine that define the Jewish people. Can we sing these words with the same gusto this

Pesach? With Israel’s hostages in peril, with hunger threatening all of Gaza, and antisemitism at its highest level ever, what does Dayenu mean?



Julia Barnard, Carolina Jews for Justice board member, frames it: “*Dayenu means to celebrate each step toward freedom as if it were enough, then to start out on the next step. It means that if we reject each step because it is not the whole liberation, we will never be able to achieve the whole liberation. It means to sing each verse as if it were the whole song – and then to sing the next verse*” (Julia Barnard).

How soon we forget those small and mighty steps it took for our ancestors to reach freedom. How quickly we flip Dayenu. No sooner had the Israelites made it out of Egypt than they started kvetching about the conditions in the desert. Barely across on dry land they complain that the manna – made especially to taste like each person’s favorite food – is not enough – they want meat. They beseech Moses and Aaron to take them forward then reject their leadership.

Moses goes up Mount Sinai to receive The Ten Commandments and the Israelites create the Golden Calf. The Israelites so bemoan their journey they beg to go back to slavery in Egypt. Instead of “it would have been enough,” the Israelites whine: “it’s never enough.”

We are not so different from our ancient ancestors. As soon as the family gets in the car for an adventure, the children initiate the rhythm: Are we there yet? Are we there yet? The chanting continues until the parents declare: One more word and we will turn around and go home. Whether through detailed planning, or sheer luck, we are all much better off if we get those Dayenu breaks along the road.



A stop to buy useless trinkets at South of the Border.

Dayenu.

A detour to the whirligig park.

Dayeinu.

Lunch and more trinkets at Cracker Barrel.

Dayeinu.

Sunset over the mountain.

Dayeinu.

A dip in the pool at the hotel.

Dayeinu.

During this year of such heightened peril, we need all the more to harness hope step by step.

Buying Israeli products for your Passover table.

Dayeinu.

Inviting someone new to your seder.

Dayeinu.

Donating to feed the hungry in Gaza.

Dayeinu.

Discovering the nuevo wealth of NC grocery stores carrying Passover goods.

Dayeinu.

Sending a card or email with Passover greetings to an Israeli friend.

Dayeinu.

Adding a supplement to the Seder to partner with Israeli congregations.

Dayeinu.

When we say Dayeinu, we acknowledge that liberation comes not in one spectacular instant, but moment by moment, by moment, through the journey. May we take that journey step by step rebuilding hope this Passover.



**לשנה הבאה
בירושלים**

**Next year
in Jerusalem**