

## A Fool's Haggadah, 4/1/10

### 1) OPENING PRAYER:

Long ago at this season, our people set out on a journey.  
On such a night as this, Israel went from degradation to joy.  
We give thanks for the liberation of days gone by.  
And we pray for all who are still bound.  
Eternal God, may all who hunger come to rejoice in a new Passover.  
Let all the human family sit at your table, drink the wine of deliverance, eat the bread of freedom:

Freedom from bondage	<i>and freedom from oppression</i>
Freedom from hunger	<i>and freedom from want</i>
Freedom from hatred	<i>and freedom from fear</i>
Freedom to think	<i>and freedom to speak</i>
Freedom to teach	<i>and freedom to learn</i>
Freedom to love	<i>and freedom to share</i>
Freedom to hope	<i>and freedom to rejoice</i>
Soon, in our days	<i>Amen</i>

### ***First Cup of Wine:***

"I take upon myself the mitzvah of this first of four cups of wine, in the name of the unification of the spirits of Nature with the Spirit of History."

--We drink the first cup of wine in thanks for our deliverance from oppression

*Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.*

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

### 2) WASH your neighbors hands from Miriam's Well

--note: Hebrew *urchatz* means "cleansing," but Aramaic *urchatz* means "trusting"

### 3) KARPAS: EAT YOUR GREENS

--green = rebirth, renewal, and growth

--salt = tears of enslavement (within a health care system blind to our needs)

*Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam,  
borei p'ri ha'adamah.*

Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life,  
creator of the fruit of the earth.

#### 4) YACHATZ: BREAK THE MIDDLE MATZAH

(open the door)

“This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat...but not too much, lest they become obese and require lap band surgeries at the public expense. Let all who are needy come and celebrate the Passover with us. Now we are here; next year may we be in the Land of Responsible Banking and Public Option health care. Now we are slaves to the ubiquitous and obnoxiously altered voice of T-Payne; next year may we be free.”

(close the door)

#### 5) MAGGID: STORY TIME!

*The Four Questions (from the youngest):* Why is tonight different from all other nights?

1. Every other night we eat whatever sort of bread we want; tonight, only Matzah. What gives?
2. So...these bitter herbs are awesome and all, but why do we eat them tonight?
3. Despite a historical penchant for hummus, the Jews aren't big dippers. Tonight we dip in both the salt water and the haroset. Why the double dip?
4. On all other nights we eat sitting up. Why are we all lounging around and reclining tonight?

*4a. Active Group Relaxation*

*The Four Children*

The smart kid: What is the meaning of the rules, laws, and practices that we have been commanded to observe during the Passover Seder?

You shall tell this child the story of Exodus and explain the laws of the Talmud and the Torah. And when you are done, you shall ask this child to do your taxes for you and hope that he or she gets into a good state school someplace outside of Colorado or California that you can afford.

The wicked child: This is lame. Why do you guys do this stuff?

The rest of us are basking in the glory of freedom and counting our blessings after being led out of slavery in Egypt, where we should have left ungrateful little punks like you to do some real work building pyramids for the Pharaoh.

The simple child: What's going on?

We're celebrating our deliverance from bondage and reevaluating retirement plans. Try it, it's fun.

The one who does not know how to question

You must show this child the Passover ritual and feed it progressive ideals and liberal slogans.

For a number of happy years long ago, our ancestor Jacob and his son Joseph lived simple, sustainable lives in the prosperous wine country of Canaan. During a famine, however—caused by a combination of climate change and poor planning—Jake and Joe were forced to give up their small-scale sustainable winery and get jobs as bureaucrats in Sacramento (then known as Egypt), where food and middle-management white collar positions with healthy benefit packages were equally plentiful. Jacob retired in a time when 401Ks still had value, and his son Joseph soon rose to high position writing environmental policy in the Pharaoh's court. Led by Joseph, our people were well-respected and well-regarded, comfortable and secure in the power structure of the time despite an innately unnatural suburban lifestyle and a general dearth of good bagels.

Generations passed and our people remained in the central valley of Egypt. As rulers came and went, a new Pharaoh ascended to the throne, propelled by a personal fortune made in internet salesmanship and a relentless, self-aggrandizing television ad campaign that positioned her as a prohibitive favorite for a job that nobody else really wanted. The new Pharaoh felt threatened by the strangers and immigrants in her people's midst, and noting that we wore funny hats, smelled of *gefilte* fish, and routinely failed to watch their fair share of NASCAR, she ordered our people enslaved. Fearing rebellion, Pharaoh decreed that all Hebrew boy-children be sent to semi-religious charter schools in the suburbs. Blocked by activist judges opposed to bussing, however, she decided he would just kill them instead.

Realizing that the Pharaoh's conservative patriarchal health care advisors had no knowledge of or interest in stable family planning—or in their constituents' long-term reproductive health—two midwives named Shifrah and Puah defied Pharaoh's orders to put the newborn Jewboys to death, and through their courage, one little *k'nadle* survived.

Fearing for his safety, the newborn's family cautiously and reasonably placed the helpless infant in a leaky wicker basket that they found on craigslist (listed as a two bedroom with on-site laundry). They floated him off, alone, covered by a light sheet, down one of the largest and now most polluted rivers in the world, the Nile.

The lucky little Yid floated on down the Nile, and it was not long until he was found...and adopted...by the Pharaoh's daughter...which was really no big deal and probably not a miracle or anything worth spending much time on in the story because it probably happens all the time. In fact, Pharaoh's daughter named him Moses, which scholars believe to have been derived from the Egyptian for, "I found him floating around in the water and decided to keep him, which is totally normal, right?" In another complete coincidence that's also probably no big deal, Pharaoh hired the boy's own mother as his wet-nurse. You know, no biggie. Thus he survived to adulthood, raised as Prince of Egypt.

Although a child of privilege, as Moses grew he became aware of the slaves who worked in the wasteful, polluting coal-fired brickyards of his adoptive mother. When he saw how much the corporate managers earned in bonuses and compared it to union salaries, he became angry, and he struck and killed a CEO. Fearing retribution, he set out across the Death Valley of the Sanai alone to hide out and maybe do a little Peyote and get a little weird for a while.

There in the desert, God spoke to Moses (who was definitely not doing Peyote at the time, of course). Very cleverly, God disguised himself as a burning bush, which though it flamed was not consumed—a nice touch, but not a particularly convincing disguise. Moses knew it was the voice of God. The divine burning foliage called on Moses to lead the Hebrew people to freedom.

Moses demurred. He argued with God (in retrospect, this was probably a bad choice, God being who He was and all). Moses pled inadequacy. Citing omniscience, God disagreed. Moses tried to reschedule. In the end, God beat Moses in a rosham and that was it. God threw rock every time and beat Moses two out of three, so Moses had to go lead the Jews out of Egypt. Good old rock.

Moses returned to Egypt and went to Pharaoh to argue the injustice of slavery and the need for greater regulation of Egypt's highly-leveraged financial markets. He gave Pharaoh a mandate that resounds through history in the voice of the late Charlton Heston:

“Let my people go.”

Pharaoh refused.

“Okay,” said Moses, “well then at least provide my people with health care, mortgage relief, and a decent wage.”

Pharaoh again refused.

Moses warned him that Mighty God would strike the Egyptian people, bringing plagues upon the land.

First Moses said, “Let my people go.”

And Pharaoh refused.

And God, a big fan of the *Twilight* series and into dark things at the time, turned the Nile to blood.

And Moses said, “Hey, Pharaoh, let my people go.”

And Pharaoh refused.

And then a whole bunch of frogs emerged from the river of blood to infest the land, which we're pretty sure was also an act of God.

And Moses said, “Let my people go.”

And Pharaoh refused.

And then lice emerged from the masses of dead frogs, which was really gross and pretty obnoxious, but possibly not the work of God, though He did tip off a nice Jewish family that it would be a good time to go into the delousing business—already booming after the closure of the nearby Head & Shoulders production plant.

Moses at this point got into his Subaru and went down to REI and used his dividend to get himself a big old hiking staff to make himself look a little more rugged. Then he went back to Pharaoh and said, “let my people go.”

And still Pharaoh refused.

So God, building on the success of the lice, sent swarms of insects into Egypt.

And Moses pounded his new staff on the ground and said “Let my people go!.”

And Pharaoh refused.

And then God killed all the cows, and the price of chicken nuggets crashed for the first few days and then shot through the roof, which, because of the high demand for chicken, led to an egg shortage, and the whole of industrial agriculture went through a series of economic shocks while the local organic farms—coincidentally run by Jews—

made a killing.

“Let my people go!” said Moses.

But Pharaoh refused.

God gave all the Egyptians boils.

“How ‘bout now?” asked Moses.

Pharaoh refused.

Then it hailed. This might have been a meteorological coincidence, but it did some serious damage to the remaining crops throughout Egypt, and Moses hoped to capitalize on it by calling it an act of God. God was watching a Giants game, and didn’t mind having his name associated with the hail, especially after Tim Lincecum struck out Manny Ramirez

with two on and two out in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup>.

“So...how ‘bout now?” asked Moses.

But Pharaoh (a Dodgers fan) refused.

Then there were locusts. Same outcome. Then darkness, which was pretty undeniably God’s doing, and one that nobody saw coming (it being dark and all). But darkness also proved ineffective, which seems to have gotten God’s attention, because then he got mad and decided to start killing people. He thought he’d begin with every first-born son in Egypt.

When God, who had by now ditched the burning bush getup in favor of the more familiar voice from above ensemble, told Moses what He wanted to do, Moses was a little shocked.

“Every first born son in the land of Egypt, huh?” Moses asked. “Jews, too?”

“Well, that would send kind of a mixed message, now wouldn’t it,” God said. “I’ll tell you what. Get all the Jews to slaughter a lamb this evening, and wipe the lamb’s blood over the doorways of Jewish houses. That way, I’ll know which houses to hit, and which ones to pass over.” God liked the sound of that idea, especially when he said “pass over” in a way that emphasized the “ass” and rolled over the “o” like “PASSover.”

Moses nodded his head, thinking about what a weird dude God was. Then he started wondering how God was going to deal with passing over all the Jews living in lofts and downtown apartments in the same buildings as Egyptians after Pharaoh’s banks had foreclosed on their houses, and what the landlords would say about smearing lamb’s blood on the newly painted moldings of the Union Building down on Fifth Street, especially now that they had fired everyone on the cleaning staff in order to compensate for the parent company’s executive bonuses.

“Jesus, Moses, I’ll figure it out,” God said.

When he found the first-born sons of Egypt dead in the morning, Pharaoh decided to cut his losses and told Moses to get his people together and hit the road. Like they always say, tenth times a charm...

*Drops for the Ten Plagues:* We commemorate the ten plagues that God sent down tot he Egyptians on our behalf with drops of wine on our plate. We place a drop on the plate as we say the name of each plague. They are:

Blood, Frogs, Lice, Insects, Cattle, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, First-Born

Fearful that Pharaoh would change his mind, our people fled in a hurry. Instead of packing fresh bagels and lox and a nice baguette with organic brie like they imagined normal Jews would, you know, if they ever went camping, our people had to slap together some flour and water and bake it pronto. Only later did they realize the stuff had the texture of saltines and the flavor of cardboard. We called it Matzah, and we eat it as a *mitzvah* eight days a year instead of bread, which always seems like a good idea on the first night but gets old after half a box.

It's unclear exactly why, but shortly after our fateful culinary blunder and our hasty departure, Pharaoh decided to send his army after us to bring us back. Some have suggested the Egyptian stock exchange crashed when so many prominent financial management professionals moved their holdings into off-shore accounts and fled the country, prompting the Pharaoh to reevaluate his decision as soon as the opening bell sounded. For my money, I think he came after us because we took his daughter with us, which, in retrospect, may have been another in a long series of bad decisions.

In any case, Pharaoh's army followed us to the sea. Like a *meshuggeneh*, Moses managed to lead us to the edge of an impassable body of salt water. And like *schmucks*, we plunged in after him. When we had gone as far as we could, however, God parted the waters for us to cross. Pharaoh and his army pursued, but when we arrived at the far edge, the waters that God had parted quite suddenly ceased to be apart. We mourn, even now, that Pharaoh's army drowned; our liberation is bittersweet because people died in our pursuit. We feel a little guilty. After all, we are Jews.

And thus God led us out of bondage in Egypt...and into the desert...for forty years. But that's another story that we like to gloss over with *dayenus*.

To this day we relive our liberation, that we may not become complacent, that we may always rejoice in our freedom.

*Dayenu: It would have been enough*

Brought us out of Egypt and not divided the sea for us—Dayenu

Divided the sea and not permitted us to cross on dry land—Dayenu

Permitted us to cross on dry land and not sustained us for forty years in the desert—Dayenu

Sustained us for forty years in the desert and not fed us with manna—Dayenu

Fed us with manna and not given us the Sabbath—Dayenu

Given us the Sabbath and not brought us to Mount Sinai—Dayenu

Brought us to Mount Sinai and not given us the Torah—Dayenu

Given us the Torah and not led us into the land of Israel—Dayenu

Led us into the land of Israel and not built for us the Temple—Dayenu

Built for us the Temple and not sent us prophets of truth—Dayenu

Sent us prophets of truth and not made us a holy people—Dayenu

For all these, alone and together, we say—Dayenu!

*\*Optional Bonus Dayenu for 2010: For enabling Sarah Palin to self-destruct to the point of*

*becoming a marginalized joke even within her own party—Dayenu!*

### *Second Cup of Wine*

“I take upon myself the mitzvah of the second cup of wine to celebrate that I am free.”

*Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.*

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

### SIGNS & SYMBOLS

It is written: she who has not explained the following symbols has not fulfilled her duty.

The **Maror**, bitter herb or horseradish, represents the bitterness of slavery.

The **Haroset**, a mixture of apples and nuts and wine, represents the bricks and mortar we made in ancient times, and the new structures we are beginning to build in our lives today.

The **Lamb Shank** represents the sacrifices we have made to survive.

Before the tenth plague, our people slaughtered lambs and marked our doors with blood: because of this marking, the Angel of Death passed over our homes and our first-born were spared.

The **Egg** symbolizes creative power, our personal and collective rebirth, and doin' it.

The **Parsley** represents the new growth of spring, for we are earthy, rooted beings, connected to the Earth and nourished by our connection.

**Salt water** of our tears, both then and now.

**Matzot** of our unleavened hearts: may this Seder enable our spirits to rise.

6) RAKHTZAH: Wash 'em again.

7) MOTZI/MATZAH

-thanks for the bread, thanks for the Matzah

-Rub-a-dub-dub, thanks for the grub, yay God!

*Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu ruach ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al achilat matzah.*

*(everyone eats Matzah)*

8) MAROR: Bitter Herbs

9) KORECH: Hillel Sandwich (Matzah and Maror = Freedom and Slavery)

10) SHULKHAN OREKH: The Feast!

11) TZAFUN: Eat the Afikoman

12) BARECH: Bless the Meal

*Prayer After Eating* (by Wendell Berry)

I have taken in the light  
that quickened eye and leaf.  
May my brain be bright with praise  
of what I eat, in the brief blaze  
of motion and of thought.  
May I be worthy of my meat.

*This is Just to Say* (by William Carlos Williams)

I have eaten  
the plums  
that were in  
the icebox

and which  
you were probably  
saving  
for breakfast

Forgive me  
they were delicious  
so sweet  
and so cold

13) HALLEL: Praise

***Third Cup of Wine***

“I take upon myself the mitzvah of this third of four cups of wine in the name of the Earth from which the wine itself came.”

*Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.*

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

**\*\*Open the Door for Elijah if you haven't already\*\***

***Fourth Cup of Wine***

“I take upon myself the mitzvah of this fourth cup of wine in the name of the sweetness of life, for which I am grateful.”

*Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.*



Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

14) NIRTZAH: Closing

*A Small Jar of Sadness* (anonymous)

Hold on to a small jar of sadness,

A ballast.

And when the season

Changes to grief, remember

That there is humor in all things.

A sail.

*Benedicto* (by Edward Abbey)

May your trails be crooked, winding,  
lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing  
views. May your mountains rise into and above the  
clouds. May your rivers flow without end, meandering  
through pastoral valleys tinkling with bells, past  
temples and castles and poets' towers into a dark  
primeval forest where tigers belch and monkeys howl,  
through miasmal and mysterious swamps and down  
into a desert of red rock, blue mesas, domes and  
pinnacles and grottoes of endless stone, and down  
again into a deep vast ancient unknown chasm where  
bars of sunlight blaze on profiled cliffs, where deer  
walk across the white sand beaches, where storms  
come and go as lightning clangs upon the high crags,  
where something strange and more beautiful and more  
full of wonder than your deepest dreams waits for  
you—beyond that next turning of the canyon walls.  
So long.

\*\*\*NEXT YEAR IN HEALTH AND GOOD COMPANY\*\*\*

(same time, same place)