

Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice Labor Seder 2016

Co-Sponsors: Beth Israel Center, Temple Beth El, Congregation Sha'arei Shamayim,
Hillel of UW-Madison, the Jewish Labor Committee

Opening Song:

הִנֵּה מָה טוֹב וְיָמָה נְעִים שָׁבֵת אַחִים גַּם יַחַד.

Hineh ma tov uma na'im
Shevet achim gam yachad.

How good and pleasant it is
For brothers & sisters to sit
together.

Kadesh: (The first cup of wine)

(We drink the first cup of wine)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן
Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei pri ha'gafen.
Blessed are you, Source of Life, who creates fruit of the vine.

Karpas: (Parsley & salt water)

(dip parsley in salt water)

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
Melech haOlam boreh pri ha'adamah. הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאָדָמָה.

Blessed are You ETERNAL our God, Master of time and space,
who creates the fruit of the earth.

Maggid: (Telling the Passover Story)

Four Questions About Modern Slavery

We start the seder by noticing what is out of the ordinary and then further investigating its meaning.

How is this night different from all other nights?

1. On all other nights, we depend on the exploitation of invisible others for our food, clothing, homes, and more. Tonight, we listen to the stories of those who suffer to create the goods we use. We commit to working toward the human rights of all workers.

Discuss: Where or when in your daily life could you listen to a worker's story? How will you find out about the life of worker you interact with?

2. On all other nights, we have allowed human life to become cheap in the economic quest for the cheapest goods. Tonight, we commit to valuing all people, regardless of their race, class, or circumstances.

Discuss: What is one purchase you can make that would value workers over the price of the goods?

3. On all other nights, we have forgotten that poverty, migration, and gender-based violence leave people vulnerable to exploitation, including modern-day slavery. Tonight, we commit to taking concrete actions to end this exploitation and its causes.

Discuss: When do you witness/experience poverty or exploitation here in Madison?

4. On all other nights, we have forgotten to seek wisdom among those who know how to end slavery – the people who have experienced this degradation. Tonight, we commit to slavery prevention that is rooted in the wisdom and experience of workers, tracking survivors, and affected communities.

Discuss: Tonight we will hear from workers about their struggles. Where or to whom will you share one of these stories?

When the seder has ended, we will not return to how it has been “on all other nights.” We commit to bringing the lessons of this seder into our actions tomorrow, the next day, and every day to come.

Adapted from “The Other Side of the Sea: A Haggadah on Fighting Modern Slavery” (2015) Editor Rabbi Lev Meirowitz Nelson, Director of Education, Tru’ah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights. See more: <http://www.truah.org>

Four Children

Four biblical verses (Deuteronomy 6:20; Exodus 12:26, 13:14 & 13:8) mention children asking or being told about the Exodus. From these verses the Rabbis created a framework for personalized instruction. They counseled parents to teach each child on the level of that child’s understanding. The Torah alludes to four types of children: one who is wise, and one who is irreverent (or wicked), one who is simple, and one who does not know that something unusual is going on. Tonight we will use the rubric of the four questions to think about how we teach our children to do justice in our complicated world.

At Passover each year, we read the story of our ancestors’ pursuit of liberation from oppression. When confronting this history, how do we answer our children when they ask us how to pursue justice in our time?

What does the activist child ask?

“The Torah tells me, ‘Justice, justice you shall pursue,’ but how can I pursue justice?”

Empower her always to seek pathways to advocate for the vulnerable. As Proverbs teaches, “Speak up for the mute, for the rights of the unfortunate. Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy.”

What does the skeptical child ask? --- “How can I solve problems of such enormity?”

Encourage him by explaining that he need not solve the problems, he must only do what he is capable of doing. As we read in *Pirke Avot – The Ethics of our Ancestors*, “It is not your responsibility to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.”

What does the indifferent child say? --- “It’s not my responsibility.”

Persuade her that responsibility cannot be shirked. As Abraham Joshua Heschel writes, “The opposite of good is not evil, the opposite of good is indifference. In a free society where terrible wrongs exist, some are guilty, but all are responsible.”

And the uninformed child who does not know how to ask...

Prompt him to see himself as an inheritor of our people’s legacy. As it says in Deuteronomy, “You must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

At this season of liberation, let us work toward the liberation of all people. Let us respond to our children’s questions with action and justice.

From the American Jewish World Service Passover Haggadah Supplement

10 plagues:

Contemporary Plagues

Reader: Our celebration tonight is overshadowed by our awareness of continuing enslavement and oppression. Unlike the plagues visited by God upon the Egyptians in order to set us free, today humanity visits plagues upon itself. Plagues that enslave and degenerate our humanity. Plagues that do not recognize that we are all made in God’s image and worthy of respect.

These plagues include:

**Together: Child Labor. Slave Labor. Sweatshops. Hunger.
Below-subsistence wages. Sexism. Racism. Ethnic Cleansing. Domestic Violence.
Indifference to human suffering**

“No business which depends for its existence on paying less than living wages to its workers has any right to continue in this country. By living wages I mean more than a bare subsistence level. I mean wages of decent living.”

— Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1933

From the Jewish Labor Committee Haggadah

SONG: *Go Down Moses, Louis Armstrong*

Go down Moses way down in Egypt land
Tell all Pharaohs to let My people go

When Israel was in Egypt land
Let My people go
Oppressed so hard they could not stand
Let My people go

So the God seyeth, Go down, Moses way
down in Egypt land
Tell all Pharaohs to let My people go

So Moses went to Egypt land
Let My people go
He made all Pharaohs understand
Let My people go

Yes The Lord said, Go down, Moses way
down in Egypt land
Tell all Pharaohs to let My people go

Thus spoke the Lord, bold Moses said
Let My people go
If not I'll smite, your firstborns dead
Let My people go

God, The Lord said, Go down, Moses way
down in Egypt land
Tell all Pharaohs to let My people go

Tell all Pharaohs to let My people go

- 1) Wherever you live, it is probably Egypt.
- 2) There is a better place, a promised land.
- 3) The way to this promised land is through the wilderness
there is no way to get there except by joining together and marching.

- Michael Walzer, American political philosopher and public intellectual, *EXODUS AND REVOLUTION* (1985)

Moments of Liberation: The Uprising of the 20,000

"I am one of those who suffers from the abuses described here, and I move that we go on a general strike," 23-year-old Clara Lemlich addressed, in Yiddish, thousands of restless laborers at New York City's Cooper Union on November 22, 1909.

Lemlich's passion stirred the crowd. The chairman came to her side and called out "Will you take the old Hebrew oath?" Although not an exclusively Jewish gathering, most in the crowd raised their right arms and pledged with him in Yiddish: "If I turn traitor to the cause I now pledge, may my hand wither from the arm I now raise." And so began the "Uprising of the 20,000," a critical turning point in American labor activism.

In the next months, thousands of garment workers, mostly young Jewish and Italian women, formed picket lines and confronted police brutality. A strong corps of Jewish women, led by figures like Lemlich, Rose Schneiderman, and Pauline Newman, worked tirelessly to organize and sustain the strike effort. They raised concerns beyond wages and hours as they fought for dignity and women's right to union recognition.

Within two days, between twenty and thirty thousand workers went on strike. A month later, workers in Philadelphia factories followed suit. While many of the workers were Jewish, other ethnic groups and cultures were represented, including African-American women. Thousands of strikers joined the

decade-old International Ladies Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU). In February 1910, the ILGWU came to an arbitrated settlement with most of the factory owners, which improved wages, hours, and working conditions. Though the companies still refused to recognize the union, they agreed, in the event of future disputes, they would arbitrate with community leaders.

One of the companies that refused to sign the agreement was the very factory in which Clara Lemlich worked: the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. A year later, the disastrous fire at Triangle would remake the industry.

Sources: The Jewish Women's Archive and the Harvard University Library Open Collections Program: Women Working, 1800-1930.

Blessing the second cup of wine

Reader 1: With the first cup of wine, we recognized the fundamental honor due to all human beings, all of us created in the divine image.

With this second cup, we now recognize the struggle often needed to secure sustenance, dignity and respect.

In America, Jewish immigrants to this country joined together, as had the Hebrew slaves of old, to liberate themselves from the bondage of sweatshops. Many Jewish immigrants, who came to America and found themselves thrust into jobs with wretched working conditions and poverty-level pay, joined together in unions to confront these problems and to better their lives.

Reader 2: With the second cup of wine, we pause to recognize the right and the necessity of people under collective distress to organize together to defend their basic rights. Three thousand years ago it was the slaves in Mitzrayim, a century ago it was the sweatshop workers in this country. Today, unions are a vital and necessary force to defend basic rights of workers wherever they may toil.

Reader 3: In spite of our society's tremendous wealth today, too many people have to work far too many hours, often in more than one job, just to get by.

Reader 4: In our own day, collective action and transformation have proven to be essential and effective means for creating social change in our society. By working together, we can achieve redemption. By joining hands with others to seek peace and justice together, we work to make the Divine manifest in this world.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן
Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei pri ha'gafen.
Blessed are you, Source of Life, who creates fruit of the vine.

(We drink the second cup of wine)

"The world is in the midst of a new social era. What labor is demanding all over the world today is not a few material things like more dollars and fewer hours of work, but the right to a voice in the conduct of industry."

– Sidney Hillman, President, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, 1919

SONG: *This Land Is Your Land, Woody Guthrie*

This land is your land and this land is my land
From California to the New York island
From the redwood forest to the Gulf Stream
waters
This land was made for you and me

As I went walking that ribbon of highway
And I saw above me that endless skyway
I saw below me that golden valley
This land was made for you and me

I roamed and rambled and I've followed my
footsteps
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts
All around me a voice was a-sounding
This land was made for you and me.

When the sun come shining, then I was
strolling
And the wheat fields waving and the dust
clouds rolling,

As the fog was lifting a voice was chanting:
This land was made for you and me.

As I went walking I saw a sign there
And on the sign it said, "No Trespassing."
But on the other side it didn't say nothing,
That side was made for you and me.

In the shadow of the steeple I saw my
people,
By the relief office I seen my people;
As they stood there hungry, I stood there
asking,
Is this land made for you and me?

This land is your land and this land is my
land
From California to the New York island
From the redwood forest to the Gulf Stream
waters
This land was made for you and me

Motzi Matzah (Blessing the Matzah)

Once it happened, as Passover neared, that Rabbi Israel Salanter (founder of the Jewish Musar ethics movement) came to a matzah factory to judge its fitness to receive a kosher certificate. Without that certificate, the matzah factory would be out of business. The owner of the factory wasn't worried, however. He was certain his factory would be certified kosher for Passover. He had instituted new protocols of efficiency that he was sure would impress Rabbi Salanter. Rabbi Salanter came in and observed the process in action. When the matzah was finished and the owner proudly presented it to Rabbi Salanter, the rabbi told the owner the matzah could not be certified as kosher. The owner was shocked. "Why, what's wrong with my matzah?" Rabbi Salanter replied, "The matzah has blood in it, and nothing with blood in it can be certified kosher." "Blood? There's no blood in my matzah!" exclaimed the factory owner. "The way you press your workers and the demands you place on them to be ever more 'efficient' in their work, shows that their blood is in every piece of matzah they produce, and therefore I cannot consider this matzah kosher."

Retold by Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice

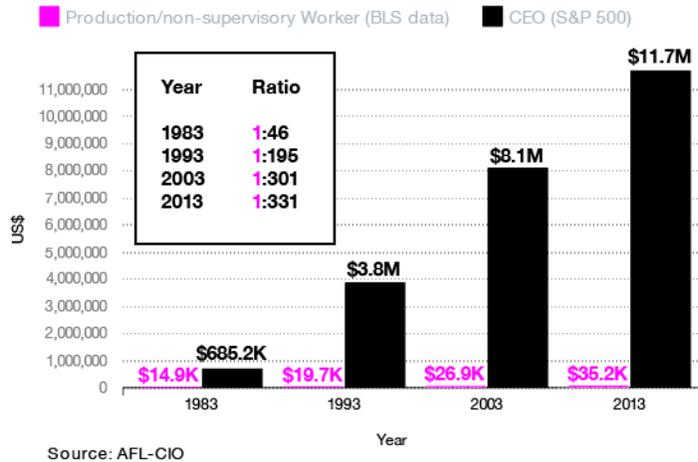
(Raise three pieces of Matzah)

<p><i>Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.</i></p>	<p>בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.</p>	<p>Blessed are You ETERNAL our God, Master of time and space, who brings forth bread from the earth.</p>
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(Eat the Matzah)

Maror: (Bitter Herbs)

CEO-Worker Pay Gap



Source: AFL-CIO

(Eat Horseradish)

Shulcan Orech: (The meal is served)

Barech: Blessing the Meal

BRICH RACHAMANA

בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָא Brich Rachamana
 מַלְכָּא דְעֵלְמָא Malka D'lma
 מַרְיָה דְהַאי פִּיתָא Maray D'hai Pita

You are the source of Life for all that is
 And your blessing flows through me
 Blessed is the Compassionate One,
 Ruler of the Universe, Source of this Food
Aramaic: Babylonian Talmud, English: Shefa Gold

Blessing the Third Cup of Wine

(We drink the third cup of wine)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן
Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei pri ha'gafen.
 Blessed are you, Source of Life, who creates fruit of the vine.

Hallel: (Songs of Praise)

SONG

מִן-הַמֵּצָר קָרָאתִי יְיָ עֲנֵנִי בַמְּרֻחָב יְיָ

Min HaMetzar karati Yah,
 Anani vamerchavYah

From the Narrow place I called out to God
 who answered me with the Divine Expanse.
 (Psalm 118:5)

Elijah

Reflection by Rabbi Jonathan Biatch

The Cup of Elijah

Reader 1: In the ninth century B.C.E., a simple farmer arose to challenge the domination of the ruling elite. In his tireless and passionate advocacy on behalf of the common people, and his ceaseless exposure of the corruption and waste of the court, Elijah became a prophet of God, sparked a movement, and created a legend which would inspire people for generations to come.

Reader 2: Before he died, Elijah declared that he would return once each generation in the guise of a poor or oppressed person, coming to people's doors to see how he would be treated. By the treatment offered Elijah in this disguise, he would know whether the population had reached a level of *mentschlichkeit*, making them capable of participating in the dawn of the Messianic age.

Reader 3: But that day is still a far-off vision. Greed, Ignorance, prejudice, hatred; contempt for truth and justice; hunger and terror; the fear of a mass destruction: These remain to afflict the human race. To end these plagues; to summon Elijah; that is the task of all who care. It is our task, for we are the people who know the stranger's heart, the slave's aching bones, and the shaking hands of the exile. When will Elijah come with the news of freedom? When we have called him by our deeds!

Reader 4: In setting Elijah's Cup at our table, we invite Elijah to join us, and we bring his passion for justice into our lives. For the moment, the cup is empty. No one has yet stepped forward to fill it. According to new custom, we pass Elijah's cup from person to person at the table, each person pouring a little wine into Elijah's cup from our own cups, until it is filled. In this way we recognize that we must act together, each contributing our best talents and energies, to bring Elijah's promise and vision to the world.

Each person at the table shares a personal commitment he or she will make to help bring about economic equality and pours some of his or her wine in Elijah's cup.

The full group joins back together:

Elijah opens up for us the realm of mystery and wonder. Let us now open the door for Elijah! And may Your day come soon when swords are beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning-hooks, when nation does not lift up sword against nation, nor do they prepare for war any more and when all people are treated with dignity and respect.

Open the door for Elijah

Sing:

*Eliahu Hanavi
Eliahu hanavi, Eliahu hatish'bi
Eliahu, Eliahu, Eliahu hagil'adi.*

*Bimhera biyamenu, Yavo aylenu.
Im Mashiach ben David,
Im Mashiach ben David.*

Blessing the fourth cup of wine

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן
Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei pri ha'gafen.
Blessed are you, Source of Life, who creates fruit of the vine.

(We drink the fourth cup of wine)

Nirtzah: (Conclusion)

Where do we go from here?

Closing Song: We shall Rise, John McCutcheon

I have been a long time traveling
Throughout this mighty land
With my pack upon my back
And this guitar in my hand
There are people, things, and places
I haven't ventured yet
For everything that I remember
There's a dozen more that I forget

I have seen my share of trouble
But one thing I've learned is true
That the times are like the people
And it's the good ones see me through
And there is a light that guides me
When they both turn hard and mean
By the flame of that small candle, now
Let me tell you what I've seen

I have seen the men and the women
Who make this old world turn
Seen their pride and seen their passion
Felt the fire that makes them burn
I've watched them struggle with their demons
Seen angels fill their eyes
Seen their face as they discover
"We shall rise!"

We shall rise, we shall rise
From the shadows, from the silence
We will stand and recognize
All the ones who've gone before us
The promise of the prize
Ever spoken, never broken
"We shall rise!"

I have seen the sweat of the farmer
Wrestle supper from the soil
Felt the muscle of the miner
In their cool, dark day of toil
In the office, the home and the factory
Still I hear to my surprise
Midst the trouble and the triumph
"We shall rise!"

I have heard the hounds of history
Ever baying at my door
Heard the cries and the curses
As the dead shout evermore
And I have heard the quiet voice of truth
Midst the thunder of the lies
It's not a threat, it is a promise
"We shall rise!"

It will rattle the foundations
It will stop the hands of time
It will part the mighty oceans
It will wear the rainbow sign
It will be heard by even silent ears
And seen by blinded eyes
It will happen without warning
"We shall rise!"

And the chains will all be broken
The locks will all fall free
And the doors will swing wide open
For the whole, wide world to see
And the powerful will understand
As the scales fall from their eyes:
It is not given, it is taken
"We shall rise!"

And when we finally stand in judgment
Before our children's eyes
Not a soul will be forgotten
"We shall rise!"

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם!
**Next year in Jerusalem—in a renewed world
where all are free.**