



Freedom for Whom?

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Dr. Diamond is the author of a chapter on the rabbinic period in the *Schocken Guide to Jewish Books*, and entries in the *Reader's Guide to Judaism* and *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. He is the author of *Holy Men and Hunger Artists: Fasting and Asceticism in Rabbinic Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2003). The book provides a thorough reassessment of the role that asceticism plays in rabbinic Judaism, suggesting that asceticism is more pervasive than is generally thought. Dr. Diamond has written on prayer, asceticism, and issues of environmental law and ethics. He is currently editing a commentary on *Yerushalmi Pesahim* written by the late Professor Louis Ginzberg, as well as a book on prayer. The prayer volume will address the problem of cognitive dissonance for the contemporary worshipper and will offer readings of traditional liturgy that use midrashic methodology to find meaning and relevance in these prayers for the modern Jew. Dr. Diamond has taught in a variety of settings, including Stern College, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, the 92nd Street Y, and several Ramah camps. Dr. Diamond was ordained at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University and received his doctorate in Talmud from JTS.

1. Exodus 6:6-8

6. Say, therefore, to the Israelite people: I am the LORD. I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians and deliver you from their bondage. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary chastisements.

7. And I will take you to be My people, and I will be your God. And you shall know that I, the LORD, am your God who freed you from the labors of the Egyptians.

8. I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession, I the LORD."

לֹכֶן אָמַר לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָנָּי יְהוָה
וְהֹצֵאֲתִי אֶתְכֶם מִתְּפִתְחַת סְבִלַּת
מִצְרָיִם וְהַצְלַחֲתִי אֶתְכֶם מִעֲבָדָת
וְנִאֱלֹתִי אֶתְכֶם בְּזִרְעוֹ נְטוּלָה
וּבְשִׁפְטִים גְּדָלִים :

ולקחתי אתכם לי לעם והייתי
לכם לאלהים וידעתם כי אני יהוה
אליהיכם המוציא אתכם מתחת
סבלות מצרים :

וְהַבָּאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁאַתִּי אֶת־יְדֵי לְתַת אֶתְחָתָה
לְאָבָרָהָם לִיצָּקָן וּלְיעָקָב וּנְתַנְתַּנִּי
אֶתְחָתָה לְכֶם מִזְרָחָה אָנָּי יְהוָה :

2. Leviticus 25:39-46

39. If your kinsman under you continues in straits and must give himself over to you, do not subject him to the treatment of a slave.

40. He shall remain with you as a hired or bound laborer; he shall serve with you only until the jubilee year.

41. Then he and his children with him shall be free of your authority; he shall go back to his family and return to his ancestral holding.—

42. For they are My servants, whom I freed from the land of Egypt; they may not give themselves over into servitude.—

43. You shall not rule over him ruthlessly; you shall fear your God.

וְכִיִּמְוֹךְ אֲחִיךְ עַפְךְ וְנִמְפַרְךְ
לְךָ לְאַתְּעַבְּדֵךְ בָּו עַבְדָּת עַבְדָּךְ :

כְּשֶׁכֵּיר כַּתְוֹשֵׁב יְהִי עַפְךְ
עַד־שָׁנַת הַיּוֹלֵד יַעֲבֵד עַפְךְ :

וַיֵּצֵא מִעַפְךְ הוּא וַיַּנִּזְרַע עַפְךְ
וַיַּשְׁבַּת אֶל־מִשְׁפְּחַתּוֹ וְאֶל־אֶחָתָה
אָבָתֵּינוּ יִשּׁוּבָה :

כִּי־עַבְדֵּי הָם אֲשֶׁר־הָזָאתִי
אֶתְכֶם מִאָרֶץ מִצְרָיִם לְאָ
מִמְכֹרְךָ מִמְּכֹרָת עַבְדָּךְ :

לְאַתְּרֹזֶה בָּו בְּפֶרֶד וַיַּרְאָתָ
מִאֱלֹהִיךְ :

וְעַבְדָּךְ וְאַמְתַּח אֲשֶׁר יְהִי־לְךָ
מִאֱתָתְךָ הָגּוּם אֲשֶׁר

44. Such male and female slaves as you may have—it is from the nations round about you that you may acquire male and female slaves.

45. You may also buy them from among the children of aliens resident among you, or from their families that are among you, whom they begot in your land. These shall become your property:

46. you may keep them as a possession for your children after you, for them to inherit as property for all time. Such you may treat as slaves. But as for your Israelite kinsmen, no one shall rule ruthlessly over the other.

סְבִיבַתְיכֶם מֵהֶם תָּקַנְוּ עֲבָד
וְאֶמֶת :

וְגַם מִבְנֵי הַתֹּושְׁבִּים הָגָרִים
עַמְּכֶם מֵהֶם תָּקַנְוּ
וּמְפִשְׁחַתֶּם אֲשֶׁר עַמְּכֶם
אֲשֶׁר הָזְלִדו בָּאֶרְצָם וְהִי
לְכֶם לְאֲחֹזָה :

וְהַתְּנוּמָלְתֶם אֶתְכֶם לְבִנֵיכֶם
אַחֲרֵיכֶם לְרִשְׁת אֲחֹזָה לְעַלְמָם
בָּהֶם פָּעַלְדו וּבָאֶחָדָם בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל אִיש בָּאֶחָיו לֹא
תַּرְצַח בָּו בְּפָרָך :

3. Exodus 12:26-27

26. And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this rite?'

27. you shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to the LORD, because He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but saved our houses.'"
The people then bowed low in homage.

וְהִלָּה כִּי-יָאמְרוּ אֶלְיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם מִהֳעֲבֵדָה
הַזֹּאת לְכֶם :

וְאָמַרְתֶּם זֶבֶחַ לְלַטְשׁוֹ הִוא לִיהְוָה אֲשֶׁר פָּסַח
עַל-בְּתֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרָיִם בְּנַגְפּוֹ אֶת-
מִצְרָיִם וְאֶת-בְּתִינִינוּ הַאֲלִיל וַיַּקְרַד הָעָם
וַיִּשְׁתַּמְנוּוּ :

4. Deuteronomy 26:5-10

5. You shall then recite as follows before the LORD your God: "My father was a fugitive Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation.

6. The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us.

וְעַנְיַת וְאָמַרְתֶּן לִפְנֵי | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
אָרֶמִי אָבֶד אָבֶד וַיַּרְדֵּן מִצְרָיִם
וַיַּגְרַשֵּׁם בְּמִתְּנִי מַעַט וַיַּהַיּוּ שָׁם לְגֹוי
גְּדוֹלָה עֲצִים וּרְבָּה :

וַיַּרְאָנוּ אֶתְנוּ הַמִּצְרָיִם וַיַּעֲזֹנוּנוּ וַיִּתְנַזְּנוּ
עַלְיָנוּ עֲבֵדָה קָשָׁה :

7. We cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression.

8. The LORD freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and awesome power, and by signs and portents.

9. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

10. Wherefore I now bring the first fruits of the soil which You, O LORD, have given me.” You shall leave it before the LORD your God and bow low before the LORD your God.

ונצַלְק אֱלֹהָה אֶלְהִי אֲבֹתֵינו וַיְשַׁמֵּע יְהוָה אֶת־קְلֹנו וַיַּרְא אֶת־עֲנֵינו וְאֶת־עַמְלֵנו וְאֶת־לְחָצֵנו :

וַיַּצְאָנו יְהוָה מִמִּצְרָים בִּיד חִזְקָה וּבָצָרָע נָטוֹיה וּבְמִקְא גָּדָל וּבְאֶתְזָה וּבְמִפְתָּים :

וַיָּבָאָנו אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וַיַּתְרַלֵּנו אֶת־הָאָרֶץ מִזֶּאת אָרֶץ זָבֵת חָלֵב וְדָבֵש וְעַתָּה הַגָּה הַבָּאֲתִיל אֶת־רָאשֵׁית פְּרִי הָאָדָمָה אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתָּה לִי יְהוָה וְהַנִּיחַתָּו לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ וְהַשְׁתַּחַווֹת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ :

5. Exodus 20:2-3, 13

2. I the LORD am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage:

3. You shall have no other gods besides Me.

13. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךְ אֲשֶׁר הָזָאת יְהוָה מִאָרֶץ מִצְרָים מִבֵּית עָבָדִים :

לֹא יְהִי־לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אַחֲרִים עַל־פָּנֶיךָ

לֹא תְּرַצֵּח : (ס) לֹא תְּנַאֲרֵף : (ס) לֹא תְּגַנְּבֵב : (ס) לֹא תְּעַנְּגַב בְּרַצְךָ עַד שְׁקָר : (ס)

6. Traditional Passover Haggadah – first response to the Mah Nishtana

We were slaves to Pharaoh in the land of Egypt. And the Lord, our God, took us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched forearm. And if the Holy One, blessed be He, had not taken our ancestors from Egypt, behold we and our children and our children's children would [all] be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. And even if we

עָבָדִים הָיִינו לְפָרָעה בְּמִצְרָים, וַיַּצְאָנו ה' אֱלֹהִינו מִשְׁם בַּיד חִזְקָה וּבָצָרָע נָטוֹיה. וְאֶלְוָ לֹא הָזָיא הַקְדּוֹש בָּרוּך הוּא אָת אָבוֹתֵינו מִמִצְרָים, הָרִי אָנו וְבָנֵינו וּבָנֵי בָנֵינו מִשְׁעָבָדִים הָיִינו לְפָרָעה בְּמִצְרָים. וְאֶפְיוֹלָו

were all sages, all discerning, all elders, all knowledgeable about the Torah, it would be a commandment upon us to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt. And anyone who adds [and spends extra time] in telling the story of the exodus from Egypt, behold he is praiseworthy.

כָּלֶנוּ חֲכָמִים כָּלֶנוּ גְּבוּנִים כָּלֶנוּ
זָקְנִים כָּלֶנוּ יֹדְעִים אֶת
הַתּוֹרָה מֵצָה עַלְינוּ לְסֶפֶר
בִּיצְיאַת מִצְרַיִם. וְכָל הַמְּרֻבָּה
לְסֶפֶר בִּיצְיאַת מִצְרַיִם הַרְיִ' זֶה
מִשְׁבָּח .

7. Traditional Passover Haggadah – concluding blessing of the Magid (storytelling) section

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who redeemed us and redeemed our ancestors from Egypt, and brought us on this night to eat matsa and *marror*;

So too, Lord our God, and God of our ancestors, bring us to other appointed times and holidays that will come to greet us in peace, joyful in the building of Your city and happy in Your worship; that we shall eat there from the offerings and from the Pesach sacrifices, the blood of which shall reach the wall of Your altar for favor, and we shall thank You with a new song upon our redemption and upon the restoration of our souls. Blessed are you, Lord, who redeemed Israel.

ברוך אתה ה' אלְהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר גַּאֲלָנוּ וּגְאָלָאתָ
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְהַגִּיעַנוּ הַלִּילָה
הַזֶּה לְאַכְלָבָו מַצָּה וּמַרְורָה.

בָּן ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
גִּיעַנוּ לְמַעֲדִים וּלְרַגְלִים אֶחָרִים
הַבָּאים לִקְרָאתֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם,
שְׁמָחִים בְּבָנֵינוּ עִירָךְ וּשְׁשִׁים
בַּעֲבוֹדָתְךָ. וְנִאכְלֶל שָׁם מִן הַזְּבָחִים
וּמִן הַפְּסָחִים אֲשֶׁר יָגִיעַ ذָמָם עַל
קִיר מִזְבֵּחַ לְרַצְוֹן, וּנוֹדֵה לְךָ שִׁיר
חֶדֶש עַל אֲלָתֵינוּ וּעַל פָּדוֹת נִפְשָׁנוּ.
ברוך אתה ה', גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל .

8. Traditional Passover Haggadah – second response to the Mah Nishtana

From the beginning, our ancestors were idol worshipers. And now, the Place [of all] has brought us close to His worship, as it is stated (Joshua 24:2-4), "Yehoshua said to the whole people, so said the Lord, God of Israel, 'Over the river did your ancestors dwell from always, Terah the father of Avraham and the father of Nahor, and they worshiped other gods.

And I took your father, Avraham, from over the river and I made him walk in all the land

מִתְחַלָּה עַזְבָּדִי עַבְזָה זָרָה הַיּוֹ
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְעַכְשָׁיו קָרְבָּנוּ הַמִּקְׁומָם
לְעַבְזָתוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר : וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־
כָּל־הָעָם, כִּי אָמַר ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל :
בַּעֲבָר הַפְּנִיר יָשִׁבּוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מַעֲלָם,
תַּרְחָ אָבִי אֶבְרָהָם וְאָבִי נָחוֹר, וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ
אֱלֹהִים אֶחָרִים .

נִאַקְחַת אֶת־אֲבֵיכֶם אֶת־אֶבְרָהָם מִעֲבָר
הַפְּנִיר וְאוֹלֵךְ אֹתוֹ בְּכָל־אָרֶץ פָּנָעוּ,

of Canaan and I increased his seed and I gave him Yitschak. And I gave to Yitschak, Ya'akov and Esav; and I gave to Esav, Mount Seir [in order that he] inherit it; and Yaakov and his sons went down to Egypt."

Blessed be the One who keeps His promise to Israel, blessed be He; since the Holy One, blessed be He, calculated/calculates the end [of the exile,] to do as He said to Avraham, our father, in the Covenant between the Pieces, as it is stated (Genesis 15:13-14), "And He said to Avram, 'you should surely know that your seed will be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they will enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation for which they shall toil will I judge, and afterwards they will go out with much property.'"

וְאַרְבָּה אֶת־זָרָעָו וְאַתָּנוּ לוֹ אֶת־יִצְחָק,
וְאַתָּנוּ לִיְצָחַק אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו.
וְאַתָּנוּ לְעֵשָׂו אֶת־הַר שְׁعִיר לְרֹשַׁת אֹתוֹ
וַיַּעֲקֹב וְבָנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרָיִם.

ברוך שומר הבטחתו לישראל, ברוך הוא. שהקדוש ברוך הוא חשב מוחשב את המקץ, לעשות כמו שאמר לאברהם אבינו בברית בין הבתרים, שנאמר: ויאמר לאברהם, ידע פדע כייגר יהיה זרעך באָרֶץ לא לךם, ועבדיהם ועניהם אתם ארבע מאות שנה. ונם אתה גוי אשר יעבדוך. ואנכי ואחריכו יצאו ברכש גדול.

9. Traditional Passover Haggadah – ve-Hi she-Amdah, an early medieval addition to the second response to the Mah Nishtana

And it is this that has stood for our ancestors and for us; since it is not [only] one [person or nation] that has stood [against] us to destroy us, but rather in each generation, they stand [against] us to destroy us, but the Holy One, blessed be He, rescues us from their hand.

והיא שעמדה לאבותינו ולנו. שלא אחד בלבד עמד עלינו לבנותנו, אלא שככל דור ודור עומדים עלינו לבנותנו, והקדוש ברוך הוא מאלינו מידם.

10. Traditional Passover Haggadah – Ha Lakhma Anya, an early medieval introduction to the Magid (storytelling) section

This is the “poor bread” (i.e. the bread of destitution) that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Anyone who is famished should come and eat, anyone who is in need should come and partake of the Pesach sacrifice. Now we are here, next year we will be in the land of Israel; this year we are slaves, next year we will be free people.

הא לחמא ענייא די אקלוי
אכלה בארעה זמראים.
כל דקפין ייתי וויכל, כל
דצרייך ייתי זיפסח. השטא
הכא, לשנה הבאה באָרֶץ
דיישראל. השטא עבדוי,
לשנה הבאה בני חורין.

11. Traditional Passover Seder – Shefokh Hamatekha, verses recited after pouring the Cup of Elijah and opening the door

Pour your wrath upon the nations that did not know You and upon the kingdoms that did not call upon Your Name! Since they have consumed Ya'akov and laid waste his habitation ([Psalms 79:6-7](#)). Pour out Your fury upon them and the fierceness of Your anger shall reach them ([Psalms 69:25](#))! You shall pursue them with anger and eradicate them from under the skies of the Lord ([Lamentations 3:66](#)).

שִׁפְךָ חַמְתָּךְ אֶל־הָגוּם
אֲשֶׁר לֹא יַדְעֹךְ וַעֲלֵךְ
מַמְלָכֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשֵׁמֶךְ לֹא
קָרָאוּ. כִּי אָכַל אֶת־יעַקְבָּךְ
וְאֶת־צְנֻחוּהוּ הַשְּׁמָנוֹ. שִׁפְךָ
עַלְיכֶם זַעַמֶךְ וְחַרְבוֹן אַפְּכָךְ
יְשִׁיגָם. תַּרְדַּף בָּאָרֶץ
וְתִשְׂמִידָם מִתְחַת שְׁמֵי הָאֱלֹהִים.

12. “Pour out your love”: a prayer purportedly found in a manuscript version of the Haggadah dated 1521

Pour your love on the nations who have known you and on the kingdoms who call upon Your name. For they show loving-kindness to the seed of Jacob and they defend your people Israel from those who would devour them. May they live to see the sukkah of peace spread over your chosen ones and to participate in the joys of your nations.

שְׁפָךְ אֶת־הַבְּתָךְ עַל הָגוּם אֲשֶׁר
יַדְעֹךְ וְעַל מַמְלָכֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשֵׁמֶךְ
קוֹרְאִים בְּגַלְגָּל חֲסָדִים שֶׁהָם
עוֹשִׁים עִם יְעַקְבָּךְ וּמְגִינִּים עַל
עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִפְנֵי אֶוְכְּלִים.
יוֹצִאוּ לְרָאֹות בְּסֻוכָּת בְּחִירִיךְ
וְלִשְׁמוֹת בְּשִׁמְחַת גּוֹיִךְ.

13. Babylonian Talmud Megillah 10b

And similarly, Rabbi Yoḥanan said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “And the one came not near the other all the night” ([Exodus 14:20](#))? The ministering angels wanted to sing their song, for the angels would sing songs to each other, as it states: “And they called out to each other and said” ([Isaiah 6:3](#)), but the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: The work of My hands, the Egyptians, are drowning at sea, and you wish to say songs? This indicates that God does not rejoice over the downfall of the wicked.

וַיֹּאמֶר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: מַאי
דְּכַתְּבֵךְ וְלֹא קָרְבֵּךְ זֶה אֶל זֶה
כָּל הַלִּילָה - בְּקַשׁוּ מְלָאֵיכִי
הַשְּׁرָת לִוְמָר שִׁירָה, אָמַר
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא: מַעֲשָׂה
יְדֵי טוֹבָעִין בָּיִם וְאַתֶּם
אָוֹמְרִים שִׁירָה?

14. From Rabbi Arthur Waskow's Freedom Haggadah (1969)

a. From the introduction

For us this Haggadah is deeply Jewish, but not *only* Jewish. In our world all men face the Pharaohs who could exterminate them any moment, and so enslave them all the time. Passover therefore fuses, for an instant, with the history and the future of all mankind. But it fuses *for an instant*, and in the fusion it does not disappear. The particularly Jewish lives within the universally human, at the same time that the universally human lives within the particularly Jewish.

b. Commenting on the last line of HaLakhma Anya

As the tradition says, "Ha-sha-tah ha-kha; I'sha-nah ha-ba-ah b'ar-ah d'yis-ra-el. This year we celebrate here, but the next year we hope to celebrate in the land of Israel."

And as another tradition says, "Ubi libertas, ibi patria"—where there is liberty, that is my country. That is my Israel. For were we sitting tonight in Jerusalem, we should still say, "Next year in Jerusalem." For this year, not only we but all men are slaves and aliens: next year we hope that all men shall be free. This year, all men eat as aliens in a land not wholly their own; next year we hope all men will celebrate in "the land of Israel"—that is, in a world made one and a world made free.

c. Explaining the custom of removing drops of wine from one's cup while reciting the Ten Plagues

These are the ten plagues which the Most Holy, blessed be He, brought on the Egyptians in Egypt:

(Drop wine from the cup ten times while saying the ten plagues)

Blood, Frogs, Vermin, Poisonous beasts. Pestilence, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, Slaying of the firstborn.

The tradition says that we spill wine from our cups in recounting the plagues because it is incumbent on us to reduce our pleasure as we remember the sufferings of the Egyptians.

And the tradition also tells us that when the angels rejoiced in the drowning of the Egyptians, the Lord our God, blessed be he, rebuked them—saying, "Are these not my people also, and the work of my hands?" Let us therefore grieve for the sufferings of our brothers the Egyptians.

But let us also remember the lesson of the plagues: the winning of freedom has not always been bloodless in the past. Through the generations, our prophets, our rabbis, and our shoftim—men like Micah who spoke the word of God directly to the kings and the people, men like Hillel who worked out the law of justice in daily life, and revolutionary leaders or "judges" like Gideon—have faced the issue of violence in the struggle for freedom.

The struggle was not bloodless when the prophet Micah warned, "Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light, they execute it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and seize them, and houses, and take them away. Thus, they oppose a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. Therefore, thus sayeth the Lord: Hear this I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel, that abhor justice and pervert all equity; the heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money.

Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest."

It was not bloodless when the people of America announced, "Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it," and when the shofet Jefferson, that revolutionary judge and leader, added, "Can history produce an instance of rebellion so honorably conducted? God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants."

15. A note on p. 99 of the Haggadah “A Different Night”, authored by Noam Zion and David Dishon (1997)

“Black Moses”

Harriet Tubman escaped in 1849 from her plantation in Maryland with the help of the “Underground Railroad.” Soon she became a major “conductor” bringing more than 300 slaves to freedom. Despite the high price on her head, her faith in God gave her the courage to persist and earn the nickname “Moses of her people.”

16. Jeffrey Goldberg commenting on Ha Lakhma Anya in the New American Haggadah edited by Jonathan Safran Foer (2012), p. 19

If there is a moment in the seder that should leave us feeling self-conscious, it is now. “This is the bread of affliction,” we read. True enough; matzah is the quintessential discomfort food.

But what follows is a problem: “All who are bent with hunger come and eat.”

The invitation to the hungry seems empty...Could it be teaching us that this night, in one crucial respect, is just like all other nights? On all other nights we eat to satisfaction, without a thought for the hungry stranger. Tonight, we speak of hunger, but do nothing to alleviate it.

17. Excerpts from Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan's The New Haggadah, revised edition, 1942, pp. 43, 50, 51, 54

¶ Moses was brought up in the luxuries of the palace; but "it came to pass, in those days, when he was grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their burdens." Not as a mere spectator did he look upon his fellow-Israelites, but as a brother. He looked upon them and wept, saying, "Woe is me! Would that I might die for you! Surely, no work can be harder than your work in mortar!" And he put his shoulder to the burden, and helped every one of them.

¶ Rabbi Eleazar ben Rabbi José,* the Galilean said: Whenever Moses saw a child carrying a load too heavy for him, or a woman carrying a man's size load, he would hurry over, leaving his royal companions, and he would lend his strength, pretending all the while that he was helping Pharaoh. That is why God said, "Since you went out of your way to see with your own eyes the suffering of Israel, and treated them as your brothers, I will go out of my way, and leave my place in the heavens to speak with you."

* A PALESTINIAN SAGE of the 2nd century.

PHARAOH: ARCH-TYRANT

¶ The Pharaoh of the Pesah story was not just a cruel king who happened to live at a certain time, in a certain country. The Pharaoh about whom we read in the Bible was, of course, such a king. But the Pharaoh that our ancestors pictured, each and every year, for century after century, when Pesah was celebrated, was more than one man: he was for them every tyrant, every cruel and heartless ruler who ever enslaved the men, women and children of his country.

¶ For our forefathers, Pharaoh was the symbol of all those tyrants who ever acted as though they were gods, and whose will had to be obeyed without question, on penalty of torture or death.

¶ And that is why Pesah means more than that first emancipation the Israelites won from Pharaoh when they left Egypt. It means the emancipation the serfs in the Middle Ages won from their overlords; the freedom the slaves won from their masters; the freedom the common people of countries won, when their kings were overthrown; it means the guarantee of the sacred rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

¶ The first emancipation was thus only a foreshadowing of all the emancipations that were to follow, and which will yet follow in the days to come. The victory over the first Pharaoh reminds us that the time will come when all the Pharaohs of the world will be vanquished, when right will conquer might, when God alone will rule over men, and all men will be brothers.

כִּאָוֶרֶת מִפְּנֵיכֶם יְהִי לְכֶם הַגָּר הַאֲרֵן אֲתֶכֶם
וְאַהֲבָתֶלֶן כְּמֻזָּקָה, כִּי גָּרִים הָיִיתֶם בָּאָרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם, אָנֹכִי יְהִי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: (וַיַּקְרָא יְהֹוָה לֵאמֹר)

¶ *The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the native among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord.* (LEV. 19:34)

וְגַר לֹא תַּחֲזֹק, וְאַתֶּם יְדַעַתֶּם אֶת־נִנְפָשׁ הַגָּר, כִּי
גָּרִים הָיִיתֶם בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: (שָׁמוֹת כ"ז ט')

¶ *And a stranger shalt thou not oppress, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.* (EXOD. 23:9)