

כַּרְפַּס), bitter herbs (*maror*/מָרֹר), a roasted shank bone (*z'roa*/זְרוּעַ), a roasted egg (*beitzah*/בֵּיצָה), and a sweet condiment (*charoset*/חֲרוֹסֶת). As we tell the story of our deliverance from Egypt, we shall explore the meaning of each of these symbols as well as the significance of matzah (unleavened bread), Miriam's cup, and the cup of Elijah, which are on our seder table.

Karpas: Blessing for the Fruit of the Earth

Hold up the karpas.

READER: Tonight we praise God once again for creating the fruit of the earth, symbolized by the *karpas* (green vegetable) on our table. The first growth of spring, *karpas* represents rebirth and renewal. In the spirit of Passover, before we eat it we dip the *karpas* in salt water. We do so to remind ourselves of the tears shed by our ancestors while enslaved in Egypt.

The karpas is distributed, and each person dips it in salt water.

THE BLESSING

The blessing may be read or chanted in unison or by the Reader. The Reader may also read the blessing in Hebrew, one phrase at a time, with everyone joining in unison after each phrase and in the English, and then the blessing may be chanted.



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam,
borei p'ri haadamah.*

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Creator of the fruit of the earth.

Eat the karpas.

קַדֵּשׁ

Kadeish

First Cup of Wine

יִרְחֹץ

Urchatz

Washing Hands

כַּרְפַּס

Karpas

Green Vegetable

יִמְחֹץ

Yachat

Middle Matzah

מַגִּיד

Magid

Telling the Story

רִיחֻץ

Rochtah

Washing Hands

before the Meal

מוֹצִיא/מַצָּה

Motzi/Matzah

Matzah

מָרֹר

Maror

Bitter Herbs

כּוֹרֵךְ

Koreich

Hillel Sandwich

שְׁלֹחַן אוֹרֵיחַ

Shulchan Oreich

The Meal Is Served



The Seder Service
before the Meal

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In the days of
the ancient
Temple in
Jerusalem,
our ances-
tors brought
offerings to
the Temple
for Festival
celebrations.
The egg on the
seder plate
is roasted in
remembrance
of the Festival
offerings.

In keeping with
the invitation
to those in
need to join us
in our seder
meal and Pass-
over celebra-
tion ("All who
are hungry,
let them come
and eat"), it is
customary to
give tzedakah
(charitable
contributions)
for hunger
relief during
the Passover
season.

The Seder Service
before the Meal

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Beitzah: The Roasted Egg

Hold up the roasted egg.

READER: Even before the Exodus from Egypt, Jews celebrated the creation of life each spring. The egg, like parsley, symbolizes the beginning and renewal of life. Round, without beginning or end, it also represents the cycles of the year and the cycles of life.

Matzah: Our Bread of Affliction

READER: We have on a plate on our table three pieces of matzah. Matzah is unleavened bread, bread that has not had time to rise, or leaven. It is the food we ate during our Exodus from Egypt. As the Torah teaches, "They baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had taken out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay" (Exodus 12:39).

The three pieces of matzah are a reminder to us of God's covenant with the Patriarchs and Matriarchs of the Jewish people—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

Before our meal, we shall give thanks to God for bringing forth bread from the earth and shall break and eat the upper matzah. As a reminder of our dual obligation to never forget the bitterness of slavery and to keep alive the hope of freedom, we shall break and eat the bottom matzah with *maror*, a bitter herb, and *charoset*, a sweet condiment that recalls the mortar our ancestors used for building Egyptian monuments.

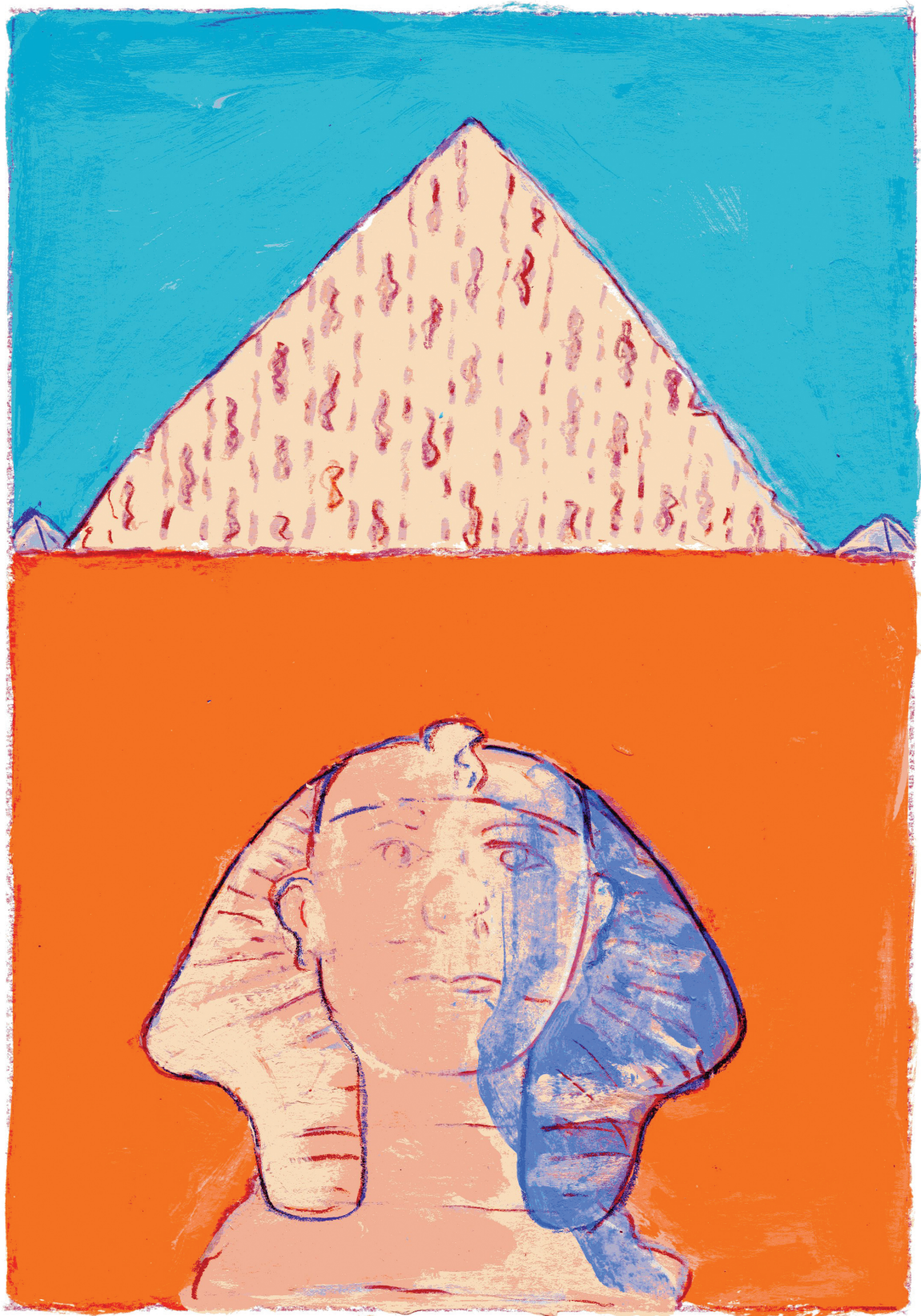
The Afikoman: Breaking the Middle Matzah

READER: We now break the middle matzah in half. The larger piece is called the *afikoman*. It is our tradition to hide the *afikoman*. After the meal the young people at the seder table hunt for it and return it, possibly for a reward, so that the seder may be completed. The search for the *afikoman* reminds us that it is the memory of freedoms that have been lost that inspires each generation to continue the pursuit of liberty, tolerance, and justice.

The Reader holds up the afikoman. Each person holds up a piece of matzah.

TOGETHER:

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. All who are hungry, let them come and eat. All who are in need, let them come celebrate Passover with



us. May it be God's will to redeem us from all trouble and all servitude. Next year at this season, may the whole house of Israel (and all peoples) be free!

הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיא דִּי אֶכְלוּ אַבְהֶתְנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.
כָּל־דְּכַפִּין יִיתִי וְיִכָּל. כָּל־דְּצָרִין יִיתִי וְיִפְסֹח. הַשְׁתָּא תָּכֵא.
לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל. הַשְׁתָּא עֲבָדִי,
לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוּרִין.

Return the matzot to the seder table. The afikoman is hidden.

A Symbol of Hope and the Responsibilities of Freedom

Raise the second half of the middle matzah.

READER: To our plate that held three pieces of matzah, we now return the second half of the middle matzah. For the oppressed, it is a symbol of hope. For free persons, it is a symbol of the responsibilities of freedom.

The story of the Exodus has brought hope to many peoples as they faced their own struggle for freedom. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968), in the speeches, rallies, and marches of the American civil rights movement, explicitly invoked the story of the Exodus:

(The Exodus) is something of the story of every people struggling for freedom. It is the first story of man's explicit quest for freedom. And it demonstrates the stages that seem to inevitably follow the quest for freedom.

This is the power of the story of the Exodus: it is both a historical story and a contemporary symbol of hope.

READER: Having washed away the remnants of slave mentality, we acknowledge that, blessed with freedom, we have responsibilities as free persons. As articulated by the great twentieth-century philosopher Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel:

Freedom means more than mere emancipation. . . . Freedom presupposes the capacity for sacrifice. . . . The glory of a free society lies not only in the consciousness of my right to be free, and in my capacity to be free, but also in the realization of my fellow man's right to be free, and his capacity to be free. The issue we face is how to save man's belief in his capacity to be free.

An opportunity for a short discussion: Who are those struggling for freedom today? What are the responsibilities of free persons?

READER: May the story of the Exodus continue to be a source of hope for all those who seek freedom from persecution and

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