

כּוֹס מִרְיָם

Kos Miryam

Miriam's Cup



עָלֵי בְּאֵר עֲנוּ-לָהּ
וְשָׂאֲבֹתֵם-מַיִם בְּשִׂשׁוֹן מִמַּעַיְנֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה.

♩ 116, 117

Ali v'eir enu lah. Ush'avtem mayim b'sason mimaay'nei ha-y'shuah.

Spring up, well! We shall respond
for we have been promised:
And you shall draw water in joy from the wells of redemption.

Numbers 21:17, Isaiah 12:3

All drink, leaning to the left.

Miriam, who first appears in the Torah as the unnamed sister of Moses, led the Israelites in song and dance as they crossed the Red Sea. "And Miriam the prophet . . . took her timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, in dance, with timbrels. And Miriam sang . . ." (*Exodus 15:20–21*).

Miriam is the first woman to be called "prophet" in the Torah. In the Midrash, the Rabbis attribute this honor to her insistence that the Israelites, including her own parents, defy Pharaoh's decree forbidding marital relations between Israelite slaves.

Miriam, with her brothers, Moses and Aaron, led the Israelites on their desert journey. According to rabbinic tradition, Miriam's ability to locate sources of fresh water preserved spirits and lives. When she died, the people were afraid that they, too, would perish. But when their period of mourning was over, they discovered fresh springs that revived them. Miriam's Well accompanied our people on our forty-year journey through the wilderness.

The Talmud suggests that we recline during the seder, adopting the practice of free Romans who reclined on couches during their lavish banquets.

And who should recline? The rabbis assume that all men are obligated to take this posture of freedom. They add, "A woman of importance should recline." (*Tractate P'sachim 108a*) Today, all women are considered "women of importance," so both women and men recline.

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Fill the kos Miryam with spring water.

זֹאת כּוֹס מִרְיָם כּוֹס מַיִם חַיִּים. זְכֹר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם.

♩ 116, 117

Zot kos Miryam, kos mayim chayim. Zeicher litziat Mitzrayim.

This is the cup of Miriam, the cup of living waters,
a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt.

Throughout their desert wanderings,
The Israelites were refreshed by miraculous springs
that bubbled out of deep crevices
in the rocky landscape.

When Miriam died, the waters dried up.
The people mourned the slave child who waited by a river,
the woman who danced across a sea,
the leader who sang a nation to freedom.

When the springs flowed once more,
they named them Miriam's Well.

When fear blocks our path, when our travels deplete us,
we seek sources of healing and wells of hope.
May our questions and our stories nourish us
as Miriam's Well renewed our people's spirits.

Pour water from the kos Miryam into every guest's cup.

סדר הסדר

Seder HaSeder

Order of the Seder

*Sing this list now, and then, if you wish,
repeat the list as you reach each new section in the seder.*

♫ 117, 118

קִדְּשׁ	<i>Kadeish</i>	SANCTIFY: blessing over the first cup of wine
וּרְחַץ	<i>Ur'chatz</i>	WASH the hands
בְּרַפֵּס	<i>Karpas</i>	Recite the blessing over a GREEN vegetable
יַחַץ	<i>Yachatz</i>	BREAK the middle matzah
מַגִּיד	<i>Magid</i>	TELL the Exodus story
רְחַצְהָ	<i>Rochtzah</i>	WASH the hands
מוֹצֵיא / מַצָּה	<i>Motzi/Matzah</i>	Recite the blessings over MATZAH
מָרֹר	<i>Maror</i>	Recite the blessing over BITTER HERBS
כוֹרֵךְ	<i>Koreich</i>	Eat the Hillel sandwich
שְׁלַחַן עוֹרֵךְ	<i>Shulchan Oreich</i>	The MEAL is served
צְפוּן	<i>Tzafun</i>	The <i>AFIKOMAN</i> is found and shared
בְּרַךְ	<i>Bareich</i>	Recite the BLESSING after meals
הַלֵּל	<i>Hallel</i>	Recite poems and songs of PRAISE
נִרְצָה	<i>Nirtzah</i>	The seder is COMPLETE

Our seder is based upon oral tradition. These fourteen words or pairs of words serve as abbreviated chapter headings to remind us of the order of the seder.

At Passover my great-grandfather Yitzhak, a denizen of British Palestine who lived through the years of the European genocide and then witnessed the rebirth of Israel, read the "order" out loud with special solemnity . . . "Whosoever thinks he can change the order of the universe, let him come and hear the order that God has established from the very day our people fled Egypt." I thought then, and I believe now: If people would just eat in order, bless in order, love in order, then maybe we would finally find killing one another out of order.

Ben Kamin