

FEMINISM

Opening Meditation

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Source: The Women's Seder Sourcebook: Rituals & Readings for Use at the Passover Seder

We come together from our separate lives, each of us bringing our concerns, our preoccupations, our hopes, and our dreams. We are not yet fully present: The traffic, the last-minute cooking, the final details still cling to us. Our bodies hold the rush of the past few hours.

It is now time to let go of these pressures and really arrive at this seder. We do this by meditating together. Make yourself comfortable, you can close your eyes if you wish. Now take a few deep breaths, and as you exhale, let go of the tensions in your body. You'll begin to quiet within.

When you're ready, repeat silently to yourself: "Hineini," or "Here I am." Hineini is used in the Torah to signify being present in body, mind, and spirit. It means settling into where we are and simply being "here."

If you prefer, you can visualize the word. Let the word become filled with your breath. Merge with it, so that you experience being fully present. Everything drops away, and you're left in the unbounded state of here-ness. When a thought arises, just notice it and return to hineini again and again. Let yourself be held in the state of hineini.

Meditate in this way for several minutes, long enough to become more present. Slowly open your eyes, and look around the room at the people in your circle. Now, we begin our journey together.