

FEMINISM

Elijah's cup and Miriam's cup

Contributed by [Alida Liberman](#)

Source: From a variety of sources (Social Justice Haggadah, The Wandering is Over, Modernist Humanist Haggadah)

The Fourth Cup of Wine

The Cup of Elijah, The Cup of Hope

Reader 1: Let us all fill our wine glasses. *Reader 1 picks up Elijah's cup for all to see.*

This is the cup of Elijah. According to Jewish tradition, the Prophet Elijah was a brave man who denounced the slavery of his day. Legend teaches that he will return one day to lead everyone to peace and freedom. It was customary during the Passover Seder to open the door of the house for Elijah, in the hope that the age of universal peace may soon be at hand.

Group: We, too, open the door to peace, knowing that Elijah's task is really our own. Only when we have made a world where nation shall not lift up sword against nation, where justice is universal, and where each person is free, will the age-old dream of peace be real. Let us bring peace and justice to the world!

Reader 1: Let us now open the door.

MIRIAM'S CUP:

Although Miriam, a prophet and the sister of Moses, is never mentioned in the traditional Haggadah text, she is one of the central figures in the Exodus story.

According to Jewish feminist writer Tamara Cohen, the practice of filling a goblet with water to symbolize Miriam's inclusion in the seder originated at a Rosh Chodesh group in Boston in 1989. The idea resonated with many people and quickly spread.

Reader 2: The story has been told of a miraculous well of living water which had accompanied the Jewish people since the world was spoken into being. The well comes and goes, as it is needed, and as we remember, forget, and remember again how to call it to us. In the time of the exodus from Mitzrayim, the well came to Miriam, in honor of her courage and action, and stayed with the Jews as they wandered the desert. Upon Miriam's death, the well again disappeared.

Reader 3: It is the women of our story who make its unfolding possible. Shifrah and Puah, the midwives who disobey Pharaoh's order to kill all newborn boys; Yocheved and Miriam, the mother and sister of Moses; Pharaoh's daughter who rescues Moses from the Nile. Pharaoh pays little mind to the women, yet it is their daring actions that began it all. It is because of them that we are here tonight; it is because of them that we are able to thank God for our freedom, just as Miriam led us in song to God after we crossed through the parted waters.

Group: With this ritual of Miriam's cup of water, we honor all Jewish women. We commit ourselves to transforming all of our cultures into loving, welcoming spaces for people of all genders.

We will end our seder with a fourth cup of wine, which we bless now:

Blessing: Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree hagafen.
We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruit of the vine.

