

## To Consider- The Origin of the Orange on the Seder Plate

Contributed by [Laura Craig Mason](#)

Source: Jewish Council on Urban Affairs Justice and Freedom Seder 2012



In the early 1980s, the Hillel Foundation invited me to speak on a panel at Oberlin College. While on campus, I came across a Haggada that had been written by some Oberlin students to express feminist concerns. One ritual they devised was placing a crust of bread on the Seder plate, as a sign of solidarity with Jewish lesbians ("there's as much room for a lesbian in Judaism as there is for a crust of bread on the Seder plate"). At the next Passover, I placed an orange on our family's Seder plate. During the first part of the Seder, I asked everyone to take a segment of the orange, make the blessing over fruit, and eat it as a gesture of solidarity with Jewish lesbians and gay men, and others who are marginalized within the Jewish community (I mentioned widows in particular). Bread on the Seder plate brings an end to Pesach - it renders everything chometz. And its symbolism suggests that being lesbian is being transgressive, violating Judaism. I felt that an orange was suggestive of something else: the fruitfulness for all Jews when lesbians and gay men are contributing and active members of Jewish life. In addition, each orange segment had a few seeds that had to be spit out - a gesture of spitting out, repudiating the homophobia that poisons too many Jews.

**Susannah Heschel, April, 2001**

**Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies Dartmouth College**

**All sing:**

**Baruch ha-Shem shel Yahoway ( Repeat three times)**

**Baruch ha-Shem, baruch ha-shem shel Yahowah**

**Blessed be the name of our God ( Repeat three times)**

**Blessed be the name, blessed be the name of our God.**

**Who noten lechem oo-mayim gam ( Repeat three times)**

**Who noten lechem, who noten lechem oo-mayim gam.**

**He gives us bread and water too ( Repeat three times)**

**He gives us bread, He gives us bread and our water too.**

**Baruch ha-Shem shel Yahoway ( Repeat three times)**

**Baruch ha-Shem, baruch ha-shem shel Yahowah**