

Conclusion of Maggid

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source: Velveteen Rabbi

Dayenu: It Would Have Been Enough

What does this mean, "It would have been enough"? Surely no one of these would indeed have been enough for us. *Dayenu* means to celebrate each step toward freedom *as if* it were enough, then to start out on the next step. It means that if we reject each step because it is not the whole liberation, we will never be able to achieve the whole liberation. It means to sing each verse as if it were the whole song—and then sing the next verse.

Had God:

Brought us out of Egypt and not divided the sea for us— *Dayenu*

Divided the sea and not permitted us to cross on dry land— *Dayenu*

Permitted us to cross on dry land and not sustained us for forty years in the desert— *Dayenu*

Sustained us for forty years in the desert and not fed us with manna— *Dayenu*

Fed us with manna and not given us the Sabbath— *Dayenu*

Given us the Sabbath and not brought us to Mount Sinai— *Dayenu*

Brought us to Mount Sinai and not given us the Torah— *Dayenu*

Given us the Torah and not led us into the land of Israel— *Dayenu*

Led us into the land of Israel and not built for us the Temple— *Dayenu*

Built for us the Temple and not sent us prophets of truth— *Dayenu*

Sent us prophets of truth and not made us a holy people— *Dayenu*

For all these, alone and together, we say— *Dayenu!*

Second Cup of Wine

הִנְנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזַמֵּן לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת כּוֹס שְׁנִיָּה מְאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת לְשֵׁם

יְחִיד קַדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשְׁכִינְתָּיהּ.

Hin'hi muchan u-m'zuman l'kayem mitzvat kos shniyah m'arbah cosot

I'shem yichud kudsha brich hu u-schinteh.

I take upon myself the mitzvah of this second of four cups of wine, in the name of the unification of the Holy Blessed One with Shekhinah!

The second cup of wine represents God's second declaration of redemption: "I will free you from slavery."

Tonight we may bless wine using several variations on the traditional Hebrew, reflecting different ways of conceptualizing the divine.

ברוכה את, שכינה, רוח העולם, בוראת פרי הגפן.

Brucha At, Shekhinah, ruach ha-olam, boreit pri hagafen.

Blessed are you, Shekhinah, Breath of Life, creator of the fruit of the vine.

Signs and Symbols

Rabban Gamaliel has said: one who has not explained the following three symbols has not fulfilled their duty: tonight we will explain seven! One for each day of the week; one for each of the seven lower *sefirot* / aspects of divinity. And they are:

The *Maror*, bitter herb or horseradish, which represents the bitterness of slavery.

The *Haroset*, a mixture of apples and nuts and wine, which represents the bricks and mortar we made in ancient times, and the new structures we are beginning to build in our lives today.

The *Lamb Shank* (or: *beet*) which represents the sacrifices we have made to survive. Before the tenth plague, our people slaughtered lambs and marked our doors with blood: because of this marking, the Angel of Death passed over our homes and our first-born were spared.

The *Egg*, which symbolizes creative power, our rebirth.

The *Parsley*, which represents the new growth of spring, for we are earthy, rooted beings, connected to the Earth and nourished by our connection.

Salt water of our tears, both then and now.

Matzot of our unleavened hearts: may this Seder enable our spirits to rise.

And what about the orange?

Susannah Heschel writes. "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." To speak of slavery and long for liberation, she says, "demands that we acknowledge our own complicity in enslaving others."

One additional item on our seder plate, therefore, is an *orange*, representing the radical feminist notion that there is—there must be—a place at the table for all of us, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. May our lives be inclusive, welcoming, and fruitful.

And the olive?

The final item on our seder plate is an olive. After the Flood, Noah's dove brought back an olive branch as a sign that the earth was again habitable. Today ancient olive groves are destroyed by violence, making a powerful symbol of peace into a casualty of war.

We keep an olive on our seder plate as an embodied prayer for peace, in the Middle East and every place where war destroys lives, hopes, and the freedoms we celebrate tonight.

In Every Generation

In every generation one must see oneself as if one had personally experienced the Exodus from Egypt. As it is written: "You shall speak to your children on that day, saying, this is how the Holy Blessed One redeemed me from Egypt. It wasn't merely my ancestors who were redeemed, but the Holy Blessed One also redeemed us with them, as it is said, 'And we went forth from there, in order that God might lead us to the land which had been promised to our ancestors.'"

Redemption wasn't a one-time thing that happened to our ancestors in bygone times; it is an ongoing experience, something that can ripple into our consciousness every day. We too were redeemed from Egypt, and we are perennially offered the possibility of living in a state of redemption if only we will open our hearts and our eyes.

This teaching ends with the understanding that God redeemed us from the Narrow Place in order to lead us to the land which had been promised to our forebears. What do we make of that idea? What does it mean to believe that God promised our ancestors a piece of land? Do we, or can we, own a piece of God's earth? Can a piece of earth own us?

What questions does this passage raise for you? How do you understand the notion that we are freed not only from but also toward? Toward what do you see yourself striving this year?