

MLK+50 Interfaith Freedom Seder: The Fourth Cup

Contributed by [Shalom Center](#)

Source: Rabbi Arthur Waskow

"American society is living now at the moment when an abused wife walks out of the household. It is the moment of greatest possibility for freedom, and the moment of greatest danger that the abusive husband will try to kill her. Freedom depends on her having a community to protect and nurture her.

"Right now, many abused communities are walking out of their abusive households. Almost certainly, there will be attempts by those in power to choke these energies to death. Together, we can nurture them and all of us to greater freedom, greater justice."

(*Gloria Steinem, "This is What 80 looks Like," The Shalom Center, 2013*)

This story is not new:

"The king said to the midwives of the Hebrews, whose names were Shifrah and Puah: "When you help the Hebrew women give birth, if he be a son, put him to death; but if she be a daughter, she may live." But the midwives held God in awe, and they let the children live. (Exodus 1: 16-21).

The Narrow Pharaoh tried to subjugate these women, make them tools of an even broader subjugation—indeed, his genocide—of these foreigners, these immigrants, these followers of a strange religion. But it was these two women—only two!—who through their resistance to the Narrow Pharaoh first gave birth to freedom in the ancient story.

And in our own generation, when our modern Narrow Pharaoh boasted of subjugating women close to him and across the breadth of all America, it was women—millions!—who led the first great wave of Resistance.

I am speaking today, not just for the #MeToos, because I was a #MeToo, but when I raise my hand, I am aware of all the women who are still in silence. The women who are faceless. The women who don't have the money, and who don't have the constitution, and who don't have the confidence, and who don't have the images in our media that gives them a sense of self-worth enough to break their silence that's rooted in the shame of assault. That's rooted in the stigma of assault. Every single day your job as an American citizen, is not just to fight for your rights; it's to fight for the rights of every individual who is taking a breath."

(*Viola Davis, Women's March in Los Angeles, January 21, 2018*)