

Passover: Dipping Parsley into Water of Tears: The Earth Cries Out to Us

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Source: Foundation for Family Education, Inc.

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Following is reading you can use during the seder at the time parsley or another green is dipped into salt water. You might also write your own!

If the Earth Could Speak, It Would Speak with Passion.

As you dip the beauty of greens into the water of tears, please hear my cry. Can't you see that I am slowly dying? My forests are being clear cut, diminished. My diverse and wondrous creatures -- birds of the sky and beasts of the fields -- small and large are threatened with extinction in your lifetimes. My splendid, colorful floral and fauna are diminishing in kind. My tropical places are disappearing before us, and my oceans are warming. Don't you see that my climate is changing, bringing floods and heat, more extreme cycles of cold and warm, all affecting you and all our Creation? It doesn't have to be! You, all of you, can make a difference in simple ways. You, all of you, can help reverse this sorrowful trend.

May these waters into which you dip the greens become healing waters to sooth and restore. As you dip, quietly make this promise:

Yes, I can help protect our wondrous natural places. Yes, I can try to use fewer of our precious resources and to replant and sustain more. I can do my part to protect our forests, our oceans and waters. I can work to protect the survival of creatures of all kinds. Yes, I will seek new forms of sustainable energy in my home and in my work, turning toward the sun, the wind, the waters. I make this promise to strive to live gently upon this Earth of ours for the good of all coming generations.

Yachatz

The Torah (Deuteronomy 16:3) calls Matzah "Lechem Oni", which is commonly translated as "Bread of Affliction", but means, more literally, "poor person's bread" or "peasant bread." For our ancestors, bread was the staff of life, symbolic of all food. One name for Passover is "The Festival of Matzah", but it might also be called "The Festival of Simple Food". Part of the great genius of this holiday is the way in which the simple peasant food of our slave past was transformed into the food of our redemption. How might Matzah as simple food redeem us now?

One way is our own personal health. Many of the serious diseases in our society have now been linked to over consumption of animal foods and processed foods of all sorts. In the past decade, medical authorities have begun to recommend less animal food and more whole grains and fresh vegetables.

A second way is by sharing food with the hungry. What do Matzah/simple food and hunger have to do with one another? If we all ate more simply, there would be more for others. This is an important lesson for the modern world and especially for us in America. More than 70% of the grain grown in the US goes to feed livestock. The livestock flesh, in turn, will feed far fewer people than the feed that went into it. If all the grain grown for livestock were consumed directly by people, it would feed five times as many people as it does

when fed to animals.

A third way is that eating simple, fresh food grown by local farmers who practice sustainable farming methods reduces pollution from fertilizers and pesticides which threaten the health of humans, other species, and whole ecosystems.

Is this not the fast that I have chosen? To loose the chains of wickedness, to undo the bonds of oppression, and to let the oppressed go free...Is it not to share thy bread with the hungry?

-Isaiah 58:6-7