

It has been 10 years since I have been free, flying like a bird! In the mid-1970s, at the age of 15, I was sold for \$200 to a man who I was supposed to be working for...I was kept in his house for more than five years against my will... I spent 22.5 years in prison for this crime I did not commit. After all those years, I thought I was going home with my family. But no! I did not go home. The INS picked me up and held me for 5 months and 7 days. This time I was told I was going to be deported... Human trafficking is like a monster that has a lot of heads. If you catch one trafficker, get rid of one head, there are still many others who continue damaging and causing pain to our society...Let's advocate and stop the monster from hurting the new generation and others.

- Maria Suarez, who was trafficked within Los Angeles County

<sup>12</sup> People often escape with just the clothes on their back.

<sup>13</sup> Not only during forced labor but during the lengthy application for a T visa. This also affects American citizens who are trafficked within the U.S.

<sup>14</sup> Including nightmares and fear of going to public places lest the person encounter their trafficker or someone who knows the trafficker.

<sup>15</sup> Imagine being truly on your own, without even a casual acquaintance to turn to.

<sup>16</sup> An American citizen who is trafficked at least has this going for them — they are not in a foreign country where they don't understand language or culture — unless they have cognitive challenges, as has been the case in a number of instances of slavery.

<sup>17</sup> Tragically, this often leads to avoiding the local coethnic community that could be a source of support and to concealing the truth of what happened from their families.

<sup>18</sup> Some benefits become available if the person is in the process of applying for a T visa — but that can be frightening because it requires interacting with police and government bureaucracy, which the person may have learned to mistrust (either from their home country or from the trafficker's threats). Even if a T visa is secured, benefits run out long before the need does.

<sup>19</sup> This makes it difficult to get a job — or makes commuting take so long that night classes become impossible, leaving the person with very limited opportunities.

<sup>20</sup> Police lack training in understanding or identifying human trafficking. They may arrest victims as criminals or, chillingly, return them to the home of their traffickers.

<sup>21</sup> Including homeless shelters. Even with the best of intentions, a trained but not specialized professional can easily miss some of the above.

## Ten Plagues of Forced Labor

It's easy to think of the plagues suffered by a person while they are enslaved — physical and sexual abuse, stolen wages, fear and humiliation. And it's easy to imagine the courage it takes to escape, as well as the kindness of strangers that sometimes makes this possible. But even after getting free, troubles mount that may not be immediately apparent. For people who come to the United States from abroad and find themselves trafficked, these plagues continue to follow them long after their escape.

Spill a drop of wine/grape juice for each of the following:

1. No belongings<sup>12</sup>
2. Enforced separation from family<sup>13</sup>
3. Trauma<sup>14</sup>
4. No local support network<sup>15</sup>
5. Limited English<sup>16</sup>
6. Shame<sup>17</sup>
7. No government benefits<sup>18</sup>
8. No transportation or childcare<sup>19</sup>
9. Lack of training for police<sup>20</sup>
10. Lack of training for service providers<sup>21</sup>

The rabbis of the haggadah use midrashic math to multiply the ten plagues into 50, 200, even 250. How might these ten plagues of trafficking grow into even more challenges?

As a rabbinical student in T'ruah's summer fellowship, I interned with Safe Horizon's Anti-Trafficking Program. In learning from my colleagues and getting to know some of Safe Horizon's clients, I came to appreciate the tremendous power of shame. The question is often asked of survivors of trafficking, "Why didn't you just leave?" One answer: "I was told I owe money, and I can't bear not paying it back." Another: "How could I return to my family without the salary I promised I'd share with them?" Or another: "My 'employer' had so much psychological control over me, I simply couldn't imagine getting out."

Shame keeps men and women in involuntary servitude even when physically they might be able to leave. It silences and stymies them, denying them the dignity and freedom deserved by everyone created in the image of God.

- Rabbi Daniel Kirzane,  
Oak Park Temple  
B'nai Abraham Zion,  
Oak Park, Ill.



**“Rising Above Oppression,” by Margeaux Gray**  
5”x 6”, Carved clay and paint, © 2015

Ms. Gray writes, “My story of rising above slavery and the unjust violence I experienced inspired this piece. Additionally, my ancestors and those who paved a path for my freedom to be possible were also an influence in its creation. The carved painting is of a woman connected to her ancestors. She draws from their strength and wisdom. She is empowered by them and rises above the oppressive nature that has for so long silenced her. She breaks through a wave and steps into the light of freedom.”

## Dayeinu

Dayeinu is a symmetrical song, in which we sing the one-word chorus 14 times. The first seven describe the Exodus, culminating with drowning the Egyptians in the sea. The second seven describe the building of a just and self-sustaining society, culminating with the building of the Temple. Only when the system is stable can we really say “dayeinu.”

In the same way, the work of fighting forced labor does not end the moment a slave is freed. It continues for years into the future as we support their recovery from trauma. We benefit from the society that enables their abuse; therefore we must shoulder the responsibility to build social and economic systems that no longer rely on or allow exploitation.

The concentric circles of Ms. Gray’s artwork conjure Miriam leading the women in dance and celebration at the Red Sea.

Most domestic workers — a profession particularly vulnerable to human trafficking — are women.

Rabba Melissa Scholten-Gutierrez writes for the Jewish Women’s Archive, “On some level, the women knew... that the slavery was ending for good, and there would be a reason to celebrate again... They left in such haste that they didn’t do many things (perhaps most famously, letting their bread bake to completion), but they remembered their timbrels.”<sup>22</sup>

Sing “Miriam’s Song,” by Debbie Friedman z”l, and take a moment to celebrate the women who are leaders in your family and community. Visit [www.truah.org/haggadah-songs](http://www.truah.org/haggadah-songs) for a recording.

<sup>22</sup> <https://jwa.org/blog/faith-is-packing-your-timbrel>



**“Moon—Safe Harbor,” by Margeaux Gray**  
11”x 11”, Acrylic and mixed media, © 2015.



Shortly after the Israelites leave Egypt, God commands a census, which counts 603,550 men fit for military service. (I can only hope that the women, children, and elderly were counted too and simply not reported in the text.)

A census symbolizes more than a statistical or military endeavor; enumerating our population is a prerequisite for living together and governing a community that provides for all. What does a census have to do with slavery? Slaves suffer in part when societies choose to leave them undocumented, uncounted, unidentified, and forgotten.

My work as a population health physician has taught me this: Governments can shed their responsibility for delivering and protecting the freedoms of undocumented and uncounted people by excluding them from censuses and statistics. A nation can appear healthy if the ill are not seen; it can appear wealthy if the poor do not report their income; it can appear literate if the uneducated do not complete a survey; and it can appear free if the slaves are not counted. Counting is the seed of accountability. Truly inclusive statistics can be a tool of resistance.

- Dr. Aaron Orkin,  
MD, MPH, MSc;  
University of Toronto;  
Bronfman Fellow '99

We can think of the plagues like a labor campaign, a series of escalating actions that ratchet up pressure until management accepts workers' demands. Once the agreement is reached and the Israelites are free, the Book of Deuteronomy becomes, in effect, the Torah's equivalent of the Fair Food Standards Council — a system of regulations, oversight, and transparency that ensures the continued fair working of the system.

As Dr. Orkin and Judge Safer Espinoza reflect, the big ideas of freedom must always be backed up by concrete, implementable, transparent details.

As a Jew with whom the themes of freedom and systemic change resonate deeply, I have the opportunity to honor some of our best traditions by serving as director of the Fair Food Standards Council (FFSC). The Council is charged with monitoring and enforcing the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' agreements, including a human rights-based Code of Conduct. FFSC does the unglamorous, extremely detailed, yet very beautiful work of ensuring that systemic change is implemented and made real in the fields for the men and women who harvest the food we eat. Exodus from Egypt is a powerful metaphor for the transformation we see on Fair Food Program farms that have put an end to modern-day slavery, sexual assault, physical abuse, wage theft, and dangers to workers' health and safety. It is a privilege to serve this groundbreaking partnership between workers, growers and buyers as it truly brings about a "new day."

- Judge Laura Safer Espinoza,  
Director, Fair Food  
Standards Council

## “*Vayar et onyeinu*” — God Saw Our Suffering

*Me'am Loez* on Exodus 1:22; commentary of Rabbi Yaakov Culi (17th-18th c. Turkey), translated from the original Ladino by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan:

“Every boy that is born you shall throw into the Nile.” Throughout all this, the Israelites did not know that this was a plan devised against them by Pharaoh. They were led to believe that such ghastly acts were being done by individual Egyptians on their own initiative. Many Israelites even complained to the authorities, and were told that if proper witnesses would be brought, the perpetrators would be punished. Eventually, of course, the Israelites discovered the truth.”

### A new midrash:

“God saw our suffering, our toil, and our oppression.” (Deuteronomy 26:7)

“Our suffering” — This represents the interpersonal realm, how we treat others. We may ourselves treat workers fairly and refrain from racist comments, but that is the barest beginning.

“Our toil” — This represents the ideational realm, both in our own heads and in the society at large. We absorb racist, exploitative ideas from the moment we are born.

“Our oppression” — This represents institutional racism, where the very structures of our society — economics, politics, alleged meritocracy — hem us in by the color of our skin.

We cannot wait for God to take us out of this Egypt. We are working together on ending Egypt for all of us.

3. In July 2017, the State Department said there was “no credible information that any member of a terrorist group has traveled through Mexico to gain access to the United States.”<sup>11</sup>

4. Most undocumented immigrants in the U.S. did not cross the border between official ports of entry; rather, they entered the country with a visa and then overstayed.

### Pharaoh's fear remains with our country today.

- What past moment(s) of vulnerability do you think the US is grappling with when rhetoric around “securing our borders” ramps up?
- Whom do you think is blamed?



### Art project by an immigrant child detained at the Tornillo tent city

Tornillo, Texas, December 2018, shortly before the facility was closed. Photograph by Justin Hamel.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/heres-how-much-has-already-been-spent-on-border-barriers-2018-12-12>

<sup>9</sup> <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/425514-border-wall-wont-stop-migrants-but-will-increase-use-of-smugglers>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/tnyradiohour/episodes/louis-cks-return-stage> “The Black Vote in 2020”

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/01/04/gops-pernicious-link-between-terrorism-border-wall/>

## Rabban Gamliel Says

**Lift up the tomato on the seder plate and say: “This tomato on our seder plate: What does it mean?”**

It represents the workers who picked it and the organizing that has changed their lives.

Farm work has always been done — to this very day — by our country’s most vulnerable people and has often resulted in labor exploitation, up to and including modern slavery. But Florida’s Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is changing that through their groundbreaking Fair Food Program. The partnership they have created — with the support of faith communities like T’ruah — between farmworkers, growers, and corporations has won labor protections, independent enforcement of human rights, and a recognition of the basic human dignity of farmworkers.

*Continued on next page...*



## WORKER-DRIVEN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (WSR)

*Tikkun olam* tells us that, as Jews, we are responsible for not only our own welfare and wellbeing but also the welfare of our neighbors and our societies. Worker-driven Social Responsibility is a model based on the idea that oppressed peoples should be empowered to combat their own oppression. WSR programs empower workers to hold corporations accountable for the working conditions those companies create — and to improve those conditions. These programs are created by and for workers and are enforceable and transparent. For instance, the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, a leading WSR program in the garment industry, has transformed safety in factories there, making two million covered workers safer. “Social responsibility” programs without worker participation are not enough. To fight the modern plagues of inequity and exploitation, we need models like WSR that enable those who are exploited to lead their own liberation.

- Chelsea Rudman,  
Director of Development  
and Strategic Partnerships,  
Worker Rights Consortium



## RAISING UP, RISING UP

A day of slam-dunking tomatoes into that bucket, his body a human backboard, leaves a human stain. Over every worker's heart, a deep brown sun, surrounded by a green halo.

It's our custom to raise up our matzah. The bread of poverty. The bread of oppression. But also the bread of liberation.

The tomato, too, is a dual symbol. It reminds us that slavery persists, today, wherever farm laborers have not tasted the sweet freedom made real by the brave workers of CIW. And it celebrates the awesome power of those workers who refuse to forfeit their humanity, who point the way toward liberation. Not just for themselves. But for all of us.

Let us raise up the tomato on our seder plate.

Let us rouse ourselves to stand in solidarity with all who are exploited bringing food to our tables.

And, in doing so, let us raise up our holy tables in a banquet of liberation, affirming wisdom and courage, wherever they are exiled, in any soul — there, or here.

– Rabbi Michael Rothbaum,  
Congregation Beth Elohim,  
Acton, Mass.



Photo Courtesy of CIW

When we see ourselves in relationship with the people who grow our food — and poor people as powerful social change agents in their own right — we become more fully whole ourselves, as the prophet Hosea taught, “Plant righteousness for yourself, harvest the fruits of goodness” (10:12), and as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms, “Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

## What we learn from CIW

- To center the leadership and solutions of the people most affected.
- How faith communities can be effective allies.
- Ways to make change outside government channels; the Fair Food Program works through consumer advocacy aimed at corporations.

For more details on the Fair Food Program, visit [www.truah.org/fairfood](http://www.truah.org/fairfood) and [www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org)

Since 2011, T'ruah has brought over 100 rabbis and cantors to Immokalee to learn from CIW and return to their communities as leaders in the Campaign for Fair Food. Since the very first delegation, they have been known as the **#TomatoRabbis**.



## “Avodah Kashah” — They Put Hard Work Upon Us

Why did Pharaoh hate and fear the Israelites so much?

A clue may be found in what the Israelites were forced to build in Egypt: not pyramids, or sacred tombs for the Pharaohs, but *arei miskenot* (Exodus 1:11), understood as either “garrison-cities” or “granary-cities.” The latter interpretation (following II Chronicles 32:28) echoes an earlier story, in Genesis, about how Joseph saved Egypt from a devastating famine by stockpiling and then rationing food.

The Torah says that a new Pharaoh arose who “did not know Joseph” (Exodus 1:8). According to the medieval commentator Rashi, it was not that he actually had never heard of Joseph. Rather, he was a xenophobe who could not stand the knowledge that mighty Egypt could have been brought to its knees by famine and then saved by a foreigner. So he decreed a massive building project, to protect Egypt from ever being vulnerable again, and he carried it out on the backs of Joseph's descendants — pretending that he didn't know that their ancestor had saved all of Egypt.

A similar building project has been carried out by both American political parties — the construction of fencing and walls on the U.S.-Mexico border — to the devastation of border communities and immigrants throughout the U.S. According to Taxpayers for Common Sense, from 2007-2018 the U.S. spent \$9.7 billion on border barriers, almost exclusively on the Mexican border.<sup>8</sup> The fear that immigration threatens America — its economy, security, and very identity — has been used to justify these draconian and wasteful policies.

Here's what we know about border security and immigration:

1. “Constructing a border wall has not been empirically shown to deter undocumented migration; instead, it displaces crossing methods and increases the use and cost of smugglers. This is dangerous because smugglers have been known to physically and sexually abuse undocumented migrants and even engage in human trafficking.”

– Anti-trafficking expert Dr. Kimberly Mehlman-Orozco<sup>9</sup>

2. Many people coming to the U.S. “illegally” are actually following the rules for seeking asylum, which is a legal process meant to offer protection to those escaping persecution or threats to their lives. New policies enacted since 2017 have made it increasingly difficult to request asylum, prompting journalist and historian Jelani Cobb to note, “The era of America as a country of asylum is over.”<sup>10</sup>

American Jewish communities today are of mixed socioeconomic class, as they have always been, and include poor and working-class Jews. A 2014 Pew Research Center study found that 16 percent of Jewish adults had a household income of below \$30,000, and another 15 percent earned below \$50,000.<sup>7</sup> When the Jewish community mobilizes its resources to effect change in the world, we should remember to count among those resources the lived experience and change-making energy of poor and working-class Jews. It is not just that many of us were poor a century ago; many of us still are today.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/income-distribution/>

## “Veniz’ak el Adonai” — We Cried Out

The Passover story of workers collectively rising up against their oppressors repeats itself throughout our history. In the early 20th century, we saw this theme reflected in the more than two million Eastern European Jewish immigrants fighting for union rights, protections, and solidarity. These workers, who risked so much to emigrate to their “Promised Land,” quickly found themselves working in sweatshops with low pay, excessive hours, and dangerous worksites. They used their European tradition of labor activism as a tool to organize thousands, many of them immigrant women, offering them the opportunity to change their world through the union movement. In 1909, Jewish women workers, including labor organizers Clara Lemlich and Rose Schneiderman, sparked the Uprising of 20,000 – a strike led and won by women garment workers who walked off their jobs and eventually gained thousands of union jobs. This movement ultimately achieved five-day workweeks, the recognition of the rights of women workers, and workplace safety regulations that still exist today. Today we commit to continue our tradition of labor activism and join in campaigns to make today’s United States a “Promised Land” for workers and immigrants.

– Ann Toback,  
Executive Director,  
The Workers’ Circle

*“In every generation a person must see themselves as if they came out of Egypt... Therefore we are obligated...”*

**This is the seder’s fulcrum, the turning point that leverages our collective memories of slavery and turns them into collective obligation. This is the moment when we return to *Ha lachma anya* and say:**

*Hashta avdei  
Leshanah haba’a  
b’nei chorin!*

הַשְׁתָּא עַבְדֵי  
לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה  
בְּנֵי חֹרִין!

**Now - slaves.  
Next year - free people!**

It is not enough simply to remember, or even to retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Rather, the haggadah demands, “In each generation, each person to see themselves as though they personally [*lir’ot et atzmo*] came forth from Egypt.”

The text of the haggadah used in many Sephardic communities demands even more. There, the text asks us “*l’har’ot et atzmo*” – to show oneself as having come forth from Egypt. The difference of a single Hebrew letter changes the obligation from one of memory to one of action.

Showing ourselves as having come out of slavery demands that we act in such a way as to show that we understand both the oppression of slavery and the joy and dignity of liberation. Our own retelling of the narrative of slavery pushes us toward taking public action to end slavery in our time.

– Rabbi Jill Jacobs,  
Executive Director, T’ruah



## “Seeing ourselves” — Who are you?

In a 2017 d'var Torah for T'ruah, Rabbi Katie Mizrahi of Or Shalom Jewish Community in San Francisco wrote:<sup>23</sup>

“The story of the Exodus is in us, and we are in that story. But where exactly? Every year the seder asks us to imagine our answers.

Are you a midwife, commanded by an evil authority to commit an immoral act, finding a way to resist? Are you young Moses lashing out at injustice, going too far, knocking down a pawn without impacting structural evil? Are you the kind daughter of Pharaoh, drawing a miracle child out of the waters, using your privilege to protect the vulnerable? Are you standing on holy ground marveling at a burning bush, hearing a call to be more than you have been? Where are YOU in the story?”

We should be open to the likelihood that, in this world of globalized capitalism, in addition to these liberatory roles, we in North America are also on Team Pharaoh. We always play multiple roles simultaneously: oppressor, victim, enabler, freedom fighter, bystander, and more. When we come to own that responsibility, we can face the cognitive dissonance our multiple identities create; instead of going with the flow, we begin to direct our energies deliberately.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.truah.org/resources/who-are-you-in-the-passover-story/>

## “Vayare'u otanu HaMitzrim” — They Did Evil To Us

Midrash tells us (Numbers Rabbah 15:20) how Pharaoh bait-and-switched the Israelites into slavery:

When Pharaoh said, “Let us be crafty with them’...and they put taskmasters over them” (Exodus 1:10-11), he gathered all of Israel and said to them, “Please, work with me today, as a favor.” That is why it says “the Egyptians enslaved the Israelites with *parekbh* [hard work]” (1:13) — with *peh rakh* [a soft mouth]. [Pharaoh himself] picked up a basket and rake. Who would have seen Pharaoh picking up a basket and rake, making bricks, and not joined in with him? All Israel went quickly and worked alongside him with all their strength, for they were mighty and heroic. When it got dark, [Pharaoh] appointed overseers and said, “Count the bricks.” They immediately did so, and he said, “You shall make this same quantity every day.”

Human trafficking occurs when workers are exploited through

## FORCE, FRAUD, or COERCION

and are unable to leave abusive employers. Conditions do not have to involve physical violence or manacles. Threats, manufactured debt, control of finances or travel documents, verbal abuse — all these and more can be involved.

Unable to leave the house. Forbidden to answer the door. Cut off from her family. Worked fourteen to sixteen hours per day. Paid nothing. Threatened with deportation and harm to her family. Someone called in a tip. She escaped.

Another tipster called the national hotline. She reported a woman in the neighborhood who never left the house, except to take out the trash. The FBI investigated. The woman had been held in forced labor for four years.

Involuntary servitude among domestic workers and nannies is one of America’s most hidden crimes. Like domestic violence, it occurs behind closed doors. Like trafficking into other sectors, the victimization can involve rape and sexual violence. Like other forms of trafficking, the abuse leaves deep scars. Unlike most trafficking, some of the perpetrators are diplomats, who bring in domestic workers on special visas.

Domestic workers are among the most exploited workers in the world. Over the years, trafficking victims have told me they never expected to be exploited here. “Not in America,” many have said. “That does not happen in America.” But it does. In America. And all around the world.

– Martina Vandenberg,  
Founder and President,  
Human Trafficking  
Legal Center

## Excerpts from “Maror and Maggid: Clearing My Throat”

by Rabbi Mira Rivera, Jewish Emergent Network Fellow, Romemu, NYC

They have reason to worry  
because multiply we have  
multiplied and we are the Other  
African Latinx Asian and in-between  
by way of Shanghai Bnei Anusim Cochin Jew Abayudaya  
Jewish by way of mother by way of father you challenge  
Observant by way of secular parents who may be practicing  
Baal Baalat Teshuvah Jew  
Jewish by Sefarad to the letter  
by way of Yosef Caro  
By way of the Rema  
Strictly Halachic Jew  
Neither Sefardi neither Mizrachi  
neither Ashkenazi neither Israeli  
Still a Diaspora Jew

I eat with my fingers  
I dine with fine crystal  
I have cheeks burning  
Peach ruddy roasted warm coffee  
Desert mocha midnight blue black Jew...  
Jew in the pew Pew Report Jew  
Forever an immigrant forever Yisrael  
Forever wrestling honestly  
Still proud to be a Jew

And yes, you're very welcome  
I'm a Person of Color  
you can look at me  
You can see me  
I'm a Jew of Color  
And I claim my space  
But I do get it  
Gotta justify presence  
in almost every Jewish space  
**So where were we again?**  
Yes, I am Jewish  
This is my name  
I am not intermarried  
And I did not take his name  
Yes, I am a convert  
Yes, I am a Rabbi  
I am here just like you  
And yes I am a Jew  
**So where were we again?**  
Now you tell me all about you

Over the past few years, I've found myself coming back again and again to the Passover story as I learn to be a rabbi in situations I never could have imagined. Our narrative of liberation guides us to care for the vulnerable among us. We are told: “You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 23:9). That is, it is not enough to simply remember. Rabbi Shai Held teaches that “[o]ne of the Torah's central projects is to turn memory into empathy and moral responsibility.” The retelling of our story in the haggadah is a call to oppose the rising forces of white nationalism that animate our country's immigration policies. Our government's goal is to force black and brown people out, and to keep any more from getting in. Fighting the nativist populism that inflicts cruelty upon immigrants is indeed part of my religious practice, a way in which I carry out my moral responsibility. My position as a rabbi — and as a human being — requires no less.

– Rabbi Salem Pearce, Director of Organizing, T'ruah

We end Maggid with a taste of Hallel, beginning with Psalm 113. The first line sums up all of Maggid in four words:

*Halleluyah hallelu* הַלְלוּיָהּ הַלְלוּ  
*avdei Adonai* עַבְדֵי ה'

**Praise God, you slaves of God!**

This recalls God's declaration towards the end of Leviticus (25:42)...

**For they are My** כִּי עַבְדֵי הֵם  
**slaves, whom I** אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי  
**brought out of the** אֶתְּם מֵאֶרֶץ  
**land of Egypt —** מִצְרַיִם; לֹא  
**they shall not be** יִמְכְּרוּ  
**sold as slaves.** מִמִּכְרֵת עֶבֶד.

...as well as the line by Yehudah HaLevi, the 12th century philosopher and poet:

**Slaves of time are** עַבְדֵי זְמַן עַבְדֵי  
**slaves to slaves.** עַבְדִּים הֵם  
**Only a slave of** עַבְד ה' הוּא  
**God is free.** לְבַד חֲפָשִׁי.

Consider singing the first line of Psalm 113 or this popular line from Psalm 100:2: *Ivdu et Hashem besimchah, bo'u lefanav bir'nanah* (Serve God with joy, come before God with song). Ethiopian-Israeli singer Etti Ankri has also set HaLevi's poem to music: [www.truah.org/haggadah-songs](http://www.truah.org/haggadah-songs)

**We conclude Maggid by blessing and drinking the second cup.**

We are meant to feel the sting of the whip on our back.

We have spent 3,000 years closing our eyes, imagining the hopelessness and outrage of working in that mud. We see ourselves as people who know what it is like to be slaves. We are oppressed. We are born into hardship. We, but for the deliverance of God, are helpless against tyranny.

We relive our slavery each year so that the pain, oppression, and struggle of others living it today will feel more immediate to us. We are “chosen” to be the ones who have seen darkness, been delivered into light, and now will deliver others.

So does Passover truly remind you of your freedom? Do you hear the call to “break the chains of the oppressed?” Is this the night you choose to act?

– Robert Beiser,  
Director of the Strategic  
Initiative on Sex Trafficking,  
Polaris Project



# רחצה

Rachtzah

Our hands were touched by this water earlier during tonight's seder, but this time is different. This is a deeper step than that. This act of washing our hands is accompanied by a blessing, for in this moment we feel our people's story more viscerally, having just retold it during Maggid. Now, having re-experienced the majesty of the Jewish journey from degradation to dignity, we raise our hands in holiness, remembering once again that our liberation is bound up in everyone else's. Each step we take together with others towards liberation is blessing, and so we recite:

- Rabbi Menachem Creditor,  
Pearl and Ira Meyer Scholar-in-Residence,  
UJA-Federation of New York

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu  
Melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu  
bemitzvotav vetzivanu al  
netilat yadayim.*

ברוך אתה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל  
נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

**Blessed are You ETERNAL our God, Sovereign of time and space,  
who has sanctified us with commandments and instructed us  
regarding lifting up our hands.**

## “Goy gadol, atzum, veraṽ” — We Multiplied

“No people have had a more inadequate preparation, educational and economic, for American citizenship.”

This quote comes not from today's right-wing media but from *McClure's Magazine* in 1907, referring to Russian Jews. Jews have been targets of the same rhetoric hurled at today's immigrants.

As HIAS President and CEO Mark Hetfield likes to say, “We used to help refugees because they were Jewish; now we help refugees because we are Jewish.” The history of Eastern European Jews immigrating to the U.S. through Ellis Island looms large in the American Jewish psyche. But we must also remember and honor the diversity of Jewish experiences:

- The first wave of Jews to arrive in America were Sephardim, who established synagogues and Jewish communities, some of which continue to operate today.
- Native American Jews are not immigrants.
- African-American Jews likely have ancestors who were brought here violently and against their will.
- Converts may come from families that have been here for hundreds of years.
- Many Jews are themselves immigrants; for them, the story is not one of long ago but of here and now.

Our shared sacred story is one of migration, seeking the promised land and being exiled from it in cycles, but each individual also has their personal stories.

Racism is implicitly and explicitly embedded in American society's structure and culture. It is a pervasive virus that seeps into all aspects of our lives, including our Jewish community. It's what motivated a mob of Chasidic Jews to harass me in front of my home for carrying a Torah scroll because it was too far fetched for a black man carrying a Torah to be a fellow Jew. It's what continues to marginalize Jewish people of color, making even holy Jewish spaces like synagogues intolerable for many. Every year we recall the Israelite experience of oppression, redemption and the recurring commandment to care for those in society that remain oppressed, such as the stranger, the orphan and the widow. These memories and values are key to embodying anti-racism through concrete acts of care and shifting access to power, which is critical to actualizing our true multi-racial community in its fullest glory.

- Yehudah Webster,  
Community Organizer  
Jews for Racial and  
Economic Justice (JFREJ)

Hearts beating like drums. Hands grasping at precious objects in the dark. My ancestors fled their oppressors under the cover of night. They packed light, bringing only sustenance for the journey ahead, unrisen cakes of dough. What could not be tied to their backs was etched across their hearts and on their souls: joy and pain, hope and trauma, uncertainty and faith.

Bite by bite, they trusted that the bread of their affliction would become the bread of their liberation.

At the Passover seder, I step back into that experience. I eat the bread of affliction to remember their journey, memories etched across my own heart and soul like the generations before me.

And yet, the journey to liberation is far from over.

Today, more than 70 million souls still wander the earth fleeing violence and persecution. From Syria, South Sudan, Myanmar, Colombia – from every corner of the earth – today's refugees make perilous journeys almost as dangerous as the conflicts they flee.

In the name of our ancestors, let us raise the Jewish community's voice in saying that we want the doors of our country to remain open to refugees and asylum seekers. We will bear witness as they write the next chapter of their stories in safety and with dignity.

- Rabbi Rachel Grant Meyer  
Rabbi-in-Residence, HIAS

## “*Arami Oved Avi*” — Why People Leave Home

“**And he dwelt there**” — This teaches that Jacob our Father did not go down to Egypt to live there permanently but rather to dwell temporarily. As the Torah recounts, “They said to Pharaoh, ‘We have come to dwell in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants’ sheep, for the famine is very heavy in Canaan. And now, please let your servants settle in the land of Goshen.’” (Genesis 47:4)

- Haggadah

At the bottom level [of poverty] are more than one billion people who live on \$1 a day or less... This is life without options... These are families whose children are regularly harvested into slavery... If we compare the level of poverty and the amount of slavery for 193 of the world's countries, the pattern is obvious. The poorest countries have the highest levels of slavery.

- Kevin Bales, *Ending Slavery* (2007), p. 15-17

Some formerly trafficked persons had never planned to live in the United States... [but for others] migration for work was a mobility strategy, a plan to attain long-term economic goals... In short, this is an ambitious and resourceful group, willing to avail themselves of whatever resources are within their reach.

- Denise Brennan, *Life Interrupted* (2014), p. 15

- Bales and Brennan, both respected researchers, present different views of modern slavery, each of which is supported in the anti-trafficking community. How do you respond to their portrayals?
- Which model better describes the biblical Jacob and his sons?

# מוציא מצה

Motzi Matzah<sup>24</sup>

Hamotzi thanks God for bringing bread from the earth. This bread results from a partnership between God and humanity: God provides the raw materials, and people harvest, grind, and bake. So too must we remember that combating human trafficking requires partnerships: among survivors, allies, lawyers, social workers, law enforcement, diplomats, people of faith... the circles of involvement are ever-expanding.

*Baruch Atah Adonai,  
Eloheinu Melech ha'olam,  
hamotzi lechem  
min ha'aretz.*

ברוך אתה ה'  
אלהינו מלך העולם  
המוציא לחם  
מן הארץ.

**Blessed are You ETERNAL our God,  
Sovereign of time and space, who brings  
forth bread from the earth.**

<sup>24</sup> There is a custom not to eat matzah in the weeks before Pesach, so that the taste is fresh at the seder. If your community seder is being held before the holiday, options include using egg matzah, crackers such as Tam-Tams, or having matzah present as a symbol but not eating it.

Similarly, the blessings for eating matzah and maror should only be said on Pesach itself, since that is when the commandment applies.



As a rabbi, my job is to see and appreciate other human beings, their uniqueness, and their stories.

Armando Rojas, the custodian at the congregation where I am a rabbi...and a 20-year member of our communal family, was taken from us suddenly in February by ICE and deported back to a country he had not lived in for decades. Left behind were his two sons, his wife, and hundreds of families who have grown to love him in our community.

What none of us were prepared for was the peek behind the curtain we have gotten of a callous immigration system... [At Armando's final appeal], the judge said he had not read the attorney's brief but doubted that it could even be entered into the record... Months of waiting and building a case to present a fully formed human being to the government and, in the end, a government form dismisses his story and the very essence of his humanity. From the perspective of the government, all that was left to do was remove the "alien."

One of the reasons we as humans fear a flood is that it is thoughtless and indiscriminate as it uproots... Because our immigration system is hidden from view, it makes it easier for those working within it to not feel public shame for not seeing the people whose lives they hold in their hands. To not seem to care at all as we stand on the shore watching Armando carried out to sea.

- Rabbi Aaron Brusso,  
Bet Torah, Mt. Kisco, N.Y.

## מרור Maror

As we eat bitter herbs, we reflect on the bitterness of slavery and deportation through the testimonies of survivors.

"When Trump won, I was in a hotel. I was watching TV and I'm like, 'Oh no, I'm really getting deported.' [My trafficker] really took advantage more of the situation. The abuse started happening more often. Because he knew how scared I was to get deported. He was like, 'They don't want y'all here, if you ever call the police or do anything, they're going to send you back home.'"

- K.V., 23, from El Salvador, is applying for a visa for survivors of human trafficking. Never an easy visa to secure, the procedures have become even more onerous.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/07/23/new-york-on-ice>

*Excerpted from an article that originally appeared at Slate.com:  
<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2018/11/immigration-horror-stories-new-york-synagogue-ice.html>*

As we sing "*Vehi she'amda*," we remember that in every generation, people have been held in forced labor, and God has been their support, if not their complete redemption.

וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה לְאַבֹּתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ  
שֶׁלֹא אֶחָד בְּלֶבֶד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלְתֵּינוּ  
אֶלָּא שֶׁבְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלְתֵּינוּ  
וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מִצִּילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם.

*Vehi she'amda, vehi she'amda la'avoteinu velanu (x2)*  
*Shelo ecbad bil'vad amad aleinu lekhaloteinu*  
*Ela shebekhol dor vador omdim aleinu lekhaloteinu*  
*Vehakadosh Baruch Hu matzileinu miyadam.*

**This is the One who stood up for our ancestors and for us.  
For not just once did an enemy arise to destroy us,  
But in every generation, they arise to destroy us.  
And the Holy Blessed One rescues us from their hands.**

In Hebrew, "The One" in the song is feminine. Who is this One? The classical rabbis would probably say the Torah. The Kabbalists invoked *Binah*, a feminine aspect of God. In the spirit of 70 faces of Torah, here is a slightly subversive suggestion: The one who stood up for our ancestors — literally, our fathers — is our mothers. We remember the oft-erased contribution women have played throughout history and celebrate the importance and power of women's leadership in fighting forced labor today.



Picture drawn by an immigrant child detained at the Tornillo tent city, Tornillo, Tex., January 2019, shortly before the facility was closed. Photograph by Justin Hamel.

Every Passover, I sit with my friends and family to tell the story of our people's liberation from slavery in Egypt. As we tell the story, we are asked to imagine that we ourselves were once slaves in Egypt and now we are free.

As an African-American, during Passover, I often think about my ancestors who were brought to this country as slaves. I imagine they found comfort in the biblical story of the Exodus; seeing themselves as the Israelite slaves and the slave owners as the Pharaoh. I imagine them praying to God for freedom and never giving up hope.

As a Jew and an African-American, I carry the memories of people who were once enslaved. I hold on to our collective memory of our escape from Egypt to freedom. And like my ancestors, I pray for the freedom of all who are enslaved, and I am hopeful that next year we will all be free.

– Rabbi Sandra Lawson,  
Associate Chaplain  
for Jewish Life,  
Elon University, Elon, N.C.;  
T'ruah summer fellow 2013

Rabbi Lance J. Sussman, senior rabbi at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel in Elkins Park, Pa., and visiting professor of American Jewish history at Princeton, [says]...The Passover narrative...didn't become an abolitionist-related story until after World War II and the Civil Rights era. "Originally, Passover was theological. It's about redemption and the power of God. It's not really about setting human beings free in a universal way. The text says that God frees the Hebrew slaves because God loves the Hebrews. God doesn't free all slaves for all of humanity or send Moses out to become the William Lloyd Garrison of the ancient free world."

– "Passover in the Confederacy," by  
Sue Eisenfeld, *The New York Times*,  
April 17, 2014

3. America generally, and the Jewish community in particular, prefers a tidy version of our history of slavery, racism, and the struggle for civil rights (e.g., Heschel marched with King). What narratives were you taught? What have you learned more recently to complicate those narratives?

4. Do you think the Passover story is a helpful lens through which to view America today? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of this paradigm?

"When you're there [in forced labor], you feel like the world is ending. You feel absolutely horrible...Once you're back here on the outside, it's hard to explain. Everything's different now. It was like coming out of the darkness into the light. Just imagine if you were reborn. That's what it's like."

– Adam Garcia Orozco, farmworker

"I was so tired and did not know how I could continue working like this. But I did not say anything to anyone. I did not know how I could do what was expected...All the time I was crying. Even sometimes at night I could not sleep. I would cry so hard I would have a headache. I would dream and see my family. It was a very hard time."

– Elsa, domestic worker  
(*Life Interrupted*, p. 90, 92)

I remember when he lifted up his shirt and I saw that scar. It was the first time I had ever seen a scar like that — it ran about 8 inches in length down the side of his body. It was unbearable to see. I had worked with sex workers in Guatemala, some of whom had been sex trafficked, and with refugees from East Africa in Israel, some of whom had been sex or labor trafficked, but I had not encountered organ trafficking in a real way before. This young Eritrean teenager had somehow survived and had made it to Tel Aviv. His scar was thick and frightening. His kidney was gone. I could feel the trauma he had endured and it seeped into me. I couldn't sleep for nights after that moment. This is a type of human trafficking we often forget and overlook, but it is real, it is happening throughout the world, it is inhumane, and it must be stopped.

– Maya Paley,  
Senior Director and  
Co-Founder,  
Change the Talk,  
National Council of Jewish  
Women Los Angeles





### “We Are Not Tractors” Banner, signed by members of CIW, 1998

Created in response to an Immokalee tomato grower who said,  
“The tractor doesn’t tell a farmer how to run a farm.”

The taste of bitterness reminds us that we were once slaves, that slavery still exists. In Immokalee, Florida, I saw the evidence of the bitterness of slavery: I saw the chains in the Modern Slavery Museum organized by CIW; I spoke with farmworkers who had gotten up at 4:00 am every morning to wait for hours in a parking lot, hoping for a few hours of work, doubtful whether they’d ever get paid. Bitterness reminds us, and its sharp flavor can wake us up. In Immokalee, I saw the amazing action that the taste of bitterness can inspire: weekly meetings of workers to plan their own liberation; marches on foot, on bicycle, to protest at corporate headquarters; immigrant workers who lack all legal protections creating a powerful mechanism to stop the abuses they once faced. As we bless this maror, let us bless both awareness and awakeness — the knowledge of bitterness, and of the action it can inspire us to take.

- Rabbi Toba Spitzer,  
Congregation Dorshei Tzedek,  
Newton, Mass.

## Summing Up: How We Remember America

“A new king arose  
over Egypt who  
knew not Joseph.”  
(Exodus 1:8)

וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ-חָדָשׁ  
עַל-מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר  
לֹא-יָדַע  
אֶת-יֹסֵף:

“God heard their  
cry, and God  
remembered God’s  
covenant with  
Abraham, Isaac,  
and Jacob. God  
saw the Israelites  
and God knew.”  
(Exodus 2:24-25)

וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים  
אֶת נַאֲקָתָם וַיִּזְכֹּר  
אֱלֹהִים אֶת בְּרִיתוֹ  
אֶת אַבְרָהָם אֶת  
יִצְחָק וְאֶת יַעֲקֹב:  
וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת  
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּדַע  
אֱלֹהִים:

1. What do these verses teach us about forgetting and remembering?

2. The sequence of verbs is: God hears, remembers, sees, and knows. We often need to have multiple kinds of contact with an issue before it sinks in for us. What is your experience — what does it take to move **you** from hearing about an issue to internalizing and acting on it?

Slavery was “normal,” constitutional. Slavery built the USA. Slavery is regulated, that is to say allowed, in our Talmud. In 1861, when Reform Rabbi David Einhorn preached, “Is it anything else but a deed of Amalek, rebellion against God, to enslave human beings created in His image?” he was driven from Baltimore by a mob that included Jews. Orthodox Rabbi Sabato Morais went beyond the halakha of his day, in 1864, to thunder, “What is Union with human degradation? Who would again affix his seal to the bond that consigned millions to [that]? Not I, the enfranchised slave of *Mitzrayim* [Egypt].” Today it is disruptive to ask — and keep asking when ignored — “Who grew this food we’re eating? Who sewed our clothes?” Even more disruptive to answer and then say that our tradition calls us to act. Do I have the guts to emulate our *gedolim* [great ones] and disrupt what’s normal?

- Rabbi Robin Podolsky,  
Religious Advisor,  
Jewish Student Union,  
Occidental College, Los Angeles



This 12-foot tall statue was built by CIW and carried 235 miles across Florida in March 2000, at the very beginning of the Campaign for Fair Food. In June 2017, it was installed at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., as part of a permanent exhibit, "The Nation We Build Together." This exhibit explores the question of what it means to be an American and how that has changed over time.

1. How do you think this statue is answering that question?
2. If you were curating this exhibit, what is one Jewish artifact you would include? One non-Jewish artifact?

3. How might you read Emma Lazarus's poem "The New Colossus" not only as a commentary on immigration but as a midrash on Miriam, Yocheved, Pharaoh's daughter, and the other women of the Exodus?

### "The New Colossus," by Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glowed world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-brided harbor that twin cities frame.

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

## כּוֹרֵךְ Korekh

In Korekh, we combine bitter maror with sweet charoset in a single mouthful. This makes real for us the dual realities of trafficking survivors, who celebrate their freedom and move forward with their lives while fighting an uphill battle against trauma and poverty. As you enjoy your sandwich, consider these diverse reflections of trafficking survivors.

"I wish the police could find him. I wish that I could send him to jail because he really destroyed me. He took a lot of time from me. But I don't feel like I live with this; I don't bring my past with me now... There is justice here [in America]. It's fair here. I feel strong because I now know when I can say no and when I can say yes. I have choices."

– Anonymous, forced into sexual labor (*Life Interrupted*, p. 148)

"It's hard juggling it all, but if I don't do something, I have to think about what happened to me. So if I am in school and busy, I don't think about it too much."

– Julia (*ibid.*, p. 166)

Can you imagine the Passover story if, rather than having figures like Moses and Miriam as our guides, it was told from the perspective of Pharaoh? Probably not. But what if it was told from the perspective of a well-intentioned Egyptian, who, though he stood to benefit from the privileges of his position, took pity upon the slaves?

Part of the power of the Israelites' journey from slavery to liberation lies in the fact that the struggle for freedom was led by slaves themselves — and the telling and retelling of that journey was thus theirs to craft. How often do we hear today's stories of injustice told from the perspective of a savior? How often do we hear them told by those who experienced those injustices, strategized and worked to counter them, and ultimately forged their own liberation?

As we listen for today's stories of communities breaking from today's bondages, let us seek out the struggles led by those most directly affected by an injustice. And if the telling and retelling of those stories sounds foreign to our ears, let us rejoice in knowing that their stories are theirs alone to craft, and ours to hear, to seek to understand, and to engage.

– Elena Stein,  
former Faith Organizer,  
Alliance for Fair Food



“I wanted to forget everything. I wanted to do something in my life. I suffered a lot...[My abuser] told me I would never learn English. He told me, ‘You think you are going to learn in just a couple of years?’ And I did and proved him wrong...I [crossed the U.S.-Mexico border] by myself. It took three days with no water. I tell myself now that I am not doing that for nothing.”

– Gladys, domestic worker (*ibid.*, p. 167)

“I think there is a lot of work to do. When I go to a conference [on trafficking] I learn a lot, and I see that there is so much ahead of us. I learn from other activists, especially the ones at the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. They really listen to workers. We have a lot in common. We all have a lot of work to do.”

– Esperanza (*ibid.*, p. 174)

“In the beginning, you often think you are wasting your time. But if you take it step by step, you can do it. It looks really hard and really big. But [newly escaped people] will get help from the program — they don’t have to do it alone...I was one of them before; I know how they think...They have a fear of making mistakes. It’s hard to say yes again. Some want to do things almost perfectly. But of course they may make the wrong decisions!”

– Eva (*ibid.*, p. 175)

“Slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery.”

- Hon. Dr. Eric Williams, historian, first prime minister of independent Trinidad and Tobago (1944)<sup>6</sup>

Modern American racism was intentionally crafted in the American colonies as a form of social control — not just of Africans and Native Americans but also over poor white people. “[Slavery] made whiteness the mark of freedom, ensuring that ‘ordinary’ English settlers identified with their social betters instead of making common cause with the new [African] arrivals.” (*ibid*) This intentional construction can be seen in the evolving legal definitions of whiteness over the years, from requiring three white grandparents to the “one drop rule.” Slavery, originally an economic choice, gave rise to an entire racial system for organizing society — which has been reinforced, in subsequent years, by bringing other people of color to this country as migrant workers.

White Supremacy vs. White Nationalism

According to Eric Ward, Executive Director of the Western States Center and an expert on fighting white nationalism, these two ideologies differ in important ways, despite starting from a shared belief that white people and culture are superior to people of color.

	White Supremacy	White Nationalism
Goal	Exploit the bodies of people of color for economic and other gain, including sexual assault.	Expel people of color to create a “pure” white-only ethno-state.
History	Foundational system that pervades all aspects of American life	Particular political ideology arising in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement
Impact on Jews	Ashkenazi and other white-appearing Jews benefit from many of the same privileges as other white people.	Views all Jews as non-white and the root cause of white America’s ills

1. Which is a better analogy for Egypt in the Exodus story?
2. How is white supremacy a root cause of forced labor and trafficking today?
3. How do these play out in our immigration system?

<sup>6</sup> Qtd. in <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/03/american-immigration-service-slavery/555824/>



**17TH CENTURY-1865****Chattel Slavery**

The kidnapping, purchase, and sale of Africans as slaves.

**1865-1944****Convict Leasing**

Prisoners are leased out as workers to private (white) citizens. These prisoners are overwhelmingly black and are usually arrested on flimsy charges, such as vagrancy.

**MID 19TH-MID 20TH CENTURY****Sharecropping**

Black tenant farmers work a portion of the owner's land, in exchange for a share of the crop. They are required to purchase supplies and seeds from the owner. Tenants, often illiterate and at the mercy of unscrupulous landowners, frequently end up only breaking even — or even further in debt — at the end of a season.

## Timeline of Forced Labor and Exploitation of Migrant Workers in America

Not all exploitation rises to the level of slavery, but America's histories of slavery and of exploiting foreign workers are intertwined.

**17TH-18TH CENTURY**

**Indentured Servitude** Poor, often white immigrants from Europe are bound to work for a set number of years. Often mistreated or held for longer than their period of indenture.

**1852**

*The New York Times* advocates bringing indentured Chinese workers to America, to take the place of slaves.

**1862**

Responding to public pressure about abuses and poor conditions, Congress bans transport of Chinese workers on American ships.

**1942-1964**

Bracero program (from the Spanish meaning "manual laborer") brings 5 million Mexican farmworkers to the U.S. on temporary visas. Many abuses are documented despite promises of good wages and housing.

**1953**

U.S. institutes the H-2 visa program, which allows guestworkers to enter the country temporarily.

**TODAY**

**An Example of Modern-Day Slavery**  
*U.S. vs. Bontemps*, July 2010. Cabioch Bontemps and two others are indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of conspiracy to commit forced labor, holding 50+ guestworkers from Haiti against their will in the beanfields of Alachua County, Fla. The traffickers held the workers' passports and visas, and the indictment states that Mr. Bontemps raped a worker and threatened her if she reported it. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers had trained law enforcement and helped with the referral to the Department of Justice, which later dropped the charges without explanation, though likely due to legal technicalities, in January 2012.



**"Aquatic Rhapsody," by Claudia Cojocar**

**38" by 46", Acrylic on canvas** Find Ms. Cojocar on Twitter @anarkriminology



Who better to inform public policy than the people it impacts the most?

As awareness about human trafficking continues to grow, survivor voices need to be prioritized. Many groups, including concerned citizens, non-profits, and government agencies are stepping up to address this atrocity. Central to the success of these groups is the input of survivors.

Survivors are capable of informing policy, shaping programmatic and funding decisions, providing training and technical assistance, and leading educational efforts.

Survivor input will also improve the likelihood that proposed plans and solutions will work. We know what has worked (e.g., having other survivors to relate to) and what hasn't worked (e.g., inflexible shelter rules or social services protocols that don't take survivors' needs into account).

Survivors are increasingly engaging in anti-slavery work. The role of survivors is critical to our collective learning about human trafficking and the development of public policy to effectively address modern day slavery in a comprehensive way.

- Ima Matul,  
Survivor Organizer,  
Coalition to Abolish Slavery  
and Trafficking (CAST);  
National Survivor Network

"Surviving is like walking a tightrope above the abyss, one wrong move and you fall... I fell many times, and I fell hard. It hurt, it bruised, it felt numbing and alone, but it never felt like I needed salvation. I am my own salvation, and I am walking my own tightrope above the abyss we all share. I see others walking theirs... They see me too. We are all survivors of something, but we move on, leaving the past behind, to make the best of our future.

If we linger in a place too long, we do not grow, we may regress and even fall, for the tightrope is just that, a rope, and it may break under the weight of assigned identities and labels.

Yes, I am a survivor of forced sex work, but I am not only that. My identity is fluid, and it moves on, perpetually morphing into who I am evolving into everyday. **My name is Claudia Cojocar, I was once hurt, lost and alone, but it is not who I am anymore.** I am an activist for justice, equal rights, respect and recognition of agency and women's choices. I am an artist, a researcher, and a tightrope walker."

1. How do these quotes support or challenge assumptions you hold about people who survive trafficking?

2. What questions would you want to ask these people if you met one of them?

## Guestworkers are ripe for abuse

The U.S. offers many kinds of temporary worker visas, with H-2 being the most common.

- H-2A, for agricultural workers: no annual cap; over 240,000 were authorized by the Labor Department in FY 2018.<sup>3</sup>
- H-2B, for non-agricultural workers: Congress authorized 135,000 for FY 2019<sup>4</sup>; majority come from Mexico and Central America.

H-2 visas are tied to a specific employer. If the employer is abusive, the worker has no freedom to quit without automatically becoming undocumented.

Employer-provided housing is often grossly inadequate, despite legal standards. Slashes in federal budgets mean the Labor Department cannot conduct adequate inspections.

Recruiters often illegally charge workers for their visas and travel, so workers arrive in the U.S. already in debt and vulnerable to trafficking.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.farmworkerjustice.org/resources/h-2a>, particularly the first fact sheet

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/04/06/trump-administration-nearly-doubles-h-2-b-guest-visa-program-which-brings-many-mexican-workers/>

## Farmwork, Immigration, and Abuse <sup>5</sup>

- 50% of farmworkers are not legally authorized to work in the U.S.
- 20% are legally authorized with a green card or a visa like the H-2A, for temporary guestworkers.
- Agriculture is the third most fatal industrial sector in the U.S.
- The industry is rife with labor law violations, including wage theft and unsafe working conditions.

<sup>5</sup> <https://contexts.org/articles/stemming-the-exploitation-of-immigrant-farm-labor/>

***"Together, 70% of US farmworkers are subject to the immigration enforcement apparatus as a form of labor control."***

This ordinary-seeming apartment building in Los Angeles housed a sweatshop in which 72 Thai women were held from 1987-1995<sup>2</sup>. A group of traffickers lured the women in with promises of good wages, then forced them to work up to 18 hours a day making clothing for well-known brands for leading department stores. They were not allowed to leave the compound.



Photo by the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, 2004

Crushingly, the traffickers were only charged with crimes related to facilitating illegal immigration; at least initially, the survivors were threatened with deportation. America's laws against forced labor had not been updated since the Civil War. Since the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act in 2000, both perpetrators and survivors would be treated differently.

3. What do you notice about the picture above? Does anything surprise you? What does this picture tell you about trafficking in the United States today?



Photo by Fritz Myer, June 2010, Courtesy of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

4. Thanks to a 2005 Congressional report, we know that slave labor was used in the construction of the Capitol. What does the juxtaposition in this image (left) say to you about our country?

5. How do we benefit today from the legacy of slavery in this country?

## נְשִׁלְחָן עוֹרֵךְ

### Shulchan Orekh

As we enjoy our Pesach meal, we thank all of the people who labored to bring this food to our table, from the workers who planted our food to the people who served it.

1. How many different roles can you think of in this chain of food production?

2. Over dinner, turn to someone near you and ask each other how your values affect your buying choices.

CIW member Gerardo Reyes Chavez reflects, "Why do I spend every day harvesting food for the rest of America and then have to wait in line at a food pantry on Thanksgiving for a plate of food?" How would you respond? How can we change this reality?

There are three movies that have affected me so deeply that I couldn't move afterwards, their impact so deep that a new journey opened up. One was "The Dark Side of Chocolate," which I saw in Fall 2010. It documents the role of trafficked child labor in the cocoa fields in the Ivory Coast, where half our chocolate comes from. I was stunned to learn that this most delicious and heavenly food was being produced by slave labor! Two things were immediately obvious: the connection to a contemporary Pesach story and the fact that there was no chocolate we could eat on Passover that wasn't probably tainted by child labor. Sitting there after the movie, I decided to launch "The Bean of Affliction Campaign" through Fair Trade Judaica. After two years, a rabbinic ruling identified the first Fair Trade and Kosher for Passover chocolate product, which is now widely available through the Jewish Fair Trade Project with T'ruah and Equal Exchange.

The Conservative Movement recognizes many varieties of Equal Exchange dark chocolate as kosher for Passover if purchased before the start of the holiday. For more information: <http://shop.equalexchange.coop/pesach>

- Ilana Schatz, Founder,  
Fair Trade Judaica

<sup>2</sup> For more information: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/70-Immigrants-Found-In-Raid-on-Sweatshop-Thai-3026921.php> and <https://americanhistory.si.edu/sweatshops/el-monte>.



## RABBIS IN ACTION

At Yavneh's core is the belief that the Jewish values and ethics the students learn are only realized when put into action, so integrated throughout our curriculum are opportunities to practice these values in real life situations. Specifically, our middle school students engage in a three-year Jewish social justice curriculum, in which they examine how they can contribute to the world, responding to the needs of their own community through direct service and making a difference globally through philanthropy and advocacy.

T'ruah's Human Rights Shabbat has become an annual tradition at our school, in which our middle school students teach the elementary school students. In the last few years, we have closely examined the issue of human trafficking in America and the Jewish teachings that categorically make it an imperative for Jews to be involved. Our students have made tomato plates for their seder tables; engaged in inter-disciplinary learning researching the history of agriculture in America, calculating fair wages, and writing letters to Congress; and created presentations to raise awareness in the community.

- Rabbi Laurie Hahn Tapper,  
Director of Jewish Studies  
and School Rabbi,  
Yavneh Day School,  
Los Gatos, Calif.

צפון  
Tzafun

*Tzafun*, which literally means “hidden,” is the part of the seder where we seek what is not obvious, when we look for something other than what is in front of our faces. It is also when we return to that which was broken earlier in the evening and try to make it whole again. **In this way, *Tzafun* serves as the organizing principle of the second half of our seder, where we ask ourselves what world we want to see. Then we commit ourselves to making it real.**

By moving one little dot, *Tzafun* becomes *Tzafon*, North. What North Star will guide your work to bring about the world you want to see?

צפון ← צפון

It's no accident that one of the leading national anti-trafficking organizations is named Polaris, after the North Star.

2. Refer to the picture below. Do this picture and this quote surprise you? Why or why not? What do they teach us about the legacy of slavery in the United States?

**“We used to own our slaves.  
Now we just rent them.”**

– Florida grower quoted in the film



Florida farmworkers in 1960, from the Peabody Award-winning CBS documentary *Harvest of Shame*

## RABBIS IN ACTION

In December 2013, I visited a local Wendy's restaurant with our middle school students. We did not do so to grab a snack, but to take a stand for human rights. We were urging Wendy's to join the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' (CIW) Fair Food Program.

Our task was not to be a menace, but to have meaningful conversations to create change. The manager knew we were coming and was happy to hear my students express their concerns about the exploitation of workers in Florida tomato fields. After talking with the manager, we handed her letters to pass along to the corporate office. She assured us that she would speak to her superiors and share our concerns.

We then left and gathered our posters and signs to raise awareness outside the restaurant. This was just one afternoon and one action, but it was an afternoon that inspired me. I now believe that these students will not just learn our tradition, but also live its values, ensuring equality and human rights for all.

- Rabbi Jesse M. Olitzky,  
Congregation Beth El,  
South Orange, N.J.

In October 2018, the Tree of Life Synagogue building, less than a mile from the synagogue I serve, was attacked by a gunman. Our community is so interconnected that, in truth, the entire Pittsburgh Jewish community was attacked because we stood up for refugees and immigrants. The gunman's fear of the other reflects Pharaoh's fear: that strangers are dangerous. Just as Pharaoh's fear was unfounded, so too the fear of immigrants and refugees is unfounded.

In the aftermath, as we picked up the pieces of our new lives, healing from our tragedy, we became like those wandering in the desert. We had to rely on one another. Not just a group of individuals but a community. We made it, spiritually, to the other side of the Red Sea, and we can see clearer now than ever.

We learned that we are in this struggle side by side. That each of us plays an important role and that, together, we are stronger.

- Rabbi Jeremy Markiz,  
Congregation Beth Shalom,  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

## “In the beginning, our ancestors worshipped idols”

A 1903 fine of \$1000-\$5000 would be roughly equivalent to \$60,000-\$300,000 in 2013. (Based on <http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare>)

1. Refer to the picture below. It may be surprising to learn that slavery existed into the 20th century. Why do you think it was able to persist?



From PBS, “Slavery by Another Name”  
<http://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name>

ברוך  
Barekh

**Pour the third cup.** (Those wishing to say the full *birkat hamazon* can find its text easily in whatever siddur or bencher is handy.)

*Brich rachamana malka  
d'alma marei d'hai pita.*

ברוך רחמנא מלכא דעלמא  
מריתא דהאי פיתא

Blessed is the Merciful One,  
Sovereign of the world,  
Master of this bread.

This one-line Aramaic blessing can be used as a shorthand form of *birkat hamazon* under less-than-ideal circumstances (*b'di avad*). It has its origins in this Talmudic discussion about the shortest text that fulfills one's obligation to say a blessing after eating (*Berachot* 40b):

Benjamin the shepherd made a sandwich and said, “Blessed is the Master of this bread.” Rav said he fulfilled his obligation. [Really?] But hasn't Rav said, “Any blessing which does not mention the divine name is not a blessing”? Rather, [Benjamin] said, “Blessed is the Merciful One, Master of this bread.”

בנימין רעינא כרך ריפתא  
ואמר בריך מריה דהאי  
פיתא אמר רב יצא  
והאמר רב כל ברכה  
שאין בה הזכרת השם אינה  
ברכה דאמר בריך  
רחמנא מריה דהאי פיתא

In the third paragraph of *birkat hamazon* (*Rachem...*), we appeal to God for our most basic needs — sustenance and shelter. We pray,

וְנָא אֶל תַּצְרִיכֵנוּ ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ  
לֹא לִיָּדֵי מַתָּנַת בֶּשֶׂר וְדָם  
וְלֹא לִיָּדֵי הַלְוָאָתָם.

**Please do not make us depend,  
Adonai our God, on the gifts of  
flesh and blood or their loans.**

While in context this means gifts or loans from other people, it could also be understood more literally as actual “loans” of flesh and blood, such as take place in prostitution and forced labor. This reading cuts to the core of this paragraph’s concluding plea, “שְׁלֹא נִבְוֶשׁ וְלֹא נִכָּלָם לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד” “that we should never suffer embarrassment nor humiliation.” This is, at base, what we all desire: a life of dignity. Unfortunately, the threat of becoming a gift of flesh and blood looms as largely today all over the world as it did for our ancestors.

– Rabbi Raysh Weiss, PhD,  
Congregation Beth-El,  
Yardley, Pa.; T’ruah  
Summer Fellowship 2013;  
Bronfman Fellow 2001

1. Why might a shepherd be inclined to say a simpler, shorter form of this blessing?

2. Later authorities added the phrase “Sovereign of the World” to Benjamin’s original prayer. In the context of slavery and freedom, why does it matter that every blessing remind us that God is the ultimate Sovereign? How does our sense of the sacred or the Divine inspire our actions to build a world of *chesed*, lovingkindness?

**Bless and drink the third cup.**

## The Four Children

When we talk about forced labor, we may start out as the child who does not know to ask, because we don’t even know that the problem exists. Upon first encountering the issue, we ask simple questions. As we learn more, it is easy to slide into the frustration of the wicked child: This is such a massive uphill battle and I am so small — why should I bother caring? We seek the wisdom to overcome despair and find the ways in which we can be effective at fighting the root causes of forced labor.

*On the path from first realizations  
to despair to activism, where do you  
find yourself tonight? What has your  
journey been to this place?*

The seder demands that we look forward, not backward. To the children’s questions about why we celebrate Passover, we respond, “because God took us out of Egypt” and not “because we were slaves in Egypt.” We dwell on the joy and agency of liberation, not on the pain of slavery.

A rabbi once taught me that Judaism was a “system for goodness.” Over the years, I have learned to recognize that I am a part of systems that are often far less than good: systems that privilege few and hurt many. Our society’s demand for cheap products and services, and my mere participation in modern commerce, implicates me in the cycle of exploitation. It is this recognition that drives me to work to reform our public institutions so that they enable others to enjoy the same freedom that we celebrate around the seder table.

The ability to rejoice in our freedom carries with it great responsibility, for we cannot truly be free unless all people are free. Let us direct ourselves towards fixing systems that exploit vulnerable members of our communities and bring a time of liberation from these narrow places for all people.

– Keeli Sorensen,  
Vice President of Victim  
Services at RAINN  
(Rape, Abuse & Incest  
National Network)



## The Thesis Statement of the Haggadah

We might think the most basic encapsulation of the haggadah is in the simple song that children learn in Jewish preschool, which comes right after the Four Questions:

We were slaves	עֲבָדִים הָיינוּ	<i>Avadim hayinu</i>
Now we are free	עַתָּה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין.	<i>Atah b'nei chorin</i>

But as adults, we know that “now we are free” is an oversimplification. We are trapped in so many overlapping oppressive systems. Indeed, at the end of the *avadim hayinu* paragraph, the haggadah offers us an alternative thesis statement, inviting us to go beyond the basics:

וְכָל הַמְרִבָּה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הָרִי זֶה מְשַׁבַּח.  
**The more we expand the telling of the Exodus,  
 the more praiseworthy.**

The more we expand our perspective to include diverse liberation struggles and the action needed to bring them to fruition, the better. In the service of that expansion, this haggadah makes the following arguments:

1. The United States was founded on fundamentally racist principles and has yet to fully grapple with that legacy.
2. America's appetite for cheap goods and labor can only survive through exploitative labor practices and immigration, and our immigration policies expose people to further abuse.
3. Forced labor does not happen in a vacuum but in the context of powerful systems that treat some people as less valuable or worthy than others.
4. If we want to reconstruct our country so it fulfills its stated values, we will have to follow the solutions and leadership of thus-far marginalized communities: women, people of color, low-wage workers, and immigrants.

## Opening the Door for Elijah

Miriam the prophetess is linked with water in a number of ways. She watched over her baby brother Moses in the Nile and sang and danced at the shores of the Reed Sea. Midrash teaches us that when Miriam died, the magical, portable well that had sustained our people dried up.

According to tradition, Elijah will bring Messiah to us and the world will be redeemed. In my lyrics (below), Miriam brings *us* to the waters of redemption. It will then be our task to enter the waters and together redeem the world.

Instead of pouring out wrath, let us pour forth love, forgiveness and peace — for the soothing and healing of our broken world.

- Rabbi Leila Gal Berner, PhD,  
 Rabbi Emerita, Kol Ami: The Northern  
 Virginia Reconstructionist Community,  
 Annandale, Va.

<i>Miriam haneviah,</i>	מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה
<i>oz v'zimrah beyadah,</i>	עֹז וְחִמְרָה בְּיָדָהּ
<i>Miriam tirkod itanu</i>	מִרְיָם תִּרְקֹד אִתָּנוּ
<i>lebagdil zimrat olam,</i>	לְהַגְדִּיל זִמְרַת עוֹלָם
<i>Miriam tirkod itanu</i>	מִרְיָם תִּרְקֹד אִתָּנוּ
<i>letaken et ha'olam.</i>	לְתַקֵּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם.
<i>Bim'hera veyameinu</i>	בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ
<i>bi tevi'enu</i>	הִיא תְּבִיאֵנוּ
<i>el mei hayeshua.</i>	אֶל מֵי הַיְּשׁוּעָה.

**Miriam the prophet, strength and  
 song in her hand,  
 Miriam will dance with us to strengthen  
 the world's song,  
 Miriam will dance with us to heal the world.  
 Soon and in our time, she will bring us  
 to the waters of the redemption.**

During my trip to Immokalee, I heard many stories from workers who described the conditions before and after the Fair Food Program. One in particular stands out: “Rosalie” told of an experience of sexual harassment on a farm by a supervisor. This person showed up at her home and threatened her in front of her children and friends.

Because she was working on a farm that participated in the Fair Food Program, she could report the perpetrator to the Fair Food Standards Council. Within hours, the supervisor was fired and her workplace was safe again. Rosalie's story reminds me of both the vulnerability of workers in exploitative conditions and of the power of organizing to change those slave-like conditions.

As we lift up Miriam's cup, a symbol of healing and redemption, let us call out for justice and for change so that all women, and all people, can be afforded dignity and protection in their work.

- Rabbi Lauren  
 Grabelle Herrmann,  
 SAJ: Judaism that Stands  
 for All, New York, N.Y.

An early morning conversation with my daughter, Lila Rose, age 3 ½:

LR: Why has Elijah not come to our house, Mama?

Me: Elijah is going to come when it is time for a new world to come.

LR: I think we should give Elijah a present when Elijah comes.

Me: What should that be?

LR: Juice.

Me: Ok.

LR: But Elijah is going to be carrying her babies so how is she going to get the juice? Oh! I know, she can carry her babies in a sling and then she can drink the juice and bring a new world.

May she come soon with her babies.

May he come soon surrounded by elders.

May zhe bring us all along.

And may we work to make that day happen with open hearts, committed hands, and a willing spirit.

– Rabbi Susan Goldberg,  
Nefesh Los Angeles

<i>Eliyahu hanavi,</i>	אֵלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא
<i>Eliabu HaTishbi,</i>	אֵלִיָּהוּ הַתִּשְׁבִּי
<i>Eliabu HaGiladi.</i>	אֵלִיָּהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי
<i>Bim'hera veyameinu</i>	בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ
<i>yavo eleinu im</i>	יָבֹא אֵלֵינוּ עִם
<i>mashiach ben David.</i>	מָשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד.

**Elijah the prophet, Elijah the Tishbite,  
Elijah the Gileadite.  
Soon and in our day, he will come to us  
with the Messiah, son of David.**

1. Invite all of the seder guests to walk together to the door, to let Elijah in. What do you see when you look out at the world?

2. When you open the door from this position of struggle (see comment on next page), whom might you invite in? Whom do you reach out to?

## Four Questions About Exploitation Today

We start the seder by noticing what is out of the ordinary and then investigating its meaning further.

*How is this night different from all other nights?*

On all other nights, we depend on the exploitation of invisible others for our food, clothing, homes, and more.

*Tonight, we listen to the stories of those who suffer to create the goods we use. We commit to working toward the human rights of all workers.*

On all other nights, we have allowed human life to become cheap in the economic quest for the cheapest goods.

*Tonight, we commit to valuing all people, regardless of their race, class, or circumstances.*

On all other nights, we have forgotten that poverty, migration, and gender-based violence leave people vulnerable to exploitation, including forced labor

*Tonight, we commit to taking concrete actions to end this exploitation and its causes.*

On all other nights, we have forgotten to seek wisdom among those who know how to end forced labor — the people who have experienced this degradation.

*Tonight, we commit to prevention that is rooted in the wisdom and experience of workers, trafficking survivors, and affected communities.*

When the seder has ended, we will not return to how it has been “on all other nights.” We commit to bringing the lessons of this seder into our actions tomorrow, the next day, and every day to come.

In March 2013, a few weeks before Passover, I participated in CIW’s March for Fair Food with my older daughter, Liora. Early one morning, as dawn broke and we sat on a bus bearing a banner “No more slavery in the fields,” she asked me to practice the Four Questions, which she would recite at the seder very soon. In that moment, past and present came together. Listening to her chant in Hebrew *mah nishtanah balailah hazeh* (“why is this night different from all other nights”) I understood the power of the commitment we make as Jews each year. We cannot tell the story of slavery without committing to action in the present day. And we are blessed to know that today real solutions are possible.

– Rabbi Rachel Kahn-Troster,  
Deputy Director, T’ruah



“You shall tell your children on that day.” When we participate in the seder, we fulfill a covenant with history to celebrate freedom. But to treat this covenant only as treasured memory is to divest it of its essence. The covenant is also a promise we make to the present and the future. When we say, “What God did for me,” we recognize the illegitimacy of bondage for all people. These too need a strong hand and an outstretched arm — the Indian family in debt bondage; the Congolese man enslaved in a mine; the Nepali woman in a brothel; the Haitian girl in domestic servitude; the Ghanaian boy trapped on a fishing boat.

When we ask, “Why is this night different from all other nights?” let us answer, “We keep faith with the heritage given to us by Moses by helping to liberate those who are slaves in our time.” As Moses says in Deuteronomy 30:11, “This is not too difficult for you.” Everyone can contribute to ending bondage. Participating in the abolition of slavery in our time adds meaning and joy to the seder.

- Maurice Middleberg,  
Former Executive  
Director (Retired),  
Free the Slaves

### ***“Ha Lachma Anya” — Anchored in the past, rooted in the present***

*Ha lachma anya* encapsulates the past (the bread we ate in Egypt), present (let all who are hungry come eat), and the future (as free people in the Land of Israel). The four questions then anchor us in the present — what is different this night? — before *Avadim Hayinu* sends us back in time to explore our origins.

Our understanding of human trafficking must also be rooted in history and the origins of worker exploitation.



### ***“Ocean in A Drop,” by Margeaux Gray, 20”x 24”, Acrylic and mixed media, © 2015***

“The phrase ‘working with not for survivors of slavery’ continued to play through my thoughts as I was creating this piece. When all the little oceans in a drop come to work with each other, what an impact we can make.” Ms. Gray is a survivor of domestic child sex trafficking. Much of her artwork incorporates everyday items that other people might consider trash. This serves as a symbol that people whom our society might be ready to discard — among them people forced into human trafficking — remain creatures of value and beauty. Ms. Gray has transcended her experience as a trafficking victim, and today she is an advocate, motivational speaker, and artist. Find her on Twitter @GeauxFreedom.



## RABBIS IN ACTION

After my summer fellowship with T'ruah, I stayed involved with Damayan, the domestic workers' organization where I had interned. I helped them plan a rally at the Philippines consulate in New York, where they were trying to pressure the Philippines' government to provide more support for Filipino/as who had been trafficked, and I wrote an op-ed to draw the attention of the Jewish press.

It was a humbling and inspiring experience to join with these workers, who not only overcame their own challenging work environments but went on to organize, empower, and protect fellow domestic workers.

I was honored to partner with Damayan, a worker-run organization of smart, powerful, and capable individuals, and to think about how I, in my role as Jewish clergy, could best move the Jewish community to support their anti-trafficking work.

— Rabbi Avi Strausberg,  
Hadar Institute,  
Washington, D.C.;  
T'ruah Summer  
Fellowship 2013

## Shfokh Chamatkha — Pour Out

The authors of the seder chose this moment to express their anger at the dangerous, antisemitic world they lived in. While such anger may need a new target today, that does not mean it has no place at the table. Rabbi Mishael Zion, former co-director of the Bronfman Fellowship, teaches that the seder's two door-openings are fundamentally opposites. When we opened the door at *Halachma anya*, we focused on local injustice; we, from our position of privilege, are the ones capable of feeding those who are hungry. Here, late in the seder, we open ourselves up to the massive injustices that affect the entire world. We give ourselves permission to name our anger at the fact that forced labor still exists in the 21st century, to recognize our limitations, and to cry out, asking God to show up as an avenger of injustice. In the words of Psalm 94, the Psalm for Wednesday:

God of vengeance,	אל נקמות ה'
Adonai; God of	אל נקמות
vengeance, appear!	הופיע!

The world we want to see will have no need of our righteous indignation, but until that world is here, we cannot afford to ignore those darker feelings.

## מגיד Maggid

Fill the second cup and begin Maggid.



**"Sleepless (Via Dolorosa I),"**  
by Claudia Cojocaru

Ms. Cojocaru writes, "During my ordeal, I was in a constant state of hyper awareness, because I had to be ahead of the abuser. Sleeping was when I was vulnerable. This signifies that I was awake and ready to escape, to be free." Ms. Cojocaru's reflection on her life as a trafficking survivor is on p. 54.

All faith begins with the act of questioning. From God's first question to Adam and Even in Eden – *Ayekah*, "Where are you?" – to Abraham's challenge to God concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, to Sarah's exasperating and agonizing question about whether she would ever bear children, to Moses questioning Pharaoh's authority, the Jewish people have always been intoxicated with the art of questioning.

Perhaps we who were slaves are constantly in a state of remembering the degradation and seeking never to forget. It is the privilege of free people to ask questions; this is the birthplace of our compassion and our zeal for justice. Why else might a motley band of former slaves have taken it upon ourselves to demand that humanity live up to its sacred promise for equality and dignity for all God's creation?

— Rabbi Michael Adam Latz,  
Shir Tikvah Congregation,  
Minneapolis, Minn.

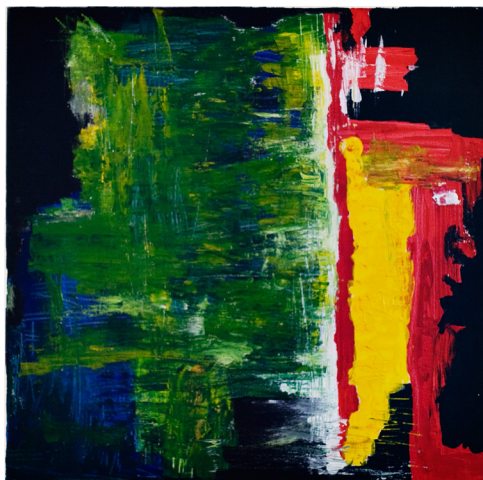
Rav Kook taught that the entire Haggadah centers on the biblical verse “You shall tell your child on that day, ‘Because of what the Eternal did for me when I went free from Egypt’” (Exodus 13:8), which we use to answer the wicked child and the one who does not know how to ask.

Maybe that means that all I have to do to fulfill my obligation to see myself as if I were personally liberated from Egyptian bondage is to say this line.

No way! When I say “what the Eternal did for me,” a robust seder depends on imagining the taskmaster’s lash, the Israelite hope for God’s compassion, and the sweet taste of freedom’s tears of joy on the far side of the sea.

And yet, I am only imagining the move from degradation to redemption. My freedom to imagine a life of slavery is itself a form of privilege. As we engage the issue of modern slavery, let us constantly be aware of the privilege we bring as well as the power, so that we may take up the right amount of space at the table and no more.

- Rabbi David Spinrad,  
Beth El Hebrew Congregation,  
Alexandria, Va.



### “Shroud (On The Other Side),” by Claudia Cojocaru

Ms. Cojocaru writes, “The shroud represents freeing people from the imprisonment of their minds and bodies. There is always a shroud covering the essence of truth within.” Ms. Cojocaru’s reflection on her life as a trafficking survivor is on p. 54.

As we begin Maggid, we seek to enter into the experience of slavery and redemption with more than just our heads, but with our hearts and bodies as well.

## הלל Hallel

Fill the fourth cup and celebrate the world you want to see with songs that have sustained activists in the past and today — we’ve included a few of these songs, but feel free also to sing other songs that give you the strength to move forward.

### Psalm 118:25

*Ana Adonai  
Hoshiah na*

אָנָּה ה'  
הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא

Please God save us!

### South African Folk Song

**Zulu (original):**  
**Siyahamba ekukhanyeni kwenkhos’.**

*Anu tzo’adim  
lor Hashem.*

אָנוּ צוֹעֲדִים  
לְאוֹר ה'

We are marching in the light of God.

We may tell our story and utter our prayers on this Passover night, but something transformative happens when we sing. Song transports us from despair to courage. From hopelessness to joy. From slavery to freedom. If you can sing a Hallel psalm of gratitude, of hope, even of despair, you know your soul is still alive.

Men were the priests and leaders of ancient ritual. But women were the songleaders of our people: beginning with Miriam, who led the women in singing and dancing as we crossed the sea. Without time to bake bread, she instructed the women to pack their timbrels as they left slavery behind. They didn’t know what the future held, but the Israelites were preparing to sing, knowing that song would help them recognize when they were truly free.

- Rabbi Angela W. Buchdahl,  
Central Synagogue,  
New York, N.Y.;  
Bronfman Fellow ‘89

Visit [www.truah.org/haggadah-songs](http://www.truah.org/haggadah-songs)  
for links to recordings, where available.

## Psalm 89:3

Music and English lyrics written by Rabbi Menachem Creditor after 9/11

**A world of love will be built. (Psalm 89:3)**

*Olam chesed yibaneh.*

עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה.

I will build this world from love...yai dai dai...  
And you must build this world from love...yai dai dai...  
And if we build this world from love...yai dai dai...  
Then God will build this world from love...yai dai dai...

## Kol HaOlam Kulo

Hebrew based on Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, *Likutei Moharan* 48

*Kol ha'olam kulo  
gesher tzar me'od  
Veha'ikar  
lo lefached clal.*

The whole entire world  
is a very narrow bridge  
And the main thing is to recall,  
is to have no fear at all.

כָּל הָעוֹלָם כָּלוֹ  
גֶּשֶׁר צָר מְאֹד  
וְהַעֲיָקָר  
לֹא לִפְחֹד כָּלֵל.

# יחזק

**Yachatz**

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi z"l taught that the “big matzah” represents the “big lessons,” which we can only take in and digest through the experience of the seder.

When we break the matzah, we traditionally save the bigger piece for the Afikomen. This year, let's save only the smaller piece.

We obviously haven't quite grasped the “big lessons” of the seder. If we had, we would not allow slavery in the world today. So, this year, we take the small piece. We commit to earning the big piece by next year.

- Rabbi Debra Orenstein,  
Congregation B'nai Israel, Emerson, N.J.

When my grandfather broke the middle matzah, a hush fell over our seder. All the cousins fell silent, concentrated on the navy velvet pouch between our Poppy's wrinkled hands. Before slipping out to hide the Afikomen, he invited us to touch the pouch. Filled with promise, each of us reached out. As we brushed our fingers against the soft fabric, we simultaneously felt the warmth of our grandfather's hand on our heads, a gentle touch of confidence for each grandchild. Then he was gone and the silence broken. The background sounds of the seder would slowly rise in decibel as the adults' attention turned away, even as the children stayed silent, quietly waiting or gesturing strategy. My grandfather's return inaugurated the grand search, breaking the pressure of anticipation and unleashing indescribable exuberance.

To me, Passover is about the hopefulness I felt as a child in the moment that my Poppy opened the door and we rushed out to search for the coveted velvet pouch. It is that same hopefulness, those same touches of confidence, and that same exuberance that inspire my belief that change is possible, that we can make an impact on modern slavery in my lifetime.

- Melysa Sperber,  
Director of Public Policy and  
Government Relations,  
Humanity United



# כַּרְפַּס

## Karpas

As the Four Questions will soon point out, we dip twice in our seder. The two dippings are opposites. The first time, as we prepare to enter a world of slavery, we dip a green vegetable into saltwater, marring its life-giving freshness with the taste of tears and death. The second time, as we move towards redemption, we moderate the bitterness of maror with the sweetness of charoset.

Any time we find ourselves immersed in sadness and suffering, may we always have the courage to know that blessing is coming.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech* בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ  
*ha'olam borei pri ha'adamah.* הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה.

**Blessed are You ETERNAL our God, Sovereign, of time and space,  
who creates the fruit of the earth.**

The dipping of karpas also recalls the Israelites' first stop after crossing the Red Sea, which was called Marah. After a three-day journey, they found water there, but it was bitter, undrinkable. God showed Moses a piece of wood to throw (dip) into the water, which made it potable. (Exodus 15:22-27)

Even after a major initial victory, our elation can collapse swiftly under the weight of the next steps we have to take. Karpas reminds us that the journey to freedom — like the seder — is long, and we have to pace ourselves.

This episode is also the source-text for the rabbis' instituting reading Torah on Mondays and Thursdays, so we never go more than three days without water/Torah. Karpas reminds us that on the long road to redemption, we have to make sure we stop and nourish ourselves wherever we can.

## Od Yavo Shalom

By Mosh ben Ari and Sheva

*Od yavo  
shalom aleinu  
ve'al kulam –  
salaam!*

עוֹד יָבֹא  
שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ  
וְעַל כָּלֶם –  
סָלָאם!

**Peace will yet come to us  
and to everyone — peace!**

## Psalm 115:1

*Lo lanu Adonai  
lo lanu  
Ki leshimkha ten  
kavod al chasdekha  
al amitekha*

לֹא לָנוּ ה'  
לֹא לָנוּ  
כִּי לְשִׁמְךָ תֵּן  
כְּבוֹד עַל חֲסִדְךָ  
עַל אֱמִתְךָ.

**Not to us, God,  
But to Your name give honor for  
your love and your truth.**

I learned a *niggun* for *Lo Lanu* on my first day of orientation for rabbinical school, and it has stayed with me since that day as a helpful mantra. Our greatest justice leaders are humble, but I suspect most of us struggle with that virtue. *Lo Lanu* reminds me that all my work is ultimately not for myself but for the greater glory of God and the greater flowering of God's images in the world.

- Rabbi Lev Meirowitz Nelson,  
Director of Rabbinic Training,  
T'ruah; Bronfman Fellow '99

## Im Ein Ani Li, Mi Li

In 1980, Debbie Friedman z"l paired these two lines from the Mishnah as a song.

*Im ein ani li, mi li?  
Ukhshe'ani le'atzmi mah ani?  
Ve'im lo akhshev eimatai, eimatai?*

אם אין אני לי, מי לי?  
וכש'אני לעצמי, מה אני?  
ואם לא עכשיו, אימתי?

*Bekhol dor vador  
chayav adam lirot et atzmo  
ke'ilu hu yatz'a miMitzrayim.*

בכל דור ודור  
חייב אדם לראות את עצמו  
כאלו הוא יצא ממצרים.

If I not for myself, who will be for me?  
And when I am only for myself, what am I?  
And if not now, when? (*Pirkei Avot* 1:14)

In every generation a person must see themselves  
as if they came forth from Egypt. (*Mishnah Pesachim* 10:5)

## Go Down Moses

When Israel was in Egypt land — let my people go!  
Oppressed so hard they could not stand — let my people go!  
Go down Moses, way down in Egypt land.  
Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go!

## Other Suggestions

- "If I Had a Hammer," by Pete Seeger and Lee Hays
- "Blowin' in the Wind," by Bob Dylan
- "Where Have All the Flowers Gone," by Pete Seeger and Joe Hickerson
- "People Get Ready," by Curtis Mayfield and The Impressions

## Bless and drink the fourth cup.



Picture drawn by an immigrant child detained at the Tornillo tent city, Tornillo, Texas, December 2018, shortly before the facility was closed. The quetzal is significant in Central American culture and mythology, including as a sign of spring and symbol of freedom. Photograph by Justin Hamel.



The first time I heard a trafficking survivor speak many years ago, she told the story of her parents' trafficking her for sex from the time she was a young girl until she was an adult. I sat in horror, listening to her calm recollection of how both her mother and father trafficked her, sometimes leaving her for days at a time in a makeshift brothel when she was barely old enough to read and write.

Her story was my t'ruah – a decibel-defying call to action to open doors, pull back curtains, and shout from the rooftops the pain and suffering of trafficked individuals in our midst.

The call guides my work at the National Council of Jewish Women, alongside incredible and passionate advocates around the country, to raise awareness about trafficking in the United States, where children are bought and sold in every state, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

And the call informs my work to create lasting social change through legislative advocacy – working with lawmakers to address the systemic issues that allow trafficking to exist, including lack of education and opportunities, and passing legislation to reform the child welfare system, which effectively serves as a supply chain to traffickers.

The sound of the shofar, a sign of liberation, reminds me not only of one woman's unspeakable journey, but of my greater responsibility to ensure my call becomes a collective call to action for all of us in the Jewish community.

- Jody Rabhan,  
Chief Policy Officer,  
National Council of Jewish Women

ורְחַץ  
Ur'chatz

"The beauty of Ur'chatz was revealed to me during a women's seder. Each participant washed the hands of another with care and *kavanah* (intentionality) — and without words. The sisterhood created in the sacred silence elevates communal consciousness. How will we utilize this state of purity? *V'ahavta lere'akha kamokha* - to love the other as ourself.

How will this ancient wisdom propel us forward to empower the silent? How will we elevate the hands of all those still in *Mitzrayim* [Egypt/the narrow place]?"

- Rabbi Jessica K. Shimberg,  
Kehilat Sukkat Shalom,  
Columbus, Ohio

נִרְצָה  
Nirtzah

## Counting the Omer: Towards Redemption

The seven weeks of the Omer, between Pesach and Shavuot, are traditionally (though somewhat mysteriously) a time of partial mourning. Rabbi Shai Held offers this explanation:

The Exodus may be a paradigm for how Jewish history is supposed (indeed, destined) to look, but for now — tragically, inexplicably — history makes a mockery of this paradigm. Rome is triumphant; a renewed Exodus remains but a dim hope.

And so we mourn. We mourn because our experience falls so unbearably short of the redemption we have been promised and assured will come. There is a stunning degree of audacity — and honesty — in starting to grieve as Pesach begins, because, in fundamental respects, Pesach resides in the future rather than the present. And yet grief does not have the final — or even the loudest — word, because we affirm that the God who redeemed us will, despite all evidence to the contrary, redeem us "a second time." (In *The Heart of Torah*, Volume 2, p. 75)

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu  
Melech ha'dlam asher kidsbanu  
bemitzvotav vetzivanu al  
sefirat ha'omer.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל  
סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר.

Blessed are You ETERNAL our God,  
Sovereign of time and space, who sanctified us with commandments  
and commanded us to count the Omer.

**Today is the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the Omer.**



## Speak Out

What is God looking for from us? Dr. Avivah Zornberg teaches that the book of *Bamidbar*, Numbers, is all about the search for proper *dibur*, speech. Through forty years in the desert, God endures the ex-slaves' complaints, rebellions, and regrets about leaving Egypt. Finally, at the book's end, Tzlofchad's five daughters — Machlah, Noa, Choglah, Milkah, and Tirtzah — come to Moses with a different kind of question (Numbers 27:1). Their father had died in the desert with no son. Under the existing laws, his portion in the land of Israel would go to distant relatives. Could they not inherit instead? God says four words to Moses:

*Ken b'not Tzlofchad dovro.*

כֵּן בְּנוֹת צְלֹפְחָד דִּבְּרוּ

**Tzlofchad's daughters speak right.**

For Zornberg, these words relieve the tension of the entire desert journey. All God was looking for was someone to speak up — *ledaber* — for justice, even in their own interest. May our speech-acts merit the same simple, beautiful response: *ken*. Yes.

## Team Up

Regarding how the story of Rosa Parks is told, educator Herbert Kohl writes,

When the story of the Montgomery bus boycott is told merely as a tale of a single heroic person, it leaves children hanging. Not everyone is a hero or heroine...Not every child can be a Rosa Parks, but everyone can imagine herself or himself as a participant in the boycott. As a tale of a social movement and a community effort to overthrow injustice, the Rosa Parks story opens the possibility of every child identifying herself or himself as an activist, as someone who can help make justice happen.

- "The Politics of Children's Literature: What's Wrong with the Rosa Parks Myth,"  
by Herbert Kohl. Rethinking Our Classrooms Volume 1:  
<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/politics-of-childrens-literature-rosa-parks-myth/>

קִדְשׁ

**Kadesh**

We begin our seder with the Kiddush, the sanctification of this moment in time.

The text of the Kiddush reminds us that the choice to uphold the sacred is in our hands. We do not directly bless wine, or praise its sweetness. Rather, we thank God for the fruit of the vine. That fruit can also be used to make vinegar, which is sharp and bitter. Our actions determine whether this sacred moment in time inspires bitterness or sweetness, complacency or action.

**Bless and drink the first cup of wine/grape juice.**

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ

*Melech ha'olam borei pri hagafen.*

מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

**Blessed are You ETERNAL our God, Sovereign of time and space,  
creator of the fruit of the vine.**

## Here's how you can start....

## How to use this haggadah

This haggadah can be used as the complete text for a themed anti-trafficking or social justice seder, as a section-by-section companion to the traditional haggadah, or as a source to pull out a few short insertions.

Several thematic threads are woven through this haggadah. To zero in on one of them, focus on these pages:

- Racial justice: 5, 16, 18-26, 29-30, 35
- Immigration: 9, 16, 21-22, 24, 27-28, 33-34, 48, 69-70
- Gender: 24, 27, 32, 36, 39, 59-60, 74
- Workers' Rights: 15-16, 19, 21-22, 31-32, 37-42, 49, 55, 71-74
- Child-friendly content: 10, 11, 39, 43-44, 51, 55-56, 59-60, 68

For more information about immigration, this haggadah can be used in conjunction with *Mikdash: A Jewish Guide to the New Sanctuary Movement*, also published by T'ruah. That guide includes a short history of U.S. immigration, Jewish texts for study and discussion, and information about how you can protect immigrants and refugees in your own community and beyond.

Before your seder, you may want to connect with local anti-trafficking or immigration organizations and ask them what action steps or volunteer opportunities would be helpful to them. When seder participants get excited about taking action, you'll have some ideas to share.

Contact T'ruah at [office@truah.org](mailto:office@truah.org) or 212-845-5201 to talk more about how to use this haggadah, or about how to involve your community in efforts to end trafficking.

## Redemption Requires Repentance

In the medieval midrash *Pirkei deRebbe Eliezer* (ch. 43), Rabbi Nechunya ben Hakanah teaches that even Pharaoh was capable of teshuvah. Just as Pharaoh sinned by saying, "Who is the ETERNAL/*Mi Adonai*?" (Exodus 5:2), he repented with the same language, saying, "Who is like the ETERNAL/*Mi Chamocha*?" (Exodus 15:11). God rescued him from the Red Sea and made him King of Nineveh. When Jonah came to prophesy the destruction of Nineveh, at once Pharaoh led his people in teshuvah, and God spared the city.

The midrash has an epilogue, though: After 40 years, Nineveh backslid and was swallowed in the depths of the underworld. This teaches us that teshuvah is an ongoing process, never a closed ledger.

What might redemption look like today? What teshuvah does it demand from us?

- **Reparations** for African-Americans and Native Americans/First Nations
- An **immigration policy** that treats all people with respect and compassion — such as the "Free to Move, Free to Stay" framework proposed by United We Dream: <https://unitedwedreamaction.org/framework-2020/>
- **Ecological sustainability**, so that none would have to flee as climate refugees
- A **civilization governed by values** other than the bottom line and production of cheap goods

## RABBIS IN ACTION

There are many ways to effect change: We protest, we petition, we demonstrate. And sometimes we bring our message directly to the seats of power. A few years ago, as the Washington State Legislature was considering a bill on human trafficking, I sought out the sponsoring senator and offered my testimony, as a member of the clergy, in support of the bill during the public hearing. While others spoke of the facts of human trafficking, and a victim shared her story, I offered a spiritual and ethical message based in Jewish teachings. Sitting in that hearing room to share this simple yet fundamental message felt like an important opportunity we have as rabbis to effect change, and to share a message our lawmakers need to hear more often: that lawmaking is as much as moral act as it is a legal act.

– Rabbi Seth Goldstein,  
Temple Beth Hatfiloh,  
Olympia, Wash.

*Organizations that have lobbying arms, such as the local Jewish Federation, can often help connect community leaders with opportunities to give testimony.*

The “Free to Move” platform includes abandoning the slogan “comprehensive immigration reform.” That term, which rose to prominence in 2001, combines increased border security with adjusted status for undocumented immigrants, allowing them to remain in the country. Our partners at United We Dream view this *ab initio* compromise as morally bankrupt. If we do not believe in a militarized border, let us not call for one! If we are in the business of setting forth a vision for public policy, let it be a vision that is truly redemptive.

**How will you lead us there?  
We’re not waiting for  
Moses or a Messiah;  
we’re all working on  
becoming them.**

**לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם!  
Next year in Jerusalem —  
in a renewed world  
where all are free.**

## A word about the term “modern slavery”

There is a debate within the anti-trafficking community about whether to use the term “slavery” to refer to human trafficking today. The International Labor Organization uses the term to refer to both forced labor and forced marriage. Our partners at the Coalition of Immokalee Workers use it, as you can see on the “Florida Modern Slavery Museum” (page 20). For some, the modifier “modern” mitigates the pitfalls of “slavery.”

Other activists, including our partners at Safe Horizon’s Anti-Trafficking Program, see the term as appropriating the history of black chattel slavery. Doing so risks several damaging ramifications, including distracting attention from the ongoing oppression of anti-black racism and painting slavery as the behavior of a few bad actors rather than the backbone of capitalism. Scholar Lyndsey P. Beutin makes this argument forcefully in her 2017 article, “Black Suffering for/from Anti-trafficking Advocacy.”<sup>1</sup>

We have chosen to use the term “slavery” occasionally and advisedly, given the broad scope of this haggadah and T’ruah’s work more generally, but have removed it from our subtitle. We do not use terms like “abolitionist” or direct analogies to chattel slavery, which evolved into more widespread and pernicious social systems such as mass incarceration and other expressions of systemic racism. We encourage you to be similarly reflective.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atrjournal/article/view/261/245>



This issue will remain with us regardless of who wins the 2020 presidential election. It will remain with us until we achieve a wholesale re-vision of our economy into one that treats human beings not as disposable cogs but as uniquely precious images of God.

The wicked child asks: “What does this work mean to you? *Mah ha'avodah hazot lakhem?*” (Exodus 12:26). I think about this question a great deal as a rabbi whose core work involves fighting for human rights. The answer must go deeper than simply saying, “We were slaves in Egypt.” The memory of bitterness does not necessarily inspire action.

What inspires me is not slavery but redemption. God could part the Sea of Reeds, but the Israelites could not truly be free until 40 years later — once they had liberated themselves fully from slavery.

I have personally been transformed by my experiences organizing T'ruah's #TomatoRabbis partnership with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida. Since 2011, T'ruah has brought more than 100 rabbis, cantors, and Jewish communal leaders to Immokalee to witness how tomato workers themselves have transformed their work environment from ground zero for human trafficking to a place that models human rights protections. They have gone home to organize their own communities — congregants, students, and colleagues — to demand (with significant success) that major grocery stores and fast food chains join the Fair Food Program and buy only from growers who commit to human rights standards, including zero tolerance for slavery, violence, or sexual harassment.

The challenge is not simply how to end horrific abuses and to build a more humane system but, fundamentally, to determine the character of the United States. Will it be a place that celebrates and protects the image of God in every person, or will it allow for exploitation and dehumanization? The choice is ours.

May this haggadah inspire all of us to new questions and to build a world of lovingkindness.



Rabbi Rachel Kahn-Troster, Deputy Director  
Sh'vat 5780/February 2020

## What You Can Do

**The best ways to fight trafficking are to address its root causes and to support survivors. Harsher penalties for traffickers are ineffective at best; at worst, they focus our attention narrowly and prevent effective solutions from seeing the light of day.**

### Advocate for policy fixes

- **More dedicated shelter beds and beds for single people.** Many homeless shelters won't take trafficking survivors, who understandably have different needs than other homeless people. Other shelters, operating in the domestic violence framework, are for mothers with children, but many trafficking survivors are single.

- **More and better “vacatur” laws.** These laws allow for criminal convictions to be vacated (erased) when the crime, including sex work, was performed under duress. As of 2019, 40 states and D.C. had such laws, but many are limited, dysfunctional, or only cover prostitution; only Nebraska, Wyoming, and Florida received a grade of B or C in a report by Polaris. For more information, visit [www.polarisproject.org/RecordRelief](http://www.polarisproject.org/RecordRelief)

### Call for better immigration policy

- Militarized borders make trafficking more likely, not less.
- Guestworker visa policies have built-in flaws that can trap workers.
- Fear of deportation makes undocumented immigrants more vulnerable to traffickers.

### Support survivors

- **Support the National Survivor Network**, in which survivors have banded together to advocate for the policies they believe will be effective. They have survivors who speak publicly; be prepared to pay an honorarium as you would for any other guest speaker. <https://nationalsurvivornetwork.org>

- Make sure that anti-trafficking campaigns you join are **led by survivors** and/or trusted experts in human trafficking. Be cautious of organizations using the language of abolition or targeting all people involved in sex work.

## Support LGBTQ Youth

- LGBT youth are especially vulnerable to being trafficked; more than 30% of trafficked people that the Urban Justice Center's Sex Workers Project encounters experienced LGBT discrimination in their families.
- **Support shelter beds for homeless youth** and other direct services for teenagers at risk.

## Be an informed consumer

- **Learn about the supply chain.** [www.knowthechain.org](http://www.knowthechain.org) has a database of over 5,000 companies' statements about their anti-trafficking efforts, if any. Shop at and invest in businesses with clear guidelines backed by third-party, ongoing, on-the-ground monitoring.
- **Buy Fair Trade chocolate**, which has made inroads against child slavery in the cacao industry. Other industries, such as coffee, have not had documented impacts from Fair Trade — and the effectiveness in chocolate has also come under scrutiny recently. Keep in mind that organic and Fair Trade are not the same, though organic farms may be healthier environments for farmworkers. So that we can celebrate Passover in sweetness, and without the bitterness of exploitation, T'ruah offers Fair Trade, kosher for Passover chocolate through a partnership with Equal Exchange: <http://shop.equalexchange.coop/pesach>
- **Memorize the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline: 1-888-3737-888.** Text: "BeFree" (233733). Call 24/7 if you suspect you've discovered a case of trafficking. The hotline is set up to assist survivors and victims, so it cannot provide general information, but the organization Polaris, which runs the hotline, has excellent online resources.
- **Let your elected representatives know this is a priority for you.** Hearing from constituents can help representatives learn about the issue and become motivated to work on it.

## Introduction to the Expanded Edition

Since 2009, T'ruah has been a leader in the Jewish community in the effort to end human trafficking — also known as forced labor and modern-day slavery. Our work has included partnering with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) to support the most effective anti-slavery program in U.S. agriculture; serving as a founding member of the Worker-driven Social Responsibility Network; advocating for federal protections and financial support for survivors of trafficking; and educating the Jewish community about how to fight slavery and trafficking in our own communities.

The first edition of this haggadah, published in 2015, helped to increase awareness and inspire reflection and action by the Jewish community on this crucial issue.

2020 calls for all that and more.

Human trafficking, at its core, is a crime of exploitation and control. Therefore, it can offer a lens — or perhaps a mirror — for viewing the other pressing issues of our day: immigration, racism, class struggle, and more. All of these injustices begin with the failure to see other human beings as creations in the image of God, who deserve to be treated with the utmost dignity. If we see low-wage, primarily immigrant workers only as a source of labor, we will continue to live in a society in which human trafficking is prevalent.

It is crucial for me to note that human trafficking does not require any movement across a border. American citizens — including white, middle-class men and women — can be and regularly are trafficked in their very hometowns. We cannot lose sight of that or fall into the assumption that trafficking only concerns immigrants and poor people of color.

That being said, the people most vulnerable to trafficking are often immigrants and are often people of color. This haggadah focuses on their story and how it is part of our larger American story; thus, to the original title *The Other Side of the Sea* we have added *The Other Side of the River*. The expanded edition pays increased attention to immigration, particularly as it touches labor rights and worker exploitation. Immigration hawks like to claim that we must “secure” our southern border in order to prevent human trafficking. This claim reveals a poor understanding or willful ignorance of the issue: The militarization and closure of the border makes trafficking more likely, not less.

## Acknowledgements

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Cover artwork: "Ocean in a Drop," by Margeaux Gray. Margeaux's story and reflection on this painting can be found on page 61. Photograph of Rio Grande Scenery at Big Bend National Park, Texas, from Goodfreephotos.com.

Thank you to the many contributors whose commentaries fill these pages.

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Graphic design by Shira Evergreen of [www.shirari.com](http://www.shirari.com).

## Partner Organizations

Rely on organizations that are part of Freedom Network or ATEST, the Alliance To End Slavery and Trafficking. Follow them on social media, particularly ones near you.

### Examples include:

ATEST: @ATEST

Coalition of Immokalee Workers (based in Florida): @CIW, @Allianceforfairfood

Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (based in LA): @CASTLA

Damayan Migrants (based in NYC): @DamayanMigrants

Freedom Network: @FreedomNetUSA

Free the Slaves: @freetheslaves

Global Freedom Center: @GlbFreedomCtr

National Domestic Workers Alliance: @domesticworkers

Polaris Project: @Polaris\_Project

Urban Justice Center's Sex Workers Project: @UJCSexWorkers

## Appendix: Human Trafficking 101

Trafficking occurs when workers are exploited through force, fraud, or coercion. There does not have to be any movement across borders for an act to qualify as trafficking; trafficking is primarily a crime of control.

Trafficking is the extreme endpoint of a spectrum of labor abuses, which includes wage theft, unpredictable working hours, unsafe working conditions, and others. The system of values and policies that does not guarantee paid parental or sick leave and enables many Americans to pay domestic workers off the books, when taken to its extreme, enables trafficking.

"Human trafficking" is a human rights-based approach to this issue, with which

T'ruah aligns. It minimizes the distinction between labor and sex trafficking, viewing it as artificial, since sex-work is a form of labor and many people who are trafficked for labor also suffer sexual assault. This approach views the distinction as playing into sexist and evangelical tropes which have been used to direct funding and attention to just one sector of a broad trafficking problem. Nevertheless, the distinction is built into federal law (the Trafficking Victims Protection Act) and international research, so it cannot be fully ignored.

There are different opinions within the anti-trafficking community on whether a person might voluntarily sell their body for sex. Our religious ideals lead us to envision a world in which sexual relations are sacred,



and in which nobody enters commercial sex out of economic need. At the same time, in today's world there may be people for whom commercial sex might be the best of their limited options.

Trafficking is less prevalent in the United States than in other parts of the world, but we consume many goods that have been produced abroad through forced labor. These include chocolate, sugar, fruits and vegetables, cars, coffee, clothing, and electronics. That is why supply-chain activism, which works on transparency and enforceable policies that reduce exploitation, is so important.

## By the Numbers

The most recent estimate of global human trafficking by the International Labor Organization (ILO), from 2017, totaled 24.9 million people.<sup>27</sup> Of these, about 16 million were in forced labor, with women slightly outnumbering men 4:3. About 4.8 million suffered sex trafficking, including 29,000 men. (The data set did not specify how trans people were counted.) The remainder were held in state-imposed forced labor. Children experience both forced labor and sex trafficking, at roughly equal rates (18 percent and 21 percent of the total, respectively).

In the United States, the Polaris Project, which operates the National Trafficking Hotline, identified almost 11,000 trafficking cases in 2018, occurring in every state and D.C.<sup>28</sup> This number has increased every year since the Hotline was established.

According to a 2014 ILO study, human trafficking produces annual profits of \$150 billion worldwide, a threefold increase from their prior estimate. Two-thirds of the profit was attributed to sex trafficking, even though numerically labor trafficking is more prevalent.<sup>29</sup>

Eight reasons forced labor still exists today:

1. Global poverty
2. Migration
3. Turmoil that leaves children orphaned or abandoned
4. Demand for cheap goods and high profits
5. Flawed visa policies
6. Corruption in law enforcement and government
7. The low status of women
8. Discrimination against LGBTQ people, particularly children

An average slave in the American South in 1850 cost the equivalent of \$40,000 in modern dollars; today a slave costs an average, worldwide, of \$90.<sup>26</sup>

## Order of the Seder

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.freetheslaves.net/page.aspx?pid=301>

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_575479.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/states>

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_243201/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_243201/lang--en/index.htm)

# THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER, THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SEA



**EXPANDED EDITION**

## About T'ruah

T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights brings a rabbinic voice to the most pressing human rights concerns of our time.

We mobilize over 2,000 rabbis and cantors, along with our communities, to bring the wisdom of the Jewish tradition and the power of the Jewish community to the sacred work of protecting the human rights and dignity of all people in the United States and Canada, and in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

Since 2009, T'ruah has been the leading Jewish organization fighting labor trafficking, and serves as the primary Jewish ally to the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.



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