



The Temple Beth El Passover Supplement 5773~2013

FOR YOUR SEDER

Each year, our clergy provide thoughtful and timely words to supplement seders at home and personal reflection and observance during this season of our freedom.

The Olive on the Seder Plate

By Rabbi Judy Schindler

The olive on our seder table reflects the peace that we pray will come to Israel and Palestine.



From the time of the dove of Genesis that came back with an olive branch in its mouth marking the storm's end, the olive branch has been a symbol of peace. Olive trees grow

in both the Palestine and Israel and have deep roots of meaning. For Jews, the pure beaten olive oil lit the menorah that brightened our ancient Temple. For Palestinians, olive trees reflect prosperity and happiness – they are a key to their livelihood. May next year in Jerusalem, in Israel and in Palestine be filled with shared olive tree plantings, olive harvests, and peace.

The Plague of Gun Violence

By Rabbi Judy Schindler

Dam – blood.

Chosech – Darkness.

Makat B'chorot – death of the firstborn.

A movie theater in Aurora, Ohio

A Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin

An elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut...

Our country has experienced an epidemic that has stolen countless children from parents

And parents from children

On each day on average in our country, thirty

people are killed by guns, two hundred are

wounded.

“Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor,” Leviticus 19 teaches.

Our movement calls for action that will turn this tragic tide and petition for change so that we can shelter our children and safeguard our future. May our activism bring light and our actions sustain life.



Ha Lachma Anya – The Bread of Affliction

By Cantor Mary
Thomas

*Halachma, halachma
anya* - This bread is the

bread of affliction. It is meant to remind us of the past of our people, unable to luxuriate in the rising of dough, the yeasty perfection of a crusty loaf of bread. The tactile experience of ingesting and digesting matzah binds us to our ancestors and to the memories of our communal past. We feel it in our gut. But it is also meant to serve as a call to action, a call to do better. Tying together life-sustaining food with affliction brings to mind many profoundly Jewish ethical questions for today.

We are *shomrei adamah*, protectors of the earth. Do our food choices help our earth or cause further damage?

We are called to *bal tashchit*, to not be wasteful. How many leftovers are cast aside; how many single use containers have we introduced to landfills?

We must not stand by *tza'ar ba'alei chayim*, the suffering of living creatures. Where does our meat come from? Were the animals we eat (if we eat animals) treated with kindness and slaughtered with care?

We must not *ta'ashok et rei-acha*, withhold fair wages to those who have labored on our behalf. Do those who harvest, process, package, and deliver our food earn fair wages?

We are all created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in God's very own image. How do we care for our bodies, these gifts that house the soul? Do we choose foods for ourselves and our families that nourish and nurture, or do our choices further our risk for discomfort and disease?

Waiting for Elijah

By Rabbi Judy Schindler

Elijah's empty chair marks every bris.

In protest of Elijah's ancient despair, our children will know Judaism.

Yet will they know him?

As the havdalah candle is extinguished with the goodbye kiss of Shabbat,
we sing Elijah's name.

Will he bring about a time when the world's pain will perish?

We send our youth to open the Seder door to see if he has come.
Will his fifth cup marking a messianic age ever be sipped?

Prophet, zealot, hope, herald of a better future.

We can wait as we have done since we were young. Or we can act - not just on this night but on all nights.

L'shanah Haba'ah

– Next Year

Adapted by Rabbi Jonathan Freirich from Rabbis Organizing Rabbis

This year we are still here – next year in the Land of Israel.

This year we are still slaves – next year free people.

This year undocumented immigrants still live in fear in the shadows of a broken immigration system.

Next year may over 11 million aspiring Americans step into the light of freedom and walk the path towards citizenship.

This year, our eyes are still clouded by the plague of darkness, as the Gerer Rav taught: "The darkness in Egypt was so dense that people could not see one another. This was not a physical darkness, but a spiritual darkness in which people

were unable to see the plight and pain of their neighbors." Next year, may we replace darkness with light and truly see our neighbors. When we see them, may we see ourselves and our ancestors, longing to live here, in the *goldene medina*, the golden country, longing to be free.

In so sympathizing may we act to create a land that continues to welcome immigrants, as all of us hail from elsewhere.



[Rabbis Organizing Rabbis is a joint project of the Reform Movement, the Justice and Peace Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Religious Action Center, and the Union for Reform Judaism's Just Congregations]