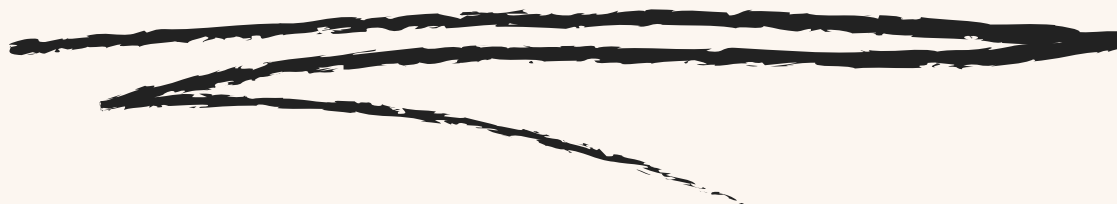


EARTH & JUSTICE FREEDOM-SEDER



MULTIFAITH PASSOVER FREEDOM SEDER
FOR STREET AND TABLE,
CHALLENGING THE CARBON PHARAOHS
TO END CLIMATE PLAGUES AND
GROW ECO/SOCIAL JUSTICE



THE SHALOM CENTER
2022 | 5782

INTRODUCTION

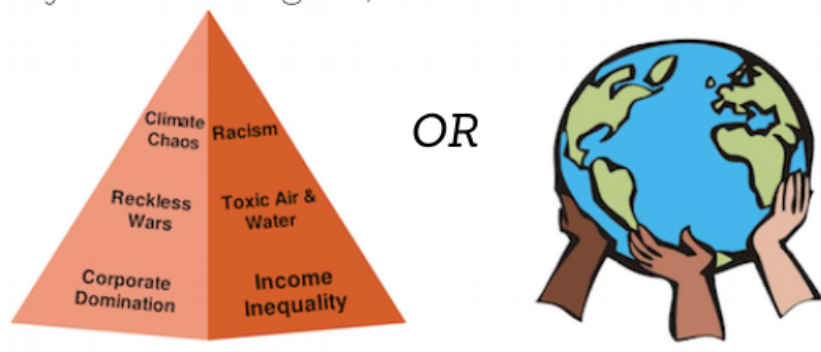
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

53 years ago this Passover, the first Freedom Seder was written by Rabbi Arthur Waskow, organized by Jews for Urban Justice, and led by Rev. Channing Phillips and Rabbi Balfour Brickner. One year after the murder of Dr. King, there was no way to honor Passover other than through a contemporary liberation seder in the mind of Rabbi Waskow. The 1969 Freedom Seder Haggadah was the first time that a Passover seder was adapted to speak on contemporary liberation movements. Since then, Freedom Seders have happened all across the country and world, inspired by that first one. This haggadah is in that legacy, the grandchild of that first Freedom Seder, now oriented towards a new, but connected, liberation movement. That of people and planet.



CONFRONT THE CARBON PHARAOHS / CHASE BANK. ETC.

Pyramids & Plagues, or Earth & Social Justice?



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This haggadah is meant first of all for use in public, nonviolent demonstrations, demanding that the Carbon Pharaohs stop lending money to any aspect of the Fossil Fuel industry. Some groups might gather outside a bank; others might enter the bank briefly to leave a sheet of matzah and a letter with bank tellers; still others might create a clear and committed nonviolent presence inside the bank. You will make your own decisions on street use.

Secondarily, this haggadah can be used in a home or community Seder during Pesach.

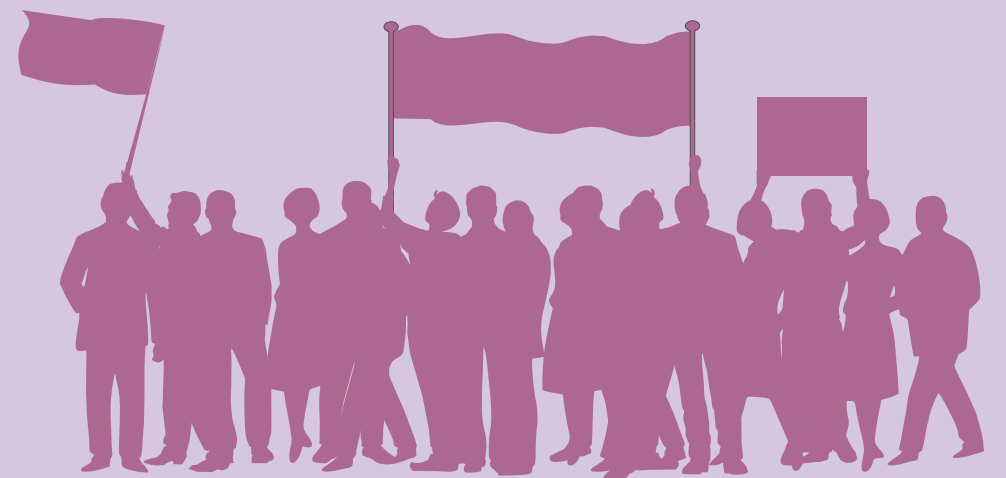
Local communities are invited to modify this guide in accord with local conditions. Include one of the rituals or songs in your demonstration, or around your table, or choose them all. This is a resource for you.

Some of the items you may need to gather for this re-enacting of the Passover story might include: bull horns or other public-address system; water bottles; song sheets; copies of this guide; spring greens: palm branches, parsley, or - especially - green branches of plants native to their region, harvested with care; "bitter herbs" - especially horseradish; sheets of matzah, unleavened bread; charoset; reusable dishes and utensils; grape juice; and a globe or a picture or flag of Earth shown from Space. Be creative, bold, and rooted in love for earth and justice!

CURRENT CONTEXT

Every year, the top US banks and money managers lend hundreds of billions of dollars to the fossil fuel industry to help finance projects like fracking, oil drilling, and pipeline laying. These endeavors are so costly that the fossil fuel companies could not continue with business as usual if the financial institutions that fund them withdrew their support. In essence, these institutions are funding the proliferation of life-killing energies. In this haggadah and on the streets, we're demanding that they fund renewable, life-giving energies instead. This Passover, we're asking these "Corporate Carbon Pharaohs" to let all people and our planet go free.

As reaffirmed by all of the latest science, climate is the most pressing issue of our time. And its root cause - a hardened heart and desire for power - is at the core of so much tragedy in the world today. This haggadah is one offering meant to help heal our divisions and inspire greater action as we travel together towards the Promised Land.



OLD VISION & NEW PURPOSE

We begin the Seder with one of the great liberation songs connected with the ancient story of the liberation of ancient Israelites enslaved by an ancient Pharaoh. The song was variously known as "When Israel was in Egypt's land/ Let My People Go!" and "Go Down Moses." "Go Down Moses" itself drew on an old story for new closely related purposes. We are doing that again, and that itself is a crystal of what we do with this whole Earth and Justice Freedom-Seder.

The story itself was repurposed in the song when it emerged from an enslaved Black community in the 1850s in what had become the United States. It told the ancient story with a new intention: to challenge embedded racist oppression by a modern country with not only enslavement but a broader racism in its practice and its Constitution.

Yet that nation prided itself on a religious story that spoke against oppression. Indeed, the earliest printed version of the song contained one verse that explicitly spoke beyond the story it celebrated: "Let us all from bondage flee/ Let my people go;/ And let us all in Christ be free,/ Let my people go." In the original story, of course, Christianity did not yet exist; yet most of the Black community had learned the story from Christian sources, and both inwardly and outwardly, felt it important to honor that context.

Today we honor - indeed, celebrate! - the song precisely because it turns an old vision of liberation to new purposes of liberation. And that is what we seek to do with the song today.

To honor the Black struggle, we begin with a few verses of the original version of the song. Then we turn to its uses of "Egypt" and "Israel" - two named communities that exist today with those same names but very different identities. We do not wish "Egypt" to be understood in our lives as the enemy, nor "Israel" as today a band of resistant and runaway slaves. And we do wish the physical realities to encompass other versions of oppression - militarism, racism, sexism, religious bigotry, and materialism - including its most destructive version, greed so intense that it seeks to burn up all Earth to increase its own Hyper-Wealth. So we have used English translations of the ancient Hebrew words for "Egypt" - Mitzrayyim, Narrow Land-- and for "Israel," Yisrael, Godwrestlers, to mean their spiritual realities.

And then we bring new verses to be sung to the same melody, again bringing new meaning to the richness of the old outcry. What was a profound outcry against racism we affirm and add a profound outcry against ecocide - the killing of our planet. We are especially moved to absorb in the new verses the meaning as well as the melody of the old. For in our generation, tormenting Earth and forcing it/ her/ them to erupt into new plagues is wrapped into oppressive racism on a global scale.

All these oppressions spring from the same poison-root. They have become more intense, more nasty, because they are being challenged by a new wave of democracy and ecology - every community, every species, counts. This Seder is part of that wave.

LET MY PEOPLE GO!

WHEN ISRAEL WAS IN EGYPT'S LAND

When Israel was in
Egypt's land,
Let My people go;
Oppressed so hard they
could not stand,
Let My people go.
Go down, Moses, way
down in Egypt's land;
Tell old Pharaoh, to
let My people go!

No more shall they in
bondage toil,
Let My people go;
Let them come out of
Egypt's spoil,
Let My people go.
Go down, Moses, way
down in Egypt's land;
Tell old Pharaoh, to
let My people go.

As the Godwrestlers
stood by the water-
side,
Let My people go;
At God's command it
did divide, Let My
people go.
Go down, Moses, way
down in the Narrow
Land,
Tell old Pharaoh: Let
My people go!

When they had reached
the other shore, Let
My people go;
They sang the song of
freedom o'er, Let My
people go.
Go down, Moses, way
down in the Narrow
Land,
Tell old Pharaoh: Let
My people go!

New Pharaohs rise to
scorch the Earth,
Let all My peoples go;
Big Coal and Oil parch
new birth,
Let all My peoples go;
Rise up, Peoples, Rise
up in every land,
Tell ALL Pharaohs: Let
My creation grow!

For the Breath of Life
still offers hope,
Let all My peoples go;
With sun and wind they
well can cope -
Let all My peoples go;
Rise up, People, Rise
up in every land,
Tell ALL Pharaohs: Let
My creation grow!

Oh, set all Earth from
bondage free,
Let all My peoples go;
Let our Making pause
to Be,
Let air and water
flow.

Rise Up, Peoples, rise
UP in every land,
Tell ALL Pharaohs: Let
My creation grow!



THE HEARTS OF ELDERS & YOUTH

A group of youth and a group of elders come forward and face each other in an act of solidarity and unity. Connecting with one another from generation to generation, l'dor va'dor, they recite in choruses, as shown here, a passage from the Prophet Malachi. The last of the ancient Hebrew Prophets, speaking 2500 years ago, Malachi's message has been remembered through the millennia and seems especially relevant in our own generation. This passage is traditionally chanted as the haftarah on the Shabbat just before the beginning of Pesach, known as Shabbat haGadol, the Great Shabbat.

MALACHI 3:19-24

[ALL TOGETHER]

"Here! The day is coming
That will flame like a
furnace, "
Says the Infinite YHWH /
Yahhhh,
The Interbreath of Life -
when all the arrogant, all
evil-doers,
root and branch,
will like straw be burnt to
ashes.
Yet for those of you who
revere My Name,
Yes! My Name, Yahhhh, the
Interbreath of Life!
a solar sun of justice will
arise
with healing in its wings,
its winds, its rays. . . ."

[ELDERS RECITE OR CHANT]

"Here! Before the coming
of the great and awesome day
of YHWH/ the Breath of Life,
I will send you the Prophet
Elijah
to turn the hearts of elders to
the youth
[Elders pause and youth pick
up:]
and the hearts of youth to the
elders,
lest I come and smite the earth
with utter destruction."

[YOUTH CONTINUE]

"Here! We ourselves are coming
Before the terrible day
of smiting Earth -

[ALL CHANT TOGETHER]

For we ourselves shall turn
the hearts
Of elders and youth to each
other
So that this day of smiting
Does not fall upon us."

[YOUTH CONTINUE]

"Here! We ourselves are coming
Before the terrible day
of smiting Earth -

[ALL CHANT TOGETHER]

For we ourselves shall turn
the hearts
Of elders and youth to each
other
So that this day of smiting
Does not fall upon us."

All chant together:

No Earth, no Justice!
No Justice, no Earth!
[Repeat]

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

We draw here on a memory that has been preserved by Christian tradition, of an ancient religio-political demonstration by a number of Jews led by Rabbi Jesus on the Sunday before Passover. It has become encoded in Christian practice as Palm Sunday, the beginning of a week of spiritual turmoil in Jerusalem that includes the Pesach Seder known among Christians as the Last Supper. We see the waving of Palm Branches as connected both with the Spring aspect of Passover, embodied in eating greens at the Seder, and with the often-renewed tradition of Passover as a time for challenging oppressive Empires - Rome, in this case.

[LIFT UP PALM BRANCHES AND OTHER GREENS]

"On the Sunday just before Passover, the people gathered at the Mount of Olives to follow Rabbi Jesus into the Holy City. They waved the green palm branches of new life sprouting in the spring. They chanted a Psalm:

"Hodu Yah ki tov, ki l'olam chasdo. All thanks be to the Breath of Life, for It gives Long-Lasting Love.' Jesus wept as he looked into the city, saying, 'If only you had known, on this great day, the path that leads to justice, life, and peace. But no, it was hidden from your sight.' They paused at the Holy Temple, where many of our people sent our money as an offering from afar.

Today we add our own lament: "The money we sent as sacred offering to make possible homes for the poor, food for the hungry, health for the sick, you turned to scorching Earth, to making plagues of fire, flood, and famine. Torah says, 'My House shall be a place of prayer for all peoples,' but you have made it a den of thievery and arson!!"

[CHANT]

"Move Our Money, Prosper Our People, Protect Our Planet!"

The officials were distressed by the ancient chant of psalms: "Rabbi," they said, "Hush your followers!" But Jesus said, "If our community were silent, the very stones would speak!"

[Luke 19:37-46]

Today, the very stones are speaking: The glaciers are weeping as they melt. The coral reefs are groaning as they die. The West Virginia mountains are shrieking as their tops are chopped to pieces for the sale of cheaper coal. When the stones speak in agony, we must speak in vigor, in determination, in resistance.

[Midrash by Rabbi Arthur Waskow]

[CHANT]

"Move Our Money, Prosper Our People, Protect Our Planet!"

[ONE RECITES, OR SEVERAL SHARE]

It is time for us to share Earth's pain. Earth lives through the Great Interbreathing as we and other animals breathe in the oxygen that the plants breathe out, and the plants breathe in the CO2 that the animals breathe out. But the Carbon Pharaohs produce more CO2 than all the plants of Earth can transmute into Oxygen. The CO2 builds up, it heats all Earth, it turns our oceans into acid. The Breath of Life is choking.



THE LESSONS OF BITTERNESS

WHO CAN'T BREATHE?

I Can't Breathe

Again and again,
With gun or choke-hold.
Some police have stolen the breath
Of some Black Americans.
The police are not merely police
For they hold a national authority
To use violence on behalf of the nation:
To serve us all, protect us all.
When some of them subjugate Black people
They implicate us all,
They make us all Subjugators
And they subjugate us all.
But their misdeeds have stirred
A great Uprising against racism.
We will let no ruler pretend
The protest is the danger.

We Can't Breathe

All humanity is choking
From a virus that invades our lungs
We have left no space for other species
And the virus leaps into our lives.
If our rulers minimize the danger
It becomes still worse
Choking our societies,
our jobs, our businesses,
Our democracy. Our lives.

Earth Can't Breathe

All life on Earth depends on
Interbreathing.
We breathe in what the trees breathe out;
The trees breathe in what we breathe out.
Our Interbreathing is the Breath that
keeps all Earth alive.
Our Interbreathing is the very Name we
call You,
For YyyyHhhhWwwwHhhh
Is the still small voice of simply
breathing.
But the Flood of CO2
That the Pharaohs drench upon us
That we call the "climate crisis"
Chokes our breathing.
Chokes Your Breathing,
All Earth is scorched by burning fossil
fuels
And Carbon Pharaohs burn their way to
faster wealth.
Earth can't breathe and Your Name rattles
in our throats.

-Rabbi Arthur Waskow

[ALL SAY TOGETHER]

Blessed is the Breath of Life that grows the root of bitterness and teaches us
when we need to be conscious of the bitterness that takes our breath away.

[PEOPLE EAT A CHUNK OF THE BITTER HERB]

THE 10 PLAGUES

[ALL CHANT THE PLAGUES IN A SING-SONG VOICE, DRIPPING GRAPE JUICE ON THE GROUND OR FLOOR OR PAVEMENT WITH EACH PLAGUE]

1. Wildfires
2. Heat Strokes
3. Melted Arctic and Antarctic Ice
4. Disappearing beaches, disappearing waterfronts
5. Flooded subways, flooded cities
6. Acidic Oceans
7. Asthma and cancer epidemics in targeted neighborhoods
8. Darkness so deep and thick that no one could see or touch her neighbor
9. Mass Extinctions of plants and animals
10. Death of humans

These plagues cannot be blamed on Earth and Ocean. As the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, heard and taught [Quran 30:41] "Corruption has appeared on the land and in the sea because of what humans have wrought. This is in order that we have given them a taste of the consequences of their misdeeds that perhaps they will turn to the path of right guidance.

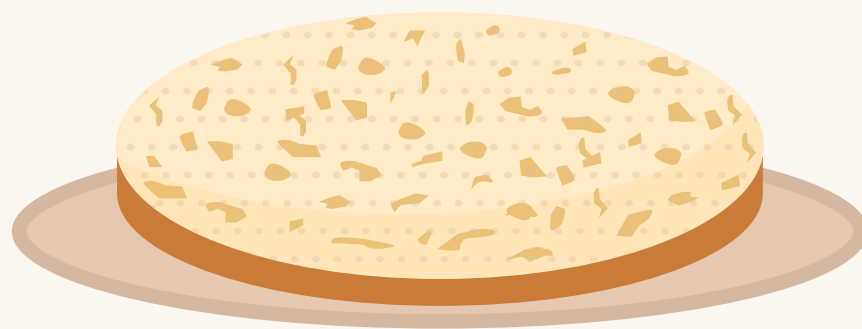
FREEDOM TOGETHER

BREATH RENEWED: PRAYER & RESPONSE

You Who are the Breath of Life,
At Sinai You taught us,
You shall not take My Name with an empty heart.
You shall not breathe My Name with empty Spirit.
Every breath we take
is Itself Your Name,
Part of that great Breath that is the Holy One.
You Who are the Breath of Life,
Heal us to breathe.

I Speak
I Who free you from choking
In the Tight and Narrow Place:
I Who send you Broad Spaces
Where My breath,
My wind, blows free:
No one shall rob you of My Name,
My Breath, My Holy Spirit.
Embody Me!

MATZAH



[ALL RECITE]

"Now they baked the dough which they had brought out of Narrowland into matzah cakes, for it had not fermented, for they had been driven out of Narrowland, and were not able to linger." [Exodus 12:30]

"When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered. We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. There is such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency." Martin Luther King, April 4, 1967, exactly one year before the Prophet Martin of nonviolence was murdered.

We pause in silence to remember those whose voices were silenced by violence because they spoke out for justice, for peace, for love, for Earth.

[BREAK THE SHEET OF MATZAH AND ALL SAY]

If we eat the matzah alone, it remains the bread of affliction. If we break the matzah and share it, it becomes the bread of freedom. Blessed is the Breath of Life that grows matzah from Earth and teaches us to share it.

[OFFER PART OF THE MATZAH TO SOMEONE ELSE TO EAT. EAT THE MATZAH.]

SING!

DAYENU

Natan lanu et-HaTorah, natan lanu et ha-Torah, Dayenu!
Daay daay dayenu, daay daay dayenu, daay daay dayenu,
dayenu dayenu!

Enough for us would be the Torah, Yes! Enough would be
the Torah, Dayenu! Daay daay dayenu, daay daay dayenu,
daay daay dayenu, dayenu dayenu!

Natan lanu et-HaShabbat, natan lanu et ha-Shabbat,
Dayenu! Daay daay dayenu, daay daay dayenu, daay daay
dayenu, dayenu dayenu!

Enough for us would be the Shabbos, Yes! Enough would be
the Shabbos, Dayenu! Daay daay dayenu, daay daay dayenu,
daay daay dayenu, dayenu dayenu!

Natan lanu et ha-Shmitah, Natan lanu et ha-Shmitah,
Dayenu! Daay daay dayenu, daay daay dayenu, daay daay
dayenu, dayenu!

Enough for us is Rest with Earth, To rest for a Year with
Mother Earth, Dayenu! Daay daay dayenu, daay daay dayenu,
daay daay dayenu, dayenu dayenu

WE HAVE THE WHOLE WORLD IN OUR HANDS

[WE LIFT UP AN INFLATABLE GLOBE OR A PHOTO OF EARTH FROM
SPACE. SHARE IT FROM HAND TO HAND, AND SING]

We have the whole world in our hands,
We have the frogs and the forests in our hands,
We have the deer and the dogwoods in our hands,
We have the whole world in our hands.

We have the whole world in our hands,
We have whales and weevils in our hands,
We have our children and their children in our hands,
We have the whole word in our hands.

[IF THE CROWD WISHES, ADD VERSES AD LIB]



THE BLESSINGS OF REDEMPTION

There are many "recipes" for charoset, all found in the Song of Songs - which mentions raisins and quinces, nuts and wine, a profusion of spices. We are taught to chant this Song Beyond All Songs during the week of Pesach, for the Song beckons us to the vision of an achievable future for which Passover is one working model. A future not absolutely perfect but one in which the ethic of love and equal dignity for all human beings with each other and between Earth and human earthlings has become written in almost every heart. The Garden of Eden for a loving, grown-up human race in a loving, peaceful Earth. With holy charoset in our bowls and sacred grape juice in our cups, we turn toward the Blessings that we intend to create in the world.

CHAROSET

[ALL RECITE ALOUD]

Blessed be the Breath of Life whose Charoset embodies the Song, and whose Song embodies Pesach.



10 BLESSINGS

[ALL RECITE TOGETHER. AFTER EACH BLESSING, DRINK A SIP OF GRAPE JUICE AND EAT A SPOONFUL OF CHAROSET]

1. Many solar co-ops in every neighborhood
2. Universal access to pure drinking water
3. Interurban light rail networks
4. Reforestation everywhere
5. Restorative agriculture and urban farms
6. Energy-conserving retrofits for homes and businesses
7. Restoration for all endangered species
8. Pollinator meadows
9. Free, quality health care for all
10. Ecological worldview everywhere

SONG OF SONGS & ISAIAH

[RECITE ALOUD]

There are moments when our traditions look beyond the world as we have known it, and imagine transformation - hard to achieve, but possible. We cannot end without reawakening ourselves to those glimmers of deep change. We begin with fragments of holy word and melody.

[SING CHANTS AND RECITE POEMS ALOUD]

Kamti ani liftoach l'dodi (x3)
I will open to you, my beloved;
Will you open, open to me?

[Song of Songs 5:5, Chant and translation by Rabbi Shefa Gold]

Vayasem midbara k'Eyden (x3)
Va'adbara k'gan Yah
You turn the wilderness to Eden (x3)
And wasteland becomes a Tree of Life.

[Isaiah 51:3, chant by Rabbi Shefa Gold, chantable translation by Rabbi Arthur Waskow]

In sandy earth or deep
In valley soil
I grow, a wildflower thriving
On your love.

Narcissus in the brambles,
Brightest flower,
I choose you from all others
For my love

Sweet fruit tree growing wild
Within the thickets --
I blossom in your shade
And taste your love.

[Song of Songs 2:1-3, translation by Marcia Falk]

An enclosed garden is my sister, my
bride,
a hidden well, a sealed spring.

Your branches are an orchard
of pomegranate trees heavy with
fruit.
flowering henna and spikenard,
spikenard and saffron, cane and
cinnamon,
with every tree of frankincense,
myrrh and aloes,
all the rare spices.

You are a fountain in the garden.
a well of living waters,
that stream from Lebanon.

[Song of Songs 4:12-15, translation by Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch]

THE ULTIMATE POSSIBILITY

We learn from the Quran perhaps the ultimate possibility, the hardest to make real: that even the worst of sinners can repent, even at the last moment, and be received into a companionship of love and justice. For the Quran hears and teaches that the oppressive Pharaoh, as the Sea of Reeds is about to close above his head, calls out, "I believe there is no God but the One in Whom the Godwrestling folk believe, and I am of those who submit to God." And the Holy One responds: "Before you were among the evil-doers. But now! We will save you in your body, so that you may be a sign for those who come after you."

[Quran 10:91-92]

The notion that repentance for terrible sins might happen only at the point of death and still be acceptable is indeed so troubling for many Muslim scholars that they interpret the text in other ways. But some [e.g. Dr. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana of American University in Freedom Journeys, pp. 210-216] believe the passage prophetically looks to a world in which repentance is utterly transformational.

In our present planetary crisis, this assertion of hope says to us all: If the Carbon Pharaohs make a true repentance, truly transform their lives and businesses, pharaohs will they be no longer - and all of us, all life-forms, can share in Earth's abundance.

NEXT YEAR

[POUR GRAPE JUICE FROM CUP TO CUP SO EVERYONE HAS A
CUP MADE UP OF JUICE FROM MANY CUPS. RECITE TOGETHER]

Next year amongst Earth and human earthlings united by love and justice.

I'LL SING PRAISES

[SING]

Of Love and Justice I will sing: To you, Breath of Life, I'll sing praises. (x2)
[Psalm 101, translation and music by Rabbi David Shneyer]

LET CREATION GROW!

New Pharaohs rise to scorch the Earth,
Let all peoples go;
Big Coal and Oil parch new birth,
Let all peoples go;
Rise up, Peoples, Rise up in every land,
Tell ALL Pharaohs: Let My creation go!

For the Breath of Life still offers hope,
Let all My peoples go;
With sun and wind they well can cope -
Let all My peoples go;
Rise up, People, Rise up in every land,
Tell ALL Pharaohs: Let My creation go!

Oh, set all Earth from bondage free,
Let all peoples go;
Let our Making pause to Be,
Let air and water flow.
Rise Up, Peoples, rise UP in every land,
Tell ALL Pharaohs: Let creation go!

Earth & Justice Freedom-Seder

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We encourage you to share this Haggadah - this Telling - for the sake of Earth and Humankind. To help us improve the effectiveness of this healing work, we invite you to write Office@theshalomcenter.org with a very brief description of how you will use it. If you feel moved to help this work continue, please feel free to click on the Contribute banner at theshalomcenter.org.

· Rabbi Arthur Waskow, director of The Shalom Center and author of the original Freedom Seder, wove together voices from varied times and traditions for this Seder.

Among contributing commentators were Rabbi Nate DeGroot, National Organizer for The Shalom Center; members of The Shalom Center Board, especially Rabbi Ellen Bernstein and Rabbi Mordechai Liebling, and Senior Fellow Robert J. Brand; Adam Berman, Chief Strategy Advisor for Hazon; Rev. Ched Myers of Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministry; Sahar Alsahlani of the Parliament of the World's Religions; Jacqueline Patterson, Founder and Executive Director of the Chisholm Legacy Project and former Senior Director of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program; and Imam Saffet Catovic of the Islamic Society of North America.

Please share comments and suggestions with
AWaskow@theshalomcenter.org.

