

THE **safe** FOUNDATION



happy  
**Passover**

**A Recovery Haggadah**

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נִרְצָה

# Kadesh



## Blessing over the first cup

On all Jewish holidays, including the weekly Sabbath, Jews mark the holy time by saying a blessing over the fruit of the vine, called *Kiddush*. The *Kiddush* for Passover thanks God for giving us holidays of joy and celebration. This holiday, in particular, is called, “The Time of our Freedom.”

It is permissible, indeed essential, for those of us in recovery to make this blessing over grape juice, instead of wine.

The blessing is recited over the drink, but it is not the juice we are sanctifying. The juice is a symbol of the sanctity and sweetness of this moment. We will leave behind the moments from our day that are still occupying us and bring ourselves fully to this moment.

The second part of Kiddush refers to our chosen-ness. Those of us in recovery understand the mystery of being chosen.

Things to think about:

**Why are we in recovery?**

**What makes us special that we have been granted the grace of this gift; this program of life, the Torah, the Steps, the whole concept of Recovery?**

The answer is a mystery! Hashem simply said, “Enough! You’ve suffered enough!”

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.**

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has granted us life and sustenance and permitted us to reach this season.*

**What are sanctified times for your recovery?**

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**What rituals do you use to sanctify time for your recovery and/or Judaism?**

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# Urchatz

## Ritual Hand-Washing



We clean our hands before continuing with the Seder, washing away the old to make space for the new.

Hands often represent “action” and “doing.”

הקל קול יַעֲקֹב וְהַיָּדִים יְדֵי עֵשָׂו

*The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.*

Esau’s name in hebrew is the same as the word “to do” and hands are synonymous with doing and action. Most of the actions that we take or things that we do involve our hands in some capacity.

Rabbis require each person to wash his/her hands prior to eating certain foods to remind us that we need to use our hands in holy ways and strive to take actions that bring us closer to God.

**What actions do you take for your recovery?**

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**What actions do you find resistance in taking?**

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**What actions do you take to become closer to God?**

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# Karpas

Eat a Green Vegetable



Passover always takes place in the spring and is sometimes called “the holiday of spring.” We look forward to spring and the reawakening of flowers and greenery. They have not been lost, rather buried beneath the snow, getting ready to reappear when we most need them.

So too, for the Israelites, freedom from slavery in Egypt was a rebirth.

We now eat a green vegetable, symbolizing our joy at the return of spring after a long, cold winter. We dip it twice into salt water, symbolizing the tears of our ancestors when they were slaves in Egypt.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הָאֲדָמָה

*Blessed are you, Lord our God, Master of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the earth.*

**What elements of your life do you hope to revive?**

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**In recovery, we are always striving to see ourselves as newcomers. What are ways that you keep it green?**

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**How do you remember the hardship and pain that your addiction caused you?**

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**What are other symbols of rebirth and renewal for you in recovery and Judaism?**

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# Yachatz

## Break the Middle Matzah



Matzah is both the Bread of Affliction and a symbol of freedom.  
How can it be both poor man's bread and free man's bread?

When we break the middle matzah, we are also breaking symmetry; there is a bigger half and a smaller half.

Nothing in life is symmetrical. There is a richer and a poorer half. Distribution of assets is not equal. Things are not fair.

As children, what was the response to the realization that life is not fair? We must have coped, because we survived, but we sacrificed our health in order to do so.

**We split. We broke into pieces. We hid ourselves away.**

This is how we prepared ourselves for life.

We became satisfied with the expression of only a fraction of our personalities. We existed on crumbs of humanness, hiding the greater parts of ourselves from ourselves. We had nothing to spare for growth when all we had went to feed our habits. Fewer opportunities to begin the fixing, as we chased the fix with growing desperation. We ended up developing a pathological relationship with the "bread of affliction."

The Haggadah is our qualification, our "war story."

**Why are we breaking the matzah now before beginning our "war story?"**

The splitting of the self often occurs when we are still in a pre-verbal state. The shaming and abandonment of ourselves happens when we are still babies. This is the story of what happened after everything changed in our lives. It is about how we went through really tough times, but eventually, found a way out.

There are no words to describe the event. We simply break the matzah, leaving the smaller half on our plate and wrapping the larger half away for the Afikomen.

Recovery is a lifelong process. WE must realize, actualize, and integrate the whole of ourselves. We do this by eating the Afikomen as a symbolic "last-act" of the Seder. When it is over, we will have achieved a reclamation of the "self" we abandoned.

# Yachatz

Break the Middle Matzah



## Why did we continue eating the Matzah after we left Egypt?

We are reminding ourselves of the times in early recovery when we found ourselves in painful situations, eating what seemed identical to the bread of our affliction. Only once we are in recovery can we see that we were, in fact, eating the bread of our freedom.

Matzah represents a shift in priorities. Our ancestors prioritized their escape over their bread rising.

**How did your priorities change when you started your recovery?**

**How are they changing today?**

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Breaking the matzah still serves a purpose. It always will. We may have felt broken when we reached our “rock bottom” or during the most difficult times of our addiction. Here we are now, full of purpose, just like the Afikomen!

**How did your earlier experiences serve you later in life?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story



הָאֵל לְחֶמְדָּא עֲנִיָּא

*The Bread of Slavery and Affliction*

The first Seder was conducted on the road into Babylonian exile about 2500 years ago. Our homes were wrecked, our families were torn apart, and we had been stripped of all our pride. The Jewish people were being dragged into slavery again.

**It was history repeating itself. We felt powerless.**

Our leaders ensured us that this was not a repetition of the Egyptian story. Instead, they prepared a Seder, inviting anyone who cared to join.

Our ancestors leaving Egypt acquired hope and faith. The items on the Seder plate represent how different the present is from the past.

We had no plans for a future when we were in Egypt. We now have the tools to fashion the raw material of our lives into a journey of the spirit.

We are free people. We have choices to choose and to change. We cannot be enslaved without our consent.

***For those among us who feel trapped in the present, enslaved to a substance or destructive behavior, the message is clear: We have been there and we want to share our story to help others going through the same thing.***

The invitation itself is a play on words. We have to hunger for miracles to happen in our lives. We have to want it more than anything.

You can have it if you want it.

**Do you want it?** Needing it is not enough.

**Are you ready to go to any lengths?**

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**How could I give back and help those who are still suffering?**

**How do I use my own affliction and suffering to help other people?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

מַגִּיד

מה נשׂתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות

*What makes this night different from all other nights?*

People often ask a variety of questions to people in recovery.

Why can't you just leave your past behind you?

Why can't you make a clean break and not dwell in the past?

You've stopped your habit, you're clean and sober. Why go to meetings to sit with people who are still doing the "crazy things" you no longer do?

Is it healthy to keep talking about it over and over again?

Look to the future and don't talk about the past.

Why can't you be like a normal person?

The youngest person at the table will usually be the first to ask the "Four Questions." Think of the youngest as the newcomer. Consider these questions.

## Question 1: Matzah

*Matzah is the symbol we use for the object of our obsession. Our world shrunk very small.*

**Why is our disease so all-encompassing, so all-excluding?**

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How come we can't enjoy things like other people do? Like hobbies or activities. Why did we have only "The Bread of Our Affliction?"

## Question 2: Maror

*Maror is the symbol for the bitterness and pain.*

**How come there was no pleasure left in what we were doing?**

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No amount of "acting out" could get rid of our real feelings. Everything we did to try and relieve the pain instead substituted or increased it.

# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

מַגִּיד

מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הלַיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת

*What makes this night different from all other nights?*

## Question 3: Dip Vegetables Twice

*Condiments (dipping food into food) symbolizes the relaxed attitude we adopt.*

**How do you treat yourself in your recovery program? What gentle things do you do?**

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Why do we treat ourselves so well in recovery? Why do we pay so much attention to the way we feel? Wouldn't it be more efficient to just have more discipline, more willpower, or a more structured daily routine than this gentle touch with which we treat ourselves?

## Question 4: Leaning

*Leaning symbolizes the pace at which we expect changes to occur.*

**Why is it important to take recovery slowly?**

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We usually want to rush through recovery so we can “fix our problems” faster. It is important to take it slowly and be patient with changes.

**What kind of questions are you asking? Are they focused on the problem or the solution? Do you ask questions to seek an answer for knowledge or action? Or are there times when you ask questions to ridicule, belittle, argue, or look smart?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

מִגִּיד

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ  
*We were slaves*

We were slaves! We were powerless!

It took the power of God to take us out of slavery. He took us out with a mighty hand and outstretched arm. We were so severely addicted to our own slavery and shame that we would still be hopelessly enmeshed in the sickness and slavery if God hadn't taken us out of Egypt.

Our children and us would be without recovery.

This is the nature of the disease; we must treat it by talking about it. It doesn't matter how clever or experienced we are, whether we know the Big Book by heart. We are still commanded to share with others our recovery.

The "mighty hand and outstretched arm" refers to the substance or behaviors to which we were addicted.

The **mighty hand** is the cessation of using or acting out our addictions. The most difficult step to take!

The **outstretched arm** refers to the separation and distance we put between ourselves and our addictions, including people, places, and things.

**List the people, places, and things from which you need to separate?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

מגיד

מַעֲשֵׂה חֲמֵשֶׁת רַבֵּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן-עֲזַרְיָה וְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא וְרַבִּי טַרְפוֹן

*A story about five Rabbis*

*The five Rabbis mentioned in this story were all in recovery. They sat all night talking about the Exodus and their own recovery.*

## **Rabbi Eliezer:**

“Live and Let Live,” “Don’t be too Quick to Anger,” “Stay Sober Today Before You Die,” and “Bask in the Glow of the Wise, but Beware lest You Get too Close and Burn Yourself.”

Rabbi Eliezer had trouble with these aspects of his personality. He argued with his friends, tried to impress his will upon them, stubbornly refused to accept majority rulings, rationalized his disrespect of them, and ended up excommunicated by them.

## **Rabbi Yehoshua:**

“Self-Will Run Riot, the Tendency to Misanthropy, Isolation and Depression will Kill a Person.”

## **Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria:**

“One who talks the talk without walking the walk is like a big tree with lots of leaves, but no roots. The first strong wind to blow will uproot it. He who walks the walk more than he talks the talk is like a tree with few leaves, but lots of roots. All the winds in the world won’t be able to move it from its place, but it doesn’t provide much shade.”

## **Rabbi Akiva:**

Rabbi Akiva was a former anti-Semite. His anger at religious Jews was murderous and fanatical up until he was 40 years old. The unconditional love of his wife, Rachel, restored him to sanity. The patience of his teacher, Nachum Ish-Gamzu helped Rabbi Akiva go from a belligerent ignoramus into an intellectual giant. He allowed his vision to be clouded by his desires, he made political blunders, and 24,000 of his students died of “disrespect.”

## **Rabbi Tarphon:**

Rabbi Tarphon was obsessive-compulsive and got bogged down with details. He would partake in actions that were considered dangerous, and his friends suggested he was compulsive and needed help. If he died doing these behaviors, he wouldn’t be considered a martyr, but rather an overdose.

“You aren’t responsible for the results, but you must put in the foot work. You don’t have to finish what you are doing, just don’t stop.”

It says “all that night” instead of “all night,” because the hebrew word for “that” means Him. Each Rabbi spoke about his own journey.

# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

בְּרַךְ הַמָּקוֹם

בְּרַךְ הַמָּקוֹם  
*Blessed is the Place*

We bless and thank God, but in this paragraph we refer to God as “The Place.”  
God is the Lord of the People, Places, and Things.

We bless God for being there when we need Him and giving us somewhere else  
to be instead of Egypt.

We bless God for giving us Himself instead of being under the rules of the  
Egyptians.

We bless God for giving us what we need to replace all the destructive and  
addictive things in our lives. We thank Him for giving us the Torah and for  
giving us our recovery program to live by on a daily basis. And we thank Him  
for being Him.

**For what are you thankful?**

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**What are the addictive and destructive things that you want and need to replace?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

אַרְבַּעַת בְּנֵי  
*The Four Sons*

The four sons are regarded as the primary purpose of carrying the message. These are the four personality types in and out of recovery to whom we can convey the message.

1. The clever, fiercely intellectual, too smart for his own good.
2. The one who thinks he's too wicked for it to work for him.
3. The newcomer, barely coherent, and ready.
4. The one who's still out there, who can't stop and desperately wants help.

## The Clever One

What does he say?

חָכָם  
מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר

The word “what” is used in a way that shows criticism or disapproval, similar to how Moses said, “What are we that you rebel against us?”

The Clever One is basically asking: “What’s the big deal? What are these laws that God commanded **you**?”

The use of the word “you” explains to us his real needs. He is afraid. He is like the arrogant person who walks into a meeting, reads the 12 Steps and says, “Is this all you have to do?” He thinks he is too clever for such a simple program to work in his life and believes that he can do it on his own.

The attitude of the cleverness often frustrates and infuriates us.

The Haggadah warns us to respond in a gentle way. The Hebrew word for “say” is the softest form of response, as opposed to “speak” or “tell.” Gently is the only way to carry the message. The message is that “you can’t do it on your own.” The first law of Passover requires a group; we can’t do any of these things without a group of people who share the same desires as we do.

**The reason it works is because we take it with us when we leave the room.**

The taste of recovery we have shared should remain with us until we meet again.

# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

אַרְבַּעַת בְּנֵי  
*The Four Sons*

## The Wicked One

What does he say?

רָשָׁע  
מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר

The word “what” is used in the way Yaakov used it, “What an awesome place this is!”

The Wicked Son says, “What an awesome program this is your work.”

He thinks that everyone in recovery is adhering to an impossible program of perfection. He thinks he is more unique than anyone else. No matter how bad someone might be, he thinks of himself as worse.

Our response is to identify with him. We should say something like, “Yes, we also felt that way! We felt despicable and unable to be saved. We thought we were God!”

God brought us out of Egypt, doing for us what we couldn’t do for ourselves.

He did this for us so that we carry the message of recovery to you, not because we were better than you.

The idea that God “did” this for us refers to the final act of creation: speech. What God “did” for us was to verbalize the pain we could not speak for ourselves. He taught us the words that we could use to express our feelings.

**What scares you about early sobriety?**

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**What are your thoughts about recovery, specifically the idea of a recovery program?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

מגיד

אַרְבָּעָה בָּנִים  
*The Four Sons*

## The Simple One

What does he say?

תָּם  
מַה הוּא אוֹמֵר

The word “what” is used in the way Yirmiyahu used it when he lamented, “Remember, oh God, what happened to us?”

The Simple One asked, “Just what is **this**?”

He is openminded and willing to listen and learn. Why do we do the Seder? Why the exodus? Why the slavery?

We were powerless! It was God’s strong hand that brought us out!

**Admitting we are powerless is the first step!**  
**If we don’t admit it, we can’t get help!**

In Hebrew, תָּם means “The End.” He is finished with this pain, willing, and ready.

The word “**this**” refers to word in hebrew, “Teshuva” or “Repentance.”

Teshuva consists of three elements:  
**Repentance, Prayer, and Charity**



Recovery consists of three elements:  
**We Confess, Admit, Come to Believe**

We become willing, grow humble, make restitution.

The word “**this**” also refers as the manifestation of God in the human world. The meaning of life! Recovery is the reason for the creation of the universe.

Why did God allow us to get to a point of brokenness?

Those of us in recovery are proof of the answer: **the fixing!** Not the fix or the fixation!

The repairing and recovering is the meaning of life.

The Simple One’s simple question is the most complex and profound!



# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

בְּמִגֵּיד

אַרְבַּעַת בְּנִים  
The Four Sons

## The One Who Can't Ask

What does he say?

לֹא יוֹדֵעַ  
מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר

You must carry the message to the one who can't ask for help!

It is written, "And you shall tell it to your child on that day, saying: Because of This, God did for me, when I came out of Egypt."

We answered the Wicked One in this way when he asked his question.

"It works! Look at me, I am free! You can be free, too! This is why God brought me all this way. So that I could bring this message to you!"

It is explicitly stated that we tell over the message

*"You shall tell the Haggadah to your child, **on that day**, saying **"because of This, God did for me when I came out of Egypt."***

**"On that day"** and **"because of this"** tell us that the time to carry out the message is specifically at the Seder, when the symbols of slavery (Maror) and freedom (Matzah) are clearly visible.

We need to stay in touch with the fundamentals of the program, "we must keep it green."

**What are some questions you have about recovery? What would you ask someone with longer recovery time than you?**

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**To which son do you most identify and why?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

בְּמִיָּד

Let's look at the four sons in a different way. Instead of thinking of them as the different personalities of us in recovery, let's think of them as the personalities of others in your life; the ones who are impacted by your addiction.

אַרְבָּעָה בָּנִים  
*The Four Sons*

We address these four children anytime we are facing an urge to use.

**The Wise One** asks, "How will acting on this urge affect you and others?"

The Wise One has learned from the past, and they understand the negative impact using will have on you and the world.

**Who are the "wise children" in your life? The ones who know the impact of your addiction?**

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**The Wicked One** asks, "Won't you feel great once you use?"

The Wicked One convinces you to focus only on the immediate relief of using, excited to control your actions.

**How do you resist giving in to the "wicked child?"**

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**The Simple One** asks, "Why are you having an urge to use?"

The Simple One asks the most fundamental, and likely the most difficult, question. It forces you to face the feelings you could numb with a substance or behavior.

**How do you answer the question of the "simple child?" Why do you have an urge to use?**

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**The One Who Doesn't Know to Ask** stays silent, oblivious to the pain you are experiencing. Think about how they would react if they learned about your recovery.

**Who are the "silent children" in your life? Would they support you if they knew how you were feeling?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story



*God took us out of Egypt*

God brought us out of Egypt with:

1. A Mighty Hand
2. An Outstretched Arm
3. Fearsome Greatness
4. Signs
5. Wonders

These five components of God's power represent the 5 Stages of Recovery.

**The First Steps we took** led to our addictive behaviors stopping. In our active addiction, we lived to use as much as we used to live.

Sobriety or abstinence required the **Mighty Hand** of God. We need more to get sober than “just saying no.”

Compare the cessation of using addictive substances or behaviors to the catastrophe of the plagues in Egypt. Everything we relied on was pulled from under us and died. The same is true for our addictions. We relied so heavily on them and it just “dies” when we stop.

**The Second Step** is the **Outstretched Arm**, which is represented by the cutting sword. Recovery can happen if we “cut off” people, places, and things associated with the addiction.

It is hard to cut off all these things instantaneously. We begin by holding them at arm's length. We are still fascinated and obsessed with the addiction.

**The Third Step** of recovery brings about **great fear**, represented by the Divine Presence, or awareness. As we distance ourselves from the addiction, we fear that we will return to our addiction and relapse.

We feel naked without our armor that was our addiction. We will go back to the addiction without help from somewhere. The fear is a healthy and defensive response to the reality of weakness when we think of how our behaviors were so life-threatening.

# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story



*God took us out of Egypt*

God brought us out of Egypt with:

1. A Mighty Hand
2. An Outstretched Arm
3. Fearsome Greatness
4. Signs
5. Wonders

**The Fourth Step** is the **Sign**, or image of the external power that keeps us from hurting ourselves. The almost-tangible, or physical, guarantee of our safety. The object of our “hanging on” through the challenges that arise in recovery is *a staff*.

מַזְפָּטָה means *staff* in Hebrew, but it also means *tribe*. These words are interchangeable, because the staff is typically used as an identification in tribal societies. The leader of a tribe had authority, and it was symbolized by the staff. Our tribe is the fellowship to which we belong, the meetings we attend. Meetings are the staff for our lives.

**The Fifth Step** is the **Wonders**, or the changes we have seen in ourselves through new actions. We now have a new purpose for our lives.

**In which stage of recovery do you most feel you are right now?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

מַגִּיד

עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת  
*Ten Plagues*

We have all suffered from the plagues in various different ways. The order of the plagues was specific to the Egyptians. Let us identify how they relate to our lives.

## The Fantasy of Omnipotence

### Blood דָּם

The Nile River is revered as a God, vital for life, wealth, and culture. It is believed that as the Pharaoh approached, the Nile would rise, symbolizing divine connection. The Nile is the lifeline of Egypt.

When God turned the Nile into blood, He hit the core of Egyptian life - politically, culturally, religiously, and economically. God cut off the Egyptian's main lifeline.

Some of us have a similar relationship with our addictions. We experienced such shifts when our "best friend" revealed it's dark side. We couldn't abandon what we had relied on for so long, even though it turned against us. Similar to how the Egyptian's didn't change their habits overnight when the Nile turned to blood, we cannot change our addictive habits overnight when we see the "dark side."

**What was the dark side of your "best friend?" How did you start seeing it?**

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### Frogs צְפַרְדֵּי

God used the frogs to mock Pharaoh and his institutions. It turned Pharaoh into a ridiculous figure after being a vain tyrant.

We thought we were on top of the world when we used our addictive behaviors, until our effects at control no longer worked. We have been humiliated because of the consequences of our behaviors and decisions.

**What were some of the consequences you experienced from your addiction?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

מַגִּיד

עֶשֶׂר מַכּוֹת  
*Ten Plagues*

## Denial

### Lice כְּנִים

This plague targeted the powerful defense mechanism of “denial.” Denial allows us to rationalize the consequences of our addictions without acknowledging the need for change. Someone with lung cancer might blame car emissions while smoking heavily. The Egyptians relied on magicians to maintain the illusion of normalcy when plagued. This denial meant Pharaoh didn’t feel powerless.

Every lie or denial creates a ripple effect and it requires more explanations. Eventually, the truth’s momentum overwhelms the lies. The magicians in Egypt couldn’t replicate the lice, which exposed their limitations. They lost their authority, conceding to a Higher Power.

**What are some of the lies you have told yourself and others in your life?**

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### Wild Beasts עָרֹב

Pharaoh tried to maintain the illusion that he was divine even after Moses warned him. Once the wild animals plagued Egypt, Pharaoh’s denial started to crack and he negotiated.

We have all tried negotiating with our struggles, hoping to maintain our illusions of control. Moses and Pharaoh made an agreement, but when the plague ended, Pharaoh went back on his promise. The negotiations didn’t ultimately work.

**How have you negotiated with your addiction?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

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## Defiance

### Pestilence דָּבָר

The “Mighty Hand” that was mentioned earlier was the death of all the livestock. We have experienced the loss of valuable possessions, like businesses, relationships, and homes. We have felt the devastation of seeing our “wealth” disappear and questioned why it happened.

The “beast” in Egypt represented food, clothing, transportation, status symbols, and other aspects of life. The sudden loss forced Egyptians to realize that life couldn’t continue the same way it had before.

### What have you lost during your addiction?

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### Boils שְׁחִין

When the Egyptians experienced the boils, their illusions and denial completely shattered. Even the magicians lost all their credibility. There was no differentiation between status; everyone from wealthy to poor, even animals, suffered from the boils. This was a clear display of the consequences for their actions.

When we neglect those in need while chasing our own desires, those in need suffer. Blaming others for our misfortune won’t solve our issues. Our own painful experiences can benefit others, offering hope for the future.

### What is one piece of hope you want to convey to others still struggling with the addiction?

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## Ambivalence

**Hail**    בָּרָד

Before this plague, God warned Pharaoh that all future plagues would strike at his heart. The hail was destructive, but it was the thunder that accompanied the hail that was truly terrifying. The thunder made it difficult for Pharaoh to maintain his illusions. Pharaoh was terrified of the thunder's noise, revealing his vulnerability.

**Are you tired of the noise in your head? Are you ready to let go?**

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**Locusts**    אַרְבֵּה

Before this plague, Pharaoh was pressured to negotiate. He panicked when he saw the devastation caused by the locusts. Pharaoh wanted to let the Israelites go, while also wanting to hold onto them.

We have experienced this ambivalence when deciding whether to cease our addictive behaviors.

**How did you navigate your own ambivalence when deciding to get sober?**

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## Capitulation

### Darkness חֹשֶׁךְ

This plague isolated the Egyptians, preventing them from seeing each other for three days. The darkness symbolized the breakdown of communication between people. Pharaoh could not admit powerlessness, so he tried to negotiate, but ultimately resorted to rage.

When we become self-obsessed, our relationships suffer, leading to a figurative darkness where communication fails.

**What are your thoughts on the concept of “powerlessness?”**

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### Slaying the Firstborn מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת

We tend to attribute our losses to fate or bad luck when they are actually consequences of our behaviors. Whether we learn from our mistakes, the price remains the same: death. Pharaoh and the Egyptians, regardless of status, lost loved ones, leading to complete surrender.

We are often resistant to fear, but moments of reflection, especially after major tragedies, can bring about seeds of doubt and shatter denial and delusions. In recovery, we have experienced the “slaying of the firstborn” at least once, confronting our deepest losses.

**What was the situation that occurred that opened you up to the idea of abstinence?**

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**What were you spared from by finding recovery?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story

מגיד

דיינן

*It Would Have Been Enough*

Dayeinu commemorates the list of miracles God performed for us over the course of the Exodus story. Any one of these miracles would have been amazing, and even more than we deserved.

Dayeinu is a reminder to remember all the miracles that have happened in our lives. If we wait for the next one to appear, then we are missing out on life. We can focus on the reasons to be grateful right now.

With Dayeinu as our reference, here are some reasons to feel grateful.

1. God brought us out of Egypt - We are no longer trapped or enslaved to substances or habits. We cannot grow until we are free.
2. God did not judge them, but did judgments among them - His judgments were for us, to show us the nature of our addiction and power of the lie in which we lived.
3. God killed their firstborns - Slavery means death. Addiction means death. The worship of anything except gods, like substances, means death.
4. God split the sea for us - We were taught to surrender and turn our will over to the God.
5. God built the Temple, or "Chosen House," so we can atone for our sins.

We aren't expected to get things right the first time, or even the second time. We might fail multiple times, but it is about progress, not perfection.

We are no longer slaves, because we have a choice. The difference between addiction and recovery is the power of choice. One of the things for which we are grateful is free will, the freedom to make choices.

**What miracles, big or small, make you feel grateful tonight?**

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# Maggid

Tell the Exodus Story



The three main symbols of the Seder are Pesach, Matzah, and Maror.

**Pesach** - The animal sacrifice given on Passover in the Temple. It reminds us of the lamb that the Israelites ate the night that God killed the Egyptian firstborn sons, while sparing the Israelite sons.

We do not sacrifice animals today, so we place a lamb bone on the Seder plate as a symbol.

**Matzah** - The flat bread we eat on Passover. It reminds us that when the chance arises for liberation, we must take it even if we don't feel ready. If we wait until we feel fully ready, we may never act at all.

**Maror** - A bitter herb or vegetable. The taste reminds us of the bitter lives the Israelites lived when they were slaves.

**What freedoms have you found in recovery?**

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**Whose kindness relieves the bitterness of recovery for you?**

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**How did you seize the opportunity to recover? Were you fully ready when you started your recovery?**

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**How do you remind yourself of painful times without reliving past traumas?**

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# Barech



## Blessing After the Meal

We thank God for food each time we eat. We say a blessing before eating to thank God for the type of food we are about to eat. After we eat, we thank God for food and the good land that produces the food. We also ask God to be merciful and continue to sustain and support us. Saying the blessings over food helps us be mindful of how fortunate we are to have food and that our lives are dependent on God’s continued sustenance.

**What other ways or times do you bless God?**

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# Hallel



## Give Praise to God

When we are engaged in our addictive behaviors, we inflict harm on ourselves. We may not feel that we are worthy of health and happiness, or that we aren’t strong enough to face the difficulties in our lives.

In recovery, it is important to remember your immense value and incomparable strength.

**Praise yourself for something you did today!**

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# Nirtzah



## Conclusion

We are beginning the season with renewed awareness of the freedoms we enjoy and the obstacles we must still confront. Having recalled our journeys to liberation and reflected on the struggles we still face, we are ready to embark on a year that we hope will bring positive change in ourselves.

**Where would you like to be in a year - personal growth, relationships, other areas?**

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Proud Partner of the UJA Federation

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THE **safe** FOUNDATION

Wishing you and your families  
a happy, healthy, and  
meaningful holiday!

**THIS PASSOVER, FIND  
FREEDOM IN SOBRIETY**

If you or your loved ones  
struggle over the holiday,  
please reach out

**718 GET SAFE**

**[ask@thesafefoundation.org](mailto:ask@thesafefoundation.org)**