

**AJC New England 19th Annual**

# **Diplomats Seder #JourneyToFreedom**

**John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum**

**Sunday, March 18, 2018**

## **Welcome**

**Sydney Altman and Bruce Singal, Dr. Sarah Gottfried and Josh Fialkoff  
Seder Co-Chairs**

## **The Seder**

**Rabbi Jay C. Perlman, Temple Beth Shalom, Needham  
Music by Rabbi Noam Katz**

## **#JourneyToFreedom**

**Robert Leikind, AJC New England Regional Director**

**Kiddush — The Seder Plate — Karpas — Four Questions  
Maggid — Matzah, Maror, and Charoset**

## **Dinner**

## **President's Remarks**

**Jonathan Dorfman, AJC New England President**

## **Elijah's Cup**

## **Diplomatic Greeting**

**Consul General of Finland Leonard Kopelman**

## **Diplomatic Response**

**Consul General of Israel Yehuda Yaakov**

## **Rabbi's Reflections and Next Year in Jerusalem**

# Diplomats Seder

Dear Friends:

After 19 years, we can call the Diplomats Seder a community tradition. And it is our very special pleasure to welcome you.

The Seder is an occasion to sit down with friends and family and relive the Exodus from ancient Egypt. It is also a carefully constructed learning experience that tells the story of the journey from slavery to freedom. The ceremony revolves around a book called the Haggadah, but also incorporates food, drink, song, textual study, stories, and inspiring rituals to make the occasion engage all of our senses.

One of the wonderful features of the annual Seder is that it stirs in all who participate a passion for freedom. It also challenges each person present to come to terms with what freedom means for oneself, one's community, and, indeed, all humankind. This is not an easy challenge for one meal, especially one that requires that we drink four cups of wine. Yet we are compelled to seek answers and the Seder ensures that we never forget the question.

The quest for freedom is, of course, a universal quest and one of the special features of the Passover holiday is that we are encouraged to invite friends and neighbors of all backgrounds to come and share in the special journey that we call the Passover Seder. So, we welcome you to the AJC New England 19th Annual Diplomats Seder.

We hope that you find inspiration and fellowship in tonight's program. Just as important, we hope that the search for freedom is one that binds us together in a shared effort to heal our world.

B'shalom (In Peace),

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Jonathan Dorfman' and the signature on the right is 'Robert Leikind'.

Jonathan Dorfman  
President, AJC New England

Robert Leikind  
Director, AJC New England

# Diplomats Seder

## **AJC New England— Where Global Meets Local**

AJC New England is the local gateway to AJC's global advocacy network.

With a network of over 30 offices in the U.S. and around the globe, AJC safeguards the well-being of the Jewish people and Israel, and promotes democratic values for all.

Through high-level diplomacy, strong legislative advocacy, and effective interreligious and interethnic coalitions, AJC has made a significant impact on issues critical to the Jewish people and Israel. With key relationships at the local, national, and international levels – from diplomats, to global decision makers, to community leaders – AJC is the preeminent global Jewish advocate.

Former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright described AJC as “indispensable.” Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice described AJC as “a powerful force for freedom and justice around the globe.”

AJC New England plays a vital role in this global Jewish advocacy, especially as international concerns increasingly shape our local community. AJC New England's pioneering outreach includes:

- Cultural and diplomatic exchanges with local diaspora leaders representing Greek, Indian, Armenian, Italian, Rwandan and Mexican communities, among many others
- Legislative outreach to advance a just, respectful, hate-free society
- Advocacy that supports civil rights and promotes peaceful co-existence at home and abroad
- Support for peace between Israelis and Palestinians based on a two-state solution
- Intensive engagement with New England's foreign diplomatic community representing countries around the world
- Outreach to life science and health care academics to oppose BDS academic boycotts
- Partnerships with elected officials through the AJC Governors United Against BDS Campaign and Mayors United Against Anti-Semitism Campaign.

# About the Passover Seder

Passover is 8 days long and begins with a “Seder” (literally, “order”) on each of the first two nights of the holiday. More than just a meal, the Seder is the ritual recounting of the Israelites’ exodus from ancient Egypt and a celebration of their freedom from slavery. You will notice that the Seder is filled with symbolism and instruction. For example, at specified moments during the Seder, participants recline to the left to eat and drink as an ancient symbol of freedom; we drink four cups of wine or grape juice as a sign of liberation; and ten drops of wine/juice are spilled, symbolizing the ten plagues.

The Haggadah is the guidebook for the Seder. “Haggadah” actually means a story that is told, and it is through the use of the Haggadah that Jews fulfill the commandment of remembering the Exodus from ancient Egypt, and teach the story to our children.

## Four Cups of Wine

The four cups of wine or grape juice, which one drinks at prescribed intervals during the Seder, toast divine redemption and are based on the four expressions of redemption reflected in the book of Exodus: “I will bring you out,” “I will deliver you,” “I will redeem you,” and “I will take you as a nation.”

Wine is considered a royal drink, one that symbolizes freedom. It is the appropriate beverage for the night when we celebrate our freedom from Egyptian bondage.



# Kiddush

The blessing of Kiddush over wine or grape juice sanctifies the holiday meal by focusing on God as the creator and redeemer of the universe. During the Seder, it is customary to drink four cups of wine.

We lift our cups to say the blessing over the first cup of wine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

*Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.



## About the Seder Plate

The Seder plate, which is a central focus of the Seder table, contains six different foods: a shank bone, charoset (a mixture of fruit and nuts), two kinds of bitter herbs, green vegetables, and an egg. Many of the foods incorporated into the Seder are used to convey educational messages.

The bitter herbs recall the suffering of the Israelites in bondage, and the matzah (unleavened bread) is symbolic of the Israelites' departure from Egypt; in their haste, they did not have time to wait for their bread to rise.



# Karpas



In this part of the Seder, we dip a sprig of parsley or potato into salt water. The parsley is a symbol of springtime, and the salt water a reference to tears of slavery. By commingling the two, we call forth the memory of degradation and the aspirations for hope and renewal.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרִי הָאֲדָמָה.

*Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam,  
borei p'ri ha'adamah.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the earth.

## Reflection

Like most Jewish children, I especially loved the Passover holiday. Solemn and joyous, it allowed us to escape time. Slaves of the pharaohs, we followed Moses into the unknown, into the desert, and up to Mount Sinai. His summons to freedom was stronger than fear.

*Elie Wiesel was a Romanian-born Jewish writer, professor, political activist, Holocaust survivor, and Nobel Laureate.*



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# Reflections

Without freedom the human mind is prevented from unleashing its creative force. But what is also clear is that freedom does not stand alone. It is freedom in responsibility and freedom to exercise responsibility.

*Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany (2005– Present)*



In the Biblical story, the ancient Egyptians speak of Israel always as a collective, not as individuals. We, too, often speak of those we don't know well as though they were all alike. But we would like to think that if the ancient Egyptians had known each of us here tonight, they would never have seen us as aliens, nor would they have afflicted us.

It is an ominous reminder of the dangers inherent in ignoring the ways in which members of a different group really are like us: in their individuality, and in their divinely created humanity.



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# The Four Questions

The “Four Questions,” traditionally asked by the youngest person at the table, reflect the educational function of the Passover Seder and ensure that the children inquire about and then discover the meaning of the holiday.

## מה נשתנה הלילה הזה, מכל הלילות?

*Mah nishtanah ha-layla ha-zeh mi-kol ha-laylot?*

Why is this night different from all other nights?



שבכל הלילות, אנו אוכלים חמץ ומצה; והלילה הזה, כלו מצה.

*Sh'bechol ha'leilot, anu ochlim chametz u'matzah;*

*v'halayla ha'zeh koo'lo matzah.*

On all other nights we eat either leavened bread or matzah; why on this night only matzah?

שבכל הלילות, אנו אוכלים שאר ירקות; והלילה הזה, מרור.

*She'bechol ha'leilot, anu ochlim she'ar yerakot,*

*v'halayla ha'zeh maror.*

On all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs; why on this night do we especially eat bitter herbs?

שבכל הלילות, אין אנו מטבילין אפלו פעם אחת; והלילה

הזה, שתי פעמים.

*Sh'bechol ha'leilot, ain anu matbilin afilu pa'am achat,*

*v'halayla ha'zeh she'tei pe'amim.*

On all other nights we do not dip herbs at all; why on this night do we dip them twice?

שבכל הלילות, אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין; והלילה הזה,

כלנו מסבין.

*She'bechol ha'leilot, anu ochlin bein yoshveen u'vein mesubin,*

*v'halayla ha'zeh kulanu mesubin.*

On all other nights we eat sitting up or reclining; why on this night do we all recline?



# Maggid

This is the section of the Seder where we fulfill the mitzvah (commandment) of telling the story of the Exodus—a beautifully woven compilation of song, rabbinic discourse, hymns, and praise. This is the heart of the Seder.



According to Jewish tradition, every person in every generation is obligated to see him or herself as though he/she personally has gone forth from slavery to freedom. By telling the same story, year after year, we attempt to step into the shoes of our forebears and take a journey into liberation. Reenacting the Exodus is also a vivid reminder of the fact that there are many people in the world who are still enslaved, and who continue to yearn for freedom. We recite the following as if we were the ancient Israelites:

*We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt and God brought us forth with a mighty hand. Had not the Holy One, blessed is God, delivered our people from Egypt, then we, our children, and our children's children would still be enslaved. Pharaoh set taskmasters over us with forced labor, and we built garrison cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Ramses. The Egyptians embittered our lives with harsh labor with mortar and bricks. But the more we were oppressed, the more we increased and spread out, so that the Egyptians came to despise and dread the Israelites.*

*Pharaoh charged all his people, saying "Every boy that is born shall be thrown into the Nile, but let every girl live." We cried out to Adonai, the God of our ancestors, and God heeded our plights, our misery, and our oppression. As we recall God's promise of redemption, we remember that in every generation and in every age some rise up to plot our destruction, even in our own time.*

The following reflections, songs, and stories will escort us along our journey from slavery to freedom.

# Reflections

I firmly believe that the mission of religion in the 21st Century must be to contribute concretely to the peaceful coexistence of humankind.

*Daisaku Ikeda, Buddhist philosopher and founding president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), the world's largest Buddhist lay organization*

## ***Waitings***

The waitings which make up the life of a slave:  
first he waits for a spokesman  
and for plagues  
to plead his cause,  
then he waits for the waters  
to open before him,  
then he waits for the desert storms  
to name themselves,  
then (being a slave) he asks in his heart:  
why did I wait for the parting of the waters?  
why did I wait for all this uproar and these burnings?  
then (being a slave) he waits for answers.

*Rabbi Stanley Chyet (a preeminent scholar of American Jewish history and translator of 20th century Israeli poetry)*



## **"Hope is Saying 'No!'"**

"Hope is saying 'no' to the world immediately experienced. Optimism is the belief that things will be different, will be better."

*Former President Havel of the Czech Republic (playwright and former prisoner in communist Czechoslovakia)*

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# The 10 Plagues

When Moses asked Pharaoh to free the Israelite slaves and Pharaoh refused, God visited ten plagues upon the Egyptians. We now recite those plagues. As each is named, we pour a drop of wine or grape juice from our cup of joy. This tradition reminds us that our own joy is diminished in the face of the pain of others; even though the plagues are an essential element in the saga we celebrate, we derive no pleasure from them; we do not gloat at the suffering they caused.

<i>Dam</i> , Blood	דָּם
<i>Tzfardeyah</i> , Frogs	צְפַרְדֵּי
<i>Kinim</i> , Lice	כְּנִים
<i>Arov</i> , Wild Beasts	עֲרוֹב
<i>Dever</i> , Blight	דֵּבֶר
<i>Sh'chin</i> , Boils	שַׁחֲיִן
<i>Barad</i> , Hail	בָּרָד
<i>Arbeh</i> , Locusts	אַרְבֶּה
<i>Chosheh</i> , Darkness	חֹשֶׁךְ
<i>Makat B'chorot</i> , Slaying of the First-Born	מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת

## Antidotes to the Plagues of our Time

Freedom	Acceptance	Democracy	Equality
Human Rights	Peace	Security	Respect
Coexistence	Pluralism		



# Reflection

Human reason is beautiful and invincible.  
No bars, no barbed wire, no pulping of books,  
No sentence of banishment can prevail against it.  
It establishes the universal ideas in language,  
And guides our hand so we write Truth and Justice  
With capital letters, lie and oppression with small.  
It puts what should be above things as they are,  
Is an enemy of despair and a friend of hope.  
It does not know Jew from Greek or slave from master,  
Giving us the estate of the world to manage.  
It saves austere and transparent phrases  
From the filthy discord of tortured words.  
It says that everything is new under the sun,  
Opens the congealed fist of the past.  
Beautiful and very young are Philo-Sophia  
And poetry, her ally in the service of the good.  
As late as yesterday Nature celebrated their birth,  
The news was brought to the mountains by a unicorn and an echo.  
Their friendship will be glorious, their time has no limit.  
Their enemies have delivered themselves to destruction.

*Czeslaw Milosz, widely considered one of the greatest contemporary Polish poets, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1980.*



# Reflections

***I prefer liberty with danger  
than peace with slavery.***

*Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a Franco-Swiss  
philosopher of the Enlightenment*



“There is still one other question arising out of the disaster of nations which remains unsolved to this day, and whose profound tragedy, only a Jew can comprehend. This is the African question. Just call to mind all those terrible episodes of the slave trade, of human beings who, merely because they were black, were stolen like cattle, taken prisoner, captured and sold. Their children grew up in strange lands, the objects of contempt and hostility because their complexions were different. I am not ashamed to say, though I may expose myself to ridicule for saying so, that once I have witnessed the redemption of the Jews, my people, I wish also to assist in the redemption of the Africans.”

*Theodor Herzl, founder of the political form of Zionism*

God has given us many faiths but only one world in which to co-exist. May your work help all of us to cherish our commonalities and feel enlarged by our differences.

*Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, international religious leader,  
philosopher, award-winning author and respected moral voice*

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# Dayeinu

אלו הוציאנו ממצרים

*Ilu hotzianu mimitzrayim*

If God had brought us out from Egypt

דינו

*dayeinu!*

Dayeinu, it would have sufficed!

אלו נתן לנו את השבת

*Ilu natan lanu et ha'Shabbat*

If God had given us the Sabbath

דינו

*dayeinu!*

Dayeinu, it would have sufficed!

אלו נתן לנו את התורה

*Ilu natan lanu et ha'Torah*

If God had given us the Torah

דינו

*dayeinu!*

Dayeinu, it would have sufficed!



DAYEINU



I - lu ho - tzi ho - tzi - a - nu, ho - tzi a - nu mi - mitz - ra - yim,  
ho - tzi - a - nu mi - mitz - ra - yim da - yei - nu.  
(Chorus) Da - da - yei - nu, da - da - yei - nu, da - da - yei - nu, da -  
yei - nu da - yei - nu da - yei - nu. yei - nu da - yei - nu.

# Reflections

For ten years, they beat me every morning. They made me sleep with the animals, and they gave me very bad food. They said I was an animal... But every day I prayed to God. One day, I asked my master a question: "Why do you call me 'abeed'? [Related to *eved*, the Hebrew word for slave.] And why do you feed me bad food all the time and make me sleep with the animals? Is it because I am black?" My master was very angry. "Where did you learn to ask this question?" he said. "Never ask me this again." And he beat me and beat me. When I was 17, I decided to escape. I would rather die than be a slave.

*Francis Bok, a former slave in Sudan who escaped in 1999*

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For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others. The true test of our devotion to freedom is just the beginning.

*Nelson Mandela was a South African anti-apartheid revolutionary, politician, and philanthropist, who also served as President of South Africa.*



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# Matzah, Maror, & Charoset



**Matzah** (unleavened bread) is symbolic of the Israelites' departure from Egypt; in their haste, they did not have time to wait for their bread to rise.

**בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.**

*Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam,  
ha'motzi lekhem min ha'aretz.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth.



**Maror**, or bitter herbs, (usually fresh horseradish) are symbolic of the bitterness of slavery. However, we do not eat the maror alone, but temper it with a small amount of charoset to signify that there is some sweetness, even in the most bitter of times.

**בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר.**

*Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam,  
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al  
achilat maror.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who sanctifies us with commandments and calls upon us to eat maror.



**Charoset** also symbolizes the mortar that the Israelites used to build the pyramids in Egypt. Tonight's Seder features a traditional charoset, a mix of apples, nuts, wine and cinnamon. Distribute pieces of matzah so that each guest may prepare a "sandwich" of matzah, maror, and charoset.



# Dinner

## Welcoming Elijah

After the fourth and final cup of wine is filled, an additional cup is then filled and set aside for the prophet Elijah (Eliyahu). Tradition says that Elijah, who will precede the arrival of the Messiah, makes an appearance at every Seder. We traditionally open a door to the home to allow Elijah to enter and sing the song Eliyahu Hanavi:



Elijah the Prophet, Elijah the Tishbite, Elijah the Giladite, may he come speedily to us in our days along with Messiah the son of David.

*Eliyahu Hanavi, Eliyahu Hatishbi, Eliyahu Hagiladi, Bimheirah Yavo Eileinu Im Mashiach Ben David.*



## Thank You

## President's Remarks

## Diplomatic Greeting

# Reflections

Israel will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the Prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the Principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

*From the Israeli Declaration of Independence which was issued on 14 May 1948.*

**The inspiring Passover message above is sponsored by  
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## Diplomatic Closing Remarks

## Next Year in Jerusalem

**לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם**

*L'shanah haba'ah b'yerushalayim!*

**Next year in Jerusalem!**



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Sydney Altman and Bruce Singal, Dr. Sarah Gottfried and Josh Fialkoff

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(continued on next page)

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## SAVE THE DATE

**20th Annual Diplomats Seder**  
March 31, 2019



# Special Thanks

Seder Co-Chairs Sydney Altman and Bruce Singal, Dr. Sarah Gottfried and Josh Fialkoff for their exceptional leadership.

AJC New England Diplomats Seder Taskforce and Host Committee for their hard work and commitment.

AJC New England President Jonathan Dorfman, Board Members, and Friends of AJC who have worked so hard to make tonight a success.

Rabbi Jay C. Perlman for leading us through an insightful program.

Rabbi Noam Katz for inspiring us through the gift of song.

A special thank you to all diplomats who participated in the program:

Consul General of France Valéry Freland  
Consul General of Colombia Yida Ximena Mora Silva  
Consul General of Cabo Verde Herminio Moniz  
Honorary Consul General of Liechtenstein Marta Judson  
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Thank you to the following special Seder supporters and table purchasers:

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