

## How Did the Passover Seder Become a Family Affair?

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### **Part I: Prologue**

#### 1. Hagadah

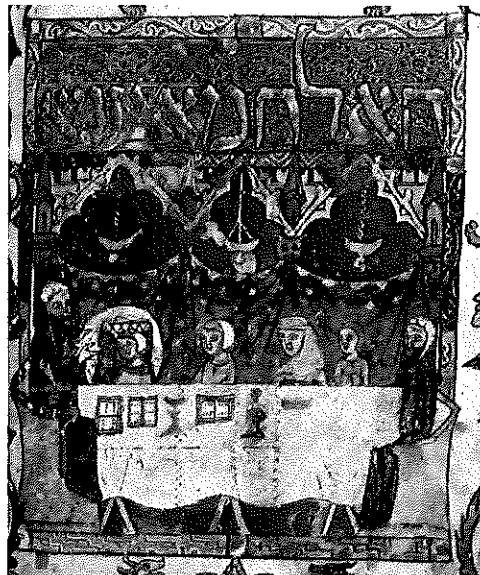
מעשה ברבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע ורבי אלעזר בן-עזריה ורבי עקיבא ורבי טרפון שהיו מסבין בבני-ברק והיו מספרים ביציאת מצרים כל-אותו הלילה, עד שבאו תלמידיהם ואמרו להם רבותינו הגיע זמן קריאת שמע של שחרית.

A case concerning Rabbi Eleazar, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon, who were reclining in Bnei Brak and were telling [about] the exodus from Egypt that entire night, until their students came to them and told them “Rabbis, the time for the morning recitation of the Shema has arrived!”

#### 2. Tosefta *Pesahim* 10:12 (trans. Bokser)

מעשה ברבן גמליאל וזקנים שהיו מסובין בבית ביתוס בן זונין בלוד והיו עוסקין בהלכות הפסח כל הלילה עד קרות הגבר, הגביהו מלפניהם ונועדו והלכו [להן] לבית המדרש.

A case concerning Rabban Gamaliel and the elders who were reclining in the house of Baitos the son of Zonin in Lod, and [they] were engaged in the laws of Passover all night, until the cock's crow. [They] raised up [the table] from in front of them, and [they] stirred and went along to the house of study.



*Image: Barcelona Haggadah*

## Part II: Two Intertwined Holidays

### 3. Leviticus 23:5-6 (trans. NRSV)

בחדש הראשון בארבעה עשר לחודש בין הערבים פסח ליהוה: ובחמשה עשר יום לחודש הזה חג המצות ליהוה שבועת  
ימים מצות תאכלו:

at twilight, there shall be a passover ,**fourteenth day of the month** In the first month, on the  
of the same month is the festival of unleavened **fifteenth day** offering to the Lord, and on the  
you shall eat unleavened bread **seven days** ;bread to the Lord

### 4. Ezekiel 45:21 (trans. NRSV)

כראשון בארבעה עשר יום לחודש יהיה לכם הפסח חג שבועות ימים מצות יאכל:  
In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall celebrate the festival of the  
passover, and for seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten.

## Part III: The Passover Story as a Family Story

### A. Family Strife, Reunification, and Reconciliation: Joseph's Sale into Slavery and Joseph's Bones

#### 5. Genesis 37:2-4, 9-10, 18-19, 28, 36 (trans. NRSV)

אלה | תלדות יעקב יוסף בן־שבע־עשרה שנה היה רעה את־אחיו בצאן והוא נער את־בני בלהה ואת־בני זלפה נשי  
אביו ויבא יוסף את־דבתם רעה אל־אביהם: וישאל אהב את־יוסף מכל־בניו כי־בן־זקנים הוא לו ועשה לו כתנת פסים:  
ויראו אחיו כי־אילו אהב אביהם מכל־אחיו וישנאו אתו ולא יכלו דברו לשלם: ויסלם עוד סלום אחר ויספר אתו לאחיו  
ויאמר הנה סלמתי סלום עוד והנה השמש והירח ואחד עשר כוכבים משתחנים לי: ויספר אל־אביו ואל־אחיו ויגער־בו  
אביו ויאמר לו מה הסלום הזה אשר סלמתי הבוא נבוא אנני ואמנן ואחיד להשתחנת לה ארצה: ויראו אתו מרחק ובטרם  
יקרב אליהם ויתנבלו אתו להמיתו: ויאמרו איש אל־אחיו הנה בעל הסלמות הלזה בא: ויעברו אנשים מדנינים סתרים  
וימשכו ויעלו את־יוסף מן־הבור וימכרו את־יוסף לישמעאלים בעשרים גסה ויביאו את־יוסף מצרימה: והמדננים  
מכרו אתו אל־מצרים לפוטיפר סרים פרעה שר הטבחים:

**This is the story of the family of Jacob.** Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. **3** Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. **4** But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him... **9** He had another dream, and told it to his brothers, saying, "Look, I have had another dream: the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." **10** But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him, and said to him, "What kind of dream is this that you have had? Shall we indeed come, I and your mother and your brothers, and bow to the ground before you?"... **18** They [the brothers] saw him [Joseph] from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. **19** They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer..." **28** When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt... **36** Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

6. Genesis Rabbah 84.13 (ed. Theodor-Albeck 1014; trans. Freedman)

הבוא נבוא אני ואחיה, ניהא, שמא אני ואמה, והלוא אמה כבר מתה ואת אומר: אני ואמה ואחיה, ולא הנה יעקב אבינו יודע שהדברים מגיעים לבלקה שפחת רחל שגדלתו כאמו.

I and your brothers shall indeed come - that may well be; but shall I and your mother come? Rachel is dead, yet you say that I and your mother [will bow down to you]? But our ancestor [Jacob] did not know that it applied to Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, who raised him [Joseph] like a mother.

7. Genesis Rabbah 92.5 on Genesis 43:30-33 (Theodor-Albeck, 1142-1143; trans. Freedman)

נטל את הגביע והנה עושה עצמו כמצרים ומריח בגביע, אמר יהודה שהוא מלך יושב בראש, ראובן שהוא בכור יושב שני לו, וכן בלן, אמר אנה לית לי אמה ובנימין לית ליה אמה, כד ילדת ליה אמה מיתת, מן בגין דא ייתי ויתן ראשיה גביה דידי. לפיקד (בראשית מג, לג): ויתמהו האנשים וגו'.

He [Joseph] took the cup and pretended to smell. Let Judah, who is king, sit at the head, he declared, and Reuven, who is firstborn, sit second. Again, I have no mother and this youth [Benjamin] has no mother, for his mother died on giving birth to him; therefore he must come and sit near me. For that reason, "The men marvelled one with another..."

8. Genesis 42:2, 8, 45:1-2, 46:3-7, 26-29 (trans. NRSV)

ו"אמר הנה שמעתי כי יש-שקר במצרים רדו-שמה ושברו-לנו משם ונחנה ולא נמות: ... ויגר יוסף את-אחיו והם לא הפרהו: ... ולא-יכל יוסף להתאפק לכל הנצבים עליו ויקרא הוציאו כל-איש מעלי ולא-עמד איש אמו בהתודע יוסף אל-אחיו: ויתן את-קלו בבקי וישמעו מצרים וישמע בית פרעה: ו"אמר אנכי האל אלהי אביך אל-תירא מרעה מצרימה כי-לגוי גדול אשימה שם: אנכי ארד עמה מצרימה ואנכי אעלה גם-עלה ויוסף ישית ידו על-עיניו: ויהם יעקב מבאר שבע וישאו בני-ישראל את-יעקב אביהם ואת-טפם ואת-נשיהם בעגלות אשר-שלח פרעה לשאת אתו: ויקחו את-מקניהם ואת-רכושם אשר רכשו בארץ כנען ויבאו מצרימה יעקב וכל-ורעו אתו: בניו ובניו בנותו ובנות בניו וכל-ורעו הגיא אתו מצרימה: ... כל-הנפש הבאה ליעקב מצרימה יצאי ירכו מלבד נשי בני-יעקב כל-נפש ושם ויש: ובני יוסף אשר-ילדו לו במצרים גפש שנים כל-הנפש לבית-יעקב הבאה מצרימה שבעים: ויאסר יוסף מרפבתו ויעל לקראת-ישראל אביו גשנה ויגרא אליו ויפל על-צוואריו ויבך על-צוואריו עוד:

I have heard," he said, "that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die." ...Although Joseph had recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him... Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it... Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again; and Joseph's own hand shall close your eyes." **Then Jacob set out from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him.** They also took their livestock and the goods that they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and they came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters; all his offspring he brought with him into Egypt... All the persons belonging to Jacob who came into Egypt, who were his own offspring, not including the wives of his sons, were sixty-six persons in all. The children of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy. Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to meet his father Israel in Goshen. He presented himself to him, fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

9. Exodus 13:18-19 (trans. NRSV)

וַיִּסַּב אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־הָעַם הַרְדּוּ הַמִּדְבָּר יַם־סוּף וְחַמְשֵׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־עַצְמוֹת יוֹסֵף עִמּוֹ  
פִּי הַשֶּׁבַע הַשְּׂבִיעַ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר פִּקֹּד יִפְקֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם וְהִעֲלִיתֶם אֶת־עַצְמוֹתַי מִזֶּה אִתְּכֶם:  
So God led the people by the roundabout way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of the land of Egypt prepared for battle. **And Moses took with him the bones of Joseph who had required a solemn oath of the Israelites, saying, “God will surely take notice of you, and then you must carry my bones with you from here.”**

**B. Oppression in and Redemption from Egypt: A Family Act**

10. Exodus 1:15-22 (trans. NRSV)

וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְמִילְדוֹת הָעִבְרִיּוֹת אֲשֶׁר שָׁם הָאֵחָת שִׁפְרָה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית פּוּעָה: וַיֹּאמֶר בְּיַלְדָּכֶן אֶת־הָעִבְרִיּוֹת וְרֵאִיתֶן עַל־  
הָאֲבָנִים אִם־בֵּן הוּא וְהַמַּתְּו אֹתוֹ וְאִם־בַּת הִיא וְחָיָה: וַתִּירֹאנן הַמִּילְדוֹת אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים וְלֹא עָשׂוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהֵי מֶלֶךְ  
מִצְרַיִם וַתַּחֲיִינן אֶת־הַיְלָדִים: וַיִּקְרָא מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם לְמִילְדוֹת וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶן מִדּוּעַ עֹשִׂיתֶן הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וַתַּחֲיִינן אֶת־הַיְלָדִים: וַתֹּאמְרֶנן  
הַמִּילְדוֹת אֶל־פְּרֹעֹה כִּי לֹא כַּנְּעִים הַמִּצְרַיִת הָעִבְרִיּוֹת כִּי־חַיּוֹת הֵנּוּ בְטָרִם תְּבוּאָה אֱלֹהֵי הַמִּילְדוֹת וַיִּלְדוּ: וַיִּסַּב אֱלֹהִים לְמִילְדוֹת  
וַיַּרְבּ הָעַם וַיַּעֲצְמוּ מְאֹד: וַיְהִי כִּי־רָאָה הַמִּילְדוֹת אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם בְּתִים: וַיֵּצֵאוּ פְרֹעֹה לְכַל־עַמּוֹ לֵאמֹר כָּל־בְּנֵי  
הַיְלֹד הַיְאֲרָה תִשְׁלִיכֶהוּ וְכָל־הַבָּת תְּחַיֶּה:

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shifra and the other Puah, **16** “When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.” **17** But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. **18** So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?” **19** The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” **20** So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. **21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.** **22** Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live.”

11. Bavli, *Sotah* 11b (trans. Soncino)

וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְמִילְדוֹת הָעִבְרִיּוֹת וְגו' רַב וְשִׁמְוֵאל חָד אִמֵּר וּבַתָּהּ וְחַד אִמֵּר כְּלָהּ וְחַמּוֹתָהּ מ"ד אִשָּׁה וּבַתָּהּ  
יּוֹכַבְד וּמָרִים וּמ"ד כְּלָהּ וְחַמּוֹתָהּ יּוֹכַבְד וְאֵלִישֶׁבַע תְּנִיא כַּמ"ד אִשָּׁה וּבַתָּהּ דְּתִנִּיא שְׁפָרָה זוּ יּוֹכַבְד וְלִמָּה נִקְרָא שְׁמָהּ  
שְׁפָרָה שְׁמִשְׁפָּרַת אֵת הוֹלֵד ד"א שְׁפָרָה שְׁפָרוּ וּרְבוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּימֵיהּ פּוּעָה זוּ מָרִים וְלִמָּה נִקְרָא שְׁמָהּ פּוּעָה שְׁהִיתָה פּוּעָה  
(וּמוֹצִיאָה אֵת הוֹלֵד) ד"א פּוּעָה שְׁהִיתָה פּוּעָה בְרוּחַ הַקּוֹדֵשׁ וְאוֹמֵרַת עֲתִידָה אִמִּי שְׁתֵּלֵד בֶּן שְׁמוּשִׁיעַ אֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל  
“And the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives...” Rav and Samuel: **one said they were mother and daughter, and the other said they were daughter-in-law and mother-in-law.** According to him who declared they were mother and daughter, they were Yocheved and Miriam; and according to him who declared they were daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, they were Yocheved and Elisheva. There is a teaching in agreement with him who said they were mother and daughter; for it has been taught: ‘Shifra’ is Yocheved; and why was her name called Shifra? Because she straightened [meshapperet] the limbs of the babe. Another explanation of Shifra is that the Israelites were fruitful [sheparu] and multiplied in her days. ‘Pu’ah’ is Miriam; and why was her name called Puah? Because she cried out [po’ah] to the child and brought it forth. Another explanation of Pu’ah is that she used to cry out through the Holy Spirit and say: ‘My mother will bear a son who will be the saviour of Israel.’

12. Genesis Rabbah 94:9 on Genesis 46:26-27 (trans. Freedman)

רבי לוי בשם רבי שמואל בר נחמן ראי' מ'מיה אדם נותן לחברו ששים וששה כוסות וחוזר ונותן לו אף שלשה והוא מונה אותם שבעים, אלא זו יוכבד שהשלימה מגן של ישראל במצרים. רבי לוי בשם רבי שמואל בר נחמן אמר יוכבד עבורה בארץ כנען, ולדתה בארץ מצרים, ה'א הוא דכתיב (במדבר כו. ט): ושם אשת עמרם יוכבד וגו', על פי'לי דמצרים נולדה

Rabbi Levi said in the name of Rabbi Samuel ben Nahman: Have you ever seen a man give his neighbor sixty-six glasses, then give him another three and count them seventy? But the extra one is Yocheved, who made up the number of Israel in Egypt. Rabbi Levi said in the name of Rabbi Samuel ben Nahman: Jocheved was conceived in the land of Canaan and born in Egypt. Hence it is written, *And the name of Amram's daughter was Yocheved, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt* (Num 26:59) - she was born by the gates of Egypt.

13. Midrash Proverbs 14:1

(משלי יד א): "חכמות נשים בנתה ביתה" - זו יוכבד, שהעמידה שלושה צדיקים, משה ואהרן ומרים, ושלושתם זכו לשמש את ישראל: משה על המן, אהרן על ענני כבוד, ומרים על הבאר, ושלושתם היו נביאים:  
"The wise woman builds her house" - this is Yocheved, who raised three righteous people: Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, and the three of them merited to assist Israel: Moses with the Manna, Aaron with the clouds of glory, and Miriam at the well, and the three of them were prophets.

14. Numbers 26:59 (trans. NRSV)

ושם אשת עמרם יוכבד בת לוי אשר ילדה אתה ללוי במצרים ותלד לעמרם את אהרן ואת משה ואת מרים אחתם:  
The name of Amram's wife was Yocheved daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and she bore to Amram: Aaron, Moses, and their sister Miriam.

15. 1 Chronicles 5:29 (trans. NRSV)

ובני עמרם אהרן ומשה ומרים

And the children of Amram are Aaron, Moses, and Miriam.

16. Exodus 6:23 (trans. NRSV)

ויקח אהרן את אלישבע בת עמינדב אחות נחשון לו לאשה...

Aaron married Elisheva, daughter of Aminadav and sister of Nahshon...

17. Sifre Zuta on Numbers 7:17

באותו היום ראתה אלישבע בת עמינדב ארבע שמחות ואבל אחד, ראתה יבמה מלך אחיה נשיא בעלה כהן גדול שני בניה סגני כהונה ואבל אחד על שני בניה.

On that same day [the day of the dedication of the tabernacle, when Nahshon, Elisheva's brother, brought his offering], Elisheva the daughter of Aminadav saw four joys and one sorrow: she saw that her brother-in-law would be kind, her brother would be prince, her husband would be high priest, and two of her sons would be vice-priests; and one sorrow about her two sons.

18. Exodus 2:1-10 (trans. NRSV)

ונלד איש מבית לוי ויקח את בת לוי: ותהר האשה ותלד בן ותרא אתו כפי טוב הוא ותצפנהו שלשה ירחים: ולא יקלה עוד הצפינו ותקחלו תבת ג'מא ותקמרה בחמר ובזפת ותשם בה את הילד ותשם בסוף על שפת היאר: ותתצב אחתו מרחק לדעה מה יעשה לו: ותרד בת פרעה לרחץ על היאר ונערתייה הלכת על ג'ד היאר ותרא את התבה בתוך הסוף ותשלח את אמתה ותקחה ותפתח ותראהו את הילד והנה נער בכה ותחמל עליו ותאמר מילדי העברים זה: ותאמר אחתו אל בת פרעה האלד וקראתי לד' אשה מינקת מן העברית ומינקת לד' את הילד: ותאמר לה בת פרעה לכי ותלדי העלמה

וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־אֶם הַיֶּלֶד: וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ בַת־פַּרְעֹה הֲלִיכִי אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד הַזֶּה וְהִנְקִיָּהוּ לִי וְאֲנִי אֲתֵּן אֶת־שִׂכְרֹךְ וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה הַיֶּלֶד וַתְּנִיקְהוּ: וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד וַתִּבְאֶהוּ לְבַת־פַּרְעֹה וַיְהִי־לָהּ לְבֵן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מֹשֶׁה וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי מִן־הַמַּיִם מָשִׂיתָהוּ:

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. 2 The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. 3 When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. 4 His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him. 5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. 6 When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. "This must be one of the Hebrews' children," she said. 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" 8 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother. 9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it. 10 When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, "because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

19. Bavli, *Sotah* 12a (trans. Soncino)

וילך איש מבית לוי להיכן הלך אמר רב יהודה בר זבינא שהלך בעצת בתו תנא עמרם גדול הדור היה כיון (שראה שאמר) פרעה הרשע כל הבן הילוד היאורה תשליכוהו אמר לשוא אנו עמלין עמד וגירש את אשתו עמדו כולן וגירשו את נשותיהן אמרה לו בתו אבא קשה גזירתך יותר משל פרעה שפרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים ואתה גזרת על הזכרים ועל הנקיבות פרעה לא גזר אלא בעוה"ז ואתה בעוה"ז ולעוה"ב פרעה הרשע ספק מתקיימת גזירתו ספק אינה מתקיימת אתה צדיק בודאי שגזירתך מתקיימת שנאמר (איוב כב, כח) ותגזר אומר ויקם לך עמד והחזיר את אשתו עמדו כולן והחזירו את נשותיהן ויקח ויחזור מיבעי ליה א"ר יהודה בר זבינא שעשה לו מעשה ליקוחין הושיבה באפריון ואהרן ומרים מרקדין לפניו ומלאכי השרת אמרו (תהלים קיג, ט) אם הבנים שמחה ... א"ר יהודה שנולדו בה סימני נערות

And there went a man of the house of Levi. Where did he go? R. Judah b. Zebina said that he went in the counsel of his daughter. A Tanna taught: Amram was the greatest man of his generation; when he saw that the wicked Pharaoh had decreed 'Every son that is born you shall cast into the river', he said: In vain do we labor. He arose and divorced his wife. All [the Israelites] thereupon arose and divorced their wives. His daughter said to him, 'Father, your decree is more severe than Pharaoh's; because Pharaoh decreed only against the males whereas you have decreed against the males and females. Pharaoh only decreed concerning this world whereas you have decreed concerning this world and the World to Come. In the case of the wicked Pharaoh there is a doubt whether his decree will be fulfilled or not, whereas in your case, though you are righteous, it is certain that your decree will be fulfilled, as it is said: you shall also decree a thing, and it shall be established for you! He arose and took his wife back; and they all arose and took their wives back. And took to wife — it should have read 'and took back!' R. Judah b. Zebina said: — He acted towards her as though it had been the first marriage; he seated her in a palanquin, Aaron and Miriam danced before her, and the Ministering Angels proclaimed, A joyful mother of children. A daughter of Levi. How is this possible! She was one hundred and thirty years old, and he calls her 'a daughter'! ...Rab Judah said: [She is called 'a daughter'] because the signs of maidenhood were reborn in her.

20. Bavli *Megillah* 14a (cf. *Sotah* 13a) (trans. Soncino)

מרים ... ואומרת עתידה אמי שתלד בן שיושיע את ישראל ובשעה שנולד נתמלא כל הבית כולו אורה עמד אביה ונשקה על ראשה אמר לה בתי נתקיימה נבואתך וכיון שהשליכוהו ליאור עמד אביה וטפחה על ראשה ואמר לה בתי היכן נבואתיך היינו דכתיב (שמות ב, ד) ותצב אחותו מרחוק לדעה לדעת מה יהא בסוף נבואתה

[Miriam] said, "My mother is destined to bear a son who will save Israel." When he was born the whole house was filled with light, and her father arose and kissed her on the head, saying, "My

daughter, your prophecy has been fulfilled.” But when they threw him into the river her father arose and tapped her on the head, saying “Daughter, where is your prophecy?” So it is written, “And his sister stood afar off to know,” to know what would be the latter part of her prophecy.

21. Exodus Rabbah 1:22

וכיון שהטילוהו ליאור, עמדה אמה וטפחה לה על ראשה. אמרה לה: בת! והיכן נבואתך? והינו דכתיב: ותחב אוחתו מרחוק וגו', לדעת מה יהא בסוף נביאותה.

When they put him (Moshe) in the river, her mother arose and hit her on the head and said to her daughter: "My daughter, where is your prophecy!?" And this is why the verse says "And his sister stood by from afar", for she wanted to know what would be the results of her prophecy.

22. Leviticus Rabbah 1:3

רבי יהושע דסקנין בשם רבי לוי אמר לה הקדוש ברוך הוא לבתיה בת פרעה, משה לא הנה בנה וקראתו בנה, אף את לא את בתי ואני קורא אותך בתי, שוואמר: אלה בני בתיה, בת יה. (דברי הימים א ד יח):

Rabbi Yehoshua of Siknin in the name of Rabbi Levi: God said to Bitya the daughter of Pharaoh, Moses was not your son and you called him your son, so too you are not my daughter and I call you my daughter, as it says, “these are the children of Bitya, the daughter of God.

23. Exodus 4:10, 14-15 (trans. NRSV)

ויאמר משה אל-יהוה בן אדני לא איש דברים אנכי גם מתמול גם משלשם גם מאז דברך אל-עבדך בן כבד-פה וכבד לשון אנכי: ודברת אליו ושמת את-הדברים בפיו ואנכי אהיה עם-פיה ועם-פיהו והוריתי אתכם את אשר תעשו: ודבר הוא לך אל-העם והנה הוא יהיה-לך לפה ואתה תהיה-לך לאלהים:

But Moses said to the Lord, “O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” ... Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and he said, “What of your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he can speak fluently; even now he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you his heart will be glad. 15 You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do.

24. Micah 6:4 (trans. NRSV)

כי העלתיך מארץ מצרים ומבית עבדים פדיתיה ואשלח לפניך את-משה אהרן ומרים:

For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and redeemed you from the house of slavery; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

**C. Exodus as Mirrored Family Narratives: Family Preservation and Family Annihilation**

25. Exodus 12:1-4, 7, 12-13, 21, 23, 29-30, 37 (trans. NRSV)

ויאמר יהוה אל-משה ואל-אהרן בארץ מצרים לאמר: החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה: דברו אל-כל-עדת ישראל לאמר בעשר לחדש הזה ויקחו לכם איש עֹה לבית-אבת עֹה לבית: ואם-ימעט הבית מהנת משה וקח הוא ושכנו הקרוב אל-ביתו במקסט נפשות איש לפי אכלו תכסו על-השנה: ... וקחו מריהם ונתנו על-שתי המזוזות ועל-המשקוף על הבתים אשר-יאכלו אתו בהם: ... ועברתי בארץ-מצרים בכלילה הזו והפיתי כל-בכור בארץ מצרים מאדם ועד בהמה ובכל-אלהי מצרים אעשה שפטים אגני יהוה: והנה היום היום לכם לאת על הבתים אשר אתם שם וראיתי את-היום ופסחתי עלכם ולא-יהיה בכם נגף למשחית בהכתי בארץ מצרים: ... ויקרא משה לכל-זמני ישראל ויאמר אליהם משכו וקחו לכם צאן למשפחתכם ושחטו הפסח: ... ועבר יהוה לנגף את-מצרים וראו את-היום על-המשקוף ועל שתי המזוזות ופסח יהוה על-הפסח ולא יחן המשחית לבא אל-בתיכם לנגף: ... ויהי | בתצי הלילה ויהוה הנה כל-בכור בארץ מצרים מבכר פרעה הישב על-בסאו עד בכור השבי אשר בבית הבור וכל בכור בהמה: וליקם פרעה

לִילָה הַזֶּה הוּא וְכָל־עֲבָדָיו וְכָל־מִצְרַיִם וַתְּהִי צַעֲקָה גְדוֹלָה בְּמִצְרַיִם כִּי־אֵין בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר אֵין־שָׁם מֵת: ... וַיִּסְעוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִרְעַמְסֵס סֶכֶתָה קְשֻׁש־מֵאוֹת אֶלְפֵי רַגְלֵי הַגִּבֹּרִים לְבַד מִטָּף:

**The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: 2** This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. **3** Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. **4** If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it... **7** They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it... **12** For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. **13** The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt... **21** Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go, select lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover lamb... **23** For the Lord will pass through to strike down the Egyptians; when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over that door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you down. **24** You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children... **29** At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. **30** Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his officials and all the Egyptians; and there was a loud cry in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead... **37** The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children.

26. Exodus 13:1-3 (trans. NRSV)

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: קִדְשִׁילִי כָל־בְּכוֹר פֶּטֶר כָּל־רִחֵם בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאָדָם וּבַבְּהֵמָה לִי הוּא: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־ה'עָם וַיִּזְכֹּר אֶת־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יִצְאֶתֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבְּיַת עַבְדִּים כִּי בַחֲזֹק יָד הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם מִזֶּה וְלֹא יֵאָכֵל חֶמֶץ:  
The Lord said to Moses: Consecrate to me all the firstborn; whatever is the first to open the womb among the Israelites, of human beings and animals, is mine. Moses said to the people, "Remember this day on which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, because the Lord brought you out from there by strength of hand; no leavened bread shall be eaten.

27. Jubilees 49: 1-8 (trans. Charles)

Remember the commandment which the Lord commanded you concerning the p\Passover, that you should celebrate it in its season on the fourteenth of the first month, that you should kill it before it is evening, and that they should eat it by night on the evening of the fifteenth from the time of the setting of the sun. For on this night - the beginning of the festival and the beginning of the joy - you were eating the Passover in Egypt, when all the powers of Mastêmâ had been let loose to slay all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh to the first-born of the captive maid-servant in the mill, and to the cattle. And this is the sign which the Lord gave them: Into every house on the lintels of which they saw the blood of a lamb of the first year, into (that) house they should not enter to slay, but should pass by (it), that all those should be saved that were in the house because the sign of the blood was on its lintels. And the powers of the Lord did everything according as the Lord commanded them, and they passed by all the children of Israel, and the plague came not upon them to destroy from amongst them any soul either of cattle, or man, or dog. And the plague was very grievous in Egypt, and there was no house in Egypt where there was not one dead, and weeping and lamentation. And all Israel was eating the flesh of the paschal lamb, and drinking the wine, and was lauding, and blessing, and giving thanks to the Lord God of



their fathers, and was ready to go forth from under the yoke of Egypt, and from the evil bondage. And remember this day all the days of your life, and observe it from year to year all the days of your life, once a year, on its day, according to all the law thereof, and do not adjourn (it) from day to day, or from month to month. For it is an eternal ordinance, and engraven on the heavenly tablets regarding all the children of Israel that they should observe it every year on its day once a year, throughout all their generations; and there is no limit of days, for this is ordained forever.

#### D. From the Pesach Sacrifice to Crossing the Sea: Appeals to Ancestral Merit

##### 28. Exodus 12:1 (trans. NRSV)

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאַל־אַהֲרֹן בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron **in the land of Egypt**...

##### 29. Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael, Pisha 1 on Exodus 12:1 (ed. Horovitz-Rabin, 2-3; Lauterbach, 3-4):

אם תאמר, דן אנכי מן הנביאים שנדבר עמהם בחוצה לארץ? אף על פי שנדבר עמהם בחוצה לארץ, לא נדבר עמהם אלא בזכות אבות. שנאמר 'כה אמר ה' מנעי קולך מבכי וגו' ויש תקווה לאחריתך וגו' [ירמיה לא].

You could say: "I cite the case of those prophets with whom He did speak outside of the land of Palestine." True, He did speak with them outside of the land, but **He did so only because of ancestral merit**. For thus it is said: "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are not. Thus said the Lord: Refrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded, said the Lord, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy. And there is hope for your future said the Lord" (Jer. 31.15f.).

##### 30. Exodus 12:13 (trans. NRSV)

וְהָיָה הַדָּם לְכֶם לְאֹת עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם שֹׁמְרֵי אֹתֵי אֲתֵי־הַדָּם וּפָסַחְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם וְלֹא־יְהִיֶּה בְכֶם נֶגֶף לְמַשְׁחִית בְּהַכְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: **when I see the blood**, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

##### 31. Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael, Pisha 7 on Exodus 12:13 (cf. Jubilees 18:18-19; 4Q225)

וראיתי את הדם רואה אני דם עקדתו של יצחק, שנאמר ויקרא אברהם שם המקום ההוא ה' יראה וגו' (בראשית כב) ולהלן הוא אומר וכהשחית ראה ה' וינחם וגו' (דברי הימים א' כ"א) מה ראה – דם עקדתו של יצחק.

He sees the blood of the sacrifice of Isaac, as it is said: "And Abraham *And When He Seeth the Blood* the Lord will see), etc. (Gen. 22.14). And it is also ) "Adonai-jireh called the name of that place written: "And as He was about to destroy, the Lord beheld and He repented Him" (I Chron. 21.15). What did He behold? He beheld the blood of the sacrifice of Isaac

##### 32. Exodus 14:15-16 (trans. NRSV)

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה מִה־תִּצַּעַק אֵלַי דְּבַר אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְעוּ: וְאַתָּה הָרָם אֶת־מִטְוֶה וְנָטָה אֶת־יָדְךָ עַל־הַיָּם וַיִּבְקָעֵהוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּתּוֹף הַיָּם בַּיַּבֵּשׁה:

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea **and divide it**, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground.

33. Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael, Beshallah 4 on Exod 14:16

ר' בנאה אומר בזכות מצוה שעשה אביהם אברהם אני אקרע להם את הים שנ' ויבקע עצי עולה (בראשית כב) וכתוב ויבקעו המים.

R. Banaah says: "Because of the merit of the deed which Abraham their father did, I will divide the sea for them." For it is said: "And he cleaved the wood for the burnt-offering" (Gen. 22.3). And here it is written: "And the waters were cleft."

ר' יוסי הגלילי אומר כשנכנסו ישראל לים כבר הר המוריה נעקר ממקומו ומזבחו של יצחק הבנוי עליו ומערכתו הערוכה עליו ויצחק כאלו עקוד ונתון על המזבח ואברהם כאלו פשט ידו ולקח את המאכלת לשחוט את בנו שנ' וישלח אברהם את ידו ויקח את המאכלת לשחוט את בנו (בראשית כב) אמר המקום למשה משה בני נחונים בצרה והים סוגר ושונא רודף ואתה עומד ומאריך בתפלה

R. Jose the Galilean says: At the moment when the children of Israel went into the sea, mount Moriah began to move from its place with the altar for Isaac that had been built upon it and the whole scene that had been arranged upon it—Isaac as if he were bound and placed upon the altar, Abraham as if he were stretching forth his hand and taking the knife to slay his son. God then said to Moses: Moses, My children are in distress, the sea forming a bar and the enemy pursuing, and you stand so long praying?

34. Muriel Rukeyser, "Miriam: The Red Sea" (1973)

High above shores and times,  
I on the shore  
forever and ever.  
Moses my brother  
has crossed over  
to milk, honey,  
that holy land.  
Building Jerusalem.  
I sing forever  
on the seashore.  
I do remember  
horseman and horses,  
waves of passage  
poured into war,  
all poured into journey.  
My unseen brothers  
have gone over;  
chariots  
deep seas under.  
I alone stand here  
ankle-deep  
and I sing, I sing,  
until the lands  
sing to each other.

## Part IV: The Passover Ritual as a Family Ritual

### A. Passover Sacrifice: Biblical and Second Temple Sources

#### 35. Philo, *Special Laws* II.145ff (trans. Loeb)

In this festival [Pascha] many myriads of victims from noon till eventide are offered by the whole people, old and young alike, raised for that particular day to the dignity of the priesthood. For at other times the priests according to the ordinance of the law carry out both the public sacrifices and those offered by private individuals. But on this occasion the whole nation performs the sacred rites and acts as priests with pure hands and complete immunity. The reason for this is as follows: the festival is a reminder and thank-offering for that great migration from Egypt which was made by more than two million men and women...

#### 36. Josephus, *Antiquities* XI.109 (trans. Loeb)

When the festival of Unleavened Bread came round in the first month, which by the Macedonians is called Xanthikos and by us Nisan, all the people streamed from their villages to the city and celebrated the festival in a state of purity with their wives and children, according to the law of their fathers; and, after offering the sacrifice called Pascha on the fourteenth of the same month, they feasted for seven days...

### B. Passover Seder: A Rabbinic Innovation

#### 37. Mishnah *Pesahim* 10:4 (trans. Danby)

מִזְגוּ לוֹ כּוֹס שֵׁנִי, וְכָאן הֵבִין שׁוֹאֵל אָבִיו, וְאִם אֵין דַּעַת בְּבִנּוֹ, אָבִיו מְלַמְדוֹ, מֵה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת... וְלִפִּי דַעַתוֹ שֶׁל בֵּן, אָבִיו מְלַמְדוֹ. מִתְחִיל בְּגִנּוֹת וּמְסִים בְּשִׁבְחָה, וְדוֹרֵשׁ מֵאַרְמֵי אוֹבֵד אָבִי, עַד שִׁיגְמַר כָּל הַפְּרָשָׁה כְּלָה: They then mix him the second cup. And here the son asks his father (and if the son has not enough understanding his father instructs him), Why is this night different from other nights...? ... **And according to the understanding of the son his father instructs him.** He begins with the disgrace and ends with the glory; and he expounds from *A wandering Aramean was my father...* until he finishes the whole section.

#### 38. Tosefta *Pesahim* 10:3, 4, 9 (trans. Bokser)

מצוה על האדם לשמח בנו ובני ביתו ברגל במה משמחן ביין [כדכתיב (תהילים ק"ד:ט"ז) ויין ישמח לבב אנוש וגו'] רבי יהודה אומר נשים בראוי להם וקטנים בראוי להם.  
A man is commanded to make his children and people of his household happy on the holiday. With what does he make them happy? With wine, as it is written, "and wine gladdens the human heart" (Ps 104:15). Rabbi Yehuda says, Women with what is appropriate for them, and children with what is appropriate for them.

#### 39. Bavli *Pesahim* 108b (trans. Soncino)

R. Judah said: Men with what is suitable for them, and women with, what is suitable for them. 'Men with what is suitable for them': with wine. And women with what? R. Joseph recited: in Babylonia, with coloured garments; in Eretz Yisrael, with ironed lined garments.

#### 40. Tosefta *Pesahim* 10:4, 9 (trans. Bokser)

המקרא את בנו ובנותיו קטנים צריך להיות עונה עמהן במקום שעונים...

[As to] one who leads in reciting to his minor sons and daughters - he must respond with them in the places that they respond...

ר"א אומר חוטפין מצה לתינוקות בשביל שלא יישנו ר' יהודה אומר משמו אפילו לא אכל אלא פרפרת אחת אפילו לא טבל אלא חזרת אחת חוטפין מצה לתינוקות בשביל שלא יישנו

Rabbi Leazar said, [they] grab unleavened bread [from each other] for [the sake of] the child so that he will not fall asleep. Rabbi Yehuda says, even if [the adult] has eaten only one hors-d'oeuvre, even if [he] has dipped only one [piece of] lettuce [and is still hungry], [he and the others] grab unleavened bread for [the sake of] the child, so that he will not fall asleep.

#### 41. *Tosefta Pesahim 10:12 (trans. Bokser)*

אין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן... חייב אדם לעסוק בהלכות הפסח כל הלילה אפילו בינו לבין בנו אפילו בינו לבין עצמו אפילו בינו לבין תלמידו. מעשה ברבן גמליאל וזקנים שהיו מסובין בבית ביתוס בן זוגין בלוד והיו עוסקין בהלכות הפסח כל הלילה עד קרות הגבר, הגביהו מלפניהם ונועדו והלכו [להן] לבית המדרש.

After [eating from] the passover offering they do not end [with] afikoman... A person is obligated to engage himself in the [study of the] laws of Passover all night, even with [only] his son, even with [only] himself, even with [only] his student. A case concerning Rabban Gamaliel and the elders who were reclining in the house of Baitos the son of Zonin in Lod, and [they] were engaged in the laws of Passover all night, until the cock's crow. [They] raised up [the table] from in front of them, and [they] stirred and went along to the house of study.

#### 42. *Bavli Pesahim 108b-109a (trans. Soncino)*

תנו רבנן הכל חייבין בארבעה כוסות הללו אחד אנשים ואחד נשים ואחד תינוקות אמר רבי יהודה וכי מה תועלת יש לתינוקות בין אלא מחלקין להן קליות ואגוזין בערב פסח כדי שלא ישנו וישאלו אמרו עליו על רבי עקיבא שהיה מחלק קליות ואגוזין לתינוקות בערב פסח כדי שלא ישנו וישאלו תניא רבי אליעזר אומר חוטפין מצות בלילי פסחים בשביל תינוקות שלא ישנו תניא אמרו עליו על רבי עקיבא מימיו לא אמר הגיע עת לעמוד בבית המדרש חוץ מערבי פסחים וערב יום הכפורים בערב פסח בשביל תינוקות כדי שלא ישנו וערב יום הכפורים כדי שיאכילו את בניהם

Our Rabbis taught: All are bound to [drink] the four cups, men, women, and children. Said R. Judah: Of what benefit then is wine to children? But we distribute to them parched ears of corn and nuts on the eve of Passover, so that they should not fall asleep, and ask [the 'questions']. It was related of R. Akiba that he used to distribute parched ears and nuts to children on the eve of Passover, so that they might not fall asleep but ask [the 'questions']. It was taught, R. Eliezer said: The matzot are eaten hastily on the night of Passover, on account of the children, so that they should not fall asleep. It was taught: it was related of R. Akiba [that] never did he say in the Beth Hamidrash, 'It is time to rise [cease study]', except on the eve of Passover and the eve of the Day of Atonement. On the eve of Passover, because of the children, so that they might not fall asleep. On the eve of the Day of Atonement, in order that they should give food to their children.

### Part V: The Passover Obligation as a Family Obligation: "Throughout your Generations" and "Tell your Children"

#### 43. *Exodus 12:14, 17, 24, 26-27, 42 (trans. NRSV):*

והיזהר היום הזה לכם לזכרון וסגתם אתו חג ליהוה לדרתיכם חקת עולם תחגגו: ... ושמרתם את המצות פי בעצם היום הזה הוצאתי את צבאותיכם מארץ מצרים ושמרתם את היום הזה לדרתיכם חקת עולם: ... ושמרתם את הדבר הזה לחק-לזו ולבגידו עד-עולם: ... והלילה כי יאמרו אליכם בניכם מה העבדה הזאת לכם: ואמרתם זכר-פסח הוא ליהוה אשר פסח על-בתי בני ישראל במצרים בנגפו את-מצרים ואת-בתינו הציל ויקד העם וישתחוו: ... ליל שמרים הוא ליהוה להוציאם מארץ מצרים הוא-הלילה הזה ליהוה שמרים לכל-בני ישראל לדרתם:

14 This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance... 17 You shall observe the festival of unleavened bread, for on this very day I brought your companies out of the land of Egypt: you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a perpetual ordinance... 24 You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children... 26 And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this observance?' 27 you shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" And the people bowed down and worshiped... 42 That was for the Lord a night of vigil, to bring them out of the land of Egypt. That same night is a vigil to be kept for the Lord by all the Israelites throughout their generations.

44. Exodus 13:8, 10, 14

והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה יהוה לי בצאתי ממצרים: ... ושמרת את החקקה הזאת למועדה מימים מימה: ... והלילה כיישאלך בנה מחר לאמר מה זאת ואמרת אליו בתוקף יד הוציאנו יהוה ממצרים מבית עבדים: 8 You shall tell your child on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.' ... 10 You shall keep this ordinance at its proper time from year to year... 14 When in the future your child asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall answer, 'By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.'

## Part VI: Conclusions

45. Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, Tara Mohr, *The Women's Passover Companion*, 45-46

"The Passover seder is one of Judaism's oldest, most powerful, and most widely observed rituals. As with so many rituals, part of its power lies in the accumulated weight of the collective memory and loyalty of all those who, over thousands of years, have performed the seder. The rituals of the seder evoke for us not only the experiences of our ancestors in Egypt but also the lives of Jews throughout history who have sustained this ancient ritual and imbued it with their own meaning. At the same time, a part of the power of ritual lies in its capacity to elicit and express new layers of meaning that come from our own lived experience. These connections are immediate, urgent, and often unexpected. Jewish tradition teaches us the importance of both *keva* (structure) and *kavanah* (intention) in our ritual practice: our observance must be both fixed and fluid, structured and spontaneous. Ritual must be at once fresh and familiar... The seder, after all, is deliberately an act both of remembering and of imagination."

46. E. M. Broner, *The Women's Haggadah* (1993), 26

It is said that four women gathered in Bnei Berak, reclining on cushions and relating the Exodus from Egypt. They are our foremothers: Rachel, Beruriah, Ima Shalom, who was a descendant from the house of Hillel, and her niece, the daughter of Rabbi Gamliel. Our Mothers spent the Night of Vigil relearning their history until their daughters came to them and said, "Mothers, the time has come to say the morning *shema*."

47. Sharon Richter, "The Seder, Hands On," *The Jewish Week* (2012)

We want "Maggid" — the story of G-d's intervention, redemption and involvement in our lives — to be the favorite and most memorable part of the seder. We consider the following: What are the values that we would like to emphasize? Do we have adequate materials accessible to review and prepare? How can we best meet the needs of our 6-year-old daughter? Our 27-year-old nephew? When we focus primarily on making the seder meaningful and memorable, the preparation for Pesach takes on an entirely new meaning. By transmitting core values and beliefs in a joyous and positive environment, the taste of the afikoman lasts long after the seder is over.

