

*IN CELEBRATION OF JEWISH WOMEN:  
OUR EVERYDAY MIRACLES*

*ALBUQUERQUE COMMUNITY JEWISH WOMEN'S SEDER  
MARCH 26, 2009*

## OPENING PRAYER

Welcome to the Albuquerque Jewish Community Women's Seder: In Celebration of Women, Our Everyday Miracles.

As we celebrate our liberation and our role as women, our hope is to achieve spiritual bonding. We honor all those women who have come before us bringing us to the table today.

Judaism places great importance on names, as the name of a person or thing is closely related to its essence. Names give us a connection to previous generations while making a statement about hope for who we will become.

We stated our names. Tonight, we also name Miriam, who dwells in our midst. Miriam exemplifies many of the attributes we celebrate tonight. It was Miriam who kept an eye on her baby brother as he floated down the Nile. It was Miriam who arranged for her mother, Yocheved, to become the baby's wet nurse. It was Miriam, who, after the Children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, "took a timbrel in her hand" to celebrate with song and dance. Miriam: a woman who made things happen!

Planning this Seder and creating the Haggadah are examples of how Jewish traditions develop. This Haggadah is taken from several sources including portions of Haggadot developed by other communities.

Recalling the importance of names is not a Pesach seder. However, that celebration of freedom is a connection and statement we continue.

Seder means "order," of age-old steps and symbols. There is a variety of opportunities to celebrate them throughout the year - such as Pesach, Tu B'Shevat or Chanukah. This year our seder celebrates women, especially those who are our "everyday miracles" . . . commemorating the steps of our journey.

A Haggadah is a "telling." The Pesach Haggadah was created so that Jews who have been silent or silenced by tradition might add their questions and insights to the timeless tales of our people. This Women's Haggadah reflects a commitment to an evolving Judaism that celebrates the contributions of the matriarchs to the rich life of our people. Tonight we honor sisters, mothers, daughters and aunts: overlooked by scholars, left nameless by the liturgy, and downplayed by those who traditionally tell and retell the story of our people

Seders affirm Jewish tradition and transform it. We hope that you will enjoy this Seder, that you will discover some new ways to bring spirituality into your lives and that you will rejoice with us in the spirit, the wisdom and the power of generations of Jewish women.

*The Talmud says: "Through the merits of the righteous women of that generation, the Israelites were redeemed from Egypt." (Sotah 11b) It was the virtue of these women during their time in slavery that rabbinic tradition credits with preserving the Jewish people for emancipation and eventual nationhood.*

## **We Celebrate Together**

*By Rebecca Wolpert Schwartz*

*Chorus: We celebrate together,  
rejoice in what we've become,  
and unite the female spirit;  
we are many, yet we are one*

*We celebrate together  
continue what we've begun.  
Holding hands with one another,  
we are many, yet we are one.*

*As we praise God for our deliverance  
from Egypt in days of yore.  
We will raise our cups and our voices high;  
remember what this night is for.*

*We celebrate together,  
rejoice in what we've become,  
and unite the female spirit;  
we are many, yet we are one*

*Just as Miriam stood by the water's edge  
and danced with timbrel in hand,  
we'll take time to bask in our freedom,  
pray for peace in every land*

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam  
Shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higi-anu las'man haseh*

*We celebrate together,  
rejoice in what we've become,  
and unite the female spirit;  
we are many, yet we are one*

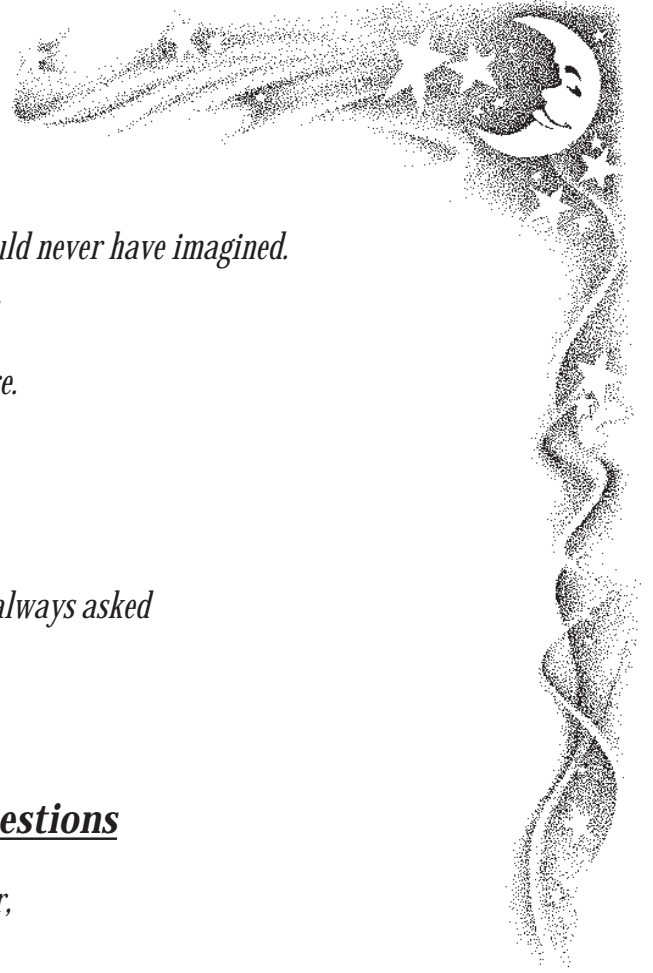
*We celebrate together  
continue what we've begun.  
Holding hands with one another,  
we are many, yet we are one*

*We are many, yet we are one  
We are many, yet we are one*



## **Mah Nishtana**

*Why is this night different from all other nights?  
On this night,  
we gather together in a way our foremothers could never have imagined.  
On this night we gather as an extended family of women.  
We break through the glass "Mechitza,"  
the curtain confining women to a separate sphere.  
What do we celebrate tonight?  
Women's stories long relegated to a minor place.  
What do we discard?  
The echo of exclusionary language.  
Let us enter into this Seder as if the ancient rabbis had always asked  
and valued the opinions of women.  
Surely God never meant for women to be overlooked*



## **The Song of Questions**

*Mother, asks the clever daughter,  
Who are our mothers~  
Who are our ancestors?  
What is our history?  
Give us our name. Name our genealogy.*

*Mother, asks the wicked daughter,  
If I learn my history, will I not be angry?  
Will I not be bitter as Miriam  
Who was deprived of her prophecy?*

*Mother, asks the simple daughter,  
If Miriam lies buried in sand,  
Why must we dig up those bones?  
Why must we remove her from the sun and stone  
Where she belongs?*

*The one who knows not how to question,  
she has no past, she has no present,  
she can have no future without knowing her history,  
without knowing her angers,  
without knowing her questions.*



# MIRIAM'S CUP

We pass Miriam's cup round the table and each pour into it some drops of water. Just as each shares in the cup, so, too, the presence of each person adds something unique to this seder.

*May the cup of Miriam refresh and inspire us as we embark on our journey through this Haggadah. May we fill it with memories of our past and hopes for our future.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה בְּדַבְרוֹ.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam she'hakol nihiyeh bidvaro.

*Praised are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, at whose word all things come into existence.  
(drink water)*



## The Journey Song

*By Debbie Friedman & Tamara Ruth Cohen*

*Where does the journey begin? Where will we go?  
Hours pass the answers might change, as we keep moving along.  
Stand at the shores of the sea, fearful we want to turn back  
The sea parts; our eyes fill with wonder as we go along on our journey*

*Where does the journey begin? Where will we go?  
Days pass the answers can change, as we keep moving along  
Stepping into the unknown, hear the echoes of Miriam's song  
We awaken, retelling our stories as we go along on our journey*

*Where does the journey begin? Where will we go? Years pass;  
the answers have changed as we keep moving along  
Cross the sea, it's the time to sing a song: we are free  
Dance with your timbrels in hand  
There's no turning back from this journey*

*Where does the journey begin? Where will we go?  
Hours pass; the answers might change as we keep moving along  
Days pass, the answers can change as we keep moving along  
Years pass, the answers have changed as we keep moving along*



## An Everyday Miracle

Flora Spiegelberg was an accomplished pianist, art collector, and organizer of local literary and dramatic clubs. In 1876 Flora arrived in Santa Fe with her new husband. The gruelling trip by railroad, stagecoach and army ambulance over rough country caused Flora to miscarry.

Flora and Santa Fe's Archbishop Lamy became close friends, as described in "Death Comes to the Archbishop" by Willa Cather. She organized several community projects - including establishing the first non-sectarian school in Santa Fe. She hired a woman to teach the children, and raised money to purchase land for a school as well as the first children's playground and garden in Santa Fe. She conducted two religious schools herself, one a Sabbath school on Saturdays for Jewish children and the other a Sunday school for Catholic children.

In the late 1880's her family moved to New York City, where their daughters could grow up in a Jewish environment and eventually marry Jewish men. There she worked for social improvement, organizing the Boys Vocational Club and the first Jewish Working Girls Club, which offered evening classes. She was a force behind creating a modern system of garbage collection, explaining health and cleanliness of streets was "quite within the province of women." She was a writer of children's stories, novels and a radio script broadcast by CBS in the 1930s. She published stories from her own life in "Reminiscences of a Jewish Bride of the Santa Fe Trail".



### Examples set by the Four Daughters

We acknowledge with pride the accomplishments of our Jewish sisters throughout history who have touched the world with their healing powers, facilitated communication between adversaries, nurtured their families, cared for the disabled, and, through teaching, ensured that our stories would be passed down from generation to generation. The Torah bids us tell our offspring about our history. From this our tradition infers four kinds of children who appear in various guises throughout our daily lives. Their attitudes must be pondered and answers sought. Tonight we turn to our daughters and describe phases they go through.



**The Committed Daughter** wants to deepen her understanding and participate in her birthright. She asks: "What can I learn from the experiences of Jewish women who came before me that is relevant to my life today?"

*It is our obligation to tell her of the rich tapestry of women before us, of the struggles they endured, of the changes, and failures, and work still to do.*



**The Angry, Alienated Daughter** has turned away from Judaism because of the pain it has caused her. She asks, “What can this sexist tribal rite possibly have to say to me?” She says “to me” and not “to us”, removing herself from our ranks and from our struggles.

*Although she has turned her back on us, we must not turn our back on her; we must confront her together and say, “What benefits are you deriving from your separation from our joyful celebration? Don’t you know you will still be identified as a Jew and as a woman in times of suffering? Join us in changing what hurts you most.”*

**The Superficially Identified Daughter** has no conflict with her Jewishness, because it is so marginal in her life. She asks “What’s it all about anyway? Who needs commitment?”



*We must explain to her that lox and bagel Judaism is so diluted that it is no wonder she relegates Judaism to the remote reaches of her life. We can encourage her to seize the day and begin to struggle against her assimilation. . . and make lifeline connections here at our seder.*

**The Daughter Without Jewish Experience** has never dropped out of the community because she was never in it, does not even know where to begin.



*Tonight we embrace her and involve her in our joy so that she can begin to feel a part of our people.*

## CUP OF THE FUTURE

We drink this cup to honor our daughters and the possibilities of their lives. Let them know the strength of their ties to our people and to the women before them.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה בִּדְבָרוֹ.

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam she'hakol nihiyeh bidvaro.

*Praised are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, at whose word all things come into existence.  
(drink sparkling water)*

### An Everyday Miracle

A story of the Conversos, the hidden Jews of New Mexico: “...and she (the mother) said: it’s been a deep dark secret among the family of my maternal great-grandmother, that the secret of being Jewish was passed down through the women... and since my sister had passed away, mother thought it was her responsibility to let me know...”.

## SYMBOLIC FOODS

### The Pomegranate



The pomegranate's many seeds represent the 613 Mitzvot a Jew has to perform. It also is a symbol of fertility and all that women add to our lives. When eating the pomegranate, a special blessing is said beseeching God to make the Jewish people as fruitful as the seeds of the pomegranate. As you taste the pomegranate, share with your table one Mitzvah (commandment) you value as an expression of your Judaism. *(taste the pomegranate)*

### The Apple



Apples and women have a long history together. The apple is considered the best nature has to offer, and has something for three senses: smell, taste and visual aesthetics. In this way, it is similar to people, the height of Creation. We note, however, apples are thin-skinned and bruise easily. We are also thin-skinned, and our soul is easily bruised. Put one "bad apple" in a community and the whole community becomes suspect. Recall, too, that Eve was rumored to eat the Apple from the tree of knowledge of good and evil - what the kids might call TMI (too much information). *(wait to eat the apple with the orange)*

### The Orange



We use the orange to represent inclusion - the variety of people, perspectives and expressions symbolized by its many segments and seeds. Susannah Heschel, a respected Jewish teacher, encountered bread on a seder plate intended to symbolize solidarity with Jewish lesbians. She transformed the bread to an orange (kosher for Pesach) and extended it to include all who are marginalized in the Jewish community - particularly adding "widows." She felt the orange suggested the fruitfulness of all Jews when each and every one of us are contributing and active members of Jewish life.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam boray pri ha-aytz.

*Praised are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, Who created the fruit of the tree  
(share an orange and apple)*

### The Artichoke



The artichoke gets its symbolism from the way it blossoms. From it we learn joy of process, of appreciating the outer layers as we delve below the surface to experience the heart. Let us savor learning about the women present, getting to the truth of who they truly are. We mine the layers of our lives to bring their fullness to bear. *(taste the artichoke)*



## Coffee beans



A casual representation of the joys and struggles of our lives - coffee beans for the added bitterness and stress women often face when juggling many responsibilities - and the chocolate for all that makes it worthwhile. (*taste the coffee beans, enjoy!*)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam  
Shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higi-anu lazman hazeh

*Blessed are You, Adonai our God, sovereign of the universe who has given us life,  
who has sustained us, and who has enabled us to reach this season.*

## PLAGUES OF OUR LIVES

As we prepare to celebrate the Festival of Freedom, let us think for a moment about slavery. What does it mean to live your life at someone else's mercy? To never be good enough. To always be subjugated. To live in fear. The penalty for escaping is severe punishment or death. The penalty for staying is loss of self. A battered woman is a slave to her abuser, as the Israelites were slaves to Pharaoh. Our ancestors, while free, complained of hunger and wanted to go back to Egypt, where, even if enslaved, at least they had food. Yes, even today, some still blame women who return to their abusers. We speak today for those women who still live in slavery, still feel the daily yoke of a Pharaoh's oppression. Battered women live under a domestic reign of terror and can only dream of the promise of freedom. These plagues dwell in the desert where she must wander for years, often alone. If she is one of the lucky ones, she will arrive safely in the Promised Land of a new life.

*We recite together:*

*Disbelief*

*Blame*

*Injury*

*Humiliation*

*Trauma*

*Stalking*

*Threats*

*Loneliness*

*Nightmares*

*... and ALL plagues of violence against women.*



It is said that oppressed people must win their own freedom, rather than rely on the kindness of others. What is given can be taken away, and so Liberty is not a gift. Tonight we name 10 ways women have yet to gain full freedom so that we may be eternally vigilant

- the consistently male image of God and the sexist language of many prayers and blessings
- *the lack of recognition of women as leaders, scholars and decision-makers who could serve as role models for all of us*
- the acceptance of physical and verbal abuse of women on the street, in the workplace, and in the home
- *the stereotypes brought upon us as Jewish women against which we have had to struggle to maintain our pride*
- the denial by omission of women who are single, childless, battered, poor or disabled from the concerns of fairness and equal opportunity
- *the emphasis on unrealistic images of physical beauty as essential for women's self-esteem, causing us to surgically alter or to starve our bodies*
- continuing barriers in the workplace: glass ceilings, differential pay, inflexibility toward job-sharing and attitudes that create the "Mommy track"
- *the devaluing of the professions of homemaking and volunteerism as compared to salaried jobs*
- the silence about our place in history as Jewish women

***from all these plagues, Judaism and women must be freed.***

In our age, as Jewish women have emerged from obscurity, let us also celebrate ten accomplishments, examples of what women bring to society to balance the plagues of our past.

- 1 Our matriarchs would be proud that women are counted in the minyan in liberal worship services.
2. Our foremothers would be proud that a woman, Golda Meir, has served as Prime Minister of Israel.

Help us name eight more accomplishments

# THE CUP OF PERSISTENCE

We lift the third cup - but do not drink as the work is not yet done.

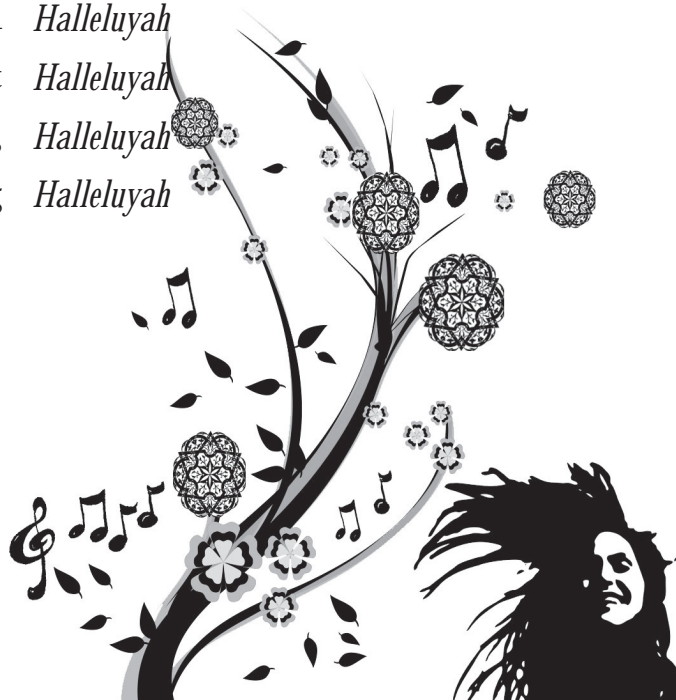
## An Everyday Miracle

Sara Spiro married Henry Grant in 1892 and they moved to Abiquiú to operate a trading post. Their children were delivered by Native American midwives, as there were no medical facilities in that part of the Territory. Sara gave basic medical care to her family and the nearby Pueblo Indians. Trained as a teacher, she provided schooling as well. During a smallpox epidemic, Sara telegraphed an institution “back East” for help. Subsequently a supply of vaccine arrived by horseback. She inoculated as many of the inhabitants as she could. When the supply ran out she created her own vaccine by breaking existing pustules on those already infected.

## Praises

### *Halleluyah*

Let us sing a new song *Halleluyah*  
Let us sing in the morning when we open our eyes *Halleluyah*  
Let us sing in the evening when sleep dampens our eyes *Halleluyah*  
Let us sing for the child who smiles with a secret *Halleluyah*  
Let us sing for the aged who share quiet talk *Halleluyah*  
Let us sing for the sick whose bodies ache for strength *Halleluyah*  
Let us sing for the well who run certain and straight *Halleluyah*  
For Israel, for women, for men, for us all, *Halleluyah*  
Let us sing a new song *Halleluyah*



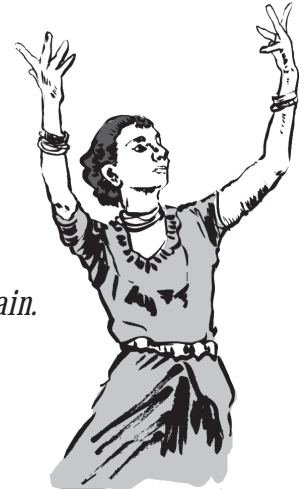
## An Everyday Miracle

Yetta Louise Goldsmith was born in 1843 in Bavaria. Arriving in the United States, Yetta met and married Samuel Kohn, a merchant in the pelt, hide and wool trade. The couple had six children. In 1869, they settled in Las Vegas, New Mexico. When her husband died in 1878, Yetta and her young children moved to La Cinta where she opened a small store. Eventually she returned to Las Vegas and Yetta took up cattle ranching, situated in Montoya, New Mexico, under the business name Y. Kohn & Co. Yetta Kohn made a name for herself as a businesswoman, rancher, philanthropist and matriarch.



### Proverbs 31:10-31

*A woman of valour who can find? For her price is far above rubies.  
The heart of her husband does safely trust in her, and he has no lack of gain.  
She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.  
She seeks wool and flax, and works willingly with her hands.  
She is like the merchant-ships; she brings her food from afar.  
She rises also while it is yet night, and gives food to her household, and a portion to her maidens.  
She considers a field, and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.  
She girds her loins with strength, and makes strong her arms.  
She perceives that her merchandise is good; her lamp goes not out by night.  
She lays her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle.  
She stretches out her hand to the poor; yea, she reaches  
She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet.  
She makes for herself coverlets; her clothing is fine linen and purple.  
Her husband is known at the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.  
She makes linen garments and sells them; and delivers girdles unto the merchant.  
Strength and dignity are her clothing; and she laughs at the time to come.  
She opens her mouth with wisdom; and the law of kindness is on her tongue.  
She looks well to the ways of her household, and eats not the bread of idleness.  
Her children rise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:  
'Many daughters have done valiantly, but you excell them all.'  
Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that fears Adonai, she shall be praised.  
Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her works praise her in the gates.*



## THE FESTIVE MEAL

We prepare to partake of the fruit of our hands. Our hands engage in holy work each day, nurturing our families, our communities and even ourselves. As we cleanse them to partake of the blessings, we know these hands are themselves a blessing.

We wash our hands in water, which sustains our lives. We wash our hands in water which cleanses and purifies, preparing us for the holiness of blessing. The holiness of eating of God's bounty with kavanah, devotion, and deveikuut, closeness to God.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam,  
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat yadayim.

*Blessed are You, Adonai our God, sovereign of the universe who makes us holy with mitzvot and commands us to wash our hands.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, hamotzi lechem min ha' aretz.

*Blessed are You, Adonai our God, sovereign of the universe who brings forth bread from the earth.*

## BIRKAT - BLESSINGS AFTER THE MEAL

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי הַזֵּן אֶת הַכֹּל:

Baruch Atah Adonai, hazan et hakol.  
*Blessed are you Adonai, who provides for all.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל הַמָּזוֹן:

Baruch Atah Adonai, al ha' aretz v' al hamazon  
*Blessed are You Adonai, for land and food.*

## OPENING THE DOOR

We are mindful that doors can be open, inviting and hospitable. They can also be closed, limiting and rejecting. Let us commit ourselves to fashioning a world that is full of open doors.

Let us take a few moments to tell one another about women who opened doors for us, who inspired us, who helped us - women we know personally or who we admire from afar.



### An Everyday Miracle

Among Jewish women are many who walked through that portal later in life, those called “Jews by Choice” and who claim a great share of maintaining our Jewish families and peoplehood. Juana Valle del Acoma was the daughter of the Acoma pueblo governor. She married Solomon Bibo, a Jewish trader from Prussia, and he, too, became a chief of the tribe. In about 1900 they moved to San Francisco, to educate their children. A quote: Juana was sent to school by Solomon to learn “European” ways; she converted to Judaism and had “all moral children except one.”

## THE CUP OF CHALLENGE

We dedicate this last cup to the women of the future who will have to rise to the challenges of this century. They can be proud of their predecessors who have helped pave the way. We, tonight, celebrate our past, and the potential of women to come.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן:

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam borei p’ri hagafen.

*Blessed are You, Adonai our God, sovereign of the universe who creates the fruit of the vine.*

*(drink wine)*

L’chayim!

## DAYENU

From singing Dayenu we learn to celebrate each landmark on our journey. Yet we must never confuse these way stations with the redemptive destination. Because it is not yet dayenu. Not yet enough. There is still so much to do in our work of repairing the world.

### **Dayenu chorus:**

*Day-day-enu (3x) Dayenu, dayenu.*

*(read the line and respond together "dayenu")*

*If we speak truthfully about the pain, joys and contradictions of our lives - Dayenu*

*If we listen to others with sensitivity and compassion - Dayenu*

*If we continue to organize, march and vote to affirm our values - Dayenu*

*If we fight against economic injustice, sexism, racism and homophobia  
where we live, work, study and pray - Dayenu*

*If we volunteer our time and money - Dayenu*

*If we break the silence about violence against women and children  
in the Jewish community and everywhere - Dayenu*

*If we teach our students and our children to pursue justice with all their strength - Dayenu*

*If we care for the earth and its future as responsibly as we care for those we love - Dayenu*

*If we realize our power to effect change - Dayenu*

*If we bring holiness into our lives, homes and communities - Dayenu*

*If we honor our visions more than our fears - Dayenu*

*v'lo dayeinu*

*it will - and will not - be enough*

*(chorus)*

And what is the promise to women? That we effect our own lives and the generations that follow us.

*We have now fulfilled our obligation as Jewish women to recount our story. May we come together again as friends and as sisters. May there be courageous steps taken to bring peace and cooperation between Israel and her neighbors. May we celebrate next year in a world at peace. May we celebrate next year in a world of universal freedom for women and for men.*

## CLOSING PRAYER



## *Miriam's Song*

*Words and Music by Debbie Friedman*

*Chorus: And the women dancing with their timbrels  
Followed Miriam as she sang her song  
Sing a song to the One whom we've exalted  
Miriam and the women danced, and danced the whole night long*

*And Miriam was a weaver of unique variety  
The tapestry she wove was one which sang our history  
With every strand and every thread she crafted her delight  
A woman touched with spirit, she dances toward the light  
Chorus*

*When Miriam stood upon the shore and gazed across the sea  
The wonder of this miracle she soon came to believe  
Whoever thought the sea would part with an outstretched hand  
And we would pass through freedom and march to the promised land  
Chorus*

*And Miriam the prophet took her timbrel in her hand  
And all the women followed her, just as she had planned  
And Miriam raised her voice in song, she sang with praise and might,  
"We've just lived through a miracle, we're going to dance tonight."*

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Portions of this Haggadah were drawn from these everyday miracles: Haggadot created by the Sisterhoods & women's groups of: Broward County Florida, Fort Worth, Central Synagogue of New York, Memphis Temple Israel, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, North Shore Congregation Israel, Riverdale Temple, New York, Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City, Women's Division, E.M.Broner, The Women's Haggadah, CCAR "Seder Tu Beshvat", [www.miriamscup.com/Heschel\\_orange.htm](http://www.miriamscup.com/Heschel_orange.htm)