

From The Torah of Nonviolence Symbols on the Seder Plate

Each of the symbols on the seder plate represents the movement from the tzar (narrowness) of mitzryim (the dimension of spiritual constriction) to the yetziah of liberation.

The symbols themselves are transformative, they exist not only in the four worlds, but also along another continuum-the one that turns swords into plough shares and spears into pruning hooks.

Peach can mean to limp under the burden of enslavement or leap like a young lamb in the spirit of liberation. Pesach is a limping dance that transforms into a leaping dance. We limped under the burden of slavery and leapt at the opportunity to create freedom.

(Use the Turkisher, a dance from the Klezmer dance repertoire to express the movement of Pesach from limping to leaping. There are fourteen different words for dance in the Torah, including the word Hag itself.)

Maror is bitter, yet it is the first herb of the spring. Bitter herbs are also healing herbs, like strong medicine, liberating us from the sickness of slavery.

Matzah is the bread of affliction and the bread of freedom. By inviting everyone to the table we transform poor bread into the bread of royalty. We are all beloved guests at the table of liberation. Matzah is the symbol of equal status around the table of humanity.

Haroset is the mortar that holds the bricks together, and, at the same time, haroset is the sweet fruits that women offered their spouses in the fields to give them renewed hope. Haroset misused by Pharaoh is transformed into sweetness and delight to symbolize relationships grounded in love and not oppression.

'Let all who are hungry come eat' is a daily invitation to dismantle systems of injustice that separate us into a gracious hospitality that feeds us all. Each symbol on the seder plate exists along a transformative continuum from darkness to light, from enslavement to freedom, from violence to liberation from violence and the establishment of a Torah of Nonviolence, in every place we gather.