HAGGADAT AL-MĪTHĀQ

הַמִּיתָאק שֶׁל הַגָּדָה

هَجّادَة المِيثَاق

The Haggadah of the Covenant

An Interfaith Supplement for Muslim-Jewish Liberation

Emphasizing Covenantal Pluralism and Shared Futures

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"Whoever is hungry, let them come and eat."

וְיֵיכֹל יֵיתֵי דִּכְפִין כָּל

Introduction: Why This Haggadah?

*The Passover seder is, at its heart, an act of sacred remembrance—***zikaron** *in Hebrew,* **dhikr** *in Arabic. Both words grow from the same Proto-Semitic root* **Z-K-R***, meaning to call back to mind, to make present again what time threatens to erase. On this night, we remember not only the Exodus from Egypt but also the covenant—***brit** *and* **mīthāq***—that liberation makes possible.*

This supplement is designed for use at joint Muslim-Jewish seder gatherings, interfaith dialogue circles, and academic settings. It does not replace the traditional haggadah but enriches it by placing Torah and Qur'anic accounts of the Exodus side by side, revealing shared roots and illuminating divergences as gifts rather than problems. It draws on the framework of covenantal pluralism: the conviction that genuine engagement across religious difference—rooted in mutual respect and covenant—strengthens rather than diminishes each tradition's integrity.

Musa (Moses) is the most frequently named individual in the Qur'an, appearing 136 times across 34 surahs. The liberation story he carries is not borrowed from one tradition by another; it is a shared inheritance, told in two languages descended from one ancient source. The Hebrew rachamim and the Arabic rahma both mean divine mercy, and both derive from the word for womb. Tonight we sit in that shared origin and ask: what futures might we recover together?

How to Use This Supplement

This haggadah supplement covers six key moments of the seder chosen for their deep interfaith resonance: Urchatz (ritual washing), Karpas (spring greens), Maggid (the telling), Maror (bitter herbs), Kos Eliyahu (the Cup of Elijah/Ilyas), and Hallel (praise). It closes with an adapted Nirtzah.

Ritual instructions appear in gold-bordered sidebars. Parallel scriptures are presented in side-by-side boxes—Torah on the left in blue, Qur'an on the right in green—so that participants from both traditions may read aloud from their own texts. Hebrew and Arabic liturgical phrases are transliterated throughout, with English translation following.

We recommend that a Jewish participant and a Muslim participant serve as co-leaders, alternating readings and inviting the table into shared conversation at each discussion prompt.

A Note on Covenantal Pluralism

Covenantal pluralism, as articulated by Rabbi Irving Greenberg and developed through the work of the Templeton Religion Trust (Seiple et al., 2020), insists that deep engagement across religious difference need not require relativism. The Noahide covenant (Genesis 9) establishes universal moral obligations; the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 17) creates shared heritage; the

Sinai covenant creates particular obligation that, precisely because it is particular, opens space for recognizing the validity of other covenantal paths (Korn, 2003).

The Islamic tradition offers a complementary architecture. The Primordial Covenant (Mīthāq al-Alast) of Surah al-A'raf 7:172 posits that all humanity testified to God's lordship before creation—a universal bond preceding any particular revelation. The Charter of Medina (Sahifat al-Madina, c. 622 CE) operationalized this as governance, establishing Muslims and Jews as a single civic community (umma) while affirming distinct religious identities: "The Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs" (Lumbard, 2015; Yildirim, 2009).

Jain anekantavada—the doctrine of many-sidedness—offers a further philosophical resource, asserting that reality is multifaceted and no single perspective captures its entirety. Together, these three pillars form the covenantal pluralism that frames this haggadah: not agreement on all things, but a covenant to remain at the table together.

I. Urchatz — Ritual Washing

אוּרְחַץ • Urchatz

الوُضُوء • Al-Wuḍūʾ

Purification Through Water

> *The co-leaders pour water over their hands—the Jewish leader performing netilat yadayim, the Muslim leader performing wudu. Participants are invited to wash together or observe in silence. No blessing is recited at this point in the seder; the act itself is the prayer.*

In both traditions, water is the threshold between the ordinary and the sacred. The Jewish practice of netilat yadayim prepares the hands for holy eating; the Islamic practice of wudu prepares the body for prayer. Tonight, as we wash side by side, we acknowledge that purification is not about being clean enough to approach God but about being present enough to encounter one another.

TORAH

"And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said: Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you."

Exodus 24:8

QUR'AN

"O you who believe! When you rise up for prayer, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, and lightly rub your heads, and wash your feet up to the ankles."

Surah al-Ma'ida 5:6

Discussion: What does it mean to purify oneself before encountering the sacred? How does the physical act of washing prepare us—not only for prayer, but for dialogue across difference?

II. Karpas — Spring Greens and Saltwater

כַּרְפַּס • Karpas

الربيع والدموع • Ar-Rabīʿ wa-d-Dumūʿ

Spring and Tears

> *Each participant takes a sprig of parsley or other green vegetable, dips it in saltwater, and eats. The Jewish co-leader recites the blessing: Barukh Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-adamah. The Muslim co-leader recites: Bismillahi ar-Rahmani ar-Rahim.*

The green of karpas is hope; the salt is the tears of the enslaved. We taste both together because liberation is not an abstraction—it is remembered in the body, in the mingling of bitterness and renewal. The Exodus was not only a Jewish event, and it was not only an Islamic story. It is the shared memory of peoples who know what it means to cry out, and to be heard.

הָאֲדָמָה פְּרִי בּוֹרֵא הָעוֹלָם מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אַדֹנָי אַתָּה בָּרוּךְ

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Blessed are You… who creates the fruit of the earth | In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

Shared Root — Rahma / Rachamim (R-Ḥ-M): The Arabic Bismillah invokes ar-Rahman ar-Rahim—the All-Merciful, the Especially Compassionate. The Hebrew Thirteen Attributes begin with El Rachum v'Chanun—God Merciful and Gracious (Exodus 34:6). Both words for mercy derive from the Semitic root for womb. Divine compassion, in both traditions, is the tenderness of a mother for what she has carried and brought forth.

III. Maggid — The Telling

מַגִּיד • Maggid

الرِّوايَة • Ar-Riwāya

The Narration

Maggid—the telling—is the heart of the seder. Here we fulfill the commandment to recount the Exodus as though we ourselves had come forth from Egypt. Tonight, we tell this story in two voices, from two scriptures, discovering that the narrative of liberation belongs to neither tradition alone but to both.

The Invitation

> *The co-leaders lift the matzah and recite together:*

Jewish leader: Ha lachma anya di akhalu avhatana b'ar'a d'Mitzrayim. Kol dikhfin yeitei v'yeikhol. Kol ditzrikh yeitei v'yifsach.

> *This is the bread of affliction our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry, let them come and eat. Whoever is in need, let them come and celebrate Passover.*

Muslim leader: The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: "He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while the neighbor to his side goes hungry" (Al-Bayhaqi). And the Qur'an teaches: "And they give food, in spite of their love for it, to the poor, the orphan, and the captive" (Surah al-Insan 76:8).

Both traditions root hospitality in divine command. The open seder table and the open iftar table enact the same Abrahamic ethic: Abraham rushed to feed three strangers (Genesis 18:2–8; Surah al-Dhariyat 51:24–27). Tonight we extend that welcome across the boundaries of tradition itself.

The Four Questions — Expanded

> *Traditionally asked by the youngest at the table. Tonight, we add a fifth question, asked by the newest friendship at the table.*

Ma nishtana ha-layla ha-zeh mi-kol ha-leilot?

Why is this night different from all other nights?

> 1. On all other nights we eat leavened or unleavened bread. Why on this night only matzah?
>
> 2. On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables. Why on this night bitter herbs?
>
> 3. On all other nights we do not dip even once. Why on this night do we dip twice?
>
> 4. On all other nights we eat sitting or reclining. Why on this night do we all recline?
>
> **5. On all other nights we tell this story among our own. Why on this night do we tell it together?**

This fifth question is the question of covenantal pluralism. We tell the story together not because our traditions are the same, but because the God who liberated the enslaved calls us both to the work of justice—tzedek in Hebrew, 'adl in Arabic—and the work of justice cannot be done alone.

Parallel Exodus: Torah and Qur'an

A. The Cry of the Oppressed

TORAH

"The Israelites groaned in their bondage and cried out, and their cry for help because of their bondage went up to God. God heard their groaning and remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob."

Exodus 2:23–24

QUR'AN

"Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people into factions, oppressing a sector among them, slaughtering their sons and keeping their women alive. Indeed, he was of those who spread corruption."

Surah al-Qasas 28:4

In both accounts, oppression is not merely political but cosmic—a violation of the created order that compels divine response. The cry of the enslaved rises not into an empty sky but into the hearing of a God who has covenanted to respond. The Hebrew za'aka—the anguished cry—finds its echo in the Qur'anic istad'afa—the systematic "making weak" of an entire people.

B. The Calling of the Reluctant Prophet

TORAH

"And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed... 'Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground.'"

Exodus 3:2, 5

QUR'AN

"Has the story of Moses reached you? When he saw a fire and said to his family: 'Wait, I have perceived a fire; perhaps I can bring you a burning brand from it, or find guidance at the fire.' When he came to it, he was called: 'O Moses! Indeed, I am your Lord, so remove your sandals. You are in the sacred valley of Tuwa.'"

Surah Ta-Ha 20:9–12

The burning bush is the shared theophany of Judaism and Islam. In both tellings, Moses is commanded to remove his sandals—to stand barefoot before the sacred, vulnerable and unshod. The reluctant prophet who stammers (Exodus 4:10; Surah Ta-Ha 20:27) is chosen precisely in his weakness. God does not call the adequate; God makes adequate the called.

C. The Parting of the Sea

TORAH

"Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground."

Exodus 14:21–22

QUR'AN

"And when the two companies saw each other, the companions of Moses said: 'Indeed, we are to be overtaken!' He said: 'No! Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me.' Then We inspired Moses: 'Strike the sea with your staff.' And it parted, and each portion was like a great towering mountain."

Surah ash-Shu'ara 26:61–63

The moment of the sea's parting is the hinge of the liberation narrative. In the Torah, God acts through the east wind; in the Qur'an, through Moses' staff. Both accounts place the decisive moment at the threshold of despair—when the people believe they are about to be overtaken. Liberation, both traditions insist, arrives not when we have solved the problem ourselves but when we have exhausted our capacity and turned toward something greater.

D. The Covenant at Sinai

TORAH

"And God spoke all these words, saying: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me."

Exodus 20:1–3

QUR'AN

"And when your Lord took from the children of Adam—from their loins—their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them]: 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes, we have testified.'"

Surah al-A'raf 7:172

Here the two traditions diverge in ways that illuminate rather than divide. The Sinai covenant is historical and particular—addressed to a specific people who have just been liberated. The Qur'anic Primordial Covenant (Mīthāq al-Alast) is pre-eternal and universal—all human souls testified before creation. Read together, they suggest that covenant operates on multiple registers: the universal bond that all humans share with the Divine, and the particular bonds through which specific communities respond to the call of justice.

Shared Root — Brit / Mīthāq: Though not cognates, both words carry the weight of sacred binding. The Hebrew brit is sealed in blood (Genesis 15:10); the Qur'anic mīthāq is sealed in testimony. Both insist that covenant creates obligation—toward God and toward one another. The Charter of Medina (c. 622 CE) operationalized this insight by establishing Muslims and Jews as a single civic community with distinct religious identities and mutual obligations of defense and justice (Yildirim, 2009).

E. Ashura: The Shared Fast

The connections between the Exodus narratives are not merely textual but liturgical. When the Prophet Muhammad arrived in Medina and observed Jews fasting on the 10th of Muharram to commemorate God's deliverance of Moses from Pharaoh, he declared: "We have more right to Moses than they have" and prescribed the fast of Ashura (Sahih al-Bukhari 3397, Sahih Muslim 1131). This hadith establishes an explicit Islamic claim to the Exodus as shared inheritance—not supersession but participation in the same liberation story.

Dayenu — It Would Have Been Enough

> *Participants sing or recite Dayenu responsively. After each stanza, the table responds: Dayenu!*

The traditional Dayenu enumerates God's gifts and declares that any one of them would have been sufficient. Tonight we add interfaith stanzas:

If God had brought us out of Egypt but not parted the sea — Dayenu!

If God had parted the sea but not sustained us in the wilderness — Dayenu!

If God had given us the Torah at Sinai but not planted in us the memory of liberation — Dayenu!

If God had planted the memory of liberation in one people but not in many — Dayenu!

If God had given the story to many peoples but not brought us to this table tonight — Dayenu!

If God had brought us to this table but not given us the courage to build a shared future — Dayenu!

The Ten Plagues and the Diminished Cup

> *As each plague is named, every participant removes a drop of wine or grape juice from their cup with a fingertip, diminishing their joy in acknowledgment of Egyptian suffering. The Jewish co-leader names the plagues in Hebrew; the Muslim co-leader names them from the Qur'an.*

The Qur'an names five of the ten plagues explicitly in Surah al-A'raf 7:133: flood (tufan), locusts (jarad), lice (qummal), frogs (dafa'di'), and blood (dam). This partial overlap is itself instructive: both traditions remember the plagues, but neither remembers identically. The act of diminishing our wine is a shared ethical gesture—we cannot celebrate our freedom without mourning the cost others bore.

Shared Root — Tzedek / 'Adl: The Hebrew imperative Tzedek, tzedek tirdof—"Justice, justice shall you pursue" (Deuteronomy 16:20)—finds its Qur'anic complement in: "O you who believe! Stand firm for justice, as witnesses for God, even if it be against yourselves" (Surah an-Nisa 4:135). Justice, in both traditions, is not merely an ideal but an active pursuit that may require sacrifice.

IV. Maror — The Bitter Herb

מָרוֹר • Maror

المُرّ • Al-Murr

Bitterness

> *Each participant takes bitter herbs (horseradish or romaine lettuce), dips them in charoset (the sweet mixture of apples, nuts, and wine), and eats. The bitterness should be felt before the sweetness arrives.*

Maror is not a metaphor; it is an embodied act of remembrance. The bitterness on the tongue is the bitterness of bondage. The charoset—representing the mortar the enslaved used to build Pharaoh's cities—transforms that bitterness without erasing it. Both traditions understand that suffering is not redeemed by being forgotten but by being remembered and transcended.

QUR'AN

"And We made the people who had been oppressed inherit the eastern regions of the land and the western regions thereof, which We had blessed. And the good word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of what they had patiently endured."

Surah al-A'raf 7:137

The Qur'an explicitly celebrates the inheritance the Children of Israel received after their suffering—an act of divine justice fulfilling the covenant. Patience (sabr) in the face of oppression is not passive acceptance but active endurance sustained by trust in divine promise.

Discussion: What bitterness do our communities carry today? What sweetness might emerge if we faced that bitterness together rather than apart? In a post-October 7 world, how do we hold the pain of both communities without diminishing either?

V. Kos Eliyahu / Kos Ilyas — The Cup of the Prophet

אֵלִיָּהוּ כּוֹס • Kos Eliyahu

كأس إلياس • Ka's Ilyās

The Cup of Elijah / The Cup of Ilyas

> *A special cup of wine is poured and placed at the center of the table. The door is opened. Participants rise.*

In Jewish tradition, a cup is set for Elijah the prophet, herald of the messianic age, and the door is opened in welcome. This is one of the seder's most powerful moments—the liminal instant when the household opens itself to the possibility of redemption arriving from outside.

Elijah is also honored in the Qur'an as Ilyas, a righteous prophet listed among the blessed in Surah al-An'am 6:85: "And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Elias—each was of the righteous." Surah as-Saffat 37:130 declares: "Peace be upon Elias!" He is a figure shared across

all three Abrahamic traditions—a prophet of justice who confronted idolatry and stood against the abuse of power.

> *The Jewish co-leader says: "We open the door for Eliyahu ha-Navi, the prophet who will herald redemption." The Muslim co-leader says: "We open the door for Ilyas, upon whom be peace, who called his people to justice and to God."*

Together: "We open this door because redemption does not come from behind closed doors. It comes when we make space for the one we do not expect, the stranger who may be a prophet, the neighbor whose tradition is not our own. Tonight, the cup of Elijah is also the cup of Ilyas—and the open door is an invitation to the future we have not yet imagined."

Shared Root — Shalom / Salaam (Š-L-M): The Qur'anic greeting to Elias—Salamun 'ala Ilyāsīn—uses the same Semitic root as the Hebrew Shalom aleichem. Peace, in both languages, means not merely the absence of conflict but wholeness, completion, the restoration of what was broken. The open door invites that wholeness in.

VI. Hallel — Praise

הַלֵּל • Hallel

الحَمْد • Al-Ḥamd

Praise

The seder concludes with Hallel—psalms of praise. The Hebrew Hallelujah ("Praise God") and the Arabic Alhamdulillah ("All praise be to God") share more than a common impulse; they share a common Semitic root of praise. Tonight we recite Psalm 113 alongside Surah al-Fatiha, not as a synthesis but as a polyphony—two voices praising the same God from within their own covenantal homes.

PSALM 113 (Hebrew Bible)

"Hallelujah! Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap."

Psalm 113:1–7

SURAH AL-FATIHA (Qur'an)

"In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. All praise is due to God, Lord of all the worlds, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, Master of the Day of Judgment. You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help. Guide us on the Straight Path, the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor."

Surah al-Fatiha 1:1–7

Both texts begin with praise and move toward the particular—the God who lifts the poor, who guides the faithful. Both insist that praise is not passive gratitude but active orientation: we praise by turning toward justice, mercy, and the service of others.

VII. Nirtzah — Closing

נִרְצָה • Nirtzah

الخِتام • Al-Khitām

Acceptance / Closing

The traditional seder ends with L'shanah haba'ah b'Yerushalayim—"Next year in Jerusalem." This ancient cry of longing carries the weight of millennia of exile and return. For our Muslim neighbors, Jerusalem is al-Quds—the Holy—the site of the Prophet's night journey and the third holiest city in Islam.

Tonight we hold both of these loves. We do not resolve the tension between them, because covenantal pluralism does not require resolution. It requires presence. It requires the willingness to sit at a table where the hardest questions remain open and the door remains ajar.

> *All rise. The co-leaders recite together:*

L'shanah haba'ah b'shalom.

السَّنة القادمة في سَلام

Next year in peace.

L'shanah haba'ah b'tzedek v'shalom.

السَّنة القادمة في عدل وسلام

Next year in justice and peace.

L'shanah haba'ah yachad.

السَّنة القادمة معًا

Next year together.

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