

The Shalom Bayit Program of Jewish Family & Career Services in Atlanta, Georgia offers the following prayer to include in your family seder. It concerns itself with domestic violence - a continuing, although rarely talked about, violence experienced by Jews of all ages. By including this prayer, we begin to acknowledge the pain many Jews feel; by saying it out loud we begin to remove the myth that it doesn't exist; and by taking it into our hearts, we begin our individual journeys toward ending the violence.

A PRAYER FOR YOUR PASSOVER SEDER

Each year at this time, it is our responsibility as Jews to look upon ourselves as if we had actually gone forth from Egypt.

The struggle for freedom is ongoing, and in every age there are new freedoms to be won. On this night our hearts turn to those among us who suffer the pain of homes in which shalom has been shattered. We have been reluctant to confront this violence and to join in the effort to liberate those in pain.

There are Jewish children who are sexually, physically and/or verbally abused; there are Jewish adults who cower in fear of their partners; there are Jewish elderly who are ignored or imprisoned in their own homes. All are victims of a violence tearing at the very essence of their beings. This night when we celebrate the miracle of liberation, it is incumbent upon us to grasp the meaning of this enslavement; to hear their cries and to aid their struggle for liberation.

Some of us around this table are survivors; others know survivors - and victims - of domestic violence. We must come to know the silence and sadness; the loneliness and embarrassment; the bitterness and the craving for liberation experienced by Jews terrorized in their own homes.

As we celebrate the memory of that first Exodus which unfolded in the heart of Egypt, let us actively, and with clear intention, chart a new path, so that those bound in the chains of domestic violence may be freed of their shackles and come to know in their lives the taste of liberation, the meaning of redemption and the experience of shalom.

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