

To be read just before the recitation of the ten plagues.

When it comes time to recite the ten plagues, there is a tradition of dipping a bit of wine out of our cups as we say each plague, diminishing our joy just a bit as we recall the difficulties that befell the Egyptians.

This seder tradition calls to mind a famous *midrash* (rabbinic commentary), on the moment during the Exodus when the Egyptian army was drowning in the sea, just after the Israelites crossed to freedom. The angels turned to one another to sing their daily praises, when God hushed them, saying, "The work of My hands is drowning in the sea, and you would sing songs before Me?!"



While we cannot erase the suffering of the Egyptians from our freedom story, we can acknowledge that a human price was paid. As we recite the plagues, as we drop a bit of wine onto our plates, we are invited to remember that our own freedom--as Americans, as Jews--often comes with a price paid by others. We can take this moment to reflect on the damage done, whether intentional or not, that has allowed us to enjoy our freedom and our privilege.

If I am economically privileged, what is the cost borne by others--in the U.S. and around the world--to allow me my comforts? If I am white, at what cost comes the relative ease with which I move through the world? As a Jew, as someone connected to Israel, how do I reckon with the terrible price paid by the Palestinian people for the creation of the Jewish state? This is not a moment for guilt, but for honest reckoning, for acknowledgment, and perhaps a commitment to make some kind of tikkun, repair, during this season of redemption.