(**Addition to Seder, 1993**).

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Because tonight we are all together.

All year long we were apart.

Mother and grandmother, tending empty nests,

Children apart from parents

Everyone busy with one's own life.

Tonight we all sit by the same table.

Even apart, we share a lot. We are a family.

If any of us has reason to be happy, we all share the joy.

If any of us is in trouble, we are all troubled.

May there always be joy to share, and may we always weather the trouble.

We are a family, both the children who grew up in this house, and those with whom they share their lives.

Welcome Britt, welcome Robin.

You chose to be with us, and we are glad to have you.

Why was this year different from all other years?

It was a busy year, an active year. Oren opened a new chapter, when he and Robin traveled to California.

God willing, there may be a wedding soon.

Are you ready for this, Oren?

Are you ready, Robin?

Also, Oren has a new job, better then the one he left.

May the same hold for Britt too (and may we be able to say this about Robin, soon!).

A new book is on its way, co-authored by Britt.

And so is, at long last, my grandmother's cookbook, thanks to years of effort by my mother and her friends Cara and Bianca.

Allon was promoted in his job, Ilana was promoted too--and she will be here again in a few weeks. To give an invited talk on her work!

And dear Audrey has three new trophies--two from the summer, one more recent--and probably more than 100 master points, once the final accounting is made.

This was the year Audrey and David went on their first Elderhostel, to Nantucket--great fun.

A huge review article by David, almost book-length, was just accepted for publication.

And his work and fellowship with Kolya, Mauricio and Tom continue successfully.

Life has been good, and we all

have reason to be grateful.

May we share nights like this one for many years to come.

We remember those who are not here.

Most of all, we miss George, who used to sit here and sing with such energy.

And pinch the little kids. He remains part of us.

We remember the many people whose lives intersect ours.

Britt's parents, Robin's family, Audrey's sisters in Florida whom she visits soon.

And the many people whose kindness sustains Annie in New York, even on hard days--Ellie, Judy, Zdenka, Hanka, her cousin Helen, Greta, Daliya, many more.

And relatives in Israel--Itamar, Rivka, Yonatan, Rachel, Gabby, Pninah, and their families.

You keep thinking of names and the list grows and grows.

Each of us can easily add a dozen more. May they all prosper in health.

Why was this year different from all other years?

It really wasn't.

As in the past, the world is at peace, but fires erupt, and burn the unlucky ones.

Bosnia and the rest of Yugoslavia are burning.

So are Armenia and Somalia, and quieter fires burn in the rest of Africa--who has ever heard of Burundi?

*[wrong guess--it was Rwanda, not its neighbor Burundi]*

Nor is there real peace in Iraq, or North Korea, or for that matter, Israel.

Yet things are changing even in Israel. This was the year Rabin met Arafat, here in Washington.

Maybe peace arrives when everyone hurts too much. Not the best way, but it is peace.

Maybe we have already seen the worst, in both Israel and Bosnia.

Our forefathers were slaves in the land of Egypt.

That is what we read tonight in our book.

It tells that God brought us out of Egypt, led us through the desert, and taught us a lesson: slavery is evil, oppression is evil.

And gave us this holiday, to sit around a table, enjoy each other's company, drink and eat--and remember the past.

Let us not take our good fortune for granted.

On this holy day, let us strive that whatever terrible things have happened in the past, my not happen again.

And that not just we, but all humanity, can sit like us and enjoy a good and free life.

Amen