Passover Haggadah Addition
Honoring Survivors of Domestic Violence

Towards freedom for those enslaved in their own homes today

*This addition can be recited following the Ten Plagues or wherever appropriate.*

**Leader:**

As we celebrate Passover, the Festival of Freedom, let us think for a moment about slavery. What does it mean to live your life at someone else’s mercy? To never be good enough, to always be subjugated, to live in fear. The penalty for escaping is severe punishment or death. The penalty for staying is loss of self.

A person abused by their partner is a slave to that abuser as the Israelites were slaves to Pharaoh. It is not easy to choose between a horrible yet familiar life enslaved, and the great unknown that may bring even more peril. No one runs joyfully into the arms of hunger and homelessness, even when it is to escape danger.

But every so often, one brave woman finds the courage to flee against all odds. All familial, financial, religious, and societal currents move against her. But still she runs. Knowing that if she is caught, retributions will be far greater, more violent than ever before; still she goes, praying to save her life. And like the Jews crossing the Sea, she, too, will be followed.

The children of Israel complained of hunger and wanted to go back to Egypt, where even if they were enslaved, at least they had food. And yet, we continue to blame, judge, or misunderstand women who return to their abusers.

**Together:**

*We fill this cup (of wine/water/juice) for those women still living in slavery, still feeling daily the yoke of pharaoh’s oppression. Battered women live under a domestic reign of terror, and can only dream of the promised land of freedom.*

*Even for those who dare to flee, with pharaoh often right behind them, the desert is wide and dangerous.*
Alternative or Additional Ten Plagues for Abuse Survivors

Together:

Recite together and remove one drop of wine for the women and girls everywhere who are experiencing any of the following:

Disbelief
Blame
Injury
Humiliation
Trauma
Stalking
Threats
Loneliness
Flashbacks
Nightmares

Add your own: Name other modern-day plagues relating to violence against women

Leader:

All these dwell in the desert in which she must wander, often alone, for years. If she’s one of the lucky ones she arrive safely in the Promised Land of a new life.

Together:

We bless the Divine Presence, whose wings carry us to freedom.
Next year in the Promised Land of our Hearts.
Next year may all dwell in freedom.

All drink an extra cup of wine/water/juice.