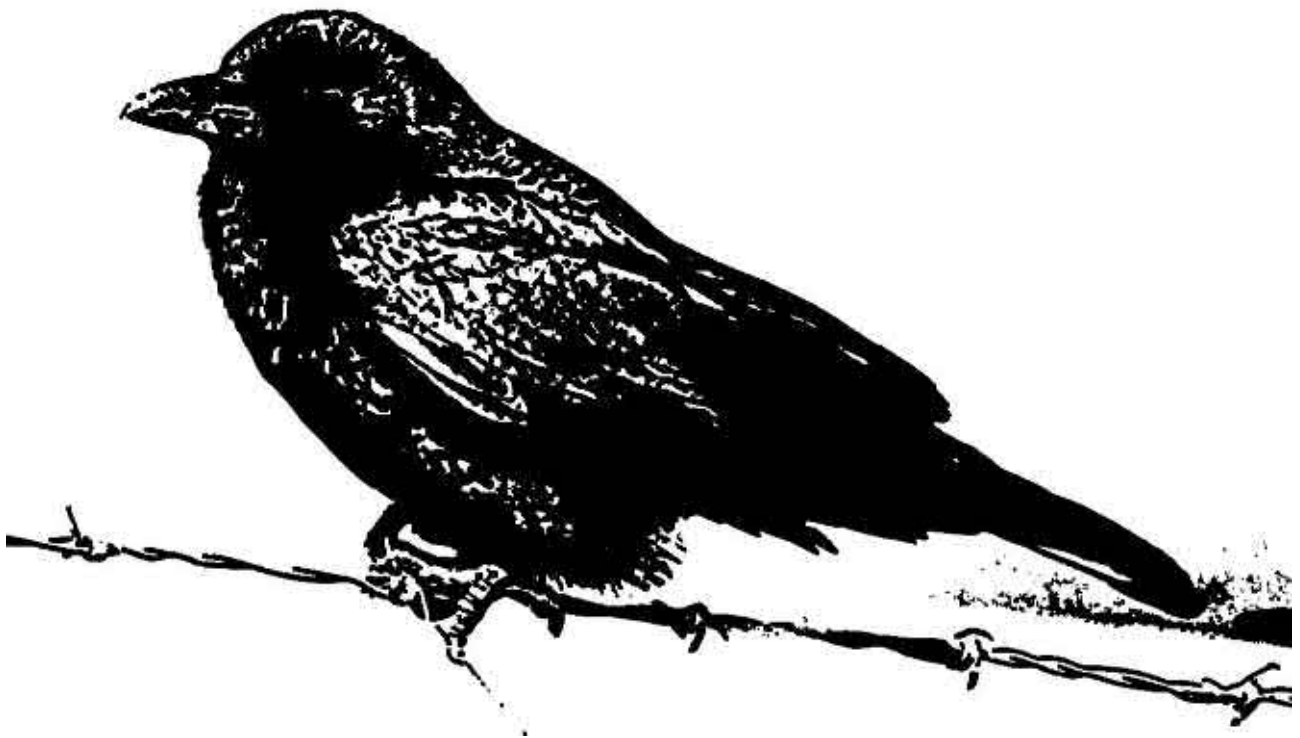


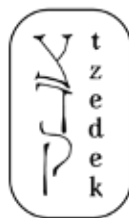
# Legacies of resistance and solidarity



A haggadah for a liberation seder

Nisan 5784

Tzedek Collective



This haggadah was compiled on the stolen lands of multiple First Nations peoples. Its current iteration was developed on unceded Gadigal land. We acknowledge the spiritual wisdom of First Nations Elders and Ancestors throughout all spirals of time. Sovereignty was never ceded; always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.

This haggadah draws mainly from *Legacies of resistance*, the haggadah put forward by [Jelithin](#) in 2019, which in turn draws from the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network in 2012 and 2014; and Tzedek Chicago's Pesach 5784 [supplement](#), *Harkening to the voice of Gaza*.

Jelithin's haggadah draws from many sources, including:

IJAN Haggadot 5766-5769 Jews for a Free Palestine Haggadah

No Time to Celebrate: Jews Remember the Nakba Haggadah Supplement Camp Kinderland Haggadah, 5769 And if not with others, how? SJE 5765

Lo Alecha, Smith College 5764

Love and Justice in Times of War Haggadah 5763

Edward Said, Michael Walzer's 'Exodus and Revolution': A Canaanite Reading

Grand Street, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Winter, 1986), pp. 86-106

Across the Sea, Smith College 5759 We Remember, We Believe, Smith College 5758

Various internet news sources

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A special thanks to Rabbi David Mivasair for his thoughtful edits to this Haggadah, particularly for adding the Ten Plagues Upon Israel

This Haggadah is dedicated to the liberation struggles of yesterday and today, and to the survival and freedom of people and the planet in generations to come.

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## Introduction

This haggadah has been developed—remixed and adapted—for horrific times, times that feel unprecedented. We are grateful to Tzedek Chicago’s seder supplement that places Gaza front and centre. Yet, very little of our primary source material, *Legacies of resistance*, needed to be changed. The genocide of Gaza did not begin on 7 October 2023; it began in (or before) 1948 and has been ongoing since. Jelithin’s introduction is reproduced below unaltered.

This Pesach, as we gather with Gaza held tenderly and fiercely in our hearts, we also take a moment to rest. To remain active in the struggle, we must rest. As Palestinian-American writer and clinical psychologist Dr Hala Alyan has [taught](#), we rest and regulate our emotions together not to run away from the atrocities we are witnessing, but to continue our work. We must find joy in community, even knowing that our happiness, like our freedom, can never be complete until we are all free.

We acknowledge that there are other ways to approach Pesach in a time of genocide. Loud Jew Collective, our siblings in Naarm, are holding a protest seder in place of a celebration. Jewish Voice for Peace, If Not Now, and Jewish Fast for Gaza have instituted the [Shulchan Orech Pledge](#), where people will fast instead of eating a festive meal. Other Jews are choosing not to mark Pesach at all this year. We honour and respect all of these approaches, and believe strongly in the power of multiple truths and paths.

Many people’s hard work, creativity and knowledge has formed this haggadah; it has been developed radically and thoughtfully. However, it is not perfect. Although we and our predecessors have tried to include traditions and perspectives beyond Ashkenormativity (Jewish Eurocentrism), it remains a predominantly Ashkenazi text. We have made choices about gendered and hierarchical language that attempt to balance inclusivity and usability, but may not have succeeded. This haggadah has also removed and altered many traditional texts, including Torah (Jewish bible) verses, which may be unacceptable for some people. We welcome feedback on these and any other aspects of our haggadah.

## 2019 introduction

Welcome to this liberation haggadah. Tonight we celebrate the freedoms that we have, freedom that our predecessors fought for us to have. Tonight we celebrate the human will to survive, to love, and to live with dignity and in freedom. Tonight we celebrate the force of this will against the many historic and current attempts to break it. Tonight we celebrate the shoulders we stand on, the long and multiple legacies of struggles for liberation.

On Pesach, we tell the story of the liberation of the ancient Hebrews from oppression in the land of Egypt, Mitzrayim in Hebrew. Seder means “order”—the order of the meal and ritual of Pesach that Jews all over the world have participated in for centuries. Tonight we draw on the legacy of Rabbi Akiva who used the Pesach Seder to plan a revolutionary struggle against the Romans, and the many Jews in every generation who have used the Seder to sustain the work of tikkun olam—repairing the world. As Jews committed to current liberation struggles, we enact this ritual to honour our history of resilience and participation in diverse movements for human emancipation across time.

At the same time that we celebrate legacies of resistance, the story of Exodus gives us a lot with which to wrestle. The Hebrews are referred to as God’s “chosen people,” and promised the land of Canaan. Zionists have interpreted this as a justification to colonise modern-day Palestine.

There are contradictions within our histories and within the text. We cannot deny that there is a tradition of exceptionalism within Judaism. We cannot ignore that, in the story of Exodus, the Hebrews worship a god that is vengeful and cruel. There are also powerful themes of resistance and liberation.

As Jews committed to ending Zionism, and as people who are part of global movements for liberation, we choose what interpretations and traditions we draw on, and what we challenge or reject. Rather than ignore the parts of our histories that challenge our visions for the future, we explore and account for the complexities of the traditions we inherit and continue the ongoing process of refining and elevating them.

We don't want a homeland for "a people without a home;" we want to live in the world with our fellow human beings in dignity and respect.

We confront the parts of the Exodus story that lend themselves to exceptionalism, separate us from our fellow human beings, deny the many allies we have had throughout history, accept revenge as a form of justice, and use our own suffering to justify the displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian people.

Tonight, the ritual of Seder gives us an opportunity to contend not only with legacies of oppression but also with current suffering that we survive, that we perpetrate and in which we are complicit. We are reminded that in every moment we can choose the best option available to us for living a life and building a world that reflects what is sacred.

Mitzrayim is the Hebrew word for Egypt, but it literally translates to mean "a doubly narrow place." We understand this as a metaphor for all which is in opposition to life, justice, connection and sustainability.

The Haggadah insists: "In every generation, a person is required to see themselves as if they personally left Mitzrayim."

In the spring, as the seedlings break through their shells and emerge from their narrow place in the earth, we imagine for a moment that each of us has personally left the narrow places that constrain us, that we live in a world of limitless possibility where we have the freedom to honour what is sacred.

Tonight we reclaim what is sacred to us. Tonight we speak of and celebrate liberation to sustain ourselves and deepen our commitment to justice in the year ahead.

This Seder is dedicated to a free Palestine and the liberation of all peoples, living beings and the planet.

Tzedek tzedek tirdof! Justice, justice, we shall pursue!



## Preparing for Pesach

Traditionally, before Pesach, homes are cleared of chametz, or leavened grain products (bread and baked goods made of wheat, spelt, rye, oats or barley that have been allowed to rise). On the night before Pesach, the home is searched for chametz, and on the morning of Pesach, any remaining chametz is destroyed or temporarily “sold” to non-Jewish neighbours. How might these practices be altered to foster intercommunity solidarity and mutual aid?

## Setting the seder table

In many Jewish communities, the ritual foods of the seder are placed together on a specially designed plate called a seder plate. Others place these items directly on the table. The entire Pesach story is contained in these items; everything on it symbolises an aspect of the story of Exodus. You will see the following items on the Seder table:



- **Zeroa**, a roasted shank bone (beet or yam for plant-based diets) to symbolise the Pesach offering, the lamb that the Hebrews sacrificed, using its blood to mark their doors so the Angel of Death would spare their firstborns during the tenth plague.
- **Beitza**, a boiled egg (potatoes or rice for plant-based diets) that to some symbolises the sacrifices made at the Temple. It can also represent the cycle of birth and death or the renewal of spring.
- **Maror or Hazeret**, bitter herbs (often cos lettuce or horseradish) to remind us of the bitterness of enslavement and oppression.
- **Haroset**, a sweet mixture of fruit (often apples or dates), spices and/or wine, representing the mortar that Hebrew slaves used to make bricks in Mitzrayim.
- **Karpas**, a green vegetable (often parsley) symbolising hope, spring, new growth, and renewal. It is dipped in salt water, which represents the tears of an oppressed people.

In addition to the traditional Seder items, we include:

- **Olive**, representing the struggle of Palestinian people for land and self-determination.
- **Orange**, representing the fruitfulness that results from including queer and/or transgender people in our communities.
- **Strawberries**, representing hope for new growth in Gaza after the current genocide and ecocide.

Either below or beside the seder plate (depending on the plate's design), three whole matzot are stacked together. They may be stored in a specially made fabric case, or in a pillowcase or cushion case.

Each attendee should have a cup, for their wine (or grape juice).

## Seder

The word seder means order. The order of the seder is as follows:

Kadesh

Urchatz: first handwashing

Karpas: green herb

Fruits of social justice: oranges, olives and strawberries

Yachatz: breaking the middle matza

Magid: telling the story

Rachtzah: second handwashing

Motzi matza: blessing over the matza

Maror: Blessing over the bitter herb

Korech: Hillel sandwich

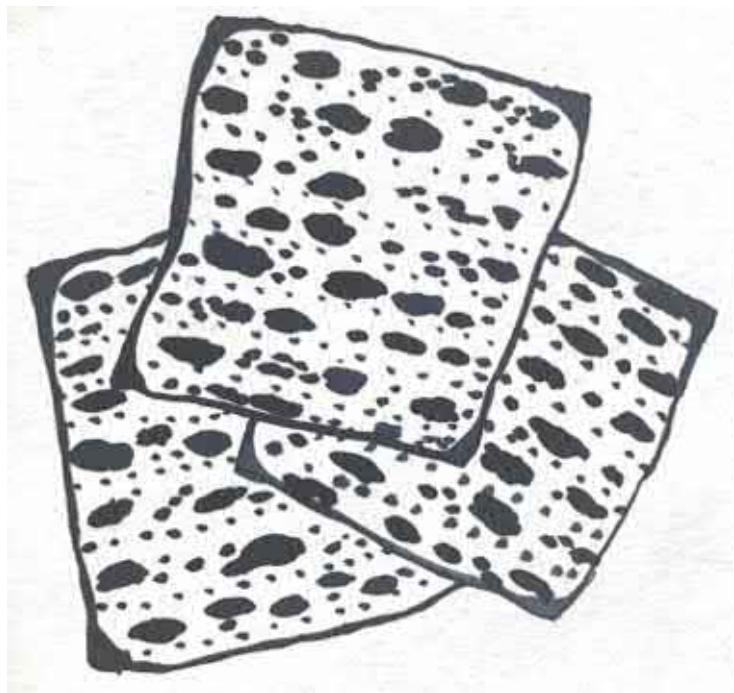
Shulchan orech: the meal

Tzafun: eating the afikomen

Bareich: blessing after the meal

Hallel: songs of praise

Nirtza: closing





## Notes

### How to use this haggadah

This haggadah has been designed to be clear and easy to use. All Hebrew/Aramaic has been transliterated (see note below) and translated.

Explanatory and additional text are presented in grey boxes, for example:

We light candles to show the eternal presence of spiritual light and the sanctity of this time.

All prayers and rituals are optional, and some are only done by the person leading the seder. For those wishing to follow along with the communal actions, instructions are italicised, for example:

*Recite the following blessing, or respond “amen” to others’ blessings:*

Discussion prompts for table conversations are indicated with a speech bubble icon:



### Transliterations

Hebrew is often transliterated inconsistently, and this haggadah is no exception. Generally speaking, <kh> is used to denote the letter כ, /χ/ whereas <ḥ> is used to denote the letter ח, /ħ/. Today, most Hebrew speakers pronounce this sound as /χ/ as in Scottish lo**ch**. However, as in the word Pesach itself, this sound is sometimes written as **ch** here as well; this has generally been preserved for better-known words.

### About asking questions

The whole purpose of the Seder is to ask questions. This is your time to put forth deep and burning questions, or to simply ask for clarification about simple things that may confuse you. You can ask about things that you do not understand or even ask questions about things that you disagree with. All questions are welcome and in fact vital to the Pesach celebration.

### Describing the Sacred: gender, humanism and pluralism

For some of us, Seder is a secular celebration of historic and current commitments to justice and struggles for liberation and freedom. For others, it is connected to our spiritual or religious practice. For most of us it is a ritual, a marking of the season, and a time with family, friends, and community. We recognise a variety of conceptions of the sacred within our communities, and a variety of ways to relate to those concepts. Rather than a spirit being or divine entity, “God” can mean the spark of humanity and compassion within each of us, or the energy that is created when people come together with a shared vision and a commitment to act. “God” could be an expression of the infinite, the mystery of the universe or of nature. It is also important to honour that because of the ways the figure of God has been used as a tool of spiritual and political violence, some of us reject the themes of deity in our traditions altogether.

Hebrew is a gendered language and traditionally, in Judaism, God is referred to with masculine language. Draw on Jewish feminist traditions, we refer to God in the Hebrew as feminine. We do this to challenge the patriarchy embedded in tradition, to disrupt the norm of masculinity as supreme—to “queer” our Seder experience.

We encourage you to use whatever words resonate for you to describe what is meaningful and holy in the universe—whether secular or spiritual.

The blessings in this haggadah are given in the sacred feminine form, beginning: “Brukha at Shkhina Elatenu Ruaḥ HaOlam...” (We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world...).

The traditional masculine form begins as follows: “Barukh ahtah Adonoy Eloheinu melekh ha'olam” (Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe).

Although not completely non-gendered, a more gender-neutral form is: “N’varekh Yah, Eloheinu M’kor HaḤayim” (Let us bless Yah our God, the Source of Life).

A humanist version can take the form: “N’varekh et \_\_ b’tzavta l’\_\_. B’ \_\_ n’varekh et ha-hayyim.

(Let us bless [candles/food/as relevant] as we gather together to [light candles/eat this food/as relevant]. With [this item] let us bless life.)

You are also welcome to answer “amen” to others’ blessings, or to remain respectfully silent.



## About Yisrael

The word Yisrael (Israel) comes from the blessing given to Ya’akov (Jacob) by a stranger with whom he wrestles all night. When the stranger is finally subdued, Ya’akov asks him for a blessing. The stranger says: “Your name will no longer be Ya’akov, but Yisrael, for you have wrestled with God and triumphed.” When we say the word “Yisrael” in blessings, we are not referring to the state of Israel. Rather, we are drawing on this legacy of wrestling—with God, with the traditions we inherit, with injustice.

## About Mitzrayim

Throughout this Haggadah, we interchange the words Egypt and Mitzrayim. On Pesach, we retell the story of the Hebrews’ journey to freedom from enslavement in Mitzrayim. The Hebrew word metzarim means strait, or narrow sea—from the root “tzar,” meaning “narrow or constricted”. We are not free as long as we are constricted in our bodies and narrow in our thinking. We are intentionally and explicitly differentiating between the symbolic oppressors in this ancient story and the contemporary place and people of Egypt.

Tonight, we offer an opportunity to not only commit ourselves to justice and liberation, but also to imagine new possibilities of what that could mean. Let us breathe deeply, let us use our voices to authentically dream our truths into being.

## Welcome

We must acknowledge that this Pesach is radically different from others. Before we begin, we are compelled to name this out loud: we gather for seder tonight while genocidal violence is being inflicted on Palestinians in Gaza—by a state that purports to act in the name of the Jewish people. Thus, we come to the very first question of the evening: what does Pesach require of us in this tragic and unprecedented moment? We begin our seder by affirming:

- If we fail to give the Palestinian people a voice at our table this evening, we will not have fulfilled the requirements of the Pesach seder.
- If our Pesach festival focuses exclusively on Jewish trauma—and not on the ways our trauma is being weaponised to oppress another people—we will not have fulfilled the requirements of the Pesach seder.
- If we read the Pesach story as a story of Jewish liberation alone or—God forbid—Jewish liberation at the expense of others, we will not have fulfilled the requirements of the Pesach seder.
- If we celebrate this festival by hardening our hearts to the horrifying stories and images from Gaza that have been crying out to us for the past seven months, we will not have fulfilled the requirements of the Pesach seder.
- If our gathering does not motivate us to do everything in our power to end the genocidal violence Israel is unleashing upon Gaza, we will not have fulfilled the requirements of the Pesach seder.

With these challenges before us, let us begin.

## Acknowledgement of Country

As we gather in community to support each other, we remember that we meet on the unceded lands of the Gadigal people. We pay our respects to Elders and Ancestors throughout all spirals of time, acknowledging their wisdom, their science and their spiritual knowledge. Sovereignty of these lands, waters and air was never ceded. Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

## A blessing for social action

*Recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shkhina Elateinu Ruah HaOlam asher  
kid'shatanu b'mitzvotaha v'tzivatnu lirdof tzedek.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם אשר קדשתנו  
במצותה וצותנו לרדוף צדק.

We praise You, indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who makes us holy with Your ways, and exhorts us to pursue justice.

## Candles

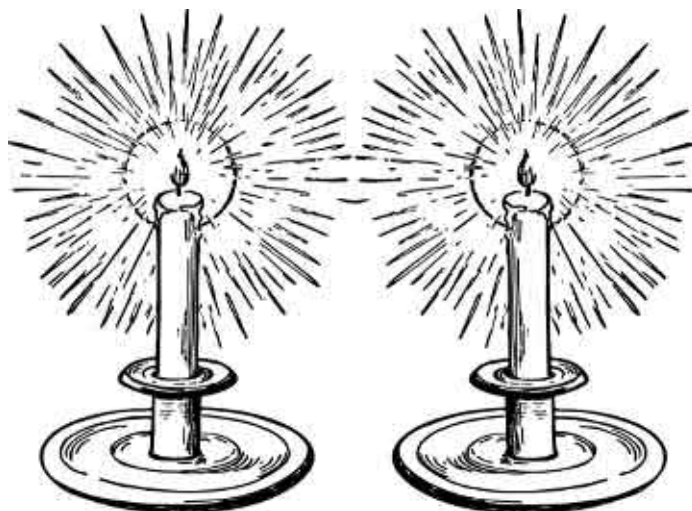
We light candles to show the eternal presence of spiritual light and the sanctity of this time.

*Light one or more candles and recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shkhina Elatenu Ruaḥ HaOlam, asher  
kidshatanu b'mitzvotaha l'hadlik ner shel yom tov.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם אשר קדשתנו  
במצותה וצותנו להדליק נר של יום טוב.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who inspires us to kindle the holiday lights.



### A blessing for reaching this time

This blessing is for when we do something for the first time or for the first time in a long while, when we are grateful for reaching a certain moment in time. Tonight is the first time this unique group has gathered together in this special way.

On Rosh Hashana (Jewish New Year), we make a point of purchasing a new item of clothing or a fruit we haven't eaten that season to ensure this blessing is valid on the second night. This is because Rosh Hashana is considered one long day. Here, we extend this custom to the second night of Pesach. Second night seder is a diasporic tradition; in the spirit of doikayt (hereness), we see this as something to emphasise.

*Recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shekhina, Elateinu Ruaḥ HaOlam,  
shehecheyatanu, v'kiy'mtanu, v'higiytanu laz'man hazeh.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם שהחיתנו  
וקימתנו והגיעתנו לזמן הזה.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.



*Take a moment to introduce yourself to the people at your table. You may also take a moment to share with one another that which inspires you.*

## Welcome loved ones not at the table

At this time we take a moment to welcome those who we wish were here tonight. We can welcome friends and family members who have died, and others who simply aren't physically present, mentors, those who inspire us, and ancestors we don't know by name.



*After a moment of silence, anyone who feels moved may name the person or people you wish to welcome, aloud or silently as you choose.*

## A blessing over new blossoms

Moroccan and other North African Jewish tradition includes going outside on Mimouna, the day after Pesach, to eat a meal and say the blessings over new blossoms in the spring. Enjoying what is beautiful in this life is integral to our political and personal liberation struggles—beauty sustains us and reminds us of the world that we love and the future that we are creating.

In the southern hemisphere, Pesach occurs in autumn, not spring. Even as we celebrate our festivals at the same time as other Jews around the world, we remember the principle of doikayt, hereness. What can this season teach us about mature growth, beauty, and different perspectives?

*Recite the following blessing over the flowers at our tables that honours our intentions for the world we want to live in and the beauty within us, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shkhina Elateinu Ruah HaOlam sheh-lo hasra  
be-olahmah davar u-varah vo briyot tovt ve-ilanot tovt  
le-hanot bahen benei adam.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם שלא חסרה  
בעולמה דבר ובראה בו בריות טובות ואילנות טובות  
להנות בהן בני האדם.

We praise You, indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who has made the world lacking nothing, and has produced beautiful creatures and trees which delight us.



# Kadesh

It is traditional to drink four cups of wine or grape juice during the seder to invoke the four promises that God made to the Hebrews—to bring us out, to deliver us, to redeem us and to take us as God’s people. Tonight, our four cups will invoke our commitments to collective liberation:

1. Engaging with histories and legacies
2. Transforming ourselves and transforming the world
3. Taking collective action toward collective liberation
4. Sustaining ourselves, each other, peoples’ movements, and the planet



## First cup: engaging with our histories and legacies

The currents of our histories—complex, contradictory, entwined—have brought us to this moment. We are not separate from our histories. As people working for liberation we are never alone. Our forebears in our families and in this work are with us in every moment, are with us now. We call on the legacies of all who have made it possible for us to be here, those whose work we build on and whose words inspire us. We call on the legacies of all who have worked for collective liberation and stand with those who continue the struggle.

In celebrating the resistance that came before us, we also rise to the task of wrestling with the complexities of our individual, family and collective histories and legacies. Our predecessors sometimes made compromises to survive, or allowed fear, greed and lust for power to lead them to collude with destructive forces. We cannot change the trajectory of history by avoiding or obscuring the parts we are unwilling to face. Rather, by understanding its patterns, we can work collectively to change them.

Because the past and the future live in each of us and are ours to contend with and transform, we raise a glass to affirm our commitment to engaging with our histories.

In ancient times, when the seder originated, free people would recline on a couch or divan to eat and drink. So, when we drink each of the four cups, we recline to our left as a sign of being free people and our commitment for all people to be free.

*Raise your glass to affirm and celebrate our commitment to engaging with our histories. Recite the following blessing, or respond “amen” to others’ blessings:*

Brukha at Shekhina, Elateinu Ruaḥ HaOlam boreit pri hagafen. ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם בוראת פרי הגפן.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who brings forth the fruit of the vine.

*Drink the first cup while reclining to the left.*



*Which family histories are we continuing, and which are we transforming?*

*Which patterns of history are of continuing, and which are we transforming?*

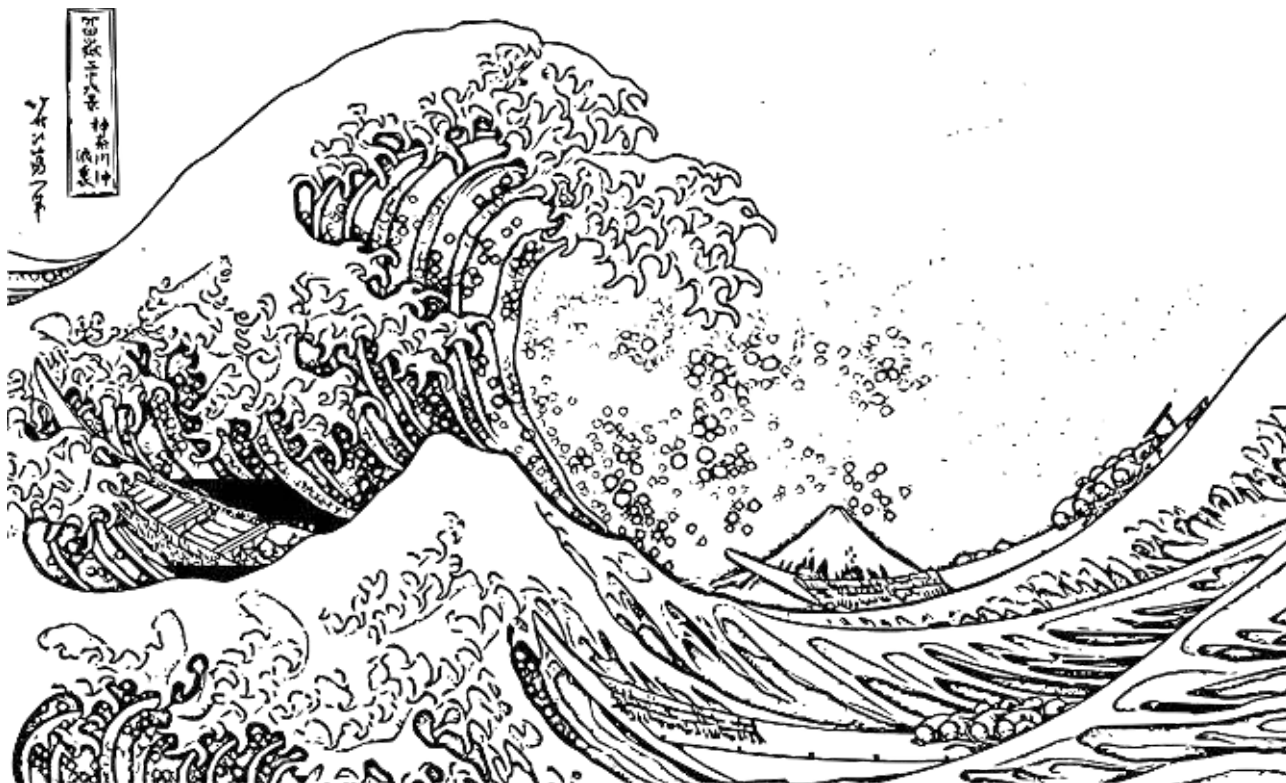
## Urchatz: first handwashing

Water is necessary for life; we are made of water; it is the sweat of our hard work and our tears of joy, grief, and mourning. As water is privatised, and pollution from industry and agriculture increases, many people around the world live without enough water, or with water that is dangerous to consume.

In Palestine, the Israeli military and Jewish settlements seize control of water sources and divert it away from Palestinians to Israeli Jews. Israeli agricultural and settlement run-off, as well as chemical warfare, pollute many Palestinian water sources beyond that. During the current assault on Gaza, even the collection of rainwater has been outlawed. As a result, many Palestinian communities lack what is necessary for daily life. This is one way the state of Israel perpetrates genocide and displacement, making it impossible for Palestinians to live on their own land.

As we prepare for the meal tonight, we symbolically prepare our hands by cleansing them with water to reinforce our commitment to truly cleanse our hands of any impurity of collusion in perpetrating injustice in the treatment, the distribution and the use of water and all resources. May tonight's reflection and ritual prepare us to act for justice regarding water and all resources in Palestine, on these stolen Aboriginal lands, and all over the world.

*In some traditions, everyone washes their hands at this time; in others, only the leader of the seder does so, with some families bringing water to the leader, or taking turns to serve each other, so participants feel "free" like a monarch. However, in the spirit of knowing that none of us are free until we are all free, those who wish to wash their hands may do so of their own accord.*



## Karpas: green herb

Long before the struggle upward begins, there is tremor in the seed. Self-protection cracks, roots reach down and grab hold. The seed swells, and tender shoots push up toward light. This is karpas: spring awakening growth. A force so tough it can break stone. We dip karpas, greens into salt water, lemon juice or vinegar to remind us that every growing movement begins with a seed. The salt water recalls the tears of our ancestors in bondage and reminds us that tears stop. Even after pain, spring comes.



*Take some greens and dip them in salt water. Recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shekhina, Elateinu Ruaḥ HaOlam boreit  
pri ha-adamah.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם בוראת פרי  
האדמה.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who brings forth the fruit of the earth.

*Eat the greens.*

## The fruits of social justice

### Orange

Professor Susannah Heschel began the tradition of including an orange on the seder plate after hearing of a homophobic comment, "There's as much room for a lesbian in Judaism as there is for a crust of bread on the seder plate." While some students had started including bread on their seder plate in protest, Heschel felt this implied that being queer was transgressive. Instead, she included an orange to show the fruitfulness of including queer people in Jewish life. Spitting out the seeds represents a repudiation of homophobia. Today, this ritual is extended to signify inclusion of all queer and transgender people.

### Olive

We include an olive on the Seder plate because, for slavery to be truly over, for a people to be truly free, we must know that we can feed ourselves and our children, today, tomorrow, and into the following generations. In Palestine, olive groves provide this security. When olive groves are destroyed, the past and future is destroyed. We eat an olive, to make real our understanding of what it means each time a bulldozer ploughs up a grove. Without the taste of olives, there will be no taste of freedom.





## Strawberries

Strawberries have long been an important crop in Gaza, traditionally harvested in farms in and around the town of Beit Lahia from December to late March. [According to](#) Ali Al-Keelani, president of the Gaza Agricultural Cooperative Society:

God has blessed Beit Lahia's land with fertile soil, a suitable climate, and freshwater—essential elements for cultivating strawberries. This practice has been passed down through generations, shaping the livelihoods of most of the town's residents. They have excelled in strawberry cultivation for decades.

Today, like most of Gaza, Beit Lahia lies in ruins. Along with homes, the Israeli military has destroyed and flattened massive tracts of farmland. We eat strawberries now, in solidarity with the people of Gaza and their historic, sacred relationship to their land. Together with karpas, let strawberries be our symbol of new life emerging out of the cold winter. With the eternal promise of spring, let us vow together that new life will emerge for the people of Gaza once more.



## Eating the fruit

Let us partake in eating oranges, olives and strawberries, thus commemorating the struggle of queer and trans people as well as Palestinian resistance to the destruction of their ancient olive groves and strawberry fields.

*Recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shekhina, Elateinu Ruaḥ HaOlam boreit  
pri ha-eitz.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם בוראת פרי  
העץ.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who brings forth the fruit of the tree.

*Eat the fruit.*

## Yachatz: breaking of the middle matza

*The leader breaks the middle matza into two pieces. Wrap and set aside the larger piece as the Afikomen, the matza to be eaten after the meal. Return the smaller half to its place with the other two matzot.*

As we break this matza in two, we acknowledge the profound brokenness Israel is inflicting on the Palestinian people.

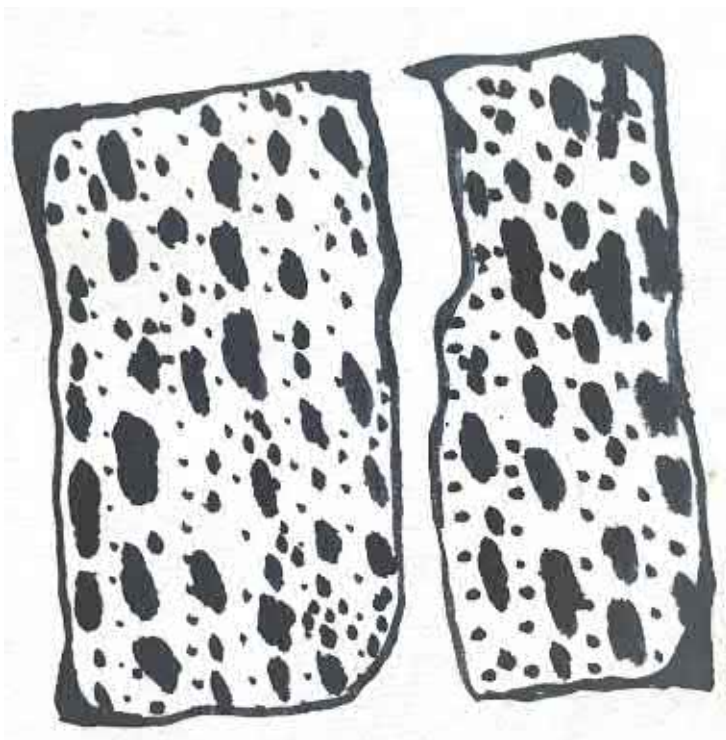
As Palestinian Christian pastor Rev. Munther Isaac has powerfully [testified](#):

We are broken. The people of Gaza are suffering. They have lost everything except their dignity...Where are they to go? There is no place for them in this world!

What is happening in Gaza is not a war or a conflict, but an annihilation—continuous genocide and ethnic cleansing through death and forced displacement. World political powers are sacrificing the people of Palestine in order to secure their interests in the Middle East; they say our annihilation is needed to keep the people of Israel safe. They offer us as sacrifices on the altar of atonement, as we pay the price for their sins with our lives.

The people of Gaza today want life. They want a night without bombing. They want medicine and surgical operations with anesthesia. They want the simplest of life's necessities: food, clean water, and electricity. They want freedom and life with dignity. Those under bombardment, beatings, and persecution do not want to hear about reconciliation and peace. They want the end of aggression!

Even as we break this matza now, we declare that it is not enough to merely acknowledge the brokenness. We insist that what is broken must be repaired and restored—until there is true and lasting liberation for all who live between the river and the sea.



## Magid: telling the story

We begin telling the story of Pesach by inviting those in need to join us.

*Leaders raise the matza and say:*

Ha lahma anya di akhalu avhatana b'ara'a d'Mitzrayim.   הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיָּא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהַתְנָא בְּאֶרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.  
Kol dikhfin yeitei v'yeykhol, kol ditzrikh yeitei v'ifsah.   כָּל דְּכַפִּין יֵיתִי וְיִכְלֹל, כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ יֵיתִי וְיִפְסַח.  
Hashata avdey, l'shana ha'ba'a bnei chorin.   הַשָּׁמַתָּא עַבְדֵּי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין.

This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Mitzrayim. Let all who are hungry, come and eat. All who are isolated, come and celebrate Pesach with us. As long as some are oppressed, none are truly free. Next year, may we all be truly free.

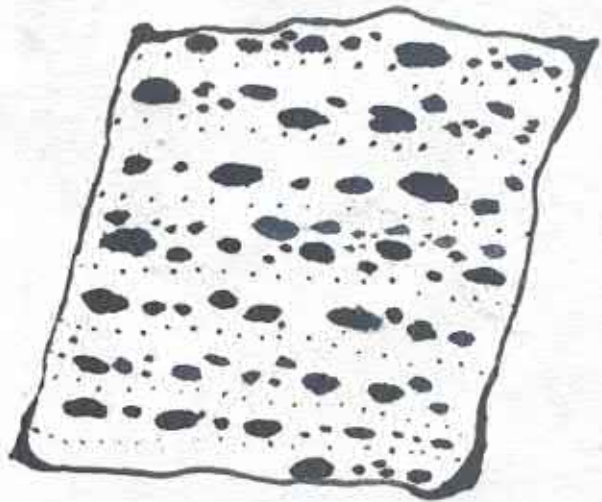
To face the magnitude of injustice and suffering—that we experience, that we bear witness to—is to be heart broken.

“Next year, may we all be truly free” is a commitment. We know that realising this is impossible. We also know, wholeheartedly, that the alternative is unacceptable: justice cannot wait.

As we lift up the matza this Pesach, the [words](#) of Palestinian poet Mosab Abu Toha remind us that for Gazans experiencing forced starvation, lehem oni (the bread of affliction) is more than merely symbolic.

Three days later, on social media, (my brother) Hamza posted a photograph of what he was eating that day: a ragged brown morsel, seared black on one side and flecked with grainy bits. “This is the wondrous thing we call ‘bread’—a mixture of rabbit, donkey, and pigeon feed,” Hamza wrote in Arabic. “There is nothing good about it except that it fills our bellies. It is impossible to stuff it with other foods, or even break it except by biting down hard with one’s teeth...”

This past Monday, an ear doctor who treated me in Gaza, Bahaa al-Ashqar, managed to cross into Egypt through the Rafah border. I woke up to a call from him at one o'clock in the morning, and two hours later a taxi dropped him off at our apartment. I was overjoyed that Dr. Bahaa was still alive. We hugged. But, as I stared at him, I saw how thin and weak he looked. This is not the doctor I used to know, I thought. He had lost thirty-seven pounds since the start of the war. In Rafah, he'd survived on canned food... In the morning, Maram cooked tomatoes and fried some eggs. Dr. Bahaa told us that it was his first normal breakfast in months. We dipped bread and feta into the olive oil. It smelled of the trees that grew the olives, and it tasted like Gaza.



## The four questions

In some traditions, the youngest person at the Seder asks the four questions; in others, all attendees sing them in unison. Each question seeks to uncover the significance of the symbolism in the Seder ritual. We value this tradition of questioning, as well as the leadership and wisdom of young people tonight and every night.

Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol halailot?  
 Sheb'khol halailot anu okhlin ḥameytz umatza, ḥameytz umatza. Halaila hazeh, halaila hazeh, kuloh matza.  
 Sheb'khol ha-lailot anu okhlin sh'ar y'arakot, sh'ar y'arakot.  
 Halailah hazeh, halaila hazeh, maror.  
 Sheb'khol halailot ayn anu mat'bilin afilu pa'am eḥat, afilu pa'am eḥat. Halaila hazeh, halaila hazeh, sh'tei p'amim.  
 Sheb'khol halailot anu okhlin bayn yosh'bin u'vayn mitzubin, bayn yosh'bin u'vayn mitzubin, Halaila hazeh, halaila hazeh, kulanu mitzubin.

מה נשמתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?  
 שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה, הלילה הזה—כלו מצה.  
 שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות—הלילה הזה (כלו) מרור.  
 שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת—הלילה הזה שתי פעמים.  
 שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין—הלילה הזה כלנו מטבילין.

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Why is it that on all other nights during the year we eat either bread or matza, but on this night we eat only matza?

Why is it that on all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs, but on this night we eat only bitter herbs?

Why is it that on all other nights we do not dip our herbs even once, but on this night we dip them twice?

Why on all other nights do we eat either sitting or reclining, but on this night we eat in a reclining position?

Ladino	Judeo-Arabic	Yiddish
Kuanto fue demudada la noche la esta mas ke todas las noches? Ke en todas las noches non nos entinyentes afilu vez una, i la noche la esta dos vezes? Ke en todas las noches nos comientes levdo o sesenya i la noche la esta todo el sesenya? Ke en todas las noches nos comientes resto de vedruras i la noche la esta lechugua? Ke en todas las noches nos comientes i bevientes tanto asentados i tanto arescovdados i la noche la esta todos nos arescovdados?	B'ma tera-yerath ha-dhee lei-la min kil l'yalee. Fee kil l'yalee les nih'na ram'seen. Lawu-noo mara wahda wa-dhee lei-la mar-ten. Fee kil l'yalee nih'na ak-leen chmeer ya f'teer. Wa-dhee lei-la kuloo f'teer. Fee kil l'yalee nih'na ak-leen ch-dhar ya m'rar. Wa-dhee Leila ku-loo m'rar. Fee kil l'yalee nih'na ak-leen u-shar-been. Ben ka'a'deen uben min-ti-kiyeen. Wa-dhee lei-la ki-lit-na min-ti-ki-yeen.	Alla nacht fun a ganz yar essen mir chametz u'matza, uhbar d'nacht fun Pesach, essen mir matza. Alla nacht fun a ganz yar essen mir allilay grinsin, uhbar d'nacht fun Pesach, essen mir marror. Alla nacht fun a ganz yar tinkin mir nor ain mol, uhbar d'nacht fun Pesach, tinkin mir tzvai mol. karpas in saltzvasser, un marror in charoses. alla nacht fun a ganz yar essen mir sie zitzindik un sie ungeshpart, uhbar d'nacht fun Pesach, essen mir sie ungeshpart.

## The four children

☞ *Traditionally, we are commanded to teach our children the customs and stories of Pesach. The Talmud (a collection of ancient rabbinic teachings on Jewish law and tradition) suggests four different archetypes of “children.” Read and discuss the following:*

According to the Talmud,

The Wise child might ask: What is the meaning of the laws and rules which our God has commanded you?

We should explain to this child in great detail all the laws and customs of Pesach.

The Wicked child might ask: What does this service mean to you?

Since this child distances themselves from participating in the community, we answer: “we celebrate Pesach because of what God did for us. If you had been in Mitzrayim, you would not have been included when we were delivered from bondage.”

The Typical child might ask: What is this all about?

We answer simply: “with a mighty hand God took us out of Mitzrayim.”

What about the child Who Doesn’t Know Enough to Ask a Question? We must explain to this child why we observe Pesach, to remember the story of Exodus.

Zionist Jews are often quick to label antizionist Jews as “wicked children”, yet many so-called rebellious children have noticed the similarities between the wise child’s and wicked child’s questions. As activists, we often find ourselves under attack for asking difficult questions. We are often called naive for daring to hope for a better future. Is it really helpful to divide these metaphorical children based on their engagement and acceptance of tradition?

If we must categorise people, a more helpful metric might be our strengths in activism. In a [recent article](#), Holly Hammond reframed Bill Moyer’s four roles of social activism for the Palestinian solidarity movement. Each of these roles—Citizen, Reformer, Rebel and Change Agent—has its strengths, and can be effective or ineffective.

- An effective Citizen can appeal to the mainstream, promoting values including democracy and justice (e.g., Mums for Palestine, Jewish Council of Australia).
- An effective Reformer uses official processes, including lobbying and rallies, to effect change (e.g., Birchgrove Legal’s referral of Anthony Albanese to the International Criminal Court).
- An effective Rebel uses nonviolent direct action to disrupt oppressive systems and draw attention to the cause (e.g., blockades of Zim ships).
- An effective Change Agent empowers people to engage with long-term, meaningful activism with a clear message and strategy (e.g., Australia Palestine Advocacy Network).

No activist, and no activist group, can do this alone. We must work together and build community and solidarity to achieve our shared goals of liberation and justice.



## The Pesach story

We tell and retell this story every year. While some believe it to be history, others see it as exaggerated or false. However, it is unarguably the ancient liberation story of our people and it opens us to possibilities of liberation in our own times. This narrative has been interpreted and used in many ways. Some we respect and embrace; others we reject. And yet others we are creating ourselves. By participating in this tradition and contending with the contradictions of the story as we have received it, we take responsibility for the legacies we inherit and create new possibilities for the future.

Maggid means “the telling.” During Maggid, we tell the story of the exodus of the Hebrews from Mitzrayim and of others, the “mixed multitude” who the Torah tells went with them. In addition to the men who the story focuses on—Moshe and his brother Aharon—we include the women who the Torah tells played significant roles but who are usually not discussed: the midwives Shifra and Pu’a, Yoḥeved, the Pharaoh’s daughter, and Miriam the prophetess.

As we begin the Pesach story, Pharaoh attempts to stem the Israelite birth rate by ordering the Hebrew midwives Shifra and Pu’a to kill every newborn boy. When they defy his order, Pharaoh orders that every newborn boy be cast into the Nile. In the midst of Israel’s genocidal assault on the people of Gaza, these verses now resonate with unbearable urgency.

UNICEF has [reported](#) that more than 13,000 children have been killed in Gaza since October 7. About 1 in 3 children under the age of 2 in northern Gaza is now acutely malnourished, as famine looms. According to a [news report](#) earlier this month:

The designated representative for Palestinian territories with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), said that when he visited Gaza last month, doctors at the Emirati Hospital similarly told him that they were no longer seeing “normal-sized” babies. They reported “more complications around births caused, they’re telling us, by malnutrition and dehydration and from stress,” (he) said. “What they are seeing is an increased number of stillborn babies and neonatal deaths.”

According to the UNFPA, around 155,000 pregnant women and new mothers in Gaza are “struggling to survive. For the 5,500 women who will give birth in the coming month, accessing adequate health care is an unimaginable challenge. Only three maternity hospitals remain in the Gaza Strip, and they are overwhelmed with patients,” it said, adding: “Doctors and midwives—desperate for medicines and supplies—are struggling to provide adequate care to newborns.”

Let us invoke the moral courage and resistance of Shifra and Pu’a. Let us fight for a world in which all children are born into health, safety and collective care.



The story begins in Mitzrayim. Twelve of the children of Jacob, whose descendants became known as the tribes of Israel, the Israelites, or the Hebrews, ended up in Mitzrayim during a time of widespread famine. Joseph, one of the sons, was a close adviser to the Pharaoh. Time passed, and the Hebrews prospered in Mitzrayim.

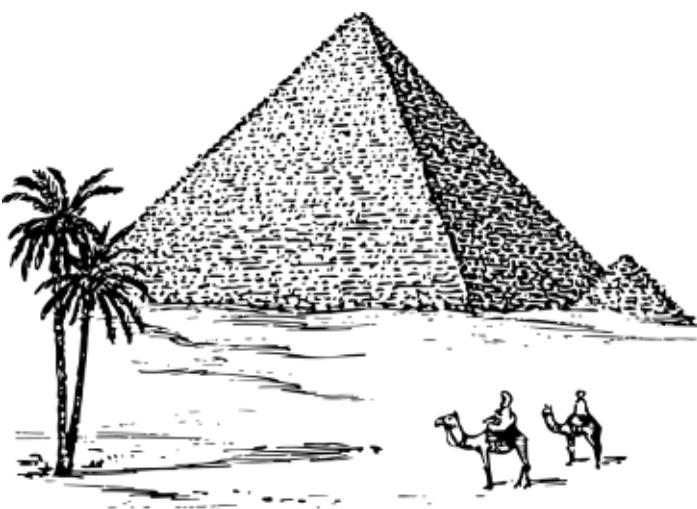
A new Pharaoh rose up in Mitzrayim, who did not remember Joseph. He saw that the Hebrews were mighty and numerous, and he was afraid. "Come, let us deal wisely with the Hebrews, lest in time of war they join our enemies and fight against us," he said. The Pharaoh afflicted them with hard bondage and made them serve with rigour. Their lives became bitter, but they continued to grow in number and strength.

The Pharaoh summoned two midwives, Shifra and Pu'a, and ordered them: "When you attend Hebrew births, if the child born be a daughter, she shall live but if the child born be a son, you shall kill him." Shifra and Pu'a refused to obey this order, safely delivering all Hebrew children.

The Pharaoh once again summoned them, demanding to know why they would not obey his command. "The Hebrew women are not like the women of Mitzrayim" they told him, "They are strong and give birth before the midwives arrive." The Pharaoh saw that they would not obey his orders, and he decreed that all Hebrew baby boys be drowned in the river.

Yohevved, a Hebrew woman, gave birth to a son. She risked her life to hide him and keep him safe. After three months, she could not hide him any longer. She built a basket of reeds and pitch, and placed him in it by the river. She sent his sister, Miriam, to stand on the riverbank to watch and see what would become of him.

Later that day, the Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe. She noticed the basket and sent her handmaiden to bring it to her. When she opened the basket, she saw the crying baby inside and said, "This must be one of the Hebrew children we have been ordered to drown. I shall take this child and raise him as my own, and I will call him Moshe (Moses) for I drew him out of the water."



At that moment, Miriam stepped forward and said, "I know of a Hebrew woman who could nurse this baby for you." Pharaoh's daughter agreed to let the Hebrew woman nurse the child, so Miriam brought Moshe back to Yohevved, who raised him until he was weaned. Then, Moshe was taken to the palace where he grew up as if he were part of the royal family.

One day, when Moshe was walking among the people, he saw an Egyptian man beating a Hebrew. Moshe struck the Egyptian man, killing him, and buried the body in the sand. The next day when Moshe was out walking, he noticed two Hebrews quarrelling and approached them

to intervene. They turned to Moshe, saying, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill us, as you killed the man of Mitzrayim?" Moshe realised that word of this killing was spreading, so he fled Mitzrayim for the land of Midian, where he married and began raising livestock.

In Midian, while herding sheep through the mountains, Moshe came across a strange sight. He saw a bush that burned with flames, but was not consumed by the fire. When God saw that he stopped to watch this, God spoke to Moshe saying, "I am God, god of your ancestors." Moshe asked, "By what name shall I call you?" God answered, "I will be what I will be. I have come to deliver my people from Mitzrayim with a mighty hand, for I have heard their cries. I will bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey, the land of the Canaanites. Go tell Pharaoh that I command him to let my people go so that they may worship me."

So Moshe returned to Mitzrayim and, with his brother Aharon (Aaron) as spokesperson, demanded that Pharaoh let the Hebrews go to the wilderness to worship God. Pharaoh did not recognise the god of Abraham, and refused to let them go. Instead, he increased their burdens. The Hebrews complained to Moshe, saying, "You have made us abhorrent in the eyes of the Pharaoh and his people. It is worse now because of you."

Moshe questioned God, saying "Why have you sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, only evil has befallen Your people. You have not delivered them at all."

God replied, "Now, see how I will deal with the Pharaoh." God sent Moshe back to the Pharaoh, ordering him once again to let the Hebrews go. This time, when Pharaoh refused, God sent the first of ten plagues.





## The ten plagues

When God first sent a plague upon Mitzrayim, Pharaoh “hardened his heart” and refused to relinquish his power over the Hebrew slaves. With each subsequent plague, Pharaoh continued to harden his heart. After the sixth plague, the Torah tells us that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. Pharaoh had become so habituated to power, he was no longer even capable of changing his heart until finally unbearable suffering was brought upon him. And even then, after he freed the Hebrew slaves, he reversed his decision and sent his army to bring them back.

We remember and name each of the plagues. As we call out each plague we reduce the wine in our cups as a reminder not to rejoice in suffering, even of our mortal enemies. We take care not to lick the wine off our fingers, so we do not rejoice in the pain of others, even if they have harmed us.



*For each plague dip your pinky into your cup of wine and place a drop on your plate as we recite together:*

Dam: blood

Sh’hin: boils

Tzfardeyah: frogs

Barad: hail

Kinim: lice

Arbeh: locusts

Arov: flies

Ḥoshekh: darkness

Dever: blight

Makat b’khorot: death of the firstborn

Before the last plague, God instructed Moshe to tell the people to sacrifice a lamb and smear its blood on the doorpost of their houses. The Angel of Death was going to kill the firstborn in every house in Mitzrayim and would pass over the homes with blood on the doorposts.

With the final plague, not a single household in Mitzrayim was spared. The Pharaoh summoned Moshe and Aharon in the night and urged them to take the Hebrews and leave immediately, before more harm befell the people of Mitzrayim.

The Hebrews left Mitzrayim in great haste, so quickly that they did not have time to let their bread dough rise. They cooked unleavened cakes of bread, and hastened to follow Moshe towards the wilderness. After the Hebrews were on their way towards the wilderness, God once again hardened Pharaoh’s heart. Pharaoh sent his armies after the Hebrews, all of his horses, chariots and soldiers. Finally, the Hebrews stood trapped between the Red Sea and the army. They cried out to Moshe, saying: “Why have you brought us here to die in the wilderness? It would have been better to serve Pharaoh in bondage than to die this way.”

Then God commanded Moshe to stretch out his arm over the water. When Moshe stretched out his arm, a mighty east wind came and divided the waters. The sea parted and the Hebrews walked through on dry land. Once again, God hardened the Pharaoh’s heart, and Pharaoh

pursued the Hebrews into the Sea. Once the Hebrews crossed to the other side, God commanded Moshe to stretch his arm back over the waters. This time, the sea came crashing down, drowning the Pharaoh and all his soldiers and horses. On the other side of the sea, the Hebrews were awed by God's power. Miriam the prophetess took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, dancing and singing praise to God for delivering them from bondage in Mitzrayim.

In this story, some Egyptians were complicit in enslaving the Hebrews, while others may not have been. Yet all were punished with the plagues, which were aimed at changing Pharaoh's mind—after God had hardened his heart. This is reminiscent of the collective punishment enacted on Palestinians, in part for the actions of the Nazis and other European antisemites. With these additional sets of "plagues", we recognise that as Jews, we have been the oppressor as well as the oppressed. That some wars cannot be won, because Israeli Jews also experience plagues in their misguided search for safety.

### **Ten plagues of the occupation of Palestine**

This year we take more drops of wine from our cup to grieve the plagues of apartheid, occupation and war being inflicted on Palestine:

1. Ethnic cleansing of Palestinians to settle Palestine as an ethnically exclusive, Jewish state.
2. Destroying over hundreds of Palestinian towns and villages since 1948.
3. Demolitions of homes and uprooting olive trees—destroying income and heritage for generations of Palestinian families.
4. Subjecting Palestinians to daily humiliation and violence at blockades and checkpoints, denying access to work, medical care and seeing their families and loved ones.
5. Limiting movement, destroying homes, and increasing surveillance by building a 30-foot high apartheid wall around the West Bank with gun towers and electric fencing.
6. Imprisoning and torturing Palestinian adults and children indefinitely, without trial.
7. Stealing resources by destroying the Palestinian economy, exploiting Palestinian labour, and stealing water and fertile land.
8. Upholding a false democracy by denying civil rights to all non-Jews through apartheid laws and administrative systems.
9. Erasing records of the ancient history and culture of Palestine.
10. Violating international law by disabling and torturing children and adults and massacring Palestinians in Sabra, Shattila, Deir Yassin, Nablus, Gaza, and elsewhere, including the current genocide.

### **Ten plagues upon Israel because of the oppression of Palestinians**

This year we recount the plagues that have come upon Israelis who live in a system of oppression just as the plagues in the Exodus story came upon Mitzrayim. We wonder how long and how many plagues will be needed before enough Israelis recognise the need to let go, as Pharaoh did.

1. Widespread poverty in an economy drained of resources to support fifty years of Occupation.
2. High rate of domestic violence in a culture that openly idealises militarisation and physical abuse to control others.
3. Young people deprived of years of their lives in enforced military conscription to enforce

domination over a subjugated yet still defiant people; those who refuse face jail time and social ostracism.

4. Young people are psychologically damaged by either awareness of their complicity in the brutal oppression of others or by the psychic efforts necessary to repress that awareness.

5. Pervasive fear of attacks by people without hope in making change by other means; constant security checks in every public setting.

6. Deaths and maiming from occasional attacks; although much fewer than the Palestinian lives lost, in Jewish thought every life represents a whole world.

7. Deaths and maiming during military operations to enforce the dispossession and subjugation of Palestinians.

8. International isolation and rejection—Israeli passports are not accepted in 16 countries, eight countries ban people with Israeli stamps in their passports wherever they are from. As the BDS movement grows, more and more people are boycotting Israeli products, performers, athletes and academics.

9. People leave the country, moving away from family, friends and the familiar, to avoid the conflict; surveys indicate about one in three Israelis hope to leave.

10. Existential insecurity—the country lives with a sense that it is in a struggle for its very existence, a fear caused by oppressing another people which is then used to reinforce and maintain that oppression in a vicious cycle. The dynamic is reminiscent of Pharaoh, who oppressed the Hebrews because he feared them and then in the end was destroyed by the dynamic created by his own fear.

## Dayenu

Dayenu means “it would have sufficed” or “it would have been enough.” Dayenu is a song of our gratitude. A Jewish philosopher was once asked, “what is the opposite of hopelessness?” His answer: “Dayenu”—the ability to be thankful for what we have received.

*Join together in song:*

Ilu hotzianu miMitzrayim, dayeinu!

אלו הוציאנו ממצרים דינו!

Ilu natan lanu et haShabbat, dayeinu!

אלו נתן לנו את השבת דינו!

Ilu natan lanu et haTorah, dayeinu!

אלו נתן לנו את התורה דינו!

If you had brought us out from Mitzrayim—dayenu, it would have been enough!

If you had given us the Shabbat—dayenu, it would have been enough!

If you had given us the Torah—Dayeinu, it would have been enough!

*To the same tune:*

As we work for Palestinian liberation. Not In Our Name, a sacred incantation. May there be full end to genocide and occupation. Dayenu.

Let us pray that it comes to be. From the River to the Sea. Palestine will be free. Dayenu.

(Lyrics: Rav Kohenet Taya Mâ Shere)

This year, many antizionist Jews have flipped this prayer of gratitude to acknowledge that while we have so many blessings, Palestinians and others around the world are suffering under the weight of systemic oppression. Here is our version of “lo dayenu”, it is not enough:

If we disrupt their comfort, but don't call for ceasefire, Lo dayenu!

If we call for ceasefire without an end to occupation, Lo dayenu!

If we call to end occupation but not to end apartheid, Lo dayenu!

If we call to end apartheid but not Jewish supremacy, Lo dayenu!

If we call to end Jewish supremacy but don't demand Palestinian right of return, Lo dayenu!

If we demand Palestinian right of return but not Palestinian self-determination, Lo dayenu!

## Pesach, matza and maror

As we close our meandering storytelling, these three words summarise the whole seder; according to the traditional haggadah, they must be spoken aloud. Here, we answer the four questions from the beginning of the seder.

While the zeroa (shank bone or beet) on the seder plate reminds us of the Pesach sacrifice, we refrain from pointing to the former due to its symbolic nature. A good reminder that symbols can only take us so far.

*We say together:*

**Pesach:** why did our ancestors eat the Pesach offering? As a reminder that God passed over the houses marked with lambs' blood in Mitzrayim.

*Leaders raise the middle broken matza; we say together:*

**Matza:** why do we eat it? Because our ancestors' dough did not have time to rise before God redeemed them.

*Leaders replace the matza and raise the maror; we say together:*

**Maror:** why do we eat it? Traditionally, we eat this bitter vegetable as a reminder that the lives of the Hebrews were embittered with hard bondage. Tonight we eat these bitter herbs to symbolise the ways oppression continues to embitter lives across the globe.

At the heart of the Seder is the commandment that, in every generation, each person should feel as if they themselves have gone forth from the narrow place of oppression.

*We say together:*

B'khol dor vador hayav adam lir'ot et atzmo k'ilu hu  
yatzah miMitzrayim.

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר חַיָּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ  
כְּאִלוֹ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם.

In every generation, each person should feel as if they themselves have gone forth from Mitzrayim.

## Second cup: growth and transformation

We dedicate the second cup to the dynamic task of transforming ourselves as part of transforming the world. We recognise that, even as we have choice, we are also shaped by our environments. As part of the work of transforming ourselves, we work to transform the relationships, communities, and movements of which we are a part. Pesach is a time to commit to becoming the people we want to be, creating relationships and communities that we want to be part of, and working towards creating the world we want to live in together.

The Talmud says: "You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it." Tonight we make a commitment to continue the work of transforming ourselves, our communities, and our movements to better reflect the liberation we strive for.



*Raise a glass to affirm and celebrate our commitment to change ourselves and change the world. Recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shekhina, Elateinu Ruah HaOlam boreit  
pri hagafen.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם בוראת פרי  
הגפן.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who brings forth the fruit of the vine.

*Drink the second cup while reclining to the left.*



*What does a principled and joyful life look like for me? What gets in the way of living this life? What supports it?*

*What changes in our own practice, relationships, and lives do we commit to in the year ahead?*

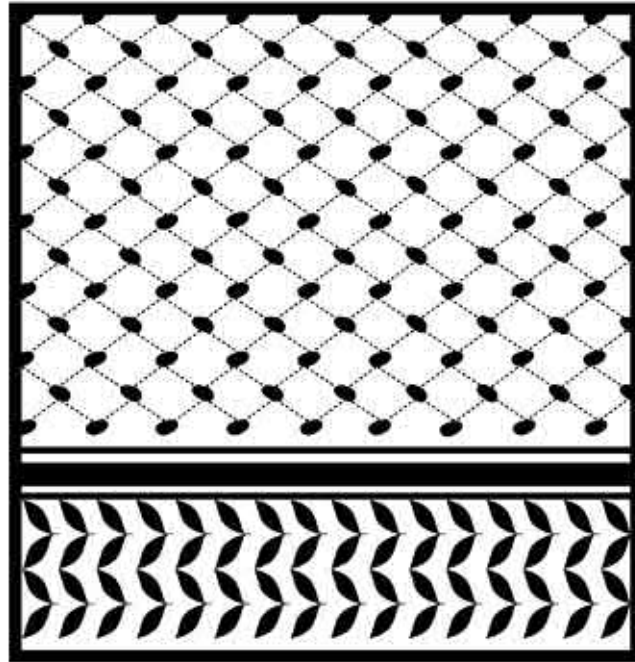
## Rachtzah: second handwashing

*We wash our hands for the meal. Recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shkhina Elatenu Ruaḥ HaOlam, asher  
kidshatanu b'mitzvotaha al nitilat yadain.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם אשר קדשתנו  
במצותה וצותנו על נטילת ידיים.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who instructs us about washing our hands.



## Motzi matza: blessing over the matza

*Leaders hold up all three matzot. Recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shekhina, Elateinu Ruaḥ HaOlam  
hamotzia leḥem min ha-aretz.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם המוציאה לחם  
מן הארץ.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who brings forth bread from the earth.

*Recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shkhina Elateinu Ruaḥ HaOlam, asher  
kidshatanu b'mitzvotaha al akhilat matza.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם אשר קדשתנו  
במצותה וצותנו על אכילת מצה.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, for teaching us to eat matza.

*Eat a portion of matza while leaning to the left.*

## Maror: blessing over the bitter herb

Gazan journalist Nesma Seyam has [written](#):

I just woke up from a strange and bizarre dream. Today is the 18th day of the war on Gaza.

It's 4:00 am, Thursday July 24th, 2014. I found myself sitting at the edge of my bed, trapped in a state between dreams and reality. As I fight to get back to reality, I feel the pull and allure of the dream get stronger and stronger. I caught myself uttering: Candy, Candy, Candy, I want more candy! Just then, a large shadowy hand descended and clasped onto my throat and squeezed...

It was yesterday afternoon when I received the dreadful news. My best friend's brother, Hasan, was now a martyr. He is survived by three little girls. The youngest, not even 2 years old yet. He wasn't given adequate time to be a father to her. To look in her eyes and give unconditional love, to hug her, to spoil her, to raise her. At least let him live just one more year to give his children a proper farewell. Three little angels robbed of their fathers love in an instant, is there a greater crime?

I have finally realized that what I have experienced was truly a dream and why it had occurred that night. My soul was aching, and my lust for sweets was an attempt to sooth the bitterness in my heart. But all the sweets in the world would still not be enough to erase the cruelty, strife, and bitterness in our hearts. In the dream I searched for anything sweet, anything beautiful to comfort myself and my friend. But there was no earthly thing that can ease our pain. The bitter taste remains in our mouths, it was Hasan who found the sweet taste of liberty and joy in heaven.



In the unspeakable bitterness of this moment, we now eat the maror.

*Take a piece of maror and dip it into the charoset, then shake the charoset off. Recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shkhina Elatenu Ruaḥ HaOlam, asher  
kidshatanu b'mitzvotaha al akhilat maror.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם אשר קדשתנו  
במצותה וצותנו על אכילת מרור.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, for teaching us to eat maror.

*Eat a portion of the maror without leaning.*

## Korech: Hillel sandwich

While eating this sandwich, we recall the sage Hillel who created the Korech sandwich: the Pesach lamb sacrifice, maror and charoset wrapped in a soft matza, like a shawarma. The Pesach seder has changed since Hillel's time, and we no longer sacrifice a lamb as part of this festival. In Ashkenazi traditions, matzot are hard crackers, not soft pitas. Yet we still make a Hillel sandwich as best we can.

*Take some maror and charoset and put them between two pieces of matza; give the sandwich to the person on your left. Eat your sandwich while reclining to the left.*



*Traditions may seem unchangeable, but we can see them shift if we pay attention. What do such changes mean for us as antizionists, including those of us who are traditionally observant and/or vegan?*

## Beitza: egg

Since there is no specific ritual involving the egg, we may eat it at any time during the Seder. In some traditions, it is dipped in the karpas salt water and eaten before the meal.

The roasted egg is traditionally part of the Seder plate and is usually understood as symbolising burnt sacrifices offered at the Temple. It is also understood as a springtime fertility symbol, or a symbol of the cycle of life and death. Yet, there is no definitive explanation for why we include an egg on the Seder plate, and there is no ritual act or blessing associated with it. Let this egg, then, represent to us the power that we must make our own meaning of traditions, and the ways that our cultural practices have a place at the table.



*Over the meal, discuss the meaning you have made of Pesach traditions and others.*

## Shulchan orech: the meal

This food is a gift of the earth, the sky, numerous living beings and much hard work.

We acknowledge the labour of the workers who grew, harvested, packaged, transported and prepared this food, who often work for low wages in harmful conditions.

May we commit ourselves to standing for workers' rights and standing together for the rights of workers everywhere to organise.

May we eat with mindfulness and may we learn to consume mindfully.

May we keep our compassion alive by eating in such a way that we reduce the suffering of living beings, preserve our planet and reverse the process of global warming.

We accept this food so that we may nurture ourselves, strengthen our community and nourish our commitment to action.

(adapted from East Bay Meditation Center)

## Tzafun: eating the afikomen

The Seder cannot officially end until everyone has tasted the afikomen—the larger half of the broken middle matza. Nothing is eaten after the afikomen, so that the matza is the last food tasted.





## Barech: blessing after the meal

*We express our thanks for the meal we have eaten:*

Bareikh raḥamana, malka d'alma, marei d'hai pita.

בָּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָא, מַלְכָא דְעֵלְמָא, מְרִיבָה דְהַאי פִּיטָא.

You are the Source of life for all that is and Your blessing flows through me.

## Third cup: taking collective action toward collective liberation

We dedicate the third cup to taking collective action toward building a world of justice, freedom, equity, dignity, joy and sustainability. We cannot change ourselves without encouragement and accountability to and from those around us. We cannot change the world without joining a critical mass of people who share our commitment to collective liberation. There is a long history of attempts to dehumanise, subjugate and exploit the many for the benefit of the few. There is an equally long history of the many surviving and rising up to demand their dignity, freedom and lives. Tonight, we recognise with gratitude all those who struggle for justice together and we recall with awe the inspiring legacies of resistance we inherit and join.

*Raise a glass to affirm and celebrate our commitment to take collective action toward collective liberation. Recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shekhina, Elateinu Ruaḥ HaOlam boreit  
pri hagafen.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם בוראת פרי  
הגפן.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who brings forth the fruit of the vine.

*Drink the third cup while reclining to the left.*



*What and who have made it possible for you to make changes you want in your life and behaviour? How do you offer support and accountability to others in your life?*

*What commitments do you want to make toward building collective action? What can you contribute to the collectives you are active with to strengthen its work and relationships?*



## Cups of the prophets

On the seder table we have placed a cup of wine for the prophet Eliyahu (Elijah) and a cup of water for the prophet Miriam. We do not consume this water or wine, but open the door and invite in Miriam and Eliyahu.

### Elijah's cup

In the ninth century BCE a farmer arose to challenge the domination of the ruling elite. In his tireless and passionate advocacy on behalf of the common people, and his ceaseless exposure of the corruption and waste of the court, Eliyahu sparked a movement and created a legend which would inspire people for generations to come.

Before he left this world, Eliyahu declared that he would return once each generation in the guise of any poor or oppressed person, coming to people's doors to see how he would be treated. By the treatment offered him, he would know whether the population had reached a level of humanity worthy of the coming of the Messiah. We translate "coming of the Messiah" to mean the realisation of our full humanity through creating a world in which justice and human dignity was the basis for society.

Eliyahu is thought to be [syncretic](#) with El Khadr, a mysterious prophet and/or angel in Muslim traditions, and Saint George, the patron saint of Palestine, among other Levantine folklores.

### Eliyahu Ha-Navi

*We sing together:*

Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu ha-Tishbi

Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu ha-Giladi

Bimheyra b'yameynu, yahvoh eleynu

Im mashiakh ben David, Im mashiakh bat Sarah

Elijah the prophet, Elijah the Tishbi

Elijah, Elijah, Elijah of Gilead

In haste and in our days may he come to us

with the Messiah son of David, daughter of Sarah

אַלְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא, אַלְיָהוּ הַתִּשְׁבִּי,

אַלְיָהוּ, אַלְיָהוּ, אַלְיָהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי.

בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, יָבֹא אֵלֵינוּ,

עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד, עִם מְשִׁיחַ בַּת שָׂרָה.



## Miriam's cup

The story has always been told of a miraculous well of living water, which has accompanied the Jewish people since the world was spoken into being. The well comes and goes, as it is needed, and as we remember, forget, and remember again how to call it to us. In the time of the exodus from Mitzrayim, the well came to Miriam, in honour of her courage and action, and stayed with the Hebrews as they wandered the desert. Upon Miriam's death, the well again disappeared. With this ritual of Miriam's cup we honour the role of women and other marginalised genders in our collective survival, resilience and liberation.

### Miriam Ha-Nevia

*We sing together:*

Miriam haneviya, oz v'zimra v'yada.

Miriam tirkod itanu l'hagdil zimrat olam.

Miriam tirkod itanu l'taken et ha'olam.

Bimheyra b'yameynu, hi t'vi'einu el mei ha-yishua, el mei ha-yishua.

Miriam the prophet, strength and song in her hand;

Miriam, dance with us in order to increase the song of the world!

Miriam, dance with us in order to repair the world.

Soon she will bring us to the waters of redemption!

(Lyrics by Rabbi Leila Gal Berner)

מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה עִז וְזִמְרָה בְּיָדָהּ  
מִרְיָם תִּרְקֹד אֶתְנוּ לְהַגְדִּיל זִמְרַת עוֹלָם  
מִרְיָם תִּרְקֹד אֶתְנוּ לְתַקֵּן אֶת-הָעוֹלָם:  
בְּמַהְרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ הִיא תְּבִיאֵנוּ אֶל מֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה



## Pour out Your...?

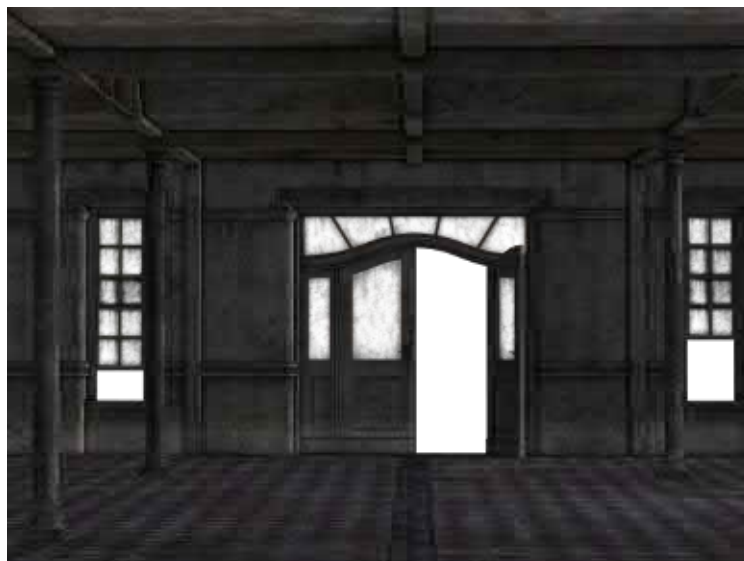
At this point in the seder, many haggadot include a collection of Torah verses known as “Shfoch chamatcha [Pour out your wrath]”. These verses are essentially a curse aimed at non-Jews who have harmed Jewish people and don’t believe in their God. Recited with the front door open, this angry curse might have been a justifiable response to European antisemitism of the 12th century, but is uncomfortable for many Jews today, particularly those in activist and solidarity space. Interestingly, these verses are not included in the haggadot of Rambam (Maimonides) or Rabbi Saadya Gaon, two eminent rabbis who lived in Muslim countries from the 12th and 9th centuries, respectively.

This flipped version, “Shfoch ahavatecha [Pour out your love]”, might be more aligned with our sensibilities. Originally also attributed to a 12th-century haggadah from Worms, Germany, it is now generally believed to be a 19th-century fraud. However, the sentiment remains—and offers still more room for improvement.

Shfokh ahavat'kha al hagoyim asher y'da'ukha  
V'al mamlakhot asher b'shimkha kor'im  
Biglal ḥasadim shehem osim im Ya'akov  
Umginim al umkha Yisrael mipnei okhleyhem  
Yizku lir'ot b'sukat b'ḥirekha  
V'lismo'ah b'simḥat goyekha

שִׁפְךָ אֶהְבֵּתָהּ עַל הַגּוֹיִים אֲשֶׁר יָדְעוּךָ  
וְעַל מַמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ קוֹרְאִים  
בְּגִלְגַּל חֲסָדִים שֶׁהֵם עוֹשִׂים עִם יַעֲקֹב  
וּמְגִנִּים עַל עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִפְּנֵי אוֹכְלֵיהֶם.  
יִזְכּוּ לְרֵאוֹת בְּסֻכַּת בְּחִירְךָ  
וְלִשְׂמֹחַ בְּשִׂמְחַת גּוֹיְךָ

Pour out Your love on the nations that know You  
And on the kingdoms that call upon Your Name  
For the loving-kindness that they perform with Jacob  
And their defence of the People of Yisrael  
In the face of those that would devour them.  
May they be privileged to see  
The Succah of peace spread for Your chosen ones  
And rejoice in the joy of Your nations.



## Hallel: songs of praise

### Hallelujah (Leonard Cohen)

Now I've heard there was a secret chord  
That David played and it pleased the Lord  
But you don't really care for music, do ya?  
It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth  
The minor fall, the major lift  
The baffled king composing "Hallelujah"

[Chorus]

Hallelujah, Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah

[Verse 3]

You say I took the name in vain  
I don't even know the name  
But if I did, well, really, what's it to ya?  
There's a blaze of light in every word  
It doesn't matter which you heard  
The holy or the broken Hallelujah

[Chorus]

Hallelujah, Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah

[Verse 4]

I did my best, it wasn't much  
I couldn't feel, so I tried to touch  
I've told the truth, I didn't come to  
fool ya  
And even though it all went wrong  
I'll stand before the lord of song  
With nothing on my tongue but  
hallelujah

[Chorus]

Hallelujah, Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah



*To our traditional Psalms of joy and praise, we add this adaptation of Psalm 46:*

## **For Gaza: Psalm 46**

*For the people of Gaza,  
for the refugees,  
for the dispossessed and displaced,  
a song:*

We will not look away  
we see you everywhere  
even as the bombs rain down  
even as the earth gives way beneath you,  
even as they drive you from your homes.

There is a river whose streams  
will one day bring rejoicing back  
to your land,  
morning will dawn and light  
will come streaming into every home.

This nation that rages so mercilessly against  
you  
soon will break under the weight of its own  
overwhelming might  
and you will find shelter and protection  
at long last.

For there is a Power far mightier  
than even the mightiest military;  
bombs and tanks and drones  
will be shattered into dust,  
governments held to account  
for their crimes against you.

*I will bring you into the stillness  
of my embrace  
and you will know that I am with you  
I will lift you up among the nations  
I will return you in dignity and in love.*

The One who abides with you  
through this endless night  
will accompany you through all harm  
and bring you safely home.

(by Rabbi Brant Rosen, from [Jewish Prayers  
for Gaza](#))

## Fourth cup: sustaining ourselves, each other, peoples' movements and the planet



The love that we extend and receive, the relationships we build, the communities we weave, and the web of life that holds us. These are the bonds that make our work possible and the connections that remind us what we are working for.

We dedicate the fourth cup to sustaining what is sacred—a life of dignity, health and well-being, our relationships, our movements for justice, the wonders and challenges of living in a body, the land and all living things. We must celebrate and revel in what is sacred as we reckon with the harm being done and mourn what is lost.

We take responsibility for sustaining ourselves, each other and our movements for the long journey ahead, in honour of those who came before us and nourished the sacred, and for the sake of those who will come after us. To sustaining ourselves and each other.

We raise a glass to affirm and celebrate our commitment to sustaining ourselves, each other, our movements and the planet.

*Recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shekhina, Elateinu Ruaḥ HaOlam boreit  
pri hagafen.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם בוראת פרי  
הגפן.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who brings forth the fruit of the vine.

*Drink the fourth cup while reclining to the left.*



*What is sacred to me?*

*What shifts am I committed to making toward sustaining what is sacred?*

*What contributions am I committed to making toward sustaining others and our collective work for liberation?*

## Nirtza: closing

As we end our seder with words of ancient Jewish yearning, we acknowledge Jerusalem's profound and sacred meaning for Gazans—and for all Palestinians living under occupation.

### ["It Took Me Three Decades to Drive One Hour from Gaza to Jerusalem"](#) (by Albi Almasri)

Earlier this year, the Israeli army gave me a permit to leave the 11-by-40-kilometer Gaza Strip for the first time in my life and travel to the United States for work. Last month, I left again—this time, to see the rest of Palestine and Israel. The one-hour trip from the Israel-Gaza crossing to Jerusalem felt like a journey to a distant world.

I have always dreamed of smelling Jerusalem's air and hearing the call to prayer ring from its mosques. When the prospect of traveling there was still a distant dream, I told a colleague, "I just hope to have the chance to pray in al-Aqsa Mosque before I die."

Al-Aqsa was even more spectacular than I had imagined. I couldn't hold back the tears—both of joy at beholding its beauty, and of sadness that such a majestic place has witnessed a half-century of ugly, abusive military occupation, where soldiers control who can pray there.

I also fell in love with Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jaffa, Acre, and Haifa during my whirlwind tour, snapping pictures everywhere that I could to share with family and friends back home.

I'm now back in Gaza, not sure if I'll ever be able to return. But I remember the sights and smells, and wait for the day that everyone in Gaza can travel freely.

### ["My Grandma Finally Got to Visit Jerusalem. Will I Have to Wait Until I'm 60?"](#) (by Ghada Ahmed)

After three weeks of anxiously waiting to get a permit, my grandma finally left her home in Gaza at 4 am May 22, got on a bus full of other older people and began the journey to Jerusalem. They were finally going to be able to pray in Al Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest site for Muslims worldwide.

The bus drove by some of the original towns from which these elderly Gazans had been expelled in 1948 during the "Nakba"—catastrophe. Grandma described how the air seemed so fresh and the land was covered by a lush green everywhere they looked. In Gaza, there is such a shortage of water, you never see such expanses of green. It was overwhelming. They could almost taste the smell of their land and everyone on the bus was feeling nostalgic. Everything was breathtaking; it was a bittersweet experience for them all.

In addition to religious reasons, all Gazans have personal reasons for wanting to visit Jerusalem. For example, my grandma was desperate to see my uncle—her son—who lives in Ramallah, a city in the West Bank. She had not seen him for 15 years. "I have always wanted the opportunity to see him again," she told us.

Finally, their dream to be reunited came true and my grandma got to see, touch and embrace her eldest son, his wife and their five children. She had tears in her eyes as she recounted hugging them all. This was the first time my cousins got to meet their grandmother. After





that, they prayed together in Al-Aqsa Mosque before she had to leave. Their reunion didn't last long simply because Israel doesn't allow Gazans to be there after 2 pm. Throughout their reunion, they were surrounded by Israeli soldiers with guns.

As soon as grandma left Jerusalem, she started counting, not the days, but the years until she can get another permit to visit Jerusalem. Until then—no Jerusalem, no son, no grandchildren. Just constant waiting. She ended her reminiscence of her visit to Jerusalem by saying, "Mararah ya sitty," an Arabic expression of desperate bitterness.

I will have to wait 37 years until I am allowed to visit Jerusalem, which is my own land. But Jerusalem, for you I will wait forever.



### [“Please Go to My Country and Say Salaam”](#) (by Malak Matar)

For any Gazan, going to Jerusalem is like a dream, and praying at Al-Aqsa Mosque, it's not something easily done. So, I went and for the first time, I saw Jerusalem. I felt that the air is kind of different from the air in Gaza, you know. It was heart-wrenching to see Al-Aqsa Mosque, and how holy it felt to pray there, and even walking in the narrow streets... it's really something. It took quite a while for me to understand that Jerusalem is also my country.

As our seder now comes to a close, let our voices now join with the collective voice of the Palestinian people. Let our words reflect our solemn commitment to the true and total liberation of Jerusalem—and the promise it represents to us all. May this day come in our own lifetimes—and may we do what we must to make it so.

Traditionally the Seder concludes with the words, “Le-shanah ha-ba’ah bi-Yerushalayim: next year in Jerusalem.” This tradition predates Zionism and the state of Israel. Before political Zionism, “Jerusalem” was sometimes interpreted to be a conceptual place symbolising a future condition of peace and freedom.

*With awareness of how this metaphor of freedom has been exploited for the political projects of establishing Israel on Palestinian land, we call for peace and justice in Palestine and all over the world and end by saying:*

L'shanah haba'a b'herut!

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּחֵירוּת!

Next year in freedom!

## Songs

### Lo yisa goy

Lo yisa goy el goy kherev, lo yilmedu od milkhama.

לֹא-יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל-גּוֹי חֶרֶב, וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה.

A nation shall not raise a sword against a nation and they shall not learn any more war (Isaiah 2:4).

### Hinei ma tov

Hinei ma tov uma na'im shevet kulanu gam yachad.

הִנֵּה מֵה-טוֹב וּמֵה-נְעִים, שֶׁבֶת כּוֹלֵנוּ גַם יַחַד.

How sweet it is to be together, all of us, in community.

## Counting the omer

The seven-week period between Pesach and the next festival, Shavuot, is known as Sefirat HaOmer, counting the omer (barley offering). In Temple days, an offering of the new barley crop was made on the second day of Pesach, and thereafter the days were counted until Shavuot, which commemorates the ancient Hebrews' acceptance of the Torah as the word of God. Although we no longer make an offering, we still count the days.

*After seder on the second night of Pesach, recite the following blessing, or respond "amen" to others' blessings:*

Brukha at Shkhina Elatenu Ruaḥ HaOlam, asher  
kidshatanu b'mitzvotaha al s'firat haomer.

ברוכה את שכינה אלתינו רוח העולם אשר קדשתנו  
במצותה וצותנו על ספירת העומר.

We praise You, Indwelling presence filling and surrounding the world, who teaches us to count the omer.

*Then say:*

Hayom yom echad la-omer.

היום יום אחד לעומר.

Today is one day of the omer.

