



SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS FOR A
FREE PALESTINE

SOLIDARITY

HAGGADAH

What is a seder?

“do not accept tradition without examining it with your own intellect and judgment.” — Bahya ibn Paquda

Seder means “order” in hebrew and yiddish. The pesach seder is a dinner theater, and the haggadah is the script. Each year we tell the story of the liberation of the jewish slaves from mizrayim ("the narrow place"). Pesach is naturally the highlight of the year for lefty jews—the chag (festival) of liberation.

It is a festival both of celebration and of mourning and struggle. The seder takes us through the story of the oppression and the liberation of our ancestors. we are invited to rejoice in our freedoms, while holding close the stories of those who are still not free and the ways in which we are still not free.

The whole point of the seder is to ask questions. this is your time to ask about things that confuse you, things you don't understand, or even things you don't agree with. Questions are not only welcome during the course of the evening but are vital to tonight's journey. Our obligation at this seder involves travelling from slavery to freedom, prodding ourselves from apathy to action, encouraging the transformation of silence into speech, and providing a space where all different levels of belief and tradition can co-exist safely. Because leaving mitzrayim—the narrow places, the places that oppress us—is a personal as well as a communal passage, your participation and thoughts are welcome and encouraged.

A note regarding language

In the wake of the violence, turmoil, colonial control, and ongoing occupation, we want to acknowledge the distinction between “mitzrayim” – the narrow place – where the story we tell at Passover takes place, and Egypt, the modern-day nation state. We are not conflating contemporary Egyptians with the pharaoh and taskmasters that appear in the Passover story. Worldwide, anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia saturate our media and our culture, and we must be vigilant to oppose it and interrupt it at every turn.

The word Yisrael (Israel) when found in the liturgy does not refer to the modern nation/state of Israel, rather it derives from the blessing given to Ya’akov (Jacob) by a stranger with whom he wrestles all night. When Ya’akov finally pins the stranger down, he 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.” Therefore when we say “Yisrael” in prayer we are referring to being God- wrestlers, not Israelis.

Hinei ma tov

הִנֵּה מַה טוֹב וְיַמָּה נְעִים
שֵׁבֶת אַחִים גַּם יַחַד

*hinei ma tov uma na'im
shevet kulam gam
yachad.*

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for people to dwell together.

Welcome

Welcome to all who have come together to take part in South African Jews for a Free Palestine's Solidarity Seder.

A special welcome to those who are not Jewish but are coming tonight to experience a Pesach seder with us.

We are so grateful to be with you tonight.

We also want to welcome all those who are Jewish or Jew-ish and to welcome your messy and complicated feelings in regard to this thing we call Jewishness/Judaism.

For those of you who have been waiting all year for a seder—you are welcome.

For those of you who have never attended a seder—you are welcome.

For those of you who have been told that you are too big, loud, and Jewish—welcome.

For those of you who have been told you aren't Jewish enough or aren't a real Jew, we say that's rubbish and we say welcome!

For those of you grieving loved ones in Palestine, in Israel, loved ones who could not join us at seder this year—you and your grief are welcome.

To those of you who don't believe in God, to those of you who love God, to those of you who are angry with God—we welcome you.

To the loudest singers and to those of you who don't know the words to prayers or to the songs—we welcome you.

To the parents, to the babies, to the teenagers, to our elders, to all of you and all your wisdom—welcome.

To those of you who for whatever reason are struggling to participate—we welcome you however you are able to show up.

There is no right way to be Jewish or right way to be at this seder. We are grateful to have your presence and to share in this evening with you.

Lighting the candles

ברוך אתה יי אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של
יום טוב

*Baruch ata adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam,
asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vitzivanu l'hadlik ner shel
yom tov.*

We bless the source of all existence, who shows us paths to holiness, and inspires us to kindle the festival lights.

Shehecheyanu

This blessing is recited when we do something for the first time (each year). It's a blessing to be together.

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam,
shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh.*

Blessed are You God, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.



Justice blessing

We pray for justice, to set our intention for this seder:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְרַדּוֹף צְדָקָה

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu lirdof tzedek.

Blessed is God who commands us to pursue justice.

The seder plate

The seder plate uses food to represent the Pesach story. The traditional items include:

Matzah (unleavened bread)

Zeroa (Shankbone) - a lamb shank or beetroot as an alternative

Beitzah (Egg)

Maror (Bitter Herbs) - horseradish

Charoset (Paste) - apple, wine, nuts

Karpas (Vegetable) - parsley

Over the years, items that were added can include:

An orange - to represent feminism/gender equality.

An olive - to represent Palestine.



NIZKOR, WE REMEMBER

Even as we give thanks for the gift of being together at this time, we take a moment of silence, in memoriam of all those who we have lost in the past year, since we last sat at the Passover table.

Those we loved, and those we did not even know. Those who died by natural causes, those lost to the violence of poverty, oppression, and racism. For tonight's seder we specifically remember the lives of the Palestinians as well as the Israelis and other nationals killed in the occupation and ongoing genocide.

We remember those killed in the ongoing bombings of Gaza and the daily indignities Palestinians suffer as they attempt to cross from the occupied territories into Israel.

We remember those who suffered the indignities of Apartheid in our own country, some of whom were killed or imprisoned for their opposition to it, and we remember all victims of violence and cruelty, then and now. And we remember those who went silently who have no one else to remember them.

Tonight we remember all refugees who have lost their lives in their search for freedom and safety. Those that died at sea and those that died on land in appalling conditions. Those in Xenophobic attacks in South Africa and those that died in detention across the world. We remember our own history of refuge tonight as we remember those that didn't make it and commit to not stand silently as injustices are committed.

May all their memories be a blessing, and a reminder of why we gather together to organise, to co-resist, and to demand justice. We will now hold a minute of silence in remembrance.

“IF I MUST DIE”

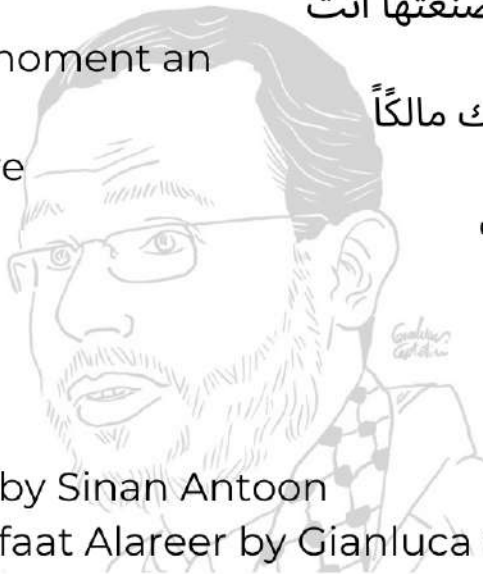
by Refaat Alareer, Poet living in Northern Gaza killed by an IDF attack.

If I must die,
you must live
to tell my story
to sell my things
to buy a piece of cloth
and some strings,
(make it white with a long tail)
so that a child, somewhere in
Gaza
while looking heaven in the eye
awaiting his dad who left in a
blaze—
and bid no one farewell
not even to his flesh
not even to himself—
sees the kite, my kite you made,
flying up above
and thinks for a moment an
angel is there
bringing back love
If I must die
let it bring hope
let it be a tale

فال بد أن تعيش أنت
رفعت العرعرير
إذا كان لا بد أن أموت
فال بد أن تعيش أنت
لتروي حكايتي
لتبيع أشياءي
وتشتري قطعة قماش
وخيوطا
(فلتكن بيضاء وبذيل طويل)
كي يبصر طفل في مكان ما من غزة
وهو يح دق في السماء
منتظراً أباه الذي رحل فجأة
دون أن يودع أحداً
وال حتى لحمه
أو ذاته
يبصر الطائرة الورقية
طائرتي الورقية التي صنعتها أنت
تخلق في الأعلى
ويظن للحظة أن هناك مالكاً
يعيد الحب
إذا كان لا بد أن أموت
فليأت موتي بالأمل
فليصبح حكاية
ترجمة سنان أنطون

Poem translated by Sinan Antoon

Image of poet Refaat Alareer by Gianluca Constantini



Kadesh

the first cup

As we raise the cup to another seder, we must acknowledge that this Passover is radically different from all other Passovers. 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 Passover require of us in this tragic and unprecedented moment?

Let us 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 Passover seder...
- If our Passover 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 Passover seder...
- If we read the Passover 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 Passover 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 Passover 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 Passover seder.

With these challenges before us, let us begin.

Kiddush on the wine:

On other nights one person makes Kiddush and everyone else gets a sip, but tonight is different, everyone gets their own cup and everyone drinks it down. After saying the kiddush blessing, sit down, lean to your left and drink the cup of wine (or juice). (Drink enough to fill one cheek.)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, borei peri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Compassionate One, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

Urchatz: Handwashing

Washing number one: without a blessing.

Karpas

Eating a vegetable

We dip a green vegetable in salt water and say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam borei pri ha'adamah.

Blessed is the One, who sustains all life, and brings forth fruits from the earth.

Illustration: Kanaladorp

Extract from Mahmoud Darwish's poem "I see my ghost"

I look out like a balcony on what I want

I look out on my image fleeing from itself
to the stone staircase, carrying my mother's scarf
trembling in the wind: What would happen, were I to return to
childhood? And I to you...and you to me

I look out on the trunk of an olive tree that hid Zakariyya
I look out on words that have died out in Lisan al-Arab

I look out on the Persians, the Byzantines, the Sumerians
and the new refugees...

I look out like a balcony on what I want

I look out on my ghost
coming
from
a distance...



Yachats - break the middle matza

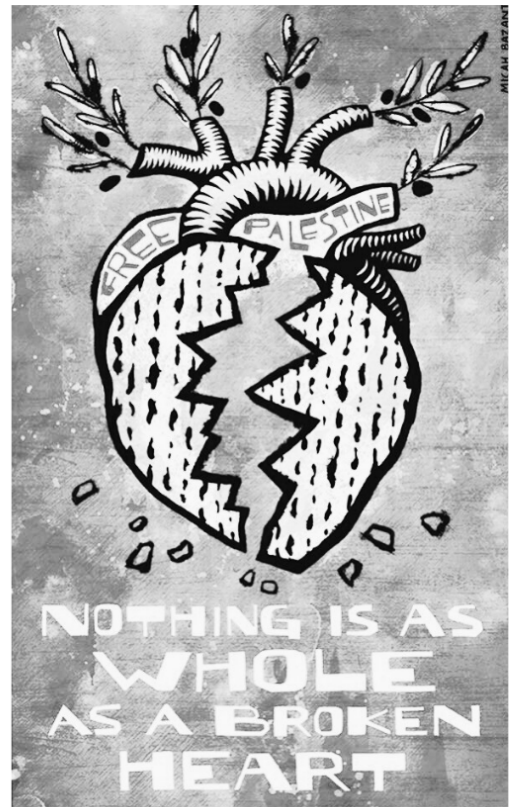
This Pesach, when we come to Yachatz, what else is there to break?
Our hearts are shattered, our worlds torn, our faith and hope in pieces
on the floor. We have witnessed so much death and destruction, we
feel powerless, it continues, the violence goes on, we break, and our
broken pieces break, we crumble.

This Pesach, when we come to Yachatz, we have the opportunity to
break with intention. To break what needs to be broken. We break the
silence, every day, we break through the thick layer of complacency.

We break through all that keeps us frozen in fear, inside of us, and all
that keeps us separate, all that comes between us....The systems of
empire and domination that tell us to proceed as if nothing is wrong,
we break their spells over us. The ideologies and oppressive
institutions that want us to stay asleep, we break them.

We break down the stories limiting what is possible. We let them
crumble. We offer them to the earth. We break what needs to be
broken. Until all are free.

The breaking of the matzah reflects the words of the Chassidic Kotzker Rebbe: “There is nothing more whole than a broken heart. If your own suffering does not serve to unite you with the suffering of others, if your own imprisonment does not join you with others in prison, if you in your smallness remain alone, then your pain will have been for naught.”



There are three matzas on the seder plate. Take the middle one and break it in half; the larger “half” is the afikomen and is set aside at this point. the smaller “half” is the lechem oni, the bread of affliction. Hold it, and the remaining two whole matzas, up as we say:

This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the narrow place. Let all who are hungry come and eat. let all who are needy come and celebrate Pesach. Now we are separate; next year may we be together. This year we are oppressed; next year may we be free.

Now we cover the matza and pour the second cup. This is the cup over which we tell the Exodus story. (Don’t drink yet.)

Illustration: Micah Bizant

The Magid

During Magid we engage with the story of the Exodus from slavery as a central part of the seder.

The Four Questions

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות
שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמִצָּה הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה כּוֹלוּ מִצָּה
שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שָׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה מָרוֹר
שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מְטַבִּילִין אֶפְילוּ פְּעַם אַחַת הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים
שֶׁבְּכָל הַלֵּילוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה כָּלְנוּ מְסֻבִּין

Mah nishtanah halaylah hazeh mikol halaylot

- *She-bechol halaylot ain anu matbilin afilu pa'am echat, halaylah hazeh shtei pe'amim?*
- She-bechol halaylot anu ochlim chametz o matzah, halaylah hazeh kulo matzah?
- She-bechol halaylot anu ochlim she'ar yerakot, halaylah hazeh maror?
- She-bechol halaylot anu ochlim bain yoshvin u-vain mesubin, halaylah hazeh kulanu mesubin?

Translation: What makes this night different from all [other] nights?

- On all nights we need not dip even once, why this night do we do so twice?
- On all nights we eat chametz or matzah, why on this night only matzah?
- On all nights we eat any kind of vegetables, why on this night maror?
- On all nights we eat sitting upright or reclining, why on this night we all recline?



Sticker designed by Talya Lubinsky

Four Questions for Times of Genocide

Tonight our tradition invites us to ask questions. Tonight we wonder, what Pesach questions are fit for a time of genocide? We need questions that inspire transformative answers and liberative action—in us and in our communities—to at the very least cease the current genocide in Gaza.

Why is this Passover different to other Passovers? Genocide. The unique scale, and devastating brutality of the current extreme escalation in Israeli state violence has murdered tens of thousands of Palestinians, still being counted, still being bombed, still being starved, still without water, still being murdered. At this very moment. Israeli forces are killing entire families and displacing countless others, now in a mass Exodus from their homes—made refugees and ethnically cleansed en masse. Maybe the question is: why are Palestinians so different from Israelis—from Jews—not even seen as human and deserving of basic resources: food, water, housing, peace, security, human rights, the right to life? Where is the world? Watching? Where are we? “Celebrating” Passover?

What four questions do we have to ask ourselves? To ask each other? How can asking questions change society? Change the world? Asking questions—a very Jewish activity indeed—reminds us not to take for granted things as they are. Instead, what if we asked about how things could be? What world could we create, if we asked why so many of us have come to believe that to be free, we must destroy others' freedom? What world could we create, if we transformed our questions into ways of being, ways of relating, and ways of moving the world? What world could we create, if we wondered aloud about who is truly welcome at our tables, who is missing, and why?

The Four Children (or Comrades)

Normally here the seder talks about the four children. The child who is wise, the one who is wicked, the simple one, and the one who is afraid to ask. And with each of these children is a response showing how to teach them about Pesach and the story of the Exodus.

Instead, we will present here a lighter version: the four comrades.

The wise comrade asks: ‘but what does Karl Marx actually say we should do? How do we bring about communism?’

This is a good comrade. You should immediately assign them all your organisational and admin tasks.

The wicked comrade asks: ‘what are you even doing? This is pointless, what about human nature, history has proven communism doesn’t work. What would the revolution do for me?’

Notice how they say for ‘me’ and not for us. This one is not your comrade. According to the rabbis and chabad.org, you should ‘blunt their teeth.’

The simple comrade asks: ‘if what you are doing is good, why do you cover your faces in front of the police?’

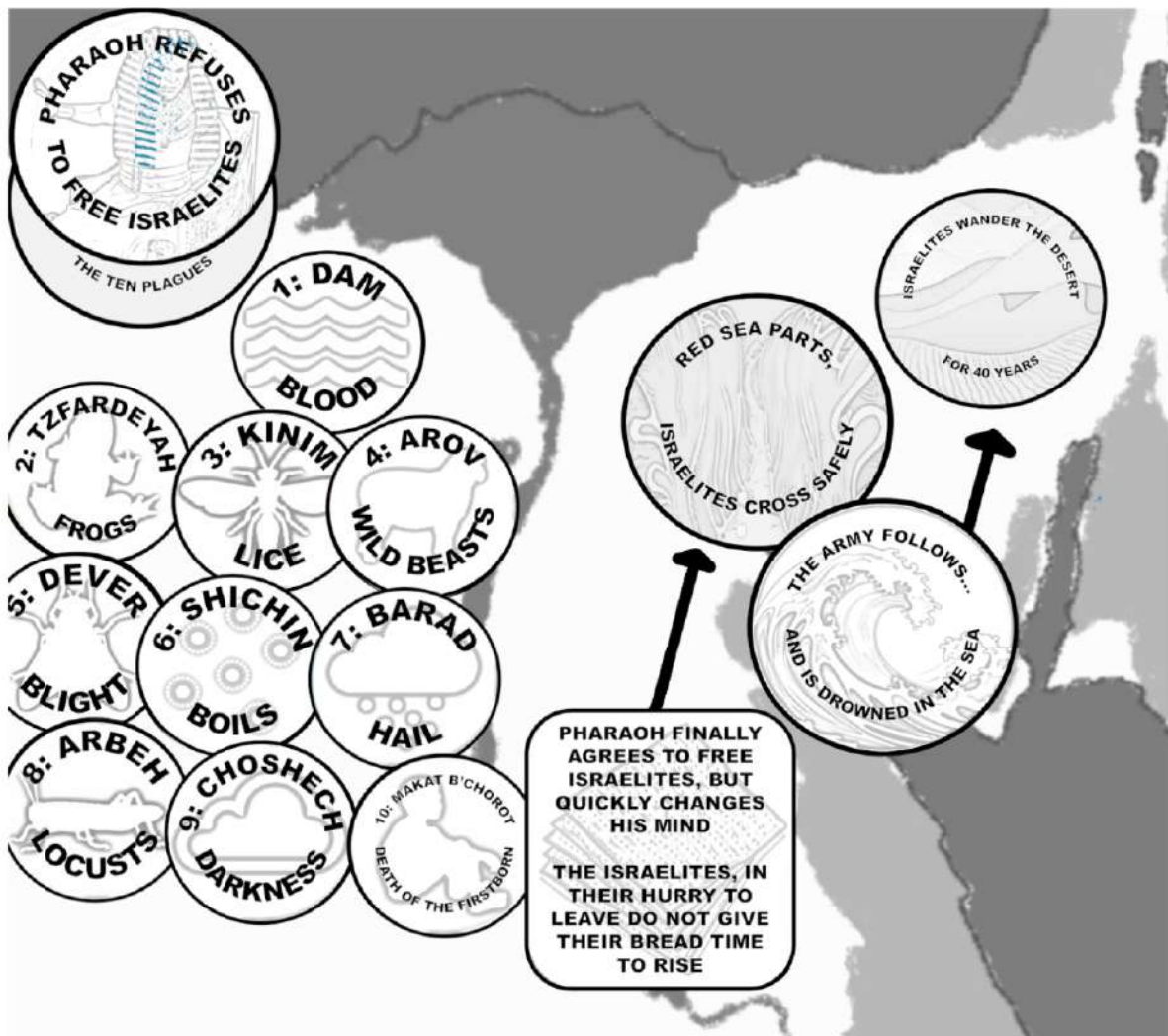
This comrade is still a comrade and you should be patient with them. You should remind them all cops are b*stards and point them to falsified evidence and abuse of power. Then sing Daloy Politsey at them until they join in.

The comrade who does not know how to ask. This is probably because some overconfident white people are dominating the whole conversation. You should tell the people who are taking up too much space that they are taking up too much space and buy some more wine. Wine relaxes people and then the comrades who haven’t spoken yet might. Also ask them if they want to speak.

The telling of the story

A very, very summarised version of the Exodus story:

The Jews were slaves in mitzrayim. Pharaoh orders that the Jewish baby boys should be killed by the midwives in order to keep the population numbers down. The midwives tried to defy this order. Moses survives and grows up. God comes to Moses as a burning bush and says “free your people”. Moses was reluctant but God insisted. Moses went to the pharaoh and said “let my people go”. Pharaoh said “no”. So God brought 10 plagues upon mitsrayim and, after the death of his first-born, the pharaoh said “fine, go”. After the Jews left, the pharaoh changes his mind and pursues them. Moses parted the Red Sea and the Jews safely crossed and wandered the desert for 40 years, sustained by manna.



The Exodus story tells of how, though we were slaves, we were seen as a 'demographic threat' to the pharaoh:

“A new king arose over Mitzrayim who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, ‘Look, the Israelite people are much too numerous for us. Let us deal shrewdly with them, so that they may not increase; otherwise in the event of war, they may join our enemies in fighting against us and rise from the ground.’ So they set taskmasters over them to oppress them...” (Exodus 1:10-11)

This is a familiar response that we know was not unique for the Jewish people in Mitzrayim. This is an idea that has sought to justify colonial oppression, violence and genocide throughout history. As we sit here today, we see its manifestation in the idea that the safety of Jews requires a “Jewish state” with a “Jewish character” (maintained by Jewish supremacy). As we sit here in South Africa, we know all too well the suffering and bloodshed that this idea, expressed through brutal systems of colonialism and apartheid, can cause.

Netanyahu – “If there is a demographic problem, and there is, it is with the Israeli Arabs who remain Israeli citizens.”

Benny Morris – “It was impossible to leave a large fifth column in the country... there was no choice but to expel the Palestinian population.”

Herman Mashaba: “We are going to sit back and allow people like you to bring us Ebola in the name of small business. Health of our people first. Our health facilities are already stretched to the limit.”



Illustration: Lino by @tsukunst

The Ten Plagues

The seder is a time for joy, not grief. But in the recitation of the Ten Plagues, we pause to remember how our freedom came at the expense of the lives of thousands of Egyptians. When each plague is recited, it is tradition to dip your finger in your wine glass and remove one drop of wine, wiping it on your plate or napkin.

Blood | *dam* | דָּם

Frogs | *tzfardeiya* | צְפַרְדֵּיָא

Lice | *kinim* | כִּנִּים

Beasts | *arov* | אֲרוֹב

Cattle disease | *dever* | דֵּבַר

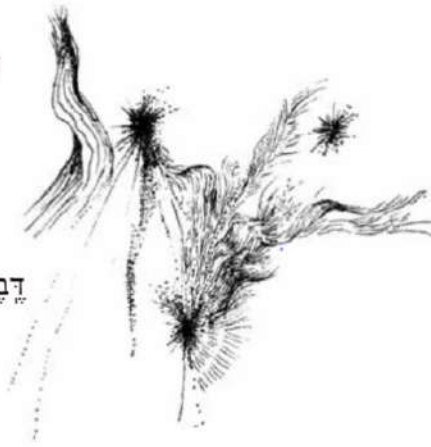
Boils | *sh'chin* | שְׁחִין

Hail | *barad* | בָּרָד

Locusts | *arbeh* | אֲרֵבָה

Darkness | *choshech* | חֹשֶׁךְ

Death of the Firstborn | *makat b'chorot* | מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת



The Plagues of Genocide

1. Dam – Blood – Water Shortage

Since 1967, the Zionist occupier has controlled access to water in Gaza and the West Bank, never providing enough while restricting Palestinians from collecting their own. Since the Zionists imposed a complete siege in October 2023, Palestinians in Gaza have had almost no water to drink, let alone to wash and cook with.

May we never again cause people to go without water!

2. Tzfardeyah - Frogs – Displacement

In Mitzrayim when the plague of frogs struck it was as if there was no place one could put their foot down. Millions of Palestinians are currently displaced internally and around the world.

Refugees from the Nakba are still not able to return to their homes.

Palestinian citizens of Israel face discriminatory laws that make it impossible for them to own the land they live on.

In the West Bank and Jerusalem, people are forcibly evicted from homes their families lived in for generations.

And in Gaza, 1.7 million people have been forced to flee multiple times in the past six months and are living in makeshift shelters and tent camps.

May we never again cause people to be displaced from their homes!

3. Kinim – Lice – The Humiliations Inflicted by Occupation

The occupation of Palestinian land is a deep structural outcome of the racist and oppressive Israeli state, but it also manifests in small, daily frustrations that get under the skin of all those who are subject to it. It scratches at Palestinians' ability to live a decent and dignified life. In addition to more than 100 checkpoints between the territories occupied in 1967 and those taken in 1948, the Israeli Army erects flying checkpoints, concrete blocks, dirt piles, boulders, trenches and road blocks. It is arduous and sometimes impossible even to travel between Palestinian cities and villages internally in the West Bank and Jerusalem. A medical emergency that requires a checkpoint crossing can be fatal for Palestinians.

May we never again allow the humiliation of occupation to continue!

4. Arov – Wild Beasts – Dehumanisation

It is the almost century-long dehumanisation and erasure of Palestinians by Zionists that has allowed Apartheid to continue and enabled a genocide to take place. Zionist politicians and media figures have repeatedly referred to Palestinians as animals or wild beasts, recognised by international law as statements of intent to commit genocide.

May we take active steps to reverse the erasure of Palestinian life, culture, and art!

May we never again dehumanise any groups of people!

5. Dever – Blight – Starvation

The Israeli blockade on Gaza blighted the lives of Gazans for more than 16 years before the current siege. Now, all Palestinians in Gaza face severe food insecurity and famine conditions. Farms and bakeries have been bombed by the IOF. Desperate people waiting for aid have been murdered in cold blood by soldiers. Children and adults are starving to death.

At the same time, hundreds of thousands of people are starving in Sudan due to the civil war. This situation has been manufactured by the leaders of rival factions. Without urgent action, hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children could starve to death.

May we never again see forced starvation!

May we never again allow anyone to go hungry!

6. Shichin – Boils – White Phosphorus / Exposure / Lack of Access to Hygiene

The Israeli Army has rained white phosphorus on civilians in Gaza and South Lebanon. This is a poisonous substance that burns through skin and even bones, causing irreparable harm to humans and the land they live on. People in Gaza are already suffering from diseases caused by exposure due to forced displacement, a lack of water for hygiene, and the purposeful destruction of hospitals necessary to treat these illnesses. The UN has warned that disease may cause more deaths in Gaza than the daily bombings.

May we never again cause people to suffer from preventable and man-made diseases!

7. Barad – Hail – Bombs and Bullets

Since October 7 2023, the Israeli Army has bombed Gaza day and night, except for a brief pause in November. This hail of bombs has killed more than 40,000 adults and children, and caused permanent injuries to tens of thousands more, including loss of limbs and disfigurement. Indiscriminate use of 2,000 pound dumb bombs has levelled whole neighbourhoods – destroying homes, masjids, churches, universities, cemeteries, and everything else in their paths. May we never again see this scale of destruction! May we never again rain terror on anyone!

8. Arbeh – Locusts – Pogroms / Destruction of Olive Trees, Farms, and Bakeries

Olive trees have long been a symbol of Palestinian culture and livelihood. Israeli military and settler pogroms, along with the construction of the Wall, have destroyed hundreds of thousands of Palestinian olive trees since 2000, and more than a million since 1967. In Gaza, the Israeli Army has bombed farms and bakeries to hasten the onset of famine and cause food insecurity for decades to come. May we never again see the destruction of Palestinian livelihoods! As Ramallah resident, Mahmoud Hriebat, said: “Cultivating our land is an act of steadfastness and peaceful resistance.”

9. Choshech – Endless Darkness – Cutting Off Electricity

The Zionist entity controls the majority of the flow of electricity in the West Bank and Gaza. They have restricted supply for decades, allowing certain cities only enough electricity to last them a portion of the day. Since October 2023, they have cut electricity flow to Gaza entirely while severely restricting the entry of fuel. This has led to injured people dying in hospitals, including premature infants in NICU. Nights are dark and internet connectivity – a lifeline for Gazans – is limited.

May all who need it have access to electricity, and never again have to suffer through imposed darkness!

10. Makat B'chorot – Mass Murder of Children

The UN has called Gaza a graveyard for children. Hospitals have received bodies of children shot in the head by Zionist snipers. Children are most vulnerable to weakened immune systems from malnutrition, exposure, and insufficient water and hygiene. In addition, Zionist military prisons hold hundreds of Palestinian children without charge, in horrific conditions and without being allowed to see their families. They are beaten by guards and often placed in solitary confinement, leading to severe physical and psychological suffering.

Ahmed Manasra, now 22, has been held since the age of 13, despite even the Zionist courts accepting that he did not participate in the stabbings he was accused of. He has been diagnosed with severe mental illness and there is no end in sight to his sentence.

May we never again see the slaughter of children! May Ahmed and every other Palestinian prisoner, child and adult, be freed!



Drawing from the exhibit: A Child's View from Gaza

We Will Not Go Down in Gaza Tonight (Song by Michael Heart)

A blinding flash of white light
Lit up the sky over Gaza tonight
People running for cover
Not knowing whether they're dead or alive

They came with their tanks and their planes
With ravaging fiery flames
And nothing remains
Just a voice rising up in the smoky haze

We will not go down
In the night, without a fight
You can burn up our mosques and our homes and our schools
But our spirit will never die
We will not go down
In Gaza tonight

Women and children alike
Murdered and massacred night after night
While the so-called leaders of countries afar
Debated on who's wrong or right

But their powerless words were in vain
And the bombs fell down like acid rain
But through the tears and the blood and the pain
You can still hear that voice through the smoky haze

We will not go down
In the night, without a fight
You can burn up our mosques and our homes and our schools
But our spirit will never die
We will not go down
In Gaza tonight

Leaving the narrow place

With all those plagues, Pharaoh still refused. Until the final one - his son was a first born. At the very last minute, Pharaoh said: 'Fine, Go! Hurry up or I will change my mind!' So the slaves grabbed their bread from the rocks on which they cooked - way before it had time to rise - and raced out of Egypt. And then, Pharaoh did change his mind, and sent his army after them.

Finding themselves trapped between a vengeful army and a raging sea. The High Priest of the Judahites, Nachshon took the first step into the sea. Moses parted the Red Sea and the Israelites safely crossed.

Miriam's Song

[chorus]

And the women dancing with their timbrels
Followed Miriam as she sang her song
Sing a song to the One whom we've exalted.
Miriam and the women danced and dance the whole night long.

[Verse 1]

And Miriam was a weaver of unique variety.
The tapestry she wove was one - which sang our history.
With every thread and every strand she crafted her delight.
A woman touched with spirit, she dances toward the light.

[Verse 2]

When Miriam stood upon the shores and gazed across the sea
The wonder of this miracle she soon came to believe.
Whoever thought the sea would part - with an outstretched hand
And we would pass to freedom leaving slavery behind

[Verse 3]

And Miriam the prophet took her timbrel in her hand,
And all the women followed her- just as she had planned,
And Miriam raised her voice in song-she sang with praise
and might
We've just lived through a miracle: We're going to dance
tonight!

Dayeinu- 'it would have been enough'

It is after the telling of the parting of the Sea of Reeds and the Egyptian army has been turned back, after Miriam, Moses' sister, dances as she crosses over the shallow river bed, that the Dayeinu is sung. We are told that the Dayeinu is a blessing for all that led to the deliverance of the Israelites.

But why do we say Dayeinu? Does it mean that we are accepting mere improvements towards justice but not really striving for a complete liberation. Is a ceasefire enough? Is humanitarian assistance enough? What about medical supplies? These are necessary steps but we must also remind ourselves that "nobody is free until everybody's free." And in Dayeinu, we have an opportunity to celebrate each step towards freedom as if it were enough only for that moment, and to immediately, with renewed commitment and power, start out on the next step.

May the next sea-opening not also be a drowning; may our singing never again be their wailing. We shall all be free, or none of us shall be free because our liberations are intertwined.

<p>אלו הוציאנו ממצרים דיינו!</p> <p><i>Ilu hotzi-hotzianu</i> <i>Hotzianu mi-mitzrayim</i> <i>Hotzianu mi-mitzrayim</i> <i>Dayenu!</i> <i>Dai-dai-enu</i> <i>Dai-dai-enu</i> <i>Dai-dai-enu</i> <i>Dai-dai-enu</i> <i>Dayenu!</i> If God had only brought us out of Egypt, that would be enough!</p>	<p>אלו נתן לנו את השבת דיינו!</p> <p><i>Ilu natan-natan lanu</i> <i>Natan lanu et hashabbat</i> <i>Natan lanu et hashabbat</i> <i>Dayenu!</i> <i>Dai-dai-enu</i> <i>Dai-dai-enu</i> <i>Dai-dai-enu</i> <i>Dai-dai-enu</i> <i>Dayenu!</i> If God had only given us shabbat, that would be enough!</p>	<p>אלו נתן לנו את התורה דיינו!</p> <p><i>Ilu natan-natan lanu</i> <i>Natan lanu et haTorah</i> <i>Natan lanu et haTorah!</i> <i>Dayenu!</i> <i>Dai-dai-enu</i> <i>Dai-dai-enu</i> <i>Dai-dai-enu</i> <i>Dai-dai-enu</i> <i>Dayenu!</i> If God had only given us the Torah, that would be enough!</p>
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Alternative Dayeinu

With the expulsions of Palestinians in 1947-1948

The world should have said 'ENOUGH'

When the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza began.

The world should have said 'ENOUGH'

When the Israeli government invaded Lebanon the first time.

The world should have said 'ENOUGH'

During the first Intifadah, when civil disobedience was met with bombs and bullets.

The world should have said 'ENOUGH'

When Oslo defined peace without justice.

We should have said 'ENOUGH'

With the expansion of settlements.

We should have said 'ENOUGH'

With the bloodshed of the second Intifadah and the claim that there were no peace partners.

We should have said 'ENOUGH'

When the Israeli government invaded Lebanon a second time.

We should have said 'ENOUGH'

At the horror of Gaza

**I say 'ENOUGH'
Now we all say 'ENOUGH'**

Second Cup

Together, say a blessing over the wine/juice:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, borei peri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Eternal Presence, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

(Drink now.)

Rachtzah: wash hands with a blessing

רוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתַי, וְצוּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם

*Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kideshanu
bemitzvotav vetzivanu al netilat yadayim.*

Blessed are You, Foundation of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments, and commanded us to wash our hands.

The Olive

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. Without economic security, a people can much more easily be conquered, or enslaved. This year, we eat an olive, to make real our understanding of what it means each time a bulldozer plows up a grove. Without the taste of olives, there will be no taste of freedom.

god full of mercy who releases prisoners
divides seas and breaches barriers:
sound a big shofar for our liberty
and carry out a miracle to gather in our exile
and gather us in quickly from the four
corners of the earth to the land
return them to the land adonai: and they
will return
blessed are they: in their expulsion and in
their return
cry freedom: let judgement roll like a wave
upon jerusalem
and justice like a mighty stream to gaza

לשון־קודש
אל מלא רחמים ומתיר אסורים
מבקיע ימים ופורץ גדרות
תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו
ושא נס לקבץ גליותינו
וקבצנו יחד מהרה מארבע כנפות
הארץ
לארצינו
השיבם " ארצה: וישיבו
ברוכים הם: בצאתם ובשובם
דרור יקרא: ויגל כמים משפט על
ירושלים
וצדק כנחל איתן לעזה

Motzi Matzah

Unleavened bread was a symbol of affliction for our ancestors. Today, in Gaza, starving people are being killed while desperately waiting for flour.

Ghassan Kanafani: A Present for the Holiday

It was the year 1949.

They told us that day: the Red Cross will bring all you children presents for the holiday. I was wearing short pants and a gray cotton shirt and open shoes without socks. The winter was the worst the region had ever seen and when I set out that morning my fingers froze and were covered with something like fine glass. I sat down on the pavement and began to cry. Then a man came by and carried me to a nearby shop where they were lighting a wood fire in some kind of tin container. They brought me close and I stretched my feet towards the flame. Then I went racing to the Red Cross Centre, and stood with the hundreds of children, all of us waiting for our turn. The boxes seemed very far away and we were trembling like a field of sugar cane and hopping about in order to keep the blood flowing in our veins. After a million years, my turn came.

A clean starched nurse gave me a red square box.

I ran "home" without opening it. Now, nineteen years later, I have completely forgotten what was in that dream box. Except for just one thing: a can of lentil soup. I clutched the soup can with my two hands red from the cold and pressed it to my chest in front of ten other children, my brothers and relatives, who looked at it with their twenty wide eyes.

Probably the box held splendid children's toys too, but these weren't to eat and so I didn't pay any attention to them and they got lost. I kept the can of soup for a week, and every day I gave my mother some of it in a water glass so she could cook it for us.

I remember nothing except the cold, and the ice that manacled my fingers, and the can of soup.

Background: Graffiti tribute to Ghassan Kanafani at the main entrance to Dheisheh camp in Bethlehem, Palestine

Bless the matzah

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz.

Blessed are You, Determiner of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל-אֲכִילַת מַצָּה

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat matzah.

Blessed are You, Supporter of the Fallen, who has made us holy through commandments and has commanded us to eat unleavened bread.
(Eat a small amount of matzah).

Maror

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ רֹחַ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר

Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat maror

Blessed is our God, determiner of the universe, who has made us holy through commandments and has commanded us to eat bitter herbs.

We taste a bit of maror (horseradish), the bitter herb, as it calls to mind the bitterness of slavery, the bitterness of Pharaoh-ism, and the bitterness of life under occupation.

Adaptation of a South African freedom song by Jessica Sherman

Imbi lendawo ngakumbi lendaw'onathi, imbi lendawo -
[Translation: This is a really bad place]

Let occupation be removed
Let injustice be removed
Let racism be removed
Let genocide be removed



Korech

(Take some maror and charoset and put them between two pieces of matzah for the Hillel sandwich.)

The charoset represents the mortar and bricks used by Jewish slaves under Pharaoh. We remember how our ancestors' work enriched the lives of the people of Mitzrayim, and challenge ourselves to think about the ways that many of us currently benefit from exploited labour, from Apartheid until today.

Hillel the Elder, first century religious leader, encouraged combining the maror and charoset. Eating Hillel's sandwich, with its mix of bitter and sweet, suggests that part of the challenge of living is to taste freedom even in the midst of oppression, and to be ever conscious of the oppression of others even when we feel that we are free.

Make a sandwich of matzah, maror, and charoset.
Read Hillel's words together:

*If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
But if I am for myself only, what am I?
and if not now, when?*

The Meal: Shulchan Orech

now we eat eggs and salt water, and then the rest of the pesach meal

Desert: Tzafun – Rejoining the afikomen

The seder cannot end until the afikomen is found, the two broken pieces reunited, just as we strive to repair our broken world. Not only do we imagine this world, but by searching for and finding the afikomen, we commit to making it real. We affirm that while the brokenness caused by systems of oppression can't be undone, healing is necessary and possible if we make it so.

The afikomen has so much more to offer us than the promise of a reward. It teaches us that finding requires seeking. That seeking is always worthwhile, no matter what the rewards. That you're never too old or too young to seek or to question.

Above all, the afikomen is a chance for joy, it's a moment we take for ourselves to be human, despite the brokenness; to be children, to nourish our curiosity, to pause. Repairing the future is not just a task for the next generation. We can all look for the afikomen, not just on Pesach, but every night.

Poems and songs

What Is Home? By Mosab Abu Toha

What is home:

It is the shade of trees on my way to school before they were uprooted.

It is my grandparents' black-and-white wedding photo before the walls crumbled.

It is my uncle's prayer rug, where dozens of ants slept on wintry nights, before it was looted and put in a museum.

It is the oven my mother used to bake bread and roast chicken before a bomb reduced our house to ashes.

It is the café where I watched football matches and played –

My child stops me: Can a four-letter word hold all of these?

Chad Gadya

Chad gadya, chad gadya.

D'zabin aba bitrei zuzei,
chad gadya, chad gadya.

V'ata shunra v'achlah l'gadya,
d'zabin aba bitrei zuzei,
chad gadya, chad gadya.

V'ata chalba v'nashach l'shunrah,
d'achlah l'gadya,
d'zabin aba bitrei zuzei,
chad gadya, chad gadya.

V'ata chutra v'hika l'chalba,
d'nashach l'shunrah,
d'achlah l'gadya,
d'zabin aba bitrei zuzei,
chad gadya, chad gadya.

V'ata nura v'saraf l'chutra,
d'hikah l'chalba,
d'nashach l'shunrah,
d'achlah l'gadya,
d'zabin aba bitrei zuzei,
chad gadya, chad gadya.

V'ata maya v'chava l'nura,
d'saraf l'chutra,
d'hikah l'chalba,
d'nashach l'shunrah,
d'achlah l'gadya,
d'zabin aba bitrei zuzei,
chad gadya, chad gadya.

V'ata tora v'shatah l'maya,

d'chava l'nura,
d'saraf l'chutra,
d'hikah l'chalba,
d'nashach l'shunrah,
d'achlah l'gadya,
d'zabin aba bitrei zuzei,
chad gadya, chad gadya.

V'ata hashocheit v'shachat l'tora,
d'shata l'maya,
d'chava l'nura,
d'saraf l'chutra,
d'hikah l'chalba,
d'nashach l'shunrah,
d'achlah l'gadya,
d'zabin aba bitrei zuzei,
chad gadya, chad gadya.

V'ata malach hamavet v'shachat
l'shocheit,
d'shachat l'tora,
d'shata l'maya,
d'chava l'nura,
d'saraf l'chutra,
d'hikah l'chalba,
d'nashach l'shunrah,
d'achlah l'gadya,
d'zabin aba bitrei zuzei,
chad gadya, chad gadya.

V'ata Hakodesh Baruch Hu
v'shachat l'malach hamavet,
d'shachat l'shocheit,
d'shachat l'tora,
d'shata l'maya,
d'chava l'nura,
d'saraf l'chutra,
d'hikah l'chalba,
d'nashach l'shunrah,
d'achlah l'gadya,
d'zabin aba bitrei zuzei,
chad gadya, chad gadya.

Chad gadya. Chad gadya.

That Father bought for two zuzim, **Chad gadya. Chad gadya.**

Then came a cat and ate the goat, **that Father bought for two zuzim...**

Then came a dog and bit the cat, **that ate the goat...**

Then came a stick and beat the dog, **that bit the cat.**

Then came fire and burnt the stick, **that beat the dog...**

Then came water and quenched the fire, **that burnt the stick...**

Then came the ox and drank the water, **that quenched the fire...**

Then came the butcher and slaughtered the ox, **that drank the water...**

Then came the Angel of Death and killed the butcher, **that slaughtered the ox...**

Then came the Holy One, Blessed be He and slew the the Angel of Death, **that killed the butcher...**

While Israel is in Palestine [tune of Go Down Moses]

From the river to the sea
Free the people, free
With full accountability
Free the people, free

Settlers stab and soldiers kill
From the river to the sea
Fear and shame upon us all
Free the people, free

In protest we all arise
Way down in Palestine
Tell all for Zionism
Free the people, free

In protest we all arise
Way down in Palestine
Tell all for Zionism
Free the people, free

While Behlehem stands behind the wall
Free the people, free
The olive trees by settlers fall
Free the people, free

The Apartheid Wall has to fall
Free the people, free
Let Peace and justice be for all
Free the people, free

In protest we all arise
Way down in Palestine
Tell all for Zionism
Free the people, free

Shout out loud and strong
Apartheid's gone on far too long
Tell all for Zionism
Free the people , free

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