

The First Cup

Amos Oz

We were not born to be a people of masters. “To be a free people” — this wish must awaken an echo in our hearts so long as we have not lost our humanity. We are condemned now to rule people who do not want to be ruled by us. Condemned, not merry and euphoric. The shorter the occupation lasts, the better for us, because an occupation is inevitably a corrupting occupation, and even a liberal and human occupation is an occupation. I have fears about the kind of seeds we will sow in the near future in the hearts of the occupied. Even more, I have fears about the seeds that will be implanted in the hearts of the occupiers. (*Davar*, August 22, 1967)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree hagafen.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruit of the vine.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעְנוּ לְזַמַּן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
she-hechiyanu v'key'manu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh.*

We praise God, Ruler of Everything,
who has kept us alive, raised us up, and brought us
to this happy moment.



Drink for thought: Amos Oz wrote this in 1967. With the occupation now in its 53rd year, we continue to work toward ending it — despite the many obstacles we face. Somehow, we find the hope we need to keep battling for justice and peace. Where do you find hope?

The Four Questions: A Ma Nishtana for Our Generation

Claire Miller, J Street U student leader

Why is this generation different from all other generations?

מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַדּוֹר הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַדּוֹרוֹת?

Throughout the haggadah, we retell the story in the plural first person — we, as a community, relive what happened, and we bear some responsibility.

שְׁבָקְל דּוֹר וּדּוֹר...

That in all other generations, we were wandering and oppressed, and now we — Israelis, yes, but also Jews — have our own state, government and army. Who, now, is powerless?

שְׁבָקְל דּוֹר וּדּוֹר...

That in all other generations, we have sought justice for ourselves against outside forces, but now a portion of our people perpetuate injustice against the Palestinians. How can we begin working toward justice for others?

שְׁבָקְל דּוֹר וּדּוֹר...

That in all other generations, we had no choice but to forgive our oppressors, yet we are now the ones who must seek forgiveness. Can we be forgiven for the ways in which we have mistreated Palestinians, and what actions on our part might be necessary before we are?

שְׁבָקְל דּוֹר וּדּוֹר...

That in all other generations, love of Israel was often a unifying factor, but in this generation, we are blessed with the idea of critical love of Israel. How can we continue to be unified around Israel without being uniform?



Four Children for a Contemporary Passover Seder

Rabbi David Teutsch

At the heart of the Passover seder are questions asked and questions answered. The four children of the haggadah model the process of asking. Four contemporary people might ask their questions about what is happening in the State of Israel.

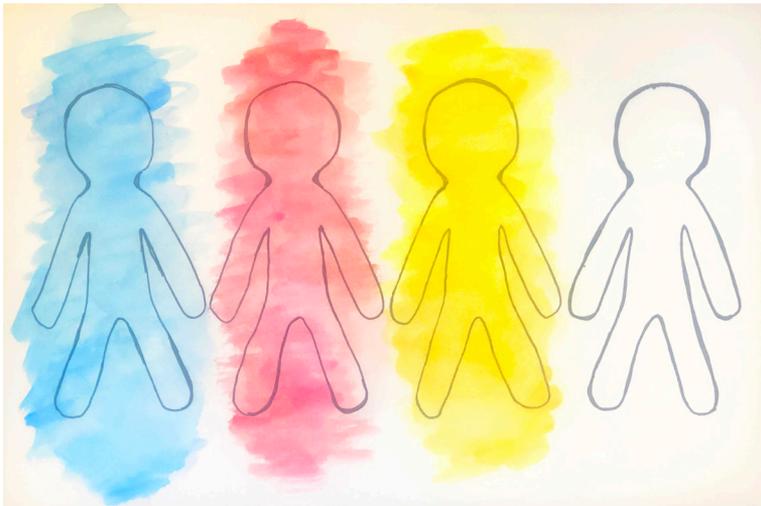
The wise child says, “Israel’s founding principles sound wonderful, but how can Israel be genuinely guided by them, recognizing the rights of Israelis and Palestinians, of Orthodox and secular, of Sephardi and Ashkenazi, of women and men, of poor and rich?”

The troubled child says, “How did you let all those settlements get built, and how do you tolerate the mistreatment of Palestinians by settlers and soldiers? And why have you allowed the protections for poor people to be gradually removed during Netanyahu’s term in office?”

The simple child says, “I love Israel. What’s wrong with that?”

The silent child is completely bewildered by all the contradictory news and perspectives. They simply don’t know what to say.

As people who love Israel but understand all the complexities, how can we discuss this difficult situation with calm and mutual caring? How do we bring ourselves to face all of the facts? Can we start tonight?



The Second Cup

Amos Oz

For a month, a year, or a generation we will have to dwell as occupiers in regions that our hearts long for because of their historical gravity. As long as we remember: as occupiers, and with no choice. And as a means of pressure to bring peace closer. Not as redeemers and not as liberators. Only in the twilight of a myth may one speak about the liberation of land that “languishes under a foreign yoke.” There is no subjugated land and no liberation of lands. Only people can be subjugated, and only about people does the word “liberation” have a meaning. (*Davar*, August 22, 1967)

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Drink for thought: Many tell us that we have no choice — that the occupation is a necessary and permanent condition for Israel’s security. We know that not to be true. Just as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin did in 1993, we can help re-envision a different and better future for both Israelis and Palestinians; we do have a choice.

How do we persuade people that the occupation is a choice and that we can have a different and better reality by ending the occupation and achieving a lasting two-state solution?

The Third Cup

Amos Oz

I see no validity in the annexation of populated regions to the bounds of the State of Israel without the agreement of their inhabitants. The residents of Nablus and Gaza are not “human material”, nor “human dust”, nor “sub-human rabble who have to be expropriated so as to create living space”. They have to be seen as a vanquished enemy; not less, and no more than that. We did not set out on a “jihad” to wipe them out and to liberate our embezzled lands. We launched the Six Day War to defend our lives, our rights, our wellbeing and our liberty. On the day when all these are assured, we will be free — and we will be obliged — to honor the right to independence, the liberty and the wellbeing of the Arabs of Palestine. (*Davar*, August 22, 1967)

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Drink for thought: In progressive pro-Israel spaces, we talk about the right to self determination, for both peoples.

What does it mean to you for both Israeli Jews and Palestinians to have self-determination?

The Fourth Cup

Amos Oz

I confess, like many of my comrades who participated in this war, I too was among the “bedazzled naives” who believed that this war might bring about the peace we so desired. I thought that this time — for the first time in the history of the Zionist project — peace depended also on us, also on the path we would take now. (*Davar, August 22, 1967*)

I still believe in this. The quarrel between Israel and Palestine has been a bleeding wound for decades, a wound that is hemorrhaging and is full of pus. You can't keep waving a big stick and beating a bleeding wound again and again so as to scare it and make it finally stop being a wound and finally stop bleeding. A wound has to be healed. And there's a way to gradually heal this wound. (*January, 2017*)

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Drink for thought: When the occupation ends — and it will one day end — we will ‘drain the pus,’ and the surface wounds will surely heal.

But even then, decades of occupation will have left deep trauma and angry scars on all sides. What is the path we can take now, as progressive Jews, to address the trauma?