



Fifteen Steps to Freedom

A J Street Haggadah



J Street organizes pro-Israel, pro-peace Americans to promote US policies that embody our deeply held Jewish and democratic values and that help secure the State of Israel as a democratic homeland for the Jewish people. We believe that only a negotiated resolution agreed to by Israelis and Palestinians can meet the legitimate needs and national aspirations of both peoples.

Working in the American political system, in the Jewish community and with others with whom we share core values, we advocate for diplomacy-first American leadership and policies that advance justice, equality, peace, and democracy in Israel, in the wider region and in the United States as well.

Cover art and inside watercolor art by Sasha Kopp

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, we, as a Jewish people, have faced persecution, violence and enslavement. It is because of this history that we find it so important to celebrate our freedom in the times when we have found liberation, safety and prosperity. At the Passover seder, we retell our eternal Jewish story and commemorate our exodus from slavery to freedom. After our time of isolation in order to protect ourselves and our communities, we might be yearning anew for liberation. While some of us may still be relegated once again to a virtual reality for the Passover holiday, we still have ample reason to celebrate, including religious freedom in America and a homeland for our people in the State of Israel.

Even in times of freedom, however, we must remind ourselves that freedom is not always a given; after all, we were all once slaves in the land of Egypt. This mentality reminds us to approach the world with empathy, compassion and concern. It reminds us that, while we are fortunate to be free, not everyone in the world has access to the same rights that so many of us were born with or have fought to achieve.

J Street has compiled this haggadah to apply the themes and lessons of the Passover seder to what it means, in 2022, to be pro-Israel, pro-peace and anti-occupation. What questions do we need to ask about our power and responsibility? How might we be responsible for the oppression faced by others? What plagues us, and what steps can we take to make the most of our own freedom, while helping others toward theirs? This haggadah provides a framework for envisioning ways we can fight to ensure that Israel flourishes as a secure, democratic homeland for the Jewish people and that Palestinians are able to achieve self-determination and independence in a state of their own. It reminds us that, as long as others are suffering, our own celebratory glasses of wine are never full to the brim.

Originally compiled in 2020, this haggadah includes pieces written by J Street friends and clergy. You can use the entire haggadah or pick out particular sections to add meaning to your seder. As the seder is one long question and answer session, we hope you'll feel inspired to ask challenging questions — and to listen closely to each other's answers.

Fifteen Steps and the Seder Order

Rabbi John Rosove

**15 steps remembering
Our people's great liberation**

**15 symbols revealing
Our journey through time**

**15 stages lifting
In the telling to the told**

**15 phases carrying
From the low to the high**

**15 points shining
From exile to the promised land**

**15 keys opening
Gates for all peoples**

**Gates of justice and mutual
respect**

**Gates to two states for two
peoples**

Soon in our day

This year and in the next

In Israel and in Palestine

Life and history fulfilled

Amen!

Kadesh	קֹדֵשׁ
Urchatz	וִּרְחֹץ
Karpas	כַּרְפָּס
Yachatz	יַחַץ
Maggid	מַגִּיד
Rachtzah	רְחֹצָה
Motzi Matzah	מוֹצִיא מַצָּה
Maror	מָרוֹר
Korech	כוֹרֵךְ
Shulkhan Orech	שֻׁלְחַן עוֹרֵךְ
Tzafun	צָפוֹן
Barech	בָּרַךְ
Hallel	הִלֵּל
Nirtzah	נִרְצָה

The First Cup

“The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture” (Israeli Proclamation of Independence, 1948).

“Our hope is not yet lost / it is two thousands years old / to be a free people in our land / the land of Zion and Jerusalem” (*Hatikvah*, Israel’s national anthem).

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרִי 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.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהֵחִיבֵנו וְקִיַּמָּנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן 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: The Israeli Proclamation of Independence promised equal rights for all inhabitants in 1948. Seventy-four years later, we know that full equality has yet to become a reality for some Israeli citizens. It certainly is not the reality of the millions of Palestinians living in the occupied territory. Yet, as *Hatikvah* teaches us, we cannot give up on our values, even if we must persist for thousands of years. Where do you find the hope to continue fighting for justice?

A Kavannah, A Word of Intention: Thresholds

Rabbi Sharon Brous

One of the first rites of the seder is urchatz, the ritual washing of hands.

We stand at the threshold. Soon we'll tell the story that reignites our imagination every year, that reminds us that the world can look different than it does, that insists that every human being can live with dignity and love. This story has, for generations, held our most stubborn and audacious insistence: that peace, justice and liberation are not fantasy but reality. That we, every one of us, are called to be partners in our own redemption story.

But before we can hear this story, we have to transition from the mundane of our work lives to the holy and the hopeful of the holiday. The signpost of that transition is a symbolic hand washing.

This year, we also find ourselves, collectively, standing at a threshold. Like the first signs of spring after a long, dark winter, we yearn to embrace new possibilities, to chart a brave, new course.

It will take courage, faith and love to make our shared dreams a reality. First, we must wash away our bitterness and resentment, our exhaustion, narrow-mindedness and cynicism. It's only then that we can begin to reconnect with a world of expansive possibility.

Unlike nearly every other element of the seder, this washing is unaccompanied by a blessing, perhaps because the washing, itself, is a blessing.

Wash hands without reciting a blessing.

KARPAS

The saltwater of Karpas represents the tears shed by the Israelites while they were enslaved. After years spent battling a global pandemic, this has been a time of tears and mourning for us all. How might the ritual of Karpas mean something new to us this year? What have we most cried over or missed? How might our own grief allow us to better understand the plight of the Israelites?

Dip the karpas into the saltwater.

בִּירוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פֶּרִי הָאֲדָמָה

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

We praise God, Ruler of Everything,
who creates the fruits of the earth.

Eat the karpas.



Rabbi Rachel Goldenberg

We now prepare to break the middle matzah, this bread that carries conflicting interpretations — the bread of affliction and the bread of freedom.

As we divide the matzah into two uneven pieces, we remember our affliction.

On kibbutz, there were always a couple of old ladies who didn't eat much at the meal in the communal dining room, but who would line up afterwards to fill stacked containers with food to take home. They had survived the camps, places where if you come across a piece of bread, you do not eat it all at once. No you take a little, and you save most of it for later. Tears flow from the cracks in the matzah. As we divide the matzah into two uneven pieces, we remember our affliction.

But this matzah is also the bread of our freedom.

Today in the State of Israel, our people have power. We have land, we have plenty. Yet, too often the tears of our affliction blind us to these realities. Israel grabs and settles territory out of fear that the enemy will return to decimate us. We are still victims.

As we break the matzah, we can break the habit of seeing ourselves as afflicted-ones. We can rise up from the degradation of occupation and eat our bread like free people!

Let's embrace the pshat (the simple, surface meaning) of the ritual of yachatz, to break our bread and share it with our neighbors. Let's divide the matzah, and take only what we need. We can let go of that wrapped-up piece, and we can let go of our fear, because we have faith that this is the only way to make it all whole again.

Divide the middle matzah. Cover the afikomen to be hidden.

Here is where we begin to tell the Passover story. Turn to someone next to you and share a story from a memorable Passover seder.

What makes this seder stand out in your memory?

What traditions or practices made a particular impression on you?

Ha Lachma Anya

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיא דִּי אָכְלוּ אַבְהֵתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דְּכָפִין יְיִתִּי וְיִיכֹל, כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ יְיִתִּי
וְיִפְסֹח. הִשְׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. הִשְׁתָּא עַבְדִּי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין.

*Ha lachma anya di achalu avhatana b'ara d'mitzrayim. Kol dichfin yeitei
v'yeichol, kol ditzrich yeitei v'yifsach. Hashata hacha, l'shanah habaah
b'ara d'Yisrael. Hashata avdei, l'shanah habaah b'nei chorin.*

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. All those who are hungry, let them enter and eat. All who are in need, let them come celebrate the Passover. Now we are here. Next year in the land of Israel. This year we are enslaved. Next year we will be free.

The Four Questions: A Ma Nishtana for Our Generation

Claire Davidson Miller, Former J Street Jewish Communal Relations Fellow

Why is this generation different from all other generations?

מה נשתנה הדור הזה מכל הדורות?

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

שבכל דור ודור...

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?

שבכל דור ודור...

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 continue working toward justice for others?

שבכל דור ודור...

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

שבכל דור ודור...

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?



Avadim Hayinu

עֲבָדֵי יָם הַיָּיִנוּ הָיִינוּ. עַתָּה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין.

Avadim hayinu hayinu. Ata b'nei chorin.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. Now we are free.

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.

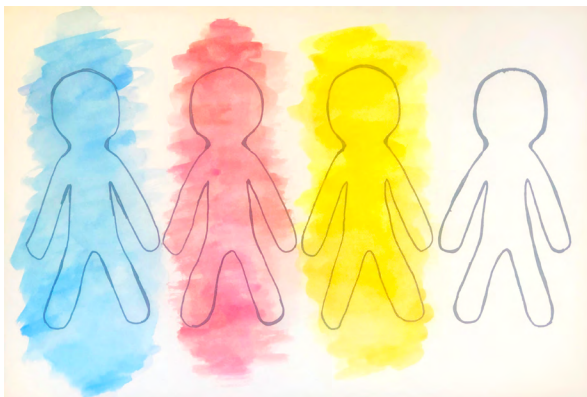
The wise child says, "Israel's founding principles sound wonderful, but how can Israel be genuinely guided by them, recognizing the rights of Israelis and Palestinians, of Orthodox and secular, of Sephardi and Ashkenazi, of women and men, of poor and rich?"

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 did you allow 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?



Narrative Reflection and Discussion

In small groups, read the following paragraph and discuss your responses to the prompts. At the end, come back together and share what you discussed.

It's important to reflect back on what we have learned and have been taught about Israel/Palestine in order to better understand our current perspectives. Many of us hold a different understanding today than what we were originally taught in school, in synagogue or by our families. With our new perspectives and information, it can be easy to be frustrated at the narratives with which we were presented and the people who presented them to us. And yet, the initial education we received was just one step on the path to where we are today. We each come to the table with a different story, and a different path to getting here. We'll now take some time to explore the stories we grew up with and how they have evolved into the understanding we have and the work that we do today.

1. What narrative about Israel/Palestine were you presented growing up?
2. What's an experience you have had that's changed or challenged your understanding of the narrative?
3. As your own narrative has changed, what's a challenge you've encountered in the process?

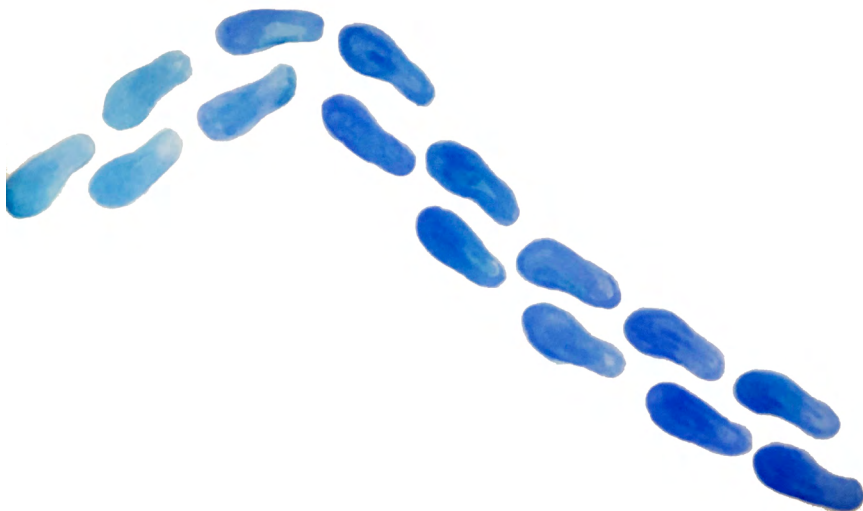
A Quick History Lesson

Jessica Jacobs

Our story as a Jewish people begins with Abraham, who, through a call from God, is given the task to lech lecha, to blindly go to a place that God will show him. Our forefathers and foremothers, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel, and Leah eventually lead us to the land of Egypt.

Jacob's son Joseph and the Egyptians begin on good terms with one another. However, soon a Pharaoh arises over the land that does not know Joseph or his descendants, the Israelites. From his fear of their great numbers the Pharaoh enslaves the Israelites and forces harsh labor and poor conditions upon them. Israelite first-born boys are drowned so as to thwart the strength of the Israelite people.

But the cries of the Israelite people do not go unnoticed. God sends ten plagues upon the Egyptians, forcing Pharaoh to let the Israelite slaves go free. God brought the Israelites, and us, out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. God brought us to freedom, and now it is our blessing and burden to carry the weight of that freedom.



Before the Ten Plagues

Rabbi Toba Spitzer

When it comes time to recite the ten plagues, there is a tradition of dipping a bit of wine out of our cups as we say each plague, diminishing our joy just a bit as we recall the difficulties that befell the Egyptians.

This seder tradition calls to mind a famous midrash (rabbinic commentary), on the moment during the Exodus when the Egyptian army was drowning in the sea, just after the Israelites crossed to freedom. The angels turned to one another to sing their daily praises, when God hushed them, saying, “The work of My hands is drowning in the sea, and you would sing songs before Me?!”

While we cannot erase the suffering of the Egyptians from our freedom story, we can acknowledge that a human price was paid. As we recite the plagues, as we drop a bit of wine onto our plates, we are invited to remember that our own freedom — as Americans, as Jews — often comes with a price paid by others. We can take this moment to reflect on the damage done, whether intentional or not, that has allowed us to enjoy our freedom and our privilege.

If I am economically privileged, what is the cost borne by others — in the U.S. and around the world — to allow me my comforts? If I am white, at what cost comes the relative ease with which I move through the world? As a Jew, as someone connected to Israel, how do I reckon with the terrible price paid by the Palestinian people for the creation of the Jewish state? This is not a moment for guilt, but for honest reckoning, for acknowledgment, and perhaps a commitment to make some kind of tikkun, repair, during this season of redemption.

Ten Modern Plagues of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Cantor Evan Kent

1. The Plague of Poor Leadership

Palestinians and Israelis have leaders who have served for too long and often promote their own personal political survival and ideological agendas over the interests of their people.

2. The Plague of Living in Fear

Palestinians and Israelis live in fear for their safety, constantly worrying that the next attack will destroy their home, their property or their family.

3. The Plague of Home Destruction

Palestinian home destruction by the Israeli army has been shown again and again to be ineffective in deterring terrorism. Additionally, studies by the IDF have shown that collective punishment such as home demolition may actually encourage retaliatory terrorist attacks.

4. The Plague of the Destruction of Olive Trees

The uprooting, burning and destruction of Palestinian olive tree groves harms the livelihood of the trees' owners, destroys generations of historic trees, often more than 100 years old. The destruction of trees is unequivocally against Jewish religious law.

5. The Plague of False Narratives

When borders, geography and mistrust limit interactions between Palestinians and Israelis, fictions are created about each other.

6. The Plague of Settlements

The two-state solution and therefore Israel's democratic and Jewish nature are severely threatened by the continual and seemingly unabated expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

7. The Plague of the Lack of Vision

We search for leaders who offer us hope, rather than fear, and a path towards co-existence, rather than walls that divide.

8. The Plague of Restricted Movement

Israel stringently restricts the movement of Palestinians within the West Bank, from the West Bank to Gaza, into East Jerusalem, Israel and abroad.

9. The Plague of Violence

Violence, instead of words, is used on all sides, by all parties, as a way to harm, intimidate, maim, destroy and kill others.

10. The Plague of Indifference

We become indifferent when we cease to see each other as human beings with legitimate hopes, dreams, aspirations and ambitions.

Dayeinu

T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

The song “*Dayeinu*,” which literally means “it would have been enough for us,” thanks God for all the miracles performed for the Jewish people: from the Exodus out of Egypt, to their journey through the desert, until they entered the land of Israel where they built a national home. In reality, no one of these alone would indeed have been enough. But we celebrate each step toward freedom before moving to the next step. If we dismiss small victories, we will never achieve the whole liberation.

CHORUS: Dai-dai-yenu, dai-dai-yenu, dai-dai-yenu, dayeinu dayeinu (x2)

Spoken: If the ETERNAL had taken the Jews out of Egypt and not brought them safely to Israel, dayeinu!

CHORUS

Spoken: If the ETERNAL had brought the Jews to Israel and not empowered them to build a sovereign state, dayeinu!

CHORUS

Spoken: If the ETERNAL had empowered the Jews to build a sovereign state and not inspired them to make it a democracy, dayeinu!

CHORUS

Spoken: If the ETERNAL had inspired the Jews to make Israel a democracy and not given them great power, dayeinu!

CHORUS

Spoken: If the ETERNAL had given the Jews great power and not ennobled them to wield it with compassion, dayeinu!

CHORUS

But the ETERNAL has ennobled us to wield power with compassion. In every generation, a person must see themselves as if they had personally gone out of Egypt. In past generations, Jews fled from oppression and persecution. Now we all draw courage from our pasts to extend a hand of aid and friendship to those in need.

Three Symbols

Rabbi Rachael Bregman

Rabban Gamliel used to say: Whoever does not discuss the following three things on Passover has not fulfilled his [sic] duty, namely:

Pesach (the Passover-sacrifice),

Matzah (the unleavened bread) and

Maror (the bitter herbs).

Rabban Gamliel answers the question, “What is required to feel the intensity and the urgency of the seder enough to get you up out of your seat such that you must respond to injustice in the world?”

His answer: Passover, Matzah and Maror. These are the symbols we investigate to identify the wrongs which must be set right.

Especially when considering issues around justice in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, what do these symbols suggest?

Pesach: Where are people or their rights being sacrificed for someone else to have power?

Matzah: Also known as the bread of affliction: Where is someone being afflicted or suffering under hardship imposed upon them so that someone else gains power?

Maror: Where have people’s lives been embittered for the sake of someone else to take away the power of others for their own gain?

In Every Generation

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדּוֹר חַיָּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ, כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרָיִם.

*B'chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et-atzmo,
k'ilu hu yatzav mimitzrayim.*

In every generation, every person is obligated to see themselves as though they personally left Egypt.

The Second Cup

“It is our duty, both to ourselves and our children, to see the new world as it is today, to examine the risks and explore the chances, and to do everything so that the State of Israel becomes part of the changing world. We are no longer an isolated nation, and it is no longer true that the entire world is against us. We must rid ourselves of the feeling of isolation that has afflicted us for almost fifty years. We must join the campaign of peace, reconciliation, and international cooperation that is currently engulfing the entire globe, lest we miss the train and be left alone at the station” (Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin’s Inaugural Speech, 1992).

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי 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.

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?

Handwashing has taken on a new frequency and importance this year. Indeed, there has been both urgency in the need to sanitize our surroundings as well as anxiety about whether it is enough. How might we translate our practical reasons for handwashing into a spiritual meaning as well? How can cleansing and protecting ourselves be a holy act?

Pour water over your hands and then recite this blessing.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו על נטילת ידים.
*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat yadayim.*

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who made us holy through obligations, commanding us to wash our hands.



MOTZI/MATZAH

Everyone takes a piece of matzah.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz.*

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who brings forth bread from the land.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat matzah.*

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who made us holy through obligations, commanding us to eat matzah.



MAROR

Maror symbolizes the bitterness in our lives. We taste it to remember the bitterness of slavery, past and present, inflicted upon us and inflicted by us. We hope that through tasting the bitterness, our senses can also be awakened to empathy and camaraderie. As you taste the bitter herbs, pause to consider: how can you have empathy for your family and friends through tough conversations about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? How can you hold loved ones in your hearts even when they may not agree with you? How does tasting the bitterness of maror inspire you to have empathy for family and friends?

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat maror.*

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who made us holy through obligations, commanding us to eat bitter herbs.

KORECH

Jews Against the Occupation

Dip the bitter herb in the charoset.

The practice of combining bitter and sweet suggests that part of the challenge of activism 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.

SHULKHAN ORECH: *B'te'avon!*

Food for thought (to discuss during the meal): Taking joy in parts of contemporary Israeli life can sometimes be difficult when we're concerned with being nuanced and remaining conscious of all the work that must be done to help make it a better place. Yet it's also so important to rejoice in the things that inspire us, give us energy and remind us why we are so committed to this work. What is the Israel that brings you joy?

TZAFUN

T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

Tzafun, which literally means "hidden," is the part of the seder where we seek what is not obvious when we look for something other than what is in front of our faces. It is also when we return to that which was broken earlier in the evening and try to make it whole again. In this way, *Tzafun* serves as the organizing principle of the second half of our seder, where we ask ourselves what world we want to see. Then we commit ourselves to making it real.

Search for, and then eat, the afikomen.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּן אֶת הַכֹּל.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam Hazan Et Hakol.

Blessed are you Adonai our God, Ruler of Everything,
who provides sustenance for all.

The Third Cup

“I Have No Other Land”
Ehud Manor

I have no other country
even if my land is aflame
Just a word in Hebrew
pierces my veins and my soul
With a painful body
with a hungry heart
here is my home
[...]

“To Our Land”
Mahmoud Darwish

To our land,
and it is the one near the word of God,
a ceiling of clouds
To our land,
and it is the one far from the adjectives
of nouns,
the map of absence
To our land,
and it is the one tiny as a sesame seed,
a heavenly horizon... and a hidden chasm
[...]

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרִי 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.

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?

HALLEL

The Fourth Cup

“And there will be a time, not for long, a month is enough, or a week, when every single person will be able to completely fulfill what they were meant to be — everything their bodies and souls have offered them, not what other people have dumped on them” (David Grossman, *To The End of the Land*).

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

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

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

Drink for thought: When the occupation ends — and it will one day end — we will “fulfill what [we] were meant to be” 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?

Elijah's Cup

Adapted from Rabbi Michael L. Feshbach

To be recited as we prepare to open the door for Elijah.

We say that there are four cups of wine at the seder. These are four cups based upon the promises in Exodus: “I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians; I will deliver you; I will redeem you; I will take you to be My people.”

But there is a fifth cup of wine at the Passover seder. And there was a fifth promise. The cup is Elijah's cup. And the promise was “I will bring you into the land.”

But God did bring us into the land. We came, we conquered, we settled... and then we lost and left again. Elijah's cup sees coming into the land as a promise held for the future. Now the cup of Elijah has come to stand for a future hope of something deeper than mere presence. It is about redemption. It is about setting things right.

And we are not, now, in a place of full redemption. To truly share this cup we must find a way to truly share this space. Sadly, we see... that redemption is not yet complete. “Being there” alone is not enough. The suffering of others, the pain of the Palestinians, has to be part of our world, brought into our minds and our hearts before we can fully taste the sweetness of the final cup. So still we look to a future day, when we will dwell in peace, in two states, and the swords shall be beaten into the plowshares... and none shall make anyone — them or us — afraid.



Eliyahu HaNavi

אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַתֹּשֵׁבִי אֱלִיָּהוּ, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי
בְּמַהְרָה בְּיָמֵנו יָבֹא אֵלֵינוּ
עִם מָשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד
עִם מָשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד

Eliyahu hanavi
Eliyahu hatishbi
Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu hagiladi
Bimheirah b'yameinu, yavo eileinu
Im mashiach ben-David,
Im mashiach ben-David

Elijah the prophet, the returning, the man of Gilad:
return to us speedily,
in our days with the messiah,
son of David.

Miriam HaNeviah

מִרְיָם הַנָּבִיאָה עַז וְזִמְרָה בְּיָדָהּ
מִרְיָם תִּרְקֹד אִתָּנוּ לְהַגְדִּיל זִמְרַת עוֹלָם
מִרְיָם תִּרְקֹד אִתָּנוּ לְתַקֵּן אֶת-הָעוֹלָם:
בְּמַהְרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ הִיא תְּבִיאֵנוּ
אֶל מִי הַיְּשׁוּעָה

Miriam ha-n'vi'ah oz v'zimrah b'yadah.
Miriam tirkod itanu l'hagdil zimrat olam.
Miriam tirkod itanu l'taken et ha-olam.
Bimheyrah v'yameynu hi t'vi'einu el mey ha-y'shuah.

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.

Shaina Wasserman

We made it to the end! The seder has concluded.

We have eaten matzah and maror, and dipped bitter herbs in the salt water.

We have reflected on the cost of conflict and occupation and discussed ways in which we can make an impact.

We have celebrated being a part of a community who loves Israel and who is concerned about the dangerous path the country's leaders are taking.

At the end of the seder we say: *Next Year in Jerusalem!*

It is an aspirational idea. May we all be together in Jerusalem — the land of peace.

But in our reality, Jerusalem is also a symbol of conflict and confusion.

Whose Jerusalem? Municipal Jerusalem? The Old City? The Arab Quarter? East Jerusalem? Ben Yehuda Street?

Let us work together so that by next year, there will be real steps towards peace and away from the occupation.

Let's continue these conversations — around seder tables, family tables and coffee tables — in which we openly wrestle with Israel.

Let's talk to our Jewish communal leaders and our elected officials.

Together, we will get to a Jerusalem of peace that embodies the national aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians.

לשנה הבאה בירושלים!
Next Year in Jerusalem!



Sources & Acknowledgements

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