

PASSOVER

5784/2024



JEWISH
VOICE
FOR
PEACE

JVP Haggadah 5784/2024

EXODUS FROM ZIONISM

Welcome to JVP Passover 5784/2024

Offered by Melissa Nussbaum Freeman

It is hard to believe that four years ago we were just figuring out how to have Passover on Zoom. How were we going to celebrate this quintessentially home-based tradition across time zones and computer screens? We were [washing our hands](#) as Dori Midnight instructed and creating tiny pods of family and friends that would keep us safe from Covid.

We are still not safe from Covid, we still wear masks, but now our pods are budding organizing formations to end apartheid and when we talk about safety we say there is no Jewish safety in genocide. With rage and grief we say Not In Our Name.

JVP and JVP Action have been in full rapid response for six months—organizing in every way we could think of and then some. From the Rotunda of a key House building on Capitol Hill to stopping President Biden from conducting his campaigning “as usual” to everyday Power Half-Hours we have had our attention and purpose on moving power to attain a lasting ceasefire. We are seeing light coming through cracks in the empire. We are not stopping until there is a lasting ceasefire and an end to the genocide—and then until full freedom.

Why put energy at this moment into creating an Anti-Zionist Haggadah?





Passover is ours to own and continuously define. To give up on this beloved tradition now would be to allow our rich thousands-year old tradition to be co-opted for oppression. Israel is a 76-year old state. While the Israeli government purports to speak in the name of all Jews, and worse, uses Jewish traditions as weapons against Palestinians, we refuse. We are wrestling back our beloved tradition from these oppressive cooptations and re-rooting in the values passed to us. We reclaim our holiday of liberation as part of reclaiming Judaism from and building it beyond Zionism. [We organize our people](#) and we resist Zionism not only as an act of solidarity with Palestinians, but also because we love Jews, Jewishness, and Judaism, and are committed to creating the Jewish futures we all deserve. We are fighting for a thriving Judaism and Jewish communities, for a multiplicity of Jewish cultures and for the future of the Jewish people—just as we fight for the future of all peoples.

We have never been in a more narrow place. This Passover, we cannot hold seder as usual. The meal cannot be festive while the people of Gaza are facing famine; the questions of liberation are not theoretical. This year’s Jewish holiday of liberation urges every one of us to step up our commitment to the liberation of the Palestinian people. May our ancient tradition be of service to all of us in this sacred obligation.

In this spirit we created this Haggadah.

Chag sameach Pesach.

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Introduction



Offered by Liv Kunins-Berkowitz

Welcome dear ones to Passover. We welcome your grief, your broken hearts, your rage, your fear, your gratitude, and all of our dreams of collective liberation.

During the course of the night, we will tell our ancestral story of the Israelites' journey from mitzrayim, the narrow place, to freedom. While tonight our story ends with the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, dancing with Miriam and her timbrels, tasting freedom—we know that the Exodus story doesn't end there. The Israelites would go on to wander for forty years in the desert before killing and displacing people in pursuit of the Promised Land. Tonight may we taste freedom, as we understand that the journey to liberation will not be realized until it is a journey for collective liberation.

This year the people of Gaza are in mitzrayim. This year the Israeli government is Pharaoh. This year those of us who pay taxes to the American government, which has financed the Israeli military's genocide of Gaza, are complicit. How does our experience of this story change if we understand that each of us can both experience and perpetrate oppression? This Haggadah does not contain the answers, only the essential questions and songs that we carry with us as we continue organizing for liberation in Palestine, on Turtle Island, and wherever you may be arriving from.

Tonight we invite you to partake in the sacred act of noticing. Notice when you feel inspired, notice when you feel connected, notice when you feel checked-out, left out, uncomfortable, notice how this ritual nourishes you as it has nourished our ancestors for generations, notice the ways it fails us as it has failed our ancestors for generations. We are here to face the contradictions and we are here to hold each other in the struggle.

May you find moments to breathe deeply, to rest, to weep, may you meet a new comrade, may you ask a new question, may our actions be meaningful, may you sing a song that your ancestor loved. May we find courage tonight so that we can return fortified to the essential work of supporting our community in the Exodus that this moment demands—an Exodus from Zionism.

We particularly want 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 the JVP 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 bullshit and we say welcome! For those of you grieving loved ones in Gaza, 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 Arabic speakers, the Hebrew speakers, the Yiddish speakers, the Ladino and Spanish speakers, to our dear ones who communicate in ASL, to you and all your languages—we say welcome. 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 dear elders, to your pets, 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 be with you.

Let us begin with a phrase that is repeated throughout the Haggadah from our dear teacher [Aurora Levins Morales](#): “We cannot cross until we carry each other.” Through this journey may we better understand what it might mean to truly carry each other as we continue our struggle for a permanent ceasefire, Palestinian freedom, and collective liberation. May it be so.



The Seder Plate

The entire story of the Haggadah is contained in the Seder plate; everything on it contains an aspect of Exodus:



Bone – Z’roah – The Sacrifice

*vegetarians can use beet

Bitter – Maror – Herb

Mortar – Charoset

Egg – Beitzah

Greens – Karpas

Horseradish – Chrein

Strawberries – For Gaza

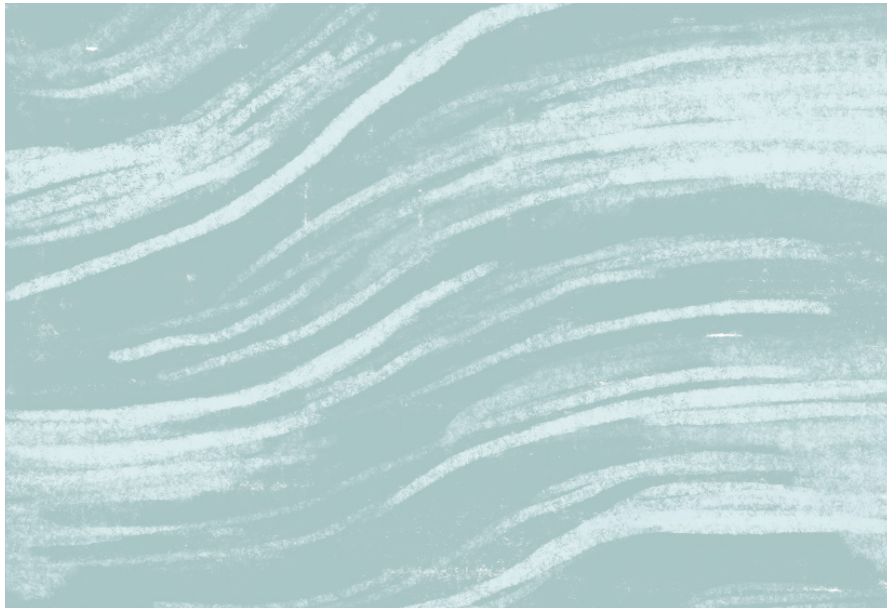
Olive – Zayit

Orange – Tapuz

Acorn – Balut

Spoon – Kafit

Garlic – Shoom



WORLD OF KNOWING

Intellectual/ Air

The number four has significant meaning in our mystical and ritual traditions. Four represents fullness, wholeness, and completion. In Judaism we have the four Matriarchs, four corners of the diaspora, and four corners of the tzitzit and tallit. The kabbalists speak of four elements, four archangels, four directions, and four mystical worlds. In the seder we have the four children, four questions, four cups of wine/ grape juice, and the four stages of redemption. According to a midrash, rabbinic tale, as the Egyptian army drew near, the Israelites were split among four opinions when trying to decide the best course of action to take.

Rabbi Rachel Bluth teaches that the seder can be experienced through four stages of engaging or relating to the world: the Intellectual, Emotional, Physical, and Spiritual. Each of us, no matter how we manifest or express our Jewishness, make meaning of life in all these worlds. So let's journey together in our shared humanity, on a path of wholeness mapped for us in the Pesach seder.

We begin with the Intellect, associated with the element of air and the World of Knowing: here we open the seder by declaring the order, asking questions, wondering, sanctifying, setting the stage, and explaining. Here we engage in our capacity to contemplate, communicate, visualize, share ideas, and breathe: *Kadesh, Urchatz, Karpas, Yachatz.*



קֵדֶשׁ | Kadesh

Offered by Rooted in this World

The first cup of wine traditionally holds the role of sanctifying the ritual itself and the space of the seder itself. Reflecting on what this means within the context of ongoing genocide is difficult. It's not difficult to appreciate this community or how valuable it is to gather with other anti-zionist Jews and comrades.

The difficulty bubbles up when considering the meaning of sanctification. A common definition of sanctification is "to set apart for special use or purpose." Many of us say that Gaza is 'ever-present.' And yet we know that as we witness, we are also quite separate from it; set apart.

So the offer with this first cup, is to reflect on this separation. Sarah Aziza, a Palestinian American, in her essay "The Work of Witness" shares:

Rather, we—those outside of Palestine, watching events through a screen—ought to think of ourselves in relation to the legacy of the shaheed*. Our work as witnesses is to be marked; we should not leave it unscathed. We must make an effort to stay with what we see, allowing ourselves to be cut. This wound is essential. Into this wound, imagination may pour—not to invade the other's subjectivity, but to awaken awe at the depth, privacy, and singularity of each life. There, we might glimpse, if sidelong, how much of Gaza's suffering we will never know. This is where real witness must begin: in mystery.

Or, much better expressed in the words of my cousin, the pharmacist,

ما زلت مصرا نحن لم نعتد القصف ونخاف من كل حدث ولم نعتد مشاهد المعاناة ، ان القلب دائما ما
ينفطر، ولم نعتد المجازر الذي يرتكبها الاحتلال فلكل شهيد حياة

I continue to insist, we have not gotten used to bombing and we are afraid of everything happening to us. We have not gotten used to the sight of suffering. No, it always breaks our hearts. We have not gotten used to the massacres perpetrated by the occupation. No. For every martyr, there was a life.

*JVP seder coordinators asked us to include the definition of shaheed. In recognition of its many layered meanings, we offer this by the same author, Sarah Azizi, in her 2022 piece Anointing the Dead: "The word shaheed, meaning martyr, anoints the dead with honor. It hugs them like a shroud. It speaks, perhaps, to a force of spirit that transcends the breath of lungs."

(DRINK FIRST CUP) *L'Chaim*.

Shehechyanu

There is also a tradition, after the first cup, to say Shehechyanu. Broken down, shehechyanu translates to “We are alive.” We are. And as we’re preparing this text, Bisan Owda is as well. On April 4th, she not only awoke to tell us this, but also to introduce the anemone coronaria or poppy anemone, shuqa’iq annaa’mun. And to share her joy at finding this wild red flower growing, and at seeing green space for the first time in so many months.

May we continue to witness and amplify our own stories, and those of comrades around the world, who, like Bisan, are surviving and resisting. Amongst pain and flowers, bringing us to this moment.





ורחץ | Urchatz

Offered by Rebecca Maria Goldschmidt

(PLEASE PREPARE AN EMPTY BOWL, A PITCHER OF WATER, AND A CLEAN HANDTOWEL)

My name is Rebecca Maria Goldschmidt (she/they), I'm an artist, a team member at Queer Mikveh Project, and one of the organizers for the Hiroshima Palestine Community Vigil and JVP Hawaii. It's my honor to lead the JVP Seder in Urchatz for the second year in a row from Hiroshima 広島. We will be helping each other to cleanse our precious hands in the first handwashing. The person to your left can hold the bowl, while the person to the right can pour the water over your hands. In this way we pass the water around the table, helping our neighbors in this symbolic purification.

Today we offer this first handwashing to the Palestinian People, Land and Waters. I'm writing from beside the Motoyasu river, where a confluence of eight rivers braids together in a delta that feeds into the Setonaikai 瀬戸内海, the Seto Inland Sea. The sea's small islands float in indigo waters under white skies. Today the sakura trees are in their full bloom state of *mankai* 満開. Spring has arrived.

Seventy-nine years ago, on August 6th, 1945 at 8:15am, Hiroshima's mountains, rivers, delta and all of its inhabitants were subjected to humanity's most horrendous technological experiment—the nuclear weapon. The US military obliterated both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the river here was clogged with thousands upon thousands of bodies whose spirits are still searching for respite from the fires and the radiation. Many thought that the land and waters would not be inhabitable for at least 75 years...

For the same 75 years, our Palestinian siblings have been suffering their own tragedy at the hands of the Zionist state, made by our own relatives. As we bear witness to the last six months of unimaginable suffering and bloodshed, we are here today to tell the story of Liberation and rededicate ourselves to Palestinian Liberation. Palestinians have suffered their wells being poisoned or turned into mikvaot by settlers; their waters diverted and stolen; their water tanks shot and drained; and they continue to be deprived of our most vital lifegiving necessity—WATER.

Urchatz is a water offering that reminds us of our vulnerability, our connectedness, our reliance on each other. Our responsibility to each other. Washing our hands is a gesture of care. I share my name, Rebecca, Rivkah, with my beloved teacher and Queer Mikveh comrade, Rebekah Erev. In the Torah, Rebecca is the water bearer who first appears drawing water from the well. She offers the water to Eliezer and his camels, who have traveled a long distance through the desert.

In Hiroshima, we have stood in front of the Atomic Bomb Dome, along the river, every night since October 13th in solidarity with the Palestinian People. There are very few Jews in Japan, and even fewer anti-zionist Jews. I can count us all on two hands.

The two hands you are washing for me now.

The two hands typing these words.

The two hands of the woman photographing the blossoms.

The two hands of the journalist maneuvering the camera.

The two hands wiping the table.

The two hands lifting the collapsed concrete.

The two hands painting the banner.

The two hands flipping the bread.

The two hands in a PVC pipe in front of Lockheed Martin.

The two hands gathering flour from the earth.

The two hands assembling the robot.

The two hands collecting the za'atar.

The two hands filing the paperwork.

The two hands operating in the dark.

The one hand of ash in the rubble.

The one hand ringing the bell.

The one hand reaching.

My mother's hands embroidering a watermelon.

Let us give gratitude for this blessed water. Let us bless the hands we have lost. Let this offering of water, this act of care, remind us of our tethered-ness. Our one-ness.

As we wash each others' hands, we honor our waters and ALL water protectors. From Gaza to the Galilee, from Hawai'i Nei to Pangasinan, from Fukushima to Taiwan, the Rhein to the Amazon.

May ALL the waters of Palestine be liberated

May ALL our waters of Peoples be liberated

May we liberate ALL our waters—together.

From the River, to the Sea.

FREE PALESTINE

パレスチナ解放



Rebecca washing their hands in the Motoyasu river in Hiroshima with the waters from Mitakidera temple, the site of three waterfalls in the mountains that was a refuge for victims of the nuclear weapon. The temple is also the site of a shrine containing the ashes of Auschwitz victims.



כַּרְפַּס | Karpas

Karpas: a three-part ritual

*Written and woven by Elliot batTzedek of Fringes:
a feminist non-zionist havurah*

Because Jewish tradition is that nothing is drunk or consumed without first being blessed, we bless the water and the salt before dipping the karpas.

BLESSING WATER

All:

*N'varekh et mey ha'ayanot—
umey han'chalim umey han'harot—
mayim chayim hamarvim kol chay*

נְהַרְדּוּ אֶת מֵי הָעֵינֹת —
וּמֵי הַנְּחָלִים וּמֵי הַנְּהָרוֹת —
מֵיִם חַיִּים הַמְרֻוּיִם כָּל חַי

Let us bless the living waters—
fountains and wellsprings, rivulets, rivers and streams
— that sustain all life
(Marcia Falk)

Reader: In tonight's sacred community, we cannot say "water" and not also say "Gaza," where Israeli apartheid had already severely limited clean water for 2 million people for years, even before this horrendous campaign of utter destruction.

Reader: We know that, tonight in Gaza, people have almost no water to drink, to cook, to bathe their children, to mix formula or medicines or to clean wounds.

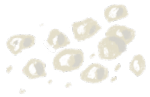
Reader: Before we drink water now, and any time we raise water to our lips tonight, we say:

All: Gaza! We will never forget you, we will never forsake you, we will never stop fighting for you until all of your people live safe and free.

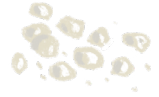
(DRINK WATER)

BLESSING SALT

Reader: Our sage Elana Dykewomon, z”l, teaches: I had a dream: I spilled a sack of salt in the road. No matter, my friends said, we don’t need salt. But I remembered my grandmother sending me little burlap bags of salt from Florida, and I said: that’s the trouble with us. Salt is an electrolyte, we need it to conduct electricity, the good feelings between us. No wonder we don’t have the connections we need. We don’t have enough salt.



EVERYONE CHOOSE TWO NAMES YOU KNOW HERE,
AND TWO YOU DON’T KNOW, AND TYPE IN THE CHAT:
“(THAT PERSON’S NAME), YOU ARE THE SALT
OF THE EARTH. PASS IT ON!”



BLESSING KARPAS

Reader: Life as we know it on this planet exists because of a few inches of top soil and reservoirs of fresh water. In our ancestors’ days, deforestation created massive soil loss and drought that upended empires and civilizations. Some anthropologists believe the story of the expulsion from Eden is a cultural memory of the devastation that happened when land was first clear-cut to grow wheat and barley—when an Eden gave way to floods, drought, and cyclical starvation.

Reader: In our day, in our empire, commercial agriculture is decimating top soil, staggeringly large and inappropriate development is draining and salinizing fresh water, fossil fuel extraction is so vast it is causing tectonic shifts, polar ice is melting so quickly that time itself could change on the planet, and both land and water are being poisoned. Permafrost is melting, our continents are on fire, animals are being driven by need into human areas, and Covid-19 is just the first huge global pressure we are going to be facing.

Reader: And so on this night, different from other nights, we dip parsley, child of that razor-thin layer of top soil, into salt water. This is not only for the sweat and tears of our ancestors in Mitzrayim, but also to know the taste of Gaza’s drained and destroyed aquifer filling now with salt water.

All: Gaza! We will never forget you, we will never forsake you, we will never stop fighting for you until all of your people live safe and free.

*B’rucha at Shekhinah, b’tocheynu ruach ha’olam
borayt p’ri ha’adamah.*

בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ שְׂכִינָה בְּתוֹפִינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרְאֵת פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה

Blessed is the Source of Life which brings forth the fruits of the earth.

(ALL EAT KARPAS AND THEN CONTINUE SNACKING ON ANY VEGETABLE OR PLANT)



יַחַץ | Yachatz

Offered by R. Jessica Rosenberg

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. May this moment of ritual be a time of creative, visionary, revolutionary breaking.

You're invited to take the middle matzah, break it in half. One half becomes the afikomen, we hide it away; we will later search for what remains. With the first half, this year, you're invited to break it again. In half again. And again. 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.



Breaking the Bonds:

Part 1—Divesting from Israeli Apartheid and Genocide

Offered by Dani Noble

This Passover, as we continue to grieve and rage at the Israeli military's genocide of Palestinians, we recommit ourselves to taking responsibility for our own community's complicity—and to taking action together. This means ensuring that in all of our actions we live out the Jewish value of *tikkun olam*, “repairing the world”—from collectively as anti-Zionist Jews demanding “never again for anyone,” to working to end the U.S.'s material complicity in apartheid, occupation, and genocide. That work must include holding our local institutions accountable—and it also starts with taking responsibility for our own complicity in financially supporting the oppression of Palestinians.

One basic step we can take is to ensure that we and our families divest from genocide and apartheid and invest in freedom. “Israel Bonds” are loans to the Israeli apartheid state. Following the Nakba, fundraising for Israel Bonds in synagogues and Jewish community spaces has intentionally linked support for Israel with American Jewish life. The American Jewish custom of gifting Israel Bonds for Jewish rites of passage, including B’Nai Mitzvot and weddings, has further tied Jewish religious, spiritual life with financial and political support for Zionism and the State of Israel. This has been a crucial part of the larger project of deepening general economical and political ties between the U.S. and Israel through investment of U.S. institutions in Israel Bonds—from public treasuries, to union pension funds, to universities.

As anti-Zionist Jews, by personally divesting from Israel Bonds, we take a powerful stand in not just refusing to economically support Israeli apartheid, occupation, and genocide of Palestinians. We refuse to have our Jewishness tied to Zionism and support for such oppression and violence: instead, we envision a future for our Jewish community rooted in our Jewish traditions of social justice, community care, and solidarity with other communities in diaspora.

Our collective pledge to divest from Israeli apartheid and genocide, and invest in freedom:

For many American Jews, “*tikkun olam*,” or repairing the world, is a sacred part of what it means to be Jewish. Generations of Jews all around the world have organized to dismantle the institutions and structures that sustain injustice and worked as part of movements to grow something new, joyful, beautiful, and life-sustaining in their place.

Aligning financial investments with our values—divesting from injustice and investing in the movements we need—is a key way to build the world we long to see.

For decades, the Israeli government has justified its oppression of Palestinians by claiming the unconditional support of all Jews who live in the US. This includes asking our communities to invest financially in the Israeli government's war-chest, currently used for a genocidal campaign in Gaza.

At the same time, the Israeli and U.S. governments have systematically repressed, criminalized, and limited the flow of resources into Palestinian-led organizing for freedom, justice and equality.

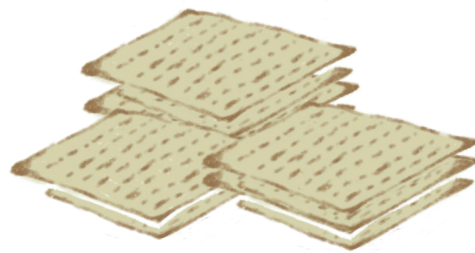
No longer.

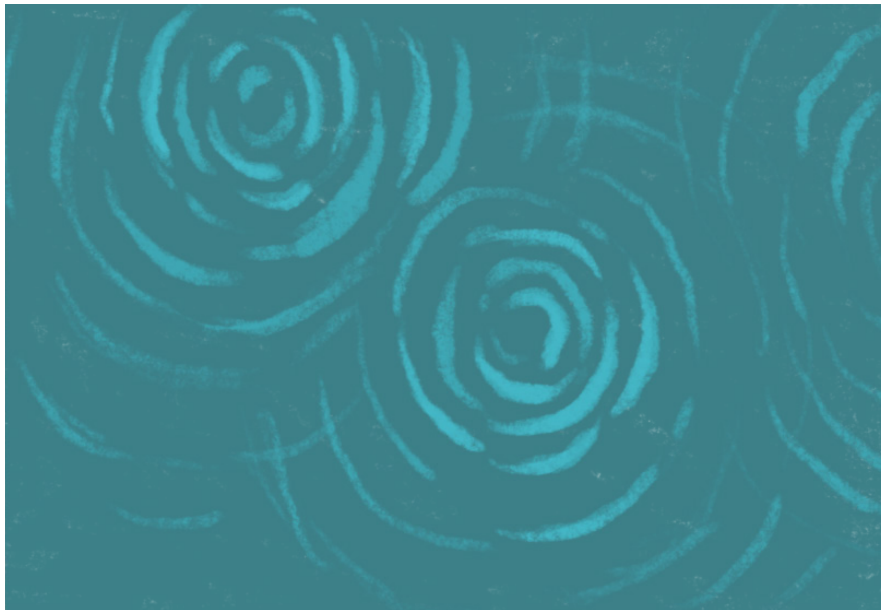
I pledge to work toward repairing the world, including with my own investments.

I will, if possible, redeem all vested Israel Bonds.

I will not purchase any future Israel Bonds.

I will invest in our movements for collective liberation, and especially in Palestinian-led organizing for justice, equality and freedom for all in the region.





WORLD OF FEELING

Emotional/ Water

We journey now to the Emotional stage of the seder, associated with water and the World of Feeling. Here we tell The Story, and we get into our collective and personal narratives of enslavement and liberation. Here we experience our vitality and capacity to feel the fullness of life. Here we are playful, creative, sensitive to the cycles of life/death/rebirth, here we are grateful and transform our lives: *Magid*.



מַגִּיד | Magid

Raise the Seder Plate

Offered by Simha Toledo

This is the point in the seder where, in my Sephardic Moroccan family, we would do the Moroccan ‘Bibhilu’ ritual. My dad z'l would walk around the seder table waving the seder plate over the heads of each person at our seder table while chanting: *Biv-hi-lu ya-tsa-nu mi-Mits-ra-yim!* (In haste we left Egypt!) To which everyone would respond: *b'nei chorin!* (A Free people!).

It is a fun and potent ritual. My favorite parts, growing up, was the performative quality of the ritual and the anticipation it created. I remember watching the seder plate make its way around the table, like a floating UFO, until it finally made it over my head where it seemed like time slowed down and the chanting muffled in the background. Instinctually, I would tilt my head back to look up at the bottom of the plate, as if it were a natural wonder, like an eclipse. I felt special and uplifted under its gentle shade, as if the Great Liberator was paying me personal attention under its canopy of peace.

I later learned that the Sephardic custom of arranging your seder plate is based on the teachings of the Kabbalah. The mystical arrangement mirrors the ten sephirot, channels of divine life force that make up the body of God, as represented by the Tree of Life. On the right column we have the shank bone and charoset, corresponding to the sacred divine attributes of kindness and victory. On the left column we have the egg and celery with saltwater, corresponding to the sacred attributes of strength and splendor. In the center column we have bitter herbs and romaine lettuce, corresponding with the sacred attributes of beauty and foundation. The three matzot on top correspond with the higher attributes of understanding, wisdom, and crown, and the seder plate itself corresponds with Kingship/Queenship or manifestation.

When arranged in this pattern, the seder plate is elevated to represent the holy Shechinah in our midst. Her traveling presence over our heads is a blessing as we set out on a pilgrimage to the past to stretch our capacity for empathy, connection, healing, creativity, and humility. In Her midst we are instantly connected to the sacredness of all life, for she teaches that in each of our hearts is a sanctuary of the eternal flame.

I hear the Shechinah whisper through intuition, I see Her in the many ways we show our love and solidarity with Palestinian freedom, the multitude of ways we love and express ourselves as Jewish people, and the ways we love the land, wherever we dwell. In the past six months, through calling

our electeds, organizing and attending actions, posting on social media, getting arrested, fundraising, supporting Palestinian businesses, disrupting business as usual, raising awareness whenever possible, deepening relationships with each other, and so much more we have been actively seeking and liberating the light of Oneness from the fragmentation of ongoing genocide, occupation, and apartheid. The world we live in may be bitterly torn and broken, but it is the divine spark within each of us, layered with our collective story of enslavement and liberation, that we call out now as free people, to all who are oppressed, to say that liberation is possible. And it is perhaps with a painful irony this year that we recall that as in haste we were liberated, in haste our oppressors, too, were overthrown.

As I lead us in this ritual, I will call and you will respond, like this:

Call: Biv-hi-lu ya-tsa-nu mi-Mits-ra-yim!

Response: B'nei cho-rin!

I will repeat the chant four times. I encourage you to welcome the holy indwelling presence into your field, by lifting your seder plate, or any object, above your head and the heads of those with you, above your camera, if it's on, and above an empty space that signifies Gaza. So that the Shechinah may bless the land and people of Palestine with protection, nurturance, and strength. So that Palestinians may be a free people in their liberated homeland, speedily in our days.

We ask that the Shechinah guide our hearts and hands towards manifesting love and wholeness, justice and peace. May we all be blessed and transformed on our journey through the telling and re-telling of the story.

Four Questions for Times of Genocide

Offered by aaron moore ellis

Tonight our tradition invites us to ask questions. Tonight I 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.

Q1: Why is this Passover different than 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 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?

Q2: Why do we eat bitter herbs / maror on this Passover—amidst genocide?

This is a time for mourning. Not celebration. White phosphorus; other chemicals and residue from bombs and bullets, tear gas, and debris from destroyed buildings; all pollute the air, water, and soil; pollute the earth; pollute Palestine; pollute us all. This toxicity renders all celebration bitter.

This year we do not celebrate our liberation. We mourn ongoing genocide in which we are intertwined, through our tax dollars, our religious, cultural, and political institutions, our identities, our own stories of liberation.

This genocide, this mourning, this bitterness, will not end when Pesach ends.

Maybe the question is: should we eat only bitter herbs/maror until a permanent ceasefire?

When a ceasefire comes—if a ceasefire comes?—what will be left to celebrate then?

Q3: Why do we dip twice this Passover?

Palestinians are starving and they are gunned down waiting for flour.

They are thirsty and do not have access to potable water.

Adding salt to water is an insult in times of blockade, strategic and intentional famine plaguing Gaza, surrounded on all sides by borders and bombs and salt water.

Can dipping twice manifest a deeply self critical reflection on privilege? Can it inspire action to end the siege? To feed the hungry? To satiate the thirsty?

If we dip twice to remind ourselves of our privilege, of our responsibility to Palestinians, rendered starving and thirsty *in our name*, then let us not stop dipping.

Until Palestine is free. Let us dip over and over again. Let us not forget our responsibility—our call to respond. Perhaps the salt becoming the sweat it will take to do the work.

Dip repeatedly. Until Palestine is Free.

Q4: Why do we use pillows and recline on Pesach during mass displacement?

How can we recline while millions of Palestinians stand and sit and weep, prostrate, outside their destroyed homes? When they experience forced migration, extreme housing insecurity? When there's no rest, no peace, no respite for Palestinians in Palestine, in so-called 48, or across the world, as we watch on in horror.

If we let our Passover amidst genocide be a triumphant celebration of our ancestral escape from slavery, our pride and joy will only underscore our deep shame.

In fact, I'm moved to ask: Does this year's Passover finally show that Pesach cannot be a collective celebration—but rather, our collective acknowledgment of shame? This year Pesach is a shonda (*Yiddish*=shame), begging a different kind of commemoration.

4 Kinds of Conversations

Offered by aaron moore ellis

With Pesach this year begging such pressing questions of us, we should consider: how can we answer these difficult questions together? With others and with ourselves. With love? And care? Our traditions invite us to ask our young ones, and times of genocide invite hard conversations.

Having hard conversations, especially around Jewish celebrations of liberation in times of genocide, means attending to the people we're talking to; their availability for hard conversations, and it means attending to people's complexities, including our own.

Kid 1: The wise child: knows that without listening to one another, we are doomed to misunderstand one another. And that only by listening deeply can we see one another better, see ourselves better, see where we can go together better.

Kid 2: The oppositional child: knows their own truth, resisting interventions and taking a stand against convention. And that through fierce difference, we can see another way, beyond the status quo.

Kid 3: The simple child: simply turns their back, unable to compute, unable to believe that a Jewish state, Jewish communities, Jewish institutions, and Jewish family members, could be in cahoots of an ongoing genocide.

Kid 4: The child who can't even ask a question: is scared. Scared of Jewish suffering. Scared of being disciplined and dismissed by Zionist family members and communities. Scared when they hear "from the river to the sea." Scared: if they ask difficult Pesach questions out loud, and have hard conversations, where will it lead?

These children are alive in our communities, in people of all ages.

These children are alive within each of us. In people of all political persuasions.

We all have tendencies to be wise: to listen, to learn, to build community through understanding; to be oppositional: to go against the status quo and struggle for what we believe is right; to be simple: to retreat when we are unable to assimilate the complexity of our home communities' complicities; to be fearful: for Jewish safety, for our own safety. All these tendencies are important, and have their place.

[Elana June Margolis](#) remarked on attending to these various tendencies within us: How can we talk to ourselves? How can we listen to ourselves? How can we listen to one another? How can we listen to all the kids in all of us? With love?

How can we have hard conversations in times of genocide? Tending to our own complexities and multiplicities? While not compromising on the truth we speak to power? While trying our best to navigate what options we have to make real change. For a lasting ceasefire. For a Free Palestine.

All Eyes on Rafah

Offered by Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb

It is written in the torah
diverse multitudes left mitzryim,
diverse multitudes resisted oppression together
grassroots ruby rousers
made beautiful trouble inside the house of the oppressor,
defiant doulas refused to cooperate with the hands of death.
They had their own plans.

The diverse multitudes stood at Sinai.
The exodus story was never about one people,
it was always about a universal common cause,
pushing together against freedom's gate
shouting to the rest of the world and each other,
'Open, open the gates of freedom.
Do you see us? We are human beings.'
Like the people of Gaza,
watching their children die
and the shores of the red sea seem far away,
and they have already walked and walked
like Mother Hajar who ran from place to place
With her dying child in her arms, crying out.
The divine heard her cry and water rose from the ground under her feet.

But, Israel has turned off the tap of life and there is no water to drink,
No food to eat, no safe place to sleep, no sanitation, no medicine, no rest from the smell of
death.

In our name, the Mashkheet stalks the land of the
the innocent and Israel has become a destroyer of worlds,
Creator of an assassination zone, a death camp, a ruined world,
Where no child is safe.

To what can this be compared: to the ancient oral narrative
that sparked an uprising, as our ancestors tell it, as it was passed down and came to rest
in Pesikta De Rebbe Eleazar,

A young mother named Rachel bat Shutelah was one of the poor Hebrews forced to gather and mix
straw and mud to make bricks for the granaries of Pharaoh. The coarse stubble pierced their heels,
mingling their blood with clay. A task master with a hard heart beat Rachel without mercy, even
though birth pangs shook her body and she cried out in labor. As the rod fell upon her back, Rachel
bat Shutelah's infant child fell from her womb into the mud and drowned. The defiant doulas and
their guardian angel pulled the child from the mud and began keening and "Shekinah heard our cry,
saw our affliction, our misery, our oppression," and the time of freedom was soon upon us.

Nisan 5784, we step into the task of defiant doulas
And refuse to turn away from the cry of the people of Gaza,
Tonight we consecrate the spirit of people rising up
Born in the desire of liberation from oppression
Like Miriam who was called Puah because of her defiant voice
We unleash the roar of solidarity's thunder, loud as the crashing waves of the sea upon the shore. We
pledge our faithfulness and will not surrender our resistance until Palestine is free from the river to
the sea.

Tonight, renew the ancient spirit of the mixed multitudes
singing open the waters of the sea, so everyone can pass through.

Don't Step On My Feet Again

by Gazan poet Basman Aldirawi

Under the constant buzzing
Of drones
The roar of F-16's over my head
While I play hide and seek
With peace
Whispering, *Don't just be a break
In between assaults,*

The electricity goes off.
Total darkness.
While I dance with hope,
Whispering, *Don't step on my
Feet again.*

At the border crossing
Between earth and sky
I still stand for hours.
My legs are shaking,
The sweat all over my body,
A voice inside my head, whispering
*You're a full human, even if
you feel like half.*



Letters

In order for no one to be left behind, we are reaching out to call in the Jewish Community and the NYTimes. Choose one (or both) of the following letters with the intention to bring everyone to freedom. Make the letter your own and send it after the Seder.

A Letter to our Jewish Communities

This is a template for a letter that you might share with a Jewish institution that you care about that has yet to advocate for a permanent ceasefire. It could be your local synagogue, your summer camp, or a Jewish community center. You also might want to share this letter with a loved one who is wrestling with their relationship to Zionism. Please feel free to personalize this letter, especially the first paragraph!

Dear _____,

I am a member of your community [insert how you have participated in this community or organization] reaching out during Passover. I am so grateful to have been a member of [insert community] where I have learned [insert one learning specifically a Jewish social justice value] and connected to so many amazing people. My experiences with [insert community] have fortified my connection to Judaism and Jewish community.

On this Passover, I am writing to you with a broken heart. I am devastated that [insert community] has chosen to [remain silent as the Israeli military destroys Palestinian life and land, which violates both international law and the Jewish values that I hold dear] **or** [to be complicit by (raising money, making statements) silent in the Israeli military's destruction of Palestinian life and land, which violates both international law and the Jewish values that I hold dear.]

Each year we return to the Passover story and recall our ancestors' enslavement in Mitzrahim—the narrow place. I believe that we return to this story each year so that we always are able to empathize with those who are oppressed. The book of Exodus teaches us, “You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourself been strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 23:9). Yet [insert organizational name] has ignored the suffering of the Palestinian people by [continuously claiming to stand with Israel] [remaining silent] [raising money for the Israeli military], while the Israeli military has killed upwards of 33,000 Palestinians in Gaza including more than 12,000 children in just six months.

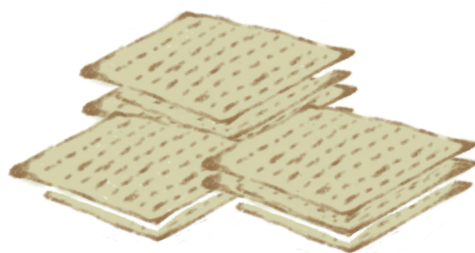
At Passover we recite “let all who are hungry, come and eat!” Meanwhile the United Nations has asserted that the Israeli military is intentionally starving the people in Gaza—over 1 million people are facing starvation. The Israeli government continues to defy international law and violate the values at the core of the Jewish tradition. This Passover may we commit ourselves to ensuring that the Israeli government stops its destruction of Gaza, and instead allows in extensive humanitarian aid so that all those who are hungry in Gaza may eat without the threat of more violence.

We are the descendants of people who have survived genocide and endured pogroms. We know how such devastation reverberates in families for generations. I am writing because I cannot sit by as my community members are complicit in genocidal violence on another group of people. On this Passover I ask you to recommit to tikkun olam, to repairing this world, by joining the Jewish movement for a permanent ceasefire and full human rights for Palestinians.

The Jewish tradition teaches us that the single most sacred obligation a Jew has is “pikuah nefesh,” saving a soul. I have spent the last six months organizing with other Jews for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza to save as many lives as possible, to free all the hostages, including the Israeli citizens held by Hamas and the thousands of Palestinians held without charges in Israeli prisons, and for a future of safety and dignity for all who live between the river and the sea.

In the spirit of Passover, I hope you might reconsider your organizational stance and commit to working towards collective liberation.

With a broken heart and faith in transformation,
[insert your name]



Write to the Standards Desk at the New York Times:

Please write to the Standards Desk at the New York Times and demand that the stop manufacturing consent for genocide. Please feel free to personalize this letter!

Email: standards@nytimes.com

Subject: On Passover I am asking you to stop manufacturing consent for genocide

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a Jewish American [or insert identity] writing during Passover asking for greater accuracy and fairness in the Times' coverage of the Israeli military's campaign in Gaza.

Since October, the New York Times has consistently mentioned Israelis significantly more than Palestinians, despite the fact that the death toll in Gaza is more than 30 times higher than the death toll in Israel. The New York Times has reported on antisemitism five times more than it has reported on Islamophobia. The Jewish tradition teaches us b'tzelem elohim—that we were all made in the image of the divine. I ask you to consider how might the New York Times look different if your reporters and editors truly believed that Palestinian life was of equal value to all other human life?

Editors and writers at the NYTimes continue to use the passive voice and feature erroneous headlines which obscure the Israeli military's violence against Palestinian people. One egregious example came on March 19th when the NYTimes published, "How Gaza Civilians Have Fared After Israel Has Asked Them to Flee." The Israeli military continues to displace millions of Palestinians through relentless bombardment, a military ground invasion, and evacuation orders. How could the newspaper of record minimize this grim reality as a request to flee?

Since October, editors and journalists at the NYTimes continue to present statements by Israeli military spokespeople without any context or questioning when it is clear that the Israeli military has a history of issuing propaganda. Finally, the New York Times continues to publish op-eds that feature harmful racism and calls to accelerate the destruction of Palestinian people including Thomas Friedman's piece that compared several Arab countries to insects and a Brett Stephens article which calls for Israel to "fight on" even after the military had killed upwards of 30,000 people.

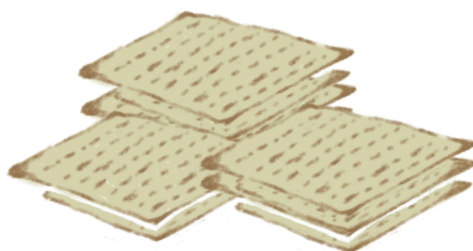
I am writing because, in the Jewish tradition, Passover calls upon us to recommit to liberation. I cannot sit idly by as the newspaper of record manufactures consent for genocide. On this Passover, I ask you to reconsider your journalistic standards and feature more Palestinian voices and anti-Zionist voices.

I have spent the last six months organizing alongside other Jews, Palestinians, and people of conscience for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza to save as many lives as possible, to free all the hostages including the Israeli citizens held by Hamas and the thousands of Palestinians held without charges in Israeli prisons, and for a future of safety and dignity for all who live between the river and the sea. Yet, the New York Times continues to report on the movement for Palestinian freedom as if it were full of bigots and hateful people. In this Palestinian-led movement I have encountered scores of people who

are truly committed to collective liberation and are organizing for a world in which all humans can be safe and free.

I look forward to reading your response.

Sincerely,
[insert your name]



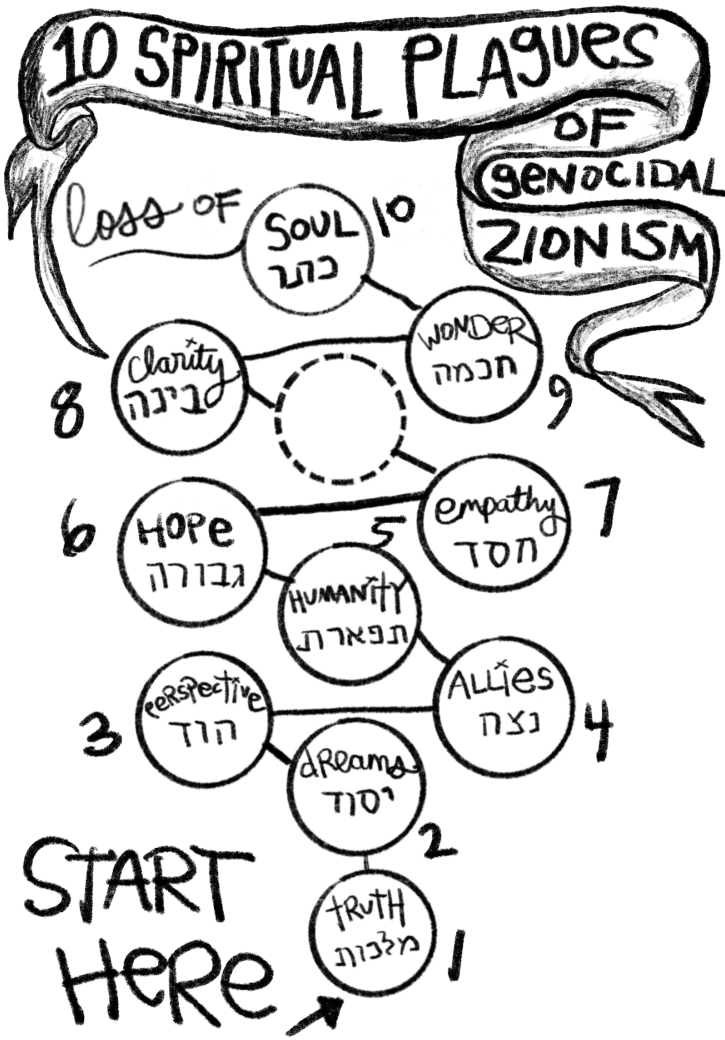
10 Spiritual Plagues of Genocidal Zionism

Offered by Nomy Lamm

The ten plagues of biblical times were material plagues that targeted the oppressors who held the Israelites captive. As American Jews, we have been conscripted into the role of complicity with those, oppressing, murdering, and destroying a people and their history. To accept this role is to sacrifice our own divinity.

There are kabbalists who have mapped the ten biblical plagues onto the ten sephirot (faces of the divine), starting at the bottom of the tree of life and working upward. I used the same method to map out 10 spiritual plagues that befall those who benefit from and support the occupation of Palestine.

As you read these, ask yourself which of these plagues have impacted you? Consider what you may have lost, and what it might take to repair it. *The antidote to each plague is held in the energy of the sephira it is mapped onto. Feel welcome to perform the action of connecting with each divine portal as we read, or come back to it at another time.*



1. Loss of Foundational Connection to Truth

~ malchut, shechinah, the physical world

This plague separates us from our foundational truths as inhabitants of this planet. Where do we belong? What is home? How do we ground into connection with the earth and what does it mean to do so? (*anoint your feet and feel the ground*)

2. Loss of Ability to Trust our Dreams

~ yesod, portal

This plague impacts our ability to dream as a Jewish people. The level of violence that we are witnessing and being asked to be complicit in requires us to separate from the messages of our subconscious and the magic of our dreams. (*anoint your lower belly and feel your aliveness*)

3. Loss of Perspective ~ hod, pacing

This plague impacts our ability to have a clear perspective on what has happened, what we want, and where we are going. We become split, unclear, and difficult to understand or relate to. Our perspective comes not from our own sense of reality, but from a disembodied dictate. (*anoint your hips and feel your stability*)

4. Loss of Allies ~ *netzach, power*

This is the plague of isolation, where we make true our greatest fears, by assuming that we are somehow uniquely positioned as victims, and that any actions we take out of fear are justified. To the rest of the world, we appear terrifying and dangerous. (*anoint your knees and feel your momentum*)

5. Loss of Humanity ~ *tiferet, beauty*

With this plague, we lose our place in the human family, the interconnection and common destiny that we all share as inhabitants of this planet. When we attempt to place ourselves outside of and above others, we sacrifice our own humanity. (*anoint your heart/solar plexus and feel your tenderness*)

6. Loss of Hope ~ *gevurah, boundary*

This is the plague of despair. It crumbles our belief in the possibility of transformation, severing connection with a loving god, sacrificing our faith to a punishing, war-mongering supernatural dictator. (*anoint your shoulders and feel your edges*)

7. Loss of Empathy ~ *chesed, opening*

With this plague, we lose our ability to feel anything for those who are harmed, whether by our own actions or by others. We find ways to blame people for their misfortunes, and assume such things will never befall us if we stay strong and on top. (*anoint your palms and feel your openness*)

8. Loss of Clarity ~ *binah, understanding*

This plague impacts our ability to make sense of complex sensory input and to know ourselves as a part of the world, operating by the same laws of the universe as every other sacred fragment. (*anoint your ears and feel your sharpness*)

9. Loss of Wonder ~ *chochmah, wisdom*

This plague annihilates our ability to experience the world with openness and wonder, to appreciate the wisdom of child mind, and to merge with the infinite. (*anoint your forehead and the back of your head and feel your magic*)

10. Soul Loss ~ *keter, source*

Who even are we? Those who have experienced all these plagues without consciously unwinding them are lost to themselves. Only when we experience this ultimate and final plague is it possible to commit the gut wrenching atrocities we witness at the hands of Zionist soldiers. (*anoint the top of your head, place your hand on your head and feel the blessings pour through you, connecting you back down to your roots, to the earth*)

2nd Cup of Wine

Offered by Taya Mâ

B'ruchah at Shekhinah eloteinu ruach ha'olam בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ שְׁכִינָה אֲלֵתֵינוּ רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם
boreit pri hagafen בּוֹרְאֵת פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

A fountain of blessing are you Sacred Presence Who Dwells Within This World
who brings forth the fruit of the vine / who blesses us with alchemy

Dayenu

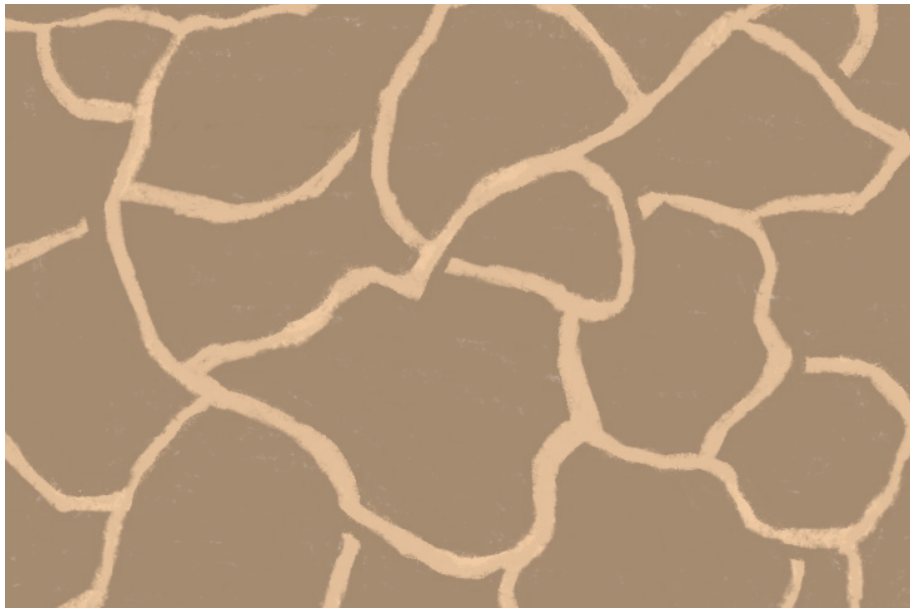
Offered by Taya Mâ

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

(Taya Mâ adaptation of traditional Dayenu song)





WORLD OF DOING

Physical/ Earth

We enter into the Physical stage of the seder now, which is associated with the earth element. Here we have food, symbolism, and eating. This is an experience in the body, of the senses, with foods and elements of the earth: water for washing, matzah and bitter herbs, setting the table, dining, and dessert. Here we take action, engage the senses, experience freedom and love of life, and honor the land and laws of nature. Here we are safe and relaxed in our bodies, breaking bread and building trust, here we all belong: *Rachtzah, Motzi Matzah, Maror, Korech, Shulchan Orech, Tzafun.*



רַחֲצָה | Rachtzah

Offered by Ollie Schwartz

Framing:

At the start of the seder, we washed our hands during Urchatz in a silent ritual cleansing. We now wash our hands with the traditional hand washing blessing for the practical purpose of preparing to eat the seder meal.

As Lakota Water Protectors fighting against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) reminded us at Standing Rock in 2016, *Mní wičhóni* // Water is life! Our sacred rivers, tributaries, and oceans nourish the more than human world around us. As Humans, we are made of water: water, amniotic fluid, holds us in utero before we emerge into the world, and water holds our brains to float safely in a cocoon of cerebrospinal fluid. Water holds our tears. A human body can only live for about three days without drinking water. Water is our life.

As we wash our hands we remember:

- Ladonna Brave Bull Allard, Lakota matriarch of fight and victory against the DAPL who passed in 2021
- Manuel “Tortuguita” Terán, of Venezuelan indigenous heritage, a [Stop Cop City](#) activist who passed in 2023
- Klee Jones Benally, Diné land defender who died in 2023
- three people are killed every week [worldwide] while trying to protect their land, their environment, from extractive forces (Vandana Shiva, “[Decade of Defiance](#)” *Global Witness*, Sept 2022 issue)
- In Palestine water theft is a key tactic of colonization
 - 90% of the regions water is controlled by the stature of Israel (Al Jazeera, “[50 Years of Land Theft Explained](#)”)
 - from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, only 44% of Palestinians were connected to water sources before the war, which has decreased since Oct 7th due to Israeli settler damaging water systems and terrorizing Palestinians at checkpoints who are traveling to obtain water (“[Palestine, not enough water to survive](#)” [Norwegian Refugee Council](#))
 - In Gaza, only 10.5 % of Palestinains had access to reliable clean drinking water before the war—the siege of Gaza’s water after Oct 7th has resulted in a 95% drop, due to targeted destruction damaging the majority of water treatment facilities

Blessing:

We give thanks for potable, safe, and accessible running water at our seder tables, as we say together:

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'Olam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al nitilat yadayim*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נִטְיַלַת יָדַיִם

Blessed are You, Queen of the Cosmos, creator of water,
who has sanctified us with stewardship and has directed us on the washing of hands.





מוֹצִיא-מַצָּה | Motzi-Matzah

Offered by Felipe Ventura

Matzah embodies the enduring spirit of liberation that breathes life into our world. Just as it nourished those fleeing slavery, today it calls us to witness and act in solidarity with all who face oppression in Palestine, Turtle Island, Abya Yala, and beyond.

When I see a piece of matzah now, I think of The Flour Massacre at Al-Nabulsi on February 29th where over 118 lives were lost, and more than 760 individuals were injured while desperately searching for food after months of imposed starvation. The magnitude of this violence, where the simple act of seeking flour led to death, reverberates in my body.

Two weeks later, Ryan Gainer was murdered by a police officer a couple of hours away from me. Ryan was a Black autistic 15 year old boy. I remember how he held a gardening tool above his head just moments before he was shot. My heart breaks even further mourning him, his childhood cut down, futures uprooted by state violence. On Purim, there was a vigil for him by the lake in Oakland. Flowers caressed his portrait as though they too felt the pain of his departure.

There's a pasuk that mentions observing the (festival of) matzot for all generations to eternity. I notice the roots, the similarity between matzot and mitzvot. What are my personal commitments to liberation and how am I approaching them for myself and future generations?

Another two weeks pass and I am sitting with my children on the asphalt of a parking lot in xučyun, now named Berkeley. It's Land Day. More children run around as twilight approaches. Beneath us is the earliest known sacred site of the Lisjan Ohlone people and the words float passionately above us. Decades of persistence and solidarity brought back the shellmound to its original land stewards and I see an opening. I hear a whisper inside me vowing to decolonize all territories beginning with myself.

This too is a portal to our liberated futures.

ושמרתם את־המצות

Exodus 12:17



מָרוֹר | Maror

Embittered and Inspired | מָרוֹר & צָמוֹר

Offered by Shula Etta Pesach with words from Alexa Rosengaus

Alexa Rosengaus: When I was a young girl celebrating Pesach with my family, my cousins and I devised a new plan every year as to how we would get rid of the maror section of our plate. We tried everything—giving the leaves to the dogs, hiding them under our chairs, wrapping them inside of napkins and sneakily throwing them away. I was convinced maror was only there to make the evening less palatable, and I was always determined to go straight into the sweet, crisp apples and honey. But every year, after everyone caught wind of our nefarious anti maror plans, my mom would sit me down and, rather than tell me off as she usually would, explain that recognizing our people’s ancient suffering before appreciating our own modern privilege was the only way to make those apples and honey taste oh so sweet. That profoundly stuck with me—Recognition. Awareness. Knowing that that bitter bite is intended to hold space for those who suffered.

This year, Maror doesn’t just taste bitter. It tastes intensely of grief, of sorrow, of mourning, of screaming into a void with an aftertaste of impotence. But this year, unlike those seders of my childhood, Maror is so much more—enduring the bitterness in a continued fight for liberation, holding profound space for our brothers and sisters in Gaza, and persisting through the bitter leaves so we may all one day enjoy our apples and honey.

Shula Etta Pesach: I’ll be honest: Maror has always confused me. In most Ashkenazi Jewish communities, the spicy horseradish is conventionally used as Maror. Horseradish is both an ingenious substitution for the bitters and a blatantly different aromatic. Originating as a diasporic adaptation, and a later rabbinic interpolation, horseradish arrives on the Seder Plate in the absence of seasonally available wild bitter greens like lettuces, dandelion leaves, and wild radish. But horseradish is not bitter—it is hot. To me, horseradish’s presence is a sign of cultural hybridity and the changingness of tradition. But it is also an invitation. What if I honor the horseradish with ritual power and elevate it beyond a substitution?

This Pesach, I invite you to combine the truly bitter greens of Maror with a new introduction to the Seder Plate “Tzamor”—a spicy, fiery element. Join me in integrating remembrance and clarity, grief and action, the sharp sadness of Maror with the enlivening power of Tzamor. We need both bitterness and heat this year. Because in the midst of the continued siege on Gaza, in the ongoing fear of hostages unreturned, with the devastation of displacement disease and famine, as we witness the atrocity of complacency, with the excruciating upheaval of it all... we must dwell with the bitter grief of calamity while feeling the heated urgency of action.

(COMBINE MAROR WITH TZAMOR AND RECITE THE FOLLOWING:)

Note: If Horseradish is not available or desired, Tzamor could be any spicy food of cultural significance, locally availability, and/or ritual meaningfulness. Tzamor: from the root צמר, meaning 'to cause fever, to fire, to animate, to inspire,' and related to סמר indicating 'to shiver, to shudder, to bristle up.'

A Prayer:

We place these hearts
firmly and gently
on the nightmare.
We recall this year's
bitterness: bondage,
bombs, an utter betrayal
of care—compassion
contained within borders.
We taste the sharpness
of lives lost and dreams
deferred. But we twine
such despair with
dedication.
Empty, speechless, afraid,
our numbness, our ache
is bound up in strength
with clarity, a readiness
for not just ceasefire but
freedom,
flourishing, return, repair.
...May it be so.

Embittered and inspired.
Let this sharp sadness,
the potency of our lament
turn to power and
motivate us. Grief become
a fever of insistence on
life. *May it be so.*

Bricks and rubble,
collapsed concrete,
ruins reforged into flint
—our grief a fire
starter. We tend the

embers of resistance
with tears as fuel.
...May it be so.

Our hearts are broken
wide—and wider.
In the expanse
of the unimaginable,
a wind stirs and stokes.
We bring an even breath
to the embers, oxygen
for the beginnings—
a flicker of the future
burning brighter
and warm enough
for a circle holding us all.
May it be so.

And on sidewalks and
windowsills, on tables
lined with tin foil, on
classroom benches and
temple bimahs, on our
bedsides, on the steps
of the congress office, and
along the corridors
of our intricate hearts:
We set a blaze
of candlelight so
our votives burn
together to become
a brilliant vision,
a heartbroken
constellation guiding
the way for this grief.

May it be so.
Grief become a fever
of insistence on life.
May it be so.

Legacies of division
undone through this:
a dedication, an
undeniable
vision of liberation.
Shivers of indignant anger
say: Not in our name.
We say: Not in our name.
Grief become a fever
of insistence on life.
May it be so.

These trembling frayed
parts of us are steadied.
Tired bones bearing
memories of martyrs,
the clenched story
of our suffering revenged
no matter the cost,
and the weight of it
all—it's too much.
Amid the shattering
let our wails be
unburdened with this:
an animation for justice.
May it be so.

Grief become a fever
of insistence on life.
And so it is.



פּוֹרֵךְ | Korech

Offered by Shir Lovett-Graff

(BREAK OFF TWO PIECES FROM THE BOTTOM MATZAH, AND MAKE
A SANDWICH OF THE BITTER HERBS AND CHAROSET)

Korech—known as the Hillel sandwich, named after the Talmudic scholar—is, if we want it to be, an encapsulation of how it feels to sit in the present. We feel the sweetness of coming together in community, to hold and be held by others in this moment of fracturing and despair. At the same time, bitterness lies heavy on our palate—the daily death, displacement, and violence in Palestine.

It feels impossible to hold these two tastes in our mouths. How can we feel the joy of connecting with others like us—Jewish and non-Jewish comrades fighting for liberation—while also recognizing the painful reasons we have found this community in the first place? For many of us, ostracized from the Jewish world, rejected by our families and friends, then threatened and doxxed by powerful institutions, there is bitter goodness in finding anti-Zionist Jewish home. There is sacred relief that comes with being in spaces—virtual or in-person, across generations and ancestries—where we can look across the room and know that someone is there to accompany us in this moment.

With *korech*, each bite is mourning. We mourn Jewish communities lost to the power of domination and ownership; to control and unhealed trauma. With *korech*, each bite is connection. We have built, are building, and will build the communities we need to sustain our journey to justice, freedom, and healing. Let this be the taste that lingers.

A SHULCHAN ORECH PLEDGE FOR PASSOVER

As we sit down to seder this Passover, we must acknowledge the genocidal violence Israel continues to inflict on the Palestinian people in Gaza. To date, over 32,000 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli military, including over 25,000 women and children. The devastation being wrought by this military onslaught is truly beyond comprehension. Entire families have been killed; whole neighborhoods, hospitals, universities, mosques and cultural institutions have been completely destroyed.

Israel is also committing violence against the Palestinian people by actively blocking the entrance of life saving humanitarian aid into Gaza. As many human rights observers have [noted](#), “the Israeli government is using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare in the Gaza Strip, which is a war crime.” This war crime is being actively abetted by the Biden administration through its defunding of the United National Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the primary agency providing Palestinian relief aid.

This Passover we are crying out in the loudest terms possible: We cannot observe this night like all other nights.

We cannot in good conscience sit down to enjoy festive seder meals as a state acting in the name of the Jewish people is weaponizing starvation against the Palestinian people. We will not be complicit in genocide.

In the Passover seder, the section in which the meal is served is known as *Shulchan Orech*. We invite all those who are hosting seder this year to join us in this pledge:

This year, we will not fulfill the requirement of Shulchan Orech by eating a festive meal while the weaponized starvation of the Palestinian people is taking place. Instead, we are calling upon members of the Jewish community to fulfill Shulchan Orech by taking the following actions at this point in the seder:

- **DONATE** the amount that would have been spent on food to UNRWA;
- **DEMAND** that the Biden administration refund UNRWA.
- **CALL ON** the Biden administration to facilitate a permanent ceasefire in Gaza now.

In place of the meal, we encourage reading aloud [essays and poems by Gazan Palestinians](#) - particularly by those who have been killed by the Israeli military.

As Palestinian writer/poet Mohammed El-Kurd [has written](#):

This consequential moment calls on us to raise the ceiling of what is permissible, and demands that we renew our commitment to the truth, to spitting the truth, unflinchingly, unabashedly (and cleverly), no matter in what conference room, no matter in whose face. Because Gaza cannot fight the empire on its own. Or, to use an embittered proverb my grandmother used to mutter at the evening news, “They asked the Pharaoh, ‘Who made you a pharaoh?’ He replied, ‘no one stopped me.’”



“May you find refuge beneath a shelter that knows no bounds, that you, and all who dwell between the river and the sea may find protection for life and for peace now and always.”

Rabbi Brant Rosen

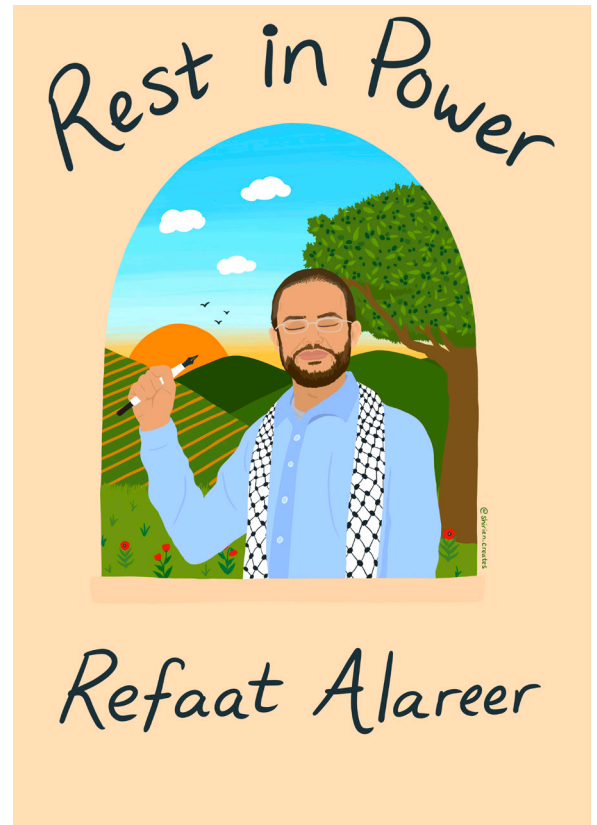
Voices of Palestinians

If I Must Die

By Refaat Alareer

(killed by an Israeli airstrike, 12/6/23)

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



Artwork by Shirien Damra
@shiriencreates

I Grant You Refuge

Hiba Abu Nada

(killed by an Israeli airstrike, 10/20/23)

translation by Huda Fakhreddine

1.
I grant you refuge
in invocation and prayer.
I bless the neighborhood and the minaret
to guard them
from the rocket

from the moment
it is a general's command
until it becomes
a raid.

I grant you and the little ones refuge,
the little ones who
change the rocket's course
before it lands
with their smiles.

2.
I grant you and the little ones refuge,
the little ones now asleep like chicks in a nest.

They don't walk in their sleep toward dreams.
They know death lurks outside the house.

Their mothers' tears are now doves
following them, trailing behind
every coffin.

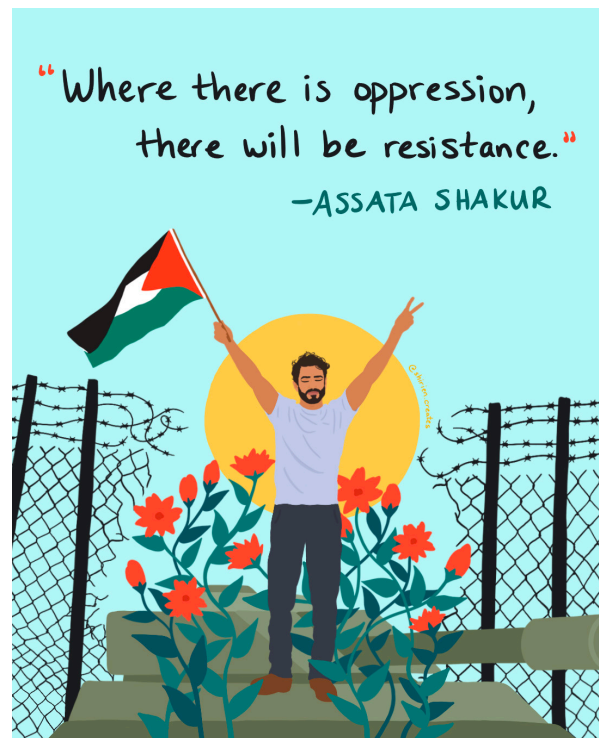
3.
I grant the father refuge,
the little ones' father who holds the house upright
when it tilts after the bombs.
He implores the moment of death:
"Have mercy. Spare me a little while.
For their sake, I've learned to love my life.
Grant them a death
as beautiful as they are."

4.
I grant you refuge
from hurt and death,
refuge in the glory of our siege,
here in the belly of the whale.

Our streets exalt God with every bomb.
They pray for the mosques and the houses.
And every time the bombing begins in the North,
our supplications rise in the South.

5.
I grant you refuge
from hurt and suffering.

With words of sacred scripture
I shield the oranges from the sting of phosphorous
and the shades of cloud from the smog.



Artwork by Shirien Damra
@shiriencreates

I grant you refuge in knowing
that the dust will clear,
and they who fell in love and died together
will one day laugh.

Drawing Class

By Salim Al-Nafar

(Killed by an Israeli airstrike, 12/7/23)

Translation by Danielle Linehhan Kiedaisch
and Lorna MacBean

If we stopped
would the endlessness stop too?
Screaming from the fire,
I shout into darkness.
Did you hear me?
Did you answer?

The children dipped their bread in my tears
while we wrestled the chains of time
drawn to drag war onto beauty.
A child told me
‘They took my father...can you see them?’
I looked, but could not see.

But I am tired
from seeing
from journeying
from anxious days
Mother, I am tired.
Delirious our joys: delirious our sorrow
And the travel nips, nips, nips, nips...

When we stop
life becomes memory.
When we sleep,
with time
to talk.

At drawing class
time is mapped onto the contours of our homeland



Artwork by Bint Bandora
@bint.bandora

and on takes of knights who kick time with their souls.
Our teacher tells us the story
And colours our minds.
Putting place into heart into the question:
What happened to our teachers?

My teacher was made absent.
No drawings, no stories, no beautiful dreams.
Tired from my travel and my question
and from a life lived in pain,
I wander.
Who will see these footsteps?
Denied in love, exhausted of anger,
they stood on clouds and took
the stars from the sky and changed
the rhythm of time.

If we stop,
will time walk on?
Never thought we would lead the young into the waves.

...

What happens to us?
Are we to learn from the absent?
That wilderness does not protect life?

I battered the door of death
and found no answer.
From this small land, we grew.
From the water came our life.
Argue with this:
The skies crush our land:
our song sings on.

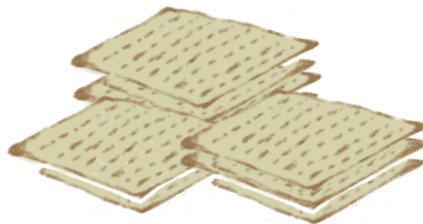
Breaking the Bonds Part 2—Invest in Freedom

Okay, I've pledged, now...

How should I give?

As you give to organizations in the movement for Palestinian freedom, we offer some considerations for how to invest with the greatest impact. For decades, Palestinian organizing has been structurally and systematically under-resourced, criminalized, and repressed. Here are some considerations about how to give in a way that breaks down those structural barriers:

1. **Give to Palestinian-led organizations**, both on the ground and in the U.S. Invest in the vision and brilliance of Palestinians leading their own liberation struggle. In addition to mutual aid funds, consider investing in the organizations working tirelessly to address root causes of injustice and achieve fundamental change.
2. **Give as much as you can.** If you can give more than the value of your bonds, push yourself to do so. Make multi-year commitments. Invite your friends and families to match your gift and to get to know the organizations you are supporting.
3. **Give without conditions.** Make gifts toward the general operating expenses, rather than with pre-conditions or prescriptions. This allows organizations to resource and advance their existing strategies and priorities.
4. **Notice and challenge gatekeeping.** As a donor, consider seeking out and learning about new Palestinian-led organizations. If you find out about organizations from mainstream media or through philanthropic sources, consider anti-Palestinian bias or political litmus-tests that might influence the organizations you've heard about.



Invest in Repairing the World—Tikkun Olam Boxes

An alternative to Tzedakah boxes

Offered by Melissa Nussbaum Freeman

As part of the indoctrination of American Jews into the Zionist settler-colonial project, the Jewish National Fund engaged the imagination and yearning of Jews in the diaspora with Tzedakah (charity) boxes—the JNF supplied even the most humble of Jewish families with small blue tin boxes to put their extra coins towards planting trees in the new Jewish State of Israel. What the JNF didn't say is that they, the JNF, were systematically buying Palestinian lands, in many cases tricking and bullying the owners into selling, and that the trees that were being planted were neither indigenous to the land nor necessary but rather were being used to cover up Palestinian towns that were razed by the Israeli military and settlers.

This Passover we are reclaiming and reinventing that little blue box with a Tikkun Olam Box (repairing the world) Divest from Israel Bonds—Invest in Palestine.

Use the template provided on the next page to make your own box.

The first of the four principles for investing—"I pledge to work towards repairing the world, including with my own investments."—is wrapped around this little box. You can put the other three principles outside or inside:

I pledge to work toward repairing the world, including with my own investments.

I will, if possible, redeem all vested Israel Bonds.

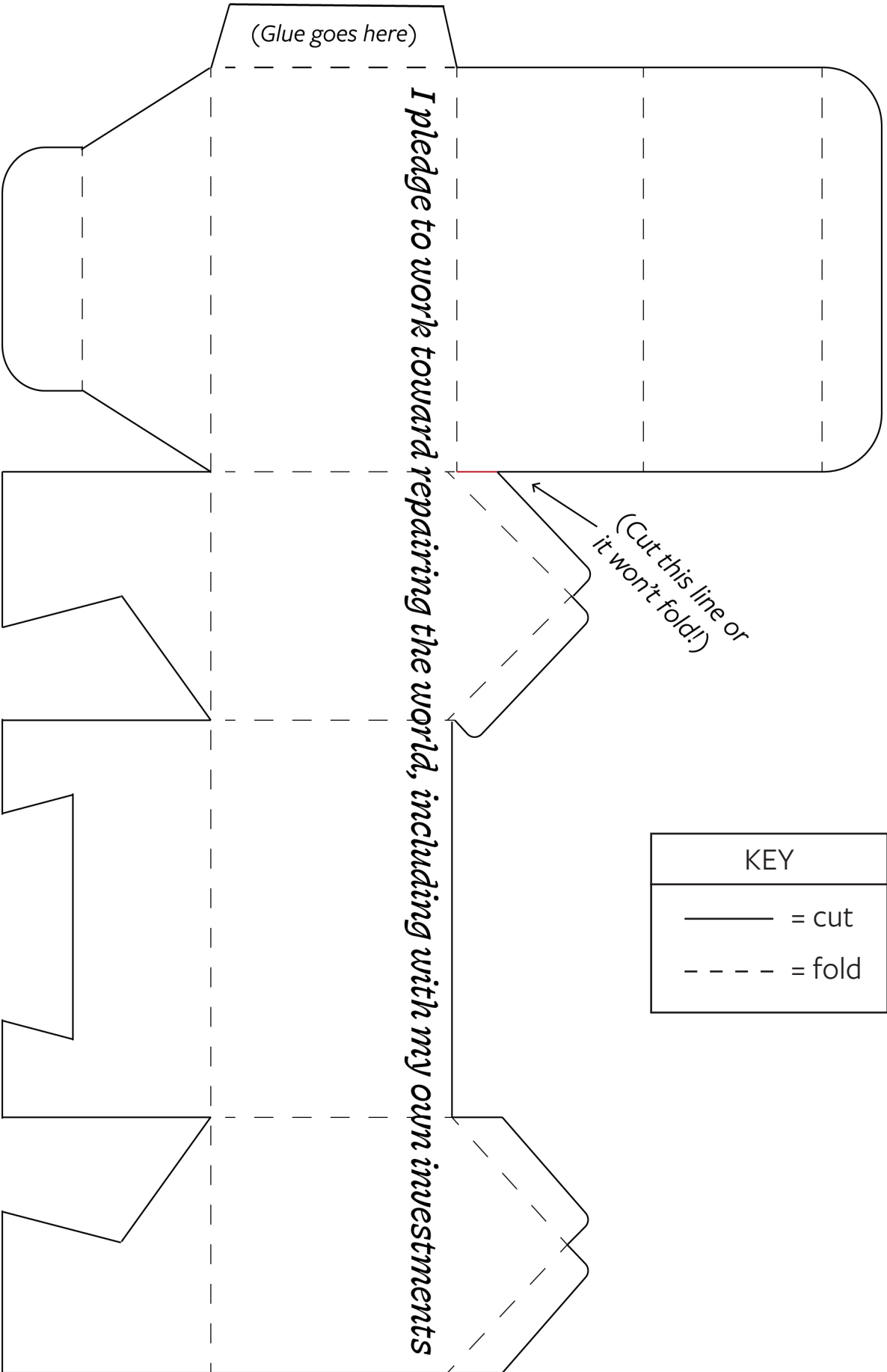
I will not purchase any future Israel Bonds.

I will invest in our movements for collective liberation, and especially in Palestinian-led organizing for justice, equality and freedom for all in the region.

Place the box where you will be reminded of how you are building the future Palestinians and all of us deserve. Maybe at eye level, maybe in a window where the sun rises, maybe on an altar, maybe near your bedside?

*Instructions for cutting and folding to make your own Tikkun Olam Box.

1. Print out template
2. Cut along solid lines only
3. Trace the cut out on to heavier paper (folders are perfect) and cut
4. Draw the broken lines - - - - - on to this second cut out (refer back to the original cut out
5. Fold on the broken lines - - - - -
6. Bottom: fold the two sides over "table" shaped flap, slipping the points inside; the remaining flap slips into the opening created by the two sides and the table shaped flap. The bottom should be snug and requires no glue.
7. On the flap that say "Glue goes here" glue the flap to the inside of the box. The box is closed!

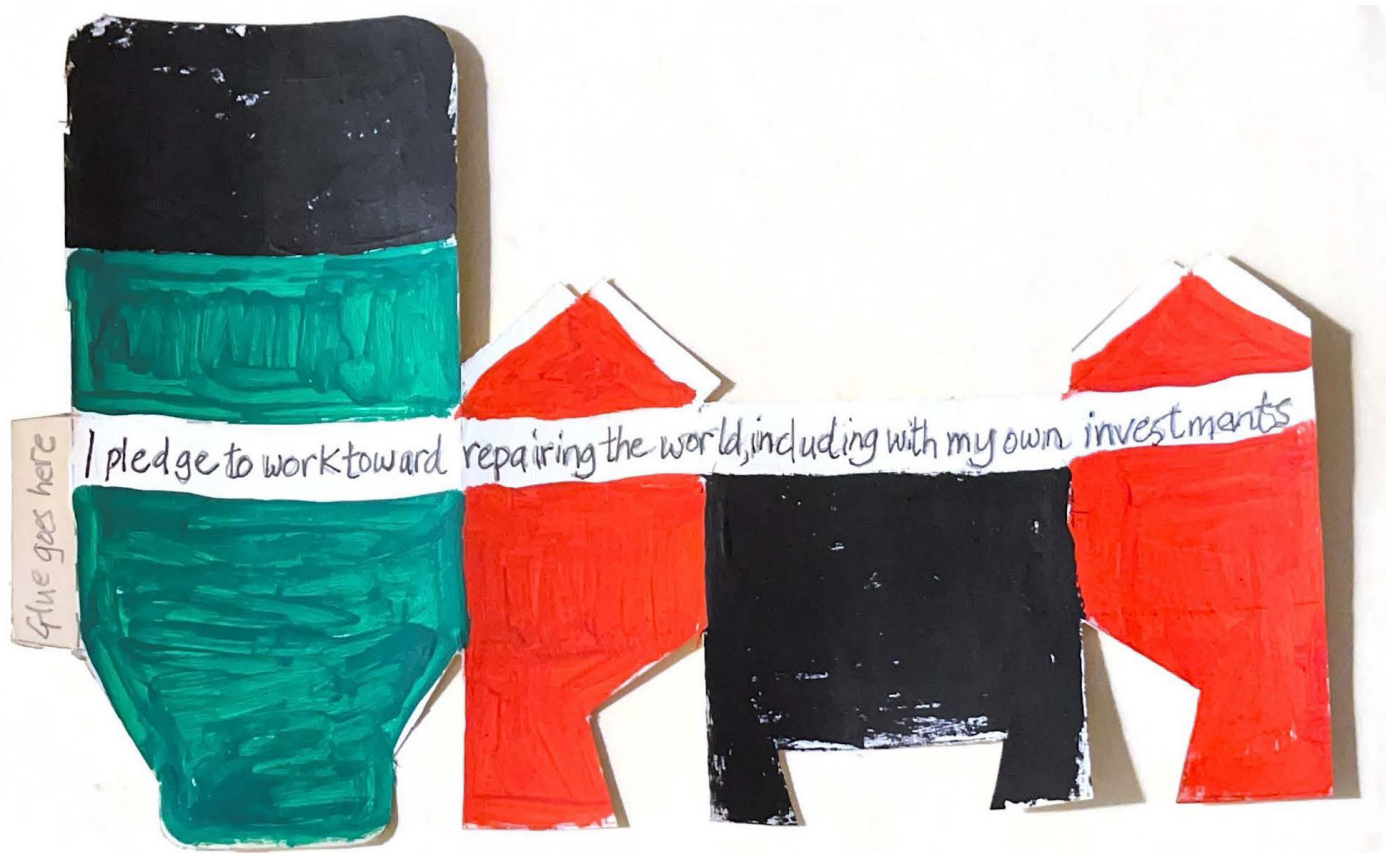


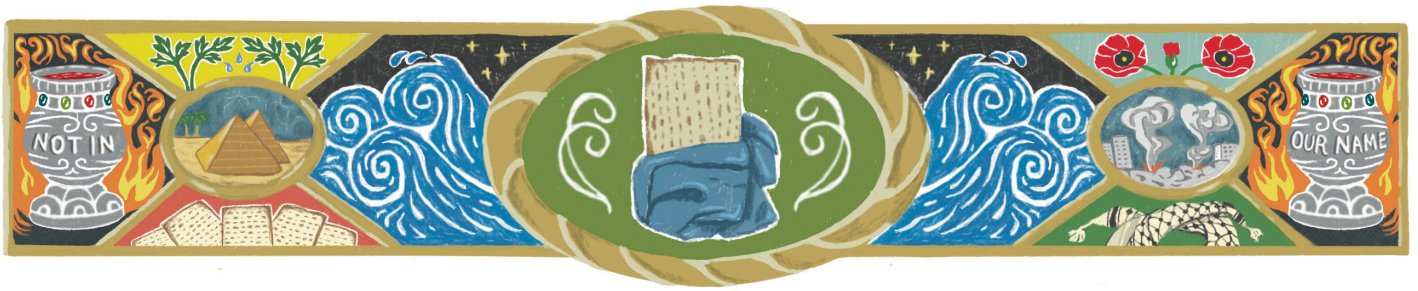
(Glue goes here)

I pledge to work toward repairing the world, including with my own investments

(Cut this line or it won't fold!)

KEY	
————	= cut
-----	= fold





צפון | Tzafun

Tzafun: “The Searching”

Offered by Rooted in this World

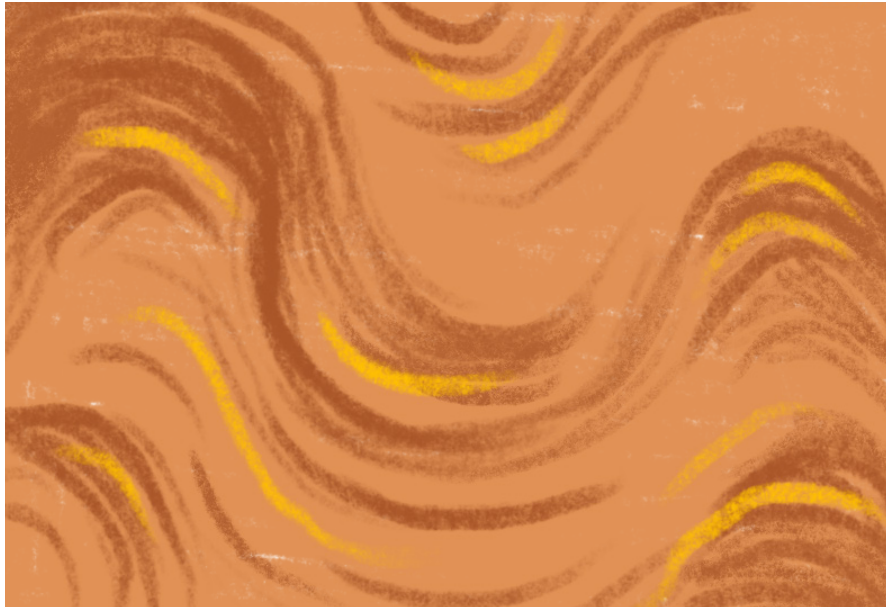
Welcome back everyone.

Tzafun is the section of the seder where we search for the hidden “*tzafun*” afikomen and reunite it with its broken half. There is both an expansion and distillation that occurs with searching—expansion because we see and discover new things we weren’t expecting, while also a distillation as we hone in on what it is that we are searching for.

When thinking about the act of searching, our minds may go to the hundreds of thousands of Gazans searching for family members, friends and colleagues buried beneath rubble. To the millions of Gazans displaced from their homes, searching for somewhere safe to be. What are we searching for and uncovering in our commitment to Palestinian liberation?

Our search and uncovering tonight might then be around the question of what it means to be Jewish and embody Jewishness beyond Zionism. We will spend time reflecting and sharing in the chat—choose one of the following questions and answer in the chat:

1. What are pieces of history, and ideas for the future, that you draw from when imagining our collective Jewishness beyond Zionism?
2. What is something that you’d like to reflect on further from tonight’s seder?



WORLD OF BEING

Spiritual/ Fire

Lastly, we enter the spiritual stage of our seder, associated with fire and the World of Being. Here we bless, sing, and practice joy. Here we are each a unique expression of the Divine spark within, and here we are One. Here we generate warmth, light, energy, and life: *Barech, Hallel, Nirtzah.*



בָּרַךְ | Barech

Third Cup of Wine

Offered Rooted in This World Network

The third cup, for workers.

The bodies tending, protecting, coiling, watering, sheltering, cutting, pruning, picking, crushing, stomping, fermenting, straining, watching, tasting.

Bodies that sometimes come from bodies having done the same. Often with pride, and also deep fatigue, bleeding and callused fingers, spasming backs, prickly lungs and life-threatening heatstroke.

Chances are, no one here has attended a seder where The Workers weren't praised. Moses, after all, was an organizer, we're told.

We're reminded of the Jewish support for union grape boycotts; that rabbis brought matzo to the 1966 United Farmworkers' Lenten March and that grapes were rendered *oshek* (unclean as the fruit of exploited labor). And that the first person to lose their life on a farm worker picket was Nan Freeman, an 18-year-old Jewish student supporting the strike, killed by a truck crashing the line.

These stories help us to connect past and present, and are important to tell. And, as Adrienne Rich reminds us, "there is no one story and one story only."

Tonight, though, we raise our glasses to the workers in all of Palestine whose own land and fields have not only been stolen and torched by settlers and the occupying army, but whose union offices, records and organizational infrastructure has also been destroyed. Amidst this, they call us all to recommit to deeper labor solidarity, building upon the many global strike days called over these past six months.

May we come through.

L'chayim.

PRAYER FOR OUR HUMANITY

Offered by Rebecca S'manga Frank

when was the last time i was hungry
tired
really sweating my heartbeat pulsing through my skin the last time i was flying
when was the last sandcastle i built
the last prolonged silence among people what was the last thing i broke
the last stamp i licked
the last toe i stubbed
the last baby i tickled
the last time i went into hiding
the last time i went seeking
the last substance i got high off of
the last bedtime i observed
the last water I watched until it boiled the last thing I blew on until it cooled
...

Thank You.

joyful beyond measure

waiting to be found
afraid I'd never find what I was looking for

thank you for taking care of yourself
thank you for caring for your mother, partner, child
thank you for going to the doctor with the beloved who is facing a life threatening illness
thank you for making an appointment for yourself
thank you for the ride
thank you for having us over for dinner
thank you for caring for my dietary restrictions
thank you for introducing me to that song
thank you for finding that rug! it really brings the room to life
thank you for buying that treat at the farmers market
thank you for *not* buying that treat at the farmers market

dancing in the rain

thank you for remembering to go for a walk to go to the ocean
to dive in!
thank you
thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you

for letting go of that toxic person and allowing them to go on their healing journey for continuing

your own
for doing your laundry
for washing your hair

for speaking up so loudly for demanding

HANDS OFF OUR FRIENDS HANDS OFF OUR FAMILY HANDS OFF OUR BODIES HANDS OFF OUR LAND
HANDS OFF THIS HOME

thank you
thank you
thank you
thank you
thank you
thank you
thank you
thank you
thank you
thank you

Thank you for asking, I'd love to help! thank you for showing up

for detaching with love and enforcing your boundaries for recharging
or being honest
for trusting

for changing the filter
for suggesting we go to the play, it was fucking awesome! for helping me move
for holding the door

for holding space
for being so insistent about me reaching out to you for help

thank you for coming back thank you for reminding me to:

*Make yourself more comfortable. Breathe in.
Close your eyes.*

And think of the most beautiful thing you can imagine...

THIS CULTURE

YOU CAN'T HAVE IT!

Now think of something even more beautiful...

Now think of something even **more** beautiful than that...

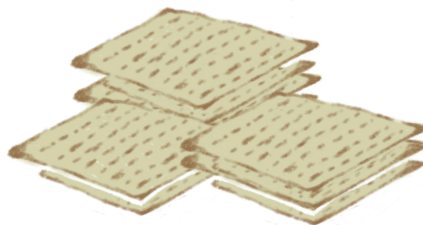
now hold it
radiate the image, the feeling
and send it wherever it needs to go
to Rafah
to Sudan
The Congo
Ukraine
(you know where it needs to go)
send it to someone who feels like they've been abandoned someone sick
suffering
afraid
someone in need of love

Breathe...

share your visions with each other
resonate on them together to bring them closer to Now.

let all our actions be infused with a visionary, radical presence of love may it keep us coming
back.

~written for JVP power half-hour for Gaza 1/14/2024





הלל | Hallel

4th Cup

Offered by Rooted in this World

As part of our search for Jewishness beyond Zionism and as we head towards the end of the seder, and further into the ongoing Nakba, into the khurbn 'aza [destruction of Gaza], we ask: is this a holiday of liberation?

Can this be a holiday of liberation when it rests upon the fantasy of a divine land grant and colonial project whose death toll this winter we already cannot count? When the story it tells (both in its broad arc and specific gestures) is part of what feeds the genocide?

Can this be a holiday of liberation when the mass slaughter of children is (as many progressive Haggadotes depict it) “an escalation of tactics”? Can this be a holiday of liberation when the “mighty hand and outstretched arm” that supposedly bring freedom are the same force that ten times over prevents escape from the narrow place, through plague, environmental devastation, and massacre?

None of these are incidental details that can be reinterpreted away. Removing ten drops does not make a full glass of wine into less of a celebration; it just provides the thinnest of emotional alibis. These genocide warrants, these celebrations of genocide, these acts that enable more genocide, are the core of the story.

Hallel sums up the message in the prayer that accompanies the opening of the door. Here is what the holiday asks the divine to do to entire peoples defined as “enemy”, in the words of two of the oldest versions of the text:

May their palace be desolate; in their tents let there be no dweller.
Let them be as chaff before the wind, with an angel of the Lord thrusting them.
May their way be dark and slippery, with an angel of the Lord pursuing them.
Give them a bereaving womb and dry breasts.
Pursue them with anger, and destroy them from beneath the heavens of the Lord.
You shall break them with an iron rod; like a potter's vessel you shall shatter them.
Give them a weakness of heart; may Your curse be upon them.
May they be erased from the book of life and not be inscribed with the righteous.
May their table before them become a trap, and [their hope] for peace become a snare.

We know these details. They are Rafah, Khan Younis, Gaza City, Al-Shifra Hospital, Al-Khalil, Jenin, Al-quds, Deir Yassin, Qibya, Sheikh Jarrah, Susya. They are part of this holiday's songs of celebration. They are what this holiday praises and seeks.

So this is a fourth cup of four questions for us to carry home:

(POUR A FOURTH CUP OF WINE)

What in this story can we keep—what does not endorse, enable, praise, justify, nor demand genocide?

What in this story should we discard completely, and cease to include in any way within our practices?

What in this story do we need to set aside, but continue to name in our practice, so that we don't forget the complexities of our ritual histories and context?

What would it look like to create a Jewish liberation holiday that is not wrapped around genocide warrants and theocratic state-building? A liberation holiday that doesn't trade other people's freedom, other people's lives (in Mitsraim, in Canaan, in Shushan, in the Greek-speaking Jewish world the Maccabees sought to annihilate, in Palestine) for those of some self-appointed, hekshered "pure" set of us? We don't yet have one. And we should.

(DRINK THE FOURTH CUP OF WINE)

Elijah's Cup

Offered by Rooted in this World

The harbinger of freedom does not attend our seders. His absence defines them; the open secret of a surreptitious sip from his goblet admits as much.

The stories about Eliyohu are about him not being welcomed, about even the promise of oylem ha-bo [the world to come] not being enough to make lip service to hospitality real. And how can we blame those who turn him away? The promise is about another world, not the world we live in, the world where we hurt and love and struggle.

Let's tell another story. A story that says our lives in this world, our lives now, our lives with our neighbors and with strangers, are the point. A story that looks at the world to learn from it.

Let's drink the cup together. It isn't Eliyohu's, it is ours. Because he doesn't attend our seders, we do.

(PASS ELIJAH'S CUP AROUND THE TABLE, WITH EACH PERSON POURING A DASH FROM IT INTO THEIR OWN GLASS. TOGETHER, DRINK TO THE REINVENTION OF JEWISHNESS, NOT JUST BEYOND ZIONISM, BUT WITHOUT THE THINGS THAT MAKE ZIONISM POSSIBLE.)

Miriam's Cup of Water Liberation

Offered by Kohenet Luna Liebling

FOR THIS RITUAL, PREPARE A CEREMONIAL WATER CUP IN DEDICATION OF MIRIAM THE PROPHETESS. FILL UP A GLASS, A GOBLET, A SHELL, OR AN IMAGINARY VESSEL, WITH WATER. PLACE IT IN FRONT OF YOU. LET THIS LEARNING AND RITUAL BE IN SERVICE OF A WORLD WHERE WE ALL REVERE WATER AS SACRED.

Water in Occupied Palestine

The water of Palestine has been occupied since well before October 7th. Since 1967, all Palestinians have had to retrieve permits from Israel for any water projects. Any existing non-authorized water wells were destroyed. The process for retrieving the permits was virtually impossible, with less than half of all applications for new water projects or for fixing old water wells approved. In 2017, the UN reported that 96% of the water in Gaza was “unfit for human consumption.” I saw with my own eyes this past summer water tanks that had been installed by Israeli settlements tapping into the water supply of various Palestinian villages in Mussafar Yattah, in the South Hebron hills of the West Bank. The water towers loomed high, casting shadows over the expanse of the desert, mocking us down below. The installment of these water systems breaks international law.

And now, the water situation in Gaza is unspeakable. The vast majority of Gazans are forced to drink dirty, salty water. There have been attacks on water sanitation facilities, and a near total blockade on all water getting into Gaza. The scope of this crisis goes well beyond the thousands of people dying from thirst and water-related diseases; the destruction of waste treatment facilities eventually causes waste to leach into the groundwater, which can cause spread of diseases and lead to potential epidemics not only in Gaza but afar, including, ironically, Israel.

What does Miriam have to tell us about water liberation?

Miriam embodied the truth that water is inherently intertwined with liberation. She watched Moses float down the Nile, she led the emotional exaltation after crossing the red sea, and her divine connection to *mayim hayyim* caused the waters to spring forth while she wandered in the desert.

We are taught then when Miriam took out her timbrel to dance, it was to praise G-d in complete celebration. But I think that when Miriam took out her timbrel, she was terrified. The other women were terrified. They were afraid and grieving, and when they danced, they danced with their fear. They sang through their grief, their rage, their overwhelm. I like to imagine that the tears streaming down their dust-caked go faces were not only tears of joy, but also tears of anguish for those who did not make it, tears of grief and utter confusion as to why we must live in a world with such violence. They stomped their feet to the rhythm of the tambourines not only to celebrate but also to rage, to flail, to prepare to fight the next enemy who could come from around the corner at any moment. The wisdom of Miriam in that moment was not that celebration comes first, but that one can feel absolute joy alongside absolute grief without diminishing the other. They can exist together, inform the other,

enhance the magic of the other's medicine. Perhaps they must.

Miriam understood the Divine importance of moving through experiences with grace, honesty, and feeling. For her, to steal water not only takes away physical life, but it also takes away spiritual well-being. Pharaoh enacted water theft onto himself when he hardened his heart—he stole from himself his very own resources of feeling his own soft heart, the waters in his body flowing. What would have happened if Pharaoh had been able to grieve, to weep, to release his waters instead of hoarding them? What would happen if those monstrous perpetrators of war crimes could also feel? The crimes they are committing start with the damming of their own waters, the destruction of their own rivers. Let us say a prayer for Miriam, our Prophetess ancestor who teaches us that to be in sacred relationship with water is to be in sacred relationship with freedom and with G-d.

A Prayer for Water

Hold Miriam's Cup close to your heart. Take a moment to feel the waters of your own body—your blood, your marrow, the interstitial fluids between your cells. Invite your feelings in—grief, sorrow, joy, numbness, rage. How do the waters of your body interact with your feelings?

Ask yourself—What kind body of water are you? Perhaps you are a raging sea, crashing and foamy. Perhaps you are a river, ice cold with glacial melt. Or a lake, a pond, a trickling stream, barely dripping, a small puddle on a city sidewalk. Whatever you are, let yourself fill up with your own waters. Find a commitment in yourself to liberate your own waters by feeling the vast expanse of your experience.

Let us recite this prayer from Dori Midnight:

*Zot Kos Miryam, kos mayim hayim.
Zeikher l'yitziat Mitztrayim.*

This is the Cup of Miriam, the cup of living waters.

Blessed are You, Source of Life, who blesses us with the capacity to imagine beyond the narrow places, emboldens us to resist and speak truth, and guides us to dance our way, together, towards an emancipated future.

Sources

The Siege on Gaza's Water, Commentary by [Natasha Hall](#), [Anita Kirschenbaum](#), and [David Michel](#). Published January 12, 2024, Center for Strategic and International Studies
<https://www.csis.org/analysis/siege-gazas-water#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20estimates%20that,emergency%20standard%20of%2015%20liters.>



Miriam ha neviah

Adapted by Taya Mâ and Ibrahim Baba

Miriam, Miriam ha neviah
Miriam, Miriam ha neviah
Shalom alayich, shalom alayich
Ha neviah shel shechinah

TRANSLATION:

Miriam, Miriam the prophet
Miriam, Miriam the prophet
Peace be upon you, Peace be upon you
The prophet of shechinah

(substitute names of people in your presence, i.e. Melissa, Melissa ha neviah... if substituting names of masc/male people you may want to change to the masculine Hebrew, ie Eliahu, Eliahu ha navi, Eliahu, Eliahu ha navi, shalom aleichem, shalom aleichem, ha navi shel shechinah...)

Zog Nit Keynmol / Partisan Hymn

Offered by Rooted in This World Network

Sung at seders in honor of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising by many survivors & their families & communities, especially among secular leftist Jews. Written in the Vilne Ghetto by Hirsh Glik, a poet and partisan fighter, in response to the news of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Melody from a mid-1930s song by Dimitri & Daniil Pokrass (Jewish Soviet composers), “Cossack March”. Popularized beyond the yiddish-speaking world by Paul Robeson.

Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg
Ven himlen blayene farshtelen bloye teg
Vayl kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot: meer zaynen do!

Never say that now the end has come for you,
When leaden skies may be concealing days of blue,
Because the time for which we've yearned will yet appear:
And our marching step shall thunder: We are here!

This song was written with our blood and not with lead;
It's not the caroling that birds sing overhead.
It was our people, 'midst the crashing walls of hell
That sang this song and fought with courage 'til they fell.

We'll have the morning sun to set our days aglow
And all our yesterdays shall vanish with the foe;
And if the time is long before the sun appears
Then let this song go like a signal through the years.

My Arabic is Mute

By *Almog Behar*

My Arabic is mute
Strangled at the throat
Cursing itself
Without uttering a word
Sleeping in the airless shelters of my soul
Hiding
From relatives
Behind the Hebrew shutters.

And my Hebrew is raging
Running among rooms and neighbours' balconies
Making its voice heard in public
Prophesying the coming of God
and bulldozers
And then it holes up in the living room
Thinking itself so open in the language of its skin
So hidden between the pages of its flesh
A moment naked, a moment later dressed
It curls up into the armchair
And begs itself for forgiveness.

My Arabic is petrified
It quietly pretends to be Hebrew
And whispers to friends
Whenever somebody knocks at her gate
“Ahlan Ahlan, welcome”
And whenever a policeman passes it in the street
It produces an ID card
And points out the protective clause
“Ana min al-yahud, ana min al-yahud” – “I am a Jew, I am a Jew”.

And my Hebrew is deaf
Sometimes very deaf.

© Translation: 2017, Dimi Reider
From: *Take This Book and Copy It*
Publisher: PDF, Jerusalem, 2017

[Poem Link](#)

‘Till We’re All Free

by *Mare Berger*

We pray for the souls that are gone
We mourn all those beautiful lives
We sing for humanity
That we all may remember our light

**And we march for your life
We scream for——your rights
And we fight for your freedom
A free Palestine frees us all**

Only safety in solidarity
Only safety in collective liberation
Only safety till we’re all- free
Justice for Gaza brings safety to Jews
To you and to me

**And we march for your life
We scream for—— your rights
And we fight for your freedom
A free Palestine frees us all
A free Palestine frees us all
Ceasefire, ceasefire now**



נִרְצָה | Nirtzah

Blessings Over Organizing

By Shelby Handler

Blessed are we, betrayers of all counterfeit kinships,
whose estrangement moves us toward an ancient & urgent togetherness.
May we organize our ghosts to join us in the streets.

May we wrench our shimmering multiplicities
from the maw of militarism.

May new homes be formed between our marching shoulders.

And may we bless the Signal threads & the spokes councils & care teams!
Bless the interest form, the QR code, the recruitment spreadsheet
with its infinite containers brimming with affinities

that never existed until now! Bless all the sacred architectures we craft
to catch our people, how our efforts stretch
across time & space to weave a place for our folks to land in.

Bless all the mundane work it takes for us to be dangerous together.
Bless calling our friends & family to ask, “Do you want to get involved?”
Bless what we really mean:

Do you want to build a new world together? Do you want to build a new ‘us’ together?

Bless how we refuse to leave the sterile offices
of those who could stop a genocide but are choosing not to.

Bless the children & grandchildren of refugees
scaling the walls of warships to stop weapons from leaving the port.
Bless how we link arms & lock ourselves to buildings

to forge a chain that pulls us closer to the world we need.
May we win real safety this time.

May we create new kinships along the way—
kinships that can outlive all forms of supremacy.
May we reach a belonging our ancestors never got to have.
And may we call out to those who are not yet with us:

*If your heart is broken, may that breakage be a doorway.
There is a family waiting for you
called a movement.*

Closing

There is a custom, upon completing the study of a book of Torah, to proclaim “Chazak, Chazak, V’nit-chazek” which translates as strength, strength, and may we be strengthened. So too, may we be strengthened in ourselves and with each other in our remembering, activism, and solidarity.



We return to our work. There is a path out of the narrow place to liberation. We have traced our ancestors’ steps; the path is in our bones. Now fortified, nourished. This year in liberation for all. A future where all people across the region live in safety and lasting peace must start with the U.S. government ending Israeli impunity and instead back the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality.

Contributor Bios

aaron moore ellis (they/them) – working at the intersections of embodiment and radical ethics. Co-Editor: Pedagogy & Theater of the Oppressed Journal <http://ptoweb.org> // Dream Defender @thedreamdefenders // Descolonizarte TEATRO @descolonizarte_teatro // Activist-in-Residence: Peace & Justice Studies, Pace University @pjsatpace aaronmooreellis@gmail.com

Alexa Rosengaus (she/her) is a Mexican-Israeli actress and writer based in LA.

Ariel DiOrío (she/they), who created the Haggadah cover art, is a Somerville-based artist, organizer, and educator who aims to engage community members around art-making experiences for social movements. Her art practice is often collaborative and connects to specific campaigns around issues such as Palestinian liberation, racial justice, and prison abolition. Ariel uses a multidisciplinary approach to help make activism more engaging and irresistibly beautiful. You can follow her work on Instagram at [@reellymakes](https://www.instagram.com/reellymakes).

Dani Noble works on strategic campaigns at JVP after a decade in the labor movement.

Elliott batTzedek – poet, bookseller, liturgist, and co-leader of [Fringes: a feminist, nonzionist havurah](#), founded in Philadelphia in 2007. That seder tradition where the olive on the seder plate represents the olive groves destroyed in Palestine? She wrote that, and other liturgy that now feels “traditional.”

Felipe Ventura (he/him) builds community networks while being an unschooling parent to twins and organizing with the [Black Jewish Liberation Collective](#). He lives with his partner and children in xučyun (Huichin) the home territory of the Chochoyeno speaking Lisjan Ohlone people in the East Bay.

Rabbi Jessica Rosenberg is a teacher, writer, organizer and calendar-maker based on Dakota land in Minneapolis. She is co-author, alongside Rabbi Ariana Katz, of *For Times Such As These: A Radical's Guide to the Jewish Year*, and a member of the JVP Rabbinical Council.

Liv Kunins-Berkowitz (they/them) is the media coordinator for Jewish Voice for Peace. They can be found telling stories, crafting ritual, and feeding people.

Luna Liebling (they/them) is a feelings witch, antizionist movement chaplain, ritualist, student of grief and joy, Kohenet, and clown. They currently make home in Lennapehoking, land originally and still tended to by the Lenni Lenape, in so called Philadelphia.

Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb – RLG is celebrating her 75th year with a new book: *Shomeret Shalom: Replanting the Seeds of Jewish Revolutionary Nonviolence* which she illustrated and wrote, and a Jewish storytelling retreat this May in Northampton, MA.

Mare Berger (she/they) is a singer-songwriter, teacher, song leader, and activist organizing with JVP Western Mass. Mare writes songs about grief, nature, healing, and collective liberation. You can follow her on instagram at [@maremoonsong](https://www.instagram.com/maremoonsong) or hear more of her music at <https://marielberger.bandcamp.com/>

Melissa Nussbaum Freeman (she/her)– JVP Staff, Spiritual & Cultural Life Organizing Manager, facilitator for [JVP Power Half-Hour for Gaza: Channeling Grief and Rage into Action to End the Genocide](#), and [JVP Havurah Network](#), melissa@jvp.org

Miranda Cohen (she/her), who designed the Haggadah and interior illustrations, is a graphic designer and illustrator based in Philadelphia. Her illustrations can be seen at [@mirandacohenmakes](https://www.instagram.com/mirandacohenmakes) and her graphic design work on mcohendesign.com.
mirandajcohen@gmail.com

Nomy Lamm is a co-creator of the [Dreaming the World to Come planner](#), the [Omer Oracle deck](#), and is teaching a 9-week course called [Omer Pulses](#) with Elana-June this year.

Ollie Emmes Schwartz (no pronouns | Long River Valley Western, MA) Founder of [Pushcart Judaica](#), core team of [Radical Jewish Calendar](#), and queer chandler, facilitator, ritualist, and lover of shtetlcore as embodied de-assimilation practice.

Rebecca Maria Goldschmidt (she/they) is an artist and cultural worker with [Queer Mikveh Project](#), [JVP Hawai'i](#), and the [Hiroshima Palestine Vigil Community](#). Currently studying at Hiroshima City University in Japan. My website was hacked but: rrrebecca.com
[@bigbigthings](https://www.instagram.com/bigbigthings) or [patreon.com/rrrebecca](https://www.patreon.com/rrrebecca)
Palestine is a nuclear issue.

Rebecca S'manga Frank is an actor, writer, teacher, and spiritual-culture worker based in Brooklyn. She travels as a theater artist and as a story-doula committed to radical empathy and collective liberation. She is a fellow of The Workshop, LABA NY, Rabbinc Arts, and the New Jewish Culture Fellowship. She'll be workshopping her plays "Valence" at Union Temple, and "The Non Monog-ologues" in Portland this spring.

Rooted in this World Network: We are an intergenerational group of rad/left, anti-zionist, (mostly) queer, secular jewish educators, activists, cultural workers, and artists, primarily based in North America, but also beyond. Some of us use "secular" and/ or "cultural" to define ourselves (while others do not), but all of us are interested in building Jewish community that de-centers rabbinic, priestly, and prayer-focused Jewishness. We share resources and co-create meaningful ways of being practicing secular Jews (including internal education around secular histories and futures, workshops with/for the broader Jewish left, shared rituals and art-making).

If this resonates, please complete our [interest form](#) and we'll add you to our low-traffic google group. You can also email us at rootednetwork18@gmail.com

Contributions to this year's haggadah were written by: Em Hirsch, rosza lang/ levitsky, Dvoyre Rosenstein, Leah Harris, and Mona Pollack

Shelby Handler is a writer, translator, and organizer with Jewish Voice for Peace.

Shir Lovett-Graff is a writer, network-builder, and community organizer with [Matir Asurim: Jewish Care Network for Incarcerated People](#). They are currently based in Somerville, MA, the original homeland of the Pawtucket peoples.

Shula Etta Pesach (she/they) is a community ritualist, Jewish educator, and trans theologian. As the program director for [Taproot](#) and co-director of [Re-Calling Our Ancestors](#), Shula's work is dedicated to cultural renewal and ancestral healing for white anti-racists. Shula is the founder and *rosh yeshiva* of [B'yameinu](#), a queer Jewish learning space in Western Massachusetts. Shula is an apprentice of bird-language, astrology, and stretching strudel dough.

Simha 'Simi' Toledano (she/they) is a hypnotist, spiritual adviser, ritualist, performer, award winning writer and filmmaker, and heart centered activist for collective liberation. Simi lives in Lenapehoking aka Philadelphia, her birthplace and hometown, and enjoys hiking and creating collages in their free time.

[Taya Mâ Shere](#) (she/her) is a ritual artist embracing embodied, earth-honoring devotion as liberatory spiritual practice. She is a professor of multi-religious ritual, host of [Jewish Ancestral Healing](#) and co-convenor of [Makam Shekhina](#) and the [House of Dates](#) at the intersections of Judaism and Islam. She co-founded the Kohenet movement & is a [chant artist](#) dreaming-into-being [From the Deep](#).



Additional Resources For Passover

[Tzedek Chicago's seder supplement 5784/2024](#)

[From the River to the Sea](#), a family friendly Haggadah by Families for Ceasefire in Philly. 5784/2024

Past years with relevant information:

[JVP Passover 5782 Haggadah](#)

[A Library of Haggadot at Haggadah.com](#)

[This google doc](#) has a compilation of justice-based Haggadot

[Spoon on the Seder Plate by R' Elliot Kukla](#)

[Black Lives Matter Haggadah](#) supplement from [JFREJ](#)

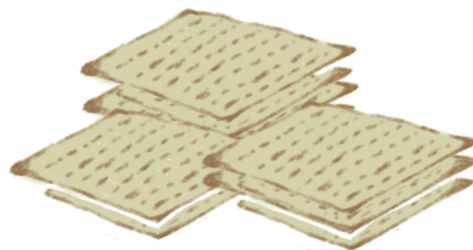
[Mango Charoset recipe](#) by Aurora Levins Morales. Aurora is a writer and poet, who was featured heavily in this Haggadah. [Contribute to her patreon here.](#)

[Poems Seder Haggadah](#) is a beautiful Haggadah of collage and poetry made by Zachary Wager-Scholl and R' Max Zev Reynolds

[Miriam and the Tachash story](#)

[An Acorn On The Seder Plate](#) by Jews on Ohlone Plate, Pesach 5783/2023

[5783 Indwelling Dreams of Olam haBa](#), Rebekah Erev and Nomy Lamm & 12 contributors, calendar and journal, notes on each lunar month and Counting of the Omer



Jewish Voice for Peace



WHO ARE WE

Jewish Voice for Peace is a national, grassroots organization working towards Palestinian freedom and Judaism beyond Zionism. It's the largest such organization in the world.

As the right wing gathers momentum in the U.S., Israel, and globally, it can be hard to know how to respond as an individual. Tens of thousands have joined JVP because they want to make meaningful contributions to the crises of our time and know that making change takes collective power.

Being a member of a grassroots, national membership organization means joining a community of thousands of people working together towards freedom and justice for all from the U.S. to Palestine. Members are the base of JVP, and when our membership grows, the movement grows.

Becoming a member commits to your stake in the movement. It allows you to be counted. And it amplifies your power. And together, we can take action—online, in the streets, and in our communities.

[Join or Renew Your Membership](#) All are welcome!

THE WIRE

JVP's Newsletter that covers important news from Palestine and the Palestine solidarity movement, and ways to take action. Subscribe and get The WIRE in your inbox each week.

POWER HALF-HOUR FOR GAZA: CHANNELING GRIEF AND RAGE INTO ACTION TO END THE GENOCIDE

Join hundreds of people in this powerful virtual community, Monday–Friday, 3:00–3:30 PM ET, to take concrete action to end the genocide and stop military funding to Israel. Register once for ongoing participation. Everyone is welcome—all hands on deck!

UPCOMING:

Liberating our Seder Tables for Palestine: How to Have Hard Conversations on Passover

[Zoom Meeting](#)

Wednesday, April 17th, 8 PM ET

JVP Virtual Seder:

[Zoom Meeting](#)

Thursday, April 25th, 7–9 PM ET

All are welcome!