

# Next Year in Liberation Haggadah



# Next Year in Liberation

Fighting Fascism and Genocide  
is a Jewish Tradition

JVP Anti-Zionist Multi-Tendency  
Haggadah 5785/2025

*Nothing is as Whole as a Broken Heart*

Cover art by Micah Bazant

The image was created in April 2025 for  
the anti-zionist haggadah *Pillar of Fire*.

Haggadah design by Miranda Cohen

# Dedicating this Haggadah

*Offered by Melissa Nussbaum Freeman*

This time last year we were already in rage and grief stricken. We were not able to imagine a worse situation in Gaza. But it is worse. Much worse. And it is worse at home. Now we are protesting the genocide in Gaza as well as the growing fascism here at home.

We dedicate this Haggadah to the deeply rooted Jewish traditions of fighting genocide and fascism.

Listen: Our grandparents' grandparents' grandparents entreat us to tell the Passover story as if it were happening now and we are the protagonists. We are the ones who must find the courage to leave the zone of oppression, from mitzrayim, the narrow space.

The people of Gaza in their survival, in their sumud, Arabic for steadfastness, teach us about courage.

We dedicate this Haggadah to courage.

We are still not safe from Covid, we still wear masks, and absurdly have to defend the right to wear one. Safety, too, is weaponized. When we talk about safety we say there is no Jewish safety in campus repression of protest and free speech, much less in genocide.

With rage and grief we reiterate Not In Our Name.

We have been in full rapid response for eighteen months, thousands have joined us organizing locally and nationally. When the government has normalized supporting the Israeli death machine, we have worked with our partners and allies to keep the spotlight on Gaza.

We will not let up. We will not turn our backs on Gaza. We will feel the grief and the rage because it is the only human thing to do. We transform what threatens to paralyze us into action to end the genocide and face the fascism that would silence us.

Why put any of that energy into creating an anti-Zionist multi-tendency Haggadah again?

Passover is ours to own and continuously define. We have not given up on our tradition, our liberatory teach-in. We are not giving it over to those who will use it to justify their treachery. We take the time to re-root and be nourished by the values passed to us. The ritual is meant for us to keep going, not to become complacent and numb to injustice.

While the Israeli government enshrines Jewish victimhood as permanent justification for mass murder and land grabs in the name of Jewish safety and weaponizes Jewish traditions against Palestinians, we refuse. Not in our name. We will keep wrestling back our tradition from the clutches of greed, hate, and assimilation.

To reclaim our holiday of liberation is to reclaim Judaism from and build 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 dream of and deserve. Just as we fight for the future of Palestinians and all peoples, so too are we fighting for a thriving Judaism and Jewish communities, for a multiplicity of Jewish cultures and for the future of Jewish peoples. Just as we fight for the future of Palestinians and all peoples on every continent, and here at home.

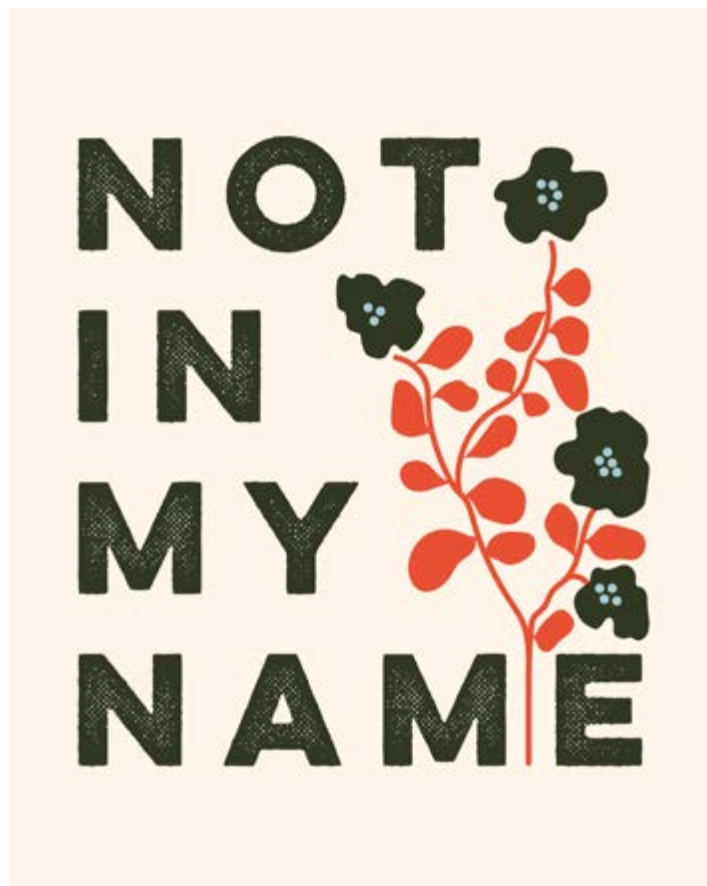
We thought that we could never be in a more narrow place. But we are. This Passover, we cannot hold seder as usual. How will we be in this retelling at our liberation meal while the people of Gaza are literally facing famine? The questions of liberation are not theoretical. The holiday of liberation again and again urges every one of us to step up our commitment to the liberation of the Palestinian people, to our collective liberation. Come for one, face us all.

May our ancient tradition be of service to all of us in this sacred obligation.

We are the ancestors to-be of our grandchildren's grandchildren's grandchildren. They will point to us and they will remember that we did not stay in mitzrayim. They will chant: "They found the courage, they were not silent." We will have done the right thing.

In this spirit we dedicate 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 steadfastness, 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 we acknowledge that the Jewish tradition contains both freedom stories and conquest stories, narratives of supremacy and narratives that teach us about the sacredness of all life. We ask, how does our experience of the Passover story change if we understand that each of us can both experience and perpetrate oppression? Tonight we wrestle with the contradictions in our inheritances.

This year the world feels unfathomably narrow. As we gather for Passover, the Israeli government furthers its genocidal project, destroying life and land all across Palestine. As we gather for Passover, modern day Pharaohs are rising to power all over the world.

In the United States, a fascist government is using the guise of fighting antisemitism to punish those who speak out for Palestinian freedom. This Passover gathering is an act of refusal. We will not allow our tradition, history, and identity, to be fuel for authoritarian crackdown.

**Tonight we have never been more clear: the journey to liberation will not be realized until it is a journey for collective liberation.**

This Haggadah does not contain the answers, yet we gather with faith that we have much to learn through the reverent retelling of this story. May we find questions and songs to accompany us as we continue organizing for liberation in Palestine, on Turtle Island, and wherever you may be arriving from.

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.

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 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 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 Ladin 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 working toward 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



# The Evolving Seder Plate (2025)

*Offered by Aurora Levins Morales*

*Please feel free to add verses*

Here's where we riff on the right of the moment,  
here's where we shoot for the moon,  
here's where the possibles on the table  
and everyone's in the room.

Oranges, olives, beetroot and spoons.

Glowing orange segments  
bless every kind of love  
and every shade of gender  
fills the world we're dreaming of.

Oranges, olives, beetroot and spoons.

The olive is for Palestine  
our dear beloved kin  
how the peace that comes from justice  
is how everybody wins.

Oranges, olives, beetroot and spoons.

The blood-red beet represents all those  
who lost the right to own our wombs  
who bear the babes we cannot raise  
or bleed out in back alley rooms.

Oranges, olives, beetroot and spoons.

Persimmons, roasted corn, pecans,  
Cranberries red and wild rice black  
Tell us the only thing to do  
With stolen land is give it back.

Oranges, olives, beetroot and spoons.



# 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.*



# קֵדֵשׁ | 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 so many others are not.

At the same time that we were preparing for Pesach in 2024, Bisan Owda awoke to tell the world not only that she was still alive, but to also introduce the anemone coronaria or poppy anemone, *shuqa'iq annaa'mun*. To share her joy at finding this wild red flower growing, and at seeing green space for the first time in so many months.

Now, as we mark another year of this unrelenting genocide and Bisan's reports, may we continue to witness and amplify each of the stories that bring 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 seventeen 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

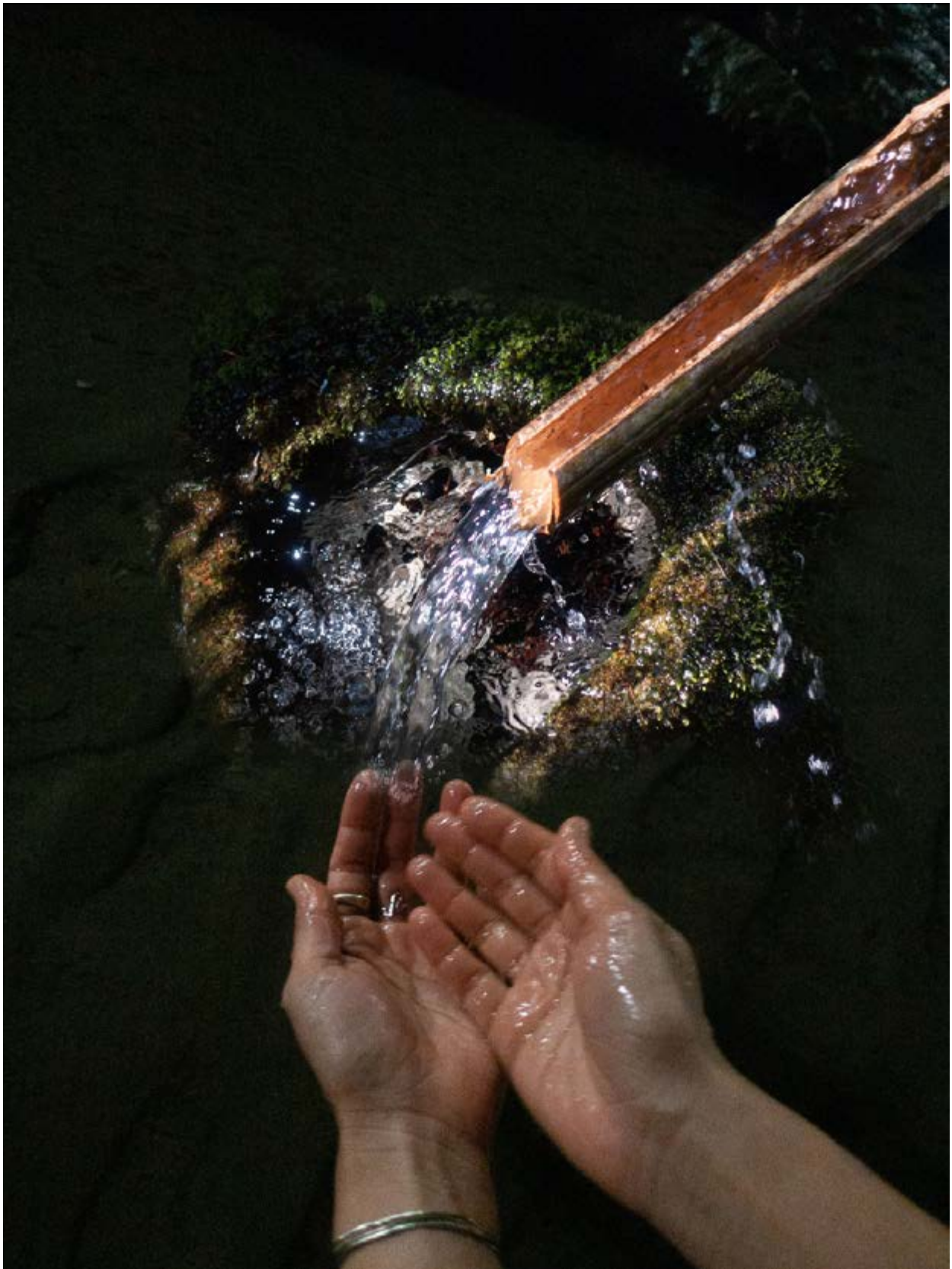
May ALL our waters of Peoples be liberated

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.*



# כַּרְפָּס | 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*

נְהַרְךָ אֶת מַי הָעַיִנוֹת —  
וּמַי הַנְּחָלִים וּמַי הַנְּהָרוֹת —  
מַיִם חַיִּים הַמְרַוִּים 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:

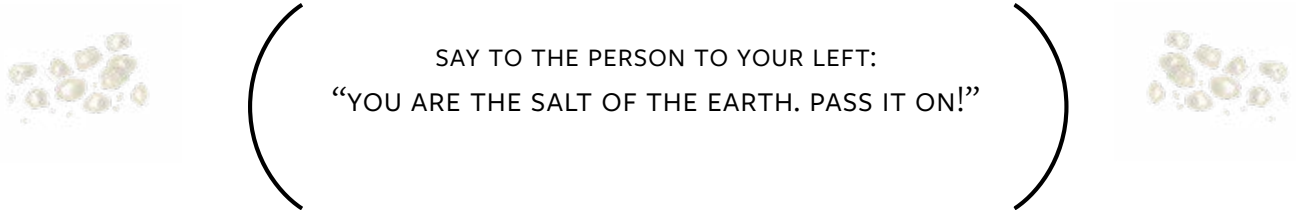
**All:** Gaza! We will never forget you, we will never forsake you, we will never stop fighting for you until all of your people live safe and free.

( 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.



## 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

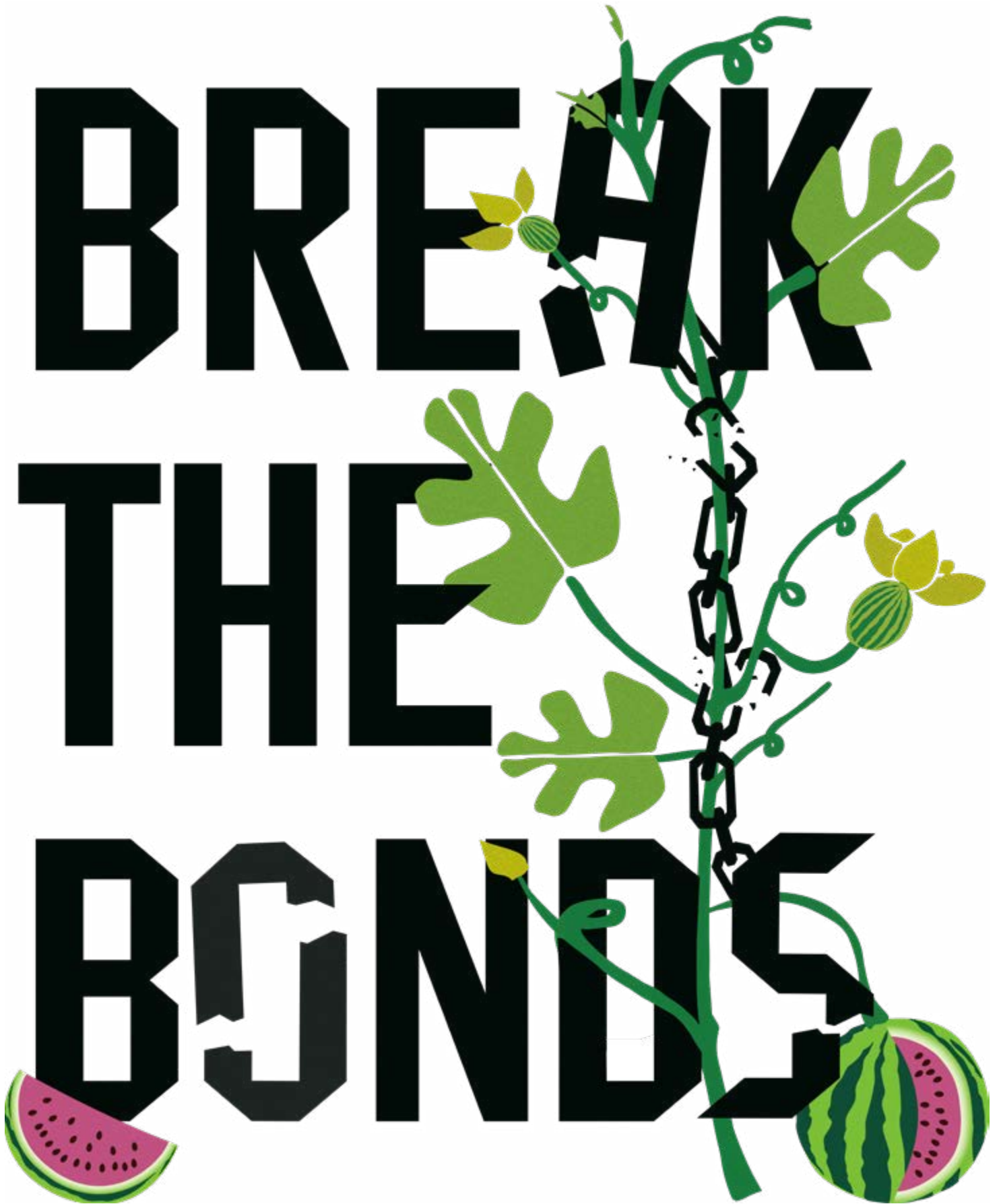
*Offered by R. Jessica Rosenberg*

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.





**BREAK**

**THE**

**BONDS**

# Breaking the Bonds:

## 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.**



## New York State says... “Break the Bonds.”

**Sign the Petition:** [bit.ly/BTBNYS](https://www.instagram.com/break_the_bonds_nys/)

[https://www.instagram.com/break\\_the\\_bonds\\_nys/](https://www.instagram.com/break_the_bonds_nys/)

As workers, retirees, taxpayers, and residents of New York State, we call on New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli to stop buying Israel Bonds with Common Retirement Fund dollars and prioritize the financial and ethical interests of our communities.

### **BREAK THE BONDS**

Israel Bonds are unrestricted loans that go directly into the Israeli treasury and provide critical financial support for Israel’s apartheid system, the forced displacement of Palestinians, illegal settlement construction, and the ongoing killing of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. The New York State Common Retirement Fund is one of the top U.S. investors in Israel Bonds, with over \$340 million worth of Israel Bond holdings as of March 2025.

**SIGN THE PETITION:** We call on Comptroller DiNapoli to be on the right side of history and bring this pension fund into alignment with its own legal mandate by prioritizing sustainable investments that benefit state workers, retirees, and all New Yorkers—as well as by refusing to fund Israeli apartheid and genocide. We call on New York State employees, retirees, and concerned taxpayers to join us in demanding Comptroller DiNapoli invest in New York and ***BREAK THE BONDS***.

**Sign the Petition:** [bit.ly/BTBNYS](https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/resource/btb-nys/)

<https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/resource/btb-nys/>

**COALITION PARTNERS:** JVP Hudson Valley, Capital District DSA, JVP Syracuse, Mid-Hudson Valley DSA, JVP Buffalo, Buffalo DSA, and JVP Albany

**ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS:** Albany Muslim Advocacy Coalition, HV for Palestine, Columbia County for Palestine, New York State Council of Churches, JVP Rochester, DSA International Committee, JVP New York City, WNY Peace Center, Palestinian Rights Committee Albany, Troy DSA, LOLA, Rally Middletown, Middle East Crisis Response, United Muslim Alliance of Albany, SUNY BDS, and Syracuse DSA.

[https://www.instagram.com/break\\_the\\_bonds\\_nys/](https://www.instagram.com/break_the_bonds_nys/)



## 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: *Maggid*.



# מַגִּיד | Maggid

## 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 seventeen 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 scores 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, in a spiraling Exodus from their homes, trying to go home and having to leave, again and again, insisting they're not going anywhere, while at the same time fleeing for their lives. No respite on the horizon.

Perhaps the better Pesach question is: Is the “promised land” a settlement? A beachside resort ethnically cleansed of Palestinians? The biblical Exodus ended in ethnic cleansing. Ethno-nationalism.



Just. Like. Now.

Where is the world? Watching? Where are we? “Celebrating” Passover? How can we even read the story? Now?

### **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. kill, maim, and traumatize Palestinians. This toxicity renders all celebration bitter.

This year we do not celebrate our liberation. Instead, we mourn ongoing genocide in which our so-called “liberation story” is complicit, and in which we are intertwined, through our tax dollars, our religious, cultural, and political institutions, our identities, our everyday banalities.

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 that actually protects Palestinians? The cessation of settler and soldier pogroms across Palestine?

When a ceasefire comes—if a ceasefire comes?—when a cessation comes—if it 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.

Let us 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 “Celebration” 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 Kids in Times of Genocide

*Here we offer two interpretations of the Teaching on the 4 Children. They can be pondered separately or together.*

## We Are the Four Children

*Offered by Esther Azar*

The 4 children have traditionally been wise, wicked, simple and the one who does not know how to speak. Here is an alternate option:

The anti-zionist

The right wing zionist

The liberal zionist

The one who refuses to take a position

The anti-zionist understands that liberation for one means liberation for all.

The right wing zionist has assimilated into a settler colonial identity that denies the humanity of Palestinians in order to assert dominance and claim land.

The liberal zionist upholds systems of oppression while offering compassion for Palestinians.

The one who refuses to take a position claims that it’s all too complicated to understand and they remain silent.

## 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. They know that through fierce defiance and cultivating difference, we can find 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—that we by our tax dollars and elected representatives—could be in cahoots and complicit in a STILL ongoing genocide. How can they come to terms with the reality that the “Ceasefire” line was never enough?

**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 they 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;

We all have tendencies to be oppositional: to go against the status quo and struggle for what we believe is right;

We all have the tendency to be simple: to retreat when we are unable to assimilate the complexity of our home communities' complicities;

We all have the tendency 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 5875, 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.*

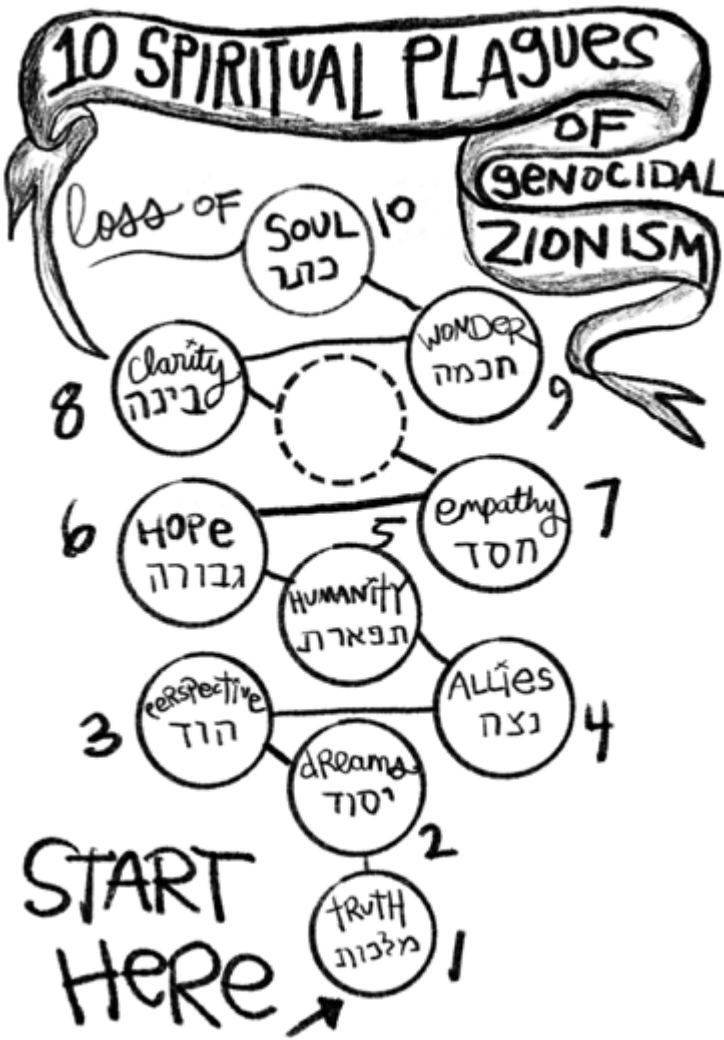
# 10 Spiritual Plagues of Genocidal Zionism

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 אַתָּה שְׁכִינָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ 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

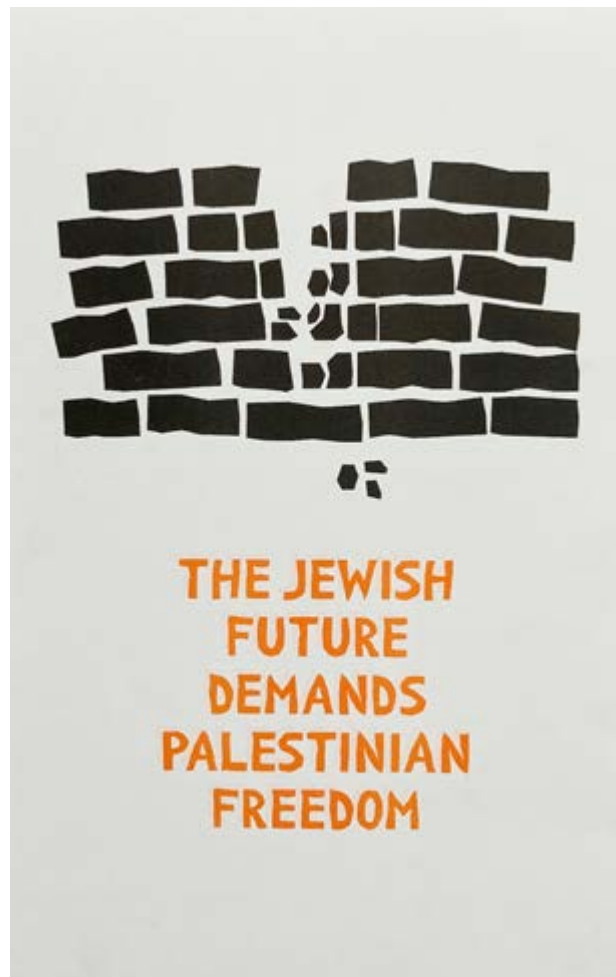
As we work for Palestinian liberation  
*Not In Our Name*, a sacred incantation  
May there be full end to genocide and occupation  
*Dayenu*

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)



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## 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, without the blessing over handwashing, as a ritual cleansing. Before our meal, we now wash our hands with the traditional hand washing blessing for the practical purpose of preparing to eat.

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 co-exist with water: amniotic fluid holds us in utero before we emerge into the world, water holds our brains to float safely in a cocoon of cerebrospinal fluid, water holds our tears, and our bodies are 75% water. A human body can only live for about three days without drinking water. Water is our life.

## Water theft as a tactic of colonization

In Palestine water theft is a key tactic of colonization, 90% of the regions water is controlled by the state 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 on Gaza, which has decreased since Oct 7th due to Israeli settlers damaging water systems and terrorizing Palestinians at checkpoints who are traveling to obtain water (“Palestine, not enough water to survive” Norwegian Refugee Council)

In 2023 Gaza, only 10.5% of Palestinians had access to reliable clean drinking water before the war on Gaza. Israeli siege on Gaza’s water after Oct 7th has resulted in a 95% drop, due to targeted destruction damaging the majority of water treatment facilities.

As of this writing, Israel has cut off the electrical supply causing the desalination plants to close.

## 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*

בָּרוּךְ 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.

**Water is our Life**  
*by Kestel Feiner Homer*

Part 1: Water is our life x4

Part 2: You flow in circles, you are never ending

Part 3: Waves crash, current strong, the ocean swells and rises.  
Our body, our blood, our spirit is the sea.



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# 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



# מרור | Maror

## Embittered and Inspired | מרור & צמור

*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.*



# פּוֹרֶךְ | 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.



# שֻׁלְחַן אוֹרֵךְ | Shulchan Orech

## How Can We Eat a Festive Meal Tonight?

This year, we will not fulfill the requirement of Shulchan Orech by eating a festive meal while the Israeli regime enforces a blockade of all that is essential so that life may thrive: water, food, medicine, fuel. The US government supports Israel in the weaponized starvation of the Palestinian people in Gaza.

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.’”

At this point in the Seder we fulfill Shulchan Orech by moving resources: **SOLIDARITY IS A VERB**

## Solidarity is a Verb: Support Palestine Resources on the Ground

Now more than ever, it's important to support Palestinians' efforts to save lives and offer communal care.

Millions of people around the world are demanding an end to genocide and calling for true safety for Palestinians, which starts with the bare minimum of a ceasefire and U.S. weapons embargo. We see people doing all that they can, from solidarity protests to contributions to international aid organizations. There are many ways to be in solidarity with Palestinians in this critical moment.

The outpouring of love and support from individuals is historic. But when it comes to donating, many are unsure of the best way to make an impact. **We believe that what is most needed now is direct support for Palestinian grassroots organizations and initiatives that are deeply rooted in the community and know how best to support it.**

Supporting grassroots groups not only provides community-based emergency relief on the ground, but also contributes to preserving the basic civil society infrastructure and the broader, long-term transformation and community resilience necessary for lasting change



## Rawa



Rawa is a Palestinian initiative working toward liberatory grassroots-led organizing across historic Palestine. Since the Israeli genocide erupted, Rawa has been supporting Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank through dozens of grassroots initiatives working to overcome the catastrophic challenges and provide vital support with dignity and resilience, including via securing shelters, drinking water, food, and medical stations.

Since 2018, Rawa has supported over 60 grassroots initiatives chosen by the community itself, moving critical resources to frontline organizers in agriculture, education, arts, media and social activism. They focus on resourcing long-term, sustainable community-led efforts, especially during crisis moments when self-determination can fall by the wayside.

Contribute:

<https://jvp.rawa.ps/en/>

## Grassroots International



Grassroots International's Palestine Emergency Fund moves 100% of donations to trusted community-led organizations throughout Palestine, as part of their long-term partnerships in Palestine for over 40 years. Since October, their partners in Gaza have delivered food, water, and supplies to over 84,000 families and supported 30 mobile health care teams amid the total collapse of Gaza's health system.

They also continue the critical work of documenting genocide and war crimes by the Israeli government and seeking justice through international courts. The work of Grassroots International's partners is born of unwavering commitment to self-determination, justice, and liberation.

Contribute:

<https://grassrootsonline.org/palestine-24/>

## 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

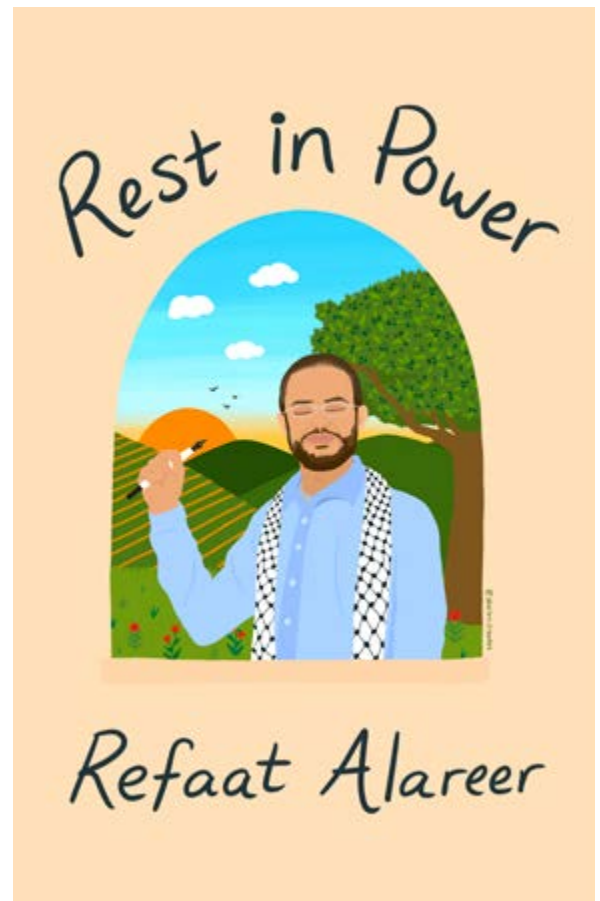
### I Grant You Refuge

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.



Artwork by Shirien Damra  
@shiriencreates

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.

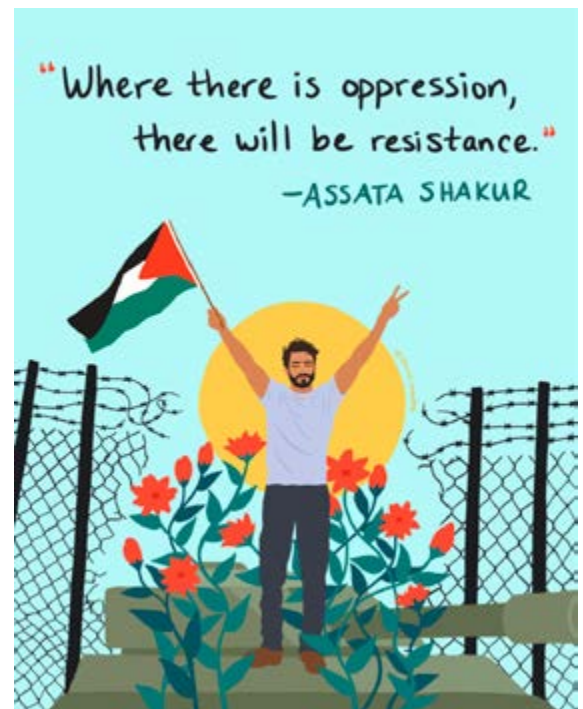
Their mothers' tears are now doves  
following them, trailing behind  
every coffin.

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



Artwork by Shirien Damra  
@shiriencreates

and the shades of cloud from the smog.

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.

# 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.

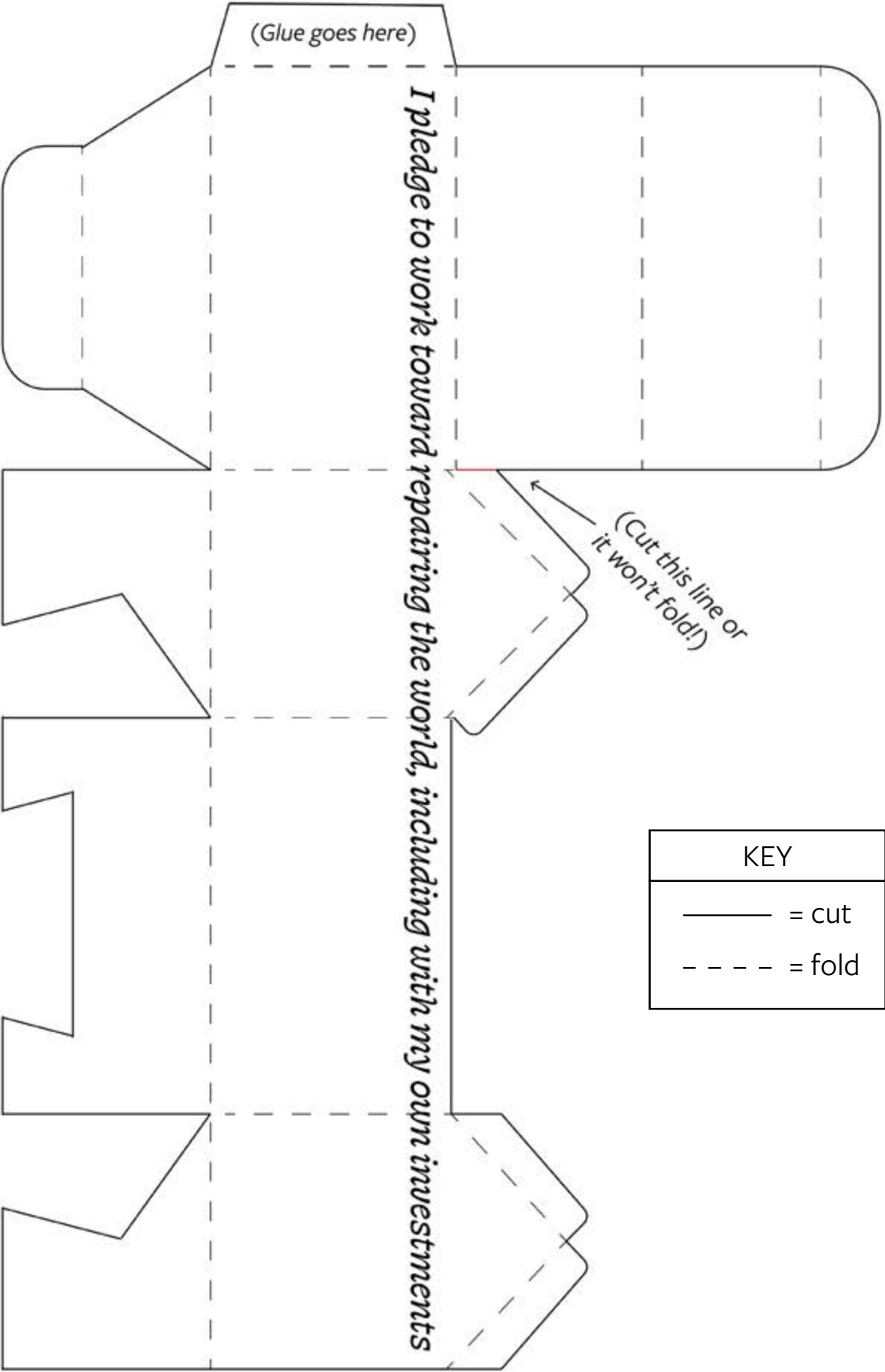
I will not purchase any future Israel Bonds.

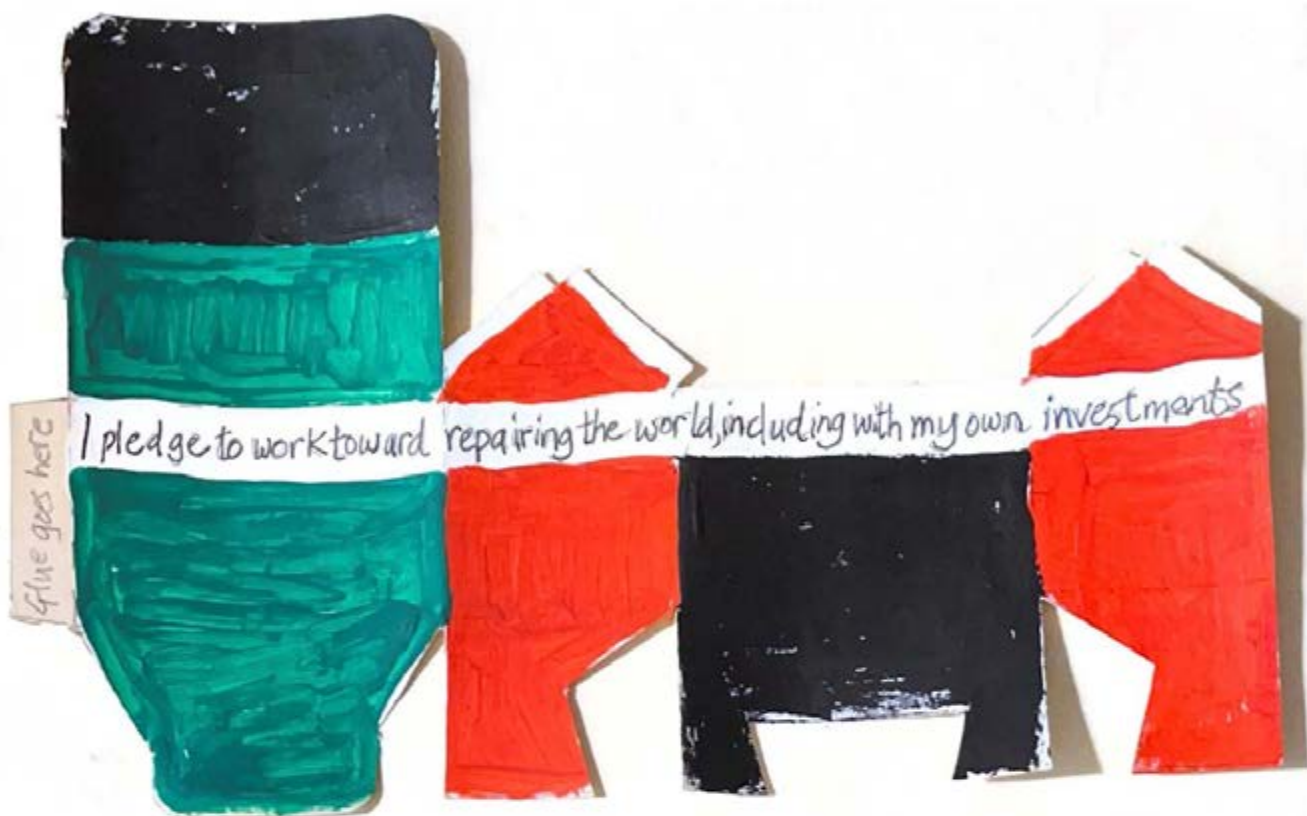
I will invest in our movements for collective liberation, and especially in Palestinian-led organizing for justice, equality and freedom for all in the region.

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!









# צפון | Tzafun

## Tzafun: "The Searching"

*Offered by Rooted in this World*

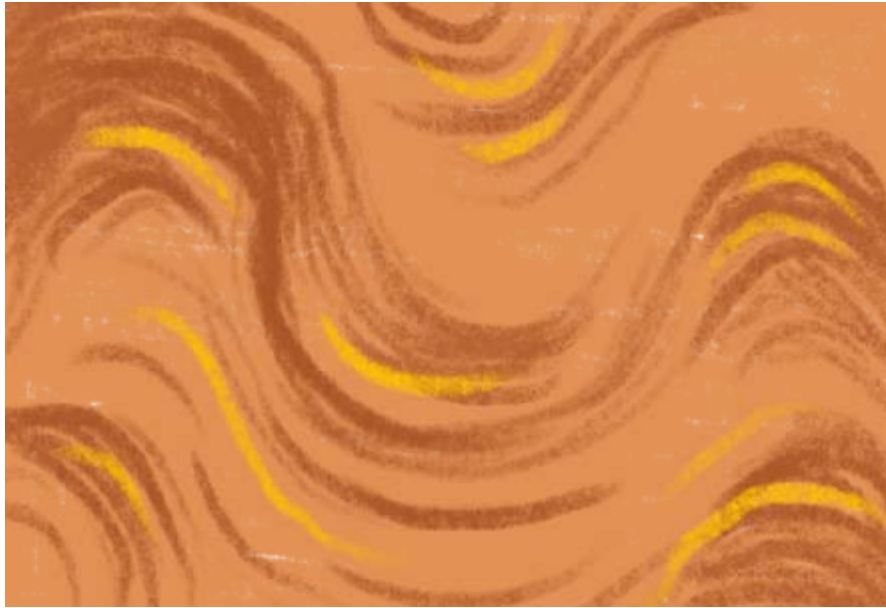
*Welcome back everyone.*

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—you may want to think about the following questions as you search:

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 seventeen 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 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, 2025, 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



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(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 / Hymn of the Partisans/ זאָג ניט קיין מאָל!

*Offered by Rooted in This World Network*

*Poem written in the Vilne Ghetto by Partisan Hirsh Glik (1922-1944)*

*Melody from the "Cossack March" set to music by Dmitri Pokrass and Daniil Pokrass (Jewish Soviet composers)*

*Published by Yehude Ayzman in 1945.*

*Popularized beyond the yiddish-speaking world by Paul Robeson.*

This song became the hymn of the United Partisan Organization in 1943. It was written in response to the news of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and spread to all the camps in Eastern Europe and later to all Jewish communities the world over. It was translated into several languages. Today it is sung at memorial meetings for martyred Jews and at seders in honor of the Uprising by many survivors & their families & communities, especially among secular leftist Jews.

Never say that you are going your last way,  
Though lead-filled skies above blot out the blue of day.  
The hour for which we long will certainly appear,  
The earth shall thunder 'neath our tread that we are here!

From lands of green palm trees to lands all white with snow,  
We are coming with our pain and with our woe,  
And where'er a spurt of our blood did drop,  
Our courage will again sprout from that spot.

For us the morning sun will radiate the day,  
And the enemy and past will fade away,  
But should the dawn delay or sunrise wait too long,  
Then let all future generations sing this song.



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This song was written with our blood and not with lead,  
This is no song of free birds flying overhead,  
But a people amid crumbling walls did stand,  
They stood and sang this song with rifles held in hand.

*Translated by Elliot Palevsky*

*Zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg,  
Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg.  
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho —  
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot — mir zaynen do!*

*Fun grinem palmenland biz vaysn land fun shney,  
Mir kumen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey,  
Un vu gefaln s'iz a shprits fun undzer blut,  
Shprotsn vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut.*

*S'vet di morgnzun bagildn undz dem haynt,  
Un der nekhtn vet farshvindn mitn faynd,  
Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun in dem kayor —  
Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor.*

*Dos lid geshribn iz mit blut un nit mit blay,  
S'iz nit keyn lidl fun a foygl af der fray,  
Dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent  
Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent!*

*To zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg,  
Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg.  
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho —  
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot — mir zaynen do!*

זאָג ניט קיין מאָל אַז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,  
כאָטש הימלען בלייענע פֿאַרשטעלן בלויע טעג.  
קומען וועט נאָך אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה —  
ס'וועט אַ פּוּיק טאָן אונדזער טראָט — מיר זיינען דאָ!

פֿון גרינעם פֿאַלמענלאַנד ביז ווייסן לאַנד פֿון שניי,  
מיר קומען אָן מיט אונדזער פּיין, מיט אונדזער וויי,  
און וווּ געפֿאַלן ס'איז אַ שפּריץ פֿון אונדזער בלוט,  
שפּראַצן וועט דאָרט אונדזער גבֿורה, אונדזער מוט.

ס'וועט די מאָרגנזון באַגילדן אונדז דעם היינט,  
און דער נעכטן וועט פֿאַרשווינדן מיטן פֿיינד,  
נאָר אויב פֿאַרזאַמען וועט די זון אין דעם קאַיאָר —  
ווי אַ פֿאַראַל זאָל גיין דאָס ליד פֿון דור צו דור.

דאָס ליד געשריבן איז מיט בלוט און ניט מיט בליי,  
ס'איז ניט קיין לידל פֿון אַ פֿויגל אויף דער פֿריי,  
דאָס האָט אַ פֿאַלק צווישן פֿאַלנדיקע ווענט  
דאָס ליד געזונגען מיט נאַגאַנעס אין די הענט!

טאָ זאָג ניט קיין מאָל אַז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,  
כאָטש הימלען בלייענע פֿאַרשטעלן בלויע טעג.  
קומען וועט נאָך אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה —  
ס'וועט אַ פּוּיק טאָן אונדזער טראָט — מיר זיינען דאָ!

## 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**



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# 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](mailto:aaronmooreellis@gmail.com)

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

**Ariel DiOrio** (she/they), who conceived Haggadah 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).

**Aurora Levins Morales** is a writer, an artist, a historian, a teacher and mentor. She is also an activist, a healer, a farmer, a revolutionary. She tells stories with medicinal powers. Herbalists who collect wild plants to make medicine call it wildcrafting. She wildcrafts the details of the world, of history, of people's lives, and concentrates them through art in order to shift consciousness, to change how we think about ourselves, each other and the world.

**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.”

**Esther Azar** is the second Syrian female rabbi. She spends her time healing, uncovering fractals and creating a theory of everything as she works on her upcoming book exploring trauma, supremacy and how to change the course of the world.

**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](#) 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](mailto:melissa@jvp.org)

**Micah Bazant**, who created this year's Haggadah cover art, is a visual artist and cultural organizer who works with liberation movements to reimagine the world. They create art inspired by struggles to end white supremacy, patriarchy, ableism and transphobia. Their work can be seen on [micahbazant.com](http://micahbazant.com).

**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](#) and her graphic design work on [mcohendesign.com](http://mcohendesign.com).  
[mirandajcohen@gmail.com](mailto: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.

[@bigbigbigthings](#) or [patreon.com/rrrebecca](https://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.

**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](mailto: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.



# Additional Resources For Passover

[SWANA Bay Area Passover Zine](#)- Passover during the Plague of Genocide, [Fundraiser for our comrades at Prosthetics for Palestine](#) – JSWANA Bay & Friends

[Spoon on the Seder Plate](#) for Disability Justice – by Rabbi Elliot Kulka

[Black Lives Matter Haggadah Supplement](#) – by Jews for Racial and Economic Justice

[Mango Charoset recipe](#) speaks to the tangled histories of Jews of color in the Americas – Aurora Levins Morales 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](#)–Jews on Ohlone Land

[A translation of a 1919 Socialist Haggadah published by the Galician Bund.](#)

## Recent Books by “Next Year in Liberation Haggadah 5785/2025” Contributors:

*Rimonim/Ritual Poetry of Jewish Liberation*, **Aurora Levins Morales**, Ayin Press, Bklyn, NY, 2024

*Shomeret Shalom Replanting Seeds of Jewish Revolutionary Nonviolence after October 7th*, **Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb**, Pushcart Judaica, 2023

*Dwell in Revolution/Ancestors for a Judaism Beyond Zionism*, co-edited & published by **Pushcart Judaica (Ollie Schwartz), Micah Bazant & Making Mensches**, 2024

*If I Must Die/Poetry & Prose*, **Refaat Alareer**, Or Books, NY, 2024

*For Times Such As These: A Radical's Guide to the Jewish Year*, **Rabbi Jessica Rosenberg & Rabbi Ariana Katz**, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, MI, 2024

*Perfect Victims/and the Politics of Appeal*, **Mohammed El-Kurd**, Haymarket Books, Chicago, IL, 2024

*Questions to Ask Before Your Bat Mitzvah*, Ed by Morgan Bassichis, Jay Saper, and Rachel Valinsky, Foreword by Angela Y. Davis, 36 authors including **Aurora Levins Morales**, Wendy's Subway, Brooklyn, NY, 2023

# Jewish Voice for Peace



Jewish Voice for Peace is the largest progressive Jewish anti-Zionist organization in the world. We're organizing a grassroots, multiracial, cross-class, intergenerational movement of U.S. Jews into solidarity with the Palestinian freedom struggle, guided by a vision of justice, equality, and dignity for all people.

If you've been looking for a political home for Jews on the left in this perilous moment; if you've been wanting a Jewish community with justice at the center; if you've been looking to turn your rage and grief into meaningful, strategic action: Join us. You belong here.

[Learn More Here](#)

## JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

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. All are welcome!

[Join or Renew Your Membership](#)

## 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.

[Subscribe Here](#)

## 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–Thursday, 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!

[Register Once](#)

## DON'T COMPLY WITH PROJECT 2025

The flurry of attacks from the administration on our most vulnerable students, faculty, and staff can feel overwhelming. We know that this administration is trying to recruit colleges and universities to do its dirty work. Now is the time to stand up and push back.

[“Tell Universities: Don't Comply with Project 2025” Toolkit](#)