

After Exodus

Living the Lessons of Passover

Jews Against the Occupation

New York City

May 1, 2005

Welcome!

Welcome to After Exodus, JATO's sort-of-seder. Tonight, we will use the traditional Passover seder as a path or guide to making new commitments to our struggle for justice and our solidarity with the Palestinian people. Tonight, in the very last hours of Passover, we will look to the lessons we can take with us from the story of Exodus as we march forward to the "Promised Land" (as we struggle to define what that means for us).

The story of Passover, as told in the traditional haggadah, describes the Israelites' liberation from slavery. Passover, more than any other Jewish holiday, brings out themes of social justice, including empathy with suffering, not rejoicing at the pain of our enemies, and learning from our own affliction, so that we may be conscious of our own potential power to oppress.

This haggadah derives from tradition, but it is in no way traditional. We loosely follow the elements of the seder, including some, parts of the traditional haggadah. At some points we will say blessings, some of them more traditional, others new. Throughout the seder, we will discuss Jayyous, a Palestinian village in the north of the Occupied West Bank. Several members of Jews Against the Occupation have spent time in Jayyous and have connections with people there. We will mention Jayyous not because it is atypical of the current situation; but rather because it is typical, because the specifics of the way the occupation is affecting life in one specific village can provide a lens of the larger injustices of the occupation and make the daily ways they effect people's lives more real.

The seder is meant to be a forum for questioning and discussion. Our JATO seder honors Jewish tradition by using the haggadah as a tool for examining and dialoguing around our role as Jews living in the United States in the movement to end the occupation of Palestinians and their land.

Several members of our community contributed to this haggadah. As you will see, each of us here tonight will also contribute. The ideas, thoughts, and facts presented here are meant to spark our reflection and our dialogue as a community.

Hag Sameach!

Re-Defining the Promised Land

The story of our liberation from slavery is a story of struggle for justice and freedom. We re-read our story this year in order to honor the Palestinian people in their struggle against oppression and exile. Through our story we hope to show that even the most well rooted power structures topple when those who are marginalized and dehumanized by them rise up and demand self/collective-emancipation. Also, we learn that even after four generations (three in slavery and one in the desert) that return is possible and that a new generation will come to mourn the old Palestine and create a new Palestine.

Many of us, who have been marginalized from Judaism and Jewish culture because of our commitment to Palestinian rights, or because of our beliefs or because of who we are can't help but notice the contradiction of the story of Passover. Isn't re-reading this story really problematic? If this story is about the beginnings of Jewish nationalism, how can we oppose Zionism and reclaim it at the same time? And besides, since none of us promote any political program that advocates freedom for Palestinians through the ethnic cleansing of Israeli Jews from historic Palestine, doesn't casting Sharon as Pharaoh and the Israelites as Palestinians make the whole drowning in the sea thing misrepresent who we are and what the Palestinian struggle is all about? What if I don't believe in God/A God who would do such horrible things? Indeed, the story is filled both with insight and dilemma, as is any great text.

We have learned that these questions must be answered individually, in order that we might discover new ways of being Jewish collectively. We encourage each other to keep asking the difficult questions and to confront contradictions, not to ignore them. In this way that we will start to forge new communities for ourselves, without giving up our past or our culture. We hope that by redefining the Promised Land, we become better allies to Palestinians. Some of us may choose to reject this material and express our Jewishness in different ways. May all of us always have a place at the table and maintain our ideals of inclusiveness.



~ Song ~

Objects on the Seder Plate

Vegetable from the Earth (Karpas) – This is symbolic of spring's bounty. We call into our minds all of the wasted olive oil and citrus fruit caused by the cruelty of occupation and every stretch of farmland lost to the Wall, what Israel calls the "Security Barrier," which effectively annexes West Bank land to Israel. This year, may all people benefit from the earth's fertility.

Boiled Egg (Beitzah) - This is at once a symbol of the cycle of mourning and rebirth. We mourn the destruction wrought by the Nakba (the Palestinian Disaster, the expulsion of 1948), and the occupation and look forward to a new Palestine of freedom and peace.

Lamb Shank (Z'roa) - This symbolized the first sacrifice offered at the Temple for Pesach, in which every member of the community could participate and eat her fill. The Talmud states that the larger the gathering, the better. Remembering the Palestinian precept that no matter how brutal the occupation becomes, no one will die of starvation, we celebrate in the spirit of everyone having a place at the table. Ahlan Wa Sahlan!

Maror/Chazeret - This is symbolic of the bitterness of oppression. We call to our minds every Palestinian humiliated at a checkpoint, imprisoned without charge, tortured or forced into exile away from their home and family. As we remember the bitterness of oppression we remember the bitterness of privilege. We commit ourselves to shaking off the system that pits us against one another. We remember Israeli victims of Palestinian violence and acknowledge the anger and anguish of their families. May their memories be honored this year and not exploited by those in power to deprive Palestinians of their rights.

Haroseth - A mixture of apples, almonds, cinnamon and raisins, or dates reminiscent of the mortar the Israelites used to labor unfairly. We call to our minds every Palestinian, who because of economic necessity was forced to work building the Apartheid Wall or illegal settlements. We remember those deprived of work and the opportunity to feed their families because of the cruelty of occupation.

Orange (tappuz)- This is symbolic of women and queers' full participation in our communities and in Jewish ritual life. B'Ezrat HeShem

Olive - This symbol is a challenge to Jewish communities in the U.S. and around the world to become allies to Palestinians and contribute fully to a Middle East in which all are free to define the national character of the place in which they live. Inshallah!



The 15 Steps

The road from slavery to liberation is laid out by the sages for us in fifteen gradual steps, represented by the 15 sections of the seder. They are:

1. **Kaddesh** – blessing over wine
2. **Ur'chatz** – washing hands before the vegetable
3. **Karpas** - eating a piece of vegetable
4. **Yachatz** – breaking the middle matzah
5. **Maggid** – telling of the Exodus from Egypt
6. **Rach'tzah** - washing hands before the matzah
7. **Motzi** – the blessing over matzah as food
8. **Matzah** – the blessing over matzah as a special mitzvah
9. **Marror** - eating the bitter herbs
10. **Korech** - eating a sandwich of matzah and bitter herbs
11. **Shulchan Orech** – eating the festive meal
12. **Tzafun** – eating the afikomen
13. **Barech** - grace after meals
14. **Hallel** – psalms of praise
15. **Nirtzah** - conclusion

Kiddush

One of the key (and intoxicating) elements of the traditional Passover Seder are the mandatory four cups of wine. Spaced evenly throughout the Seder they punctuate major blocks of this elaborate ritual: beginning it (*Kadesh*), concluding the retelling of the Passover narrative (*Maggid*), concluding the blessing after the meal (*Barech*), and concluding praising God (*Hallel*). Although there are various explanations for the particular number of cups, most often cited is the correlation between the four cups and the “Four Expressions of Redemption” attributed to God in Exodus 6:6-7. There God pledges to redeem the Ancient Israelites from Egypt with the words “...*v'hoseiti... v'hesalti... v'gaalti... v'lakachti...*” - “...I will bring you out... I will free you ...I will redeem you ... I will take you ...” (N.I.V.) Thus, each cup captures one ingredient of the full redemption.

The Seder celebrates and relives a redemption in which the people were passive. In the four verbs used to describe the redemption God is the active subject and the people are passive objects. In fact, traditional rabbinic texts describe, at length, how the Ancient Israelites were undeserving of the redemption because they had forgotten about God.

Tonight however, we will not be celebrating a passive redemption, but learning from the lessons of Passover and committing ourselves to acting in the interests of justice and peace in the coming year. We will not merely be objects of redemption, but active participants in pursuing justice. Walking through our Seder we will declare our own four commitments to working for peace and justice for the Palestinian people. Through this Seder we will each reflect upon what needs to be done, what we can do, and what we must do in the coming year to “advocat[e for] peace through justice for Palestine and Israel. As we come to approach each of the four cups we invite you to write your own words of commitment.

In the traditional rabbinic calendar there are four New Years. Passover (The 15th of the Hebrew month of *Nissan*) being the new years for the Jewish People. As is customary, with the secular new years let us make resolutions for this coming year and find the strength and clarity to keep them.

Kadesh (the sanctification of time through a blessing on wine) is a standard part of almost every traditional Jewish ritual. At the Seder this first cup corresponds to the expression of redemption: “v’hoseiti” (“I will bring you out”).

Please consider the remarkable times in which we live and write your first declaration of commitment.

(Please fill in the line below with your own commitment)

“I commit to _____”



Here after participants have had time to write their own commitments we will rise and raise our glasses, full of wine. Individuals will call out their commitments (“I commit to ...”).

*As a group will say after them: **L’Chaim!***

Shehekhyanu

This is the Bracha recited when attempting something new for the first time. May we each tell new stories this year and take new steps in our commitment to justice.

*baruch Ata Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha-Olam,
shehekhyanu, veh'kimanu, veh'higgianu la zman ha zeh.*

*Blessed are You, O HaShem our eternal, guider/shaper of the universe,
Who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this festive season.*

Urchatz

Everyone can now wash their hands (pour water from a cup, twice on each hand). After washing, we say Ken Yehi Ratzon (Truly it shall be willed.) We call into our minds our commitment to end oppression and as we say Ken Yehi Ratzon, we recount the ways we must challenge our privilege in order to create a new world.

Karpas

Take the green vegetable and dip it in salt water. We call to mind the countless olive trees and citrus gone to waste, in Jayyous and through the Occupied Palestinian Territories, because of restrictions on Palestinian movement and Palestinian commerce. We remember the countless trees uprooted needlessly. We think about how the new growth of vegetables and other crops has been made bitter, as families in Jayyous and elsewhere remain on the other side of the wall, unable to cross. We remember those who have been beaten or arrested by soldiers and settlers only for trying to harvest their crops.

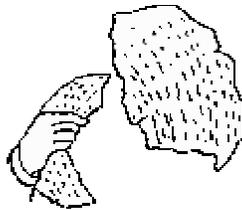
Boruch Ata Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha-Olam borei p'ri ha-adama.

Blessed are you O HaShem our eternal, guider/shaper of the universe who makes the fruit of the earth.



Yahatz

We break the middle Matzah, and put it aside to serve later as the Afikomen. Matzah symbolizes the bread not given time to leaven when the Israelites fled Egypt in haste. We remember those victims of the Nakba, the Disaster of 1948, the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians from their homes, forced to flee with only what they could carry on their backs. We will later find the afikomen and return it to the table, and envision a free Palestine, when a new generation will return to its land to create a society in which all people define the national character of the place in which they live.



~ Song ~

Bread of Affliction

Ha lakhma onya: The Aramaic words introduce the central image of Pesakh. This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

What does it mean to ingest our affliction year after year? And why is this bread, wolfed down as the Hebrews take flight, considered part of the affliction? It could just as easily been called the bread of liberation as it marks the moment of transition, of escape, of transformation. Why dwell on what's being left behind? Why not see this as the bread of promise and possibility?

I want to pursue this idea of matza as a mark of transition. Flat as a boundary, matza is a liminal food: It's what Jews ate at the critical moment when they were poised between an oppressed past and an open future. Bland and plain, without any taste of its own, matza is open to the projections we might want to heap onto it -- whether the sweet charoset or the bitter maror, whether crunchy peanut butter or mango chutney, or any combination of traditional or contemporary condiments we might need so we can taste our understanding of history.

But our tradition chooses to recognize matza as a sign of affliction, and perhaps its affliction is not the slavery itself -- an experience well marked by other symbols in the seder -- but the rush to escape. If you've ever tried to make bread without a tablespoon of yeast pulled out of your refrigerator, but instead by just letting the dough sit in the open air, collecting whatever yeast spores are in the atmosphere, you know how long the rising actually takes. Not a matter of hours -- but of days, maybe even a couple of weeks. So a process that should be slow, slow enough to draw in the elements around it in order to grow into something larger and sustaining, gets cut short. The Jews rush away with a bread so flat it has not absorbed the powerful natural agents that make it nourishing. In other words, some things take time. And if that time is not permitted to transpire, growth gets stunted. *Ha lakhma onya* -- this is the bread of affliction -- because our people did not have time to absorb the meaning of their experience or that of the place they were leaving behind. They acted fast, without reflection. Maybe they had no choice. But there were consequences: They wandered 40 years and when they arrived at Canaan, they went in as conquerors.

Jews rush today to defend our supposed interests. The Sharon government provokes Palestinian attacks and then answers every attack with a crackdown sure to produce yet more attacks. And the American Jewish community for the most part rushes to defend the indefensible. Consider those ads mainstream organizations often take out in the *Times* proclaiming "We Stand with Israel" and blaming every aspect of the current crisis on the Palestinians. That is the affliction: the narrowness, the hardened heart that are themes in this ritual -- and the rush to act and to act violently. It is a most destructive affliction.

Ha lakhma onya -- this is the bread of affliction and it challenges us to ask: What if we took time to absorb the ambient spores of experience that would let us grow and expand? What if we had to understand the conflict not through a lens of Jewish history that sees us as always the suffering victim of Jew-hatred, but from the point of view of a people dispossessed, oppressed, afflicted by us?

The matza -- flat, bland, and plain -- offers us a blank slate every year. Let us reclaim it as a symbol of transition, of the moment of change, of the opportunity to create a new vision. Let us refuse to let our past be an affliction, a baggage of suffering that Jews use to justify the affliction they cause others. Instead let us invoke this blank screen to project a vision, a vision of empathy and justice.

Alisa Solomon, with Marilyn Kleinberg Neimark, © 2005

How is tonight different from all other nights of Pesach?

1. On all other nights we tell our own stories, stories that we have been told, stories that we were raised with, stories of our oppression and liberation. Tonight, how will we tell stories that are painful to tell, the stories that have not been told, the stories we have not been taught, stories that shame us, stories that *must* be told?
2. On all other nights we strive for peace and justice, working with all of our strengths and energies. Yet tonight we commit ourselves to new work in creating a just world. Where can we find new strength and energy for our task, a task that will require breaking old habits and taking risks?
3. On all other nights the matzah and marror represent our own suffering, our own bitter oppression. Yet tonight how will they represent how we are responsible for the suffering of others, their bitter oppression?
4. On all other nights of Passover we recall our own liberation. Tonight, what lessons can we learn from our own liberation, and our own privilege to work with Palestinians for their freedom?



Maggid: The Telling

At this point in a traditional seder we come to maggid, the section where we tell the story of the exodus, as well as recounting stories of people talking about the exodus. A traditional seder is an experience of actively engaging with narrative, of reading, discussing, examining, reinterpreting and arguing about different perspectives and different histories. Tonight, we challenge ourselves by telling new stories. We acknowledge that part of this work involves breaking the hold the old stories have on us.

Maggid: Breaking the Cycle

One of the themes in the Book of Exodus is the oppression of the Israelites. Exodus tells us that the Israelites were the victims of a cruel slavery. This victimhood is stressed but, just as importantly, Exodus stresses the inner destructiveness that oppression breeds in both victims and perpetrators. The institution of slavery marks a society that is morally sickened. Forced labor and wanton cruelty sickens both the oppressors and those who are oppressed.

Liberation is not just physical but spiritual as well. Exodus emphasizes the moral failings of the Israelites. They were stubborn and impatient. The underlying cause of that moral failing is being brought up in the environment of oppression. The Israelites did not wander in the desert for 40 years because Moses refused to ask for directions. Rather, the Torah teaches us that God had the Israelites wander for 40 years so that the generation which would settle down would be free of the psychological stigma of slavery. God knew that those who suffered from oppression could stray all too easily into the role of the oppressor.

Tradition also teaches us that it is easy to dehumanize an adversary. The song of Miriam stands out as an example: When Miriam rejoices at the drowning of the Egyptians, God chastises the cheering Israelites, reminding them that the Egyptians are God's creation, just like the Israelites. The Torah repeats many times, emphasizing the importance of this lesson, "Do not oppress others as you yourselves were oppressed."

Because We Were Strangers in the Land of Egypt

"Jerusalem Shadow," 1985

peace is not an absence
victims are not ennobled
home is the storm's eye
unless the stranger too is welcome

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz

Let My People Go

April 29, 2005

You had to choose your demonstration carefully during this week of Passover. If you went to the one in Gaza or the northern West Bank, joining right-wing settlers to protest their imminent evacuation, your activities would be secured by Israeli soldiers and border police to protect you from the neighboring Palestinians – unarmed and simply waiting for the settlers to depart. If you went to the ultra-Orthodox demonstration against further construction of the new Highway 6 – allegedly set down on an ancient burial site – you could “throw rocks, bricks, metal rods and benches at the police” [Ha’aretz, 28 April 2005] with relative impunity.

On the other hand, if you attended yesterday’s demonstration against construction of the Wall at Bil’in, a Palestinian village in the Occupied Territories, you were in for a surprise. Not only were the demonstrators ferociously attacked by Israeli soldiers with stun grenades, tear gas, billy clubs, and bullets, but there were actual provocateurs spread among the demonstrators who deliberately set off the melee by goading the soldiers and hurling rocks at them.

.....

The demonstrators, mostly Palestinian villagers and some Israeli peace activists, were all committed to nonviolence and experienced in not giving the army a pretext for opening fire. They were there to plant olive trees. They did not throw stones.

The army claimed that their undercover agents threw stones to avoid revealing their identity, an absurd claim. First of all, the police code of conduct prohibits such unethical behavior. Secondly, demonstrators can choose their level of involvement, and no one is regarded with suspicion for hanging back from the front line of demonstrators. Clearly, this was a deliberate act of provocation by the army.

Sound like a scene from an old-fashioned despotic regime? This is part of the ongoing Israeli policy of zero tolerance for protest by Palestinians, in an effort to stifle dissent and resistance to the Israeli occupation. And don’t bother us with arguments about the right to protest; the “only democracy in the Middle East” stops at the checkpoints into the occupied territories.

And so, as we reach the end of Passover week, with its celebration of the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt thousands of years ago, it’s easy to sink into the myth and ignore reality. Occupation corrupts and brutalizes the occupier, shackling the oppressors to their need to control the oppressed. Let my people go.

Gila Svirsky, Coalition of Women for a Just Peace, Jerusalem

Maggid: Our Own Narratives

We will now take a step back to think about how certain stories and counterstories about Israel and Palestine have functioned in our own lives, and to think about active ways to engage with and shift those narratives.

The stories that we learn, are told, tell and retell about Israel and Palestine are tremendously important, because they directly affect how we see the present and how we envision the future. We have the power to retell these stories our ways, ways that they may not be told in public venues or in popular media or within large segments of the American Jewish community, and to shift those narratives. That's a crucial part of the work we do as Jews Against the Occupation. However, it is also important to acknowledge that this is hard work at times.

Here, at this seder, where different histories and stories and facts have been presented already, I think it's valuable to take some time to consider the narratives that we've been taught about Israel and Palestine, the ones we've explored and sought out ourselves and with others, and some of the implications of those stories. In pairs, please use the questions below to begin to consider these issues.

We'll take about 10 minutes to do this - and just as a note, we won't be sharing with the larger group, so anything you say will stay within your small discussion. You and your partner will probably have different opinions and experiences; please take this exercise as a time to listen respectfully, rather than to preach or to argue.

Questions for discussion and thought:

What were you taught about Israel and Palestine growing up?

How are your current views of the situation similar or different?

If there was one, talk about an experience that made you rethink something you had been taught.

In the process of thinking about and reconsidering these histories, what has been challenging or a struggle for you?

What is one thing that has been exciting for you, as you engage in telling and retelling narratives about Israel and Palestine for yourself and for others?



~ Song ~

The Ten Plagues

In the traditional story of Exodus it took ten plagues to finally convince Pharaoh to "let our people go." As we retell the story of the Exodus at the Seder, we remember these plagues but do not whole-heartedly celebrate them. We must mourn the suffering of the Egyptians, by removing a drop of wine from our cups for each of the plagues. Although we were greatly privileged by the plagues, as they brought us our freedom, it was at the expense of others, particularly the innocent Egyptians who were subject to the consequences of the Pharaoh's decisions. Tonight, we look to the plagues suffered by the Palestinian people, and we complicate our outrage and empathy by recognizing how we benefit, albeit involuntarily, from their suffering. We must acknowledge that as Jews and Americans we are tied to Israel politically and culturally and are privileged by Israel's actions.

1. **Poverty** - 75 % of the Palestinian population living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories lives under the poverty line (\$2 per person) and 30% of children under five suffer from malnutrition.
2. **The Wall** – denies Palestinians the ability to earn a living from their land, reach their schools, families, friends and work places, access adequate water supply, and reach essential health care. In Jayyous the Wall is built four miles east of the Green Line on Jayyousi land, cutting the people who live there off from their land.
3. **Water Shortage** - 75% of the Occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip renewable water resources are used by Israel and water supply in the West Bank and Gaza is frequently cut off by the Israeli military. In Jayyous, all seven village wells now lie on the Israeli side of the wall.
4. **Destruction of Olive Trees** – Olive trees have long since been a symbol of Palestinian culture and livelihood. Israeli military and settler violence, along with the construction of the Wall, have destroyed thousands of Palestinian olive trees. In Jayyous, construction crews from the nearby settlement Zufim recently bulldozed 650 olive trees belonging to Jayyous' farmers.
5. **Political Prisoners** – Palestinians from all walks of life have been illegally detained by Israel; it is an ever-present threat in the daily life of all Palestinians. Approximately 40% of Palestinian men have been detained. Since the beginning of this Intifada in September 2000, over 2500 children have been arrested. There are at least 750 Palestinians currently in Israeli prisons being held without charge or trial.
6. **Torture** - According to Israeli human rights organization B'tselem, more than 85% of Palestinian detainees are still being subjected to torture or ill-treatment during interrogations. This includes beating, kicking, humiliation, solitary confinement, and exposure to extreme heat and cold.
7. **Denial of Freedom of Movement** – The Wall, violently-enforced curfews, roadblocks, checkpoints and other forms of surveillance make even the most basic elements of daily life – like going to the store or for a walk – dangerous for Palestinians, and often makes getting to work, school or hospitals impossible.
8. **Refugees** –There are approximately five million Palestinian refugees throughout the world, the result of over 50 years of efforts of expulsion, starting with the Nakba.
9. **Settlements** –Despite Israel's pledge to freeze construction of illegal settlements under the "Road Map" agreement, settlement expansion and the network of "bypass roads" that connect them, continue to claim Palestinian land and escalate violence against Palestinian communities. In Jayyous, settlers from the Zufim settlement have thrown stones at Jayyous' farmers, beaten them, stolen their crops, and bulldozed their land.
10. **Language War** – We have been mis-educated: "A land without people for a people without land" are words that do violence, swiftly erasing Palestinian existence. In our families, in the media, and in our daily lives, we routinely hear Palestine talked about in ways that feed fear and racism.

Using New Language, Charting New Territory

I love the mail Nafez Assaily got, several letters delivered through the Israeli postal service, addressed to "Palestinian Center for the Study of Non-Violence, Occupied Jerusalem, Palestine via Israel." And the peace quilt from the Jewish children. I did not love the bumper sticker up on the wall, "Why not a Presbyterian State?" Such jokes feed Jewish fear.

I don't feel fearful, just unaccountably hurt. The Presbyterians have Scotland, were not decimated by one-third ever and especially not recently. Is forty years so long? Why can they remember their orange trees and not our terror? I have read that Palestinians educated on the West Bank and Gaza or in Arab countries learn nothing about the Holocaust. Literally, they don't know what it is.

In answer, Rita Giacoman's face, voice, flash into my mind: "I am very sympathetic to the suffering of the Jews in Europe, though I can never accept what was done to us to solve their problems."

For a moment I imagine hearts on both sides beating open, beginning to shed anger and feel grief: their own, each other's. The immense relief.

I breathe. Is this the first time I understand they were wronged?

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, from "I've been to Israel and to Palestine."

Exploring Narratives

For many of us, coming into our current political understanding involved being exposed to and seeking out other narratives about Palestine and Israel, narratives that may have not been as available or ubiquitous as the dominant Jewish and Israeli narratives. On the walls of this room we have pasted many personal narratives from Palestinians, Jews, and internationals who have experienced life and struggle in Palestine and Israel. Please take five minutes to read a few of these narratives. When you're done, return to your table and share with your tablemates one narrative or part of a narrative that struck you as meaningful or significant.

Dayenu

Dayenu, meaning "it would have been enough," is a rousing song that is also a synopsis of the Exodus story. The song tells of the gifts God has given the Israelites, from the Exodus to letting them enter the "Promised Land." Each verse tells of a gift and the chorus repeats – if God only gave us this, it would have been enough.

The word *dayenu* can also mean "we have had enough." We gather together tonight to say *dayenu*, *g'nug*, *chalas* - enough with the occupation. What is the power of saying, "enough"? **Can more of us say it, can we say it in a more unified voice, can we say it louder?**

For tonight's purposes, we have rewritten the Dayenu as a device to tell the narrative of the Nakba, the Palestinian Disaster of 1948, the mass expulsion of an estimated 750,000 Palestinians and the destruction of 530 villages, by Jewish forces. Contrary to the dominant Israeli narrative of the expulsion, most of these Palestinian refugees were forced to leave the villages before Arab armies entered Palestine.

Yet, the narrative of the Palestinian Disaster is suppressed and absent from the Jewish and Israeli cultural landscape. Only when Israel faces the narrative of the Nakba, will it be able to deal with its moral culpability in the events of 1948 and its responsibility to the refugees.

UN Resolution 194, adopted in 1948, established the Right of Return of Palestinian refugees, and states, "The refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted

to do so at the earliest practicable date...compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return."

Tonight, in the act of telling and remembering the Nakba narrative, we can start to move towards justice. After each verse, we will say together, "We should have said enough!"

When the Etzel and the Stern Gang massacred 250 Palestinians at Deir Yassin, outside of Jerusalem –
we should have said enough.

When in villages throughout Palestine, Jewish brigades implemented a procedure of expulsion:

When soldiers rounded up Palestinian men and massacred them collectively –

When other men were forced to dig their neighbors' graves –

When women and children were ordered to walk towards Arab countries, while Jewish soldiers fired shots over their heads –

we should have said enough.

When Palestinian men were forced into labor camps, where their labor included destroying Palestinian homes –

we should have said enough.

When on the Eve of Passover, in an operation called, "Cleaning Out Chametz" the Haganah shelled the Palestinian residential quarters of Haifa, forcing 70,000, 90% of the city's Palestinian residents, to flee –

When similar operations were carried out in Jaffa, Tiberias and Safad –

we should have said enough.

When the 10,000 Palestinian residents of Majdal, now Jewish Ashkelon, were enclosed for two years in a ghetto, or closed militarized area, and later forced on trucks and transferred to Gaza –

we should have said enough.

When the IDF forced the inhabitants of the cities of Lud and Ramle out of their homes at gunpoint and forced them to march west towards Jordan –

we should have said enough.

When, after villages were depopulated, they were obliterated by the IDF, houses and mosques bombed and bulldozed, all signs of former life destroyed –

When Palestinian homes were confiscated by Israel and repopulated with Jews –

we should have said enough.

When the Haganah used live fire to prevent villagers from returning to their homes –

we should have said enough.

When, in 2005, Israel continues to deny that the forced expulsions happened –

When Israel and the American Jewish community continue to deny the Right of Return to refugees of 1948

We say: enough!

Second Cup

How will we say enough, g'nug, dai?

For our second cup, please complete the statement below with your commitment.

"I commit to _____"



L'Chaim! To freedom!

In Struggle

"In kamf," or "in struggle" is one of the unofficial anthems of the Yiddish-speaking Jewish labor movements. Its author, Dovid Edelshtat, was born in Russia in 1866 to a fairly assimilated family. He learned Yiddish as an adult in order to reach more Jewish workers with his political and poetic writing. Edelshtat immigrated to the U.S. in 1882 and became one of the best-known Jewish anarchist writers and agitators, with his work set to music and sung around the world.

mir vern gehast un getribn
mir vern geyogt un farfolgt
un alts nor derfar vayl mir libn
dos oreme shmakhtnde volk

We have been hated and driven out,
we have been hunted and persecuted;
and all only because we love
the poor downtrodden people.

mir vern dershoshn, gehangen
men roybt undz dos leb'n un rekht
derfar vayl mir emes farlangen
un frayhey't far oreme knekht

We have been shot and hanged,
robbed of our lives and our rights,
and only because we clearly demand
freedom for downtrodden slaves.

shmit undz in ayzerne keytn
vi blutike khayes undz rayst
ir kent undzer kerper nor teytn
nor keyn mol undzer heylikn gayst

Shackle us in iron chains,
tear us apart like bloody beasts;
you can only kill our bodies
but never our precious spirits.

ir kent undz dermordn tiranen
naye kemfer vet brengen di tsayt
un mir kemfn mir kempfn biz vanen
di gantse velt vet vern bafrayt

You can murder us, tyrants,
but time will bring new fighters;
and we fight, we fight until
the entire world is freed.

Rachtzah

At this point in the seder, we wash our hands before the meal. We recall the well that followed Miriam through the desert and provided water for the Israelites in their wanderings. We recall that water is a precious resource in semi-arid Israel/Palestine. Water is a resource that like land, is occupied in Palestine.

Tonight we dedicate ourselves to free the water and the land for its inhabitants, so that "Justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." (Amos 5:24).

Motzi Matzah: Blessing Over the Matzah

Last year, I went to the Kosher bakery to pick up some dessert for the seder. They sold beautiful pesadika cakes which were indistinguishable from the chometz ones sold the rest of the year. I bought it and on my way home, I thought, "Is this the Bread of the Afflicted?" Strictly speaking, they were kosher since they didn't contain any forbidden ingredients. In essence, however, they were not.

Tradition tells us that one night of eating matzah is not enough because it does not reinforce the daily absence of foods of substance does not allow us to experience affliction. Matzoh is also the food of exile. This highlights the hardship of refugees who are driven from place to place at a moments notice. It also reminds us that people who work long hours for little pay do not have the luxury of preparing a nice meal. Lastly, the simplicity and lack of nutritional value of its ingredients reminds one of the jail regime on bread and water.

We eat these foods not just in remembrance of our ancestor's suffering, also as a reminder of those who currently suffer.

Eat a piece of matzah.

We dedicate ourselves to fight oppression, so that no one eats the bread of affliction, so that freedom is let to rise, like yeast, so that we may all be sated.

Maror: Blessing the Bitter Herb

We taste the maror, the bitter herb, to remind us of the bitterness of slavery, and of the bitterness of life under occupation.

As the bitter herb stimulates our senses, may it stimulate our empathy and solidarity.

Take five minutes to discuss with your tablemates:

What is sympathy? What is empathy? What is solidarity? Are they related? How does tasting the maror produce our empathy or solidarity?

Korech: Tasting the Bitter with the Sweet

We make a sandwich with both bitter maror and sweet charoset. There are two interpretations of this practice:

- A) Rashi has interpreted charoset to represent the mud of the bricks the Israelites used to build with as slaves. Charoset in Palestine is the cement that is building the Wall. With the charoset we taste the bitterness the Wall is causing and will cause until it is torn down.

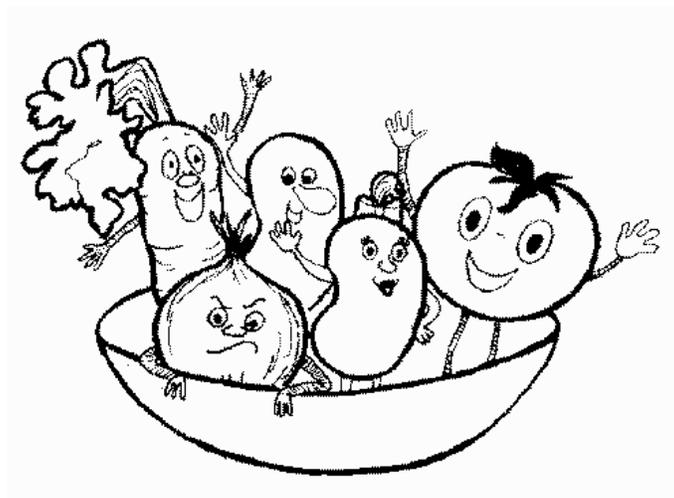
- B) The practice of combining the bitter and sweet suggests that part of the challenge of activism is to taste freedom even in the midst of oppression, and to be ever conscious of the oppression of others even when we feel that we are free.

Shulkan Orech ~ the Meal

The work of rewriting narratives is taxing. As we engage in our task of telling, shulkhan orech reminds us not to forget to eat. In our activism it is important not to forget our own sustenance, physical and spiritual.

We should also remember that the seder is a celebration - a celebration of freedom – both the freedom we have gained and the freedom we will gain for Palestine and for all people.

Enjoy!



~ Song ~

Tzafun: Finding and Eating the Afikomen

(Hold up the afikoman and take turns reading)

The afikoman is the last thing eaten at the seder. It is the matzoh we've broken apart, hidden, and will now bring back together to eat as a whole.

One commentary about this ritual says that the bringing together of the afikoman represents the reuniting of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Tonight, let us challenge ourselves about perceptions of such a unified whole.

Let us look to newspapers, TV news, web logs, where The Jewish View on Israel/Palestine is continually presented as one and the same. How often have we heard the conflation of 'good for Israel' and 'good for the Jews,' and how often do these go unquestioned?

Tonight, let us look at pieces both apart and together and commit to working toward wholes and also to working to preserve and cultivate the space for dissent, for difference, for nuance in our communities.

Tonight, let us remember that representations of 'the Jews' often don't include Sephardic Jews, Mizrahi Jews, poor Jews, immigrant Jews, queer Jews, Jews of color, secular Jews and most Jews who aren't Ashkenazic, U.S.-born, and middle-class. Let us resist describing our communities as unbroken and uncomplicated wholes.

Tonight we acknowledge the way that bringing up our struggles and questions about our relationship to Israel/Palestine can cause cracks and crumbings in our closest relationships, with family and loved ones.

Tonight, let us commit to not being afraid of saying the things that result in cracking. Let us hope to heal the breaks without erasing them, and to bring together a stronger whole. Let us ask questions of our families: about home, about resistance, about solidarity. About Israel, about occupation, about Palestine, about responsibility. Let us understand that a conversation with cracks in it can be the most liberating kind, the most strengthening and the most loving, even if it's scary.

(Before eating the afikoman)

The act of pulling out something that's been hidden, of bringing it to light, of feeling its texture, unmediated;

The way we take the issues and questions that are the most difficult, break them off, and file them away, hide them;

Tonight let us take note of one thing, one question we've hidden. Let us find it, hold it to the light, examine it, feel its texture. Let us promise to eat some of it before putting it away again. By saying it aloud, by writing it down, by raising a question, by not letting our internal struggles stay hidden but by honoring them as moments from which to learn and to act.

Elijah and Miriam: Vision and Sustenance

(point to the cups of Elijah and Miriam and face the door)

This is the moment in many haggadahs when Elijah and Miriam the prophets are welcomed and invited in to drink from these cups and to bring their strengths and gifts to our seder.

We invite Elijah in and we invite vision, visioning toward a liberated and liberating future; a Jewish community we can all feel a dynamic part of; and a just and free Palestine.

We invite Miriam in and we invite sustenance: the basic way that water sustains and regenerates us, so do new perspectives and voices that take risks.

Look around the room and notice who else is here with you. Think about a conversation you've had or will have with someone here during tonight's seder that will be a risk, that sustains and regenerates and looks toward a just future.

(sing together)

Eliyahu Hanavi
Eliyahu Hatishbi
Eliyahu Hageel'adee
Beem'hayrah beaming yavo eilaynu
Eem moshiach ben David

We Are The Magicians

By Tamara Cohen

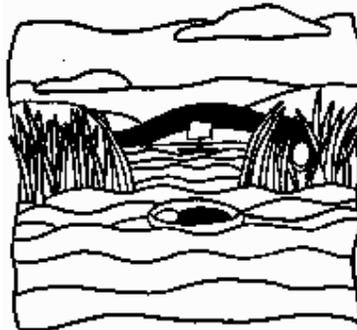
We are the magicians
it is more than staff into snake we seek.

We dream a sentence into life.

We must.

We are skilled in the kitchen
of language and longing
baking leftover letters
into nourishment
for our hungry.

Miriam you are our finest
patchwork kittel
dusty scraps from history's cutting floor
silk like grandmother's lips
and new truths ablaze
with laughing
and the murmur of girls
studying Talmud and dance.



Miriam we kiss your fringes
gulp down the water
we bless with your name.

Miriam, on this night we are free
Five thousand years of desert
and now everywhere wells.

Barekh: Blessing after the Meal

*Breekh rakhamana
Malka d'alma
Marei d'hai pita*

You are the Source of life for all that is and your blessing flows through me

Third Cup

What are our commitments to vision and sustenance?

Write below your commitment to celebrating and building our community of activists.

"I commit to _____"



L'Chaim! To community!

Hallel: Praise

In this section, songs and psalms are sung to express joy and praise. Use these, and add/teach your own.

Shalom Chaverim (Peace, friends)

Shalom Chaverim, Shalom, Shalom
L'hitra'ot, Shalom, Shalom

Pitchu Li

Pitchu Li, Sha'arei tzedek
Avo vam, odeh yah
Zeh ha sha'ar la'shem
Tzadeekeem yavo'oo vo

(Open to me the gates of justice, let me come in and give thanks to the Source, this is G-d's gate, let all who are righteous come in.)

Fourth Cup

Write below with your commitment to finding your own voice and using it, in songs of protest or otherwise, to bring about change.

"I commit to _____"



L'Chaim! To our voices!

Nirtzah: Conclusion, Commitment

Excerpted from "Next Year Where," by Jonathan Safran Foer from *Wrestling with Zion*.

I have heard the story of the Exodus from Egypt every year of my life. I've been told, again and again, about our enslavement, and the plagues, and the parting of the red sea. I've dipped my finger in the wine, and transferred a portion of the sweetness to my plate, in memory of all those throughout history who have had to suffer so that Jews wouldn't have to. Next year in Jerusalem, I can hear in my grandfather's voice, and in my father's. Next year in Jerusalem, I've said, again and again and again. That central trope of the Passover Seder, the moral of the story, has always fascinated me, in large part because I'm not sure what it means to me.

Of course there have been times - the times of our bondage - when Jerusalem was a logistical impossibility. But I proved that now it takes a little less than a thousand bucks, and a little more than ten hours on a plane. If we wanted to have our Seders in Jerusalem, if we wanted to live in Jerusalem, no more would be required than our efforts. This year in Jerusalem.

Perhaps the Jerusalem of next year isn't a place but an idea - an idealized place. Next year among that future generation of Jews - the Sauls, who are allowed to build the Temple, rather than the Davids, the Warrior Kings, who are forbidden from doing so. Next year in a perfect world.

The problem, though, is that the better place of next year is personalized to each of us. It would be impossible for us to coexist, next year, in the Jerusalem of next year, because our visions are different, and competing.

*

When I say, Next year in Jerusalem, to what place am I referring? What does it have to do with the grid that I saw from the tower, and the striations of civilization that I saw in the tunnel? And what about that banner, stating great offense? And what about the songs? Is there a place where my revulsion and love can coexist?

Next Year, Where?

The narrative of the haggadah takes us from slavery to liberation to 'next year in Jerusalem.' These last words of the seder are weighty ones: they may be troubling contemporarily, but they are also an opportunity - arguably, a demand - for us to vision our personal commitments, our personal 'next year's'.

Turn to a neighbor and talk for a few minutes about these questions:

What does your next year look like?

Where will you be, and with whom?

What commitments have you made tonight?

Next year where?



Jerusalem

By Naomi Shihab Nye

"Let's be the same wound if we must bleed.
Let's find side by side, even if the enemy
is ourselves: I am yours, you are mine"
-Tommy Olofsson, Sweden

I'm not interested in
who suffered the most.
I'm interested in
people getting over it.

Once when my father was a boy
a stone hit him on the head.
Hair would never grow there.
Our fingers found the tender spot
and its riddle: the boy who has fallen
stands up. A bucket of pears
in his mother's doorway welcomes him home.
The pears are not crying.
Later his friend who threw the stone
says he was aiming at a bird.
And my father starts growing wings.

Each carries a tender spot:
something our lives forgot to give us.
A man builds a house and says,
"I am native now."
A woman speaks to a tree in place
of her son. And olives come.
A child's poem says,
"I don't like wars,
they end up with monuments."
He's painting a bird with wings
wide enough to cover two roofs at once.

Why are we so monumentally slow?
Soldiers stalk a pharmacy:
big guns, little pills.
If you tilt your head just slightly
it's ridiculous.

There's a place in my brain
where hate won't grow.
I touch its riddle: wind, and seeds.
Something pokes us as we sleep.

It's late but everything comes next.

Contributors:

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Editors note: The process of compiling this haggadah was imperfect, at best. The haggadah project is a work-in-progress. We intend to refine and improve it for next year. Please get in touch with us to give us your ideas and suggestions for next year's improvements.

Your editors, Aviva Arad and Rachel Wile.

Jews Against the Occupation is an organization of progressive, secular and religious Jews of all ages throughout the New York City area advocating peace through justice for Palestine and Israel.

www.jewsagainsttheoccupation.org