



A JEWDAS

HAGGADAH

A Jewdas Haggadah

For diasporist seders

DIVINELY INSPIRED BY
RABBI GEOFFREY COHEN



PLUTO  PRESS

וַיֹּאמֶר יי סְלַחְתִּי כְּדַבַּרְךָ.



Adonai replied,

"I have forgiven as you have asked!"

Va-yomer

Adonai, salahti

ki-dvarekha

Lets start with Sh'hekhayanu...

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהַחַיִּנוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ
וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.



Barukh atah

Adonai, eloheinu

melekh ha-olam,

she-heheyanu

v'kiy'manu

v'higi-anu

la-z'man ha-zeh.

Blessed are you Adonai, our God, ruler of time and space, for granting us life, for sustaining us, and for bringing us to this moment.

Un mir zaynen ale brider,
oy, oy, ale brider,
un mir zingen sheyne lider,
oy, oy, oy!

And we are all brothers,
Oy, oy, all brothers,
And we sing nice songs,
Oy, oy, oy.

Un mir haltn zikh in eynem,
oy, oy, zikh in eynem,
azelkhes iz nishto bay keynem,
oy, oy, oy.

And we stick together,
Oy, oy, stick together,
As nobody else does,
Oy, oy, oy.

Un mir zaynen ale shvester,
oy, oy, ale shvester,
Azoy vi Rokhl, Rus un Ester,
oy, oy, oy!

And we are all sisters,
Oy, oy, all sisters,
As are Rachel, Ruth and Esther,
Oy, oy, oy.

Un mir zaynen ale eynik,
oy, oy, ale eynik,
Tsi mir zaynen fil tsi veynik,
oy, oy, oy!

And we are all united,
Oy, oy, all united,
Whether we are many or few,
Oy, oy, oy.

Un mir libn zikh dokh ale,
Oy, oy, zikh dokh ale,
Vi a kale mit a kale,
oy, oy, oy!

And we love each other,
Oy, oy, each other,
Like a bride with a bride,
Oy, oy, oy.

Un mir zaynen ale freylekh,
Oy, oy, ale freylekh,
Vi Yonassen un Dovid haMeylekh
Oy, oy, oy!

And we are all happy,
Oy, oy, are happy,
Like Jonathan and Kind David
Oy, oy, oy!

Un mir zaynen freylekh munter,
Oy, oy, freylekh munter,
Zingen lider, tantsn unter,
oy, oy, oy.

And we are happy and cheerful,
Oy, oy, happy and cheerful,
We sing and we hop around,
Oy, oy, oy.



First cup Kadeish קדש

A Blessing for the Earth

It's heartwarming, according to the photos on social media. Dolphins are coming back to the waterways of Venice. Elephants get drunk on corn wine and pass out in a field in China. Haggis once again roam free in Edinburgh, and Daleks can snake through London undisturbed.

Sadly, these stories aren't true, yet have been seized upon by a small faction of the environmental movement who call for authoritarian and even genocidal ideas to solve the climate emergency. Posts like "coronavirus is the vaccine, we're the virus" have brought a dangerous ideology to the forefront.

Humans aren't the virus but capitalism is. We know the climate emergency can only be justly solved when people are put over profit and when no human life is considered dispensable. We know those living in areas with the worst air quality- disproportionately working class and ethnic minority communities- are the most vulnerable to COVID-19.

For those of us lucky enough to be able to go outside once a day, nature is a lifeline right now, even if pollen really needs to read the room and consider taking a year off. We drink this cup of wine in honour of the earth which sustains us, and commit to fighting to liberate it from the oppression of capitalist exploitation. We say a hearty Shekoyach to those fighting in the climate movement, despite how relentless the fight is, and pledge ourselves to join the fight too, because we literally have no other choice if we want to survive.

Brucha at yah, eloheinu Ruach ha'olam, boreit pri hagafen

To the Earth! L'chaim! To life!



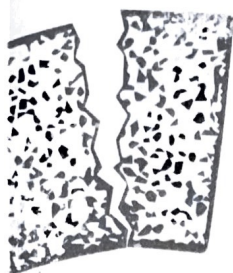
Hand washing

Urchatz ורחץ

Normally we begin the seder by washing our hands in silence, without a blessing. This year, we have all become experts in effective handwashing technique, and it no longer feels like a ceremonial act.

In tonight's silence we reflect on those forced to continue working in unsafe, insecure, and exploitative conditions during this pandemic. From NHS staff, to those employed in warehouses, public transport and the postal service, we refuse to accept the idea that workers' lives are disposable.





Yachatz יחץ

~ Virtual Afikomen ~

הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיא דִּי אָכְלוּ אַבְהַתָּנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.
כָּל דְּכָפִין יִיְתִי וְיִיכֹל, כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ יִיְתִי וְיִפְסַח.
הַשְׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל.
הַשְׁתָּא עַבְדֵּי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין.

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

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

Anyone who is hungry should come and eat

Anyone who is in need should come and join our seder.

Now we are here, next year we will be in the land of Israel;

This year we are slaves, next year we will be free people

a prayer for the diaspora

ELPHABA MOND

Shekhinah

Great Mystery

Universe and That which holds you in place,

we thank you for this abundant planet - your own palm of blessing,

we thank you for this world, our home, that is given with such love and devotion.

we stand in the open fields of diaspora and know we are blessed

diaspora from the time before we can remember,

from the pool of the womb,

from the lands we were forced from
and the lands we choose

where we have come from has blurred,
but our roots emerge like wings
wherever we find ourselves

and we are learning along the way
that where we come from and where we
are cannot be separated,
they dance together like the dust of
the earth
from which we came.

We trust in these winged roots

We trust in this dust.

our family scattered like holy rain, river-veins kissing
the skins of the spinning earth,

we are like these flowing rivers of not knowing
but all the same,

leaping, like the salmon towards the source

and the source is you Great Mystery, goddess of courage,
of journeying and justice, of apples plucked from the
Sacred Sheffield tree.

We cannot go back to the womb so we sit under this
tree where we find ourselves
remembering our journey is through time and not space.
and Time will never make an exile of us.
And so we live, flames in holy time

Great Mystery may you bless this family, all of us, finding our
way through this earth-dream,
dear goddess,
please, hold us in your tiny palm of our great green and
tiny planet

Let us make holy home on the road,
in deep family with our neighbours,
under the tree,
of all creed,
creature
and species
safe, celebrated, befriended

and may our diaspora, cold, mossy, green
rainfilled be our peace
may we seek peace
may we know peace
may we be the keepers of peace

wrap us in your diaspora,
oh Mystery,
so we may be home
wherever we land
keep us safe in your Time
remember us.



מגיד Maggid

INTRODUCTION

We're here, at the maggid, or the story telling. This is the highlight of the seder: the charoset of a hillel sandwich. Not only because it has major potential for radical, topical rewrites, but also because the story was made for lefty diasporas.

Standing up to oppression, the failure of liberal diplomacy, collectivisation, increasingly radical direct action, awkward leadership, fun waterside drumming and a long march. Tick tick tick!

Yet if your early Jewish education was anything like ours, the story of Exodus was disappointingly literalised. Look what the goyim always do to us? As soon as you get a whiff of antisemitism, get the fuck out, and by the way your final destination should be Israel. Hmm, bit revisionist?

Tonight, even more than on all other nights, we revel and delight in collective liberation. In staying put exactly where we are until the struggle is over (apart from going on Birthwrong). In coming together with other oppressed peoples with strong hands and outstretched arms. In overthrowing capitalism. In liberating all of us. In escalating direct actions and vigorously debating the use of violence and/or menstrual blood. In our unity with all humanity and life on earth. In our capacity for peace, justice and freeing ourselves. And in our capacity to go more than a week without beigels.

4 AND 20 QUESTIONS

We kick off the maggid by asking some questions

Judaism loves the number four. So in addition to the traditional 4 questions, we've given you four more sets of Four Questions, for whatever Passover situation you may find yourselves in.

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל
הלילות?

What differentiates this night
from all nights?

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ
ומצה, הלילה הזה – כלו מצה.

On all nights we
eat chameitz and matzah; this
night, only matsa?

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר
ירקות – הלילה הזה (כלו) מרור.

On all nights we eat
other vegetables; tonight
(only) maror.

שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין
אפילו פעם אחת – הלילה הזה

On all nights, we don't dip,
even one time; tonight twice.

שתי פעמים. שבכל הלילות אנו
אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין –
הלילה הזה כלנו מסבין

On other nights, we eat either
sitting or reclining; tonight we
all recline

THE FOUR QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

Why is my ex texting me?

When was the last time I showered?

Why am I not using this time to write my masterpiece?

Will this ever be over?



4 The four comrades

The wise comrade asks:

‘but what does karl marx actually say we should do?
How do we bring about communism?’

This is a good comrade. You should immediately assign them all your union’s organisational and admin tasks.

The wicked comrade asks:

‘what are you even doing? This is pointless, what about human nature, history has proven communism doesn’t work, jeremy corbyn is unelectable. What would the revolution do for me?’

Notice how they say for ‘me’ and not for us. This douchebag is not your comrade. According to the rabbis and chabad.org, you should ‘blunt their teeth’.

The simple comrade asks:

‘if what you are doing is good, why do you cover your faces in front of the police?’

This comrade is still a comrade and you should be patient with them. You should remind them all cops are bastards and point them to reporting about undercover cops, falsified evidence and abuse of power. Then sing daloy politsey at them until they join in.

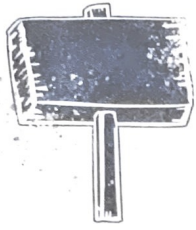
The comrade who does not know how to ask

This is probably because some overconfident white men (and probably a few privately educated white women) are dominating the whole conversation. You should tell the people who are taking up too much space that they are taking up too much space, and buy some more wine. Wine relaxes people and then the comrades who haven’t spoken yet might. Also ask them if they want to speak.



Uncover the motzot and raise the
seder plate, read out loud:

My mother was a wondering Geoffrey.
She went down to Finchley with meagre
numbers and sojourned there; but she
became a great and very populous satirical
blog. The Jewish community dealt harshly
with us and oppressed us; they imposed
supermarket 'bagels' upon us. We cried out
to Adonai, the God of our ancestors, but
Adonai was taking a nap or something.
So we cried out to our fellow Geoffreys
and we heard each others' pleas, saw our
plight, our misery and our oppression. We
freed ourselves by a mighty hand, by an
outstretched beigel and awesome power, and
by banners and stickers, bringing ourselves
out to these places and sharing the land, a
land flowing with salt beef and pickles.



The story

In the haggadah we are instructed to tell the story of the Exodus as if we ourselves had been there in Egypt. Most seders focus on the famous parts of the Exodus story: the working conditions imposed upon the Israelites by Pharaoh, the ten plagues and the escape across the Red Sea into the desert. They leave out the less well-known parts, such as when the Israelites successfully nationalised healthcare in Ancient Egypt, ensuring that healthcare was publically funded, publically provided and free at the point of use. The midrash of how the Ancient Israelites came together with working class Egyptians to organise direct action to stop the government dumping toxic waste into the Nile is also ignored by most mainstream Jewish communities.

10 Plagues of the Plague

The Lord decided to strike the earth, not because we had been naughty because that reasoning sounds a bit eco ~~lash~~, but just because he could or something. But he did give Geoffrey a heads up.

1. The Lord said to Geoffrey, "I will strike the working culture of the UK, and it will be changed into working from home. The safety of your room in your house will die, and the benefits of going to your office will stink, like the food your flatmate makes at THREE IN THE MORNING; the British will not be able to use its utensils even though they are in a draw clearly labelled."
2. Then the Lord said, "I will send a plague of Landlords on your whole country. The UK will teem with landlords. They will come up into your flats and your bedroom and onto your bed, into the houses of your key workers and on your people, and into your kitchens and living rooms to show people around when you just want to have dinner and watch Netflix. The landlords will come up on you and your people and all your officials."
3. Then the Lord said, "throughout the land of the UK the citizens will become snitches watching to see if you're going out for another cigarette and does this count as another excursion?"
4. Then the Lord said, "I will send swarms of Tories on you and your mutual aid groups, on your people and into your community support groups. The informal support networks of the British will be full of Tories; even the charities will be covered with them. But on that day, I will deal differently with the land of Anarchism, where my people live; no swarms of Tories will be there, so that you will know that I, the Lord, am in this land."
5. Then the Lord also said "The hand of the Lord will bring a terrible plague of bootlicking on your media in the country—on your Times, Independent and Sky and on your BBC, ITV and Channel 4. But the Lord will make a distinction between the media of Britain and that of the Jewish Community, so that - no oh no that's pretty shit too."
6. The Lord then said to Geoffrey, "Take handfuls of soot from a furnace and toss it into the air. It will become fine antisemitism over the whole land of Egypt, and festering racism will break out on people and social media throughout the land."
7. Then the Lord said "this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. Give an order now to bring your friends who aren't white to a place of shelter, because the p will fall on every person and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die."
8. Then the Lord said, "I will bring self-righteous social media comments about not having been outside for weeks which I'm sure is so hard with four bedrooms three toilets a conservatory and garden into your newsfeed tomorrow. They will cover the face of the timeline so that it cannot be seen. They will devour what little respect for liberals you have left after the election, including every labour centrist friend that you thought you could make a little more left. They will fill your screens and those of all your friends and all the British—something neither your parents nor your ancestors have ever seen from the day they settled in this land till now."
9. Then the Lord said (almost finally if you lost count) Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that meaningless thanks and actions for the NHS spreads over the country—actions that can really not be felt." So, Geoffrey stretched out his hand toward the sky, and clapping covered all the UK every Thursday. No one could see anything else or scroll on social media for three days. Yet somehow other countries had fully funded health services in the places where they lived.
10. And finally, this bit is over, and the Lord said, "I will go throughout the UK. Every small business in the country will die, from the charity founded by well-meaning liberals, who live in the south east, to the sole trader of the north, who is at their white van, and all the employees of big businesses as well. There will be loud wailing throughout the UK—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. But among the big corporations not a job will be lost by any stakeholder.' Then you will know that the government makes a distinction between normal people and big business. |

Ten plagues to overthrow Pharaoh

We recite the ten plagues at the seder, spilling a drop of wine for each one. This maintains the communal memory of what to do if ever again we are enslaved by Pharaoh.

דָּם Blood

צְפַרְדֵּי Frogs

כִּנִּים Lice

עֲרֹב Wild animals

דָּבָר Cattle disease

שֹׁחִין Boils

בָּרָד Hail

אֲרֵבָה Locusts

חֹשֶׁךְ Darkness

מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת Death of the first born

Dayenu

אלו הוציאנו ממצרים, דינו.
Ilu hotzianu mimitzrayim. Dayenu.
Had God only brought us out of Egypt. Dayenu.
ולא נתן לנו את השבת, דינו.
Ilu natan lanu et hashabbat. Dayenu.
Had God only given us Shabbat. Dayenu.
ולא נתן לנו את התורה, דינו.
Ilu natan lanu et hatorah. Dayenu.
Had God only given us the Torah. Dayenu.
ולא הכניסנו לארץ ישראל, דינו.
Ilu natan lanu et hatorah. Dayenu.
Had God only brought us into the land of Israel.
Dayenu.

Dayeinu: Enough.

If we had only done our part and stayed home to slow the spread, dayeinu.

If we only wash our hands for 20 seconds and can't remember all the hip new songs we're supposed to sing while doing so, dayeinu.

If we only had one post-work Zoom call to socialize onscreen, dayeinu.

If some days we manage to educate our children, but ALL days we manage to keep them fed, dayeinu.

If we put on real pants more than twice a week, dayeinu.

If we stave off the creeping anxiety long enough to binge a Netflix show or experiment with some fancy new recipe or download Duolingo and tell ourselves we're finally going to learn that language dangit!, dayeinu.

If we made even one special Passover dish when we cannot invite guests to celebrate with us, dayeinu.

If we only cry out that freedom is essential for all people, and crunch some bread of affliction, and acknowledge our dissatisfaction with the imperfect world we live in... dayeinu.

If we do something productive with our frustration, dayeinu.

If we are still here, still seeking connection, still flattening the curve, still frustrated, still hopeful, still breathing - dayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu.

By Beth Kander



Second Cup

A BLESSING FOR STRANGERS

Throughout the Torah, we are commanded to be good to strangers, because we were strangers in the land of Egypt. Tonight is all about remembering that history, of what it is to be an outsider, an other in a narrow place and the struggle to be liberated from persecution, exploitation and narrow mindedness. We drink this glass of wine in solidarity with migrants who are still wandering and trying to find a place they can call home and be free. We drink also in solidarity with all strangers, with all the weirdos at our own table, and in defiance of what society tells us is normal and acceptable.

ברוך אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch atah A-donay, Elo-heinu Melech Ha'Olam borei pri hagafen.
Blessed are You Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, Who creates
the fruit of the vine



Hand washing רחצה Rachtzah

We have grown used to washing our hands a lot at the moment. Tonight as we repeat this action once more in the midst of fear and uncertainty, we recall the words of Kohenet Dori Midnight:

'We are humans relearning to wash our hands.
Washing our hands is an act of love
Washing our hands is an act of care
Washing our hands is an act that puts the hypervigilant body at ease
Washing our hands helps us return to ourselves by washing away what does not serve.'

The second hand washing reminds us of the responsibility we all have to look after each other, and the power of collective care.

We are especially reminded of the kinship we have with our Romani siblings, who share our traditions around handwashing, and for whom clean hands represent a clean soul. May we amplify their voices, and stand alongside them to fight discrimination and prejudice.

ברוכה את שכינה אלוהינו רוח
העולם, אשר קדשתנו במצותיה
וצותנו על נטילת ידיים

Berucha at Shekhinah, Eloteinu Ruach Ha'Olam, asher kidshatnu
bemitzvotaha v'tzivatnu al netilat yadayim.

Blessed are You, Shekhinah Our Goddess, who has given us many
sacred works to do, including cleansing ourselves of ideas which
oppress us and others, and making visible that which has been erased.

Dori Midnight

We are humans relearning to wash our hands.
Washing our hands is an act of love
Washing our hands is an act of care
Washing our hands is an act that puts the hypervigilant
body at ease
Washing our hands helps us return to ourselves by
washing away what does not serve.

Wash your hands
like you are washing the only teacup left that your
great grandmother carried across the ocean, like you
are washing the hair of a beloved who is dying, like
you are washing the feet of Grace Lee Boggs,
Bevonce, Jesus, your auntie, Audre Lorde, Mary
Oliver- you get the picture.
Like this water is poured from a jug your best friend
just carried for three miles from the spring they had to
climb a mountain to reach.
Like water is a precious resource
made from time and miracle

Wash your hands and cough into your elbow, they say.
Rest more, stay home, drink water, have some soup,
they say.
To which I would add: burn some plants your
ancestors burned when there was fear in the air,
Boil some aromatic leaves in a pot on your stove until
your windows steam up.
Open your windows
Eat a piece of garlic every day. Tie a clove around
your neck.
Breathe.

My friends, it is always true, these things.
It has already been time.
It is always true that we should move with care and
intention, asking
Do you want to bump elbows instead? with everyone
we meet.

It is always true that people are living with one lung,
with immune systems that don't work so well, or
perhaps work too hard, fighting against themselves. It
is already true that people are hoarding the things that
the most vulnerable need.

It is already time that we might want to fly on airplanes
less and not go to work when we are sick.

It is already time that we might want to know who in
our neighborhood has cancer, who has a new baby,
who is old, with children in another state, who has
extra water, who has a root cellar, who is a nurse, who
has a garden full of elecampane and nettles.

It is already time that temporarily non-disabled people
think about people living with chronic illness and
disabled folks, that young people think about old
people.

It is already time to stop using synthetic fragrances to
not smell like bodies, to pretend like we're all not
dying. It is already time to remember that those scents
make so many of us sick.

It is already time to not take it personally when
someone doesn't want to hug you.
It is already time to slow down and feel how scared we
are.

We are already afraid, we are already living in the time
of fires.

When fear arises,
and it will,
let it wash over your whole body instead of staying
curled up tight in your shoulders.
If your heart tightens,
contract
and expand.
science says: compassion strengthens the immune
system
We already know that, but capitalism gives us amnesia
and tricks us into thinking it's the thing that protect us
but it's the way we hold the thing.
The way we do the thing.

Those of us who have forgotten amuletic traditions,
we turn to hoarding hand sanitizer and masks.
we find someone to blame.
we think that will help.
want to blame something?
Blame capitalism. Blame patriarchy. Blame white
supremacy.

It is already time to remember to hang garlic on our
doors
to dip our handkerchiefs in thyme tea
to rub salt on our feet
to pray the rosary, kiss the mezuzah, cleanse with an
egg.
In the middle of the night,
when you wake up with terror in your belly,
it is time to think about stardust and geological time
redwoods and dance parties and mushrooms
remediating toxic soil.
it is time
to care for one another
to pray over water
to wash away fear
every time we wash our hands

Gaza and Covid-19

Telling the story of our ancestors' liberation from Egypt is a stark reminder of the oppressive and violent powers that continue to destroy lives. When we turn our prayers to the liberation of Palestine during our seder, every year there are new atrocities of the Israeli occupation for us to commit ourselves against. This year is no different.

As we've seen in the UK, epidemics expose existing power structures and threaten the lives of the most vulnerable in society the most. Applying this globally, Palestinians in Gaza are some of the most vulnerable people on the planet to Covid-19. 2020 is the year the UN described the Gaza Strip as becoming "uninhabitable", and that was before Coronavirus.

As of 7 April the UN had reported 13 confirmed cases in the Gaza Strip. This small number presents a major threat to a population of two million, including almost one million children, crammed into a tiny strip of land where social distancing is near impossible. After three recent wars, UNRA cuts and more, the health care system in Gaza is decimated; Palestinians in Gaza die on a daily basis, not just by military violence but from treatable conditions that also make them more vulnerable to Covid-19. 98% of the water supply is contaminated, meaning measures such as hand washing are less effective.

Despite the need for solidarity and compassion more than ever during this global pandemic, Apartheid Israel remains committed to the violent occupation and relentless programme of demolitions, raids, incarceration, and theft. Now and before, Israel does this all in the name of Jews. As Jews all over the world recommit themselves to freedom and justice this Passover, we continue to grapple with this distorted claim.

As the world struggles against COVID-19, we promise to extend our solidarity to the people of Gaza

- We must continue to call on our governments and politicians to lift the siege
- We must continue to amplify voices from Gaza (*look up: We Are Not Numbers, network of writers in Gaza*)
- Donate to NGOs, if we can, which have access to Gaza and can get medical equipment in. (UNRWA, Medical Aid for Palestinians, DCI Palestine and Palestine Children Relief Fund (PCRF))

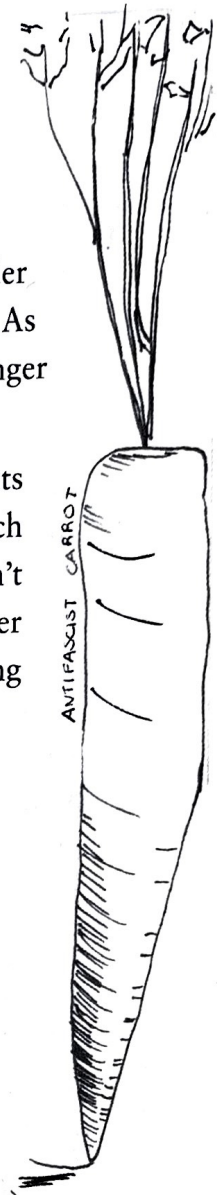
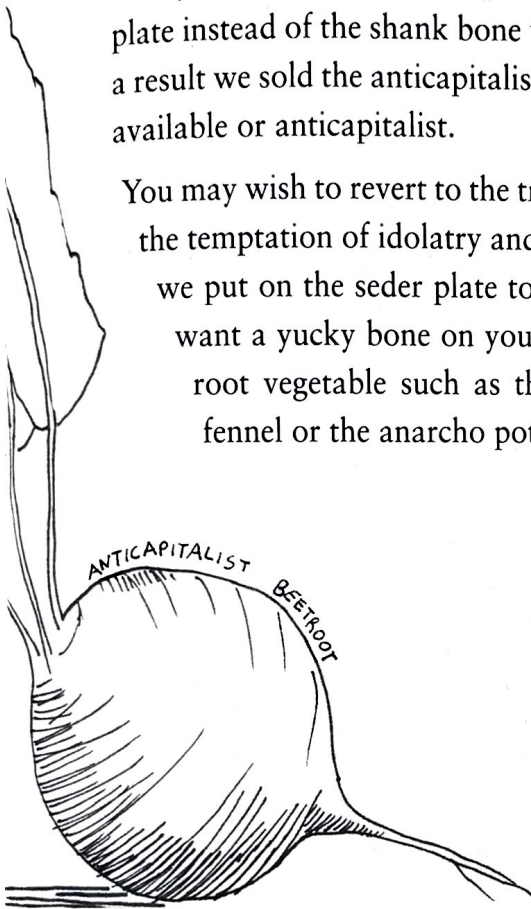
May we all pass safely through. Next Year in Jerusalem! Next Year in al-Quds! Next year in a City of Peace!





ANTICAPITALIST BEETROOT

Last year the Jewdas anticapitalist beetroot that we had on our seder plate instead of the shank bone was made famous by the Daily Mail. As a result we sold the anticapitalist beetroot online, and it is now no longer available or anticapitalist.

You may wish to revert to the traditional shank bone which represents the temptation of idolatry and therefore consumer capitalism, which we put on the seder plate to remind us that it's gross. If you don't want a yucky bone on your seder plate, then please pick another root vegetable such as the antifascist carrot, the anti-fracking fennel or the anarcho potato.



*Please raise your chosen symbolic food in the air and shake it
like a lulav, march to your nearest bank and throw
it through the window and shout*

 fuck capitalism. 

(the world is literally gonna die by 2040, we don't have
time to fuck around this year)



Bareich בָּרֵךְ

Brich rachamana

Malka D'alma

M'arei

D'hai pita

Oh God prepare me
To be a revolutionary
Bold and tender
Tried and true
And with each other
We'll build another
World together
For me and you

Lyrics by Margot Seigle



Third cup

A BLESSING FOR SURVIVAL

We've made it this far, the seder is almost finished, and nobody's mentioned coronavirus yet.

If someone at your seder has already mentioned coronavirus, you've lost the seder. Do not pass go, do not make a hilarious tiktok video. Put down the beetroot and start the whole thing again from the beginning. This time, don't mention the global pandemic until you get to this cup of wine.

As Pesach reminds us, Jewish history is full of stories of persecution and liberation. It is a heritage of survival, resilience, and resistance. But trauma cannot be healed quickly, even by finding meaning in stories of survival. After liberation from Egypt, the Jews had to wander in the desert for 40 years before reaching the promised land. Why? The Uber Rebbe explains that a person's political consciousness - and therefore their horizon of the possible - is largely dictated by their class position (Manifesto of the Communist Party, tractate 2, daf 25). What could a people forged in the master-slave dialectic offer its children but a sense of fear, inferiority, subservience? A generation had to pass and new foundations built in a society without a slave class before the Israelites no longer carried the trauma from their former society. In this sense, their trauma consisted not only of what was done to them but also of what they had to participate in, in order to survive as slaves. In our modern capitalist era, where we are at once oppressed and participating in oppression, there is rarely the opportunity to wander in the desert together. And yet here we sit on-screen, in front of each other: alone but not alone; in exile but together. And outside, the horizons of the possible expand. Neighbours who never spoke before are helping each other with the most basic necessities of life, people are finding joy in their local streets and parks instead of using polluting planes and cars, those who were low-skilled in Purim are acknowledged now as key workers, and policies that were radical in Chanukah are now labelled essential by the sycophants of the masters of today. Worldwide, our generation bears the deepest scars of capital. We are over-worked, under-paid, poisoned, polluted, privatized, pensionless, asset-stripped, asset-poor, and our asses are on the front lines of catastrophic climate change and crypto-fascist governments. Unfolding around us now are the consequences of the era of industrial capitalism which, far from over, are carried forward and inflicted on the people of the world. But still, in this moment, we sit in exile together, with the horizons of what's possible expanding while the world that forged us falls under the weight of its own contradictions.

So let us raise this third cup of wine in solidarity with all peoples still suffering persecution and oppression, and commit to stand with them in their struggles. We celebrate our past survival as a nation and we celebrate the impending survival of a world with a capitalist past and a socialist future.

ברִּינָכָה אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוֹחַ הָעוֹלָם בְּיִרְאָת
פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

B'rukha At Yah Eloheynu Ruakh ha'olam boreyt p'ri hagofen

You are blessed, Our God, Spirit of the World,
who creates the fruit of the vine

הלל Hallel

Ozi v'zimrat Yah vay'hi li lishuah

עֲזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה וְיִהְיֶה לִּי לִישׁוּעָה

If I had the strength
I would run through the streets
And I would cry out peace, peace, peace

Volt ikh gehat koyekh,
Volt ikh gelofn in di gasn,
Volt ikh geshrign sholem, sholem, sholem

וואָלט איך געהאַט כּח
וואָלט איך געלאָפֿן אין די גאַסן
וואָלט איך געשריגן שלום, שלום, שלום

ELIJAH'S CUP

(open the door to see if Elijah is outside, and raise Elijah's cup)

We are taught that Elijah will come just before the coming of the messianic age (read: revolution) to forewarn us. This seems a bit passive to us, as we tend to believe that ha'olam haba will come about by a lot of organising, campaigning and working.

So, if Elijah does turn up we will celebrate, not because the ha'olam haba will be any closer (that is in our hands anyway), but because we'll have an extra person on board to help us organise.

Raise the cup: To the end of capitalism, to renationalisation of many things, to communism, to the future

MIRIAM'S CUP

We raise a cup to Miriam and to all the women and non-binary people who have been silenced by our traditions. With this cup we acknowledge their work in building our traditions and commit to telling their stories.

Raise the cup: To all the great women and non-binary people who wove our past, create our present and who build for tomorrow

GEOFFREY'S CUP

We raise a cup to our struggle with the Jewish establishment, to smashing the hierarchies within anglo-Jewry, to making liberal Zionists feel uncomfortable. With this cup we honour all the mischief that we have made and all the mischief that we will make.

Raise the cup: To diasporism, to heresy, to singing out of time and out of tune, to communal broiges, (insert your own here)

To Geoffrey!



Fourth cup

Most years during Seder, this one included, we consider the many people who currently and historically are still struggling for freedom.

This year is unique in that we are also each facing various levels of additional restrictions to the liberties we are used to enjoying. As many of us spend an uncomfortable amount of time at home, it's important to reflect on the inhumanity of incarceration and confinement. We think about our ancestors hiding in small spaces, the sweatshop workers living ten to a room, and those now in prisons or immigration detention who are facing huge risk as they are forced to remain in close quarters. And while we all recognise the urgent measures necessary to combat a pandemic, it's worth considering what powers and practices are becoming normalised during these extreme circumstances. The security measures of today are the surveillance tools of tomorrow.

All this said, thinking about the pain and suffering in the world, about how few people in it are actually really free, is exhausting, and itself can become a prison. As we raise this glass, we allow ourselves a moment of freedom from the constant struggle, a moment to celebrate everything that has already been achieved, and a moment to imagine the liberatory futures yet to come, even though there is still so much more to be done.

ברִּוּכָה אַתְּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ רוּחַ
הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא תְּפִילָּה

B'rukha At Yah Eloheynu Ruakh ha'olam boreyt p'ri hagofen

You are blessed, Our God, Spirit of the World,
who creates the fruit of the vine

Nirtzah נרצה

Next year, in a world where we can be physically together. Next year when we can sing all together, our voices intertwining increasingly out of tune and out of time as the night goes on.

Next year in a world when we can hug our comrades hello and goodbye, and in the middle just because. Next year in a world where we once again stress about if we have enough food and enough chairs for everyone.

Next year in a world where we don't have to look at our face every time we have a social interaction outside our household.

Next year in a world where we can walk outside with no purpose, and see people for no reason other than we wanted to see their face. Next year in a world where we meet new people in person again, and we learn new people's body language, and we welcome new people into our lives. Next year in a world where we can all start getting laid again.

And maybe not next year- but the year after, or maybe it will even have to be the year after that- in a world where nobody flinches when somebody leans in for a hug. In a world where holding hands will feel like the most natural thing in the world. In a world where we can squeeze into crowds at a pub or a concert or a rush hour tube and not feel anxiety. In a world where things are so normal again that we take all these things for granted, and it only occasionally enters our memory that these things were once forbidden, and when it does, we hug each other extra tight.

Next year in a world that doesn't forget some things. Next year in a world where Wetherspoons finally goes under for treating its staff like shit and a cheap worker owned co-op springs up in its place. Next year in a world that recognises everyone's right to housing, to healthcare, to clean air, to a livable income, to love, to social interaction, to being connected.

Next year- wherever- just for the love of God not on fucking Zoom.

L'Shana Haba'ah B'Yachad!

The Passover seder has been completed, according to all its rules and regulations which, as devotees of Rav Geoffrey, we have dutifully satirised, dissolved, lampooned, re-written and re-made for the sake of collective liberation.

Just as we merited this gathering, so may we and all who inhabit this Earth merit to live in a world in which all systems of oppression have been dissolved. Shekhinah, raise us up in our collective struggle.

Bring near the day when all of Your people feel rooted enough to rejoice in Diaspora, having built solidarity with one another and all the peoples of the Earth.