



TI PASSOVER 2024/5784

SUGGESTED SEDER READINGS & IDEAS

Illustration by Michel Kichka, "Kibbutz Be'eri, *Darom Adom*: Kibbutz Be'eri, the Red South." This illustration is a tribute to Kibbutz Be'eri from early settlement days to the red poppy flowers which blossom near the Israel-Gaza Border. Created in October 2023 as part of "Wrapping Memory," the Bezalel Academy's memorial tribute to communities attacked on October 7.

WE STAND  WITH ISRAEL!

How is this Passover different from all other Passovers?

At Passover seders each year, family and friends gather to tell the ancient Jewish story of freedom and liberation, to ask questions inspired by our tradition, and to express hope for a world of greater wholeness and peace. As we gather for Passover, we pray for the safe return of those held hostage, and our hearts break for all those who suffer.

This year, the October 7th attacks in Israel and the war in Gaza have created a rupture in our Jewish communities as people struggle in their relationships with those who hold differing viewpoints. Many of us may worry that the conversations around our tables this year will be fraught, or even impossible. But now, more than ever, it is critical to ask questions and to listen to one another.

Here are four questions to help all who gather to engage with open hearts and open minds.

- 1 Passover is a holiday of storytelling, and the Haggadah commands us to tell the story as though we had been present in it. What is one story that has shaped how you understand the war in Gaza?
- 2 Passover warns that great suffering comes from hardening our hearts. How are you feeling hard-hearted right now? How are you feeling tender-hearted?
- 3 Passover is a time to ask questions. When you think about the current war in Gaza, what questions come to mind? What is something you'd like to understand?
- 4 The seder ends with the aspiration: "Next Year in Jerusalem." What do you hope will be true one year from now? How do you hope you will feel?

You can find more questions and a guide for having productive conversations around divisive topics in our *Talk for a Change* resources, linked at the QR code.

Find more Passover resources at ReformJudaism.org/Passover.



#TALKFORACHANGE

What Should We Tell the Children? (Pesakh 5784) - by Rabbi Isaac Saposnik

This year,
what should we say to
the wise child?
The child who is paying
attention.
The one who is able to
hold the nuance.
We should tell her
this is a time of stories,
and she should listen
carefully.
We all should.
Not all stories
are easy to hear.
But all stories
are essential.
Imperative.
And only after
we listen –
truly listen –
can we hope
for freedom
and redemption.

"There is no hope,"
her brother responds.
"They won't allow it."
Some might call him
the evil child,
but do we really need
more name calling
in the world?
We must remind this
child

of ours
that there is no them,
only us.
All of us.
Together.
Striving for peace
we hope –
no, we know –
we can achieve.
Together.
Even if he
doesn't believe it.
Yet.
And what about
the simple child?
The one who doesn't
know the details,
but knows all is not as it
should be.
We should tell her that,
yes –
people are hurting
and suffering
and dying.
And the angel of death
has not yet passed over.
But we are working,
as hard as we can,
to rid the earth
of any more plagues.

"When do we eat?"
asks the last child,

the one who doesn't yet
know
the trials of the world.
We should send this
child
to the door.
They should be the one
to throw it
wide open.
To welcome
all those
who are hungry
to come and eat.
All those
who are weary
to come and rest.
And all those
who seek peace
to join in our *seeder*.
Because if we can all
sit together,
spilling wine,
finding crumbs,
and singing
late into the night,
everything will,
indeed,
be in order.

A Haggadah for This Time

נסח, תשפ"ד | Passover, 2024

**"In every generation, each person is obligated to see themselves building Be'eri...
Coming out of Egypt, they will rise up like lions"**

(Or Adam, resident of Sderot)

How shall we celebrate Pesach this year?

How can we leave Egypt when part of our hearts are still bound and captive in Gaza? Every year, and in every generation, the story of the Exodus is told differently, but our faith in liberty does not change. Even in the long period of slavery in Egypt, it was hard to believe that there might be light at the end of the tunnel, and that is precisely why this myth helps to fill us with hope and strength. It helps us to remember our commitment to all those who are oppressed and suffering and to all those who are strangers, for we were strangers in the land of Egypt.

This year, we are thrilled to gather and present a selection of original pieces, many of which were written in light of recent events. We have collected and curated writing by authors who were evacuated from the Gaza Envelope area and from the Northern border areas of Israel, as well as members and rabbis from the Israeli Reform Movement in this contemporary collection titled "A Haggadah for this time" - הגדה לזמן הזה.





Kohelet Wasn't Right / Rabbi Oded Mazor

"Kohelet wasn't right," Yehuda Amichai.
In the days when each hour collides with the next
We have no choice but to cry and to laugh with the same eyes
To mourn and to dance at the same time
And the long arc of history is compressed into one day and one hour
We ask for the strength to contain
The intensity of our bursting hearts.
To rejoice with those who will be able to embrace today,
To enfold all of those leaning into their longing, souls trembling,
To hold on to hope without letting go,
And to leave some quiet space for a silent scream.
Please, grant us the room to shatter into pieces,
And the spirit to be rebuilt, anew.

*Rabbi Oded Mazor, Kehilat Kol HaNeshama, Jerusalem
(English: Rabbi Ayelet Cohen)*



This project was initiated by Rabbi Yael Karrie, the Rabbi of the Mateh Asher region of the Western Galilee, who herself had been evacuated from her home in Kibbutz Rosh HaNikra. Her stunning photographs, accompany the collection and depict the experience of migration from place to place, from sublet to sublet, since she and her husband were made to leave her home in October.





Intentions for Pesach

Intention for Pesach / Tammy Levitan, Kibbutz Nahal Oz

The spring is exploding again in all its power
Carrying on its wings the scent of citrus flowers
And the bright colors of wildflowers
And the drumbeat steps of Pesach approaching
Are heard more and more clearly
Pesach – the holiday of freedom – Really?
This year? For all the children of Israel?
One hundred thirty four brothers and sisters
Are rotting in tunnels and in cages under torture
And we're to celebrate as usual?
Today we have a heartless government.
If what I met on the 7.10.23 was the cruelty of Hamas,
What I'm meeting today and everyday
Is the cruelty of our government.
In spite of this and in spite of it all –
Tonight we'll celebrate, we'll make our hearts into
Nests for hope, and as it says in the Pesach Haggadah, "you shall tell your children" –
We will tell our children
All about the injustices.
As it is written, "Next year in Jerusalem"
We will say "as fast as possible, bring them home,"
Only then will our world be filled with joy,
With color, and perhaps, with some ease.

(English: Rabbi Daniel Burstyn)





Intentions for Pesach

Intention for Yakhatz / Rabbi Alona Lisitsa

[In case, God forbid, our hostages are not returned]

This year, our heart also is split in half.

Half of it is here, around the table, filled with great joy and gratitude for family and for togetherness, for our freedom, for our full cups, and for all the goodness we merit.

And the second half is in Gaza, with our hostages, for they have no freedom, no redemption, and no seder.

Simultaneously, our heart exists in many places in the Land, in houses where dwell families of the hostages, where around their table there are empty places.

Our heart is broken to pieces.

This pain is sharp and piercing; this pain now feels normal.

It too deserves a place in our seder.

(English: Rabbi-Ari Jun-Ballaban)





Intentions for Pesach

Ma Nishtanah - four questions for this Pesach Seder, 2024/5784 / Rabbi Gil Nativ

Ma Nishtanah haSeder hazeh mikol Sidrei HaPesach?

Why is this Seder different from all previous Pesach Seders?

1. While at all other Pesach seders we see ourselves as if we left Egypt, halaila hazeh tonight we see ourselves as if we escaped the Gaza Envelope.
2. While at all other Pesach seders we eat the bitter herbs of Egyptian slavery, halaila hazeh tonight we eat the bitter herbs of Gaza.
3. While at all other Pesach seders we dip in salt water, halaila hazeh tonight we dip in real tears.
4. While at all other Pesach seders we recline in comfort, halaila hazeh tonight we tremble in fear of bad news that might come to our door at any moment.

Optimistic question possibilities:

How is this night different from all the nights since Shmini Atzeret, 5784?

1. While on all other nights our sleep was bothered by worries, tonight we renew our hope.
2. While on all other nights we expected destruction, tonight we witness renewal and the beginning of tekumah, rebuilding.
3. While on all other nights we counted the injured and the dead, tonight we share in the joy of the healing and the rehabilitation.
4. While on all other nights our table had empty seats, tonight we hug those who have returned home.

(English: Rabbi Daniel Burstyn)



Intentions for Pesach

The Fifth Cup - the Cup of Miriam / Rabbi Osnat Eldar

Blessed be You, Our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has shared your spirit and blown into her nostrils the spirit of prophecy, and with the merit of her courage, creativity, sensitivity and her womanly love for others, she was able to initiate the great miracle of our salvation.

Blessed be You, our God, Ruler of the Universe, who placed the timbrel in her hand and filled her mouth with the song of thanksgiving at the sea.

May our song rise and join the secret chorus of the generations, accompanying Miriam's song that rose, winding and curling into a new prayer for peace, for health, and for renewal.

Blessed be You, God, who slakes our thirst with the living waters from Miriam's Well.

(English: Rabbi Daniel Burstyn)



In Every Generation / Or Adam

In every generation, we must see ourselves as if we came out of Egypt.

Every one of us was a slave, every one came out
Matzah, the bread of affliction, reminds us of this
So that even without darkness and blood,
We can safekeep the same freedom of every human.

In every generation, we must see ourselves as if we were in Kfar Aza.
Every one of us hid in our "safe" room on that Shabbat
While terror stalked and rampaged outside
Every one prayed, an unending scream,
In that desecrated kibbutz by the gates of Gaza.

In every generation, we must see ourselves as if we danced at Re'im.
Every one of us couldn't understand what's going on here
As the gunfire ripped through the pulsating music
And we saw ourselves falling from a great height.
Every one of us was raped there at Nova.

In every generation, we must see ourselves as if we were kidnapped from Nir Oz.
Devastation, fire, awful sights
Every one of us sat on the open truck, hands tied tight
Fear on the faces of woman and child.
In every generation, we are kidnapped from Nir Oz.

In every generation, we must see ourselves building Be'eri.
Every one of us, in every time, will arise from the ashes
Grit our teeth and return to the borderlands
Coming out of Egypt, we will rise up like lions.
We will yet drink the water of life from the well of Be'eri.

Erev Pesach 5874 – April 2024

*Or Adam, member of Migvan, the urban kibbutz in Sderot
(English: Shaul Vardi)*





Suggestions for Seder in these times

Passover is a festival of joy. It is the holiday of spring, freedom and redemption. This year, we welcome the holiday with heavy hearts in the shadow of war, when many of us won't celebrate in our homes. Some will be on guard in the military, others still wounded in hospitals, and 133 others still in captivity in Gaza. This year, we blend sorrow with joy, and so we must give space to our pain through changes that emphasize partnership, mutual commitment and solidarity.

- 1. A glass half full** – The sages instructed us to drink four cups of wine during the Passover Seder, each representing one of the four words of salvation: vahotzeiti, vahitzalti, vage'alti, valakachti. This year, our salvation is not complete; how can we celebrate when many are no longer with us? Just as we lower the flag to half-mast, this year we will fill our glasses halfway and hope that soon we will be able to fill them completely.
- 2. Yellow ribbons** – We will adorn the table with yellow ribbons associated with the struggle for the release of hostages, and symbolizing threads of longing and hope.
- 3. An empty chair** – We will not be able to set the table as usual this year and celebrate as in past years, while so many are still held captive and so many of us are no longer here. This year, we will add an extra chair which waits for the return home of those who were taken. On the chair, we may place a picture of loved ones who are not with us, and before we begin the Seder, we will include a prayer for the peace of the captives.
- 4. Yachatz (breaking of the Matzah)** – Our hearts are divided in two, this year when we break the matzah in half, we acknowledge the brokenness and heartache.



Suggestions for Seder in these times

5. Ma Nishtana (the four questions) – So much has changed this year, and we remain confused and full of questions. Here are some ideas for four alternative questions:

- Ma Nishtana: What has changed within me this year?
- Avadim Hayinu: Where do I feel hardship, lack independence or influence - what is my slavery?
- Dayenu: Where do I want to say "enough" and reduce suffering in the world around me?
- Le'Shana Haba'a: What future do I imagine? What is my vision for hope and change?

6. The ten plagues – According to Halacha, it is customary to drip a little wine from the cup while saying 'blood' 'fire' and 'pillars of smoke', and reciting the ten plagues. This year, in addition to the ten plagues, we can mention the plagues we have experienced in the past months, for example:

- Blood - of the young men and women slaughtered at the Novah festival / Blood - the injured and wounded captives, the raped.
- Frogs, lice, boils - the unhygienic conditions in which the hostages suffer.
- Death of livestock - the slaughter of animals in the surrounding kibbutzim.
- Darkness - where has hope disappeared, the sacred work of peace among peoples?
- Death of the firstborn - where are the children of the slaughter? Where have they vanished? The soldiers, the girls and boys, the young children?

7. Opening the door for Elijah and Miriam - Let us open the gates of our hearts to all those displaced from their homes in the kibbutzim surrounding Gaza. To those displaced from the cities and kibbutzim of northern Israel, who have become refugees in their own country. To the schoolchildren who have no school- To those who were uprooted from their workplaces, businesses and livelihood. Let us open our doors as written in the Haggadah, to be aware of those who have no permanent home.



TIMES OF ISRAEL
"6 Months...Dayenu"

If only the world would speak out about our hostages still in Gaza.

Dayenu.

If only the world would speak out against antisemitism and hatred toward us.

Dayenu.

If only the world would speak out about entire communities being desecrated and families violated in their own homes.

Dayenu.

If only the world would speak out against Hamas for what happened on October 7th.

Dayenu.

If only the world would believe Israeli women.

Dayenu.

If only the world would know that anti-Zionism is antisemitism.

Dayenu.

If only the world would know that our resilience is stronger than our hate.

Dayenu.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Perri Schwartz, activist & writer, Atlanta, is a 2021-2022 alum of Young Judaea gap year. She interned with the Israel Daily News Podcast. She is also on the autism spectrum and is passionate about making the world a better place. Follow her on Instagram, @thezioprincess.



THE AFIKOMAN

A Light-Hearted Exploration

אפיקומן

By Jon Adam Ross

Finding the afikomen at a family seder is the moment when the kids run amok through the living room while the “adults” grab an extra slice of kosher-for-Passover marble cake. Here are four easy activities to enhance this moment in the seder that work for all ages.

Option 1: Searching for Peace

There might be political tension at your seder this year. It’s exhausting to navigate the complexities of our inherited traumas while living through a new period of fresh fear, angst, anger, and grief. Why would this night be different from any other night? But amidst all the family stress caused by arguments, you might need to take a moment to find some peace. Inner peace. Follow the steps below:

1. Place both feet on the floor.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Concentrate on your breathing for at least three breaths.
4. Find a core memory in your life when you were completely at peace and in the moment, without concern for the past or future. Hold onto that core memory. Identify an object in that core memory that serves as a touchstone for you.
5. Open your eyes. Find something in the room that resonates with the object touchstone you identified.
6. That new object is now something that will remind you of your inner peace, every time you look at it.

Option 2: Searching for Laughs

As Laura Ingalls Wilder said, “A good laugh overcomes more difficulties and dissipates more dark clouds than any other one thing.” It has been a hard year. Laughter might help. In a search for authentic passover-appropriate laughter, go around the table and tell your best Passover joke. The joke that gets the most laughs gets to eat the afikomen! The joke that gets the most groans? An extra serving of gefilte fish. .

Option 3: Searching for Freedom

We’re almost finished with the seder and most of what is left is singing! Sing some of your favorite songs about freedom as you wait for the Afikoman to be recovered. Whether they are in Hebrew or English, we all need a little more dreaming about a better time. Who knows? It might become a tradition!

Option 4: Searching for Words

If you just want to sit and enjoy your after dinner drink before the last two cups, you can also participate in this Passover-themed word search! Can you find the afikomen???



7 WAYS TO ADDRESS OCTOBER 7 AT YOUR FAMILY SEDER

Why is this Passover different from all other Passovers? So many of us are still reeling from the October 7 attack in Israel and the ongoing war. And while a seder brings the opportunity to lean on tradition, you may also want to acknowledge this unprecedented time in a way that feels right for your gathering. We hope this guide of seven extra rituals and elements for your seder offers an opportunity to reflect, mourn and celebrate as a family and community this Passover.

1. Empty chairs at your table

While some families leave an empty chair for the prophet Elijah, you may choose to leave more empty chairs this year to recognize all those celebrating without lost loved ones at their tables this Passover. You may choose to include images and names of victims or hostages that you're honoring.

Before starting the seder, say: Let's take a moment to talk about the extra empty chairs at our table — they represent people who will not be able to celebrate with their families this year.

2. Extra maror? Changing up your seder plate

During what feels like an especially bitter time, adding extra maror, bitter herbs, to your seder plate can give room for that grief. Other additions to your seder plate that might feel especially resonant include an olive or olive oil as a symbol of the olive branch — a hope for peace. You can also subtract things from your plate to honor those experiencing hunger.

When introducing the seder plate, say: You will notice the seder plate looks a little different tonight — we have extra maror to note an especially bitter year, and we've added the olive/olive oil to remind us of hopes of peace.

3. A fifth question

The Four Questions, traditionally recited by the youngest guest at the table, is one of the most touching parts of the Passover seder, a reminder of Jewish continuity and survival. This year, you may want to ask the central question one more time — “ma nishtanah ha'layla haze mikol ha'leylot?” — as a chance for guests at the table to share how this Passover feels different than other years. Ideally, you can give everyone's feelings respect and space, and not make it a moment for bitter family arguments. This could be a good chance for kids to express their feelings and struggles about these past months, and for adults to be vulnerable.

After singing the fourth question, say: Now we are going to sing the question one more time, and everyone can take a turn answering: How does Passover feel different to you this year?

4. The four precious children

As we talk about the four children and their various questions — or lack thereof — let us be grateful for all the children at Passover tables this year, for all their questions (yes, even their million “whys”), and for how much richer they make our world.

After the four children, say: Let us remember that all children — wicked, wise, innocent and those who do not know how to ask — deserve safety, peace and space to prosper.

5. Extra plagues

What are the plagues we feel we are experiencing this year? Let’s pour out some extra wine or juice for them. How does the plague of darkness feel especially connected to this moment? Discuss.

After the ten plagues, use one of these prompts:

- *What does the plague of darkness mean to us this year? What is one thing we’ve done to bring in light?*
- *Now, let us go around the table and everyone can say what has felt like the biggest plague of these past few months.*

6. A moment of gratitude

“Hakarat todah” is the Hebrew term for gratitude. We can take a moment to say what we’re all grateful for at this seder as we finish our meal with full tummies. We can also appreciate how this will not be the experience of everyone this Passover.

As you near the end of the seder, say: We feel so fortunate to be able to be together tonight. We feel such a sense of gratitude — “hakarat todah” in Hebrew — for being able to hold this seder. And yet we think, again, of all those who cannot.

7. Next year in Jerusalem

As many of us say this traditional line at the end of our seder, let us consider what we would like the next year in Jerusalem to look like. What are our hopes and dreams for the reality in the holy city and land? Consider closing your seder with a song that connects us to these wishes, like “Oseh Shalom.”

At the end of the seder, say: Before we all say “L’shanah Ha’ba’ah be’Yerushalayim,” let us try to imagine what we’d like next year in Jerusalem to look like.

***This insert is to be recited after the Ten Plagues
or at another time deemed appropriate during one's seder.***

For as long as we have recorded our stories and history, women's lives and bodies have been degraded during times of war. From the rape of Dinah to the kidnapping of Helen of Troy, violence against women is synonymous with armed conflict. During this current war in Israel, many of the more than 200 hostages were women, facing violence, pain, and suffering. With over 100 hostages still in Hamas captivity, the threat of continued violence, including forced pregnancy, remain an ongoing threat. Time is running out to safely bring them home.

This is a story we cannot ignore: the excessive and disproportionate violence against women, stemming from our oldest days to this present, terrible moment. From the Passover story to this contemporary devastation, we are determined to free those held in captivity.

Jewish tradition affirms that "there is no greater commandment than redeeming the captive." During Passover especially, we have a commitment to advocate for the rights of those who are suffering from gender-based violence, who have had their freedom taken away from them, and who have been separated from their home and their loved ones.

As broken as our people are, we are also resilient and do not stand idly by. This year, when we say "Next year in Jerusalem," we say it with the conviction that all are returned to their families and embraced safely; that those who are still held captive and are experiencing this atrocious violence are freed; that those recently freed and those who have senselessly suffered loss find peace and healing; and that the raging violence comes to an end.

Our God, the God of our ancestors
Free all those captured in war.
Free the captive women;
Free our mothers, grandmothers, daughters, sisters, and aunts.
Free the babies and children,
senselessly, violently kidnapped.

Fulfill that great mitzvah, that holy duty
Of redeeming the captive.
May they all return, swiftly
To their families and their homes.

May women's bodies be sacred and safe.
Shechinah, nurturing presence, watch over them.
Guard them.
Protect them.
Bring them home.

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, who frees the captive.

- Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch (she/her)
WRJ Executive Director



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