



# INTRODUCTION

## הקדמה



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Why is Passover in 5785/2025 different from all other Passovers?
2. Which aspects of the Haggadah Shel Pesach connect me to the people and State of Israel?
3. Who at our seder do I hope to learn from about their relationship to Israel?
4. How do I want to grow my relationship to Israel?

By Jan Katzew

The Haggadah Shel Pesach (The Telling of Passover) has an enduring, if not eternal, understanding at its core: “In every generation each person must see themselves as though they came out of Egypt.”

It tells our story: a timeless, yet timely narrative of the Jewish people. It invites us, dares us, to write ourselves into it, to see ourselves as actors in the Exodus from Egypt, in every narrow strait, in every dark place and time in which we find ourselves, individually and collectively. It imprints memories and inspires hope.

The central question of the seder is *מה נשתנה הלילה הזה?* Why is this night different from all other nights? This year, 5785/2025, it is compelling to ask: “Why is this Pesach different from all other Pesachs?”

In the shadow of a multi-front war against the State of Israel—and, on many levels, the people of Israel—we are inviting you to reflect on your relationship to Israel as you reenact the Exodus from slavery to freedom. To be sure, it is possible to relate to Israel every Passover, we believe this year is qualitatively different.

Some elements of the Haggadah Shel Pesach will no doubt “read” differently than other years. What does it mean to call the matzah “the bread of our affliction”? How does it feel to recite plagues that call to mind some of the events of October 7 and its aftermath? What does it mean to say “Next Year in Jerusalem”?

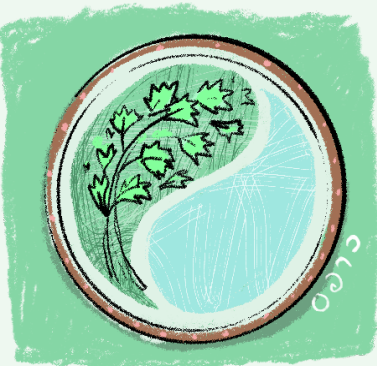
During your Pesach seder this year, we invite you to highlight and amplify some of these elements. We hope to raise more questions than provide answers, and to facilitate conversations that generate

## INTRODUCTION | הקדמה

light, and quite possibly some heat as well. After all, Jews are a people that have raised arguing to a sacred artform. We hope your experience of Passover this year will be inclusive and incisive, personal and communal, memorable and enjoyable, and consequently, that your relationship to Israel will be closer, stronger and deeper.



*Illustration credit: Ira Ginzburg*



# KARPAS

## Returning to Kibbutz Sa'ad

כרפס



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. The Karpas, like many of the symbols of the seder, combines a celebration of the new—spring—as well as remembering the bitter experiences that we suffered on our ongoing journey to freedom. What contrasting feelings are you holding today?
2. How can embracing such conflicting emotions inform our conversations around the seder table?

By Omer Drori and Ayelet Drori, *Residents of Kibbutz Saad*

Before eating the leafy green vegetable, we dip it in salt water and say the blessing over the fruits of the earth, remembering that later, the blessing will also include the bitter herbs.

We, the community of Kibbutz Sa'ad, were evacuated from our home with the rest of the Western Negev residents, after two days of hiding in the shelters and hearing the terrible news of what was happening to our neighbors and friends. After five months of living in temporary locations, we finally began to return to our homes and continue the work of making the desert bloom. Going back brings with it the sense of freedom and relief, but also tears. We cry for the friends and neighbors we've lost. We also cry for our friends who are still refugees from their communities in the south and north, who are still far away from their own homes and their land. Most of all, we cry tears of anxiety for the hostages who may be a very short distance away, but are still beyond where we can reach. We pray that they are able to soon return to their families, their communities, and their homes. Together, we need to build a shared future, where we can all go from slavery to freedom.

Dipping the karpas in the salt water brings together two important aspects of Passover: the vegetables remind us of spring and life; while the salt water represents our tears and loss. We won't recline to eat the leafy greens, because they are still coated in our tears and we aren't truly free people. This Passover, the sense of freedom and sadness will be evident throughout our seders in Kibbutz Sa'ad. This year's seder table will be heavy with our fears and prayers for the wellbeing of our soldiers, fighting above ground, and the hostages below it. With so many people missing from our seder tables, may we learn again how to celebrate and grow from the pain.

Many of the kibbutzim and communities around us are still not able to return to their homes. As the signs of spring and rebirth fill our land, we are grateful to be back in our homes and look forward to the return of our friends, families, and neighbors.



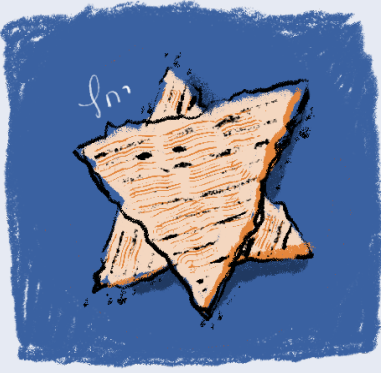
Children returning to the Eshkol region religious school. The school reopened in March 2024, after being shut down since October 7.

*Photo courtesy of Omer Drori*



A sign made by the community of Kibbutz Sa'ad for the community of Kfar Aza reading: "Dear Kfar Aza community, we embrace you! The Sa'ad community." Both kibbutzim are adjacent and hold a strong bond, and while the Sa'ad community has returned to their homes, the people of Kfar Aza are still evacuated from their own.

*Photo courtesy of Omer Drori*



# YACHATZ

## Filling Our Brokenness With Hope

יחאץ



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What do you feel when you hear the crack of the matzah?
2. Leonard Cohen famously said: "There is a crack in everything, that is how the light gets in." What is the light you are letting in this season?
3. What are stories you have heard recently that inspire you?

By Lori Sagarin

Yachatz is a moment in the seder that commands attention, especially for children who experience it as the lead up to the search for the Afikoman. Traditionally symbolizing the brokenness of our world, this year, Yachatz appears to be especially relevant. Many of us feel broken after more than 18 months of war and captivity. The crack of the matzah hearkens to the cracks in our world.

And yet, we cannot forget that one of the broken pieces becomes a symbol of possibility, the only way we can conclude the Pesach meal. In Japanese tradition they use a process, called *kintsugi*, to repair broken pieces of pottery. Instead of trying to gloss over the cracks, they fill them with gold and a new piece emerges.

There are no silver linings in the reality of the last 18 months, but we can see some gold between the cracks as we attempt to rebuild. We have observed Israeli civil society mobilizing to provide for those in the Gaza Envelope and the North who were evacuated from their homes. And we have heard countless stories of ordinary and extraordinary bravery.

As we break the middle matzah, it is impossible not to dwell in the brokenness. Still, as much as the matzah is the "bread of our affliction" as the Haggadah tells us, it is also what sustained us as we left Egypt.





# THE FOUR QUESTIONS

## What Makes This Night Different?

### ארבע הקושיות



#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Do the questions of the Haggadah read differently this year?
2. How do you feel this seder night is different from previous seder nights, if at all?
3. What is giving you a sense of community this year?

By Shalom Orzach

#### AN EXPLORATION THROUGH JEWISH TEXT

We often refer to the Four Questions that play a central role in the Pesach seder. A closer look however will reveal that we are actually asking five questions. The first question is in its guise as an introduction, posing the most profound question of all: “*Why is this night different from all other nights?*” In fact, this is the real question, and the other four are derivatives of it.

This first question is an invitation and it ingeniously enables us to perform a fundamental obligation, that of the commandment to:

זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים (שמות י"ג, ג)

“Remember *the* day that you left Egypt” (Exodus 13:3)

Our capacity to remember rests on vesting the event with a meaning that makes it different and unique. When things resemble one another, when there are no meaningful distinctions, that is, we forget, or perhaps more poignantly we *forgo* the particularity of the moment.

The phrase *mah nishtanah* (מה נשתנה), the opening of the Four Questions, is itself curious. It speaks not only of difference but also of deference, awe. Rabbi Soloveitchik teaches us that this process of amazement and explanation, of intrigue and elucidation, is the foundation of the Haggadah. This is the source of procurement of knowledge. It is the question of questions.

The first and too often overlooked question of Mah Nishtanah, creates that *chavruta* (חִבְרוּתָא), meaning friendship, companionship, community. A party of slaves that at the beginning of their journey to freedom shares their food are now a people able to invite the poor to join their meal. Again Rabbi Soloveitchik reminds us the term *am* (עַם), “a people,” is from the word *im* (עִם), meaning “with,” denoting togetherness and solidarity. This and so much more is captured in the Big Ask of Mah Nishtanah.

Yet this year the questioning reverberates all the more powerfully and may lean more to disquieting proclamation, as we declare in Ha lachma anya, “This is the bread of affliction...” which preempts the reciting of Mah Nishtanah:

הַשְׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאֶרֶץ דִּישְׂרָאֵל. הַשְׁתָּא עֲבָדִי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין

“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.”

This is supposed to be nostalgic, not a reflection of our modern reality with the existence of the State of Israel! Perhaps as opposed to asking, we may wish to amend the opening by מָה נַעֲשֶׂה מַה לַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה... What will we be doing differently tonight?



# WE WERE SLAVES

## Remembering the Hostages

עבדים היינו



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Which of these images speak most to you?
2. How do you continue to think about, pray for, and engage with the hostages and their families, even after so many months have passed?
3. Where do you think the hostage families find their courage and their hope?
4. What symbols could you add to your seder table to represent the hostages?

By Natalie Blitt

It is hard to read about our ancestors being held against their will in Egypt without thinking of the hostages currently being held in Gaza. It feels almost impossible to call ourselves free when friends and loved ones are being held in unimaginable conditions for more than 18 months.

Over the past 18 months in Israel and around the world, art installations have been created in order to ensure that their plight remains at the forefront of the public's consciousness and to express a collective prayer for their return and reunion with their families.

We are not free as long as our sons and daughters are held in Gaza.

Consider the following song and images as expressions of those ideas and prayers. We invite you to use them as prompts for conversations and reflections.



## WE WERE SLAVES | עבדים היינו

The song "Come in Peace" was written by Rachel Shapira and is associated with the prayer for the safe return of the IDF soldiers during the first Lebanon war. The lyrics describe the distress we are living with these days and emphasize the mutual responsibility and the feeling of shared fate. The song echoes the words of the Haggadah: that if God had not taken our ancestors from Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.

Come in peace, the gardens will open,  
we have set the table and lit the candles  
And before the songs will be sung,  
We wait until you come back.

בוא בשלום, נפתחות חצרות  
ערכנו שלחן והדלקנו נרות  
ובטרם יושר מזמור  
נחכה לך שתחזר

Come in peace, the grove reminds us,  
before we plant the last piece of land  
And before the blinds will be shut,  
Please, come to us in peace.

בוא בשלום, החרשה מזכירה  
בטרם חלקה אחרונה תזרע  
ובטרם יגף חלון  
אנא, שוב אלינו בשלום

## WE WERE SLAVES | עבדים היינו



Posters created by Israeli artists to raise awareness for the hostages.

*Artwork by Maayan Maor, Design Duty*



*Artwork by Hannah Heifetz, Design Duty*

# WE WERE SLAVES | עבדים היינו



The clock in Hostage Square in Tel Aviv counts the amount of time the hostages have been in captivity.

*From November 7, 2023*



Installation of empty chairs, each representing a hostage in Gaza, in Hostage Square in Tel Aviv





Bring Them Home Dog Tags



Shabbat table with place settings for each of the hostages

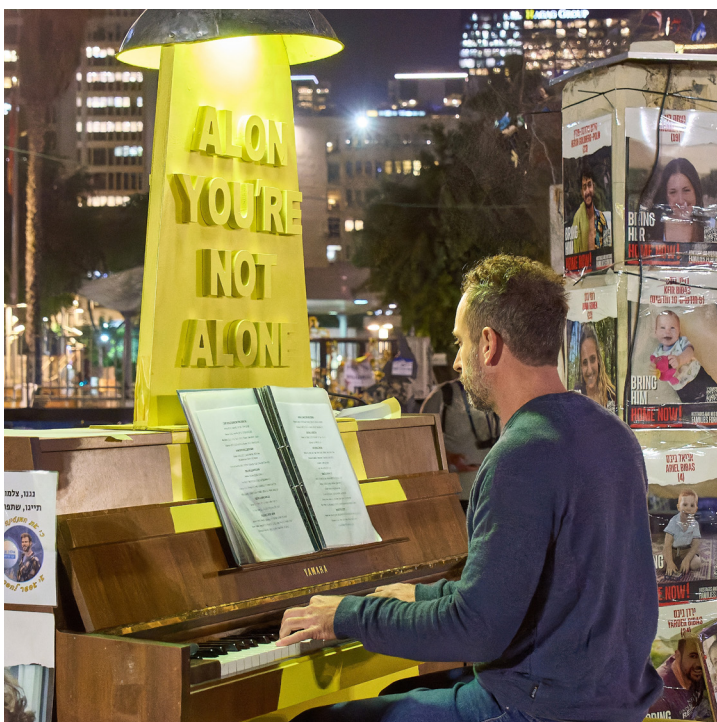
# WE WERE SLAVES | עבדים היינו

Bring Them Home posters of each hostage from a demonstration in London.

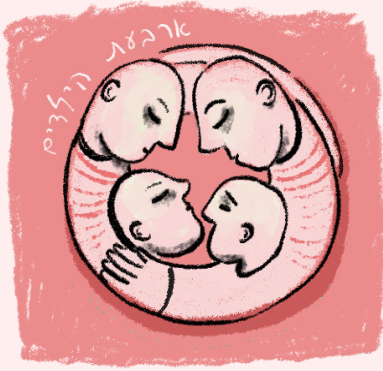


Piano placed at Hostage Square to remember Alon Ohel, a talented young jazz pianist who is still being held hostage in Gaza.

For more on Alon Ohel and the piano, listen to his story on the [Israel Story podcast](https://www.israelstory.org/episode/udit-ohel/) ([www.israelstory.org/episode/udit-ohel/](https://www.israelstory.org/episode/udit-ohel/))







# THE FOUR CHILDREN

Asking Questions in this Political Reality

ארבעת הילדים



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What do we lose and what do we gain when we use questions that are actually statements in disguise?
2. When have you had successful experiences of questions leading to discussions, even if they don't result in the parties agreeing?
3. What questions are you carrying?

By Natalie Blitt

Questions are one of the most central elements of the Passover seder. Everyone is encouraged to participate, to ask about parts of the seder that feel strange or hard to understand. Whether the youngest person at the seder is a toddler or an adult, the call and response of the four questions is a memorable element of the seder.

However, the freedom to ask questions is tempered by the story of the four children. Here, there are consequences to the way the questions are phrased and the perceived intention of the questioner.

This is not so different today. The past 18 months have seen communities, families, and friends divided by the questions and responses being volleyed back and forth. We have used questions as accusations and sometimes do not even listen to the responses, so convinced that we know what the other will say.

While the Haggadah offers us thoughtful explorations when questions come up at the seder, in our lives, there are many questions for which there are no answers. And there are many responses that are dependent on who is being asked and their unique life experience.

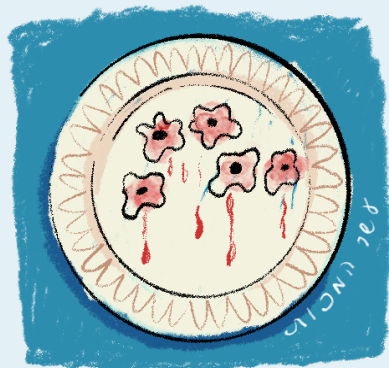
This year, let us resolve to ask questions with more humility. Let us endeavor to remember that there are many answers to most questions. None of us has the necessary expertise to speak in absolutes. Let us ensure that the questions being asked lead to discussions instead of closing down the possibility for conversations. Let us commit to weaving back together the divisions and splits within our communities, friends, and families.



# THE 10 PLAGUES

## Reducing Our Joy

### עשר המכות



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. This year, which plagues feel heavy with new meanings?
2. Some families list additional events that could be considered plagues. What might you add to the list?
3. What resonates with you about the Rabbinic tale and the quote from Proverbs?

By Lori Sagarin

The recitation of the plagues is one of the most memorable moments in the seder. While elsewhere we dip our vegetables or lean to the left side, the practice of reciting each of the plagues as we remove some of our wine is unique.

Perhaps in response to the nature of the practice, families and communities develop traditions around it. Some dip their finger in the wine, others use a piece of cutlery, and still others spill from the side of the glass. There are even traditions about what you do with the wine drops: some wipe it away while others insist that you cannot. Some even have the custom of not licking the wine off their finger or the cutlery for fear of ingesting the plagues.

One practice feels particularly apt today. Some families have the tradition that you cannot lick the wine from your finger, not because of a fear of ingesting the plagues, but rather out of a sense that we should not derive pleasure from the pain of others. This practice aligns with a well-known Midrash about the splitting of the sea when the Israelites pass through on dry land but the sea crashes into the Egyptian army that had followed them. According to the Midrash, God chastises the angels who begin to sing at the downfall of the Egyptians. “How dare you sing for joy when my creatures are dying!”

As we reduce our joy by spilling our wine, let us remember that while we can celebrate being saved, our tradition teaches that we should not sing while God’s creatures are dying. This is echoed in Mishlei (Proverbs): “When your enemy falls, do not rejoice.”

# DAYENU

## Singing *Dayenu* from the Sea of Fire

דיינו



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. For what do you feel gratitude?
2. When have you had moments that made it difficult to feel any gratitude at all?
3. What helps you to find strength and hope even during extremely challenging times?

By Eliaz Cohen

קח סירה  
וְחַצְרָה אֶת יַם הָאֵשׁ  
(כל שושנה, זלדה)

...Take a boat  
And cross the sea of fire...  
*Every Rose—Zelda*

These lines from the Poetess Zelda have always intrigued me: “Take a boat and cross the sea of fire.” It’s an invitation delivered in simple language, but completely insane! A small fragile boat, usually made of flammable materials, how is it possible to use it to cross a sea of fire?

It’s been 500 days since October 7, since the holiday of Simchat Torah that was horrifically turned from joy to mourning, from a festive day to one of grief. Each of these days has become a kind of “Sea of Fire” which is difficult, if not impossible, to cross. I carry the weight of more than a hundred days when my three sons served in reserve duty along with hundreds of thousands of fellow reservists, fighting our enemies and those seeking to harm us in the South and in the North. It was life on the brink of the abyss, fearing the knock on our door that comes with the potential for horrifying news...

I think of the families of the kidnapped, how they endure even one day, how they have withstood 500 days.

Perhaps one of the things that may help us cross the Sea of Fire, of terror and anxiety, is actually here in the seder. The song *Dayenu*

is one that we say every year and have done so for many hundreds of years, in almost every Jewish household. It's a song that gives us the capacity to know the secret of gratitude, even from the depths of tragedy.

In *Dayenu*, we express gratitude for every stage that brought about the Exodus, including those stages that contain a measure of fear, anxiety, and disaster. *Dayenu* expresses gratitude even for the redemption that has yet to arrive. But we pause, as it were, within each stage of the redemption and consider it as worthy of our gratitude.

I invite myself and all of us to consider what we can be thankful for, even amidst the adversity surrounding us. And to draw strength and faith from that ancient hymn, from that song that was sung with gusto in every generation, even when it was very, very difficult.



# IN EVERY GENERATION

## As If They Are Exiting Be'eri

בכל דור ודור



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. In the last paragraph, Chen Artzi Srur gives her own vision of hope for the future based on the present reality. What do you imagine when you think of hope for the future?
2. What do you think will come out of the events of October 7?
3. How will we shape the memory of this time?

By Chen Artzi Srur

The entirety of the Jewish story is anchored in our obligation to remember. A living memory. A memory that we are committed to act upon.

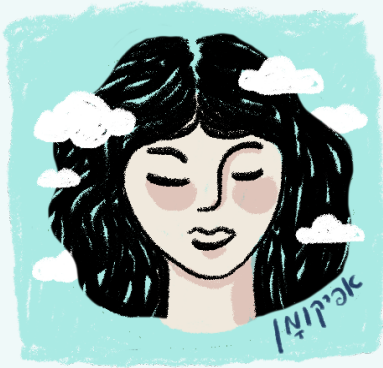
In every generation, we uphold the Pesach mitzvah: “And you shall tell your children.” This duty and obligation to tell the story of the Exodus was given in real time, when the enslaved Israelites, who would soon become a people, were in the midst of their redemption. It is a deep understanding of a pivotal moment as it is happening: The story must be told and retold as a turning point in the history of the Jewish people and the world.

What will come from the disaster of October 7? What will be innovated after all the systems, concepts, and beliefs were shattered in the face of boundless cruelty? The way we will shape the memory of these days will define what we will become. We are the witnesses of this reality, the storytellers, the guardians of the memory. We will connect these puzzle pieces. The way we shape the story and preserve it will define how we can be reborn as a nation: a stronger, safer nation, with more solidarity. Not a nation based in terror, but in strength.

While living our illusion we forgot that we are partners in a covenant of fate, we were of course not ready to think of a shared destiny. After October 7, both of these parameters can no longer be neglected. We are partners in a single fate, whether we deny it or not. Our duty is to find a shared purpose to validate our being. We will have to look for it together, whether we want to or not. Our struggle is not just for the security of the State of Israel, but the concept of “Israeliness,” its beauty and strength. A concept that can emerge only from the cultural contexts that we will weave in the days to come.

## IN EVERY GENERATION | בכל דור ודור

Every person must see themselves as if they exited Be'eri. Kfar Aza. Sderot. Ofakim. To remember and not to forget until their last day. Not to nurture fear, on the contrary, but to instill hope. The elderly will return to the lawns of Be'eri. The streets of Sderot will once again be filled with children playing. The burnt houses will be painted again. The tomatoes will be picked. The existential threat will be removed. This is not a prophecy meant to comfort us. It is a plan of action.



# 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 and a half. 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???

ש ע ק ד צ ע ת מ ב פ כ ח ר ר ת ק פ ז א ש  
ק ק י ש ה ג ד ה ט ל ו ע ר צ כ ר ב ע י  
ת ב ח מ ר ו ו נ מ כ ע ס נ ל ת ד ע ש י ג  
ש ש ס ט א ס פ ד ח ר ו ס ת ג ו ח ה ב ט ה  
ח י ע מ ר פ ג ג ע י מ א ר ס ג ש צ י ת י  
ז י ש מ צ ר י מ ו ק י ר ח ע ג ל כ ז ק ה  
ר ס ה ו י ת ק מ ש ב כ י ח מ ש ס ד ר פ ת  
נ ע ד נ ח ה ז ד ל ב כ ל ז א נ כ ל ו ת א  
ק ה פ פ נ ד כ נ מ ט מ י ר פ ו י ה ז ט ע  
ג ע ש ר מ כ ו ת צ א ב י ק י ט ל ר ג ט ס  
ת ר ד י י ק ר כ ד פ ט ל כ ק ז ד י י נ ו  
ר ע ו כ ש ק מ א ק י כ נ נ ו ס ד א ז כ ש  
ת א ר ד ג ה צ ז ט מ ר צ ס מ ר א ב ס כ  
ע ט ת ז ל א ה י א ר מ ט ע נ ל ג ה ק ל ל  
פ ח ע ע ת ה ג ק י כ י צ ר ב ע ג ה מ י ו  
ק ד נ ר ג פ ה ו ב ר ה ש ב ז י ש ר א ל צ  
ה ג א מ ש ה נ ח ט פ ט י ח י מ ק ק ה ע א  
ק ד י צ ב ל ל י נ ס צ ה ת ל ע מ ג כ מ ת  
ת י כ נ מ ב צ ט ד ש ח ד מ ר ו ר ה ל ט ת  
צ א ל נ ק ז י מ נ ס ה ת ע ג צ א פ כ א ל

הגדה  
אפיקומן  
משה  
פרעה  
ישראל  
מצרים  
עשרמכות  
מצה  
מרור  
כרפס  
חרוסת  
סדר  
דיינו  
חדגדיא

W D G U F R R E T Z D D A K K  
X E D T S C S P K A I B C F V  
Q X P L O M H D E S E R T L A  
Z D G E N O C A M A T Z A H F  
T Z D P G S S D G P B K D I I  
X R X Q S E N P R G H R J Z K  
C B A B U S Y P H A A G E Z O  
B I O D S E N I M A L D M K M  
I S S F I K S W D I R J A U A  
T R E T A T U T A M D A Q H N  
T A D E M M I H I R B R O K R  
E E E G L G I O R O Y U A H H  
R L R Y E I M L N H N U U S R  
S Q Y P I N U K Y W G S J P H  
A A U T S T O R I E S Z V R G

TRADITION

PHARAOH

MIDRASH

DESERT

MOSES

HAGGADAH

MATZAH

BITTER

SEDER

EGYPT



# SONGS OF PRAISE

## Singing as an Act of Faith

הלל



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What song has been a source of comfort for you during these past 18 months? Why?
2. In the series, the musician Shai Tsabari sings “And for just a moment you can see a shore of hope in the distance, the glimmer of a lighthouse.” What brings you hope these days?

By Hadas Wolff Yitzhak

How will we say Hallel this year, when far too many tables are empty and too many hearts are missing loved ones? When too many empty chairs, some still waiting to be sat upon and others that will remain empty forever?

(And who knows? By the time you are reading these lines, maybe our hostages will have been returned to their loved ones; while some have returned, others remain in the dark depths. And I wish, so wish, they have returned already.)

How will we say Hallel when our mouths and hearts are still filled with the taste of the ‘Maror’ (bitter herbs)?

When I examine the verses of Hallel, taken from the book of Psalms, they have become more real and relevant than ever before. It’s hard not to notice that the words “aneni”—answer me—and “hallelujah”—praise God—are used interchangeably in Hallel, the pain and hope intertwined.

I know that these ancient lines were sung during other dark periods of our history and have been read at many seder tables, and maybe that notion should bring us some healing and comfort. I assume that if we were going to create a seder from scratch right now, we would have found it hard to find words of praise. Maybe it’s good that there is a seder already set by our ancestors that will give us a framework to lean on.

Especially this year, when we walk around speechless in the face of an unimaginable reality, we need the familiar words and beloved melodies that have been passed from generation to generation to

anchor us. In the words of Israeli singer Ehud Manor, “this is the song which Saba [grandfather] sang yesterday to Aba [dad] and today I sing it.”

Singing is an essential part of the story we are retelling tonight of a people that came out of Egypt and crossed the sea and were saved from death. Because even then, after this enormous event, instead of talking, Miriam led with singing. When the words are silent and disappearing, the melody comes to help us reach what is beyond the words. And even here, the melody holds within it the ancient pain and hope.

Maybe this year, we will only be able to sing a “cold and broken Hallelujah” as Leonard Cohen sings, but it will express a deep prayer that the day is near when we will once more celebrate and rejoice.

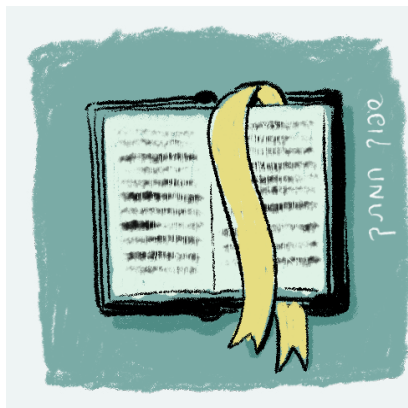
Amen.

In “*Song of Hope*,” Beit Avi Chai’s new online [series](#), we invite Israeli composers and musicians to share songs that became their soundtrack and provide them with inspiration during these difficult days of war and trauma.

Each episode includes an acoustic performance and an intimate discussion about the comfort and hope that music can offer.



*Beit Avi Chai focuses on creating, developing and producing original Jewish content with the aim of introducing wide and diverse audiences to Jewish-Israeli culture and ideas in Israel and around the world—and engaging reached audiences to actively take part in Jewish/Israeli cultural study and activity.*



# POUR OUT YOUR WRATH

## Divine Wrath and Divine Love

### שְׂפֹךְ חֲמַתְךָ



#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How does Professor Kasher's strategy strike you? What do you think about the idea that "Pour out Your wrath" is a relic of the past?
2. The verse from Psalms calls for God to pour out God's wrath. Which punishments should we leave for God, and which should we enact ourselves?
3. How does reading this passage feel this year?

By Jan Katzew

שְׂפֹךְ חֲמַתְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעוּךָ וְעַל־מַמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ לֹא קָרְאוּ. כִּי אֵל  
אֶת־יֵעֶלֶב וְאֶת־נֹהוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם. שְׂפֹךְ־עֲלֵיהֶם זַעֲמֶךָ וְחֲרוֹן אַפֶּךָ יִשְׁיֹגֵם. תִּרְדֹּף בְּאֵף וְתִשָּׁ־  
מִיָּדָם מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיִם ה'.

Pour Your wrath (*Shfokh Chamatkha*) upon the nations that did not know You and upon the kingdoms that did not call upon Your Name! Since they have consumed Ya'akov and laid waste to his habitation (Psalms 79:6-7). Pour out Your fury upon them and the fierceness of Your anger shall reach them (Psalms 69:25)! You shall pursue them with anger and eradicate them from under the skies of God (Lamentations 3:66).

The passage above from the Haggadah was added during the time of the Crusades (11-12th Century CE), almost a thousand years after most of the Haggadah was created. Its context is future oriented, since it is recited just after a door is opened for Elijah to herald the coming of redemption. It calls for divine vengeance against the enemies of the Jewish people. It leaves no room for doubt or equivocation. Its language is absolute and unforgiving. On Passover, the God whose mercy is sought for a thousand generations elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, in Rabbinic literature, and in the daily prayer book, is invoked and implored to eradicate nations and kingdoms that destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem and exiled the people of Israel from the land of Israel.

The echo of vengeful rhetoric has been used by some to justify political policies. Indeed, along with the return of hostages from Gaza,



the current war is being waged to pursue and eradicate Hamas. This Pesach, there may be no escape from coming to terms with the idea embedded in the Haggadah that no mercy is to be shown against people like Hamas whose avowed purpose is your destruction.

Despite the passage's compelling urgency, there are people who annually skip it entirely. The Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai wrote in one of his epic poems that we all live censored lives, that everyone chooses to omit passages, prayers, books, stories, and perhaps people as well from our lives. Whether you decide to include this section in your Passover Seder or omit it, please consider the following alternatives and questions.

Professor Asa Kasher, the primary author of the Israeli Defense Forces Code of Ethics, teaches that some parts of the Haggadah are exclusively about history, and this section is one of them. He does not eliminate the passage from his Haggadah, but he relegates it to the past, and regards it as no longer authoritative or relevant.

In addition, some Haggadot have added a prayer that asks for God to “pour out divine love” שפוך אהבתך (*Shfokh Ahavatkha*) as a compensatory, comforting and caring display of Divine Power.



# NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM

## A Traveler's Prayer

## לשנה הבאה בירושלים



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What messages from the seder will you carry with you as you leave?
2. Which additional children would you add to the Haggadah? What will they represent?

By Yehudit Werchow

"הרהורי ליל הסדר. כנגד ארבעה בנים דיברה  
תורה, אחד חכם, אחד רשע, אחד תם ואחד  
שלא יודע לשאול. אבל לא מדובר שם  
על אחד טוב ולא על אחד אורב  
וזו שאלה שאין לה תשובה ואם תהיה לה תשובה  
לא ארצה לדעת."

"Musings on the eve of the Seder. The Torah speaks of four sons: one wise, one wicked, one simple, and one who does not know how to ask. But it does not speak there of one who is good, or one who loves. And this is a question that has no answer, and if it will have an answer I wouldn't want to know it."  
—Yehuda Amichai

The seder is "a celebration of partial freedom, an intimation of the freedom that could be, that should be, and that will someday be universal."  
—Rabbi Jan Katzew

As the seder concludes, we begin the transition from the timeless journey of exile to freedom that we embarked on at the beginning of the evening. But where do we go from here? Perhaps the words of Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai can guide us to becoming the Haggadah's missing children. Our mission now is to act in ways that bring forth goodness and love in the world. Perhaps the experience of the seder is a reminder that freedom is a progressive commitment that we are all responsible for ensuring is shared by all humans.

## NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM | לשנה הבאה בירושלים

Israeli singer and songwriter Shai Tsabari's voice singing the beautiful ancient prayer "Traveler's Prayer" can be a source of inspiration. Together we can join him in prayer: "May You lead us toward peace. May You return us to peace and May You support us with peace."

May we support each other with peace and return all of us to peace.

### THE TRAVELER'S PRAYER

**Melody:** Shai Tsabari

**Text:** Siddur of Saadia Gaon

May You lead me toward peace  
May You return me to peace  
May You support me with peace

May You rescue me from the hand of foes  
along the way

May it be Your will, Lord, my God

May You lead us toward peace  
May You return us to peace  
May You support us with peace

May You rescue me from the hand of foes  
along the way

Blessed are You, Lord, Who hears prayer

### תפילת הדרך

לחן: שי צברי

מילים: סידור רב סעדיה גאון

שְׁתוּלִיכְנִי לְשָׁלוֹם  
וְתַחְזִירְנִי לְשָׁלוֹם  
וְתִסְמְכֵנִי עַל שָׁלוֹם

וְתַצִּילֵנִי מִכַּף אוֹיֵב וְאוֹרֵב עַל הַדֶּרֶךְ  
מִכַּף אוֹיֵב וְאוֹרֵב עַל הַדֶּרֶךְ

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי

שְׁתוּלִיכְנִי לְשָׁלוֹם  
וְתַחְזִירְנִי לְשָׁלוֹם  
וְתִסְמְכֵנִי עַל שָׁלוֹם

וְתַצִּילֵנִי מִכַּף אוֹיֵב וְאוֹרֵב עַל הַדֶּרֶךְ  
מִכַּף אוֹיֵב וְאוֹרֵב עַל הַדֶּרֶךְ

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה

