



Hosted by

Jewish Voice for Labour ~ Independent Jewish Voices ~ Jews for Justice for Palestinians ~
 as a liberation seder and a fund-raiser for
the British Shalom-Salaam Trust (www.bsst.org.uk)

Welcome by Rabbi Janet Darley

We want to start our Seder together, so what to do as we gather? We decided on listening to Woody Guthrie's famous song "This Land is my Land". Though aimed at encouraging equal black participation in the American dream, like William Blake's 'Jerusalem', 'This Land' has acquired a universalist, democratic and humanitarian significance which slots in perfectly to our Seder.

In February 2021, the Forverts released a Yiddish version, translated by Linda Gritz and Daniel Kahn. **Daniel Kahn**, based in Germany, tells us he is "totally thrilled. . . and honoured" that we have included it and he wishes us "health and peace". "This Land" in Yiddish is so full of wit and warmth, we have decided it should be a permanent fixture. Enjoy!

Introduction by Rabbi Janet

Last year's seder was held during the Covid-19 pandemic, which has abated but is by no means at an end. We mourn all those who have been affected by this terrible pandemic.

Today, the presenting issue is not a virus but war – the terrible invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Not only have thousands of soldiers died, thousands of civilians have been murdered, entire cities such as Marioupol and Kharkhik are destroyed and over 10 million people are displaced, within Ukraine itself and also across borders into Poland, Romania, Moldova, and beyond.

The Jewish festival of Pesach (Passover) reflects on and celebrates the Biblical Hebrews' exodus from Egypt and the survival of Jews and Judaism. It is the first story in recorded history to celebrate the idea that slaves can become free. As a festival of escape and liberation, it has long provided a focus among radical Jews, both practising and secular, for reminding ourselves of the many continuing oppressions experienced by nations and other communities, and for adopting Pesach's universal hope: for the liberation of all who are unfree. Indeed, the first Haggadah I ever saw was the one Art Waskow created for the Freedom Seder held in 1969, the first anniversary of Martin Luther King's assassination. When I moved to the UK, the first British Seder I went to was held outside of South Africa House, organised by Jews Against Apartheid.

Last year, we acknowledged the Uighurs, Yazidis, Tigrayans and others struggling for their survival, as well as all who have been forced to make an exodus from their homelands, including the Afghans, Syrians and Rohingya. Tonight we pay special tribute to the resilience, bravery and tragedy of the Ukrainians – and we dare to dream that one day their tragedy will end, and Ukrainian refugees will be able to rebuild their lives back home. In the meantime, we must demand that Britain and other wealthy countries take their fair share of refugees, from *wherever* they originate, and offer sanctuary in a cruel world that would deny them life.

Through this Seder, we make connections with many contemporary struggles for freedom from oppression: Indian small farmers who engaged in a huge year-long strike to protect their livelihoods; black Americans demanding racial justice; women seeking the freedom to live safely without the threat of violence inside or outside their homes. For all we are daring to dream.

Though we range widely in our solidarity, we never forget the Palestinians who, with their progressive Jewish allies inside Israel and around the world, continue to struggle for justice, human rights, an end to violence against people and property and for political recognition and equality. We speak out in support of their struggle and dare to dream with them. We will hear more about this particular struggle as the evening progresses.

This year we note the over-lapping of Easter, Ramadan and Pesach and hope that such a timely coincidence can be deployed by all of us for a peaceful and cooperative future. So, tonight, we welcome to our Seder celebration *everybody*; Jewish, of another faith or of none. We set no test of religiosity, observance, denomination or politics. We try to include a range of voices and different ways of identification, while recognising that there can always be others. But our key message is: whether this is your first seder or your ninety-first seder, you are equally welcome.

The organisers trust you will be inspired by its content, by our participant readers, and by our continuing solidarity with those who are persecuted and oppressed.



#199561505

The Passover Plate

Perhaps one reason why so many Jews still organise a *seder* is that it both connects us to old traditions but allows for reinterpretation and change, a truly hermeneutic dinner! A Zoom seder offers the chance for anyone interested in this ancient family-based ritual of Judaism to participate.

The first two nights of Passover (*Pesach*) are special for their ritual *seder* with its special book, the *Haggadah*, and the special plate of edible symbols. A seder is full of ritual and symbolism but is also endlessly rewritten to echo contemporary issues and concerns, a fascinating dialogue between religious tradition and contemporary secular sensibilities.

Here, we provide some tips on how you might like to prepare. These are NOT compulsory, so if you want simply to be present, that's fine!

The main ingredients of the seder plate are

MATZAH: the unleavened bread (cracker!) that Jews ate while in the wilderness. Eaten instead of leavened bread for the eight days of Passover.

ZEROAH: A shankbone, sometimes a chicken bone. Signifies the paschal sacrifice made before the exodus from Egypt.

MAROR: Bitter herbs, usually horseradish or endive, to represent the bitterness of the slavery of our forefathers in Egypt.

CHAROSETH: A paste, made from a mixture of apples, walnuts, cinnamon and red wine. Delicious, so it is often said 'we must make this more often' but don't! Supposed to represent the mortar that the Jews used when working for Pharaoh.

KARPAS: Greens, herbs of some kind, usually parsley. Used to dip into a small bowl of salt water that represents our forefathers' tears.

BEITZAH: An egg, roasted or hard boiled. Represents the pre-holiday offerings brought to the High Temple.

This ritual meal is always changing and being updated. Variations include using roasted beetroot or parsnip instead of animal bone for vegetarians; using flowers petals instead of the egg for vegans; adding olives in support of peace between Israel and Palestine; adding an orange in support of LGBTQ+ inclusion; and Sephardi tradition includes beating each other with spring onions!

Wine – or grape juice - is also an important part of the seder ritual throughout. Sometimes we drink from the wine glass, sometimes we dip our fingers in, and sometimes – annoyingly – we just lift the glass and put it down again!



Lynne Feldman, The Seder

Candle lighting – by Charlotte and Sophie Neslen

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You sanctify us by Your commandments and enjoin us to kindle the (Sabbath and) festival lights.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו
להדליק נר של (שבת ושל) יום
טוב.

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kidd'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivvanu l'hadlik neir shel (shabbat v'shel) yom tov.



She-hecheyanu

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, that You have kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ
לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam she-hecheyanu v'kiyy'manu v'higgiy'anu la-z'man ha-zeh.

First cup of wine, recited by Mike Cushman

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Green vegetable dipping

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the earth.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-adamah.

The Afikomen: There are usually three large *matzot* on the table, the middle one of which - the Afikomen - is traditionally broken in two and a half is hidden somewhere in the house. The children are offered a small reward for finding it. What does this all signify? Well, some Jews see it as symbolic of the ultimate redemption from suffering, which comes at the end of the Seder. Some read it as a reference to the Passover sacrifice that used to be offered at the ancient temple in Jerusalem, some as a reminder that the poor must always set something aside for the next meal, and some as recognition that there's always more to discover in life.

This year, we're reversing the typical procedure and are getting the children to do the hiding!

Hiding the Afikomen by Yari Sreberny Lewis and Leo Sreberny-Allan

Matzah

Food is hugely important in Jewish families. Indeed, Jews always assume that it is uniquely important to us - it's woven into our writings, our humour, and of course, our religious rituals, prohibitions and obligations.

But, of course, food matters greatly to everyone. As well as essential sustenance, it represents security, love, plenty, generosity. As anyone who has been to the West Bank will know, *baraka* is immensely important to Palestinian hosts, so they lay far more out on the table than visitors could ever eat. And always they lay out their traditional foods, a showcase for a culture that, despite all, remains vibrant today.

Central to Passover is one food, Matzah: the bread of affliction, a flat cracker baked in extreme haste by those fleeing oppression who had no time to wait for the dough to rise. The matzah reminds us that when the chance for liberation comes, we must seize it even if we do not feel ready — indeed, if we wait until we feel fully ready, we may never act at all. A timely message for all that, not only hope but also action is needed, so we may build a world where liberation, the end of occupation, discrimination and persecution, are achieved.

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

Let all who are hungry come and eat;
Let all who are in need come and share
our Passover.

This year here, next year in the land
of Israel;

This year oppressed, next year free.

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיא דִּי אָכְלוּ
אֲבֹהֵתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.
כָּל־דִּכְפִּין יִיתִי וְיֵכֹל,
כָּל־דִּצְרִיךְ יִיתִי וְיִפְסֹח.
הַשָּׁתָא הָכָא,
לְשָׁתָא דְּאַתְיָא בְּאַרְעָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל.
הַשָּׁתָא עֲבָדִי,
לְשָׁתָא דְּאַתְיָא בְּנֵי חוֹרִין.

Ha lachma anya di achalu avhatana b'ar'a d'mitzrayim.

Kol dichfin yeitei v'yeichul

Kol ditzrich yeitei v'yif'sach.

Ha-shata hacha – l'shata d'atya b'ar'a d'yisra'el

Ha-shata avdei – l'shata d'atya b'nei chotin.

The Four Questions - sung by Dorothy Neslen

How different is this night from all other nights!

מַה נִּשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת!

On all other nights we eat either leavened or unleavened bread; why only unleavened bread tonight?

שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמִצָּה, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלּוּ מִצָּה?

On all other nights we eat different types of herbs and vegetables; why bitter herbs tonight?

שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יֵרָקוֹת, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מָרֹר?

On all other nights we do not even dip once; why do we dip twice tonight?

שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מַטְבִּילִין אֲפִילוֹ פַּעַם אַחַת, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְעָמִים?

On all other nights we eat either sitting or leaning; why do we all lean tonight?

שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כָּלָנוּ מְסֻבִּין?

Ma nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleilot?

Sheb'khol haleilot anu okhlin hametz umatzah; halailah hazeh, kuloh matzah.

Sheb'khol haleilot anu okhlin sh'ar y'rakot; halailah hazeh, maror.

Sheb'khol haleilot ein anu matbilin afilu pa'am ehat; halailah hazeh, shtei f'amim.

Sheb'khol haleilot anu okhlin bein yoshvin uvein m'subin; halailah hazeh, kulanu m'subin.

How different is this Passover from all other Passovers!

Passover is celebrated at home with family and friends. Last year it was still only possible to celebrate by Zoom with those outside our immediate household.

Even though things have eased this year, and even as we are all desperate for the personal contact that Zoom cannot provide, we have decided to continue to hold our third 'third seder' (as liberation seders are often known) as a way of sharing our beliefs and solidarity across many borders.

On Passover we open our door to and our hearts to the stranger. This year, the demands are such that we must do this with even greater love and generosity. Peace must be our central goal and we need to wage peace as defiantly and energetically as those who wage war. But peace is nothing without justice and equality, all of which are absent in Palestine.

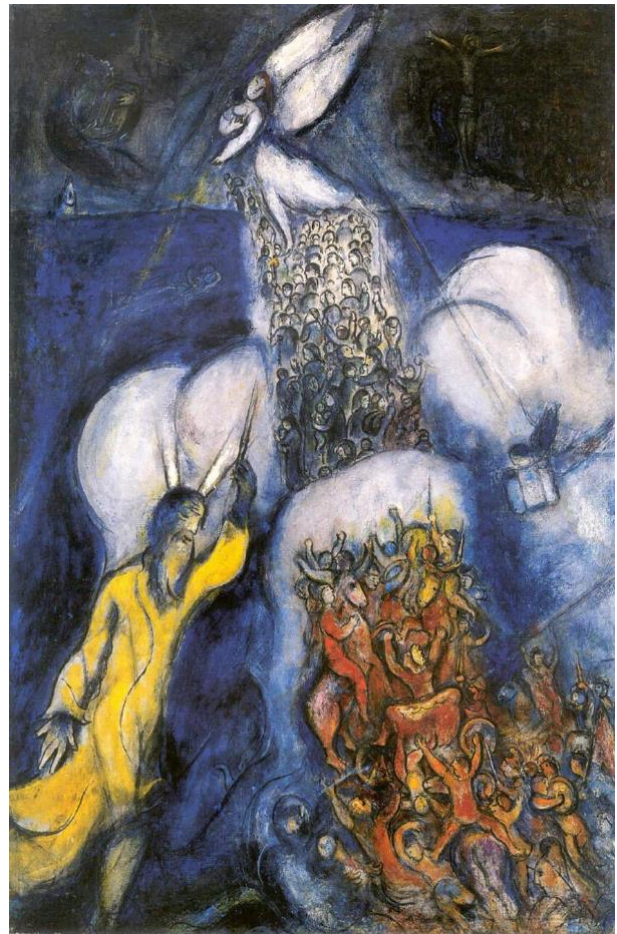
Peter Beinart: Reflections on the Exodus story

In the last few years, American Jewish political commentator **Peter Beinart** has turned Jewish debate about the future of Israel/Palestine upside down and inside out. We are enormously grateful to Peter for contributing to our Seder with his reflections on the Exodus story.

Danya Cohen: Israel as an apartheid state

B'TSELEM is Israel's leading human rights research organisation. Its conclusion that Israel is presiding over an apartheid state from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean has helped transform debate about Israel/Palestine.

Once again we welcome **Danya**, speaking to us live from B'tselem in Jerusalem about the designation of Israel as an apartheid state.



Marc Chagall, The Parting of the Red Sea

Second cup of wine, spoken by Mike Cushman

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign
of the universe, Creator of the fruit of
the vine.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם,
בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Seders have often been conducted in very harsh conditions. Two interventions remind us of the yearning to maintain the continuity of tradition, even when there was little hope.

First, Stefan Feuchtwang reads a prayer written by his uncle Rabbi Bernard Davids inside Bergen-Belsen, 1944

Stefan wrote the account below as an introduction to the prayer we will hear him read – as it is long and must not be rushed, while our time is short, we suggest you read and reflect on it after this Seder.

“My uncle, Rabbi Bernard Davids and another Dutch rabbi composed a prayer in the concentration camp of Bergen Belsen in 1944, for members of their Rotterdam community imprisoned with them. It was added after having said the prayer for blessing unleavened bread, *matza*, over a dried crust of leavened bread, *chametz*, despite the commandment to cleanse chametz from the surroundings. The prayer over unleavened bread is to celebrate God’s gift to his chosen people on their journey out of slavery in Egypt. I will read the special prayer in a moment. But first I want to say something about the parallels between the journey from pharaonic oppression, and the journey of so many other refugees from oppression, not to a chosen land but to many welcoming lands. Matzo is the bread to sustain refugees on their journey when they cannot bake. But in Belsen the stale crust was the meagre treasure of survival in much more dire circumstances.

Like the young mothers and their babies seeking refuge from Putin’s devastation of their cities, my mother carried me, but in her case alongside my father, escaping the Gestapo from Berlin to join my father’s mother who had already sought refuge with her daughter Erica married to Rabbi Davids in Rotterdam. We lived for a year from April 1938-39 with Erica and Bernard, their children and my grandmother before my father succeeded in finding a sponsor in London to avoid the Nazi Holocaust that the rest of the household could not escape. Some time after we left, they were hauled off to Westerbork, the Dutch transit camp, and from there in 1944 to Belsen.

My uncle, Bernard Davids and his son, Elijah, did not survive Belsen, but his wife, his mother-in-law, and their two daughters Miriam and Shulamid, did. My grandmother was released from Belsen in 1944 in a strange exchange for German Christians in Israel. Miriam and Shulamid eventually settled in Israel after Soviet troops liberated them from the enforced train journey to abandonment in a western German village when the British were approaching Belsen. My cousin Shulamid missed her Rotterdam childhood and her beloved brother, who with her father had died in the camp, that after many years in Israel she returned to live and marry in the Netherlands and instructed that when she died, she wanted her ashes to be joined to the mass grave where her brother’s body was thought to have been dumped.

I learned this shockingly moving last wish from the wife of one of Shulamid’s two sons as we attended a commemoration of Rabbi Davids and his son Elija in Rotterdam on 22 November 2021, last year. The ceremony was the laying of so-called stumble stones, *stolpersteine*, small paving stones onto which a bronze plate was fixed naming them, their life dates, and the death camp, replaced stones laid into the road outside the doorway to the residence from which they had been taken. The German artist Gunter Demnig who inaugurated the making and laying of *stolpersteine* had for several years done the labour of making the stones and laying them, in Germany, Holland and other countries as an act of reparation among the many undertaken by many German people. They are now prepared and laid by municipal public works departments as they were in Rotterdam last November. I salute him and them with gratitude. Tourists and other passers-by stumble upon these bright stones and are reminded about what happened there. Stumbling against an unevenly laid cobble had in Germany once aroused a curse on Jews who must, so anti-Semites thought, have caused this and all other mishaps. Now they remind us of the Nazis’ lethal rounding up of Roma, Jews and many others from their homes.”

Now the prayer. Stephan reads the English translation. Both it and the Hebrew can be found by Googling ‘Passover Prayer in Bergen Belsen’:

“Heavenly father, it is apparent to you that it our will is to do your will and to celebrate Passover by eating matzah and refraining from chametz. But on this our hearts are distressed because the oppression prevents us [from fulfilling your command] and we find our lives in danger. We are ready and willing to live by your mandate that we ‘live by the commandments and not die by them’. And we observe your warning ‘protect yourself and sustain your soul greatly’. We therefore beseech you to keep us alive, sustain us, and redeem us speedily, so that we may observe your statutes, carry out your will, and serve you wholeheartedly. Amen.”

And in a different historical context of repression,

Rachel Weston, accompanied by Jeremiah Lockwood, sings “Zog Maran”

This is the story of a secret seder, held in Spain by Marrano Jews. They had on the surface converted after the Spanish Inquisition but actually practised Judaism in secret. The song is told in a question-and-answer dialogue, the words by Avrom Reizn and the melody by Shmuel Bugatch.

Zog maran, du khaver mayner,
Vu is greyt der seyder dayner?
In tifyn heyl in a kheyder,
dort hob ikh gegreyt mayn seyder.

Tell me, Marrano, my friend
where your seder is prepared?
I have made my seder ready
in a room, in a deep cave.

Zog maran mir vu bay vemen
Vestu vayseh matzos nemen?
In der heyl oyf got's barotn
Hobn mir dem teyg geknotn.

Tell me Marrano, how and from whom
you will get your white matzos?
My wife, having consulted God
has kneaded the dough in the cave.

Zog maran vi vest zikh klign
A hagode vu tzu krign
In der heyl, in tife shpaltn
Hob ikh zi shoyn lang bahaltn.

Tell me, Marrano, how will you
get your hands on a Haggadah?
I have long hidden them
in a deep crack in the cave

Zog maran, vi vest zikh vern
Ven men vet dayn kol derhern
Ven der soyne vet mikh fangen
Vel ikh kempfn mit gesangen.

Tell me, Marrano, how you will be
if they hear your voice.
If the enemy captures me
I will go down singing.

The Seder Plate

Matzah

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You cause the earth to bring forth bread.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam ha-motzi lechem min ha-aretz.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You sanctify us by Your commandments and enjoin us to eat unleavened bread.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל
אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam asher kidd'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivvanu al achilat matzah.

Maror

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You sanctify us by Your commandments and enjoin us to eat bitter herbs.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרֹר.

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam asher kidd'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivvanu al achilat maror.

Hillel sandwich

This is what Hillel used to do when the Temple still stood: he would combine the paschal lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs and eat them together to fulfil the verse: 'with unleavened bread and bitter herbs shall they eat it.'

כֵּן עָשָׂה הִלֵּל בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה
קֹיִם: הָיָה כּוֹרֵץ מַצָּה וּמָרֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד
לְקִיּוֹם מֵהַ שְּׁנַאמֵר "עַל מִצּוֹת וּמָרֹרִים
יֹאכְלֶהוּ."

How to talk about Ukraine? This was a question we pondered long in preparing this seder. In the end, though in some ways, very much a work of its time, Yevgeni Yevtushenko's great cry of anger – his poem *Babi Yar* – seemed to fit the bill. We recognise that it is unapologetically Russian, with no acknowledgment of the Ukrainian location or Ukrainian name of this notorious killing field. Yet, six decades after it was written, Yevtushenko's *Babi Yar* also transcends its own era and context, remaining a work of astonishing courage, internationalism and universalist identification. It's about being human, standing up for the other, and about celebrating both personal identity while respecting that of others.

Tonight we want to honour *all whose bravery transcends boundaries and identities* – and we hope, counterintuitive as it may seem, that through Maxine Peake's reading, *Babi Yar* will be heard as representing and celebrating all; Ukrainians and Russians, Palestinians and Jews, and those with multiple identities, who today are standing up against tyranny and oppression.

There are many translations of *Babi Yar*. Yevtushenko chose this stripped-back version when he read the poem in English. **Maxine Peake's** reading more than vindicates his choice.

No monument stands over Babi Yar.
A drop sheer as a crude gravestone.
I am afraid.

Today, I am as old in years
As all the Jewish people.

Now I seem to be
a Jew

Here I plod through ancient Egypt
And here, I perish, crucified, on the cross,
And to this day, I bear the scars of nails.

I seem to be Dreyfus.
The Philistines, both informer and judge.
Behind bars. Beset on every side,
Hounded,
spat on,
slandered,
while squealing, painted ladies in flounced Brussels lace
Stab parasols into my face.

I seem to be, then,
a young boy in Byelostok
Blood runs, spilling over the floors,
The bar-room rabble rousers
Give off a stench of vodka and onion.

A boot kicks me aside. Helpless I bleed
While these pogrom bullies
Jeer and shout
"Beat the Yids. Save Russia!"
Some grain merchant rapes my mother.

O, my Russian people,
I know that you
Are international to the core.
But those with unclean hands
have often made a jingle of your purest name.

I know the goodness of my land.
How vile,
these antisemites without a qualm

They call themselves
The "Union of Russian People!"

I seem to be Anna Frank,
Transparent, as a branch in April,
And I love, and have no need of phrases,
My need is that we gaze into each other.

How little we can see or smell!
We are denied the leaves, we are denied the sky,
Yet we can do so much
And tenderly embrace each other
In a darkened room
They are coming here.

Be not afraid
those are the booming sounds
Of spring. Spring is coming here.
Come then to me. Quick, give me your lips!"

"Are they smashing the door!"
"No, no, the ice is breaking..."

The wild grasses rustle over Babi Yar,
The trees look ominous, like judges.
Here, all things scream silently, and baring my head,
Slowly I feel myself turning grey.

And I myself, I'm one massive soundless scream
Above the thousand thousands buried here,
I am - each old man here shot dead,
I am - every child here shot dead.

Nothing in me shall ever forget.
The "Internationale", let it thunder
When the last antisemite on the earth is buried
forever.

In my blood there is no Jewish blood,
In their callous rage, all antisemites
Must hate me now as a Jew.
For that reason
I am a true Russian!

An appeal on behalf of the British Shalom-Salaam Trust

This Seder has been organised by the British Shalom-Salaam Trust, a tiny Jewish charity doing its utmost to help build hope in Israel/Palestine/Golan. BSST supports dozens of grassroots projects in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, Israel and the often-forgotten Syrian Golan. Many serve children whose families are refugees and asylum-seekers. They may be ‘new’ refugees – Africans from Sudan, Congo, Somalia, Ethiopia. Or refugees whose status dates back to the *Nakba* when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were driven from their homes; many of their descendants still live in refugee camps alongside Palestinian towns and cities in Gaza and the West Bank.

This is an appeal for BSST because, unlike most grant-giving trusts, we have no endowment. Which means that every penny we give away, we must first raise. We know we do a great job, and we know that many of you know it too. But tonight we want you to *demonstrate* your support, *not for BSST, but for the people on the ground in Israel/Palestine/Golan who need us*. It’s about *their* lives, *their* dreams, *their* efforts, *their* struggles and *their* achievements. And because BSST has no staff, no premises, no spiralling fuel bills, 99% of what we receive gets passed on to Palestinians, Jews, Syrians, African refugees, people for whom our support is priceless.

To help make this more real for you, tonight we are introducing activists from three of our brilliant projects: **Youth of Sumud**, **+972 Magazine** & **Fragments Theatre**. Please help us to continue to support projects like these across Israel/Palestine/Golan. To donate, go to www.bsst.org.uk/donate/

First, **Sameeha Huraini** from the South Hebron Hills. An activist with **Youth of Sumud**, Sameeha gives a vivid account of their garden project, which is under constant threat from violent settlers, and also shows how it was BSST’s support which enabled it to go ahead.

Next, **Haggai Matar**, Executive Director of **+972 Magazine**, speaking from Tel Aviv, describes what he and his fellow journalists are trying to achieve, and why they value BSST.

Finally, **Rawand Arqawi**, founder and Director of **Fragments Theatre** in the City of Jenin, will talk to you about her project, her dreams, and why Fragments and the young people of Jenin need BSST.

Don’t forget – Sameeha, Haggai, Rawand, and all their colleagues, families, users, fellow activists, rely on BSST, which relies on you. To donate, go to www.bsst.org.uk/donate/

The Passover meal would be eaten here - but we will just continue on . . .



Finding the Afikomen

We hope you haven't forgotten that the Afikomen was hidden. Now we invite everyone to hunt for the Afikomen but without leaving your screens. Have you found it yet? This is perhaps a world first in Jewish digital magic!

Birkat Hamazon

We praise You, Eternal One, our God,
Sovereign of the universe, whose
goodness sustains the whole world.
With grace, love and compassion You
provide food for all Your creatures, for
Your love is everlasting. Through Your
great goodness we have never lacked our
daily bread; may we always have sufficient,
for Your great name's sake. Your goodness is
the source of sustenance for all who live. We
praise You, O God, Provider of food for all.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,
הזן את העולם כלו בטובו ברחם
בחסד וברחמים, הוא נותן לחם לכל
בשר כי לעולם חסדו. ובטובו הגדול
תמיד לא חסר לנו, ואל יחסר לנו
מזון לעולם ועד. בעבור שמו הגדול,
כי הוא זן ומפרנס לכל ומטיב לכל,
ומכין מזון לכל בריותיו אשר ברא.
ברוך אתה יי, הזן את הכל.

*Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam ha-zan et ha-olam kullo b'tuvo b'chein
b'chesed u-v'rachamim hu notein lechem l'chol basar ki l'olam chasdo u-v'tuvo ha-gadol
tamid lo chasar lanu v'al yechsar lanu mazon l'olam va-ed ba'avur sh'mo ha-gadol ki hu
zan u-m'farneis la-kol u-meitiv la-kol u-meichin mazon l'chol b'riyyotav asher bara.
Baruch atah Adonai ha-zan et ha-kol.*

Third cup of wine, spoken by Mike Cushman

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign
of the universe, Creator of the fruit of
the vine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Andrew Feinstein talks about the difficulties in discussing Palestine in the context of British politics

Annabelle Sreberny talks about Elijah's cup

A significant moment in the seder is to welcome in Elijah, the prophet. My family put a fine silver goblet of wine on the doorstep in case he arrived. We took it quite seriously while other families enjoyed their father dressing up in a white sheet to become Elijah the ghost who spooked everyone! The seder has always invited inventiveness and playfulness, and this moment also evokes the very contemporary notion of inviting strangers into our house. Michael Lerner and the progressive Tikkun collective in the US, amongst others, want to acknowledge women and the feminine better in the seder, so they put out a beaker of water for Miriam, probably a more thirst-quenching refreshment for the long traveller.

A powerful element of the Elijah story is of course the messianic hope that becomes embodied in him. But we all know where the longing for father figures, for great male leaders, can take us. We're seeing it daily visited on the heads of Ukrainian people and property. And we witness the ruthless destruction of Palestinian houses, olive groves, water supplies, sometimes of people themselves in violent settler attacks.

Many of us have come to think of 'godness' as a form of human goodness, as the positive human spirit that lives within each of us. So perhaps we might turn the image of the strange visitor inside out and welcome those parts of ourselves that we haven't allowed to be manifest or which always seems so weak and impotent in the face of real power. Perhaps we could find the Elijah and the Miriam inside ourselves and invite them out a bit more?

The invocation of Elijah reminds us of the messianic vision of a world of peace and justice in which inequalities have been abolished and our human capacities for love, solidarity, creativity and freedom are allowed to flourish, in which all people will live in harmony with nature and with each other. Solidarity has to be with those who are unlike ourselves. We still need to dare to dream.

Fourth cup of wine, spoken by Mike Cushman

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign
of the universe, Creator of the fruit of
the vine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch atah Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

The Brighton and Hove Choir, led by Polina Shepherd on piano, sing “Di bekhers mit vayn,” - “Let’s fill our Glasses,” H. Bloshteyn / P. Shepherd

Khaveyrim, heybt hekher di bekhers mit
vayn,
Zol lebn di libshaft, gezunt zol zi zayn.
Di libshaft fun yokhed tsum yokhied - dem
mentsh,
Di frayndshaft fun felker zol zayn undz
gebentsht.

Der velt iz in gantsn af libshaft geshtelt,
Der gortn, der vald un dos veytsene feld,
Zey shteyen in grins, un in bloy un in gold.
Der far nor? Der far vos di zun hot zey holt.

Refren:

Mir zaynen ale ot do af der erd
Vayl s’hot undz a libshaft, a groyse bagert,
Vos blonzhet in harts vi farborgene shayn,
Biz s’gist zikh in eybikn nign arayn.

Es vert bloyz durkh libshaft dos lebn gemert,
Iz zol zi gebentsht zayn, di muter di erd,
Di muter – di zun un di muter – di froy!
Dos lebn on libshaft iz kalt un iz

Friends, let’s drink to love between people and to the friendship of peoples!

Love is the foundation of the world. Gardens, woods and barley fields are in blossom because the sun loves them. We all yearn for true love. The secret shine of love is concealed in our hearts until it breaks free in an everlasting melody.

Let’s bless Mother Earth, Mother Sun and Mother Woman! Life is cold and grey without love.



Conclusion

Our seder is now complete. We have followed the order, told the story, performed the rites, sung the songs, and reflected on the relevance of the message of Pesach to the Jews, to the struggle for justice for Palestinians and of its universal resonance for all peoples.

Let us meet next year in a world redeemed! Peace, justice and equality for all!

NOTES ON SPEAKERS AND ORGANISERS

Rawand Arqawi is a director of **Fragments Theatre** in Jenin in the West Bank, Palestine. Fragments Theatre can be found on Instagram.

Peter Beinart is editor-at-large of American Jewish left magazine, Jewish Currents, a professor of journalism and political science at City University of New York and author of the Beinart Notebook newsletter on Substack.

The Brighton & Hove Yiddish Choir is a group of singers who explore all Yiddish singing traditions and build on them via folk songs, contemporary compositions and translations from other cultures, while respecting the history, style and cultural contexts in which the music originated and developed. The choir is led by **Polina Shepherd**, originally a Russian Jewish musician now living in the UK. Her current work covers vocal music from large scale choirs to solo in the UK and internationally. <https://www.polinasherpherd.co.uk/>

Danya Cohen is the International Relations Officer for **B'tselem**, the Israeli campaigning organisation which documents the abuses of the Occupation and recently issued a ground-breaking report: *A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea': This is Apartheid*, which can be found at btselem.org

Mike Cushman is Membership Secretary of **Jewish Voice for Labour**. He no longer has a family Seder to attend since his parents died, so is delighted to be part of our collective event.

Rabbi Janet Darley is a graduate of Leo Baeck College in London and was ordained in July 2009. She began serving South London Liberal Synagogue (SLLS) as its minister in 2008 while a final year student and continued to serve the community until the summer of 2016. Originally from Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.A., Rabbi Janet moved to the UK in 1989. Before becoming a rabbi, she was a Senior Lecturer in Economics at Kingston University and previously worked as an applied economist in local government in the United States. She is committed to the prophetic vision of social justice and the ethical monotheism espoused by the founders of the progressive Jewish movement.

Hagai van der Horst (PhD, FRSA) writes on racism in the press and works as a graphic designer, trading as ZOPAFilms.com. He designed the lovely flyer.

Andrew Feinstein is an author, film-maker & investigative researcher. He is a former ANC Member of Parliament who served under Nelson Mandela. Son of a Holocaust survivor who lost dozens of family in the Shoah, Andrew introduced the first ever motion on the Holocaust in the South African Parliament. He has published on genocide prevention and lectured at Auschwitz on the topic. He is the Executive Director of Shadowworld Investigations <https://shadowworldinvestigations.org/>

Stephan Feuchtwang is Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at the LSE. He came to the UK in 1939 with his parents as refugees from Hitler, initially from Berlin, but then from a year in Rotterdam living with his aunt and her husband, Rabbi Bernard Davids.

Sameeha Huraini is an English Lit. student and member of **Youth of Sumud**, a Palestinian resistance group. She lives in a village in the South Hebron Hills, an area under constant harassment and attack by settlers and by the IDF. www.facebook.com/youthofsumud

Daniel Kahn is a punk-klezmer musician with The Painted Bird in Germany. In February 2021, The Forverts released this Yiddish rendition of folksinger Woody Guthrie's classic song, "This Land is Your Land" including *all* its controversial verses. Daniel translated the song into Yiddish and produced the music video which can be found here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnP8zWcy1ZA>

Haggai Matar is an Israeli journalist and Executive Director of **+972 Magazine**. He lives in Tel Aviv. 972mag.com

Leo Sreberny-Allen is 4 years old and lives in Paris

Yari Sreberny Lewis is 3 years old and lives in London

Charlotte & Sophie Neslen are 8 and 9 years old and live in Brussels

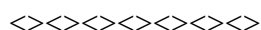
Dorothy Neslen is 8 years old and lives in London

Maxine Peake is a leading British actor with a huge repertoire ranging across theatre, film, radio and television, from Dinner Ladies to Miss Julie to Mike Leigh's Peterloo to Hamlet in which she played the Prince. Born in Bolton to a care worker and a lorry driver, she was encouraged by her grandfather to take up acting. Now living in Salford, both writing dramas and performing, she describes herself as a feminist and a socialist. She is a long-time supporter of Palestinian rights.

Rachel Weston is a London/New York-based song collector and performer of Yiddish song. She is a Chazzan in training at New York's Hebrew Union College School of Sacred Music. In the UK she has worked with the Jewish Music Institute; Kleznorth; Klezfest London; SOAS; WOMAD and the London Yiddish choir. She has performed and taught internationally in Montreal, Toronto, New York, Weimar, Berlin and Krakow. Rachel serves as student cantor at Garden City Synagogue in Long Island and Reform communities in the U.K.

Annabelle Sreberny is Emeritus Professor, SOAS University of London. She is the child of refugees, from Germany via the Kindertransport and from Poland. She is a trustee of BSST.

Naomi Wayne is co-founder and current secretary of BSST.



Liberation Haggadah 2022 was compiled, written and edited by Annabelle Sreberny and Naomi Wayne

Zoom technical operations were organised and managed by Mike Cushman, to whom enormous thanks!

Finally, a couple of other things we like but there wasn't room to include . . .

Arwa Mahdavi wrote a valuable opinion piece in the Guardian reflecting on the invisibility of Palestinian issues in our media.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/mar/12/gigi-hadid-palestine-vogue-liberals-ukraine>

and poet **Stevie Krayner** sent us this

Passover toast

We raise our glasses and cry
Next year in Jerusalem! As though
we couldn't fly there next week
if we chose - and not
as tourists. We play the outcast;
we plague ourselves with this longing.

Next year in Jerusalem
may we meet face to face
with our Palestinian cousins;
may we find a way to greet
our neighbours whose houses
we claimed, whose claims we denied.

Next year in Jerusalem
may we and they bow low
before each other's anguish.
But may we who exiled them -
we who've had *exile, enemy, monster*
stitched into our flesh -

May we fall to our knees
on those wrestled-over stones
and beg forgiveness. And let us
hold our breath till we know
whether we may stand up straight again
freed from the weight of wrong.

Next year in Jerusalem
may we and they come together
to tear down the walls
that divide us, that imprison us -
soldier, shahid, farmer, student,
rabbi and sheikh and orphan.

When that happens, next year
in Jerusalem, among the ruins
of years and lives that cannot be rebuilt
many will wail a kaddish, a salat; and some
will dash their wine upon the ground
wishing it were blood.

But the children will run and laugh,
forgetting last night's bad dreams,
and the young people will dance
the dabke and the hora,
and maybe, maybe, the year after that,
they'll teach one another the steps.