

# Haggadah Supplement Pesach 2024

(ways to include the Israel - Gaza war this Seder)



The following ideas have been brought together to help families who want to celebrate “how is this night different from all other nights?” and also recognise “how is this seder different from all other seders?” by acknowledging the war in Gaza, the plight of the hostages and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza at their seder table.

Recognising that for some a discussion of Israel-Palestine is difficult enough at any time, we’ve attempted to find a path for families to go beyond the traditional Passover Seder/Haggadah format in these stressful and emotional times during the ongoing war.

We’re not suggesting that you adopt all ideas below - you may choose only one. We hope that by having some options you feel able to meet the needs of your seder participants and provide opportunities to present and discuss the current circumstances honestly, without taking away from Pesach as a Festival of Freedom.

These ideas emerge from the seder tradition of asking questions and provoking enquiry in the search for meaning in the Pesach festival. For those wanting to acknowledge and sit with the discomfort that this seder may bring, we suggest that you make your intentions known prior to or early in the seder. No one likes confronting surprises. For your seder to be successful, your family and friends need to engage on these difficult issues. Remember, you have invited the people important to you to be part of the seder, so your aim should be inclusion and respect for all opinions and responses to these challenging times.

We hope you find these ideas stimulating, useful and engaging.

Chag Pesach sameach

# On the table or Seder plate

## 1. An extra candle



*A suggestion inspired by the Central Conference of American Rabbis Haggadah supplement*

Adding a candle. The tradition of adding a candle at shabbat is common practice for many households to remember loved ones not present or who have died. We are suggesting that an extra candle be lit as an initial framing of how this night is different from other seder nights, saying something like:

We light this extra candle to recognise in pain and in hope all the victims since October 7. The hostages and their families, the fallen soldiers and all the innocents of Gaza. We light this candle for those who have died, that their memories will be for the blessing of peace and in their names that we work together to shed light, because we cannot defeat darkness with more darkness.

## 2. Symbols



Another simple approach could be the addition of new items as symbols. The leader of the seder may or may not choose to highlight them during the Seder and ask additional questions, or they could simply be presented and the question asked as to why they are there?

### Hostages

- Stale pita on the seder plate to symbolise their deprivation
- Yellow ribbons on the table (the adopted symbol of the hostages)
- An empty chair and setting for those who can't attend a seder

### Gazans

- An additional cup that is empty to symbolise their humanitarian crisis
- A broken brick to symbolise the destruction

# The Maggid

Before starting or during the telling of the Maggid

## 3. Ma Nishtana

Before (or following) the traditional singing of Ma Nishtana, invite people to share with the person next to them the ways in which this year feels different from other years in terms of being Jewish and participating at the seder. People can share some of their reflections with the larger group.

## 4. Discuss our obligation to see ourselves as those who found freedom

Another idea is to discuss the Haggadah's obligation that "In every generation a person is obligated to see themselves as though they went out from Egypt" in the context of the hostages, but to also then link it to Gaza by adding that the Torah reminds us four times that "You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt".

## 5. Discussing 'Freedom'

Another idea is to have a series of photos from the paper/social media - without headlines or articles and pose the question: "Are the people in these pictures free?" Images could include recognisable faces like Kate Middleton, Sam Kerr, Taylor Swift - but also of hostages or kids in Gaza or displaced people in Israel

## 6. All Four Are One (an alternative for The Four Children)



*This is based on a piece from an organisation called Bayit, based in the USA, originally written by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat.*

Today we will read about a different set of Four Jewish Children as a way to find a shared future within our communities: a Zionist, a Palestinian solidarity activist, a peacenik, and one who doesn't know what to even dream.

The Zionist, what do they say? Two thousand years we dreamed of return. "Next year in Jerusalem" is now, and hope for the Jewish people is our guiding light.

The Palestinian solidarity activist, what do they say? We know what it is like to be the stranger. For me, to be the oppressor is unbearable. We must lift up all the downtrodden.

The peacenik, what do they say? We must acknowledge that we both love this land and neither is leaving. So we're in this together. Between the river and the sea, two peoples must be free. We must be willing to make difficult choices to achieve this.

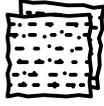
And the one who doesn't know what to even dream, simply feed them sweet haroset, a reminder that building a just future has always been our call.

All of us have wisdom. None of us are intentionally wicked with our desires for peace.

We are one people, one extended family. Not only because history's flames never asked what kind of Jew one might be, but because the dream of collective liberation is our legacy. We need each other in this wilderness. Only together can we build redemption.

# Other Parts of the Seder

## 7. Matzah



*Inspired by the Shalom Hartman Haggadah supplement*

After you have distributed the first pieces of matzah around your seder table, before you say the blessing invite each person to give their piece to someone else - ensuring everyone has a piece.

Explain that on this Seder night you wish to bring together the two ideas of inclusion and safety by reciting, “Let all who are hungry come and eat” while also remembering the experiences of oppression and suffering that was so severe that we had to eat the “bread of affliction”.

Once all of the matzah has been redistributed, say together:

“For all the hostages and their families and all the innocents of Gaza, this bread that is shared is no longer the bread of affliction, it is the bread of freedom”.

## 8. The 20 plagues

The Rabbis taught that it was wrong to celebrate the death of anyone, even an enemy: (Proverbs 24:17) “Rejoice not when your enemy falls and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles”. This idea led to the Ashkenazi tradition of removing one drop of wine for each plague. We can not celebrate “with a full cup” knowing we have achieved freedom through the suffering of others.

Tonight we will remove a drop of wine as we read the traditional ten plagues as well as the ten modern plagues: Crime, Disease, Abuse, Neglect, Poverty, Destruction of the environment, Discrimination, Indifference to the suffering of others, Hunger and War.

## 9. Challenge the idea of “Pour out your wrath”



Near the end of the Passover Seder, as we open the door to welcome Elijah the prophet, we recite the shefokh khamatkha, Pour Out Your Wrath: a prayer in which we request divine vengeance be poured upon those who persecute us.

In general the idea of vengeful retribution is a challenging text to discuss, but even more so this year. So we are offering 2 ways we can consider this. Depending on your beliefs, you can choose which to include:

a) For those who believe in God, we can see this as a prayer to remove the need for vengeance from our hearts by relinquishing this to the Divine. We are not the ones who are able to effect justice adequately in this world, instead we must trust that just responses to evil will be pursued by Hashem. With this faith we can free ourselves from the bitterness of pursuing revenge and instead focus our energies on our journey out of slavery and into freedom.

b) For those who do not believe in God, we can discuss this prayer in more humanistic terms by asking which is more empowering and future building: an act of vengeance or an act of love?

There are two example that you could use:

i) Rami & Bassam from the Parents Circle Families Forum  
(<https://www.australianjewishnews.com/two-fathers-united-in-grief-work-towards-peace/>)

ii) Rwanda. It is 30 years ago this month (April 1994), that in just 100 days, 800,000 people were murdered and hundreds of thousands of women were raped. The Hutus attacked their fellow Tutsi citizens personally and directly with machetes and hand guns - the scale and modes of brutality makes this period different from any other act of violence before or after. The massacre ended when the Tutsi resistance movement defeated the Hutus' army and seized control of Rwanda. About two million Hutus fled the country. Thirty years later, there is peace between the Tutsis and the Hutus. The Tutsi leadership initiated a process of acceptance and healing and accepted back into Rwanda the overwhelming majority of the Hutus who had fled.

Today, the Hutus and the Tutsis live together in peace in Rwanda - a country which is now considered one of the more peaceful and flourishing countries in Africa.

## **10. Discussing 'Dayenu' before singing it**

Another suggestion is to discuss the idea of the song, Dayenu ("It would have been enough") in the context of the hostages and Gazans. The discussion could be simply opened by asking what, if any, of these verses could be sung this seder? Or, are there alternative verses people would like to offer as alternatives?



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