

Selections from The Israeli Haggadah, Special Edition 2024

The Solidarity Seder Supplement 2024

by Michael Zion and Noam Zion

illustrations by Michel Kichka

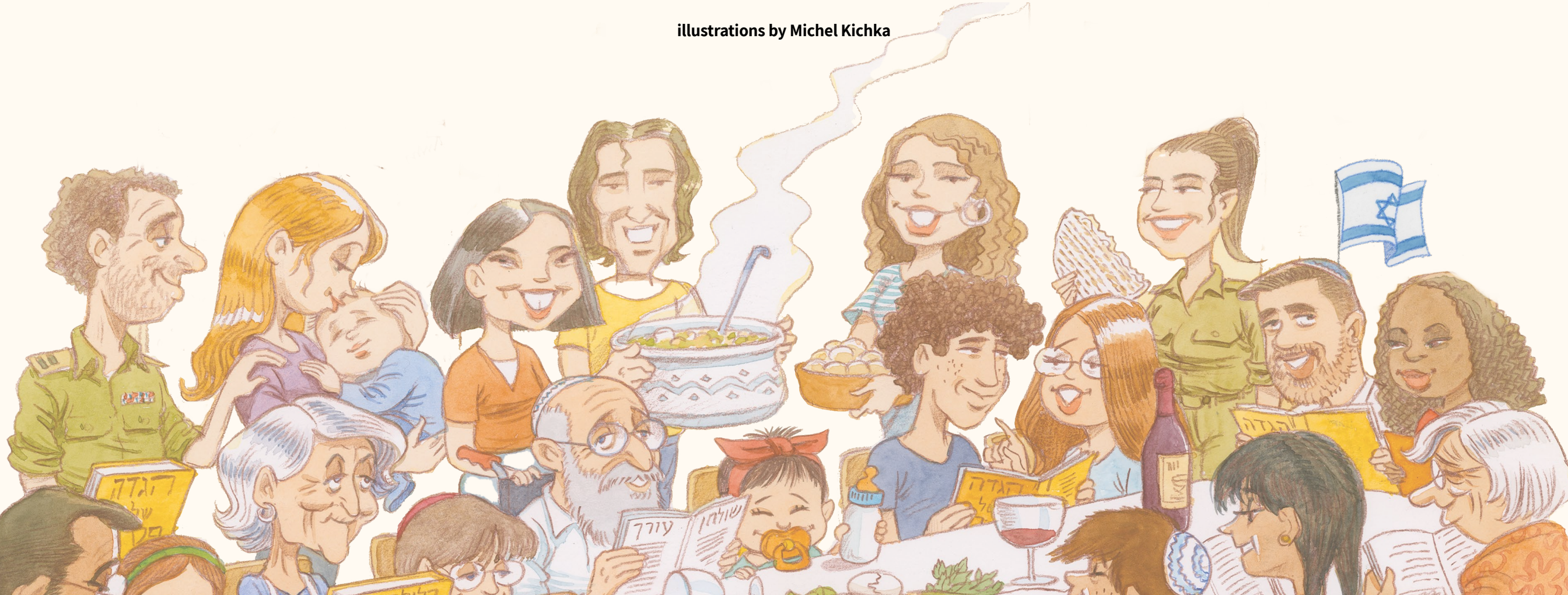


Table of Contents

3 Introduction

The Mitzvah to Tell Our Story to Our Children: A Three-Generation Haggadah Project Rabbi Mishael Zion

6 Kadesh | קדש

Lift up a Glass by Avner Goren z”l

7 Yahatz | יחץ

Entering the Broken World
Mishael Zion

Broken Unto You
Leonard Cohen

8 Ha Lakhma Anya הא לחמא עניא

To be a Free People in Our Land
by Yishai Sarid

9 Ma Nishtana: Contemporary Questions מה נשתנה

The Historic Haggadahs
from the Kibbutzim on the Gaza border:
Be’eri, Nir Oz, Nachal Oz

“Our Freedom”: The Ukrainian Haggadah 2024 by Vlada Nedak and Zoya Cherkassky

14 Arba Banim and Banot ארבעת הבנים וארבע בנות

The Contemporary Four Sons and Daughters
Michel Kichka, Racheli Shalev, Philip Roth,
Franz Kafka, Yoel Heshin, Tamar Elad-
Appelbaim, A. J. Heschel, and, Ziva (Tezezew)
Mekonen Degu

21 B'khol Dor VaDor בכל דור ודור

In every generation they rise up against us
Michel Kichka, Noam Zion

23 Hallel | הלל

Gratitude for Redeeming Our Captives
Jacky Levy, uncle of redeemed and
unredeemed hostages

24 Shfokh Hamatkha שפוך חמתך

Pour out Your Wrath and Pour out Your Love
Avraham Shlonsky, Rachel Goldberg
and M.L. King

26 L'Shana haBa'a לשנה הבאה בירושלים

Elijah's Good News and Next Year in Jerusalem
David Grossman, Rabbi Oded
Mazor, Rabbi Yitz Greenberg

29 A Guide for Parents and Families

How will we celebrate Passover this Year?
Dasee Berkowitz



The "door of hope" is still open; things are not what they might be, even when what they might be isn't totally different from what they are. We still believe, or many of us do, what the Exodus first taught: first, that wherever you live, it is probably Egypt; second, that there is a better place, a world more attractive, a promised land; and third, that "the way to the land is through the wilderness." There is no way to get from here to there except by joining together and marching.

Michael Walzer, Exodus and Revolution

The old will be made new, and the new made holy.

Rav Abraham Isaac Kook, first chief Ashkenazi rabbi of Eretz Yisrael, 1865-193

A Gift of Solidarity and Gratitude, Passover 2024

How will we sit at the family Passover table this year? In this year of extraordinary pain and heroism, mutual aid and hope, we created a new version of our Israeli Haggadah to help Hebrew-speaking audiences to integrate the challenging experiences of this year into their Exodus stories. We found new stories, texts and illustrations relevant to these moments in Jewish history.

As Passover comse closer and the war continues, we have distributed gift copies of the new Israeli Haggadah to the thousands of families most impacted by this war - bereaved families who have lost their loved ones, and families evacuated from the endangered borders in the Galilee and the Gaza strip environs, who are celebrating Seder away from their homes.

We turned to you, our North American friends, colleagues and rabbis, to join us in this endeavor, and were heartened by the warm and generous response. This joint initiative, together with the Shalom Hartman Institute, allowed us to distribute thousands of copies of the Israeli Haggadah to families across Israel.

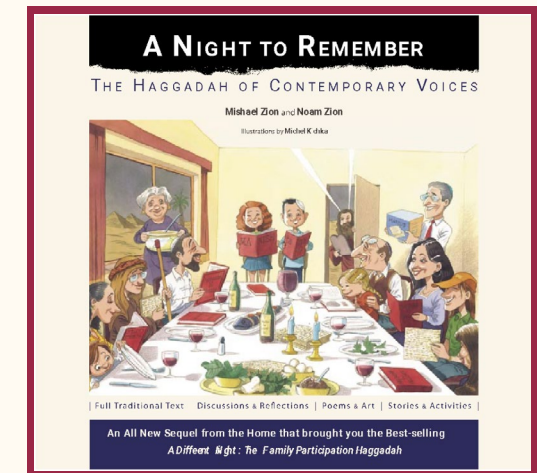
As an expression of our gratitude, and in the spirit of international Jewish solidarity, we translated selections of this Haggadah into English, Portuguese and Spanish, French and German, so that Jews across the world can be "on the same page" tonight.

We hope this will contribute to interesting discussions at your seder.

May we all celebrate a Passover of hope and strive for peace, freedom and security.

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A Three-Generation Haggadah Project

by Rabbi Mishael Zion (2024)



I will never forget the first seder I led in 2002: I was a twenty-one year old soldier in the Israeli army serving in Rafah, between Egypt and Gaza. My father, Noam, suggested I fill his shoes as the seder leader. We had just printed an experimental draft of what would become an Israeli Hebrew haggadah entitled Halaila Hazeh (2004), taking inspiration from my father's A Different Night: The Family Participation Haggadah (1997, by Noam Zion and David Dishon).

We planned the night meticulously, aiming to perform as many of the customs of Jews from around the world at once: to sit on the living room floor like the Yemenite Jews, passing the seder plate in blessing and song over the head of each child and adult in the North African tradition, wearing white like the German Jews and beating each other with green onions during Dayenu like the Jews of Persia and Afghanistan. It was a wonderful and joyous evening: my youngest sibling prepared a quiz with prizes to go with Ma Nishtana; my older sister offered a feminist analysis of contemporary enslavement based on "We were slaves" Avadim hayenu. At the eating of Maror, my mother told the tale of my grandfather being saved in Holland by his devout Christian neighbors during World War II. When reciting, "everyone is obligated to see oneself as if s/he went out of Egypt," my

grandfather told us about how, as a chaplain in the US Army Air Forces he composed an original haggadah as a humorous parody on "enslavement" in the US Army for his Jewish soldiers on Okinawa immediately after World War II. Then he described his first seder in the Land of Israel in 1948, just weeks before the founding of the State of Israel. At that time, he fought in the Haganah, alongside my grandmother, and was asked to organize the army seder in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Talpiot. Talpiot is the neighborhood I grew up in, and as my grandfather described how he invited future Nobel prize winner and fellow Talpiot resident Shmuel Yosef Agnon to lead the Seder, I felt how past and present became more deeply intertwined.

When we finally sat down to the meal, my uncle pulled me aside and said: "There has been a Hamas suicide bombing at the Park Hotel seder in Netanya. Should we tell everyone?" At that moment the joy of the holiday was turned to mourning. I felt what Jews had felt again and again during our history: A nation that wants to retell its story of Exodus to freedom, rediscovers that "in every generation there are those who wish to wipe out the Jewish people." On that evening, we felt once again how we are turned into a nation defined through the gunshots of its enemy and how we are

united by a covenant of common fate in times of persecution.

Two years later, in 2004, the first edition of The Israeli Haggadah was published. The Haggadah was wildly successful, and we felt we had attuned our book to the desire for a truly Israeli combination of integrating tradition and innovation, a legacy of generations with the hutzpah and creativity to remake our own traditions anew. In the years that followed, we created haggadot in multiple languages together with Jews of varied communities so the seder would mirror their local Jewish perspectives: Denna Afton in Sweden; Una Noche de Libertad (Uruguay); Uma Haggada Para o Nosso Tempo (Brazil); and A Night to Remember: The Haggadah of Contemporary Voices (USA). I felt honored to be part of my family's multigenerational Haggadah project: to enable each family to celebrate its personal Exodus from Egypt in its own way.

Today, twenty years later, I am no longer a young soldier but a father of four daughters. I decided to create a new edition of the Haggadah that would be updated and more accessible for a new generation of parents and children. In the midst of this project the attack of October 7th, 2023, on Simhat Torah took place. This time - unlike

KADESH

קַדֵּשׁ



Lift Up a Glass! Avner Goren z"l

Look at a fruit salad:
sweet fruits and tangy ones,
some soft-skinned and some rough,
some hard and some juicy.
Each fruit brings its own flavor,
colors and texture.

Together they create something new,
something that is all of them united,
while still separate,
tasteful and surprising.

So too are we:
We have in our midst
an abundance of goodness:
Some of us work the earth,
others fear Heaven.
Some are visionaries, others doers.
Some track new paths,
and others settle into their homes.
Each brings along his own language,
her own customs and their own beliefs.

Together we are an ingathering,
a kibbutz of exiles and a fusion of cultures,
a great creation - breathing and vital,
new, innovative, and self-renewing.

Let us raise our glass to toast
our return into the gates of our land,
to a kibbutz of ingathered exiles,
celebrating its fusion of cultures,
and welcoming all who gather and take part!

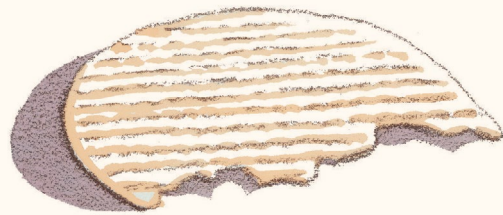


Avner Goren, son of Kibbutz Nir Oz founders, was murdered in his home on October 7, 2023. Avner's wife Maya was killed in the children's nursery where she worked. Her body is held hostage by Hamas. For years Avner was part of the team that wrote the texts for their Kibbutz Haggadah. This text was written in 1996, and republished also in the Beeri Kibbutz Haggadah in 1999. Avner and Maya are survived by their four children, Gal, Asif, Bar and Dekel. The literal translation of the word Kibbutz in Hebrew is "gathering".

Michel Kichka, Darom Adom - a tribute to the red poppy flowers which blossom near the Israel-Gaza Border, October 2023.

YAHATZ

יחַץ



Inviting Missing Persons to our Seder

The Seder gives us a chance to tell the stories not only of our ancestors but of those who have no voice, those who are missing from our table but not from our hearts. Some are beloved parents and grandparents who once played a central role in our Seder, some are cut off members of our worldwide Jewish family and some are just family members who could not join us and it hurts to pass over that poignant absence without marking it. Ritual can help heal the pain caused by these poignant absences, making the missing seem present

The tradition of pouring a cup "for the missing" began in the kibbutzim during World War II when the Fourth Cup was dedicated to the many kibbutz members who had volunteered to serve in the British Army fighting the Nazis. In the 1970s and 1980s, many left an empty chair at the table or added a fourth matza for Soviet Jews or Syrian Jews who were not free to celebrate Passover or to make aliyah. Since then, these persecuted Jews have gained their freedom and re-joined us around the table. Today, an empty place setting might be left for those massacred and kidnapped in the war with Hamas and those Israeli soldiers who fell in defense of their homes and families.

Is there someone whose name you would like to add to that list of those whom we miss this Seder? Would you like to tell their story as part of Maggid and what it teaches us?

Entering the Broken World by Mishael Zion

The Pesach story begins in a broken world, amidst slavery and oppression. The sound of the breaking of the matza sends us into that fractured existence, only to become whole again when we find the broken half, the afikoman, at the end of the Seder.

This brokenness is neither just a physical nor a political situation: It reminds us of all those hard, damaged places within ourselves. All those narrow places from which we want to break free. In Hebrew, Egypt is called "Mitzrayim", reminding us of the word "tzar", narrow. Thus, in Hasidic thought, Mitzrayim symbolizes the inner straits that trap our souls. Yet even here we can find a unique value, as the Hasidic saying teaches us: "There is nothing more whole – than a broken heart."

Broken unto You by Leonard Cohen

All my life is broken unto you, and all my glory soiled unto you.

Do not let the spark of my soul go out in the even sadness.

Let me raise the brokenness to you, to the world where the breaking is for love.

Do not let the words be mine, but change them into truth.

With these lips instruct my heart, and let fall into the world what is broken in the world. Lift me up to the wrestling of faith.

Do not leave me where the sparks go out, and the jokes are told in the dark, and new things are called forth and appraised in the scale of the terror.

Face me to the rays of love, O source of light, or face me to the majesty of your darkness, but not here, do not leave me here, where death is forgotten, and the new thing grins.

HA LAKHMA ANYA

הָא
לַחְמָא
עֲנִיָא



“To Be a Free People in our Land” by Yishai Sarid

A Jew encounters at least two Aramaic texts in her/his life: The mourner’s Kaddish and the Haggadah’s opening festive declaration Ha Lakhma Anya, “This is the bread of affliction!” The Seder begins with a memory from the past: the bread of the poor, the matza that recalls enslavement and humiliation, the hatred for the Jews, and the murderousness of the tyranny of Pharaoh. We are obligated to remember!

Immediately thereafter comes the mitzvah of social responsibility: “Let everyone who hungers, come and eat; all in need, come to partake in the Passover meal. The traumas we experienced do not release us from our moral responsibilities today. We are obligated to extend our hand to those in need of our aid.

Then Ha Lakhma Anya continues with the hope for redemption ... which is the dream that brought my grandparents to Israel from Baghdad, Casablanca, Tsaana [in Yemen], Warsaw and Berlin. They rebuilt Israel with enormous devotion and realized generations-long dreams with their own hands.

Finally, it concludes with the aspiration for freedom: “This year slaves – next year freedom!” We returned to our homeland to be free, as a people and as human beings. In the Israeli Declaration of Independence, we committed ourselves to the ideal that Israel would be a state of free women and men without discrimination based on religion, race or gender. We will not be infected by the corrupt racism that persecuted us in the lands of our exile. That is the magnanimous spirit from which Israeli democracy was born. That is the dream we realized by virtue of sacrifices too precious to bear. Now we defend it mightily in the name of our parents and for the sake of our children and our people.

Yishai Sarid, an Israeli novelist, published this reflection on the Passover Seder in the The Haggadah of the Protest, 2023. His father Yossi Sarid was a socialist Israeli parliamentarian. The title “To Be a Free People in our Land” derives from HaTikvah, the Israeli National Anthem, and this slogan has often been quoted by demonstrators protesting the proposed radical right-wing reform of the judicial system, 2023.

Ma Nishtana

מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה

Contemporary Questions Unanswered

A Seder Ice Breaker: How is This Year Different?

When extended families and distant friends gather for the annual Seder, it is the norm to catch up and ask what's new. To deepen this exchange, some families ask each one at the table to report briefly, to everyone, or to share with those sitting next to them, the most important ways in which they or their world has changed since last year's seder. On the one hand, there are personal milestones and sometimes losses to be marked alongside descriptions of how we have tried to grow and cope. On the other hand, especially in 2023, the collective worldview of many Jews – the experiences of physical and social vulnerability, anti-democratic authoritarianism, rising antisemitism and anti-Zionism and radical Islam – have raised challenging questions and caused disorientation. What are the new or newly acute questions we ask ourselves this year about our Jewish identity?



**“Contemporary” Versions of
the Ma Nishtana
from Kibbutz Haggadot (1930s-1950s)**

Historically, the original questions at the Seder were meant to be spontaneous and genuine queries, but over time Jews fell into the comfortable habit of memorizing and performing the simplest ritual questions taught at the level of the youngest and least sophisticated child. Even these rote questions have varied in different countries and eras. However, with the Zionist Revolution and especially the innovative attempt to create new collective Jewish communities called kibbutzim, the traditional seder opened itself to contemporary questions, disturbing inquiries about why the world is the way it is and pointing towards what it could be.

Before and after the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948, the secular kibbutzim issued new Haggadahs reflecting the dramatic events of Jewish history, such as the Holocaust and the return to Jewish sovereignty for the first time in 2,000 years. In recalling the genocide of Jewish boy babies in Egypt and the struggle for freedom from persecution and slavery, they could not help but relate contemporary fears and hopes to the ancient holiday of freedom. Even though secular socialist kibbutz members were far from traditional observance, they felt the acute relevance of Passover’s history to their own lives in Israel.

One of the most original features in the kibbutz seder was the custom of composing contemporary questions for the young to ask their elders and then asking the founders of the kibbutz to propose answers. Today, after Oct 7, 2023, these spontaneous questions resound with new urgency and poignancy, though satisfying answers are not easy to find.

For example, after the rise of Hitler and during World War Two, and after the beginning of the Arab Revolt in Palestine and the Israeli War of Independence (1936-1943), kibbutz Haggadahs recorded the following unanswered questions:

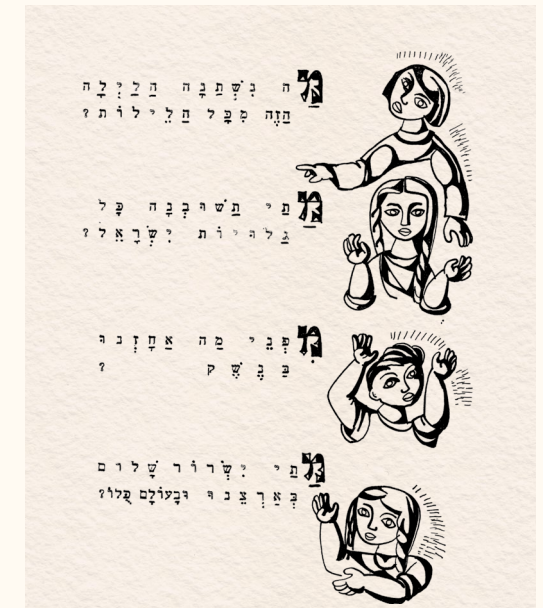


Illustration: Maryam Bartuv, Kibbutz Gvaram, 1943

Why do they hate Jews all over the world?

Why is there so much bloodshed in the world?

How different is this dark and dismal night from every other night! How strange and how bizarre is this world,

in this year, in this generation! What is happening to us that human beings are turning into malevolent, predatory animals? What is happening to people whose consciences in their chests are silenced?

How have we, our brothers, been transformed in the eyes of our enemies - from fellow human beings, fellow creatures of God, fellow mortals born to human mothers?

Why did we take up arms? For in every other era, we did not have the spirit in us to rise up and respond to our enemies in kind, but now we stand up in the gates of our towns to defend ourselves?

When will all the Jews of the Diaspora return to their land?

When will our land become a verdant garden?

When will peace reign in our land and throughout the whole world

(from Kibbutzim Ein Harod and Beit Oren, 1936)

In 1956, many new kibbutzim were settled along the new Egyptian border next to Gaza. In its first Haggadah, compiled and printed in 1956, Kibbutz Nahal Oz, located on the Gaza border, modified the Four Questions as follows:

On all other nights our ancestors were slaves to Egypt subject to their taskmasters.

But on this night we are free and we are settled on the border of Egypt and now our own hands are ready to defend our lives!

The name Nahal Oz means the Strong Outpost, but, painfully, on Oct 7, 2023, many of its members were massacred and kidnapped by Hamas.



מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל
הלילות. שבכל הלילות כל בני
ישראל, איש בכה ואיש בכה
יצטוק בחורין
הלילה הזה יושבים
כל בית-ישראל בכל אתר
ואתר ומטובין בקדושה.

שבכלילות עבר היינו סמוכין
על שלחן אחרים שופים ומהפסים
שאלחנו אנו
הלילה הזה בביתנו
אנו יושבים

שבכלילות היה אבותינו
עבדים לפרעה במצרים
נתונים ליד נוגשים
הלילה הזה בני חורין אנו
על גבול מצרים
זדינו רב לנו
צהגן על כפ שנו.

שבכל הלילות
היבולים-עוללות
כי עזים באים
ושטפים הם בלוע

זה הלילה הזה
נתחדשה המלאכה
כופפות ראשינו
שבליים עגולות.

The Beeri Haggadah



Kibbutz Beeri, many of whose members were massacred or taken hostage during the attack of October 7th, composed its own Haggadah even before it settled on the Egyptian Gaza border. In 1946, the founders wrote their own Haggadah to reflect their values and hopes, and a few months later settled in the Western Negev, and began to build the kibbutz they had dreamed of around the Seder table.

Their first Haggadah was created with a simple copying machine, but after the establishment of the State of Israel, the kibbutz turned to the designer Paul Kor, a new immigrant from Paris, and asked him to design a new and modern Haggadah for them. Kor, who would later become a famous Israeli designer, was influenced by the optimism of the young kibbutzniks and created the Haggadah in the spirit of the agricultural village, fields, sheaves of wheat and spring flowers. Kor arranged their innovative non-traditional text using a Torah scribe's font - the traditional Ashkenazi script, thus expressing the combination of tradition and innovation.

At the end of the Haggadah, Kor merged past and present, when he drew immigrants gathering together at the same time - from the pyramids representing ancient Egypt, from the illegal refugee ships of

Nazi-ravaged Europe, and from the Tower of Babel representing the Zionist youth movements of Iraq - to become a single community. This illustration is a tribute to the three groups that founded Kibbutz Beeri together. Next to the painting, the secular founders of the kibbutz wove verses from the comforting prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah, skipping over the name of the God of Israel, but without giving up the Biblical message of comfort:

“Restrain your voice from weeping, And your eyes from tears; For your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD, And they shall come back from the land of the enemy.” (Jeremiah 31:16).



According to Yigal Zora, 'Lines and Dots', Kibbutz Beeri

The New Ukrainian Haggadah: “For Our Freedom”

by Vlada Nedak

Za Nashu Svobodu «За нашу свободу» (2024)

“The more they oppress us the more we increase” (adapted from Exodus 1:12)

My first Pesach lasted about four hours. In a small university canteen, the Seder was packed mainly with people my grandfather's age. I understood nothing because the entire celebration was in Hebrew, but I only spoke Russian and Ukrainian. I was 12 years old and felt like the simple child who can only ask: “What is this?” Later, at one of Project Keshet's Jewish seminars in the 2000s, we had a day devoted to the Pesach story, where I finally understood what the holiday was about, what events it referred to, and who the main characters were. I was 22 years old then.

In 2022, when my family gathered for the Pesach Seder, I was no longer the simple child, so I held a "training" Seder for them. I explained the symbolic meaning of certain foods, told them the Exodus story, and focused on how long it had taken for the Jews to escape slavery. It was the second month of the full-scale war [in Ukraine which has been defending its independence and its national identity against the Russian

invasion]. The air raid siren was howling and I was unsure whether we should stay at the table or run to a shelter. I found some comfort in the fact that, during World War II, Jews, even in death camps, had practiced some of the rituals of Pesach.

Unfortunately, many Ukrainian Jews do not speak Hebrew and can't understand the prayers and texts, and accordingly many have to read the Passover texts in Russian. I worried: How can we celebrate our freedom in the language of the oppressor. I resolved that in the future we must celebrate Pesach not only in the language we inherited from our forefathers and foremothers, the holy Hebrew, but also in Ukrainian - a language that has become a symbol of courage, fortitude, and indomitable will, the language of the land where we were born and raised.

Project Keshet's new Ukrainian Haggadah, which was published in 2024, is entitled For Our Freedom whose title is drawn from the Ukrainian national anthem: "Soul and body shall we sacrifice for our freedom." It resonates with the mood of Ukrainian Jewry, which, in response to the full-scale Russian invasion, has continued to forge its distinctive identity. Its title reflects our desire to unite for the sake of our freedom and to choose our identity as Ukrainian Jews.



“Ma Nishtana (2022): How is this night different?
by Zoya Cherkassky

(Vlada Nedak, Executive Director of the All-Ukrainian Jewish Women's Organization "Project Keshet".

[» Listen to the podcast interview with Vlada Nedak.](#)

Arba Banim and Arba Banot

Four Sons

illustration by Michel Kichka

In 2004 Michel Kichka reimagined the wise child in Israeli society not as a Torah scholar as in many traditional haggadaot, but as a computer geek sitting atop seven books all titled by the question: Why? What for? How? As he munches on matza he explores his laptop emblazoned with the icon of the hi-tech giant “Intel” followed on the second line with the letters “ligent.” Instead of the ideal Israeli of 2004 being a fighter pilot, he had become the successful dot.com entrepreneur of Start-up Nation.



Four Contemporary Israeli Children

Today, as in the past, many Jewish families feel the challenge of generational conflicts around the definition of Jewish identity, Jewish loyalty, and the pursuit of tikkun olam/social justice. That parents necessarily have different memories and experiences than their children is the original reason for the Haggadah. It is natural, says the Torah, that children will ask about the significance of the Jewish commitments and rituals central to their parents' and grandparents' worldviews and practices. It is good though not unproblematic when children and parents inquire of each other about the gaps in perspective and values. Generationally divergent experiences of Israel in both North America and Israel itself can be at the center of such conversations if we allow ourselves to be honest and open.

In the Haggadah the rabbis promote a differentiated view of the questions posed by their diverse children and the appropriate responses. Who is the wise daughter or son and what questions do we associate with them? Who, if any of our children, is the “rasha” understood as wicked or rebellious or, perhaps, courageously critical? When is alienation from Jewish identity more a product of a parent's inadequate

educational approach or a child's youthful revolt or his or her idealistic critique of the status quo. Recall that Elijah's hopeful prophecy is that somehow he “will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents” (Malachi 3:4)

The Jew is a Dispute Incarnate by Philip Roth

“WHY COULDN'T THE JEWS be one people? Why must Jews be in conflict with one another? Why must they be in conflict with themselves? Because divisiveness is not just between Jew and Jew — it is within the individual Jew. Is there a more manifold personality in all the world? I don't say divided. Divided is nothing . . . But inside

every Jew there is a mob of Jews. The good Jew, the bad Jew. The new Jew, the old Jew. The lover of Jews, the hater of Jews. The friend of the goy, the enemy of the goy. The arrogant Jew, the wounded Jew. The pious Jew, the rascal Jew. The coarse Jew, the gentle Jew. The defiant Jew, the appeasing Jew. The Jewish Jew, the de-Jewed Jew. Shall I go on? So I have to expound upon the Jew as a three-thousand-year amassment of mirrored fragments . . . Is it any wonder that a Jew is always disputing? He is a dispute, incarnate.” (Operation Shylock, 1993)

Four Daughters, Israel 2024 illustration by Racheli Shalev

Israeli illustrator Racheli Shalev, known for her depictions of motherhood in Israeli press, portrays the Four Daughters as four phases in a woman's life: The smart “Hermione Granger” tween, the questioning and challenging teenager, the spiritual seeker in her twenties to the adult mother becoming herself an educator to her daughter who doesn't yet know how to ask. Shalev flips the usual hierarchy between the children, starting with the wise child and ascending from there. Throughout the four daughters as throughout life's changes and phases, healthy questioning remains a key element in a woman's life.



Who is the Wise Israeli Daughter?

illustration by Michel Kichka

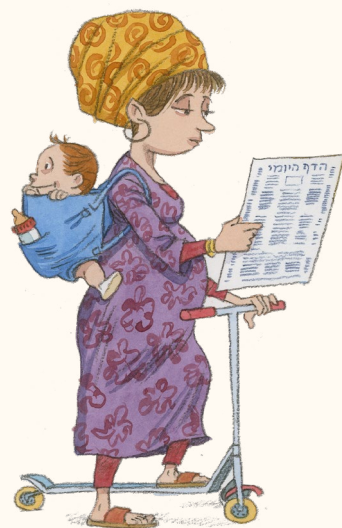
text by Noam Zion



1. Israeli reserve combat officer and mother

reflects the unprecedented role of women IDF soldiers fighting Hamas terrorists. All-woman Israeli tank crews killed 50 terrorists who overran Israeli communities near Gaza during 17 hours of combat on October 7, 2023, and they were the first Israeli (and perhaps Western) women soldiers to go into active tank battle. One soldier said: “You keep saying ‘heroines’ and ‘historic’... I don’t feel like a hero. I feel like I’m a soldier that was given a

job, and I did my job. I think anyone would have done that.” Another reported: “You think about the civilians trapped in their homes and the people that needed us. You understand that there was no room for fear.”



2. Religious feminist woman

engaging in daily Talmud (Daf Yomi) study, a new movement among Orthodox religious women, riding a scooter symbolizing her mobility – no longer tied to the home, but connected to her children, to Torah study and her intellectual journey in a self propelled journey.



3. The Israeli Protestor

Jerusalem is modelled after Tova Sheleg, law student, daughter of two politically active religious journalists, a journalists. Tova became the face of the Jerusalem branch of the judicial protests aimed at uniting religious protestors (Orthodox, Conservative and Reform) with secular Israelis from left, center and right to defend the principles of the Israeli Declaration of Independence and the separation of powers in a Jewish Democratic state. She holds up a sign proclaiming: THIS year - we shall be free.



4. The marathon runner

is modeled after Lonah Chemtai Salpeter, popular Kenyan-Israeli Olympic marathon runner. Her personal best time for the marathon is 2:17:45, which when she ran it in 2020 made her the sixth-fastest woman in history, the second-fastest European all-time, and set a new Israeli national record. Lonah came to Israel in 2008, to work as a nanny for the children of Kenya's Ambassador to Israel and married the Israeli track coach Dan Salpeter.

Who is the First Wise Daughter? Eve, the First Start-up Entrepreneur

by Yoel Heshin

When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate. (Genesis 3:6)



We teach our children to do research, to be curious, to observe and to learn. As venture capitalists funding innovative hi-tech companies, we seek out entrepreneurs with a fierce desire to investigate, to develop, and to do all that is necessary in their project in order to bring it to the next level. We are project initiators whose own curiosity motivates us to go forward and gives us a reason to get up in the morning. Do we really want to describe eating from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge as a sin?

The Torah tells us that Eve seduced Adam into eating from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and marks her as the guilty one. But in my mind, Eve is the first start-up entrepreneur. She is the researcher who tested the fruit and shared it with her husband. By virtue of her curiosity, she refused to forgo an opportunity and she went out to experiment. Therefore, she did not sin but rather expressed the entrepreneurial spirit within her. She simply interacted with the environment around her. The identification of the start-up initiative of the first woman, Eve, with a transgression, may be the reason that the worldwide percentage of women start-up entrepreneurs and VC investors is so shamefully low. If we were to praise Eve's courage, her curiosity, and her collegiality toward Adam, then we might create a greater balance between the number of male and female start-ups.

Yoel Heshin, an Israeli venture capitalist, whose father was the Israeli Supreme Court Justice, Mishael Heshin

Who is the 'Wicked' Son, Father?

By Franz Kafka

"I could not understand how, with the insignificant scrap of Judaism you yourself possessed, you could reproach me for not making an effort ... to cling to a similar, insignificant scrap. It was ... a mere nothing, a joke-not even a joke ... At home it was ... confined to the first Seder, which more and more developed into a farce, with fits of hysterical laughter ... How one could do anything better with that material than get rid of it as fast as possible ... Precisely the getting rid of it seemed to me to be the devoutest action."

Franz Kafka's Letter to His Father, Prague, Czechoslovakia, 1919.

Who is the Wicked Child, or the Wicked Parent, Today?

Families often encompass diverse opinions on political, moral and religious issues, including issues involving Israel. The questions and discussions at the Seder should respectfully include diverse voices, but must stretch to allow honest expressions of disagreement. The Rabbis who composed the text of the Four Children identified certain kinds of alienation between Jewish parents and their children as a threat to Jewish continuity. As a result, they label some children as disloyal, as "wicked," even if we might prefer to call them rebels, critical thinkers, or contentious adolescents. What are our boundaries of legitimate debate today? How can we bridge gaps or at least keep open a big tent of inclusivity among Jews and where do we draw absolute red lines, no to be crossed?

A Simple Girl's Question: How Can We, too, Go out of Egypt Tonight?

By Tamar Elad-Appelbaim

Moses replied to Pharaoh: "We will go [out of Egypt, all of us] with both our children and our grandparents." (Exodus 10:9)

On one Seder night in a suburb of Tel Aviv, when I was a little girl of approximately seven, our extended family, the Bouskilas, originally from Morocco, gathered around the Passover table of my beloved grandparents, Saba Ya'ish and Savta Zari, may they rest in peace. We began the Seder with great excitement, in song and in joy. But the Seder got longer and longer, and my grandfather noticed that everyone was growing tired, even though they had not yet finished the Maggid section of the Haggadah and so we had not arrived at the meal, Shulkhan Orekh. So he announced: "My sweet ones! There are some tired people here, so let's ask Savta, the daughters-in-law, and the beloved granddaughters to go to the kitchen to prepare the food, while the rest of us complete the readings from the Haggadah. Thus we will succeed in speeding up a bit the Exodus from Egypt tonight."

Everyone thought the plan was very reasonable. Savta Zari got up and went to the kitchen. So too, my mother and my aunts. Now it was my turn, the oldest of the granddaughters, and all the other women were already in the kitchen. But suddenly, I stood up, a little girl arrayed against the Seder table, and I cried out: "No, Saba! My dear Saba, you taught me that on this night everyone went out of Egypt together. You taught me that we are all free and we

are all destined to live as a free people in Eretz Yisrael. But now you are sending the women to the kitchen? How will we too, the whole family together, get to the land of Israel?"

I asked the question of a simple child. The question of a simple girl, a granddaughter. Silence. Everyone went quiet. Then my beloved Saba Ya'ish arose and announced: "The girl is right. Just as then – so tonight, just as then - so also always, we will exit Egypt only when we are all together, the whole family, and everyone helping until we arrive!"

On that night in my grandparents' home near Tel Aviv, the whole Bouskila family went out of Egypt. Together we finished the Maggid portion of the Haggadah. Together we went to the kitchen. Together we all helped. And together we merited to become free men and free women in Israel. That night we sang until the middle of the night – Hallel, the Song of Songs, songs of praise and liturgical poems. On that night Saba Ya'ish and Savta Zari showed us the way to the land of Israel, the way of family togetherness, the way of moderation and tolerance, the way of honoring God's creatures in humility, listening to one another and taking mutual responsibility for one another.

Tamar Elad-Appelbaim, Rabbi and founder of Kehilat Zion, Jerusalem; founder of the Beit Midrash for Israeli Rabbis, a joint initiative of the Hartman Institute and the Midrasha in Oranim.

Our Mothers as Heroes: My Mother and Our Family's Exodus from Africa

by Ziva (Tezewew) Mekonen Degu

“You shall tell your child on that day: ‘It is because of this that God did for me, when I went out from Egypt.’” (Exodus 13:8)

Ziva Mekonen-Degu served as Executive Director of the Association of Ethiopian Jews between 2011-2019. She is a co-founder of “Mothers on Guard” an anti-racism activist group calling for justice for young Ethiopian Israelis suffering from police brutality. Born in Ethiopia, Ziva lives in Jerusalem with her family.

At a traditional Ethiopian Passover Seder (Kurban), it is the Qes (the Bete Israel rabbi) who tells his son (“as if he went out of Egypt”) about the Biblical trek from Africa, to the land of Israel, from slavery to freedom. But in our family, it is on Israeli Independence Day, Yom HaAtzmaut, that my mother retells the tale of our real trek in 1984 from Ethiopia to Sudan and then to Israel. The hard trek!

From her story I learned about a mother's courage and determination to protect every single child from death and even, in times of crisis, not to give up. She demonstrated for me the character traits necessary to continue to lead our journey to freedom in Israel and our campaign as activist mothers seeking to liberate every human being.

From my mother, whose Amharic name is Tru Work Itzhak Adane, I learned about **a parent's obligation to advocate for the education of one's daughters even in the face of strong prejudices.** My mother's drive for education began when my grandmother, who was widowed at a young age, became landless and lost the services of a husband to support her. Nevertheless, my grandmother decided to send my mother, her youngest daughter, to school along with her brothers, unlike her older sisters who were married off very

young without any formal education. My mother recalls how great her excitement was when she went off to school and how her school years were the most beautiful and meaningful of her life. She felt privileged as the only daughter in her family to be able to study. Nevertheless, the extended family pressured my grandmother to marry off my mother at age 15 to a man who promised she could go on learning. However, as a married woman with domestic responsibilities and soon children of her own, her dream of continuing her education evaporated. While my mother mourned that lost opportunity her whole life, she promised herself that, come what may, her daughters would not suffer that discrimination, as she had.

Since her husband's income did not suffice to pay for her children's schooling in Ethiopia, my mother took on extra jobs as an agricultural worker and then as a talented seamstress for wealthy Christian women. When I was born, the first daughter after three sons, she sent me at age four to study at a preschool conducted by a Christian monk called Abba Yanta. He taught us the numbers and letters of ancient Geez and modern spoken Amharic, as we gathered around the single available copy of the textbook. As a gift of appreciation, my mother would send him her homegrown, homemade corn mash, while he would

greet her with the honorary title, “Mother of Tzewew” (which was my name). Even in the most economically stressful times, my mother would never economize on our education.

When I was 12 years old in eighth grade, we began to organize our illegal flight from the communist dictatorship in Ethiopia through Sudan to Israel. My mother decided to start her trek with six of her children, even without our father (who joined us later in Sudan), and she was accompanied by her mother and extended family. This pilgrimage constituted her personal Exodus to freedom, on foot, for hundreds of kilometers, through a parched desert, to fulfill her dream to go up to Jerusalem. The daily march usually began at night, to avoid the police and the heat. While three of our family were old enough to walk on our own (ages 9, 12 and 16) and my mother or my brother could carry our three-year-old brother on their backs, my mother had to hire two local guides to carry my 5 and 7 year old brothers. After each night's trek, each morning my mother took her children's roll call, since she knew that some of our extended families had tragically lost track of relatives on the march.

As we approached the Sudanese border in a particularly dry desert area without water,

we were warned to go quickly throughout the night. Then the local smugglers took their leave of us, and we stumbled on, with heavy steps, exhausted by a hot wind and thirsty, because our jerry cans were now empty. When all the families reached the thick bushes near the border, my mother asked me, “Where are your younger brothers?” I told her I had seen them under a tree and told them to follow, but now they had disappeared. My mother opened her eyes wide in shock, but she could not say anything. I remember her standing there, with her hands on her hips, helpless, not knowing what to do, looking back in the direction from which we had come. Then she sat down, hugging my 3 year-old brother, and rocking him back and forth, as she tried to calm herself.

My older brother had gone out with other young boys to find some water for the whole group, though the water was more mud than water. Still that water saved our lives. My mother used a cloth to strain out the mud and gave us each a drink from my brother’s jerry can. But she did not take a drink for herself, closed the top tightly, placed it firmly under her legs, and refused to share its remainder even with her aunt: “No, this is saved for my other children, [my lost children], not for me!”

Then she commanded my oldest brother: “Take grandmother’s horse, take this water, and go bring back your brothers.” In the meantime, it grew dark, but my mother still refused to drink or eat anything. She was waiting for her remaining children. I don’t remember the exact hour, but in the middle of the night, my older brother arrived with his missing younger brothers. My mother lamented: “I almost lost three of my sons!” Over the last week, we had lost Manaale Genetu, aged three, her niece’s daughter, and Ayelign Avera, aged 40, her brother in-law. Even now, forty years later we do not know what happened to them.

At the end of this debilitating march, and after three more months in refugee camps in Sudan, the Mossad took us by Hercules cargo planes to Israel [in what was appropriately named Operation Moshe] arriving just one week before Israeli Independence Day. Over time, the evening of Independence Day has become a traditional family gathering with a thanksgiving meal to thank the Holy One for uniting us and for the privilege to make Aliyah in peace. Every single year, my mother tells the story of her trek again, highlighting how God rescued her children – Yael, Asher and Uri, as they are called in Hebrew. Of course, we remember Grandma Wagaye Yitzhak who started the trek but did not complete it and who allowed our mother, her

youngest daughter, to go to school despite the discriminatory social conventions. Even today my mother encourages each of us – her already academically accomplished children and her grandchildren to keep on studying. There is no week in which she does not take an interest in my studies.

I feel that all my accomplishments were earned through her merit. I internalized from my youth that when you have the will, nothing can stop you, as long as you have faith in the Creator and in yourself. As the executive director of the Association for Ethiopian Jews (2010-2019), the organization committed to change social policies and to combat racism in Israel, I knew I could have an influence and change reality by virtue of that faith and my mother’s encouragement. We also established the movement, “Mothers on Guard” to struggle to overcome police violence and prejudice against young males of Ethiopian parentage and against all civilians. Before my eyes, always, are the integrity, the faith and the professionalism that characterize my mother.

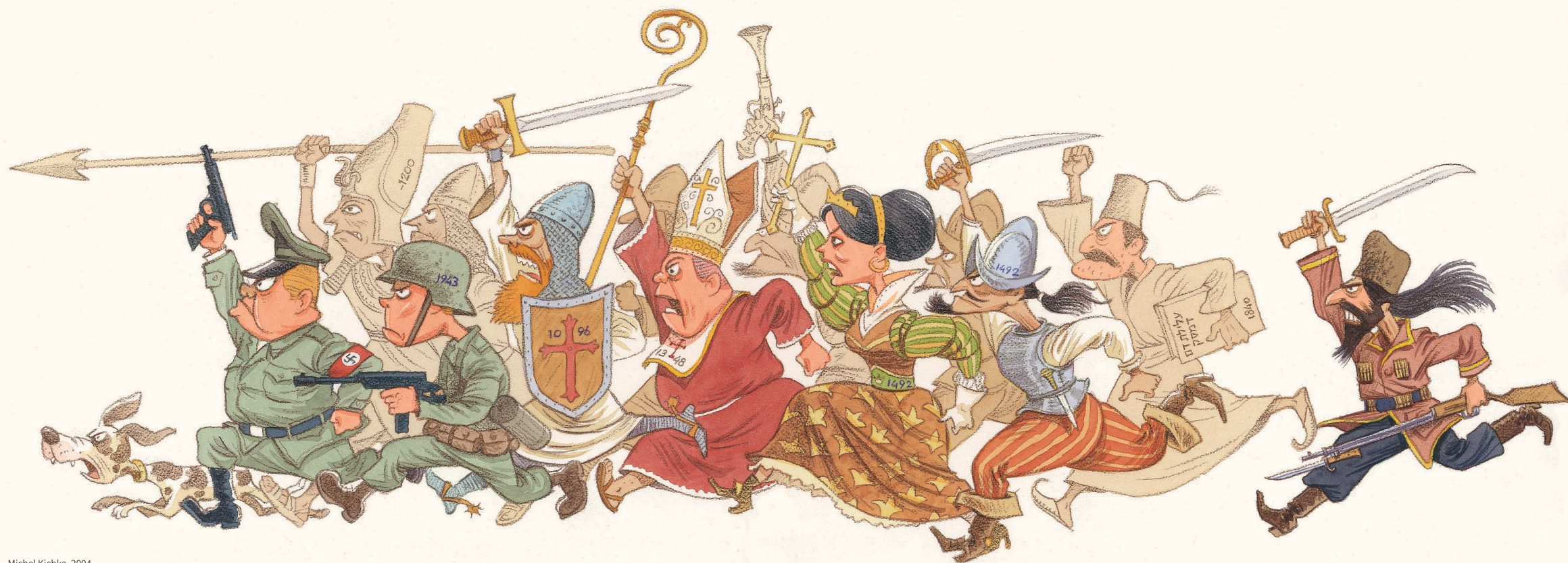
Today, as a mother myself who has earned an MA in Gender Studies and who leads public advocacy organizations, I appreciate how my mother combined caring for family and leadership even without knowing a single feminist theory. She is my hero.



Exodus of Ethiopian Jewry (1991) by Aliza Urbach, photographer.

B'KHOL DOR VADOR

בְּכֹל דֹר וָדֹר



Michel Kichka, 2004

“In every generation they rise up against us to wipe us out”

by Noam Zion

Jewish history never seems to become an irrelevant historical fact of the ancient past. Back in the 1930s, the socialist kibbutz educator Yitzhak Tabenkin explained the meaning of Jewish identity to the children in his idealistic kibbutz in terms of Pharaoh's original plot to throw all the Jewish boys in the Nile. He had in mind the contemporary rise of German Nazism along with worldwide antisemitism in Soviet Russia, Poland, France and the United States:

On Passover every Jew is obligated to ask him or herself:

When was I born? Where was I born? What historical memory do I carry with me?

I look at my identity card and read the invisible script: "My parents were born as slaves in Egypt when Pharaoh the king of Egypt ordered the first genocide in history." I too was there!

Tabenkin realized that the Seder is not only about freedom from Egyptian slavery and economic exploitation, but also about a struggle to preserve Jewish national identity in the face of genocide. Thus the Haggadah has always reminded us that Pesach is not only a celebration of a freedom won long ago, but also of an ongoing threat to our existence: In Every Generation.

In the original "Halaila HaZeh" Haggadah, Israeli illustrator and political cartoonist Michel Kichka portrayed the perennial attempts to destroy our people as a mob assault of the ages. He drew the characters of Pharaoh, Christian Crusaders and Inquisitors, Czarist pogromists and more, led by a Nazi officer, drawing them in a tongue in cheek fashion despite the painful memories of their actions.

Kichka's humorous approach continues the tradition of Jewish dark humor in light of thousands of years of suffering.

Following the October 7 attacks, Kichka added a new and yet terrifyingly familiar image – the radical Islamic nationalist terrorist of Hamas. Kichka was careful to distinguish the Hamas fighter from the legitimate Palestinian search for self-determination, portraying a made-in-Iran missile in the hands of this paramilitary fighter. Himself a son of an Auschwitz survivor, Kichka has been active in the Peace Now movement for thirty years and is a strong advocate of the two-state solution, a solution which Hamas violently opposes.



Michel Kichka, 2024

HALLEL

הלל

What blessing does one say when you suddenly get your life back?

By Jacky Levy

Jacky Levy is a popular Jerusalem performer and author of children's stories, whose relatives, Sahar and Erez Calderon, aged 16 and 12, were kidnapped to Gaza by Hamas on Simhat Torah, Oct. 7, and then redeemed in a hostage exchange after 52 days in captivity. Their father, Ofer, who was injured in the attack, was not redeemed in that hostage exchange.

“The kids have returned!” That is all one can mumble. While our family is usually very verbal, during this long period of the children in captivity, everything had shrunk to a few isolated words of hope: “They will come back!” For two months our deficiency in words has thrown us into the arms of both old songs and Biblical verses, the Israeli musical feed and the childhood heritage of our Judaism. When we have nothing to say, we try to rely on a good quote. Then every classic line, every verse and every word reveals itself anew. Suddenly they were charged with relevance as if they had been written just for this moment.

Ever since we finally saw the faces of these children of Kibbutz Nir Oz and among

them, Sahar and Erez, the words coursing repeatedly in my heart are from the opening of the Psalm recited on Passover:

“Praise God! For God is good and divine kindness is forever!” That is what those, redeemed by God from the hand of the enemy, declare.” (Psalm 107:1-2).

How often have I recited those well-worn festive words in the past, but never once took the time to think how those redeemed are really meant to feel. What does a human being feel and say when granted his life anew after having been held hostage in the hands of his enemy? How do the families of hostages express themselves after their loved ones who have spent days, weeks or months in a place where their lives are not worth a cent, are released and suddenly the time for a hug arrives – the very opposite of the clutches of “the enemy’s hands.” Then apparently, one says: “Praise God! For God is good and divine kindness is forever!”

Even though in my otherwise left-wing Zionist family of kibbutzniks, I am almost the only one who prays and feels at home among these ancient verses, something like “Praise God!” is exactly what the children’s mother, Hadas, said. She said these words after they announced to her that her two children had been liberated and after she

concluded roaring like a lioness who had just rescued her cubs from the teeth of the jackals. After Hadas stretched up her arms to the heavens (arms which I think have of late become elongated by ten centimeters), then she declared, “Yes, there is a God!” That is just an updated version of saying “Praise God, for God is good!”



Jacky Levy and Noam Dan campaigning for the return of the hostages, including their brother-in-law Erez Kalderon, outside Israel's Ministry of Defense, 29.10.2023.

SHFOKH HAMATKHA

שְׂפֹךְ
חַמַּתְךָ

**“Pour out Your Wrath on
those who consume the
people of Israel”**

**and “Pour out Your Love on
the Righteous Gentiles who
rescue the Jewish people”**



A Vow by Avraham Shlonsky

By my eyes which witnessed the slaughter

By my heart that was weighed down by cries for justice

By my compassion that taught me to pardon

Until the days came that were too terrible to forgive,

I have sworn: To remember it all,

To remember - nothing to forget!

Forget not one thing to the last generation

Until my indignation shall be extinguished

When the staff of my moral rebuke shall have struck until exhausted.

A vow: Lest for nothing shall the night of terror have passed.

A vow: Lest for nothing shall I return to my wont

Without having learned anything, even this time.

The Israeli poet Avraham Shlonsky composed “A Vow” for Pesach 1943 after reading early reports about the Nazi extermination of European Jewry. Its Hebrew name, “Neder” refers traditionally to the Kol Nidrei ceremony promulgating the official forgiveness of all unfulfilled vows

before Yom Kippur. In this case, the vow is a response to the Holocaust, however, the poet refuses to be absolved of his vow to remember. Instead, he pledges his eternal righteous indignation lest we forget and lest we learn nothing from our experience with genocide.

Shlonsky’s poem is quoted in the Kibbutz Haggadah of Nahal Oz from 1956 immediately after the traditional text, “Pour Out Your Wrath.” Next to the poem is a handmade drawing of an olive branch and a sword. 67 years later on October 7, 2023, many of the kibbutz members, including several of the original founders, now quite elderly, were murdered, while many others were abducted to Gaza as hostages by Hamas.

Do Not Drink from the Cup of Bitterness

by Dr. Martin Luther King, jr

I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

Hatred is Easy by Rachel Goldberg

Rachel is the mother of Hersch Goldberg-Polin, a wounded hostage kidnapped by Hamas to Gaza from the Nova Nature Music Festival at Kibbutz Reim. Selections from her speech given at the UN Headquarters in New York, October 25, 2023.

So here I live. In a different universe than all of you. You are right here. We seem like we live in the same place. But I, like all of the mothers, and all of the fathers, and wives, and husbands, and children, and brothers, and sisters and loved ones of the stolen - we all actually live on a different planet. Our planet of no sleep, our planet of despair, our planet of tears.

And the hatred being showered on Israel now... I keep being asked about that. First, in an article I read by Nicholas Kristof it was so eloquently stated that if you only get outraged when one side's babies are killed, then your moral compass is broken. And your humanity is broken. And therefore in your quiet moments alone, all of us, everywhere on planet earth need to really ask ourselves, "Do I aspire to be human, or am I swept up in the enticing and delicious world of hatred?"

This is not a phenomenon unique to Israel or Gaza, this is everywhere on our planet. I understand that hatred of "the other" - whoever we decide that "other" to be - is seductive, sensuous and most importantly, hatred is EASY. But hatred is not actually helpful nor is it constructive.

In a competition of pain there is never a winner.

One thing gave me a whisper of hope from all the horror on October 7th. One of the witnesses with whom I spoke told me that when the rocket fire first began, and all those young music loving hippies went running into the bomb shelter, a Bedouin man who was a guard at the kibbutz across the street also ran inside for cover. As Hamas closed in on the bomb shelter this man told the young people, "Stay quiet and let me go out to talk to them." He went out and in Arabic said, "I'm a Muslim. Everyone inside is my family, we are Muslim. You don't have to search in there." He tried to save them. He could have just said, "I am a Muslim." And just saved himself. But he tried to do the right thing EVEN though it was terrifying and EVEN though it required unimaginable courage. He was brutally beaten, and the witnesses do not know what his fate was. But I take comfort even for a fleeting moment knowing there was someone trying to do the right thing, even when everything in the universe had turned upside down. We human beings have been blessed with the gift of intellect, creativity, insight and perception. WHY are we not using it to solve global conflicts all over our world?

Because doing this is hard and it takes fortitude, imagination, grit, risk and hope. So instead, we opt for hatred because it's so comfortable, familiar and it's so very, very EASY.



[» Link to the speech](#)

Next Year in Jerusalem

לשנה הבאה בירושלים

Since October 7, many Israelis have greeted each other not with the usual “shalom” or “Ihitraot”, but the traditional good wishes associated with Elijah the prophet: “besorot tovo” - May there be good news!



May We No Longer Be Extraordinary by David Grossman, novelist

I wish that we Israelis will be able - perhaps for the first time in our history - to stop being a story constantly at the center of the world's attention, the center of international agendas; that finally we'll cease being a larger-than-life story, as we've been since the dawn of time, and start being just another story among the stories of the other nations; a special story, of course, a gripping and moving and multi-layered story, but, for God's sake - not a larger-than-life story - just another story of life

Death as a Way of Life, 2003

David Grossman, Israeli novelist and peace activist, father of a fallen soldier killed in the war with Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006

Tikvah/Hope: The Enclave of Freedom in the Human Soul by David Grossman

Hope, I thought, over and over again trying to awaken it inside me. I called to it, out loud, in Hebrew even, perhaps it speaks Hebrew: "Tikvah! Tikvah!" I thought about Israel's national anthem which is called "HaTikvah," "The Hope," and speaks of the hope held by Jews for two thousand years

in exile, the hope of one day being able to live in their own country. It was a hope that often kept them alive.

Hope is a noun, but it contains a verb that propels it into the future, always to the future, always with forward motion. One could look at hope as a sort of anchor cast from a stifled, desperate existence towards a better, freer future. Towards a reality that does yet exist, which is made up mostly of wishes, of imagination. When the anchor is cast, it holds on to the future, and human beings, and sometimes an entire society, begin to pull themselves towards it.

It is an act of optimism. When we cast this imaginary anchor beyond the concrete, arbitrary circumstances. When we dare to hope, we are proving that there is still one place in our soul where we are free. A place that no one has been able to suppress. And thanks to this anchor of fearlessness, of freedom, in the souls of those who have hope, they know what the reality of freedom looks like. They also know how crucial it is to fight for it.

David Grossman, Speech at the Frankfurt International Book Fair, 2020, during the Covid 19 Pandemic

Prayer: To hold on to hope without letting go by Rabbi Oded Mazor

"For everything there is a season... under Heaven.... A time for weeping and a time for laughing, A time for mourning and a time for dancing... A time for war and a time for peace. " (Ecclesiastes 3: 1,4,8)

In those days when each time collapses into 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 are fortunate
to embrace today, To enfold all of those
withdrawing into their longing, their 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, Rabbi of Kol Haneshamah, a Reform synagogue in Jerusalem, and recited at the demonstration for the release of captives, Jerusalem, 2023

Translated by Rabbi Ayelet Cohen, adapted by Noam Zion

The Chutzpah of Faith by Irving Greenberg, *The Jewish Way*

"Where does Israel get the strength, the chutzpah, to go on believing in redemption in a world that knows mass hunger and political exile and boat people? How can Jews testify to hope and human value when they have been continuously persecuted, hated, dispelled, destroyed? [Because they draw their strength and hope from] the memories of the Exodus! "



Tomorrow's Jerusalem: Revised and Revisited

illustration by Michel Kichka

text by Noam Zion

Two messianic political leaders are represented: Atop the gate is a bearded Theodore Herzl, founder of the Zionist movement in 1896, together with Noah's dove of peace. With furrowed brow, he compares the Israeli reality below with his vision of the New Zion in his utopia, The Jewish State. Atop the white donkey sits the messianic descendant of King David.

The handsome biblical David was ruddy in complexion and now his seed has produced a red-haired hippy with sunglasses. A more mundane dream is expressed by the Israeli taxi driver who reads in his newspaper: "Israel has won the Soccer World Cup!" Can you find all the traditional enemies now shaking hands? (For example, the rival red and yellow clad soccer players play for teams established by the competing left and right wing political parties – Labor and Likud).

How will we celebrate Passover this Year?



A Guide for Parents and Families

by Dasee Berkowitz

Each year the youngest present at the seder asks, “How is this night different from all other nights?” This seder night, following the events of October 7th, the Hamas-Israel war, and a steep rise in anti-Semitism worldwide, many of us are wondering, “How will this seder night be different from all other seder nights?”

While on other seder nights, we retell the ancient story of our people’s liberation from Egyptian bondage; **on this seder night**, we are keenly aware we are actors in Jewish history as it is unfolding. We may feel extra responsibility to make this Passover meaningful.

While on other seder nights, we welcome different generations to attend our seders, m’kol dor va’dor (from generation to generation), **on this seder night**, we know that strong political differences can map onto generational divides. On this holiday of redemption, we may feel nervous about the differences in perspectives that feel unredeemable.

While on other seder nights, we seek to design a seder experience that is relevant, engaging, and real, **on this seder night** we

might also seek to focus on what unites us, avoiding the conversations that divide us.

While on other seder nights, the promise of Spring and its renewal uplifts us, **on this seder night** we come to the table with mixed feelings. Some of us place an empty chair at our table to remember those still held hostage by Hamas. Others feel the painful absence of soldiers killed in combat. Many feel the ache for all those who have been killed, Jew and Muslim, and are suffering due to the conflict. Longing and heartbreak accompany us this seder night.

For everyone hosting a seder, you are in a unique position. You have the opportunity to invite your guests to become active participants in an ancient ritual that holds the potential for healing, healthy discussion, and hope. The seder table is the stage upon which the ancient rite of retelling takes place. Friends, family, and guests are the actors. The Haggadah is our script. As you prepare the stage for seder night, I invite you to consider four conceptual frameworks to guide your preparation.

Framework 1:

Set Intentions: Enable freedom within boundaries

As the convener you set the tone for the evening. This takes place from the moment you extend the invitation. By articulating your intentions for the evening you put your family and other guests at ease. The journey toward freedom invites full participation when there is structure. Just as children can express themselves freely when the boundaries are clear, your guests will feel comfortable sharing openly when boundaries are set and intentions are articulated.

Toward the beginning of the seder share a few intentions (or in Hebrew, kavanot) to encourage participation, questions, and mutual respect. To get the maximum amount of buy-in, you can set two intentions and ask folks to share a third. Consider choosing an intention from this list, or choose one that is more suitable to your setting.

- ◇ Speak in the first person about your experiences and opinions
- ◇ Share from a place of authenticity - what causes you pain and what brings you joy
- ◇ Agree to be awkward and know that your contributions will be received with care
- ◇ Give everyone at the table the benefit of the doubt
- ◇ Approach each other with curiosity

Framework 2:

Tales of Resilience: Make space for elders and their stories

On all other nights we frontend seder experiences that engage the children. This seder night our path toward freedom is paved by a resilient spirit. Lessons in resilience are most readily learned from our elders. We need their voices and their stories of how they have come out of Egypt over and over again. Draw out the lessons they learned from enduring adversity. Ask the children to be the bridge to the elders and have them ask the following questions or generate your own:

- ◇ Share a political or historical challenge you or your family has faced
- ◇ How did you overcome or deal with these challenges?
- ◇ What is a lesson you have learned about resilience that you wish you knew when you were young?

Framework 3:

Redemptive Questioning: Practice asking better questions

Passover is the festival of questions. Slaves and those in bondage can't ask questions. Questions are the medium by which we know we are a free people. Freedom carries with it great responsibility. So many of us are not careful with how we speak, and what we ask. We may ask combative questions that can put others on the defensive (e.g. "what were you thinking?") As journalist and radio personality Krista Tippett once wrote:

“Questions elicit answers in their likeness...It's hard to transcend a combative question. But it's hard to resist a generous question. We all have it in us to formulate questions that invite honesty, dignity, and revelation. There is something redemptive and life-giving about asking a better question.” (Krista Tippett, *Becoming Wise: An Inquiry into the Mystery and Art of Living*, pg. 30)

Learning how to ask generous questions is a skill we can invite our seder-goers to practice. Encourage people to ask open-ended questions like, “Who do you look up to? What inspires you about them?”, “What brought you to that way of thinking?” or “What is a different way of understanding this?” Learning to ask better questions can help build a bridge with people around the table who feel hard to reach.

Framework 4:

Celebrate Life: Elevate gratitude

One of the hallmarks of resilient people and the Jewish people as Resilient People, is a habit of gratitude. Gratitude can hold space for loss even as we celebrate life. The structure of the Haggadah, with the placement of a short Hallel selection (or psalms of gratitude) in the Magid (the main section of the Haggadah) reflects the sensitivity that words of praise and gratitude are always possible, even before we reach a redemptive ending. To paraphrase resilience researcher, Dr. Lucy Hone,

“Don’t lose what you have to what you have lost” (Dr. Lucy Hone, “The Three Secrets of Resilient People,” TEDxChristchurch, August 2019).

Take a moment at the beginning of the seder to have your guests look around the room to appreciate everyone who is there. At the end of the seder, ask everyone present to share a word of personal gratitude they have for the evening. Gratitude for what is present in our lives is that much more important in times when we know there is so much that is not yet redeemed.

Family relationships and friendships are long journeys of discovery, sometimes

marked by discomfort. As you go through seder night, invite your guests to ask questions about the texts in the supplement and to bring their own perspectives. If arguments start to brew, welcome them. As the convener, if you find that a few people are dominating the conversation, invite other people to join the discussion by saying, “I wonder if there are other perspectives...” Remember your role on seder night is not to achieve world peace. Instead, it is to create an environment in which everyone can have an experience that will soon turn into a memory. Ensure that everyone around the table feels like they are valued and belong.

Our families, friends, and communities are the contexts in which we work out our ideas and ideals. Each person gathered around your table is meant to be there. We need everyone - young, old, opinionated, and passive alike. In a world of so much strife and division, you are a gatherer. Inclusivity, patience, and love will pave your way forward.

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