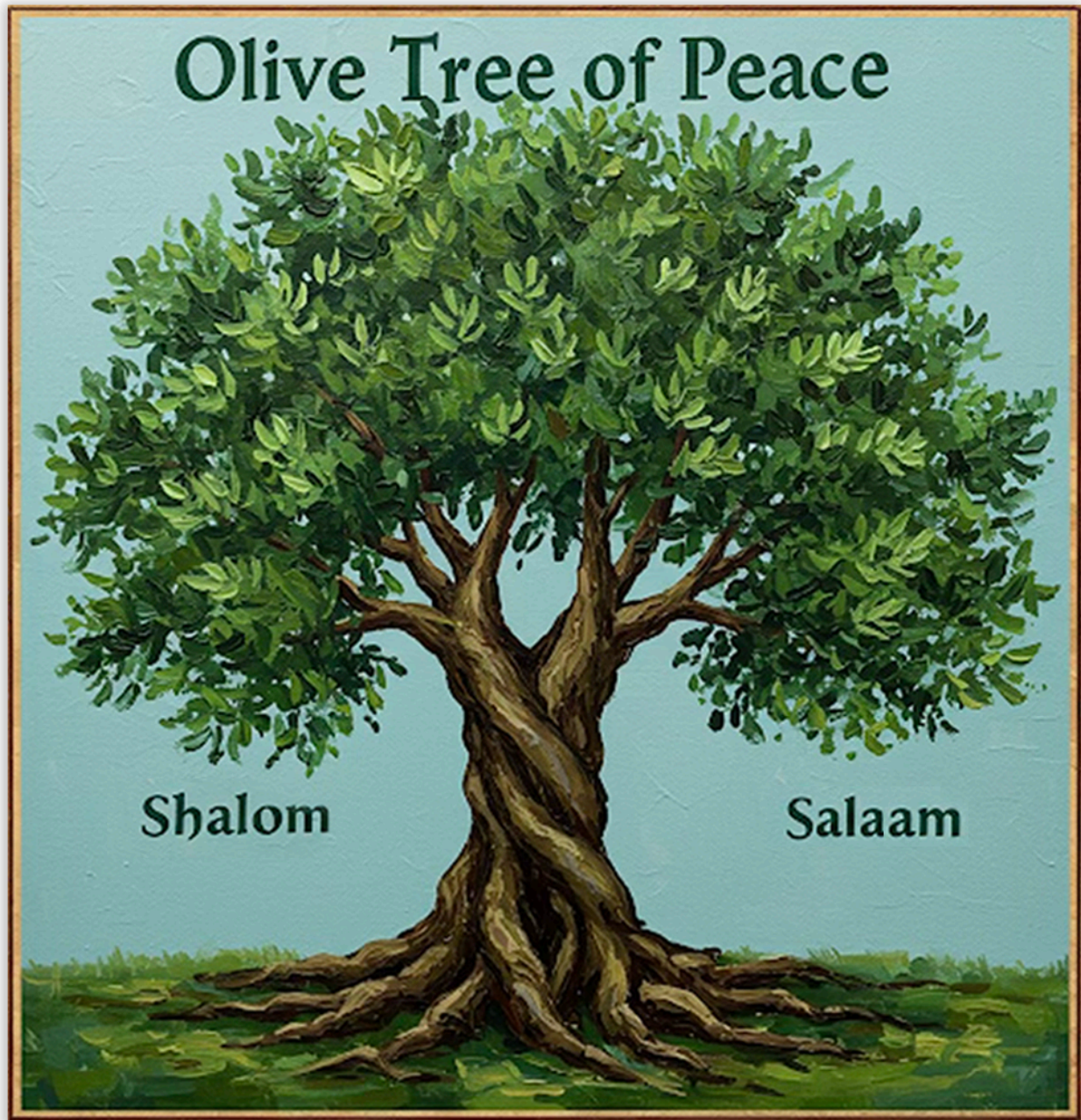


# A New Haggadah For Peace



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## ***Acknowledgements***

Justice is a central theme of Judaism. Some of its deepest values are sharing, kindness and empathy. We feel for all people who suffer ... Jewish Israelis and Palestinians alike.

However, in our point of view, right now, at this historic moment, we feel very deeply for the suffering of the Palestinians.

Our New Haggadah for Peace adds to the usual Passover Seder. It offers approximate Palestinian versions of the Seder's Jewish prayers, readings, songs and symbols. We acknowledge inspiration from the Center for Jewish Nonviolence. We also acknowledge some use of the wording from *A Family Haggadah: In Every Generation*, by Shoshana Silverman, 1987.

## ***We Light the Candles***

***(Before sunset, we light the holiday candles.  
We follow the candle lighting with the  
traditional Shehecheyanu.)***

***Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam,  
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvot v'tzivanu l'hadlik  
ner shel (Shabbat v'shel) Yom Tov.***

**We praise you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe,  
who makes us holy by Your mitzvot and commands us  
to light the festival (and Sabbath) festival candles.**

***Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech  
ha'olam shechecheyannu v'kiy manu  
v'higianu lazman hazeh.***

**We praise you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe  
who has kept us alive and well so that we may celebrate  
this special time.**

# ***Themes of a possible Palestinian Seder:***

**Nakba:** “The Catastrophe,” when the original Palestinian Arabs, through violent displacement from and dispossession of their land, property and belongings, experienced the destruction of their society and the suppression of their culture, identity, political rights and national aspirations.

**Liberation and Self-Determination:** The yearning for liberation and the celebration of resilience reflect the unwavering hope for a future when Palestinians can live in freedom and dignity.

**Connection to the Land:** The Palestinian people and their land are deeply connected. Symbolic foods express the richness of Palestinian cuisine and cultural heritage.

**Remembrance and Solidarity:** This Seder serves as a time to remember the suffering and sacrifices of the Palestinian people. It also expresses solidarity with all of those who continue to struggle for justice. It reaffirms our commitment to a just and lasting peace.

**Cultural Preservation:** This Seder is also a time to celebrate and help preserve Palestinian culture, traditions and identity. It is a way to pass on the stories and values of the Palestinian people to future generations.



# ***A possible Palestinian Seder Plate:***

## ***A Symbol of Hope and Resilience***

The ancient Israelites yearned for freedom. Palestinians today strive for liberation from occupation and the chance to live with dignity and self-determination.

**Olive Branch:** Placed in the center of the Seder Plate as a universal symbol of peace. Olive trees are an integral part of the Palestinian landscape and heritage, and represent resilience and connection to the land. They symbolize the Palestinian desire for a just and lasting peace.

**Bitter Herbs (Maror):** The traditional Maror represents the bitterness of Hebrew slavery. The Palestinian Maror symbolizes the bitterness of occupation, displacement and hardship. This Maror could be made with chicory, which is grown in Palestinian lands.

**Salt Water:** Represents the tears of suffering and loss felt by both Israelis and Palestinians.

**Roasted Egg (Beitzah):** The traditional Passover roasted egg represents the festival sacrifice. The roasted egg of the Palestinians represents resilience and the cycle of life. They continue to persevere and hold onto hope for a brighter future.

**Charoset:** Palestinian Charoset incorporates dates, figs and almonds, all fruits of the Palestinian land. This richness of Palestinian culture, and its connection to the land can be seen as symbols of sweet freedom, in the face of present attempts at annexation.

**Flatbread (Khubz):** Instead of Matzah, Khubz, a traditional Palestinian flatbread is on the Seder plate. This represents the daily bread of the Palestinians and their struggle to maintain a normal life under occupation. It also represents the restrictions placed on movement.

**Olives:** Olives are a staple of the Palestinian diet and a major part of the economy. They symbolize the hardship that Palestinians endure when their olive trees are burned down and destroyed by the settlers.

## ***Additions to the Traditional Seder Plate:***

In addition to the usual items on the traditional Seder Plate, we have added a few other items.

The orange on the Seder Plate tells of Suzannah Heschel's story and symbol. The false story: an Orthodox man in Miami Beach argued with Dr. Susannah Heschel, denouncing feminism, and said that a woman belongs on the bima (pulpit)

the way an orange belongs on a Seder plate. The true story: an Oberlin College Haggadah written in the 1980s describes how a woman asked a Rebbe whether there is room in Judaism for a lesbian. The Rebbe shouted “there is as much room for a lesbian in Judaism as there is for a crust of bread on the Seder Plate!” Because it is impermissible to put bread on a Seder plate, Dr. Heschel chose an orange, to represent the feminism and the fruitfulness that will arise when lesbians are active contributing members of Jewish life. The symbolism then expanded to include all marginalized people. The orange placed on the Seder plate was not a navel orange, but one with seeds and segments, to symbolize rebirth and renewal and spitting out the seeds of hatred and prejudice. Its segments symbolize the discrete segments of our community that come together to form a whole.

We add cotton balls to the Seder plate so we will remember the Uyghurs in China, living in concentration camps, who are forced to pick the cotton for so much of the clothing we wear.

We add shoelaces to symbolize the laces taken from asylum seekers to stop them from fleeing.

We add a scallion to each individual Seder plate to “whip” each other during the service, a tradition offered by Iranian and Afghanistan Jews.

**Passover is replete with symbolism. This Haggadah will keep the Palestinian symbolism at the forefront of our thoughts.**

**Seder means ORDER. We have a special order for each aspect of the service. As we follow the “order,” we interject possible Palestinian symbols to the traditional practice.**

**Now lean back on your pillows like people who are free can recline. The slaves and servants of yore always stood. Are our Palestinian friends able to recline or will they continue to stand?**

## ***First Cup of Wine***

**We lift our cups to say the blessing over the first cup of wine:  
Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, borei p'ri  
hagafen.**

**We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who created the fruit of the wine.**

## ***Shifra and Pu'ah, the First Cup of Wine***

**We drink the first cup in remembrance of two righteous women who played a major part in the Hebrew birth into**

freedom. Shifra and Pu'ah were either Hebrew or Egyptian midwives. The text is not clear. However, we are certain that these God-fearing women acted on their own sense of moral obligation and helped deliver the Israelites from possible extinction. These two women became God's partners in fulfilling the promise: "I will bring you out from Egypt."

## ***Palestine-Israel Hopes of Deliverance***

A thread of olive, silver-bright, woven through a troubled night.

A whispered hope, a fragile plea, for dawn to break, and eyes to see.

No longer walls, nor shadowed fear, but children's laughter, crystal clear.

A shared horizon, sunlit land, where olive branches fill each hand.

The ancient stones, a silent vow, for seeds of healing, planted now.

A future built, on common ground, where empathy and trust are found.

The desert blooms, a vibrant hue, a testament to dreams come true.

A symphony of voices blend, a peaceful journey, without end.

Though scars remain and memories sting, the heart still yearns our peace to bring.

A lasting solace, deep and wide, where two peoples walk, side by side.



## ***We Wash Our Hands***

**We assist each other with a bowl of water, a cup and a towel. By drying the hands of our neighbors at the table, we express our caring for all the people at our Seder table. Expressing our caring and helping each other is a true blessing. Washing our hands helps us feel ready for the Seder.**

## ***We Dip Karpas (parsley) Into Salt Water***

**Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melach ha'olam borei p're ha'adamah.**

**We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the earth.**

**The parsley reminds us of spring and renewal.**

**The salt water reminds us of the tears of both the Palestinians and Israelites.**

## ***We Break The Middle Matzah***

**The Seder leader breaks the middle matzah into two pieces, wraps the larger piece as the Afikomen, the dessert, then hides it while the children close their eyes. They will hunt for the Afikomen at the conclusion of the meal.**

**Some say the middle matzah is broken because our redemption is not yet complete. We focus on the land that our two peoples must share.**

**Matzah is the bread of poverty and the hurry before the bread had time to rise. The Israelites left in a hurry from Egypt. Some recite the prayer: All who are hungry, come and eat. All who are needy, come and celebrate Passover with us. Now we celebrate here. Next year may we be in the land of two peoples. Now we are slaves. Next year may we all be free.**

**Gandhi wrote that there are people in the world so hungry that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.**

## ***The Matzah and Khubz of Hope***

**A special Matzah and a piece of Khubz is set aside during this part of the Seder, as a symbol of hope for those who are not free. May the peoples of all lands be free from fear.**

**Let us sing a Palestinian Song of Resistance and Hope:**

**Sunrise paints the olive trees, a gold on ancient stone. But shadows linger, memories of painful seeds that we have sown. A homeland whispers in the breeze, a story etched in sand. Though walls may rise and borders squeeze, our spirit will withstand.**

**(Chorus) Ya and ya dar, oh land, oh home. Your voice is in our hearts. No force can break, no fear will pollute, the strength that freedom brings. We rise with hope, we stand as one, our voices clear and strong. To seek justice, until day is done. We sing our rightful song.**

**The children's eyes, a burning flame, reflect a future bright. They carry dreams, they speak your name, and claim their stolen right.**

**The keffiyeh, a symbol of the legacy we hold, a tapestry of stories of courage, and the bravery of old.**

**(Chorus)**

**Though tears may fall, like summer rain, and sorrow fills the  
air. We plant our seeds, we rise again, with love beyond  
compare.**

**The dove of peace takes its flight, a symbol of our plea.**

**For unity, a guiding light for all the world to see.**

**(Chorus)**

**From river banks to city streets, our voices will not cease.**

**For freedom's dawn, our heartbeats meet, and we will find  
our peace.**

**Ya and, ya dar, we will return, our hope forever burns.**

## ***The Partisan Song***

**This Yiddish song of hope was composed by Hirsch Glick. It was the official hymn of the Vilna Partisan Brigade fighting the Nazis in the Rudnicki forests.**

**Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letzin veg,**

**Chutsh himlen blayene farshtelnh bloyeh teg.**

**Vayl kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho,**

**S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot: mir zeinen do.**

**Never say that there is only death for you.**

**Though leaden skies may conceal days of blue.**

**Because the hour that we have hungered for is near**

**Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble: We are here!**

**We'll have the morning sun to set our day aglow,**

**And all our yesterdays shall vanish with the foe.**

**And if the time be long before the sun appears,**

**Then let this song go on, like a signal through the years.**



# ***We Tell the Passover Story by answering The Four Questions***

**Mah nishtannah halailah hazeh mikol halaylot!**

**Why is this night different from all other nights?**

## ***Israelites Four Questions***

- 1. On all other nights we eat bread or matzah. On this night why do we eat only matzah?**
- 2. On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables. On this night why do we eat only maror?**
- 3. On all other nights we do not have to dip vegetables even once. On this night why do we dip them twice?**
- 4. On all other nights we eat our meals sitting any way we like. On this night, why do we lean on pillows?**

## ***Palestinian Four Questions***

- 1. Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights, we carry the weight of the Nakba, the original wound, of the stolen homes, and the shattered**

**lives. On this night, we are forced to confront not just the memory, but the ongoing reality: the bulldozed villages of the West Bank, the bombed-out cities of Gaza, the relentless expansion of settlements, and the persistent erasure of our existence. Why, on this night, do we relive the trauma, when the world remains blind to our suffering?**

- 2. Why on all other nights do we eat our bread, however meager, with a semblance of normalcy, but on this night, only Khubz, the bread of affliction? On all other nights we struggle to find sustenance amidst checkpoints and sieges. On this night we eat the bread of our ancestors' forced exile. A symbol of our continued displacement, a constant reminder of the genocide threatened and inflicted. Why do we consume this bread of pain when the world feasts on our stolen land?**
- 3. Why on all other nights do we swallow our bitterness, attempt to maintain a façade of resilience, but on this night taste only bitter herbs? On all other nights we try to shield our children from the horrors they witness. On this night we savor the patience and resilience that helps us bear the bitterness of our grief, the loss of loved ones, the sting of tear gas, the ashes of destroyed homes. Why**

**must we amplify our sorrow when the world remains deaf to our cries?**

- 4. Why on all other nights do we stand, forced to endure the indignities of occupation, but on this night recline on cushions, a hollow symbol of freedom? On all other nights we are denied our basic human rights. Our dignity is stripped away. On this night we feign relaxation, a cruel mockery of the liberation we are denied. Why do we perform this ritual of freedom when our chains remain unbroken, and the world looks away?**

## ***We Answer the Questions***

**Once we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but Adonai, our God, took us out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. If Adonai had not brought our ancestors out of Egypt then we, our children, and our children's children would still be slaves. We are encouraged to tell this story in great detail every year. We know that around the world the story is being told in family homes, in this same ORDER. Seder means ORDER.**

**We begin the story despite knowing it well.**

**At this point, in the Bukharan Jewish tradition, the custom is for the leader of the Seder to walk around the table in a**

**bent-over position, as if he or she or they were a slave in Egypt.**

**We are commanded to teach our children the story, says the Torah. The Talmud suggests four different ways they might react. Again, we must tell the story. We must discuss the different stories of the Israelites and the Palestinians. One begins in ancient Egypt. The other begins with the Nakba.**

## ***The Four Children***

**The WISE child: What is the meaning of the laws and rules which God has commanded us? We must answer the wise child in great detail about all the laws and customs of Passover.**

**The WICKED child: What does this service mean to us? This child doesn't want to be included, so we must answer that if he or she or they had been in Egypt, they might not have been freed from slavery.**

**The SIMPLE child: What is this all about? We answer simply "with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm Adonai took us out of Egypt."**

**The child who cannot ask a Question: We must explain to this child that we observe Passover to remember what God did for us when we were freed from slavery in Egypt.**

**DISCUSSION QUESTION: Children are the same in all cultures. Let us think about what the Palestinian children of Gaza, the West Bank or East Jerusalem might be asking us....**

## ***The Ballad of the Four Children***

**(sung to the tune of Clementine)**

**Said the father to his children: "At the Seder, you will dine.**

**You will eat your fill of matzah. You will drink four cups of wine.**

**Now this father had no daughters, and his sons they numbered four.**

**One was wise and one was wicked. One was simple and a bore.**

**And the fourth was sweet and winsome. He was young and he was small.**

**While his brothers asked the questions, he could scarcely speak at all.**

**Said the wise one to his father, "Would you please explain the laws?**

**The customs of the Seder, will you please explain the cause?"**

**And the father proudly answered, "As our fathers ate in speed.**

**Ate the paschal lamb "ere midnight, and from slavery they were freed."**



So we follow their example, and 'ere midnight must complete,  
All the Seder, and we should not after twelve remain to eat.

Then did sneer the son so wicked "What does all this mean to you?"  
And the father's voice was bitter as his grief and anger grew.  
"If yourself, you don't consider a true son of Israel.  
Then for you this has no meaning, you could be a slave as well."

Then the simple son said simply, "What is this?" And quietly,  
The good father told his offspring, "We were freed from slavery."  
But the youngest son was silent, for he could not ask a thing.  
His bright eyes were bright with wonder, as his father told him "sing."

Now dear children, heed the lesson, and remember evermore,  
What the father told the children, told his sons that numbered four.

## ***The Passover Story***

**Joseph became Pharaoh's advisor. His people became the Israelites. As their numbers grew Pharaoh made them slaves, to build cities with bricks made from clay and straw. Pharaoh became cruel and decreed that every baby boy born to Israelite women was to be drowned.**

**Yocheved would not allow the killing of her son and hid him in their hut. As his cries became louder, Yocheved placed her baby boy in a basket on the Nile River, where the boy's sister, Miriam, watched over him.**

**Pharaoh's daughter was bathing in the river when she came upon the baby in his basket. She named the boy Moshe, which means "drawn from the water." Witnessing this discovery, Miriam bravely asked the princess if she and her mother could help care for Moshe. They taught him about his heritage.**

**When Moses (Moshe) saw an Israelite slave being beaten, he became angry and killed the Egyptian overseer. He then fled to Midian for safety and became a shepherd.**

**One day as he was herding sheep on Mount Horeb, Moses saw a burning thornbush and heard God's voice: "I am the God of your ancestors. I have seen the suffering of the Israelites and have heard their cries. I am prepared to take them out of**

**Egypt and bring them to a new land, a land flowing with milk and honey.”**

**A humble man, Moses was hesitant. However, God reassured Moses that He would bring plagues upon the Egyptians if they did not let the Israelites go. Pharaoh refused to let the slaves go free. God brought ten plagues to the Egyptians. Each plague scared Pharaoh but after the plague stopped, Pharaoh withdrew his promises to let the people go. Only upon the tenth plague... the death of each Egyptian first born ... did Pharaoh agree to let the Israelites go.**

## ***The Ten Plagues***

|                                |                       |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Blood</b>                   | <b>Dahm</b>           |
| <b>Frogs</b>                   | <b>Tz'fardaya</b>     |
| <b>Lice</b>                    | <b>Kinin</b>          |
| <b>Beasts</b>                  | <b>Arov</b>           |
| <b>Cattle Disease</b>          | <b>Dever</b>          |
| <b>Boils</b>                   | <b>Sh'chin</b>        |
| <b>Hail</b>                    | <b>Barad</b>          |
| <b>Locusts</b>                 | <b>Arbeh</b>          |
| <b>Darkness</b>                | <b>Choshech</b>       |
| <b>Plague of the Firstborn</b> | <b>Makat B'chorat</b> |

## ***Palestinian Ten Plagues***

- 1. Dispossession and loss of land, loss of security and stability, uprooting a people.**
- 2. Restriction of movement by checkpoints and blockades, a symbol of loss of freedom, of feeling trapped and of disruption of daily life.**
- 3. Demolition of homes symbolizes destruction of family, community and a sense of belonging.**
- 4. Water scarcity signifies denial of a basic human necessity.**
- 5. Economic hardships of unemployment and poverty, the systematic undermining of livelihoods and the creation of dependency.**
- 6. Violence and military operations, the constant threat of physical harm and psychological trauma, living in a war zone.**
- 7. Loss of access to healthcare, the degradation of life and loss of the ability to heal.**
- 8. Fracturing of families, the breaking of social bonds and destruction of the family unit.**
- 9. Loss of education, with its loss of the ability to progress, and loss of hope for the future.**
- 10. Constant feeling of oppression, with the weight of being ruled against ones will.**



## ***Crossing the Sea and God's Promise***

Pharaoh sends his army after the Israelites, ordering them to be returned. The army meets the Israelites at the Sea of Reeds. The Israelites become very afraid with the Egyptians on their heels.

Following God's instructions, Moses lifted his rod. A strong east wind parts the sea allowing the Israelites to cross on dry land.

As the Egyptians follow, their chariots and horses are covered with water, presumably drowning.

This was one of several moments in our history when the Jews did not mourn the loss of human life. Miriam and her women friends all danced and sang in joy.

God had promised Abraham and Sarah that their children would be a great people, so we lift our wine glass and say:

Vehi She'amdah la'avotenu v'lanu. Shelo echad bilvad amad aleinu l'chaloyenu. Ela sheb'chol dor vador omdim aleinu l'chalotenu. VeHakadosh Baruch Hu matzilenu miyadam.

More than once in our history, enemies have tried to destroy our people, but the Jewish people live.

***Dayenu*** “That alone would have been enough, for that  
alone we are grateful”

(Chorus), Day-day enu, day-day enu.....

Adonai took us out of Egypt, Dayenu

Punished the Egyptians and destroyed their idols, Dayenu

Divided the sea and led us across on dry land, Dayenu

Took care of us in the desert for 40 years and

fed us Manna, Dayenu

Gave us Shabbat, Dayenu

Brought us to Mt. Sinai and gave us the Torah, Dayenu

Brought us to the land of Israel and built the

Holy Temple, Dayenu

For all these ... alone and together ...we say, Dayenu

***More Dayenu***

If we speak truthfully about the pain, joys, and contradictions  
of our lives, Dayenu

If we speak to others with sensitivity and compassion, Dayenu

**If we challenge the absence of women in traditional texts,  
chronicles of history and as leaders of our institutions, Dayenu**

**If we continue to organize, march and vote to affirm  
our values, Dayenu**

**If we fight economic injustice, sexism, racism, and  
homophobia where we live, work and study, Dayenu**

**If we volunteer our time and money, Dayenu**

**If we break the silence about violence against women  
and children in the Jewish community and  
everywhere, Dayenu**

**If we teach our students and children to pursue justice  
with all their strength, Dayenu**

**If we care for the earth and its future as responsibly as  
we care for those we love, Dayenu**

**If we create art, music, dance and literature, Dayenu**

**If we realize our power to effect change, Dayenu**

**If we bring holiness into our lives, homes and  
communities, Dayenu**

**If we honor our visions more than our fears, Dayenu**

**It will, and will not be, ENOUGH.**

## ***Palestinian Dayaynu***

|                                                      |         |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| If we had only our steadfast hearts,                 | Dayaynu |
| If we had only our memories and works of art,        | Dayaynu |
| If we had only our olive trees, rooted deep,         | Dayaynu |
| If we had only our stories, and secrets we keep,     | Dayaynu |
| If we had only our children's bright, hopeful eyes,  | Dayaynu |
| If we had only our songs that forever rise,          | Dayaynu |
| If we had only our fields where the wheat does grow, | Dayaynu |
| If we had only our voices, letting the truth flow,   | Dayaynu |
| If we had only our courage to stand so tall,         | Dayaynu |
| If we had only our dreams to reclaim it all,         | Dayaynu |
| If we had only the sun on our ancient stones,        | Dayaynu |
| If we had only the hope to return to our homes,      | Dayaynu |
| If we had only the world that saw our plight,        | Dayaynu |
| If we had only the strength to keep up the fight,    | Dayaynu |
| If we had only the peace that we yearn to find,      | Dayaynu |
| If we had only justice, for all humankind,           | Dayaynu |
| If the siege of Gaza that had been lifted high,      | Dayaynu |
| and our children's tears begin to dry,               | Dayaynu |

|                                                          |         |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| If the checkpoints' barriers had ceased to stand,        | Dayaynu |
| If we had only free passage throughout our land,         | Dayaynu |
| If only the settlements, with their red tiled roofs, had |         |
| vanished from our fields and homes,                      | Dayaynu |
| If only we could shepherd near our ancient stones,       | Dayaynu |
| If only the right of return, our hearts' desire,         | Dayaynu |
| If only we might then set our lost souls afire,          | Dayaynu |
| If only stones thrown by our youth, angry and bold,      | Dayaynu |
| If only they were replaced by stories yet untold,        | Dayaynu |
| If only the world would see our plight clearly,          | Dayaynu |
| If only the world would feel our pain deeply,            | Dayaynu |
| If only a moment of true peace we could find,            | Dayaynu |
| If only we cease to bear scars of humankind,             | Dayaynu |

**Dayaynu, Dayaynu. It would have sufficed.**

**We gather our people, with our spirits strong,**

**And sing of freedom, a world where all belong.**

**Dayaynu. It will suffice.**

## ***Occupation of the West Bank***

**From Burin's burned out groves, to Jenin's fractured streets,  
a tapestry of ruin weaves, where life and memory retreats.**

**In Masafer Yatta, heart laid bare,**

**The silent witnesses see all with care.**

**Ramalah's lanes, once bustling bright, now echo with  
despair,**

**where shattered homes and fading light, a heavy burden  
bear.**

**In Hebron's heart, where shadows creep,  
a soldier's gaze, the secrets keep.**

**The ancient stones, a witness stand,  
to lives constrained, on occupied land.**

**Through Bethlehem's gates, a watchful eye,  
where separation walls climb so high.**

**The olive groves, in Nablus' fold,  
a land divided, stories told.**

**In Ramallah's streets, a restless hum,  
where dreams of freedom overcome.**

**The checkpoints rise, a constant sting,  
in Jenin's fields, where memories cling.  
From Jericho's palms, to Qalqilya's plight,  
a daily struggle, day and night.  
The settlements grow, a creeping tide,  
where hopes and futures often hide.  
In village squares, where whispers rise,  
of stolen land, and tear-filled eyes.  
The ancient paths, where footsteps tread,  
a people's spirit, almost dead.  
The weight of years, a heavy chain,  
on lives that yearn for peace again.  
In every home, a silent plea,  
for a land unbound, and destiny free.**

# ***Palestinian Play***

***A 5 scene play about Omar Yatta, a former terrorist turned advocate for non-violence and a two-state solution.***

## ***Scene 1: The Prison Cell; Seeds of Change***

***Setting: A stark, dimly lit Israeli prison cell. The walls are concrete, cold damp. A single, bare bulb hangs from the ceiling, casting long, skeletal shadows. A metal cot, a thin mattress, and a chipped enamel wash basin are the only furnishings. Omar Yatta, gaunt and weary, sits on a metal cot, his hands clasped tightly. His eyes, though aged, hold a burning intensity.***

***Action: Lights rise slowly. The sound of distant echoing footsteps and the metallic clang of a closing cell door fades. Omar is visited by a young, idealistic Israel prison guard, Rachel. She enters, carrying a tablet and a small, worn notebook. She seems nervous but determined. She locks the cell door behind her. She challenges his deeply held beliefs, showing him news footage of the devastating consequences of his past actions.***

***A heated debate ensues, where Omar defends his past with the rhetoric of justified resistance, but Rachel counters with***



examples of shared humanity and the futility of endless violence.

RACHEL: Omar Yatta.

(Omar looks up, his gaze unwavering)

OMAR: (voice raspy) You have my name. What do you want?

RACHEL: I wanted to ...talk.

OMAR: (scoffs) Talk? You and I have nothing to say.

RACHEL: I disagree.

(Rachel approaches, stopping a few feet from the cot. She holds up the tablet. Omar's eyes narrow.)

RACHEL: I want to show you something.

(She presses play. The screen flickers to life, showing grainy news footage. A bombed-out marketplace, the rubble of a school, crying children. The images are raw and visceral. Omar's face remains impassive.)

RACHEL: These are the consequences of your actions, Omar.

These are the faces of the children who pay the price.

OMAR: (voice low and dangerous) Propaganda. Lies.

**RACHEL:** Lies! These children are real. They are dead, or maimed, or orphaned. Does their suffering mean nothing?

**OMAR:** They are casualties of war. A war you started. A war we will finish.

**RACHEL:** A war that only breeds more war. More death. More suffering. Is this the future you envision for your people? Endless cycles of violence?

**OMAR:** (Rising to his feet, his voice rising) You speak of cycles?

You, who occupy our land, who steal our homes, who imprison our sons! You speak of peace while your tanks patrol our streets!

**RACHEL:** I speak of a different path. A path where Palestinian children can grow up without fear. A path where Israel children don't live in terror.

**OMAR:** (spits on the floor) Your peace is built on our submission.

**RACHEL:** No! It's built on understanding. On seeing each other as human beings, not as enemies. (Rachel opens her notebook. She reads aloud.)

**RACHEL:** “Every child deserves a chance to dream. To laugh. To live without the shadow of violence hanging over them.” Do you believe that, Omar? Do you believe that any child, Palestinian or Israeli, deserves that?

**OMAR:** (turning away) Words. Empty words.

**RACHEL:** Are they? Are they truly empty? Or are you afraid to admit that there might be another way?

*A sudden, violent scream echoes from the neighboring cell. A thud, followed by a choked sob. Rachel and Omar both freeze. They exchange a look. Rachel’s eyes are wide with fear.*

**RACHEL:** What was that?

(Omar moves quickly, his years of imprisonment not diminishing his agility. He presses his ear against the cold concrete wall, then steps back.)

**OMAR:** He is ... hurting himself.

(The screams continue, more desperate now. Rachel fumbles with her keys, her hands shaking. Omar steps forward, his voice low and urgent.

This moment of crisis occurs when another Palestinian prisoner, driven by despair, attempts self-harm. Omar, instinctively, intervenes, using words rather than force.)

**OMAR: Wait. (He raises his voice, speaking in Arabic.)**

**OMAR: (In Arabic) Khalil! Stop! You are not alone. You have not been forgotten.**

**(The screams diminish, replaced by ragged, gasping breaths. Omar continues, his voice firm, but gentle.)**

**OMAR: (In Arabic) You are stronger than this despair. You are a son of Palestine. Do not let them break you.**

**(Silence. Then a weak, broken voice responds in Arabic)**

**KHALIL: (In Arabic) They have taken everything.**

**OMAR: (In Arabic) They can take your body, Khalil, but not your spirit. Not your dignity. You are more than this cell. You are more than their chains. (The silence stretches, heavy and thick. Rachel stares at Omar, her eyes filled with a mixture of confusion and awe. He turns back to her, his face etched with exhaustion.)**

**OMAR: He is ... young. He has lost hope.**

**RACHEL: (voice trembling) You ... you spoke to him. You stopped him.**

**OMAR: Words are sometimes stronger than weapons.**

**RACHEL: (After a pause) Why? Why did you do that?**

**OMAR: (Looking away) He is a human being.**

**(Rachel stares at him, her eyes searching his face. She sees something there, something she hadn't seen before. A flicker of ... something. A hint of humanity, perhaps. A crack in the hardened shell of his resistance.**

**This interaction becomes a turning point. We see the first cracks in Omar's hardened exterior, hinting at a shift in his perspective.)**

**RACHEL: You said ... you said they are casualties of war. But... But he was going to kill himself.**

**OMAR: (Voice barely a whisper) Sometimes, the war is inside.**

**RACHEL: (Moving closer, her voice soft) What about your war, Omar? What about the war inside you?**

**(Omar turns away, his shoulders slumping. He sits back down on the cot, his gaze fixed on the floor. He doesn't answer. Rachel sits on the edge of the cot, a respectful distance away. She opens her notebook again, her finger tracing a line of text.)**

**RACHEL: I have a son. He's five years old. He loves to draw pictures of superheroes. He dreams of being a pilot. Do you think he's any different from a Palestinian boy his age?**

**OMAR: (voice flat) They live in different worlds.**

**RACHEL: Do they? Or do we create those worlds? Do we choose to see the differences, instead of the similarities?**

**(She closes the notebook and looks at him, her eyes filled with a quiet intensity.)**

**RACHEL: What kind of world do you want for your children, Omar? For all children? A world of endless conflict? Or a world where they can dream of flying too?**

**(Omar remains silent, his gaze fixed on the floor. The weight of her words hangs in the air, a heavy, unspoken question. The silence is broken only by the distant sounds of the prison, the echoing footsteps, the metallic clang of a door. The bare bulb flickers, casting long, dancing shadows on the walls. The seeds of change have been planted, a fragile hope in the barren landscape of a prison cell.)**

**(Lights fade slowly.)**

## **Scene 2: The Homecoming ... A Divided Reception**

***Setting: A dusty, sunbaked refugee camp. Tattered tents and makeshift shelter huddle together, a maze of narrow alleyways. Graffiti covers the walls, a mixture of political slogans and faded murals of martyrs. A makeshift stage, constructed from wooden planks and draped with a faded Palestinian flag, stands at one end of a large, open square. The air is thick with the smell of dust, spices, and the simmering tension of a community on edge.***

***The scene opens with a cacophony of sound. Drums beat rhythmically, a mix of celebratory and militaristic tunes. A crowd surges forward, a sea of faces etched with anticipation and a hard-won weariness. Omar, dressed in simple, worn clothes, is being pushed forward by a group of jubilant men. Cheers and ululations erupt. Banner proclaiming “Freedom for Omar” and “The Hero Returns” wave above the crowds.***

**MAN 1: (Beaming, slapping Omar’s back): Welcome home, Omar! Welcome back from the lion’s den!**

**WOMAN 1: (Tears steaming down her face, hugging Omar)**

**Alhamdulillah! You’re alive! We prayed for this day!**

**OMAR:** (His voice hoarse, a mix of relief and exhaustion) Thank you. Thank you all. It's... it's good to be home.

(The crowd presses closer. A few suspicious glances are exchanged. A group of young men, their faces hardened, stand apart, arms crossed. They wear military-style fatigues and Keffiyehs wrapped tightly around their heads.)

**MAN 2:** (a gruff voice from the back) What kind of welcome is this? Has he forgotten his brothers?

**MAN 3:** (Louder) He sat in their prisons, ate their bread! Did they break him? Did they buy him?

(This celebratory mood begins to fray. Murmurs ripple through the crowd. Some voices echo the accusations, others defend Omar. A group of men push Omar onto the makeshift stage. The drums fall silent. A microphone squeals with feedback.)

**ORGANIZER:** (clearing his throat) Brothers and sisters! We are gathered here today to celebrate the return of our son, Omar! A man who endured years of oppression!

(The crowd erupts in a mix of cheers and jeers)



**OMAR: (Raising a hand, his voice trembling slightly)**

**Thank you. Thank you for being here. I ...I'm overwhelmed.**

**(He pauses, looking out at the faces, searching for understanding. He sees the joy, the hope, but also the doubt, the anger.)**

**OMAR: I know ... I know many of you have questions. I know there are whispers. And I understand. (He takes a deep breath.) I went into prison a soldier. A soldier fighting for our liberation. But ... things change. People change. (A wave of angry murmurs rises from the crowd.)**

**MILITANT 1: (stepping forward, his voice cutting through the noise) Change? You mean you betrayed us! You sold your soul for a few years of comfort!**

**MILITANT 2: He speaks the language of the enemy! He's been brainwashed!**

**OMAR: (His voice rising, but still controlled) No! Listen to me! I haven't been brainwashed. I've been given time to think. Time to see things differently. (He gestures to the camp, the faces of the people)**

**OMAR:** We've been fighting for decades. Decades! And what have we achieved? More suffering! More loss! More children growing up in these camps!

**MILITANT 3:** You call our struggle suffering? It is resistance! It is our right!

**OMAR:** I'm not saying we should give up our rights! But we need a new path! A path that leads to a real future, not just more bloodshed! I believe in a two-state solution. I believe we can live side by side with the ... with the others.

(A roar of outrage erupts. Shouts of "Traitor!" and "Collaborator" fill the air. Someone throws a stone, hitting the stage. The crowd surges forward, a wave of anger.)

**MILITANT 1:** (Spitting on the ground) He speaks of peace while our children starve! He speaks of compromise while our land is stolen!

**OMAR:** (His voice cracking, but still defiant) I've seen the other side! I've seen that they are not all monsters! There are those who want peace, too!

**MILITANT 2:** Lies! They only want our surrender!

**OMAR:** No! They want a future too! A future where their

children don't live in fear! A future where we can all live in dignity!

(He looks at the faces of his former comrades, the men he fought alongside. He sees the hatred in their eyes, the bitter disappointment.)

OMAR: You were my brothers! We fought together! We bled together! Don't you see? This path leads to nowhere!

(He pauses, his voice dropping to a whisper.)

OMAR: I made mistakes. I made terrible mistakes. I was filled with anger, with hatred. I wanted revenge. I wanted to hurt them as they hurt us.

(He looks down at his hands, his voice filled with remorse.)

OMAR: I...I killed. I killed in the name of our struggle. And I carry that burden with me every day.

(The crowd falls silent, stunned by his confession. A few gasps are heard.)

OMAR: (Looking up, his eyes filled with tears) But I've learned. I've learned that violence only breeds more violence. It only creates more pain. It only perpetuates the cycle of suffering.

**(He raises his hands, pleading.)**

**OMAR: We can't keep living like this! We can't keep sacrificing our children! We need to find a way to break this cycle!**

**OMAR: I know many of you will never forgive me. I know many of you will see me as a traitor. But I swear to you, I speak from my heart. I speak for the future of our people.**

**(He steps forward, his voice filled with a desperate hope)**

**OMAR: We need to talk. We need to listen. We need to find a way to build bridges, not walls. We need to find a way to live together, not die together.**

**(He looks out at the crowd, his eyes searching for a flicker of understanding, a spark of hope. The crowd remains silent, a sea of conflicted emotions. The sun beats down on the camp, casting long shadows. The silence stretches, heavy and uncertain. The fate of Omar, and perhaps the fate of his community, hangs in the balance.)**

**(The scene ends with Omar standing alone on the stage, his voice echoing in the silence, his words hanging in the air like a fragile plea for peace.)**

### **Scene 3: Bridges and Barriers**

***Setting: A sterile, brightly lit meeting room in a heavily secured building in Geneva. The room is dominated by a long, polished conference table. Israel and Palestinian delegations sit opposite each other, separated by a row of international mediators. The air is thick with tension.***

***Characters:***

***OMAR: leading the Palestinian delegation, a man in his late 40's, composed but with a weariness in his eyes.***

***DAVID: leading the Israeli delegation, a seasoned negotiator in his 60's, pragmatic and sharp.***

***MEDIATOR/ ANNE: A European diplomat, attempting to keep the peace.***

***ISRAELI DELEGATE/ SARAH: Hardline, skeptical.***

***PALESTINIAN DELEGATE/ YOUSEF: Young, radical, distrustful of compromise.***

***OTHER DELEGATES: Various advisors and support staff.***

**(The scene opens with Omar addressing the room. His voice is calm, but firm.)**

**OMAR:** We are here today not to rehash the past, but to forge a future. A future where our children, both Palestinian and Israeli, can live without fear. We have presented a framework, a starting point. It requires compromise, yes, but it offers a path towards lasting peace.

**SARAH:** (Scoffs) Compromise? You call demands for the right of return, for Jerusalem, compromise? You speak of peace, while your streets celebrate those who murder our children.

**YOUSEF:** (Interrupting, in Arabic, translated by a colleague) They speak of peace while their soldiers occupy our land, demolish our homes, imprison our brothers?

**ANNE, the MEDIATOR:** (raises her hand, attempting to restore order) Gentlemen, please. Let us maintain civility. We are here to engage in constructive dialogue.

**DAVID:** (Leaning forward, addressing OMAR) Omar, let's be realistic. We've been down this road before. Grand pronouncements and sweeping gestures achieve nothing. We need to focus on practicalities. Security, water resources, economic cooperation. These are the building blocks.

**OMAR:** Practicalities are built upon a foundation of justice, David. Without addressing the root causes, the grievances, these practicalities will crumble.

**DAVID:** Justice is a subjective term, Omar. We have our narrative, you have yours. We can argue about history until we're all dust. But in the meantime, people are suffering. Let's focus on alleviating that suffering.

**OMAR:** Suffering is a symptom, not the disease. The disease is occupation, the denial of our basic human rights.

**SARAH:** Your "rights" are built on the blood of our people.

**OMAR:** And your "security" is built on the oppression of ours.

(A tense silence descends. The delegates shift uncomfortably.)

**ANNE:** (clears her throat) Perhaps we could take a short break? Refreshments are available.

(The delegation disperses, some gathering in small groups, others moving towards a side table laden with food and drinks. Omar and David find themselves standing near the window, gazing out at the cityscape.)

**DAVID:** (Sighs) You know, Omar, sometimes I envy you.

**OMAR:** Envy me! What could you possibly envy?

**DAVID:** Your idealism. You still believe in the possibility of a just peace. I've been doing this for too long. I've seen too much.

**OMAR:** And yet, you're still here.

**DAVID:** Because I believe in the necessity of it. Even if I don't believe in the possibility. We have no other choice.

(A moment of silence. David gestures towards the food.)

**DAVID:** They've got some excellent hummus. Care to join me?

(Omar hesitates, then nods. They move towards the table, joining a few other delegates. They share hummus and pita bread, engaging in small talk about their families, their hobbies. A brief, almost surreal moment of normalcy amidst the tension.)

**OMAR:** (Smiling faintly) My daughter, she loves to draw. She fills notebooks with sketches of birds, flowers ... and sometimes soldiers.

**DAVID:** (Nods) Children see the world in such stark terms. My grandson, he's obsessed with football. He dreams of playing for Real Madrid.

(They share a laugh. For a moment, the weight of their political differences seems to lift. They are simply two men, fathers, grandfathers.)



(The meeting resumes. Omar and David return to their seats, the atmosphere slightly less strained. They begin to discuss specific issues, focusing on water resources and economic cooperation. David presents a detailed plan for joint water management, emphasizing efficiency and sustainability. Omar listens attentively, asking probing questions.)

**OMAR:** This plan, it addresses the immediate needs. But what about the long-term? What about the expansion of settlements, the continued depletion of our aquifers?

**DAVID:** We are prepared to discuss limitations on settlement expansion, within the framework of a comprehensive agreement.

**YOUSSEF:** (Interrupting, in Arabic, translated) Empty promises! They will continue to steal our water, our land, our future!

**OMAR:** (Addressing Youssef, in Arabic) We must explore every avenue for a just resolution. We cannot afford to dismiss any opportunity for progress.

**OMAR:** (Turning back to David) We need guarantees, David. Concrete, enforceable guarantees.

**DAVID:** Guarantees are built on trust, Omar. And trust is earned, not demanded.

**SARAH:** They have broken every agreement, every promise. Why should we trust them now?

**OMAR:** Because we have no other choice. Because the alternative is endless conflict, endless suffering. We must find a way to break this cycle.

**OMAR:** (Looks directly at David, his eyes pleading) We are both fathers, David. We both want a better future for our children. Can we not find a way to build that future together?

(David looks away, his face etched with weariness. He knows the weight of Omar's words, the desperate hope behind them. But he also knows the complexities, the entrenched animosity, the deep-seated mistrust.)

**DAVID:** We can try, Omar. We can try. But it will require compromises from both sides. Painful compromises.

**OMAR:** We are prepared to make those compromises. But we need to see a genuine commitment to justice, to equality.

(The discussion continues, the delegates debating the details of the water management plan, the terms of economic cooperation. A tentative sense of progress begins to emerge. But then, a sudden interruption. A mediator's phone rings, their face turning pale as they listen to the caller.)

**ANNE:** (Standing up, her voice trembling) I...I'm afraid we have a situation.

**ANNE:** (Looking at Omar and David, her eyes filled with dread) There has been a terrorist attack in Tel Aviv. A suicide bombing.

(A collective gasp fills the room. The delegates exchange horrified glances. Omar and David stare at each other, their faces ashen. The fragile sense of progress shatters, replaced by a wave of despair.)

**SARAH:** (Triumphantly) I told you! They cannot be trusted. They are animals!

**YOUSEF:** (In Arabic, translated) This is their response to our suffering! They will never stop their aggression!

(Omar stands, his face a mask of grief and anger. He looks at David, his eyes filled with a desperate plea.)

**OMAR: David... this ... this cannot derail us. We cannot let them win.**

**(David stares back, his face a mixture of sorrow and resignation. He knows the devastating impact of such an attack, the way it fuels hatred and mistrust, the way it threatens to destroy any hope of peace.)**

**DAVID: (His voice heavy) Omar, I ...I don't know. This... this changes everything.**

**OMAR: No! It cannot! We must continue! We must show them that we will not be deterred!**

**SARAH: (Screaming) How dare you! After what they've done! (The room erupts in chaos. Delegates shout at each other, their voices filled with anger and despair. Anne tries to restore order, but her efforts are futile. Omar and David stand amidst the turmoil, their faces etched with the weight of their shattered hopes.)**

**OMAR: (To David, his voice barely audible) We cannot give up David. We cannot.**

**DAVID: (Looking at Omar, a deep sadness in his eyes) I know, Omar. But ... sometimes, the darkness is too strong.**

(He turns and walks away, his shoulders slumped. Omar watches him go, his heart filled with a profound sense of loss. The dream of peace, so close, now seems impossibly distant. The weight of the conflict, the endless cycle of violence, presses down on him, threatening to crush him. The scene fades as the chaos continues, the voices of the delegates echoing in the sterile, brightly lit room, a stark reminder of the bridges and barriers that divide them.)

#### **Scene 4: The Betrayal**

*Setting: A dimly lit, subterranean room. Rough-hewn stone walls, damp and cold. A single flickering oil lamp casts long, distorted shadows. A worn rug lies on the dirt floor, stained and faded. The air is thick with the smell of damp earth and stale tobacco.*

**Characters:**

**OMAR:** *a middle-aged Palestinian leader, weary but resolute, advocating for negotiated peace.*

**KAMAL:** *Omar's former comrade, now the leader of a militant faction, hardened and filled with bitter resentment.*

**LEILA:** *a young woman, Omar's trusted aide, alert and anxious.*

*YOUSEF: An older man, a reluctant member of Kamal's faction, his face etched with worry.*

(The scene opens with Omar, Leila, and Yousef huddled around a rough table. Maps and documents are spread before them. Yousef is visibly agitated.)

YOUSEF: (Whispering) They speak of you, Omar. They speak of... removing the obstacle.

OMAR: (Calmly) Removing what obstacle, Yousef? Be precise.

YOUSEF: You. You, and the talks. They say you've sold us out. They say you've ... become a traitor.

LEILA: (Sharply) Who says this? Names, Yousef!

YOUSEF: Kamal. And his followers. They're planning something. Something ... violent.

OMAR: (His voice hardening) I knew it. But I hoped ...I hoped I was wrong. What are they planning?

YOUSEF: An attack. A large one. To sabotage the upcoming meeting. And... they've been told... to silence you. Permanently.

(Omar stares at the map, his face etched with pain. Leila places a hand on his arm.)

**LEILA:** Omar, we need to move. We need to warn the others.

**OMAR:** (Shakes his head) It's not just the Israelis they want to provoke. It's us. They want to plunge us back into the abyss.

(A sudden, heavy thud echoes from the passage outside. The flickering lamp throws grotesque shadows on the walls. Kamal enters, followed by two armed men. His face is grim, his eyes burning with anger.)

**KAMAL:** (Voice dripping with venom) So, the dove sings of peace, while the wolves gather. You've become quite popular, Omar. Popular with the enemy.

**OMAR:** (Rising to his feet) Kamal. I hoped we could still talk.

**KAMAL:** Talk? You've betrayed everything we fought for!  
You sit at tables with the occupiers, while our people suffer!

You call this peace? It's surrender!

**OMAR:** It's a chance, Kamal. A chance to end the bloodshed. A chance for our children to have a future.

**KAMAL:** A future of humiliation? A future of living on our knees? You've lost your fire, Omar. You've lost your soul.

**OMAR:** I've lost my taste for endless violence, Kamal. I've seen too much blood. Too many funerals.

**KAMAL:** And I've seen too much weakness. Too much compromise. You think they'll give us anything? They'll take everything. Our land, our dignity, our very existence.

**OMAR:** That's not true. We can negotiate. We can find a way.

**KAMAL:** (Scoffs) Negotiation? You're a fool, Omar. A naïve fool. They understand only force. Only resistance.

(Kamal gestures to his men, who move forward, their weapons raised.)

**LEILA:** (Stepping in front of Omar) Don't you dare touch him!

**KAMAL:** (Ignoring her) You've made your choice, Omar. You've chosen their side. Now, you'll pay the price.

**OMAR:** (Looking at Kamal, his voice filled with sadness) You were my brother, Kamal. We fought together. We bled together.

**KAMAL:** (Spits on the ground) You're no brother of mine. You're a traitor.

(A tense silence hangs in the air. Yousef looks down, his face a mask of despair.)



**OMAR: (His voice firm) You're wrong, Kamal. This isn't about me. It's about our people. About their future. Your plan will only bring more suffering.**

**KAMAL: My plan will bring liberation!**

**OMAR: Liberation? By killing your own people? By destroying any chance of peace? Is that your idea of liberation?**

**KAMAL: You've twisted everything! You've turned our struggle into a pathetic plea for mercy.**

**OMAR: No, Kamal. I've turned it into a chance for survival. A chance to build something better.**

**OMAR: (Looks at Yousef, then back at Kamal) You think you're strong? You think you're fighting for the cause? You're only feeding the cycle of violence. You're only giving them more reasons to hate us.**

**KAMAL: (His voice trembling with rage) Enough! You've said your peace. Now, you'll be silenced.**

**OMAR: (Raising his voice) No, Kamal. You'll be silenced! Your plan will be exposed!**

**KAMAL: (Laughs bitterly) Who will believe you? You're the traitor!**

**OMAR:** They will believe the truth. I will expose your plot. To everyone. To the Palestinians, to the Israelis, to the world!

(Kamal's eyes widen in disbelief. He lunges forward, but Omar steps back, grabbing a document from the table.)

**OMAR:** This document, Kamal. It details your plan. The names the dates, the targets.

**KAMAL:** (His voice a low growl) Give it to me.

**OMAR:** No Kamal. I'm going to make sure everyone knows what you're planning.

**KAMAL:** You wouldn't dare!

**OMAR:** I dare, Kamal. For our people. For the future we deserve.

**OMAR:** (Turns to Leila) Leila, get this to the authorities. Both Palestinian and Israeli. Tell them everything.

**LEILA:** (Nods, her eyes filled with determination) Yes, Omar.

(Leila takes the document and rushes out of the room. Kamal's men move to stop her, but Omar blocks their path.)

**OMAR:** Let her go, Kamal.

**KAMAL: (His face contorted with rage) You've made a grave mistake, Omar. A fatal mistake.**

**OM'AR: (His voice filled with sorrow) Maybe. But I won't let you destroy everything we've worked for.**

**(Omar looks at Kamal, his eyes filled with a deep sadness. He knows he has crossed a line, that he has betrayed his former comrade. But he also knows that he has made the only choice he could live with. He has chosen peace, even at the cost of his own life.**

**Kamal stares at Omar, his face a mask of hatred. He knows that Omar has won, that his plan has been exposed. But he also knows that the fight is far from over. The ideological divide, the pain of betrayal, the weight of responsibility ... these will continue to haunt them, to shape their destiny. The dimly lit room, the flickering lamp, the shadows on the wall ... they are a reflection of the darkness that has consumed them, a darkness that threatens to consume them all.)**

**(The scene fades to black.)**

### **Scene 5: The Hope... A Fragile Dawn**

***Setting: A public square, once a bustling marketplace, now a space marked by both division and tentative unity. The remnants of a checkpoint, partially dismantled, stand as a stark reminder of the past. A makeshift stage has been erected, adorned with simple banners bearing olive branches. The crowd is a mix of Palestinians and Israelis, their faces etched with a mixture of weariness, hope, and skepticism.***

***The scene opens with a low hum of anticipation. Omar stands at the podium, his face weary but resolute. David, an Israeli negotiator, stands beside him, a silent presence. The crowd murmurs of languages and anxieties.***

**OMAR: (Voice hoarse, but clear) We stand here today, not to celebrate a victory, but to acknowledge a fragile dawn. A dawn that has been hard-won, paid for in tears and in blood. We have walked a long, treacherous path, a path littered with the debris of broken promises and shattered lives.**

**(A Palestinian woman in the crowd, FATIMA, wipes away a tear. An Israeli man, AVI, shifts nervously, his eyes fixed on Omar.)**

**OMAR:** Many of you here have lost loved ones. You have witnessed the unspeakable horrors of the conflict. You have lived with fear as your constant companion. And you have every right to be skeptical. Every right to doubt.

**OMAR:** (He pauses, his gaze sweeping across the crowd) We have reached a tentative agreement. A framework for a two-state solution. It is not perfect. It does not erase the pain of the past. It does not guarantee a future free from all conflict. But it is a beginning. A fragile, flickering flame of hope in the darkness.

**KHALIL:** (a young Palestinian man shouts from the crowd) Hope? What hope? We've heard these promises before!

They are lies!

**OMAR:** (raises a hand, silencing him) Khalil, I understand your anger. I share your anger. But we cannot allow anger to blind us to the possibility of change. We cannot allow the wounds of the past to dictate the future.

**OMAR:** This agreement is not the end of our struggle. It is the beginning of a new struggle. A struggle to build trust.

**A struggle to heal the wounds of generations. A struggle to create a just and lasting peace.**

**DAVID: (steps forward, his voice low and hesitant) We, too, have suffered. We, too, have lost. We, too, carry the scars of this conflict. We have made concessions, difficult concessions. We have recognized the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.**

**(A murmur ripples through the Israeli side of the crowd.)**

**DAVID: We understand that true security can only be achieved through justice and equality. We understand that we cannot build a future on the foundation of occupation and oppression.**

**AVI: (shakes his head, muttering to himself)  
Concessions? What concessions? We're giving away our land!**

**YOUSSEF: (steps forward, his voice trembling) We are not asking for your land. The land that our ancestors have lived on for generations.**

**OMAR: (steps back to the microphone) We must remember that we are all human beings. We are all parents, children, brothers, sisters. We all want the same things: a safe home, a secure future, a life free from fear.**

**This agreement is a testament to the courage and resilience of both peoples. It is a testament to the power of dialogue and compromise. It is a testament to the belief that peace is possible, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles.**

**(He pauses, his eyes filled with emotion. The crowd begins to disperse, some with smiles, some with frowns, some with tears in their eyes. The square, once a symbol of division, now stands as a fragile testament to the possibility of reconciliation. Omar and David stand together, watching the crowd leave. They exchange a weary smile.)**

**OMAR: It is a start.**

**DAVID: A strange dawn.**

**(They stand in silence for a moment, looking out at the rising sun. The scene fades to black.)**

# ***Songs of Praise and Prayers of Grace***

**Jews thank God for bringing them from slavery to freedom,  
from sadness to joy, and from darkness to light, singing  
Hallelujah...our Palestinian brothers and sisters sing:**

## **Verse 1**

**From olive groves, from ancient stone. We gather here, though  
hearts have groaned.**

**From Gaza's sands, from hills of green. A pilgrim's hope, a  
whispered scene.**

**For Al-Quds' walls, our spirits yearn. A sacred path, where  
faiths return.**

## **Chorus**

**Ya Rabb, Ya Rahman, hear our plea. For peace to bloom, for  
hearts to be.**

**Released from sorrow, healed from pain. Let justice flow, like  
gentle rain.**

**From Jenin's streets to Nablus' square. A pilgrim's song, a  
heartfelt prayer.**

## **Verse 2**

**The scent of thyme, the taste of dates. Remembering lands,  
where memory waits.**



Through checkpoints harsh, and weary miles. We carry hope,  
though bitter trials.

For children's laughter, free and bright. For starry nights, and  
days of light.

(Chorus)

Verse 3

The ancient stones, they bear witness, to stories told, and  
love's deep kiss.

We seek a future, just and fair. Where all can live, and all can  
share.

No walls to bind, no tears to fall. But unity, embracing all.

(Chorus)

Outro

In Al-Quds shade, we'll find our rest. When peace arrives, and  
hope's expressed.

Amen, Amen, our hearts declare. A pilgrim's dream, a  
whispered prayer.

## ***The Second Cup of Wine***

**Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'alam borei p're hagafen.**

**We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.**

**We remember Yocheved and Batyah as we drink the second cup of wine:**

**“I will deliver you out of their bondage.” (Exodus 6:6)**

**“For the sake of righteous women of that generation, Israel was released from Egypt.” (Sotah 11b)**

**“Amran took to wife his father’s sister, Yocheved and she bore him Aaron and Moses.” (Exodus: 6:20)**

**We drink the second cup in honor of two women who, together, enabled the future of our people by fulfilling God’s second promise. “I will deliver you out of their bondage.”**

**Yocheved was the mother of Miriam, Aaron, and Moses. We honor Yocheved, woman of courage, who made a cradle of reeds, a fragile vessel that would carry Moses away from her and towards an uncertain future. We think of her tonight, bent over with fear as she set her baby down in the Nile.**

**But God protected Moses, and he was drawn from the water by a compassionate woman who longed for a child of her own. The woman who is known in the Torah only as “daughter of Pharaoh” reached beyond class and station to rescue a child from death. The rabbis call her “Batya”, daughter of God, for her action.**

**Together, these two women nurtured the child. Did these two mothers know one another’s true identity? Did they know that all liberation requires cooperation? They were indeed instruments of God in the fulfillment of the promise.**



**We acknowledge Miriam, also a child of Yocheved, by lifting Miriam's Cup, which is filled with water. Miriam plays a role in the story with her tambourine at the water's edge. She also is known for finding the water sources as the Israelites traveled through the desert.**

**Who might be the Palestinian woman similar to Miriam?**

## ***Aisha's Cup: The Wellspring of our Hearts***

**Aisha's name, a whisper on the breeze.**

**A name that echoes through the olive trees.**

**A name that binds us, daughter, mother, wife.**

**A wellspring of resilience, the pulse of Palestinian life.**

**This cup, it holds not wine, but water clear.**

**Drawn from the depths from which ancient stories appear.**

**From wells that nurtured, where our grandmothers knelt,**

**Where thirst was quenched, and contentment felt.**

**A sacred solace, in the sun-scorched land.**

**A lifeline flowing, cupped within our hand.**

**The wells, they speak of roots that run so deep,**

**Of strength that rises, secrets they still keep.**

**Of stones that witness, to our enduring plight.**

**Of patient waiting, for the dawning light.**

**Each drop a tear, a memory held dear,**

**Of villages lost, and futures drawing near.**

**Aisha's cup, it sings of woman's grace,  
Of hands that mend, and smiles that light each face.  
Of whispered lullabies, beneath the moonlit sky,  
Of stories woven, as the long years fly.  
They guard the embers of our fading dreams.  
And plant the seeds, where hope forever gleams.  
The water shimmers, like a desert bloom.  
A symbol rising from a shadowed tomb.  
Of spirits unbroken, though the burdens weigh,  
Of voices rising in the brighter day.  
For they are pillars in the shifting sand,  
The keepers of our heart, throughout the land.  
  
They are the weavers of our tapestry bright.  
The guardians of our heritage, day and night.  
They are the daughters of a steadfast soul.  
Who keep the flame, and make our nation whole.  
Aisha's cup, a symbol strong and true,  
Of strength and courage, shining ever new.**

**This water flowing, life's eternal stream,  
Reflects the hope, within a waking dream.  
Of fields returning where the olives grow.  
Of peace descending where the rivers flow.  
Aisha's cup, a promise whispered low,  
Of love and freedom, that will overflow.**

**Miriam's Cup honors the role of vital women in the Jewish Exodus. Aisha's Cup honors the strength and resilience of Palestinian women. Aisha is a common and beloved name in Palestinian culture, representing life and the living. It celebrates countless Palestinian women who have endured displacement, hardship, and loss, yet continue to be the backbone of their families and communities. They are the keepers of tradition, protectors of cultural heritage, and sources of unwavering strength. They have always been essential to Palestinian life. They represent survival, connection to the land, and the enduring spirit of the Palestinian people. The water in Aisha's Cup represents both the physical sustenance provided by wells and the spiritual nourishment derived from connection to the land and**

ancestral heritage. It symbolizes the resilience of the Palestinian people, who have maintained their cultural identity and connection to their land despite severe ongoing challenges. The “living waters” represent the wish for renewal of the land and the people. They represent the tears of the past and hopes for the future. They symbolize the healing power, inclusivity and empowerment of Palestinian women.

Miriam’s and Aisha’s Cup of Water are remarkably similar.

We Wash our Hands symbolically, before eating Matzah, Khubz, Maror, Hillel’s sandwich.... And OUR MEAL!!!!

## ***Hillel’s Sandwich***

On Passover in the days of the Temple in Jerusalem, Rabbi Hillel would eat a sandwich made of the Pesach (lamb offering), matzah and maror. Now we do not bring sacrifices to the Temple, so our sandwich is made only with matzah and maror.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha’olam, asher kid’shanu  
b’mitzvotav al achilat maror v’matzah.



# ***LET's EAT !!!***

## ***Afikomen***

Children at the Seder hunt for the Afikomen. No children? We are all children.

## ***Third Cup of Wine***

We give thanks for our meal, and we pour the Third Cup of Wine.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, borrei p're hagafen.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

## ***Welcoming Elijah***

This is the Cup of Eliyahu Hanavi, Elijah the Prophet. We open a door to greet our honored guest and invite him to join our Seder. Palestinians also honor an Elijah.

We, your people, call upon you in this time of longing. As we remember your fiery spirit, your zeal for justice, we remember

**the land you walked, the hills you knew, the olive groves and ancient stones that bear witness to all of the land's original peoples.**

**We, the children of this sacred earth, pray for your return. Not with a chariot of fire, but with the gentle rain of reconciliation and reparations. Bring us the healing waters of understanding, to quench the thirst of division. Guide us from the shadows to the light of shared humanity.**

**Elijah, in your strength, remember the children who know only fear, the mothers who weep for lost sons, the fathers who toil for a future uncertain. May your voice, once raised against injustice, now whisper hope in all our hearts.**

**We yearn for a time when the echoes of violence are silenced, when the walls that divide us crumble, when the fruit of our labor is shared in peace. O Elijah, messenger of God, intercede for us. Bring us the dawn of a just and lasting peace, a peace that blooms like the wildflowers of our homeland, a peace that shelter us all, beneath the shade of the ancient olive trees.**

**May your spirit, like the wind that sweeps across our hills, carry our prayers to the heavens. May your presence, like the star that guides the lost, lead us to a future of hope and harmony. Amen.**

# ***Seder Songs and Readings***

## **Palestinian Peace and Justice**

**From ancient hills, our spirit cries.**

**A homeland lost, beneath our skies.**

**For justice yearns, our weary soul.**

**A lasting peace, to make us whole.**

**Oh, Palestine, our heart's desire.**

**A land of peace sets hearts afire.**

**Where olive trees their shadows cast.**

**And wounds of conflict fade at last.**

**Through tears and pain, our hopes remain.**

**To break the chains, erase the stains.**

**For freedom's dawn, we lift our voices.**

**A future built, by our own choices.**

# **Our Passover Things**

**(Sung to My Favorite Things in the Sound of Music)**

**Cleaning and cooking and so many dishes,  
Out with the Hametz, no pasta, no knishes.  
Fish that's gefilted, horseradish that stings,  
These are a few of our Passover things.**

**Matzah and karpes and chopped up haroset,  
Shank bones and kiddush and Yiddish neuroses.  
Tante who kvetches, and uncle who sings,  
These are a few of our Passover things.**

**Motzi and maror and trouble with Pharaoh.  
Famines and locusts, and slaves with wheel barrows.  
Matzah balls floating, and eggshells that clings,  
These are a few of our Passover things.**

**When the plagues strike,  
When the lice bite,**

When we're feeling sad.  
We simply remember our Passover things,  
And then we don't feel so bad.

## ***Palestinian-Israeli Coexistence & Peace***

### **Verse 1**

Sunrise paints the ancient stones, a golden, dusty hue.  
Two stories whispered on the wind, both claiming what is true.  
From Jerusalem's worn pathways, to Gaza's sandy shores,  
A longing echoes in each heart, for peace to be restored.  
A broken trust, a bitter past, a future blurred and dim.  
Underneath the hardened shells, shared humanity within.

### **(Chorus)**

Oh, let the olive branches bloom, where shadows used to fall.  
Let children's laughter fill the air, and answer freedom's call.  
From Jordan's flowing river, to the Mediterranean's tide,  
May peace and understanding grow, where anger used to hide.

May hands reach out across the wall, and bridges start to mend.

A symphony of hope arise, where broken pathways bend.

**Verse 2**

The scent of spices fills the air, a melody of prayer.

Voices rising to the sky, a burden hard to bear.

A mother's tears, a father's grief, a child who knows no play.

Only fear and constant dread that steal each passing day.

The stories etched in every face, of loss and deep despair,

Yet underneath the pain, remains hope beyond compare.

**(Chorus)**

**(Bridge)**

Imagine fields of golden wheat, where bombs have left their scars.

Imagine songs of unity, beneath the twinkling stars.

Imagine voices joined as one, a chorus strong and clear.

A future built on empathy, where love can conquer fear.

**(Chorus)**

**(Outro)**

**Shalom, Salaam, a gentle plea, for peace to find its way.**

**A dream of coexistence bright, for every coming day.**

**A dream of coexistence bright, for every coming day.**

***Eichad Mi Yodea: Who Knows One***

**Numbers are important symbols in Jewish tradition. Seder guests have probably all heard “Who Knows One”. Saying all of the parts of this round in one breath is a favorite Seder activity. Here is one version:**

**Who Knows One: I know One... One God of the World.**

**Two are the tablets of the covenant.**

**Three are the Patriarchs.**

**Four are the four Matriarchs.**

**Five are the five books of the Torah.**

**Six are the six books of the Mishnah.**

**Seven are the seven days of the week.**

**Eight are the eight days until circumcision.**

**Nine are the nine months of pregnancy.**

**Ten are the Ten Commandments.**

**Eleven are the eleven stars in Joseph's dream.**

**Twelve are the twelve Tribes of Israel.**

**Thirteen are the thirteen attributes of God's mercy.**

## ***Palestinian Version of Who Knows One***

**Who Knows One: I know One ...One is the God of the World.**

**Two are Israel and Palestine.**

**Three are the olives trees, the land, and the culture.**

**Four are the Refugee Camps.**

**Five are the Hands of Resistance.**

**Six are the days of the Nakba.**

**Seven are Keys of Return.**

**Eight are the Gates of Jerusalem.**

**Nine are the stars of the Flag.**

**Ten are the poems of the Poet.**

**Anyone know what Eleven, Twelve or Thirteen might be?**



# ***Had Gadya or Two Zuzim***

## ***Traditional Version***

On the surface, this traditional Passover song is concrete about a little goat a father buys for Two Zuzim. That goat meets aggressive animals and spiritual demise. A cat that eats the goat. A dog that bit the cat. A stick that beat the dog. A fire that burnt the stick. Water that put out the fire. An ox that drinks the water. A Butcher that slaughtered the ox. The Angel of Death who kills the butcher. And, finally, the Holy One who slays the Angel of Death.

This can be also interpreted as an allegory: The kid goat, Israel. The two Zuzim, the Tablets of the Law. The cat, Assyria. The dog, Babylonia. The stick, Persia. The fire, Greece. The water, Rome. The ox, the Saracens. The butcher, the Crusades. And the Angel of Death, in this allegory, is the Ottomans.

The end of the song offers Hope for Peace for the people of Israel.



## ***Palestinian Version: This Land of Mine***

***The Palestinian Had Gadya is titled This Land of Mine. It symbolizes the force and impact of displacement and occupation, the walls of separation and confinement. The olive***

*trees symbolize the Palestinian people of this land. The words represent their history, the voice of the people speaking up, and the “right” is the desire for justice.*

**This Land of Mine, this land of mine. My father bought it long ago in time. This land of mine, this land of mine.**

**Then came the force, then came the force, that took the land my father bought of course. This land of mine. This land of mine.**

**Then came the wall, then came the wall, that blocked the force that took it all. That took the land my father bought, of course. This land of mine. This land of mine.**

**Then came the trees, then came the trees. That fell before the wall, for us to see. That blocked the force that took it all. That took the land my father bought, of course. This land of mine. This land of mine.**

**Then came our words, then came our words. That spoke of trees without flying birds. That fell before the wall, for us to see. That blocked the force that took it all. That took the land my father bought, of course. This land of mine. This land of mine.**

**Then came the voice, then came the voice. That sang our words, a people’s choice. That spoke of trees without flying**

birds. That fell before the wall, for us to see. That blocked the force that took it all. That took the land my father bought, of course. This land of mine. This land of mine.

Then comes the right, then comes the right. To claim the voice, with all its might. That sang our words, a people's choice. That spoke of trees without flying birds. That fell before the wall, for us to see. That blocked the force that took it all. That took the land my father bought, of course. This land of mine. This land of mine.

## ***The Fourth Cup of Wine***

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam borrei p'ri hagafen.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe. Who creates the fruit of the wine.

Our Seder is now complete with its traditional prayers and Order. We focused on the Palestinians because they are, like the Israelis, owners of the land.

We often end by saying: "next year" in Jerusalem....Lashanah haba'ah b'Yerushaleym!

This year we add, "next year" in a peaceful and shared land.



**Palestinian-Israeli Coexistence.**



## About The Authors



### **Dale Norma Oller, MD**

For over three decades, Dale Oller continues to practice psychiatry in Portland, OR. A Human Rights activist over the last two decades, she is active in Never Again Coalition and Amnesty International. She is a member of the Reconstructionist Synagogue Havurah Shalom, where she is involved with the Palestinian Justice Group. July, 2024, she participated in a Solidarity volunteer program with the Center for Jewish Non-Violence. Through this program, she spent time in the Bedouin Village of Umm Al Kheir, in the South Hebron Hills of the West Bank, partnering with the Palestinians in their struggle against the settler violence and destructiveness. She continues to be an active alumna with CJNV, which provided the inspiration to write a New Haggadah, including the Palestinian perspective.



### **Benson Schaeffer, PhD**

Retired Pediatric Neuropsychologist. Dr. Schaeffer's career spans academic instruction in child psychology, clinical psychology, and neuropsychology, 1966-2010, Eugene and Portland, Oregon; psychological consultation, Eugene and Portland, Oregon, and internationally, 1974-2010; research psychology, Psychology Department, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 1966-1980, Good Samaritan Hospital, Portland, Oregon, 1980-1982; member, Board of Psychologist Examiners, Salem, Oregon, 1980-1986; Clinical Psychologist, Portland and Eugene, Oregon, 1966-2010. Dr. Schaeffer is proudest of the Signed Speech techniques he developed for teaching language to non-verbal children.