

VOICES OF RESISTANCE

A ZOOM LIBERATION SEDER FOR GAZA

THURSDAY 25 APRIL 2024 19.00 BST

MIRIAM MARGOLYES, CHARLOTTE CHURCH
and others

Hosted by



Jews for Justice for Palestinians
Jewish Voice for Labour



In aid of

British Shalom-Salaam Trust's
Gaza Trauma Appeal



Photo by Janine Joles on Unsplash

VOICES OF RESISTANCE: A LIBERATION SEDER FOR GAZA

A 'Friday of Joy' street event for Gaza children, organised by the *Palestinian Trauma Centre* after bombing & destruction a decade ago.



While we gather. . .

What to do as we gather for our Seder? This year we will watch *War on Children in Gaza*. This short but haunting film shows a set of clothes for each child in Gaza known at the time to have been killed after October 7th. The film was released on February 5th by visual artists' group, *Led by Donkeys*, with a clothing strip five kilometres long, and representing 11,000 children.

In tonight's seder we focus on the terrible onslaught on Gaza, following the horror of October 7th, 2023. Each death represents the loss before their time of an individual human being. None is more important than any other. Even so, the heaviest price has been paid by two million Gazans civilians who once led ordinary, if very confined lives. Now engaged in a desperate and unimaginable struggle simply to exist, their very survival is an act of resistance.



Still from 'War on Children in Gaza', made by artists collective, *Led by Donkeys*

Welcome by Rabbi Lev Taylor

Why do we come together to tell this same story every year? Because it is a quintessential tale of hope. It tells of a people, our people, who took on the world's mightiest empire, and won.

What courage it must have taken, all those centuries ago, for our ancestors to get up and leave their homes.

Tradition teaches that on reaching the Red Sea the Israelites wailed they were doomed. One man, Nachshon, even waded into the waters until they might drown him. Then the seas burst open, reminding us that even the strongest powers can fall. Even the seas can part.

We think back on the story of the Jewish people, remembering other times of resistance: the Warsaw Uprising; those brave few who struggled against South African apartheid; our own challenges to Mosley in '30s Britain... All seemed impossible.

And then they were unstoppable.

Right now, the power of the Israeli state seems insuperable. Israel's government lurches ever closer to what many would call fascism. In Britain, we are meeting political intimidation and censorship, aimed at curtailing criticism of Israel. Yet we are also seeing greater resistance than ever. Palestinians and Israelis; Jewish diaspora and solidarity activists; all of us are making ourselves heard. These rebellions mean there is hope.

A day will come, let it be someday soon, when the seas of Israeli apartheid will part, and the occupation will be swept away. In our days, Pharaoh will fall.



The Family at the Seder, 1935. By Arthur Szyk – a complex and contradictory Polish Jewish artist.



Members of the Gaza writers project, *We are Not Numbers*, dancing in happier times to *Jerusalem*.

Pesach and the Seder

The festival of Pesach (in English, Passover) is older even than Judaism. Since ancient times, North African and Near Eastern peoples have sacrificed lambs to welcome spring. The Pesach that Jews celebrate reflects on and rejoices in the Biblical Hebrews' exodus from Egypt and the survival of Jews and Judaism. It is the first story in recorded history to honour the idea that slaves can become free.

The seder – meaning our order of eating foods and reciting stories – itself dates from Roman Palestine. Around the 1st Century CE, a group of rabbis stayed up all night, celebrating Pesach - and, of course, arguing. They had to answer this huge question: *should they take up arms in resistance against Rome?* One, Rabbi Akiva, argued for revolution and military resistance.

This is Rabbi Akiva's seder. We follow his words.

Over centuries Jews have continually repurposed the original story of resistance against Egypt to show opposition to contemporary oppressions. As a festival of freedom, Pesach has provided radical Jews, practising and secular, with a focus: hope for the liberation of *all* who are unfree.

Tonight, we make special connections with the struggle for Palestinian freedom and equality, and especially with the memory of tens of thousands of Palestinians whose lives and hopes have been obliterated by IDF action in the last six months.

At the same time, we hold in our hearts nearly twelve hundred Jews, Bedouin, overseas workers and foreign visitors murdered by Hamas and other groups on October 7th, the ongoing tragedy of the Israeli and Bedouin hostages, and the injustice experienced by thousands of Palestinians kept in Israeli jails after sham trials or no trial at all.

This is a seder like no other in our lifetime.

An ancient rabbinic text instructs us that *'Each person in every generation must regard himself or herself as having been personally freed from Egypt.'* We take from these words that each of us must connect this story to all current freedom struggles.

Tonight is the first seder we have organised during a horrific revenge war: most of all on the people of Gaza, but also on Palestinians in the West Bank, and on citizens of Israel who protest Israel's war.

Inevitably, this seder has come with many uncertainties – about what to include and who - and we have worked up to the wire to be ready for you, as we promise we now are!

Israeli journalist and activist Haggai Matar wrote on 7th October in +972 Magazine

This is a terrible day. After waking up to air sirens under a barrage of hundreds of rockets fired on Israeli cities, we have been learning about the unprecedented assault by Palestinian militants from Gaza into Israeli towns bordering the strip ...

Attacks on civilians are war crimes, and my heart goes to the victims and their families.

... while the army was clearly caught completely off guard, this is not a 'unilateral' or 'unprovoked' attack. The dread Israelis are feeling right now, myself included, is a sliver of what Palestinians have been feeling on a daily basis under the decades-long military regime in the West Bank, and under the siege and repeated assaults on Gaza...

As I write these words, I am sitting at home in Tel Aviv, trying to figure out how to protect my family in a house with no shelter or safe room, following with growing panic the reports and rumours of horrible events taking place in the Israeli towns near Gaza which are under attack.

I see people, some of them my friends, calling on social media to attack Gaza more fiercely than ever before. Some Israelis are saying that it is the time to eradicate Gaza entirely — essentially calling for genocide...

Yet I remember that everything I feel now, which every Israeli must be sharing, has been the life experience of millions of Palestinians. ... The only solution, as it has always been, is to end apartheid, occupation, and siege, and promote a future based on justice and equality for all of us. It is not *despite* the horror that we must change course — it is exactly because of it.

But our message remains.

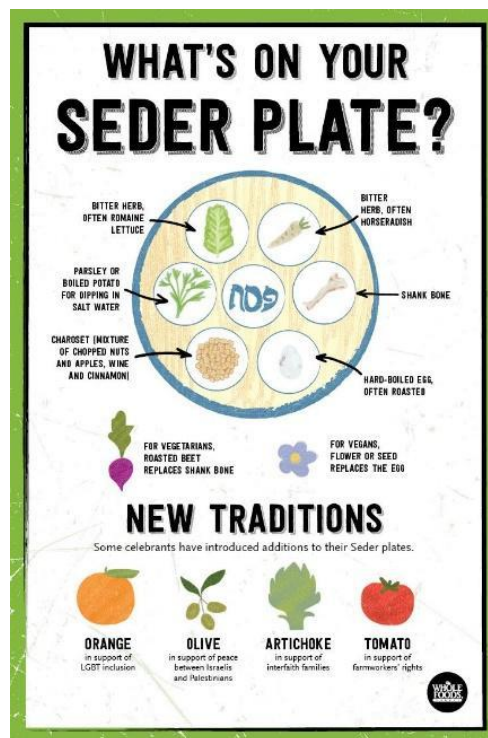
Tonight, we will urge a better world; for equality of civil, political and human rights, and for a just and sustainable peace for all Palestinians and Israelis living between that river and that sea which are our joint inheritance. We welcome all; Jewish, Muslim, Christian, of another faith or of none. We set no test of religiosity, denomination or politics. Be this your first or your ninety-first seder, you are equally welcome!

The Seder Plate

Perhaps one reason why so many Jews still enjoy a *Seder* is that it connects us to old traditions but allows for reinterpretation and change. Nowadays a Zoom seder enables anyone interested in this ancient family-based ritual to participate.

Pesach (Passover) lasts eight days and nights. The first two nights are special for their ritual seder with its book, the *Haggadah* (meaning 'Telling'), and its plate of edible symbols. Filled with symbolism, it is also endlessly rewritten to echo contemporary concerns, a dialogue between religion and secular sensibilities.

In this *Haggadah* we highlight the role we believe Jews must play in responding to the tragedy in Gaza and beyond. Our words may provoke discussion, reflection or even contention. We hope that this wrestling with ideas will help lead to meaningful action for justice.



Below we provide tips for preparing for your seder participation. These are NOT compulsory, so if you just want to be present, that's fine! The main ingredients of the seder plate are:



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

ZEROAH: A shank bone, or maybe a chicken bone. Signifies the paschal sacrifice made before the exodus from Egypt.

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

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

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

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

This ritual meal is always changing and being updated. More recent additions include:

ZETEEM: Olives - sometimes added in support of peace across Israel-Palestine. Perhaps we need to change sometimes to always.

TAPUZ: First introduced in the 1980s by American Jewish academic, Susanna Heschel, an orange is included to represent those frequently marginalised by Jewish communities, such as women and those who are LGBTQ+. We are meant to spit out any seeds so as to spit out the seeds of sexism and homophobia.

Variations might also involve using

- roasted beetroot or parsnip instead of animal bone for vegetarians,
- flower petals rather than the egg for vegans,
- artichokes to represent interfaith commitment,

while Sephardi tradition includes beating each other with spring onions!

Wine – or grape juice - is also an important part of the seder ritual throughout.

Sometimes we drink from the wine glass, sometimes we dip our fingers in, and sometimes – bafflingly and annoyingly – we just lift the glass and put it down again!



“The Seder” by Lynne Feldman, painter and fabric artist

Candle lighting - Charlotte & Sophie Neslen join us from Brussels

The seder officially begins with a physical act: lighting the candles. In Jewish tradition, lighting candles and saying a bracha (blessing) over them marks a time of transition, from the day that is ending to the one that is beginning, from ordinary time to sacred time. Lighting the candles is an important part of our Passover celebration because their flickering light reminds us of the importance of keeping the fragile flame of freedom alive in the world.

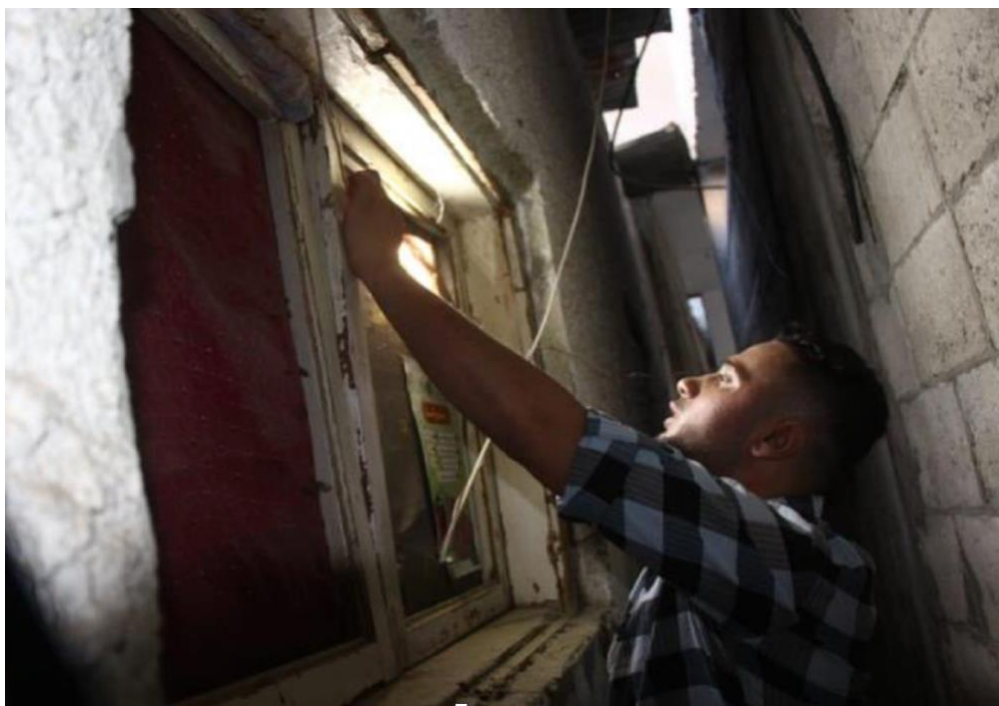
We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You sanctify us by Your commandments and enjoin us to kindle the (Sabbath and) festival lights.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל (שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל) יוֹם
טוֹב.

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

With only a few hours' mains electricity daily, for many Gazans candles were the only option.

BSST grants to the *Future Association for Development & Environment* enabled FADE to purchase and install rechargeable battery-powered lamps, bringing safe & continuous lighting, to 200 of the poorest families in Nuseirat Refugee Camp.



BSST does not know what has happened to the homes and families that received the lamps.

She-hecheyanu

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיָּנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ
לְזִמַּן הַזֶּה.

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

First cup of wine, recited by Mike Cushman

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

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

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

Green vegetable dipping

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

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם, בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

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

BSST has supported Gazan/British partnership, *Theatre for Everybody/Az Theatre* for some 15 years. We helped fund their production of satirical Polish play, 'The Emigrants,' seen here in rehearsal.

The two theatres hoped it would help young Gazans re-evaluate their yearning to emigrate. Now, however.?



Matzah

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

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

Central to Pesach is one food, Matzah: the bread of affliction, a flat cracker baked in extreme haste by those fleeing oppression who had no time to wait for the dough to rise. The matzah reminds us that *when the chance for liberation comes, we must seize it even if we do not feel ready — indeed, if we wait until we feel fully ready, we may never act at all.*

This year food has taken on another and terrible significance: as a weapon of war. Over the last six months, Palestinians have endured a daily struggle just finding food.

In Gaza, IDF tanks have reduced the agricultural land and produce to mud. UNRWA, by far the most important aid agency has been vilified and barred from its crucial work. At least 200 aid workers have been killed. People in Gaza are eating grass and animal feed, while in the West Bank, mammoth loss of male employment since October 7th plus terrifying settler marauding has, for many, rendered either growing or purchasing food impossible.

Tonight, as we eat Matzoh we are reminded that we must *always* stand with the Palestinians, so we can join them in turning the chance of liberation into reality.

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

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

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

This year oppressed, next year free.

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיָא דִּי אָבְלוּ
אֲבֹהֵתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.
כָּל-דְּכָפִין יִיתִי וְיִכֹּל,
כָּל-דְּצָרִיף יִיתִי וְיִפְסַח.
הַשָּׁתָא הַכָּא
לְשָׁתָא דְּאַתְיָא בְּאַרְעָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל.
הַשָּׁתָא עֲבָדִי
לְשָׁתָא דְּאַתְיָא בְּנֵי חוֹרִין.

*Ha lachma anya di achalu avhatana b'ar'a d'mitzrayim.
Kol dichfin yeitei v'yeichul
Kol ditzrich yeitei v'yif'sach.
Ha-shata hacha – l'shata d'atya b'ar'a d'yisra'el
Ha-shata avdei – l'shata d'atya b'nei chorin.*

BSST supports the *Haifa Association*, a Gaza project helping children with Type 1 Diabetes who live outside the refugee camps.

This means they don't qualify for UNRWA support, so without *Haifa*, are entirely reliant on the very limited medical supplies available from the Gaza Ministry of Health.



Break the Middle Matzah

There are usually three large *matzot* on the table. Traditionally, the middle one - the Afikomen - is broken in two, with a half being hidden somewhere in the house. The children are offered a small reward for finding it. What does this all signify?

Well, that's a matter of contention! Some Jews see it as symbolic of the ultimate redemption from suffering, which comes at the Seder end; some as a reference to the Pesach sacrifice that used to be offered at the ancient temple in Jerusalem; some as a reminder that the poor must always set something aside for the next meal, and some as recognition that there's ever more to discover in life.

This year, when we break this matzah in two, it may symbolise the brokenness in our world, and especially the tragedy of the brokenness Israel is inflicting on the Palestinian people.

Stephen Fox reads testimony of Bethlehem Palestinian Rev Munther Isaac

We are broken. The people of Gaza are suffering. They have lost everything except their dignity ... Where are they to go? There is no place for them in this world! What is happening in Gaza is not a war or a conflict, but an annihilation — continuous genocide and ethnic cleansing through death and forced displacement.

World political powers are sacrificing the people of Palestine in order to secure their interests in the Middle East; they say our annihilation is needed to keep the people of Israel safe. They offer us as sacrifices on the altar of atonement, as we pay the price for their sins with our lives. The people of Gaza today want life. They want a night without bombing. They want medicine and surgical operations with anaesthesia. They want the simplest of life's necessities: food, clean water, and electricity. They want freedom and life with dignity. Those under bombardment, beatings, and persecution do not want to hear about reconciliation and peace. They want the end of aggression!

This year the bread of affliction is only too real. And we cannot simply *admit* the brokenness: what is broken must be repaired until there is true liberation and equality of humanity and rights for *all* who live between the Jordan and the Mediterranean. Next year, may the bread of affliction be just a symbol - and may all Israel-Palestine's people enjoy the bread of plenty.

Palestinian children at summer camp organised by *Al Nour Association for Community Development* based in Deir al Balah, central Gaza. BSST has contributed funding for many years.

Al Nour is especially keen to integrate children with disabilities. Around 30 children with physical disabilities attend camp, while many other attenders with emotional and behavioural problems also receive psychotherapy.



The Four Questions – sung by Dorothy Neslen from London

The formal telling of the story of Passover is framed as a discussion with many questions and answers. The tradition that the youngest person present asks the questions reflects the centrality of involving everyone in the seder. Asking questions is a core tradition in Jewish life.

How different is this night from all other nights!

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות!

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

שֶׁבֶּכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמַצָּה, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה בְּלוּ מַצָּה?

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

שֶׁבֶּכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יְרָקוֹת, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מְרוֹר?

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

שֶׁבֶּכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מְטַבֵּילִין אֶפְיָלוּ פַּעַם אַחַת, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פַּעַמִּים?

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

שֶׁבֶּכֶל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבִין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה בְּלָנוּ מְסֻבִּין?

Ma nishtanah halailah hazeh mikol haleilot?

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

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

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

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

A Fifth Question: You may have your own additional question you wish to reflect upon tonight; you may also wish to share this in the chat.



For the first time, last year BSST supported *Ethar*, a new community group in Khan Yunis, south Gaza, providing psycho-social services to schools and kindergartens.

BSST funded a mix of psychological support and fun activities for 160 traumatised youngsters, plus group sessions teaching 240 mothers how to help their children deal with crises.

BSST has not been able to reach anyone from *Ethar* for many months.

Rabbi Brant Rosen from Chicago responds to all our Questions by reading his own poem “FOR PASSOVER YOUR CHILD WILL ASK” . . .

Your child will ask
why do we observe this festival?

And you will answer
it is because of what God did for us
when we were set free from the land of Egypt.

Your child will ask
were we set free from the land of Egypt
that we might hold tightly
to the pain of our enslavement
with a mighty hand?

And you will answer
we were set free from Egypt
that we might release our pain
by reaching with an outstretched arm
to all who struggle for freedom.

Your child will ask
were we set free from the land of Egypt
because we are God’s chosen people?

And you will answer
we were set free from the land of Egypt
so that we will finally come to learn
all who are oppressed
are God’s chosen.

Your child will ask
were we set free from the land of Egypt
that we might conquer and settle
a land inhabited by others?

And you will answer
we were set free from the land of Egypt
that we might open wide the doors
to proclaim:

Let all who are dispossessed return home.
Let all who wander find welcome at the
table.

Let all who hunger for liberation
come and eat.



Before October 7th, Gaza families, schools and community groups did their best to create childhood normality.

Above, *Bozour Theatre*, the only women-run theatre in Gaza. BSST supported its project teaching children film animation and storytelling.

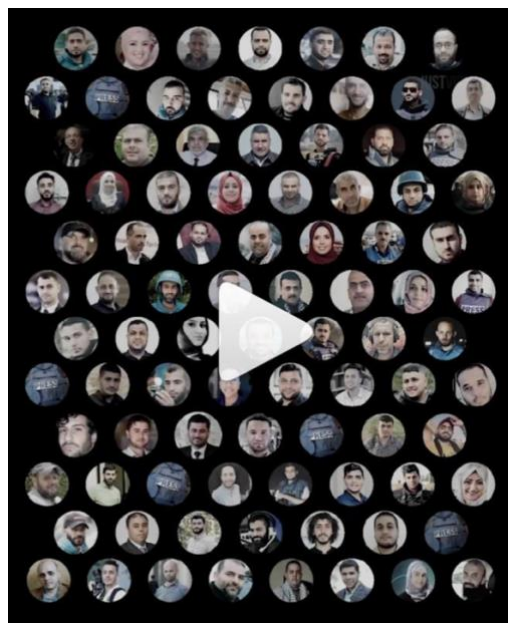
On the right, fun on a day trip with BSST-funded community group *Afaq Jadeeda (New Horizons)* based in Nuseirat Refugee Camp.



A message from one of Gaza's citizen journalists, Mahmoud Mustasha

As Israel has barred all but tame 'embedded' reporters from entering, Gaza's own citizen journalists have played a brave and hugely important role telling the world what is happening around them. We are pleased to welcome Mahmoud, one of those journalists. Mahmoud had to leave Gaza a few days ago and is speaking to us from Cairo. His family remains in Gaza.

Via this **short film**, we also pay tribute to those of Mahmoud's many citizen journalist colleagues who have lost their lives sharing the story of Gaza with the outside world.



This Pesach *must* be different from all others. . .

On Pesach we open our door and our hearts to the stranger. This year we must do so with a fierce determination to wage peace as energetically as those who wage war. But it must be a just peace: peace is nothing without justice and equality, both absent across Israel-Palestine. Palestinians in Israel are third class citizens. In the West Bank they are ruled over by settler/state lawlessness and thuggery. In Gaza we have seen mass killing by the IDF of over 30,000 civilians, maiming of thousands more, annihilation of most homes, of essential infrastructure: hospitals, universities, schools, water purification, electricity generation.

Meanwhile, in Britain, in Europe, and in the US, these denials of Palestinians' humanity are met with government handwringing, while peaceful resistance is deemed antisemitic or actively crushed. Jon Stewart in the US comprehensively tackles the double standards applied to the Palestinians – as shown in this coruscating account from Haaretz – impossible to imagine in any mainstream British newspaper and to be savoured at your leisure.

https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2024-04-10/ty-article/.premium/real-friends-take-the-fucking-keys-jon-stewart-blasts-dens-support-of-israel-in-gaza/0000018e-c8c0-d480-a99e-ced727180000?utm_source=mailchimp&utm_medium=Content&utm_campaign=haaretz-most-read&utm_content=413a475538

For us, raising our voices in solidarity and compassion is, therefore, not an option, it is an imperative.

How the Palestine Trauma Centre keeps going

We are delighted that we can bring you this film made by the **Palestine Trauma Centre**. These BSST-supported child therapy specialists have not allowed bombing, injury, loss of family members and homes stop their work, and have specially put together for this seder a beautiful record of some of their extraordinary activities during the last six months.



The Palestine Trauma Centre premises – just a small part of the damage wrought by bombing raids by the IDF

Even though it has lost its home, *PTC* continues to go onto the streets every day, providing services across Gaza to as many children as they can reach. *PTC* told us:

"In Gaza City, Tareq Abu Shqair, the clown on stilts, has been entertaining children in spite of the extreme danger in that area.

He brought bright colours to the dusty grey street surrounded by rubble. He brought a smile to pale young faces. He did all this despite having bullets lodged in his leg from an injury sustained a few weeks before."



Now, **'We are the Dreams'**, a song for Gaza written by **Adam Gottlieb** and sung by his reggae fusion band, **One Love**.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם Oseh Shalom (We Are The Dreams)

Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya'aseh

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה

Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya'aseh

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה

Shalom aleynu v'al kol Yisrael v'Yishmael

שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל

v'al kol yoshvei teyvel, vimru amein

וְעַל כָּל יְשֵׁבֵי תֵבֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן

We are the dreams of all our dear ancestors
We are the seeds they planted in their best works
We are the meek inheriting the treasure
that was always ours: heaven on earth forever

We won't just watch a genocide, no
We won't just idly stand by, no
We'll show up spirits standing high
and ready for that ancient fight for just and right

We are the ones the prophecies foretold
We are the ones their borders cannot hold
We are the breathing incarnations of those precious souls
from our days of old – we will not fold!

May the One who brings peace in heaven
bring us peace on earth
Peace to our broken people
Peace to the world and we say Amein

Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya'aseh
Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya'aseh
Shalom aleynu v'al kol Yisrael v'Yishmael
V'al kol yoshvei teyvel, vimru amen

Second cup of wine, spoken by Mike Cushman

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

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

Back to the Seder Plate

Matzah

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maror

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

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

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

Hillel sandwich

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

בֶּן עֶשְׂרֵה הֵלֵל בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁבִיטַת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה
קָיָם: הָיָה כּוֹרֵךְ מַצָּה וּמְרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד
לְקַיֵּם מֵהַ שְׁנַיִם אָמָר "עַל מִצּוֹת וּמְרוֹרִים
יֵאָכְלוּ."



Liara Ostroff: The Bird's Head Haggadah

A personal message from Rabbi Lev

If God is the moral voice of the universe, that voice must be crying out in desperation.

In the last few months, over 30,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed by Israeli bombs. I am kept awake at night thinking about that. I imagine God, smothered by the rubble of obliterated hospitals, calling out. Like Abel, stricken by Cain, the voice of the blood is calling out from the ground (Gen 4:10). I imagine God, pulled from the wreckage, crying: “Thou shalt not kill. (Ex 20:13) Thou shalt not kill. (Deut 5:17)”

I believe that God is screaming.

The commandments may once have been given as words of instruction or even as a love letter, but now they are a desperate plea.

God says “I am the Eternal One thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me.”

No other gods. No state, no flag, no military, no leader, no ideology, no grudge, no border, nothing. None of these can ever be placed before God. None of them have any trump over God’s words.

God’s word says: “You shall not pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land, and no expiation can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it.” (Num 35:33)

So I believe I can hear God screaming: thou shalt not kill.

And I do not want to silence that voice. I want to amplify it. I want the Holy Torah to be heard now, more than ever. I hear God screaming, and I want to join in.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not kill.

Maxine Peake reads a poem by **Nadine Murtaja**, a young poet from Gaza.

In 2018 around thirty young and aspiring poets set up the [Gaza Poets Society](#). Three years later, their spiritual home, Samir Mansour's huge Gaza City bookstore – combined shop, library, meeting place, escape from social restrictions - was targeted in an Israeli missile strike and completely destroyed. Nadine Murtaja, one of those Gaza poets, was 18 at the time.

A year later, after a huge international fundraising and book donating effort, Samir's bookstore reopened. Now, once again, it has been devastated by bombing. According to her Facebook page, Nadine is still alive and still writing, and has been studying as a dental student at Al-Azhar University in Gaza. Now, however, her university, like all universities in Gaza no longer exists. This is her poem.

*There, on the other side,
time changes, hours pass, and it gets darker,
the sky takes off its dim dress, then the
morning arrives,
but here where I live, and breathe, life wears
its black dress constantly,
to mourn the labour of my land,
which took a long time.*

*Here, the hanging clock, in my room is broken,
not only this one, everyone's clock is broken here,
my mother keeps saying:
everyone is waiting for the elixir,
we've had it with the grief and agony,
in this holy land we sleep and wake up on the
sound of bombing and shooting
so the first light of day rises in the evening,
lighting up the sky with the blood of martyrs,
here death sleeps not far from us,
we all walk towards freedom, towards hope,
we walk on stones that once were a house, carrying stories and secrets,
we walk with the screams of children, and the groans of mothers pulsating over and over in our ears.*

In 2021 BSST joined the worldwide campaign to rebuild Samir Mansour's iconic *Gaza Bookshop*, after its destruction by the IDF. In Oct 2023 the bookshop was once again severely damaged by IDF bombing. We do not know its current situation.



Future Association for Development and the Environment used to teach the children who came to its summer camps the importance of looking after their environment - gathering rubbish, planting and cherishing trees...

Shalom Salaam



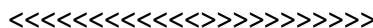
THE BRITISH SHALOM-SALAAM TRUST

MIRIAM MARGOLYES, longstanding BSST Patron, currently filming in New Zealand, makes an appeal on behalf of the British Shalom-Salaam Trust's trauma work in Gaza and the West Bank.



To support BSST's work, go to our website at www.bsst.org.uk. Scroll down to the last line of our Trauma Appeal and click on.

If you wish to give, but in a different way, go to www.bsst.org.uk/donate/.



We have already seen the *Palestine Trauma Centre's* film. Now, for you to read in your own time, we include messages from three further Gaza groups that BSST supports. These are in a desperately precarious state – we can message them, but all attempts at direct discussion have foundered because of bombing, erratic Wi-Fi and general chaos in Gaza.

“Our patterns are many days, hours and minutes of great terror. . . Horror, fear and sadness. . . death comes quickly and we often have no time to grieve for loved ones and friends. We and our families are waiting for death but we are still alive despite losing the splendour of our homes, our money and everything we have. Thank you for checking on us.”

Qasem, chair of *Afaq Jadeeda*, writing in November.

“There are many words inside me, but I find it difficult to describe everything. There is a lot of pain, but silence is the master of the situation. I try to be brave for my children. I search for an answer to all their questions but find nothing but to lie. I hide my eyes from them – I do not want them to see the lie in my eyes.

Everything here is over, even the living people are dead and waiting for their turn. From my work in a charitable organisation, I receive thousands of calls asking if we can provide food. Families have left carrying only their children and are now searching for a piece of bread. You will not understand what it means to be helpless in the face of these needs. It is as if life here has stopped.”

Ali, Director of *Future Association for Development & Environment*, writing in October



But sometimes we are confounded.

In February 2024, astonishingly, Amal, director of *Khotof El Khair*, sent us a report on their kindergarten project which BSST had funded. With striking understatement, she apologised for sending it 'so late due to the difficult circumstances we are experiencing in the Gaza Strip'.

We do not know if the kindergarten is still operating.

Dayenu – IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH

The Seder is normally an experience shared around a dinner table. We know that Zooming a Seder is not the same as socialising close together, eating too much, arguing, having fun, and being gloriously irreverent (in how many families has the door been opened to Elijah, only to find an uncle clad in a white sheet outside?). It also includes a lengthy singsong. At our earlier Seders we felt a full-length singsong wouldn't work over Zoom. But last year we picked one song – and we enjoyed it, so here again is DAYENU!!

If <u>He</u> had brought us out from <u>Egypt</u> , and had not carried out judgments against them – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu hotzianu mimitzrayim, v'lo asah bahem sh'fatim, dayeinu!</i>	ממִצְרַיִם הוֹצִיאָנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ שִׁפְטִים בָּהֶם עָשָׂה וְלֹא דָּיְנוּ
If He had carried out judgments against them, and not against their idols – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu asah bahem sh'fatim v'lo asah beloheihem, dayeinu!</i>	שִׁפְטִים בָּהֶם עָשָׂה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאֱלֹהֵיהֶם עָשָׂה וְלֹא דָּיְנוּ
If He had destroyed their idols, and had not smitten their first-born – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu asah beloheihem, v'lo harag et b'choreihem, dayeinu!</i>	בְּאֱלֹהֵיהֶם עָשָׂה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם אֶת הָרַג וְלֹא דָּיְנוּ
If He had smitten their first-born, and had not given us their wealth – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu harag et b'choreihem, v'lo natan lanu et mamonam, dayeinu!</i>	בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם אֶת הָרַג אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְמוֹנָם אֶת-לָנוּ נָתַן וְלֹא דָּיְנוּ
If He had given us their wealth, and had not split the sea for us – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu natan lanu et mamonam, v'lo kara lanu et hayam, dayeinu!</i>	מְמוֹנָם אֶת-לָנוּ נָתַן אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַיָּם אֶת-לָנוּ קָרַע וְלֹא דָּיְנוּ
If He had split the sea for us, and had not taken us through it on dry land – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu kara lanu et hayam, v'lo he'eviranu b'tocho becharavah, dayeinu!</i>	הַיָּם אֶת-לָנוּ קָרַע אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּתוֹכֵהּ הַיָּם הַיָּבֵשׁנוּ וְלֹא דָּיְנוּ
If He had taken us through the sea on dry land, and had not drowned our oppressors in it – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu he'eviranu b'tocho becharavah, v'lo shika tzareinu b'tocho, dayeinu!</i>	בְּתוֹכֵהּ הַיָּבֵשׁנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּתוֹכֵהּ צָרֵינוּ שָׁקַע וְלֹא דָּיְנוּ
If He had drowned our oppressors in it, and had not supplied our needs in the desert for forty years – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu shika tzareinu b'tocho, v'lo sipeik tzorkeinu bamidbar arba'im shana, dayeinu!</i>	בְּתוֹכֵהּ צָרֵינוּ שָׁקַע אֱלֹהֵינוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר צָרְכֵנוּ סָפַק וְלֹא שָׁנָה אַרְבָּעִים דָּיְנוּ
If He had supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and had not fed us the manna – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu sipeik tzorkeinu bamidbar arba'im shana, v'lo he'echilanu et haman, dayeinu!</i>	בַּמִּדְבָּר צָרְכֵנוּ סָפַק אֱלֹהֵינוּ שָׁנָה אַרְבָּעִים הַמָּן אֶת-הָאֵכִילנוּ וְלֹא דָּיְנוּ
If He had fed us the manna, and had not given us the <u>Shabbat</u> – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu he'echilanu et haman, v'lo natan lanu et hashabbat, dayeinu!</i>	הַמָּן אֶת-הָאֵכִילנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַשַּׁבָּת אֶת-לָנוּ נָתַן וְלֹא דָּיְנוּ
If He had given us the <u>Shabbat</u> , and had not brought us before <u>Mount Sinai</u> – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu natan lanu et hashabbat, v'lo keirvanu lifnei har sinai, dayeinu!</i>	הַשַּׁבָּת אֶת-לָנוּ נָתַן אֱלֹהֵינוּ סִינַי הַר לִפְנֵי קָרְבָנוּ וְלֹא דָּיְנוּ
If He had brought us before <u>Mount Sinai</u> , and had not given us the <u>Torah</u> – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu keirvanu lifnei har sinai, v'lo natan lanu et hatorah, dayeinu!</i>	סִינַי הַר לִפְנֵי קָרְבָנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַתּוֹרָה אֶת-לָנוּ נָתַן וְלֹא דָּיְנוּ
If He had given us the <u>Torah</u> , and had not brought us into the <u>land of Israel</u> – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu natan lanu et hatorah, v'lo hichnisanu l'eretz yisra'eil, dayeinu!</i>	הַתּוֹרָה אֶת-לָנוּ נָתַן אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֶרֶץ-הַכְּנִיעָנוּ וְלֹא דָּיְנוּ
If He had brought us into the <u>land of Israel</u> , and not built for us the <u>Holy Temple</u> – Dayenu, it would have been enough!	<i>Ilu hichnisanu l'eretz yisra'eil, v'lo vanah lanu et beit hamikdash, dayeinu!</i>	יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֶרֶץ-הַכְּנִיעָנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בֵּית אֶת-לָנוּ בָּנָה וְלֹא הַמִּקְדָּשׁ דָּיְנוּ

While the Passover meal would normally be eaten part way through the Seder, we will just continue . . .



Finding the Afikomen

We hope you haven't forgotten that the Afikomen was hidden. Now we invite everyone to hunt for the Afikomen but without leaving your screens.



The Seder highlight for children (other than dipping their fingers in wine and shouting out the plagues) is the Afikomen hunt.

For the second year, BSST trustee **Stephen Fox** has devised another great Zoom-friendly Afikomen hunt which he will be guiding you through!

Stephen – over to you . . .

Birkat Hamazon

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַזֵּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוֹבוֹ בְּחֵן
בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים, הוּא נוֹתֵן לָחֶם לְכָל
בָּשָׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ. וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל
תָּמִיד לֹא חָסַר לָנוּ, וְאֵל יַחְסַר לָנוּ
מִזֶּזֶן לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בְּעֲבוּר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל,
כִּי הוּא זֵן וּמְפַרֵּס לְכָל וּמְטִיב לְכָל,
וּמְכִין מִזֶּזֶן לְכָל בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַזֵּן אֶת הַכֹּל.

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

Third cup of wine, spoken by Mike Cushman

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

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



As we near the end, we are delighted to be sung out (or nearly out) by

CHARLOTTE CHURCH

who has been so consistently vocal in supporting the people of Gaza and has not buckled under the worst hostility and abuse.



Fourth cup of wine, spoken by Mike Cushman

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

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

Conclusion

Our seder is complete. We have followed the order, told the story, performed the rites, sung the songs, and reflected on the relevance of the message of Pesach to the Jews, to the struggle for justice for Palestinians and of its universal resonance for all peoples. Let us meet next year in a world redeemed! Peace, justice and equality for all!



But for now, just don't forget. Visit the BSST website at www.bsst.org.uk and donate to our TRAUMA APPEAL

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS AND ORGANISERS

Charlotte Church is one of our best-known entertainers, a Welsh singer, television host and also a committed activist with a longstanding commitment to the Palestinian cause.

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

Stephen Fox is a retired academic and is co-founder of **Tzedek UK-Ireland**, an anti-zionist online community. Stephen is a BSST trustee and involved with Na'amod.

Adam Gottlieb, one of **Tzedek Chicago**'s two cantors, is a poet and musician who has a Chicago-based Revolutionary Reggae Fusion band called **One Love**.

Miriam Margolyes is one of Britain's – and Australia's – greatest actors. Theatre, film, television, chat shows, audio books – Miriam has done, and in her eighties, continues to do it all. From Harry Potter to Scorsese to Dickens (especially the last). Also an author, a BSST Patron and one of the Palestinians' most outspoken supporters.

Nadine Murtaja is a young Gazan poet who until October 7th was studying dentistry. Since the IDF destroyed her university, she has been practising her hobby of writing. In March 2024 she produced her first book '**Ash and Air**'. She describes her goal in life as "to strive to live it by all means and to defend the Palestinian cause until my last breath in this life."

Mahmoud Mushtaha is a journalist, now in Cairo, who was living in Gaza till a couple of weeks ago.

Charlotte & Sophie Neslen are 10 and 11 years old and live in Brussels. Their cousin **Dorothy** is 10 and lives in London.

Palestine Trauma Centre was set up in 2007 to help train therapists in mental health skills. It was also a referral centre for those with mental disorders and PTSD symptoms. It possesses (badly damaged) premises, but much of its work happens on the streets. BSST has been supporting PTC for many years.

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

Rabbi Brant Rosen was ordained by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 1992. He is a vocal activist for justice and human rights, particularly in Israel/Palestine, co-founding the **Jewish Voice for Peace Rabbinical Council**. He also established **Ta'anit Tzedek** – the international weekly Jewish Fast for Gaza - and **Tzedek Chicago**, a community committed to Palestinian solidarity. Plus, he is the author of the popular Jewish social justice blog, [Shalom Rav](#).

Rabbi Lev Taylor is a rabbi in northeast London, after an earlier career in the charity and education sectors, campaigning on workers' rights, climate change, and global health. He is part of the Jewish-Anarchist collective, **Jewdas**, and presided over the Seder where Jeremy Corbyn arrived with horse-radish from his allotment. He blogs at www.simlev.blog, bringing a radical Jewish perspective to issues large and small, is an educator for the **Queer Yeshiva**, and has been published – eclectically - in Tribune, Jewish News, Novara, Tablet and the Jewish Chronicle.

Naomi Wayne is co-founder and secretary of BSST.

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The Liberation Haggadah 2024 was written and compiled by Stephen Fox and Naomi Wayne.

Zoom technical operations were organised and managed by Mike Cushman of JVL, to whom, as always, enormous thanks.



BSST supports groups in Israel-Palestine-Golan seeking creative and practical solutions to the needs of their communities. We favour small grassroots projects, including those tackling contentious issues and those overlooked by major funders.

We do this as the only Jewish grant-giving charity working solely across Israel-Palestine-Golan'. The area we cover is the State of Israel since 1948, and all the land - Gaza and the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and Golan - occupied by Israel since 1967.

BSST donates nearly 100% of its income to our supported groups and their work. Mostly our funds go to Palestinian, Jewish and jointly-run organisations, but we also assist others such as a Syrian group in Golan, an East Jerusalem gypsy group and projects working with African asylum seekers and migrant workers from around the world who now live in Israel.

Our Jewish identity defines our work and purpose:

- to make a positive and practical Jewish statement of opposition to the oppression of the Palestinian people across Israel-Palestine, and of the Syrian population of Golan.
- to oppose all discrimination against other minorities or sections of the communities within Israel-Palestine-Golan. These include women and LGBTQ+ people within the entire area; asylum seekers and migrant workers in Israel; gypsies in East Jerusalem; Ethiopian and Mizrahi Jews in Israel.
- to support the achievement of a democratic, just and sustainable peace based on equality, human rights and mutual respect between all communities within Israel-Palestine-Golan.

BSST sees its role as showing solidarity - helping people on the ground create their own building blocks for a humane society and a fair and lasting peace between the communities of Israel-Palestine-Golan.

Reach us at bsst@bsst.org.uk

