

# Before the Seder

Jews have celebrated Pesach for over three thousand years. Our story of enslavement turned freedom through divine help and human struggle has stayed with us through the millennia and is central to our identity, traditions, and legacy. This cherished story of ours recounts the necessity of speaking truth to power and fighting for justice, a story we have taken with us to wherever we may be. In the intervening years, many similar tragedies have befallen us and others. Today, we face yet another - the Uyghur genocide.

The Uyghurs are a Turkic-speaking, Muslim minority in the Western Chinese province of Xinjiang. In recent years, the Chinese state has been committing genocide against them. The persecution of Uyghurs includes internment in so-called 're-education camps', forced labour and enslavement, torture, forced sterilisation, and religious expressions and cultural practices have been banned as means to repress the Uyghurs beyond all conscience.

This Pesach, we ask you to consider the Uyghur story of enslavement and repression alongside our own, by using this resource created to accompany any Haggadah. All you need is **cotton**, representing Uyghur forced labour, and **yellow raisins**, sweetness representing hope, on your seder plate. We hope it will spark conversations around your dinner table and on zoom - and will remain with you long after. **#MakeThisSederDifferent**

# Mah Nishtana

**Why is this Seder different to all other Seders?**

ממה נשתנה הסדר הזה מכל הסדרים

Mah nishtana ha-seder ha-zeh mi kol ha-sdarim?

**On all other Sedarim we tell our own story. Why do we dedicate this seder to another's story?**

שבכל הסדרים אנו מספרים את סיפורינו הלילה הזה מוקדש גם לסיפור של האחר

She-b'chol ha-sdarim anu mesaprin et sipurenu, ha-seder mukdash gam l'sipur shel ha'acher

**On all other Sedarim we remember suffering (maror), why do we dedicate this Seder to hope (yellow raisins) as well?**

שבכל הסדרים אנו זוכרים את הסבל הסדר הזה אנו מקדישים גם לתקווה

She-b'chol ha-sdarim anu zocrim et ha-sevel, ha-seder ha-zeh anu makdishim gam l'tikvah

**On all other Seder plates we place our traditional foods, why on this one do we include cotton as well?**

שבכל הסדרים אין אנו מטבילין כותנה אפילו פעם אחת הסדר הזה שתי פעמים

She-b'chol ha-sdarim, ein anu matbilin kutna afilu pa'am echat, ha-seder ha-zeh sh'tei f'amim.

**On all other Sedarim we lean and relax. Why this Seder do we take action as well?**

שבכל הסדרים אנו אוכלין מסובין. הסדר הזה כלנו פועלין

She-b'chol ha-sdarim, anu ochlin m'subbin, ha-seder ha-zeh kullanu po'alim

# The Ten Plagues

At the heart of the Seder we recount the ten plagues delivered to the Egyptians so that the Jews could begin their journey to freedom. Just as the traditional ten plagues symbolise the worst of ancient terrors, our ten plagues reflect the horrors being endured by Uyghur Muslims today. As you read and discuss these new plagues, you may wish to consider if there are any others you would add.

**Incarceration for your identity**

**Destruction of your culture**

**Separation from family**

**Intrusive surveillance**

**Removal of bodily autonomy**

**Displacement from home**

**Violation of human rights**

**Forced labour**

**Murder**

**Indifference**

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# Avadim Hayinu

## "All those who recount the Exodus deserve praise"

Having ourselves once been slaves to Pharaoh in the Land of Egypt, we are commanded to re-tell the story of our Exodus in every generation. We recognise that telling our story is vital for us to remember both the bitterness of slavery and the joy of freedom. On this Seder, we are sharing the testimony of Reyhan Asat, whose brother Ekpar has been detained in a concentration camp in Xinjiang, China.

**"My brother was taken to the concentration camps immediately after returning from the United States. I don't know where he is, we can't even talk to him. So once you go into this concentration camp, it's just a dark cell. They can't see the light at the end of the tunnel and that is the reality of many Uyghurs. I never allowed myself to grieve because how could you grieve for someone who may still be alive? I miss those sibling moments we used to have.**

**The international response has been very indifferent. We need our politicians from democratic countries to step up. Unless stronger steps are taken, the Chinese Government will see this as a green light to continue committing its crimes against humanity."**

Seder in Hebrew means order; established and accepted traditions that we use to remember our collective suffering during Pesach. This seder has been changed by new questions and practices because the order of life for the Uyghurs has been disrupted beyond recognition. We must use our voice to restore a just order to the lives of the Uyghurs.

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