Pesach is a celebration of national liberation, of liberation from slavery and oppression and in many ways a celebration of the fulfillment of the Zionist ideology – the establishment of a State for the Jewish people. For this reason we bring you four interesting and relevant discussion pieces that you might like to insert in your family or community Seder. Please print and use this at your Seder, or pass it on to family & friends.

Freedom for Gilad Shalit

Suggested point in the Seder – In the Kadesh ντσσ section, after you have filled the first cup of wine, but before you say the blessing, read the following:

On this Seder night, Gilad Shalit will have been in captivity for 1,758 days. That’s equal to nearly 4 years and 10 months. Gilad was born in Nahariya in the Western Galilee on August 28th, 1986 the second child to Aviva and Noam. He went to the regional Junior High school at Kfar Vradim, where he received his Bar Mitzvah. Gilad loves all sports, especially basketball.

Gilad was abducted by Hamas on the night of June 25th, 2006, at the Kerem Shalom border crossing point between Israel and Gaza. His parents and brother Noam have been granted access to him, or conditions for his release. In September 2009 a video of Gilad showing him still to be alive was made by his captors and handed over to the Israeli authorities.

A prayer for Gilad’s safe return:

May God who blessed our forbearers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, take pity on the prisoner Gilad son of Aviva and Noam Shalit. May God who releases the bound, redeem Gilad, and was captured at the Kerem border crossing point between Israel and Gaza on June 25th, 2006. He is known to be held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip, however, to date no diplomatic actions have been successful in providing access to him, or conditions for his release. In September 2009 a video of Gilad showing him still to be alive was made by his captors and handed over to the Israeli authorities.

To dream of freedom: Herzl as Moshe

Suggested point in the Seder – In the Magid מַגֵּד section of the Seder, after you have asked the 4 questions of the Seder, and before you say “We were slaves of Pharoah in Egypt” read the following:

Can you imagine the Jewish people still being slaves in Egypt? Even though the journey for the Jewish people began with the Exodus, it actually only began once they started to act upon their desire for freedom, turning to God for help. As we read in Exodus 2:23, “A long time after that, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites were still groaning under their bondage and cried out; and their cry for help from the bondage rose up to God.”

This is the ethos of Pesach – we need to want freedom and pursue it. Similarly, it took thousands of years for Jews to actualize the need to go back to our own country, to have sovereignty over our own land, and be responsible for our own destiny. Like Moshe had done in the time of the Bible, Theodor Herzl led the Jewish people into action. Also like Moshe, Herzl was almost entirely assimilated, but still had the clarity to realize that Jews needed their own sovereign state where they would not be persecuted nor discriminated against. Again, just like Moshe, Herzl led our people in the struggle for a physical geographical place for Klal Yisrael -all the people of Israel.
Every generation needs an Exodus

**Suggested point in the Seder** – In the Magid המגיד section, after you have read "Pesach, Matzah and Maror" and before you read "In every generation..." read the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every person needs a certain Egypt, To deliver themselves from it With a strong arm, and persevere With the grinding of their teeth.</td>
<td>Kol adam tzarich she’ti’hi’yeh lo Ey’ze mitzrayim Li’hi’yot moshe atzmo me’toch’o B’yad chazakah U b’charikat shinayim.</td>
<td>כל אדם צריך שיתחייה לו, יזא מצרים, ליהיהمش אצמו ממוכן, ביד חזקה, ואבחירות שניים.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every person needs one long journey That they will always remember In their feet, Every person needs to have a certain Jerusalem.</td>
<td>Kol adam tzarich masa aroch echad, Lizkor oto l’ad B’kapot ha’raglayim Kol adam tzarich she’ti’hi’yeh lo Yerushalayim.</td>
<td>כל אדם צריך מסע ארוך אחד, לזכור אותו עד, בארкат ההרגלים, כל אדם צריך שיתחייה לו ירושלים.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Israeli poet, Amnon Ribak, reminds us in his poem that no Pesach Seder is complete without recounting the story of the Exodus and feeling like we, ourselves, have personally come out of Egypt. **Turn to the participants at your Seder, and ask:** But what is our Egypt today? What challenging journey do we face as Jewish people around the world today?

Poem text taken from Kol Adam Tzarich Mitzrayim כל אדם צריך מצרים Every person needs an Egypt by Amnon Ribak. Translation to English by MERCAZ Olami. Read the full poem in Hebrew and other languages at www.masortiworld.org/ribak

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Dayeinu! Are we truly free in Israel?

**Suggested point in the Seder** – In the Magid המגיד section, after you have read the Ten Plagues and the opinions of the three Rabbis דייני, read the following:

Unfortunately in Israel today, religious pluralism barely exists:

- Conservative / Masorti and Reform Rabbis are not recognised by the Chief Rabbinate
- Non-Orthodox synagogues receive no financial support from the State
- Weddings or conversions carried out according to Conservative / Masorti tradition are not approved by the Rabbinate
- Women are not accepted as equals in religious practice, even leading to being arrested for praying in public places like the Kotel (Western Wall)

So, this year, as we recount the wonders that God bestowed upon us in the time of the Exodus, let us add some new lines to the Dayeinu乐意 wording:

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Had He only built us the Temple, and not rebuilt the Jewish State – דייני!
Had He only rebuilt the Jewish State, and not brought Jews to Israel from over 100 different countries of the Diaspora– דייני?
Had He only brought Jews to Israel from over 100 different countries of the Diaspora, and not brought religious pluralism – דייני?
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MERCAZ Olami is the Zionist Organization of the Conservative/Masorti Movement providing Jewish/Zionist education, promoting Israel Experience trips, sending Shlichim around the world, fighting for Religious Pluralism in Israel, supporting Aliyah and securing the position of the movement.

MERCAZ Olami has chapters in countries around the world.

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Masorti Olami – The World Council of Conservative/Masorti synagogues builds, renews and strengthens Jewish life throughout the world, with efforts that focus on existing and developing communities in Europe, Latin America, the Former Soviet Union, Africa, Asia & Australia. Masorti Olami projects are supported by The World Zionist Organization.

www.masortiworld.org

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www.womenofthewall.org.il