

Haggadah

Supplement 5785



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Hag Sameah!

This Pesach comes amid much continued distress in the world and amongst our people. Our tradition gives us a chance to simultaneously step out of our individual concerns into a space of memory while also connecting the issues of our past to those of our present and our future. As we dive into this practice of meaning-making, connection, and togetherness, I pray that this supplement provides ways of connecting to the material of our Haggadot to your own lives, in poetry, song, and new framing. May your Pesach be a time of community, music, and sweetness among the bitterness.

PAS CANTORIAL INTERN SIERRA FOX

Hadlakat Nerot

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As we observe the light of the Passover candles, in holy community, we recall the lights we have kindled throughout this past year: Shabbat and festival candles in celebration of our sacred times, Yahrzeit candles in memory of those we've lost near and far, Havdalah candles to bid farewell to Shabbat and our holidays and strengthen our resolve to make it through another week, the continual light of our Ner Tamid, our eternal flame that illuminates our ark.

Regardless of the physical candles we may see flickering, the light that brings the most hope tonight is the light that shines in the eyes and spirits of those around us. Look around your seder table and meet the eyes of those present. Our world may seem dark, but when we gather, supporting one another, engaging in song and prayer, we bring light. And when we recognize the light in others, we reflect and magnify the brightness we each have the capacity to bring.

What have been the lights in your life in this past year?

How do you hope to increase light in the year to come?

Urhatz

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Sacred water in a sacred time
Prepares us for the long night ahead
Our hands, our souls, lifted, cleansed,
A blessing embodied without being said

How can we make this ritual hand-washing meaningful without the blessing? How can this help us prepare for the night ahead?

We might think of this hand-washing as a nod to the mikvah. When we immerse ourselves in the living waters, we rise back up renewed and changed. What are the changes you hope to embody in the year to come?



Karpas

THE FIRST TASTE RABBI EMILY MEYER

We take what is fresh and
new,
And swirl it in our salty
tears—
If this isn't a metaphor for
being Jewish,
I don't know what is.

This sprig of joyful energy,
Spry and sassy, promising
Fresh starts and new
beginnings.
It is how we begin.

Yet we can't savor it
Without these drops of
grief.
We're tethered to our
sorrow,
Shackled to our
vulnerability.

And still, it's beautiful to
taste
This blend of what was
and what will be—
The flavor of all time,
Hope dipped in heartache.

Rabbi Emily Meyer, in her forthcoming book of Passover poetry *Hope Dipped in Heartache*, reflects on the juxtaposition of the green vegetable (often parsley) dipped in salt water. She reminds us that this element of the seder is a chance to “reflect on greenness in its many meanings – newness, freshness, environmentally responsible – springing to life.” What are the elements of this “greenness” that you hope to bring into this spring and the year to follow?



Yahatz

YACHATZ (PASSEOVER)

RACHEL ANISFELD

We break the matzah in half, *hetzi*,
because our hearts need to be broken
open, pierced (as if by an arrow, a *hetz*),
just a crack, enough for the wine drops
of redemption to drip their slow
fast way in and remake us
whole.

It hurts — this breaking
and our growing knowing
of the broken.
We are opening to *oni*, to only
to lack and black and a flat lifeless snack
whose lines remind us of the whip on the back.

We are opening to endless generations
of running and hiding even while thriving
Bekhol dor vador
more and more
pain until it's ma-roar,
bitterness that seeps into our core,
until —
Never again, please no more.

But then we begin to open the door
 Not just to the needy
 . but also to Elijah
 Not just to *oni*
 . but also to Dayenu,
 Not just to lack and never,
 . but also to ever
 Enoughness.
 To the possibility that the pain —
 . Like maror in a Hillel sandwich
 . Like matzah in a Hallel sandwich—
 To the possibility —
 . Nay, to the knowledge, now clear as fiery hail —
 that the pain is always held
 In the embrace of an outstretched arm

whose capacities don't stop at ten
 fingers on the hand
 but keep multiplying, powerful
 and loving with no end.

Maybe we break open the heart
 to take our part in this embrace
 to make our heart a part of this embrace
 to have two halves that can have
 and hold the old wounds
 and become whole through the holding,
 and come to know All through the holding.

How can we better be there for each other through times of brokenness?

Rachel Anisfeld reminds us that we must open the door knowing that there will be joy amidst the bitterness. Is brokenness the same as openness? If not, are there ways to connect them through our traditions and community?



Maggid

A PRAYER OF GRATITUDE FOR THE RETURN OF ISRAELI HOSTAGES

RABBI NAOMI LEVY

Today is a day of gratitude for every soul freed from captivity.
Children, mothers and elders are coming home!
The long-awaited hour of reunion is here.
God, heal the hearts of children
Who have lived through horrors no child should ever endure.
Some children have no parents' arms to run to,
Let all of Israel embrace them with an eternal love.
We give thanks for every hostage released today,
For joyous reunions filled with tears of thanksgiving.
We pray that love will mend the brokenness,
That fear will soon give way to faith in tomorrow.
But for the hostages this hope-filled day of homecoming
Will also be heartbreaking,
A time of mourning for murdered loved ones.
Comfort them, God, be their light in these dark days,
Be their strength, be their shelter, their hope
For new life that lies ahead.
On this blessed day of gratitude
Our hearts refuse to rejoice
Until every soul heartlessly held by Hamas,
Every boy and girl,
Every woman and man
Has been released.

God, help us bring them home.
Until that day, watch over them, God.
Fill them with courage, perseverance,
Strength and hope
For the day of freedom that is coming.
May that day come soon.
*Baruch Ata Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-Olam
Matir Assurim.*
Blessed are You, O God,
Who frees the captives,
Amen.

In the Maggid section of our Haggadah, we tell the story of our people escaping slavery in Egypt. Today, as we recall the ancient story, we also remember that there are still members of our Jewish family held in captivity. How can we balance our relief at our own freedom while some remain hostage? Rabbi Levy's prayer reminds us that we can hold both gratitude and brokenness, recognizing the deep losses in our world while also holding on to hope for a future where all are safe, home, and free.

Maror

THE OTHER SHORE (from The Torah: A Women's Commentary)
SHIRA RUBENSTEIN

The guilt begins on the other shore of the Reed Sea,
 with us, drained from terror and excitement....
 waves lapping against the bodies on the sand,
 so gently now.
 Children laugh or cry,
 but the world is quiet,
 afterwards.

Who is like you, O God?
 We know about fear
 and doubt,
 resentment and guilt.

We thought we'd be leaving it behind.
 How heavy a load can be carried out of Egypt?
 How many in that army were blameless?

How many innocents will die for this freedom?



We don't know whether these questions are for God
 or us.

We try to drown them out with drums,
 hoarse, harsh song,
 the pounding of tired feet in a desperate dance.

We think of the cracks of the whip,
 the insults,

every murdered child
 –all the times we wished
 something like this would occur.

We tell ourselves we have a right to rejoice.

It would be easier to believe
 if the horses
 hadn't had time
 to
 scream.

Korekh



RABBI BEN LUKS-MORGAN

A Korech sandwich is a culinary *makhloket*.

A *makhloket* is a disagreement - or perhaps more accurately - a debate of substance.

Rabbi Hillel was known for engaging *makhloket*.

Going toe to toe with his rival Rabbi Shammai over lies, lights, and litmus tests.

In his time, the *makhloket* was over when and how to imbibe the command, “with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.”

It was the custom of Hillel to eat matzah and maror, with the sacrifice from the Temple.

Hillel wrapped it all together in one efficient bite.

The other sages of his time disagreed, saying, eat them each independently, it is enough.

Today the Temple is but a longed-for memory, but maintain Hillel’s wrap.

No lamb.

Just maror submersed in sweet fruits, representing the clay matter of slavery’s labor wine soaked apples or orange zested dates

The maror and charoset caked between dry matzot of the life-satiating experience of liberation.

A Korech sandwich is a culinary *makhloket*.

The Orange on the Seder Plate

The practice of including an orange on the seder plate originated with Susannah Heschel, a professor at Dartmouth College, who offered a ritual in which each person blesses a segment of the fruit and spits out the seeds as a symbolic rejection of homophobia.



THE ORANGE RABBI ARIEL TOVLEV

Make
no mistake:
through and through
I am what I am

my outer skin
reflects the sweetness
I hold inside

my waxy coat a cover
to guard against the
elements
aware of my harsh
environment

several segments
separated
yet still the same
not a simple singularity

unexpected but not
unnatural:
am I not a fruit from the
Tree of Life?
a creation created by our
Creator?

the small seeds imbedded
within
not hollow hardened pits
but promises for a fertile
future

within me an orchard
if only
given the ground to grow

orange outside inside
shielded sweet holding
promises
I am what I am

What are the seeds of discrimination and cruelty that we must reject in the year to come?

How can we make our table more welcoming to marginalized communities?

How can we reframe the narrative to see the orange seeds as potential for growth and positive change?

Shulhan Orekh



RABBI EMILY MEYER

A Blessing Over Matzah Ball Soup:

Source of healing,
May this soup warm our
bodies and souls.
May its aroma carry us back to
years past,
and generations gone by.

May this Jewish penicillin
nourish our hearts,
soothe our woes,
restore our strength,
and help us heal.

A Blessing Over Gefilte Fish:

Unknowable God,
I will never understand
Why You have given us this
delicacy—
Chopped, balled, slimy
poached fish.

But thank You
For creating the mysteries of
the universe,
For every strange and
unexpected gift.

A Blessing Over the Potato:

To the unsung hero of our
Passover meal,
This tenacious fruit of the
earth—
Dear Potato, we offer this
blessing for you.
Thanks, spud.

Like you,
May we open our eyes to life's
blessings.
May we stay rooted,
Embracing the multitudinous
potential we hold.
And may we know when it's
time
For a fresh starch.

A Blessing Over Chopped Liver:

What am I, Chopped liver?

Miriam's Cup



RABBI ADA LUISA SINACORE

It is said that the Angel of Death had no power over Miriam,
Instead, she died at the kiss of G-d,
A death reserved for the righteous.¹
And still,
Her people did not mourn her,²
Refusing to bestow kindness upon her.³
And so, her well,
The only source of water for Am Yisrael,
A tribute to the Prophetess' merit,
Dried up.⁴

Miriam's Cup is raised. The leader recites:

Tonight, in her honour,
We fill her cup
To restore her well,
To remember her place
In our redemption from Egypt.

Pour water into the Miriam's cup after each recitation:

She who took on the name of Pu'ah,⁵
To welcome to the world,
The Jewish babies,
Who would have been slain.⁶

She, who in a time of slavery,
Foretold of the restoration of her people,
A time of freedom and hope,
Even when her own father acted against her.⁷

She who stood by the riverbank,⁸
Waiting for a stranger, her enemy, To rescue her brother,⁹
Who held the Spirit of the Divine within him.¹⁰

She who was unafraid to offer rebuke,
To those in power—
Pharoah and her brother—
Even at the cost of personal isolation and physical pain.¹¹

She who sang at the shore of the sea,
Rejoicing in a miracle,
With a timbrel in her hand,
The voice of a nation.¹²

Raise the now full water goblet and recite:

Zot Kos Miryam, Zot Mayim Chayim. Zeicher Litziat
Mi'Mitzrayim.¹³

This is Miriam's Cup, a cup of living waters, a reminder of our
exodus from Egypt.

Barukh atah Adoshem, Elokeinu Melekh Ha'Olam, Shehakol
Niyeh Bedvaro. Amen.

Blessed are You G-d, Creator of the Universe, by Whose Word all
things came into being. Amen.

[1] BT Bava Batra 17a & BT Moed Katan 28a.

[2] In BeMidbar 20:29, we learn that the entire House of Israel mourned for Aaron for 30 days. Whereas, when Miriam dies in Numbers 20:1, we learn that she was immediately buried. The rabbis understand this immediacy to indicate that the community did not mourn her in earnest, to concerned were they with the lack of water. Or HaHayyim BeMidbar 19:14.

[3] Or HaHayyim BeMidbar 19:14 & Yalkut Shimoni Torah 763.

[4] BT Ta'anit 9a & Numbers 20:2.

[5] Shemot Rabbah 1 & TB Sotah 11b.

[6] Exodus 1:16.

[7] TB Megillah 14a.

[8] Exodus 2:4 & TB Sotah 9b.

[9] Exodus 2:4-5.

[10] Mekhilta DeRabbi Yishmael, Tractate Shirah 10.

[11] Shemot Rabbah 1 & Sifrei Bamidbar 99.

[12] Exodus 15:20.

[13] "Miriam's Cup blessing" Copyright 1996 (Matia Rania Angelou, Janet Berkenfield, Stephanie Loo).

S'firat Ha-Omer



CANTORIAL INTERN SIERRA FOX

I began counting the omer in 2021, still in quarantine. I was finishing up my first year of cantorial school online, which should have been a year in Israel, and was fretting about and preparing for a move to New York. wondering what the world would look like by the time I had to move. My classmate asked if anyone wanted to be an “accountabilabuddy” for counting the omer, and our omer-counting WhatsApp group chat was born.

The counting of the *omer*, or *s'firat ha'omer*, is the ritual counting of the 49 days between the second night of Passover and Shavuot. Leviticus 23:15 tells us:

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמְּחֹרַת הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאְכֶם אֶת-עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה שֶׁבַע שָׁבָתוֹת תִּמְיָמֹת תִּהְיֶינָה.

U'sfartem lakhem mimohorat hashabbat, mi-yom haviakhem et omer hatnufah, sheva shabbatot t'mimot tihyehna.

And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering—the day after the sabbath—you shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete.

The days of the counting of the *omer* are full of all manner of historical, mystical, and personal significance. During the days of Rabbi Akiva, a plague struck his students during the counting of the omer. When I first started counting the omer, we remained in our own state of plague and uncertainty. The sages suggest that the plague that struck down thousands of Rabbi Akiva's students was

a result of their refusal to follow his message of treating each other with respect, loving their neighbors as themselves, as it is said in Leviticus, *v'ahavta l'reacha kamocha*. As our own plague raged on, I found myself wondering if we had only loved our neighbors better, we would have been able to protect the vulnerable more effectively, being more careful about masking, isolating, testing, and providing care. Hopelessness and uncertainty threatened my sense of grounding, and in that space of disorder and confusion, I began to count the days. Soon, I found myself looking forward to sundown, to making another step toward completion of this mitzvah, to connecting with my counting crew, and to feeling like I had a way of ordering my days. The time of isolation so often felt like days would blur, and the practice of identifying each day as meaningful helped create a sacred order, a seder, to my time.

And, perhaps most importantly for me, I found a way to bring music into my counting. My friend who got us started with the counting shared with us a recording of the Hadar Rising Song Institute's *S'firat HaOmer Niggun*. This song begins with a brief *kavanah*, or intention: "I'shem yikhud kudisha brikh hu ush'khinteh hineni mukhan um'zuman l'kayem mitzvah aseah shel s'firat haomer." The composers translate this as "For the sake of the unification of the Transcendent Creative Power with the Divine Presence dwelling here and now, I am here, I am ready to fulfill the mitzvah of counting the *omer*." In singing these words, I can find that Transcendent Unity, of the Divinity above and below, inside and out, with my self and with others, between Pesach and Shavuot. And, even if I don't always feel ready for the next number, the next day . . . sometimes I need to say it to convince myself as well. "I am here, I am ready."

The song continues with the text from Leviticus we cited earlier: "sheva shabbatot t'mimot tihyena." Seven shabbats, seven weeks,

and they must be complete. One of the requirements of counting the *omer* is that you must do it every day. You must say the blessing at night and then count. If you don't remember until the next morning, you can count without the blessing and then resume counting that night with the blessing. But if you don't remember to count until the next night, you are no longer eligible to say the blessing for the remainder of the days. Because of this, the communal aspect becomes so much more meaningful. By keeping each other on track, we helped everyone make it through to the full seven weeks. When we finally made it to our semester in Israel, my house would invite classmates over most nights to join in singing it together, finally experiencing this in togetherness after having been apart for so long. Now, the song has become a favorite melody of my mother's, and I observe the counting with her, calling every night to sing together. Alone, it is hard to remember to observe this mitzvah every night. Together, it becomes a source of joy in a time of grief, light in a time of darkness.

Hineni mukhan um'zuman. I am here, I am ready, and even if I am not, I will sing the words until I can believe they are true; and with the support of my community, someday they will be. May this tune help you to count your days in song and togetherness, and find meaning in each one.



Sefirat Ha'Omer Niggun

Liturgy for Counting the Omer

Music: Rabbis Shir Meira Feit, Zach Fredman, Yosef Goldman

Vocals: Cantor Mira Davis, Cantorial Intern Sierra Fox

Piano: Michael Hey

L'Shanah Haba'ah B'Yerushalayim!

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