

Remembering and Imagining Liberation

Pesach 5780/2020

Solidarity of Nations - Achvat Amim draws from the wellsprings of Jewish tradition for guidance and wisdom in pursuing personal and collective transformation and liberation. In creating this Pesach discussion guide, we hope to encourage reflection, learning, and conversation that can nourish us in our individual and shared processes of liberation. We believe that the narrative of liberation from *Mitzrayim*/Egypt/the narrow place and our ancestral practices of recalling this narrative can illuminate where we have come from and what is still needed for *tikkun adam* (repairing oneself) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world).

"Song is medicine, magic, and cultural insurrection. Song is what fuels us to resist forces of occupation and separation. Song is how we keep our imagination wide and our hearts tender, crossing borders while forging alternative power."

-Emet Ezell Achvat Amim alum Fall '19

In this early rabbinic teaching, we learn about the core elements of the Pesach seder. We invite you to turn to this piece of Torah to prompt your conversation about our journey towards justice and liberation.

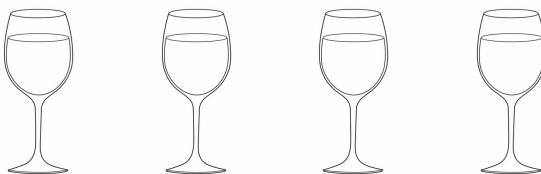
Mishna Pesachim 10:5

Rabban Gamaliel used to say: whoever does not make mention of these three things on Pesah does not fulfill his duty. And these are they: the pesah, matzah, and bitter herbs. The pesah because the Omnipresent passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt. The matzah because our fathers were redeemed from Egypt. The bitter herb because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our fathers in Egypt. In every generation, each of us is obligated to regard ourselves as though they personally had gone forth from Egypt, because it is said, "And you shall tell your son on that day, saying: 'It is because of that which the Y-H-V-H did for me when I came forth out of Egypt'" (Exodus 13:8). Therefore it is our duty to thank, praise, laud, glorify, raise up, beautify, bless, extol, and adore Him who made all these miracles for our ancestors and ourselves; G-d brought us forth from slavery into freedom, from sorrow into joy, from mourning into festivity, from darkness into great light, and from servitude into redemption. Let us say before Her, Hallelujah!

רבנן גמליאל היה אומר, כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח, לא יצא ידי חובתו, ואלו הן, פסח, מצה, ומורר. פסח על שם שפסח המקומ על ביתינו אבותינו במצרים. מצה, על שם שנגאל אבותינו במצרים. מরור, על שם שמררו המצרים את חיינו אבותינו במצרים. בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאלו הוא יצא ממצרים, שנאמר (שמות יג), והגדת לבני ביום ההוא לאמר, בעבור זה עשה ה' לנו בצאתי ממצרים. לפיכך אנחנו חייבין להודות, להלל, לשבח, לפאר, לrenom, להדר, לברכה, לעלה, ולקלס, למי שעשה לאבותינו ולנו את כל הנשים האלה, הוציאנו מעבדות לחירות, מיאנו לשמחה, ומאבל ליום טוב, ומפארה לאור גודל, ומשבעוד לגאה. ונאמר לפניו, הללויה:

"When the world is sick, can't no one be well / But I dreamt we was all beautiful and strong"

- Thee Silver Mount Zion Memorial Orchestra



- What's the difference between telling the story of Pesach and "regarding oneself as though they personally had gone forth from *mitzrayim*/Egypt/the narrow place"?
- What does singing praises do? What does it feel like to sing praises when we are keenly aware of our broken world? How might singing praises be a tool for remembering and imagining liberation?

"Our rights became dreams."

— Awdah Hathaleen, Umm al-Khair community leader and peace activist

The Hathaleen tribe bought the land in Umm al-Khair from the nearby city of Yatta after being forced off their lands in al-Arad in 1948. A small Bedouin village located in Area C in the South Hebron Hills of the West Bank, Um al-Khair currently has 151 buildings in the village with pending demolition orders. Nearly every building has already been demolished at least once and rebuilt by the village. People in the community live in fear, not knowing when the bulldozers will come for their homes. Demolition orders are not limited to homes, but also extend to the wood burning stones where villagers bake bread and the lavatories.

Learn more: <https://goodshepherdcollective.org/>



Cohort Fall 2017 in Umm al Khair

In this Mishna, *Mitzrayim*/Egypt/the narrow place is characterised as a state of slavery, sorrow, mourning, darkness, and servitude and to leave *mitzrayim*/Egypt/the narrow place is to enter into freedom, joy, festivity, great light, and redemption.

- From what have you been liberated? In other words, when and in what ways have gone from darkness into great light, from slavery into freedom?
- From what do you still need to be liberated?
- What collective liberation have you witnessed?
- What collective liberation is still needed?

"I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own."

— Audre Lorde