

How is This Night Different?

A Seder Supplement in Light of the October War
Hebrew version edited by Ayelet Escojido
English version edited by Rabbi David Golinkin

Jerusalem 2024

יוצרים
זיכרון

בית המדרש
לרבנים
ע"ש שכטר

התנועה
המסורתית

כנסת
הרבנים
בישראל



Contents

Introduction by Rabbi Chaya Rowen Baker

- 1. Lighting the Festival Candles by Rabbi Nathalie Lastreger**
- 2. Symbolic items which may be added to the Seder Plate or table**
- 3. “Pass Over Them” by Rabbi Maayan Belding-Zidon**
- 4. “How is this night different from all other nights?”
by Rabbi Irina Gritzevskaya**
- 5. “On this Night” by Rabbi Sara Cohen**
- 6. “In Every Generation” by Martin Herskovitz**


Introduction

In preparation for Purim this year, my friend Rabbi Debra Newman Kamin, rabbi of a large Conservative synagogue in the Chicago area, told me about her community's Megillat Esther. The Megillah was written by the founding rabbi of the community, Rabbi William Frankel z"l, when he was a 15-year-old boy in Vienna, in 1938. While he and his family were waiting to flee to the United States, which would save them from the cruel fate that awaited the Jews of Europe, they did not dare leave their house. While he was hunkered down in his house, in fear of death, he sat and copied Megillat Esther.

This little piece of information moved me, especially when many of us were wondering whether to celebrate Purim and how, and in what kind of situation we would read the Megillah. I imagined the young boy drawing courage and hope from writing Megillat Esther while the Angel of Death was raging outside, and from the thought that the story of the scroll echoes his own story. And now we are about to enter the Festival of Freedom, to our sorrow still in deep sadness, suffering and existential anxiety; and like that scared boy, hiding in his house, we are invited to the Seder table, to read the story of the Exodus from Egypt and understand that it's actually our story.

The longer, Hebrew version of this booklet, the fruit of the labor of many good people, was edited by Ayelet Escojido. It was produced in cooperation with The Masorti Movement and The Rabbinical Assembly of Israel and supported by *Yozrim Zikaron* [Creating Memory]. Rabbi David Golinkin then selected some of those readings and translated them into English. This supplement seeks to help us deal with our current situation. It tells a little of our story at this difficult time, arranged according to the order of the Haggadah to facilitate the integration of the readings into the Seder. You can browse through the readings before Pesah and choose a reading for candle lighting or for various points during the Seder. You can derive personal inspiration, stimulate thought for the holiday and arrive a little strengthened for the Seder night. It's possible to print the booklet for use by the Seder participants. Or you can send it out in advance and invite the participants to choose parts that they would like to incorporate into the Seder.

Let us return for a moment to the story of Rabbi William Frankel z"l. Later, his son related that on the last day of school, before the Nazis closed the school which his father attended in his youth, the principal gathered all the pupils and told them: "One day the Nazis will no longer be here, and Jewish children will still recite *Shema Yisrael*."



We must know that one day this war will end, and Jewish children will still sing *Mah Nishtanah*.

I hope and pray that we find strength in these moments around the Seder table, for gentle singing, conversation and reflection, and to continue telling our story.

Rabbi Chaya Rowen Baker

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Rosh Hodesh Nisan 5784 -- April 2024

1. Lighting the Festival Candles by Rabbi Nathalie Lastreger

On Pesah eve, we light another pair of candles, the candles of freedom and hope, for the hostages, and pray for their speedy release.

A moment before the entrance of the holiday, let us remember all the heroes and heroines of our people. May they soon see the light of day, and come out of darkness into light, from slavery to redemption, and may they soon return to their families, safe and sound in body and soul. We light these candles of freedom, hope and light so that they and all of us will merit to see this Passover the miracle of their return home, Amen.

מי שֶׁבָּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה הוּא יְבָרַךְ אֶת כָּל הַשְּׂבוּיֹת וְהַשְּׂבוּיִים, הַחֲטוּפוֹת וְהַחֲטוּפִים בְּיַד צָר וְאוֹיֵב, נָשִׁים וְגִבּוֹרִים, טַף וְזָקְנִים. יִתֵּן לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים אֶת עוֹצְמוֹת הַגּוֹף וְהַנְּפֶשׁ הַדְּרוֹשׁוֹת לְמַעַן עוֹד יִחְזִיקוּ מִמַּעַמְד בְּיַמֵּי הַעֲבָדוֹת וְהַשְּׂבִי. יְבָרְכוּ בְּנֵי וּבָנוֹת מִשְׁפַּחְתֵּיהֶם בְּעֵז הַרוּחַ עַד יָשׁוּבוּ וְיִרְאוּ בְּשׁוּב יְקִירֵיהֶם לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם בְּמַהֲרָה עוֹד בְּחַגֵּינוּ זֶה, אָמֵן.

May God who blessed our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and our mothers, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, bless all the hostages imprisoned by our enemies – men and women, children and the elderly. May God give them the strength of body and soul that they need in order to survive their captivity. May their families be blessed with strength of spirit until their return and may they see their loved ones return to life and peace soon during this holiday, Amen.

We light and bless the holiday candles:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוֵּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק גֵּר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב:
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהִחַיְנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזַמַּן הַזֶּה:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the Festival lights.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and enabled us to reach this time.

2. Symbolic items which may be added to the Seder Plate or table:

- This year, we will tie a yellow ribbon around the Kiddush cups or napkins, to mark the expectation of all of us for the safe return of the hostages.
- We will add a lemon to the Seder Plate, in memory of the events of October 7th, a symbol of longing and concern for the safety of the abducted, of sorrow for the fallen and the dead, and of the pain of the wounded. But it's also a symbol of hope, since a lemon may be turned into lemonade, for the hope that better days will come
- We will place a flower pot or pots on the Seder table, instead of flowers, to remember the evacuees who have been uprooted from their homes for many months. May they return safely and quickly to their towns and kibbutzim.
- This year, while we are dealing with crisis, loss and pain, we are also experiencing the exaltation of the Israeli spirit -- in giving, kindness and mobilization. These can also be symbolized on the Passover table with an olive branch or an anemone in honor of the volunteers who look around and ask "Who can I help? How can I support?". We will add an anemone to the table, a sign of spring and the growth of hope and faith, our resurrection from brokenness and grief, so that we remember in the words of Natan Alterman that "sunsets on a mountain will burn and fade away, but anemones will always bloom". The People of Israel stand tall even in the most difficult days. Together we will build another floor that will bring repair and redemption to the world.

What other symbol should we add to the Seder Plate this year?

3. יפסח עליהם מאת הרבה מעיין בלדינג־צידון

הא לחמא עניא.

זה לחם העוני

שחירותנו מעלה לרמת קדושה.

דאכלו אבהתנא...

אבל מה עם אחינו?

מה הם אוכלים עכשיו?

בארעא דמצרים...

שם, במנהרות הצרות,

הנשאר בכלל לחם?

כל דכפין ייתי וייכול...

כל פיתה עבשה שתשאיר אותם חיים

גם היא תעלה לרמת קדושה.

כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח.

בזכות אבותינו ואמותינו

בזכות תחינותינו ותפילותינו

בזכות מעשי הגבורה, החסד והנדיבות

יפסח עליהם מלאך המוות

ויוציאם הי' משם

ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה.

השנה הם שם, בידי אויב

ואנחנו איתם.

לשנה הבאה, בארעא דישראל

יושבים בראש השולחן,

בלבוש לבן, שרים שירי חג.

פעם, יספרו לילדיהם, היינו עבדים

ועתה, בני חורין.

3. Pass Over Them by Rabbi Maayan Belding-Zidon

Ha lahma anya.

This is the bread of affliction
that our freedom elevates to holiness.

That our ancestors ate.

But what of our siblings?

What are they eating now?

In the land of Egypt, the narrow place.

There, in the narrow tunnels,
is there any bread left at all?

All who are hungry, come and eat.

Every dry pita that keeps them alive
is also elevated to holiness.

All who are in need, come and partake in the Passover.

By the merit of our fathers and mothers,
by the merit of our pleas and our prayers,
by the merit of the heroism, the hesed, the generosity--
May the Angel of Death pass over them, too,
and may God bring them out from there
with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.

This year, they are there, in the hands of the enemy,
and so are we.

Next year, in the Land of Israel:

sitting at the head of the table,
dressed in white, singing Seder songs.

Once, they will tell the children, we were slaves, and now, we are free.

4. מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת? מאת הרב אירנה גריצבסקיה

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?
שבכל הלילות אנו חיים בשלום ובשלווה,
הלילה הזה – ליבנו בין שתי מלחמות, בארץ ובאוקראינה.
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלים והצלחות מתרוקנות,
הלילה הזה – צלחתנו ריקה מלכתחילה.
שבכל הלילות אנו פותחים את הדלת לאלהו,
הלילה הזה – מקווים לשובם של יקירינו.
שבכל הלילות אנו תפילה לגאולה,
הלילה הזה – מוקדש לשלום חיילינו וילדינו.

4. How is this night different from all other nights?

By Rabbi Irina Gritzevskaya

How is this night different from all the other nights?

On all other nights, we live in peace and tranquility,

This night - our heart is between two wars, in Israel and in Ukraine.

On all other nights, we eat and the plates are emptied,

This night - our plate is empty from the start.

On all other nights, we open the door for Elijah,

This night - we hope for the return of our loved ones.

On all other nights, we pray for redemption,

This night -- is dedicated to the peace of our soldiers and children.

5. הלילה הזה מאת הרבה שרה כהן

הלילה הזה

הלילה הזה

כולנו קרבנות.

הלילה הזה

הלילה הזה

כולנו מוחלשות.

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?

שבכל הלילות אנו חושבות שיש לנו תשובות

הלילה הזה כולנו סתם שותקות.

שבכל הלילות אנו זוכרים, שרים ובוכים

שרים, זוכרים ובוכים

הלילה הזה

הלילה הזה

כולנו רק בוכים.

5. On this Night by Rabbi Sara Cohen

On this night

On this night

We are the Paschal sacrifice.

On this night

On this night

We are all weakened.

How is this night different from all other nights?

On all other nights, we believe that we have the answers to our questions.

On this night, only silence.

On all other nights, we remember, we sing we cry.

On this night

On this night

All of us, only cry.

6. In Every Generation

by Martin Herskovitz

In every generation a person must see

the light,

to guide his way in the darkness.

In every generation a person must hear

the whisper that has been silenced
and respond with tears.

In every generation man must taste

the bitterness of existence

and he can learn to embrace.

In every generation, a person must smell

a scent of burnt expectations

and learn to mourn.

In every generation, a person must

learn to touch

and to be touched

and then he can impart.

In every generation, a person must

learn to dream

so that he can will himself to
endure.

6. בכל דור ודור

מאת מרטין הרסקוביץ

בְּכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לְרֹאוֹת

אֶת הָאוֹר

לְהַנְחוּתוֹ הַדָּרֵךְ

כְּדֵי שְׁיִמְשִׁיךְ לְצַעַד בְּאֲפֵלָה.

בְּכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לְשָׁמֵעַ

אֶת הַלְחָשׁ שֶׁנִּדְמָה

כְּדֵי לְעֲנוֹתוֹ בְּבִכּוּי.

בְּכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לְטַעֵם

אֶת מְרוֹר הַמְּצִיאוֹת

כְּדֵי שְׁיִוָּכַל לְהִתְחַבֵּק.

בְּכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לְשָׂאֵף

אֶת נִיחּוֹם הַתִּקְוָה שֶׁנִּשְׂרָפָה

כְּדֵי שְׁיִוָּכַל לְהִתְנַחֵם.

בְּכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם

לְתַתּוֹ לְעֲצָמוֹ לְחוּשׁ

כְּדֵי שְׁיִוָּכַל לְסַפֵּר.

בְּכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לְקוֹוֹת

כְּדֵי לְאַפְשֵׁר לְעֲצָמוֹ לְקוֹם