



Bringing the Hostages to Your Seder: Seder Supplement

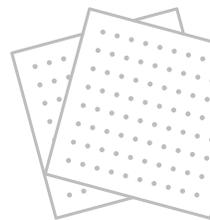
How might we integrate hope for the return of our hostages into our Seders this year?

How might we meaningfully engage an intergenerational group with the hostage issue at the Seder table?

Introduction

The mitzvah of *pidyon shvuyim* - redeeming captives - is a Jewish obligation... in the same category as the Jewish obligations that we fulfill each year at our Seders: eating *matzah* and *maror*, recounting the Exodus from Egypt, and singing God's praises.

At a typical Seder, the *afikoman* - a broken piece of matzah - is hidden away by the leader and later found and redeemed (i.e. restored to its proper place at the Seder table). In some traditions, children would ransom the *afikoman* in return for a prize, since without the *afikoman* - which is the last thing we eat at the Seder - the Seder cannot continue. Expanding on this practice, we invite you to hide, find, and redeem other ritual items necessary to complete the Seder, while each time recalling our obligation and hope.



Karpas

(parsley, or another dipping vegetable/herb) and salt water

Kavanah:

The Psalmist writes:

הַזְרְעִים בְּדַמְעָה בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ, הַלֹּחַ יִלְךְ וּבָכָה נִשָּׂא מִשֶּׁן־הַזֶּרַע
בֹּא־יָבֵא בְרִנָּה נִשָּׂא אֶלְמוֹתָיו

*Ha-zor'im be-dim'ah be-rinah yiktzoru, ha-lokh yeileikh
u-vakhoh nosei meshekh ha-zara bo yavo ve-rina nosei alumotav*

Those who sow in tears shall reap with joy;
one who weeps while carrying their sack of seed will return in
song carrying their sheaves.

(Psalm 126:5-6)

As we redeem the *karpas*, we recall the unharvested fields of those communities decimated on October 7, and we remember our obligation to redeem our captives. As we redeem the salt water, we recall the tears shed by the family and loved ones of the hostages, and we remember our obligation to redeem our captives.

Discussion prompt:

Did you cry on October 7? Have you cried since?

Maggid

Zeroa (shankbone)

Kavanah:

We read in our holy Torah:

וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־עֲצָמוֹת יוֹסֵף עִמּוֹ כִּי הִשְׁבַּע הַשָּׁבִיעַ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
לֵאמֹר פֶּקֶד יִפְקֹד אֱלֹקִים אֶתְכֶם וְהֵעֲלִיתֶם אֶת־עֲצָמוֹתַי מִזֶּה אֶתְכֶם:

*Va-yikah Moshe et atzmot Yosef imo ki hashbei'a et Benei Yisrael
leimor: Pakod yifkod elokim etkhem ve-ha'alitem et atzmotai
mi-zeh itkhem*

Moses took with him the bones of Joseph, who had exacted an oath from the Israelites, saying: "God will be sure to take notice of you; then you shall carry up my bones from here with you."

(Exodus 13:19)

As we redeem the *zeroa*, we recall the Israelites oath to return Joseph's bones to the Land of Israel, and we remember our obligation to redeem our captives.

Discussion prompt:

It is known that some of the remaining captives have lost their lives. Why (and for whom) might it have been important for Joseph's bones to be returned to the Land of Israel? Can we understand this idea in relation to those captives who have lost their lives?

Maror

(bitter herbs)

Kavanah:

We read in Megillat Esther:

וּמֶרְדֵּכַי יָדַע אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה וַיִּקְרַע מֶרְדֵּכַי אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וַיִּלְבַּשׁ שֵׁק
וְאָפֵר וַיֵּצֵא בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר וַיִּזְעַק זְעָקָה גְדוֹלָה וַיִּמְרָה:

U-Mordekhai yada et kol asher na'aseh va-yikera Mordekhai et begadav va-yilbash sok va-eifer va-yeitzei be-tokh ha-ir va-yiz'ak za'akah gedolah u-marah.

Mordekhai heard all that had happened and Mordekhai tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city crying a loud and bitter cry.

(Esther 4:1)

As we redeem the *maror*, we recall waking to the bitter news of more lives lost and people missing, and we remember our obligation to redeem our captives.

Discussion prompt:

What is one bitter news story or headline that you recall reading since October 7?

Koreikh

Hazeret (horseradish) and Haroset (sweet, sticky mixture)

Kavanah:

Israeli musician Naomi Shemer sings:

עַל הַדְּבַשׁ וְעַל הָעֵקֶץ / עַל הַמֶּר וְהַמְתוֹק / עַל בִּתְנוּ הַתִּינֹקֶת / שְׁמֹר אֵלַי הַטּוֹב.
עַל הָאֵשׁ הַמְבַעֶרֶת / עַל הַמַּיִם הַזְּכִימִים / עַל הָאִישׁ הַשׁוֹב הַבֵּיתָה / מִן הַמְרַחֲקִים.
עַל כָּל אֵלֶּה, עַל כָּל אֵלֶּה / שְׁמֹר נָא לִי אֵלַי הַטּוֹב / עַל הַדְּבַשׁ וְעַל הָעֵקֶץ / עַל הַמֶּר וְהַמְתוֹק.
אֵל נָא תַעֲקֹר נְטוּעַ / אֵל תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת הַתְּקוּנָה / הַשִּׁיבֵנִי וְאֲשׁוּבָה / אֵל הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה.

*Al ha-devash ve-al ha-oketz / al ha-mar ve-ha-matok / al biteinu ha-tinoket / shemor eili ha-tov
Al ha-eish ha-mevo'eret / al ha-mayim ha-zakim / al ha-ish ha-shav habaitah / min ha-merhakim
Al kol eileh, al kol eileh / shomer na li eili ha-tov / al ha-devash ve-al ha-oketz / al ha-mar ve-ha-matok
Al na ta'akor natu'a / al tishkah et ha-tikvah / hashiveini va-ashuvah / el ha-aretz ha-tovah*

*Over the honey and the stinger / the bitter and the sweet / over our baby daughter / My God, protect the good
Over the burning flame / over the pure water / over the man returning home / from far away
Over all these, over all these / my God please, protect the good / over the honey and the stinger /
the bitter and the sweet / Do not uproot what is planted / do not forget the hope /
return me and I will return / to the good land*

(Al Kol Eleh)

As we redeem the *hazeret*, we recall the communities of survivors that were uprooted from their homes, and we remember our obligation to redeem our captives. As we redeem the *haroset*, we recall the moments of sweetness provided by Israeli civil society as it supported those displaced by the attacks of October 7, and we remember our obligation to redeem our captives, and we sing of how we need the honey and the stinger in moments like this.

Discussion prompt:

What is one good news story or headline that you recall reading since October 7?

Shulhan Oreikh

Beitzah (egg)

Kavanah:

The Shulhan Arukh legislates:

תחילה בבצים או בתבשיל של עדשים זכר לאבילות
ואח"כ אוכלים כל צרכם

*Tehilah be-veitzim oh be-tavshil shel adashim zeikher
le-aveilut ve-ahar kakh okhlim kol tzarkham.*

First, [the mourner eats] eggs or a dish of cooked lentils
as a symbol of mourning, and only afterwards
eat their fill [of other dishes].

(Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'ah 378:9)

As we redeem the *beitzah*, which symbolizes both the circle of life and the mourner's inability to speak, we recall the insufficient food received by our captives in Gaza and the simple rations that have sustained IDF soldiers in Gaza in their campaign to redeem them, and we remember our obligation to redeem our captives.

Discussion prompt:

Can you imagine spending 200 days in captivity? What would you be most excited to eat once you were redeemed?

Tzafun

Afikoman

Kavanah:

The Talmud reports in the name of R. Eliezer, the rationale for hiding and redeeming the *afikoman*:

חוטפין מצות בלילי פסחים בשביל תינוקות שלא ישנו

*Hotfin matzot be-leilei pesahim
bishvil tinokot she-lo yishnu.*

We snatch the matzot on Seder night
in order that the children do not fall asleep.

(Pesahim 109a)

As we redeem the *afikoman*, we recall the torturous decisions we make between protecting our children from and exposing our children to current events in Israel and Gaza, and we remember our obligation to redeem our captives.

Discussion prompt:

- Ask the children at your Seder table: What do you know about the hostages? What do you want to know about the hostages?
- If there are no children at your Seder table: What do you tell the children in your life about October 7 and the war in Gaza? What do you conceal from them?

Elijah's cup

Kavanah:

The Psalmist writes:

אָנָּא יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא
אָנָּא יְהוָה הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא

Ana Hashem hoshi'ah na! Ana Hashem hatzlihah na!
O God, please redeem! O God, please deliver!

(Psalm 118:25)

As we redeem Elijah's cup, we recall the deep longing for redemption of Jews throughout history and lore, and we remember our obligation to redeem our captives.

Discussion prompt:

What is one thing you have done or will do to help redeem the captives?

Nirtzah

Tarmilim (pods)

Kavanah:

The prophet Jeremiah reports:

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עוֹד יִשְׁמַע בְּמָקוֹם־הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם אֹמְרִים חָרֵב
בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּבְחֻצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם קוֹל שִׁשׁוֹן וְקוֹל שִׂמְחָה קוֹל חֲתָן וְקוֹל כַּלָּה

*Koh amar Hashem: Od Yishama ba-makom ha-zeh
asher atem omrim hareiv... ba-arei yehudah u-ve-hutzot
yerushalayim... kol sason ve-kol simhah,
kol hatan ve-kol kalah.*

Thus says God: In this place, which you declare ruined...
the cities of Judea and the streets of Jerusalem...
will once again be heard the sounds of joy and happiness,
of bride and bridegroom.

(Jeremiah 33:10-11)

As we redeem and open these *tarmilim*, we anticipate the joy and relief of reconciliation between the captives and their loved ones, and we remember our obligation to redeem our captives.

Discussion prompt:

What gives you hope for the redemption of the captives?