

8 Days Completed

Learning Focus

Here I am ready to consider **who we are NOT** in this journey, undertaking to know more each day about the workings of oppression, so that we might get ourselves, all of us, out from under this millstone that is the Narrow Place.

In his *Bible Tales with Commentary*, Dick Gregory (1932-2017, *z"l*) discusses the biblical Joseph -- the one whose bones were being carried, back on Day 7. At first he speaks of general terms about Joseph as a dreamer. Then Gregory shifts to a more racially explicit perspective, suggesting that "maybe Joseph was a Black cat." He continues, regarding Joseph's incarceration and interpretation of dreams for fellow inmates (Gen 40):

The butler in the Joseph story symbolizes America's treatment of Black folks. The butler used Joseph's talent as an interpreter of dreams and he promised to tell Pharaoh about Joseph. As soon as the butler got himself comfortably back in Pharaoh's palace, he forgot about his word to Joseph.

America was built on the sweat, toil, and talent of Black folks. But when the work was done and the talent utilized, America quickly forgot its debt to Blacks. Black folks helped lay down the railroad tracks, but they could only work as porters after the trains started running. Black slaves picked the cotton, but the garment industry belonged to white folks. -- *Dick Gregory's Bible Tales*, p.73

Then, as now, readers outside Black communities can relate to feelings of being ill-used. But here Gregory specifically references experience of Black people enslaved in the U.S. and their descendants. If this is not our direct experience, we must recognize what we know and what we don't.

Non-Black Jews might have experiences of oppression and carry generational trauma. We can learn from others. But that does not make us first-hand experts on topics like "America's treatment of Black folks."

Non-Jewish folks might have experiences of oppression, carry generational trauma, and can learn from Jews. But non-Jews are not first-hand experts on topics like "alarm bells that anti-Jewish conspiracy raise for me."

How do we speak and write so as to distinguish shared, or universal, experiences from more particular ones?

Ritual Focus

Here I am, ready and prepared

[use traditional *kavanah* and/or continue here]

Here I am, ready and prepared to fulfill this project of counting 49 days,
from Narrowness to Expansion,
seeking to examine oppression and envision liberation,
inspired by the Torah's counting of the Omer,
counting seven full weeks, from Liberation to Revelation,
until I reach fifty days,
and prepare to bring new thoughts before the Eternal and into the world.

Bless

[See "Blessing "page for masculine or feminine God-language]

Brukheh ateh YHVH

Elohéinu hei ha'olamim

asher kidshétnu

bəmitzvotéihe vətzivétnu

al sefirat ha'omer

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה

אֱלֹהֵינוּ חַי הַעוֹלָמִים

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ

בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וַצִּוִּיתָנוּ

עַל סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר

Blessed are you, YHVH,
our God, Life of endless worlds,
who made us holy
with Voix commandments and commanded us
to count the Omer.

Count

הַיּוֹם תִּשְׁעָה יָמִים שְׁהֵם שְׁבוּעַ אֶחָד וּשְׁנַי יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

Hayom tishah yamim shehem shavua echad ushnei yamim la-omer

Today is day nine of the omer, making one week and two days

visit <http://Rereading4Liberation.com>
for more on Recounting Exodus and
Rereading Exodus along the Anacostia