

18 Days Completed

Learning Focus

Here I am ready to consider the **value of bridges** on 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 2015, I wrote for the Reform Judaism blog:

Metrobus carries me between my home in the Southeast quadrant
...and Temple Micah in the city's Northwest quadrant. Metrobus
also carries me to work across the District's geographic, demo-
graphic, and existential dividing line, the Anacostia River.

For decades, I have struggled with the river divide: on one side,
communities affected by violence, its causes and aftermath, grief
and mourning; on the other, communities privileged to work and
worship in relative calm. On one side, Christian and African tradi-
tions; on the other, a diversity of worship, including a smattering of
synagogues.

And me, traveling between the two, carrying strangeness, and its
loneliness, with me.

In the past year, heartbreaking circumstances have helped foster a
new sense of connection, one I hope will continue to grow... [After
my colleague's murder in May 2015, Temple Micah began listing the
names of all DC homicide victims before mourners' kaddish.]

When I witnessed a gun homicide a few weeks later, it was a great
help to know I would not be alone in my grief when I arrived, still
shattered, at Shabbat services. Without that new bridge supporting
me, I am not sure I could have traveled the river divide that week.

...Reciting the names of those killed helps make visible parts of our
city's tapestry that can be obscured, depending on the view. This is
having an effect, fellow congregants tell me....

How do spiritual communities effectively address mourning for regular
losses and on-going grief experienced by only one part of the community
-- or, perhaps, by neighbors who are not part of the worship community?

Should the focus be on mourning alone or mourning-that leads to action?

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 kidshétu

bəmitzvotéihe vatzivétu

al sefirat ha'omer

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה

אֱלֹהֵינוּ חַי הָעוֹלָמִים

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ

בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְצִוִּיתָנוּ

עַל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר

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 עָשָׂר יוֹם שָׁהֵם שְׁנֵי שָׁבוּעוֹת וְחֲמִשָּׁה יָמִים לָעֹמֶר

*Hayom tishah asar yom
shehem sh'nei shavuot vachamishah yamim la-omer.*

Today is nineteen days, which is two weeks and five days of the Omer.
Today is sixteen days, which is two weeks and two days of the Omer

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