

36 Days Completed

Learning Focus

Here I am ready to consider **realtors of Pitom** 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.

As discussed previously, deciding where a story starts is crucial to the shape of the tale and meaning-making around it. Popular versions of the Exodus narrative, including Hurston's *Moses* and the movies, *The Prince of Egypt* and *The Ten Commandments*, begin with the *Yisrael-ites* already living in *Mitzrayim*. But the Book of Exodus itself -- like most Passover tellings -- begins with Jacob's extended clan traveling to *Mitzrayim*.

Back up to consider the story of how the *Yisrael-ites* come to be found in *Mitzrayim*. To begin: imagine a realtor selling high-end dwellings in the city of Pitom, where enslaved people were forced to build storage facilities (Ex 1:11). Then take a look at the DC-area public television program, "If You Lived Here," launched during the pandemic (2021).

The first episodes of the new series are case studies in residential displacement, gentrification through erasing existing local commerce, and the consequences of promoting density to increase affordability of housing.

The first episode, "H Street Corridor," is an illustration, however unintentional, of everything Brandi Thompson Summers writes in her insightful 2019 book, *Black in Place: The Spatial Aesthetics of Race in a Post-Chocolate City*. In short, professor Summers uses H Street NE to explain how "blackness has become a prized and lucrative aesthetic that often leaves out D.C.'s Black residents." (See also interviews with author available on-line)

WETA's "H Street Corridor" advertises the area's Black history while simultaneously promoting "cranes in the sky at all times" and other evidence of displacement. We're told, for example, that what was once a single-family home was converted to two units, each selling for \$775,000, "because of the cost of dirt" in the neighborhood.

How is DC/Washington sold for business and residence these days?

Who benefits? Who ends up displaced?

What sold you on your current place of residence?

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 הָעוֹלָמִים

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ

בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וַצִּוֵּתָנוּ

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 שֶׁבָּעָה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם שֶׁהֵם חֲמִשָּׁה וּשְׁבִיעוֹת וּשְׁנַיִם יָמִים לְעֹמֶר.

Hayom shivah ushloshim yom

shehem chamishah shavuot ushnei yamim la-omer.

Today is thirty-seven days,
which is five weeks and two days of the Omer.

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