

41 Days Completed

Learning Focus

Here I am ready to consider the **Pharaoh's policies** 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.

Consider some of Pharaoh's early policy decisions:

- First, he set up taskmasters and forced labor, "But the more they were oppressed, the more they increased..." (Ex 1:11-12);
- Then, ruthless labor and making life bitter, apparently without desired effect (Ex 1:13-14);
- Next, midwives are told to kill baby boys; they tell Pharaoh *Yisrael-ite* women give birth too quickly for them to attend (Ex 1:15-21);
- Finally, Pharaoh commands all the people: "Every boy that is born, you are to cast him (off) [*tashlikbubu*] into The River," but that doesn't quite work as expected either (Ex 1:22ff).

At this point in the story, incredulity often arises: arises: "Can we imagine any people behaving as Pharaoh directs toward *Yisrael-ite* babies?"

Pharaoh's command (Ex 1:22) is often translated as tossing or throwing, "casting" baby boys into The River. But biblical scholar Adele Berlin notes that the verb here is the same one used when Hagar leaves Ishmael under the bush (Gen 21:15) and in other verses where the meaning is "to abandon" ("cast off"). She compares ancient Greek practice of leaving baby girls on hillsides to die out of sight of the parents, saying that, on the water:

The predictable -- but not immediate -- result would be the baby boy's death. -- comment, *Torah: A Women's Commentary* (URJ, 2008)

Predictable, but not immediate....

What are the predictable, but not immediate, results of wholesale displacement of people, in DC and other locales?

What happens, in the the long run, to communities whose businesses are regularly destroyed in pursuit of greater profits?

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 וְצִוִּיתָנוּ

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 שְׁנַיִם וְאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם שֶׁהֵם שְׁשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת לְעוֹמֵר

Hayom sh'nayim v'arbaim yom shehem shishah shavuot la-omer

Today is forty-two days, which is six weeks of the Omer

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