

44 Days Completed

Learning Focus

Here I am ready to consider **Pharaoh's household** 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.

The plague of blood symbolizes a tragic reality...

Pharaoh was willing to negotiate in earnest only after his own son was killed. Countless Hebrew mothers and fathers had lost sons. But Pharaoh only listened when death came to his own household. The loss of a loved one caused Pharaoh to change his oppressive ways.

-- *Dick Gregory's Bible Tales*, p.87

Gregory goes on to wonder "how many wars would be avoided if the loved ones of the national leaders were the first soldiers to face enemy fire?" But his commentary on Exodus applies just as clearly to loss of a loved one through drug overdose, illness, gun violence, or many avoidable causes.

What will it take for Pharaoh "to change his oppressive ways," in the context of health, in DC, or elsewhere?

Black people comprised over 80% of deaths due to opioids in DC, in recent years, although the population of the city is now only 46% Black. Black people are dying from opioids between four and ten times more often than white people in DC. Ward 3, our whitest and wealthiest ward, experienced between 1/6 and 1/10 of the deaths in predominantly Black wards east of the river. And yet, the only 24-hour treatment center is in Ward 3.

Coronavirus, similarly, killed Black people at much higher rates. Black people have comprised 77% of deaths due to Covid-19. In addition, Black people have contracted Covid-19 at a rate more than twice that of white residents.

Do we allow legislative and budget decisions to be made based on only whose households have been immediately affected?

Is the solution to change the households represented?

Is there a way to expand concern to households we might not know?

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 וַצִּוֵּתָנוּ

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 חֲמִשָּׁה וָאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם שֶׁהֵם שָׁשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשָׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים לְעוֹמֵר

Hayom chamishah v'arbaim yom

shehem shishah shavuot ushloshah yamim la-omer.

Today is forty-five days, which is six weeks and three days of the Omer.

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