

48 Days Completed

Learning Focus

Here I am ready to consider **the long interval** 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 length of time that the *Yisrael-ites* lived in [מֹשָׁב, *moshav*]
Mitzrayim was thirty years and four hundred years." -- Exodus 12:40

The phrasing in Hebrew -- "thirty years and four hundred years" -- can nudge us to consider those thirty years as both part of 430 and distinct from the other 400. While 400 years is in some ways abstract, many readers will have personal experience of 30, maybe multiples of 30, years.

In his *Bible Tales*, Dick Gregory (ꞑ'ꞑ) reflected on the Exodus story:

Black people are herded into small, over-crowded areas called ghettos, made to live in substandard housing...Add to this the poor food found in ghetto supermarkets, the absence of health services...

The result is an infant mortality rate that is at least twice as high for Black folks as it is for white folks. a genocide plan a lot more subtle than Pharaoh's. -- *Dick Gregory's Bible Tales*, p.76-77

Even if all these conditions had been eradicated, health effects for living people would still be with us. As it is, however, people reading now have lived with decades more of the conditions Gregory describes: whole generations still under the "millstone that is *Mitzrayim*." The effect of these particular decades is one weight, and the cumulative effect of the centuries is something else again.

Translators seeking to follow the Hebrew for Ex 12:40 more closely use a noun for "*moshav*" [dwelling, situation]:

- "settlement" (Robert Alter; Everett Fox, both 20th Century US),
- "habitation" (Artscroll, 20th Century Ashkenazi Orthodox)
- "lifestyle" (*Me'am Lo'ez*, Ladino/Sephardic text, 1700s Turkey).

The use of "lifestyle" for this passage is unusual and evocative, suggesting -- that the situation in *Mitzrayim* was, in some sense, a way of life for both *Mitzrayim-ites* and *Yisrael-ites*; and

-- like all lifestyles, it will come to an end.

At Passover, we leave *Mitzrayim* before knowing much about what's ahead.
After weeks of journey, are we clearer about what needs to change?
Approaching Sinai, are we ready to learn what must end?

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 vətzivétu

al sefirat ha'omer

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה

אֱלֹהֵינוּ הִי 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 וָאַרְבָּעִים יוֹם שֶׁהֵם שְׁבַע שָׁבוּעוֹת לְעֹמֶר

Hayom tishah v'arbaim yom

shehem shivah shavuot la-omer

Today is forty-nine days, which is seven weeks of the Omer

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