



Israel initiative Havdallah

"Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Time"

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Opening Reading:

"And I will make of thee a great nation; and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"

(Genesis 12:2-3)

Blessing over the Wine

Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam bo-rei p'ri ha-ga-fen

Parsley: The Exodus

" And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, Unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites; and the Hittites;

and the Amorites; and the Perizzites; and the Hivites; and the Jebusites" (Exodus 3:8).

The time has come, O' Israel,

For the "Mighty Exodus",

As all nations open up their doors

From the North, South, East and West.

Speak to the North, "Give up!"

And to the South, "Keep not back!"

Shout to the very ends of the earth,

"Arise, it's time to pack!"

Beautiful "coat of many colors",

Uniquely and wonderfully made,



Heed the voice of your Heavenly Father,
And make Aliyah today.

Each Spring, we gather around seder plates and take note of our first ritual step that involves eating - dipping parsley into salt water. On the seder plate, the parsley suggests the first green of spring. But, it is also said to represent a first course in the meal, which in ancient times only those who were free could enjoy. As we pilgrimage through our week, through shabbat, and through the separation between, we remember that even though the most difficult of times, there is a true sense of renewal upon completion of our goals. Thus, let our personal exodus begin.

Blessing over the Spices

Ba-ruch A-tah A-donai E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-olam bo-ri mi-nei v'sa-mim

Sage: Our Teachers, the great Sages of Zion

"All the land which you see I give to you and your descendants for ever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth."

Genesis 13:15-16 to Abraham

Genesis 26:4 to Isaac

Genesis 28:13-14 to Jacob

Let me go over and see the land;

Open my eyes that I might see.

Impart sacred visions, God,

Impart them to me.

Consume me with Your Holy Fire,

Lift up my soul ever higher.

Far above earth's sinking sand,

Let me go over and see the land.



Lift up my soul, God, lift it higher.

Let me ascend Your Holy Hill.

Let me go over and see the land

That my great longing for You be fulfilled.

In the final parashah of the Torah, V'zot HaBrachah, Moses asks God to let him enter the land that he led his people to, as God had commanded him. God's response is a curious, "no". The parashah goes on with the death and burial of Moses, by God, and God's eulogy of Moses. Throughout our history, we have seen many great visionaries regarding Israel. Moses, Joshua, David, Ruth, Judah HaLevi, Theodor Herzl, David ben Gurion, Gold Meir, Menachem Begin. The common thread that weaves these leaders together was one not-so-simple lesson. They each worked tirelessly to ensure a Jewish homeland, many knowing that they would never reap the benefits of their own work. Acts of selflessness for the greater good of the people is what defines our sages today.

Blessing over the Light of Fire

Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam bo-ri m'-orei ha-eish

Rosemary: Jerusalem

And Moses went and spoke these words unto all Israel. And he said unto them: 'I am a hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in; and God has said unto me: Thou shalt not go over this Jordan. The Lord thy God, He will go over before thee; He will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt dispossess them; and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the Lord hath spoken.

Gensis 31:1-3

If I forget thee, Jerusalem,

Then let my right be forgotten.

Let my right be forgotten, and my left remember.

Let my left remember, and your right close

And your mouth open near the gate.



I shall remember Jerusalem
And forget the forest -- my love will remember,
Will open her hair, will close my window,
will forget my right,
Will forget my left.

If the west wind does not come
I'll never forgive the walls,
Or the sea, or myself.
Should my right forget
My left shall forgive,
I shall forget all water,
I shall forget my mother.

If I forget thee, Jerusalem,
Let my blood be forgotten.
I shall touch your forehead,
Forget my own,
My voice change
For the second and last time
To the most terrible of voices --
Or silence.

While standing at the Kotel, the Western Wall, one feels a new sense of humility. Perhaps it's the massive stones, the paleness of their color, the change in hue between where people stand and what rises above. And then, the palette of sand-colored enormity breaks, almost surprisingly, into patches of forest green. It's the clusters of rosemary that emerge through the cracks and crevices in the Wall. Rosemary is the spice of Jerusalem. Rosemary has firm roots, reliably strong stems, and delicate arms



that reach out to budding new growth from which its sweetness is emitted. It is persistent, and resilient and tends to bloom regardless of circumstance. Like the spice, and like the city, our passion and determination will not waiver. Jerusalem is home.

Separation of the sacred from the profane

Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-nai me-lach ha-o-lam ha-mav-dil bein ko-desh l'-chol.

Time: Our Journey Together

How can I rest serenely in a strange and foreign land,

Knowing Eretz Yisrael is in dire need of a helping hand?

How can I remain silent when love's flame within me burns?

How can I turn my eyes away from the land my spirit yearns?

Am I my brother's keeper? Or do I turn away a deafened ear

To the sound of distant drums, as storm clouds are drawing near?

Oh what bonds in unity love can never break,

Where heart and soul unite as one just for Israel's sake!

Time. It's our greatest commodity. We find time for the things we want to do, and make time for the things we have to do. But in a more quantifiable sense, how can we gauge the value of our time in terms of history? Zionism is alive because of the time and commitment and passion of people who have been lovers of Judaism and Israel for centuries. How do we begin to identify our role, and our responsibility, in ensuring her survival?

Israel changes people. Learning about the land and knowing the land are a chasm apart. But we can begin to know the land before we even step foot on her soil. We can study, we can appreciate culture, we can reach out to the people of the land in a personal way. Each one of us holds in our hands and in our hearts the ability to ensure the survival of the Jewish people, and our homeland, Eretz Yisrael. As we separate the shabbat from the week anew, now is the time to reaffirm our commitment to Israel, our quest of knowledge and our passion for Zionism. Shavua tov.

Eliahu Hanavi, Shavua Tov