

נְרֵצָה: Next Year in Jerusalem—Messages of Hope

After an evening full of conversation about persecution and redemption, joyful singing, and delicious food, we close the seder with the ultimate Jewish expression of hope: to be able to celebrate Passover next year with the entirety of the Jewish people in Jerusalem. The Haggadah reads: *Leshana haba'ah beyerushalayim*, “Next year in Jerusalem.” For this year’s seder, we have included additional texts and images about hope: a piece on the nature of hope in the Jewish story, the words of “*Hatikva*” (Israel’s national anthem), and a poem about holding onto hope in the wake of October 7 and the ongoing war.

Tikvah/Hope: The Enclave of Freedom in the Human Soul

David Grossman

Hope, I thought, over and over again, trying to awaken it inside me. I called to it, out loud, in Hebrew even, perhaps it speaks Hebrew: “*Tikvah! Tikvah!*” I thought about Israel’s national anthem, which is called “*Hatikvah*,” “The Hope,” and speaks of the hope held by Jews for two thousand years in exile, the hope of one day being able to live in their own country. It was a hope that often kept them alive.

Hope is a noun, but it contains a verb that propels it into the future, always to the future, always with forward motion. One could look at hope as a sort of anchor cast from a stifled, desperate existence towards a better, freer future. Towards a reality that does not yet exist, which is made up mostly of wishes, of imagination. When the anchor is cast, it holds on to the future, and human beings, and sometimes an entire society, begin to pull themselves towards it.

It is an act of optimism. When we cast this imaginary anchor beyond the concrete, arbitrary circumstances. When we dare to hope, we are proving that there is still one place in our soul where we are free. A place that no one has been able to suppress. And thanks to this anchor of fearlessness, of freedom, in the souls of those who have hope, they know what the reality of freedom looks like. They also know how crucial it is to fight for it.

Hatikvah

“*Hatikvah*,” Israel’s national anthem, literally means “the hope.” The lyrics were written by nineteenth century poet, Naphtali Herz Imber.

כל עוד בלִבֵּב פְּנִימָה	<i>As long as within our hearts</i>
נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדֵי הוֹמִיָּה,	<i>The Jewish soul sings,</i>
וּלְפָאַתִּי מִזְרָח, קְדִימָה	<i>As long as forward to the East</i>
עֵין לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפֶיָה,	<i>To Zion, looks the eye –</i>
עוֹד לֹא אָבְדָה תְּקוּתָנוּ,	<i>Our hope is not yet lost,</i>
הַתְּקוּהָ בֵּת שְׁנוֹת אֲלָפִים,	<i>It is two thousand years old,</i>
לְהִיּוֹת עִם חֶפְשִׁי בְּאַרְצֵנוּ	<i>To be a free people in our land</i>
אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.	<i>The land of Zion and Jerusalem.</i>

Questions for Conversation

- David Grossman describes the hope embedded in “*Hatikva*” as something that kept Jews alive for two thousand years of exile. As you gather for your seder this year, how would you describe your relationship to hope?
- In what ways does hope feel elusive? In what ways does it feel like an important act of optimism?

For Weeks I've Been Bleeding Poems

Iris Eliya Cohen (Translated by Jonathan Paradise)

אָני קוֹרֵאת לְקֹבֵץ "גּוֹן"	<i>I name the file "sorrow"</i>
מוֹחֶקֶת	<i>I delete</i>
קוֹרֵאת לוֹ "אוֹקטוֹבֶר"	<i>Name it "October"</i>
מְשַׁנֶּה לְ"שִׁבְעָה"	<i>Change it to "7"</i>
מְחַלֶּפֶה לְ"תְהוֹם"	<i>Replace it with "chasm"</i>
מְשַׁנֶּה: "תְּהוֹמוֹת"	<i>Change: "chasms"</i>
קוֹרֵאת לוֹ "כְּשֶׁאוֹל"	<i>Name it "hell-like"</i>
קוֹרֵאת לוֹ "תְּקוּהָ"	<i>I name it "hope"</i>
מוֹרָה לְמַחְשָׁב שְׂיִזְכֹּר	<i>Command the computer to remember</i>
הוּא עוֹנֶה לִי "שׁוֹמֵר אֶת תְּקוּהָ"	<i>It responds, "saving hope."</i>

Questions for Conversation

- If you were going to create a file on your computer for the last six months, what would you call it?
- What do you hope to name the file for the next six months?

