

פירוש: Pour Out Your Wrath and Your Love

Toward the end of the seder, after a night of joyfully telling the story of our ancestors' redemption from enslavement and praising God's powerful intervention, we invite Elijah the prophet to enter our homes, hoping that we, too, will experience redemption through the arrival of the Messiah. Right after opening the door and declaring our faith in the Messiah's coming, though, it is traditional to recite "Pour Out Your Wrath," a compilation of biblical texts demanding that God show up for us in our moments of suffering and persecution, just as God showed up for the ancient Israelites. For many modern Jews, this piece of the seder feels uncomfortably violent and angry. For others, it provides an outlet for expressing very real fears and a yearning for Divine protection. As you consider the message of "Pour Out Your Wrath," how are you relating to it this year? To supplement this part of the seder for 2024, we have included three pieces that tackle this question. The first, "A Vow," by the poet Avraham Shlonsky, was written in 1943 and describes his commitment to hold onto the anger generated by the horrors of the Holocaust. The second and third pieces urge us to seek out and lift up allies and allyship: one is an excerpt from a speech at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on October 25, 2023 by Rachel Goldberg, mother of hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin, and the second, "Pour Out Your Love," was found in a manuscript from Worms, Germany from 1521 and is attributed to the descendants of Rashi, though contemporary scholars debate this.

A Companion to "Pour Out Your Wrath"

Mishael Zion

The Israeli poet Avraham Shlonsky composed "A Vow" for Passover 1943 after reading early reports about the Nazi extermination of European Jewry. Its Hebrew name, "*Neder*," echoes the Kol Nidrei ceremony promulgating the official forgiveness of all unfulfilled vows before Yom Kippur. In the case of the Holocaust, however, the poet writes that he refuses to be absolved of his vow to remember, and he pledges his eternal righteous indignation, lest we forget and lest we learn nothing from our experience with genocide.

Shlonsky's poem is quoted in the Haggadah of Kibbutz Nahal Oz from 1956 immediately after the text, "Pour Out Your Wrath." Next to the poem is a handmade drawing of an olive branch and a sword. Sixty-seven years later, on October 7, 2023, many of the kibbutz members, including several of the original founders, were murdered, while many others were abducted to Gaza as hostages by Hamas.

A Vow

Avraham Shlonsky (Translated by Mishael Zion)

*By my eyes that witnessed the slaughter
By my heart that was weighed down by cries for justice*

*By my compassion that taught me to pardon
Until the days came that were too terrible to forgive,*

*I have sworn: To remember it all,
To remember—to forget nothing!
Forget not one thing to the last generation
Until my indignation shall be extinguished
When the staff of my moral rebuke has struck until exhausted.*

*A vow: Lest for nothing shall the night of terror have passed.
A vow: Lest for nothing shall I return to my wont
Without having learned anything, even this time.*

Questions for Conversation

- Why do you think the members of Kibbutz Nahal Oz included "A Vow" in their Haggadah next to "Pour Out Your Wrath"? How do the two pieces inform one another?
- What is your relationship to the anger in the poem and in "Pour Out Your Wrath"? Is it different this year than in previous years?

Hatred is Easy

Rachel Goldberg

So here I live. In a different universe than all of you. You are right here. We seem like we live in the same place. But I, like all of the mothers, and all of the fathers, and wives, and husbands, and children, and brothers, and sisters and loved ones of the stolen—we all actually live on a different planet. Our planet of no sleep, our planet of despair, our planet of tears.

And the hatred being showered on Israel now.... I keep being asked about that. First, in an article I read by Nicholas Kristof, it was so eloquently stated that if you only get outraged when one side's babies are killed, then your moral compass is broken. And your humanity is broken. And therefore, in your quiet moments alone, all of us, everywhere on planet earth need to really ask ourselves, "Do I aspire to be human, or am I swept up in the enticing and delicious world of hatred?"

This is not a phenomenon unique to Israel or Gaza, this is everywhere on our planet. I understand that hatred of "the other," however we decide that "other" to be, is seductive, sensuous, and, most importantly, hatred is easy. But hatred is not actually helpful nor is it constructive.

In a competition of pain, there is never a winner.

One thing gave me a whisper of hope from all the horror on October 7: one of the witnesses with whom I spoke told me that when the rocket fire first began, and all those young music loving hippies went running into the bomb shelter, a Bedouin man who was a guard at the kibbutz across the street also ran inside for cover. As Hamas closed in on the bomb shelter, this man told the young people, "Stay quiet and let me go out to talk to them." He went out and in Arabic said, "I'm a Muslim. Everyone inside is my family, we are Muslim. You don't have to search in there." He tried to save them. He could have just said, "I am a Muslim" and just saved himself, but he tried to do the right thing even though it was terrifying and even though it required unimaginable courage. He was brutally beaten, and the witnesses do not know what his fate was. But I take comfort, even for a fleeting moment, knowing there was someone trying to do the right thing, even when everything in the universe had turned upside down.

We human beings have been blessed with the gift of intellect, creativity, insight, and perception. Why are we not using it to solve global conflicts all over our world? Because doing this is hard and it takes fortitude, imagination, grit, risk, and hope. So instead, we opt for hatred because it is so comfortable, familiar and it is so very, very easy.

Pour Out Your Love

Translated by Noam Zion and David Dishon

in *A Different Night*

Pour out your love on the nations who have known you and on the kingdoms who call upon your name. For they show loving-kindness to the seed of Jacob and they defend your people Israel from those who would devour them alive. May they live to see the *sukkah* of peace spread over your chosen ones and to participate in the joy of your nations.

שְׁפוּךְ אֶהְבֶּתְךָ עַל הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר יִדְעוּךָ וְעַל מַמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ קוֹ-
רְאִים בְּגִלְלַת חֲסָדִים שֶׁהֵם עוֹשִׂים עִם יַעֲקֹב וּמְגִינִים עַל עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
מִפְּנֵי אוֹכְלֵיהֶם. יִזְכוּ לְרֵאוֹת בְּסִפְתָּ בְּחִירֶיךָ וּלְשִׁמוּחַ בְּשִׁמְחַת גּוֹיְךָ.

Questions for Conversation

- What do you think about Rachel Goldberg's claim that hatred is comfortable and easy?
- Both Rachel Goldberg and the author of "Pour Out Your Love" call on us to lift up our allies and those who support us. In what ways do you find this charge intuitive? In what ways is it difficult?
- Share a story about an act of allyship that has moved you this year.