



## On Yom Yerushalayim, Pour Out a Few Drops of Wine

By Alden Solovy , 5/23/2017

On Yom Yerushalayim, Jerusalem Day, I will pour a few drops of wine onto the ground here in Israel to remember the suffering of the Palestinians. This moment – 50 years after the reunification of Jerusalem – is a real-life *Hagaddah* moment.

There's a stunning and profound ritual in the *Hagaddah* that comes so quickly that its significance is muted. We drain a bit of our wine from the glass to represent the suffering that the Egyptians faced for our freedom.

Is this a model for how we should think about the suffering of the Palestinians, even as we celebrate the reunification of Jerusalem? Shall we extend the metaphor by pouring off a bit of our own joy at this modern miracle of Jerusalem reunited? Shall we recognize the suffering of the other?

I remember the joy we all felt in the U.S., in the comfort of our homes, as we hung onto every newscast, at hearing that Jerusalem had been retaken by the fearless paratroopers of the IDF. I'm a benefactor of that bravery, living in the City of Gold, even now sitting in a cafe in modern Jerusalem, while tomorrow going on an insider's tour of the City of David.

This is our home: Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel the nation, the spiritual capital of the Jewish people. We've yearned for this city for millennia. Jerusalem has been the focus of our prayers and the source of our dreams.

In the *Hagaddah*, there's nothing about the essential justice of the Israelites' struggle for freedom – or our birthright to the land – that mitigates our need to honor the suffering of the Egyptians. They were taskmasters. We pour off wine. They served a tyrant-Pharaoh. We pour off wine. They pursued us to the edge of the sea, to kill us, to take us back as slaves. And we pour off wine. This nod in the direction of 'the other' is extraordinary.

The analogy is profound. Palestinians taskmasters rule their own people. Some serve these tyrant leaders. Their governments – and the terrorists that are produced by their societies – still vow to drive us into the sea. Yet, to forget the Palestinian suffering is to forget their essential humanity and to forget that God silenced the angels who wanted to rejoice as the Egyptians drown in the sea.

On [Pesach](#), after we pour off a few drops of wine, we also refill our glass and continue to rejoice. We diminish our joy for only a moment, without forgetting the gifts and the miracles we've been given. We sing *Dayenu*, recounting the myriad blessings from God.

In so many respects, Jerusalem is still a divided city. There's work to be done, healing work between Jews and Jews, Jews and Muslims, Muslims and Christians, Israelis and Palestinians.

On Yom Yerushalayim, the fiftieth anniversary of the reunification of this Holy City, I will dance. I will study Torah. I will cry for our soldiers and our victims of terror who died – and who continue to die – so Jerusalem can be free. I will hear stories of the manifold miracles and blessings from the Six-Day War. And I will sing *Hatikvah*, Israel's national anthem.

I will also remember that others suffer for this freedom. I will remember that we have work that remains undone.

Without ceremony, I'll fill a glass of wine and pour off a few drops. In the name of our rabbis who make sure we remember the suffering of the Egyptians, I'll remember that Palestinians have also suffered and continue to suffer. The work of healing is ours.

What I won't do: make this into a ritual. There will be no blessing of the moment. No list of "plagues" inflicted by Israelis on Palestinians. This will be a simple moment of recognition and reflection.

Then, I'll refill the glass, say the *bracha* (blessing) over the wine and declare with all my heart:

**ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם. שהחיינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה**

*Baruch ata Adonai elohenu melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiyimanu, v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh.*

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe Who has given us life, sustained us, and allowed us to reach this day.

We are home. Jerusalem is reunited. Let us rejoice!

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<http://www.reformjudaism.org/blog/2017/05/23/yom-yerushalayim-pour-out-few-drops-wine>