

As promised, this is the "trial balloon" intended as a beginning point for a production of our first mini project-- a one page insert of suggested readings and rituals for remembering the holocaust during Pesach. If you have suggestions of other readings and rituals, bring them (with copies) to the meeting.

PESACH--REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST

The following may be included in the Passover seder:

The Jews in Bergen-Belsen had no matzot for Pesah 1944. It was decided that it was permissible to eat hametz, and that the following prayer should be recited before eating:

"Our Father in Heaven, behold, it is evident and known to You that it is our desire to do Your will and to celebrate the festival of Pesah by eating *matzah* and by observing the prohibition against *hametz*. But our hearts are pained that the enslavement prevents us from doing so, and our lives are in danger. Behold, we are ready to fulfill Your commandment, 'And you shall live by them and not die by them.' Therefore, our prayer to You is that You may keep us alive and save us and rescue us speedily so that we may observe Your commandments and do Your will and serve You with a perfect heart. Amen."

Prayer recited in Bergen-Belsen before eating hametz:

אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים, הִנֵּה גְלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לִפְנֵיךָ שְׂרָצוֹנֵנוּ
לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנֶךָ וְלַחֲוֹג אֶת חֵג הַפֶּסַח בְּאֲכִילַת מַצָּה
וּבְשִׁמִּירַת אִיסוֹר חֶמֶץ. אָף עַל זֹאת דְּאָבָה לִבְנוֹ
שֶׁהִשְׁעִבּוֹר מֵעַכְבֹּ אֹתָנוּ וְאַנְחָנוּ נִמְצָאִים בְּסִכְנַת
נַפְשׁוֹת. הִנְנוּ מוֹכְנִים וּמוֹמְנִים לְקִים מִצְוֹתֶיךָ: וְחִי
בְּהֵם וְלֹא שִׁמּוֹת בְּהֵם, וְלִזְהַר מֵאֲזַהְרָה, הִזְהַר לָךְ
וּשְׁמֹר נַפְשֶׁךָ מֵאוֹר, וְעַל כֵּן תְּפִילָתָנוּ לָךְ שֶׁתְּחַיֵּנוּ
וְתִקְוֵנוּ וְתִגְאֲלֵנוּ בְּמַהֲרָה לְשִׁמּוֹר חוֹקֶיךָ וְלַעֲשׂוֹת
רְצוֹנֶךָ וְלַעֲבֹדֶךָ בְּלִבְבֵּךְ שְׁלֵם. אָמֵן.

A RITUAL SUGGESTION

It has been suggested by Rabbi Yehiel Poupko that scraps of vegetable peels be placed in a small bowl either on the seder table or on the seder plate.

We remember those Jews in the Holocaust who were forced to eat moldy bread unfit for human consumption and watered down soup. Through these scraps we remember their bitterness at oppression, and their will to continue living.

"MY WISH IS THAT ALL OF US SHOULD LIVE TO SEE THE PASSOVER OF THE FUTURE."

To be a Jew means in every instance to be in an exalted position. The temporary suffering and blows that descend upon the Jews have a meaning, are not merely oppressions, and do not degrade the Jew. For a Jew is a part of the sacred triad: Israel, the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He. That means the Jewish people, the moral law and the Creator of the universe. This sacred

triad runs through the whole course of history. It is a reality that has been proved countless times. Our grandfathers clung to the triad, lived by its strength. And now too, the Jew who does not cling to this triad is to be pitied. He wanders in a world of chaos, he suffers and finds no rationale for his suffering; he can be severed from his people, *i.e.* he can wish to change his self. But the Jew who clings to the sacred triad need not be pitied. He is in a secure association. To be sure, this is a stormy period in history. A war is being waged against the Jew. But this war is not merely directed against one link in the triad but against the entire one: against the Torah and God, against the moral law and Creator of the universe. Can anyone still doubt which side is the stronger? In a war it happens that one regiment is beaten, taken captive. Let the Jews in the ghetto consider themselves as such prisoners of war. But let them also remember that the army as a whole is not and cannot be beaten. The Passover of Egypt is a symbol of an ancient victory of the sacred triad. My wish is that all of us should live to see the Passover of the future."

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(translated by Shlomo Noble)