



An A Way In: Haggadah Insert

Tikkun HaLev: Healing the Hardened Heart

In the Passover story, we hear many times that Pharaoh's heart was hardened and, despite Moses' pleas and the ten plagues, he would not let the people go. Pharaoh's hardened heart made it impossible for him to act with empathy, understanding or justice.

With all that is happening in our country and in the world, it is easy for us to fall into the habit of hardening our hearts. Anger, fear, frustration, disappointment and despair can cause us to close down and turn away. As we do, it becomes more difficult for us to respond to each other with patience, understanding and compassion. With hardened hearts, we can't fully appreciate life's blessings or respond well to life's challenges.

As we begin the Passover Seder, we set an intention to engage in *Tikkun HaLev*, to soften our hearts in order to heal them. We do this for our own sake and for the sake of each other, to bring us back into connection with each other and the world.

With each cup of wine, we seek to soften and heal our hearts.

FIRST CUP Honoring Those Who Came Before Us

We lift the first cup of wine and remember those who have passed out of this world. We remember those with whom we have shared Seder meals. We remember family and friends whom we love and whose memory we cherish. And we remember people who have made a difference in our lives and in the world.

As we name some of these people, the sadness, appreciation and love that we feel softens our hearts.

May their lights continue to shine through us and may the words of our mouths, the love of our hearts and the work of our hands honor their memories.

SECOND CUP

Acknowledging the Challenges of this Time

Each day's news brings more information that can intensify our feelings of rage, fear and despair. We take a moment to acknowledge something in this country or the world that is of deep concern to us. Instead of anger or fear, we turn toward compassion and connection by "praying with the news."

As we lift the second cup, we reflect on what concerns us and say a prayer for the people involved. We pray for those who are being hurt. We say a prayer for the strength of those on the front lines. We pray for a just resolution. We soften our hearts by encouraging our own and each other's empathy, connection and care.

THIRD CUP

Gratitude

We lift the third cup and give thanks for the blessings in our lives. We give thanks for the people whom we love and who love us. We give thanks for the gifts we receive and are able to give. We give thanks for the bounty we enjoy and the opportunities we have. As we raise the third cup, we share gratitude -- and that opens our awareness, brings joy and softens the heart.

FOURTH CUP

Goodness

There is so much good in the world. There are so many people acting every day with care and devotion for the benefit of each other and the earth. As we lift the fourth cup, we share stories of goodness. We share acts of kindness we have witnessed. We relate instances of people coming together for justice. We share inspiring moments and encounters that bring us strength and hope.

May our hearts be strong and filled with courage.

May we guide each other into the expanse of hope and possibility.

Blessings to all,
Rabbi Yael Levy
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