



After Roe: A Havdalah Ritual for Losing Abortion Access

The following can be used to frame the first Havdalah service following the US Supreme Court's decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, the case regarding Mississippi's 15 week abortion ban. Use this as a space for your community to mourn, to sing, to pray, to connect, to unite, to separate from what we knew to what we know. We hope this allows you to make space for all who are already impacted, and now will be, by this decision.

This week, we are marking a very significant separation: the separation from one way of being with abortion access in this country—for nearly fifty years—and another. Separation between a country where abortion was the legal law of this land to a country where this is no longer so. But unlike the traditional Havdalah ceremony, which marks all distinctions as valuable — the sacred and the mundane, the seventh day and the other six, Jews and all the other communities of the world — here, we know that this time into which we are crossing is not as worthy of divine praise as the time we are leaving behind. As a result of the Supreme Court's decision, more people will be harmed, with disastrous effects on their autonomy, dignity, safety, health, and lives. And abortion bans in the United States intensify every structural inequality that exists in this country. They disproportionately harm those struggling to make ends meet, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) communities, immigrants, young people, disabled people, individuals in rural communities, trans men and some non binary people. Those denied abortion care are more likely to wind up in poverty or trapped in abusive relationships as a result of denied care. This is our pain, the national shame, and a new kind of responsibility that we carry into this new week.

But we can mark as holy our ways of being in the world — our obligations to show up for those most impacted by this decision have changed, and our actions now for a more just world will be different. And they will be holy — just as our work to care for each other was and still is holy.

There is work to be done. These times — this new, terrible era — will demand much of us. Shabbat will become more important than ever, as we need to rest and refuel in order to stay in this work for the long haul.

Traditionally, we mark the end of Havdalah with a prayer for Elijah Ha'Navi — our hope for redemption. In this Havdalah we will also call upon Miriam Ha'Niviah — that she may lead us, without delay, to the waters of help and healing.

This is really a chance to call upon the Elijah and Miriam inside each of us — the prophetic, courageous voices inside each of us that demand we bring forth a better world.

As we separate between Shabbat and the week that lies ahead, we pray for the redemptive strength we need to keep going.



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OPENING PRAYER

הנה אל ישועתי, אבטח ולא אפחד. כי עזי וזמרת יה יי, ויהי לי ליטועה. ושאבתם מים בששון, ממעיני היטועה.
ליי היטועה, על עמך ברכתך סלה. יי צבאות עמנו, משגב לנו אלהי יעקב סלה.
יי צבאות, אשרי אדם בטח בך. יי הושיעה, המלך יעננו ביום קראנו.

ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר.

כן תהיה לנו. כוס ישועות אשא, ובשם יי אקרא.

Hinei El y'shuati, evtach v'lo efchad. Ki ozi v'zimrat Yah Adonai vay'hi li lishuah. Ush'avtem mayim b'sason mimaay'nei hay'shuah. L'Adonai hay'shuah, al am'cha virchatecha, selah. Adonai tz'vaot imanu, misgav lanu, Elohei Yaakov, selah. Adonai tz'vaot, ashrei adam botei-ach bach. Adonai hoshiah; haMelech yaaneinu v'yom kor'einu.

(This line is customarily recited by the participants first and then the leader repeats:)

LaY'hudim hay'tah orah v'simchah v'sason vikar; kein tih'yeh lanu.

Kos y'shuot esa, uv'shem Adonai ekra.

Behold, my redeeming God, I am confident, unafraid; for God is my strength and song, and has been my deliverance. You will draw joyfully water from the wells of salvation. God is our help; may God bless God's people. God of the universe is with us; the God of Jacob is our protection. God of the universe, happy is the person who trusts in You; God, redeem--may the Sovereign answer on the day that we call.

(This line is customarily recited by the participants first and then the leader repeats:)

There was light and joy; gladness and honor for the Jewish people.

So may there be for us. I will lift the cup of salvation and call upon God's Name.

BLESSING OVER THE WINE

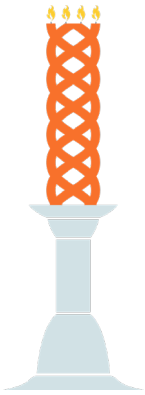
As we recite the blessing over the wine, may we remember that there is still sweetness that we can bring to the world, still acts of caring and compassion we can bestow, choices we can make to support those in our community who are hurting right now and those in our community and beyond who are most impacted by this decision.

(Lift the cup of wine or grape juice, and recite the blessing:)

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haolam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, God our God, Sovereign of all, Creator of the fruit of the vine.



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BLESSING OVER THE SPICES

The spices we smell are often understood as a way to bring the otherworldly bliss of Shabbat into the rest of the week. This week, in particular, let us use their lingering aroma as a way to hold on to our vision of a just world—to remember the world as it must be, and to continue striving for it.

(Hold up the spices, and recite the blessing:)

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא מיני בשמים.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haolam borei minei v'samim.

Blessed are You, God our God, Sovereign of all, Creator of varied spices.

BLESSING OVER THE FLAME

We look at the light and shadows on our hands and our fingernails and remember that we know right from wrong, that we bring the prophetic fire of truth into the world with our acts of advocacy and action.

(Hold the Havdalah candle, and recite the blessing:)

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא מאורי האש.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haolam borei m'orei ha-esh.

Blessed are You, God our God, Sovereign of all, Creator of the lights of fire.

BLESSING OF SEPARATION

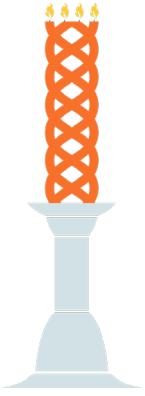
The world we are entering is different from the world we have left behind. Before we recite this last blessing, separating realm from realm, time from time, let's just pause to take a moment to feel our feelings, whatever they are. Wherever we are right now is valid. (Pause). And let's not forget that we are in this together.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם המבדיל בין קדש לחול בין אור לחשך בין ישראל לעמים בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה. ברוך אתה יי, המבדיל בין קדש לחול.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haolam hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol, bein or l'choshech, bein Yisrael laamim, bein yom hash'vi-i l'sheishet y'mei hamaaseh. Baruch atah Adonai, hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol.

Blessed are You, God our God, Sovereign of all: who distinguishes between the holy and ordinary, between light and dark, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and the six days of work. Blessed are You, God who distinguishes between the holy and the ordinary.

(Sip the wine or grape juice. Then extinguish the candle in the remaining wine or grape juice.)



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Shavua tov

שבוע טוב

ELIJAHU HANAVI - ELIJAH THE PROPHET

Eliyahu hanavi,
Eliyahu hatishbi,
Eliyahu hagiladi.
Bimheirah b'yameinu, yavo eileinu, im Mashiach ben David.

**Elijah the prophet,
Elijah the Tishbite,
Elijah of Gilead,
Speedily in our day may he come to us, heralding redemption.**

אליהו הנביא
אליהו התשבי
אליהו הגלעדי
במהרה בימינו יבוא אלינו עם משיח בן דוד

MIRYAM HAN'VIAH – MIRIAM THE PROPHET

Miriam ha-n'vi'ah oz v'zimrah b'yadah.
Miriam tirkod itanu l'hagdil zimrat olam.
Miriam tirkod itanu l'taken et ha-olam.
Bimheyrah v'yameynu hi t'vi'einu el mey ha-y'shuah.

**Miriam the prophet—strength and song in her hand
Miriam—dance with us in order to increase the song of the world.
Miriam—dance with us in order to repair the world.
Soon she will bring us to the waters of redemption.**

מרים הנביאה עז וזמרה בידה
מרים תרקד אתנו להגדיל זמרת עולם
מרים תרקד אתנו לתקן את-העולם:
במהרה בימינו היא תביאנו
אל מי הישועה