



A LEMON ON THE SEDER PLATE?

As we conclude the reading for *Maror* (מרור), tasting the bitterness of slavery, and alongside the traditional *Chazeret* (חֲזֶרֶת), we introduce a new symbol on our Seder plate this year—a lemon.

This bright yellow fruit, like the ribbons tied in remembrance, represents both hope and the sourness that fills our hearts as we think of the 59 hostages still held in Gaza. Its sharp bitterness echoes the pain of their captivity—a powerful reminder of freedom still denied.

This lemon, in addition to the *Maror* and *Chazeret*, is more than a symbol; it is a call to awareness and action. It urges us to weave their struggle into our ancient story of liberation.

As its bite sharpens our resolve, may it kindle an unrelenting desire to see them safely returned. May this emblem of captivity become a symbol of celebration at their release.

Let us pause now for a moment of silence, sending our deepest prayers and hopes to the hostages and their families, longing for a Pesach when the sweetness of freedom overcomes the bitterest of sorrows.

אֶחֱינוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל Acheinu kol beit Yisrael
הַנִּתְּוִימִים בַּצָּרָה וּבַשְּׂבִיָּה han'tunim batzara uvashivya,
הָעוֹמְדִים בֵּין בָּיִם וּבֵין בַּיַּבָּשָׁה. ha'omdim bein bayam uvein bayabasha.
הַמְּקוֹם יְרַחֵם עֲלֵיהֶם Hamakom y'rachem alehem
וְיוֹצִי'ֵם מִצָּרָה לִרְוָחָה v'yotzi'em mitzara lirvacha
וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹרָה וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד לְגִאּוּלָּה ume'afela l'ora umishibud lig'ula
הַשְּׂתָא בַּעֲגָלָא וּבְזִמָּן קָרִיב. hashta ba'agala uvizman kariv.

Our brothers, all the house of Israel, who are in distress and captivity,
who stand between the sea and dry land, may God have mercy on them,
and bring them out from distress to relief, from darkness to light,
and from subjugation to redemption, speedily and soon.

As we prepare our Hillel sandwiches, let us place a slice of this lemon between the *matzah* (מַצָּה), *maror*, and *charoset* (חֲרוֹסֶת).

With each bite, may the sharpness of the lemon cut through the sweetness of the *charoset*, reminding us of the urgency of their plight and the strength of our hopes for their freedom.

This act of solidarity — a pledge that their bitterness is ours to share — endures until they are returned to the embrace of freedom.

INSPIRED BY THE TEACHING OF RACHEL GOLDBERG POLLIN
IN MEMORY OF HER SON HERSH Z"l



PLAY AUDIO

 **shtiebel**
שטיבל

