



# 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.

אָכֵינוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל	Acheinu kol beit Yisrael
הַנִּתְּנוּיִם בַּצָּרָה וּבִשְׂבִיָּה	han'tunim batzara uvashivya,
הָעוֹמְדִים בֵּין בַּיִם וּבֵין בַּיַּבָּשָׁה.	ha'omdim bein bayam uvein bayabasha.
הַמְּקוֹם יְרַחֵם עֲלֵיהֶם	Hamakom y'rachem alehem
וַיּוֹצִיָּאֵם מִצָּרָה לְרוּחָה	v'yotzi'em mitzara lirvacha
וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹרָה וּמִשְׁעֶבֶד לְגִאּלָּה	ume'afela l'ora umishibud lig'ula
הַשָּׂתָא בְּעָגְלָא 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

