



# 'Love of Zion' Seder Supplement 2012

The sages (Mishna, Pesachim 10:4) instruct us at the Seder “to expound on the ‘My father was a wandering Aramean’ portion of Torah until concluding the entire passage.”

Yet, we do not recite the entire passage in our Haggadah. We omit the last verse and a half: “*And He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And now, here, I have brought the first fruit of the land which you have given me, God*” (Deut. 26:9-10).

This year, consider sharing modern stories that capture our people’s miraculous rebirth in our ancestral homeland.

## *“And He brought us to this place”*

Last night, or rather early this morning, I sat at my desk and read tens of letters signed by Soviet Jews. All of them expressed one idea with such force that as I read their words, my Zionism and my sense of belonging to this land seemed almost less strong than theirs...There is no assurance that they will ever arrive here. What they have done they did without any illusions as to their safety. They are well schooled in the ways of Soviet society and are well aware of the possible consequences of the writing to us. Yet letter after letter ends on the same note: “I am prepared for anything, but I have one desire, and that is to live and die in Israel.”

- Golda Meir

## *“and gave us this land”*

It is said that Napoleon, passing a synagogue on Tisha B'av, was struck by the sounds of lament coming from the building. “What” he asked one of his officers, “are the Jews crying for?” “For Jerusalem” came the reply. “How long ago did they lose Jerusalem?” “More than seventeen hundred years ago.” Napoleon was silent for a moment and then said, “A people that can remember Jerusalem for so long will one day have it restored to them.” So it has come to pass in our time.

- Jonathan Sacks



## *“a land flowing with milk and honey”*

When the (Ethiopian airlift) landed in Israel, the joy of it is beyond description. Suddenly you forget all the hardships you suffered, for a moment you put it aside, and...as if I was floating on air out of happiness. Then they took us into the night. It was raining, we saw the orange groves on our way, and we said to each other: ‘Look. Here it is! The oranges. As we were told, the land of milk and honey! We are seeing it.’

- Shlomo's story. Gadi BenEzer

This Haggadah supplement is produced and edited by Rabbi William Hamilton & Rabbinic Intern Tiferet Gordon of Congregation Kehillath Israel, Brookline, MA.

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### ***“And now”***

Ben-Gurion then said, “Let us rise to indicate our support for the Declaration of Independence.” All rose. “Please be seated,” he said. “I would like to call upon Rabbi Yehudah Leib Fishman.” The white bearded leader of the religious Mizrachi Party recited the traditional Shehecheyanu blessing celebrating a new or festive experience...Thirty-seven minutes after entering the hall, the new prime minister of the new state rapped his gavel and announced, “The State of Israel has arisen. This meeting is now adjourned.”

- Shimon Peres



### ***“Here (I am)”***

In his testimony (Jerusalem 1961) Abba Kovner told the story of Anton Schmidt, a German sergeant, who supplied Jews with money, arms, and forged papers until he was caught and executed. Schmidt received no financial gain. Writing with uncharacteristic emotion, (Hannah) Arendt described the courtroom’s reaction:

“(A) hush settled over the courtroom; it was as though the crowd had spontaneously decided to observe the usual two minutes of silence in honor of the man named Anton Schmidt. And in those two minutes, which were like a sudden burst of light in the midst of the impenetrable, unfathomable darkness, a single thought stood out clearly, irrefutable, beyond question – how utterly different everything would be today in this courtroom, in Israel, in Germany, in all of Europe, and perhaps in all other countries of the world, if only more such stories could have been told.”

- Deborah Lipstadt

### ***“I have brought the first of the fruit of the land”***

There was great excitement amongst the young people in every house in the Palestine Colonies...to see and take part in the Celebration of the “Feast of First Fruits and Flowers”... There was not one sad face to be seen that day! Younger people stood in groups and dreamed dreams and sometimes said to one another, “It must have been like this in the days of the Patriarchs of old. Happy indeed are we to be the ones who again enjoy freedom and peacefulness in our own land.”

- Hannah Trager

### ***“that You have given me God”***

Sadat was coming to Jerusalem (November, 1977). I had no TV in my Columbia University dorm, so my grandparents invited me over to watch with them. We sat on the long sofa, facing the television, and the drama unfolded... It was an awesome moment, watching the president of Israel’s enemy standing at attention for her anthem. I listened intently, taking it all in, when suddenly another sound registered. I turned to my grandfather, a tall and large man, and the first thing I noticed was his wet shirt. Only then did I see the tears flowing.

In all the thousands of hours we had spent together, reading, studying, arguing, laughing, it was the first time I’d ever seen him cry. Suddenly I realized what this all meant. A lifetime of believing that this could never have happened was suddenly proven wrong. Could this have meant the end of the dying in a century bloodier than any our people have ever known? I don’t know how much of that I understood then, but now I think I have a sense of why he was crying... Whenever someone mentions Sadat’s coming to Jerusalem, my first thought is “It made my Saba cry”...For after all, if there’s a place in this world that can make you cry, isn’t that where you ought to be?

- Daniel Gordis



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**Congregation Kehillath Israel**