

A Passover Supplement for those Experiencing Cancer

Rabbi Benjamin David

We are told that Passover marks *zman cheroteinu*, the season of our freedom. Indeed, on this sacred night, we celebrate the miraculous journey of our ancestors from hardship to possibility, slavery to salvation. And yet, even as we do so, we are confronted with the hardened reality of physical suffering in our lives and in our homes. A litany of doctors' visits, more medical tests than can be counted, chemotherapy and its side effects threaten our ability to fully embrace an otherwise joyous festival. We come to the *seder* table perhaps less ready to eat as a free people, and more imprisoned by the pain of illness. And so we pray, Eternal One Above, that we might find comfort here and now in our togetherness. May we, like the Israelites of long ago, remain hopeful amid times of doubt and fear. Dear God, may we soon know freedom from pain. And may we, with faith and resolve, travel at last from shores of hurt to shores of renewal and well-being. Amen.

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Dear God, we come to this *seder* night with hearts full of thanks. As a people, we have experienced both the narrowness of slavery as well as the broad expanse brought on by newfound freedom. Just as Jews across time have celebrated the festival of Passover with joy and gratitude, so do we now embrace this sacred time. And yet we come here not only grateful for our freedom, but ever thankful for our health. To have endured cancer is to have endured a test of faith. We were wounded by illness and often devastated by the very path to recovery. We ventured from one plague to the next. There was the darkness of exhaustion, the pain of side effects, the loss of will, the uncertainty of tomorrow, and still we emerged on the shores of new life and new possibility. On this Passover night we thank you O God for our health. With great emotion, we experience the story of our people anew and recall now the dancing of Moses, Miriam and every Israelite as they acknowledged their miraculous existence. Amen.