



RITUAL #6

# REOPENING THE SYNAGOGUE

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## HAVDALAH FOR EMERGING FROM COVID ISOLATION

Begin in dark or near dark room with participants in a circle

Recite Mourner's Kaddish (demonstrates how upside down the world is - normally we end with Kaddish) - in memory of those who have died, taken from us by this horrible disease, and those who died of other causes, whose memories we were unable to honor in our traditional communal rituals. While we creatively found ways to be together alone, it did not compare to the comfort we experience by being surrounded by family and friends who ease our sorrow.

Leader lights a single Shabbat candle then lights the neighbor's candle. For a year, we have made shabbat alone, unable to fulfill the mitzvah of hachnasat orchim, unable to gather together to welcome Shabbat Hamalkah into our houses of prayer. But each of us kept our flame of our neshamah lit, our hope never died, and like pixels on a computer screen, each of us was a point of light, shining through our Zoom windows.

Participants pass the candle light from one to the other around the room. At the end, the last person kindles the havdalah candle.

### Begin havdalah service:

1. Wine, which symbolizes joy, reminds us that we are a people who come together to celebrate. What are simchas we missed in the year gone by?

Wine also confirms our commitment to acting in partnership with God. God provides the materials, and we provide the efforts to transform those ingredients into a higher state of potential. So are we called to use our knowledge, wisdom & understanding to solve the crises that confront us, to advance the levels of human learning, and to bring solutions to the problems of our present.

<Insert Kavanah here for all who have served as God's agents and partners in bringing healing and light back to the world. - possibly use citation from Al Hanisim - עֲמַדַּת לָהֶם בְּעַת צָרָתָם רַבַּת אֲתֵרִיבָם דְּנֵת אֲתֵדִינָם נִקְמַת אֶת - נִקְמַתָּם מִסָּרַת גְּבוּרִים בְּיַד חֲלָשִׁים...>

Barukh Atah... borei p'ri hagafen.

2. Spices wake us up and attune us to the world around us. Loss of taste & smell from COVID - pray for long-haulers.

Transitioning us from time that is different to time that is ordinary - celebrating and welcoming the ordinary. Marking the move from kodesh to chol - what do we want to bring with us from this time of apartness into our new experience of chol.

Baruch ... borei minei b'samim



3. Light is a symbol of hope for the future and the infinite value of every soul. Nishmat adam ner hashem - each of our soul's is but a lamp of God's light in the world. The miracle of light - we share our light without our own light being diminished. We are called to be an or lagoyim and take seriously our responsibility to bring our own unique light to the world. Intertwined candle represents us being together again and our lives being intertwined.

Baruch...borei m'orei ha-esh

4. Havdalah is usually bittersweet, in that we are sad to see shabbat end, and the drudgery of the work week resume. Tonight we celebrate the end of the kadosh (the set-apartedness of COVID), and gleefully look forward to the resumption of chol (the ordinariness of "normal."). Never before have we as a society longed for the little acts that we used to do without thinking: the high five, a warm embrace, a casual peck on the cheek. We look forward to the commonplace: meeting over a cup of coffee, bowling together, movies in theaters, dinner out with friends, even synagogue committee meetings. Today we take that first step toward resuming the "chol" in our lives, as we come together in our holy space, looking at each other eye-to-eye, even if our faces are still masked.

May the light we kindle tonight glow brightly through the coming days, reminding us that whatever hardships we endure, we are always stronger together

Baruch... hamavdil beyn kodesh l'chol.

Closing melody - suggestions - Or Zarua...

## ALTERNATE REOPENING RITUAL

**Recite Mourner's Kaddish** (demonstrates how upside down the world is - normally we end with Kaddish) - in memory of those who have died, taken from us by this horrible disease, and those who died of other causes, whose memories we were unable to honor in our traditional communal rituals. While we creatively found ways to be together alone, it did not compare to the comfort we experience by being surrounded by family and friends who ease our sorrow.

**Blow the Shofar** - in ancient days, the shofar was blown to gather the people together.

We blow it this evening to announce that we are gathering again in our sacred space.

**Light Candles** - The lights of the Menorah burned in the ancient temple, but were extinguished when the sanctuary was closed off from the Jews. We kindle these lights anew in the prayer that never again will we need to be separated from our holy spaces.

- The first candle is lit in memory of those who died from the COVID-19 virus.
- The second candle is lit to honor all of those who contracted the virus and survived. We pray for continued health and recovery
- The third candle is lit in honor of those doctors, nurses, health care providers, chaplains, ambulance drivers, firefighters, and all who placed themselves in harms way to care for and save those in need.



- The fourth candle is lit to honor all of the essential workers who kept open the grocery stores, delivery services, restaurants, pharmacies, and all the factories which produced the food and goods we needed while we lived our lives in isolation.
- The fifth candle is lit to honor our friends and families from far and near, who reached out in these times of isolation and shared their time and attention amidst the loneliness and fear. By telephone, Facebook, texting, Instagram, Facetime, and especially Zoom, we connected and reconnected with loved ones from all over the globe.
- The sixth candle is lit to honor all those in our own community, who enabled us to convene as a community of faith during these precarious times. We prayed on Shabbat and holidays, we learned, we observed sacred commemorations, and we mourned and comforted each other.
- The seventh candle is for all of those gathered tonight, knowing that the Jewish spirit can never be extinguished, and that while it will still be a long time before we return to what we knew as normal, it is resilience in the face of challenges that has always been the hallmark of Jewish survival.

**Mincha / Maariv service** as appropriate

**Psalm 30 - Hannukat ha-Bayit** - We rededicate this place and declare that we have returned to our community's Jewish home. May we never again be compelled to abandon our holy space of sanctuary.

Just as we began with mourner's Kaddish, we end with a hopeful and uplifting song, **Hinei mah tov** - how good and pleasant it is for brothers and sisters to sit together in friendship, in health and in peace.