



# Rosh Hodesh Iyar

Sunday, April 19, 2026 @ 11:00 am

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## Introductions and Opening Blessing

Introduce yourself! We invite you to use your first name and your mother's first name. It doesn't matter if your mother isn't/wasn't Jewish.

### Blessings:

*Barukh atah Adonai  
Eloheinu melekh ha'olam  
shehehyanu vekiyemanu  
vehigi'anu lazman hazeh*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁהֵחַיָנוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ  
וְהִגִיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, sovereign of the universe  
who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season

May it be Your will, my God and God of my ancestors, to be gracious to me and to all my family and to give us, and all Israel, a good and long life. Remember us with goodness and blessing, and grant us salvation and mercy. Grant us abundant blessing, and fortify the places we call home. May Your Presence dwell among us as we gather here today. May we be blessed with wise and learned disciples and children, lovers of God who stand in awe of You, people who speak truth and spread holiness. May those we nurture light the world with Torah and good deeds.

Hear the prayers I utter now in the name of our mothers Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah. May Your light, reflected in these candles, surround us always. And let us say, Amen.

*Commentary on this blessing by LilyFish Gomberg:*

The reference to children in the blessing can apply to biological or adopted children, and it can also apply to anyone we nurture and teach within the community, the next generation of Jews we collectively hope to inspire.

The prayer is intended to be inclusive, speaking to our shared responsibility in helping to shape the future of the Jewish community.

In Sanhedrin 99b, Reish Lakish says, "Anyone who teaches someone else's child Torah is regarded by the Torah as though they have made them." R. Elazar adds that it is as though the teacher has "made" the child in terms of Torah, highlighting the importance of the role of teaching and mentorship in Jewish life.

## About Iyar

(Source: FUSION with Rabbi Jason)

Iyar is the eighth month of the civil year and the second month of the Jewish religious year on the Hebrew calendar.

The name **איָר** Iyar is an acronym for **אֲנִי רֹפֵאֲךָ** *Ani Adonai Rof'ekha* — "I am God your healer." This month is associated with healing, and its guiding spiritual faculty is thought: the kind of quiet, inward attention that makes healing possible.

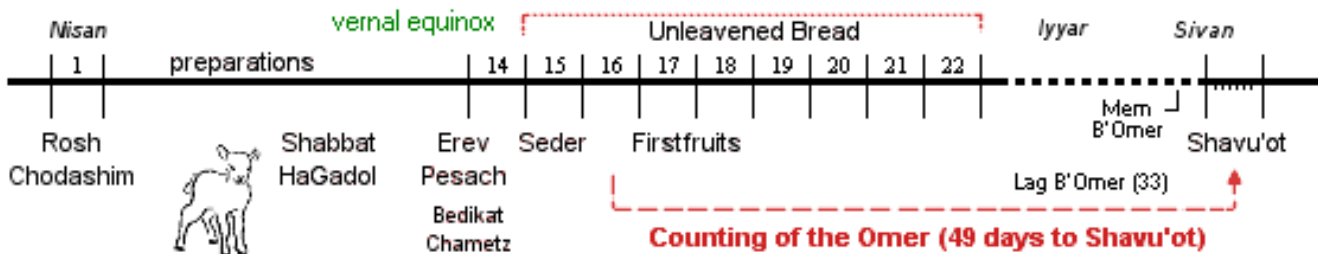
**Focus:** Healing • Spiritual Journey

**Sense:** Thought • Introspection

Although Iyar does not contain many "special days," every single day of the month is included in the **Counting of the Omer**. This month is a period of introspection and self-refinement as we prepare ourselves to receive the Torah. Each day of Iyar represents another step in the spiritual journey toward Mount Sinai.

## Season of our Liberation

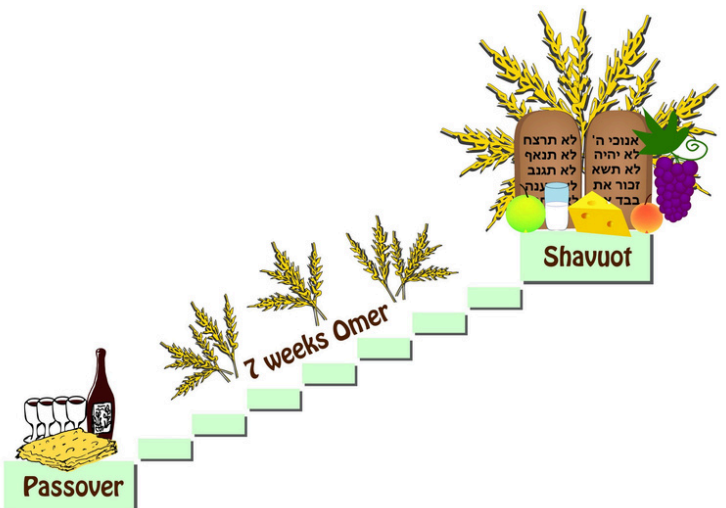
click timeline



### Days of the Omer

	CHESED	GEVURAH	TIFERET	NETZACH	HOD	YESOD	MALCHUT
<b>Week 1</b> CHESED	1 16 Nisan א	2 17 Nisan ב	3 18 Nisan ג	4 19 Nisan ד	5 20 Nisan ה	6 21 Nisan ו	7 22 Nisan ז
<b>Week 2</b> GEVURAH	8 23 Nisan ח	9 24 Nisan ט	10 25 Nisan י	11 26 Nisan יא	12 27 Nisan יב	13 28 Nisan יג	14 29 Nisan יד
<b>Week 3</b> TIFERET	15 30 Nisan טו	16 1 Iyar טז	17 2 Iyar יז	18 3 Iyar יח	19 4 Iyar יט	20 5 Iyar כ	21 6 Iyar כא
<b>Week 4</b> NETZACH	22 7 Iyar כב	23 8 Iyar כג	24 9 Iyar כד	25 10 Iyar כה	26 11 Iyar כו	27 12 Iyar כז	28 13 Iyar כח
<b>Week 5</b> HOD	29 14 Iyar כט	30 15 Iyar ל	31 16 Iyar לא	32 17 Iyar לב	33 18 Iyar לג	34 19 Iyar לד	35 20 Iyar לה
<b>Week 6</b> YESOD	36 21 Iyar לו	37 22 Iyar לז	38 23 Iyar לח	39 24 Iyar לט	40 25 Iyar מ	41 26 Iyar מא	42 27 Iyar מב
<b>Week 7</b> MALCHUT	43 28 Iyar מג	44 29 Iyar מד	45 1 Sivan מה	46 2 Sivan מו	47 3 Sivan מז	48 4 Sivan מח	49 5 Sivan מט

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## A Reading and Activity for Rosh Hodesh Iyar by Ma'ayan

Today we gather together to welcome the month of Iyar. We rejoice in the holiday of Rosh Hodesh which, according to midrash, was given to our foremothers at Sinai as a gift for refusing to contribute their jewelry to be melted down for the building of the Golden Calf.

Though many of us never heard of Rosh Hodesh as a women's holiday when we were growing up, we now understand that like so much of our inheritance as Jewish women, the fact that we did not know about it doesn't mean it didn't exist. Many of our great-grandmothers probably did observe Rosh Hodesh, either by reciting a special *teuhine* (woman's prayer) or by refraining from certain kinds of work...

What did these women do instead of work on Rosh Hodesh? Perhaps, like us, they gathered to talk about their lives, sing, laugh, cry, offer each other a little comfort, teach each other something new.

**All: Today we honor the traditions of our mothers and grandmothers. Traditions lost and still being recovered.**

Iyar is a month of transition. It falls between Nisan, the month of Pesahu, and Sivan, the month of Shavuot. Iyar was the month in which the Israelites began their wandering through the desert, after leaving Egypt and before receiving the Ten Commandments.

According to the rabbis, Iyar was the month when manna first began to fall from the sky. Manna was the food that sustained our people throughout their desert journey.



Manna was a perfect source of physical and spiritual sustenance. It tasted different to each person and could taste like whatever the eater wanted to eat. (It was probably also highly nutritional and fat free!)

One of the rules about manna was that you couldn't collect more than you needed for that day. If you tried to save any for later it rotted. This was a way of building trust between the former slaves and God.

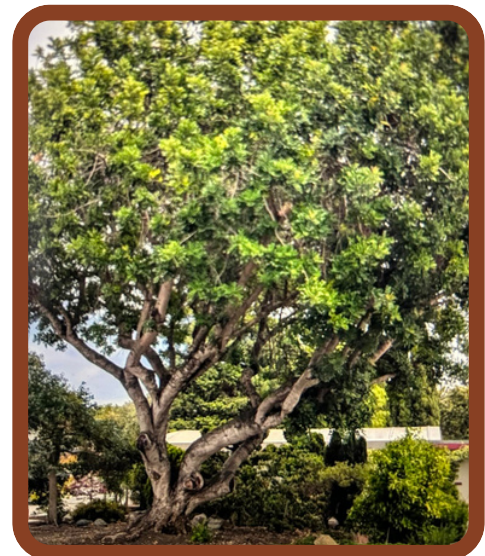
Rabbi Akiva explained that manna actually contained the splendor of the Shekhinah, the indwelling presence of God within it.

- Is there something or someone in your life that is like manna? Something that sustains you materially or metaphorically or spiritually?
- How do you trust that it will still be there tomorrow?
- How do you plant seeds for future generations?

### **From Manna to Carob — Trust in what we are given today, faith in what we are building for tomorrow**

Our tradition gives us another image of sustenance: the carob tree.

- Carob is a superfood, just like manna.
- It grows in adverse conditions — very hearty and practically indestructible.
- It teaches patience, because it takes a long time to grow. It is planting for tomorrow.
- There is a story that carob sustained Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and his son for 17 years while they hid from the Romans in a cave, surviving on nothing but carob and water.
- The carob tree is a powerful emblem of endurance, faith in the future, divine care through hardship, intergenerational responsibility, and patience and redemption.
- Fun Fact: Carob is the origin of how we measure the weight of diamonds in carats. Carob seeds were used in ancient trade as a standard of weight.



**All: On this Rosh Hodesh Iyar, may we be nourished by what is given today, and may we have the faith and courage to plant for the future.**

## The Spiritual Challenge (Source: Torah Journeys by Rabbi Shefa Gold) A Guided Meditation

Iyar is also the month of the census, which describes all the different tribes of Israel. We can think about the roles assigned to these tribes as representing different parts of the nation of Israel — and also different parts inside each of us. We need all of these different roles to make up the nation of Israel, just as we need all the parts of our personality to make a complete person.

We need to have faith, and we work on our faith through introspection, healing, and spiritual journey.

**Close your eyes:** As we take the inner census of the personality, as we see the aspects which comprise the force of our egos, we do so to place their power in service to the soul, to our true essence, to the spark of God — The Divine — Holiness within us — our Mishkan. Our Levite is the part of us who must guard that essence.

**After each tribe is counted and named,** it is given a role and a place on the periphery of the camp, surrounding the Mishkan and its Levites in the center.

We'll take a minute, silently, for a moment of introspection in each direction.



- I LOOK TO THE **EAST** (4 tribes), to face the rising sun, opening to new beginnings, new possibilities.
- I LOOK TO THE **SOUTH** (4 tribes), to receive warmth, comfort and constancy.
- I LOOK TO THE **WEST** (4 tribes), to find a vision of where my path must lead me.
- I LOOK TO THE **NORTH** (4 tribes), and open myself to the wisdom of my ancestors, receiving their guidance and challenges.

The blessing of Bamidbar, the journey through the wilderness, places my soul at the center of the Mishkan, guarded and surrounded by the part of me that is mindful of holiness, and that circle is surrounded by the circle of my personality, which places itself in service to the soul. Each aspect stands in its place, knowing that it is the God-spark at the center that is in charge.

## Closing

Let us sing together, using our collective voice to honor the memory of all those lost to us and to commit ourselves to a vision of a vibrant, peaceful future for Jews in Israel and everywhere.

### **A Sliver in the Sky: A Song for Rosh Hodesh by Beth Hamon**

I wrote this song last year when I was preparing to teach a group of Jewish campers and staff about Rosh Hodesh, and discovered that there didn't seem to be a lot of music written for the holiday. I wanted a song that could be sung by any gender of any age. So I came up with this.

*The world turns round and around  
While the sun climbs up and falls down  
And the days and nights roll by  
'Til we notice the moon's just a sliver in the sky*

*Each night it glows with possibility  
And we dream of all the good there could be  
As the moon grows big and round  
Heaven's blessings of peace find us here upon the ground*

*Time is the measuring rod  
Given to us by God up above  
Like lines we mark on the door  
We grow older and wiser  
As our hearts grow stronger with love*

*The world turns round and around  
And the moon fades without a sound  
As the nights and days roll by  
And we come back around to that sliver in the sky.*



## Joint Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Ceremony: Streaming & Dinner

Monday, April 20 @ 5:30 pm

You are invited to join fellow congregants in the Social Hall for a streaming of the 21st annual **Israeli-Palestinian Joint Memorial Day Ceremony**. Held on the eve of Yom HaZikaron in Israel, this powerful gathering brings together bereaved Israeli and Palestinian families to mourn their loved ones and affirm a shared commitment to peace. At **5:30 pm**, we'll gather in the Social Hall for dinner. The streaming begins at **6:00 pm**, including testimony, music, and messages of peace from human rights leaders. This ceremony is an annual reminder that, even in the face of loss, we can still choose humanity and hope.

**Advance Registration Required: [societyhillssynagogue.org/the-day-after](https://societyhillssynagogue.org/the-day-after)**



## Resilience and Return: Segev Kalfon's Survival of Captivity in Gaza

Sunday, April 26 @ 3:00 pm

**Segev Kalfon** was kidnapped from the Nova Music Festival on October 7, 2023, and survived **738 days of captivity in Gaza** before his return home. Our **Israel Connections Subcommittee** invites you to join us as Segev shares his remarkable story of the resilience, determination, and faith which sustained him in captivity.

He will discuss the strength, purpose, and hope that can emerge even in the darkest of circumstances. After Segev's talk, we will have a brief commemoration of **Yom HaZikaron**, Remembrance Day for Israel's Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terrorism, followed by a reception with Israeli hors d'oeuvres.

**Advance Registration Required: [societyhillssynagogue.org/segev](https://societyhillssynagogue.org/segev)**



## *Labors of Love: The Life and Legacy of Henrietta Szold* and post-film talkback with Director Abby Ginzberg

Monday, May 4 @ 6:00 pm Reception | 7:00 pm Film and Talkback  
Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History  
\$10 Student | \$15 Senior | \$20 General Admission

Visionary leader and one of history's most influential, yet under-recognized, American-Jewish women, Henrietta Szold, founded Hadassah, established a healthcare system treating Arabs and Jews equally, and led Youth Aliyah, saving 11,000 children from the Nazis. This heartfelt documentary brings the incredible story of a woman who reshaped history through compassion and an unwavering belief in humanity.

For our next Rosh Hodesh gathering, there will be a live Zoom talkback with Abby Ginzberg, director of *Labors of Love: The Life and Legacy of Henrietta Szold*.

**[theweitzman.org/events/labors-of-love-the-life-and-legacy-of-henrietta-szold-docs-dialogues-series/](https://theweitzman.org/events/labors-of-love-the-life-and-legacy-of-henrietta-szold-docs-dialogues-series/)**