



# Rosh Hodesh Nisan

Sunday, March 30, 2025 @ 11:00 am

Program Facilitator: Merrily Williams and Stefanie Rosen

## Agenda

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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:

*Commentary 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.

**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.**

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁהַחַיִּים וְקִיָּמָנוּ  
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי 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

## About Kislev

Nisan is the first month of the ecclesiastical year, called the "first of the months of the year", "first month", and the month of Aviv (Spring). Nisan comes around the same time as the secular month of March, in the spring! Counting from 1 Tishrei, the civil new year, it would be the seventh month, but in contemporary Jewish culture, both months are viewed as the first and seventh simultaneously.

The Hebrew word "Nisan" may be related to the Hebrew word *nitzan*, which means "bud." Nisan marks the birth of spring, signaled by the arrival of new buds and the birth of the Israelite nation. Physical and spiritual seeds are planted in Nisan—seeds for the summer crop and seeds of freedom and liberation.

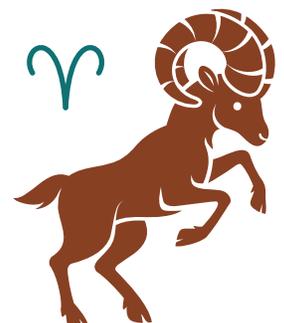
### Biblical Traditional History in Nisan:

- **circa 2300 BCE** — Noah's Ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat
- **circa 1713 BCE** — Birth of Yitzach Avinu (Isaac)
- **circa 1638 BCE** — Death of Avraham Avinu (Abraham)
- **circa 1506 BCE** — Death of Ya'akov Avinu (Jacob)
- **circa 1456 BCE** — The Exodus from Egypt
- **circa 1455 BCE** — Mishkan inaugurated (Exodus 40)
- **circa 1417 BCE** — Death of Miriam HaNevi'ah (Miriam the Prophetess)
- **circa 1415 BCE** — Israelites cross the Jordan River to the Promised Land
- **472 BCE** — Most of the Purim story

### Jewish History in Nisan:

- **1135** — Birth of Maimonides
- **1270** — Death of Nachmanides
- **1492** — The Alhambra Decree orders the expulsion of Spanish Jews from Castile and Aragon (but not Navarre)
- **1517** — Death of Joseph Caro, author of the Shulchan Aruch.
- **1699** — During a commercial crisis in Bamberg, Germany, a Jewish man reportedly saved himself from a mob by throwing prunes from a window. The event was commemorated as the 'Plum-Fast' with a local Purim until the community's extermination
- **1943** — Warsaw Ghetto Uprising begins. The uprising would last until 3 Iyar, and is now commemorated in Israel on 27 Nisan.

The *mazal* (constellation) for Nisan is Aries, the הָלֵךְ / taleh (ram).



## Raise Your Voices

*From Chaya Lester's book:  
"Lit - Poems to Ignite your Jewish  
Holidays"*

Women raise your voices in rightful  
raucous.  
Beat drum, sing song  
and stun anyone  
whoever called  
you too timid  
to sing.

For the Spirit alone  
instructs your lips and  
limbs as to the allowance  
of their bend  
and propriety is defined by  
the prophetess  
who abides within.

For she will be the one to pull the  
covers  
of your tresses  
to dress her modest  
as she launches  
into her loudest  
campaign - for you to stand and  
dance majestic on histories'  
well-sanded stage.

Sisters, this is why we wear our drums  
ready on our shoulder blades...  
to seize this moment at the sea  
that it may become a fable famous  
and decree.  
For as long as history  
needs a precedent  
to utter unabashed  
riffs of praise.

Here we are held  
responsible to sing  
of the Gd-drenched things that  
we have seen.

And we will whirl castles out of sand  
with our dance  
unhampered  
unashamed  
entranced.

For we handmaids  
have a mandate to hand-make  
our own music,  
to move muscles  
and meet quotas  
of creative output  
through inspiration  
and through struggle.

To sway on sand-dunes  
undone by a tune.

To be emboldened in our G-d-given  
right  
to self-expression.

Embodying ideas and  
idealizing emotion  
invoking insight  
at the lips of the ocean.

Holding up mirrors  
like the windows of waves  
-reflecting each other  
face to effervescent face.

And so it was, is and will be  
in one graceful gesture  
at the parting sea  
that the women set out  
with clapping feet  
to circle in a consciousness  
of creativity.

Let us ignite each other's  
dormant scorch of  
dreams.