



HOPE AMIDST THE TEARS

A reflection on karpas during the time of COVID-19

In the telling of the Passover story, we recount the oppression that our ancestors experienced when we were slaves in Egypt. We dip a growing vegetable—*karpas*—into saltwater, to taste their tears of grief mingled with our hopes for life, health and renewal for a more just world.

This year, the tears are *ours*.

They are the tears of the sick and their loved ones who worry or mourn.

They are the tears of those who have lost their jobs, are uninsured, live in isolation, or must go to work each day to provide essential services to others.

They're the tears of courageous health care workers who save lives and risk their own.

We must acknowledge this pain and suffering and allow ourselves the space to grieve. Yet, as the *karpas* ritual beckons, we must also look toward the future with a sense of hope and possibility. Passover arrives on the precipice of spring, when new growth is just around the corner. All over the world, resilience, strength, compassion and innovation will grow from under this tragedy.

We honor the tears, but we also bless the hope.

Raise the karpas, dip it in saltwater and say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei peri ha-adama.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruits of the earth.

This Passover, may the brightness of our hope break through our tears and strengthen us in this moment together.



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