



ניסן תשפ"ב | April 2022

## חגים ומועדים – Holidays and Occasions

### מעבדות לחרות

#### From Slavery to Freedom

The various Hebrew names for Passover highlight different facets of the holiday, from its rituals to its season. The epithets **חג החרות** ('the festival of freedom') and **זמן חרותנו** ('the time of our freedom') express the essence of the holiday and its significance.



The word **חרות** ('liberty, freedom'), from the root **חר"ר**, dates to Rabbinic Hebrew, which probably borrowed the word from Aramaic. The Mishna speaks of our obligation to thank "the one who performed all these miracles for us and for our ancestors and brought us out **from slavery to freedom** – **מעבדות לחרות**" (Psalms 10:5). We also find the word on **coins** minted by the rebels during the Jewish revolts against the Romans in 67–70 CE and 132–135 CE, for example in the inscription **שנת שנים / חרות ציון** ('Year Two / the Freedom of Zion').

In contemporary Hebrew, **חרות** serves primarily in formal contexts and in **terms** and other fixed phrases – e.g., **זכות לחרות** ('right to liberty'), **חרות המשורר** ('poetic license'), **פסל החרות** (the Statue of Liberty), **פצמון החרות** (Liberty Bell, also called **פצמון הדרור**), and **ארבע החריות** (the Four Freedoms of US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt).

Related words from the same root include the causative verb **שחרר** ('to emancipate, liberate'), which entered Rabbinic Hebrew from Aramaic along with its antonym, **שעבד** ('to enslave, subjugate'). In Aramaic, the two verbs belong to the causative pattern **שפעל** with prefixed **ש**, a parallel to Hebrew's **הפעיל** pattern (prefixed **ה**). From the root **חר"ר** Arabic, too, has a verb 'to liberate'; Cairo's Tahrir Square takes its name from the corresponding noun, **تحرير** (*tahrir*, 'liberation').

The word **חורים** ('nobles, freemen'), also from this root, does occur in the Bible – in plural form only – both on its own and, once, in the phrase **בן-חורים** (literally, 'son of **חורים**'; Eccles. 10:17). In Rabbinic Hebrew the phrase usually appears as **בן-חורין** with final **ן**, meaning 'free person' or 'free' in various senses – freeborn, not enslaved, exempt from obligation, unencumbered; contemporary Hebrew retains the Rabbinic spelling and meanings. The Biblical names **חור** and **בן-חור** (*Ben-Hur*, namesake of the blockbuster film) may likewise come from **חר"ר** and, if so, probably mean 'noble.'

The Haggada not only recounts our liberation of yore but also gives voice to the currently oppressed: **לשנה הבאה בני חורין**; **השנה עבדי**, ('this year – slaves; next year – free people'). May we see that wish fulfilled speedily.

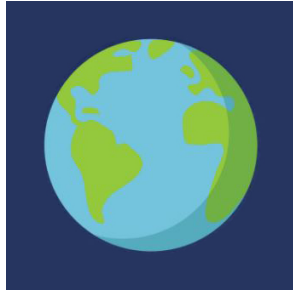
להרחבה באתר האקדמיה

### Timely Terms – מנחים לענין

### Idioms and Expressions – מטבעות לשון

## Earth Day – יום כדור הארץ

## עברנו את פרעה – נעבר גם את זה



This year Earth Day (April 22) coincides with the seventh day of Passover.

Meir Ariel's 1990 hit song – **עברנו את פרעה – נעבר גם את זה** ('we survived Pharaoh; we'll survive this, too'; listen [here](#)) brought into widespread use this expression of hope and optimism in the face of adversity. The song catalogs a host of troubles and frustrations the narrator has experienced, concluding each verse with the refrain – **אבל עברנו את פרעה – נעבר גם את זה** ('but we survived Pharaoh...').

### environmentalism – סביבתנות

Ruvik Rosenthal (in Hebrew, [here](#)) identifies the saying as a longstanding Jewish aphorism (in Yiddish: ...פרעה דעם בייגעקומען דעם פרעה...), sometimes with variations in wording (e.g., 'we survived Haman...'). Avshalom Kor attests that his own father and the latter's friends in the Betar movement used the Yiddish expression as youths in Riga, Latvia, though otherwise they conversed entirely in Hebrew.

The term **סביבתן** ('environmentalist') and the corresponding abstract noun **סביבתנות** made their official debut in 2011 in the Academy's dictionary of environmental terms. They come from the word **סביבה** ('**environment**'), whose root **סב"ב** may express 'surrounding,' as in the word **סביב** ('around'). Another modern-Hebrew innovation from the word **סביבה** is the adjective **סביבתי** ('**environmental**'), found in terms such as **נזק סביבתי** ('environmental damage') and **צדק סביבתי** ('environmental justice').

### renewable (energy, resources) – מתחדש

Some suggest that the song **אנחנו נעבר** (listen [here](#)), written by poet and lyricist Yechiel Mohar in 1967, provided inspiration for Ariel's refrain. Kor surmises that the aphorism inspired both Mohar's and Ariel's lyrics.

The verb **התחדש** ('to be renewed, happen anew'), from the same root as **חדש** ('new'), has been in use since the Bible, where it makes one appearance, in **Psalms 103:5**. Its participle form, **מתחדש**, provides an apt equivalent for 'renewable' in terms like **משאבים מתחדשים** ('renewable resources') and **אנרגיה מתחדשת** ('renewable energy').

### pollution – זהום

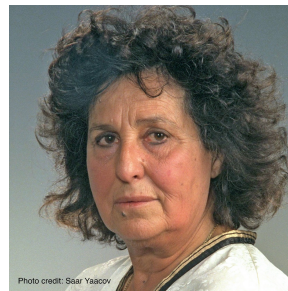
The word **זהום** ('pollution, contamination, infection') dates back to Rabbinic Hebrew. In contemporary Hebrew it denotes not only environmental pollution – as in **זהום אויר** ('air pollution'), **זהום מים** ('water pollution'), **זהום קרקע** ('soil pollution') – but also biological **infection**; in addition, it serves as a general term for **contamination** (alongside **נגוע**). The related word **מזהם** means both 'pollutant' and 'polluter.'

View the Academy's dictionary of environmental terms [here](#).

למילון מונחי איכות הסביבה של האקדמיה

## Yig'al, Ge'ulla – יגאל, גאלה

In Exod. 6:6 G-d promises the enslaved children of Israel **יגאלתי אתכם** ('I will redeem you'); in the liturgy, daily blessings ending with **גאל ישראל** ('[who] redeemed Israel' or 'redeemer of Israel') continually recall the fulfillment of that promise.



While the Passover story serves as the archetype of national redemption, the verb **גאל** ('to redeem, save, liberate') and the corresponding noun **גאלה** ('redemption, salvation, liberation') may refer to collective or individual salvation; to the redemption from Egypt or from some other exile or oppression; to a past deliverance or a yearned-for future.

Biblical **גאל** also means 'to buy back' [e.g., an individual sold into slavery or ancestral property that passed out of the tribe]. This sense accounts for its use in parallelism with **קנה** ('to get, acquire, buy'), as in **עם־זו קנית** and **עם־זו גאלת** ('the people that You redeemed'; 'the people that You acquired') in the Song at the Sea, Exod. 15:13, 16. When one cannot buy back one's own freedom or property, the duty of redemption falls upon kin; accordingly, **גואל** ('redeemer, savior') in the Bible also means 'relative.'

The Bible mentions three men called **יגאל**. Hebrew names from the Biblical period often contain an embedded name of G-d, as in **גאליהו** (*Ge'alyahu*, 'G-d redeemed'); Biblical **יגאל** is likely an abbreviation of such a theophoric name. Like many other male names, including **יצחק** (*Yitshak*, Isaac) and **יעקב** (*Ya'akov*, Jacob), **יגאל** has the form of a verb (in this case, **גאל**) in future tense, 3rd person masculine singular ('he'). Because Biblical tenses do not correspond strictly to past or future time, names in this form may express a wish for the future or a declaration of what has happened; each of those interpretations has garnered scholarly support.

In the last century, the male name **יגאל** has enjoyed periods of popularity, although not so much in recent decades. Far less common is the name **גואל** (*Go'el*), which also serves as a surname, sometimes in the form **הגואל** (*HaGo'el*, 'the redeemer'). From the verb **נגאל** ('to be redeemed') comes the rare male name **יגאל** (*Yigga'el*), which, like **יגאל**, is a future 'he' form. Meanwhile, the feminine noun **גאלה** serves as a female name. Famous Israelis with these names include Yigal Allon, Yigael Yadin, and Geula Cohen (in the photo above).

---

## חדשות וארועים – News and Events



פרופ' שמעון שרביט ירצה על לשון ההגדה  
Prof. Shimon Sharvit to Speak on the  
Language of the Haggada

Academy member Prof. Shimon Sharvit will give an online talk (in Hebrew) about the language of the Haggada on **Tuesday, April 12, at 19:00 IDT**. Besides addressing how the text coalesced over the course of 1000 years and characterizing its language, he will examine numerous phrases from the Haggada that have become expressions in common usage, such as **בְּכַבּוּדוֹ וּבְעִמּוֹ** ('in person'), and the evolution in meaning that some of them have undergone, as in **גָּמַר עָלָיו אֶת הַהַלֵּל** ('to praise someone exceedingly').

[לעמוד ההרשמה](#)



מפעל המלון ההיסטורי השלים את התקנת המקרא  
Historical Dictionary Project Completes  
Tagging of the Bible

The Academy's Historical Dictionary Project recently completed the linguistic tagging of the books of the Bible. For over half a century the Dictionary Project has been building a digitized concordance of Hebrew texts – now a vast repository spanning over two millennia – to serve as the basis for writing the dictionary entries. This unique resource, available to the public on the *Ma'agarim* website, enables users to perform sophisticated searches and to read full compositions.

Explore the *Ma'agarim* website [here](#).

[להרחבה באתר האקדמיה](#)  
[לאתר "מאגרים"](#)

יורם טהרלב – יהי זכרו ברוך  
In Memoriam: Yoram Taharlev

An extraordinarily prolific and talented lyricist, Yoram Taharlev (1938–2022) had an outsize influence on Hebrew culture. He wrote the words to some 1000 songs, many of them popular hits and classics of Israeli music. A lover of Hebrew, he infused his lyrics with snippets of traditional Jewish texts. For example, the song **עוֹד לֹא תִמּוּ כָּל פְּלִאֵיךָ** ("Your Wonders Never Cease"; [listen](#)) contains a riff on **פִּתְחוּ-לִי שַׁעַר-צִדִּיק אֲבֹתֶיךָ אֲדֹהָ יְהוָה** ('Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will enter them [and] give thanks to the Lord'; Psalms 118:19, part of Hallel).

[Yoram Taharlev's website \(English page\)](#)

[להרחבה באתר האקדמיה](#)  
[לאתר של יורם טהרלב](#)



האקדמיה ערכה כנסו בין-לאומי על העברית החדשה  
AHL Holds International Conference  
on Modern Hebrew

Thousands attended the Academy's online academic conference entitled: **העברית החדשה: תמונת מצב** ('Modern Hebrew: The State of the Art'), held on March 1–3, 2022. The program featured a session on Israeli Sign Language, chaired by MK Shirly Pinto, as well as talks on issues of morphology, syntax, discourse, sociolinguistics, and more. Simultaneous translation into ISL accompanied several of the sessions. The full program and the recordings of the sessions (all in Hebrew) are available for viewing on the Academy's website.

[לתוכנית הכינוס ולצפייה במושב](#)

[The Academy's English Website](#)

[Subscribe to our Newsletter](#)

[לאתר האקדמיה בעברית](#)

[Subscribe a Friend](#)

[Friends of AHL Website](#)

[Donate](#)



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage Subscription](#)