

# Hallel: Praise as Spiritual Practice

Contributed by [Jessica Belding](#)

Source: abbreviated from Tova Leah Nachmani

The Jerusalem Talmud claims that the Pesach Hallel is not “recited”, rather it is belted out in the kind of song which suits a miraculous moment of reclaiming our lives after a national near-death experience. It is a current, relevant, real singing of salvation, said by Jews worldwide, every year.

On this night I attempt to identify with the pain and tortures of the darkest nights of history. On this night, in contrast, I feel more a deep connection to my modern reality in which I am SO blessed to be living, no matter how great the daily challenges around us and within me.

...In Hallel we are not thanking, rather PRAISING G-d. Which is greater - praising or thanking? When I thank someone, I am recognizing and acknowledging what they have done for ME. But when I praise someone, or when I commend them on an action, an attitude or a character trait unrelated to me, I am seeking out and seeing them more fully for who they are. Not just for what they have done for me.

The Passover story is our story, but it is also part of a larger universal story – called in our tradition the “Springtime of the World”. It is a story which has an ethical monotheistic beginning and an ethical monotheistic aim. In our own small way we hunger to be partners in this aim when we ask, “how I can use my G-d given gifts and talents to contribute to G-d’s world and the people who share it?”

What are some things you can whole-heartedly praise in this world?

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**Before we start Hallel**, stand up for a minute and take a stretch. Once we finish the “traditional” hallel, there are many songs written at the end of the Haggadah (and many more not written in the Haggadah!) for you to choose and sing.