JUDAISM UNBOUND PRESENTS
THE SHAVUOT UNBOUND ZINE
Introduction

Welcome to the Shavuot Unbound Zine!

What’s a zine you ask? A zine is a small, independently-published booklet, usually the product of the underground press. Historically, zines have been used by all sorts of communities to tell stories and secrets, instruct and inquire. Zines can be collages or DIY instruction manuals, comic-filled or lesson-filled. In the case of this Shavuot Unbound zine, we hope it’s a bit of all these.

Why did we make a zine for this holiday? Some Jews have the custom of staying up all night on Shavuot learning and talking together until dawn, when you can see your friend in the street. For the last couple years, Judaism Unbound has riffed on this tradition by encouraging Shavuot learning all-nighters at everyone’s favorite 24/7 pancake house, IHOP (or as we’ve started calling it, Chai-HOP). But you don’t need to go somewhere in order to learn something meaningful on Shavuot night - you can do it anywhere, with anyone. It doesn’t matter if you’ve learned a thousand texts or are looking to try it for the first time -- we’ve tried to include something (or multiple somethings) in here for everyone.

This Shavuot Unbound Zine is meant to be a helpful guide and collection of texts and tidbits to enhance your holiday. We hope that this Shavuot you jump into the tradition of revelation (and renovation), learning out fresh ideas in this batch of texts.

- Rena Yehuda, Lex, and Dan
June 2019 / Sivan 5779
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The All-Nighter Activity: A Note On Learning Texts

What does it mean to “learn” a text? Everyone does it a different way. Learning a text can mean reading and rereading, interrogating it with questions, criticizing or rejecting it, waxing poetic about its meanings, or connecting it back to your own life. Learning a text can be done alone, in a group, or in a pair. We encourage that you print off two copies of this zine, grab a buddy, and dig in until the sun comes up.

Learning in pairs is a classic method of Jewish text study -- so classic that there’s a specific word for partners who delve into texts together. The Hebrew word Hevruta (translating to “fellowship” or “friend”) describes the relationship between two people who struggle and explore texts together, building insights together, asking questions and relating the meanings to their own lives as they read. One of the texts included in this zine is about one of the greatest (and most tragic) hevruta pairings of all time, the story of Rabbi Yochanan and Resh Lakish. Their story is from the Talmud, a book of rabbinic writings. For a meta Shavuot, you can learn about their ancient hevruta with your own modern hevruta.

Every hevruta or group of text learners has a different vibe and feel. There’s no right way to learn a text. Some folks prefer to talk about the literal meanings while others might seek out metaphor. Some might draw webs of connections between texts and some may be inspired to tell stories from their own lives. Take a chance on a tangent, go out on a limb with a question. The Talmud likens a good chevruta to two knives sharpening each other. None of the texts in this zine have a clear objective lesson -- rather, think of each text as an orchard with many paths. Take someone by the hand and walk through it together, observing oddities and wonders while enjoying the fruits along the way.

You can learn the texts in this zine in order or hop around to the ones that strike you. Mix and match! Some of the stories have discussion questions or reflective nuggets to help spark conversation. With longer or more ancient texts, try reading aloud line by line, stopping in between to discuss portions that strike you. If you’re new to Talmud texts, some of the stories might be a little different than what you’re used to -- you’ve got this. Go slow, read and reread. Ask questions you might not be able to answer. Who knows what might bloom?
Hevruta Learning in the Wild

Hevruta Exhibit A: The Winter Skype

Hevruta Exhibit B: The Shabbat Study

Hevruta Exhibit C: Shavuot All-Nighter

(Draw your own Exhibit D above)
Shavuot Customs

From “The Jewish Chronicle”, a London-based Jewish newspaper

The Reading of the Book of Ruth: The Biblical book of Ruth, which tells the story of a Moabite princess who went on to convert to Judaism, is read on Shavuot. This is because the events in the latter part of the book take place around the time of the harvest festival.

Torah Night Study: There is a widely-held practice among religious Jews to stay up and learn Torah on the first night of Shavuot. The practice originates from the Midrash – rabbinic commentary on the Torah – which says that the Israelites overslept on the day the Torah was due to be given, and Moses had to wake them up because God was waiting! To atone for this tardiness, generations of Jews have therefore stayed up all night to study. There is also a special study service devised for the night which some use, known as Tikkun Leil Shavuot, the “order of Shavuot night”. Created by the Arizal, a famous Jewish kabbalist, this service incorporates elements from the Torah, the Mishnah, and Kabbalah.

Flowers: There is a custom to decorate synagogues on Shavuot with flowers; again, this a reference to the Midrash, which says that Mount Sinai blossomed with flowers just prior to being the venue for the giving of the Torah. Some synagogues will even create a canopy of flowers around the Bimah, the lectern from which the Torah scroll is read. This is in reference, again, to the giving of the Torah, which is sometimes referred to as the marriage between God and the people of Israel, with the Torah acting as a Ketubah, a marriage document. The canopy therefore resembles a Chuppah, a marriage canopy, which is traditionally used at Jewish weddings.

The Ten Commandments: On Shavuot, the portion of the Torah detailing the revelation at Sinai is read in the Synagogue. It is the custom to stand while the ten commandments are read out.

Dairy Food: Another custom on Shavuot is to eat milky products, such as cheese blintzes and cheesecake. There are a number of reasons given for this custom: (1) The Torah is compared to “milk and honey” in the Song of Solomon – “Like honey and milk, it lies under your tongue” (2) Prior to accepting the Torah at Mount Sinai, the Israelites had not had to keep any dietary laws. Now they had taken on the commandments in the Torah, they needed to make their meat utensils kosher before using them, and they ate dairy foods in the meantime.
The Gemara relates that Rav Kahana entered and lay beneath Rav’s bed. He heard Rav chatting and laughing with his wife, and seeing to his needs, i.e., having relations with her. Rav Kahana said to Rav: The mouth of Abba, Rav, is like one whom has never eaten a cooked dish, i.e., his behavior was lustful. Rav said to him: Kahana, you are here? Leave, as this is an undesirable mode of behavior. Rav Kahana said to him: It is Torah, and I must learn.

• Why is Rav Kahana hiding under his teacher’s bed?
• In the case of Rav Kahana and of someone learning text out of this zine, what does it mean to learn?
• What makes something “Torah”?
• How does this text envision an expansive notion of Torah?
The Great and Tragic Chevruta: Rabbi Yochanan and Resh Lakish

To get you started with a study partner, we recommend beginning with this collection of texts about a friendship for the ages: the chevruta between Rabbi Yochanan and Resh Lakish. This text is from the Talmud (a collection of Rabbinic writings), from a chapter called Bava Metzia, page 84. This text was compiled and translated by Rabbi Mishael Zion.

The story of Rabbi Yochanan and Resh Lakish begins with the story of how they met, then fast-forwards to a moment of tension in their relationship with fatal consequences. Alongside the text, you’ll find some notes and questions for reflection.

On the next page you’ll find a few different snippits about what other rabbis have said about our two main characters - the very pretty Rabbi Yochanan and the brutal, brilliant Resh Lakish. This’ll give you a little more context for the story that follows, telling you a bit about who they were before they met.
1. The Greatest Havruta: Rabbi Yohanan and Resh Lakish

Background sources

1. Yerushalmi Shabbat 44a
Rabbi Yohanan and Resh Lakish studied the seventh chapter of Shabbat for three and a half years. For every one of the 39 melakhot of Shabbat, they identified 39 toladot (derivatives).

2. Bavli Ta'anit 8a
Resh Lakish would repeat the mishna 40 times – one time for each of the days in which the Torah was given to Moses at Sinai – and only then he'd go in to study with R. Yohanan.

3. Bavli Sanhedrin 24a
Ulla said: Seeing Resh Lakish learning in the Beit Midrash, was like experiencing him taking mountains and crushing them one against the other.

4. R. Yohanan's beauty | Bava Metzira Page 84b
Rabbi Yohanan said: "I have survived from the beautiful of Jerusalem.
One who wishes to see the beauty of Rabbi Yohanan should bring a brand new silver cup and fill it with the red seeds of the pomegranate and place around its rim a garland of red roses, and let him place it at the place where the sun meets the shade, and that vision is the beauty of Rabbi Yohanan.
[...]
Rabbi Yohanan did not have splendor of face [i.e. a beard].

5. Resh Lakish's brigandry | Bavli Gittin 47a
Resh Lakish sold himself as a Gladiator. He brought with him a sack with a lead ball tied in it, saying: It's known that on the last day (of the fights) – anything you ask of them – they'll do for you, so that your blood is "let". On the last they asked him: How would you like to compete in the arena?
Resh Lakish answered: I'd like everyone to be tied and seated in the middle, and each one of you will receive from me (only) a strike and a half.
The tied him and sat them down. Each one – when he'd strike him but one strike – they'd die, but their teeth would show and they looked like they were smiling (and the other gladiators didn't think he was dead, for the sack covered the lead ball, and they thought it was only a dry punch).
He would say to him: You're smiling at me? I still have half a blow to give!
(and in this way he managed to) kill them all, and was released from service as a Gladiator.
He came home and sat down to eat and drink.
He daughter said to him: Would you like a bed to lie down on?
He answered her: My stomach is my pillow.

Tosafot: Resh Lakish sold himself – This story must have taken place before he did Teshuva, otherwise he wouldn't have treated himself in such a way.

6. Bavli Yoma 86b
Resh Lakish said: Great is the power of Teshuva, for a person's sins become like good deeds!
The Tragic Tale of Rabbi Yohanan and Resh Lqish

Bavli Bava Metzia 84a

One day Rabbi Yohanan was swimming in the Jordan. Resh Lakish saw him and thought he was a woman. He dug his spear into the Jordan and leaped to the other side of the Jordan.

R. Yohanan said to him: “This strength of yours—for Torah!”
Resh Lakish said to him: “This beauty of yours—for women!”
R. Yohanan said to him: “If you will return/repent, I will give you my sister, who is more beautiful than I.”
Resh Lakish accepted [the offer] upon himself.
Resh Lakish tried to jump back to bring his clothing – but he was not able to.

R. Yohanan taught Resh Lakish Bible and he taught him Mishna, and he turned him into a great man.

One day the Beth Midrash was divided over an issue: “The sword and the knife and the spear and the sickle – from when do they “receive tume’ah”? From the moment their manufacture is complete.” And when is their manufacture complete?
Rabbi Yohanan said, “When they are honed in the furnace.”
Resh Lakish said, “When they are burnished in the water.”
Rabbi Yohanan said, “A marauder knows his maraudership!”
Resh Lakish said to him: “What good have you done me? There they called me Rabbi and here they call me Rabbi.”
R. Yohanan said to him: “I’ve done you good by bringing you under the wings of the Shekhina.”
Rabbi Yohanan became severely depressed. Resh Lakish became severely ill.

Questions

Before their big fight, what did it feel like when Rabbi Yochanan and Resh Lakish disagreed with each other?

Why didn't Rabbi Yochanan apologize?

Vocab:

Mishna: The first rabbinic commentary on the Torah
Tume’ah: A state of impurity. All tools are susceptible to receiving ritual impurity, but raw materials cannot - therefore, Yochanan and Lakish ask this question: when does something turn from a collection of raw materials into a tool?
Shekhina: The Kabbalistic understanding of the feminine aspects of G-d, Marauder: In this case, referring to Resh Lakish’s history as a gladiator and a thug
R. Yohanan’s sister came and cried before R. Yohanan: “Have mercy on my children!”

R. Yohanan quoted to her a verse: “‘Leave your orphans with Me; I will rear them’ (Jeremiah 49:11).”

“For the sake of my widowhood!?” she cried.

He said to her: ‘Let your widows rely on Me’ (ibid.).”

Resh Lakish passed away.

Rabbi Yohanan grieved deeply after him.

The scholars said: "What shall we do to make him feel better? Let’s bring Rabbi Elazar ben P’dat, whose memory of traditions is sharp, and sit him down before him.”

They brought Rabbi Elazar ben P’dat and sat him down before him. After everything Rabbi Yohanan said, Rabbi Elazar ben P’dat would say to him: “There is a tradition that supports you.”

R. Yohanan said: “You are like Ben Lakish!? Ben Lakish [“son of the difficult one”]—to everything I would say he would pose twenty-four difficulties, and I would give him twenty-four solutions, and throughout the traditions became clearer.

And [all] you [can] say [is]: ‘There is a tradition that supports you’? Don’t I already know that what I said was correct?”

R. Yohanan would go out, ripping his clothes, crying and saying: “Ben Lakish, where are you! Ben Lakish, where are you!”

And he would scream so until he lost his mind.

The scholars prayed for mercy for him and he passed away.

Questions:

Why couldn’t Rabbi Yochanan learn with Elazar ben P’dat?

Is it possible to die of heartbreak? Is that what happened to Rabbi Yochanan and Resh Lakish?

What makes a good chevruta?
Shavuot & Coffee

An Excerpt from Elliott Horowitz’s “Coffee, Coffeehouses, and the Nocturnal Rituals of Early Modern Jewry,” in which Horowitz describes the history of the Jewish relationship to coffee -- and how the drink eventually came to inform the ritual of all-nighters for shavuot learning. How does food and drink inform ritual? What are you eating and drinking tonight?

Although increasingly available, the beverage was not as universally familiar in the Near East of the sixteenth century as we might expect. R. Joseph Caro, for example, who came to Safed from Turkey in 1536 and completed his Bet Yosef there some six years later, shows no signs in the relevant sections of that work (nor of his later Shulkhan 'Arukh) of any familiarity with coffee. Yet Caro would have had good reason to be interested in a stimulant which could effectively promote wakefulness. For he, together with his brother-in-law R. Solomon Alkabetz, introduced the custom of observing an all-night study vigil on the festival of Shavuot, and he also invested much energy in remaining awake at night on a year-round basis in order to commune with his personal “Maggid.”

A SHAVUOT RECIPE CARD

FARMER'S CHEESE!

EATING DAIRY DISHES ON SHAVUOT IS AN OLD TRADITION. TRY YOUR HAND AT THIS CLASSIC CHEESE RECIPE!

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 GALLON WHOLE MILK
- PINCH OF SALT
- 1 LARGE LEMON, JUICED
- CHEESE CLOTH

1. Pour milk into large pot w/ pinch of salt. Bring to a boil over med-high heat, stirring frequently.

2. When milk begins to boil w/ bubbles at the edges, turn off heat. Stir in lemon juice, waiting 5-10 minutes for it to curdle.

3. Line a sieve or colander w/ cheese cloth. Pour milk thru cloth. Drain the liquid, then gather the cloth & squeeze to drain the rest. Now you've got farmer's cheese!
AND IT CAME TO PASS that the great Rebbe Israel Baal Shem Tov, Master of the Good Name, known for his powers in heaven as well as on earth, decided to try once more to force his Creator’s hand. He had tried many times before—and failed. Burning with impatience, he wanted to end the ordeals of exile forcibly; and this time he was but one step away from success. The gates were ajar; the Messiah was about to appear and console the children and old men awaiting him, awaiting no one else but him. The Diaspora had lasted long enough; now men everywhere would gather and rejoice.

The heavens were in an uproar. The angels were dancing. Red with anger, outraged, Satan demanded an audience with God. Brought before Him, he protested, invoking laws and precedents, history and reason. Look at man’s impudence, he said, how dare he take things in his own hands? Does the world deserve redemption? And the conditions to warrant the Messiah’s coming, have they been met?

God listened. And had to recognize the validity of Satan’s arguments: Lo ikhshar dara, the Rebbe’s gesture was judged premature; his generation was not yet ready for a miracle of such magnitude. Moreover, since the order of creation may not be disturbed with impunity, he and his faithful scribe Reb Tzvi-Hersh Soifer were deported to a distant uncharted island. Where they were promptly taken prisoners by band of pirates.

Never had the Master been so submissive, so resigned.

“Master,” the scribe pleaded, “do something, say something!”

“I can’t,” said the Baal Shem Tov, “my powers are gone.”

“What about your secret knowledge, your divine gifts: your yikhudim? What happened to them?”

“Forgotten,” said the Master. “Disappeared, vanished. All my knowledge has been taken away; I remember nothing.”

But when he saw Hersh Soifer’s despair, he was moved to pity. “Don’t give up,” he said, “we still have one chance. You are here, and that is good. For you can save us. There must be one thing I taught you that you remember. Anything—a parable, a prayer. Anything will do.”
Unfortunately, the scribe too had forgotten everything. Like his Master, he was a man without memory.

“You really remember nothing,” the Master asked again, “nothing at all?”

“Nothing, Master. Except . . .”

“. . . except what?”

“. . . the aleph, beith.”

“Then what are you waiting for?” shouted the Master, suddenly excited. “Start reciting! Right now!”

Obedient as always, the scribe proceeded to recite slowly, painfully, the first of the sacred letters which together contain all the mysteries of the entire universe:

“Aleph, beith, gimel, daleth . . .”

And the Master, impatiently, repeated after him: “Aleph, beith, gimel, daleth . . .”

Then they started all over again, from the beginning. And their voices became stronger and clearer: aleph, beith, gimel, daleth . . . until the Baal Shem became so entranced that he forgot who and where he was. When the Baal Shem was in such ecstasy, nothing could resist him, that is well known. Oblivious to the world, he transcended the laws of time and geography. He broke the chains and revoked the curse: Master and scribe found themselves back home, unharmed, richer, wiser and more nostalgic than ever before.

The Messiah had not come.
So... TORAH?

WE'LL TAKE TWO.
The Gemara cites additional homiletic interpretations on the topic of the revelation at Sinai. The Torah says, “And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the lowermost part of the mount” (Exodus 19:17). Rabbi Avdimi bar Hama bar Hasa said: the Jewish people actually stood beneath the mountain, and the verse teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, overturned the mountain above the Jews like a tub, and said to them: If you accept the Torah, excellent, and if not, there will be your burial. Rav Aha bar Ya’akov said: From here there is a substantial caveat to the obligation to fulfill the Torah. The Jewish people can claim that they were coerced into accepting the Torah, and it is therefore not binding. Rava said: Even so, they again accepted it willingly in the time of Ahasuerus, as it is written: “The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them” (Esther 9:27), and he taught: The Jews ordained what they had already taken upon themselves through coercion at Sinai.

“In the tractate of Shabbat (88A), the Talmud tells a story that captures that transformation in the character of redemption and of covenant. The Talmud says that when the Israelites came out of Egypt to Sinai, God held the mountain over their heads and said, “Accept my Torah or I will bury you right here.” To which a scholar, Raba, comments, “Then we can plead ‘acceptance under duress’ (as extenuating circumstances if we fail to live up to the covenant).” Not so, responds the Talmud, in the Book of Esther, for it states that “The Jews accepted and upheld [the Purim holiday]” (Esther 9:27). This means that the Jews, by freely accepting Purim, upheld (reinstituted) the original covenant acceptance of Sinai.”

- Rabbi Irving Greenberg, “Revelation: The Next Level: A Hidden God allows for a more active human role in the covenant,” An article about Purim for MyJewishLearning.com
Art, music, and culture have always been part of Jewish life, of Jewish resistance, of Jewish organizing, and of movements for justice. We are blessed, honored, and full of joy to have collaborated with Micah Bazant on this beautiful piece.

As the story goes: In 1939, Nazis surrounded a group of Jews from Lublin, Poland, backed up against barbed wire and ordered them to sing to their own execution. One man began to sing: "Mir veln zey iberlebn, iberlebn, iberlebn"—"We will outlive them." The song took hold among the entire people, who, as they awaited their deaths, began to dance. They danced with joy, with resilience, with a life that could not be destroyed by fascism, militarism, or genocide. The commander saw this resilience. He recognized their defiance. They continued, even as the SS troops charged at them. Most lost their lives that day. And some lived to tell this story.

Tsibele brought the song back to life and back into our movement. We are here. Together, we will outlive them.
"I drew these after Pittsburgh but they’ve become relevant again.

The synagogue shot up today was a Chabad shul. I spend every shabbat at my local Chabad, celebrating with those I love. Offline for observance, I heard about it today around 4 or 5, from the local Hillel director, warning us to lock the doors.

The shooting took place on the last day of Passover. For two thousand years, Jewish joy has been an act of rebellion. Singing zmirot and keeping shabbes holy with those I love is an act of rebellion. I am trans and Jewish and for that they want me dead. But my joy is rebellion. It is the opposite of what they want, it is the very thing they cannot defeat. All I have is my rage, my joy, and my emunah. We will fight and fight the white supremacists, we will protect what is holy, who we love.

To the white supremacists: We will outlive you.

To us: The whole entire world is a very narrow bridge, and the most important thing is not to be afraid.”

- @rena.yehuda, Instagram Post, April 27th 2019
Touching on similar questions as the earlier Rav Kahana about what Torah really is, this story of Rabbi Eliezer holding a seemingly “correct” opinion leads to a rebuke through the radical statement, “The Torah is not in Heaven!” This story contains walking trees, listening walls, and a divine voice, yet none of these wild happenings can sway the rabbis who declare that the Torah is now truly in our hands.

And this is known as the oven of akhnai. The Gemara asks: What is the relevance of akhnai, a snake, in this context? Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: It is characterized in that manner due to the fact that the Rabbis surrounded it with their statements like this snake, which often forms a coil when at rest, and deemed it impure. The Sages taught: On that day, when they discussed this matter, Rabbi Eliezer answered all possible answers in the world to support his opinion, but the Rabbis did not accept his explanations from him.

After failing to convince the Rabbis logically, Rabbi Eliezer said to them: If the halakha is in accordance with my opinion, this carob tree will prove it. The carob tree was uprooted from its place one hundred cubits, and some say four hundred cubits. The Rabbis said to him: One does not cite halakhic proof from the carob tree. Rabbi Eliezer then said to them: If the halakha is in accordance with my opinion, the stream will prove it. The water in the stream turned backward and began flowing in the opposite direction. They said to him: One does not cite halakhic proof from a stream.
Rabbi Eliezer then said to them: If the halakha is in accordance with my opinion, the walls of the study hall will prove it. The walls of the study hall leaned inward and began to fall. Rabbi Yehoshua scolded the walls and said to them: If Torah scholars are contending with each other in matters of halakha, what is the nature of your involvement in this dispute? The Gemara relates: The walls did not fall because of the deference due Rabbi Yehoshua, but they did not straighten because of the deference due Rabbi Eliezer, and they still remain leaning.

Rabbi Eliezer then said to them: If the halakha is in accordance with my opinion, Heaven will prove it. A Divine Voice emerged from Heaven and said: Why are you differing with Rabbi Eliezer, as the halakha is in accordance with his opinion in every place that he expresses an opinion?

Rabbi Yehoshua stood on his feet and said: It is written: “It is not in heaven” (Deuteronomy 30:12). The Gemara asks: What is the relevance of the phrase “It is not in heaven” in this context? Rabbi Yirmeya says: Since the Torah was already given at Mount Sinai, we do not regard a Divine Voice, as You already wrote at Mount Sinai, in the Torah: “After a majority to incline” (Exodus 23:2). Since the majority of Rabbis disagreed with Rabbi Eliezer’s opinion, the halakha is not ruled in accordance with his opinion. The Gemara relates: Years after, Rabbi Natan encountered Elijah the prophet and said to him: What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do at that time, when Rabbi Yehoshua issued his declaration? Elijah said to him: The Holy One, Blessed be He, smiled and said: My children have triumphed over Me; My children have triumphed over Me.

- What does it mean “the Torah is not in heaven”?
- Is it a good thing to follow the majority? Even when there is nearly divine proof they are incorrect?
- How might this statement, “The Torah is not in heaven” inform or impact our Judaism(s) today?
- At the end of the story, why does G-d smile?
An Excerpt from the Zohar, 3:98

This text is an excerpt from the Kabbalistic book, the Zohar. This section describes the spiritual significance of learning on Shavuot.

“[We have learned] that the Torah that we need to learn on this night of Shavuot learning is the Oral Torah, so that they may be purified from the wellspring of the deep stream. Afterward, on this day [of Shavuot] Written Torah will come join her and they will be as one, as one couple above. Then it is proclaimed about him (Isaiah 59:21) ‘And this is for Me My covenant with them said YHVH: My spirit that is upon you and My words I have put in your mouth (will not depart from your mouth, nor from your children’s mouths...now and forever)’.

Thus, the earlier pious ones did not sleep on this night, and they studied Torah, saying let us acquire a holy inheritance for us and our children in two worlds. And on this night, Assembly of Israel is crowned above them and comes to intimately join with the King, and both of them are crowned above the heads of those who are worthy of this.

Rabbi Shimon would say, when the Community gathered around him this night, “let us array the jewels of the Bride, so tomorrow she will appear before the King suitably adorned and bedecked. Happy is the portion of the Hevraya when the King inquires of the Matronita who has placed her jewels and illuminated her crown, and arranged her adornments? For there is none in the world who know how to array the jewels of the Bride other than the Community. Happy is their portion in this world and the world that is coming.

Come and envision! The Community should prepare the jewels of the Bride that night, and crown her with Her crowns for the King. But who prepares the King on that night to be with the Bride and partner with the Matronita? The Holy River, deepest of all rivers, the Supernal Mother, as it is written (Song of Songs 3:11) Go out and see, O daughters of Jerusalem, the crown with which King Solomon was crowned by his mother on the day of his wedding. And after she has prepared the King and crowned Him, she comes to purify the Matronita and those who are with Her.”
Appendix A: Sources - Where’s It All from?

We’ve included all kinds of texts in this zine both modern and ancient. While modern sources like facebook posts might be a little easier to contextualize, a handful of the texts in this zine are from ancient sources like the Talmud and Zohar. So what are these books?

“The Talmud” is a collection of rabbinic writings, compiled between 200 and 600 C.E. They contain all sorts of stuff, like stories (midrash) and laws (halakha). There are actually two Talmuds compiled around the same time: the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud. But, we usually just refer to both of them as “The Talmud,” usually citing sources from the Babylonian Talmud (also called Talmud Bavli). The Talmud is made up of many sections (called a tractate or masechet), organized by topic. Sources we bring into this zine from the Talmud will be usually cited with the Talmud name, tractate name, and then a page number, plus an “a” or “b”, referring to the side of the page.

This zine also has a text from the Zohar, which features kabbalistic texts, poems, and all sorts of mystic writing, first published in Spain in the 13th century.

Some of the texts are from more modern places, such as screenshots from social media or news articles from online journals, some of them responses to current events and others, responses to ancient ones.

There are also some comics and cartoons throughout this zine. These comics were drawn by Judaism Unbound Intern, Rena Yehuda Newman (They/Them) as a modern midrash (interpretation or response) to more classic texts. We invite you to see them as texts of their own.

Throughout the zine, you’ll find citations for these sources, all of which -- biblical, rabbinic, and modern -- are part of a wider web of Jewish thinking, dreaming, and writing.