

# HOD – MAJESTY

## WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO MAJESTY?

### CHECK-IN

Share your name and a moment or experience that prompted wonder or awe within you.

### OUR BRIT (COVENANT)

- ❖ Everybody's story is sacred: we commit to respectful communication.
- ❖ Listening is important for understanding: we commit to active and thoughtful listening.
- ❖ Our hearts are open when we feel safe: we commit to confidentiality.
- ❖ We will not try to fix, explain, or judge one another.
- ❖ We will allow for silences within the discussion so that everyone has the space to speak.
- ❖ As our Omer Groups are under the umbrella of Isaiah Together and the broader umbrella of Temple Isaiah, we will keep the values of each front and center.

### COUNTING OF THE OMER

*Hineini* – I am ready to fulfill the mitzvah of counting the Omer.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ, וְצִוֵּנוּ  
עַל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר.

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al sfirat haOmer.*

Praised be You, Adonai our God, who rules the universe, instilling within us the holiness of mitzvot by commanding us to count the Omer.

Today is the \_\_\_\_\_ day, which is \_\_\_\_\_ weeks and \_\_\_\_\_ days of the Omer.

May I understand and make the decisions necessary to live my life with awe at the majesty of the world.

## WHAT IS HOD?

*Hod* is often translated as glory or majesty. It is our sense of wonder and gratitude for the magnificence of the universe. *Hod* is where we are taught our desire to pray and praise God originates, from our expression of the immense gratitude for the unfolding expanse of our perception.

*Hod* is placed at the foot of the *sephirot*, stabilizing the structure with its considered wisdom and practicality. *Hod* and *yesod*, the *sephirah* for next week, are seen as “tactical” *sephirot*, looking past the superficiality of the world in order to see the true purpose and function of things. By stripping away the distractions, we aim to find deeper meaning in the structure and order of the world.

*Hod* challenges us to look past our biases and see meaning and purpose in everything we encounter. We are asked to expand past the boundaries of ourselves and exist in the mystic reality beyond the world we can perceive. It is only through gratitude for the grand processes and constructions of the world that we see what they truly are. By maintaining a sense of awe and wonder, we open ourselves up to the miracles present in the function of the universe.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTION:

How do you understand *hod*? When have you experienced it in your life? Can you relate to the idea of majesty as gratitude?

## WISDOM FROM OUR TRADITION:

*Mah gadlu maasecha Adonai,  
m'od amku machsh'votecha.*

How great are Your works, Adonai, how very subtle Your designs! – Psalm 92:6

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- (a) What does it mean that the works of God are both great and subtle?
- (b) What are the works of God/The Universe/The Divine Force that we experience?  
What do these works prompt in us?
- (c) If the work of God is both great and subtle, where do we fit in creation?

## MODERN VOICES:

Awe is more than an emotion; it is a way of understanding, insight into a meaning greater than ourselves. The beginning of awe is wonder, and the beginning of wisdom is awe.

Awe is an intuition for the dignity of all things, a realization that things not only are what they are but also stand, however remotely, for something supreme. Awe is a sense for transcendence, for the reference everywhere to mystery beyond all things. It enables us to perceive in the world intimations of the divine, to sense in small things the beginning of infinite significance, to sense the ultimate in the common and the simple: to feel in the rush of the passing the stillness of the eternal. What we cannot comprehend by analysis, we become aware of in awe. – Abraham Joshua Heschel, *“Who Is Man?”*

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- (a) Heschel describes awe as “an intuition” or reflex towards transcendence. Do you agree that wonder has to be a reflection of the Divine?
- (b) How is our sense of wonder limited by our knowledge and understanding of the phenomena of the world?
- (c) How do we apply a sense of awe to our understanding of ourselves?

## MORE ON HOD:

One who crosses the sea and survives a storm thanks God. Why not thank God when there is no storm? One who survives an illness thanks God. Why not one who escapes illness altogether? – The Radziminer Rebbe

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- (a) How would you answer the Rebbe’s questions?
- (b) What moments in your life elicit a moment of gratitude and wonder? Where is this gratitude directed?
- (c) Does awe need to be tied to a sense of inadequacy?

## A FINAL WORD:

Often, we dismiss questions that we cannot answer. Take a few moments to write down some questions that do not have easy answers. Go around and have every member of your group share a question they have. Try to resist the urge to answer.