

Fire and light are such prevalent metaphors in our tradition; even small babies respond to the glow of the Shabbat candles. We light lights for Shabbatot and Festivals, usher in the week through braided wicks and light our proud lamps for the eight days of Chanukkah. Isaiah declares us a 'light unto the nations' while the Book of Exodus describes Mount Sinai like a fiery kiln during the giving of the Torah. We celebrate life through fire and honor the memories of loved ones with the flickering flame of a Yahrzeit candle. We set the rhythms of our soul through the light – actual or reflected – of the sun and the moon. New moons, equinoxes and solstices remind us of the waxing and waning of the light and give us hope when darkness seems to overpower us.

Now that June is upon us and we have just celebrated Shavu'ot, the image of fire and light is on my mind. We might hate to admit it, but just as Chanukah surreptitiously honors the winter solstice

beauty, allows us to warm our bones. Things may not be as they were, exactly, but we are invited outside, to sit in the sun, to enjoy the blessings of earth, water and sky. We can breathe deeply (and safely!) on beautiful nature walks or savor the peace of our gardens and parks. Like Miriam's well travelling through the wilderness, the reprieve of this time of year can offer us sustenance and succor. I intend on sampling the richness of this season as intently as I can. Our garden is generous and supplementing our family table with leafy greens, radishes, turnips, peas, beets, carrots – and a little later in the season, hopefully tomatoes, cucumbers and squashes. To see the snowy-white blossoms, almost like lilies, on the pea plants, is a delight. Drink in the light with your eyes.

And likewise, we are called to emit what we have absorbed. The Torah was given on a humble mountain in unclaimed wilderness, the Rabbis teach us, so that no-one in particular would claim