

INTRODUCTION

הקדמה



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Why is Passover in 5785/2025 different from all other Passovers?
2. Which aspects of the Haggadah Shel Pesach connect me to the people and State of Israel?
3. Who at our seder do I hope to learn from about their relationship to Israel?
4. How do I want to grow my relationship to Israel?

By Jan Katzew

The Haggadah Shel Pesach (The Telling of Passover) has an enduring, if not eternal, understanding at its core: “In every generation each person must see themselves as though they came out of Egypt.”

It tells our story: a timeless, yet timely narrative of the Jewish people. It invites us, dares us, to write ourselves into it, to see ourselves as actors in the Exodus from Egypt, in every narrow strait, in every dark place and time in which we find ourselves, individually and collectively. It imprints memories and inspires hope.

The central question of the seder is *מה נשתנה הלילה הזה?* Why is this night different from all other nights? This year, 5785/2025, it is compelling to ask: “Why is this Pesach different from all other Pesachs?”

In the shadow of a multi-front war against the State of Israel—and, on many levels, the people of Israel—we are inviting you to reflect on your relationship to Israel as you reenact the Exodus from slavery to freedom. To be sure, it is possible to relate to Israel every Passover, we believe this year is qualitatively different.

Some elements of the Haggadah Shel Pesach will no doubt “read” differently than other years. What does it mean to call the matzah “the bread of our affliction”? How does it feel to recite plagues that call to mind some of the events of October 7 and its aftermath? What does it mean to say “Next Year in Jerusalem”?

During your Pesach seder this year, we invite you to highlight and amplify some of these elements. We hope to raise more questions than provide answers, and to facilitate conversations that generate

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light, and quite possibly some heat as well. After all, Jews are a people that have raised arguing to a sacred artform. We hope your experience of Passover this year will be inclusive and incisive, personal and communal, memorable and enjoyable, and consequently, that your relationship to Israel will be closer, stronger and deeper.



Illustration credit: Ira Ginzburg