

A New Haggadah Insert of Our Common Destiny

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Because tonight we cannot join together with our extended family, friends and community in celebration. This night is different because, as we tell the story of our people from slavery to freedom from Egypt to the Promised Land, we must also tell about our own time, about our own plagues and immediate needs.

The mystics taught us that Egypt was not only a historical place of enslavement, but as the Hebrew word for Egypt, Mitzrayim, suggests it is any state of narrowness, loneliness and fear a person experiences -- a feeling many of us, and those we love, know too well during this COVID-19 pandemic. The Passover story is also about our individual and collective efforts to leave whatever narrow place we are in.

This night is different because we are not only remembering and reliving our shared history, but we are deeply mindful of our current crisis, and the urgency of learning about and speaking out about the impact of this plague -- and many other plagues -- happening around the globe to Jews and all people.

But each of us, and every Jew around the world, though we are more physically separated than ever, is strengthened because of our sense of Peoplehood. Despite all the ways in which we are separated, by distance; by the differences between our various movements, and our personal, national and religious identities; today -- more than ever -- we sense our connectedness and our mutual responsibility. Especially now, this Passover, we can commit ourselves to our shared future, to



"Next Year in Jerusalem" from a 15th century Haggadah.

our common destiny.

Our Common Destiny is a new global initiative that gathers us together as one people, and we offer this addition, or additional reading for your Seder Table. You can also say it whenever and wherever you eat matzah this Passover. This insert was created by Our Common Destiny, which aims to strengthen global Jewry by linking Jewish communities worldwide to a shared set of values, shaped by the input of our diverse global community.

In the profound opening of the Haggadah, there is a Jewish message with universal reach: we need each other, and we need to be sure that, as it says in the Haggadah, all who are hungry enter and eat; and all who are in need come and celebrate. May all of humanity hear the response of the Jewish people: We will uphold our collective responsibility for each other and for the world.

This is the meaning of the Passover Matzah this year.

While we are a generation who has been divided, we must now come together to imagine a new future, a common destiny based on shared values and respond to the needs of all.

As we hold up the matzah this year:

(to be said individually or together)

This is the bread of our affliction, HaLachma Anya, this is our shared story of suffering and freedom.

As we hold the matzah this year, whether with our families or completely alone, may we experience our connection to the story of the Jewish people; to our values and to our shared future.

As we partake in this bread of memory and hope, may we never forget our Exodus story and our promise to ourselves that even in our new, more limited freedom, we will not stand by when others are suffering.

Let all who are in need, know that we are with them.

As we ready ourselves to eat

this hard bread of affliction, let us also prepare ourselves to respond to the suffering and isolation all around the globe.

May all who are suffering, whether they are sick, afraid, hungry, suffering from domestic violence or any other plague, know that we see you, we hear you, and we will work together to respond to you.

May all who are mourning find comfort and may we collectively find ways to console them.

May we continue to support medical personnel, as well as all service workers, who are responding with all their capacities, generosity, care and self-sacrifice.

May all who are suffering now be healed quickly; May all who are in need, know that the Jewish people will respond with the best of ourselves.

May we find new ways to learn about each other and to learn together, even virtually. Let us assure each other that we, the Jewish People, share a common destiny and we will create it together.

May we look into the eyes of those around us and those who we see from afar, and assure each other that we are mutually responsible for one another, for the health and safety and spiritual well-being of ourselves, our communities, and for all of humanity today, as we were then.

This year, we are here. We are broken apart, but next year may we find new beginnings, a new commitment to each other, a new wholeness, and a new common destiny.

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