

No Jew can pass the Haggadah untouched. For its style is not narrative, but interrogative. Its story is not told like a legend, but like a problem. One initial question is asked, and all the others follow from it: "What is the difference between this night and all other nights?" It is for the Jew to answer if he can, and if he cannot, to feel that the question contains a challenge. Like an unfinished play, the night of the Exodus continues through the centuries, seeking actors to relive it perpetually, and to grasp its essential meaning.

- Andre Neher, from *Moses and the Vocation of The Jewish People*, 1959

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The National
Jewish Center
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CLAL-The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership was founded in 1974. A leadership training institute, think tank and resource center, CLAL convenes interdisciplinary conversations that explore the Jewish and American futures, and enhances Jewish participation in civic and spiritual life in North America. The CLAL faculty, representing rabbis from every denomination and scholars from a broad array of disciplines, links Jewish texts and intellectual traditions with cutting-edge contemporary scholarship. Working with established and emerging volunteer leaders, rabbis, professionals, scholars, thinkers and opinion makers, CLAL has earned a reputation for compelling programs that embody the principles of pluralism, and build vital Jewish institutions and communities across the continent.

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*What words
will ring true
this
Passover?*



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IN THE LAST SIXTY YEARS,
the words of the Passover Haggadah
have marked the flow of history:

 At a makeshift Seder in
the Bergen-Belsen
concentration camp
in 1944, the leader recited:

"This is the bread of our affliction!"

At a Seder on the beaches of Tel Aviv
in 1948, new immigrants sang:

*"Blessed be the Guardian who kept his
promise to Israel!"*

At a Seder in an African-American
church in Washington, D.C. in 1969,
young civil rights activists called out:


*"In every generation, every Jew must
regard himself as though he, personally,
were brought out of Egypt."*

At the Seder of Ethiopian Jews in a reset-
tlement camp in 1992, families recited:

*"God brought us out from there, so
that we are led to the land promised
our ancestors!"*

And at Seders last year, in the hours
after the suicide bomber struck down
twenty-nine in Netanya, we said:


*"In every generation they have stood
against us to destroy us, but the
Holy One, blessed be, has delivered us
from their hands."*

 EACH YEAR brings a new context
to the Seder, and the events on the front pages
and front lines cause ancient words to find
new meanings.

Yet the overall story does not change—no turn
of events causes us to waver from our ultimate
dream: that all who are oppressed know freedom,
that all who serve under Pharaohs can know true
justice, and that all who are exiled or abandoned
can find a place to call home.

This year it is uncertain what line will leap
from the text of the Haggadah and grasp our
attention. But we retain the hope that we will
one day be able to truly say:

*Let all who are hungry come and eat!
Let all who are in need celebrate
Passover with us!*

 THIS YEAR, as you join your friends or
family around the Seder table, you might begin
by asking each person around the table to recall
one news event from the past few months. As a
group, pick one of these events and ask:

*How can telling the story of the Exodus
deepen our understanding of this event?*

May you be blessed with a festival of hope.



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