

In Every Generation



CONTEMPLATIONS FOR SEDER NIGHT

How is This Night Different?

If I'm honest, it isn't really.

Still war.

Still hostages.

Still quarrels and disputes with no regard for truth.

We are different.

We are less trusting, sadder, lonelier.

The exodus from Egypt was accompanied by anxiety and pain. Cheers of liberation quickly mingled with cries of war as the Egyptians pursued the Israelites, trapping them between their chariots and the sea. After safely crossing the parted sea, euphoria was

quickly replaced by anxiety as the threatening desert was revealed before them, where they would have to tread without food and water, guided by an unfamiliar leader.

"And the Egyptians pursued after them...and overtook them encamping by the sea, at **Pi-HaHiroth**..." (Exodus 14:9)

The Festival of Freedom (*Heirut*) echoes the name of this space, between Egypt and the sea; between salvation and a new existential threat; between promise for the future and fear that this is the end.

Perhaps part of telling the story of our exodus is remembering that difficulty is a side effect of moving forward; that redemption and pain are intertwined in the story of our people, from its inception.

Tonight everything is special and yet nothing is different. On all nights we struggle, for the sake of our future and our sanity; tonight we season our grief with aspirations of freedom, for our hostages and for our weary souls.

Tonight and every night we tell of freedom (*Heirut/Hiroth*) that is blocked by the sea; how that muddled freedom inspires us to keep retelling the story.

Rabbi Chaya Rowen Baker, Dean, Schechter Rabbinical Seminary

To Be Free

In the Passover Haggadah, we declare "This year we are here, next year in Israel. This year we are slaves,



"Frogs" Shlomi Charika

next year free people." Yet moments later, we say "We were slaves" in past tense, and sing "Now we are free."

This contradiction reflects our complex reality: while some of our people remain captives, those of us gathered around the holiday table are indeed free. We must not confuse the painful reality of our captive brothers and sisters with the blessing of living as Jews in Israel.

This Passover, we're obligated to recognize our freedom while working tirelessly until everyone, without exception, can truly say "Now we are free."

Rabbi Arie Hasit, Associate Dean, Schechter Rabbinical Seminary



Midrash on Song of Songs

Yossi Elmackias

Upon my bed at night, I sleep, but my heart is awake.
I sought him whom my soul loves.
The voice of my brothers who dwell in the clefts of the rock, in the hidden places of the cliff.
Their voice pleads: "Open for me;"
I sought them but did not find them.
I adjure you - stir up and awaken love - until it pleases!
I adjure you: Do not turn your eyes away from them,
We will say to every mother: We will seek him with you!
Until we see the last of the mothers - and none is bereaved.
We beg, show us their appearance, let us hear their voice.
Allow their fathers to hold them and not let them go,
Their left hand under their heads and their right hand embracing them.
The blossoms appear in the land, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.



"Darkness" Shlomi Charka

And You Shall Tell Your Daughter

Rabbi Irina Gritsevskaya

Life is stronger than death, I tell my daughter, and always, no matter how much pain surrounds us, there is a tomorrow and in it "let there be light." And if she asks me what is the most important **time**? Who is the most important **person**? And what is the most important **thing** to do?...like in Tolstoy's Three Questions I will answer: The most important **time** is now, when you and I, and our loved ones sit around this Passover table, while in millions of other homes other Jews, who are also in

pain, whose lives are also in danger, whether in Israel or in Ukraine are conducting Seders. The most important **person** is the one beside us, for me it's you sitting next to me right now. And the right **thing** to do is to help that person, and so I will tell my daughter that life is stronger...

In Every Generation

Martin Hershkovitz

In every generation a person must see
The light,
To guide their way in the darkness.
In every generation a person must hear
The whisper that has been silenced
And respond with tears.
In every generation one must taste
The bitterness of existence
And he can learn to embrace.
In every generation, a person must smell
A scent of burnt expectations
And learn to mourn.
In every generation, a person must
Learn to touch
And to be touched
And then one can impart.
In every generation, a person must
Learn to dream
So that he can will himself to endure.

Sanctify and Forget (Kadesh 'Ushkach) / Shlomit Naim Naor

And how shall we sit for the Seder
When plague exists
How can delicacies be placed
When our bretheren –
How can we eat the bread of affliction
Salt water
How can we dine like royalty
How can the charoset be sweet
How not.

