

Intro

Ma Nishtanah Halilah hazeh mi kol haleilot? Why is this night different from all other nights? Perhaps the real question is “Why is this Passover different from all other Passovers?”

War in Israel and Gaza – Hostages who are not yet free - Israelis who can't go home - Civilians in Gaza (especially children) who are suffering - Antisemitism in our own country at unprecedented levels.

There is a lot in our world to feel....depressed about and yet we are here to “celebrate Passover”

Jews hold two opposite things in their hands.....

But most importantly – tonight we hold in our hands...hope

Isn't that what Passover is about – our story of surviving slavery to become a free people? It is certainly a story worth remembering. Tonight we celebrate

Passover in a way that is perhaps not as joyful as usual. We feel the heaviness of the fear and sadness that the situation in Israel and in our own country brings.

And yet, we still go on this journey that we and our ancestors have taken every year for thousands of years. In some cases, the words of the Haggadah feel more relevant than ever, in others, the Haggadah's proclamations clash with reality.

How can we celebrate a holiday of freedom when over 100 people are still held captive in Gaza? How do we call for all who are hungry to come and eat when so many Israelis are not at their own seder tables and thousands of Palestinians are on the brink of famine? And yet – if we stop telling the story, if we don't keep celebrating Passover then our enemies will have won and the hope for a better future that the seder gives us will be gone. So as we celebrate Passover tonight, we will ask many questions so that we find the meaning that this story has for us tonight. And we will pray with all of our hearts that this most important story of the Jewish people will bring us hope and remind us of our responsibility to work towards bringing peace into our world.