

The Stories We Tell Again and Again



Every year at Pesah, each day in our prayers, we keep telling the story of our exodus from Egypt. We tell it over and over and over again. To tell this story is a commandment.

The Haggadah says:

וְאֶפְּלוּ בְּלֵנוּ חֻכְמִים בְּלֵנוּ נְבוֹנִים בְּלֵנוּ זְקֵנִים בְּלֵנוּ יוֹדְעִים אֶת הַתּוֹרָה מִצֹּהַ עֲלֵינוּ
לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם

And even if we were all sages, all discerning, all elders, all knowledgeable about the Torah, *it would be a commandment upon us to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt.*

And guess what? We don't just tell it once, and then we're done. We are supposed to tell it and tell it again; to expand on it, and linger in the story...

As the Haggadah says:

וְכָל הַמְרַבֵּה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הָרִי זֶה מְשֻׁבַּח

And anyone who adds and spends extra time in telling the story of the exodus from Egypt, behold they are praiseworthy.



"The more one tells about the Exodus from Egypt, the more praiseworthy." For the Exodus from Egypt never ends, as Scripture says: *So that you will remember the day when you went out of Egypt all the days of your life* (Deut. 16:3). In the act of telling about the Exodus, the miracle itself is continually fulfilled and enhanced...That's what telling the tale does: it keeps drawing out further potential. The liberation was back there in Egypt but the specifics of our own liberation are worked out each year."

— The Language of Truth, Sefat Emet on Pesah 3:6



"It is in the telling that transformation occurs. In every liberation movement, the sharing of stories becomes crucial. When women first gathered in consciousness raising groups or alcoholics shared their "experience, strength, and hope" in smoky church basements, stories were shared. I begin to see that my story isn't just my story. First we touch the common pain, then the common hope. From there we devise strategies for transformation. I am no longer caught in the isolation of my uniqueness. The fear and self-doubt that I feel about myself is revealed to be without substance. Every oppressor knows how subversive groups can be and tries to keep the oppressed from talking to each other, from telling their stories to one another."

— Rabbi Sheila Peltz Weinberg from *A Different Night Reconstructionist Haggadah*

The Stories We Tell Again and Again, continued



What do you have to add to the story?

Everyone sitting at our seder table has a story of liberation to share—no matter their age, experience, education, or background.

We all have a story. What is yours?

We all have stories. Stories that can be told and retold—to audiences new and the same. Stories that, over and over again, lead to interpretation, reflection, reinterpretation, and laughter.



How do these stories reinforce the life you're living now?

Do they conjure up memories of successes, failures, love, or growth that nourish you over and over again, even if they're difficult or problematic?

What are some of the universal truths that your story provides?

How can you share it with others so that they can live beyond their own experiences?



B'NAI
JESHURUN