

THROUGH THE WILDERNESS TOGETHER

Every year at Passover, we are commanded to retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Moreover, we are commanded to experience the story as if it happened to us. As if we were there. When we retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt, it is *our* story.

There are lessons in each chapter of this epic saga, and at the seder we spend most of our time at the beginning of the story. Heroic origins, plagues, the parting of the waters. Perhaps as we retell the tale this year, reclaiming it once more as our own story, we can think about the peril and promise of what stretches before us at the end of the Passover story: the wilderness.

How intimidating the wilderness was! As the Israelites of old stumbled their way toward freedom, they did not know what to expect. We have the benefit of knowing what came next in their story, something they could not possibly know. But we do not know what comes next in our own story, today—and in many ways, we, too, are wandering in the wilderness. Stumbling our way toward something better than what we know now. Overwhelmed at times by both the peril and promise of an uncertain future.

This aspect of the story feels truly familiar. How intimidating the wilderness remains! Like the Israelites of old, we live with hope and fear side by side. Like the Israelites of old, we will make mistakes along the way. Like the Israelites of old, we cannot know what lies ahead—but we know we cannot simply remain where we are. As we retell the story this year, let us remember something else that the Israelites of old experienced: a growing sense of community, every step of our journey. For while many things are uncertain, this we know to be true: the only way to walk through the wilderness is to do so together.

Keyn y'hi ra'tzon – may this be God's will. Amen.

