



MJCS PRESIDENT MONTHLY MESSAGE

March 2018

Dear Friends,

As we head into Passover this week, I wanted first and foremost to wish you all Chag Pesach Same'ach and best wishes for a joyous celebration of this important event in the Jewish story.

During one of our recent "Edible Judaism" events with Rabbi Bill Kaplan (one of the most fun things we do at MJCS), Rabbi Bill told the story of his father in law, a Holocaust survivor who during those dark days in hiding with his family and living off discarded materials never intended for human consumption, one Passover they discovered a single potato, which became the sole occupant of their seder plate and their sustenance. In memory of that miraculous day, a potato now occupies a special place on their seder plate.

One of the tenets of Reconstructionism is blending old traditions with the new. Thus, in honor of all of our brethren who survived the Shoah, and of those many millions who perished, I offer as a new tradition for our community the placing of a potato on our seder plates and telling this story as part of the Passover seder. I hope you will join me in adopting this new and meaningful tradition.

Passover celebrates the freedom of our ancient brethren from slavery and their journey to new beginnings. While we no longer fear slavery, we are still on a journey – a journey for freedom from the hatred, belligerence and discrimination we call anti-Semitism. Sadly, the latest figures on anti-Semitism, including in Southern California and many campuses that our kids and grandkids attend, are on the rise, and given the world shift toward white nationalism, a growing economic inequality, and the political divide over Israel, it does not look like we will achieve this freedom anytime soon. That said, our strength and determination throughout the centuries have always derived from our belonging to a Jewish community that honors its members, its history and its values; the community we have created and continue to construct and reconstruct at MJCS is just that. So as our collective journey continues, I hope that you will remain active in our community if you already are, and that you will become active if you haven't been. Our future is entirely in our hands.

Given this, I will repeat something from my last Message if you didn't see it -- I have heard over the years that some of our members do not feel embraced by MJCS or our community and have not been asked to participate. Well, I am now asking *all* of you to participate. We have a golden opportunity with Rabbi Michael to engage in a wide range of programs, to create new traditions while celebrating the old, to increase the dialogue between us all and to create whatever it is we wish to create for the community. We need additional Board members, people to work on committees, and volunteers to be part of our newly established Volunteer Program. We need you! Please call our office at (310) 456-2178 and ask for Jennifer H. or Monica, and we will welcome your participation with loving arms.

So I'll end this as I started it -- Chag Pesach Same'ach!

As always, thanks for listening.

Steven Weinberg, President