

## President Obama on Passover

Contributed by [Daniel Gropper](#)

**Source:** <http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2013/03/21/president-obama-speaks-people-israel#transcript>

Passover is a story of centuries of slavery, and years of wandering in the desert; a story of perseverance amidst persecution, and faith in God and the Torah. It is a story about finding freedom in your own land. For the Jewish people, this story is central to who you have become. But it is also a story that holds within it the universal human experience, with all of its suffering and salvation. It is a part of the three great religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – that trace their origins to Abraham, and see Jerusalem as sacred. And it is a story that has inspired communities around the globe, including me and my fellow Americans.

In the United States – a nation made up of people who crossed oceans to start anew – we are naturally drawn to the idea of finding freedom in our land. To African-Americans, the story of the Exodus told a powerful tale about emerging from the grip of bondage to reach for liberty and human dignity – a tale that was carried from slavery through the civil rights movement. For generations, this promise helped people weather poverty and persecution, while holding on to the hope that a better day was on the horizon. For me personally, growing up in far-flung parts of the world and without firm roots, it spoke to a yearning within every human being for a home.

Of course, even as we draw strength from the story of God's will and His gift of freedom expressed on Passover, we know that here on Earth we must bear our responsibilities in an imperfect world. That means accepting our measure of sacrifice and struggle, and working – through generation after generation – on behalf of that ideal of freedom. As Dr Martin Luther King said on the day before he was killed – "I may not get there with you. But I want you to know that... we, as a people, will get to the promised land." So just as Joshua carried on after Moses, the work goes on – for justice and dignity; for opportunity and freedom. (President Obama Speech in Jerusalem, March 21, 2013)