

From a Narrow Place

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We are told that every person should see him/herself as having personally left Egypt. How can we fulfill this obligation of radical empathy?

The Hebrew word for Egypt, Mitzrayim, literally translates to "a narrow place." It implies this image of a restrained or confined space. We might not have personal memories of enslavement in Egypt, but we all have experiences with feeling restrained or confined. That is especially true this year when we are for the most part physically confined to our home.

We can channel the emotions we have been experiencing with this confinement to bring ourselves closer to the story. More than that, we also have the gift of using the story of the Israelites' exodus from their narrow place to channel the mindfulness necessary to keep us free in our minds in the current situation. For this, we must be intentional in praying, maintaining our faith, and taking care of ourselves and each other. Every day we have the opportunity to do things that help us feel that we are leaving our "narrow place," even if we do not walk through a parted sea to do it.