



OPENING OUR HEARTS AND MINDS

Tonight, through the telling of the Exodus story, our ancestral memories come alive. We witness how Pharaoh's heart was hardened and kept people enslaved. We travel with Moshe, Miriam and Aharon out of bondage and into freedom, feeling their sorrow, their fear, their hope, and their joy as if we were there beside them.

But the story of oppression is not a distant memory. Poverty, inequality and injustice surround us. And while we may read the headlines, the details can often feel opaque and distant.

But sometimes, we learn something that catches us by surprise—we hear a person's story, or learn a fact, that softens our heart. Suddenly, our eyes are opened to a struggle we never imagined our neighbour might share - and we notice that our heart was perhaps harder than we would have liked to think.

Tonight, to honour the fact that we are always learning, we discuss: What is one thing you have learned recently that helped you understand the realities of injustice and poverty for people different than yourself - something that softened your heart to another's struggle?

Inspiration:

- *I heard someone talk about her experience of homelessness. She talked about how mandatory credit checks and paying first + last months rent up front mean that often people who are getting their lives together still can't secure housing - even if they're doing all the right things. It's been a long time since I rented... Things have really changed!*
- *I learned that Inuit people couldn't vote until 1962. It made me realize how much it must still affect people today since it's in living memory—just like how many Jews are still affected by the trauma of the Holocaust less than 100 years ago.*
- *I heard that Canada accepted 23% fewer refugees in 2025 compared to the year before. It reminded me that Canada's refugee policy has always been heartless. That during WW2 Canada admitted only 5,000 Jews... fewer than almost any other democracy.*

If it's hard to think of something, build or comment on a fact someone else has shared:

"I thought _____'s contribution was so interesting, it made me think of..."

Once you've gone around the table and everyone has had the opportunity to share, pledge together:

EVERYONE: On this week of Pesach, and through all weeks to come, I will not let my heart be hardened. I commit myself to listening. To having my mind changed. To softening any hardness that has already taken root. On this week of Pesach, and through all weeks to come, I pledge to love and learn more and more, until the end of my days.