



Jewish, Christian, Muslim Conversation on the Exodus and the Passover Celebration on the Web

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A new website offering insights into Jewish, Muslim and Christian views on themes raised by the exodus and the passover celebration is launched on the web.

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In response to rising anti-Muslim sentiment in America, three distinguished writers, a Jew, a Christian and a Muslim, began an extended discussion to explore the story of the Exodus, the ancient saga of the Israelites' struggle for freedom. Selecting the Exodus, an important narrative in all three traditions, the writers have constructed a new resource to promote understanding that can be used for the celebration of Passover and for interfaith dialogues year round. They explored sixteen issues raised by the text of the Haggadah (the guide to the Passover service), including: What are the implications of believing your group is chosen or exalted by God? What are your hopes for women in your tradition today? How does your religious community handle dissent? How do you understand the obligation to care for the needy? Speaking as individuals rather than as spokespersons for their faith traditions, the writers examined both differences and similarities among their traditions and within their respective faith communities.

There are many surprises here. In the side-by-side presentation of the story of the Exodus as written in the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Old Testament and the Qur'an Moses emerges as a hero and Pharaoh a villain. Muslim and Jewish traditions around death and mourning prove very similar. While the New Testament does not repeat the Exodus story, Passover imagery suffuses the gospels and letters.

By launching Exodus Conversations on the web, the project participants hope to encourage international public discussion about important questions and themes common to our humanity and religious traditions. Links to the websites of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim artists who contributed their work to the project are provided for those interested in seeing and/or purchasing their art.

The project was funded in part by the Henry Luce Foundation and sponsored by the Interfaith Center of New York. The writers, convener, artists, and editor largely contributed their services. Writers are: David Arnow, Ph.D., author of *Creating Lively Passover Seders* and Co-editor *My People's Passover Haggadah: Traditional Texts, Modern Commentary*, and lecturer on the *Passover Haggadah*; Mary C. Boys, Skinner and McAlpin Professor of Practical Theology at Union Theological Seminary, author of *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding* (2000), and with Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue: Learning in the Presence of the Other* (2006); and Muhammad Shafiq, Ph.D., professor and Executive Director of the Hickey Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue at Nazareth College, Rochester, New York, and co-author, *Interfaith Dialogue: A Guide for Muslims*, 2nd edition, III, (2012); Ruth J. Abram, founder of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum and the International Coalition of Historic Sites of Conscience, conceived and coordinated the project. The website was designed by John Kudos of Studio Kudos. Featured artists are Ruth J. Abram, Sandra Bowden, Seth Chwast, Noorin Fazal, Judith Greenwald, Bart Gulley, Elinor Holland, Avner Moriah, Zainab

A. Khuwaja, Huda Totonji, and Deborah Ugoretz. The text was edited by Barbara King Lord. Kevin Childress of SocialNetwork, LLC designed and manages the social media component.

www.exodusconversations.org