

פסח



HIAS SEDER SUPPLEMENT

2016 • 5776

As we celebrate the Jewish people's biblical exodus from Egypt, we remember that there are 60 million displaced people around the world, people fleeing violence and persecution in search of a safe place to call home. We are currently in the midst of the worst refugee crisis since World War II.

HIAS, the world's oldest, and only Jewish, refugee resettlement organization, helps refugees find ways to live in safety and with dignity as we also mobilize the Jewish community's response to the global refugee crisis. This Passover, we hope you will find inspiration in weaving the story of the Jewish people's exodus from Egypt together with the stories of today's refugees as we offer words of blessing and hope and commit ourselves to acting on behalf of refugees worldwide in the days to come.



FIRST GLASS OF WINE

As you bless the four cups of wine and remember the different ways God protected the Children of Israel during their exodus from Egypt, offer these words of blessing for the ways we can stand in support of today's refugees as they journey to safety. This is the first of the blessings over the four cups of wine that we say throughout the Passover Seder. You will find the other three blessings interspersed throughout this supplement.

I will free you...

וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם...

As we remember our own liberation from bondage in Egypt, we express gratitude for the ability to work as God's partners in continued and continual redemption for today's refugees. As our wine cups overflow in this moment of joy, we hold out hope for the day when every person in search of refuge in every corner of the earth can recall a story of freedom, reflect on a journey to security from violence and persecution and no longer yearn for a safe place to call home. Blessed are You, Adonai our God, who frees those who are oppressed.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree hagafen.

Blessed are You, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

FIRST QUESTION

Following the framework of the Four Questions of the Passover haggadah, this is the first of four alternative questions for discussion that you will find scattered throughout this supplement. These questions are meant to spark conversations that can happen throughout the seder.



Read this narrative aloud and then discuss the question below.



“When I found out I got into the University, I immediately called my ‘real’ mom in Afghanistan, whom I haven’t seen since I was 14. My family, which belongs to the Hazaras, lived under the constant threat of the Taliban, until, one day the latter tried to run me over with a car. My parents feared for my life, and sent me to Iran. At first I was crying all the time. It hurt too much being on my own. When things got tougher there too, I headed to Europe.

I was just 17 when I came once more close to dying, this time in my attempt to cross to Samos on a boat from Turkey, along with four more Afghans. I had never seen the sea before and although I knew how to swim, the waves terrified me. When the sea got really rough and the oars of the boat broke one after another, there was panic. I was rowing with all the strength I had in me. What kept me going was a 13-year-old boy who was constantly asking me ‘If I fall in the sea, will you save me?’ ‘As long as I am alive, you have nothing to fear’, I kept telling him. We are still good friends with this boy.

I love Thessaloniki, the town where I live now, but if I could, I would return to Afghanistan without second thoughts. My country is beautiful, there are amazing landscapes, natural resources and high mountains. The only thing missing is peace...”¹ —Hamid, age 25, from Afghanistan, now living in Greece

Through the Passover Seder, we reconnect with our biblical journey to liberation, and, yet, we retell the story now mindful of those who are not yet free—those whose futures are, therefore, bound up in our future. We recognize, as Hamid does in this powerful narrative, that the way we live has bearing on the lives of those who are not yet free. Why do you think we retell this story each year? With an eye to the struggles of our time, whose future do you feel is bound up in yours?



STAND WITH REFUGEES THIS PASSOVER

To use at the beginning of the Maggid, the telling of the Passover story.

The heart of the Passover Seder is the Maggid, meaning storytelling. Maggid comes from the same root as Haggadah, which means telling. The Maggid tells the story of the Jewish people's exodus from slavery in Egypt. During the Maggid, we say the words, "אֲרָמִי אֹבֵד אָבִי" (*Arami oved avi*). This phrase is sometimes translated as "My father was a wandering Aramean" and other times as "An Aramean sought to destroy my father." Somewhere between the two translations lies the essence of the Jewish experience: a rootless people who have fled persecution time and time again.

At this point in the Seder walk with your guests to your front door and place a pair of shoes on your doorstep and read together:



"As we recite the words 'Arami oved avi,' we acknowledge that we have stood in the shoes of the refugee. Today, as we celebrate our freedom, we commit ourselves to continuing to stand with contemporary refugees. In honor of this commitment, we place a pair of shoes on our doorstep of this home to acknowledge that none of us is free until all of us are free and to pledge to stand in support of welcoming those who do not yet have a place to call home."

Invite family and friends to join you by placing a pair of shoes on their doorstep as well. Encourage them this Passover to support welcoming the world's refugees and stand up against the xenophobia and hatred being levied against these most vulnerable people. You might also direct them to the HIAS website for ways they can amplify their support.



10 PLAGUES FACING REFUGEES IN THE U.S. AND WORLDWIDE

Remembering the ten plagues that God brought upon the Egyptians when Pharaoh refused to free the Israelites, we have the opportunity tonight to recognize that the world is not yet free of adversity and struggle. This is especially true for refugees. After you pour out a drop of wine for each of the ten plagues that Egypt suffered, we invite you to then pour out drops of wine for ten modern plagues afflicting refugee communities worldwide and in the United States. After you have finished reciting the plagues, choose a few of the expanded descriptions to read aloud.

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. VIOLENCE | 6. XENOPHOBIA |
| 2. DANGEROUS JOURNEYS | 7. ANTI-REFUGEE LEGISLATION |
| 3. POVERTY | 8. LANGUAGE BARRIERS |
| 4. FOOD INSECURITY | 9. WORKFORCE DISCRIMINATION |
| 5. LACK OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION | 10. LOSS OF FAMILY |

VIOLENCE

Most refugees initially flee home because of violence that may include sexual and gender-based violence, abduction, or torture. The violence grows as the conflicts escalate. Unfortunately, many refugees become victims once again in their countries of first asylum. A 2013 study found that close to 80% of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) living in Kampala, Uganda had experienced sexual and gender-based violence either in the DRC or in Uganda.²

DANGEROUS JOURNEYS

Forced to flee their home due to violence and persecution, refugees may make the dangerous journey to safety on foot, by boat, in the back of crowded vans, or riding on the top of train cars. Over the last two years, the United States has seen record numbers of unaccompanied minors fleeing violence in Central America. Many of these children have survived unimaginably arduous journeys, surviving abduction, abuse, and rape. Erminia, age 15, came to the United States from El Salvador two years ago. As she walked through the Texas desert, her shoes fell apart and she spent three days and two nights walking in only her socks. "There were so many thorns," she recalls, "and I had to walk without shoes. The entire desert."³

LACK OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Though the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* affirms that the right to education applies to refugees, a recent education assessment found that 80% of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon were not in school.⁴ Research shows that refugee children face far greater language barriers and experience more discrimination in school settings than the rest of the population.⁵ Muna, 17, a Syrian refugee living in Jordan, who dropped out of school, said, “We can’t get educated at the cost of our self-respect.”⁶



LOSS OF FAMILY

It is not uncommon for refugees to lose multiple immediate family members in the violent conflicts that cause them to flee home. These losses, as well as the fact that they may become separated from their family members during flight, can have major consequences on the family structure. Paola⁷, a refugee living in Jaque, Panama⁸ explains, “Fifteen years ago, paramilitaries invaded my community in Jurado, Colombia. The group began to massacre the locals, forcing many of us to flee our lifelong homes. I escaped across the border to Panama. Before the massacre, I had five children. Two of them died in the violence, and I don’t know anything about the remaining three, who all left the community many years ago. I am now 62 years old. I have two young grandchildren for whom I am the sole caretaker and provider.”

XENOPHOBIA

Just as a 1939 poll from the American Institute of Public Opinion found that more than 60% of Americans opposed bringing Jewish refugees to the United States in the wake of World War II, today we still see heightened xenophobia against refugees. This fear can manifest through workplace discrimination, bias attacks against Muslim refugees, and anti-refugee legislation. In recent months, there has been a frightening surge in anti-refugee sentiment here in the United States, a trend we expect will grow in the months to come.

SECOND GLASS OF WINE

I will deliver you...

והצלתִי אֶתְכֶם ...



Just as we remember all of the times throughout history when the nations of the world shut their doors on Jews fleeing violence and persecution in their homelands, so, too, do we remember with gratitude the bravery of those who took us in during our times of need—the Ottoman Sultan who welcomed Spanish Jews escaping the Inquisition, Algerian Muslims who protected Jews during pogroms in the French Pied-Noir, and the righteous gentiles hiding Jews in their homes during World War II. In the midst of the current global refugee crisis, we aspire to stand on the right side of history as we ask our own government to take a leadership role in protecting the world's most vulnerable refugees. May we find the bravery to open up our nation and our hearts to those who are in need. Blessed are You, Adonai our God, who delivers those in search of safety.

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SECOND QUESTION

Put yourself back into the story of the Exodus: What do you remember from leaving Egypt?

KAVANAH FOR OPENING THE DOOR FOR ELIJAH

Gathered around the Seder table, we pour four cups, remembering the gift of freedom that our ancestors received centuries ago. We delight in our liberation from Pharaoh's oppression.

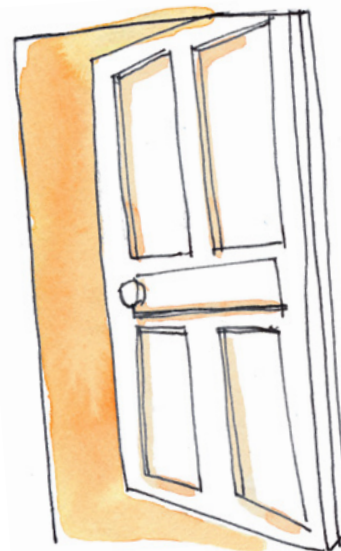
We drink four cups for four promises fulfilled.

The first cup as God said, "I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians."

The second as God said, "And I will deliver you from their bondage."

The third as God said, "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments."

The fourth because God said, "I will take you to be My People."



We know, though, that all are not yet free. As we welcome Elijah the Prophet into our homes, we offer a fifth cup, a cup not yet consumed.

A fifth cup for the 60 million refugees and displaced people around the world still waiting to be free—from the refugee camps in Chad to the cities and towns of Ukraine, for the Syrian refugees still waiting to be delivered from the hands of tyrants, for the thousands of asylum seekers in the United States still waiting in detention for redemption to come, for all those who yearn to be taken in not as strangers but as fellow human beings.

This Passover, let us walk in the footsteps of the One who delivered us from bondage. When we rise from our Seder tables, may we be emboldened to take action on behalf of the world's refugees, hastening Elijah's arrival as we speak out on behalf of those who are not yet free.



THIRD GLASS OF WINE



I will redeem you...

וְגָאַלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם ...

Emboldened to welcome refugees into our communities, may we remember that true welcome is not completed upon a person's safe arrival in our country but in all the ways we help people to rebuild their lives. As God provided for our needs on the long journey from slavery to the Promised Land, let us give the refugees in our communities the tools they need not just to survive but to thrive: safe homes to settle into, quality education for their children, English language tutoring, access to jobs, and all of the things we would want for ourselves and our families. Blessed are You, Adonai our God, who gives us the opportunity to be your partner in ongoing redemption.

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THIRD QUESTION

*What do you think makes some people stay and continue to experience unimaginable trauma and others flee in search of refuge and asylum?
Can you understand both decisions?*



FOURTH GLASS OF WINE

I will take you to be my people...

ולקחתי אתכם...

When we rise up from our Seder tables, let us commit ourselves to stamping out xenophobia and hatred in every place that it persists. Echoing God's words when God said, "I take you to be my people," let us say to those who seek safety in our midst, "we take you to be our people." May we see past difference and dividing lines and remember, instead, that we were all created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God. May we see welcoming the stranger at our doorstep not as a danger but as an opportunity – to provide safe harbor to those seeking refuge from oppression and tyranny, to enrich the fabric of our country and to live out our Jewish values in action. Blessed are You, Adonai Our God, who has created us all in Your image.

ברוך אתה ?? אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree hagafen.

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FOURTH QUESTION



Just as we open the door for Elijah, to what or to whom do you want to open the door in your own life this year? What fears do you have about doing so?



For more information about how to become part of the Jewish response to the global refugee crisis, visit hias.org/helprefugees.

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