

A REFUGEE HAGGADAH SUPPLEMENT

for your Passover Seder

WE REMEMBER

Many of us grew up hearing family stories passed down through the generations about the homes and lands our ancestors were forced to leave behind. Some left as a result of persecution. Others narrowly survived atrocities, and afterwards found they had no home left. All believed their lives and the lives of their families depended on finding a new home in a new land and starting over.

Today, images in the news of homes being decimated by war conjure these memories of our own families' historical struggles. We see the faces of people desperately seeking safety. We cry out as families are detained and prevented from entering our country. We listen to the fear, and wonder if our neighbors realize: that could be us seeking refuge in a new land.

Each Pesach, we recall the story of Exodus and remember our slavery and our liberation. This Pesach, we reflect on those who are still on their journey to liberation and a new home.

A SWEET WELCOME

When the Spanish discovered the pineapple in the "New World" in 1493, they embraced the sweet exotic fruit with pinecone-like skin. The pineapple quickly became a popular delicacy and was introduced to Europe, India and the Pacific islands.

In colonial times, because of the labor and expense required to transport this peculiar fruit, people bought pineapples for special guests as a gesture of hospitality. Thus, the pineapple became a symbol of welcoming and prosperity.



Despite the troubling history of European conquest in the Americas, we seek to reclaim the pineapple's welcoming symbolism.

As we think about those who are finding a new home, we aim to bestow upon them the highest gift one human being can give to another: hospitality. That's why we feel the pineapple is an appropriate representation of a heartfelt and sweet welcome.

WHERE IT GOES IN YOUR SEDER

In the fifth part of the Passover seder, *Magid* (the telling of the Passover story), we introduce the bread of affliction, the matzah. We say, "let all who are hungry come eat."

Consider introducing the pineapple along with the matzah to your seder at this point, as we welcome all who have traveled an arduous journey to join our table physically or in spirit.

Let all who are hungry come eat the bread of affliction; let all who are looking for safety find safety here.

WANT MORE?

Find rituals and prayers for refugees on Ritualwell at www.ritualwell.org/refugees.

A PASSOVER BLESSING

Tonight, we remember that we were once slaves
struggling under unbearable burdens.

Tonight we remember that we rushed toward freedom
so fast that there was no time for our bread to rise.

Tonight, we remember that we stood at the shore,
facing a sea in front of us and an army bearing down on us.

Tonight, we remember that the sea parted and we marched to the far shore.

Tonight, we remember that we danced in celebration,
even as we didn't yet know our future.

Tonight, we also remember that there are 60 million people fleeing repression and danger,
running from their homes, facing unbearable choices.

Our ancient story is the day-to-day reality of far too many people.

Once we were slaves. Now we are free. Now we are obligated to help others
who face oppression, who are hungry, who are seeking safe haven.

Blessed are the refugees. May they be kept safe. May they find deliverance.
And may we be strengthened in our efforts
to aid and support and champion them.

Blessed are You, Adonai Our God, source of strength and welcome.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER AFTER THE SEDER

This activity is designed to guide our thoughts after the seder, during the remainder of the Passover holiday, and help us get into the mindset of a refugee. Before proceeding, please consider whether this exercise (which may be upsetting to some) is appropriate for your family/guests.

We are fortunate. We are secure. We are clothed. We have roofs over our heads. We have the luxury of being able to stop work on this day and gather with our family, friends, neighbors and others to enjoy this beautiful meal.

For now.

At one time – months or even years ago – those who today seek refuge were also secure, and also had homes. The world can change in a moment, and any of us could find ourselves in unfamiliar or unstable circumstances. Together with your family, consider the following questions as an exercise in solidarity with those who seek refuge in the world today.

- 1. How would you flee?** If you had to leave your home suddenly, how would you do it? Via car? On foot? If you have pets, would they come too?
- 2. What would you take?** If push came to shove and you had to decide which of your possessions were of the utmost importance, how would you decide? What would your loved ones take with them?
- 3. Where would you go?** Do you have family that would take you in? Close friends, maybe?
- 4. How would you survive along the journey?** If your food supply ran low, would you depend on the kindness of strangers to nourish you and your family? What about shelter?