

HIAS

Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

HAGGADAH SUPPLEMENT 2018-5778



INTRODUCTION

Leader reads aloud:

The Passover Seder plate is one of the oldest symbolic representations of the Jewish people's historic refugee experience. From dipping green vegetables into salt water in order to recall the salty tears cried by our Israelite ancestors as they endured slavery to the hope for renewal and rebirth symbolized by the round egg, each item on the plate articulates a key component of our Israelite ancestors' difficult journey from oppression to freedom.

In the face of unprecedented efforts to limit refugees' ability to seek safety in the United States – even as more people are displaced by violence and persecution than ever before – these powerful symbols of both the unimaginable suffering and the boundless resilience and hope of refugees feel particularly poignant. This Passover, let us consider these symbols in the context of the contemporary refugee crisis, discuss our connections to this important issue, and rise from our Seder tables committed to ensuring that refugees worldwide find a safe place to call home.

SHOES ON THE DOORSTEP

After the leader reads the introduction to the Haggadah supplement, either walk with your guests to the front door or have one guest rise from the table and walk to the front door. There, place a pair of shoes on the doorstep and read the words below.

Leader: The heart of the Passover Seder tells the story of the Jewish people's exodus from slavery in Egypt. During the retelling of this story, we say the words, "אַרְמֵי אֲבִי אָרָם" (*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.

Group: Soon we will recite the words "*Arami oved avi*" as we retell the story of our people's exodus from Egypt. These words 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 the doorstep of our 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.



THE SEDER PLATE



At the beginning of the karpas section of the Seder, the leader reads:

Centuries ago, only those who were free enjoyed the luxury of dipping their food to begin a meal. In celebration of our people's freedom, tonight, we, too, start our meal by dipping green vegetables. However, we also remember that our freedom came after tremendous struggle. And so, we dip our vegetables into salt water to recall the ominous waters that threatened to drown our Israelite ancestors as they fled persecution in Egypt, as well as the tears they shed on that harrowing journey to freedom.

As we dip, we recognize that, today, there are more than 65 million people still making these treacherous journeys away from persecution and violence in their homelands. As we dip the *karpas* into salt water tonight, we bring to mind those who have risked and sometimes lost their lives in pursuit of safety and liberty.

Group: We dip for the Rohingya father who walked for six days to avoid military capture in his native Myanmar before he came to the Naf River and swam to Bangladesh.¹

We dip for the Syrian mother rescued from the dark waters of the Mediterranean Sea in the early hours of morning, still holding the lifeless body of her infant child after their small boat capsized.²

We dip for the Somali and Ethiopian refugees deliberately drowned when the smuggler who promised them freedom forced them into the Arabian Sea.³

Leader: We dip for these brave souls and for the thousands of other refugees who have risked their lives in unsafe and unforgiving waters across the globe this past year.

It is a green vegetable that we dip tonight – a reminder of spring, hope, and the possibility of redemption even in the face of unimaginable difficulty. As we mourn those who have lost their lives in search of freedom, we remain hopeful that those who still wander will find refuge.

Group:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְרִי הָאֲדָמָה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai,
Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam,
borei p'ri ha'adamah.*

Blessed are You, our God,
Ruler of the Universe, creator
of the fruit of the earth.



Following the blessing over the second cup of wine and/or hand-washing, the leader reads:

At the Passover Seder, we eat matzah as we remember the modest means by which the Israelites sustained themselves on their journey out of slavery, enabling them to survive and thrive in their new homeland.

Like our ancestors, today's refugees rebuild their lives with precious few resources at their disposal. These meager resources often become the seeds of their liberation as they go on to lay down new roots, rebuild their lives, and make important contributions to their local communities and our country as a whole.

A participant reads the following story:

**Tashitaa Tufaa,
Ethiopian refugee living in Minnesota**

In 1992, at the age of 24, Tashitaa Tufaa came to the United States, where he sought political asylum. Though Tashitaa had earned a college degree in his native Ethiopia, when he came to the U.S., the only work he could find was as a dishwasher, making less than \$6 per hour. In order to make ends meet, Tashitaa took on several jobs, including working as a taxi driver.

After almost a decade of working long, hard hours, Tashitaa challenged himself to start his own business. In 2003, he went door-to-door in his new home state of Minnesota to try to find clients for his new transportation business. Three years later, Tashitaa had successfully launched the Metropolitan Transportation Network (MTN). Started with just his taxi and his wife's minivan, this new company was so successful that Tashitaa was

able to buy school buses; though, he had to pay for them in cash. Today, MTN is one of the largest bus companies in Minnesota, employing hundreds of people and generating tens of millions of dollars in income. In addition to running the business, Tashitaa also mentors refugees across the country to help them achieve financial self-sufficiency and success for themselves and their families.⁴

Take turns reading these facts aloud:

Did You Know?

- Though refugees living in the United States for five years or less have a median household income of roughly \$22,000, that number more than triples in the following decades, growing far faster than other foreign-born groups.
- Refugees are taxpayers. Over a twenty-year period, the majority of refugees fully pay back the cost of resettlement and other related benefits. They contribute, on average, \$21,324 more in taxes than any costs associated with their initial resettlement.
- Refugees across the United States are helping to revitalize Main Street. In Akron, Ohio, Bhutanese and Burmese refugees have transformed the North Hill neighborhood from a landscape of vacant storefronts into a bustling corridor of grocery stores, clothing vendors, and jewelry shops. Bosnian refugees in St. Louis have transformed a section of the city called Bevo Mill, once known for its high crime, into an area full of popular Bosnian-owned restaurants, bars, and cafes.⁵

Discuss one of the following questions together:

- 1 **Does Tashitaa's story resonate with your own family's story of coming to the United States?**
- 2 **How might you use Tashitaa's story or the facts above to respond to those who claim that refugees take more from the American economy than they contribute?**

When your discussion concludes, recite the following blessings as a group, distribute the top and middle matzot set aside earlier in the Seder, and then taste the matzah:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.	<i>Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam, hamotzi lechem min haaretz.</i>	Blessed are You, our God, Ruler of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.
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בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.	<i>Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat matzah.</i>	Blessed are You, our God, Ruler of the Universe, who sanctifies us with commandments and calls upon us to eat matzah.
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Following motzi/matzah, the group reads together:

With the taste of bitterness just before our lips, we remind ourselves of the bitterness that led to the enslavement of our ancestors in Egypt. Tonight, we force ourselves to experience the stinging pain of the *maror* so that we should remember that, appallingly, even centuries later, the bitterness of xenophobia still oppresses millions of people around the world, forcing them to flee their homes.

As we taste the bitter herbs, we vow not to let words of hatred pass through our own lips and to root out intolerant speech wherever we may hear it, so that no one should fall victim to baseless hatred.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר.

*Baruch Atah Adonai,
Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu al achilat maror.*

Blessed are You, our God, Ruler of the Universe, who sanctifies us with commandments and calls upon us to eat bitter herbs.



Following maror, the group reads together:

We prepare now to build the Hillel sandwich, combining the bitter *maror* with the sweet *charoset*.

With the bitterness of the *maror* still stinging our tongues and the knowledge that fear of “the other” continues to displace people still stinging our hearts, we take comfort in knowing that there can be an antidote to that hatred. It is up to each of us to temper the hatred that still plagues our world by joining together and saying “*Dayeinu*” – it is, now, enough.

Combine maror and charoset between two pieces of matzah and recite the following as a group:

<p>זָכַר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהִלֵּל. בֵּן עֲשֵׂה הִלֵּל בְּזִמְנֵן שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קַיִם. הָיָה כּוֹרֵךְ מַצָּה וּמְרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד, לְקַיֵּם מֵה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: עַל מִצּוֹת וּמְרוֹרִים יֹאכְלֶהוּ.</p>	<p><i>Zeicher l'mikdash k'Hillel. Kein asah Hillel biz'man shebeit hamikdash hayah kayam. Hayah koreich matzah umaror v'ochel b'yachad, l'kayeim mah shene-emar: Al matzot um'rorim yochluhu.</i></p>	<p>In memory of the Temple, according to Hillel. This is what Hillel would do when the Temple still existed: he would combine matzah and maror and eat them together, in order to fulfill the teaching, “with matzot and maror they shall eat [the Passover sacrifice]” (Numbers 9:11).</p>
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After you make the Hillel sandwich, discuss together:

Over the next year, what will you do to temper the bitterness of xenophobia, as well as anti-refugee and anti-Muslim hate?

The American Jewish Movement for Refugees Tempers Hate with Values-Based Action

Over the Past Year:

Hundreds of thousands of American Jews took to the streets, public squares, and airports to oppose the administration's various refugee and Muslim bans.

Activist Sabrina Farber on why she speaks out for refugees:

“My great-grandfather, Benjamin, came to this country with his wife and five children, fleeing violence and religious persecution. His story echoes those of a majority of American Jews who wouldn't be here today if it weren't for the more humane, open immigration policies of the past. It is up to Jews to continue to lead the chorus in demanding protection and an American future for refugees and asylum seekers. We know what it is like to be strangers in a strange land.”

Nearly 400 congregations joined the Welcome Campaign – HIAS' synagogue action network – and engaged in powerful advocacy, educated themselves, and welcomed local refugee families.

Lay leader Stan Shanker on why he takes part in his congregation's work on the refugee crisis:

“Once I saw the gut-wrenching photos of Alan Kurdi's body being carried from the Mediterranean Sea, I knew I could no longer sit by in silence. Further motivated by our Rabbi Jim Bennett's Rosh Hashanah sermon, I helped organize our Hineni New American project. In some small way, our hope – and my prayer – is that we can help these people enjoy joy, peace, and break the cycle of oppression and prejudice. The words 'Never Forget' and 'Never Again' play over and over in my mind.”

Countless volunteers assisted refugees in settling into their new communities, providing pro bono legal assistance, English language tutoring, employment mentoring and many other services.

Alexandra Wasch on why she volunteers with refugees:

“Participating in this volunteer program has redefined the word 'inspirational' for me. Through my mentorship of a HIAS client, I've seen resilience, compassion and bravery personified.”

More than 2,000 American rabbis from 48 states raised their voices in support of welcoming refugees.

Rabbi Mona Alfi on why she added her signature to HIAS' rabbinic advocacy letters:

“As the daughter of an Iranian Jewish immigrant, I am forever grateful that this country opened its doors to my family after the Iranian revolution, providing them with a safe haven at a dangerous time. How could I close my heart to others who seek the same things – freedom and safety – that my family needed?”



Just before the meal is served, the group reads:

The egg that we place on the Seder plate is meant to remind us of the natural cycle of life – that, even after enormous suffering, we can experience renewal and rebirth. Just as the Jewish people not only survived but also thrived following our exodus from Egypt and the many persecutions and expulsions we experienced thereafter, so, too, do today’s refugees rebuild their lives in extraordinary ways. Let us now read three of their stories.

Participants each read a story:

Evelyn Lauder (née Hausner), a native of Vienna, Austria, fled Nazi-occupied Europe with her family as a young child and came to the United States with HIAS’ assistance. Shortly after starting her teaching career in Harlem, Evelyn met and married Leonard Lauder. After they were married, she joined the business founded by her mother-in-law: Estée Lauder Companies. She ultimately became Senior Corporate Vice President, created the Clinique brand, and developed its product line. Evelyn Lauder’s philanthropy and passion brought breast cancer and women’s health issues to the forefront of public awareness. She co-established The Breast Cancer Research Foundation, which formalized the pink ribbon as a worldwide symbol for breast cancer awareness and has raised over \$350 million to support breast cancer research across the globe.



Bryan Bedder/Getty Images

Twenty-three years ago, **Wilmot Collins** came to this country as a refugee fleeing civil war in Liberia. In the days before he and his wife left Monrovia, food was so scarce they once ate toothpaste. Once resettled in the United States, Wilmot became a U.S. citizen and worked for the Montana Department of Health and Human Services, specializing in child protection. He has also been a member of the United States Navy Reserve. Today, he is mayor of Helena, Montana, having defeated a four-term incumbent mayor to become the first black person to be elected the mayor of any city in the history of Montana.⁶



William Campbell/Corbis via Getty Images

Sam (Yamin) Yingichay grew up in Burma as one of an estimated 168 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 engaged in child labor around the world. Forced into constructing roads and living with an abusive stepfather, at 14, Yamin escaped and began to search for her birth father. Eventually, she met a man claiming to know her father and followed him to Thailand, where she was once again sold into hard labor. Holding onto hope that she would one day be free, Yamin survived and escaped to Malaysia where she was granted refugee status and accepted for resettlement to the United States. In 2008, Yamin arrived in Grand Haven, Michigan to live with a foster family. Today, Yamin is studying to become a nurse. She dreams of being able to support her family still living in Burma and to help other refugees in the United States.⁷



Leader reads the following before the conclusion of the Seder:

As we conclude our Seder this evening, we draw our attention to the final item on our Seder plate. The *zeroah* (shank bone), which literally means “arm,” reminds us of the “outstretched arm”⁸ with which God brought the Israelite people out of slavery in Egypt.

Jewish tradition teaches us that we are God’s partners in the continual act of creating a more just world in which all human beings are treated with dignity and compassion. As we recall the strength that God extended to the Jewish people in the season of our escape from oppression, we extend our arms to embrace those in our world still experiencing persecution because of who they are.

May tonight’s Seder inspire each of us to take action on behalf of today’s refugees, as we join and strengthen the Jewish response to the global refugee crisis at this critical moment in history.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Speak up. Tell Congress that welcoming refugees makes America stronger. This year, the U.S. is on pace to welcome the lowest number of refugees in decades. Write to your Members of Congress, or call them, and ask that they support higher refugee admissions. Urge them to ensure that there are no further attempts to restrict or dismantle the program. Find instructions and a script at the link below, as well as a guide to writing an op-ed or letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

Take to the streets. Join or plan public actions and add your voice to the American Jewish movement in support of refugees to broadcast your loud and clear support of what is just and right.

Volunteer. Help refugees in your local community or abroad to rebuild their lives.

Get educated. Raise awareness in your community about the global refugee crisis. Access HIAS' educational materials, including FAQs, fact sheets, holiday resources, Jewish resources, and more at the link below.

Organize your community. Ask your synagogue to join the hundreds of synagogues stepping up for refugees through HIAS' Welcome Campaign. Participate in National Refugee Shabbat with communities all over the United States.

Donate. Support HIAS' vital work helping refugees rebuild their lives in the U.S. and around the world.

Visit hias.org/take-action for more information about all of these ways to help refugees.

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8. Deuteronomy 26:8.

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