

PASSOVER SUPPLEMENT 2017

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS, COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY

Voces Solidarity
Challenge

Introduction

As we gather around the table, we remind ourselves of the words of the Haggadah: "*B'chol dor vador chayav adam lir'ot et atzmo k'ilu hu hatza mimitzrayim* – In every generation it is our duty to consider ourselves as if we had come forth from Egypt." Every year we remember that we were once slaves in Egypt. We place ourselves within the Passover story, however difficult that may be, so that we can learn from past oppression and mobilize to fight for justice in our own time.

In addition to remembering the past and acting in the present, we are obligated to plan for the future – the *haggadah* tells us that we must teach this story to our children, or other children in our community, so that it becomes their story as well.

This is a time of asking questions and learning from each other. It is a time of debate, reflection, and celebration.

This year, as we remember that we were once strangers in the land of Egypt, we turn our attention to modern-day "strangers" who live among us. We focus on eleven million undocumented immigrants currently living and working in the United States. As we sit here tonight, ICE raids and deportations are instilling fear in immigrant communities and are ripping families apart.

We remember that historically our people migrated from country to country, unsafe and continually uprooted. We remember when we had nowhere to go, when doors were slammed shut, when options were few.

If our retelling of the Exodus teaches us anything it is that the way things are now is not the way things always have to be.



Take the Voces Solidarity Challenge and Support Immigrant Rights

As deportations rip apart immigrant families, allies have a responsibility to speak up.

We have a responsibility to support our undocumented neighbors.

We have reached out to Voces de la Frontera to see what we can do.

Their need is clear: In conjunction with Centro Hispano, they hope to hire a full-time organizer for their Madison area chapter so they can effectively respond to the attacks on immigrant families.

They've requested our support in raising \$60,000 to fund this position. Help us respond to their challenge and stand in solidarity with them.

Set a goal — Can you raise \$250? \$500? \$1000? The most effective way to raise money is to ask for it. Spread the word on social media, host a house party, tell your neighbors.

Together we can raise this money.

For more information see www.shamayim.org/voces-solidarity-challenge

Maggid

The courage to let go of the door, the handle.
The courage to shed the familiar walls whose very stains and leaks are comfortable as the little moles of the upper arm; stains that recall a feast, a child's naughtiness, a loud blistering storm that slapped the roof hard, pouring through.

The courage to abandon the graves dug into the hill, the small bones of children and the brittle bones of the old whose marrow hunger had stolen; the courage to desert the tree planted and only begun to bear; the riverside where promises were shaped; the street where their empty pots were broken.

The courage to leave the place whose language you learned as early as your own, whose customs however dangerous or demeaning, bind you like a halter you have learned to pull inside, to move your load; the land fertile with the blood spilled on it; the roads mapped and annotated for survival.

The courage to walk out of the pain that is known into the pain that cannot be imagined, mapless, walking into the wilderness, going barefoot with a canteen into the desert; stuffed in the stinking hold of a rotting ship sailing off the map into dragons' mouths.

Cathay, India, Serbia, *goldeneh medina*, leaving bodies by the way like abandoned treasure. So they walked out of Egypt. So they bribed their way out of Russia under loaves of straw; so they steamed out of the bloody smoking charnelhouse of Europe on overloaded freighters forbidden all ports--

out of pain into death or freedom or a different painful dignity, into squalor and politics. We Jews are all born of wanderers, with shoes under our pillows and a memory of blood that is ours raining down. We honor only those Jews who changed tonight, those who chose the desert over bondage,

who walked into the strange and became strangers and gave birth to children who could look down on them standing on their shoulders for having been slaves. We honor those who let go of everything but freedom, who ran, who revolted, who fought, who became other by saving themselves.

--Marge Piercy

The Midwives: Shifrah and Puah

Tonight we honor the midwives, Shifrah and Puah, who refused to comply with the Pharaoh's order to kill all Hebrew baby boys. Throughout time, liberation has begun with ordinary people resisting unjust orders.

The Hebrew text is not clear whether the midwives were Egyptian or Hebrew. We do not know if they were Hebrew midwives or midwives of the Hebrews, if they were leaders of their people or if they were they standing in solidarity with another people.

For discussion or reflection:

How does your understanding of the Passover story change if the midwives are Hebrew women courageously leading their people versus Egyptian women standing in solidarity with the Hebrew slaves?

An Alternative Four Questions

1. What is your family's story of coming to the United States?
2. How has the Trump administration's anti-immigrant agenda affected people whom you know?
3. What stories of resistance have you heard from your family, friends, neighbors, or others that motivate you to speak up or take action?
4. What is one thing you could do to stand in solidarity with others?

At this Passover let us recommit ourselves to build a world where all people are safe, where no one fears deportation, and where the imperative to act in solidarity with others is sacred.

The Voces Solidarity Challenge is a project of Congregation Shaarei Shamayim in collaboration with Voces de la Frontera and Centro Hispano and co-sponsored by Madison-area Urban Ministry and Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice.

