

Climate Action Tip of the Month

Tevet / טבת

Did you know that, according to the [U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees](#), climate change is forcing an average of 21.5 million people from their homes around the world each year? Over the next 30 years, 143 million people are likely to be uprooted by rising seas, drought, searing temperatures and other climate catastrophes, according to the [U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) report published this year.

This climate crisis disproportionately impacts people of color, Indigenous people, women, and the poor. Meaningful work has yet to be done that officially recognizes climate migrants and comes up with formalized ways to assess their needs and provide aid. Not only is the United States expected to become a home to many climate migrants from other countries, but climate migration will increase inside the U.S. as well. Considering wildfires and other risks, the number of American climate migrants could easily reach into the tens of millions. ([NYT](#)).

This year, on the Shabbat that falls on Rosh Chodesh Tevet, we read Parshat Miketz. In it, Yaakov sends his sons down to Egypt because the drought is so severe in their land (Genesis 43:1).

But the famine in the land was severe וְהָרָעַב כְּכֹד בְּאֶרֶץ:

Yaakov's sons journeyed all the way to Egypt in search of food. There, they run in circles trying to keep their family together and healthy. They are fooled and taken advantage of. Like climate migrants today, our ancestors faced food insecurity and were displaced because of a harsh climate situation. Not only does this collective history give us the empathy to understand this hardship, we are also commanded to love those who have been “othered” because we ourselves were “othered” (Deuteronomy 17:19). וְאַהַבְתֶּם אֶת-הַגֵּר כִּי-גֵרִים הֵייתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

It is important to think of how refugees and migrants must feel in this country and in our city. Maybe it's a new language, or they are overwhelmed by the stench of New York. People have been forcefully driven from their homes - the least we can do is acknowledge them and why they are here.

Climate Action Tip of the Month for Tevet:

Here are 3 ways to help climate refugees today and in the future:

- Support refugee/migrant led organizations
- Strengthen resilience through Indigenous leadership
- Welcome refugees/migrants & prepare cities

You can learn about all of these solutions at [Global Giving](#). For more information about what Jewish communities are doing about issues related to climate migration, learn more about the work of [AJWS](#). And check out [the comments about climate migration](#) made by Mark Hetfield, President and CEO of HIAS at the Halifax International Security Forum.