

FOUR QUESTIONS: SEEKING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE JUSTICE ON PASSOVER

A Haggadah Supplement

WHAT DOES PASSOVER TEACH US ABOUT OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PURSUE JUSTICE AND INCLUSION?

The story of Passover is one of enslavement and suffering, of migration and loss, but it is also a story of liberation and joy. “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but now we are free” (Avadim Hayinu, Passover Haggadah).

As we rejoice in our freedom, we ask if our own experience of oppression inspires our responsibility to work for the just and fair treatment for all. The Passover story of liberation is at the core of Jewish values, urging us to support and include those who are marginalized or vulnerable - as we ourselves know what it is to be vulnerable: “You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt” (Ex. 23:9). We are therefore commanded to ensure justice for others, not just for ourselves: “Justice, justice shall you pursue” (Deut. 16:20).

After a year of restriction, isolation and loss, we approach this Spring with the freedom to imagine. As we resume our liberty to move and gather, we are reminded that we are often not aware of our freedoms until we lose them. We see the systemic problems plaguing our nation augmented by the virus: racial injustice, threats to our democracy, hateful incidents targeting marginalized communities and people based on their identities, health disparities and economic hardship to name a few. These issues stand in the way of achieving freedom for all. We may especially consider, because

of our own historical cycles of oppression and migration, those (Jewish and not) who are on a modern-day exodus to the United States or other havens as they flee persecution and hardship in their home countries. Through our awareness and action, we can pursue justice and work towards the goal of achieving freedom for all.

WHY DOES PASSOVER INSPIRE US TO SUPPORT REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS?

Tonight, we may sit comfortably in our homes and feast in safety and plenty. As the Haggadah reminds us, citing Rabban Gamliel (BT Pesachim 117b), we should never forget our history or become complacent. We must therefore remember that not everyone has a safe place to call home. In every generation, and specifically during the Seder, each of us is obligated to see ourselves as if we, personally, came out of Egypt. At our Seder table, let us commit not merely to remember, but to act so that all who seek safety and security will find open arms and open hearts. People come to the United States from all over the world, fleeing persecution and dire circumstances in their countries of origin. Those that have found safe haven here have flourished and contributed to the well-being of the nation, including as [vital frontline workers](#) during the pandemic. Those who seek safe haven now deserve a fair opportunity to have their cases heard.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CONDITIONS AND HATE THAT IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES FACE?

ADL regularly creates and updates educational resources about immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. These resources include lesson plans, book discussion guides, and family conversations. As you gather with your family in person or virtually over Passover, consider discussing the following topics and their relationship to our own stories of persecution and migration:

- [Coronavirus: Anti-Immigration, Xenophobia and Homophobia](#)
- [What is DACA and Who Are the DREAMers?](#)
- [Diverse and Complex Narratives Cultivate Empathy and Action](#)
- [Supporting #AllOfUS Means Supporting Immigrants During COVID-19](#)

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES DURING AND AFTER PASSOVER?

You can take action and show solidarity with immigrant and refugee communities:

1. Help keep DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and TPS (Temporary Protected Status) recipients safe from deportation by [telling your Senators](#) to pass the Dream and Promise Act.
2. Donate to an [immigration bail fund](#) and share information about it with others.
3. Educate others about immigration issues and the increase in anti-immigrant bias, after you educate yourself using the resources above.
4. Shop at businesses owned by people who are refugees and immigrants. You can search online for refugee-owned restaurants and shops in your area, or immigrant- and refugee-owned businesses where you can place your order online.

Visit [ADL.org](https://www.adl.org) for additional Passover resources.