

HIAS HAGGADAH SUPPLEMENT

2017 • 5777



פסח



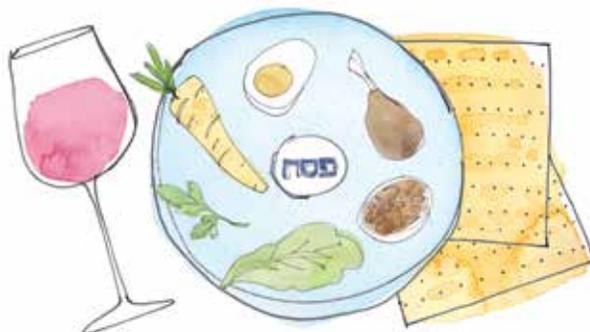
INTRODUCTION BEFORE THE SEDER BEGINS

Leader reads aloud:

Throughout our history, violence and persecution have driven the Jewish people to wander in search of a safe place to call home. We are a refugee people. At the Passover Seder, we gather to retell the story of our original wandering and the freedom we found. But we do not just retell the story. We are commanded to imagine ourselves as though we, personally, went forth from Egypt – to imagine the experience of being victimized because of who we are, of being enslaved, and of being freed.

As we step into this historical experience, we cannot help but draw to mind the 65 million displaced people and refugees around the world today fleeing violence and persecution, searching for protection. Like our ancestors, today's refugees experience displacement, uncertainty, lack of resources, and the complete disruption of their lives.

Over the past year, we have read almost daily about humanitarian crises, watched xenophobic hate crimes increase, and been overwhelmed by the sheer number of people being persecuted. In the United States, in particular, we have experienced a devastating closing of doors to refugees. We now have the opportunity this evening to move beyond the headlines and the statistics to focus on the individual experiences behind the numbers and policies. These are the experiences of refugees around the world who, like the ancient Israelites, are finding liberation amidst brokenness and rebuilding their lives. Tonight, as we embrace the experience of our ancestors, we also lift up the experiences of the world's refugees who still wander in search of safety and freedom.



SHOES ON THE DOORSTEP IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING INTRODUCTION

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, "אָרַמִי אֹבֵד אָבִי" (*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.

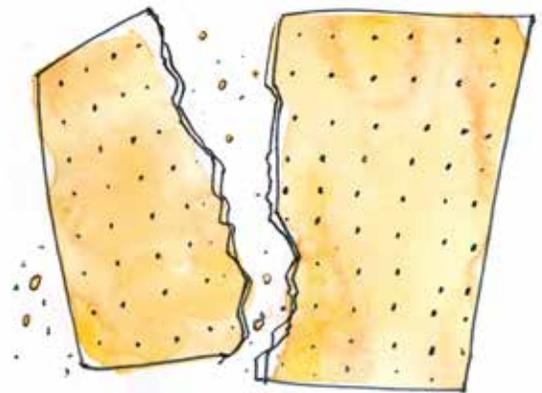
Group:

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 and against the backdrop of terrible restrictions on refugees, 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.

FROM AMIDST BROKENNESS BEFORE YACHATZ (BREAKING THE MIDDLE MATZAH)

Take the middle matzah of the three on your Seder plate. Break it into two pieces. Wrap the larger piece, the Afikoman, in a napkin to be hidden later. As you hold up the remaining smaller piece, read these words together:

We now hold up this broken matzah, which so clearly can never be repaired. We eat the smaller part while the larger half remains out of sight and out of reach for now. We begin by eating this bread of affliction and, then, only after we have relived the journey through slavery and the exodus from Egypt, do we eat the Afikoman, the bread of our liberation. We see that liberation can come from imperfection and fragmentation. Every day, refugees across the globe experience the consequences of having their lives ruptured, and, yet, they find ways to pick up the pieces and forge a new, if imperfect, path forward.



Choose one or more of the readings below to read aloud:

Art and Education Bloom in The Desert

The world's refugee camps are some of the most desolate backdrops against which people fleeing violence and persecution rebuild their lives. The Akre Refugee Camp in Iraq, which houses hundreds of Syrian families, was built out of the remains of a former Saddam Hussein prison. The Za'atari Refugee Camp in Jordan, one of the world's most populous refugee camps, consists of endless rows of beige tents and caravans with almost no plant or animal life. Dust storms, heat, and blindingly bright sunlight make life unbearable for the more than 100,000 primarily Syrian residents.



Photo credit: Taylor Smith.

Without much structured activity or access to education, the thousands of children in these camps sit listlessly. Initiatives like the Za'atari Project and the Castle Art Project are changing this bleak reality. Through these projects, children paint vividly colored murals on the walls of their temporary homes. They begin to work through the trauma they have experienced and to articulate and depict their dreams in technicolor. These projects create a sense of camaraderie and community amongst the participants and even provide a venue for the volunteers who run them to provide informal classes on water conservation, camp hygiene, and conflict resolution, in addition to artistic techniques.¹

Overcoming Language Barriers

Many refugees find themselves in multiple countries before they find a permanent place to begin rebuilding their lives. If they do not speak the language in those countries, refugees face even greater challenges finding employment, and everyday tasks like filling out forms or trying to purchase food can feel nearly impossible. Children confront language barriers in school. The language of instruction may be the language of the child's host country – the country to which s/he flees – or it may be the language of their original homeland. This can differ from country to country. One refugee child followed by the Migration Policy Institute experienced a Tanzanian curriculum in English and Swahili during primary school, a Burundian curriculum officially in French and Kirundi but taught in English and Kiswahili during the beginning of secondary school, and a Congolese curriculum taught in French at the end of secondary school. This exposure to multiple languages ultimately can lead to the academic mastery of none.² Despite these obstacles, many refugees are beating the odds. In the Harran and Akcakale camps near the border of Syria, 70-year-old women are teaching themselves how to read and thereby inspiring the younger women in the camp to learn new skills in order to sustain themselves.³ Adam Sakhr, a Sudanese refugee who faced execution due to his political and religious views, used the difficulties he experienced when he first arrived in France to create an app called Nowall. When newly arrived refugees text the app, they can receive translation via their mobile phone in the form of a text message, phone call, or face to face meeting with a volunteer interpreter, depending on their need.⁴

Finding Work Amidst Discrimination

The 1951 Refugee Convention⁵ clearly states that host countries must permit asylum seekers and refugees to engage in both wage-earning and self-employment. According to asylum experts, “the right [to work] has been recognized to be so essential to the realization of other rights that without the right to work, all other rights are meaningless.”⁶ Even with these legal protections, though, outside of the United States, “many of the world’s refugees, both recognized and unrecognized, are effectively barred from accessing safe and lawful employment.”⁷ Despite these challenges, refugees are finding innovative ways to sustain themselves. Paola⁸, a 64 year-old refugee from Jurado, Colombia now living in Jaqué, Panama, started a small business selling tamales with a local Panamanian woman. However, she found that it was difficult to survive and support herself and her grandchildren on the income from tamale-making alone. When she heard about HIAS’ livelihood initiatives to help local refugees learn new sustainable jobs, she submitted a proposal to build a chicken coop and received a grant to seed a successful small chicken farm. She says that this new work has helped her regain some of her dignity and gives her a sense of control that was taken away when she had to flee her home.

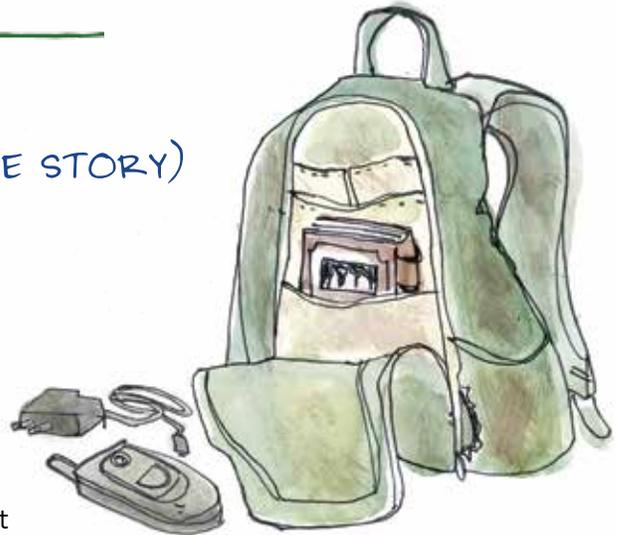
CARRYING FORWARD DURING THE MAGGID (TELLING OF THE STORY)

INTRODUCTION - Beginning of the Maggid

Leader reads aloud:

Pictures of great-grandparents lining the staircase wall. Souvenirs from our most recent vacation. Shabbat table linens crocheted by our relatives decades before our birth. Lavender and jasmine plants whose smell lets us know we are home. A well-seasoned cast-iron skillet passed down through generations. These objects create our homes and make us who we are not just through their presence in our lives but also through the stories they contain, the memories they conjure, and the comfort and familiarity they bring us. These possessions become part of us, part of the story of who we are in the world. When we walk in the front door of our home and look at the objects that surround us, we know that we are home, that we are rooted.

What happens if those objects are taken away? What happens if we must decide quickly, in the dark of the night or without warning in the middle of the afternoon, what to fit in a single backpack as we leave home? This is the decision that those fleeing violence and persecution have faced since biblical times and that they still face today. Having left with only what they can carry, how will they continue to find comfort and familiarity? How will they feel a connection to their own memories without the possessions that link them to their histories and to their lives?



OUR JEWISH ANCESTORS

Leader continues reading aloud:

We do not know much about what our biblical ancestors took with them when they went forth from Egypt. The Haggadah tells us only that “they baked unleavened cakes of dough (*matzot*) since they had been driven from Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.”

Today, we are commanded: “Remember the day on which you went forth from Egypt, from the house of bondage, and how God freed you with a mighty hand.”⁹ Imagine that you were there when our ancient Israelite ancestors left home with only unrisen bread. What else might you have brought with you? What comfort or memory would these objects bring you in your new homeland?

After the leader reads the passage above, choose one of these two options:

1. Go around the table and have participants offer their individual answers to the two questions above.
2. Build a “modern midrash¹⁰” as a group. The first participant begins by answering the questions above (what objects did the ancient Israelites bring and what comfort and memories did the objects hold). The other participants will build on the responses of those who answered before them to create a cohesive group narrative.





Um.

Photo credit: Mercy Corps/Sumaya Agha.

TODAY'S REFUGEES - Before Dayeinu

Take turns reading aloud:

Dayeinu. It would have been enough. But would it have been enough?

If God had only parted the sea but not allowed us to cross to safety, would it have been enough? If we had crossed to freedom and been sustained wandering through the wilderness but not received the wisdom of Torah to help guide us, would it have been enough?

What is enough?

As we sing the traditional "*Dayeinu*" at the Passover Seder, we express appreciation even for incomplete blessings. We are reminded that, in the face of uncertainty, we can cultivate gratitude for life's small miracles and we can find abundance amidst brokenness. Just as the story

of our own people's wandering teaches us these lessons time and time again, so, too, do the stories of today's refugees. The meager possessions they bring with them as they flee reflect the reality of rebuilding a life from so very little.

For Um, the blessing of being alive in Jordan after escaping violence in Homs in the company of her husband with only the clothes on her back - *Dayeinu*: it would have been enough.¹¹

For Dowla, the wooden pole balanced on her shoulders, which she used to carry each of her six children when they were too tired to walk during the 10-day trip from Gabanit to South Sudan - *Dayeinu*: it would have been enough.

For Farhad, the photograph of his mother that he managed to hide under his clothes when smugglers told him to throw everything away as he escaped Afghanistan - *Dayeinu*: it would have been enough.¹²

For Sajida, the necklace her best friend gave her to remember her childhood in Syria - *Dayeinu*: it would have been enough.

For Muhammed, scrolling through the list of numbers on his cell phone, his only connection to the people he has known his whole life - *Dayeinu*: it would have been enough.



Dowla.

Photo credit: UNHCR/Brian Sokol.



Sajida.

Photo credit: Mercy Corps/Sumaya Agha.



Muhammed.

Photo credit: Mercy Corps/Sumaya Agha.



Photo credit: UNHCR/Brian Sokol.

For Magboola, the cooking pot that was small enough to carry but big enough to cook sorghum to feed herself and her three daughters on their journey to freedom – *Dayeinu*: it would have been enough.¹³

Even as we give thanks for these small miracles and incomplete blessings in the world as it is, we know that this is not enough. We dream of the world as it could be. We long for a world in which safe passage and meager possessions blossom into lives rebuilt with

enough food on the table, adequate housing, and sustainable jobs. We fight for the right of all people fleeing violence and persecution to be warmly welcomed into the lands in which they seek safety, their strength honored and their vulnerability protected. When these dreams become a reality, *Dayeinu*: it will have been enough.

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM END OF MAGGID OR END OF SEDER

Before you conclude the Seder and say the words “next year in Jerusalem,” read this section and perform the closing ritual – the 5th cup. (If it is your tradition to conclude your Seder when the meal is served, read this after you bless and drink the second cup of wine and just before the meal is served.)

Leader:

At the beginning of the Passover Seder, we are commanded to consider ourselves as though we, too, had gone out from Egypt. At the end of the Seder (and once in the middle) – we say the words, “Next year in Jerusalem” to recognize that, just as redemption came for our ancestors, so, too, will redemption come for us in this generation. For those of us fortunate enough to have a roof over our heads, we may understand these words to mean that the parts of us that feel adrift will find steady footing. However, for the world’s 65 million displaced people and refugees, these words can be a literal message of hope that they will be able to rebuild their lives in a safe place.

Reader:

After experiencing unimaginable trauma and often making harrowing journeys out of danger, refugees across the United States are finding liberation after oppression. For Mohammad Ay Toghlo and his wife, Eidah Al Suleiman, the dream of “Next year in Jerusalem” has become a reality in Buffalo, New York. After war came to their village outside Damascus, they witnessed the murder of their pregnant daughter and the kidnapping of their son. They sold their car to pay a large ransom and then ultimately escaped to Lebanon. After a lengthy vetting process, Mohammed, Eidah, and their youngest son, Najati, received word they would be resettled by HIAS through the Jewish Family Service of Buffalo. Mohammed says



that, when he found out, he thought he was dreaming because “the United States is such a big thing for us that I don’t even see that in my dreams; I was so happy.” Najati is learning English and enrolled in school, and he says that, when he finds himself on the street on the way to school or to an appointment and he needs assistance, people go out of their way to communicate with him and help, even reading his body language to try to



understand what he needs. While the family’s move is bittersweet because their oldest son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren remain in Lebanon and they worry constantly about their safety, Najati says that, here, in the United States, “wherever we go, we find helpful, loving people.” As he settles into his new life here, Najati made a drawing to express his gratitude for the opportunities that the Jewish Family Service of Buffalo and the United States government have provided him and his family. The drawing expresses thanks to the United States and features a large Jewish star, surrounded by the phrase “Thank you, Jewish Family” in Arabic. The family’s life in Buffalo is not free from difficulty, but they are beginning to pick up the broken pieces of the trauma they have experienced to fulfill new hopes and new dreams here in America.

Group:

As we now end the Seder, let us pass around a 5th cup into which we will each pour a drop of wine as we express our prayers for the world’s refugees.

Pass an empty wine glass around the Seder table and have everyone add a drop of wine from their cup into this new cup. After everyone has added some wine to this 5th cup, read this blessing aloud together:

Tonight we honor the strength and resilience of refugees across the globe. We commit ourselves to ensuring that our country remains open to them, to supporting them as they rebuild their lives, and to championing their right for protection. Just as our own people now eat the bread of liberation, we pray that today’s refugees will fulfill their dreams of rebuilding their lives in safety and freedom in the year to come.



Blessed are all those who yearn to be free.

Blessed are we who commit ourselves to their freedom.

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

CALL TO ACTION FOR REFUGEES

We hope you are inspired to take action on behalf of refugees after tonight's Seder and will become part of the Jewish response to the global refugee crisis at this critical moment in history.

- Add your voice and advocate for the most needed reforms in American and international policy to protect all refugees at www.hias.org/take-action.
- Call your elected officials to tell them that you support refugees and ask them to act to ensure that refugees are welcomed and protected in the United States. Instructions and script at the link below.
- Ask your synagogue to join the hundreds of synagogues stepping up for refugees through HIAS' Welcome Campaign at www.hias.org/hias-welcome-campaign.
- Educate yourself and others using HIAS' FAQs, fact sheets, holiday resources, Jewish sources, and more on www.hias.org/resources.
- Volunteer locally with refugees in your community.
- Donate to support HIAS' vital work helping refugees rebuild their lives in the U.S. and around the world.

Visit [hias.org/helprefugees](http://www.hias.org/helprefugees) for more information about all of these ways to help refugees.



REFERENCES

1. <https://joelartista.com/syrian-refugees-the-zaatari-project-jordan/>
2. Sarah Dryden-Peterson, *The Educational Experiences of Refugee Children in Countries of First Asylum* (Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute, 2015), 1.
3. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/23/syrian-refugee-women-documentary_n_7638290.html
4. <https://techfugees.com/news/translation-through-text-how-nowall-can-help-refugees-overcome-the-language-barrier/>
5. The 1951 Refugee Convention is a multilateral treaty that defines who is a refugee, outlines the rights of refugees, and describes the obligations of the countries that grant asylum.
6. https://asylumaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FINAL_Global-Refugee-Work-Rights-Report-2014_Interactive.pdf
7. *ibid.*
8. Pseudonym used to protect the client's safety.
9. Exodus 13:3.
10. Midrash refers to the genre of rabbinic literature written between the 1st and 11th centuries that comments on the Bible, focusing on specific words, verses, or chapters and filling in the gaps or answering the questions that arise from the original text.
11. The stories of Um, Sajida, and Muhammed come from www.mercycorps.org/photoessays/jordan-syria/we-asked-refugees-what-did-you-bring-you. Their photos are reprinted with the permission of photographer Sumaya Agha (www.sumayaagha.net).
12. Farhad's story comes from upshout.net/refugees-unveil-most-valuable-possessions.
13. The stories of Magboola and Dowla come from petapixel.com/2013/03/21/portraits-of-refugees-posing-with-their-most-valued-possessions. Their photos are reprinted with the permission of UNHCR and photographer Brian Sokol (www.briansokol.com).