

# THERE ARE NO STRANGERS:

## *A Passover Seder Supplement Affirming Our Support for Immigrants and Refugees*



We gather at Passover to retell the foundational story of the Jewish People; a story of an oppressed people fleeing a life of hardship for freedom and safety in a new land.

Thirty-six times the Torah, Judaism's holiest text, references that freedom journey as a reminder that we are called not only to have empathy for the *ger* (stranger, sojourner, refugee, asylee, immigrant, or migrant), but also to take action to ensure that person is cared for in our communities. We are explicitly commanded, "You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt (Exodus 23:9)." We know the heart of the stranger because we were once strangers, too. The Jewish people's origin story is heard in the universal story of the refugee, and we are committed to keep this memory alive through welcoming and protecting those who come to our communities.

The Haggadah instructs, "In every generation, each person must see themselves as if they went out of Egypt," reminding us to keep a personal connection to the ongoing plight for freedom and justice for all migrants. Through the generations of Jewish history since the Exodus, the Jewish people has known what it means to be refugees, desperate to escape violence, poverty, and prejudice.

This Passover, we affirm our support for immigrants and refugees.

In the words of the Haggadah, we say:

Let all who are hungry come and eat.

Let all who are in need come and celebrate Passover.

## FOUR QUESTIONS FOR TABLE CONVERSATION

Consider this classic Jewish teaching (Yalkut Shimoni 13:2 on Genesis):

God gathered dust [to create the first human] from the four corners of the world... Why from the four corners of the earth? So that if one comes from the east to the west... as they near departing from the world, it will not be said to them, "This land is not the dust of your body, it's of mine. Go back to where you were created!" Rather, every place that a person walks, from there they were created and from there they will return.

1. What are some of 'the places you have walked,' literally and figuratively, in your lifetime? How have those places shaped you?
2. Think about the places where your ancestors lived. How have those places shaped you and your family? Think about the many places where our Jewish spiritual ancestors have lived. How are those places now a part of the body of the Jewish people and part of Jewish culture?
3. What motivates someone to say to another, "go back?" How do we counter that harsh impulse?
4. How can you apply this teaching, along with the Haggadah's call to preserve the collective memory of forced migration across generations, to your own life? In what ways can you actively support immigrants and refugees in your own community?

Learn more and discover ways to both express empathy and take action at [rac.org](https://www.rac.org)