

I AM A DESCENDANT OF THOSE WHO WANDER

Reflecting On Our Stories of Migration



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 reminds us of that freedom journey. Again and again, we are commanded not only to feel empathy for the ger – the stranger, sojourner, refugee, asylee, immigrant, or migrant – but to take action to ensure that person is cared for in our communities. We know the heart of the stranger because we were once strangers, too. 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).” The Jewish people’s origin story is heard in the universal story of the refugee, and we are committed to keeping 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 many generations of Jewish history since the Exodus, we have known what it means to be refugees, desperate to escape violence, poverty, and prejudice.

This Passover, we affirm our support for immigrants and refugees. But we don’t stop there, we pledge to act.

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.

כָּל דֹּכָפִין יִתִּי וְיִיכַל, כָּל דְּצָרִיךָ יִתִּי וְיִפְסַח

Learn more and discover ways to take action for immigration justice at rac.org/2026immigration

Use this roadmap to prepare your community and congregation in advance of ICE and DHS immigration enforcement activity rac.org/roadmap



rac.org/roadmap

FOUR QUESTIONS FOR TABLE CONVERSATION

Consider this teaching from Deuteronomy 26:5-26:11:

ועלית ואמרת לפני ה' אלהיך ארמי אבד אבי ויגד מצרומה ויגר שם במתי מעט ויהי-שם לגוי גדול עצום ורב:

You shall then recite as follows before the Eternal your God: "My father was a wandering Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation.

וירעו אתנו המצרים ויענונו ויתנו עלינו עבדה קשה:

The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us.

ונצעק אל-ה' אלהי אבותינו וישמע ה' את-קלנו ויגרא את-ענינו ואת-עמלנו ואת-לחצנו:

We cried to the Eternal, the God of our ancestors, and the Eternal heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression.

ויצאנו ה' ממצרים ביד חזקה ובזרע נטויה ובמרא גדל ובאותות ובמפתים:

God freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and awesome power, and by signs and portents,

ויבאנו אל-המקום הזה ויתן-לנו את-הארץ הזאת ארץ זבת חלב ודבש:

bringing us to this place and giving us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

ועתה הנה הביאתי את-ראשית פרי האדמה אשר-נתתה לי ה' והנחתו לפני ה' אלהיך והשתחית לפני ה' אלהיך:

And so I now bring the first fruits of the soil that You, O Eternal One, have given me." You shall leave the basket before the Eternal your God and bow low before the Eternal your God.

ושמחת בכל-הטוב אשר נתן-לך ה' אלהיך ולביתך והלוי והגר אשר בקרבך:

And you shall enjoy, together with the Levite and the stranger in your midst, all the bounty that the Eternal your God has bestowed upon you and your household.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does the recurring theme of migration throughout our biblical and historical stories shape Jewish identity today?
2. The Torah commands us many times not to oppress the stranger because "you know the feelings of the stranger." What does it mean to truly "know" the heart of the stranger?
3. In the Exodus story, who holds power and how is it used? How should Jewish memory shape our response when government power impacts vulnerable migrants today?
4. The passage ends by celebrating bounty together with "the stranger in your midst." What would it look like for our communities to not only help, but truly include and proactively seek to support newcomers?