

Passover Seder Refugee Supplement

Prayer and Poem to be included during Yahatz (יחץ) – breaking of the middle matzah, before or after the poem Halachma Anya (הא לחמא עניה) – this is the bread of affliction.

Prayer:

If there is a moment in the Seder that should leave us feeling self-conscious, it is now. This year we are slaves, next year the liberated ones. This year we are slaves, next year the liberated ones? Aren't we, who sit around these tables overflowing with food and drink, the liberated ones, while many of the 60 million people displaced worldwide, torn from their homes due to civil war, famine, or persecution are truly the bent, the ones in need?

Eloheinu V'Elohei Avoteinu v'Imoteinu - Our God and God of our fathers and mothers, help those who flee persecution as our ancestors did some 3000 years ago. Show chesed (loving-kindness), compassion to those hemmed in by misery and captivity, to those who take to the open ocean, or treacherous landscape seeking freedom and liberty. Rescue and recover them - delivering them from gorge to meadow, from darkness to light. Inspire us to act on behalf of those we don't know, on behalf of those we may never meet because we know the heart of the stranger. We too ate the bread of affliction whose taste still lingers. And so, dear God, inspire us to be rodfei tzedek, pursuers of righteousness for those who seek the same freedoms we enjoy tonight. Do it speedily and in our days, and let us all say, Amen.

Rabbi Daniel Gropper, Community Synagogue of Rye, NY

A Poem

He Wore the Same Shoes as My Benny

He wore the same shoes as my Benny, Blue
velcro, brown stitching, rubber-soled.

"Mama, I want to wear shorts!" he yelled.
She wondered what the future would hold.

This is the bread of affliction...

He packed a small bag with "essentials,"
A tiny brown bear and his book,
"Shhh," brother said in the quiet of night
The last journey that they ever took.

This is the night of affliction...

And so they arrived and got ready to board,
With "life vests" and people all over.
Daddy was trying to calm mommy's fears,
Although it was freedom that drove her.

This is the fear of affliction...

Not five minutes into the harrowing ride
The nightmare began, they were all terrified.
There was no escape from the cruelty of war
The rude awakening; so close yet so far.
Water was rising, gasping for air
Panicking, struggling, are you still there?

This is the water of affliction...

Early the next morning,
Though sadly too late,
The world took notice of this family's fate.

And though it is easy to turn a blind eye,
We ought to be mindful;

This was once You and I.

For we too were slaves who fought for
redemption.

We cannot turn away. There is no exemption.

This is the history of affliction...

This year as we sit at our Passover seder,
We all take a moment to pause.

There are millions enslaved in our world to
this day,

We must stand up and fight for this cause.

This is the fight of affliction...

He wore the same shoes as my Benny,
The similarities do not end there.

Each child has hope for a much better world,
The burden is on us to care.

This is the bread of affliction...

Cantor Aviva Marer, Temple Emanu-El Edison, NJ

Discussion

As we join together at the Seder table, in remembrance and in celebration of our liberation from Egypt, we cannot forget the far too many people still seeking refuge. With over 60 million people displaced worldwide, we are facing the largest global refugee crisis since World War II, and as a Jewish community, we must take action. Use the following questions to discuss the connections between this contemporary crisis and the biblical teachings of Passover. For more resources and tools to take action visit rac.org/refugeecrisis.

1. On Passover we are told, "In every generation all of us are obligated to regard ourselves as if we ourselves went forth from the land of Egypt" (Exodus 13:8). How does this season of Passover remind us of and inspire us to take action in response to the 60 million seeking a safe haven worldwide?
2. Our community knows too well the struggle for freedom. Does this history motivate us to engage on this issue? How so?
3. During Passover and throughout the year, how can I help respond to this global refugee crisis?