



Not Only Them But Us

Passover 5779

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלוֹ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׁנֵאמַר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יי לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּלֶבֶד גָּאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֲלֵא אִף אוֹתֵנוּ גָּאֵל עִמָּהֶם, שְׁנֵאמַר: וְאוֹתֵנוּ הוֹצֵיא מִשָּׁם, לְמַעַן הִבִּיא אֹתֵנוּ, לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם.

In each and every generation, a person is obligated to see oneself as if one left Egypt, as it is stated: "For the sake of this, did the Lord do this for me in my going out of Egypt." (Exodus 13:8) Not only our ancestors did the Holy One, blessed be God, redeem, but rather also us together with them did God redeem, as it is stated: "And God took us out from there, in order to bring us in, to give us the land which God swore unto our ancestors." (Deuteronomy 6:23)

The Passover story reminds us that we were once wanderers. We were once without a place to call home, our future uncertain. Like millions of refugees and displaced people in the world today, we fled violence and persecution with the hope of a better future. Like immigrant families who uproot their lives in order to begin anew, we left everything we had behind for the promise of more. And so on Passover, as we recount the story of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, we must also recount the similar experiences of immigrants and refugees today. Closing our eyes to the suffering of refugees and immigrants is akin to closing our eyes to our own history and our collective memory.

Discussion Questions

- 1. What is your (biological or chosen) family's immigration story or experience with immigration, migration, forced migration? Are there stories in your family that are not told? Why?**
- 2. What is a physical, emotional, or spiritual journey you have taken (or are still on) since last Passover? What have been some challenges of that journey? What have been some rewards?**
- 3. What is a mitzrayim, or a narrow place, that you have emerged from in the past year? What did it take for you to go from narrowness to freedom?**

It is with eyes wide open to our historical connections and obligation, as well to the current immigration crisis plaguing the United States, that we, members of the Chicago Jewish Justice Circle (CJJC), urge you to uplift Immigration Justice as part of your Seder this Passover.

During Passover, we speak about Mitzrayim - the narrow place of Egypt from which our ancestors emerged into freedom. In the United States today, we are constructing mitzrayim: detention centers in which our immigrant siblings are held captive, never knowing when they will emerge and what their fate will be when they do. We watched children being ripped from their families and placed in child detention camps. We celebrated the closing of the Tornillo, TX child detention facility, a victory members of our own Chicagoland community fought for, and we are horrified by the ongoing detention of children in Homestead, FL. Here in Illinois, a fight is on-going to pass a bill that would ban the construction of for-profit, private detention facilities.

We cannot condone caging humans. We cannot stand idly by while companies are profiting off of the pain and heartache of our communities. We must take action to free all those who are caged out of racism, xenophobia, fear and hate.

We invite you to get involved with member organizations of the Chicago Jewish Justice Circle (CJJC) this Passover and all year round!

CJJC is a collective of Jewish individuals and organizations who see justice as core to our work and lives as Jews. We gather bi-monthly to connect, share our work, and find ways to support one another in our efforts to engage our communities in impactful social justice work.



Avodah

Avodah strengthens the Jewish community's fight against the causes and effects of poverty in the United States.

**Contacts: Abby Citrin, (773) 649-6140, acitrin@avodah.net
Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg, 310-717-0092, druttenberg@avodah.net**

**HIAS
IMMIGRATION
& CITIZENSHIP**



HIAS Immigration and Citizenship

HIAS Immigration & Citizenship, a program of JCFS Chicago, provides an array of comprehensive immigration and citizenship services to immigrants of all faiths and backgrounds. HIAS actively advocates for the rights of refugees and immigrants at the local, state and national level.

Contact: Jessica Schaffer, JessicaSchaffer@jcfcs.org



Illinois Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

RAC-IL is the organized Reform Jewish community building and leveraging the power of our Movement for a more just and compassionate Land of Lincoln for all.

Contact: Julie Webb, jwebb@rac.org



Jewish Council on Urban Affairs (JCUA)

JCUA is the Jewish voice for social justice in the Chicagoland area. JCUA combats poverty, racism, and anti-semitism in partnership with Chicago's diverse communities through issue based organizing campaigns, youth engagement, and investment in affordable housing and job creation.

Contact: Anna Rubin, anna@jcua.org, 412-335-5807



Mishkan Chicago

Our mission is to reimagine and breathe new life into Judaism. We create radically inclusive spaces for Jewish spiritual practice and community, focusing on engaging, educating, and empowering people across the spectrum of identity, background, age, and belief.

**Contact: Rabbi Lauren Henderson, 773-893-0613,
rabbilauren@mishkanchicago.org**



Na'aseh at Anshe Emet

Na'aseh - meaning "we will do" - is the social justice committee that helps the Anshe Emet community engage in social action and volunteer activities.

Contact: Samantha DeKoven, samantha.dekoven@gmail.com

**Silverstein
BASE HILLEL**

Silverstein Base Hillel

Silverstein Base Hillel is a Jewish home for college students and young adults and the actual home of a rabbinic couple committed to pluralism and founded on three core values: hospitality, learning, and justice.

Contact: Rabbi Megan GoldMarche, rabbimegan@gmail.com

Contact us at ChicagoJJC@gmail.com or check us out on Facebook @ChicagoJJC