

Aleinu: It Is On Us



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

Aleinu: it was on us.

It was on us from the moment our ancestors were first forced to leave home,
charged with transforming their wandering into a blessing for all people.
It has been on us since that wandering became encoded in our DNA,
from *Avram Ha'Ivri*, Abram the one who crossed over,
to *Ha'Ivrim*, the Jewish people,
all of us inheriting the legacy of centuries of crossing from one home to another.
As our people became a refugee people,
we took on the sacred responsibility to see our story as bound up with the stories of all who continue to wander.

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"Love [the stranger] as you would love yourself,
for you were strangers in the Land of Egypt," God said.
To advocate for a world in which the 68 million people who flee for their lives
can find protection and a place to call home –
To stand with those who leave nightmarish situations only to undertake nightmarish journeys
so that they may exercise their legal right to find protection in these United States –
To cry out for the families who are separated from one another,
detained without an end in sight,
babies calling for parents who may never see them again –
To speak up when those in power shut the doors of our country to victims of violence and persecution –
To stay outraged from a place of love rather than hate,
from a place of welcome rather than exclusion –
These, too, are our obligations without measure.

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We know the cost of making any other choice,
of demurring from the holy task of transforming our wandering into blessing.
As we bow and bend to the Source of Freedom,
with visions of a repaired world in our minds
and the commitment to fulfill these visions on our tongues and at our fingertips –
Aleinu: it will always be on us to remember that there is no us and there is no them,
there are only God's children,
each deserving of blessings of liberty and justice.