

Together with Refugees: In Remembrance of Egypt, In Celebration of Creation



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

Read the following aloud before you recite Kiddush (blessing over the Shabbat wine):

We lift this cup with words remembering our ancestors' Exodus from Egypt on our lips – *zecher litziat Mitzrayim*.

As we recall that ancient journey from slavery to freedom, we think also of the many times throughout history that our people have wandered in search of safety.

From tsarist Russia; to the horrors of the Holocaust; to persecution in Iran, the Former Soviet Union, Cuba, Ethiopia, and beyond, time and time again we have found ourselves forced out of our homelands for being who we are.

But, each time, we were held together by community and assisted by those who risked their safety in protection of ours. We continued to survive against all odds as our hearts grew to hold others who would come to experience what we had.

We fill our Kiddush cup to overflowing, hoping that the joy of Shabbat will spread into the week to come.

And so it is as we welcome refugees and asylum seekers into our communities today.

Recalling our Exodus from Egypt, the Torah tells us, “you know the soul of the stranger.” While our responsibility to protect the rights of refugees and asylum seekers does not derive from our experience in Egypt, that experience does amplify our obligation to welcome.

May our commitment to welcome fill to overflowing just as our Kiddush cup does, leading us to take bold action in support of refugees and asylum seekers from every corner of the earth.

Just as the Jewish people have thrived, so, too, do today's refugees of all faiths and ethnicities thrive as they rebuild their lives and become part of their new communities.

We lift this cup with the words remembering the ingenuity of creation on our lips – *zikaron l'ma'aseh v'reishit*.

We continue creating and repairing the world as we build our communities on the collective strength of each individual, remembering that we are stronger and strongest when we come together.