



On Freedom

A Passover and Easter Conversation

During this time of Passover and Easter, we urge those celebrating to consider the roots of these holidays, roots found in persecution, slavery, and exile. Both celebrate the freedom G-d has given us: The Israelite's freedom from Egypt and the Christian belief of freedom from sin and death through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

In reading the Exodus stories that are shared in Jewish and Christian communities alike during Passover and Holy Week, reflect on the history of G-d's people and see today's refugees and immigrants in the place of the Israelites, traveling through unknown and dangerous lands with the hope of eventual peace and safety. At this time of the year, now more than ever, our faiths call us to become sanctuaries for all (Exodus 15:12-18).

But today, bans have been issued against immigrants and refugees under the name of "national security." These bans specifically target our Muslim and undocumented siblings. Any silence on this matter is deafening. True security only comes when every person has a place

they can call home. True security only comes with freedom from oppression, persecution, detention, and deportation.

Many of us and our communities are physically liberated at this moment. As we celebrate this liberation, may we recognize and stand in solidarity with G-d's most vulnerable - refugees and immigrants in our midst - so that they might finally be free. We must remember and acknowledge that our continued liberation is bound up with the liberation of the rest of society - "None of us is free until we are all free," (MLK Jr.) "Until we are all free we are none of us free," (Emma Lazarus).

What You Can Do

This is a call for you to:

1. **Remember and discuss** the refugee and immigration crises during Passover and Easter seasons by using this document, other resources listed, and discussion questions. Vow to end the silence.
2. **Call** your representatives.
3. **Prayerfully consider** making your congregation a "sanctuary" community.
4. **Educate** your congregations on how to be advocates for the marginalized.
5. **Support** refugee and immigrant aid organizations, with your time or money.
6. **Engage** in interfaith conversations to plan next steps. Build bridges not walls!

Discussion Questions

1. How does the story of Exodus that we read this time of year resonate with the current crisis?
2. What might your faith community do to support immigrants and refugees living and working in your community?
3. How might we be allies during this time? Reflect on Lilla Watson's quote: "If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."
4. How might we live into our call to "Holy Resistance" when it comes to supporting our undocumented and vulnerable neighbors?

Did You Know?

- **Undocumented workers have the same rights under labor law as all other workers in the United States.**
- Undocumented workers make up more than 5 percent of the U.S. workforce overall, and are represented at approximately 25 percent and 15 percent in farming and construction, respectively. Many of these working people have been in the United States for over 10 years.
- Undocumented immigrants in this country are living in constant fear of deportation as the number of random searches conducted by ICE continues to increase.
- In the weeks since the inauguration, IWJ has been working with our partners across the country to win freedom for members of our worker center communities who have been detained or been placed in deportation proceedings by ICE and local law enforcement. These cases are happening across the country, from Upstate New York to Cincinnati to LA.

What Faith Groups Say...

"A secure America is one that stands by its Constitution, and real patriotism is the belief in American ideals enough to uphold them. As Americans, we do not ban, register, or deport people based on the how they pray or the color of their skin. As Americans, we do not turn away men, women and children who are seeking refuge and are escaping persecution, violence and war. **As Americans, we know very well that an attack on one religious minority is an attack on us all.** THIS is what makes America great." (Muslim Public Affairs Council)

"We stand in a long tradition of radical hospitality.... We will not be silent if families are torn apart, children terrified, parents detained. **We are not accomplices to hate or reactionary fear.** Our calling is to love and justice and faithful resistance. We will open our hearts, we will open our doors, to those who face the threat of deportation. All are welcome, period." (The Rev. Victoria Safford, Unitarian Universalist Association)

"Thousands of persons are led to travel north in search of a better life for themselves and for their loved ones, in search of greater opportunities. Is this not what we want for our own children? **We must ... view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories,** trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal." (Pope Francis, Roman Catholic Church)

"We believe what we're doing together is a practice of "holy resistance." ... our faith required us to risk." (The Rev. Dr. Cody J. Sanders, American Baptist)

"...look for inspiration to the Torah's exhortation to "welcome the stranger," **we cannot be silent while our borders close.**" (Jewish Reconstructionist Assembly)

