

THEY GAVE ALL THEY HAD TO SAVE ALL THEY COULD



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# THE ZOOKEEPER'S WIFE

PASSOVER SUPPLEMENT

*(To be used in addition to your family's Haggadah)*



**HIAS**  
Welcome the stranger.  
Protect the refugee.



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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

*The Zookeeper's Wife* is the real-life story of one working wife and mother who became a hero to hundreds during World War II. In 1939 Poland, Antonina Żabińska and her husband, Dr. Jan Żabiński, had the Warsaw Zoo flourishing under his stewardship and her care.

When their country was invaded by the Germans, the the Żabińskis covertly worked with the Resistance and put into action plans to save Jewish families from the Warsaw Ghetto, putting themselves and their family at great risk.

In the spirit of this heroic story, Focus Features has collaborated with humanitarian relief agencies the International Rescue Committee (IRC), HIAS, and CARE; and leading Jewish organizations from around the country to produce this Haggadah supplement.

*There are four points in the Seder where these materials can be inserted:*

1. Introduction to Maggid
2. The Four Questions
3. The Four Sons
4. Dayenu

"We used to help refugees because they were Jewish. Now we help refugees because we are Jewish."

—MARK HETFIELD, the president and CEO of HIAS

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## INTRODUCTION FOR THE SEDER HOST

*(To be read in preparation for the Maggid Section)*

We gather on Passover to recall a moment of resistance and liberation in the history of our people. The story of Exodus, which we are about to recount, reminds us of the transformative power that our people wield when we confront oppression. On this holiday, we remember the biblical story of Exodus—how an entire nation was oppressed, forced to evacuate their homes, pursued by their oppressors into the desert, and then finally given a chance to rebuild their society in freedom.

In observing Passover, the Jewish people are directed to not only share the original story of Exodus but also to acknowledge historical injustices and challenge injustice in their own times. This Passover, we encourage you to honor this tradition by sharing the story of Antonina Żabińska, honored by the State of Israel as Righteous Among the Nations, and to use your Seder as an opportunity to reflect and discuss the role we can play in following Antonina's example and providing a place for hope for modern-day peoples in exodus, refugees across the world looking for sanctuary, looking for a home. This story of Exodus comes to mind today as we consider the situation of the millions of people around the world who have been forced to flee their homes and leave loved ones behind because of violent conflict and disaster.

We hope that this story-telling, contemplation, discussion and renewed commitment to tzedek, (justice)—in the great tradition of Passover—will be a powerful part of your Seder and will lead to tikkun olam, meaningful change in the world.

*Currently there are over 65 million people worldwide who have been forced from their homes by conflict, 25 million of them have crossed borders and are refugees. This is the greatest humanitarian crisis since WWII. Like our ancestors in Egypt, forced to flee their homes from the terror of the Pharaoh, or our Jewish relatives terrorized by the Nazis and fascist regimes, millions of families today from Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Congo, and more are on the move in search of a chance to rebuild their lives in safety. The International Rescue Committee is working in 40 countries around the world and 29 cities across the U.S. helping war-affected people to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity.*

"Whoever saves a single life is as if one saves the entire world."—TALMUD

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## READING

*As we move into the Maggid section of the Seder, where we recount the story of our Exodus, please turn to the Passover Supplement:*

**READER:** Passover honors the story of Exodus—how our entire nation was oppressed, forced to flee their homes at a moment's notice, pursued by their oppressors into the desert, and then finally given a chance to rebuild their society in freedom. We retell this story of our liberation so that we are able to visualize ourselves as if we were also slaves in Egypt, enduring similar hardships.

**READER:** We remember that there have been other times during history that our people could not live as Jews, yet they held Seders to preserve their traditions and maintain their dignity, and their humanity. At the time of the Spanish Inquisition, Jewish families lived as Christians in public but held Seders in secret. During the Holocaust, while fellow Jews were being massacred, our people held Seders in ghettos and concentration camps, further risking their own lives.

**READER:** Tonight we remember the story of *The Zookeeper's Wife*, Antonina Żabińska. Together, she and her husband, Jan helped over 300 Jews escape the Warsaw Ghetto by sheltering and hiding them in their home at the Warsaw Zoo, despite the extreme danger her actions posed for herself and her family. The Warsaw Zoo is still run by the Żabiński family today and stands as a memorial to the 300 Jews who were saved by their bravery, and the many millions more who were murdered because of intolerance and hate.

**READER:** As we enjoy the freedom to be Jews and to celebrate our traditions in the open, we must always remember the plight of millions of people around the world who do not have the same luxury, as they have been forced to flee their homes and leave loved ones behind because of violence and religious persecution, similar to what our people faced and continue to face daily, even in the United States.

"I am a refugee but the word refugee is not popular. But everyone likes the idea of refuge. Fight for refuge. We all need refuge."

—Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, ELIE WIESEL

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## SECOND READER or GROUP READ:

Right now, more people around the world have been uprooted by war and disaster than at any other time in recorded history. We are in the midst of the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II. The strength of the United States has always been rooted in our diversity of ideas and people, and in upholding freedom and justice for all. By knowing and sharing facts about refugees, we can counteract misinformation and a growing stigmatization of one of the world's most vulnerable populations. Facts like:

- Men, women and children become refugees when they are involuntarily forced to flee their homes—their country of origin—due to war or persecution, owing to their race, religion, nationality, or political affiliation.
- More than half of the world's refugees are children under the age of eighteen. Three-quarters are women and children.
- The 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention was initially created to protect European refugees in the aftermath of World War II. Under international law, refugees cannot be forced back to the countries they have fled.
- Refugees are the most vetted people coming into the United States. In 2017, the U.S. pledged to receive 110,000 refugees. The U.S. had reduced that number to 50,000—and excluded refugees from Syria, a country where over 12 million people, over half of its original population, have been forced to flee their homes.
- The United Nation's refugee agency forecasts that roughly 1.2 million of the 16.1 million refugees under the organization's mandate will need to be resettled, half of whom are children.

**READER:** As we honor Passover over the next 7 days, let's pledge to strive to acknowledge injustice daily and remember our calling to help the vulnerable throughout the world, starting in our own community.

"The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil,  
but because of the people who don't do anything about it."

—ALBERT EINSTEIN (the International Rescue Committee was founded at the suggestion of  
Albert Einstein in 1933, to help rescue persecuted Jews out of Europe.)

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## **Take Action in Your Community**

- Find the nearest refugee processing center near you and call them to find out how you can help support them.
- Donate to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) that resettles refugees and helps families rebuild their lives in the U.S.:  
[www.rescue.org/Zookeepers](http://www.rescue.org/Zookeepers)
- Ask your synagogue to join the hundreds of synagogues stepping up for refugees through HIAS' Welcome Campaign at  
[www.hias.org/hias-welcome-campaign](http://www.hias.org/hias-welcome-campaign).
- Send a CARE Package to refugees at [www.care.org](http://www.care.org). CARE provides vouchers to refugees for them to purchase the food and other items they determine most urgent for their families.
- Tell Congress to Stand for Welcome by calling and leaving a voicemail expressing your support for refugees or writing a letter.



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## FOUR MORE QUESTIONS

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*(To be read after the Mah Nishtanah—the Four Questions and their Responses):*

In one of the most important moments of the Seder, the youngest person present recites “Mah Nishtana—The Four Questions.” This year, we include four additional questions related to the themes of the Seder for you to contemplate and discuss.

1. One of the most powerful scenes in *The Zookeeper's Wife* comes when some of the Jews hiding in the Żabińskis' zoo gather for a Passover Seder. As the characters sing, we see them recounting the story of how the Jewish people escaped a regime which enslaved and persecuted them, finding freedom and redemption. We see a parallel between the Passover story and the situation of those hiding from the Nazis. In what way do the themes of Passover resonate with the current socio-political climate? Who is living under persecution or in need of redemption now? and what can we do to help them?
2. In some ways, the Passover story—that trajectory of the Jewish people being enslaved and oppressed in Egypt but ultimately being freed—is a particularly special story for the Jewish people. However, it is also a universal tale, meant to teach broader lessons of tolerance and compassion for those who are different. The experience of going from slavery to freedom is repeated at several other points in the Torah as part of our obligation to care for “the stranger” for “you were strangers in Egypt.” Who do we regard as “the stranger” today? How might the Passover story teach us to treat them?
3. In the Haggadah it is written, “Whoever is hungry, let him come and eat; whoever is in need, let him come and conduct the Seder of Passover.” Just as Antonina opened her home to shelter and care for the needy, this holiday compels us to find ways to help care for those “in need.” How can we open our homes to those who are hungry and in need? What do we have to give?
4. It is written, “In every generation, a person is obligated to regard himself as if he personally left Egypt.” What does it mean to “regard” one's self as having “personally left Egypt?” Why might this personal connection be so significant for the holiday of Passover? How might relating to the Passover story help us relate to the struggles of refugees?

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## THE FOUR HEROES

*(To be read after the Four Sons):*

We have just read about four archetypal sons, four ways in which people relate to the Passover story. This year, we offer the Four Heroes, four ways in which one, like Antonina in *The Zookeeper's Wife*, can stand up for those around him or her.

1. **The Hero Who Speaks Out:** He sees something wrong and raises his voice to call attention to the problem and inform others. He posts informative articles on social media, calls elected officials to make his voice heard, and engages people in conversation, helping to counteract the misinformation about refugees.
2. **The Hero Who Gives:** She shares what she has with those who are in need. She donates extra resources, such as food or clothing, to local food pantries, shelters, or charities.
3. **The Hero Who Is Present:** He gives his time and physical presence to helping others. He spends time on the weekends at local shelters and organizations that serve those in need.
4. **The Hero Who Welcomes:** She opens up her home to those who need a place to stay, and urges her town and state to offer sanctuary. She supports the humanitarian organizations and has connected to the refugee resettlement office in her community.

As we finish up Maggid and the rest of the Seder, we hope that the example of Antonina, the facts, resources, questions, and kinds of heroes you've just read will empower you to carry the story of Passover long after the holiday ends.



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## TODAY'S REFUGEES

Resource from the HIAS 2017 Haggadah Supplement which can be found at [www.hias.org/passover2017](http://www.hias.org/passover2017)

*( Before Dayeinu) Take turns reading aloud:*

Dayeinu. It would have been enough. But would it have been enough?

If God had only parted the sea but not allowed us to cross to safety, would it have been enough? If we had crossed to freedom and been sustained wandering through the wilderness but not received the wisdom of Torah to help guide us, would it have been enough?

What is enough?

As we sing the traditional “Dayeinu” at the Passover Seder, we express appreciation even for incomplete blessings. We are reminded that, in the face of uncertainty, we can cultivate gratitude for life’s small miracles and we can find abundance amidst brokenness. Just as the story of our own people’s wandering teaches us these lessons time and time again, so, too, do the stories of today’s refugees. The meager possessions they bring with them as they flee reflect the reality of rebuilding a life from so very little.

For Um, the blessing of being alive in Jordan after escaping violence in Homs in the company of her husband with only the clothes on her back—Dayeinu: it would have been enough.

For Dowla, the wooden pole balanced on her shoulders, which she used to carry each of her six children when they were too tired to walk during the 10-day trip from Gabanit to South Sudan—Dayeinu: it would have been enough.

For Farhad, the photograph of his mother that he managed to hide under his clothes when smugglers told him to throw everything away as he escaped Afghanistan—Dayeinu: it would have been enough.

For Sajida, the necklace her best friend gave her to remember her childhood in Syria—Dayeinu: it would have been enough.

For Muhammed, scrolling through the list of numbers on his cell phone, his only connection to the people he has known his whole life—Dayeinu: it would have been enough.

For Magboola, the cooking pot that was small enough to carry but big enough to cook sorghum to feed herself and her three daughters on their journey to freedom—Dayeinu: it would have been enough.

Even as we give thanks for these small miracles and incomplete blessings in the world as it is, we know that this is not enough. We dream of the world as it could be. We long for a world in which safe passage and meager possessions blossom into lives rebuilt with enough food on the table, adequate housing, and sustainable jobs. We fight for the right of all people fleeing violence and persecution to be warmly welcomed into the lands in which they seek safety, their strength honored and their vulnerability protected. When these dreams become a reality, Dayeinu: it will have been enough.

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Created by Picture Motion

## **Resources Provided by:**

International Rescue Committee

HIAS

## **Reviewed by:**

United Synagogue Youth

CARE

Hillel

Anti-Defamation League