

Arami Oved Avi

Contributed by [Alon Ferency](#)

Source: Rabbi Alon C Ferency

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אָרַמִּי אֹבֵד אָבִי, וְנִרְדָּ מִצְרַיִם, וַיֵּגֶר שָׁם בְּמִתֵּי מִצְרַיִם.

Deuteronomy 26:1-10

My ancestor was a refugee Aramean. He descended to Egypt and resided there in small numbers. There, he became a great nation, powerful and vast. The Egyptians persecuted us, and battered us, giving us severe labors. We cried out to God, who is god to our ancestors, and then God heard our voice. God saw our suffering, toil, and oppression. God took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and outstretched arm, with great demonstrations[of God's power] and wonderful signs. God brought us to this place, and gave us this Land, a Land of milk and honey.

Letter from a Foreign Jew (Egypt, 11th cent.)

I have no cover, and no couch, and no work to which I can resort. I am from a faraway place, namely Rahba [Iraq].

I have been here three months and none of our coreligionists has paid attention to me or fed me with a piece of bread. So I have turned to God the exalted and to my master to do for me what is appropriate for every wayfarer and give me as charity a little money to raise [my] spirits, for I am miserable and dying from hunger. Dogs get their fill these days with bread, but not I.

The Economist, *Keep the Borders Open*, January 3, 2008

History has shown that immigration encourages prosperity. Tens of millions of Europeans who made it to the New World in the 19th and 20th centuries improved their lot, just as the near 40m foreign-born are doing in America today.

Many migrants return home with new skills, savings, technology and bright ideas. Remittances to poor countries in 2006 were worth at least \$260 billion— more, in many countries, than aid and foreign investment combined...

The movement of people also helps the rich world. Prosperous countries with greying workforces rely ever more on young foreigners. Indeed, advanced economies compete vigorously for outsiders' skills. Around a third of the Americans who won Nobel prizes in physics in the past seven years were born abroad. About 40% of science and engineering PhDs working in America are immigrants. Around a third of Silicon Valley companies were started by Indians and Chinese. The low-skilled are needed too, especially in farming, services and care for children and the elderly. It is no coincidence that countries that welcome immigrants— such as Sweden, Ireland, America and Britain—have better economic records than those that shun them.