

Karpas

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Source: HIAS Haggadah 2019



Leader: Centuries ago, only those who were free enjoyed the luxury of dipping their food to begin a meal. In celebration of our people's freedom, tonight, we, too, start our meal by dipping green vegetables. However, we also remember that our freedom came after tremendous struggle. And, so, we dip our vegetables into salt water to recall the ominous waters that threatened to drown our Israelite ancestors as they fled persecution in Egypt, as well as the tears they shed on that harrowing journey to freedom.

We recognize that, today, there are more than 68 million people still making these treacherous journeys away from persecution and violence in their homelands. As we dip the karpas into salt water tonight, we bring to mind those who have risked and sometimes lost their lives in pursuit of safety and liberty.

Group: We dip for the Rohingya father who walked for six days to avoid military capture in his native Myanmar before he came to the Naf River and swam to Bangladesh.

We dip for the Syrian mother rescued from the dark waters of the Mediterranean Sea in the early hours of morning, still holding the lifeless body of her infant child after their small boat capsized.²

We dip for the Somali and Ethiopian refugees deliberately drowned when the smuggler who promised them freedom forced them into the Arabian Sea.

Leader: We dip for these brave souls and for the thousands of other refugees and asylum seekers who have risked their lives in unsafe and unforgiving waters across the globe this past year.

It is a green vegetable that we dip tonight - a reminder of spring, hope, and the possibility of redemption even in the face of unimaginable difficulty. As we mourn those who have lost their lives in search of freedom, we remain hopeful that those who still wander will find refuge.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree ha-adama.

We praise God, Ruler of Everything, who creates the fruit of the earth.