

ARAMI OVED AVI - MY FATHER WAS A WANDERING ARAMEAN

Our Origin Story...

Genesis

And the Eternal had said to Abram, “Get out from your country, and from your family, and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.” (Genesis 12:1)

[God] said to Abram, “Know now that your descendants shall be strangers in a land not theirs; they shall be enslaved and afflicted for four hundred years. (Genesis 15:13)

Deuteronomy

You shall then recite as follows before your Eternal God: “My father was a fugitive Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation. The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us. We cried to the Eternal, the God of our ancestors, and the Eternal heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression. The Eternal freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and awesome power, and by signs and portents, bringing us to this place and giving us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. (Deuteronomy 26:5-8)

Eight Teachings from the Torah on Immigrants

1. You shall not wrong nor oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. (Exodus 22:20)
2. You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt. (Exodus 23:9)
3. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger; I the Eternal am your God. (Leviticus 19:10)
4. When strangers reside with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt; I the Eternal am your God. (Leviticus 19:33-34)
5. You too must befriend (love) the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.. (Deuteronomy 10:19)
6. You shall not abhor an Edomite, for such is your kin. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, for you were a stranger in that land. (Deuteronomy 23:8)
7. You shall not subvert the rights of the stranger or the fatherless; you shall not take a widow’s garment in pawn. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that your Eternal God redeemed you there; therefore do I enjoin you to observe this commandment. (Deuteronomy 24:17-18)

8. Cursed be the one who subverts the rights of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. And all the people shall say, Amen. (Deuteronomy 27:19)

Mishnah Pesachim 10:5 (and from the Haggadah)

In every generation, a person is obligated to see him or herself as though s/he came forth from Egypt.

Rambam, Hilkhos Chamez u'matzah 7:6

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Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, Festival of Freedom: Essays on Pesach and the Haggadah

The standard text reads, "In each generation, one is duty-bound *lirot et atzmo*, to consider himself, as if he had been delivered from Egyptian bondage." Instead of the reflexive verb *lirot et atzmo*, signifying an inner experience, Maimonides substitutes the verb, *l'harot et atzmo*, to demonstrate, to behave in a manner manifesting the experience of finding liberty after having been enslaved for a long time.