

Slavery didn't end with The Exodus



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Sixty year old Shyari's hands are bound in cloth in an attempt to protect them against the bricks she has to shift for 12 hours a day.



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'Indra' was trafficked from Sri Lanka to the UK to work in domestic service. Her employer took her passport and refused to pay her.



Coalition of Immokalee Workers

Many migrant workers are often forced to harvest crops on farms, work in construction and factories.

Slavery didn't end with the exodus from Egypt. It is a plague that still exists today. The International Labour Organization estimates that there are about 20.9 million people in slavery in the world and it values the international slave economy at around \$150 billion.

What has this got to do with us, as Jews today?

"In every generation we are commanded to view ourselves as if each one of us was personally brought forth out of Egypt." The Seder service and its rituals aim to remind us of the feeling of being a slave. Furthermore we are told to "remember the stranger, for we were strangers in Egypt"

This is a call to action, a call for us to rise up against slavery and oppression in our own time. It's easy to talk about slavery at our Seder as if we were part of our past and not our present. In order to truly celebrate the Exodus, we need to remember those who do not enjoy our freedom.

Some ideas to help us remember modern slavery at the Seder Service:

- eat an extra portion of **bitter herbs** to remember the bitterness of the lives of people in modern slavery;
- put out **four matzot** instead of the traditional three to symbolise those still eating the bread of affliction;
- lay an extra place at your Seder to represent those who do not live in freedom;
- read **Hadijatou's story** (over the page) during the Seder service perhaps after the Hallel to contrast our joy at freedom with the unhappiness of people like Hadijatou;



Hadijatou's story

Hadijatou was born a slave and she was sold to a new master at the age of 12. She served her new master's family for almost 10 years, subjected to harsh labour, doing domestic and agricultural work in the fields. She was never paid for her work. One year after her purchase she was raped for the first time by her master and subsequently continued to endure sexual violence. With Anti-Slavery International's partners' help, she was freed and she is now married with a small holding. Following her landmark court case, many other women like her were freed.

Slavery today

Slavery exists in different forms around the world today.

Trafficking - this involves the transport or recruitment of people - women, children and men - for the purpose of forcing them into slavery. Trafficking is found in almost all parts of the world including the UK and Israel. President Peres said: "The fact that this loathsome disease exists in a Jewish state is a disgraceful stain on the most basic commandments of our legacy."

Bonded labour - people become bonded labourers when their labour is demanded as a means of repayment for a loan, which can be for as little as the cost of medicine for a sick child. The labourer receives basic food and shelter as 'payment' for their work, but may never pay off the loan, which can be passed down for generations.

Child slavery - according to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 5.5 million children are in slavery, forced to work at the cost of their health and childhood.

Slavery by descent - where people are either born into slavery. They are literally owned by a master and face a lifetime of forced labour and abuse. They can be bought and sold.

What can you do to help?

Try to buy clothes and other goods from suppliers who do not use slave or child labour to make them. Be especially careful with goods that are very cheap. Ask your retailers what they do to prevent forced labour being used in their supply chain.

Become a supporter of **Anti-Slavery International** (www.antislavery.org). It works to end slavery in all its forms. Join, help to fight slavery and practise the mitzvah of Tikkun Olam – help to heal a broken world.