

Let All Who are Hungry, Come and Eat—A Reading for The Passover Seder

We encourage you to incorporate this reading into the *Ha lachma anya* section of your seder.

Ha lachma anya—this is the bread of affliction.

At the seder we begin as slaves. We eat *matzah*, the bread of affliction, which leaves us hungry and longing for redemption. It reminds us of a time when we couldn't control what food was available to us, but ate what we could out of necessity. The *matzah* enables us to taste slavery—to imagine what it means to be denied our right to live free and healthy lives.

But, while we will soon enjoy a large meal and end the seder night as free people, 963 million people around the world can not leave the affliction of hunger behind. Each day, 25,000 adults and children die from hunger and malnutrition. In fact, a child dies every six seconds because he or she is starving.* Let us awaken to their cries and declare:

Kol dichfin yeitei v'yeichol—let all who are hungry, come and eat.

As we sit at our seder and contemplate our people's transition from slavery to freedom, let us hope for a time when all who are hungry will eat as free people:

Let all people gain autonomy over their sources of sustenance.
Let local farms flourish and local economies strengthen.

Let exploitation of natural resources cease so that the land may nourish its inhabitants.

Let communities bolster themselves against the destruction wrought by flood and drought.

Let our world leaders recognize food as a basic human right and implement policies and programs that put an end to world hunger.

The Passover seder inspires us to take action and commit ourselves to working toward these and other sustainable changes. As the seder guides us from scarcity to plenty, let us empower others on their paths to sustenance.

Hashata avdei—this year we are still slaves.

Leshanah haba'ah b'nei chorin—next year we will be free people.

This year, hunger and malnutrition are still the greatest risks to good health around the world. Next year, may the bread of affliction be simply a symbol, and may all people enjoy the bread of plenty, the bread of freedom.

* UN World Food Programme.

The Four Children

We encourage you to incorporate this reading into the Four Children section of your seder.

At Passover, we are confronted with the stories of our ancestors' pursuit of liberation from oppression. Facing this mirror of history, how do we answer their challenge? How do we answer our children when they ask us how to pursue justice in our time?

What does the **Activist Child** ask?

"The Torah tells me, 'Justice, justice shall you pursue,' but how can I pursue justice?"

Empower him always to seek pathways to advocate for the vulnerable. As *Proverbs* teaches, "Speak up for the mute, for the rights of the unfortunate. Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy."

What does the **Skeptical Child** ask?

"How can I solve problems of such enormity?"

Encourage her by explaining that she need not solve the problems, she must only do what she is capable of doing. As we read in *Pirke Avot*, "It is not your responsibility to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."

What does the **Indifferent Child** say?

"It's not my responsibility."

Persuade him that responsibility cannot be shirked. As Abraham Joshua Heschel writes, "The opposite of good is not evil, the opposite of good is indifference. In a free society where terrible wrongs exist, some are guilty, but all are responsible."

And the **Uninformed Child** who does not know how to ask...

Prompt her to see herself as an inheritor of our people's legacy. As it says in *Deuteronomy*, "You must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

At this season of liberation, join us in working for the liberation of all people. Let us respond to our children's questions with action and justice. Please visit www.ajws.org.