



Jewish Educational Wisdom,
Experience & Leadership

Hunger Haggadah

Written and Prepared by Rabbi Erin Hirsh, January 2006
Based on the Oxfam Hunger Banquet http://harvest.oxfamamerica.org/login_form

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***Seder Leader:
Welcome to our Hunger Seder.***

We begin with a blessing.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Elohaynu Melech ha-Olam shehecheyanu v'kiymanu v'higianu
laz'man hazeh*

Praised are You, Sustainer of Humanity, for enabling us to reach this time together.

Seder Leader:

Even though we come together to discuss something unpleasant, it is a blessing that we are in a position to learn about hunger and think about what we can do about it. That is because most of us –we can't assume all of us- had enough to eat this morning.

If we hadn't, would we be able to sit together at this seder and do some important talking, and thinking and learning and planning together?

- ***No? why not?***
- ***What does it feel like to be hungry? (students call out adjectives)***
- ***What happens to you if you haven't had enough to eat? (students call out symptoms)***
- ***Let's review some facts.***

- Reader One: More people are hungry in the world today than ever before: an estimated 840 million people, 1/6 of the people in the world.¹
- Reader Two: Over 30,000 children under the age of five die each day from hunger and other preventable causes.²
- Reader Three: The majority of those people live in what we call the developing world, in places like Africa and Asia.³
- Reader Four: There is also hunger in the Middle East, including a growing amount in both Israel and the Palestinian territories.⁴
- Reader Five: But there is a lot of hunger in the United States, too, even though it is the wealthiest country in the world.⁵
- Reader Six: Every day in the United States, 33.6 million people –13 million children and 20 million adults- go hungry.⁶
- Reader Seven: And within the United States, there is plenty of hunger in Pennsylvania. Over 10% of the families in our state have hungry people or have to worry about going hungry.⁷ (*Insert statistics about your state here.*)
- Reader Eight: In the five-county Philadelphia area nearly 226,000 households must cut the size of their meals or skip meals; they may feel hungry, but cannot afford food.⁸ (*Insert statistics about your city or town here.*)

¹ United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2002 as cited in Oxfam Global Grab Bag Kevin Connors p7.

² United Nations Development Report (UNDRP) 2002 as cited in Oxfam America Global Grab Bag Kevin Connors p.7

³ FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, Hunger Map

⁴ http://mazon.org/What_You_Should_Know/Hunger_Facts/Israel_Hunger_Facts.asp. 1. “The Right to Food: Report by the Special Rapporteur, Jean Ziegler, Addendum Mission to the Occupied Palestinian Territories,” (E/CN.4/2004/10/Add.2) as cited at <http://www.madre.org/articles/me/hungerinpalestine.html>

⁵ <http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=350> RESULTS is a nonprofit grassroots advocacy organization

⁶ US Department of Agriculture: Food Security in the United States, 2002 as cited in Oxfam America Global Grab Bag Kevin Connors p.7

⁷ <http://www.centeronhunger.org/states/pa.html>. A. Sullivan and E. Choi (August 2002). Hunger and Food Insecurity in the Fifty States: 1998-2000. Waltham, MA: Food Security Institute: Center on Hunger and Poverty Heller School for Social Policy and Management Brandeis university.

Food security exists when all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

Food insecurity exists when people lack access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food, and therefore are not consuming enough for an active and healthy life. This may be due to the unavailability of food, inadequate purchasing power, or inappropriate utilization at household level.

⁸ <http://www.hungercoalition.org/php/hungerinfo/surveys/> Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey as cited by the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger.

Reader Nine: And in the Jewish community of Philadelphia, there is hunger. About 3000 Jewish people who keep kosher would go hungry each month if Jewish organizations didn't help them get food.⁹ *(Insert statistics about your city or town here.)*

Reader Ten: That doesn't count however many thousand other Jewish people there are in Philadelphia who don't keep kosher and go to specifically Jewish organizations to get food. We can only guess there must be thousands more of them.

Seder Leader:

- ***SO...WHAT is the problem? Why are there so many hungry people?***
- ***Is there not enough food?***

(Page TWO in the Participant's Haggadah begins here)

The Earth produces 20% more food
than it would take to feed every single person on earth!¹⁰

Hunger is not really about food.
Hunger is NOT about food.
Hunger is about power.¹¹

Seder Leader:

Let's take a few minutes and introduce ourselves to the people at our tables. As I'm sure you noticed, you were arbitrarily divided into three groups when you walked in. I'd like each group to get to know some of the people in their group with the teachers' help. Whoever wants to, read your card to the group. See what you have anything in common with the people sitting with you.

(Go through the following three times)

⁹ Hunger Quiz (Not Just For Kids) as cited on

http://www.jewishphilly.org/content_display.html?ArticleID=124439

¹⁰http://mazon.org/What_You_Should_Know/Hunger_Facts/International_Hunger_Facts.asp

¹¹ Oxfam America Hunger Banquet faith Based Script p.11

- ***OK, now I'd like someone from each group to tell everyone else at the seder what you noticed about your group.***
- ***Thank you. Would you mind telling us, what are YOU having to eat at this seder? What is on YOUR plate?***

(ham up your reactions to the differences in what is being served.)

60% of you are Low-income. You have nothing to eat but rice and water.¹²

25% of you are Middle-income. You have rice, water, and also beans to eat.¹³

15% of you are High-income. You have pasta with sauce, salad, and juice.¹⁴

¹² LOW INCOME PEOPLE 60% of the World's Population

If you are sitting here, you represent the majority of the world's population – roughly 60 percent. Your average income is less than \$911 a year – about \$2.50 a day – although many of you earn far less. Every day is a struggle to meet your family's basic needs. Finding food, water, and shelter can consume your entire day. For many of you women, it would not be uncommon to have to walk 5 to 10 miles every day to get water, spend several more hours working in the fields, and of course, take care of the children. Many of you are frequently hungry. It is quite likely that you don't get the minimum number of calories your hardworking life requires. Many of you are homeless or live in structures so flimsy that a hard rain or strong wind can cause a major catastrophe. Even though education is the single most powerful weapon against poverty, school is a luxury few of your children will ever experience. Most girls don't even bother to dream about school. Adequate healthcare is out of the question for many of you in this group. For most of you, early death is all too familiar, with many mothers expecting to lose one or two children before they turn five. If you are lucky enough to work, you are probably a tenant farmer who must give your landowner 75 percent of your harvest. Or you may get occasional work as a day laborer at a large plantation growing bananas, sugar, or coffee for export. You reap few benefits from these crops; you'd prefer to grow food your children could eat.

¹³ MIDDLE INCOME PEOPLE 25% of the World's Population

If you are sitting here, you represent roughly 25 percent of the world's population. You earn between \$912 and \$9,075 a year. The levels of access and security you enjoy vary greatly. You live on the edge. For many, it would take losing only one harvest to drought or a serious illness to throw you into poverty. You probably own no land and may work as a day laborer, a job that pays a paltry amount—but it's better than nothing. Your small income allows for some use of electricity and a few years of schooling for your children—especially if they are boys. Alternatively, you may have left your family to go work in the city. You hope that the money you earn from your less-than minimum-wage job as domestic help or a sweatshop worker will eventually allow you to move back home and make a better life for your family.

¹⁴ HIGH INCOME PEOPLE 15% of the World's Population

If you are sitting over here, you represent the 15 percent of the world's population with a per capita income of \$9,076 or more. You are fortunate enough to be able to afford a nutritious daily diet. As a group, you consume 70 percent of all the grain grown in the world, most of it in the form of grain-fed meat. Since most of you exceed your daily requirement of calories, you face health problems such as heart disease and diabetes. But most of you don't worry about getting healthcare. You have access to the best medical care in the world. It's a given that your children will attend school; the only uncertainty is how many years they will study after high school. Access to credit? You turn down more offers than you can count. You and your family live in a comfortable and secure home. You own at least one car and probably two televisions.

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Seder Leader:

Alrighty... let's say the Motzi, the blessing over bread that we traditionally say at the beginning of every meal that has any kind of bread product in it at all.

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohaynu Melech ha-Olam hamotzi lehem min haeretz.

Praised are You, Sustainer of Humanity, source of bread of the Earth.

Seder Leader:

- ***Say, why do you think Jewish tradition thinks we should always recite that prayer?***
- ***What if we're being served food we don't like?***
- ***What if we're getting a little food, but not a lot of food?***
- ***What if somebody else is getting spaghetti and we're just getting rice and water?***
- ***HOW WOULD IT FEEL IF YOU WERE ALL REALLY HUNGRY RIGHT NOW AND THIS WAS REAL FOOD WE WERE SERVING?***

Sample questions to provoke discussion:

- *Low-income people, would you be satisfied with your rice and water?*
- *High income people, would you want to trade with the low income people?*
- *Do you think it's fair that the world is divided this way? Why or why not?*
- *Do you think the people who got the better meals should share? Why or why not?*
- *Are there other ways the high income people could help the people who have less to eat? What ideas do you have?*

It Could Be Me

Alexander Scrung¹⁵, Grade 8 New York City

I think that hunger is one of the worst problems in the world today because when I see a bum or somebody on the street, train or train station, I feel sorry for them. Because you never know, one day it could be me. I think...the president... should take better precaution of it instead of helping ...people in... other foreign countries. He should handle the homelessness, crime and hunger over here in the United States. That's how I feel about it.

When you take your annual two-week vacation, you don't worry about your job disappearing. You have access to everything you need and the security to enjoy it.

¹⁵ Kids Speak as cited at kidscanmakeadifference.org, 2004.
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Seder Leader:

Notice in that poem the author mentions “homelessness and hunger” together in a sentence. Those are important associations, and some that many of us have. It’s important to realize that not all hungry people are homeless, although most homeless people are hungry. That’s why we’ve all been working so hard already to bring food in for the homeless people who will be staying here as our guests this week. The first step we are taking to help end hunger is making sure our guests from the Interfaith Hospitality Network do not go hungry this week.

ROOT CAUSE OF HUNGER ONE:

LACK OF EDUCATION.

Right now, 115 million children in the world can't go to elementary school. School fees are one of the many obstacles denying children in developing countries a basic education-and locking them into a cycle of poverty.¹⁶

Seder Leader:

- *We have a Public School Teacher at our seder today.*
- *Have you ever had a child in your class who didn’t have enough to eat?*
- *Did his/her hunger make it difficult for the student to become educated?*
- *How did it make you feel?*
- *Was there anything you could do about it?*

(Page THREE in the Participant’s Haggadah begins here)

Why Is It?

Courtney Kenney, Grade 8, LA

Why is it?

They have to travel for days,
Just to get a little food.

When we can just pick something up,
Whenever we are in the mood.

Why is it?

They can get only small portions,

¹⁶ http://www.hungerbanquet.org/page.php?id=learn_more
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That barely help them get by,
 When we have feasts and banquets,
 And meals with food piled high.
 Why is it?
 Everything is so unfair!¹⁷

ROOT CAUSE OF HUNGER TWO:

LACK OF ACCESS TO RESOURCES.

Millions of farmers are deprived of the resources they need to survive, including land, water, credit, and access to markets for their goods.¹⁸

Seder Leader:

This is one of the reasons that Israelis and Palestinians have struggled to make peace so hard for so long. There is a limited amount of water and a limited amount of land to produce food. Each group wants to make sure they have access to as much water and land as they need. Probably nothing is as important as protecting your family's ability to survive, and so the passion and struggle between the Palestinians and the Israelis goes on.

Just Like Me

Donley W., Grade 8, New York City

Hungry they are, hungry they will be.
 Hunger is killing 40,000 people a day, just like me.
 They are young and old dying not because nobody cares,
 but because nobody knows.
 So let us do something, so it is known.¹⁹

¹⁷ Kids Speak as cited at kidscanmakeadifference.org, 2004.

¹⁸ http://www.hungerbanquet.org/page.php?id=learn_more

¹⁹ Kids Speak as cited at kidscanmakeadifference.org, 2004.

ROOT CAUSE OF HUNGER THREE:

CONFLICT AND WAR.

Millions die each year from conflict-related hunger and disease. Worldwide, there are about 20 million people displaced by war and humanitarian emergencies.²⁰

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Seder Leader:

You can imagine how difficult it is to get food to civilians and refugees in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Hunger

Unknown, Grade 8, New York City

All over the world, people are hungry.
 Hungry because they need food.
 I feel sorry for the people on the streets that are hungry.
 I don't ever want to be a crack head, etc.
 I want to be a good eating kind of person.
 I don't care if I am fat or skinny.
 But I'm going to eat and be a healthy boy.²¹

ROOT CAUSE OF HUNGER FOUR:

TRADE.

Millions of farmers, laborers, and factory workers are affected by the unfair rules of world trade. High tariffs, subsidies, and bans on certain imports are often insurmountable barriers to people trying to break the cycle of poverty.²²

²⁰ http://www.hungerbanquet.org/page.php?id=learn_more

²¹ Kids Speak as cited at kidscanmakeadifference.org, 2004.

²² http://www.hungerbanquet.org/page.php?id=learn_more

Spit

Anthony Mullings, Grade 8, New York City

Hunger, hunger everywhere.
 People outside night and day are starving each and every day.
 They look for a bite to eat and a warm place to sleep.
 People are starving here and there and some people don't really care.
 They'll walk past a hungry person and spit
 before they would help a homeless person.²³

ROOT CAUSE OF HUNGER FOUR:

DISCRIMINATION.

Members of ethnic and religious minorities often have limited access to resources and government assistance. They are frequently the last to receive emergency aid in the wake of disasters.²⁴

Seder Leader:

We saw a dramatic example of this not long ago with Hurricane Katrina. Thousands of people lost their homes and had no way to get food or water. Our government did not respond quickly to what had happened to them and many of them went hungry for days. Many people believe if the majority of the Americans affected by Katrina had been white, water and food would have been brought to them much sooner.

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A world free from hunger

Our vision is a world without hunger and malnutrition - a world in which each and every person can be assured of having the food they need to be healthy and well-nourished. Our vision is a world which provides for and protects the welfare and human dignity of all its people. A world in which all children can grow, learn and flourish, developing into healthy, active, caring members of society.²⁵

²³ Kids Speak as cited at kidscanmakeadifference.org, 2004.

²⁴ http://www.hungerbanquet.org/page.php?id=learn_more

²⁵ <http://www.feedingminds.org/info/vision.htm> "Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger," is a global education initiative for schools and youth groups spearheaded by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the U.S. National Committee for World Food Day.