

## GENESIS

### Bereishit

- a. People are given seed-bearing plants and fruit trees for food. (Gen 1:29)
- b. The first time people eat is seen in Genesis 3:6.
- c. Eve eats, and then Adam eats.
- d. They eat a fruit, usually thought to be an apple.
- e. The fruit came from the tree of knowledge of good and bad.
- f. When they ate, they understood that they were naked, and they made garments of fig leaves to cover themselves. (Gen. 3:7)
- g. After their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, humans would have to “sweat” for their food (Gen. 3:19)

#### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Discuss the connection between eating, knowledge and free will.
2. Why is “sweating” for our food important?

### Noah

- a. G-d tells Noah to plan for an upcoming food shortage by storing up food. (Gen. 6:21)
- b. Noah is the first to eat meat. “Every creature that lives shall be yours to eat; as with the green grasses, I give you all these.” (Gen. 9:3)
- c. Noah is also the first to plant a vineyard. (Gen. 9:20)
- d. Noah drinks the wine made from the grapes in his vineyard. (Gen. 9:21)

#### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. What does G-d teach the world by creating a food shortage? We have enough food in our world to feed the hungry – how can we use G-d’s teaching in this parasha to make a plan to feed the hungry?
2. How can we model Noah’s efforts to save for an upcoming food-shortage in order to meet our current and forecasted needs?
3. Some say that if we were to stop eating meat, and instead use grazing fields for growing grains, we would have more than enough food to feed the world. How do we balance the need to feed everyone in the world with our divinely-given “right” to eat meat? How do we balance individual rights versus communal needs?

### Lech Lecha

- a. a. Abram leaves his home to go to Egypt because of a severe famine in the land. (Gen. 12:10)

#### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Abram and Sarai risk their relationship and perhaps even their lives when they move to Egypt because of the famine (see Gen. 12:10-13). Today, what risks do desperate and hungry families take?

## Vayeira

- a. Abraham and Sarah have three angels as guests. They feed them bread or cakes, curds, milk and veal (calf). (Gen. 18:2; 5-8)
- b. Abraham also offers the guests water to bathe their feet and a place to rest under a tree. (Gen. 18:4)
- c. When Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael out of the house he packs bread and water for their journey. (Gen. 21:14)
- d. Hagar and Ishmael run out of water and food, and Hagar leaves Ishmael under a bush out of desperation. (Gen. 21:15-16)
- e. G-d promises to lift up Ishmael from his impoverished roots into a great nation and provides a well to quench the thirst of Hagar and Ishmael when they are about to give up. (Gen. 21:18-19)

### Discussion Suggestions:

1. Abraham is known as the epitome of hospitality, in part because of his behavior toward these three special guests. Abraham's behavior is so exemplary because he runs to greet the guests, he offers them every comfort, he waits on them and he speaks to them with respect (calling them "my lords.") How can we apply this model to our treatment of hungry and homeless people?
2. G-d promises to make Ishmael into a great nation, and then provides for the basic needs of Hagar and Ishmael. How hard is it for us to see the potential greatness in the poor and hungry? Is it harder to see their potential than that of those people who do not need our help?

## Chayei Sarah

- a. Eliezer knows the young woman is to be Isaac's wife because she offered him water and also gave water to his camels. Later she invites him to spend the night at her family's house, and to eat with them. (Gen. 24: 12-20, 25)

### Discussion Suggestions:

Like Abraham, Rebekah is known as an exemplar of hospitality, willing to offer water, food and lodging to a stranger. She, too, is rewarded, but does not know she will be when she offers him water. In those days, welcoming people wandering in the desert meant the difference between life and death for travelers. For her righteous and caring actions, Rebekah merited becoming the mother of Israel.

1. Today, there are still people in our society who depend on our kindness for their lives and wellbeing. What can we do to "welcome" these most vulnerable and needy members of our society?

## Toldot

- a. Isaac favors Esau who had "a taste for game." (Gen. 25:28)
- b. Jacob feeds Esau a reddish lentil stew, because Esau says to him, "Give me some of that red stuff to gulp down, for I am famished."
- c. Jacob wants Esau's birthright, so he bribes him with food, giving it to him only after Esau agrees to give him the birthright. (Gen. 25: 29-34).
- d. There is a famine in the land that causes Isaac to go to Abimelech. (Gen. 26:1)
- e. Abimelech and his chief counselor come to Isaac to make a truce. Isaac prepares for them a feast and they eat and drink. (Gen. 26:26-30)
- f. Isaac requests that Esau prepare him a meal of fresh game meat. (Gen. 27:3-4)
- g. Rebecca prepares a meal of game and bread for Isaac. She uses the same food

that Jacob used when he tricked Isaac into giving him Esau's blessing. (Gen. 27:8-17)

**Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Think about times when you have been very hungry. What do you focus your thoughts and energy on during those times?
2. What do you think of Jacob's behavior here? Did he act ethically?
3. Are there situations you can imagine when people might be easily manipulated because they are hungry?
4. Isaac shared a meal with Abimelech's troops as a sign of trust and friendship. How is sharing a meal with someone a sign of friendship and brotherhood?

## Vayeishev

- a. Joseph interprets the cupbearer's dream favorably and the baker's dream unfavorably. On the third day, Pharaoh holds a banquet in honor of his own birthday. (Gen. 40:9-20)

**Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Even in ancient days, special foods were used to mark important occasions. Why do we continue to do this? How does food work to sanctify a celebration?

## Mikeitz

- a. Joseph stores grain during productive years to use for food during years of famine; this way, he can feed many people who would otherwise not have food. (Gen. 41: 47-49, 53-57.)
- b. Joseph rations grain during the famine in order to feed everyone in need. (Gen. 41:57)
- c. Joseph's brothers come to get food in Egypt when they cannot get any food in their land. (Gen. 42:5; Jacob sends them again in Gen. 43:1-2)
- d. Joseph has a meal prepared and served for himself and his brothers. Benjamin's portion is larger than any of the other's. (Gen. 43:31-34)
- e. Joseph sends the brothers home with as much food as they can carry. (Gen. 44:1)

**Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Is there anyone today who serves as Joseph's counterpart, storing food and giving it out to those who are hungry?
2. Is there a famine in our land today? If so, how do different people get food? If not, why do some people have no food?
3. We are told that Joseph was able to feed everyone in the world who was hungry, not just those in his own land. Do we have a responsibility to feed the hungry in other parts of the world?

## Vayigash

- a. Joseph gives his family choice lands and enough bread to sustain them. (Gen. 47:11-12)
- b. Joseph takes all the money in the lands of Egypt and Canaan as payment for the

- rations of bread he distributes during the height of the famine. When the money runs out, Joseph takes land and other property as payment. (Gen. 47:13-22)
- c. Joseph institutes a "tithe" of one fifth of the produce of the land to go to Pharaoh. (Gen. 47:23-26)

#### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Joseph gave his family choice lands and enough bread to sustain them. How do we decide who should receive help and how much help they should receive?
2. Do we have equivalents today to Joseph's "tithe" to Pharaoh? What is such a "tithe" used for today?

## **EXODUS**

### **Sh'mot**

- a. Pharaoh's daughter finds a baby in the Nile River and sends for a Hebrew wet-nurse to suckle the child. (Ex. 2:5-9)
- b. Moses flees to Midian and, after rescuing Reuel's daughters from shepherds, is invited to join the family for a meal. (Ex. 2:15-21)
- c. The land of Israel is referred to as a land flowing with milk and honey. (Ex. 3:8)

#### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. We learn from this parasha that caring for children properly means meeting their basic needs first and foremost. Both Moses' mother and Pharaoh's daughter contributed to Moses' wellbeing. What are the consequences of not meeting a child's most basic human needs?
2. Pharaoh's daughter went out of her way to help baby Moses, even putting herself at risk by going against the Pharaoh's decree. She did everything in her power to feed him appropriately. How can we learn from her actions about what we can do to help the hungry in our community?
3. Is there significance to the fact that Pharaoh's daughter called for a Hebrew wet-nurse and not an Egyptian wet-nurse? Is it important that hungry people get food that is culturally appropriate to them? Or should "beggars not be choosers" and be happy with whatever food they receive?

### **Bo**

- a. The Israelites offer a lamb in sacrifice. They put its blood on the door and eat the meat. Each family takes a lamb according to what it can eat, or shares with neighbors if family members cannot eat a whole lamb themselves. (Ex. 12:2-4)
- b. The Israelites are commanded to eat unleavened bread for seven days and celebrate it as a festival to G-d. (Ex. 12:14-15)
- c. The Israelites bake dough into unleavened cakes because the dough has no time to rise when they have to leave Egypt in a hurry. (Ex. 12:39)
- d. Any circumcised Israelite or slave shall eat of the Passover offering, regardless of whether he is a clansman or a stranger to the family clan. There shall not be favoritism or preference: "There shall be one law for the citizen and for the stranger who dwells among you." (Ex. 12:43-49)
- e. Today, we are instructed to eat the same unleavened bread – matzah – during Passover, to remind us of G-d's redemption of our ancestors from slavery. (Ex. 13: 6-8)

### Discussion Suggestions:

1. The Israelites, in their worship of G-d, were told to eat a festive meal, but to be sure that no food was wasted – i.e., that they should only cook as much food as they could consume in that one meal. If they or their neighbors could not afford the meal alone, they were instructed to feed one another and eat together. How is feeding one another and sharing a meal a holy act?
2. How can we use these ideas of not wasting food and of sharing our good fortune with others to motivate our anti-hunger work?
3. Food is commanded both for Passover and other holidays as a means of remembering and commemorating events of the past. Why is food so important?
4. We are told that when it comes to eating the special commemorative foods of the holiday, all people – regardless of whether they are family or just visitors – must be treated equally. Do we tend to treat our family members differently than others?
5. MAZON does not just help Jews in need, but rather gives money to organizations that help all hungry people in the United States, in Israel, and other developing countries. Why is it important to be reminded that we should not show preference only to our own “kind,” or our own families?

### B’shalach

- a. The people complain that death by G-d would have been better than the hunger they experience in the desert. (Ex. 16:3)
- b. G-d says He will provide manna for those who are hungry. G-d provides one portion during the first five days of the week, with a double portion on the 6th day to have for Shabbat. They gather the manna each morning in the desert. The manna tastes like wafers in honey. Each hungry person has exactly enough food – none with too much, none with too little. (Ex. 16: 4-5, 14-18, 21-23, 31.)
- c. When anyone becomes thirsty, they complain and say to Moses that they regret having left Egypt. (Ex. 17: 1-3.)
- d. Moses, instructed by G-d, strikes the rock at Horeb and water erupts from it, which allows everyone to drink. (Ex. 17: 5-6.)

### Discussion Suggestions:

1. How does G-d give us food today?
2. How do we acknowledge G-d’s gifts of food?
3. Hunger causes people to do desperate things for food (the Israelites in the desert were ready to re-submit to servitude!). What desperate acts are people today driven to perform for food?
4. How can we act as the hands of G-d, delivering manna to the poor?

### Mishpatim

- a. Every seventh year we do not harvest our land. We let the land lie fallow, allowing the needy to take what they wish and leave their leftovers for other living things. (Ex. 23:10-11)
- b. We are told to observe the feast of unleavened bread, eating unleavened bread for seven days. (Ex. 23:15)
- c. We must donate the (choice) first fruits of our harvest to G-d’s service. (Ex. 23: 16)
- d. When we eat we should not cook a calf in its mother’s milk. (Ex. 23:19)
- e. The people accept G-d’s commandments as told by Moses. After Moses splatters them with blood, to signify their acceptance of the covenant with G-d, the people

eat and drink. (Ex. 24:3-11)

#### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. We are told to let the land rest and to let the hungry take what they need. What is the connection between protecting the environment and helping one another?
2. Why do we give our first and choicest fruits to G-d?
3. For those of us who are not farmers today, how can we show our thanks for our blessings?
4. In this parasha, we are given one of our first food restrictions (not to cook a calf in its mother's milk). Why is it important for us to be mindful of what and how we eat?
5. How does respecting what we eat (i.e. respecting the cow by not cooking a calf in its mother's milk, not eating the blood of an animal, etc.) influence our lives and our attitude toward each other?
6. Food serves as a means of remembering and commemorating events of the past. Why is food so important?
7. Eating matzah in observance of Passover is repeated several times in the Torah. Discuss the connection between having food and being free.

### **Titzaveh**

- a. The priests shall eat of the sacrificial ram and the unleavened bread in the offering basket. Only the priests, no layperson, may eat of them because these things have been consecrated to G-d and therefore are holy. (Ex. 29-34)

#### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. When the sacrificial system was in place, we offered our precious foods to G-d as a show of thanksgiving, repentance, and praise. We had a notion of food as holy and sacred, special and powerful. Why was food the chosen mode of expressing our most sincere feelings to G-d?
2. We no longer have a sacrificial system; is there a way that food is still (or could be) used to show our thanks and appreciation for G-d?

### **Ki Tisa**

- a. The people grow impatient while waiting for Moses to return from the mountain. They complain to Aaron, who helps them fashion the golden calf. Then they make offerings, eat, drink and celebrate with the calf. (Ex. 32:1-6)
- b. The Israelites are instructed not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land because it will lead the Israelites to idolatry and to eat of pagan sacrifices. (Ex. 34:15)
- c. We are instructed to observe the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. (Ex. 34:18)
- d. The food provisions of Ex. 23 are repeated: first fruits are dedicated to G-d and a calf should not be boiled in its mother's milk. (Ex. 34: 26)

#### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Food and drink are staples at all of our celebrations (even for the Israelites celebrating the calf!) What is the connection between food and joy?
2. We are warned against eating certain foods in pagan sacrifices. Why is it important for us to be mindful of what and how we eat?
3. How can we use food to show our appreciation to G-d?
4. What is the connection between eating and worship?

5. In Judaism it is considered extremely praiseworthy to perform acts that cause others to praise G-d. At the same time, in Ki Tisa we are clearly warned against causing people to praise false gods, in this case with food. Why is food in particular an issue of concern? How does our diet shape our interaction with the divine? And how might feeding poor and hungry people be an act that leads them to praise G-d?

## LEVITICUS

### Vayikra

- a. When a meal offering is made to G-d, the priests turn a choice portion into smoke on the altar, and the remainder becomes the food of the priests. (Lev. 2:1-10, 14-16)
- b. You must offer salt with your offerings.
- c. It is forbidden for anyone to eat fat or blood. (Lev. 3:16-17)
- d. Like the meal offering, the sin offering belongs mostly to the priests. (Lev. 5:11-13)

#### Discussion Suggestions:

1. Once again we are giving our choicest foods to G-d. Why is it important to give up a little of our best food in praise of G-d?
2. The Levites were able to eat of the offerings because this was their only source of income – they were essentially on the community dole. How do we help those people today who depend on community assistance?
3. Today, we don't make sacrifices at the Holy Temple. How can we emulate this biblical idea of feeding those with no other source of food? Might this be a modern way of praising G-d?

### Tzav

- a. Of the meal offering, a portion is burnt for G-d. The priests eat the rest with unleavened cakes. Only priestly males may eat of this holy food. (Lev. 6:7-9, 11)
- b. The meal offering of the priests is a whole offering, and none of it is eaten. (Lev. 6:16)
- c. Once again we are told the priests eat of the sin offering, and only the priestly males may eat of it. (Lev. 6: 19-23)
- d. The priests may eat of the guilt offering. It should be consumed only by the priestly men and in the sacred precinct. (Lev. 7:1-6)
- e. Any meal offering cooked in an oven, on a griddle, or in a pan belongs to the priest who makes the offering on behalf of the offerer. Any other meal offering is given to all of the priests communally. (Lev. 7:9-10)
- f. The peace offering shall be eaten on the day of the offering. (Lev. 7:11-15)
- g. The votive and the freewill offerings are to be eaten on the day they are offered, and their leftovers eaten on the next day. Fire consumes anything left on the third day. (Lev. 7:16-18)
- h. Only ritually clean food can be eaten and only ritually clean people can eat of it. (Lev. 7:19-21)
- i. One must not eat of any animal that dies naturally or is killed by other animals. (Lev. 7:24-25)
- j. One must not consume blood of birds or animals. (Lev. 7:26-27)
- k. Aaron and his sons are commanded by Moses regarding G-d's rules for eating the sacrifices. They then follow them, eating the appropriate foods. (Lev. 8:31-36)

### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. In this parasha we are given many rules about what can be eaten, by whom and what ritual state they must be in to eat. Why is eating elevated to such a level of holiness?
2. How can we apply in our own lives this notion of turning the mundane act of eating into something holy?
3. How can we turn the act of giving food and supporting those in need into acts affirming G-d and life?

## **Shimini**

- a. Moses instructs Aaron's sons Eleazar and Ithamar regarding the sacrifice and eating of various offerings. (Lev. 10:12-13)
- b. The laws regarding which animals may and may not be eaten are given. (Lev. 11:2-22, 41-42)
- c. An animal that may be eaten that comes into contact with an unacceptable animal, the water surrounding it or a vessel that carried it, becomes unclean. (Lev. 11:34)

### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Why is it important for us to be mindful of what and how we eat?
2. In what ways does restricting how, when and what we eat influence our lives and our attitude toward each other?
3. Are there benefits to requiring animals to be killed in specific ways?
4. Is it important for those who have very little food to be as concerned with what they eat?

## **Acharei Mot**

- a. No blood of an animal that is acceptable to be eaten may be consumed. No animal that has died naturally or been killed by other animals may be consumed. (Lev. 17:13-15)

### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. How does respecting what we eat (i.e. respecting the cow by not cooking a calf in its mother's milk, not eating the blood of an animal, etc.) influence our lives and our attitude toward animals and each other?
2. Are there benefits to requiring that animals be killed according to specific laws?

## **K'doshim**

- a. Peace offerings should be eaten the day they are offered, and leftovers the second day. On the third day anything left should be consumed by fire. (Lev. 19:5-8)
- b. When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. 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. (Lev. 19: 9-10)
- c. No blood should be consumed. (Lev. 19:26)

### Discussion Suggestions:

1. These days most of us don't have fields or vineyards. What do we have that we can take a small part of to give to the "poor and the stranger"?
2. Fruit and gleanings have seeds that can be planted, and thereby the poor can begin to grow their own food. Maimonides teaches us that helping the needy to become self-sufficient is the highest level of tzedakah. What can we do to give more than just food for one day – to help make the hungry self-sufficient?

## Emor

- a. A priest who is ritually unclean may not eat of the sacrifices. He may not eat of an animal that has died naturally or was killed by other animals (Lev. 22:4-8)
- b. A priest's slave (acquired by purchase) and those born to his household may eat of the sacred donations. No layperson or woman (including a priest's daughter) married to a layperson may eat of the sacred donations. (Lev. 22:10-13)
- c. A thanksgiving offering should be eaten the day it is offered. (Lev. 22:29)
- d. We are commanded to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:5-8)
- e. We are reminded that we should not reap all the way to the edges of the land, or gather all the gleanings of the harvest, in order to leave these for the poor and the stranger. (Lev. 23:22)

### Discussion Suggestions:

1. Repeated from the Holiness Code of last week's parasha, we are told to leave the corners of our fields for the poor. These days, most of us don't have fields or vineyards. What do we have that we can share with the "poor and the stranger"?
2. Solely by virtue of having, are we obligated to care for those who don't have?
3. Fruit and gleanings have seeds that can be planted, and thereby the poor can begin to grow their own food. Maimonides teaches us that helping the needy to become self-sufficient is the highest level of tzedakah. What can we do to give more than just food for one day – to help make the hungry self-sufficient?
4. Food is commanded again as a means of remembering and commemorating events of the past. Why is food so important?
5. Specifically, eating matzah in observance of Passover is a commandment that is repeated several times in the Torah. Discuss the connection between having food and being free.

## B'har Sinai

- a. Jews must not work the land in the seventh year, but may eat whatever the land produces. (Lev. 25:3-7)
- b. In the Jubilee year Jews do not work the land, but eat its produce from the field. (Lev. 25:11-12)
- c. The crop in the sixth year will be sufficient for three years so that that there is enough to eat through that year and until the new crop grows. (Lev. 25:20-22)

### Discussion Suggestions:

1. We are taught the importance of sustainable farming. The land must be given time to replenish itself. What is the connection for us today between how we eat, what we buy, and sustainable agriculture?
2. How can we become better educated about where our food comes from and how it is grown?
3. We learn the importance of planning ahead in order both to feed those in need

and not to overwork the land. What is the connection between feeding people and respecting other aspects of creation (i.e. the land)?

4. How can we change our food buying/growing practices to better support both the land and those who are hungry?
5. Where can we look for policy-related and legislative information that addresses the issues of hunger and agriculture? (Possible answers: Food Research and Action Center, America's Second Harvest, Center on Hunger & Poverty, etc.)

## B'chukotai

- a. If you follow G-d's commandments you will have plenty to eat (Lev. 26:3-5)
- b. If you do not obey G-d, there will not be enough food to satisfy (Lev. 26:23-26)
- c. If you continue to disobey G-d you will "eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters." (Lev. 26:27-29)

### Discussion Suggestions:

1. How does leading a holy, respectful life lead to having plenty to eat? (One possible answer: If we respect the land and the environment, look out for one another and emphasize the importance of working hard, we will promote sustainable development and be better positioned to feed all those in need.)
2. Those who experience food insecurity and hunger often feel desperate to feed themselves and their families. The parasha suggests that those experiencing the most desperate hunger will end up sacrificing their children's wellbeing. Does this happen today?

## NUMBERS

## B'haalot'cha

- a. While in the desert, a number of Israelites express their dissatisfaction with eating only manna and cry out for meat and other delicacies they used to eat in Egypt. (Num. 11:4-6)
- b. G-d promises the people meat to satisfy their cry, but also promises that they will eat so much meat that they will not ever want meat again. (Num. 11:17-20)
- c. The people eat quail, which they are not to, and become very ill. (Num. 11:31-34)

### Discussion Suggestions:

When those who have not eaten much finally get to eat, they tend to overeat or eat the wrong kinds of foods (foods that are filling, but not necessarily nutritious). As a result, they can become very ill.

1. There has been much documentation of the connection between hunger/poverty and the growing obesity epidemic in the United States. What can we do to promote access to healthy, nutritionally balanced meals and to exercise programs (such as school sports) for those in need?

## Sh'lach-L'cha

- a. When you bake or eat the bread of the land, you shall set aside a portion for G-d. (Num. 15:17-21)

### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Why is it important for us to acknowledge G-d when we create new foods (i.e., "bake," or turn many ingredients into a new dish)?
2. What is the connection between eating and holiness?
3. What does it mean to "Set aside food for G-d?"

## **Korach**

- a. The (male) priests shall receive and eat of the meal offerings and the guilt offerings. (Num. 18:8-10)
- b. All those of the priestly households may eat of the offerings as well. (Num. 18:11)
- c. The people shall donate their choicest fruits, oils, wines and grains to the priests and their households as a thanksgiving to G-d. The priests shall also get the meat of the firstlings of cattle, sheep and goats. (Num. 18:12-14, 17-18)
- d. The Levites receive the tithe of Israel and may eat of it once setting aside the choicest parts for G-d. (Num. 18:21-32)

### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Once again, we are giving our choicest foods to G-d. Why is it important to give up a little of our best in praise of G-d?
2. Even the Levites, who ate only of the offerings of others, were instructed to give a portion to G-d. Is it important for the poor to give a little of what they have and to acknowledge G-d as well?
3. Should we ask the poor and hungry to help one another? Why or why not?
4. Today, we don't make sacrifices in the Holy Temple. How can we emulate this biblical idea of sacrificing? Might we consider feeding those with no other source of food as a way of praising G-d?

## **Chukat**

- a. The people again complain about the lack of food and water, and this time G-d sends serpents to bite those who complain. When bit by the serpents, some die. (Num. 21:4-6)

### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Who has the right to be particular or fussy about what they eat?
2. Does everyone have a right to certain foods?
3. Do the poor have the right to complain about not getting the foods they want?

## **Pinchas**

- a. We are instructed to eat unleavened bread for seven days to celebrate the Passover festival. (Num. 28:16-17)

### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Food serves as a means of remembering and commemorating events of the past. Why is food so important?
2. Eating matzah in observance of Passover is repeated several times in the Torah.

Discuss the connection between having food and being free.

## DEUTERONOMY

### D'varim

- a. When you travel through a land belonging to another people, even when the travel is divinely sanctioned, you must reimburse the owners of the land for all food and water used. (Deut. 2:2-6)

#### Discussion Suggestions:

1. Why is it not sufficient to simply thank G-d for the land and water? Why is it important to acknowledge other people's rights to land and water?
2. It may be G-d's will that we help feed those who are in need, but we still make the choice to help. When and how do we decide to feed others?

### Eikev

- a. The land is described as being a good land, a land of plenty, where the people can "eat without scarceness," where the people will not lack anything. (Deut. 8:7-9)
- b. We are told that after we eat we should thank G-d for the land and for our portion. (Deut. 8:10)
- c. If we observe G-d's commands, our livestock will be satisfied and well-fed in the land, as will we be. (Deut. 11:13-15)

#### Discussion Suggestions:

1. In this parasha, there is a clear connection made between receiving divine blessings and having enough to eat. Are those who are hungry suffering a punishment from G?
2. If the land provides enough for all to eat but we don't distribute it to all in need, are we thwarting G-d's will?
3. How can we help deliver the divine blessing to those in need?
4. Why is it important for us to thank G-d after we eat?
5. How does leading a holy, respectful life lead to having plenty to eat?

### R'eih

- a. In the new land, we must destroy pagan altars and idols. In the place of G-d's choosing, we will offer gifts to G-d and we will feast. (Deut. 12:3-7)
- b. G-d tells us explicitly that we may eat meat whenever we desire it. But no blood from any animal must not be consumed. (Deut. 12:15-16, 20-25)
- c. We receive the instructions telling us that animals, birds and fish are acceptable for human consumption. (Deut. 14:3-21)
- d. Even though we are not permitted to eat of animals that have died naturally, we are allowed to give these animals to the stranger that lives amongst us or to a foreigner. (Deut. 14:21)
- e. We must not boil a kid in its mother's milk. (Deut. 14:21)
- f. It is a commandment to donate the tithes to G-d. We are commanded to make sure the Levite is not neglected. (Deut. 14:22-29)
- g. Every third year, a full tithe is given to the Levites, the widow, the orphan and

- the stranger. (Deut. 14:27-29)
- h. Every year a "first fruits of the womb" offering is made to G-d from the herds and flocks. But if the animal is blemished, it is consumed by all in the settlement. However, no blood may be consumed (Deut. 15:19-23)
  - i. We are enjoined to observe the Passover sacrifice through a seven-day consumption of unleavened bread. (Deut. 16:1-8)

### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Some say that if we were to stop eating meat, and instead use grazing fields for growing grains, we would have more than enough food to feed the world. How do we balance the need to feed everyone in the world with our divinely-given "right" to eat meat? How do we balance individual rights versus communal needs?
2. Why do we give our first and choicest fruits to G-d?
3. For those of us who are not farmers today, how can we show our thanks for our blessings?
4. We are given one of our first food restrictions (not to cook a calf in its mother's milk). Why is it important for us to be mindful of what and how we eat?
5. How does respecting what we eat (i.e. respecting the cow by not cooking a calf in its mother's milk, not eating the blood of an animal, etc.) influence our lives and our attitude toward animals and each other?
6. Food serves as a means of remembering and commemorating events of the past. Why is food so important?
7. In particular, eating matzah in observance of Passover is repeated several times in the Torah. Discuss the connection between having food and being free.
8. We are warned against eating certain foods in pagan sacrifices. Why is it important for us to be mindful of what and how we eat?
9. What is the connection between eating and worship?

## **Shoftim**

- a. The Levites will live off the people's offerings, and have no land apportioned to them. (Deut. 18:1-5)
- b. When your army besieges a city, you may not chop down the trees but you may eat of them. Only non-food bearing trees may be cut down for construction materials. (Deut. 20:19-20)

### **Discussion Suggestions:**

1. We are taught that even in war we should not waste food. When we enter into wars today, do we concern ourselves with the environment?
2. Should we be concerned with feeding the hungry in other parts of the world?
3. What else can we do at times of war to protect food supplies?

## **Kiteitzei**

- a. When you enter another man's vineyard, you may eat as much as you can at that moment. You may not pack grapes away in a sack. When you enter another man's field, you may pluck grain/corn with your hand but you may not use equipment (such as a sickle) to cut the grain. (Deut. 23:25-26).
- b. When you harvest your field and overlook a sheaf, you may not go back for it. It belongs to the stranger, widow, and orphan. Similarly, when you harvest olives on the tree or grapes on the vine, you should not beat the tree or pick the vine repeatedly. What is left on the tree or the vine after the harvest belongs to the

stranger, widow, and orphan. (Deut. 24:19-21)

**Discussion Suggestions:**

1. Why is it important to acknowledge other people's rights to land and water?
2. If others have the right to "own" land, why are we given permission to eat of their crop?
3. Both of these laws suggest that by virtue of having, we are obligated to care for those who don't have. Do we feel so obligated today? And how do our feelings of obligation manifest themselves (i.e., what do we do about them)?

**Ki Tavo**

- a. In Deuteronomy 26, the people are instructed to take some of the first fruits of their harvests, bring them to G-d's altar and recite a passage that reminds them of why these fruits are being given to G-d (because G-d redeemed us from Egypt and gave us the land of Israel, a "land flowing with milk and honey"). The fruits are then to be enjoyed and shared by the Israelite who brought them, the Levite, and the stranger among them. (Deut. 26: 1-11.)
- b. The people are also instructed to set aside 10% of their yields to give to the Levite (who had no land holdings), the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, so that they can eat. (Deut. 26: 12-15)
- c. Cursed be anyone who subverts the rights of the stranger, orphan or widow. (Deut. 27:19)

**Discussion Suggestions:**

1. What can we do that is akin to tithing our produce to give to the needy?
2. Why do we give our first and choicest fruits to G-d?
3. How can those of us who are not farmers today show our thanks for our blessings?
4. The Levites were able to eat of the offerings because this was their only source of income – they were essentially on the community dole. How do we help those people today who rely on community assistance?
5. How do caring for one another and providing food for one another make us holy?