Passover is a special time when we gather with family and friends to retell the story of our people’s freedom from bondage. We read from our prayer books, perform rituals that are thousands of years old, and eat a LOT of delicious and symbolic foods. Unfortunately, not everyone is lucky enough to have that luxury.

Hunger in America is at an epidemic level. Fifty million Americans – nearly 1 in 6 – struggle to put enough nutritious food on the table every day. And it’s no better in Israel, where 1 out of every 4 Israelis live below the poverty line. These statistics are tragic, and they inspire our daily work. But at Passover, when it can seem as though the primary purpose of the Seder is to eat (and eat and eat), we feel the discomfort a bit more keenly.

We eat the stage early in the Seder by saying, “All who are hungry, let them enter and eat.” We move ceremoniously through the haggadah, reminding ourselves that we once were slaves in Egypt and explaining the meaning of each bite we eat. But millions of Americans and Israelis do not have enough nutritious food. To them, this has a very different meaning – it is a reminder that they have enough nutritious food. To them, this has a bite we eat. But millions of Americans and Israelis do not have enough nutritious food. To them, this has a very different meaning – it is a reminder that they have enough nutritious food. To them, this has a very different meaning – it is a reminder that they have enough nutritious food.

This year, please join us as we again ask The Fifth Question:

Why on this night are millions of people still going hungry?

MAZON has a number of materials available to help you ask The Fifth Question at your Seder.

Visit our website or contact us by phone (800) 813-0557.

The Fifth Question
Why on this night are millions of people still going hungry?
In 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivered his historic “Four Freedoms” address to Congress. In it he articulated a vision that rested on 4, just 4, freedoms, the 3rd of which was that Americans, and all citizens of the world, had an essential human right to “freedom from want.”

On that day, over 70 years ago, our President believed that freedom from want was not a “vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation.” Sadly, too many generations have passed by, and we have yet to realize this vision. Nothing could be more basic, or more attainable than ensuring that “freedom from want” becomes the hallmark of our generation.

MAZON was founded on the belief that we can attain a world in which freedom from want is a reality. How? By working every day to end hunger in America and Israel. By ensuring that the most vulnerable among us have enough to eat, and that their needs are among our top priorities as a nation.

But the dismal truth is that they’re not.

Our federal government was formed to create and uphold policies that protect the mutual needs and wants of the country, its states and communities. As Hubert H. Humphrey explained, “Government is the means by which all the people acting together do for themselves those things that the people cannot do one by one. That is the great principle of government.” As such, our government bears primary responsibility for safeguarding a freedom from want.

SNAP is the centerpiece of this fundamental idea, deeply rooted in our Jewish faith, that the community has an obligation to sustain its most vulnerable. SNAP represents our collective commitment that when times are tough, we will stand together and help families get back on their feet.

Yet here we are, still recovering from the worst economic downturn in generations, far too many Americans still find themselves unable to make ends meet. And now Congress has approved a Farm Bill that cuts SNAP by over $8 billion - a move that the Congressional Budget Office estimates will force 850,000 vulnerable people off the program.

Food is the most basic human need. Hungry children can’t learn, and hungry adults can’t work. They can’t create. They can’t lead. They can’t address any other priority because alleviating hunger becomes their only priority.

The three-year debacle that was the Farm Bill negotiations was an important reminder that we still lack the political will to end hunger in America.

So it comes to us to reiterate our will. As President Roosevelt said, “This nation has placed its destiny in the hands and heads and hearts of its millions of free men and women.” If we join together to tell Congress they are failing to live up to our collective responsibilities: to help the most vulnerable; to support social and economic justice; and to protect the right of our citizens to live free from want, surely we will see this vision realized in our time and our generation.

And it goes without saying (but we’ll say it anyway) that we have you to thank. You make our work possible not only with your voice, but with your generous gifts.

Together, we can transform how it is into how it should be.

Lech l’shalom,

Abby J. Lederman
President & CEO

Sarah Keeney, Program Associate
Sarah joined MAZON as an Intern after spending the summer with us at an intern program. Previously, she lived in New York. She holds a B.A. in Counseling from Marshall University and a M.A. in Social Welfare from the State University of New York, Albany.

We welcome new staff

WE NEED MORE STAFF

Sarah Keeney, Program Associate
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On Passover, you can symbolically “Let all who are hungry, come and eat” by making a gift to MAZON.

Give a gift today by using the attached envelope, visiting mazon.org or by calling us at (800) 813-0557.

Thank you for your generous support!