MAZON | A Jewish Response To Hunger

Healthy School Meals for All Colorado

In 2022, Colorado voters passed Proposition FF to fund Healthy School Meals for All. Since then, 100% of eligible districts opted in to the program, and meal participation is up more than 30% across the board, demonstrating both the need for this program and the excitement around it.

Despite resounding support from voters in 2022, Colorado state lawmakers are making Coloradans go back to the ballot box to sustain the program and implement voter approved elements. Healthy lunches help children learn and thrive and Colorado voters are needed again to protect and strengthen this incredibly successful program.

Read about the work of the Colorado Jewish community in 2022

Learn more about the success of school meals in Colorado

Learn more about the 2025 Ballot Initiatives

Pledge to Vote

Sermon Starters

Rabbi Iah Pillsbury

High Holy Day Torah Portions

Creation (Gen 1-2): When God creates the world, all the vegetation and food that is good to eat is created before humanity. Humanity's role is to safeguard and take care of all of this bounty, to live off the land and to steward it. This means it is also our responsibility to share this bounty with each other and make sure everyone has access to healthy affordable food.

Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21): Even in the worst of times, we must provide bread (food) for our children and for people in need. While expelling people is never ok (especially when they are expelled for no fault of their own), even when we treat people terribly, we are commanded to feed them and nourish them.

Sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22): It is never ok to kill our children no matter the circumstances, this means we have an obligation to feed them good nourishing food.

Kol Nidre: Everyone, even society gets a second chance at doing the right thing and making the world a better place. We have a responsibility to make this Yom Kippur count and remember those who are in need of food, and make sure everyone has access to healthy food.
Parashat Nitzavim (Deut 29): The entire community is included in the covenant between God and Israel, meaning that we have a responsibility to take care of the entire community and make sure that everyone has access to food and enough to eat.

The Two Goats (Lev 16): Some of us get demonized for no reason, often those on the margins are the ones that bear the brunt of the community's sins. We must do everything we can to make sure that those suffering from food insecurity are not blamed for being poor or needing help. We must make access as easy as possible and remind ourselves that anyone can be food insecure and fortunes can change in the blink of an eye, through no fault of our own.

Yom Kippur Offerings (Numbers 29:7): On Yom Kippur we are reminded of how precious food is and not to take it for granted. This also reminds us that not everyone in our community has access to good food and we must do everything in our power to change that.

Sexual Misconduct (Lev 18): On Yom Kippur we are reminded of the terrible things people do to one another and how important it is to treat people with dignity and respect. This also applies to food insecurity and food access. We must make sure everyone in our community has access to healthy affordable food and no one is made to feel less than in the process.

Other Texts

That emphasize our religious obligation to feed those in our midst, especially those on the margins

Deut 10:17-19 For your God יהוה is God supreme and Lord supreme,* the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who shows no favor and takes no bribe,but upholds the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and befriends the stranger, providing food and clothing.—You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Rashi on Deut 10:17-19: *And God loves the stranger in giving them bread and raiment* — and this (bread and raiment) is a matter of importance, for the very self of (all the energies of) Jacob, our ancestor, was to pray for this, (Genesis 28:20) "Let God give me bread to eat and raiment to put on" (Genesis Rabbah 70:5).

Ibn Ezra on Deut 10:17-19: *God executes Justice*. Even though God is exalted, God executes justice on behalf of the orphan and widow who have no one to help them, as in *a father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows* (Ps. 68:6). God similarly loves the stranger and sustains them when the stranger relies on God. Now, since God loves the stranger, you too are obligated to love the stranger.

Mishneh Torah (Maimonides) on Esther: One should rather spend more money on gifts to the poor than on his *Purim* banquet and presents to his friends. No joy is greater and more glorious than the joy of gladdening the hearts of the poor, the orphans, the widows, and the strangers. One who gladdens the heart of these unhappy people imitates God, as it is written: "I am … to revive the spirit of the humble, and to put heart into the crushed" (Isaiah 57:15).

Musar: Orhot Tzaddikim 17: One should be very careful to be liberal with the poor, to dress them, to feed them with the best, as it is written, "All the fat is Adonai's" (Lev. 3:16). One's reward shall be that which is good and treasured, which "Neither has the eye seen, save God, who worketh for one that waits for God" (Is. 64:3).

Talmud: Being a Citizen of a place means providing food for the poor and contributing to funds that go to the purchasing of high quality food for those in the community who need it.

Bava Batra 8a: The Gemara asks: And do we require that one live in a city for twelve months for all matters? But isn't it taught in a *baraita*: If one lives in a city for thirty days, he must contribute to the charity platter from which food is distributed to the poor. If he lives there for three months, he must contribute to the charity box. If he lives there for six months, he must contribute to the clothing fund. If he lives there for nine months, he must contribute to the burial fund. If he lives there for twelve months, he must contribute to the columns of the city i.e., for the construction of a security fence. Rabbi Asi said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: When we learned twelve months in the mishna, we learned that with regard to contributing to the columns of the city, money used for protecting and strengthening the city, but not for other matters.

Bava Batra 8b: Food for the charity platter is collected by three people and distributed by three people because its collection and its distribution take place on the same day. Food for the charity platter is collected and distributed every day, and therefore a third individual must participate in the collection so that he will be available to take part in the distribution without delay; whereas the money of the charity fund is distributed only once a week, on each Shabbat eve. There are additional differences between these two types of charity operations: The food from the charity platter is distributed to the poor of the world, meaning, to any poor individual arriving in the city; the money of the charity fund is allocated exclusively to the poor of the city. But it is permitted for the residents of the city to use money that has been collected for the charity fund to purchase food for the charity platter to feed the poor; and similarly they may use food that had been collected for the charity platter for the charity fund. In general, it is permitted for them to change the purpose toward which charity will be used to whatever they want, in accordance with the needs of the community.

Sanhedrin 49a: The verse states with regard to Joab: "And he was buried in his own house, in the wilderness" (I Kings 2:34). The Gemara asks: Is that to say that Joab's house was a wilderness? Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: Joab's house was like the wilderness; just as the wilderness is freely open to all, so too, Joab's house was freely open to all, as he generously opened his house to the poor and made them feel like members of the household. Alternatively, Joab's house was like the wilderness; just as the wilderness is clean of theft and sexual immorality, as it is uninhabited, so too, Joab's house was clean of theft and sexual immorality, owing to his righteousness. As for the verse: "And Joab kept alive the rest of the city" (I Chronicles 11:8), Rav Yehuda says: Not only would Joab feed the poor, but he would even give them treats of types of small fish so they would lack for nothing.