

IDENTITY

Matzah

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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 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 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.