



# OPENING OUR HEARTS AND MINDS

Tonight, through the telling of the Exodus story, our ancestral memories come alive. We witness how Pharaoh's heart was hardened and kept people enslaved. We travel with Moshe, Miriam and Aharon out of bondage and into freedom, feeling their sorrow, their fear, their hope, and their joy as if we were there beside them.

But the story of oppression is not a distant memory. Poverty, inequality and injustice surround us. And while we may read the headlines, the details can often feel opaque and distant.

But sometimes, we learn something that catches us by surprise—we hear a person's story, or learn a fact, that softens our heart. Suddenly, our eyes are opened to a struggle we never imagined our neighbour might share - and we notice that our heart was perhaps harder than we would have liked to think.

**Tonight, to honour the fact that we are always learning, we discuss: What is one thing you have learned recently that helped you understand the realities of injustice and poverty for people different than yourself - something that softened your heart to another's struggle?**

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Inspiration:

- *I heard someone talk about her experience of homelessness. She talked about how mandatory credit checks and paying first + last months rent up front mean that often people who are getting their lives together still can't secure housing - even if they're doing all the right things. It's been a long time since I rented... Things have really changed!*
- *I learned that Inuit people couldn't vote until 1962. It made me realize how much it must still affect people today since it's in living memory—just like how many Jews are still affected by the trauma of the Holocaust less than 100 years ago.*
- *I heard that Canada accepted 23% fewer refugees in 2025 compared to the year before. It reminded me that Canada's refugee policy has always been heartless. That during WW2 Canada admitted only 5,000 Jews... fewer than almost any other democracy.*

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**If it's hard to think of something, build or comment on a fact someone else has shared:  
"I thought \_\_\_\_\_'s contribution was so interesting, it made me think of..."**

Once you've gone around the table and everyone has had the opportunity to share, pledge together:

**EVERYONE: On this week of Pesach, and through all weeks to come, I will not let my heart be hardened. I commit myself to listening. To having my mind changed. To softening any hardness that has already taken root. On this week of Pesach, and through all weeks to come, I pledge to love and learn more and more, until the end of my days. Amen.**



# FOUR CHILDREN OF FOOD INSECURITY

The Torah teaches us to tell our children the story of Exodus four times, and each time our instructions are different. Traditional readings of the Haggadah understand this to mean that these represent many types of children who need to be taught in many different ways. The reality that learning styles differ from child to child has been a fundamental part of our Passover tradition for millennia.

So, how should we teach different types of learners about hunger and food justice?

## THE WICKED CHILD

The wicked child understands that others go hungry, but chooses not to care. This child is selfish and mocks others who choose to be kind. This child says, "So what?!" and "That's not my problem." To this child you should say, "We are all responsible for one another. No-one can be free until all of us are free."

## THE COMPLACENT CHILD

The complacent child may know about hunger, but does the bare minimum to stop it. This child might bring cans to the annual school food drive, but forgets those in need the other 364 days a year. This child says, "There, I've done enough." To this child you should say, "Thank you for what you have done. There are still people who go hungry every day. How can we help them every day, and not just when we are asked?"

## THE CHILD WHO DOES NOT NEED TO ASK

There is a child who cannot "learn about hunger and food justice" because this child has always known - this is the child who never has enough to eat. This child asks, "Why do I feel so tired and have headaches all the time? Why is it so hard for me to learn and behave myself in school? Why do others have food when I go hungry?" To this child, you should say: "It is not your fault—it is because the world has not shown you justice. Today, let me help you with a meal—and tomorrow, let me commit to the fight for a better world where no child will feel how you feel."

## THE WISE CHILD

The wise child knows that a warm meal can ease the pangs of hunger for a moment, but that they will soon return. This child understands that hunger is just one face of poverty, and that hunger will always exist so long as there are people deprived of opportunities, homes, and health. This child asks: "How can grown-ups allow for a world where anyone goes hungry, even for a day? No matter how big the changes would have to be, I don't want to grow up in a world that's so unfair." To this child you should say, "Nothing worth doing is simple, but together let's learn what we can do to change things. Let's follow the lead of people who have known poverty and hunger themselves, who know the problems and solutions best. Together, you and I will help them change the world so no child ever goes hungry again."



## YACHATZ: THE BREAKING OF THE MATZAH

**LEADER:** At this step of the Seder, Jews around the world are breaking a piece of matzah in half and hiding the larger piece away to be found and eaten later. Let's take a moment to remember just how common this action is.

Some of you around the table might be familiar with this process from last Passover and the one before that. Others may be used to the feeling of saving food for later each and every time you eat.

7.4 million people in Canada have to make compromises in the quality and/or quantity of their food - like having smaller portions to make their groceries and budget last. That's over 19% of Canadians stretching every meal they have, even when the food available is like this "lachma anya", this bread of poverty.

To the children: How do you feel when you notice that something is unfair, when one person doesn't have what they need and another person has more than their fair share? What do you need from grown-ups in that moment - how can we help you help others?

*Take a moment to allow the children to think about this question and respond.*

To the adults: Too often we hide the brokenness of the world from our children, leaving them to uncover it on their own later on. How can we bring the next generation into our work towards justice?

*Take a moment to allow guests to think about this question and respond.*

**TOGETHER:** Tonight we pledge to fight injustice wherever we find it, and to build a world without hunger and poverty. May putting food aside for later stay only at the Seder, and not follow us, or any one, throughout the year.