

HUNGER & FEEDING IN THE TORAH

A MAZON QUIZ

1. When is the first time people eat in the Bible?
 - a. Who eats?
 - b. What do they eat?
 - c. Where did this food come from?
 - d. What happened when they ate?

2. Noah was the first person in the Bible to have two kinds of foods.
 - a. What were they?
 - b. What happened to him when he had the second of the two?

3. Abraham and Sarah were the first people in the Bible to entertain guests.
 - a. Who were their guests?
 - b. Why were their guests coming to see them?
 - c. What did they feed them?
 - d. What did Abraham prepare and what did Sarah prepare?
 - e. What else did Abraham and Sarah do for their guests?

4. When Abraham's servant Eliezer went to look for a wife for Isaac, he found a young woman by a well. He knew she was the one who was meant for Isaac.
 - a. How did he know?
 - b. What was her name?

5. Isaac had two sons, one younger and one older.
 - a. What were their names?
 - b. What did the younger one feed the older one? Why?
 - c. What did the older one give the younger one in exchange for food?

6. Many years later, Isaac's younger son became a father himself. He had many children, but one was his favorite, and he gave him a special article of clothing to wear.
 - a. What was the favorite son's name?
 - b. What was the special article of clothing?
 - c. Where did his brothers send him? Why?
 - d. What was his special talent that got him promoted to high office?
 - e. What did he do that helped everyone in that land?
 - f. Who surprised him by coming to him for help?

7. When the Israelite people were slaves in Egypt, G-d saved them and they walked out to freedom.
 - a. What did they take with them to eat? Why that particular food?
 - b. We still eat that same food today. When? Why?
 - c. When they ran out of the food they had brought, what did they eat? How did they get it? How long did they eat this new food? What did it taste like?

- d. After walking in the desert for many days, the people got thirsty. What did they do? How did they get water?
8. Several times in their journey toward the land of Canaan, the Israelite people were given rules about eating.
- Can you find two places in the Bible where such rules are found?
 - Why were we given rules like this?
 - Many Jews today still follow these rules, and others, when they prepare and eat food. What is this system of eating rules called?
9. In the book of Leviticus, there is a section called the Holiness Code, with many instructions for Jews about how to try and be holy.
- Can you find the Holiness Code? Where is it?
 - One way it tells us to be holy is to take care of people who cannot take care of themselves. How does the Code tell us to do that?
10. Just before the Israelite people were to enter the land of Canaan, Moses gave them instructions about how to live in their new land. Some of those instructions can be found in Deuteronomy, Chapter 26.
- Can you find two things that people were instructed to do about food?

ANSWERS TO TORAH QUIZ

1. The first time people eat is seen in Genesis 3:6.
- Eve eats, and then Adam eats.
 - They eat a fruit, usually thought to be an apple.
 - The fruit came from the tree of knowledge of good and bad.
 - When they ate, they understood that they were naked, and they made garments of fig leaves to cover themselves.
- 2.
- Noah was the first to eat meat (Genesis 9:3: "Every creature that lives shall be yours to eat; as with the green grasses, I give you all these."). Noah was also the first to plant a vineyard (Genesis 9:20).
 - He drank the wine made from the grapes in his vineyard and got drunk.

Discussion Questions: Besides alcohol, what other kinds of food and drink can be bad for you if you eat or drink too much? What happens to you? Why do people do this?

- 3.
- Abraham and Sarah's guests were three men who were really three angels (Genesis 18:2).
 - Their guests came to announce Isaac's birth (Genesis 18:9-15).
 - They fed them bread or cakes, curds, milk and veal (calf) (Genesis 18:5-8).

- d. Abraham selected the calf, which was prepared by a servant boy, and took the curds and milk to the guests. Sarah made cakes.
- e. Abraham also offered the guests water to bathe their feet and a place to rest under a tree.

Discussion Questions: Abraham is usually known as the epitome of hospitality, in part because of his behavior toward these three special guests (Genesis 18:1-8. He runs to greet the guests, he offers them every comfort, he waits on them, he speaks to them with respect, calling them, “my Lords.”). What makes Abraham’s behavior so exemplary? When you have guests, do you follow any of Abraham’s examples? How? How do you treat people you don’t really know?

4.

- a. Eliezer knew the young woman was to be Isaac’s wife because she offered him water and also gave water to his camels. Later she invited him to spend the night at her family’s house, and to eat with them (Genesis 24:12-20, 25).
- b. Her name was Rebekkah.

Note: Like Abraham, Rebekkah is known as an exemplar of hospitality, willing to offer water, food and lodging to a stranger. She, too, was rewarded, but did not know she would be when she offered him water.

5.

- a. Isaac’s two sons were Esau, the older, and Jacob, the younger.
- b. Jacob fed Esau a reddish stew, possibly made of lentils, because Esau said to him, “Give me some of that red stuff to gulp down, for I am famished.”
- c. Jacob wanted Esau’s birthright, so he bribed him with the food, giving it to him only after Esau agreed to give him the birthright (Genesis 25:29-34).

Discussion Questions: Think about times when you have been very hungry. Can you think about anything but food at a time like that? Imagine being very hungry all the time. What would be your main concern? What do you think of Jacob’s behavior here? Did he act correctly? (Some say yes, because he was supposed to get the birthright. Others say no, because he used Esau’s hunger unfairly.) Are there situations you can imagine when people might be easily manipulated because they are hungry?

6.

- a. Jacob’s favorite son was Joseph.
- b. Jacob gave Joseph an ornamented tunic or coat of many colors (Genesis 37:3).
- c. Joseph’s brothers sold him to a passing caravan of Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt, because they were jealous of his being their father’s favorite (Genesis 37:18-28).
- d. Joseph’s special talent was interpretation of dreams, which Pharaoh put to use and then promoted Joseph (Genesis 41: 1-36).

e. Joseph stored grain during productive years to use for food during years of famine; this way, he fed many people who would otherwise not have had food (Genesis 41:47-19, 53-57).

f. Joseph's brothers surprised him by coming to get food in Egypt when they could not get any food in their own land.

Discussion Questions: Is there anyone today who serves as Joseph's counterpart, storing and then giving out food? 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?

7.

a. The Israelites walking to freedom took dough, which they baked into unleavened cakes, since the dough had no time to rise when they had to leave Egypt in a hurry. They took in because it was the only thing they had that could be quickly and easily packed up (Exodus 12:39).

b. We eat the same unleavened bread – matzah – today during Passover, to remind us of G-d's redemption of our ancestors from slavery. Even in the Bible, we were instructed to do so (Exodus 13:6-8).

c. When the people ran out of their own food, they ate manna, which G-d provided 6 days during the week, with a double portion on the 6th day to have for Shabbat. They gathered it each morning in the desert. It tasted like wafers in honey (Exodus 16:14-18, 21-23, 31).

d. When the people got thirsty they complained and said to Moses, "Give us water to drink (Exodus 17:1-2). " Moses, instructed by G-d, struck the rock at Horeb and water came from it, and everyone drank (Exodus 17:5-6).

Discussion Questions: How does G-d give us food today? Does it just appear or must we work to get it? How? How do we acknowledge G-d's gifts of food?

8.

a. Rules about eating can be found in Exodus 23:18-19 and Leviticus, Chapter 11. See also Deuteronomy 12:20-24, 14:3-21.

b. We were given rules for many possible reasons: To set ourselves apart from other peoples, to remember G-d as the source of our lives and food when we eat, and for health reasons.

c. Our system of rules for eating is called Kashrut.

9.

a. The Holiness Code is found in Leviticus, Chapter 19.

b. In the Holiness Code we are told:

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: I the Lord am your G-d (Leviticus 19:9-10).

Discussion Questions: These days most of us do not have fields or vineyards. How do we try to be holy as the Holiness Code instructs us? What do we have that we can take a small part of to give to the “poor and the stranger”? (One way, of course, is to give a small portion of money – what we own now instead of fields – to an organization like MAZON, which provides it to the poor and the stranger.)

10.

a. In Deuteronomy 26, the people were instructed to take some of the first fruits of their harvests and bring it to G-d’s altar and recite a passage that reminds us 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.” Deuteronomy 26:1-10).

The people were 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 could eat, and to make a declaration that they had done so (Deuteronomy 26:12-13).

Discussion Questions: As in Question 9 above, ask what we can do that is akin to tithing our produce to give to the needy. Could we take a portion of what we have or what we eat and give it to those who are in need? (This is what MAZON asks: That supporters donate 3% of what they spend on parties, holiday meals, bar/bat mitzvah receptions, wedding parties, etc. Perhaps the class could decide to send its tzedakah collection, or 3% of the money each student spends on snacks, to MAZON to give to those who are hungry.