

Passover - Passing Over Our Heritage To Our Children (Edited By Alon Gildoni Nissan 5768)

In the summer of 1947, testifying before the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, David Ben-Gurion, the one who declared Israel's independence and the first prime minister of the state of Israel, said: "About 300 years ago a ship named the Mayflower set sail to the New World. It was an important event in the annals of England and America, yet I wonder if there is even one Englishman who knows exactly when that ship set sail, and how many Americans know how many people were on that ship? And what type of bread did they eat when they left England? Yet more than 3,300 years ago, before the Mayflower set sail, the Jews left Egypt. And every Jew in the world ... knows exactly on what day they left: They left on the 15th of Nisan. And everyone knows what kind of bread they ate: They ate matzah. And until today Jews all over the world eat matzo on the 15th of Nisan... and recount the Exodus.... That is the nature of the Jews."

<p>ג ויאמר משה אל-העם, זכור את-היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים מבית עבדים, כי בחזק יד, הוציא יהוה אתכם מזה; ולא יאכל, חמץ.</p>	<p>Exodus 13 3 And Moses said unto the people: 'Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place; there shall no leavened bread be eaten.</p>
<p>ד היום, אתם יצאים, בחדש, האביב.</p>	<p>4 This day ye go forth in the month Abib.</p>
<p>ה והיה כי-ביאך יהוה אל-ארץ הכנעני והחתי והאמורי והחוי והיבוי, אשר נשבע לאבותיך לתת לך, ארץ זבת חלב, ודבש; ועבדת את-העבדה הזאת, בחדש הזה.</p>	<p>5 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, which He swore unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month.</p>
<p>ו שבעת ימים, תאכל מצות; וביום, השביעי, חג, ליהנה.</p>	<p>6 Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD.</p>
<p>ז מצות, יאכל, את, שבעת הימים; ולא-יראה לך חמץ, ולא-יראה לך שאר--בכל-גבולך.</p>	<p>7 Unleavened bread (Matzot) shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee, in all thy borders.</p>
<p>ח והגדת לבנך, ביום ההוא לאמר: בעבור זה, עשה יהוה לי, בצאתי, ממצרים.</p>	<p>8 And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying: It is because of that which the LORD did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.</p>
<p>ט והיה לך לאות על-ידך, ולזכרון בין עיניך, למען תהיה תורת יהוה, בפניך; כי ביד חזקה, הוציאך יהוה ממצרים.</p>	<p>9 And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thy hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the law of the LORD may be in thy mouth; for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.</p>
<p>י ושמרת את-החקה הזאת, למועדך, מימים, ימימה. {פ}</p>	<p>10 Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.</p>

The Four Sons The Torah speaks of four types of children: One is wise, one is wicked, one is simple, and one does not know how to ask.

The Wise One asks: "What is the meaning of the laws and traditions God has commanded?" (Deuteronomy 6:20) You should teach him all the traditions of Passover, even to the last detail.

The Wicked One asks: "What does this ritual mean to you?" (Exodus 12:26) By using the expression "to you" he excludes himself from his people and denies God. Shake his arrogance and say to him: "It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt..." (Exodus 13:8) "For me" and not for him for had he been in Egypt, he would not have been redeemed.

The Simple One asks: "What is all this?" You should tell him: "It was with mighty hand that the Lord took us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." **As for the One Who Does Not Know How To Ask,** you should open the discussion for him, as it is written: "And you shall explain to your child on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.'" (Exodus 13:8)

The Haggadah introduces the Four Sons and explains how each should be taught. The Four Sons serve as a wonderful model on how to transmit our rich heritage effectively, tailor-made to each child's capacity and unique way of learning. The values of the Torah are timeless and so every generation finds a new way of interpreting the Haggadah which has meaning in it for them.

The Four Generations You can look at the four sons as four generations of Jews. The first generation of observant Jewry who lived a rich Jewish life represented by the Wise Son. This is the Jew who grew up with a strong connection to the Jewish way of life. It is inconceivable for him to think of working on Shabbat. He knows why Judaism is important. His commitment is unshakable. His son, the second generation, is represented in the Wicked Son. This is the rebel who wants to succeed in his new life and takes on a non Jewish way of life. Although he has grown up in a home full of Jewish values and an integrated Jewish life, he rejects this in favor of integrating into the wide society and becoming accepted by it. His son, the third generation, is represented by the Simple Son. This child has spent Seder suppers at his grandparents' table, has seen his grandmother light the Shabbat candles. He has a spattering of knowledge picked up at Hebrew school, but he doesn't know the meaning behind any of the symbols and is not very motivated to go beyond what he sees. His son, the fourth generation, is represented in the "One who doesn't know how to ask." This child does not have memories of his great grandparents. He celebrates the National holidays and other than knowing that he is a Jew, has no connection whatsoever to Judaism. He sits at a traditional Seder Supper and does not even know what to ask because it is all so foreign to him. Today there is even a fifth son, who stays at home or goes out at to the movies on Seder night, not even aware that Passover exists. Anyone sitting at the Seder table is still connected to the Jewish people and heritage just by being there. We just need to get him curious and interested enough to ask a question that interests him and we can open the door for him as well.

"When a People ignores its past, the present has little substance and the future is clouded in doubt" (Yigal Alon)