

Pesach / 15 Nissan, 5575 / April 4, 2015

וְהָיָה כִּי-תָבֹאוּ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר יָמֵן יְהוָה לְכֶם--כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר; וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם,
אֶת-הַעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת

Ex. 12:25 “When you come to the Land, which Adonai will give you, as declared, you shall carry out this service.”

There are two central messages in the Passover story and in the way in which it is told each year. The first is the affirmation of Jewish history and its significance to Jewish identity. The second is the idea that maintaining the shared past and a common historical experience lends commitment and even direction to a shared Jewish destiny.

As we sit around our tables with friends and family we recall the story of the Jewish people once enslaved and somewhat without direction. And, we celebrate the liberation from this narrow place to an unimagined destination. Once across the Red Sea, having escaped the enemy, the Israelites face endless possibilities despite dwelling amongst potentially dangerous peoples. And, in their formation to be a common people on their way to a land of promise, they learn the rules, order and structure that will help ensure their long-term success and continuity.

It's fascinating to look at the story that was preserved, and the way it has been brought alive for the past 2,500 years. Why did we preserve these chosen elements of the story? Why are some rabbis' commentaries essential, while others' go unmentioned? How and why did the songs become iconic to the experience of Passover?

The content and the delivery of the *Hagaddah* can serve as a model for what and how we choose to teach this generation about the story of our people in shaping and defending the modern State of Israel. First, it's essential that we affirm our history. Every aspect of Jewish life has been deeply affected by the creation and development of Israel - spiritual, liturgical, political, cultural, literary and linguistic. One cannot extricate Israel and our present Jewish identity. Note the people who brought the idea of a Jewish Homeland to reality: Theodore Herzl, David Ben Gurion, ? Let the



Additional References:

At the top of this D'var Torah you find a copy of the front page of a [Passover Hagaddah from Givat Brenner in 1935](#). The bottom depicts Bavel and Egypt and the top shows symbols of each wave of Aliyah.

Kibbutz HaBoneh created their own "[Ma Nishtanah...](#)" for their Haggadah in 1937

["The Four Sons"](#) and ["The Twelve Plagues"](#) of

commentary tell the contributions of Israel to advancements in our world. List Nobel Prize winners: Shai Agnon, Aaron Ciechanover, Avram Hershko, Ada Yonath, Dan Schectman, Arieh Warshel, Menachem Begin, Yisachak Rabin and Shimon Perez, not to mention all the other Nobel nominees and innovators who contributed to the magnificent Israel of today.

In terms of how we transmit the story of Israel's modern founding, we again can take instruction from our Passover *Hagaddah*: tell the story with text. Use sources that convey the message of Israel's founding: The Zionist Congress meeting notes, the Declaration of Independence, the songs and poems of our people from pre-Statehood until today. The story and the sidebars should include actual documents and maps: the New Yishuv, Herzl's Jewish State, the Balfour Declaration, Israel's Declaration of Independence and documents like UN Resolution 242 and others. And above all, we can not forget the rich renaissance of the Hebrew Language with its music, novels and cinema.

In teaching our history of Statehood, we can convey the shared responsibility of all Jewish people to the future of the Modern State of Israel. Understanding and connecting to its history, people, policies, government, culture and its place in the modern world at large will enable the next generation to have a hand in maintaining the ongoing narrative of the modern Land of Israel.

As we bring the *seder* to a close with the words: Next Year in Jerusalem, let it serve as more than a metaphor or an existential hope. We are presently "in Jerusalem" and perhaps it's time to change the final words to: This year, let's continue to thrive in Israel!

[the Hagaddah of Independence](#)
(Published by the IDF 1952)

["There Were Four Sons"](#)
(Bergson Group Version)

[Hagaddot from pre-State and early Israel](#) at Israel's National Library

Discussion Questions:

1. How might life in the diaspora be different if Israel did not exist?
2. What is it that we as Jews weigh about ourselves and our faith, perhaps shaped from the Passover Story, about going or staying? Consider our history: Stay in Europe after the 1903 pogroms or not? Stay in Germany in the 1930s or not? Stay in Iraq after the Farhud/Anti-Jewish riots in 1941 or not? Stay in France in 2015 as Jews or not? Stay in the West Bank or not? And when we go, what is the common thread for the Jewish people in all of these examples?