

## **“JEWISH SURVIVAL-JEWISH HOME”**

This is not a Dvar Torah on the parasha, but on the Shabbat HaGadol that past, and the Pesach to come. I have delivered over 50 years of Shabbat HaGadol and Pesach Drashot so why should this year be different? There are no questions for you to answer at the end, but I would appreciate your honest comments (not mere flattery) on the contents.

The Yom Tov of Pesach centers around the Bayit Yehudi, the Jewish home. The Torah commands us- “Ve-Higgadeta L’vinecha” , and *you shall tell [teach] your children* (Shemot 13:8). A basic principle of education is that the best way to teach something is to first motivate the student. We do precisely that, at the Seder by doing things differently from the rest of the year so that children will be motivated to ask “Ma Nishtana?”

Once we have motivated their curiosity we begin “Avadim Hayinu “ by relating the oppressions of slavery in Mitzrayim and then continue telling about the cruel, anti-semitic hardships of Jewish life throughout the ages. But the main focal points should be about our own personal experiences, and that of our parents, and grandparents. Describe a life without a Jewish homeland, without Eretz Yisrael, living in Europe, in the Ghettos, and for some , even surviving in Concentration Camps. That’s all part of Avadim Hayinu. “Vehigadeta” is not only telling but testifying [as in Hagadot Eidut] to our family and children. We were there, we saw, and we lived through it

How did we survive throughout all the centuries? Of course it was “VaYotz’ienu HaShem”, with Gd’s help, but the Jewish family also played a major role. No matter what occurred in the outside world, we at least had our strong ties with our own families. At the Seder we brought everyone together, no one excluded. In “Fiddler On The Roof”, Tevya felt he lost his first daughter because she didn’t follow the exact tradition of matrimony, by falling in love with a “tailor” instead of going through a “shadchan” . Tevya felt he lost his second daughter because she decided to marry a non-religious socialist. His third daughter he completely gave up on because she decided to marry a non-Jew. At the Seder we are taught to bring all our children together: the Chacham, the Tam, the She’eino Yodei’ a Lish’ol, and even the Rasha. We never give up on any of them. Even the Rasha who could be married to a non-Jew, or could be “gay”, or one who doesn’t observe Shabbat, or Kashrut, or guests who are physically or mentally challenged, we invite all to our Seder.

Who knows, perhaps the son of the Rasha will some day long for the environment of his “zeidis” house, he will be like a “Tam” who doesn’t know anything about religion and his child would not even know “what to ask”, so we, the zeidis step in and develop a relationship that can bring them home to Yiddishkeit. To the dismay of the Rasha who wanted his children not to have any knowledge of the “old time Judaism” he also deprived them of the beauty of that old time Judaism. He threw out the baby with the water. Statistics in Israel powerfully support this contention. 83% of all Israelis- eat no Chametz on Pesach. They may eat a non-kosher McDonalds hamburger on Pesach , but they check to see that the bun is not chametz. 91% fast on Yom Kippur. They may go bicycle riding on the open roads,

free of traffic- but do so while still fasting. 93% have a Brit Milah. Unlike irreligious Jews throughout the world, the Israeli Jew has a strong sense of tradition. So bring them all to your Seder.

At the Seder you will introduce them to your colleagues : the Rambam, Raavad, R' Yosef Karo, the Rama, Rabbi Akiva, R' Tarfon, and all those you quote as you explain the Haggada and the Halochot. No matter when they lived we bridge the generation gaps. So too do we breach the generation gap between children and grand parents . We have one Torah, one Messorah for all, and our mission is to transmit this rich heritage to the next generation. Avraham Avinu was only able to transmit his belief in monotheism to one generation- Yitzchak. Yitzchak was only successful in transmitting it to Yaakov, but Yaakov Avinu had the zechut of teaching it even to his grandchildren-Ephrayim and Menashe.

On Shabbat HaGadol we read the Haftara from the last chapter of the last of the Nevi'im , Malachi, who foretells that, " Behold,I send you Eliyahu the prophet , before the great and awesome day of HaShem. He will restore the heart of fathers to children and the heart of children to their fathers". That is our cue and Haftacha from HaShem that indeed we will succeed in our holy mission of life. Keeping the family in tact, excluded no one from our Seder, as long as they are willing to sit and join us. The Bayit Yehudi is always open to all.

Chag Samei'ach from Yerushalayim....Aharon Ziegler