

בס"ד

PARentingFrom the PARsha

Special Pesach Issue

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We will devote this week’s Parenting from the *Parsha* to *Pesach* and *leilseder*.

Volumes and volumes have been written about the hashkafa,*halachos*and themes of Pesach. Our*d’varTorah* will concentrate on the three following aspects of the *leilseder*in regard tochinuchbanim:

1)Lessons of parenting that we glean from the general format of the *seder.* 2) The relevance of the *arbabanim*3) The importance of ourchildren’s participation.

The*Chachamim,*in their unique wisdom,designedthe*seder*and exhorted us to recite the *haggada* in order fulfill the *mitzvah d'oriesa* (*Torah* command)of סיפור יציאת מצרים. Furthermore we relivethe bondage,wonders and redemption from *Mitzraim*through the objects, food and ritualspresented at thetheseder in order to fulfill the *halacha* "A person is obligated to view himself as if he personally departed from Mitzraim."(*Pesachim* 116b-*RambamHilchosChametzdU’matza)*.

TheChachamim’s use of the audio-visual pedagogic processin the seder precedes this “*chiddush*”of modern secular educators by thousands of years. This process isalso invaluable in parenting. Let’s present some examples:

**1) Seeing is Believing-** Observing a father attending *minyan* and *dovening*with*kavana* makes a far more profound impression upon the son than *Abba* merely speaking about it; a parent explaining an issuecalmly proves to be more potent than demanding the child that it is the proper thing to do.Watching *Abba* involved in Pesach cleaning spurs the child to participate more than instructing him to do so.

**2) Vivid Imagery**meansevoking images and scenes in one'smind. In this case, it refers to teaching a child amitzvah or goal by conveying vivid examples or descriptions. The*Alter* from *Khelm*(*SeferChachmaU'Musar*)comments that Moshe Rabeinu was able to feel empathy for B'neiYisroelin the labor camps by conjuring up images in his mind of their suffering (even though he was raised in royalty). Similarly, a parent can encouragea child to do more *chesed*by describing cases of unfortunate Jews in states of physical or emotional anguish. As well,the parent can*mechanech* the child in the mitzva of tzedakah by proding him to imagine that the time that he felt most hungry is the continual state of an ani and his family.

**3) Drama-**Built into the seder are opportunities to keep the attention of the children to convey certain details of yetziasmitzraim. A universal *minhag* is the stealing and hiding the *afikomen*. Other *minhagim*are brought down such as holding the *matza* on one's shoulders to represent the dough that *BneiYisroel* carried out from*mitzraim*. A creative learning experience is for the siblings is plan and execute a skit(s) about the bondage, *esermakos*, *korban pesach*, the *yetzia* itself and so forth.

**4) Teaching ThroughPictures and Devices-** As mentioned above, the message of *yetziasmitzraim* is portrayed to our children through ritual, food and objects we can take this a step further. Teaching our offspring *mitzvos*, and building*middostovos*through pictures, games and stories can be very effective.Bedtime stories don't only serve to build a bond with the child, but can bean important learning experience. We can take a few extra minutes to explain ideas and concepts represented by the content and pictures.Listeningto music disks with stories intertwined with *hashkafa* and *middos* lessons are very influential. On *CholHamoed*, the kids may be allowed to watch anappropriate video to enlighten the mind and arouse the heart.

The *Mishna* in *ArveiPesachim* (*Perek* 10:4) instructs the child to ask parents about the various rituals that are carried out during *leilseder*. The *Chachamim*understood the vital educational importance of teaching the children through a question and answer format. Thespringboard to the*haggadah* is the *arbakashiyos*, the four questions.

Encouraging questions from our offspring is a very important pedagogic technique. A question is an expression of a desire to know something. A child will retain the information more often from the answer of **his** question. If the childfeels undo pressure or coercedthe knowledge will usuallynot remain in his memory.

The four*banim* are quintessential examples of all the “sons” of history. Each child has his unique intellectual abilities and *techunoshanefesh*. We learn from the *haggadah* that we must take thesefactors into account to determinehow we answer him.The answer must also be relevant according to the generation in whichhe lives, his background andfactors in his environment.

The importance of involving our children in the*seder*transcends the importance of keeping alive the lessons of yetziasmitzraimfrom year to year. It represents the essential chain of mesorah that guarantees the continued existence of*KlalYisroel.*

May we be*zocheh* to continue to transmit the lessons of Pesach to our offspring and may we all meet on *HarHabayis* this year to offer our *zevachim* and *pesachim.*

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