

VEHI SHEAMDA

"For, not only one arose and tried to destroy us, rather in every generation they try to destroy us, and God saves us from their hands."

Vehi Sheamda is one of the most well-known parts of the entire section of Maggid. The song Vehi Sheamda tells the story of resilience and the Jewish people overcoming challenges. So too, this year we will overcome challenges and take the opportunity to grow as a family and a people.

- In essentially every generation, the Jews have been physically threatened. What in your opinion is the greatest "enemy" to being Jewish today? How can we fight and stand up to this enemy?
- What has kept the Jews going over the centuries despite anti-Semitism in every generation?
- Has adversity made us stronger as a people?
- How do you connect with God in dark times?
- What are challenges you have overcome in your life?
- Who supported you through your challenges? Who have you supported?
- Do you consider yourself a supportive friend?
- The Leadership of Moshe Rabbenu

In unsettling times, we turn to our leadership to give us proper guidance. Moshe is considered one of the greatest leaders in our history. Moshe encouraged Bnei Yisrael (the Jewish people) to stand firm and witness the salvation that God would bring them.

THE LEADERSHIP OF MOSHE RABBENU

- Why do you think Moshe was an effective leader?
- Why is leadership important?
- Have you found the leadership in the current situation to be succeeding?
- Which leaders inspire you today?
- Who in your community stands out for being a successful leader?
- What leadership qualities do you most admire?
- Have you ever been in a position of leadership? How can you make a difference in guiding and helping others?

WHAT CAN PARENTS AND TEACHERS LEARN FROM THE FOUR SONS?

*“Chanoch l'naar al pi darko, gam ki yazkin lo yasur mimenu”
Train the youth according to his way, so that even when he
ages he will not deviate from it. (Mishlei 22:6)*

This Pesach may present us with the opportunity to slow down and have more quiet time discussing the Haggadah with our children during the Seder and throughout Pesach. The Torah speaks of four children listed in order of their intellectual capacities. The wise child, the wicked child, who is also wise but whose disrespect leads him to act wickedly; the simple child, who has at least enough intelligence to ask; and finally the one who does not know how to ask.

- What does it mean to teach?
- Who do you consider your teachers?
- Have you ever taken the time and effort to properly thank your teachers?
- Is teaching a natural ability, or one that we can work on and constantly hone in our skills?
- Do we just need to tell our children the story of Pesach, or is the night about re-experiencing the exodus, inculcating our children with lessons and values?
- How can we turn our seder into a learning experience for ourselves, to practice being teachers for our children all year round?
- How can we be creative to teach each child, no matter their intelligence, personality, or behavior?
- How can we be more careful to individualize our teaching for each of our children? What is the right balance between accepting a child for who they are and encouraging them toward their greater potential?

KARPAS

"For, not only one arose and tried to destroy us, rather in every generation they try to destroy us, and God saves us from their hands."

This year, with the quieter atmosphere than usual during our sederim, people may notice interesting things in the Haggadah that they may have glossed over in the past. Karpas is one such thing. We take less than a kazayit (the size of an average olive) of a non-bitter vegetable and dip it into the salt water. It serves as a symbol of the wonderful bounty of vegetables and fruits in the springtime harvest. The salt water symbolizes the salty tears the Jews shed in their slavery in Egypt. The act of dipping symbolizes purification in a mikveh (ritual bath).

- Do we appreciate the extensive variety of foods available at the supermarket all year round?
- Despite the incredible challenges do we appreciate the ability to celebrate Pesach this year?
- What power does it have to begin the Seder with the tears of slavery?
- What are the different types of tears you have in life?
- What do we need to purify ourselves of? What are we purifying ourselves for?

10 FUN INTERACTIVE GAMES TO PLAY AT THE SEDER (AND THROUGHOUT PESACH)

As Pesach will be more intimate this year, we are presented with a unique opportunity to bond as a family and use creativity to make Pesach more relevant for our children. To get you started, here are some ideas.

1. Make your own Pesach Trivia game. Create a list of questions related to Pesach and ask them throughout the Seder or holiday. Buy small presents or candy to hand out to the children who answer correct.
2. Play Seder Bingo.
3. Plan your own "Amazing Race". Each part of the Seder (Kadesh, Urchatz, etc.) will be a different pit stop. At each location, there will be route information with questions and directions.
4. 20 Questions Pesach version. Each person holds a piece of paper above their forehead. They are able to ask 20 questions to guess what is written on their piece of paper (Crossing the Red Sea, Pharaoh, Afikoman, Karpas, Hallel, Chametz, etc.)
5. Memory games. Have children memorize the plagues and the steps of the Seder forwards and backwards. Give out prizes for those who do it the fastest and correctly.
6. Ten Plagues Bowling Game. Label the pins from 1-10, representing each of the 10 plagues. Have children knock down the pins and say what corresponding plague matches the pins they knock down.
7. Prepare a Pesach version of charades. Examples include leaving Egypt, making matzah in 18 minutes and Eliyahu Hanavi.
8. Pesach Taboo. Create cards related to Pesach.
9. Pesach Jeopardy. Create several categories including people, places, numbers and dates.
10. Start off singing lyrics to a Pesach song and the player will have to finish those lyrics.

FREEDOM

"For, not only one arose and tried to destroy us, rather in every generation they try to destroy us, and God saves us from their hands."

Freedom is a central theme of Passover. Pesach is "z'man heyruteinu," the season of our freedom, both in a physical and spiritual sense. This year, we have a special opportunity, free from our past (and possibly rote) manner of performing the Seder, to rejuvenate the way we celebrate Pesach.

Discussion Questions

- Spiritual redemption is demonstrated by the fundamental Jewish idea that in every generation individuals are obliged to view themselves as though they had actually gone forth from Egypt. How can we keep the story of yetziat mitzrayim (leaving Egypt) alive?
- What does freedom look like to you?
- When in your life have you felt most free?
- How has your view of freedom changed over the last few weeks?
- What do you really need to live your life?
- Are we slaves to our past? Are we slaves today to worry or work?
- Is there someone or multiple people in your family's history who made their own journey to freedom?

TIPS TO PREPARE FOR A UNIQUE PESACH EXPERIENCE THIS YEAR

Pesach will certainly be very different for everyone this year. Each of us will approach our preparations for Pesach in a different way. For many, this will be the first time preparing a Seder at home. Many things are possible when you have a small intimate Seder at home.

- Share and discuss family customs. Brainstorm ways to incorporate and adapt them into your Seders over video chat.
- Organize an interactive children's group online using Zoom. Invite all of your children, nieces, nephews and family friends' children. Run activities and share stories and ideas with them. This will give them an opportunity to prepare for the Seder and build up their excitement.
- Invite family and friends to partake in a virtual Pesach talent show. Everyone will share either a song, poem, story, skit, dance or trick. Everyone can share these talents at their individual Seders.
- Collect recipes from family and friends and compile a Pesach recipe book. E-mail the recipe book to all of the contributors and post it online for others.
- Cook recipes together with your family and friends on a video call. This way you can share your cooking secrets. Take into consideration available ingredients.
- Organize a group video call with the entire extended family on before or during Pesach. Each family member will share what they are most looking forward to about Pesach this year and give a blessing to the family.