

# Thirty Days before the Holiday...

Undisputedly applied to reviewing the laws and customs of Pesach...

Probably applied to the laws and customs of Sukkot, as well...

Liberally applied to the laws and customs of other holidays on our Calendar...

## What about the HAGADA?

**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider thinks so. We agree...** (Fourth in a series)

### Inscribing the Story on the Hearts of our Children

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik zt"l (1903-1993) suggested that in one significant way our forefather Yaakov was unique. Yaakov Avinu was the only one of the Avot whose relationship with his grandchildren was recorded in the Torah. Not only was he their friend and confidant, he taught his grandchildren. He was, in the words of the Rav, the 'ba'al Hamesorah' for Ephraim and Menashe. The Midrash teaches that Yaakov Avinu learned with his grandchildren for the seventeen years he lived in Mitzrayim.

The Rav often discussed the idea of transmission of the mesorah to future generations. This idea is a foundational principle of Judaism. Therefore, not surprisingly, it is a central theme of the Seder night. The Torah obligates us in the mitzvah of ve'higadeta levincha, we must spend the night of Pesach teaching our children. Every child - the wise, wicked, simple, and the one who does not

know how to ask - must be taught according to their ability and interest level. We as parents engage in piquing the curiosity of our children and encourage them to stay awake late into the night. We tell them that we cannot finish the Seder until they return the afikoman. We simply cannot complete the celebration without them!

The Sages employ the following term in describing this central mitzvah: 'sippur yetziat mitzrayim.' The term sippur, of course, is rooted in the word l'saper, to tell or to recount. But, said the Rav, the word has another layer of meaning. It is related to the word sofer (סופר), "scribe," or sefer (ספר), which means a "scroll" or a "book." What this meaning suggests is that a sofer, a scribe, who writes a sefer, a scroll, produces something that is permanent, something that will last for generations. On Seder night, parents are also involved in the act of "writing an everlasting scroll." The child is the sefer, the scroll upon which the parent etches the beauty of this sacred night in the child's mind. On Pesach night we are to be sofrim, scribes, writing indelibly on the hearts and on the minds of our children the story that will be passed down to all succeeding generations.

According to the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Ve'zot Habracha, Remez 962), when Moshe died, a voice from Heaven called out, "Moshe has died, the great scribe of Israel, Safra Rabbah D'Yisrael." Why of all accolades was this term used to describe Moshe? Was this his greatest



attribute - that he wrote Torah scrolls?

Rabbi Soloveitchik explains that *safra rabbah*, "a great scribe" does not just mean that he was a scribe who wrote Torah scrolls. Rather, Moshe wrote upon the hearts of his people. He etched the wisdom of the Torah into the very soul of the nation. And he did so in a way, that remarkably, each generation would pass it on to the next.

This is also our obligation on the night of the Seder: We need to impart the Torah not on parchment but on the very souls of our children.