

Editorial

"For The Sake Of Our Children"

On the first night of Passover thousands of Jewish children will ask the four questions, and then impatiently wait as the answers are completed — until it is time to eat. Unfortunately, there will also be thousands of Jewish children who will not only not ask the questions, but who will also not know that special feeling that settles over the home when the family participates together in that unique, beautiful experience, the seder.

Over and over again, Jewish parents today ask the questions: How can we provide our families with meaningful experiences? How can we foster closer family ties and pass values that have meaning in today's world on to our children? What can really touch our souls?

Truly, people are asking these questions, and the answers are not simple.

In recent decades, Jewish parents have increasingly looked to institutions outside the home to carry out responsibilities that once belonged to the family. Parents must realize that they must be the primary educators of their children.

It is in the home where children really learn about being Jewish. The family must function as the unit which provides each member with a sense of belonging and purpose.

Isn't Passover a marvelous opportunity for the family to gather together in a meaningful way? But, there is a significant difference between a Passover dinner and a seder.

Passover dinner is simply a festive family get-together, probably not unlike Thanksgiving or an anniversary celebration. The seder, however, is an important opportunity to feel a connection with our past (we tell the story as though we were on that journey from slavery to freedom) and transmit Jewish values. It provides an opportunity for parents, children, grandparents and guests to participate in the service, each in his own way, and to feel a connection with our past and to feel the warm bond of belonging to that special unit, the family. How does the seder provide all this? Let's begin with the connection we all feel as Jews. Thirty-one centuries ago, the first Passover was celebrated in Egypt, and for generations since then Jews the world over have retold the story of the birth of liberty. How important for our self-identity to know and feel proud of our people's past!

The seder is also a dynamic example in creating closer family relationships. How beautiful it is to see the parent (or grandparent) leading the service, being the instructor of his children. Children need a positive parent image and throughout the year he/she must reaffirm their role in the family.

The seder affords children participation too. What a waste to send children to religious school and then deny them the opportunity to use what they have learned.

The seder serves also as a mini-values-clarification course. "Let all who are hungry come and eat; let all who are needy come and celebrate the Passover with us." Is there a better way to teach the value of hospitality and sharing?

The message of Passover is that freedom is to be cherished and must be won anew by each generation. And "in gratitude for the freedom which is ours, may we strive to bring about the liberation of all mankind." What more effective way to remind us that we must fight against the oppression of all people?

Talk together about the connection between Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora and the significance of Jerusalem as our spiritual capital. It is especially important to discuss Israel with college students who are vulnerable to aggressive Arab propaganda on the campuses.

Young people today are searching for spiritual experiences. Their parents have been very diligent about providing security and comfort. Now we are challenged to provide for their souls, or else they may become very disappointed. From such empty Jewish backgrounds may come those who either turn off to Judaism or turn to groups such as cults.

Can we afford to cheat ourselves of such a meaningful spiritual experience as the seder? "For the sake of our children and our children's children," make that night different from all other nights.

Spotlighting Federation

By Richard A. Klein

Wouldn't it be nice if we were blessed with some straight answers to serious questions facing our Federation. If it's any consolation, we're not alone.

At the last General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations, the following cases were considered. These kinds of issues affect all of us. Look them over — and think about them. Let's hear what you think.

Case Study No.1: The general chairman of the

Federation's annual fundraising campaign analyzes the past and present giving records of the trustees of the Federation and concludes that a significant number are not contributing adequately. He proposes that henceforth only those who meet that standard should be permitted to serve on the board of trustees.

Further, a small committee consisting of past general chairmen should serve as a "rating" committee to pass judgment on those proposed by the nominating committee or to prepare a select list for the nominating committee to

consider.

A proposal was adopted by the Federation's board of trustees with a 60% majority. A vocal minority was strongly opposed.

Should the resolution be implemented? When should majority vote prevail and when should unanimous agreement be required?

Case Study No.2: As part of the process of determining the annual deficit budget of the local agencies, the Community Center submits a request for a substantial sum over the amount allocated the year before. It claims that this increase, necessary to maintain the same level of service as the prior year, is due to inflation and will not allow for any improvement or expansion of service.

The Federation's budget committee takes the position that the increase is not justified on the grounds of necessity or availability of dollars, and that the Center should prioritize its programs and present a new budget minus a program or programs it deems to be of low priority.

The Center agrees and submits a recast budget which calls for the closing of two senior service neighborhood centers. Federation's response is that the Center's proposal is unacceptable since service to the non-institutionalized elderly is a high community priority.

Whose priority should prevail?

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..... A SMALL VOICE

Across The Editors' Desks



Next Year In Jerusalem

I would like to share with you my recent trip to Israel in September. My son Robert and I went to Israel for a wedding.

Leaving New York on Sunday evening, we arrived in Paris where we changed planes for Tel Aviv and arrived 2 p.m., being met by our cousins, where we were taken to their home for dinner.

The next day we went to the bank to exchange our dollars for Israel shekels and then to the railroad station where we took the train to Haifa. Then we took the bus up to the top of Mount Carmel and after touring the top, we took the subway down where we stopped off to see the Bahai Shrine and the Persian Gardens. The shrine was closed and the gardens were beautiful. From Haifa we took the bus to Tiberias where we spent the night and toured Tiberias by night.

The next day, we took the bus to Kiryat Shmona which is in the Upper Galilee and the Golan Heights. From Kiryat Shmona to Safed, which is 3000 feet above sea level and is known as the City of Mysticism, the home of the cabala. After touring

the old section and artist colony, we made our way back to the bus terminal where we engaged with a group of teenagers who had come over for the day from Kiryat Shmona, to tour old synagogues and the artist colony. One teenager asked me "Why don't I come to live in Israel." I responded to her that I could do more for Israel living in America by helping raise funds for Israel through United Jewish Appeal.

From Safed, we went to the townlet of Matullah, which is on the Lebanese border. It is a summer refuge for city dwellers. From Metullah, we were on our way back to Tel Aviv, where the wedding was taking place on Thursday evening. It was held in a seaside hotel with over 200 people. It was just like any wedding held in the USA.

Friday, we took the bus to Jerusalem where we stopped at the Knesset (Israel's Parliament) which was closed because of the Sabbath. Walking across the street, we visited "The Shrine of the Book" which contains one of the seven Dead Sea Scrolls and the Israel Museum. From there we visited "Yad

Vashem" Memorial to the Six Million and the Ohel Yizkon Memorial Hall and the Jerusalem Military Cemetery.

After lunch in the New Section of Jerusalem, we made our way to the old city of Jerusalem. We visited "The WALL" and said our prayers with the help of a Lubavitch Rabbi.

Back to Tel Aviv, where people were preparing for the Sabbath. We visited Tel Aviv University campus and visited the Diaspora Museum.

Sunday was the beginning of "Yom Kippor" and Monday everything was closed. Every shop, store, transportation was at a complete standstill, as though an atomic bomb had been dropped.

We visited four synagogues during the day and they were filled with people. The younger people stayed home, as there were no people on the streets. It was total observance of Yom Kippor and we were there for Yom Kippor, as it is said in the Good Book "Next Year in Jerusalem".

— Marvin Zerden
Hickory, N.C.