



RABBANIT SHARONA HASSAN

GUEST DVAR TORAH

Living B'chol Dor VaDor

Every year at the Seder we say the familiar words from the Haggadah:

B'chol dor v'dor chayav adam...

“In every generation a person is obligated...”

Most of us hear these words as a personal instruction. Each of us must see ourselves within the Exodus.

But grandparents sitting at the Seder table often experience something deeper. They are able to see *b'chol dor v'dor* unfolding before their eyes.

Around many Seder tables sit three generations. Grandparents who remember the Sedarim of their childhood, parents creating

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Sedarim for their own families, and children just beginning to ask the Four Questions. In that moment, the story of Pesach is not only being told. It is being carried across generations.

In recent years I often hear parents and grandparents ask a thoughtful question: “How can I make Pesach more interesting and meaningful for my children and grandchildren?”

Usually the answers offered are creative activities. A new game. A craft project. A dramatic retelling of the Exodus. A new commentary on the Haggadah. An exciting trip.

These ideas can be wonderful, but by the time children reach the third or fourth grade, they have already experienced many of them. Teachers, youth leaders, and parents have worked hard to bring the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim to life. Children have acted out the Exodus, read it, studied it, and perhaps even folded origami frogs. Most families have also experienced beautiful Pesach programs or memorable Chol HaMoed outings.

In many ways, today's children encounter more creative Pesach programming by the age of ten than many adults experience in their entire lifetime.

And yet the most powerful element of the Seder is often the simplest, and the one most easily overlooked.

Memory.

In the Maggid section of the Seder, just

after Rabban Gamliel teaches that we must discuss the meaning of Pesach, matzah, and maror, we encounter the phrase *b'chol dor v'dor chayav adam*. Whether we follow the version of the text that says a person must see themselves (*lirot*) as if they left Egypt, or the Rambam's version that one must demonstrate (*leharot*) this experience, the message is the same: every generation must actively connect itself to the story.

Grandparents possess something unique in fulfilling this commandment. They are the ones at the table who carry living memories of earlier generations.

They remember what the Seder looked like when they were children. They remember how their parents and grandparents told the story. They remember the melodies that filled the room, the family customs that shaped the evening, and the stories that were shared from one generation to the next.

Children and grandchildren know their own generation well. They know what they learn in school, what they read in their Haggadot, and what they experience in their homes.

But only grandparents can open a window into the generations that came before. Now is the opportunity to incorporate a different type of Four Questions, including but not limited to questions like:

- **What was Pesach like in your childhood home?**
- **What did your grandparents share about the Sedarim of their youth?**
- **What did your childhood seder sound like, with different languages, melodies and accents?**
- **What traditions did they hold onto, even when circumstances were**

difficult?

These memories are not side conversations. They are the living fulfillment of *b'chol dor v'dor*.

When a grandparent shares the Sedarim of earlier generations, the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim stops being a distant historical narrative. It becomes a living chain. Children begin to understand that the story they are hearing is the same story their grandparents heard, and their great-grandparents before them.

Suddenly the Haggadah's words become visible around the table.

The generation that remembers.

The generation that teaches.

The generation that asks.

And the story continues.

Pesach does not become meaningful only through creative activities or clever innovations. It becomes meaningful when each generation recognizes its place within the unfolding story of the Jewish people.

For grandparents, that role is especially powerful. They are the bridge between the memories of the past and the curiosity of the future.

And when they share those memories with love and joy, they transform the Seder table into exactly what the Haggadah describes.

B'chol dor v'dor.

In every generation, the story lives again. ■

Rabbanit Sharona Hassan is a master educator who has worked for over twenty years in Jewish day schools, camps, synagogues, and major communal initiatives. She is the founder of Grand Plan, where she explores the role of grandparents as partners in Jewish continuity through her podcast *Connecting Jewish Grandparents*, weekly Torah insights, and workshops for families. Learn more at grandplan.kit.com.