



'Love of Zion' Seder Supplement

The Seder's retelling of our redemption from Egypt invites us to a renewed rapport with the miraculous story of Israel's 1948 rebirth. Consider five different understandings of the opening sentence of Israel's Scroll of Independence:

בארץ ישראל קם העם היהודי



In the land of Israel *stands erect* the Jewish people.

Then my father told me in a whisper what some hooligans did to him and his brother in Odessa and what some other boys and girls did to him at his Polish school in Vilna. And the next day when his father, Grandpa Alexander, came to the school to register a complaint, the bullies refused to return the torn trousers but attacked his father, Grandpa, in front of his eyes, forced him down onto the paving stones in the middle of the playground...the girls laughing and making dirty jokes, saying the Jews were all so-and-sos, while the teachers watched and said nothing, or maybe they were laughing too. And my father told me

under my blanket in the early hours of November 30, 1947 (moments after the United Nation's vote to create a Jewish State alongside a Palestinian one), "Bullies may well bother you in the street at school someday. But from now on, from the moment we have our own state, you will never be bullied just because you are a Jew and because Jews are so-and-sos. Not that. Never again. From tonight that's finished here. Forever. I reached out sleepily to touch his face, just below his high forehead, and all of a sudden instead of his glasses my fingers met tears. Never in my life, before or after that night, not even when my mother died, did I see my father cry."

Amos Oz

The land of Israel *restored* the Jewish people

In the mid-1980s as the first Ethiopian Jews were being airlifted to Israel, a BBC reporter summed up the essence of the Zionist spirit. "I have never been too sympathetic to the policies and ideologies of Israel," he said. "But I must say this. No other nation on the globe – or in history – would have sent its soldiers halfway across the world to rescue people of another race and a different culture because they said, "We are your brothers and sisters."

Rabbi David Wolpe

This Haggadah supplement is produced and edited by Rabbi William Hamilton of Congregation Kehillath Israel, Brookline, MA, www.congki.org

The land of Israel *awakened* the Jewish people.

“I do think that Zionism will always constitute a kind of permanent challenge,” wrote Herzl, “and that this will be so after we establish our state in the Land of Israel. Zionism, as I understand it, is not solely about the desire to acquire a legally secure piece of real estate for our down-trodden people, after all, but also about the desire to grow towards moral and spiritual perfection”. Sixty-two years after the founding of the State of Israel, the general sense within Israeli society and many Jews around the world is that Zionism has finished its job since there is a state called Israel. Zionism has not finished its job – in fact, it has only begun. It was never only about creating a political refuge; rather, it aspires to an all-inclusive renewal of Jewish existence. We must reinforce the Zionist project today, by allowing Jews, by inviting Jews, to explore their Jewish identity, to connect to it and to refresh it.

Rabbi Tamar Elad-Appelbaum

In the land of Israel *arose* the Jewish people.

The first occurrence of the word “torah” in the Torah is: “There shall be one torah for the citizen and for the alien (Ex. 12:49). Later, we learn: “The alien who resides with you shall be to you like a citizen of yours, and you shall love him as yourself” (Lev. 19:34). The people of Israel had enemies, then as now. The Torah instructs that Israel should surely defend itself from its enemies, but not hate them. It commands, “Don’t abhor an Edomite” (Deut. 23:8). Edom (what is now southern Jordan) had a perfectly awful history with Israel, yet Israel is instructed not to hate them...Even while enemies demonize Israel – identifying the Jewish state as apartheid, racist, colonial, segregationist, terrorist, involved in ethnic cleansing, and so on – I stand in awe of Israel’s principles, from the Torah to Theodore Herzl and David Ben-Gurion, that embody the opposite image.

Richard Elliott Friedman

The land of Israel *established* the Jewish people.

The Jewish National Fund collection box is on a table in many Jewish houses today. Years ago young men, yeshiva students, would go around to houses and exchange empty boxes for the full ones. Once, a young boy went to empty the boxes in a town of Sanuk in Galicia, and as he entered the doorway of a shoemaker he said, “I’ve come to empty the Jewish National Fund box.” At first the shoemaker was silent, then he asked the visitor to sit down. He removed his shoes and began to put new soles on them. The young man was dumbfounded. “What are you doing?” he asked. The shoemaker replied, “I am a poor person and I cannot afford to make

contributions to the Jewish National Fund, so I want to put new soles on your shoes. You go around from house to house to house and your shoes get torn. I also wish to have a portion in this mitzvah.”

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

A fifth cup of wine is held aloft while reciting “May we see ourselves as part of the telling of our return to our ancestral home. As it is written: And God brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And now, here, I’ve brought the first of the fruit of the land that You have given me” (Deut 26:9-10).

The declaration ends personally. Bringing our willing hearts and hands and steps – the first fruits of our being,

let us:

- **Make a new friend-of-Israel this month**
- **Visit this year**
- **Act to build: Alyn Hospital, Leket (hunger relief), Yemin Orde (educational promise)**

