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# WHY NOT CHOCOLATE?\*

RIGHT ANSWERS  
AND BETTER ANSWERS  
TO A HAGGADAH'S QUESTIONS\*\*

by Rabbi Ari Mark Cartun



*Suggestions on how to make any Seder meaningful and new  
for adults and children, leaders and guests  
Special Tips for those leading large and/or communal Seders.*

*\*See inside, page 29*

*\*\* See inside, page 3*

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## Key to symbols

- ☆ Discussion Topic
- ☞ Innovative *Seder* Activity
- ✍ Section of Commentary
- ✓ "Important" (or "Favorite") Seder Part

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Sharon Lenox, Copy Editor and Asker of Simple Questions  
“*Liberation begins with simple questions. So does the Seder.*” (See page 36.)

## INTRODUCTION

Another book on the *Seder! Mah Nishtanah haSefer haZeh?* Why is this book different from all other books on Passover? Answer: **It is written by a "Rebellious Child" with other "Rebellious Children" in mind.**

When I read the *Four Children* (usually known as the *Four Sons*, but the heck with sexism!), I identify with a friendlier understanding of the "Wicked" one. I see this child as "Rebellious" rather than "Wicked." So many of us have found Judaism, as it is often practiced, to be stale, insipid, boring, or even oppressive. Yet we still show up at synagogues and *Seder* tables out of a love for our people, a commitment to its best ideals, and a hope that things can be better. Wicked children go away for good. The rebellious come back and try to change things. I am one of them.

Are you? If you are, then this book is for you.

*A little rebellion can be a good thing.* At times of great distress, our ancient rabbis, mothers, and fathers resorted to radical changes to keep Judaism and Jews alive. I will try to show these things to you as we go. The *Haggadah* is, itself, a radical book containing the history of radical changes designed to take the spirit of liberation and apply it to all oppression, including the oppression that comes from within, from our own slavishness to tradition and to the text.

Through a bit of traditional-style Hebrew wordplay, I emphasize this: **rebellion/wickedness** (רשע) can be rearranged to be a **gateway** (שער) to new understandings. The way that is done is through innovation. Innovation is best done when it shows knowledge of the rules before it breaks them. This book is designed to show where the rules are, how they have been broken over and over, and to suggest new ways of using the rules to break the rules.

I did not decide to become a rabbi to continue replicating the same old same old. I did so to innovate, to breathe new life into our people and our practices. This book is designed with that in mind. It is a gateway to making *Seders* new every year, learning from the best innovative traditions of our people.

Most people treat a *Haggadah* as if it were handed down by G0d to Moses. But it was written by generations of men (and, today, women) who designed it to be a manifesto of political and theological agitation designed to inspire moral action and social change, *as well as to be fun!*

When I teach classes on Passover, I ask people about the best and worst *Seders* they attended. Without exception, the worst *Seders* were those where the *Haggadah* was recited as holy writ, usually in mumbled Hebrew, and never made to come alive, even though the perpetrators of such *Seders* usually have no clue of why they did it this way.

**The *Haggadah* is not a Bible. It is a script designed to provoke us to think, and then to tell the story of Passover in our own words.**

It shares this ability with a Rorschach inkblot. Like a Rorschach test, all of our best and worst feelings about our religion come out in the discussions around the *Seder* table (not to mention the discussions we have with ourselves and with family members prior to going to a *Seder*, when we imagine all the things we fear may happen there). Our expectation levels are high, and all of our Jewish baggage is packed. If you are about to run a *Seder* for the first time, or for the umpteenth time, remember, "Do not unto others

that which you do not wish others to do to you." Remember what you liked and disliked about *Seders* and improve them.

*The best Seders are those where both leaders and participants are "into it," have a sense of humor, involve everyone in reading English or Hebrew as per their ability, and feel flexible enough to pick and choose their way through often arcane and irrelevant sections to spend time on those that grab the group as a whole.*

The most **memorable Seders** are the most different. *Mah Nishtanah?* The *Haggadah* starts by asking us to ask "Why Is This Night Different?" It encourages us to make many things different on this night so that we ask questions.

**Why ask questions?** Because we cannot be free until we realize we are enslaved, until we question the ruts we are in. Once we are aware of our slavery, we can begin to address it, and triumph over it.

## Right Answers And Better Answers

**What is the right answer?** At my seders, I like to say, "*I'll give you one point for a right answer, and two points for a better answer.*" That is, yes, Matzah is "the Bread of Affliction." But that is not the end of the story. It is also the "Bread of Haste," because we had to eat it as we hurried out of Egypt with no time to let the dough leaven. So why is it only called the "Bread of Affliction?" Nobody knows. But it is so many things to so many people. So the right answer, traditionally, is only the beginning of an answer, and may not even be the most important answer to you and to me.

If you lead or participate in a seder in this spirit, you will liberate all the participants from slavery to simple, traditional answers! See if that works for you.

### WHY IS THIS BOOK BASED ON A *TRADITIONAL HAGGADAH*?

There are so many *Haggadot* on the market, all of which do different things, abbreviate different things, re-order different parts, with varying theo-political slants and extra readings to accentuate them, that it would be impossible to discuss them all. Additionally, dozens of new ones are produced each year, making any attempt at a comprehensive critical bibliography obsolete before it is printed.

In this book, therefore, I will detail the traditional *Haggadah* text, its origin, its purpose, its slant on Passover, Judaism, and the Temple, and where other *Haggadot* often amend or excise the text.

Knowing this, you will be free to make any traditional text work for you.

You will also understand what any new *Haggadah* you find has left out, put in, reoriented, and/or switched the position of. And then you will be able to deduce why.

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**HOW TO USE THIS BOOK  
WITHOUT BEING OVERWHELMED**

So, you look at all the things this book will cover and you wonder how you'll ever get them all understood.

Don't bother trying.

G0d willing, you'll have many more Passovers to go to, and many more occasions to learn and enjoy the Haggadah. So, my advice, is, learn something this year, and learn a little more the next. We will never learn it all (thank G0d ) or we'd be bored out of our skulls.

*There are really two books in this slim volume.*

**BOOK ONE:**

An introduction to the history and practice of Passover, and of its main symbols.  
*Preparation, Meaning, Kashering, and Logistics* of how to lead a seder.

**BOOK TWO:**

An in-depth look at each part of a traditional *Haggadah*, with an innovative commentary.

Use Book One to put your mind in the right place for getting ready for your *Seder*. After you have read it once, the Table of Contents will send you back to places you may wish, in future years, to recheck.

Use Book Two to help you pick new things to say each year about the *Haggadah*, and to stimulate you to invent new activities and lead new discussions. It is not necessary to read all of it in any one year.

☞ *Choose activities to study and/or innovate with discretion.* Start with those things that have always intrigued you, or start at the beginning. But only do a little at a time.

If you try to do everything this book suggests all at once, you will only end up overwhelming yourself as well as your family and guests.

☆ *Review after the Seder.* Sometimes your best understandings will come from having done something and then looking at how you can do it differently next time. And talk with your family and friends about how things went. If you get a great idea, write it down and put a sticky note on the page to remind you to look there next year.

Reading this book after the *Seders*, but still during Passover, is one way to extend the meaning and message of Passover throughout the whole of the week of Passover.

☞ *Put your own commentary into the pages of this book.* Maybe you are someone who does not write in books. Fine. Don't do it. But I put extra space in this so you could do exactly that. Write down interesting comments you hear at every *Seder* you attend, and neat ways you see people do things. Then pass this book on of your own Passover commentary to your children as a Jewish Living Will.

*There Are Four Kinds of Questioners,  
and Four Moods In Every One Of Us:*

One of the most famous parts of the Haggadah is the Four Children (literally, and traditionally, "Sons"), who ask their questions. They are the wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one who cannot ask. I see them as both aspects of our own personalities on different days and in different settings, as well as as character types among us and among all peoples. Importantly for this book, we recognize that these four types of questions are the ones you might have at any time while reading this book. For example:


A "wise person" is usually asking: "What are the traditional sources behind this? What does this symbolize? How can I do a Seder better/differently? There is so much to learn, and so little time!"

An angry, disconnected ("wicked") person is asking: "Why should I care?"

One who just wants a straight answer to a "simple" question asks: "Simply put, what is this about?"

And some are so new to this subject that they are saying, "I can't even begin to understand this. Please start from the beginning."

It is the aim of this book to try to address all of these questions. The fact that the Haggadah recognizes all of these questions as legitimate and prevalent should serve to make you feel comfortable asking all of your questions.

Just in case you are a wise child at this point, you will find the discussion on these Four Children in **BOOK TWO: AN INNOVATIVE COMMENTARY ON THE TRADITIONAL HAGGADAH**,  Commentary Section 12, page 38.

## BOOK ONE

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND PRACTICE OF PASSOVER, AND TO ITS MAIN SYMBOLS

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO PASSOVER, THE *SEDER*, AND THE *HAGGADAH*

#### A. WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT PASSOVER?

Every Jew a liberator, every leader a rabbi.  
Family-centered, not synagogue-centered, like the "good old days."

**Passover celebrates Israel's liberation from generations of Egyptian slavery.** The festival lasts seven (some celebrate eight) days during which *matzot* are eaten in place of leavened bread. On the first (and second) nights of the festival, Jews hold a symbolic meal called a *Seder* ("Order"), so named because it arranges the topics of discussion in a particular *order*. The *Seder* reenacts the night of the tenth plague before the dawn of the Exodus. It is the opportunity for large family or communal gatherings.

**Passover starts at sunset, on the fifteenth of the Hebrew month of Nissan, and ends at sunset seven days later (eight for traditional Jews outside of Israel).** The first (and second) as well as the last (two) days are holy days.

The name *PESACH* (PASSOVER) פֶּסַח, derives from *Pasach*, in Hebrew, which means to skip like a young lamb. The name was applied to the holy day because G0d "skipped over"—passed over—the houses of those Israelites who had bedaubed the lintels and posts of their doorways with the blood of a slaughtered lamb, while G0d blasted those houses not so marked with the tenth plague: the deaths of the first-born (*Exodus* 12:13).

**The theme of the Passover holiday is liberation and freedom.** It is when we remember that once our people suffered under enslavement and fled from slavery to freedom. While we were slaves we learned to identify with the strivings of all who are oppressed, all who yearn for freedom. And we committed ourselves to confronting the Pharaohs of every age who would treat human beings as chattel, as beasts of burden, and as robots.

**The story of the Exodus from Egypt occupies the first fifteen chapters of the book of Exodus in the Torah.** The primary Passover rituals are introduced in chapters twelve and thirteen. However, the rest of the Bible contains many references to the Egypt story.

There are some differences in the way Passover was celebrated in Egypt that first eventful night, and the way it is done now:

*In Egypt* the Israelites were all packed and ready to leave, with the fearful sounds of the plague of the killing of Egypt's firstborn outside.

*Today Seders* are done leisurely and with joy (the only worry on some Jewish minds is "When are we gonna eat?!"). Similarly, without a Temple, Jews no longer sacrifice anything, so the foods we eat are not holy, and laws of sacrificial purity no longer apply. To emphasize the difference, some Jews will not eat lamb nor put a lamb shankbone on their *Seder* plate, so that no one would even think there might have been a sacrifice. Other Jews go out of their way to eat lamb as a reminder of Temple days and ancient ways.

## B. WHAT IS A SEDER?

*Seder* סדר is a Hebrew word that means “order.” It is the order of prayers and activities for the evening of Passover.

*Seder* is the word used for any order of prayers. Every prayerbook is called a *Siddur*—“Ordering,” and every service within a prayerbook is called “Seder so and so” (e.g. *Seder Hotza'at haTorah*: The Order of Prayers for Bringing Out the Torah, colloquially called The Torah Service). It is not specific to Passover, though that is its most memorable context.

The Prime Directive of the *Seder* is “*Haggadah*” חגגדה, a Hebrew word derived from the verb meaning “to tell/narrate.” In *Exodus* 13:8 the Israelites are instructed to “*Tell* (*higad'ta*) your child on that day, saying: It is because of that which God did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.” The whole point of the Feast is to provide a context for that telling. Making sure everyone is “on the same page” about what happened in Egypt was the origin of the need for a text of the *Haggadah*.

**Reading a *Haggadah* is not enough; one must talk about one’s own needs and experiences of liberation, that is, “tell the story” in one’s own words. (See Commentary Section #21, page 51)**

*If the main thing is to tell the story, it is interesting that we call this night’s activity a “Seder” rather than a “Haggadah.”* Imagine telling your friends that you were going to a “*Haggadah*,” instead of to a “*Seder*.” It is “telling” that we use a name that means “Prayerbook,” and emphasizes a concern for doing a proper rite in a correct order, rather than a word which would emphasize our role in telling the story. We end up going to a **rite** instead of to a **group story-telling**.

For too many people, this is what the evening has become: a ritualized recitation of a book without any discussion. Certainly this is sufficient, and that is why the rabbis invented the text—so that everybody would, at the very least, have done that much.

But there is so much more that can be done! When I teach classes on the *Haggadah* and the class has its first discussion of a part of the text, I then ask them how many of them have ever had such a discussion at a *Seder* they attended. Answer: almost none. Very often, none at all.

Some of this comes from the “Let’s Eat” impatience of those “Bored and/or Angry Wicked Children” who sometimes make *Seders* so difficult. Some of this derives from pious prior generations who set pallid examples of what was possible and/or desirable. Some of it comes from the lack of confidence of the *Seder* leaders, and their reluctance to

get into a discussion about issues and facts they do not know or are ambivalent about.

But it is not important to be an expert. It is only important to have the conversation. "*Haggadah*" is a conversation on liberation among the generations. That is the essential of Passover. Everything else about this activity is designed to provoke the conversation.

### C. ORIGIN OF THE *SEDER* AND THE *HAGGADAH*

The first *Seder* ceremony took place in Egypt during the night of the tenth plague, just before the dawn of the Exodus, as commanded and recounted in Chapters 12 and 13 of *Exodus*.

What Israelites/Jews did from that date until the time of the Mishnah (approximately 200 CE) when the first text of a *Haggadah* was written down is anybody's guess. Most likely, for a long time, "everyone did what was right in their own eyes." (Judges 21:25) We do know that from time to time they forgot to do Passover at all, or, at least, did it so badly that it almost didn't count. (e.g.: II Chronicles 30:2,3ff)

When they did celebrate Passover, then, as now, Jews conducted *Seders* in their own homes. They also offered and ate Passover lamb (or goat) sacrifices, which, without a Temple, we no longer do. Despite Deuteronomy's admonition against local altars besides the One Temple in Jerusalem (chapter 12), local sacrifices continued right up to the latter days of the First Temple (King Josiah centralized the sacrificial cult in II Kings chapter 23. Beware—it is a bloody story! Josiah's restoration of Passover is in verses 21-23.).

During Second Temple days Passover offerings were only brought to the central Temple. Pilgrims came from all over the country (and the world) to do so. The city teemed with people, with lamb-merchants, and with all the trappings of the tourist trade.

While they were in Jerusalem, the Pilgrims, most of whom were agriculturalists, brought their first-fruits offerings to the Temple (as commanded in Leviticus 23:9-14). When they presented their offering to the *Kohen* (the Priest) they recited a specific text from Deuteronomy 26:5-8. This recitation was to become the basic text of the *Haggadah* we have today. (See ☞ Commentary Section #17, page 44)

After the Romans destroyed the Second Temple in 70 CE there was a need to address the deep theological challenges that catastrophe raised. Again G0d had destroyed the center of G0d 's own worship. Again G0d had exiled Israel. Again Israel were slaves to Pharaoh (Caesar).

The Jews of their time were aliens in their own land after the Romans destroyed Jewish independence, the Temple, and even the name of the country. The Romans insultingly called it "Palestine"—Latin for "Philistia," as a way of eradicating the Jewish presence. What were our ancestors to do?

Radical rabbis took steps to keep hope alive that the Temple would once again be rebuilt, and that Passover sacrifices would once again be offered in it. They embedded in the *Haggadah* longings to rebuild the Temple, and assurances that it would be rebuilt.

Their *Seder* ceremonies emulated the rich freeborn citizens of the Roman Empire to emphasize what liberation would again look like. That is why we "recline," if only symbolically, like the Romans did. That is why we call our last bite of Matzah an "Afikoman," a Greco-Roman "After-dinner" ceremony (See ☞ Commentary Section #30, page 54).

But now it is today, and if I only had one piece of advice to give you, it would be this: you can go to a rite, or to a group story-telling party. It is your Seder, your Haggadah, to create, and to enjoy.

#### **D. ONE SEDER OR TWO?**

Why do some Jews celebrate two nights of Passover and others only one? Why does it last seven days in the Bible and eight for some Jews? The answer to this requires a short history lesson.

"In the beginning," Israelites did not have a perpetual calendar. Instead, witnesses attested to spotting the new moon (difficult, because a new moon is when the dark-side faces earth, and it also rises at dawn!). If their testimony was judged to be true, a new month was declared. Muslims continue this practice today.

The lunar month is 29 1/4 days long, so sometimes the new moon is visible on the 29th day of the month, and sometimes not until the 30th. The standard Hebrew month is 29 days long. When the new moon is not witnessed until the 30th day of a month, that day and the first day of the following month are both called "New Moon," days one and two.

Now, back when the months were still being declared in the Priestly Court of Jerusalem's Second Temple, there was still a sizable Jewish population that never came back from the Babylonian exile. In order to let those Jews in Babylon know that a new month had been declared, a string of signal fires were lit from hilltop to hilltop, all the way from Jerusalem to Babylon. Unfortunately, many troublemakers (especially the Samaritans who lived just north of Jerusalem astride the signal pyre route and were religious rivals of the Jews) would light false flares, causing the Babylonian Jewish community to be out of sync from the dates declared in Jerusalem. Hence, they often ended up celebrating festivals on different dates.

To remove this as a difficulty, the sages of the time decided to inaugurate a radical solution: they instructed **Jewish communities in exile (that is, outside of the land of Israel) to celebrate holy days for two days** instead of one, just in case the previous month had a 30th day instead of just 29. That way they would at least get one day right.

Even after the perpetual calendar system was developed, Jews outside the Land of Israel continued the tradition of observing two holy days instead of one. In Israel, and among Reform Jews and some Reconstructionist and Conservative Jews, Festivals last one day only, except for *Rosh haShanah*. It is the only Holy Day which falls on the first day of a month and it has dawn rituals. As conditions for witnessing the new moon at dawn might not be favorable, *Rosh haShanah* was set for two days even in Israel. Some Reform Jews hold a two-day New Year, but most do not, as they prefer to rely on calendars instead of on tradition.

One other calendrical note concerning Passover. As lunar years are 11 days shorter than solar years, a strictly lunar year would slip seasons. That is, Passover would rotate earlier through the years, unless a leap year were inserted. And that is just what Jews do. Jews add a thirteenth, "leap", month seven out of every nineteen years (in the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years of this cycle) when Passover would otherwise precede the spring equinox. This is based on the verse in Exodus 23:15: "observe the feast of unleavened bread in the spring (*Aviv*) month." That is, Passover has to be in the (northern hemisphere) spring.

## E. TWO OR MORE *SEDER*S?

Even Jews who, for calendrical reasons only consider there to be one holy day at each end of Passover, sometimes celebrate more than one *Seder*. Some of us just can't get enough of them!

Quite frequently we are invited to a family *Seder* the first night, and a friend's *Seder* the next night. Often specific theme-oriented *Seders* occur on the middle days of Passover. For example there are feminist *Seders* emphasizing the women's role in the liberation and Miriam's role particularly; interfaith *Seders* (these often take place in churches on Maundy Thursday, during Passover, which is the day Christians commemorate as Jesus' last supper/*Seder*; civil-rights *Seders*, etc.).

Sometimes there are other "*Seder-like*" *Seders* which emphasize communal or liberation agendas within the Jewish community, or between Jews and others. The non-holy days on Passover following the first *Seder* are usually filled with these events. The good thing is that holy day regulations need not be worried about in interfaith gatherings on these days, and, since the Jews, at least, have had as "full" a *Seder* as they wanted on the first night, they feel freer about abbreviating and innovating on these nights.

Additionally, preceding Passover there are usually "Model *Seders*" in Jewish schools. If one were to attend all the possibilities in one's area, one could be very *Seder'ed out*, very quickly!

### PREPARING FOR PASSOVER

□ When **choosing a *Haggadah*** for your family, go over it ahead of time so you are familiar with its style, its commentary, its liberal or traditional slant, and its options.

Estimate how long it may take to just read so that you can navigate your way through it competently. This may prove helpful if your discussion on any one topic wraps you up in its spell so long that you may want to cut out something later.

*Six things to consider when choosing a Haggadah:*

**Transliteration and musical notation:** First, is absolutely everything you will want to do in Hebrew/Aramaic transliterated into English characters for the benefit of those who need it? If not, you will leave many of them out cold while you mumble on.

Second, is the text transliterated on the same page as the Hebrew, or do you have to send people hunting around for transliterations in the back (and thereby they have to reveal how stupid they are)?

Third, is the text transliterated into Ashkenazic or Sfardic (Modern Israeli) Hebrew, and do you care?

Last, do you want/need musical notation? Very few *Haggadot* have it. And the version of the songs they have may not be the ones you know. You can get *Seder* song tapes and sheet music at most Jewish bookstores (see #□).

**Translation Style:** Do you want modern English (go vs. goeth) and gender-neutral terms for the Divine (the Eternal vs. the Lord) and the human (the Four Sons vs. the Four Children, etc.), or do you not care?

**Commentary and Instructions:** Do you need *Seder* instructions interspersed with the *Haggadah* text? Do you want commentary? Do you want at least the Biblical and

Rabbinic references (and modern, if there are those) in the *Haggadah* text to be so noted? Do you want only a little commentary so as not to clutter up the whole page with it? Do you want moral commentary, basic commentary, detailed textual commentary, suggestions for discussion?

**Artwork and Design:** Is it pretty, or is it pretty boring to look at? Remember, each illustration can be the opportunity to engage in another discussion when you and your guests try to determine the intent of the artist in rendering each scene, and figure out how you would have done it.

Two places to judge **art styles** are the Four Sons and the Ten Plagues, as almost all *Haggadot* that have illustrations will have illustrations here.

When judging the overall **design**, look to see if the layout of each page deals with whole topics, or are topics broken up and spread over many pages. It is far easier to have a grasp of what is going on (as a leader and as a participant) if all four of the four children are on the same page, rather than if you have to turn page after page. There are many interesting *Haggadot* that paid little or no attention to design, and, as a result, the comments I get about them is that the *Seder* was hard to follow. This is a shame, but it is, nonetheless, true.

**Transcendance:** This is a question to ask of non-traditional *Haggadot*, which tend to be highly-abbreviated, reordered, politicized or meditative (not to mention the single-use "coloring-books"). This is something you find interesting now, but will you be able to use it again in a year, or in three years? Is it too trendy and faddy, or does it seem to have some staying power: that is, transcendance?

Remember, you are making a financial investment. If you think it is too intensely trendy to reuse, but there are aspects of it you do like, buy one and make references to it.

**Cost:** It does come down to this. You can, at least, have your guests share them, two, or even three people per *Haggadah*, if the books are very expensive but you really want them anyway.

See the discussion below about *Haggadot* for children.

### □ **Study the *Haggadah* and Learn the Texts and Songs Ahead of Time**

*Study the text:* What do you like, and what do you like to skip? Develop familiarity with the text so you can be flexible with it in a pinch. Use colored stick-on notes to remind you what you could skip, or where to skip ahead to, and to remind you of discussion topics, people to call upon, things to get started, at any given time.

This is crucially important when you are using a modern *Haggadah* with many optional readings!

What if you have studied the text a hundred times? **Buy a new *Haggadah* every year to glean its unique insights.** One of the best *Seders* I ever attended was of a family of four who all bought new *Haggadot* each year and looked into them for insights to share.

☞ *Seder Supplements:* There was no one *Haggadah* that did it all for you? Make a *Seder* supplement and include contemporary readings or your favorite songs.

☞ *Learn the music, and decide what you want to sing* You can purchase a variety of *Seder* tapes, CDs, and sheet music that have all the *Haggadah's* songs on them. Again, ask what version of the music you are buying: modern or traditional, Askkenazic or Sfaradic, Hebrew/Aramaic, English, Yiddish, or Ladino (Judeo-Spanish).



Play them over and over, when you sit at home, and when you drive in your car; when you lie down, and when you rise up!

Be a big spender. Buy a copy of the tape or sheet music for any "simple children" guests you may have so that they can also prepare as you do. You'll be doing yourself a favor if you want them to sing along with you.

☞ OK, so you tried and you tried, and you still can't learn that one new song well enough to lead it, and no one else you've invited can lead it either. **Play the tape at the Seder!** Fine. Now I've said it. You want the song? Why shouldn't you have the song? Maybe next year you can learn it enough to lead it. As we always say at the end of every *Seder*, "Next Year in Jerusalem!"

***It is equally important to get kids prepared.***

Hopefully your children go to a Jewish religious school, either a day school or supplementary school, where they can learn with Jewish peers about Passover and the *Seder*. Nothing takes the place of a Jewish peer group doing Jewish things for building an independent Jewish identity.

***Still, there is more that parents can do to get their kids into it.***

☞ There are a variety of **videos** you can buy or rent to teach pre-literate children the story of Passover and the Exodus, as well as the concepts and symbols of the *Seder*. They are all more or less good, but some *are* better than others. They all have their slants, and they all leave out some things and add extraneous things. Animated videos are best for the very young, but my children started watching *The Ten Commandments* by accident one year on television at the age of three and a half, and were entranced by it. That year they had a very visual understanding of the story, and had a great time discussing it at our family *Seder*. They still love to watch it. It is OK, but the pronunciation of the Hebrew names is atrocious! And Moses' mother's real name was not Yoshebel, as in this movie, but Yocheved (Ch as in Chanukah. See Exodus 6:20).

A much better movie is *Prince of Egypt* (Dreamworks). It was produced by Jews, and includes wonderful music, including Hebrew songs sung by Israeli singers, along with English songs. It is animated, and the special effects are terrific. The major discrepancy from the text of Exodus (besides giving a larger role to Moses' wife, Tziporah, who, in the Torah, does not accompany him to Egypt) is that Moses is a youthful man, whereas in Exodus he is 80 years old at the Exodus (Ex. 7:7). Also, Tziporah is dressed like a real babe! Definitely not historical.<sup>1</sup>

☞ There are special **Haggadot for children**, some that are nothing more than coloring books, some that are abbreviated, and some full Haggadot with juvenile illustrations and elementary-school level commentary.

☞ There are special **song tapes with children singing** them. Play them in your car and at home to get them ready to sing them. Practice, practice, practice. You will be surprised to hear them singing the songs on their own as they play.

☞ **Kids can make many of the items you will use at the Seder.** They can make Elijah's cups, *Seder* Platters, *Matzah* Covers, name tags/seat assignment placards, etc. The more they see their handiwork on the table, the more they will feel like the Holy Day is "theirs," too. If you already have these items, use your kids' productions alongside your fancy "real" ones, or at different ends of the long table.

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<sup>1</sup> The "prequel" to *Prince of Egypt* is the *King of Dreams*, about Joseph and his brothers and how the Israelites got to Egypt in the first place. It is also worthwhile watching.

□ **Important safety tip: know the tolerance of your guests, and/or** invite guests who might enjoy a style of *Seder* similar to what you would like. It is disappointing, to say the least, to have an elaborate *Seder* ceremony planned for impatient and/or unappreciative guests! *Dayenu!*

□ **When inviting non-Jews,** it is good to let them know that their questions are encouraged, for the spirit of Passover is to ask questions! When non-Jews ask questions it frequently "allows" Jews to feel freer to open up and ask and discuss themselves.

□ If you only have one fancy set of everything at one end of the table, people may feel left out, and you will slow down the process by passing everything around. **Be sure to have enough paraphernalia for everyone to share and use.**

☞ If you do not own a fancy *Seder* platter, you can always designate any kind of platter to serve as one. You can also make little *Seder* platters out of regular plates and put them in strategic spots around the table.

☞ *One good pre-Passover project for kids* is to buy the kind of plastic plate that you can draw on with crayons and then bake to make the pictures permanent.

☞ Do the same for wash bowls, salt water bowls, etc. *Important safety tip:* make the wash bowls and salt water bowls look uniformly different!

♥ **Two rules for innovating:**

A) Let people know where and why you are innovating. Explain the reasons to them, otherwise they feel you are doing a trip on them; and

B) Make the *Seder* recognizable to people somewhere, otherwise they often feel as if they have not had a "real" *Seder*.

For example, if you are introducing new recipes for *Seder* symbols foods (like one of the thousands of *Haroset* recipes), or new tunes for *Seder* songs, be sure to include as many of the "expected" items as you can. You can always have two kinds of *Haroset*, and you can sing a few bars of the old version of the song along with the new one. Excess is expected at *Seder* s.

□ **When seating your guests,**

Try to intersperse **knowledgeable people** all around the table with **novices**, so that there is no one part of the table that feels left out.

Similarly, if possible, do not put **kids** all in one place so that when (notice I did not say "if?") they get up to run around they do not leave gaping holes in the seating so that those remaining seated all of a sudden feel like distant islands from each other.

**Argumentative people** are best seated surrounded by co-operative people along the side of the table. If you know of guests with a penchant to be a bit seditious concerning things Jewish or Passover (the "wicked child" of the four), be sure not to exile them to the opposite end of the table where they can hold a position of power equal to the *Seder* leader and disrupt everything.

□ Some *Seder* hosts have **pre-Seder get-togethers** with their guests so that they can introduce new melodies (or teach first-timers melodies) so everyone will be on a more or less equal footing. Sometimes sections of the *Haggadah* are distributed to guests at these pre-*Seder* sessions, for them to lead at the *Seder*. This gives people some time to prepare a comment or an activity on their section.

☞ □ **For "Wise Children" Only:** One ambitious way to have a *Seder* is to **make your own Haggadah**. I'm not talking about writing a *Haggadah*, but photocopying others and pasting the pieces together. This is especially good for "rebellious children" like me, who find every *Haggadah* lacking somewhere.

I don't recommend this for anyone's first attempt at leading a *Seder* on their own, unless they have paid attention to many *Seders* and *Haggadot*, and know what they like and what they want to keep.

*Important safety tip:* Try not to put everything in the world into your opus, so as not to make it longer than the original. Use some discretion. Show it to your friends and family as you go, and let them be a focus group for your more radical or fanciful ideas.

**Start earlier than you think you need to!** It takes a bit of time just to do the research on what you wish to include and from where you may have to copy (or even write/type up) your items. Then you have to leave time to actually do the copying, and the layout. On top of this you are getting your house ready for Passover (and going to work, being a parent, etc.).

☞ □ Another ambitious way to have a *Seder* is to **give everyone different Haggadot!** If you do this, be sure you have educated guests, or that you have a master sheet in which you have written all the names of the parts of the seder service that you intend to cover during the *Seder*, and where, in each *Haggadah*, they are located. Fill out and put a Haggadah Page Guide and Program in every *Haggadah* you will be using. This sheet is found in Appendix F at the end of this book, on page 67. Otherwise you will spend a lot of precious time flipping pages looking for rubrics in varying translations!

One advantage to these home-spun *Seders* is that you need not collect large numbers of the same *Haggadah*. Instead, **you can collect Haggadot for their beauty, their commentary, their innovative translations or activities**, and ensure that no two *Seders* will EVER be alike in your house!

<b>GETTING KOSHER FOR PASSOVER</b>
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**Why Would Anyone Want To Remove Leaven?**

Answer: It's the *Yeast* We Can Do! ☺

**Exodus 12:14.** This day (Pesach) will be a memorial for you. Keep a feast for G0d throughout your generations. Keep a feast as an eternal mitzvah.

15. Seven days you will eat unleavened bread: (by) the first day you should rid your houses of leaven, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day (of Pesach) till the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. 16. The first day (of Pesach) is a holy day, and the seventh day is also a holy day for you. Do no kind of work (that is also forbidden on Shabbat), except what is necessary for food preparation: only that may be done by you.

17. Keep this Feast of Unleavened Bread; for on this same day did I bring your multitudes out of the land of Egypt. That is why you should keep this day in your generations by an eternal mitzvah.

18. On the first month (Nissan), on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you will eat unleavened bread, until the twenty first day of the month at evening. 19. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats that which is leavened, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether a stranger, or born in the land. 20. Eat nothing leavened; wherever you live, eat (only) unleavened bread.

**Exodus 13: 3.** Moses said to the people, "Remember this day on which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery; for by force did G0d bring you out of this place. Therefore, no leavened bread may be eaten.

4. This day came you out in the month Aviv ("Springtime," now called Nissan).

5. When G0d brings you into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, that G0d swore to your ancestors to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you should keep this service in this month.

6. Seven days you should eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day shall be a feast to G0d. 7. Eat unleavened bread for seven days; and let no leavened bread be seen with you. Don't let leaven be seen with you wherever you live.

8. And tell (*v'Higgadata*, the word that becomes the title of the book, *Haggadah/The Telling* that we use for a Seder) your child on that day, saying, 'I am doing this because of what G0d did for me when *I* came forth out of Egypt.'


**What Foods Are "Kosher For Passover?"**

Jews do not eat *leavened* food during Passover. This is an additional level of keeping kosher, above the meats which are usually forbidden, such as *Leviticus* chapter 11's list of the meats of quadrupeds which do not both chew the cud and have cloven hoofs (e.g.: pigs, rabbits, horses), fish which do not have both fins and removable scales (e.g.: shrimp and all other shellfish, shark, squid and all cetaceans), and those forbidden birds (there are no uniform disqualifying marks on them such as there are on the quadrupeds and fish) and creepy-crawlies.

## PERMITTED AND FORBIDDEN FOOD

### Hametz or Pesadik?

The Yiddish word for food that is Kosher for Passover is "***Pesadik***." *Pesadik* means that the food has no ***Hametz*** (pronounced *Hommetz* in Yiddish, and *Hamétz* in Hebrew).

***Hametz*** (*Leaven*) is the Hebrew term for anything "sour", as in *sourdough*. Yeast-fermented dough is sour to the taste if left to rise long enough. In ancient days, before packages of yeast were available, all leavened products were made from starter doughs, highly sour, excessively fermented. A pinch of this sourdough would be added to the flour and water, and the bread dough would begin to rise. Passover was the time that the entire people of ancient Israel would throw away and burn all of their starter dough, and start (literally) afresh. After Passover it would take some time for the naturally-occurring yeast in the air to begin to make new sourdough, so that Passover would, in fact, last (at least culinarily) until such time as yeast again proliferated through the country. By the time of the holy day of Shavuot, fifty days after Passover, leavened loaves were commanded to be brought to the Temple to show that the country had returned to normal. (See  Commentary Section #17, page 44)

**Leavened Foods** obviously include *bread* but also the following items:

- ***Matzah* which is not explicitly labeled Kosher for Passover.** *Matzah* is sold year-round, and, outside of Passover is usually ***not*** prepared in kosher for Passover conditions which would make it Kosher for Passover. In this case, it is basically a cracker. Be careful to check your *Matzah* box, especially if you are buying it from the "Jewish foods" section of the supermarket. Grocers in general do not know that foods kosher for year-round use are ***not*** the same as "Kosher for Passover."<sup>2</sup>

- Anything with *hametz* in it:

Leavened bread, cakes, biscuits and crackers; and substances derived from cereals—wheat, barley, oats, rice,\* corn,\* peas,\* and beans;\* (\*see next page) and all liquids which contain ingredients or flavors made from grain alcohol, including beer, whiskey, etc.

Be sure to check for kosher wines and yeast and kosher wines/grape juice.

Salad Dressings and wine vinegar, unless they are specifically kosher for Passover, contain *hametz* in the vinegar.

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<sup>2</sup> You will also find the words, "Hallah is taken" on the matzah box. This has nothing to do with the leavened loaf of braided egg bread we commonly call Hallah today. It has to do with giving a sacrificial amount of dough to the Kohen/Priest every time you bake bread. It comes from this: Numbers 15:17. G0d spoke to Moses, saying, 18. Speak to the people of Israel, and say to them, When you come into the land where I bring you, 19. then when you eat of the bread of the land, offer up an offering to G0d. 20. Offer up a "Hallah" of the first of your dough for an offering; as you do the offering of the threshing floor, so shall you present it. 21. From the first of your dough you shall give G0d an offering in your generations.

Therefore, bread made from dough of one of the Torah's "five species of grain" (wheat, barley, spelt, rye, and oats), must have the "hallah portion" separated. An amount of dough no less than the size of an olive is separated and burned. The custom is to burn it in the oven where the bread is being baked. Seeing "Hallah is taken" on the matzah box lets you know that this has been done.

**PERMITTED FOOD** has a “*Kosher l’Pesach*” (Kosher for Passover) label. They include *Matzot*, Passover noodles, candies, cakes, beverages, canned and processed foods, jams and jellies, vinegar, wines and liquors. Butter, cottage cheese and cream cheese are allowed with no label but must be purchased before the festival.<sup>3</sup> Also allowed with no label: fresh fruits and vegetables, natural unground coffee, sugar, tea, salt and pepper, from unopened packages or containers, and oil made from legumes.

**\*Kitniyot: Corn And Peas, And Rice, Oh My!**

In addition to the five grains mentioned above which can become *hametz*, certain legumes and other grain-like substances called *kitniyot*, in Hebrew, are also forbidden by some. These substances include cereals and other vegetables resembling *hametz*-producing grain such as rice, peas, beans, lentils, corn, legumes, millet.

Some say this is due to the practice of using the same bags to transport these foods as were used to transport wheat, etc. No one really knows.

Ashkenazic Jews (of Northern European descent), observe this, but many Sfardic Jews (of Spanish/Portuguese descent) have a different tradition of eating these foods during Passover. Middle Eastern Jews vary by community.

In Appendix E, on page 66, is a letter from the Conservative movement in Israel about **permitting** the use of *kitniyot*: Keep in mind that this was written for Israel where *kitniyot* are under supervision, and, because there are so many Sfardim who eat *kitniyot* that finding non-*kitniyot* foods is difficult. Outside of Israel, the consumption of *kitniyot* is usually forbidden by Conservative Jews. Reform Jews usually do not have any problem with *kitniyot*.

## WHY KEEP KOSHER FOR PASSOVER?

### A. Leaven as a Symbol

Leaven removal is the bane of the Passover holy days. I love Passover, but I hate the cleaning. By the time the seder comes, I am so exhausted I can barely stand to finish cooking, can only just find the strength to sit at the table.

What can the advantage be to all this cleaning? Well, as expressed by those of us who do it, it gives us a chance once a year to thoroughly clean the house, whether we

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<sup>3</sup> This is because we will declare all the *hametz* in our possession, that we have tried to find yet did not find, to be "null and void, ownerless and masterless, as the dust of the earth," on the morning before Passover starts, in a ceremony called *Biur Hametz*, the ridding (by fire) of *hametz*. We burn a little of the last *Hametz* to symbolically burn away all the leaven.

After we have said this, all the incidental microscopic amounts of *hametz* on the butter sticks and milk cartons, etc., that we bought before the Holy Day, become "null and void, etc." But any *Hametz* adhering to these items that we would bring into our homes **during** Passover would not have been made null and void.

This is, obviously, up to each person to decide whether the microscopic amounts of *hametz* they would bring into their homes would be significant for them. Another solution would be to disavow, with the same phrase you use at the onset of Pesach, the incidental *hametz* on any item purchased during Pesach just before putting it in your car (did you get your car washed and vacuumed before the Holy Day?? Or are those *hametzdik* snack wrappers still rattling around it?), or before bringing it into your home.

need to or not (OK, so maybe *your* children never make a mess, and there are no Cheerios in the sofa nor juice stains in the carpet!). I had friends in Israel who, when they turned sixty, decided never to clean their house again and, instead, would "sell" their Jerusalem house and move to Tiberias for the holy day, to a house cleaned for them, and to communal seders prepared for them. I always thought that would be a great idea. But then, their house never got a thorough cleaning.


So was this whole leaven thing just a ruse to get lazy Jews to get off our duffs and scrub as if our mortal souls depended on it?

Some of us will say yes. OK, there's no way to prove that position wrong, nor will those who hold the belief be easily shaken from the notion. They'll say that only the supernatural fear of leaven-pollution could drive Jews to frenzies of micro-decontamination worthy of a Silicon Valley clean room. Otherwise we would run the risk of slacking off in our efforts to eradicate the potential microbial plague, saying to each other in our weariness, "Honey, does it look clean enough to you?"

"Absolutely, dear! Thank you for asking!"

But with the fear of Heavenly displeasure at the thought of a persistent leaven-ly crumb, the answer would be, "Absolutely not, dear. There's still the guest-room closet top shelves to check." See how it works?

Now, despite the extra benefit of a thorough spring cleaning, I think the issue of leaven-hunting has its own meaning: to get the house skinny.

The thing about *matzah* is that it is skinny bread, not puffed-up bread. Now, don't get me wrong. I am not one of those rabbis who interpret leaven as a puffed-up ego. After all, the rest of the year we are *encouraged* to eat the stuff, in the form of *challah*, on Shabbat and festivals. In fact, Jews were mandated to bring leavened offerings to the Temple on Shavuot, the 50th day after Passover, which is the capstone of the celebration of freedom. (See  Commentary Section #39, page 59) I cannot label something as a symbol of evil for one week of the year when it is so positive the rest of the year. Puffed-up egos are undesirable, but it's not leaven's fault.

What *matzah* is to me is skinny bread. The Hebrew word for Egypt is "*Mitzrayim*," or, "narrow straits," named for the narrow banks of the Nile river of which all of Egypt is comprised. It took getting skinny to get out of oppression. We couldn't have left *Mitzrayim* if we had tried to bring everything—we couldn't have carried it, nor could we have fit through the Reed Sea!

This is emigrant behavior, and it is just what Passover is meant to remind us of. Think of the emigrants to California, throwing unnecessary items out of their Conestogas all the way across Kansas. My next-door neighbors just moved to a new house and, in the packing process, threw or gave away a lot of things they had accumulated but no longer needed. We are all packrats, for it is easier to stuff things in unoccupied (or under-occupied) holes in our house than to actually do anything significant about the clutter.

*Matzah* is skinny bread. It reminds us how little we actually need to survive, how much we can do without. When I look at the emptied-out stripped-down bare-minimum kitchen I use on Pesach, I really love the fact that I can open kitchen drawers without them sticking on the extra strawberry-corers and other third-string utensils I keep in there the rest of the year. On Pesach I just have things I need. When I wake up Pesach morning and see how spare and Spartan and clean all the counters are, I feel free: unencumbered of my need to amass and of my fear to discard.

Passover and Sukkot reside at opposite sides of our year, literally poles apart in our planet's journey around the sun. But what they both have in common is that they force us out of our houses to experience how little we can actually get by on, and how enslaved we let ourselves get by creature comforts. This year, as we scrub and straighten and *shlep* and reorganize, and as the grumbling word born of exhaustion begins to form on our lips, let's keep our eyes on the prize: a house down to bare essentials, an experience of freedom. Like everything else in life, it doesn't mean much if we don't have to work for it.

☞ One last note—Pesach is the best time to go through all of our old clothes, toys, etc. that *we* are encumbered by and buried under, but might be just what those down on their luck need to feel a bit freer. Take those "shackles" to a food closet in your town. Make Passover cleaning a double *mitzvah*.

**B. Ham and Cheese On Matzah:**  
***Is It Hypocritical To Keep Kosher For Passover***  
***If You Don't The Rest Of The Year?***

A friend of mine came out to visit one Passover during a business trip. While on the airplane he had a revelation into his sense of Jewishness. He knew it was Passover, but he had not reserved a kosher meal for the flight, because it is not his customary practice to keep kosher. But he had brought some matzah along, for it is his customary practice to remove leavened bread from his diet on Passover. When the flight attendants brought out the snack, the snack turned out to be a ham and cheese sandwich on rye. So, when it was served to him, my friend removed the rye bread, put the ham and cheese on the matzah, and ate it. He said it was pretty good.

Why he was so excited was because he had been put to a Jewish test, and he affirmed the person he was and the choices he made. Though my friend did not normally opt for ham over other meats, he ate the ham because he was hungry, and he does not find avoiding the meats of certain animals according to Biblical purity laws to be meaningful. He ate the cheese because he does not agree with the Talmud (Pesachim 24b) when it extended the Biblical prohibition against boiling a goat kid in its mother's milk (Exodus 23:19; 34:26; and Deuteronomy 14:21) to the eating of any meat with any milk product. Yet he does find it meaningful to identify with the traditions that link liberation from slavery and becoming a free people to avoiding leaven on Passover. Hence, he felt that his ham and cheese on matzah sandwich was authentically *Pesadik* for him. Since it was the first time he had had all these values tested at once, he was pleased with the self-discovery. And he made a point of telling me, one of his rabbi friends.

I enjoyed his story, and I was proud for him, too. For though I *do* find it personally meaningful to avoid those meats our ancestors who wrote the Bible avoided, like him, I am much more attached to the liberation symbols of Passover than the purity symbols of forbidden meats. I was excited for him because he was excited about his positive choices, and about his positive identity as a Jew who makes choices, intelligently, informedly, and committedly.

✧ **Discussion** *What do you think about his choice?*



## SEDER CUSTOMS AND SYMBOLS

### סֵדֶר SEDER

A *Seder* is a symbolic Feast designed to relive the Exodus from Egypt and to provoke discussion on liberation. Each of its foods and actions symbolizes an aspect of the story of the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Delving into the meaning of the symbols, uncovering and deciphering their allegories is the expressed point of the Feast.

### THE "ORDER" OF THE "SEDER"

The rite had to be done in a certain order in Egypt, and so too now. In keeping with the concept that the *Seder* we now have was designed to consciously and subconsciously induce Jews to long for a rebuilt Temple, the *Seder* was divided into fifteen named parts (there are a variety of other things that could have been "named parts" if the authors had been so inclined. Some small parts are subsumed into large parts in order to preserve the symbolism of fifteen sections).

These 15 parts represent the fifteen steps to the ancient Temple, and the fifteen generations from Abraham (Father of the People) to Solomon (who built the Temple.) This night is also the *fifteenth* of the month. (See ☞ Commentary Section #19, page 48, the *Dayenu*, for a full treatment of the number 15 in the *Haggadah*.)

*Here are the 15 parts of the Seder, which are often sung:*

קַדְדֵשׁ **KADDESH** "Sanctify" the day with the 1st Cup

וְרַחֵץ **UR'CHATZ** "Washing" the hands before Karpas.

כַּרְפָּס **KARPAS** The Vegetable Appetizer

יַחַץ **YACHATZ** "Halve" the Middle Matzah

מַגִּיד **MAGGID** "Tell" the Passover story, up to the 2nd Cup, of "Redemption"

רַחֲצָה **ROCHTZAH/RACHTZAH** "Washing" the hands before bread.<sup>4</sup>

מֹצֵי / מוֹצֵי'ס **MOTZI, MATZAH** Blessings for "Bringing Forth" Bread, and for the mitzvah of eating "Matzah."

מָרֹר **MAROR** "Bitter" herb.

כֹּרֵךְ **KORECH** "Fold" the "Hillel sandwich."

עֲרֵךְ שְׁלֶחַן **SHULCHAN ORECH** "Set the table" for dinner.

צְפוּן **TZAFUN** "Hide" and then find the Afikoman.

בָּרַךְ **BARECH:** The After-Meals "Blessing" and ends with the 3rd Cup

הַלֵּל **THE HALLEL** (Psalms 113 –118, and 136, the "Great Hallel").

נִרְצָה <sup>4<sup>th</sup></sup> cup and **NIRTZAH** May our *Seder* "be accepted" by You.

☞ If you wish to find out how much a role **order** plays in the *Seder*, try changing

<sup>4</sup> Different Haggadot spell and sound this word differently. See footnote 15 below, page 53.

the order of some significant things and see what people say. Sometimes you can do this for effect, sometimes to bring up an interesting juxtaposition of ideas that gets people to see things anew. Also, try repeating something (something short and fun is best) to see what that does to liven up the conversation. *Mah Nishtanah?* The order is different!

✧ **Why is this called a Seder ("Order" of Prayers) rather than a Haggadah (a "Telling" of the Story of Passover and Liberation)?**

✧ **Do the events that precipitate Redemptions happen in a certain order, or do things follow one another somewhat randomly, when the oppressed are freed?**

נְרוֹת CANDLE (See ☞ Commentary Section #1, page 32)

We light candles to begin Passover, just as on any Sabbath or Festival. One candle would have been lit in any case to see in the dark. The second candle was added to distinguish the day as holy, reasoning that as the Sabbath celebrates creation, which began with the creation of light, so each celebration of creation should begin with light.

It is a custom among some Jews to add a candle for each child in the family (as long as you continue do so from then on), so a family with two children would light four candles each holy day.

☞ One may ask guests to light the number of candles they would normally light at home. This produces an amazing conflagration if they do, so prepare a safe space for this.

☞ In earthquake country it is advisable to use low-center-of-gravity candlesticks on a metal tray. This is also good advice for *Seders* with many young children, who create their own earthquakes.

☞ Or you can invite each guest to light a candle, or just light two.

כּוֹסוֹת אַרְבַּע FOURS CUPS (OF WINE) (See ☞ Commentary Section #2, page 32)

Wine is a symbol of festivity, joy and thanksgiving: “And wine that gladdens the human heart” (*Psalms* 104:15). The sanctification of the holiday (*Kiddush*) is pronounced over the first cup. Three additional cups are drunk during the course of the *Seder*, making a total of four: **Arba Kosot (Four Cups)**.

We drink four cups of wine (or grape juice), "toasting G0d" in honor of the four promises G0d announced to Moses, and which G0d fulfilled ( <i>Exodus</i> 6:6-7):	These Four Cups ( <i>Four Toasts</i> ) have special names based on their place in the <i>Seder</i> :
☐ “I will take you out” of the land of bondage.	☐ The <b>Kos Kiddush</b> (Cup of <b>Sanctification</b> ) sanctifies the Festival
☐ “And I will save” you.	☐ The <b>Kos G'ulah</b> (Cup of <b>Redemption</b> ) ends the Story of Redemption (The <i>Maggid</i> )
☐ “And I will free” you from slavery.	☐ The <b>Kos Brachah</b> (Cup of <b>Blessing</b> ) ends the "Blessing for the Meal"
☐ “And I will take” you to be My People.	☐ The <b>Kos Hartza'ah</b> (Cup of <b>Acceptance</b> ) ends the <i>Seder</i> by asking for Divine Acceptance ( <i>Nirtzah</i> ) of our service.

As wine and grape juice were used in the ancient Temple as part of every sacrificial ritual, there is special attention paid to it being kosher. Not only do the normal laws of kosher and kosher for Passover apply to it, but when Jews use wine to bless G0d , it is important that the wine not have been dedicated to any other deity (this actually still happens today, where some cultures pour out a little of the wine as an offering to their G0d), or to any other religious observance, e.g., Christian sacramental wine.


### כּוֹס אֵלִיָּהוּ ELIJAH'S CUP (See Commentary Section #32, page 56)

A fifth verb of redemption ends the above passage in *Exodus* 6:8, “I will bring you into the land which I swore to your ancestors.” Half the rabbis claimed that this verb necessitated a fifth cup. The other half pointed out that inasmuch as it was a “bringing-in verb”, and not a “taking-out verb” like the first four, it was distinguished from the others, and thus no fifth cup was necessary. The rabbis could not reach a majority decision, and, as in all cases where that was the case, they said, “Let it stand until Elijah comes, heralding the Messiah, who will answer all unanswered questions.”

Thus this cup became known as Elijah’s Cup, and we wait to learn if we should drink it. Filled but untasted, it stays on the table during the *Seder* in the hope that the Prophet Elijah may appear as a messenger of the Almighty and announce the coming of the Messiah, which would be the final redemption.

☆ **Discussion** What do you think a final Redemption of the World would be like?

### מַצָּה MATZAH


(See  Commentary Sections #5, *Yachatz*, page 34; #20C, *Matzah as one of the main symbols*, page 51; and #26, *the Motzi and Matzah blessings*, page 53)

*Matzah* (plural—*Matzot*) is unleavened and unfermented bread. It is the bread that had to be baked during the Israelites’ hasty flight when there was no time for leavening. It was also specifically commanded to be eaten during the first seder the Israelites observed in Egypt (*Exodus* 12), as well as for all subsequent seders (*Exodus* 13).

Three *Matzot* are placed in a separate *Matzah* plate. There are special *Matzah* covers one can purchase, as well as three-compartmented trays and bags.

Why **three *Matzot***? Two for the normal Sabbath/festival loaves (which remind us that twice as much manna fell before Sabbaths and festivals so we wouldn't have to gather it on those days (See *Exodus* 16) and one specifically to remind us of slavery by being the “bread of affliction”).

***For the Seder plate and the first bite, make sure not to use egg Matzah or Matzah made with cider.*** The latter are pastry , not *bread*, and both are called “rich *Matzah*”, not “bread of affliction.” Also, it is customary to refrain from eating *Matzah* from Purim to Pesach in order for the *Matzah* to be more exciting to the palate.

Half of the middle *Matzah*, saved for the *Afikoman* (dessert), is playfully “stolen” by a child and ransomed for a prize. A fourth *Matzah*, the “*Matzah* of Hope,” has often been added to the matzah plate (making a total of four matzot) for Jewish communities in need of rescue, such as Syrian, Soviet, and Ethiopian Jewry. (See  Commentary Section #6, page 36.) Similarly this *Matzah Of Hope* and rescue can be used to focus on general crises at home (hunger and homelessness) and abroad (warfare, oppression, and famine).

☞ It is the custom to give of one's resources before each festival so that the needy may enjoy it as well. Before Passover this is called *Ma'ot Chittin*, "Wheat money," that all might afford to buy *Matzah*. It is also a custom of many communities to organize a donation of all the *hametz* of which we are ridding our homes before Passover to a local food distribution agency.

### מֵי מַלְחָה SALT WATER (See ☞ Commentary Section #4, page 33)

The *Karpas* is dipped into salt water to make it palatable. It was an ancient form of salad dressing, which now has its own symbolic meaning in the *Seder*.

Salt water is seen to represent the salty tears shed by the oppressed Israelites. It also reminds some of the Reed Sea through which the Israelites passed in the last climactic act of escape to freedom.

### RECLINING (See ☞ Commentary Section #7, page 36)

Reclining is how rich first-century citizens ate - on their left side eating with right hands. As we are all free this night, we eat like the citizens ate, reclining. Many don't do this anymore, but instead just put a pillow on or at the armrest of their chair.

### KITTEL

Some people wear a Kittel at their seder. A Kittel is a white robe, also worn on Rosh haShanah and Yom Kippur. Some are also buried in their Kittel.

In Jewish tradition white garments are symbolic of humility and purity of thought. When the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies on the Day on Atonement, rather than dressing in his usual golden vestments he wore simple white linen garments. This is based on the statement of Isaiah, whose words are read in the Haftarah reading on Yom Kippur: "Though Your sin be as scarlet (hence real and incontestable), they shall be as white as snow ( after repentance)" (Isaiah 1:18). The custom of dressing in white spread, and it has become traditional for men and women to dress in white on the High Holy Days as well as Passover.

## THE SYMBOLS ON THE SEDER PLATTER

### קַעֲרַת הַסֵּדֶר – THE SEDER PLATTER

Though it is called a *Seder* "plate" in English, in Hebrew and reality it is a large platter. Anything can be used for a *Seder* platter, as long as it is large enough. Some have hollows into which you put the items, some have little individual bowls to put into the hollows. Some have pictures of the items, some have little or no decoration.

### בֵּיצָה BEITZAH

#### (A ROASTED, HARD-BOILED) EGG

Ask anyone why there is an egg on the *Seder* platter and they will probably tell you that it symbolizes the springtime, as eggs (new life and rebirth) do in most cultures. Then ask them why the symbol of spring and birth should be *roasted*.

The roasted egg represents the festival sacrificial ox called the *Chagigah*, which was brought on all festivals to the Temple. As the Passover lamb would have been too small to suffice for an entire clan, the extended family would make most of its meal on

Passover out of this ox. The ox would be slaughtered at the Temple, then a symbolic part (the suet and a piece of the liver and kidneys) would be burned on the altar, and the officiating *Kohen* (Temple Priest) would get the thigh or breast, and the family would eat the rest.

How does an egg replace an ox? It is because the first law in the Talmudic treatise on festival law is, "An egg, if it is laid on a festival, can it be eaten? Shammai's disciples say yes. but Hillel's disciples say no." (Hillel won out.) Since *egg* is the first word in the law, the tractate became known as "*Beitzah /Egg*". Hence, it seemed appropriate to substitute a roasted hard-boiled egg, the name of the Festival Law Section of the Talmud, for the festival offering. Be glad about this, for this means we don't have to put any part of an ox on our *Seder* plate! ☺

In addition to the roasted egg on the *Seder* platter, there is a custom of serving hard-boiled eggs in salt water as the first course of the meal, as if to say that our ancestors were about to break the shell of slavery and tears and taste the period of liberation.

#### **How to roast an egg:**

##### ***Really Roasting:***

Step 1) ***Important Safety Tip!*** Hard-boil your *Beitzah* first before you attempt to roast it or it will explode all over your kitchen!

Leave the eggshell on or take it off as you prefer.

Step 2) Put it in the roasting pan in the oven with your main dish (check on it after half an hour!). It will turn a nice golden brown.

OR

Put it on your barbecue *for a minute* while you are barbecuing your main dish. Don't leave it on too long or it will split open!

OR

##### ***The Symbolic Roast (It's all symbolic, after all!)***

- 1 Wave a sooty candle underneath the egg to give it a "faux roast" look!
- 2 Boil the eggs with onionskins and they will turn a dark yellow, but taste the same, so you can even serve these eggs.

#### **חרוֹסֵת HAROSET** (See 📖 Commentary Section #27, page 54)

*Haroset* is a mixture of chopped apple, nuts, cinnamon, and wine (or dates, raisins, sesame seeds and wine). According to some, it is designed to look like the mortar used by the Israelites in building the palaces and pyramids of Egypt during centuries of forced labor. But others say, since there is no mention of mortar in the Biblical account of the slavery, it represents the mud out of which we made the bricks.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Pesachim 116a: (The rabbis discuss whether or not *Haroset* is a mitzvah. They end by deciding that it is *not*, but those who think it should be discuss its symbolism):

Rabbi Levi said: In memory of the apple-tree (under which, according to tradition, Israelite women in Egypt would hide to secretly give birth to their children: Sotah 11b. This is, in turn, based upon the verse in Song of Songs 8:5: "I awakened you up under the apple tree; there your mother was in labor with you; there she who bore you was in labor.").

Rabbi Yohanan said: In memory of the day (that they made bricks). (continued on next page)

Before the *Maror* (bitter herbs: see page 30) is eaten, it is dipped into the *Haroset*. The symbolism of this act, as I have heard it described, is to find the sweetness in every instance of suffering. In other words, look for the silver lining. In the case of the Israelites' slavery in Egypt, not only did it turn us into a nation bound together by a common struggle, but it also sensitized us to the plight of the oppressed everywhere.

✧ Discussion: Is any suffering justifiable on the grounds that there are lessons to be learned in it? Can the cost in human life ever be evened out by other gains? The starkest example of this problem is posed by the question: was the utter bitterness of the Holocaust the prerequisite for the sweetness of the founding of the State of Israel?

☞ Innovative Activity: There are many recipes for Haroset from Jewish communities around the world. Try a new one each year, but be sure to include along with it the one your guests are expecting. You would be surprised to find out how many Jews equate the taste of the Haroset of their youth with the entirety of the *Seder* experience!

### חֲזֵרֵת HAZERET

*Hazeret* (lettuce) is, in the Mishnah, another form of Karpas (Pesachim 10:3, 114a: He dips the lettuce/*hazeret* before he has reached the aftercourse of the bread. Then they set before him matzah, lettuce/*hazeret*, and haroset.)

*Hazeret* is also a symbol of how the rich freeborn began their meals—with salad instead of bread.<sup>6</sup> That is why the *Seder* begins with a green vegetable (the parsley/*karpas*).

Eating or dipping *hazeret* is almost always omitted (even from many *Seder* Platters), in favor of the *karpas*.

In some traditions, *hazeret* is equated with *maror*. **Still, if you have *maror*, and you have *karpas*, you don't need *hazeret*. So why bother with it?** There is no part of the seder where it is mentioned by name. **As we say in Aramaic, "Fuggetaboutit!" ☺**

☞ Innovative Activity: **Personally, we like to fill the *hazeret* dish with chocolate.** Why? Why not? And that gets people asking other questions, too! Fill it with whatever you want and let people ask about it.

***And this is why we titled this book, "Why Not Chocolate?"!***

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Abbaye observed: Therefore one must make it tart and thicken it: make it tart, in memory of the apple-tree; and thicken it, in memory of the day.


It was taught in accordance with Rabbi Yohanan: The condiments (Which are mixed in the haroset) are in memory of the straw (just as the straw was kneaded into the clay) and the haroset itself is a reminder of the day (of making bricks).

<sup>6</sup> Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: These are Antoninus and Rabbi (Yehudah haNasi), whose table never lacked either radish, lettuce (*hazeret*) or cucumbers either in summer or winter! (Berachot 57b)

### כַּרְפָּס KARPAS (See Commentary Section #4, page 33)


*Karpas*, usually a piece of parsley, can be any “fruit of the ground” (That is the blessing we say before eating it). It is dipped into salt water in remembrance of the tears the Israelites shared in their misery.

The *Karpas* derives from a first-century custom of starting meals with salad instead of bread, but it has come to signify many things: It can symbolize the meager diet of the Jews in Egyptian bondage; and springtime, the season of Passover. It can also connote the way the oppressed Israelites rose up from the mud out of which they made bricks and fled to freedom (e.g.: their freedom was a “fruit of the ground”).


 Discuss this: *Karpas*, as a word, is not mentioned in the Exodus story. It is used in the Book of Esther (1:6), but there it means “fine linen or cotton!”

☆ There is a fun custom of planting parsley (or something else to be used as *Karpas*) on Purim, thereby connecting the sole Biblical mention of *Karpas* to the holy day where it is used.

### מָרֹר MAROR

(See  Commentary Sections #20D, as one of the main three symbols, page 51; and #27, the blessing for maror, page 54)


The *Maror*, or “bitter herb” (often horseradish), symbolizes the bitter suffering of the Jews under Egyptian rule. We will dip it in sweet *Haroset* before eating it.



 Other ideas for *Maror* include ginger root, lettuce root, and, though not exactly *bitter*, jalapeños or other intense peppers are painful and make the same point. Cut them into bite sizes but leave a huge hunk of uncut *Maror* on the *Seder* platter.

### זְרוֹעַ Z'RO'A (See Commentary Section #20B, page 50)


The *Z'ro'a* is the roasted “arm” bone of a lamb (“shank” as it is usually translated in English). It represents the ancient sacrifice of the Paschal lamb (*Pesach*) which had to be eaten roasted.

### DIFFERENT THINGS ALTOGETHER

 By adding different things to the traditional items on the *Seder* Platter and/or on the table, we create more opportunities for questions and discussions.

 For example, what if you put a **big stick** on the *Seder* Platter, or on the table. It would surely generate questions. What is it? (Answer: to represent Moses' staff.) Why is it there? (Answer: to ask why Moses is not an important part of the *Seder*. See  Commentary Sections #17, page 44; and #18C, page 47.)

☆ Another Example, put a **tambourine** on the table or on the *Seder* Platter. Why? To represent Miriam, who led the women in celebratory song with her timbrel at the Reed Sea (Exodus 15:20). Why is it there? To emphasize the role that women played in the Redemption. (For more on the role women played, look at Exodus chapter one for the contributions of Shifra and Puah—the midwives— and two, for the story of Moses' mother, Yocheved, his sister, Miriam, and Pharaoh's daughter.)

 By putting **two or more versions of the same things** (e.g.: two *Haroset* recipes, three kinds of *Maror*, four *Karpas* items, etc.) we create similar effects. This could also be the opening of a new version of the counting song for the *Seder*: Who Knows One? Who knows what I made one of, two of, three of, etc.?

☞ **The Orange on the Seder Plate** by Susannah Heschel<sup>7</sup>

In the early 1980s, the Hillel Foundation invited me to speak on a panel at Oberlin College. While on campus, I came across a Haggadah that had been written by some Oberlin students to express feminist concerns. One ritual they devised was placing a crust of bread on the Seder plate, as a sign of solidarity with Jewish lesbians (there's as much room for a lesbian in Judaism as there is for a crust of bread on the Seder plate).

At the next Passover, I placed an orange on our family's Seder plate. During the first part of the Seder, I asked everyone to take a segment of the orange, make the blessing over fruit, and eat it as a gesture of solidarity with Jewish lesbians and gay men, and others who are marginalized within the Jewish community (I mentioned widows in particular).

Bread on the Seder plate brings an end to Pesach—it renders everything *hametz*. And it suggests that being lesbian is being transgressive, violating Judaism. I felt that an orange was suggestive of something else: the fruitfulness for all Jews when lesbians and gay men are contributing and active members of Jewish life. In addition, each orange segment had a few seeds that had to be spit out - a gesture of spitting out, repudiating the homophobia of Judaism.

When lecturing, I often mentioned my custom as one of many new feminist rituals that have been developed in the last twenty years. Somehow, though, the typical patriarchal maneuver occurred: My idea of an orange and my intention of affirming lesbians and gay men were transformed. Now theory circulates that a MAN said to me that a woman belongs on the bimah as an orange on the Seder plate. A woman's words are attributed to a man, and the affirmation of lesbians and gay men is simply erased.

Isn't that precisely what's happened over the centuries to women's ideas?

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<sup>7</sup> Sue Fendrick asked Susannah Heschel to comment on the origin of this custom, and she happily gave her both this answer, and the permission "to forward it to the four corners of the earth."



## BOOK TWO:

# AN INNOVATIVE COMMENTARY ON THE TRADITIONAL HAGGADAH

The names of the *Seder* sections vary from translation to translation, but the Hebrew is invariably the same.

Sections with this symbol (✓) are frequently done, and are, in this author's point of view, the most important and/or meaningful parts of the Seder. Basically, don't *Passover* them!

☆ *Do you agree with my choices? Discuss!*

☞ **General note:** *This commentary is not the end of the discussion! You can always find out more about all of these things by looking them up on the web by using a search engine. Be sure to (mis)spell them in as many ways as you can, so you will find all the different things people say about them. For example, when looking up Passover, look up Pesach and Pass Over. Or Afikoman: also look up Afikomen, Aphikoman, Aphikomen, and even Apikoman; Matzo, Matza, Mazza, Matzah, Matzoth, Matzos, etc.*

*Also, be aware that there are many "Messianic Jewish" (i.e., Christian) websites, though, with Passover information. Some of it is good, but most of it is through a Christian lens, interpreted as if Jesus were a Passover sacrifice.*

### 1. ✓ **הַדְּלָקַת נְרוֹת CANDLELIGHTING**

As on all Sabbaths and Festivals we light *two* candles and recite the blessing. The first one was, as any day, merely to illuminate the darkness. The second one says by its presence that it is a special day, and makes the first one holy as well.

*(If the Seder begins on a Saturday night we delay candlelighting until after Kiddush, for Havdalah, the ceremony separating Sabbath from the rest of the week, is included in the Kiddush. We light the festival candles from the Havdalah candle.)*

### 2. ✓ **קַדְדֵּשׁ KADDESH**

*Kaddesh is the command (verb) which means "Sanctify." The sanctifying of the day (noun) is called "Kiddush."<sup>8</sup> Kiddush is said or sung over the first cup of wine. By saying/singing this prayer, we acknowledge that the day is super-special, or "holy."*

*This is the first cup, the "Cup of Kiddush." After kiddush you can continue to drink at will. Some forbid continuing to drink lest the Seder participants get too drunk to pay attention to the story. If this is a problem, or for any other reason, you may drink grape juice instead of wine.*

☆ We make four toasts tonight.

The **first** is to Passover.

The **second** to Freedom.

The **third**, after we eat, for the food.

And the **fourth**, at the end, for the Seder we have enjoyed with each other.

<sup>8</sup> Kaddish is Aramaic for the same word, "Sanctification." *Kaddish* is the prayer that ends services, sanctifying G0d's Name.

At this point, let each participant offer publicly a toast to some aspect of Passover.

✧ Though it is too early in the service to offer a discussion here, on those occasions when Pesach falls on Saturday night, one can discuss the meaning of the change in the phrase in the *Havdalah* ("Distinction" prayer) among the other things that are different that we note in the *Mah Nishtanah* (☞ Commentary Section #7, page 36). This prayer, which ends each Sabbath by praising G0d for "making a distinction between the holy day and non-holy day," is changed, when the Sabbath leads into a holy day, to read, "making a distinction between the holy day and holy day," that is, between the Sabbath's holiness, and the holiness of Passover.

✧ What is the difference between the holiness of a Sabbath and the holiness of a festival such as Passover? Does Passover have *more* holiness because it only comes once a year so it is more special than Shabbat? Or because it is so widely observed that it has demographic holiness? Or because of the extra amount of work that must be done to celebrate it, or the extra level of Kashrut to observe it? Or, in spite of all these things, does Shabbat still have a higher level of holiness?

✧ Which is holier to me, personally? I can measure this by asking myself which I would be more likely not to skip: one Passover or one Shabbat? Or, alternatively, which one, having skipped it, would I miss more?

### 3. ✓ יְרַחֵץ UR'CHATZ

*Ur'chatz* means "&Wash the hands." It is done without a blessing, before eating the *Karpas* (see below, ☞ Commentary Section #4). In the First century CE, rich people began meals with salad instead of bread. This symbolizes this custom. No blessing is said because salad does not have the same sacrificial status as bread, before the offering of which, Priests (*Kohanim*) "prepared" (washed) their hands. (See also *Rochtzah/Rachtzah*, the washing of the hands before bread, ☞ Commentary Section #25, page 53).

✧ As we prepare to wash our hands before eating *karpas*, what was the role of water in the Exodus? Can you follow it through the story of the Exodus as well as through it's symbolic representations (hidden as well as obvious) in the Seder?

Many have never done this in their seders, thinking it to be too messy. However, if you have enough bowls and towels, it is not messy. Remember *Mah Nishtanah!*

☞ One way to have fun with this is to have each guest wash the hands of another, thus turning each guest into both a servant, and a freeborn citizen.

### 4. ✓ כָּרְפַס KARPAS

*Karpas* can be any ground-growing vegetable or fruit. Dip the *Karpas* in salt water (tears). This is akin to the ritual salting of the bread offering (Leviticus 2:13-14).

✧ Some see *Karpas* as a green vegetable symbolizing springtime. What meaning would springtime symbols have to someone who is still living in winter (way north), or just about to enter winter (in the southern hemisphere)?

✧ As mentioned in the introduction to the symbols on the *Seder* Platter, *Karpas* can also connote the way the oppressed Israelites rose up from the mud out of which they made bricks and fled to freedom (e.g.: their freedom was a "fruit of the ground"). Think of the image of the Israelites in the mud pits. Think of the concept of "uprising."

**Potatoes:** Some Jews used potatoes for *Karpas*, because they lived in northern climes where spring had not yet reached, or in the southern hemisphere where it is the beginning of autumn.

**Another meaning of the potato** is to remember the survivors of the *Shoah*, who, when fed a rich diet right after liberation, died of systemic shock. Finally the army doctors figured out that they had to readjust their enslaved and emaciated bodies to food slowly. This lesson was successfully applied to bring the Ethiopian Jews back to health from the famine they endured in Ethiopia just before being airlifted to Israel.

✧ If you serve potatoes and tell this story, ask your guests to imagine themselves just coming from the *Shoah*, Ethiopia, or another famine, and to describe the *Seder* table before them from that perspective.

### ☞ Exotic Karpas

We can use any "fruit of the ground" over which the blessing, "Creator of the Fruit of the Ground" can be said. So we can get creative. However, whenever you serve exotic *Karpas*, also **put parsley out, too**, so that those who have a need to feel that the *Seder* requires parsley will be satisfied.

☞ Want to get people's attention and make your *Seder* memorable? Use a **strawberry** for *karpas*. It is a "fruit of the ground," and it will get people to think!

☞ If you really want to blow their minds (and fill their stomachs) you can use a **banana**. Bananas? Don't they grow on trees? Yes, but the stalk that produces the banana grows up from the ground each year, so the correct blessing before eating a banana is "fruit of the ground."

☞ **Specially for the Kids:** It is a custom to distribute hard candy to the kids after *Karpas*. (Hard candy takes a while to suck on and keeps them busy for a while.) Candy helps make the day sweet, and puts a "good taste" in their mouths for the Holy Day.

**Hungry already? Serve Karpas Trays:** After eating *Karpas*, some Jews continue to eat "ground fruits" i.e. vegetables - carrot sticks, celery, and other garnishes. Other Jews do not, out of the intention to experience the suffering of our ancestors who always hungered in slavery. But those who do snack on *Karpas* do so out of either practicality or to re-experience the slavery of our ancestors who, while smelling the feasts of their taskmasters, were reduced to eating the few herbs that grew from the ground on which they worked.

Snacking on *Karpas* is a good way to alleviate hunger and keep people from snacking on the *Matzah*. The Reform *Haggadah* puts the ritual eating of *Matzah* and maror here with an option to move it back to its original place just before the meal is served (See ☞ *Commentary Sections #26 & 27, page 53*). If you start to eat *Matzah* here you will fill up on it, and you will be in no mood to eat dinner when it comes. Snacking on *Karpas* is healthier, and it helps the digestion of the *Matzah*, if you know what I mean!

## 5. ✓ יָחַטַּץ YACHATZ

"Halve" the middle of the three matzot into two unequal sections. The larger becomes the *Afikoman* which you will hide. For the time being, either put it in a special *Afikoman* bag, which you can buy or ☞ make yourself, or simply wrap it in a napkin, and put it aside somewhere. The smaller piece goes back onto the *Matzah* plate.

✧ *Question: Why is this Matzah broken unequally?*

*Answer: Have you ever tried to break it equally?*

There once was a Jewish aeronautics engineer who designed a high-performance aircraft only to see the prototypes' wings fall off when it reached high speed. The

engineer went to the local rabbi to ask for a solution. The rabbi suggested putting a line of perforations along the edge of the fuselage where the wings connected. Perplexed about the rabbi's advice, the engineer nonetheless did as the rabbi suggested, and the plane worked phenomenally! So the engineer returned and asked the rabbi the secret. The rabbi replied, "Have you ever tried to break a *Matzah* along the perforations?"

*Serious Answer:* One story relates breaking food into two unequal pieces to the practice of the poor, who, if given a handout, may break it into two pieces, eat the smaller, and save the larger one for later when they are hungry again. It is the savings account of the destitute, and recalls the times we, as a people enslaved or merely downtrodden, have been in similar dire straits.

✧ *Another Question: What is the meaning of breaking the Matzah at all?*

*First Answer:* Pieces of our people have broken off along the way, by God's decree (exile, of the Ten Lost Tribes, for example), or by their own choice (assimilation and alienation). When we search for the *Afikoman* and bring it back to the *Seder*, we may be saying that we intend to search for and retrieve our lost brothers and sisters.

*Second Answer:* By breaking the "Bread of Affliction," we can symbolically break the yokes of slavery for ourselves and for all enslaved.

*Third Answer:* Breaking the *Matzah* can symbolize the rending of the world necessary in order to make a living. Searching for the *Afikoman* and reuniting it with the other half shows our dedication to *Tikkun Olam*, repairing the world, and making it *Shaleim/Shalom*, Whole/Peaceful.

*Fourth Answer:* In the Introduction to this book I said, "Innovation is best done when it shows knowledge of the rules before it breaks them. This book is designed to show where the rules are, how they have been broken over and over, and to suggest new ways of using the rules to break the rules." What rules of the *Seder*, or of Judaism, would you like to break and rewrite?

✧ *Still Another Scholarly Question: Is there an ironic connection between the Hebrew words "Yachad" (together) and "Yachatz" (halve)?*

*Scholarly Answer:* Maybe, but they stem from two entirely different roots<sup>9</sup> The root of *Yachad* is יחד *echad* (meaning "one") while the root of *Yachatz* is חצה *chatzah*, (meaning "half"). *Yachad* is a word formed from the *second and third letters of its root*, while *Yachatz* is a verb, 3rd person (masculine) singular imperfect, formed from *the first two letters of its root*. Many forms of the verb could have been used to designate this section. Why was this one chosen?

In all actuality, we will never really know, but two solutions suggest themselves. First, to rhyme with *u'R'chatz* (washing before *Karpas*), so that the fifteen items of the *Seder* rhyme and are easier to commit to memory. This also partly answers why the two "Washings" are called these two things: *u'R'chatz*, and *Rochtzah/Rachtzah*.

Second, to ironically tell us that even though we may **halve** the *Matzah*, we will search hard to put it back **together**. Similarly, though our people have been halved (losing the northern ten tribes of the Kingdom of Israel, and others of us who have dropped away of their own assimilatory accord), nonetheless we should ever hope for a

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<sup>9</sup> Hebrew words are based on two- or three-consonant "roots" by adding consonants and vowels as prefixes, suffixes, and infixes.

reuniting of our broken people.

✓ מגיד *MAGGID* "Tell the Story."

This is the retelling of the Exodus story, and continues up to the Second Cup  
(*Second Cup is* ☞ *Commentary Section #24, page 52*)

6. ✓ לחמא ליה *HA LACHMA ANYA*

"*This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the Land of Egypt.*"

**Have an enthusiastic guest open the door and shout out, "All who are hungry, come and eat!"** You should only be so lucky to have this happen to you--it could be Elijah walking in dressed as a beggar. Since this part of the *Seder* is early, quite frequently in communal *Seders*, someone walks in just at this moment!

In many homes, there was a fourth *Matzah*, "the *Matzah* of Hope," a tradition that began during the effort to free Soviet Jews. Now that Soviet Jews are (mostly) free to emigrate, some still continue this tradition. They hold up a fourth *Matzah* and mention all Jews not free this year to celebrate the *Seder*.

✧ This is a good time to discuss the role of food in world peace, internal stability, and personal freedom. There is a Talmudic dictum appropriate here: "If there is no wheat, there can be no Torah." Mishnah *Pirkey Avot* (the Sayings of the Founding Fathers of Rabbinic Judaism) 3:17: For how can we study or have elevated thoughts if we are constantly scrounging for our next meal?

7. ✓ מה נשתנה *MAH NISHTANAH*

"*What's changed?*"

Usually called the four questions, in reality it is either four answers to the same question, or each "answer" is really a question disguised.

It is the custom for the youngest person(s) present to lead this, to demonstrate that "out of the mouth of babes have I founded strength" (Psalm 8:2). It is also children who question the obvious, who have no preconceived notions that prevent them from seeing the bitter truth, and who always challenge their parents to explain how they can stand the horrible situations we come to endure and to rationalize as adults. **Liberation begins with simple questions. So does the *Seder*.**

✧ Ask people around the table what is different for them this night. There are many more things than the four standard answers. It is a good idea to continue until everyone has a chance to point out all the ways this evening differs from other nights. Let your imagination run wild. You can even do funny things to make the room even *more* different. It is a mitzvah to get people to talk and ask questions this night.

The four answers in this *Haggadah* are all obvious except dipping twice. The first dipping is of *karpas* in salt water. The second is of *maror* in haroset.

✧ Four is a central symbol in the *Haggadah* because of the number of cups. There are 4 answers, equal to the 4 promises, 4 kids etc. How many others can you find?

☞ **Reclining** is how rich first-century citizens ate—on their left side eating with right hands. Set your tables on the floor some year and try it. At least put pillows on the chairs, and allow everyone to put their elbows on the table!

✧ **Originally, the One Of The Questions Was Different.** The original four

questions as preserved in the Mishnah (Pesachim 10:4) included "on this night we eat roast meat," because of the way the sacrificial lamb had to be prepared. After the Temple was destroyed this was changed to the familiar answer, "Tonight we recline." (Some *Haggadot* translate "recline" as "we dine with special ceremony," because we do not recline on couches anymore). Would you like to add a new question to the list, or take out one of the traditional ones?

#### 8. ✓ עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ AVADIM HAYYINU

"We were slaves." The *Haggadah* begins with degradation and ends in exaltation.

✧ Ask people to talk about their own "slavery" now and how they'd like to leave it. Who are today's "Pharaohs"?

The second paragraph says that even if we are all scholars of the *Haggadah* and Judaica, nonetheless, we should try to learn something new each year through our *Seder* discussions. Two examples of sagely rabbis egrossed in and learning new things about Passover follow:

#### 9. מְעֵשָׂה בְּרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר MA'ASEH B'RABBI ELIEZER

"The Rabbis' All-nighter."

(Note: Eleazar is pronounced *El-a-zar*, Eliezer is pronounced *Elly-ezzer*).

These Rabbis were plotting the Bar Kochba Revolt against Rome in 135 CE. This revolt was inspired by Rabbi Akiva, who changed Shim'on bar Kosiba's name to "Bar Kochba," "The Star's Son," a Messianic title based on Numbers 24:17, "A star will step forth from Jacob, a scepter rise out of Israel..." This disastrous<sup>10</sup> revolt led to the death or exile of 75% of the Jewish population of the Land of Israel.

However, at the beginning of the revolt, the rabbis were caught up in the excitement of it, and that's why they spent all night at their Seder. It was directly relevant to them. They were freedom fighters planning their own Exodus.

☞ If you would like to leave this in your Seder, learn more about the Bar Kochba Revolt by looking it up on the web with a search engine.

#### 10. אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר AMAR RABBI EL'AZAR BEN AZARIYAH

"Rabbi El'azar ben Azariya said: (*Berachot, 12b*)" "I am as if seventy years old (i.e., an elder) and I never merited mentioning the Exodus from Egypt in the night prayer for redemption at (i.e.: in *Ma'ariv*, the evening service) until ben Zoma explained it thus."

This paragraph treats two questions: the answer to both is "Yes."

a) Should the Exodus be mentioned in the "Redemption" prayer, which follows the *Shma*, in the *evening* as well as in the morning?

b) Will Passover be celebrated in the Messianic age?

✧ This last issue can lead to a fascinating discussion of whether or not Passover will be relevant in the far future, after many more exiles and redemptions. The question arose when Christians, who said they were the "True Israel" living in the Messianic age, decided that Easter should supplant Passover as a celebration of the Messiah, rather than continue the holy days of the "Old Law."

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<sup>10</sup> *Dis-aster* stems from the Latin word for Star ("aster") and the negative prefix "dis." A disaster is something that happens under a "bad star;" appropriate for a man called StarSon, who lost to the Romans!

11. ✓ המקום ברוך **BARUCH HA MAKOM**

"*Blessed be the Place* (a euphemism for G0d Who is the Place of the World, i.e.: Omnipresent)" This is the introduction to the 4 children. "Baruch" is mentioned 4 times like the cups and children.

☆ **This phrase is considered to be the substitute for a blessing for reading the Haggadah.** It is interesting inasmuch as telling the story of the *Haggadah* is a commandment of the Torah, that there is no blessing for this mitzvah! Maybe you can make one up and discuss whether it is or is not appropriate to say it.

12. ✓ **THE FOUR "SONS" (CHILDREN, ADULTS, DESCENDANTS)**

There are four questions/answers in the Torah concerning Passover (Exodus 12:26; 13:8 (answer only); 13:14; and Deuteronomy 6:20). This is why the Haggadah asks Four Questions in *Mah Nishtanah*, and why, here, it puts four questions into four different relationships with the ancestral tradition.

Many old translations use the word "sons," as the tradition overlooked our daughters as Torah scholars. However, even the Talmud recognized that as all of us, adult and child, male and female were redeemed together, it is obligatory for all of us to celebrate our redemption. Additionally, many commentaries (especially the artistic renderings of this section) depict the "sons" as adults.

It is the intent of the text to relate these questions to the obligations of **parents** to teach their descendants the story of Passover (as Exodus 13:8 commands/describes, "You will/shall tell your "son" on that day, saying, 'Because of this G0d did for me when I went out of Egypt.'). Therefore, whether the "sons" in question are adult or yet children, the most important aspect is how they as *descendants* relate to their parents' story of liberation, and, secondarily, how they relate to their parents' Judaism.

These "four questioners" are also different ways each one of us goes about asking questions. **The way we ask the questions has an effect on the answers we receive:**

**Wise** This is my wise and positive side, able and willing to ask meaningful questions, and interested in learning more.

**Wicked/Rebellious** This is my negative side, as if to say: "Why should I care? Show me! I dare you!"

**Simple** Simply put, I ask you, "What is this about?"  
This is my naïve side, able to ask a question for the simple reason that I want to know, not that I want to fight.

**The One Who Cannot Ask** As if to say, "I cannot begin to understand this..."  
This is my clueless side, unable even to form a question, and/or unaware that I am permitted to question what is going on.

*The next page has a breakdown of all the questions and answers:*

**Question 1: From the Wise Child**  
**Deuteronomy 6:20** This is the last question in the Torah concerning Passover:  
20. And when your son asks you in time to come, saying, *What do the*

**testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, mean, which haShem our G0d has commanded you?**

**Answer 1**—The next to last law in the Mishnah concerning Passover (*Pesachim 10:8; 119b*) one may not conclude after the pesach sacrifice meal afikoman.<sup>11\*</sup>

*Significantly, the Haggadah does not use the answer to Deuteronomy 6:20:*

21. Then you shall say to your son, We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt; and haShem brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; 22. And haShem showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes; 23. And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore to our fathers. 24. And haShem commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear haShem our G0d, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. 25. And it shall be accounted virtue in us, if we take care to do all these commandments before haShem our G0d, as he has commanded us.

*\* Many Haggadot find this answer, quoted from the Talmud, too difficult to explain to modern readers, so they will substitute something else, such as "Teach him all the laws, or all there is to know, about Passover."*

✧ **What would your answer be? To this child, and to all of them?!**

### Question 2: From the Wicked Child

**Ex. 12:26** When your children ask you, "**What do you mean by this service?**"

**Answer 2**—Ex. 13:8: Tell your son on that day, saying, This is done because of that which haShem did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.

*Significantly, the Haggadah does not use the answer to Exodus 12:26, which is:*

*27. Say, "It is the sacrifice of haShem’s Passover, Wh0 passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians, and saved our houses."*

### Question 3: From the Simple Child

**Ex. 13:14** "When your son asks you in the future, "**What is this?**"

**Answer 3**—**Ex. 13:14** (The only question and answer pair from the Torah that are joined together): "Say to him, By strength of hand haShem brought us out from Egypt, from the house of slavery."

### Question 4: From the One "Who Does Not Know (How/What/Why) To Ask"

**Answer 4**—**Ex. 13:8** Tell your son on that day, saying, This is done because of that which haShem did for me when I came forth out of Egypt. (the same answer as to the wicked child!). This answer is not in response to a question, here or in the Torah.

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<sup>11</sup> Meaning that " One may not conclude after the last unleavened bread is eaten by saying, ‘Now to the entertainment!’" (See ☞ Commentary Section # 30, page 54)



☆ *Here are some things to discuss:*

☆ a) Except for the first answer, the answers to the children and the questions are quotes from the Torah. Look them up and see their context. Do they in any real way have anything to do with the "children" the *Haggadah* uses them to describe? How are they taken out of context? Why do you think the perfectly good answer to Exodus 12:26, in 12: 27, was not used in the *Haggadah*?

☆ b) What is the relation of "questioning" to liberation?

☆ c) Figure out why the *Haggadah* gives the same answer to the wicked and to the "one who knows not how to ask." This answer is usually translated, as almost all Torah future tense verbs are translated, as a commandment ("You *shall* tell."). It can also be translated as a simple future ("You *will* tell," i.e.: a prediction). How do you hear the verb: as a command or as a prediction? Do you hear it differently when spoken in the context of a "wicked" child vs a child who cannot ask?

☆ d) Is the wicked child really wicked, or does he/she just need some understanding?

☆ e) What is the difference between the wise and wicked child's question, inasmuch as they both say "to you?"

☆ f) How does quoting the *next to last law* concerning Passover in the Mishnah (the first reformulation of the Bible into a legal discourse, from about the year 200 CE., which became the precursor of the Talmud) answer the wise child? Why not the *last law*? Is it the content, or the placing, of the second to last law that is the reason for this?

**Note:** *The second to last law* in the Mishnah on Passover uses the word *Afikoman*. Many translations obscure this fact by translating the sense of the word instead of the word itself. The literal translation should be, "Do not close (your Seder) with an Afikoman (after-dinner carousal) after eating the Passover sacrifice." (See also *Tzafun*, hiding the Afikoman, ☞ Commentary Section #30, page 54) It then continues: "If some fell asleep during the meal they may eat again (from the Passover sacrifice), but if all fell asleep they may not eat again. Rabbi Yossi says that if they napped they may eat again, but if they slept heavily they may not."

*The last law* is: "After midnight the Passover sacrifice impurifies the hands . . . and if one has said a blessing for eating the Passover lamb sacrificial meat, one need not say an additional one for any other sacrificial animal meat one also ate. Rabbi Yishmael says you can't say a second blessing if you've already said the one, but Rabbi Akiba says you may say a blessing for both."

☆ g) *Wise, wicked, simple, cannot ask. These are just four characteristics. What characteristics would you add for a fifth child, a sixth, etc.* How about renaming *all* the children and looking at their motivations differently (e.g.: what is the difference between the names of the *Haggadah*'s four children and the names of Disney's seven dwarfs?)

☆ h) Try looking at the children as if they are not part of the same generation, but the child of each preceding child (i.e.: the wicked is the child of the wise, etc.). How does that change the meaning?

☆ i) Imagine the four children as not different children, but as different aspects of each one of us.

☆ j) How else can you link the children into a progression to tell a story?

☆ k) This is one of the places where *Haggadah* artists tell a story/make a

commentary by the illustrations they draw. Look at several *Haggadot* and interpret the visual statements the artists are making.

☞ 1) **A good game for children** and adults is to draw their own images of the four children and for others to discuss what they drew.

### 13. יָחוֹל *YACHOL*

"*One Might Think*" This is a reminder that the story of the Passover should be told on the night of Passover (15 Nissan), and not on the First of Nissan, for in Exodus 12:2 G0d declares Nissan to be the New Year for Jews. Somebody asked this once, and now it's in the *Haggadah*. It is fairly arcane logic applied to a mostly irrelevant question, and is, thus, frequently passed over.

### 14. מִתְחִילָה *MIT'CHILAH*

"*Originally*" our ancestors worshipped idols, says Joshua, Moses' attendant and military leader. This is a good time to discuss how far we've come as Jews, both ideologically and geographically. Where did our grandparents and parents come from? Did any of them make an Exodus lately? So many Jews have moved over the last century that this is usually an interesting tale.

Reminding ourselves that we Jews were also originally idol-worshippers is one way to remind ourselves that we are kin of all the world, no matter what they worship.

On the other hand, this fact served our ancestral rabbis for a reason to justify our subsequent slavery in Egypt. Not just as punishment, but because to the prophets of the Bible, worship of idols was the worst slavery there was: slavery of the mind.

✧ This is a quote from the book of Joshua (24:2-4). What were the authors of the *Haggadah* trying to say by starting the telling of the Exodus story in the mouth of the leader of the Conquest of the Land of Canaan?

✧ One answer to the above question sees the Egyptian Bondage as punishment for having been idolators at one time. Some see slavery to Egyptians as a symbol of slavery to the idols the Egyptians worshipped (i.e.: that idolatry is a mental form of slavery). By putting the statement of the sin (idolatry) in the mouth of Joshua (who led us into the land), the *Haggadah* emphasizes that the Egyptian Bondage fully expiated the sin. Or is it the other way around?

✧ By starting with Joshua, the *Haggadah* begins at the end (the Entry into Canaan) of the Exodus. But what Joshua is mentioning is that Avraham's father and ancestors were idolators. So, the story of the Exodus begins at the end, then goes back to *before the beginning!* What is the purpose of such non-chronological story-telling?

✧ There is no festival in the Jewish calendar for the entry into the land of Canaan. However, it happened five days before Passover (See Joshua 4:19), on the 10th of Nissan ("the first month," as it becomes in Exodus 12:2). The entry into Canaan and the circumcising of the males so that they could celebrate Passover becomes the Haftarah for Passover morning (Joshua 5:2-6:1,27). This text also mentions that the manna ceased to fall on the second day of Passover, and from that day on they only ate "produce of the land." But on that Passover, they ate both *Matzah* and manna (Joshua 5:10-12)!

With all this in mind, does Passover take the place of an "Entry Into Canaan" (*Eisodus*) Festival?

✧ Is the Exodus more important than the subsequent Eisodus? Or was it impossible to introduce another major Festival five days before Passover? (Note: Yom Kippur is five days before Sukkot, and building a Sukkah is also a lot of work).

✧ What would the *Seder* have been like for Joshua and his contemporaries, knowing the Exodus was over, eating *Matzah* and mannah at the same time? What stories would you tell had you been there?

15. ✓ הַבְּטָחוּ שׁוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ **BARUCH SHOMER HAVTACHO**

***"Blessed is the One Who keeps the promise made to Israel, who set the end of the exile when mentioning it to Avram (Genesis 15:8-18).***

✧ The *Haggadah* asks Jews to thank G0d for ending the exile on schedule, as promised. It never asks Jews to consider that it was G0d Who ordained that there should be an Egyptian Bondage to begin with. Discussing this opens up a large can of worms.

✧ "**400 years?**" Because the lifespans of known Hebrews in Egypt never add up to 400 years,<sup>12</sup> our ancestors looked for another calculation of the length of time Israel was in Egypt. Traditionally they arrived at **210** years. How did the rabbi's calculate the 210 years, and how does it relate to the two other mentions in the Torah of 400 years and 430 years?

Exodus 12:40 mentions the length of time as **430 years**. This is understood by traditional commentators to mean that the "Egyptian Bondage" started from the birth of Isaac, and ended 400 years later. The extra thirty years they harmonize as being from the day that G0d revealed this to Avram at the "Covenant Between the Parts," in Genesis 15:13, when Avram was 70, to the day Isaac was born, thirty years later, when Avraham (as he became called) was 100 (Genesis 21:5).

How did tradition decide that the thirty years difference between 400 and 430 was the amount of time between the "Covenant Between the Parts" (Genesis 15) and the birth of Isaac? Avram was 75 years old when he came to Canaan (Genesis 12:4), and, according to *Seder Olam*, a second century CE book that dates events since creation, Avram received the vision in Genesis 15, five years before he arrived in Canaan.

We also know that Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born (Genesis 25:26). Let's add to that that Jacob was 130 when he went down to Egypt (Genesis 47:9). Add the age that Isaac fathered Jacob (60) to the age Jacob was when he entered Egypt (130), and subtract that total (190) from the 400 years seen as the length of time from Isaac' birth to the Exodus, and you get 210 years.

One last symbolic issue about the time spent in Egypt. We know that Moses was 80 years old at the time of the Ten Plagues (Exodus 7:7). That would mean, if we accept the figure of 210 years as the length of time that all Israel was in Egypt, that Moses was born 130 years after Jacob arrived at the age of 130 years. This might, in itself, be the most convincing reason to accept this date.

✧ Last, when G0d decided that a redeemer (Moses) should be born, it took 81+ years (Moses' age at the Ten Plagues plus the nine or so months of pregnancy of his

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<sup>12</sup> Levi lived for a total of 137 years, most of which were in Canaan (Exodus 6:16). His son, K'hoth, lived for 133 years (6:18), and his son, Amram, Moses' father, lived for 137 years (6:20). Moses was 80 at the end of the Egyptian bondage, so we have a maximum of 80+137+133=278 years, plus whatever part of Levi's life was lived in Egypt.

mother, plus the time it took for all the Ten Plagues to happen) for G0d's freeing of Israel to occur. What do you think about that?

✧ Why does the Haggadah use the number 400 if it is really 210, or 430? Is there something symbolic about 400?

✧ **For "Wise Children" Only:** If you have a *Seder* full of people who love to study the Torah, and who have a lot of time on their hands, or you want to reorganize what you are doing and spend more time this year on the precursor to the Egyptian Bondage than on the story of the Redemption from it, then look at the text of Genesis 15, called the "Covenant Between the Parts," because G0d covenants with Avram between the halves of animals.

Three animals are halved, representing the three generations to be enslaved in Egypt (represented by Levi, Kohath, and Amram—see Exodus 6:16-28 for the genealogy of the Levites, Moses' familial tribe). The two unhalved birds symbolize the twin leadership of Moses and Aaron (or, possibly, of Moses/Aaron and Miriam) who brought the fourth generation out of Egypt. And endless discussion can revolve around why those three halved mammals were selected, and what they might represent.

Ask your guests what the meaning of Avram being put into deep sleep could mean, why the detail of him chasing the "bird of prey."

#### 16. ✓ שְׁעֵמֶדָה וְיִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ 'HI SHE'AMDA

*"It is this promise that sustained us . . . For not just one tried to annihilate us, but in every generation some have risen up to annihilate us, but the Holy One saves us from their hands."*

**Raise the Cups (but do not drink) in a toast** to G0d 's promise and protection.

✧ Recall all the evils that have befallen us and other peoples, and memorialize all victims of genocide.

☞ Almost as if it were the Ten Plagues section (See ☞ Commentary Section #18, page 46), go around the table and mention historical and current genocidal catastrophes and those who tried to carry them out on Jews, or others, and deduct some of the joy from our Cups of Redemption by dipping the wine out with our fingers. This will deepen the appreciation for doing the similar ritual at the Ten Plagues section of the *Seder*, but it can also be confusing. For there we are lessening our joy because of the pain the plagues caused our oppressors, the Egyptians.

✧ Can we ever feel the same way about the travail common Germans of the *Shoah* era went through during World War II, as we do for the ancient Egyptians?

✧ Do we still harbor grudges against the ancient and currently non-existent Babylonians, Assyrians, or Romans, for slaughtering and exiling us?


✧ Do we feel anger toward modern day Italians (descendants of the Romans), or Spanish or Portuguese (who expelled Jews from their countries) or Ukrainians (for the massacres of Jews initiated by their independence leader, Chmielnicki, in 1648).

✧ How does the *Seder* story speak to us in the post-*Shoah* generation?

✧ Do we believe that "the Holy One saves us from their hands" as the *Haggadah* says? If not, then what does?

#### 17. ✓ THE DRASH (INTERPRETATION) OF THE PASSOVER STORY

The traditional *Haggadah* has its retelling of the Exodus in the form of a “**running commentary**” (that is, each comment runs along, or follows, the order of the text it is explaining) on four verses: **Deuteronomy 26:5-8**. These verses in context are the ritual of what a farmer would say while giving the "first crops offering." to the Priest (*Kohen*) in the days when the Temple stood.

The connection to Passover is twofold: First, the beginning of the season of offering the "omer" (about a bushel) of first fruits was in Passover (See  Commentary Section #39, page 59). Second, her/his produce was evidence of the reality of the Exodus, of having been brought from Egyptian slavery to the freedom of the Promised Land. Just as with the fifth "bringing-in" verb in the promise of redemption that yielded the tradition of Elijah's cup, there is a fifth verse in this ritual formula that says, "And so I bring my first fruits to you." But we do not comment on that verse in the *Haggadah*, as it is about the Exodus, not the Eisodus (the entry into the Land.)

***Here are the verses of the First Fruits Ceremony:***

*Deut 26:1. When you come in to the land which haShem your G0d gives you for an inheritance, and possess it, and live in it; 2. Take of the first of all the fruit of the earth from your land which haShem your G0d gives you. Put it in a basket, and go to the (Temple). 3. Go to the priest who shall be in those days, and say to him, "I declare this day to haShem your G0d, that I have come to the country which haShem swore to our fathers to give us."*

*4. The priest will take the basket from your hand, and set it down before the altar of haShem your G0d. 5. Then you say before haShem your G0d,*

*"A wandering Aramean was my father,  
and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few,  
and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous.*

*6. The Egyptians dealt ill with us, afflicted us, and laid upon us hard slavery;*

*7. And when we cried to haShem, the G0d of our ancestors, haShem heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression;*

*8. And haShem brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great awesomeness, and with signs, and with wonders;*

*9. And brought us to this place, and has given us this land, a land that flows with milk and honey. 10. So now, see, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which you, haShem, have given me."*

*Set (the basket) down before haShem your G0d, and worship haShem your G0d; 11. and rejoice in every good thing which haShem your G0d has given you, to your household, the Levite, and the stranger who is among you.*

**In a running commentary each verse is read, then questions are raised and answered about issues prompted by the use of words in the verses.** As is customary in Jewish running commentary from the first century, the questions that are to be answered are not stated: only the answer is given, and the question it is answering must be inferred from the answer itself. **To appreciate what is going on, ask yourself what the question is that the commentators are asking.**


✧ The rest of the paragraphs discuss the verses word by word. Example: And he went down into Egypt: compelled by the word of G0d. Question: Why *did* Jacob leave Canaan?

✧ Sometimes seemingly off-the-wall verses are brought as "proof" (proof texts)


for some of these answers. How do they apply? What are the authors of the commentary really getting at?

✧ One way to approach this section is to ask what question the commentary is asking. Then see if anyone can come up with a better answer. Or find a question the *Haggadah* does not ask that interests you.


**Why are the chapters from *Exodus* that detail the whole story not read?** Two reasons. First, the Deuteronomy section is *four* verses, like all the other groupings of four in the *Haggadah*. Second, just as we remember the Exodus, the Deuteronomy verses show the Exodus *remembered* in the Torah, while the Exodus chapters recount the Exodus *experienced*. Some *Haggadot*, however, read the Exodus chapters in abbreviation, because running commentary is a literary form unfamiliar to most modern Jews. It focuses on the story itself. Classical *Haggadot* focus on the *lessons* of the story .


✧ **Notice that Moses is mentioned only once in the *Haggadah*, and it is not in the retelling of the Exodus.** (See  *Commentary Section #18C, page 47*) Were the rabbis angry at Moses, or did they just want to put the redemption squarely in Divine hands, and not in human hands? Why would they want to discourage human political action? Or did they? Remember, the *Haggadah* was written during the time after the Temple was destroyed, and Christians were saying that only a Redeemer like Jesus could save the Jewish people.

### Instead of interpreting the verses from Deuteronomy . . .

 **Some Seders ask guests to recount the Exodus story in their own words,** omitting most of this section. One fun game, especially for second night *Seders*, is to ask one guest to start the story, and then, anywhere he/she wants, to stop-mid sentence if he/she so chooses- and hand the story over to the next guest to continue. This can be both instructive and hilarious if you have guests who feel free enough with each other to extemporize. Usually Charlton Heston gets brought into it!

#### *For "Wise Children" Only:*

 **Some Seders read and discuss selections from the story of the Exodus in the book of Exodus,** or the other Biblical accounts of Passover.

 There is another "Story of Passover" in the Bible. It is in the *Song of Songs*. Our ancestor-rabbis, especially Rabbi Akiva, saw the Song of Songs as an allegory of the love between G0d and Israel (you can figure out who is the male and who the female, and what that means to the men and women of our people. But that is another story!)


In addition to the love-story, they saw **the *Song of Songs* as an allegory to the Exodus.** That is why it is read in synagogues following the Torah reading on the Sabbath during Passover.

Here are the three best examples:

1:3 "Draw me after You and we will run . . . ;

2:8-13, which ends, "Arise and go away, my lover, my beauty: flee away!"

and 3:6-8 and 8:5, "Who is this (fem.) coming up out of the wilderness . . . ?"

 If you are of a mind, try to find other cryptic references to the Exodus.

The commentary is introduced by the phrase **יֵצֵא וְלָמַד TZE ULMAD—GO OUT AND LEARN.** The discussion of the Exodus begins with the exhortation to "go out" and learn, as if the Exodus, the "going out" of Egypt, was a lesson in learning!

This is where most modern, liberal, and themed Haggadot differ from the traditional text, with various ways to tell the story of the Exodus.

“My father was a wandering Aramean” can also be translated “An Aramean tried to cause my father to perish.” If Jacob’s father-in-law, Laban the Aramean, had killed Jacob (*one* interpretation of the story in Genesis 31), then he would have killed *all* the Jews (i.e.: Jacob, the *only* one), which was worse than what Pharaoh accomplished.

✧ This situation of Jacob in Aram was, in itself, a bondage to Laban. And in the end, Jacob, having come to Laban a fugitive from his brother Esau, had to work hard for twenty years (see Genesis 29:18,20,27; 31:41), but left Aram with four wives, eleven sons and a daughter (Gen. 29:16-30:43), and many herds (Gen. 32:14-15). This presages the Egyptian Bondage, and the way the Israelites left Egypt wealthy. Discuss.

✧ **For “Wise Children” Only:** There is another story in Genesis which presages the Egyptian Bondage. It is Chapter 12:10-13:1. Read. Discuss among yourselves. What does Sarah’s captivity symbolize? What measure-for-measure plagues do you think G0d unleashed upon Pharaoh that made him come to understand that Sarah was married?

### 18. ✓ **THE PLAGUES**

The Plagues story is the climax of the *Drash* on Deuteronomy 26:5-8. It begins with a typical Talmudic interpretation of singular and plural words in the text of verse 8, which allows the interpreter to specify the *strong hand, outstretched arm, great awe, signs, &wonders*:

#### 18A. דָּבָר אֲחֵר **DAVAR ACHER**

*“Another Interpretation” of strong hand, outstretched arm, great awe, signs, &wonders:*

It is a very Jewish thing that “alternate interpretations” are mentioned in the Talmud. They are all “true”, for they all bring new insights. Feel free to encourage this in your guests. The key to this paragraph is that each single word can be assumed to stand for one plague. Hence “strong hand,” being two words, denotes two plagues. And so for “outstretched arm,” and “great awe.” You may think it is cheating to leave out the words with, and, an, etc, but these are not separate words in Hebrew. Rather, they are prefixes.

The bigger leap of interpretation comes when “signs” is interpreted as two plagues. You should know that all unspecified plurals in the Torah are assumed to be “two”, the minimum plural. Therefore both “signs” and “&wonders” equal two plagues each.

The total is thus 2 words + 2 words + 2 words + plural + plural = 10 plagues.

#### 18B. ✓ **RECITING THE TEN PLAGUES AND DIPPING THE WINE**

Dip your finger in the wine each time you read the name of a plague, and put the finger drops on your *plate*. Do this also each time you say one of the acronyms formed by the first Hebrew letter of each plague: **D'TzaCh, ADash, B'ACHaB**. (Some also dip when “blood, fire, and pillars of smoke” (Joel 3:3) is said introducing the plagues).

✧ This makes a total of 13, or of sixteen dips. Can you make an interpretation of the symbolism of these numbers? (Hint: 13 is the number we sing up to in Echad Mi Yodea. See 📖 Commentary Section #40, page 60).

🔍 Some dip two times: once for the names of the Plagues in Hebrew, and once again in English. This makes twenty times. If you also dip the three times for the quote from Joel and three for the acronym, it makes 26, which is the numerical value of YHWH

(G0d 's Name).

This symbolically lessens the joy (the wine is a symbol of joy) in our "Cup of Redemption" by lessening the amount of wine. (Nonetheless we may continue to drink and refill our cups.)

The Ten Plagues, as they occur in the text of Exodus, are:

❶	- <i>Dahm</i>	Blood,	7:14-25
❷	- <i>Tzfarde'a</i>	Frogs	7:26-8:11
❸	- <i>Kinnim</i>	Lice	8:12-15
❹	- <i>'Arov</i>	Biting Flies	8:16-28
❺	- <i>Dever</i>	Cattle Disease	9:1-7
❻	- <i>Sh'chin</i>	Boils	9:8-12
❼	- <i>Barad</i>	Hail	9:13-35
❽	- <i>Arbeh</i>	Locusts	10:1-20;
❾	- <i>Hoshech</i>	Darkness	10:21-29
❿	- <i>Makat B'chorot</i>	Smiting the Firstborn	11:1-13:16

☆ **For "Wise Children" Only:**

In Psalm 78, there are three plagues missing. They are also the three plagues which happened without a warning to Pharaoh. Put them together, in reverse order, and they make a magic box which spells out their names across and down. They are:

Lice	Boils	Darkness	
כ	ש	ח	<b>#9:</b> Darkness/ChosheKh חשכ
נ	ח	ש	<b>#6:</b> Boils/Sh'ChiN שכנ
ם	נ	כ	<b>#3:</b> Lice/KiNiM כנם

☆ The second cup will be called "the Cup of Redemption," and we are saddened that our liberation had to happen by means of the death of our oppressors. Must liberation always be accompanied by death? It is good to dwell on this point.

☆ This is one of the places where *Haggadah* artists tell a story/make a commentary by the illustrations they draw. Look at several *Haggadot* and interpret the visual statements the artists are making.

☞ **A good game for children** and adults is to draw their own images of the plagues and for others to discuss what they drew.

**18C. THE TEN PLAGUES MULTIPLIED**



This section is a fanciful exposition of one-upmanship among the rabbis. In order to glorify G0d 's liberation, the Reed Sea experience is compared to the plagues. If the ten plagues were, as the Egyptian magicians said, "The finger of G0d " (Ex 8:15), and at the Reed Sea G0d 's *hand* of, it is assumed, five Divine fingers, was displayed (Ex 14:31), then multiply and get 50 (5 fingers times ten plagues).

The second and third paragraphs of this section interpret another place in the Bible, Psalm 78, where the plagues are mentioned (but only *seven* of them.). Rabbi Eliezer says that "blazing anger" (PS 78:49) is another way of saying "a plague." Each was therefore displayed in four ways, the four words that follow blazing anger in the Psalm. Thus each plague in Egypt was *four* times as severe as you thought. Therefore the Reed Sea experience was equal to 200 plagues ( $4 \times 5 \times 10 = 200$ ).

Rabbi Akiba interprets "blazing anger" not as the word "plague" itself, but just another one of the ways it was displayed, equivalent to the other words in the list. So now each plague in Egypt was *five* times as severe as you thought. Therefore the Reed Sea experience was equal to 250 plagues ( $5 \times 5 \times 10 = 250$ ).

The last little trick is to add up the first initials of the plagues (Hebrew letters are also numbers). They are: ך (4) + ז (90) + ך (20) + ך (70) + ך (4) + ך (300) + ך (2) + ך (1) + ך (8) + ך (2) = 501. The three preceding paragraphs add up to 500 ( $50 + 200 + 250$ ). The discrepancy is "one"—the finger of G0d itself.

☞ Another trick is to discount the whole enterprise by quoting Exodus 9:3, where the *plagues* are referred to the "hand" of G0d , and not just the finger. As these rabbis certainly knew this verse too, why did they go to such great lengths to weave a tale that could be so easily disproved?

☆ In the traditional *Haggadah*, **this is the only selection where Moses is mentioned:** in the verse "And Israel saw the great hand which haShem laid upon the Egyptians . . . and they believed in haShem and in His servant Moses." Is putting Moses here a putdown of his role in the Exodus, or an aggrandizement? After all, he is not mentioned anywhere else, but he is mentioned here in which the miraculousness of each plague is magnified as many as twenty-five times.

☆ **For "Wise Children" Only:** Psalm 78:42-51<sup>13</sup> mentions seven plagues, and Psalm 105:23-38<sup>14</sup> mentions eight. In both these Psalms the plagues are in a different order, and both are in a different order from those in Exodus. Can you figure out a rationale for this?

### 19. ✓ יְיָ יָחַד *DAYENU* — "It's Sufficient for Us"

*Dayenu* is the song which thanks G0d for each step on the way from the Exodus (which was initiated by a Passover sacrifice done in each house) to the Building of the Temple (where the Passover sacrifice could have a permanent home).

*Dayenu* is introduced by "How many favors (literally *ma'alot*, "ascents") has G0d done for us." This line, plus the 14 verses of *dayenu*, equal 15.

#### **Here is the Full Traditional Text of Dayenu**

- 1 How many good things did G0d do for us?
- 2 Had G0d brought us out of Egypt

---

<sup>13</sup> Blood, *Arov*, Frogs, Locusts, Hail, Cattle Disease, and First-Born (#s 1,4,2,8,7,5, and 10 in *Exodus*).

<sup>14</sup> Darkness, Blood, Frogs, *Arov*, Lice, Hail, Locusts, and First-Born (#s 9,1,2,4,3,7,8, and 10 in *Exodus*).

but not executed judgment against (the Egyptians)

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

3 Had G0d executed judgment against them

but not upon their G0ds

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

4 Had G0d executed judgment against their G0ds

but not slain their first born

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

5 Had G0d slain their first born

but not given us their wealth

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

6 Had G0d given us their wealth

but not split the sea

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

7 Had G0d split the sea

but not led us through on dry land

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

8 Had G0d led us through on dry land

but not drowned our oppressors

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

9 Had G0d drowned our oppressors

but not provided for our needs in the desert

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

10 Had G0d provided for our needs in the desert

but not fed us manna

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

11 Had G0d fed us with manna

and not given us the Sabbath,

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

12 Had G0d given us the Sabbath

and not led us to Mount Sinai,

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

13 Had G0d led us to Mount Sinai

and not given us the Torah,

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

14 Had G0d given us the Torah

and not led us into the Land of Israel,

*Dayenu!*— —it would have been enough

15 Had G0d led us into the Land of Israel

and not built for us the Temple,

*Dayenu!*—it would have been enough

**Fourteen as a symbol:** The fourteen verses themselves refer to the "outstretched arm" with which G0d brought us out of Egypt. "Arm" in Hebrew is  $\text{זר}$ , which is also the exact number 14.

**Fifteen as a symbol:** Including the introductory line: How many good things did G0d do for us? There are fifteen lines in *Dayenu*.

15 is  $\text{טו}$  (yud-hey) in Hebrew—a name of G0d, like in hallelu-yah.

There were 15 steps (*ma'alot*) to Solomon's Temple

15 Psalms of Ascents in the Bible (Psalms 120—134) sung by Pilgrims ascending to the Temple on the Festivals of Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot.

There were 15 generations from Avraham to Solomon, who built the Temple (see First Chronicles 1:28, 34; 2:1-15).

And there are 15 parts of the *Seder* (see the introduction to the Seder, page 24). Therefore, the whole of the *Seder* equates to the verses of *Dayenu*, both teaching the longing for rebuilding the Temple. This longing is explicitly expressed in the song Adir Hu, which concludes the *Seder* (See  $\text{ז}$  Commentary Section #40, page 60).

$\text{ז}$  An activity: here is a good time for every one assembled to answer, "*Dayenu!*" What would or would not be sufficient for us as people? As Jews? How much of the Exodus would have been enough for you? How much of any revolution is enough?

$\text{ז}$  By this time in the *Seder* many may already be saying *Dayenu!* Enough of the *Seder*. If this is also true for you, let them know that they are very near dinner! If your guests threaten to mutiny, tell them that you could lead a long discussion on what they wish to cut for next year, but right now you're so close that you'd like to finish.

**20. ✓ THE BIG THREE SYMBOLS:  
PESACH—Z'RO'A, MATZAH, MAROR**

**20A. ✓ RABBAN GAMLIEL SAYS**

He says you have to look at and talk about the Biblically-commanded symbols specially. So we do!

**20B. ✓  $\text{זר}$  PESACH/Z'RO'A: THE ARM OF THE PASSOVER SACRIFICE**

**It is not raised or pointed at to show that this is *not* a sacrifice.**

$\text{ז}$  **We don't do sacrifices anymore without the Temple.** This is a good time to discuss the concept of sacrifices (who wants them back?) and communal festive meals (how they owe their origin to shared sacrificial meals.)

***Symbolic Innovations***

❶ Actually, many S'fardic Jews and others purposefully eat lamb on Passover as a reminder of the sacrifices. They are not confused by their menu. And if someone *asks* them why they are eating lamb, well, isn't answering questions the whole point?

❷ Some Jews show that this is not a sacrifice by substituting a chicken neck (why a neck? why not a foot?) for the lamb shank.

❸ Others use a beet (red, like the blood of the sacrifice) or a picture of a bone to symbolize the lamb and to distinguish that this is not a sacrifice. These last things are

good for **vegetarians** to use. Other vegetarians use a mixture of *Matzah* meal and olive oil, as these two items, mixed together, were offered alongside each animal sacrifice, and thus are very appropriate to symbolize the sacrifice.

✧ **Why an arm (shank)?** "For with an outstretched hand and a mighty *arm* did G0d bring us out of Egypt." But, most of the time, we use a cut-off arm (shank) bone. Is this an insult to G0d 's saving power? Should we use a full arm bone, nothing less? Or does the very fact that the arm on the plate is the arm of a *slaughtered* lamb insult G0d 's power? This question can perplex endless *Seders*.

☞ **Bone Games**

❶ Try and find other places the sacrificial lamb has been hidden in vegetarian options throughout the *Seder* by our inventive ancestors. Where is it? In the Afikoman (the piece of *Matzah* that substitutes for eating the lamb offering) and the haroset on the Hillel sandwich (See ☞ Commentary Section #28, page 54).

❷ "I have a Bone to Pick with You." What if our ancestors had chosen a different bone than the arm bone. What symbolism would you find in other bones? (E.g.: ankle, hip, skull, hoof, rib, etc.?)

20C. ✓ מצה MATZAH

*Point to it.* The reason given for eating the matzah—i.e., that we had not enough time to let the bread rise naturally—**only applied to the last 6 days of Passover, while we were running.** The reason we ate it the night of the tenth plague (the very first Seder) was because G0d *commanded* us to eat it, the Paschal lamb, and the *maror* (Ex 12:8) together.

✧ So, you might ask those assembled with you, why does the text emphasize *this* reason? And, furthermore, by emphasizing this one reason in the *Haggadah*, this becomes the one reason 99% of Jews will remember.

20D. ✓ מרור MAROR

*Point to it.* Any bitter vegetable is permissible - horseradish, ginger, lettuce root, etc. Try something different each year.

21. ✓✓✓ דור ודור בכל B'CHOL DOR VADOR

**"In Every Generation" we are personally commanded to tell the Exodus story in the first person. This is the central mitzvah of the Haggadah!!! ✓✓✓**

✧ How did *I personally* leave an Egypt this year? ("Egypt" *Mitzrayim* in Hebrew means narrow straits - or troubles—related to the word, "*Tzooris*" in Yiddish). And, if my ancestors hadn't left Egypt, I wouldn't exist—so I personally left Egypt *with them*. This is the theme and the moral and the punch line of the *Haggadah*!

✧ What if my ancestors were not Jews, but I, by choice, am? This is a good time to emphasize that an "mixed multitude"—*erevra* or *asafsuf* in Hebrew—also left Egypt with the Israelites. How can we, as Jews by birth and by choice, continue to enable all who yearn for freedom to leave?

☞ This prayer is traditionally written in the masculine, like the "Four Sons."

בְּכֹל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לְרַאֲוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ  
כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם

*B'chól dor vadór chayyáv adám lir'ót et atzmó k'eélu hu yatzá miMitzráyyim.*

In every generation *a man* is obligated to see *himself* as if *he* left Egypt.

Debbie Friedman recorded an inclusive version of this prayer which can be sung to the traditional melodies as well as to her own beautiful melody:

בְּכֹל דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיִּיבִים אָנוּ לְרִאֲוֹת אֶת עַצְמָנוּ  
כְּאֵלּוּ יָצָאנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם

*B'chól dor vadór chayyaveém ánu lir'ót et atzmeínu k'eélu yatzánu miMitzráyyim.*

In every generation *we* are obligated to see *ourselves* as if *we* left Egypt.

☞ One of the ways you can make the whole seder more meaningful, especially for children, is to personalize each Haggadah by gluing a picture of each participant to the front of it under a copy of this prayer (or you can make placecards with these pictures and the quotes). In this way, you emphasize that "In every generation *we* are obligated to see *ourselves* as if *we* left Egypt."

☞ The "Moss Haggadah" has little mirrored circles on the page with this prayer so you can see yourself. Try handing out little mirrors and see what effect that has. This would really be a "Mah Nishtanah," as everyone who comes to your seder will remember having held a mirror up as being very "different."

## 22. ✓ לְפִיכָח L'FICHACH

Since we did leave Egypt, "**Therefore**" *we are bound to thank, praise, laud, glorify, extol, honour, bless, exalt, and reverence G0d...* " **We raise cups in toast to G0d** and praise for 5 transitions—one for each of the "fingers" of G0d 's hand that liberated us from Egypt, one for each of the books of the Torah that we received during the Exodus:

slavery to freedom  
sorrow to joy  
mourning to festivities  
darkness to great light  
servitude to redemption

## 23. הַלֵּל THE HALLEL (PSALMS 113 –114)

The Hallel Psalms are sung during morning services on Sukkot, Chanukah, and each new month. Only on Pesach is it also said in the evening. These are victory Psalms, and the connection to Passover is evident in the first lines of the second one,

✓ Psalm #114 ("*When Israel left Egypt, the House of Jacob from a jabbering people.*") is especially good to read or to sing (it has a great traditional melody!).

The **first 2 Psalms** (Ps 113 and 114) are said/sung now, because of the connection of "*When Israel left Egypt...*" to the story of the Exodus. The last 4 Psalms of the Hallel (115-8), and the Great Hallel (Psalm 136), are said/sung after dinner. It is there that they are called HALLEL, the 14<sup>th</sup> part of the Seder.

☞ Some who are unfamiliar with the Hallel choose to sing other songs of praise here, and others just want to get to the meal, especially if they have had a great (i.e.: long) discussion of some of the previous sections!

## 24. ✓ THE SECOND CUP (of Redemption/G'ulah)

This is introduced with a blessing that praises G0d for our redemption. It sums up the telling of the story of our liberation and concludes the *Maggid*.

## Preparing for Dinner

### 25. ✓ הַצֵּחַח *ROCHTZAH/RACHTZAH*<sup>15</sup>

The hands are washed a second time, this time with the blessing the Priests said when preparing their hands for the unleavened bread offering. **In order to connect the preparation of the hands with the offering of the bread (*matzah*) into one ritual action, we don't speak until we have blessed, and eaten matzah.**

### 26. ✓ מוֹצֵה / מוֹצֵי *MOTZI, MATZAH*

We make two blessings - one for eating bread, one specifically for fulfilling the commandment to eat *Matzah*. Eat *Matzot* from the *Seder* platter (but not the Afikoman).

It is traditional to hold the three matzot together for the blessing, and eat the top and bottom matzot. Why? The top and bottom matzot stand for the two loaves of bread for any Shabbat or Festival, and the middle matzah stands for the *Lachma Anya*, the "Bread of Affliction." The matzah we will now eat is the same as beginning a Shabbat or Festival meal with Challah. We hold the two *challot* together, say the haMotzi blessing, then eat from one or both of those loaves.

✧ *Mah Nishtanah? What is different* in the way we eat the Matzah? Answer: We don't have to salt it though we may, if we wish. The inaugural bite of bread at a meal is usually salted before eating it, to remember the sacrificial rites where all sacrifices were salted. Why bread? Because the command to salt sacrifices is mentioned in connection with the grain offering (Leviticus 2:13,14), and because most meals began with bread (think of restaurants, where this custom continues.). Bread thus stands for all we eat. One word in English that gets this across is "Meal," which denotes both ground grain and a full sitting down to eat. Salting non-holy foods is a rabbinic custom designed to turn everyone's tables into altars, as it were, and all our meals into shared experiences of the Divine (in Hebrew, the word sacrifice is "Korban," which means, literally, "drawing near:" coming close to G0d .)

We don't salt this ritual bite of Matzah because we are Biblically commanded (Exodus 12:8) to eat Matzah, and nothing but. Therefore, the rabbis decided not to adulterate the mitzvah of Matzah with their symbolic new salting ritual. This also allows us to truly experience the Matzah. Bite and chew slowly. Let the crispy, crunchy karma of it all roll around your mouth.

✧ *Motzi* (מוֹצֵי) and *Matzah* (מַצֵּחַח) sound very much alike, but are not etymologically connected.<sup>16</sup> Yet these two words are thematically connected here in the *Haggadah*, and an understanding of why the blessing of G0d for bread so differs from all other blessings can be gleaned from this juxtaposition.

Most other food blessings praise G0d as *Borei*: the Creator of something. But the blessing for bread praises G0d as *HaMotzi* lechem min ha-aretz, the One Who *brings out*

<sup>15</sup> The two ways to say this word stem from the two ways it is written in different Haggadot: הַצֵּחַח and הַצֵּחַח , *rochtzah*, with a kamatz katan, and *rachtzah*, with a patach. In the Torah (Exodus 40:30) the word is written with a kamatz katan. Therefore, I am putting the *Rochtzah* transliteration first.

<sup>16</sup> *Motzi* is the *hifil* (causative form) of the verb "to go out" (מוֹצֵי), while *matzah* may be from the root מוֹצֵה. Viewed this way they only share the letter tsadde צ in their root forms.

bread from the earth. Just as G0d brings bread out of the earth, so G0d used bread to bring out the Israelites from Egypt. Therefore each bite of bread we eat, from now on and forever, is, when we think of it, a reminder of the Exodus, and all of its lessons.

And carrying us forward from Exodus to Sinai, without matzah (Exodus) there would be no Revelation (Sinai), as it is said in the Mishnah *Pirkey Avot* (the Sayings of the Founding Fathers of Rabbinic Judaism) 3:17: "Where there is no flour (bread), there is no Torah; where there is no Torah there is no flour (bread)." That is, if there is no knowledge (Torah), who will know how to farm wheat or bake bread, and if there is no food, who will be able to study?

### 27. ✓ מָרוֹר *MAROR*

We have already said the blessing for food from the ground when we ate the Karpas so a second blessing is not necessary. Now we praise G0d for the commandment to eat Maror.

Dip the Maror in *Haroset* (which symbolizes the mud for the bricks we made in Egypt) to show that the bitterness of slavery turned into the sweetness of a unified Israelite people freed. Then eat it.

✧ *Innovative Judaism of the 1st century*: Where in the Torah are we commanded to use Haroset when we eat the Maror? Nowhere! Who says we can do these things, and tinker with time-hallowed traditions? The *Haggadah*, that's who.

✧ *Why add sweet to bitter?* Without evil can there be good? Without slavery can there be an appreciation of freedom? Without the Egyptina Bondage could there have been Pesach?

### 28. ✓ כֹּרֵךְ *KORECH/FOLD the Sandwich*

"Fold" the "Hillel sandwich." The text of Exodus 12:8 commands us to eat the Paschal lamb *al* maror, and *Matzah*. *Al* in Hebrew usually means "on", though it is usually translated as "along with" in this context. Rabbi Hillel in the first century CE took it literally, and commanded the eating of the lamb (here replaced by the haroset in which the Maror has been dipped) "on" the *Matzah* with Maror.

### 29. ✓ עֵרֵךְ שְׁלֵחַן *SHULCHAN ORECH ("Set the Table," or "Serve Dinner, Already!")*

"Set the table" for dinner. It is customary to eat hard-boiled eggs, symbolizing spring and eternity, first. They, like the Karpas, are dipped in salt water. (Egg, birth, waters, salty waters, tears: see the progression?)

Following this there is the traditional Ashkenazic *gefilte fish*. Perhaps these symbolize the Reed Sea fish who, like the mixed multitude, decided to also be liberated along with the Israelites, yet found they couldn't live in the desert. So the Israelites mixed up their multitude (i.e.: chopped them up) and ate them.

Seriously, *gefilte fish* are so prepared so as to mince their bones so that they can be eaten on Shabbat and Festival (when picking the bones out would be forbidden "work." It is "Sifting.")

### 30. ✓ צִפּוּן *TZAFUN (Hide and Find the Afikoman)*

**While people are eating, (better yet, before!☺) hide the Afikoman.** Before starting the service again after dinner, have the "kids" look for it. Once it is found, reward the finder. One may make the parable that we should all hunt for redemption just as hard

as the Afikoman was sought. In the same vein, we hope G0d , or at least other Jews, will seek us out if we are in distress with the same gusto we hunted for the Afikoman. (See ☞ Commentary Section #5, page 34).

It is customary to eat nothing after the Afikoman, but there is a blessing at the end of the Haggadah for having drunk the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> cups, and for anything you nibbled on after dinner. The *Afikoman* itself symbolizes the small bite of Passover lamb each person in the extended clan celebrating together would get to eat. But it has a deeper meaning.

It also refers back to the answer given to the wise child (See ☞ Commentary Section #12, page 38), that the Afikoman comes last *ayn maftirin achar haPesach Afikoman*: "Do not close (your *Seder*) with an **Afikoman** (after-dinner entertainment and carousing from house to house) after eating the Passover sacrifice.<sup>17</sup>"

"*Afikoman*" is Hebraized Greek for "*epikominos*—after dinner." It was a Greco-Roman custom to engage in philosophical dinner parties, in which, among other things, the participants would carouse from house to house to have various courses of the meal. The first-century rabbis who co-opted this term may have done so for two reasons.

❶ As discussed above, the *Seder* emulated the rich freeborn citizens of the Roman Empire. By calling this ceremony symbolizing the Passover sacrifice an "*Afikoman*," the rabbis allowed their people to live like the Roman overlords, while at the same time they flipped the meaning of the Greco-Roman *Afikoman* to mean a Passover philosophical discussion feast. This is, interestingly enough, the only meaning the term has today, for its original practitioners have long since disappeared into the dust of history. Only the Jewish meaning of *Afikoman* survives!

❷ Second, the integral part of the Greco-Roman *Afikoman* was the going from house to house. Obviously, with the association of the *Seder* to the events of the tenth plague going on outside all unprotected houses in Egypt, the rabbis wanted to switch that around as well and keep everyone indoors. Hence, the hunt for the Afikoman in the houses of the *Seder* celebrants replaced the going around the neighborhood.

✧ One can see additional meanings for this practice. It reflects an awareness of the centrifugal tendencies of the "Wicked Child." By looking around *indoors* for the *Afikoman*, the rabbis emphasized that one need not search around in the outside (read: "alien") world for meaning. One can find it inside, within one's own people, within one's own family, within one's own religion and ritual, if one looks hard enough and does not give up! Hence this is a most appropriate thing to remind the "Wise Child," the avid student.

***When someone has found the Afikoman:***

☞ **Bargaining:** Many families traditionally have the children who find the Afikoman extract some parental concession in a bargain as the price for returning it.

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<sup>17</sup> Talmud, Tractate *Pesachim* 10:8; 119b.





parent over a barrel. This can often be fun, and can often lead to strife. I have seen both.

✧ *The symbolism here is that a parent is in G0d 's stead, and the children are the children of Israel, attempting to coerce G0d , by withholding the Pesach sacrifice which the Afikoman represents, into alleviating the suffering of the people in Egypt and/or today. This is obviously problematical theologically, and engenders a lively debate.*

☞ **Prizes for one, for all:** Other families give a prize to the one(s) who discovers the Afikoman. Others also give prizes to the children, after recognizing the successful finder, in order that Pesach be a happy experience for all the children.

✧ *Theologically, this represents the boon that those of our people who discovered the worship of G0d brought to the entire people. Discuss.*

Once the Afikoman has been found and reacquired by the *Seder* leader, **distribute the Afikoman after dessert** as a last bite of dinner.

### 31. ✓ בָּרַךְ **BARECH: BIRKAT HAMAZON**

*The After-Meals Blessing that ends with ✓ THE THIRD CUP (of Blessing/Brachah)*

The blessing after meals derives from *Deuteronomy 8:10*, which is quoted in the blessing itself: "You will eat, be satisfied, and bless haShem your G0d ." This blessing is said or sung on any day after any meal at which bread has been eaten. On Passover it has special inserts for the festival, and for Shabbat if Passover falls on Shabbat.

The third cup of the four cups ends this blessing, because originally a cup of wine ended *every Birkat haMazon*. Thus its place here in the *Seder*.

Non-traditional *Haggadot* have abbreviated blessings, frequently arranged as responsive readings.

☞ One way some Jews abbreviate the traditional after-meal blessing is to ask each person to invent their own way to thank G0d (or, for the "theologically challenged," to be thankful) for one item of food they ate that night. This is one way to appreciate our freedom-from want, as well as from oppression.

### 32. שְׂפֹךְ חַמַּתְךָ **SH'FOCH HAMATCHA**

*"Pour out Your Wrath" and/or ✓ OPEN THE DOOR FOR ELIJAH*

**Many new Haggadot have "Elijah services". instead of the following traditional Bible verses.**

These verses (Psalms 79:6,7; 69:25; and Lamentations 3:66) symbolize the tenth plague that was wreaking havoc among the Egyptians while the Hebrews were celebrating the *Seder* behind the safety of their lamb-blood-painted-doors. They have always been troublesome to Jews who wish to avoid more bloodshed associated with liberations, even our liberations. But those Jews who have felt the murderous oppressor at the door during Pesach have related to these lines from the Bible.

Elijah became associated with this section of G0d's wrath because of the wrathful way he had with Israelites who defected to the worship of Ba'al and other idols.

These verses represent our deepest fears in exile. Saying them in the *Haggadah* originated during the Medieval persecutions. It also introduces the second part of the Hallel, whose second verse (Psalm 115:2) is "Why should the nations say, where is their G0d ?". So, "pour out Your wrath on the Nations who know you not."

This is why most modern *Haggadot* shy away from emphasizing (or even including) these lines, concentrating on Elijah who heralds the Messiah, hopefully to

usher in a non-violent era of Peace, instead of yet another bloody era of wrath.

☞ It is always fun to tease little kids by asking them to see if Elijah was drunk from his cup. It will have evaporated a bit.

33. **THE HALLEL** (continued) and ✓ **FILL THE FOURTH CUP**

Part II (Psalms 115-118) continue the Hallel from before dinner.

Part III Psalm 136—The Great Hallel (for G0d 's Mercy endures forever). This Psalm is similar in form and spirit to Dayenu.

✓ Again, unless one is familiar with singing the Hallel, which I personally love, they may wish to sing another song of praise, and call that their HALLEL.

34. נִשְׁמַת נְשָׁמָה **NISHMAT (KOL CHAI)** "Every soul shall praise You"

A selection from the Sabbath and Festival morning service describing G0d 's marvels daily. As we have been retelling one specific marvel, it is good to remember that these miracles occur daily.

35. **PIYYUTIM (Songs from the Middle Ages).**

Few people sing or study these except in very traditional homes with people who know a tune for them or want to study how cleverly arcane their slant references to the Bible are. The running commentary on the text of the piyyutim below is attributed to Rabbi El'azar ben Yehudah of Worms, 13th century. Translation by David Goldstein in his 1985 edition of the *Ashkenazi Haggadah*.

**35A First night:**

וַיְהִי בַחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה Vay'hi b'hatzi halayla:

**AND IT CAME TO PASS AT MIDNIGHT (Exodus 12:29)**

Cryptic references to other deliverances at midnight, like the 10th plague. It is by the 7th century poet from the land of Israel, Yannai.

**At midnight on Passover** 'The night was divided upon them' (cf. Genesis 14:15). **He refreshed (his'id)**, with a meal (*se'udah*). **The winged beings** of fire. **A reminder** of the cattle offered at Passover, as it is written, 'Sacrifice the Passover offering to the haShem, your G0d —flock and herd' (Deuteronomy 16:2), so the festal offering came with the Passover offering. **With fire on Passover** It was at Passover-time. **Was saved (hulatz)** means, he escaped. **You swept through** 'with the broom of destruction' (Isaiah 14:23). **The land of Moph and Noph** Egypt. 'Egypt shall gather them, Moph shall bury them' in *Hosea* (9:6). **The city was closely besieged** Jericho, when they observed the Passover at Gilgal (cf. Joshua 4:10). **The chiefs (mishmane)** 'Among his fat ones (mishmanav) leanness' (Isaiah 10:16). **Pul and Lud** Sennacherib (cf. Is. 66:19). **Advent (ga'ah:** like *tagi'a*—it arrives). **An inscription meaning destruction (tsul)** Referring to Babylon. 'Who says to the deep (tsulah): Be dry' (Isaiah 44:27). **You made him see it** Belshazzar saw the hand while he was seated at his table. **(Hadassah) assembled the community** (Esther said) 'Go, gather all the Jews' (Esther 4:16). This happened on Passover, since it is written 'Mordecai passed' (Esther 4:17), which teaches that he passed the first day of Passover in fasting. **The head of a wicked house** Haman. **These two things... suddenly** So in *Isaiah* (47:9): 'These two things shall come upon you suddenly in one day, loss of children and widowhood'. **On the Uzzite** Of the descendants of Esau, as it is written, 'Rejoice and be glad, daughter of Edom, who lives in the land of Uz' (Lamentations 4:21). He is not to be identified with the descendants of Shem, namely, 'The sons of Aram: Uz and Hul' (Genesis 10:23); nor with 'Uz, his firstborn' (Genesis 22:21); but with the descendants of Esau, of whom it is written, 'The children of Dishan: Uz. . . ' (Genesis 36:28).

35B *Second night:*

וְאָמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח V'amartem zevach Pesach:  
AND SAY IT'S THE PASSOVER OFFERING (Exodus 12:27)  
Interpretations of other deliverances at Pesach time.  
It is by the 8th century poet El'azar haKallir.

You gave the **righteous convert** Avraham victory over the kings (cf. Gen. 14). **The Aramean** Lavan '(G0d ) gave judgment the day before' (Genesis 31:42). **(Israel) fought with G0d** 'For you have wrestled with G0d ' (Genesis 32:29). 'You wrestled with an angel and prevailed' (cf. Hosea. 12:5). **You destroyed (tisat)** Suddenly, for he hastened like a deer. **Captain** Sisera, who came **from Harosheth-goyim** (Judges 4:2). **You destroyed (silita)** With the stars in their courses (*mimesilotam*) (Judges 5:20). **A blasphemer**—Sennacherib, Emperor of Babylon—as it is written, 'Who has sent to blaspheme the living G0d ' (Isaiah 37:17). **To sweep away** He swept his hand over Zion (cf. Isaiah 10:32): 'For the haShem has chosen Zion. He desired it as a dwelling for himself' (Psalm 132:13). (Sennacherib) swept his hand over it, to fight against it. **You confused his corpses** For they all became dead corpses. **Bel . . . fell down** As it is written, 'Bel falls down, Nebo stoops low' (Isaiah 46:1): the idols of Babylon. **And his statue** (The vision's mystery was) revealed to Daniel. **He who made himself drunk with the holy vessels** Belshazzar 'in that very night was slain' (Daniel 5:30). **Saved from the lions' den** For he had thrown Daniel into the den (*gov*) of lions. *Bor* (den) is rendered in Aramaic *guba* (Daniel 6:17). **He interpreted** visions which were in 'the terrors of night'. Haman the Agagite stored up **hatred**, and wrote missive to destroy (cf. Esther 3:13). Another possibility is that this refers to Shimei, the scribe, son of Haman, who is mentioned in *Ezra* (4:8), and who blotted out the merit of Mordecai. **You will tread the wine press** The vines of Edom, her grapes. **The guard** (asks 'What) of the night?' (The night of) Edom. **Crying like the watchman and musing**, which means, speaking. **Declare (hoda)**, and not *hodia* (He has declared), because it refers to the future. **First of all appointed times** Passover is sanctified above all the appointed times, except for the Sabbath, in the *parashah Emor* (cf. Leviticus 23:4-5). **Ezrahit** Avraham. "Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite" (Psalm 89:1).

36. ✓ **THE FOURTH CUP (of Acceptance/Hartzah)** This is the last cup, so savor it!

37. ✓ נִרְצָה NIRTZAH

May our *Seder* "be accepted" by You, and may the redemption come this year to the world. This is similar in intent (and is a different form of the same name) to the *R'tzeh* prayer, the third to last prayer in the worship service's *Amidah*, which asks G0d to accept our worship.

✧ How did it go tonight? Ask everyone, if you dare. Learn from their comments so next year's can be even better.

✧ Would you, if you were G0d , accept the *Seder* you did tonight? What would your criteria be for accepting or not accepting, whether you were yourself, or G0d ?

38. ✓ **Sing "Next Year in Jerusalem" L'Shanah ha Ba'ah**

In Temple days the Pilgrims would say good-bye to each other with these words, hoping to meet again next year in the city of their pilgrimage, again offering sacrifices

together and sharing communal meals. After the Temple was destroyed this expressed the hope that the Messiah will come and lead us all to Jerusalem and rebuild it and the Temple from its ruins sometime before (or on) the next Passover.

This is a fitting way for a document (the *Haggadah*) which is so focused on the Temple to end.

✧ If you live in Jerusalem now you say "Next year in Jerusalem rebuilt." This is because you already live there. But isn't Jerusalem already rebuilt? Not in the Messianic sense, not with a complete and functioning Temple.

✧ If, perchance, Messiah does not come, what do you make of this text?

✧ One of my guests once asked, "Isn't this anti-patriotic if I like living here in America?" Well, is it?

✧ Maybe your *Seder* didn't go as planned. Maybe you are disappointed. There's always "Next year in Jerusalem."

### 39. ✓ (*Second Night Only*) **COUNT THE OMER**

#### **What is an omer that we should count it?**

*(May be excluded from some Haggadot.)*

"Teach us to count our days, that we may bring to heart, wisdom."

(Or, Wisdom is in cherishing each day). (*Psalm 90:12*)

The "Omer," about a bushel of dry measure, was the amount of the first fruits of the barley harvest that all farmers had to bring to the Temple. It could be brought any time from the second day of Pesach through the next 49 days between Passover and Shavuot. The formula that the offerer ritually said to the *Kohen* (Hebrew Priest) is found in Deuteronomy 26:5-8. It begins, "My father was a wandering Aramean . . .," and forms the main text of the story of Passover in a traditional *Haggadah*.

These days were also to be counted. This is commanded in Leviticus 23:9-21;. (The "morrow after the Sabbath" when the verse ordains that the counting begin, is interpreted as the day after the "Sabbath-like festival day": i.e., the second day of Pesach). The two activities were combined in the common mind, and "*the counting of the days on which it was mandatory to bring an omer of one's first-fruits to the Temple*" became known in short-hand as, simply, "*Counting the Omer.*"

This is commanded in Leviticus 23:9-16: 9. *HaShem spoke to Moses, saying, 10. "Speak to the people of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come to the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, bring an OMER of the first fruits of your harvest to the Kohen;'<sup>18</sup> 11. who will wave the OMER before haShem, to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the sabbath the Kohen will wave it.*

*12. Offer on the day when you wave the OMER a male lamb without blemish of the first year for an "all goes up" offering to haShem. 13. Its (accompanying) grain offering it is two tenths measures of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to haShem for a sweet savor. Its (accompanying) wine offering of it is a quarter hin of wine.*

*14. Don't eat bread or parched grain or green grain until you bring this offering to your G0d. It is an eternal mitzvah, throughout your generations, wherever you live.*

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<sup>18</sup> What the offerer ritually said to the *Kohen* (Hebrew Priest) in Deuteronomy 26:5-8 (See ☞ Commentary Section #17, page 43) formed the main section of the *Haggadah*.

15. *Count from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the OMER of the wave offering; seven complete sabbaths (weeks); 16. Up to the day after the seventh sabbath (week), count fifty days. then offer a new meal offering to haShem.*

17. *(Then, on the Festival now known as Shavuot, or "Weeks"), Bring out of your dwellingplaces two wave loaves made of two tenth measures of semolina flour; baked with leaven (to show that Passover is totally over). They are the first fruits to haShem."*

*If this is not in your Haggadah, here is the ceremony for counting the Omer:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר :

*Barúch atáh Adonái, Elohéynu Mélech ha'olám, ashér kid'shánu b'mitzvotáv,  
v'tzeevánu al sfeerát ha'ómer.*

Blessed Y0u, Ad0nai, our G0d, Ruler of the universe, Wh0 consecrates us with mitzvot  
and commands us to count the (days of the) omer.

הַיּוֹם יוֹם אֶחָד לְעוֹמֵר

*HaYom yom echad la'omer*

Today is the first day of the Omer

#### 40. ✓ **ENDING SONGS**

These are sometimes in a different order in different *Haggadot*.

40A. ✓ אֲדִיר הוּא ADIR HUI "God is Great!"

A song to G0d 's greatness with a hope that the Temple will be restored. The song is a Hebrew acrostic, each phrase beginning with the next letter of the Alef-Bet.

40B. לֹו נֶאֱהָיָה לִי KIL LO NAEHI "For to Him it is beautiful"

This is another acrostic, based on a series of assonant phrases:

*L'cha u'l'cha* means "To You and...to You" and alludes to the verse, 'To You belongs praise, O G0d, in Zion, and to You a vow should be paid' (Psalms 65:2).

*L'cha ki l'cha* means 'To You... for to You' and alludes to the verse, 'To You, HaShem, belongs greatness, strength, ...for to You belongs all that is in heaven and earth ...' (II Chronicles 29:11).

Finally, *L'cha af l'cha* means 'To You ... also to You' and alludes to the verse, 'To You belongs the day, and also to You the night' (Psalm 74:16). The end of the refrain, *l'cha HaShem ha'mamlachah*, 'To You, HaShem, belongs sovereignty' is the conclusion of the verse in II Chronicles.

The various expressions used for G0d and the angels in this song are also taken from Biblical verses.

40C. ✓ מִי יוֹדֵעַ אֶחָד ECHAD MI YODEA/WHO KNOWS ONE?

This is a game song, of the main Jewish interpretations of the numbers 1 through 13. Numbers are certainly a theme of the *Haggadah*! There are English, Ladino, and Yiddish translations of this that can be su62g instead of the Aramaic, and to the same melody. Frequently the symbol of the number changes in translation. Squeamish English translators avoid "nine months of childbirth" and "eight days to a circumcision."

Here is the last stanza of the Rap version of Who Knows One, annotated so you

can see what all of these things mean:

Who knows **THIRTEEN**? I know Thirteen.

**Thirteen** are the **Attributes of G0d**<sup>19</sup>

**Twelve** are the **tribes of Yisra-El**.<sup>20</sup>

**Eleven** are the **stars of Joseph's dream**.<sup>21</sup>

**Ten** are the **Ten Commandments**

**Nine** are the **months of childbirth**.

**Eight** is the **day of miláh**.<sup>22</sup>

**Seven** are the **days of the week**. Boom, boom.

**Six** are the "**orders**" of—**Mishnáh**<sup>23</sup>, and

**Five** are the "**Books**" of—**Toráh**<sup>24</sup>, and

**Four** are the **Mamas**,<sup>25</sup> and

**Three** are the **Papas**,<sup>26</sup> and

**Two** are the **tablets that Moshe** brought, and

**One** is **haShem**, One is haShem, One is haShem,

Wh0 made the heaven and the earth.

Here is the last stanza of *Quien Supiense Y Entendiense*

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<sup>19</sup> Traditionally, the "13 Attributes (descriptions) of G0d," learned from Exodus 34:6-7, as if there were only 13 ways to describe G0d in the world! You may also substitute the phrase "Thirteen is the year of Bar/t Mitzvah," especially if you have a 12 year old at the table!

<sup>20</sup> In order of birth, the twelve sons of Ya'akov/Yisra'El are: the sons of Leah: Re'uven, Shim'on, Levi, Yehudah; the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan, Naftali; the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad, Asher; a second set of Leah's sons: Yissachar, Z'vulun; and Rachel's sons: Yosef, Binyamin. (see Genesis 29:31-30:24; 35:16-18).

<sup>21</sup> See Genesis 37:9

<sup>22</sup> The Covenant (*Brit*) of Circumcision (*Miláh*), done on the eighth day of life. See Genesis 17:9-14. The *brit* ceremony of a girl can be on her eighth day, or a new or full moon, or the first convenient day.

<sup>23</sup> "*Mishnah*" means "*memorized learning*" in Hebrew. It is the maxims we and our families live by and repeat to each other. "*Gemara*" means "*learning*" in Aramaic. The Gemara is the commentary on the Mishnah—a group discussion on the maxims that we live by. "*Talmud*" means "*learning*" in Hebrew. It is Mishnah and Gemara in one book. The six Sedarim are

**Order Seeds/Seder Z'raim**, Agricultural Laws, Laws of prayers The first TRACTATE (book) in the Order of Seeds is Blessings (Brachot),

**Order Season/Seder Mo'ed**, Holy Day Laws

**Order Women/Seder Nashim**, Laws of Who is A Jew, Who is Married, Who is adopted, etc.

**Order Damages/Seder Nezikim**, Crimes and Lawsuits, Property, Contracts

**Order Holy Things/Seder Kodashim**, "Special Things" and how to treat them

**Order Purities/Seder Tohorot**, How to be pure, stay pure, eat pure, and repurify.

<sup>24</sup> **Genesis/B'reishit**, From the Creation of the World through the fathers and mothers of the Children of Israel; **Exodus/Sh'mot**, The Israelites grow into a nation, are enslaved, freed, receive the Torah, and build the *Mishkan*, the portable sanctuary; **Leviticus/vaYikra**, The Laws Given at Mount Sinai, of Sacrifices and of Holy Living; **Numbers/baMidbar**, The many things that happened last 38 years of wandering "in the wilderness;" **Deuteronomy/D'varim**, Moses' last teachings, in the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the 40<sup>th</sup> year, as he is about to die.

<sup>25</sup> Sarah ("Queen"), Rivkah (Rebecca, "Trough"), Rachel ("Ewe"), Leah (undetermined meaning).

<sup>26</sup> Avraham ("Father of Many"), Yitzhak (Isaac, "He Laughs"), Ya'akov (Jacob-Heel)/Yisra'El (Israel, which means, "Yisra/wrestler with El/G0d."



*(Echad Mi Yodea in Ladino, which is Judeo-Spanish/Portuguese)*

Quien supiese y entendiense  
Alavar al Dio creense  
Qualo son los doze?  
Qualo son los doze?

Who knows and understands  
What G0d created  
What are twelve?  
What are twelve?

Doze trivos con Yosef  
Onze trivos sin Yosef  
diez mandamientos de la Ley  
Mueve mezes de la preñada  
Ocho dias de la Mila  
Siete dias con el Shabbat  
Sesh dias de la semana  
Cinco livros de la Ley  
Quatro madres di Yisrael  
Sarah, Rivqah, Leah, Rachel  
Tres nuestros padres son  
Avram, Yitzhaq y Ya'aqov  
Dos Moshe y Aron  
Uno es el Criador  
Uno es el Criador  
*baruch hu*  
*u'varuch sh'mo*

Twelve tribes with Joseph  
Eleven Tribes without Joseph  
Ten Commandments of the Law (Torah)  
Nine months of pregnancy  
Eight days to circumcision  
Seven days including Shabbat  
Six days of the week  
Five books of the Law (Torah)  
Four mothers of Israel:  
Sarah, Rivqah, Leah, Rachel  
Three, are our fathers:  
Avraham, Isaac and Jacob  
Two, Moses and Aaron  
One is the Creator  
One is the Creator  
Wh0 is blessed,  
and Wh0se Name is blessed.

40D. ✓ שׁוֹטְטֵי טַיִם **CHAD GADYA/AN ONLY (GOAT) KID**

This is an Aramaic parable that there *is* justice in the world, and G0d cares about it and us. Israel is symbolized by the little child whose father bought the lamb (of Pesach? Of general innocence?). The child watches the violent progression of empires swallow each other up until G0d personally puts an end to the cycle of death by killing death itself. There are English translations of this that can be sung instead of the Aramaic, and to the same melody.

☆ Of course, does one death really ever justify or make up for another? The kid was eaten by the cat. Does the dog eating the cat make a difference to the kid? Does G0d's ultimate defeat of the Angel of Death really matter to the kid, the cat, the dog, etc.?

☞ *Add your own songs and sing all night long: Freedom spirituals from the civil rights movement are always appropriate, as are generic Hebrew table songs.*

<b>Appendix A: Checklist of Ritual Items for Seders</b>
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*Seder Platter* (More than one if a long table)

**On the *Seder Platter(s)*:**

*Beitzah* (Roasted) Egg

*Haroset*

*Hazeret*

*Karpas*

*Maror*

*Z'ro'a*

Different Things Altogether (See page 30)

**On the *Seder Table*:**

*Matzah Plate* (More than one if a long table)

*with 3 Matzot in a cloth*

*(or more, if you are having symbolic extra Matzot)*

Candles and Candlesticks on a tray

*Kiddush* Cups

Elijah's Cup

Salt Water Bowls

Wash Water Bowls (different-looking than the salt water)

*Haggadot*

*Seder* supplements (if you made them)

*Seder* coloring books for small children,  
with cups of crayons.

Candy to distribute to the children after *Karpas*.

**Other Items:**

*Kippot*

*Afikoman* Bag

*Afikoman* Present(s) for the *Afikoman* finders

*Omer* counter (*Second night Seders* only)

*Havdalah* candle (*Saturday night Seders* only)

## Appendix B: SEDER LEADING GOALS AND REALITIES

**Here are some questions to ask yourself before you lead a seder:**

### **What Is Your Goal?**

Are you having "Traditional Families" and/or "Mixed Families," and how might that affect what you do?

Is it a Small or a Large Seder? If it is small, then you have more flexibility. If it is large, then there are more "group dynamics" concerns.

Will there be young children at the table, and for how long? If you expect all the little kids to get up and leave at some time, then be sure to seat the adults close enough together so that when the kids leave the adults are able to feel together at the table, instead of spread out too much. This makes it hard for people to feel like they are connected, and the level of participation and interaction decreases.

How many of your Guests are Strangers? How much introducing do you need to do?

How assiduously do you need to try to finish your Seder early if it is on a weeknight, and your guests will not be taking the next day off as a holy day?

## Appendix C: GROUP DYNAMICS TIPS FOR SEDER LEADERS OF LARGE AND/OR COMMUNAL SEDERS

### **Sit up tall.**

**Get permission from the group:** Introduce yourself, introduce the *Haggadah* (and the supplement). Let them know what you will be trying to do. Explain anything new or odd or radical before you do it so the group feels it has, at least, been informed of what is about to happen.

**Be sure not to let your head table become a clique.**

**Set an example** for everything you ask them to do by doing it yourself, first.

**Fulfill your promises!** If you say you will do something in such a way for such an amount of time, make sure you do it. Then people will trust you.

**Be able to laugh at yourself** if (really, when!) you make a mistake. Everyone does, just recover with humor and gracefully.

**Smile, and enjoy yourself.** If you enjoy yourself, your guests will enjoy themselves.

**(If you are part of a team of Seder leaders:) Back each other up during the readings.** What you do, others will do. If you are talking and not paying attention, others will follow your example, too.

## Appendix D: SONGLEADING TIPS FOR SEDERLEADERS

**If you are using a microphone, check your microphone's sound level before the Seder to make sure it is loud enough.**

**Use a table microphone, not a boom mike, and pull it close to you before you talk into it!**

**Remember: you will be a little nervous**, especially if you are starting with the kiddush, which is why it may be easier to start with an easier song.

**So: Think low, think slow, speak clearly, and smile.**

*Low* to keep from singing too high with tight tense vocal chords,

*Slow* to keep from singing too fast

*Clearly* so all will know what you are singing

and *Smile* to project the concept of having a good time! (It also keeps your voice from going flat!)

**Tempo Control:** Many people do not pay attention to what the leaders are doing, and if there are many different tempos going on out there you will have a hard time. Quite frequently some insensitive people will rebel and try to speed you up or slow you down.

**Also, use your body to help lead the tempo.**

Play the table top like a drum so people *hear* the beat.

Tap your feet so they *feel* the beat.

Move your body like a metronome so they *see* the beat.

**(If you are part of a team of Seder leaders:) Always back each other up.** Even if you are not the one leading the singing, sing loudly and help the leader lead the singing, using your body as well. If you are talking and not paying attention, others will follow your example, too.

## Appendix E: The Conservative Movement In Israel On Kitniyot

Vol. 3, pp. 35-56 (OH 453:1)

**Question:** In light of the ingathering of the exiles, would it be possible to eliminate the Ashkenazic custom of not eating legumes on Pesach?

**Responsum:** **In our opinion it is permitted (and perhaps even obligatory) to eliminate this custom.** It is in direct contradiction to an explicit decision in the Babylonian Talmud (Pesachim 114b) and is also in contradiction to the opinion of all the sages of the Mishnah and Talmud except one (R. Yochanan ben Nuri, Pesachim 35a and parallels). It also contradicts the theory and the practice of the Amoraim both in Babylonia and in Israel (Pesachim 114b and other sources), the Geonim (Sheiltot, Halakhot Pesukot, Halakhot Gedolot, etc.) and of most of the early medieval authorities in all countries (altogether more than 50 Rishonim!).

This custom is mentioned for the first time in France and Provence in the beginning of the thirteenth century by R. Asher of Lunel, R. Samuel of Falaise, and R. Peretz of Corbeil—from there it spread to various countries and the list of prohibited foods continued to expand. Nevertheless, the reason for the custom was unknown and as a result many sages invented at least eleven different explanations for the custom. As a result, R. Samuel of Falaise, one of the first to mention it, referred to it as a "mistaken custom" and R. Yerucham called it a "foolish custom".

Therefore, the main halakhic question in this case is whether it is permissible to do away with a mistaken or foolish custom. Many rabbinic authorities have ruled that it is permitted (and perhaps even obligatory) to do away with this type of "foolish custom" (R. Abin in Yerushalmi Pesachim, Maimonides, the Rosh, the Ribash, and many others). Furthermore, there are many good reasons to do away with this "foolish custom":

It detracts from the joy of the holiday by limiting the number of permitted foods. It causes exorbitant price rises, which result in "major financial loss" and, as is well known, "the Torah takes pity on the people of Israel's money." It emphasizes the insignificant (legumes) and ignores the significant (hametz, which is forbidden from the five kinds of grain). It causes people to scoff at the commandments in general and at the prohibition of hametz in particular—if this custom has no purpose and is observed, then there is no reason to observe other commandments. Finally, it causes unnecessary divisions between Israel's different ethnic groups. On the other hand, there is only one reason to observe this custom: the desire to preserve an old custom. Obviously, this desire does not override all that was mentioned above. **Therefore, both Ashkenazim and Sephardim are permitted to eat legumes and rice on Pesah without fear of transgressing any prohibition.**

Undoubtedly, there will be Ashkenazim who will want to stick to the "custom of their ancestors" even though they know that it is permitted to eat legumes on Pesah. To them we recommend that they observe only the original custom of not eating rice and legumes but that they use oil from legumes and all the other foods "forbidden" over the years, such as peas, beans, garlic, mustard, sunflower seeds, peanuts etc. Thus they will be able to eat hundreds of products, which bear the label "Kosher for Pesah for those who eat legumes." **This will make their lives easier and will add joy and pleasure to their observance of Pesah.**

Rabbi David Golinkin

Approved Unanimously 5749/1989

## Appendix F: HAGGADAH PAGE GUIDE AND PROGRAM

Sections with this symbol (✓) are frequently done, and are, in this author's point of view, the most important and/or meaningful parts of the Seder. Don't *Passover* them!

**Name of Haggadah:** \_\_\_\_\_

✓ **KADESH U'CHATZ: The 15 parts of the Haggadah:** Page \_\_\_\_\_

קַדֵּשׁ **KADDESH** "Sanctify" the day with the 1st Cup

וְרַחֵץ **UR'CHATZ** "Washing" the hands before Karpas.

כַּרְפָּס **KARPAS** The Vegetable Appetizer

יַחַץ **YACHATZ** "Halve" the Middle Matzah

מַגִּיד **MAGGID** "Tell" the Passover story , The 2nd Cup

רוֹחַצְתָּה / רַחֲצֵה **ROCHTZAH/RACHTZAH** "Washing" the hands before bread.

מִצֵּה / מוֹצִי' **MOTZI, MATZAH** Blessings for eating Bread and *Matzah*.

מַרְרוֹר **MAROR** "Bitter" herb.

כֹּרֵךְ **KORECH** "Fold" the "Hillel sandwich."

עֲרֵךְ שְׁלֵחַן **SHULCHAN ORECH** "Set the table" for dinner.

צַפּוּן **TZAFUN** "Hide" and then find the Afikoman.

בָּרַךְ **BARECH:** The After-Meals "Blessing" and 3rd Cup

הַלֵּל **THE HALLEL, part two! (Psalms 115 –118, 136)**

נִרְצָה **NIRTZAH** The 4<sup>th</sup> cup, then May our *Seder* "be accepted" by You.

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1. ✓ הַדְּלֵקַת נְרוֹת **CANDLELIGHTING** Page \_\_\_\_\_

Not in most traditional Haggadot, as it is taken for granted that we will light candles on a holy day.

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2. ✓ קַדֵּשׁ **KADDESH** Page \_\_\_\_\_

*Kiddush over the first cup.*

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3. ✓ וְרַחֵץ **UR'CHATZ** Page \_\_\_\_\_

*Wash hands without a blessing*

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4. ✓ כַּרְפָּס **KARPAS** Page \_\_\_\_\_

*The fruit of the ground that begins the Seder.*

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5. ✓ יַחַץ **YACHATZ** Page \_\_\_\_\_

*"Halve" the middle of the three matzot into two unequal sections.*

✓ מַגִּיד **MAGGID** "Tell the Story."

From this point up until the second cup (#24) is the retelling of the Exodus story.

6. ✓ לַחֲמַת עֲנִיָּה הָאֵל **HA LACHMA ANYA** Page\_\_\_\_\_

"This is the bread of affliction."

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7. ✓ מָה נִשְׁתַּנָּה מָה **MAH NISHTANA** Page\_\_\_\_\_

"What's different tonight?" Usually called the **Four Questions**. Creatively called The Four **Answers** to the Same Question.

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8. ✓ עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ **AVADIM HAYYINU** Page\_\_\_\_\_

"We were slaves." That is the point. Now we're free.

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9. ✓ אֵלֵינוּ בְּרַבֵּי אֵלֵינוּ **MA'ASEH B'RABBI ELIEZER** Page\_\_\_\_\_

"The Rabbis' All-nighter."

These Rabbis were plotting the Bar Kochba revolt against Rome in 135 CE. That's why they were so excited about the story of the Exodus - it was directly relevant.

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10. ✓ אֶלְעָזָר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר **AMAR RABBI EL'AZAR BEN AZARIYAH** Page\_\_\_\_\_

"Rabbi El'azar ben Azariya said:"I am as if seventy years old (i.e.: an elder) and I never merited mentioning the Exodus from Egypt in the prayer for redemption at nighttime (i.e.: in *Ma'ariv*, the evening service) until ben Zoma explained it thus . . ."

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11. ✓ הַמָּקוֹם בְּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם **BARUCH HA MAKOM** Page\_\_\_\_\_

"Blessed be the Place (a euphemism for G0d Who is the Place of the World, i.e.: Omnipresent)" This is the introduction, in almost blessing form, to the 4 Children. "Baruch" is mentioned 4 times like the cups and children.

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12. ✓ **THE FOUR "SONS"** Page\_\_\_\_\_

**CHILDREN, ADULTS, DESCENDANTS**

There are four questions/answers in the Torah concerning Passover (Exodus 12:26; 13:8; 13:14; and Deuteronomy 6:20). This is why the Haggadah asks Four Questions in *Mah Nishtanah*.

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13. ✓ יָכוֹל **YACHOL** Page\_\_\_\_\_

"One Might Think" This is a reminder that the story of the Passover should be told on the night of Passover (15 Nissan), and not on the First of Nissan.

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14. ✓ מִתְחִילָה **MIT'CHILAH** Page\_\_\_\_\_

"Originally" our ancestors worshipped idols, says Joshua

15. ✓ שוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחוֹ שוֹמֵר **BARUCH SHOMER HAVTACHO** Page\_\_\_\_\_

*"Blessed is the One Who keeps the promise made to Israel, who set the end of the exile when mentioning it to Avram (Genesis 15:8-18).*

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16. ✓ שְׁעֵמְדָהּ וְהִשְׁעָמְדָהּ V 'HI SHE'AMDA "It is *this* promise that sustained us . . . For not just one tried to annihilate us, but in every generation some have risen up to annihilate us, but the Holy One saves us from their hands. Page \_\_\_\_\_

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17. ✓ **THE DRASH (INTERPRETATION) OF THE PASSOVER STORY**

A "running commentary" on **four** verses: **Deuteronomy 26:5-8:**

5. ... "A wandering Aramean was my father (or "an Aramean tried to kill my father."), and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous; 6. And the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard slavery; 7. And when we cried to haShem G0d of our fathers, haShem heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression; 8. And haShem brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great awesomeness, and with signs, and with wonders;

The commentary is introduced by the phrase וְלֵמַד TZE ULMAD—GO OUT AND LEARN. The discussion of the Exodus begins with the exhortation to "go out" and learn, as if the Exodus were a lesson to learn! Page \_\_\_\_\_

*\*This is where most modern, liberal, and themed Haggadot differ from the traditional text, with various ways to tell the story of the Exodus. Describe your Haggadah's story on the back of this sheet, but put the page numbers here.*

18. ✓ **RECITING THE TEN PLAGUES AND DIPPING THE WINE**

Page \_\_\_\_\_

18A The commentary ends with a typical Talmudic *alternative interpretation* (דָּבָר אַחֵר *Davar Acher*) of verse 8, as if the *strong hand, outstretched arm, great awe, signs, &wonders* were the Ten Plagues (six singular words, and two plural words, each understood as the minimum plural, 2=10).

18B Dip your finger in the wine when you read each plague's name, and put the drops on your *plate*. Do this also for the acronyms formed by the first Hebrew letter of each plague: *D'TzaCh, ADash, B'ACHaB*. (Some also dip when "blood, fire, and pillars of smoke" is said introducing the plagues).

18C **THE TEN PLAGUES MULTIPLIED to 50, 200, 250** 3 rabbis compare the Reed Sea to the plagues. **Rabbi Yossi of Galilee** says, if the ten plagues were, as the Egyptian magicians said, "The finger of G0d " (Ex 8:15) and at the Reed Sea G0d 's "Hand" of, it is assumed, five Divine fingers, were used to destroy Egypt (Ex 14:31), so multiply and get 50 (5 fingers times ten plagues). The second and third paragraphs of this section quote **Rabbis Eliezer and Akiba** interpreting Psalm 78:49 as if each of its 4 or 5 references to G0d's anger multiply G0d's "Hand" (200, and 250 plagues).



19. ✓ יְיָנוּ **DAYENU** — "It's Sufficient for Us" Page\_\_\_\_\_

Dayenu is a recap of the Journey from *Servitude* to Pharaoh to *Services* (in the Temple) to G0d. How many of the 14 traditional verses, beginning with the 15<sup>th</sup>, the introductory phrase "How many good things has G0d done for us?" does your Haggadah have? Most liberal ones have only three. Traditionally Dayenu is followed by a shorter recap of it. *For the full text, see page 48.*

20. ✓ **EXPLAINING THE THREE BIG SYMBOLS: PESACHZ'RO'A, MATZAH, and MAROR**

A. **RABBAN GAMLIEL SAYS** Page\_\_\_\_\_

He says you have to look at and talk about the symbols specially. So we do!

✓ זְרוּעַ **PESACHZ'RO'A:**

**THE PASSOVER SACRIFICIAL SYMBOL**

(Shankbone, Chicken Neck or Leg, Beet, Matzah Meal & Oil Patty, or a picture).

It is not raised or pointed at to show that *this is not* a sacrifice Page\_\_\_\_\_

✓ מַצָּה **MATZAH** Page\_\_\_\_\_

Point to the plate of Matzot.

✓ מָרוֹר **MAROR** Page\_\_\_\_\_

Point to the bitter vegetable.

21. ✓✓✓ דּוֹר וָדוֹר **B'CHOL DOR VADOR** Page\_\_\_\_\_

"In Every Generation" we are personally commanded to tell the Exodus story in the first person. This is the central mitzvah of the *Haggadah!!!*

22. ✓ לְפִיכַח **L'FICHACH** Page\_\_\_\_\_

Since we did leave Egypt, "Therefore." We raise cups in toast to G0d and praise for 5 transitions: slavery to freedom; sorrow to joy; mourning to festivities; darkness to great light; servitude to redemption

23. הַלֵּל **THE HALLEL part one (PSALMS 113 -114)** Page\_\_\_\_\_

✓ Psalm 114 is especially relevant, and a great tune!

24. ✓ **THE SECOND CUP (of Redemption)** is introduced with a  **blessing** that praises G0d for our redemption. This sums up the telling of the story of our liberation. (*Maggid* ends.) Page\_\_\_\_\_

*The meal begins with washing our hands before eating bread:*

25. ✓ רֹחֵץ **ROCHTZA/RACHTZAH** Page\_\_\_\_\_

The hands are washed a second time, this time with a blessing.

26. ✓ מַצָּה / מוֹצֵיאַ MOTZI MATZAH Page\_\_\_\_\_

We make two blessings - one for eating bread, one specifically for fulfilling the commandment to eat *Matzah*. Eat *Matzot* from the *Seder* platter (but *not* the Afikoman).

27. ✓ מָרוֹר MAROR Page\_\_\_\_\_

We have already said the blessing for food from the ground when we ate the Karpas so now we praise G0d for the commandment to eat Maror.

Dip the Maror in *Haroset*. Then eat it.

28. ✓ כֹּרֵךְ KORECH Page\_\_\_\_\_

"Fold" the "Hillel sandwich," of maror and haroset on matzah.

29. ✓ שְׁלַחַן עֵרֶךְ SHULCHAN ORECH Page\_\_\_\_\_

"Set the table" for dinner.

30. ✓ צִפּוּן TZAFUN Page\_\_\_\_\_

While the people are eating, "**Hide**" the *Afikoman*. After dinner search for it. Once it has been found, give a small piece of it to all assembled. This is the official dessert, and it symbolizes the one piece of the sacrifice that each participant would eat.

31. ✓ בָּרַךְ BARECH: BIRKAT HAMAZON Page\_\_\_\_\_

The Blessing After a Meal ends with

✓ THE THIRD CUP (of Blessing) Page\_\_\_\_\_

32. שְׂפוֹךְ חַמַּתְךָ SH'FOCH HAMATCHA "Pour out Your Wrath" Page\_\_\_\_\_

at this point we

✓ OPEN THE DOOR FOR ELIJAH It is always fun to tease little kids by asking them to see if Elijah was drunk from his cup. It will have evaporated a bit. Page\_\_\_\_\_

Many new *Haggadot* have "Elijah services" instead of the traditional Bible verses that express the hope that G0d will utterly destroy evildoers. Those that do end with the song "ELIYAHU HANAVI" (on page\_\_\_\_\_)

33. THE HALLEL (continued Psalms 115-118, 136)

FILL THE FOURTH CUP

Part II (Psalms 115-118) continue the **Hallel** from before dinner. Page\_\_\_\_\_

Part III Psalm 136—The **Great Hallel** (*Ki L'Olam Chasdo*! for G0d's Mercy endures forever"). This Psalm is similar in form and spirit to Dayenu. Page\_\_\_\_\_

✓ Or sing your own songs of praise.

34. נִשְׁמַת *NISHMAT (KOL CHAI)* Page\_\_\_\_\_

"Every soul shall praise You" A piece of the morning service following the Psalm service.

35 *PIYYUTIM (Puzzle Poems of Exodus Allusions)*  
Sometimes these follow the ending songs below (#40)

35A *First night:* וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה *Vay'hi b'hatzi halayla:*  
**AND IT CAME TO PASS AT MIDNIGHT** (Exodus 12:29) Page\_\_\_\_\_

35B. *Second night:* וְאָמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח *V'amartem zevach Pesach:*  
**AND SAY IT'S THE PASSOVER OFFERING** (Exodus 12:27) Page\_\_\_\_\_

36. ✓ **THE FOURTH CUP** (of Acceptance) Page\_\_\_\_\_

This is the last cup, so savor it!

37. ✓ נִרְצָה *NIRTZAH* Page\_\_\_\_\_

May our Seder "be accepted" by You.

38. ✓ *Sing L'Shanah haBa'ah* "Next Year in Jerusalem" Page\_\_\_\_\_

*Israeli Haggadot have, in Rebuilt Jerusalem (BiRushalayim haB'nuyah).*

39. ✓ (Second Night Only) **COUNT THE OMER** (not always included in Haggadot) Page\_\_\_\_\_

40. ✓ **ENDING SONGS**

These are sometimes in a different order in different Haggadot.

40A. לֹא נֶאֱחָה *KILO NAEH* Page\_\_\_\_\_

"For to Him it is beautiful" This is another acrostic, based on a series of assonant phrases: *L'cha u'l'cha* means "To You and...to You" and alludes to the verse, 'To You belongs praise, O God, in Zion, and to You a vow should be paid' (Psalms 65:2).

✓ 40B. אָדִיר הוּא *ADIR HU* , "God is Great! Build the Temple!" Page\_\_\_\_\_

✓ 40C. מִי יוֹדֵעַ *ECHAD MI YODEA* , Who knows One? Page\_\_\_\_\_

✓ 40D. חָד גַּדְיָא *CHAD GADYA* An Only Kid. (In Aramaic) Page\_\_\_\_\_

**Add your own songs and sing all night long!**

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Appendix G: CREATE AND LOG DISCUSSION QUESTIONS</h2>
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Use this form to create and log your own discussion questions or record discussion questions that you have enjoyed at past seders. Here’s a few additional ones to get you started. Add new sections and questions every year. Enjoy!

<p><b>Section 7. Mah Nishtana / “What’s Different?”</b></p>
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<p><b>Discussion Question:</b> We start out with four answers that are called four questions. Which is it? How does this set the tone of the seder? In the end, in our seder discussion do we have more questions than answers? If yes, is that okay?</p>
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<p><b>Section 8. Avadim Hayyinu / “We Were Slaves”</b></p>
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<p><b>My Discussion Question:</b></p>
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<p><b>Section 12. The Four Sons (Children)</b></p>
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<p><b>My Discussion Question:</b></p>
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<p><b>Section 16. V’Hi She’amda / This Promise.. to save us / in every generation some have risen up to annihilate us</b></p>
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<p><b>Discussion Question:</b> If there is a threat of annihilation in every generation what threatens us today? How does the threat of annihilation through assimilation compare to that of genocide? Are American Jews “lost in a good land”? Is it a “light in the darkness” that even the most assimilated Jew usually attends a seder at Passover?</p>
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<p><b>Section 16. V’Hi She’amda / This Promise.. to save us / in every generation some have risen up to annihilate us</b></p>
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<p><b>Discussion Question:</b> Purim is past but the Book of Esther echoes here. Is G0d “concealed” and working “behind the scenes” to save us in every generation?</p>
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<p><b>Section 16. V’Hi She’amda / This Promise.. to save us / in every generation some have risen up to annihilate us</b></p>
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<p><b>My Discussion Question:</b></p>
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