

About Our Haggadah

Contributed by [Judy Chicago & Donald Woodman](#)

Source: Judy Chicago / Donald Woodman Haggadah

For over two decades, a small group of us has celebrated Passover together. When we came together, we - like many American Jews - were somewhat disconnected from Jewish tradition. Despite this, we all felt strongly that our Jewish heritage (about which we had varying degrees of knowledge) had shaped our values and - for those of us who were artists - influenced our work.

At first, none of us really knew how to go about making a Seder. We had to search out recipes and ask a local rabbi to help us put together a Haggadah that was not male-centered. Our first Haggadah was pieced together from a number of contemporary approaches but even these often referred to a male God which we replaced with a gender neutral term. In retrospect, it is clear that we were searching for a meaningful path for our practice, which evolved slowly. By the early 1990's, Judy Chicago (who is descended from 23 generations of rabbis but nonetheless, raised in a secular home) and her husband, photographer Donald Woodman, began to put together a Haggadah that reflected our personal approach to the Seder, one that was rooted in tradition but updated that tradition in a contemporary manner. Its underlying philosophical framework grows out of what we believe is the very definition of what it means to be Jewish, that is; because we were once slaves in Egypt and became free, it is our responsibility to work for the freedom of everyone.

Our Haggadah - which is illustrated by Judy Chicago - grows out of our shared, passionate commitment to justice. Its intention is to provide a pathway for Jews like us; Jews who want to celebrate Passover but aren't sure about how to do that in a way that makes sense today; Jews who are dissatisfied with the patriarchal bias of traditional Jewish practice; Jews who have blended families (for example; mixed marriages, ethnically and/or racially diverse or non-traditional families) along with anyone who understands that the Passover Seder can be a powerful path to affirming hope in a world that can sometimes seem completely hopeless.

We offer here a few pages of our Haggadah. By next year, we plan to make it available for purchase through this site via Amazon. In the meantime, we wish everyone a Happy Passover as Jews all over the world participate in the Seder and its universal hope for a joyful future.