

# Welcome

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Source: A Different Night; Haggadah for the American Family, 1966; #globalbeitmidrash and #globalteenagershaggadah



## LEADER:

**Happy Passover and welcome to our Seder!**

We are about to begin our Seder. Its primary purpose is to retell the ancient story of Israel's redemption from bondage in Egypt and to recall the miraculous events which led to the exodus from an ancient land of slavery. The Bible commands, "And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying: It is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt." By this the Bible means that young and old should gather on the eve of Passover, in order to relate this chapter of our people's history.

Passover has a message for the conscience and the heart. It commemorates the deliverance of our people from the degradation of slavery and cruel and inhuman tyranny. Although it is the Pharaoh of old who is the tyrant of the Haggadah, it is not he alone of whom we speak tonight. We speak this evening of other tyrants and other tyrannies as well.

Although we are no longer enslaved in Egypt, our experience shaped and should always shape our interactions with people around the world. We as a people must have "the outstretched hand" that G-d had with our ancestors. When people seek refuge, let their wish be fulfilled. That is how we can thank G-d for our freedom, more than anything.

We welcome our family members and friends from all backgrounds to reflect with us on the meaning of freedom in all our lives and histories. We will consider the blessings in our lives, pledge to work harder at freeing those who still suffer, and begin to cast off the things in our own lives that oppress us.

## ASSEMBLED:

We speak of the tyranny of poverty and of the tyranny of privation,

Of the tyranny of wealth and the tyranny of war,  
Of the tyranny of power and the tyranny of despair,  
Of the tyranny of disease and the tyranny of time,  
Of the tyranny of ignorance and the tyranny of color.

**PARTICIPANT:**

Iraqi Jews tell the tale that in one country the king was always chosen in a special way. When the old king died, a bird called the "bird of good fortune" would be released. On whomsoever's head it landed, the people would place the crown making him their next ruler.

Once the bird of good fortune landed on the head of a slave. That slave had been a simple musician who entertained at the master's parties. His costume consisted of a feathered cap and a belt made of the hooves of sheep.

When the slave became king, he moved into the palace and wore royal robes. However, he ordered that a shack (a kind of sukkah) be constructed next to the palace and that his old hat, belt and drum be stored there along with a giant mirror.

The new king was known for his kindness and love for all his people – rich and poor, free and slave. Often he would disappear into his little shack. Once he left its door open and the cabinet ministers saw him don his feathered hat, put on his old belt and dance and drum before the mirror. They found this very strange and asked the king: "After all, you are a king! You must maintain your dignity!"

The king replied:

"Once I was a slave and now I've become a king. From time to time I want to remind myself that I was once a slave lest I grow arrogant and treat with disdain my people and you, my ministers."