Introduction

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Source: http://elmad.pardes.org/2016/04/the-pardes-companion-to-the-haggadah/

Pesach is a time of inclusion.

On seder night, there are two moments where we metaphorically open our doors and invite others in. One is at the opening of the Magid portion of the seder, when we say, "All who are hungry come and eat." There is a beautiful message here: we were once slaves; poor and hungry, and we remember our redemption by sharing what we have with others.

The other, comes towards the end of the seder, when we have the custom of pouring a fifth cup of wine, which we claim is for Elijah the Prophet. This is a statement of faith, a statement that says that although we are a free people, our redemption is not yet complete, and we believe that it will come.

From the most downtrodden to the most celebrated, the message is clear: everyone is welcome and everyone is necessary. Why is it that we go out of our way to include all at our seder table? Perhaps it is because when we make room for others, we have the opportunity to make room for ourselves as well. In fact, the Mishnah (Pesahim 10:5) teaches us that:

בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים In every generation a person is obligated to see themselves as if they left Egypt

The seder presents us with the obligation of identifying with the generation that left Egypt and internalizing that experience. And through that internalization, we come to feel the redemption as if it was our own as well to - לראות את עצמו. Further, the reliving of the story of the Exodus affords us the opportunity see one's true self. It is only when we are able to see ourselves clearly, that we are able to be redeemed. But perhaps the only way we are able to see ourselves, is when we are truly able to see those around us. This message of inclusion is Pardes's message too, and our hope is that this Haggadah Companion which offers something for everyone, will add new meaning to your seder and help bring the Jewish people a little closer together.