

Introduction

Contributed by [JQ International](#)

Source: JQ International GLBT Haggadah

This GLBT Haggadah was created as a result of a collaborative effort by JQ International and the Institute for Judaism & Sexual Orientation at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (IJSO). Our goal was to create a comprehensively GLBT-oriented Haggadah and GLBT Passover experience by codifying the annual GLBT Seder experience created by lay members of JQ International since 2004 and making it available to GLBT Jews for reapplication anywhere around the world. A committee of dedicated members representing both JQ International and HUC's IJSO brought together ideas from a variety of sources including leaders in the GLBT community, personal experiences at GLBT Seders and many new, never before seen elements were incorporated in to this GLBT Haggadah.

Our Haggadah attempts to bridge traditional and modern, old and new, historical and contemporary. Our goal was to create a text that was inclusive on many levels, offering leaders a great degree in flexibility regarding the essence of their seder. Recognizing the diversity within our GLBT Jewish community, the Haggadah could be used to hold a rather traditional seder, however, it also aims to provide the material and ideas necessary to create an interactive, progressive seder that speaks directly to the themes and issues facing the GLBT Jewish community.

We would like to thank all of those involved with the process, from leaders of past JQ International GLBT Seders to authors of the text to editors and proofreaders, who include Asher Gellis, Brandon Gellis, Dean Hansell, Jacob Heller, Lior Hillel, Jay Jacobs, Joel Kushner, Jeff Lieberman, Dan Paress, Eric Rosoff, Kevin Shapiro, Rabbi Jerry Brown, Wylie Tene, and more!

We also thank the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles for its continued support and sponsorship of JQ International's work in the community and Hebrew Union College's support of the Institute of Judaism and Sexual Orientation's creation of liturgy to help foster the continued inclusion of GLBT Jews.

נספח

The holiday's name – *Pesach*, meaning “*passing over*” in Hebrew, is derived from the instructions given to Moses by God. In order to encourage the Pharaoh to free the Israelites, God intended to kill the first-born of both man and beast. To protect themselves, the Israelites were told to mark their dwellings so that God could identify and “*pass over*” their homes. In modern times the holiday of Passover has grown to represent a time to remember the struggle for civil liberties in our current day lives or in other words individuals whose recognition of rights and validation of identity have been “*passed over*” by the society they live in.

Pesach or Passover traditionally is the celebration of God's decree to spare the first-born male Israelites as recounted in Exodus, which ultimately concludes with the liberation of the Jewish people from a life of oppression, tyranny and slavery. However, with great irony today's Seder or Passover service seeks to consciously recognize and remember those that have been overlooked in our current day by reliving the struggles of our community collectively as a group. With pride we acknowledge the history of events that brought us here tonight. Our Seder abounds with many old and many new symbols that serve as our communal recognition of the hurdles we have overcome and our ongoing drive to reaffirm and recognize the GLBT Jewish community as vibrant and valuable community worthy of celebrating with Pride.

בְּרִיךְ הוֹשִׁיעַ

We gather together tonight as a community to remember the bondage of our ancestors and the struggles of those that continue today, so that we may be inspired to cherish the freedom we now have, to recognize the

bondage of those who are not yet free, and to encourage our collective call to help in the struggle to free all people and to value all people equally. On these evenings, the bond of friendship, love, family and community reaches out from within – as from this gathering – to unite all humankind in remembering our collective history in hope for tomorrow.

As a Jewish community, we are an old people; our history reaches back over 4000 years. In that history, our forebears have seen bondage and freedom, trial and triumph, high achievements and terrible disasters. Today, too, as we recline in the luxury of our freedom, let us not forget how deeply our neighbors in other places yearn for the simple necessity of release from their bondage and oppression and those who sit here beside you who have faced incredible challenges in their lives to gather here as a community.

You Don't Have to Be Jewish to Celebrate Freedom

Passover is a Jewish holiday, but it is not just for Jews. We welcome our non-Jewish friends to our celebration of liberation. Liberation from oppression is always a deep concern for Jews because of our history. We invite our friends and family to share this night with Jews all over the world, as we take this opportunity to celebrate our freedom and pray for the freedom of all those who suffer, wherever and whomever they may be.