

The History of our Haggadah

Contributed by [JQ International](#)

Source: JQ International GLBT Haggadah

What's the story behind the Haggadah?

According to Rabbi Moshe Lazarus, the word Haggadah comes from the Torah command – “And you shall tell (*Higadeta*) your children on that day...” Although the minimal fulfillment of this mitzvah is a simple recounting of the going out of Egypt and explaining a few of the Passover symbols, proper fulfillment requires much more.

Over the centuries, additions have been made to the Haggadah to enhance this mitzvah. Many of these additions gained such wide acceptance that they became part of the Haggadah. One of those additions is the *Chad Gadya*. Another is *Dayeinu*. Rav Saadia Gaon (882 CE – 942 CE) included neither in his Haggadah, although he did recognize the existence of *Dayeinu*. Neither Rashi (1040-1105) nor Maimonides (1135-1204) included *Chad Gadya* in their versions of the Haggadah, although Rashi did include *Dayeinu*.

Our Haggadah was created as a GLBT community response for the need of a fully inclusive and integrated GLBT Passover experience. In years past, GLBT Seders have incorporated select items of GLBT significance such as an orange on the Seder Plate and Miriam's Cup. However, our Seders saw the need for fully integrated GLBT content. What sets this Haggadah apart is the creation and integration of the GLBT struggle, history, pain and joy throughout the text as a conscious amalgamation to a holiday that has already grown synonymous with the Jewish GLBT civil liberties movement.

Great care was taken to ensure the elements of a traditional Seder were preserved while integrating the GLBT material into this Haggadah. Following the customary Seder order, four new segments have added ceremonious acts to the ritual nature of the traditionally well organized Passover Seder. First *Eyru'ayim* meaning “events” in Hebrew is a recounting of the GLBT historical timeline of struggles and accomplishments over the last century. Judaism teaches the importance of remembering the history, good and bad, of our people as well as our traditions, customs and culture. The *Eyru'ayim* brings us the opportunity to pass forward the history of this movement and to collectively learn from our history in much the same manner as in the *Maggid*, the telling of the ancient Exodus story.

The remaining three segments *HaCarah*, *Chamutz* and *HaDerekh*, meaning “The Recognition, Sour Vegetables and The Path” respectively in Hebrew revolve around the addition of a second Seder Plate. In recent years, the GLBT community has added an orange to the traditional Seder Plate. However, in this Haggadah, we fully integrate the GLBT Seder Plate, created and developed by Asher Gellis for Passover 2007. The GLBT Seder Plate and its symbolic components are integrated into this GLBT Haggadah and it becomes an equal and integral part of our Seder experience alongside the traditional Seder Plate.

The orange is no longer just the addition of a foreign object to the traditional Seder Plate. Instead, a whole new GLBT Seder Plate, full of symbolism, was developed to sit proudly and equally next to the traditional Seder Plate, with its shank bone, egg, *charoset*, bitter herbs, greens and parsley. The orange is now joined by the coconut, sticks and stones, flowers, pickled vegetables and fruit salad, each representing additional hardships and blessings that we will explore at our GLBT Seder.

In addition to our four segments adding ceremonious acts to the ritual nature of the Passover Seder experience, many other innovative creations have been integrated, including an additional “fifth” question that has been added to the traditional “Four Questions,” which we now call “Our Five Questions,” authored by Lior Hillel and “The Four Children,” by Eric Rosoff.

The GLBT Jewish community's timeline and 10 Plagues, Miriam's Cup, an accurate account to the origin of the orange on the Seder Plate and other Judaic and GLBT content was researched, compiled and edited by Kevin Shapiro and Joel Kushner.