



# All of the Seder

**Ideas for an experiential  
and interactive Seder for all ages**

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## Primary sources

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"In every generation a person is obligated to see himself as if he left Egypt" (Mishna Pesachim, chap. 10 mishna 5)

"In every generation a person must show himself as if he, himself, just now left the slavery of Egypt."  
(Maimonides, Laws of Chametz & Matza, chap. 7 law 6)

It is a positive commandment of the Torah to tell of the miracles and wonders that were done for our forefathers in Egypt on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, as it says: (Shmot 13:3): "Remember this day on which you left Egypt," just as it says (Shmot 20:8): "Remember the Sabbath day".

From where do we know that [that the commandment should be fulfilled on] the night of the fifteenth? For the Torah teaches us (Shmot 13:8): "You shall tell your son on that day, saying: 'It is because of this...'" [that is] when *matza* and *maror* are placed before you.

And even if one has no child [one should retell of the Exodus]. Indeed, even the greatest of sages are obligated to tell of the Exodus from Egypt, and who elaborates about what happened is praiseworthy.

It is a positive commandment to inform one's children even if they do not ask, as it says (Shmot 13:8): "You shall tell your son". A father should teach his child appropriate to the child's knowledge. How is this so? If the son is young or imprudent, he should tell him: "My son, in Egypt, we were all slaves like this maidservant or this slave. On this night, the Holy One, Blessed be He, redeemed us and took us out to freedom".

If the son is older and wise, he should inform him what happened

to us in Egypt and the miracles wrought for us by Moses, our teacher; everything according to the son's knowledge.

One should make changes on this night so that the children will see and will [be motivated to] ask: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" until he replies to them: "This and this occurred, this and this took place."

What changes should be made? He should give them roasted seeds and nuts; the table should be taken away before they eat; *matzot* should be snatched from each other and the like.

When a person does not have a son, his wife should ask him. If he does not have a wife, [he and a colleague] should ask each other: "Why is this night different?" This applies even if they are all wise. A person who is alone should ask himself: "Why is this night different?"

(Maimonides, Laws of Chametz & Matza, chap. 7 law 6)

## Introduction

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"Thirty days prior to the festival one studies the laws of the festival" (Pesachim 6a). While this directive is vital, there is no need for it to be limiting. There is no reason to make do with a study of only the halachic, legalistic, aspects of the festival. Indeed one should give attention to all the extra things that can transform this evening from a long, often tiring and boring evening, to one full of the experiences of the Exodus – in those days at this time.

The secret to the success of the Seder is preparation. This is **THE** evening that so long ago transformed us from being a tribe, a collection of families and made us into a nation, a people, the Jewish People. Much as the Israelites at the time were told to prepare – belts tightened, shoes on their feet and walking sticks in hand – ready for the word to leave, so too we need to be prepared for our own experiences. This preparation is connected to all aspects of the evening – the identity and number of the guests, the menu, the content (Q & A, discussions, activities, games) the décor and design, the participants' wakefulness and more.

This booklet aims to assist the Seder leader. In it are ideas and (kosher for Pesach) food for thought for the Seder leader to prepare for the journey that, together with the others around the table, will enable them to experience a personal, familial and national exodus. This journey should encompass not only the halachic requirements but should also be in keeping with the spirit of the festival. That is, individual and collective experience of slavery and freedom, tears of pain and tears of joy, looking back, looking forward and singing, always singing old songs and new, and in the words of the Haggada, may we merit "to sing before Him a new song, Halleluya!"

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# Before the Seder

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## 1. The Goal

As in any important matter, in order to succeed, we must clearly set our goals as Seder leaders. What do we want to pass on to the children on this evening? An exciting, enjoyable Jewish experience; learning the basics of the Pesach story; a feeling that they are an important part of the Jewish People and another link in the chain of generations; strengthening the family "togetherness" and keeping special family traditions; all of the above? What about the adults? We recommend making a short list of your personal objects, considering the family members and their ages. It will help conduct the Seder with confidence, keeping the correct focus.

## 2. An interesting evening is less famishing

As a rule, the more the evening interests and stimulates the participants, they less they will think about the meal which is much later than usual and as a result they will participate more. as such, it is important to think ahead of time how best to do this.

It's a good idea to have the children – and adults – eat before the Seder, so that hunger and expectation for food won't distract them from the evening's experiences too much. Furthermore, it is a good idea for everyone to rest before the onset of Yom Tov so that at the Seder everyone is alert and energised.

The silverware for the meal can be wrapped with napkins and left aside, instead of setting the table fully at the beginning of the evening. Doing so will lower expectations that food is imminent and will also leave more room on the table for *haggadot*, glasses, decorations activities and more.

## 3. Guests

Take into consideration who are your guests. Think about the compatibility of the various guests (age, life status, experiences, knowledge, introverts & extroverts etc.) so that everyone feels comfortable right from the beginning of the evening. You'll be spending a lot of time together and the better the compatibility,

the better the evening will flow.

Note the late hour that the Seder is expected to end and therefore when each family will be leaving for home. Will a family with many children manage with the small children that fell asleep? Will an elderly couple be able to safely walk home after a long full night, including quite a bit of wine? Is there someone to accompany the person who came alone and is it necessary (especially lone women who might not feel comfortable walking home alone)?

## 4. Involving the children in the preparations

Children can and should help in the preparations for the Seder, which does not just mean Pesach cleaning. They can be involved in setting the table, preparing place-cards, decorating the room in to match an Exodus theme or the parting of the Red Sea, and of course preparing plays, games, *divrei Torah* etc. Jobs can be given out for the evening itself as well, such as Wine Steward, Hand Washer, *Haggada* Distributor, Card Waver etc.

## 5. Treats

At the beginning of the evening, as part of the general introduction, each participant receives a small, personal bag. Every time the Seder leader feels like it, he will give out a small treat to a participant, whether for a good question, a suitable answer, singing a song, active participation etc. One should always look out for chances to give out treats. The treat can be a sweet, marshmallow, a dried fruit, a 'gift card' for small gifts such as a pencil, eraser etc. that will be given after the Yom Tov in exchange for the card. Other prizes and surprises can be handed out throughout the evening for winning quizzes, singing solo or any other reason. The aim is to encourage festive, enthusiastic and ongoing participation. This is not just for children, but for all ages!

## 6. Background, plays and costumes

Just like on Friday night, on Seder night we return home with guests who look around to see if the house is prepared for the festival and remark on it from the beginning. Also here the first glimpse, the first impression, can "make" the evening. A set

table, relevant background (map of Egypt and Israel marked with the path of the voyage, red tape around the doorsill, place-cards, napkins with Pesach pictures, posters with stories of the Exodus, etc.) create the atmosphere from the beginning of the evening, even before the first question is asked.

There are many places in the Seder where plays can be added, either by children or by adults, either pre-prepared or improvised. The further in advance plays are prepared, the better the chance of finding suitable costume!

Think about where to place things needed for the Seder but which do not need to be on the table all the time, such as extra *matzot*, wine bottles, drinks, washing cups and towels as well as any paraphernalia to be used during the Seder. The table is the visual center of attention, so it would be better to focus the guest's attention on the important things – the Seder plate, wine glasses and the exposed *matzot* throughout the 'Magid'. Other things can be added and removed as relevant. A centerpiece such as a depiction of the exodus from small toys or a map of the journey the Israelites underwent from Egypt to Mount Sinai or the Holy Land can also serve as a focal point.

### 7. Sitting and leaning

The seating arrangements should be, well, arranged. Will everyone be sitting around one table or is it possible to prepare a special table for the children with a Seder plate (real or toy) and games and riddles for them as well as having a space for them at the main table?

Consider splitting the evening into parts when it is more comfortable to sit around a table (Kiddush, meal) while for the rest of the evening can be on couches, armchairs, bean bags and the like in the living room. Make sure to have a low table in the middle of the room for the Seder plate and *matzot* and if possible small tables for the wine-cups and *haggadot*.

The seating should be planned ahead of time. For example, place children between the adults to help them with the *haggada* and other Seder matters, or adults who are more likely to engage in conversation and discussion sitting either next to or across from one another.

### 8. The Seder order

An introduction to the evening is useful. This will set out expectations, welcome guests and introduce them to one another, and will challenge them to participate actively throughout the evening.

### 9. Thank you to the helpers

The introduction should include thanks to those who helped with preparations for the festival, whether with cleaning, cooking, preparing *divrei Torah*, activities or simply for coming and celebrating together. Basically - everyone should be thanked for something. In this way the evening opens in a positive light and from here it can only get better.

### 10. One Haggada or many

There are advantages and disadvantages in having a variety of *haggadot*.

The main advantage is that the wider the variety of *haggadot*, the more commentaries, interpretations and ideas there will be. This can contribute to the discussions as each person present can feel they have something unique to add to the Seder, even if it is not their own idea.

The big disadvantage is that there won't be uniformity. This can make it more difficult to find the correct place, especially for those who are not familiar with the Seder or have difficulty reading. Another disadvantage is that sometimes there are different instructions about what to do when (filling the wine glasses, raising the *matzot* and the Seder Plate, different wording for the blessings) as well as minor differences in the text, mainly between Ashkenazi and Sephardi liturgy. The recommendation is that as part of the introduction, the Seder leader announces, politely but clearly, that everyone goes according to his/her *haggada*.

Teachers: You can print a class or school *haggada*, including an idea that each student prepared, with his or her name clearly printed. They can then share this at the Seder to their own delight as well as that of parents, grandparents and so on.



### 11. Tunes

There are quite a few songs in the *haggada* and each song has a variety of tunes - traditional and modern, vintage family and newly minted. Invite the guests to sing their tune, even if it means repeating a song that was already sung. Of course, the extra time must be taken into consideration and maybe the extra tunes should be saved for the meal, all according to your judgment. songs can also be sung in various languages. For example, after Mah Nishtana is sung by a young child, ask their grandparent to repeat the questions in Yiddish, Ladino, Russian, French or any other relevant language? How many ways can you find to say Dayeinu?

### 12. A sprint or a marathon?

Prepare the parts of 'Magid' you want to focus on in the discussions, stories, plays etc. and think which parts you run through or skip. Take into consideration that certain elements must stay in (Ma Nishtana; Avadim Hayinu; Mitchila Ovdei; Vehi She'amda; reading the four verses of the Exodus (without the midrashim); Pesach, Matzah and Maror; Hallel Mitzrayim at the end of Magid) and others that are expected (the four sons; Dayeinu).

### 13. Changing the order

Particularly with young children in mind, consider moving some of the more 'fun' songs (Dayeinu, who knows one, chad gadya) to an earlier stage of the Seder. This way, if they fall asleep early, they feel that they experienced something beyond the talking. You can always repeat these songs later in the evening.

### 14. Homework

While the Seder leader is the main person responsible for the smooth running of the Seder, this doesn't mean he or she must do everything, plan all the activities and games, think of and say all the *divrei Torah*, organise the children's activities and certainly not read the whole *haggada*. Each participant should be given responsibility for some aspect of the Seder, each at their own level. This should be given out well in advance so that everyone has time to prepare. For example, ask a family of four,

or a family with four children, to prepare something about the four sons. Another guest will prepare their own list of Dayeinu. A guest with a good, powerful voice will be in charge of the singing, etc. It is best to give specific parts of the *haggada* and not just ask to prepare something in general, since this might lead to everyone preparing something about the Ten Plagues and having nothing else interesting throughout the Magid. In addition you can ask the guests to participate in bringing the food for the Seder: One guest can bring wine, another *charoset* and a third scallions (for beating at Dayeinu). Another idea is to ask a guest to create a Do-It-Yourself charoset buffet, with a wide variety of ingredients that the other Seder participants can choose from.

### 15. Reading

Everyone should take part, each at their own level, in reading the *haggada*. If there are participants who find it hard to read without prior preparation, let them know in advance which part you want them to read, so they can prepare. Make a note of who was asked to read something specific, so you miss them out later in the evening. If there are participants who don't read Hebrew, they may read in their language.

### 16. Leadership Vs. management

There is no need to do everything at the seder alone! Ask someone else to oversee bringing the water for handwashing to the table, giving out the different foods and drink (wine, karpas, Matzah), finding napkins for spilled wine, etc. The flow of the Seder will be disturbed if the Seder leader has to get up every minute to bring something else to the table.










### 17. Dayeinu - that's enough!

There is no reason or need, and it is certainly not recommended, to prepare too much for the Seder. There will be spontaneous discussions and conversations that will take time and the Seder won't always flow as originally expected, especially if there are small children who need help being fed, put to bed, etc. The Seder leader should always pay attention to the good flow

of the Seder – when to run ahead and when to slow down. The main goal is to create a sense for the guests that they just actively participated in the Exodus and are now on the way, spiritually and physically, to the Promised Land. We always have another chance to complete what we didn't get to next year (or at the second Seder).






On that note, this guide aims to give ideas for activities and discussions, but there is certainly no need to do everything on the one night. It's an ongoing process that can take years, very much the encapsulation of Dayeinu.

### key:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  - Discussion       |  - Game & Drama |
|  - Food for thought |  - Story time   |
|  - Game             |  - Activity     |
|  - Homework         |  - Decoration   |
|  - Treat            |  - Sing-along   |


## The order of the Seder


### Before starting


-  **Decoration:** The room where the Seder is to take place should be ready for the Exodus experience, much like our ancestors "loins girded, shoes on your feet and a staff in your hand" (Shmot 12:11). As mentioned in the introduction, the first impression is important, so the table should be organized, name-cards in place, posters on the wall, red crepe paper on the doorframe to symbolize blood, blue ribbons for the splitting of the sea etc.
-  **Treat:** Prepare some hats and small water bottles in advance to give out to the guests – after all, one cannot leave for the desert without water and a hat! On the bottles put a sticker with each person's name and this can also serve as a place card. Hats or shirts can also be printed with something like "The (Cohen) Family Seder – Leaving Egypt Together".
-  **Game and drama:** If not everyone knows everyone else around the table, this is the time to play a quick ice-breaker. A quick round of "I (name of the speaker) left Egypt and took (object/person/experience) with me". The next person repeats the sentence, including their own name and the names of everyone before them, as well as the item they took and all the items that came before. Feel free to give out a marshmallow for each response that correctly includes all the other information.
-  **Treat:** The Seder can be long and tiring. The job of the Seder leader is to create the atmosphere and fill the evening with content so that it won't feel so long and tiring. One idea is to give out stress balls with a smiley or a personal message on them, showing that you are aware of the length of the evening and will do everything possible to make it pleasant, enlightening and even fun for all those participating, and if someone feels stressed, now they have a way to deal with it.
-  **Game and discussion:** Organizing the Seder plate chronologically. Each one of the different elements of the Seder plate and what is in its immediate vicinity (*karpas*, *maror*, *chazeret*, shank bone, egg, *charoset*, salt water, *matzot*, wine) symbolises something else. For example, the matza symbolises the bread of affliction and also the bread the Israelites ate upon leaving Egypt. Hand out pictures of these different elements to two different people



and ask them to arrange the Seder plate chronologically based on the symbolism. Each arrangement must be explained, since you will likely get various different answers.


 **Sing-along:** Invite your guests to sing the order of the Seder in various tunes. You will immediately discover that there are different tunes, so go ahead and sing! Hand out a prize to the one who suggests the most tunes.


 **Activity:** Seder flags. Prepare cards with pictures depicting the different stages of the Seder. Ask one of the children to be in charge of waving the flag when progressing from one stage to the next. There is no need to wave it all through that stage, especially in Magid or Shulchan Orech. Once displayed, the cards can simply be put away, or you could hang them up on a clothesline with pegs or even prepare a Seder clock and at each stage move the hand round to the next stage.


 **Activity:** Seder Bingo. Prepare a few bingo cards with words and concepts that will be mentioned throughout the evening. Ask someone else to be in charge of the master board and decide what needs to be filled (row, column, corners, everything) and wait for someone to call out the magic word (Afikoman! Exodus! Dayeinu! etc.). What's the prize? You decide. You can also play bingo as a quiz, with the players' boards containing the answers and the Seder leader or someone else periodically asking questions.

### Kadeish - קדש

As is traditional throughout the year and life cycle, we begin with kiddush, sanctifying the day and ourselves over a cup of wine.


 **Food for thought:** Who says the Kiddush? Each family or just one person on behalf of everyone? Standing or sitting? Make sure your guests know what's happening.


 **Food for thought:** When Seder night falls on Friday night or Motza'ei Shabbat, what do we do that is different even from a regular Seder night, starting with Kiddush?


 **Homework (advanced):** Choose a few times throughout the seder when there is food or drink and talk, put on a play, ask questions etc. each time the food or drink come around. Don't forget the special foods included in the meal (egg in salt water *kneidlach*, etc.).

### Urchatz - ירחץ

In preparation for dipping the karpas vegetable in salt water, we first wash our hands as an act of ritual purification.


 **Food for thought:** Who washes hands – just the Seder leader or everyone?


 **Question for discussion:** We wash our hands for ritual purity as an act of remembrance of when this was the norm in Temple times. What else do we do that serves as a reminder of the Temple, both on Seder night and beyond?


 **Question for discussion:** This is an evening of opposites. Chametz and matza, bitter maror and sweet charoset, bread of affliction and bread of freedom, actions that take us back to Temple times and at the same time the burned egg and shank bone on the Seder plate in remembrance of the destruction. Why is it important to highlight such opposites? What is it teaching us about the Exodus? About Judaism and life in general?

### Karpas - קרפס

Acting like royalty of yore, we begin the evening with hors d'oeuvres. However, we dip it in salt water. "The karpas comes from the depths of the earth to the Seder table. This is an expression of the power within each and every one of us" (Rabbi Shai Piron).

 **Question for discussion:** How would you like to grow in the coming year?

 **Question for discussion:** To what should we aspire when we grow older (youngsters and adults alike)?

 **Story time:** The two beggars. you can find an example of the story here - [www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/273207/jewish/The-Feast.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/273207/jewish/The-Feast.htm)

### Yachatz - יחץ

We divide the middle matza into two parts, saving some for later, much as a slaves save some of the food in front of them for the future, not knowing where and when the next meal will come.

We now use the bigger part for the *afikoman*, a central focus during the Seder, particularly for children.



### ▲ Activity ideas for the afikoman:

1. The Seder leader hides the *afikoman* and the children search for it. The finder gets a prize.
2. The children take and hide the *afikoman* and the adults have to search for it. If they find it – great, if not the children return it, in exchange for a prize.
3. The *afikoman* stays in its place and instead of hiding the actual *matza* a few numbered pictures of *matzot* are hidden and in return for each picture found the participants - old or young - receive a small prize (card game, *sefirat ha-omer* counter, kiss from parents, story time from a beloved aunt, etc.). Numbering the cards helps to recover them all and the prizes can be known ahead of time (eg. find card no. 1 and receive a bar of chocolate). Ideally, the cards should be hidden well before the Seder rather than during the evening itself.
4. The *afikoman* stays in its place and instead of hiding the actual *matza*, a picture of a *matza* is cut into pieces and hidden. The guests must work together to recreate the puzzle and they receive either individual or group prizes.
5. Treasure Hunt Afikoman – Prepare numbered envelopes and in each one put a clue that leads to the next location and eventually to the *afikoman* itself. Alternatively, each envelope contains a task that must be performed to receive the next envelope until eventually the *afikoman* - or *afikoman* prize - is retrieved. (Ideas for assignments: guess how many sweets in the jar, what do you get when you add up the ages of all the participants, what letter is repeated most in the names or the participants, what does our family name mean? Of course, the tasks can also be Pesach related.)

### Magid - מגיד

The central part of the Seder where the story of the Exodus from Egypt is retold and relived, concluding with our prayers of thanks and praise to the Almighty.

### ▲ a. Ha Lachma Anya - הא לחמא עניא

**Food for thought:** This is said in Aramaic as this was the main spoken language. From here we learn of the need to adjust

the Seder according to the participants every year. What other adjustments do we make at the Seder so that people will feel comfortable and understand what is happening?

▲ **Activity:** “בנהילו יצאנו ממצרים” - We left Egypt in great haste”. Take a walk around the table with your guests to reenact the exodus. If it’s safe and relevant, you can even leave the house and walk around calling out for other guests, or with a sign which reads “כָּל דֹּכָפִין יִתִּי וַיֵּכֶל” - Let all who are hungry come in and eat” in order to search for guests. You can also do this by inviting your guests to move from the table to couches. Another option is to begin the evening with this sign – even before Kiddush and before singing the order of the Seder – to show that first and foremost we make sure that everyone has a place at a Seder. The truly extrovert can even hold up such a sign on the way home from shul, after Maariv.

🗣️ **Discussion:** “הַשָּׂמָא עַבְדֵי לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוֹרִין” - This year we are slaves, next year we will be free.” What is your “Egypt”? Each participant will say one thing to which they are somewhat enslaved and would like to break free from in the coming year (for example: social media, smartphone, work, nail biting, caring too much what others think of me, etc).

**Discussion:** What is poverty and what is wealth?

### b. Ma Nishtana - מה נשתנה

👤 **Food for thought:** Traditionally it is the youngest able child who sings this while standing on a chair (something which in most homes is not acceptable all year round; another difference to note).

🗣️ **Discussion:** How is this night different? – How do you feel different tonight from one year ago? Do you like changes or prefer the old and familiar? Why is it so hard to change? What can help us change? Everyone will say what he/she wishes him/herself for the coming year and what they wish for the whole family.

### c. Avadim Hayinu - עבדים היינו

🧩 **Game:** Play “Pharaoh says” in the style of “Simon says”.

🗣️ **Discussion:** What should our attitude be towards migrant workers?

- 🗣️ **Discussion:** What does being a slave mean?
- 🗣️ **Discussion:** Why would a slave want to stay in servitude?
- 📌 **Activity:** The answer will come both from the parents and the Haggada, but it is interesting to ask the children if they know how this night is different from other nights – they can say what they learnt in kindergarten or school.
- 👤 **Food for thought:** Why write a book? What is the meaning/ advantage/importance of a story?
- 🎮 **Play:** The story of the slavery and exodus in various styles – serious, humouristic, song/rhyme, dolls, etc.

#### d. Five rabbis sitting - ... מעשה ב...?

- 🎮 **Game/play:** Recreate the discussion in Bnei Brak. Choose five people from around the table and have each one play one of the rabbis, telling either the story of the Exodus from Egypt, life under Roman rule or even a modern day setting of freedom from slavery to freedom. Add a humoristic challenge by asking each speaker to begin with the next letter of the alphabet, starting from A.

#### e. I am like a 70 year old - הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה

- 🗣️ **Discussion:** Who should be respected? Should it be based on their age, knowledge, other reason?
- 🎮 **Game/play:** Act out the mishnaic discussion. Have a young child play the part of Rabbi Elazar, and add to the scene by coming with a fake white beard ready as well as other costumes.

#### f. Four sons - כנגד ארבעה בנים

- 🗣️ **Discussion:** The four sons are present; the fifth son did not show up. Who would have liked to have and is missing in from Seder and why would you like them there? For example, soldiers in captivity, family members, a figure from history, etc.
- 🎮 **Game/play:** Role play the discussion between parent and child, only have the child play the parent and vice versa.  
Discussion (requires advance preparation): Ask a guest to prepare a presentation - preferably with images - about the four sons as they see them and during the Seder ask them to explain their choices to everyone. In keeping with the understanding of Rabbi Desler that the four sons are four characteristics within

each of us, ask a guest to speak about the four characters or characteristics that made them who they are today. This can be narrowed down to family members only, or expanded to include figures from history or even fictional characters.

- 📌 **Discussion/activity (requires advance preparation):** Print different examples of the four sons as depicted throughout history - from the earliest printed haggadot to modern-day online memes - and discuss them around the table. Another way to do this is to arrange the images around the table and ask each person at the beginning of the Seder to pick the one they most identify with. When you reach this point of the Seder, have the guests explain why they chose that particular image.

#### g. Why not start from Rosh Chodesh? - כול מראש חודש?

- 🎮 **Game:** Just as *matza* and *maror* symbolise different aspects of the Exodus, there are other constant reminders around us. Before Pesach ask the children to collect small toys and hand out a toy to each guest either at this point in the Seder or even as they first come to the Seder table. Each person must explain in turn how and why the toy is connected to the Seder/Pesach/the Exodus, etc. Another option is to have a tray of toys ready and each guest can choose their own.
- 🗣️ **Discussion:** When is the best time to learn and teach? Just before a test? Well in advance? Why is experience so important that it can't simply be learned from books or movies?

#### h. At first our ancestors were idolaters - מתחלה עובדי עבודה זרה

- 🗣️ **Discussion:** what is idolatry today? To what are we enslaved today?
- 🗣️ **Discussion:** "Blessed is He who keeps His promises to Israel" – What promises must be kept? what promises can we break?
- 🎮 **Game and Discussion:** Hand a toy phone to a guest while holding on to another toy phone. "Call" the guest and let them know that you are the Messiah and you really want to come and bring about the final salvation, all that's missing is a really good reason to do so. The guest's task is to convince you that time has come and explain why it's a good idea.



▲ **Activity / Discussion:** Joshua took the Israelites into the Promised Land. What's so good about the Land of Israel, Ask people to share their memories of a visit to Israel, what is their favourite place to visit, favourite Israeli food or favourite dvar Torah about Israel.

#### i. Vehi She'amda - והיא שעמדה

✚ **Game / Activity:** In order to internalize the message of "Vehi She'amda" - that God keeps His promise to protect the Jewish people - the participants are divided into two groups. Each group receives an envelope with cards. Some of the cards have dates on them and others an event where a person, group or nation sought our downfall. For example, one card will have the words "Expulsion from Spain" and another "1492". The group that manages to match the date to the event and then arrange the events in the correct chronological order, wins a small prize. Once we understand that we were really persecuted throughout history, and despite that we are still here, we can raise a toast and give thanks for all the miracles we experienced.

🎤 Another option is to spontaneously sing Maoz Tzur which also tells a brief part of Jewish history (Egypt, Babylon, Chanuka, Purim). Beyond the surprise element of singing a Chanuka song at the Seder, this too shares the message of Divine salvation. Once the message is understood, we cover the matzot and raise our glasses in a toast to the Almighty.

#### j. Go and learn (the four verses) - צא ולמד

🗣️ **Discussion:** The verses are taken from the section of the Torah also known as "Mikra Bikurim", which were said in the Temple when bringing the first fruit, bikurim. What is the connection between the *bikurim* - the first fruit - and the Exodus? How do we see the State of Israel – as connected or detached from Jewish history throughout the centuries? If wanted, how can this connection be strengthened?

▲ **Children's activity:** At this stage of the Haggada reading, there are midrashim that explain each word or expression in the verses of "Mikra Bikurim". This is a good chance to ask the children to leave the table, freshen up, search for the *afikoman*, prepare a play etc.

🎨 **Decoration:** The *midrashim* take each word or phrase from the verses and learn something different from each one. Create posters showing how this works. Include either the explanation given in the Haggada or write your own explanations.

🗣️ **Discussion:** With reference to the decoration, discuss the importance of the words we say/write.

#### k. Blood, fire and pillars of smoke - דם ואש ותימרות עשן

🗣️ **Discussion:** When do we say 'At the fall of your enemies do not rejoice' (Mishlei 24:17) and when do we say 'when the wicked perish, there is joy' (Mishlei 11:10). When and how should one rejoice at the fall of an enemy, whether it is an arch nemesis of the Jewish people such as Haman, or whether it is a schoolyard bully who has been caught and punished?

#### l. The Ten Plagues - עשר המכות

🎨 **Decoration:** Prepare a bag of items that serve as reminders of the plagues. For example: little toy frogs, masks with pictures of fierce animals, red jelly beans to signify blood, eye masks or sunglasses for the plague of darkness and so on. Each time a plague is mentioned, the relevant item is placed on the table or given to the guests.

🗣️ **Discussion:** What would be the modern ten plagues? For example, no reception on the cell phone or no wifi? Too much packaging and plastics that can't be recycled? Tsunamis around the world?

#### m. How many plagues? - מנין אתה אומר?

🎨 **Decoration:** This one is specially for mathematicians - prepare a chart which shows clearly how each of the Talmudic scholars learns about the number of plagues in Egypt and how many at the sea. Use these charts to explain to the guests how each word has special significance, similar to the *midrashim* we had earlier in the Haggada.

✚ **Game:** Ask the young children to clap every time they hear a number.

🗣️ **Discussion:** Is having more plagues actually good? Should we rejoice in this?



### n. Dayeinu - דיינו

▲ **Activity (requires advance preparation):** Ask a guest or guests to prepare a list like Dayeinu which tells the person's personal, family or national story. The list can be printed and given out, read and even sung right after singing Dayeinu, or as part of the meal later on.

### o. Pesach, Matzah and Maror - פסח, מצה, ומרור

🗣️ **Discussion:** Why is it that whoever did not say these three things - Pesach, Matzah and Maror - has not fulfilled his obligation? What makes these items/ideas the essence of the Seder? Is it right to talk in "codes"? What is the benefit? What is the harm?

🧩 **Game:** Make up a code or hand out a quiz in which the answers are encoded. Hand out prizes for correct answers.

### p. In every generation - בכל דור ודור

📖 **Story time:** Ask a guest to tell their own personal salvation story, Aliyah experience or reflections on a past favourite Seder. Aliyah story or personal rescue story.

▲ **Activity:** Try to bring the participants back to Egypt with leading questions such as: What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? You can use pictures of the slavery from the Haggadot to help.

### Rachtza - רחצה

This time everybody washes their hands even if earlier only the Seder leader did so.

▲ **Activity:** Instead of leaving the table to wash, have some designated washers who come with the cup of water, a bowl and a towel. This adds to the sense of royalty of the evening.

### Motzi-Matzah - מוציא מצה

Breaking the "bread" and finally eating. We eat the matza while leaning, showing that we have moved from matza as the bread of affliction to matza as the bread of the exodus.

🗣️ **Discussion:** Why do we need a separate, second, bracha before eating the matza?

### Maror - מרור

The bitter herbs, a reminder of the slavery in Egypt, are eaten without leaning. Once again we note the change from exodus to slavery, from happiness to sadness.

🗣️ **Discussion:** Why is it important to remember difficult times when celebrating good times?

### Korech - כורך

The "Hillel Sandwich" which combines matza, maror and in many cases charoset, and which used to include the Pascal lamb as well.

👤 **Food for thought (literally):** When else do we remember the Temple? For example, breaking a glass at a wedding, Tisha B'Av, prostrating ourselves during the High Holidays, leaving a small unfinished section when building a new house and more. Hand out a prize for every correct answer.

### Shulchan Orech - שלחן עורך

Time for food. Make sure to leave some room for the Afikoman!

🗣️ **Discussion:** Do you have special foods for the Seder, or foods that you purposely don't have (apart from chametz)? For example: egg in saltwater, kneidalach etc.

🗣️ **Discussion:** Use the meal to continue discussions that came up but were not given enough time in Magid.

### Tzafun - צפון

After the main meal comes dessert - the Afikoman!

### Barech - בריך

#### a. Birkat Hamazon

🗣️ **Discussion:** Who leads *birkat hamazon* (grace after meals)? While normally a guest is invited to lead, many have the custom that the host leads on Seder night.

🗣️ **Sing-along:** Sing as much as possible and also include hand actions. This also helps wake up those who may be slumbering as we head into the home straight.

### b. Eliyahu's Cup

- ▲ **Activity** (In the name of R' Naphtali Tzvi Horowitz from Rupshitz) When filling Eliyahu's cup, it is only filled halfway from the bottle and then each participant adds to it from their own cup. Add to this by asking everyone to think of what they'd like to see at the time of the final redemption and perhaps share it with the others.
- ▲ **Activity:** Ask the children to open the door for Eliyahu. (A stereotypical paternal tradition involves lightly shaking the table to make the wine overflow and show that Eliyahu is taking a sip. This doesn't trick anyone, but instead adds to the sense of gladness and positive merriment at the Seder.)
- 🗨️ **Discussion**, especially with older children starting to drive: Eliyahu visits every house in the world which is having a seder. He drinks and "drives". Why is it important for normal humans to drive according to the safety rules? How can you make sure you keep to these rules and guard lives?

### c. Rain Down Your Anger - שפך חמתך

- 🗨️ **Discussion:** Do we really mean this? What should our approach be towards the nations of the world?
- ▲ **Activity:** Consider adding the paragraph of "Rain down your love" that appears in a number of *haggadot*. This positive spin on relations with the nations of the world dates back, it appears, to a *haggada* from 1521.

### Hallel - הלל

Sing as much as possible.

- 🗨️ **Sing-along:** Sing as a choir. For the sections that involve a standard response such as in "Hodu", have one person lead the first part of the verse and then everyone else responds in unison.

### Nirtza - נרצה

- ▲ **a. Next year is Jerusalem - לשנה הבאה בירושלים**

**Activity:** This is a great time to just get up and dance!

### b. Who knows one? - אחד מי יודע?

- ▲ **Activity:** Sing the final set (who knows 13?) in one breath.
- ▲ **Activity:** Keep switching languages. Sing one verse in Hebrew, one in English, one in Yiddish and so on.
- 🗨️ **Sing-along:** You can sing here in a choir as well, with one person or group asking the question (Who knows one?), another group singing the answer (I know one!) and all together singing the end (One is Hashem...).
- ▲ **Activity:** Prepare signs with numbers and hand them out to everyone at the table. Each time a number is mentioned, the sign is raised. Another option is to show the number by holding up fingers. This will involve people working together with numbers 11,12 & 13.

### c. Chad Gadya - חד גדיא

- ▲ **Activity:** Finish off with fun! Each person chooses a figure from the song and each time the figure is mentioned, make the appropriate sound. Prepare masks ahead of time that each person can wear. It's highly recommended that one person be left in charge of the singing, otherwise there may be so much laughter that you won't get to the end of the song!



## Games

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(Some have been mentioned above)

Here are some ideas for games to be played throughout the Seder:

1. Tell the story of the Exodus but add mistakes on purpose. For example: the king of Egypt, Antiochus, told all the Israelites to build great pyramids of glass and so on. Ask the children to correct the storyteller.
2. Prepare a crown with a slot for inserting a card and cards with names from the story of the Exodus (Moshe, Aharon, Miriam, Pharaoh, Nachshon Ben Aminadav etc.) or articles (Seder plate, goblet, etc) and foods (zroa, egg, karpas, etc.) from the Seder. Throughout the evening different people are asked to wear the crown, with a card inserted without the wearer seeing it. The other participants hint what is on the card without saying the words itself. Make it harder by allowing the audience to only answer yes or no, and also by limiting the number of questions that the person can ask before guessing.
3. Use the same list of words but this time ask a guest to use pantomime.
4. Use a banana to pretend that the phone is ringing and Pharaoh is on the line. Have a conversation or let one of the other guests speak to him.
5. Ask the older children to prepare news bulletins about the latest happenings in Egypt. It should include reports, commentary and interviews with some of the participants playing Pharaoh, Moshe, the bear from the plague of wild animals, etc. The interviews can be improvised or give out cards prepared in advance (example: You are Pharaoh. You were just woken by your advisors reporting there is no drinking water in the whole of Egypt, only blood. The radio host wants to hear what you have to say to the Egyptian people and what you plan to do about the situation).
6. The story bag – Collect articles from around the house (keys, doll, watch, etc.) into a non-see through bag. Each participant in his turn closes his eyes and takes one article from the bag.

He must tell the item's story in connection to the Exodus. This takes some creativity, but can be very successful.

7. Matching game: Prepare pairs of cards with suitable concepts, such as "Hillel" on one and "Korech" on the other; "Ten" on one and "Plagues" on the other; Four/Questions; Matzah/Shmurah; Cup/Eliyahu, etc. until you have enough cards to put one card under each plate. At some stage tell all the guests to pick their plate up, read the card and find their match. This can also be done as a memory game and given to the children to play.
8. Charades – This game is for slightly older children, or those who are well acquainted with the *Haggada*. Prepare a few sentences from the *Haggada* or some verses from the Torah that speak about Egypt and the Exodus in advance and write each one on a piece of paper. Each participant chooses one card and acts out the verse they received in pantomime. The rest of the participants try to guess what verse it is. The actors may not speak, but can show with their fingers how many words are in the verse. They can also hint at rhyming words by pointing first at his ear. The game can also be suited to younger participants, guessing the plagues or simple words connected to the *Haggada*.
9. When singing Chad Gadya, ask the participants to add suitable vocal effects for the animals (children love it and you won't believe how the older children and adults join in with gusto...).



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