



# ADDING JOC VOICES TO YOUR HAGGADAH

A series of supplements for the  
Passover Seder written by Jews  
of Color.

Curated by the Tikkun Olam Commission of  
the Reconstructionist Movement, Rabbi  
Micah Weiss and Rabbi Asher Sofman

# WHY THIS SUPPLEMENT?

Until the 1930s, Haggadot across the world tended to contain the same traditional texts of the Passover seder. Over the last century, however, new Haggadot that bring modern events and values into conversation with the traditional texts have proliferated greatly. Jews today can lead their seders from feminist, queer, justice-oriented, anti-hunger, humanist, and, yes, even corporate-sponsored Haggadot illustrated with “Muppets” or “Star Wars” characters. Growing up Reconstructionist, my heritage spoke to me in dozens of voices across time and space when my family read from the Haggadah on Passover. All of us at the table had the opportunity to pipe in, too, adding to a centuries-long continuity of conversation, storytelling and prayer.

Still, it was only part of my heritage. Only part of my Jewish heritage, even. The voices and traditions of Jews of Color, Mizrahi and Sephardi Jews, Jews informed by cultures far from Europe and all sorts of world Jews have yet to be spoken across many a seder plate. To begin to bring them in and grant them due honor, we have collected a few contemporary writings from Jews of Color in this Haggadah supplement. We commit to sharing more in future years.

In their preface to *A Night of Questions*, published by the Reconstructionist Press, Rabbis Joy Levitt and Michael Strassfeld write, “The goal expressed by Mordecai Kaplan in 1941 rings true for this new effort as well. We hope to ‘articulate the prayer that is in the heart of every Jew, the prayer for a world which will be rid of all Pharaohs, and in which God alone will be sovereign.’” May the words of Jews of Color in this supplement help us articulate the prayer in the heart of every Jew — of every person at our seder table — for a truly just and liberated world.



Rabbi Asher Sofman, Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion program coordinator at Reconstructing Judaism  
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# MAGGID: COLLECTIVE MEMORY

*An introduction to the Maggid (storytelling) section of the Seder*

Every Passover, we are commanded to recall the past and to retell the story of our people's liberation from slavery in Egypt to freedom. And as we tell the story, we are asked to imagine that we ourselves were once slaves in Egypt, and now we are free. As a Black woman in America, the history of slavery is much closer in my collective memory than Israelite bondage. I often think about my ancestors who were brought to this country as slaves. I want to imagine and believe that they found comfort in the Biblical story of the Exodus, seeing themselves as the Israelite slaves and the slave owners as the pharaoh. And I also imagine them praying to God for freedom and never giving up hope.

As a Jew and an African-American, I carry the memories of people who were once enslaved. And I hold onto our collective memory of our escape from slavery into freedom. And, like my ancestors, I pray for the freedom of all who are enslaved, and I am hopeful that next year—and that one day—we will all be free.



Rabbi Sandra Lawson, Director of Racial Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Reconstructing Judaism

from [Minutes of Torah ep. 49](#), published March 29th, 2018



# FIVE ADDITIONAL CHILDREN

*Commentary on the Four Children*

In each of us lives all four children – the wise one, the fearful or doubting one, the simple one, and the one who has not yet begun to inquire. Which of these children will we present to the world?

For our time, there are five more children: the child of the Atlantic Slave Trade, the child of colonialism, the child of war, the child of the Holocaust/Shoah, and the child of forced migrations. Many of these children did not survive to be with us. The children we have lost and those waiting for relief only ask, “Why?” For these children, we have no answers. Only a pledge:

We are not yet done  
and will never be done until  
we can promise with certainty:  
**NEVER AGAIN!**



Chazzan Sabrina Sojourner, Co-Founding Director of KHAZBAR, from her own seder

# MAROR AND MAGGID: LEST THEY INCREASE YET MORE

*A response to the Egyptian fear of the Other*

They have reason to worry  
because multiply we have  
multiplied and we are the Other  
African Latinx Asian In-between  
by way of Shanghai Bnei Anusim  
Cochin Jew Abayudaya  
Jewish by way of mother  
By way of father you challenge  
Observant by way of secular parents  
practicing  
Baal Baalat Teshuvah  
Jewish by Sefarad to the letter  
by way of Yosef Caro  
By way of the Rema  
Strictly Halachic Jew  
Neither Sefardi neither Mizrachi  
neither Ashkenazi neither Israeli  
Still a Diaspora Jew

I eat with my fingers  
I dine with fine crystal  
I have cheeks burning  
Peach ruddy roasted warm coffee  
Desert mocha  
Midnight blue black Jew

Single mother empty nester child  
queer straight shut-in  
Transgender Morah Chazzan Jew  
Prepubescent adolescent young adult  
new parent  
Post-doc Jew with learning variations  
Torah-wielding Jew by Choice  
childless by biology  
Partnered married separated  
Divorced widowed adopted single  
36 under 36 awesome  
Menopausal lay leader  
Rabbi Jew  
Left right center  
Jew in the pew  
Pew Report Jew  
Forever an immigrant forever Yisrael  
Forever wrestling honestly  
Proud to be a Jew

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second page of Maror and Maggid: Lest They Increase  
Yet More

And yes, you're very welcome  
I'm an Asian Jew  
You can look at me  
You can see me  
I'm a Jew of Color  
And I claim my space  
But I get it  
Gotta justify presence  
in almost every Jewish space  
So where were we again?  
Yes, I am Jewish  
This is my name  
I am not intermarried  
And I did not take his name  
Yes, I am a convert  
And if I am, what then  
Yes, I am a Rabbi  
I am here just like you  
And yes I am a Jew  
So where were we again  
Now tell me  
All about you



Rabbi Mira Rivera, Rabbi-in-Residence and Board-Certified Chaplain at JCC Harlem and the LUNAR Collective, a contribution to the LUNAR Collective haggadah



RECONSTRUCTING  
JUDAISM



# MIDWIFING RESISTANCE

*Remembering the hidden; honoring our neighbors*

**...I am reminding myself of the Inquisitions – a period that lasted several hundred years, and did not officially end until 1834 – when Jews in places like Spain, Portugal, and parts of Italy had to find covert ways to conduct a Seder that would not alert the authorities and get them arrested, or even killed.**

In my cookbook *Too Good To Passover: Sephardic & Judeo-Arabic Seder Menus and Memories from Africa, Asia and Europe*, Rabbi Barbara Aiello, an Italian-American living in Calabria, Italy, explained her family's tradition of a Seder on the first and fifth nights of Passover to honor Christian neighbors who might have allowed their Jewish friends to kasher a room in their own homes on the fifth night, when the Inquisition authorities would not be suspecting the Jews of 'Judaizing'. This fifth night is called Seder Hamishi (from hamesh in Hebrew, meaning 'five,' and also related to the Yiddish slang word hamish, meaning 'friendly, welcoming') has become a way of honoring not only those Jews who had to hide their Judaism or had been forced to convert to Christianity (the Anusim), but a way of remembering those Christians who helped the Jews even upon risk of their own lives. For the Seder Hamishi she always invites her non-Jewish friends.



Jennifer Abadi, Sephardic and Judeo-Arabic cookbook author, excerpted from *A Seder During a Time of Uncertainty and Fear. Again*, published on [JenniferAbadi.com](http://JenniferAbadi.com).



# THE PLAGUES

*A question after naming the Ten Plagues*

Ya know, a lot of folks reengineer the plagues to account for the varied ways systematic oppression plays out in our world.

And yet, the plagues we recount in the exodus story are **AGAINST** the system.

They were in service of dismantling it.

So this pesach, my goal has been to think about the ways we can and have already been plagues to racial capitalism this year and would love to know:

How have you been a plague?



Koach Baruch Frazier,  
Au.D., Reconstructionist  
Rabbinical College '24,  
posted on Facebook on  
March 26, 2021

