

Songs of Haggadah



Cantor Benjamin Maissner
Orchestration: Ted Labow

A NOTE FROM THE SENIOR RABBI

Pesach is the most celebrated Jewish festival; even the least connected members of your family and circle of Jewish friends are likely to attend a Seder, perhaps in your home.

The quality of the celebration is often determined by the kind of text we use and the kind of music we know. The Reform Haggadah, available from our Judaica shop at around \$20 a copy, is superb, and this attempt to provide the right sound enhances it enormously. Between the book and the music you have an opportunity to conduct a great Seder.

It will require a little preparation. The person(s) to lead the Seder should spend some time beforehand and the family as a whole should try to learn the tunes in advance. Don't put the tape on while those around the table catch up with family gossip, but make them all sing with you.

If you need further help, please contact your Cantor or Rabbi.

Happy Passover - every year.

Rabbi Dow Marmur
Senior Rabbi
Holy Blossom Temple

A NOTE FROM THE CANTOR

Haggadah, literally means telling. This ritual and story telling of the Exodus from Egyptian slavery is contained in a special book used at the Passover Seder service. We are commanded in the Torah (Ex. 13:8) "V'higadeta l'vanecha"; "And thou shall tell your children on that day."

The Haggadah as we know it today with its varied and colourful literature developed from about c.e.200 to approximately the sixteenth century. In its development, the Haggadah provided us with a fixed set of instructions about the order of the service as well as with a rich oral tradition. In almost every Jewish home even in the most marginally observant household, the very basic Passover tradition is rendered with songs of this season. Chanting and singing the text of the Haggadah is generally observed in all Jewish communities, each one according to its own peculiar style and tradition.

Traditionally, the Haggadah does not have to be chanted. It is in a different category than all other scriptures which are rendered in chant. Yet the Haggadah text is full of opportunities for solo chant as well as responsorial and community singing. The melodic recitations are very similar to the simpler form of Synagogue chant: The Ashkenazi prayer mode called - Adonai Malach, while oriental Jews employ their T'fila mode. The narrative and didactic sections, if presented with knowledge and skilfulness balances out the more melodious recitation of songs of praise and Psalms, called Hallel.

In the Talmud we are told that singing Hallel "cracks the ceiling" from the enthusiasm of the participants. The medieval poetry and songs which make up the conclusion of the haggadah are sung in variable tunes in different styles. Here each family, each community and household constitutes unexplored treasures and folklore.

Our CD and booklet provides a guide to the musical tradition. Each song, tenderly arranged, recorded and notated exemplifies a different style, representing the best of our familiar Passover Tradition. Many of the songs follow the traditional chant: Kiddush, Birkat Hamazon. Others follow Hassidic East European sounds and fervour: V'nnomar l'fanav, Kol rinah, "Ma l'cha hayam, (from Hallel). The Sephardic song is represented in the renditions of: Ha Lachma and Kadesh Urchatz, as well as in the conclusion of the Seder: Chasal Sidur Pesach. The songs reserved for the end of the Seder are the "Fun songs," the songs we wait a full calendar year to intone again: Adir Hu, Echad Mi Yodeah and Chad Gadyah. These texts are sung to metrical melodies in typically folksong style. This booklet is designed to enhance your Passover Seder season; the music is notated exactly as the rendition on the recording. The order of the songs follows the sequence of the Seder rituals as published in the REFORM UNION HAGGADAH.

The recording and the songbook can be used as tools for preparation of the Seder, as well as during the actual celebration of the Festival, handing out booklets (additional sets are available from the Holy Blossom Temple) or playing the music itself throughout the festival of Pesach.

HAG SAMEACH,MOADIM L'SIMCHAH

Cantor Benjamin Z. Maissner
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שירים לליל הסדר
SONGS FOR THE SEDER