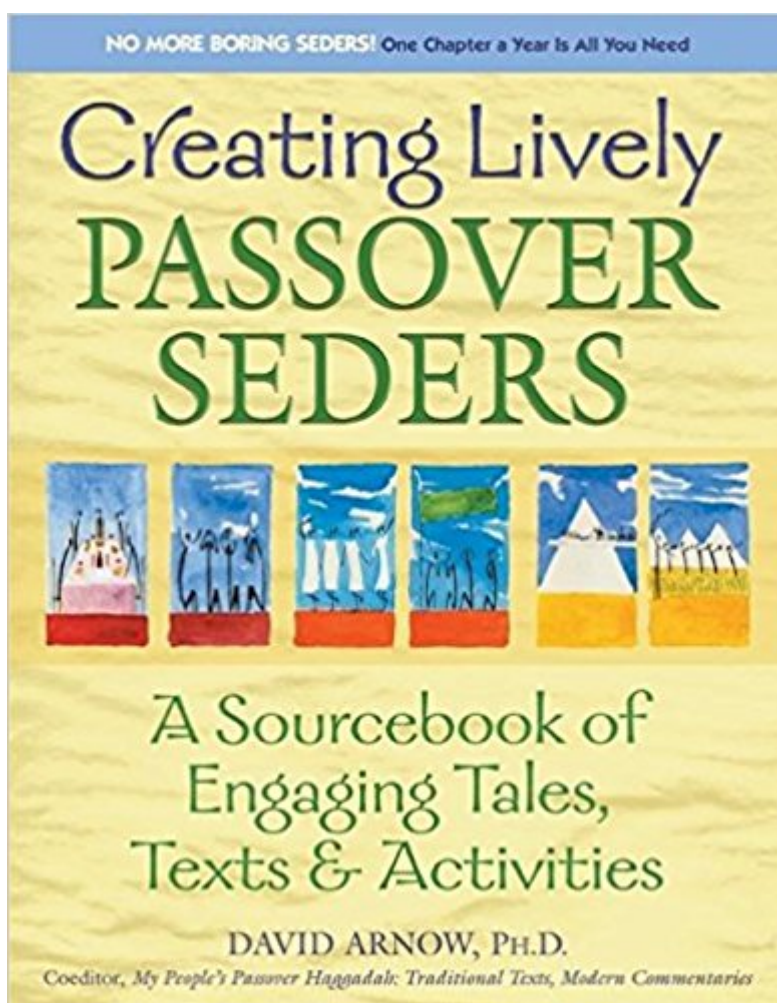


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# Creating Lively Passover Seders: A Sourcebook Of Engaging Tales, Texts & Activities



## Synopsis

No more boring Seders! One chapter a year is all you need. A guide to help you invigorate your Seder, create lively discussions, and make personal connections with the Exodus story today. For many people, the act of simply reading the Haggadah no longer fulfills the Passover Seder's purpose: to help you feel as if you personally had gone out of Egypt. Too often, the ritual meal has become predictable, boring, and uninspiring. Creating Lively Passover Seders is an innovative, interactive guide to help encourage fresh perspectives and lively dialogue. This intriguing Haggadah companion offers thematic discussion topics, text study ideas, activities, and readings that come alive in the traditional group setting of the Passover Seder. Each activity and discussion idea aims to: Deepen your understanding of the Haggadah Provide new opportunities for engaging the themes of the Passover festival, including interactive readings and bibliodrama Develop familiarity with the Exodus story, as well as the life and times of the people who shaped the development of the Haggadah Reliving the Exodus is not about remembering an event long ago, but about participating in a conversation that provides hope and strength for the struggle to make tomorrow a brighter day. With this complete resource, you can create more meaningful encounters with Jewish values, traditions, and texts that lead well beyond the Seder itself.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Mishnah implies that no two Seders should be the same," claims Arnow, who has created a new Haggadah pamphlet each year to distribute among friends and family. In this innovative book, he urges readers to make the ritual their own, using Passover as an opportunity to better

understand and internalize Judaism, freedom and faith. Each chapter begins with a short selection from the Haggadah, followed by Arnow's interpretations, ideas for discussion of relevant topics (e.g. miracles, slavery, exile) and suggestions for hands-on activities. Some adults may find these activities cheesy, but Passover has always been a holiday in which children are actively involved, and they will love "marching" from Egypt to the Red Sea, or stepping outdoors mid-meal to gaze at the full moon. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"David Arnow has written the afikomen of Seder books: An ingenious synthesis of history, legend, law, and spirituality (un)leavened with practically helpful, politically important, and psychologically sophisticated suggestions on how to transform your meal into a true celebration of asking and learning. This book belongs next to every seder plate." • Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, Emanu-El Scholar at Congregation Emanu-El, San Francisco; author, *The Way Into Jewish Mystical Tradition*

"This richly informative and inspiring book is a treasure for all those seeking to create a Seder that is alive with questions that matter." • Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, coeditor, *The Women's Passover Companion*

• "What is most enjoyable is the connection between the ancient and the contemporary, the timely and timeless quality of our eternal texts which David Arnow has masterfully managed to bring to our attention. Will serve as a marvelous companion piece to the Passover Haggadah and can be referred to year after year." • Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, chancellor, Ohr Torah Stone Institutions of Israel

• "A deeply enriched and enriching Seder awaits those who use [this] comprehensive sourcebook. [Its] chapter on women of the Exodus is alone worth the cover price." • Letty Cottin Pogrebin, author, *Deborah, Golda, and Me: Being Female and Jewish in America*

• "The book everyone who has to lead or attend a Seder has been waiting for. Simply put: This book will ensure that Seders will be intellectually challenging, emotionally engaging, and spiritually uplifting for years to come. If we only have David Arnow's new book to guide us to creating lively Passover Seders, Dayyenu it would be enough!" • Rabbi Irwin Kula, president of CLAL: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership; coeditor, *The Book of Jewish Sacred Practices: CLAL's Guide to Everyday & Holiday Rituals & Blessings*

• "A gift to Jewish parents and teachers who want to explore the many layers of history and interpretation in our celebration of freedom." • Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell, editor, *The Open Door, the Reform Haggadah*

• "A treasure trove of lore and scholarship, insight and activities that will fascinate and enlighten readers and enrich their Seders for decades. An extraordinary array of strategies for reaching the diverse groups who gather to share the Seder experience." • Rabbi David A.

Teutsch, past president, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College – a welcome support for Seder leaders everywhere. As Jewish life continues to evolve, the Seder remains a pivotal moment to transmit values, stories, and the culture of our people. This book is full of ideas, texts, and information on how to enrich the experience for all gathered at the table! • Rabbi Geela Rayzel Raphael, rabbinic director, Jewish Women's Spirituality Institute, JCCs of Greater Philadelphia

we agree with cantor epstein... this book is too scholarly, too long, and boring. we will have to post online to find some interesting songs, stories and things to add to our seder. if you want a rabbinical thesis, this is the book for you

I liked the author's open-mindedness but honestly I bought it because I thought my computer science instructor was the author. I just want to say that my teacher is the real David Arnow, he told me so :)

This is a second expanded edition of the 2004 successful first edition, for which David Arnow, its author, received a lot of positive feedback. It contains excellent, interesting, and informative material for people who want to go beyond the traditional Passover Seder night service, or deeper into it, and make it more relevant and inspiring. Arnow writes that his book is for all strands of Jews from secularists, vegetarians, and kabbalists to Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox. The book will help all Jews create a good warm feeling at their Seder. The Orthodox rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Chancellor of Ohr Torah Stone Institutions in Israel wrote that the book will "serve as a marvelous companion piece to the Passover Haggadah and can be referred to year after year." The Passover Seder (the word means "order") is a ceremonial home family meal designed to recall the ancient exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and give the history a contemporary relevance. It was first sketched out in the third century Mishnah (code of Jewish law) in a 435-word plan. Today, the traditional Ashkenazic (Jews from Germanic and some other lands) Haggadah has over 5,500 words, not counting any commentary. Unfortunately many Jews do not understand this important ceremony, and Arnow's book remedies this problem. Virtually all of the 25 chapters begin with a passage from the Haggadah (the "Retelling"). Thus the Seder leaders and the participants can select which part of the Haggadah they want to explore. The first chapter, for example, spends 16 pages discussing the Seder plate, which receives a prominent placement on the Seder table. Arnow explains the different customs of what is put in the plate, why people differ, why place items on a plate at all, what items were added by some people in recent times and why did they do so, why is the matzah, the

unleavened bread that is so significant to Passover, not on the plate. He has some readings about some of the items on the plate that participants may want to recite during the Seder or discuss. In another chapter he focuses on the wide-spread myth that Moses is not mentioned in the Haggadah. He shows that Moses is mentioned once explicitly and once by reference. Why, he asks and then answers: do people imagine that Moses is not mentioned and why only these two references? What do these facts tell Jews about the meaning of Passover? Arnow also includes an English translation of the tenth chapter of Mishnah Pesachim, the earliest description of the Seder, in the appendix, and interesting chapters on "Women of the Exodus," and "The Exodus from Egypt: The Question of Archeology." Thus, this book is a valuable tool for anyone wanting to know more about the Passover, its ceremonial Seder meal, and the meaning of dozens of parts of the meal ceremony.

It is very rare that a book as innovative and useful as this has been so widely endorsed. Anyone who wants to have a Seder that will keep people awake not only awake, but really interested, should try this book. All you need is one chapter a year. That's plenty. The blurbs say it all."David Arnow has written the afikomen of Seder books: An ingenious synthesis of history, legend, law, and spirituality (un)leavened with practically helpful, politically important, and psychologically sophisticated suggestions on how to transform your meal into a true celebration of asking and learning. This book belongs next to every seder plate."-Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, Emanu-El Scholar at Congregation Emanu-El, San Francisco; author, *The Way Into Jewish Mystical Tradition* "A deeply enriched and enriching Seder awaits those who use [this] comprehensive sourcebook. [Its] chapter on women of the Exodus is alone worth the cover price."-Letty Cottin Pogrebin, author, *Deborah, Golda, and Me: Being Female and Jewish in America* "What is most enjoyable is the connection between the ancient and the contemporary, the timely and timeless quality of our eternal texts which David Arnow has masterfully managed to bring to our attention. Will serve as a marvelous companion piece to the Passover Haggadah and can be referred to year after year."-Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, chancellor, Ohr Torah Stone Institutions of Israel "This richly informative and inspiring book is a treasure for all those seeking to create a Seder that is alive with questions that matter."-Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, coeditor, *The Women's Passover Companion* "A wonderful collection of readings, stories, and activities to enhance your Passover celebration."-Dr. Ron Wolfson, vice president, University of Judaism; author, *Passover: The Family Guide to Spiritual Celebration* "A treasure trove of lore and scholarship, insight and activities that will fascinate and enlighten readers and enrich their Seders for decades. An extraordinary array of strategies for reaching the diverse groups who gather to share the Seder experience."-Rabbi David A. Teutsch, past president,

Reconstructionist Rabbinical College"A welcome support for Seder leaders everywhere. As Jewish life continues to evolve, the Seder remains a pivotal moment to transmit values, stories, and the culture of our people. This book is full of ideas, texts, and information on how to enrich the experience for all gathered at the table!"-Rabbi Geela Rayzel Raphael, rabbinic director, Jewish Women's Spirituality Institute, JCCs of Greater Philadelphia"The book everyone who has to lead or attend a Seder has been waiting for. Simply put: This book will ensure that Seders will be intellectually challenging, emotionally engaging, and spiritually uplifting for years to come. If we only have David Arnow's new book to guide us to creating lively Passover Seders, Dayyenu-it would be enough!"-Rabbi Irwin Kula, president of CLAL: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership; coeditor of The Book of Jewish Sacred Practices: CLAL's Guide to Everyday & Holiday Rituals & Blessings"A gift to Jewish parents and teachers who want to explore the many layers of history and interpretation in our celebration of freedom."-Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell, editor, The Open Door, the Reform Haggadah

These texts/discussions might be lively for a seder full of Jewish scholars or rabbis. This is not full of fun, creative seder ideas! It is interesting, but not for most lay people..As a cantor, I was going to use this book as part of a class on making seders more lively and engaging. Needless to say, I didn't use it or recommend it to anyone! It is pretty dry and boring, actually.This book primarily deals with stimulating intellectual discussions based upon certain parts of the Haggadah. However interesting the topics and discussions inside this book may be to the author, they are really NOT for most families who want something a little more creative and vibrant. This is not for anyone who interested in getting young children involved with craft activities, songs, costumes, stories, etc. You can get a million better ideas for your seder online for free. Pass this book by, unless you have a family that is extremely erudite and loves to deliberate.

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