

Rabbi Morris Allen:

In a Haggadah text filled with awe and wonder, perhaps the most significant comment Marcia Falk adds to the traditional Haggadah is this:

By far the most important symbol at the table is the community of participants. "Whether two people or thirty are in attendance, tonight we represent am yisra'el, the people of Israel". By placing the participants directly in with the other symbolic representations of the Seder, Falk underscores the centrality of Pesach as THE master narrative of the Jewish people. It is through this understanding that Falk reminds us of our particular heritage and responsibility, even as she celebrates aspects of universal concern and focus. As our guests opened up this new Haggadah, one comment immediately stood out at our table. In reflecting on the color coding of the pages, a guest suggested that in doing so, she softened the telling immediately and enabled doubters to see a way in." On her apricot pages are her brachot, blessings. Here we are to see a reimagined Divine which is the greater whole of which we are an inseparable part. Her metaphors are a wellspring of life,... [Read more...](#)

Rabbi Margie Jacobs:

Marcia Falk's Night of Beginnings offers a wonderful balm to the overwhelm, anxiety, and harshness- the kotzer ruach and avodah kashah- of these times. This is a Haggadah that speaks intimately and gently to our hearts. The subtle flower sketches that permeate the pages gently invite us to unfold as a flower does. The spacious, soft visual beauty of this Haggadah calls to the places in us that words can't reach, captured in Falk's interpretation of the "The Child Who Cannot Ask." Her generous, positive reconstruction of all four children was a favorite moment of the Seder for my family. Even in words, Falk manages to touch that which is hidden within us. The poetry of the expanded Song of Songs section and Marcia's own poetic liturgy elicit the love and yearning within us that might catalyze our own liberation.

The simplicity and spaciousness of the Haggadah left me wanting more words in just a few places, including a clear reconstruction of the four divine actions traditionally associated with each cup of wine.

The most profound absence noted at our Seder table was that of the traditional blessing... [Read more...](#)

Ben Schein:

We often talk about the Seder as being about "the order". However, this year I have found myself thinking about ordering as a verb, as in we are going to order or really "re-order" the Seder itself. That is the core of what I found myself doing and appreciating in using Marcia Falk's new Night of Beginnings: A Passover Haggadah.

Falk's "reorderings" stimulated my thinking. I really appreciated how she has created new sections of the Haggadah while still using the traditional order as its core. In the maggid, telling, she helps us understand that we introduce the story, then tell it in a way that preserves the integrity of the Biblical story itself. Throughout the Haggadah her color coding helps us be aware of the distinctiveness of each part of this liturgical coat of many colors.

Falk has also "re-ordered" by re-introducing old-new characters into the maggid itself. Moses and Miriam are no longer missing from the story. They are an integral part of the new seder of a Biblical maggid that was displaced over time. This is an act of creative recovery. [Read more...](#)

**Rabbi Jeffrey Schein:**

All the virtues of the Haggadah noted in reviews in popular journals--the beautiful prose-poetry, the delicate aesthetic illustrations, the invitation to move the Pesach journey along the axes of outward to inward ,concealed to revealed-were at play during our

Seder. Perhaps the supreme compliment came from a non-Jewish guest. Though explicitly non-religious, he wanted to bring a copy back to his fiancée in Singapore because of the spiritual values permeating the volume.

I facilitated the Maggid portion of the Seder. I was eager to help participants explore the deep feminism of Marcia Falk's orientation and also to locate the volume in the tradition of new, contemporary Haggadot that dates back to the publication of The New Haggadah by Behrman House in 1941. Here is how I hoped the two intentions would come to fruition.

I began by suggesting that the 1941 Haggadah sought to open up the meaning of freedom and slavery. [Read more...](#)