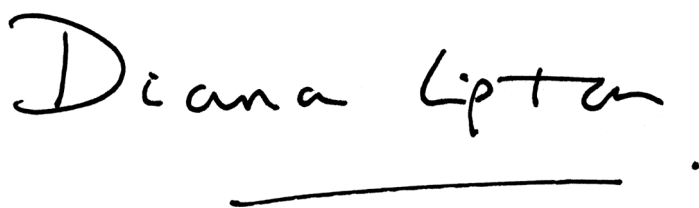


Diana Lipton. Beth Shalom Reform Synagogue, Cambridge, England.

As Head Teacher of a thriving cheder with the unofficial slogan 'Help keep the Anthropology out of Judaism', I am often asked to recommend a good Passover Haggadah. This should be very easy - there are thousands on the market - but I've found it surprisingly difficult. Many members of our synagogue are on a very steep learning curve. Their own families did not make Shabbat at home while they were growing up, but they want to do it. Most of them had a Seder of some kind at Pesach, but it was often more of a family gathering than the celebration of a festival. Even those who had a more ambitious Seder have realised in the meantime that they depended on their grandparents to make the matzah ball soup and lead the singing. They want a Seder that combines the family focus with the ritual, but where to start? What should they cook? What kind of service should they have? And, more important than it may sound, what songs should they sing?

When Naomi Tippett showed me some early drafts of her Pesach Haggadah and described her plans for an accompanying cook book and CD, I wondered if I might at long last have found what I needed. I have! This Haggadah is thoughtfully and creatively designed for a family Seder. The English translation accompanying the traditional Hebrew texts is accessible and engaging. The illustrations - a sophisticated collage theme using pressed flower images and children's representations of the Passover story - are vibrant and truly exquisite. The accompanying cookbook is full of mouth-watering recipes to suit all tastes. And best of all, from my point of view, is the superb CD, featuring all the songs you half remember and some wonderful innovations. (Say goodbye to the tinny voices and circa 1965 backing music that seem to be a feature of so many Passover recordings!) The children of Melbourne's King David School manage to sound at once traditional and contemporary, impressively professional and inviting. This is a CD you will want to listen to in the car in the weeks leading up to Pesach and, what's more, you'll want to learn the songs and sing along. If you haven't mastered them all in time for your Haggadah's first outing, you can keep the CD close to hand and let the King David Choir swell the voices at your Seder table. And once you feel comfortable with the words but need some help with the tunes, there's even a 'music only' section for valuable moral support.

There is no Jewish festival that is not enlivened and enriched by the concept of Hiddur Mitzvah (beautify the mitzvah), but it's always seemed to me especially important at Pesach. The Seder Plate, a festive table, delicious food, a beautiful Haggadah that delights the eye as it brings to life our inspiring story, and songs that you may or may not have learned from your parents but will certainly want to teach your children. There is an excellent chance that this wonderful haggadah set is exactly what you've been looking for, and I strongly recommend that you check it out!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diana Lipton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature is a horizontal line that starts under the 'D' and ends with a small dot under the 'n'.

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