

**Henshke, David.** מה נשתנה: ליל הפסח בתלמוד של חכמים = *'Mah Nishtanah': The Passover Night in the Sages' Discourse.* Magnes Press, 2016. 626 pp. \$46.00. (9789654938709). Hebrew.

Despite its title and cover illustration from the Kaufmann Haggadah, this book is not a commentary on the Passover Haggadah. Rather, it is a scholarly tour-de-force that examines the Talmudic sources – Mishnah, Tosefta, Bavli and Yerushalmi – that served as the foundation on which the text of the Passover Haggadah was later built.

Henshke critiques a wide variety of scholars who have found in the Passover Seder all manner of ideas, influences and surprises. He relentlessly deploys textual criticism, contextual interpretation, and terminological precision in order to strip these fascinating but unfounded suggestions away from the sources. The essence of Henshke's approach is the distinction between different chronological periods, and between textual statements from different periods or different perspectives that were compiled together into the multi-layered corpus of rabbinic literature. To take one core example: Henshke claims that, during the Second Temple period, eating the Paschal sacrifice formed the focal point of Passover night. In the wake of the destruction of the Temple, different adaptations of the ceremony emerged. Rabban Gamliel moved other foods, matzah and maror, to the center to take the place of the sacrificial meat, while other rabbis placed their emphasis on learning and discussion the laws of the Festival. These conflicting positions are reflected in different places of the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Talmud. The intricate process of untangling these different traditions and realigning them into their original conceptual contexts makes this work both magisterial and captivating.

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