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Escape Velocity, A Post-Apocalyptic Passover Haggadah



Synopsis

Large heirloom edition: 13.75 x 9.75 inches and weighs almost 4 lbs. Gripping illustrations with over 60 full-page and in full-color. Silver gilded pages provide a luxury finish. A fully illustrated pull-out section that spans more than 3 feet! The perfect gift to buy for the host of your Seder or to provide for each person at your Seder (they will not want to share this one). Also makes an excellent Bar and Bat Mitzvah gift.

Synopsis: On Passover a Jew is obligated to see himself as if he came out of Egypt. Yes, but how? The Passover Haggadah, the text that is meant to guide one through the Seder night, is almost as old as the holiday itself. It tells a story of ages ago, removed by millennia from our modern lives. And how can Jews relate to an ancient persecution when we are not seventy years removed from the cataclysm of the Shoah? *Escape Velocity* works under a very simple assumption: The Haggadah is the one source Jews use, on the one night they have, to express, and be impressed, by their faith. *Escape Velocity* sees to it that the Haggadah lives up to that promise. It strives to find relevance in a story few Jews can relate to. It recognizes the intent of the text and places enormous demands on it to not only be a good read, but for it to be a good feel for it to be felt: deeply. *Escape Velocity* is a how-to of sorts. It sets an example of how to bring one's self to the Seder table and intertwine the richness inherent in each of us with the poetry and song found throughout the Haggadah. It reveals an ancient tale which is told by the wise and the pious, but one that is meant to be read and listened to by the Jew of today. It is a celebration of synthesis between the wisdom of the ancients and modern man's unique vantage point - a post-Apocalyptic vantage point. When the Haggadah is read through the eyes of such a generation, it takes on an existential tone and moves from a commemoration of an event in the past, to a celebration of our lives in the now. *Escape Velocity's* commentary, its design, as well as its illustrations all work to uncover a dynamic, riveting opportunity to connect with one's faith and impart that faith to others. It reveals a Haggadah of existential proportions, perfectly suited for a people of extra-ordinary circumstances. In the end, *Escape Velocity* teaches us that we have more in common with our ancient ancestors than we think. Our emerging from the dark shadow of the Shoah makes the exodus of our people from Egypt a blueprint of sorts for our modern lives. The Jewish people has rarely known a time where their hopes and dreams were not ripped from their tightly clenched fists and tossed out a window like a handful of magic beans. Indeed, history has been less than kind to the chosen ones. As the Passover Haggadah declares: In all ages they rise up against us to destroy us Expulsion. Crusade. Pogrom. Pick your persecution; the Jew has known it. Yet somehow one gets the feeling that recent times have taken knowing to new levels. Never before have so many been so close to so much unabashed, raw evil. Never before have so few survived, been pushed so far and left with

so little. The Holocaust: more than crusade, more than pogrom, even more than genocide was no less than deicide. And although faith was never wholly rational, it was now reduced to the ridiculous, and the faithful left wide open to ridicule. These are the times in which we find ourselves. And suddenly, the very fact becomes an imperative. In these times, we must find ourselves! The Seder night then becomes the battleground where man's stare must penetrate his own heart, and without missing a beat his heart must courageously return the gaze.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The focus here is on the larger existential meaning of life and why G-d created this imperfect yet darkly beautiful universe. In Judaism there is never just one answer to any question. This provocative Haggadah allows us to go past the simple reading of its text and wrestle with the philosophical questions about God and reality. provokes us to think beyond the simple reading of the Haggadah text and appreciate that the deepest philosophical questions of G-d and reality.

--Amos Lassen, Amos Lassen Review
Escape Velocity is a post-Holocaust retort par excellence. It rebels against traditional theology, only to reclaim Passover's redemptive message from the ashes.

--Jay Michaelson, The Forward
Stan Lebovic's Pesach Haggadah is a work of art both in its illustrations and in its text and insights into the basic story of Judaism and the Jewish people. It is an intellectual work, fraught with emotion and extremely powerful in its illustrations and text. It should not only be read, but it should be studied, absorbed and savored. Stan Lebovic is a person of enormous talents and deep faith and wisdom. His work should be appreciated and disseminated.

--Rabbi Berel Wein, Prolific author and world renown lecturer Rav, Beit Knesset HaNassi Jerusalem

& Director, Destiny Foundation. Stanley Lebovic's *Escape Velocity* is a tour de force of words and art that strives to unlock the deeper meaning of the Passover Haggadah and its contemporary message to the modern reader. Lebovic struggles with the two lenses through which he views the world: the lens of a scholar of classic Jewish theology and philosophy, and the lens of a Holocaust survivor's son. In his first book, *Black is a Color*, the author and artist used his masterful artwork to present his personal theodicy of the Holocaust and how he has embraced the Divine messages contained therein. In *Escape Velocity*, Lebovic hearkens back to the Shoah only occasionally, but there's no doubt that it serves as the fuel which compels him to probe into the deeper purposes of existence. The author thus focuses on the larger existential meaning of life and why G-d created this imperfect yet darkly beautiful universe. Using the text of the Haggadah as his backdrop, Lebovic has woven an intricate theological tapestry that culls from a wide variety of classic Jewish literary genres. *Escape Velocity* is best read in small doses. Each page of art and text demands rumination and digestion. Lebovic's goal isn't to force-feed the one singular truth about creation, Exodus, or existence; if one truism exists within Judaism, it's that there's never only one answer to any question. Rather, he provokes us to think beyond the simple reading of the Haggadah text and appreciate that the deepest philosophical questions of G-d and reality are contained within this very innocuous-looking text. After *Escape Velocity*, you will no longer be able to hurriedly recite the Haggadah on the way to the matzah balls. --Rabbi N. Daniel Korobkin, Author of the New Translation of the classic philosophic work, *The Kuzari: In Defense of the Despised Faith* Rabbi of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation A brilliantly crafted artistry of graphic and text that is sure to inspire personal introspection and family conversation around the Seder table and beyond. It further encourages the reader to more fully grasp and appreciate the span of Jewish experience that is found within the words of the Haggadah. --Rabbi Raphael B. Butler, President of The Afikim Foundation --Rabbi Raphael B. Butler, President of The Afikim Foundation

Born in Los Angeles in the year 1963, Stan Lebovic grew up on a healthy dose of California sunshine. He was raised, however, beneath the dark shadow of the Holocaust. As the son of a survivor of Auschwitz, Stan's life became dominated by a search for balance between the life he lived and the life his father bequeathed him, a struggle between the light and the dark, between the good and the evil. His battle successes and failures were the subject of his first book, *Black is a Color*. The book earned praise for its brilliantly creative approach to the subject of evil and theology. *Escape Velocity*, his second book, brings that approach to the most widely read piece of literature in the Jewish world: The Passover Haggadah. Stan travels extensively, exhibiting his work and

encouraging others to carry on the dialogue he has begun. Though his work is a labor of love, he recognizes the sacrifice and patience of his family, especially his wife.

My search for chometz is never as challenging as my quest to uncover a new and inspiring Hagaddah. I always find some chometz hidden behind a sofa or under a bed in the form of a half eaten candy left there by my grandchildren. The hunt for the Hagaddah, however, has me visiting bookstores, speaking with colleagues, and of course scouring the internet. There seem to be so many options as new commentaries are published each year, and while each one has a unique approach, they never speak to me personally. This year my search led me to a purchase *Escape Velocity*. My initial thoughts were that this would make a nice coffee table addition, and as I was sipping my Saturday morning coffee about to read the newspaper, I decided to peruse through the new addition to my coffee table sitting comfortably next to my collection of History and Art books. Three hours later I was completely transformed as the Haggada was now a part of my personal life story. The trials and tribulations that all of us endure were captured in the artwork and commentary of the author in a way that Passover now became a personal event that I experienced. I am making my first Passover Seder as the first 50 years of my life I attended the Seder by a family member. I approach this Passover with trepidation; how do I convey the important message to my Children and Grandchildren in a way that will inspire them to internalize and personalize the Passover events? *Escape Velocity*, as the title's message conveys, allowed me to break out of the traditional boundaries that restricted my interpretation of the Hagaddah. I am now excited and anticipating the Seder and my challenge to all those attending my Seder will be to relate their life events and personal stories to the events that occurred thousands of years ago and continue to unfold every day. I even have a new appreciation for my favorite bedtime story "Jack and the Beanstalk"

I've always found the best Haggadot are the ones that inspire us to talk about their contents. What is a Seder, after all, without spirited conversation about Passover, the Exodus, and the freedoms we all aspire to? Many Haggadot explore these topics in words, sometimes illustrating or illuminating those words with occasional, often literal pictures. The four sons are, well, four guys in different outfits and hair styles. Rarely does an Haggadah come around with illustrations and images that themselves could inspire a full Seder's worth of conversation and debate. Lebovic's work is truly astonishing, and promises to transform the Seder experience.

The incredible thing about this Haggadah is that it manifests all of the essential elements of any stupendous Seder: beautiful and poignant artwork, thought-provoking questions, traditional themes and resources, and deep exploration of the incredible paradoxes that are at the core of the Passover experience. At the same time, this amazing work is much more than the sum of its parts. It is an experience unto itself: Jewish and universal; esthetic and philosophical; steeped in both tragedy and joy; an experience to be appreciated at a communal ritual table, or alone in quiet contemplation. I'm so glad Lebovic made this Haggadah, and so glad to have added it to my personal library!

Without a doubt, this Haggadah is a must have for Pesach. The layout of the book is well written, with visually stunning pictures throughout. Using a mix of both scholarly sources, as well as quotes from classics such as Jack and the Beanstalk, Lebovic makes this text interesting and relevant to readers of all ages. Lebovic does an excellent job of explaining how the artwork represents each piece of the Exodus from Egypt. If you are looking for a book that is as exquisite as a coffee table book, with interesting commentary, and a fully functional Haggadah, this is the one for you.

This is the most spectacular haggadah I've seen. I know it will enhance our seder table in a way we will all enjoy. Stan Lebovic's illustrations are second to none. I plan on giving "Escape Velocity" as a present to some very special people and can't wait to share this with family and friends. All I can say is WOW!

this is a beautiful haggadah, with amazing illustrations, and indepth commentary. my husband has been going through it in the evenings and discussing different parts with the family. its thought provoking and interesting. I have to say one more time its so beautifully illustrated, the pictures are so captivating, thanks Mr. Lebovic, i'm going to be a proud gift giver

Better than expected. A masterpiece in every way. Looking forward to using it to lead this year's Passover seder. Whether you are looking for a Haggadah or a beautiful (and meaningful) coffee table art book you have found what you are looking for.

ESCAPE VELOCITY is an amazing haggadah from the front cover to the back cover!The details in the art and the words that Stan has written are so powerful!Truly a wonderful book to own and to give as a gift for everyone.

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