

ALTERNATIVE SEDER TRADITIONS FLOURISH IN *Canada*

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Excerpted section from an article which appeared in the CJN's glossy magazine, *Canadian Jewish Life*, Spring 2018. It featured, among others, Oraynu's Pass-over Haggadah and Seder:

All secular and humanistic seders focus on universalist visions of social justice, which take an equal seat to the Judeo-centric narrative. Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto hosts a seder from the same historic Jewish humanist lineage, but celebrates it on the first night of Passover. Oraynu's seder expands the Exodus story beyond the biblical to embrace the whole history of diaspora Judaism with its many exiles, relocations and journeys into the unknown.

As Jordan Ginsberg, a reporter who attended a seder using Oraynu's haggadah, *Roots and Branches*, wrote in 2012, "Faithful in its retelling of the Exodus, *Roots and Branches* also embraces the story as a metaphor, and that is what makes it such a compelling text.... Here, the authors augment biblical history with first-hand accounts of the Jewish Diaspora to America, of living like a king in the early 1900s, making two dollars a day pushing a Manhattan fruit cart after fleeing the Bolsheviks. "The idea is not 'Next year in Jerusalem,' but rather that Judaism is pluralistic: that its history can edify you, that you can be whole without claiming Israel as your birthright, that your ultimate destination after escaping that which binds you is one of your own choosing and that you can build your own blessed kingdom wherever you land."



The Oraynu seder has a twist I haven't heard of before. Traditionally there are three pieces of matzah on the plate. In Oraynu's seder, there is a fourth piece to "acknowledge those people who were not born as Jews, but who identify with us and with the struggles of the Jewish people."



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