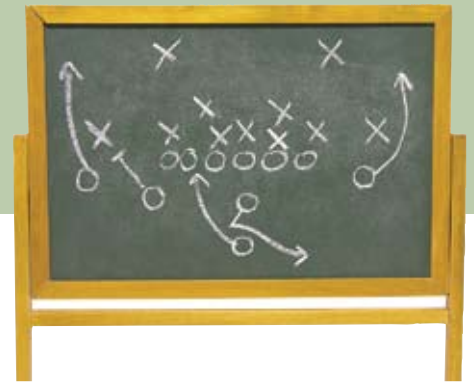


# The Haggadah – The Ultimate Playbook

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by Alan "Shlomo" Veingrad



**At the start of training camp** each year, every player gets handed a playbook the size of the yellow pages. He is expected to study it and to know every single play backwards and forwards. Each play is strategically designed to use all eleven players to achieve a specific objective. The playbook provides the spacing, directions, timing, objectives and techniques required for every player for each play.

At times, every player will come up short in his execution but as long as he wins his share of the battles all is well. The worst thing, though, is to get the play wrong because you did not study it. Pro Football Hall-of-Famer and legendary Coach Forrest Gregg, who coached me in Green Bay, once told the team "if I open up your playbook on Sunday before the game and don't find ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, coffee and maple syrup stains all over it you didn't study your plays well enough." More than anything else, our success would depend on how well we would execute our plays.

Great players study  
the playbook not just  
to memorize it but to  
*understand it.*

But if you don't know who to block or where to go or what to do, the play breaks down and you have no excuse. Can you imagine running the wrong play because you didn't know what to do? And worst of all – worse than knowing you

messed up on national television – is that you, your teammates and your coaches will all watch the whole thing together the next day – in slow motion. Talk about embarrassing!

In Judaism, we have several "playbooks" that describe how we can achieve our various spiritual objectives. One of my favorites is the Haggadah – the playbook for the Passover Seder. We have a lot to accomplish on this special night and we've got to do what it takes to make the most of it. It is our best opportunity of the year to break out of our own personal limitations, symbolized by the slavery of ancient Egypt. We can "gain more yardage" towards ultimate freedom at the Seder, and throughout Passover, than at other time of the year.

Like a playbook, the Haggadah is full of specifics: Make kiddush and lean in luxury as you drink the wine, wash your hands, take a vegetable and dip it in saltwater, break the middle matzah, ask and reward questions, etc. Each of these "plays" is strategically designed to achieve an objective – enhancing our identities and deepening our freedom. But if you want to be successful, you have to study the playbook. And, you have to understand it.

Success in football, and in Judaism, is about more than x's and o's. You also have to know what it takes to win. If you just follow the arrows on the chalkboard, you might get the play right but you'll never be a winner. Great players study the playbook not just to memorize it but to *understand it.*

As a former offensive lineman coming out of the huddle to the line of scrimmage, I can assure you we didn't focus on the instant success of crossing the goal line; we focused on making progress and "moving the chains."

The Hebrew name for Egypt is Mitzrayim, which means boundaries or limitations. These boundaries and limitations that exist in the realm of our relationship with God cause us to serve with limited commitment. We need to ensure that we don't get taken down by our inner Egypt by taking out that playbook and studying it before the big night. That's what it takes to execute our plan, making an unbounded commitment to Godliness. We just need to keep moving those chains, inch by inch, yard by yard and Mitzvah by Mitzvah.

Ready? Blue 29! Blue 29! Hut, hut, hut –  
Have a happy, meaningful and kosher Passover.

**About the author: Alan Shlomo Veingrad**

Alan had a seven-year career as an offensive lineman in the NFL, first with the Green Bay Packers and then the Dallas Cowboys, with whom he won Super Bowl XXVII. Alan's presentation style and post-retirement experience in business have made him a much sought-after speaker by many organizations whose management seeks to lead their organizations by exemplifying a culture of personal and professional achievement blended with a higher purpose. Alan has captivated religious audiences around the world, sharing his inspirational messages of transformation, personal excellence, leadership, team play and spiritual connection. Today Alan is the National Marketing Director with CJA and Associates, a nationwide consulting firm specializing in tax elimination strategies and estate planning options for business owners and professionals. For more information, please visit [www.alanveingrad.com](http://www.alanveingrad.com). For Media Inquiries and bookings, please contact [alan@alanveingrad.com](mailto:alan@alanveingrad.com) 954 205 6369.