

# PASSOVER

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## HAGGADAH



פֶּסַח

# INTRODUCTION

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*Passover is the oldest religious holiday that is still celebrated today. It began over 3500 years ago when the Lord freed ancient Israel from Egyptian bondage. After they were freed, the children of Israel were commanded to celebrate this holiday to help them remember how the Lord had freed them from captivity. In obedience to that ancient commandment, Jews still observe this holiday today, and many believe that the promised Messiah will come to free them on this day, just as the Lord freed their ancestors so long ago.*

*As members of the House of Israel, we also have claim on God's deliverance, and a duty to remember the great things He has done for our ancestors. Prophets in every land and generation have urged their people to remember the captivity of their fathers and God's deliverance, as the basis for their faith in Him. When speaking of Passover, the Lord commanded: "This is a day to remember. Each year, from generation to generation" (Exodus 12:14 NLT Bible). With this in mind, we celebrate the Passover this evening, and ponder in our hearts the great mercies of the Lord to His children when they were in bondage to Pharaoh. As we remember His deliverance of an ancient people in a foreign land, we gain renewed confidence that He will also deliver and uphold us, and will free us from those things that bind us, that in Him we can have life, and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). Tonight we celebrate an ancient festival, but with new eyes.*

*There is much that we do not know about the origins of the traditions and rituals of Passover. Though the Talmud lays the foundation for the structure of the modern Seder service and the foods ritually consumed (which our Seder is based on), it is a later composition—the Biblical text only instructs participants to partake of roasted lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs, with no instructions about the order or accompanying rituals.*

*Various scholars disagree on when certain practices came into existence, and how they were observed. In fact, even the authors of the four canonical Gospels disagree on several key elements of Christ's last meal with His disciples. It would be neither possible*

Once Judas left, the Gospel of John indicates that the entire mood of the evening changed. From this point on Jesus teaches some of the most important teachings contained in all scripture. From this moment, light could fill the darkened chambers of the upper room. Yet, a valuable lesson had already been taught to the disciples because of the seating arrangement Jesus had chosen. A lesson of servant-leadership, and a lesson of true love and devotion towards even the greatest of sinners.

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## SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

**Exodus 12-14**—The Lord institutes Passover. The children of Israel go out of Egypt, and pass through the Red Sea unharmed. The Lord swallows up the Egyptians in the Red Sea.

**Numbers 9:1-14, Deuteronomy 16:1-8**—The Lord commands the children of Israel to keep the Passover each year.

**Matthew 26:17-35, Mark 14:1-26, Luke 22:1-38, John 13-17**—Jesus eats the Last Supper with His disciples.

**Hebrews 11:23-29, 1 Corinthians 5:7-8**—Paul discusses the Christian implications of the Passover.

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26**—Paul gives us the first recorded account of the Last Supper and the institution of the sacrament.

EDITED BY: DANIEL SMITH AND AMY GRIGG

For more information on how to host your own Passover dinner, including preparations, recipes, handouts, music, etc. visit:

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or  
toeveryonethatbelieveth.blogspot.com

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If this seating arrangement was followed by Jesus, and from the scriptures it seems to be the case, Jesus then was seated not in the center, but second from the left. John 13:23 indicates that John the beloved was seated to Jesus' right, as John had to lean on the bosom of Christ to ask of the identity of the betrayer. Matthew 26:23 indicates that Judas was seated to the left of Christ, in the seat of honor, as both Jesus and Judas were able to eat from the same bowl. John 13:24 indicates that Peter was across from John, on the right side, as he had to signal to John to ask Jesus who would betray him.

This would mean that Jesus had placed the youngest apostle John on the side of eminence, while placing Peter, the chief apostle, in the seat of the servant. This would make sense, for according to Luke 22, there was strife among the disciples as to who was the greatest. Always the teacher, Jesus said unto them: "But he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth." (Luke 22:26-27).

To further teach Peter and the others of the importance of servant-leadership, Jesus then washed the feet of the twelve disciples, including the feet of Judas. Peter, who Jesus had placed in the seat of the servant, was most likely responsible for washing the feet of the guests, yet Jesus, the host, and the greatest of them all, now acted as servant and washed their feet. This would explain the protest of Peter when he says: "Lord, dost thou wash my feet? ... Thou shalt never wash my feet." (John 13:6, 8). Then Jesus teaches Simon Peter, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet... The servant is not greater than the lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." (John 13:14, 16).

This seating arrangement would also mean that Jesus placed Judas, who would betray him, in the seat of honor. It seems that to the very end Jesus loved Judas, and desired to teach him of his love by placing him in this most important seat. It was as if Jesus was trying to give Judas one less reason to betray him. Jesus, at some point, gives Judas a "sop," a piece of bread dipped in broth, yet another sign of honor. However, Judas had already made up his mind. "And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly." (John 13:27).

*nor helpful to present every conceivable theory or argument surrounding these disputes tonight. What we present tonight is our interpretation, based on scripture, modern Jewish practice, and, where possible, the opinions of well-respected scholars.*

*Footnotes throughout the text and explanatory essays in the appendix add information about connections between the Passover and the Last Supper, as well as early Christian doctrinal commentary on this, the most central of Jewish holy days. Much of the text comes from standard Jewish Passover texts, though we have added explanatory material and have simplified the modern Seder to include only elements we believe are likely of ancient date.*

*Ours is by no means the only possible interpretation. Passover is a holiday that is meant to inspire many questions—in fact, four questions are traditionally asked and answered at every Passover meal. We encourage you to devote time in your personal study to symbols or practices that are meaningful or intriguing to you. We hope that you will come away from this celebration with a greater understanding of the symbols and events that are part of our sacred scripture. We hope that you will gain a greater appreciation for a culture and a religion that is not your own.*

*Passover is a feast of deliverance. It carries with it the understanding that, as we have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, we have an obligation to likewise extend mercy to all. It is a feast of remembrance. Its traditions are filled with rich symbolism that cannot easily be forgotten and that help us know of the true power of God. It is a feast of obedience. It is kept today by Jews for the same reason that the ancient Hebrews put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their home—because God commanded it. Finally, it is a feast of gratitude. As we express our thanks for God's mercy, we gain humility, which gives us greater faith in Him and a renewed desire to follow His plan.*

# THE SEDER SYMBOLS

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*The Passover ritual begins with first a description of the various symbolic foods that are used as part of the service, and then a retelling of the story of the exodus of ancient Israel. This is followed by the actual meal and then the final blessing.*

## Leader

Tonight we celebrate the Passover, the feast of freedom and redemption, and we read from the *Haggadah*. Haggadah is a Hebrew word meaning story. It relates our history: enslavement in Egypt, freedom, the holy covenant at Mount Sinai, and the return to the Promised Land.<sup>1</sup>

Tonight we will be celebrating the Seder as it was celebrated in the time of Christ. Many aspects of the Passover celebration have changed over the centuries of its observance, but we will try to follow the customs that would have been practiced in the first century A.D., as far as is known. As we do so, try to put yourself in the shoes of those disciples who ate the Last Supper with Christ that fateful night. They rejoiced in the deliverance of their ancestors from the bondage of Egypt, not fully understanding the redeeming power of the One who ate beside them, the true Passover Lamb of God.

As we eat the Passover tonight, as members of the House of Israel ourselves, we rejoice in the marvelous manifestations of the Lord's power of deliverance throughout the ages, even down to the present day, in the lives of our ancestors and especially in our own lives. Just as the Lord delivered the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, we know that He will deliver us from the bondage of death, of sin, of heartache and of sorrow.

The Haggadah ritual is called '*seder*' meaning 'order' in Hebrew. We will now explain the various dishes on the table that are part of the Seder meal.

Tonight we will eat lamb, which has been the central feature of the Passover meal since it was first instituted. It is used as a reminder

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<sup>1</sup> Joshua 5:11 — During the feast of Passover, Joshua led the children of Israel out of the wilderness and into the promised land.

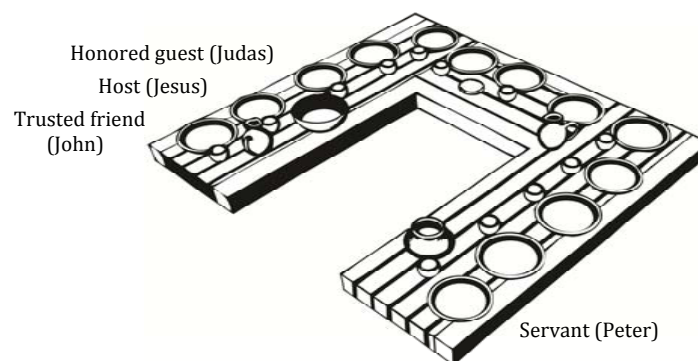
## A POSSIBLE SETTING FOR THE LAST SUPPER

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It was Thursday, just before the setting of the sun. Jesus and the apostles had gathered in a large upper room on Mount Zion in the upper city of Jerusalem. The home would have been a wealthy home, as it had an upper chamber, and all of the preparations for the Passover feast would have already been made. The most prominent feature of the room would have been a low table in the shape of a "U" called a triclinium. A triclinium was a Roman styled table, of various sizes and styles that had been adopted by the Jews of the first century. The table had large couches, or cushions, placed on each of the three sides, allowing the middle to be open for entertainment and servers.

The guests would lie on their left side facing the inside, leaving their right hand free to eat the meal. This would mean that each guest could lean on the bosom of the person to his or her left. Their legs would be towards the outside, allowing a servant to wash their feet as they ate the feast.

The host of the feast would not sit in the middle, as is often depicted in artwork of the Last Supper, but instead second to the left, with the guest of honor on his left, and a trusted friend to his right. The seating then continued around the triclinium, the most important guests seated on the left, then going around the table, with the least important sitting on the far right. The servant, if seated at the table, would occupy the last position, closest to the door, so they could go and obtain more food as the evening progressed.



*All drink, except the leader,<sup>25</sup> the fourth cup of wine, the Cup of Hope and Freedom.*

## FINAL BENEDICTION: FREEDOM OF JERUSALEM

### Leader

The rites of the Seder are now concluded, in accordance with ancient precept and custom. With the same zeal that we have prepared for this day may we plan and live our daily lives.

May the spirit of the Passover, and our knowledge of God's ancient and continual redemption of His chosen people, always fill our lives, that we might always remember Him, that we might always have His Spirit to be with us.

### Participants

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, for the vine and the fruit thereof, and for the goodly, ample, beloved land which Thou hast chosen and bestowed as a heritage for our fathers to eat of its fruit and enjoy its bounty.

Have pity, Lord our God, on Israel Thy people, on Jerusalem Thy city, Zion the dwelling place of Thy glory, on Thine altar and Thy Temple. Build up Jerusalem the holy city soon in our days, bring us up thither and give us happiness in it that we may eat of its fruit and enjoy its goodness, and bless Thee there in holiness and purity.

And cause us to know there the joy of this Passover festival of unleavened bread.

This year we celebrate the Passover in captivity, next year may we rejoice as free people. This year our world is filled with uncertainty, next year may it be filled with light and peace brought by the Messiah, and may He come speedily, speedily, soon, and in our day.

This year we observe these rituals in exile,

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM!

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<sup>25</sup> Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 26:29 that He would not partake of wine again until His Second Coming. In this context, that could indicate that He would not partake of the cup of freedom or hope until true freedom and hope were brought to the earth at His Second Coming.

of the lamb offered on Passover at the Temple in Jerusalem two thousand years ago.<sup>2</sup> It also recalls that God passed over the houses of the Hebrew people in Egypt when He saw the blood of the lamb on their doorposts.<sup>3</sup>

Then, when your children ask you, "What is the meaning of this rite?" you shall say: It is the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when God struck the Egyptians but spared our houses." *Exodus 12:26-27*

*Participants lift the various dishes of food as they are explained.*

### A Participant

Here are the bitter herbs. In Hebrew they are called *maror*. They remind us of the bitterness and hardship of the slavery of Israel.

### A Participant

Here is a mixture of chopped apples, cinnamon, and nuts. It is called in Hebrew *haroset*. The haroset is a reminder of the mortar used by the Hebrew slaves in Egypt.

### Leader

This dish of *matzot* or unleavened bread<sup>4</sup> is a reminder of the haste with which the Hebrews left Egypt.

### A Participant

As part of the Seder we each will partake of four cups of wine mixed with water to represent the four stages found in Exodus by which Israel was delivered from captivity: "Therefore say to the children of Israel, I am the Lord. I will *free you* from the burdens of

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<sup>2</sup> Lamb is no longer eaten at modern Jewish Seders. This practice was discontinued in 70 A.D., when the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple made temple sacrifices impossible.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 5:7—"For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

1 Peter 1:18-19 NIV—"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 5:7-8—"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

the Egyptians and *deliver you* from their bondage. I will *redeem you* with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of chastisement. I will *take you as my people* and I will be your God.” *Exodus 6:6-7*

The wine is usually red, recalling the color of the blood, which the Hebrews dabbed on the doorposts of their homes, using a branch of hyssop, so that their first-born sons could be ‘passed over.’ When Jesus was on the cross, the Roman soldiers filled a sponge with vinegar, or cheap wine, and held it up to Jesus’ mouth using a reed. John, remembering the symbolism of the Passover lamb, tells us that the reed was a stalk of hyssop (John 19:29). John also records that after Christ’s death, “one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.” *John 19:34*

### A Participant

That special wine cup in the middle of the table is called Elijah’s cup. It relates to a fifth expression of deliverance:

“And I will *lead you* to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and I will give it to you as a possession, I the Lord.” *Exodus 6:8*

Elijah’s cup is a symbol of prophetic hope in the coming of the Kingdom of God upon our world.

## THE PASSOVER SEDER

### THE BLESSING OF WINE: קדש

#### FIRST CUP OF WINE: THE CUP OF BLESSING<sup>5</sup>

*Servants fill the first cup of wine.*

### Leader

Before each cup of wine, we recite the same traditional blessing, which praises God as the “creator of the fruit of the vine.” As

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<sup>5</sup> “And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves.” (Luke 22:17) This verse is most likely referring to the first of the four cups of wine.

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

### All

“Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.

### Leader

“God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.

### All

“Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.” *Psalms 118:16-29*

## CONCLUSION OF THE SEDER: נרצה

*The servants fill the wine cups for the fourth and final time.*

### THE CUP OF HOPE AND FREEDOM

### Participants

*All hold up cups of wine.*

We will partake of the fourth cup of wine, the cup of freedom. It is a reminder of freedom, its hopes, struggles and dreams for so many enslaved nations and individuals. As committed children of God, we are called to bear witness of this precious gift and make it known to all peoples of the earth: those who seek justice, those who lack any rights and who fight for freedom.

### Leader

*Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p’ri ha-gafen.*

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

## Leader

At this moment we welcome Elijah the Prophet, the messenger of final redemption and deliverance from all forms of oppression. Blessed be his presence and inspiration for all of us and humanity.

## Participants

Jewish legends recall the mystical appearance of Elijah in times of trouble, to promise relief and redemption, to lift downcast spirits, and to plant hope in the hearts of the downtrodden.

Jewish tradition states that Elijah's greatest mission will come when the Messiah appears on earth to usher in the long-promised millennial era of peace and tranquility. It will be Elijah the Prophet who will precede the Messiah and will announce his arrival, and with it, the arrival of freedom and peace for all God's children on the earth.

## RECTIAL OF THE HALLEL: הלל

*At this point, families usually recite or sing all or part of the Hallel.<sup>24</sup>*

## Leader

"The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death. Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord: This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.

## All

"I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

## Leader

"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

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<sup>24</sup> Matthew 26:30—"And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." This "hymn" was most likely the Hallel, Psalms 113-118. As noted previously, the Hallel was sang in two parts (113-114 & 115-118) during the meal.

believers in Jesus Christ, we remember that, during His mortal ministry, Christ's first miracle<sup>6</sup> demonstrated His divinity by fulfilling this prayer. At the wedding feast in Cana, Christ created wine for the celebration, demonstrating that He was literally the "creator of the fruit of the vine." (see John 2:1-11)

*Participants lift the wine for the blessing.*

## Leader

*Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.*

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.<sup>7</sup>

## Participants

Praised art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has chosen us among all peoples and sanctified us through Thy commandments. With an everlasting love Thou hast given us the holidays and seasons for rejoicing, and this day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the time of our freedom, in remembrance of Israel's going out from Egypt.

*All drink the first cup of wine, the Cup of Blessing.*

## WASHING OF THE HANDS: ורהי

## Leader

Let us wash our hands. As we wash, let us renew our commitment to God to have "clean hands and a pure heart."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Moses' first plague was that of turning water to blood. Jesus' first miracle (according to John) was turning water to wine (a symbol for blood). The last plague was the redemption of the Jews by the death of the lamb. Jesus' last and greatest miracle was his own death, which released all from physical and spiritual bondage.

<sup>7</sup> Note the use of "fruit of the vine" in both Matthew 26:29 and Luke 22:18 during the Last Supper.

<sup>8</sup> The ritual of washing is often a form of preparation for an individual prior to entering a holy place or participating in a religious ritual (see Exodus 29:4). John 13:5-9—Jesus washes the feet of His disciples at the Last Supper. According to the KJV this occurred when supper had "ended." However, most Bible translations state that the washing of feet took place during or even before the meal (see John 13:2 in NIV Bible for example).

*Servants bring out washbasins and towels and assist with the first washing of hands.*

## THE PASSOVER STORY: מַגִּיד

### THE BREAD OF AFFLICTION<sup>9</sup>

*The recital of the Haggadah begins with the Ha Lakhma Anya, "The Bread of Affliction." The leader lifts up the plate for all to see the unleavened bread or matzot, and the company recites:*

#### Participants

This is the bread of affliction which Israel ate in the land of Egypt. It is a symbol of days of slavery and pain, endured by the Jewish people for centuries. It is a symbol also of the slavery and pain of so many in the world today. The Lord our God gave bread and drink to the Israelites while in the wilderness; let us likewise give freely to those who are in need. As the Lord God has released us from captivity, let us likewise go to those who are physically and spiritually bound and help to free them from bondage by our acts of service.

#### Leader

Let us open the door of our hearts to welcome the hungry of body and spirit. Let all who hunger for bread and freedom come to partake, to celebrate, and partake of the bread and freedom of this our Passover celebration.<sup>10</sup>

*Matzot are set down by leader.*

### THE FOUR QUESTIONS

*The youngest person,<sup>11</sup> traditionally a child, asks the Four Questions.<sup>12</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 53:5,10—Christ is torn and bruised for our sakes.  
John 6:51—Christ is the bread of life.

<sup>10</sup> John 13:27-30—When Judas leaves to betray Jesus, the Gospels report that some of the disciples think he is going to give to the poor.

<sup>11</sup> John the beloved would have been the youngest of the disciples and may have been the one that would have asked these four questions.

## THE THIRD CUP: THE CUP OF REDEMPTION

*Servants fill the wine cups for the third time.<sup>22</sup>*

#### Participants

The biblical text reminds us of God's redemption: "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment." *Exodus 6:6*

The Gospels record that Jesus took the "cup after supper" and gave it to His disciples, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you" "for the remission of sins." *Luke 22:20, Matthew 26:28*

*All hold up cups of wine.*

#### Leader

*Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.*

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

#### Participants

"What shall I return to the Lord for all his goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. Praise the Lord." *Psalms 116:12-14, 19 NIV<sup>23</sup>*

*All drink the third cup of wine, the Cup of Redemption.*

### THE CUP OF ELIJAH

*All participants stand and the door is opened to welcome Elijah the Prophet. Servants fill the Cup of Elijah in the middle of the table.*

*After a few seconds of silence, the community welcomes the Prophet Elijah, the messenger of peace.*

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<sup>22</sup> Luke 22:20 uses the term "The Cup after Supper," which is possibly referring to this part of the Seder.

<sup>23</sup> Part of the Hallel, which is traditionally sung at Passover meals.



herbs in order to observe the biblical command: They shall eat the Passover offering “with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.”  
*Numbers 9:11*

*All eat the “Hillel Sandwich.”<sup>20</sup>*

## THE PASSOVER MEAL: שלחן עורך

*Dinner is served. Lamb is traditionally the main course.<sup>21</sup>*

*After the meal has been eaten, each guest traditionally finishes with a small bite of lamb, after which it is customary to eat nothing else, so that the slain lamb will be foremost in our minds.*

## GRACE AFTER THE MEAL: ברכה

### Leader

The Bible indicates the obligation to say grace: “When you have eaten and are satisfied you shall thank the Lord your God for the good land which he has given you.” *Deut. 8:10*

Praised be the Lord, our God, Father of all, who sustains the world with goodness and gives us the food of the earth.

### Participants

We thank Thee, Lord our God, for the goodly land which Thou hast given to our ancestors, and for bringing us out from the land of Egypt, and redeeming us from the House of Bondage. We thank Thee for the Torah which Thou hast taught us, and for the life of grace and loving kindness which Thou hast graciously bestowed upon us, and for the food we eat with which Thou dost nourish and sustain us at all times.

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is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn.” It is possible that Jesus was paraphrasing Hillel when He formulated His own “Golden Rule.”

<sup>20</sup> As lamb is not eaten at modern Jewish Passovers, today Jews combine the haroset (apple mixture) with the bitter herbs and matza, however, Hillel would have used the lamb, not the haroset, to fulfill the command of Numbers 9:11.

<sup>21</sup> The bible teaches us that the lamb was to be “without blemish, a male of the first year” and that you are not to “break any bone of it” (Exodus 12:5, 46). John notes, “when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs” (John 19:33 NIV) thus fulfilling this aspect of the Law.

Why is this night different from all other nights?

1. For on all other nights we eat either leavened or unleavened bread, but on this night only unleavened bread?
2. On all other nights we eat any kind of herbs, but on this night only bitter herbs?
3. On all other nights we eat all kinds of meat roasted, stewed, or boiled, but on this night only roasted lamb?<sup>13</sup>
4. On all other nights we eat sitting or reclining. Why on this night do we only recline?

### Leader

Indeed, this night is different from all other nights, for on this night we celebrate the going forth of Israel from slavery to freedom; from captivity to redemption; from a time of hardship to a time of blessing.

*Various participants may speak the following.*

1. Why do we eat only matza tonight?

We eat unleavened bread to remind us of the haste in which Israel fled Egypt. “With the dough they had brought from Egypt, they baked cakes of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves.” *Exodus 12:39 NIV*

2. Why do we eat bitter herbs tonight?

We eat bitter herbs to remind us of the bitterness and hardship of the slavery of our ancestors in Egypt. The scripture explains: “And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field.” *Exodus 1:13-14*. We

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<sup>12</sup> See Exodus 13:14 and Deuteronomy 32:7.

<sup>13</sup> As lamb is no longer part of modern Jewish Passover meals (since the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 A.D.), the third question is traditionally, “On other nights we do not dip parsley even once. Why on this night, do we dip them twice?” We substitute this third question about roasted lamb because during the Last Supper, lamb would have been a critical part.

also eat bitter herbs that we may remember that by knowing the bitter we may know how to prize the sweet.

### 3. Why on this night only roasted lamb?

We eat roasted lamb on this night to help us remember that the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts of the children of Israel saved them from the angel of death. Likewise, it is because of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God that we are redeemed from sin and death and brought out of our own form of bondage. The lamb reminds us that only through the blood of the lamb will all mankind be saved.

### 4. Why do we recline at the table?

We recline at the table tonight because reclining while eating is a luxury afforded only to free people. Our ancestors were slaves in Egypt, and tonight we remember how God freed them and brought them to a land flowing with milk and honey, where they could be their own masters.

#### Participants

We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt and God brought our people from there with a strong hand and a promise of redemption. It is our duty to remember and tell the story of the captivity of our ancestors and to remember how the Lord delivered them by His power. In every generation, the story of the Exodus has given us and our ancestors the courage to face difficulties and to continue with our religious commitment and faith.

## THE STORY OF OPPRESSION AND LIBERATION

#### Leader

Blessed be God who keeps his promises to Israel and fulfills them in every age. Blessed be the Holy One who has saved his people from tyrants and tyrannies.

#### A Participant

The book of Deuteronomy states: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt, and sojourned there; he became a great and important community. The Egyptians dealt

#### Leader

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.<sup>17</sup>

#### Participants

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe who sanctified us with Thy commandments and commanded us to eat of unleavened bread.

*Each participant eats a piece of matza.*

## EATING OF THE BITTER HERB: מָרֹר

*Everyone takes some of the bitter herb with matza.*

#### Participants

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who sanctified us with Thy commandments and commanded us to eat of bitter herbs.

*All eat the bitter herbs.<sup>18</sup>*

## THE HILLEL SANDWICH: כּוּרֵךְ

*A piece of matza is broken, and each participant takes two pieces with some bitter herbs and a piece of lamb forming a sandwich.*

#### Leader

Thus did Hillel<sup>19</sup> do when the Temple in Jerusalem was still standing. He combined the Passover offering, matza and bitter

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<sup>17</sup> John 6 – Jesus feeds the five thousand, literally fulfilling this prayer of bringing "forth bread from the earth."

<sup>18</sup> It is possible that it was at this point that Jesus gave Judas the "sop," or piece of bread, dipped in the bitter herbs. If so, how appropriate that Jesus should tell Judas, "that thou does, do quickly," (John 13:26-27) for what he was about to do would bring about great bitterness both for Judas and for Jesus. Matthew 26:23—"He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me."

<sup>19</sup> Hillel was a great Elder who lives during the time of Herod the Great. One of his best known sayings was, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That

reason, we raise our cup and drink the wine of memory, the memory of salvation.

*All hold up cups of wine.*

#### **Leader**

*Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.*

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

*All drink the second cup of wine, the cup of memory.*

## **WASHING OF THE HANDS: רחצה**

#### **Leader**

We are ready to enjoy the Passover meal. Before we eat let us wash our hands and say all together:

#### **Participants**

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe who sanctified us with Thy commandments and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.

*Servants assist in washing the hands of the participants for the second time.*

## **BLESSING THE MATZA: מוציא-מצה**

#### **Leader**

The earliest surviving account of the Last Supper records that, "The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread, And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me" *1 Cor. 11:23-24*. Though today we use regular leavened bread in our worship services, Christ would have used the only bread available during the feast—this unleavened bread, or matza, which we will likewise bless and eat.

*Every participant breaks off a piece of the matza and holds it up.*

harshly with us and oppressed us, they imposed heavy labor upon us." *Deuteronomy 26:5-6*

#### **A Participant**

The Book of Exodus confirms this story. It tells us that after Joseph died, a new Pharaoh arose who forgot what Joseph and his people had meant for Egypt. This Pharaoh enslaved all Israel and condemned all newborn males to death.<sup>14</sup>

#### **A Participant**

A child, a descendant of Levi, was saved by Pharaoh's daughter and reared in the palace. Later in life he realized that he was a son of Israel and escaped to the desert. There in Horeb, God revealed himself at the burning bush and said: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob...I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey...the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them." *Exodus 3:6-9 NIV*

#### **Leader**

Moses pleaded with Pharaoh, who stubbornly refused to free the Hebrew slaves. God afflicted him with Ten Plagues that left the people and the land desolate.

*Servants pour a small amount of wine into empty cups.*

We recall the Ten Plagues by pouring drops of wine as we mention each of them. We do not pour the wine out of joy. According to an ancient Jewish tradition, we express our compassion for the suffering of the Egyptians. Although they were enemies and tormentors, they were also children of God, and fellow human beings. We temper our joy tonight with drops of wine spilled from our cups.

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<sup>14</sup> Matthew 2: 16-18 – All babies were killed in Bethlehem when Christ was born. Both Moses and Jesus were miraculously saved from the slaughter of the innocents.

*As each plague is mentioned, the participants spill out a drop of wine into the plates. All recite in unison.*

Blood	Boils
Frogs	Hail
Lice	Locusts
Flies	Darkness
Cattle Disease	Slaying of the firstborn

## SINGING OF THE FIRST PART OF THE HALLEL

### All

“When Israel came out of Egypt, Jacob from a people of foreign tongue, Judah became God’s sanctuary, Israel his dominion. The sea looked and fled, the Jordan turned back; the mountains leaped like rams, the hills like lambs.

“Why was it, sea, that you fled? Why, Jordan, did you turn back? Why, mountains, did you leap like rams, you hills, like lambs?

“Tremble, earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turned the rock into a pool, the hard rock into springs of water.” *Psalms 114 NIV*<sup>15</sup>

## DAYENU<sup>16</sup>

*The participants say the Dayenu refrain, “For that alone we would have been grateful,” after the leader’s enumeration of God’s blessings. This is done with great enthusiasm.*

### Leader

How thankful we must be to God for all the good done for us. Had God only divided the sea for us and not brought us through it dry-shod...

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<sup>15</sup> Traditionally, the Hallel (Psalms 113-118) was divided into two parts (113-114 & 115-118) and sung during two points of the Passover meal (see *The Temple* by Alfred Edersheim, pp. 190 and 192).

<sup>16</sup> Although this poem was not in use during the time of Christ, the concept of recognizing God’s abundant blessings is not new. During the Last Supper, the apostle Phillip echoed a similar sentiment in John 14:8, “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” Dayenu means “it would have been enough” or “it would have sufficed.”

### Participants

Dayenu! For that alone we would have been grateful!

### Leader

Had God helped us forty years in the desert and not fed us with manna...

### Participants

Dayenu! For that alone we would have been grateful!

### Leader

Had God brought us to Mount Sinai and not given us the Torah...

### Participants

Dayenu! For that alone we would have been grateful!

### Leader

Had God given us the Torah and not brought us to the Land of Israel...

### Participants

Dayenu! For that alone we would have been grateful!

### Leader

We are grateful to the Lord, our God, for the redemption from Egyptian slavery, for the splitting of the waters of the Red Sea, for the manna that sustained us in the desert, for the Law, the Sabbath, and the peace of our hearts.

## SECOND CUP OF WINE: THE CUP OF MEMORY

*Servants fill the wine cups for the second time.*

### Participants

Not only were our ancestors redeemed by God from slavery: all of us also are now redeemed in spirit and example. Each of us, each generation, is a beneficiary of God’s power of salvation. For this