

# Passover Haggadah

Seder held at 370 King Street, March 29, 2001

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Preparations for the Seder</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1	Prohibition of 'Leaven' (chametz) . . . . .	3
1.2	Guests for the Seder . . . . .	3
1.3	Food . . . . .	4
1.4	Seder Table . . . . .	4
<b>2</b>	<b>Haggadah</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	Parts . . . . .	5
2.2	Welcome . . . . .	5
2.3	Lighting of Festival Candles . . . . .	5
2.4	The First Cup: The Cup of Sanctification . . . . .	5
2.5	Washing of the Hands . . . . .	6
2.6	The Seder Plate . . . . .	6
2.7	Dividing the Matzah . . . . .	8
2.8	The Four Questions . . . . .	9
2.9	The Second Cup: The Cup of Memory . . . . .	10
2.10	Dayenu . . . . .	11
2.11	The Passover meal . . . . .	11
2.12	Grace After the Meal . . . . .	11
2.13	The Third Cup: The Cup of Redemption . . . . .	11
2.14	Elijah's Cup . . . . .	12
2.15	Psalms . . . . .	12
2.16	The Fourth Cup: The Cup of Praise (or Hope) . . . . .	13
<b>3</b>	<b>References</b>	<b>15</b>

# 1 Preparations for the Seder

From time immemorial, Jews have celebrated Passover in memory of their liberation from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12:7). Throughout the festival, matzah is eaten, as it was during the Exodus itself. The Bible tells us that on the last night in Egypt each Jewish household ritually slaughtered a lamb and then consumed it at a family gathering. This ritual was commemorated in the Temple times by each household, with the sacrifice of a lamb at the Temple on Passover Eve. The lamb was then eaten at a festive gathering of the family or by a group of friends who spent the evening recalling the memory of the historic deliverance with prayers and psalms. This banquet – reverent in purpose and joyful in practice – has been perpetuated through the ages in the Seder ceremony.

Passover is the oldest of all the Jewish holidays. It marks the beginning of the religious calendar (Exodus 12:1,2). In Hebrew, Seder is the Hebrew word for order; the Seder is an ordered service. The Biblical background of the Seder is found in Exodus 12, 13, and 14.

The Haggadah (which means "telling") is the book which gradually emerged over the centuries, fixing the rituals of the Seder. Originally, the Haggadah was brief. But with each passing generation, many interpretations, legends, and traditions were added. Today there are over 1200 variations.

## 1.1 PROHIBITION OF 'LEAVEN' (CHAMETZ)

The Biblical command does not only point to the eating of matzah on Passover. In its full form, it orders the removal from the household for the duration of the festival of all unleavened food and all dishes and utensils that have been 'connected' with chametz during the rest of the year.

Chametz covers any fermented product of grain. To ensure that contact with chametz should not be made accidentally, virtually everything for Passover is made separately, under strict supervision; observant households will put away all their 'normal' dishes at Passover time and use special Passover dishes.

As a basis for this, the home will be thoroughly spring-cleaned well in advance. The purpose is deeply religious in origin, but in living terms it helps to generate an air of sparkling freshness on Seder night. The more specific removal of chametz (food and dishes) will take place on the day before Passover. In observant households there is a ritual to seal this clearing-out process. On the night before, the head of the household does a formal search by candlelight to find any stray crumbs, some of which are swept away with a feather into a little box, and on the next morning all is burnt. There is a special prayer to go with this, followed by a solemn statement: "May all leaven in my possession, whether I have seen it or not, or whether I have removed it or not, be annulled and considered as dust of the earth."

## 1.2 GUESTS FOR THE SEDER

Apart from the religious basis of the Seder, the most important ingredients are good company and good food. Both need a certain amount of advance preparation.

The company should, if at all possible, be built around the family, however scattered its members might normally be. A Seder never achieves its full flavor, though, unless there is also a good mixture of guests, preferably (as at any successful party) from a variety of backgrounds.

In planning the food and table-space, the hostess must always be able to accommodate unexpected last-minute guests. Part of this arises from the religious command to ensure that 'anyone who is hungry' can join the Seder. An open invitation covering this is recited in the Haggadah, before the ceremony begins. An extra chair has to be provided also – as we shall see – for the prophet Elijah, who is expected by the tradition to appear one day as the precursor of the Messiah.

### 1.3 FOOD

The food should be, quite literally, a banquet, as it must have been to the ancient Israelites when the menu was *one whole lamb, roasted*. There are no ritual rules about the menu today, although for many people a first course of hard-boiled eggs in salt water has become de rigueur, as explained below.

### 1.4 SEDER TABLE

To set the Seder Table for the ceremonies, the housewife shall acquire the following, in addition to the matzah itself:

1. Bitter herbs (*maror*): some grated horseradish, in memory of the 'bitterness' of slavery in Egypt.
2. Onion or horseradish root (*hazereth*): this item reminds us that the root of life is bitter.
3. *Haroset*: a sweet paste made of apples, nuts, and cinnamon, grated fine and mixed with a little wine.
4. A bone (*z'roah*): the portion of a shankbone of a lamb, with a little meat on it, roasted, in memory of the ancient Temple sacrifice.
5. A baked egg (*haggigah*): thought to symbolize the other Temple sacrifices at Passover time, and also, perhaps, as a symbol of mourning for the Lost Temple.
6. Parsley, celery, or lettuce (*karpas*): it will be dipped in salt-water at an early stage in the ceremony; in origin it was the hors d'oeuvres leading directly to the meal. (A small dish of salt water should be handy, for the dipping).

There should also be a matzah tosh, a stack of three whole matzahs wrapped in a napkin or a towel.

The ingredients will be arranged on two dishes in front of the head of the household.

## 2 Haggadah

### 2.1 PARTS

- Leader - the leader for the ceremony
- All - everyone
- Group - a group of men, preferably fathers
- Female Candlelighters - a group of females
- Narrator - tells the Passover story
- Child - asks the Four Questions
- Speaker 1 - the speakers answer the questions asked during the meal.
- Speaker 2
- Speaker 3
- Speaker 4

### 2.2 WELCOME

Leader: *Gives a short welcome.*

*You shall keep the feast of Unleavened Bread, for as on this very day I brought your hosts out of Egypt. You shall observe this day throughout the generations as a practice for all times. (Exodus 12:17)*

*Remember the day on which you went forth from Egypt, from the house of bondage, and how the Lord freed you with a mighty hand. (Exodus 13:3)*

### 2.3 LIGHTING OF FESTIVAL CANDLES

Female Candlelighters: *(As the candles are lit by the mother of the house.)*

Happy are those of steadfast faith,

Who can still bless the light

Shining in the darkness...

Rejoice, all the earth, in those who keep the way,

For there is still song within them for you.

### 2.4 THE FIRST CUP: THE CUP OF SANCTIFICATION

*NT Perspective: Luke 22:17-18*

Leader: The Passover has begun, and during the course of our Seder we will drink from our cups and replenish them a total of four times (*all raise the first cup*). The first cup is called the Kiddush cup, or the Cup of Sanctification.

Group: Praised are you, Lord God, King of the Universe, who created of the fruit of the vine.

All: Amen.

Leader: With this cup, we commit our observance to the Lord, and pray for His blessing upon the rest of the service to follow. It was concerning this first cup that the Messiah declared:

All: "Take this, and divide it among you; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God comes." (*All drink the first cup with the toast "TO LIFE."*)

## 2.5 WASHING OF THE HANDS

*NT Perspective: John 13:3-5*

Leader: Ritual washings have been a part of Jewish life since God commanded Aaron to wash his hands and feet before approaching the altar of the Lord. And so we customarily wash our hands at this time as a token of our desire to live lives of acceptable service to our Almighty God.

All: Yet Jesus carried this notion of servanthood one step further on that Passover night in the upper room. "He laid aside His garments, and took a towel, and girded Himself... and began to wash the disciples' feet."

*There will be wet towels before you for everyone to wash their hands.*

Leader: How graciously He has taught us the fullest meaning of servanthood: humility.

All: "The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

## 2.6 THE SEDER PLATE

Leader: Behold this Seder plate and these traditional symbols.

All: What do they mean, and of what do they speak?

Leader: The story of Passover is a story of our deliverance from bondage, and all of the elements of the Passover meal are part of the portrait of redemption.

All: What is the meaning of the karpas (greens) and the salt water?

Group: The greens represent life, and the salt water represents the tears of life. Before we eat the greens, we dip them into the salt water, for truly...

All: A life unredeemed is a life immersed in tears.

Leader: Let us eat the karpas.

*All dip a piece of parsley in salt water and eat.*

All: What is the meaning of the hazeret, the root of the bitter herb?

Group: This horseradish root reminds us that the root of life is often bitter, as it certainly was for the sons of Israel in the land of Egypt.

All: And what is the meaning of the maror, the bitter herb itself?

Group: As we partake of the freshly ground horseradish, we are reminded afresh of how bitter life is without redemption.

Leader: Let us eat the bitter herb.

*All eat a small helping of horseradish with matzah.*

All: But what is the meaning of the haroset and why is it sweet to the taste?

Group: The haroset is a reminder of the mortar with which the Israelites made bricks for Pharaoh.

All: But why should such a sweet mixture represent such bitter toil?

Group: Even the bitterest labor is sweetened by the promise of redemption.

Leader: Let us eat the haroset.

*All eat a small helping of haroset mixed with a small bit of horseradish between two small pieces of matzah.*

All: And what is the meaning of the egg, the haggigah? And why is it brown?

Group: Haggigah was the name given to the daily Temple sacrifice in ancient Jerusalem. It is roasted to turn it brown, just as the daily offerings were burned with fire upon the altar of the Lord. The haggigah is a token of grief to the Jewish people, grief over the destruction of the Temple; and so, before we eat it, we dip it into salt water – the tears of life.

Leader: Let us eat the haggigah.

*All dip a piece of the egg into the salt water and eat it.*

All: And what is the meaning of the zeroah, the shankbone of the lamb?

Leader: Traditionally, the shankbone of a lamb is used as a reminder of the lamb offered on Passover at the Temple in Jerusalem two thousand years ago. It also reminds us that God passed over the houses of the Hebrew people in Egypt.

”And when your children ask you, ’what does this ceremony mean to you?’ then tell them, ’it is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.” (*Exodus 12:26-27*)

All: But why do we no longer offer a lamb on Passover as in the days of old when the ancient Temple stood?

Leader: Simply because the Temple stands no more. The Passover sacrifice, as well as all sacrifices, could only be offered upon the altar in Jerusalem. And so, since the Temple’s destruction in 70 A.D., no sacrifices have been made.

All: But without sacrifices, how can we atone for our sins, for the Law declares, ”it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul.” Does this mean that atonement and redemption are no longer possible?

Leader: May it never be! Those of us who know the Messiah know too that God has provided a sacrifice for our sins, *the* sacrifice for our sins: the Passover Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

All: The Messiah Jesus.

Leader: Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, who offers redemption from death, and atonement for sins.

All: Amen.

## 2.7 DIVIDING THE MATZAH

Leader: (*Raising the Seder plate*) This is the bread of affliction, the poor bread, which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in want come and share in the hope of Passover.

*(The upper part of the matzah tosh, or stack of three matzahs, is broken and distributed among the group. The middle matzah is broken and the larger piece is hidden. The remaining matzah is covered and the plate replaced on the table.)*

Leader: It is an old Jewish tradition to take this middle matzah, the afikomen, and hide it during the meal. The children are given a challenge, a game, to find the afikomen. They are told,

All: Great is the reward of he who finds the hidden afikomen.

Leader: This game over the afikomen is certainly one of the more delightful moments of the Passover Seder. And yet, some mystery surrounds the significance of the afikomen and the matzah tosh from which it has been drawn. We may justly ask,

All: What is the meaning of the three matzahs, and why is the middle matzah broken, buried, and then brought back?

Speaker 1: Some teach that the three matzahs represent the unity of the three patriarchs of Israel: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

All: Then why is the middle matzah broken, buried, and then brought back?

Speaker 2: Others say that the matzahs represent the unity of worship in ancient Israel: the High Priests, the Levites, and the people of Israel.

All: Then why is the middle matzah broken, buried, and then brought back?

Speaker 3: Still others teach that the matzahs represent three crowns: the crown of learning, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of kingship.

All: Then why is the middle matzah broken, buried, and then brought back?

Leader: There is one final explanation, and explanation suggested by the design of the matzah tosh itself. For the three parts of the matzah tosh form a unity – a tri-unity, a mysterious three-in-one. Could it be that the tri-unity of the matzah tosh bears witness to the tri-unity of one God revealed in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit?

All: Then why is the middle matzah broken, buried, and then brought back?

Leader: Because Jesus, the second Person the the Godhead was broken, buried, and then brought back. It was at this time during the Seder that Jesus said, "this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

## 2.8 THE FOUR QUESTIONS

*(Asked by a child present)*

1. On all other nights, we can eat bread or matzah; why tonight, only matzah?
2. On all other nights, we can eat any kind of herbs; why tonight bitter herbs?
3. On all other nights, we don't dip the herbs we eat into anything; why, tonight, do we dip twice, first into salt water and then into haroset?
4. On all other nights, we can eat either sitting up straight or reclining; why, tonight, do we all recline?

*The answers to the four questions begin (Deuteronomy 6:4-9,20-25)*

Narrator: The Bible teaches that during a great famine in the land of Canaan, the sons of Israel journeyed to Egypt to purchase food. There they were reunited with their brother Joseph. Because of his influence, they were permitted to dwell in the fertile plains of Goshen.

At first, the house of Israel numbered less than eighty souls. But in time their numbers swelled, their flocks increased, and they became a might people.

And then there arose a new Pharaoh, one who did not know Joseph. He beheld the might of Israel, and he feared that in time of war, the sons of Jacob might join themselves with Egypt's foes.

And so he subdued the Israelites, and afflicted them with cruel labor. Taskmasters were placed over the Israelites, to compel them to make bricks and to build Pharaoh's great storage cities of Rameses and Pithom.

But despite their hardships, they continued to thrive just as God had promised. This caused Pharaoh even greater alarm, and he ordered the slaughter of Israel's infant sons. By his command, every male child born to the Hebrews was to be cast into the Nile and drowned.

How sore were the afflictions of the Jewish people! In anguish they cried unto the God of their fathers. And God heard their cry. God remembered His covenant. And God raised up a deliverer, a redeemer – the man Moses. And he sent Moses to Pharaoh's court to declare the commandment of the Lord:

"Let my people go!"

But Pharaoh would not harken to the Lord of Hosts. And so, Moses pronounced God's judgement on Pharaoh's house, and on Pharaoh's land. Plagues were poured out upon the Egyptians, upon their crops, and upon their flocks.

But Pharaoh's heart was hardened. He would not yield to the will of God. He would not let the house of Jacob depart.



Then the tenth plague fell upon the land: the death of Egypt's first born. "And all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sits upon his throne, even unto the first-born of who is behind the mill; and all the first-born of the beasts.... And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment."

But to protect the children of Israel, God commanded the head of each Jewish household to sacrifice a spotless lamb and to apply its blood to the doorway of his home, first to the top of the doorway, the lintel, and then to the two sideposts.

All: "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

Narrator: By the blood of the lamb was death made to pass over.

Speaker 1: *Why do we eat only matzah tonight?* When Pharaoh let our ancestors go from Egypt, they were forced to flee in great haste. They had no time to bake their bread. They could not wait for the yeast to rise, so the sun beating down on the dough as they hurried it along baked it into flat unleavened bread called matzah.

Speaker 2: *Why do we eat only bitter herbs tonight?* Because the Bible tells us that our ancestors were slaves in the land of Egypt and their lives were made bitter by their oppressors.

Speaker 3: *Why do we dip the herbs twice tonight?* We dip the parsley into salt water because it reminds us of the green that comes to life in the springtime. We dip the bitter herbs into the sweet haroset as a sign of hope. Our ancestors were able to withstand the bitterness of slavery because it was sweetened by the hope of freedom.

Speaker 4: *Why do we recline at the table?* Because once we were slaves, and now we are free. Long ago, reclining at the table was a sign of a free person. We recline to remember that our ancestors were freed on this night.

## **2.9 THE SECOND CUP: THE CUP OF MEMORY**

Leader: *(All refill their cups as the leader reads)* 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 created by God, and fellow human beings. We temper our joy with drops of wine spilled from our cups.

*(As each plague is mentioned, the participants spill out a drop of wine onto the plates.)*

1. Blood
2. Frogs
3. Lice
4. Beasts
5. Blight
6. Boils
7. Hail
8. Locusts
9. Darkness
10. Death of the firstborn

Leader: *(With cups raised)* And though we celebrate our liberation, our happiness is not complete as long as others remain bound to slavery and death. For it was not one man who rose against us to destroy us; in every generation there are those who seek to destroy us. But God saves us from their hands.

*(The leader proposes a toast, "TO FREEDOM.")*

All: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, who created the fruit of the vine. (*All drink the second cup.*)

## **2.10 DAYENU**

*If He had merely rescued us from Egypt, but had not punished the Egyptians, it would have been enough.*

*If He had merely punished the Egyptians, but had not destroyed their gods, it would have been enough.*

*If He had merely destroyed their gods, but had not slain their firstborn, it would have been enough.*

*If He had merely slain their firstborn, but had not given us their property, it would have been enough.*

*If He had merely given us their property, but had not split the sea for us, it would have been enough.*

*If He had merely split the sea for us, but had not brought us through on dry ground, it would have been enough.*

*If He had merely brought us through on dry ground, but had not drowned our oppressors, it would have been enough.*

*If He had merely drowned our oppressors, but had not supplied us in the desert for forty, it would have been enough.*

*If He had merely supplied us in the desert for forty years, but had not fed us manna, it would have been enough.*

## **2.11 THE PASSOVER MEAL**

### **2.12 GRACE AFTER THE MEAL**

*NT Perspective: Luke 22:19a*

Leader: Leader: May the name of the Lord be blessed from now to eternity. Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who feeds the entire world with Your goodness, with grace, with lovingkindness and with pity. Blessed are You, our God, of whose bounty we eat and by whose goodness we live.

All: Amen.

### **2.13 THE THIRD CUP: THE CUP OF REDEMPTION**

*NT Perspective: Luke 22:19-20*

Leader: It is With this cup that Israel remembers their deliverance from 430 years of slavery, and their redemption from the plague of death by the blood of the first Passover Lamb. (*All refill their cups*) 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*)

It was of this cup that Jesus said:

All: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (*Luke 22:20*)

*(The third cup is drunk after the leader proposes a toast, "TO PEACE.")*

Group: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine, and gives us the joy of your redemption."

## **2.14 ELIJAH'S CUP**

*NT Perspective: Matthew 17:10-13*

Leader: Elijah, the prophet from the village of Tishbi in Gilead, challenged the injustice of the king and overthrew the worship of Baal. He healed the humble sick and helped the widowed. At the end of his days on earth, his disciple Elisha saw Elijah being carried to the skies in a whirlwind. God told the prophet Malachi:

All: "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. (*Malachi 4:5-6a*)

Leader: It is an old Jewish custom to open the door for Elijah so that he may enter, and to set a cup of wine, as a sign of God's messianic promise of renewal. We do not have such a place set, for we know that Elijah has already returned, as Jesus told us,

All: "Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him." (*Mark 9:13*)

"For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come." (*Matthew 11:12-13*)

## **2.15 PSALMS**

*NT Perspective: Matt. 26:30*

Psalm 115

Not to us, O Lord, not to us  
but to your name be the glory,  
because of your love and faithfulness.  
Why do the nations say,  
"Where is their God?"  
Our God is in heaven;  
he does whatever pleases him.  
But their idols are silver and gold,  
made by the hands of men.  
They have mouths, but cannot speak,  
eyes, but they cannot see;

they have ears, but cannot hear,  
noses, but they cannot smell;  
they have hands, but cannot feel,  
feet, but they cannot walk;  
nor can they utter a sound with their throats.  
Those who make them will be like them,  
and so will all who trust in them.  
O house of Israel, trust in the Lord -  
he is their help and shield.  
O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord -  
he is their help and shield.  
You who fear him, trust in the Lord -  
he is their help and shield.  
The Lord remembers us and will bless us:  
He will bless the house of Israel,  
he will bless the house of Aaron,  
he will bless those who fear the Lord -  
small and great alike.  
May the Lord make you increase,  
both you and your children.  
May you be blessed by the Lord ,  
the Maker of heaven and earth.  
The highest heavens belong to the Lord ,  
but the earth he has given to man.  
It is not the dead who praise the Lord ,  
those who go down to silence;  
it is we who extol the Lord ,  
both now and forevermore.

Praise the Lord .

## **2.16 THE FOURTH CUP: THE CUP OF PRAISE (OR HOPE)**

Leader: (*All refill their cups*) The fourth cup recalls to us the covenant with the Eternal One, to the tasks that still await us as a people called to the service of God, to a great purpose for which the people of Israel lives: the preservation and affirmation of hope.

All: As it is written: "And I will take you to be my people." (*Exodus 6:7*)

Leader: As the darkness has passed, as light dawns over Zion, we raise this cup, for the day of Deliverance of all has come. We drink this cup as a sign of hope and of Redemption. For the people of Israel lives!

(*All take the fourth cup and drink it, after the leader proposes the toast, "TO JERUSALEM."*)

All: We praise you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who created the fruit of the vine.

Praise the Lord, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!

Leader: It is traditional to conclude the Seder by singing "L'Shana Ha-Ba-ah Birushalayim" – "Next Year in Jerusalem." For generations, this song has captured in melody the fervent hope of the Jewish people, a hope to be restored to the ancient land of Israel in the presence of the Messiah himself. We too have a similar precious hope: the hope of Messiah's soon return.

All: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth.... And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.... The former things are passed away.... Behold, I make all things new." (*Revelation 21:1-5*)

Leader and Congregation: Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!

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