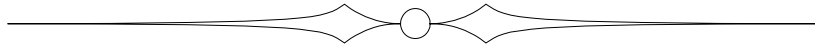


“WE WERE SLAVES TO PHARAOH IN EGYPT, AND THE LORD OUR GOD TOOK US OUT OF THERE WITH A STRONG HAND AND AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM.”¹ AND IF GOD HAD NOT TAKEN OUR FATHERS OUT OF EGYPT, THEN WE, AND OUR CHILDREN, AND OUR CHILDREN’S CHILDREN, MIGHT STILL BE SLAVES TO PHARAOH IN EGYPT. SO EVEN IF WE ARE ALL WISE, ALL CLEVER, ALL OLD, AND ALL EXPERT IN THE TORAH, IT IS STILL A GOOD DEED FOR US TO DISCUSS THE PASSOVER STORY.

¹Deuteronomy 6:21



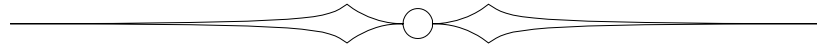
We are here, friends and family, to celebrate and commemorate the Jewish Exodus from Egyptian enslavement. Tonight we will say words and perform rituals that have been said and performed each Passover eve for countless generations. Because we are performing such an ancient ritual, in celebration of an event that took place thousands of years ago, it's easy to lose sight of both its historical meaning and present day relevance. But there's a reason for just about everything that's on this table, and for everything we're going to say and do. Before we start the formal Seder, and as we go along, we'll talk about some of those reasons.

Let's also remember that the events of three thousand years ago weren't all that alien from those of more modern times. We are all well aware that the Pharaoh was not the last world leader to find a ready scapegoat in the Jews. History abounds with events like the Inquisition and diaspora of 15th century Europe, and more recently the Russian pogroms that resulted in many of our parents and grandparents coming to this country. And our present personal well-being mustn't cause us to lose sight of the fact that while our enslavement in Egypt took place thousands of years ago, the European Holocaust is still a vivid memory for those lucky enough to have survived it. Nor should we forget that while we are free to celebrate the Passover in whatever way tradition and personal preference dictates, Jews in other parts of the world may not be so fortunate. So the story of Passover is a retelling of past events, but it is also a warning that what happened before can happen once again.

The Exodus took place, according to archaeologists, in 1280 B.C.E.², and the first Seder not long after that. Over the years, a ritual order of retelling developed: the Seder — which means “Order.” To guide us in the retelling we have the Haggadah, which means “Story.” In observant families, the Seder and Haggadah blend very well with life as it is lived year-round. But those of us who live a somewhat more secular life often find the language of the traditional Haggadah to be less meaningful than we'd like. This, in turn, makes the Seder an unsatisfying experience. We're hoping that tonight will be different, at least to the extent that we'll all come away with a better understanding of the customs and traditions associated with Passover.

The Haggadah we're using tonight differs in some ways from what we may be used to. Still, it does contain a few of the older translations of scripture and commentary that some of us remember from Seders of years gone by. This is to remind us that although we're doing this a bit differently tonight, the basic idea is the same: the Torah commands that we celebrate the Exodus, and retell its events, as a lesson for the younger generations. It also commands that in every generation each of us should feel as if he himself went out of Egypt. This is what the Torah means when it says “And you shall tell your son on that day saying ‘This is because of the things God did for *me* when *I* went out of Egypt.’”

² B.C.E. — Before the Common Era; more commonly referred to as B.C.



THE SEDER PLATE

Let's start by taking a look at what's on the Seder Plate. The Seder Plate has on it the five symbols of Passover: the shank bone, the egg, the bitter herb, the *harosetz*, and the *karpas*, or vegetable.

The shank bone helps us to remember the Paschal Lamb which used to be offered in the Jerusalem Temple.³ Since it's the arm portion of the animal, it also reminds us that God led us out of Egypt "with an outstretched arm." Tradition allows the substitution of any bone with meat on it if a shank bone isn't available.

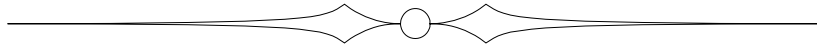
The egg is a symbol of the Holiday Sacrifice which was offered when Jews visited Jerusalem on Passover, Succos, and Shavuous. In ancient times, the actual sacrifice was an animal. We use an egg because it represents new life and is a symbol of our hope that the Jerusalem Temple will be rebuilt.

The bitter herb is a symbol of the bitterness of slavery that the Jews suffered in Egypt. Horseradish is generally used.

The harosetz is a mixture of apples, nuts, and red wine. It is meant to remind us of the clay and mortar used to make bricks in Egypt. Later, we'll dip the bitter herb into the harosetz to show that this mortar was the cause of our bitterness.

The karpas is the first thing eaten after the Kiddush (*blessing over the wine*), and it symbolizes the simple vegetables eaten by the Jewish slaves in Egypt. Celery is customary, but any vegetable may be substituted.

³ Maimonides (1135-1204) held that the only reason God granted the privilege of sacrifice to Jews was because it was such a common practice at that time that prohibition would have been difficult. God's intention from the beginning, though, was to lead Israel to the true worship — prayer. Therefore, He ordained that sacrifices could be offered in only one place, the Temple, while prayer and supplication were permitted at any place and any time.



WINE

It's a Passover tradition to drink four cups of wine, one for each of the four main parts of the traditional Seder. The four parts are Kaddesh, Redemption Blessing, Grace after the Meal, and Hallel Praise. These four cups also recall the four ways God told the Jewish people that he would save them:

I will free you from the labor of the Egyptians,
And I will deliver you from their slavery;
I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great terror.
And I will take you to be My people, and I will be your God.⁴

KADDESH: SANCTIFICATION

One of the things observant Jews do a lot of is say blessings, or *b'ruchas*. They say them before eating, drinking, washing, and just about anything else you can think of. One of the nice things about the Seder is the way it unites Jews of every level of observance, and gives them a sense of global community that is often elusive at other times. At Passover, more than any other time of year, Jews everywhere know that there are other Jews doing much the same as they are at that moment. And one thing they will do, even at the most abbreviated Seder, is join us as we say the blessing over the wine:

Recite this paragraph on Friday night only

The sixth day: God created the heavens and the earth and all that was contained therein. On the seventh day, God finished His work and rested. God then blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it He rested from all His creative work.

⁴Exodus 6:6,7



On weekdays begin here

Baruch ata Adonai,
Elohaynu melech ha-olam,
boray p'ree hagafen

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the universe,
Who created the fruit of the vine.

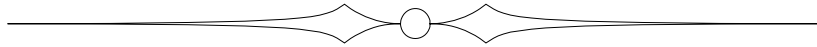
Baruch ata Adonai,
Elohaynu melech ha-olam,
she-heh-che yanu, ve-kiyemanu, ve-higianu
la'zeman ha-zeh.

Praised be Thou,
O Lord our God,
Who has kept us in life, and has sustained us,
and has permitted us to enjoy this festive day.

We now drink the first cup of wine.

UR'CHATZ: WASHING THE HANDS

Tradition now calls for us to wash our hands by pouring water from a cup over each of them, right then left. This is because we are about to eat a vegetable dipped in salt water. It was once the custom to wash one's hands whenever eating something dipped, because wet food is more likely to pick up dirt and germs from the hands. Even though this is no longer the custom year-round, it's done at the Seder in order to make the children curious so that they should ask questions about our traditions. We're going to dispense with the actual washing, and be content to know the reason for it — unless anyone feels the need, in which case feel free. By the way, no blessing is recited at this point because a full meal is not to be eaten now.



KARPAS: VEGETABLE HORS D'OEUVRES

After a blessing, we will each take a small piece of parsley or celery, dip it in salt water, and eat it. In addition to it being customary to eat something right after the Kiddush, this serves to remind us of the simple food eaten by the slaves in Egypt, and of their tears.

Baruch ata Adonai,
Elohaynu melech ha-olam,
boray p'ree ha-adama.

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the universe,
Who created the fruit of the earth.

Dip the vegetable into salt water and eat it.

YACHATZ: DIVISION OF THE MATZAH

One thing that everyone remembers about Passover and the Seder is matzah. It's the most important symbol of Passover, and the one which gives it its other name — "The Feast of Unleavened Bread."⁵

A portion of this matzah is wrapped in a napkin, and hidden for the children to find and later ransom. It's called the *Afikomen* and is a tradition that goes back to the Talmud. Like many things in the Seder, one reason for this is to keep the children wide awake and interested.

Break the middle matzah, wrap, and hide the larger part.

⁵ The matzah plate contains three whole matzahs. Why three? Traditionally, on every Sabbath and festival a blessing is said over two loaves of bread. Since we are not permitted bread on Passover, it would make sense to say a blessing over two matzahs. The third matzah is there to keep the Passover commandment "You shall eat Matzahs, a poor man's bread." Since a poor man does not usually have a whole loaf, this is interpreted to mean that we must eat a broken piece of matzah as poor man's bread. The third piece allows us to do so, and still have two whole ones.

MAGID: RECITING THE HAGGADAH

Uncover matzah, lift the plate, and say:

This is the poor man's bread that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. We remember their suffering, and the cruelty they endured. All who are hungry, come in and eat! All who are needy, come and celebrate Passover! This year, here — next year in the land of Israel. This year slaves — next year as free men!

Set down and cover the matzah; refill the wine glasses.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

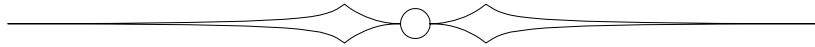
The next event in our Seder is the asking of the Four Questions, which express our sense of wonder about the unusual customs and different foods eaten on this holiday. In order to further reinforce the notion that the most important purpose of the Seder is to pass the story of the Exodus from generation to generation, the privilege of asking the Four Questions is customarily given to the youngest child.⁶ The traditional Haggadah follows the four questions with a discussion of the Exodus, which is intended to serve as an answer. We'll read a bit of that prose, just for the flavor of it, and then depart from tradition and simply tell the story.

Ma nishtana ha-laila ha-zeh, mi-kol ha-laylos?
Why is this night different from all other nights?

She-b'chol ha-laylos, anu ochlin chametz u-matzah,
ha-laila ha-zej kulo matzah.
On all nights we eat bread or matzah,
but on this night only matzah.⁷

⁶ It's important the Four Questions be read even if no children are present. Let everyone read them in unison, do it round-robin style, appoint a reader, whatever, but do it!

⁷ A nice explanation for matzah: matzah is a natural food, in contrast to *chumetz*, which is the work of civilized arts. Passover, the springtime holiday, serves as a reminder of the springtime of the world, when the ancient inhabitants of the earth and their progeny of necessity made use of the gifts of nature as they were, without any change.



She-b'chol ha-laylos, anu ochlin she'ar yerakot,
ha-laila ha-zeh maror.

On all other nights we eat vegetables and herbs of all kinds,
but on this night only bitter herbs.

She-b'chol ha-laylos, ayn anu matbilin afilu pa'am eh-has,
ha-laila ha-zeh sh'tay fe'amim.

On all other nights we do not dip vegetables even once,
while on this night we dip twice.⁸

She-b'chol ha-laylos anu ochlin bayn yoshvin u-vayn mesubin,
ha-laila ha-zeh kulanu mesu-bin.

On all other nights we eat either sitting upright or reclining,
but on this night we recline at the table.

The reasons for these differences are meant to recall the experience of our ancestors, who had been enslaved in Egypt:

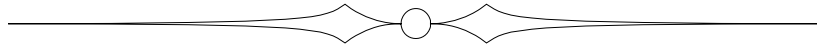
We eat only matzah because that is what the escaping Jews were able to prepare in their haste.

We eat bitter herbs to remind us of the bitterness of our fathers' enslavement.

We dip celery in salt water to remind us of the simple food eaten by the slaves in Egypt, and of their tears. And we dip bitter herbs in harosetz to show that the bitterness came because of the mortar and clay in which they worked.

We recline because in ancient times free nobles would eat while reclining on couches.

⁸ We dip celery in salt water, and bitter herbs in harosetz.



THE FOUR CHILDREN

Four times the Torah commands us to relate the story of the Exodus to our children. From this we infer that there are four different kinds of people, each needing a different kind of explanation.

The wise child asks: “What are the precepts, laws, and observances which the Lord our God commanded us?” To him we should explain the observances of the Passover thoroughly.

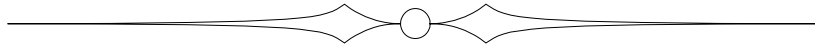
The wicked child asks: “What is this observance to *you*?” Since he says “to *you*” and not “to us” he rejects the essentials of our faith: the unity of God and the community of Israel. To him we respond: “It is because of what the Lord did for *me* when I went forth from Egypt — for *me* and not for *you* for had you been there you would not have known redemption.”

The simple child asks: “What is this?” To him we reply simply — “With a mighty arm God freed us from Egypt, from the house of bondage.”

To the child who does not know to ask, the father must take the initiative: “You shall tell your child on that day, saying: ‘This is because of what the Lord did for me when I went free from Egypt.’”

HERE, IN A COMBINATION OF SCRIPTURE AND ANCIENT COMMENTARY, IS THE STORY OF THE EXODUS.

“But he went down to Egypt and lived there as a stranger. With 70 souls your fathers went down to Egypt. And now the Lord your God has made you as many as the stars of the sky. And there he became a nation, Great and mighty. The Egyptians said ‘come, let us act wisely against them. Otherwise, they may become so many that if there is a war they will join our enemies and fight against us and leave the land.’ So they set slave drivers over them to make them suffer with hard work. And they built storage cities for Pharaoh. And we cried to the Lord, God of our Fathers, and God heard our voice, and saw our suffering, our misery, and our oppression. And God took us out of Egypt.” Not by an angel, but God alone. “For on that night I will pass through the land of Egypt, and I will strike down all the first-born in Egypt, man and beast, and I will judge all the gods of Egypt, I am the Lord.”



You might ask, what were the Jews doing in Egypt in the first place? Well, one reason is that it was the fulfillment of God's statement to Abraham, in Genesis. God said, "Know that your children will be strangers in a land that is not theirs. And they will make them slaves and be cruel to them for 400 years. But then I will judge the nation whom they serve, and after that they will leave with great wealth."

The story goes that Joseph, after being brought to Egypt as a slave, became friendly with the reigning Pharaoh, who was of the Semitic Hyksos dynasty. During this time, relations between the two peoples were good. But when the Hyksos lost power, conditions changed abruptly. The new administration feared that the Israelites might prove to be troublesome. They were enslaved, and forced to build the garrison cities of Pithom and Raamses.

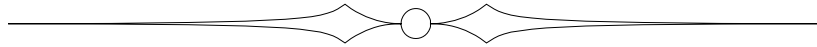
Moses confronted the Pharaoh, and demanded freedom for his people. He did so in the Name of God, and challenged Pharaoh's divinity, the divine right of all kings, and the divinity of the Nile. Pharaoh refused, and plagues came upon Egypt, and upon Pharaoh himself. The tenth plague was the most severe — the killing of the first-born of Egypt, including the royal prince.

The Israelites, untouched by the plagues, were told to prepare themselves for the Exodus. On the tenth day of Nissan, each family was to choose a lamb. It was to be carefully guarded until the 14th; then it was to be slaughtered, roasted, and — that night — consumed in a family gathering together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. With this meal they were to be ready for immediate departure, for this was to be the night of the slaying of the first born. As a distinguishing mark for their homes, the Israelites were to mark the posts and lintels of their doors with some of the lamb's blood. When the time came, the hand of God *passed over* their homes.

When the frightened Pharaoh chased the Israelites out of his land, they were not fully prepared. They burned the leftovers of the lamb, as they had been commanded, took their belongings, and departed in haste. But the dough they had set aside for rising could not be baked. They put it on their heads, and the sun eventually baked it, transforming it into unleavened bread.

Three days later, Pharaoh had second thoughts. With chariots, he chased after the Israelites, and reached them on the seventh day. Facing the Red Sea, and without any

⁹ Some contemporary scholars hold that the Red Sea was, in reality, the Sea of Reeds, which was more of a marsh, and that the Israelites, because they were travelling light, were able to cross with little difficulty. The Egyptians, in armored and in heavy horse-drawn chariots, simply could not negotiate the terrain. More recently, oceanographers have speculated that a 40 knot wind, blowing from the northwest for 10-12 hours, could easily have exposed an underwater ridge in the Gulf of Suez, which is a northern extension of the Red Sea.



means of escape, the Israelites thought themselves doomed. But the sea parted, they were led through, and the waves closed over the pursuing Egyptians.⁹

Cover the Matzah, lift the wine, and say:

For not one alone has stood up to finish us, but in every generation they rise up to finish us; and God, blessed by He, saves us from their hand!

THE TEN PLAGUES

The death of the first-born of Egypt was the last of the ten plagues God inflicted upon the Egyptians in order to convince Pharaoh to set his people free. As we recite the ten plagues, we'll dip a drop of wine from the cup into our plates with our little fingers. One explanation for this custom is that it symbolizes our unhappiness over the misfortune suffered by the Egyptians. This sentiment is expressed in the Talmud: "When the Egyptians were drowning, the Angels wished to sing. But God said 'My handiwork is drowning and you wish to sing!'" The thought of rejoicing over the suffering of others, no matter how much it may be deserved, is alien to Judaism.

BLOOD
FROGS
LICE
WILD BEASTS
CATTLE PLAGUE
BOILS
HAIL
LOCUSTS
DARKNESS
SLAYING OF THE FIRSTBORN

And Pharaoh rose up and called Moses and Aaron and said "Rise up, get ye forth, both ye and the Children of Israel, and go serve the Lord as ye have demanded." ¹⁰

¹⁰Exodus 12:30-31



PSALM 114

Psalm 114 describes, in highly picturesque language, how all of nature helped the fleeing Israelites escape from the clutches of the Egyptians:

When Israel came forth out of Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;

Judah became his sanctuary,
Israel his dominion.

The sea saw it and fled,
The Jordan turned back in its course.

The mountains shook like frightened rams,
The hills like fearful lambs.

What ails you, O sea, that you flee?
Why, O Jordan, do you turn backward.

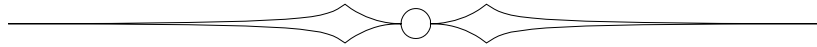
Why, O mountains, do you prance like rams,
O, you hills, like fearful lambs.

Tremble, you earth, at the presence of the Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob!

For it was He who turned rock into water,
Lifeless stone into a flowing fountain.

DAYEINU

Some of us remember sitting at the Seder table and singing a song called *Dayeinu*. This song thanks God for all that He has done for us, and says “even if You didn’t do so much, it still would have been enough” — which is roughly what “Dayeinu” means. We’ll sing a bit of it now, in Hebrew, and then speak the translation.



Da-da-yeinu
Da-da-yeinu
Da-da-yeinu
Dayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu

Ilu hotzi hotzianu
hotzianu mimitzrayim,
mimitzrayim hotzianu
Dayeinu (refrain)

Ilu natan natan lanu
natan lanu et ha Shabbat,
Et ha Shabbat, natan lanu
Dayeinu (refrain)

Ilu natan natan lanu
natan lanu et ha Torah,
Et ha Torah, natan lanu
Dayeinu (refrain)

HOW GRATEFUL AND CONTENT ARE WE FOR ALL THEY BENEFICENCE, O LORD!

For sparing our ancestors of old from the disastrous plagues that
befell the Egyptians,
Dayeinu!

For strengthening our martyrs of latter days to face with courage
the demonic forces that took their lives,
Dayeinu!

For all Thy acts of kindness,
Dayeinu!

If Thy only act of kindness was to deliver us from the bondage of
Egypt,
Dayeinu!

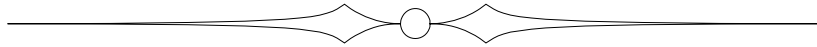
If Thy only act of deliverance was the bringing of the plagues,
Dayeinu!

If Thy only act of mercy was to divide the Red Sea waters,
Dayeinu!

If Thy only act of mercy was to provide the manna in the desert.
Dayeinu!

If Thy only act of graciousness was the gift of a Sabbath day,
Dayeinu!

If Thy only act of love was to favor us with Thy Torah,
Dayeinu!



THE SECOND CUP OF WINE

At the beginning you were promised four cups of wine, and if you're thinking that now would be a good time for one of them you'd be right! It's also time for a few other blessings that lead up to some of the other things we've talked about, which themselves lead to the festive meal.

But first, the b'rucha.

Baruch ata Adonai,
Elohaynu melech ha-olam,
boray p'ree hagafen

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the universe,
Who created the fruit of the vine.

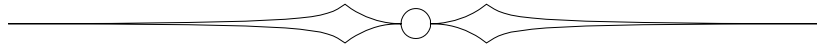
We now drink the second cup of wine.

UR'CHATZ: WASHING THE HANDS

The last time we washed—or talked about washing—our hands we didn't recite a b'rucha because no meal was to be served. This time, however, we're very close to a feast.

Baruch ata Adonai,
Elohaynu melech ha-olam,
asher kideshanu bemitz vosov
vetzivanu al netilas yada'yim.

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the universe,
Who sanctified us by His commandments
and commanded us concerning the laws of cleanliness.



EATING THE MATZAH

Baruch ata Adonai,
Elohaynu melech ha-olam,
Hah-moh-tsee lechem min ha-a-aretz.

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the universe
Who brings bread out of the earth.

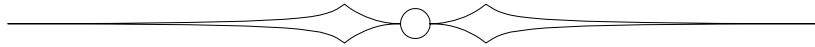
Baruch ata Adonai,
Elohaynu melech ha-olam,
asher kideshanu bemitz votov
vetzivanu ahl akhee-lahs Matzah.

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the universe,
Who made us holy with His commandments
and commanded that we eat Matzah.

Each person eats a piece of Matzah from the plate.

MAROR: THE BITTER HERBS

As mentioned in the Four Questions, on Passover we dip twice. A while ago we dipped a vegetable in salt water. We now dip the bitter herb in the harosetz, and serve it on a piece of matzah. This is called a Hillel Sandwich. Hillel was a great Jewish leader who used to eat a matzah, bitter herbs, and a piece of the Paschal lamb together more than 2,000 years ago, in the time of the Second Temple. Since the destruction of the Temple, the sandwich only contained maror, because the sacrificial custom had been discontinued, and paschal lamb was no longer available. Today, harosetz is added to reduce the strong taste of the bitter herb, but according to tradition and the Haggadah, most of the harosetz should be shaken off in order that the bitter taste not be completely hidden.



Baruch ata Adonai,
Elohaynu melech ha-olam,
asher kideshanu bemitz vosov
vetzivanu ahl akhee-lahs Maror.

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the universe,
Who made us holy with His commandments
and commanded that we eat bitter herb.

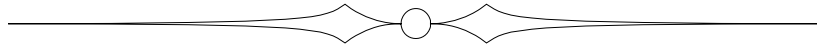
Pass Hillel sandwiches to all.

THE HARD BOILED EGG

In many households it is customary to begin the meal with a hard boiled egg, which is dipped in salt water and eaten. The egg is meant to symbolize the holiday sacrifice offered regularly in the Temple. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., roasted meat on the bone (representing the paschal lamb) and roasted egg (representing the regular holiday sacrifice) were the two main courses at the festive Passover banquet. The egg is dipped in salt water and eaten.

SHULCHAN ORECH: THE FESTIVAL MEAL

Remove the Passover Plate and serve the meal.



AFIKOMEN: THE HIDDEN MATZAH

The Afikomen is eaten in place of the Paschal lamb, which was always eaten at the very end of the meal. That's why it's called Afikomen, which is the Greek word for dessert. So in spite of what we might have already stuffed ourselves with, tradition dictates that each of us takes a bit of matzah. But we can't eat it until we have it, and — you may remember from before dinner — it's been hidden. It must be found, and whoever finds it will get a reward!

GRACE

Saying grace at the end of a meal is a custom which has, for the most part, been abandoned by our society. We revive it at the Seder, using a traditional Passover text:

Let us praise God of Whose bounty we have partaken, and by Whose goodness we live. We praise our God, the One, sustaining all. On the Festival of Matzah, inspire us to goodness. On this Day of Liberation, make us a blessing. On this Festival of Pesach, preserve us in life. May He who blessed Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob bless this house, this table, and all assembled here; and so may all our loved ones share our blessing.

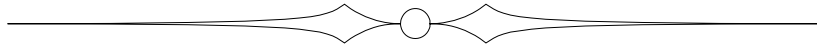
THE THIRD CUP OF WINE

It's now time to drink the third cup of wine. For those die-hard Brooklyn traditionalists, we can continue to pour the sweet, syrupy stuff. Otherwise, name your poison, and your designated driver!

Baruch ata Adonai,
Elohaynu melech ha-olam,
boray p'ree hagafen

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the universe,
Who created the fruit of the vine.

We now drink the third cup of wine, and pour the fourth.



ELIJAH'S CUP

There's an extra wine glass on the table tonight — a special one — and it's called Elijah's Cup. According to ancient Jewish tradition, the prophet Elijah didn't die, but rode a fiery chariot to heaven. Over the years, the belief grew that Elijah would someday return, heralding the redemption of mankind.

We set a cup for him at Passover — the festival of the first redemption — to express our faith that God will redeem us, and to show that we are ready to offer hospitality to Elijah when he comes.

THE FIFTH CHILD

On this night, we remember a fifth child. This is a child of the Holocaust, who did not survive to ask. Therefore, we ask for that child — Why?

We are like the simple child. We have no answer. We can only follow the footsteps of Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, who could not bring himself to mention the Exodus at night until Ben Zoma explained it to him through the verse:

In order that you REMEMBER the days of your going out from Egypt,
all the days of your life.¹¹

“The days of your life” indicates the daylight and the goodness of life. “*All* the days of your life” means even in the darkest nights when we have lost *our* firstborn, we must remember the Exodus.

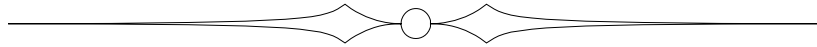
We answer that child's question with silence.

In silence, we remember that dark time.

In silence, we remember that Jews preserved their image of God in the struggle for life.

In silence, we remember the seder nights spent in the forests, ghettos, and camps; we remember that seder night when the Warsaw Ghetto rose in revolt.

¹¹ Deuteronomy 16:3



Lift the cup of Elijah

In silence, let us pass the cup of Elijah, the cup of the final redemption yet-to-be. We remember our people's return to the land of Israel, the beginning of that redemption. We rise now, and open our door to invite Elijah, the forerunner of the future which will bring an end to the nights of our people.¹²

The following verses from the scripture are said as a sign that we do not fear, and that we await the final destruction of evil:

Open the door, stand, and say:

Pour out Your rage, O God, on the nations who do not know You, and upon the kingdoms who do not call your Name. For they have eaten up Jacob, and destroyed his Temple.¹³

Pour out Your anger upon them, and let Your raging fury catch them.¹⁴

Chase them in anger and destroy them from under God's heaven.¹⁵

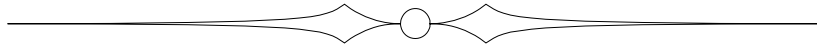
Close the door, and sit.

¹² An earlier reason for opening the door is that Passover is called in Exodus "A night watched by God." We therefore hold the door wide open to show that we do not fear anything outside.

¹³ Psalms 79:6,7

¹⁴ Psalms 69:25

¹⁵ Lamentations 3:66



HALLEL: PRAISE

It's time for us to do what we used to call in Sunday School "responsive reading." Years ago, we used a small, shiny black Haggadah, which was given away each Passover at Barricini candy stores. It was an archaic translation, but unlike many others, it had loads of charm. One of the nice things about it was the phrase used for the response in this section. What we now find translated as "for His mercy is forever" was rendered by Barricini "for His mercy endureth for aye." To commemorate all of Barricini's wonderful chocolates, we'll do it their way.

PSALM 136

Thank God because He is Good
For His mercy endureth for aye.

Thank the God of Gods
For His mercy endureth for aye.

Thank the Lord of Lords
For His mercy endureth for aye.

For doing great wonders all alone
For His mercy endureth for aye.

For making the heavens with wisdom
For His mercy endureth for aye.

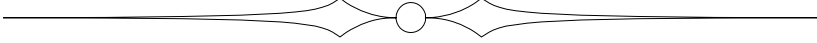
For spreading the land over the waters
For His mercy endureth for aye.

For making great lights
For His mercy endureth for aye.

The sun to rule by day
For His mercy endureth for aye.

The moon and stars to rule by night
For His mercy endureth for aye.

For striking Egypt through their firstborn
For His mercy endureth for aye.



And bringing Israel from among them
For His mercy endureth for aye.

With a strong hand and an outstretched arm
For His mercy endureth for aye.

For splitting the Red Sea into lanes
For His mercy endureth for aye.

And bringing Israel through it
For His mercy endureth for aye.

For throwing Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea
For His mercy endureth for aye.

For striking down great kings
For His mercy endureth for aye.

And killing mighty kings
For His mercy endureth for aye.

Sihon, king of the Amorites
For His mercy endureth for aye.

And Og, king of the Bashan
For His mercy endureth for aye.

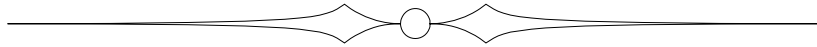
And gave us their land to keep
For His mercy endureth for aye.

When we were low He remembered us
For His mercy endureth for aye.

And saved us from our enemies
For His mercy endureth for aye.

He gives bread to all flesh
For His mercy endureth for aye.

Thank the God of Heaven!
For His mercy endureth for aye.



THE FOURTH CUP OF WINE

The fourth cup of wine, along with any other significance that might be attached to it, carries the message that the Seder is drawing to a close.

Baruch ata Adonai,
Elohaynu melech ha-olam,
boray p'ree hagafen

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God,
King of the universe,
Who created the fruit of the vine.

We now drink the fourth cup of wine.

NIRTZAH: ALL IS ACCEPTED

The Seder ends with a poem, composed by Rabbi Joseph Tov Elem more than nine hundred years ago.

The rites of the Seder are now concluded
In accordance with ancient precept and custom.
With the same earnestness that we have prepared for it,
May we live our lives throughout the year.

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM!