

Messianic Passover Seder: A Passover with Yeshua

Introduction

“Shalom Aleichem”: the words that Yeshua, Jesus said to the disciples after the Resurrection.

Today we are about to explore a turning point in spiritual history—the revelation of Yeshua to his disciples that he was about to take a great festival of national freedom and transform it into a gateway to personal peace—our *shalom* with God.

Seder means order; these ordered traditions that we still use can be dated back to some 600 years before Yeshua, and the events on which they are based took place over 1500 years before him. But at a great turning point of history, Yeshua took the symbols of this table and transformed them as he prepared his disciples for a new beginning in spiritual history while he led them toward the overwhelming events to which they would be witnesses: his death by crucifixion, the burial and grief over his tomb, the miracle of resurrection and then his commands for their lives.

How does it all begin: Luke 22:7ff

Passover always takes place as a celebration in the Jewish home, and only secondarily in the Temple or the synagogue—and it all begins with exacting preparations. As you all have experienced, in springtime there is a mysterious connection between our homes and cleaning: but in the Jewish home the reasons for cleaning are focused on Passover. So it begins with removing something that can't be found in our home during the 8-day feast—a primary symbol of sin—leaven, a reminder of getting our heart right.

The Jewish home is thoroughly cleansed of all items that use leaven or act as leaven: regular bread, cookies, and pasta. In the European tradition, this will include items that swell up like rice, beans, peas, etc. In fact, in Orthodox homes even plates and dishes that have touched leaven are replaced by special Passover dishes. However, in the Sephardic traditions around the Mediterranean, these “kitnyot” like rice and beans are acceptable.

(Yes, go ahead and clean up ladies, although the rabbis also remind you, “Dust is not chametz.”)

Then the night before, the man of the house goes to inspect the home—his wife leaves him just a little of leaven to find and remove—traditionally taking his children with a spoon, a feather and a candle to seek out leaven. She's smart enough to leave one pile of the leaven for them to discover. He gathers it up, removes it and then he says a blessing over the home declaring it's clean. And then a final blessing: Even if there's a bit of leaven may it be as if it isn't there.

We do all these things as rigorously as possible. But we also recall the words of Rabbi Sha'ul—the Apostle Paul; he tells us in 1Cor 5:6-8: “clean the leaven out of your hearts...so that you can celebrate the festival with sincerity and truth.” That's how we want to prepare for this evening [—let's pray...]

Now, imagine we're sitting together with Yeshua and his disciples in the upper room of the large house where a place has been reserved for them. Tomorrow night is Passover, but by tradition, the teacher leads his disciple in a teaching concerning the practice of the holiday on the night before. Thus we're following the Seder as he taught, and recalling the events of that evening.

As the first three stars appear in the twilight hills of Judea, a trumpet blast sounds off the Temple walls.

[Put on Kittel/Prayer Shawl, Kippa] The father is as the king of his home and table; wearing a kippa/prayer shawl; WHITE THE COLOR OF PASSOVER SUGGESTING PURITY AND HOLINESS

[Lighting the Passover lights] In our homes, at Passover, the woman of the house is the Queen of the home, and to her belongs the honour of opening the evening with the lighting of candles over the table:

BARUCH ATA ADONAI ELOHEYHNU MELECH HA'OLAM ASHER KIDDISHANU
B'MITZVOT TOV V'TZIVANU L'HADLIK NER SHEL PEYSAKH.

Blessed art thou O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us and commanded us concerning the lighting of the Passover lights.

A prayer as we celebrate the first Seder: BARUCH ATA ADONAI ELOHEYNU MELECH HA'OLAM SHEKHEKHIYANU V'KIMANU V'HIGIANU L'ZMAN HAZEH. Blessed art thou O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who has sustained us and kept us to bring us to this season. AMEN

The father now leads the family in the blessing of the first cup, sitting at the table, he raises his glass:

The First Cup: a cup to sanctify this evening unto the God of Israel:

BARUCH ATA ADONAI ELOHEYNU MELECH HAOLAM BOREY PRI HAGAFEN
Blessed art thou O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth fruit from the vine.

As we sit around the table we all read from copies of this elaborate book called the Haggadah: which means the story; the story of Passover; usually 3-4 hours to go through it. But in Yeshua's time there was no printing; how could one be sure it was done right?

Four cups: The Kiddush Cup (Sanctification)
 Cup of Plagues
 Cup of Redemption (or Praise)
 Cup of Elijah

Four “I wills” of God: Exodus 6:^{6ff} : *he frees us; takes us as his people, brings us to the land and gives it to us as our inheritance.*

Therefore, say to the people of Isra’el: ‘I am *ADONAI*. ***I will*** free you from the forced labor of the Egyptians, rescue you from their oppression, and redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. ⁷***I will*** take you as my people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am *ADONAI* your God, who freed you from the forced labor of the Egyptians. ⁸***I will*** bring you into the land which I swore to give to Avraham, Yitz’chak and Ya’akov — ***I will*** give it to you as your inheritance. I am *ADONAI*.’”

[Urchatz] Before any of the elements is touched, the hands are washed: Yeshua did not simply wash his hands; John 13:2ff, he got up from the table and washed the disciples feet: even over the objections of Peter; and none from Yehuda [Judas].

He is not a master of tradition, but of love: as he instructs us: “If I the Lord and Rabbi have washed your feet, then you should also wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:14, 15)

[Karpas] The family then actually begins a symbolic meal—using the karpas or greens that are on the table. They say a prayer of thanks and then dip it in salt water. BARUCH ATA ADONAI, ELOHEYHU MELECH HAOLAM, BOREY PRI HA ADAMAH. Blessed art thou, O Lord our God who brings forth from the earth. (I’ll explain this part in detail later.)

There is also bread at our table; let me show it to you: here in the Matzotash. This is what we’ll eat during the eight days of Passover; Matzo. It’s cooked without leaven, it’s flat, dry and was first made very quickly as we prepared to leave Egypt.

Preparing the Afikoman: the **Yachatz** (breaking): The father does something quite interesting as it’s first revealed; he reaches in past the top piece to the middle piece and takes it out. He recites no blessing, except to reach in and break it in half. Half is left on his plate; the other half is wrapped up and hidden away. It is often tucked among his cushions for awhile so that the children can steal it and he will buy it back with chocolate money, but after supper it’s hidden so that the children go in search of it and one will get a great reward.

The father now lifts up the unleavened bread which the family will eat for the next eight days and declares to his family: **Behold the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt; whoever is hungry, let him come and eat. Whoever is needy, let him come and celebrate Passover. Now we are here; next year may we be in Eretz Yisrael. Now we are slaves; next year may we be free men. This year we are here; next year in Jerusalem.**

[Why so many traditions?] By this time, people’s eyes are starting to glaze over as they can see that there are a lot of rituals, a lot of traditions to follow.

So, why do we do it? Why do we go for 8 days without bread? Why pay so much scrupulous attention to avoiding leaven—and in a Jewish household this will mean being scrupulous about the toothpaste and Coke bottles that have a tiny kosher for Passover sticker on them. Why did the prisoners in concentration camps refuse bread during Passover though they were starving?

In fact, God anticipated this question in the Torah: Exodus 12: 26, 27 and : *When you come into the land and your children ask you, Why do you do this? You shall explain...* And in Exodus 13:8: *On that day tell your son, 'I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.'*

The father speaks to his children, not as if these things happened so long ago no one remembers, but as if he were there; as if he himself formed the bricks and walked through the Red Sea. The rest of the elders at the table are urged to speak the same way.

[Four Questions] So as the evening begins, he asks the youngest of his children to ask 4 questions, beginning: Ma nishtana ha lyla hazeh min kol haleylot?

Why is this night different from all other nights?

On all other nights we may eat chametz and matzoh, but on this night only matzoh.

On all other nights we eat many vegetables, but on this night, we eat maror.

On all other nights we do not dip even once, but on this night twice

On all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining, but on this we all recline.

The child notes the distinctive foods and the dipping and the father explains using a series prompts, all through the evening that remind him and the family of the experience of Egypt.

[Show the Zeroah (shankbone): Arm of the Lord]: Deut 26:8: So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders.

“Arm of the Lord” –the Arm of the Lord is not too short to save, even from the most powerful of enemies.

For we know that Pharaoh, who was one of the most powerful people on earth, placed himself among the Gods of Egypt; but he had attacked the strength of Israel, killing their sons and enslaving the people. Just as God warned in Exodus 4:22: Thus says the LORD: “Israel *is* My son, My firstborn. 23 So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.”

So, God heard the cries of his people. Now you would think that the Haggadah would be the brave story of a hero, one whom God sent to save us. But it's not. In fact, the story that we read emphasizes that God alone accomplished the task of saving His people: that he did not do this by any other means than by His own hand.

The Egyptian king's heart was already in the hands of God and it was hardened to keep saying, “no. And then our God unleashed upon the Egyptians terrible plagues that showed His power over the gods of the field, the waters and even the sky. And then Pharaoh was given one last chance; one last warning before God unleashed the most terrible plague of all: death.

But that night, God had prepared us. We were take a perfect spotless lamb and kill it; pouring its blood before the door of our houses in the draining trench under the door. Then we splashed the blood over the lintel using hyssop—the parsley at the table is a reminder of the hyssop—covering each side of the door as a seal. The blood was a covenant seal of God's salvation for those who trusted in Him.

So, we ate in a hurry; standing up with our belts on our waist; sandals already on our feet; waiting for the moment when we should leave. The next morning we could hear the cries and wails from every corner of Egypt their first born was dead. But behind our doors, sealed by the blood of the lamb, we were spared.

[Lifting the second cup]: we remember, yet not with joy, the suffering of the Egyptians; and we take ten drops from our cup; one for each one of the plagues: as we remember when we were slaves, we were bought with a price:

DAM, TZIFARDAYEH, KINIM, AROV, DEVER, SHIKHIN, BARAD, ARBEH, CHOSECH, MAKKAT B'CHOROT

Blood, boils, darkness, frogs, flies, hail, locusts, pestilence, vermin, slaying of the first born

[SING DAYENU]: It would have been enough: Split the Sea, Brought us out, Destroyed Pharaoh, Torah, Let us to Sinai, Made us his people, Gave Ten Commandments, Gave us Shabbat, Gave us the Land

What must we do to fulfill our obligation for Pesach? Hillel teaches us to explain the Passover offering; the matzah and the maror:

The Pesach offering was given because HaShem passed over over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt.

Matzah: the dough of our fathers didn't have time to rise; and so they baked it into unleavened bread because they could not delay.

Maror: because the Egyptians embittered our lives in Egypt.

So now, it is our duty to regard ourselves as personally having gone out of Egypt.

Rachatz: Second washing of the hands

Blessing before we the Matzoh and Maror: We thank and praise our God: Blessed art thou O Lord Our God, king of the Universe who redeemed us and redeemed our ancestors from Egypt and enable us to reach this night so that we may eat matzah and maror.

The blessing is said over this bread: BARUCH ATA ADONAI ELOHEYNU MELECH HA OLAM HA MOTZI LECHEM MIN HA'ARETZ.

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

and an added blessing: Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has commanded us concerning the eating of Matzoh.

BARUCH ATA ADONAI ELOHEYNU MELECH HA'OLAM ASHER KIDDISHANU B'MITZVOTAV V'TZIVANU AL ALKHILAT MATZOH.

So that finally we all taste of the unleavened bread.

Maror: bitter herb, symbol of sorrow (mixed with a touch of charoseth)

BARUCH ATA ADONAI ELOHEYNU MELECH HA'OLAM ASHER KIDDISHANU B'MITZVOTAV V'TZIVANU AL ALKHILAT MAROR.

Charoseth: [Korech] mortar of apples, cinnamon, symbol of bricks (add a touch of maror)

Why is charoseth sweet? Because we still had hope for redemption; takes the edge off the maror.

[Offering the first taste of the sop] Yeshua had already told the disciples that one of them would betray him and during the evening, Peter asked John—who sat next to His Master—who it was. At first, Yeshua hints that it will be one who is dipping in his bowl, but there are a number of people doing that. Then, during the meal, Jesus does something even more pointed: in his day, it was an honour to be the first one given the charoseth mixture (called the Korech at our table—or the sop in my KJV): and that was what Jesus did to Judas; offering to bridge the gap between them. But then Judas got up from the table and left hurriedly. Yeshua's last words to him make it clear—he knows what his disciple is about to do.

Twilight has ended and John writes ominously: “It was night.”

Beytzah (egg): symbol of grief, eaten at funerals; we have no Temple and Israel is in mourning for we have had no sacrifices for 2000 years.

Before we say the blessing over the cup of plagues. As we said, we ate in a hurry; standing up with our belts on our waist; sandals already on our feet; waiting for the moment when we should leave.

The next morning we could hear the cries and wails from every corner of Egypt their first born was dead. But behind our doors, sealed by the blood of the lamb, we were spared. But then we have to be ready to go out through that door and begin our journey. But what we recall, is that much as we feared what would come, the Egyptians were so happy to see us go that they gave us their gold and silver and urged us on our way.

Yeshua, too, will have to go out that door and face the disciple who has already left the table. So we must trust all things into the Lord's hands as we pray through the cup of plagues.

[Second Cup—of Plagues] BARUCH ATA ADONAI ELOHEYNU MELECH HAOLAM BOREY PRI HAGAFEN

Blessed art thou O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth fruit from the vine.
In whom all things are Yes and Amen.

SHULCHAN ORAYCH: WE ENJOY THE MEAL: LET'S PRAY.

AFTER THE SUPPER: SEARCH FOR THE AFIKOMAN**The Third Cup**

After the supper, the Afikoman is revealed; but take a closer look at the matzotash: the three in one: it is seen in various ways; the three groups within Israel

The tradition concerning the three in one: **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or The king, the high priest and people:**

But do we not know this of Isaac: he was said to been sacrificed and have died—and Abraham received him back as if from the dead.

And when was there ever a high priest like this—who interceded for Israel with his life? Wrapped in white burial white cloth, buried and then came back as a ransom for his people?

Take a closer look at the Matzoh: it's a symbol of Messiah: Is. 53: 4ff.

**He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities
The punishment that brought us peace was upon him
And by His stripes we are healed.**

Yeshua said: “This is my body, broken for you...”

Look at this cup: red wine alone is used; it's a symbol of the blood of the spotless Lamb. This was the blood splashed upon the door of our homes that saved us from the onslaught of the angel of death. Now too there is a Lamb of God who is offered before the throne of grace: it is His blood that is a sign of intercession for us:

Jesus lifted this up declaring the promise fulfilled of Jeremiah the prophet: [31:31] **a new covenant written on hearts when no one will ask concerning the Lord, for they shall all know him [Isaiah]...a new beginning...**

Yeshua said: This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

The covenant sign of intercession is his sacrifice on our behalf. Yeshua is our Passover Lamb.

The next day, Yeshua received 39 stripes from a Roman whip, enough to kill him, but he was strong enough to carry the beam for his stake all the way to Golgotha and die on a cross where his first words were, “Father forgive them...”

At midday, as Yeshua was breathing his last, the trumpet blasts off the city walls announced that they were sacrificing the Passover lambs in the Temple, just as He was becoming our Passover Lamb, the last sacrifice of all.

All these things were foreseen by the prophet Isaiah hundreds of years before:

**Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?**
²**He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.**
³**He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.**
⁴**Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.**
⁵**But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.**
⁶**We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.**

This is why, the night before, Yeshua combined these two: the cup symbolizing blood; the bread symbolizing a Messiah without sin. The disciples didn't fully understand until he had risen from the grave and then they began to share this cup with all who followed him.

They recalled what Yeshua had done in their midst: **“This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”**

It has passed been down to us: the cup and the bread of this table has continued to be passed down until it reaches us.

My people do not yet know all that Yeshua has already done for them. When they take these elements it is with the hope that salvation may yet be coming.

The family simply takes the elements together: blessing again the cup which is combined with the singing of the Hallel, the great psalm of praise, so this cup of redemption is sometimes called the Cup of Praise.

BARUCH ATA ADONAI ELOHEYNU MELECH HAOLAM BOREY PRI HAGAFEN
 Blessed art thou O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth fruit from the vine.
 And may we bear much fruit as we abide in the vine.

One more cup: cup of Elijah: there's also an extra setting at the table just for the prophet

Because in the very last verses of the Hebrew Bible we read the prophet Malachi declare that before the great and terrible day of the Lord, Elijah is to come.

Pharisees asked if John were Elijah and Yeshua said they would have known him if they had been willing to accept him.

Call for Elijah: The oldest child goes to the nearest door and opens it crying out for Elijah:

Sing: Eliyahu Ha Navi

So we take the last cup together, and once more declare the blessing:

[Fourth Cup] BARUCH ATA ADONAI ELOHEYNU MELECH HAOLAM BOREY PRI HAGAFEN
Blessed art thou O Lord Our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth fruit from the vine.

And may we bear much fruit as we abide in the vine.

If you are reading in John's Gospel, Yeshua begins one final admonition—a little sermon using as his text this very prayer as he instructs his disciples: ⁴Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. (John 15)

Before we conclude: Remember those words, which we first said over the matzoh?

**Behold the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt;
then we were slaves, this year we are free.**

“This year we are here; next year in Jerusalem.”

We conclude by together reciting the words of promise as a pledge of hope.

For we have traveled from Egypt to the land of Promise; from grief to Celebration; from slavery to freedom; from despair to hope. And now we turn our eyes to the ultimate hope:

Every aspect of this meal points to a climax of history that could only take place when the Temple was still standing, when the Passover lamb was still slain in the midst of Israel, when we could be sure that the Messiah could be proved to be a descendant of David and that Israel could both reject him and experience his resurrection. So now the Passover points to a new redemption, just as Israel says as it concludes the Seder.

The pesah service is finished, as it was meant to be performed. Just as we have been privileged to lay out its order, so may we be privileged to perform it [in the Temple.] Soon, may the Lord lead us redeemed to Zion with great joy.

L'shana ha'ba b'Yerushalayim. Next year in Jerusalem and we all say it together!

Sing: L'Shana ha ba:

Next year, may Messiah come and gather us up to Jerusalem. For so many of my people, it's always about next year. And if you're in Jerusalem, we can say next year in the New Yerushalayim.

But what did the father say? This is what God did for me. So, too, this table is not about the elements or the symbols, but what was done for you and me.

As Yeshua went out to the Garden of Gethsemane, he was singing,

²¹I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.

²²The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;...

²⁴The LORD has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad. ...

²⁶Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.
From the house of the LORD we bless you.^[b]

....

²⁹Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Conclusion:

3500 years ago my people were slaves—but the blood over the doorposts from a spotless lamb saved them from death and then they walked through it.

Today, we need the blood the lamb over the doorposts of our hearts; and we need Him to come inside, to make order—Seder—in our lives. This is the work of Messiah alone and he is calling to us to welcome him into our home, our hearts, our lives.

And he waits for us to say: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord—Baruch ha ba b'shem Adonai.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord and brings with him true Shalom. Do you need that Shalom tonight. Where are you on the journey? Isn't it time to move from doubt to grace, from pain to peace, from despair to hope? Do you need to welcome Messiah into your heart now?

Let us pray.

As we conclude with the singing of the Hatikvah, we remember that God is preparing our generation for the ultimate hope of Israel. Let's stand together and sing: words on next page

HATIKVA

Kol od balevav penimah,
Nefesh Yehudi homiyah.
Ulfa'atei mizrach kadimah,
Ayin l'Tziyon tzofiyah.

Od lo avdah tikvateinu,
Hatikvah bat shnot alpayim,
Lihyot am chofshi be'artzeinu,
Eretz Tziyon viyrushalayim.
Lihyot am chofshi be'artzeinu,
Eretz Tziyon viyrushalayim.

THE HOPE

As long as deep within the heart
A Jewish soul stirs,
And forward, to the ends of the East
An eye looks out, towards Zion.

Our hope is not yet lost,
The hope of two thousand years,
To be a free people in our land
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.
To be a free people in our land
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.