



The first night of Passover is March 27th

Breaking the Middle Matzah

Warmest Greetings in the Lamb,

ORDER!

This is the word that the Ruach Ha Kodesh impressed on our hearts for this Passover season. Order is the very essence of Passover. The word *seder* as in Passover Seder, means "order." If you go to Israel, you'll hear the word *b'seder* hundreds of times each day. It means O.K. or "in order." GOD IS A GOD OF ORDER. He desires order in the home, order in the congregation, and order in all human affairs. I Corinthians 14:40 says, "*Let all things be done decently and in order.*"

A wonderful example of this divine order is found in Matthew Chapter 3 at the *tevilah* (immersion) of Yeshua the Messiah. Yeshua came to John for immersion, but John said that he had need of being immersed by Yeshua, not vice-versa. "*And Yeshua answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now: for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.'*" God's order. Always.

As we celebrate the Lord's Passover this year, may we all seek, and find, God's divine order for our lives. May our prayer be the one voiced in Psalm 119:133: "*Order my steps in Thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*" (KJV)

We were fascinated to find that the first reference (and many thereafter) of order in the Torah had to do with sacrifices, specifically laying the wood in order for the sacrifice. Order and blood sacrifice. Over and over. And so, we come to Passover, the culmination of ORDER and BLOOD SACRIFICE.

Order in the Passover Seder

There are 14 steps in the order of the traditional Passover seder. We'd like to take you through these steps and show you their connection with Messiah.

#1 KADESH (Ka-DESH) - the cup of sanctification, the blessing.

The *seder* always begins with a cup of wine. Wine is a symbol of sanctification in Jewish life. It also symbolizes the joy of life and is present on all occasions where future happiness is anticipated, i.e. Sabbath, weddings. (At Jesse's Bar Mitzvah celebration there was no wine or alcohol, but comments such as the following were made: "This is the most joyful Bar Mitzvah I've ever attended" (82 year old relative), and "How can these people have so much joy without drinking anything?" Answer: Wine is not the source of joy for believers in Messiah. God is. We are filled with the "new wine" of His Spirit!) Yeshua had nothing against wine (His first miracle at a wedding involved making wine.), however, wine as a source of joy was replaced by the One

who can **make wine**. The real source of joy is the Messiah Himself.

Kadesh comes from the Hebrew word, *Kadosh* (holy, set apart, sanctified). Just as the first cup of wine sets apart the table for Passover, Yeshua's first miracle set Him apart as the Holy One sent from God. Through Him, we too are "set apart," *kadosh l'cha!*

Kadesh is also the "kiddush," or sanctification of the seder. God is praised for both sanctifying his people Israel and for enabling them to reach this time of celebration. Let us remember to thank the Lord that we have lived to celebrate one more Passover in His honor!

#2 URCHATZ (oour-CHATZ) - handwashing

The second step in the order of the Passover seder is called *netilat yadayim* in Hebrew. The father of the household cleanses his hands through a ceremonial washing, just as the High Priest in Bible times cleansed himself in the laver before ministering in the Tabernacle or Temple. At the last *Pesach* of Yeshua, when it was time for the handwashing, our Messiah did something quite radical. He took the form of the servant (who normally would appear with a water basin) and began to wash His disciples' feet. What was the message? After sanctification comes service. God has set us apart to serve others with the same humility of heart as our Messiah.

#3 KARPAS (CAR-pas) - the greens

A green vegetable, a symbol of spring, is dipped in salt water. Parsley is generally used. Just as hyssop (a green vegetable) was dipped in blood at the first Passover, we dip the greens. The salt water represents both the Red Sea that the Israelites passed through, and the tears that they shed while slaves in Egypt.

Dipping was a common way of eating in Yeshua's day. It is a blessing to participate in a ritual that He participated in and helps us remember where we have come from!

For those who don't want to rush through the service (which can take 4 hours), because of those who are "starving," we serve *karpas* appetizers and avocado dips at this point in the Seder: raw celery, carrots, radishes, broccoli, parsley, etc. Yeshua's yoke is easy and His burden is light!

#4 YACHATZ (yah-CHATZ) - breaking the middle *matzah*

The word *yachatz* literally means to "break" or "divide." At this point in the Seder, the leader breaks the middle of three ceremonial *matzot* which are kept in a *matzah tash* (pocket). Traditional Judaism views the middle *matzah* as Israel, suffering and being broken, in its place between God and the Nations. As Messianic Jews, we know that the middle *matzah* represents Yeshua, our High Priest and the "*one Mediator between God and men*" (1 Timothy 2:5) who was broken for us.

In **The Passover Seder** by Dr. Ron Wolfson, a traditional Jewish author, the following comments are made: "*Yachatz* is a powerful symbol of redemption." In the future, something now in hiding will make complete that which is now incomplete. This is a foreshadowing of the Messiah, establishing that we not only celebrate the Passover of the past but the Passover of the future."

Yeshua is the "hidden one." He is the "broken one." He is also the "resurrected one." May He be revealed this *Pesach* to His ancient people, so that they may be complete in Him!!

#5 MAGGID (ma-GEED) Telling the story

The story of the first Passover is re-told every year. The Bible instructs us in Exodus 13:8 as follows: *V'higad'ta l'vinkha*, "You shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'This is done because of what the Lord did for me when I came up from Egypt.'" The word *higad'ta* comes from the root *l'hagid*, "to tell." The words *Haggadah* and *Maggid* come from the same root.

The Exodus story is actually told in four different ways during the *Maggid*. Each of the four tellings begins with a question, followed by an answer, followed by praise to God. Telling #1 includes the "four questions," telling #2 includes the four types of "Jewish learners," telling #3 is a consideration of four verses in Deuteronomy that summarize the Exodus story and telling #4 deals with the ritual items on the Passover table - the Lamb, the Matzah and the Bitter Herbs.

As we tell the story of God delivering our people from Egyptian bondage, we acknowledge the God who is mighty to save. This is the God who has delivered us from darkness and called us into His marvelous light. Our God has set us free from the bondage to sin and self. When we tell **that** story, our own personal *maggid*, we overcome the enemy of our souls. As Revelation 12:11 expresses it: *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony..."*

#6 Rochzah (rach-TZAH) - second handwashing

A second handwashing occurs before the breaking of matzah, symbolic of the meal. Observant Jews wash their hands before breaking bread at every meal. The cleansing during *Rochzah* is a ritual cleansing in which first the right hand is cleansed then the left. Special pitchers with dual handles are often used. *"Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 'Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.' But He answered and said to them, 'Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?'... Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.'"* (Matthew 15:1-3, 7-8)

Let's make sure this Pesach that as we wash our hands, **our hearts** are clean before the Lord.

#7 MOTZI MATZAH (MO-tzi MAH-tzah) Blessing for the Matzah

Matzah is unleavened bread. It is just flour and water - no yeast. It is plain and relatively tasteless. It is the "bread of affliction" (*lechem oni*) spoken of in Deuteronomy 16:3 Just as leaven, *chametz* is a type of sin in the Holy Scriptures, *matzah* is a type of sinlessness. No bloating. No pride. Simplicity. In fact, the *Hasidim* (ultra-Orthodox Jews) talked of Passover as a time to become a "matzah person," a time to rid ourselves of any inflation. An unleavened person. This traditional Jewish concept sounds very familiar. Consider the following verses from the B'rit Hadasha: *"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Messiah, our Passover was sacrificed for us."* (1 Corinthians 5:7) You are a MATZAH PERSON in Yeshua!

A deep thought about the matzah at Passover. This matzah is traditionally considered to be a symbol which is transformed through the Seder experience from the bread of affliction into the bread of freedom. Yeshua is the fulfillment of this concept. His affliction purchased our freedom. By embracing His death, we enter into life. He who became a curse, is the consummate Blessing.

#8 **MAROR** (ma-ROAR) the bitter herbs

Maror is first mentioned in the Bible in Exodus 12:8, "and with bitter herbs they shall eat it (the paschal sacrifice)." God commanded His people to eat something bitter with the lamb. Today that something is usually prepared horseradish, but may also be bitter lettuce. As we taste the *maror* and perhaps wince or even begin to tear, we are reminded of the bitterness of slavery in Egypt (Exodus 1:14) or the bitterness of bondage to sin (Messianic interpretation).

According to one rabbinic legend, the enslaved Israelites called Pharaoh *MAROR* because he embittered their lives. But God defeated Pharaoh. And Yeshua defeated Ha Satan (the devil). Through Him we can have victory over bitterness. The Pesach and the Maror should not be juxtaposed in our lives! "Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?" (James 3:11) There is a struggle (Romans 7:18-25), but we can be victorious through The Lamb!

#9 **KORECH** (co-RECH) Hillel's sandwich

Some of you have heard of the "Hillel sandwich" which consists of *maror* and *charoseth* between two pieces of matzah. This part of the Seder ritual was developed by Rabbi Hillel, one of the greatest rabbis in Jewish history, as a reminder of God's instruction to eat the flesh of the paschal lamb with bitter herbs. The original Hillel sandwich consisted of roasted lamb and maror. Once the Temple was destroyed and lambs could no longer be sacrificed, the sandwich became matzah and maror. A later addition was something called *charoseth*. This is a sweet mixture of wine, nuts, honey, spices and sometimes fruits. The rabbis decided that the *charoseth* would symbolize God's kindness which made the bitterness of slavery easier to bear. (The *charoseth* also represents the mortar with which the Israelite slaves made bricks.) It is certainly true that when we bring God into our lives we can find sweetness in even the most bitter of situations.

#10 **SHULCHAN ORECH** (shool-CHAN o-RECH) The Meal

The literal tradition of *Shulchen Orech* is "set the table," but this term is used to describe the meal itself. The Passover meal is a festive meal and might well be described as a "feast." At the time of Yeshua, lamb, roasted or as a stew, was standard fare. Today in Jewish homes, lamb is rarely if ever eaten. This has been the case since 70 AD. Chicken, turkey or beef brisket are eaten instead. As Messianic Jews, we have reintroduced the lamb at **our** Passover table, as we lift up the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

#11 **TZAFUN** (tzah-FOON) The Afikomen

Dr. Wolfson comments in his book that religion is all about "finding... finding God, finding truth, finding faith, finding the way..." A good thought! God said: "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13)

Tzafun, literally means "hidden." The larger half of the broken middle matzah is called the *afikomen*. It is wrapped in white cloth, hidden, and later found and redeemed. For Messianic believers who know Yeshua as the "Unleavened bread of sincerity and truth," the *afikomen* ceremony is a graphic portrayal of the death, burial and resurrection of Messiah.

The ancient rabbis understood the *afikomen* to be a symbol of the *korban Pesach*, the Passover sacrifice. How accurate! May modern day rabbis come to see that Yeshua is the once and-for-all *Korban Pesach*! When He held up the *afikomen* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you...." (Luke 22:19), He was inviting all to partake of His redemption.

#12 **BARECH** (bah-RECH) Blessing after the meal

Most of us are accustomed to bless the Lord for our food before the meal. *Barech* (from *baruch*, to bless) shows us the more scriptural way... to thank God after we have eaten. Deuteronomy 8:10 gives us the Biblical precedent: "*When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which he has given you.*" The grace after meals is usually referred to as *Birkat ha-Mazon* (the blessing of the sustenance) and consists of four parts, 1) the blessing for food, 2) the blessing for the land, 3) the blessing for Jerusalem, and 4) the blessing of goodness (God is good and does good for all).

The blessing after the meal would have included the third cup of wine, the cup of redemption (the cup **after** supper) that Yeshua said represented His blood. (Luke 22:20)

#13 **HALLEL** (ha-LELL) Praising God

The *Hallel*, or Songs of Praise, are found in Psalms 113-118. They end with *Ho du l'Adonai ki tov, ki l'olam hasdo* ("Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His love endures forever.")

Prophetic references to Yeshua are found twice in Psalm 118: "*The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.*" (verses 22-23) and "*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*" (verse 26)

#14 **NIRTZAH** (neer-TZAH) Conclusion

Nirtzah, literally "acceptance", is the last step in the order of Passover. It includes a fourth cup of wine which, according to most Jewish sources, is a reminder of God's promise of redemption, "*I will take you as My people, and I will be your God.*" (Exodus 6:7) The focus turns to Jerusalem and future hope for God to restore the redeemed to Zion. The seder ends with *Lashanah ha-bah b'Yirushalayim!* ("Next year in Jerusalem!")

Love and Blessings in Yeshua's Name! M & J

P.S. May God's precious people come to really understand what "in order" means in their lives: God, Ha Shem, as **Number One**. This is the beginning of divine order! Let us all intercede for God's order to be established this Passover in homes throughout the land of Israel!