

Passover Feature

IN HONOR OF PASSOVER, WHICH COMMEMORATES THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF THE ISRAELITES FROM EGYPTIAN BONDAGE, THE LAS VEGAS ISRAELITE WILL PUBLISH A SERIES OF FEATURES. THIS YEAR THE PASSOVER FESTIVAL IS INAUGURATED AT SUNDOWN ON THE EVENING OF WEDNESDAY, APR. 14 AND ENDS APR. 22.

Passover and Bicentennial

(By Rabbi Samuel Silver)

There's a straight line between Passover and the Bicentennial.

This land was founded by people who clung to the ideals of the Jewish Bible.

The Pilgrims implanted within the soil of America the belief that every human being is sacred.

Judaism teaches that every individual has a touch of the Divine. Therefore, we must respect our neighbor. And in this shrinking world, everyone who resides on Spaceship Earth is a neighbor.

The doctrine of reverence for all human beings is the basis of the Passover saga. That doctrine is also one of the cardinal components of our nation, when it operates at its noblest.

The Pilgrims regarded themselves as latter-day Israelites.

They thought of King George as Pharaoh. They limned and hymned this new land as the new Palestine, the land of promise.

It is true that the U.S. does not always adhere to the ideals of our nation at its finest. But whenever we stray from our spiritual anchorage, the memory of our fundamental ideals gnaws at our collective conscience and we guiltily go back to our original moorings.

Each moral setback in our history has been followed by a comeback.

And what we come back to is the recognition of the fact that this nation has a mission, not to dominate the world but to serve it. Engraved upon the psyche of America is the

The traditional way to make a Seder

- 1 **CANDLES** are lighted by the mother of the house to usher in the festival of Passover. The benediction which she pronounces over the candles gives a religious meaning to this simple act. An abundance of light symbolizes joy and festivity, and the soft candle-glow adds an aura of spirituality to the Seder table.
- 2 **A CUP OF WINE** is placed at each table setting. The sanctification of the Holiday is pronounced over the first cup. Three additional cups are drunk during the course of the Seder, making a total of four, to symbolize the four expressions of the Lord's promise to redeem the children of Israel and deliver them from bondage.
- 3 **THE HAGGADAH** (literally "the telling") contains the complete Seder ceremonies in their prescribed order (Seder). The first part of the book, concerned mainly with the story of the Jews' deliverance from Egypt, is read before the meal. After dinner follows the second portion consisting of prayers of praise and thanks to the Almighty.
- 4 **MATZOH** represents the "bread of affliction" eaten by the Jews in Egypt, and also the bread that had to be baked during their hasty flight when there was no time for leavening. Three matzot are placed in the Seder tray. Half the middle matzoh, saved for the Afikomon (dessert), is playfully "stolen" by a child and ransomed for a prize.
- 5 **THE Z'ROAH**, a roasted shank bone, is placed on the Seder tray. It represents the ancient sacrifice of the Paschal lamb (Pesach) which had to be eaten roasted. Pesach, the Hebrew name for Passover, also refers to the Lord's passing over (posach) the Jewish homes during the plague visited upon the Egyptian first-born.
- 6 **THE BEITZAH**, a roasted egg placed left of the Z'roah, symbolizes the required offering brought on all festivals in the Temple. The egg, while not itself sacrificed, is used in the Seder as it is the Jewish symbol of mourning (in this case for the loss of the Temple where the sacrifices were brought).
- 7 **THE MAROR** or "bitter herbs" (usually horseradish) is placed in the middle of the tray and symbolizes the Jews' bitter suffering under the Egyptian yoke. Directly below is the Chazereth, another piece of bitter herbs, commemorating the custom of eating Maror sandwiched between two pieces of Matzoh.
- 8 **THE CHAROSET**, placed beneath the Z'roah, is a mixture of chopped apple, nuts, cinnamon, and wine designed to look like the mortar used by the Jews in building the palaces and pyramids of Egypt during centuries of forced labor. Before the Maror is eaten, it is dipped into the Charoset.
- 9 **THE KARPAS**, a piece of parsley or lettuce placed to the left of the Charoset, symbolizes the meager diet of the Jews in Egyptian bondage. It is dipped into salt water in remembrance of the tears they shed in their misery. The Karpas also signifies Springtime, the season of Passover.
- 10 **THE CUP OF ELIJAH**, filled with wine, is kept on the table throughout the Seder in the hope that the Prophet Elijah may appear as a messenger of the Almighty and announce the coming of the Messiah. Thus, in the midst of their memories of the past, the Jews look forward to the day of universal peace, love, and brotherhood.

call of the prophet to be a "light unto the world."

Hence, when there is a disaster in Guatemala or a famine in India, we automatically feel the obligation to be of help.

Every element of the Passover observance enforces this feeling of responsibility. The matzoh and the maror remind us of the bitterness of bondage and ingesting them induces us to reduce bitterness in the world.

The prayers and the songs associated with Passover glorify freedom, and the expansion of the area of freedom is a staple of the Hebraic-American outlook on life.

It is good, in this context, to note the alliance between the United States, sometimes called the Big Israel, and the State of Israel, often thought of as the America of the Middle East in the endeavor to bring to reality the hopes of our common spiritual heritage.

Passover is a holiday which prods us to create a world where all people will enjoy dignity, equality and security.

The observance of Pesach and the celebration of our national birthday combine to spur and stir each of us to live and love the most precious of precepts.



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