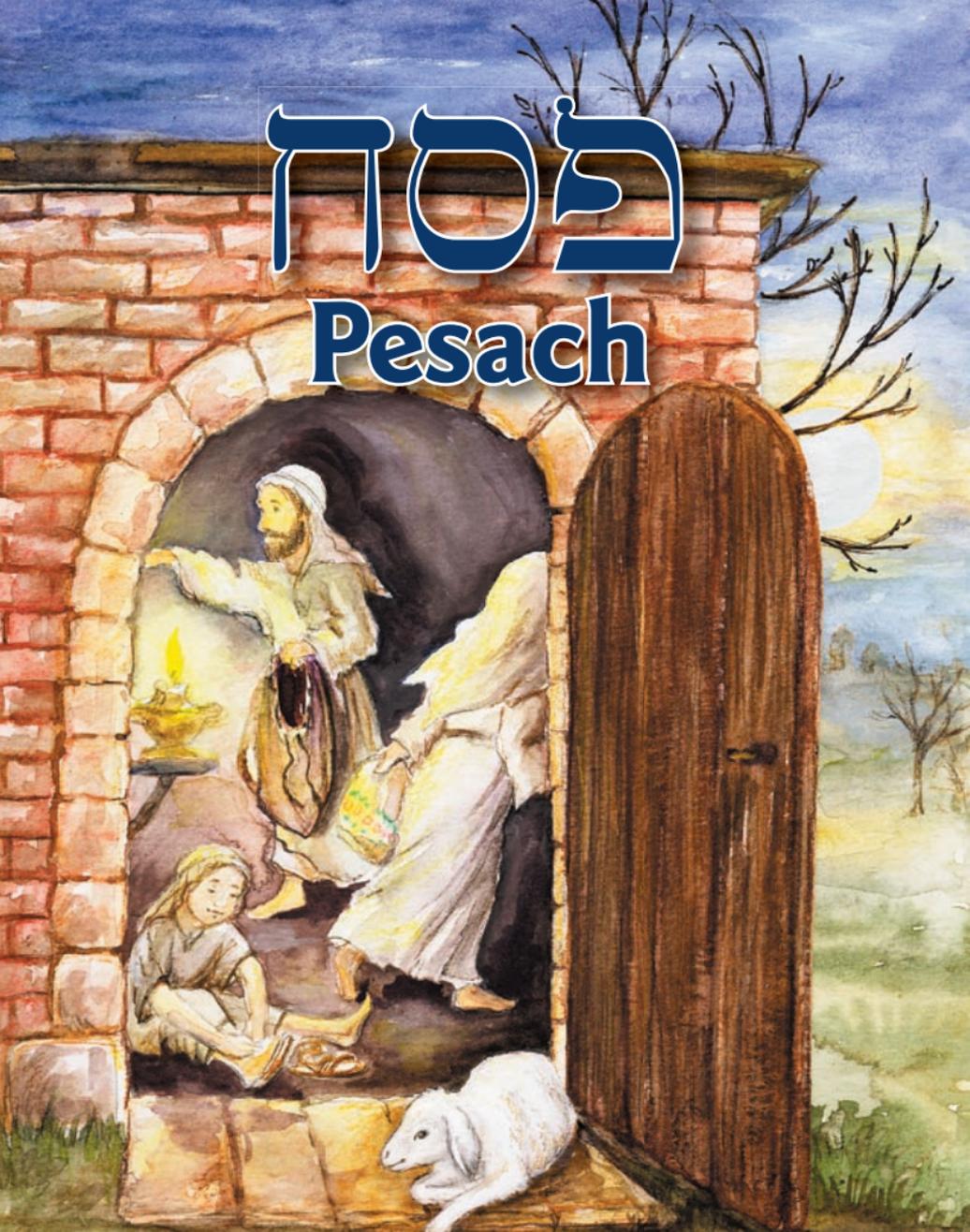


פסח

Pesach



Passover Hallel

"Praise The Lord. Praise. O servants of G-d, praise the name of G-d.

Let the name of G-d be praised, both now and forevermore.

From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of G-d is to be praised."

(Hallel, said by the Jewish people at the occurrence of a miraculous salvation, is said not as an obligation of "reading Hallel" per se, but as a form of praise to HaShem, or "Shirah." Our love for HaShem for the miracle that He did for us arouses us to say the Hallel). —Rabeinu Yonah,

When the Children Ask...



The little ones must understand.

The Almighty emphasized in the Torah that the children cannot be expected to participate in Pesach as only a "ritual" that they do not

comprehend. It is *essential* for them to understand.

Though it seems more comfortable to skirt the issue of "sacrifice" in our Pesach meal, it is really unavoidable. As is recorded in the Torah, it is the central focus of our festival.



So, when the children ask you, the answer must be: **IT IS A SACRIFICE.**

"And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean?' You shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to G-d who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.'" Shemot (Exodus) 12:26,27

"In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With a mighty hand G-d brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, He killed every firstborn in Egypt, both man and animal. This is why I sacrifice to G-d the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons.' And it will be like a sign on your hand and a symbol on your forehead that G-d brought us out of Egypt with his mighty hand."

Shemot (Exodus) 13:14-16

*In the House, the Tenth day through the
Fourteenth...*

Petted and pitied...

A lamb... soft and cuddly and gentle...

A lamb... kept inside your home

for four days.

*A lamb... the children rejoice
to have him so close.*

*A lamb... to be our sacrifice
for Passover.*



The Law requires that the Passover lamb be brought into the home four days before the actual day when it is to be sacrificed. We must be touched in our heart with compassion for the lamb in order for it to be a true sacrifice. The cozy family meal must never neglect the truth behind our traditions... Why does it need to be a blood sacrifice? Passover... is very deep!

"It is no coincidence that the blood (of the sacrificial animal) resembles our blood, and, that they possess many similar characteristics to humans. Seeing animals should invoke strong feelings of mercy, though not at the cost of our feelings for G-d, Torah, and fellow human beings..."

—Rabbi Pinchas Winston
www.torah.org

Our Most Significant Feast

Clear direction on how to celebrate Passover was given in the Torah:

Preparations were to begin on the tenth day of Abib. The head of each household was to select a lamb according to the number

of people who would be present. The animal was to be a year-old male without any defects. Each animal was to be slaughtered at twilight on the fourteenth day. The blood from the animals was to be applied to the doorframe of each house.

That night, each family was to eat the roasted lamb along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. The meat was to be roasted whole with the head and legs intact. All the leftovers were to be burnt; nothing was to be allowed to remain. The meal was to be eaten with an air of haste and expectancy. Therefore, the people's robes were to be tucked in their belts, their sandals were to be on their feet, and their staffs were to be ready and on hand.

Original Pesach

This was a "home celebration" in the beginning when our people were delivered from Egypt. The father of each family was the officiating "priest." Thus the whole nation was to be a "nation of priests." The later intervention of the Levites in the scriptures was contrary to the original design of Pesach. At home, there were no priests, no altar, no tabernacle; families were communing in the presence of G-d and around the sacrificial lamb that was the substitute for the firstborn members of that family. The lamb was to be a year-old male because it was taking the place of Israel's firstborn males who were young and fresh with the vigor of life. The bitter herbs were to recall the bitter years of servitude. The unleavened bread was to reflect this event's haste on that first night.

The slaying of the paschal lamb "between the evenings" that divide the 14th and 15th of Abib (Nisan) looks forward to the festive celebration that night. The Israelites were to "commemorate" that day as a "festival" and a "perpetual ordinance."

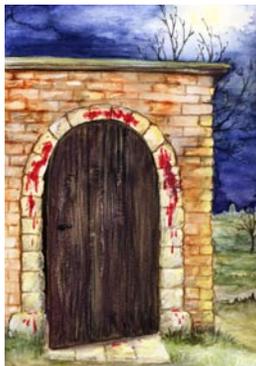
The Deadly Night

On that same night, the fifteenth of Abib, the death angel passed through Egypt to strike down the firstborn of all men and animals whose household had not been placed under the blood. Like the other “signs” or “miracles” Pharaoh had seen, the blood also was to be a pledge of G-d’s mercy. G-d would “pass over” these marked homes, and no plague would touch them. Indeed, even “all the gods of Egypt” would be judged by this final plague. Obviously, those deities whose representatives were linked with beasts were dealt direct blows—the bulls, cows, goats, jackals, etc. There could be little doubt that this would be interpreted as a direct blow to the gods of Egypt themselves.

The lamb itself to be slaughtered by each family was called “Pesach.” Blood from this animal was placed in a basin and with a bunch of hyssop was “slapped” on the doorframe. No one was to leave the house “until morning.” There was safety only within the place where the blood had covered...

In this, Israel would know the grounds and means of their deliverance and redemption for all times.

“The destroyer” was not a demonic power that rivaled G-d, but rather an angel who expedited His will. This angel of death is collectively called “a band of destroying angels.” They carried out the final judgment of G-d on Egypt. This was G-d’s direct work.



Later in the Temple Period

The celebration of Pesach became very different in the glorious days of the Temple in Jerusalem. Toward midafternoon on Thursday, 14 Nisan, the lambs (one per household) would be brought to the temple court where the priests sacrificed them. The priests took the blood and passed it in basins along a line till it was poured out at the foot of the altar. They also burned the lambs’ fat on the altar of burnt offerings. The singing of the Hallel accompanied these steps.

After sunset (now 15 Nisan), the household would gather in a home to eat the Passover lamb, which by this time would have been roasted with bitter herbs. The head of the household began the meal with the thanksgiving for that feast day and for the wine, praying over the first of four cups. A preliminary course of greens and bitter herbs was followed by the Passover *haggadah* — in which a boy would ask the meaning of all this, and the head of the household would explain clearly the meaning of the **PESACH SACRIFICE**... After the sobering reminder of the significance of the blood of the lamb that brought about their deliverance, with gratitude they began the singing of the first part of the Hallel. Then followed the joyous meal, accompanied by several shared cups of wine, one specifically called the “cup of blessing.” They sang the rest of the Hallel with hearts full of thanksgiving.

“Sing for joy to G-d our strength; shout aloud to the G-d of Jacob! Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre. Sound the ram’s horn at the New Moon, and when the moon is full, on the day of our Feast; this is a decree for Israel, an ordinance of the G-d of Jacob.” —Tehilim (Psalm) 81:1-4

“And ye shall observe this as an ordinance for thee and for thy sons forever.”



Enjoy
a meaningful
Pesach this year...

Significant Greetings by

