

The Changing Face of Pesach (Passover)

Introduction

YHWH instructed for the moed (festival) of Pesach (Passover) to be a perpetual observance throughout Israel's generations (Exod.12:14). All who keep Torah will soon be celebrating this moed and although we may disagree about the timing of this event, we should all acknowledge the evolution of this moed and what it memorialises - post Mashiach.

When compared with the other moedim (festivals), Pesach is unique because YHWH changed the rules for Pesach several times, a trait not found with any of the other moedim. A further significance surrounds the slaying of the animal – the actual Pesach. The Pesach was neither an offering nor sacrifice to YHWH, although the principle behind the sacrificial law: blood = life, is pertinent but the initial Pesach in Egypt was merely the means of obtaining blood. Before we start it is important that the reader understands the term 'leaven' from a Scriptural perspective and its relationship with yeast.

The Scriptural Relationship Between Leaven and Yeast

In the Scriptures the term 'leaven' is generally used in a negative sense, reflecting immorality, malice or false doctrine. But this is not always the case, in Matt.13:33 Mashiach compares the kingdom of heaven to leaven. Here Mashiach is comparing the expansion qualities of leaven with the growth of His kingdom. Insofar as the 'Feast of Unleavened Bread' is concerned leaven is used in the negative sense,

Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1Cor.5:8).

The First Pesach

YHWH decided the timing of Israel's exit from Egypt would be known as Pesach. It was after eating the Pesach lamb on the night of the 14th the Israelites left Egypt on the night of the 15th of Aviv (Deut.16:1).

YHWH gave stringent instructions concerning this first Pesach and Exodus chapter 12 provides a very detailed account of how this Pesach was to be performed,

1. The animal was to be killed between the evenings that is 3:00 – 6:00PM,
2. None of its bones were to be broken,
3. It was to be roasted,
4. It was intended for nothing of the animal to remain until morning, if anything was remaining it was to be burned up,
5. It was to be eaten whilst in a state of readiness for the journey
6. Blood from the animal was to be smeared on the doorposts and lintel
7. The people were to stay in their houses throughout this night.

YHWH instructed for this night to be memorialised by future generations but how? Clearly some of these laws and regulations (for example 5, 6 & 7) were designed to accommodate specific circumstances never to occur again. Of course, YHWH recognised the uniqueness of the situation, thus this moed was subject to several changes as discussed in the following items. Indeed, there may be a very valid argument for none of the above being applicable today.

Nevertheless, there are those who believe the rules for the first Pesach in Egypt remain applicable and must be followed today. The foundation for this belief tends to be the wording found in two verses in Exodus chapter 12,

*For YHWH will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, YHWH will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And you shall **observe this thing** for an ordinance for you and your sons **forever**. (Exod.12:23-24).*

Verse 24 is submitted for the necessity of maintaining the provisions of the first Pesach in Egypt. But as we shall see, YHWH Himself changed the rules and we cannot therefore interpret this verse in a way that is contradictory to the changes YHWH has deemed necessary. Our interpretation of this verse must accommodate the evolutionary aspect of Pesach celebrations. Two salient phrases are highlighted; *'observe this thing'* and *'forever.'* The crux of this issue is how we interpret these phrases.

'Observe' is the translation of the Hebrew *'shamar'* (pronounced 'shaw-mar') and has the meaning of 'to preserve, guard or keep. So, what is it that is to be preserved?

To answer this question, we need to consider the very essence of what this night was all about and the clue to this is the blood. Why did YHWH command for blood to be put on the doorposts, why not just nail a piece of coloured cloth externally to the door of the house? Would not this have been sufficient to identify all Israelite homes? Why did it have to be blood?

For the Israelites, the 14th Aviv was a night of salvation, salvation of the first born and salvation from bondage and we know that from the time of Adam, salvation requires the spilling of blood. After the flood and his salvation, Noah sacrificed animals to YHWH (Gen.8:20), again blood was shed. If we jump approximately 2500 years, Mashiach offered salvation through the spilling of His own blood.

The salvation achieved on the 14th Aviv was to be memorialised by the spilling of blood. Obviously, this required an animal sacrifice and so the rules associated with the selection, killing, cooking and the ultimate disposal of the animal carcass, were to continue **for a time**. But even these rules were subsequently modified by YHWH. So, coming back to verse 24, what was to be preserved was the necessity of blood for memorialising salvation. We should understand that insofar as memorialising the event, the spilling of blood was sufficient without the need for smearing blood around an entrance way. Neither Noah nor the temple priests, smeared blood on doorways. This act was necessitated by the unique circumstances specific to Egypt: the blood was for both salvation and identification – it was to identify the Israelite homes from Egyptian homes.

A further thought is that, during this night of terror, a nation was being knitted together and the next day they emerged as one. As the Israelites crossed the bloodied doorway of their homes, it was a defining moment to be compared to the process of a birth. This metaphor also explains why the placement of the lamb's blood was a one-time event. While the Passover meal was to be celebrated as an eternal commemoration of YHWH's saving intervention, a nation can only be born once. Once they had crossed through the blood of delivery, they could not re-enter the birth canal, so to speak and pass through on an annual occurrence.

Now let us consider the second phrase, 'forever.' This is a translation of the Hebrew *'olam.'* In almost all cases *'olam'* is translated 'forever' or 'everlasting' but in truth *'olam'* does not necessarily have either meaning, it can simply mean a long time. *'Olam'* comes from the root *'alam'* which means 'to conceal' or 'to hide.' Therefore, idiomatically *'olam'* may mean of such a long duration that the end cannot be seen. This considered, a more appropriate translation would be 'long lasting' not 'forever' or 'everlasting.' This makes sense for those who 2500 years later have accepted Mashiach Yahusha as their Pesach, thereby annulling the previous rules concerning the sacrifice of an animal as explained later in this article.

Insofar as the first Pesach held in Egypt is concerned, it was never the intention to relive the actual night, that is impossible. What was meant was to memorialise, the salvation achieved by YHWH's grace to His people and salvation requires the spilling of blood.

The Second Pesach

When the Israelites left Egypt, they took with them large numbers of flocks and herds (Exod.12:38). These animals were not just for food but also for worship (Exod.10:24-26).

Having performed the first Pesach in Egypt, we know exactly one year later they celebrated their second Pesach in the wilderness (Num.9:1-5). This is the only wilderness Pesach recorded. However, this wilderness Pesach creates a conundrum – after only one month in the wilderness the people were

complaining because they had exhausted their food supplies (Exod.16:1-3) and YHWH provided them meat via quails, this being the case how were they able to slaughter Pesach lambs 11 months later?

The answer may be found in Exod.16:3. Although they should have realised by now it was YHWH who called them out of Egypt, we find in Exod.16:3, the people blaming Moshe for their hunger and maybe they had a valid reason to do so. Consider, after four weeks in the wilderness they have no animals left for food, yet 11 months later they have sufficient animals for a Pesach sacrifice. Could it be that Moshe had instructed the people to separate certain perfect animals which were to be kept wholly for worship? Moshe prohibiting a hungry people from slaughtering these animals for food would certainly explain them directing their anger towards him personally and answer this conundrum.

How was the Second Pesach performed?

The Pesach held in the wilderness is recorded in Num.9:1-5,

And YHWH spoke to Moshe in the wilderness of Sinai in the first month of the second year after they had left the land of Egypt, saying, "Let the children of Israel keep the Pesach at its appointed time. On the fourteenth day of the first month at dusk, they shall keep it at its appointed time; they shall keep it according to its law, and according to its ordinance. And Moshe ordered the children of Israel to sacrifice the Pesach, on the fourteenth day of the first month in the wilderness of Sinai. According to all that YHWH commanded Moshe, so the children of Israel did.

The verse says, 'According to its law and to its ordinances' but which law and which ordinances? It cannot mean the rules attached to the first Pesach performed in Egypt because their circumstances now are very different and prevent the ritual performed in Egypt,

- 1) There is no fear of a 'Destroyer.'
- 2) They are living in tents and have no door posts or lintels on which to smear blood.
- 3) They are no longer in Egypt and there is no reason for putting blood around the door.
- 4) There was no need for them to have their loins girded and sandals on their feet for the reason given in Egypt.
- 5) There was no need for them to stay inside all night, as in Egypt.

Clearly, if the wilderness Pesach was performed in accordance with laws and ordinances, then YHWH must have provided a new set of rules to those He stipulated for the first Pesach in Egypt. Whilst the Scriptures are specific concerning the procedure for the first Pesach, they are relatively silent insofar as the second Pesach is concerned and as we will see, there is a plausible reason for this silence hidden amongst other verses,

On the first day of the first month, you are to set up the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting. (Exod.40:2).

On the first day of the first month of the second year the tabernacle was set up. (Exod.40:17).

Why did YHWH ensure the completion of the tabernacle was just in time for Pesach? Was it because all future Pesach celebrations would require the animals to be slaughtered at the tabernacle/temple by the Aharonic priests and no longer slaughtered by individuals at their homes? The phrase 'According to its law and to its ordinances' in Num.9:1-5 infers that YHWH had previously instructed Moshe how the Pesach celebration was to be performed under a tabernacle/temple system.

As stated earlier, this is the only wilderness Pesach recorded in the Scriptures. The next Pesach we are told about is forty years later when the Israelites enter the land and after the death of Moshe. Could it be that whilst in the wilderness and the Israelites still had sufficient animals, YHWH gave Moshe the rules for a temple Pesach as is recorded later in Leviticus. Could it be that whilst Moshe was still leading them, YHWH decided this was the opportune time to introduce the new Pesach laws and thus had the people rehearse a temple Pesach in readiness for the future? Having the opportunity for an actual rehearsal may explain why

we cannot find any new rules recorded anywhere. What is certain is that it would not have been performed in the same manner as the first Pesach held in Egypt.

Pesach Celebrations in the Land

YHWH has prescribed seven annual moedim (festivals) and He has separated three of these to be performed at a specific location by specific people. First YHWH identifies which moedim are to be treated separately; *“Three times in the year you are to observe a festival to Me:”*

- 1) *Guard the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Pesach). Seven days you eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Aviv – for in it you came out of Egypt – and do not appear before Me empty-handed: and*
- 2) *The Festival of the Harvest, the first fruits of your labours which you have sown in the field; and*
- 3) *The Festival of the Ingathering at the outgoing of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labours from the field. (Exod.23:14-16).*

The above moedim are commonly referred to as Unleavened Bread of which Pesach (Passover) is the start, Shavuot (Pentecost) and Sukkot (Tabernacles). However, the above passage does not tell us how these moedim are to be different, for this information we need to look elsewhere,

Three times in the year all your men are to appear before the Master YHWH, Elohim of Israel. (Exod.34:23).

So, these three moedim are to be a male only celebration and to be performed before YHWH. What does it mean, ‘to be performed before YHWH?’ Again, we need to look to other verses for clarification,

“Guard the month of Aviv and perform the Pesach to YHWH your Elohim, for in the month of Aviv YHWH your Elohim brought you out of Mitsrayim (Egypt) by night. And you shall slaughter the Pesach to YHWH your Elohim, from the flock and the herd, in the place where YHWH chooses to put His Name.” (Deut.16:1-2).

“You are not allowed to slaughter the Pesach within any of your gates which YHWH your Elohim gives you but at the place where YHWH your Elohim chooses to make his Name dwell, there you are to slaughter the Pesach in the evening at the going down of the sun, at the appointed time you came out of Mitsrayim. And you shall roast it and eat it in the place which YHWH your Elohim chooses and in the morning you shall go to your tents.” (Deut.16:5-7).

‘Where YHWH chooses to put His Name, where YHWH your Elohim chooses to make his Name dwell:’ after the construction of the tabernacle, YHWH’s presence was above the mercy seat on top of the Ark of the Covenant situated in the Most Holy Place. This was YHWH’s dwelling place amongst His people, but YHWH also refers to a geographical location for His presence,

And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem), the city which YHWH chose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. (1Kings 14:21)

Behold, I and the children whom YHWH has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from YHWH of hosts, who dwells on mount Zion. (Isa.8:18).

So shall ye know that I am YHWH your Elohim dwelling on Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Yerushalayim be holy, and foreigners shall not pass through her again (Joel 3:17).

When we consider these verses, all Pesach celebrations held in the Land were to be held in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) conducted at the temple by the priests and attended by the Israelite males: three distinct changes to the Egyptian Pesach. As Pesach was no longer performed within individual homes the smearing of blood around the entrance to individual homes must also have been annulled. However, Deut.16:7 infers for the men to return home after eating the Pesach and celebrate the week of Unleavened Bread with their families.

One might ask why females celebrate Pesach today if it was changed to an all-male affair. For those who have not accepted Yahusha and still sacrifice an animal, without a temple and priestly system the Pesach celebration has again become an individual family affair. The problem is that today there are no finite rules, for performing the Pesach, beyond what Mashiach has instructed, which is discussed in the following section. Consequently, there is little consistency in how Pesach is observed other than following a Jewish Seder. What is certain, is that YHWH recognised the circumstances surrounding the first Pesach in Egypt no longer applied and it was nonsense to continue with rules designed for circumstances that no longer existed.

Mashiach Changed the Fundamentals of the Pesach Celebrations

For those who have accepted Yahusha, Pesach can pose the problem; is it necessary for believers to slaughter an animal if, as the apostle tells us, Mashiach is our Pesach (1Cor.5:7)? Clearly you cannot have two Pesachs, is it an animal or is it Mashiach? We cannot hide behind the assertion the animal is merely a representation of Mashiach, the 'golden calf' incident at Sinai absolutely prohibits this kind of substitution where our faith is concerned.

So, for believers is Pesach an animal or is it Mashiach? It cannot be both. This question has ramifications reaching well beyond the Pesach celebration itself and going all the way back to the Abramic Covenant. Recognising the integrity between 1) the Abramic covenant, 2) Israel's 'golden calf' transgression at Sinai, 3) the principle of kinsman redeemer and 4) Mashiach's sacrifice, is fundamental to a complete understanding of Mashiach being our Pascal Lamb. However, the issue of kinsman redeemer is altogether a separate study and suffice to say that the Abramic covenant was cut in blood and therefore carried the death penalty for its breach. That Israel broke the covenant is confirmed in Jer.31:32, thus a death was therefore required. What is more, Mashiach was the 'Word' in the flesh, and it was the Word in the form of a lighted torch that 'cut the Covenant' (Gen.15:17). The smoking oven represented YHWH and the lighted torch represented the other party to the covenant; Abraham's descendants (Exod.24:8, Jer.34:18-19) a.k.a. Mashiach. It was for this reason that Mashiach had to come from the line of Abraham. It was Abraham's descendants that broke the covenant at Mount Sinai and so Mashiach paid the ultimate price via the principle of kinsman redeemer. Consequently, substituting our true Pesach with an animal is ignoring the necessity of a kinsman redeemer which Mashiach reiterated was to be His role during His Pesach meal with His disciples,

*"This is My blood of the New Covenant which is shed in **exchange** for many."* (Mark 14:23).

Only by accepting Yahusha's sacrifice in the role of kinsman redeemer do we acknowledge the relevance of the integrity described above and most importantly, our participation in the 'Old Covenant.' Remember the covenant was only for Abraham and his descendants. Therefore, we must be grafted into Israel (Rom.11), without this grafting we cannot benefit from the principle of kinsman redeemer and are thus unable to experience the full effect of Mashiach's atonement. Neither will the Pesach celebration have any meaning. Without this acknowledgement we cannot be part of the 'New Covenant.' The apostle alluded to this very principle in his epistle to the Galatians,

And if you are of Mashiach, then you are seed of Abraham and heirs according to promise. (Gal.3:29).

Note Paul says, 'according to promise' and not 'according to covenant.' This is because he is referring to those who have accepted Mashiach as their kinsman redeemer and therefore accept their participation in the Abrahamic covenant thereby becoming heirs to the original promise which is integral to the (old) covenant. Hence Paul's opening phrase 'if you are of Mashiach.' The writer of Hebrews also emphasises the 'kinsman redeemer' element of Mashiach's sacrifice,

*And because of this He is the Mediator of a new (**Kainos**) covenant, * so that, death having taken place for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, those who are called might receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance.* (Heb.9:15).

*Many translations have renewed covenant, but this is incorrect. The covenant was cut in blood and its breach required the death of the guilty party which inevitably brings the agreement to an end. Thus,

an entirely new covenant was instituted by Mashiach via His (pure) blood. The apostle annuls any argument by describing Mashiach as the mediator of a better covenant (Heb.8:6). What is more the Greek *Kainos* means new. When renewed is meant the Greek (*Anakainizō*) is used as in Heb.6:6.

This verse is concerned with people who previously had entered into covenant with YHWH something the Gentile nations have never done. Thus, He is kinsman redeemer to Israel alone. To summarise.

Of Mashiach = accepted Him as kinsman redeemer.

Of Abraham = party to the covenant (Old Covenant) - because only the Old Covenant required a kinsman redeemer.

As fundament to Pesach is the integrity linking the Abramic covenant, Israel's 'golden calf' transgression at Sinai, and Mashiach's role of kinsmen redeemer, we should not forget the universal effect of Mashiach's sacrifice in reversing the consequence of Adam's transgression; death and offering all humanity the prospect of eternal life,

For as all die in Adam, so also all shall be made alive in Mashiach. (1Cor.15:22)

Such is the fullness of Mashiach's sacrifice and uniqueness of the new (better) covenant. It is a better covenant because it applies to all humanity not just the direct descendants of Abraham and because it is a more powerful covenant – it takes away sin something the blood of animals could not do (Heb.10:4).

A Comment on 1 Cor.5:7

In his address to the Corinthian assembly the apostle says,

“Therefore, cleanse out the old leaven, so that you are a new lump, as you are unleavened. For also Mashiach our Pesach (Passover) was offered for us.” (1Cor.5:7).

As a result of this passage there is a tendency to consider Pesach to be a 'blue-print' of Mashiach's death and resurrection. Yet there is no physical connection between these two events. The timing of Mashiach's death, resurrection and His ascension to heaven (three days and three nights) shows no correlation with the timing of Pesach and the waving of the first fruits. Yahusha Himself celebrated the Pesach with His disciples, thus His death does not correlate with the slaughter of a Pesach lamb. Neither is there any similarity in the timing of His ascension as first fruits of the resurrection with the timing of the waving of the first fruits of the barley harvest. Admittedly Mashiach does refer to humanity in terms of a harvest (Matt.9:37) but He is talking about the spreading of the gospel and not the first fruits of the resurrection. What is more, the slaughter of the Pesach and Mashiach's sacrifice accomplished fundamentally different objectives, which is evidenced by the constitutional change to the Pesach celebration inaugurated by Mashiach through His instruction to the disciples,

And taking bread, giving thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you, do this in remembrance of Me.” Likewise the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for you. (Luke 22:19-20).

Mashiach's words effectively introduce a new focal point for all future Pesach celebrations: His sacrifice, thereby transferring the emphasis from Egypt to covenant. But not only the emphasis changed with Mashiach, He changed the actual objective of Pesach and gave birth to an entirely new reason for memorialising Pesach. It was therefore fitting for Him to introduce a new method of memorialisation of only bread, wine and bitter herbs.

Mashiach elevated the Pesach celebration to a higher level; He gave it a greater significance. Pre-Mashiach, Pesach memorialised the saving of the Israelite first born in Egypt that is, the saving of selective members of the Israelite nation. Now through Mashiach's sacrifice as kinsman redeemer (paying the death penalty for the golden calf transgression), the whole nation can be saved. The fundamental difference between the pre-Mashiach Pesach and a post-Mashiach Pesach is the objective: the former was the protection of the first born from the plague of death and the latter the redemption of the whole nation. Mashiach's sole purpose in coming was to pay the penalty for the golden calf transgression, bring Israel back into covenant

and ultimately free all of humanity from the effects of Adam's transgression. As stated above, it was this latter effect of Mashiach's blood that led the apostle to describe the covenant as a better covenant.

So, coming back to the verse in Corinthians, describing Mashiach as our Pesach, the apostle is merely recalling the atonement offered vicariously for all through Mashiach's sacrifice. Another passage of relevance is the following,

"For Elohim so loved the world (Kosmos) that He gave His only brought-forth Son, so that everyone (Pas) who believes in Him should not perish but possess everlasting life." (John 3:16).

If Mashiach's sole purpose was the redemption of Israel, how are we to understand this passage? It says Mashiach's sacrifice was for the world not just Israel, yet Mashiach himself tells us that He came only for the lost sheep of Israel (Matt.15:24). The answer is quite simple, whilst Mashiach's sacrifice is available to all who wish to partake of it, all wanting salvation must become grafted into Israel as told by the apostle in Romans 11. But this is not the Israel of today, it is the Israel of YHWH that is, the 'Body of Mashiach' comprising both Jew and Gentile. The apostle spoke in terms of grafting because he knew that the covenant was made with Israel alone and belongs to Israel alone. Paul subsequently reiterates this fact in his epistle to the Galatians,

And if you are of Mashiach, then you are seed of Abraham and heirs according to promise. (Gal.3:29)

To be of Mashiach (that is for Him to be your kinsman redeemer) you must be seed of Abraham (you must be of Israel).

Remember Mashiach Himself confirms that salvation comes only from (through)the Jews (John.4:22).

Mashiach Sets the Example for Future Pesach Celebrations

We all agree that the Torah points to Mashiach, but Mashiach has been, gone and is about to return, yet we often fail to interpret Torah in terms of Mashiach. If the Torah points to Mashiach it is ludicrous to think He has had no effect on Torah commands, particularly with respect to the Moedim (Festivals). We must interpret the Torah in terms of His life, death, resurrection and all that He said. Remember He exclaimed that He came to give clarity to the Torah, (Matt.5:17).

So how should we celebrate Pesach today? We must observe Yahusha's Pesach and obey His words. The consensus is that Yahusha celebrated Pesach in the 'upper room' with His disciples. Here again the Scriptures are somewhat vague concerning all that was said and done in the 'upper room' and how He performed this celebration. There is no evidence an animal was slaughtered; in fact, we can assume the contrary. The Torah required the Pesach to be slaughtered at the temple by the temple priest which, at this time, was an illegitimate priesthood. So, Torah procedure could not be followed. Yet Yahusha was sinless (2Cor.5:21, 1Pet.2:22) that is, He never transgressed the Torah. So how do we reconcile this anomaly?

Yahusha more than anyone understood the relevance of Pesach and its evolution. He knew that He was about to fundamentally change the reason and the mechanics of the Pesach celebration via Himself becoming the Pesach. Consequently, there was no longer a need for an animal to be sacrificed. What is more the Torah required for the animal to be taken to the temple and slaughtered by the temple priests, but the temple system had become corrupt; the priesthood was no longer an Aharonic priesthood as ordained by YHWH. The high priest currently was Caiaphas who was not a descendant of Aharon. To Yahusha, these temple administrators were imposters without authority. A false priest has no authority to perform temple rites thus, if the animal could not be slaughtered in accordance with Torah there would be no point in killing the animal, a second very plausible reason a lamb is not mentioned at Mashiach's Pesach. (Incidentally, Ashkenazi Jews today acknowledge that without a temple and priesthood the Torah rules for Pesach cannot be followed, consequently they do not include a lamb in their Pesach celebration).

What Yahusha did do was to re-direct the focus of the celebration from an animal to Himself by adding His body and His blood. By this, Yahusha was signifying His imminent execution, which would complete the Pesach programme from Egypt, through Sinai and into the New Covenant via His sacrifice as kinsman

redeemer and fulfilling the prophetic picture given to Abraham when he was about to sacrifice his son Yitzchak (John 8:56).

As said the information contained in the canon of Scripture is somewhat shallow insofar as Mashiach's Pesach celebration is concerned. A more comprehensive version can be found in the 'The Gospel of Kaledy' quoted below, which portrays a much greater significance insofar as memorialising Mashiach than do the synoptic Gospels. The highlights are mine,

After He had taken His place at the table and all were seated, Mashiach said, "I have very much wanted to keep this Pesach with you because it is the last before My ordeal. And I tell you, I will not share another with you until My purpose is fulfilled."

Then He took the cup (1st cup) before Him and drank, saying, "Blood is the life of men, while this is the life of the grape sacrificed for men, so it is a fitting and worthy symbol of He Who offers His life for men. I will not taste wine again (Mashiach is relating to his wedding with His Bride)¹ until the Rule of Elohim is established."

He then passed the cup (1st cup) to John, and, taking the bread, He gave thanks and broke it, saying, "This represents My body, which will be broken as an example to the sons and daughters of men; for all must freely sacrifice for others. As you eat of the bread, which is sacrifice, so shall you eat the Bread of Eternal Life. For without sacrifice, there is no life. Henceforth, call it Remembrance Bread and Remembrance Wine; when meeting afterwards, do this and remember Me. But remember also the sacrifices which must be made for the cause of Elohim." Yahusha said, "The sacrifice is ready. The hand of the betrayer rests upon this table and dips in the bowl. But this is as it should be. Take the cup and drink again (2nd cup); let it seal a new covenant signed with the blood of One Who is dedicated to the cause of men and their salvation from darkness into life eternal."

"The Father's will is that the things I teach should be given to the people, but they will not listen, arguing among themselves as to who I am. Therefore, I must drain the bitter cup (cup of reeling) of life to its last dregs. Then they will say, 'This is He,' and heed My words. This I do for men, and none can say I have not faced up to the tests of life or I have shirked its supreme trial."

The disciples then drank the reeling cup (3rd cup), and Yahusha HaMashiach said to Peter, "I depend upon you (the disciples) to carry the burden among the brethren."

*Note three cups and not four as included in the Jewish Seder.

Whilst we are not told what the meal was, Yahusha would have followed the Torah requirements insofar as they were applicable to His Pesach. No doubt He ate unleavened bread with wine, whether He ate bitter herbs is debateable but as for a Rabbinical Seder, had it existed, I doubt He would have been interested in the dictates of man. What we are told is that Mashiach instructed His disciples to eat of the bread and drink three times from the cup of wine, each for a specific purpose. This alone confirms a new significance for Pesach, and we must take cognisance of this new symbolisation.

It may be fitting at this point to draw the distinction between the Scriptural Pesach and the Catholic 'Mass.' The apostle tells us that Mashiach died once and for all time (Rom.6:10, Heb.9:28). In other words, Mashiach's single sacrifice was sufficient. However, with respect to the Catholic Mass, the Catholic Church teaches the doctrine of transubstantiation in which the bread and the wine literally change into the actual body and blood of Mashiach, consequently, unlike the Pesach celebration, the Mass is not a memorial of Mashiach's sacrifice it is the actual sacrifice itself. Thus, in Catholicism, Mashiach is repeatedly sacrificed which is against Scripture.

¹ Refer to the article 'Does YHWH Require a Future Temple Building Part 3 (A Betrothal and a Wedding)' on www.undertorah.com in the End Times section.

So, considering Mashiach's instructions how should we conduct our Pesach ceremony? We must keep in mind that today Pesach is a memorial of Mashiach and must therefore reflect His sinlessness. Thus, the prohibition of leaven (Exod.12:8) must be observed. Accordingly, the Pesach bread is always unleavened but what about the wine, is fermented wine acceptable? Although fermentation is a product of yeast fermentation is not wholly dependent on yeast and so yeast free alcoholic wines are acceptable at a Pesach meal. But there is no reason why the wine cannot be alcoholic free, indeed there are circumstances where this is best – when the Pesach celebration is attended by recovering alcoholics or those who do not drink alcohol. All we can discern from the Scriptures is that the liquid was the fruit of the vine and so grape juice would be acceptable.

As said earlier the requirement for bitter herbs is debateable, there is a reference in Matt.26:23 to dipping into a bowl, whether this is a finger bowl of water, remember they ate with their hands, or a bowl of bitter herbs is unclear, but it is wise to err on the side of prudence and include bitter herbs. Thus, the three elements; unleavened bread, bitter herbs (Exod.12:8) and yeast free wine must be present, otherwise it is not a Pesach. What is more, whilst there is no prohibition against including additional food, the meal itself must reflect the special reverence of Pesach. For this it is necessary to include a degree of liturgy specifically pertaining to the three essential elements; bread, wine and bitter herbs (Refer to the Appendix). So, what we have is,

Unleavened Bread/Mashiach's Sinless Body

- Remembrance Bread

For most the bread is usually Matzah, Matza or Matzo (plural Matzot or Matzos), which is a crisp wafer made from flour and water. The flour may be whole or refined grain but according to Jewish tradition must be either wheat, **spelt**, barley, rye, or oat.

The bread is a memorialization of His sacrifice, specifically His physical death. However, Yahusha described sacrifice in terms of lifestyle. His words are a clear instruction that all who seek eternal life and wish to join His 'body' must be prepared to sacrifice this life (just as He did). To sacrifice this life means to come out of this world, reject all it has to offer and becoming set apart for YHWH.

Yeast Free Wine or Grapefruit Juice/Mashiach's Sinless Blood

- Remembrance Wine (1st Cup)

This first cup of wine is also a memorialization of His sacrifice, specifically the spilling of His blood which He took to The Father before the heavenly alter. The apostle refers to this first cup as the 'cup of blessing' (1Cor.10:16) it is probable that Paul had Ps.116:13 in mind where the Psalmist refers to the 'cup of salvation' and salvation is a blessing borne of YHWH's grace. Mashiach is commanding that Pesach is the appointed time to reflect on and give thanks for Him offering himself for our sakes.

There are those who teach that Mashiach's sacrifice was His living ministry which culminated with His death. These people teach against the sanctification achieved only by His blood. This philosophy is a rejection of such verses as Rom.5:9, Eph.1:7 etc. and unscriptural.

- Wine of the Sealing of the New Covenant (2nd Cup)

This aspect of Pesach has more to it than is generally realised. YHWH only knows covenant relationship and Mashiach is the only means of entering into covenant with YHWH. Pesach proves it is Mashiach's 'Body of Believers' that is YHWH's Israel and no one else. Although this new covenant is available for anyone and everyone who accepts Mashiach, it belongs to Israel. YHWH only covenanted with Israel and Mashiach had no authority to change the situation (Deut.4:2, John 6:38). It is for this reason believers must be grafted into Israel (Rom.11).

- Wine of Reeling (3rd Cup)

This is the cup of commitment, to fully understand its significance we need to recall another of Mashiach's comments,

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his stake, and follow me." (Mark.8:34)

This cup is a forewarning of the traumatic life waiting for His followers. "Let him take up his stake and follow Me" is idiomatic for 'suffer for Me as I have suffered for you.' By accepting this cup, we are committing our lives and lifestyle to Him whatever the consequences even giving up our lives just as He gave up His for us,

"For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. (Matt.16:25)

This cup symbolises the set-apartness of true worship. Set-apartness has a two-fold effect: YHWH sees His worshippers as separate from the rest of humanity, but this requires His worshippers to live lifestyles detached from the umbrella of unrighteousness intrinsic to this kingdom. This separation is both spiritual and physical. Unless you feel like a fish out of water you are failing YHWH,

"He who loves his life shall lose it, and he who hates his life in this world shall preserve it for everlasting life. (John 12:25).

No one should drink this cup of reeling unless prepared to surrender to the lifestyle it symbolises persecution, ridicule, torment and possibly death.

Bitter Herbs

- Bitter Herbs: Hebrew (*Maror*)

And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roasted in the fire, with unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. (Exod.12:8).

The phraseology of this command is very precise: eating bitter herbs is associated with eating the paschal lamb which is no longer fundamental for a post Mashiach Pesach. Neither can we be certain Mashiach included bitter herbs in His Pesach meal. Frankly, other than to set an example of Torah observance (Exod.12:8) there was no reason for Mashiach to eat bitter herbs: being about to suffer the bitterness of torture and death He was not in need of the symbolism attached to this food. So, the question begs should we include bitter herbs in our Pesach? I believe we should because tasting bitterness is, in a small way, emblematic of the trauma He endured and confirmation of our willingness to equally suffer for Him if we are so challenged.

But what constitutes bitter herbs? The Torah is not explicit and a Jewish Seder, following rabbinic guidance, will have either romaine lettuce, horseradish and endives (escarole). But any form of bitterness that is unpleasant to taste will suffice and celery dipped in salt water is sufficient.

My personal view is that the whole of the meal should reflect the anguish and suffering an innocent Mashiach endured purely for us.

Who May Perform the Pesach?

The Scriptures stipulate circumcision of the flesh a prerequisite for eating of the Pesach,

And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Pesach to YHWH, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. (Exod.12:48).

The question for many will be, is circumcision a requirement today for non-Jewish believers? Many think the apostle Paul was opposed to the circumcision of gentiles, but was he? Paul writes "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Messiah." (1Cor.11:1). We know that Yahusha HaMashiach was Torah obedient, and that He was indeed circumcised (luke.2:21-22) as was the apostle (Phil.3:5). Mashiach also commands all of

us to 'Take up our stake and follow him' (Matt. 16:24). To follow Him is to emulate him and to truly emulate Mashiach and be imitators of Paul, means being Torah obedient as they both were, which includes being circumcised. The error is in failing to understand that the apostle Paul puts circumcision in its correct context for new Believers, of whom many were incorrectly making physical circumcision an issue of salvation, rather than one's maturation and growth in the faith. Suffice to say, it is incorrect to believe that circumcision of the flesh was superseded with circumcision of the heart, truly both circumcisions are required for all believers.² Hence the above requirement in Exodus remains valid for a Pesach celebration today.

A second question concerns the participation of women at a Pesach meal? Clearly the Torah confines this meal to men only. I do not want to comment on Orthodox Judaism because Judaism has cloaked this meal in Rabbinical ritual not found outside the Talmud and which completely excludes Mashiach's relevance to this celebration. To answer this question, we must distinguish the changed concept of Pesach pre and post Mashiach. As said earlier Mashiach took Pesach from Egypt and into covenant. So, are women to be included in the covenant? Yes, of course they are and are therefore equally required to follow Mashiach's command in Luk.22:19-20.

A Week of Matzah (Unleavened Bread)

The Pesach meal initiates the week of unleavened bread and whilst they may be considered individually, the two are integral, they are not separate festivals (Mar.14:12, Luke. 22:1,7). But how is the week of unleavened bread to be observed?

Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread; even the first day you shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. (Exod.12:15).

Seven days you eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to YHWH. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with you, neither shall there be leaven seen with you in all your quarters. (Exod.13:6-7).

These verses are explicit: no leaven is to be present within the home. But to comply with YHWH's command we need to understand what is meant by leaven.

Leavening agents are substances that are used to puff up or produce fermentation, generally, yeast, bicarbonate of soda (baking soda), baking powder and sourdough. The usual foods that contain these are bread, rolls buns, cakes, some crackers, cereals etc. It is important to check the list of ingredients. Egg whites, yeast extract (derivatives of yeast that do not leaven anything), brewer's yeast and cream of tartar are allowed.

But what is the reason for the week of matzah and why is it specifically seven days? Whilst Scripture explains the relevance of leaven and tells us how we are to spend this week of unleavened bread, Scripture fails to explain the relevance behind this command. I can only therefore provide my own belief and leave it for the reader to come to his/her own decision.

Blessed and set-apart is the one having part in the first resurrection, they shall be priests of Elohim and of Mashiach, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. (Rev.20:6).

Resurrection is referring to Mashiach gathering His body at the end of this age and not the resurrection of the dead at the end of the millennium described in 1Cor.15:20-28 and 1Thess.4:16-17. This verse in Revelation correlates with the words of the apostle

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a set-apart nation, a people for a possession, that you should proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1Pet.2:9).

² Circumcision is discussed under 'The Issue of Circumcision' in Miscellaneous Articles at www.undertorah.com

I believe, for us, the week of unleavened bread is associated with our ordination as priest under the Melchizedek priesthood, in accordance with the rules set by YHWH for the anointing of priests,

“And you shall anoint Aharon and his sons, and set them apart, to serve as priests to Me. (Exod.30:30).

“And so, you shall do to Aharon and his sons, according to all I have commanded you. Seven days you shall ordain them, (Exod.29:35).

Leviticus chapter 8 describes the ordination of Aharon and his sons as the priests of Israel, but it is YHWH's instructions to Aharon in verse 33 we need to examine,

“And do not go outside the door of the Tent of Meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed – for he fills your hands for seven days. YHWH has commanded to do, as he has done this day, to make atonement for you. “And stay at the door of the Tent of Meeting day and night for seven days. And you shall guard the duty of YHWH and not die, for so I have been commanded.” (Lev.8:33).

It is my opinion that this was a week of purification specific to the priesthood and applicable to all entering the priesthood. Could it be that the seven days was a time of spiritual cleansing for the priests to attain the special level of holiness, entitling them to enter the sacred parts of the temple (The holy Place and the Most Holy Place)? This premise finds support in a passage from Hebrews,

For by a single offering, He has brought to the goal for all time those who are being set apart for Elohim and made holy. And the Ruach HaKodesh too bears witness to us; for after saying, “This is the covenant which I will make with them after those days,” says YHWH, “I will put My Torah on their hearts and write it on their minds.” He then adds, “ And their sins and their wickedness I will remember no more.” Now where there is forgiveness for these an offering for sins is no longer needed. So, brothers, we have confidence to use the way into the Holiest Place opened by the blood of Yahusha. (Heb.10:14-18)

Only the priests were holy enough to enter the ‘holy place’ in the temple, thus they had to be the holiest of all Israel. It is no different for us as Malkizedekian priests of Mashiach. Unlike Aharon who commenced his priestly duties straight away, we remain in a state of apprenticeship until Mashiach collects us into the land. Until we receive our rejuvenated bodies (Isa.65:17, 20, 22), not received until we enter the land, we are susceptible to the flesh and therefore need to undergo spiritual cleansing/purity and a refreshing of ordination annually. Some may argue that only the high priest had to perform the ritual of an annual cleansing which he did every Yom Kippur. However, Mashiach changed the priesthood and the rules associated with it,

For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. (Heb.7:12).

Under the Aharonic priesthood only the high priest was allowed into the Most Holy Place but under the Malkizedekian priesthood all can stand before YHWH.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Mashiach Yahusha, (Heb.10:19)

We have a higher calling under Mashiach and therefore different rules must apply and I believe the week of Matzah takes on a different meaning,

For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. (Luke 12:48).

Conclusion

Today Pesach is about covenant rejuvenation. This is the salvation Pesach celebrates for all believers today, not Egypt, remember Egypt was to be celebrated for a ‘long time’ not ‘forever.’ Today it is our sin that is

'passed over' by the Father; it is not a 'destroyer' passing over our homes. Remember the words of Yahusha, "Do this (*celebrate Pesach*) in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19). Verse 29 of the apostle's directive to the Corinthian congregation confirms a new concept behind the Pesach festival,

And having given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat, this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. As often as you drink it, do this in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Master until He comes. So that whoever should eat this bread or drink this cup of the Master unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Master. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For the one who is eating and drinking unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Master. (1Cor.11:24-29).

When we celebrate Pesach today, we should do so with covenant and redemption in mind, not protection of the first born. Many believers persist in following the Rabbinical Seder with its emphasis on Egypt. Judaism has not accepted Yahusha Mashiach and whilst in this state, redemption is beyond their grasp. Yahusha said "*Nobody comes to the Father except through Me*" and with its rejection of Mashiach, Judaism is unable to make the transition from Egypt to covenant. Thus, it makes little sense for a believer in Mashiach to follow a tradition memorialising something Mashiach has replaced. It makes even less sense to add Mashiach to a Rabbinical Seder as some do, this is mixing iron with clay.

Clifford Fearnley 2020 (Revised 2022)

*I have attached and appendix as an '*aide memoire*' for anyone in need of guidance in performing a post Mashiach Pesach celebration.

APPENDIX

Whilst many will have their own preferences, the following is presented for those who may appreciate some guidance and is only a suggested procedure for a post Mashiach Pesach.

Pesach Reading/Study

It is sensible at the start of the Pesach celebration to read from the sections of the Scriptures pertinent to this celebration: remembering it is a post Mashiach celebration. The recommended area of Scripture is that which record Mashiach's Pesach meal with His disciples, His arrest, trial, execution and resurrection, that being Matthew chapters 26 through 28. However, I substitute Matt.26:17-30 with what is described in the Gospel of Kaledy, thus the readings I follow are.

- i. Matt.26:3-16
- ii. Kaledy as below,

After He had taken His place at the table and all were seated, Mashiach said, "I have very much wanted to keep this Pesach with you because it is the last before My ordeal. And I tell you, I will not share another with you until My purpose is fulfilled."

Then He took the cup (1st cup) before Him and drank, saying, "Blood is the life of men, while this is the life of the grape sacrificed for men, so it is a fitting and worthy symbol of He Who offers His life for men. I will not taste wine again (He will not live amongst men again) until the Rule of Elohim is established." He then passed the cup to John,

And, taking the bread, He gave thanks and broke it, saying, "This represents My body, which will be broken as an example to the sons and daughters of men; for all must freely sacrifice for others. As you eat of the bread, which is sacrifice, so shall you eat the Bread of Eternal Life. For without sacrifice, there is no life. Henceforth, call it Remembrance Bread and Remembrance Wine; when meeting afterwards, do this and remember Me. But remember also the sacrifices which must be made for the cause of Elohim." Yahusha said, "The sacrifice is ready. The hand of the betrayer rests upon this table and dips in the bowl. But this is as it should be. Take the cup and drink again (2nd cup); let it seal a new covenant signed with the blood of One Who is dedicated to the cause of men and their salvation from darkness into life eternal."

"The Father's will is that the things I teach should be given to the people, but they will not listen, arguing among themselves as to who I am. Therefore, I must drain the bitter cup (cup of reeling) of life to its last dregs. Then they will say, 'This is He,' and heed My words. This I do for men, and none can say I have not faced up to the tests of life or I have shirked its supreme trial."

The disciples then drank the reeling cup (3rd cup), and Jesus said to Peter, "I depend upon you (the disciples) to carry the burden among the brethren."

- iii. Matt.26:31 – 28:20

End of Reading

With the readings complete, the formal Pesach meal can commence, and I prefer to follow what is described in the Gospel of Kaledy. You may consider it pedantic, but I believe each of the three cups of wine should be three separate pouring, rather than three sips from the same portion. For the Pesach formalities I also believe it is sufficient only for a 'sip or taste' of the wine, remember it is a Pesach not a wine party. True reverence would demand for all to stand when performing the following. It is my preference for the host to introduce each element with a recital from Kaledy.

Suggested Liturgy For Pesach Meal

1. Breaking and Eating Unleavened Bread

Host's Recital:

And, taking the bread, He gave thanks and broke it, saying, "This represents My body, which will be broken as an example to the sons and daughters of men; for all must freely sacrifice for others. As you eat of the bread, which is sacrifice, so shall you eat the Bread of Eternal Life. For without sacrifice, there is no life.

Guest's Response:

All present should stand with a piece of unleavened bread, break it and recite,

"I break this bread in remembrance of Mashiach Yahusha's body which was broken for me," The bread is broken and the following recited, *"I eat this bread in recognition and acceptance of the vicarious atonement offered me through Mashiach Yahusha offering Himself in my stead,*

- *His purity offered for my impurity,*
- *His cleanness offered for my uncleanness,*
- *His sinlessness offered for my sins,*

Thank you, Yahusha HaMashiach."

The bread is then eaten.

2. Remembrance Wine (1st Cup)

Host's Recital:

Then He took the cup before Him and drank, saying, "Blood is the life of men, while this is the life of the grape sacrificed for men, so it is a fitting and worthy symbol of He Who offers His life for men. I will not taste wine again until the Rule of Elohim is established."

Guest's Response:

All present should stand and raising the cup recite,

"I drink this cup in remembrance of the blood of Yahusha HaMashiach spilt vicariously for me,

- *His purity offered for my impurity,*
- *His cleanness offered for my uncleanness,*
- *His sinlessness offered for my sins,*

Thank you, Yahusha HaMashiach."

3. Wine of the Sealing of the New Covenant (2nd Cup)

Host's Recital:

And Mashiach said, "Take the cup and drink again let it seal a new covenant signed with the blood of One Who is dedicated to the cause of men and their salvation from darkness into life eternal."

Guest's Response:

All present should stand and raising the cup recite,

"I drink this cup of the of the new covenant vicariously sealed for me by the spilt blood of Yahusha HaMashiach.

- *His purity offered for my impurity,*
- *His cleanness offered for my uncleanness,*
- *His sinlessness offered for my sins,*

Thank you, Yahusha HaMashiach."

4. Wine of Reeling (3rd Cup)

Host's Recital:

And Mashiach said, "The Father's will is that the things I teach should be given to the people, but they will not listen, arguing among themselves as to who I am. Therefore, I must drain the bitter cup of life to its last dregs. Then they will say, 'This is He,' and heed My words. This I do for men, and none can say I have not faced up to the tests of life or I have shirked its supreme trial." The disciples then drank the reeling cup.

Guest's Response:

All present should then stand and raising the cup recite,

"In drinking this cup, I commit my life to YHWH and the blood of His son Yahusha HaMashiach and am prepared to face whatever suffering this life may require of me, even unto death as Yahusha HaMashiach suffered for me.

- *His purity offered for my impurity,*
- *His cleanness offered for my uncleanness,*
- *His sinlessness offered for my sins,*

Thank you, Yahusha HaMashiach."

5. Bitter Herbs

There is nothing to quote from Mashiach's Pesach before eating the bitter herb, but I see the bitter herb a symbolic of the bitter treatment Mashiach endured at the time of his trial and execution so all present should stand and taking the bitter herb recite,

"I suffer this bitterness in remembrance of the bitter and painful sacrifice Yahusha HaMashiach paid for me

- *His purity offered for my impurity,*
- *His cleanness offered for my uncleanness,*
- *His sinlessness offered for my sins,*

Thank you, Yahusha HaMashiach."

This completes the Pesach formalities which if forming part of an evening meal, the meal itself may continue but the Pesach is the start of the 'week of unleavened bread' no leaven can be eaten until this period is over.