

# THE PASSOVER SEDER INSTRUCTIONS

## Lighting the Yom Tov (Holiday) Candles

Before the start of Passover, it is traditional to light two candles in honor of the holiness of the day.

After lighting the candles, recite:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us that we kindle the Yom Tov (Holiday) lights.

*Baruch Atah Ado-nai, Elo-heinu Melech Ha-olam, Asher Kid'shanu B'mitzvotav V'tzivanu L'hadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov.*

## Seder: The Passover Service

### 1. Sanctifying the Day

Holding the cup of wine in one's right hand, recite:

**Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.**

*Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-heinu Melech Ha-olam Boreh Pree Ha-ga-fen.*

We thank you God for giving us the gift of Festivals for joy and holidays for happiness, among them this day of Passover, the festival of our liberation, a day of sacred assembly recalling the Exodus from Egypt.

The Blessing of *Shecheyanu* is recited at this point

**Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has kept us in life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.**

*Baruch Atah Ado-nai, Elo-heinu Melech Ha-olam, She-heche-yanu, V'kiye-manu Vehigi-yanu La-z'man Ha-zeh.*

The first cup of wine is drunk, and the cup is refilled.

### 2. First Ritual Hand-Washing

Pour water from a cup once on each hand over a sink or basin without reciting a blessing, in preparation to eat the parsley dipped in salt water.

### 3. Dipping Parsley in Salt Water

Parsley (or any other vegetable such as celery or potato) is dipped in salt water and then eaten. The parsley symbolizes both the humble origins of the Jewish people. The salt water symbolizes the tears shed during our slavery.

Before eating the vegetable, recite the following blessing:

**Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.**

*Baruch Atah Adonai Elo-heinu Melech Haolam Boreh Pree Ha'adamah.*

#### **4. Breaking the Middle Matzah**

The middle matzah on the plate is broken in half. One half is put back with the stack; the other half is placed in a napkin (or special holder) and designated the *Afikomen* (the dessert) and put aside.

#### **5. The Telling of the Story of Passover**

Before asking the Four Questions, recite:

There arose in Egypt a Pharaoh who knew not of the good deeds that Joseph had done for that country. Thus he enslaved the Jews and made their lives harsh through servitude and humiliation. This is the basis for the Passover holiday which we commemorate with these different rituals tonight.

### **WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER NIGHTS?**

***If YHVH had not brought our ancestors out of Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would still be subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt.***

#### **The Four Questions:**

- On all other nights we eat either bread or *matzah*; on this night, why only *matzah*?

***The matzah represents the hurried Exodus from Egypt wherein they left so quickly that their dough did not have time to rise.***

- On all other nights we eat herbs or vegetables of any kind; on this night why bitter herbs?

***They remind us of the bitter pain and suffering the Israelites went through as slaves to the Egyptians.***

- On all other nights we do not dip even once; on this night why do we dip twice?

***The salt water into which we dip represents the tears we cried while in Egypt.***

- On all other nights we eat our meals in any manner; on this night why do we sit around the table together in a reclining position?

***We commemorate our freedom by reclining on cushions like royalty.***