



JEWISH IDENTITY

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COVENANT

Definition: A covenant is another word for a solemn promise or agreement.

God's promises to Abraham included that his wife, Sarah, would bear a son; that he would be the leader of a great nation; that he would be the leader of Canaan; and Ishmael would have 12 great leaders.

There were 2 covenants Abraham had to give to God in return for God's promises. Abraham and his many followers had to do was that at the age of 8, all male babies had to be circumcised. They also had to fully worship God and respect what he asked of them and do the things that God asked them to do.



THE STORY OF ABRAHAM

Abraham was a peasant living in the city of Ur. He and his wife Sarah wanted a child but couldn't because she was too old. One day, Abraham was told by God that he would be the father of many. God sent Abraham and Sarah to new land. Once there, Sarah decided that her servant Hagar would produce the son God promised. Ishmael was born. Hagar and Sarah fell out and Hagar ran away. God spoke to Hagar and he told her to go back to Sarah. God goes back to Abraham and said. **“Sarah will have a child and you shall call it Isaac!”** Sarah later had a child and they called it Isaac. Sarah became jealous because she thought that Abraham was spending more time with Ishmael than he was with Isaac. Sarah wanted Hagar to leave because of this. God tells Abraham that to prove his faith to God he must sacrifice Isaac. Abraham tries to plead with God but God is adamant about his decision. Abraham and Isaac walk miles before they reach the altar that Isaac will be sacrificed upon. Just before Abraham sacrifices Isaac an Angel from God stops him. God says that Abraham has proved his commitment to God because he was willing to kill his only son, Isaac. Abraham's country is born. It is called Canaan. God fulfills his covenant, Abraham becomes a great leader with many descendants.

STORY OF MOSES/PASSOVER

The story of Moses has been told many times in many ways but here is my version of the story. Moses was put in a cradle in a lake so that he could escape being drowned by the Egyptians. He was discovered by an Egyptian prince and was brought up as a royal prince. When Moses was older, he reacted against the unfair treatment that his own people and he killed an Egyptian guard. Moses then fled to escape the wrath of the Pharaoh. During his exile God spoke to him through a flaming bush that was not burning. God said to Moses that he would free his people from slavery and bring them to promised land. Having heard God's word, Moses went to the Pharaoh and said "Let my people go!". The Pharaoh refused and so God unleashed the first plague upon the Egyptians. 9 plagues past and each time, Moses would go to Pharaoh say "Let my people go!". Every time the Pharaoh would refuse. The tenth plague was the most brutal. God sent his angels and killed the oldest son in every family. Moses told the Jews that God's angels would not kill those who sacrifice a lamb and smear it's blood over the door. This plague killed the Pharaoh's only son. In despair the Pharaoh let the Jews leave. The Pharaoh then changed his mind and sent an army of 600 chariots to pursue them. Moses used the power of God to split the Red sea in two allowing the Israelites to pass through. When the last Jew was clear of the water, the waters returned and destroyed the Pharaoh's army. The Jews travelled for three months until they camped a little before they would reach Mount Sinai. At the camp, God appeared and made a covenant with Moses. This covenant renewed the one he made with Abraham. He also gave the Israelites 10 laws that they would have to follow. These were called the ten commandments.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Ten Commandments

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain
4. Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy
5. Honour thy father and thy mother
6. Thou shalt not kill
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery
8. Thou shalt not steal
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour
10. Thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbour's



THE TEN PLAGUES

1. Water into blood – Moses took his rod and struck all the rivers in Egypt, turning them into blood. All the fish died and no Egyptian drank from the water because of its stench.
2. Frogs – God plagued the Egypt with the frogs from the Nile. God sent the frogs everywhere, inside bedrooms, into the palace, into the houses of the officials and even in the ovens
3. Lice – As Aaron struck the rod on the dust on the ground and all the dust in Egypt became lice.
4. Mixture of wild animals or flies – This plague was of any creatures that could harm or kill people and/or livestock and it could only harm the Egyptians, says the Torah
5. Diseased Livestock – The hand of Lord brought a terrible plague to the livestock in the fields.
6. Boils – From God's words, Abraham tossed handfuls of soot from the furnace into the air. It became fine dust all over Egypt and boils broke out on men and animals throughout the land.
7. Thunderstorm of Hail – God wanted the Egyptians to know that there was no other God like him. God sent a hail storm that would kill any man or animal that were outside or in the fields.
8. Locusts – God brought locusts to Egypt. There were so many that no one could see the ground. They ate all the little that they had after the hailstorm.
9. Darkness for three days – God instructed to Moses to stretch his hand to the sky and a total darkness covered all of Egypt. The darkness lasted for three days.
10. Death of the Firstborn – As explained above it would kill the firstborn in every family. However, the Israelites could avoid this by painting in lamb's blood on their door, as a sacrifice to God.

SEDER PLATE/PASSOVER MEAL

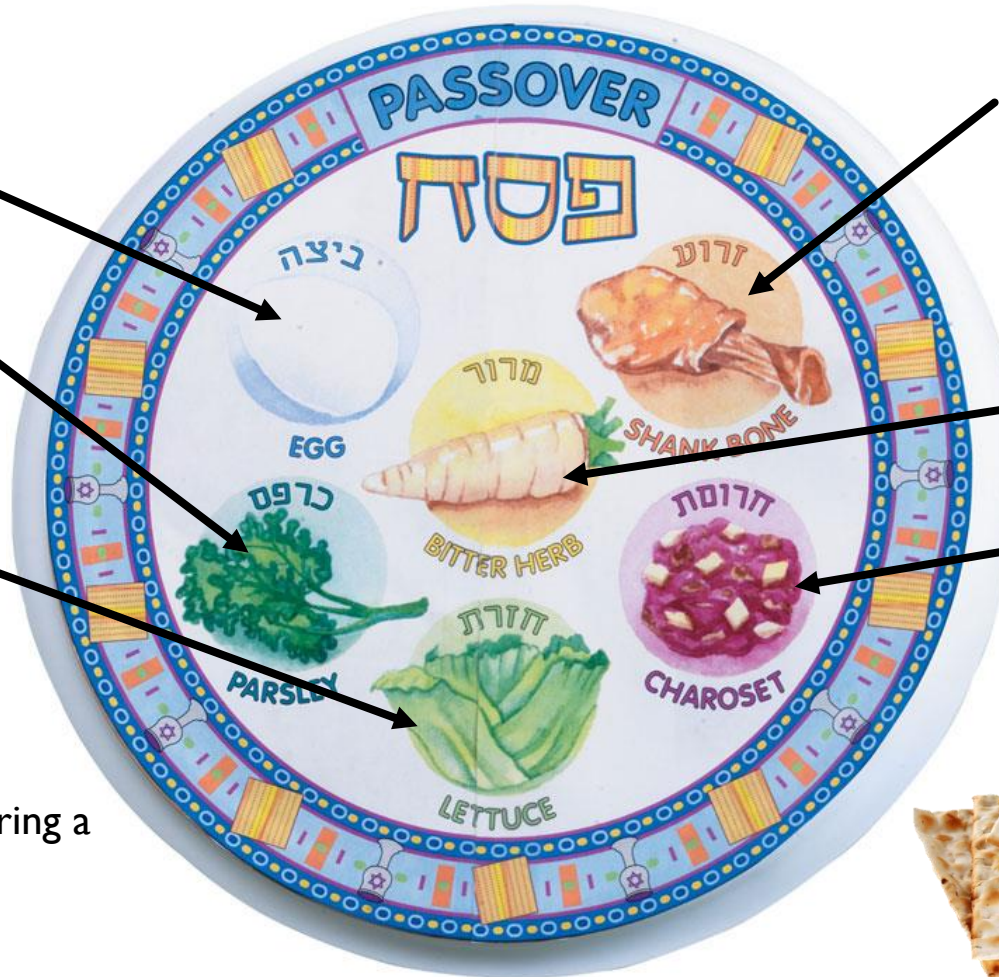
An egg is the symbol of new life

Parsley is the symbol of the way God cared for the Jews when they were travelling in the desert

Lettuce or horse radish. Another symbol to show the bitterness of slavery



Wine is drunk 4 times during a meal to remember the 4 promises the God made.



The shank bone is a reminder of the lamb that was killed so that its blood could be put on the doorstep/door.

Bitter Herbs is a symbol of the bitterness of slavery

Charoset is the symbol of the sweetness of freedom



Matzo bread is a reminder of the bread that did not have time to rise when the Israelites were freed and before they left Egypt.

PASSOVER

Jews celebrate Passover because it reminds them of how the Israelites escaped Egypt. It is also a reminder of god's power. Passover itself last seven days, the first and last day being known as the full days of rest (yom tov). The middle five days are intermediate holidays (hol ha-moed). The day before Passover begins all of the oldest male in each family fast to celebrate their escape from the Plague of the oldest child or firstborn. Over the meal a book called the Haggadah is read it contains songs, blessing ad psalms and Four questions. These four questions are as followed.

- Why do we eat unleavened bread? - The answer to this question is that the Israelites didn't have enough to add yeast to the dough before they escaped the Egyptians
- Why do we eat bitter herbs – Bitter herbs are to represent the bitterness of slavery within the meal.
- Why do we dip our food in liquid? – At the beginning of a meal a piece of potato is dipped in some sea salt. This represents the tears the Jews shed as slaves.
- Why do we eat in a reclining position – Back in the ancient times, the people who were freed would lay on sofas as they ate. During the Passover, cushions are placed on the chairs to symbolise freedom and relaxation.

These 4 questions are usually read by the youngest person in the family and the father will be the one respond.



KOSHER FOOD

Kosher is the way that Jews categorize their meat. If a food is kosher then Jews are allowed to eat it however if it not Kosher Jews can't eat it. To determine whether something is Kosher or not Kosher, Kosher animals have to eat from cud and also have to have a split in it's hooves. If an animal doesn't have these requirements it is not Kosher. The reason why Jews follow these rules about food is that eating the right food is a way of worshipping god. The also specially prepare Kosher meat by soaking it in cold water and sprinkling it in salt. This removes all the blood from the Kosher meat. Fish are also split into Kosher meat and Not Kosher meat. The way you can tell Kosher and Not Kosher fish apart is that Kosher fish have to have fins and scales. If a fish does not have any of these features or only has one of these feature it is not Kosher

Some Kosher meat includes: Cow, Sheep, Buffalo and Gazelle

Some Kosher fish include: Coalfish, Flounders, Goldfish, Haddock and Muttonfish

CREDITS

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/holydays/passover_1.shtml

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagues_of_Egypt

My Book

Prince Of Egypt Movie