

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In these few sentences which describe the institution of the Christian Passover or the Lord's Supper, the answers to the questions we asked above are found:

Why does the Jew, while eating the piece of Matzo which is called "Aphikomen," believe (according to the Shulchan Aruch) that is he eating the PESACH (or the Passover Lamb)?

The origin of this idea is not found in the Talmud; it comes from the New Testament. It is *because* Jesus took bread (Matzo) and said: "This is my body." It is He who gave His disciples bread and told them, as they were eating it, to believe that they were eating the Korban Pesach (Sacrifice of the Passover). He, the Messiah, was the true Korban Pesach. It was from Him that the Rabbis learned to make such an identification.

Some Jewish readers at this point might protest and cry: "This is impossible! Jews would never do such a thing!" Yet it is so. The New Testament undoubtedly is the source and origin of the essential features of the Jewish Seder. What follows will dispel any further doubt in the matter.

To continue:

Why are there three Matzos on the Seder table, and *why* is the middle matzo broken?

The customary explanation for the presence of the three Matzos is that they represent the three groups in Israel: the Cohens, the Levites, and the Israelites. But if that be the case, why is the middle Matzo broken, wrapped and hidden (a recent Jewish writer uses the term "buried" instead of "hidden"), and then recovered from the hiding place and shared among the members of the family? Why also is it called by the mysterious name, *Aphikomen*? What has all this to do with the Levites? Nothing like this has happened to them!

But every single act done to that middle Matzo is a description of what happened to Jesus. It is therefore He whom the Aphikomen represents. And all the three Matzos are symbolical of the threefold

revelation of the Godhead according to the Bible: God the Father and Creator, God the Saviour or Redeemer, and God the Holy Spirit. The middle Matzo which represents Jesus is therefore broken. He was broken when He was crucified!

Why is the broken Matzo wrapped in a cloth and hidden? *Because* the disciples of Jesus, when He died on the cross, took His body down, wrapped it in grave clothes and placed it in a tomb.

Why is the broken Matzo, called Aphikomen, recovered from its hiding place? *Because* on the third day God raised Jesus from the grave in His resurrection from the dead.

Why is the Aphikomen eaten as the last act of the Seder? *Because* other parallel reports of this incident inform us that this institution of the "Lord's Supper" took place at the close of the meal in the upper room in Jerusalem.

And finally, *Why* is the Aphikomen shared among all the members of the family? *Because* the followers of Jesus are regarded as the family of God; and Jesus had said to them "Take, eat!" *He is the bread of life to all who believe in HIM.*

THE WINE THAT WAS RED

The incident related in the New Testament also answers the questions with reference to the Wine on the Seder table.

Why is wine necessary and essential for the Seder? *Because* Jesus took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to His disciples.

Why is the wine to be red, resembling blood? *Because* Jesus said: "This is my blood of the New Testament, shed for many for the remission of sins."

Why is it mandatory that every Jew should drink wine at the Seder? *Because* Jesus said: "Drink ye all of it."

THE MYSTERY OF THE APHIKOMEN

What is the meaning of this mysterious word "Aphikomen"? It looks like a Greek word. Most scholars are agreed that it is, but different opinions

exist as to its meaning. Some say it comes from "Epikomos" and means "dessert." But that does not seem to be correct, since a great deal of violence had to be perpetrated on the word "Epikomos" in order to turn it into "Aphikomen."

But there is another Greek word, which gives a full and satisfactory explanation, and where violence is not at all necessary to give it meaning. It reads exactly as our Aphikomen. What does it mean? According to the Greek lexicon it means "I CAME." Who came? The One, obviously, whom the broken Matzo represents, namely, the Lord Jesus, the True Pesach!

In the Aphikomen, therefore, the Lord Jesus, calls to all who are waiting and hoping for the coming of the Messiah, "Why do you wait any longer? I came already! Aphikomen! Open your eyes of faith, and behold Me. I am the True Passover. I shed my blood to shield you from death and give you eternal life. I stand in the place of your Passover Lamb because I am its fulfillment!"

Jesus is the Shepherd of Israel. He has not forsaken His people. We cannot escape Him. Like the Good Shepherd He is following His sheep through all the places of their wanderings. He has been with us through all the vicissitudes of our sorrowful existence. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted," the Prophet Isaiah assures us. Do not turn away from Him. Still He is calling, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

HOW IT HAPPENED

Before we leave our subject, we must still say a word as to how it was that the "Lord's Supper" became the core of the "Jewish Seder." Briefly, it happened like this: At the time of the birth of Jesus, and about thirty years after, only one kind of Passover was in vogue in Israel; the kind that Moses instituted at the Exodus, and the kind Hillel observed fifteen hundred years after Moses. Then Jesus held His memorable supper in the upper room in Jerusalem, saying to them: "This do in remem-