

# the story

THAT COULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN!



## THE NEW INGREDIENT

**T**HE LAW OF MOSES which gave the Passover to Israel carefully prescribed the manner in which it was to be kept. The outstanding feature of that feast was the Lamb offered by the Priests in the Temple of Jerusalem commemorating the Lamb slain in Egypt, and which alone was called "The Passover."

All of this is recorded in the 12th chapter of the Book of Exodus.

Yet today with the Temple and the Priesthood gone, and no possibility of offering the Lamb, we nevertheless persist in our claim that we are keeping the Passover!

And as if to make up for that deficiency, a new ingredient has been added to its observance, namely the *Wine*. Although nowhere, neither in the writings of Moses, nor in those of the Rabbis (including Hillel) during the fifteen centuries that followed the days of Moses, is there any mention made of wine as being necessary for the keeping of the Passover.

The Hagadda (the Jewish Passover story) tells us how Hillel kept it. Only 3 things were essential: Pesach, Matzo, and Moror, that is: the Passover Lamb, the Unleavened Bread, and the Bitter Herbs.

In other words, during the fifteen hundred years between Moses and the birth of Christ, Israel kept the Passover without the wine. Possibly, wine was used by those who could afford it, but it was not an essential part of the observance of the Passover.

Yet today the four cups of wine for the celebration of the Passover, or Seder, are mandatory. No Jew could keep the Passover without them. The Shulchan Aruch (Jewish Book of Rules) further instructs that the wine used on that occasion should be red!

## THE DRAMA OF THE MATZO

Moreover, as an additional feature, so as to make up for the sorely felt loss of the Passover Lamb, part of one of the Matzos on the Passover Table or

"The Seder" (as it is now called), is no longer just "Unleavened Bread." It is called *Aphikomen* and has been vested with a new significance. It now symbolizes the Passover Lamb itself!

An interesting little drama is being enacted every year in connection with the Matzo: Three Matzos are placed on the table, one on the top of the other. The person who conducts the ceremony breaks the middle one into two unequal parts. The larger piece he wraps in a clean cloth and hides. Then, at the close of the meal, he recovers it from its hiding place and shares it among all members of the family. That piece of Matzo, or the "Aphikomen" the Shulchan Aruch bids to be treated with special regard and eaten at the close of the Seder with special reverence, because, it says, it represents the Passover Lamb which was eaten at the close of the meal.

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By Solomon Birnbaum

As the matter now stands, it is no longer the Passover Lamb, commanded by Moses, which constitutes the main feature of the Jewish Passover, but the bread (Matzo) and the wine.

This marks a radical departure from the feast initiated by Moses.

What was the cause of this departure? Who substituted the Matzo for the Passover Lamb? Who made the Wine an essential part of the Seder? Why should it be red like blood?