

Early in the Passover story, after the burning bush encounter and after his first meeting with Pharaoh, Moses was distraught. His first meeting with Pharaoh was a disaster. Not only did Pharaoh refuse to let the Israelites go, he increased their work load which not only brought increased hardship on the people, it caused their taskmasters to turn against them.

So Moses returned to YHVH and questioned Him saying –

^{ESV} **Exodus 5:22-23** "O LORD, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? ²³ For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all."

To put Moses' whining in today's English, he said "YHVH, I spoke on your behalf to Pharaoh. I told him that You want him to release the Israelites, but He acted like you don't even exist. I did what you told me to do, but You didn't do what You said You would do". But did Moses really do all He was told to do? Not necessarily. Yes — he did tell Pharaoh to let the people go three days into the wilderness, but he did so without bringing the elders of Israel like he was instructed to do.¹ I'm not sure why he did not bring them, but I've got my suspicions. When you read the context of what God had told Moses in regards to Pharaoh, Moses should have expected Pharaoh to refuse his request, after all, God had said that Pharaoh would not let the people go. Therefore, Moses should have expected to happen exactly what did happen.

Exodus 3:19-21 ¹⁹ "...I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. ²⁰ So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. ²¹ And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty ..."

Moses had somehow forgotten that important point — though Pharaoh would initially reject the thought of Israel leaving, he would ultimately send them out.² So God reiterated what He had previously said –

^{ESV} **Exodus 6:1** ... "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."

What God was saying was that He was going to bring so much grief on Pharaoh that Pharaoh himself would end up driving the Israelites out of Egypt — and not only was Pharaoh going to drive them out, they would take the wealth of Egypt with them.

This was prophesied to happen over 400 years earlier when YHVH said to Abraham –

^{ESV} **Genesis 15:13-14** Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

And as we know, this is exactly what happened.

God continued by saying –

¹ Exodus 3:18

² in verse 20, the Hebrew word translated "let you go" is 'shalach' (שָׁלַח) – 7971) which mean "to send". In some places 'shalach' is used to indicate a man divorcing his wife. (Example: Deut. 24:1,3,4; Jer. 3:1)



^{ESV} **Exodus 6:2-5** ... "I am (YHVH). ³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty³, but by my name (YHVH) I did not make myself known to them. ⁴ I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. ⁵ Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant.

What He was saying was that He had made a covenant with the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give them a land, but though they had a presence in it, they never claimed it as their own. God simply took care of them while they were there. But now, because He is hearing the groaning of their descendants, God is getting ready to send those descendents into that same land, and they are going to claim it – thus fulfilling His covenant to the fathers. But before He can do that, He must first secure their release, and it has to be more than Pharaoh just releasing them — Pharaoh has to actually cast them out of the land.

This little history lesson was what Moses needed. We know that up to this point, Moses not only had questions about himself, he also had questions about the leadership amongst his Hebrew brothers, and apparently – because Pharaoh did not heed His word, he also had questions about God. Was God really able to do this? Was He really going to be able to turn Pharaoh around to where he would not only let the Israelites leave, he would actually cast them out of Egypt?

Though Moses surely had his doubts, the signs of the times were quite evident. The four hundred years were up; Egypt was in the midst of economic prosperity, and Moses' somewhat peculiar upbringing led him to believe that He might be 'the man' – the saviour of Israel. So God brought Moses back down to earth and said –

^{ESV} **Exodus 6:6** ... "I am (YHVH) ..."

God was proclaiming to Moses that He – YHVH – was the one that was going to make this come to pass. The same YHVH who spoke the covenant to Abraham, was going to bring it to fruition — Moses was simply going to be the tool in God's mighty hand. So as to make it perfectly clear what was going to happen, God went on to say –

^{ESV} **Exodus 6:6-7** "... I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. ⁷ I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

These are the four things that YHVH said He was going to do for the Hebrew people. He was going to:

- bring them out, or separate them from the burdens of the Egyptians
- deliver them from their slavery to them (but would make them slaves to Him)
- redeem them
- take them as His people

These four things are symbolized by the four cups of wine in a traditional Jewish Passover seder. They are the Cup of Sanctification, the Cup of Affliction, the Cup of Redemption, and the Cup of Praise. Though the Jewish terms for each cup vary, these terms generally fit what God said He would do.

These promises are what inspired Moses to continue on with the job YHVH had given him, and as he reiterated them to the Israelite people, they – for the most part – began to understand what was happening as YHVH systematically destroyed the Egyptian land and economy.

³ Literally "El Shaddai" which in Hebrew means "the nourishing God" or "the God that provides"



Let's now dig a little deeper into the meaning of each of these "I wills" as we prepare ourselves to fully understand what is happening at our Passover celebrations.

Cup of Sanctification

The first thing God said he would do is to "... I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians". To "bring you out" implies that you are going to separate Israel from the Egyptian burdens.

When God began to send the plagues on Egypt, the first three were experienced by both the Egyptians and the Hebrews, but the next six plagues were experienced by the Egyptians alone –

^{ESV} **Exodus 8:20-23** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. ²¹ Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. ²² But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. ²³ Thus I will put a division between my people and your people."

The Hebrew word that is translated "set apart" is 'palah' (פָּלַח – Strong's 6395) which means to be distinct, to be marked out, and to be separated. It has much the same meaning as the Hebrew word 'qadash' (קָדַשׁ – 6942) which is a root word that is oftentimes translated "holy". Thus you could say that with the fourth plague, God began to make Israel 'holy'.

After the blood, frogs, and lice God began to destroy the Egyptian economy by destroying the livestock and the crops. After the hail beat down the crops and the locusts ate up the straw, there was no straw left from which to build bricks. Thus the Israelites could not do their work. This began the separation of the Hebrews from their burdens, giving them more time to contemplate what was happening around them.

God intends for His people to be separated from the world. When they arrived at Mount Sinai, He said to them –

^{ESV} **Exodus 19:5-6** "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation ..."

God continued to instruct them to remain a separate people; to not be like the nations around them, even to the point of eating some of the things the heathen eat –

^{ESV} **Leviticus 11:42-45** ⁴² Whatever goes on its belly, and whatever goes on all fours, or whatever has many feet, any swarming thing that swarms on the ground, you shall not eat, for they are detestable. ⁴³ You shall not make yourselves detestable with any swarming thing that swarms, and you shall not defile yourselves with them, and become unclean through them. ⁴⁴ For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground. ⁴⁵ For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."

Peter reminds his followers of the same thing – to separate yourselves from your heathen past and become a holy people –



^{ESV} **1 Peter 1:14-16** ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

So God separated the people from their burdens so they could contemplate His greatness. As time went on and He continued that separation process, they would eventually find themselves in the Promised Land.

Cup of Affliction

The next 'I will' was that God was going to deliver them from their Egyptian slavery. Notice how it is worded –

"... I will deliver you from slavery to them ..."

This is not a repeat of the previous phrase; instead, it is a statement that they will no longer serve Pharaoh, but will instead serve YHVH. Let's uncover the Hebrew behind the key words in order to get a better understanding –

- 'slavery' = 'abodah' (עֲבֹדָה) – Strong's 5656) – labor, service; from the root "abad" – work, serve
- 'deliver' = 'natsal' (נָצַל) - Strong's 5337) – to snatch away, deliver, rescue, save, plunder

The word 'abodah' is the same word Joshua used in his challenge to the elders of Israel –

^{ESV} **Joshua 24:15** And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will **serve**, whether the gods your fathers **served** in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will **serve** the LORD."

When applied to Israel in Egypt, it appears that they served the God's of the Egyptians, including Pharaoh. But God wanted their service, and so He told Pharaoh on numerous occasions –

^{ESV} **Exodus 9:1** ... "Let my people go, that they may serve me.

But we know that Pharaoh refused, and since he did, God worked it out to where Pharaoh would actually 'send' his people away. He literally forced his Hebrew servants out, sending them into the waiting arms of YHVH, thus enabling them to serve their new master. You might say that YHVH '**snatched**' them up when Pharaoh sent them out.

^{ESV} **Exodus 12:31-33** Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, "Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said.³² Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.³³ And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We *be* all dead *men*."

So Israel was literally 'snatched away' from Pharaoh. Pharaoh may have assumed that in sending them out, it might take days or even weeks for the Israelites to actually leave – giving him time to change his mind and stop the exodus of the people, but Moses had them organized to where they left that night. and before the Egyptians woke up the next morning – the Hebrews were gone; and suddenly they realized they realized they had made a mistake –

^{ESV} **Exodus 14:5** When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?"

Though the Israelites were rescued from Egyptian slavery, they never gave up the longing to go back to Egypt and serve Pharaoh. Just days after crossing the Red Sea they said to Moses –



^{ESV} **Exodus 14:12** Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."

This is the trap so many believers fall into. When things get tough, they tend to give up on the God who delivered them from serving a foreign god, and that god can take on many forms – a boss, a friend, a wife. Just about anything or anyone who can take your eye off YHVH. We must always remember that we cannot serve two masters.⁴ We have to choose who we are going to serve, and then do it.

Cup of Redemption

The third 'I will' is that God would –

“... redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment ... “

There are two Hebrew words that are translated 'redeem' in the Tnakh. They are 'padah' (פָּדָה – Strong's 6299) – which carries the thought of paying a ransom to rescue someone; and the other is 'ga'al' (גָּאֵל – Strong's 1350) which is a kinsman redeemer, a person who redeems another because he is family. In our passage, the second is used. God redeemed Israel because Israel is His family. In fact, Israel is His firstborn. On his way to confront Pharaoh, God told Moses -

^{ESV} **Exodus 4:21-23** ... "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. ²² Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, ²³ and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.'"

God considers Israel to be His children – His sons, and therefore He feels a responsibility to them. The purpose of the ga'al could in many ways be summarized as being his brother's keeper. So when Israel cried out because of their bondage, and God remembered the covenant He had made with Abraham, He had compassion for His children and stepped in to rescue them.

Throughout Israel's nearly 4000 year history⁵, God has repeatedly stepped in to rescue His people, but there came a time when a part of Israel had gone too far and God knew that simply rescuing her would not resolve the issue. Therefore, He turned her loose, and for approximately 700 years she became estranged from Him — she became "lo-ammi", not my people. When the time became right, He again sent his outstretched arm, Messiah Yeshua - Israel's kinsman redeemer, and redeemed her once again.

Cup of Praise

The fourth 'I will' states that God will –

“ ...take you to be my people, and I will be your God ...”

This, of course, tags on to the previous 'I will', but in a different way. In the previous 'I will', YHVH stated that He would be their kinsman redeemer. In this one, He is stating that He will be Israel's husband.

The English word 'take' is the translation of the Hebrew word 'laqach' (לָקַח – 3947). 'Laqach' means "to take, get, fetch, lay hold of, marry, and to take a wife, and is used that way in a number of places. One example is where God instructs Israel in regards to marrying a Canaanite –

⁴ Matt 6:24

⁵ when you start with Abraham



^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 7:2-3** ... and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. ³ You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or **taking** their daughters for your sons ...

Scripture shows that God betrothed Himself to Israel at Mount Sinai, and that He considered Himself to be her husband.

^{NKJ} **Jeremiah 31:31-32** Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah -- ³² "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

When you consider the events of the Exodus, it is as if God literally did 'snatch' Israel away from Pharaoh and take her as His wife. But we must remember, Pharaoh first sent her away. YHVH simply got her out of town fast enough to keep Pharaoh from taking her back when he later changed his mind. For the next 45-50 days, YHVH wooed her so that she would marry Him, and when she said "I will", He became Israel's God.

How does this marriage concept tie into the "Cup of Praise" and "Elijah's Cup"?

Let's start with 'Elijah's Cup'.

The prophets state that a person in the spirit of Elijah would come and announce the coming of the Messiah –

^{ESV} **Malachi 4:1** "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble ... ² But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. ³ And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet ... ⁵ "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."

It is important to understand the timeline in this passage. The time of trouble will come before advent of the "Sun of Righteousness", and Elijah the Prophet will come before the time of trouble. So the order is: Elijah, the time of trouble, then the advent of the Messiah. Many of the Jewish people in the first century saw John the Baptist as the person who fulfilled that prophecy, and thus came to his baptism⁶. Yeshua's disciples understood it as well and came to Him one day asking -

^{ESV} **Matthew 17:10-13** ... " why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" ¹¹ He answered, "Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. ¹² But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands." ¹³ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

So Yeshua recognized John the Baptist to be the Elijah figure of Malachi chapter four. John also understood this and realized that he was not the Messiah, but rather the one who preceded the Messiah. When asked about that, he explained it using a wedding analogy that was common in His day –

^{ESV} **John 3:28-30** You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' ²⁹ The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the

⁶ Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7



bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. ³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease."

Elijah is part of the Passover because he is the one who precedes the coming of the Messiah, and when the Messiah comes, the consummation of the marriage of Israel to God will take place.⁷

What is interesting is that the Jewish people really have no reason for including Elijah in the Passover seder, they just do.⁸

As for the fourth cup being called the "Cup of Praise" —

When God destroyed the Egyptians in the Red Sea, their enemy was finally destroyed. At that point, Moses and the Hebrew people sang a song, part of which went —

^{NKJ} **Exodus 15:2** The LORD *is* my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He *is* my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him.

When the Israelites finally realized that the god named "YHVH" was greater than all the other so-called 'gods', and that YHVH had personally taken a liking to them, even to the point of saving them from Pharaoh, they sang songs of praise to Him.

That pretty much summarizes the four 'I wills' and their association to the four Passover cups. But that is not the 'end of the story' so to speak. There are actually two more 'I wills' in that same passage, but they did not come to fulfillment in Moses' lifetime. Even though YHVH was able deliver them from Egypt and bring them to Mount Sinai that generation refused to go into the Promised Land. Israel had to wait until Moses and that generation died, and then Joshua brought them into the land.. But there is one more point I want to make about the four 'I wills' as a whole. After the fourth 'I will', the text goes on to say —

^{ESV} **Exodus 6: 7** "...and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Once God had fulfilled all He said He would do in these four statements of truth, the people should be able to look back and say that they were fully committed to YHVH, the god who had delivered them from the Egyptians. If they had, they would have known that that same God could also take them into the Promised Land and could overthrow their enemies. Unfortunately, it did not work out that way. There were always some who doubted, and the voice of the doubters was greater than that of Joshua and Caleb. Therefore the generation that came out of Egypt died in the wilderness.

May that not happen to us.

Shalom Alecheim

⁷ Passover is connected to Shavuot (Ex. 3:11-12), and Shavout is connected to Sukkot through the marriage of YHVH to His people.

⁸ <https://www.amiyisrael.org/articles/Elijah-Passover/Elijah-Passover.htm>