

Long ago, our ancestors worshipped idols. Now the Eternal is our God and He alone do we worship. This is even as the Scripture confirms, "And Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the Eternal, the God of Israel, your forefathers lived beyond the river; that is, Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, and they served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the river, and I led him throughout the whole land of Canaan. I increased his family by giving him a son, Isaac; and I gave Isaac two sons, Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave Mount Seir as a possession, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.'"

Blessed be God, who keeps His promise to Israel. Blessed be the Almighty who foretold the end of the bondage to Abraham at the Covenant between the Pieces [of Sacrifice]. For God said to Abraham, "Know that your children will be strangers in a land that is not their own. They will be enslaved there, and oppressed four hundred years. However, the nation whom they shall serve, I will judge. Afterward, they will go forth with great abundance and wealth."

Raise the cup of wine and cover the matzah, as the leader says the following:

This promise made to our forefathers stands true also for us. For more than once have they risen against us to destroy us. In every generation some have risen to seek our annihilation, but the Holy One, blessed be He, always delivers us out of their hands.

Put down the cup, and uncover the matzah. To encourage participation, have each person take turns reading the following paragraphs:

Come and learn what Laban the Syrian tried to do to our father Jacob. While Pharaoh's decree was only against the males, Laban desired to uproot all. For so it is written, "My father was a wandering Aramean, ready to perish; and he went down to Egypt and dwelled there, few in number. From there he became a nation, great, mighty and numerous."

"He went down to Egypt" — Why did he go down to Egypt? He was compelled by God's word. "And he dwelled there" — this means that our father Jacob did not go down to Egypt intending to settle there, but only to stay for a short time; for so it is written, "And they said to Pharaoh, we have come to dwell in the land because there is no pasture for our flocks due to very severe famine in the land of Canaan. Now please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

"Few in number" — as it is written, "Your ancestors went down into Egypt with seventy persons. Now the Eternal your God has made you as numerous as the stars in heaven."

"And there he became a nation" — from this we learn that Israel was established to be a distinct nation in Egypt.

"Great and mighty" as it is said, "And the children of Israel were fruitful and

increased in abundance, multiplied, and became very strong — "and the land was filled with them."

"And numerous" as it is said, "I have increased you as the growth of the field, and you have grown to become numerous and adorned in great beauty. You are fully matured, yet you remained naked and bare."

"The Egyptians evilly mistreated us" — they made us suffer by setting burdens of hard labor upon us. "And the Egyptians did evil unto us" — as the Scripture says, "Come, let us deal craftily with them, lest they multiply even more; And in the event of war they might join themselves with our enemies, fight against us, and depart out of the land altogether."

"And they made us suffer" — as it is written, "the Egyptians set taskmasters over them in order to oppress them with heavy forced labor; and they built Pithom and Raamses as stone storage cities for Pharaoh. And they weighed us down with bitter, hard labor" as the Scripture states, "And Egypt made the children of Israel to labor relentlessly."

"So we cried unto the Eternal, the God of our fathers, and the Eternal heard our voice, saw the sorrow of our affliction, and the deep burden of our oppression."

"And we cried unto the Eternal, the God of our fathers" — as it is written, "And it came to pass after many days, that the King of Egypt died, and the children of Israel moaned because of their bondage, and cried out; And their anguished cry went up before God."

"And the Eternal heard our voice" — as it is written, "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob."

“And He saw our affliction” — this phrase implies the forced separation between husbands and wives during the time of their persecution, as it is written, “And God saw the children of Israel, and God understood their cruel plight.”

“And our sorrow” — recalls the edict to drown all the male children, as it is said, “Every son that is born, you shall cast into the river, but every daughter you shall keep alive.”

“And our oppression” — denotes the severity of our crushed lives, saying, “And I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.”

“And the Eternal brought us forth from Egypt, with a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm (*z'roa*), with great terror, and with miraculous signs and mighty wonders.”