

and He fed us the Manna;  
and He gave us the Shabbos;  
and He brought us before Mount Sinai;  
and He gave us the Torah;  
and He brought us into the land of Israel;  
and He built the Chosen House  
for us, to atone for all our sins.

WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW? This concludes the Haggadah's chronological exposition of the Exodus story (beginning on p. 50) (Rashbatz).

Thus, while the following passage is integral to the Haggadah, and to the mitzvah of recalling the Exodus (see *Classic Questions*), it is nevertheless not part of the actual chronicle of the Exodus itself (Likutei Sichos vol. 17, p. 79, note 20).

## RABBAN GAMLIEL USED TO SAY:

Whoever has not mentioned the following three things on Pesach has not fulfilled his obligation. They are:

**Pesach, Matzah & Maror.**

### TORAS MENACHEM

פסח מצה ומרור — Pesach, Matzah and Maror.

There are three general categories of food: a.) food that is required for normal development, or is vitally needed to sustain life; b.) food that is harmful, and must be excluded or even destroyed; and, c.) food that while not indispensable is a source of additional nourishment and pleasure.

These three categories are alluded to in the three special Pesach foods—Matzah, Maror and Pesach:

a.) Matzah is, of course, unleavened bread and “bread sustains a man’s life” (Psalms 104:15). In a

broader sense, the term “bread” is used for a whole meal, and the entire daily diet (see *Daniel* 5:1; *Rashi* to *Bereishis* 31:54).

b.) Maror—in our context—signifies undesirable things which we need to perceive as bitter, and therefore reject.

c.) The Pesach sacrifice had to be eaten “*al hasova*,” when filled to satisfaction (*Rambam, Laws of Pesach Sacrifice* 8:3). It came as a “dessert,” a source of additional nourishment and pleasure. For this reason the Pesach had to be eaten sumptuously, “*in a manner of royal festivity*” (*Rashbam* to *Pesachim* 119b).

והאכילנו את-המן.  
ונתן לנו את-השבת.  
וקרבנו לפני-הר-סיני.  
ונתן לנו את-התורה.  
והכניסנו לארץ ישראל.

ובנה לנו את-בית הבחירה  
לכפר על כל-עונותינו:

רַבּוֹן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר:  
כָּל-שָׁלֹא אָמַר שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים אֵלוֹ בַּפֶּסַח  
לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי חוֹבָתוֹ. וְאֵלוֹ הֵן:  
פֶּסַח מִצָּה וּמָרֹר:

### CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Does one merely have to mention Pesach, Matzah and Maror at the Seder?

**RASHBAM:** No, one must explain the reasons for these *mitzvos*.

● If a person fails to explain these three things has he not fulfilled his obligation at all?

**RAN:** The Haggadah means to say that he has not fulfilled his obligation properly (*Pesachim* 116a-b).

**RASHBATZ:** One must explain the reason for these three *mitzvos* here, otherwise one has not fulfilled one’s obligation to recount the Exodus.

Even though some of these ideas were touched upon earlier, during the Four Questions, they must be clarified properly here.

● Which obligation, exactly, are we speaking about here?

**KIRVAS SEFER:** One must explain the reasons for Pesach, Matzah and Maror, in order to fulfill the *mitzvah* of remembering the Exodus properly (*Laws of Chametz and Matzah* 7:5).

**RABEINU MANOACH:** One must explain the reasons for Pesach, Matzah and Maror in order to fulfill the *mitzvos* of Pesach, Matzah and Maror properly. (*ibid.*).

  
**וּרְחַץ**  
*Wash the Hands*  


- WE NOW WASH OUR HANDS WITHOUT MAKING A BLESSING (SEE OPPOSITE).
- (*MINHAG ADMUR*: ONE GOES TO THE SINK AND WASHES ONE'S OWN HANDS).
- (IF YOU MAKE A BLESSING AL *NETILAS YADAYIM* IN ERROR, EAT MATZAH NOW (BUT NOT MAROR AND KORECH), AND THEN CONTINUE WITH *KARPAS*.)

סידור אדה"ז:  
ורחץ. ונוטל ידיו  
ואינו מברך:

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why do we wash our hands at this point?

**TALMUD:** Because the law requires us to do so before eating a food dipped in liquid (the next step of the Seder). This is in order not to impart the liquid (and thereby the food) with ritual impurity from our hands, for ritual impurity is transmitted more easily to a wet substance (see *Pesachim* 115a and *Rashi* *ibid.*).

● Why do we not make a blessing?

**ALTER REBBE'S SHULCHAN ARUCH:** In a case of Halachic doubt we do not make a blessing, for fear that we would be uttering God's name in vain. In this instance, there is a view (*Tosfos* *ibid.*) that washing the hands before dipped food was a *mitzvah* only practiced in Temple times (*Orach Chaim* 158:3).

● If during the year I follow the opinion of *Tosfos* and do not wash before dipping food, should I still wash now?

**CHOK YA'AKOV:** Yes, because this is part of the Seder, designed to arouse the interest of the children (*Orach Chaim* 473:28).

● Why does this step's title, *Urchatz*, begin with the letter *vav* (meaning "and"), which is not the case with the other steps?

**LIKUTEI TA'AMIM U'MINHAGIM:** This renders "*Urchatz*" as a two-syllabled word. It thus enables the steps of the Seder, arranged in stanzas of two words, to rhyme: *Kadesh, Urchatz; Karpas, Yachatz* etc. (see also addendum).

TORAS MENACHEM

🕊️ וּרְחַץ — *Urchatz*.

What is the *inner* reason why *Urchatz* is the only step of the Seder which begins with the letter *vav* ("and"), suggesting a special connection with the preceding step, *Kadesh*? (See *Classic Questions*.)

The Kabbalists taught that the various steps of the Seder allude to different aspects of the *sefiros*, the

scheme of Divine attributes which are mirrored in the soul of man. In particular, the first two steps, *Kadesh* and *Urchatz* correspond to the first two *sefiros*, *Chochmah* (conception) and *Binah* (cognition).

Unlike the other *sefiros* which operate relatively independently of one another, *Chochmah* and *Binah* are a single, functional unit, "*two friends that never separate*" (*Zohar* III 4a). And this is the mystical expla-

## *How to Wash*

- ✎ BEFORE WASHING THE HANDS CHECK THAT THEY ARE CLEAN AND DRY.
- ✎ THE CONTAINER IS HELD AT ALL TIMES WITH A TOWEL.
- ✎ PICK UP THE FILLED CONTAINER WITH YOUR RIGHT HAND, AND PASS IT INTO THE LEFT HAND.
- ✎ REPEAT THE FOLLOWING THREE TIMES: POUR PLENTY OF WATER (AT LEAST THREE OUNCES) OVER YOUR RIGHT HAND SO THAT THE WATER COVERS THE ENTIRE HAND UP TO THE WRIST.
- ✎ PASS THE CONTAINER INTO YOUR RIGHT HAND AND POUR WATER THREE TIMES OVER YOUR LEFT HAND, EXACTLY AS BEFORE. (LEAVE A LITTLE WATER IN YOUR LEFT HAND).
- ✎ LET GO OF THE CONTAINER, RUB YOUR HANDS TOGETHER.

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### TORAS MENACHEM

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nation why the steps of the Seder embodied by these two *sefiros* are linked by a *vav*: to reflect their intimate working relationship.

Why are *Chochmah* and *Binah* so utterly dependent on each other?

*Chochmah* is the seat of the soul's creativity. Its perception is holistic: it has an extremely broad view of concepts and ideas, and it acquires knowledge intuitively rather than rationally. *Chochmah's* "eye" can read different themes simultaneously, perceiving how they converge into a simple core idea, or "point."

*Binah*, on the other hand, is quite the opposite. It focusses very much on details and data, analyzing them carefully and sequentially. Its logic is well reasoned and precise; and it excels at taking the raw ideas which it is fed by *Chochmah* and fleshing them out with ornate detail, appropriate descriptions and helpful analogies.

*Chochmah* and *Binah* are "two friends that never separate" because each excels in what the other lacks. Besides initially generating the ideas, which *Binah* could not do on its own, *Chochmah's* constant influence is required to prevent *Binah* from losing the bigger picture as it focusses on the detail. *Chochmah* must always be at hand to help its "friend" synthesize

its findings and to place in context the rather dizzying amount of information that *Binah* tends to generate.

But as much as *Binah* is helpless without *Chochmah*, *Chochmah* alone is a mere "side-dish" to the "main course" of true intelligence which *Binah* offers. Intuition, creativity and holistic perception are, of course, wonderful, but of what use are they unless we have the apparatus to translate those whims of abstraction into solid, well-honed ideas? *Chochmah* has all of the inspiration, but none of the communication skills necessary to bring its message across. *Chochmah* may be a master of *context*, but without *Binah* there is no *text* at all.

So that inconspicuous *vav* at the beginning of *Urchatz* represents our ability to harmonize an inner tension that exists within us all: the rational versus the intuitive, the practical versus the idealistic, the tangible versus the transcendent.

There is no easy solution. Our souls are powered by highly contrasting faculties which need to work together so that we can lead fulfilling lives and carry out our God-given mission in this world. In short: We must listen to *both* of our minds, and give each of them the respect that they deserve.

(Based on *Sichah of Erev Pesach* 5750)



- REMOVE THE ONION (OR POTATO) FROM THE SEDER PLATE .
- DIP A SMALL PIECE OF IT (LESS THAN 0.9OZ) INTO SALT WATER, MAKE THE FOLLOWING BLESSING, AND THEN EAT IT. HAVE IN MIND THIS BLESSING ALSO REFERS TO ALL THE BITTER HERBS EATEN LATER. (DO NOT LEAN.)

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ  
הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה:**

סידור אדה"ז:  
כרפס. נוטל פחות  
מכזית כרפס  
ויטבול במי מלח  
או חומץ ויברך:

יכון להוציא גם  
המרוך בברכה זו.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● Why do we dip the vegetable in salt water and eat it?

**TALMUD:** To arouse the interest of the children, since it is not something we do during the rest of the year (*Pesachim* 114a-b).

TORAS MENACHEM

כַּרְפַּס — Dip and Eat the Vegetable (*Halachah*).

The stated reason for *Karpas*, eating a vegetable that has been dipped in salt-water, is to arouse the interest of the children. The commentators explain that this rather odd practice is likely to capture the children’s attention since dipping is not something we do the rest of the year (see *Classic Questions*). In fact, we find this is one of the Four Questions posed by the child later on: “On all nights we need not dip even once, but on this night we do so twice!”

There seems, however, to be a glaring inconsistency here. Even a small child will be familiar with the fact that we do carry out a “dipping” ceremony at other times. On *Rosh Hashanah*, for example, we dip an apple in honey. Furthermore, every time we eat bread during the year there is a requirement to dip it in salt. (In fact, many follow the *Arizal’s* custom to dip the bread in salt three times). So how could one say, “on all other nights we need not dip even once”?

A simple solution to this problem, which even a child could appreciate, is that tonight’s ritual is unique in that *it revolves around the dipping itself*.

On *Rosh Hashanah*, our main intention is to recite a prayer for a sweet new year, to which the apple dipped in honey is secondary. Likewise, during the year when we dip the bread in salt, the emphasis is not the dipping *per se*, but the presence of the salt on the table (since the table resembles the Altar on which salt was always placed), or the general mixing of the salt with the bread, *in whatever fashion* (to resemble the mixing of salt with the sacrifices). The notion of dipping is thus an outgrowth of the general need for salt. This is not a “dipping ceremony” at all, but a “salt ceremony” that has evolved in such a way that it involves some dipping.

In fact, in one of his discourses, the *Alter Rebbe* states this point unequivocally: “The essential principle is not that we bring salt and dip the bread in it. Rather, our main intention is that the bread should somehow acquire the flavor of salt.... The dipping is not a crucial point here” (*Short Discourses*, p. 500).

So, in the final analysis, we see that tonight is the only occasion when normative Jewish practice requires dipping for dipping’s sake.

# Dip & Eat the Vegetable

- REMOVE THE ONION (OR POTATO) FROM THE SEDER PLATE .
- DIP A SMALL PIECE OF IT (LESS THAN 0.9OZ) INTO SALT WATER, MAKE THE FOLLOWING BLESSING, AND THEN EAT IT. HAVE IN MIND THIS BLESSING ALSO REFERS TO ALL THE BITTER HERBS EATEN LATER. (DO NOT LEAN.)

*Blessed are You, God, our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.*

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## TORAS MENACHEM

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(While the above definition of salt dipping is satisfying, for a person initiated in the finer points of Jewish law, it is ultimately unnecessary. From a strictly *Halachic* viewpoint “dipping” here refers to dipping in a liquid (which is why we are required to wash our hands first—see above, p. 36), and the salt in which we dip our bread throughout the year is, as a general rule, dry. Tonight, by contrast, both of our dippings are wet: the vegetable in salt-water, and the Bitter Herbs in Charoses, a paste made with wine. So there is really no question in the first place: from the perspective of Jewish law we *never* dip bread in salt.)

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim* 5741)

🕯️ **כִּרְפֵּס** — *Dip and Eat the Vegetable* (Kabbalah).

According to the Kabbalah, *tibul*, dipping, is symbolic of *bitul*, surrender (or negation) of the self, which is why in Hebrew we find that one word is an anagram of the other: טִיבּוּל = בִּיטוּל (*Siddur im Dach, Sha'ar Kavanos ha-Mikvah*). And one doesn't need to be a mystic to appreciate why. The purpose of dipping a food into a flavoring agent is so that the food should *surrender* some of its own taste and “give way” to a more desirable quality found in the flavoring agent.

But, ironically, while dipping food suggests an experience of surrender and self-negation *for the food substance*, it bears the very opposite connotation *for the dipper himself*.

What drives a person to dip? Because, as something of a connoisseur, he knows that the food is lacking its full gourmet potential and that it would

be enhanced greatly by the right sauce—hardly a moment of self-surrender and ego nullification!

But on Pesach, all this changes. Pesach is a festival of *bitul*: We eat unleavened bread which has no chance to rise, symbolic of humility; and we celebrate the birth of our nation, a point in history when Israel's spiritual standing was very low, and we had little of which to be proud.

So our dipping tonight is inevitably different from any dipping throughout the year. Normally, dipping food is an expression of culinary expertise, an exercise aimed at enriching those pleasures of life that our egos so desperately pursue. But tonight, when our souls are awakened, we realize that there is something more important, more noble—and, ironically, more rewarding—than the pursuit of happiness for its own sake. A voice within is telling us that only through genuine *bitul* can we make a transition from the distorted, egocentric, human view of reality, to a more true, theocentric standpoint. After all, a genuine mystical union with our Creator must be on His terms, and not on ours.

God took us out of Egypt so that we would be free to serve Him: free from the Egyptians and, more significantly, free from the obsessive desire for self-enrichment which draws us away from our true calling in life. So tonight, let us emulate the *Karpas* and “dip ourselves” too, endeavoring to surrender to God, and not make our observance of His law contingent on our own, mortal understanding.

(Based on *Sichos of Nights of Chag ha-Pesach* 5748)