

Secrets of the Seder

	Stage	Name	Transliteration	Action
Purpose	1	קדש	Kaddeish	Kiddush
Past	2	ורחץ	Urchatz	Wash (for dipping)
	3	כרפס	Karpas	Vegetable
	4	יחץ	Yachatz	Break the middle matzah
	5	מגיד	Maggid	Telling the story
	Present	6	רחצה	Rochtzah
7		מוציא	Motzi	Make a bracha over the matzah
8		מצה	Matzah	Eat the matzah
9		מרור	Marror	Eat the bitter herbs
10		כורף	Korech	Hillel sandwich
11		שלחן עורף	Shulchan Orech	Festive meal
12		צפון	Tzafun	Afikomen
Future	13	ברך	Bareich	Blessing after the meal (Bensch)
	14	הלל	Hallel	Hallel (second half)
	15	נרצה	Nirtzah	Acceptance

קדש Kaddeish

בראשית פרק יח

(ו) וַיַּמְהַר אַבְרָהָם הָאֱהָלָה אֶל שָׂרָה וַיֹּאמֶר מַהֲרִי שְׁלֵשׁ סָאִים קִמַּח סִלְתָּ לְיֹשֵׁי וַעֲשֵׂי עֲגוֹת:

Genesis 18:6

6. And Avraham hurried to the tent to Sarah, and he said, "Hurry! [Prepare] three se'ah of [normal] flour [and] fine flour; knead and make cakes."

תורה שלימה בראשית יח:ו הערה צא

לְיֹשֵׁי וַעֲשֵׂי עֲגוֹת – שְׂבִיבֵי סוּד נוֹלֵד יֵאָחַז, וּמִנִּין אֶלֶף כֶּסֶה מְלֹאכִים בָּאִים אֶלֶף אֲבָרָהּ מֵהוּ אֹמֵר לְיֹשֵׁי וַעֲשֵׂי עֲגוֹת
שֶׁהִיא פֶסַח וְאָמְרוּ לוֹ סוּב אֶשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ כֵּעֵת חַיָּה וְהָנָה בֶן לְשָׂרָה אֲשֶׁרָהּ.

Torah Shleimah, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Kasher, Poland (1895 – 1983)

KNEAD AND MAKE CAKES That Yitzchak was born in Nissan, and what is the source? Rather when the Angels came to visit Avraham why did he say [to Sarah] 'Knead and make cakes'? Because it was Pesach and they [the Angels] said to him 'I will surely return to you at this time next year, and behold, your wife Sarah will have a son'.

בראשית פרק יט

(א) וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים סָדְמָה בְּעָרֵב וְלוֹט יָשָׁב בְּשַׁעַר סֹדֶם וַיֵּרָא לוֹט וַיִּקָּם לִקְרֹאתָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אֲפָיִם אָרְצָה: (ב) וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה נָא אֲדֹנָי סוּרוּ נָא אֶל בַּיִת עַבְדְּכֶם וְלִינוּ וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁכַּמְתֶּם וְהִלַּכְתֶּם לְדַרְכְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא כִי בְּרַחוּב נָלִין: (ג) וַיִּפְצַר בָּם מְאֹד וַיִּסְרוּ אֵלָיו וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל בַּיִתוֹ וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם מִשְׁתֶּה וּמִצּוֹת אָפֶה וַיֹּאכְלוּ:

Genesis 19:1-3

1. And there came two angels to Sodom at evening; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face to the ground; 2. And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I beseech you, to your servant's house, and remain all night, and wash your feet, and you shall rise up early, and go on your way. And they said, No; we will stay in the street all night. 3. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in to him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

רש"י בראשית פרק יט פסוק ג
ומצות אפה - פסח היה:

Rashi on Genesis 19:3

AND BAKED UNLEAVENED BREAD – it was Pesach.

בראשית פרק כז

(ט) לָךְ נָא אֶל הַצֹּאן וְקַח לִי מִשָּׁם שְׁנֵי גְדֵי עִזִּים וְשְׁנֵי טְבִים וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אֹתָם מִטְעָמִים לְאָבִיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר אָהָב:

Genesis 27:9

9. Go now to the flock, and take for me from there two choice kids, and I will make them tasty foods for your father, as he likes.

רש"י בראשית פרק כז פסוק ט
שני גדיי עזים - וכי שני גדיי עזים היה מאכלו של יצחק, אלא האחד הקריב לפסחו והאחד עשה מטעמים.
בפרקי דרבי אליעזר (פרק לז):

Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, France 1040 – 1105)

TWO CHOICE KIDS – Did Isaac's menu consist of two kids? Rather he sacrificed one as a Pesach offering, and one he made into tasty foods. [This is found] in Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer (chapter 32).

הגדה של פסח - נוסח ההגדה
את יום חג המצות הזה ...

ספר קדושת לוי¹ - פרשת בא

ואמרתם זבח פסח הוא לה'. והנה יש להבין שאנו קוריו את יום טוב המכונה בתורה בשם חג המצות אנו קורין אותו פסח, והיכן רמז זה בתורה לקרוא יום טוב זה בשם פסח, והלא בכל התורה נקרא יום טוב זה בשם חג המצות. והנה כתיב (שיר השירים ו, ג) אני לדודי ודודי לי, היינו שאנו מספרים שבחו של הקדוש ברוך הוא והקדוש ברוך הוא מספר שבח של ישראל... והנה חג המצות נקרא על שבה ישראל... ונמצא נקרא חג המצות על שם שבה ישראל שאפו את הבצק עוגות מצות. ולזה בתורה נקרא יום טוב זה בשם חג המצות כביכול השם יתברך מספר שבח של ישראל. ואנו קורין היום טוב בשם פסח על שם שבה השם יתברך ואמרתם זבח פסח הוא לה' אשר פסח כו'. שהוא שבח השם יתברך על דרך הפסוק אני לדודי ודודי לי:

Talelei Oros "The Haggadah Anthology"

HaShem has the Torah call this holiday "Chag HaMatzos" to publicize lofty praise of the Jewish People for their perfect trust in Him. At the time of yetzias Mitsrayim, our nation obediently and happily "followed Him" into the desert, not carrying any food except for matzos.

As for us, however - the Jewish People - we call this holiday "Pesach," for our desire is to give praise and thanks to Him! We want to publicize the great love that He showed for us! The word "Pesach" connotes "passing over," and the Torah (Shemos 12:27) uses this term to relate how in Egypt, on the night of the seder, HaShem "passed over" Jewish homes during the Tenth Plague. By calling the holiday "Pesach," we tell the world that when He miraculously destroyed our enemies in Egypt, He mercifully spared our firstborn. Just as showed Infinite Kindness towards us then. He continued showering His mercy on us - throughout history to this very day.

הגדה של פסח - נוסח ההגדה

... זמן חרותנו (לשבת: באהבה) מקרא קדש זכר ליציאת מצרים.

This phrase, "zeicher Vyetsias Mitsrayim" is also found in the kiddush that we say on Shabbos. Tosafos asks (Pesachim 117b), "How is Shabbos a remembrance of our People's leaving Egypt?"

In Yaaros Dvash, R. Yonasan Eibeshutz explains by first noting a question asked by many commentators. The Torah says (Shemos 12:40), "And the settlement of the children of Israel who dwelled in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years." When HaShem spoke to Avraham in the Covenant "Between the Pieces," He said that for four hundred years, Avraham's descendants would be "strangers in a land not theirs."

¹ Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev (1740–1809 in Berdychiv), also known as the Berdichever, was a Hasidic leader. He was the rabbi of Ryczywół, Żelechów, Pinsk and Berdychiv, for which he is best known. He was one of the main disciples of the Maggid of Mezritch, and of his disciple Rabbi Shmelke of Nikolsburg, whom he succeeded as rabbi of Ryczywół.

Some say that the count of these years begins with the birth of Yitzchak in Canaan, and included in the total are the years that Yitzchak dwelled in Canaan, before it actually became a possession of our nation (See Rashi, Bereishis 15:13). Still, from Yitzchak's birth until the exodus was only four hundred years. What are these "extra" thirty years?

The Yaaros Dvash answers that these thirty years are actually a part of the four hundred, because of the Shabbos. That is, Heaven's decree of subjugation issued on Israel pertained only to weekdays, not the Shabbos. The Egyptians, however, oppressed our forefathers beyond what was decreed, and they forced the Jews to work on Shabbos, too. As is known, the subjugation in Egypt lasted 210 years, the numerical equivalent of the word **רדו** (redu) which means "go down" (It was said by Yaakov (Bereishis 42:2) to tell the brothers to "go down" to Egypt). Shabbos is every seventh day, and one seventh of 210 years is thirty years. Therefore, the Jews having to work on Shabbos during the 210 years of subjugation is the source of the "extra" thirty years. The verse therefore should be read, "And the settlement of the children of Israel who dwelled in Egypt was [considered] four hundred and thirty years [because of having to work on Shabbos for 210 years]."

Had the Jews remained exempt from working on Shabbos, they would have remained in that vile country another thirty years, which would have had disastrous consequences. Negatively influenced by the Egyptian people and the Egyptian land, our fathers would have become further steeped in sin. Their spiritual deterioration would have continued for additional years, and they eventually would have sunk to the fiftieth level of impurity, from which there is no return. Having been forced to work on Shabbos, they went free after 210 years instead, so they did not descend so low. Therefore, in kiddush of Shabbos, we say that Shabbos, too, is a remembrance of yetsias Mitsrayim.

וְרַחֵץ Urchatz

The second siman for the steps of the seder is **וְרַחֵץ** (urchatz) = "and you shall wash," which designates the washing of the hands that we do after kiddush, before we dip the karpas [into saltwater or vinegar] and eat it. During the rest of the year, we are not particular to wash our hands before dipping food into liquids. Why on the seder night are we particular to do this washing?

Writes the Netziv of Volozhin in Imrei Sheffer that our Sages made provisions that at the seder, we do as was done in Eretz Yisroel on the seder night, when there a mitzvah to eat the Pesach offering. Because the offering was kodshim, having been slaughtered in the Beis HaMikdosh, at the seder afterwards one had to be careful about spiritual impurity on one's hands - that they remain pure in the event of contact with the meat of the offering. As a remembrance of the seder in those days, we are to wash our hands before dipping the karpas, out of concern about spiritual impurity, even in the absence of the Pesach offering.

כָּרְפָּס Karpas

Our Sages say (Pesachim 114b) that we dip karpas into liquid before the meal in order to awaken the curiosity of the children, hoping that they will begin to ask many questions about this night. However, after the meal begins, there is a second dipping - when we dip maror into charoses. If so, writes R. Eliezer Ashkenazi (in his Pesach Haggadah), perhaps there is an additional reason for dipping the karpas.

When telling the story of yetsias Mitsrayim, we are obligated to go back all the way to Avraham Avinu, and mention that his father, Terach, was an idol-worshipper. As our Sages say, "We begin with shame." Another aspect of "shame" in the beginning of the story is Yosef's brothers dipping Yosef's "coat of many colours" into blood, to make Yaakov think that Yosef had been killed by a wild animal. "We begin with shame and we conclude with praise."

There also is a praiseworthy "dipping" in the story of yetsias Mitsrayim. HaShem commanded (Shemos 12:22) that before the night of the Tenth Plague, the Jews dip grass into blood from the Pesach offering and then smear the blood onto their door posts. The Jews obeyed the command.

יִחַץ Yachats

At the start of the seder" explains the Chasam Sofer in Pardes Moshe, "we split the matzah into two to indicate that the seder has two parts - one about the redemption from Egypt and one about the redemption to come - the Final and Ultimate Redemption. The future redemption, the bigger and complete one, is hidden. We do not know when it will be. Therefore, the [larger] piece of matzah that alludes to this greater redemption is the Afikoman - called צִפּוּן (tzafun) i.e. "hidden."

מַגִּיד Maggid

Living Beyond Time: The Mystery and Meaning of the Jewish Festivals, Rabbi Pinchos Stopler
A Jew moves through time in a cycle we call the year. [It helps to envision an analogue clock with calendar dates marked off instead of numbers.] Time does not pass. It is we who pass through time. Each year, we arrive at the same point in time that we left the previous year. Each festival is a "stop" on life's journey. Each stop has its own particular spiritual potential and influences. For instance, all of our Passover stops represent one Passover. When we arrive at the Passover stop, the [spiritual potential of the] day imbues us with the ability to experience freedom and the birth of the Jewish nation in the same way that our ancestors experienced freedom when they left Egypt. Each year's Passover stop is designed to allow us to add to the treasure trove of experiences and insights we developed during previous Passovers, so that each year witnesses the maturation and growth of our personal Passover structure. So it is regarding the Sabbath and each of the holidays.

1	This is the poor bread	הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיא
2	Four questions	מַה נִּשְׁתַּנָּה הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה
3	We were slaves	הָיִינוּ לַפְרָעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם
4	Incident in Bnei Brak	מַעֲשֵׂה ... בְּבֵנֵי בְרַק
5	Blessed is the Omnipresent	בְּרוּךְ הַמְּקוֹם
6	Four sons	כְּנֻגַד אַרְבַּעַה בְּנֵים דְּבִרְהַ תּוֹרָה
7	Perhaps from Rosh Chodesh	יְכוּל מֵרֵאשׁ הַדָּשׁ
8	Idol worshippers	מִתְחַלְלֵי עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדַת זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
9	Blessed is He who keeps	בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
10	Go and learn	צֵא וְלָמַד מַה בְּקִשׁ לְבֵן הָאֲרָמִי
11	Explain Devarim 26:5	דַּרְשׁ דְּבָרִים כו:ה
12	Explain Devarim 26:6	דַּרְשׁ דְּבָרִים כו:ו
13	Explain Devarim 26:7	דַּרְשׁ דְּבָרִים כו:ז
14	Explain Devarim 26:8	דַּרְשׁ דְּבָרִים כו:ח
15	Ten plagues	עֲשֵׂר מִכּוֹת
16	Davenu	דַּוְנוּ
17	Rabban Gamliel used to say	רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר
18	In every generation	בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר
19	Hallel (first half)	לְפִיכָךְ אֲנַחְנוּ חַיִּבִּים לְהוֹדוֹת לַהֲלֵל
20	Who redeemed Yisrael	בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Rabban Gamliel used to say

רבינו בחיי שמות פרק יב פסוק כג.
 וכן עוד ד' כוסות של פסח כנגדם: כוס ראשון של קדוש, כנגד אות יו"ד שהוא קדוש וכן הוא אומר: (תהלים קלד, ב) "שאו ידיכם קדש", כוס ב' שאומר עליו ההגדה והוא ספור הנסים, כנגד אות ה"א שמשם נמשכים הנסים והמכות, כוס ג' של ברכת המזון, כנגד אות וי"ו שנקרא שמים ממה שכתוב: (מלכים - א ח, לב) "ואתה תשמע השמים", ומשם בא המזון ממה שכתוב: (להלן טז, ד) "הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן השמים", כוס ד' שאומר עליו שפוך חמתך, כנגד ה"א אחרונה שהיא מדת הדין וזה מבואר.

פסחים קטז:

אמר רבא מצה צריך להגביה ומרור צריך להגביה בשר אין צריך להגביה ולא עוד אלא שנראה כאוכל קדשים בחוץ.

רשי על פסחים קטז:

צריך להגביה - כשהוא אומר מנה זו שאנו אוכלין:

בשר אין מגביה - כשהוא אומר פסח שהיו אבותינו אוכלים לא יגביה הבשר שהוא זכר לפסח:

אין צריך להגביה - דהא לא מצי למימר פסח זה:

In his sefer, The Tzlach, the author of the Nodeh B'Yehuda asks, "Each of these three items is a reminder of a different part of the story of Pesach. Why didn't R. Gamliel list the chronologically?"

That is, maror is in remembrance of how the Egyptians embittered our lives during the enslavement. The enslavement came first in time. Pesach should be mentioned afterwards, because the Pesach offering is a reminder of the Tenth Plague, which came later, when HaShem killed the Egyptian firstborn but "passed over" the Jewish homes. Matzah should be mentioned last, for matzah recalls our haste the next morning when we had no time to let our dough rise because the Egyptians wanted us to leave as soon as possible.

As known, however, the decree was that we would be enslaved for four hundred years. Because of the bitterness of the enslavement, we were slaves only for 210 years. Those years were so difficult, it was if we actually were enslaved for the full four hundred years. Therefore, R. Gamliel is saying, "The reason for the Pesach and the matzah i.e. why the redemption happened when it did, was the maror i.e. the bitterness."

מַרְרוֹר מָרֹר – מַצָּה Matzah – מוֹצֵיאַ Motzi – רֹחֵצֵה Rochtzah

כּוֹרֵךְ Korech

The verse quoted by the Haggadah is about Pesach Sheni (BaMidbar 9:11) - a "second chance" to bring the Pesach offering. For those who for good reason missed bringing the offering in its proper time, on the fourteenth of Nisan, the Torah gives an opportunity to bring the offering a month later, on the fourteenth of Iyar. Hillel's opinion - that the meat of the offering is eaten together with matzah and maror - and not by itself - applies just as much to Pesach itself, perhaps more so.

What is more, the Torah has an almost identical verse about the "first" Pesach - a verse in Shemos (13:8) where we read, "And matzos on bitter herbs you shall eat it." This also seems to be a source for Hillel's custom to make a "korech" and eat all three items together.

The commentators ask, why doesn't the Haggadah cite the verse about the "first" Pesach offering as the source for Hillel's opinion? One answer that was offered is that the words of the Haggadah here are actually a prayer. We are praying that HaShem rebuild the Temple, so we can bring the Pesach offering. It is now night, so according to halacha it is no longer possible to slaughter an offering for the Pesach we are having now, in Nisan. Therefore, we pray that we have the Temple again soon enough, so that by the time that Pesach Sheni comes, we will be able to bring a Pesach offering then, and fulfil what the Torah says in its verse in Bamidbar.

Obviously, the Haggadah cannot bring the verse in Shemos, because these words are a prayer that we are saying, specifically about Pesach Sheni!

שלחן ערוך Shulchan Orech

Many have the custom to eat eggs during the seder. What is the reason? In the sefer Toras Ernes, by R. Leib Eiger of Lublin, it is said in the name of the Rebbe from Izbitza that eggs allude to what, at essence, was yetsias Mitsrayim.

Throughout nature, when creatures are born, birth is concluded in one step. The mother's womb opens, and a new member of the species comes into the world. This birth is the concluding step that is necessary for the survival of the species. The birth of an egg, however, is not a concluding step. It is a necessary but preliminary step, and the real purpose is the hatching that comes later. Only then does offspring emerge into the world.

Yetsias Mitsrayim was very much like the egg. It, too, was like a first step - an "emergence" and "birth," but it was not the ultimate purpose. That would come later, when our fathers stood at Sinai and HaShem gave them His Torah. Only later, by accepting the Torah were we "born" as a nation.

As is clear from the writings of the Arizal, HaShem took us out of Egypt in order to give us His Torah. This "made" us. First, though, He had to free us from Egypt, and take us out into the clean air. Until the events at Sinai, the nation of Israel still was hidden, like a chick inside its egg.

צפון Tzafun

ברך Bareich

At the seder, before Birkas HaMazon or immediately afterwards, before we say, "Pour out Your wrath," it is a custom to pour a fifth cup of wine - The Kos of Eliyahu. Our nation's customs are considered "Torah." If so, it behooves us to know the reason or reasons for the fifth cup.

We prepare a cup of wine for Eliyahu for he is the harbinger of the Ultimate Redemption, and the second half of the seder - after the meal - is all about the Ultimate Redemption. Our Sages refer to Eliyahu as the Malach HaGoel - the angel of the Redemption. At the seder we prepare a cup of wine for him, hoping he will come soon and bring the Redemption.

הלל Hallel – נרצה Nirtzah