

AND WASH, GREENS - ורחץ כרפס
continued - בהמשך

Simply, *karpas* means green(s). When the letters are reversed, masters of homiletics interpreted *karpas* – כרפס – to mean “sixty-hard labor” – ס’ פרך – i.e. sixty myriads or 600,000 Hebrew males who were subjected to hard labor. The visible outcome is greens, or our ability to indulge in them. But the cause that brought about this effect was the hard labor of Egypt. (The word פרך – *parech* – is in Exodus 1:13 - “The Egyptians enslaved the Children of Israel בפרך – with crushing harshness.”) *Olat Ra'a'yah*, Volume 2, pp.257-259

DIVIDING (the middle *matzah*) - יתץ

The middle *matzah* is broken in two. The larger portion will be reserved for the final *afikoman*; the smaller portion is to be eaten for *matzah*. The final *afikoman*, which symbolizes the *korban pesach* (the Passover offering), is to be eaten '*al ha-sova*', on a full stomach. The *matzah* on the other hand, is to be eaten '*le'te'avon*', hungrily, with appetite.

These two dissimilar eatings symbolize the two different stations along the spiritual way. The spiritual novice devours his meal ravenously. The adept or initiate, who has conquered the cravings of the animal soul, eats feeling already satisfied. His eating is not out of necessity but to broaden and enlarge his spirit.

The goal is to reach the sort of eating represented by the *afikoman*. But the spiritually realized person must not be disdainful of the other members of the human race who have not arrived at this plateau and must still satisfy animal desires. It is possible the adept himself has states where he is unable to attain the heights of *afikoman*-type eating.

Regarding the two halves of the *matzah*, one observes the interaction between the two types of eating. The mundane eating relates to the *afikoman* as its end goal; the spiritual eating of the *afikoman*, on the other hand, is a possibility only because of the prior stage of the more prosaic, commonplace eating of the *matzah*.

This symbolic act of breaking the *matzah* in two is a very visual way of declaring that in the history of an individual not only ends are important but means as well. Not only the final stage of *afikoman* is of importance, but the intermediate stage of *matzah* as well.

This is a recurring theme of the *Seder* night. The *Mishnah* in *Pesachim 10:4* stipulates, "*matchil be-genut u-mesayyem be-shevah*" (one commences with derogation, being defamed, and ends with praise.) Two sages of the Talmud disagree as to what form the derogation should assume. "Rav said, 'Originally our fathers were idolotars.' And Shmuel said, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt.'" (*Talmud Pesachim 116a*)

The MaHaRaL of Prague, (Rav Yehudah Loew ben Bezalel, **Moreinu Ha-Rav Loew**, appx. 1512- 1609) explains their differing views. Rav felt the greater derogation is the derogation of the soul. The body is only temporary; the soul is eternal. But a soul blemished by idolatry will be eternally lost. Shmuel, on the other hand, felt the derogation of the body is to be stressed. The havoc that idolatry wreaks upon the soul is invisible; the effects of physical slavery upon the body are readily discernible. Also, the spiritual result of having worshipped idolatry lies in the far-off future; the injury of slavery to the body is visible in the immediate

present. In our version of the *Hagadah* we combine both approaches of Rav and Shmuel, reciting both. (Rabbi Yehudah Loew, *Gevurot HaShem*, chap. 52)

But why bring up the degrading themes of idolatry and slavery at all? The whole point is that we are to find meaning not only in the “end” states of freedom and service of the true G-d, but in the “means”, the inglorious states that preceded s well! Our experience as slaves inculcated in us a servile attitude, which serves as a valuable resource even when one has attained freedom. In a truly free state, one is free to lower and humble oneself when it is appropriate to do so, namely in the service of G-d.

By the same token, it was by Divine design that our ancestors were once idolaters. In this pagan mind, imagination runs wild. If there had never been in our spiritual evolution a stage of paganism, we would have been bereft of the unhampered imaginative faculty. This would result in a service of G-d that is overly cerebral, sterile and lackluster.

Olat Ra'a'yah, Volume 2, pp.259-261