

WASHING - רחצה

This is the second time the hands are washed. The first time is referred to by the word ורחץ – ur'chatz – and Wash. This second time is referred to by the word רחצה – rachtzah – Washing. The subtle linguistic difference between the two expressions is the the noun רחצה refers to a permanent state. (Song of Songs 6:6 – “Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes that have come up from the washing.” – (רחצה.) The imperative ורחץ on the other hand indicates an improvisation.

The first washing before dipping the vegetable in salt water is not usual. There are those who insist on such a washing of the hands all year before eating a fruit or vegetable that has been moistened, but others do not insist on this stringency. Whereas when it comes to eating bread, or in this case מצה, the washing beforehand is an absolute *halachic* requirement.

The washing symbolizes that the material act of eating must be purified and uplifted (נטילה does not mean washing, but rather raising up/lifting up).

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MOTZI (who brings forth) – מוציא

Simply, this heading of מוציא refers to the blessing recited before eating bread, *ha-motzi lechem min ha-aretz* – Who brings bread forth from the earth. But there is much more to the name than just this simple allusion. מוציא refers to the deeper processes at work in extracting bread from the raw materials of the earth and to the choosing of Israel from among the nations.

The other blessings recited before eating food do not reflect the fact that many different factors contributed to the end product of the food. It is only before eating bread, the staple of the human being, that we review the process whereby the raw materials of the earth contribute to the final product. מוציא – bringing forth – suggests opposite relations: one, whereby the final product is connected to its previous elements, and a second, whereby it is disentangled from its past and emerges in the present a distinct entity.

All of this is symbolic of the bringing forth of Israel from among the nations. On the one hand, Israel emerges from the raw material of humanity as a whole; on the other hand, Israel achieves independence and a unique sanctity.

<p>...and you shall know that I am the Lord your G-d Who brings you out from under the burdens of Egypt. Exodus 6:7</p>	<p>...וידעתם כי אני ה' אלוקיכם המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים. שמות ו,ז</p>
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MATZAH – מצה

The “poverty” of the bread and hasty exodus from Egypt dictate the form of the מצה. The hasty exodus was the Divine Plan to revolutionize Israel in a way that would never occur had Israel gone through the evolutionary process that nations normally undergo. Instead, all the great energies that slumbered within the soul of the people during hundreds of years of Egyptian bondage, suddenly erupted to the surface. From lowly slaves, they were transformed overnight to a cultured, godly nation.

The reason behind all of this was that there could be no admixture of the previous Egyptian culture. The little cultural influence Egyptian idolatry exerted was renounced prior to the slaughtering of the Pesach lamb.

<p>HaShem alone guided them (Israel), and no other power was with them (Israel). Deuteronomy 32:12</p>	<p>ה' בַּדֵּד יִנְחֵנוּ וְאֵין עִמּוֹ אֵל נֹכֵר. דְּבָרִים לֵב, יב</p>
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Once Israel were devoid of any national culture, they were ready to have stamped upon them the Divine form.

Again, this sudden revolution rather than a gradual evolution, was necessary in order to receive the Torah. The least trace of culture would have prevented the sanctity of the Torah and the Divine form unique to Israel from impressing them.

The symbol for this cultural tastelessness is the tasteless מצה.

מוציא מצה, bringing Israel forth from the nations, engenders מצה, unleavened, tasteless מצה.

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