

כַּרְפָּס - Karpas

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Dipping a green vegetable in salt water | *karpas* | כַּרְפָּס

Passover, like many of our holidays, combines the celebration of an event from our Jewish past with a recognition of the nature around us. As we remember the liberation from Egypt, we also recognize the beginning of spring and rebirth happening in the world around us. The symbols on our table bring together elements of both kinds of celebration.

We now take a vegetable, representing our joy at the dawning of spring after our long, cold winter. We now dip it into salt water, a symbol of the tears our ancestors shed as slaves. While we eat it, some people have the custom to lean to the left because we are free now, and are just remembering the slavery. Except others do not lean, because we are feeling the slavery as we taste the tears. Before we eat it, we recite a short blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הָאֲדָמָה

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei p'ree ha-adama.

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, King of the Universe, who creates fruit of the ground;