ALL ABOUT MAROR AND CHAROSET

What is Maror?
The Torah says that the Pesach offering was eaten together with: Matzah Maror. This is how it was done when we had the *Bet haMiqdash*.

What is maror? A bitter vegetable. The word *maror* comes from the Hebrew *mar*, meaning “bitter.” The Torah explains that the Egyptians:
“…made the lives [of the Jewish slaves] bitter with hard labor, with mortar and bricks…” (Shemot 1:14)

We eat maror to remember and symbolically experience the bitterness of slavery in Egypt.

Which vegetable is used for maror?
Ashkenazi families often use horseradish, sometimes mixed with beet (chrein) .

Sephardic families use lettuce .
Why lettuce?

The Rabbis explained that lettuce (*chazeret*) starts soft and not very bitter.
But as it grows, its stalk hardens and its leaves become more bitter.

This reflects what happened in Egypt. At first, Pharaoh avoided harsh oppression so as not to provoke rebellion. But gradually, he increased the pressure until the Jewish people were fully enslaved.

The taste of maror teaches that oppression can begin subtly and later become harsh and bitter.

Maror must be explained

At the Seder, we do not only eat maror—we must also mention it and explain its meaning.

“Rabban Gamliel taught: Anyone who does not mention (and explain) the following three things does not fully fulfill the mitzvah of the Seder – *vehiggadta levincha*:
□ Pesach □ Matzah □ Maror

□□ **What work did Bene Israel do in Egypt?**
At first, Pharaoh imposed forced labor as a type of tax. Bene Israel helped build the cities of Pitom and Ramses. Later, they were fully enslaved.

The Torah says:
“The Egyptians made their lives bitter with hard labor, with mortar and bricks.” (Shemot 1:14)

From the word *vayemareru* (“they made bitter”) comes *maror*.

The Torah describes their work. It was not dragging stones for pyramids.
The Jewish people made bricks using □□□□□□□ □□□□ **(tit ve-teven)** – mud mixed with straw.

This labor included:
□ Carrying heavy mud from the Nile, mixed with silt
□ Gathering straw and mixing it into the mud
☀□ Mixing with their feet and shaping bricks by hand

They worked long hours in thick mud under the sun.
The mud irritated their skin and hardened on their bodies. It was exhausting and unhealthy work.
Even when weak or sick, they had to continue.

This work with *tit ve-teven* became a central memory of slavery in Egypt.

□ **What is Charoset?**
Charoset is a mixture of fresh fruits (such as apple), dried fruits (dates, nuts, etc.), and vinegar or wine.

Its thick texture resembles the mortar used to make bricks in Egypt.
When we see the charoset, we remember the forced labor.

At the Seder we remember slavery in two ways:
 The taste of maror → bitterness
 The charoset → mortar

Together, they represent both the feeling and the image of slavery.

 How and when do we eat maror and charoset?
At the Seder we eat maror with charoset twice:

 First, we dip maror in charoset after the berachah:
“asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al achilat maror.”

 Then, we eat maror and charoset again with matzah, in the *korech* sandwich, as practiced by Hillel, remembering the Pesach offering eaten with matzah and maror.

According to Maimonides, charoset is the only condiment required at the Seder:

- Karpas is dipped in charoset
- The first matzah is eaten with some charoset
- Maror is eaten with charoset, both alone and in korech