

# The Seder of the Seder

קדש. ורחץ. כרפס. יחץ. מגיד. רחצה. מוציא מצה. מרור. כורך. שלחן עורך. צפון. ברוך. הלל. נרצה.

## Kadeish



Kiddush for Yom Tov is recited over the first of the 4 cups of wine. Red wine is preferable but higher quality and/or personal preference can favor white wine. Many stand for Seder Kiddush (even if they sit for Kiddush throughout the year). When saying שהדינו, we should have in mind the Chag plus the mitzvot of matza, Hagada and the 4 cups. *(Women who have said שהדינו at candle lighting, should not answer אמץ to that bracha in Kiddush, since it might constitute an interruption. Women who say their own Kiddush, should not say שהדינו at candle lighting, but rather say it as part of Kiddush. If they did say it at candle lighting, they skip it at Kiddush.)* We then sit and recline comfortably to the left for drinking the wine. Each of the four cups requires drinking the whole cup, or at least a bit more than half (ROV KOS). Grape juice is a valid substitute for wine. But wine is preferable. Adding wine to grape juice is better than plain grape juice, since alcoholic wine is the symbol of freedom, wealth, and luxury. One should not dilute the wine with water, since at a certain point, the mix can lose its HaGafen bracha. Mixing wine with grape juice does not run that risk. One who cannot tolerate even a little wine in the grapejuice can drink straight grapejuice.

*(Someone who cannot drink wine or grape juice should consult a Rav as to what to do at the Seder.)*

## Urchatz



Wash hands with a cup, without a bracha. This is required according to the rules of Ritual Purity when eating wet foods. *(This - according to some opinions - applies all year round, not just at the Seder, but here an extra "fuss" is made to highlight the importance of the Seder and to arouse the curiosity of children.)*

The different items of the Seder should be explained (and discussed), not just done. Questions should be encouraged (not just MA NISHTANA) and answered - on the questioner's level.

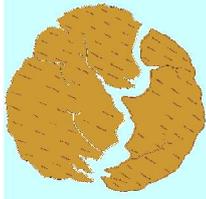
## Karpas



A small piece *(so as not to enter into a SAFEK concerning an after-bracha)* of celery *(some use parsley; others boiled potato, onion, white radish - family tradition often is the determining factor - celery is the preferred vegetable if no strong family custom exists)* is dipped in salt water *(vinegar or lemon juice)*. When saying the bracha, one should have in mind the maror as well, since there is a question as to whether the Maror should get its own food-bracha - which it won't get. Reclining is optional. Karpas symbolizes Spring. It also whets our appetite - a symbol of freedom and luxury. Salt water reminds us of both the bitter tears of slavery and the "freedom waters of Yam Suf". Karpas is a fine, richly colored fabric (as mentioned in Megilat Esther) which Rashi mentions when commenting on Yosef's multi-colored coat. Karpas, thus, is a reminder of the jealousy that brought us down to Egypt. There are other reasons for karpas, as well. Encourage Seder participants to add to the reasons.

Suggestion for comfortable reclining, if you are sitting on a standard dining room chair without arms. Rotate your chair 90° clockwise, so the back is now to your left. Drape your left arm over the back of the chair, lean to the left, et voilà - comfortable **הסיבת שמאל**. If the back of your chair is too high for comfort, you'll have to find another comfortable position for reclining.

## Yachatz



Break the middle matza. Hide the larger piece for later (Afikoman), just as the Final Redemption is yet to come (*Rav Steinzaltz Hagada*). The remaining piece of matza is now in its proper broken form for לחם עוני. When do we fulfill the mitzva of Matza - beginning of the meal, or at the end (Korban Pesach time)? YACHATZ focuses us on both times by giving us a piece for now and one for later. It also stimulates a child's curiosity, as to why we aren't eating the matza yet, even though we broke it.

## Magid



Over the matza (and Seder Plate) and the second cup of wine, the story of the Exodus is told, in answer to the child's questions. Real questions should be encouraged in addition to the traditional מה נשתנה, and personalized answers should be offered in addition to the standard Haggada text. Following the story and analysis of selected p'sukim from the Torah, the first installment of Hallel is sung. The second cup of wine is drunk following HaGafen and the "Redemption Bracha". In some homes, the Seder leader reads/explains the Haggada and the Seder celebrants listen. It seems, however, that in many homes, everyone says the Haggada (more or less) together. Either way, parents and grandparents (male AND female) should TALK to their children (male and female, young and old) and guests about the stories and halachot relevant to the Seder night, and not suffice with the recitation of the Hagada alone. Children should also be encouraged to contribute short explanations that they have learned in school. The meal to come is an excellent time for further elaboration.

## Rachatz



(*rhyming with URCHATZ and YACHATZ*) or RACHTZA (*which rhymes with MATZA*). Now we have a full formal נטילת ידים with bracha. Ideally, there should be no talking from this point until after the Hillel sandwich. Spend a few minutes before washing to explain the upcoming elements of the Seder to avoid talking during, although talking about the topics at hand is not considered an interruption and may be done, especially when clarifications are called for.

## Motzi-Matza



The 2½ matzot are taken in hand and מן הארץ לחם is recited. The two whole matzot serve as Lechem Mishna in honor of Yom Tov (*the broken piece as the mitzva-matza - and one of the whole matzot is that too*). Some use salt; some don't. Some keep the matzot covered during the bracha; some don't. People without their own Lechem Mishna should answer אמן to the leader's HaMotzi, even if they will be saying their own על אכילת מצה. Then, without delay, put down the bottom matza and say the על אכילת מצה bracha on the whole and the P'RUSA. One should have in mind this first amount of matza, Koreich, and the subsequent Afikoman. Opinions vary, but approx. one square machine matza will satisfy both the Torah's requirement, as well

as the Rabbinic preference to having two portions (*which only applies IF you have your own three matzot*) - one from the top whole matza and one from the broken piece (*based on a doubt as to which is the mitzva - the whole or the broken piece*). One should eat the matza while reclining to the left, as a symbol of freedom, thinking of the mitzva and its symbolisms. One set of matzot will not suffice for the required amounts for all Seder participants; it is a good idea for each person to have his own 3 Shmura matzot, or a plentiful stock of matza pieces should be available to supplement the pieces received from the main three. The matza for the mitzva needs to be Sh'mura (*hand or machine*) even if you eat regular Pesach matzot for the rest of the Chag. [*Some use Sh'mura also for any meal's HaMotzi. And, many eat Sh'mura for the entire Pesach.*]

## Maror



A "Kazayit" of maror (lettuce leaves or stalks -and/or- horseradish) dipped in charoset is eaten, following the mitzva-bracha, as a reminder of bitter slavery - hence, no reclining. Talmud Yerushalmi explains that the longer lettuce remains in the ground, the more bitter it becomes. This makes lettuce, although it is not very bitter per se, symbolic of the life of our ancestors in Egypt and therefore, particularly appropriate for the mitzva. Some wrap a small amount of horseradish in a lettuce leaf. *(This gives it the "punch" people remember from the horseradish days, without ripping your throat out. Seriously, lettuce, which should be properly cleaned of possible bugs, is by far the preferred vegetable for Maror. Horseradish was common where lettuce was unavailable and is/was so prevalent among Jews of Eastern European and Russian origin, that switching to lettuce takes getting used to.)* Family custom can trump the general preference.

Maror is a Rabbinic requirement until the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash, when it will resume its Torah status when eaten with Korban Pesach (and matza).

**Important: Jarred horseradish is not acceptable for Maror or Chazeret.**

## Koreich



Combine a piece of the bottom matza with another portion of maror to make the Hillel Sandwich which commemorates the mitzva to eat Korban Pesach with matza and maror. Some dip it in charoset; some don't. Some recline; some don't. Although many say the *זכר למקדש כהלל* passage before eating KOREICH (as is printed in most hagadot), some suggest saying it right after so as not to constitute an interruption between the MATZA and MAROR brachot and the eating of the two foods together. Reminder: it takes some time to eat matza, marmor, koreich - but we should resist non-relevant conversation. Eat in quiet contemplation of the greatness of G-d's having taken us out of Egypt.

## Shulchan Oreich



We now have the festive meal, which should be an integral part of the Seder, not just a food break. Now is a perfect time to discuss various aspects of the Seder in a relaxed atmosphere. Some recline during the meal. Many start with egg (from the Seder plate or elsewhere) and salt water. Care should be taken to resist overeating at the Seder, since the Afikoman must be eaten *על השובע* (when satisfied but not stuffed). The meal should be enjoyable in fulfillment of the mitzva of SIMCHAT YOM TOV. Keep in mind, too, that at the best of times in Jewish History in Eretz Yisrael with a Beit HaMikdash, the main dish was the Korban Chagiga. This should add a touch of longing for the Geula Sh'leima.

## Tzafun



As a sign of freedom, luxury, and nobility, Korban Pesach was eaten as a dessert at the end of the meal, when one was satisfied but not stuffed from his meal. Afikoman commemorates the KP and/or the matza that was eaten with it. *(This is why some eat two "K'zeitim" of matza for Afikoman.)* Supplement the hidden piece with other matza (since there will not be enough to go around). Ideally, Afikoman sh/b eaten before halachic midnight, since this was the deadline for eating KP. This year, use 12:40am Israel Summer Time as your target - CHATZOT in Yerushalayim is 12:43 (other locations in Israel vary slightly). There is "on whom to rely" to pass the chatzot deadline for Afikoman, especially if rushing will "spoil" your Seder. While eating the Afikoman, one should think of the mitzvot of the night and whole story of the Exodus. Eat while reclining to the left.

## Bareich



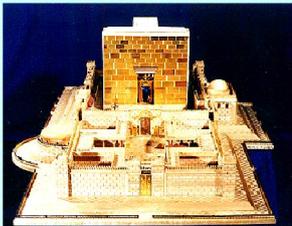
Birkat HaMazon is said over the third cup of wine. Omitting יעלה ויבא invalidates benching; Say it over. If a מזומן is present, the Seder Leader should lead the benching rather than giving it to someone else (*as he might ordinarily do*). Here's another example (benching with a cup of wine) of something that is done (can be done, should be done?) throughout the year. But most people don't do it. (*Of course, it is common at large simcha gatherings.*) At the Seder, we all do it, to lend extra honor & ceremony to this important evening. Remember too that Birkat HaMazon is one of the Torah mitzvot fulfilled at the Seder (*as well as any other time one eats a satisfying meal*).

## Hallel



The 4th cup is filled and Hallel is completed. The other Hallel (from Shabbat and Yom Tov P'sukei d'Zimra) is also said, as are other songs of praise from our davening. A special cup of wine is filled, Eliyahu's Cup, which focuses on the fifth Term of Redemption (entry into Eretz Yisrael), the coming of Mashiach, and the building of the Beit HaMikdash. Care should be taken to drink a sufficient amount of the fourth cup, so that there is no question that an after-bracha is indeed required (*since it is part of the Seder service and will be said in all cases*).

## Nirtza



We conclude the Seder with songs and poems which speak of miracles, Divine protection and justice. May we soon see the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the fulfillment of our prayer, which we express on the day of "Repentance from Fear" (Yom Kippur) and on the day (night) of "Repentance from Love" (Pesach) - Next year in Rebuilt Jerusalem!

*Some read Shir HaShirim after the Seder.*

## SUGGESTION

It might be a workable idea to keep the Seder moving at a decent pace, even though you and other participants have many explanations and Divrei Torah to share. Then, if you and others still have the energy, you can stay at the Seder table - after you help clean up - and expound upon the miracles of Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim and practices of the Seder for as long as you want (even until it is time to recite the SH'MA of the morning - sound familiar?).

One should be sensitive to his/her spouse, children, and guests and not turn a very special occasion into torture for those who are fighting to stay awake. Finish up, let them go to sleep, and then you can really fulfill the concept of: "And he who expands the telling of Y'TZI'AT MITZRAYIM, this is praiseworthy."

There are even opinions expressed among early Hagada commentators, that it is not necessarily praiseworthy to stretch the Magid portion of the Seder, for this delays the fulfillment of the mitzvot of Matza and Maror, makes it difficult for children (and others) to remain focused, and can often cause one to either rush the Afikoman or miss the CHATZOT deadline.



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