

# The Seder of the Seder



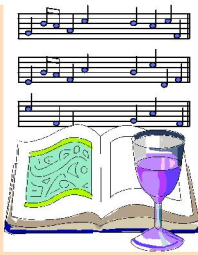
**BAREICH:** We say Birkat HaMazon over the third cup of wine. Omitting יעלה ויבא invalidates benching; Say it over. If a מזומן is present,

the Seder Leader should lead the benching rather than giving it to someone else (as he would 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 and 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).

**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 (until it is time to recite the SH'MA of the morning). One should be sensitive to

his/her spouse, children, and guests and not turn a very special occasion into torture for those who are zonked from their Pesach preparations (or otherwise). 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 praise-worthy. 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. **The entire OU Israel family wishes you and yours a CHAG KASHER V'SAMEI'ACH and an enjoyable and meaningful SEDER.**

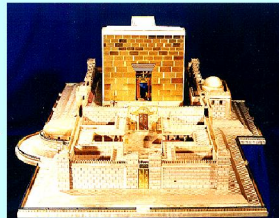
**HALLEL:** The 4th cup is filled and Hallel is completed. The other Hallel (from Shabbat and Yom Tov P'sukei D'Zimra) is also said, as are other songs of praise from



A special cup of wine is filled, Eliyahu's Cup, which focuses on the fifth Term of Redemption, 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).

**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 J'lem.

Some read Shir HaShirim after the Seder.



**KADEISH:** Kiddush 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. Most stand for Seder Kiddush (even if they sit for Kiddush throughout the year). When saying

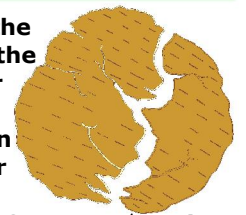
שהחיינו, we should have in mind the Chag plus the mitzvot of matza, Hagada and the 4 cups. (Women who have said שהחיינו at candle lighting, should not answer אמן to that bracha in Kiddush, since it might constitute an interruption. Women who say their own Kiddush, should not say שהחיינו at candle lighting, 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 with grape juice does not run that risk.



**KARPAS:** A small piece (so as not to enter into a SAFEK concerning an after-bracha) of celery (some people use parsley; some use boiled potato, onion, white radish - family tradition often is the determining factor) is dipped in salt water (vinegar or lemon juice).

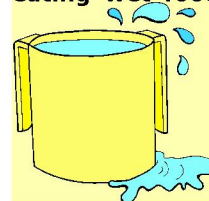
When saying the bracha, one should have in mind the maror as well, since there are questions as to whether the Maror should get its own food-bracha - which it does not). Reclining is optional. Karpas symbolizes Spring. It also whets our appetite - a symbol of freedom and luxury. Salt water reminds us of both the bitter tears of slavery and the "freedom waters of Yam Suf". Karpas is a fine, richly colored fabric (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, too.

**YACHATZ:** Break the middle matza. Hide the larger piece for later (Afikoman), just as the Final Redemption is yet to come. Other piece 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 (KP time)? Yachatz focuses us on both times by giving us a piece for now and one for later. And it also arouses curiosity

**URCHATZ:** Wash hands with a cup, without a bracha. Required according to the rules of Ritual Purity when eating wet foods. (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 and answered.





**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 the

"Redemption Bracha" and הגפן. In some homes, the Seder leader reads/ explains the Haggada and the Seder celebrants listen. It seems, however, that in most families, 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) about the stories and halachot relevant to the Seder night, and not suffice with the recitation of the Hagada. The meal is an excellent time for further elaboration.



**RACHATZ:** (rhyming with URCHATZ and YACHATZ) or RACH-TZA (which rhymes with MATZA). At this point, we have a full formal נטילת ידים with

bracha. Ideally, there should be no talking from this point until after the Hillel sandwich. (It is recommended to 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 המוציא לחם מן הארץ is recited. The two whole matzot serve as Lechem Mishna in honor of Yom Tov (the broken piece as the mitzva-matza - but 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 מצה על אכילת מצה. Then, without delay, put down the

bottom matza and say the על אכילת מצה bracha on the whole and the P'RUSHA. One should have in mind this first amount of matza, Koreich, and the subsequent Afikoman. Opinions vary, but approx. 2/3 of a square 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.

Practical suggestion for comfortable reclining if you are sitting on a standard diningroom 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.

**MAROR:** A "Kazayit" of maror (lettuce leaves or stalks -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.) 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).



**KOREICH:** Combine a piece of the bottom matza with portion of maror to make the "Hillel Sandwich" which commemorates the command to eat Korban Pesach with matza and maror. Some dip it in charoset; some don't. Some recline; some don't. Although most Hagadot instruct us to say the זכר למקדש כהלל passage before eating KOREICH, 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 silently or talk to the topic

**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) with salt water. Care should be taken to resist overeating at the Seder, since the Afikoman must be eaten על השרובע (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 also sacred meat - viz. the Korban Chagiga (not on Motza"Sh).



**TZAFUN:** As a sign of freedom, luxury, and nobility, the Korban Pesach was eaten as a dessert at the end of the meal. Our Afikoman commemorates the KP and/or the matza that was eaten with it. (This is why some eat two "K'zeitim" of matza for the Afikoman.) Supplement with other matza. Care should be taken to eat the Afikoman before halachic midnight, since this was the proper deadline for eating the Korban Pesach. 12:40am Summer time will cover just about all locations in Israel. There is "on whom to rely" to pass the midnight deadline for Afikoman, especially if rushing will "spoil" the flow of the Seder. While eating the Afikoman, one should think of the mitzvot and whole story of the Exodus.

