

Seder Night

Leaning (Heseibah)

- **The mitzvah.** There is an obligation *d'rabbanan* to lean while doing certain mitzvos at the Seder as an expression of freedom ("*derech cheirus*").¹
- **Which mitzvos.** **1)** Matzah² **2)** Korech³ **3)** Afikomen⁴ **4)** Four cups of wine⁵
- **How.** First, recite the *berachah* on the matzah or wine while sitting in an upright position.⁶ Then tilt your body (from the hip up) toward your left side⁷ (everyone, even "lefties"⁸) onto something. Remain leaning until you've consumed the correct amount of wine or matzah that is required for that mitzvah.
- **What to lean on.** Leaning must be onto something, not midair. For example, you can lean on the armrest of your chair, the table (by turning your body to the right so the table will be on your left), or against another chair.⁹
- **Talmid chacham.** If you're eating the Seder with your rebbe or an exceptional talmid chacham, you must ask him for permission to lean in his presence.¹⁰

Four Cups

- **What to drink.** Grape juice can be used to fulfill your obligation.¹¹ However, it's preferable to drink wine since it's a greater demonstration of freedom. This applies even if you personally like grape juice better, as long as you don't strongly dislike wine.¹²
 - **Tip:** If you don't want to drink so much wine, you can mix in grape juice. As long as the taste of the wine is noticeable in your mixture, it's considered as though you're drinking wine.¹³
- **Which color.** There's a mitzvah to drink red wine (as opposed to white).¹⁴ This is because red wine is generally of higher quality. Also, it serves as a reminder of the Jewish blood that was spilled in Mitzrayim.
 - **Tip:** If you prefer white wine, you can mix some red wine into it to change its color.¹⁵ When doing so, you should pour the red wine into the cup first and then add the white wine.¹⁶
- **Cup Size.** The cup you use must be big enough to contain a *revi'is* of wine. There are two opinions regarding the size of a *revi'is*. **(A)** The smaller size is 86 cc, around 3 ounces.¹⁷ **(B)** The bigger size is 150 cc, around 5 ounces.¹⁸ (As a point of reference, the standard plastic drinking cup holds 180 cc). For the four cups at the Seder (*a mitzvah d'rabbanan*), you can use the smaller size (86cc).
- **How much to drink.** Ideally, you should drink all of the wine in your cup (unlike Kiddush and Havdalah, where the majority of a *revi'is* is sufficient). If not, you should drink at least a majority of the cup.¹⁹
 - **Tip:** Use the smallest size cup possible (that holds **no less** than a *revi'is*), as it's preferable to drink an entire cup of the smaller size than a majority of the bigger size.²⁰

- **Time Limit.** Ideally, you should drink the cup in ten to twelve seconds. However, you have up to four minutes. You shouldn't pause — and certainly not speak — until you've finished the required amount.²¹
- **Forgot to lean.** If you didn't lean while drinking the four cups, the halachah is as follows: for the first or second cup, you must drink it again (without a *berachah*); for the third or fourth cup, you do **not** drink it again.²²
- **Pouring.** It is customary to have someone at the Seder pour the wine for you, as this is a symbol of freedom (*derech cheirus*).²³

The Seder

Kadesh

- **Two mitzvos.** *Kadesh* is a fulfillment of your obligation of Kiddush and the first of the four cups. Therefore:
 - Even if you're being *yotzei* the *berachos* with someone else, you must drink the required amount from your own cup.²⁴
 - You should have in mind before making the *berachah* that you are about to fulfill both of these obligations.²⁵
- **Who recites.** Although during the year most people are *yotzei* Kiddush with the head of the household (through *שומע כעונה*), on Seder night many have the custom that everyone makes their own Kiddush. In the event that someone is making Kiddush on your behalf, you should hold up your own cup.²⁶
- **Shehecheyanu.** When the *berachah* of *shehecheyanu* is recited, have in mind all the mitzvos of the night.²⁷

Urchatz

- **How.** Wash once on each hand without making a *berachah*.²⁸ You should not talk until you've completed Karpas, unless it is something directly related to the mitzvah (for example, "Pass the salt water").

Karpas

- **How.** Dip the Karpas vegetable with your hand (not a fork)²⁹ into the salt water, make the *berachah* (*borei pri ha'adama*), and then eat it.
- **Intention.** When you say the *berachah* on the vegetable, have in mind that it should exempt the maror that will be eaten later.³⁰
- **Amount.** Eat less than a *k'zayis* (size of a small matchbox) of Karpas.³¹ If you ate more than that, you should nevertheless not make a *berachah acharonah*.³²

Yachatz

- **How.** Break the middle matzah with your hands (not a knife),³³ and put aside the bigger half for the afikomen.³⁴

1. שו"ע תעב:ב. שו"ע תעה:א. 3. שם. 4. שו"ע תעז:א. 5. רמ"א תעב:ז. 6. הליכות שלמה עמ' רלו. 7. מ"ב תעב:סק"ז. 8. רמ"א תעב:ג. 9. מ"ב תעב סק"ח. 10. שו"ע תעב:ה. 11. הליכות שלמה עמ' ריז. 12. תשובות והנהגות ח"ב רמג. 13. הלילה הזה עמ' 11. 14. שו"ע תעב:יא. 15. מבית לוי ח"ז עמ' לב. 16. שו"ת שבת הלוי ח"י ס' נו. 17. גר"ח נאה. 18. חז"א. 19. מ"ב תעב:סק"ל. 20. הל' חג בחג עמ' תג. 21. מ"ב תעב:סק"ל"ד. 22. רמ"א תעב:ז. 23. רמ"א תעג:א. 24. מ"ב תעב:סק"ל"ו. 25. מ"ב תעג:סק"א. 26. שש"כ פמ"ז סקכ"ו. 27. ביצחק יקרא תעג:א. 28. שו"ע תעג:ו. 29. מ"ב קנח:סקכ"ו. 30. מ"ב תעג:סקנ"ה. 31. שו"ע תעג:ו. 32. הל' חג בחג עמ' תקכג. 33. הל' חג בחג עמ' תקכה. 34. מ"ב תעג:סקנ"ח

Maggid

- **What to say.** Ideally, you should say the entire Hagaddah³⁵ (even “Ma Nishtanah”³⁶). If that’s not possible, the most important parts are: **1)** from the section that begins “Rabbi Gamliel used to say” until the second cup; **2)** the Ten Plagues³⁷; and **3)** Avadim Hayinu.³⁸
- **Cover/uncover matzah rule.** The matzos should be present (uncovered) for the recitation of the Hagaddah.³⁹ However, whenever our cups are raised, the matzos are covered (for the same reason we cover the challahs on Shabbos during Kiddush).
- **Ten Plagues.** It is customary to remove some wine from your cup as you say each plague. You should use your index finger.⁴⁰ Many are careful to not drink from the wine that was removed from the cup.⁴¹
- **Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim.** The focus of *divrei Torah* at the Seder should be on the story and miracles that took place when we left Mitzrayim, as opposed to explanations of the Hagaddah.

Rachtzah

- **How.** Wash your hands as you would for bread and recite “*al netilas yadayim*.”⁴² You may not speak until you’ve finished with Korech,⁴³ unless it’s directly related to the mitzvah you are doing (for example, “Pass the charoses”). This applies even to *divrei Torah*.

Motzi Matzah

- **How much.** You must eat a *k’zayis* of matzah to fulfill your obligation.⁴⁴ There are two opinions regarding the size of a *k’zayis*. Practically, the volume of a *k’zayis* varies according to the thickness of the matzah. Generally, the bigger size is between one third and one half of a round handmade matzah. The smaller size is between one fifth and one third of it. Ideally, for Torah obligations you should follow the bigger size, and for rabbinic obligations you can follow the smaller size.⁴⁵ Therefore:
 - On the first night you should eat the bigger amount for your mitzvah of matzah. If you forgot to lean and are eating again, you can eat the smaller amount.
 - On the second night you can eat the smaller amount for all the mitzvos of the night.⁴⁶
 One who is ill can eat the smaller size of a *k’zayis*.
- **Time limit.** Eat your matzah ideally within two minutes or in no longer than nine minutes.⁴⁷ The clock starts at your first swallow.
- **Kavanah.** Before making the *berachos*, have in mind **1)** that you are fulfilling your mitzvah of matzah, and **2)** that your *berachah* should also exempt Korech and the afikomen.⁴⁸
- **Top matzah.** Included in your *k’zayis* should be a piece of the head of the household’s upper matzah.⁴⁹
- **Plain.** You should **not** eat your *k’zayis* of matzah with salt.⁵⁰ ט"ו
- **Forgot to lean.** If you didn’t lean, you must eat another *k’zayis* (following the smaller size) while leaning.⁵¹

Maror

- **What to use.** The ideal choice of vegetable for maror is romaine lettuce⁵² (even though it doesn’t taste bitter).

- **How.** Dip the maror into charoses, shake it off, make the *berachah* on the maror, and eat.⁵³
- **How much.** A *k’zayis* (smaller *shiur*) must be eaten. Practically, one very big leaf (with the stalk), or one and a half medium size leaves, are a *k’zayis*.

Korech

- **How.** Make a sandwich with matzah on the outside and maror on the inside. Dip the maror in charoses, shake it off, say, “*Zecher l’mikdash k’Hillel*,” lean to your left, and then eat.⁵⁴
- **How much.** A *k’zayis* (smaller *shiur*) of matzah should be eaten (see Motzi Matzah for amounts). The same amount of lettuce used for Maror should be used for Korech.
- **Time limit.** Korech should be eaten within four minutes or no longer than nine minutes.
- **Bottom matzah.** Many include a piece of the head of the household’s bottom matzah in their *k’zayis*.⁵⁵
- **Forgot to lean.** If you forgot to lean, you don’t need to eat again.⁵⁶

Shulchan Orech

- **Overeating.** You should be careful not to overeat, as you cannot be *yotzei* the mitzvah to eat the afikomen if you feel too stuffed.⁵⁷
- **Charoses.** If at the meal you eat charoses by itself, it would require a *berachah* (if chunky, “*Ha’eitz*”; if pureed, “*Shehakol*”).⁵⁸
- **Egg.** It’s customary to eat the egg from the Seder plate.⁵⁹

Tzafun (Afikomen)

- **How much.** Ideally, you should eat two *k’zayis* (of the smaller *shiur*),⁶⁰ which would amount to two fifths of a hand matzah. If you cannot, you should eat one *k’zayis* (smaller *shiur*).⁶¹
- **Time limit.** The afikomen should be eaten within four minutes or no longer than nine minutes.
- **Forgot to lean.** If you didn’t lean, the halachah is as follows: If you remember before *bentshing*, you must eat it again;⁶² if you remember after *bentshing*, you do **not** eat it again.⁶³
- **Chatzos.** You should try to finish eating the afikomen before *chatzos*.⁶⁴
- **Taste of matzah.** After eating the afikomen, you should not eat or drink for the rest of the night⁶⁵ (aside from the next two cups of wine, and water)⁶⁶ in order to keep the taste of matzah in your mouth.

Hallel

- **Chatzos.** If possible, you should try to finish Hallel and the fourth cup before *chatzos*.⁶⁷

After the Seder

- **Stay awake.** There is an obligation to stay awake speaking about the miracles of Yetzias Mitzrayim and learning the halachos of Pesach.⁶⁸ This should not be done at the expense of Shacharis the next morning.

35.הל' חג בחג עמ' תקל. 36. שם עמ' תקלז. 37. מ"ב תעג:סקס"ד. 38. הליכות שלמה עמ' רסג. 39.רמ"א תעג:ז. 40. מ"ב שם סקע"ד. 41. ויגד משה ס' כב אות יא. 42. שו"ע תעה:א. 43. מ"ב תעה:סקכ"ד. 44. שו"ע שם. 45. מ"ב תפוס:סק"א. 46. הל' שלמה עמ' רי. 47. הל' חג בחג עמ' תקנ. 48. שם עמ' תקמז. 49. הל' שלמה עמ' רעז. 50. רמ"א תעה:א. 51. רמ"א תעב:ז. 52. ב"י תעג. 53. שו"ע תעה:א. 54. שם. 55. שם. 56. גר"ז סע' כ'. 57. רמ"א תעו:א. 58. גר"נ קרליץ. 59. רמ"א תעו:ב. 60. מ"ב תעז:סק"א. 61. שו"ע תעז:א. 62. מ"ב תעח:סק"א. 63. מ"ב תעב:סקכ"ב. 64. שו"ע תעז:א. 65. שו"ע תעה:א. 66. שו"ע תפא:א. 67. רמ"א תעז:א. 68. שו"ע תפא:ב.