

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch - Chapter 118: Preparations for the Seder

קיצור שולחן ערוך - סימן קי"ח

By Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried

1. You should do your best to obtain choice wine to perform the mitzvah of drinking the Four Cups. If red wine is available, that is, of the same quality as white wine, and its kashrus is as reliable as white wine, the red wine is preferred for the Four Cups, for it is said, "Look not after wine when it is red," ([Proverbs 23:31](#)) indicating that wine is most desirable, when it is red. In addition, because it reminds us of the blood, which flowed, when Pharaoh slaughtered innocent Jewish children. In backward and ignorant countries, where people, make slanderous accusations, Jews refrain from using red wine on Pesach.

2. For the first dipping, which is called karpas, many people follow the custom of using parsley, but it is better to use celery, which tastes good when raw. Best of all is to use radishes.

3. For maror (bitter herbs), it is customary to use horseradish, which, may be grated,¹ because it is very sharp; but you should take care that it does not lose its strength completely. It should be grated, when you return home from the synagogue.² (see Ch. 98:3 that the grating should be in an unusual manner). On Shabbos, it is forbidden to grate the [maror](#), but you should grate it before night, and keep it covered until nightfall.³ However, it is preferable to use chazeres, lettuce, which is easier to eat,⁴ and it is called maror, because when it stays in the ground for a long time, the stem becomes bitter. You can also fulfill the [mitzvah](#) with la'anah, (an herb called wormwood).⁵ (Alashin and charchevina [mentioned in the Mishnah], are not found in our region). All the species, with which you can fulfill the mitzvah (of eating maror), may be combined to make up a kazayis, and you may fulfill your duty with either the leaves or the stems, but not with the roots, that is not with the little roots, that branch out in all directions. But the large root, out of which the leaves grow, although it is hidden in the ground, is considered a stem. Nevertheless, it is better to use the leaves and the stem that is out of the ground, because some authorities hold that the part that grows in the ground is called "root." The leaves are valid only if they are fresh, but the stems are valid whether they are fresh or dried out, but not when they are cooked or pickled.

4. The charoses must have a thick consistency⁶ to recall the mortar from which our forefathers had to make bricks. When you are ready to dip the maror into it, you should add a little wine or vinegar to make it soft to represent the blood, and for the additional reason that it should become fit to dip something into it. The [charoses](#) should be made from fruits that symbolize the Jewish people; for example: figs, for it is said, "The fig tree has produced its green figs," ([Song of Songs 2:13](#)); nuts, because it is said, "I went down to the garden of nuts" (ibid. 6:11); dates, because it is said, "I will ascend the palm tree" (ibid. 7:9); pomegranates, because it is said, "Like a slice of pomegranate" (ibid. 6:7); apples, to commemorate what is written, "Beneath the apple tree I aroused you," (ibid. 8:5) where the women gave birth to their children without pain; and almonds, (shekeidim, singular shakeid), because the Holy One, blessed is He, watched diligently (shakad) to end our bondage. You should put spices in it, that look like straw, such as cinnamon and ginger, that are not finely ground,⁷ and have straw-like strands in them, to recall the straw, the Jews used to knead into the mortar. On Shabbos, you should not pour the wine and the vinegar into the charoses, for it must be done in an unusual manner, by putting the charoses into the wine or the vinegar. The salt water, (even when Yom Tov does not occur on Shabbos)⁸ should be prepared on erev [Yom Tov](#). If you do prepare it on Yom Tov, you should do it in an unusual way,⁹ by pouring the water first, and adding the salt later.

5. After the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, the Sages ordained that there should be two cooked foods on the table, during the reciting of the Haggadah, one to recall the Korban Pesach, (Passover sacrifice), the other to recall the Korban Chagigah (Festival sacrifice), which were offered in the times when the Beis Hamikdash was standing. It is customary that one of the foods should be meat, from the shoulder

section,¹⁰ to recall that the Holy One, blessed is He, redeemed Yisrael, with an outstretched arm. It should be roasted on fire, to recall the [Korban Pesach](#) (Passover sacrifice), which was roasted on fire. The second food should be an egg,¹¹ because an egg, in the Aramean language is beiah, that is to say, the Merciful One desired (ba'ei) to redeem us with an outstretched arm. You may prepare the egg, either roasted or boiled, but you must do the roasting or boiling on erev Yom Tov, while it is still daylight. If you forgot to do it (on erev Yom Tov), or if that day occurred on Shabbos, you should roast or boil it at night, but then you must eat it on the first day of Yom Tov. The same goes for the second night; you should roast it or boil it (at night), and you must eat it on the second day of Yom Tov, for you are not permitted to cook on the first day of Yom Tov for the second day, and neither on a Yom Tov for a weekday. Now, since it is customary not to eat roasted meats on the two nights of the seder, you should, therefore, eat the shoulder meat on Yom Tov during the day. Even if you roasted it on erev Yom Tov, you should not throw away (the meat) afterwards, but you should put it into the food that is cooked on the second day and eat it on the second day.

6. You should prepare your seat [at the table] while it is still daytime, with the nicest pillows you can afford, placing them in such a way that you can recline and lean on the left side. Even a left-handed person should recline on the left side. You should also prepare the [seder](#) plate while it is still day, in order that immediately on returning home from the synagogue you can begin the seder without delay.

7. Although during the year, it is best to be moderate in displaying fine tableware, so that we remember the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, nevertheless, on the night of [Pesach](#), it is good to set the table with as many beautiful things as are within your means. Even vessels not used for the meal should be placed on the table for elegant decor, to symbolize freedom.

8. The seder plate is arranged in this manner: You place three matzos on the seder plate, you cover them with a beautiful cloth, you place the shankbone on your right side, and the egg on the left; the maror, over which you say the berachah, you place in the center; the charoses, you place below the shankbone; the [karpas](#) below the egg, and the maror, that is eaten together with the matzah, you place in the center; as in the diagram:

9. The wine cups must be whole, without any defect, thoroughly rinsed,¹² and they must hold no less than a revi'is.¹³

10. It is our custom to wear a kittel (a white robe), which should also be prepared, while it is still day. A person, in mourning, God forbid, should not wear it, but he is required to recline. However, if he has observed no mourning at all before Yom Tov, as, for example, if the funeral was held on Yom Tov, then, it is customary that he should not recline. But he must recite Hallel, because the saying of [Hallel](#) is mandatory.

11. A son, at his father's table, is required to recline, but a student, in the presence of his Rebbe, is not required to recline.

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch - Chapter 119: The Seder

קיטור שולחן ערוך - סימן קיט

By Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried

1. Although on every other Shabbos and Yom Tov, you are permitted to say kiddush and eat a meal while it is still day, in order to add from the secular to the holy, on Pesach, you are not permitted to do so. The mitzvah of eating matzah must be performed only at night, as was the case with the [Pesach](#) sacrifice, about which it is written, "And they shall eat the meat (of the Korban Pesach) on this night." ([Exodus 12:8](#)). The [mitzvah](#) of the Four Cups may also be done only after nightfall. Since the cup of wine, over which we say [kiddush](#), is one of the Four Cups, the kiddush should not be said until it is definitely night.¹ (The person who conducts the seder) puts on the kittel and takes his seat to conduct the [seder](#). It is a mitzvah to distribute almonds, nuts and similar things to the children, so that they notice the change and ask questions, and this will also stimulate them to ask also the reasons for eating [matzah](#), maror and reclining.² Boys and girls who have reached the age of training for mitzvos, that is, who are able to understand the holiness of [Yom Tov](#) and understand what is being told about the Exodus from Egypt, should also be given a cup of wine,³ from which they should drink. It is customary to fill an additional cup of wine,⁴ and it is called "The Cup of Elijah the Prophet."
2. A servant or a member of the household should fill the cups, and each time the cups are filled, they should fill them, rather than doing it yourself. This conveys an impression of freedom. You should instruct the members of the household to drink at least the greater part of each cup at one time,⁵ and of the fourth cup, they should drink a revi'is at one time.⁶ All should have in mind to fulfill the mitzvah of drinking the Four Cups (of wine), and of relating the story of the Exodus, and eating matzah and [maror](#), because women, too, are required to perform these [mitzvos](#), except that they do not recline. You recite the kiddush, as it is written in the Haggadah, and drink the wine while reclining on your left side. It is best, if possible, to follow the opinion of the authorities, and to drink the entire contents of all the Four Cups.
3. After that, you should wash your hands,⁷ without saying the berachah, dry them, and cut the karpas for yourself and for all the members of the household, giving each less than a kazayis.⁸ Each dips his portion in salt water and says the [berachah](#) Borei peri ha'adamah "Who creates the fruit of the ground." They should have in mind to exempt the maror which will be eaten later with this berachah, and while eating the [karpas](#), they should also recline on the left side.⁹ The person who leads the Seder then takes the middle matzah and breaks it into two parts, placing the larger part near his seat for the afikoman. It is customary to wrap the [afikoman](#) in a napkin,¹⁰ to recall what is written, "Their leftovers were wrapped in their clothes" ([Exodus 12:34](#)). Some people place it on their shoulders, to recall the Exodus. Since the afikoman takes the place of the Pesach sacrifice, it is most esteemed, and the larger portion of the matzah is set aside for it. The smaller portion, is put back on the seder plate. He then uncovers the matzos slightly, lifts the seder plate, and all declare Ha lachma anya diachalu,¹¹ "This is the bread of affliction, which our forefathers ate etc. to leshanah haba'ah benei chorin, "Next year we shall be free men." Those who say, Keha lachma anya (keha instead of ha), "Such as this bread of affliction," should omit the word di (which).
4. The second cup is now filled, and a child asks: Mah nishtanah "Why is this night different." If there is no child present, then an older son or daughter should ask, or a friend or your wife should ask.¹² Then Avadim hayinu (we were slaves) etc. is said.¹³ It is proper to explain to the members of the family¹⁴ the contents of the [Haggadah](#) in the language they understand.¹⁵ If you do not understand Hebrew, you should use a Haggadah with a translation, and after completing each paragraph, you should repeat from the translation, and particularly, the declaration, Rabban Gamliel hayah omeir (Rabban Gamliel used to say,) because it is essential to understand the reasons for the Pesach sacrifice, matzah and maror. At Vehi she'amedah (this promise) etc. you should cover the matzos (so that the matzah is not slighted when it seems that we are ignoring it, by lifting only the cup of wine). All take their cups in their

hands and say, Vehi she'amedah, to miyadam, (from their hands), when you again uncover the matzos. When you say Matzah zo (this matzah) etc., you should take the half matzah from the seder plate, and show it to the family and say, Matzah zo (this matzah etc.). When saying Maror zeh (this maror), you should lift the maror. However, when saying Pesach shehayu avoseinu ochelim (the Pesach offering which our fathers ate etc.), you should not raise the shankbone, which is a reminder of the Pesach offering, for it might appear as if you had set it apart for a Pesach offering, (which can only be done in the Beis Hamikdash). When saying, Lefichach(Therefore), you should cover the matzos, and each person takes his cup in his hand and raises it, holding it until concluding with Ga'al Yisrael, (Who redeemed Israel). Everyone then says the berachah, Borei peri hagafen, over their cup of wine, and drink the cup, while reclining on the left side.

5. After that, everyone should wash their hands, and say the berachah, Al netilas yadayim, and Hamotzi over the matzos. Since on Yom Tov, we must say [Hamotzi](#) over two whole loaves of bread, and the mitzvah of matzah requires that we eat the broken one, because matzah is called "poor man's bread," and a poor man generally eats broken pieces of bread, therefore, when saying Hamotzi, you should take the two whole matzos in your hands and the broken one between them, and recite Hamotzi. You then put down the bottom matzah,¹⁶ holding only the top, and the broken middle matzah, and say the berachah, Al achilat matzah. You then break off a piece the size of a kazayis, from the top matzah and from the broken middle matzah.¹⁷ You distribute the same quantity to every member of the family. Then you eat both pieces simultaneously,¹⁸ while reclining on the left side.¹⁹ If it is difficult for you to eat both pieces of matzah at the same time, you should first eat the kazayis piece over which you said Hamotzi, and then eat the kazayis piece from the broken matzah. But you should not pause between eating the two pieces, and eat both pieces while reclining. It is the custom in our region, at the seder, not to dip the matzah in salt; neither the matzah, over which Hamotzi is said, nor the one over which Al achilas matzah is said.

6. If someone is unable to chew the matzah, he is permitted to soak it in water²⁰ to soften it,²¹ provided it is not completely mashed. An elderly or sick person, who cannot eat matzah, when soaked in water, may soak it in wine, or in any other beverage.²² When you soak the matzah, with which you want to fulfill the mitzvah (of eating matzah), you must be careful not to soak it for twenty-four hours, for it would then be considered as if it were cooked and you could not fulfill the mitzvah with it. You must also be careful, in other respects, that the matzah should not lose its status as bread. See Chapter 48:5 above.

7. You then take a kazayis of maror,²³ and distribute portions of the same quantity to each member of the family. You dip it in the charoses, and shake off the [charoses](#), so that the maror should not lose its taste, and say the berachah, Al achilas maror, and eat it²⁴ without reclining.²⁵ You then take a kazayis from the bottom matzah and a kazayis maror. It is also proper to dip (this maror) in charoses and shake it off. You then place the maror between (two pieces of) matzah and say, Kein asa Hillel(This is the way Hillel did it) etc.²⁶ and eat it while reclining.²⁷ The size of a kazayis, as we have written in the general rules, is as much as half an egg.²⁸ However, some authorities hold, that it is a little less than one-third of an egg. Since the mitzvah of eating maror is in our days a rabbinical requirement, therefore, a person, who finds it difficult to eat maror, may rely on this (more lenient) opinion, and eat a little less than one third of an egg, and say the berachah over it. A person who is sick and cannot eat maror at all, should, nevertheless, chew a little of any of the species, with which the mitzvah of maror may be fulfilled, or any bitter tasting herb, until he feels a bitter taste in his mouth; just as a token, without saying a berachah.

8. After that the meal begins. It is proper to eat the entire meal²⁹ while reclining. It is customary to eat eggs. It is wise to use good judgment, and not overeat, so that you will be able to eat the afikoman, as required, (with appetite), and not on a full stomach.³⁰ Roast meat should not be eaten, on the two seder nights, not even roast poultry. Even if it was boiled and then pot roasted, it should not be eaten. Some have the custom not to eat any food dipped in liquid, on the seder nights, except the two required dipped foods, so that it should be prominently recognized that these two are mitzvos. After completing the meal, the afikoman is eaten³¹ to remind us of the Pesach sacrifice,³² which was eaten at the end of the meal so that you should be completely satiated. It is proper to eat two kazeisim (of matzah for the afikoman), one to remind us of the Pesach sacrifice, and the other to recall the matzah that was eaten

with the [korban Pesach](#) . At any rate, you should not eat less than a kazayis, and you should eat the afikoman, while reclining. After eating the afikoman, it is forbidden to eat anything.^{33 34} The third cup is then filled for Birkas Hamazon. You must make sure that it is clean, not containing leftover wine, that is to say, nothing is left from the wine, in which matzah may have been soaked during the meal. If it is not clean, it requires washing and rinsing (See Chapter 45:4 above). It is a mitzvah to make an effort to recite [Birkas Hamazon](#) with zimun (three males), but you should not go from house to house to look for people required for zimun, because each person is required to say Birkas Hamazon in the place where he has eaten. It is customary for the master of the house to lead the zimun³⁵ as it is said: "A man of a good eye shall bless," ([Proverbs 22:9](#)) (see Ch. 45:5) and he is called, "A man of good eye," (i.e. a generous person) because he said: "All who are hungry—let them come and eat" etc. After Birkas Hamazon, the berachah is said over the third cup, and you should drink it while reclining. It is forbidden to drink between this cup and the fourth cup.

9. After Birkas Hamazon, the fourth cup is filled. It is the custom to open the door, to remind us that tonight is a night of Divine vigil, and we are not afraid of anything. In the merit of our faith in Hashem, our righteous Mashiach will come, and the Holy One, blessed is He, will pour out his anger on the nations. Therefore, we recite Shefoch chamasecha (Pour out Your anger) etc. After that, we say, Lo lanu (Not for us) and continue reciting the Hallel. When we reach Hodu (Give thanks), if there are three people present, even if they are his wife and children, who have reached the age of training for mitzvos, the leader should say Hodu, and the other two people respond, as it is done in the synagogue. You are required to drink a full revi's³⁶ from the fourth cup, after which you say the after-berachah.³⁷ You then recite the Haggadah to the end. After the fourth cup, it is forbidden to drink any beverage, except water.³⁸ If you are not too sleepy, you should say Shir hashirim after the Hagadah. It is customary not to say the bedtime Shema, except for the section of [Shema](#) and the berachah Hamapil, to indicate that it is a night of divine vigil when [Hashem](#) protects us from all evil, and we need no other protection.

10. A person, who does not drink wine all year, because it causes him discomfort, nevertheless should make a special effort to drink the Four Cups, as our Rabbis, of blessed memory, relate about Rabbi Yehudah bar Rabbi Ilai, who used to drink the Four Cups of wine on Pesach, and then he would have to wrap his temples until Shavuot (because of the headache the wine gave him). However, such a person may dilute the wine with water, or drink raisin wine, (see Chapter 50:6 above), or he may drink mead, if these are the "beverage of the country"

11. If the afikoman was lost, and you still have matzah left of those that were made specifically for the mitzvah, you should eat a kazayis of that matzah, otherwise, you should eat a kazayis of any other matzah.

12. If you forgot to eat the afikoman; and reminded yourself before saying Birkas Hamazon, although you already had washed your hands at the end of the meal or said, "Come, let us say the blessings," you may eat the afikoman, and do not have to say Hamotzi. And even though you had not intended to eat anymore, this does not constitute a diversion of the mind, since it is your duty to eat the afikoman, and are sitting at Hashem's table, (and must fulfill His will; thus you were not completely distracted). Nevertheless, you should wash your hands, without saying [Al netilas yadayim](#). But if you did not remind yourself, until after saying Birkas Hamazon, before saying Borei peri hagafen over the third cup, then you should wash your hands again, without saying, [Al netilas yadayim](#), and recite the berachah of Hamotzi, eat a kazayis of the afikoman, say Birkas Hamazon; then say the berachah over the third cup, and drink it. But if you only reminded yourself after saying Borei peri hagafen over the third cup, you should drink the cup. If on other occasions you are accustomed to recite Birkas Hamazon, without a cup of wine, you should wash your hands, eat the afikoman, and say Birkas Hamazon without a cup of wine. However, if you are scrupulous, and always says Birkas Hamazon, over a cup of wine, and now cannot do it, because you would be adding to the four cups, (which is forbidden), then you should not eat the afikoman, but rely on the matzah, which you ate before.

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