

## The Quickest Seder: A Guide for Medical Professionals and Patients

If a doctor or other medical staff is on duty in a hospital on Seder night, it is important to know how to conduct an abridged Seder in order to fulfill the special Mitzvos of the night properly. A person who begins the Seder in the customary manner may find himself unable to complete it and will possibly miss some of the more important Mitzvos. It is therefore ideal to calculate or attempt to predict how much time he has available before beginning the Seder and prioritize the most important parts.

The following rules are also applicable to a sick person who is unable to conduct an entire Seder. He too should be aware of the rubric of the Seder so that he can fulfill its most basic obligations.

There are a plethora of Halachos that are applicable to patients and specific disease states on the *Leil Haseder*, but this essay will focus purely on the doctor or patient who is faced with time constraints that require an abridged Seder.

First we will outline the basic structure of the Seder and its Mitzvos:

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Comments</u>
<i>Kadeish</i>	Kiddush for <i>Leil Yom Tov</i> . The Brachah of <i>Shehecheyanu</i> . The first of the <i>Arba Kosos</i>	When the first day of Pesach falls on Shabbos, a " <i>Hazkarah</i> " (mention) of Shabbos is inserted into Kiddush
<i>Urchatz</i>	<i>Netilas Yadayim</i> (no blessing is recited) as preparation for <i>Karpas</i>	
<i>Karpas</i>	Reciting <i>Borei Peri ha'Adamah</i> and eating <i>Karpas</i>	One should intend that the Brachah also cover the <i>Maror</i> that will be eaten during the Seudah
<i>Yachatz</i>	Breaking the middle of the three Matzos. (Minhag)	One should ensure that two complete Matzos remain for <i>Lechem Mishnah</i> as for every Shabbos and Yom Tov meal
<i>Maggid</i>	<i>Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim</i> (Torah obligation) After reciting the Haggadah, one recites the Brachah " <i>Asher Ge'alanu</i> " and drinks the second <i>Kos</i>	The Haggadah contains some elements which comprise the basic fulfillment of the Mitzvah and some additions that are based on Minhag and early <i>Takanos Chachamim</i>
<i>Rachtzah</i>	<i>Netilas Yadayim</i> with a Brachah	
<i>Motzi Matzah</i>	Eating a <i>Kezayis</i> of Matzah (Torah obligation)	
<i>Maror</i>	Eating a <i>Kezayis</i> of <i>Maror</i> (Rabbinic obligation)	In the absence of the <i>Korban Pesach</i> , eating <i>Maror</i> is only <i>mi'Derabbanan</i>
<i>Korech</i>	Eating Matzah and <i>Maror</i> together as a 'sandwich'	

	(Rabbinic obligation – <i>Zecher leMikdash</i> )	
<i>Shulchan Oreich</i>	The Mitzvah of <i>Seudas Yom Tov</i>	In addition to the <i>Kezayis</i> of 'Pas' already eaten during <i>Motzi Matzah</i> (also an obligation of <i>Seudas Yom Tov</i> ) one should eat a <i>Kezayis</i> of meat
<i>Tzafun</i>	<i>Afikomen</i> . Eating a <i>Kezayis</i> (or two) of Matzah (Rabbinic obligation - <i>Zecher l'Korban Pesach</i> )	
<i>Bareich</i>	<i>Birkas Hamazon</i> followed by the third <i>Kos</i>	
Hallel	Completion of Hallel followed by the fourth <i>Kos</i>	
<i>Nirtzah</i>	There are no actual obligations at this stage of the Seder	People customarily recited <i>Piyutim</i> such as " <i>Chad Gadya</i> " or " <i>Echad Mi Yodeia</i> ". Some have the custom to recite <i>Shir Hashirim</i> .

The following are the Mitzvos that a person is obligated to perform during *Leil Haseder*:

***Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*** – aside from the recurring daily Mitzvah to mention *Yetzias Mitzrayim* throughout the year, there is an additional, Torah obligation, to speak about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* on the *Leil Haseder*.

**Mitzvos Involving Eating** – Eating Matzah, *Maror*, *Korech* and *Afikomen*. Matzah is the only Torah obligation.

**Drinking *Arba Kosos*** – a Rabbinic obligation. Each *Kos* needs to contain at least a *Reviyis* of wine or grape juice.

**The Mitzvah of Reclining (*Heseiba*)** – The *Arba Kosos*, Matzah, *Korech* and *Afikomen* are all eaten of whilst reclining on one's left side. This is a Rabbinic obligation.

The following principles should be taken into consideration when deciding how to conduct an abridged Seder:

1. If a person is sick and is unable to fulfill one or any of the Mitzvos of the Seder, then he is exempt. He should bear in mind that he may still fulfill the Mitzvah of *Simchas Yom Tov*, by being joyful and trusting that Hashem will cure him.
2. In a similar vein, if a doctor is occupied with the holy duties of medical care on *Leil Haseder*, he should remember that *Pikuach Nefesh* (danger to life) overrides all of the Mitzvos of the Torah. Moreover, the Halacha is that "*Ha'osek Bemitzvah Patur Min Hamitzvah*" – somebody occupied with performing one Mitzvah (such as healing the sick) is exempt from performing another Mitzvah at that time. If Hashem has willed it that he spend *Leil Haseder*

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saving lives, he should do so with joy. If he fails to do so and attempts to conduct a Seder instead, it may even be a "*Mitzvah haBa'ah be'Aveirah*" – a Mitzvah that is performed by way of a sin (Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt"l*)

3. In cases where one is very short on time, it is important to remember that it is vital that one conduct the Seder in its correct order. For example – one should not drink all of the *Arba Kosos* one after the other, then eat the Matzah and then recite the Haggadah. The *Shulchan Aruch* (O.C. 472:8) rules that one who drinks all four *Kosos* one after the other is considered to have only drunk one large *Kos* and has not fulfilled his obligation.
4. The greatest challenge for a person who is pressed for time on *Leil Haseder* is the recital of the Haggadah. It is important that to realize that there are sections of the Haggadah that comprise the core elements of the Mitzvah of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* and must be recited in order to fulfill the Torah obligation. Moreover, there are certain paragraphs that need be said so as to ensure that the *Kos* that is drunk immediately afterward is considered to have been drunk "*Al Haseder*" – at its correct time.
5. Furthermore, *Chaza"l* instructed that the Mitzvah of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* be done in a very specific way: One must do it in a manner of "*Sha'alah U'teshuva*" (question and answer). One must begin with the shame ("*Maschil Bigenus*") and end with the glory ("*Mesayem Bishevach*"). One must mention "*Pesach, Matzah and Maror*". The sections of the Haggadah were selected and arranged in order to meet these criteria.

### Based on the above, the following are the minimum requirements for a Pesach Seder:

1. Firstly, one makes Kiddush on a cup of wine and drinks it (the first *Kos*). One may then skip *Urchatz* and *Karpas*. As for reciting the Haggadah, the most important paragraph to say is *Avadim Hayinu* as it contains the core elements of the Torah obligation of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*. One should then skip to the Brachah of *Asher Ge'alanu* and drink the second *Kos*.
2. If one has more time, it is important to say the paragraph of "*Rabban Gamliel Omer*" which contains the mention of *Pesach, Matzah and Maror*, and then continue from there until the end of *Maggid*.<sup>1</sup>
3. If there is more time, one should include the sections of *Ma Nishtanah* (so as to recite the Haggadah in a manner of "*Sha'alah U'teshuva*") and *Mitchilah Ovdey Avodah Zarah Hayu Avoseynu* until the paragraph beginning "*Rabi Yehuda Hayah Nosein Bahem Simanim*" (so as to be *Maschil Bigenus U'mesayem Bishevach*).
4. In the case of one who is too ill to recite the Haggadah himself, it is important that he at least hear the Haggadah recited by others, if possible.
5. Following *Maggid*, one should take three (*Bedieved*, at least two) Matzos and make a Brachah and eat a *Kezayis*. (The minimum *Shiur* of *Kezayis* in a pressing situation – *Besha'as haDechak* – is a piece of Matzah weighing twenty grams.)
6. The Mitzvah of eating a *Kezayis* of Matzah takes precedence over eating *Maror* or *Korech*. Eating a *Kezayis* of *Maror* takes precedence over eating *Korech*.

<sup>1</sup> Though some hold that if one fails to mention "*Pesach, Matzah and Maror*" one has not fulfilled one's obligation, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt"l* (*Halichos Shlomo, Erchei Refua*, Part 1, p131) contended that is only to "fulfill the *Mitzvah Min haMuvchar*" but one does fulfill the basic Mitzvah even if it is omitted.

7. If a person did not have the time or was incapable of eating *Karpas* and did not make the Brachah of *ha'Adamah*, he should nevertheless not recite the Brachah of *Borei Peri ha'Adamah* on the *Maror*.
8. After eating the *Seudah*, one should eat another *Kezayis* of Matzah for *Afikomen* followed by *Birkas Hamazon* and the Brachah of *haGafen* on the third *Kos*. If there is no time for *Hallel* and the fourth *Kos*, a *Brachah Acharonah (al haGefen)* should be recited.
9. If time permits, one should recite *Hallel* and drink the fourth *Kos*. If one skipped the first half of *Hallel* (in *Maggid*), it should be said now if possible.
10. Having completed *Hallel*, if one sees that one has a few more minutes to spare, one should say *Nishmas* (and the Brachah that follows it) before drinking the fourth *Kos*. If one had already made a *Brachah Acharonah* on the third *Kos*, one should recite the Brachah of *haGafen* on this *Kos*.
11. In a situation when a person either doesn't have the time or isn't capable of eating more than one *Kezayis* of Matzah, he should conduct the Seder in the regular way, skip *Motzi Matzah*, eat the *Seudah*, do *Netilas Yadayim*<sup>2</sup>, recite the Brachos of *Hamotzi* and *Al Achilas Matzah* and then eat the *Kezayis*. That way he will fulfill the Mitzvos of Matzah and *Afikomen* together (*Mishnah Berurah* 482:6).
12. If a person is forbidden to eat Matzah and will therefore not be Bentching, if he is able to eat some of the Yom Tov foods, then doing so is considered enough of a *Hefsek* (division) between the second and third *Kosos*. If he is unable to eat anything, he should at least make a form of a *Hefsek* by saying a Dvar Torah or speaking about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and then drink the third *Kos*.
13. If a person was unable to perform any of the Mitzvos before *Chatzos*, he should conduct the entire Seder<sup>3</sup> with all of the Brachos (except for *Asher Ge'alanu*, *Al Achilas Matzah*, or *Al Achilas Maror*). He should also drink all four *Kosos* at their proper times, but should only recite the Brachah of *haGafen* on the first and third *Kosos*<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> One should not recite the Brachah of *Netilas Yadayim* as one is not intending to eat a *Kebeitzah* (see *Shulchan Aruch*, 158:2 and *Mishnah Berurah* 9 ad. loc.)

<sup>3</sup> If time allows; otherwise, he should follow the guidelines above to prioritize the *Mitzvos haLaila* in the available time

<sup>4</sup> Since there is a doubt if one can fulfill the *Mitzvah* of *Arba Kosos* after *Chatzos*, he should follow the opinion of the *Mechaber* (O.C. 472) that one recites *haGafen* only on the first and third *Kosos*.